REVEREND REGINALD GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE O.P.

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REVEREND REGINALD GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE O.P.

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REVEREND REGINALD GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE O.P.

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REVEREND REGINALD GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE O.P. COLLECTION

Réginald Marie Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P. (February 21, 1877, Auch, France—February 15, 1964, Rome) was a Catholic theologian and is considered by some to be the greatest Catholic Thomist of the 20th century. He taught at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas, commonly known as the Angelicum, in Rome from 1909 to 1960. By 1917 a special professorship in ascetical and mystical theology was created for him at the Angelicum, the first of its kind anywhere in the world. His great achievement was to synthesise the highly abstract writings of St Thomas Aquinas with the experiential writings of St John of the Cross, showing how they are in perfect harmony with each other.

BEATITUDE

REVEREND REGINALD GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE O.P.

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THE NATURE OF MORAL THEOLOGY

THE second part of the Summa begins with a prologue which outlines the purpose and scope of what is now called moral theology. Hence we dwell here, first on the nature of moral theology, and secondly on its divisions.

The word “image” (in the phrase “image of God”) signifies man as endowed with intellect, free will, and self-mastery. Hence, having treated of God, who is man’s exemplar, we now proceed to consider God’s image, man, namely, who is the source of his own deeds, since he has free will and mastery of self.

What a sublime conception of moral theology! God’s liberty in creation is the prototype of man’s free activities.

In the first part of the Summa, the Saint, treating of God’s creatures, had shown how man is the imperfect image of God, since, like God, man can know and love himself, thus representing not only the divine nature, but also the divine Trinity. Now he proceeds to show that man is God’s image, not only by his higher faculties, but also in his free activities, whereby he knows and loves not only himself, but also God, as God knows and loves Himself. This knowledge and love are indeed the final goal of all human life. But even here on earth a saint differs from his fellows by that love wherewith he loves not only himself, but God. From this sublime viewpoint moral theology is the science of imitating God. It produces a more and more perfect likeness of man to God. And this likeness would be man’s goal even if God had not become man. But how much more perfect is this likeness when imitation of God has become imitation of Christ!

A more scholastic description of moral theology can be found in the first part: “Although theology is more speculative than practical, it is nevertheless practical, in its treatment of human acts, by which man is led

to perfect knowledge of God wherein lies eternal blessedness." Again, in the second question, outlining the entire Summa, he says: "We will speak first of God, secondly of man's journey to God, thirdly of Christ who, as man, is our road to God."

Thus moral theology may be defined as that part of theology which, guided by revelation, studies human acts as the road to man's supernatural goal. Or, more briefly: a theological treatise which guides human acts to man's supernatural goal.

Moral theology, then, stands on a higher level than natural ethics. Natural ethics guides man to his last natural goal, which consists, not in the beatific vision and supernatural love, but in the knowledge, perfect but abstract, of God as the author of nature, and in the consequent natural love of God above all else. Ethics, properly speaking, does not deal with man as the image of the triune God. In the definition given above, many theologians avoid the phrase "that part of theology," substituting for it "that branch of knowledge." Hence arises the following question: Does moral theology differ specifically from dogmatic theology?

The distinction of moral and dogma became distinct in the Summa. But some later theologians, Vasquez, for example, maintained that moral and dogma are not two parts of one science, but two distinct sciences. In line with this tendency, moral theology, ignoring dogmatic questions (e.g., grace, merit, the nature of infused virtue), often became a casuistic treatise. In our view, casuistry is but an inferior exemplification, just as asceticism and mysticism are superior exemplifications, of moral theology.

Are dogma and moral two distinct branches of knowledge? To this question our answer must be negative: theology is one science, not many. The proof follows.

Scientific unity arises from unity in subject matter and viewpoint. Now all things discussed in theology belong to one and the same subject matter, God, and are approached from one and the same viewpoint, revelation. When theology does speak of creatures, it speaks of them only in their relation to God, and draws its conclusions from the viewpoint of revelation.

St. Thomas writes: Sacred doctrine remaining one, includes the subject matter of all philosophic sciences, because it sees them under the light of its own viewpoint. Hence, whereas one philosophic science is speculative and another practical, sacred doctrine is both speculative and practical, just as God, by one and the same act, knows both Himself and His works. But

theology, since it treats principally of God and only secondarily of human acts, is more speculative than practical. It deals with human acts as leading to that perfect knowledge of God which is eternal blessedness.

Dogma and moral, then, are but two parts, two branches, of one and the same science. In each, under one and the same light of revelation, the viewpoint is God: God either in Himself, or as efficient and exemplary source, or lastly, as the end, purpose, and goal of our life.

Now God as God, as Deity, is an object higher than that reality which is the object of metaphysics, higher than moral good which is the object of ethics. Here appears the wonderful hierarchy of knowledge: division below, unity on high. Theology, imprinted on the created mind by God, rises on high above philosophy and history, and is subordinated only to the uncreated mind of God.

It follows, then, that to consider dogma and moral as two sciences is to ignore the sublimity and simplicity of moral theology. Separated from dogma, reduced to casuistry, under a kind of materialistic and statistic tendency, moral theology loses its native elevation and dignity.

Here follow two corollaries. First corollary. Physical science has many integral parts: mechanics, hydrostatics, hydrodynamics, acoustics, optics, thermodynamics. Theology, too, remains one science, notwithstanding the distinctions, that between positive theology and systematic theology, and that between dogmatic theology and moral theology.

Positive theology has three integral parts:

a) biblical, which assembles truths revealed in Holy Scripture;

b) patristic, which expounds the teaching of the Holy Fathers;

c) symbolic, which examines ecclesiastical creeds, definitions, and declarations.

Systematic theology has two integral parts:

a) dogmatic, which discourses on the articles of faith: God, creation, the Incarnation, the Redemption, the sacraments, the four last things;

b) moral, which deals with human acts in relation to man’s supernatural goal. Mystical theology, and ascetical, and casuistic, are subdivisions of moral theology. Here a brief word on this distinction.

Moral theology is concerned with the laws of Christian life, with the virtues, gifts, and sin. But it deals with universal principles and does not, as does prudence, descend to particular applications.

Casuistic theology solves questions of conscience, and distinguishes degrees of obligation. Its tendency is negative, the avoidance of sin, rather than positive, the cultivation of virtue. It is not really distinguished from prudence, since prudence is the source of a correct and secure conscience.

Ascetical theology teaches the road of Christian perfection in its beginning and progress, by laying down practical rules toward active purification and advance in virtue.

Mystical theology shows how the soul may reach the unitive life, by passive purification and contemplation. Secondarily it treats also of extraordinary contemplative graces. On this mystical level, moral theology merges with dogma, with Scripture and tradition, with the Word of God, whence all theology proceeds. Beginning and end coincide. The circle is closed. Unity is preserved.

Second corollary. Deep knowledge of moral and mystical theology presupposes deep knowledge of dogmatic theology, on predestination, say, and on grace. Specialization does indeed have its place, particularly in the lower sciences, mathematics, say, in physics, and biology. But specialization can be perilous in that highest science which is one and indivisible.

A doubt may here arise. Why does St. Thomas place moral theology (his second part) between his two dogmatic parts (first and third)? Why, in particular, does he place it before the treatise on the Redemption and the Incarnation? Would it not be better to treat all dogmatic questions first? Should not theology teach imitation, not of God only, but also of Christ?

To this difficulty, two answers:

1. The Incarnation presupposes not only the creation of man, but also the relation of man to God as man's supernatural goal. Even if God had not decreed the Incarnation, the moral law would still exist. God, without decreeing the Incarnation, could have created angels and men in the state of grace, in the supernatural order. The moral law, natural and supernatural, arises necessarily from nature elevated by grace. These indestructible moral truths, on the final goal, on human acts, on grace and infused virtue, on sin —these truths are presuppositions of Redemption from sin.

2. Further, when you speak of the virtues in Christ, you must first know the nature of virtue. Thus the Master of the Sentences, since he has no explicit moral treatise, has to deal by occasion with the virtues when writing on Christ. Hence we need not wonder that St. Thomas, proceeding

speculatively, distinguishes three parts: first, God; second, the rational creature's movement to God; third, Christ, who, as man, is our road to God. But St. Thomas, too, in treating the sacrament of penance, deals with the virtue of penance, with grace as specifically Christian, with Carrying the cross in penitential spirit. Thus he shows again that dogma and moral are not two sciences, but one. Yet in practice it is good to expound dogma entirely before beginning moral.

CHAPTER II

DIVISIONS OF MORAL THEOLOGY

THE first division is that between a) moral in general (I—II), and b) moral in particular (II—II). Why this distinction? “The goal determines the road.” The final goal, first in intention though last in attainment, must be treated before we study the roads that lead to that end. Thus there arise four chief divisions:

A. The final goal:

1. the final goal in general;

2. blessedness, i.e., attainment of the goal.

B. Human acts in themselves:

1. those characteristic of man

a) generically (voluntary and involuntary; circum-stances);

b) specifically, (1) in relation to the goal (to will, to intend, to enjoy); (2) as to means employed (to consent, to choose, to command, to use); (3) in relation to morality.

2. those common to man and beast, i.e., the passions

a) generically (their subject, their differences, their good and evil, their order of succession);

b) specifically, as found in the concupiscible passions (love, hate, desire, joy, aversion, sadness) and in the irascible passions (hope, despair, fear, audacity, anger).

C. Sources of human acts:

1. intrinsic sources (habits in general, virtues and gifts, vices and sins);

2. extrinsic principles

a) God, by His Law (law in general, natural law, the Old Law, the New Law);

b) God, by grace (its necessity, essence and divisions; its cause; its effects).

D. Human acts in particular:

1. theological virtues and correlative gifts;

2.cardinal virtues and correlative virtues and gifts;

3. states of life, state of perfection, charismatic graces. This distribution is marked by perfect and progressive order. This division is contrasted with that of previous authors and with that of subsequent authors.

The chief Scriptural sources of moral theology are (a) the Decalogue, (b) the Sermon on the Mount. In this sermon Jesus proclaims, in all its sublimity, the New Law of love which fulfills the Old Law of fear. The New Law penetrates into man's interior, eschews even internal sins, commends purity of intention, urges imitation of God: Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect. Not perfect like the angels, but perfect like God, since men have received participation, not in angelic nature, but in divine nature.

Patristic sources of moral theology are found, first, in commentaries on the Decalogue, the Sermon on the Mount, the Gospels, and the epistles of St. Paul; secondly, in special treatises on particular duties and virtues; thirdly, in oratorical and ascetic exhortations on the full round of Christian morality. To illustrate. Clement of Alexandria; Tertullian (too rigid, does not clearly distinguish precepts from counsels); St. Cyprian and Lactantius; the Cappadocians; St. Ambrose (his De Officiis, suggested by a Ciceronian title, but moving on a higher level); St. Augustine (on the theological virtues, on chastity and matrimony). Last, not least, St. Gregory the Great, who, in his commentary (not scholastic, but allegorical) on the book of Job, gave to medieval ascetics a full treatise of moral theology.

The first scholastic treatise is that of St. John Damascene, who wrote the first Summa. Its three parts are:

1. a philosophical introduction (findings of the pagans);

2. heresies (a general exposition);

3. the orthodox faith, in three subdivisions: first, on God; second, on creatures; third, on Christ and His sacraments. The emphasis throughout is on dogma. Moral questions are treated as occasion offers.

Peter the Lombard, whose Sentences remained the textbook until the sixteenth century, follows the third division of St. John Damascene. Peter's general division, differing notably from that of St. Thomas, seems to be based on the human will, and thus to be a division of moral theology. Yet, in

fact, he assigns no special part for moral questions, intermingling them with dogmatic questions.

His general division, based on two acts of the will, namely, to use and to enjoy, has three chief parts: (a) things to be enjoyed (God, One and Triune); (b) things to be used (creatures as means to attain the vision of God); (c) things to be both enjoyed and used (the humanity of Christ, the sacraments, the angels and the saints).

The chief moral questions he discusses are found, first, in his treatise on the first man, where he dwells on grace, on sin, on virtue and merit, on the acts of the will. Secondly, in his treatise on Christ, where he dwells on faith, hope, and charity, on the cardinal virtues, on the seven gifts, on the Ten Commandments, on lying and perjury, on the Old Law and the New. Thirdly, in his treatise on the sacraments, where he discourses on heaven, purgatory, and hell.

Alexander of Hales, who retains Peter's division and method, shows progress beyond his master, but is still very imperfect.

The innovation introduced by St. Thomas is twofold. First he treats of God in Himself, God as the first reality, God in three persons, God as Creator, before he turns to consider God as the goal that is good and draws man to Himself. "Reality comes before goodness." Goodness is founded on reality, is a characteristic of reality. Goodness is reality, reality is perfect and desirable. Goodness is counterfeit unless it is founded on genuine reality.

Secondly St. Thomas assigns a second and special part to moral, and treats this part scientifically, not oratorically. Thus he lays a solid foundation for casuistry, for ascetic and mystic theology, proceeding systematically from the universal to the particular.

Historians, then, are right when they say that St. Thomas was the first who systematized ethics, individual and social. See as illustration his treatment of justice, and of prudence, political, economic, and military. His social ideas deserve deeper study today.

The work of St. Thomas was, we say, an innovation. But it was not a revolution. It was the normal development of the union between tradition and that perennial philosophy which prepares theologians to proceed scientifically in matters of faith and morals.

Yet three centuries elapsed before this great innovation conquered the schools. Until the end of the sixteenth century, the textbook in all schools,

Dominican schools included, was that of the Lombard. See the commentaries on the Sentences, from Capreolus to Soto.

Cajetan and Koelin were the first to comment on the Summa. Yet this happy innovation made slow headway in the schools, and did not have, even on noted authors, the influence it deserved. Let us look cursorily at these authors.

1. St. Raymond of Pennafort (thirteenth century) wrote a casuistic guide for confessors. He was followed by many others.

2. St. Antonine, O.P., archbishop of Florence, wrote a Summa of moral theology. His method is ascetic, and he does not always follow the doctrine of St. Thomas. A comparative study of the two saints would be useful.

3. Mystic treatment of moral questions appears in Eckhart, Tauler, Suso, Gerson, and Thomas a Kempis.

4. When commentaries on St. Thomas replaced those on the Lombard, many authors wrote moral Summas:

a) Cajetan, who had written a casuistic Summa, on sins.

b) Many commented on the second part of the Summa: Victoria, Medina, Dominic Soto, Peter Soto, Ledesma, John of St. Thomas, the Salmanticenses, Suarez, Lugo, Gonet, Alexander Natalis, Billuart. Billuart's treatment, like that of many others, is both scholastic and casuistic, while others (e.g., the Salmanticenses) keep the two methods separated. Concina and Patuzzi, two Thomists, contended strongly against probabilism. Many religious of various orders, also many diocesan priests, wrote commentaries on the Summa.

5. The two centuries from 1650 to 1850 were devoted to casuistry. Many authors in this period omit all doctrinal questions. Many deal almost exclusively with practical questions: the law, conscience, probable conscience, cases of conscience, the limits of obligation. Moral theology is the science rather of avoiding sin than of cultivating virtue. This casuistic method, inefficacious in urging men to lead good lives, tends to laxism. Asceticism and mysticism lack foundation. Many treatises, ascetic and mystic, have simply no doctrinal value.

6. But during this period there appeared a man, sent by God to remedy the evils of casuistry. This man was St. Alphonsus Liguori, doctor of the Church, founder of the Redemptorists, renowned author of many works, ascetic and moral, highly praised by various popes. He is rather practical

than speculative. As founder of equiprobabilism, he cleansed casuistry from the defects of probabilism and laxism.

7. In our own day we find various practices.

a) Seminaries unite the two methods, scholastic and casuistic, adding ascetic applications.

b) Universities generally give two distinct courses, one scholastic, the other practical and casuistic. Some give also special courses in ascetico-mystic theology.

8. When Leo XIII had, we might say, raised Thomism to life, many authors followed St. Thomas. But textbooks generally still labor under the defects of casuistry. They omit important doctrinal questions on human acts, on the passions, on habits.

When asked for treatises on grace, infused virtue, and the gifts, they send you to classes in dogma. But the question returns: How can moral, if it refuses to dwell on the nature of virtue and merit, proceed to a scientific explanation of human acts as the road to a supernatural goal? Science rests on sources and causes. Now the sources of salvific human acts are the infused virtues. Look at the divisions in many moral textbooks. You will find the following general division: on the last end, on human acts, on laws, on conscience, on sins, on virtues in general. Further, you will find a treatise on special moral, which deals indeed with virtues, theological and cardinal, but does not determine their nature, dwells, but all too briefly, on their necessity, while it emphasizes the sins to be avoided. At the end you find a treatise on the sacraments. The moral theology of St. Thomas, it is clear, has not yet found a home in our schools.

Three questions:

1. Why does St. Thomas place moral theology between two dogmatic parts? This question was answered above.

2. Why does he prefer division by virtues to division by precepts?

a) He does treat the precepts, first in the treatise on law, secondly after each virtue.

b) He prefers the division by virtues, for three reasons.

i) Science rests on principles and causes. The principles of human acts are the virtues, whence good deeds proceed, promptly, easily and gladly.

ii) Thus appear clearly the various functions of the spiritual organism, in hierarchical form.

iii) Thus we lay the foundation of mysticism and asceticism, which deal with the stages of progress in virtue.

3. But are not precepts the sources of human acts?

a) Yes, but they are sources that regulate human acts, not sources which produce these acts.

b) Many precepts of the Decalogue are, in their literal sense, negative. Commenting on St. Paul's word about the letter that kills and the spirit that quickens, St. Thomas speaks thus: "The mere law, without the Spirit who prints the law on the heart, is an occasion of death." Why? Because, learning from the precept what we ought to do, we leave the deed undone.

There are, of course, affirmative precepts: Love God and your neighbor. But the sublimity and fruitfulness of these precepts are often neglected, and the emphasis remains on the avoidance of vice. But vice is intelligible only by its opposition to virtue, just as darkness by its opposition to light. The Decalogue, finally, while it does contain precepts on religion, does not directly give precepts on faith, hope, and charity.

CHAPTER III

ETHICAL SYSTEMS

BEFORE we study the articles of St. Thomas on the final goal, we think it well to classify the various systems of natural ethics. Such classification will serve to emphasize the importance and the timeliness of the saint's teaching.

A. Ethics without sanction, without obligation.

1. Hedonism, founded on pleasurable good (Aristippus, Fourier).
2. Utilitarianism.

a) Individual utilitarianism (Epicurus, Hobbes, Bentham).

b) Social utilitarianism (Comte, Durkheim, Levy Bruhl).

3. Good-for-its-own-sake (Stoics, Spinoza).

B. Ethics, with sanction and obligation.

1. Obligation arising:

a) from the human will, autonomous, by categorical imperative (Kant).

b) from the divine will, which freely decrees the precepts of the Decalogue (Scotus), and all precepts (Occam, fideists, theological positivists).

C. From good-in-itself, according to right reason, human and divine.

REFLECTIONS ON THESE SYSTEMS

These systems, one excepted, are false: false, rather in what they deny than in what they affirm, since they single out some elements of moral reality, and neglect others. Aristotle, on the contrary, and St. Thomas much more perfectly, embrace and harmonize all aspects of morality. Hence the Thomistic ethical system is universal, opposed to partial systems, as

Catholic doctrine is opposed to heretical doctrine. Heresy, as its name implies, chooses one element of truth and rejects others.

Hedonism considers only the pleasurableness of good; utilitarianism, only its usefulness, unconcerned with what is by nature good (e.g., to tell the truth in the face of death). Kant does indeed admit obligation, but finds for the obligation no objective foundation, which can be found only in objective good, and ultimately only in the supreme good. Others (e.g., Spinoza), while they admit the dependence of our will on rational good, do so in a pantheistic fashion, with consequent denial of obligation and free will. The fideists (e.g., Occam) do admit moral obligation, but base this obligation, not on the immutability of nature, divine and human, but on contingent positive law, and thus reach theological positivism, which denies the immutability of natural law.

St. Thomas, on the contrary, admits all these aspects of moral reality, and harmonizes them. The good is delightful and useful, but is first of all good in itself. And thus, as good in itself, it is the object of our will, the will being a rational appetite implanted in man by the author of nature. And this good-in-itself, discovered by reason, is the proximate foundation of moral obligation. Further, since reason is right only by its conformity with divine reason, i.e., with the eternal law, the ultimate foundation of morality is God, who created and ordained men to know and love the supreme good.

Further, the Saint admits contingent positive law, even in the supernatural order. But he does not deny, rather he upholds, the necessity of natural law, whereby we are bound, not merely by necessity of precept, but also by necessity of means, to know and love God above all else, if we would attain eternal life.

Elevated and universal, St. Thomas is also scientific. He proceeds from the four causes:

a) Material cause, the subject matter, is human activity.

b) Formal cause, the viewpoint is the morality of human acts, i.e., conformity to the supreme standard.

c) Efficient cause is twofold, directive and productive. The directive cause is itself twofold, one ultimate, i.e., the eternal law, one proximate, i.e., reason enlightened by faith. The productive cause also is twofold, one radical, i.e., nature elevated by grace, one proximate, i.e., virtue, infused and acquired.

d) Final cause, the ultimate goal, i.e., the supreme good, to be loved for its own sake, not merely for the delight or utility which follows the possession of that good. This supreme good is God, both in the order of nature and in the order of grace.

Let us now enumerate, in descending order, the sources of morality.

1. The eternal law, i.e., God
2. The natural law
3. Revelation: divine positive law
4. Human laws and customs
5. Church law and doctrine
6. Synderesis (conscience)
7. Prudence (the golden middle way)
8. Choice (ruled by justice)
9. Regulated passions (fortitude and temperance)
10. Performance of moral act.

Of these ten sources of morality, naturalism denies the third and the fifth (revelation and Church doctrine). Positivism denies the second (natural law). Kant denies the ontological validity of the sixth (conscience, human reason).

Some intellectualists minimize the role of right will in forming a good conscience. This view shows the inadequacy of probability. St. Thomas shows clearly that moral and practical truth arises, not directly from conformity with reality, but from conformity with right appetite and will (in determining the golden mean, in regard to temperance, say, or bravery, or humility, or meekness). This view, which at first glance seems to be a concession to subjectivism or pragmatism, rests in fact on profound understanding of moral activity.

The ethical synthesis of St. Thomas, then, is not, like other systems, particularistic. It is universal, it is scientific. It is but the unfolding, the development, of common sense, of natural reason, which contains all elements of morality, but does not know how to systematize them. That is why the Church, ever more insistently, prefers the teaching of St. Thomas.

Let us now proceed to a brief delineation of the aforesaid systems, as contrasted with their refutation by him whom the Church calls the Common Doctor.

CHAPTER IV

THE FOUR CHIEF SYSTEMS

IN ASCENDING order, we examine here the four chief ethical systems: Empiric Ethics, Kantian Ethics, Stoic Ethics, Fideistic Ethics.

A. Empiric ethics, which limits itself to that good which is experienced as delightful (hedonism), or as useful and profitable (utilitarianism, individual or social).

Hedonism says that enjoyment is the motive and standard of human acts. Man is made to do good and to avoid evil, along the lines of sense-enjoyment. Thus Aristippus among the ancients, Fourier, a socialist, among the moderns. The latter describes the physical attractions of the passions, as physicists speak of the attractions of the stars. This system tends to cynical egoism, founded on identification of man with God, forgetting that God is, and man is not, the supreme good.

B. Utilitarianism. Individual utilitarianism says that man must renounce pleasure in favor of tranquility and security. Thus of old the Sophists and Epicurus. The latter demands moderation of passion, between too much and too little. Virtue, he says, is the golden middle way, chosen, not for its own sake, but solely to avoid harmful extremes. In this system morality is rather a corpse than a living power. Among moderns we find Hobbes and Bentham, whose first moral law is temporal peace. Stuart Mill and Spencer look on social utilitarianism as the evolutionary goal of individual utilitarianism. Grotius and Puffendorff formulate the first ethical principle as follows: Man must worship and promote society. We must live, says Comte, for others. Society, notwithstanding its defects, must be loved above all else, as if society were an evolving God. Obligation rests on human legislation. A father’s right to educate his children, for example, is founded, not on nature, but on the same human law which, in ancient Rome, gave to

the father the right to kill his son. Thus the Neo-Comtists, Levy-Bruhl and Durkheim.

C. Empiric ethics refuted. Three reflections may suffice.

1. A virtual refutation lies in the philosophically established proof that, as there is an essential distinction between intellective life and sense life, so likewise between good-in-itself and good as pleasurable or useful.

Sense life knows only sense-goods, pleasurable and useful. It does not know good-in-itself, which is known only by reason. The evil of empiric ethics lies in its failure to recognize good-in-itself (testimony to truth in the face of death, for example, as shown by Christ: “I am come to give testimony to the truth”). Good-in-itself is the perfection of our rational activity, and is good even if it is not followed by pleasure or utility.

2. Empiric ethics cannot explain the testimony of conscience which dictates, as a first and evident principle, that, independently of consequences, good is to be done, evil to be avoided. Empirics even contradict this principle. Denying moral obligation, men will not eschew moral evil (secret theft, for example, or betrayal of country) if they find evil to be useful.

3. Empiric ethics does not, and cannot, result in the happiness it promises. That it does not was shown also by Spinoza and Kant. The man who lives without a genuine moral ideal is unhappy. His passions (desire, anger, envy) are uncontrolled, often contrary one to the other. He is self-centered in his egoism, a slave to passing events, a slave to other men, who can rob him of the sense-goods wherein he hoped to find happiness.

Further, this system, even at best, simply cannot give man happiness, because it cannot satisfy his higher faculties, his aspirations toward moral goodness and beauty, toward peace in himself and peace in society, and society is not perfect enough to be loved above all else.

Lastly, the only way to harmonize private with public utility is to love good-in-itself. All men, as St. Augustine says, can simultaneously possess good-in-itself, truth, for example, and virtue, though they cannot so possess sense-goods, a house, for example, or a field. Matter divides, spirit unites.

D. Kantian ethics refuted. Kantian ethics stands higher than empiric ethics, since it admits moral obligations. But the foundation it builds for this obligation, the so-called categorical imperative, is subjective, not objective. Subjective likewise are the three Kantian postulates of practical reason: human liberty, a future life, and the existence of God the Rewarder.

Kant begins by denying to speculative reason the power of demonstrating either God's existence, or free will, or moral obligation as an internal fact, not merely of experience, but of reason. Every sincere man finds in his own conscience an imperative, not conditional but absolute, which binds him to act morally. Kant formulates this categorical imperative as follows: "Act so that your own moral attitude can be the principle of universal legislation, act, that is, as you will all men to act."

Now this formula is not objective, based on the nature of good, but is subjective. It is, Kant says, a synthetic-a-priori judgment. We cannot, Kant explains, find the foundation of moral obligation in God as Lawgiver and Final Goal. And if obligation were imposed on us by God, our life would either be slavery, or, since it would be drawn by the hope of happiness, it would be mercenary, not, properly speaking, moral, since it would be founded on pleasure or utility. Kant, it is clear, does not see the sublimity of good-in-itself, which, though it is also delightful, is desired primarily for its own sake. Kant thinks that the human will, in order to be truly rational, moral, and free, must be its own law, otherwise it falls into slavery. Thus the human will is autonomous, independent of any higher and extrinsic law.

Individual man, then, is to judge whether his own activity is or is not the standard of universal legislation. Individual reason is the supreme arbiter of good and evil. Individual will, as first moral cause, imposes obligation on itself.

1. Kantianism lacks foundation. Kant's judgment, synthetic but a priori, has no objective motive, because, as he says, it is not evident, either a priori or a posteriori. But, if so, it is a blind judgment. Now, since the object of the intellect is reality, and the object of the will is good, obligation must be rooted in objective reality, and ultimately in the supreme good. Kantian ethics, then, deprived of a true, primary, and objective standard, is like a landscape without the sun.

2. Absolute autonomy of the human will, unsubordinated to the eternal law, imposing on itself its own moral obligation, is impossible in any creature, since all creatures depend on God the supreme good. Kantianism leads to the errors of subjectivism and individualism.

3. The promise of blessedness is not an ill-founded invitation to a good life. The benefits God bestows are dispositions which lead us to love God for His own sake. The supreme good is indeed a delectable good, but only because it is good-in-itself.

Hedonism, we have seen, aims at happiness, but excludes obligation. Kantianism, vice versa, excludes happiness as moral motive, and considers only subjective obligation. Each is an extreme. The traditional and true doctrine rises on high between these two extremes. It sees no incompatibility between happiness and obligation, but finds them both in the supreme good, which commands supreme love and rewards supreme love with supreme joy.

4. Man's reason as supreme motive is a kind of self-worship. Where God is not loved above all else, there can be no love of good-in-itself, but only a proud preference for our own subjective superiority. But if we love and seek the good-in-itself, then, a fortiori, we will seek and love that supreme good which is the source of all goodness. Happiness cannot be found in any created good, but only in the uncreated Good.

But a question arises: Do not Kant's three postulates of practical reason (free will, immortality of the soul, and God's existence) show him favorable to traditional and Christian ethics? Does he not say that free will is implied in moral obligation; that the perfection demanded by the categorical imperative cannot be attained in this life: that in the next life God alone can bind virtue and happiness into a stable unity?

The answer runs thus: Kant does indeed admit these postulates, as rationally credible in the merely natural order. But he admits them, not as foundations, but only as completions, of his ethical system. Obligation rests, not on objective good-in-itself, but on man's independent and autonomous will; not on right reason as proximate norm of our will: not on the eternal law as ultimate norm. Kantian ethics, therefore, remains an arbitrary and subjective structure, an arctic region, sad and cold. It lacks the strength of common sense and Christian thought.

E. Stoic ethics refuted. Greek Stoics say that the highest good lies in virtue, i.e., in our own rational activity, not in things which are external and independent of ourselves. Even under adverse fortune, they say, the wise man, in control of his passions, finds joy in his own rational activity. A similar system of rational eudaemonism appears in Spinoza, who looks on divine good as immanent in ourselves. Pantheistic and determinist, Spinoza denies free will and genuine moral obligation. The moral law is not imperative, but optative. It can be expressed as follows: "Would that men would live rationally! But many men do not, and cannot, attain clear and distinct ideas on what is good." Here are three reflections on this system.

1. It rests on pantheism. But God, far from being identified with man, is man's cause, efficient and final.

2. Human virtue is not the supreme good. Virtue inheres in the soul, of which it is not the substance, but an accident. Hence virtue is participated good that has a beginning. Hence, however noble, it is a particular and limited good, not the supreme good.

3. Stoicism denies the twofold testimony of conscience:

a) the moral obligation, based on the first principle of practical reason, i.e., do good, avoid evil;

b) human freedom, based on the distinction between universal good (where man is not free), and limited good (where man must freely choose).

Question: Does not moral obligation have a sufficient foundation in rational good, as the object of man's free will? The answer is: Yes, if you are looking at obligation's proximate source, but not if you are looking for its ultimate foundation.

F. Fideism refuted. Fideism is not, properly speaking, a system based on nature. It is rather a pseudo-supernatural system proposed by the nominalists of the fifteenth century. This system might be entitled theological positivism, since it founds obligation only on God's free will, on the divine positive law, made known by faith and therefore unknowable by reason. Hence the name, fideism. On the surface fideism exalts faith, but in truth it depreciates, not only reason, but also the reasonableness of faith. Confounding the spheres of reason and faith, conceiving reason as confined to mere sense life, it becomes a pseudo-supernatural system.

In Occam's radical nominalism, reason cannot transcend sense-experience, cannot prove God's existence or the spiritual nature of the soul; hence it cannot be a foundation for moral obligation. Teaching that all these truths come only by faith, Occam prepared the way for Luther. The Jansenists retain elements of this fideism, as do likewise the nineteenth-century traditionalists. But they are not as radical as is Occam himself, who holds that the great precept of loving God above all else is not only inaccessible to reason, but is in itself accidental and contingent, so that God could if He willed command us even to hate Him.

Similar is the view of Descartes, who says that the truth of the principle of contradiction depends on God's free will. If so, then on God's free will rests likewise the distinction between good and evil.

Now listen to St. Thomas. “Will is guided by reason, in man and in God. Hence the first source of all justice is the wisdom of the divine mind, which gives to all His creatures the right proportion to one another and to Himself. Hence to say that justice depends simply on the divine will is equivalent to saying that the divine will does not act according to divine wisdom—a blasphemous assertion.” In other words, God, if He so willed, could be the supreme evil of the Manichaeans.

Thus fideism arrives at absolute contingency, wherein there remains nothing necessary and stable, not even divine nature, the first reality.

One element of this system remains in Scotus, who holds indeed that the command to love God is immutable, but that the commands concerning men are not. Thus homicide, theft, fornication are not prohibited because they are evil, but are evil only because they are prohibited. This view is opposed to that of St. Thomas, who holds that God never issued orders against the fifth, sixth, and seventh Commandments. Abraham’s readiness to sacrifice his son, for example, came not from his own choice, but from his role as instrument of God, who is Lord of life and death. Similarly, the executioner, who is the instrument of social authority, does not commit murder.

G. General conclusion. The doctrine of St. Thomas, its sublimity and universality, is the best answer to the catechism question: Why was man made? Man was made, not merely for his own pleasure and delight (hedonism); not merely for his own interests, individual or social (utilitarianism); not merely to cultivate his own personal dignity (Kantianism); nor for the sake of his own rational activity (the Stoics and Spinoza). Man was made, first to love good for its own sake, even if such love were not followed by delight or utility; and, secondly, to have supreme love for the supreme good, namely, God, who is man’s ultimate goal, natural and supernatural.

This system harmonizes moral obligation and perfect blessedness, by basing both on one and the same foundation, that supreme good, namely, which beatifies man by insisting on man’s duty to love God above all else. God’s right to such love is the source of all obligation.

The time we have spent on the foregoing ethical systems will bear fruit in subsequent chapters wherein we shall develop the Thomistic synthesis, and particularly in the chapters which show the connection between the treatise

on man’s ultimate goal and the treatise on law, eternal law, which is the source of natural law.

H. One last question. What are the sources of traditional ethics? Can we find its essentials, in particular its view on the foundation of moral obligation, in Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle? Or is it based exclusively on religious tradition, particularly on the Old Testament and the New?

Many historians of philosophy maintain that Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle teach a mere rational eudaemonism, which involves no moral obligation, obligation being a religious concept rather than a moral one. Kant’s admission of the moral obligation, they add, is inherited from Christianity.

The answer rests on a distinction. These three Greeks knew the proximate foundation of moral obligation, namely, right reason as commanding good-in-itself. But only implicitly did they speak of obligation’s ultimate source in a supreme Lawgiver.

Socrates we know only through Plato. But we cannot deny that Plato himself defended the objective foundation of morality. The criminal who escapes punishment, says Plato, is worse off than the criminal who undergoes punishment. Why? Because by paying the penalty, he restores the order of good which crime violated, and thus re-enters into the region of good which ends in felicity. Thus Plato admits an objective obligation, based on good-in-itself, which is the standard of man’s rational activity. Further, the supreme good which Plato admits is an implicit admission of a supreme standard, even though he does not speak explicitly of a supreme Lawgiver and an eternal law.

Aristotle, too, though he speaks only implicitly and indistinctly of the supreme Lawgiver, maintains the proximate foundations of moral obligation. Good-in-itself, he often says, is the goal aimed at by virtue. This good is not only potentially lovable, but must be actually loved, since potency exists only for the sake of act. Good-in-itself (e.g., telling the truth) is to be done for its own sake, not merely for the joy that follows doing. Joy is the ornament of deed, as beauty is the ornament of youth. Joy is a consequence of the good act, but does not constitute the goodness of the act.

St. Thomas says: The first and self-evident principle of practical reason is the universal desirability of good. In other words, good-in-itself, rational good, is an obligation laid on man’s will by the Author of nature. This statement only makes explicit what the Greeks left implicit.

Thus the explicit view of morality, founded on the eternal law, is, in point of fact, speaking historically, religious rather than philosophic, is based on the Testaments, the Old and the New. The Sermon on the Mount, at the beginning of Christ's public life, promises men blessedness as the reward of righteousness. But the supreme precept is that of loving God with heart, soul, mind, and strength. This precept harmonizes obligation and blessedness, each based on the supreme good, which is the goal commanded by the eternal Lawgiver.

Our long Introduction ended, we now turn to examine the questions dealing with man's ultimate goal.

FIRST PART

THE ULTIMATE GOAL (I—II, q. 1-5)

The first question treats of the ultimate goal in general, considered abstractly. The following questions discuss the matter concretely: the term “blessedness,” the beatifying object, the beatifying operation, the characteristics of that operation, its attainment, its inamissibility.

CHAPTER V

THE ULTIMATE GOAL IN GENERAL

THE eight articles may be thus divided: the first four explain the relation of human acts to an ultimate goal, the last four show that this goal is one, and only one.

An initial question arises: Do not these first seventeen questions treat of human acts from a viewpoint, not moral, but merely psychological? Does he not begin the treatise on morality in question 18?

Answer: As found in human acts, yes, morality begins in question 18. But his first five questions are a moral treatise on the ultimate goal.

QUESTION 1

ART. 1. DOES MAN ACT PURPOSELY?

The answer runs thus: Only in view of a purpose to be achieved can man act deliberately.

PRELIMINARIES

The question is universal: Can man, acting deliberately, ever exclude purpose from his act? Can any human act, which must necessarily have a terminus, come into being without that terminus pre-existing as intention and purpose in man’s mind?

Purpose, then, as here considered, expresses the motive, the reason why, of the human act. It does not mean a mere terminus, as point means the end of a line, or as vacation means the end of a school year, or as death, according to the materialists, is simply dissolution of the body.

Some think this question is useless. Rather, it is most important, since it deals with the very foundation of moral obligation, denied by Spinoza, and the impossibility, denied by Duns Scotus, of any deliberate act being here and now morally indifferent. This importance appears in the difficulties raised by St. Thomas as he begins the question.

1. Purpose cannot be a cause, since cause must pre-exist before effect. But purpose comes at the end, as something we attain by our act.

In this difficulty lies the reason which later led Spinoza to deny that God works for a purpose. All things, so Spinoza, proceed from God geometrically, as the characteristics of a circle proceed, without finality, from the essence of the circle. But he overlooks the truth that geometry has nothing to do with act or with motion.

2. Man surely engages in some actions unpurposely, simply for their own sake, for example, play and recreation. And contemplation, thus Aristotle, being itself the ultimate purpose, has no purpose beyond itself.

3. Man often acts without deliberation, as when, e.g., he inadvertently strokes his beard. Such acts, unintended, are not done purposely.

A. The response is nevertheless affirmative. The thesis runs thus: Man, acting freely, acts for a purpose.

1. Purpose, in the world of action, is parallel to first principle in the world of speculation and contemplation. As man's mind is carried by principle to conclusion, so is man's will carried by purpose to the means needed for attaining purpose. This rule suffers no exception. Hence no individual act can ever be morally indifferent. It must be either good or bad.

2. The foregoing argument is borrowed from Aristotle. St. Thomas prepares by division for demonstration. We distinguish "human acts" from "actions of man." Human acts proceed from man as man, as distinct from irrational animals, as being, by reason and free will, the master of his actions. Human acts properly speaking, proceeding from man's free choice, are consequently either meritorious or demeritorious, worthy of praise or of blame.

But "actions of man" (inadvertently stroking one's beard) signify acts which, being indeliberate, do not characterize human activity as human.

THREE THOMISTIC COROLLARIES

a) All human acts are acts of man, but not vice versa.

b) Indeliberate acts proceeding from man’s mind and will cannot properly be called human acts: first impulses to pride and to unbelief; further, spontaneous acts of wonder, laughter, weeping, speaking; again, indeliberate blasphemy under diabolic obsession; lastly, the acts of children before the age of reason and the acts of the insane.

c) On the contrary, acts of eating, drinking, walking, though they are common to man and beast, are human acts when done deliberately.

THREE DOUBTS

a) Man’s very first act of thought, which precedes his first act of will—is this thought a human act? No, because man is not master of that thought.

b) Is beatific love a human act? No, because that act is not free, but necessary. It transcends freedom, hence is not meritorious, though it is morally good.

c) The acts of filial affection toward God, which are not properly speaking, deliberate, but are elicited by divine inspiration—are these human acts? Yes, because we freely consent to them, and merit by them. Such acts, because they transcend discursive deliberation, are still free.

B. The thesis demonstrated. All deliberate human acts are here in question. Experience itself shows that men usually act purposively. How frequently we hear: Why did you do this? But here we are asking a universal question: Can man, acting freely, ever perform an unpurposeful act? The libertists say no, St. Thomas says yes, and his proof runs thus:

Since faculties are differentiated by their respective goals, acts proceeding from any faculty aim at the goal of that faculty.

Now the goal of the will is good to be attained. Hence every human act aims at some goal to be attained.

To illustrate the major of this argument: hearing is concerned with sound, and only with sound: sight, exclusively with color; mind, exclusively with the intelligible.

To illustrate the minor: the goal of the will is the good, just as the goal of the intellect is the true. Will aims at the good, be that good genuine or counterfeit. And the good, as attracting the will, is purpose, is final cause. It is called good, because it is desirable. It is called purpose and goal, because it moves the will to seek ways and means.

But do not ways and means attract the will for their own sake? If they do, they become an intermediate goal. But, properly speaking, ways and means attract, not for their own sake, but only for the sake of the end, the purpose, the goal. The good which is the essential and adequate object of the will, is found, secondarily, by participation, in ways and means.

Thus the conclusion stands: Every deliberate human act is done for a purpose, to attain an end. Whatever is deliberately willed is loved either as goal, or as way and means. This truth is necessary and absolute, be the good genuine or counterfeit. He who sins deliberately aims at some good, for example, mere pleasure.

AN ADDITION

Scotus rejects this doctrine. He distinguishes three genera of the good: (a) the goal, (b) means and ways, (c) neither goal, nor means and ways. Were God neither our goal nor our way, He could still be loved by us with most genuine love. As example of this pure and neutral love, Scotus points to the inefficacious love of life in Christ when He said: “If it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me. But not as I will, but as Thou wilt.”

The answer runs thus: That inefficacious love of Christ (and of the martyrs) was toward life as a goal, since life is in the line of blessedness, which all men desire by nature. Anything that is desirable can be loved only by its dependence, actual or virtual, on the first and supreme good.

But, says the libertist, I will to will—nothing else. Answer: Where no good, not even counterfeit good, is willed, there no act of will is possible. Hence, to repeat, no individual human act can be morally indifferent, i.e., neither good nor bad. This is the common view, against Scotus, the Scotists, and Vasquez. Man, whenever he acts, is bound to act for a good purpose. Where such purpose is lacking (e.g., an idle word), the act is morally evil. Recreation is good when carried on for a good purpose, otherwise it is bad.

A CONFIRMATION

The thesis holds for all human acts, whether they aim at the goal, or only at ways and means. Acts concerned with choice of means are evidently done with purpose. Acts concerned with the goal, simple volition and efficacious intention, though they do not proceed from a preceding act, still

owe their existence to the goal. And they are virtually deliberate by reason of previous knowledge which distinguishes good from evil.

SOLUTION OF DIFFICULTIES

First. Goal, attained, comes after the act. Goal, intended, comes before, and is cause (final cause) of the act.

Second. Contemplation is the possession of the beatifying object, and joy is a consequence of possession. Hence the total and complete goal has the three elements, object, possession, joy, all welded into one whole. Joy, says St. Thomas, is the will resting in the object attained. Hence joy, while it is not, speaking rigorously, a human act, is nevertheless the completion of the act, is a connatural result of possessing the goal.

Third. Indeliberate acts, although they do not proceed from reason, still do proceed from some natural purpose, held by the imagination, in the form of a habit mechanically acquired.

GOAL AND PURPOSE

Definition and division. Goal is the final cause, which moves man to act. Goals are divided, (a) objectively, (b) subjectively.

A. Objective divisions

1. The object itself (health):

a) The ultimate object (victory for the soldier, God for man): the object which we desire (God, seen intuitively); the act by which we possess the object (the beatific vision).

b) The intermediate object, desirable both for its own sake and for some ulterior purpose (health for the sake of virtue, virtue for the sake of God).

2. The individual for whom (e.g., a sick man) I desire the good object (health). This individual may be

a) superior to me (God, to whom we wish glory)

b) myself (to whom I will salvation)

c) inferior to me (a dog, to whom I wish health).

B. Subjective divisions

1. The intention of the agent:

a) identified with the natural purpose of the deed (alms to aid the poor): the purpose produced (health by the act of the physician); the purpose obtained, but not produced (pennant after contest);

b) the intention of the agent, not necessarily identified with the deed's natural purpose (alms, for God's sake, for vainglory, simply to aid the poor): the agent's primary intention (participating in Mass to adore God, battle to defend the fatherland); the agent's secondary intention, subordinated to his primary intention, not as a mere medium, but as effect, or as natural consequence (honor and salary for the soldier.)

ART. 2. UNIVERSALITY OF PURPOSE

PRELIMINARIES

The thesis is twofold: Purpose, known as purpose, characterizes rational beings, but irrational beings act for a purpose, to them unknown. Against the second assertion there are three difficulties:

a) How can things work for a purpose to them unknown?

b) Only reason can seek ways and means.

c) Where there is no will, there purpose is impossible.

Thus we enter into the question of finality, as found in inanimate nature, in vegetative life, in sense life. St. Thomas, we recall, founded his fifth proof for God's existence on this principle. Experience, he says, shows us irrational beings, plants and animals, which generally, if not always, follow a steady line toward self-preservation, individual and racial. Now such activity, unexplained by mere chance, shows that such beings, without knowing it, are under the control of purpose. Thus, following Aristotle, he shows the existence of natural finality.

Here, in the present article, he shows that the principle of finality is necessarily universal: every agent acts for a purpose. This thesis is opposed by the materialists, by Spinoza, by all who deny natural finality, even by some modern Scholastics, who hold that this principle presupposes a proof of divine providence.

This principle of finality is of fundamental importance, on it rests the first principle of practical reason: Do good, avoid evil.

St. Thomas first cites Aristotle: not only intellect, but nature too, acts for a purpose. Then he proceeds to show the necessity of finality, and the mode of finality which separates man from beast.

1. The necessity of finality. The argument is indirect. An agent, capable of various acts, will never act at all unless it is determined toward some one of its possible effects. For, if the agent should produce a determined and suitable effect (if the eye, e.g., could produce vision), without tending to that one effect rather than to another, then this effect, unless intended by nature, would be simply without reason for its existence. And this tendency to definite effect must pre-exist in its cause, not actually of course, but virtually, i.e., by the faculty's innate relation to one effect rather than to another. Later we shall see that this passive and innate relationship of faculty to act presupposes an active relationship in the Author of nature.

Further. This principle of finality, just now demonstrated indirectly, is, if we admit the right notion of agent and purpose, in itself evident. Thus it is evident that sight is intended to see, hearing to hear, gravity to hold the universe together. Now this tendency to an advantageous act is the very principle of finality. Faculty, potency, is defined by its tendency to act, and act by its tendency to object. Sight, were it not for its innate tendency to see, might just as well perform an act of hearing. An acorn might grow into a pear tree, or a canine embryo into a lion.

2. Human finality. Purpose, known as purpose, characterizes rational beings. Purpose dictates ways and means. This relationship of end and purpose to ways and means is an intelligible entity, known only by an intelligence whose object is, not color or sound, but the inner realities of things, and their mutual relationships.

Animals do indeed know the sense-thing which is end and purpose, the stall, for example, which draws the horse home. Thus, without intelligence, they act intelligently, or rather, we may say, they are driven intelligently. This intelligence in an unintelligent world points to uncreated intelligence in the Maker of that world.

Purposeful activity, then, has three levels:

a) the human level, where activity is formally directive;

b) the animal level, where the activity is directive, non-formally (materially);

c) the plant level, where the activity is merely executive.

A RECAPITULATION

All agents act for a purpose: some by knowing purpose as purpose (intelligence uncreated and intelligence created), some by knowing the thing which is purpose (animals); some without knowing (plants and nonliving bodies).

Finality, then, is an analogous concept, found also on the lowest level of existence. However imperfect it may be on this lowest level, it is still a natural tendency to what is best. It is clearest in racial tendencies, where the individual sacrifices its own life for its offspring, in the hen, for example, gathering her brood under her wings against the hawk.

GOD AND FINALITY

1. The effects of God are done for a purpose; namely, to show forth God's goodness in which they share.

2. God's own operations, whether necessary or free, do not, properly speaking, exist for a purpose, because they are uncreated, hence have no cause, not even a final cause.

3. Still, in a sense, divine goodness is the purpose of God's free acts. That goodness, though it is not the cause, is still the reason for God's free acts. God, says St. Thomas, though He is not moved by purpose, still acts for a purpose. God is not His own cause, but He is His own reason.

What a splendid panorama! All things act purposively: God, angel, man, animal, down to the tiniest realities.

ART. 3. DIFFERENTIATION BY PURPOSE

PRELIMINARIES

On this article depend many subsequent questions: specific distinction of virtuous act from wicked act, degrees of sinful gravity, distinction of mortal sin from venial. The initial difficulties are three.

1. Goal, purpose, is an extrinsic cause, whereas the differentiating principle must be intrinsic.

2. That which specifies and differentiates comes before the purposeful activity, whereas attainment of the goal comes after.

3. Purpose would put each human act into one specific class, whereas we know that one and the same act can be done for different ends: objective, subjective, principal, secondary, proximate, ultimate.

THE PROOF

Listen to St. Augustine: “As is our purpose, culpable or laudable, so are our deeds.” If we punish to satisfy our anger, the deed is blameworthy. If we punish to preserve justice, our deed is praiseworthy.

The argument in the corpus is not easy. It ascends from the sense-world to the world of spirit and morality. And we must rightly understand the analogy between the bodily act of heating and the spiritual act of the human will. We are seeking the universal metaphysical law of action as action.

The present article first puts down a universal law. Specification, differentiation, arises, not from potency, but from act: from the act which is form and nature, in substances; from the acts which are source and terminus, when we deal with successive things. Thus heating, as action, proceeds from the actual heat of the agent, but, as passion, terminates in the actual heat in the patient.

Applying this principle to human acts, we argue as follows.

Major. What is both source and terminus differentiates human acts.

Minor. Goal, purpose, is both the source and the terminus of human acts.

Conclusion. Every human act, whether looked at as action (which commands), or as passion (which is commanded), is specifically differentiated by its goal and purpose.

The major is not merely a truth of experience (a radiator heating the air in the room), but is likewise the expression of a universal law, since any agent, acting by its own specific nature, produces an effect like itself. Action is a specific action, not by reason of the agent as efficient cause, but by reason of the agent’s formal and constitutive principle. Passion, likewise, is a specific passion by reason of the patient’s formal and constitutive principle.

The minor rests on the truth that, in human acts, the goal, as aimed at by the will, is the formal and specific principle of the will’s action. Further, by actually aiming at the goal, the will moves itself to choose ways and means.

Question: Could not St. Thomas argue in a simpler fashion? Could he not say: Actions, like powers and habits, are specifically differentiated by their

goals and objects? Now purpose and goal are the objects of the will. Hence all voluntary acts are differentiated by their goal and purpose.

The answer is threefold.

a) Had he thus argued, he would have omitted the analogy between action in the sense-world and action in the inner world of the human will.

b) The metaphysical law of action as action would be omitted.

c) We should not have had the distinction between a commanding action and a commanded action (as when a man, meditating a murder, passes through many acts, psychologically distinct, but morally one).

DIFFICULTIES ANALYZED

1. The goal is not altogether extrinsic to the act, because the intrinsic act is, by purpose, related to the goal. The goal, as aimed at by purpose, is both the inner source and the inner terminus of the act.

2. The goal comes after the human act in the order of attainment, but not in the order of intention. The goal which differentiates one human act from another is, properly speaking, the goal as existing in the inner intention. As such it differentiates also the execution which tends to the goal.

3. One and the same human act can be directed to different goals, if these goals are hierarchically one, but it cannot be directed to diverse proximate goals. And it is this proximate and primary goal, not the remote goal, nor the proximate secondary goal, which gives each human act its specific moral nature. To illustrate. The stipend given to a priest for celebrating Mass is a secondary goal of his act. To kill a man in order to preserve justice is a good act. But to kill a man in order to satisfy anger is an evil act. The proximate primary goal gives each human act its specific differentiation.

A COROLLARY

The apostolic life, since it cannot have two proximate and primary goals, aims at contemplation as its primary purpose, whereas its secondary purpose, arising necessarily from its primary purpose, is to give to our neighbor the fruits of our contemplation.

1. The goal differentiates the internal act of intention and the external act of execution. But does it differentiate both in the same manner? Does not St. Thomas say that the interior act is differentiated by its purpose, and the exterior act by its object: giving, as an example, a man's intention (internal) of committing adultery, and then proceeding to steal (external act) in order to have the money he needs for his purpose?

The answer runs thus: In the present article no distinction is yet drawn between the purpose of the agent, and the purpose of the deed. To illustrate. When the thief intends simply to steal, his purpose differentiates, not only his internal act, but also his external act. But when his intention is to use the ill-gotten money as a means to adultery, he commits two sins, one of theft (differentiated by the money, which is the purpose of the deed), and one of intended adultery (which is his purpose as agent). But even in this case, his purpose as agent (the intended adultery) differentiates also his external act of theft, not indeed directly, but indirectly, through the objective purpose of his sin of theft. The intention of the will, says St. Thomas, is the soul, the form, of the external act, because the will uses the corporeal members as instruments, and external acts are moral acts only so far as they come from the will. He concludes, quoting Aristotle: He who steals for the sake of adultery is, speaking properly, more adulterer than thief.

2. But is not purpose a mere circumstance, and hence incapable of differentiating the human act? How, then, are we to distinguish purpose as differentiating from purpose as mere circumstance?

St. Thomas illustrates as follows: In theft, the fact that the object stolen belongs to someone else is of the very essence of the act, whereas the amount stolen is a circumstance. The differentiating purpose, superadded by the agent, is not a circumstance. To act bravely simply because bravery is a duty is not a circumstance. But the superadded purpose, to act bravely for country, or for Christ, is a circumstance, though this circumstance may become the object of a higher virtue, say, of charity.

But, it may be insisted, to act bravely for home or for altar, seems to be more than a circumstance, since it is the brave man's personal purpose, which mediately, as said above, differentiates the human act.

The answer is that the agent's personal motive, which mediately differentiates his deed, becomes also a circumstance of his deed (e.g.,

bravery) when that deed, remaining objectively one and the same, is performed, by one man to defend his home, by another to defend his altar.

SUMMARY

Human acts are specifically differentiated by the goal at which they aim: the commanding act, by the goal as first in intention, as the motive source of the act; the commanded act, the execution, by the goal to be attained. This metaphysical proof given by St. Thomas, based on analysis of purpose and goal, and illustrated by analogy with the sense-world, is retained by many modern treatises, ethical and moral.

ART. 4. DOES HUMAN LIFE HAVE AN ULTIMATE PURPOSE?

PRELIMINARIES

We have seen that man, when he acts deliberately, always aims at a goal which specifically differentiates his act. The question now is: Does human life have an ultimate goal and purpose? The answer to this question is, we may say, a new stone, scientifically hewn and chiseled, and set in place, by the architect who is steadily, stone by stone, building a temple to God. One question at a time, each in its place, not too early, not too late: such is the sober simplicity that marks St. Thomas in contrast to many of his commentators, whose haste and precipitation end in confusion and complexity.

1. An ultimate goal seems impossible, because it would be the highest good, and the good is essentially self-diffusive.

2. Since our mind in counting never comes to an ultimate number, why must our will come to an ultimate good?

3. I can will something, then will myself to will it, and so on ad infinitum. Hence voluntary action does not necessarily aim at an ultimate end and goal.

TWO CONCLUSIONS

A. In goals hierarchically ordered, it is impossible to proceed to infinity.

Before we take up the proof let us note its importance. It involves a truth taught also by the “philosophy of action” and the “method of immanence.” But Blondel’s proof reaches a certitude that is merely practical and subjective, whereas St. Thomas, following Aristotle, reaches a certitude that is speculative, universal, and objective. Thus the present article initiates a demonstration of God’s existence, proceeding from man’s natural desire for happiness. The demonstration here initiated will be completed below, where we shall see that beatitude cannot be found in any created good, but only in uncreated good.

The proof runs thus: Where there is no first in a causal sequence, there can be no second causes, which act only when acted upon by the first cause. But causes hierarchically ordered act only when acted upon by the first. Hence where there is no first in a causal sequence, there can be no essentially subordinated second causes.

In other words, infinite regression is impossible in a hierarchy of causes. There must, in the nature of things, be an ultimate goal, which here and now attracts for its own sake, and not for the sake of some higher goal. Our conclusion, then, is simply a corollary from the universal principle of causality, efficient or final. Formulated for efficient causality, the principle runs thus: Anything that has a beginning comes from a pre-existing source of its existence, and, ultimately, from an uncreated source. Formulated for final causality, the principle runs thus: Every agent acts to reach a goal, and ultimately for a goal aimed at for its own sake, not for the sake of something else.

Further, the conclusion holds good in the order both of intention and of execution. In the order of intention, it runs thus: Where there is no goal to attract the appetite, the appetite is simply not attracted. Now the first source of intention is the ultimate goal. Were there no ultimate goal, there would be nothing to attract the appetite.

In the order of execution, thus: Where there is no motive for execution, execution can simply not begin. Now the first motive in execution is its relation to the final goal. Without this goal, no agent would begin anything.

To illustrate. A sick man willing health, calls a doctor. Health he wishes, let us say, to pursue his studies. Study, to know the truth, the supreme Truth; supreme Truth, in order to reach beatitude; and beatitude, for God’s glory. God’s glory, beyond which there is nothing higher, is the first source in this particular causal sequence.

Again, in efficient causality: The cart is drawn by a horse, the horse is supported by the earth, the earth by the sun, the sun by some other center. Can we go on thus forever? No. There must be a first source which needs no support, which is its own activity and hence its own unreceived existence. And without this first cause, there would be no second and subordinated causes, which move, draw, and support only by some higher causality. Looked at vertically, not horizontally, the lowest motion on earth is but the lowest rung on a living stairway, which ends in an eternal and unchangeable and coexistent source of all that is below itself.

But when God creates, is there not an infinite process downwards? No. On the stairway of creation there is a lowest step. The supreme goodness is indeed infinitely self-diffusive. But that goodness is the source of divine liberty, which is ruled by divine wisdom.

B. Second conclusion. In a causal sequence where causes are related, not essentially, but accidentally, there can be a process ad infinitum.

An example, to illustrate. I wish to learn Latin, then Greek, then Hebrew, then Arabic. Then I abandon languages in favor of mathematics, or metaphysics, or law, or medicine. Then, like Faust, I abandon knowledge in favor of pleasure or riches. Lastly, I return to literature and science. In such a sequence, there is no essential dependence of one step on another, hence there can be a process without limit.

Another example, in efficient causality. Cause per se of the son is the father, whereas the grandfather is cause per accidens. St. Thomas explains: Man generates as man, not as son of another man. Adam, son of no man, generated children. And the grandfather may be dead when his son generates a grandson. All fathers stand on the same level, each being a particular agent in the long line of generations. Thus an infinite series, man generated from man, is not impossible. But it would be impossible if the generation of one man depended, not merely on his father, but also on the elements, and on the sun, and so ad infinitum.

Here we may add, following Aristotle and Aquinas, that the impossibility of an infinite and eternal series of transformations cannot be demonstrated. Sea water into clouds, clouds into rain, and then repeat and repeat again, without limit. For such a series we need only the existence of sun and water. If these two existed from eternity, evaporation could be without beginning, but not without origin, since each evaporation would depend on the eternal Prime Mover. Thus Aristotle was led from the existence of motion to the

existence of God, while he simultaneously admitted that motion had no beginning, and thus reveals the infinite power of the Prime Mover. Hence we must clearly distinguish vertical dependence, which is limited, from horizontal dependence, which is unlimited. Thus the soul, considered horizontally, will never have a last volition, but each volition depends, vertically considered, on the ultimate goal of each separate volition.

The initial difficulties should by now have disappeared. In the Saint's answer to the second difficulty, we may note that infinity in numbers is an accident of number as such, and accident which may happen to any number if you add a unit to it. Any number, though necessarily unequal to all other numbers, is still equal to all others by being a number.

In the third reply we may note an example of accidental subordination. A scrupulous man, preparing a sermon, speaks thus: Since I may be laboring in pride, I ought to elicit an act of humility. But is not this humility itself an act of pride, since I wish to be more humble than others? I must pause to examine myself. But does not this examination itself proceed from pride? And thus ad infinitum.

ART. 5. CAN ONE MAN HAVE MANY ULTIMATE PURPOSES?

Unity, keystone unity, is here in question. We ask: first, can one man have many ultimate purposes (art. 5); second, is man's every act directed to that last end (art. 6); third, do all men have one and the same goal (art. 7); fourth, do all creatures have the same ultimate goal (art. 8).

Can one man, either actually or virtually, aim simultaneously at many and diverse ultimates? That is the precise question in the present article. The question is posed from the subjective angle (purpose), but in relation to the objective angle (goal).

INITIAL DIFFICULTIES

1. St. Augustine refers to some writers who defend four ultimates: pleasure, tranquility, natural goods, and virtue.

2. There are many ultimates which are not mutually exclusive.

3. Man can successively choose as his goal, first, pleasure, second, virtue. If man has free will, why can he not choose pleasure and virtue also simultaneously?

THE DEMONSTRATION

A. By authorities. “No one can serve two masters.” God and Mammon are mutually exclusive. They “whose belly is their God” cannot have virtue as their goal. “He who is not with Me is against Me.” This sentence excludes indifference and neutrality in relation to one last goal.

B. The argument. The argument is threefold. St. Thomas generally gives but one reason, the formal demonstrative medium. When he gives a number of reasons he orders them, not by mechanical juxtaposition, but by organic interconnection. The three operative terms in this article are, first, perfect good, second, the first natural good, third, the first differentiating good. “Perfect good,” the very definition of ultimate purpose, is the terminus ad quem. “The first natural good,” the very nature of the will, is the terminus a quo. “The first differentiating good,” i.e., the source which makes acts human, is the transition from the ad quem to the a quo. The first reason is the more fundamental and formal. The other two are confirmations.

These three reasons can be given simultaneously, as follows: No man can simultaneously desire (a) two goods, each of which is perfectly satiative, leaving nothing to be desired; (b) two first and perfect goods, each of which is naturally desirable; (c) two first and primary goods, each of which is the prime genus of human appetite. But the ultimate goal is a good that perfectly satiates all desires; the first good that is naturally desirable; the good that constitutes the prime genus of human appetites. Therefore it is impossible that one man’s will can simultaneously have two diverse ultimate goals.

CLARIFICATIONS

The ultimate purpose, we say, is a good which perfectly satiates all desires, in the sense that it excludes, not all other goods, but all goods not subordinated to itself. Thus the carnal sinner, who finds in lust his ultimate purpose, may desire also food, drink, honors, and riches, but all these as subordinated to lust. But full subordination of all else to one vice is perhaps a rare occurrence, since the sinner’s ultimate purpose is not the object of each particular sin, but rather selfishness, that is, the love of self above all else, even above God.

Again: When we say that the ultimate goal is the first object naturally desired, and that it is the good which constitutes the prime genus of human

appetites, we mean that every man's first and natural desire is to be happy, and that therefore, even though unconsciously, he tends to love God more than himself, because natural inclination as such is always good and right.

A CONFIRMATION

The ultimate goal is never subordinated to any other goal, but puts all else in subordination to itself. But in the hypothesis of two such ultimate goals, neither could be subordinated to the other. Hence the hypothesis of two (or more) ultimate goals is an absurd hypothesis.

INITIAL DIFFICULTIES ANSWERED

1. Pleasure, tranquility, and virtue can be considered as partial constituents of one whole.

2. Health, virtue, and God are not indeed mutually exclusive. But perfect good, the ultimate goal, does exclude all and everything unsubordinated to itself.

3. Man is free, yes, even after he has chosen an ultimate goal. But freedom cannot bring two contradictories into simultaneous existence. Now two ultimates, each perfectly satiating, are contradictories. Each would, and each would not, be perfectly satiative.

THREE FURTHER DIFFICULTIES

1. Cannot man, being free, desire a second ultimate, as something overabundant and superfluous? No. That which is overabundant and superfluous cannot be an ultimate goal, which must necessarily be the principal object of the will.

2. One and the same man, for instance, guilty of theft, homicide, and adultery, may have for each of these three sins a separate and disparate motive. If so, will he not have in view three ultimate goals?

The answer is again no. The positive root of all sin is selfishness, i.e., the love of self above all else, and this selfishness, this egoism, is the sinner's ultimate goal, to which all his sins are subordinated. Egoism, scorning God, builds the City of Babylon, as love of God and scorn of self build the City of God. Love of God, the virtue of charity, binds all virtues into one.

Egoism, selfishness, counterfeit love of self, is the source and goal of all sin.

3. But what of him who sins venially? He does not lose God as his ultimate goal, yet his sinful act, since it does not have God as goal, must be done for some created good, which is therefore a second ultimate goal.

Full answer to this difficulty will come in the next article. For the moment, let us note that the goal of venial sin is not the love of a created good above all else, for that is the goal of mortal sin. Nor is God the goal, except negatively, in the sense that venial sin does not destroy man's relation to God as goal. But the goal of venial sin is good in general, seen here and now as satisfying man's desire.

The present article deals formally and primarily with man's last end, i.e., with perfect good, whenever found. Only secondarily is it concerned with the object wherein perfect good is found.

ART. 6. DOES MAN WILL HIS EVERY ACT FOR A LAST END?

In every deliberate act, man acts for a purpose. The question now is: Does man will all his acts for one ultimate purpose? We expect an affirmative answer, but we must first note the initial difficulties, which were later developed by Scotus against St. Thomas.

INITIAL DIFFICULTIES

1. Man sometimes acts jocosely, and jocose acts are not done for an ultimate purpose. Scotus later says: Jocose acts are indifferent acts, not only specifically, but also as found in the individual who indulges in them.

2. Any speculative branch of knowledge (e.g., mathematics or metaphysics) is pursued for its own sake, but is not nevertheless an ultimate goal.

3. Man does not always think of an ultimate goal. How, then, can he always act for such a goal?

THE ARGUMENT

St. Thomas begins by quoting St. Augustine, who says that the ultimate goal is that by reason of which all other things are loved.

The conclusion runs thus: Whatever man deliberately desires, he desires for an ultimate goal, at least virtually and implicitly (this last phrase is from the third solution).

We present first, the arguments of St, Thomas; secondly their interpretation, since on this last point his commentators do not entirely agree.

There are two proofs. The first runs thus: Anything a man desires he desires because it seems to be a good thing. But if what he desires is not that perfect good which is his ultimate purpose, then it must be something subordinated to that perfect good and ultimate purpose. Hence whatever man deliberately desires, he desires by reason of his ultimate goal.

To explain. A beginning, in any line, is subordinated to consummation. Examples are, in nature, the germ of a plant, in art, the foundation of a building.

Primarily, as we said above, the conclusion holds good of the subjective ultimate purpose, and only secondarily of the object wherein blessedness is to be found, and this in diverse modes, since the man who desires may be either a viator or one of the blessed or one of the damned. Thus the blessed, who see God face to face, cannot sin, even venially, whereas a damned soul, loving itself selfishly above all else, cannot do any good deed. The viator wills everything for his own subjective beatitude, and can sin venially, though such acts neither turn him away from God nor yet lead him to God.

The second proof proceeds thus: The ultimate purpose is the prime mover in eliciting desire. Now secondary movers, second causes, move only as moved by the prime mover. Hence only as subordinated to the ultimate goal can secondary motives move man’s will.

Here, again, we are dealing primarily with the formal last end, and only secondarily with the object wherein that formal end is found. But note that the mother-idea is becoming ever more distinct.

DIFFICULTIES ANALYZED

1. Jocose actions aim at the good of the man who does them, whether that good is genuine (e.g., to study better) or counterfeit (to enjoy more a life of luxury).

2. Knowledge for its own sake is in opposition to the utility aimed at by the mechanical arts. Speculative knowledge, then, while thus distinguished

by its proximate purpose, aims ultimately at the good state of him who pursues it.

Here enters a scholion, on the purpose of meditation. Meditation may be an act of the virtue of prudence, entered into in order to do one's duty better. But it may also be an act of the virtue of faith, entered into in order to love God better. But love of God is related to love of neighbor, not as a means to an end, but as pre-eminent cause to its effect.

3. Even when he is not actually thinking of his ultimate goal, man's every deliberate act arises in him in virtue of that ultimate goal (virtualiter). The traveler's destination governs his every step, whatever he may be thinking of at every step.

DIFFICULTIES RAISED BY SCOTUS

Against St. Thomas, Scotus holds that man can act deliberately without aiming at beatitude and even against beatitude. He argues thus:

1. The will follows the intellect. But the intellect may not be thinking of beatitude.

We answer thus: The will follows the intellect, yes, but in two ways: either by actual intention (when the intellect is thinking of purpose), or by virtual intention (when the intellect is not thinking of purpose).

2. The will follows the intellect. But the intellect can think of something in itself good, without thinking of it as good toward a goal.

We answer: "Without thinking of an object wherein that good exists," yes; but without thinking of that good as part of his own happiness, no. Beginning necessarily aims at consummation.

3. Even while he remains certain that beatitude is found only in God, a man can will, for instance, the sin of fornication. Now such a man wills something against beatitude.

We answer: "Against the object wherein beatitude is found," yes; against his own desire for beatitude, no. Such a man, here and now, tries to find happiness in sin.

FURTHER DIFFICULTIES

A good deed, done by a sinner, must be done, at least virtually, for God. But the sinner, who remains a sinner, has something created as his goal.

Hence a man may have two ultimate goals.

Answer: The sinner's good deed has God as ultimate goal, in a certain sense, yes (since the object of that deed meets with God's approval); but, simply and absolutely, no (because, not even virtually, is the good deed done for God loved above all else). This man cannot serve two masters. All his deeds, good and bad, are done for one last goal, namely, himself, loved selfishly.

But, the arguer continues, since created good is not the object of the sinner's good deed, created good is no longer his last goal.

Answer: His last goal is still his own love of self above all else; but, since he is not confirmed in evil, he can still act against his own evil goal, but not against his own desire for beatitude.

But, so the arguer again, man can simply not act for his own beatitude, because the will tends not to happiness in the abstract, but to the concrete object which gives happiness. To illustrate. A bath, to reach its purpose, must not remain in abstract thought, but must become a concrete reality.

Answer: If beatitude were aimed at without relation to me, the concrete agent, then it would remain in the abstract, yes; but otherwise, no. When I act, I want beatitude, not in the abstract for men in general, but for me, the concrete self.

It remains true, though, that this desire for happiness does not become fully and simply efficacious until I choose an object (God or myself) wherein I am to find this happiness.

But, the arguer insists, intermediate motives, like intermediate agents, must be concrete and existing realities.

Answer: "Like intermediate agents" is an ambiguous phrase. Physical agents, having physical causality, must be concrete and existing realities. But intermediate moral motives, exercising final causality, move simply by being known. Here lies condemnation of Quietism, which tells the holy soul to love God without any thought of its own beatitude. The holy soul must love its own beatitude, but subordinates that beatitude to the glory of God, whom it loves more than it loves itself.

A fourth insistence: Do we not often choose some particular good without thinking at all of any ultimates?

Answer: Without thinking of ultimates expressly and explicitly, yes; without thinking of them implicitly and tacitly, no.

Fifth and last insistence: But if man is free, why can he not refuse to will his own happiness?

Answer: Man can refuse to exercise his freedom, yes (by going to sleep, or by getting drunk); but if he exercises his power of choice, he must choose something in some way subordinated to his own well-being.

VENIAL SIN

When the just man, who finds his happiness in God, still commits venial sin, is God in some way the object of that sin? Some Thomists say yes, and explain: God is the object, not positively but negatively, permissively, and habitually, since venial sin does not destroy the sinner's habit of charity. We hold that these expressions, though not false, are still improper, because God cannot, in any proper sense, be the object of sin. These authors fail to distinguish clearly the state of man as wayfarer from his state of blessedness or of damnation.

A better solution is given by Cajetan, who is followed by Billuart, Sylvius, and Contenson: namely, that everything a man does, venial sin included, is done for man's well-being, but not necessarily for that object wherein his well-being is found. The present article, says Cajetan, deals primarily with man's desire for happiness, whereas the question of the object which will satisfy that desire is the precise question in the next article.

To illustrate. The Christian, in the state of mortal sin, can elicit an act of hope, the ultimate end of which is God, inefficaciously loved. But the sense of our thesis here is that the ultimate aim of every human act is the object which we efficaciously intend. No one can serve two masters.

ST. THOMAS ON VENIAL SIN

The acts of a Christian are either good or bad. If good, they aim at God, either perfectly or imperfectly. If bad, they are either venially bad (and have no ultimate concrete aim), or then, mortally bad (and aim at some created good as ultimate). The ultimate in anyone's venial sin is his own well-being, not found here and now simply in God (else it would not be sin at all), nor simply in created good loved supremely (else it would be grievous sin). But if venial sin has no ultimate concrete end, then venial sin is

impossible. Impossible, the Saint replies, in the angels, yes; in men who are still wayfarers, no. Man, the wayfarer, does not, like the angel, have intuitive knowledge, which sees instantaneously all conclusions in their principles, all acts in their last concrete end. Hence, while angels, if they sin, must sin mortally, men, as long as they are wayfarers, can sin, not only grievously, but also venially.

In conclusion, we give three more statements from the Saint.

a) In venial sin man does not aim at created good as his last concrete end.

b) In venial sin man aims at created good, not as one enjoying (because he does not find in it his last goal), but as one using (since, while he retains his habitual relation to God, he actually does the deed for his own well-being).

c) Venial sin does not have created good as its ultimate goal.

APPENDIX

VIRTUAL INTENTION

"Habitual intention" is a term used by many moderns to signify the intention, explicit or implicit, which St. Thomas calls "virtual intention."

THE ARGUMENT

A. St. Augustine: All men agree in aiming at one last end, their own well-being.

B. Two conclusions.

First. All men aim at one and the same formal end, because each desires his own happiness, his own well-being, his own perfect state.

Second. All men do not aim at the same material end, at one and the same object, wherein to find their own wellbeing: as beatifying object, some aim at riches, some at pleasure, some at knowledge. Few choose God, who alone, as we shall see, can give happiness, even in the order of nature.

A COROLLARY

As man is, so man chooses. To the babe, milk means sweetness. Later his intellect first knows milk as a reality, and his will first desires that reality as good. What holds good of the babe, holds good of all men: as they are, so they choose.

INITIAL DIFFICULTIES ANALYZED

1. The sinner turns away from the truly beatifying object, but not from his desire of his own well-being, which he seeks in counterfeit beatifying objects.

2. The active life by its proximate purpose differs from the contemplative, but each has the same ultimate goal in God.

3. Each man's acts belong to him individually, yes. But nature, the source of activity, is the same in all men, and tends to the same goal in all men. And intellect and will, the faculties by which nature acts, tend likewise to one goal, intellect to the true, will to the good.

ART. 8. DO ALL CREATURES HAVE THE SAME ULTIMATE GOAL?

The object which is the goal is one and the same for all creatures, namely, their Creator who made them in order to manifest, each in its own way, their Creator's goodness. "The creature, as creature, belongs to God, and as such is inclined to love its Creator more than it loves itself.

But in the mode of attaining this goal, creatures differ. God can be possessed, properly speaking, only by acts of intellect and will, and of these acts irrational creatures are incapable.

RECAPITULATION

1. Man, acting deliberately, always aims at his own well-being as ultimate purpose.

2. Voluntary acts are specifically differentiated by their objects.

3. Human life has one ultimate goal.

4. No man can aim simultaneously at two ultimate goals.

5. Man, acting deliberately, wills all his actions for one last end, his own well-being.

6. All men agree in desiring each his own well-being, but not in the object wherein to find their well-being.

7. All creatures have God as their ultimate goal, though not all can know God.

All these articles proceed from one fundamental idea, the mother-idea, evolving from that idea, as bodily organs evolve from the embryo.

CHAPTER VI

MAN'S OBJECTIVE BEATITUDE

PROLOGUE

THE first five questions in this part of the Summa are concerned with the following:

1. primarily, with man's formal, subjective well-being;
2. with the object wherein this well-being can be found;
3. with the activity, the beatific vision, whereby God is possessed;
4. with the characteristics of the act whereby we possess God;
5. with the attainment of this possession, its possibility, and its degrees.

THE PRESENT QUESTION

These eight articles are concerned with four possibly beatifying objects:

a) with external goods, the goods of fortune, namely, riches (art. 1); honors (art. 3); fame and glory (art. 3); power over men (art. 4);

b) with bodily goods (art. 5) and sense-delights (art. 6);

c) with soul-goods, virtue, and knowledge (art. 7);

d) with any created good whatsoever (art. 8).

DIVISION OF GOODNESS

1. The good, as identified with reality, is divided into the ten categories of reality (substance, quality, etc.).

2. The good, as good, has three divisions, based on:

a) its perfection, by reason of which good is either fully good, or only in a certain sense (wine, deficient, but still wine);

b) its desirability, by reason of which good is good in itself, or good as giving mere pleasure, or, finally, good as the road to higher good;

c) its standard (right reason), by reason of which good is either moral or immoral or indifferent. Moral good, identified with good in itself, is found in man on three levels: in man as substance (the good of self-preservation); in man as animal (the good of begetting and educating children); in man as endowed with reason (the good of justice toward God and men).

The good-in-itself, even though it were not delightful or useful, is man's proximate standard and first duty, simply because man is endowed with reason.

ART. 1, 2, 3, 4. CAN EXTERNAL GOODS BE MAN'S BEATIFYING OBJECT?

A. The reply of revelation is clear: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, those who mourn, . . . those who suffer persecution." "What doth it profit a fool to have riches, since he cannot buy wisdom?"

B. Reason itself sees this truth. If "blessedness means that perfect good which totally satiates man's longings," then, for three reasons, external goods are not the beatifying object.

1. Goods found in bad men cannot be the beatifying object. But external goods are possessed, not only by good men, but also by bad men.

2. Goods that are incomplete are not the beatifying object. But external goods are incomplete (they do not, e.g., include health and wisdom).

3. Goods that, while useful, are insecure and transitory cannot be the beatifying object. But external goods, while useful, are insecure and transitory.

This last argument condemns utilitarianism, which sets up usefulness as the supreme standard of morality and happiness.

Looking at particular external goods, we argue thus:

The external goods of fortune are more gloriously lost than retained. The Apostle looks on temporal goods as manure, which, heaped up, stinks, but when scattered on the field, is transformed into bountiful harvests. This holds good, not only of riches, but also of honors, dignities, and power over men. How many popes, writes Gonet, died soon after their supreme elevation. Thus pass all the glories of the world. We add a particularized proof for the first four articles.

1. Wealth cannot be the beatifying object. Wealth, money, the reward of human art and industry, is intended to serve natural wealth: food, drink, clothing, shelter. These in turn, as means of self-preservation, are subordinated to man, inferior to man. Gold, in contrast to wisdom, is but a small heap of sand. Fools think otherwise. But human standards should not be set up by fools.

Further, wealth, however great, longs for ever greater wealth. Its insufficiency is best known by its owner. But the beatifying object, the more it is possessed, the more it is loved and appreciated.

2. Honors cannot be the beatifying object. Honor, to be genuine, presupposes virtue. In contrast to the ambitious man, the magnanimous man aims, not at honor, but at honorable deeds, which he esteems much more than the honor which may or may not follow. “If you would be first, become a servant.” Humble yourself, if you would be exalted.

3. Human glory is not the beatifying object. Glory rests on human knowledge, often defective. Again, true glory does not cause, rather it presupposes, that excellence which is the source of blessedness. The canonized glory of the saint presupposes the saint’s beatitude.

Divine glory, by contrast, God’s approving knowledge, is the cause of the saint’s beatitude. “I will deliver him, glorify him, show him that I am his savior.” To St. Thomas, still on earth, Christ spoke the glorifying words: “Thou hast written well of Me.” Genuinely glorious is he whom God commends.

4. Power over others is not the beatifying object. Rulers often misuse their power. Power is attended by cares and fears. Power is exercised over others, and is therefore a transitive thing, which presupposes an excellence immanent in the ruler who is to lead others to beatitude. The genuine “superman” is the supernatural man, who rules in superhuman fashion, as instrument of the Holy Spirit. Only he who serves God can rule men. Blessed are the meek, the humble, the obedient. “Blessed those who rule others:” Christ never said that.

Summary: External goods, the goods of fortune, may serve as instruments in attaining beatitude, but can never be the beatifying object.

ART. 5. BODILY EXCELLENCE IS NOT THE BEATIFYING OBJECT

Materialists, who hold that man’s death is the end of his existence, must find the beatifying object in man’s bodily excellence. Against them we argue as follows:

A. Common sense sees that man, in some real way, surpasses the animal world. But in bodily excellences man often yields to beasts: to the elephant, in duration; to the lion, in strength.

Our opponents insist that in brain power, the chief bodily excellence, man transcends all beasts. Here enters the twofold argument of the present corpus.

B. 1. The primary purpose of the ship is the ship’s destination, not the ship’s preservation. The example illustrates a principle: Destination is more important than self-preservation. Nothing less than the supreme good, which man does not have but only desires, can be the beatifying object. Man, who is limited in so many ways, cannot be the supreme good. Hence his bodily excellences (health, strength, speed, skill) cannot be the beatifying object.

2. Man’s soul is more important than his body since on his immortal and subsistent soul depends the existence of his body. Even if, therefore, self-preservation were the beatifying object, bodily excellence could not be that object.

DIFFICULTIES ANALYZED

1. As external goods are subordinated to the body, so is the body subordinated to the soul.

2. Existence is higher than life, yes, if you are talking of God’s unreceived existence. But no, if you are talking of that received existence, shared in even by the stone.

3. Not self-preservation, but assimilation to the Creator, is the creature’s ultimate purpose.

ART. 6. PLEASURE IS NOT THE BEATIFYING OBJECT

The word “pleasure,” which means primarily sense-pleasure, includes in its wider meaning also intellectual pleasure, poetic and philosophical pleasure. Pleasure, says Aristotle, is the natural consequence of any operation perfect in its kind.

INITIAL DIFFICULTIES

1. Pleasure, since it is sought for its own sake, must be the beatifying object.

2. Pleasure, since it makes man scorn all other goods, must be the beatifying object.

3. Pleasure, since it is the goal of all men, whether wise or foolish, must be the beatifying object.

These objections stem from the hedonists, especially Epicurus.

THE RESPONSE

A. Boethius and Plato are our authorities. The supreme good, says Plato, cannot be found in pleasure, because pleasure can be evil.

B. We have two proofs.

1. Pleasure, since it presupposes the possession of good, is indeed a characteristic of beatitude, but cannot be the essence of beatitude. Pleasure arises from some possession, present (in re) or future (in spe) or past (in memoria). Just as, to quote Aristotle, beauty does not constitute youthful vitality, but is a consequence which manifests that vitality, so likewise is pleasure the consequence and expression of successful activity.

2. Much less can corporeal pleasure be the beatifying object. Man's soul, transcending matter, rises above all sense-transmitted pleasure, to the pleasures attained by man's intellect in the possession of universal truth, and by man's will in the possession of the universal good. "All irrational beings taken together, the firmament, the stars, the earth and all its kingdoms, are of less value than the lowest of spirits, since the spirit knows that entire irrational world, and also knows itself, whereas the corporeal world knows nothing at all."

DIFFICULTIES ANALYZED

1. Is pleasure aimed at for its own sake? As an inseparable consequence of the good possessed, yes. As direct and formal motive of activity, no. Eating, to illustrate, by aiming at corporeal preservation, results in the pleasure which manifests the good act performed. Thus, if we distinguish the joys of heaven from the possession of God, of which those joys are the

inseparable consequences, we see how the saints love themselves as a consequence of the love they have for God.

2. Is corporeal pleasure the chief motive of human appetite? If chief motive means, “motive the most easily perceived,” yes. If it means, “motive in itself most noble and effective,” no.

3. Is pleasure the most universal motive? As an inseparable consequence of aiming at the good, yes. As something to which good itself is subordinated, no.

The greatest pleasure, then, the highest joy, results from the possession of the supreme good. But this highest joy must be distinguished, both from the supreme good (the beatifying object), and from the possession of that object (by the beatific vision).

ART. 7. IS VIRTUE THE BEATIFYING OBJECT?

PRELIMINARIES

The controversy here is with the Stoics, ancient and modern. Rational activity, life according to man’s nature, was the watchword of the ancient Stoics. Permanent fortitude of will results in harmony with all men. “Man sacred to man” condemns slavery. Harmony with all men leads to harmony with the whole universe, since divine reason (here pantheism enters) is the soul of the universe.

The wise man, then, the Stoic philosopher, transcends the limits of family, city, and country, and becomes a cosmopolitan, a citizen of the universe, subject only to fate, which leads him who is willing, and drags him who is unwilling. Passion, the Stoic says, since it is the enemy of virtue, must be destroyed, by patience and abstinence. Says Epictetus: Sustain and abstain. Be a man, strong against passion and pleasure, tranquil in fortune and misfortune. Pleasure and pain are meaningless. Virtue is its own reward.

This ancient Stoic school was indeed a school of courage and constancy, but it was likewise a school of pride. Further, it denied free will by its pantheism, its universal determinism, which ended in fatalism. As an ethical system, although it seemed to be superhuman, it was in truth inhuman, indifferent when faced with human joy and pain.

Echoes of this ancient Stoicism are still heard in later times. Spinoza's system, though he ascends to contemplation of divine good, is still pantheistic, since he looks on man's intelligence as a mode of divine thought; Spinoza's system, like ancient Stoicism, denies free will and merit.

Stoic elements remain also in Kant's ethical system, wherein man's rational dignity is the supreme motive of man's activity. Thus this system leads to "anthropolatry," to the worship of man, just as the altruism of Comte leads to "sociolatry," to the worship of society.

What are the arguments which seem to show that virtue is the beatifying object? Three such arguments are noted by St. Thomas:

1. The beatifying object, since it can be neither external good nor bodily excellence, must be an intrinsic good in man's soul.

2. Since we love a person more than the gift we give him, and therefore love our own person more than we love all other goods, the beatifying object must be our own personal virtue and value.

3. Since beatitude means perfection, and perfection is something intrinsic in man's soul, beatitude must consist in virtue.

VIRTUE, SOUL-GOOD, CANNOT BE THE BEATIFYING OBJECT

A. Our authority is St. Augustine: Man, and all that is in man, must be loved for the sake of God, who is infinitely better than man, and from whom comes all good that man has.

We have two conclusions, one concerned with the beatifying object, the other with subjective beatitude.

A. The soul itself, being a potentiality capable of receiving knowledge and virtue, cannot be its own actual and beatifying object.

Further, all soul-goods (knowledge, virtue), taken singly or collectively, are not a perfect and universal good, and cannot, therefore, be the beatifying object. In God alone, says Cajetan, is found unlimited and absolute good, whereas created goods are necessarily limited. Man's nature, says St. Thomas, desires complete goodness, but the object which gives that complete goodness is not determined by nature. All soul-goods, says Koellin, are limited, and hence cannot satiate man's desire. Just as the adequate object of the intellect, as Billuart says, is simply all truth, so the adequate object of the will is simply all good, and God alone, since He precontains all created good, is simply and absolutely all good.

Inductively, too, we reach the same conclusion. Look at the values inherent in the soul (powers, habits, acts, all knowledge, scientific or artistic, all virtues, even the most heroic): each of these, being an accident, not only is a limited good, but has an ulterior purpose: powers and habits end in acts; intellectual acts end in truth, and ultimately in the supreme truth; voluntary acts end in goodness, and ultimately in the supreme and unlimited good, to which are subordinated all good in all souls, and all single virtues, all prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance.

Against the ancient Stoics, then, and against our modern subjectivists, we must maintain that the virtues, all and singly, are subordinated to the supreme Good which is their ultimate goal. Virtue is the road to happiness, but the road is not the goal. Virtue aims at regulating, not at satiating, man's appetites and desires. Beatitude is the reward of virtue, but virtue is not itself beatitude.

B. Beatitude, considered formally and subjectively, inheres in the soul. Since formal beatitude means to possess and enjoy supreme Good, and since man possesses this Good by his intellect and will, we must conclude that formal beatitude resides and inheres in man's soul.

Here we must note, with Koellin: "Not human act as such, but act as possessing infinite Good, can satisfy man's desires. Possession (the finis quo), and the object possessed or desired (finis qui) are not two separate goals, but rather two related aspects of one and the same goal."

A COROLLARY

The Stoics, ancient and modern, put too much value on themselves, do not look high enough to see God, the supreme Good. Even in Nietzsche's "superman" nothing is found to transcend man. The only genuine "superman" is the supernatural man, the saint, who lives, not for himself, but for God, who lives and acts for God, his friend supreme.

DIFFICULTIES ANALYZED

1. Goods are external, bodily, and spiritual. This enumeration is incomplete unless it includes God, the supreme good.

2. When we give a gift to a friend, we love the friend as him to whom (finis cui), but we love the gift as what we give (finis qui). Thus, in

friendship with God, by the virtue of charity, we wish to give God His own infinite goodness, and, secondarily, to give that same infinite goodness both to ourselves and to our neighbor.

3. Man's perfection is something intrinsic in man. Yes, if you are talking about formal, subjective beatitude; no, if you are talking about the beatifying object.

ART. 8. NOTHING CREATED CAN BE THE BEATIFYING OBJECT

INITIAL DIFFICULTIES

1. Each lower level of creation finds its goal in the next higher level: vegetation in sense-activity, sense-activity (artistic imagination, say) in rational activity. Hence man ought to find his goal in the next higher level of creation, i.e., in the angels.

2. Man, being but a part of the universe, should find his goal in that universe, since parts exist for the sake of the whole.

3. Man's natural desire, since it is created and limited, cannot receive a good which is uncreated and unlimited.

PROOF OF THE THESIS

A. The Lord is my portion forever. Patristic texts are numerous. Two sentences of St. Augustine are often quoted: "As the soul is the life of the body, so God is the life of man." "Thou hast made us, O Lord, for Thyself, and restless is our heart till it rests in Thee." To the question of Christ addressed to St. Thomas: "What shall be thy reward," the Saint replied: "Nothing but Thyself, O Lord."

B. Nothing created can be the beatifying object, because nothing created can satiate man's natural desire.

This argument rests on the principle that natural desires are never in vain. Man's will aims at the universal good, just as man's mind aims at universal truth. And universal good, good that totally satiates desire, cannot be found in any or all created and limited goods.

Here we must again note that the word "good" is not used as an abstract predicate, because the will aims at the good actually existing in the concrete

object. Nor does the word “good” refer directly to God, who is the total plenitude of goodness. What the word does directly refer to is good as such, good unlimited, uncontracted. And the conclusion is that such unlimited good, existing as an actual and concrete object, is to be found in God and God alone.

We may add this reflection. Let us suppose all the limited goods of the universe to be multiplied to infinity. Such an infinity of finite goods, were it even an actual infinity, would never be an infinite good, just as an actually infinite number of irrational animals would never make one man, or as an infinite number of fools would never make one sage.

Here lies the source of that deep dissatisfaction and boredom which are the intolerable burden of worldly men. Only in God can the human heart find rest.

DIFFICULTIES ANALYZED

1. The human will, like the angelic will, aims at that universal and unlimited good which is found in God alone. The intuitive vision of even the highest angel could never satiate man’s desire, because the angel is and remains a creature.

2. The universe in relation to its parts may be an intermediate goal, but never an ultimate goal. Thus, whereas the active life serves society, the contemplative life aims directly at glorifying God, the supreme good. Again, schism, a sin against ecclesiastical society, is not as great a sin as is infidelity, which is a sin against God.

Here enters a question: Does the human individual exist to serve society (communism), or does society exist to serve the individual (liberalism)?

Communism and liberalism are two extremes. Between and above these extremes runs the golden middle way. The individual, in temporal matters, serves society; but in eternal things he rises above civil society, since he is a fellow citizen of the saints, a member of the household of God. In defense of his country the citizen must be willing even to shed his blood. But civil authority, on the other hand, while its proximate goal is the well-being of society, has as its ultimate goal that eternal life which is the end of all human activity. Man’s active life, then, his lower and external life, is subordinated to society. But man’s contemplative life, his higher and internal life, transcends civil life.

Here we note the distinction between “individual” and “person.” The animal is an individual, but not a person. Man is both an individual and a person. Man, as an individual, is subordinated to society, whereas society is subordinated to man as a person. Thus in the spiritual order (as person) man is bound to provide first for himself, whereas in the temporal order (as individual) man is praiseworthy when he is generous in providing for his neighbor. Again, virginity excels matrimony, because divine values surpass human values. And private spiritual good stands higher than common civil good.

Here too lies the reason why the secrets of man’s heart are not really parts of the universe, and hence cannot naturally be known.

3. Man is incapable of receiving an uncreated and infinite good. Yes, we answer, if he is to receive it intrinsically, as an attribute of his inner self. But no, if he is to receive it as object, eternally distinct from himself. Thus, even in the natural order, we would know and love God as our beatifying object.

But is not man’s desire a limited and finite thing? Limited, yes, as a being, but still so insatiable that it cannot be satiated even with an actually infinite number of finite and limited values.

But, you may insist, subjective beatitude, being finite, should be satisfied with a beatifying object which is finite. Answer: Subjective beatitude, as an elicited act, is finite, yes, yet so that its object is not finite.

But then, you insist, man would have to possess infinite knowledge of God. This does not follow. Only God’s knowledge of Himself is infinite.

But then a lower saint would desire a higher knowledge of God. No. The lowest saint is fully satiated, just as the man with the least hunger is satiated, though he eats less than others.

But, lastly, the saint who possesses God still has other desires: glorification of his body, e.g., and the salvation of his relatives. Answer: He desires these things as consequence and extension of his possession of God, yes. In any other sense, no. All goods that man can desire pre-exist in God, in higher fashion than they exist in themselves.

COROLLARIES

1. Temporal goods are to be sought only as ways and means to spiritual values.

2. External goods, while looked upon by the Stoics as in no sense good, are good as instruments of higher goods.

3. Temporal goods are not the reward of virtue, and their loss is not primarily the punishment of sin.

4. God distributes temporal good and evil in such fashion as to promote virtue.

5. Temporal goods given to a sinner, though often in fact tending to evil, are intended to lead him back to God.

6. Spiritual goods are permanently satiative, but temporal goods are not.

7. Temporal goods attract in anticipation, but disgust when actually attained. Spiritual goods act inversely.

8. Spiritual goods do not taste well to those whose appetite is spoiled by sense-indulgence.

9. Spiritual goods, but not corporeal goods, remain full and entire when shared with others. Two men cannot simultaneously own one and the same house, or eat one and the same article of food. But two men can simultaneously possess wisdom, virtue, and God. Matter divides, spirit unites.

APPENDIX

PLATO AND ARISTOTLE ON THE SUPREME GOOD

Plato. Plato sets up a stairway of beauty: from love of bodily beauty (sounds and colors) man rises to beauty of soul, because bodily beauty comes from the soul, which gives the body motion and life. Further, soul-beauty comes from noble deeds, noble deeds from elevated doctrines and precepts, and elevated doctrines depend on the highest branch of knowledge, which has as object self-subsistent beauty and good. What felicity it would be, he cries out, what a blessed vision would be his, who beholds beauty itself, beauty pure, perfect, and simple, uncontaminated by human flesh, by colors, by all mortal trifles, a beauty uniformly permanent and divine! Would not such a man be truly virtuous, truly a friend of God, truly an immortal among mortal men?

Thus Plato, following Socrates in condemning sophistic utilitarianism, holds that beatitude does not consist chiefly in sense-pleasure, though it includes higher pleasures. Further, he holds that God, the supreme good, is

man’s beatifying object, to be attained by him who by virtuous life imitates God. And the supreme virtue, higher than temperance, fortitude, justice, prudence, is that wisdom which is chiefly occupied with the contemplation of the supreme good.

Further, Plato affirms the immortality of the soul, since even here on earth man’s mind knows unchangeable and universal truth. Good souls, after death, are rewarded by association with the gods, but wicked souls will be tortured. But will punishment be eternal? Here Plato speaks uncertainly, basing his view on traditional myths. Thus he speaks of souls which, though evil, can still be cured, and hence return to a new body for a new trial (metempsychosis, transmigration of souls). But although at times he speaks plainly both of eternal punishment and eternal reward, he elsewhere seems to say that all souls will ultimately attain beatitude.

To understand Plato, while we acknowledge his genius, we must recall two errors: first, his absolute and exaggerated realism which leads to pantheism: secondly, his exaggerated dualism, which, while favoring the immortality of the soul, still looks on the body, not as the soul’s substantial instrument, but rather as a burden and hindrance. Yet, notwithstanding these aberrations, Plato definitely finds man’s beatifying object in God, the Author of nature, known, not abstractly, but concretely and intuitively. Further, although he does not speak of the eternal law as the supreme law of morality, his philosophy does lead naturally to God as the supreme moral norm, since God formed the universe and all its laws.

Aristotle. How does man reach that beatitude which his nature desires? Not by pleasure or by riches or by power or even by virtue, but, as Plato said, by contemplating God. Dispositions for this contemplation are the moral virtues, and secondarily, bodily health and sufficiency of external goods. Contemplation is beatitude, because it is the highest act of man’s highest faculty, exercised on the highest of objects, namely, the supreme good. Contemplation is characterized by its permanency, its delightfulness, its self-sufficiency, its supremacy. The contemplative life is full human life, almost a superhuman and divine life, because man’s mind is something divine, even while man is mortal. Let man live by what is best in his soul, his intellect, by which he is man. Soul-life, mind-life, is of all lives the best and most delightful. Little at best is man’s knowledge of higher beings, but that little is more lovely and desirable than all man can know of lower beings.

These affirmations, as being in harmony with truth, become, in St. Thomas, the natural foundation of supernatural morality.

But Aristotle speaks only of beatitude in the present life. On the future life he is silent. Since the soul is the form of the body, how can the separated soul think, since it cannot employ as instruments the sense-powers which reside in the body? Nor does he speak explicitly of the supreme standard of morality, though he maintains that justice is something objective, based on nature. Nor did he reach an explicit knowledge of creation.

DESIRE FOR HAPPINESS AS PROOF OF GOD'S EXISTENCE

PRELIMINARIES

1. This proof is virtually identified with St. Thomas' fourth way, which shows the necessary dependence of imperfect goods on an actual infinite Good, which makes them one in goodness. St. Thomas, like Plato, rises from multitude to unity, from composition to simplicity, from received good to the Good unreceived.

2. From the viewpoint of morality, we present this argument as follows: Since natural desire can never be in vain, and since all men naturally desire beatitude, there must exist an objective being that is infinitely perfect, a being that man can possess, love, and enjoy.

This argument rests first, on inductive evidence, secondly, on metaphysical evidence. Inductively, we take examples: the natural desire of life for air, of self-preservation for food, of the ox for grass, of the lion for meat. We quote illustrations from the words of Christ: the birds of heaven, fed by the heavenly Father, the foxes who have their burrows. We quote the Psalms and Job: The swallow finds a house, the dove a nest, the young crows find food. To all these illustrations, the cynic, pointing to individual cases of starvation, fails to see that exceptions prove the law, that the natural desire of living things for life is not a desire that is idle and in vain, but a desire that is fulfilled in the endless propagation of the race.

But do all men naturally desire beatitude? Again, induction says yes. Neither sensual pleasure nor riches, nor honor nor power nor science nor even friendship can satisfy man's natural desire, which remains unsatiated

until its rests in the supreme good. All else is “vanity of vanities” and affliction of spirit.

Metaphysically considered, our two propositions are likewise evident. A natural desire cannot be in vain, because nature tends to an object that is real, not merely imaginary. If any action could be without some natural purpose, it could not exist at all, since everything that exists has a sufficient reason for its existence. This truth is particularly true in relative beings, like desire or sight or hearing, since their whole nature is a tendency to something else which is their object. Thus the human will’s natural tendency cannot be idle and in vain.

Again. Good exists in actually existing objects. Hence, since man’s desire tends to good as such, to a boundless and unlimited good, this infinite good really exists.

CLARIFICATIONS

This argument rests, not on man’s natural desire to see God face to face, but on man’s desire for natural happiness, a desire which is innate, identified with the will itself, a desire which is quasi-infinite, insatiable by any finite good. Seen thus, this argument is an apodictic proof of God’s existence. “One sigh of man’s soul for perfect happiness is a supergeometric demonstration of the existence of God.” Supergeometric, we say, because it is metaphysical, based on principles on which depend mathematical principles. Metaphysical, yet simple, since Christ’s word, that “the clean of heart will see God,” holds good proportionally also in the natural order.

Is our argument identical with that of Blondel and others, who try to prove God’s existence from man’s immanent desire for God? Superficially, yes, in reality, no. These philosophers, since in various degrees they follow Kant in doubting the validity of speculative reason, affirm in its stead the primacy of practical reason, which, objectively insufficient, is nevertheless a subjectively sufficient basis for moral life. This conclusion, they add, is then confirmed by moral life itself, which finds experimentally that God satiates man’s aspirations.

But, we must ask, if in the order of thought you mistrust even the principle of contradiction, what assurance can you have in the order of action? If your speculative mind is fallible, how can your will, which follows your mind, be sure and infallible?

To summarize. The existence of God is proved by man's natural desire for an actually existing supreme good. God, known as the Author of nature, is the presupposition of man's knowledge of God as the Author of grace.

CHAPTER VII

WHAT IS BEATITUDE CONSIDERED FORMALLY, SUBJECTIVELY? (Q.3)

PRELIMINARIES

SEVEN notable answers have been given to the question: In what does formal beatitude essentially consist? Two answers find that essence in an uncreated Good, which is either a reception of the Divinity into the essence of the soul, or an uncreated knowledge of God, communicated to us by our own unitive act.

Five answers find this essence in a created good, which is, either

a) a habit which deifies the essence of the soul; or

b) the beatific vision; or

c) the beatifying love of friendship with God; or

d) the enjoyment and fruition of God; or

e) equally in the vision of God and the love of God.

Let us begin with a synopsis of the doctrine of St. Thomas. Formal, subjective beatitude,

1. is the created possession of uncreated Good;

2. this possession is an activity; but

3. not a sense-activity, though it is preceded and followed by sense-activity;

4. this activity is exercised by the intellect, whereas the consequent delight is an activity of the will;

5. it is an activity of the speculative intellect rather than of the practical intellect;

6. it is not the natural metaphysical knowledge of God, though this knowledge may be called imperfect beatitude;

7. it does not consist in knowing the angels;

8. but it does consist in the immediate vision of God.

These eight assertions are to be proved in the eight articles which follow.

ART. 1

Whereas God, the beatifying object, is indeed uncreated, unchangeable, and eternal, man's possession of this object has a beginning, and is therefore something created. Man's own beatitude is received from God. Hence the blessed soul loves God more than it loves itself. The soul's ultimate end is the possession of God.

ART. 2

As preliminary, let us note the six initial difficulties. How can this possession of God be called an activity? Let us enumerate the difficulties.

1. The possession of God is called "eternal life;" and life means the nature, not the mere activity, of the living thing.

2. Boethius calls beatitude "a state;" and state (permanent condition) is surely distinct from activity.

3. Beatitude is intrinsic, whereas activity is something extrinsic, something that passes from the agent into the patient.

4. Beatitude is permanent, activity passes away.

5. Beatitude is one and indivisible, whereas activities are many (to understand, to will, to enjoy).

6. Beatitude goes on uninterrupted, whereas activities come to an end (in sleep, e.g., or in some other activity).

THE AFFIRMATIVE PROOF

A. Our authority is Aristotle: Felicity is the activity of man's most perfect power. This definition of natural felicity holds good likewise of supernatural felicity. This is eternal life, that they know Thee, the one true God. The clean of heart will see God. Blessed souls see the divine essence, by a vision that is intuitive.

B. Since perfection consists in act, not potentiality, and since man's beatitude is his ultimate perfection, beatitude must be an activity. Agere

sequitur esse: activity is the purpose of existence. Possession of the beatifying object is the highest kind of activity.

OBJECTIONS ANALYZED

1. Life is of the very nature of a living thing; yes, when you divide substances into living and nonliving. But life means activity, when you look at the purpose for which substance exists. By its purpose, its activity, you distinguish active life from contemplative life.

2. Beatitude is a state (a permanent condition); yes, if you are giving a broad definition of the beatifying object, of all the values that are subordinated to God. But formal, subjective beatitude consists essentially, not in possessing an aggregate of goods, but in possessing the supreme good by the highest activity of our highest faculty.

3. Beatitude is an immanent activity, not a transient activity. This latter, which is truly said to be "in the agent," is yet more truly said to come "from the agent." Immanent action (sensation, understanding, will) is both from and in the agent, perfects the agent, and can constitute his subjective beatitude. Thus man's immanent contemplative life stands higher than his transient active life. And the celebration of Mass stands higher than preaching.

4. Whereas beatitude is permanent, activity passes away. Yes, if you refer to this life's activity; no, if you refer to the activity of life eternal, an activity which is measured, not by time, but by eternity. Like God's eternity, the beatific vision is entire and simultaneous, and the light of glory, which is its source, is not subject to variation.

5 and 6. The answer is similar. The activities of the blessed soul are indeed many, but only one of them, the vision whereby it possesses God, constitutes beatitude, and suffers no interruption. The other activities of the blessed soul (thoughts about creatures) are subject to interruption and time.

HENRY OF GHENT AND THE MAGISTER BONAE SPEI

Many mystics seem to say that the soul's intimate union with God takes place, not in the operative faculties, but in the very essence of the soul, where sanctifying grace resides. Thus to Henry of Ghent is assigned this

statement: Subjective beatitude consists in a descent of Divinity into the essence of the soul.

This view is contrary to authority, which finds beatitude, not in essence, but in operation: The blessed see God, know God, have intuitive vision of God. It is contrary likewise to reason. God is present in the essence of the soul by producing the soul's existence, or by granting it sanctifying grace. But this descent of God, since it is found in just men here on earth and in the souls in purgatory, cannot be essential beatitude. Further, the human soul, being a created existence, can operate only by faculties distinct from itself. Action is not identified with existence, action follows existence. The view which is attributed to Henry of Ghent has no probability.

The same sentence must be passed on the Magister Bonae Spei, who finds beatitude in an uncreated understanding of God, communicated to the soul by the soul's own act of union with God. Against this view, let us note two truths.

1. Beatitude, the vision of God, is a vital act, performed by a created soul. But an uncreated understanding, being identified with God Himself, can never be an act performed by a creature.

2. God, the Uncreated, cannot be the effect of a created intellect, or the form of a created intellect. God is the efficient and the final cause of the universe, but cannot be either the material or the formal cause. Even in the hypostatic union, the divine Word, far from being the form of Christ's humanity, is simply the act which terminates and renders incommunicable the human nature of Christ.

These two views, then, that of Henry of Ghent and that of Magister Bonae Spei, lead to the pantheism of Spinoza, who says: "Man's intellectual love for God is identified with the love whereby God loves Himself."

To conclude. Formal, subjective beatitude is an activity, an operation, immanent, not transitive, eternal, not transient, forever new and forever delightful: an everlasting midday followed by no night.

ART. 3. IS IT SENSE-ACTIVITY?

Here we note three brief conclusions:

1. Sense-operations, limited to the corporeal world, cannot be the beatifying operation.

2. But sense-operations, since they are the prerequisites of intellectual operations, belong antecedently to the beatific operation.

3. Lastly, since after the resurrection the soul's beatitude overflows on the body, sense-operations belong to perfect beatitude as consequences.

These distinct adverbs, "essentially," "antecedently," and "consequently" throw light also on other questions. For example, our love of desire belongs to charity, not essentially (because charity is disinterested friendship), but antecedently (because if God were not our own supreme good we could not love Him), and also consequently (because for love of God we love our own soul, and desire eternal life for ourselves). Again, many elements which do not constitute the mystic state still belong to that state antecedently or consequently.

ART. 4. BY WHAT FACULTY IS THIS ACTIVITY EXERCISED: BY THE INTELLECT OR BY THE WILL?

PRELIMINARIES

On this question Thomists and Scotists are at odds. St. Thomas holds that the beatifying activity is essentially an operation of the intellect, whereas Scotus says it is essentially an act of love, an act of the will. The view of St. Thomas rests on two previous positions.

1. The notion of truth is more absolute, more independent, more universal, than the notion of good. The good presupposes truth and reality. Hence the truth, as object of the mind, antecedes the good, though no concrete thing can be perfect unless it is good.

2. Hence, by reason of its object, the intellect is, speaking simply, a higher faculty than the will.

Scotus, looking at the concrete subject rather than the differentiating object, denies these two positions of St. Thomas. The notion of truth, says Scotus, is not nobler than the notion of good. Hence the will, since it is the seat of charity, the highest of all virtues, is, speaking simply, a faculty higher than the intellect.

INITIAL DIFFICULTIES

1. Beatitude, since it is peace, belongs, like joy, to the will.

2. Again, since it is the highest good, it belongs to the will.

3. Again, since among the faculties the will is the prime mover, and the prime mover is also the last end, beatitude must belong to the will.

4. Again, since charity, the highest virtue, is in the will, beatitude too must belong to the will.

5. Lastly, since he is blessed who has all he wills and who wills nothing evil, the beatific operation must be an act of the will.

THE AFFIRMATIVE ARGUMENT

A. Scripture favors our position: To know God is life eternal. Show us the Father. The clean of heart see God. We are like God, because we see Him. These texts, although they do not distinguish beatitude from its qualities, surely favor the intellect as the beatifying faculty.

Patristic texts likewise favor our position: Life eternal comes from seeing God. The highest contemplation constitutes human felicity. To live blessedly means to possess by knowledge that which is eternal? Mental possession means possession by knowledge.

B. In the body of the article we have, first, a distinction, then two conclusions. As we must distinguish man’s essence (i.e., rationality) from his characteristics (i.e., laughter, wonder, and speech), so must we likewise distinguish the essence of beatitude from its characteristics. The essence of beatitude is the possession of the beatifying object. From this essential possession flow many characteristics: love, joy, bodily glory.

First conclusion. The essence of beatitude cannot be found in any act of the will, but only in an act of the intellect. The proof runs thus: The attainment and possession of the beatifying object cannot be an act of the will. Why not? For two reasons, one a priori, the other a posteriori. The first reason is that the acts of the will either antecede possession (in the form of desire), or presuppose possession (in the form of joy).

Here lies the difference between intellect and will. The intellect draws its object to itself, becomes that object, intentionaliter, either by an intermediate ideal species, or without medium (in the beatific vision). But the will is drawn to the object as it is in itself. Love, says St. Augustine, is a weight, bending me to the object I love. The will, then, is either seeking possession or enjoying possession, whereas the intellect apprehends, seizes, possesses the object.

To speak concretely. A saint (e.g., St. Teresa) who on earth enjoyed high intellectual visions, must experience the immediate vision of God as something entirely new. Her previous visions being based on faith, not sight, are like nonseeing in comparison. Even the highest faith (as in Our Lady) cannot see. Only the beatific vision can see.

Further, love effects union; yes, but an effective union, not an objective union. Objective union is effected by the vision, and this union is necessarily followed by the joy of mutual inhesion: My beloved to me, and I to him. Even on earth (think of Mary) this mutual inhesion can be very intimate, but can never constitute perfect beatitude.

The second reason, a posteriori, rests on analogy with possession in the sense order. The child's desire for a coin is not possession. He attains and possesses when he holds it in his hand, and possession is followed by joy. Again, the eye possesses color, the ear possesses sound, the palate possesses flavor. Now as sense is related to sense-good, so intellect is related to intellective good. An intellective being, therefore, attains and possesses the beatifying object, not by its will, but by its intellect.

Second conclusion. But to the will belongs that joy which is a consequence and characteristic of blessedness. Joy, since it follows the possession of supreme truth, is the consummation of blessedness. "Rejoicing in the truth" is Augustine's definition of beatitude. Joy is a characteristic, which follows beatitude but does not constitute it.

DIFFICULTIES ANALYZED

These objections are: first, the initial difficulties proposed by St. Thomas; second, those proposed by Scotus; third, those proposed by Suarez.

INITIAL DIFFICULTIES

1. Peace and joy, which belong to the will, are a necessary consequence of beatitude, but not the essence of beatitude.

2. God, as good, is the object of the will, yes; an object attainable without the mediation of the intellect, no.

3. Among man's faculties, the will is the prime mover, yes, yet so that the will cannot do by itself the work which it commands the intellect to do.

4. Love for God is better than knowledge of God: here on earth, where by faith we move toward God, yes; in heaven, where we see and possess God, no.

5. Blessed is he who has all he desires: yes, but he has them, possesses them, by knowing them, not by willing them. His will is either a disposition for possession, or a consequence of possession.

DIFFICULTIES PROPOSED BY SCOTUS

1. Attaining God is twofold: by knowledge, which is first in the order of time; by love, which is first in the order of perfection. Answer: Love for the beatifying object is not, speaking properly, the same thing as attaining that object. Love either precedes attaining or follows attainment.

2. Love implies rest, and resting in God is blessedness. Answer: Resting in God is the consequence, not the essence, of the beatifying operation. Love, since it abstracts from the object's presence or absence, cannot be attainment of the object.

But, the objector insists, love, according to Augustine, Denis, and Aquinas, is "the virtue which unites lovers." Answer: Love is union, affective union. But love causes real and objective union. Love moves the intellect to attain experimentally the object which love desires.

3. The will desires its own act more than it desires the act of the intellect. Answer: Desires its own act more, as a command to the intellect to see and possess, yes; but otherwise, no.

4. The will is more perfect than the intellect, because the will is, first, not abstractive, but concrete; secondly, it is the mover of the intellect; thirdly, it is free. Answer: The will is more perfect than the intellect: simply speaking, no; secundum quid, yes.

To explain. It is true that the good, the object of the will, does not, like the intellect, abstract from actual existence. But the object of the intellect (truth, reality) is more independent, primary, and universal, than is the good, which is the object of the will. Mere concreteness of object does not prove the superiority of the will, otherwise the sense-powers would be more perfect than the intellect, the horticulturist than the metaphysician. The will, as efficient cause, moves the intellect, but the intellect, as final cause, moves the will. The intellect plans, the will executes.

Again, freedom is indeed in the will, but the source, root, and cause of freedom are the intellect's power of deliberation. Cause is higher than effect, root is higher than fruit. Withered root leads to dead tree.

Lastly, beatific love is not a free act, but a necessary act, which rises above freedom, just as God's internal and necessary acts are superior to His external and free acts.

5. Charity, love of God, is more perfect than knowledge of God: on the road to heaven, yes; in heaven itself, no. St. Thomas speaks: When the thing where good resides is more noble than the soul, will is more noble than intellect. But when the good thing is less noble than the soul, intellect is higher than will. Hence, here on earth love of God is better than knowledge, whereas knowledge of the corporeal world is better than love of that world. Speaking simply, however, where objects are equal, the intellect is more noble than the will. In heaven, souls differ in degrees of grace, love, and vision; but vision, speaking simply, is more perfect than love.

6. Charity, in the will, is more perfect than faith, which is in the intellect. Answer: Faith is imperfect knowledge. As imperfect, yes, faith is lower than charity; but, as knowledge, it is higher than charity. Faculties must be weighed by their adequate objects. Thus sight, speaking simply, is higher than hearing, but listening to a symphony of Beethoven is higher than the sight of a commonplace movie.

7. The seraphim, named from burning love, precede the cherubim, named from perfect knowledge. Answer: Let it pass; what does it prove? If answer be called for, let us simply say that charity on earth stands higher than faith.

8. Vision is the road to love. Answer. As means to end (in final causality), no. As cause to effect (in efficient causality), or as essence to characteristic (informal causality), yes. Love, on earth, longs for the vision. Love, in heaven, follows the vision.

9. Vision reaches its perfection by love: its consequent perfection, yes; its essential perfection, no.

10. Friendship, loving God for His own sake, loves Him more than it loves its own vision. Yes, but, in so doing, friendship ascribes to God its own already established beatitude. Friendship for God, a free act here on earth, is in heaven a necessary act. The blessed soul, seeing God, must love Him above all else. Friendship for God, like impeccability, is a necessary consequence of the vision.

11. Beatific love, since it comes later than vision, is more perfect than vision. Not so, we answer, if it comes as a characteristic of the essential beatitude constituted by vision.

12. But you cannot deny that love is the ultimate act of the soul in heaven. No, I cannot deny, I affirm. But, I must add, love is the ultimate, not in the line of attaining and possessing, but in the line of resting and rejoicing.

13. If hatred of God is worse than the absence of vision, then charity is better than vision. Answer: You are confounding two orders. In the moral order, hatred of God (and indeed any vice), is worse than absence of vision. But absence of vision, eternal damnation, since it deprives man of ultimate perfection, is the worst of all physical evils. Further, charity in heaven is no longer a free and moral act, but an act which transcends freedom and merit. Again, privation of vision is privation of the highest conceivable good, a good found only in heaven.

14. But, since the moral order is higher than the physical order, charity must be higher than vision. Answer: Although the moral order is higher than the physical and inanimate order, it is not higher, rather, is lower, than the intellectual order. And all acts in heaven, beatific vision and beatific love, are, properly speaking, not moral, but supramoral.

15. Fruition, peace, and impeccability flow from the act, not of the intellect, but of the will. Answer: But that act of the will, the primary characteristic of beatitude, and the source of all other characteristics, arises from the act of the intellect.

Here enters a question, suggested by the principles of St. Thomas himself. In natural beatitude would not love for God stand higher than knowledge of God? No, runs the answer, because love, by its very nature, either precedes possession or follows possession. To illustrate. The hypostatic union, though it is higher than the beatific vision, is not essential beatitude, because it does not possess God as intelligible object. Similarly, love of God as the Author of nature would be a necessary consequence of natural contemplation. St. Thomas, following Aristotle, finds natural beatitude to consist in contemplation, since contemplation is an act of man’s highest power, namely, the intellect. Hence supernatural charity is the only kind of love which stands higher than contemplation. Natural love of God is measured by natural knowledge of God.

Objections proposed by Suarez. To reconcile Scotus with Aquinas, Suarez maintains that beatitude consists equally in two acts, namely, vision of God and love for God. A general answer runs thus: The act of the will is subordinated to the act of the intellect, which it presupposes. Hence vision and love cannot equally constitute beatitude. Again, the possession of the beatifying object cannot consist in two operations equally perfect, because if the two are specifically different, then one must be more perfect, and if the two are only numerically distinct, one of the two is superfluous.

DIFFICULTIES ANALYZED

1. Vision and love, as two partial causes, concur in attaining God. Answer: Since God is indivisible, He cannot be possessed by two partial causes. God entire is possessed by vision. Of this entire possession, love (the second operation) is a consequent characteristic.

2. Two operations are better than one. Answer: If you are looking at the state of blessedness, yes; if you are looking at the essence of blessedness, no. Vision, the essence, the root, precontains love and all other characteristics.

3. Vision alone does not satiate all the desires of the blessed soul. Answer: Vision, looked at as separated from its characteristics, I grant; looked at as possession, necessarily followed by love and joy, I deny.

4. But if God, absolutely speaking, would refuse concurrence with the blessed soul’s act of love, then that soul would still be essentially blessed: surely an absurd conclusion. Answer: Absurd, yes, if you confound essential beatitude with consummate beatitude. A baby, although it is essentially a man, is not a full-grown man.

CONCLUSION

Notwithstanding the difficulties raised by Scotus, by Suarez, and by others, the doctrine of St. Thomas still stands. It is held by many theologians (Bellarmine, Becanus, Tostatus, Vasquez) who do not belong to the school that is strictly Thomistic.

Our defense of the intellect as the beatifying faculty has led us to anticipate the following articles, which maintain that beatitude is a

contemplative activity (a. 5), is not a mere metaphysical knowledge (a. 6), consists essentially in the immediated vision of God.

ART. 5. IS BEATITUDE AN ACTIVITY OF THE CONTEMPLATIVE INTELLECT?

The practical intellect is concerned with making, the speculative intellect with knowing. God cannot be made, but He can be known. Hence contemplation is its own end, whereas actions aim at producing, not directly at knowing. Man shares contemplation with God and the angels. Action he shares with animals, who also labor for their own self-preservation.

Even the imperfect happiness of the present life lies chiefly in contemplation, and only secondarily in practical activity, whereby man rules his passions and forms his character. In heaven, then, a fortiori, contemplation transcends action. Contemplation, thus Augustine, is promised to us as the goal of all activity, as eternal and perfect enjoyment. Let modern pragmatism take notice.

ART. 6. CAN METAPHYSICAL KNOWLEDGE BE CALLED BEATITUDE?

Metaphysical knowledge, even in its highest reaches, rests on principles, abstract principles, derived from the sense-world. Now such principles can never raise man to perfect knowledge of God, but only to a knowledge that is negative, or relative, or at best analogical. Negatively we know God as nonfinite, nonmutable, nonvisible. Relatively we know Him as supremely good and true. Analogically we know Him as precontaining, in infinite fashion, all the perfections we find in creatures.

No wonder, then, that even perfect metaphysical knowledge is clouded with obscurities. God is unchangeable, and still free. God has infallible knowledge of the future, yet man is free. God is omnipotently good, yet He permits evil. His mercy is boundless, yet His justice is inexorable. These obscurities, though they are antinomies, not contradictions, constitute that supreme philosophical mystery which is the source of the natural desire, conditional and inefficacious, to see the very essence of God, the Author of nature. Metaphysics alone, then, while it is the source of imperfect beatitude, can never give man perfect beatitude.

A DIFFICULTY ANALYZED

Felicity, since it is the act of our highest faculty in its highest object, must consist in the knowledge of God. Yes, but on earth this felicity remains imperfect. Even if man had been left in the merely natural state, with perfect knowledge and love of God, he would never have perfect beatitude, which arises only from intuitive vision. In point of fact, however, as revelation teaches, man is destined for supernatural felicity. Natural felicity is proportioned to human nature, but supernatural felicity, since it transcends all created natures, is attained, not by man's natural powers, but by God's generosity. Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, heart doth not suspect, what God holds ready for those who love Him.

ART. 7. BEATITUDE DOES NOT CONSIST IN KNOWING THE ANGELS

Revelation: "Let him who glories glory in this, that he knows Me." "When He shall appear we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is."

Reason. To contemplate limited and participated existences cannot constitute the perfection of our intellect. But the angels have participated existence and therefore participated truth. Angels can illumine us, but only as far as they are instruments of God. Even if we knew angelic nature intuitively, as the angel sees himself, our knowledge of God would still be analogical, negative, and relative. Hence there would always remain the desire of knowing God in Himself.

ART. 8. FORMAL BEATITUDE CONSISTS IN THE VISION OF THE DIVINE ESSENCE

Difficulties. Man seems capable, not of the immediate vision of God, but only of mystic and obscure contemplation of God. To see God without medium seems to be an incommunicable perfection of God.

Revelation. "We see now as in a mirror, but then face to face." "The blessed in heaven see God clearly, one and triune, as He is." "The blessed in heaven see the divine essence, with a vision that is intuitive and face-to-Face, a vision not mediated by any creature but by the divine essence showing itself without medium openly and clearly."

PROPOSITIONS CONDEMNED

1. “Every intellectual nature is in itself naturally blessed, and the soul does not need the elevating light of glory in order to see and enjoy God.”

2. “The exaltation of human nature to share in divine nature, since it was due to the integrity of man’s primal condition, should be called natural and not supernatural.”

3. “Absurd is the view of those who say that man was, from the beginning, by a supernatural and gratuitous gift, raised above the condition of his nature, in order to adore God in faith, hope, and charity.”

4. “The integrity of the primal creation was not an undue exaltation of human nature, but was man’s natural condition.”

5. “The grace of Adam is a consequence of creation, due to Adam’s perfect nature.”

According to these condemned propositions man’s ultimate natural end is identified with his supernatural end, and the beatific vision is not only possible, but is due to us by justice, since it corresponds with our natural efficacious desire, and consequently is not intrinsically supernatural.

This doctrine of Baius reappears among the Modernists. “Catholic men are found who, while they reject immanence as a doctrine, nevertheless use it in apologetics, and so incautiously as to admit in human nature, not only a capacity for the supernatural order (a capacity which Catholic apologists, under proper modifications, have always maintained), but also a true and genuine exigency, and thus find in our nature itself the germ of the supernatural.”

The beatific vision, then, the immediate vision of God, is indeed possible and welcome, is the reward promised to us, but is a gift which transcends the powers and exigencies, not only of human nature, but also of angelic nature. It is consummated grace, altogether gratuitous, because it pleased God’s infinite goodness to raise man to a supernatural end.

St. Thomas. In support of his doctrine, Baius quotes the present article. Let us look more closely at the Saint’s teaching on the existence of the beatific vision. In this article St. Thomas does not intend to prove by mere reason the existence or the possibility of the beatific vision, since mysteries, because they are intrinsically supernatural, cannot be demonstrated by the natural light of reason, not even after revelation. Thus the Vatican Council: “Divine mysteries, by their very nature, so exceed the created intellect, that even after revelation has been given and faith has been accepted, these

mysteries remain veiled by faith, wrapped in a kind of darkness as long as we are pilgrims on earth, because we walk by faith and not by sight."

Mysteries intrinsically supernatural include, not only the Blessed Trinity, but also the Incarnation, the Redemption, and the life of grace and glory. Grace and glory, since they are real and formal participations in the divine nature, in the intimate life of God, cannot be proved by reason alone even after revelation.

Why is demonstration excluded? Because what is supernatural in its substance is supernatural also in its cognoscibility. How, then, can the theologian defend these mysteries? He can do three things: first, he can show that they are contained in the deposit of revelation; secondly, he can give some understanding by analogies with nature; thirdly, in answer to those who speak against the faith, he can show that their views are either false or inconclusive.

ILLUSTRATIVE TEXTS

1. "Sacred doctrine uses human reason, not to prove the faith, but to manifest other truths contained in the faith."

2. "The Trinity supposed, reason can illustrate, but not prove."

The mode of arguing in this article differs slightly from the mode followed in the first part. The argument in question twelve of the first part runs thus: Natural desire cannot be in vain, cannot tend to the impossible. But man has a natural desire to know, not only that there is a first cause, but also what it is. In the Prima Secundae the argument may be expressed as follows: Man is not perfectly happy as long as something remains to be desired. But man has a natural desire to know, not only that there is a first cause, but also what it is.

The principle here invoked is the principle of finality. If every agent acts for a goal, then natural desire cannot be empty or vain, otherwise it would tend to something and still tend to nothing. Natural desire is not fictitious (like, say, the desire to have wings), but is based on nature itself, which cannot be fallacious, just as the intellect is never deceived regarding the principle of contradiction. This argument has its own difficulties. It seems to prove either too much or not enough. Two difficulties arise, one minor, one major.

The minor difficulty. If we understand this natural desire to be an efficacious desire, then we prove too much. We fall back into the heresy of Baius, which claims that the beatific vision is due to human nature, just as is the immortality of the soul, or God's concursus with created causes. On the other hand, if this natural desire is conditional and inefficacious, then it can be frustrated, and the argument does not prove enough. Nay, the question arises whether nature has even an inefficacious desire to see God. God causes natural things, not by necessity of nature, but by intellect and will. Now this truth is known by metaphysics or natural theology, and thus we would not have even an argument of convenience in favor of the beatific vision (which is beyond the ken of philosophy).

ANSWER TO THIS DIFFICULTY

1. Even the most perfect abstractive knowledge would remain analogical, involving great obscurity regarding the intimate harmony among God's attributes: immutability and liberty, a free act which still is not contingent, omnipotent goodness and permission of evil, infinite mercy and infinite justice. Of each divine attribute we know rather that it is than what it is. From this obscurity arises a natural desire to 'see the essence of God, the Author of nature. I say, the Author of nature, for God as triune, as the Author of grace, cannot be known by reason alone, and hence the vision of God as triune cannot be naturally desired. This natural desire remains in the angels even when their natural cognition has been consummated, and their natural cognition is much more perfect than ours.

2. What kind of natural desire does St. Thomas have in mind? As background for answering this question, let us give, in synopsis, various meanings of the term "desire." Desire may be

A. supernatural, as coming from charity or as coming from hope. It may be

B. natural

1. as innate or
2. as elicited, and

a. necessary, or

b. free, and if free, either efficacious or inefficacious, and implicit or explicit.

Cajetan says that, in our present article, the term “desire” means “supernatural desire,” connatural to us under grace. Scotus says that it means an “innate natural desire of the beatific vision.” Baius says that it means a “natural and efficacious desire.” Thomists say that it means a “desire, natural but inefficacious.”

We follow this last view. St. Thomas is speaking, not of an efficacious natural desire, but of a natural desire which is conditional and inefficacious, of velleity, which, absolutely speaking, might be frustrated, and would in fact have been left unfulfilled had not God pleased to raise man to a supernatural end. Thus understood, the argument proves neither too much nor too little, since it is not apodictic, but is persuasive. There cannot be a natural efficacious desire except in relation to a good that is proportioned to nature and due to it.

Illustrative Texts. 1. Thomas. “Eternal life is a good exceeding the proportions of created nature, because it exceeds even the cognition and desire of nature.” Again

2. “Man cannot merit eternal life without grace, nor prepare himself without the aid of grace for grace.”

3. “No rational creature can have a motion of the will directly ordained to that beatitude unless this creature is moved by a supernatural agent, namely, the aid of grace.”

4. “There is another good which exceeds the proportions of human nature, which natural powers do not suffice either to think of or to desire.”

5. “Nothing can be ordained to a certain end unless there pre-exist in it a proportion to that end, which may create desire of the goal. Hence man’s initial step toward eternal life is infused faith.”

These texts show clearly that Baius was wrong in citing St. Thomas for his view. The term “natural desire,” as used by St. Thomas, although it does not mean “efficacious desire,” does not, on the other hand, mean the “innate desire” admitted by Scotus, namely, an inclination of the will anteceding all cognition and all elicited desire, since it is clear from the text of St. Thomas that the desire of which he is speaking follows cognition of the effects of God and of the existence of God, whereas appetite is directed only to beatitude in common.

Hence, as Thomists commonly say since the time of Baius, we are dealing here with a natural desire, not innate, but elicited, not efficacious, but conditional and inefficacious. Now this conditional and inefficacious

desire supposes a judgment both on the goodness and on the natural unattainability of the desired object. Man might say: “Oh, this wondrous vision of God: if only I could attain it.” Finally, this velleity would be either explicit or implicit: implicit, when it is known confusedly; explicit, when the object is known.

This velleity seems to be expressed in this passage of Plato: “How blessed would that vision be, could a man be granted to see beauty itself, beauty unalloyed, and divine! Would not this man be the friend of God? Would he not deserve to be called immortal?”

Conclusion. Hence, as Thomists commonly teach, man naturally desires to see the essence of God, the Author of nature, yet this desire is not innate, but elicited, conditional, and inefficacious. But even this desire, although conditional and inefficacious, cannot, it seems, be vain, cannot tend to something impossible. Thus the argument is persuasive of the possibility of the beatific vision, of the existence of a potentiality which can be elevated to the supernatural vision.

A doubt. Why is this argument not apodictic but only persuasive? All Thomists agree that this article does not prove apodictically the fact of our elevation to the beatific vision. Some few, however, hold that it does prove apodictically the possibility of this elevation, since it would be absurd to admit such a natural desire if the vision were impossible. Answer. The general answer runs thus: The existence and the intrinsic possibility of mysteries which are essentially supernatural cannot be demonstrated by reason even after revelation has been given. But life eternal, the beatific vision, participation in the divine nature, is a mystery intrinsically supernatural. Hence this vision is impossible without the light of glory, and by reason alone we cannot prove the possibility of the light of glory, though we can defend that possibility.

A special reason runs thus: The aforesaid desire, since it is conditional, does not prove apodictically the possibility of this vision, but presupposes the hypothesis of this possibility. Yet this desire, since it is natural, since it does not proceed from mere phantasy, or from one individual’s philosophical knowledge, but is found in all wise men, it becomes a very probable and persuasive proof that the vision of God, the Author of nature, is a possibility. We cannot, from reason alone, prove that the adequate object of intellect is not only reality as reality, the object of metaphysics, but also reality in its whole latitude, containing the Trinity clearly seen.

SYNOPSIS OF OPINIONS

Natural desire is either:

A. innate

1. and in some way efficacious, because intuitive vision, while it is a natural goal of man's desire, is supernatural in mode of attainment (thus the Augustinians, Noris and Berti);

2. and inefficacious, because intuitive vision, while it is the universal human goal, is not universally known, hence not efficaciously desired (thus Scotus); or

B. elicited and

1. natural secundum quid, because, while it does not reach out beyond our natural powers, it still arises connaturally when the effects of grace have been revealed (thus Cajetan against Scotus);

2. simply natural, because it follows knowledge of natural effects (Thomists in general).

OPINIONS EXAMINED

1. The Augustinian opinion, closely related to Baianism, does not preserve the absolute distinction of the natural order from the supernatural order, and denies the principle of finality, that every agent acts for a proportionate end. God as Author of nature, would have given us an innate desire for an end to which, as Author of nature, He could not lead us.

2. Nor does the opinion of Scotus sufficiently preserve the distinction between the two orders, because this distinction, according to him, is not necessary but free, depending on God's free will, since God could have given us the light of glory as a human characteristic. But then, our intellect would naturally have the same formal and proper object as has the divine intellect, and would thus be a created God: a view which leads to pantheism.

FURTHER REFLECTIONS

1. This desire, being inborn, should be efficacious, since a desire is inefficacious only by proceeding from a conditional judgment. Innate desire, since it does not proceed from cognition, cannot be conditional and inefficacious.

2. This innate desire involves contradiction. It would be essentially supernatural, differentiated by a supernatural object. The very nature of the human will would be ordained, not only to good in general, but positively and naturally to the vision of God. Similarly, the active obediential potency held by Suarez would be something positive and essentially natural, and at the same time essentially supernatural.

3. Cajetan's opinion seems to be an excessive reaction against Scotus. St. Thomas, expounding the mode in which this desire arises, speaks of the supposed knowledge of effects, not supernatural, but natural: a desire which is simply natural, but inefficacious. Cajetan himself seems to grant this when he says: "The human intellect, knowing that God exists, and desiring naturally to know what God is, obeys a natural desire which leads us, when we see an effect, to know the cause of that effect."

4. Following Ferrariensis and Bañez, and the Thomists who wrote at the time of Baius, we hold that man could have been created in a purely natural state, and that therefore grace, as its name implies, is a gift simply gratuitous, not due to us or to the angels, but supremely harmonious with created nature.

TWO COROLLARIES

First. The obediential potency, the elevability of our nature to the order of grace, is not active, but passive, an aptitude, that is, to receive from God whatever God wills to give. Thus our nature has obediential potency for the hypostatic union. Second. Obediential potency is immediately directed, not to any supernatural object or act, but to the supreme Agent whom it obeys. Hence the human soul is positively and immediately ordained to a supernatural act only after its elevation to faith and grace.

The foregoing opinions may be thus summarized.

St. Thomas: Grace is gratuitous and harmonious. Semi-naturalism: At least the possibility of revelation can be demonstrated. Scotism: The distinction between the two orders is contingent. The Augustinians: Latent confusion of the two orders. Pelagianism: Denial of all supernaturalness of Christian life. Pseudo-supernaturalism (Protestants, Baius, the Jansenists): Supernaturalness does not transcend the exigencies of our nature.

The principal objection against our doctrine runs thus: The beatific vision, since it is in supremest harmony with our nature, must be

proportioned to that nature, and not gratuitous. Were it not so proportioned, it would not be harmonious, but inharmonious, violent, or indifferent, neither good nor evil. Answer. Supernatural harmony, by reason of its very gratuity transcends natural harmony, and is the most profound of all harmonies. Only God can unite two things that are apparently opposite, the highest kind of harmony and the highest reach of gratuitousness. Supernatural gifts perfect us more than do natural gifts. They perfect our soul at its deepest and highest, namely at the point where supernatural life is inserted. The elevation of the obediential capacity to the supernatural level, in the hypostatic union, say, or in the infusion of grace, presupposes an active power that is infinite, just as does creation from nothing. Obediential potency, then, is nothing else than the essence of the soul, capable of receiving whatever God wills.

Here lies the ultimate root of our solution. We are dealing with a mystery which lies on the confines of two orders, infinitely distant one from the other. But this much we must say: Supernatural is what exceeds the proportions of finite nature, by gratuitously perfecting the obediential capacity of that nature. Grace perfects our nature, does not destroy it.

COROLLARIES

1. Had man been created in a merely natural state, his lack of the supernatural would not have been painful: first, because only velleity would be frustrated; secondly, the velleity itself would not be entirely in vain, because it would lead men to adore the hidden mysteries of God’s hidden life. If, on the contrary, that desire were innate and efficacious, then a merely natural state would be impossible, since God would owe it to Himself to elevate us to the life of grace.

2. After elevation to the supernatural order, privation of the beatific vision is not painful in the present life, because the radical order of our life does not yet demand that we enjoy this vision; but, even on the earth, the saints, from the efficacious ardor of their charity, desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ.

3. This privation is very painful in purgatory because the radical order of the supernatural life demands that the soul enjoy this vision immediately after death. This purgatorial pain of loss is like that of extreme hunger or thirst.

4. A fortiori, perpetual privation in hell is supreme misery, simultaneously against nature and against grace. The supernatural and the contranatural are radically opposed. Even the natural law says that we are to obey all God’s commands, hence to lose our supernatural end is simultaneously to lose our natural end. To confuse the supernatural gifts of God with things that are contrary to nature is to confuse true religion with stupid superstition, to confuse the beatific vision with supreme misery.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF BEATITUDE (Q. 4)

DIVISION of the Question. It has two parts. In the first four articles we deal with delight and love as consequences of the beatific vision. In the following four, we deal with the extension of this beatitude, to the body, to external goods, to the society of friends.

ART. 1. IS DELIGHT A NECESSARY CONSEQUENCE OF BEATITUDE?

Yes, because the will necessarily finds joy in the possession of good. “Beatitude is joy in the truth,” in the possession of reality. We must clearly distinguish the essence of beatitude from its concomitants and consequences, just as the essence of the mystical state must be distinguished from its accidental phenomena (e.g., ecstasy or ligature).

ART. 2. THE CHIEF ELEMENT IN BEATITUDE

Conclusion. Vision is more important than joy. Vision is the cause, joy is the effect, and stands higher than effect. Again, the will finds joy in an operation because of the goodness of that operation. Goodness is not pursued for the sake of joy and rest, but vice versa, since otherwise the very act of the will would be its own goal or purpose. Joy cannot be the first object of the will, just as the act of sight cannot be the first visible object of sight.

OBJECTIONS ANALYZED

1. Joy is operative perfection, and perfection stands higher than the thing perfected. Answer. Joy is operative perfection, i.e., a perfection which

follows operation. “Joy follows perfect operation, as beauty follows youth.” Here lies the error of the hedonists and sensualists, who reduce good in itself to good that is merely delightful.

2. Animals, since they do not know the good as such, desire operations merely as delightful. Is, then, their activity not rightly ordained by God? Answer. God, the Author of nature, who knows most perfectly good-in-itself, adds joy to activity in order to draw creatures to right operations. “The hen gathers her chickens under her wing,” and thus unconsciously does what is good in itself, whereas a woman, who defends her children under similar circumstances, does consciously what is good in itself.

3. Charity seeks God for His own sake, even though joy is a necessary consequence. Thus we refute the Quietists and Kant, who wish to exclude from pure love the desire of all reward. Joy, fruition, is no goal to which God is subordinated, but can nevertheless be legitimately desired, as a consequence inseparable from God and the vision of God.

ART. 3. DOES BEATITUDE INCLUDE COMPREHENSION?

Conclusion. Beatitude includes comprehension, not in the sense of comprehensive vision, but in the sense, that the blessed are called comprehensors, since they cling to God inseparably. Vision corresponds to faith, comprehension to hope, and fruition to charity. Comprehension belongs to the will, is a relation resulting in the will from the vision.

The beatific vision itself cannot be comprehensive, because the light of glory, being a created and finite thing, cannot produce an infinite comprehension. We see God entire, but not entirely, just as, to illustrate, a man may know an entire proposition (subject, predicate, and verb) without knowing it totally, without profound penetration into its full meaning.

ART. 4. RECTITUDE OF WILL IS INCLUDED IN BEATITUDE, BOTH ANTECEDENTLY AND CONSEQUENTLY

Authority. “Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God.” “Pursue peace and holiness, without which no one shall see God.”

Rectitude as prerequired. To reach its goal, an agent must be properly orientated toward that goal, as matter is toward form. Now rectitude of will implies proper orientation toward man’s last goal.

Rectitude as consequence. Ultimate beatitude consists in the vision of the divine essence. Now the will of him who sees the essence of God necessarily possesses rectitude, i.e., it loves whatever it loves in relation to God, and finds it impossible to sin.

Here we are opposed by Scotus, who holds that even beatific love is not necessary but free, at least in its exercise, and that the blessed are not impeccable intrinsically, namely, by the vision of God, but only extrinsically, since God continues perpetually to rectify their will. This view is founded on voluntarism, which says that the will in itself is higher than the intellect. In virtue of this principle, Scotus holds that the Father and Son freely breathe forth the Holy Spirit. Does Scotus not see that, under this view, the Holy Ghost would not necessarily be God?

Let us look at the efficacy of the Thomistic argument, and the solution of Scotistic objections. St. Thomas: The essence of goodness is related to those who see God in the same way as good-in-general is related to wayfarers. As wayfarers cannot turn away from the idea of good, so those who see God cannot turn away from the essence of God. Further, since God contains in Himself the whole reality of good in a much more excellent way than it is contained in the abstract knowledge of good, the will is necessitated by an object outside of which nothing is desirable. But while this vision removes the possibility of sinning, it does not take away liberty in relation to particular goods. A blessed soul may turn from one friend to another. Christ on earth, enjoying the beatific vision, though He could not sin, could still freely choose His apostles: “Not you have chosen me, but I have chosen you.”

Objection. Granting the necessity of specification, would there not still remain the liberty of exercise, so that the blessed soul, if it willed, could interrupt its act of loving God? Answer: No. In order to interrupt this act, the blessed soul would have to retain indifference of judgment, i.e., be able to see some shade of evil, either in the supreme good clearly seen, or in its act of loving that good. Now, neither in that object nor in that act can the blessed soul detect the slightest shade of evil, of tedium or weariness. Hence the blessed act of loving God, necessary both in nature and in exercise, is an act which necessarily transcends liberty, just as the love whereby God loves Himself transcends liberty. This truth is a proof from on high that man’s will has a boundless profundity, infinite in relation to its

object, since created goods attract it only superficially, and thus it responds freely to their invitation, whereas God seen clearly attracts it invincibly.

Is there a parallel truth in natural beatitude? Would God, unseen, but known perfectly, be loved necessarily, say, by an angel? St. Thomas speaks as follows: “It is natural for the angel to turn with love towards God, the Author of his existence: but to turn towards God as the object of supernatural beatitude is a gift of grace coming from gratuitous love.” It seems, then, that the angel’s natural love of God would be a necessary love, at least as regards specification; but it is not so clear that it is necessary as regards exercise.

TWO COROLLARIES

1. The blessed are absolutely and intrinsically impeccable. It is of faith that at least extrinsic impeccability is necessary for beatitude. “That he might present to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle.” These words are commonly understood of the Church triumphant. Again, “He regenerated us unto living hope, unto an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, that cannot fade.” Beatitude would not be beatitude if it could admit sin, and hence punishment.

Scotus did not doubt the existence of impeccability, but said that it came from without, namely, from the aid of God preserving the blessed soul from sin, as it preserved the Blessed Virgin Mary from sin on earth. Thomists, on the contrary, hold that the blessed are intrinsically impeccable, because of the vision of God and the necessary love that follows it. There can be no sin in the will, unless there be in the intellect a defective knowledge, a defective dictate, arising from error, ignorance, inconsideration. But the intellect which sees God clearly cannot be defective, for in God it sees everything that belongs to our perfection, and there is no interruption of this vision because it is eternal life. In a word, he who clearly sees the supreme good, here and now necessarily lovable, cannot turn away from it, cannot sin, otherwise he would not look on God as the supreme good.

2. We desire the vision of God, not only as the delightful reward of a virtuous life, as Kant objected, but as the possession of the highest good-in-itself.

The first series of Scotistic objections is against the necessity of exercise in regard to beatific love. The second series is against the intrinsic

impeccability of the blessed.

FIRST SERIES

1. No object moves the will as regards exercise. Answer: The object does not move the will to exercise without the mediation of the will itself, we grant. We likewise grant that, even under this mediation, the object, if finite, does not necessarily move the will. But we deny that the will can remain unmoved when faced with an infinite object.

Indifferent judgment can come from a twofold cause. First, from the imperfections of our knowledge (as appears in those first motions which are indeliberate): secondly, from the perfection of our vision of the highest good which transcends the natural capacity of our will. Thus beatific love is not free. It transcends merit. But it is not forced, rather it is in the highest degree spontaneous and vital.

2. Augustine says: Will does not exist unless it is free. Answer: From the truth that the will is free it does not follow that it is free in its every act, just as from the truth that our intellect is discursive it does not follow that it is discursive in its every act.

3. A necessary act cannot have degrees of intensity, because it proceeds from the entire capacity of the will. Answer: We must deny this statement. The natural motion of a falling stone increases in rapidity, the motion of brutes increases as they more vehemently desire their prey, and the same truth is seen in the indeliberate motions of the will. Similarly, beatific love, though it flows from the entire capacity of the will, can be more intense in one of the blessed than in another, by reason of a more intense degree of glory and charity. Nor can the blessed on a lower level desire a higher degree of glory and charity, because each is completely satiated with his own reward and predestination. A man who is less hungry eats less, but is equally satisfied.

4. But love in heaven is identical with love on earth. Answer: Yes, but to love on earth God appears under one viewpoint as good and on the other as the Lawgiver who forbids what pleases the sinner.

5. But toward beatitude in common the will retains liberty of exercise. Answer: Toward explicit love of beatitude, yes; toward a virtual and implicit love, no. Here on earth when the will refrains from actual and

explicit love of beatitude in favor of some other thought, it acts thus for its own good and thus implicitly for its own beatitude.

6. Christ's love for God, being meritorious, was free, though it proceeded from the beatific vision.

Two answers. The first runs thus: Christ's love of God as God was not free; but it was free as reason for loving creatures. Thus it is with God's love of Himself: while this act is necessary, it is still freely exercised in relation to creatures. And as God, though free to create, is impeccable, so Christ was free in His love unto death for souls, yet simultaneously intrinsically impeccable by reason of His beatific vision and divine personality. Similarly, the blessed in heaven necessarily love God and freely love creatures: freely, we say, but impeccably, since they love creatures only in relation to God. But their love for creatures is not meritorious, because they are no longer in via, whereas Christ was simultaneously wayfarer and comprehensor. The second answer runs thus: As ruled by the beatific vision, Christ's love of God was not free: but it was free as ruled by infused knowledge, which is an analogical cognition.

John of St. Thomas says that each of these views is probable. The second view is simply an addition to the first view. Yet the first solution seems to be more profound. Loving God considered in Himself differs much from loving God as the reason for loving creatures. It is more difficult to love our neighbor, a Pharisee, say, for God's sake than it is to love God Himself. In relation to creatures judgment remains suspended, the creature being lovable under one viewpoint, but not under another until the free will overcomes this indifference. But the free will of the blessed, profoundly rectified by the beatific vision, is confirmed in good. Hence it acts as it should, impeccably and freely, in such external services as are free. The necessity which remains is a necessity of precept, a necessity of infallibility and consequence, like that under efficacious grace, which does not destroy liberty but actualizes it.

7. Love that is free is more perfect than love that is necessary. Answer: Yes, if the necessity arises from imperfect cognition (as in sudden indeliberate acts); but no, if the necessity arises from perfect cognition of the highest good.

To explain. Liberty is a dominating indifference of the will in relation to particular goods. But the will cannot have this dominating indifference in relation to God seen clearly. Beatific love, then, is necessary, and thus is

higher than love which is free, and is not below liberty but above it. Further, necessary love precontains eminently the very foundation of liberty, because the will is free in relation to particular goods only by its necessary relation to universal good, which in reality is found in God alone. In illustration, take Aristotle's word, that metaphysics is something useless, meaning that it is not below but above utility.

8. But God can let vision continue, and still hinder love, by suspending His own concursus. Answer: God could do this, considering His absolute power, just as He could annihilate all creatures. But from this it does not follow that beatific love is not a necessary characteristic that follows vision. And God's wisdom will never allow Him to deny this concursus, just as it will not allow Him to annihilate the blessed in heaven, or to create a soul without its characteristics and faculties.

SECOND SERIES

Scotistic objections against the intrinsic impeccability of the saints.

1. The power of sinning is essential to created liberty. Answer: The power of sinning is the defectibility of liberty; it is not a characteristic of liberty as such. God is free, and yet impeccable.

2. Law is not imposed except on those who are capable of transgression. Answer: This we simply deny. On the blessed, law is imposed because they love to act in subjection to God.

3. Since liberty is related to contraries, the blessed are capable of nonfulfillment of law. Answer: Liberty is related to contraries in the divided sense, yes; i.e., it can chose one thing after another. But in the composite sense, no, because it cannot choose simultaneously two opposed courses. To explain. The soul cannot exercise simultaneously the beatific vision and nonfulfillment of the divine precept. But this does not mean that the blessed in heaven, or Christ on earth, can sin or transgress the precept. The soul that sees God can obey freely, but, even in the divided sense, cannot disobey, though it retains the capacity of nonobedience and nonfulfillment.

A parallel truth is that of man's antecedent potency to resist efficacious grace, not in the sense that he can directly impede the efficacy of grace, but in this sense, that he retains the power not to do that to which he is determined by grace, because judgment remains indifferent, and God wills that what is done by grace be done freely. As a precept which would take

away liberty would destroy its own nature, so efficacious grace, if it did not actualize but destroyed liberty, would destroy its own nature.

4. To be able to omit the act commanded is to be able to sin. Answer: To be able to omit the command by disobedience (the contrary of obedience) is to be able to sin, we grant. But to be able to omit the command by nonobedience (the negation of obedience) is to be able to sin, we deny.

There is a great difference between being able not to obey by negation, and being able to disobey, by a contrary act of commission, or by a privative act of omission. For example, if I am in no way subject to a certain superior, my nonobedience is not sinful. At the other extreme, the soul is most profoundly subject to God, retaining the power of nonobedience in things which do not attract invincibly. But when the thing is commanded, then, notwithstanding the command, the will remains free.

ART. 5. THE BODY, WHILE IT IS NOT ESSENTIAL FOR PERFECT BEATITUDE, STILL SERVES TO INCREASE BEATITUDE

Authority. “Blessed are those who have died in the Lord.” “While we are in the body we are absent from the Lord.” “I am straitened on both sides, having a desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ, a thing by far the better, but to abide still in the flesh is needful for you.” “By apostolic authority we define that all the blessed even before the resumption of their bodies . . . have seen and still see the divine essence by intuitive vision . . . and this before the general judgment, without intermission, and from then on into eternity.” Some writers (Greeks, Armenians, Nestorians) thought that the face-to-face vision would be deferred until the resurrection. This question reappeared at the time of John XXII. While some authors say, not without foundation, that the pontiff hesitated regarding this question, it is nevertheless certain that he never defined his view ex cathedra.

Theological proof. Our intellect needs the body only because it needs the sense-images furnished by the imagination. Now the divine essence cannot be seen by means of sense-images. The principle here invoked is from reason, and the application is a truth of faith. Hence many Thomists hold that this theological conclusion could not be defined as dogma were it not revealed in equivalent terms in Scripture or tradition, in this instance by St. Paul.

Yet the body is required for the fullness of beatitude. Why? Because the soul is more perfect in its nature when it informs the body, which was created for the soul. The separated soul has “a desire to rule its body.” The body sub-serves the soul, since the soul is on the very lowest level of intelligence, to which corresponds the lowest level of intelligibility.

DIFFICULTIES ANALYZED

1. The separated soul, being subsistent, can have a perfect operation, even though it does not have a perfect nature. But it is not a person, since person signifies complete nature.

2. The soul’s fruition overflows on the body. The separated soul remains individual: it is this soul, the soul of Peter rather than of Paul, by a transcendental relation to its own body.

3. The desire of the separated soul, while it rests in the possession of God objectively, is not totally at rest subjectively. Hence, when the body rises, the soul’s beatitude grows, not intensively, but extensively.

4. Some separated souls may see God more clearly than do the inferior angels, because, while they have an intellect naturally less keen, they have a greater light of glory.

ART. 6. IS BODILY PERFECTION NECESSARY FOR BEATITUDE?

Conclusion: Beatitude, in every way perfect, requires perfect disposition of body.

Authority: St. Paul enumerates the four gifts of the glorified body: 1. impassibility (“It is sown in corruption, it rises in incorruption”); 2. brightness (“It is sown in dishonor, it shall rise in glory”); 3. agility (“It is sown in weakness, it shall rise in power”); 4. subtility (“It is sown a natural body, it shall rise a spiritual body”).

Reason: These gifts are necessary: first, that the flesh no longer weigh down the soul and turn it away from contemplation; secondly, that the soul, the form of the body and its principle of life, may communicate to its body a share in its own beatitude.

Impassibility excludes corruption, passion, pain. Subtility enables the body to penetrate another body (Christ entering though the doors were closed). Agility renders the body capable of the swiftest motion (though not

instantaneous). By brightness the body becomes luminous, like a crystal, revealing its wonderful organization.

Aureoles. This overflowing glory carries from the soul a special beauty into the body. This beauty, particularly as it appears in the glorified head, is an accidental glory, super-added to the essential glory, symbolized by the golden crown. This aureole, representing a special victory, is threefold: against the world, against the flesh, and against the devil. Those who conquered the world, wear the aureole of martyrs. Those whose teaching conquered the devil, wear the aureole of doctors.

ART. 7. ARE EXTERIOR GOODS NECESSARY FOR BEATITUDE?

For perfect beatitude external goods are in no wise required, since the body is no longer animal, but spiritual. Yet heaven, the empyrean, is a place of supremest beauty. Food and drink and riches are metaphors, to express spiritual goods: “Eat, O friends, drink, and be inebriated.”

ART. 8. IS THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS NECESSARY FOR BEATITUDE?

The society of friends is not necessary for perfect beatitude, since the soul possesses entire plenitude of perfection in God. Yet the society of friends adds an accidental and concomitant fullness, since the blessed see one another and rejoice in one another’s company.

Why does man need friends on earth? Not for the sake of utility, since he is sufficient unto himself. Nor for the sake of delight, because his own deeds give him supreme delight. But he needs friends in order to benefit them, to be inspired by them unto good, and to be aided by them in doing good. Virtuous friendship, as distinct from friendship founded on delight or utility, is based on good-in-itself. Higher still is that friendship which is supernatural, founded on God Himself. This friendship constitutes the Church triumphant, the home of perfect beatitude.

CHAPTER IX

ON ATTAINING BEATITUDE (Q. 5)

OF THESE eight articles, the first four deal with the attainability and inamissibility of beatitude; the last four, with the means whereby man attains beatitude.

ART. 1. CAN MAN ATTAIN BEATITUDE?

The affirmative answer is a truth of faith. A persuasive argument is based on our natural inefficacious desire of seeing God. The adequate object of our intellect is all reality, including the vision of the Blessed Trinity.

ART. 2. CAN ONE MAN BE MORE BLESSED THAN ANOTHER?

One man can be more blessed than another, not indeed in the object possessed, but in the measure of that possession.

Authority. The thesis is of faith, against Jovinian and the pseudo-Reformers. “The souls of the just see God, triune and one, clearly as He is, but one more perfectly than another by reason of diversity of merit.” “He who says that by good works eternal life, and the attainment of life eternal, and increase of glory cannot be merited, let him be anathema.”

Scripture abounds in this line. “In the house of my father there are many mansions.” “God will render to each one according to his works.” “He who shows sparingly will reap sparingly. He who sows in blessings will reap in blessings.” “Star differs from star in brightness.”

Reason. Enjoyment follows disposition, the remote disposition of merit and the proximate disposition of glory. Since the beatific vision is absolutely supernatural, its greater intensity depends, not on greater natural vigor of intellect, but on the more intense light infused into it. Obediential

capacity is equally gratuitous for angels and for men. But does not he who comes last receive as much as those who labored the whole day? Answer: This parable pictures the gratuitousness of objective beatitude, not the degree. The degree of glory depends on the degree of charity at death. Sudden conversions (the good thief on Mount Calvary and the public sinner) may include a surpassing degree of grace and merit.

ART. 3. CAN ANYONE IN THIS LIFE BE BLESSED?

Answer: Perfect beatitude is not possible in this life. This sentence is of faith. Against the Beghards and Beguines, the following proposition was condemned: “Every intellectual nature is in itself naturally blessed, and the soul does not need the light of glory to elevate it to see God and to enjoy Him in bliss.” Scripture is eloquent on the miseries of this life: “Man, born of woman, lives a short time and is replete with many miseries.” Since man cannot understand except by turning to sense-images, he cannot, in this life, come to the vision of God’s essence. Yet, notwithstanding ignorance, inordinate affections, suffering, and fear of death, man can still in this life have a kind of participation in future beatitude, by reason of hope and charity, especially if he reaches the unitive way, as is clear from the lives of the saints.

ART. 4. CAN PERFECT BEATITUDE BE LOST?

Inamissibility, the cause of perpetuity, is a truth of faith, expressed by the Gospel term “eternal life,” by the symbol, “I believe in life everlasting,” and by the statement of Benedict XII that the beatific vision suffers no interruption.

Scripture speaks often of this inamissibility: “The just will go into eternal life.” “I give them eternal life.” “The many who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake, some unto eternal life, others unto shame and opprobrium.” “Blessed are those who live in Thy house, O Lord, forever and forever they will praise Thee.”

Is this inamissibility intrinsic or extrinsic? Scotists, followed later by Molina and Suarez, tend to depreciate the supernatural gifts of God, their elevation above the order of nature, in contrast to St. Thomas, who gives to the gifts of God all their sublimity, and amplitude, and intrinsic

inamissibility. Man naturally desires to retain the good he has, without fear of losing it. But beatitude is perfect good, satisfying all desires and excluding all evils. Hence beatitude includes inamissibility and excludes all fear of loss.

1. The argument rests, not on a contingent decree of God, but on the very nature of beatitude. The greatest fortune granted for one day only, or for a month, or for a year, would not make a man blessed. Even a transient glimpse of the beatific vision did not make St. Paul blessed.

2. The beatific vision, arising from the permanent light of glory, can cease only in one of these three ways: by reason of him who sees; by reason of God withdrawing the vision; or by reason of some created cause corrupting the vision. But it cannot cease in any of these ways.

The beatific vision cannot cease on the part of him who sees, because the will simply cannot find in the beatific vision anything deficient or unpleasant. It cannot cease on the part of God, considering His ordinary power, because to act thus would be to inflict punishment, and punishment presupposes guilt, and the blessed are impeccable. Nor can it cease by reason of a created cause, because the beatific vision unites the blessed soul immediately with God, elevating it above all created agents, above all demonic influence.

Confirmations. First, the sources of the beatific vision are absolutely spiritual and incorruptible: namely, the intellective soul, the intellect, the permanent light of glory, the divine essence taking the place of the impressed and expressed species. Hence the beatific vision is absolutely and intrinsically immutable.

Second, charity, which is the beginning of eternal life, is in itself incorruptible. Here on earth it can be lost, but only by mortal sin, since we carry this treasure in earthen vessels. But the treasure, in itself, is the beginning of eternal life, and the charity of Christ, preserving us in life, is stronger than every temptation. “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities nor any other creature can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” If these words are spoken of eternal life as begun here below, how much more true they are of eternal life there where sin is impossible!

How is the beatific vision measured? Not by time, whether continuous or discrete, but by participated eternity, which infinitely transcends our continuous time and also the discrete time of the angels. In this eternity, the

vision is one unbroken instant, of which a remote image can be found in the life of union as led by saints on earth.

Eternity is the perfect possession of interminable life, a possession that is simultaneously whole and perfect. The discrete time of the angels measures their succession of thoughts and affections. Continuous time, the measure of motion, is constituted by the flowing now. The one single instant of immutable eternity is related to continuous time, as is the apex of a cone to its base.

Corollary. The term “eternal life” is very profound. “Eternal” means intrinsically invariable, simultaneously whole, altogether without succession. It is variable only extrinsically, by the absolute power of God, who, as He began it, can also cease to support it, by suspending His own concursus. This He will never do, because there is no motive for doing so. God will never annihilate the human nature of Christ, or of the Blessed Virgin. This annihilation is not a contradiction if we look at matter and form, but it is if we look at purpose. Even the beatific vision, granted for a transient moment, as it was possibly granted to St. Paul, is measured by participated eternity, because it contains in itself no succession.

SCOTIST OBJECTIONS ANALYZED

1. That which has potency to nonexistence can be lost. Yes, if the potency is intrinsic; but no, if it is merely extrinsic.

2. Since the beatific vision is not a debt due to any creature, it can be lost. Answer: If it is not due, either in its collation or in its conservation, we grant. But if it is due to the subject at least as far as conservation goes, then we deny. It is true that the beatific vision is given gratuitously, since God gratuitously gave us the principle of merit, namely, grace. But the beatific vision is due to the blessed as a reward, and as an eternal reward, given even to children by reason of the merits of Christ.

3. Form received into a nonconnatural subject can be lost. Answer: If the form is in itself corruptible, I grant. If the form is in itself incorruptible like charity, I subdistinguish: if you can assign a cause why it should be lost, I grant; otherwise, I deny. Charity, on earth, is lost by mortal sin, but sin is impossible in heaven.

4. Whatever is received is received in the manner of the recipient. Yes, if the gift is subordinated to the recipient; no, if the gift subordinates the

recipient to itself. To explain. The light of glory subjects to itself the intellect, and thereby elevates the will to immobility in good. Thus vision differs from grace on earth, which is dependent on man's subjective will. The Word, united to the humanity of Christ, does not participate in the latter's mutability, but communicates to it its own immutability.

5. St. Paul's vision was lost, because it was transient. But the vision of the blessed is of the same species. Answer: St. Paul had the blessed vision by a miraculous privilege, granted: as an ordinary grace, denied. The vision given to St. Paul was not the reward of perfect beatitude. The life of glory, given miraculously and transiently, does not have the immobility of a habit, because it does not flow from habitual grace as a characteristic.

6. The light of glory is not more inamissible than habitual grace, which can be lost. Answer: Grace on earth is amissible, not by reason of itself, but by reason of the changeable subject in which it is. But the habitual grace of a soul confirmed in good, as was the Blessed Virgin on earth, or as are the souls in purgatory, or as are the blessed who see God clearly and cannot sin: this habitual grace cannot be lost.

Corollary. Heavenly bliss has three principal characteristics. First, love for God, necessary also in its exercise, a love which transcends liberty and merit, like the love whereby God loves Himself. Secondly, intrinsic impeccability. Thirdly, intrinsic inamissibility. Thus we explain the last words of the Creed, "I believe in eternal life." St. Augustine dwells on the perpetual newness of eternal life. The joy of entering into heaven lasts forever. It is eternal springtime, always new, always young, insatiably satiating.

ART. 5. CAN A CREATURE BY HIS NATURAL POWERS ATTAIN BEATITUDE?

Neither man nor angel can attain the beatitude of the fatherland by his natural powers. This conclusion is a truth of faith, against the Beghards. It is founded on the text of St. Paul: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard." Reason agrees. Reason can prove, not indeed the existence or the possibility of the beatific vision, but its supernaturalness, namely, that it is naturally unattainable, Cognition means that the object known exists in the knowing subject, by reason of the subject's immateriality. But God's immateriality infinitely transcends the immateriality of the created intellect. Like the eye of the owl to the sun, so is the created intellect to uncreated Light. Hence

the infinite abyss between natural cognition and the beatific vision. Natural knowledge, though it should grow to infinity in its own line, would still not be one step nearer to the vision of God, just as a polygon, inscribed in a circle, could never be identified with the circumference, because a line can never become a point, and a line is divisible into infinity.

ART. 6. CAN MAN ATTAIN BEATITUDE BY THE ACTION OF SOME HIGHER CREATURE?

Man cannot attain beatitude by the action of some higher creature. This is again a truth of faith. “God gives grace and glory.” God alone is the author of grace and of glory. Grace and glory are participations in the divine nature which, much more wonderfully than physical miracles, transcend all created powers. Corporeal vision, given miraculously to a man born blind, is a natural thing, though supernaturally restored, whereas grace is essentially supernatural.

Angels can dispose man toward attaining his last end, but the order of agents corresponds to the order of goals, and only the supreme Agent can efficaciously lead the creature to its ultimate goal.

Why cannot a blessed angel communicate to us a participation in his light of glory? The angel, even naturally, can communicate to us good thoughts, also in relation to supernatural mysteries. But he cannot communicate to us supernatural light, except instrumentally, as do the sacraments, because this effect transcends the angel’s proper form, natural or supernatural. Light illuminates, but not everything that is illumined can in turn illuminate others.

ART. 7. ARE GOOD WORKS PREREQUIRED FOR BEATITUDE?

The affirmative answer is of faith, against the Calvinists. “If you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.” The creature cannot naturally have supernatural beatitude, but must strive to reach it, and beatitude is the reward of good works. Christ, indeed, in the first moment of His conception, enjoyed the beatific vision. But this was an extraordinary grace, like the creation of the first individuals in each species, and it was restricted to Christ, because He is the God-man, and the head of humanity.

ART. 8. DOES EVERY MAN DESIRE BEATITUDE?

First conclusion. Every man desires beatitude in common. The reason is that, thus to will beatitude, is nothing else than willing that the will be satiated. But this every man wills, as is clear both by experience and by reason, since the object of the will is universal good, not limited to this or that particular good.

Second conclusion. Not all men will that special beatitude which is found in God alone, since some men will pleasure or riches or honor, instead of God.

SUMMARY

The essence of beatitude consists in the beatific vision. Its principal characteristics are fruition, impeccability, and inamissibility. The attainment of beatitude, not possible by nature, is possible therefore only by grace, which, when it is consummated, is called glory. May God in mercy grant to us all this greatest of all His gifts.

SUPPLEMENT

ON NATURAL BEATITUDE

What would constitute that beatitude which can be attained by the powers of nature, in cooperation with the natural help of God? In the case of men, it would consist in perfect cognition of God, the Author of nature, and in a consequent love of God, the source of all natural good. For the angels, it would consist in the natural cognition of God as the Author of each angel’s individual nature, and in the natural love proportionate to this cognition. God is the objective beatitude of men and angels, both in the order of nature and in the order of grace. The creature’s will is like a point from which infinite lines of desire reach out in every direction. Divine goodness, even as naturally known, is the circumference which unites it itself all these myriads of lines.

The Salmanticenses pose three questions: first, is natural beatitude possible; second, in what natural operation would it consist; third, in what state would men attain natural beatitude? Answer: Within the order of nature there is possible an operation, to which, however imperfectly, the

name “beatitude” can properly be applied. For this view they cite Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, St. Augustine, St. Thomas, Durandus, Scotus, Cajetan, Bellarmine, Bañez, and Suarez. They conclude: “The distinction between natural beatitude and supernatural beatitude is commonly received.” The chief reason for this assertion, taken from St. Thomas, runs thus: The rational creature, since it is by its nature ordained to some last end in its own order, must be able to attain that end, and this attainment is natural beatitude.

They cite Vasquez to the contrary. Neither in men nor in angels does Vasquez admit any beatitude except supernatural beatitude. He rejects the common distinction between natural and supernatural, which all other theologians admit. This singular opinion of Vasquez has been renewed in our days by Henry de Lubac, who maintains that human nature is not a defined essence, with necessary characteristics and proportioned natural end, but rather an essence open to indefinite progress. Traditional theologians reply thus: Then not even God would have a definite and clear idea of human nature, He would know only human individuals, as was maintained by the nominalists of the fifteenth century, especially by Occam. Further: then there would no longer be a natural right, distinct from divine positive right, nor would natural ethics be immutable. Juridic positivism, the offspring of nominalism, would be true. Lastly, since the supernatural is defined by the Church as a perfection which transcends the natural, if there is no longer human nature nor angelic nature, then there is no longer anything properly speaking supernatural. The distinction between the natural order and the order of grace, far from being a Thomistic invention, is thus proclaimed by the Vatican Council: “The perpetual teaching of the Catholic Church has held, and still holds, that there is a twofold order of cognition, distinct, not only in source, but also in object.” And the encyclical Humani generis rejects the opinion of those who corrupt the “genuine gratuitousness of the supernatural order,” since they maintain that God could not create an intellectual creature without calling it to the beatific vision.

SECOND PART

HUMAN ACTS

CHAPTER X

VOLUNTARY AND INVOLUNTARY (Q. 6)

THIS question is divided into two parts. First part, where is voluntariness to be found? This question is treated in the first three articles: first, is voluntariness to be found in human acts; second, is it also to be found in brute animals; third, can there be voluntariness without any act? Second part: Things which can cause involuntariness or reduce voluntariness: Can the will suffer violence (art. 4)? Can violence cause involuntariness (art. 5)? Can fear cause involuntariness (art. 6)? Can concupiscence cause involuntariness (art. 7)?

ART. 1. ARE HUMAN ACTS VOLUNTARY?

PRELIMINARIES

Here we have the definition of the voluntary act. After the first three articles on the nature of voluntariness, we discuss the divisions of voluntariness, divisions which are commonly proposed today, and which are founded in the doctrine of St. Thomas. This process is the normal one. Step by step St. Thomas proceeds to a methodical definition of voluntariness, whereas modern theologians often presuppose the definition already found and received. The difficulty of the question appears in the objections. Voluntary is that which proceeds from our will, that is, from a principle intrinsic in us. But man is moved to act from without, that is, either by the proposed object, or by a precedent motion, either corporeal (e.g., to avoid cold or heat), or spiritual, since man needs to be moved by God in order to act at all.

THE AFFIRMATIVE ARGUMENT

A. Authority. St. Damascene says that “voluntary is an act proceeding from the will under the direction of reason.”

B. Voluntariness is found in the highest degree in human acts. When we say “in the highest degree,” we are speaking of man’s relation, not to God, but to brutes. The conclusion is proved as follows. Man has within himself the principle, not only of acting, but of acting for a purpose, since he knows the end and purpose of his work. Hence, since voluntary means something that proceeds from an intrinsic principle accompanied by knowledge of the end, voluntariness is found in the highest degree in human acts.

To explain the principle here invoked we must notice the divisions of motion. Intrinsic motion is either vital or nonvital. Vital movements are of two kinds, one cognitive, when the agent knows, either purpose as purpose (man), or knows only the thing which is purpose (animal). Second, vital motion, which is noncognitive (the plant which preserves itself by assimilating food). Next the nonvital movements which are still intrinsic (the stone which falls by gravity). Finally, we have extrinsic motion (the stone moving upward).

The minor is a nominal definition of voluntariness, namely, motion which comes from the agent’s own inclination. But this one element is not sufficient. The vital action of the plant, for example, nutrition, is not voluntary. Hence voluntariness requires also knowledge of the end. Thus we say, in some real sense, that animals perform voluntary acts (this dog wills to eat).

In response to the third difficulty, we say that man moves himself to his end, even though, first, the object must be proposed to him, and, second, he must be premoved by God. Man has in himself, not the first cause of his act, but a created intrinsic principle of acting under knowledge of purpose. And thus man knows, not merely the thing which is his purpose, but knows it as purpose, as precontaining the relation of means to the purpose he intends.

ART. 2. ARE THE ACTS OF ANIMALS VOLUNTARY?

Conclusion: the imperfect voluntary is found in brutes but the perfect voluntary only in men.

A. Authority. Aristotle says that boys and brutes share in the voluntary. Boys, it is understood, before the use of reason. The same view is expressed by St. Damascene and Nemesius.

B. The argument. In order to have a voluntary act, the principle of the act must be within, with knowledge of the end. Now in brute animals there is at least an imperfect knowledge of the end, since by their sense-powers, especially by their instincts, they know the thing which is the end, though they do not know the end as end, i.e., they do not know the proportion between the act and its purpose. Hence in brute animals we find an imperfect voluntary. Only in man who deliberates can we find the perfect voluntary. Only man knows purpose as purpose, not only in the abstract, but also in the concrete (for example, the cook preparing a meal).

Objection: The brutes have no will and therefore they have no voluntariness. The answer runs thus: Brutes have no will, because will signifies rational appetite; while ‘voluntary’ gets its name from the will, it has a wider signification, namely, that which proceeds from an intrinsic principle with knowledge of the end, and in this sense it is found, analogically and imperfectly, also in brute animals.

Certain authors say that voluntariness is found univocally in brutes and men. This statement does not seem to be true, because “voluntary” follows knowledge and appetite. Now cognition and appetite are analogical terms when applied to the two orders, sensitive and intellective: analogical, because based on a similitude of proportion. Cognition is not one univocal notion, it is not a genus, diversified by differences which lie outside the genus. In this analogous sense, cognition can be claimed even for God. Thus John of St. Thomas speaks as follows: “Some hold that the voluntary is spoken analogically of man and brute, or metaphorically, as the meadow is said to laugh.” To us it seems that “voluntary” is an analogical term. It is used, not metaphorically, but properly, as is the term “cognition.” Sense-cognition is cognition, properly so called, not a mere metaphor. Yet this cognition agrees only analogically with intellective cognition. Thus compare also the word “life,” which is predicated, analogically but properly, of God, of the angels, of our mind, of animals, of plants. It can, of course, become a mere metaphor when we speak, say, of living water.

St. Thomas says: “Voluntariness is found by the philosopher in brutes, not as coming from the will, but as opposed to violence, so that we can speak of the acts of brutes and children as voluntary, because they act

spontaneously, though without an act of choice." Voluntary is here identified with the spontaneous. This seems to be the meaning of Cajetan where he says: "Simply speaking, we can deny that brutes move themselves to their end. The statement is true only secundum quid." And St. Thomas says; "In things which do not have the use of reason there is neither voluntariness nor involuntariness." From all these considerations it seems to follow that voluntariness is found in brutes only analogically.

DEFINITION OF VOLUNTARINESS

Voluntary is that which comes from an intrinsic principle under knowledge of purpose. The voluntary is perfect when an end is known, not only materially, but formally as an end. The intrinsic principle is, in the case of perfect voluntariness, man's spiritual will, which is guided by reason. In the case of the imperfect voluntary of brutes, it is their sense-appetite, guided by instinct (thus the sheep flees from the wolf).

This definition of the voluntary is legitimate, it follows the laws of logic. For, by nominal definition, popular definition, voluntary is that which proceeds from the will, or from the inclination of the agent.

A real definition is reached by the division of natural motion proceeding from a natural internal inclination of the agent which moves and acts. Now the principle of motion is twofold: efficient or final. Hence those things are perfectly moved by an intrinsic principle in which we find these twofold principles, efficient (in the inclination or appetite), and final (rational knowledge of the end).

The correctness of this definition is confirmed when we compare the voluntary with other similar or dissimilar motions. Here we institute a comparison that is inductive and ascending. Voluntary is contrasted

A. as an intrinsic principle (a) with the violent (where the principle is external, counter to inclination); (b) with the object willed, but not produced by the agent (rainfall).

B. As proceeding from knowledge (a) against vegetative life (sleep, digestion, respiration); (b) against the mere spontaneous (first motions of passion, preceding all advertence).

ART. 3. CAN THERE BE VOLUNTARINESS WHERE THERE IS NO ACT?

Conclusion. A thing can be voluntary without any act, even without any internal act, if we speak simply and objectively. We have two arguments. First, from common principles. This proof runs as follows: Anything which is under our control is said to be voluntary. But man is master of his action and his nonaction, of his willing and nonwilling. Therefore, as willing is voluntary, so also is nonwilling, so far as it is under man's dominion. Therefore a man is culpable, not only when he does evil, but also when he does not do the good which he should do.

An argument more direct and proper, runs as follows: Voluntary is that which comes from the will with knowledge of purpose. But a thing can be indirectly from the will, when man does not place an act which he can and should place. To illustrate: The sinking of a ship comes indirectly from the will of the pilot, if he does not will to guide it as he should and can. Thus a thing can be voluntary without any act, internal or external. A sin of omission does not require an act of nolition, because then the omission would be directly willed. That the omission may be indirectly willed, it suffices that the agent, who can and should (e.g., go to Mass) does not do so.

In answer to the second difficulty we note the difference between "willing-not-to" and "not-willing-to." Willing-not-to is an act, not-willing-to is the absence of act. Here an objection enters. It seems that to "will-not-to" constitutes rather an involuntary act. The answer is that sometimes it does. A man who wills not to write can be forced to write, and thus does something involuntary. But sometimes willing-not-to constitutes a voluntary: I will-not-to go to Mass. Again, in the third difficulty, not to consider is voluntary, when man can and should consider.

Corollary. That omission be voluntary, it is required and suffices that a man knowingly omits a work which he could do, for instance, going to Mass on a ferial day. That the omission be not only voluntary, but also culpable, three things are required: first, that the agent could act; second, that he had a duty to act; third, that he did not act. Thus Sylvius. Similar are the words of Cajetan: "To constitute an act, indirectly culpable, three elements concur: first, ability; second, duty; third, not willing. Hence we must diligently consider whether the agent should, and when he should, hinder an omission. Thus divine permission of sin is without fault. God certainly can hinder all sin. He does not hinder, but He is not bound to hinder. Rather, as St. Augustine says, God, being infinitely good, would in

no wise allow anything evil in His works, were He not so omnipotent and good as to draw good even from evil.

A DOUBT

Can omission be indirectly voluntary without some act which is its cause or occasion? Many disciples of St. Thomas answer negatively. These Thomists say that, whereas St. Thomas had answered affirmatively in his earlier writings, he later changed his view. Now, in point of fact, St. Thomas in the Summa says this: “For the essence of a sin of omission there is not required per se any act, as when, to illustrate, a man at the hour when he is bound to go to church, does not in any way think of going or of not going to church.”

“But if,” St. Thomas adds, “in the sin of omission we understand also the occasions or causes of omitting, then in a sin of omission there must be some act. To illustrate. A man does not will to go to church, because he wills to play at the moment, or because he stayed up late last night, and in consequence does not go in the morning to church. And then this act, interior or exterior, is per accidens the cause of the omission. But judgment on things is to be given by what they are per se and not by that which they are per accidens. Hence we can say truly that there can be sin without any act at all.”

OBJECTIONS

1. But certainly at times it seems that there is no act which is cause or occasion of the culpable omission. To be guilty, it suffices that a man can and should consider and will, whereas in fact he does not consider and does not will. Answer: For the sin of omission some act is required, at least per accidens. When an object is proposed by the intellect, for instance, the obligation of going to Mass on Sunday, the will can have three relations to that act. First, to will; second, to will not; third, not to will. Now to will and to will not are acts, and in this latter case the omission is directly willed. Not to will is the suspension of act, whether of volition or nolition. But, so Thomists argue, this determination to suspension cannot exist without some act. If the will would in no way determine itself to suspend the act, there would be no exercise of liberty and we would be dealing with a

voluntariness that is merely potential. But, possibly, it seldom happens that we deal with this act to suspend an act, because generally the omission of the precept takes place because he who omits wishes to do something else, say, to sleep.

2. That the omission be voluntary it suffices that a man can act and does not act. But here there is no act. The answer is: If the omission is to be voluntary, the man must be able to do the objective deed and does not do it, this I grant; but the man remains without any subjective determination, this I deny. The agent certainly determines himself at least not to place the act. The exercise of liberty cannot be without all act, otherwise the will would remain as it were dead, free only as a power. Thus God omits voluntarily to hinder the sins of men, and permits them for higher motives of His wisdom, namely, to manifest His mercy or His justice.

First corollary: That an effect be voluntary, it must proceed either physically or morally from the will.

Second corollary: The effect which follows or accompanies the omission is not voluntary, unless there is an obligation to impede that effect, or unless the omission is chosen purposely as a means to this effect.

Here, then, we have the proof that this effect does not proceed either physically or morally from the will: not physically, because the agent exercises no influence; not morally, unless there is an obligation for the agent to hinder this effect. To illustrate: God omits voluntarily to hinder the sins of men, yet these sins are not voluntary on the part of God, because God is not bound to hinder these sins, but can permit them in view of a greater good.

Further, from positive and fully voluntary acts there may follow several effects which are not voluntary, since there is no obligation to hinder them. To illustrate: The sacrilege of a bad priest is not voluntary to the penitent who asks for the sacrament. Motions of concupiscence which follow the confessor’s hearing of confessions, or the physician’s care of the sick, are not voluntary in the confessor or in the physician, because they are not bound to hinder these effects, since their duties are causes per accidens of the unintended effects.

But when an omission which is voluntary and not culpable is chosen as means to a certain effect, then such effect is voluntary, because it is directly willed. To illustrate: A man who stays away from the fire in order to suffer

cold for the sake of mortification. The cold is willed per se, and the mortification is voluntary.

DIVISIONS OF VOLUNTARINESS

The voluntary is either perfect or imperfect. The perfect voluntary is either necessary (beatific love, love of beatitude in general) or free. The free voluntary is either direct or indirect. The direct voluntary is either voluntary in its cause or voluntary in itself, and this in two fashions: positive (volo), or negative (nolo). The positive includes the voluntary simpliciter (consequent will), and the voluntary secundum quid (antecedent will). The indirect voluntary is negative (sinking of a ship by reason of lack of vigilance). The imperfect voluntary is twofold: first, in human emotions, which are either semi-deliberate, or entirely indeliberate; second, the imperfect voluntary (the spontaneous as found in brutes). The six most important of these divisions are to be explained.

Divisions arising from: 1. degrees of cognition; 2. degrees of advertence; 3. degrees of freedom; 4. modes of influence; 5. modes of termination; 6. modes of willing.

1. Degrees of Cognition

By reason of cognition the voluntary is divided into the perfect and the imperfect voluntary, according as cognition is either perfect, knowing the purpose and the proportion of means to that purpose, or is imperfect, when it apprehends, as animals do, the thing which is the purpose but not as purpose.

Thus the imperfect voluntary belongs to brutes, but it is found also in men, motions which are either indeliberate, i.e., such motions as antecede advertence, or in motions that are semi-deliberate of which we are only imperfectly conscious, because, for example, we have not waked up entirely. This imperfect voluntary appears in infants, in lunatics, in drunkards, in those suffering from hallucination or obsession. But deliberate motions elicited with full advertence are fully voluntary. Some authors note that half-insane people may still be responsible, in matters where judgment and deliberation are still free. This holds good, particularly at the beginning of the disease, as regards moral and religious standards.

2. Degrees of Advertence

Even full advertence may be either distinct or confused, according as the morality of the object is perceived distinctly or confusedly. To illustrate. He who throws a stone from a window, foreseeing that he will thus wound his passing enemy, adverts distinctly to the malice of the act. But if he does the act surmising that possibly some passer-by may be wounded, he does not advert except confusedly to the likelihood of wounding his enemy.

3. Degrees of Freedom

By reason of the object proposed, the voluntary is divided into the necessary voluntary, (for example, the desire of beatitude here on earth and beatific love in heaven), and the free voluntary, an act, namely, that is immune, not only from coercion, but from the natural necessity of instinct, or of any power determined to one line.

Here enters a doubt considered by Billuart: Is the perfect voluntary identical with the free? An affirmative answer is given by a few, who deny that the necessary voluntary is perfect. Thomists reply by distinguishing two classes of the necessary voluntary: first, what arises from imperfect cognition as in brutes and children); second, that which originates from perfect cognition. This voluntary, they hold, is not imperfect, but in the highest degree perfect. Examples are the love by which God loves Himself, and breathes the Holy Spirit, also the love whereby the blessed love God clearly seen in paradise.

4. Modes of Influence

By reason of influence, the free voluntary is either direct or indirect, according as the will has, or has not, a direct influence on the thing willed. What is only indirectly willed is willed for something else. Example: the omission of Mass when I will to do something else, as, for instance, to read a profane book. I do not will to go to Mass, but I do not say directly: “I will not go to Mass.”

Further, the direct voluntary is twofold, either immediate or mediate. It is immediate when I will the object in itself, either positively (I will go to Mass), or negatively (I will not go to Mass). But this direct voluntary is mediate when I will something, not in itself, but in its cause. Example: I will to drink immoderately, though I foresee that drunkenness will be the cause of a quarrel. In this case the quarrel is willed in its cause.

Here we must note that many authors confound the indirect voluntary and the voluntary in cause, because each resembles the other, and because the omission indirectly willed, as we said above, presupposes some act of the

will as cause, or at least as occasion. But according to St. Thomas there is a difference. The voluntary in cause is not indirect but direct, though not immediate. To illustrate. The demonstration from motion to God's existence is not indirect but direct, though mediated. Voluntary in cause is the foreseen effect of a positive action willed in itself. Indirect voluntary is the foreseen effect of an omission. We must here pause to discuss the following relevant principles.

1. The voluntary, either indirect or in cause, can be good. And the effect foreseen as good increases the goodness of the whole act. But theologians generally deal rather with these two voluntaries under the aspect of evil, in order to tell us when the evil effect is to be avoided.

2. An evil effect, willed only in its cause, is imputable as guilt, under three conditions; first, the agent was bound to foresee this effect at least confusedly; second, the agent was able not to place the cause; third, he was bound to hinder the effect.

First condition. Nothing is willed unless foreknown. A physician or confessor, conscious that he lacks the necessary knowledge, foresees, indistinctly, the evil effects that may follow. The surgeon, conscious that he has not studied sufficiently the conditions required by the operation, is responsible for the evil effect that may come from his negligence. Thus foresight and circumspection are parts of prudence.

But when the agent cannot foresee the evil effect, then this effect is not imputed, to him as guilt. Drunkenness is not indirectly voluntary in him who is ignorant of the special power of a certain wine and thus becomes inebriated (as happened to Noe).

Second condition. The agent who is morally bound to place the cause is not responsible for the effect. A priest is not guilty of sacrilege when he gives Communion to a sinner whose unworthiness he knows only from confession, because he is bound to preserve the sacramental secret.

Third condition. The agent must be bound to hinder the effect. If he is not thus bound, the effect is not imputable. Inordinate motions of sensuality, in a physician, say, or confessor, are not imputable when they arise from the exercise of duty.

THIRD PRINCIPLE

It is allowed to place an act, in itself good or indifferent, from which follow two effects, one good, the other evil, provided the good effect is immediate, i.e., is not mediated by the evil effect; provided further that there be present a grave reason for acting, and that the agent's purpose be good. Four conditions are here laid down.

First condition. The act in itself must be good or indifferent. For if it be in itself evil, it can never become licit. We are never allowed to lie, to blaspheme, to commit fornication, even though a good effect may follow. The reason is clear. Evil is not allowed as road to good.

How do we judge whether the act in itself is evil or not? By its moral object. To illustrate. Hypnotic sleep, voluntarily produced in another, is it something morally indifferent or is it evil? The more probable opinion, based on various responses of the Holy Office, is that hypnotism is sometimes natural, not diabolical, not absolutely to be condemned. Thus we can use this medium if the reason be proportionately grave (not mere curiosity), and if there is no intention of evil, and if there is no diabolical intervention.

Second condition. The good effect must be immediate, i.e., not follow from the evil effect. Though at times good may follow from an evil effect, we are still not allowed to place the cause, since the evil effect would be directly intended as medium, and evil may not be done that good may result. Illustrations: to slay an infant in the womb, in order to save the life of the mother; to cause an abortion, in order to save honor: these acts are illicit. But a man need not abstain from riding, even though sensual disturbance may follow, an evil which he permits and to which he does not consent.

If the effect is only physically evil, not morally, it is licit as medium. Thus, if there is no other way to save your life, you may kill an unjust aggressor.

Third condition. The purpose of the agent must be a good one. The confessor, intending the salvation of souls, can be permissive in relation to temptations which may follow. He does not desire these temptations, but detests them.

Fourth condition. There must be a cause proportionately grave for acting and permitting the evil effect. The reason is that the evil effect, though not intended, is a material sin, and not rarely brings on the danger of formal sin. To illustrate. A very urgent cause is required for a maidservant to go on

exercising her service in a home where she is often solicited by a son of the family, since she is in proximate peril of sinning mortally. But for an action which only remotely and lightly tends toward an evil effect, less urgent reason is required. This question on voluntary in cause is not negligible.

5. Modes of Production

Under this heading we distinguish the positive voluntary from the negative voluntary. To illustrate. A positive voluntary act is that of theft. A negative voluntary act is that of an administrator, who knows that goods in his charge are being stolen and neglects to hinder such thievery.

This negative voluntary can be either direct (when I say “I will not go to Mass”) or indirect (when I do not go to Mass, because I will something else). This negative voluntary appears in two kinds of negligence: first, in regard to what we can and should do, second in regard to what we can and should consider. Here lies a probable explanation of a difficult doctrine of St. Thomas on the first motions of sensuality. If, he says, consideration was possible and binding, then these sensual motions are minor venial sins. “It is manifest,” he continues, “that the act of sensuality can be voluntary, since sensuality by its nature can be controlled by the will.” Now reason, in the waking state, is bound to advert to the motions of the soul. If, therefore, due advertence is not present, we have a sin against prudence, an omission in some way voluntary. Again, St. Thomas says, that, if reason resists sensual motions there is no sin. But, he adds, reason, if watchful, can be aware of and avoid each individual inordinate motion, but not the whole series as a unit.

Many Thomists require at least an interpretative influence of the will if a motion of sensuality is to be a sin. Others say that it is a venial sin even when there is no sin in the will. To us it seems that there is no sin unless there is at least a negative voluntary, by neglecting resistance or consideration. We can avoid this negligence in each and every particular case, but not in the whole series as a unit.

6. Modes of Willing

Here we have two divisions: the simple voluntary and the voluntary secundum quid.

The simple voluntary arises when the object, considered in all its circumstances, is simply willed, although it may be associated with some difficulty or discomfort. For example, I wish to study theology,

notwithstanding the difficulties I must conquer. The voluntary secundum quid is a conditional volition, a mere velleity.

Certain authors depart here from the terminology of St. Thomas. Voluntary secundum quid, they say, is an object at which the will aims with reluctance. They illustrate with these examples: I will to take medicine, even though it is bitter. I throw my wares into the sea in order to save my life. St. Thomas, on the contrary, says that to throw away goods when in danger of shipwreck is a simple voluntary act, and only secundum quid involuntary. Why? Because the sailor truly wills, though reluctantly, to act as he does act. St. Thomas would invert the example. The preservation of goods at the time of danger is voluntary secundum quid.

Thus the voluntary secundum quid is reduced to the conditional or antecedent voluntary. St. Thomas writes: “Antecedently God wills all men to be saved, whereas consequently He wishes some to be condemned, according to the exigence of His justice. Thus the just judge wills, antecedently, all men to live, but, consequently, he wills the murderer to be put to death.” St. Thomas adds: What we will antecedently, we do not will simply, but only secundum quid, because will is related to objects as they are in themselves. Now objects in themselves are individual and particular. Hence when we will an object simply, we choose it with all its particular circumstances. The just judge simply wills the murderer to be put to death, but, in a certain sense, secundum quid, wills him to live, namely, in as far as he is a man. To will secundum quid is a velleity rather than an absolute act of the will. And thus it is clear that, whatever God wills simply, comes to pass, whereas what He wills antecedently does not always come to pass.

The simple voluntary, we conclude, is identified with the consequent or efficacious voluntary, whereas the voluntary secundum quid is identified with the antecedent, conditional, and inefficacious voluntary. The merchant who throws his wares into the sea to save his life, says conditionally: “I wish I could save these wares, but, in point of fact, I choose definitely to throw them into the sea.”

THE INVOLUNTARY AND ITS CAUSES

The involuntary must be distinguished from the non-voluntary. St. Thomas says that nonvoluntary means simply the absence of the act of the will. But the involuntary means that the will is contrary to the object

proposed. Hence upon the involuntary there follows sadness, which does not always follow the nonvoluntary.

The involuntary is divided into the simply involuntary and the involuntary secundum quid. The simple involuntary is a proposal which the will resists with all its might. To illustrate. He who is forced by external violence to immolate to an idol exercises an action that is simply involuntary. Involuntary secundum quid is a proposal which the will resists under one aspect, but which it still goes on to will simply, in order to avoid a greater evil. Example is again the merchant throwing his wares into the sea in order to save his life. This act is involuntary secundum quid, but is simply voluntary, here and now, in order to preserve his life.

The Causes of the Involuntary (art. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8)

We distinguish four causes of the involuntary: force, fear, concupiscence, ignorance.

ART. 4. CAN THE WILL SUFFER VIOLENCE?

Whereas external members can be overcome by force, the question here is: Can the will itself suffer coercion? And by coercion we mean that species of violence to which cognitive beings may be subjected. A plant may indeed suffer violence, but not coercion.

Violence, generically, is defined by Aristotle as follows: an act whose principle is outside, against the inclination of the patient, who contributes nothing to the result. Hence violence adds something to necessity. Necessity means determination to one act, without power toward the opposite act. Thus the necessary can be spontaneous. To illustrate. The brute animal necessarily, but spontaneously, desires food. But under violence, the act comes from an extrinsic principle, against the inclination of the patient. Thus the necessary is twofold, namely, either violent or spontaneous.

When we have thus defined violence, it might seem (so the first objection) that the will can be forced at least by God. Further, the Molinists say that it would be thus forced if there were such a thing as a predetermining physical premotion. Further, (thus the third objection) the motion of the will to sin is against nature and therefore violent.

OUR THESIS

Violence can be inflicted upon the will's commanded acts, but not on the will's own elicited acts.

Proof of the first part. By exterior violence the members can be impeded from following the command of the will. To illustrate. Someone may close my eyes, so that I cannot see, or he may open my eyes, compelling me to look upon something obscene against my will. Then this sight, though it proceeds from my visual power, is called violent, since it is against the inclination of my will.

Objection. But then this sight is not an act commanded by the will. Therefore violence cannot be effectual against the will, even in commanded acts. Answer: We distinguish the antecedent. It is not an act commanded by the will actually, we grant. Not commanded even potentially, we deny. But the conclusion deals with acts either actually or potentially commanded. Acts actually commanded by the will can be prevented by violence. Since the will resists, they come to pass only by the force of an external agent. In possession or obsession, for example, demonic violence exercised on the organism or imagination, can compel speech or prevent motion. But, says St. Thomas, although the devil can compel a man to do an act which is sinful, he cannot compel man to sin. When reason is bound, nothing that man does can be imputed to him as sinful.

Proof of the second part. The will can suffer no violence in its own elicited acts (to will, to intend, to choose). No power, created or uncreated, can force the will to elicit an act. The act elicited by the will is nothing else than the will's own inclination, actually proceeding from the will under knowledge of the end, whereas an act that is forced must come from an exterior principle, against the inclination of the patient. An act elicited by the will, and at the same time forced, implies a contradiction. This conclusion is confirmed by analogy with the natural inclination of noncognitive things. By force the stone goes up, but it goes down by its natural inclination, natural gravity.

This doctrine is found in Augustine (the text cited in sed contra est). Also in St. Anselm, who says: "An unwilling man can not-will anything, because he cannot will, willing not-to-will."

But can God, who moves from within, force the will? All theologians agree that God, using an instrument of justice (e.g., fire) can inflict punishment against the will of the patient. Thus the sufferings of hell are contrary to the will of its victims. These punishments are violent at least

secundum quid as being against a particular inclination of the condemned soul, but nevertheless they are according to the order of justice.

Certain theologians hold that God, as universal mover, can force the will. The acts thus forced, they say, though they are in harmony with potency and with the fundamental inclination of the will to universal good, may still be against the will's inclination to a particular good. Further, Suarez and Molina say that, if God premoves and predetermines the will, the acts thus caused would not be free, and God would be the author of violence.

St. Thomas replies: God, who is more powerful than the human will, can move the human will. Again, he says: "As long as judgment remains indifferent, it is impossible that God can so premove as to force the will. Such an act would no longer be free. As long as judgment remains indifferent, the will is not limited to this object. God clearly seen by vision is the only object which removes this indifference of judgment."

Further, as it is a contradiction for the will to desire an object not proposed by the intellect, so it is also a contradiction that the will desire an object under some aspect not proposed to it by the intellect. Otherwise the will would cease to be a rational appetite, and would act without cognition.

OBJECTIONS

1. God can deny cooperation, say, with the act whereby the blessed love God in heaven. This cessation would be forced. Answer: First, the force here in question would not be positive compulsion to an elicited act, but a negative impeding of the act to be elicited. Second, such cessation would not be, properly speaking, violence. As it is natural for a second cause to act under the influence of the first cause, so it is natural (or supernatural or preternatural) not to act when the influence of the first cause is removed. Thus it is when fire does not burn, or when hungry lions do not devour.

2. God can produce in the will of Judas, who at the time hates John, a love for John. This act would be forced, that is, against the inclination of Judas. Answer: God can do this by changing the evil inclination of Judas into a good inclination. But He cannot do this, and at the same time preserve the contrary volition. When God changes the will, He brings it about that in place of the preceding inclination, there follows another inclination. Thus "the heart of the king is in God's hand, and whithersoever God wills He can turn it."

3. Sin is against man’s natural inclination, but is nevertheless an act elicited by man’s will. Answer: Sin is against man’s partial inclination to good-in-itself, yes; it is against man’s adequate inclination to good in common, no. Man wills sin as an apparent good.

ART. 5. CAN VIOLENCE CAUSE INVOLUNTARINESS?

PRELIMINARIES

From this fifth article to the end of the question we deal with the four causes of the involuntary, namely, violence, fear, concupiscence, and ignorance.

When we say that violence or fear or concupiscence or ignorance causes the involuntary (at least as regards commanded acts), we do not mean to say that these causes physically influence the act of the will. But they do move, either physically or morally, to an act in some way contrary to the inclination of the will. Thus when fear moves man to throw goods into the sea, his act is involuntary secundum quid, because of his inclination to preserve his goods.

Thesis. Absolute violence causes the simply involuntary in commanded acts. Example: the man who, against his own persevering inclination, is forced to sacrifice to an idol. This conclusion is to be understood of absolute violence, such, namely, that the victim, with all his efforts, cannot overcome it. We are not treating of violence secundum quid, which a man is able to overcome if he resists as far as he can. Absolute violence causes the simple involuntary, violence secundum quid causes the involuntary secundum quid. Martyrdom is involuntary secundum quid, but simply voluntary, just as is loss of goods from fear of shipwreck. The arguments follow.

A. Our authorities are Aristotle and St. Damascene.

B. From reason. A voluntary act comes from an intrinsic principle, in agreement with the will’s inclination. But that which is absolutely violent comes from an extrinsic principle, and against the will’s inclination. Therefore that which is absolutely violent is not voluntary in an agent capable of cognition, just as it is not natural in things which lack cognition.

1. Objections. Our conclusion holds good only for acts commanded by the will, not for elicited acts.

2. Note that a thing can be natural, or voluntary, in two ways, one active, the other passive.

3. An act can be violent secundum quid, and still voluntary simply. A man, climbing a hill, is performing an act violent secundum quid, since the body naturally tends downward, but the act is simply voluntary, by reason of the man's intention and inclination.

Question. Does violence make the sufferings of the martyrs involuntary? Answer: The martyrs did not suffer absolute violence, but only relative violence, violence secundum quid. The martyrs, had they so willed, could have escaped violence, namely, by denying their faith. But they voluntarily endured death for God's sake. Hence they did not suffer absolute violence, but they did overcome the greatest violence secundum quid. Everything that is born of God conquers the world, and this is the victory which conquers the world, our faith.

On the contrary, when the martyr's hand is forced open to sacrifice to an idol, this sacrifice is simply involuntary, if the man resists as far as he can.

The same truth holds good of a woman in relation to the man who violates her. If she resists as far as she can, the violation is involuntary. If she does not so resist, she consents to sin. If you command me to be violated against my will, said St. Lucy, my chastity will have a double crown. The body cannot be soiled except with the permission of the mind.

A man who is forced to receive baptism receives it validly, and therefore voluntarily. Answer: To receive baptism validly, he must first put away his contrary disinclination.

A clarification: When is a woman culpable in relation to an aggressor? She is not allowed to kill her oppressor, because the integrity of the flesh is a lower good than life itself. But she can resist by cries, blows, and wounds, and she is bound to this resistance. But if there is peril to her own life or fame, and if there is no danger of interior consent, the woman is not bound to extreme exterior resistance, because exterior resistance is an affirmative precept, which does not oblige to loss of life or fame. But if the danger of interior consent is present, the woman is bound to resist even at the expense of life and fame. It is better to lose corporeal life than the life of grace.

COROLLARIES

1. If all resistance, interior and exterior, is unavailing, then violence is absolute, and causes the simply involuntary, because the act is not free and therefore not imputable.

2. If the person resists exteriorly, but not interiorly, the voluntary is indeed diminished but not taken away. If under violence the person is altogether passive, not cooperating, and not resisting except interiorly, then the act can still be imputable when there is an obligation to resist exteriorly, in order to prevent scandal (for example, in matters of faith), or of consent (in matters of chastity).

ART. 6. DOES FEAR CAUSE THE INVOLUNTARY?

PRELIMINARIES

An act done from fear differs from an act done with fear. The merchant begins his voyage with fear, but not from fear. But when, in a storm, he throws his goods overboard, he acts from fear.

DIFFICULTIES

Three difficulties present themselves: 1. Fear seems to be related to the future as force is to the present. 2. A deed done from fear seems to be in itself involuntary. 3. Such a deed is voluntary only under condition, and hence is voluntary only secundum quid, not simply.

OUR THESIS

Deeds done from fear are simply voluntary, but secundum quid involuntary.

A. Authorities. Nemesius and Aristotle speak thus: “Deeds done from fear are voluntary rather than involuntary.”

B. Reason. That deed is simply voluntary which, here and now, is chosen by the will. Now the deed done from fear is, here and now, chosen by the will, though that deed, seen in itself abstractly, is against the will’s inclination. Therefore the deed done from fear is simply voluntary and yet involuntary secundum quid.

To explain. The simple voluntary act deals with objective good, clothed, here and now, with all its circumstances. The voluntary secundum quid deals with the object, not as it is here and now, but as it is in the intellect abstractly, denuded of its actual and objective circumstances.

Note that we are not speaking here of fear so extreme as to make deliberation impossible. Acts done from such fear are not in any sense voluntary.

A confirmation. Acts done from fear are willed absolutely and efficaciously. The will is against them only inefficaciously and conditionally. The merchant wills efficaciously to lose his goods, though he would will to retain them were there no danger of shipwreck. A deed willed efficaciously is simply voluntary, and only secundum quid involuntary.

DIFFICULTIES ANALYZED

1. In acts done from fear, the will consents. In acts done under violence, the will does not consent.

2. An object in itself involuntary may become simply voluntary.

3. An act done here and now from fear is absolutely willed, conditionally non-willed.

SPECIAL DIFFICULTIES

1. Fear of hell leads many men to sorrow for sin and observance of the law. Now this sorrow and observance are in no way involuntary. Hence acts clone from fear need not be involuntary secundum quid. Answer: Even in this case the will remains conditioned: Were there no hell, I would sin. While the man in this condition is not good, his sorrow and observance are good, just as faith in a sinner is good, even while the man remains bad.

2. But a deed which is simply voluntary cannot in any real sense be involuntary. Answer: The adverb “simply” does not mean “totally.” It means “principally and efficaciously.”

3. Contracts entered into under grave fear are invalid, and therefore simply involuntary. Answer: Such contracts, even when they are not invalid by natural law, are made invalid by positive law. Natural law itself cancels gratuitous contracts, if such contracts result from fear unjustly threatened, because gratuitousness presupposes full freedom.

Grave fear unjustly inflicted invalidates matrimony, some say by natural law, others, by ecclesiastical law.

1. Corollaries. Grave fear, in matters prohibited by the natural law, does not entirely excuse from sin, because the act remains simply voluntary. Example: one who from fear of death denies the faith or commits perjury or fornication. But fear does diminish the voluntary, in the degree in which the fear is grave. It even destroys the voluntary if it takes away the faculty of deliberation.

2. Grave fear, in matters which are evil only because prohibited, generally excuses from all sin, because positive laws do not oblige under grave loss. Under fear of death or of infamy, a man is not bound by the law of fasting, say, or of Sunday Mass.

3. But at times even positive laws oblige a man to risk or lose his life. But such cases contain an element of the natural law. For example, a soldier must face his country's enemy. Again, a Christian, ordered to eat meat on Friday, if the command comes from scorn of religion.

ART. 7. DOES CONCUPISCENCE MAKE THE ACT INVOLUNTARY?

PRELIMINARIES

By concupiscence we here understand those passions which incline us to follow a certain line of activity. Concupiscence is thus opposed to fear, the latter being motion away from evil.

Concupiscence is either antecedent (which precedes the motion of the will) or consequent (which follows the act of the will). Consequent concupiscence is the sign and effect of an intense voluntary act, which excites a corresponding passion (e.g., anger) in the inferior appetite. Here we deal only with antecedent concupiscence.

A TWOFOLD CONCLUSION

First. Antecedent concupiscence of itself inclines rather to the voluntary than to the involuntary, because it attracts the will to that which concupiscence desires. Thus it increases the imperfect voluntary, whether in brutes or in man.

Second. Antecedent concupiscence diminishes the perfect voluntary, because it weakens judgment. It may even coerce judgment completely (e.g., in hysteria or extreme anger). In any case, it distracts the intellect from attention to the reasons for good.

AN APPENDIX

Question: Do habits, good or bad, increase voluntariness? Habit is an acquired operation quality, a quality hard to change, which man uses when he wills, and by which he is inclined to perform similar acts, good or bad, virtuous or vicious.

Habits are found, not only in the sense appetite, but also in the intellect and the will. As regards the influence of habits upon liberty, under the moral aspect of imputability, we must make a number of distinctions. Habit either remains voluntary, or, if it has been efficaciously retracted, still influences materially.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Habit, good or bad, unless retracted, increases the voluntary, because it gives to the will facility and propensity to act, and takes away all repugnance. Nor does it diminish liberty, because it has been acquired freely and is freely preserved.

2. A good habit perfects liberty, since it inclines the agent to act according to right reason, and diminishes the power of sinning, which is a defect of liberty.

3. An evil habit increases sin, because he who sins from a habit not retracted sins with greater inclination and delight, but not with less liberty. The man who sins by habit, and not merely from a momentary impulse, sins by malice.

4. An evil habit, efficaciously retracted but still exerting material influence, remains as a temperamental disposition, which diminishes the voluntary because it partially impedes deliberation. Acts which flow from it indeliberately (for instance, blasphemy or excess in drinking) are no longer imputed as guilt, because they are not free in their principle. But the man is bound to do his utmost toward eradicating his bad habits.

HEREDITY AND TEMPERAMENT

Heredity transmits certain inclinations which, while directly physical, are indirectly moral (e.g., the inclination to anger or to lust). Many determinists maintain that children simply cannot resist their hereditary passions.

To this we must reply: As long as the use of reason remains, there remains likewise the power of deliberating and choosing, even against hereditary inclinations. This truth is clear by the testimony of conscience and many historical facts. Christian discipline has often overcome and transformed the hereditary inclinations of barbarians. That which is born of flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Still we must grant that hereditary inclinations do lessen liberty by disturbing judgment. Men under this handicap are to be treated kindly. Their temptations need the aid of special grace.

HEREDITY

By heredity we here understand psychopathic tendencies, transmitted by parents to children. From parents insane or alcoholic or neuropathic, or drunk at the moment of conception, children may have an organic predisposition to any of these evils, a certain psychopathic tendency, especially in the form of disordered imagination and sensibility, of obsession, tendencies, for instance, to suicide.

Immediate heredity, i.e., from parents alone, may be simple (from one parent) or double (from each parent). Maternal heredity is probably more frequent and more grave. Mediate heredity, if it has grown through several generations, is called accumulated heredity.

Heredity is progressive, when the aforesaid disposition continually grows, and tends to the annihilation of the family. Or it is regressive, when corrected by a happy marriage, as it were by the infusion of new blood. In a family where insanity is hereditary, children are sometimes immune, and even distinguished by great genius. The sickness transmitted can be a disposition to insanity or to general paralysis or to neurosis or to syphilis or to alcoholism. General paralysis often arises from hereditary syphilis.

Modern theories tend to consider pathological heredity as the effect of disturbed nutrition, or of intoxication in the embryo. Intoxication in the blood may result in delirium, or give rise to forms of nerve-tension.

TEMPERAMENT

Temperament is the complex of all inclinations directly physical, which arise, either from heredity or from the individual organism. These inclinations are based in matter signed with quantity which, according to Thomists, is the principle of individuation. This individuation, since it lies below direct intelligibility, cannot be defined, just as God cannot be defined, since He stands higher than the created intellect. Temperaments differ by predominance of nerve-power or of blood or of bile or of lymph. Some men are thus prompt to begin, but without perseverance. Others are energetic and persevering, and others sluggish.

These native dispositions can be modified by education, by external circumstances, by individual effort. Thus arises character, which is a stable complex of these native propensities, as fixed by education and the individual's own will. Virtuous character is related to temperament, as in Latin the word vir is related to the word homo. Vir, like virtus (virtue), originally signified man as distinguished from woman. Cicero uses the word "virility" to express character and vigor of soul. Homo, on the contrary, means any member of the human race, man or woman. The word seems related to humus (the soil). Character, then, is the seal which man (vir) imposes upon his humus, his temperament. Christian character is constituted by the virtues, moral and theological.

Temperament, like antecedent passion, lessens free will. Character, on the contrary, like a voluntary habit not retracted, increases the voluntary and does not diminish freedom. Good character perfects liberty, evil character not retracted increases sin.

CHARACTER EDUCATION

Hereditary inclinations are modified by parents, teachers and society, under three forms.

1. The inculcation of principles, good and bad. This is a truth of the greatest importance, if, as Aristotle says, the boy's mind is a blackboard where nothing has been written. The enemies of the Church recognize this importance by claiming a legal monopoly in education.

2. The second influence of education is that of giving example which allures imitation.

3. Third, the education of passions, either by moderation or by perversion, not only by example or by inculcation of principles, but by commands, properly so called, given by parents and teachers.

Finally, the individual Christian educates his own character, by acquiring virtue, by prayer and the sacraments, which increase infused virtues. For example:

1. The spirit of faith, hope, and charity grows by meditation, by acting from good motives, natural and supernatural.

2. The continual practice of prudence, natural and Christian, which directs the moral virtues to a supernatural end. Negative prudence is not sufficient, operative prudence is required. The phrase “he is prudent,” is often misused to express a negative prudence, employed in avoiding the discomforts of life, as, for example, by Epicureans.

3. Moderation of the passions, that the man may have true temperance and fortitude. Passions are not to be extinguished, because man is to be moved toward good, not only by his will, but also by his sense-appetites, regulated and commanded by virtue. God gave us sensibility to attain our purpose in life.

4. Frequent consideration of the rights of others, in a spirit of justice, and love of our neighbor’s sanctification, in the spirit of charity.

PATHOLOGICAL CONDITIONS

Modern authors tend to consider pathological conditions as directly affecting the will. Indecision, or any particular propensity, is looked on as sickness of the will. Such a view denies or ignores the spirituality of the soul. We must clearly distinguish physical sickness from vice, which is an evil habit of the will itself. Vice has in it more than mere sickness. Speaking properly, sickness is in the body, but only analogically in the soul, as far as the will is evilly disposed.

Certain pathological states impede more directly the exercise of judgment and will. Thus indecision (aboulia) affects the will, as insanity does the intellect. Others less directly impede the exercise of liberty, for instance, neurasthenia, hysteria, epilepsy. But even here a crisis may make the use of reason impossible. Those who undergo hypnosis, and afterward carry out the suggestions of the hypnotist, probably suffer only a diminution of liberty. But even when liberty is entirely taken away, we must still consider

whether the deeds done are voluntary in cause (by the patient's imprudent consent to be hypnotized). Each case is to be examined by the experience of those suffering from the sickness, by the testimony of experts and physicians.

ART. 8. DOES IGNORANCE MAKE THE ACT INVOLUNTARY?

PRELIMINARIES

Ignorance is the lack of knowledge that is due; for instance, absence of theological knowledge in a priest or of medical knowledge in a physician. Thus ignorance is distinguished from nescience, which is a mere absence of knowledge, for instance, in the insane. It is likewise distinguished from error, which is not only negation, or privation of knowledge, but is a contrary disposition.

DIVISIONS OF IGNORANCE

St. Thomas speaks of three kinds of ignorance: antecedent, concomitant, and consequent. Modern theologians prefer to speak of ignorance, vincible or invincible. But these two modes of division can be harmonized.

1. By relation to its object, ignorance is ignorantia juris (when the law is unknown, when, e.g., I do not know that excommunicated persons are to be avoided).

2. Second, ignorance of fact. To illustrate. I know the law, but do not know that Peter, for example, is excommunicated.

3. Two other kinds of ignorance are distinguished by their relation to the will. Here we have, first, consequent ignorance, that is, ignorance willed and vincible. And this itself has two classes: ignorance, directly willed, i.e., pretended ignorance, or, then, indirectly willed, arising from negligence, which can be either grave or light.

4. Distinct from consequent ignorance is ignorance that is nonconsequent, i.e., not willed, and invincible. Also this ignorance is of two kinds. First, antecedent ignorance, when the deed is indeed done but would not be alone if there were knowledge. For example, I kill a friend while invincibly I think that I am killing a deer. Second, concomitant ignorance,

when, e.g., I kill my enemy, thinking invincibly that I am killing a deer, but so minded that I would have done the deed even if I had known that it was my enemy.

PRINCIPLES REGARDING IGNORANCE

First Principle

Consequent ignorance, directly willed and vincible, causes the simply voluntary and the involuntary secundum quid. Such ignorance does not take away freedom and imputability. But ignorance indirectly willed lessens freedom and voluntariness.

Ignorance directly willed is itself voluntary. Willing the cause, I will the effect. For example; a physician, negligent in removing his ignorance, wishes in cause the death which follows from this ignorance.

Nevertheless this consequent ignorance, when indirectly willed, is in some way against the inclination of the agent. If he had known, the deed would not have been done. Hence ignorance indirectly willed lessens freedom and voluntariness. Thus ignorance arising from light negligence may reduce a sin objectively to a venial sin. But crass ignorance cannot be so excused. If, however, ignorance is so affected that even in its absence the work would still be done, then it does not lessen the voluntary. Example: a man wills not to know the law in order to sin without remorse. Here we have full imputability.

This first principle is thus divided by some modern theologians. Ignorance actually vincible does not remove freedom but lessens it. Ignorance here and now invincible, whereas formerly it was vincible, results in an act voluntary in cause. To illustrate. The physician, who during his medical education neglected study, does not incur the sin of homicide in that instant when he gives a medicine which produces death: but he willed the effects of his ignorance when he neglected study. The same hold good of the confessor who has gravely neglected the study of theology.

SECOND PRINCIPLE

Ignorance nonconsequent, not willed, invincible, causes the involuntary simply or at least the nonvoluntary. This principle has two subdivisions. First: Ignorance invincible and antecedent, since it is itself involuntary,

causes the involuntary simply. For nothing is willed unless it is foreknown at least in its cause. Further, the deed proceeding from this ignorance is against the agent's inclination, actual or habitual or interpretative. This is evident in the example already adduced: I kill a friend, because invincibly I think I am killing a deer, but would not have killed him had I known him to be my friend. Second: Invincible ignorance concomitant makes the act, not simply voluntary nor simply involuntary, but nonvoluntary. This is clear from the example of the man who, invincibly thinking that he is killing a deer, kills instead an enemy whom he would have killed anyhow had he known it. Such ignorance does not take away all will of sin. Therefore the act is not simply involuntary. But neither is the act simply voluntary, because the ignorance itself is not voluntary.

Corollary. In this last case, the man who kills his enemy, invincibly thinking that he is killing a wild beast, while he is guilty of intended homicide is excused from actual homicide, and hence from punishment and censures, which are not inflicted except on account of the external act.

A FINAL CONCLUSION

In every sin there is voluntary ignorance of choice, not as regards the law, but as regards the law's application to the here and now. Here and now we choose something that is simply evil, and only good secundum quid. Thus, misled by passion, a man judges that it is good to steal or to lie.

Thus we harmonize the word of Plato and Aristotle that "every evil man is ignorant," with the saying of Augustine that "all sin is voluntary."

A brief synopsis. 1. Consequent ignorance causes the simply voluntary. 2. Antecedent ignorance causes the simply involuntary. 3. Concomitant ignorance causes the nonvoluntary.

CHAPTER XI

THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF HUMAN ACTS (Q. 7)

PRELIMINARIES

THE nature of any human act is affected by its circumstances. Certain circumstances change the very species of an act: theft becomes sacrilege, when committed in a holy place. Other circumstances notably increase the gravity of the act: to steal a thousand dollars is a greater sin than to steal a few cents. Others are only lightly aggravating: to steal thirty cents rather than twenty-five.

ART. 1. WHETHER CIRCUMSTANCE CAN BE AN ACCIDENT OF HUMAN ACTS?

Response. Circumstance is an accident of the human act, affecting the morality of that act. We explain the definition. Circumstance is called an accident, because it lies outside the substance of the act, surrounds the act, as it were (circumstare, the Latin verb, means to stand around). It affects the human act, but does not constitute the essence. If it were the source of essential morality, it would no longer be a circumstance, but would either specifically differentiate the act, or would be the purpose of the deed. The purpose of the agent, when it is not identical with the purpose of the work, is a circumstance. Examples: to steal in order to pay money to a prostitute, or, on the contrary, in order to give alms. A circumstance affects the act morally, that is, modifies it in relation to moral standards. A mere physical circumstance does not affect morality. Example: A man giving alms in gold or in silver, with the right hand or with the left.

ART. 2. THEOLOGICAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Circumstances modify acts, first, in relation to man’s last end. To illustrate: alms, not for a mere human end, but for God. Second, in relation to good and evil. By an evil circumstance an act, by its object good, can become evil. For instance, I teach the truth, but with the purpose of attaining human glory. Third, as regards merit and demerit.

ART. 3. CIRCUMSTANCES FORMULATED: WHO, WHAT, WHERE, BY WHOSE AID, WHY, HOW AND WHEN

This division is founded on the definition of circumstance. The seven circumstances are reduced by St. Thomas to three chief classes. First, circumstances that modify the act itself. Second, those that modify the causes of the act. Third, those circumstances that modify the effect of the act.

1. Circumstances of the act itself. Such circumstances function, first, as a measure of time (when: a festival day, a prolonged period), or as measure of place (where: in public, in a sacred place). Secondly, circumstances affect the act in the manner of a quality (how: intensely, remissly, from contempt, or ignorance).

2. Circumstances that affect causes. If the cause is final, we have the circumstance “why” (the personal purpose of the agent). If the cause is the efficient principal cause, we have the circumstance of “who” (a priest, a married man). If the cause is the instrumental cause, we have the circumstance “by whose aid” (demon, poison, sword).

3. Circumstances that modify the effect. Here we have the circumstance “what” (a sacred thing, a profane thing). To illustrate. The circumstance called “what” does not denote that the thing stolen belongs to someone else, but that it is either sacred or profane, large or small. The circumstance “who” designates the quality of the agent (a priest or a layman). The circumstance “why” designates a purpose, not intrinsic in the deed itself, but extrinsic, namely, the purpose of the agent (stealing in order to get drunk).

ART. 4. WHAT ARE THE CHIEF CIRCUMSTANCES?

The principal circumstances are “why” and “what,” since they more nearly modify voluntariness. Hence the chief circumstance is “why” as

affecting purpose. Next in importance is “what,” as modifying the effect destined for such a purpose. Other circumstances are ordered by their nearness to “why” and “what.”

HUMAN ACTS CONSIDERED PSYCHOLOGICALLY

Human acts are either elicited by the will or commanded by the will. Acts elicited deal either with the end and are therefore divided into three classes, (namely, to will, to enjoy, to intend), or with the means employed (namely, to choose, to counsel, to consent, to use).

Although intention precedes fruition, we treat of fruition first, because it deals simply with the end, whereas intention implies relation to means. Thus God enjoys His own goodness before He intends to manifest that goodness. St. Thomas treats of choice in connection with counsel, which guides choice. Consent sometimes precedes choice, when, namely, pleasing means are open, and the agent must choose between them.

TWELVE SUCCESSIVE ACTS

Intellect Will

ORDER OF INTENTION

1. Judgment (this goal is desirable). 2. Inefficacious desire (e.g., for rain).
3. Judgment (this goal is attainable). 4. Efficacious intention (I will attain this goal).

ORDER OF CHOICE

5. Counsel (many choices are open). 6. Consent (to one of these various choices).
7. Practical judgment (this is the best means). 8. Choice (I select this means).

ORDER OF EXECUTION

9. Command (follow this path). 10. Active use (the will moves to take this path).

11. Attainment of goal. 12. Fruition (enjoyment of goal attained).

This classification is of great importance in many questions. For instance, in the problem of free will, since the last practical judgment is within our power. Similarly, in dealing with indeliberate acts, with temptation, in analyzing the act of faith, in predestination, where we distinguish the order of intention and the order of execution, and even in the forms of government in civil society or in the Church. In regard to counsel, St. Thomas prefers a union of aristocracy and the popular elements (senators and representatives). But as regards command, unity is needed, lest there be discussion without end.

Question. Why does St. Thomas not treat these acts in their chronological and concrete order?

1. He is here following the theoretical and abstract order, treating professedly acts that belong, not to the intellect, but to the will. Hence he treats the command and commanded acts, after the question of use, although, it is true chronologically, command enters in at the beginning of execution.

2. Since he first speaks of acts elicited regarding the goal, he speaks of fruition at the beginning, although this act belongs chronologically at the end.

3. He treats of fruition before treating of intention, because fruition is concerned with the end simply, whereas intention deals with the end in relation to ways and means.

4. He treats counsel after choice, because choice is an elicited act of the will.

5. He treats consent after choice, because often there is only one suitable medium to the end. In this case the two acts are not distinguished.

6. As consent is sometimes distinguished from choice, so likewise we distinguish counsel from the last practical judgment. Thus we have perfect harmony between the chronological, concrete succession generally admitted and the order of St. Thomas, who treats each act theoretically and abstractly. Finally we must notice that, in the first three questions on the will, St. Thomas professedly treats only of simple volition. But even while he thus treats of volition, St. Thomas adds many points regarding the

volitional power. Choice, for instance, is a kind of volition, although not every volition is choice. Treating of the first volition, he speaks of volition as a genus. Similarly, treating of the angels who are the first of creatures, he deals with matters that belong in common to all created things. Treating of the first sacrament, namely, of baptism, he speaks of the sacraments in general. Similarly, Aristotle, treating of the vegetative soul, deals with the soul in general.

CHAPTER XII

THE WILL AND ITS OBJECT (Q. 8)

ART. 1. CAN THE WILL DESIRE EVIL?

PRELIMINARIES

IT SEEMS that the will can aim at evil, just as sight, for instance, aims not only at white but also at black, since one and the same power deals with opposites. Again, according to Aristotle, it is a characteristic of rational powers to deal with opposites, with truth and falsehood, with evil and good. Further, goodness and reality are convertible, and our will chooses negations of reality, for instance, not to walk, not to speak.

For our thesis we might quote Dionysius, who says that evil is not aimed at by the will, that all things desire only good. But how are these assertions to be harmonized with the difficulties just now proposed? Dionysius seems at first sight to deny the existence of sin and vice. And if, as Spinoza and Hegel maintain, the object of sin is not an evil, but only a lesser good, the sinner himself would be merely a man characterized by his indistinct power of thinking. Thus we would have absolute and unlimited optimism.

Thesis. It is not necessary that the object of the will be in very truth a good, but only that it be apprehended as a good. The will cannot will evil as evil. This is the common doctrine, admitted also by St. Bonaventure, Henry of Ghent, and Gabriel Biel, and rejected only by some nominalists.

A. Authority. The word of Dionysius (see above) had already been expressed by Aristotle. St. Augustine says: So much do we want to be blessed, that we cannot will to be miserable. Not even the demon can will evil as evil.

B. By reason we prove, first, that the will always aims at good. Every appetite is inclined to something agreeable. The will is an appetite. Hence it

aims only at what is good and agreeable. The will, however, can aim at apparent good. What is really evil, for instance, theft, is often looked upon as good. But the will is an appetite that follows, not upon a natural form (as does the natural appetite of the plant), but upon an apprehended form (as does sense-appetite). Therefore the will, like sense-appetite, can aim at something that is only apparently good.

Corollary. Natural appetite follows the natural form, which always tends to perfection and to real good. But whereas our natural appetite is always right, its object is the lowest kind of good. The will, however, is related to a higher good, which it attains freely, and can therefore turn aside from true good. But, notwithstanding the possibility of sin, the will transcends natural appetite, by reason of its universal object.

Confirmation. We must judge the adequate object of the will, just as, proportionally, we judge the adequate object of the intellect, or of the sense-appetite. The adequate object of the intellect is reality and truth, at least apparent truth. The adequate object of the sense-appetite is sense-good, suitable and agreeable, at least apparently. Hence the adequate object of the will is good, either really or at least apparently. The object is not, as maintained by some nominalists, reality as abstracting from good and evil. We cannot will evil except under the aspect of an apparent good.

DIFFICULTIES ANALYZED

1. Good and evil as opposites belong to the same power. Answer: Belong to the same power, if they are related in the same way to both, yes. The will aims at both good and evil, but not in the same way. Will, volition, aims at good. Non-will, volition, refuses evil.

2. The will is a rational power, and therefore deals with good and with evil. Answer: The will aims at good and at evil, but at evil only under the aspect of an apparent good, I grant. Aims at evil as evil, I deny.

THE FOLLOWING DIFFICULTIES ARE URGED

a. He who hates his enemy wishes him evil as evil. Answer. He wishes evil as the evil of his enemy, yes; as evil to himself, no.

b. The envious man is saddened by the prosperity of another under the aspect of good. Therefore sometimes the will flees from good. Answer: The

envious man is sad at the good of another as good for that neighbor, yes; as good for himself, no.

c. Sin committed by malice is distinguished from sin committed by passion or ignorance. But he who sins by passion wishes moral evil only as a sense-good, and he who sins by ignorance wishes evil because he believes it to be good. Therefore malice, differing from these two kinds of evil, chooses evil as an offense against God. Answer: That consequence does not follow. These three kinds of sin are distinguished, not by their object, but by the dispositions of the sinner. He who sins by passion is moved by that passion to sin, and he who sins by ignorance sins by responsible lack of knowledge. But he who sins from malice, not from passion and not from ignorance, while he knows that this thing is evil and forbidden, still wills it as suitable to his present evil disposition, to manifest his own liberty (e.g., his pertinacious selfishness and pride).

3. The will aims also at nonexistent things, for instance, not to walk, not to speak. But such acts cannot aim at good because good and reality are convertible. Answer. In nonexistence, in self-destruction, it is not possible to find any positive aspect of good, I grant; any negative aspect, the lack of evil, I deny. Those who will anything under a not-good aspect, do so because to lack evil is good. Demons, e.g., will nonexistence as liberation from their miseries. They desire not to be miserable. This seems to them to be good.

The objection is urged: He who hates God, wills evil as evil. Answer: He who hates God, the judge who punishes sin, wishes to escape punishment, and this would be a good.

COROLLARY

The good that is only apparent good is really evil, not merely a minor good. Apparent good attracts more, the more it has the appearance of good. Greatest perversity arises when the greatest evil is pursued under the appearance of good: absolute liberalism, for example, the negation of all rights of God, under the guise of charity, namely, to avoid divisions among men. Since charity is the highest of all virtues, counterfeit charity is the greatest of evils. As such, it will characterize Antichrist, under whom even the elect, were it possible, will be led into error. Beware of false prophets in the garments of sheep. By their fruits you shall know them. Test all things,

keep only that which is good. Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see if they be from God. All these evils are founded on the truth that evil is proposed under the appearance of good. Open materialism, manifestly absurd, is less dangerous than an idealism which flaunts Christian words, but denies their reality. Liberalism denies the obligation, laid on the individual and on society, to embrace revelation sufficiently proposed. Liberty of cult is an evil, to be tolerated in order to avoid a greater evil. It is not the ideal condition. On this point Lamennais was condemned. Liberalism, indifferentism, skepticism, lead many to confound true charity with false.

May certain tenets of liberalism be retained in practical life, on the plea that the rights of God and of God's Church are allowed in our schools? In practical life, so these men say, the hypothesis of liberty for all cults is to be admitted. Answer: If the assertion were true, then it would also be true to say that though theft is simply evil, still, in hypothesis, and in practical life, we must allow theft to be justifiable. What is needed in life is not liberalism, but prudence. Prudence never allows any deed against man's ultimate goal, but it does tolerate one evil in order to avoid a greater evil. Our thesis is not a mere speculative ideal, to be abandoned in practice. The rights of God, the exigencies of eternal salvation, enunciate the very goal of human life. True religion is to be embraced, not only by individuals but by society. In attaining this end, prudence dictates toleration of an evil to avoid a greater evil. But to abandon the thesis as something merely ideal, something only for the schools, is in reality to turn mankind away from the end of human life. It would be opportunism, receding farther and farther from the love of God and of souls.

We must keep the efficacious intention of attaining the end. Liberty flows from the authority of God, but license leads to the servitude of corruption.

ART. 2. IS THE WILL CONCERNED WITH PURPOSE ONLY?

PRELIMINARIES

Granting that the will aims only at good, either true good or apparent good, we now ask whether the will deals only with the end or also with means. It seems that it deals only with the end, according to Aristotle, since means belong to another genus of goods, namely, not to good-in-itself, or to

delightful good, but to the useful good. Thus we distinguish arts concerned with the end, navigation, for instance, from arts concerned with means, say, ship-building. We answer by a double conclusion. First: The will as a power deals with both the end and the means, since both are good. Secondly: The first act of the will, properly speaking, aims only at the end. The first simple volition is carried toward that which is willed for its own sake. But the means are not good except in relation to the end. Confirmation. In intelligence, the first act deals with principles, and the second act with conclusions. But in the order of appetibility the end has the same place as principle has in the order of intelligibility. The useful and the good-in-itself belongs to the same power, because one is subordinated to the other, just as color and light in relation to the power of vision. And one and the same operative habit (art) deals both with its own proper end and with the means to attain this end. Hence there can be no neutral act, no act which tends to an object which is neither end nor medium. Whatever we will, is in some way related to our desire for beatitude.

ART. 3. IS THE WILL MOVED BY ONE AND THE SAME ACT TOWARD PURPOSE AND MEANS?

PRELIMINARIES

When we wish one thing for the sake of another, for instance, medicine for the sake of health, is there one act of the will directed to both objects, or are there two simultaneous volitions, one of which is the reason and motive of the other?

This article illustrates the conciliation of liberty and impeccability in Christ. Many Thomists say that Christ, wayfarer and comprehensor, necessarily loved God clearly seen in Himself, but that He freely loved God as the reason for loving creatures, and hence for loving the sacrifice of the cross. God’s own love of self is necessary in relation to His own goodness, but is free in relation to creatures. This question influences spirituality also. When we will anything virtually on account of God, do we by that same act will God Himself?

Three conclusions. 1. The will is carried toward the end in a twofold manner, first, to the end absolutely, secondly, to the end as reason for

willing the means. Here there is no difficulty, for our will can be carried toward God absolutely, and by reason of this to love of neighbor.

2. The act by which the will is carried toward the end absolutely is distinct from the act by which it chooses the means. The reason is that we can think of the end absolutely, before we begin to consider the ways and means. Sometimes the first act precedes the choice of means even in time. Then it is called simple volition, distinct from choice which is concerned with means. To illustrate. First, I will health; secondly, I will to call a physician. Similarly, in the intellect: first, I know principles intuitively; secondly, I know conclusions drawn from these principles.

3. The motion of the will which we call choice aims simultaneously at end and means, because in this case the medium is willed, not for its own sake, but only for the end. To illustrate. The sick man cannot will bitter medicine unless he simultaneously wills health as the reason for choosing the medicine. Again, we cannot love our neighbor for God's sake unless we love God as the reason for loving our neighbor. Thus every act of a man who has charity, even though he is not thinking actually of God, is an act, not only of religion, but also of charity, because his will, virtually, not merely habitually, is centered on God. The will aims at medium and at end by one and the same act.

A CONFIRMATION

By one and the same act of vision we see color and light. Light is simultaneously the what (quod) and the whereby (quo). Again, by one and the same act we know, not only the conclusion, but also the principle, not absolutely, but as our reason for knowing the conclusion. Again, by one and the same act, I believe that God is triune and I believe God when He reveals the Trinity, an act wherein God's authority is simultaneously the what and the whereby. By one and the same simple act I believe God who reveals and the God whom He reveals.

Here enters a doubt. Is the act of desiring the end in the means a simple volition or a choice? For instance, to desire health in the offered medicine. The answer runs thus: To desire medicine on account of health is an act of choice. To wish absolutely for health in an offered medicine is a simple volition. Again, when God is clearly seen in some great saint, not only is this saint loved for God's sake, but God Himself is loved in this saint.

Hence the word: Wonderful is God in His saints. And when a principle is seen clearly in a conclusion, not only is the conclusion known from the principle, but in that conclusion we see the principle absolutely.

CHAPTER XIII

BY WHAT MOTIVES THE WILL IS MOVED (Q. 9)

PRELIMINARIES

IN THIS article, says Cajetan, St. Thomas considers, not only the objective motive of the will, but also the different causes of volition. Chief among these causes is the volitive faculty itself. This question has two parts. The first deals with intrinsic causes, namely, the intellect, the sense-appetite, the will itself. The second part deals with causes that are extrinsic, under three headings. Is the will moved by some exterior principle (object, God)? Is it moved by the heavenly bodies or atmospheric agents? Is it moved by God alone as exterior principle, or is it also moved by the angels or the demons? Throughout the present question two general theses are to be distinguished.

First. As regards the essence of its acts (the differentiating element), the will is moved directly by the intellect, indirectly by the sense-appetite and external corporeal agents.

Second. As regards the existence of its act (quoad exercitium), the will is moved only by itself and God, by no other cause. In the following question, these two general theses are particularized as follows:

1. The will is differentiated. This may be (a) necessarily, by three objects: by God seen clearly, by beatitude in common, by particular goods which precede deliberation (art. 1 and 2); (b) non-necessarily, by two objects: by partial good (not evidently connected with beatitude in common), by passion (art. 2).

2. The will is exercised. This may be (a) necessarily, by two objects: by God seen clearly, by beatitude in common (art. 4); (b) non-necessarily, by a partial good, not evidently connected with beatitude in common (art. 4).

ART. 1. IS THE WILL MOVED BY THE INTELLECT?

PRELIMINARIES

It seems that the will cannot be moved by the intellect, because, first, we often know a good and still have no desire to attain it. Secondly, imagination often proposes an object without moving the appetite. Thirdly, we would have a vicious circle: if the will moves the intellect, then it cannot be moved by the intellect.

The response is affirmative. First, by authority. The object understood is an “unmoved mover” whereas the will is a “moved mover.” The will moves the other faculties to act, but itself is moved, as regards specific difference, by the good proposed by the intellect. In the body of the article we have three conclusions.

First conclusion. We must distinguish exercise of the act from specification of the act. St. Augustine, indeed, uses the term delectatio victrix, be that delight heavenly or carnal. The Saint seems to understand by this term the object which attracts rather than the efficient cause. But clearly we must make a distinction. By my color I can objectively move the eye of another man, but I cannot move him, efficiently, to exercise his power of seeing. The teacher can move objectively the intellect of his pupil, but only God can move that intellect subjectively to exercise its act.

Proof of the conclusion. Anything that is in potentiality must be moved in order to be reduced to act. But the faculties of the soul are in a twofold potentiality: first, as regards exercise, namely, to act or not to act: secondly, as regards differentiation, namely, to do this or that. Consequently the faculties of the soul need to be moved under two aspects. First, subjectively toward exercise, secondly, objectively to specific differentiation.

Second conclusion. The will moves the intellect, and other powers, as regards exercise. When active powers are hierarchically ordered, that power which aims at the universal end moves to their exercise those powers which are directed to particular ends, just as the leader of an army moves soldiers subordinated to him. Now the will is directed toward good in common, whereas every other power is directed toward some special good, the eye, for instance, to perceive colors, the intellect to know the truth. Consequently the will must move to their exercise all powers of the soul, except the vegetative powers, which are not subject to our will.

This conclusion does not imply that the will is the principium quod, i.e., the acting man. But man, by his will, moves other faculties to their exercise.

Third conclusion. The intellect moves the will as regards the differentiating specification. Why? Because the intellect proposes the object to the will. Thus we have the adage, nothing willed unless pre-known. Specification in natural action, water getting hot, or cow begetting calf, comes from the specific form of the agent. But specification of an act of the will comes from the form of the object proposed to it by the intellect.

OBJECTIONS ANALYZED

1. If it be said that the intellect at times proposes a good and the will is not moved, we answer that the intellect moves, not to exercising the act, but as controlling specification, and even then not of necessity, if we are dealing with a particular good.

2. The intellect which moves the will is not the speculative intellect, but the practical, which proposes a certain good as here and now desirable.

3. The will moves the intellect, and is moved by the intellect, without any vicious circle, because the two movements are in different genera. The will moves the intellect to the existence of the act, because the truth to be known is a certain particular good. But the intellect moves the will to specification, because the good itself is a particular truth. This mutual relation of causality between will and intellect must be kept in mind when we prove free will, or show the mutual relation between choice and the last practical judgment. This mutual relationship solves also many objections of the voluntarists, who hold that intellect does not attain truth except under the influence of the will even as regards specification. What they say is true of prudential judgment, where truth means conformity with right appetite, even while speculative error remains in the intellect. It is true likewise of faith, since the object does not sufficiently move the will, and also of the quasi-experimental knowledge founded on the gift of wisdom. But it is not true of the speculative intellect, which deals with first principles, and with conclusions demonstrated from these principles.

THREE DOUBTS

1. What kind of causality does the intellect exercise in moving the will as regards specification? The more probable opinion is that given by Capreolus, Ferrariensis, Bañez, Gonet, and Billuart, namely, that the intellect exercises a causality which is final and extrinsically formal, but not efficient. The intellect, says St. Thomas, moves the will, not as an efficient cause, but as a final cause, by proposing to the will the object which is the goal. Cajetan indeed holds that the intellect moves the will also by a certain kind of efficient causality, since the known object concurs with the will to specify the volition, almost as the species impressa effectively concurs with the intellect to differentiate the act of the intellect. But, we must answer, this proposal of the object is effective only in an improper sense, since it is not an action, but only a disposition, required that this differentiated act be elicited by the will. To concur effectively in the proper sense, the object proposed by the intellect would have to be intrinsic in the intellect, just as is the species impressa.

2. Is the action whereby the will moves the other faculties formally transitive, or only virtually transitive? Active use is not an action formally transitive, for the act of the will does not pass out of the will. It does not pass into the sense-appetite, e.g., so as to be terminated there, whereas the action of heating is terminatively in the wood that is heated. The act of the will (just as God's creative action) is formally immanent and only virtually transitive. The effect it produces is called "passive use."

3. Does the will move other faculties only by a certain sympathy, or does it imprint something real? Probably it does imprint something real, since the inferior powers are compared to the will as instruments to a principal agent. Sympathy is not sufficient to move powers which resist, for instance, a distracted intellect or a disordered sense-appetite. Such a resistance is not overcome except by a real immutation. God moves our will by an action formally immanent but virtually transitive, but this transitive action produces something real in the creature, namely, the reduction of the power to act. The will is first an eliciting power, then by this imprint it actually elicits the operation.

ART. 2. IS THE WILL MOVED BY SENSE-APPETITE?

PRELIMINARIES

It seems that the will cannot be moved by sense-appetite: first, because the higher cannot be moved by the lower; secondly, because a particular agent cannot move a universal agent; thirdly, we would have a vicious circle, because sense-appetite is itself moved by the will.

TWO AFFIRMATIVE CONCLUSIONS

First conclusion. The object of the sense-appetite moves the will by the mediating judgment of the intellect. Proof. Any object understood by the intellect as good can differentiate the act of the will. Now when passion is aroused in the sense-appetite, the intellect apprehends as desirable an object which it would not so judge were passion absent. Therefore the sense-appetite moves the will by means of the intellect.

Here we may appeal to experience. In a fit of anger a man judges that revenge is a good thing, a judgment he would not pass if he were in a peaceful state. Similarly, the man who desires lust. As man is, so he chooses. Each one judges practically according to his predominant inclination. Contrast the man who has the virtue of temperance with the sinner who knows the law of temperance, but who, nevertheless, as ultimate practical judgment, says that intemperance is here and now good. Truth in the practical intellect is conformity with right appetite. A fortiori this is true of the command that comes after the last practical judgment.

OBJECTIONS ANALYZED

The sense-appetite can move the will only by the mediating intellect. But it can attract the will, since the choice is concerned with a limited good.

Second conclusion. The will moves the sense-appetite by a control which is diplomatic, not despotic. St. Thomas explains. The soul’s power over the body is despotic, because the members of the body (hand, foot) cannot resist the command of the soul. But reason’s control of the passions is diplomatic, because the sense-appetite is able to resist the command of reason, since, in man as in brute, it is moved by instinct, imagination, and sense. Thus we feel or imagine something delightful which reason forbids, or something saddening which reason commands. Thus passion, not despotically, but only diplomatically, can be led to obey reason.

ART. 3. DOES THE WILL MOVE ITSELF?

PRELIMINARIES

The response is affirmative, at least as regards some acts of the will. Two difficulties present themselves. 1. Since whatever is moved is moved by something else, we would, by allowing the will to move itself, destroy the first way for demonstrating the existence of a prime mover. 2. The will would be moved by two movers, each equal, namely, intellect and will itself.

THESIS

Particular acts. The proof is twofold. First, the will as free is the mistress of its own acts. Hence it has power either to will or not to will. Such power would be impossible if the will could not move itself. Secondly, the special nature of our will. Will, in the world of appetite, is like principle in the world of intelligence. The intellect, by knowing principle, reduces itself from potential to actual knowledge of conclusions, and thus moves itself. Hence the will, by willing the end, moves itself to will ways and means.

This self-motion toward choice, being a created act, does not, of course, exclude the causality of God, which is the first cause of all created acts, necessary or free.

DIFFICULTIES ANALYZED

1. Nothing moves itself. Yes, where only one act is in question. But the will, willing the end, moves itself to will the means.

2. The will would thus be moved by two immediate motors. Yes, but in different orders. The will is moved by the intellect as to the kind of act it performs, but by itself to the exercise of that act.

Note that this article is of great importance in distinguishing mystical acts (where the will does not move itself, but is moved by operating grace) from ascetic acts (where the will moves itself, under cooperating grace).

A difficulty remains regarding the first volition of the end. Does the will move itself to its first volition, when man comes to the use of reason, or again, to its first volition in any new undertaking, or to its first volition after

sleep? The answer is that here the will cannot move itself, but is moved only by God, though the will elicits the act.

ART. 4. IS THE WILL MOVED BY ANY EXTERIOR PRINCIPLE?

PRELIMINARIES

That the will is moved specifically by some exterior object is manifest. But we ask whether the will is moved by some exterior principle to exercise its act. The answer seems to be negative. First, it is the nature of the voluntary act to come from an intrinsic principle. Secondly, such an act seems to be forced, and violent volition is a contradiction. Thirdly, the will moves itself sufficiently, hence does not need to be moved by anything external to itself.

Thesis. To exercise its act, the will must be moved by an exterior mover, namely, by God. The argument runs as follows. That which is in potentiality to act needs to be premoved by something that is already in act. To choose means, the will moves itself, because it is already in act by willing the end. Now, in relation to the first volition of man’s whole life, an act which presupposes no anterior act of the will, the will is in potentiality. To this first volition, the will cannot move itself, but must be moved by the supreme motor, that is by God, the Author of nature and of will. This truth is affirmed also by Aristotle (or one of his disciples), and is confirmed by revelation which says: In God we live, and move, and are.

DIFFICULTIES ANALYZED

1. Voluntary motion, like natural motion, must be from an intrinsic principle. From an intrinsic principle, as second cause, granted; as first cause, denied. The very first volition of our whole life comes from the will as second cause. But the will, which elicits this first volition, does not move itself to it. It moves itself when it proceeds from one act to another, when from the volition of the end it chooses the means.

The divine premotion does not reduce the will from potentiality to that act which is the operation itself. Premotion moves the will from potential eliciting to actual eliciting, just as wood becomes ignited, and then ignites

other things. Three elements must be distinguished: first, the divine motion; second, the motion in the creature which is a passion; third, the operation vitally elicited.

2. The will, moved by some exterior principle, would be subject to violence. Yes, but only if it be against its own inclination. Under the motion of God the will itself acts.

3. The will is sufficiently moved by itself. To its first volition, no.

But, says the arguer, the first volition cannot be immediately from God, for this first volition presupposes intellectual cognition of the good, and this cognition presupposes the motion of the will which applies the intellect to consider and thus we have an infinite process. Answer: We need no infinite process. The intellect is simply first. Knowledge always precedes volition, but volition does not always precede knowledge. The source of our first act of knowledge is an intellective principle, higher than our own intellect; and this is God.

4. The first volition that follows the use of reason is not only a vital act, but also an act that is free and meritorious, as is clear in the case of Christ and the angels. Now to exercise a vital, free, and meritorious act, the will must not only elicit the act, but must also move itself to the act. Answer: This is required for a deliberate act, granted; for a free act, denied.

Explanation. This first volition, if it deals with beatitude in common, is free only as regards its exercise. If it deals with the ultimate end in the concrete, it is free also as regards specification. The act is free when the object is not proposed as absolutely good. Thus an object proposed by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost may precede the first deliberation. Then the will, already in volition to the common end, moves itself to deliberate, and this second act is not only free, but deliberate, with full dominion and full merit. Thus St. Thomas says that in their first instant of life angels could not sin, because their first act came immediately from God. Nor did that act have full dominion and full merit. But their second act was either sin, as in the demons, or fully meritorious, as in the angels. Further, acts performed under the gifts of the Holy Ghost, especially if they come after prayer disposing for them, are free and fully meritorious, although not discursively deliberate, since they come from a special inspiration.

The difficulty is urged. Man can sin in the first instant of the use of reason. Therefore in that instant man moves himself, otherwise sin would be traced to God as its author. The answer runs thus. Man can sin in the first

physical instant of the use of reason, denied; in the first moral instant, granted. In his first use of reason man passes from a confused cognition of good in common to a distinct cognition of good-in-itself. Hence this knowledge is not acquired in one physical instant, but in one moral instant, that is, a certain length of time, shorter or longer, depending on the subject's mental penetration. Hence that moral instant consists of many physical instants, at least two. In the first, wherein he is especially moved by God, man cannot sin. But in the following instant he can sin, because by his first act, elicited by God's special motion, he can by his own counsel move himself as he pleases.

TWO DOUBTS

1. Does God move the will only in that first volition, or also in others? Answer: God moves to that first volition in a special manner. To all other volitions God moves at least as first and universal mover, since the will is always a second cause.

But God's premotion is not an indifferent premotion. God moves in different fashions, according as man's volitions are sins, or acts naturally good, or acts disposing for justification, or acts fully supernatural and meritorious. Again, in one fashion to the act of virtue, in another fashion to the act of the gifts, in still another fashion to acts which resist temptation. All these acts differ in goodness, and all good in all volitions comes from God, the supreme good.

God is not the cause of sin, but only of the physical entity underlying the sin. But God is the cause of all virtue, and of all acts which are in any way good. All that God wills He does. Nothing happens, either in heaven or on earth, unless God Himself does it in mercy (if it is good), or allows it to happen in justice (if it is a sin).

Molina fell into error, by rejecting premotion and substituting for it a simultaneous concursus (two men drawing a ship). Those also are in error who admit only a premotion indifferent to good or to evil. From this would follow the proposition which Molina thought he had found in a genuine work of St. Justin, namely, that our deeds, good or evil, though they presuppose the general concursus of God, still come from our free will alone as their particular cause, and are not to be attributed to God.

God is the author of all that is good, even of merely natural good, which requires a greater natural aid than does the material act of sin. How much more is God the source of supernatural good! Without Me you can do nothing. We cannot even think anything as from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God. What hast thou that thou hast not received?

Molina's proposition is radically opposed to the definitions of the Council of Orange against the Pelagians and Semi-Pelagians. No one has of his own anything but lies and sin. God does many good things in man which man does not do, but man does nothing that is good unless God grants him the doing. Surely that which is most perfect in the created order, namely, man's good use of grace, must come from God as its source. Contrast with this truth the following propositions. "With an aid that is equal in both cases, it can happen that one man called will be converted and another not. With a minor aid of grace one can rise, whereas another with even greater grace does not rise but remains obdurate." "Of two similarly called, one may accept the grace and the other refuse. In this case the act is said to be from liberty alone, not that he who accepts receives by his liberty alone, but that only from liberty does this distinction arise, not from the diversity of the divine aid which precedes."

2. Does God specially move man to the first volition of each day, or each new undertaking? In a new undertaking God sometimes moves in a special manner, so suddenly that the will does not move itself.

a) Now this takes place in three ways: First, in supernatural motions, where no supernatural act precedes, but rather a contrary disposition. Instances: an infidel moved toward faith, a sinner toward penance. Such effects are due solely to operating grace. But when our mind is moved, and then moves, the operation is due to cooperating grace. Sometimes, at the beginning of the day, after sleep, we are granted operating grace, and then at once also cooperating grace. But it is not always thus. A sinful thought of sin at the beginning of the day, concerned indeed with beatitude in common, may immediately afterwards entertain a sinful purpose.

b) Second, in natural motions God sometimes suddenly gives men an entirely new thought. This can happen at man's first wakeful moment.

c) In many cases the will moves itself, from a preceding virtual intention to some new undertaking, without a special motion from God. An instance is the man who suddenly consents to a new sin at the first moral instant after sleep. Since sin cannot come from God's special movement, it must

come from the sinner’s will moving itself from some inordinate preceding act, which still remains, at least virtually.

ART. 5. IS THE WILL MOVED BY THE CORPOREAL WORLD?

PRELIMINARIES

The question of fate. This question today would be proposed probably as follows: Is the will affected by atmospheric agents, for instance, by hot winds? It would seem so, first, because our bodies are under the influence of atmospheric variations, the source of which is the diffusion of solar heat. Secondly, voluntary bodily motions cannot be traced back to prime physical agents, unless these agents affect also the will. Thirdly, it can be foreseen that under the influence of certain winds, suicides will increase.

Further, materialists say that the existence of free will is refuted by the principle of the conservation of energy, according to which the world’s total energy, potential and actual, remains always the same. Now if human liberty exercised an influence on our body, the quantity of energy would be increased. Similarly, the existence of a First Mover would augment the quantity of energy. Against these views stands the authority of Damascene, who says that the corporeal universe is not the cause of our actions.

First thesis: The corporeal world, as object, moves the will. The sense-world, and our own organs, are subject to our corporeal environment, in particular, to atmospheric variations. Under these variations, the passions of the sense-appetite attract the will objectively.

Second thesis: The corporeal world cannot force the will to act. No corporeal agent can force the spiritual faculty, which is independent of corporeal organs. Even objectively, the imagination cannot move the intellect except through the mediation of the intellect agent. Sense-powers, since they act by corporeal organs, can be moved by atmospheric variations, which involve variations in the organs themselves.

COROLLARY

Fate can be admitted, if we define it as “the mediation of second causes toward effects foreseen by divine knowledge.” Hence all events subject to

second causes are subject to fate. But deeds done immediately by God are not subject to fate. The more removed a created thing is from the first mind, the more deeply is it bound in the bonds of fate, more subject to the necessity of second causes.

Divine motion, then, far from enslaving, liberates the created will from the fatality of material causes. Molina's scientia media, on the contrary, admits a determinism by circumstances, a determinism which comes, not from God on high, but from the lowest creatures.

DIFFICULTIES ANALYZED

1. The multiform motions of our will are reduced to one uniform cause, namely, to God, but not to the corporeal universe.

2. Many men follow passion, which varies with atmospheric influence. Predictions based on this fact often come true. But the wise man "rules the stars," by resisting passion.

3. In modern terms, this same difficulty runs thus: The physical energy of the universe is unchangeable. Answer: Physical energy produced by physical energy, yes. But experimental science cannot prove that the invisible influence of God, the First Mover, or that of our will, does not exist. Physicists acknowledge that it has never been proved that the world is a closed system, that is, separated from all invisible influences.

ART. 6. IS GOD THE ONLY EXTERIOR PRINCIPLE

THAT MOVES THE WILL?

PRELIMINARIES

It seems that God is not the only principle which moves the will. First, the human will can be moved by the angels. Secondly, our intellect can be illuminated by the angels. Thirdly, if the will were moved by God alone, it would never be moved to evil. But the response is affirmative. In the Sed contra we hear St. Paul: "It is God who works in us both to will and to do." St. Paul here excludes four false understandings. Namely, first, that man, by free will, can be saved without divine aid; second, that man is necessitated by fate or providence; third, the Pelagian error, that to will comes from us,

but to do comes from God; fourth, that God does no good in us except in response to our merits, whereas elsewhere St. Paul tells us that salvation belongs, not to him who wills, or to him who runs, but to God who shows mercy. Similarly, Isaias: “Lord, Thou hast done all our works for us.” And the Psalm: “Strengthen, O Lord, that which Thou hast wrought in us.” And Christ Himself: “Without Me you can do nothing.” “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me, draw him.”

THESIS

The only exterior principle that moves the will is God alone. Since the motion of the will, like every natural motion, comes from within, it cannot be produced except by the will and the Author of the will. But God alone is the Author of the will. Hence only by God can the will be moved to exercise its act.

To explain. To produce an intrinsic motion in the will, there must be an immediate power over the will itself. But the only cause that has this immediate power is God. Why? Because God alone, being the immediate and universal Creator and Preserver, can change the creature which He creates and preserves. Examples are: first, transubstantiation; secondly, multiplying the loaves; thirdly, the vital operations of plant life; fourthly, resurrection of the dead.

Objection. But man, who is not the creator of the stone, can move the stone downwards, though this motion is natural and intrinsic in the stone. Answer: Either the motion is more rapid than it would be by the natural weight of the stone, or it is not more rapid. If it is more rapid, the movement is not natural for the stone. If it is not more rapid, then he who throws it only removes an impediment. Thus the principle stands clear: motion cannot be produced except by the proximate agent from which it proceeds, and from that agent’s Creator and Preserver.

But is God the only Author of the will? Yes. First, by nature, the will is a spiritual power of the rational soul. But God alone is the Author of the spiritual soul, and therefore of the will, which is a characteristic of that soul. Secondly, the will being a universal agent, destined for a universal good, cannot be produced except by the most universal of agents, namely, God. Hence God alone can move the created will. Demons cannot change the will of man intrinsically, but only extrinsically, by persuasion, by

influencing the imagination, or by exciting the humors of the body, and thus indirectly arousing passion.

COROLLARY

Only God scrutinizes the heart of man. The will of the rational creature belongs to God alone, hence things which depend upon the will alone are known only to God. The secrets of the heart are not necessarily connected with the external course of the world or with the essence of the soul, since they are free. Properly speaking, they are not parts of the universe, and therefore cannot be known even by the angels, though the angels know all the parts of the universe.

DIFFICULTIES ANALYZED

1. The angel is indeed higher than man, but not high enough to be the cause of our will. Hence the angel can move our will only objectively, by persuasion, not subjectively, by causing the act itself.

2. Likewise the angel can illumine our intellect objectively, by proposing an object in some higher and more universal way than a human teacher could, for instance, by manifesting to a soul some beautiful metaphysical synthesis. But the angel cannot intrinsically move our intellect. This belongs to God alone. But if the angel can move our will objectively, by persuasion, like a mother, how much more is it true of God?

THE THIRD RESPONSE

This third response is famous in the history of theology. It is cited by Molinists to prove that St. Thomas never admitted physical predetermination, but only a general concursus, or an indifferent premotion. This response contains three affirmations.

1. “As Universal Mover, God moves man’s will to universal good. Without this universal motion man cannot will anything.”

2. “By his own reason man determines himself to will this or that good, a good that is either real or apparent.”

3. “At times, in a special manner, God moves some men to choose definitely an object which is good, as is clear in those whom He moves by

grace.”

Let us consider, first, the Molinistic interpretation of this text, secondly, the Thomistic interpretation. Many Molinists conclude thus: St. Thomas admits physical premotion only for that first act whereby the will wills good in common. After this first act, premotion would be indifferent, i.e., man, of himself alone, determines himself either to good or to evil. Otherwise, they say, human freedom would be destroyed. Into man’s salutary act, God enters, first objectively, by the moral attraction of grace, secondly subjectively, by a simultaneous concursus or by an indifferent premotion. These views presuppose, as we have said above, a gratuitous definition of free will. Nor can they stand unless we admit Molina’s theory regarding scientia media.

The Thomistic interpretation rests on three propositions.

1. As universal Mover, God moves the will of man to universal good, and without this universal motion man cannot do anything. In this proposition there is no difficulty. This motion is required for any act, good or bad. But even under this first proposition we reject simultaneous concursus (two horses drawing a boat), and we affirm a previous concursus, at least an indifferent concursus. God moves the will, whereas one horse does not move the other.

2. Man by reason determines himself to this or that good, real or apparent. But man does this as proximate agent, not as sole agent. God’s premotion antecedes man’s deed, and this premotion is not indifferent, otherwise God would not be in any higher way the author of virtue than He would be the author of vice.

To understand this Thomistic interpretation we must distinguish six different ways in which the will is moved by God. Three of these ways are in the natural order, and three in the supernatural order. In the natural order we have, first, God’s motion to good in common. Here a man cannot sin, but only elicits a vital act, as a desire of beatitude. Secondly, God moves the will to determine itself, either to a true good or to an apparent good. In this case the will moves itself and is capable of sin. Thirdly, God moves by a special inspiration, in moral, or poetical, or philosophical, or military undertakings.

In the supernatural order God moves the will, first, to turn itself toward its supernatural end. In this case the will does not move itself by virtue of a previous act, but disposes itself by operating grace and free consent.

Secondly, God moves the will to exercise infused virtues. Here the will moves itself. Lastly, God moves the soul to exercise the gifts of the Holy Ghost. In this case the will does not move itself, but freely consents.

Under divine efficacious premotion to good, the will never sins, but (against the Jansenists) it can sin, if it wills to resist. Nor is there any obscurity in the present response after what has been said. The will is sufficient source of its own act, in its own order, namely, as proximate agent. Hence, when the will moves itself from intention of end to choice of means, it moves itself as a second cause, under the influence of the First Cause. God alone moves the will interiorly.

The will is not moved in the same way toward sin and toward the virtuous act. God is not the cause of sin, either directly or indirectly, though He is the cause of whatever physical entity there is in the sinful act. God is not the cause of the defects in an action which comes from a deficient second cause. To illustrate. The will causes the motion of man's members, but not his stumbling or lameness. The lameness comes from the crooked leg. But in every state, natural or supernatural, man needs the divine aid to do good. And the divine aid in the man who does good differs from the aid given to the man who, by divine permission, commits sin.

The objection to which St. Thomas is replying runs thus: If God alone moved the will, the will would never be moved toward evil. He replies: The will is moved by God alone as exterior principle, but is moved by itself as intrinsic principle, sometimes to real good, sometimes to apparent good. Here lies the possibility of sin. But there can be no sin in that first act whereby the will is moved by God and not by itself, as, for instance, in the first instant in the life of an angel, or where the will first wills good-in-common.

3. God sometimes, in a special manner, moves a soul to determinately will something good, "as when He moves by grace." Now this proposition deals precisely with the special motion which is found, either in the beginning of moral life, or at the beginning of conversion, or in the superhuman response to the gifts of the Holy Ghost, where there is no deliberation. These are the effects of operating grace. But the effects of our will, when it both moves and is moved, are the effects of cooperating grace. But operating grace naturally leads to cooperating graces.

In summary, we say that the will cannot be determined by itself alone. First, because such determination requires some mediating act whereby the

will moves and determines itself. And of that mediating act we would have to inquire by what more remote principle it is determined. Secondly, because the will as a power is indifferent and indetermined, and all determination depends on the supreme determination of the first agent, who is Pure Act. But with this motion of God presupposed, the will is the proper cause of its own act as individually mine or thine. But this same act, as entity, comes from the supreme entity, and as good from the supreme good. Thus the entire act is both from God and from the will, as from two causes, one of which is totally subordinated to the other, not from coordinated causes, illustrated by the two horses drawing the wagon.

The Molinistic view is based on a false definition of created liberty, a definition opposed to the principle of efficient and universal divine causality, and opposed likewise to the principle of divine predilection, namely, no created being can be better than another unless it is more loved by God.

CHAPTER XIV

HOW IS THE WILL MOVED? (Q. 10)

PRELIMINARIES

WE HAVE determined the cause whereby the will is moved, both objectively and subjectively. Now we have to treat of the modes under which the will is moved, one mode being that of necessity, the other that of freedom.

In summary, these four articles run thus. Looked at objectively, the will is moved of necessity: first, by God clearly seen; secondly, by beatitude in common; thirdly, by a particular good where the judgment does not remain indifferent. And it is moved freely, first, by a particular good where the judgment remains indifferent; secondly by passion. Looked at subjectively, the will is moved of necessity: first by beatitude in common; secondly by God seen clearly. And it is moved freely by a particular good, a good which, here and now, is not necessarily connected with beatitude in common.

ART. 1. IS THE WILL MOVED TO ANY ACT NATURALLY, I.E., NOT FREELY?

Thesis. The will desires naturally, by the necessity of objective specification. Elements which are not per se and naturally intrinsic are reduced to something that is intrinsic by nature. Now the will has free motions, which are not there necessarily and naturally. Nature comes first, on all levels of reality. Thus, as we speak of the nature of God, of the nature of the soul, of the nature of the intellect, so we speak here of the nature of the will. Further, on every level of reality we reduce all that is diverse and mutable to a source that is one, uniform, and immutable, otherwise we have an infinite process. As the intellect has an act that is natural and necessary, so must the will itself have some natural act.

COROLLARY

We must look at the will as nature and as free. Will as nature desires a necessary good. Will as free desires freely any good that is not necessary. This same distinction we find in the divine will, which necessarily loves divine goodness, but freely loves created goodness.

What, then, does the will naturally and necessarily desire? Three things: first, good in common; secondly, its ultimate end or goal, that is, beatitude in common, independently of any explicit notion of God; thirdly, existence, life, truth, and other natural goods, considered in themselves, though these goods may, by accidental circumstances, be seen as evils.

ART. 2. IS THE WILL MOVED NECESSARILY BY ITS OBJECT?

Definition of Liberty

Liberty in general is exemption from necessity. Freedom from legal necessity gives us moral liberty, namely, the absence of obligation. Freedom from elicitive necessity gives us psychological liberty, i.e., free will itself. Let us look at this distinction more in detail.

1. Moral liberty means, first, exemption from law, either from civil law (e.g., the right of possessing, testating, buying, selling, marrying); or secondly, from political law (the right to participate in the government of our country); or thirdly, from restrictions on liberty of conscience and of thought (the right of professing one's own religious faith).

2. Moral liberty may also mean, secondly, exemption from servitude, either from external servitude (slavery, imprisonment), or from the internal servitude of sin ("he who sins is the slave of sin").

3. Psychological liberty is, first, exemption from necessity, whether of acting at all (I can will or not), or from acting under specific differentiation (to love or to hate, to pray or to study). Psychological liberty is, secondly, exemption from external violence.

Freedom from necessity is also called the freedom of indifference, since under the very act of willing (under obedience, say) there remains real power to the opposite. Since this liberty of choice is based on freedom of judgment, indifference of judgment, it is called liberum arbitrium (free judgment).

God's freedom is not a faculty, not a potentiality which goes over into act. It is an act of choice which retains full freedom to the opposite.

Freedom remains under the act already elicited, otherwise God, whose act is eternal, could never create freely. The free act, even after it is determined, remains free. Molinists disregard this truth.

ERRORS REGARDING THE FREEDOM OF THE WILL

These errors are of two opposite kinds: determinism and indeterminism. Let us look, first, at the divisions of determinism. Here we find, first, divine determinism. Protestant determinism says that grace compels the will after original sin. Thus Wiclif, Luther, Calvin, Baius, and Jansenius. The only liberty that remains is freedom from external force. Pantheistic determinism holds that all things proceed under necessity from the substance of God. Thus the Stoics, Spinoza, and Hegel.

Human determinism has three forms. First, psychological determinism, which holds that the last practical judgment is determined infallibly by the strongest motive. Thus Leibnitz. Second, physical and physiological determinism (from temperament, from physical circumstances, from the principle of causality, from the principle of the conservation of energy). Third, statistic determinism, which claims to foresee the number of future homicides, suicides, thefts, marriages.

DIVISIONS OF INDETERMINISM

Pelagian indeterminism holds that human freedom is inclined equally to good or evil; that human liberty would be unreasonably limited if we affirmed the necessity of prevenient grace for conversion; that human liberty was not harmed by original sin.

Libertinarian indeterminism holds that freedom can choose without any motive; or that the primary distinction between good and evil comes from the free will of God; or that the primary distinction between good and evil rests on God’s free will; or that impeccability would destroy liberty, since liberty contains essentially the power of sinning.

Question. Did St. Thomas know these errors against free will? The answer is affirmative, as is clear from the objections in this article, and from the twenty-four questions in his treatise De malo.

PRELIMINARIES

We are here treating of natural necessity, namely, whether the will is moved necessarily by its object, as a physical thing is changed and moved by a physical cause, or as the faculty of sight is moved by its object. Now it might seem that the will is moved necessarily by its object. First, the object is a sufficient motive, and any sufficient motive moves of necessity, a necessity, not indeed metaphysical or physical, but moral. Secondly, since the intellect is necessarily moved by its object, even by a particular truth, the will too must be moved of necessity by a particular good which, here and now, is evidently connected with beatitude. Thirdly, since the last end in common is necessarily desired, and the end is the reason for willing the means, the means also are desired of necessity.

OUR AUTHORITIES

Aristotle says that the will, since it is a rational power, is related to opposites, and hence is not of necessity moved toward one or the other. God speaks to Cain: The lust thereof (of sin) shall be under thee, and thou shalt have dominion over it. God leaves man in the hand of his own counsel. The Church condemned this Jansenistic proposition: For merit or demerit in the state of fallen nature, there is required, not freedom from necessity, but only freedom from coercion.

First thesis. The will is moved to act of necessity by no object except God seen clearly. This conclusion is clear from experience. We are not bound even to think of any one object, much less to will it. But if we do will anything, then, at least virtually, we will it by reason of beatitude in common.

Second thesis. Objectively (and a fortiori subjectively) the will cannot be moved necessarily by any good proposed by reason as particular and limited.

The proof that will here follow is a metaphysical proof, based on experience. Moderns tend to ignore the foundation of the solution, namely, that the adequate object of the will is universal good. Further, they do not look on the will as a rational appetite, since they divide faculties into three, namely, intellect, will, and sensibility, and under sensibility they place, not only the passions of the sense-appetite, but also the higher inclinations of the rational appetites. This division, originating from Rousseau, is merely

phenomenal, and is false, since it no longer observes the distinction between intellectual life and sense life.

THE ARGUMENT

The will is not moved necessarily, as regards differentiation, except by an object here and now proposed as universally good, in no way evil. Now all particular goods, since they are in some way limited, can be looked upon as not good. The principle here invoked has two foundations. First, the relation of faculty to adequate and differentiating object; secondly, from analogy with sight and intellect. Sight is differentiated specifically only by an object completely and actually colored. The intellect is differentiated specifically only by necessary and evident truth, not by mere probability. Only manifest evidence necessitates the intellect. Since mysteries remain obscure, it is possible to doubt the truths of faith.

A particular good may be good-in-itself, but also difficult and arduous. Or it may be delightful or useful, not good-in-itself. And even if it is in itself entirely good (existence, life, intelligence), it can still be seen as not good because of attendant evils. Such particular and limited goods cannot necessarily move a faculty of unlimited capacity.

FIRST COROLLARY

Here on earth God Himself is, under one aspect, good, but under another is evil (to the sinner, e.g., who is displeased by God’s commands). Here man’s judgment is mutable and free. Only God clearly seen can invincibly attract our will, down to its deepest roots, whereas particular goods can attract it only superficially.

In a purely natural order, man, we may suppose, would, after probation, be preserved from practical error, and would not depart from God known in the mirror of creation. In illustration, we may point to those saints who, while still on earth, were confirmed in grace.

The dominating indifference of the will in relation to particular goods is first potential and then actual. The act, elicited and determined, still remains free, because its object is particular, not universal. Thus the man who is seated retains, even while he sits, the power to stand, though he cannot simultaneously sit and stand. Similarly, under efficacious grace, where there

is transition from potential indifference to actual indifference, the mode of freedom remains under the act itself. In God there is actual dominating indifference, but not potential. If potential indifference were of the essence of freedom, God could not be free, since His act is both free and eternal.

SECOND COROLLARY

Our will has a quasi-infinity, since only the infinite God seen clearly can adequately fill its capacity. The will's free act is man's response to the impotent solicitation coming from finite good. A particular good, augmented as far as conceivable, will never become a universal good, good under every aspect, a good that necessarily attracts our will.

Question. What is the demonstrative medium in proving free will? Answer: This demonstrative medium is the infinite disproportion between particular good and universal good. In other words, there is no objective reason infallibly determining the transition of the will from universal good to particular good. Though on earth we do not possess God as seen, we are nevertheless destined for Him, so that it is impossible to find our beatitude in any finite good. Thus the martyrs showed their freedom by despising all finite goods and overcoming all torments.

FOUR DOUBTS

First. Wherein does this metaphysical demonstration differ from the spontaneous knowledge of common sense? Answer: The difference is the distinction between confused and distinct, between natural intelligence and philosophical reason. Natural intelligence recognizes, confusedly, the disproportion between the particular good and the universal good. Thus we experience that this particular good cannot in every way satisfy our rational appetite.

Objection. But consciousness recognizes only the act already elicited which is already determined. Hence we can have no consciousness of potential liberty. Answer: Consciousness knows, not only the elicited choice after it has been made, but also the entire course of deliberation, wherein choice is the terminus. Knowing this successive deliberation, consciousness perceives, confusedly at least, the infinite disproportion between the particular and the universal. Even in cases where there is no antecedent

deliberation, but docile and free acceptance of divine inspiration, we should still have experience of liberty, of freedom, that is, either to accept or to reject that inspiration. Thus we experience that we stand freely, because we know that we can choose the opposite, namely, not to stand. And God knows experimentally He is free, though His choice never passes from potentiality to act.

Second. What is the relation of the last practical judgment to the act of choice? Answer: Among the Thomistic theses one runs as follows: "The will does not precede, but follows, the intellect. The will necessarily desires only what is presented as being in every way good. Thus among the various goods, desired by mutable judgment, the will chooses freely. Choice therefore follows the ultimate practical judgment. But the will itself makes that judgment to be the last."

This proposition, a compendium of our thesis, is, in its first part, against Suarez, who holds, as we shall see later, that when two equal goods are proposed to the will, the will can choose one of them without any ultimate practical judgment directing this choice rather than the opposite. His view cannot stand, because it is against the principle that nothing is willed unless foreknown, and that nothing can be more loved than another unless it is foreknown as more suitable here and now, though only, it may be, for an accidental reason and the subjective disposition of the man who chooses. The last part of the proposition is against Leibnitz, that is, against psychological determinism, which denies that the last practical judgment comes from the will itself.

Third. By what act does the will make this judgment to be the last? Many Thomists answer (e.g., the Salmanticenses) that this act of the will is free, otherwise the judgment itself would not be free. Hence the act of the will which thus determines the ultimate judgment, regarding this particular medium, is not the intention of the goal, nor the consent given in globo to different ways and means. But it is the very choice of this determined medium, because choice in general acts as formal extrinsic cause, anteceding the ultimate practical judgment. This judgment does not direct the will unless the will chooses thus to be directed. Causes are reciprocal, since they are in various genera of causality.

But if the last practical judgment comes from a special inspiration of the gift of counsel, it is still free and mutable, not in the sense that it is fully and

completely in our power, but in the sense that it deals with an object not in every way good, an object which man freely accepts.

Fourth. What about motions of the will that are altogether sudden or imperfectly free? Are they sins, at least venial sins? One answer is that these acts are not free. But the proper answer demands a distinction. Most certainly these acts are not fully deliberate, but an act can be non-deliberate and still free. We note some instances. The first act in the life of an angel where, without deliberation, there is an indifferent judgment and a certain domination, though not complete. Again, human acts under the gifts of the Holy Ghost are not deliberate, but still free and meritorious. Hence the proper answer to the question runs thus: These sudden motions are imperfectly free, if indifference of judgment still remains, that is, attention to the twofold aspect of the object, good in the one way, not good in another. If this attention is absent, these acts are not even imperfectly free.

But there remains a difficult question. Is man bound to be always attentive to sudden motions that arise, let us say from sensuality or temptations against faith? The answer of St. Thomas runs thus: “The corruption remaining from original sin does not impede rational man from repressing any single inordinate motion of sensuality if he foresees it: he can divert his thought to something else, some other inordinate motion may arise. For instance, when a man changes his thought from carnal delight to the study of knowledge, there may arise an emotion of unpremeditated vainglory. Hence by reason of this corruption man cannot avoid all these motions. But such emotion is in some way sinful, since he is able to avoid each single motion that arises.” If he does not avoid each single motion, there is at least a negligence against prudence. And a fortiori, if the sudden motion is not in sensuality but in the will. “A sudden motion of infidelity is a venial sin.”

THE ROOTS OF FREEDOM

Here we must distinguish extrinsic roots of liberty from intrinsic. The extrinsic root of liberty is the supreme efficacy of the divine will, which is the cause of created things and of all their modes. The intrinsic roots are two, one remote, the other proximate. The remote root of liberty is the immateriality of intellectual natures: human, angelic, divine. The proximate root is either causal or subjective. The causal root is the intellect’s

knowledge of universal good. The subjective root is the will's amplitude and capacity for universal and absolute good, the will's pre-eminence above all particular and limited good.

DEFINITIONS OF LIBERTY

First: Liberty is self-control, self-mastery, dominion over self. Second: Free will is a faculty of will and of reason. It belongs to reason as origin and norm; but formally to the will, because only the will can choose. Third: Liberty is a rational power related to opposites, to act or not to act. Fourth: Free will is a faculty elective of means, presupposing direction with relation to the goal. The phrase, direction "with relation to the goal" shows that turning away from the goal is a defect of liberty. Free will is more perfect in God and Christ and the angels than it is in those who can sin. Power to sin is not of the essence of liberty, but a defect of liberty, just as error is not essential to reason, but a defect of reason.

THE MOLINISTIC DEFINITION

Liberty is a faculty which, presupposing all elements necessary for action, can either act or not act. This definition is, first, novel; secondly, ambiguous; thirdly, when explained Molinistically, a begging of the question; fourthly, contrary to the universal causality of God; fifthly, an offense against the very principle of causality.

As to novelty, it is not found among the scholastic doctors of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. As to ambiguity, note, first, the word "presupposing," which does not distinguish the order of time from the order of nature. A prerequisite of a free act, not in time but in nature, is the divine premotion and the last practical judgment. Another ambiguous expression is "can act or not act," which expresses, either the divided sense, i.e., antecedent power, or then the composite sense, i.e., consequent power.

Molinists and Congruists interpret in the following fashion. Liberty is a faculty which, presupposing all things necessary, not only in time but also in nature, can still act or not act even in the composite sense. They explain: Supposing a congruous grace inclining to act, and supposing the ultimate practical judgment, the will not only retains the power of acting, but can even cause the nonexistence of the act. Molina, against the principle of

predilection, speaks thus: “Under equal aid, one man is converted and another not. Yes, even under a smaller aid, one can rise, whereas the other, even under a greater aid, does not rise but remains obdurate. Thomists on the contrary, understand as follows: Liberty is a faculty which, presupposing in time all things necessary for acting, can still act or not act in the composite sense; but which, presupposing all things required by nature, can act or not act, only in the divided sense. They explain. Under efficacious grace and the last practical judgment, we retain the power of not acting, but we cannot make the act nonexistent. An example is the man who is sitting: he retains the power to stand, but he cannot simultaneously sit and stand.

This definition, as it stands, holds good only in regard to prerequisites in time, otherwise it begs the question, and denies the principle of predilection, which declares that no one can be better than another unless he is more loved by God. “What hast thou that thou hast not received?” Further, it would deny the universal causality of God.

TWO DOUBTS

First. Can the will, placed twice under the same circumstances and dispositions prerequired in time, act differently in each case? The response is affirmative. It is commonly admitted by theologians, as a corollary of the preceding definition, as there explained.

Second. Can the liberty of indifference be harmonized with scientia media? No. Scientia media presupposes a circumstantial determinism, because in this theory God can foresee the future infallibly only by examining the circumstances in which a man will be placed. This theory involves a threefold impossibility. First, the free determination would be a good not proceeding from God. Secondly, God’s intelligence would be that of passive spectator, whose knowledge is not cause but effect. Thirdly, human liberty would be destroyed, by its subjection to circumstantial determinism. But, says Thomas, no created being can be better than another if it be not loved more by God. He who labors more has more of grace, but that he does labor more is an effect of some higher cause.

DOMINATING INDIFFERENCE

The constituting element of free will is its full dominion over its own acts. This dominating indifference may be considered in relation, either to the object or to the act. In relation to the object, we have either objective indifference (in the object) or formal indifference (in the will itself). In relation to act, we have either passive and potential indifference (in the faculty), or active, actual indifference (in the act of choice itself).

Potential indifference is the state of the will, when the will is idle and inactive. This inactive indifference is not essential to liberty as such. It is rather an imperfection, since every potentiality is perfected by the act for which it exists. Otherwise it would follow that God, who is always in act, would not be free. Further, it would follow that our will, as often as it acts, would lose liberty, by losing potential and passive indifference.

Actual and active indifference appears when the will acts, but still retains power not to act. This indifference is not taken away by grace, but is given by grace. Grace moves, not only that the act take place, but that it take place freely. Potential indifference, on which Molinists insist, is not of such great importance, since it does not exist in God, nor in us when we freely choose.

Question: Which kind of indifference is essential to freedom? Our answer is fivefold.

1. Freedom of choice demands that indifference which excludes natural necessity, determined to one course. Freedom of will differs from that spontaneity which brutes have by natural instinct. Nature causes by being what it is, but the will causes, not by its natural form, but by its own super-added determination, mediated by the intellect. Jansenists reply that the mere light of reason suffices to lift the will above nature, and thus indifference is not required. But they fail to see that the will has, not only free acts, but also necessary acts, determined by its essence, for instance, the love of beatitude. “The longing for the last goal is not of those things which we are masters of.”

2. Objective indifference is required for freedom of will. It is impossible for the will to aim freely at an object proposed to it as altogether good and lovable. It can aim freely only at those goods which are proposed, under one aspect as good, under another at least as apparently deficient. Further, the act of the will is free only so far as the judgment from which liberty proceeds is itself free, i.e., in the power of the will. And this judgment is not in the power of the will if objective indifference is absent. But, so runs the question, can we not reflect on the act even without objective indifference?

Answer: The intellect can reflect upon a necessary judgment by a cognitive reflection, yes; by a judicative and deliberative cognition, no. To illustrate. We cannot dissent from the principle of contradiction, or from a geometrical conclusion. Assent or dissent is in our power when the thing apprehended does not sufficiently convince the intellect.

3. Formal and subjective indifference is required for liberty, because it follows objective indifference. Otherwise the will would not tend with indifference to the object; it would not determine itself, but would be determined by its nature.

4. Moral indifference is not the essence of liberty, but rather its imperfection. To follow evil is not of the very nature of a power destined for good. The free will is destined to follow good, just as reason is destined to pursue truth. In God, in Christ, in the blessed, we find the most perfect freedom united with supreme impeccability.

5. Freedom of will does not necessarily require differentiating indifference, but it does demand indifference toward placing the act. The will brings forth this act, not because it exists, not by a determination of nature, but because, by its own counsel, it chooses to perform this act.

Objection. The desire for the last goal does not belong to those things of which we are masters. Still we are free to exercise this act. Answer: Free, yes, but only so far as we can refuse to think of beatitude. If we do think of it, the judgment is not indifferent, and the will of its own nature is necessitated toward this act.

IS EQUILIBRIUM NECESSARY FOR FREEDOM?

Some say that subjective indifference means equilibrium, and that efficacious grace, by determining the will to one thing, takes away this equilibrium. Answer: We do not find this term, either in Scripture, or in the definitions of the Church, or in St. Augustine, or in St. Thomas. Further, if by equilibrium we are to understand equality of inclination and facility, and even of faculty in the Molinistic sense, then the notion is false. Molina says, we remember, that under equal aid, one may be converted and another not. Or, again, that by the aid of a smaller grace one man can rise, whereas another, under a greater aid does not rise, and remains obdurate. Now these sentences are against the principle of predilection: “What hast thou that thou hast not received?” and also against the principle of the universal

causality of God. But if by equilibrium we understand the power of resisting any grace, and the power of conquering any temptation with God's help, in this sense we admit equilibrium, because it is then nothing else but the active indifference which is not taken away by efficacious grace, since under efficacious grace there remains a real power to the opposite. But the term is not well chosen.

ANALYSIS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL DETERMINISM

So far we have seen that human liberty is based on reason, and have also seen the various kinds of indifference. Now we pass to the second part of the article, which harmonizes human liberty with the influence of sufficient motive. The main objection, proposed by Leibnitz, is found already in St. Thomas.

ANALYSIS OF DIFFICULTIES

A truly sufficient motive moves by necessity. But a particular good is related to the will as a sufficient motive. Answer: If it fills the entire capacity of the mobile thing, then it moves by necessity, granted. But if it is only relatively sufficient, if it does not fill the entire capacity of the mobile thing, then we deny that it moves by necessity.

EIGHT REPLIES

1. The will is moved by its object, as sense-appetite by its object. Now the appetite of a hungry dog does not, by the fact that it is insatiable, remain free while eating a morsel of bread. In parallel manner, then, the will does not, by the fact that it is destined for universal good, remain free in relation to a particular good. Answer: The will is moved by its object, if you presuppose the indifference of judgment founded on the cognition of universal good, granted: otherwise, denied. This nominalistic objection shows that sensualism cannot admit liberty, but only spontaneity.

2. The will is moved by good, as the intellect is by truth. Now the intellect, though destined for universal truth, is not free regarding a particular truth. Answer: The intellect is not free in relation to demonstrated truth, I grant; in relation to mere opinion, I deny. Note, further, that the

intellect draws things to itself and thus reduces many truths to the necessity of prime principles. The will, on the contrary, is drawn to the thing wherein the good exists. That good is always finite, unless it be God.

3. But that liberty or indifference of judgment in relation to particular good does not remain. Proof: Aesthetic admiration, though destined for universal beauty, is of necessity aroused by particular works of art, Michelangelo's statue of Moses, say, or by one of Beethoven's symphonies. In parallel manner, then, the will, though destined for universal good, is drawn necessarily by certain particular goods. We distinguish: Drawn by particular goods in any way imperfect, we deny. By particular goods, in every way good (existence, life, intelligence), per se, we grant; but note that these goods can, per accidens, be refused.

4. But the natural desire of the end takes away indifference of judgment. I grant, as regards specification. But, granting likewise that the end is the reason for necessarily willing the means, here and now necessary for beatitude, (as existence, life, intelligence), I deny such necessity toward other means and ways.

5. But the practical judgment must always be necessary, otherwise ethics would be a system not necessary, but arbitrary. Answer: The standard of the will must be necessary as regards principles and conclusions, but not as regards the practical judgment of prudence. And I explain. The judgment that is speculativo-practical belongs to moral science, and proceeds from the awareness of the sinner. But the judgment that is practico-practical is determined by prudence, and is not here and now psychologically necessary. To illustrate. The sinner, though speculatively he admits that justice must be observed by all men, especially toward himself, nevertheless, in practice, judges that his injustice toward another is simply good for himself. He can repeat the words of the poet: I see the better way, and I approve, but nevertheless I follow the worse.

6. By the principles of causality and sufficient reason this indifference is taken away. A cause, under one and the same set of circumstances, cannot produce different effects. Answer: A cause determined by nature to one line of causality, granted; otherwise denied.

7. But the will cannot choose unless it is determined by the intellect, and the intellect, granted the same circumstances, cannot change its judgment. Answer: Cannot, if the circumstances of the object are here and now infallibly determined, granted; otherwise denied.

8. Individual circumstances infallibly determine the act, because the object cannot be chosen unless it is judged to be better than another. Answer: Unless it is judged absolutely better, I deny. Better in relation to the will which is here and now acting, I grant. The last practical judgment depends on the actual disposition, good or bad, of liberty itself. He who wills an object can also non-will it, to manifest his liberty. Particular good furnishes no motive that infallibly determines the will. This truth is especially apparent in acts where we find the greatest liberty, particularly in God.

TWO DOUBTS

1. Must choice be always governed by the last practical judgment? Thomists answer in the affirmative, against Suarez. The last judgment immediately directing election is pre-required, because nothing can be willed unless it can be pre-known as good and suitable. But, says Suarez, when two goods are proposed as here and now equal, the will can choose one without any reason, simply because it wills. Stat pro ratione voluntas. Answer: The phrase “because it wills” modifies, not only the agent, but also the object. The will always chooses “because it wills,” if you look at the act subjectively, even when it chooses a greater or an equal good. The phrase “because it wills” concurs as an objective motive. If the man is asked why he selects this minor good in preference to a major good, he will give for the reason and motive “because I will.” His motive for the choice is his own pleasure which he applies to one object and not to another. Stat pro ratione voluntas.

Man’s pleasure, we note, is often against the rule of reason, whereas God’s pleasure, though infinitely free, is always conformed to infinite wisdom, and wisdom judges that, in matters which cannot necessarily be determined, it is right to act according to one’s pleasure. To illustrate. God creates a man at this instant rather than before or after; or He gives to one a degree of glory which He does not give to another.

But, Suarez insists, God, without any last practical judgment, chooses this world in preference to a better world. Answer: God chooses a world, less good objectively, granted; by a motive less good, no. To explain. This world, though intrinsically less good than other worlds which God could have chosen, is nevertheless better, if you look at God’s motive, since it

shows God’s pleasure applied to this world and not to another. In matters of liberality and grace, the will of the donor becomes objective motive.

Further, the divine will does not, as does our will, presuppose goodness, but makes and creates that goodness, by loving and choosing it. God pours the goodness of His own choice into our free choice. God does not choose creatures because they are more or less good, but creatures are more or less good because God loves them more or less. God has greater love for better things, but better things are better because they are more loved by God.

ANSWERING LEIBNITZ

God would be neither wise nor good, says Leibnitz, had He not created the best possible world. The answer is that God cannot make any created good absolutely better, because no created good is the highest possible good. God can always make something better than the thing He has already made. But He cannot act better, that is, He cannot act with greater wisdom and power. The external glory of God rests on the free counsel of His will. Supreme wisdom “delights to play in the universe.” What God chooses among created goods is formally better, that is, more according to His will, but it is not always materially better. To illustrate. What obedience commands is not always materially the better course; but it is formally the better.

A FINAL DOUBT

Supposing a free and efficacious intention of the goal, and only one medium to reach this goal, is the act of the will in such cases necessary or free? For example, a man wills health, and sees that it can be attained only by amputation. The answer is that, as the case is here stated, the man’s decision for amputation is a necessary act, because the will cannot efficaciously will the impossible. If he refuses, then he has withdrawn his free and efficacious intention to attain health.

ART. 3. IS THE WILL MOVED NECESSARILY BY THE SENSE-APPETITE?

PRELIMINARIES

This article is against physical and physiological determinism. The objections are thus proposed by St. Thomas.

1. The authority of St. Paul: “Not the good which I will do I do, but the evil which I will not, that I do.” St. Paul is speaking of the concupiscence which follows original sin.

2. Aristotle says: “As man is, so does man choose.” Now it is not in the power of the will immediately to cast off passion.

The thesis is negative. In the Sed contra we have God’s words to Cain: “Why art thou angry? Under thee shall be thy appetite, and thou shalt control it.” Then follow three conclusions.

1. A man whose reason is totally bound by passion is necessarily moved by the sense-appetite. Where reason is bound, we cannot have indifference of judgment, and hence no voluntary act. Man is then like a brute animal.

2. When the judgment of reason is not entirely impeded by passion, man is moved by sense-appetite, not necessarily, but freely. The object attracts him strongly, but leaves his judgment indifferent and mutable. But the liberty decreases as the impulse of passion increases.

3. If an act of the will is present it does not of necessity follow passion. From this third conclusion it is clear that St. Thomas does not admit that sudden motions of the will are necessary.

DIFFICULTIES ANALYZED

1. St. Thomas, explaining the Pauline phrase, “the evil which I will not, that I do,” notes that the will cannot prevent movements of concupiscence from arising. The first motions of sensuality are not sins, if man immediately resists and turns his thought elsewhere. The following proposition has been condemned: “Evil desires, which reason does not consent to, which man suffers against his will, are nevertheless prohibited by the precept “thou shalt not covet.”

In an opposite direction Molinos says: “Under temptations, even furious temptations, the soul is not bound to resist.” Condemned is likewise another proposition of Molinos wherein he denies that first motions of sensuality can exist after the purification of the soul. This condemnation of Baius and Quesnel shows that concupiscence, being a habit (fomes), is not properly speaking sin, and that the first motions of sensuality are not sins if man resists and turns his thought elsewhere.

2. Our will has not the power to banish passion immediately. Answer: The judgment of reason remains in some way free, and hence can refrain from following passion.

3. The will can be moved to a particular good, without any passion in the sense-appetite. A sick man, with no appetite, nevertheless wills to eat in order to sustain life, or to drink bitter medicine though it nauseates him.

We have solved the objections raised by physical or physiological determinism by recalling the source of free will, i.e., the indifference, the mutability, of judgment. If such judgment is absent, the act is no longer voluntary. Thus we see the harmony between free will and motive objectively sufficient. This motive is relatively sufficient for a free choice, but not absolutely sufficient to necessitate the will. Two finite goods, however unequal, are both equally distant from infinite good.

ART. 4. MUST THE WILL BE MOVED BY GOD TO ITS ACT?

PRELIMINARIES

Here we are to solve the objections of Calvin and Luther against efficacious grace, objections renewed by Molinists against Thomists, objections already stated by St. Thomas. For in this article we are treating not only of liberty from coercion, that is, of spontaneity, but also of freedom from necessity.

OBJECTIONS

1. An irresistible agent moves of necessity. But God is an irresistible agent. This objection is raised by Calvinists and Lutherans. Molinists agree on the principle involved, namely, that God, moving by intrinsically efficacious grace, would move of necessity. But they differ from heretics in the application, namely, that grace is intrinsically efficacious. This is affirmed by the heretics, denied by the Molinists. We, however, reject the principle, admitted by Protestants and Molinists.

Protestantism says: God, moving by intrinsically efficacious grace, moves of necessity. But grace is intrinsically efficacious. Molinism says: God, moving by intrinsically efficacious grace, moves of necessity. But

God does not move by necessity. Hence grace is not intrinsically efficacious. Thomism says: God, moving by intrinsically efficacious grace, moves not of necessity. But grace is intrinsically efficacious. Hence God moves not of necessity.

2. The operation of God would be inefficacious if the will refused that to which God is moving. But the operation of God is not inefficacious.

THESIS

God moves the will, yet so that He does not determine it to necessity. We prove this first by authority. “God from the beginning created man, and left him in the hand of his own counsel.” Again, we have the definition of the Council of Trent against the early Protestants: If anyone says that the free will of man, moved by God, does not cooperate by assenting to God’s calling, whereby man prepares himself for the grace of justification, or says that man cannot dissent if he wills, but that, like something inanimate, he does nothing at all and is merely passive, A.S.

Molinists say that the Council is here treating of efficacious grace, first, because the grace in question is one with which man de facto cooperates, and secondly, because the Council is treating of that grace which, according to Luther and Calvin, would destroy liberty. From this conception of the Council’s meaning, they argue that man can resist efficacious grace in the composite sense, thereby rendering it inefficacious.

A MANIFOLD REPLY

1. Were this position true, the Council would have also condemned Thomism. But the supreme pontiffs, especially Benedict XV and Clement XII, declared that the Thomistic doctrine was in no way condemned by the Council of Trent, nor by the bull Unigenitus against the Jansenists.

2. This Molinistic objection was proposed already by Pelagians and Semi-Pelagians against Augustine.

3. Among the fathers of the Council were many Thomists and Augustinians, who certainly did not wish to condemn Thomism. And in the redaction of these canons on justification, one of the collaborators was the Thomistic Soto.

4. We grant that in this canon there is question of efficacious grace, and we answer that, according to the Molinists, man under that grace which is efficacious, though he can indeed dissent, does not in fact dissent. Otherwise this grace would no longer be efficacious, not even by extrinsic denomination, but would be merely sufficient. In the Molinistic view this grace is indeed not efficacious except by our consent foreknown by God through scientia media. But this prevision, depending on our consent, posits a dependence in God, which we cannot admit.

5. The fathers of the Council are probably speaking, not only of efficacious grace, but of grace intrinsically efficacious. The meaning of the canon would be, against Luther, that this grace, intrinsically efficacious, does not take away free will, since man can dissent, i.e., he retains power for the opposite; he is not an inanimate thing, merely passive.

The fathers of the Council certainly knew that Luther and Calvin defended grace per se efficacious, and from this principle inferred the destruction of liberty. Hence arises a dilemma. The fathers of the Council judged, either that the doctrine of antecedent grace, that is, grace per se efficacious, is heretical, or that the Protestant consequence, namely, that efficacious grace destroys liberty, is heretical. That the first alternative is not their meaning is clear. They would have had to proscribe such a traditional doctrine in express terms; this they did not. Hence the second alternative holds good, namely, the fathers of the Council say that it is heretical to affirm that intrinsically efficacious grace destroys liberty.

Now from this conciliar condemnation it does not follow that Molinism, in its positive part, is a heresy; but it does follow that its objections against Thomism do not preserve the meaning of the Council. It is an illegitimate heretical conclusion to say that efficacious grace destroys liberty.

Again, the Council, treating of perseverance, declares: “God, unless men fail in corresponding to His grace, just as He began the good work, so will He bring it to perfection, since ‘He works both to will and to do.’ “ How can this proposition of the Council be harmonized with the proposition of Molina, namely, that under equal aid, or even smaller aid, one man is converted and another not. Were it so, God would have begun equally in these two men a good work, and one of these would of himself bring the work to completion.

To see the mind of the Church, let us return to ancient times, and particularly to the Second Council of Orange, against the Pelagians and

Semi-Pelagians. The twentieth canon of the Council says: “No one has of his own anything except deceit and sin. But if man has anything of truth and justice, it must come from that fountain which we thirst for here in the wilderness, in order that, bedewed by its drops, we may not faint in the way.” The many texts cited by the Council against the Semi-Pelagians hold good likewise against Molinists.

In favor of grace intrinsically efficacious, many other texts are cited, not only by Thomists, but also by Augustinians. St. Augustine himself, commenting on the words, “I will take from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh,” speaks thus: “This grace, given secretly to human hearts by divine generosity, has as first purpose to take away hardness of heart.” Now God cannot infallibly attain this purpose by concurring indifferently, by a decree which awaits or presupposes consent given by man, since according to Scripture, it is God who takes away the hardness of the human heart. Divine Providence, says St. Thomas, works in all things infallibly.

AGAINST LESSIUS

Lessius speaks thus: “When of two men similarly called, one accepts the grace offered and the other refuses, then we say rightly that the decision comes from liberty alone. Not that he who accepts, accepts only by his liberty, but because by his liberty alone does this difference arise, not from the diversity of the aid which precedes.”

This view, Thomists repeat, is against the principle of predilection: “I will have mercy on whom I will.” It is also against St. Paul’s word: “What hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received?” Listen to St. Augustine: “Why God draws this man and not that man, judge not unless you would misjudge.” Thomists add that, according to St. Paul, God Himself, by His election and grace, distinguishes one man from the other, whereas Molinism supposes that one, Peter, say, is distinguished from Judas by liberty alone, so that God’s role is reduced to placing Peter in circumstances wherein God foresees, by scientia media, that Peter will consent.

Who distinguishes thee? To this question St. Thomas replies: “Thou canst not distinguish thyself from the mass of lost men. Hence thou hast no reason for being proud against another, or for making thyself superior to

another." Again, "No created thing could be better than another unless it were more loved by God, whose love is the cause of all created goodness."

Here enter some beautiful words of Bossuet: "We must bring our intellect into captivity before the great mystery of grace, and admit that there is a twofold grace, one sufficient, the other efficacious, the first of which leaves our will inexcusable before God, while the second hinders us from glorying in ourselves."

"O God, I thank Thee that I am not like the rest of men." These words St. Augustine often quoted against the Semi-Pelagians. Del Prado, quoting the same text against the Molinists, shows how men should pray if the principles of Molina were true.

THE THESIS

God, moving the will to choose, does not determine it to necessity, but so that its motion remains contingent, except in its natural movements. God moves all creatures according to their condition, necessary causes to necessary effects, contingent causes to contingent effects. But the will is an active principle, not determined by nature to one line of activity.

Notice that St. Thomas does not say that God moves the will according to scientia media. Neither does Leo XIII. St. Thomas had spoken thus: "Since the divine will is most efficacious, that which God wills not only follows, but follows in that manner in which God wishes it to follow. But God wills that some things follow necessarily and some things contingently."

Harmony between the infallible divine decree and our liberty is founded on the transcendent efficacy of the divine causality. The mystery lies, not in man, but in God. This efficacy of divine causality transcends all created causality, even angelic causality, just as free determination is predicated only analogically of God, angel, and man.

St. Thomas leads our intellect toward this mystery when he says that, already in the created order, "the more a cause is efficacious, the more does effect follow cause, not only substantially, but also modally." To illustrate. Dissimilarity of son to father is on account of weakness in the father, whereas, if the father is strong and sound, his son is similar to him also in modes and accidents. In certain families we find that the son is the living image of the father. A great military leader (Themistocles, Caesar, Napoleon) communicates to his soldiers his own victorious modes.

Michelangelo, Beethoven, Dante, Plato, Aristotle, and St. Thomas, each in his own line, communicates to his disciples the mode and spirit of his power. A mother leads her son, a wife leads her husband, to choose freely what she wills and as she wills. Hence the ironical proverb: What the wife wills, God wills.

PASSAGES FROM ST. THOMAS

1. “Since the will of God is most efficacious, not only does that follow which God wills to follow, but it follows in the manner which God wills. But God wills certain things to happen necessarily, others contingently, that there be order in things, to complete the beauty of the universe.” Hence for some effects He creates necessary causes, and for other things, contingent causes.

2. “Necessary and contingent are characteristics that follow being as being. Hence these modes, contingency and necessity, fall under the provision of God, the universal provider, but not under the provision of particular causes. Not only the power of freedom, but the very act of freedom, is reduced to God as its cause.”

3. “The divine will must be understood as transcending the entire order of the universe, as a cause that penetrates the depths of reality and all its differences. But the fundamental differences of reality are possibility and necessity, which, therefore, are caused by the divine will itself.”

4. “Free will is indeed the cause of its own motion, because man by free will moves himself to act. But free will need not be the first cause of that which is free, just as a cause need not be a first cause in order to be a cause. God, the first cause, moves both natural causes and voluntary causes. As He does not take away from natural causes their naturalness, so by moving voluntary causes He does not take away their voluntariness, rather He produces their voluntariness. He works in each being according to its nature.”

Question. How does God, moving thus, produce this free mode? Answer: The will tends to a particular good, with actual and active dominating indifference, and this indifference is based on the destination of the will to universal good, to beatitude in common. But God moves the will, first, by priority of nature, by arousing in it the desire of beatitude in common; secondly, by posteriority of nature, by moving the will to determine itself

by its own deliberation, with dominating indifference to the particular good. Thus God is the cause, not only of potential indifference, but also of actual indifference. He actuates liberty, does not destroy it. He moves the will from within, according to its natural inclination toward its adequate object, before He moves it to determine itself by way of deliberation to an inadequate object.

TWO FURTHER FUNDAMENTAL ARGUMENTS

1. Every good that is in us comes from God as its cause. But nothing in us is better than our free consent to good deeds. Therefore this free consent comes from God as cause.

2. Were it not so, our will would be the first source of its choice, and God would depend on our will, known by scientia media. God's indifferent concursus would be determined by our liberty, and our liberty would be the sole cause of discrimination between good consent and evil consent.

DIFFICULTIES ANALYZED

1. When God moves efficaciously, nothing can resist Him and therefore God moves of necessity. St. Thomas does not answer as does Cardinal Billot. The latter answers that God moves only to universal good, not to particular good. Nor does St. Thomas say that the divine motion is fallibly efficacious. What St. Thomas does say is this: "The will of God extends, not only to the deed, but also to the mode which suits the nature of the thing moved. It would be more contradictory to divine motion if the will were moved of necessity, which does not belong to its nature, than if it were moved freely as suits its nature."

2. But, say our adversaries, grace, if it is per se efficacious, destroys liberty. St. Thomas replies: "On the contrary, grace, precisely because it is most efficacious, makes our action to be free, produces the free mode of our action." God actualizes our liberty, does not destroy it. To illustrate this doctrine, think of the conversion of Magdalen, of the good thief, or better still, of the consent given by the Blessed Virgin on the day of the Annunciation. God touches our created liberty with a virginal contact, which contains no violence. Just as, by the operation of the Holy Spirit, the Blessed Virgin conceived and brought forth without damage to her virginity,

so under the grace of the Holy Spirit our liberty remains unharmed. God does not violate liberty, but preserves, elevates, vivifies, sanctifies, and strengthens liberty. To depreciate the strength of efficacious grace would be to reduce its sweetness, because the two, strength and sweetness, are intimately connected in the most profound harmony.

3. It is impossible that the will should not will the object toward which God moves it, since God's operation cannot be inefficacious. We answer with St. Thomas, not that the motion of God is indifferent and moves only to universal good, or that grace is only fallibly efficacious, but that, in St. Thomas' own words: "If God moves the will to a certain act, it is incompatible with this position that the will shall not be moved. Yet it is not simply impossible." The will cannot resist in the composite sense, namely, it cannot combine actual resistance with efficacious grace. But it can resist in the divided sense, because there remains a real power to the opposite. While, as the Council of Trent says, "it can resist if it wills," yet, under efficacious grace it never as a fact resists, just as a man sitting can stand, but not sit and stand simultaneously.

FURTHER OBJECTIONS ANALYZED

1. "God, moving the will, does not force it, because He gives to the will its own inclination."

2. "To be moved voluntarily is to be moved intrinsically, yes; but this intrinsic principle can come from another and extrinsic principle."

3. "If the will were so moved by another as not to be moved by itself, then the works of the will would not count as merits or demerits. But since the fact that it is moved by another does not exclude self-motion, merit or demerit is not taken away."

4. "God moves the will immutably by the efficacy of His moving power, which cannot fail. But by the nature of the will which is moved, a will which is indifferent to various lines of activity, we do not have necessity but liberty."

5. "When the Holy Spirit moves the soul to love God, charity has impeccability, since the Holy Spirit infallibly does whatever He wills. Hence these two things can never be simultaneous: the Holy Spirit moves to an act of charity and the will simultaneously loses charity by sin. For the

gift of perseverance is one of the benefits of God, benefits whereby all who are liberated are most certainly liberated."

6. "Every action of the will, so far as it is action, is not only from the will as immediate agent, but from God as the first agent, who is more powerful than the will. If, then, the will can change its act, much more can God."

7. "Only God can change the inclination of the will to another line as He wills." But even God, we may add, cannot make simultaneous these two things: an indifferent judgment in the intellect and a necessary act in the will. As it is a contradiction that the will should will an unknown object, so it is a contradiction that the will should will it in any other way than as it is known. If the will necessarily willed that which is proposed by an indifferent judgment, the will would no longer be a rational appetite. It is a contradiction that the will adhere necessarily to an object which is not proposed as good from every angle.

But then, says the objector, even sinful acts would come from God. Answer: God is the cause of the physical entity of sin, but not of sin itself. Sin is a defect, a deformity. But defect comes from a deficient cause, not an efficient cause. Lameness has its cause in the crooked bone, not in the lame man's motive power.

But would there be sin if God did not permit it? No, but God permits it, does not impede it; first, because it is not wonderful that if a thing is defectible it should at times really fail; secondly, it belongs to the universal provider to permit certain evils, in order that from them there may arise greater good. The treason of Judas, the pagan persecutions, are permitted in order that the patience of Christ and the martyrs may infallibly manifest God's attributes of mercy and justice.

THE NATURE OF PREMOTION

We distinguish two questions, one principal, the other secondary. The principal doctrine is that divine decrees are of themselves efficacious, that grace is of itself efficacious. This efficacy of grace comes from the omnipotent will of God, independently of the consent of the creature and of scientia media. This truth we defend as a theological doctrine, connected with the principles of faith, a doctrine proximately definable, and with us agree nearly all theological schools, the Molinistic school excepted. Thus

certain Augustinians explain the intrinsic efficacy of grace, not by physical premotion, but by victorious delectation.

The second doctrine runs thus: Efficacious grace must be explained by premotion, i.e., physical predetermination. This is a philosophical thesis, since it cannot be proved by revelation alone. In this secondary thesis we dissent, not only from Molinists and Congruists, but also from many other theologians who, while rejecting scientia media and admitting intrinsically efficacious grace, explain that efficaciousness by a multitude of moral aids, or by moral causality, or by in-deliberate acts, or by victorious delectation, not by physical premotion.

Molinists confound this secondary question with the primary question on grace of itself efficacious. Billuart answers: “Let Molinists finally acknowledge that the grace necessary for salvation is not indifferent and determinable by the human will, but that, on the contrary, the human will is thereby infallibly determined, independently of scientia media. If they admit this, then they may reject physical predetermination, either absolutely, or at least in relation to acts that are materially sinful. Then, while as philosophers we will continue to oppose them, we will be their friends as theologians, and will not call for a new Congregatio de Auxiliis.” After these essential declarations let us see what this divine motion is on the part of God and what it is on the part of the creature.

1. The divine action by which God influences second causes is really identified with the divine essence. It is an action formally immanent and virtually transitive. The proof runs as follows. There can be no accident in God. God is His own intelligence, His own will, His own activity. Hence His action ad extra is formally immanent, because identified with the divine essence. But it is virtually transitive, because it places an effect ad extra. God’s power is the source of created effects, but not the source of God’s action. In God there is no novelty of action, but only a novelty of effects outside of God.

In creatures, on the contrary, an act that is formally transitive, e.g., heating, is an accident proceeding from the agent and terminating in the patient. God’s action on second causes, transcending the action of created things, is really a superaction, just as God is supertruth and supergood. This position is admitted by all theologians, though they do not define analogy in the same way.

Hence divine action is in itself just as unknowable as is the divine essence. We know it analogically, in what it shares with creative action, and we know it negatively and relatively in its characteristics, namely, that it is an action uncaused, a supreme action, the source of all created action, a self-subsisting action. We know what it is not, rather than what it is. Molinists impugn this view, calling it Bannesianism, as if divine motion agreed with created motion univocally.

2. What is divine motion as found in the creature? Is it a created thing? Some theologians deny this, saying that the extrinsic assistance of God is sufficient, and that the free creature simply wills what divine liberty wills by a certain sympathy with the divine will. Thus those who follow Scotus. Others say that moral causality suffices, that is, either God's attraction by a celestial delectation, or by many moral aids, or by arousing indeliberate acts which dispose us to choose.

Thomists respond: You do not explain how God obtains infallibly the good effect He wills. Nothing attracts the will infallibly except God seen clearly. Even without victorious delectation men often desire good, even supernatural good, in aridity of the spirit, say, or in the dark night of the soul. Actual grace, operative or cooperative, is not God, but an effect of God, and it is not our act, but it is the cause of our act. This is the doctrine of St. Thomas. Listen to the texts that here follow.

1. "By the gratuitous will of God man is aided by being moved to know, to will, to do. This gratuitous effect in man is not a quality, but a motion of the soul. The act of the mover, in the thing moved, is motion."

2. "That divine effect whereby a created thing acts, has a passing and incomplete existence, like the existence of colors in the air, and the existence of art in the instrument of the artist. It is a power, a vis, whereby the second cause, as instrument of the first cause, brings its act into existence. Just as a created thing cannot preserve itself, neither can it operate without a divine operation."

3. "The motion of the mover precedes the motion of the movable thing, both in idea and in reality. Our advance in good works is owing to the divine aid which antecedes our works."

4. "The ultimate in goodness and perfection to be attained by a second agent is that which it can do by power of the first agent. The fullest reach of the second agent comes from the first agent."

Created transitive action has three elements. Motion-action (heating proceeding from fire); motion-passion (heating as a passion in the thing that is heated); consequent operation (whereby the heated wood itself heats another piece of wood).

Created immanent operation also has three elements: Motion-action (a colored object moves sight); motion-passion (the sense of sight receives species impressa); consequent operation (the act of sight).

Created action becomes an analogy of divine action. As wood does not heat unless it is itself preheated, and as sense does not act unless it previously receives an impression from the object, so no second cause can work unless premoved by God. And so it is that here too three elements must be distinguished: motion-action (the divine action, formally immanent and virtually transitive); motion-passion (when will is moved from potential willing to actual willing); the elicited operation of the will (which under the motion of God elicits vitally and freely its own act of volition).

To explain. The divine motion, considered outside of God, is in the created thing moved. And this motion-passion, whatever adversaries say, is not to be confounded with the operation elicited by the will. In motion-passion the will is moved, whereas in operation the will itself operates.

But then, runs the objection, the will is not the mistress of its act, because this motion-passion is produced in it by God without it. Answer: This motion received from God can be called a motion of the soul, but it is not an act of the will. The will is not mistress of its own passive power, but it is mistress of its own active volition. The divine motion is not in our power, but we are in the power of God.

We must not, then, confuse the passive actualization of the will by God with the action elicited by the will. And note well that God adapts His divine motion to the freedom of our will. God does not determine our choice, as if the will would in no way determine itself. God infallibly moves the will to self-determination. God, says St. Thomas, “is the cause of every created action in four ways. First, He gives the power of action; secondly, He preserves that power; thirdly, He applies the power to action; fourthly, by His power all other powers act. Created causes concur as it were instrumentally to produce existence which is the proper effect of God.”

Question: Does premotion precede our act, or is it a mere simultaneous concursus? Answer: The divine premotion precedes our act, not in time, but in causality. To move and to be moved are simultaneous in time because

one and the same reality is from the mover and in the movable thing. But the priority of causality is evident. The patient would not be moved if the agent did not move. And the patient cannot act unless it is premoved to act. Wood cannot heat unless it is first heated. The eye cannot see unless it is moved by the object. But the divine motion which first operates, then cooperates, is, even as cooperating, prior in causality to our action with which it cooperates.

St. Thomas uses the word “motion,” not “premotion,” because in his mind all motion by priority of causality is pre-motion. The particle “pre” is tautological, but we retain it in order to distinguish the divine motion from the merely simultaneous concursus of Molina, which indeed precedes its effect, but in no way precedes the production of our operation. God and the will, according to Molina, are like two horses drawing a cart. One horse does not move the other, but both move the cart. This conception, however, does not in any way explain how the will passes from potentiality to act. Our will is not its own act, and therefore needs to be premoved in order to act.

Here we must note an error in terminology. Father Sertillanges, O.P., says that many Thomists use the word “premotio physica” to signify the action of God. This usage, according to him, involves a triple verbal heresy: the particle “pre” is improper, because there is no priority of time; motion, because we are dealing, not with motion but with creation; physical, because the action is not physical, but rather metaphysical. We have answered this difficulty above. The particle “pre” signifies merely priority of nature. Motion is well chosen; it is the term used by St. Thomas. And it is false to say that the action is creation, because creation presupposes nothing as its terminus a quo. If our acts were created, they would in no way come from us vitally, and we would have to admit occasionalism, because only God would be the agent. Finally, the term “physical” is in opposition, not to metaphysical, but to moral.

Question: Is the divine premotion the same thing as predetermination? Listen to Zigliara: “There are some who grant premotion, but are horrified at the term ‘predetermination.’ Now these authors tremble with fear where there is no fear. They do not understand the premotion which they admit, nor the predetermination which they refuse.” Pre-motion is identical with predetermination. It expresses relation to the divine omnipotence which moves; predetermination expresses the divine will, the predetermining

decree which precedes the act, by priority, not of time, but of causality, and that from eternity. The divine intellect conceives, the divine will predetermines, omnipotence pre-moves.

The word “predetermination” is not an invention of Thomists, but is found in St. Thomas himself. Here are his words: “Damascene, following St. Gregory of Nyssa, says that God foreknows our deeds, but does not predetermine them. These words have this meaning: Our deeds are subject to the determination of divine providence, but not in such fashion as to receive necessity from this determination.” The saint’s mind is that God predetermines, not only our free future actions, especially meritorious actions, but also their free mode. Eternity precedes time by a priority, not of time, but of causality and order.

A MIDDLE INTERPRETATION

This interpretation was proposed by three cardinals: Pecci, Satolli, and Lorenzelli.

PRELIMINARIES

Molinism says that God’s grace is efficacious, not of itself, but from its effect, namely, from our consent, preknown by scientia media. Congruism retains from Molinism the term scientia media, but distinguishes congruous grace from incongruous. Congruous grace, though not infallibly efficacious, agrees with the temperament and disposition of the subject, and thus, as moral benefit, surpasses incongruous grace. Finally, syncretism, as proposed by the three cardinals and their disciples, joins Thomism in rejecting scientia media and admitting grace intrinsically efficacious, but does not allow to grace even a priority of nature.

Against this syncretism, we have elsewhere discussed this dilemma: “God either determines or is determined; there is no middle way. If God does not determine, then He is determined by our foreknown consent. Hence theologians who will not admit predetermining decrees, must, willy-nilly, admit scientia media.”

For the moment let the following synopsis suffice.

Thomism

Occasionalism	Molinism
Pantheism	Atheistic Evolutionism

This synopsis shows that Thomism is an elevation, rising not only above grave errors and heresies contrary to one another, but also above the opinions of theologians, and in particular, against eclecticism, which tries to find a medium, but does not reach the summit. Satolli rejects scientia media, but, while he admits intrinsically efficacious grace, he denies to that grace any priority, even that of nature. Paquet follows the same road, but comes more closely to real Thomism.

A SUMMARY

These authors are mistaken in trying to find this doctrine in Cajetan. St. Thomas does not use the word “premotion” because for him every motion is premotion. Cooperating grace has a priority of causality in relation to our act. This syncretism leads to scientia media, whether they will or no.

But they say, God, without any predetermining decree, can know a free futuribility. Answer: God, without predetermining decree, could not know which of two possible contradictories would come to pass, whether Peter, in such and such circumstances, would sin or not. The futuribile is more than the simply possible thing, because of two possible things, contradictorily opposed, it expresses the definite outcome in such and such circumstances.

CONCLUSION

In the words of St. Augustine, cited by the Council of Trent: “God does not command impossibilities, but by commanding He admonishes thee to do what thou canst, and to ask for what thou canst not.” God’s saving will is universal. Sin never arises from the insufficiency of the divine aid. Such insufficiency would presuppose divine negligence, which would be a contradiction in terms, a negation of divine providence and of God Himself. On the other hand no one could be in any way better than another had he not received more from God: “What hast thou that thou hast not received?” The mystery remains, namely, the intimate harmony of infinite justice, infinite mercy, and supreme liberty. This harmony, this transcendent eminence of God, this intimate life of God, cannot be seen except in the Fatherland.

CHAPTER XV

OTHER ACTS ELICITED BY THE WILL (Q. 11-17)

FRUITION (Q. 11)

FRUITION is concerned with the end simply, whereas intention is concerned with ways and means. God enjoys Himself, but He does not intend Himself. Fruition, derived from “fruit,” from the tree’s perfection, is essentially delight in the end attained, a delight which presupposes the possession of the end by the apprehensive faculty. It is the act of the lover resting in possession of his desire. The animal’s enjoyment of its food is fruition, but an imperfect fruition. Complete fruition is concerned only with the last end; incomplete fruition is from an intermediate end, for instance, from a medicine which is tasty. In relation to the last end, we distinguish imperfect fruition, based on hope, from perfect fruition, arising from possession in reality.

INTENTION (Q. 12)

Intention is the efficacious desire to employ the proper means for attaining the goal. Thus it is distinguished from simple volition, which is a mere complacency in the good without relation to ways and means. Inefficaciously, I can wish rain, but I cannot intend it. The natural desire for the beatific vision is an act of the will, but not an efficacious intention.

Intention can be concerned either with the last end or with an intermediate end. The right intention is called the eye of the soul: “If thine eye be simple, thy whole body will be lightsome.” It is called the eye of the soul because it presupposes right knowledge of the last end. By right

intention our works are lucid before God, by evil intention they become dark.

A doubt. St. Thomas says: “If we take two unrelated things, man can intend many ends.” Answer: At first view these words seem to say that man can intend two ultimate ends. But if so, then the will would have simultaneously two unrelated acts: an impossibility. Alvarez, with others, answers thus: “The will can simultaneously intend many things, provided they agree in some element which is willed primarily and per se.” Thus the will can desire two ends for the tongue, namely, speech and taste, because this organ serves both purposes. A medium may be intended because it is suitable for many ends.

ART. 4, 5. IS THE INTENTION OF THE END IDENTICAL WITH THE ACT OF THE WILL TOWARD THAT END?

Answer: If we will the medium solely on account of the end, then there is one act, namely, choice. But if we will separately, first the end and then the means, then there are two acts: intention of the end and choice of means. In article five we read that brutes intend materially the end, but tend executively to the thing which is the end, but not as end. Intention, therefore, belongs to animals, not formally, but executively.

Corollary. In order that choice be right and efficacious, and a fortiori that command shall be right and efficacious in dealing with means, there is prerequired a right and efficacious intention of the end. Hence prudence, which is obligated to reach a right and efficacious command, presupposes right appetite, that is, an intention which is right and efficacious.

THE ACT OF CHOICE (Q. 13)

Presupposed efficacious intention of the end, four acts are concerned with means: first, counsel, that is, consultation by the intellect on the means suitable for reaching the end; second, consent, which follows counsel, whereby these means are accepted as a unit; third, a discerning judgment in the intellect, which discovers the medium that is most apt; fourth, choice in the will, which accepts this medium. The act of choice, presupposing the judgment by which it is directed, is substantially an act of the will, because it deals with a good, and only the will aims at the good. But choice,

properly speaking, deals only with means subject to deliberation. The physician does not deliberate on restoring health, but on the means suited to attain this end. Now man can deliberate on the ordination of his whole life toward his last end. “When man begins to have the use of reason, the first thing that occurs to him is to think of himself, to ordain himself to the right end.” In this case the object of deliberation and choice is not, properly speaking, the last end, but the ordination of our life to this end. Similarly, a man may choose virtue instead of vice, in relation to beatitude in common. Choice is concerned only with those things which are subject to us, or at least are subject to our appointment, as when we elect the superior of a community.

THE ACT OF COUNSEL (Q. 14)

1. Counsel is an inquisition of reason to prepare choice. Reason does not proffer its judgment without preceding investigation.

Doubt. Does counsel include intrinsically the act of judgment? There is a difficulty here in solving the doubt. St. Thomas, following Aristotle, says that eubulia is a power that counsels, but is distinguished from synesis which judges well in practical matters. Cajetan solves the difficulty thus: Human counsel includes inquisition and judgment, whereas divine counsel is a judgment without inquisition. According to the common way of speaking, the act of counsel remains incomplete unless followed by an act of judgment on the medium to be chosen. Counsel is a practical syllogism, and the practical judgment is the conclusion of this syllogism. When many suitable media appear, counsel may approve them in globo, before the ultimate, practical judgment determines which of the proposed media is the better: in this case there are two acts, and the qualities of counsel are distinct from the qualities of the ultimate judgment. Counsel, examining many different means, all of them apt, may consult many men: a king, for example, profits by a great diversity of competent ministers, in order to see all aspects of the affair, and all the motives pro and con. But out of this multitude of counsels the king himself pronounces the ultimate practical judgment. Counsel comes from many sources, whereas the ultimate judgment comes from one, the monarch.

A second doubt. Does every deliberate choice involve a practical judgment? The answer is affirmative. Simple apprehension of good does

not suffice. Without an affirmative judgment “this is to be done,” “this is to be refused,” choice would lack direction. Alvarez says that also the act of command belongs to all deliberate acts.

Even for the act of faith four judgments are prerequired: first, this statement is credible; second, men are bound to believe this statement; third, I am bound, here and now, to believe this statement; fourth, if I believe this statement, then I say “I believe.” “No one believes the mysteries of faith unless he sees that they are to be believed, either by the evidence of miracles or by some similar evidence.”

But do we not thus start an infinite process? No. “We regress to the first act of the will, which does not depend upon the command of reason, but comes from instinct of nature, or from something higher than nature, namely, God who inspires the act.”

Art. 2. Counsel, like choice, deals, not with the end, but only with means. The end in practical matters is like principle in speculative matters. Counsel is a practical syllogism, which presupposes the intention of the end.

Art. 3. Counsel deals only with things subject to our control. It does not deal at all with things that are necessary and universal.

Art. 4. Counsel does not deal with everything we do, but only with matters of some importance. As regards matters of minor importance, the adage holds good: “Little is reputed as nothing.” Lack of order in little things is not always a venial sin; it can be a mere imperfection.

Art. 5. Counsel proceeds analytically. Analytical order begins with something that is prior in cognition but posterior in existence. Now the principle in counsel is the end, which, in intention, is prior to counsel, but posterior in existence.

The order of deliberation, then, descends from the end intended to the first medium, whereas the order of execution is just the inverse. It ascends from the lowest medium to ultimate attainment. In the order of execution, life is first, study and knowledge second. But, in the order of intention, philosophical contemplation, and, a fortiori, Christian contemplation, stand higher than material or economic life. For the sake of this higher life, public executive power preserves peace in the state.

Art. 6. Counsel cannot proceed to infinity. It begins with principles of practical reason, and terminates in practical conclusions. Neglect of this conclusion constitutes scrupulosity. Is this good deed done out of pride? Ah, but even asking myself this question may be owing to false humility!

A doubt. May we counsel a lesser evil in order to avoid a greater? On this matter we find two extreme opinions. Some say that the lesser evil in relation to the greater is really good. Others deny, for various reasons. The lesser evil, even if compared with the greater evil, is still an evil, hence cannot be chosen, but at best be tolerated. This reason seems to be apodictic, if we are dealing with acts that are intrinsically evil. St. Thomas, proving that a lie is always a sin, that we cannot licitly lie even to avoid a homicide, continues thus: “We are not allowed to do anything illicit to avoid danger or harm. We are not allowed to tell a lie in order to deliver another from peril. But we are allowed to hide the truth prudently.” A minor physical evil may be counseled to avoid a greater evil. But he who counsels a lesser moral evil is the cause of that evil, and therefore sins.

Third opinion. This opinion is affirmative, but with many limitations. For this view, which Alvarez says is the more common Thomistic view, we note three considerations. First, Aristotle says that the lesser evil in comparison with a greater is really a good, supposing that we cannot avoid both evils and as long as we cannot avoid them. Secondly, the lesser evil shall not be intrinsically evil. In elections, for example, we cannot approve a program that is intrinsically evil in order to prevent one that is worse. Thirdly, the two evils must threaten one and the same person. Thus, in Jeremias, ten men gave Ismael their treasures that he might not kill them. But Lot sinned, so St. Augustine says, when he counseled the men of Sodom to abuse his daughters in order to avoid the sin of sodomy. Still, when only a slight danger threatens a third person, we can counsel a lesser evil, at least a physical evil, in order to avoid a greater evil.

In summary, prudence must decide. In elections, for example, a person may commend a good candidate, so that men may not be tempted to choose between two evil candidates.

THE ACT OF CONSENT (Q. 15)

Here, briefly, are the four conclusions of St. Thomas. 1. Consent is an act of the appetitive power. 2. Consent, properly speaking, is not found in brute animals. 3. Consent, properly speaking, deals, not with the end, but with the means to the end, thus differing from intention. 4. Consent to the act belongs to the higher reason, because consent is the final sentence on what is to be done. As long as the proposal is still subject to judgment, we do not

have the final sentence. Consent to the act belongs to the higher reason, which includes also the will. Thus consent to mortal sin always belongs to higher reason, at least indirectly or negatively or imputatively. The higher judge revokes the unjust sentence of the lower judge, otherwise the higher judge himself becomes guilty. Thus mortal sin is always aversion from the last end, which higher reason is bound to consider.

THE ACT OF USING (Q. 16)

We distinguish active use, which belongs to the will, from passive use, which belongs to the executive faculties. And we deal here directly with active use. Here, briefly, are the four articles of St. Thomas. 1. Active use properly belongs to the will, because the will moves other powers to their operations. Active use is an act, formally immanent and virtually transitive. 2. This act, properly speaking, is not found in brutes, because brutes do not know purpose or utility as such. 3. Use is concerned with media, with the means useful to an end. We do not use the end, we enjoy it. The last end, indeed, is useless, properly speaking, because it is above utility, not below. Thus Aristotle says that metaphysics is useless, that is, it is above utility and is sought for its own sake, thus differing from the arts, especially the mechanical arts. But metaphysics uses logic, as theology uses sciences lower than itself. The superior uses the inferior, but the inferior, properly speaking, does not use the superior. 4. Use differs from choice, and follows it. Choice belongs to the order of second intention, namely, deliberation, whereas active use belongs to the order of execution. In choice the will possesses the end affectively, but in active use it tends to the end effectively. Choice is concerned with the medium as future, whereas use deals with the same medium as present. Use, here and now, overcomes the difficulties bound in execution itself. Many men choose easily, but fail in carrying out their choice.

Further, we choose first those media that are nearer to the end, and then descend to the lower media. To attain health, I first choose a physician, and then tell a servant to call him, and so on. In the order of execution, on the contrary, I first call the servant. God predestines first to glory, but in the order of execution, glory comes last. Again, since the acts of the will are self-reflective, in each act we can distinguish consent, choice, and use: the will consents to choose, and consents to consent, and uses itself to consent

and to choose, and these acts are all destined to that which is first. Again, the will uses reason to deliberate, and this use precedes choice. Then, deliberation ended, the will freely uses reason to direct choice, and thus the ultimate judgment is free.

Cajetan, commenting on this article, gives a division of the twelve acts which nearly coincides with what is commonly admitted. But he does not sufficiently notice that every act of the will is preceded by a correlative act of the intellect.

ACTS COMMANDED BY THE WILL (Q. 17)

The command here in question is not a political command, whereby a king or a superior commands his subjects, but that personal command whereby man governs himself and his powers, which we call self-government, self-control. The present question is perfectly ordered.

Art. 1. Some theologians, Suarez and Vasquez, for example, say that command is not a special act, since the preceding judgment directs choice. Thomists, and many others, say that command is a special act, belonging to the intellect, but presupposing an act of the will.

THREE CONCLUSIONS

First. Acts of the will and acts of the reason interact on one another, in virtue of the axiom: Causes are mutual causes, though in diverse genera.

Second. Command is an act of reason, because order, arrangement, intimation belong to reason, and command is a kind of intimation. Command differs from the practical judgment, as the two following propositions differ: One says, “this is to be done,” for example, tomorrow; the other says, “do this, here and now.”

Third. Command presupposes an act of the will, because the first mover among the powers of the soul is the will itself. Now the command moves to execution, at least secondarily and participatively.

Suarez objects: No other act of the intellect is required but that of the practical judgment. Answer: Since nothing can be willed unless it is foreknown, a special act of the will presuppose a special act of the intellect. Hence active use, being a special act of the will, distinct from choice, presupposes a special act of the intellect, distinct from practical judgment.

Cajetan notes that the act of command includes three elements: to ordain, to intimate, to move. It ordains execution of media, here and now, not like choice, but in the inverse order, beginning with the lowest and ascending to the highest. Secondly, command intimates execution by saying, not indicatively “This must be done,” but imperatively, “Do this.” To intimate is to announce, to manifest, and this is an act belonging to the intellect. Thirdly, command moves toward execution. This act belongs, secondarily and participatively, to the intellect by reason of the preceding act of choice, the power of which remains in the subsequent act. Therefore command is a special act, an act of reason, which presupposes an act of the will. Thus St. Thomas says that prayer is, properly speaking, an act of the intellect, being a quasi-command of an inferior to a superior.

Corollary. The order of execution is clearly distinguished from the order of choice, because active use is distinguished from choice. Thus a new order begins. Suarez did not sufficiently notice this truth. The reason is that in the order of execution new difficulties arise, which demand not only a new effort of the will, but also a new ordination and intimation of the intellect. Many men judge well and choose well, but fail in execution, by reason of these new difficulties, many of which could not be foreseen, or, if foreseen, did not then move as they do now when they are present. Thus execution demands a new direction of reason, a direction distinct from the practical judgment, almost as existence is distinct from essence. The command “Do this,” here and now, deals with media as present, whereas the judgment, “This should be done,” deals with these same media as future.

Confirmation. Just as a prince or a superior must not only judge that something is to be done, but must also command it, so in our personal life, since nothing is willed unless foreknown, command is the ultimate intimating judgment.

SIX OBJECTIONS

1. Since we should not multiply realities without necessity, the practical judgment, if continued, suffices to direct the execution. Answer: The practical judgment would suffice if you disregard all ensuing difficulties.

2. But the preceding practical judgment, as distinct from speculative judgment, had already considered the media in their here and now. Answer:

The practical judgment had already considered the media, as here and now desirable, I grant: as here and now to be carried out, I deny.

3. But even for execution thus understood, an act of the will suffices, that act, namely, which we call active use. Answer: To move toward execution belongs, properly and primarily, to the will, I grant: belongs to the will, secondarily and participatively, I deny.

4. Decree is the same as command, and decree belongs to the will. Thus even Thomists speak of the decrees of the divine will. We distinguish. Decree, in the wider sense, belongs to the will, yes; decree, in the proper sense, belongs to the will, no. Decree in the wider sense is identical with the choice of the will, and thus precedes execution.

5. St. Thomas himself writes as follows: “Let us consider the acts commanded by the will.” Answer: The will commands, in a wider sense, by moving, yes. A command, even taken strictly, does belong to the will, not substantially, but causatively and originally, because from the will it gets its power of moving. Thus law is an act of reason, but also an expression of the lawgiver’s will. Command, dominion, as intimating and directing, belongs to the intellect, but, as moving, it belongs to the will.

6. Charity commands all other virtues, and charity is in the will. Answer: Charity commands in the wider sense of the word, that is, it moves just as the will does. But when it commands in the proper sense, it does so by a mediating act of the intellect, i.e., of faith or of infused prudence. The intellect differentiates the act of the will, but exercises its act under the influence of the will.

Art. 2. Command does not belong to the brute order, because only reason can ordain and arrange.

Art. 3. Command precedes use, which it directs. But the acts, both of reason and of will, are self-reflective.

Art. 4. The command and the act commanded constitute one human moral act, just as two physical acts make one moral act, by being mutually related, as are matter and form, or body and soul. Thus we explain the unity of the mystical body, expressed by St. Paul when he says; “I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me.” This unity is more than a unity secundum quid. Christ and His living members constitute one reality, not in the physical order, but in the moral order.

Art. 5—9. What acts are subject to command? These acts are divided into four classes: acts of the will, of reason, of sense-appetite, of the body.

1. Acts of the will: in a wide sense, consent and choice are commanded; in the proper sense, active use is commanded.

2. Acts of the reason: first, as regards exercise: sudden thoughts, continued or not; and deliberate study. Then, as regards specification, we have opinion, the act of faith, the last practical judgment.

3. Acts of the sense-appetite: acts which depend on reason's power over the imagination, but not acts arising from indisposed organs, or from unforeseen acts of the imagination.

4. External acts, depending, not on the vegetative powers, but on the sense-powers, e.g., acts of our hands and feet. Acts of the vegetative soul are not subject to the command of reason, because they are not mediated by knowledge, and depend on dispositions of the body which are not in our power. This synopsis is explained in the following articles.

Art. 5. Acts of the will can be commanded, with the exception of the first volition wherein man does not move himself but is moved by God. But this act is not deliberate, though surely it can be free. Intention and choice are commanded in a wider sense, because they are preceded by a command in the strict sense. Active use follows this command. Per accidens, however, choice itself can be commanded, when a man who is slow in choosing finally says to himself: "You must choose, now choose."

Art. 6. Acts of reason can be commanded in three different ways.

1. Thoughts that arise unforeseen come under the command of reason, to be admitted or refused or continued or interrupted. Thus it is with the first thought of all moral life, to which God moves us immediately. Thus also with many divine inspirations; thus also with evil thoughts, arising from temptation, by means of the imagination.

2. Certain acts of reason can be commanded only as regards exercise. But evident truths necessitate assent. Thus it is with principles and demonstrated conclusions. But adherence is free when we are dealing with opinions or with inevident postulates.

3. Certain acts of reason are commanded even as regards objective specification. Thus it is with opinion, and the act of faith, and the ultimate practical judgment.

Art. 7. Some acts of the sense-appetite can be commanded, but not those acts which necessarily arise from dispositions of the body, from too great heat, or from illness, or from unforeseen motions of concupiscence. On the

contrary, those acts are subject to our command which arise from the imagination, for the imagination can be ruled by reason.

Here we pause to notice more clearly the doctrine of St. Thomas concerning the first motions of sensuality. He speaks as follows: “It happens at times that the motions of the sense-appetite are suddenly aroused by imagination or sense. Such motions are not under the command of reason, but could have been impeded if reason had foreseen them.” Now since human reason, even when diligent, cannot foresee everything, the first motions of sensuality are not always sinful. “Reason’s control of the passions is not despotic but diplomatic.” “Imagination, the stronger it is, the more it is subject to reason. But when the imagination is weak, by reason of indisposition of its organ, it may fail in forming appropriate images.”

Art. 8. The acts of the vegetative soul and of the correlative organs are not subject to the command of reason. We cannot command nutrition, or growth, or the movement of the heart, or the natural alterations of the organs of generation. In the state of innocence, by a supernatural privilege, concupiscence was perfectly subject to reason, but original sin left nature to itself.

Art. 9. The acts of the external members (hands, feet, head), since they are controlled by the sense-powers, just as in brutes, are subject to command, by reason of their dependence on the imagination, which can be controlled by reason.

Corollary. Man’s dominion over himself and over his acts justifies the statement quoted by St. Thomas from Boethius. “Those levels of creation which are nearest to the First Mind transcend the order of fate. The farther away creation is from the First Mind, the more is it bound by the ropes of fate, by the necessity arising from second causes.”

The wise man rules the stars. Contemplation, elevating the mind to God, frees the soul from the fatality of the laws of nature. Here lies the progressive perfectibility of the human personality.

THIRD PART

MORALITY OF HUMAN ACTS

CHAPTER XVI

SOURCES OF GOOD AND EVIL (Q. 18)

PRELIMINARIES

SO FAR we have studied, psychologically, the twelve acts which concur to form one deliberate and consummate moral act. Now we are to consider these acts morally, under three heads: in their genus (q. 18), in their specific differences, interior and exterior (qq. 19 and 20), in their consequences, namely, merit and sin (q. 21).

These thirty articles, which at first sight may seem repetitious, are in reality very original. Certain modern historians forget that without speculative penetration you cannot know St. Thomas even historically.

ERRORS REGARDING MORALITY

These errors can be reduced to five. Hedonism (morality based on pleasure); utilitarianism (founded on utility, either personal or social); subjectivism (founded on the categorical imperative of conscience); eudaemonism (founded on rational beatitude, but lacking sanction, freedom, and obligation); fideism (founded on God's positive law).

Above these errors stands traditional ethics, that is, morality founded on good-in-itself, guided by right reason as proximate standard, and by the eternal law as supreme standard.

The Syllabus condemns absolute evolutionism, according to which God Himself comes into existence by the evolution of humanity. God is one and the same thing with the world, spirit with matter, necessity with liberty, truth with falsehood, evil with good, justice with injustice. St. Thomas synthesizes all the truths found scattered in other systems, finding these systems true in what they affirm, false in what they deny. Here follows a synopsis of that synthesis.

Eternal Law

necessary
Natural Law Revealed Law
positive
Human Law Ecclesiastical Law
Custom Custom

REASON

Conscience Faith
Desire for Beatitude Hope
Natural Love of God Charity
Moral Science Moral Theology

PRUDENCE

The Will Justice
Sense Powers Temperance
Fortitude

THE MORAL ACT

ART. 1. HUMAN ACTS, INTRINSICALLY GOOD OR INTRINSICALLY BAD?

PRELIMINARIES

Here we meet two errors, mutually opposed. Followers of Spinoza hold that no action is morally evil because man has no liberty. Men do evil only when they do not know what is good. The arguments in favor of this absolute optimism (really, a very sad thing) are identical with the objections which open this article: first, evil does not act except by virtue of good; secondly, nothing acts except so far as it is actual, and therefore good; thirdly, evil cannot be a cause. Thus murder would not be morally evil, but only a lesser good, an imperfection. Scotus modifies, saying that no action is intrinsically evil except to hate God.

The opposite error is that of Luther and Calvin, who say that all works done before justification are really sins, and that, in all his deeds, even the just man sins, at least venially, or even mortally, and hence deserves eternal punishment, and is not condemned only because God does not impute these works unto condemnation. These propositions have been condemned as heretical.

THESIS: SOME ACTIONS ARE MORALLY GOOD, SOME ARE EVIL

Authority: “Every one who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, that his works may not be condemned. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his works may be made manifest, because they are done in God.”

Reason speaks thus: Every voluntary action which lacks the fullness of the reality due to it is deficient in good, is morally bad. But among human actions many are thus deficient, in quantity (refusing to pay a debt), or in place (theft in church). Hence not every human act is morally good. This argument is independent of divine positive precepts.

God’s fullness of being rests on simple deity, hence God alone can in no way be deficient. The creature’s plentitude arises, not from simplicity, but from many different factors: its substance, its faculties, its acts. Hence creatures can fall away from the fullness due to them. Just as blindness, e.g., is a physical evil, so the human act, while it is a reality which comes from God, is simply evil, mortally or venially, if it lacks the plentitude due to it.

But note that what is simply good and even meritorious (for instance, a remiss act of charity) may still be imperfect. A man who has five talents, but acts as if he had only two, performs an act that is simply good, though it is deficient in intensity. Such an act is an imperfection, but not a venial sin. Some recent writers, neglecting this truth, maintain that, according to the doctrine of St. Thomas, there is no distinction between imperfection and venial sin. To speak thus is to confound counsel with precept, to confound a positive precept with a negative precept.

DIFFICULTIES ANALYZED

1. An act that is simply evil is secundum quid good, being a reality in the physical order. But, since it lacks the rectitude due to it, it is morally evil, not a minor good.

2. The blind man who walks possesses a good in so far as he can walk, thus differing from the paralytic, but his deed of walking lacks perfection.

3. An evil action may result in a physical good (adultery begetting a child), but looked at morally it is simply evil, since it lacks direction by reason.

First corollary. Spinoza and Hegel confound the simple evil with a lesser good. In Hegel's evolutionistic terms, thesis and antithesis are good in their time, but less good than the higher synthesis which follows. Art, which can very often be pantheistic, is a thesis; while religion, a metaphorical representation of God, is an antithesis; and evolutionistic philosophy is the synthesis, Each is good in its time. Even the crimes of the French and the Russian Revolution, while they are a lesser good than Christian sanctity, are not simply evil.

This doctrine comes from denying the distinction between being and non-being, which are identified in the "becoming" (fieri) of creative evolution. Hence follows also the denial of the distinction between truth and falsehood, between good and evil, Thus materialism would not be simply false, but true for its time, for its moment. The crimes of Bolshevism would not be simply evil, but only an evil secundum quid when a higher synthesis appears.

Second corollary. If we remove the metaphysical primacy of reality in relation to becoming, we destroy radically the distinction between moral good and moral evil. Modernists speak thus: "Truth is not more immutable than man himself, since with him, and in him, and through him truth is evolved." The traditional doctrine teaches that, in virtue of the principle of contradiction, there is absolute opposition between reality and nothing, between the simply true and the simply false, between the simply good and the simply evil. The opposite doctrine of absolute evolutionism, condemned in the Syllabus, runs thus: "No supreme, wise, and provident divinity exists, no divinity distinct from this universe. God, identified with nature, and hence subject to change, really comes into existence in man and in the world. All things are God and have the very substance of God. As God is identified with the world, so is spirit identified with matter, necessity with liberty, truth with falsehood, good with evil, justice with injustice."

What is the moral essence of human action as distinguished from its physical entity? Nominalists answer, either that morality is an extrinsic denomination, as paper becomes money by an extrinsic denomination derived from the will of the prince, or morality is a mere relation of reason, hence identified with liberty itself. Others say that morality is a predicamental relation. Thomists hold that morality is a real transcendental relation to its objective standard. This thesis can be proved, indirectly and directly.

Indirect proof. First. Moral goodness consists in a plentitude of being, arising from relation to the end which is its objective standard. Now, though the end is an extrinsic cause, still the right proportion to that end, the relation to that end, inheres in the action itself. Moral goodness is in truth a positive perfection, existing objectively in human acts, caused by human virtue and God’s grace. Second. Morality presupposes liberty, but is not identified with liberty. Liberty is indeed the indispensable subject of morality, because necessary acts are not subject to moral standards. But we must first conceive liberty before we can conceive morality. By the very fact that we conceive an act as going forth from the will under an indifferent judgment, we conceive that act as free, but not yet as moral, because we do not as yet conceive the standard to which that act is subject. To illustrate: think of an act of theft performed with the intention of adultery. Here we have a twofold moral evil, but only one free act. We grant, however, that every free act is a moral act and every moral act is a free act, because, as we will see later, every act done freely is either morally good or morally evil, at least by the agent’s intention.

Direct proof. Morality consists formally in a transcendental and real relation to its objective standard. Preserving proper proportion, we must speak of act in its moral essence as we speak of act in its natural essence. But act, in its natural essence, is a transcendental relation to its objective standard. As sight is related to a colored object, as intellect to reality, as volition to good, so moral volition is a transcendental relation to the objective moral standard.

This relation is not one of reason, it exists in the moral act itself, independently of man’s thought. The saint differs from the criminal, not only in idea, but in fact. Further, it is not a predicamental relation, accidentally superadded. It is related to its object, not merely as a terminus,

but as its differentiating specification. An illustration: think of an act of charity, transcendentally related to God as its object.

Objection: The full goodness of the human act is surely not a mere relation. Answer: This fullness, while it cannot rest on a mere predicamental relation, does arise from the truth that human reason is essentially and transcendentally related to its object.

THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF MORALITY

Goodness and malice are the two differences ordinarily assigned. Should we also sneak of indifference as a species of morality? Answer: Moral evil can be considered, either as something positive, namely, a transcendental relation to an object dissonant from moral standards, or as something privative, the privation of harmony and rectitude.

Take a sin of commission. Is its essence something positive? Our own view is affirmative, supported by many Thomists: Capreolus, Ferrariensis, Cajetan, John of St. Thomas, Salmanticenses, Massoulié, Gonet, Billuart, whereas the negative answer is held by Sylvius, Contenson, Bancel.

Does indifference constitute a species of morality? We affirm, with John of St. Thomas, Contenson, Billuart, and many others, against the Salmanticenses and Gonet.

Proof. An act that is indifferent proceeds from a deliberate will, under subjection to a moral standard which does not command or prohibit, but only permits. Such an act, indifferent in its object, is still subject to the permissive moral law. Hence indifference is a species of morality. “If we speak of a moral act according to its species, then not every moral act is good or evil, but some acts are indifferent.”

Summary. Moral goodness is a transcendental relation to an object which conforms to the law. Moral evil is a transcendental relation to an object forbidden by law. Moral indifference is a transcendental relation to an object permitted by the law.

THE SOURCES OF MORALITY (Q. 18)

ART. 1. WHETHER HUMAN ACTS ARE GOOD OR SOME OF THEM BAD

PRELIMINARIES

St. Thomas assigns three sources: object, circumstance, and purpose. The purpose here in mind is not that objective purpose which is identified with the object, but the subjective purpose which is the principal circumstance. This has not been sufficiently noted by historians who have recently treated of this part of the Summa. The primary and essential source of morality is the natural object of the act: God, for an act of charity, our neighbor's good (in giving alms), our neighbor's harm (in stealing).

Chief among secondary sources is the subjective purpose of the agent, in three ways. A good act becomes evil by an evil intention (to give alms for the sake of vanity). An evil act does not become good by a good intention (to lie in order to save our neighbor's life). One and the same act can have two species, either of goodness or of malice, one from the object and the other from the purpose (to give alms in order to satisfy for sin).

Another secondary source are circumstances, which either aggravate or diminish goodness or evil in the same species (to steal much or to steal little), or which even change the very species of the moral act (to steal a sacred thing or in a sacred place).

In one and the same act, we may have a multiple morality. An act, good by its object and purpose (e.g., almsgiving), becomes venially evil, for example, by vainglory. Such an act, though it is meritorious of eternal life, is simultaneously an evil secundum quid, an evil which must undergo temporal punishment.

ART. 2. MAN'S ACTION DERIVES ITS FIRST AND ESSENTIAL GOODNESS OR BADNESS FROM ITS NATURAL OBJECT

PRELIMINARIES

By object we understand the direct and primary goal of the act. Thus God is the object of charity, our neighbor's property is the object of theft. And we are now looking at this object, not physically, but morally, for example, at our neighbor's property, not as a car or a purse, but as something taken from its unwilling master. One and the same act considered physically (e.g., killing a man) is morally good if done for the sake of justice by an executioner, or morally evil when done by an assassin. Our thesis, then,

asserts that the primary and essential goodness or evil of the human act flows from the moral object of that act.

Authority speaks: “They have become abominable as the things which they love.” They love adultery, say, or the property of another. Reason speaks: As a natural thing is specifically distinguished by its form, so action by the object to which it essentially tends. This principle holds, not only for first and essential goodness, but also for first and essential evil, since malice is opposed to goodness. As the first physical evil is lack of substantial form (a monster generated instead of a man), so the first moral evil is lack of conformity with the act’s natural standard.

To explain. Action is specifically differentiated by its object. This truth holds good, not only for actions, but also for potentialities and habits. This principle, which Reginaldus lays down as the third of the three fundamental principles of St. Thomas, illumines all psychology, ethics, and moral theology.

We here suppose that there are differentiated species in created things, and that essence is the primary constituent element. The nominalists, Occam, Peter de Alliaco, and Gerson, say that essences are not knowable. Evolutionists say that the essences of things are not stable, yea, that all essences are united in a universal flux, so that from a monkey a man can be generated. Here too it would follow that there is no objective difference between good and evil. This is explicitly affirmed by Occam: No act is morally good or evil by its genus, that is, by its object. It has its goodness or evil only from the positive law of God known by revelation. This theological positivism is held by Scotus, who excepts only two acts, the love of God and the hatred of God. It seems, according to Scotus, that the essences of creatures depend on the free will of God. God could have so created man that a son would be bound to kill his aged father, in order to deliver him from the miseries of life. Positivists and evolutionists, since they reject the positive law of God known by revelation, cannot recognize any moral obligation.

Let us add here that this primary objective morality does not change even if circumstances and purpose change. Thus adultery is primarily and essentially an evil by reason of its object, that is, intercourse with another man’s wife. Nature remains invariable, while circumstances and purpose change.

1. In natural objects considered physically there is no moral evil. But in these same objects, seen as standards of human activity, there is moral evil.

2. When we use the word “matter,” we mean, not the matter “from which” (ex qua), but the matter “concerning which” (circa quam).

3. Although the goodness of the action is not caused by the goodness of the effect, still the proportion of the action to its effect is the reason for the goodness of the action, because the object differentiates the action as it is in intention. The causality of the effect is formal and final, not efficient.

4. Moral goodness or malice comes, not from the object, but from the law. Answer: From the law mediately, as its standard, but immediately from the object as specificating form, because action is a motion and a way to the object.

But note that the specificating object may be either good-in-itself, or good only because it is commanded (fasting on Saturday rather than on some other day). The object good-in-itself exercises immediate differentiation, whereas the object good-by-law differentiates mediately.

5. The human act receives its primary morality from the goal to which it tends, while the object is willed only on account of the end. Hence morality comes primarily from the purpose. Thus certain historians, who distort a doctrine commonly admitted. Answer: What the human act directly regards is the objective end (finis operis), not the subjective end (finis operantis). The objective end coincides with the object. The subjective end enters as an accident. Almsgiving aims, directly and primarily, to relieve the poor. To this objective purpose may be added a subjective purpose, the intention, say, of satisfying for sin.

6. When a man says, “I wish to live right” or “I do not wish to live right,” his act does not have its specific goodness or malice from the object, otherwise this will would precontain the goodness of all virtues or the malice of all vices. Answer: The act, “I wish to live right,” has indeed many material objects, but it is differentiated specifically by the common object, namely, good-in-itself, just as metaphysics, say, is specifically differentiated by being and reality.

A doubt. From what habit does this act come, namely, “I wish to live right?” Answer: If this act follows justification, it comes from charity. If it precedes justification, it comes from the will alone, as naturally inclined to good-in-itself. The opposite act, “I do not wish to live right,” gets its

specific difference from useful or delightful good. No one can choose evil as evil.

ART. 3. CIRCUMSTANTIAL GOODNESS OR BADNESS

PRELIMINARIES

Circumstance is an accident which affects the human act in its essential morality. Seven circumstances are enumerated: who, what, where, by what aid, why, how, and when. To illustrate: the agent is a priest, the object is sacred, the place is public or sacred, the instrument is invocation of the demon, the purpose of the agent is evil, the mode is intense, say, or scornful, the time is a festival day, or a longer or shorter period.

THESIS: THE HUMAN ACT DERIVES SOME GOODNESS OR EVIL FROM CIRCUMSTANCES

Authority. In almsgiving or fasting or prayer, Christ forbids the intention of vainglory. The virtuous man acts as he should, and when he should, and according to other circumstances.

Reason. We must judge of goodness or evil in human acts by analogy with goodness or evil in natural things. But natural things are good or evil not only by their substantial form but also by their accidents, e.g., proportion in members, in stature, figure and color. Similarly theft is always bad, but theft in a sacred place is worse.

ART. 4. PURPOSE AS CIRCUMSTANCE

Purpose stands here, not for the natural and objective purpose of the deed, but for the subjective intention of the agent.

THESIS. THE HUMAN ACT DERIVES GOODNESS OR EVIL FROM THE AGENT’S SUBJECTIVE PURPOSE

Authority. “Beware of doing justice in order to be seen by men.” “If thine eye is evil, thy whole body is in darkness.”

Reason. In dependent things, just as their existence depends on agent and form, so does their goodness depend on their purpose. Thus everything created depends on at least three causes: one intrinsic (form), two extrinsic (agent and purpose). But things that are relative, while they are specifically differentiated by their objective purpose, are also related to and dependent on, the agent's purpose as extrinsic goal.

First corollary. In human action we must distinguish a fourfold goodness: 1. according to genus, looking at the action physically; 2. in its moral species, which comes from its objective goal; 3. in its circumstances, which are its accidents; 4. in its subjective purpose.

But does not St. Thomas say that the subjective purpose is itself a circumstance? Answer: Yes, this purpose is a circumstance as related to the commanded exterior act, but not as related to the interior act, the intention. Thus when a man gives alms for vainglory, this vainglory is a circumstance of the exterior act, but since it specificates the intention immediately, it also mediately specificates the exterior act. Hence the agent's personal purpose, while it is a circumstance, must be distinguished from other circumstances, since it may pass over into a specificating element.

Second corollary. An action is not simply good unless all four kinds of goodness concur. Proof lies in the often quoted word of Denis, namely, good arises from full cause, evil from any defect. Now defect may arise from any lack of conformity with the moral law.

To explain. 1. The aforesaid deformity arises, not only from the object, but also from circumstances and purpose. The act is an evil act, even though it may be good in its object and circumstances, if it is evil by the subjective purpose of the agent. Further, action is simply evil, if it is good only by the purpose of the agent, but intrinsically evil from its object (a lie, say, in order to save the life of our neighbor).

2. An action can be simply good, according to all the aforesaid kinds of goodness, and yet be imperfect in its mode (e.g., a remiss act of charity, or refusal of an unbinding inspiration). Such an act is an imperfection, but not a venial sin.

3. Further, an action may be simply good, in all the preceding four ways, if you consider its principal element, but it can at the same time be venially culpable from a secondary standpoint (e.g., a sermon, good by object, purpose, and circumstances, but venially sinful by a sudden movement of vanity or impatience). Such an act is simply good and meritorious, but with

an attendant evil which calls for temporal punishment. Martyrdom itself may be disturbed by slight motions of impatience or cowardice, which are not in conformity with right reason.

Objection. But then venial sin is an act distinct from the work which is simply good. Answer: It can be a distinct act, but it can also be a secondary mode in the principal act (e.g., complacency, or a bitter tone, in defending the truth). Is the martyr to be deprived of his crown because of a passing emotion of cowardice? It is true that martyrdom, in the last instant, satisfies for all venial sins, but even before this last instant the act was simply good. Further, if a slight deordination suffices to make the whole act simply bad, we could hardly find any good act even in holy men. And this conclusion is palpably absurd. How very few, even in the most heroic saints, are deeds unaffected by vainglory, for instance, or selfishness, or self-complacency, or remissness, or excess, or precipitation, or inconsideration! How few are penitents whose penance is not accompanied by some defect or excess! How few superiors correct with no excess of zeal or anger! How few preachers are unmoved by self-complacency! How few are men who pray without distraction!

ART. 5. GOOD AND EVIL DIFFERENTIATE HUMAN ACTS SPECIFICALLY

PRELIMINARIES

We have seen that human acts receive their goodness or malice from object and purpose. The precise question now is this: Is the morality arising from the object specific? Is the act, for instance, of killing an innocent man intrinsically and essentially evil? Would it remain evil even if God would revoke all positive precepts? Scotus says no. He holds that no act is evil by object alone, no act except to hate God. He adds that killing, if God revoked all positive precepts, would not be evil. St. Thomas holds the opposite view, as is clear from the objections preceding this article.

1. Good and evil exist in acts just as they do in things. But in things good and evil do not diversify species. To illustrate: A man who is well and man who is dying belong to the same species.

2. Evil is a privation, and therefore cannot constitute the specific difference of any sin except that of omission.

Scotus and the nominalists, departing from tradition, prepared the way for the positivists, who deny specific distinction between good and evil. Evil, they say, is mere ignorance of what is useful and delightful. Taine said that virtue and vice are natural effects, like sugar and arsenic, arsenic not being specifically injurious, since in small quantities it can be used as a remedy.

THESIS. GOOD AND EVIL DIVERSIFY MORAL ACTS SPECIFICALLY

Authority. Aristotle: “Habits that are similar bring forth acts that are similar.” Now a good habit differs specifically from a bad habit, generosity, for example, from prodigality. The Holy See has condemned the proposition of the laxists, who hold that masturbation, fornication, and onanism are not intrinsically evil by their object. The following propositions were condemned by Innocent XI: 1. Fornication is evil only because it is forbidden. 2. Masturbation is not prohibited by the law of nature. Hence if God had not forbidden it, it would often be good and sometimes obligatory. The Holy Office condemned the following propositions: 1. It is probable that the onanistic use of matrimony is not prohibited by the natural law. The response says that the proposition is scandalous and erroneous, and implicitly condemned by Innocent XI. 2. To a further question, whether the imperfect use of matrimony, whether onanistic or sodomistic, be licit, the answer was, “illicit because intrinsically evil.”

Hence we can no longer hold the following sentences: No act is evil by its object except to hate God: No act against creatures is mortally sinful by its nature, but only by divine precept. Adultery and murder would not be sins if God recalled His positive precept.

Reason. Acts are specifically differentiated by their objects. Good and evil constitute a specific difference in objects as related to right reason. Hence certain acts are essentially in harmony with reason, just as their objects are. Certain acts are not reasonable.

In this argument right reason is assigned as the proximate foundation of obligation. Good-in-itself belongs essentially to right reason, whereas evil does not. For the rational animal, that is good which belongs to him by reason, and evil is that which disagrees with right reason.

First corollary. The first principle of ethics is “do good, avoid evil,” that is, “live according to reason.”

Second corollary. If, as maintained by empiricism and positivism, reason were not essentially distinct from imagination, then men, not knowing the specific difference between good and moral evil, would not know that good in itself is something higher than delectable or useful good.

Third corollary. Spinoza’s denial of free will destroys the specific distinction between good and evil, since liberty is a conditio sine qua non of morality. In Spinoza’s view, Bolshevism would be nothing more than a kind of sickness.

Fourth corollary. Here appears the essential distinction between the natural law, impressed on our nature, and the divine positive law. This corollary is against Scotus, Occam, Peter of Alliaco, and Gerson.

DIFFICULTIES ANALYZED

1. Even in objects of nature, good and evil are essentially diverse. A dead body and a living body do not belong to the same species.

2. How can evil, which is a privation, constitute the specific difference, not only of the sin of omission, but also that of commission? Answer: Since evil is a privation of good that is due to the subject, an act is called evil in its species, not because it has no object, but because it has an object that is not in harmony with reason. Thus the object can positively constitute the species of an evil act.

Cajetan quotes St. Thomas: Good and evil are not constitutive differences except in the moral world, where acts receive their species from their objective purpose. Now, since good is the reason why an object is end and purpose, good and evil are the specific differences in the moral world. But good is end and purpose per se, whereas evil is so only in so far as it removes the end which is due. The remotion of this due end constitutes a species, but only because it is united to an undue end.

Evil as evil is not a constitutive difference, but only by reason of the good in which it is found. The sin of commission is aversion from God with conversion to that created good by which the sin of commission is differentiated. Thus sin is distinguished by its opposite virtue, and virtue by its object. Hence the formal constituent of a sin of commission is not

privation, but the positive thing which is the basis of the privation, the positive tendency to an object which does not agree with right reason.

ART. 6. THE INTENTION IS DIFFERENTIATED BY PERSONAL PURPOSE

PRELIMINARIES

Does the personal purpose diversify human acts specifically, or is it merely a circumstance? Much depends on this question. On it depends, for example, the question whether two sins are to be declared in confession or only one.

OBJECTIONS

1. Acts are differentiated by the object, and the personal purpose is not identified with the object.

2. It seems to be a mere accidental blemish that a man gives alms for vainglory; hence, notwithstanding this subjective purpose, the act remains essentially good.

3. Acts which differ specifically can be devoted to vainglory.

Two conclusions. First: Intention, the interior act of the will, is specificated by personal purpose. Second: The exterior act, the commanded act, is differentiated, directly by the object, indirectly by the subjective purpose.

The first conclusion is proved thus: Acts are differentiated by their object, and the subjective purpose is, properly speaking, the object of the intention, the interior act of the will. This truth holds good, not only for intention, but for every interior act of the will. To illustrate: A man commands himself to give alms for vainglory. Here we have, first, intention commanding choice, then choice, commanding a second subordinated choice, the choice of a subordinated means. Again, I will to have health; hence, secondly, I wish a physician; thirdly, I call a servant to seek the physician.

The second conclusion is proved thus: The act of the will is the formal and vivifying element, of which the exterior act is the material. Now the interior act is differentiated by subjective purpose. But the exterior act,

although it remains immediately differentiated by its proper object, is differentiated, mediately and formally, by the purpose. The will uses the bodily members as instruments, and exterior acts enter the field of morality only as subject to the will. The act which commands and the act which is commanded, though they are physically two acts, are still only one moral act. This explains, if we are not mistaken, the concept of moral person. A college of physicians, physically multiple, has a moral unity. A similar truth holds true of the mystical body.

Corollary. One who steals in order to commit adultery is an adulterer rather than a thief, because adultery, the subjective purpose, is the form of which theft is the material. In this case there are two sins specifically distinct, to be declared in confession.

ART. 7. DIFFERENTIATION BY OBJECT IS SOMETIMES SUBORDINATED TO DIFFERENTIATION BY PURPOSE

At other times one and the same act is in two disparate species. First conclusion. The species of good which comes from objective purpose is subordinated to the species which comes from subjective purpose. Thus theft may be subordinated to avarice. And the acts of all the other virtues are subordinated per se to the object of charity.

Second conclusion. That species of goodness which comes from an object ordained per accidens to such and such an end is not contained under that other species as genus. He who steals in order to commit adultery unites in his act two disparate kinds of malice.

COROLLARIES

1. A choice good by the object becomes sordid by an evil intention.

2. An evil choice is not made good by a good intention, though its malice is diminished. Illustration: the man who steals in order to give alms. The end does not justify the means, when the means are intrinsically evil.

3. One and the same act can have two kinds of goodness or malice, one from the object, the other from the purpose. Illustration: to give alms (an act of mercy) in order to satisfy for sin (an act of penance), or for love of God and neighbor (an act of charity).

4. An act, good in object, purpose, and circumstances, remains simply good and meritorious, even if there supervenes secondarily something venially sinful, a tinge, say, of vainglory or of impatience.

TWO DOUBTS

1. Is it a venial sin, or only an imperfection, to choose a lesser good when counsel invites to a greater good? Illustration: A physician hears Mass for nine days to obtain a special grace. He finds that this exercise was no impediment to his work. Would it be better to continue hearing Mass? But, he says, I am not obliged to this, and I can well use this time for the study of medicine, a minor good indeed, but still a good, not an evil. Some authors say that in this case there is a venial sin, but of the lightest kind. Thus they deny the distinction between imperfection and venial sin, since a lesser good here and now takes on the nature of evil. Others deny this view. The act of the physician, they say, who uses his time, not to hear daily Mass, but to study medicine, is a good act, differentiated by a good object, by a legitimate motive. We embrace this second answer.

2. Is it licit to choose a minor evil in order to escape a major evil? The answer here is now clearer. The affirmative answer again comes from the relativists, for whom the lesser evil, in comparison with the greater evil, becomes a good. Those who are rigorists in regard to the lesser good become laxists on the minor evil. Such is the confusion to which relativism leads. Others reply correctly, and negatively, namely, we are not allowed to choose the minor evil to avoid the greater when the minor evil is itself evil by its object. Only under the three following conditions may we choose a minor evil in order to avoid a major evil: (a) both evils cannot be avoided: (b) the lesser evil is not intrinsically evil: (c) the two evils must threaten one and the same person. Moses rightly counseled repudiation of a wife in order to avoid her death. But Lot committed sin when he counseled the men of Sodom to abuse his daughters in order to keep these men from sodomy with Lot’s guests.

ART. 8. SOME ACTS ARE SPECIFICALLY INDIFFERENT

PRELIMINARIES

“Indifferent” signifies an act that, morally, is neither good nor bad. “Specifically” signifies the act in relation to its object, not in relation to the individual agent. The affirmative answer is by far the more common.

Authority. “Continence is good, lust is bad, indifferent is the act of walking.” Condemned is the proposition of Huss which denies the existence of acts indifferent in their nature.

Reason. Act is differentiated by its object in relation to right reason. Now there are acts which do not include either harmony or disharmony with reason, for instance, to walk, to write, to speak. Such acts, therefore, are in themselves indifferent, morally neither good nor bad.

OBJECTIONS ANALYZED

1. Since between things privatively opposed, between light and darkness, there is no medium, and since good and evil are privatively opposed, there can be no medium. Answer: If you are talking of things already existing, of darkness in relation to light, of death in relation to life: Yes, there is no medium. But in things that are coming into existence, no. For there is an intermediate indisposition between health and serious illness. Similarly, an indifferent act, like walking, becomes evil when it subserves theft. The evil purpose does not take away objective indifference, but the act, here and now, has become simply evil.

2. But there is no habit specifically indifferent, and therefore no act. Here we deny parity. Habits are acquired by individual acts, and individual acts are never indifferent. The exercise even of the mechanical arts is not indifferent in the individual.

Corollary. Acts specifically indifferent antecede all laws natural or positive. Before any divine positive law an act can be specifically good or evil. This truth condemns Occam and other nominalists, for instance, Gerson and Peter of Alliaco, who say that no act is in its genus evil, not even that of hating God, but only the evil which is positively prohibited by God. It likewise condemns Scotus, who says that no act is perfectly good in its genus, that is, by its object alone, except to love God, and no act is evil by its genus, that is, by its object alone, except to hate God. These views lead to moral indifferentism and positivism.

ART. 9. NO HUMAN ACT IS INDIVIDUALLY INDIFFERENT

We are not treating of indeliberate acts, such as stroking one's beard or moving one's foot, from an impulse of nature or of imagination. These are not human acts, and hence are indifferent even in the individual. Nor are we dealing with acts which are indifferent in relation to supernatural merit or demerit, with acts ethically good, of the infidel or of the sinner, e.g., almsgiving, as a natural good, but without subordination to a supernatural end. Our thesis is the common one, against Scotus and Vasquez. It is taught by St. Bellarmine, Suarez, Valentia, St. Alphonsus, and by many recent authors: Müller, Bouquillon, Simar, Noldin, Lehmkuhl, and Frins.

Authority. "Of every idle word men will give an account in the day of judgment." St. Gregory explains: "Idle words are those which lack utility or necessity or piety." If it does not lack these qualities, it is good. Hence every word is either good or evil. Speech, in itself indifferent, is never so in the individual, supposing him to speak deliberately, not merely mechanically, without consciousness. "Whether you eat or drink or do anything else, do it all for the glory of God." All that we do must, at least virtually and implicitly, be done for the glory of God.

Reason. As often as a man acts deliberately, he is bound to direct his action to a good end. If he does this, the action will be good, supposing that it is not evil by object or circumstances. If he does not do so, his act will be evil, because it lacks proper personal purpose and goal. Hence there is not, and cannot be, an act that is indifferent in the individual.

The principle here is that man, as often as he acts deliberately, acts for a purpose which he establishes by a judgment of his reason. Otherwise his act would take place by chance, and there would be no reason why he would do one thing rather than another, or there would be only an unconscious finality, as in life that is merely vegetative or sensitive. Further, man, acting deliberately, must aim at an end that is in itself good and not merely indifferent, because he must act as man, as a rational agent, whereas if he neglects to act by reason he acts as a beast.

The application is clear: every deliberate act in the individual either stands under the dictate of right reason or not. If the first, then it is good; if the second, then it is evil. Hence, even if the act be indifferent by its object, it becomes good or evil by the purpose of the agent. Man acts according to nature only when he acts according to reason.

COROLLARIES

1. To act deliberately merely for sense-delight as an end is evil. This corollary follows from the condemnation of the following propositions. 1. Matrimonial intercourse exercised merely for pleasure is not even venially sinful. 2. To eat and drink to satiety, simply and solely for pleasure, is not a sin, supposing that it does not harm the health. Man's will is intended, not to serve the senses, but to command them. Man is not indeed forbidden to have sensible delight in exercising operations necessary for the preservation either of the individual or of the species, but he is forbidden to seek these delights as his end, as brute animals do. And even the pursuit of truth, simply on account of the delight annexed to it, would be the vice of curiosity.

2. This doctrine is very consoling for men of good will. All deliberate acts, even the smallest, if they are not sins, are morally good. Thus the just man merits daily an augmentation of grace and glory. This consolation fails if, with Scotus, we hold that some acts, otherwise morally good, are indifferent even in the individual.

A doubt. But is man bound to direct all his acts, not only to a good end, but also to God, at least virtually and implicitly? The answer is affirmative, and opposed to two opposite errors. Baius and the Jansenists say that man must turn all his acts to God actually, otherwise his acts are sins, since by reason of the corruption of nature, there is no medium between heavenly charity and vitiated cupidity. Hence "all the deeds of infidels are sins." This proposition was condemned by St. Pius V.

The opposite error, taught by many Jesuits, says that man is not bound to direct all his acts to God even virtually, but that it suffices that they be done for something in itself good. Some (e.g., Noldin) even say that the act remains good even though the man does not intend good-in-itself, but only the delight or the advantage he gains from it. This last view is not safe, for the following proposition has been condemned: The marriage act, exercised merely for pleasure, lacks all guilt, even venial. The view of Thomists, admitted also by many other theologians, runs thus: Man is bound to direct all his acts to an end which, at least implicitly, is directed to God. Why? Because a last end has been assigned to man by his Creator, an end to which he must tend in all his acts. But this direction and ordination need not be actual and explicit; it suffices that it be implicit, as far as man sees his actions as conformable to right reason and eternal law. Delight is for the

sake of the operation, not e converso. “Whether you eat or drink, or do anything else, do it all for the glory of God.” Nor is it required that a man daily elicit an explicit proposal to do everything to God’s glory. It suffices that, at proper times, he elicit an act of faith and charity, acts which contain implicitly the virtual intention.

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS

1. There is no obligation without precept. But there is no precept, natural or positive, to direct every action toward a good end. Here we simply say that there is such a precept.

2. There is no positive precept to direct every action to an end good-in-itself. The words of St. Paul, on eating and drinking, are not a precept but only a counsel. Answer: The words of the Apostle are preceptive, because the word “do” (facite) in Holy Scripture signifies everywhere a precept, and because man, even in the natural order, must do all his deeds for his last end, which is God; a fortiori in the supernatural order.

3. But in the natural order there is no precept to do anything for God’s sake. For instance, when a man sneezes, or attends to a need of nature, is he bound to think of his last goal? Answer: Right reason dictates proper care of physical needs for the sake of health.

4. “Act according to reason” is an affirmative precept, which indeed binds always, but not at each moment. Answer: This precept is simultaneously negative, namely, “Do not act idly,” do not act without reason. Hence it binds man in all his deliberate acts.

5. This precept, thus understood, would be too rigorous, would be an intolerable burden. It would result in innumerable venial sins, or would be perpetual occasion for scruple. Answer; The one essential requirement is the general intention to live according to right reason. This general intention remains virtually, unless it be revoked by contrary intention. Further, many inferior actions (spitting, eating, drinking) often occur indeliberately. Hence, on the contrary, this doctrine is one that consoles. All deliberate acts, even the smallest, unless they are sinful, are morally good and meritorious.

6. These inferior actions (spitting, drinking) cannot be made the object of a vow; therefore they are not morally good. Answer: A vow must be devoted, not only to good, but to a higher good.

7. The omission of an act which is not commanded (for instance, to hear Mass on a week day), is not evil, but neither is it good, because its opposite (e.g., to hear Mass) is a good. Therefore such omission is indifferent. Answer: The omission is good if it comes from a reasonable motive, otherwise it is evil. It is evil if it comes from laziness or disgust or contempt, and so on. But it is good if it comes from care for health, or from any other rational motive, and thus, though less perfect, it still remains meritorious. The just man is not bound always to the maximum of generosity possible here and now.

8. A man can be invincibly ignorant of the precept that he must always act for a good end. Now suppose this man to perform an act, indifferent by object and purpose, for instance, to walk through a field. This act is not good, since it is indifferent in object and purpose, nor is it evil, because it proceeds from invincible ignorance. Answer: Some Thomists hold (e.g., Alvarez) that such an act is per accidens possible, and that St. Thomas is speaking only of what is true per se. But it seems better, with Medina, Billuart and Prümmer, to deny the possibility of such invincible ignorance. The age of reason brings obligation to act according to the principles of reason.

ART. 10. SOME CIRCUMSTANCES DIFFERENTIATE ACTS SPECIFICALLY

Authority. The Council of Trent defines the circumstances which change the species of a sin (e.g., theft in a sacred place) and says that they are necessary matter in confession.

Reason. Morality arises from relationship to right reason. Now certain circumstances, independently of the moral species derived from the object, carry with them a special relationship of harmony or disharmony with reason, the proximate standard of morals. Such circumstances change the nature of the act. They do this by superadding a new species to the act (adultery superadded to theft) by turning a specifically indifferent act into an act that is good (walking for health’s sake), or by destroying the primary species of a good act (almsgiving merely for vainglory).

OBJECTIONS ANALYZED

1. Accidents do not create a species, and circumstances are nothing but accidents. Answer: Circumstance is an accident: an accident which can become a principal condition of the object, yes; otherwise, no.

2. But one thing cannot be in different species. A thing that is absolute, I grant; a thing that is relative, proceeding from a twofold consideration of reason, I deny.

ART. 11. SOME CIRCUMSTANCES DO NOT CHANGE THE NATURE OF THE ACT, BUT ONLY AUGMENT OR DIMINISH ITS GOODNESS OR EVIL

Certain circumstances, considered apart from the specific nature of the act, do not change that nature, but do influence its gravity. The amount stolen, e.g., determines the difference between grave sin and venial sin.

Corollary. Circumstances changing the nature of sin are matter for confession, as are also, according to the more common and safe view, those circumstances that notably increase the evil. As illustrations, take an act of hatred extending over years, or a long unbroken period spent in impurity.

CHAPTER XVII

GOOD AND EVIL IN INTERIOR ACTS (Q. 19)

THIS question has two parts. In the first four articles we ask: Does the will's goodness depend: (a) on the object; (b) on the object alone; (c) on right reason; (d) on the eternal law. In the remaining six articles we answer difficulties about the foregoing principles: (a) Does erroneous reason oblige? (b) Is the will that follows erroneous reason evil? (c) Does the goodness of choice depend on the intention of the end? (d) Does the quantity of good in the choice follow the quantity of good in the intention? (e) Does the goodness of the human will depend on the divine will? (f) Must the human will always be in harmony with the divine will in the object willed?

ART. 1. THE GOODNESS OF THE WILL DEPENDS ON ITS OBJECT

PRELIMINARIES

On first view, this article seems merely a repetition of the preceding question. But here, treating only of the interior act as distinguished from the exterior, St. Thomas wishes to show the relation of the foregoing articles with those that follow.

Authority. Aristotle says: "Justice is the virtue by which we will to do things that are just."

Reason: The specific difference among acts of the will follows the object proposed by reason. Just as truth and error differentiate per se the acts of reason, so do good and evil differentiate per se the acts of the will, the objects of which are necessarily subject to the order of reason.

Corollary. Acts are intrinsically good if their object is always conformable to reason (e.g., to love God or to pay debts). But we must

notice, as said above, that this traditional objectivism is opposed to Kantian subjectivism. The Kantian standard is not the objective nature of good, but the categorical imperative, which is a subjective judgment, synthetic, and a priori, namely: “Act in all things so that the moral direction of your will can be a principle for common and public legislation.” But this moral direction cannot be valid for all men unless it is based on the objectivity of right reason. The act of the will is differentiated, not by reason as such, but by the object subject to measurement by reason. To illustrate: The amount of food is measured by its relation to reason’s standard of health.

ART. 2. GOODNESS OF INTENTION DEPENDS ON THE OBJECT AIMED AT BY PERSONAL PURPOSE

On the object alone depends direct goodness or malice, and, for the interior act, intention, the object is nothing but the purpose of the agent. The essential good and evil of the interior act of the will must be taken primarily from that which is intended by the will primo and per se.

ART. 3. THE GOODNESS OF THE WILL DEPENDS ON REASON, THAT IS, ON THE OBJECT PROPOSED BY REASON

PRELIMINARIES

The proximate rule of morality, practical reason, has three elements: first, synderesis, the habit of first principles; second, moral knowledge which arises from these principles; third, conscience, the act of the practical reason, dictating something to be here and now done or avoided. In the supernatural order, synderesis becomes faith, moral knowledge becomes moral theology, and natural conscience becomes Christian conscience. This latter, in the just man, is an act of infused prudence subserved by acquired prudence. Since the formation of conscience belongs properly to the treatise on prudence, only general questions belong to this treatise on human acts.

Authority. St. Hilary speaks: “Unregulated is the will unless subject to reason.”

Reason. The object of the will is proposed to it by reason; hence the will’s goodness depends on the object of the intention. To explain. Nothing is willed unless foreknown. The will tends to universal good only because

the intellect knows universal good. The will is regulated by practical reason, just as speculative reason is directed to the cognition of truth.

DIFFICULTIES ANALYZED

1. Although the good as good belongs primarily to the will, nevertheless the good as true belongs to reason before it can belong to the will, because the will, being a blind faculty, must be directed by reason.

2. The goodness of the practical intellect, that is, truth conformed to right appetite, depends on the goodness of the will. When we praise a man as just, we speak of him as a man of good will rather than of good intellect. This objection is repeated today by pragmatism and the philosophy of action. Answer: The goodness of the practical intellect is truth conformed to right appetite. If you are speaking of the judgment of prudence, yes; if you are speaking of the judgment of moral science, no. The right moral judgment, here and now, comes from the virtue of prudence. But prudence cannot perform this duty unless the will is guided by the other virtues (justice, fortitude, and temperance).

3. How does direction by moral science differ from direction by prudence? Moral science shows us the goal to be aimed at, whether that goal be the ultimate end of all human endeavor, or the goal of any particular virtue. Thus the truth of moral science rests on objective conformity to reality. But prudence directs the choice of right ways and means, here and now, and its truth consists in man’s personal intention to reach the right goal even if, as in the case of invincible ignorance, his intention lacks conformity with objective reality. Example: a man invincibly ignorant of the special strength of the liquor set before him. Conformity with right intention justifies his drinking, even though he thereby becomes drunk. His judgment was practically true, by conformity with right intention, though speculatively false in relation to reality.

This truth, of great importance in forming conscience, is neglected by many probabilists. They insist too exclusively on the value of the moral virtues: on the truth, say, that the chaste man, by being chaste, judges correctly on matters of chastity, and the humble man on matters of humility. Now this is a part of the truth, a part contained in the teaching of Blondel, who defines truth as “equation of mind and life.” This truth is verified only

of the truth of prudence, and, in some measure, of the gift of wisdom, which gift nevertheless presupposes faith as conformed to divine reality.

Summary. Goodness of will depends on right reason, that is, on synderesis and on moral science. But reason in the practical order, that is, under prudence, depends upon correct intention, whereby the rectitude of universal principles descends to the particular deed to be performed here and now.

ART. 4. THE WILL'S GOODNESS DEPENDS ON THE ETERNAL LAW AS ITS SUPREME STANDARD

PRELIMINARIES

This thesis is denied by independent ethics, independent not only of revealed religion, but even of the concept of God and of every metaphysical concept. Kant, for example, holds that the supreme foundation of moral foundation is the categorical imperative, the absolute autonomy of our will. Thus man would be like God: he would be bound, not by any superior, but only by himself, to act wisely, i.e., according to right reason. Were obligation imposed on us by God, our life, being a servitude, spent to obtain a delightful reward, would not be, properly speaking, a moral life, would not be worthy of man's dignity.

The objections which Kant here raises against traditional ethics are, at bottom, identical with those which St. Thomas puts at the head of this article: 1. Reason alone is a self-sufficient standard. 2. Whereas measure must be proportioned to the thing measured, the eternal law is not so proportioned. 3. The standard of human activity must be most clear and certain, whereas the eternal law is unknown to us.

Against these arguments, agnostic and positivistic, we defend our thesis: Goodness of the human will depends on the eternal law as its supreme standard.

Authority. Sin, says St. Augustine, is a word or deed or desire against the eternal law. The following proposition was condemned: "A philosophical sin, a moral sin, is a human act out of harmony with rational nature and right reason. Theological sin is free transgression of the divine law. Philosophical sin, however grave, in a man who ignores God, or does not think actually of God, is a grave sin, but it is not an offense against God. It

is not a mortal sin dissolving our friendship with God, nor does it deserve eternal punishment." From this condemnation it is clear that there cannot be a sin merely philosophical, that is, a sin against reason but not against the eternal law. Therefore the eternal law is the supreme standard of human morality. The following proposition is also condemned: "The laws of morality do not need divine sanction, nor need human laws be in harmony with the natural law, or receive their obligation from God."

Reason. In a series of causes, one subordinated to the other, the effect depends more on the first cause than on the second cause. But human reason regulates the human will only by dependence on eternal law, which is divine reason. To explain. Human reason can rightly command good to be done and evil to be avoided, only by appealing to conformity with the eternal law. Human reason is a second cause, not the first. And the order of subordination of agents corresponds to the order of goals. Hence movement to universal good, to the last end, must come from the first cause of morality, that is, from God.

Corollary. The obligation of the natural law begins with God's will to create man. God promulgates the natural law by imprinting it on man's mind.

Objections Analyzed

The objections formulated by St. Thomas are repeated by independent ethics.

1. The one standard of human action is human reason. Answer: Yes, if you are talking of a proximate standard, subordinated to a higher standard.

2. The measure must be proportioned to the thing measured. But the eternal law is not proportioned to human will. Answer: Not proportioned as proximate measure, granted; otherwise, denied.

3. The eternal law is not the supreme standard, because the first and essential goodness of an act comes from its object, and an object in itself good is independent of the eternal law. Answer: Goodness comes from an object, good by moral standards, yes; good by mere physical standards, no.

4. To tell the truth is morally good independent of God's creative free act. Answer: God is free to create, or not to create. But if He creates rational beings, He must will them to live rationally.

5. Veracity is morally binding on God Himself, before He promulgates the eternal law. Answer: God's veracity is identified with God's wisdom. And obligation, properly speaking, does not exist for God, since God has no superior, though He does owe it to Himself to act wisely.

6. The standard of morality must be known naturally, and from the very beginning of moral life. Answer: Must be known even from the beginning of moral life, at least in its first principle, i.e., do good, avoid evil, I grant, though I hold that revelation is morally necessary if all men are to know, explicitly and unerringly, the fullness of the natural law.

7. But even this first principle of the eternal law, since it is admitted by the authority of reason, is subordinated to reason. Thus even obedience to God is good, not because it is commanded by God, but because it is a dictate of our reason. Hence the supreme foundation, even of religious certitude, is human reason. Answer: The authority of human reason discovers the divine reason, whose authority transcends altogether the authority of our reason.

8. If the goodness of the will depended on the eternal law, our will would have to be conformed to the divine will in every object which it wills. Thus I would have to will the eternal damnation of my father if God wills it. This is an undesirable conclusion. Answer: Ultimately, I will all evils which Providence permits, but, here and now, under particular reasons which I must consider, I do not will what God wills, but I will what God wills me to will.

A RELATED QUESTION

Does conscience prove a posteriori the existence of a supreme legislator?

PRELIMINARIES

Many traditional authors answer affirmatively. Among those who answer negatively is Father Billot, S.J. The background of this denial is the following thesis: Many men are invincibly ignorant of God's existence, and of the first precepts of the natural law, and are invincibly ignorant of these truths even up to death. Such men never reach the age of reason, as far as morality goes. Atrocious crimes, in such men, would be only material sins.

Moral evil, he says, cannot be conceived, unless we anteriorly know God who obliges.

This concept of Father Billot seems to presuppose that the obligation of the natural law is founded on a special divine law, while we say it rests on God's general creative will. Otherwise, he adds, we should again fall into the theory of "philosophical sin," i.e., a man could sin against right reason, without sinning against God whom he would not yet know.

Answer: Notwithstanding these objections, we maintain that the existence of God can be proved from the fact of moral obligation known by conscience. Let us note, first of all, that proofs of God's existence can begin with any fact, whether in the sense order, or in the intellectual and moral order. Man's intellective soul leads us to a supreme intellect. What participates (the fourth way), what is changeable (the first way), and what is imperfect (the third and fourth way), demand the pre-existence of something immovable and perfect. Now the human soul is intellective by participation, because only one of its parts is intellective: and it is imperfect, because it does not understand everything and because it proceeds from potentiality to act.

Uniting the five ways, we speak thus: Whatever is changed is changed by another; whatever begins to cause needs to be moved toward causing; every contingent thing is caused by a necessary thing; everything imperfect or composed of parts is caused by a perfect and most simple thing. But the human intellect and will are changeable, contingent, imperfect, yet are destined for universal truth and universal good. Hence the human soul depends on the prime mover, on the prime cause, on the prime necessary being, on the supreme and most perfect being, on the supreme ordinator.

This fivefold demonstration can be applied also in the field of practical reason. On a superior cause depends whatever is moved or begins to cause, or is contingent, or is imperfect, or is ordained to another. Now practical reason begins with the first principle, i.e., good is to be done, evil is to be avoided, and then begins to regulate our activity by this principle. Further, it is contingent and imperfect, and is related to the truth as the will is to the good. Hence our practical reason, in knowing and commanding good, commands by virtue of a supreme cause, namely, God the Legislator.

1. This demonstration proceeds, not from moral obligation, but from the various imperfections of our practical reason. Answer: It proceeds from the imperfections of our practical reason, in its action considered psychologically, no; in its action as commanding and regulating, yes. Practical reason not only shows us the good, but also commands us to do that good. But it commands as a second cause, which does not act except in virtue of the first cause.

2. But we cannot know moral obligation unless we know God beforehand. Answer: Unless we know God, from the very obligation itself, yes; otherwise, no. To explain. Obligation is knowable in two ways: a priori and a posteriori. A priori, we know it either from its supreme foundation in God, or then in its proximate foundation, in the self-evident principle that good is to be done, and evil to be avoided. A posteriori we know it in the joy of a good conscience, in the remorse of conscience, in the insufficiency of human legislation which itself needs regulation. But note that the principle of doing good and avoiding evil is a principle, not a mere conclusion. Without this principle man would have no duty to live according to reason.

3. But obligation, known a posteriori, and a priori in its proximate foundation, is known, not as a moral obligation, but only as a rational imperative, not yet morally obliging. Answer: This obligation cannot be known perfectly, a priori, in its supreme cause, unless we first know God. But it can be known in its proximate foundation, which is immediately evident, namely, in remorse of conscience. Knowing the obligation, we simultaneously know, a posteriori, the existence of God the Obligator, precisely because there is no obligation without a superior who obliges.

4. But thus we would have the sin that is called philosophical, because man could know his action to be against right reason, without knowing that it is against the eternal law. Answer: He can know this without knowing the eternal law distinctly, but not without knowing, at least confusedly, the existence of God the Legislator. My practical reason sees at once that I am not the source of a law that binds all men, individually and collectively. Since, then, practical reason knows that it commands as second cause, it follows that philosophical sin is impossible. If God can be known from the wonderful ordination of plants and animals to their own proper functions, why can He not be known from the natural ordination of our will to God?

ART. 5. ANY ACT OF THE WILL AGAINST REASON, RIGHT OR WRONG IS ALWAYS EVIL

PRELIMINARIES

At this point modern manuals introduce a treatise on conscience. Aquinas is writing, not a manual of practical theology, but a speculative treatise on morality. His treatment is here universal, but later we will meet questions on the principles of human acts: law and virtue, and the relation of prudence to the other virtues. Justice, fortitude, and temperance cannot exist without prudence to direct them, nor can prudence exist without these moral virtues. The special treatise on prudence will be, concomitantly, a treatise on right and certain conscience.

In the present general treatise on human acts, the only truth needing proof is that moral activity demands a conscience that is right and certain. The precise question in this article runs thus: Is our will evil when it is against erroneous reason? Does an erring conscience oblige? The answer is that any act of the will discordant with reason, right or wrong, is always evil. In other words, we are never allowed to act against conscience, even though the conscience be erroneous.

The reason is that the will is a blind power, which follows the lead of reason. Nothing can be willed except as foreknown. Hence, if reason erroneously proposes a line of activity as evil, the will is still bound to avoid that line. Similarly, when reason proposes an object as good and the will refuses, the will will be evil. If reason, for example, tells a man erroneously that he is bound to save his neighbor’s life by a lie, he is bound to tell that lie. Again, a man who eats food which he thinks forbidden, sins, says St. Paul, because he is not acting from faith, that is, from conscience (so the Fathers commonly interpret this text). Conscience is the proximate and immediate standard for human actions, since it applies the law here and now. To act against conscience is to act against the law.

ART. 6. CONSCIENCE VOLUNTARILY ERRONEOUS DOES NOT EXCUSE FROM SIN

The argument is a distinction between conscience invincibly erroneous and conscience which is voluntarily in error. Man can never act against

conscience, but he can and should lay aside any erroneousness of which he is aware, or should be aware.

ART. 7, 8. GOODNESS IN CHOOSING WAYS AND MEANS DEPENDS ON THE GOODNESS OF INTENTION

In article seven we show that goodness in choosing means depends on the antecedent intention of the goal. This relation to the goal is the source of goodness in the object willed. Example: a man who fasts for love of God. Article eight asks this question: Is the goodness of choice equal to the goodness of intention? Answer: The quantity of goodness, whether it comes from the object or the mode of intention, while it does not necessarily descend fully into the act of choice and execution, does nevertheless overflow on the act of choice and execution, in the degree in which these acts tend to the goal to which the intention is directed.

Corollary. In order that the entire goodness of intention overflow on election and execution, the ways and means must be directed, not only to the proximate object, but also to the goal of the intention. Thus genuine Christians do not act from natural precipitation, but keep even their exterior acts directed to that last goal which is the object of charity.

ART. 9. GOODNESS OF WILL DEPENDS ON CONFORMITY WITH GOD'S WILL

Authority comes from our Lord's words in Gethsemane: "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt." The argument runs thus: All action is judged by its relation to its standard, and the divine will is the standard, the first rule and measure, of every act of man's will. What does this truth mean for men, pagans particularly, who do not know the true God? Answer: If they ordain their actions to the highest good which they know, these actions are morally good, otherwise they are bad.

ART. 10. THIS CONFORMITY MUST BE FOUND IN WHAT IS GOOD BY ITS VERY NATURE

PRELIMINARIES

Objections. 1. We cannot will what we do not know, and often we do not know what God wills. 2. When God wills the condemnation of a man whom he foresees will die in mortal sin, is this man bound to will his own damnation? 3. When God wills my father's death, would I not be unfilial if I also willed that death?

Contrary objections. 1. That man has the right heart who wills what God wills. 2. Since the will is differentiated by its object, if man must conform his will to the divine will, then he must also conform his will to the object of God's will.

First thesis. Our will must be conformed to God's will formally, i.e., by willing the good-in-itself. Proof: Since man must will everything for the sake of good-in-itself, he who knowingly wills a good, not good-in-itself, formally wills evil. Action is judged rather by its form than by its matter. But he who aims at good-in-itself aims, at least implicitly, at the supreme good.

Second thesis. Our will is not bound to conformity with the divine will materially unless this object is known by precept or prohibition.

This truth was not understood by the Quietists, who said that conforming our will to the divine will means sacrificing our own interests, even our eternal interests. Proof: Will tends to its object as proposed by reason. Now one and the same object can be good from the standpoint of God, the universal provider, and still not be good from the standpoint of man as viator.

The death of a robber, to illustrate, is necessary to the common good, but injurious to the robber's family. The judge wills the death of the murderer, but the murderer's wife, whose duty it is to care for the family, does not will her husband's death. Similarly, the universal provider permits evils in view of greater good, to manifest His mercy and justice. Though God allows my father to die in heresy, I cannot will that death. A fortiori I cannot will my own damnation. Thus, in the object willed, though I seem to recede from the divine will, I am indirectly in harmony with that will, since, here and now, I will not what God wills, but what God wills me to will.

Corollary. Opposite wills of different men can each be good. St. Philip Neri and St. Charles Borromeo, attempting to found an institute of priests, differed in their ideas, hence each made his own foundation. The more saintly men are, the more must they agree to disagree, each insisting on what God wills him to do.

1. While sense-appetite can refuse what God wills, the object of deliberate will must be conformed to God's will. Answer: Conformed to God's will as our reason for willing, yes; but not necessarily in the material object, unless there be a precept. When Christ said, "Let this chalice pass from Me," He shrank from death as material object, but embraced death as willed by divine Providence.

2. The object formally willed is the most universal aspect under which all particular reasons are contained. Now, since, we are bound to conform in the formal object, we are bound to conform also in the material object. Answer: The formal object is the most universal reason, in causing, yes; in being, no.

3. In the Lord's Prayer we say, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." But in heaven the blessed are conformed to the divine will also in the material object. Answer: The blessed in heaven are conformed, even in the material object, to God's will because, knowing God's will perfectly, they are no longer bound by temporal considerations, since they adhere fixedly and immovably to God's will in everything, even in the manifestation of His justice. But this privilege does not belong to those still on earth.

4. But is it not better to be conformed to the divine will also in the material object? Answer: Yes, when such conformity is licit, in willing, for example, my own humiliation or the advantage of religious obedience, which means formal conformity even in the smallest details of life.

5. When does material conformity become illicit? First, when the material object, sin, say, is only permitted by God and not positively willed. Secondly, when we are dealing with an opposite precept. Thus I am not allowed to will damnation, my own or that of another. Again, since charity binds me, I am not allowed to will, either for myself or my neighbor, an evil which would deprive us of confession or communion.

6. Supposing we are not bound to material conformity, may we continue in this attitude? Answer: If the thing is irrevocably done, no. We can only be sad about it, and wish it were not, if that were possible. But if the thing has not yet been done, yes, we can and should labor against it. Even saints, to whom God has revealed their death, should and would take remedies against sickness.

In preaching, let us avoid subleties. Christians in general understand that we may not will our own damnation, that we must all labor toward salvation. Yet the distinctions in the present article are necessary, particularly in confuting the errors of the Quietists, on sacrificing our own good, our eternal salvation. To our people let us urge conformity to the divine will of sign, namely, the precepts and counsels of the Gospel, the spirit of humility, mildness, and patience, and blessings offered to the poor, to the meek, to the victims of persecution.

7. When the deed in question is known by revelation, what conformity is required? Answer: Although we cannot strive against God’s will or permission, we must still strive against the deed considered materially, as far as it depends on particular causes. Peter, after the revelation of his threefold denial, was still bound to strive against sin. And Christ, foreknowing His own crucifixion, still prayed that the chalice might pass from Him.

CHAPTER XVIII

GOOD AND EVIL IN EXTERIOR ACTS (Q.20)

ART. 1. FIRST CONCLUSION. GOOD AND EVIL ARE FIRST FOUND IN THE INTERIOR ACT

THIS is true, whether we consider the goal intended, or the ways and means undertaken. The exterior act, being the effect of the will, derives its good or evil from the will.

Second conclusion. But if we consider the exterior act in its object as presented by reason, then its good or evil comes, not from our will, but from the object which differentiates our will. Good intention does not justify a medium that is in itself evil.

This twofold conclusion is based on the distinction between differentiation by purpose and differentiation by object. For instance, in almsgiving the exterior act, as object, antecedes the will, whereas, as effect, it follows the will.

ART. 2. EXTERIOR GOOD AND EVIL IN RELATION TO THE WILL

We must steer between two extremes: the subjectivism which justifies even evil deeds by a good intention, and the pragmatism which judges only by external results.

Four conclusions. 1. The good or evil which the exterior act derives from the purpose depends altogether on the will. 2. The good or evil which the exterior act derives from object and circumstances depends on conformity with right reason. Robbing the rich is wrong, even if it is done with a good intention, such as almsgiving. 3. The exterior act is not simply good unless the act of the will is good, in its purpose, in its object, and in its principal circumstances. The exterior act is simply evil if the will is evil, either by its subjective purpose, or by its object, or by a principal circumstance.

ART. 3. INTERRELATIONS OF EXTERIOR ACT TO INTERIOR ACT

Four conclusions. 1. These two acts, interior and exterior, looked at morally, are one act, though physically they are distinct. The act of the will is the formal element, and the exterior act is the material element, but form and matter form one reality. 2. One and the same act can contain different kinds of goodness or of evil. 3. Interior goodness or evil is not identified with exterior goodness or evil except when goodness or evil arises merely from subjective purpose. 4. When the exterior act is good by its object and circumstances, its goodness differs from that interior goodness which arises from subjective purpose.

ART. 4. DOES THE EXTERIOR ACT INCREASE THE GOODNESS OR EVIL OF THE INTERIOR ACT?

This article carries great spiritual importance. Suppose a man robbed of money meant for almsgiving: Is he less good before God than if he had in fact given the alms? Again: Does actual martyrdom add goodness to a man’s efficacious desire to die for Christ? Or, once more, does actual theft increase the evil of the desire to steal?

On this matter, some fail by defect; namely, the Quietists, who hold that all exterior works are useless. Others err by excess, not considering the greater importance of the interior act.

First conclusion. The exterior act, precisely as execution of the interior act, does not add goodness or evil in relation to the essential reward or punishment.

Authority. Abraham is praised as if he had in fact immolated his son. He who looks on a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

Reason. The exterior act, as object, has already been willed internally. As a mere external act, it has only an extrinsic goodness or evil, denominated from the goodness or evil of the interior act. The interior act alone has intrinsic liberty, whereas use of the members can be violently impeded. Virtue, like grace and glory, is independent of human violence. “If I be violated against my will, my crown of chastity is twofold.”

But, let us note, in the absence of external occasion for merit, also the will to merit is often absent, whereas the external occasion tends to renew the interior act, which is then perfected in the exterior termination.

Second conclusion. The exterior act gives an accidental increase to the interior act.

Reason. All tendencies are perfected by attaining their terminus. Actual martyrdom does bring to the martyr, not only a reward, but also the aureole of martyrs, which is an accidental reward, an additional joy.

Are we bound to confess external act of evil? Yes, because: first, evil is ordinarily intensified and multiplied by the exterior act; secondly, the exterior act is an evident sign of efficacious will; thirdly, because of harm done to others; fourthly by reason of greater adherence to sin, and a more difficult cure. The confessor is not merely a judge, but also a physician.

This doctrine is exaggerated by the Quietists, who hold that external acts, even though they proceed from an interior will, are still useless. This doctrine is clearly wrong, because also exterior acts are commanded by the law. That man lacks good will who can act and does not.

ART. 5. DO RESULTS AFFECT EXTERIOR GOODNESS AND EVIL?

The answer is affirmative, if the result has been foreseen and intended, or if it should have been foreseen. But if the result is accidental, and is in no way intended, it adds neither goodness nor evil, since it is in no way voluntary.

ART. 6. CONCLUSION

One and the same physical act may be morally manifold. Example: the act of walking, morally good by good intention, may, by change of intention, become morally evil.

The Consequences of Human Acts in the Line of Goodness and Evil (q. 21)

Four conclusions. 1. Relation to its end makes the human act either right or wrong. 2. Voluntary acts are either praiseworthy or blameworthy. 3. By retributive justice, human acts are either meritorious or demeritorious, in relation to men. 4. By retributive divine justice, human acts are meritorious or demeritorious in relation to God, “who will bring all things to judgment, be they good or bad.” “Man is not ordained to the political community in his entire being, hence his acts are not necessarily meritorious or demeritorious in relation to the political community. But man in his entirety

is ordained toward God; hence his every act is meritorious or demeritorious before God." "Man is a person, not merely an individual. And persons are born to know and love God."

FOURTH PART

CONSCIENCE

CHAPTER XIX

DEFINITION AND DIVISION

DEFINITION. Conscience is a practical judgment, which proceeds from common moral principles, and which, here and now, commands good and forbids evil.

Explanation. First. Conscience dictates and regulates both choice and execution: of the three acts of prudence, namely, counsel, judgment, command, the second, that is, judgment, coincides with conscience that is right and certain, though conscience exists imperfectly also in those who do not yet have prudence acquired or infused. The phrase, “man must form his conscience before he acts,” means that he must form a right judgment.

Second. The subject of conscience is practical reason, not the will nor the speculative intellect.

Third. It proceeds from common principles, furnished by faith, or by natural reason, or by a moral conclusion. Conscience is not identified with the habit (synderesis) of prime moral principles. Conscience can err, synderesis cannot err. Synderesis is a spark enkindled by the Creator in the minds of all men, a spark which cannot be extinguished as long as man retains his reason, and which remains in the condemned as a worm that cannot die.

Further, speaking properly, neither moral science nor the virtue of prudence is subject to error. Error arises, not from these habits, but from some other source, such as precipitation, which does not use moral science or prudence as it should. Imprudent judgment comes, not from prudence, but from imprudence. Conscience, on the contrary, can be erroneous, an erroneous application of true principles to a particular case.

Fourth. Conscience judges goodness or evil, either of the act already done, or of the act to be done. Whatever conscience, after due diligence, judges to be in harmony with law, is subjectively good, even though it be

objectively evil. Thus conscience, even when it is invincibly erroneous, is the subjective standard implanted by God. It is, as it were, the voice of God, intimating to us how His law is to be applied in this particular case.

DIVISIONS OF CONSCIENCE

OBJECTIVE DIVISION

A. TRUE AND RIGHT CONSCIENCE

1. In relation to obligation.

a. When binding, it is called commanding conscience or forbidding conscience;

b. when not binding, it is called permitting conscience or advising conscience.

2. In relation to act, it is called (a) antecedent conscience (when it deals with an act not yet done), (b) consequent conscience (when it deals with a deed already done or omitted).

B. ERRONEOUS CONSCIENCE

1. When it is excessive, it is called (a) scrupulous conscience (futile fear of evil), (b) perplexed conscience (seeing sin on both sides).

2. When it is defective, it is called (a) lax conscience (judging too easily that there is no sin), (b) hardened conscience (by sinful habit), (c) pharisaical conscience (making great sins small, and small sins great).

SUBJECTIVE DIVISIONS

A. Certain conscience (acting prudently, without fear)

B. Uncertain conscience, which is called 1. probable conscience (judges, with fear, an act as licit or illicit), 2. dubious conscience (not assenting to either side); it is either speculatively dubious or practically dubious.

Let us note that a conscience speculatively probable can become practically certain, here and now, by a reflex principle. To illustrate. I can judge speculatively that it is illicit to confer baptism with rose-water. This is an abstract judgment, speculativo-practical. But if I am dealing with an

infant about to die, and all other material be absent, I judge practically that, here and now, under these circumstances, it is right to confer baptism with this dubious material. In this decision I am guided by the reflex principle: “Sacraments are for the sake of men.” Hence in the case of necessity, I can give baptism even with dubious matter.

TRUE AND RIGHT CONSCIENCE

1. Here we must solve some doubts. Is a conscience which is practically true necessarily also right? The answer is affirmative. Practical truth, rectitude, arises from conformity with right intention according to law. But note that a judgment can be speculatively true, and still be rash. Example. A judge condemns to death a man whom he believes, but on slight grounds, to be a murderer, or a traitor. The judge’s conscience is speculatively true, but not morally correct.

2. Can a conscience that is practically true and right still be speculatively false? The answer is affirmative. Speculative truth means harmony with objective reality. But practical truth, prudential truth, means conformity with a right intention, made with due diligence and attention. Now only this practical truth is the object of conscience. But such a conscience can be speculatively false. To illustrate. A judge, under invincible ignorance, decides that this man is a murderer. When Jacob took Lia for his wife, his error was speculative, not practical.

3. But are we not arguing in a circle? Will and intention are right only by conformity with right reason. The answer is, no. Practical judgment, the prudential judgment, dealing only with ways and means, is true by its subjective conformity with right will, with right intention. But this right will itself, this right intention, means objective conformity with moral science, and this means conformity with reality, with human nature, with natural law. Let us note the three levels of truth.

1. Speculative truth, objective conformity to reality, in synderesis and moral knowledge. Example: Temperance is man’s duty.

2. Truth in the will, regulated by the moral science, say, of temperance.

3. Practical truth, conformity with the right intention. Here and now, I must observe the just medium between excess and defect.

Question. In the development of moral virtue, temperance, for example, is the virtue regulated immediately by moral science, or by initial prudence?

Answer. In relation to the goal, initial temperance is regulated by synderesis and moral knowledge. But in relation to ways and means, initial temperance is regulated by prudence. Causes are mutually causes. Further, the four cardinal virtues grow together, since, whether initial or perfect, they are inseparable, and grow simultaneously, like the four fingers on one hand.

PRINCIPLES OF CONSCIENCE

1. Man is bound to have a right conscience, a conscience in harmony with the law of God, the voice of God. Hence conscience must be formed by serious study of the laws which govern life. But ordinary diligence suffices.

2. Supposing conscience to be right, man is bound to follow that conscience, whether it commands or forbids. Conscience, being the application of the law, here and now, is as binding as is the law itself.

Modern manuals give little space to the virtues, in particular to the virtue of prudence. Thus, in favor of practicality, they neglect the deeper reasons for the truth which they defend. Much of the doctrine of St. Thomas on conscience is found in his treatise on the virtue of prudence.

IS MAN BOUND TO OBEY AN ERRONEOUS CONSCIENCE?

Preliminaries. Synderesis, the knowledge of first principles, cannot err, but conscience, the application of those principles, can err. Examples. A man who concludes from Christ’s words on swearing that he cannot, here and now, take an oath before a tribunal, even if legitimate authority commands the oath. Again. A man who concludes from the law of charity that he is bound, here and now, to tell a lie in order to save his neighbor’s life. In such and similar cases conscience, though erroneous, is still binding. If the error is vincible, the man is bound to renounce the error before acting. But he is not allowed to act against his erroneous conscience, even if the error is vincible.

Authority. That which does not come from faith (i.e., from conscience) is sin.

Reason. The will is evil when it aims at an object proposed by reason as evil. An object proposed by conscience, even by erroneous conscience, is

an object proposed by reason. Hence the will, if not in harmony with conscience, true or erroneous, is always evil.

Goodness or evil in the will comes from the object as proposed by reason, because nothing can be willed by the will unless it is foreknown by reason. Further, by definition, conscience is the proximate and immediate standard of human acts, because it applies the law here and now, dictating that the act is either an evil to be avoided, or a good to be done. Hence we are never allowed to act against conscience, even though conscience be erroneous. Examples. If erroneous reason proposes abstinence from fornication as evil, the will discordant with this dictate is evil. Again. When belief in Christ is proposed as evil by erroneous reason, the will is related to this belief as evil, not because the belief is evil in itself, but because it is evil as apprehended here and now by reason. Briefly, the argument runs thus: That man sins who wills sin and is attached to it. But he who acts against his conscience, even if it be erroneous, wills sin, because he wills a thing which he judges to be a sin.

OBJECTIONS ANALYZED

1. Reason that errs does not come from the eternal law, and therefore is not binding. Answer: Reason that errs comes from the eternal law, not by objective truth, but by subjective judgment, and is, even though erroneous, still binding.

2. The precept of reason in error is against a higher law. Answer: Is against a higher law, and this opposition is known, I deny; this opposition is not known, I grant.

3. A man can believe invincibly that to love God above all things is a sin. Answer: This statement we simply deny. A man who knows that love for God means inclination toward God cannot simultaneously think that such love is against God.

Corollary. One who thinks, erroneously, that the day is a day of fast, and still acts against his conscience, sins formally, because he scorns a precept which he thinks to exist. One who thinks that Christianity is not revealed by God cannot legitimately believe, because he has no sufficient credibility and his act would be against prudence. But if he thinks that the divine origin of Christianity is seriously probable, he is bound to inquire and to pray.

THE WILL IN HARMONY WITH ERRONEOUS REASON IS GOOD

First conclusion. The will, if it agrees with invincibly erroneous reason is good. Proof. Good and evil are in an act as they are willed. But under invincible error, evil is not willed as evil, but is willed as good. Conscience, invincibly in error, while it is speculatively false, is practically true. The sin in this case is not formal, but only material.

Corollary. A man who, under invincible error, thinks it his duty to tell a lie (e.g., to save his friend), would commit sin by refusing to lie.

Second conclusion. We are not allowed to follow a conscience that is vincibly erroneous. Proof. Good and evil depend on voluntariness. But vincible error does not make the evil involuntary, because the man exposes himself to the peril of sin. He must put away his erroneous conscience, by prayer, deliberation, and counsel. If he must act, let him choose the less probably evil.

Doubt. In what sense is it true to say that we must revere every man's conscience? Answer: From the truth that conscience is always binding it does not follow that we can follow conscience if its error can be cured. Rather, we must reform and correct that conscience. Otherwise we fall into liberalism, that is, into denial of divine law. This denial, at least implicitly, speaks thus: "Whether God speaks in the Gospel, whether Catholic doctrine is revealed or not, is of little importance; I intend to enjoy my liberty." Such a position gives to error the rights that belong to truth alone, to erroneous sects the rights that belong to revelation alone. The pretext of intellectual liberty minimizes, even destroys, the supremacy of truth. Under the pretext of charity we leave the field to unbelievers who themselves fight against the faith. People begin to say that no religion can sufficiently manifest its own divine origin. Man feels that he is excused from sin when he says: "I do not believe" or "I cannot believe," Liberty or error has become liberty of perdition.

CONSCIENCE ON THE PART OF THE SUBJECT

ON CERTAIN CONSCIENCE

First conclusion. We are never allowed to act with a conscience that is practically doubtful, or probable, or even practically more probable. This is

the common conclusion, even among probabilists.

Authority. Again St. Paul's text: "What is not from faith (that is, from good conscience), is sin." St. Augustine: "To do a deed, uncertain whether it is a sin, is certainly a sin." St. Alphonse: "He who acts with a dubious conscience, commits a sin of the same species and gravity as the matter on which he doubts, because he who exposes himself to the danger of sin has already sinned: He who loves danger will perish therein." We add that the sin is less grave than if he were certain.

Reason. 1. An act against prudence is sinful. But he who acts with a conscience practically dubious, or practically probable, or more probable, does not act prudently, for the act of prudence is always practically true and certain.

2. He who acts thus exposes himself to the proximate danger of sinning formally. By doing what he reasonably suspects to be a sin, he virtually wills sin, just as a man who would take a drink, though very probably not poisoned, would imprudently expose himself to the danger of death.

Second conclusion. Indirect moral certitude suffices, if direct certitude is unattainable. Moral certitude differs from metaphysical and physical certitude. Metaphysical certitude excludes all possibility of error. Examples: Good is to be done, God is to be worshiped. Physical certitude excludes error in the physical order. Examples: I shall die, the sun will rise tomorrow. Moral certitude is based on human habits and dispositions. Example: I am certain that my friend, whom I know perfectly well, is not, here and now, telling me a lie.

But this moral certitude is twofold: speculative or practical. Speculative certitude means harmony with objective reality, as known by reliable testimony. Example: This man is a murderer, hence it is right and just that the judge inflict on this man the punishment of death.

Practical certitude means harmony with right intention and due diligence. Example: Obedience to a man whom, mistakenly, we hold to be legitimately elected. This practical certitude can exist, with or without speculative certitude. If speculative certitude is absent, practical certitude, based on reflex principles, is always attainable. Example: In doubt whether a superior's command is licit, the presumption stands for the superior.

This wider certitude may be called "probable certitude" if, following Aristotle and St. Thomas, we make "probable" the equivalent of "commonly admitted."

Why does our thesis say that practical certitude, even if imperfect, is ordinarily sufficient? St. Thomas answers: “We must not seek for the same kind of certitude in all matters. The field of prudence is that of particular and contingent things.” Now in this Field no certitude can silence all questioning. We add the restriction “ordinarily speaking,” because in certain cases the use of probability is not licit.

CHAPTER XX

DUBIOUS CONSCIENCE

DUBIOUS conscience means a suspension of our intellect, assenting to neither part of a contradiction. Probabilists use the term “probable opinion” to express what is, in reality, only a doubt, a suspension of judgment.

DIVISIONS OF DOUBT

A. Objective doubt is

1. by its nature either (a) a dubium juris, i.e., is there, or is there not, a law in this matter? or (b) a dubium facti, i.e., is the alleged fact true or not true? or

2. by its universality (a) a speculative doubt (is painting, say, a servile work?) or (b) a practical doubt (am I allowed, say, to read this book here and now?)

B. Subjective doubt is positive doubt, i.e., with serious reason pro and con, or negative doubt, i.e., a mere hesitation, for slight and insufficient reason (e.g., a priest, who conscientiously fulfills his daily office, but cannot recall explicitly whether he said Sext today).

Thesis. We are never allowed to act with a conscience that is practically doubtful. Positive doubts must be removed by reflex principles. This conclusion, held by nearly all Catholic theologians, including the probabilists, is a mere corollary of the preceding conclusion, namely, that to act licitly we need a conscience that is practically certain.

Proofs. 1. “That which does not come from faith (i.e., from persuasion of licitness) is sin.” 2. To act with dubious conscience is a sin against prudence. 3. Such action exposes the agent to the danger of sin.

Corollary. Sin thus committed is of the same species as sin committed with a certain conscience. He who doubts whether his contemplated act is

perjury commits the sin of perjury. Interpretatively he wills the sin to which he exposes himself.

But do not scrupulous people often act with fear of sin, and yet do not sin? Answer: Under a fear that is merely speculative and inconsequential, yes. Under a fear that is practical and reasonable, no. Let such victims simply obey their confessors.

HOW TO SOLVE PRACTICAL DOUBTS

Doubt can be solved in two ways: first directly, (by consultation, by reading, by reflection); secondly, if the direct way is impossible, then indirectly, by the aid of reflex principles. But if even this cannot solve the doubt and if action cannot be deferred, then, to exclude the peril of sin, we must choose the safer part, i.e., the part which includes observance of the doubtful law.

THE CHIEF REFLEX PRINCIPLES

Reflex principles are general norms which solve the question, not directly and intrinsically, but indirectly and extrinsically.

First principle. A dubious law does not bind. This principle was exaggerated by the laxists (Caramuel, Diana, Tamburini), who applied it without exception in all the fields of action, whereas more rigid probabilists (many Dominicans of the seventeenth century, and in the eighteenth century Concina and Batuzzi) rejected this principle entirely. The Holy See, under Innocent XI, in the year 1679, before the birth of St. Alphonsus (1696-1787) condemned the application of this principle in four lines of action: first, the validity of the sacraments; secondly, in matters necessary for salvation (acts of faith and charity); thirdly, in dealing with certain rights of a third person; fourthly, when we are bound to avoid grave peril of spiritual or temporal harm, either to ourselves or to others.

With these four exceptions, this principle is a legitimate way of solving practical doubts. Probabilists, indeed, hold that this principle by itself suffices by itself alone, whereas other theologians demand the addition of the principle, that the condition of the possessor is the better. With St. Alphonsus we say that a dubious law does not bind if we are dealing with a doubt in the strict sense, i.e., if there is equal probability that the law was

never passed, because in this case liberty is in possession. But equal probability that the law has ceased does not suffice, because then the law is in possession.

Second principle. When there is doubt we must stand on that side where stands the presumption, i.e., arguments and signs which prevail until the contrary is clearly proved. This principle has many equivalent formulas. 1. Man is presumed to be good until he is proved to be evil. 2. Crime is not to be presumed, but to be proved. 3. In doubt, we must favor the accused. 4. In doubt concerning the rectitude of a superior's command, presumption stands for the superior. 5. In doubt, presumption stands for the validity of the act (for the validity of religious profession if, for instance, the religious begins to doubt whether he had sufficient intention and sufficient knowledge). 6. In doubt, presumption stands for the usual and the ordinary.

Third principle. In doubt the condition of the possessor is the better. This principle, the foundation of aequiprobabilism, taught by St. Alphonsus, finds particular application in the field of justice. Men generally watch over the possessions they are entitled to, and positive law favors the possessor, that lawsuits may not become interminable. Thus far all theologians agree. But the probabilists hold that this principle is valid only in matters of justice, whereas the aequiprobabilists extend it also to other fields.

According to St. Alphonsus, law and liberty can be considered two possessors. The law binds until it ceases to be law. But liberty acts freely until a new law is promulgated. Thus man is not strictly bound to confess a sin that is dubiously mortal, since liberty is in possession. But if he is certain that the sin is mortal, whereas he doubts seriously that he has ever confessed it, he is bound to confession, because the law of confession is in possession, a law which he does not satisfy by a dubious fulfillment. When liberty is in doubtful possession, the law is certainly in possession, and vice versa.

Subordination of reflex principles. All reflex principles can be reduced to one: Find that line where presumption is in possession. The principle of dubious law holds good only where there is a true presumption for liberty, where, namely, we doubt, not whether the law has ceased, but whether it ever existed. The reflex principle of presumption has many advantages: it is admitted by theologians, it is easily understood by unlettered people, it operates in the civil courts, it was common in all schools before the controversies concerning probabilism, and we may hope, by its aid, to end

the interminable quarrels between different moral systems. Now let us put the eight reflex principles in proper subordination.

1. In doubt, stand where stands presumption.

2. In doubt, the condition of the possessor is the better, because there stands presumption.

3. In doubt, favor the accused, because for him stands presumption.

4. In doubt, presumption stands on the side of the superior.

5. In doubt, follow daily and ordinary experience.

6. In doubt, stand for the validity of the act.

7. In doubt, amplify the favorable, restrict the unfavorable.

8. A doubtful law does not bind, i.e., a law that is doubtful in its very existence.

Question. What relation is there between these reflex principles and the doctrine of St. Thomas, who bases conscience on the truth of prudential judgment, which means conformity with right intention? Answer: These reflex principles are useful in establishing this conformity. Conformity with right intention, he says, moves the intellect to due diligence in finding the law and the law's application to the here and now. Where direct principles are lacking, we fall back on reflex principles, i.e., we ask on what side stands presumption. But what are we to do when all these principles do not go beyond probability? We can still attain practical certitude by conformity with a good and virtuous will. As man is, so man wills. The chaste man judges rightly in matters of chastity. Rectitude in moral science descends in vital manner from right will down to practical judgment, in the here and now.

CHAPTER XXI

PROBABLE CONSCIENCE

PRELIMINARIES

OPINION is an act of the intellect which favors one line of a contradiction while fearing that the other may be erroneous, i.e., adherence must outweigh fear of error. An opinion ethically probable must rest on a good foundation, worthy of acceptance by a prudent man, even though there be fear of error. But the term “good foundation” varies with different systems: probabiliorism, probabilism, aequiprobabilism. Probabilism holds that a less probable opinion suffices, if only it is seriously probable. Probabiliorists reply: An opinion less probable, faced with a more probable opinion, is not, properly speaking, here and now probable, since the fear of error is greater than the inclination to adhere, and thus the opinion is merely voluntary, not rational. To solve this difficulty, let us note the divisions of probable opinion.

A. In view of the object, opinion is

1. absolutely probable (i.e., in itself, where fear is based on lack of sufficient proof);

2. comparatively probable (i.e., as faced with an opposite probability, which engenders fear). An opinion comparatively probable may be most probable, or more probable, or equally probable, or less probable.

B. In view of the motive, opinion is

1. intrinsically probable (i.e., as seen by reason), or

2. extrinsically probable (i.e., as based on the authority of approved teachers).

What is meant by “the safer opinion?” The safer opinion is that which favors the law. The less safe opinion is that which favors liberty. Hence the more probable opinion is not always the safer.

What is meant by “the more probable opinion?” It is that opinion which rests on the more solid reasons. Here appears clearly the distinction between probabilism and probabiliorism. Probabiliorism holds that the foundation necessary for an opinion ethically probable is not to be found except in a more probable opinion, because the opinion less probable, when faced with an opinion more probable, is no longer ethically probable. If proposition A is to me probably true, then proposition B, opposed to it contradictorily, is not probable, but probably false. When probabilists argue that the opinion less probable can still be accepted as seriously probable, the probabiliorists reply thus: Opinion, by its very nature, cannot abstract from the fear raised by the opposite opinion. Hence an opinion wherein fear of error predominates is not rationally and ethically probable, and can be accepted only by going against the virtue of prudence.

THE USE OF PROBABILITY

First conclusion. The use of probability is illicit when there is danger of an evil absolutely to be avoided. Proof of this thesis, commonly admitted, lies in the condemnation of laxism. Probability is condemned in dealing with the four following cases.

1. In conferring the sacraments. As far as we can, we are bound to safeguard the validity of the sacraments; otherwise we are in danger of inflicting grave harm on our neighbor, and of being irreverent.

2. In assuring salvation. In peril of eternal damnation, the safer part must be chosen. The following proposition has been condemned: The infidel is excused from infidelity if he is led by a less probable opinion. The unbeliever is bound to search for the truth and to pray. He sins against faith if he does not use the means necessary for reaching it. Thus St. Alphonsus.

3. In the certain rights of a third person. We must favor the accused man as long as crime has not been proved. Even in civil cases the judge is bound by the more probable opinion. The laxist view, that he can follow an opinion less probable, has been condemned.

4. In dangers spiritual or temporal. We are not allowed, without grave necessity, to run the risk of probable death (say, by taking a doubtfully poisoned drink).

These four cases limit the reflex principle that a dubious law does not bind. The general principle runs thus: Where law and obligation are certain,

the principle of probability does not apply.

A THOMISTIC FORMULATION

Probability is illicit in matters where the measure of action is an objective medium, that is, correspondence, not to the interior dispositions of the agent, but to external reality. My neighbor's rights are an objective medium not dependent on my conscience. If I owe him one hundred dollars, no probability can change that amount.

By contrast, in matters of fortitude and temperance, we determine the golden mean, not objectively, but subjectively, by the agent's interior dispositions, passions, and age. The measure of food and drink varies with age, season, and occupation. Here lies the field of prudence, and prudence operates among probabilities. But, let us repeat, the objective medium which rules justice, rules likewise the four cases treated above, where the safer part must always be chosen.

Second conclusion. Probabilism is licit when we are not dealing with matters excepted in the foregoing conclusion. Here lies the field of prudence, which measures the proper proportion of act to agent. But here, too, we find extremes that have been condemned, namely, rigorism and laxism. Rigorism says that, in doubt, the safer side, the side which favors law, is always to be followed. Rigorism forbids us to follow even the most probable of probable opinions, even when the very existence of the law is dubious. How unreasonable! Such a system would make life itself intolerable. Laxism speaks thus: For prudent action, a tenuous probability suffices. But, we ask, is it a mark of prudent men to be guided by tenuous probabilities? A conscience thus guided would be a conscience practically doubtful, and hence illicit. Excluding these extremes, we find three systems admitted in the Church.

1. Probabiliorism, which will depart from a safe view only for a more probable view. It urges two reasons. First, the less probable is not really probable. Secondly, we would thus be in danger of transgressing the law.

2. Aequiprobabilism, which says we are allowed to abandon the safe view when an equally probable view is in possession. Hence, in doubt concerning the existence of a law, we can follow the aequiprobabilism in favor of liberty, and in doubt concerning the cessation of law, we are to follow the opinion equally probable in favor of the law. This system,

impugned by Billuart and admitted by Father Beaudouin, is really in harmony with the views of St. Thomas, and is supported by the great authority of St. Alphonsus, who is a doctor of the Church. This system is based on the principles of possession and presumption, perfected by prudence acting in conformity with right will and right intention. As man is, so man wills.

3. Probabilism, which holds that we are allowed to follow any view that is seriously probable, since a dubious law does not bind. This rule, they add, is not a norm of perfection, but the lowest degree of obligation.

Here we must demur. This system offends, not only perfection, but the very essence of prudence, which is not a mere counsel, but a strict obligation. The prudent man, since he is bound to act licitly, is likewise bound to seek and follow the truth, or then to stay as closely as he can to the truth. To act otherwise is to favor laxism.

Against probabilism stands the great authority of St. Alphonsus, who, beginning as a probabilist, ended by confuting probabilism. Liberty, against a law in possession, is not a liberty which liberates. While we are free to choose a lesser good, we are not free to look upon a probable obligation as no obligation.

FIFTH PART

THE PASSIONS

CHAPTER XXII

THE PASSIONS IN GENERAL (Q. 22-25)

PASSIONS may he considered, psychologically, or morally, or ascetically.

1. Psychologically. Passion is a motion of the sense-appetite, arising from the imagination of good or evil, accompanied by corporeal transmutation. Moderns often give to passions the name of emotions, restricting the word “passion” to designate vehement or prolonged emotions.

Sense-appetite is the formal element of passion; the corporeal mutation is the material element.

DIVISION OF PASSIONS

Passions are either concupiscible or irascible.

A. Concupiscible passions are caused by

1. a sense-good, which attracts (a) simply, and is called love, (b) when absent, and is called desire; (c) when present, and is called gladness.

2. a sense-evil, which repels (a) simply, and is called hatred; (b) when absent, and is called aversion; (c) when present, and is called sadness.

B. Irascible passions are caused by

1. a sense-good that is difficult, but (a) attainable, and is called hope; or (b) unattainable, and is called despair.

2. a sense-evil that is arduous, but (a) still easy to repel (audacity); or hard to repel (fear); or present, and calling for vengeance (anger).

First among all passions, and the origin of all others, is sense-love. Without love, no desire and no joy, no hatred, no aversion, no sadness. Again, in the irascible passions, without love there is neither hope nor despair, neither fear nor audacity, no rising up in anger.

2. Moral view. Here we meet a twofold error, one by defect, and the other by excess. The hedonists hold that all passions are morally legitimate expansions of our nature. Thus Aristippus among the ancients, Fourrier and Saint Simon among the moderns. By excess, the Stoics condemn all passions, as being opposed to reason and nature, and hence to be eradicated. Aristotle holds that passions in themselves are neither morally good nor morally evil, though some of them are naturally laudable, e.g., commiseration and modesty. They become morally good when they are commanded or directed by reason, otherwise they become morally evil. St. Thomas evolves this doctrine under three headings.

a) Passions in themselves are indifferent to moral good or evil, since morality depends on the laws discovered by reason. Anger uncontrolled by reason is bad, but subject to reason (in Christ, say), it is good.

b) Passions become voluntary by relation to reason. Unregulated by reason, they degenerate into vice (pleasure becomes gluttony or lust).

c) Passions, commanded and moderated by right will, are aids to virtue. Thus we find them in Christ, who felt sadness even unto death, and whose anger drove the moneylenders out of the temple. Rejoice, says St. Paul, with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. But when unregulated, or when commanded by evil will, passions become the roots of vices, especially of capital vices.

ART. 3. DOES PASSION INCREASE OR DIMINISH THE GOODNESS OR THE EVIL OF AN ACT? (Q. 24)

It might seem that passion always diminishes the goodness of the act, first, because passion perturbs reason; secondly, because we must imitate God in whom there are no passions; thirdly, since he who sins in passion sins less, it seems that he who does good passionately does a lesser good.

Conclusion. The perfection of moral good requires the cooperation of man’s sense-appetite.

Proof. Moral good grows by the number of its cooperating sources, and sense-appetite, subject to reason, is such a source. Passion that antecedes reason is not voluntary, and such passion may indeed cloud the judgment and diminish responsibility. But when passion follows upon deliberate choice, it does increase either the goodness or the evil of the action. Perfection requires that all passions be regulated by reason, just as are the

external members. My heart and my flesh, says the Psalmist, exult in the living God. Thus fortitude established a just medium between the defects of fear and the excesses of audacity. Saints are men of strong passions, but passions inspired by zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

Ascetical view. The passions, in themselves morally indifferent, are not to be eradicated, as if they were vices or sins, but are to be regulated, moderated, educated, to be like trained horses driven by reason and faith.

Corollary. Training must be proportioned to its purpose. Even extreme anger or sadness or fear need not go beyond right reason. Moses was very angry at the adoration of the calf. The zeal and indignation of Phineas was praiseworthy. Heli was not sufficiently indignant against his children. Jeremias was often very sad, and rightly so. Christ drove the sellers from the Temple, was sad unto death, wept over Jerusalem, moaned in spirit.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE PASSIONS IN PARTICULAR (Q. 26-49)

LOVE (Q. 26-28)

LOVE is complacency in good. It is divided as follows:

A. Elicited love, which follows either

1. intellective cognition, in the form of friendship (I love my neighbor for his sake), or in the form of concupiscence (I love for my own advantage); or

2. sense-cognition, either in the form of animal friendship (the hen protecting her brood), or in the form of animal concupiscence (the hungry dog seeking a bone).

B. Innate love, which antecedes all cognition and is identified with the natural inclination of each created being toward its own proper object (the love of a falling stone for its center). Modern authors express this innate natural love by such terms as attraction, affinity, coherence.

Sources of love. The chief source, the object and motive, is sense-good. Two conditions are added: first, cognition, because the object moves only as it is known; secondly, similitude, since every living thing loves that which is like itself. Actual similitude causes the love of friendship, whereby two become one, either by nature or by cooperation. Potential similitude causes rather the love of concupiscence, as found, say, in the disciple toward his master, whose knowledge he desires for himself, whereas the master's love is that of friendship: as examples, think of Plato loving Aristotle, of Christ loving Peter.

But if, so runs an objection, bricklayers hate one another, similitude is not the cause of love. Similitude, we answer, remains by nature the source of love, while it may still, as an accidental impediment, be the source of dislike and hatred. Quarrels arise, not from similitude, but from pride.

The effects of love. St. Thomas notes six effects. 1. Union. This union is either affective, constituted by love itself, even though the object be absent, or real union, by the presence of the object loved. Affective love moves the lover to seek real union. Thus love for God moves men to desire the beatific vision.

2. Adherence. The lover tries to penetrate into the interior of the loved object, to know it, to find his delight in it.

3. Ecstasy. The lover is drawn outside himself, first by knowledge beyond his proper measure, secondly by affection, whereby he goes forth from himself. This is true even in the love of concupiscence, but much more in the love of friendship. Ecstasy in the saints is a normal effect of their burning love for God.

4. Zeal is an ardor against everything that is opposed to love. In the form of envy, it belongs to the love of concupiscence. In the form of zeal for God's glory and the salvation of souls, it belongs to the love of friendship.

5. The lover's lesion. Richard of St. Victor seems to say that all intense love is violent. But the love of supreme good, even when intense, is not in itself violent, though it may, by concomitant passion, become violent and inflict a wound on the lover. Similar effects of love appear in "melting of the heart," that the beloved can enter in; in fruition, if the beloved is present; in languor, if the beloved is absent; in fervor, an intense desire of possession.

6. General influence. Love, the root of all affections, penetrates and animates the lover's entire life and activity.

Hatred (q. 29) is aversion from evil. It is opposed to love and takes on two forms: abomination (e.g., of cruelty), and enmity (willing evil to a foe). Hatred is born of love, since only something which we love can make its contrary hateful.

Desire (q. 30), often called concupiscence, is affection toward an absent good. Its opposite is flight. Can concupiscence be infinite? St. Thomas distinguishes. Natural concupiscence (e.g., for food or for sexual pleasure) can never be infinite actually, though it can be infinite potentially: "He who drinks of this water shall thirst again." But unnatural concupiscence, which follows, not sense, but wrong reason, is altogether infinite, since reason has no bounds, and can seek infinite beatitude, not in the infinite God, but in finite things, for instance, in riches. Thus a man may desire to be rich without any limit. Reason apprehends the universal, hence man's

concupiscence, when disordered, is greater than concupiscence in brutes, because man, even in dealing with lower goods, seeks, as it were unconsciously, an infinite good. Such love often turns into hatred, because finite good cannot give infinite beatitude.

Delight (q. 31-34). Delectation is the rest which follows possession. When possession comes by the intellect, this rest and quiet is called joy. This rest in the possessed good is not cessation from all act, but is a state of complacency in the good attained. Delight is something positive, not merely cessation of pain, as was maintained by Epicurus, Kant, Schopenhauer, and other pessimists.

Plato says that delight is motion rather than rest. St. Thomas answers: Since motion is an uncompleted act, delight would not be the ultimate perfection. But experience shows that delight, especially intellectual delight, joy in truth at last attained, is the ultimate emotion. St. Thomas adds that Plato failed to distinguish the ultimate objective end, which is God, from the ultimate subjective end, which is the possession of God, a possession which is followed by supreme delight and joy. Here lies the golden middle way between Epicurus and Plato. Delight is not cessation of pain, nor motion toward good, but rest in the goal now attained.

Is intellectual delight greater than sense-delight? In itself, yes, because it is more noble, solid, and penetrating. But in relation to man in his present state, sense-delight is greater, because it is more easily experienced, particularly in its corporeal effects, in its remedial power against pain and sadness. Hence men who cannot reach spiritual joy, which belongs to the virtuous, turn aside to corporeal delight.

Scholion. What is the source of those abnormal perversions which sometimes afflict men, such as delight in eating dust or charcoal, or in bestial and sodomistic intercourse? These corruptions of nature arise from one of two sources: a bodily disease or evil dispositions of soul.

Causes of delight (q. 32). Six causes are assigned: 1. harmonious activity; 2. variety, change; 3. hope; 4. memory; 5. congenial association; 6. wonder and admiration. But these six sources are not exhaustive. Active love of neighbor is a never-ending source of joy. Service to fellow men reacts on our own legitimate self-love, teaches us to grow in overflowing charity, enables us to penetrate this teaching of Christ, quoted by St. Paul: It is better to give than to receive.

The effects of delight (q. 33): expansion of the heart; thirst ("he who drinks of this water will thirst again"); hindrance to the use of reason, if the delight is corporeal and vehement. But, in general, delight is the perfection of operation, as beauty is of youth.

Delights, good and evil (q. 34). Delight is good if its object is good and reasonable, otherwise it is evil. The highest kind of delight is delight in truth, especially delight in God possessed in eternal life. Man is judged good or evil by the objects that give him joy. He who rejoices in earthly things is earthly, he who rejoices in heavenly things is heavenly. He who rejoices in God is God's son and God's friend.

Sadness and pain (q. 35-39). Pain is a motion of the sense-appetite, arising from the apprehension of present evil. It must not be confused with physical evil, which is a privation in the organism. Pain is something positive, a motion of the sense-appetite, opposed to delight. Sadness is a special kind of pain, as joy is a species of delight. Contemplation itself is faced with no contrary sadness, though it may be impeded by bodily weariness.

Speaking per se, the desire of delight is stronger than aversion from sadness, because good is willed for its own sake, but evil is shunned as a privation of good. All natural motion is more intense as it approaches the goal. But per accidens we shun sadness more than we desire delight, since sadness impedes every kind of delight. Similarly mental pain is in itself keener than bodily pain, just as spiritual delight is in itself higher than sense-delight. But quoad nos the contrary is true, because exterior pain is felt more keenly.

There are four species of sadness: (a) compassion, which is sadness for our neighbor's evil; (b) envy, sadness at our neighbor's good; (c) anxiety, which sinks the soul in present evil; (d) sloth, which weighs man down in the face of duty that seems to be too heavy. From sloth comes laxity, intellectual or spiritual.

Causes of sadness. We distinguish four causes: (a) loss; (b) concupiscence, whereby delay saddens us; (c) love, desiring a union not yet attained; (d) external power, that keeps us from our goal.

Effects of pain. Pain (a) lessens the power to learn; (b) weighs on the soul; (c) weakens operation or even impedes.

Remedies of sadness. Sadness is mitigated in many ways: by opposite joys, by weeping and mourning, by the compassion of friends, by sleep, by

the contemplation of truth and future beatitude.

Sadness, good and evil. Though sadness is in itself a kind of evil, sadness over sin is good. Blessed are they who mourn. Such sadness acts like medicine. The greatest evil is not the sadness of punishment, but the sadness of guilt. From the concupiscible passions we now pass to the irascible passions.

Hope and despair (q. 40). Hope arises from a loved object, hard to attain. Its opposite is despair, which considers attainment impossible. Hope, properly speaking, rests on man's own power, whereas expectation looks to help from others. Hope is abundant in youth, and in the state of inebriety, in those who lack experience of difficulties, easily supposing they will obtain what they want. Descartes, in his youth, fondly hoped to re-create all philosophy!

Hope and love. Hope in relation to its object is caused by the love of concupiscence. But in relation to the person through whom that object is expected to be attained, it leads to love and friendship. Thus the theological virtue of hope disposes us for charity, and it presupposes faith.

Hope aids operation, first because its object is good and though difficult to obtain, still possible; secondly because it evokes delight, which aids operation.

Fear (q. 41-44) is a motion of the appetite faced with evil that cannot easily be resisted. The species of fear are six: discouragement (fears the burdens of duty), shame, regret, hesitation, stupor, agony (there is no escape).

Fear of punishment differs from fear of guilt. Man can fear even fear, just as he can love love. Fear arises, not only from love, but also from experience of our own defects. Fear has many effects: shrinking, paleness, loss of voice, dryness of throat, hair standing on end, unconsciousness, even sudden gray hair. Fear uncontrolled leads to despair.

Audacity (q. 45) is a motion whereby the soul goes out to conquer a great evil, here and now imminent. Such victory is necessary to attain the purpose of hope. Animals which have a small heart, says Aristotle, are audacious, while those that have a large heart are timid. And lovers of wine are distinguished by audacity.

How does audacity differ from fortitude? The audacious are more prompt to begin than to sustain, because of perils they did not anticipate. Comparing the two acts of fortitude, to attack and to sustain, we find that

the latter is more important and more difficult. The brave differ from the audacious in this: In beginning, they seem to be remiss, because they attack, not with passion, but with deliberation. But actually faced with danger, they resist better.

Anger (q. 46-48) is an appetite for vengeance, accompanied by heat around the heart. Anger has no passion contrary to itself, because it deals with evil difficult to avoid and already present. In this situation the soul either sinks down in sadness, or by anger conquers the evil. Anger is natural by the law of self-preservation. Mildness, on the contrary, is less natural, and is a virtue to be acquired. The physical disposition to anger is a choleric temperament.

Anger, though it is much less grave than hatred, is much more impetuous. Hatred wills evil to neighbor as his evil, but anger considers this evil as a right required by justice. The angry man, after accomplishing vengeance, feels mercy, but not so the man who hates.

The species of anger are two: bitterness and fury. Fury never rests till it has finished its task of punishment. The angry man, says Aristotle, is sharp, bitter, and difficult to deal with.

Causes of anger. The principal cause is contempt for our neighbor, arising from the thought of our own excellence. Hence men in high station are prone to anger, as are also rich men, orators, and poets. Sickly people are disposed to anger, since they are more easily saddened.

The effects of anger are four: delight in the hope of vengeance, rush of blood to the heart, disturbance of mind and body, taciturnity.

Thus we conclude the treatise on the passions. Passions are to be regulated by reason: “Under thee shall be thy appetite.” Passions, thus regulated, become virtues, in the form of temperance and fortitude. Acquired virtues are a participation in the light of reason, and infused virtues are a participation in the uncreated light of God. But if the passions, intended as servants and handmaids, act instead as masters and mistresses, they become vices and corruptions.

SIXTH PART

HABITS

CHAPTER XXIV

HABITS IN THEIR ESSENCE (Q. 49)

PROLOGUE

HAVING now considered those acts that are characteristic of man, and those that are common to men and brutes, we must now deal with the sources of these acts. These sources are two: one intrinsic, the other extrinsic. The intrinsic principle is either power or habit. As powers have already been treated, we have now to deal with habits. Treatment of the extrinsic principle, namely, God who instructs by law and aids by grace, is matter for another book.

The present treatise has three divisions: habits in general (q. 49-54), virtues in general (q. 55-70), vices and sins (q. 71-89).

The treatise on habits in general has four divisions: 1. habits in their essence (q. 49); habits in their subject (q. 50); habits in their cause (q. 51-53); habits in their distinction (q. 54).

THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS TREATISE

Since habit is the genus both of virtue and of vice, we cannot rightly know either virtue or vice unless we first know what habit is, and how one habit is distinguished from another.

This treatise is difficult, and it is comparatively neglected. Cajetan and Koellin did indeed write on these articles, as did John of St. Thomas; but the Salmanticenses, Alvarez, Gonet, and Billuart have nothing to say on this subject.

Comparison with modern theories must be our first step, for three reasons: first, moderns generally have no explicit treatment on habits, speaking rather of custom; secondly, because moderns tend to opposite extremes, either of passivity or of activity, whereas St. Thomas harmonizes

these two aspects; thirdly, because moderns, particularly the phenomenalists, deny the existence of soul-faculties, and consequently of habits, appealing instead to subconsciousness and method. Like quacks who prescribe remedies by mere tradition, since they are not masters of medical science, many moderns seem to think that ethical science, far from being a single science, is a mere juxtaposition of unrelated conclusions. These men have lost the scientific spirit.

To illustrate. Vasquez had lost the notion of habit, when he said that, even when infused faith is lost, the habit of theology can still remain. The truth is that, when faith is lost, there remains only the corpse of theology, namely, a certain material arrangement of ideas, since theology lives only by faith itself. Modern terms, “habitude,” “usage,” “custom,” correspond rather to the Latin “consuetudo” than to the Latin “habitus.” The word “habitus” is not easy to translate. It signifies a disposition, permanent and difficult to change.

We must dwell here on two opposed theories. Some moderns, like Descartes and Comte, hold that habit is something passive, a phenomenon of inertia, meaning that a body remains where it now is, in a condition of rest or of motion, unless an extrinsic cause disturb this condition. A projectile dropped into a vacuum would have a habit of everlasting motion. Habit would thus be nothing but the passive perseverance of matter in its present state. Scientific habit would be nothing but the passive persistence of certain modifications in the nerve centers. Descartes puts method in the place of habit, as if mechanical control of method guaranteed possession of science.

An opposite extreme, borrowing from Aristotle and Leibnitz, says that habit is a law of activity, whereby living beings incline to remain in their present state or action. Habit, then, would be, not a mere passive perseverance, but a tendency to repetition of acts (“using the same path twice”). Thus habit would not be found in inanimate bodies, but only in living things, in animals, especially domestic animals, and particularly in human attitudes, intellectual or moral.

This second theory is not satisfied with Cartesian passivity, which does not explain the tendency of habit to act, to be second nature, to establish continuity in human life, to make progress and education possible. Good habits, by strengthening the will, strengthen also liberty.

This second theory harmonizes better with the view of St. Thomas, though he admits, not only operative habits, but also entitative habits, bodily health, say, and sanctifying grace. St. Thomas speaks thus: Habit cannot be produced in an agent (e.g., fire) whose principle is merely active. But in an agent with two principles, one active, one passive, habits can arise. Multiplied acts generate a certain quality in the passive principle, and this quality is called habit. Thus habits of virtue arise in the appetitive powers under the influence of reason, and scientific habits arise in the intellect under the repeated influence of self-evident propositions.

How profound St. Thomas here appears! Moderns, generally, do not rise above experimental psychology, whereas St. Thomas is metaphysical, and, of course, more difficult.

Other moderns, positivists and phenomenalists, deny even the existence of habits. They reduce substance, faculties, and habits to a mere succession of phenomena, and thus arrive at absolute nominalism. Many positivists recur to subconscious psychological phenomena, as the source, for instance, of mathematical virtuosity.

Against phenomenalism in general we argue thus: Whereas our sense-powers are limited to phenomena (color, sound, and so on), our intellect apprehends the reality, the substance, existing under phenomena. Now finite substance is not immediately operative, but acts by powers and faculties distinct from itself. Its existence is not identified with its activity, since existence is one, whereas activity is manifold. But if existence and activity are really distinct, distinct must be likewise their correlative potentialities, i.e., the substance which underlies existence, and the operative faculties which underlie activity. Such faculties are intellect and will. And if we have faculties, we can also have habits in these faculties, for instance, science in the intellect, justice in the will, chastity in the sense-appetite.

HABITS IN GENERAL (Q. 49)

This question has four articles. Is habit a quality? Is it a determined species of quality? Is habit necessarily related to act? Are habits necessary?

ART. 1. IS HABIT A QUALITY?

Habit does not seem to be a quality. First, because habit, from the Latin word “habere,” indicates possession, and we possess not only qualities, but also quantity, money, and so on. Secondly, because habit is that ultimate predicament, which expresses a mode of clothing. Thirdly, habit means disposition, which seems to refer to corporeal attitude.

Authority. Habit is a quality difficult to change.

Reason. From the nominal definition we pass on to the three meanings which the word “habit” may have: possession, a garment, a disposition either to good or evil.

1. “Habere” (to possess) is an element common to diverse categories, and hence is found among the post-predicaments.

2. “Habit” signifies garment, and thus constitutes a special category, whereby man is said to be clothed or armed. In this meaning, habit is not quality, or quantity, or action, or passion, but a mere relation.

3. Habit is used to express, not a possession of something external, but a mode of self-possession, and such self-possession is a kind of quality, belonging to the highest genus of quality.

Aristotle’s definition runs thus: Habit is a disposition, whereby the subject is disposed, well or ill, either in itself or in relation to something else. When we say “habit does not make the monk,” we mean external habit. But internal good habits do make the monk.

ART. 2. IS HABIT A DEFINITE SPECIES OF QUALITY?

Quality is distinct from substance, quantity, action, passion, relation, and so on. The category of quality contains four species: habit and disposition; power and impotence; sense-qualities; form and figure. Why these four? Because there are four modes whereby a substance can be disposed in itself.

1. To be good or evil in relation to its nature: habit and disposition.

2. To be disposed well or ill in its operation: power and impotence.

3. To be well disposed in relation to sense-alteration (color, heat, sound, odor, taste): sense-qualities.

4. As limiting quantity: form and figure.

Habit here comes before power, because it expresses an immediate relationship to the nature of the substance. Habit (e.g., science) can be changed only with difficulty, whereas disposition (opinion) can easily be changed, though, by reason of passion, opinion may, per accidens, be very

tenacious. But habits may begin in the form of dispositions. Science, in the pupil, exists first as a disposition, and only when rooted in the subject does it become a habit. The same truth holds good in the development of moral virtues.

ART. 3. DOES HABIT INCLUDE NECESSARILY RELATIONSHIP TO ACT?

All habits, whether entitative or operative, are related to act. 1. Entitative habits, since they dispose the substance in itself, have a consequent relation to act, because activity is the purpose of nature. Thus health and sickness, beauty and ugliness, habitual grace and its privation, although they are entitative habits, still have consequent relationship to act. 2. Operative habits, since they dispose the operative powers, have as their chief purpose a relationship to act.

ART. 4. ARE HABITS NECESSARY?

First conclusion. Where operative power is distinct from operation and is not limited to one operation, there habits are necessary, since otherwise the power would remain undetermined and idle, whereas it should act promptly and easily, and in various directions: for instance, the intellect in physics, mathematics, and metaphysics; the will in justice, religion, and temperance.

In God, who is His own activity, as He is His own existence, habits cannot exist. Nor do natural agents, which are restricted to one effect, need a habit (e.g., external senses or the vegetative powers).

Second conclusion. Entitative habits are necessary when the subject needs them in order to be well disposed in itself, i.e., when many elements concur in forming that disposition. Thus health is an entitative habit, since it implies a definite proportion among many factors. Beauty, too, is an entitative habit. For example, loss of eyelashes or eyebrows suffices to mar the beauty of the human face.

Proceeding metaphysically, from the distinction between faculty and act, we have established these truths: Habit is a quality, a special kind of quality, either operative or entitative, each necessary in its place. Only by reduction to metaphysics does psychology qualify as a perfect science, simultaneously inductive and deductive.

CHAPTER XXV

HABITS AND THEIR SUBJECTS (Q. 50)

ART. 1. HABITS IN THE BODY

FIRST conclusion. The body has entitative habits, such as health and beauty.

Second conclusion. No operative habit exists principally in the body as subject. Operative powers which are not limited to one line of activity belong either to the soul alone (intellect and will) or to the soul principally (in the inferior faculties only as subject to the will). Thus temperance and fortitude exist principally in the soul, and only secondarily in the body.

Here lies an error of materialism, which reduces habits to mere modifications of the organism, particularly of the nerve centers. But the emotion of modesty is not identified with the virtue of chastity, nor sense-commiseration with the virtue of mercy, which belongs in the highest degree to God.

ART. 2. CAN THE ESSENCE OF THE SOUL BE THE SUBJECT OF HABITS?

First conclusion. No natural entitative habit, but only that supernatural entitative habit which we call sanctifying grace, is received into the essence of the soul. The human soul is the complete form of human nature, and cannot receive any better disposition. But sanctifying grace deifies the very essence of the soul, thus preceding the infused virtues, just as the soul's essence precedes the powers of the soul. As man's intellective power participates in divine knowledge by the virtue of faith, as man's will shares in divine love through the virtue of charity, so man's soul itself participates in the divine nature by the grace of regeneration and re-creation.

Second conclusion. Operative habits are not in the essence of the soul, but in its faculties, because the soul is not immediately operative.

ART. 3. CAN THE SENSE-POWERS BE SUBJECTS OF HABIT?

Conclusion. The sense-powers, though in themselves incapable of supporting habits, can do so as directed by reason, since reason can turn them to various lines of activity. Thus temperance and fortitude exist in the sense-appetite, as ruled by reason and will. The same direction develops memory and artistic imagination. But neither the external senses, nor the vegetative powers, can be subjects of habit, because their activity is one and unvaried.

ART. 4. INTELLECTUAL HABITS

Intellectual habits are five: The habit of first principles, wisdom, science, prudence, and art. Averroes falsified this Aristotelian doctrine by positing one single possible intellect for all men, thus denying personal immortality. Further, since men differ in wisdom, knowledge, prudence, and art, Averroes said that these habits are not in the possible intellect, which is one, but only in the internal senses, imagination and memory, whereas Aristotle holds that these virtues are in that part of the soul which is rational by its essence, namely, in the intellect, not in the internal senses, which are rational only by participation.

Conclusion. Habit belongs to the power which performs the act, and intelligence is the act proper to the intellect. All ideas retained in the intellectual memory are habits. In a secondary, dispositive sense, habit exists in the imagination, which prepares the object for the possible intellect.

First corollary. Profound treatment of the nature of science, the nature of metaphysics, the nature of theology, and the division of sciences is impossible unless we realize the importance of habit. Habit, far from being a mere mechanical juxtaposition of ideas, is rather a simple, vital, soul-quality, essentially related to one formal object, whence it derives its unity. Thus theology, resting on virtual revelation, is one indivisible science. Dogmatic theology, moral theology, hermeneutics, and so on, are but different aspects of one and the same vital habit, namely, the habit of faith, which is an impression of the knowledge possessed by God and the blessed. When the formal motive of faith ceases, virtual revelation also ceases. When the theologian becomes a heretic, he retains, not the habit of

theology, but a mere collection of statements which have authority only from his own private judgment.

Second corollary. How many distinct sciences are there? As many as there are scientific habits, specifically distinct. Moderns often treat the integral parts of one science as if they were diverse sciences, as if dogma, let us say, and moral theology, and exegesis, were three distinct sciences. In one and the same science there can, of course, be many parts, like the branches of a tree, and in this sense we distinguish positive theology from speculative theology. But any excessive emphasis on specialization destroys unity and life of the intellectual habit. Synthesis becomes impossible, and many difficulties arise regarding the relations of these partial sciences one to another: difficulties which cannot be met except by the direction of a higher habit, whose integral parts have been separated without justification.

ART. 5. ARE THERE HABITS IN THE WILL?

The answer is, yes. By nature the will is determined only to universal good, not to this or that particular good. Habits enter in to set the will definitely on a particular line of activity, such as justice or charity or hope or religion: and all habits, whatever their subject, depend on the will for their exercise, since habit is a possession which man uses when he pleases.

Were the will a mere agent, like the agent-intellect, it would not need a habit. But the will is not only a moving thing, it is also a moved thing. Even to its first act the will is moved objectively, by the good proposed by the intellect. Secondly, by intention the will moves itself to choose means.

ART. 6. DO THE ANGELS NEED HABITS?

The angels need operative habits, and also the entitative habit of sanctifying grace. While by his nature the angel understands his own essence, he still needs grace if he is to know and love God supernaturally. Thus as long as he is on the way to beatitude, the angel needs the habits of faith, hope, and charity. And when he has been beatified, he still needs the habit of sanctifying grace and charity.

General conclusion. Operative habits are necessary in faculties which need to be determined toward good activity. These faculties are: first, the will; second, the intellect; third, the sense-appetite; and fourth, the internal

senses. Entitative habits exists in the body, in the form of health or beauty. But they are unnecessary in the essence of the soul, unless the soul is raised to the supernatural level.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE SOURCE OF HABITS (Q. 51)

ART. 1. DO HABITS COME FROM NATURE?

OPPOSITE errors meet us here. Plato and Descartes hold that our primary ideas are innate, not abstracted from sense-activity. Leibnitz, too, says that these first principles are in us, at least virtually, before sense-cognition. Opposed to this excess is the view of sensists and empiricists, who admit no essential distinction between intellect and sense. Let us first note a twofold meaning of the word “natural.” 1. A thing can be natural according to the nature of the species, for instance, “man is a risible being.” 2. A thing can be natural according to the nature of the individual, for instance, “Socrates is healthy.”

First conclusion. Man has entitative habits, some (like health) totally from nature, others partly from nature (health restored by medicine).

Second conclusion. No operative habits come totally from nature. Here man differs from the angel, whose ideas come totally from its nature, a privilege unsuited to human nature, because the human intellect naturally uses sense-activity. Man’s proper object is the lowest of intelligible objects, those mediated by sense qualities. A man born blind can have no direct knowledge of color. Here lies condemnation of the theory of innate ideas.

Third conclusion. Some human operative habits arise partly from nature and partly from an exterior principle. The habit of first principles, for instance, the principle that the whole is greater than a part, is a natural and inevitable possession, not a mere empirical association, reiterated by tradition. The habit of first principles is an indivisible natural quality, not divided into parts. But it is not totally from nature, as would be an innate idea.

A comparison may illustrate. Just as nutrition is a natural act of the soul when food is offered, so the knowledge of first principles is a natural act,

which receives its food only when, on coming to the age of reason, it derives its first ideas from experience. Then there flows into the possible intellect that quality which we call the habit of first principles. Thus we steer between the two extremes of innatism and sensism: innatism, which says that all our ideas are inborn; sensism, which denies the essential superiority of intellect over sense.

But the human will has no need of a natural habit, because in the very inclination of the will to universal good proposed by reason, we have the seeds of virtue, the roots from which grow the habits of justice, temperance, and fortitude. Some operative habits, while they arise from individual nature, depend partly on a well-disposed organism: a truth expressed by the proverb, “Poets are born, not made.” Similarly, some men are naturally disposed to chastity or mildness. Not all operative habits, however, are natural. Science, for instance, is not a gift of nature, since it arises only from demonstration, and hence is properly styled an acquired habit.

ART. 2. DO HABITS ARISE FROM ACTS?

Again we meet two opposite views. One view, based on the inertia of matter, derives habit from the passivity of the subject. The other view says that habits (e.g., carpentry) are caused by activity, by repetition of acts. St. Thomas begins with three objections in favor of the theory of passivity. 1. Quality depends on the receptiveness of the subject, whereas activity is not a receiving, but a giving. 2. A faculty, which by acting would cause a habit, would be simultaneously mover and the thing moved. 3. Effect cannot be nobler than cause, and habit is something nobler than the act which precedes.

Against these objections stands the affirmation of Aristotle, that the habits of virtues and vices are caused by acts. St. Thomas finds partial truth in each theory, harmonizing them, not in the fashion of eclecticism, but in a higher synthesis.

First conclusion. An agent whose only principle is active cannot develop habits. Stones and plants, to illustrate, neither develop new customs nor lose old ones. A stone falls always the same way, the plant nourishes itself always in the same way.

Second conclusion. An agent which has both active and passive principles can develop habits in its passive principle. This statement is

proved, first, by experience. The will, moved by reason, develops the habit of justice. And the sense-appetite develops temperance and fortitude. Moved by the habit of first principles, the intellect develops the habit of drawing scientific conclusions.

The statement is proved, secondly, by argument. Everything that is moved by another is disposed by the act of that agent. Men have faculties which are moved, either by another faculty, or by themselves as already in act. Hence multiplied acts result in habits in the power which is moved. Nor is the habit nobler than its cause. Reason itself is a nobler principle than the moral virtue generated by repeated acts. And the habit of first principles is nobler than the knowledge of conclusions. Moral virtue is a participation in reason, and the habit of knowledge is a participation in the light of first principles.

PEDAGOGICAL COROLLARIES

1. To learn is not simply to remember. Here we oppose Plato who, since he did not distinguish potential knowledge from actual knowledge, said that knowledge pre-existed in the pupil's mind, hence the teacher's work would be that of reminding, not of instilling.

2. The teacher is perfect in proportion to his power of reducing the truth to higher and more universal principles, since under this influence the disciple acquires the habits of science and wisdom. Great teachers are instruments in a kind of natural revelation, whereas hardly any intellectual formation comes from a teacher who is satisfied with the positivist or empirist approach. Facts unrelated to principles, while they furnish materials for science, can never become science, can never result in scientific synthesis.

3. Pedagogical theories are three: the traditional one (Aristotelian-Thomistic), the innatism of Plato, and empiricism. Against the traditional theory, which regards the human intellect as the lowest of intellects, Plato sins by excess, the empiricists by defect.

ART. 3. CAN HABIT BE PRODUCED BY ONE ACT?

Preliminaries. It seems so: 1. By one demonstration we create science, at least one scientific conclusion. 2. One intense act is equivalent to many acts

less intense. 3. By one act a man becomes sick or well; and sickness, like health, is a habit. But, as “one swallow does not make spring,” so one day does not make a man virtuous.

First conclusion. In no appetitive power can the habit of virtue be generated by one act. One act of reason cannot totally conquer any appetitive power, because the appetitive power is multiple and variable. Only gradually, like fire in damp material, or water dripping on rock, can reason create that second nature which we call habit. Reason’s first act produces a disposition, the second act strengthens that disposition, and the series must continue to a final act, strong enough to turn the disposition into a permanent quality, difficult to change.

To illustrate. One set of circumstances demands that we act humbly, another set that we act magnanimously. Magnanimity is not ambition, just as humility is not pusillanimity. Multiplied and repeated acts of reason are required before both humility and magnanimity become man’s second nature. The term “second nature” is illuminating. As nature imitates God, so the virtuous man imitates nature, whose unchangeable laws are God’s own creation.

TWO COROLLARIES

1. All virtues are fields of slow development. Justice, unbroken recognition of our neighbor’s rights, becomes a habit only under the persistent prodding of reason. Only after long training does religion become a virtue, independent of sensible devotion. The same road is marked out for temperance, fortitude, meekness, patience, and chastity, which develop only by a long-continued restraint on sensuality.

2. Disposition, although it is the necessary road to habit, is never identified with habit, which is the goal of all dispositive activity. A moral habit is thus distinguished from a scientific habit, which can be generated by one act.

Here we meet a mystery, which permeates all levels of creation. It is just as difficult to draw the line between ultimate disposition and habit, as it was for biologists finally to determine that the sponge, say, is not the apex of vegetative life, but one of the lowest forms of senselife. But, admitting this concrete difficulty, vegetative life still remains specifically distinct from senselife, and licit mental restriction still remains distinct from a lie.

Second conclusion. Science can be caused by one act, but opinion cannot. One proposition, if self-evident, convinces the intellect, though this one scientific conclusion can grow, both in intensity and in extension, by application to other conclusions. In illustration, we may refer to the subordination of all second causes, including the human will, to God the First Cause. But, though conviction may be immediate, the scientific habit, by reason of external dependence on sense powers, becomes firmly established only by repeated acts.

As similar instances of a metaphysical habit established by one act we may note: first, being as being, reality as reality, is the precise object of ontology. Secondly, in God alone is essence identified with existence. Opinion, too, is a habit, but it cannot be established by one act, because it depends on probable propositions.

Third conclusion. Only by repeated acts can habits be established in the lower cognitive powers, particularly in the memory. Experience is sufficient proof for this statement. But we must note the terminology of Aristotle, who uses the word “passive intellect” to express a sense-power, which applies memory and imagination to concrete and particular problems. This power, he says, is subject to corruption, as are all sense-powers. Averroes, erroneously identifying this “passive intellect” with “possible intellect,” concluded that Aristotle had denied personal immortality.

Reason argues thus: Because organic powers depend on matter, the principle of corruption, they need much repetition to become fixed in one definite direction. Here lies the reason why men differ in the power of imagination. What Aristotle calls a “dry” memory does not easily receive, but preserves well what it has received, whereas a “wet” memory receives easily, but also loses easily. Climates, dry and wet, may serve as illustrations.

Fourth conclusion. Bodily habits can be caused by one act if the active element is very strong. One dose of strong medicine may restore health. Inversely, one blow may destroy health.

COROLLARY

A widespread error confounds instruction with education. Instruction aims at intellectual habits, which can be generated, often by a single act. But education, which aims at moral habits in the will and in the sense-

powers, is a long and slow process. To suppose that children who are merely instructed, not educated, will become good citizens, with well developed moral and religious habits, is a fatal error. Imagine parents who would exercise no care over their children's food, because, forsooth, these children, as adults, will suddenly be capable of self-control.

ART. 4. ARE SOME HABITS INFUSED BY GOD?

It is of faith that the process of justification includes the infusion of virtues: faith, hope, and charity, and so on. These virtues are qualities permanently inherent in the soul or in its faculties, though it does not seem certain by faith that these qualities are in the strictest sense habits, since the Council does not use the words "quality" and "habit." But while the demands of faith are met by holding that sanctifying grace is an habitual internal gift, it is still theologically certain that grace and its consequent gifts are habits.

First conclusion. Supernatural habits cannot arise except by infusion. Habits, natural or supernatural, must be proportioned to the end for which they dispose us. But natural habits acquired by repeated acts can never dispose us to a supernatural end. Supernatural habits, therefore, cannot arise except from supernatural infusion. This truth holds good of even the highest angel, even if he should have been created from eternity.

Second conclusion. Habits which are in themselves natural may arise from infusion. Such habits (e.g., sudden mastery of a strange tongue) are said to be infused per accidens. Adam must have had many such habits.

FIRST COROLLARY

A habit infused per accidens is of the same species as an acquired habit, just as the eyes given to a man born blind are specifically the same as natural eyes. But habits per se infused are also per se supernatural, not supernatural only in their mode (such as origin by miracle), but supernatural in their very essence.

SECOND COROLLARY

While infused habits are simply indispensable for meritorious acts, still certain salutary acts, not yet meritorious, may, under actual grace, arise even before justification and infused habits.

Question. Do the acts arising from an infused habit beget another habit of the same species? Answer: No, because one and the same subject cannot have two forms of the same species. Acts produced by an infused habit simply strengthen the pre-existing habit.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE GROWTH OF HABITS (Q. 52)

IN THREE articles we ask: Do habits grow? Do they grow by addition? Does each and every act of the habit increase the habit? This question is difficult, but important, especially in its pedagogical consequences.

ART. 1. DO HABITS GROW?

It seems that habits cannot grow. First, growth, augmentation, is a quantitative term, whereas habit is a quality. Secondly, habit is a kind of perfection, and perfection, since it means an ultimate, does not admit degrees. Thirdly, qualitative augmentation would at best be nothing but alteration.

Authority sustains our thesis. “Lord, increase our faith.” “Grow in grace and in the knowledge of God.” “Fructify in every good work and grow in the knowledge of God.” The Council of Trent: He who says that the justice received from God cannot be augmented before God by good works, let him be anathema.

Conclusion. 1. Certain habits can be augmented in extension, e.g., knowledge, which becomes greater by being extended to new conclusions. 2. All habits grow in intensity as they are more and more rooted in the subject. Thus charity becomes more intense, knowledge becomes more profound. The foundations of this demonstration are thus proposed by St. Thomas.

a) While it is true that augmentation, in its primary meaning, belongs to quantity, still, in an analogical and true sense, it belongs also to spiritual qualities, since we know spiritual things only by analogy with the sense-world.

b) Perfection of quality or form can be considered in two ways. First, abstractly, as form. Thus we say knowledge is small or great. Secondly, concretely, as participated by the subject. Thus we say that a man is more or less healthy, or that one philosopher is more profound than another.

Here we find four fields of thought. 1. Plotinus and other Platonists hold that habit grows in itself. 2. Some think that habits are not augmented in themselves, but only more deeply participated in by the subject. 3. A medium between the two foregoing views is that of the Stoics, who say that certain habits, arts and sciences, are also in themselves augmented in extension, but that other habits, virtues, are augmented only in intensity. 4. Others hold that immaterial qualities and forms do not admit variation in degree, but that material forms do admit variation.

To find the truth here, St. Thomas appeals to the great principle which governs specification of qualities. It runs thus: The specificating element must be something stable and indivisible. Things below this point are in a lower species, things above this point are in a higher species. To illustrate. Rationality is the element that differentiates man. Animals, without rationality, are below men. Angels, who transcend rationality, are above men. Now qualitative hierarchies are governed by the same principle. Species are like numbers. Add one, subtract one, and you have a different species. Of this principle we have two applications, one on absolute qualities, the other on relative qualities.

1. A form or quality that is absolute does not admit of more or less, and is incapable of augmentation. Thus it is with the human soul: below it is the brute animal; above it is the angel.

2. A quality that is relative, i.e., differentiated by its essential object or terminus, while it may increase as it approaches its goal, remains specifically the same, because its terminus is one. Thus motion in any line is more intense or more remiss, and health grows better by greater harmony with the nature wherein it exists.

Here rests the first part of our conclusion, namely: certain habits can be augmented extensively, i.e., can be extended to new termini under the same formal object. Thus grow arts and sciences. Thus theology in itself was greater in the thirteenth century than it was in the eighth century.

On this point, then, the Stoics were right: extensive augmentation takes place when the habit is extended to a new material object under the same formal aspect, that is, in arts and sciences. But this extensive augmentation

does not find place in moral and theological virtues, because the man who has, e.g., the moral virtue of temperance, has it in relation to all objects of temperance, and he who has even the lowest degree of charity reaches out to all objects that can be loved by charity. This same truth governs the virtues of hope and faith. Since the death of the apostles, the smallest level of faith embraces all objects to be believed, though there can be a transition from implicit to explicit.

The second part of the conclusion treats of intensive augmentation. It says: As shared by the subject, some qualities and some forms admit degrees, but others do not. Forms participated substantially are incapable of intensification and remission. But here, too, we appeal to the general principle of specification, namely, that the differentiating element must be stable and indivisible. From this principle it follows that substantial forms do not admit variational degrees. A rational soul makes man to be a man, and nothing else. It follows further also that accidental forms which are in themselves indivisible do not admit degrees. Each number is constituted by an indivisible unity. Geometric figures cannot be more or less triangular or circular. Thirdly, it follows that habits (sciences and virtues), since they do not give substantial species to the subject, and do not in their nature include indivisibility, may be possessed in various degrees by different men.

RECAPITULATION

First conclusion. Certain habits grow in extension. Proof. That quality can be increased in itself which can be extended to one to more or fewer termini under the same formal object. Now certain habits, namely, sciences and arts, can be extended to more or fewer termini under the same formal object.

Second conclusion. All habits can be increased in intensity. Proof. Any quality that does not give its subject a substantial differentiation, and which does not in its nature include indivisibility, can grow in intensity. Now every habit is a quality which does not give its subject substantial differentiation, and does not in its nature include indivisibility.

ART. 2. ARE HABITS AUGMENTED BY ADDITION?

It seems that even intensive augmentation takes place by addition. 1. The term “augmentation” is a quantitative term, and quantity is not augmented except by addition. 2. The agent, unless he produces augmentation by addition, would produce nothing. 3. A white thing becomes more white by the addition of a greater whiteness, just as a heap of coins or grain grows by addition.

Contrary authority. A thing already hot becomes hotter without any addition of heat newly produced.

First conclusion. Sciences and arts are augmented in extension by the addition of a new conclusion, but not by a new partial habit. Geometry may serve as an example. Analogy confirms the thesis. Motion can increase, not only in velocity, but can also be extended in space and time.

Let us note that this extensive augment does not take place by a collection of many qualities, but by a new mode and manner of one and the same habit.

All Thomists defend this view against Vasquez and the nominalists, and also against Scotus and Suarez, who hold that the habit of science is not a simple quality, but an aggregation of many particular habits.

Corollary. St. Thomas, holding that theology is one simple habit, by reason of its formal object quod and quo, is in direct opposition to those moderns who say that sacred theology is a collection of many sciences. Each of these two conceptions dictates its own mentality and pedagogical method. One is satisfied with unrelated acquisitions, the other unifies the spirit.

Second conclusion. Intensive augmentation, arising from deeper participation of the subject in the form, does not take place by the addition of form to form. This Thomistic view, held by many outside the Thomistic school, is against Durandus, who holds that intensive augmentation takes place by generation of a new and more perfect quality, and also against Scotus, Suarez, and Vasquez, who hold that augmentation takes place by the addition of a new qualitative entity. The thesis is proved, first directly, secondly indirectly.

Direct proof. The law of augmentation follows the law of production. A thing becomes hot by participating in the form already present. Form is not that which is, but that by which a thing is so and so. Rotundity is not an existing thing, but is that whereby a round thing is round. It is impossible to

make rotundity, but it is possible to make a round thing. Again, humanity is not generated, but this man, the subject which participates in humanity.

We must therefore conclude that intensive augmentation of quality does not take place, as Durandus wills, by generation of a new form, nor by the addition of a new entity, as Scotus, Suarez, and Vasquez maintain.

Indirect proof. If intensive augmentation took place by addition, this would be owing either to the form or to the subject, but neither view is possible. Any addition owing to form would vary the species. And any addition owing to the subject would presuppose some part of the subject to receive the form which it had so far lacked, and we would be dealing again with extensive augmentation. Hence generation (or augmentation) of habit does not mean that one part is generated after another part, but that the subject participates more and more perfectly in the quality.

Only a rude imagination can think of charity, say, as a heap of minor little charities. Again, this new partial charity is either more perfect than the pre-existing or not. If it is more perfect, the pre-existing is superfluous. But if it is not more perfect, it cannot make the subject more perfect, but will be a mere extension of the form, an extension which is inconceivable in a spiritual subject.

The growth of charity is growth, not in size, but in perfection. Charity grows intense by being more deeply rooted in the subject. As trees grow by deepening their roots, charity grows by penetrating ever more deeply into the potentialities of the will. As charity grows, sin becomes ever more difficult. One and the same man is successively an infant, a boy, a youth, and an adult, not by the advent of a new partial man, but by advance to a more perfect state of life. And so, too, one and the same quality may grow from remissness to intensity, not by the advent of a new partial quality, but by advance to a more perfect mode of being. In the phrase “degrees of charity,” degrees means, not a partial quality, but a higher mode of perfection. Each new degree contains virtually all degrees lower than itself. Even if, by a miracle, charity were separated from its subject, it would still be rooted in its subject, not actually, but aptitudinally.

Corollary. The opposition between these two theories begets two opposed pedagogical systems and methods: One, mechanical and external, proceeding by juxtaposition of acts and exercises, the other, dynamic and internal, guided by the purified formal object of the science or of the virtue.

The first method, unless corrected by the second, will not lead to the unitive life, but only to multiplied and unorganized perfections.

ART. 3. DOES EACH AND EVERY ACT INCREASE THE HABIT?

This question faces modern theories, on progress in civilization, in science, in philosophy, in theology.

PRELIMINARIES

It seems that each and every act increases the habit: first, when cause is multiplied, effect also is multiplied; secondly, all acts that proceed from one and the same habit are similar; thirdly, one similar thing is increased by another similar thing. But the response is negative: Not every act increases habit.

Authority. “Some acts proceeding from habit diminish the habit.” As illustration, think of the fourteenth century, which did little to develop philosophy and theology, which rather, in Occam, saw a great regress that prepared the way for Luther. What holds good in society, holds good likewise in the individual.

Reason. Only an act as intense as the habit can increase the habit. Cause must be proportioned to effect. If a remiss act caused increase of habit, more would be produced from less, the more perfect from the imperfect.

To illustrate. A man with a habit equal, say, to ten talents sometimes works remissly, from negligence or tepidity, as if he had only two talents. Hence not every act proceeding from a habit augments that habit.

Second conclusion. An act equal or superior in intensity to the habit either increases the habit or disposes proximately to such increase.

Third conclusion. But if the intensity of the act is not proportioned to the intensity of the habit, such an act does not dispose proximately to increase of the habit, but rather for its decrease. This conclusion is against the modem dogma of necessary progress. We are dealing here with the physical disposition necessary to increase habit. We are not dealing with merit, because, as will be said later, an act of charity, even though remiss, is still meritorious. Yet it disposes to decrease, since it opens the road to contraries. Every act of charity, says St. Thomas, even though it be remiss, merits eternal life and an increase of charity. Charity, however, is not always

increased at once, but only when the subject endeavors to reach such an increase. In illustration, we may point to the laborer who daily increases in riches, because daily he acquires a new right to a reward or merit, though in fact he does not receive this reward except at the end of the week.

We must here notice the difference between an acquired habit and an infused habit. Our acts, just as they are the physical cause of an acquired habit, so likewise they are the physical cause of increase in the habit. But since our acts, even under actual grace, are not the physical cause of an infused habit, but only dispositions for its infusion, they are likewise not physical causes, but only dispositions for the increase of charity. Hence a remiss act of charity, while it is meritorious, does not dispose us to an increase of charity except remotely, and may even dispose us for a decrease of the habit, since he who works remissly easily yields to contrary acts whereby the habit is corrupted. Thus imperfections may be dangerous. We must progress, in order not to regress. Unless the boy grows, he remains an abnormal man.

ST. THOMAS AND SUAREZ

Suarez maintains that by each and every act, however remiss, the habit is at once increased. And he differs again from St. Thomas on this question: Does the precept of charity bind a man to greater charity even up to the time of death? To this question St. Thomas answers affirmatively, since the perfection of charity falls under precept, at least as an ultimate goal. Suarez denies, saying that the perfection of charity does not fall under precept even as a goal. Perfection of charity, he adds, is a counsel, not a precept.

The doctrine of St. Thomas, rejected by Suarez, leads to a very important corollary in the spiritual life. It runs thus: The rate of increase in virtue should be continually accelerated, as it was in the saints, and especially in the Blessed Virgin. Growth in faith (or in any virtue) corresponds to natural motion, where rate of increase is measured by nearness to the goal, whereas the contrary holds good of violent motion. “The nearer you see the day approaching,” says Scripture. And. again, “The path of the just, like a shining light, grows unto perfect day.”

Why does natural motion grow ever more intense? Because the goal attracts it ever more strongly. A stone falls ever more rapidly, whereas thrown upward by force, it rises ever more slowly. Man’s soul, says St.

Thomas, tends more vehemently to joy than it flees from sadness, hence is drawn more strongly by God the nearer it comes to Him.

Material gravitation illustrates spiritual gravitation. If the velocity of a falling body is equivalent to 20 in the first second, it will be 40 in the second that follows, 60 in the third, 8o in the fourth, and 100 in the fifth. Here lies a far-off view, an inkling, of Mary's final state. Her initial plentitude of grace surpassed the grace of all saints and angels, and her rate of increase suffered no interruption even by sleep. Hence no creature is more beautiful or more faithful to God.

OBJECTIONS ANALYZED

1. Acts, coming from a habit, must increase that habit. Yes, but only when the act is proportioned to the habit.

2. But if one act increases the habit, why not all similar acts? Yes, but only if they are similar, not merely in species, but also in degree of intensity.

3. But every act is similar to its habit. Yes, similar in species, but not necessarily in degree of intensity.

4. If a remiss act is sufficient disposition, both for the infusion of grace and charity, and for its sacramental increase, then, also outside the sacramental world, a remiss act should be sufficient disposition to increase the habit. We deny the parity. Grace and its increase come from the sacraments ex opere operato, and God supplies the lack of disposition in adults as he supplies the entire lack of disposition in infants who are baptized. But, outside the sacraments, grace and its increase arise ex opere operantis, i.e., by personal acts of contrition and charity.

5. But does not the Council of Trent say that the sacraments cause grace according to the disposition of each recipient? Yes, but the phrase "according to" is to be understood, not arithmetically, but proportionally, i.e., the better the disposition the greater is the grace received, but the grace is not necessarily equal to a man's disposition.

Corollary. He who has charity represented by two talents and elicits an act equivalent to three, receives the augmentation of charity at once. But he who has charity measured by five talents and elicits an act worth four does not at once receive an increase of charity, though his act is meritorious, and he will receive the increase when he performs an act sufficiently intense.

CHAPTER XXVIII

CORRUPTION AND DIMINUTION OF HABITS (Q. 53)

PRELIMINARIES

MODERNS harp on progressive evolution, as if progress came necessarily, as if regress were not possible. This progress they guarantee by developing, not habits, but rules, methods, and mechanical aids. Here Descartes was a pioneer. He denied the very existence of habits, and even of faculties distinct from substance. And Leibnitz meditated a machine for thinking and computing, that thus the mind would be dispensed from thinking distinctly. To this “democratic” conception of science, we oppose the “aristocratic” conception, the mental nobility arising from permanent good habits. Modern treatises on mental prayer need the same reminder. Methods, while useful for beginners, can never be substitutes for supernatural habits.

The progress expected from rules and methods, however advantageous in the material and mechanical world, has not prevented mental and moral regress toward irreligion and atheism. And when we hear modern determinists applying the doctrine of transmitted heredity to modern crime and insanity, we wonder how they harmonize this view with universal progress. When God is denied, enigmas increase, and insoluble questions arise.

ART. 1. CAN HABITS BE CORRUPTED?

PRELIMINARIES

It seems that habits cannot be corrupted. 1. Nature cannot be corrupted, and habit is second nature. 2. Spiritual habits cannot be corrupted, because they exist in an incorruptible subject. 3. Neither corporeal transmutation, nor sickness, nor death, can destroy the habit of knowledge or virtue, since these exist in the spiritual and incorruptible soul.

Authority. “Forgetfulness and error corrupt knowledge.” “By contrary acts virtues are generated and corrupted.”

First Conclusion. Health and beauty, and all corporeal habits are corruptible, both per se and per accidens: per se, by reason of the subject in which they exist, per accidens, by reason of contrary causes.

Second conclusion. The habits of first principles, both speculative and practical, are incorruptible, both per se and per accidens: per accidens because they exist in the intellect which is incorruptible, per se because they have no contrary cause. The notion of being, of reality, is not contrary to the notion of nothing, since they can coexist in the same subject, though they cannot be predicated of one and the same object. Nor is there anything contrary to the act of the agent intellect, which, since it abstracts ideas from phantasms, is the cause of the habit of first principles. Hence this habit, like synderesis, is incorruptible, both per se and per accidens. Unassailable by forgetfulness or error, first principles are the adamantine base of our intelligence, incorruptible, indestructible, even in the minds of professed sophists, such as Hegel or Protagoras. Protagoras cannot simultaneously both exist and not exist, nor simultaneously be Protagoras and not be Protagoras.

Third conclusion. Science and opinion, moral virtues and vices, are corruptible both per se and per accidens. They are corruptible per accidens, because, though their chief subject is incorruptible, they reside secondarily in a corruptible subject, namely, in the internal sense-powers, imagination and memory, or in the sense-appetite. And sciences and moral virtues are corruptible per se by the law of contraries. A scientific conclusion can be overthrown by a sophistic syllogism, a true opinion by false opinion, moral virtue by the opposite vice.

Corollary. The modern dogma of unbroken progress is false. Regress appears in society as it does in individuals. As example, think of the downward gradation from Lutheranism to Modernism. Yet some authors seem to think that Scotus and Suarez, by coming later, perfected St. Thomas, as if Thomas were the thesis, Scotus the antithesis, and Suarez the

higher synthesis. The twenty-four Thomistic propositions would merely codify an inferior period of scholastic evolution.

ART. 2. CAN HABIT BE DIMINISHED?

First conclusion. Habit can be diminished just as it can be increased. First, remiss activity reduces subjective intensity. Secondly, sciences and arts may decrease also in extension. As habits increase in a twofold way, intensively and extensively, they may also decrease in the same two ways.

Second conclusion. Decrease comes from the same causes as does corruption. Decrease is the road to corruption, just as generation is the foundation for increase. Reiterated acts are the cause of increase of infused habits. The same disparity appears in decrease. Charity can be diminished, not directly, but only indirectly: not directly because charity is not caused or augmented by human acts, but only by God. By mere cessation from act (supposing the cessation not to be mortal sin), charity is not diminished, nor is it diminished directly by venial sin, because venial sin, unlike charity, is not concerned with the last end. But indirectly charity is diminished by venial sin, which impedes the application of charity, allows evil inclinations to arise, thus making the exercise of charity difficult, and disposing the soul to mortal sin, whereby charity is destroyed.

ART. 3. IS HABIT CORRUPTED OR DIMINISHED BY MERE CESSATION FROM ACT?

Conclusion. Cessation from act causes per accidens corruption or diminution of habit, because it removes the factors which hinder corrupting or diminishing causes. Knowledge can be overthrown, not only by error but also by forgetfulness. Friendships wither by lack of association. Let us apply this conclusion, first, to virtue.

When a man does not use the habit of virtue to moderate passions or actions, there must arise many non-virtuous passions and operations, from the inclination of the sense-appetite and other exterior attractions. The same truth holds good in the man who does not keep up the habit of mental prayer.

Second, application to knowledge. When a man ceases to use his knowledge, for instance of theology, extraneous imaginations may lead him to confuse the doctrine of charity with the tenets of liberalism.

Corollary. In the way of virtue and science, cessation means not to progress, and not to progress is to regress. Acts that are good, but remiss, although they do not cause regress are still a disposition to that regress, since they open the way to contrary inclinations.

Maritain writes: “Progressive negation of the value of habits would need its own special history. It began in the fourteenth century among theologians, and has now descended to the lowest level.” Scotus and Occam denied specific distinction among the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Further, Scotus denied the necessity of infused moral virtues, and held the theological virtues to be supernatural only in mode. Following Occam, Luther denied all infused habits, grace, in his view, being a mere extrinsic denomination under which man remains in his corruption.

The next step was to eliminate acquired habits. Descartes denied the distinction between substance and accident, thus eliminating the accidents which we call habits, and substituting for them infallible methods of attaining knowledge. After Descartes, method becomes the almost exclusive catchword. The final step was envisioned by Leibnitz. His calculating machine, releasing mankind from the burden of thought, would create an age of light, of universal intellectual democraticism!

CHAPTER XXIX

HABITS, HOW DISTINGUISHED (Q. 54)

IN THESE four articles we deal with habits as related to the subject wherein the habit exists, to their objects, and to the goal toward which they tend.

ART. 1. CAN MANY HABITS EXIST IN ONE SUBJECT?

First conclusion. Many entitative habits, at least many corporeal habits (such as health, beauty, and strength) can exist in one and the same subject. Corporeal elements serve nature in diverse ways. Good proportion in the non-solid elements constitutes health. In the solid parts (bones, muscles) it constitutes strength. Harmony of members and countenance constitutes beauty.

Second conclusion. Many operative habits can coexist in one power. One power can be moved to act by many objects specifically distinct, and habits are proportioned to the acts by which they are generated. As matter is moved by agents specifically distinct into forms specifically diverse, so, for instance, the intellect is moved to act by objects specifically distinct, physical, mathematical, metaphysical, and these acts generate corresponding habits. And, whereas matter cannot simultaneously receive many substantial forms, one power can simultaneously receive many habits, because habits are accidents.

DIFFICULTIES ANALYZED

1. Whereas generic diversity creates distinction of faculties, specific diversity is the source of acts and habits. Thus our intellect ascends, step by step, from reality in general to changeable reality (natural science), then up

to quantitative reality (mathematics), and ultimately to the divine reality (theology).

2. Although the intellect cannot understand many truths simultaneously and actually, it can still simultaneously and habitually be master of many and diverse branches of knowledge.

ART. 2. ARE HABITS DISTINGUISHED BY THEIR OBJECTS?

PRELIMINARIES

To attain a supernatural goal we must have a supernatural habit. Thus Thomists in general maintain that our infused faith and the acquired faith of the demon do not rest on the same formal motive. Infused faith rests on the authority of God, the Author of grace; acquired faith rests on the authority of God, the Author of nature and of miracles. They also hold that natural love of God the author of nature is distinguished from love of God the author of grace, by its objective goal, whereas Molina and other Jesuit theologians teach that an infused habit (e.g., theological faith) needs no formal object that surpasses the powers of reason, since they deny the principle of St. Thomas, namely, that habits are differentiated by their formal objects.

Difficulties. It seems that habits are not distinguished by specifically different objects: 1. One and the same science reaches out to contraries, such as health and sickness. 2. One and the same knowable truth, for instance, the earth is round, is demonstrated in diverse sciences, in physics and in astronomy. 3. One and the same object, as related to different goals, can belong to different virtues. To illustrate, money given for love of God belongs to charity, while money given to pay a debt belongs to justice.

General conclusion. Operative habits are distinguished by diverse objects. Since acts differ specifically by their objects, and since habits are simply dispositions to act, habits themselves must be distinguished by their objects.

To explain. Operative habits are essentially ordained to produce acts: knowledge, to produce demonstration; virtue, to bring forth virtuous acts. This principle leads St. Thomas to consider habits, in their relation first to their active principles, secondly to the nature of the subject, thirdly to their

objects. Difficulties arise from the caviling of the nominalist, and the false interpretation of the Molinist.

Molinist interpretation. Molinists hold that, according to this article, an infused operative habit is specifically distinct from an acquired habit only by reason of the effective principle, not by reason of its formal object, since infused faith is immediately produced by God, whereas acquired faith is not. Thomists commonly reject this interpretation. Why?

1. Because thus we should abandon the fundamental principle of St. Thomas, that operative habits are differentiated by their formal object.

2. If infused faith had the same formal object as acquired faith, it would be infused only per accidens, would be supernatural only in the mode of its production, like infused geometry or the gift of tongues, or like an eye given miraculously to a blind man, which would not differ specifically from an eye given by generation. Thus the essential supernaturalness of infused virtues would be destroyed.

This doctrine of Molina comes from nominalism, which maintains that we do not know the essences of things, the essence of grace or of virtues, but only facts, for instance, that this man has faith. Nominalists say further that sanctifying grace is not intrinsically supernatural, but gives a right to eternal life only by divine institution, by an extrinsic denomination, like a written note which promises money. Nominalism thus prepared the way for Luther's tenet, that grace is not an infused gift of God inherent in the soul, but only an external imputation of the justice of Christ.

3. This Molinist interpretation does not preserve the true meaning of the present article, which rests on the doctrine that every habit implies relationship to the nature of the subject. The following is a synopsis of the article.

Habits are differentiated:

A. As forms passively received by their proximate principle, whereby they are either

1. infused habits (from God as agent); or

2. acquired habits, which are either branches of knowledge or moral virtues (guided by reason).

B. As dispositions related

1. to the nature of the subject: infused habits (from God); or acquired habits, which are either good (in harmony with nature) or bad (contrary to nature);

2. to the object of the act to be performed: infused habits (object supernatural); or acquired habits (object naturally attainable).

This synopsis shows that the three modes of distinguishing infused habits from acquired habits are convertible. An operative acquired habit would not suit our nature, and would not be acquired under the direction of right reason, unless it had an object that is true, good, and naturally accessible. But all such habits are distinguished by their special harmony with our nature, under the special directions of reason. And this harmony and direction depend finally on the differentiating goal and object.

Similarly, a habit essentially supernatural, that is, infused per se, would not per se belong to participated divine nature, to sanctifying grace, and would not be infused per se, if it did not have an object essentially supernatural. Hence relation to the object is the primary differentiating element. Whatever Molinists say, our assertion is this: habit can be specifically and simultaneously differentiated by its object, by the nature in which it is, and by the active principle. But, object removed, no habit remains.

First conclusion. Habits, as forms, are distinguished by their proximate and diverse active principles. To illustrate. Every proximate agent makes an effect specifically like itself. A transitive action (e.g., the act of heating) is distinguished specifically by the principle of action from which it proceeds. Thus we admit that an entitative habit, (e.g., sanctifying grace) is distinguished from acquired habits by its active principle, which is God. The same truth holds good of infused virtues and of the seven gifts, which flow from sanctifying grace, though all these habits, as operative, are differentiated by the goal and object to which they are proportioned.

We are dealing here, not with the supreme active principle, but only with the proximate active principle. Thus the proximate principle in the appetitive field is the cognitive power which represents the object. Moral virtue, in the sense-appetite, is a participation in reason. In sciences, demonstration is the active principle. The following are illustrative texts.

1. We learn the nature of faculty from the act to which it is ordained.

2. The object is compared to the act of a passive power as principle and moving cause. Color is the principle of vision.

3. To the act of an active power (e.g., augmentation) the object is compared as terminus and goal.

4. From these two, principle and terminus, every action gets its species: heating, for example, from an agent that is hot, cooling from an agent that is cold.

5. Diverse demonstrative media are the active principles of diverse scientific habits. But these active principles, since they are objective, coincide with the formal motive (with the objectum quo) by which the object is constituted as knowable.

6. In the virtues, too, the proximate active principle is the goal intended. Goal in the field of activity is like principle in the field of demonstration. Diversity in goal diversifies virtues, just as does diversity of active principles. As the demonstrative principle is the formal motive quo of the conclusion, so the proximate goal is the formal motive quo of choice. Money for God's sake belongs to charity, money to pay a debt belongs to justice.

Second conclusion. Habit, as disposition, is specifically distinguished according to the agent's nature. Things that are relative are distinguished by their relation to different termini. Habits, in particular entitative habits, are good or evil according as they are or are not in harmony with nature. Health in man belongs to one species, health in the horse to another species, because man's nature is not the nature of the horse. Acquired human virtues are specifically distinguished from infused virtues, since the former dispose us for an act harmonious with human nature, whereas the others dispose us for an act harmonious with grace, that is, for participated divine nature. And, we repeat, this distinction by relation to nature is always found in union with the distinction by relation to object.

Third conclusion. Habits, as disposing for operation, are differentiated by objects and goals specifically different. Operative habits, being related to distinct operative termini, must be differentiated by those termini. This conclusion is universal, holding good of all operative habits. Since infused geometry and acquired geometry have the same formal object, they are not specifically distinct, and the infused habit is infused only per accidens. But in virtues per se (e.g., divine faith) the proper motive is the First Truth, the authority of God the Revealer, the Author of grace, whereas the formal motive of acquired faith is the natural evidence of miracles. The following texts are illustrative.

1. Acquired faith is not a special gift of God, but the result of natural intellectual perspicacity.

2. But since a man who makes an act of faith must be elevated above his nature, he must have within him a supernatural principle, moving him to this act.

3. The expression “to believe” is equivocal when used of faithful men and of demons. He who lacks infused faith and has only acquired faith is like a man who hears materially the sounds of a symphony, but does not hear the soul of the symphony because he lacks musical appreciation.

Summary. Proportionality governs the relations of habitual grace and infused faith to their acts, and to the objects of those acts. In the doctrine of Molina we do not find this proportionality. According to him, habitual grace and infused faith have the same object as the nature of the soul and acquired faith. But it is clear that infused faith cannot be per se proportionate to habitual grace, unless it is addressed to an object which is per se in harmony with habitual grace. For the operative habit, like the operation itself, is differentiated by its formal object.

This principle is absolute. It gives light to the whole treatise on habits and infused virtues. It is strange that many Molinists reject it, or retain it only in relation to charity which remains in the fatherland, and do not retain it in treating of hope and faith. But surely faith and hope and moral virtues are all supernatural in substance, otherwise we destroy the sublimity and homogeneity of the spiritual organism.

Molina objects. “The necessity of a supernatural habit of infused faith resides in this: acts of faith must be elicited as suited to a supernatural end, to salvation. Hence the acquired faith of the demon would be distinguished from infused faith, not by its formal object, but only by its ultimate goal.” Answer: This ultimate goal, in the Molinist theory, does not rise higher above natural powers than does the formal object of faith or of hope. If therefore the formal object of faith and hope can be attained naturally, by historical knowledge of the Gospel confirmed by miracles, we cannot see why the ultimate end, and even the object of charity, God loved above all things, cannot be naturally attained. And thus we would return to the Pelagians, who held that charity was necessary only in order to love God more easily.

Corollaries. 1. Sciences are specifically distinguished by their formal objects quod and quo, i.e., by the objective motive and active principle. Virtues, too, are distinguished by this twofold formal object, quo and quod. Entitative habits alone are not distinguished by their object.

DIFFICULTIES ANALYZED

1. Habits are specifically distinguished, not by their material object, but by their formal object. Thus medicine deals with contraries, namely, health and sickness, by one and the same formal object.

2. Sciences, too, are distinguished, not by their material objects, but by their formal objects, namely, by their different demonstrative principles.

3. Nor is virtue distinguished by its material object, since, for example, money can be given for a motive either of charity or of justice.

ART. 3. ARE HABITS DISTINGUISHED AS GOOD AND EVIL?

Conclusion. Good and evil distinguish habits essentially, not only accidentally. Virtue is contrary to vice, and contraries belong to different species. Habits are specifically distinguished, not only by their objects and active principles, but also by the nature in which they are and with which they either are or are not in harmony. This truth is against Spinoza, who holds that vice comes solely from mental confusion. The following texts are illustrative.

Acquired virtue, and divine virtue per se infused, are distinct specifically. The first arises from harmony with human nature, the second from harmony with divine nature, of which grace is a participation.

Is human virtue specifically distinct from heroic virtue? Yes, if by heroic virtue you understand virtue that is per se infused; no, if by heroic virtue you understand acquired virtue.

Many evil habits may exist in one field of activity, since lack of harmony with right reason may arise either from excess or from defect.

ART. 4. CAN ONE HABIT BE COMPOSED OF MANY HABITS?

PRELIMINARIES

It may seem that one habit can be composed of many habits: for example, geometry is constituted by many different conclusions, and one and the same virtue has many parts. But the conclusion runs thus: Habit is a simple quality, not constituted by many habits. Habit is an operative principle

which, however far it extends, has but one formal object. A science, reaching out to a new conclusion, does not develop a new partial habit.

Thomists commonly defend this view against those who maintain that theology is not one simple science, but an aggregation of many particular habits, dogmatic, moral, and so on. This adverse view is radically opposed to the spirit of science. It maintains, with Vasquez, that a man who loses infused faith may still preserve the theological science whose root is faith. But in truth, when faith, the soul of theology, is taken away, theology itself has been destroyed.

Question. But are not the cardinal virtues composed of various habits? Answer: Without being composed, the cardinal virtues are divided, either integrally (into various functions), or subjectively (into various fields of labor), or lastly potentially (into conative adjuncts).

Thus terminates the treatise on habits, in their essence, in their subject, in their cause, and in their distinction. On these foundations depend all questions concerning virtues and vices. Habit is the common genus of all of them. Neglect of generic treatment often creates insoluble difficulties in treating of species, difficulties that can be solved only by metaphysical study of the genus in itself.

CHRIST THE SAVIOR

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CHRIST THE SAVIOR

Preface

We have already published treatises on the One God, the Triune God, the Creator, and the Holy Eucharist. These have been presented in the form of a commentary on the teaching of St. Thomas in his Theological Summa. It is the purpose of the present treatise on Christ the Savior to explain, in accordance with the more common interpretation of the Thomists, the teaching of St. Thomas on the motive of the Incarnation, the hypostatic union, and its effects. We have discussed at length the more difficult problems, such as the reconciliation of freedom with absolute impeccability in Christ, the intrinsically infinite value of His merits and satisfaction, His predestination with reference to ours, inasmuch as He is the first of the predestined, and the reconciliation, during the Passion, of the presence of extreme sorrow with supreme happiness experienced by our Lord in the summit of His soul.

In all these problems our wish has been to manifest the unity of Christ inasmuch as He is one personal Being, although He has two really distinct and infinitely different natures. Hence the Person of Christ constitutes the one and only principle of all His theandric operations.

In all these questions St. Thomas, according to his custom, wonderfully preserved the principle of economy by reducing all things to the same principles and in the ultimate analysis to the one and only fundamental principle. Similarly, with reference to the Passion everything is reduced to the principle of the plenitude of grace. This plenitude, on the one hand, was the cause in the summit of our Lord’s soul of the beatific vision and, on the other hand, it was the cause of His most ardent love as priest and victim, so that He willed to be overwhelmed with grief, and die on the cross a most perfect holocaust.

At the end of this treatise we have given merely a compendium on Mariology, since a more complete commentary on this subject has recently been published by us in the French language.

May the reading of these pages be a source of knowledge as well as of spiritual benefit to all students of theology.

THE THIRD PART OF ST THOMAS' THEOLOGICAL SUMMA

PROLOGUE

In this prologue St. Thomas shows the place assigned to this treatise in his Theological Summa, according to the division made by him at the beginning of this work, in which he had said: "Because the chief aim of sacred doctrine is to teach the knowledge of God, not only as He is in Himself, but also as He is in the beginning of things and their last end, and especially of rational creatures... we shall treat:

(1) "Of God (one in nature and triune in persons, and inasmuch as He is the principle of creatures); (2) of the rational advance of creatures toward God (or of God as He is the end of the rational creature); (3) of Christ, who as man is our way to God."

In the present treatise he says: "Because our Savior the Lord Jesus Christ in order to save His people from their sins, as the angel announced, showed unto us in His own person the way of truth, whereby we may attain to the bliss of eternal life by rising again, it is necessary... that, after consideration of the last end of human life, and the virtues and vices, there should follow a consideration of the Savior of all and of the benefits bestowed by Him on the human race."

Some theologians prefer another division to that made by St Thomas, in which the distinction between dogmatic theology and moral theology is more in evidence, so that moral theology is not placed between the treatises on the One God and the Word incarnate. Furthermore, they remark that the treatise on the Word incarnate because of its dignity justly comes immediately after the treatise on the one and triune God.

To this the Thomists reply that, according to St. Thomas, dogmatic theology and moral theology are not two distinct sciences, but two parts of the same science, similar to the science of God of which it is a participation. The unity of this science results from the unity of its formal object both

quod and quo. Its formal object quod, or the subject of this science, is God Himself considered in Himself, or as He is the principle and end of creatures. The formal object quo is virtual revelation by the light of which are deduced both in dogmatic theology and moral theology the conclusions that are virtually contained in the revealed principles. Therefore dogmatic and moral theology are not two sciences, but two parts of the same science.

They also remark that, although this treatise on the Savior, because of its dignity, precedes the moral part of theology, nevertheless, in the orderly arrangement of knowledge, it is justly placed after the other parts of theology, and this especially for three reasons: (1) because the simpler things come before the composite. In the preceding parts of the Summa, however, what pertains to God and to man are discussed separately, whereas the present treatise is concerned with Him who is both God and man. (2) The work of redemption presupposes also that man lived for a long period of time under the law of the Old Testament, as well as it presupposes acts of faith and other virtues necessary in the various states of life. Hence St. Thomas appropriately places this treatise on the Savior at the end of his Summa. (3) Moreover, it must be noticed that what is necessary precedes what is contingent. But in the two preceding parts of the Theological Summa, what forms the subject of special discussion is the nature of God, and the nature of both angels and man with reference to God; whereas the Third Part of the Summa considers the great contingent fact which did not have to be realized, namely, that the Word was made flesh. This fact, although it is the greatest of all historical facts in the universe, is a contingent fact; for it is not something absolutely necessary, such as the divine nature for God and also the human nature for man. For this reason, certain philosophers, even certain mystics, desired to reach union with God, not by way of Christ the universal mediator, although He had said: “I am the way and the truth and the life.” These persons did not grasp the practical import of the statement that Christ, or the Word of God incarnate, is the exemplar and source of all virtues, without whom nobody can acquire salvation and sanctity.

This deviation from the common method of approach to God is in itself manifestly in opposition to the great truth, namely, that these persons somehow overlooked the fact of the Incarnation, inasmuch as it is not an absolutely necessary fact, and they failed to see that precisely because it is contingent, it becomes, in some aspect, a fact of the greatest importance,

inasmuch as it is a transcendent manifestation of God's most free and absolutely gratuitous love for the human race. St. John testifies that: "God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son." He also says: "He hath first loved us, and sent His Son to be a propitiation for our sins." In fact, these texts express the fundamental truth of Christianity, which is that God, by a most free act of His love, sent His divine Son to us. Hence the entire third part of the Theological Summa of St. Thomas is a detailed narrative of God's gratuitous love for us confirmed by the text: "God so loved the world, as to give His only-begotten Son." It is truly a complete description of this gratuitous love as being the motive of God's mercy, and of the efficacy of this love. It is a canticle of God's gratuitous love for the human race. Thus the contingency of this most prominent fact in the history of the human race does not lessen its importance, but it manifests, on the contrary, the supreme gratuitousness of God's most free love for us.

Indeed, this manifestation of love is of such excellence that, in these days, even the more obnoxious enemies of the Church, such as several idealists, disciples of Hegel and Renan, who deny the existence of a true God really and essentially distinct from the world, say that Christ was the noblest of all men and that nobody was a better type of the evolution of the human race. So wrote Renan. In fact, several communists in these days say the same, and they furthermore remark that this evolution of the human race predicted by Christ can be realized only by communism. Thus, presenting Christ in an entirely false light, whether they wish it or not, they confess that the greatest event in the history of the human race was the coming of Christ. But before this statement about Christ can be understood, one must have a correct notion of both God and man. Hence this treatise on the Incarnation is logically placed in the third part of the Theological Summa.

From the prologue we see that St. Thomas divides the third part of his Summa by considering: (1) the Savior Himself; (2) the sacraments by which we attain to our salvation; (3) the end of immortal life to which we attain by the resurrection.

Thus it is evident that the third part of the Summa is a treatise on the Savior, and the benefits He bestowed on us by instituting the sacraments and enabling us to get to heaven, which is our last end.

The treatise on the Savior is divided into two parts.

Part I discusses the mystery itself of the Incarnation (q. 1-26).

Part II discusses the actions and sufferings of our Savior or the mysteries of the life of Christ (q. 27-59).

The first part is often called, in our days, Christology, and the second part is known as soteriology. The mystery of the Incarnation is the principal topic of discussion in the first part, and in the second part St. Thomas considers the mystery of Redemption, in which he discusses especially the passion of Christ (q. 46-52).

The first part of the mystery of the Incarnation contains three sections:

1) The fitness of the Incarnation, in which it is discussed as a historical fact (q. 1).

2) The mode of union of the Word incarnate is considered (q. 2-15). The union itself (q. 2), the union in its relation to the person assuming (q. 3), and then on the part of the nature assumed and its perfections, the grace, knowledge, and powers of Christ are discussed (q. 4-15).

3) The consequences of the union with reference to what belongs to Christ are here discussed: (1) in themselves (q. 16-19); (2) in their relation to the Father, in which the predestination of Christ is considered; (3) with reference to us, in which our adoration of Christ and His office of Mediator are discussed (q. 25-26).

The second part is concerned with the mysteries of the life of Christ, and is divided into four sections: (1) the coming of Christ into the world, which includes Mariology; (2) His life on earth in its gradual development; (3) the end of His life, or His passion and death; (4) His exaltation, or His resurrection and ascension.

This second part which is entitled, The Mystery of Redemption, will be a brief treatise on the Passion, as it is the cause of our salvation, the vicarious satisfaction of Christ, its infinite value, Christ’s victory, and also Christ as king, judge, and head of the blessed. Finally there will be a compendium on Mariology.

It must be noticed that among the commentators of the Summa John of St. Thomas discusses the satisfaction of Christ at the beginning of His commentary, by considering the fittingness of the Incarnation, inasmuch as the Son of God came down from heaven for our salvation, namely, to redeem the human race. This arrangement is, indeed, appropriate for a complete understanding of the thesis on the motive of the Incarnation. However, in the doctrinal order, so far as operation follows being, St. Thomas is justified in discussing the Incarnation before the Redemption, or

before the theandric act of the love of Christ suffering for us. Probably the reason why John of St. Thomas discussed at length the satisfaction of Christ at the beginning of his commentary, is that it ends with the twenty-fourth question in the Summa of St. Thomas.

Billuart, however, developed his thesis on the satisfaction of Christ in connection with the merit of Christ, which is question nineteen in the Summa of St. Thomas, at the same time discussing the infinite value of the merits of Christ.

Following the arrangement of questions as given by St. Thomas, we shall consider: (1) the mystery of the Incarnation; (2) the mystery of Redemption. This is the method commonly adopted by theologians.

CHAPTER I: THE MYSTERY AND FACT OF THE INCARNATION

Preliminary Remarks

Before we come to explain the article of St. Thomas, we must set forth what positive theology teaches on the fundamentals of this treatise. Speculative theology, of course, begins with the articles of faith as defined by the Church, and concerning these its method of procedure is twofold. In the first place it gives a philosophical analysis of the terminology employed in these articles of faith. Thus it shows the fittingness of the mysteries, the possibility of which can neither be proved nor disproved. As the Vatican Council says: “Reason enlightened by faith, when it seeks earnestly, piously, and calmly, attains by a gift from God some, and that a very fruitful, understanding of mysteries; partly from the analogy of those things which it naturally knows, partly from the relations which the mysteries bear to one another and to the last end of man.”

In the second place, speculative theology deduces from the principles of faith conclusions that are virtually contained in the principles. In this way a body of theological doctrine is established in which there is due subordination of notions and truths, some of these being simply revealed, whereas others are simply deduced from revealed principles. These latter truths do not properly belong to the faith, but to theology as a science.

So does St. Thomas proceed, presupposing in the first article of this third part of his Summa the dogma of the divinity of Christ as solemnly defined by the Church. The positive theology of St. Thomas is found especially in his commentaries on the Gospels and on the Epistles of St. Paul.

It is necessary, however, to begin with a chapter on positive theology, in order to show that the definitions of the Church express what is already contained more or less explicitly in the deposit of revelation, namely, in Sacred Scripture and tradition.

On this point it must be carefully noted, as regards the method, that positive theology, being a part of sacred theology, differs from mere history, inasmuch as per se or essentially it presupposes infused faith concerning divine revelation, as contained in Sacred Scripture and tradition, and faithfully and infallibly preserved and explained by the Church.

Thus positive theology differs from the history of dogmas, for this latter views them solely according to the rational exigencies of the historical method. Positive theology, under the positive and intrinsic direction of the faith, makes use of history, just as speculative theology makes use of philosophy, but in each case as a subsidiary science.

This means that positive theology, in studying the documents of Scripture and tradition, presupposes not only rational criticism and exegesis, as Father Zapletal ably points out, but also Christian criticism and exegesis, which acknowledges the dogma of inspiration. It presupposes, too, Catholic interpretation of Scripture and tradition, which admits not only the dogma of inspiration, but also the authority of the Church in determining the true sense of Sacred Scripture and tradition, as also the authority of the Fathers and the analogy of faith, as Leo XIII explains in his encyclical Providentissimus Deus. In this encyclical he writes: “In the other passages, the analogy of faith should be followed, and Catholic doctrine, as authoritatively proposed by the Church, should be held as the supreme law.... Hence it is apparent that all interpretation is foolish and false which either makes the sacred writers disagree with one another, or is opposed to the doctrine of the Church.” In accordance with the analogy of faith, an obscure text in Sacred Scripture is to be explained by other texts that are clearer or more explicit.

This method appears to be most reasonable, since even in human affairs, if we wish to put a correct interpretation on the historical documents of any nation or family, their traditions must be considered, for these are always a living quasi-commentary of these documents, so that an interpretation of these documents which results in their being contradictory to the living tradition of the people should be rejected as false.

Thus not only rational but also Christian and Catholic exegesis must admit the canon of the books of Sacred Scripture, together with the text, which have been approved by the Church, and also the documents of tradition preserved in her archives.

Thus Catholic exegesis considers the books of Scripture not only as historical works written by certain authors, such as the Gospel written by St. Matthew, or that by St. Mark, but it also considers them as divine books that have God as their author, the preservation of which pertains to the Church; and it reads these books not only by the light of natural reason but also by the supernatural light of infused faith. Catholic exegesis, of course, makes use of the natural branches of knowledge, languages, for instance, but it subordinates these to a higher light and to the principles of faith.

Hence the Vatican Council, in recalling the decree of the Council of Trent, says: “In matters of faith and morals... that is to be held as the true sense of Holy Scripture, which our holy Mother the Church has held and holds.”

Finally, as Father Zapletal remarks, the sacred authors sometimes did not fully understand the meaning which the Holy Spirit intended to convey by the words, that is, they did not always completely grasp the literal and objective sense of the words, as can be concluded from what St. Peter says about the prophets.

In fact, St. Thomas says: “Sometimes he who is prompted to write something does not understand the meaning the Holy Spirit intends to convey by what he writes, as is evident in the case of Caiphas, who said: ‘It is expedient for you that one man should die for the people.’ Then it is a case more of prophetic instinct than of prophecy.”

This observation may prove useful in connection with the question of the divinity of Christ as literally expressed in the Synoptic Gospels. Having completed these preliminary remarks, let us pass on to consider the testimony of Christ Himself as contained in the Gospels.

FIRST ARTICLE: CHRIST’S TESTIMONY OF HIMSELF AND PRIMARILY OF HIS MESSIANIC DIGNITY. STATE OF THE QUESTION.

In our days what claims first attention is the opinion that Modernists and a number of liberal Protestants have about Christ. What they think is known from the propositions condemned in the decree Lamentabili. Some of these read: “The divinity of Jesus Christ is not proved from the Gospels, but it is a dogma deduced by the Christian conscience from the notion of the Messias” (prop. 27). “In all the Gospel texts the expression ‘Son of God’ is equivalent merely to the name ‘Messias’; it does not at all, however, signify

that Christ is the true and natural Son of God" (prop. 30). "The doctrine of the sacrificial death of Christ is not evangelical, but originated with St. Paul" (prop. 38).

A number of rationalists, such as Renan, B. Weiss, H. Wendt, Harnack, recognize some divine sonship in Christ that is superior to His Messiahship, but they deny that Jesus, in virtue of this sonship, was truly God.

Among conservative Protestants, however, several, such as F. Godet in Switzerland, Stevens and Sanday in England, defended in recent times the divinity of Christ, not only from the Fourth Gospel and the Epistles of St. Paul, but even from the Synoptic Gospels.

Let us first briefly review what the Gospels say about the Messiahship of Christ; a fuller account will be given afterward of His divinity as recorded in the New Testament.

It has already been shown in apologetics by the historical method, that is by considering the Gospels as historical narratives, though not in this connection, as being inspired, that Christ very plainly affirmed Himself to be the Messias announced by the prophets. A few rationalists, such as Wellhausen, deny that Christ said He was the Messias; but very many rationalists, such as Harnack and O. Holzmann, acknowledge that Jesus affirmed His Messiahship, and Loisy admits that Jesus, not at the beginning of His public life but toward its end, taught that He was the Messias. The Gospel texts in which the Messiahship is affirmed are quoted in all works on apologetics. The principal texts are given below.

From the beginning of His ministry, Jesus testified that He was the ambassador of God, and later on much more explicitly He asserted that He was the Messias and the Savior.

This He affirmed both publicly and privately.

Publicly (1) He declared His mission as teacher and Messias, when the Evangelist says of Him: "He began preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God. And saying: The time is accomplished, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe the Gospel." In choosing His apostles, He said: "Come ye after Me and I will make you to be fishers of men." "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and every infirmity among the people."

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus perfects the Mosaic law in His own name, asserting many times: "It was said to them of old.... But I say to

you." At the end of this Sermon, we read: "For He was teaching them as one having power, and not as the scribes and Pharisees."

2) Jesus replied to the scribes and Pharisees that He is the "Lord of the sabbath," "greater than Jonas and Solomon," greater than David.

3) Likewise, in the synagogue at Nazareth, after Jesus had read the words of Isaias concerning the future Messias: "The spirit of the Lord is upon me. Wherefore He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, to heal the contrite of heart," we read farther on that "He began to say to them: This day is fulfilled this Scripture in your ears." When the people did not believe, and said: "Is not this the Son of Joseph?" Jesus replied: "Amen I say to you that no prophet is accepted in his own country."

4) Jesus declared His Messiahship even in plain words, after He cured the paralytic in a certain house at Capharnaum, on the Sabbath. The Jews accused Him of blasphemy, and He replied: "But that you may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, then He said to the man sick of the palsy: Arise, take up thy bed and go into thy house. And he arose and went into his house." Christ claimed for Himself all rights pertaining to the Messiahship, such as the power of doing what His Father does, raising the dead to life, judging all men, and bringing those faithful to Him to eternal life.

Privately. Jesus preferred to make known His Messiahship when speaking more intimately to His apostles.

1) In the beginning, after John the Baptist had given his testimony, and Jesus had spoken to others for the first time, Andrew says to his brother: "We have found the Messias." Philip and Nathanael had similar experiences.

2) Jesus said to His twelve apostles: "And going, preach, saying: The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, raise the dead.... He that receiveth you receiveth Me, and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me." "He that despiseth Me despiseth Him that sent Me."

3) To the disciples of John the Baptist asking: "Art Thou He that art to come, or look we for another?" Jesus replied: "Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen. The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, the poor have the gospel preached to them." This text, however, is manifestly the fulfillment of the prophecy by Isaias, which the Jews understood as referring to the Messias.

4) The first time that Jesus came to Jerusalem, He conversed with Nicodemus, one of the rulers of the Jews, and declared to him: “No man hath ascended into heaven, but He that descended from heaven, the Son of man who is in heaven.... For God so loved the world, as to give His only-begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in Him, may not perish, but may have life everlasting.” It is most evident from this answer that Jesus teaches His Messiahship, in fact, His divine sonship.

5) Jesus spoke similarly to the Samaritan woman, who says to Him: “I know that the Messias cometh (who is called Christ) “; Jesus says to her: “I am He who am speaking with thee.” After the Samaritans had heard Jesus, they said: “We ourselves have heard Him, and know that this is indeed the Savior of the world.”

All the preceding testimony, however, belongs to the beginning of Jesus’ ministry; but toward the end of His life He speaks more explicitly not only to His apostles but also to the people.

The Last Year Of His Life

1) As Jesus was approaching the city of Caesarea Philippi, He asks a question, and receives from Peter this answer: “Thou art Christ the Son of the living God.” These words at least signify that Jesus is truly the Messias, and they are approved by Christ as being inspired by His heavenly Father.

2) On the festival day of the Jews, Jesus says to them: “My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me.” The next day Jesus says to the Jews: “I am the light of the world.... I give testimony of Myself... and the Father that sent Me giveth testimony of Me.”

3) On the occasion of Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem, as the crowd was shouting: “Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.... Hosannah in the highest,” Jesus said to the Pharisees: “If these shall hold their peace, the stones will cry out.”

4) During the Passion, Jesus affirms before the Sanhedrim that He is the Christ, the Son of God. Thus at least He declared His Messiahship.

5) After the Resurrection, Jesus said to the disciples on their way to Emmaus: “Ought not Christ to have suffered all these things, and so to enter into His glory?” Similarly, Jesus said to the eleven apostles: “As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you.”

Conclusion. All this testimony, as Harnack acknowledges against Wellhausen, is so interconnected with the entire Gospel narrative. that without it there would be almost nothing left that is historical in the life of

Jesus, and His death could by no means be explained. There was also no time for a gradual idealization of Jesus' life, for the apostles already from the day of Pentecost taught that Jesus is the Messias and the Author of life.

It must be noted that, theologically speaking, it is hard to determine in the Gospel texts when the expression of complete Messianic dignity ceases, and that of the divine sonship of Christ begins. The reason is that Jesus is called the Messias, or Christ, because He is the anointed of God. But the principal source of His anointing comes from the grace of union, by which His humanity is personally united to the Word, and by which He is therefore the Son of God. Hence, among the prophets and apostles, those who were more illuminated concerning the sublimity of the Messianic dignity already had a confused knowledge of the dignity of divine sonship.

SECOND ARTICLE: TESTIMONY OF CHRIST AND THE APOSTLES CONCERNING THE DIVINE SONSHIP

State of the question. Several rationalists, such as Renan, B. Weiss, H. Wendt, and Harnack, recognize some divine sonship in Christ that is superior to His Messiahship, but they deny that Jesus, in virtue of His sonship, is truly God.

Several conservative Protestants, such as F. Godet, and in England, Stevens, Gore, Ottley, and Sanday, recently defended the divinity of Christ not only from the Fourth Gospel and the Epistles of St. Paul, but even from the Synoptic Gospels.

Moreover, the Church declared against the Modernists, that the divinity of Christ is proved from the Gospels. Thus several of their propositions were condemned in the decree Lamentabili.

Let us see what the Synoptic Gospels, the Gospel of St. John, and the Epistles of St. Paul say about the mystery of the Incarnation.

For the state of the question it must be observed that Jesus is called the Son of God fifty times. The question is: In what sense is this expression to be understood?

In the Scripture, "son" is predicated in two ways. In the strict and literal sense it signifies a living being that proceeds from a living principle in conformity with the laws of nature. In the broad and metaphorical sense it denotes a disciple or an adopted heir. The term, with reference to God, also has two meanings. In the broad sense it is predicated of men who

participate in the spirit and life of God, so that Christians are called “sons of God”; in the strict and proper sense, it is predicated of the Second Person of the Trinity, as in the text: “the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father.”

This expression “Son of God” sometimes perhaps in the Gospel means no more that Messias, when it is predicated of Jesus, for instance, by those who do not yet seem to know that He is by nature divine. But from the Synoptic Gospels it is certain that Jesus said He was the Son of God in the proper, strict and most sublime sense of the term, inasmuch as He possesses the divine nature and is not merely a participator or partaker of this nature by grace.

Christ Testifies To His Divinity In The Synoptic Gospels

There are two ways by which Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels gradually declares His divine nature. (1) He claims rights or privileges that belong only to God. (2) He affirms that He is the Son of God. This gradual development is seen also as regards His Messiahship, which on several occasions is more affirmed as it is more denied or disbelieved by the Pharisees. The divine affirmation of these rights for the salvation of souls is intensified in proportion as the Pharisees increasingly resist these claims.

Moreover, we get a clearer insight into the sublime meaning of these words of Christ in proportion as the gift of infused faith increases within us, just as the validity of the first principles of reason and of being is more fully realized in proportion as the ability of metaphysical argumentation or the power of intellectual penetration increases within us. The scriptural texts that we shall now quote are considered by students of apologetics as it were from without, but in theology they are considered as it were from within, just as there are two ways of viewing the paintings on the windows of churches, either from the outside; or from within the church and thus in their true light, and then they are seen with better effect, and there is a realization of their value.

A. Christ attributed to Himself divine rights. The seven principal ones are these.

1) Jesus testified of Himself that He is greater than any creature. He is greater than Jonas and Solomon, greater than David who called Him Lord, greater than Moses and Elias who were present with Him on the day of the Transfiguration. He is greater than John the Baptist, greater than the angels, because “the angels ministered to Him” after His temptation in the desert,

and they are His angels, for we read: “The Son of man shall send His angels and they shall gather together His elect.”

2) He speaks as the supreme Legislator, absolutely equal in authority to the divine author of the Old Law, which He completes and perfects, purging it of the false rabbinical interpretations, repeatedly saying: “It was said to them of old... but I say to you.” He forbids divorce to the Jews, which Moses permitted because of the hardness of their heart. He says that He is the Lord of the Sabbath.

3) He claims the right of forgiving sins, which the Jews considered a divine privilege. This is evident from the answer Jesus gave to the Jews when He miraculously cured the paralytic, saying: “But that you may know that the Son of man hath on earth to forgive sins, then He said to the man sick of the palsy: ‘Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thy house. “ He even claims the right of communicating to others this power of forgiving sins, saying: “Whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, shall be bound also in heaven.”

4) He performs miracles in His own name, commanding the paralytic and the dead, saving: “Arise.” On the occasion of the storm at sea, He said: “Peace, be still. And the wind ceased.” On the contrary, others perform miracles in the name of Jesus, saying: “We have done many miracles in Thy name.”

5) He demands that all believe in, obey, and love Him in preference to all other affections, even at the cost of their life. “He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me, is not worthy of Me.” These words would express odious and intolerable pride if Jesus were not God. The prophets never spoke in this manner. There are similar texts in the Gospels.

6) He assigns to Himself the power of judging the living and the dead. “You shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of the power of God and coming with the clouds of heaven.” “And He shall send His angels with a trumpet, and a great voice, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest parts of the heavens to the utmost bounds of them.”

7) He promises to send the Holy Ghost. “And I send the promise of My Father upon you.” Lastly, He accepts adoration from others; whereas, on the contrary, Peter, Paul, Barnabas, and the angels reject this adoration as being unworthy of it.

B. In the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus affirms several times that He is the Son of God in the proper and strict sense of the term. There are six principal texts, which shall be set forth in chronological order.

1) “All things are delivered to Me by My Father. And no one knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither cloth anyone know the Father, but the Son, and he to whom it shall please the Son to reveal Him.”

The authenticity of this text is admitted by the majority of Protestant critics, and it is most ably defended by Catholic authors. This text declares the equality of the Father and the Son both in knowledge and knowability. But this equality implies consubstantiality, as St. Thomas remarks, saying: “The substance of the Father transcends all understanding, since the essence of the Father is said to be unknowable as the substance of the Son is.” The Son is known only by the Father; therefore, like the Father, He exceeds all created knowledge, and hence is God. The above-mentioned scriptural text is substantially the same in meaning as when it is said: “No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.” These two texts are equally profound and identical in meaning, as several critics admit.

2) Christ’s answer to Peter’s confession. Peter said: “Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus answering, said to him: “Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona, because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but My Father who is in heaven.”

Some say that it cannot be historically proved from this confession that Peter affirmed anything more than Christ’s Messiahship, since elsewhere he is quoted as saying merely: “Thou art the Christ,” “Thou art the Christ of God.” Nevertheless, something more than this is clearly enough evident from Jesus’ answer. For He says that Peter could not have known His sonship unless it had been revealed to him. The mere knowledge of Christ’s Messiahship did not require so great a revelation, for the signs of Messiahship were already made manifest to the apostles from the beginning of Jesus’ ministry, and several of them acknowledged it.

3) Parable of the wicked husbandmen. The authenticity of this parable is admitted by most of the critics, even by very many rationalists. The parable says that the lord of the vineyard sent a servant to the husbandmen at the time of the harvest, then another, and many more, some of whom they beat, and others they killed. “Having yet one son, most dear to him, he also sent him unto them last of all, saying: They will reverence my son. But the

husbandmen said to one another: This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours. And laying hold on him, they killed him and cast him out of the vineyard. What therefore will the lord of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy those husbandmen and will give the vineyard to others. And have you not read this scripture: The stone which the builders rejected, the same is made the head of the corner? By the Lord has this been done, and it is wonderful in our eyes. And they sought to lay hands on Him, but they feared the people. For they knew that He spoke this parable to them. And leaving Him they went their way."

The application of this parable was manifest. The servants sent by the Lord of the vineyard were the prophets, and Jesus stated this more clearly to the Pharisees later on. If, therefore, the servants of the Lord's vineyard are the prophets, His beloved Son is not only more than a prophet, but is truly His Son. Therefore this parable expresses absolutely the same truth as when St. Paul says: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, last of all in these days hath spoken to us by His Son... by whom also He made the world."

4) Jesus questions the Jews about Christ the son of David. "And the Pharisees being gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying: 'What think you of Christ, whose Son is He.' They say to Him, 'David's.' He saith to them: 'How then doth David call Him Lord, how is He his Son?' And no man was able to answer Him a word."

The authenticity of this text is admitted by the prominent liberal critics. But in the Messianic psalm just quoted, David, in calling the Messias "my Lord," acknowledges that this Lord is superior to him and equal to the first Lord, namely, to God the Father.

5) Jesus answers Caiphas. When Christ appeared before the Sanhedrim, "the high priest said to Him: 'I adjure Thee by the living God, that Thou tell us if Thou be the Christ the Son of God.' Jesus saith to him: 'Thou hast said it. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven.' Then the high priest rent his garments, saying: 'He hath blasphemed; what further need have we of witnesses? Behold now you have heard the blasphemy.'" From this answer we see that Jesus is more than the Messias, for divine sonship, sitting at the right hand of the Father, the exercise of supreme power, do not belong to the simple dignity of Messiahship. That is why Caiphas rent his garments, saying: "He hath blasphemed." These texts

of the Synoptic Gospels receive further clarification in the Fourth Gospel, in which we read that, after Jesus had cured the paralytic at the Probatic pool, “the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He did not only break the Sabbath, but also said God was His Father, making Himself equal to God.” Similarly, in the history of the Passion we read: “The Jews answered Him: ‘We have a law and according to the law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.’” Hence the question put by Caiphas to Jesus was to get an answer rendering Him guilty of death.

6) The baptismal formula. After the Resurrection, we read in the Gospel: “Jesus coming, spoke to them[His apostles], saying: ‘All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth. Going therefore teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.’”

Even all liberal Protestants admit this formula, and it was universally accepted in the various Churches at the beginning of the second century. In this baptismal formula the Son is declared equal to the Father and the Holy Spirit.

Conclusion. It must therefore be said, in refutation of the Modernists, that the declarations of Jesus concerning His eminent dignity as recorded by the Synoptics transcend simple Messiahship and express divine sonship that belongs most properly to Christ. Moreover, this divine sonship is not only superior to simple Messiahship, which is conceded, as has been said by several rationalists of our times, such as Harnack, but it establishes Christ above all creatures as equal to, and one in nature with God, the Second Person of the Trinity.

TESTIMONY OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES CONCERNING THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST

The more conservative Catholic and Protestant historians consider it more probable that the Acts of the Apostles was written about A. D. 64 or, at least, before the year 70. The rationalists of the Tubingen school set the date at A. D. 150. But, in our days, historical evidence made the rationalist Harnack assign the date of this work to the years 78-83, or perhaps even to 60-70. From this it is evident that the above mentioned declarations of the

Synoptic Gospels were not the result of a certain process of idealization, gradually evolved after Christ's death and ascribed to Him. The time required for this idealization was too short, for it is certain that from the day of Pentecost the apostles taught not only that Jesus was the Messias but also God.

The discourses of St. Peter are recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, in which we read: "The God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified His Son Jesus, whom you indeed delivered up.... But the Author of life you killed, whom God hath raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses. And the faith which is by Him, hath given this perfect soundness [the lame man who sat at the gate of the Temple] in the sight of you all."

The Author of life, however, is none other than God Himself. Likewise St. Peter says: "This is the stone which was rejected by you the builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other." "God hath exalted Him [Jesus] with His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins. " But only God is the Savior of souls, forgiving persons their sins.

Similarly St. Peter says: "By the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we believe to be saved." Jesus is called by St. Peter "Lord," "Lord to all," "He who was appointed by God to be judge of the living and of the dead." Finally, the apostles work miracles in the name of Jesus, confer baptism; and the deacon St. Stephen says, when dying: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

It is no matter of surprise, therefore, that when the Ebionites, who were the first heretics, denied the divinity of Christ, they were immediately condemned by the Church, as is evident from the writings of the Apostolic Fathers.

TESTIMONY OF ST. PAUL ON THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST

The principal epistles of St. Paul were written about A. D. 48-59 or 50-64, as several rationalists admit, among whom are Harnack and Julicher. In these epistles, however, St. Paul, in affirming the divinity of Christ, does not announce it to the Churches as an unheard-of innovation, but he speaks of it as an already accepted dogmatic truth.

It will suffice if we give the principal references of St. Paul to the divinity of Christ.

1) According to St. Paul, Jesus is the Son of God in the strict sense of the term. He says of Him: “Who was predestinated the Son of God in power, according to the spirit of sanctification.” And again he writes: “God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, ... spared not even His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all.” Elsewhere he says: “But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, that He might redeem them who were under the law; that we might receive the adoption of sons.”

2) St. Paul affirms that the Son of God existed from all eternity before He became incarnate, and he also states plainly that the Son of God is the Creator. He speaks of “the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.” He says of Christ: “Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature. For in Him were all things created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominations or principalities or powers; all things were created by Him, and in Him. And He is before all, and by Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the Church, who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things He may hold the primacy. Because in Him it hath well pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell.” In this text the Son of God is clearly declared the Creator, just as elsewhere St. Paul says of God that: “of Him and by Him and in Him are all things.” Likewise it is the common belief among Catholics, and even very many non-Catholic critics admit that: “the fullness of the Godhead here signifies “all that is required to constitute Christ as God.”

3) St. Paul teaches that Jesus is God and equal to the Father. He says: “But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews indeed a stumbling block, and unto the Gentiles foolishness. But unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.” And again of Christ he says: “For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead corporally. And you are filled in Him who is the head of all principality and power.” In another epistle he writes: “For let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man.”

There cannot be a clearer affirmation of the divinity of Christ than in this text.

Farther on in this epistle, he writes: “God hath given Him a name which is above all names, that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow”

Likewise he says: “I wished myself to be an anathema from Christ, for my brethren, ... of whom is Christ, according to the flesh, who is over all things, God blessed forever. Amen.” But there is a difficulty concerning the punctuation of this text. Very many even of the liberal critics place merely a comma before the words, “who is over all things, God”; whereas, Tischendorf and Gebhardt put a period, thus making this expression to be only an invocation addressed to God. All the Fathers of the Church and Catholic exegetes saw in this text an affirmation of the divinity of Christ.

Finally, in another epistle, we read: “In these days [God] hath spoken to us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the world. Who being the brightness of His glory, and the figure of His substance, and upholding all things by the word of His power, making purgation of sins, sitteth on the right hand of the majesty on high.” According to this teaching, the Son is the Creator, for it is by the Son that God produced all things. With the Jews, however, creation is an act that applies solely to God. The Son is also the preserver of all things, upholding all things by the word of His power. Likewise in this same epistle the angels are called the ministers of Christ, and adore Him. They are therefore inferior to Him.

The preceding texts clearly prove that St. Paul taught the divinity of Christ; and so speaking, he intended to affirm no new doctrine, but to state what was already the universal belief among the early Christians, even among the converted Jews, who adhered most firmly to monotheism.

ST. JOHN’S TESTIMONY TO THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST

1) In the prologue to the Fourth Gospel, we read:: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” Three assertions are made: 1. The eternal pre-existence of the Word; 2. The Word is distinct from God the Father; 3. The Word is divine and therefore consubstantial with the Father. Then it is affirmed that all things were made by the Word. Therefore the Word is the Creator, and He is consequently God. That Word or divine person assumed our human flesh, or nature, and

lived among men. He is called “the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father.” Therefore St. John most clearly teaches the divinity of Christ in this prologue, which is a quasi-synthesis of revelation.

2) In the Fourth Gospel we find Christ reported as using words by which He declares Himself to be the Son of God and Lord, although He frequently calls Himself the Son of man, thereby showing the humble subjection of Himself as man to His Father.

He says: “Father, the hour is come. Glorify Thy Son... that He may give eternal life to all whom Thou hast given Him.... And all things are Thine, and Thine are Mine.” Again, we read: “The Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He did not only break the Sabbath, but also said God was His Father, making Himself equal to God. Then Jesus answered, and said to them: ‘What things soever the Father cloth, these the Son also cloth in like manner... and He giveth life to whom He will.... The Father hath given all judgment to the Son, that all men may honor the Son, as they honor the Father.... For as the Father hath life in Himself, so He hath given to the Son also to have life in Himself.’” Christ also says: “From God I proceeded and came.” And again: “I came forth from the Father and am come into the world.... And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.”

It is eternal sonship in the strict sense to which Jesus refers, for He says: “Amen, amen, I say to you, before Abraham was made, I am.” And again: “Glorify Thou Me, O Father, with Thyself, with the glory which I had before the world was, with Thee.”

Moreover, Jesus says: “As the Father knoweth Me and I know the Father.” “All things whatsoever the Father hath, are Mine. Therefore I said, that He, the Spirit of truth, shall receive of Mine, and show it to you.” Jesus even says: “I and the Father are One. The Jews understood these words in the sense that Jesus was equal in dignity to the Father, for they at once took up stones to stone Him. Similarly He said: “I am the way and the truth and the life”; but only God, who is essential Being, is truth and life; a mere man may have even infallible truth, but is not truth itself, just as he is not self-subsisting being. In this respect there is an immeasurable difference between the two verbs, “to be” and “to have.” Hence this last utterance of Jesus would of itself suffice to constitute an explicit expression of His divinity, which is so clearly affirmed in the prologue of St. John’s Gospel.

3) In St. John’s First Epistle we read: “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard... and our hands have handled of the Word

of life... we declare unto you." Farther on he says: "And we know that the Son of God is come, and He hath given us understanding that we may know the true God, and may be in His true Son." These concluding words of St. John's First Epistle most clearly show that the author's intention was to affirm the divinity of Christ just as this was his intention in writing his prologue to the Fourth Gospel.

4) In the Apocalypse, that Christ is divine and the Son of God, is clearly evident from the titles assigned to Him; for He is the First and the Last, the beginning of the Creation, the Lord of lords and the King of kings. The divinity of Jesus is also equally manifested from the prerogatives attributed to Him, for He is called the Lord of life and death for all men, the searcher of hearts. He has power to open the book, which no man is able to open, ruling over all things celestial and terrestrial, being omnipotent as God Himself is. The divinity of Christ is also clearly set forth in this book; because of the honors that are rendered to Him from men, the faithful are called servants of Jesus, the faithful both of Jesus and of God. There is reference in these texts to the priests of God and of Christ. The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world is adored as God, and adoration is permitted to be given only to God.

From what has been said, it is most clearly apparent that Jesus is God and a divine person distinct from God the Father. This will be more fully explained when we come to discuss the infinite value of the merits and satisfaction of Christ and consider the texts of the New Testament concerning the mystery of Redemption.

Among the principal texts of the Old Testament about the divinity of the Messias, the following must be quoted: "A child is born to us and a son is given to us, and the government is upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, God the Mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of Peace." This text forms part of the Introit of the second Mass in honor of the birth of our Lord. The Church sees in this text an affirmation of the divinity of Jesus.

Concerning this text, the Rev. F. Ceuppens, O. P., remarks: "The true meaning of this expression 'God the Mighty,' is very much disputed among Catholics. Following the opinion of such distinguished authors as A. Condamin, E. Tobac, F. Feldmann, and M. J. Lagrange, we think the expression must be accepted in the literal and proper sense, and the reason we give for this is that, in other texts of the Old Testament, the same

expression occurs, and it is always predicated of Yahweh. This being the case, the future Messias is foretold as being truly God, and truly divine by nature. But it is another question whether the Jews, imbued with monotheistic concepts, perfectly understood all these things, and whether the prophet himself fully grasped this doctrine and saw it in all its applications."

THIRD ARTICLE: TESTIMONY OF TRADITION AND THE PRINCIPAL DEFINITIONS OF THE CHURCH

A more detailed account of tradition and the definition of the Church is given in the history of dogmas and in patrology. In this treatise we shall give a brief summary of what everyone is expected to know about these matters. We notice that considerable progress has been made in the development of dogma in the course of combating the various heresies.

1) In the first three centuries, the Fathers affirm that Christ is both God and man, because He came to save and redeem us, which He could not have done unless He had been both God, the author of grace, and also man. Hence they reject the errors of the Docetae, who said that Christ's body was imaginary and fantastic, and of the Dualists, who declared that the divine and human natures in Christ were united accidentally. We find Tertullian, in his days, asserting that the union of the two natures in Christ was effected "in one person."

2) In the fourth century, whereas the Apollinarists denied a rational soul to Christ, meaning to say that the Word took the place of the mind in Christ, the Fathers clearly affirm that Christ is both perfect God and perfect man; and they also assert that what was not assumed was not healed. If, therefore, the Word did not assume a rational soul, the soul was not healed; and besides, Christ could not have merited and been obedient.

3) Finally, in the fifth century, the Nestorians declared that the union of the two natures in Christ was only accidental, and the Eutychians asserted that there was only one nature in Christ. Against these heresies the Catholic concept of one person in Christ and of the hypostatic union is explicitly affirmed, and these points must be fully explained farther on.

Following are the principal definitions of the Church concerning the divinity of Christ.

1) Christ is truly God, He is rightly called the Word, and Son of the Father, consubstantial with the Father, equal to Him, God of God, begotten not made, the only-begotten of the Father by natural and not by adoptive sonship.

2) “I believe in Jesus Christ, our Savior...,” which is the most ancient formula.

3) “I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son [of the Father] our Lord,” which is the more ancient formula in the Western Church.

4) The Creed of St. Epiphanius proposed to the catechumens of the Eastern Church: “We believe in one God... and in one Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God, begotten of God the Father, the only-begotten, that is, of the substance of the Father, God of God, light of light, true God of true God, begotten not made, consubstantial with the Father by whom all things were made... who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate.”

5) The First Council of Nicaea (325) defines, against the Arians: “We believe in one God the Father almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible. And in our one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten of the Father, that is, of the substance of the Father, God of God, light of light, true God of true God, begotten not made, one in substance with the Father, by whom all things were made, both in heaven and on earth, who for our salvation came down, was incarnate, and was made man, suffered and rose again the third day, ascended into heaven, and will come to judge the living and the dead.” All these words of the Nicene Council must be seriously considered farther on, when we explain the articles of St. Thomas. The preceding testimony and definitions suffice for establishing the fact of the Incarnation.

CHAPTER II: PRELIMINARY QUESTION THE POSSIBILITY OF THE INCARNATION

Let us now turn to speculative theology, which, as stated, has two tasks to perform.

1) It must give a philosophical analysis of the terms used in revealed dogma, so that their meaning may be better known, for, as the Vatican Council says in the text already quoted: “Reason enlightened by faith, when it seeks earnestly, piously, and calmly, attains by a gift from God, some, and that a very fruitful, understanding of the mysteries; partly from the analogy of those things which it naturally knows, partly from the relation which the mysteries bear to one another and the last end of man.” Thus the mystery of man must be illustrated from analysis of the notions of divine nature, human nature, person, as well as from the connection of this mystery with the mysteries of Redemption and of eternal life. In this part of speculative theology the discussions are either explicative, or subjectively illative.

2) Speculative theology must deduce from revealed truths by a discursive process that is properly and objectively illative, other truths, namely, conclusions that are only virtually contained in the revealed truths. An example would be the following: Christ already had, when on earth, infused knowledge, which was inferior to the beatific vision.

We must begin by discussing the possibility and fittingness of the Incarnation.

St. Thomas starts abruptly by considering the fittingness of the Incarnation, whereas many theologians of later times first speak of its possibility; and this is what St. Thomas had done in the work preceding his Summa. The reason why the holy Doctor omitted this question of the possibility is probably because he wishes to examine this question afterward, when he discusses the mode of the union (q. 2-15), which is concerned with the principal difficulties against the possibility of this mystery. Moreover, it is not absolutely necessary to begin by treating about

the possibility of this mystery, because for the faithful this possibility follows from the fact of the Incarnation, which is of faith. From actuality to possibility, this follows as a logical consequence.

For the general benefit of the doctrine, however, theologians begin by asking whether the possibility of the Incarnation can be proved or known by the natural light of reason. This question has its advantages as regards method.

Incarnation corresponds to the Latin term “inhumanatio,” which signifies the act of becoming man, and it is the union or unition of the human nature with the divine in the one person of the Word. This is evident from the traditional explanation of the words of St. John: “The Word was made flesh,” in which “flesh” as frequently in Sacred Scripture is concerned with living and human flesh, which is not living and human unless united with a human soul. And it also says that this Word was made flesh to commend the humility of our Savior, who also willed to become man for our salvation.

But can the Incarnation be proved? In the first question of this treatise it will be shown, indeed, that there is no apparent contradiction in the Incarnation, and that it cannot be proved impossible. But the question now is, as posited above, whether this possibility can be proved by reason alone. There does not seem to be any apparent contradiction in the affirmation of a divine quaternity, and yet there lurks a contradiction in this affirmation. There cannot be four persons in God, nor merely two, but three. Is it therefore possible to prove the Incarnation? This question is commonly answered in the negatives.

Authoritative proof. St. Paul calls the Incarnation, “the mystery which hath been hidden in God.” The Eleventh Council of Toledo says: “If the Incarnation could be shown possible by reason, then it would not be an object of admiration; if it were an example, then would not be unique.”

Similarly, against the semi-rationalists, who wish to prove the revealed mysteries, especially against Froschammer, Pius IX wrote: “The author teaches that reason, also in the most secret matters pertaining to God’s wisdom and goodness, even too in the mysteries that are dependent on His free will, although granted that they have been revealed, can by itself, not relying on the already established principle of divine authority, but on its own natural principles and powers, acquire a certainty of knowledge. Everyone who has a slight knowledge of the rudiments of Christian doctrine

immediately sees and likewise fully realizes how altogether false and erroneous is the author's teaching."

It is true, indeed, that Froschammer wished to prove not only the possibility but also the very fact of the Incarnation. If, however, the possibility of the Incarnation could be apodictically and positively proved, as the possibility of any miracle, for instance, of the Resurrection, then the Incarnation would be only a miracle that is supernatural as regards the mode of its production, but it would not be a mystery in the strict sense, that it is essentially supernatural.

In the condemnation of semi-rationalism, it is stated: "And assuredly, since these dogmas are above nature, therefore they are beyond the scope of reason and natural principles."

The Vatican Council also says: "If anyone shall say that in divine revelation there are no mysteries, truly and properly so called, but that all the doctrines of faith can be understood and demonstrated from natural principles by properly cultivated reason, let him be anathema."

Theological proof. What is essentially supernatural is supernatural as regards its knowability, even for the angels.

But the intrinsic possibility of the Incarnation is the intrinsic possibility of something essentially supernatural, which has no necessary and evident connection with things of the natural order.

Therefore this possibility is supernatural as regards its knowability, even for the angel. Hence it cannot be demonstrated, but only persuasive arguments of fitness can be advanced, and it can be defended against those who deny it.

The major is evident, for truth and being are convertible.

Minor. The Incarnation is not only a miracle that is supernatural as regards the mode of its production, such as the resurrection of the dead, but it is also an essentially supernatural mystery, for it is the intimate union of the human nature with the divine nature as it is in itself, in the person of the Word. But the divine nature as it is in itself, and the person of the Word are essentially supernatural; on the contrary, God as the author of nature has a necessary and evident connection with things of the natural order.

Reason, however, can solve the objections against the possibility of this mystery, by showing them to be either false or unnecessary. Moreover, reason can urge the fitness of this mystery by arguments that are not apodictic but congruent. These arguments are truly profound; in fact, they

can always be the result of keen penetration by either the human or angelic intellect, but this penetration can never reach the degree required for demonstration.

Objection. To prove that anything is not contradictory is to prove it possible.

But it is proved that the Incarnation is not contradictory.

Therefore the Incarnation is proved possible.

I distinguish the major. To prove that anything is not contradictory, positively and evidently, this I concede; that it is not so negatively and probably, this I deny. So writes Billuart.

In this kind of argument we do not proceed from some a priori or a posterior) reasoning that is positively demonstrative of this possibility, but our reasoning rests on probable and apparent grounds. Thus it is shown that the possibility of the Incarnation is never disproved; the objections are not impossible of solution, for they can be shown to be either false or at least not cogent.

Another objection. But God is in Himself essentially supernatural, and yet reason alone apodictically proves His existence. Therefore, although the mystery of the Incarnation is essentially supernatural, reason alone apodictically proves at least the possibility, if not the fact of the Incarnation.

Reply. I distinguish the antecedent. That God is in Himself as regards His Deity or intimate life essentially supernatural, this I concede. Nevertheless, as the Author of nature, He has a necessary and evident connection with created effects of the natural order, and so in this inferior aspect the truth of this proposition, God exists, is demonstrated cum fundamento in re, although we have not a positive and natural knowledge of God's essence or of His act of essence. On this point St. Thomas says: "To be can mean either of two things. It may mean the act of essence or it may mean the composition of a proposition effected by the mind in joining a predicate to a subject. Taking 'to be' in the first sense, we cannot understand God's existence or His essence; but only in the second sense. We know that this proposition which we form about God when we say 'God is,' is true; and this we know from His effects." But there is nothing similar to this in the Incarnation of the Word, because this mystery, just as the intimate life of the Trinity, has no necessary and evident connection with natural effects; hence neither the fact nor the possibility of this mystery can be demonstrated from natural principles, for this possibility transcends demonstration. These

arguments of congruence may always be made more profound, but they will never reach the degree required for an apodictic argument, just as the sides of a polygon inscribed in a circle may be increased indefinitely, yet they will never be identified with the circumference of the circle, because the sides will never be diminished so as to become a point.

But I insist. It is apodictically proved that there is in God a supernatural order of truth and of life.

Reply. We are not positively but only negatively assured of this order by such a proof, which is the case with any order whose mysteries cannot be known in a natural way.

Still Gregory of Valentia insists that at least the angelic intellect can perhaps prove this possibility, because the angel intuitively sees the human nature as distinct from its subsistence or personality, and therefore as assumable by the divine subsistence.

Reply. The angelic intellect cannot know in a natural way whether the divine subsistence, which is essentially supernatural, can, without implying imperfection, take the place of human subsistence.

Corollary. A fortiori the angelic intellect cannot know by its natural powers the fact of the Incarnation.

Gregory of Valentia remarks that the angel, since He sees intuitively that the human nature of Christ is without its own personality, must immediately conclude that this human nature is personally united to some divine person.

Reply. This conclusion is not established, for the angel could conclude: the human personality of this man is hidden from me, because of motives known to God alone. Thus it is certain that the created intellect by its own natural powers cannot know that the Incarnation is possible, much less that it is a fact.

The objections that can be raised, however, against the possibility of the Incarnation are solved in the course of this treatise. It will suffice here at the beginning to take note of the principal objection, by way of a statement of the question. It is one proposed by St. Thomas, and may be stated as follows:

God cannot be subject to any intrinsic change, or be intrinsically otherwise than He is.

But by the Incarnation God would be intrinsically otherwise than He is. Therefore the Incarnation is impossible.

Reply. I distinguish the minor. That God would undergo a change, if by reason of passive potency He were to receive some distinct perfection, this I concede; that God only terminates the human nature, and undergoes a change, this I deny.

God in the Incarnation neither loses nor acquires anything, but merely makes creatures partakers in His perfection. Therefore, as St. Thomas says: "When it is said, 'God was made man,' we understand no change on the part of God, but only on the part of the human nature." Similarly, if we see the sun, it undergoes no change, but is only the object of our vision.

As St. Thomas says: "To be man belongs to God by reason of the union, which is a relation.... But whatever is predicated relatively can be newly predicated of anything without its change, as a man may be made to be on the right side without being changed, and merely by the change of him who was on his left side." Likewise, anything at first not seen is seen afterward without any change in itself, but inasmuch as it is actually the termination of our vision. It is the visual faculty that is changed, inasmuch as it passes from potentiality to act.

Similarly, as we shall see in the case of the Incarnation, the change is entirely on the part of the nature that is assumed, which is deprived of its own subsistence and acquires the divine. The Word by no means acquires a new and real relation, but the relation is logical; for the real relation is only on the part of the human nature toward the Word, just as the visual faculty is in real relation to the object seen, and not the reverse of this. Hence St. Thomas says: "God is said to be united not by any change in Himself, but in that which is united to Him; similarly, when it is said that He is unitable, this statement does not mean that the union is effected by reason of any passive potency existing in God, but because there is such a potency existing in the creature so as to make this union possible." So also God is said to be visible and in the next life He is seen by the blessed, not because of any change in Himself, but the change is in the blessed, since He terminates their vision as object seen. Thus a point that already terminates one line, can terminate a second and third line as in the case of the point of a pyramid, and yet the point undergoes no change in itself.

Objection. The Word is the subject of the human nature, and not merely the terminus; for the Word has this human nature, which is truly attributed to Him, as to the subject. Therefore the Word is the recipient of the human nature.

Reply. I distinguish the antecedent. That the Word possesses the human nature in a receptive sense, this I deny; in a terminative sense, this I concede. To possess a form in a receptive sense is to be the subject of this form, just as matter receives its form, or as a substance receives accidental forms; but such is not the case when a subject has some form in a personal or terminative sense. The Word, however, possesses the human nature not in a receptive sense, because He is not in passive potency to receive it; but He possesses it personally and terminatively, in so far as He is its intrinsic terminus, intrinsically completing it and terminating it, just as the point terminates the line, or the object seen terminates the visual faculty. The difficulty raised by this objection makes it apparent that the possibility of the Incarnation cannot be strictly proved.

Again I insist. What is extrinsic to another cannot become intrinsic to it unless it is received by the other. But the human nature in itself is extrinsic to the Word. Therefore the Word can become intrinsic to the human nature only by becoming the recipient of it.

Reply. I deny the major. For something can become intrinsic to another by the sole fact of being joined to that which receives it by way of intrinsic termination, as a point becomes intrinsic to a line, and so what is received is not received by way of informing act, as if the recipient were in some passive potentiality to be perfected by it. Thus it is shown that the objection is either false or at least unnecessary, and hence of no force.

This point will be made clearer in the course of this treatise, in which it will be shown that God cannot take the place of a created subsistence as informing, but as terminating what is received. The informing form is related to the whole to which it is ordered as the less perfect part, just as the soul is less perfect than the complete man. On the contrary, the terminating perfection is not ordered to the more complete whole, but rather draws the other to Himself. Hence, instead of involving any imperfection, God imparts His perfection to what is assumed. Thus, for example God’s essence without involving any imperfection terminates the vision of the blessed, and the divine essence is not more perfect in being seen by the blessed than if it were not seen by them. Similarly, a beautiful statue is not made more perfect by the fact that it is the object of my admiration, nor is the doctrine of St. Thomas made more perfect by the fact that it is understood by the disciple, but it is the disciple who is made more perfect by the doctrine.

Rome is not made more perfect by the fact that any pilgrim, however distinguished, visits it.

Final objection. One substantial being cannot result from the union of several complete beings. But the human and divine natures are complete beings. Therefore one substantial being, such as Christ would be, cannot result from the union of the two natures.

Reply. I distinguish the major. From several beings complete in their natures there cannot result one substantial unity of nature, this I concede; that there cannot result a substantial unity of suppositum or person, this I deny.

Explanation. From two acts there cannot result something essentially one in nature, and therefore prime matter must be pure potency, so that the human nature is essentially and not accidentally one. But the human nature as such is not complete in the sense that it is a suppositum or person, and thus it is drawn to unity of being with the Word, in the sense that there is one suppositum, which will be more fully explained farther on. Thus in the resurrection the body is united with the soul and constitutes with it one supposital being.

More briefly, these various objections are solved by saying that the Word is not related to Christ's humanity as recipient subject, for in such case the Word would be in passive potency for His humanity; nor is He related to it as informing form that is received, for in this case He would be less perfect than the whole, which is the complete Christ; but He is related to it as terminating perfection, just as the pre-existing point that already terminates one line again terminates another; or just as the object that terminates the vision of one man, may again terminate the vision of another man. Thus the professor teaches his various students not in a receptive but in a terminative sense. Expressed more briefly, we may say that the Pure Act is unreceived and unreceivable. If He were received in any potency, He would be subjected to participation and limitation; if, however, He were to receive, then He would be in potency for a further act.

"To have terminatively" does not mean to be actuated or to be perfected; rather it means to perfect. Thus the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost do not have the Deity receptively, but terminatively. Thus the Son of God has His humanity terminatively, but not receptively. Thus God has His external glory, inasmuch as He is known and praised.

“To have receptively” is to be actuated and perfected. Thus matter receives the form. The created substance receives accidental forms.

“The form terminating” is not a part and involves no imperfection, but perfects and bestows its perfection upon what it terminates. Such is the case with the person of the Word, who unites with Himself and terminates Christ’s humanity. So also the doctrine of St. Thomas unites with himself and terminates the intelligence of a number of students.

“The form informing” is less perfect than the whole, as the soul in man.

The difficulty raised by the foregoing objections against the intrinsic possibility of the Incarnation confirms the thesis, namely, that this possibility cannot be apodictically proved from reason alone, but solely that persuasive reasons can be adduced in defense of this possibility, by showing that the objections of those attacking it are either evidently false or at least unnecessary, and of no force.

We must now treat of the fitness of the Incarnation. Fitness means something more than mere possibility, and it will at once be seen that we are persuaded of this fitness by congruent arguments drawn from reason alone; but the revelation of original sin being presupposed, the Incarnation is proved necessary so that adequate reparation be made to God, if He demands such reparation.

CHAPTER III: QUESTION 1—THE FITNESS OF THE INCARNATION

This question contains six articles that gradually develop the doctrine of the fitness of the Incarnation. St. Thomas begins by discussing:

(1) the fitness of the incarnation;

(2) its necessity for the reparation of the human race;

(3) its proximate motive, whether, if there had been no sin, God would have become incarnate;

(4) whether God became incarnate for the removal of original sin more chiefly than for actual sin;

(5) why it was not more fitting that God should become incarnate in the beginning of the human race;

(6) why it is not more fitting that the Incarnation should take place at the end of the world.

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER IT WAS FITTING THAT GOD SHOULD BECOME INCARNATE?

State of the question. In this article we are concerned with the mere fitness, not as yet with the proximate motive of the Incarnation. In other words, was the Incarnation not only possible, but was it expedient and fitting, that is, was it in agreement with God’s wisdom and goodness? Taken in this sense, the question is whether it was fitting that God should become man; on the other hand, it does not seem fitting that God should become a lion, although this may perhaps be possible. But was it more fitting that the Son of God, rather than the Father or the Holy Ghost, should become incarnate? Likewise, was it more fitting that the Word should assume the human nature rather than the angelic nature?

This state of the question will be made clearer from the solution of the difficulties posited at the beginning of this article. They constitute, as it

were, the nucleus of the difficulties to be solved.

The difficulties are the following.

(1) From all eternity God was separated from human nature. Therefore it was not fitting that He should be united to it.

(2) It is not fitting for those things to be united that are infinitely distant from each other. This seems to be against the principle of continuity, which states that the highest of the lowest order should reach the lowest of the highest, but not that the very lowest should reach the very highest. Hence it seems to be more fitting that God should have taken the nature of the highest angel, which is perhaps what Lucifer thought.

(3) It was not fitting that the supreme uncreated Spirit should assume a body, as indeed He would be assuming what is evil. This objection was raised by the Manichaeans, who held that matter is evil.

(4) It is unfitting that the infinite God, the Ruler of the universe, should remain hidden in the tiny body of an infant. So say Volusianus and many philosophers of modern times, who do not see anything unbecoming, however, in pantheism so that the divine nature be confused with the nature even of a stone. Several rationalists of our times say that the Incarnation would be the lapse or descent of the metaphysical absolute into the phenomenal relative, or the lapse of immutable eternity into mutable time. In like manner some go further and say that the Incarnation might perhaps be admitted by those who thought that the earth is the center of the universe, but not by those who hold that the earth is but like an atom among the millions of stars. They also say that the Incarnation is not only derogatory to God’s supreme majesty, but also to His mercy, which is more strikingly manifested by simply forgiving the sin without demanding reparation.

Finally, if it were said to be fitting for God to become incarnate, we should also have to conclude that it was unfitting for God not to become incarnate. But this conclusion is false, because God could have willed not to become incarnate, without this being derogatory to Him. All other objections even of modern philosophers are easily reduced to the above-mentioned objections.

Yet the answer is that it was fitting for God to become incarnate.

Authoritative proof. St. Paul and St. Damascene say that it appears to be most fitting that the invisible things of God be made known by the visible things He has created. Thus God created the world in manifestation of His

goodness and perfections. But, as Damascene says, the Incarnation shows the goodness, wisdom, justice, and omnipotence of God.

The goodness which Damascene speaks of includes mercy, and already Plato had defined divine goodness as diffusive of itself, it being the love of supreme opulence or perfection for extreme poverty. In a loftier strain, the Evangelist says: “For God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son.” This thought is developed below.

Theological proof. It starts from a consideration of God’s goodness, on which the fitness of the Incarnation has its special foundation, and is a commentary on the words of St. John: “For God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son.” God’s goodness is seen conspicuously in this supreme and most liberal gift, although His wisdom, justice, or omnipotence is also evident.

The argument may be reduced to the following syllogism.

It belongs to the idea of good to communicate itself to others, for good is self-diffusive. But God’s nature is essential goodness, or plenitude of being. Therefore it is fitting for God to communicate Himself to others in the highest degree, which finds its complete realization in the Incarnation.

The major is quoted from Dionysius, and is explained by St. Thomas in various places. It contains three principles: Good is self-diffusive, primarily as the end that attracts and perfects. Secondly, inasmuch as the end attracts the agent to act at least immanently. Thirdly, inasmuch as the perfect agent acts to communicate its goodness externally.

Nevertheless, good does not consist essentially in the actual communication of itself, for this would result in pantheistic emanation; but good essentially implies an aptitude or propensity to communicate itself. This means that good is aptitudinally self-diffusive, not of necessity diffusing itself, and, when it does so, this diffusion is sometimes most free and entirely gratuitous; but sometimes this diffusion is a necessary act, if the agent is determined to act in only one way, as the primary purpose of the sun is to give light.

These truths have been explained by St. Thomas in various parts of his works. Thus he says: “Goodness is described as self-diffusive, in the sense that an end is said to move,” namely, by attracting to itself, as to that which is perfect and perfective. Thus good is more of the nature of a final cause than of an efficient cause. But as stated in the argumentative part of this article just quoted, the end moves the efficient cause to act. Hence St.

Thomas says: “The very nature of good is that something flows from it but not that it flows from something else.... But, since the First Good diffuses itself according to the intellect, to which it is proper to flow forth into its effects according to a certain fixed form, it follows that there is a certain measure from which all other goods share the power of diffusion.”

Thus, this law is verified, namely, that good is self-diffusive throughout the universe, as St. Thomas shows in illustrating the mystery of the Trinity. He says: “The nobler a nature is, the more that which flows from it is more intimate to it.” In other words, good is self-diffusive, and the nobler it is, the more fully and more intimately it is self-diffusive. For instance, the sun illumines and heats, or fire generates fire, the plant produces a plant, the grown-up animal or perfect animal generates an animal like itself. Similarly, a celebrated artist or a famous musician conceives and produces wonderful works of art; a prominent scientist or celebrated astronomer discovers and formulates the laws of nature, for instance, the courses of the planets. Great teachers, such as St. Augustine, impart not only their knowledge but also their spirit to their disciples; a virtuous man incites others to lead a virtuous life; great apostles, such as St. Paul, communicate to others their love for God. Hence good is self-diffusive, and the nobler it is, the more fully and intimately it is self-diffusive. We now see how this principle illustrates the mystery of the Trinity, inasmuch as the Father, generating the Son, communicates to Him not only a participation in His nature, His intellect, and His love, but His complete and indivisible nature, so that the Son of God is Light of Light, God of God, true God of true God. Likewise the Holy Spirit is true God proceeding from the mutual love between the Father and the Son.

There is, however, a difficulty. It is that the principle, good is self-diffusive, proves either too much or not enough. It proves, indeed, too much if we infer from it the moral necessity and a fortiori the physical necessity of the Incarnation. But it does not prove enough if the Incarnation is a most free decree, because then, whether God became incarnate or not seems to be equally fitting.

As a matter of fact, there were extreme views both for and against this principle. Some pantheists, such as the Neoplatonists, in accordance with their emanatory theory, exaggerated this principle, saying that good is essentially and actually self-diffusive and also actually diffusing itself. But God is the highest good. Therefore He is essentially and actually diffusive

externally by a process of necessary emanation. This teaching is contrary to the dogma of a free creation, which was explicitly defined by the Vatican Council in these words: “God created both the spiritual and corporeal creature with absolute freedom of counsel,” and not from eternity.

Absolute optimists, such as Leibnitz and Malebranche, likewise erred. Hence the principle that good is self-diffusive must be understood in the sense we already noted with the Thomists, as meaning that good does not consist essentially in the actual communication of itself, but that there is essentially in good an aptitude and tendency to be self-diffusive, first as the end proposed, and then as moving the agent to act. But actual diffusion of good is sometimes necessary if the agent is determined in one way, as the sun is to illumine; sometimes this diffusion is a most free and absolutely gratuitous act, because God is not determined in one way in His eternal acts. He is already infinitely good and blessed in Himself, and created good does not increase His perfection; He is not more being after His action.

Thus creation and the Incarnation are absolutely free acts. The freedom of both is confirmed by the revelation of the mystery of the Trinity; for if there had been neither creation nor Incarnation, the principle that good is self-diffusive would be verified in the case of the internal divine processions.

This sufficiently explains the major of our syllogism, namely, that good is self-diffusive.

Minor. God’s nature is essential goodness, for He is the self-subsisting Being and is therefore the very plenitude of being, which means that He is the essential, supreme, and infinite goodness.

Therefore it is fitting for God to communicate Himself to others in the highest degree, and this is, indeed, most effectively accomplished by means of the Incarnation. For by this means God communicates to the creature not only a participation of being, as in the creation of stones, not only a participation in life, as in the creation of plants and animals, not only a participation in the intellectual and moral life of justice and holiness, as in the creation of Adam, the first man, but He communicates Himself in person. St. Thomas quotes St. Augustine in saying: “He so joined created nature to Himself that one person is made up of these three, the Word, a soul, and flesh.” Hence it is manifest that it was fitting for God to become incarnate.

This same principle (good is self-diffusive) illustrates the mystery of Redemption, the sacrifice of the Cross, and the institution of the Eucharist.

There is still another difficulty, namely, that this argument does not sufficiently prove. It is that if, in virtue of the principle that good is self-diffusive, the Incarnation is not even morally necessary but absolutely free and gratuitous, then it is equally fitting whether God become incarnate or not. This leaves the question either indifferent or undecided. Therefore, as the nominalist-q say, it is useless for theology to speak of the fitness of the mysteries that have been accomplished by God's liberality.

Reply. Billuart says: "The incarnation was fitting, not in the sense of its being necessary, but of its being a free act." We say, for in stance, the motive for choosing this particular thing is fitting, not as necessitating the will, but it is fitting that this particular thing be a matter of free choice, and not because of any necessity. Thus it is fitting to preserve one's virginity, yet it is equally fitting to make use of matrimony, because each is a free decision. And so incarnation or no incarnation, each was equally fitting. As Cajetan says: "To communicate Himself to others does not denote a new perfection in God but in the creature to whom this perfection is communicated."

Hence theology does not have recourse to useless speculations about the fittingness of the Incarnation, as several nominalists said, and certain philosophers and theologians who wrote that the Incarnation is said to be fitting because it was accomplished; but it would have been likewise and equally fitting for God not to have become incarnate if He had so willed. Therefore the arguments of fitness have no foundation.

This statement would be true if it were not more fitting for God to have chosen to become incarnate than for Him not to have chosen. In the opinion of St. Thomas, before the foreknowledge of merits it is not more fitting for God to choose Peter in preference to Judas; for this choice "depends on the will of God; as from the simple will of the artificer it depends that this stone is in this part of the wall, and that in another; although the plan requires that some stones should be in this place and some in that place." The election of the predestined depends purely on the divine benevolence, which is the culmination of divine liberty.

In the matter we are discussing, it is a certain motive in the divine strategy or in divine providence that makes the Incarnation more fitting than no incarnation, just as creation is preferable to no creation, and just as

virginity consecrated to God is better than matrimony. But this reason of fitness does not even morally necessitate the divine will, which is independent of all created good, inasmuch as from all eternity God's goodness is infinite, and is not in need of any created good. Therefore the argument of fitness does not make it necessary for God to become incarnate, but it is advanced as showing the wisdom of such choice.

Difficulty. God would have communicated Himself still more if He had united all created natures with Himself.

Reply. The union is not an absolute impossibility, and it would not have been pantheism, because it would have been accomplished without confusion of the created nature with the uncreated; but then all men and angels would have been impeccable, as Christ is. It is also fitting that the Word be united with the human nature, which is the microcosm, the compendium of the universe, inasmuch as it includes corporeity, as also vegetative, sensitive and intellective lives.

It is even more perfect for the Word to be united only with the human nature of Christ, and not with others. The reason is that the whole world demands subordination of beings, and it is fitting that the created nature personally united with the Word be the highest in the order of created beings, as the efficient and final cause of those beings beneath it, as St. Paul says: "For all are yours. And you are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

Concerning this article, Medina asks whether there can be anything more excellent than the humanity of Christ. He replies that there can, indeed, be something more excellent than the humanity of Christ, but not anything more excellent than Christ.

1) God could not make anything that is better than Christ our I Lord, because Christ is truly God.

2) God could not elevate human nature to anything better than the hypostatic union.

3) God could have made something more excellent than the humanity of Christ, such as more perfect angels. In fact, as we shall state farther on, God, by His absolute power, could have given to the soul of Christ a higher degree of the light of glory, or one of greater intensity, because the highest possible degree of the created light of glory is inconceivable; for God can produce something still more perfect than anything He has produced. Thus the swiftest possible motion is inconceivable, because such swiftest motion

would reach its terminus before it had left its starting point, and would no longer be motion, but immobility.

St. Thomas says: “God can make always something better than each individual thing.” Hence in created beings, there is no highest possible, and in this sense there is no highest creatable angel; but nothing can be higher than the hypostatic union of some created nature with some divine person.

What has just been said is the answer to the absolute optimism of Leibnitz and Malebranche.

Reply to first objection. “God was not changed by the Incarnation... but He united Himself to the creature in a new way, or rather united Himself to it,” St. Thomas says; “or rather He united it to Himself,” because there is a real relation of union of Christ’s humanity to the Word, but not of the Word to the assumed humanity. It was fitting for Christ’s humanity thus to be assumed.

Reply to the second objection. “To be united to God was not fitting for human flesh according to its natural endowments, but it was fitting by reason of God’s infinite goodness that He should unite it for man’s salvation.”

This distinction is of greatest validity in showing the fitness of the elevation of our nature to the supernatural order, so as to solve the following objection, which is similar to the one raised by Baius: What is eminently fitting must be unconditional, and is opposed to what is gratuitous. But the beatific vision is for us eminently fitting, so that its privation is abject misery. Therefore the beatific vision is unconditionally fitting to our nature, and is not gratuitous.

Reply. I distinguish the major, in accordance with the distinction given in this article. What is eminently fitting according to our natural endowments must be unconditional, this I concede; what is according to God’s infinite goodness, this I deny; and I contradistinguish the minor.

Reply to the third objection. It could be fitting for God to assume flesh but not evil, because flesh is from God the author of nature and is ordered to good, whereas evil is not.

Reply to fourth objection. St. Augustine replies to Volusianus that God by the Incarnation at Bethlehem did not lose the government of the world, just as He did not lose His divine nature, but united the human nature to it. “Hence (in the infant) Jesus the greatness of divine power feels no straits in narrow surroundings.” God’s immensity is not measured by space or by

quantity, but it is greatness of power, supporting or preserving all things in being. If a word Uttered by a human being in some point of space can be heard by others also even far away, and its meaning has a moral influence upon the whole world, why could not the Word of God, present in the frail body of the child Jesus, still preserve in being and govern all things created?

Finally, what must be said in reply to the objection of modern scientists, who say that the Incarnation perhaps could be admitted if the earth were the center of the universe, which it is not, for it is a planet among countless millions of heavenly bodies that are greater, namely, the stars and the nebulae?

Reply.

It may be said: 1. Just as the a priori reason why the Savior was sent was not so that the Jewish race be chosen in preference to some other nation, or, among the women of this race, that Mary be chosen as the Mother of our Lord in preference to some other woman, or among the just of this race, there was no a priori reason that Joseph be chosen as the foster father of our Lord; so there is no a priori reason that the earth be chosen in preference to some other heavenly body that may possibly be inhabited, such as Sirius.

We may also say: 2. We do not know whether there are any other heavenly bodies suitable for human habitation, which are inhabited.

On this point both the positive sciences and theology can offer only hypotheses. Therefore it is not on conjectural grounds that the testimony about the Incarnation must be rejected; namely, the testimony of Christ, of the apostles, of so many martyrs, of the Catholic Church must be rejected concerning the Incarnation. This testimony is confirmed, indeed, by miracles and the wonderful life of the Church, which is fruitful both morally and spiritually in all good works.

If some of the other heavenly bodies are inhabited by human beings, God has not deemed it opportune to reveal this fact to us. Some say, if perhaps there are others inhabited, then these human beings are either in the purely natural state, or there was no case of original sin among them, or if there was, then they were regenerated in some other way than by the Incarnation. There is nothing intrinsically repugnant in all these views. It is difficult to say, however, whether these opinions can be reconciled with the free decree of the Incarnation in its relation to the human race. For revelation speaks of the human race as it exists on this earth.

Whatever is the fact about these gratuitous hypotheses, Christ, as the incarnate Word of God, is the culmination of the whole of creation, and, just as He is the head of the angels, at least as regards accidental grace, so He could be such with reference to human beings who might be living on some of the other heavenly bodies. Concerning these things and many others, we have no knowledge, and there is no need for us to stop and discuss them. Some men seem to be of the opinion that on other heavenly bodies perhaps there are rational animals of another species than man. But this seems to be false, for the term “rational animal” seems to be not a genus but the ultimate species, according to the principle of continuity; for the highest in the lowest order, for instance, the sensitive life, touches the lowest in the highest order, namely, the intellective life. Hence there is no conjunction of the highest in the sensitive life with the lowest in the intellective life, except in one species, and this is not susceptible to either increase or decrease.

Finally, it must be noted that even if the world were the mathematical center of the universe, this would be no reason why God should choose it for the Incarnation. Thus Christ was not born in Jerusalem, but in Bethlehem. So also St. Augustine was the greatest theologian of his time, and yet he came into the world and taught not at Rome, which was the center of the world, but in Africa. He was only bishop of Hippo.

The mathematical position of a body is a matter of less importance with reference to a supernatural mystery, which infinitely transcends the spatial order.

What has been said suffices concerning the fitness of the Incarnation.

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER IT WAS NECESSARY FOR THE RESTORATION OF THE HUMAN RACE THAT THE WORD OF GOD SHOULD BECOME INCARNATE?

State of the question.

(1) We assume that the Incarnation was not absolutely necessary, as Wyclif contended, arguing from the false principle that “all things happen because of absolute necessity.” Presupposing the fact of creation, the Incarnation was not necessary, whatever absolute optimists, such as Leibnitz and Malebranche, said to the contrary; although the Incarnation may have increased the accidental glory of God, He is absolutely sufficient unto Himself, and is not at all in need of this accidental glory.

2) We assume that after original sin, it was in God's power not to will the reparation of the human race, and in this there would have been no injustice, as St. Augustine says. Therefore we must thank God for having mercifully willed to free the human race from sin.

As a matter of fact, indeed, God did not reinstate the fallen angels; and why He permitted their fall was for a greater good, which must be the manifestation of infinite justice. St. Thomas considers the reparation of the human race to be most fitting, for the sin was not in itself irreparable, whereas he considers the devil's sin, which was committed with full knowledge, to be in itself irreparable, just as the sin of final impenitence is for man. He says: "So it is customary to say that man's free will is flexible to the opposite both before and after the choice; but the angel, s free will is flexible to either opposite before the choice but not after. So therefore the good angels who adhered to justice were confirmed therein; whereas the wicked ones, sinning, are obstinate in sin," because the angel immediately and intuitively sees whatever must be considered before the choice, with nothing to be considered after the choice.

The question of this article is posited on the understanding that God wills to restore the human race, so far as it is capable of restoration.

A thing is said to be necessary for the end in two ways:

a) simply, when the end cannot be attained in any other way. Thus food is necessary for the preservation of life;

b) in a qualified manner, when the end is attained more conveniently, as a horse is necessary for a journey.

Some thought that St. Anselm in his treatise on the Incarnation taught its absolute necessity after the fall of the human race; but St. Bonaventure and Scotus interpret his statements in a benign sense; in fact, St. Anselm does so himself farther on. Tournely holds that the Incarnation is absolutely necessary after the fall of the human race, if God wills to free the human race from sin.

On the contrary, it is the common teaching among theologians that the Incarnation is not absolutely necessary even after the fall of the human race, even if it is granted that God willed to free the human race from sin, because there were other means of liberation; but it was necessary secundum quid. Suarez thinks that it would be rash to deny this common opinion of the theologians; so does Lugo. In fact, Valentia says that the conclusion is most certain, which means that it is a theological conclusion

commonly admitted by the theologians, one which is supported by many testimonies of the Fathers of the Church.

St. Thomas, who firmly holds this conclusion, begins by positing difficulties that are against even the secundum quid necessity of the Incarnation. He argues that the Incarnation does not seem to be necessary even secundum quid because: (1) for the reparation of the human race, the non-incarnate Word can do whatever the incarnate Word can do; therefore the Incarnation is not absolutely necessary. (2) God must not demand from man greater satisfaction than man can give. (3) It is better if there had been no Incarnation, because the more men consider God as raised above all creatures and removed from sense perception, the more they reverence Him. But God's dignity seems to be lowered by assuming human flesh.

Yet the answer is:

1) The Incarnation is not indeed absolutely necessary for the reparation of the human race. (2) But it was necessary secundum quid, namely, as a better and more convenient means.

First Part:

Authoritative proof. A. Billuart holds that this second opinion is the unanimous teaching of the Fathers; he mentions SS. Athanasius, Gregory Nazianzen, Theodoret, Cyril of Alexandria, Gregory the Great, and John Damascene. Likewise St. Augustine in one of his works says: "Foolish people say that the only way by which God in His wisdom could liberate mankind was by becoming man, and by suffering all He did from sinners. To these persons we say that such was absolutely possible for God, but if He had done otherwise, this likewise would have been displeasing to your stupidity."

B. Proof from reason. Concerning this first part of the thesis, St. Thomas says: "God of His omnipotent power could have restored human nature in many other ways." What ways were these?

In the first place, God could have pardoned the offense committed against Him by sin. Tournely denies the possibility of this way by God's ordinary power, because the preservation of justice requires punishment of the offense.

We reply to this objection, according to the mind of St. Thomas, by saying that the supreme judge and legislator can do so, since He is above other judges, and therefore enjoys the prerogative of being able to pardon

offenders even without demanding reparation, just as sometimes kings bestow a favor upon or are merciful to those condemned to death.

Or again, God could have accepted some sort of satisfaction from man, or as it pleased Him to accept it; for there is no contradiction implied in these ways of pardoning by Him, and God is absolutely free in His operations ad extra.

Or, as we said in the statement of the question, God could even have willed not to restore the human race, although it is extremely fitting for Him to do so.

Proof of thesis (second part). This part states that the Incarnation was secundum quid necessary for the reparation of the human race, as being the better way.

First of all, there is the authority of St. Augustine, who holds that the Incarnation was more fitting than any other way for the reparation of the human race.

St. Thomas offers a fine theological proof, in which he shows the fitness of the Incarnation on the part of man, just as in the first article of this question he showed its fitness on the part of God, who, being the supreme good, is in the highest degree self-diffusive. His argument may be reduced to the following syllogism.

That way is better for the reparation of the human race, by which man is better and more easily urged to good and withdrawn from evil. But each of these results is obtained by the Incarnation. Therefore the Incarnation is the better way for the reparation of the human race. The major is evident.

The minor is proved, as regards our furtherance in good, by a consideration of the theological virtues, which are higher than all the other virtues, for God is their immediate object and the ultimate end to whom the sinner must be converted.

Faith is made more certain by the Incarnation, for the very reason that by it we believe God Himself who is speaking.

For the formal motive of faith is the authority of God revealing; but God, who is most exalted, remains hidden from us, even though He speaks to us through the prophets, whose preaching is confirmed by miracles. How much more we are confirmed in the faith, if God Himself comes to us, and speaks to us as a human being, not as the scribes did, but as one having authority, saying: “Amen, amen, I say unto you: he that believeth in Me, hath everlasting life.”

This argument seems paradoxical to those who say, as the liberal Protestants do, that Christianity is the most exalted type of religion, provided that the dogma of Christ's divinity be eliminated from it. They say this, since they are imbued with the spirit of rationalism that seeks to judge all things by human reason, and not as God sees them.

On the contrary, if we consider this matter in the spirit of faith, this argument is seen to be most fitting and also most exalted, and not one made up by St. Augustine, who is quoted in this article, but as contained already in the very preaching of Christ and His apostles. Jesus Himself says: "I am one that give testimony of Myself, and the Father that sent Me giveth testimony of Me." No prophet spoke words like these, for only Christ can say such words, because He alone, as He Himself said, "is the truth and the life." He is the First Truth, who gives testimony of Himself, and so He is the formal motive of faith, namely, the authority of God actually revealing, and this authority is confirmed by miracles evident to the senses. Similarly Jesus says: "The words which Thou gayest Me I have given to them. And they have received them and have known in very deed that I came out from Thee; and they have believed that Thou didst send Me." Hence the Evangelist writes: "The Samaritans said to the woman: We now believe not for thy saying, for we ourselves have heard Him, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world."

Likewise St. John says in his prologue: "And of His fullness we have all received.... No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him."

Similarly St. John says: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the World of life. For the life was manifested, and we have seen and do bear witness and declare unto you the life eternal, which was with the Father, and hath appeared to us." This means that you can believe because what we announce to you we have heard from the Word incarnate, whom we saw by our sense of sight, whom we looked upon, and whom we touched with our hands.

Likewise St. Paul writes: "God who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, last of all in these days hath spoken to us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He hath made the world." And again he says: "For if the word, spoken by angels, became stead fast... how shall we escape...

what has been declared by the Lord, ... God also bearing them witness by signs and wonders." This means that Christ is a more exalted witness than the angels.

These texts serve to illustrate the argument of St. Thomas, who says that by the Incarnation our faith is reassured since we believe God Himself speaking to us, that is, speaking to us as man in His assumed nature. As St. Augustine says: "In order that man might journey more trustfully toward the truth, the Truth itself, the Son of God, having assumed human nature, established and founded faith."

Certainly in this life we see Christ's divinity neither by the sense of sight nor mentally; but Jesus with so great authority speaks to us, saying: "I give testimony of Myself," making Himself equal to God, so that no man of good will can doubt that Jesus is truly the living God, who is speaking to us. I say: no man of good will in the salutary sense of the Gospel, that is, neither resisting revelation, nor internal inspiration given to one for the purpose of believing.

When Christ says, "Come to Me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you... he that loveth father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me," He means men of good will who do not resist the grace of faith, do not doubt that He is more than a mere man, more than a prophet, because no prophet uttered such words; and they are certain that Christ is the First Truth, who is speaking to us. And it is precisely such great authority as this that proves unbearable to the Pharisees, who therefore turn away from Him.

In other words, what is the greatest light on this earth for men of good will, becomes obscurity for them. This means that what most of all confirms the faith of men of good will, becomes a source of scandal for them, as Simeon foretold, saying: "Behold this Child is set for the fall and for the resurrection of many in Israel and for a sign that shall be contradicted." For this reason Christ Himself said: "Blessed is he that shall not be scandalized in Me." Our argument was imputed formerly as an objection to our Lord's opponents, and is so too in our days for the rationalists, who, so they say, would be willing to admit the truth of Christianity if it did not include the dogma of Christ's divinity, which means that they would accept Christianity if it were no longer Christianity, but only a higher form of the evolution of natural religion. Thus the greatest light is turned for them into obscurity; but this light is essentially

illuminating, and it is only accidentally that it has a blinding effect, that is, on account of the bad disposition of the hearer. As St. Augustine says: “Light is annoying to those of defective eyesight, but it is very welcome to those of good eyesight.”

Thus the argument remains most firm, namely, that our faith is made more certain by the Incarnation, since we believe God who speaks to us as man in His assumed human nature. The formal motive of faith is reduced to almost sensible proportions inasmuch it is the supreme authority of Christ speaking. Hence we read in the Gospel that the ministers sent by the Pharisees feared to arrest Jesus, and replied to the chief priests: “Never did man speak like this man.” They meant, never did any man utter words so sublime, or in such an exalted and divine manner; for there was a sensible manifestation of something divine in Christ’s tone and manner of speech.

St. Thomas says that by the Incarnation we are greatly strengthened in hope. Why is this? It is because hope is a theological virtue that longs for the supreme future and possible good, indeed, but difficult of attainment. Its formal motive is God helping, who has promised us His help not only to keep His commandments that are always possible to observe, but also to save our souls.

Hence hope is trust in God, and this trust increases in us inasmuch as God not only promises His help, but actually bestows it, and manifests His benevolence even in a way that appeals to our senses. Thus we place our trust especially in friends, because we know their help comes from motives of true and deep love for us.

But by the Incarnation God not only gives us His help, which means not only His grace, but He gives us the Author of grace, who remains present in the Holy Eucharist, which very much increases the virtue of hope in us. It is what St. Augustine says in the passage quoted by St. Thomas in this article.

Thus the virtue of hope is very much strengthened in us since Christ says more reassuringly than any prophet: “Come to Me all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you.” I am He who helps, I am the Author of salvation. Similarly, when Jesus says to the paralytic, before healing him: “Thy sins are forgiven thee,” that is, your soul is healed, whereas you were demanding only the cure of a bodily ailment. Likewise St. Paul formulated this argument in equivalent words when he wrote: “The mystery which hath been hidden from ages and generations, but now is manifested to His saints, to whom God would make known the riches of the glory of this mystery

among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you the hope of glory." Again he writes: "Christ our hope," for Christ Himself, as God, is both the object and the motive of our hope, for God Himself is both helper and helping.

The following special text of St. Paul must here be quoted: "If God be for us, who is against us? He that spared not even His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not also, with Him, give us all things? Who shall accuse against the elect of God?... Who is He that shall condemn? Christ Jesus that died, yea that is risen also again, who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress or famine... or persecution or the sword?... But in all these things we overcome because of Him that has loved us." In other words, in all these things we overcome, because of the efficacy of the help of Him who loved us; and in the opinion of St. Augustine and St. Thomas this help is of itself efficacious, and not because our consent was foreseen by God.

The formal motive of hope is not man's effort cooperating with God's help, but it is God helping, who, by the Incarnation is with us and remains present in the Holy Eucharist. Thus we have the greatest reason for trusting in God.

Thirdly, by the Incarnation "charity is greatly enkindled," says St. Thomas, who quotes here St. Augustine as saying: "What greater cause is there of the Lord's coming than to show God's love for us?" And St. Augustine afterward adds: "If we have been slow to love, at least let us hasten to love in return."

Charity obliges us to love God more than we love ourselves, loving Him as our friend, the formal motive of our love being His goodness, which infinitely surpasses all His favors bestowed upon us. This means that we must will efficaciously the fulfillment of His will, that He may reign truly and profoundly in souls and be glorified forever, since the Scripture says: "Not to us, O Lord, not to us; but to Thy name give glory." What has been said constitutes the definition of charity that surpasses hope, just as the love of benevolence surpasses the love of concupiscence, no matter how much this latter be upright and ordered to its proper end. By the virtue of hope, I desire God for myself, but as my final end, indeed, because He is God. By the virtue of charity, however, I love God efficaciously as my friend, and I love Him more than I love myself, and I will Him all befitting good. This most sublime aspect of charity, more than anything hope can offer, will

enable us to cease worrying, too, about the mystery of predestination, notwithstanding its great obscurity. By charity I love God more than myself, and in a general way whatever God has eternally decreed in manifestation of His goodness. Thus God, who is infinitely good, is the eminent source of all goodness being a quasi-ego to myself, and in a certain sense more an ego than I am, for whatever good I possess already is contained in Him in a far more eminent manner. This is that true mysticism which is certainly the normal way to holiness.

But this divine goodness, which is the formal object of charity, is especially made manifest by the supreme act of love in which God gave us His only-begotten Son. It is the fundamental truth of Christianity, because this love is the fountain source of the very gift of the Incarnation. Hence Jesus says: “As the Father hath loved Me, I also have loved you. Abide in My love.” And again: “Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” St. John writes: “By this hath the charity of God appeared toward us, because God hath sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we may live by Him. In this is charity, not as though we had loved God, but because He hath first loved us, and sent His Son to be a propitiation for our sins. My dearest, if God hath so loved us, we also ought to love one another.” Farther on he says: “Let us therefore love God, because God first hath loved us.”

Likewise St. Paul says: “But God commendeth His charity toward us, because when as yet we were sinners, according to the time, Christ died for us.” Writing to Titus, he says: “For the grace of God our Savior hath appeared to all men, instructing us, that denying ungodliness and worldly desires... we should live Godly in this world, looking for the blessed hope and coming of the glory of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.”

Thus these three arguments of St. Thomas not only result in a theologically certain conclusion, but they pertain to the faith, and are the sublime object of contemplation. It is also evident that this contemplation, which proceeds from faith illumined by the gifts of the Holy Ghost, is the normal way to holiness of life.

Fourth, the incarnation of the Word sets us an example in the practice of all virtues, whereas Diogenes and several other philosophers said that the search for an exemplar in virtues is a vain quest. It is only Christ who could say to His adversaries: “Which of you shall convince Me of sin?’, Hence holiness of life consists in the imitation of Christ.

Fifth. The Incarnation is most appropriate for withdrawing us from evil.

1) Because man by the Incarnation is instructed to despise the devil conquered by Christ even as man, as stated in the legend of St. Christopher.

2) Because by the Incarnation we begin to realize the dignity of our human nature, so that we are urged not to stain our soul by sin.

3) Because the Incarnation takes away all presumption from us since God, s grace, regardless of any previous merits on our part, is approved in us or bestowed upon us through Jesus Christ, so that St. Paul is able to say: “By the grace of God I am what I am.” The sinner, too, who has committed all crimes, can repent by trusting in the infinite merits of Christ.

4) Pride is removed and cured by a consideration of the humiliating conditions of the passion of our Lord.

5) Man is freed from the slavery of the devil and of sin. As St. Thomas says in this article in equivalent words: God, by assuming our human nature, did not lessen His majesty and attracted us more by this means to know Him.

Therefore the Incarnation is a more fitting way of freeing the human race from sin. Nevertheless, God could have chosen not to become man, and this would not have been derogatory to Him, for the Incarnation was a most free act, and an absolutely gratuitous gift.

Hence we must say that it was more fitting for God to become incarnate, but it would not have been inconsistent with God’s goodness if He had not become incarnate. Similarly, it was more fitting for God to have created and raised man to the supernatural order, but it would not have been derogatory to His goodness if He had not done so. Thus in human actions, virginity is more perfect than matrimony, but there is nothing unbecoming in matrimony. There is freedom of choice in both cases.

The only remaining difficulty is the one proposed in the second objection of this article, namely, that it does not seem proper for God to demand greater satisfaction than man can give.

St. Thomas replies to this objection by giving a brief summary of the doctrine on satisfaction. He remarks that it would not, indeed, be fitting if God had not given His Son as Redeemer to make the greater satisfaction. But God gave His Son. This difficulty gives us the opportunity to present certain doubts that must be examined in amplification of the doctrine of this article.

First doubt. Was the Incarnation necessary so as to have condign satisfaction for sin?

St. Thomas examines this question in his reply to the second objection of this article.

1) Satisfaction is perfectly sufficient, he says, when it is condign, being in a certain sense adequate in reparation of the fault committed. Thus, if anyone has to pay another a debt of one hundred dollars, and returns the complete sum, then he is said to have made perfect satisfaction in a material sense. Moreover, that the satisfaction be perfect in the formal sense, or as an act of justice, the restitution must be made out of the debtor, s own belongings, and must not be owing to the creditor on some other account, nor in any way under his dominion. The last condition is that the creditor is bound to accept the payment as satisfaction.

Perfect satisfaction considered merely materially is called condign satisfaction. Perfect satisfaction in the formal sense is called rigorous or according to the strictest standard of justice.

2) Imperfect satisfaction also in the material sense, or what is not condign, is that which is deemed sufficient, and which a person is contented to accept as satisfactory. Thus, if anyone is bound to pay back one hundred dollars, and returns eighty, the creditor being satisfied with this sum, such satisfaction is often called congruent.

Three certain conclusions follow from these distinctions.

1) Mere man can in the material sense satisfy imperfectly for sin. This conclusion is expressed in equivalent words by St. Thomas toward the end of his reply to the second objection. The expression “mere man” does not mean the exclusion of grace, but only of the divine nature. Thus a just person can satisfy imperfectly for his own mortal sin, or for another’s, by a satisfaction which God can accept, if He so wills, and which He could have accepted, if He had not willed to free man from sin by the Incarnation. So also in this life our satisfactions for our sins, or in reparation for the sins of others, are imperfect even in the material sense. Hence St. Thomas says: “The satisfaction of every mere man has its efficiency from the satisfaction of Christ,” even the satisfaction of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Therefore she is not called co-redemptress except in a subordinate sense to Christ, as being quasi sub-redemptress.

Hence Pope Pius X ratified the common teaching of theologians, when he said: “That which Christ merited for us de condigno, the Blessed Virgin

Mary merited for us de congruo." And likewise she did not satisfy for us de condigno, but de congruo. Pope Benedict XV declared: "It can truly be said that along with Christ she redeemed the human race," that is, subordinate to Christ with Him, and through Him, the Blessed Virgin Mary's satisfaction was not condign but congruent, or an imperfect satisfaction, which was not of itself (apart from Christ's redemption) perfectly sufficient.

2) Mere man cannot offer complete satisfaction to God for his own sin or for another's. This means that he cannot satisfy according to the strictest standard of justice, because there is nothing either in the natural order or in the supernatural order that he can offer to God which has not been bestowed upon him by God who is His creditor and which God is bound to accept in satisfaction. Thus the Holy See approved the following statement of a provincial council: "No one but the God-man was able to satisfy in strict justice."

3) Mere man could not satisfy de condigno for his own or another's mortal sin; and for such condign reparation the Incarnation was necessary.

This conclusion, which is commonly admitted by theologians, is considered certain by St. Thomas, and occurs in the beginning of his reply to the second objection. However, some theologians. following Scotus and Durandus, admitted that some creature, adorned with a very high degree of grace, such as the Blessed Virgin Mary, could satisfy adequately for mortal sin.

There are proofs for this third conclusion.

Authoritative proof. St. Augustine says: "We would not have been liberated through the one mediator between God and man, the man Jesus Christ, unless He were also God." Likewise, St. Leo says: "It He were not truly God, He could not apply the remedy; if He were not truly man, He could not give us the example."

This traditional and common opinion among theologians was approved recently by Pope Pius XI, who wrote concerning Mary reparatrix: "If the Son of God had not assumed our human nature for the purpose of repairing it, no created power sufficed to expiate the crimes of men."

Thus the traditional thesis is now a ratified pontifical document, and is theologically certain, being an approved theological conclusion.

Theological proof. St. Thomas gives two reasons why adequate satisfaction was impossible. This he does in his reply to the second objection of this article.

a) Condign satisfaction was impossible by mere man “because the whole of human nature has been corrupted by sin,” and only a just person can merit de condigno and satisfy. But some may say that God could have preserved some man from original sin, or could have sanctified him after the sin was committed and bestowed a high degree of grace upon him so that he could satisfy for it.

The second reason replies to this suggestion.

b) This reason may be presented by the following syllogism. Mortal sin committed against God has a certain infinity considered as an offense. But condign satisfaction must be adequate reparation. Therefore condign satisfaction must have infinite efficacy, as being the satisfactory act of one who is both God and man.

St. Thomas proves the major by saying: “A sin committed against God has a kind of infinity from the infinity of the divine majesty, because the greater the person we offend, the more grievous the offense.”

Yet not all Thomists interpret this major in the same sense.

Some theologians say that St. Thomas wrote that “mortal sin has a kind of infinity”. as an offense. Therefore its gravity is not absolutely infinite, but only in a qualified sense and objectively; for sin as an act of the will is always finite. Likewise, its malice, since it is a turning to changeable good, is finite; so it does not merit absolutely infinite punishment, for the penalty of damnation consists in the deprivation of the beatific vision, which is something created, although it concerns God objectively. So say certain Thomists such as Soto, Conradus, along with Scotus, Suarez, and Vasquez.

Others say that the gravity of mortal sin is absolutely infinite, not indeed considered as a physical act, nor as a moral act because of its malice and demerit, but because it is an offense. Briefly, a grievous offense against God is absolutely infinite. Such is the view of Capreolus, Cajetan, Gonet, Salmanticenses, and John of St. Thomas.

These theologians say that, more probably mortal sin, because it is an offense, is absolutely infinite in gravity, and this for the reason given by St. Thomas, namely, “because the greater the person we offend, the more grievous the offense.” But He who is the supreme good, who is the ultimate end, who is practically denied by mortal sin, is absolutely infinite in dignity; whereas man prefers the creature to God and loves himself more than God. If it were not so, then St. Thomas would be wrong in concluding the necessity of infinite satisfaction.

St. Thomas also says: “Since God infinitely transcends the creature, mortal sin committed against God is an infinite offense, by reason of the dignity of Him to whom somehow harm is done by sin, since God Himself and His precept are despised.”

Moreover, the offense is morally in the person offended, inasmuch as the person offended is truly the victim of injustice. Hence the greater is the dignity of the person offended, the greater is the offense. Thus it is a greater offense to insult a genera than a soldier, and a king than a general. Hence to insult God is absolutely infinite as a moral act, inasmuch as it practically denies God the infinite dignity owing to Him as the ultimate end or as the infinite good.

Nevertheless, one mortal sin can be more grievous than another in three ways, either because it is committed with greater deliberation and consent; or, objectively considered, because it is more directed against God; or by reason of the circumstances.

Most certainly the gravity of the offense is estimated according to the dignity of the person offended, whereas the value of the reparation is estimated according to the dignity of the person who makes reparation. The whole force of the argument rests on this statement.

Objection. Some say that although God, who is infinite, is the object of the act of charity, this act is not absolutely infinite in dignity as a moral act. Therefore, although mortal sin offends God who is infinite, considered as an offense in the moral order, it is not absolutely infinite in gravity.

Reply. The difference is that, as regards charity, God is only its object and not its subject; but He is the subject of the moral offense committed against Him. Thus, as stated, the greater the dignity of the person offended, the greater is the gravity of the offense. On the contrary, although God can be the object of venial sin, it does not deny Him the infinite dignity owing to Him as the ultimate end, and thus its offense is not absolutely infinite.

Briefly, a grievous offense against God is absolutely infinite, since it is practically a denial of His absolutely infinite dignity.

This comparison between a mere man’s act of charity that is of finite value, and a grave and absolutely infinite offense against God, is founded on the principle that in our negations concerning God there is more of denial than there is of assertion in our affirmations.

A practical denial of the dignity of the ultimate end denies more about it, than its practical affirmation can affirm about it. Hence the general saying

that it is easier to destroy than to build. In a moment a man can destroy very precious objects, which only after a long time can be replaced; and it is generally admitted that an inferior can do more against a superior than for him. Matter, by escaping from the domination of its form, can do more against the form of a corporeal thing, such as a plant or an animal, than for it by remaining under it, because without matter this form, for instance, of a lion, totally disappears, but matter alone is not sufficient for the sensitive life of the lion. The mineral kingdom can do more harm to man, for instance, in an earthquake, than good to him; likewise the lack of air necessary for breathing causes death, whereas its presence is not sufficient; for life, food and other things are also required.

Similarly in the human order, a common man can do great harm to a king, but he cannot render him all the honors that are due to him. Likewise the common people can be the source of more affliction to men of great ability than joy to them. In like manner, if it is said of a good doctor that he is not so in the medical art, this judgment grieves him more than the opposite judgment could cause him to rejoice.

Generally speaking, the inferior can do more harm to the superior than good to him. Proud Satan is conscious of this; the devil wishes to have power not from grace, but in his own right; and so he wishes to have the power to destroy, which is tantamount to saying: I am preventing the development of the kingdom of God; it is for this reason that I exist and have power.

Hence the truth of the principle: the inferior can do more harm than good to the superior.

Thus it is that the subordination of the inferior helps to some extent the action of the superior, whereas his insubordination sometimes totally impedes it.

The reason is that frequently the inferior is an indispensable condition for the action of the superior, and the lack of this cooperation results in not only a partial but a total frustration of the action of the higher power, as in the case of insanity resulting from a cerebral lesion there follows a total impossibility of judgment. When the brain is in good condition it is of some help to the reasoning faculty, whereas, if seriously damaged, it completely prevents the act of reasoning. Thus many men who enjoy the best of health have not much intellectual ability; but a man of great intellect suddenly becomes insane because of a cerebral lesion.

Likewise, man of himself can do more against God, against the kingdom of God by blaspheming, than he can do for God by honoring Him. Man in the purely natural state suffices for the complete denial of God's ineffable greatness, but he is afterward incapable of completely affirming this greatness, even though restored by grace. Our negations are more absolute in their effect than our affirmations. When the impious person denies God, he denies God completely in his heart; when the just person affirms God, he does not affirm Him completely, but in a finite manner, and, as St. Thomas says, "we cannot know what God is, but rather what He is not." To comprehend is to equate in knowledge the knowable object. God alone has comprehensive knowledge of Himself, which attains to the whole of Him and to all that is contained in Him.

In like manner anyone who denies the principle of finality, completely denies it; on the contrary, anyone who affirms the principle of finality, does not completely understand it. This principle, that, "every agent acts for an end," is known better by an angel, and a fortiori by God. Therefore a grievous offense against God is absolutely infinite, since it denies to God absolutely infinite dignity of the ultimate end, or the supreme Good.

Our grave disobedience toward God is graver because of the offense, than our due subjection to Him contributes to His eternal glory. It remains true, therefore, that the gravity of the offense is estimated according to the dignity of the person offended, whereas the value of the reparation is estimated according to the dignity of the person making reparation.

But what is the validity of the minor, that is, that condign satisfaction must be adequate reparation, and hence it must be of infinite value?

Proof of minor. Condign compensation must offer to God what is no less or more pleasing to Him than the offense is displeasing to Him.

St. Thomas says: "He properly atones for an offense who offers something which the offended one loves equally or even more than he detested the offense. But by suffering out of love and obedience, Christ gave more to God than was required to compensate for the offense of the whole human race. First of all because of the exceeding charity from which He suffered; secondly on account of the dignity of His life which He laid down in atonement, for it was the life of one who was God and man; thirdly on account of the extent of the Passion, and the greatness of the grief endured."

The reason why this satisfaction is of infinite value is that it was offered to God from the charity of the Word incarnate, namely, of the divine person whose theandric act is of infinite price, since the estimated value of the satisfaction is derived from a consideration of the person making satisfaction.

On the contrary, an absolutely infinite injury cannot be condignly repaired by a satisfaction of finite value. But the satisfaction of any creature whatever is of finite value; for the value of the satisfaction is derived, as has been said, from a consideration of the person satisfying, inasmuch as this person is the subject who satisfies. Hence the common saying that honor is in the person honoring.

Therefore the greater the dignity of the person satisfying, the greater the estimate of the satisfaction. Hence the satisfaction of Christ is absolutely infinite, because the person satisfying is divine and infinite. On the contrary, the dignity of the creature who satisfies is finite, no matter what may be the number of his supernatural gifts. Therefore a finite creature cannot give adequate satisfaction for an absolutely infinite offense.

This is the reason given by St. Thomas in his reply to the second objection of this article. But on this point, the knowledge acquired through the gifts of the Holy Ghost is of a much higher order and more striking than discursive knowledge.

Second doubt. Would the Incarnation be necessary if the gravity of the offense were only in a qualified manner infinite?

Would the reason given by St. Thomas still be valid if the grievous offense against God were not absolutely infinite, but only in a qualified manner, that is, objectively, as the act of charity is said to be objectively infinite?

Some Thomists, such as Billuart, reply that the reason given by St. Thomas has still some value, in this sense, that the gravity of mortal sin does not consist only in this, that it denies God His dignity as the ultimate end, but that also the depreciation and contempt of the divine majesty comes from a vile creature, who presumes to offend Him. This injury is not compensated by an act of charity of a mere man, because it is more injurious to God to be subjected to a vile creature than the subjection of this creature to Him pays Him honor. Similarly it is more against the king’s dignity to be insulted by one of his ministers, than it adds to his honor for him to accept the apology of his minister.

But the reason as proposed is no longer strictly the reason given by St. Thomas, which is derived not from a consideration of the vileness of the person offending, but from the supreme dignity of the person offended. Hence from what St. Thomas says, it is clearly enough evident that he considers a grievous offense against God to be absolutely infinite, inasmuch as it is practically a denial of His absolutely infinite dignity. We have said that such is the conclusion of very many Thomists, namely, of Capreolus, Cajetan, Salmanticenses, Godoy, Gonet, John of St. Thomas, Billuart.

Third doubt. Can a just man offer condign satisfaction for venial sin?

Reply. The answer is that he can; for a just man can make reparation for venial sin and therefore satisfy for it, because venial sin does not take away from the soul habitual grace, which is the root of the supernatural life, nor does it turn us away from the ultimate end. Moreover, the injury included in venial sin does not deny God His absolutely infinite dignity as the ultimate end. Therefore this injury is not absolutely infinite but finite. Therefore it can be repaired by what remains of the virtue of charity.

Cajetan in his commentary on this article examines other objections raised by Scotus; but these belong more properly to the article on the passion of our Lord, in which St. Thomas asks whether it brought about our salvation by way of atonement.

It must be noted that the thesis of St. Thomas on the necessity of the Incarnation so as to satisfy de condigno for mortal sin is absolutely in conformity with tradition. The Fathers frequently have proved, from the dogma of the redemption admitted by heretics, that Christ was truly God.

Solution Of Objections Against The Reply To The First Doubt

The Incarnation was not necessary to satisfy de condigno for sin.

First objection. Condign satisfaction returns to the one offended all that was taken away by mortal sin. But mere man justified by an act of charity returns to God all that was taken away by mortal sin, namely, it returns lovingly what is His due as being the ultimate end. Therefore mere man justified can offer condign satisfaction to God for mortal sin, and so the Incarnation is not necessary.

Reply. I distinguish the major. Condign satisfaction that returns all, and all that is implied by an act that is equal to the gravity of the offense, then I concede the major.

That returns all, but not all that is implied by an act that is not equal to the gravity of the offense, then I deny it.

I contradistinguish the minor in the same way.

Satisfaction for wrong done requires more than the mere restitution of the object stolen; it also requires that the object taken be returned with due compensation for slighted honor. Thus, if a commoner snatched a king's daughter, it would not suffice for condign satisfaction that the daughter be returned, for in this way reparation for the wrong done to the king would not be made. Similarly, God's dignity is far more offended when the creature despises Him, than honor is paid to Him by the creature's subjection to Him even by an act of charity. Insubordination is not sufficiently repaired by the restitution of subordination that is already due Him.

Mortal sin of any kind offends God's right, His right of being the ultimate end, and therefore every mortal sin is an insult to God, not always explicitly intended as in blasphemy, but resulting as a consequence of the sin. Although man cannot render to God whatever is due Him according to strictest justice, yet he can be strictly unjust to Him by practically denying Him His absolutely infinite dignity to which He is entitled as the ultimate end.

Second objection. He who can merit de condigno for others the grace of forgiveness of mortal sin, can likewise satisfy de condigno for the mortal sin of others. But a mere man mercifully justified and constituted the head of the human race could merit de condigno for others the grace of forgiveness of sin, which is admitted by several Thomists, such as John of St. Thomas. Therefore this mere man could satisfy de condigno for the mortal sin of others.

Reply. I deny the major, because there is no parity between merit and satisfaction. Merit is the right to a proportionate reward in accordance with distributive justice, whereas satisfaction concerns the equal compensation of another, in accordance with the standard of commutative justice, by making equivalent reparation for the wrong done. Hence this mere man would give only a modified satisfaction that would fall short of condign satisfaction, and thus God would condone the offense without receiving condign satisfaction, just as the father in family life condones the offense of a younger son on account of the merits of an elder son. Mere man cannot "offer to God offended something He loves equally or even more than He detests the offense."

Another objection. The incarnate Word did not have a higher degree of virtue than the non-incarnate Word. But the incarnate Word could satisfy de condigno. Therefore the non-incarnate Word could satisfy de condigno.

Reply. I distinguish the major. That the Word incarnate had also certain virtues properly His own as man, this I concede. Otherwise I deny the major.

I contradistinguish the minor. That the Word incarnate could satisfy as the Word in the divine nature, this I deny. As the incarnate Word, that is, as man, this I concede.

God could have restored the human race by condoning the offense without demanding satisfaction; but as God, He could not have obeyed, suffered, prayed, offered sacrifice of reparation to God, and merited.

But I insist. The non-incarnate Word also had strictly the power to satisfy. The power to satisfy implies any good without admixture of evil. But the non-incarnate Word has whatever is good without any admixture of evil. Therefore the non-incarnate Word has strictly the power to satisfy.

Reply. I distinguish the major; that it implies any good without admixture of moral evil, this I concede; no admixture of physical perfection on the part of created nature, this I deny.

I contradistinguish the minor. That the non-incarnate Word has all good without admixture of any imperfection whatever, this I concede; otherwise, I deny the minor.

In other words, mixed perfections are not contained formally, but only virtually in the non-incarnate Word.

Still I insist. The non-incarnate Word can have formally, without becoming incarnate, strictly the power to satisfy. The Word can assume the angelic nature. But by assuming this nature the Word can satisfy formally. Therefore the Word can satisfy formally without becoming incarnate.

Reply. I concede the major.

I distinguish the minor. That the Word can satisfy by satisfaction improperly so called that is freely accepted by God, let it pass without comment; by satisfaction in the strict sense, as offered by the Word in the human nature for our redemption, this I deny.

In like manner I distinguish the conclusion.

Final objection. Mere man can satisfy for venial sin. But a slight offense is infinite, if the distance between the offender and the offended is infinite.

Reply. The gravity of the offense is not estimated formally from the distance, but it is estimated from the dignity of the person offended; and the dignity of God as the ultimate end is practically denied only by mortal sin.

THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER, IF MAN HAD NOT SINNED, GOD WOULD HAVE BECOME INCARNATE?

State of the question. We are concerned here not only with the fitness of the Incarnation, which was discussed in the first article, but also with the proximate motive of the efficacious decree of the Incarnation: the motive, namely, not on the part of God willing, but on the part of the thing willed; for God does not will one thing on account of another, but He wills one thing to be as a means for the other. The question precisely is this, whether, in virtue of the present decree, God so willed the Incarnation for the redemption of the human race, that if man had not sinned, the Word would not have become incarnate.

At the time of St. Thomas there was difference of opinion among the doctors on this question. Alexander of Hales and St. Albert held it to be more probable in virtue of the present decree, even if man had not sinned, that God would have become incarnate. This thesis was afterward more tenaciously defended by Scotus and the Scotists.

On the contrary, St. Bonaventure and St. Thomas declare it to be more probable that, if man had not sinned, the Word of God would not have become incarnate. St. Thomas claims only greater probability for his answer. In the present article, he says: “It is more fitting to say.”

For a methodical method of procedure in this complex enough question, let us consider:

1) The difficulties of the question as set forth by St. Thomas at the beginning of this article, are arguments in favor of the opposite opinion.

2) The solution of St. Thomas.

3) The stand taken by Scotus.

4) How Cajetan, John of St. Thomas, and Billuart interpret the teaching of St. Thomas.

5) Godoy, Gonet, and Salmanticenses give another interpretation, Capreolus being quoted for this view.

6) The solution of the objections advanced by Scotus against this second interpretation, which seems to be more probable.

Since the question is complex, we must say right at the beginning, that we wish especially to defend this truth, which seems to us to be admitted by all, namely, God willed the Incarnation for the manifestation of His goodness, to show His mercy toward men to be redeemed, as the Creed says, “for our salvation.” We intend and understand nothing else but that: God, by one sole efficacious decree thus willed the Incarnation.

1) The difficulties of the question are evident from the objections posited at the beginning of this article. They are almost the same as those proposed by St. Thomas in one of his earlier works. They reproduce the opinion on this question that was held by Alexander of Hales and St. Albert, an opinion that was afterward developed by Scotus. From these objections it is apparent that St. Thomas had a very good knowledge of the state of the question.

First difficulty. St. Augustine says: “Many other things are to be considered in the incarnation of Christ besides absolution from sin.” Hence, even if man had not sinned, God would have become incarnate. In that event, He would not have been the savior and the victim, but the teacher, the mediator, the King of kings for all mankind.

Second difficulty. The purpose of God in creating is to manifest His goodness and omnipotence; but it belongs to God, s omnipotence to perfect His works by some infinite effect, namely, by the Incarnation.

Third difficulty. Human nature has not been made more capable of grace by sin. But after sin it is capable of the grace of the hypostatic union. Therefore, if man had not sinned, human nature would have been capable of this greatest grace, nor would God have withheld from it any good of which it was capable.

Fourth difficulty. God’s predestination is eternal. But Christ, as man, was predestined to be truly the Son of God. Therefore, in virtue of this predestination, even before sin, the Incarnation was a necessity.

Fifth difficulty. The mystery of the Incarnation was revealed to the first man in his state of innocence without any reference to his future sin for which reparation must be made.

For these reasons, Alexander of Hales, St. Albert, and later on Scotus deemed it more probable that the Word would have become incarnate even if man had not sinned.

This question assumes no less importance if it be proposed as follows: What is the fundamental trait of Christ? Is it to be the Savior and victim, or

preferably to be the teacher, King of kings, Lord of all? Is it only of secondary importance that He is the Savior and victim?

St. Thomas' conclusion in the body of this article is the following. "It is more fitting to say that the work of the Incarnation was ordained by God as a remedy for sin, so that, had sin not existed, the Incarnation would not have been. And yet the power of God is not limited to this; even had sin not existed, God could have become incarnate."

St. Thomas in one of his earlier works gives this opinion as probable, in fact, as more probable. Similarly, in another of his commentaries, he says: "We do not know what God would have ordained (by another decree) if He had not foreknown the sin of man. Nevertheless, authoritative writers seem to state expressly that God would not have become incarnate if man had not sinned. I incline more to this view."

Proof. St. Thomas proves his conclusion by one argument, for, as we shall immediately see, there is no distinction between the argument "sed contra" and the argument in the body of this article, but he combines them into one argument, which may be presented by the following syllogism.

What depends solely on the will of God, and beyond all to which the creature is entitled, can be made known to us only inasmuch as it is contained in Sacred Scripture.

But everywhere in Sacred Scripture the sin of the first man is assigned as the reason for the Incarnation.

Therefore it is more fitting to say, since it seems to be more in accordance with the meaning of Sacred Scripture, that the sin of the first man is the reason of the Incarnation. This conclusion is both more and less than a theological conclusion. It is more because it appears to be the meaning of Sacred Scripture; it is less because it is not absolutely certain.

The major is evident, because what depends on the most free will of God is known only to Himself, nor is there any other way by which supernatural gifts can be made known except through revelation, which is contained in Sacred Scripture and also in tradition. Hence the Scripture says: "For who among men is he that can know the counsel of God? Or who can think what the will of God is."

Proof of minor. Christ Himself testifies, saying: "They that are whole, need not the physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the just, but sinners to penance." And again: "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." St. Paul says: "Christ Jesus came into the world

to save sinners." Elsewhere he writes: "God sent His Son made of a woman, made under the law, that He might redeem those who were under the law." The beloved Apostle testifies: "God so loved the world, as to send His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting." St. John the Baptist on seeing Jesus, says: "Behold the Lamb of God... who taketh away the sin of the world." Likewise the Old Testament assigns the healing of the contrite of heart and the abolition of iniquity from the land, as the only reasons for the promise and expectation of the Moreover, the name Jesus signifies Savior.

But Sacred Scripture does not say explicitly that this reason for the Incarnation is the only possible one, and it speaks with reference to us men and our salvation. Hence the argument from this point of view is not apodictic.

But this argument drawn from Sacred Scripture is fully confirmed by tradition. The Council of Nicaea, in the symbol which, too, the Church sings, says: "Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven. And was made flesh by the Holy Ghost, and was made man." Likewise, in the Council of Sens and by Innocent II, Abelard's proposition was condemned, which said: "Christ did not assume our human nature in order to deliver us from the devil's yoke."

The Fathers insist upon the above-quoted passages when speaking about the motive of the Incarnation.

St. Irenaeus says: "If no flesh had to be saved, the Word of God would not at all have become flesh."

St. Cyril of Alexandria remarks: "If we had not sinned, the Son of God would not have become like unto us."

Other Fathers may be quoted. Thus, St. Athanasius writes: "The Word by no means would have become man unless the necessity of mankind had been the cause."

St. Gregory Nazianzen declares: "But what was the reason for God to assume our human nature for our sake? Assuredly that He might prepare the way to heaven for us; for what other reason can there be?"

St. Chrysostom, the head of the Greek Church, likewise says: "He assumed this human nature of ours solely on account of His mercy, that He might have mercy on us; there is no other reason whatever than this alone for dispensing us from our obligation." This means to say that the

proximate motive of the efficacious decree of the Incarnation was formally the motive of mercy.

Finally also St. Augustine, the head of the Latin Church, is quoted in the counterargument of this article, who says: “If man had not sinned, the Son of man would not have come.” And elsewhere he says: “Since Adam was made, namely, a righteous man, there was no need of a mediator. But when sins had separated the human race far from God, it was necessary for us to be reconciled to God through a mediator.” The testimony of the gloss, quoted in the counterargument, must be added to the above quotations, namely: “Take away diseases, take away wounds, and there is no need of medicine.”

The Scotists say that these texts from Sacred Scripture and the Fathers prove only that, if Adam had not sinned, Christ would not have come in passible flesh, or as the physician and Savior.

The Thomists reply that in such a case the statements of the Fathers, asserting absolutely, simply, and without restrictions, that Christ would not have come if Adam had not sinned, would be false; or there would certainly be much equivocation concealed in their words. Thus the following affirmation would be false. Christ is not in the Eucharist meaning: He is not in the Eucharist in passible flesh.

But St. Augustine says, as quoted above: “If man had not sinned, the Son of man would not have come,” whereas he ought to have said: He would have come indeed but not in passible flesh, as the Redeemer.

The Scotists also appeal to the words of St. Paul, who says of Christ: “Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature, for in Him were all things created in heaven and on earth.... Al] things were created by Him and in Him. And He is before all, and by Him all things consist.”

Concerning this text the Thomists remark that, even if these words refer not only to the Word before the Incarnation, but also to Christ, yet they do not express the proximate motive of the Incarnation, but that Christ is above every creature, by reason of His personality.

Hence many authors say that the opinion of St. Thomas and of St. Bonaventure has its foundation more in the testimony of the Scripture and the Fathers.

Therefore, because of this fundamental argument, St. Thomas rightly says in his conclusion: “Hence, since everywhere in the Sacred Scripture

the sin of the first man is assigned as the reason of the Incarnation, it is more in accordance with this to say that the work of the Incarnation was ordained by God as a remedy for sin; so that, had sin not existed, the Incarnation would not have been," at least in virtue of the present decree; but it could have been regardless of sin in virtue of another decree. This means that the proximate motive of the Incarnation was formally the motive of mercy, namely, to alleviate the misery of the human race.

Confirmation. The Thomists present a second argument which serves as a complete corroboration of the preceding.

Since God's efficacious decrees are not modified by Him, but from eternity include also all the circumstances of the thing to be produced, the present efficacious decree of the Incarnation from eternity includes the passibility of the flesh. But, as the Scotists concede, the incarnation in passible flesh, supposes the fall. Therefore, in virtue of the present decree, the Word incarnate would not have existed if man had not sinned.

Explanation of the major. God's efficacious decree includes all the circumstances of the things to be produced, because it is an act of most perfect prudence, which attends to all the circumstances of the object, inasmuch as it is concerned with all the particulars that can and must be done right at the moment. The difference between God and us consists in this, that we intend many things even as much as these efficaciously be in our power, although we do not attend to all the detailed circumstances, because these do not come under our observation simultaneously but successively, nor can we foresee with certainty the absolutely fortuitous circumstances even of the morrow. On the contrary, God knows all future things from eternity, and nothing happens without either a positive or permissive decree of His will, positive as regards that which is real and good, permissive as regards evil. Hence God's positive efficacious decree, since it is most prudent, includes all the circumstances of the thing to be produced. Hence God, different from us, does not modify His efficacious decrees, and consequently the efficacious decree of the Incarnation in passible flesh, so that de facto the Incarnation takes place, is the only one issued by God, and this decree, as the Scotists concede, supposes the fall of the human race. Therefore, in virtue of the present efficacious decree, if man had not sinned, the Word would not have become incarnate.

Therefore the Scotists ought to say that the decree of the Incarnation considered in itself and not in passible flesh is a conditional and

inefficacious decree, like God's antecedent will of saving the human race, because it is directed to something considered in itself, abstracting, as it were, from particular circumstances of time and place. But it must be added in virtue of the present inefficacious decree, nothing comes into being, for no being or anything good is produced, because these can be produced only according to conditions right at the moment, and at the moment nothing is realized, for the conditional and inefficacious decree does not refer to the existence of things. Hence, in virtue of this particular, inefficacious decree, the Word de facto would not, right in the present circumstances, have become incarnate either in passible or in impassible flesh.

Instance. But perhaps this argument proves only that the reparation of sin was an indispensable condition for the coming of Christ. It does not follow as an immediate consequence that this indispensable condition was the proximate motive of the Incarnation, because not every indispensable condition is the motive of one's action.

Reply. We say that the Scripture assigns this condition as the motive, and no other proximate motive is assigned to this condition, except the common and ultimate motive in all God's works, which is the manifestation of His goodness or His glory.

This argument is most forceful. In fact, it appears to be apodictic, inasmuch as it is equivalent to saying that God, unlike us, does not afterward make a change in what He has efficaciously decreed to bring into being. These decrees are, from the moment of their utterance, most perfect and include future circumstances even to the least detail. Thus, in like manner it was decreed by God that Peter was to attain eternal glory only by way of penance after his threefold denial, which was permitted by God. This argument holds good against the opinion of Suarez.

Objection. The election of Peter to heaven is an efficacious decree. But this decree does not include in its object all the circumstances, for instance, whether Peter will reach heaven by means of martyrdom, for this pertains to a subsequent decree. Therefore not every efficacious decree includes all the circumstances.

Reply. I distinguish the major. The election of Peter to heaven is an efficacious decree of the end, this I concede; of the means, this I deny.

I contradistinguish the minor. That the decree does not include all the circumstances of the means, this I concede; of the end, this I deny.

Although the decree concerning the end virtually contains the decree concerning the means.

Thus Peter's election to heaven includes a certain degree of glory for this individual person, together with all the associated circumstances. Similarly, therefore, the decree of the Incarnation ought to terminate in the individual Christ, right now to be born of the Virgin Mary, in passible flesh, just as it actually happened.

The Scotists insist saying: I can decree efficaciously that someone must be paid a debt of one hundred dollars, not considering whether this debt is to be paid in gold or silver.

Reply.

1. We mortals can certainly do so, for our decrees are from the beginning imperfect, often vaguely expressed, especially if they concern something to be fulfilled in the future.

2. Moreover, the aforesaid decree concerns the end, namely, the price to be paid, not the means by which it is to be paid.

3. This decree does not concern the production of the thing, but the use of a thing already produced, namely, of a sum of gold or silver. On the contrary, the efficacious decree of the Incarnation concerns a thing to be produced right now, hence in passible flesh, as it actually happened. Therefore this argument rests on very solid grounds, that is, after the Incarnation has become an accomplished fact.

Confirmation of proof. St. Thomas confirms his proof by the solution of the objections which he placed at the beginning of this, his third article.

The first objection was proposed by St. Augustine, who says: "Many other things are to be considered in the Incarnation of Christ besides absolution from sin."

Reply to first objection. "All the other causes which are assigned in the preceding article have to do with a remedy for sin," since, by the Incarnation man is withdrawn from evil and given the greatest of incentives to practice the virtues of faith, hope, and charity.

We must also concede that God, in the decree of the Incarnation, besides the redemption of the human race, had in mind as the ultimate and common end of all His works, the manifestation of His goodness or of His glory; but now it is a question of the proximate motive of the Incarnation, namely, whether it is connected with sin.

The second objection was: It belongs to God's omnipotence to manifest Himself by some infinite effect.

Reply to second objection. "The infinity of divine power is shown in the mode of production of things from nothing. Again, it suffices for the perfection of the universe that the creature be ordained in a natural manner to God as to an end (that is, in the purely natural state). But that a creature should be united to God in person exceeds the limits of the perfection of nature." Therefore, this constitutes the object of a most free decree, the motive of which is made manifest only by revelation.

The third objection was: Human nature has not been made more capable of the grace of the hypostatic union by sin. Therefore, if man had not sinned, God would have willed the Incarnation.

Reply to third objection. St. Thomas concedes the antecedent. He distinguishes the consequent, and concedes that, if man had not sinned, human nature was capable obediential of the Incarnation; that it would de facto have been raised to the dignity of the hypostatic union in virtue of the present decree, this he denies.

The whole of this beautiful reply to the third objection must be read, because it is of great importance.

There are two things to be noted in this reply.

1) The obediential power concerns a supernatural agent, namely, God whom it obeys; but God, who is absolutely free, does not always complete this obediential power, though He sometimes does so, and gratuitously.

2) "But there is no reason," says St. Thomas, "why human nature should not have been raised to something greater (de facto) after sin. God allows evils to happen in order to bring a greater good therefrom. Hence it is written (Rom. 5:20): 'Where sin abounded grace did more abound.' Hence too, in the blessing of the paschal candle, we say: 'O happy fault, that merited such and so great a Redeemer. "

Thus it is confirmed that the motive of the Incarnation was formally the motive of mercy, and, moreover, it is evident that God permitted original sin for a greater good, which is the redemptive Incarnation. Thus causes are to each other causes, though in a different order. In the order of material cause to be perfected, the merciful uplifting of the fallen human race precedes the redemptive Incarnation; but this latter precedes the fall in the order of final cause or of greater good for which reason sin of the first man is permitted. Thus the body of this particular embryo in the order of material cause to be

perfected precedes the creation and infusion of this particular soul, and yet this latter precedes the embryo in the order of final cause, for this soul would not be created unless the embryo were disposed to receive it.

Several Thomists insist on this point, as we shall see, such as Godoi, Gonet, Salmanticenses, whose interpretation is already contained in this reply to the third objection, which was not sufficiently considered by John of St. Thomas and Billuart.

The fourth objection was: Christ as man was eternally predestined to be the natural Son of God. But predestination is always fulfilled. Therefore even before sin, it was necessary for the Son of God to become incarnate.

St. Thomas replies: “Predestination presupposes the foreknowledge of future things; and hence, as God predestines the salvation of anyone (for example, of Augustine, to be brought about by the prayers of others, for example, of St. Monica), so also He predestined the work of the Incarnation to be the remedy of human sin.”

This reply of St. Thomas to the fourth objection requires a brief explanation. “Predestination,” says St. Thomas, “presupposes the foreknowledge of future things,” not indeed of all future things. Certainly St. Thomas does not mean that it presupposes the foreknowledge of merits, for then he would contradict himself; but predestination presupposes the foreknowledge of certain future things. Thus, when God predestines Peter, He first wills him eternal life in the order of final cause, but previously in the order of material cause He wills him individuation by means of matter by which he is constituted as Peter. Similarly, when it is a question of the whole human race and of Christ’s predestination as the Redeemer of the human race, this predestination presupposes the foreseeing of Adam’s sin in the order of material cause only. Likewise a foreseen persecution is the occasion for someone being predestined to the grace of martyrdom. The Thomists consider the person of the predestined, native talents, and other natural gifts, temperament, to be effects postulated by predestination, which follow it in the order of final cause. And as Augustine would not have attained eternal life if St. Monica had not prayed for him, so if man had not sinned, the Word would not have become incarnate.

This reply must be correctly understood, so that it be not interpreted as contrary to a previous conclusion,. which stated that the foreknowledge of merits is not the cause of predestination, because the merits of the elect are, on the contrary, the effects of their predestination.

Cajetan explains this point well. He remarks that, when St. Thomas says in his reply to the fourth objection that "predestination presupposes the foreknowledge of future things," he does not mean "of all future things," for Peter's predestination does not presuppose the foreknowledge of Peter's future eternal happiness, but, on the contrary, the foreknowledge of Peter's future eternal happiness presupposes Peter's predestination to eternal happiness, inasmuch as God foresees future things in the decrees of His will. But St. Thomas means in this case that "predestination presupposes the foreknowledge of some future things which are presupposed by predestination."

Thus St. Thomas considers that Christ's predestination to natural divine sonship presupposes the foreknowledge of sin, since it was to repair this offense that Christ was predestined; for, as Cajetan observes, the ordering of medicine presupposes knowledge of the disease.

But the difficulty is not solved, for Scotus will argue that this dependence of the Incarnation on sin holds good in the order of execution but not in the order of intention of Christ's predestination. For the orderly way of willing for anyone is to will the end and those things nearer to the end, than other inferior things. Thus God wills for anyone, such as Adam, before He saw either His merits or a fortiori His demerits. Therefore a fortiori God wills divine natural sonship to Christ before having foreseen Adam's demerit.

In answer to this objection it can be said, in accordance with the reply to the third objection, what St. Thomas means is that, even in the order of intention, Christ's predestination is dependent on the foreseeing of Adam's sin, not indeed that it is dependent on this latter as being the final cause, but as being the material cause that is to be perfected.

Thus, when God predestines Peter, He first wills him eternal happiness in the order of final cause, and He first wills him individuation from matter already qualified in the embryo, in the order of material cause; and "to them that love God all things work together unto good." He also wills them their physical temperament.

Likewise, when it is a question of the whole human race, and of Christ's predestination as the Redeemer of the human race, this predestination presupposes the foreseeing of Adam's sin in the order of material cause only.

This distinction is made by Cajetan on this point, and, although not everything that he says here on the ordering of the divine decrees

concerning the three orders of nature, grace, and the hypostatic union are true perhaps, nevertheless this distinction must be and is upheld by subsequent Thomists.

For Cajetan replies by distinguishing the antecedent as follows: in the order of final cause, one who wills methodically, wills the end before other things, this I concede; that one does so in the order of disposing cause, which reduces itself to material cause, this I deny

Thus we will first and preferably health to purification in the order of final cause; contrary to this, however, in the order of material or disposing cause we will purification as a means to health.

This distinction has its foundation in the principle that causes mutually interact, and the application of this principle is afterward developed by the Salmanticenses and Gonet, whose interpretation differs somewhat from Cajetan's, as will be stated farther on.

Cajetan concludes: "It is evident that the Incarnation can be willed by God, without such an occasion (i. e., Adam's sin), but it is not evident that it is de facto willed by God independent of such occasion.... We must turn to the Scripture if we wish to know that de facto God ordained that the Incarnation will come to pass, whether Adam did or did not sin. Rut because from the Scripture we have knowledge only of a redemptive Incarnation, we say, although God could have willed the Incarnation even without a future redemption, de facto He willed it only in the redemption; because by revelation, He did not reveal things otherwise to us, and it is only by revelation that we can know His will.... The conclusion is that God willed the greatest good only in conjunction with such less good." Thus, although God could have willed efficaciously the salvation of the whole human race (which to us appears better), it is certain that He willed efficaciously that many be saved, but not all.

Likewise, as Cajetan says: "It is not derogatory to God's wisdom to have disposed things so that He will effect so sublime a good as that (of the Incarnation), sin being only the occasion that urged Him to have mercy.... Therefore we must not on this account rejoice at another's fall (that is, Adam's), but at the mercy of God, who causes the foreseen fall of one to redound to another's good." Hence we conclude that the motive of the Incarnation was formally the motive of mercy, since our salvation was the motive, as stated in the Nicene Creed.

Fifth objection. St. Thomas states that the mystery of the Incarnation was revealed to man in a state of innocence without any reference to future sin. Therefore it has no connection with this sin.

Reply to fifth objection. St. Thomas says: “Nothing prevents an effect from being revealed to one to whom the cause is not revealed.”

What Is Precisely The View Of Scotus?

The question whether Christ was predestined to be the Son of God, affords Scotus the occasion to discuss the problem of the motive of the Incarnation. After replying to the first question in the affirmative, he goes on to show that Christ was predestined as man to the grace of the hypostatic union and to glory independently of the foreseeing of Adam’s sin. Scotus proves his point by seven arguments that have been splendidly reproduced by Cajetan. We shall give here the principal arguments with Cajetan’s replies.

First argument. The predestination of any person whatever to glory precedes naturally, on the part of the object, the foreknowledge of sin or of the damnation of any man whatever. Therefore with far greater reason this is true concerning the predestination of Christ’s soul to supreme glory.

Cajetan replies. He denies the antecedent, because he holds that the foreseeing of sin pertains to the order of general providence, presupposed by the ordering of predestination. But this reply gives rise to many difficulties, since the permission of sin in the life of the predestined, for example, and therefore in the life of Adam himself, is the effect not only of general providence, but also of the predestination of these elect, which itself presupposes the predestination of Christ. Hence theologians in general, and even subsequent Thomists, do not uphold Cajetan in this reply.

But very many Thomists reply as follows. They concede that Christ’s predestination precedes by nature the foreseeing of Adam’s sin in the order of final cause; they deny that it precedes in the order of material or disposing cause.

Thus they concede that Peter’s predestination to glory precedes by nature the foreseeing of his individuation, in the order of final cause; they deny this precedence in the order of material cause. Likewise, one is predestined to the grace of martyrdom, on the occasion of a foreseen persecution.

Second argument. The orderly way of willing is for one to will first the end, and then those things more immediate to the end. Thus God first wills to give heavenly glory to one before grace, and He first wills this to Christ,

and then to the predestined as subordinated to Christ. Moreover, God first wills anyone heavenly glory and grace which He may foresee are in opposition because of sin and its consequences. Therefore God first wills heavenly glory to Christ previous to foreseeing Adam's fall.

Cajetan replies, and this reply is upheld by subsequent Thomists. He distinguishes the major: that the orderly way of willing is for one first to will the end in the order of final cause, this he concedes; in the order of material and disposing cause, this he denies.

By way of example: someone might wish to build the Collegio Angelico in Rome, but has not yet found a suitable place and, having found such a place, his wish of having this college built is realized, or the opportunity offers itself, because he has received the necessary money. Similarly God wills first the soul in the order of final cause, and first the body in the order of material cause, and this particular soul would not be created right at this moment, if this embryonic body were not disposed to receive it. Likewise the Word would not have become incarnate, in virtue of the present decree, unless man had sinned or the human race had to be redeemed.

But you insist. Causes do not mutually interact in the same order. However, this would be the case here in the same order of final cause, if sin is permitted because of this greater good of the Incarnation, and if the Incarnation is willed for our redemption.

Reply. The causes are not in the same order, for sin is permitted because of this greater good of the Incarnation considered as the end for which it is decreed; whereas, on the contrary, the human race to be redeemed stands in relation to the Incarnation in the order of material cause to be perfected, or is the subject to whom the redemptive Incarnation is beneficial. Hence the human race is not called the end for whose sake the Incarnation is decreed, but the end to whom it is beneficial. Therefore the causes are not mutually interactive in the same order. And this very redemption of ours as willed by God, presupposes as a prior requisite in the order of material cause the human race to be redeemed.

So also let us take as example one who saves the life of a boy who, because of his imprudence, falls into the river. The rescuer first wills to save the boy's life in the order of final cause, but he would not save the boy's life unless the boy had fallen into the river, and thus had afforded the other the opportunity to come to his rescue. In like manner, the more solemn dogmatic definitions of the Church are always given on the occasion of

some error that must be rejected, because it is endangering the freedom of souls.

Third argument. Redemption or the heavenly glory of a soul to be redeemed is not so great a good as the glory of Christ's soul. Therefore the Redemption does not seem to be the sole reason why God predestined Christ's soul to so great glory.

Cajetan replies: God could have willed indeed this great good (of Christ's glory) without its being connected with a less good; but from Sacred Scripture it is evident that He willed this greatest good only as connected with such less good. It is not therefore a question of a possibility, but of a fact. God could have willed efficaciously to save the whole human race, for instance, but from Sacred Scripture it is evident that not all are saved, although, by God's help, the fulfillment of His commands is always possible. Herein lies a mystery that must be believed according to the testimony of Sacred Scripture and not to be determined in human fashion by a priori reasoning.

Fourth argument. It is not very likely that a less good is the only reason for the existence of so supreme a good.

Reply. The Thomists say that the Incarnation is not an incidental good in the strict sense, but it is only improperly so called. For that which the agent does not intend and which happens by chance, is called strictly incidental; such is the case when one digs a grave, and finds a treasure, or when one rescues a boy accidentally who happens to fall into the river. That is improperly said to be occasioned which depends on some incident, although it be intended by the agent, as the rescuing of a boy who fell into the river. Thus the Incarnation is an incidental good, and it is fitting that evil be the occasion of eliciting from God so great a good, namely, a good that results from His liberality and mercy, because misery is the reason for commiserating.

Scotus overlooks the fact that many of the finer things in life are improperly incidental, especially many heroic acts, such as saving another's life with danger to one's own, as in the case of shipwreck or of fire. Such are heroic acts performed in defense of one's country, on the occasion of an unjust aggressor; hence the glory acquired by many soldiers is thus incidental. Also incidental are heroic acts in defense of one's faith, such as martyrdom on the occasion of a persecution. The most beautiful dogmatic definitions uttered by the Church on the occasion of the refutation of an

error that is threatening to enslave souls, belong to this class. So it was on the occasion of the rise of Pelagianism and Semi-Pelagianism, that St. Augustine wrote his books On Grace.

But the difference between God and man is that man could not infallibly foresee the occasion that prompted these heroic acts, and so he does them unforeseen. Other arguments of Scotus presented in different aspects repeat the same objection.

The Scotists insist. They say, with Father Chrysostom, that the material cause is not the end (of the Incarnation), nor is the material element in the Incarnation its motive. Therefore the difficulty remains.

Reply. The material element that enters into the redemptive Incarnation is the reason for the Incarnation, since "the alleviation of misery is the reason for commiseration." Thus in this third article, St. Thomas is able to say: "Redemption is the reason for the Incarnation," although the Incarnation is not subordinated to the redemption.

All these objections can be reduced to the following syllogistic argument: God cannot will that the higher order should be subjected to the lower, for this would be the inversion of order, or perversion.

But our redemption is inferior to the Incarnation.

Therefore God cannot will the Incarnation to be for our redemption.

Reply. I distinguish the major. That God cannot will the higher order to be subjected to the lower, as being the perfective and ultimate end, this I concede; that God cannot will the higher for the lower, as being the end that must be perfected or repaired from a motive of mercy, this I deny. For the alleviating of misery, is the reason for commiseration. I concede the minor.

I distinguish the conclusion. That God cannot will the higher order to be subjected to the lower on account of this latter being the perfective and especially the ultimate end, this I concede; as being the end that must be perfected or repaired from a motive of mercy, this I deny.

Thus the Thomists say that the redemption of the human race is not the end for the sake of which the Incarnation is decreed, but it is the material element that enters into the motive of the redemptive Incarnation, or the end for which the Incarnation is beneficial. Thus a doctor visits a sick person, or a priest says Mass for the restoration of somebody's health, for the common good and the glory of God.

Therefore the whole teaching of St. Thomas, of St. Bonaventure, and others is summed up in these words: the motive of the Incarnation was

formally the motive of mercy. As the Psalmist says: “Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am weak.” “Have mercy on me, for I am poor.” “Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am afflicted.”

Cajetan replies most appropriately: “It is not unbefitting God’s wisdom that He was disposed to perform so great a good, only because sin was the occasion that urged Him to be merciful.” “It is because the alleviation of misery is the reason for commiseration,” and divine mercy, alleviating the misery of the human race, is the greatest manifestation of divine goodness and omnipotence. If God’s omnipotence is already made manifest in the creation of a grain of sand from nothing, a fortiori it is shown when He brings good out of evil, and so great a good as eternal life of those justified. St. Thomas says: “In itself mercy is the greatest of virtues (and so it is in God, but not in us, because we have someone above us, who must be honored by the practice of virtues); for it belongs to mercy to be bountiful to others, and, what is more, to succor others in their wants. And this pertains especially to the one who is above others; hence mercy is accounted as being proper to God, and therein His omnipotence is declared to be chiefly manifested.” St. Augustine likewise says: “The justification of the sinner is greater than the creation of heaven and earth; for heaven and earth shall pass away, but the justification of the ungodly shall endure.” But since misery is the reason for having mercy, the alleviation of misery is more the matter about which mercy is concerned; it is the motive of mercy, not indeed as constituting the perfective end, but as being the end in the order of redemption.

In this there is no inversion of orders. There would indeed be a perversion of orders if the higher were ordained for the lower, as if this latter were the ultimate and perfective end; but not, if by way of mercy, the higher is ordered to the lower end for its perfection or reparation.

Thus it is that the Son of God through His incarnation certainly stoops down to us with sublime mercy, so that the saints are moved to tears at the thought of it. But by thus lowering Himself, He in no way subordinates Himself to us; on the contrary, in alleviating our misery, He restores the original subordination, by making us again subordinate to Himself and God the Father. Thus God, by mercifully lowering Himself, has most splendidly made manifest His goodness and omnipotence, since “to have mercy belongs especially to one who is above others.”

In God, inasmuch as He has nobody above Him to whom He would owe allegiance, the greatest of all virtues is mercy, and misery is the reason for being merciful. Thus the beginning of a certain collect reads: “O God, who, more than in all things else, showest forth Thine almighty power by sparing and by having mercy.” Therefore Scotus did not destroy the demonstrative middle term of this article.

The preceding doctrine is certainly what St. Thomas taught. On this point, he wrote: “God therefore did not assume human nature because He loved man, absolutely speaking, more than angels; but because the needs of man were greater; just as the master of a house may give to a sick servant some costly delicacy that he does not give to his own son in sound health.” He also says: “Nor did anything of Christ’s excellence diminish when God delivered Him up to death for the salvation of the human race; rather did He become thereby a glorious conqueror” Of sin, the devil, and death.

The thesis of St. Thomas, as proposed by him, is most convincing inasmuch as he declares mercy to be the motive of the Incarnation; wherefore Christ was the first of the predestined, but He was predestined as Savior and victim, as the victor of sin, the devil, and death. This title of Savior belongs primarily to Christ, as expressed in the name Jesus, which signifies Savior. This title belongs more fundamentally to Him than do such titles as Doctor, or King of kings, Lord of lords.

Christian faith itself seems to teach this doctrine, although the Scripture does not say that mercy was the indispensable motive of the Incarnation. This doctrine is also most beneficial in the spiritual order. urging us to imitate Christ and show zeal for souls.

Cajetan remarks that, as in the act of hope I desire God for myself, because God is my final end (since God is the ultimate end of this act of hope), so Christ is given to us (for our sake or as our end), for the glorification of God (who is the ultimate end for which God performs all His works). Thus the Incarnation is not subordinated to our redemption, but is its eminent cause. Thus contemplation is not subordinated to apostolic action, which must result from the fullness of contemplation, this being its higher source, as St. Thomas points out. Therefore, no matter what the Scotists may say, the words of St. Paul still apply, who says: “For all are yours. And you are Christ’s. And Christ is God’s” In this Thomistic thesis, Christ is not subordinated to us, but we are subordinated to Him.

Agreement and disagreement between Thomists. They all agree upon the principal conclusion as explicitly formulated by St. Thomas, which is: If Adam had not sinned, the Word would not have become incarnate.

But they are not altogether in agreement concerning a secondary issue.

Several Thomists, adopting the views of Cajetan, such as John of St. Thomas and Billuart, refuse to answer the question, why God permitted Adam's sin and original sin. Moreover, they multiply divine conditional decrees. According to their views: (1) God willed the natural order; (2) the elevation of the human race to the supernatural order; (3) He permitted the sin of the first man; (4) He decreed the redemptive Incarnation in passible flesh.

Other Thomists, such as the Salmanticenses, Godoy, Gonet, and very many of more recent times, insisting on what St. Thomas remarks in this article, and elsewhere, say: Certainly God permits evil only because of a greater good. This doctrine is certain and de fide, otherwise God's permission of sin would not be a holy act. It cannot indeed be said a priori that God permitted original sin because of some greater good, but, after the fact of the Incarnation, it appears that God permitted original sin because of the redemptive Incarnation, so that the redemption of the fallen human race is prior in the order of material cause to be perfected, and the redemptive Incarnation is prior in the order of final cause. This distinction is made by Cajetan in his commentary on this article, but much of its force is lost inasmuch as he multiplies exceedingly the divine decrees, so different from what he wrote earlier in his commentary.

Moreover, these Thomists say that divine conditional decrees must not be multiplied, for this multiplication results from the weakness of our intellect, and we must do our best to overcome this defect. Hence God, previous to any decree, saw by His knowledge of simple intelligence all possible worlds with all their contents, just as the architect has in mind various possible houses and all their component parts. Thus God had in mind a sinless world not in need of redemption, but brought to perfection by the example of the Word incarnate; also another possible world, in which man sinned, and which was perfected by the redemptive Incarnation. God chose de facto, by a single decree, this latter, in which, therefore, the redemptive Incarnation is prior in the order of final causality (as the soul is prior to the body), and the reparation of the fallen human race is prior in the order of material causality to be perfected, as the body is prior to the soul.

This second interpretation is entirely in conformity with the reply given by St. Thomas to the third objection of this article, and also with a previous statement in his Summa, in which he says: “God loves Christ not only more than He loves the whole human race, but more than He loves the entire created universe, because He willed for Him the greater good in giving Him a name that is above all names, so far as He was true God. Nor did anything of His excellence diminish when God delivered Him up to death for the salvation of the human race; rather did He become thereby a glorious conqueror,” namely, of sin, the devil, and death.

This reply of these Thomists is also precisely what St. Thomas says in his reply to the third objection of this article, in which he quotes the words of St. Paul: “Where sin abounded, grace did more abound,” and of the liturgy: “O happy fault, that merited such and so great a Redeemer!”

And St. Augustine says in his commentary on the forty-seventh psalm: “Therefore Adam fell for our resurrection,” which means that God permitted Adam’s sin for this greater good of the redemptive Incarnation.

Moreover, the divine decrees must not be multiplied without necessity; for this frequency of recourse to divine decrees has its foundation in the imperfection of our manner of understanding the divine decrees. In fact, it is evident that various events of the natural order, such as the death of a good person from some disease, which at first sight seems to depend solely on natural causes and the general provisions of Providence, are to be attributed to the supernatural operation of predestination. Therefore it is apparent that God, by a single decree, willed this present world with its three orders of nature, grace, and the hypostatic union.

The Liberty Of The Decree Concerning The Incarnation: A Comparison Between The Doctrine Of St. Thomas And That Of Scotus

On first consideration, it is surprising that St. Thomas, who is an intellectualist, should say: Since the Incarnation is a most free and absolutely gratuitous gift of God, its motive can be known only by revelation; whereas Scotus, who is a voluntarist inclined to liberalism, wishes to establish this motive of the Incarnation by arguments or quasi a priori reasonings, as the extreme intellectualists do, such as Leibnitz and Malebranche, who say that the Incarnation is morally necessary so that the world may be the best of all possible worlds.

The reason for this difference of opinion between St. Thomas and Scotus seems to consist in this, that St. Thomas, because of his moderate

intellectualism, distinguished exactly between the order of nature and the order of grace, by establishing the proper object of the created intellect, whether human or angelic. Hence St. Thomas fully acknowledges God's perfect liberty in elevating the human nature (or the angelic) to the order of grace, and a fortiori to the hypostatic union. Thus his moderate intellectualism most correctly acknowledges the rights of divine liberty.

On the contrary, Scotus, in virtue of his voluntarism does not succeed in distinguishing so exactly between the orders of nature and of grace; he says that there is in our nature an innate appetite and not merely one that is elicited for the beatific vision, and he adds that, if God had so willed, the beatific vision would be natural for us.

Hence he is inclined to regard the supernatural order as the complement of the natural order, and the hypostatic order as the complement and quasi-normal consummation of the supernatural order. Thus he does not acknowledge sufficiently the rights of divine liberty as regards this twofold elevation; and he speaks finally, almost like the absolute intellectualists of the Leibnitz type, who think that the Incarnation is morally necessary for the world to be the best of all possible worlds. Thus extremes meet.

Absolute intellectualism reduces to an ideal right the accomplished fact. Absolute libertism reduces the right itself to an accomplished fact.

These two systems are in the inverse order, but practically they meet, because both admit that the accomplished fact is the same as the ideal right, and success is identical with morality; yet the followers of the former system insist on the right, whereas the followers of the latter system insist on the accomplished fact. But moderate intellectualism lies between these two extremes, because it safeguards both the validity of the first principles of reason and true liberty, which latter is denied by absolute intellectualism.

Thus in Thomism the Incarnation is seen to be the supreme fact of the entire universe, but it is a contingent fact in which God's most free and gratuitous love for us is made manifest by way of mercy. "For God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son."

Thus this thesis of St. Thomas, if we compare it with his other theses on moderate intellectualism and liberty, has a deep significance, for it means that, in the supernatural order, inasmuch as this order is gratuitous, divine liberty reigns supreme and its predilection is most free, the motive of which can be known only by revelation. But the discarding of this principle results in the incomplete understanding of several fundamental utterances in the

supernatural order, suck as the following words of St. Paul: “But the foolish things of the world hath God chosen that He may confound the wise;... and things that are not, that He might bring to nought things that are.”

But these questions are most profound, and their solution has caused great intellects to take opposite views.

Spiritual corollaries. These corollaries are developed in another book, in which the doctrine of St. Thomas on the motive of the Incarnation is explained not so much scholastically as spiritually. These corollaries are as follows:

1) It follows from this doctrine that it is not something accidental that Christ is the Savior, both priest and victim. This is the dominant trait of Jesus, as the name indicates. Jesus is not especially King of kings and sublime Doctor who happened to become the Savior of humanity and victim on account of the fall of the human race. No, but in virtue of the present decree He came principally and primarily as the Savior of men. His entire life was directed to this final end, namely, the sacrifice on the cross.

2) Christ thus appears nobler, and the unity of His life is better made manifest, since it is the unity of the Savior’s life, who is merciful and also victorious over sin, the devil, and death.

3) Wherefore Christ calls the hour of the Passion “My hour” as if it were pre-eminently this.

4) Therefore in the present economy of salvation, it is not something accidental in the sanctification of souls, that they must carry their cross daily in union with our Savior, as He Himself says.

5) Hence for sanctity, even great sanctity, learning is not necessary, nor the performance of many external works; it suffices for a person to be conformed to the image of Christ crucified, as in the case of St. Benedict Joseph Labre of the seventeenth century, who showed himself a living image of Christ in his poverty and love of the cross.

6) Finally it follows, as St. Thomas explains in his treatise on the effects of baptism, that sanctifying grace in the redeemed is strictly the grace of Christ, for it is not only a participation of the divine nature as in Adam and the angels before the Fall, but it makes us conformable to Christ the Redeemer, and by it we are made living members of His mystical body. Wherefore this grace, inasmuch as it is the grace of Christ, disposes us to live in Christ the Redeemer by a love of the cross, for it disposes us to make

reparation for our own sins and the sins of others, inasmuch as the living members of Christ must help one another in the attainment of salvation.

Therefore, it is only after a period of painful probation that any Christian ideal and any Christian society produces true fruits of salvation, for our Lord says: “Unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, itself remaineth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.”

Thus Christians are made conformable to Christ, who said of Himself to the disciples on the way to Emmaus: “Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into His glory?” Hence St. Paul says: “We are heirs indeed of God and joint heirs with Christ; yet so, if we suffer with Him that we may be also glorified with Him.”

These spiritual corollaries are deduced from this teaching.

A certain special opinion. It has been held by some in recent times that so far the question is always presented unfavorably since it always appears in a hypothetical form, namely, “Whether, if man had not sinned, God would have become incarnate.” “For,” as they say, “if man had not sinned (or in this supposition), there would be another order absolutely different from the present order, and what would have happened in such an order God alone can know.” The proper way of positing the question, according to these theologians, must be by presenting it in the form of a positive and universal proposition, that is, “What is the adequate universal reason for the Incarnation in the present order?” Father Roschini replies to this question as follows: “The primary reason of the Incarnation is God’s free election from all eternity of the present order with all that is included in it; inasmuch as only the present order exactly corresponds to the measure and mode likewise freely prearranged by God, by which He willed to bestow His goodness ad extra and hence procure extrinsic glory.”

An answer to Father Roschini’s view appeared in the Angelicum; its gist is as follows: The question posited by the Scholastics concerns the present order, and a new way of presenting the question is outside the scope of the present problem, and brings us only to the common truth that is admitted by all schools of thought. It is most certain to all theologians that the Incarnation depends on God’s free choice of the present order, and what He has ordained for the manifestation of His goodness. This is God’s supreme reason, but, now the question is, what is His proximate reason?

Evidently the hypothetical question put by the great Scholastics concerns the present order; namely, in virtue of the present decree, if we make

abstraction of the sin of the first man, would the Word have become incarnate? This abstraction is not a lie, nor does it change the order of the thing considered. It is the same as asking: Would the soul of this particular man have been created if his body in his mother's womb was not sufficiently developed to be informed by it? Or we might ask: Will this temple remain intact if this particular column is removed? The truth of a conditional proposition, as logic teaches, depends solely on the connection between the condition and the conditioned.

Hence in replying to the objection, we say: If man had not sinned, the present order of things would be changed, I distinguish: if it meant there would be a change in virtue of another decree, this I concede; in virtue of the present decree, this I deny.

As stated in the above-mentioned reply to Father Roschini: "The reasoning of the Scholastics is not, and cannot be, other than this, otherwise how are we to explain the fact that those doctors are so eager in their futile search, concerning which nothing for certain can ever be known?... Without saying, then, what to attribute to those ponderous and so circumspect theologians, with St. Thomas as their leader, a general view of the case would justify us in considering them at least as scholars."

St. Thomas would have improperly stated the question, or would not have corrected the question improperly stated, a question that is even useless, and of course quite irrelevant.

But it is true to say, with the holy Doctor, that in speaking of another order of things, "We do not know what (God) would have ordained, if He had not had previous knowledge of sin." St. Thomas says the same in the present article, for he writes: "And yet the power of God is not limited to this; even had sin not existed, God could have become incarnate, namely, in another order of things."

Final Conclusion: The Motive Of The Incarnation

Therefore it must simply be said that God willed the Incarnation for the manifestation of His goodness by way of mercy for the redemption of the human race, or "for our salvation," as stated in the Creed.

Those who admit, as the Thomists do, one efficacious decree concerning the redemptive Incarnation in passible flesh, by this very fact must say with St. Thomas that, in virtue of the present decree, "if Adam had not sinned, the Word would not have become incarnate," or, expressed affirmatively, it must be said that, in the present decree, the redemptive Incarnation

supposes the fall of the human race to be redeemed, although this fall was permitted for a greater good, which is the redemptive Incarnation. Thus the creation of the soul presupposes that the embryonic body is sufficiently disposed, and this sufficient predisposition was willed and produced by God for the soul. Causes mutually interact though in a different order, without implying a vicious circle. It would be a vicious circle if we were to say that the permission of Adam's sin was on account of the Incarnation, and that the Incarnation took place because of the permission of Adam's sin. The truth is that the Incarnation took place, not on account of the permission of sin, but for its reparation.

It would likewise be a vicious circle to say that men are for the sake of Christ, and in the same way Christ is for the sake of men. But it is true to say that Christ is the destined end of men, and men are the end to whom the redemptive Incarnation is beneficial.

Hence the truth of the assertion is established, that God willed the Incarnation as a manifestation of His goodness by showing His mercy toward men for their redemption, or "for our salvation," as stated in the Creed.

FOURTH ARTICLE: WHETHER GOD BECAME INCARNATE IN ORDER TO TAKE AWAY ACTUAL SIN, RATHER THAN TO TAKE AWAY ORIGINAL SIN?

The reply is in the affirmative.

Scriptural proof. We read in the Gospel: "Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world," that is, as St. Bede says, the sin that is common to the whole human race. St. John wrote "the sin of the world."

But the principal text is quoted in the body of the article, in which we read: "For judgment indeed was by one[i. e., by Adam] unto condemnation... as by the offense of one, unto all men to condemnation: so also by the justice of one [i. e., of Christ], unto all men to justification of life."

This purpose of the Incarnation of the Son of God is likewise expressly affirmed in a provincial council and also to some extent in the Council of Trent.

Theological proof. It includes two conclusions.

1) Christ came to take away all sins, because He came to save men, and all sins are an obstacle to salvation.

2) St. Thomas proves that Christ came first of all to take away original sin, since this sin is absolutely greater extensively, inasmuch as it extends to the whole human race, by which the race is infected; although actual sin is greater intensively, because it has more of the nature of voluntary.

Hence in virtue of the present decree, it is probable that Christ came also only to take away original sin, but not solely for the taking away of actual sins; because, if there had been no original sin, this would eliminate the more important reason for the Incarnation. Moreover, in virtue of the present decree, Christ came in passible and mortal flesh; but, if there had been no original sin, His flesh would have been neither passible nor mortal.

FIFTH ARTICLE: WHETHER IT WAS FITTING THAT GOD SHOULD BECOME INCARNATE IN THE BEGINNING OF THE HUMAN RACE?

The answer is in the negative. But He came “in the fullness of time” as St. Paul says.

For it was not fitting that God become incarnate before sin, since the Incarnation is for the redemption of the human race; nor was the Incarnation fitting immediately after sin, and this for three reasons.

1) That man, being humbled, would more readily acknowledge the seriousness of the disease and the necessity of Redemption, and so would cry out for it.

2) That the human race might gradually be led from imperfection to perfection by means of the natural law, the Mosaic law, and the Gospel.

3) Because it befitted the dignity of the Word incarnate that His coming be announced by the prophets.

SIXTH ARTICLE: WHETHER THE INCARNATION OUGHT TO HAVE BEEN PUT OFF TILL THE END OF THE WORLD?

St. Thomas denies this, but says it was fitting for the Incarnation to take place “in the fullness of time,” as stated by St. Paul, or morally speaking “in the midst of the years.”

Three reasons are given.

1) Because it is not fitting that the efficient cause of perfection be put off so long a time.

2) Because at the end of the world there would have been almost no knowledge of God among men.

3) Because it was fitting that the salvation of the human race be effected by faith in the Savior, not only by faith in some future thing but also by faith in something present and past.

Thus the question of the fitness of the Incarnation has been sufficiently examined both as to its relative necessity for the reparation of the human race, and its absolute necessity as regards condign reparation. The proximate motive of the Incarnation has also been considered, which was formally the motive of mercy, namely, the alleviation of the human race from its misery, or “for our salvation,” as the Nicene Creed says.

Having discussed the fact of the Incarnation, we now come to consider its nature.

CHAPTER IV: QUESTION 2

PROLOGUE: THE MODE OF THE UNION OF THE WORD INCARNATE

St. Thomas has the following considerations about this mode of union.

1) The union itself (q. 2).

2) The person assuming the human nature (q. 3).

3) The nature assumed and the perfections or defects of this assumed nature (q. 4-15).

Then the consequences of this union will be discussed, namely, as regards being, volition, and operation.

Hence this second question is about the essence of the Incarnation, or about the hypostatic union.

This second question contains twelve articles, and is divided into three parts.

The first part (a. 1-6) discusses what is and what is not the nature of this union. It inquires 1. whether the union took place in the nature; 2. or in the person; 3. or in the suppositum; 4. whether the person of Christ is composite; 5. what is the union of body and soul in Christ?

Thus the question is gradually solved, and the sixth article, which is of great importance, unites the preceding articles, by asking whether the human nature was united to the Word accidentally.

The second part considers the union with reference to the divine actions, which are creation and assumption (a. 7, 8).

The third part considers the union with reference to grace: Is it the greatest of unions (a. g)? Did it come about by grace (a. 10)? Was it the result of merit? Was the grace of union natural to the man Christ (a. 12)?

This second question virtually contains the whole treatise on the Incarnation, just as the third question of the first part of the Summa in which God is defined as the self-subsisting Being, virtually contains the whole treatise on the One God.

As regards the order of the questions, it must be noted that in the Summa Theologica St. Thomas follows the logical order rather than the historical, whereas in the Contra Gentes (Book IV, q. 27 f.) he follows primarily the historical order by refuting the various heresies that arose concerning the Incarnation.

Heresies concerning the Incarnation. For an understanding of the articles of this question, a brief explanation must be given of the principal heresies condemned by the Church: Arianism, Apollinarianism, Nestorianism, Monophysitism, and Eutychianism.

A threefold division is made in these heresies, inasmuch as some erred concerning the divinity of Christ, others denied His humanity, and finally some erred about the union of the two natures.

God permits errors so that by opposing them the truth may be presented in clearer light.

ERRORS

divinity of Christ:

This was denied by the Ebionites, Cerinthians, Arians, and others. The Arians and Apollinarians denied that Christ had a soul.

humanity of Christ:

The Docetae and Valentinus denied that Christ had a real body

the union of the natures:

The Nestorians denied that the union was personal

The Eutychians and Monophysites denied that there were two natures in Christ

Thus it was that already in the first four or five centuries of Christianity almost all the errors possible against the Incarnation were proposed.

1) The divinity of Christ was denied.

In the first century, by the Ebionites and Cerinthians. In the second and third centuries by the Adoptionists and Gnostics.

In the fourth century, by the Arians. They declared that Christ is not the Son of God consubstantial with the Father but is a creature; that the Word (Logos) pre-existed, but was created, and is a mediator, who assumed in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary only a body and not a soul. Thus the Arians concluded that Christ is neither truly God nor truly man. Hence St. Athanasius replied that such a conception of Christ made it impossible for Him to satisfy for the human race or free it from sin. This means that the

denial of the mystery of the Incarnation includes the denial of the mystery of Redemption, and thus there is left but the semblance of Christianity.

Later on, in the sixteenth century, the Socinians denied the divinity of Christ, and the same must be said in our times of the Unitarians, who deny the Trinity, and also liberal Protestants and Modernists of the present day.

2) The humanity of Christ. Some denied that Christ's body was real, others that He had a soul. The Docetae, such as Marcion and the Manichaeans, said that Christ merely appeared to have a body.

Appelles and Valentinus in the third century said that Christ's body was real but celestial, sidereal or aerial, and therefore He did not derive His human nature from the Virgin Mary.

The Arians and Anomoeans taught that the Word did not assume a soul. In the fourth century the Apollinarians held that Christ had only a sensitive soul, and that the Word performed the functions of the rational soul, though they admitted, contrary to the Arians, that the Word was not created.

3) Some denied the unity of person in Christ, others the twofold nature. In the third century, the unity of person was denied by Paul of Samosata. In the fourth century, Diodorus of Tarsus said that the Word was only accidentally united to Christ. So also Theodore of Mopsuestia and the Nestorians, teaching a sort of personal union, rejected it really, however, inasmuch as they posited merely a moral union between the two natures. In this way they sought to refute Apollinarianism. The consequence of these errors was the view that Mary is not the Mother of God.

The prominent opponent of the Nestorians was St. Cyril of Alexandria who, in refuting them, availed himself of the principal argument used by St. Athanasius against the Arians, namely, that, if Christ is not God, but only morally united to Him, as a saint is, then how could He satisfy for us or free the human race from sin?

In our times, too, the disciples of Gunther denied the unity of person in Christ, since they defined a person as a self-conscious nature, for in Christ there are two self-conscious natures.

So also, Rosmini acknowledges between the Word and the human will in Christ merely an accidental union, inasmuch as the human will, since it was completely dominated by the Word, ceased to be personal. Rosmini says: "Hence the human will ceased to be personal in Christ as man, and, since it is personal in other men, in Christ there remained but the human nature." Thus the union in Christ between the Word and the human will would be

merely accidental and moral. The error of Rosmini and Gunther is that both do not seek to define person ontologically by reason of subsistence, but only psychologically through self-consciousness, or by reason of liberty. This error is the result of the nineteenth-century psychologism.

The Modernists say about the same, since they reduce the hypostatic union, if they give it any thought, to God's influence upon the human conscience of the historic Christ, or to the subconscious self in Christ by which He perceived that He was loved by God above all others.

Finally, the Eutychians or Monophysites denied that there were two natures in Christ. Eutyches posed as the adversary of Nestorius and the defender of the theology of St. Cyril of Alexandria, which he did not understand. He was a man of little learning, and obstinate, and so he went to the other extreme of Nestorianism. He was so insistent in affirming the unity of person in Christ against the Nestorians that he ended in denying His twofold nature. He said: "I confess that our Lord was of two natures before the union; but after the union I acknowledge one nature," either because the human nature was absorbed by the divine nature, or because each nature commingled to form a third nature, distinct from each before the union, or because the human nature and the Word were absolutely united as the soul and the body are. Hence Eutyches by this method succeeded in proclaiming something that the Nestorians denied, since they denied that the Blessed Virgin Mary is the Mother of God.

In the fourth century, however, the Monothelites, professing that Christ had but one will, by this very fact rejected the doctrine that there were two natures in Him. The followers of the modern heresy that declares the Word really emptied Himself, also deny a twofold nature in Christ, since they hold that the Word, at least partly and for a time, set aside His divine attributes.

Thus several heresies made their appearance as excessive reactions against the preceding ones; so also not infrequently it happens that the human mind in its aberrations passes from one extreme to the other.

1) Arius says that Christ is the created Word united to a human body, without a soul. St. Athanasius says correctly: then Christ could not have satisfied for us.

2) But Apollinaris says that Christ is the uncreated Word united to a human body, without a rational soul, since this latter was capable of sinning, and consequently could not satisfy for us.

3) Then Nestorius, in a reactionary spirit, says that Christ has a rational soul which is morally united to the Word. Thus the union of the natures is no longer personal.

4) Finally, Eutyches goes to the other extreme and asserts that the union of the natures is not only moral but also physical, meaning that after the union there is only one nature. This doctrine is Monophysitism.

These last three mentioned heresies deny that the Blessed Virgin Mary is the Mother of God, and they do so for various reasons. Apollinaris says that Jesus is not a man, Eutyches says that His body is not of the same nature as ours, whereas the Nestorians assert that Jesus is not God, but morally united to Him.

The dogma strikes a medium between Nestorianism and Monophysitism, transcending both of them, inasmuch as it states that both natures in Christ are united in one person.

Teaching of the Church. It is evident from the Gospels, the Apostles' Creed, and the condemnation of the above-mentioned heresies.

1) Already even in the Apostles' Creed it is stated that Jesus Christ is truly God and truly man, inasmuch as it says: "I believe... in Jesus Christ His only Son, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary."

2) In the First Council of Nicaea (325) and the First of Constantinople (381), the consubstantiality of the Word with the Father is explicitly declared. The First Council of Nicaea says: "God of God, light of light, true God of true God, born not made, of one substance with the Father, which the Greeks call homoousion." It is likewise declared against the Docetae, Gnostics, and Apollinarians that "Christ had a complete human nature."

3) In the fifth century, the Athanasian Creed declares all that is of faith on this point, in these few words: "Jesus Christ the Son of God is God and man. God, of the substance of the Father, begotten of the Father from all eternity; and man, of the substance of His Mother, born in time.... Who, although He be God and man, yet He is not two, but one Christ; one, not by conversion of the Godhead into the flesh, but by the assumption of the manhood into God; one altogether, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person."

The Council of Ephesus (431) proclaims against Nestorius that there is one person in Christ, and two natures hypostatically united, and also proclaims "that this same Christ is both God and man."

Likewise, not long afterward (451), the Council of Chalcedon defines against Eutyches and the Monophysites that “One and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, must be acknowledged to be in two natures, without confusion, change, division, separation; the distinction of natures being by no means destroyed by their union; but rather the distinction of each nature being preserved and concurring in one person and one hypostasis; not in something that is parted or divided into two persons, but in one and the same and only-begotten Son of God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ.” This text is quoted almost verbatim in various subsequent councils, the Council of Florence being the last to refer to it (1441).

Finally Pope Pius X condemned the following proposition of the Modernists: “The Christological teaching of SS. Paul and John, and of the Councils of Nicaea, Ephesus, and Chalcedon is not Christ’s own teaching, but that which the Christian conscience conceived concerning Jesus.”

Let us now undertake the philosophical analysis of these definitions of the Church.

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER THE UNION OF THE INCARNATE WORD TOOK PLACE IN THE NATURE

State of the question. The meaning is: Does this union, referred to in the heading of this article, result in only one nature, as Eutyches and Dioscorus taught? In this article we have the refutation of Monophysitism.

The reason why St. Thomas refutes Eutyches before Nestorius is that he is following the logical order and not the historical order. It is in accordance with logical procedure to state first in what this union does not consist, and afterward what constitutes it.

The difficulties presented at the beginning of this article are arguments of Eutyches, who sought to defend the teaching of St. Cyril of Alexandria against the Nestorians, but Eutyches had a wrong conception of St. Cyril’s teaching.

First difficulty. The text quoted by St. Thomas in this first objection is not St. Cyril’s, as found in the acts of the Council of Chalcedon, but is to be attributed to the heretic Dioscorus. However, since the words can be interpreted in a good sense and are attributed to St. Cyril, they are examined by St. Thomas here. The text reads: “We must understand not two natures, but one incarnate nature of the Word of God.” It does not say simply “one

nature," but "one incarnate nature"; and this is true, since only the divine nature became incarnate, as explained afterward in the Second Council of Constantinople, and the words of the council on this point are quoted by St. Thomas in his reply to the first objection.

St. Cyril had said that this union was not moral but physical. By calling the union physical, St. Cyril by no means meant that it signified a commingling of the two natures, but that the union was more than moral and accidental, and as used by St. Cyril the expression came to be commonly accepted as equivalent to hypostatic union.

In the Latin Church, the terms "person" and "nature" have a distinct meaning already from the time of Tertullian, who admits in Christ one person but two natures, almost as clearly as St. Hilary and St. Augustine declared after him.

Second difficulty. It is taken from the Athanasian Creed, in which it is said of Christ: "As the rational soul and the flesh together are one man, so God and man together are one Christ." But the soul and the body unite in constituting one nature. Eutyches applied this remote analogy in the literal sense.

Third difficulty. St. Gregory Nazianzen says: "The human nature[in Christ] is deified," just as St. Cyril had said, "the divine nature is incarnate." But some could understand the expression to mean a certain transmutation and blending of the natures.

Eutyches understood the expression in the following sense: "That our Lord was of two natures before the union; but after the union there was one nature." Eutyches said: "Christ is of two natures, not in two natures, nor is He consubstantial with us according to the flesh; the deity suffered and was buried."

The reply of St. Thomas, notwithstanding these difficulties, is as follows: The union of the Word incarnate did not take place in the nature or essence, such that in Christ there is only one nature. In fact, this is absolutely impossible; but there are in Christ two distinct natures.

This conclusion is a dogma of our faith defined as such against Eutyches in the Council of Chalcedon in these words: "We teach that Christ... is perfect as God and that He is perfect as man, true God and true man... and that He is in two natures, without confusion, ... the properties of each nature being preserved, and that He is in one person and one subsistence." The Second Council of Constantinople defines similarly. Likewise the

Athanasian Creed declares: “One altogether, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person.” Subsequent councils and professions of faith give similar definitions.

Scriptural proof. From the many passages already quoted, it is evident that Christ is truly God and truly man. It suffices here to give the following text from the Old Testament: “A child is born to us... and His name shall be called... God the Mighty.” Thus also in the New Testament, the greater and especially more sublime prophets were already illumined to perceive the divine nature of the promised Messias.

From the New Testament we have the following texts: “I am the way and the truth and the life.” “Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant.” Here we have the twofold form or nature, namely, of God and the servant, each distinct, without confusion (of natures). Again we read: “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life.” Here again we have the two natures distinctly mentioned, namely, the one divine in the words “of the Word of life,” the other the human nature, in the words “which we have looked upon and our hands have handled.”

Proof from reason. It is given in the body of the article, in which, from an analysis of the notion of nature, the absurdity of Monophysitism is shown, which is just as absurd as pantheism. There are two parts to this article. The first part considers what is meant by the word “nature.” The second part shows the impossibility of the union taking place in the nature.

First part. It determines, by the way of invention, following Aristotle and Boethius, the various acceptations of the term “nature.”

This noun signifies: 1. birth or begetting of living beings; 2. the principle of this begetting; 3. whatever intrinsic principle of motion essentially belongs to the subject in which it is, such as the principle of the vegetative life, or of the sensitive life, in each and every subject; 4. The substantial form, which is this radical principle of natural operations, for instance, in the plant; 5. matter, which is the principle of natural passivity; thus it is said that the animal is naturally mortal; 6. the essence also of spiritual things and of God Himself, inasmuch as this essence is the radical principle of their operations. So says Boethius, who is quoted in this article, and St. Thomas concludes: “But we are now speaking of nature as it signifies the essence.”

Second part. It is shown to be impossible for the union to take place in the nature. The argument of St. Thomas may be reduced to the following syllogism. There are only three possible ways for the union to take place in the nature, namely: 1. by the composition of things that are perfect in themselves and that remain perfect; 2. by the mixture of things perfect in themselves that have undergone a change; 3. by the union of things imperfect in themselves that have been neither mixed nor changed.

But these ways are incompatible. Therefore it is impossible for the union to take place in the nature.

UNION

of two perfect things

that remains such, as a heap of stones or a house: called composition. One nature does not result from this union

that have changed, as a combination of elements resulting in a mixture; but the divine nature is absolutely unchangeable; for Christ would be neither truly man nor truly God.

of imperfect things

that have been neither changed nor mixed, as man is composed of soul and body. But both the divine and the human natures are in themselves perfect. But the divine nature cannot be even a part of the compound as form, for then it would be less than the whole

The whole article must be read.

More briefly: This union does not take place in the nature, so that there results from it but one nature:

1) Because Christ would not be truly man and truly God, but a sort of chimera.

2) Because the divine nature is unchangeable and cannot constitute a part of any whole, not even as form, for thus it would be less perfect than the whole.

Objection. Some have said that there can be a transubstantiation of the human nature into the divine, just as there is a transubstantiation of the bread into the body of Christ, without any corruption in the process.

Reply. Even if this transubstantiation were not incompatible, the result of this would be that after the Incarnation the human nature would cease to exist. and thus Christ would not be truly man, which is against the faith. Christ is truly man, for He was born, suffered, and died.

The reply of St. Thomas is confirmed from the solution of the difficulties presented at the beginning of the article.

Reply to first objection. This difficulty is taken from the text attributed to St. Cyril and explained by the Second Council of Constantinople, in the sense that the physical union, which St. Cyril spoke of when arguing against the Nestorians, who admitted only a moral union, was meant by St. Cyril as referring not to a union in the nature, but in the person, or to a subsistential union, as the words themselves denote.

Reply to second objection. When the Athanasian Creed says, “As the rational soul and flesh together are one man, so God and man together are one Christ,” the analogy has its foundation in the similarity between the parts, namely, inasmuch as soul and body constitute one person, but not in the dissimilarity, namely, inasmuch as the soul and the body constitute one nature.

Reply to third objection. Damascene explains correctly the words attributed to St. Cyril, who says: “The divine nature is incarnate,” inasmuch as it is united personally to flesh. He gives a similar interpretation to the words of St. Gregory Nazianzen, who says that “the human nature is deified”; namely, not by change, but by being united with the Word, the properties of each nature remaining intact.

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER THE UNION OF THE INCARNATE WORD TOOK PLACE IN THE PERSON

State of the question. The meaning is: whether this union took place in such manner that there is only one person.

In this article we have the refutation of Nestorianism, a heresy that denied there was only one person in Christ, and that admitted only a moral union such as found in saints united by love with God.

The first two difficulties posited at the beginning of this article, are arguments raised by the Nestorians.

First difficulty. In God there is no real distinction between person and nature. If, therefore, this union did not take place in the nature, as the Nestorians say, then it did not take place in the person.

Second difficulty. Personality is a dignity that belongs to us as human beings. Hence it is not attributed to irrational animals or to other beings of a lower order, for these have individuality, but not personality. But Christ’s

human nature has no less dignity than ours. Therefore it was much more reasonable that Christ's human nature should have its own personality.

This difficulty is still proposed in our days by many theologians who disagree with Cajetan's interpretation of St. Thomas' teaching. These theologians, as we shall see, in advancing this difficulty against Cajetan, seem to be unaware of the reply to the second objection of this present article.

Third difficulty. It is taken from the definition of person as given by Boethius, who says: "a person is an individual substance of a rational nature." But the Word of God assumed an individual human nature, namely, this humanity belonging to Christ. Therefore this humanity belonging to Christ has its own personality.

This difficulty of necessity calls for the making of a profound distinction between individuality, or individuation, and personality. St. Thomas most fittingly makes this kind of distinction in his reply to the third objection, which is thoroughly explained by Cajetan. Nevertheless, even many Scholastics seem to have only a superficial knowledge of this reply to the third objection, perhaps because they did not begin by examining with sufficient care the state and difficulty of the question, as St. Thomas did in his presentation of these difficulties, which constitute, so to speak, the very problem to be solved in this article.

The reply, in spite of these difficulties, is: The union of the Word incarnate took place in the person of the Word, such that there is only one person in Christ. This declaration is a dogma of our faith.

This reply was defined against the Nestorians in the Council of Ephesus, in which the union was declared to be hypostatic, or personal, and it condemned the assertion of two persons morally united in Christ. It likewise condemned the Nestorian expression, Christ the man is theophoron, that is, God bearer. Likewise it declared that, "if anyone does not confess that the Word of God suffered and died in the flesh, let him be anathema." It also defined that the Blessed Virgin Mary is the Mother of God, since she is the mother of this man Jesus who is God, constituting one person.

These definitions are confirmed in the Council of Chalcedon, which says: "One and the same Christ... acknowledged to be in two natures, without confusion... and concurring in one person and one hypostasis, not in something that is parted or divided."

Similarly the Apostles' Creed confesses that one and the same person is the Son of God and of man; particularly the Creed of St. Athanasius, which says of the union, "absolutely one, not in confusion of substance, but in unity of person."

Sacred Scripture. This doctrine of the faith is already clearly expressed in the New Testament; for it attributes the properties of both the divine and the human natures to one and the same Christ, since it is the same Christ who is conceived, born, baptized in the Jordan, who fears, is sad, hungry and tired on His journey, who suffers and dies on the cross. This same person is called the Son of God, God above all, the Author of life, for He Himself says: "I am the truth and the life." Hence we see that the properties of each nature are attributed in Sacred Scripture to the same intelligent and incommunicable subject, that is, to the same person. But this person is the eternal person of the Word, as expressed by the Evangelist in these words: "The Word was made flesh," that is, the Son of God became man. Therefore the Son of God and man are not two persons, but one person.

The common notion of person suffices for an understanding of the preceding statements, namely, that a person is an intelligent and sui juris or free agent. This subject can be merely a man, an angel, God, or any divine person.

Nestorius objected that a moral union was sufficient.

Reply. A moral union is established by means of affection. But, however intimate is the friendship between two persons, one friend is not said to have become the other friend, neither is a saint who is united with God by a bond of most fervent love said to have become God, nor is God said to have become either Peter or Paul, although there is a moral union between them and God.

In fact, Christ could not have said truthfully: "I am the way, the truth, and the life." In other words, speaking of Himself, He could not have attributed truly to Himself divine attributes and also those that belong to the human nature. The pronoun "I" denotes the person speaking, and there is only one person; for if there are two persons? it cannot be said that one is the other. In affirmative judgments, the verb "is" expresses real identity between subject and predicate. Thus: I am the truth, signifies: I, who by my mouth, am speaking, am the same person who am the truth. Otherwise the judgment is absolutely false, and it is as if Paul were to say: I, who am Paul, am Peter.

Testimony of the Fathers. Tertullian, Origen, St. Ephrem, St. Athanasius, St. Gregory Nazianzen, St. Jerome, St. Cyril of Alexandria, St. Leo I, and St. John Damascene quoted by St. Thomas in the counter-argument of this third article have all affirmed clearly and most explicitly that there is one person in Christ.

It must be noted that in the liturgy of the Church the termination of the orations frequently is, “Through our Lord Jesus Christ who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, forever and ever.”

Body of the article. It contains two parts. In the first part a distinction is made between person and nature. The second part proves that the union of the Word incarnate took place in the person.

First of all the article must be explained, and then we shall consider the erroneous system of several modern philosophers concerning personality, and also the systems freely discussed among Catholic theologians.

In the first part of this article, as regards the distinction that is made between person and nature, by a gradual process the argument proceeds from common sense or natural reasoning, to the establishment of a philosophical proof that acknowledges and defends the real validity of natural reasoning against either empiric or idealistic phenomenalism.

The first part of this article must be read. It is divided into three parts: 1. the conclusion; 2. definition of suppositum; 3. definition of person, which is completed in the reply to the third objection.

First conclusion. It may be expressed briefly as follows: There is a real difference between suppositum and nature in every creature, just as there is a real difference between the whole and its parts.

The reason is that the nominal definition of suppositum or the subject of predication signifies the whole, and in every creature existence and accidents are not included in its essence. Such is the case in the angels, for Michael is not his existence nor his action. Moreover, in corporeal things, in addition to the essence of the species, each has individuating principles that are derived from quantified matter, such as these bones, this flesh.

Hence this real distinction between the created nature and the suppositum that contains it, is not a distinction between two separate things, but it is a distinction that prevails between a real and actual whole, and its real, formal, and perfective part.

Contrary to what has been said, there is, a real distinction in God between suppositum and nature.

The real definition of suppositum is given in the following words. The suppositum is taken to be a whole which has the nature as its formal part to perfect it; and as stated in the reply to the third objection, the suppositum is the whole that exists and acts separately by itself. This point must be carefully considered, because it constitutes the philosophical foundation of the whole treatise.

Thus the suppositum is that which is, namely, the real subject of attribution, so that the suppositum is not attributed to any other subject; whereas nature is that by which a thing is such as it is, in such a species. Similarly, existence is that by which a thing is placed outside of nothing and its causes; a faculty is that by which the subject can operate, and operation is that by which it actually operates.

All the above-mentioned are attributed to the suppositum, and this latter is not attributed to any other subject. Moreover, it must be noted that the following divers affirmative judgments: Peter is a man, Peter exists, Peter can act, Peter does act, all these affirmative judgments assert real identity between subject and predicate by the word “is.” They are equivalent in meaning to: Peter is the same real subject that is the man that exists, that can act, that does act. For these judgments to be true, this real identity between subject and predicate must be verified outside the soul, although Peter’s essence is not his existence, nor the faculty by which he acts, nor his action. Hence there must be something by which the subject is the same real subject, or that by which something is “that which by itself (separately) exists and acts,” as stated in the reply to the third objection.

Farther on we shall see how that by which a thing is a quod (or subject of attribution) is subsistence, for which reason the suppositum is that which is competent to exist by itself separately. This truth constitutes the philosophical foundation of this entire treatise.

Person is defined as an intelligent and sui juris or free subject, namely, a suppositum having a rational, or intellectual, nature.

This definition is given at the end of the first part of this article in the following equivalent words: “And what is said of a suppositum is to be applied to a person in rational, or intelligent, creatures; for a person is nothing else than an individual substance of a rational nature, according to Boethius.”

In addition to this it must be said that a person is an intelligent sui juris subject by itself separately existing and by itself operating, such as Peter,

Paul. St. Thomas says similarly: “Person is a subsistent individual of a rational nature.”

This definition is explained at the end of the third objection. The objection states that according to Boethius, person is an individual substance of a rational nature; but Christ assumed an individual human nature; therefore He assumed a human person, and so there are two persons in Christ, namely, the person assuming and the person assumed.

In the solution of this objection, St. Thomas in his reply most splendidly illustrates the definition of Boethius, by distinguishing accurately between individuality, or individuation, and personality.

This reply to the third objection must be read.

Not every individual in the genus of substance, even in rational nature, is a person, but that alone which exists by itself, and not that which exists in some more perfect thing. Hence the hand of Socrates, although it is a kind of individual, is not a person, but the part of a person, the part of a person and the part of a substance.

On the other hand, we know that according to St. Thomas quantified matter is the principle of individuation, that is, as Cajetan explains: “Matter capable of this particular quantity so that it is not susceptible of that other quantity; for it is in this way that we distinguish between two drops of water that are most alike: not having the same quantified matter, they are thus in different parts of space. Hence individuation, which is derived from matter, is of the lowest order in man, whereas personality, as stated in the reply to the second objection, pertains to the dignity of a thing and to its perfection, so far as it pertains to the dignity and perfection of that thing to exist by itself.”

In Christ, as we shall see, individuation, as in our case, is effected by matter, whereas His personality is uncreated and thus there is an infinite difference between the two. St. Thomas discusses this point in his reply to the third objection, and elsewhere he says: “Person signifies what is most perfect in all nature, that is, a subsistent individual of a rational nature.”

Therefore we must not confuse the individual nature, individuated or singular, with suppositum and person. For even the individuated nature is not that which is, but that by which anything is constituted in a certain species that is limited or contracted to an individual grade of being, for example, an individuated nature is this humanity. Similarly matter is that by which anything is material. On the contrary, by suppositum or person is

meant this person separately existing by himself and acting, to whom this humanity is attributed, as constituting a part of him; hence we do not say that this man is his humanity, for the verb “is” expresses by a logical distinction real identity between the whole and its parts. We truly say that this man is not his humanity, but has humanity, or has his nature. Thus the common sense or natural reason of all men, by so speaking, distinguishes in a confused manner between person and nature, or between that which is, and that by which something is constituted in a certain species.

Hence St. Thomas and the Thomists, in explaining the definition of person as given by Boethius, make some addition and say that a person is an entirely incommunicable individual substance of a rational nature, inasmuch as a person is the first subject of attribution, which is predicated of no other subject, and to whom is attributed whatever pertains to person, such as nature, existence, properties and actions. But communicability is threefold.

COMMUNICABILITY

of the part to the whole

to this whole that is the suppositum: e.g., of the humanity to the Word

to this essential or quantitative whole: e.g., of the soul to man; e.g. of the arm to the body

of the universal to the inferior

e.g., of the humanity to all individuals of the species

Hence, when it is said that a person is incommunicable, what is especially meant is that such person is incommunicable to another suppositum, although even both to inferiors and to the quantitative whole.

St. Thomas discusses this incommunicability of person in various parts of his works.

Thus the transition is made gradually from the common or popular notion of person to the philosophical notion of the term. It is not necessary here by way of conclusion to this article to explain the various systems freely disputed among Catholic theologians concerning personality, or what formally constitutes a person.

Second conclusion. Toward the end of the argumentative part of this article, what St. Thomas intends to prove concerning the formal constituent of person may be expressed by the following syllogism.

Everything that adheres to a person, whether it does or does not pertain to the nature, is united to it in the person, which is the whole by itself

separately existing.

But our Catholic faith teaches us that the humanity of Christ adheres to the person of the Son of God.

Therefore it is united to the person of Christ, but not to His nature.

The major follows from the definition of person, since it is the whole or the subject by itself separately existing and acting to whom are attributed as to the ultimate subject of attribution all those things that pertain to a person, such as nature, existence, accidents, and other notes.

The minor is evident from revelation, inasmuch as the human nature as also its parts and properties, such as the soul, the body, passibility, and other qualities are attributed to the Son of God.

First confirmation. There are only two possible unions; either the union of the Word was with the nature, or with the person. For union by affection or by reason of the extraordinary grace bestowed upon the person loved, such as Nestorius imagined in the case of Christ, does not belong solely to the Word, but is common to the three persons of the Trinity operating together ad extra, and this union is already found in varying degrees in all the just.

Second confirmation. If there are two persons in Christ, then we are not redeemed; for neither of these two persons could have redeemed us from sin: not the divine person, because He could neither suffer nor satisfy for sin nor merit for us; not the human person, because he could not confer infinite value upon his satisfactory and meritorious works, such as was required for our redemption, so that the redemption be adequate.

It remains for us to reply to the first two difficulties proposed at the beginning of this article.

The first objection was: The person of God is not distinct from His nature. But the union of the Word incarnate did not take place in the nature. Therefore it did not take place in the person.

Reply to first objection. I distinguish the major: that there is no real distinction between nature and person in God, this I concede; that they do not differ in meaning, this I deny. I concede the minor.

I distinguish the conclusion. Therefore the union did not take place in the person, if by this is meant that the divine person is not even distinct in meaning from nature, then I concede the conclusion; otherwise I deny it. The reply to the first objection must be read.

Therefore this union of the humanity with God took place, not in the divine nature, but in the person of the Son.

Thus the mental distinction between God's mercy and justice is the foundation for the truth of these propositions: God punishes not by His mercy, but by His justice, although these two attributes are not distinct. Thus God understands by His intellect and not by His will. Likewise the Word is united to the humanity not in the nature but in the person.

As Cajetan says: "The reply is confirmed by reason of the fact... that the union of the human nature in the mystery of the Incarnation does not add anything to the meaning of nature, but it does indeed add something to the notion of person, because it adds the notion of subsisting in the human nature."

Moreover, it must be noted that St. Thomas in this reply to the first objection and often afterward, says: "The Word subsists in the human nature." So does Cajetan, whereas many modern theologians say less correctly: The humanity subsists in the Word. In truth, that which subsists is not the humanity, which is that by which the Word is man; that which subsists is the very Word incarnate.

Second objection. It is still proposed in these days by many theologians who object to Cajetan's interpretation of St. Thomas' teaching. It reads as follows: Christ's human nature has no less dignity than ours. But personality belongs to dignity. Hence, since our human nature has its proper personality, there is much more reason for Christ's to have its proper personality.

Several theologians in our times revive this argument against Cajetan, saying: Personality cannot be a substantial mode that terminates the nature, rendering it immediately capable of existence, as constituting it that which by itself separately exists.

The reply of St. Thomas is quoted by Pius XI in his encyclical commemorating the decrees of the Council of Ephesus against Nestorius. The following statement summarizes the reply of St. Thomas: Personality pertains to dignity inasmuch as it is that by reason of which a person exists separately by oneself. But it is a greater dignity to exist in something nobler than oneself than to exist by oneself. The complete reply to the second objection should be read.

Thus it is more perfect for the sensitive life to be united to the intellective, and for every inferior to be united to the superior. Just as it is

more perfect for the deacon to be made a priest, so it is more perfect for the human nature to exist in the person of the Word, than to have its own personality; because whatever perfection there is in its own personality, is found infinitely and more eminently in the Word, so that there is intrinsic independence not only from inferior material things, as in the case of every rational soul, but from every creature, for Christ, indeed, is not a creature, but above every creature.

And what St. Thomas says in this reply concerning one's own personality can be said of the substantial mode by which, as Cajetan remarks, it is that by which it exists separately.

Cajetan gives a good explanation of St. Thomas' reply to the second objection, saying: "Just as it is nobler for the sensitive life to have its complete specific nature by a form of a nobler order, namely, by the rational soul, so a greater dignity was bestowed upon the human nature of Christ from the fact that it was assumed by the divine personality."

Later Thomists, such as Billuart, make this additional comment: Subsistence or personality is the perfection and completion of the nature, perfecting it not in its notion of nature or essence, but in its notion of suppositum or person, inasmuch as it pertains to the dignity of a thing that it exist by itself; as St. Thomas says: "It is a greater dignity to exist in something nobler than oneself than to exist by oneself. Hence, from this very fact, Christ's human nature is not less noble but more noble than ours."

It must be noted that the above definition of person, namely, an intelligent and free subject, easily finds its verification both in the human person, the angelic person, and the divine person. In all of them the subject is incommunicable, which cannot be attributed to another, and all of them enjoy intelligence and free will. But it is evident that person is not predicated univocally of God and man; it is predicated analogically, though not metaphorically, but properly; for the formal signification of person is properly retained in God proportionally, just as the proper signification of intelligence and liberty, of the real subject.

Difficulty proposed by more modern critics. The final difficulty is thus proposed by many modern philosophers of the Guntherian and Rosminian trend of thought. They say that the mystery of the Incarnation is absolutely unintelligible from the mere abstract and metaphysical notion of either suppositum or subsistence or personality. For it is not only the metaphysical or ontological concept of personality that must be considered; it must be

viewed in its psychological and moral aspects likewise, which come under experience. But psychologically, personality seems to consist in consciousness of oneself, and in personal judgment. Hence Locke, and after him Gunther, defined person as “a nature conscious of itself.” But in the moral order, personality seems to consist in this, that every one is sui juris, or is master of himself, or is free to act as he wishes, and Rosmini insists on this point.

In the days of Modernism (1905) several students of dogmatic theology attending this course in a certain university did not even listen to the professor who was explaining the treatise on the Incarnation. They wrote letters or read books not pertaining to dogmatic theology, because, as they said, the conception of personality as proposed by scholastic theology is unintelligible.

I then said to one of these students: “Therefore, in your opinion in what does personality consist so as to give us a better understanding of the mystery of the Incarnation?” He replied: “Personality consists in a consciousness of oneself, and this is enough.” I asked him how many consciousnesses and intelligences there are in Christ? This student had not even considered the fact that there are two intelligences and consequently two consciousnesses in Christ. Therefore there ought to be two personalities in Christ, if personality formally consisted in consciousness of oneself.

Another of these students replied to me: “Personality consists in freedom or dominion over oneself.” But neither had he considered that in Christ there are two freedoms, and so there ought to be two personalities and hence two persons, which is the heresy of Nestorianism.

Hence it is manifest that, for assuming a more profound notion of personality, it must be considered in its ontological aspect, and not merely in its psychological and moral aspects.

For the solution of this difficulty, which is very widespread in these days, it will be useful at the beginning of this treatise, for its clarification, to start with a certain introduction or ascent from the psychological and moral notion of personality, especially as found in the saints, ending in the ontological notion of the most exalted personality of Christ. The notion of personality will thus be present in a less abstract, but more vivid and concrete manner, as befitting this mystery, when speaking not only with modern philosophers, but also with the faithful who are not accustomed to

the language of philosophy, and who must, nevertheless, live by faith in the Incarnation, and who aspire to the contemplation of this mystery.

Introduction Or Ascent Toward A Certain Understanding Of The Incarnation

There are three articles of St. Thomas that enable us to make this ascent. But what pertains to the psychological and moral aspects of person must be added.

This introduction must begin by a definition of person considered under this threefold aspect, namely, ontological, psychological, and moral, and in accordance with the law of true progress from the psychological and moral aspects of personality.

Person under this threefold aspect is defined as an intelligent and free subject, or a substance of a rational nature, by itself separately existing and operating, conscious of and responsible for itself, such as Peter and Paul.

Human personality is that by which a man is thus by himself separately existing, and hence conscious of and responsible for his actions, which means that he is master of his actions. What must especially be noted about personality is that, besides its common independence from every suppositum, inasmuch as it exists separately by itself, it enjoys a threefold special independence, for a person is a suppositum by itself separately existing, whose specific existence and operation, namely, understanding and willing, does not intrinsically depend upon matter.

Therefore a person enjoys the following threefold independence:

1. Its existence does not intrinsically depend upon matter, and thus the soul separated from the body remains immortal.

2. In like manner its understanding does not intrinsically depend upon matter, and thus it transcends actually existing individual things and extends to the universal.

3. It will also remain independent of particular goods that are mingled with evil, for these do not infallibly attract the will, which is specified by universal good. Thus personality far surpasses individuation by means of matter.

What, then, is the law of true and complete progress concerning psychological and moral personality?

Some think that this law consists simply in progress of the aforesaid independence, which would finally be in every respect absolute, or it would consist in complete autonomy of spirit and will, as Kant says. In accordance

with this tendency, however, the complete evolution of man's personality would mean that he recognizes nobody his superior. Once this personality is fully developed, there would no longer be any place for virtues that are called passive, such as humility, obedience, patience, meekness, even for the theological virtues; and hence this superior personality would not differ much from the perfect insubordination of him who said: "I will not serve." This absolute autonomy, which is the doctrine of Kant, was condemned by the Vatican Council in these words: "If anyone shall say that human reason is so independent that faith cannot be enjoined upon it by God; let him be anathema."

It is manifest that the law of true and complete progress of personality does not consist merely in progress of the above-mentioned independence; for the true and legitimate independence of the human person toward things inferior to it has its foundation in the strict dependence toward realities that are superior to it. Thus our reason transcends sensible things, space and time, because it is ordered to universal truth, and so to the knowledge of Him who is supreme Truth, at least so far as He is naturally knowable.

Likewise, as our will is free and independent with reference to the attraction of particular good, this is because it is ordered to universal good, and so to the supreme Good, which means to God the author of nature, who is to be loved above all things.

True personality has this characteristic, that its legitimate independence or relative autonomy toward things inferior to itself has its foundation in immediate dependence on truth and goodness, on supreme Truth and supreme Goodness, that is, God.

What follows from this characteristic as regards the law of true and complete progress of psychological and moral personality? It follows that the more personality dominates inferior things and the more intimately it is dependent on God, then the more perfect it is.

This is the true law of its progress, which is easily illustrated by examples, ascending gradually from the lowest grade of human personality until we reach the personality of Christ.

Thus the lowest grade of psychological and moral personality is verified in the man who is addicted to inordinate passions. Yet this man is a person or a substance of an intellectual nature, but insufficiently conscious of his dignity and dominion. Such a man is not ruled by right reason, but by his senses, imagination, and inordinate passions as in the case of irrational

animals. He has not dominion over himself, nor independence as regards those things inferior to him, acting as if invincibly attracted by the lowest kind of good, by pleasure and every concupiscible object, living according to the prejudices of the world, rather its slave than its master; he is the slave of sin. What is developed in him is not personality but the lowest type of individuality, which manifests itself as individualism or egoism. He wishes to be the center of all things, and truly becomes the slave of all things, the slave of his passions that are in open rebellion against one another, inasmuch as they are not controlled; he becomes the slave of men and events that can in the twinkling of an eye definitely take away from him the least happiness he enjoys.

Moral personality is far nobler in the virtuous man, who is conscious of his human dignity and succeeds in controlling his passions, in proportion as he increases in the love of truth and justice, that is, in proportion as he increasingly makes his life dependent on God who is to be loved above all things.

This was, in a certain manner, understood by the great philosophers of antiquity, such as Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and to some extent by the Stoics.

Likewise, in the intellectual order, to what shall we attribute that superiority of intellectual personality in men of great genius compared with those of ordinary intellectual ability? It must be attributed to the fact that a man of great genius depends less on the help to be obtained from men of his age and country, and this because he receives a higher inspiration from God, and is more dependent on God. Aristotle said about these great men, who are called divine, such as the divine Plato: “They follow an interior instinct, and it is not expedient for them to be given advice, because they are moved by a better principle,” that is, they depend more immediately on God, and their lives are dominated by this higher inspiration, which sometimes is most impelling. Thus genius is defined as a certain special nearness to God, a relationship with the absolute.

But how far superior are the saints to men of ordinary virtue and to men of great genius! The saints alone fully understood the law of true and complete progress of human personality, that human personality is the more perfect in proportion as it is more dependent on God, and united with Him, dominating inferior things. This aspect of personality is something that belongs most especially to the saints, being found only in them, since they

exemplify in their lives these words of Christ: “He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world keepeth it unto life eternal.” The saints, thoroughly understanding these words of our Lord, engaged in a real conflict with their own ego, fought against a personality that is the result of egoism or self-love, and reached such a superior degree of psychological and moral personality that it is truly supernatural, and even distinguished in the order of grace.

The saints in dying to themselves, submerge themselves, their personality in God’s personality, so that they become truly and most profoundly servants of God, as the Church says: for the servant is not free, is not master of himself. God’s servant, however, participates in His supreme independence; hence it is commonly said that to serve God is to reign, and this is the culmination of created personality, which bears a certain remote resemblance to Christ’s uncreated personality.

How did the saints acquire this eminent personality? In dying to themselves, they are guided in their intellect not by their own more or less inordinate judgment, but by the most correct judgment of God received in them by means of faith and the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Thus it is said that the just man lives not by his own inspiration but by faith, and considers all things, so to speak, as God sees them, in the mist of faith.

Likewise, in the case of the will, the saint gradually substitutes God’s will for his own will, in accordance with our Lord’s words: “My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me that I may perfect His work.” They live continually faithful to the divine will of expression, and they completely abandon themselves to the divine will of good pleasure not yet made manifest, so that they become in the profoundest sense the servants of God, just as our hand is the servant of our will; they become in some manner something of God, or a creature of God, always in the hand of his Creator. As St. Thomas says, “They live not for themselves, but for God,” in that charity of friendship with God, and God is to them another ego.

In fact, the saints keenly perceive that God is to them another ego that is much more intimate to them than their own ego, and infinitely more perfect, inasmuch as what perfection there is in their own ego is found most eminently in God, and inasmuch as God is the radical principle of their intimate life. Thus the saints, giving up entirely, as it were, their own will and independence in their relation to God to be loved above all things, finally come to say with St. Paul: “I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in

me," or "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain." As St. Thomas remarks: "As the hunter is preoccupied with hunting, and the student with study, and as the sick person is preoccupied in regaining health, so with the saints to live is Christ, because He is the principle and end of their lives."

Thus the psychological and moral personality of the saints in the supernatural order exceedingly transcends the type of personality found in wise pagans, just as grace transcends nature. The personality of the saints transcends not only sensible things, space and time, but in a certain manner all created things inasmuch as the saints live not for themselves but for God.

This supernatural transcendence is the extraordinary secret of St. Paul's personality, so that after twenty centuries a vast number of Christians daily model their lives according to his epistles, as if these had been written yesterday; whereas only a few of the learned read once in their lives the epistles of Seneca. It is also the secret of the personality of all the saints, for example, of St. Francis of Assisi, of St. Catherine of Siena, of St. Vincent de Paul, who, in a certain manner die to their own personality, so that they might live to God, so that their supernatural influence is felt not only in their own times and countries, but practically throughout the Church and for many centuries.

Pascal excellently pointed this out in one of his works, saying: "The saints have their realm, their glory, their victory, their luster, and have no need of temporal or spiritual (intellectual) aggrandizement which in no way affects them, neither increasing nor decreasing their greatness. The saints are seen by God and the angels, not by bodies or curious minds. God suffices for them."

This is strictly speaking to live not for oneself but for God, as St. Thomas remarks. This means, so to speak, to lose one's own personality in God by denial of oneself, acquiring perfect mastery over one' passions and all inferior things. Yet there is an infinite distance between God and the saints, inasmuch as their ontological personality is created, even though they may say with St. Paul: "I live, now not I but Christ liveth in me." They are intimately united with Him in the moral order..

The error of Nestorius, and afterward of Rosmini, consisted in reducing the union of the Word incarnate to God's union with the saints, so that the difference between them was only one of degree, and the union itself was accidental. Hence the following proposition of Rosmini was condemned:

“In Christ’s humanity the human will was so rapt by the Holy Spirit to adhere to the objective entity of the Word, that it gave up completely its human control to the Word, and the Word personally assumed this control, thus uniting the human nature to Himself. Hence the human will ceased to be personal in Christ as man, and, although it constitutes a person in other human beings, in Christ as man it remained a nature,” This means the confusion of the psychological and moral manifestation of the ontological personality with its personality.

Truly the uncreated personality of Christ is the inaccessible culmination of the true and complete progress of personality that can be conceived by us. For not only in Christ’s intellect is God’s judgment substituted for His own human judgment, not only in His will is God’s will substituted for His own volition, but radically in these faculties, in fact, radically in the very soul of Christ, there is no human personality, but in its place there is the uncreated personality of the Word that assumed Christ’s humanity in an ineffable manner. And whereas the saints almost never speak in their own person except to accuse themselves of their sins, Christ speaks of His uncreated and adorable person saying: “I am the resurrection and the life.” “I and the Father are one.” “I” designates the uncreated personality of the Word, in whom the human nature of Christ exists.

Thus the fitness of the Incarnation is in a certain way made manifest, and a certain knowledge of this mystery is acquired by considering, on the one hand, that it belongs to the notion of the supreme Good, namely, God, that He communicate Himself in the highest manner to the creature, which means in person, as already stated. On the other hand, the more intimately personality is dependent on God and is united with Him, dominating things that are inferior, the more perfect it is. The saints are, in a way, one in judgment and will with God, since theirs is in complete conformity with His. The ideal union would be if our human nature were united, without any commingling, with the divine nature in the same divine person, and in the same divine existence. But this wonderful union, which absolutely transcends our natural desire, is verified in the Incarnation of the Word, in which supreme personality is made manifest according to the greatest possible intimacy with God, and its domination over inferior things.

All these notes are implicitly contained in the true definition of person, which is an intelligent and free subject. To say that a person is a subject or person is to declare its ontological personality; to say that it is intelligent

and therefore conscious of itself is to declare its psychological personality; to say that it is free and is master of itself is to declare its moral personality, or to consider it in its moral aspect. From what has been said, it is clearly evident that ontological personality is the root or foundation of psychological and moral personality. Therefore they must not be separated, but must be considered as one person.

Thus it is easy to see that in accordance with revelation, Christ is but one person, namely, just one intelligent and free subject, although He has two intellects and two wills. In Christ it is not merely the ontological union of two natures in one person, for it also follows that there is a wonderful union in Him in the psychological, moral, and spiritual orders. This union is a kind of compenetration of Christ's two intellects, inasmuch as His most holy soul, from the moment of its creation, enjoys the beatific vision, as will be stated farther on. Thus His human intellect sees immediately, without any impressed and expressed species, God's essence and intellection, and by this supreme intellection is comprehensively seen, and by it is continually reinforced by the light of glory, which is preserved in it and measured by participated eternity. Likewise there is in Christ's most holy soul from the beginning of its existence a kind of interpenetration of the two wills, for Christ as man, by reason of His infused charity intensely loves God's good pleasure as regards everything, and is in the highest degree loved by God.

Thus Christ's ontological personality results in a union not only of natures in the order of being, but also in a union of activities in accordance with the most perfect and intimate subordination of the two intellects and wills in the order of operation, or in the psychological, moral, and spiritual orders.

Two Theories About The Hypostatic Union

It is of faith, as we have said, that the union of the two natures in Christ was personal or subsistential, as the Council of Ephesus stated, and for this reason the union is called hypostatic. But theologians dispute about what formally constitutes a person, or what is meant properly by personality or subsistence.

Hence, after a brief examination of the theories condemned by the Church, we must explain those freely disputed among theologians.

Theories condemned by the Church. There are two, namely, Gunther's system that reduces personality to consciousness of oneself, and Rosmini's

that would have personality to consist in freedom of will or in dominion over oneself.

Gunther's theory. According to Gunther the fundamental question in philosophy is the theory of knowledge, which, he said, has its foundation in the consciousness of oneself, which is what Descartes taught. Gunther rejects pantheism, of course, but he admits a substantial unity of all created beings, considering these to be manifestations of the same substance, which he calls nature. This nature that is unconscious of itself, becomes conscious in man.

Hence Gunther holds that personality properly consists in a consciousness of oneself, and this note belongs to the rational soul.

From the notion of personality Gunther seeks to explain the mysteries of the Trinity and the Incarnation. He is unwilling to admit that God is conscious of Himself by His essence, for then there would be only one person in God. If, therefore, says Gunther, God knows Himself, it is because in Him subject and object are in opposition, and he affirms the equality of each. The subject conscious of itself is the Father, the object conscious of itself is the Son; finally, the consciousness of equality between each results in the Holy Spirit. Thus Gunther seeks to demonstrate the Trinity, and reduce it to the order of philosophical truth. In this we have the essence of semi-rationalism, which does not deny supernatural revelation, but seeks to reduce all revealed mysteries to truths of the natural order, as if revelation were supernatural only as to the manner of its production, not substantially or essentially, namely, on the part of the object revealed.

Gunther also denies the freedom of creation, admitting the absolute optimism of Leibnitz. Just as the elevation of the human race to the supernatural order was necessary, as Baius contends, so also was the Incarnation.

Finally, Gunther explains the union of the Word incarnate. His theory that personality consists in a consciousness of oneself leads to Nestorianism, for there are in Christ two consciousnesses, just as there are two intellectual natures. Gunther, however, in order to avoid the heresy of Nestorianism, devises a theory that scarcely differs from it, inasmuch as he makes the human nature in Christ conscious of its subordination and dependence on the divine nature. But this condition is already verified in all the saints, and is not something special that is found in Christ alone.

This theory, as also Gunther's semi-rationalism, was condemned by Pius IX in his papal brief to Cardinal de Geissel, archbishop of Cologne.

This theory is refuted philosophically and theologically.

Philosophically. Consciousness of oneself testifies to or asserts the identity of our person, but does not constitute it. This means that we know and remember from our past lives that we are the same persons, and consciousness of ourselves tells us that we are today the same persons we were in the past. Therefore both memory and consciousness imply or presuppose an already constituted person; they merely announce the presence of or are attributed to person. They constitute only the psychological aspect of personality.

Hence the saying: I am conscious of myself or of my personality; if consciousness constituted personality, we should have to say: I am conscious of my consciousness. Person is a substance, whereas consciousness is an act.

Confirmation of the preceding. If consciousness together with memory constituted personal identity, this identity would be lessened, in fact would be destroyed, as often as the exercise of memory or consciousness is lessened or suspended.

Expressed briefly, a person is a subject conscious of itself, but it must be first constituted as a subject in order that it be conscious of itself.

Theologically. Gunther's theory is refuted by the very fact that it posits in Christ two persons regardless of his wishes; for Christ's humanity is conscious of itself, and so is the Godhead. Nor does he avoid the error of Nestorianism by saying that Christ's humanity is conscious of the subordination to and dependence on the Godhead; for this union, which is already realized in the saints, is nothing else but a moral and accidental union with God's judgment and will. Pius IX was right in condemning this theory. Modernists express themselves in almost the same terms as Gunther.

Rosmini's theory. Rosmini (1797-1855) did not start, as Gunther did, with the "cogito" of Descartes, being more of an ontologist than Gunther. St. Thomas says: "The first thing conceived by the intellect is being. Hence being is the object of the intellect." But Rosmini teaches that what is first conceived by the intellect is the beginning of being, which is something divine, belonging to the divine nature; it is something divine not by participation, but in the strict sense it "is an actuality that is not distinct from the remainder of the divine actuality"; "it is something of the Word."

All Rosmini's theories are deduced from this principle.

1) He seeks to prove the Trinity about the same way Gunther did, by distinguishing in God between subjectivity, objectivity, and sanctity, or between reality, ideality, and morality, inasmuch as these are three supreme forms of the being, namely, subjective being, objective being, and their union by love.

2) He denies the freedom of creation, as Gunther did. He admits generationism or traducianism, saying: "The human soul, by coming in contact solely with its intuitive sentient principle, becomes a being, and by this union that principle, which before was only sentient, becomes intelligent, subsistent, and immortal." Rosmini held that the will constitutes human personality, by which everyone is responsible for and master of himself. Hence Rosmini teaches: "In Christ's humanity, the human will was so rapt by the Holy Spirit to adhere to the objective entity of the Word, that it gave up completely to the Word its human control.... Hence the human will ceased to be personal in Christ as man, and, although it is a person in other human beings, in Christ as man it remained a nature."

This theory is refuted both philosophically and theologically about the same way as Gunther's.

Philosophically. It is false to say that the will constitutes the person in human beings, for the will is attributed to an already ontologically established person, such as Peter or Paul, and the will is this will, since in that it is the will of this particular subject, by itself separately existing. Person is a substance, whereas will is its accident, an inseparable accident, indeed, but a predicamental accident, although it is not a predicable, which means that it is not contingent.

Theologically. Rosmini's theory leads to Nestorianism, for the union it admits is only a union of wills or a moral union, such as we find in the saints, who would differ from Christ only according to the degree of their love for Him.

What results from the condemnation of these two theories?

It follows that merely phenomenalist or dynamistic notions of personality cannot be reconciled with the Catholic doctrine of the Incarnation, as we showed in another work.

According to the empiric phenomenalism of Hume, Stuart Mill, and Taine, we have knowledge only of phenomena or states of consciousness, but not of the "ego" itself as substance. But conscious facts are united

according to the laws of association, and then personality is established by a dominating state of consciousness. But if there be a psychological disturbance, as in madness, some think that there are two personalities, for at times a person considers himself a king, and at other times a servant.

The rational phenomenalism of Renouvier considers personality to be an a priori form of our mind, which unites all that belongs to us. Our existence is merely so far as it is represented.

As for the dynamic evolutionism or philosophy of becoming (of such philosophers as H. Bergson), person is neither an association of phenomena nor a certain category of the mind, but it is a vital and free impulse, which manifests itself in an unbroken series of divers states of consciousness.

It is evident, however, that the person of the Word incarnate, as conceived by the Catholic Church, cannot be either a certain association of phenomena or a certain category of the mind, or a vital and free impulse; all these pertain to the finite and hence created order, and cannot constitute the uncreated personality of the Word incarnate.

But in contrast to either empiric or rational phenomenalism, or the philosophy of becoming, traditional philosophy may be called the philosophy of being, inasmuch as the formal object of our intellect is neither an internal nor an external phenomenon, nor a category of the mind, but it is the intelligible being of sensible things. This is, as H. Bergson avows, the natural metaphysics of human intelligence, or the conception of natural reason, or the sensus communis, which develops by a gradual process from the confused state of rudimentary knowledge to the clearly defined state of philosophic knowledge. Gradually our intellect ascends from the knowledge of the being of sensible things to the knowledge of the soul and of God, who is conceived as the First Being or as the self-subsisting Being.

According to this philosophy of being, however, person is something more profound than phenomena and their laws, either empiric or a priori, something of even deeper significance than the becoming of being that underlies phenomena, for it is a substance of a rational nature by itself separately existing, or an intelligent and free individual subject, permanent in itself, by itself operating, and hence conscious of itself and because of free will responsible for its actions. Briefly, person is an intelligent and free subject. Hence the aforesaid theories consider only the psychological or moral aspects of personality, but not ontological personality, on which these

aspects depend. This ontological personality is that by which a person is a subject or a whole by itself separately existing, intelligent and free.

As we said, a person enjoys a threefold independence, inasmuch as its being, its understanding, and its will are not intrinsically dependent on matter. Thus it is evident that ontological personality is the foundation of psychological personality and of moral personality.

It is also apparent that those notes which constitute personality, namely, a subject subsisting in itself, endowed with intelligence and freedom, are absolutely simple perfections, which can be attributed analogically and in the proper sense to God, whereas, on the contrary, merely phenomenal personality cannot be attributed even analogically to Him, since God is absolutely above the phenomenal order.

Various Scholastic Views About Personality

There are different views about ontological personality among the Scholastics. They are radically divided: some admit and others do not admit a real distinction between what is and its existence, a distinction that is declared among the greater in the philosophy of St. Thomas, and which forms one of the twenty-four theses approved by the Sacred Congregation of Studies in 1916.

Some say, in these days, that the first of these twenty-four propositions on which the others depend, is not found in the works of St. Thomas, who admitted, so they say, only logical composition of potentiality and act, but not real composition in every created:

On the contrary, St. Thomas said explicitly: “Everything that is in the genus of substance is a real composite...; and its existence must be different from itself.... Therefore everything that is directly in the predicament of substance is composed at least of existence and that which exists.” This means that there is a real distinction in the created suppositum between that which exists and its existence. The suppositum is the whole, and its existence is a contingent predicate.

Again he writes: “The act that is measured by aeviternity, the aeviternal existence, differs indeed really from that whose act it is”; which means that an angel’s essence differs really from his existence. On this point Father Norbert del Prado, O. P., has collected many similar texts from St. Thomas in the famous book he wrote on this subject. In this work, he shows that the first truth by way of doctrinal judgment though the highest of causes is that

in God alone essence and existence are the same; He alone can say: I am who am.

These truths presupposed, however, among Scholastics who deny a real distinction between what is and its existence, and between essence and existence, Scotus says that personality is something negative, namely, the negation of the hypostatic union in a singular nature. Suarez considers personality to be a substantial mode that presupposes the existence of a singular nature, and that renders it incommunicable.

Among those Scholastics who admit a real distinction between existence and what exists, there are especially three opinions. Cajetan and very many Thomists say that personality is that by which a singular nature becomes immediately capable of existence.

Others, following Capreolus, say less clearly that personality is a singular nature as constituted before it exists. Lastly, Father Billot reduces personality to existence that actuates the singular nature.

PERSONALITY

real distinction admitted

It is that by which a singular nature becomes what it is, or becomes immediately capable of existence. (View of Cajetan and very many Thomists).

It is a singular nature as constituted before it exists (Capreolus)

It is existence that actuates a singular nature (Billot)

real distinction denied

It is a substantial mode that presupposes the existence of the substance (Suarez)

It is something negative, the negation of the hypostatic union. (Scotus)

Criterion To Be Followed In The Examination Of These Opinions

All these theologians wish to retain the ontological validity of the common notion of person, namely, an intelligent and free subject, and they wish to pass methodically, although they do not all do so, by the light of revelation, from this common notion of person to the more philosophical notion of person, which is like the guiding star.

We said, however, that according to natural reason, a person is an intelligent subject by itself separately existing, and this absolutely must be maintained.

Moreover, it must be observed that there are assertions of natural reason confirmed by revelation, and these must likewise be preserved intact. First

of all, there are affirmative judgments, in which those things that pertain to a person are predicated of the person as a real subject of predication, such as: Peter is a man, Peter is existing, Peter is acting. In these affirmative propositions, however, the verb “is” affirms real identity between subject and predicate, and postulates the same real subject underlying nature, existence, and operation.

Lastly, the following truth must be retained. God alone is His existence, He alone can say: “I am who am.” Peter is not his existence. This statement means that the act of existence even when in act is included only in God’s essence, which is related to existence as A is to A, for God’s essence is the self-subsisting Being. On the other hand, no created essence is its existence, no created essence contains existence as an essential predicate, for in such a case it would be self-existent and would not be created; but existence befits it as a contingent predicate, inasmuch as it is possible for this essence not to exist. Hence it is said of Michael the archangel, that he is not his existence, just as a grain of sand is not its existence. These propositions are commonly admitted by theologians as true, which means that they correspond to a reality, and hence we must say, as the Thomists assert, that before the consideration of our mind, Michael’s essence or man’s essence is not his existence, which means that it is really distinct from its existence.

Nevertheless we say that Michael is existing, Peter is existing. Thus the verb “is” signifies real identity between subject and predicate notwithstanding the real distinction between created essence and existence.

This principle is the criterion in the judgment of the above-mentioned opinions, and it is manifest that it makes a considerable difference in the notion of person, to whom essence and existence are attributed, according as a real distinction between essence and existence is or is not admitted. The true teaching about person has its foundation in this, that it is a requisite for the verification of the following judgments: Peter is existing, but is not his existence, whereas Christ is existing, and is His existence, just as “He is truth and life.”

1) Opinion of Scotus. Scotus holds that a twofold negation is added to the notion of person as applied to a singular human nature, namely, actual dependence on the divine person, and aptitudinal dependence on this same divine person. Thus this humanity of ours is a person, because it is neither naturally apt to be terminated, nor actually terminated by the divine personality.

Scotus gives the following reasons for this conclusion:

(1) Because then there would be some positive entity in the human nature that would be incapable of assumption by the Word. (2) Because it would follow that the human nature assumed by the Word would be wanting in some positive entity... and thus Christ would not be universally a man.

Criticism. Cajetan reproduces exactly these arguments of Scotus, and examines them. Capreolus had already examined them. Later on John of St. Thomas, Zigliara, and Billot had discussed these arguments. The Thomists show that this opinion of Scotus is contrary to the teaching of St. Thomas, and that it does not preserve the common notion of person.

Fundamental argument. The constitutive element of that which is not perfect in nature cannot be assigned to something negative. But as St. Thomas says, “Person signifies what is most perfect in all nature, that is, a subsistent individual of a rational nature.” Therefore its constitutive element or its personality cannot be assigned to something negative. John of St. Thomas explains this point well.

1) “Subsistence,” he says, “is not the negation of dependence. It is impossible for the independent not to be more perfect than the dependent. But dependence is something positive. Therefore, a fortiori, independence in that genus, cannot be a pure negation, although it is explained negatively, just as simplicity is explained by indivision.”

Thus infinity in substance; although it is explained negatively, yet it is something positive. Hence God’s independence in being constitutes His greatest perfection. Therefore that by which anything is a subject by itself, separately existing, cannot be a mere negation, for it is that which constitutes a subject as the first subject of attribution. Likewise every negation has its foundation in something positive, as Father Billot says against Scotus.

2) “Moreover,” adds John of St. Thomas, “natural and proper subsistence is not only opposed to the hypostatic union, but it is also opposed to the existential mode of accident, or even of a part. And if the inherence of accident is something positive and not a negative notion, a fortiori the subsistence of first substance, to which second substance is attributed, must be something positive.”

3) Then again, proper subsistence is something primo and per se natural, because it constitutes something of the natural order. Therefore it cannot primo and per se consist in the negation of the hypostatic union, which is

supernatural, although the negation may also include this latter, just as in anything of the natural order we have the negation of the supernatural, although things of the natural order are not primo and per se constituted as such by this negation. Thus, according to the opinion of Scotus, either Heraclitus or Thales would have been persons, because their nature was not hypostatically united to any divine person.

4) Finally, in the case of the divine persons, there are in the strictest sense of the terms, three subsistences and three personalities, which, inasmuch as they are subsistences, denote positive realities, and not three negations. And the subsistence of the Word substituting Its subsistence for that of the human nature; but this union did not consist in anything negative, but in something positive.

But there must be analogy between the divine personality and created personality. “Nor is there something unbefitting resulting from this, as Scotus would have, for the Word assumed whatever pertains to the human nature, as a nature, although not whatever pertains to man as a suppositum.” As St. Thomas says, “It is a greater dignity to exist in something nobler than oneself than to exist by oneself.”

5) Furthermore, it must be said against Scotus that this theory does not make it clear how the following affirmative judgments can be true: Peter is a man, Peter is existing; for the verb “is” expresses real identity between subject and predicate. But this real identity cannot be established by something negative. In other words: that by which anything is a who or a what, or a first subject of attribution, cannot be something negative.

Some Scotists say that a subject is a singular nature.

Reply. The nature itself is not this subject, for as St. Thomas often says: “nature, i. e., humanity, is that by which anything is such, i. e., a man; it is not that which is.” Individuation alone is not that by which anything is a who or a what, for matter constitutes this individuation in Christ, namely, this humanity; yet it does not constitute a subject distinct from the Word. Individuation is also found in the parts of a nature, for example, in this flesh, these bones, but these parts do not have the incommunicability that belongs properly to the suppositum.

Moreover, as we said, individuation derived from matter is something very low in dignity, but subsistence and especially personality is something far nobler, for it is that by which anything is a subject by itself separately

existing and operating. On the contrary, matter is not that which is, but that by which anything is material.

6) Finally, Scotus denies a real distinction between created essence and existence, and so we should have to say: Peter is his existence, just as we say: God is His existence. But before the consideration of our mind it is true to say: God is His existence, and there is no real distinction between the Deity and His existence. Whereas, on the contrary, before any consideration of the mind, it is true that Peter is not his existence, but has existence, just as Peter cannot say: "I am the truth and the life," but only "I have truth and life." Hence, before any consideration of the mind, there is a certain distinction, not indeed spatial, but real or ontological between Peter's essence and his existence. More briefly, that which truly is not its existence, before any consideration of the mind is distinct from its existence, in some way just as matter is not form, but is related to it as potency is to act, as potency limiting to act determining. Act of itself is not limited, but is limited by the potency in which it is received; so also existence is in various ways limited in the essence of stones, plants, animals, and other things in which it is received.

Wherefore we said that the true doctrine of person has its foundation in this, that it postulates the truth of the following judgments: Peter is existing, but is not existence; whereas Christ is existing and is His existence.

7) It follows from the thesis of Scotus that there are two existences in Christ, which is contrary to the teaching of St. Thomas, and then this means that the humanity of Christ has its own ultimate actuality, namely, its own existence. Thus, before its union with the Word, it is absolutely complete, both substantially and subsistentially. Hence there is danger of Nestorianism in this opinion, since the human nature in Christ appears to be a suppositum distinct from the Word, with whom it can be united only accidentally. Scotus does not wish to affirm this, but his principles ought to lead him to this conclusion. There would be two supposita whose union would not have its foundation in anything positive.

2) Opinion of Suarez. This opinion of Suarez is examined after that of Scotus, since the two views are much alike, although Suarez departs from Scotus inasmuch as he holds personality to consist in something positive, namely, in a substantial mode, which in his opinion presupposes existence for the essence. How does Suarez reach this conclusion?

Often in his eclecticism, Suarez searches for a via media between St. Thomas and Scotus. In the present question, he sees, as the Thomists say, that personality must consist in something positive, and then he says: this positive element cannot be an accident, since person is a first substance. Therefore it must be a substantial mode by which a singular nature is rendered incommunicable, which is what Cajetan said. In Christ, he says, the human nature is not a person, because the mode of personality is wanting to it, the mode of the union taking its place.

But, on the other hand, Suarez holds, as Scotus does, that there is no real distinction between created essence and existence. Hence, in his opinion, the substantial mode which constitutes ontological personality, presupposes not only essence or nature, but also existence.

Thus Suarez frequently in accordance with his eclecticism, as in this question, refutes Scotus by St. Thomas, and St. Thomas by Scotus. But this via media is most difficult to follow, since it is very difficult to maintain the proper equilibrium or stability by this method, so that Suarez in the development of his theses not infrequently fluctuates or oscillates between St. Thomas and Scotus, not taking a firm stand for either view.

Criticism. The Thomists reply:

1) This opinion does not preserve what is fundamental in the truth of the following proposition: Peter is not his own existence, for only God is His existence. He alone can say: “I am who am,” “I am the truth and the life,” and not merely “I have being, truth, and life.” But these judgments, acknowledged to be true by all theologians, demand a real distinction between created essence and existence; for, that these propositions be true even before any consideration of our mind, there must be a real distinction between Peter and his existence, whereas, on the contrary, God is really His existence, without even the least of real distinctions.

Hence the Sacred Congregation of Studies (1916), among the twenty-four propositions of St. Thomas that it declared to be the greater, posited a real distinction between created essence and existence. It is the third proposition which reads: “All other beings (except God) which participate in being, have a nature which is limited by existence, and consist of essence and existence, as really distinct principles.”

Furthermore, the Thomists with John of St. Thomas say that the substantial mode, which is subsistence, does not presuppose existence, for it is by subsistence that the suppositum is formally constituted as either a

suppositum or a person. But, as St. Thomas says: “Being is consequent upon nature, not as upon that which has being, but upon that whereby a thing is such; whereas it is consequent upon person or hypostasis, as upon that which has being. Hence it has unity from the unity of the hypostasis, rather than duality from the duality of the nature.” Peter is that which is, and first comes the concept of person and personality before existence that is attributed to the person when we say: Peter is existing, but is not his existence.

Hence personality terminates the nature and ultimately comes existence as primarily befitting the suppositum, and through the intermediary of the suppositum the nature. This is the constant teaching of St. Thomas. There is no existing subject unless the whole being is terminated and incommunicable (e. g., Peter), to whom existence is applicable as a contingent predicate. Being and becoming befit the suppositum, as St. Thomas shows, for the terminus of creation, or even of generation, is that which is, not that by which anything is such as it is.

Therefore very many Thomists say with Cajetan that the substantial mode is the terminus that causes the singular nature to be incommunicable and terminated, just as the point terminates the line and does not continue it, nor is subsistence an unexplainable entity. But it must be something real that constitutes this mode, not nature alone, however, nor existence. Therefore it must be by what terminates the mode. Thus John of St. Thomas, following Cajetan.

3) The Thomists and Father Billot also say against Suarez:

Since the existence of substance is its ultimate actuality, as St. Thomas often says, whatever accrues to substance already complete in its existence accrues to it accidentally. But this mode consisting in personality or subsistence, according to Suarez, accrues to substance after existence. Therefore the mode is not substantial as he would have it, but accidental.

Hence, as already stated against the opinion of Scotus, the union of the Word incarnate would thus be merely accidental, since each nature would have its own existence, or its ultimate actuality.

3) Opinion of Father Billot. Father Billot, S. J., insists especially on this, that St. Thomas maintains there is only one existence in Christ. Father Billot vigorously asserts this against Scotus and Suarez, because he firmly defends against them the opinion of a real distinction between essence and

existence. On this point he is truly in agreement with St. Thomas and the Thomists.

But on the other hand, Father Billot, always attacking Suarez, will not admit a substantial mode even in Cajetan's sense, for-he says: "There is nothing positive about the terminus itself except what it terminates, for all that the point does which terminates a line is to deny its further extension, adding absolutely nothing to it."

Cajetan would reply by saying that the terminus itself is not indeed a new thing or reality, but is a real mode, really and modally distinct from the thing itself. Thus a line is made up of divisible parts and of indivisible points; a point that terminates a line, or two lines that converge in it, is neither a nonentity nor a part; So the roundness of a metallic sphere is not nothing; it is something really and modally distinct from substance, even from the metallic quantity that it terminates; the quantity of this metal is not its roundness, and it could have another shape.

But since Father Billot refuses to admit this substantial mode as terminating the nature, so that it is immediately capable of existing, he says that person is a singular nature under its own existence, and he identifies subsistence or personality with the existence of the substance.

He quotes for his opinion especially the passage in which St. Thomas asserts, and in similar passages, that there is one being in Christ. This assertion is indeed valid against Scotus and Suarez, but not against Cajetan, for he also maintains that there is one being in Christ.

Father Billot, who quotes Capreolus for his view, interprets him as saying that person is a singular nature with its existence. Cajetan's answer would be: Yes, it is a singular nature (terminated) with its existence, but it must be declared terminated, for nature in itself is only that by which anything is such as it is, it is not that which is.

The exact words of Capreolus on this point are: "1. The name suppositum is affirmed of that individual which subsists by itself. 2. Understood formally, as a mode, and then by suppositum is meant the composite that consists of the individual with its suchness and its own subsistence." It cannot be inferred from this text that a person and the singular nature are identical, for a person is what is, and the nature that by which something is; nor can it be said that personality is existence, for personality is attributed to a person already formally constituted as a person.

Criticism of Father Billot's opinion. It may be reduced to the following arguments.

1) This opinion is not in harmony with the teaching of St. Thomas, who says: "Being is consequent upon nature not as that which has being, but upon that whereby a thing is; whereas it is consequent upon person or hypostasis as upon that which has being." Hence being or existence does not formally constitute personality, because it is consequent upon a person already formally constituted as such by personality. St. Thomas speaks similarly in the body of the article just quoted.

2) Moreover, St. Thomas takes up this disputed point in discussing Christ's unity of being, by considering, as he himself says in the prologue to the previous question, the consequences of the union. Therefore he first established his teaching on the hypostatic union, and from this that there is only one person in Christ. Then he goes on to deduce that there is one being in Christ, inasmuch as being is immediately consequent not upon nature, but upon person, which alone is what is.

Hence if Father Billot's opinion were the true teaching of St. Thomas, the holy Doctor ought to have shown at the beginning of this treatise that there is one being in Christ, so as to make it clear that there is only one person and only one personality in Christ. But he considers this point only farther on, which presupposes the solution of the problem concerning what constitutes the hypostatic union.

3) The Complutenses Abbreviati note that St. Thomas teaches that "the angel is composed of existence and what is." Thus Michael is existing but is not his existence. Hence the holy Doctor teaches that existence enters into composition not only with essence, but also with the suppositum. It would not be so, however, if existence were the same as subsistence or personality. Likewise, the principium quod of the theandric operations in Christ is not common to the three divine persons. But existence is common to the three divine persons. Therefore the principium quod in Christ is not formally constituted by existence.

4) St. Thomas says: "Existence does not pertain to the notion of a created suppositum," which means that Peter is not his existence. But subsistence pertains to the notion of suppositum, and personality to the notion of person. Therefore they are not really the same as being or existence, at least for St. Thomas.

Finally, St. Thomas treats as distinct the following two questions, namely, whether essence and existence are the same, and whether essence and suppositum are the same. This would be superfluous if there were no real distinction between existence and subsistence. Such is the excellent observation of the Complutenses Abbreviati.

Moreover, it must be observed so as to avoid ambiguity, that subsistence does not mean existence of substance, but subsistence is the abstract name that is the correlative of the concrete name suppositum. Hence subsistence is to suppositum as personality is to person, as existence is to exist, and as running is to run.

Hence subsistence is not an abstract name that would correspond to the concrete to subsist, but to the concrete that is called suppositum. But to avoid this ambiguity, it is better to use the word personality than subsistence, because it is evident that personality corresponds in the concrete to person, and not as such to the word "subsist." Hence subsistence is to suppositum as personality is to person, and as existence is to exist or to being.

5) Father Billot's opinion leads to the denial of a real distinction between essence and existence, a distinction that he firmly maintains nevertheless against Scotus and Suarez. For it must be said that being which is not its existence, is, before the consideration of the mind, really distinct from its existence. But Peter's person, even his personality, is not his existence. Therefore Peter's person, even his personality, is really distinct from his existence.

The major of this argument is the principle from which we deduce that there is a real distinction between essence and existence, and this Father Billot accepts. But the minor is most certain, namely, that Peter's person is not his existence, and therefore it differs from the person of the Word; moreover Peter's personality is not his existence, because it formally constitutes Peter's person, which is not his existence.

In other words, the denial of a real distinction between a created person, constituted as such by his own personality and existence, means that a real distinction between created essence and existence is without any foundation; for a being that is not its own existence is, before the consideration of the mind, really distinct from its existence. But Peter's person, formally constituted as such by his personality, just as his essence,

is really distinct from his existence. Only God is His existence, and the truth of this assertion will be most clearly seen in the beatific vision.

This point was more fully explained by quoting several texts of St. Thomas, and in the examination of the recent work of Father Charles Giacon, S. J.

Certain disciples of Father Billot advance the following objection. Peter is not his nature. Yet there is no real distinction between him and his nature. Therefore between him and his existence there is no real distinction.

Reply. I concede the major. I deny the minor and parity of agreement. For Peter is not his nature, because his nature is an essential part of himself, and even an essential part is not identified with the whole.

Thus I concede the major: Peter is not his nature. I deny the minor, for there is a real distinction between Peter and his nature, just as there is a real distinction between the real whole and its real part, and I deny also the parity of argument, because Peter's nature is an essential part of himself, but his existence is not. Thus when we say, "Peter is a man," man is an essential predicate; on the contrary, when we say, "Peter is existing," existing is a contingent predicate.

Father G. Mattiussi replies to this as follows: "St. Thomas says that existence is not included in the notion of suppositum, inasmuch as existence is not essential to any finite thing; but the suppositum can be considered in the order of possible things, without its actually existing"

To this it must be said: When I say that Peter is not his existence, I am not concerned with Peter's possible existence, but with his actual existence; just as when we say that the essence of a created thing really differs from its existence, it is not a question of a possible essence, but of a real essence that underlies the existence which it limits. For as Father Mattiussi himself admits, the act of existing is multiplied and limited only by the real essence and not the possible, in which it is received. Similarly, existence is a contingent predicate of existing Peter, and not of possible Peter. Of existing Peter we say that Peter is existing, but is not his existence; whereas of God, we say that God exists and is His existence.

That being which is not its existence is really distinct from its existence. But Peter's person, even his personality, is not his existence, which is a contingent predicate. Therefore Peter's person, even his personality, is really distinct from his existence, which is really distinct from his personality.

Father Mattiussi quotes three texts of St. Thomas in proof that he, too, was of the same opinion, namely, that subsistence is the existence of substance. On the contrary, in these texts we read: “Subsistence is said of that whose act is to subsist, just as essence is said of that whose act is to exist.” On the contrary, these texts do not in any way contradict Cajetan’s opinion. Father Mattiussi does not search for that by which anything is a what, or for that in which the concrete, this man differs from this humanity. This man is what is, humanity that by which he is. They differ however by that which constitutes man the first subject of attribution, for it is the concrete that is constituted, whereas the form is in the subject. The Complutenses Abbreviati present this argument in various forms and excellently, showing that otherwise the proposition, man is existing, would be an eternally true proposition, just as this proposition, man is a substance of a rational nature. They insist on this, that subsistence or personality is intrinsic to the notion of a created person, whereas existence accrues to it and is completely outside the notion of person. Hence Father Billot’s opinion denies the truth of the following proposition: Peter is not his existence.

6) Moreover, Father Billot’s opinion denies the truth of another proposition, -namely, that Peter is existing. For in every affirmative proposition, the word “is” expresses real identity between subject and predicate. This real identity, however, must have its foundation in some real positive thing, in that by which anything is a what. But that by which anything is a what, is neither even a singular nature nor existence. For nature is that by which anything is such, for example, a man; existence is that by which anything is established beyond nothing and its causes. And two elements related to each other as by which, do not constitute a one that is a what, that is, a subject of itself separately existing.

7) Moreover, Father Billot overlooks the fact that in God there are three personalities and one existence, not three relative existences but one esse in that is substantial. St. Thomas says: “There is only one being in God and three subsistencies.” Therefore personality is not being.

8) Capreolus does not say that personality is formally constituted by existence, but he says, supported by Cajetan on this point: “The being of actual existence is called the act of the essence as whereby of the suppositum, and the act of the suppositum as what exists....Existence thus pertains to the notion of suppositum, not forming a part of the suppositum,

nor is it included in the essence of this latter, but is related to it by way of connotation and is implied indirectly, which is about the equivalent of saying that the suppositum is identical with the individual substance having existence. Such was the opinion of St. Thomas, so I think." Cajetan admits this. There is, indeed, a more recent opinion that maintains person is the singular nature itself underlying its existence.

Criticism. This does not explain whereby anything is properly what is, or the first subject of attribution subsisting of itself, first substance. For the singular nature, for example, this humanity, is not what is, but whereby anyone, namely, Peter or Paul, is a man. Hence we say: Peter is not his humanity, because the whole is not its part, it is not identical with its part, but includes other things besides; thus Peter includes his nature, existence, and accidents. Hence we seek that whereby a person is formally constituted the first subject of attribution, not attributable to another subject; whereas, on the contrary, this humanity is attributed to each human being.

Moreover, this humanity immediately is not capable of the act of existing, for it is not what exists. We are seeking the subject of this singular nature, of its existence and accidents.

Common opinion among Thomists. It is Cajetan's opinion, which he explains, and very many Thomists follow.

Cajetan passes methodically from the commonly accepted definition of person, namely, a subject of a rational nature, to the definition of personality. He notes that the name personality signifies that whereby a person is constituted the first subject that is of itself separately, so that it cannot be attributed to another subject.

But that whereby anything is a subjective what, cannot be anything accidental, or a permanent accident, such as the intellectual faculty, or the free will, or a transitory accident, such as an act of conscience or even a free act. It must be something substantial, as constituting the subject of attribution.

But this substantial can be neither a singular nature that is an essential part of this subject but not the subject itself, nor existence, which is a contingent predicate of whatsoever created person, and hence does not formally constitute it. Therefore personality is a substantial mode that terminates the singular nature, so that it may become the immediate subject of existence, for the subject is what is, and not the nature.

This substantial mode terminates the singular nature in some way as the point terminates the line and makes of the line a complete whole; thus, when a line is divided by a point into two lines, whichever of these, that before was in potentia to be continued, now becomes a line in act, becomes some whole in act, by the very fact that it is terminated. Similarly, the line itself, for instance, a circular line terminates the surface of a scroll. This is also the case in the order of substances, for, when an animal of the lower order, a worm, for instance, is divided in two, then we have two worms, two supposita; before the division they were potentially two, now they are actually two.

Thus this humanity, which is in Christ, could be terminated in its own right, and thus it would be a distinct suppositum, a human person. De facto, however, it is terminated by the pre-existing personality of the Word, just as a line is extended so that it remains one line and not two lines; or, better still, just as two lines terminate in the same point at the apex of an angle.

Cajetan's fundamental argument. It may be reduced to the following syllogism.

Something real and positive is required by which the created subject is what is, which is against Scotus. But this cannot be either the singular nature, which is related to the subject as whereby, or existence, which is a contingent predicate of the created subject, which is against other opinions. Therefore something else positive is required, namely, personality, which ultimately disposes the singular nature for existence. It would indeed be repugnant if a substantial mode accrued to substance already existing, for then it would be an accident, which is against Suarez; but it would not be so if it accrued to substance before it existed.

Cajetan's opinion is admitted by Francis Sylvester (Ferrariensis), by Bannez, by John of St. Thomas, Gonet, Goudin, by Billuart, by the Salmanticenses, and by very many Thomists.

There are two proofs for this opinion. 1. It is proved on the authority of St. Thomas; 2. it is proved from reason; 3. it explains satisfactorily the dogma of the Incarnation; 4. it is defended against those who attack the opinion.

Proof from St. Thomas. Cajetan quotes four texts,

a) "Being is consequent upon nature, not as upon that which has being, but as upon that whereby a thing is; whereas it is consequent upon person or hypostasis, as upon that which has being." Therefore being does not

constitute personality but presupposes it, and as that which is really distinct from the singular nature, which is not the what or suppositum, as is evident in ourselves who have this flesh, these bones, and also in Christ who has this humanity.

b) “Temporal nativity would cause a real temporal filiation in Christ if there were in Him a subject capable of such filiation.” The subject would be a human person, not a nature. On the contrary, the Word cannot acquire a new relation, or an accident that is superadded to Him.

c) “If the human nature had not been assumed by a divine person, the human nature would have had its own personality.... The divine person by His union hindered the human nature from having its personality.”

d) “If the human personality had existed prior to the union... then it would have ceased to exist by corruption.” And again: “I say that essence is predicated of that whose act is to exist, subsistence of that whose act is to subsist.” Therefore subsistence is not identical with subsist. Finally St. Thomas says: “The form signified by the word ‘person’ is not essence or nature, but personality.” But in God there are three personalities and only one essence and one existence. Therefore personality is not existence. St. Thomas likewise says: “The name ‘person’ is imposed by the form personality, which means the reason for subsisting in such a nature.”

Proof from reason. Cajetan’s opinion has its foundation in the principle that on the part of the object it is required that the commonly accepted definition of person, namely, an intelligent and free subject, be true, and that these two judgments are true: Peter is existing, but is not his existence.

Cajetan says: “If we all acknowledge this principle, in examining the quiddity of the thing signified, why turn away from what is commonly admitted?” In other words, in the transition from the nominal definition to the real definition, why depart from the nominal definition of person, which is, what exists separately of itself in a rational nature? The quiddity of the name contains confusedly the quiddity of the thing, and the explicit definition must not be the negation of the implicit or nominal definition, but must be in conformity with it, otherwise philosophical reason disagrees with the findings of natural reason.

Moreover, for the verification of the two above-mentioned judgments (Peter is existing, but is not his existence), there must be a foundation for the real identity between subject and predicate, which is affirmed in the first judgment, yet such that there is not identity, which is rightly so denied in

the second judgment. But this foundation, must be something positive, real, which is substantial and not accidental, which is not existence, however, for this is a contingent predicate of Peter, or nature, which is related as whereby and as an essential part of this subject. It must formally be that whereby anything is a what or a real subject of these divers predications.

Therefore a terminus is required or a mode that is substantial and not accidental. This argument, namely, that on the part of the object there is required real identity between subject and predicate in the affirmative judgment, Peter is existing, is confirmed by several theologians.

The search or hunt for the definition of personality can be more briefly set forth, by beginning with the nominal definition, and by comparing personality with those things unlike it, namely, with negations and accidents, and with those things like it and related to it, such as with the singular nature and with existing substance, as also by separating in this way those things that do not pertain to the genus of substance to which person belongs.

1) Personality is not anything negative, but is something positive, because it formally constitutes person, which is something positive.

2) Personality is not anything positive that is accidental, because person is a substance. Thus consciousness of self, liberty, or dominion of oneself cannot constitute ontological personality.

3) Personality is not the singular nature itself, because the singular nature is not what is, but that whereby anything is constituted in a certain species. If personality were the singular nature itself, then in Christ there would be two personalities, and in God there would be only one person.

4) Personality is not existence itself that actuates the nature, because existence is a contingent predicate of a created person, and it comes to the person already formally constituted as having existence. Peter is not his existence, but only has existence. Peter exists contingently, whereas Peter necessarily is Peter, and, by virtue of the principle of identity, can be only Peter.

5) Personality is therefore that whereby the singular nature becomes immediately capable of existence, and thus the subjective what is really constituted.

This is the commonly accepted opinion among Thomists, and this real definition of personality corresponds to the nominal definition, that personality is that whereby any intelligent subject is a person, just as

existence is that whereby a subject exists. This latter assertion is almost frankly admitted by all, and in a confused manner implies that personality is not the same as a person's existence.

3) Finally, Cajetan's opinion very well explains the dogma of the Incarnation.

1) It explains that there is one person in Christ, because it posits in Him two natures, indeed, but only one subsistence or personality, and only one existence, which follows the one and only person in Christ.

2) It explains why the councils call this union subsistential or hypostatic, and not existential or natural. It is not called an existential union, but a hypostatic union, which means a union that is according to subsistence or personality, which means that whereby anything is a what, or a terminated whole, of itself separately existing.

Moreover, as St. Thomas says, "the three persons in God have only one being." Therefore St. Thomas is of the opinion that personality or subsistence is not being or existence, nor is it the singular nature, which is related to the suppositum as whereby and as an essential part. Therefore personality is a substantial mode by which a singular nature is made immediately possible of receiving existence.

The truth of this doctrine is to be seen in the instinct of self-preservation. Now, for instance, every suppositum whether mineral, vegetable, or animal seeks to retain what it possesses. Similarly the human person seeks to retain his nature, body and soul, his existence, his faculties, his integral parts, his operations; he seeks to retain all he possesses. It is not his individualized nature that possesses all these things, but his very person considered as the first subject of attribution, his very "ego."

What has been said also clearly shows the sublimity of Christ's personality; for He has not a human personality, and therefore all that pertains to His human nature is under the dominion of the Word incarnate. It is the person of the Son of God who possesses all these things, and therefore nowhere in creation has there been such a perfect illustration of God's supreme dominion both in the past and in present times, as in the case of Christ's most holy humanity.

The Complutenses Abbreviati give a good explanation of this doctrine in their philosophical works. It is fitting here to quote their proofs. They remark: "It must be said that there is a real distinction between subsistence and existence. Such is the teaching of St. Thomas, for he says: 'Being is

consequent upon nature, not as upon that which has being, but upon that whereby a thing is; whereas it is consequent upon person or hypostasis, as upon that which has being.' But that which is consequent upon another is really distinct from it.... He also says: 'An angel is composed of existence and what is,' and he expounds this doctrine here remarkably well by saying that existence forms a composite not only with the essence of a thing, but also with its suppositum; but if it were really identical with the subsistence of a thing, it could not enter into composition with the suppositum, but we should have to say that it formally constitutes the suppositum. Then in another work, he says: 'Existence does not pertain to the notion of suppositum,' but subsistence belongs to the notion of suppositum, and even formally constitutes it as such....

"Finally, the holy Doctor, in discussing various questions, asks whether essence and existence are identical in created things, and also whether the essence and suppositum are the same. This would be superfluous if existence and subsistence are not really distinct....

"The second proof for this thesis is founded on an argument taken from St. Thomas, which may be presented as follows: Act is really distinct from the real subject in which it is received; but the suppositum is the real susceptive subject of existence. Therefore the suppositum is really distinct from its existence. This second consequence is a legitimate inference from the first consequence; for it is by subsistence that the suppositum is formally constituted. Hence if existence really differs from the suppositum, and is received in this latter, it must presuppose subsistence as a reality, and be really distinct from this latter. The minor is clarified: because that receives as what existence, which comes into being as what and operates as what; for becoming is ordered to being, and being to operation; but to come into being as what, and to operate as what belongs properly to the suppositum, which is the common teaching of scholastic theologians and philosophers. Therefore the suppositum really is the recipient as what of existence.

"The third proof for this assertion made above is taken from the previously quoted argument of St. Thomas, and is substantially as follows: That which belongs intrinsically to the notion of suppositum is really distinct from that which accrues to it and is completely superfluous to the proper notion of suppositum; but subsistence belongs intrinsically to the notion of suppositum, whereas existence accrues to it and is not at all

included in its proper notion. Therefore existence is really distinct from subsistence. The major and the consequence are evident. But the first part of the minor is sufficiently clear, ... and the Complutenses give a brief proof and conclude that this is an eternal verity, namely, the suppositum is a subsisting substance and incapable of being attributed to another.... The second part of the minor is expounded as follows: Existence does not apply necessarily and essentially to the suppositum, otherwise this proposition, the suppositum exists, would be an eternal truth, which is absurd. Therefore existence is an accidental attribute of the suppositum, and is not included in its proper notion.

"The first confirmation of these proofs is that the suppositum is identical with the first substance that is directly assignable among the predicamentals; but the aforesaid substance is not constituted a reality by existence, inasmuch as all things placed among the predicamentals prescind from the notion of existence....

"The second confirmation is that existence and subsistence are lacking in every principle of identity. Therefore they are not really the same. The antecedent is proved first of all because existence does not pertain to the notion of subsistence; otherwise anything of which subsistence is predicated would also require existence to be predicated of it. Consequently, just as this proposition, man is subsisting, is eternally true, so also this proposition, man is existing, would be eternally true, which nobody would concede. Again, existence does not enter into the concept of any third object by which it would be identified with subsistence: for no third object can be thought of, except the suppositum, whose concept, however, does not include the notion of existence, as we have just seen. Finally, existence and subsistence do not originate from the same form." Such are the splendid comments of the Complutenses, who preserve absolutely intact, therefore, the interpretation of St. Thomas offered by Cajetan.

Solution Of Objections Against Cajetan's Opinion

First objection. In a certain work we read: "The necessity of this substantial mode is freely affirmed, namely, that an individualized substance be immediately capable of existing separately; it is of the very notion of an individualized and complete substance that it exist in itself and of itself."

Reply. Substance or individualized nature is not what exists, but whereby any subject is such as it is, constituted in a certain species with its

individualizing conditions. What exists is not this humanity of Peter. Otherwise this humanity of Christ would already be what is, and thus there would be two supposita in Christ, or two persons. On the contrary, there is only one suppositum in Christ, to whom the two natures are attributed.

Such is the common teaching of theologians in discussing the theandric acts of Christ, and the infinite value of His merits and satisfaction. They say these meritorious and satisfactory acts are of infinite value not because of the principle from which they are elicited, namely, the human nature, its faculties and infused virtues, but because of the subjective principle that elicits these acts, that is, the divine suppositum or divine person.

Personality must therefore be a real, positive, and substantial thing, distinct from the individualized nature and also from existence that is a contingent predicate of the created person. This means that personality is properly that whereby any intelligent and free subject is what is. Thus the common teaching of St. Thomas is that, in any creature whatever, there is a difference between what is and being.

Second objection. On the part of substance, to subsist is to exist. But the relation between subsistence and to subsist is the same as between existence and to exist, with which latter it is identified. Therefore subsistence is the same as existence.

Reply. I concede the major, inasmuch as subsistence is the fact of existence attributed to the person, but not constituting the person, for the person is the thing that de facto exists. Hence we concede the major, or let it pass without comment.

I deny the minor; for the relation is not between subsistence and to subsist, but between subsistence and the suppositum, which is the same as between existence and to be or to exist; which means that it is a relation between the abstract and the concrete, as between a race and running. This becomes clearer if we substitute “personality” for “subsistence”; for the relation is not between personality and subsistence, but between personality and person, which is a relation between the abstract and the concrete. Hence the relation is the same as that between existence and to exist, and between a race and running. And thus there is a real distinction between personality or subsistence and existence, or between to exist and to subsist, which de facto is attributed to the suppositum as a contingent predicate.

St. Thomas admits this distinction; for he writes: “The relation between life and to live is not the same as that between essence and to exist; but

rather as that between a race and to run, one of which signifies the act in the abstract, and the other in the concrete."

Thus there is a threefold order in the signification of both the abstract and the concrete:

abstract: essencehumanitypersonality or subsistenceexistence

concrete: beingmanperson (Peter) |to exist

As St. Thomas says: "The three persons in God have only one being," and this latter is identified with the divine essence, which is not really distinct from the divine persons, although there is a real distinction between the persons.

Against Cajetan's argument other objections have been proposed in our times, such as the following.

Objection. St. Thomas says: "Being and operation belong to the person by reason of the nature, yet in a different manner. For being belongs to the very constitution of the person, and in this respect it has the nature of a term, that is, as ultimate actuality; consequently unity of person requires unity of the complete and personal being. But operation is an effect of the person by reason of the former nature. Hence plurality of operations is not incompatible with personal unity."

Reply. In this text St. Thomas is not inquiring into the formal constituent of person, which has already been determined; but why there are two operations just as there are two natures, whereas there is one being. He replies that "being belongs to the very constitution of the person," namely, to the person constituted as a person, as to that which has being, as St. Thomas said. For it is the person that immediately is, whereas operation, which follows personal being, belongs to the person through the intermediary of the nature and its faculties. Thus in Christ there are one being and two operations, just as there are two natures. In this text St. Thomas is not inquiring about the formal constituent of person, since this he had already done, and had no need to postpone the determination of this formal constituent of person, when confronted by the doubt, which he proposed to himself, namely, whether there is only one operation in Christ; for operation follows being, and what belongs to being must be considered before what concerns operation.

Father Mattiussi, S. J., presents three texts from the works of St. Thomas in proof that he taught the identity between subsistence and existence. But the true gist of these texts is: "Subsistence is said of that whose act is to

subsist, as essence is said of that whose act is to exist." Therefore, as existence is really distinct from essence in which it is received, so suppositum and subsistence that formally constitutes suppositum, is distinct from existence.

Another objection. From two acts there does not result per se unity; wherefore prime matter must be pure potency. But essence, subsistence, and existence are three acts. Therefore these three acts cannot result in per se unity.

Reply. I distinguish the major. That there cannot result from two acts a nature one per se, this I concede; that there cannot result a suppositum one per se, this I deny. I concede the minor. Essence, subsistence, and existence are three acts, yet so ordered that one is the terminus of the other. I distinguish the conclusion. Therefore from these three acts there does not result a third per se nature, this I concede; that there does not result a one per se suppositum, this I deny. For when the rational nature is completed by personality, it is constituted a person, to whom existence applies accidentally or contingently. Aristotle distinguished between four modes of per se predication: (1) definition which shows that the nature is one per se; (2) per se predicate that denotes a necessary property; (3) per se predication that declares something is of itself subsisting or a suppositum, which means that it is one per se as a subject, although it may be an essential part and have accidental parts; (4) predication that denotes a cause that is per se, and not per accidens. It must be noted that in a certain article of a Carmelite periodical, personality is something relative and is only reduced to the category of substance. In reply to this, we say that the divine personalities are indeed relative entities, that is, they are subsisting relations, paternity, filiation, passive spiration, whose esse in (or inexistence) is substantial. But either human personality or angelic personality is not a relative entity, but an absolute entity; for it does not imply reference to another person, as paternity does. It is predicated as belonging indirectly to the category of substance, as a substantial mode, whereby an individual nature becomes immediately capable of existence.

Conclusion. Thus in the opinion held by Cajetan there is a legitimate transition from the commonly accepted definition of person, namely, that person is the first subject of attribution in a rational nature, to the philosophical notion of personality. Cajetan so very well says: "If all

acknowledge this, then why in scrutinizing the quiddity of the thing signified, do we turn away from the common admission?”

According to this common admission, person is that which exists separately of itself in a rational nature, and personality is that whereby person is formally constituted as a what of itself separately existing, to whom existence is attributed contingently.

Hence the entire opinion of Cajetan reduces itself to what is required on the part of the object, which is the verification of these two judgments admitted by all theologians, namely, the person of Peter exists, but he is not his existence. And just as no created essence is its existence, so no created person, formally constituted as such, by its own personality, is his own existence. Only God is His existence.

Doubt. Does Cajetan consider subsistence or personality to be the intrinsic terminus of substance?

Reply. He certainly does, inasmuch as subsistence is the formal constituent of first substance, or the suppositum, although it does not belong to the notion of nature. Thus subsistence pertains to the substantial order. Father Hugon correctly says: “The metaphysical foundation for this opinion is the radical difference prevailing between what belongs to the existential order and what belongs to the substantial order. This means that no created person is his existence. Likewise the end of motion is what properly terminates it, but it is no longer motion, which has ceased; so also it is subsistence that terminates the nature, but is not the nature; however, it constitutes the first substance, or suppositum. No created person, whether understood denominatively as a singular nature, or formally, that is, with personality, is its existence. The second article of St. Thomas may now be read again, so that this doctrine may be more clearly understood.”

Recapitulation. The principal argument in this opinion that is held by very many Thomists is reduced to the following conclusion, as stated above. Something real and positive is required whereby a created and existing subject is what is, which is against Scotus. But this something cannot be either the singular nature, which is related to the subject as constituting it in its species, or existence, which is a contingent predicate of the created subject, which is against other opinions. Therefore some other positive entity is required, namely, personality, which is the ultimate disposition of a singular nature for existence. A substantial mode that would accrue to substance already existing would, indeed, be a contradiction in

terms, for it would thus be an accident, which is against Suarez; but there would be no contradiction if it came to substance before it existed.

THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER THE UNION OF THE WORD INCARNATE TOOK PLACE IN THE SUPPOSITUM OR HYPOSTASIS

The meaning of the title is: whether the union of the Word incarnate so took place that in Christ there is one suppositum, only one hypostasis..

The answer is in the affirmative, and it is of faith. The Council of Ephesus declares that “the union is subsistential.” But some heretics said that there is one person but two supposita.

St. Thomas refutes this heresy by three arguments.

1) He points out that, by the addition of the note of person to the hypostasis, the nature becomes determinate and rational.

2) If it be said that “what person adds to the hypostasis is a dignity,” then the union would be according to a certain dignity, or it would be a moral union, as Nestorius contended.

3) If there were two supposita in Christ, then to one of these what pertains to God would be attributed, and to the other what pertains to man. This would result in the severance of the subsistential union.

FOURTH ARTICLE: WHETHER AFTER THE INCARNATION THE PERSON OR HYPOSTASIS IS COMPOSITE

State of the question. Some deny that the person of Christ is composite, such as St. Bonaventure, Durandus, Scotus; and this for reasons posited by St. Thomas in his objections at the beginning of this article. He points out: (1) that the person of Christ is the very person of the Word, who is in Himself most simple, and in no way composite. (2) Moreover, the divine nature cannot be a part in Christ, because the part is always less perfect than the whole. (3) It cannot be said that Christ is composed of two natures, because thus there would be a composite nature, just as the human nature is composed of soul and body, and then the Deity would be to the composite as form, and therefore as part. This would be Monophysitism.

Reply. The person of Christ is one, but is composed of two natures.

First proof. It rests on the authority of St. Damascene, who is quoted in the counterargument of this article. Moreover, the Second Council of

Constantinople corroborates the conclusion stated above, saying: “The Holy Church of God... confesses that the union of the Word of God with the flesh was by way of composition, which means that it was subsistential.”

Second proof. The argument is from reason, and there are two parts to it.

a) The person of Christ in itself is an absolutely simple uncreated being, even as the nature of the Word is, and therefore in itself is in no way composite. Thus Christ is one subsisting being.

b) Nevertheless, this person of Christ subsists in two natures, and thus He can and must be said to be a composite of two natures.

First objection. The reply is evident from the argumentative part of the article.

Reply to second objection. The divine nature, however, is not to be considered as a part of this composite. For “this composition of a person from natures is not so called on account of parts, but by reason of number, even as that in which two things concur may be said to be composed of them.” Hence Christ is not a composite of parts, but of extremes that are united. St. Thomas explains this point more fully elsewhere, remarking that composition may be viewed in two ways.

1) It may be considered as the union of parts which causes and results in the totality of the being, and this union implies imperfection, inasmuch as the part is an incomplete being, not so perfect as the whole, and inasmuch as the being of the whole is dependent on its parts and thus is caused.

2) Composition may be viewed as the union of extremes in some third entity that communicates being to the extremes. The extreme, however, prescinds from the notion whether it be a complete or incomplete being. Thus, for example, seeing terminates in the thing seen without resulting in any imperfection on the part of the object seen, on which the seeing depends, but which does not depend on the seeing. Thus the intellect of the blessed is united to God who is clearly seen, without involving any imperfection on the part of God. There is something similar to this in the hypostatic union, but in the order of being and not merely of operation, since the human nature is terminated by the absolutely simple person of the divine Word, without involving any imperfection on the part of the divine person. The person of the Word is related to the human nature not as informing act, but as terminating act.

First corollary. Christ is also a composite of the person of the Word and the human nature, because He consists of these really distinct and united.

Yet it cannot be said that Christ is a creature, because created being applies to the person, who is what is. The person of Christ, however, is uncreated, but in Him the human nature is something created.

Second corollary. Although Christ is thus composite, He is not more perfect than the Word not made flesh in this composition, because the Word is the infinite extreme eminently containing the perfection of the human nature.

In contrast to this, God is not said to be a composite of persons and nature, because the divine persons, although united in the same nature, are not united among one another, but are rather in opposition, not being united with the nature, because They are simply identical with the nature. Thus They are not really distinct from the nature, but They are really distinct from one another by a relation of opposition.

FIFTH ARTICLE: WHETHER IN CHRIST THERE IS ANY UNION OF SOUL AND BODY

State of the question. If so, then it seems that there would be in Christ a human person, for the human person is the result of the union of the soul with the body.

Reply. The answer is in the affirmative and it is of faith. But the human nature thus being a composite has not its own personality.

SIXTH ARTICLE: WHETHER THE HUMAN NATURE WAS UNITED TO THE WORD OF GOD ACCIDENTALLY

This article is both a recapitulation of the preceding articles and the completion of their definition of the hypostatic union.

State of the question. It seems that this union is accidental, for whatever accrues to a being after it is complete as an entity, accrues to it accidentally. Whatever does not pertain to the essence of anything, is its accident. But the human nature does not pertain to the divine nature of the Son of God. Therefore the union of the human nature with the divine nature is accidental.

Reply. It is given about the end of the argumentative part of the article. St. Thomas says: “The Catholic faith, holding an intermediate position between Monophysitism and Nestorianism, does not affirm that the union

of God and man took place in the essence or nature, nor yet in something accidental, but midway, in a subsistence or hypostasis."

1) Indirect proof. It is drawn from the counterargument, and is expressed by the following argument. Whatever is predicated accidentally, is not predicated substantially, but quantitatively or qualitatively. But the humanity of Christ is not predicated quantitatively or qualitatively. Therefore it is not predicated accidentally.

2) Direct proof. It is founded on the arguments defining the faith on this point, which declare that the union is not natural, which is against Eutyches, nor accidental, which is against Nestorius, but is subsistential. The two opinions quoted by the Master of the Sentences in this article may be included in the error of Nestorius. The argument may be reduced to the following syllogism.

The union of substantial things that form the composite of one person is not accidental. But such is the union of the Word incarnate. Therefore the union is in no way accidental, but substantial, which means that it is subsistential.

This implies more than the expression "in the person," for even accidents are in the person to whom they are attributed. To understand this article it must be noted that there are four modes of per se predication, and that personal union means more than union in the person, as Cajetan observes.

There are four modes of per se and not per accidens predication, as Aristotle explains. St. Thomas says in his commentary on Aristotle: In the first mode of per se predication, definition is predicated of the subject, for instance, man is per se or essentially a rational animal.

In the second mode of per se predication a property is predicated of the subject, for instance, man is risible, or has the power of laughing, which manifests itself on his countenance as an indication of intelligence, and this power does not belong either to the angel or to the irrational animal.

The third mode of per se predication is more the mode that pertains to existence, and not to predication, since it signifies something that exists in itself and not in another as in a subject. Thus first substance, for example, Peter, is per se or in himself existing, in opposition to accident, and to second substance, for example to humanity, which is predicated of Peter and is in him.

The fourth mode of per se predication is according to the notion of causality, when the proper effect is attributed to its proper cause. Thus the

doctor restores to health, that is, he does this inasmuch as he is a doctor; strangling kills, light illumines. Contrary to this, it is accidental that the doctor sings.

It is evident that the humanity is united with the Word neither in the first mode, nor in the second mode, nor in the fourth mode, but in the third mode, inasmuch as it exists in the Word not per accidens, but per se, and as Cajetan says, it is united with the Word not only as in the person or in the hypostasis, as accidents are so united with substance, but it is united with the Word hypostatically, which means substantially, according to the third mode of predication.

Solution of difficulties. Durandus holds that this union is not predicamentally or physically accidental, because humanity belongs to the predicamental substance, and not to any of the others. But the union is predicably or logically accidental, because the predicable accident is defined as that which can be either present or absent from its subject of predication, without the corruption of this latter. But the humanity can be either present or absent from the Word, which remains unchanged.

The principal objections in scholastic form are the following.

First objection. What accrues to anything after the completion of its being, accrues to it accidentally. But the human nature accrues to the Word after the completion of the former as a being. Therefore the human nature is united with the Word accidentally.

Reply. I distinguish the major: if it is not drawn into the same personal being, I concede the major; otherwise I deny it. I contradistinguish the minor: that the human nature is drawn into the personal being of the Word, this I concede; that it is not, this I deny.

But I insist. Even though it is drawn into the same personal being, it is united accidentally. The accident that accrues to any subject is drawn into the same being of the subject. But the accident is united with this subject. Therefore the human nature is united with the Word accidentally.

Reply. I distinguish the major: that it is drawn into the same being of the suppositum, this I deny; improperly so, I concede; for it has its own being, but inheres in a subject. It belongs to the being of accident to inhere. I concede the minor. I distinguish the conclusion: if the human nature were an accident inhering in the Word, then I concede the conclusion; otherwise I deny it.

The human nature is truly united with the Word not only in the person as accidents are, but also substantially inasmuch as it is terminated by the personality of the Word, and has one personal being or one existence with it, just as body and soul are so united.

Again I insist. Nevertheless the union is accidental at least predicably, if not predicamentally as Durandus says.

What is not predicated of a subject per se is a predicable accident.

But the human nature is not predicated per se of the Word.

Therefore the human nature is united with the Word as a predicable accident.

Reply. I distinguish the major; what is in no way predicated per se, I concede; what is at least predicated per se in the third mode or per se as subsisting, I deny. I contradistinguish the minor, and I deny the consequent and consequence. The humanity of Christ does not indeed belong to the definition of the Word or of the Second Person of the Trinity, nor is it a property of the Word, but the Word subsists in the human nature, and the human nature in the Word.

Finally I insist. Nevertheless, what can be either absent or present, the subject remaining intact, is united with the subject accidentally. But the human nature can be absent from the Word, which remains intact. Therefore the human nature is united with the Word accidentally.

Reply. I distinguish the major: the subject remaining intact considered as a composite, this I concede; the subject considered as a mere subsisting form, I deny. I contradistinguish the minor: the human nature can be absent, the Word remaining intact considered in Himself, as the eternal person, I concede; considered as the Word incarnate, I deny.

Thus the body is not united accidentally with the soul, and yet the body can be separated from the soul, this latter continuing to exist, though the composite ceases as such. In other words, there can be no separation of the body from the soul unless there is a cessation of the composite, and so the union is per se and not per accidens. Similarly the humanity is united with the Word, although the union between the two is not essential.

Corollary. Hence the hypostatic union differs from an essential union that would result in one sole composite nature, such as the union between body and soul. It also differs from an accidental union. It is, however, an absolutely unique union of its kind, one that is subsistential or hypostatic, or a formally personal union, and not only a material union in the person, for

even accidents, which accrue to man, are united to him materially in the person, but not formally as constituting the person.

Therefore Christ's human nature in the Word is neither a predicamental accident, as, for example, the intellectual faculty is in the rational soul or in the angel, nor a predicable or contingent accident as, for example, a certain person may be sitting instead of standing.

Thus is determined the exact meaning of this conciliar expression, namely, "hypostatic union." We are not concerned here with a theological conclusion deduced from the dogma, but with a metaphysical explanation of the dogma. The hypostatic union is not a new truth concerning the Incarnation, but it is a metaphysical explanation of this revealed truth.

SEVENTH ARTICLE: WHETHER THE UNION OF THE DIVINE NATURE AND THE HUMAN IS SOMETHING CREATED

State of the question. It seems that the union is not anything created, and this for the following reasons.

1) Because this union is in God, for it is God united to the human nature, and there can be nothing created in God.

2) The terminus of the union is the uncreated person of the Word. Therefore the union itself is not anything created.

This question presents considerable difficulty, because there are three possible meanings to the word "union." It may be understood: (1) as unitive action; (2) as rather the passive union of some things into one; (3) as a relation that follows from this union.

1) If we consider the union as meaning the act of uniting the human nature with the Word, then certainly the action is uncreated, and it is common to the whole Trinity, for the Father and the Holy Ghost united Christ's human nature with the Word, although they did not assume it. This action common to the whole Trinity, inasmuch as it is dependent on the omnipotence that is common to the three Persons, is formally immanent, but virtually transitive, and hence is certainly uncreated.

2) If we consider the union as implying a real relation of dependence on the part of Christ's human nature on the Word, St. Thomas clearly shows it to be something created, and so it presents no difficulty.

3) But if we consider the union rather as denoting a passive combination of Christ's humanity with the Word, then theologians dispute whether it is

something real and created that is distinct from the human nature. Scotus, Suarez, Vasquez, and certain Thomists, such as the Salmanticenses and Godoy, as also Father de la Taille in recent times, affirm this view. But Scotus would have it to be something relative that is an extrinsic adjunct, whereas others say it is a substantial mode and the foundation of the real relation of which St. Thomas speaks.

On the contrary, Cajetan and several other Thomists, such as Billuart and Father Billot, deny that the union is something created, remarking that there is no substantial mode in this case, one that is a quasi-intermediate connection formally uniting the human nature with the Word, so that it is impossible to detect any other formal union distinct from the extremes united, except the relation itself that follows from the passive change effected in the human nature by the action of the Word uniting to Himself. So says Billuart. Thus passive creation is merely a real relation of dependence, nothing else, and it has its foundation in the being of a creature, inasmuch as a creature is not its own existence. This seems to be the true solution of the difficulty. Let us see what St. Thomas says.

In the counterargument he observes that this union began in time, therefore it is something created. In the body of the article, however, he determines what this something created formally is. St. Thomas speaks only of relation here. His argument is reduced to the following syllogism.

Every relation between God and the creature is real in the creature and logical in God. But the relation about which we speak is a certain relation of Christ's humanity to the Word. Therefore this union is in Christ's humanity as something real, and created, namely, a real relation of dependence on the Word assuming this nature, just as creation is a real relation of dependence of the creature on the Creator.

But what is the foundation for this relation? St. Thomas says in the body of this article: "By the change effected in the creature such a relation is brought into being," that is, this foundation is passion that corresponds to the unitive action. Whether this passion is really distinct from the human nature passively assumed, is a disputed point among the above-mentioned theologians.

Let us see whether the replies to the objections define more clearly the nature of this union.

Reply to first objection. It declares that this union is not anything real in God.

Reply to second objection. It states that this union is something real and created in the human nature. It is not apparent from this reply that the union is anything more than a real relation.

Did St. Thomas speak more explicitly on this point elsewhere? He certainly did; for in another of his commentaries he says: “We must know that in the union of the human nature with the divine there can be nothing intervening that is the formal cause of the union with which the human nature is joined before it is united with the person. For, just as there can be no intervening entity between matter and form that would be in the matter prior to the substantial form, otherwise accidental existence would be prior to substantial existence, which is impossible; so also between the nature and the suppositum there can be nothing intervening in the above said mode.” Thus there is nothing intervening between the Word and the humanity. Hence union in the passive sense or created is nothing else but a real relation of the human nature that is dependent on the Word as a person, just as creation in the passive sense is nothing else but a real relation of dependence of the creature on the Creator.

Which is the more probable opinion? An intervening substantial mode between the Word and the human nature, as Cajetan, Billuart and others show, appears to be inadmissible.

Proof. The Word is united with the human nature by that whereby the Word terminates and maintains it. But the Word by Himself or solely by his personality, every formal connection excluded, terminates and sustains the human nature. Therefore the Word Himself or His personality is united with the human nature.

The union of the Word with the human nature means nothing else but the termination of this latter; thus analogically, in the order of operation, God clearly seen immediately terminates the beatific vision.

First confirmation. Created subsistence is by itself immediately united with created nature. Therefore a fortiori uncreated subsistence is so united, as it is most actual in the notion of terminating.

Second confirmation. Likewise existence, as the ultimate actuality, by itself immediately actuates the created suppositum; similarly personality by itself immediately is united with created nature, or terminates it; so also one and the same point immediately terminates two lines that meet in it, which is a very faint image of the union of the two natures in the Word.

Doubt. Was the human nature changed in being assumed by the Word?

Reply. In the strictest sense of the term, it was not, because it did not exist before it was assumed, inasmuch as it did not have its own personality, but was assumed by another personality. A nature must be first produced before it can be assumed.

Thus St. Thomas shows that creation is not a change except as we conceive it, for he says: “Change means that the same something should be different now from what it was previously.” But this cannot be either in creation, or even in the assumption of Christ’s humanity, which did not exist before its assumption. And St. Thomas says: “When motion is removed from action and passion, only relation remains.” Hence creation in the passive sense is nothing but a real relation of dependence that has its foundation in created substantial being. Similarly, in the hypostatic union, the soul of Christ is created as dependent on the Word as a person. If other authors wish to affirm that it is something else, namely, a special substantial mode, let them prove its existence. St. Thomas never spoke about this special mode.

What is therefore the foundation of the relation in the hypostatic union? It is Christ’s humanity, inasmuch as it is not terminated by its own created personality, and so it can be terminated and possessed by the Word.

EIGHTH ARTICLE: WHETHER UNION IS THE SAME AS ASSUMPTION

First conclusion. There is a distinction between union as implying a relation, and assumption that implies an action; for this relation is in Christ’s humanity and follows the active assumption, which is the foundation for this relation, just as passive generation is the foundation of the relation of filiation.

Second conclusion. Hence assumption implies becoming, whereas union implies having become. Thus we say of what took place, that the Word assumed the human nature, and even now that it is united with the Word.

Third conclusion. Whereas union implies a relation of quasi-equivalence, and both the divine nature and the human nature are declared united; but assumption, which is the action of the one assuming, does not designate the divine nature, but the agent assuming and the human nature that is assumed.

Fourth conclusion. Who unites and who assumes are not the same absolutely, for only the Son of God assumed the human nature, but the Father and the Holy Spirit are said to unite, but not to assume. For union as

an action implies only the conjunction of extremes, whereas assumption as an action means the same as the taking to oneself, inasmuch as He who assumes unites to Himself personally, and is the end of the terminating action and not merely its beginning. Every external action of God is common to the three persons, just as omnipotence is, from which action derives its power; but one person, such as the person of the Word, can be separately the terminus of some real relation.

NINTH ARTICLE: WHETHER THE UNION OF THE TWO NATURES IN CHRIST IS THE GREATEST OF UNIONS

State of the question. St. Thomas, as Cajetan remarks, considers union here not so much as a relation, but as it is a substantial and immediate conjunction of the two natures in the person of the Word. And the conjunction is the foundation of the above-mentioned relation. There are difficulties, as stated in the beginning of this article.

1) Unity that is the principle of number, seems to be a greater unity than Christ.

2) It seems that this union is not the greatest, because the divine and human natures are infinitely apart, and the greater the distance between the extremes that are united, the less is the union.

3) It seems that the union between body and soul is greater, because from it there results what is one not only in person, but also in nature.

The counterargument presents a contrary objection, as if the union of the Incarnation were greater than the unity of the divine essence.

Reply. The hypostatic union is the greatest of unions, not on the part of the things united, but on the part of the person in whom they are united.

First part. It is proved in the body of this article, and in the reply to the second objection as follows: The greater the distance between the extremes united, the less is the union in this respect. But the divine and human natures, which are the extremes of this union, are infinitely apart. Therefore the union of the divine and the human natures is the least in this respect.

Second part. It is proved as follows: On the part of the medium in which the extremes are united, so much the greater is the union as this medium is in more one and simple, and more intimately united with the extremes. But the medium in this union, namely, the person of the Word, is most simple in Himself, and really identical with the divine nature, and substantially united

with the human nature, so that the person of the Word imparts to the human nature both subsistence and existence. Therefore this union, on the part of the medium in which it took place, is the greatest of created unions.

This same principle serves as the means of illustrating the mystical body of Christ. Although the members of His mystical body live far apart from one another in most distant climes, yet they are most closely united both in Christ and in the Holy Spirit.

Thus it is that sometimes two saintly persons living far apart according to their nationality, are more intimately united in Christ than with their fellow citizens. The principle on which the unity of the mystical body of Christ depends is, indeed, far more productive of this spirit of unity than that of any family or nation on this earth.

It is the formal unitive principle that is of greater consideration in union than the actual distance, however great this may be, which separates the members. Thus it is apparent that the greatest intimacy is to be found in the hypostatic union, which evidently far transcends the unity of the mystical body of Christ. Nevertheless the hypostatic union is not so great as the unity of the Trinity; for the unity of the Trinity is a unity of an absolutely simple nature, which is numerically one in the three divine persons and identical with each of them.

St. Bernard has given us three conclusions in equivalent words in one of his works, saying: “Among all things that are properly called one, the unity of the Trinity holds the first place, in which the three persons are one in substance or nature; conversely, that union holds the second place by which three substances are present in the one person of Christ,” namely, the Deity, the soul, and the body.

Reply to first objection. The unity of the divine person in Christ is greater than numerical unity, which is the principle of number; for the unity of a divine person is an uncreated and self-subsisting unity, and is incompatible with the nature of a part.

This union is sublime; for what is extraordinary in the order of the beautiful is sublime. Beauty is splendor of unity in variety, and the more distant are the extremes that are united and the more intimately they are united, the more beautiful is their union. This union of which we are speaking is unique, and is both a miracle and an essentially supernatural mystery. Its real possibility is not apodictically proved by reason alone, but it is persuaded and defended against those denying it.

There remains, however, the principal difficulty. It may be expressed by the following syllogism.

That union is greater from which results not only one person, but also one nature. But such is the union between soul and body. Therefore it is greater than the hypostatic union.

Reply to third objection. On the part of the medium in which it takes place, the hypostatic union is nobler, for “the unity of the divine person is greater than the unity of person and nature in us.” This is evident, for the divine person of the Word is absolutely simple, whereas the human person and the human nature are composite. Thus the human composite is corruptible, whereas the hypostatic union is incorruptible.

How shall we reply, therefore, to the major of this objection, namely, that union is greater from which results not only one person but also one nature? I distinguish: that the union is greater on the part of the extremes, this I concede; on the part of the medium, this I deny.

Thus the union in the Incarnation is intensively more perfect than the union between soul and body, and therefore is indissoluble; whereas soul and body are separated by death, and as long as the soul is separated it is not properly a person.

This article is most sublime in doctrine. It can be developed so as to elevate the mind to spiritual things, combining this article with the above-mentioned principle, namely, “It is a greater dignity to exist in something nobler than oneself than to exist by oneself.” This principle is very rich in possibilities if closely examined, first as found in Christ, and then as it applies in a certain extended sense to us in the operational order. Thus it is better for us to be passive in our relations with God, by a perfect conformity of our will with the divine will, than following our own will to rule the world, which is contrary to Satan’s doctrine, who, in seeking to tempt Christ, said: “All these things will I give Thee, if falling down Thou wilt adore me.” Thereupon Jesus says to him: “Begone, Satan! For it is written: The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve.” It is a greater dignity for one to exist in someone nobler than oneself than to exist by oneself, and to act in conformity with God’s will than to perform great acts by one’s own choice. As Cajetan says: “It is better to obey the king, than to rule over one’s household,” or it is better to be in a passive frame of mind as regards those superior to us, than to assume an active role as regards those inferior to us; and although it is better to give than to receive,

it is better to receive from someone superior to us, than to give to someone inferior to us. Thus the true way of passivity in the spiritual life is nobler than to act, relying on one's own ability, as Dionysius says of Hierotheus that he was "passive to the divine operations (patiens divina) "

TENTH ARTICLE: WHETHER THE UNION OF THE TWO NATURES IN CHRIST TOOK PLACE BY GRACE

State of the question. The difficulties at the beginning of this article show clearly the purpose of this question. It seems that the union did not take place by grace, because grace is an accident inhering in the soul of everyone in the state of grace; whereas the hypostatic union is substantial, as stated above, and belongs exclusively to Christ.

Reply. This union did not take place by created grace, which is an accident, and an habitual gift inhering in the soul, but it took place by uncreated grace, which is the gratuitous will of God doing something without any preceding merits on the part of the beneficiary of the gift.

First part. It is evident, because this union is substantial, and not accidental.

Second part. It is also evident, because this union infinitely transcends the faculty and exigencies of created nature, even the angelic.

In this article St. Thomas does not speak of a substantial mode that would be present between the Word that assumes and the humanity that is assumed.

ELEVENTH ARTICLE: WHETHER ANY MERITS PRECEDED THE UNION OF THE INCARNATION

State of the question. In a certain sense it seems the Incarnation was merited, for the just of the Old Testament merited eternal life, to which they could attain only through the Incarnation. Therefore it seems that they likewise merited the Incarnation. Also the Church chants of the Blessed Virgin that "she merited to bear the Lord of all "

On the contrary, St. Augustine teaches that no merits preceded our regeneration, and he gives St. Paul as his authority. Therefore no merits preceded the generation of Christ. Moreover, in the above-mentioned work, St. Augustine shows in his own beautiful way that the predestination of

Christ as man to divine natural sonship, could not have been because of Christ's foreseen merits, for these merits presuppose His person already constituted. From this St. Augustine concludes that likewise our predestination, of which Christ's predestination is the exemplar, is not because of our foreseen merits, which are the effects of our predestination, as explained by St. Thomas.

Reply. There are three conclusions in the body of the article.

First conclusion. Christ could not merit His incarnation, because every operation of Christ followed the hypostatic union; for Christ was not first a mere man, and afterward united to the Word, but at the very moment His human nature was created, it was personally united to the Word. This conclusion is de fide against Photinus.

Second conclusion. The patriarchs of the Old Testament and the Blessed Virgin Mary did not merit and could not merit de condigno the Incarnation, and this for three reasons.

1) Because the Incarnation transcends the beatitude of eternal life, to which the merits of the just are ordained as their ultimate reward. The Incarnation establishes the hypostatic order above the order of grace and glory.

2) Because the principle of grace cannot fall under merit, for it would be its own cause. Thus the state of grace does not fall under merit, and a fortiori this applies to the Incarnation, which is the principle of grace, for the Gospel says: "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

3) Because the incarnation of Christ is for the reformation of the entire human nature, and therefore it is not on account of the merit of any particular man. St. John says: "Of His fullness we have all received."

Third conclusion. Yet the patriarchs of the Old Testament merited the Incarnation congruously or in a broad sense by desiring and beseeching, for it was becoming that God should hearken to those who obeyed Him. "The Blessed Virgin," says St. Thomas, "is said to have merited to bear the Lord of all; not that she merited His incarnation, but because by the grace bestowed upon her she merited that grade of purity and holiness which fitted her to be the Mother of God." These are golden words, and in the strictest sense express what the Blessed Virgin Mary truly merited, for she did not merit the Incarnation, which is the principle of that plenitude of grace which she received so as to merit, but she merited an increase of grace by which she became worthy to be the Mother of God.

There are some doubts that arise concerning this article.

For the solution of these doubts we must recall the division of merit as set forth in the treatise on grace. Merit is a work performed that is deserving of a reward, or, more correctly, there is a right to a reward in this work performed. Hence the foundation for this division is according to the excellence of the work performed, inasmuch as there is or is not equality of proportion between the work performed and the reward. There is this proportion in condign merit, but not in congruous merit.

MERIT

condign

which has its foundation at least in distributive justice, inasmuch as there is condignity or equality of proportion between the work and the reward

congruous

in the strict sense: is founded on friendship, or a friendly right between persons, inasmuch as friendship is a potential part of justice

in the broad sense: is founded on God’s pure mercy, without implying any right or obligation to reward because of the work performed

First doubt. Could Christ have merited His incarnation by works that followed from it?

Some theologians, such as Suarez, Ruiz, Coninck, are of this opinion, inasmuch as God had decreed the execution and continuance of the Incarnation in future times because of the foreseen future merits of Christ.

The Thomists deny this view. They defend this first conclusion of St. Thomas by saying that Christ neither merited nor could have absolutely merited His incarnation either de condigno or de congruo, not even by works that followed from it.

The reason for this is that the principle of merit neither falls nor can fall under merit, for it would be its own cause, as explained in the treatise on grace.

More briefly, Christ did not merit His own self. Merit is the morally efficient cause of reward, inasmuch as it is a right to a reward; if, therefore, the principle of merit were to fall under merit as a reward, then merit would be its moral cause; and thus it would be its own cause; it would be both cause and effect in the same genus and in the same aspect, which is absurd.

But the Incarnation is the principle of the whole of Christ’s merit because it is impossible to conceive of any of Christ’s operations that does not proceed from His person as the efficient principle that operates, since

actions belong to the supposita, and operation follows being, and the person of the Word gives an infinite value to Christ's merits, which will be more clearly explained farther on.

Hence not even Christ's good works following from the Incarnation could have merited it either de condigno or de congruo, for these works would have been the cause of Christ Himself. Similarly the Incarnation would have been both cause and effect in the same aspect; it would have been both principle and principled, prior and posterior to itself, all of which are contrary to the principle of contradiction, that must be preserved in these mysteries, otherwise mysteries would be nothing but absurdities, not above reason, but contrary to reason.

Confirmation. The Incarnation was decreed even as regards its execution before the merits of Christ were foreseen. For just as being precedes operation, so the being of Christ was decreed before His operation. Hence Christ could not have merited His incarnation at least in its essentials.

Second doubt. Did Christ merit the circumstances of His incarnation?

The Thomists answer by distinguishing between circumstances either preceding or accompanying the Incarnation, and others that follow from it. They also subdistinguish the preceding circumstances so far as they either are or are not necessarily connected with the Incarnation. They say:

1) Christ did not merit the preceding or concomitant circumstances of the Incarnation that essentially belong to His being or were its necessary accompaniments.

The reason is that Christ's merits presuppose His incarnation as their principle, and likewise the aforesaid circumstances that belong to His essence and individuation in the Incarnation.

Moreover, God cannot infallibly foresee Christ's future merits, unless He previously foresees that Christ will exist in some moment of time.

Hence Christ did not merit to be conceived of the Holy Ghost, to be born of the Blessed Virgin Mary, of the Jewish race, in a certain place, at a certain time, and in a certain manner.

2) Christ merited those circumstances of His incarnation that neither essentially belong to His being nor were its necessary accompaniments, or those that did not pertain to His essence and individuation in the Incarnation.

These circumstances are not the cause or principle of merit, nor does Christ's merit depend on them. Christ merited all that fittingly can be called

merit. Thus He merited what the prophets foretold about Him, what the angel announced, and more probably the virginity of Mary, for Mary's virginity does not essentially belong to the Incarnation, any more than that a mother be of the white race; nor does it seem necessarily connected with the Incarnation. Likewise Christ merited the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

3) Christ merited the circumstances that followed from the Incarnation; because these are not connected with the principle of merit, but follow from it. Thus He merited the multitude of angels singing after His birth, the adoration of the Magi, the appearance of the star, the care given to Him by the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Joseph, to be the judge of the world, the institutor of the sacraments, His resurrection.

More briefly, as the Salmanticenses say: "Concerning all the circumstances of the Incarnation, it may be said that Christ did not merit those that belong to the essence and individuation of the Incarnation, such as to be conceived of the Holy Ghost, to be born of the Virgin, and so He did not merit the maternity of the Blessed Virgin Mary; but He merited all the circumstances that do not belong to the essence of the mystery.

"The reason is, as regards the first conditions, that the principle of merit, the Incarnation, does not fall under merit; concerning the other circumstances, the reason is that these are not connected with the principle of merit." Briefly, Christ did not merit His own self.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE INCARNATION

preceding and accompanying it

those pertaining to essence and individuation of Incarnation -

e.g., conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; i.e., Christ did not merit her virginal maternity (so the Salmanticenses(Christ did not merit these)

what does not pertain to the essence of the Incarnation—(Christ did merit these)

what the prophets foretold about Him, what the angel announced, and other such things—following from it

adoration of Magi, care given to Him by Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph, to institute sacraments, to rise from dead—(Christ did merit these)

Third doubt. Did Christ merit the continuation of His incarnation? Suarez and certain other theologians affirm that He did.

The majority of the theologians, especially among the Thomists, say that He did not. They give as their reason, that the continuation does not differ from the Incarnation itself, which cannot be the object of merit. The Incarnation is not a continuation after the manner of successive and divisible things by some addition, namely, by way of part, degree or help, but it is simultaneously whole and is measured by an absolutely indivisible duration, which transcends the continuity of solar time, and also the discrete time in the succession of thoughts of angels. This duration, that measures the Incarnation, is participated eternity, participated indeed inasmuch as the Incarnation had a beginning. The reason is that the hypostatic union is unchangeable, and more permanent than the beatific vision, which is really measured by participated eternity on the part of the object, inasmuch as there is neither change nor succession in it.

Confirmation. Now the continuation of the state of grace until death no more falls under merit than the beginning of this state, which is the principle of merit; a fortiori, therefore, the continuation of the Incarnation, which is the radical principle of all merits of both Christ and baptized persons, does not fall under merit.

Fourth doubt. This concerns the merits of the patriarchs of the Old Testament and of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

St. Thomas clearly shows indeed that they could not have merited de condigno the Incarnation, which is the radical principle of the merits of all men after the Fall and their regeneration, and which transcends our beatitude or the ultimate end of our merit. This is the commonly accepted and certain opinion among theologians, which is expressed in passages of Holy Scripture where it is stated that the Incarnation is a work of mercy. The canticle that is called the Benedictus, says: “Through the bowels of the mercy of our God, in which the Orient from on high hath visited us.” St. Paul says: “But when the goodness and kindness of God our Savior appeared; not by the works of justice which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us.”

Hence neither the Blessed Virgin Mary could merit de condigno the Incarnation; but it was the radical principle of all the merits of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who received the grace of the Immaculate Conception because of the future merits of Christ, as Pius IX declared.

Therefore the only difficulty that remains is that which concerns congruous merit. In other words, what does St. Thomas mean by saying

toward the end of the body of this eleventh article: “Yet the holy fathers of the Old Testament merited the Incarnation congruously by desiring and beseeching; for it was becoming that God should hearken to those who obeyed Him”?

Is it here a case of congruous merit in the strict sense, a merit that is founded on friendship, or on an amicable right; or is it merely congruous merit in the broad sense, which has its foundation in God’s pure mercy who hears our prayers even without their being meritorious either de condigno or de congruo, as when He hears the prayers of sinners who cannot merit to be heard, since they are in a state of sin?

Several theologians, even some Thomists, say that congruous merit is here meant. But they are incapable of solving the objection that immediately presents itself, namely, that the incarnation of Christ is the principle of the whole merit acquired by the Blessed Virgin Mary, and by the fathers of both the Old Testament and of the New. The principle of merit does not fall under merit, not even under congruous merit in the strict sense, for this merit has its foundation in friendship or in charity that comes from Christ. St. Thomas says: “Christ is the Savior of the whole human race,” as the angel said: “He shall save His people from their sins.”

Some theologians reply that in the intentional order the Incarnation is the principle of merit concerning the fathers of the Old Testament, and in the order of execution the merits of the fathers prepare for the Incarnation. In other words, the Incarnation and these merits are mutually causes, though in a different order; the Incarnation is the final cause, but merits constitute the moral efficient cause.

This reply is of no value. It would perhaps apply to the merits of Adam in the state of innocence, but here it is valueless; for the merits of the fathers are dependent on the future merits of Christ, not only as final cause, but as moral efficient cause. These causes are mutually causes, though in a different order. Hence St. Thomas says: “The mystery of the Incarnation is the principle of merit, because of His fullness we all have received,” even all the just of the Old Testament. The same must be said of the merits of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In the present state of man after the Fall, there is no merit, nor is it possible to conceive of any, which does not derive its value and power of meriting from the merits of Christ. Merits in Christ are not conceived as morally efficient cause of our merits, except so far as Christ is considered as existing, or absolutely will exist in some moment of time, and

consequently actually existing and not merely intending to exist; for actions belong to supposita that exist, and operation follows being. Hence the principle “causes mutually interact” does not apply here, for they would be causes in the same genus of causality, which constitutes a vicious circle.

Hence neither the fathers of the Old Testament nor the Blessed Virgin could merit strictly de congruo the accomplishment of the Incarnation as foreseen and decreed by God, nor therefore as taking place in time. If we merit the attainment of glory in the order of execution, it is because God so willed this by His eternal and effective decree. This means, as it is commonly said, that in the intentional order God freely wills to give glory to His elect, but He does not will to give it freely to the adult elect in the order of execution. This means that the adult must merit glory to which they have been freely predestined.

Solution of the doubt. Several Thomists, such as Sylvius and Gotti, say that the problem concerns congruous merit in the broad sense of the term, which has its foundation in God’s pure mercy hearing our prayers even though they are not strictly meritorious, such as the prayers of sinners. And this seems to be the meaning of the following text of St. Thomas: “It was becoming that God should hear the prayers of those who obey Him.” Therefore congruous merit in the broad sense is the same as impetration.

Otherwise 1. the Fathers would have merited something better than Christ Himself merited; 2. Christ would be indebted to the fathers for His incarnation; 3. The Incarnation would not be a work of pure mercy.

Thus the principle enunciated by St. Thomas in the body of this eleventh article, namely, “the principle of merit does not fall under merit,” remains intact. This principle applies equally to strictly congruous merit, which is the result of God’s love obtained for us by Christ, as to condign merit. Sacrosanct also is the principle that Christ is the source of the merits of the regenerated both in the Old Testament and in the New, even of the merits of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

This interpretation is confirmed by the fact that St. Thomas denies that the Blessed Virgin Mary merited the Incarnation, for he writes: “The Blessed Virgin is said to have merited to bear the Lord of all, not that she merited His incarnation, but because by the grace bestowed upon her she merited that grade of purity and holiness which fitted her to be the Mother of God.”

St. Thomas said practically the same in another of His works, in which he wrote: “The Blessed Virgin did not merit the Incarnation, but after its accomplishments she merited to be instrumental in bringing it about, not by condign merit, but by congruous merit, inasmuch as it was becoming that the Mother of God should be most pure and most perfect.”

Objection. Strictly congruous merit has its foundation in the mutual friendship prevailing between the one who merits and the one who rewards. But the holy fathers who desired the Incarnation were God’s friends, and a fortiori the Blessed Virgin was. Therefore the Blessed Virgin and the holy fathers de congruo merited the Incarnation.

Reply. I distinguish the major; when nothing militates against the notion of merit, I concede the major; otherwise I deny it. But the obstacle here is that the Incarnation is the principle of merit for the fathers, and cannot be merited. Moreover, as already stated, the Incarnation constitutes a special hypostatic order, which is beyond the scope of merit; for the only purpose of merit is for the attainment of eternal happiness, and “the union of the Incarnation transcends the union of the beatified mind with God, and therefore it cannot fall under merit,” as St. Thomas says.

TWELFTH ARTICLE: WHETHER THE GRACE OF UNION WAS NATURAL TO THE MAN CHRIST

Cajetan remarks that this question concerns Christ, not as God, but as man. Is the grace of union natural to Him?

Reply. The grace of union is not natural to Christ, if this would mean that it is caused by the principle of the human nature; but it may be called natural inasmuch as it was bestowed upon Him together with the human nature, and moreover, inasmuch as it comes from the divine nature of Christ. Infused habitual grace in the soul of Christ is also natural in this sense.

The reason is that both graces are substantially supernatural and were given to Christ at the moment of His conception.

Doubt. Was the Blessed Virgin Mary the instrumental cause of the union of the human nature with the Word at the very moment of Christ’s conception?

Reply. Most certainly no creature was or could be the principal efficient cause of the Incarnation, for the Incarnation is not only a work that belongs

properly to God, such as creation, but it is His greatest work; for it is a miracle of the first order surpassing in substance all created and creatable powers and all exigencies of whatsoever created nature. It is also a mystery that transcends the mysteries of grace and that constitutes a special order, known as the hypostatic order.

The Incarnation was a work of the Trinity, by reason of omnipotence, which is a common attribute of the three persons. Thus, as we stated, the Father and the Holy Ghost joined in the act of uniting the human nature with the Word, but only the Son assumes or takes this nature to Himself.

But a doubt arises. Was the Blessed Virgin the instrumental cause of the Incarnation?

The question is disputed. St. Thomas says that Mary was not, for he writes: “In the conception of Christ, the Blessed Virgin took no active part, but was merely the material cause.” But the instrumental cause takes an active part through the power of the principal agent.

Likewise St. Thomas maintains that there is no instrumental cause in creation, not even in the creation of the souls of infants, which occurs every day. The parents are not the efficient cause, but merely furnish the matter or dispose the body for the reception of the soul; a fortiori there is no instrumental cause in the Incarnation.

The principle on which this a fortiori argument rests may be illustrated by the following syllogism.

An instrument must dispose the subject for the effect of the principal agent. But, as in creation, there is no subject from which is produced that which is created from nothing; so in the Incarnation there is no pre-existing subject to be disposed, for the Incarnation is the communication of the personality of the Word to the human nature of Christ. The Word, however, is beyond the scope of created action, and is not the subject on which created action operates. Matter cannot be disposed for something uncreated, namely, for the Word that assumes. Therefore there is no instrumental cause in the Incarnation.

Hence, if the Blessed Virgin is said at times to be the instrumental cause of the creation of Christ’s soul and even of the Incarnation, this must be understood in a broad sense, inasmuch as she provided the matter which was formed by the Holy Ghost into the human nature and united with the Word.

CHAPTER V: QUESTION 3: THE MODE OF THE UNION ON THE PART OF THE PERSON ASSUMING

After the consideration of the hypostatic union in itself, we must now discuss the nature of this union on the part of the person assuming.

John of St. Thomas observes in the beginning of his commentary on this third question that St. Thomas divides it into two parts: 1. the person assuming (a. 1-5); 2. the manner of the assumption (a. 6-8).

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER IT IS FITTING FOR A DIVINE PERSON TO ASSUME

Cajetan says the purport of this title is to show that the question of this article concerns the divine person as such, so far as we introduce a mental distinction between person and the divine nature.

State of the question. It is apparent from the first two difficulties presented at the beginning of the article, namely, that there is no possibility of any addition to a divine person because this person is in Himself infinitely perfect. Also incommunicability belongs to the concept of person.

Conclusion. To assume a nature is most properly befitting to a person.

Authoritative proof. St. Augustine, who is quoting St. Fulgentius, says: “This God, that is, the Only-begotten One, took the form, that is, the nature of a servant to His own person.”

Proof from reason. It may be expressed in syllogistic form as follows: The word “assume,” which practically means to take to oneself, is both the principle and the term of an act. But only a person can be both the principle and term of an act. Therefore only a person can assume.

The other articles of this question will bring out more clearly the meaning of the adverb “most properly.”

Proof of minor. It belongs to a person to act, for actions are attributed to supposita, and a person is that which by itself separately exists and acts.

Moreover a person is the term of this assumption, because the union took place in the person and not in the nature.

Assumption is properly an action by which the human nature is drawn into the subsistence of the Son, so that it may subsist by this subsistence. Hence this action not only produces in the human nature of Christ a relation of dependence on the Word, but communicates to it the personality of the Word.

Reply to first objection. No addition is made to the divine person, who is infinite. But what is divine is united to man. Hence not God, but man is perfected.

Reply to second objection. “A divine person is said to be incommunicable inasmuch as it cannot be predicated of several supposita, but nothing prevents several things being predicated of the person.... But this is proper to a divine person, on account of its infinity, that there should be a concourse of natures in it, in subsistence.”

Doubt. Does the termination of another nature belong exclusively to a divine person, so that it would be repugnant to every created or creatable personality? Can an angel, for example, or a devil assume the human nature? Some thought that St. John the Baptist was an angel incarnate, and that Antichrist will be a devil incarnate.

Reply. It is the common teaching among theologians that no created person can assume a nature into union with its suppositum. So say Cajetan, Soto, Alvarez, Medina, Suarez, Vasquez, Billuart. The reason is that finite personality derives its limitation and species from the nature whose complement and term it is. Although subsistence is the mode and term of the nature, it does not specify the nature, but is specified by it. Thus we speak of the human personality, or of the angelic personality; hence it implies a contradiction for the same personality of one nature to terminate another. On the contrary, the divine personality because of its infinity, as St. Thomas says, is above both genus and species and contains formally and eminently the power of all possible personalities.

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER IT IS BEFITTING TO THE DIVINE NATURE TO ASSUME

State of the question. The meaning of the title is, as Cajetan remarks, whether de facto it is true that the Deity, or rather God, assumed the human nature.

It seems not to be true, because the union did not take place in the nature, but in the person; also because to assume in this manner could be said of the three persons.

Nevertheless, St. Augustine or rather St. Fulgentius, who is quoted in the counter-argument, says that the divine nature took our nature.

Conclusion. In the strictest sense a person is said to assume inasmuch as it is both principle and term of the assumption. In a secondary sense, however, it can be said that the Deity or God assumed the human nature inasmuch as the Deity was the principle of the assumptive act but not its term. The whole article must be read.

All the other articles of this question, on the supposition of the real possibility, even of the very fact of the incarnation of the Word, examine what else was either possible or impossible. I say: “on the supposition of the real possibility of the incarnation of the Word,” which, as already stated, is neither demonstrated by reason alone, nor can be disproved, but is persuaded and defended against those denying it, and is firmly held by faith.

THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER THE NATURE ABSTRACTED FROM THE PERSONALITY CAN ASSUME

State of the question. The meaning of the title is: Can the divine nature assume a nature different from its own, if by God we understand, in the way the pagans and Jews imagine Him to exist, without personal relations and without persons, as our Catholic faith acknowledges to be in Him?

It seems that the divine nature cannot so assume; because, as stated above, it befits the nature to assume because of the person, and because the union took place not in the nature, but in the person.

Reply. It is affirmed, nevertheless, that the divine nature can assume our nature.

Proof. It is taken from the counterargument of this article, from the argumentative part and from the reply to the second objection. The reasons given are: 1. In this hypothesis, God’s omnipotence, by which the Incarnation took place, would remain. 2. There would also remain the one personality of God as the Jews understand, which could be the term of the assumption.

In God, the Deity and God are identical, or in God whereby it is and what is are the same; for God's essence is His self-existing being.

First doubt. Is it something absolute or something relative that immediately terminates the human nature of Christ?

Reply. It is something relative that immediately and proximately terminates Christ's human nature, namely, the personality of the Word, which is constituted by relative subsistence, or by the subsisting relation of sonship, as explained in the treatise on the Trinity. The divine relations are subsisting relations, inasmuch as their inexistence (esse in) is substantial and not accidental as in created predicamental relations, for example, in created paternity and created sonship.

Proof. The Eleventh Council of Toledo in its profession of faith says: "Neither the Holy Spirit nor God the Father, but only the person of the Son took flesh." But if the Word were to terminate the human nature formally and proximately by a common and absolute subsistence, then the Father and the Holy Spirit equally with the Son, would have been incarnate.

Second doubt. Could the triune God assume the human nature primarily on account of absolute subsistence, and only secondarily on account of relative subsistences?

Reply. The triune God could have assumed absolutely our human nature, because this absolute subsistence "could be the principle and term of this assumption," as stated by St. Thomas in this article. For the reason why God subsists in His own nature, can be the reason why He subsists in a different nature. But absolute and common subsistence could be the reason for His subsistence in a different nature.

Third doubt. What is the difference between the incommunicability of absolute subsistence and of relative subsistence?

Reply. The first incommunicability is not within the Trinity, but only external to it. The second incommunicability is both internal and external to the Trinity. Common and absolute subsistence does not formally attribute incommunicability internally to the Deity, for the Deity is communicated to the Son and to the Holy Ghost. On the contrary, the personality of the Father is not communicated to the Son. But God by reason of His common and absolute subsistence is incommunicable externally, in this sense that He is by Himself separately existing, really and essentially distinct from the world. St. Thomas says: "A person is said to be incommunicable inasmuch as it cannot be predicated of several supposita."

What the philosopher means by saying that God is personal, is that He is the separately existing being, distinct from every creature, intelligent and free and so is externally incommunicable. When theologians speak of the three divine persons, what they first of all have in mind is internal incommunicability. Thus the Father communicates the whole divine nature to the Son, but not His personality, which is the subsistent relation of paternity in opposition to filiation.

Objection. The Fathers and councils never mention this absolute subsistence, which seems to have been discovered by Cajetan.

Reply. They never referred to it because there was no occasion of doing so to refute errors against it such as Nestorianism and Monophysitism, which had not yet arisen. It sufficed to exclude union in the nature and affirm the union in the person of the Word, as recorded in revelation. Absolute subsistence was not discovered by Cajetan, for St. Thomas explicitly refers to it in this third article.

FOURTH ARTICLE: WHETHER ONE PERSON WITHOUT ANOTHER CAN ASSUME A CREATED NATURE

State of the question. The difficulty, as presented by the first objection, is that assumption, being a certain external operation, pertains to all three persons, who operate externally by a common omnipotence. Thus it has been shown that the Trinity of persons cannot be known from creatures by natural reason; for “the creative power of God is common to the whole Trinity.”

Reply. Nevertheless it is of faith that only the Son of God became incarnate, neither the Father nor the Holy Spirit. The Eleventh Council of Toledo says: “We believe that of these three persons, only the person of the Son... true man... assumed[our nature].”

The body of the article contains the solution of the difficulty arising from the definition of assumption, or to assume.

Assumption implies two things: the act of assuming and the term of the assumption. But revelation says that only the person of the Son is the term of the assumption. Therefore assumption, considered as the term, applies only to the person of the Son, although considered as an act, it is common to the three persons.

Thus we said that the Father and the Holy Ghost united the human nature with the Word, but They did not assume it in the sense of term.

FIFTH ARTICLE: WHETHER EACH OF THE DIVINE PERSONS COULD HAVE ASSUMED HUMAN NATURE

State of the question. The difficulty is, as stated in the second objection, that by the divine Incarnation, men acquired the adoption of sons, which is a participated likeness of natural sonship, which applies only to the Son. Therefore it seems that only the Son could be incarnate. Moreover, to be incarnate is to be sent, which cannot apply to the Father, who cannot be sent by any person, since the other two persons proceed from Him.

Reply. Nevertheless it is affirmed, that each of the persons could have assumed human nature. For to assume another nature is befitting to God because of His omnipotence, as the principle of the assumption, and because of His person, as the term of the assumption. But each of the divine persons is omnipotent and has His own personality. Therefore each of the divine persons could have assumed human nature.

Reply to first objection. It was fitting, if the Father became incarnate, for Him as man to have been the Son of man, for example, the son of David; for this would be according to difference of natures, and would not result in confusion of realities, but at most of names.

Reply to second objection. It contains a beautiful scriptural text concerning adoptive sonship, which is a certain participated likeness of natural sonship. But if the Father became incarnate, we would have received this adoptive sonship from Him, as coming from the principle of natural sonship; but farther on in this question, it is shown that it was more fitting for the Son to have become incarnate.

Reply to third objection. The Father, who is innascible as to eternal birth, could have been born temporally as man if He had become incarnate. In such case the Incarnation would not have been a mission. Thus the Father dwells in the just, as the Son and the Holy Ghost do, but He is not sent, and so He comes without being sent; whereas the other two persons are sent by Him. So the pope sends His legate, but he himself is not sent, but comes.

SIXTH ARTICLE: WHETHER SEVERAL DIVINE PERSONS CAN ASSUME ONE AND THE SAME INDIVIDUAL NATURE

State of the question. The meaning is: Can the three persons assume this human nature, terminating it proximately and immediately by their own relations?

The difficulty is that it could not then be said the human nature is assumed by one man or by several men, because there would be one human nature and three divine persons who possess it.

Reply. Yet St. Thomas affirms the possibility of the three persons assuming one and the same human nature. It is the commonly accepted teaching, but it was attacked by Scotus.

Indirect proof. It is taken from the counterargument of this article, and proceeds by way of analogy; for just as the divine nature is common to the three persons, so likewise the human individualized nature can be common to Them.

A more direct and proper proof is found in the argumentative part of this article. It may be expressed by the following syllogism.

The divine persons do not exclude one another from communicating in the same nature, since they terminate together the same divine nature.

But in the mystery of the Incarnation, the whole reason of the deed is the power of the doer, as Augustine says.

Therefore in passing judgment on the act, we must take into special consideration the condition of the person assuming, who does not exclude the other two persons from communicating in the same nature.

There is no repugnance on the part of the human nature, because it can be assumed, not by reason of its natural limited power, but because of its obediential power, which extends to all that is not essentially repugnant.

What is truly impossible is for a divine person to assume a human person, for then there would be two persons in one person.

Reply to first objection. It contains the solution of the difficulty proposed in the objection, namely, that, granting the hypothesis, it would be true to say that the three divine persons were one man, because of the one human nature, just as we say that they are one God, because of the one divine nature, which is one numerically, without any multiplication and division.

SEVENTH ARTICLE: WHETHER ONE DIVINE PERSON CAN ASSUME TWO HUMAN NATURES

State of the question. This question is posited, as the preceding questions are, so as to make it known more clearly in what the mystery of the Incarnation consists on the part of the person assuming.

The difficulty is that there would be one suppositum for two natures of the same species, for example, the same divine person would be Peter and John. Another difficulty is that it could not then be said that the person incarnate is one man, because He would have two human natures; nor several men, because several men have distinct supposita. It is not apparent how these two human natures could be united to each other, one of these natures being perhaps in one part of the world, and the other in another part.

Reply. St. Thomas affirms, however, the possibility of such an assumption.

Indirect proof. It is taken from the counter-argument of this article, and may be expressed by the following syllogism.

Whatever the Father can do externally, the Son also can do. But after the Incarnation, the Father can assume a human nature distinct from that assumed by the Son. Therefore the Son can assume a human nature distinct from the one He assumed.

Direct proof. This same principle is again invoked, as in the following syllogism.

The power of a divine person, both as regards the principle in the assumption and as regards the term of the assumption, is infinite; nor can it be restricted to what has been created. But a divine person would be restricted in power if He could assume only one human nature. Therefore a divine person can assume more than one human nature.

Some have objected that such two human natures would interpenetrate.

Reply. To establish the truth of this conclusion, it is not necessary for the divine person to assume these two natures in the same place; for divine immensity makes it possible for any of the divine persons to assume one of the human natures in Rome, and the other in some place far away from this city. Such action involves no absurdity.

Reply to first objection. “There can be a numerical multitude on the part of the nature, on account of the division of matter, without distinction of supposita.”

Reply to second objection. There would still be one man, and not several, because there is only one suppositum. In fact, one divine person could assume many individual human natures, and there would be no pantheism

in this for there would be no confusion of the divine nature with the human nature; but all these natures would be impeccable. Toletus gave us a good rule to follow, one that is taken from the teaching of St. Thomas. He says: “For the multiplication of concrete substantive names both kinds of multitude are required, namely, of supposita and of forms; the absence of one results in unity.”

Eighth Article: Whether It Was More Fitting That The Person Of The Son Rather Than Any Other Divine Person Should Assume Human Nature

State of the question. It seems that it is not, because the effect of the Incarnation is a kind of second creation, which befits the Father, inasmuch as creative power is appropriated to Him. Besides, the Incarnation is ordained to the remission of sins, which is attributed to the Holy Ghost.

Conclusion. Yet it was most fitting that the person of the Son should become incarnate, and this for three reasons.

1) Because of the principle of the union. All things were made by the Word, as by the exemplary cause. Therefore it was fitting that ail things be restored by the Word. Thus the craftsman, by the intelligible form or concept of his art, whereby he fashioned his handiwork, restores it when it has fallen into ruin.

2) The end of the union. It was fitting that He who is the natural Son of God, should make us adoptive sons. He received by eternal generation the whole divine nature without its being multiplied or divided; but we receive a participation of the divine nature, or the radical principle of strictly divine operations, and finally a participation of the beatific vision.

3) Reparation for sin. An inordinate desire for knowledge had resulted in the sin and spiritual death of man. Hence it was fitting that reparation be made by Him to whom wisdom is attributed.

St. Paul says: “[God] predestinated[us] to be made conformable to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren.” St. Thomas in commenting on this text shows clearly that adoptive sonship is a participated likeness of natural and eternal sonship. Adoption is generally known as the legal acceptance of an unrelated person as son. To adopt is to admit someone freely as heir to one’s estate. It befits the whole Trinity to adopt men, “although in God, to beget belongs to the person of the Father, yet to produce any effect in creatures is common to the whole Trinity, by reason of the oneness of Their nature; because, where there is one nature, there must be one power and one operation.” The adopted son

of God is not strictly begotten, but made; yet sometimes it may be said that he is begotten, by reason of spiritual regeneration, which is gratuitous and not natural. Hence it befits the whole Trinity to adopt men as sons.

Nevertheless St. Thomas says: “Adoptive sonship is a certain likeness of the eternal sonship.... Now man is likened to the splendor of the eternal Son by reason of the light of grace which is attributed to the Holy Ghost. Therefore adoption, though common to the whole Trinity, is appropriated to the Father as its author; to the Son as its exemplar, to the Holy Ghost as imprinting on us the likeness of this exemplar.” It is easy to assign similarities and differences between the divine, natural, eternal sonship and adoptive sonship; for the Son of God is by nature begotten, not made; He is light of light, true God of true God; possesses the whole Deity that can neither be divided nor multiplied. The adopted son is made, not begotten, but he is spiritually born of God by grace, which is a participation of the divine nature, and this radically disposes him for strictly divine acts, namely, to see God face to face and love Him for all eternity.

Recapitulation. What has been discussed in this third question will enable us to acquire a better understanding of the hypostatic union in all its aspects so far considered.

Therefore it has been established that in the strictest sense it befits a divine person to assume a created nature, that is, take it to Himself (a. 1 and 2). Nevertheless, God as conceived by Jews and Monotheists, not consisting of three persons who are related to one another, could assume a created nature, because He is omnipotent, and He could terminate this nature by absolute subsistence, which is common to the three divine persons.

It follows from this, as has been stated, that anyone of the divine persons could assume the human nature. In fact, the three divine persons could assume one and the same human nature, just as they have one and the same divine nature.

Finally, one divine person could assume two human natures, because the power of the person on the part of the principle and the term of the assumption is infinite. But although these divers hypotheses are possible, it was more fitting that the Son of God rather than the Father or the Holy Ghost should assume the human nature of Christ.

CHAPTER VI: QUESTION 4: THE MODE OF THE UNION ON THE PART OF THE HUMAN NATURE ASSUMED

We must now discuss the mode of the union not on the part of the person assuming, but on the part of what was assumed; and here two things must be considered.

1) What the Word assumed:

a) The human nature itself (q. 4).

b) Of the parts of the human nature, which refutes Docetism and Apollinarianism (q. 5).

c) Of the order of this assumption, for example, whether the soul was assumed before the flesh (q. 6).

2) What things were co-assumed; (a) of perfections, where the habitual grace of Christ, His knowledge and power are discussed; (b) of defects, or of those defects which Christ voluntarily accepted for our satisfaction, such as passibility of the body, death, in which Christ's impeccability is discussed, as also His propassions. (q. 7-15)

Thus the treatise on the hypostatic union is complete, since we find discussed: (a) the union itself (q. 2); (b) the person assuming (q. 3); (c) the nature assumed, both as to its parts and those things co-assumed (q. 4-15). Afterward there will be a discussion of the consequences of the union, in themselves and in their relations both to the Father and to us.

The fourth question contains six articles, treating of the human nature in itself, both in its relation to human personality, which Christ did not have, and in its relation to individuals of the human nature.

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER HUMAN NATURE WAS MORE ASSUMABLE BY THE SON OF GOD THAN ANY OTHER NATURE

State of the question. The inquiry concerns human nature as assumable, not according to its natural passive power nor according to its obediential power, but according to its fitness. The more common opinion among theologians affirms with St. Thomas that according to God's absolute power any other nature is assumable. The discussion here concerns only its fitness.

This question is of some importance in determining whether besides the obediential power there is a fitness attached to the nature, but not necessarily so, for example, a fitness of assumption in the human nature rather than in the angelic.

First objection. The difficulty is that God's absolute power is not limited to one nature; for just as there is no such thing actually as the best of all possible worlds, so there is no created nature that is more fitted for the hypostatic union.

SECOND OBJECTION. THE DIFFICULTY IS THAT ALSO IN IRRATIONAL CREATURES THERE IS A TRACE OF GOD'S IMAGE.

Third objection. In the angelic nature we find a more perfect likeness of God than in the human nature, and there is need of redemption for angels that are sinners.

FOURTH OBJECTION. FINALLY THE WHOLE UNIVERSE IS MORE CAPABLE OF ASSUMPTION THAN THE HUMAN NATURE.

Conclusion. It was more fitting, says St. Thomas, for the human nature to be assumed by the Word, than any other nature.

Authoritative proof. This fittingness is intimated in various passages of Scripture. Thus the Wisdom of God is represented as saying: "My delights were to be with the children of men." Similarly St. Paul writes: "For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, who had brought many children into glory, to perfect the author of their salvation, by His passion.... For nowhere doth He take hold of the angels, but of the seed of Abraham He taketh hold. Wherefore it behooved Him in all things to be made like unto His brethren, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest before God, that He might be a propitiation for the sins of the people." Christ had to be both priest and victim because no other victim was worthy of fulfilling this role.

Theological proof. It may be reduced to the following syllogism.

This greater fitness may be viewed both according to the dignity and the necessity or need of the assumable nature.

But the human is more worthy than the irrational nature since it can attain to union with the Word by knowledge and love. Moreover, it needed reparation, since it was subjected to original sin, which is not true of the angels, for all did not sin, and those who did are already confirmed in their sin and incapable of redemption. Therefore it was more fitting for the human nature than any other nature to be assumed by the Word. This conclusion must be understood in the sense given by St. Thomas at the end of the argumentative part of this article, where he says: “Hence it follows that only human nature was assumable.”

Moreover, as St. Thomas remarks in another of his works, the human nature is a quasi-compendium of the universe, a microcosm, inasmuch as it contains within itself being, as in minerals, life as in the lower forms of living animals, intelligence as in the angels, although in not so perfect a way.

The solution of the difficulties raised in the objections confirms this last observation of St. Thomas.

Reply to first objection. Here it is shown that besides the obediential power, which includes everything that is not in itself repugnant to reason, there can be a certain fitness or congruity in the human nature for its being assumed by the Word in the hypostatic union, a fitness that is not found either in stones, plants, a lamb, or a dove. Hence St. Thomas says in this reply: “Therefore a creature is said to be not assumable, not as if we withdrew anything from the power of God, but in order to show the condition of the creature which has no capability for this.” Therefore this capability, which is in neither stone nor dove, is not this obediential power for assumption, which is in either a stone or in any animal, for example, in the most spotless lamb.

As Cajetan remarks, St. Thomas did not ask whether the Word can assume the nature of a stone. There is nothing intrinsically impossible in this according to God’s purely absolute power, but there would be no end or purpose in doing this. Thus God can by His purely absolute power annihilate the Blessed Virgin Mary, but there is no reason for doing so on the part of the end in view. Therefore this is repugnant, if not by God’s

purely absolute power, at least by His ordained power, either ordinary or extraordinary.

Yet there is truly in the nature of either a stone, a lamb, or a dove a non-repugnance or obediential power for the hypostatic union, although there is no capability in the sense of congruity.

From this reply to the first objection, it seems to follow that the capability or fitness of our nature to be elevated to the beatific vision is not this obediential power, which of itself requires nothing else but a non-repugnance to this elevation, inasmuch as God can do whatever is not repugnant. In fact, as will be stated farther on, there is in the most holy soul of Christ the obediential power for a greater degree of the light of glory. The obediential power of our intellect is in itself unrestricted, because our intellect by God's absolute power, can always be raised to a higher degree of the light of glory, and our will to a higher degree of charity.

There remains this obediential power in the nature of the damned for being raised to the beatific vision, but it is no longer any fittingness in them.

Reply to second objection. "The irrational creature which falls short of the union with God by operation has no fitness to be united with Him in personal being."

Reply to third objection. Concerning the reply to this third objection, which must be real, Cajetan observes against Scotus, that for St. Thomas personality is something positive and real that is distinct from the individualized nature, for instance, from Michaelness, because St. Thomas says: "In this way, nothing pre-existing would be corrupted in it," if God, by producing a new angelic nature, were to unite it to Himself.

In this same reply, it is pointed out that the bad angels fell irreparably, though not indeed absolutely, but according to the way that is consistent with divine providence, as already explained by St. Thomas, for, when asking whether the will of the demons is confirmed in evil, he says: "The angel's free will is flexible to either opposite before the choice, but not after." This means that the angel's choice elicited by means of intuitive and simultaneous knowledge of those things that must be considered in the object, is irrevocable, and thus it participates in the immutability of the divine choice, which is both most free and absolutely immutable. On the contrary, our choice is elicited by means of abstractive and discursive knowledge, which only gradually acquires the knowledge of all those things

that must be considered. Hence it is revocable, inasmuch as after the choice we can consider certain new things not previously considered.

Hence man is capable of redemption, but not the angel. Moreover, the first man was tempted by the devil and fell, whereas the devil fell solely by his own will. Hence the human nature is more worthy of compassion than the nature of the fallen angel.

First doubt. Can an irrational nature, such as that of a lamb or dove, be united befittingly with the person of the Word?

Reply. Several theologians give an affirmative answer, just as it was not unbecoming for the Word incarnate to be scourged, spit upon, and to die. In fact, during the three days of death, the Word remained hypostatically united to the corpse, not personally, but subsistentially. But these reasons do not rest on solid grounds, for the Word was united to the corpse of Christ, only because it was previously united to His human nature, and, if the Word was scourged and crucified, this was meritorious for our redemption. Whereas there is no comparison in the above-mentioned hypothesis, because the dove and the lamb are incapable of meriting and satisfying.

Second doubt. St. Thomas says in various passages that suppositum and nature are the same in the angels; yet in his reply here he holds that the angelic nature is assumable, which cannot be unless it is distinct from the suppositum.

Reply. Cajetan, Medina, Alvarez, Gonet, and Billuart say that St. Thomas in the passage cited above means that the angelic nature is not distinct from its individualizing notes; but he holds that the angel has its own subsistence or personality that is distinct from its nature, which it would lose if the angelic nature were united with the Word. On several occasions St. Thomas says that there is a difference between what is (suppositum), and being (existence). For it is manifest that Michael has not only his nature or Michaelness, but also his being and accidents, such as successive intellections and volitions.

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER THE SON OF GOD ASSUMED A PERSON

State of the question. The difficulty is that the Son of God assumed an individualized nature and thus it appears that He assumed this particular man or person.

Reply. Nevertheless, the answer is that He did not assume a person, which is of faith against Nestorius, inasmuch as the Church defined the union to be subsistential, so that there is only one person in Christ. the counterargument gives a quotation from St. Fulgentius, under the name of St. Augustine.

The theological explanation is given in the body of the article, which may be explained by the following syllogism. What is assumed must be presupposed to the assumption. But a person in human nature is not presupposed to assumption, but is rather the term of the assumption. Therefore the human person is not assumed; but the person of the Word assumed to Himself the human nature.

Indirect proof of minor. If the person were presupposed, then it was either corrupted, in which case its assumption was to no purpose; or it remained after the union, and then there were two persons in Christ, which is contrary to revelation, and then the union would not be personal, but accidental, as Nestorius contended.

Reply to first objection. The Son of God assumed an individualized human nature, or a singular human nature, namely, this human nature of Christ.

Reply to second objection. It is pointed out that “the nature assumed did not have its own personality through the loss of anything pertaining to the perfection of the human nature, but through the addition of something which is above human nature, which is union with a divine person.” Concerning this difficulty, St. Thomas had said: “It is a greater dignity to exist in something nobler than oneself than to exist by oneself.”

Reply to third objection. St. Thomas says: “The divine person by His union hindered the human nature from having its own personality.” Therefore St. Thomas considers personality to be something positive, real, and distinct from the nature. It is not identical with existence, because existence is a contingent predicate of any created person, whose formal constituent is personality. No created person, even created personality, is his or its existence. Thus St. Thomas often says that in every creature there is a difference between quod est and esse, namely, between suppositum and existence.

Concerning Cajetan’s great commentary, it suffices to note that he shows there is a distinction even between the individualized nature and subsistence. He says: “The whole force of the argument consists in this, that

the constituent of a thing, in this respect, is that a being intrinsically and primarily susceptive of real entity, must be some reality. But this man, in this respect, differs from this humanity, because he includes in himself something by which he is primarily and intrinsically susceptive of some real entity that is repugnant to this human nature. Therefore he includes in himself a reality that constitutes him in being, by which he differs from this human nature. But he differs only in personal being, whereby this man is a hypostasis or person, which this human nature is not. Therefore the person of this man adds some reality that intrinsically constitutes him a human person, which this human nature is not." This man is what is, whereas his individualized humanity is that whereby he is constituted in a certain species.

Wherefore St. Thomas says in the present article: "If created personality were presupposed to assumption, then it must either have been corrupted... or there would be two persons." And also in his reply to the third objection, he also says: "The divine person by His union hindered the human nature from having its personality." Hence Cajetan's interpretation, by which he shows that created personality is a substantial mode, truly has its foundation in this text quoted from St. Thomas.

More briefly, Cajetan's whole argument may be reduced to the following syllogism. The created suppositum differs from the nature inasmuch as it is what is, namely, the real subject of existence, which is attributed to it contingently. But that whereby anything is a real and not merely a logical subject of existence is something real, distinct from this nature and from existence, which is predicated contingently of a created person already formally constituted as a person. Therefore the created suppositum is something real that differs both from the individual nature and from existence.

Hence the whole of Cajetan's interpretation has its foundation in the legitimate transition from the common sense notion of personality to its philosophical notion, namely, from its nominal definition to its real definition, or from the Christian acceptation to its theological notion, as Cajetan himself remarks.

Cajetan's opinion asserts only what is required for the verification of the following three arguments of common sense.

1) This man, Peter, is not his human nature, which is attributed to him as an essential part, and the part is not predicated of the whole; for the whole

is not the part, but has the part.

2) This man, Peter, is not his existence, which is attributed to him contingently and not essentially. This means that it constitutes neither the essence nor personality of Peter, but is really distinct from them. Thus in every creature there is a real difference between suppositum and existence.

3) This man, Peter, is existing, namely, it is the same suppositum that is existing. In this judgment the word “is” affirms real identity between subject and predicate, which means that the predicate is identical with the suppositum. Therefore subsistence is that whereby anything is what; and as a substantial mode, it is distinct both from nature, whereby anything is constituted in a certain species, and from existence, whereby anything is established outside nothing and its causes.

Likewise, applying this doctrine to Christ, in accordance with revelation, we say: “This man Jesus is God,” meaning that this man is the same suppositum that is God, or is the same person. But the divine personality of Christ is distinct from the human nature He assumed.

Doubt. Could the Word have assumed a nature terminated by its own subsistence, this latter remaining.

Reply. The answer is in the negative. The reason is that it implies a contradiction for the same nature to subsist and not to subsist in a suppositum different from its own.

Objection. The divine nature is terminated simultaneously by the three personalities. Therefore, in like manner, the human nature could be terminated simultaneously by two personalities.

Reply. The comparison does not apply, for the three divine personalities are not foreign to but belong properly to the divine nature, and from several subsistences that belong properly to the divine nature there follows one effect which is to subsist and be terminated in itself, although in divers ways. On the contrary, from a subsistence proper to a person and one foreign to it there follows a double effect that is repugnant, inasmuch as the person subsists in itself and not in another, and also subsists in another and not in itself.

THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER THE DIVINE PERSON ASSUMED A MAN

Is it strictly true to say that God assumed a man?

Reply. It is not, because man is the name of a person that signifies the human nature as subsisting. But God did not assume a created person. Hence, in the strict sense, it is not true to say that the Word assumed a man. After the Incarnation, however, it is true to say that the Word is man. Similarly, the proposition, “God is man,” and also the proposition, “man is God,” are true, because of the unity of the person. The word “is” expresses real identity between subject and predicate, and this identity is identity of suppositum or person, which means that this man Jesus is the same being or suppositum that is God.

Reply to first objection. If the Fathers at times said that the Word assumed a man, this word “man” must not be taken in the strict sense of the term.

FOURTH ARTICLE: WHETHER THE SON OF GOD OUGHT TO HAVE ASSUMED HUMAN NATURE ABSTRACTED FROM ALL INDIVIDUALS

This article is inserted here to refute the error of certain Platonists, who admitted that the Son of God ought to have assumed such a nature.

It is denied that the Son of God assumed a nature abstracted from individuals, because such a nature has only mental existence, and also because by the very fact that the nature is assumed by some person, it belongs properly to this person. Moreover, only common and universal operations can be attributed to the common nature, by which a person does not merit, because merit pertains to a particular circumstance and time. Finally, even though the human nature were to exist apart from sensible things, as Plato contended, the assumption of this kind of separated human nature would not be fitting, because the Son of God assumed the human nature so that He could be seen by men.

Reply to first objection. Nevertheless, it remains true that Christ is “the universal cause of human salvation,” for this universality is not of predication, but of causation.

FIFTH ARTICLE: WHETHER THE SON OF GOD OUGHT TO HAVE ASSUMED HUMAN NATURE IN ALL INDIVIDUALS

Reply. It is denied that the human nature should be assumed by the Word in all individuals: 1. because the multitude of supposita which are natural to

human nature, would thus be taken away; 2. because this would be derogatory to the divinity of the incarnate Son of God since He is the first-born of many brethren according to the human nature, even as He is the first-born of every creature according to the divine nature. Finally, divine wisdom demands this subordination, for St. Paul says: “For all are yours, and you are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.” It must be noted that, if the Son of God had assumed the individualized nature of all human beings, then all human beings would have been impeccable.

SIXTH ARTICLE: WHETHER IT WAS FITTING FOR THE SON OF GOD TO ASSUME HUMAN NATURE OF THE STOCK OF ADAM

The Son of God could, indeed, have assumed the human nature created anew, just as Adam was created.

Reply. The answer is, nevertheless, that it was fitting for the Son of God to assume the human nature of the stock of Adam, and this for three reasons: 1. so that He might satisfy for the race that had sinned; 2. because the conqueror of the devil should come from the race conquered by the devil; 3. to manifest God’s omnipotence that. raised a weakened and corrupt nature to such virtue and dignity. God permits evil only for a greater good.

Hence in the Roman Breviary, the Church recites: “That flesh hath purged, what flesh hath stained.” The Scripture says: “Who can make him clean that is conceived of unclean seed. Is it not Thou who only art?” Thus there are sinners in Christ’s genealogy, although He is separated from sinners in this respect.

Reply to first objection. Christ’s innocence is the more wonderful in this, that, although He assumed His nature from a mass tainted by sin, it was endowed with such purity.

Reply to second objection. It was not fitting for the Word to assume the particular nature of Adam, who was a sinner; because Christ, who had come to cleanse all sinners, had to be separated from all who sinned.

Third objection. The difficulty is this: “If the Son of God wished to assume human nature from sinners, He ought rather to have assumed it from the Gentiles than from the stock of Abraham, who was just.”

Reply to third objection. Christ, indeed, had to be like sinners in His assumed nature, but He also had to be separated from them as regards sin. Hence it was fitting that between the first sinner and Christ, some just men

should intervene, who were to be in certain respects conspicuous types of Christ's future holiness, and these began in Abraham.

But why the Jewish race was chosen in preference to any of the Gentile nations depends on God's absolute free choice, just as the predestination of Christ, of His Blessed Mother, of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the prophets are so dependent. The mystery of predestination is apparent in the whole course of Jewish history, since one is chosen in preference to another, for instance, Abel to Cain, Noe to those who died in the flood, Isaac to another son of Abraham, Jacob to Esau; and so it is with other descendants. It must be noted that the merits of the elect are not the cause of their predestination, because they are its effects. This is especially evident both as regards Christ's predestination to divine natural sonship, and the predestination of the Blessed Virgin Mary to divine maternity.

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS

First doubt. Does the human nature united with the Word still have an innate desire for its own subsistence?

Reply. The common opinion of the Thomists, especially of Cajetan and John of St. Thomas, is that it has no such desire as a reflected act (actus secundus), because it is perfected by a more perfect subsistence, which contains formally and eminently absolutely whatever there would be in its own subsistence. Therefore the natural desire of the assumed human nature rests satisfied in the higher subsistence.

Second doubt. Can incomplete substances and accidents be assumed immediately by the Word, such as prime matter, non-subsistent forms, for instance, the substantial form of bread, or of another body?

Reply. The query is denied, because these incomplete realities are intrinsically incapable of having their own subsistences. Thus prime matter, the substantial form of bread, and accidents cannot be assumed except mediately, that is, through the mediation of substance, whose parts they are, or in which they inhere. But the rational soul separated from the body, which is capable of having its own subsistence and existence, is assumable.

Corollary. Integral parts of the human body, such as the hand, the head, feet, so long as they are united to the whole, cannot be assumed unless the whole is assumed. But if these parts are separated by death, they can remain united with the Word, because these parts separated from the whole are

capable of having their own subsistence and existence, distinct from the subsistence and existence of the whole.

CHAPTER VII: QUESTION 5: THE MODE OF THE UNION CONCERNING THE PARTS OF THE HUMAN NATURE ASSUMED

Since these parts are the body and soul, Docetism and Apollinarianism are here refuted.

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER THE SON OF GOD OUGHT TO HAVE ASSUMED A HUMAN BODY

It is of faith that the Word assumed a real body, and not a phantom or shadow. This truth has been frequently defined in such councils as Nicaea, Ephesus, Constantinople, Chalcedon, and others, against the Marcionites and Manichaeans, who attribute to Christ the semblance of a body, because they thought every body comes from the principle of evil, and is evil. Simon Magus, Saturninus, and Basilides are likewise condemned. This latter heresiarch, says St. Irenaeus, maintained that Simon of Cyrene was crucified instead of Jesus, who exchanged external figure and countenance with Simon of Cyrene.

Scriptural proof. In the New Testament we read: “The Word was made flesh.” And again: “Every spirit which confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God. And every spirit that dissolveth Jesus, is not of God.” St. Paul says: “Concerning His Son, who was made to Him of the seed of David, according to the flesh.” Christ speaking of Himself, says: “Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of man shall be betrayed..., and crucified, and the third day He shall rise again.” Finally, after the Resurrection, Jesus said: “Handle and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as you see Me to have.”

Theological proof. It is taken especially from the arguments proposed by the Fathers, especially from Tertullian, and from St. Irenaeus.

Three reasons are given in the body of the article. 1. Christ would not be a true man if He did not have a true body. 2. If Christ is not truly man, then He did not truly die, as narrated in the Gospels. 3. Jesus did not speak the truth when He said: “Handle and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as you see Me to have.”

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER THE SON OF GOD OUGHT TO HAVE ASSUMED AN EARTHLY BODY

This means: Ought Christ to have assumed flesh and blood, rather than a heavenly body?

Reply. The answer is in the affirmative, and it is of faith against the Valentinians, who said that Christ assumed a celestial body and passed through the Blessed Virgin, as water flows through a channel.

Scriptural proof. In the New Testament we read: “A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as you see Me to have.” St. Paul says of Jesus: “He was made to Him[Father] of the seed of David, according to the flesh.” And again: “God sent His Son, made of a woman.” In Christ’s genealogy, it is said of Him: “Son of David, son of Abraham.” The angel says to Mary: “Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb and shalt bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus.” St. Joseph is also declared to be “the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus.”

All these texts would not be true if Christ had come down from heaven with a celestial body, and had merely passed through the Blessed Virgin, as through a channel.

Theological proof. 1. If Christ had not assumed our nature, then He would not be truly man, since flesh and bones are required for a nature to be truly human. 2. Also Christ would not have been really hungry, or have suffered and died, as recorded in the Gospels. 3. He would have told a lie in presenting Himself to men as having a body of flesh. If St. Paul says that “the first man was of the earth, earthly: the second man from heaven, heavenly,” this means that Christ’s body was formed from the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary by a heavenly power, namely, by the Holy Ghost.

Reply to second objection. Christ came in passible flesh, “that He might carry through the work of our redemption.” Hence Christ’s death was not the result of original sin, but the consequence of a nature conceived in passible flesh, and this consequence He offered in submission for our

redemption. He submitted to the penalty of death not for Himself, but for our sake.

That the Word came, however, in passible and mortal flesh, rather than in impassible flesh, presupposes Adam's sin, although in Christ death was not the result of original sin, which He did not contract. The same must be said of the Blessed Virgin, who was preserved from original sin.

Reply to third objection. It pertains to the greatest glory of God that He raised a most weak and earthly body to such sublimity. It was mercy that moved God to unite the highest with the lowest for our salvation. St. Thomas has treated this question more fully in another work.

Doubt. Was Christ's blood hypostatically united with the Word? This question is of no slight importance, because it concerns the precious blood of Jesus Christ that was shed in His passion and that is offered daily in the Mass.

This doubt was formerly the subject of much dispute. Durandus denied that the Word hypostatically united with Himself the natural blood. Alphonsus Tostatus (Abulensis), Richard, and several Franciscan theologians were of the same opinion. St. Thomas took the affirmative view both here and in his commentary on the resurrection of Christ. The Thomists, Cajetan and Capreolus, and almost all theologians are in agreement with St. Thomas on this point. Since this question gave rise to bitter contention between the Franciscans and Dominicans, the latter defending the doctrine of St. Thomas, Pius II (1464) issued a decree putting an end to these disputes, until it was defined what must be believed. Later on, however, as Suarez observes, the Franciscan view was eliminated from their schools of theology, as being neither pious nor safe teaching.

There are three proofs for this affirmative view, which is the one most commonly held.

Scriptural proof. St. Paul says: "Therefore because the children[i. e., men] are partakers of flesh and blood[i. e., are composed of flesh and blood], He Himself[Christ] in like manner hath been partaker of the same."

This same teaching is confirmed in other passages of Sacred Scripture, in which our redemption is attributed to the blood of Christ, His Son, as in the following text: "The blood of Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin."

Authoritative proof. The Council of Trent, in its discussion on the Holy Eucharist, affirms the natural union of the body and blood of Christ in these words: "The body itself is under the species of bread, and the blood is under

the species of wine, and the soul under both, by the force of that natural connection and concomitance, whereby the parts of Christ our Lord... are united together." Therefore the blood is a part of Christ.

Similarly Clement VI affirmed that the blood of Christ was united with the Word, saying: "The innocent and immaculate lamb is known to have shed His blood, a single drop of which, on account of its union with the Word, would have sufficed[for our redemption].

Theological proof. Blood is a necessary part of the human body because it is required for its life and for the nutrition of its various parts, as also for the natural process of combustion by which natural heat is generated.

Hence theologians maintain that there will be blood in glorified bodies, inasmuch as this pertains to the integrity of the body.

Confirmation of proof. From the definition of the Church on the Holy Eucharist.

If the Word did not assume hypostatically the blood, then the Word is not by concomitance under the species of wine. For that is by concomitance in the sacrament which is united really and substantially with the primary term of the consecration and conversion. But, if the Word did not assume hypostatically the blood, the Word is not really and substantially united with the blood, which is the primary term in the consecration of the chalice. Therefore, in this case, the Word would not be by concomitance present under the species of wine, which is contrary to the teaching of the Council of Trent.

Objection. Those holding the opposite opinion have said that blood is not animated, and is not actually a part of the body. The Thomists contradict this assertion, remarking that the blood is a fluid that contributes to the nutrition of the other parts of the body.

Again the opponents object, saying: What the Word once assumed, remained always united with Him. But He severed His union with the blood.

Reply. In answer to this, we say with St. Thomas: I deny the minor; for the blood of Christ, just as His corpse, although it was no longer animated, remained hypostatically united with the Word during the triduum of death because it had to be reassumed. And if, during the triduum of death, there had been the consecration of the wine in the chalice, the divinity would have been present by concomitance under the species of wine, as the

Council of Trent declares. This cannot be said of Christ's blood that was shed at the circumcision, because it was not intended to be reassumed.

It must be observed that when St. Thomas says: "All the blood which flowed from Christ's body, belonging as it does to the integrity of human nature, rose again with His body," this must be understood of all the blood shed in a moral sense, but not of absolutely all the blood in a physical sense. As Pius II says, it is not contrary to faith for one to assert that a portion of the blood that was shed by Christ on the cross, or at the crowning of thorns, was not reassumed; but then this portion of blood, if it was not reassumed, was not hypostatically united with the Word, because, just as in the case of the blood shed at the circumcision, this blood was not indeed intended to be reassumed in the resurrection for the integrity of Christ's body. What has been said suffices, in our days, for the solution of this doubt that was formerly disputed.

THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER THE SON OF GOD ASSUMED A SOUL

State of the question. The next two articles are written in refutation of Apollinaris and Arius, who first of all denied that Christ had a soul; then, retracting this former opinion, they granted that He had a soul, but it was not an intellectual soul, saying that the Word took the place of the intellect.

The Council of Ephesus defined against these heretics that the Word assumed an intellectual soul.

Scriptural proof. Our Lord says of Himself: "My soul is sorrowful even unto death." And again: "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit."

St. Thomas explains in the body of the article that these words cannot be taken metaphorically, especially because the Gospel says that Jesus wondered, was angry, and hungry. These acts belong to a soul that is both intellectual and sensitive.

Theological proof. The principal reason given in the theological proof is that Christ would be neither truly man nor the Son of man as declared in the Gospel, unless He had a soul; and thus there would be no more any truth to the Incarnation.

Reply to first objection. If St. John says in his prologue, "And the Word was made flesh," flesh is taken for the whole man, just as sometimes in Sacred Scripture we read such assertions as, "All flesh shall see that the mouth of the Lord hath spoken."

Reply to second objection. The Word is the effective cause of Christ's human life, the soul is its formal cause, and hence it is not useless. Moreover, the Word cannot be the formal cause of the human body, because the formal cause is the intrinsic cause and therefore is a part of the composite, not so perfect as the composite. But this cannot be said of the uncreated Word.

FOURTH ARTICLE: WHETHER THE SON OF GOD ASSUMED A HUMAN MIND OR INTELLECT

Reply. That the Son of God assumed an intellect has been defined against the Arians and Apollinarians as belonging to the faith.

Scriptural proof. Jesus says: "Learn of Me because I am meek and humble of heart." Christ was also obedient and merited, which was possible only if He had a human intellect and a human will; for the divine intellect and the divine will cannot be the principle of an act of obedience as regards a higher will.

Theological proof. The principal reason in this proof is that, if Christ did not have a human intellect, then He was not truly man, which is contrary both to what He Himself said and to Scripture.

CHAPTER VIII: QUESTION 6: THE ORDER OF ASSUMPTION

State of the question. This question is inserted here especially because of Origen's error that was condemned by Pope Vigilius in the following canon: "If anyone says or thinks that our Lord's soul existed and was united with God, the Word, prior to His incarnation and birth from the Virgin, let him be anathema."

Origen said that Christ's soul was created at the beginning of the world, and by the performance of good works merited to be united hypostatically with the Word, and was de facto united with the Word, before it was united with the body in the womb of the Blessed Virgin. Hence Vigilius declared: "If anyone says or thinks that the body of our Lord Jesus Christ was first formed in the womb of the Blessed Virgin, and that afterward God the Word and the soul were united with it, as if He had already existed, let him be anathema."

Hence the teaching of the Church as defined against Origen is that Christ's soul and body, or His entire humanity, was at the same moment assumed by the Word. St. Thomas explains this teaching of the Church especially in the third article of this question. In the other articles, however, especially in the fifth, he considers what was assumed by priority of nature, both on the part of the agent assuming and according to his intention, and thus the entire human nature of Christ was first assumed; and also he considers what was first assumed on the part of the subject assumed in the order of execution, and thus the parts were assumed before the whole, and so the soul was first assumed, and the body through the soul as intermediary, and finally the whole as resulting from each, or the complete human nature.

Thus this distinction being established between priority of time and priority of nature together with the aforesaid subdistinction, the whole of this question will be understood.

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER THE SON OF GOD ASSUMED FLESH THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF THE SOUL

State of the question. In this article soul and body are compared in accordance with the natural order, and thus this article is distinct from the third, although for the benefit of the doctrine St. Thomas begins by distinguishing between the temporal order and the natural order.

There are two conclusions.

First conclusion. In the order of time the Word united the whole human nature of Christ to Himself simultaneously, at the very moment of the creation of Christ's soul.

This conclusion is defined to be of faith against Origen. It will be explained more fully farther on, when St. Thomas, discussing Christ's conception, shows that it is contrary to the faith to say that Christ's flesh was first conceived and afterward was assumed by the Word of God. This assertion is against Photinus who said that Christ was first a mere man and afterward by the sanctity of His life came to be considered the Son of God. In such a case, the Blessed Virgin would not be the Mother of God.

St. Thomas gives us the reason for this conclusion in these words: "If Christ's flesh had been conceived before being assumed by the Word, it would have been at some time a hypostasis other than that of the Word of God," and so there would have been two hypostases in the Word incarnate, or one would have been destroyed, which is not fitting. Hence Christ's entire humanity was simultaneously assumed.

Second conclusion. In the natural order, however, the Word instantaneously united the flesh with Himself, through the intermediary of the soul, since the soul is mediating link by reason of its dignity and causality. There is clearly here a distinction between priority of time, which is denied, and priority of nature which is affirmed, inasmuch as the very moment that Christ's soul was created, the Word assumed the flesh through the mediation of the soul; otherwise the flesh would not be human.

Third objection. It must be noted that St. Thomas says that, if the medium is taken away, then the extremes are separated. But the soul is taken away by death, though the union of the Word with the flesh still remains; for "what is bestowed through God's grace is never withdrawn except through fault." Therefore the Word was not united with the flesh through the mediation of the soul.

Reply to third objection. The soul, before its separation from the body, rendered the latter apt for assumption, though it did not sever the union of the Word with the flesh; just as the loss of a woman’s beauty, though this beauty contributed to her fittingness for marriage, does not sever the marriage bond.

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER THE SON OF GOD ASSUMED A SOUL THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF THE SPIRIT OR MIND

The purpose of this article is to explain the following text of St. Augustine, quoted in the counter-argument: “The invisible and unchangeable Truth took a soul by means of the spirit, and a body by means of the soul.”

Conclusion. The Word assumed by means of the mind the other parts of the soul, just as He assumed the body by means of the soul, on account of the dignity of the order and the congruity of the assumption; for mind is the highest part of the soul in its relation to the sensitive soul. What is meant by mind is the essence of the spiritual soul from which the higher faculties are derived, those that are purely spiritual, namely, the intellect and will.

THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER THE SOUL WAS ASSUMED BEFORE THE FLESH BY THE SON OF GOD

This article is strictly concerned with priority of time, for the purpose of denying such priority against Origen, and thus it differs from the first article. Origen not only maintained that all immortal souls were created in the beginning along with the angels, before they were united to bodies, but he also said this especially of Christ’s soul, inasmuch as it is nobler than the angels.

Reply. The answer is that Christ’s soul was not created prior to its union with the Word, and it is of faith, as evident from the condemnation of Origen by Pope Vigilius.

In the counter-argument St. Thomas quotes the authority of St. John Damascene, who most clearly is against Origen’s opinion.

Theological proof. It shows the unfittingness of Origen’s view. It is derogatory to Christ’s dignity to suppose that His soul was created before its assumption, because then it would have had its own subsistence, and

hence there would be two subsistences in Christ, and two supposita, or else one subsistence would have been destroyed, which is unbecoming to Christ, as well as being a mere assertion without any foundation.

Likewise it is derogatory to Christ's dignity to suppose that His soul was created and simultaneously assumed before His body was formed, because then this soul of Christ would not seem to be of the same nature as our souls, which are created at the same time that they are infused into our bodies, inasmuch as it is the very nature of the soul to be the form of the body, and thus it differs from the angels.

As St. Thomas says in this article, quoting St. Leo: "Christ's soul excels our soul not by diversity of genus, but by sublimity of power."

Doubt. Is St. Thomas speaking only of sublimity of supernatural power, that is, of plenitude of grace, whereby Christ's most holy soul excels the sanctity even of the first and second highest among the choirs of angels, namely, the seraphim and cherubim; or has he in mind the natural and individual nobility of the soul, whereby Christ's soul excels in nobility the soul of any human being?

Reply. The holy Doctor admits inequality of power among human souls in the same species.

Since matter and form are mutually causes, and "since the form is not for the matter, but rather the matter for the form," Providence made Christ's body more apt for its union with the nobler part, which is the soul, just as He made the body of the Blessed Virgin Mary more fitting so that she might be worthy of becoming the Mother of God.

St. Thomas says: "It is plain that the better the disposition of a body, the better the soul allotted to it. This clearly appears in things of different species, and the reason thereof is that act and form are received into matter according to the capacity of matter. Thus, because some men have bodies of better disposition, their souls have a greater power of understanding, wherefore it is said that it is to be observed that 'those who have soft flesh are of apt mind.' Secondly, this occurs in regard to the lower powers of which the intellect has need in its operations; for those in whom the imaginative, cogitative, and memorative powers are of better disposition, are better disposed to understand."

St. Thomas applies this teaching to Christ, showing that the body was miraculously formed from the most pure blood of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

On the one hand, the soul, although it is created and not educed from matter, thus depends materially, but not intrinsically, on the body, and therefore it can continue to exist after its separation from the body.

On the other hand, the body is better disposed, inasmuch as it depends finally and formally and in some way in the evolution of the embryo efficiently on the better disposed soul. Hence St. Thomas says: “What is received in anything can be considered both being and perfection. According to its being it is in the one in which it is received, after the manner of the recipient; nevertheless, the one that received it is drawn to its perfection.” Thus heat is received in water, light in the air, the soul in the body, grace in the soul, and the subject that receives is made conformable to the perfection received.

So there is a mutual transcendental relation between matter and form, body and soul, which therefore remains individuated after its separation from the body by reason of this transcendental relation to the body, which will be again informed by the soul on the day of the resurrection of the dead.

Father Gredt correctly remarks that “one human soul differs from another in perfection substantially, of course, though not essentially but accidentally, taking the word ‘accidentally’ as a predicable accident,” but not as a predicamental accident, which is an operative faculty that is really distinct from substance. Thus the soul of Christ, even as a substance, is individually, although not specifically, nobler than the soul of any other human being, just as His body, which was miraculously formed in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary, was better disposed than any other human body whatever. It is also evident that the souls of great doctors of the Church, in which there are signs of great genius, are individually nobler than many other souls.

Thus we have a beautiful verification of the principle that causes mutually interact, but in a different genus; for the form determines the matter, and the latter is ordained for the form, as also the agent attains the end which attracts it.

FOURTH ARTICLE: WHETHER THE FLESH OF CHRIST WAS ASSUMED BY THE WORD BEFORE BEING UNITED WITH THE SOUL

State of the question. This article concerns priority of time. The purpose of this article, as stated in the first and second difficulties, is that, according to the teaching of the ancient philosophers, in the conception of other men, living flesh is found in possession of vegetative life, and already of the sensitive life, before the rational soul, which is created by God, comes to it. Thus in the first two objections of this article, disposition of the matter precedes the coming of the form, and in human beings, the body is conceived before the rational soul comes to it.

But, on the other hand, as we stated in the first article, it is evident, concerning the condemnation of Origen's teaching, that the Word assumed simultaneously the flesh and soul of Christ, for flesh is not human before the soul comes to it.

This question presupposes another, namely, whether Christ's flesh was conceived or formed, at least in accordance with its remote natural dispositions, before it was united with the rational soul. The solution of the present article depends on this query, but this point concerns the question of Christ's conception, and is therefore explained farther on.

In the passage quoted above, St. Thomas shows that it is against the faith to say that Christ's flesh was first conceived, and afterward was animated and assumed by the Word. This is evident from what the Church has declared against Origen and against Photinus.

Reply. Christ's flesh ought not to have been assumed before the soul.

Authoritative proof. St. John Damascene says: "At the same time the Word of God was made flesh, and flesh was united to a rational and intellectual soul." This means to say that Christ's flesh was conceived, animated, and assumed simultaneously. This is what the Church declares against Origen and against Photinus.

Theological proof. It is expressed briefly in the last line of the argumentative part of the article. Flesh is not strictly human before it receives the rational soul. But the Word assumed only strictly human flesh. Therefore flesh ought not to have been assumed before the soul.

This is well explained in the body of the article. For human flesh is assumable by the Word according to the order it has to the rational soul. But it has not (at least this immediate) order, before the rational soul comes to it; because the moment that the matter is ultimately disposed for the form, it also receives the form. The whole article must be read.

But how is the difficulty that is presented in the first objection to be solved. It states that our bodies are conceived before they are animated by the rational soul. St. Thomas admits this statement as at least probable in fact, inasmuch as the body first has the vegetative life, then the sensitive life, before it is ultimately disposed for the rational soul, which is created by God instantaneously from nothing, and is not educed from matter.

St. Thomas replies to the first objection of this article, saying that it is certainly so with us, remarking that "before the coming of the human soul, there is no human flesh," but there is in the body a previous but not ultimate disposition for human flesh. He goes on to say: "In the conception of Christ, the Holy Ghost, who is an agent of infinite might, disposed the matter and brought it to its perfection at the same time." Likewise, he says farther on: "Christ's body, on account of the infinite power of the agent, was perfectly disposed instantaneously. Wherefore at once and in the first instant it received a perfect form, that is, the rational soul." Farther on he says: "Christ's conception must be said to be entirely miraculous (on the part of the active power), and in a qualified manner natural (on the part of the matter contributed by the mother)."

Thus in the miraculous conversion of water into wine at Cana, the matter of water (without any previous dispositions) is disposed to receive the form of wine. So also, in the operational order, the conversion of St. Paul was instantaneous; similarly the sanctification of the Blessed Virgin Mary took place at the very moment of her conception, inasmuch as, when her soul was created, it instantaneously received a plenitude of grace, and was preserved from original sin through the merits of Christ. So too, in the natural order, men of great genius solve problems, but, at times, they do not sufficiently prepare their pupils to understand their teaching, which is then understood in a wrong sense, and thus these pupils fall into error.

Different from Christ's conception, St. Thomas does not admit that the rational soul of the Blessed Virgin Mary was created at the moment of her conception, for he distinguishes between this moment and the moment after the animation of her flesh. In this he distinguishes between the virginal conception of Christ and that of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which was not miraculous, inasmuch as her conception was not virginal, but natural; for she was born in a natural way from a father and mother. St. Thomas asks whether the Blessed Virgin Mary was sanctified before animation, which is distinct from the passive conception of the body. But complete passive

conception of the body, inasmuch as it is distinct from the beginning of this conception, took place in the Blessed Virgin at the same time as animation, which is the usual procedure in human beings.

Reply to third objection. The conception, animation, and assumption of Christ's body were instantaneous. But by priority of nature the body was preserved by the Word as a being, before its animation, because the body is first a being, and then a body.

Nevertheless, as regards the personal union, Christ's body was, in accordance with nature, first united with the soul, before it was united with the Word, because it is from its union with the soul that it is capable of being united with the Word in person; especially since a person, as such, is found only in the rational nature. So it was that during the three days in which our Lord's body was separated from the soul, the Word was not united personally but only subsistentially with Christ's corpse. The entire reply to the third objection should be read.

A question that deserves special attention is: When is the rational soul created? Does this take place at the moment of conception or afterward? Father Gredt says: "The ancient philosophers taught that, first of all, ... the merely vegetative soul that is imperfect and transitory would be educed, and this soul by a process of evolution would become corrupt and would be substituted by another that is imperfect, the sensitive soul, which also becomes corrupt, and forty days after conception the rational soul would finally be created and infused into the body." "Nevertheless," says Father Gredt, "it is better to say with modern philosophers that from the very beginning the germinal cells are united, and there is present a special organization and proximate disposition for the infusion of the rational soul, which is therefore created and infused by God, without the intervention of any other soul.

On the contrary, Father Barbado, O. P., says: "It is not our purpose to decide this question that is so much disputed among Scholastics. However, we must point out that experience shows the foundation for this traditional view, which the ancient philosophers took from embryology, is strongly supported by present-day investigations.... For the egg, in the segmentation process and the follicles in the blastodermic process do not possess actually but only potentially the future organization, and it is only much later that the organs come to perfection."

Moreover, after death or the separation of the rational soul from the body, facts seem to attest that for some time the vegetative soul remains, since the hair and nails still grow. If such be the case after the separation of the rational soul from the body, why not before the creation of the soul?

FIFTH ARTICLE: WHETHER THE WHOLE HUMAN NATURE WAS ASSUMED THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF THE PARTS

This title is not concerned with the order of time, but with that of nature.

State of the question. The purpose of the article is to explain what St. Augustine means when he says, as quoted in the first objection: “The invisible and unchangeable Truth assumed the soul through the medium of the spirit, and the body through the medium of the soul, and in this way the whole man.” We stated in the first article that the Word assumed flesh through the medium of the soul. But the whole human nature results from the union of the parts.

Conclusion. The Word of God assumed the human nature through the medium of the whole. This means the body and the soul, because of their relation to the whole. Evidently the article is concerned only with the order of nature and not with that of time.

Authoritative proof. It is taken from St. John Damascene, who is quoted in the counter-argument.

Theological proof. The order of nature, which concerns us here, is of two kinds. It may be considered either on the part of the agent assuming, or on the part of the subject assumed. In the Incarnation, however, our attention must be given especially to the first kind, because the whole idea of the deed is estimated from the omnipotence of the agent.

But on the part of the agent, that is absolutely first which is first in intention, which is to assume the entire human nature. Therefore the Word of God assumed the parts of the human nature through the medium of the whole, or on account of the whole that was first intended.

SIXTH ARTICLE: WHETHER THE HUMAN NATURE WAS ASSUMED THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF GRACE

This article is inserted here because of the necessity of explaining the threefold meaning of the word “grace.”

1) There is a certain grace that is the uncreated will of God freely doing or donating something. In this sense, it is called effective grace, but not formal grace.

2) In Christ there is the grace of union which is formally in Him, and it is the very personal being of the Word, which terminates, possesses, and sanctifies the human nature of Christ.

3) Habitual grace is also formally in Christ, inhering in His soul' as an accident, which will be more clearly explained in the following question.

Two conclusions follow from this distinction.

1) The hypostatic union did not take place through the medium of the grace of union or through the medium of habitual grace. For the grace of union is the very personal being of Christ, which is the term of the assumption. Habitual grace, which inheres in the soul of Christ, is the consequent effect of the hypostatic union, and this will be made clearer in the following question.

2) The hypostatic union took place by grace that is God's uncreated will, not as a medium, but as efficient cause.

Thus St. Thomas, speaking of the grace that predestines the elect, inquires whether predestination places anything in the predestined, and he replies: "Predestination is not anything in the predestined, but only in the person who predestines.... But the execution of predestination, which is the calling, the justification, the magnification, is in the predestined."

Doubt. Is there a created actuation produced by the uncreated act in the hypostatic union by the very fact that Christ's human nature began to be actuated terminatively by the Word, as Father de la Taille contends? Is the grace of union in Christ anything created, as St. Thomas maintains?

This question is about the same as that concerning the substantial mode whereby Christ's humanity is united with the Word.

Reply. Both parts of the question are denied. St. Thomas says in the present article: "The grace of union is the personal being that is given gratis from above to the human nature in the person of the Word," and therefore it cannot be understood in the sense of a created medium, a created actuation that is produced by the uncreated act. The grace of union is not something created, but it is the very Word that terminates the human nature, both possessing and sanctifying it.

Likewise, when St. Thomas inquires about the union of the two natures in Christ, as to whether it was effected by grace, he replies: "If grace be

understood as the will of God gratuitously doing something, ... then the union of the Incarnation took place by grace, ... but not as though there were a habitual grace by means of which the union took place." It would have been so, however, if there were a created and indeed supernatural actuation produced by the uncreated act.

St. Thomas says, too, in the present article: "Grace is an accidental perfection of the soul, and therefore it cannot ordain the soul to personal union, which is not accidental."

We have already quoted the passage in which St. Thomas says: "It must be known that in the union of the divine nature and the human nature, there can be no medium that formally causes the union, to which the human nature is previously joined before it is united with the divine person; just as there can be no mediating being between matter and form, which would be previously in the matter before the substantial form, otherwise accidental being would be prior to substantial being, which is impossible. So also, between nature and suppositum there can be no medium in the above-mentioned manner, since each conjunction is for substantial union." But it is shown that the union, as a real relation of the human nature with the Word, is the consequent or resulting effect; for St. Thomas says: "This relation follows, which is called union; hence union is the medium, not as causing the assumption, but as following it."

St. Thomas also shows elsewhere that the union is declared to be something created since it is a real relation of Christ's human nature to the Word, but it is only a logical relation of the Word to the human nature. Thus creation in the passive sense is a real relation of the creature to the Creator.

As we remarked above, it cannot properly be said that the human nature undergoes a change in its assumption by the Word, and that this change is the finite actuation produced by the uncreated act.

St. Thomas shows that we look upon creation as a change, whereas in reality it is not a change, saying: "Change means that the same something should be different now from what it was previously." But this is impossible in the case of creation, and even in the assumption of Christ's humanity, because the subject that is to undergo the change is not as yet in existence. As Thomas says, "When motion is removed from action and passion, only relation remains." Hence passive creation is simply a relation of dependence, which is likewise the case with Christ's hypostatic union. This means that Christ's human nature is dependent on the Word.

Likewise the formal effect is not distinct from the form that is received in the subject. Thus the formal effect of whiteness is to make a thing white, and it is only by this whiteness that anything is white. Similarly man is made pleasing to God by habitual grace.

Matter is also actuated by form, and there is no distinction between this actuation and its substantial form, otherwise, as St. Thomas stated above, “accidental being would be prior to substantial being, which is impossible.”

But if the actuation of prime matter is the same as the formal act that it receives, so also the actuation produced by the uncreated act cannot be anything created, because then there would be a real and infinite distinction between it and the uncreated act.

Thus we terminate the metaphysical questions concerning the mode of the union of the human nature with the Word, first in itself, and then on the part of the person assuming, and of the human nature that is assumed together with its parts, as also the order in which these parts are assumed. Let us pass on now to consider questions that are not so much metaphysical as psychological and spiritual, and that concern the co-assumed parts, such as Christ’s grace, knowledge, power, His sensitive nature or His propassions. But metaphysical questions will again arise, when we consider the consequences of the hypostatic union, namely, the truth of the propositions because of the personal unity in Christ, and when we come to inquire whether there is unity of being in Christ, just as there is unity of person in Him.

It is already to some extent apparent that the answer will be in the affirmative.

CHAPTER IX: QUESTION 7: THE THINGS CO-ASSUMED THE GRACE OF CHRIST

Having considered the nature that was assumed, we pass on to n treat of what pertains to the perfection of Christ's human nature, namely, His grace, knowledge, and power; then we shall discuss His passibility together with His sensitive nature. The thirteenth question is concerned with Christ's human will, namely, with those things that pertain to the conformity of the two wills in Christ. There are two questions on Christ's grace, namely: (1) Christ's grace as an individual man (q. 7); (2) Christ's grace as the head of the Church (q. 8).

Theologians generally distinguish between two graces in Christ: (1) the grace of union, that is, His personal being that is gratuitously given by God to His human nature; (2) His habitual grace, as an individual man and as head of the Church.

In the seventh question St. Thomas, in discussing Christ's habitual grace as an individual man, includes the whole organism of the supernatural life in Christ's most holy soul, namely, the grace that is called "the grace of the virtues and of the gifts"; in that the virtues and the gifts belong properly to this grace. He also treats of the graces gratis datae and of the plenitude of Christ's grace. Some might object to the order followed in these questions, and say that the present problem, just as the question concerning the union of wills in Christ, ought to be relegated to the latter part of this treatise, when the consequences of the union are discussed.

The answer must be, in all probability, that the proper place to discuss the things co-assumed on the part of the human nature is here; whereas, on the contrary, from the sixteenth to the twenty-sixth questions inclusive, those things consequent to the union of the two natures are discussed, namely, Christ's unity as regards being, will, and operation, as also His relation to the Father, and to us, for example, that Christ must be worshiped as God.

Hence the proper place to discuss the things co-assumed is here, this being the truly logical order, after the consideration of the nature that was assumed.

Hence, after consideration of the nature that was assumed, the truly logical order is to discuss the things that were co-assumed, from the seventh question to the fifteenth question.

There are three parts to this seventh question.

First part. It discusses habitual grace, the virtues and gifts in Christ (a. 1-6).

Second part. It treats of the graces freely bestowed upon Christ by His heavenly Father.

Third part. It is concerned with the plenitude of Christ's grace (a. 9-13).

All these articles pertain to Christ's sanctity. But after the time of St. Thomas, Christ's sanctity was discussed more in detail by way of a preliminary question, which is usually inserted here by way of a preliminary by the Thomists. The precise purport of this question is to settle the doubt whether the substantial grace of union sanctifies formally or merely radically Christ's human nature.

This question must be examined here since it serves as an introduction to the articles of the seventh question, enabling us to understand them better, for the substantial grace and uncreated grace of union is, so to speak, the radical cause of habitual grace, or the grace of the virtues and gifts in Christ.

Preliminary Question: Christ's Substantial Grace Of Union As The Source Of His Sanctification

State of the question. Gonet observes: "It is a question of three kinds of grace, to which St. John briefly and indirectly alludes. For concerning the substantial grace of union, he says: 'The Word was made flesh.' Concerning Christ's habitual grace as an individual person, he adds: 'We saw His glory full of grace and truth.' Finally, there is indirect allusion to Christ's grace as head of the Church when, farther on he says: 'And of His fullness we have all received.' "

Cajetan observes in his commentary at the beginning of this seventh question that St. Thomas already discussed the grace of union, not under the name of grace, however, but inasmuch as it is the hypostatic union of Christ's human nature with the Word. But when the question arose, whether Christ's human nature is formally sanctified by the substantial and

uncreated grace of union, then Durandus and the Scotists said that Christ's human nature is not formally but only radically sanctified by the grace of union. The affirmative opinion prevails as the more general one among, Thomist theologians and those of other schools, which is the conclusion we come to from the teaching of the councils and the Fathers of the Church, and there is more than an indirect reference to this opinion in the passages we shall quote from St. Thomas. Of this opinion are John of St. Thomas, Godoy, Soto, Salmanticenses, Gonet, Billuart, and more recent Thomists, as also Suarez, de Lugo, Valentia, Vasquez, Franzelin, Billot, Hurter, and Pesch. It is the common and certain doctrine.

Thesis. Christ's human nature is not only radically, but also formally sanctified by the substantial and uncreated union of the Word with the human nature.

In other words, Christ's sanctity is not accidental, but it is also substantial and uncreated, because it began at the very moment of His virginal conception. To understand this doctrine we must recall what sanctity is. St. Thomas says that sanctity is steadfast union with God, which implies "stainless purity."

This steadfast union is unchangeable in heaven or among the blessed. The just have not as yet in this life attained to this unchangeableness, but, as St. Thomas says, the holiness of the wayfarer causes him to direct his thoughts and actions toward God or is firmly turned to Him.

There is a twofold acceptation of sanctity as thus defined.

1) It may mean the proximately operative virtue of good, and in this sense there is no difference between it and the virtue of religion that is commanded by the theological virtues and that firmly directs all our actions to the worship of God.

2) It may be regarded as the foundation for this union with God, and thus in us it is habitual grace, which for this reason is called sanctifying grace, or the grace that unites us with God and makes us pleasing to Him.

All admit that Christ, as God, possesses essential and uncreated sanctity. But the question is whether the uncreated and substantial grace of union sanctifies Christ's human nature radically, namely, in that it is the source of habitual grace, or whether it sanctifies His human nature formally, that is, in the true and strict sense of the word, independently even of habitual grace. Likewise, farther on there will be a question of whether the grace of union

suffices for the negative effect of sanctity, namely, impeccability; and the answer will be in the affirmative.

1) Teaching of the Fathers on Christ's sanctity. The passages commonly quoted are as follows:

St. Cyril: "Christ was anointed not as other saints and kings are; but because the Word is flesh," that is, because the Word was made flesh.

St. Gregory Nazianzen: "Christ is so called because of His divine nature; for that is the unction of His human nature, which is not effected by operation, as in others that are anointed, but Christ is sanctified by the presence of the whole divine unction."

St. John Damascene: "He[Christ I anointed Himself, which means that as God, He anointed His body by His divine nature; He was anointed, however, as man.... Moreover, the divinity is the unction of His humanity."

St. Augustine, commenting on this scriptural text, "that they also may be sanctified in truth," says: "The Son of man was sanctified from the beginning of His creation, when the Word was made flesh; because one person became Word and man. Therefore He was sanctified by Himself in Himself; because the one Christ, who is Word and man, sanctifies the man in the Word."

In another work St. Augustine says likewise: "Christ... was known to be anointed by that mystic and invisible union, at the time when the Word was made flesh, namely, when the human nature, without any previous merits because of good works, was united with the Word of God in the womb of the Virgin so as to become one person with the Word."

2) St. Thomas says in a similar manner: "The grace of union is the personal being that is given gratis from above to the human nature in the person of the Word, and it is the term of the assumption, whereas the habitual grace pertaining to the spiritual holiness of the man is an effect following the union." But the effect, inasmuch as it is a consequent accident, presupposes substantial sanctity.

Likewise St. Thomas, in proving the necessity of habitual grace in Christ, does not seek the reason for it in His already established sanctity by the grace of union, but he explains it: (1) because of the union of His soul with the Word; (2) because it had to be the connatural principle of knowledge and love in the supernatural order; (3) on account of Christ's relation to the human race, since He is its head.

Hence St. Thomas does not say that Christ's habitual grace is sanctifying grace. In fact, he says farther on that Christ's human nature during the Passion had "the actual holiness of a victim, from the charity which it had from the beginning, and from the grace of union sanctifying it absolutely." St. Thomas speaks in similar terms when discussing the plenitude of Christ's grace. After having said that by habitual grace man is united to God by love, he adds: "There is another kind of union of man with God, which is not only accomplished by love or the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, but also by the unity of the hypostasis.... And this belongs properly to Jesus Christ...and makes Him most pleasing to God, so that it may be said of Him as an individual: This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

Again, when St. Thomas asks whether Christ can be called the adopted Son of God, he replies: "The sonship of adoption is a participated likeness of natural sonship; nor can a thing be said to participate in what it has essentially. Therefore Christ, who is the natural Son of God, can nowise be called an adopted Son."

He also shows that Christ, as man, was predestined primarily and principally for natural and divine sonship, or for the grace of union, and secondarily and consequently for habitual grace and glory, as the effects of the grace of union. St. Thomas, in his comment on the scriptural text, "Whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world," referring to St. Hilary, likewise says: "He precedes the rest by this, that He was sanctified as the Son." Hence St. Thomas taught even explicitly the doctrine of the present thesis, and, though he did not use the same terminology as nowadays, yet he expressed himself in equivalent terms.

Theological proof. This proof from reason that is proposed in various ways by the Thomists, may be clearly expressed by the following syllogism.

Formal sanctity which the just possess by reason of sanctifying grace, includes but four requisite conditions. But these four requisite conditions are found in Christ solely because of the grace of union, even independently of habitual grace. Therefore the substantial grace of union is what formally constitutes sanctity in Christ. Therefore His sanctity is innate, substantial, and increate. Accidental sanctity, which results from habitual grace is derived from this grace of union.

Proof of major. Formal sanctity about which we are concerned, is not a proximately operative virtue that is really distinct from the virtue of

religion, but it is that union with God which the just have by reason of habitual or sanctifying grace. This formal sanctity, however, includes but four necessary conditions, so that the just person be formally holy. These conditions are the following.

1) That the person be united with God and somehow drawn into union with the divine being.

2) That the person be constituted the son of God, heir of His kingdom, pleasing to Him and loved by Him.

3) That the person be radically disposed to perform supernaturally good works.

4) That the principle of life is in such a person, which principle is incompatible with mortal sin.

All these four conditions are fully explained in that part of the treatise in which habitual or sanctifying grace is discussed, or that grace which makes us pleasing to God.

Minor. But Christ possesses these four conditions in a much higher degree by reason of His substantial and increate grace of union, even independently of habitual grace. For 1) by the grace of union, Christ's human nature is more perfectly drawn to and united with the divine nature than by habitual grace. For Christ's human nature is drawn to the divine nature as it is in Itself, and not merely to a participation in the divine nature. It is also united with the divine nature not merely accidentally and lovingly, but substantially and personally.

2) By the grace of union, Christ as man becomes the natural Son and heir of God, most pleasing to Him and loved by Him, whereas by habitual grace man becomes merely the adopted son of God. St. Thomas shows that love on God's part is the diffusion of good, and He could not confer a greater good on the human nature than to give Himself substantially to it.

3) The grace of union makes Christ the principium quod of theandric operations that are infinitely meritorious, whereas Christ has need of habitual grace only so that these supernatural operations be elicited connaturally by His human faculties.

4) Finally, the hypostatic union implies greater incompatibility with sin than habitual grace does, for, as will be stated farther on, not only is this union incompatible with mortal sin, but even with the slightest sin, and it makes such a man not only sinless, but absolutely impeccable.

Therefore the conclusion follows that the substantial grace of union is what makes Christ formally holy, and this holiness is not accidental, but substantial, increate, and also innate.

Confirmation. By the grace of union, Christ is the natural Son of God. To be the natural Son of God means the maximum of sanctity, or the greatest of union with God and of supernatural union with Him, in accordance with what the Father said: “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

Objection. The grace of union cannot make a man formally blessed. Therefore it cannot make him formally holy.

Reply. I deny the consequent. The difference between the two is that formal blessedness is a vital act consisting in the vision and love of God; formal holiness, however, with which we are here concerned, consists in habitual union with God, which is ordered to right action; and just as habitual grace gives one a right to eternal happiness, provided this grace be not lost by mortal sin, so a fortiori does the grace of union..

Again I insist. But if the Word were to assume an irrational nature, for example, a dove or a lamb, such a creature would not be sanctified by the Word.

Reply. The reason for this lack of sanctification would be that such subject or nature that is assumed is incapable of it; in fact, the Word would not give personality but only subsistence to such a nature. Likewise during the three days of Christ’s death, the Word remained united with Christ’s corpse, not because it was a person, but because it was a suppositum.

Another objection. The divine nature can formally sanctify Christ’s human nature only by intrinsically perfecting it and really changing it as its intrinsic form. But the divine nature cannot be in relation to Christ’s human nature as its intrinsic form. Therefore the divine nature cannot formally sanctify Christ’s human nature. This means that Christ’s human nature would be holy only by extrinsic denomination.

Reply. I distinguish the major: unless the divine nature intrinsically perfected the human nature as the intrinsic form that terminates it, or rather as the act that intrinsically terminates it, this I concede; that the divine nature could formally sanctify it only as its intrinsic form that informs it, this I deny. And I contradistinguish the minor.

For just as Christ’s human nature is really and intrinsically perfected, not because it is a nature, but because it is a suppositum, inasmuch as it is

terminated by the Word, so it is really and intrinsically sanctified by its personal union with the Word.

But I insist. There can be no holiness without the intrinsic form that excludes sin. But this intrinsic form must inform, just as sin is an inherent privation; so also blindness is removed only by the inherent power to see, and not as proposed by reason of the terminating object.

Reply. I concede the major. I deny the minor, for sin is absolutely impossible in Christ's human nature solely because this human nature is assumed by the Word. The reason is that sin is a privation that introduces disorder in the entire suppositum, and the divine suppositum cannot be subjected to disorder. On the contrary, blindness is only the privation of some particular accident, namely, the power to see, and hence this blindness is removed only by the restoration of the inherent visual faculty.

Final objection. But in such a case, Christ's human nature is sanctified by the increate sanctity and consequently would be God or the Godhead. Confusion of the nature would follow the form.

Reply. I distinguish the consequent as in the previous objection. That Christ's human nature would be God or the Godhead, if it were sanctified by the divine nature, as the informing form, this I concede; as the act that properly terminates the nature, this I deny. Therefore Christ's sanctity is substantial, increate, and also innate.

Doubt. Is Christ's human nature formally and substantially sanctified by the divine nature that is included in the personality of the Word, or is it sanctified by His relative personality, because of what this adds to the absolute perfections, or even by the very mode of the union?

Reply. Gonet, Billuart, and several other Thomists say that Christ's humanity is substantially sanctified by the divine nature that is included in the personality of the Word, but not in the other two ways. There is authoritative proof for this affirmation from the quotations of the above-mentioned Fathers, especially St. Gregory, who says: 'Christ[anointed] is so called because of His divine nature, for that is the unction of the human nature." But what anoints the human nature is formally what sanctifies it. Therefore the human nature is formally sanctified by the divine nature.

Theological proof. Christ's human nature is formally sanctified by the divine sanctity. The divine sanctity, however, is the divine nature as such, which is included in the personality of the Word, and therefore the three divine persons are holy by the same essential holiness.

Confirmation. Habitual grace formally sanctifies inasmuch as it is a participation of the divine nature, and thus it is the source of strictly divine operations and ultimately of the beatific vision. Therefore, in like manner, what formally sanctifies Christ's human nature is precisely the divine nature that is included in the personality of the Word.

Hence the other two modes are rejected. First of all, it is clearly evident that Christ's human nature is not formally sanctified by the mode itself of the union, because, in our opinion, there is no such mode of union; and if there were, it would not formally sanctify the nature, because it would not be the sanctifying form, but merely the application of the nature to the form. Thus the just person is not said to be sanctified by the mode of union with habitual grace, but by habitual grace itself.

Finally, Christ's human nature is not formally sanctified by the relative personality of the Word because of what this personality adds to the absolute perfections of the divine persons, for, according to the more probable opinion of several Thomists as explained in the treatise on the Trinity, the divine personalities considered as such or because of the notion of reference to the opposite correlative in the order of divine relations (esse ad), which they add to the divine essence, do not declare a new perfection, and therefore sanctity, but rather they abstract, as the free act of God does, from both perfection and imperfection. Otherwise we should have to say that the Father is lacking in a certain perfection since He does not have sonship, or that subsistent relation which constitutes the person of the Son. Hence the subsistent, divine relations, that are opposed to one another and God's free act, are not absolutely simple perfections at least in the strict sense; for an absolutely simple perfection is defined as a perfection the concept of which implies no imperfection, and which is better to have than not to have. Thus the Father has all absolutely simple perfections, otherwise He would not be God, but He does not have the correlative opposite relation of sonship. It is also not better for Him to have the free act of creating than not to have it. For God is not better because He created the universe.

Objection. Some say that Christ's nature is formally sanctified by that with which it is immediately united. But it is more immediately united with the subsistence of the Word than with the divine nature. Therefore Christ's nature is formally sanctified by the subsistence of the Word.

Reply. I distinguish the major. If this to which the human nature is immediately united is the sanctifying form, then I concede the major;

otherwise I deny it.

It is not unbefitting Christ's human nature to be united with the divine nature through the medium of the personality of the Word, because this union cannot be effected in the nature, but only in the person. Likewise it is only through the medium of the person of the Word that the human nature is united with the one and only divine nature. Similarly habitual grace sanctifies the whole being of man, although it is not united immediately with the whole of his being.

Thus it remains true that Christ's human nature is formally sanctified by the substantial and increate grace of union, but with a union not by participation with the divine nature, but with the divine nature itself, in the person of the Word. Thus, as already stated, Christ's sanctity is not only a transport of joy experienced in His intellect and will, but it is also the transport of joy that is felt in His whole being.

This preliminary article does not give the complete teaching of St. Thomas on this question, but it covers a particular phase of it, for this is what he had already said in equivalent words.

Having discussed Christ's substantial sanctity, we must now consider the question of His accidental sanctity, which consists in habitual grace that was infused into His soul at the moment of His conception. St. Thomas treats of this grace throughout the whole of this seventh question.

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER IN THE SOUL OF CHRIST THERE WAS ANY HABITUAL GRACE

State of the question. Paludanus asserts that some theologians were of the opinion that there was no habitual grace in Christ, because they thought it to be entirely superfluous in Him. Their reasons are given by St. Thomas in the objections placed at the beginning of this article, and are as follows:

1. Grace is a certain participation of the divine nature; but Christ is God not by participation, but in truth.

2. By the mere fact that Christ was the natural Son of God, He had the power of doing all things well in the supernatural order, and eternal life was His by right.

What is true about these arguments, as will at once be evident, is that, absolutely speaking, Christ could have acted freely, and, by way of transient help that functions instead of habitual grace, be elevated to elicit

supernatural and even meritorious acts, but these would not have been connatural to Him. It is difficult to deny this statement, which is admitted by several Thomists, such as Gonet, Godoy, Billuart, and others.

Let us suppose that Christ or the Word incarnate had not received habitual grace and, nevertheless, had offered Himself for us on the cross; this oblation would not only be salutary, as our acts are that precede justification and dispose us for it, but by virtue of the grace of union this oblation would also be meritorious, in fact, of infinite value. Nevertheless, as we shall immediately show, this oblation would not have been connatural, as it must be, nor would it have been connatural merit de condigno.

Conclusion. We must say that Christ's soul was endowed with habitual grace.

It is the common opinion among theologians, which the Scholastics hold along with the Master of the Book of Sentences and the commentators of St. Thomas on this article. This conclusion is at least theologically certain which is correctly deduced and commonly admitted, so that it belongs at least to "the science of theology," which is subordinate to faith and above theological systems.

For the purpose of reconciling the various theologians who do not attach the same note of censure to the opposite opinion, Francis Sylvius made the following distinctions.

In his opinion: (1) It is certainly of faith that Christ even in His human nature was holy and pleasing to God.

2) It is probably of faith that Christ was sanctified by habitual grace that was infused into His soul, especially because, as Sacred Scripture attests, Christ had charity and the other infused virtues, which presuppose habitual grace.

3) Christ in His human nature was sanctified in two ways: first by the grace of union; secondly by habitual grace. The first sanctity is substantial, the second is accidental. Hence the opinion of those who said that Christ's habitual grace must be denied as superfluous, because He was sanctified by the grace of union, must be rejected, as at least temerarious.

Scriptural proof. St. Thomas quotes in the counterargument, the following text: "The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him[i. e. Christ, or the Messias] : the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of

counsel and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and of godliness, and He shall be filled with the spirit of the fear of the Lord."

This text from Isaias proves directly the presence of the gifts of the Holy Ghost in the soul of Christ and consequently the presence of created habitual grace, from which the gifts proceed as explained in the treatises on grace and the gifts. Thus grace is called by theologians the grace of the virtues and gifts, because these are derived from it.

The Evangelist explains these words of Isaias as referring to Christ, and the interpretation of St. Thomas on these words is the one generally followed.

There is another text that must be quoted concerning this grace. The Evangelist writes: "And the Word was made flesh... and we saw His glory as it were of the only-begotten of the Father[which is the grace of union or natural divine sonship], full of grace and truth"[where the fullness of habitual grace is implied]. The Evangelist likewise says: "And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace." We have confirmation of this grace from those texts of Scripture attributing to Christ virtues that presuppose habitual grace, such as charity, humility, and other virtues.

The meaning of these texts of Sacred Scripture is made clearer by the testimony of tradition, which is the living commentary of Scripture.

Patristic proof. St. John Chrysostom says: "The full measure of grace has been poured out over that Temple[Christ] : for the Spirit does not measure this grace out to Him.... We have received of His fullness, but that Temple has received the complete measure of grace.... In Him is all grace, in men but a small measure, a drop of that grace."

St. Cyril of Alexandria says: "Christ sanctifies Himself, since as God He is holy by nature; but according to His human nature He is sanctified together with us."

St. Augustine says: "The Lord Jesus Christ Himself not only gave the Holy Spirit as God; but also received it as man, and therefore He is said to be full of grace and of the Holy Spirit. And it is still more plainly written of Him, 'Because God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit.' Certainly, not with visible oil, but with the gift of grace, which is signified by the visible ointment wherewith the Church anoints the baptized."

St. Bernard, commenting on these words of the Evangelist, "And therefore also the Holy that shall be born of thee," says: "He[Christ] was undoubtedly and particularly holy through the sanctification by the Spirit

and assumption by the Word." These last words contain two distinct assertions. Evidently, the words "and through the assumption by the Word" signify the increate grace of union; hence the preceding words, "through the sanctification by the Spirit," imply created or habitual grace.

We do not find, however, that the Fathers distinguish so clearly between the increate grace of union and created habitual grace as the Scholastics do and especially as St. Thomas does. Yet the Fathers distinguish more explicitly between the Word and charity that is infused into Christ's soul, because the Gospels and epistles frequently refer to Christ's charity and His other virtues that always presuppose habitual grace. The Fathers spoke more in the concrete, that is, they spoke of Christ's acts and were not so much concerned with the abstract question of habitual grace. Such is always the case, inasmuch as our intellect gradually makes the transition from the concrete to the abstract and then returns to the concrete for a better understanding of the question. We find this to be the method of procedure in all treatises.

Theological proof. Three proofs from theological reasoning are given in the body of this article.

1) On account of the principle which is the hypostatic union.

2) In view of the end, or the purpose of the supernatural operations in Christ's soul.

3) Because of Christ's relation to the human race.

The article must be read.

1) The reason on the part of the principle, which is the hypostatic union, is reduced to the following syllogism.

The nearer any recipient is to an inflowing cause, the more does it partake of its influence. But Christ's soul is most closely associated with the Word of God, the Author of grace, since it is united with the Word in the person, and there cannot be a closer union. Therefore Christ's soul receives the maximum influx of grace from God.

It follows from this that Christ's habitual grace, though it is not a physical property, is at least a moral property of the hypostatic union, inasmuch as the Word incarnate was connaturally entitled to it. It is not, however, a physical property, for the Word does not constitute with Christ's human nature one nature, but only one person.

A similar reason, all due proportions being observed, prevails for the fullness of grace in the Blessed Virgin Mary.

2) The reason, because of the end of Christ's operation in His soul, may thus be expressed: That the operations of the soul, namely, knowledge and love, may attain to God the Author of grace, who is to be loved above all things, the soul and its faculties must be elevated by habitual grace as by a second nature. But it was necessary that operations of Christ's soul should most closely and therefore connaturally attain to God the Author of grace, by knowledge and love. Therefore Christ's soul and its faculties had to be elevated by habitual grace.

The major is evident, inasmuch as habitual grace is necessary so that these operations be elicited connaturally. For the agent operates connaturally when it has in itself the nature or permanent form by which it is inclined to its act. But Christ's soul could be inclined intrinsically and permanently to vital supernatural acts only by habitual grace. Therefore, that Christ's soul be inclined intrinsically and permanently to vital supernatural acts, it had to have habitual grace.

The nature itself of the soul did not suffice nor did the grace of union.

For the soul by nature is entitatively natural and hence it is intrinsically incapable of eliciting vital supernatural acts; but with merely actual grace it could indeed elicit such acts, just as a sinner elicits a salutary act before justification; but such an act is not connatural to the soul, as it is generally admitted to be in the case of a just person.

The grace of union likewise did not suffice, because this grace is, as already stated by St. Thomas: "the personal being that is given gratis from above to the human nature in the person of the Word." Thus this grace was the principium quod of the operations, but not the principium quo. That by which Christ's soul is intrinsically, permanently, and connaturally inclined to supernatural acts, must be in the soul by way of a second nature, as the radical principium quo of operations, just as the infused virtues are the proximate principium quo.

It is evident from this that habitual grace in Christ was not superfluous, but it was necessary for the eliciting of connatural supernatural and meritorious acts.

We must insist upon the word "connatural" because, absolutely speaking, Christ, in virtue of the grace of union, and with a transient help, could have elicited supernatural and even meritorious acts. But that He should elicit these acts connaturally, His soul had to be endowed with habitual grace as a

second nature, which is a participation of the divine nature. Otherwise His soul would be imperfect, which is absolutely unbefitting Him.

3) The reason of Christ's relation to us confirms the preceding proofs, and may be expressed by the following syllogism.

The mediator between God and man must have grace overflowing upon others. But Christ, as man, is the mediator between God and man, for the Scripture says: "Of His fullness, we have all received, and grace for grace."

We shall see farther on that Christ's grace as head of the Church is not precisely the grace of union, but it is habitual grace as presupposing and connoting the grace of union. For St. Thomas says: "Everything acts inasmuch as it is a being in act..., hence the agent is nobler than the patient.... And therefore from this pre-eminence of grace which Christ received, it is befitting to Him that this grace is bestowed on others."

Truly Christ is the head of the human race inasmuch as He merited and satisfied for us, and He could not connaturally elicit these meritorious and satisfactory acts without habitual grace, as already stated. But the grace of union is presupposed so that these acts may be of infinite value on the part of the principium quod of these operations.

For a more complete understanding of this article, the following three conclusions taken from Gonet, with whom several other Thomists such as Godoy and Billuart agree, must be noted. However, the Salmanticenses differ from the others concerning the third conclusion.

1) Habitual grace was required in Christ's soul for the completion and perfection of His sanctity. Such is the opinion of all theologians except Vasquez.

2) Habitual grace was required in Christ's soul for His supernatural acts to be connatural.

3) It was necessary for Christ to have habitual grace so that He could merit connaturally a supernatural reward. By Christ's absolute power, however, without this grace He could have merited a supernatural reward with intrinsically supernatural help by way of a transient light of glory.

So say several Thomists, such as Godoy and Billuart.

Objection. The argument raised against this third conclusion is that St. Thomas says: "Although there is a certain note of infinity in Christ's merit because of the dignity of the person, yet His actions are meritorious because of habitual grace, without which merit is impossible."

Gonet replies as follows: “I answer that the purpose of St. Thomas in the passage just quoted is to point out that without habitual grace there can be no question of connatural merit. It does not follow from this, absolutely speaking, and according to God’s absolute power that Christ’s soul solely with the grace of union and an actual help in the supernatural order could not merit a supernatural reward, but only that He could not do so connaturally.”

John of St. Thomas is of about the same opinion, saying: “Habitual grace is not absolutely necessary for the validity of Christ’s merit and satisfaction that transcends the former and that is derived from the value of the person.”

The conclusion of St. Thomas is confirmed from the solution of the objections in this article.

Reply to first objection. “The soul of Christ is not essentially divine. Hence it behooves it to be divine by participation, which is by grace.”

Reply to second objection. In Christ’s soul “the beatific act and its fruition could not be without grace.”

Reply to third objection. “Christ’s humanity is the instrument of the Godhead, not indeed an inanimate instrument, which nowise acts, but is merely acted upon, but an instrument animated by a rational soul, which is so acted upon as to act.” For Christ’s soul to act supernaturally by the love of charity, it was at least the normal requisite for His soul to have habitual grace. It would have been something absolutely abnormal for Christ not to have this habitual grace.

Another objection. If Christ had habitual grace, He would be the adoptive son of God, for adoptive sonship is the formal effect of habitual grace. We shall see further on that Christ cannot be called the adopted son of God, because He is already the natural Son of God in His own right.

Reply. I deny the consequence, for adoptive sonship is not the primary effect of habitual grace, but only its secondary effect, and even if it were the primary effect, it would not be communicated to Christ, because He is already the natural Son of God and hence is incapable of being an adopted son of God. Adopted sonship applies to anyone by reason of the suppositum, or person, and hence the person who is the natural Son of God, cannot be called the adopted son. Hence the Blessed Virgin Mary is the first of the adopted children of God.

First doubt. When did Christ receive habitual grace?

Reply. He received this grace at the moment of His conception, because habitual grace is the connatural consequence of the hypostatic union.

Second doubt. Did Christ at the first moment of His conception dispose Himself by an act of free will for the habitual grace that was then infused?

St. Thomas answers this question in the affirmative, because this mode of sanctification by one's own disposing act, as in adults, is more perfect than to be sanctified by the disposing act of another as an infant.

St. Thomas holds that "Christ's intellect in regard to His infused knowledge, could understand at the first moment of His conception, without turning to phantasms." Many doctors admit this truth as applicable to the Blessed Virgin Mary. So also the angels; Adam and Eve, who were created as fully grown, by receiving habitual grace at the moment of their creation disposed themselves for it by actual grace.

Objection. Some say that this act of free will comes from habitual grace and therefore cannot dispose one for it.

Reply. Several Thomists, such as Gonet and Serra rightly maintain in their treatises on grace, when discussing the justification of adults, that the free act that ultimately disposes in the order of material cause for habitual grace follows it in the order of formal cause and hence is the effect of habitual grace, in accordance with the principle: causes mutually interact, though in a different order.

Likewise the due organization of the human body disposes it for the reception of the human soul; however, the body has this ultimate disposition only from the soul, as St. Thomas teaches.

Other Thomists, such as Goudin, say that the free act which is the ultimate disposition for habitual grace in adults proceeds effectively from the virtue of charity that is not as yet permanently communicated as a habit but is of the nature of a transient actual help. The former answer seems the more profound.

St. Thomas solves this question, saying: "Because the infusion of grace and the remission of sin regard God who justifies, hence in the order of nature, [instantaneously] the infusion of grace is prior to the freeing from sin. But if we look at what takes place on the part of the man justified, it is the other way about, since in the order of nature, the being freed from sin, is prior to the obtaining of justifying grace." But the being freed from sin is the ultimate disposition for the attainment of habitual grace, and this takes place in the adult only by an act of free will (as stated in the body of the

article); this movement of the free will to God proceeds from the actual infusion of habitual grace and follows it in the orders of formal, efficient, and final causes, although it precedes this grace in the order of material cause, as the ultimate disposition in the body in its relation to the soul.

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER IN CHRIST THERE WERE VIRTUES

State of the question. We are concerned with virtues that are so called in the strict sense, such as the theological and cardinal virtues. Afterward, in discussing Christ's knowledge, we shall devote a question exclusively (q. 9) to the consideration of the intellectual virtues, which are not virtues in the strict sense inasmuch as they do not make a person absolutely good, but only in a qualified manner, such as when we say a person is good in metaphysics or mathematics.

We are concerned not only with directly infused moral virtues, but also with moral virtues of the natural order, which are acquired by our individual acts.

Conclusion. Christ had all the virtues. This means that He had all virtues that do not in their notion imply any defect in the soul of Christ, who was both wayfarer and comprehensor, as will be pointed out farther on. Thus in the following articles we shall have occasion to remark that Christ did not have either faith or hope or penance.

Scriptural proof. The Gospels authoritatively represent Christ as the exemplar of all virtues. Rationalists, such as Renan, acknowledge this to be true. We must insist upon this truth for the better manifestation of Christ's sanctity, which is the motive of credibility that leads to faith in Him.

There is negative evidence of this truth inasmuch as Christ was sinless, so that He could say to the Jews who sought to kill Him: "Which of you shall convince Me of sin?" And nobody dared to contradict Him. Truly, indeed, as the Gospel narrates: "The chief priests and the whole council sought false witness against Jesus that they might put Him to death, and they found not." But it was only because Jesus confessed that He is Christ, the Son of God, that "the high priest rent His garments, saying: 'He hath blasphemed. " Even Judas confessed, saying: "I have sinned in betraying innocent blood"; and Pilate said: "I am innocent of the blood of this just man, look you to it."

Moreover, Christ had all virtues and even most different kinds of them which He practiced in a heroic degree. Love and dutiful submission to God are especially evident in the life of Jesus, His love and mercy for men, perfect self-denial, humility and utmost magnanimity, most perfect meekness as also fortitude and patience on the cross, as when He prayed for those who tortured Him. We find wonderfully reconciled in Christ that holy rigor of justice toward the impenitent Pharisees and that immensity of mercy toward those sinners who do not resist God's grace.

In fact, as shown in apologetics, this harmony and perseverance that prevails between such vastly different virtues practiced in a heroic degree is a moral miracle. For this sublime and profound harmony between the virtues or holiness of life is impossible without God's special intervention, for it consists in an inseparable union with God which can come only from God, inasmuch as the order of agents must correspond to the order of ends. Apologetical arguments founded not on revelation but on reason make this already evident.

In fact, Christ's sanctity is not only eminent, but is manifestly extraordinary in that it unites in itself vastly different heroic virtues. We have seen indeed that a person is at times naturally disposed or is by force of habit ready to perform acts requiring fortitude of soul, who, nevertheless, is not ready to perform acts that call for meekness of soul, for by nature such a person is determined one particular way. But that anyone may have all the virtues and also excel in them, even those so vastly different, such as supreme fortitude and supreme meekness, perfect love of truth and justice and also the greatest of mercy toward those that err and fall into sin, this is impossible without God's special help, who alone in the simplicity of His nature contains formally and eminently vastly different perfections, and who can unite these in the human soul, so as to make it a perfect image of God. Thus the soul of Christ is that most sublime image in which it is possible to contemplate the Deity.

Theological proof. It can be proved by theological reasoning that Christ had all the virtues. This reasoning of St. Thomas is valid for the infused virtues, and may be expressed as follows:

As the faculties of the soul stem from its essence, so the infused virtues stem from habitual grace, and in a proportionate degree. But Christ's soul was endowed with habitual grace from the moment of His conception, and indeed in the highest degree of perfection, as will be more clearly explained

farther on. Therefore Christ had all the infused virtues and in the highest degree.

We are concerned with virtues which, in what they mean, imply no defect in the soul of Christ, who was both wayfarer and comprehensor. Thus faith, hope, and repentance must be excluded. The reason given by St. Thomas holds good for charity and all the infused moral virtues.

Reply to first objection. Habitual grace performs supernatural acts only through the medium of the virtues.

Reply to second objection. Christ had the virtues most perfectly, beyond the common mode. In this sense Plotinus gave to a certain sublime degree of virtue the name of virtue of the purified soul, as Macrobius says.

Reply to third objection. “Christ showed the highest kind of liberality and magnificence by despising all riches.” For these virtues, just as wittiness which has to do with joking, can be either made use of or despised for the sake of a higher end. But Christ had no evil desires whatever, as will be shown farther on. Thus Christ had perfect temperance, but not continence, which St. Augustine says is not a virtue but something less than the virtue of chastity, for the continent person, strictly speaking, has evil tendencies, but resists them by will power. Cajetan remarks, taking the name “continence” in the more common acceptation of the word, that there is nothing that prevents us from calling Christ continent.

First doubt. Did Christ have all moral virtues that of themselves can be acquired? Theologians generally give an affirmative answer to this question..

The reason is that the sensitive appetite in Christ was no different from ours, which is an inclination to sensible delectable good; that it may completely and perfectly tend to its natural and fitting good, it requires a superadded form, that can be nothing else but a moral virtue that is directly acquirable. Infused moral virtues did not suffice, because the direct purpose of these is to incline the will to supernatural acts. The correlative moral and acquirable virtues, although they are in themselves in their own order truly virtues, are related to the virtues as dispositions from which there arises an extrinsic facility for the practice of the infused virtues, for they exclude inordinate inclinations resulting from repetition of acts. The acquired moral virtues are in their relation to the infused virtues somewhat like dexterity in manipulating the harp is to the art that is in the practical intellect of the musician. Hence it is certain that Christ had moral virtues that are of

themselves acquirable; otherwise He would have been morally imperfect, just as beginners in the Christian life who, by the very fact that they are in the state of grace, have infused prudence, which scarcely manifests itself, however, because they lack the virtue of acquired prudence, without which it is difficult to practice the virtue of infused prudence.

Confirmation. Christ's will must be perfected as regards good, just as much as His intellect is as regards truth. But there was acquired knowledge in Christ's intellect, as will be made clear farther on. Therefore, likewise in His will and sensitive appetite there was the possibility of acquiring moral virtues.

First objection. To perform a most perfect act is to act from a supernatural motive. But Christ always had to perform most perfect acts. Therefore He always acted from a supernatural motive or by acts of the infused virtues and not by acts of virtues that of themselves were acquirable.

Reply. I distinguish the major: to perform a most perfect act is to act from a supernatural motive, when this motive is the end in view of the person acting, this I concede; that the deed performed must always be in itself supernatural, this I deny. Hence, just as Christ performed not only acts of charity, but also acts of the infused virtues, so also He performed natural acts that as regards the object and end of these acts were good and fitting, though they were subordinated to the supernatural end of charity as being the end in view of the person acting. Thus Christ said: "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's...." These are natural obligations, just as even pagans know that commutative justice requires the payment of debts.

As grace does not destroy nature but perfects it, so also the infused virtues neither destroy nor render the acquired virtues useless, but perfect them, directing them to be performed for the love of God, not that the acts themselves are supernatural, but that the end in view of the agent is supernatural. Thus the act of the acquired virtue of temperance is modally supernatural, whereas the act of the infused virtue of temperance is substantially supernatural. Thus the acquired moral virtues are subordinated to the infused moral virtues in some way just as the imagination and sensitive memory are subordinated to knowledge, philosophy to theology, and theology to the doctrine of faith that transcends the science of theology. There is a normal hierarchy of functions in this subordination.

Second objection. But the acquired virtues are required to restrain the immoderate tendencies of the passions, which Christ did not have, for, as will be mentioned farther on, Christ was free from concupiscence. Therefore He had no need of the acquired virtues.

Reply. I distinguish the antecedent: that the acquired virtues are necessary in a secondary sense so as to check the immoderate tendencies of the passions, this I concede; that they are primarily necessary, this I deny. For the primary and special purpose of these virtues is to enable the faculties to act properly, promptly, and with facility in the natural order. It is in this way that chastity operates, for example, even when there are no temptations to be overcome or passions to be curbed. Thus humility in Christ did not check the first movements of pride, but it completely subjected His will to the divine majesty.

Thus Adam in the state of innocence had those virtues that are of themselves capable of attainment, and they remain in the blessed, as St. Thomas teaches.

Second doubt. Did Christ have these moral virtues that can be acquired of themselves by infusion, or did He acquire them by His own acts?

It is difficult to give a definite answer to this question. The more probable opinion of several Thomists is that they were infused, just as Adam in the state of innocence had them from the moment of his creation. However, Adam was created in the adult state, whereas Christ as man gradually grew up to manhood.

The principal reason for this answer is that Christ was never without these virtues, for to be deprived of them for any time is in itself something evil, and no defect is admissible in God, except those that are not contrary to the end of the Incarnation, such as the privation of the glorification of His body for a time. But such is not the case with the temporary privation of these virtues. It would be more derogatory to Christ's dignity that He should be for a time without these virtues, than increase in perfection by acquiring them, which cannot be instantaneous, but only a progressive process. Moreover, the Church declared in the Second Council of Constantinople: "Christ was not subjected to passions, nor did He become better by the repetition of virtuous acts."

Objection. But the Gospel says: "Jesus advanced in wisdom and age, and grace with God and men."

Reply. The answer of St. Thomas is: “Christ advanced in wisdom and grace as also in age (not by an actual increase of the habits but), because as He advanced in age He performed more perfect works.”

Another objection. St. Thomas says farther on that Christ advanced in acquired knowledge. Therefore He also advanced in moral virtues that of themselves can be acquired.

Reply. There is not parity of argument. (1) The natural sciences do not make man absolutely good, such as the moral virtues do, but good only in a qualified sense, such as good in mathematics or in physics. (2) If the natural sciences were infused in Christ, then His active intellect would be in a state of continual idleness as regards its first function, which is to abstract intelligible species from the senses. Therefore it is more probable that Christ had moral virtues that of themselves can be acquired from the time of His conception.

THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER IN CHRIST THERE WAS FAITH

The general opinion of theologians is that Christ did not have faith. Such is the opinion of St. Thomas.

The reason given in the counterargument does not absolutely prove this assertion, for the words of Peter quoted here, namely, “Thou knowest all things,” were spoken after Christ’s resurrection. Hence these words prove to some extent that at least after the resurrection Jesus did not have faith concerning mysteries in the strict sense, but the beatific vision.

The body of the article presupposes what must be proved farther on, namely, that Christ from the first moment of His conception completely saw God in His essence. But the clear vision of God excludes the notion of faith, which is of things not seen.

In other words, a virtue cannot be in a subject to whom its primary act is derogatory. But the primary act of faith refers to God not seen. Therefore Christ could not have had faith, since from the moment of His conception He clearly saw God in His essence. This is the common opinion among theologians. No theologian holds that an act of faith is simultaneously compatible with the beatific vision, because the scriptural text of St. Paul is clear on this point: “Faith... is the evidence of things that appear not.” Durandus thinks that the habit of faith, however, if not its act, can remain in the blessed. Scotus holds this to be possible, but useless. St. Thomas and St.

Bonaventure are of the opinion that the habit of faith cannot co-exist with the beatific vision. Thus St. Thomas says: “The object of faith is a divine thing not seen. But the habit of virtue... takes its species from the object. Hence, if we deny that the divine thing was not seen, we exclude the very essence of faith.”

At least the permanence of the beatific vision excludes both act and habit of faith. The beatific vision as a transient act, which St. Augustine and St. Thomas think St. Paul had on this earth, excludes the act of faith concerning this object, but not the habit of faith.

Reply to first objection. The moral virtues, although they are inferior to faith, were and are always in Christ because they imply no defect as regards their subject matter.

Reply to second objection. St. Thomas does not teach that Christ had the merit of faith, but He had what constitutes the reward of our faith, which is perfect obedience to the loving commands of God.

But Christ was faithful to His promises, and this is sometimes called faith in Sacred Scripture. Thus the prophet says of the Messias: “Faith shall be the girdle of His loins.”

Therefore the maximum of faith that any intellectual creature had was the theological faith of the Blessed Virgin Mary, for her faith was proportionate to her plenitude of grace. From this we conclude how sublime must have been the acts of faith and hope made by the Blessed Virgin Mary, especially on Mount Calvary, not in the least doubting that her Son, who seemed to be conquered, was the Son of God, the conqueror of the devil and sin, and the proximate victor of death.

FOURTH ARTICLE: WHETHER IN CHRIST THERE WAS HOPE

State of the question. There is some difficulty, for the Psalmist, speaking in the person of Christ, says: “In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped.” Moreover, Christ awaited or hoped for the glorification of His body and the building up of His mystical body.

Conclusion. St. Thomas, with whom the majority of theologians agree, maintains that Christ did not have the virtue of hope but had a certain act of hope or rather of desire concerning things He did not yet possess.

Scriptural proof. St. Paul says: “What a man seeth, why doth he hope for?” But Christ did not have faith, as was said above, because from the

beginning (of the hypostatic union) He enjoyed the vision of the divine essence. Therefore, too, He did not have the virtue of hope.

Theological proof. The reason for this proof is taken from the formal or primary object of hope, for hope, considered as a theological virtue, has God Himself as its primary object, whose fruition is expected. But Christ from the beginning of His conception had the complete fruition of the divine essence, as will be stated farther on. Therefore He did not have the theological virtue of hope.

The principle of the preceding article applies equally here, namely, a virtue cannot be in a subject to whom its primary act is derogatory.

However, at the end of the argumentative part of this article, St. Thomas admits that Christ had a certain act of hope or rather of desire as regards some things, so that He could expect the glorification of His body and the building up of the Church. Thus the Psalmist, speaking in the person of Christ, says: “In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped.” But these things do not constitute the primary object of the theological virtue of hope, and thus it remains true that Christ did not have this theological virtue of hope.

Therefore of all intellectual creatures, the hope of the Blessed Virgin Mary was the most sublime especially on Mount Calvary, when all the apostles, with the exception of St. John, did not have the courage to witness the death of Christ. Hence it is said of her: “Grant that I may carry the cross of Christ.”

First doubt. To what virtue must we attribute this act of desire in Christ for the glorification of His body and the building up of the Church?

Reply. This act must be attributed to the virtue of charity, as its secondary act, whereby Christ loved Himself and the Church, for God’s sake, as the Evangelist says: “Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”

Thus the love of concupiscence by which we desire eternal life for the glory of God, is attributed to us as a secondary act of charity.

Second doubt. Was there penance as a virtue in Christ?

Reply. There was no penance, as a virtue, in Christ, because it implies in the strict sense sorrow for one’s own sins. But Christ was impeccable, as will be explained farther on. The Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office forbade such invocations as: “Heart of Jesus, penitent for us, Jesus penitent, Jesus penitent for us.”

The truth of this reply is clearly established since it agrees with the generally accepted teaching of St. Thomas, which declares that penance is a special virtue that is distinct not only from the virtue of religion, but also from the virtue of vindictive justice and of all the other virtues.

Thus the primary and specific act of penance is sorrow for one's own sins with the motive of amendment, and the intention of performing salutary acts in satisfaction for one's past offenses.

But a virtue cannot be in a subject to whom its primary act is intrinsically repugnant. But the act of penance is intrinsically repugnant to Christ's human nature, because it was united to the Word. But Christ had a perfect detestation for sin inasmuch as it is an offense against God, arising from the intensity of His love for God offended and for souls that are dead to God through mortal sin.

FIFTH ARTICLE: WHETHER IN CHRIST THERE WERE THE GIFTS

State of the question. The difficulty is that gifts are given to help the virtues. But the virtues were most perfect in Christ. Therefore He did not need this help.

Moreover, Christ had already on this earth the contemplation of heaven as explained farther on. But the gifts of wisdom, knowledge, and understanding seem to belong to contemplation in this life, and apparently these are useless in a soul that already enjoys the beatific vision.

Conclusion. It is commonly admitted, however, that the soul of Christ had these gifts in a pre-eminent degree.

Gonet maintains that this conclusion is a certainty of the faith, because of the text of Isaias quoted in the proof.

Scriptural proof. The prophet says: "The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him: the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and of godliness. And He shall be filled with the spirit of the fear of the Lord."

Instead of the words, "the spirit of knowledge and of godliness," the Hebrew text reads, "the spirit of knowledge and of fear." Thus fear is mentioned twice. The Greek version and the Vulgate give "godliness," which is about the same in meaning as reverential godliness. The Old Testament does not distinguish so clearly between. godliness and fear as the New Testament does, which is not the law of fear, but of love.

The Fathers and Scholastics are generally agreed that this text concerns Christ's human nature.

Theological proof. Although it has been revealed that Christ had gifts and still has them, this assertion can also be proved from higher revealed principles, namely, from the definition of gifts. St. Thomas says in this article: "The gifts, properly, are certain perfections of the soul's powers, inasmuch as they have a natural aptitude to be moved by the Holy Ghost," according to St. Luke, who says: "And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the desert." Hence it is manifest that the gifts were in Christ in a pre-eminent degree.

The thesis is confirmed by the fact that the gifts of the Holy Ghost follow from habitual grace and are connected with charity, as St. Thomas teaches. But Christ had habitual grace in the most perfect manner and the highest degree of charity. Therefore He also had pre-eminently the gifts.

The thesis is also confirmed from the solution of the objections.

Reply to first objection. It points out that as a man, however perfect he may be, needs to be helped by God, so also, no matter how perfect the virtues are, they need to be helped by the gifts, which perfect the powers of the soul, inasmuch as these are not controlled by reason illumined by faith, but by the Holy Spirit. This reply confirms the teaching of St. Thomas as set forth in a previous passage where he shows that the infused virtues, even the highest degree, are specifically distinct from the gifts as regards their formal object quo or their rule or motive; for to be ruled by right reason even though illumined by the light of faith differs from being ruled by the Holy Spirit, which means to be ruled by His special inspiration, which transcends the discursive process of reasoning. Thus there is a manifest difference between being ruled by infused prudence, which proceeds from living faith, and being ruled by the gift of counsel.

Reply to third objection. It states that the gifts were not useless in Christ, for He also had earthly knowledge, as will be stated farther on; for Christ was both wayfarer and comprehensor. He was comprehensor as regards the higher part of the soul, and wayfarer inasmuch as His soul still was passible and His body passible and mortal, so that He looked forward to beatitude in all those things which were wanting to Him of beatitude. Moreover, as explained elsewhere, the gifts remain in heaven.

As stated in this last citation, this doctrine of the permanence of the gifts in heaven is affirmed by St. Ambrose, and the reason is that the gifts of the

Holy Spirit perfect the human mind to follow the prompting of the Holy Spirit, which is especially the case in heaven. But in heaven, evil and temptation being no more, by the gifts of the Holy Spirit we are perfected in good, not entirely as regards the same material object but the gifts will preserve in us intact the same formal objects both quo and quod of the virtues by which latter they are specified; for as theologians in heaven will see the object of theology, either in the Word if in this life they studied it out of love for God, or outside the Word; so also all the blessed in heaven will receive special inspirations from the Holy Spirit to know something special by means of experimental knowledge, according as it is connaturally related to divine things, for instance, to know for what wayfarers they must especially pray. The beatific vision precedes beatific love, whereas the knowledge obtained by the gifts follows this love. Finally, there is neither succession in knowledge nor acquisition of anything new, whereas by the gifts it is possible for the blessed to acquire additional knowledge.

But obscurity and similar imperfections that now actually belong to the gifts, either of wisdom or counsel, or of other such gifts, do not belong to the state of glory, nor were these defects in Christ.

Thus the gift of wisdom disposed Christ so as to be moved with facility by the Holy Spirit to pass certain judgment on divine things by the highest of causes, in accordance with a connaturalness that is founded on charity for things.

But the gift of understanding attributed to Him correct and immediate penetration of those things that pertain to the kingdom of God.

The gift of counsel likewise attributed to Christ the power of immediately finding out the motive for action.

The gift of knowledge so that even in the consideration of inferior motives, He might judge with absolute certainty about things that happened.

The gift of fortitude expelled from Him the fear of death and its attendant tortures.

Gonet says these conclusions are admitted by all theologians as being certain and beyond dispute.

SIXTH ARTICLE: WHETHER IN CHRIST THERE WAS THE GIFT OF FEAR

State of the question. There are two difficulties: (1) It seems that hope is stronger than fear, for the object of hope is good, whereas the object of fear

is evil. If, therefore, Christ did not have the virtue of hope, a fortiori He did not have the gift of fear. (2) The gift of fear makes one afraid either of being separated from God, or of being punished by Him. But these two were impossible for Christ, because He was impeccable.

Reply. Christ had the gift of fear.

Scriptural proof. The testimony of the prophet, quoted in the preceding article, is: “He shall be filled with the spirit of the fear of the Lord,” which also in the Hebrew text refers to the spirit of fear. Moreover, the Church condemned the following proposition of Abelard: “The spirit of the fear of the Lord was not in Christ.”

Theological proof. This assertion of Sacred Scripture is not so much proved as explained by the following syllogism.

God is feared by an act of reverential fear, not only inasmuch as He can inflict punishment but on account of His pre-eminence, who cannot with impunity be resisted. But the soul of Christ was moved by the Holy Spirit toward God b; certain reverential affection. Therefore Scripture attributes to Him the fullness of the gift of fear, not indeed of the fear of punishment, or sin, but of reverential fear.

Confirmation. This gift of fear, understood as reverential fear, remains in the blessed, for the Psalmist exclaims: “The fear of the Lord is holy, enduring forever and ever.” It is said of the angels, especially of those called Powers: “The Powers tremble.” For every creature that is not self-existent trembles in the sight of Him who alone is and can be the self-subsisting Being. But Christ’s human nature is not His being, although it exists by the very being of the Word, inasmuch as there is one being in Christ, just as there is one person.

Doubt. What is the primary object of the gift of fear?

It is God’s pre-eminence, who cannot with impunity be resisted; and its primary act is reverence for this divine pre-eminence, and so this gift can be both in Christ and the blessed. The secondary object of the gift of fear, or of filial fear, is the evil of sin that must be avoided.

In contrast to this, the primary object of fear, considered as a passion, is terrifying sensible evil, and the primary act of this fear is flight from this evil. Finally, the primary object of servile fear is the evil of punishment to be inflicted on account of the offense committed.

Thus it remains true that the habits of the virtues and the gifts properly and directly refer to good, but to evil as a consequence.

State of the question. By placing the article about the graces gratis datae here, it is evident that St. Thomas draws a complete distinction between them and the gifts as he has already shown. The seven gifts, which are connected with charity, belong to the organism of the supernatural life, but the graces gratis datae do not.

The difficulty is that the graces gratis datae are freely given by way of a transient act. But Christ had permanently the fullness of grace. Hence He did not need these secondary graces. The Gospel does not say that He had the gift of tongues.

Reply. Nevertheless the answer is that all the graces gratis datae were pre-eminently in Christ as the first and chief teacher of the faith.

Authoritative proof. St. Augustine says: “As in the head are all the senses, so in Christ were all the graces.” St. Augustine is also expressly referring here to the graces gratis datae in Christ.

The Master of the Book of the Sentences is precisely of the same opinion, and it is commonly admitted by the scholastic theologians.

Theological proof. Graces gratis datae are ordained for the manifestation of faith and spiritual doctrine, because the manner of their enumeration makes this evident, and also the explanation of St. Thomas. But Christ is the first and chief teacher of the faith and of spiritual doctrine. Therefore the graces gratis datae were in Christ.

This means that the graces gratis datae were most excellently in Christ, being ordained for the benefit of others. They may be expressed by the following schema.

GRACES GRATIS DATAE that are ordained for the instruction of others in divine things

to acquire complete knowledge of divine things
faith concerning principles,
word of wisdom concerning the principal conclusions,
word of knowledge concerning the examples and effects
to confirm the divine revelation
by doing: grace of healing working of miracles
by knowing: prophecy, discerning of spirits
to convey fittingly to the hearers the divine message
kinds of tongues, interpretation of speeches

Christ had to have in the most perfect degree all these graces that were bestowed on others; for they denote no imperfection that is repugnant either to the beatific vision or to the hypostatic union. They are also becoming to the dignity of the head of the mystical body, as St. Augustine says in the counter-argument of this article.

Reply to first objection. St. Thomas points out that these graces are called "diversities of graces," inasmuch as in the saints these graces are divided; but Christ had these graces all at once and in their plenitude just as He had and always has the plenitude of habitual grace.

Reply to second objection. It was fitting for Christ to have habitual grace, not according to His divine nature, but according to His human nature.

Reply to third objection. It is pointed out that, although we do not read of Christ having had the gift of tongues, because He preached only to the Jews, "yet a knowledge of all languages was not wanting to Him, since even the secrets of hearts, of which all words are signs, were not hidden from Him."

Christ likewise had the grace gratis datae of faith. This grace is a certain pre-eminence of knowledge concerning the revealed mysteries whether such knowledge be clear or obscure; it is also a facility given by the Holy Spirit of proposing the things of faith simply and in a way adapted to all, so that they can be understood even by the ignorant, as explained by St. Thomas. It is evident from the Gospel that Christ had both kinds of excellence.

There is no doubt about Christ's powers concerning either the grace of healing or the discernment of spirits, for the Evangelist says: "And Jesus seeing their thoughts[of the Pharisees], said: 'Why do you think evil in your hearts?'" Again he says: "Jesus knowing their thoughts.

Finally, Christ had pre-eminently the grace of interpretation of speech for explaining the Scriptures in the true and most exalted sense. Hence the Evangelist relates that the disciples going to the town called Emmaus said: "Was not our heart burning within us, whilst He spoke in the way, and opened to us the Scriptures?"

EIGHTH ARTICLE: WHETHER IN CHRIST THERE WAS THE GIFT OF PROPHECY

State of the question. St. Thomas posited this special article about prophecy, because this grace gratis data presents a particular difficulty. For

the first objection of this article remarks that prophecy implies a certain obscurity. But Christ already enjoyed on this earth the beatific vision. Also prophecy concerns distant things or those that are far off, and seems to imply an essential imperfection, as faith and hope do. Moreover, the Apostle says that in heaven, “prophecies shall be made void.”

Reply. The answer is in the affirmative.

Scriptural proof. Moses announced to the Israelites: “The Lord thy God will raise up to thee a Prophet... of thy brethren... Him thou shalt hear.” Jesus applied to Himself what Moses foretold of Him, saying: “He wrote of Me.” Likewise Jesus said of Himself in the synagogue at Nazareth: “A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country.”

Theological proof. He is a prophet who knows and announces what is distant both from himself according to his state and from his hearers. But Christ, who was not only comprehensor but also wayfarer, knew and announced very many things which were distant from Him according to His state as wayfarer, such as His betrayal, death, and resurrection, as also the destruction of Jerusalem, the signs preceding the end of the world, the denial of Peter, and several other events. Therefore Christ was a prophet.

Reply to first objection. Prophecy, as usually communicated, is obscure and enigmatic not in itself, but because of the imperfection of the hearer. Its clarity or obscurity, that it be communicated transiently, or permanently, are of themselves a matter of indifference. But in Christ prophecy was clear and permanent because of the union of His human nature with the Word.

But if the Apostle says that in heaven “prophecies shall be made void,” he has in mind complete beatitude, which is incompatible with the state of wayfarer.

NINTH ARTICLE: WHETHER IN CHRIST THERE WAS THE FULLNESS OF GRACE

State of the question. The third part of this question begins here. After the consideration of the grace of the virtues and of the gifts and of the graces gratis datae in Christ, St. Thomas treats of the fullness of grace. He asks whether Christ was simply full of grace, both intensively and extensively.

This article and those that follow are therefore concerned with the perfection of Christ’s grace.

Conclusion. Christ had fullness of grace, both intensively, that is, as regards its perfection, and extensively, that is, as regards the various effects

it can produce.

Scriptural proof. The Evangelist says: “We saw His glory... full of grace and truth.... And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace.” Likewise St. John the Baptist testified concerning Christ, and the Evangelist says; “He whom God hath sent, speaketh the words of God; for God does not give to Him the spirit by measure. The Father loveth the Son, and He hath given all things into His hand.”

The Fathers of the Church have often explained these texts by showing that Christ, who is most full of grace, had every kind of holiness.

Theological proof. It is simply discursive and explanatory, explaining the above quoted text.

This proof may be reduced to the following syllogism.

Fullness of grace is of two kinds, namely, intensive and extensive.

But Christ had each kind. Therefore Christ had absolutely or completely fullness of grace.

Major. It is thus explained. There is intensive fullness of any quality in a being, for instance, of whiteness, when the being has as much of this quality as it can naturally have. Thus it appears that a lily has the highest possible degree of whiteness; so also snow.

Hence intensive fullness is estimated from the degree and radication of any quality in the subject. But extensive fullness of any quality is estimated from the relation to the various effects that any operative principle is capable of producing; for example, the irrational animal has not extensive fullness of life, because it has not intellectual life, but only the vegetative life and sensitive life.

Minor. Its parts are proved. Christ had intensive fullness of grace, that is, in the highest degree that it can be had, for two reasons.

1) Because His soul, which was united to God by the most exalted of all possible unions, which is the hypostatic union, received the greatest influx of grace, just as the air that is nearer to the fire is warmer and more luminous.

2) Because grace was given to Christ, as the head, from which it was to be poured out upon all others; just as in this world nothing is brighter than the sun, which illumines all other things. Hence the Evangelist quotes Jesus as saying: “I am come to cast fire on the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled?” The reference is to fire that purifies, illumines, and kindles spiritually.

From these proofs it is apparent that intensive fullness of any quality is estimated from its intrinsic perfection inasmuch as it is pure and free from all imperfection. Thus snow is perfectly white; it has whiteness in all its intensity or purity, containing no element that is not white.

If there is reference to some operative habit, since this habit determines the faculty to operate, it is all the more perfect intensively, the more it determines the faculty with reference to the formal object of the operation to be elicited, that is, it actuates the faculty and is radicated in it. There is something similar in the case of habitual grace, which is an entitative habit, which is received in the essence of the soul, and is radically operative, inasmuch as the virtues are derived from it, just as the faculties are derived from the essence of the soul. Thus intensive fullness of habitual grace is estimated from its intrinsic perfection free from all imperfection, and its radication in the soul, which it especially determines radically to operate most holily free from all imperfection. This intensive fullness of grace would apply to Christ even if His soul were ordered solely to the performance of acts of the love of God.

Likewise Christ had extensive fullness of grace, which is estimated from its relation to the various effects it can produce.

The reason is that, as St. Thomas says: “Christ had grace for all its operations and effects, and this because it was bestowed on Him, as upon a universal principle in the genus of such as have grace... just as the sun is the universal cause of generation.”

This twofold fullness, intensive and extensive, is called absolute on the part of the grace itself, which by God’s ordinary power cannot be received in a more perfect manner. It is not merely relatively perfect or according to the exigencies of the state or dignity of the subject. In fact, this most exalted dignity of head and redeemer of the human race demands absolute fullness of grace.

Doubt. Is this plenitude of grace more perfect intensively than extensively?

Reply. It is the common opinion among theologians that intensive plenitude is the more perfect, just as quality is to be preferred to quantity, although positivism is inclined to the contrary view; for indeed intensive plenitude is immediately estimated from the intrinsic perfection of the quality, and is the foundation of extensive plenitude. This is especially evident in knowledge, for its intensive plenitude results from the deeper

penetration of its first notions and principles, whereas its extensive plenitude, both habitual and actual, is estimated according to the number of conclusions that are deduced from the principles. There are certain physicists who know all the conclusions of their own science in its actual state of development, and who have read all the books of any importance belonging to this science. This does not mean, however, that they have penetrated more deeply into the principles of this science; for the scientific habit is not yet, perhaps, established in their intellect as a sort of second nature. On the contrary, another physicist knows more from on high the principles of this particular science, and their subordination to the other sciences, even though he may have forgotten certain conclusions. The perfection of a science is not estimated according to the number of its conclusions, for although science may make use of many subordinated ideas, it is a simple quality that perfects the intellect in its relation to some formal object and to certain first principles, which virtually contain all the conclusions of this particular science.

Thus there is a great difference between Aristotle and the author of a textbook on peripatetic philosophy. Although the author of such a textbook may perhaps succeed in giving to this science new conclusions, yet he has not the genius of Aristotle, nor could he be the author of such works as the Organon, Physics, Metaphysics, and Ethics of the Stagirite. There is also a similar difference between St. Thomas and his commentators, although the latter may succeed in giving to the science new conclusions.

Likewise those historians Who Write a critical estimate of the life of Napoleon have a more extensive knowledge perhaps than the ambassadors and soldiers of his time, but they generally do not penetrate so intensively and vividly into the mind of such a genius as Napoleon.

Similarly those historians who insist on giving us a critical evaluation of the Gospels, certainly have a less intensive knowledge of Christ’s preaching than the apostles had who heard Him. Thus St. John the Evangelist had a better knowledge of Christ’s teaching than a theologian would have who would know all the condemned propositions contained in Denzinger’s Enchiridion.

Therefore, a fortiori, there was in Christ intensive plenitude of habitual grace and hence of the virtues and gifts.

State of the question. The reason for inserting this article is that Sacred Scripture attributes at least a certain fullness of grace to some others. Thus the angel says to the Blessed Virgin Mary: “Hail, full of grace.” The Scripture also says: “Stephen, full of grace and fortitude.” In fact, St. Paul writing to the Ephesians, thus expresses his desire to them: “That you may be filled unto all the fullness of God.” Moreover, for all the blessed in heaven, beatitude is the fullness of all good, which presupposes a certain fullness of grace in this life. What is therefore the fullness of grace that is proper to Christ?

First conclusion. Absolute fullness of grace, but not relative fullness, belongs to Christ alone.

Scriptural proof. The Evangelist says: “We saw His glory, the glory as it were of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” But to be the only-begotten of the Father, belongs to Christ alone. Therefore, too, does fullness of grace.

Theological proof. Absolute fullness of grace is attained when there is as much grace as can be had, at least according to God’s ordinary power. But Christ alone had grace in the highest possible degree of excellence and intensity that can be had, at least according to God’s ordinary power. Therefore Christ alone had absolute fullness of grace, both in its intensity and extent, as was stated in the preceding article.

Second conclusion. Relative fullness of grace does not belong to Christ alone, but is communicated to others through Him.

There is, indeed, relative fullness of grace when it is of such a nature and extent as demanded by the condition and office of the person to whom it is attributed.

But several saints, especially the Blessed Virgin Mary, had grace that was perfectly proportioned to the state and duty assigned to them. Thus the Blessed Virgin is declared to be “full of grace.” Therefore relative fullness of grace does not belong to Christ alone.

Corollary. Christ’s habitual grace, from the very moment of His conception, excelled in both intensity and extent all grace, even the ultimate grace of angels and men combined. The reason is that the grace in Christ is in proportion to the hypostatic union, and is in Him as the source from which it flows even to the angels; for, as will be stated farther on, Christ is the head of the angels at least as regards accidental grace and glory, inasmuch as the angels are His ministers in the kingdom of God. Jesus said,

“The Son of man shall send His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all scandals, and all them that work iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire.” He likewise said: “He shall send His angels and shall gather together His elect.”

From these texts it is evident that Christ has a higher degree of grace than all angels and men combined, including the blessed, just as in a way the sun is brighter in its intensity than any lesser light whatever, and iron is of more value than a huge pile of common stones. Moreover, it is also said of the Blessed Virgin Mary that her first fullness of grace excelled in intensity the final degree of grace, though not the glory of angels and men combined, and so it is said: “The holy Mother of God has been raised above the choirs of angels to the heavenly kingdom.”

It even appears to be true that the grace received by the founders of religious orders excels, as regards the founding of the order, the grace of their combined associates, in this sense, that these associates, unless their founder had been especially inspired by God, would not have started this order, whereas, contrary to this, the founder, deputed by God for this work, could have done it with other companions. Thus the grace, either of St. Benedict or of St. Dominic or of St. Francis, seems to excel the grace of his companions. Likewise, the degree of grace in St. Thomas is greater than that of all his commentators combined. This is more readily understood in that grace is a quality and hence its perfection is qualitative but not quantitative. Consequently, grace that is equivalent for ten talents is of a higher degree than ten graces each of which is equivalent to one talent. Thus a saint, such as the saintly parish priest of Ars, has a greater degree of grace and accomplishes more than many of the faithful and even priests whose charity is of a less degree.

Thus St. Thomas shows that charity—and he says that the same applies to habitual grace—is not increased in intensity by the addition of charity to charity; for this would be a multiplication of charity, but not an increase of it. It is increased, however, by becoming more firmly rooted in the recipient or, not using metaphysical language, by a greater actuation or determination of, and inherence in the recipient; for it is the nature of an accident to inhere.

All these statements are but one and the same way of expressing the intensification of qualities. A new degree of charity, and a more perfect

actuation of this charity and of its inherence in the recipient, mean the same thing.

If, then, a higher degree of grace is taken in a qualitative sense and not in its quantitative sense, it is easy to see that Christ's habitual grace excels in intensity even every ultimate grace of men and angels combined. From the moment of His conception it excelled their glory.

St. Thomas teaches that this fullness of grace is of three kinds. He says: "There is sufficient fullness by which anyone has sufficient grace to perform meritorious and excellent acts, as St. Stephen did. There is likewise redundant fullness by which the Blessed Virgin excelled all the saints on account of the eminence and abundance of her merits. There is also efficient and affluent fullness, which applies to Christ alone as man, as to the quasi-author of grace. Thus there was an outpouring of grace on us by the Blessed Virgin, yet she was by no means the author of grace.... Christ's fullness of grace is the cause of all the graces in all intellectual creatures."

St. Thomas says in this text, "of all graces" in general; he does not, however, determine the kind, and he does not say "even of essential grace and glory" in the angels, which elsewhere he denies.

Objection. There would be great disproportion in the natural body if the head were larger than the rest of the body. Therefore, for a similar reason, there would be disproportion in the mystical body if the grace of Christ as its head were in intensity to exceed or equal all the grace of those that constitute His mystical body.

Reply. Gonet answers this objection by conceding the antecedent and denying the consequence, because, as he points out, a distinction must be made between quality and quantity, and there is by no means parity of argument between the mystical body and the natural body. There is indeed similarity of comparison between the two bodies as regards the influx of the head in the members and its pre-eminence over them. But in the natural body the substantial form demands a determinate quantity, both in the head and in the members, that the body may be able to perform its vital operations: and so it is necessary that our head be smaller than our body. Moreover, since habitual grace is the form that vivifies the mystical body of the Church, it does not demand a determinate intensity, but can be increased indefinitely. Hence in the head of the mystical body there can be a greater intensification of grace than in all other persons, and this even pertains to the dignity of the head. Finally, there is in no way any vital dependence of

the mystical body on the members, whereas, on the contrary, the head of the physical body depends on the heart, lungs, and other parts.

ELEVENTH ARTICLE: WHETHER THE GRACE OF CHRIST IS INFINITE

State of the question. This article is evidently not strictly concerned with the increate grace of union, for St. Thomas said: “The grace of union is the personal being that is given gratis from above to the human nature in the person of the Word.” This increate grace of union is infinite inasmuch as it is identical with the very Word of God that terminates the human nature. But it is strictly a question here of habitual grace which is “an effect following the union.”

Theologians are not all agreed on this point. Major asserts that Christ’s grace is absolutely infinite in intensity. Maldonatus and Hurtado afterward said the same. St. Bonaventure, Durandus, Scotus, Ricardus, and the Thomists Cajetan and Nazarius are of the same opinion, since they taught that Christ’s grace could not be increased by God’s absolute power. But the opposite opinion seems far more probable and more in conformity with the teaching of St. Thomas, and it is commonly held by theologians, not only of the Thomist school of thought, but also of other schools.

St. Thomas splendidly presents the difficulty of the question at the beginning of this article, where he remarks that Christ’s grace appears to be infinite, because the Gospel declares it to be measureless or immense, saying: “God doth not give His Spirit by measure”; whereas, contrary to this, St. Paul says of others: “To every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the giving of Christ.” Moreover, Christ’s grace extends to the whole human race. Finally, if Christ’s grace were finite, then some other person’s grace might increase so much as to equal Christ’s grace. These objections consider in habitual grace, not only the being of grace, but also the nature of grace.

Nevertheless it is evidently true to say that Christ’s habitual grace, inasmuch as it is distinct from His grace of union, is something created. But everything created is finite, as stated in the counter-argument of this article. Therefore Christ’s habitual grace must be finite.

How is this question to be solved? The article must be read.

First conclusion. The grace of union is infinite, because it is the very person of the Word, who terminates Christ’s human nature, as stated above.

Second conclusion. Christ's habitual grace, inasmuch as it is a being, or considered as an entity, is not physically infinite, because it is in Christ's soul, as an accident is in its subject. But Christ's soul is a certain creature having finite capacity. It will be made clear in the following article that grace can always be increased, but considered as a being, since it is something created, it can never be physically and actually infinite.

Third conclusion. Christ's habitual grace, not considered as a being, but according to what strictly pertains to the notion of grace, can be termed infinite. Almost all Thomists understand this conclusion in this sense, namely, that Christ's grace is in its notion of grace morally infinite, though not physically so. For St. Thomas says: "As stated above (q. 7, a. 12) there cannot be a greater grace than the grace of Christ with respect to the union with the Word; and the same is to be said of the perfection of the divine vision; although, absolutely speaking, there could be a higher and-more sublime degree by the infinity of the divine power." He says the same in the reply to the second objection of the next article of this question. Neither does St. Thomas say, concerning this third conclusion of ours: "We must say that Christ's grace, considered as grace, is infinite," but he says "it can be termed infinite," which means, if interpreted in some good sense.

Hence this third conclusion thus understood of grace that is morally infinite viewed in its specific nature of grace, is easily proved.

Two proofs are given in the body of this article, inasmuch as this grace is considered both intensively and extensively.

Intensive proof. Christ's habitual grace is intensively infinite because it has whatever can pertain to the nature of grace, and it is not bestowed "in a fixed measure," just as we may say that the light of the sun is infinite, not indeed in being, but in the nature of light, inasmuch as it has whatever can pertain to the nature of light.

This means that Christ's habitual grace is according to its intensity in the highest degree of its excellence capable of being bestowed on others, at least according to God's ordination and His ordinary power.

We shall see that it can be increased by God's absolute power. Moreover, it must be noticed that the three objections placed at the beginning of the present article conclude that Christ's grace, considered in its specific nature, is also infinite, and that this is denied in the counter-argument.

Something of very great importance must be added here which is implied in the present article, namely, that this habitual grace of Christ, by reason of

its union with the Word, is the principle by which Christ performs meritorious and satisfactory acts that are intrinsically and absolutely infinite in value. This infinity, although it comes from the divine person as the principle that operates, nevertheless redounds in moral value and worth on the habitual grace that is the principle by which Christ performs meritorious acts that are strictly and intrinsically infinite in value. Farther on we discuss the commonly accepted thesis of Thomists and almost all theologians, with the exception of Scotists, namely, that Christ's operations were not only extrinsically accepted by God, but they were also intrinsically "absolutely infinite in value both for meriting and for satisfying."

All these things considered, it is no wonder that St. Thomas says in this article, concerning Christ's habitual grace taken in its intensity, that it can be termed infinite, viewed in its specific nature of grace, though he afterward adds that it can be increased by God's absolute power.

Extensive proof. Christ's habitual grace is at least morally infinite because, as St. Thomas says in this article, it is bestowed on Christ's soul, as on a universal principle for bestowing grace on human nature. St. Paul says: "He hath graced us in His beloved Son." This means that Christ's habitual grace extends to all effects that pertain to the nature of grace, even to those that are syncategorematically infinite. Thus we shall see that this habitual grace is called the grace of headship, inasmuch as by it there flows from Christ upon the members of the Church (through the influx of His merits) grace and glory; but glory is without end, since it is eternal life.

But if Christ's grace does not extend so far as to merit the essential grace of Adam in the state of innocence and of the angels, this is not because it did not have the power, but because these were not included in the divine ordering. Hence Christ's grace viewed in its specific nature of grace is morally infinite, both in intensity and extent.

The answer of St. Thomas, as understood in the sense stated above, receives its confirmation in the solution of the objections.

First objection. The Gospel declares: "God doth not give the Spirit by measure[to the Son]." Therefore Christ's grace is infinite.

St. Thomas replies that the words of the Baptist as recorded by St. John can refer: (1) either to the eternal and infinite gift, namely, to the divine nature which the Father from all eternity communicated to the Son; (2) or to the grace of union that is infinite inasmuch as the Word terminates the human nature; (3) or to habitual grace inasmuch as it extends to all that

pertains to grace, namely, to the word of wisdom or to the word of knowledge, or to other such gifts.

Hence St. Thomas does not concede the conclusion of the objection, that Christ's habitual grace is absolutely and physically infinite, so that it cannot be greater by God's absolute power.

Reply to second objection. "The grace of Christ has an infinite effect," which means that it includes the salvation of the whole human race "both because of the aforesaid infinity of grace," which for this reason is called the grace of headship, and because of the unity of the divine person, to whom Christ's soul is united. Thus, as we said, Christ's habitual grace, because of its union with the Word, is the principle by which His meritorious and satisfactory acts for us were intrinsically of absolutely infinite validity, and He could have merited eternal life for an ever greater and vast number of human beings, even though, for example, the generations of human beings were to continue even after the end of the world.

By this reply St. Thomas shows that he does not concede the conclusion of this second objection, which is that Christ's habitual grace viewed in this sense is absolutely and physically infinite, so that it cannot by God's absolute power be increased.

Third objection. It states that, "if Christ's grace were finite, then the grace of any other man could increase to such an extent as to reach to an equality with Christ's grace." The Beghards were condemned for saying: "If one could always advance in perfection, then someone more perfect than Christ could be found."

Reply. St. Thomas does not say that Christ's habitual grace is physically and absolutely infinite viewed in its specific nature of grace, but he says: "The grace of any man is compared to the grace of Christ as a particular to a universal power." By way of illustration, the light of the moon, no matter how much it may increase in intensity, cannot equal in intensity the light of the sun from which it receives its light. For the moon does not have its own light, but transmits the light it has received from the sun. St. Thomas, in accordance with the physics of ancient times, made use of another example because he thought the stars were incorruptible, and the light and heat of the sun were of a kind different from the heat of terrestrial fire. Spectral analysis, however, has established the fact that the stars are not

incorruptible, but that the same chemical combinations take place in these as on this earth.

Therefore Christ's habitual grace is a finite being, and viewed in its specific nature of grace, if it is not physically infinite, is at least morally infinite, both in its intensity and in its extent, inasmuch as it concurs with the grace of union to produce merit that is intrinsically of infinite validity.

Cajetan, in his commentary on this article, adverting to the fact of his recent elevation to the cardinalate, considers this all the more a reason why the mysteries of Christ should be examined and made known to all. His purpose is to show that Christ's habitual grace is in Him in all the perfection that grace as such can have. In other words, this grace is in Christ "as in the whole that is equivalent to it as such," just as heat is not in the air but in the fire; just as a line could be infinite in length, viewed as a line, although finite as a being, just as whiteness, which is finite indeed, as a being, since it is an accident, is intensively infinite in its nature of whiteness, since there could not be a more perfect whiteness.

Nevertheless Cajetan maintains that Christ's habitual grace, as well as that of others, is of the same most particular species, as regards its essence; the difference is only as regards the mode of its being, just as heat differs in its mode of being as found in terrestrial fire and in the air.

Let us see in what Cajetan agrees and disagrees with other Thomists.

Cajetan maintains, indeed, with other Thomists, that charity can always be increased in this life, and that charity in itself has no ultimately possible degree, because it is a participation of infinite charity and so it differs from heat and from whiteness. But Cajetan is not in agreement with other Thomists when he says that charity in itself does not exclude the highest possible degree of this virtue, especially so if it is ordered to the greatest possible union, namely, the hypostatic union, for then it has, as proportionate to this union, the highest possible degree of this virtue, as heat in fire, and whiteness in snow.

Other Thomists justly reply to him by saying that there is a greater difference between habitual grace or charity and natural qualities, such as heat in fire and whiteness in snow.

First difference. These natural qualities have their own intrinsic and finite specification, and are not defined with reference to something else; whereas habitual grace is defined as a formal and physical participation in the divine nature, the possibility of this participation being infinite. Thus of itself there

is no limit to it, but it even excludes this, which means that it seeks intrinsically to have syncategorematically no limitation, which means that the highest possible degree of habitual grace, or of charity or of the light of glory, is intrinsically repugnant, just as the absolutely swiftest motion is a contradiction in terms, for it is always possible to conceive a swifter motion, accomplished in a shorter time, that is however distinct from the indivisible instant of time.

Second difference. Natural qualities, such as heat in fire—a better illustration is whiteness in snow—are natural properties of some natural and finite substance; whereas habitual grace is not a natural property of the created intellectual substance, not even of Christ's soul as united with the Word, because it flows in a certain measure not necessarily, but freely from the Word, a point that will be more clearly explained in the following article.

Third difference. Natural qualities, such as heat and whiteness, are received in the subject according to its passive and finite natural power, whereas habitual grace is received in the subject not according to its natural power, but its obediential power. And St. Thomas says: "The obediential power, inasmuch as it can receive something from God, is not limited in this respect because, whatever God does in the creature, there still remains in it the power to accept something from God."

Finally, grace is something freely given that is dependent in its measure on the divine good pleasure.

Cajetan seeks to defend his opinion and says: "It is possible for one to have a higher degree of the vision of God (than the degree granted to the soul of Christ) from a more sublime intellect equally illumined," in other words, if to an equal degree of the light of glory an angel were assumed by the Word of God into unity of person.

Other Thomists reply that then the degree of the beatific vision would not be formally more sublime but only materially; in fact, not even materially, because this angel would not have a clearer vision of the divine essence, which is an essentially supernatural object that absolutely transcends the power of whatsoever created intellect, as Alvarez remarks.

Cajetan likewise sets forth his same view in his treatise on charity. He maintains especially in his great commentary, that charity in this life can always be increased and in itself this virtue is not found in the highest possible degree, though it does not exclude this degree, as it excludes

mortal sin. In fact, for it to be proportionate to this union, then charity must be in the highest possible degree.

Cajetan, seeking to magnify Christ's habitual grace, minimizes the sublimity of absolutely assumed grace, as we shall see in the explanation of the following article.

So far, Cajetan asserts but he does not prove that Christ's habitual grace is not in the highest possible degree. We shall see in the explanation of the following article what he adds in confirmation of his special opinion.

TWELFTH ARTICLE: WHETHER THE GRACE OF CHRIST COULD INCREASE

State of the question. St. Thomas clearly sets forth the difficulty of this problem, for he says:

1) To every finite thing addition can be made. But Christ's habitual grace, as we said, considered as a being, is finite. Therefore it can be increased.

2) Also considered as grace, it seems that it can be increased, for increase of grace is effected by divine power; and since this power is absolutely infinite, there are no limits to it.

3) The Evangelist says that "Jesus advanced in wisdom and age. and grace with God and men."

Conclusion. Christ's habitual grace could not be increased after the first moment of His conception, either on the part of the grace itself, or on the part of the recipient of this grace. Thus Christ differs from all others, even from the Blessed Virgin and the angels, who were wayfarers and not comprehensors.

Let us first of all examine the proofs of this article; afterward we shall consider Cajetan's interpretation; finally we shall discuss the interpretation of other Thomists.

Scriptural proof. The Evangelist says: "We saw His glory, the glory as it were of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." "But nothing can be or can be thought greater than that anyone should be the begotten of the Father. Therefore no greater grace can be or can be thought than that of which Christ was full." Thus we said in the preceding article that Christ's grace is at least morally infinite inasmuch as it is the principle by means of which He performed meritorious and satisfactory acts that are of absolutely infinite value. Thus Christ's habitual grace absolutely excels the grace of all men and angels combined.

Moreover, the Second Council of Constantinople defined: “If anyone defends the assertion that Christ... as He advanced in the performance of good works became better... let him be declared anathema.” This means that Christ did not either become more perfect, or was subjected to passions, or offered sacrifice for Himself. In this Christ differs from all the just, even from the angels in heaven, who became more perfect in the second instant of their creation, since they were wayfarers and merited, and after this they were only comprehensors. But if St. Luke says that “Jesus advanced in wisdom and age, and grace with God and men,” St. Thomas replies in this article, along with the whole of ecclesiastical tradition: “Christ did not increase inasmuch as the very habits of wisdom and grace were increased in Him..., but as regards the effects, ... since in the course of time He did more perfect works, to prove Himself true man, both in the things of God and in the things of man.” The Greek and Latin Fathers generally take this view when they speak of the fullness of Christ’s grace.

Theological proof. There are two subdivisions to this proof.

a) On the part of the recipient of this grace, Christ’s grace could not be increased from the beginning, because as man He was from the first moment of His conception truly and completely comprehensor, as will be made clear farther on. But in comprehensors, or in the blessed, there can be no increase of grace, subjectively speaking, for they have already reached their final end to which they were eternally predestined. Therefore, subjectively speaking, there can be no increase in Christ’s grace.

b) On the part of grace. Christ’s grace from the beginning could not be increased, because Christ as man was from the beginning personally united with the Word, and He already received, as St. Thomas says in this article, “the highest measure of grace.”

This consequence is proved by one syllogism on which Cajetan very much insists.

It is in reference to the end that a measure is prefixed to each form; for example, in accordance with the physics of the ancients, there is no greater gravity than that of the earth because there is no lower place than that of the earth. Or, as we now can say, in our solar world there is no greater light and heat than the light and heat of the sun, which is the center of attraction of this solar world.

But the end of grace is the union of the rational creature with God, and there cannot be a greater union than the hypostatic union of Christ’s human

nature with the Word.

Therefore, from the moment of His conception, Christ's grace attained its highest degree of grace, and there was no possibility of its future increase; whereas, on the contrary, the first fullness of grace in the Blessed Virgin always received an increase of this grace until it acquired its consummate fullness when she entered heaven.

St. Thomas determines more clearly the force of this conclusion in his replies to the objections placed at the beginning of this article.

Reply to first objection. To the proposed difficulty that "to every finite thing addition can be made," St. Thomas replies by making the following distinction: that addition can be made to every finite mathematical quantity, namely, to every line, to every number, I concede; that addition can be made to every natural quantity I deny, for example, the quantity or height of a dog or a horse, or an elephant, or a man cannot always be increased. St. Thomas concludes at the end of his reply by saying: "Hence it is not necessary that addition should be capable of being made to Christ's grace," although it is finite in its essence, which means that it is finite as having reached "the highest measure of grace" as stated toward the end of the argumentative part of this article.

Second objection. "It is by divine power that grace is increased and, since this power is infinite, it is confined by no limits."

Reply. St. Thomas answers by saying: "Although the divine power can make something greater and better than the habitual grace of Christ, yet it could not make it to be ordained to anything greater than the personal union with the only-begotten Son of the Father; and the measure of grace corresponds sufficiently (not adequately) to this union, in accordance with the definition of divine wisdom." This text is of great importance. Similarly farther on it is stated that, "absolutely speaking, there could be a higher and more sublime degree[of the beatific vision] by the infinity of the divine power."

Concerning the interpretation of this second reply and of what is said in the body of this article, Cajetan and Nazarius differ from the rest of the Thomists, both ancient and modern. Let us consider each interpretation.

Cajetan's interpretation.

Cajetan gives the following interpretation to this article. He himself says: "What is substantially for the end must be commensurate with the end (as the shape of the saw for the cutting of wood), ... wherefore, since the

tendency of a heavy object is to fall down, ... the lowest point to which an object can fall must be governed and measured only by the maximum influence exerted on it by the law of gravitation. Thus the greatest union of the rational creature with God must be measured only by the greatest grace." Farther on Cajetan remarks: "Therefore Christ's grace is finite and at the same time it excludes addition."

In the reply to the second objection, when St. Thomas says that "God can make something greater and better than the habitual grace of Christ," Cajetan introduces the following distinction: that God can make something greater and better inasmuch as it is a being, this I concede; inasmuch as it is ordained to its proper end, which is the hypostatic union, this I deny.

Criticism. Cajetan does not sufficiently explain the words of St. Thomas in his reply to the second objection, when he says: "To this[hypostatic] union such measure of grace is correspondingly sufficient, according to the definition of divine wisdom" or the divine ordination. He also does not explain the similar and clearer text of St. Thomas concerning the higher degree of the light of glory that is possible by God's absolute power.

It is of no avail to say that God can produce something better than Christ's grace because this is an accident, and God can produce substance or even give to an angel the same degree of the light of glory.

In these considerations Cajetan, who almost always views problems in their formal aspect, seems to understand the reply to the second objection of this article in a material sense, as well as the other reply similar to this.

He seems to stress too much the quasi-material aspect in the subject of grace and the fact that grace is an accident, and not a substance.

Now indeed, as St. Thomas says: "The good of grace in one is greater than the good of nature in the whole universe" that is, than all created and creatable creatures. Hence, when St. Thomas says, "The divine power can make something greater and better than the habitual grace of Christ," his purpose is not to speak of substance God can produce. Nor does it seem true, as stated above, that an angel, who would have the same degree of the light of glory as the soul of Christ, would have a clearer vision of the divine essence, because the divine essence is an essentially supernatural object, which does not seem to be seen more clearly because of the keener penetration of a material and created intellect.

Common interpretation of Thomists.

Such are Capreolus, Bannez, John of St. Thomas, Salmanticenses, Gonet, Billuart, and others.

To understand this interpretation, we must bear in mind the division commonly admitted by the Thomists about the divine power. It may be expressed by the following schema.

DIVINE POWER
absolute
ordained
extraordinary
ordinary
according to hypostatic order
ascending to order of grace
according to natural order
spiritual
corporal

The merely absolute divine power is the divine power considered apart from the ordination of divine wisdom, and so considered it refers to all things not intrinsically repugnant even though they may be extrinsically repugnant on the part of the end.

Thus God, by His merely absolute power, could annihilate all the blessed in heaven, even the Blessed Virgin and Christ's human nature, since He freely preserves these in being. This annihilation is not intrinsically repugnant but extrinsically repugnant on the part of the end, for on the part of the end there can be no purpose in this annihilation. Hence this annihilation is repugnant to God's power as regulated by divine wisdom.

The ordained divine power is that which refers to the ordaining of divine wisdom, and it concerns everything that is neither intrinsically repugnant, nor extrinsically repugnant on the part of the end.

It is divided into ordinary and extraordinary. The ordinary ordained divine power is that which operates in accordance with the laws as established by God, either in the natural order, or in the supernatural order, or even in the order of the hypostatic union.

It is called extraordinary, when it is called into action and reaches beyond the above-mentioned laws either of the natural order (as when miracles of the physical order are performed) or of the supernatural order (such as a sudden and miraculous conversion as in the case of the conversion of St. Paul) or of those that pertain to the hypostatic union. Thus the question is

put, whether Christ's habitual grace could have been greater by God's absolute power, and also by His ordained power and His extraordinary power, so that the Incarnation could have taken place without Christ suffering. There seems to be no doubt that the fullness of even the grace acquired by the Blessed Virgin Mary at the time of her death could have been intensively greater not only by God's absolute power but even by His ordained power and also His extraordinary power.

These principles established, Thomists almost unanimously hold that by God's absolute power Christ's habitual grace could have been increased in intensity, although He actually had the highest possible degree of such grace by God's ordained and ordinary power. So say Capreolus, Bannez, Medina, John of St. Thomas, Alvarez, Suarez, Vasquez, and others, against the Scotists and Cajetan.

John of St. Thomas says that this opinion is more probable and undoubtedly more according to the mind of St. Thomas. This seems to be proved when he says: "As stated above, there cannot be a greater grace than the grace of Christ with respect to the union with the Word; and the same is to be said of the perfection of the divine vision; although, absolutely speaking, there could be a higher and more sublime degree by the infinity of the divine power." So says St. Thomas in this passage, and he is plainly speaking of God's absolute power and he cites and explains what he had said previously about Christ's grace.

To be sure, Cajetan says that Christ's beatific vision could increase, not because of a greater light of glory but because of a greater natural power, for example, if the Word were to assume an angelic nature.

Reply. The beatific vision is regulated and measured only according to the elevating power which is the light of glory; for the vision itself is an essentially supernatural act, specified by an essentially supernatural object, which infinitely transcends the natural vigor of any created or creatable intellect whatever.

Doubt. Is it possible to conceive a grace and light of glory of a higher species, and can Christ's grace be of a higher species than ours?

Reply. The answer is, No, for the following reasons. (1) Because grace, as in the just and in Christ is already a formal and physical participation in the Deity, having in each case the same definition, and there cannot be anything capable of participation that is higher than the divine nature or the

Deity as it is in Itself, or in other words, God's intimate life; this view is against a certain thesis of Father Billot.

2) Because otherwise Christ would not contain in Himself all the effects of grace if He did not have a certain species of grace. Therefore the only possible conception of a higher beatific vision is that resulting from a greater penetration of the divine essence and from an increase in the intensity of habitual grace and of the light of glory in the same species.

This same interpretation is also proved from the previous reply of St. Thomas to his query about the possibility of charity being increased infinitely. He says: "In no way, either on the part of the form or of the agent or of the subject is a limit to be set to the increase of charity in this life. For there is no limit to the increase of charity in what properly belongs to it in its species, for it is a certain participation of infinite charity, which is the Holy Spirit. Similarly also the causal agent of charity is infinite in power, for it is God. Similarly, too, on the part of the subject, there can be no pre-assigned terminus set to this increase since the greater the increase, the greater the aptitude for further increase." because as St. Thomas also says here, "by it[charity] the heart expands." As we already remarked, St. Thomas says: "The obediential power, inasmuch as it can receive something from God, is not limited in this respect, because whatever God does in the creature, there still remains in it the power to receive something from God"; for the obediential power in the creature has immediate reference not to some object that must be known or loved, or to some act that must be elicited, but it has reference to the absolutely free agent, who is infinite in power, whom it obeys and from whom it can always receive something.

Hence we must conclude, as St. Thomas says in this article: "By the purpose of divine wisdom, the measure of grace is sufficient for this[hypostatic] union."

John of St. Thomas remarks: "Clearly St. Thomas signifies that the end in view of that grace is union with the Word, not in the absolute sense, but as it serves the purpose of divine Wisdom, who assigned such measure of grace to Christ. Hence we conclude that by another purpose of divine Wisdom, there is nothing repugnant in a different measure and increase of grace being given to Christ."

Solution of objections.

Objection. St. Thomas says in his counter-argument to this twelfth article: "Therefore no greater grace can be or can be thought than that of

which Christ was full."

Reply. That St. Thomas says this about Christ's grace with reference to its extrinsic end, which is the hypostatic union, of which he speaks in the preceding article of this question, and as it serves the purpose of divine Wisdom, with which his reply to the second objection of this article is concerned, this I concede; that he says this about Christ's grace taken in the absolute sense of the term and independently of the purpose of divine Wisdom, this I deny.

Thus Christ's grace on account of the union of His human nature with the person of the Word, was the greatest in this order in which it is produced; that is, it is connaturally the greatest, for the purpose or ordination of divine Wisdom that pre-assigned the connatural limits to all forms, according to the connatural order in which these were established by this Wisdom. As God, who gave to St. Peter, to St. John, and to St. Paul, also to St. Augustine, and to St. Thomas a fitting degree of wisdom and charity, could have given them a higher degree, so He gave Christ a higher degree of grace, but on absolute consideration He could have given Christ a higher degree, because the highest possible degree cannot be conceived. Thus the final argument fittingly terminates the best sermon, although, absolutely speaking, there could still be another exhortation.

Another objection. St. Thomas said in the preceding article: "Christ's grace has whatsoever can pertain to the nature of grace."

Reply. This must be understood from the immediate context and from other texts of St. Thomas in this same question, because we cannot suppose that He contradicted himself. In other words, he meant that Christ's grace has whatever pertains to the nature of grace, considered in its moral aspect and with reference to its union with the Word.

Finally, God's power would be exhausted if He could produce nothing more perfect by His absolute power, and even by His extraordinary ordained power.

Final objection. If a higher degree of grace were possible, then Christ would have merited this grace, for His merits were of infinite value.

Reply. That Christ would have merited a higher degree of grace if He had not already been a comprehensor and beyond the condition of wayfarer, let this pass without comment; but although the comprehensor, by means of grace performs many good works, this neither increases grace nor merits an increase of it in the comprehensor, as is evident in the blessed, who in this

respect are like to God, inasmuch as God’s works can in no way increase His perfection. God did not become better by the fact that He created the universe or sent His Son into the world for our salvation.

If Christ merited the glorification of His body, the reason is that the temporary lack of this glorification of the body was conducive to the end of redemption; whereas, on the contrary, He had from the beginning grace in the highest degree according to His connatural state both as comprehensor and as wayfarer, and thus He absolutely transcended all the just, both angels and men. The Second Council of Constantinople declared that Christ was not made better by advancing in the performance of good works. On the contrary, the Blessed Virgin, by her continuous and uninterrupted performance of meritorious acts until death, was made better.

Corollary. Hence Christ adored God’s supreme good pleasure by which He simultaneously freely willed the Incarnation and determined the degree of habitual grace befitting the Word incarnate. In this also Christ could say: “I confess to Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth... for so hath it seemed good in Thy sight.” God’s most free decrees must be adored and they are infinitely good, since they are decrees that are the result of infinite wisdom and of infinite love. From this the sublimity of the Deity and of grace taken in the absolute sense, which by God’s absolute power can always be increased, is more clearly seen since it is a participation of the divine nature, which is always capable of participation in a more sublime way.

THIRTEENTH ARTICLE: WHETHER THE HABITUAL GRACE OF CHRIST FOLLOWED AFTER THE UNION

Reply. The grace of union precedes the habitual grace of Christ, not in order of time but by nature and in thought, and this for three reasons.

1) Because of the principles of both graces. For the mission of the Son by the Incarnation precedes by nature the mission of the Holy Spirit by habitual grace and charity, just as in the order of nature the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son.

2) Because of the relation of grace to its cause. For Christ’s habitual grace is caused by God’s presence in Him through His personal union with the Word just as the brightness of the sun comes from the sun.

3) Because of the end of grace. For the purpose of grace is good action, and actions belong to the suppositum and presuppose the suppositum constituted in being. Therefore Christ's habitual grace, since the purpose of it is good action, presupposes the union of the human nature with the Word.

Reply to second objection. "Habitual grace is not understood to have preceded the union but to have followed it, as a natural property"; however, as already stated, the degree of this habitual grace does not flow of necessity from the Word, but "the measure of grace is sufficient to this union by the purpose of divine Wisdom."

This terminates the question of Christ's grace inasmuch as He is a certain individual man. This question presents to us a sublime illustration of the definition of grace, inasmuch as now we see more clearly that there cannot be a nobler species of habitual grace than ours, or a more exalted species of the beatific vision than that which the blessed possess.

CHAPTER X: QUESTION 8: CHRIST'S GRACE AS HEAD OF THE CHURCH

There are two parts to this question.

First part. It treats of grace which befits Christ as head of the Church (a. 1-6).

The first article considers the meaning of the expression, head of the Church. Then there is a discussion of the grace of headship as it extends to men and angels (a. 2-4).

Finally whether to be head of the Church is proper to Christ.

Second part. It concerns the devil and Antichrist. Is the devil the head of all the wicked? (a. 7.) Can Antichrist be called the head of all the wicked? (a. 8.)

It must first of all be noted that this whole doctrine has its foundation in the epistles of St. Paul, in which Christ is often spoken of as the head of the Church. Christ indeed had already said, as reported by the Evangelist: "I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman. Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He will take away; and everyone that beareth fruit He will purge it that it may bring forth more fruit.... I am the vine, you the branches; He that abideth in Me, and I in Him, the same beareth much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone abide not in Me, he shall be cast forth as a branch, and shall wither, and they shall gather him up and cast him into the fire, and he burneth."

This same doctrine is developed under another analogy, namely, of the head and mystical body of Christ, in whom the faithful must gradually be incorporated, by participating in the hidden life of Christ, His public life, His sorrowful life, and finally His glorious life. As St. Paul often says in the following text and in others: "He[God]... hath made Him[Christ] head over all the Church, which is His body, and the fullness of Him who is filled all in all."

State of the question. We are concerned with the Church, though the title of the article does not as yet determine whether we are concerned only with the Church militant, or also with the Church triumphant, for this will be determined farther on. We are also concerned with Christ as man.

The difficulties are these: (1) The head imparts sense and motion to the members, and it seems, as St. Augustine says, that Christ as man does not give the Holy Spirit, and hence He does not impart spiritual sense and motion to those men who are the faithful of His Church. (2) Furthermore, the head of man receives an inflow of blood from the heart, for just as it could not live without receiving this influx of blood from the heart, and its re-oxygenation in the lungs, so the head of man is dependent on the heart, the lungs, and also on other organs; whereas, on the contrary, Christ does not depend either formally or efficiently, or finally on the faithful, but they depend on Him. Thus this article is most appropriate for the discernment of the dissimilarities and similarities in this analogy.

Reply. Christ as man is head of the Church. The expression “as man” must not be understood absolutely in its reduplicative sense, as if it meant solely by reason of Christ’s human nature, but it must be taken in its special sense, namely, as man subsisting by the divine personality, which will be more clearly explained farther on.

Scriptural proof. The following text is especially cogent: “God... raising Him up from the dead, and setting Him on His right hand in the heavenly places... hath made Him head over all the Church.” It is manifest, however, that St. Paul is here speaking of Christ as man, for he says that He was raised from the dead.

St. Paul has developed this doctrine at considerable length in his epistles, from which he proceeds to establish four conclusions.

1) Christ is the head of the regenerated human race raised to the supernatural and fallen from it. St. Paul says: “For if by the offense of one many died, much more the grace of God, and the gift, by the grace of one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.... For if by the offense of one many died, much more the grace of God, and the gift, by the grace of one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.... For if by one man’s offense death reigned through one, much more they who receive abundance of grace, and of the gift and of justice, shall reign in life through one, Jesus

Christ. Therefore, as by the offense of one, unto all men to condemnation, so also by the justice of one unto all men to justification of life."

For God permits evil only for a greater good, and He permitted Adam's sin only for the greater good of the redemptive Incarnation, as we showed above, when discussing the motive of the Incarnation.

St. Paul likewise says: "For as in one body we have many members, but all the members have not the same office, so we being many, are one body in Christ, and everyone members one of another."

2) St. Paul teaches that the influx of Christ as head over all men, even the angels as His ministers, presupposes the great pre-eminence of Christ. Most striking is the following text: "You are filled in Him[Christ], who is the head of all principality and power."

3) St. Paul says that this influx of Christ as head makes itself felt on various persons throughout the course of the centuries. Thus he writes: "The whole body... groweth unto the increase of God."

4) St. Paul insists on the unity of this mystical body, both as regards the head, source of this influence, and as regards the end of this unity. In many texts he speaks of our common participation in the blood of Christ.

This doctrine of Christ's headship is de fide, not only as contained in Scripture and the ordinary teaching authority of the Church, but it is also the teaching of the Council of Trent, which says: "For whereas Jesus Christ Himself continually infuses His virtue into the said justified, as the head into the members and the vine into the branches, and this virtue always precedes and accompanies and follows their good works, which without it could not in any wise be pleasing and meritorious before God...." The Council likewise says: "If anyone denies that Christ whole and entire, the fountain and author of all graces, is received under the one species of bread, because, as some falsely assert, He is not received, according to the institution of Christ Himself, under both species; let him be anathema."

In the body of the article, St. Thomas gives three reasons why Christ is fittingly called the head of the Church, according to a metaphorical analogy in which there is similarity of proportionality and also dissimilarity.

1) Argument from order. The head is the first part of man, that is, the superior part. But Christ as man, on account of His nearness to God, by grace is higher than all, for St. Paul says: "For whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren."

2) Argument from perfection. In the head flourish all the senses, both interior and exterior. But Christ has the fullness of all graces, for the Evangelist says: “We saw Him full of grace and truth.”

3) Argument from power. From the head proceeds the motion and direction of the members, by reason of the sensitive and motive power that resides in the head. But Christ has the power of bestowing grace on all members of the Church, for the Evangelist says: “Of His fullness we have all received.”

Reply to first objection. Christ as God is the principal physical cause of grace, and as man He is the meritorious or moral cause of grace for us, and furthermore its physical instrumental or efficient cause, on which more must be said farther on.

Therefore this analogy of proportionality is extremely appropriate, though it is not analogy of proper proportionality, because, according to the strict meaning of head, it designates the higher part of the animal; but the metaphor is appropriate because of the above-mentioned similarities. There are also dissimilarities, as in all analogies, especially in those that are metaphorical.

Reply to second objection. “A natural head depends on the other members or organs, from which it receives nourishment; but the father of a family is subject to the civil governor, and Christ as man is subject to God, so that there is no reason why God cannot be the head of Christ.”

In a general reply to the third objection it may be observed that the natural head is dependent on other members and organs for its nutrition and life, and it is therefore a member. Contrariwise, the moral head of the Church, Christ, is in no way dependent on the members and the body for His spiritual life. Thus Christ cannot be called a member of the Church; although St. Thomas in other passages conceded that Christ can be called, though not in the strict sense of the term, a member of the Church, since He is united with the Church as His mystical body, and receives an influx from God as the principal head of the whole Church.

Third objection. Why cannot Christ be called the heart of the Church, since the metaphor would be even more fitting, because the heart influences the head and other members?

Reply to third objection. The head has a manifest pre-eminence over the other members; but the heart has a certain hidden influence. And hence the Holy Ghost is likened to the heart, since He invisibly quickens and unites

the Church; but Christ is likened to the head in His visible nature in which man is set over man.

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER CHRIST IS HEAD OF MEN AS TO THEIR BODIES OR ONLY AS TO THEIR SOULS

State of the question. The meaning of the title to this article is clear from the tenor of the third objection, in which it is doubted whether Christ, even as regards His body, is head over other men even as regards their bodies.

Reply. The answer is in the affirmative, for the whole human nature of Christ is an instrument united with the divine nature in the operation of our salvation, which was formerly accomplished in the passion of our Lord, and is now instrumentally and physically continued in the Holy Eucharist.

Christ not only bestows both habitual and actual grace on the soul, but He also influences our bodies, inasmuch as in this life He makes them to be instruments that cooperate in our sanctification by the performance of the external acts commanded by the virtues. Thus the infused virtues of temperance and fortitude are in the sensitive appetite, and, after the resurrection of the dead, Christ will be the instrumental and physical cause as regards the glorification of the bodies of the saints.

THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER CHRIST IS THE HEAD OF ALL MEN

State of the question. It is apparent from the difficulties posited at the beginning of this article, for the objections declare: (1) Infidels do not at all seem to be members of the Church, of which Christ is the head, because they are in no way related to Christ, whom they do not even know. (2) In fact, many of the faithful are in the state of mortal sin, and therefore do not seem to belong to the Church, for St. Paul says: “Christ delivered Himself up for the Church... that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing.” This difficulty as proposed here was in later times the heretical teaching of John Hus and Quesnel, as will be stated farther on. (3) It is not clear how Christ can be the head of those who lived before Him in the Old Testament, for He could not have influenced them.

Reply. Christ is the head of all men, but in different degrees.

1) This doctrine is of faith, it being evidently the teaching of the New Testament. St. Paul says: “Who[Christ] is the Savior of all men, especially of the faithful.” The Evangelist likewise says: “He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.” The Church also condemned John Hus, who maintained that it consisted only of the elect, and Quesnel, who declared that only the just belong to the Church.

2) Theological proof. It is developed in the argumentative part of the article, and may be expressed by the following syllogism.

Among the members of the mystical body, some are potentially members, and others are actually members, since they are not all living at the same time or all in the state of grace. But Christ is the head of all human beings, according as they are members of His mystical body. Therefore Christ is the head of all human beings either actually or potentially.

MEMBERS
actually
by glory
by charity in this life
by faith only (these are imperfect members only relatively united with Christ (ad 2)
potentially
destined to be
in eternity, by glory
in time, by faith and charity
those not destined to be
(this will always be so in adults because of some personal sin; for God does not deny grace to one who does one’s best)

This schema is clear enough in print, but it presupposes the great mystery of predestination. The entire article should be read.

Corollary. Those who die not in the state of grace, “completely cease to be Christ’s members” because it is no longer potentially possible for them to be united with Him.

Reply to first objection. “Those who are unbaptized, though not actually in the Church, are in the Church potentially. And this potentiality is rooted in two things: first and principally in the power of Christ, which is sufficient for the salvation of the whole human race; secondly, in free will,” for they can still be converted to God.

Therefore the difference between the mystical head and the natural head is this, that the former not only can preserve and direct those members it already has, but it can also unite others to itself, and with reference to these it is called a potential head.

Reply to second objection. The Church that has neither spot nor wrinkle is the Church triumphant in heaven. But the Church militant actually consists both of the just and the faithful in the state of mortal sin, and these are imperfect members, being only in a qualified sense united with Christ.

This needs some explanation, because of what Quesnel maintained. For those among the faithful who are in a state of mortal sin actually receive from Christ an influx, which consists in a certain permanent bond, namely, in infused faith, and by this bond they are permanently united with the other members of the Church in one belief. Perfect union with Christ, indeed, requires charity. But it is already something of great importance to preserve the gift of infused faith.

This doctrine that was denied by John Hus and Quesnel, is manifestly in agreement with what Sacred Scripture says. The Gospel compares the Church to a threshing floor in which along with the wheat there is chaff that must be burnt, or to a net cast into the sea that contains good and bad fishes; or it is compared to ten virgins, five of whom were foolish, not having provided themselves with the oil of charity. Thus the Fourth Council of the Lateran defined the Church as a “congregation of the faithful”, saying: “There is but one universal Church of the faithful outside which absolutely nobody is saved.”

But if certain Fathers of the Church said that the wicked do not belong to the Church, this must be understood as meaning that they are not perfect members of the Church; they are, nevertheless, imperfect members if they have faith.

Those among the faithful who are in the state of mortal sin are called members of the devil, or of the Babylonian city, inasmuch as they are turned away from God; but they are called members of the Church, so far as they keep the faith. So also in our bodies, a member that no longer has the sensitive life is an imperfect member. Thus the hair and nails are still parts of the body.

Corollary. All who have faith are members of the Church, even if they are only catechumens or schismatics, although it is true to say that schism

easily drifts into heresy, and there is scarcely any formal schismatic who was not a heretic.

Reply to third objection. The ancient fathers of the Old Testament, “by observing the legal sacraments, which were types of future things, were born to Christ by the faith and love of charity”, and so “they belonged to the same body of the Church as we do.” However, Christ, who merited for them the grace of salvation, did not physically influence them, for a physical influence presupposes the existence of the influencing cause. On the contrary, the moral meritorious cause can be as yet non-existent and future, because it moves not as actually existing, but as known as pertaining either to the future or the past. Thus, on account of Christ’s future merits, God bestowed grace on the just of the Old Testament. They received medicinal grace and redemption dependent on Christ’s future merits, just as we receive such grace and redemption dependent on Christ’s past merits. But Christ always living now exerts a physical influence on us, as the instrumental cause of grace.

First doubt. Is Christ actually the head of baptized and occult heretics, because of the baptismal character that remains in them? The query is concerned with formal heretics.

Reply. The answer is in the negative, against Cajetan’s view, because in their case not even infused faith remains, which means that they do not belong to the third class. St. Thomas has in mind in the body of the article, those who are united with Christ neither by glory nor by charity in this life, but by faith. The Church is defined as “the congregation of the faithful,” inasmuch as faith is the foundation and beginning of the supernatural life.

Christ, to be sure, influences these heretics by actual graces, but these graces only dispose them for the life of grace, and are not anything permanent in them, which means that they do not constitute a permanent bond uniting the member with Christ. Thus nobody is said to be a member of a family, merely because he visits it occasionally. Christ also bestows actual graces on infidels, of whom certainly He is actually the head.

Cajetan’s objection. Christ bestows on baptized infidels something spiritual and permanent, namely, a baptismal character.

Reply. It is not enough for Christ to bestow on them something spiritual and permanent, for this something spiritual and permanent must be both vital and uniting the baptized with the one who is believed or loved. Otherwise Christ would be the head of the baptized who are damned.

Cajetan concedes this last conclusion, but St. Thomas clearly denies it at the end of the argumentative part of this article.

It would be an error in the other extreme opposed to that of John Hus and Quesnel.

Hence the baptized formal heretic is not an actual member of the Church, and yet the Church has the right of punishing him, inasmuch as he does not maintain what he promised to believe, just as a king has the right to punish fugitive soldiers.

St. Robert Bellarmine's objection. The pope who becomes a secret heretic is still an actual member of the Church, for he is still the head of the Church, as Cajetan, Cano, Suarez, and others teach.

Reply. This condition is quite abnormal, hence no wonder that something abnormal results from it, namely, that the pope becoming secretly a heretic would no longer be an actual member of the Church, according to the teaching as explained in the body of the article, but would still retain his jurisdiction by which he would influence the Church in ruling it. Thus he would still be nominally the head of the Church, which he would still rule as head, though he would no longer be a member of Christ, because he would not receive that vital influx of faith from Christ, the invisible and primary head. Thus in quite an abnormal manner he would be in point of jurisdiction the head of the Church, though he would not be a member of it.

This condition could not apply to the natural head in its relation to the body, but such a condition is not repugnant in the case of the moral and secondary head. The reason is that, whereas the natural head must receive a vital influx from the soul before it can influence the members of its body, the moral head, such as the pope is, can exercise his jurisdiction over the Church, although he receives no influx of interior faith and charity from the soul of the Church. More briefly, as Billuart says, the pope is constituted a member of the Church by his personal faith, which he can lose, and his headship of the visible Church by jurisdiction and power is compatible with private heresy. The Church will always consist in the visible union of its members with its visible head, namely, the pope of Rome, although some, who externally seem to be members of the Church, may be private heretics. Thus the conclusion we must come to is, that occult heretics are only apparent members of the Church, which they externally and visibly profess to be the true Church.

Second doubt. Was Christ the head of our first parents in the state of innocence?

This is a difficult question, and the answer depends on the way we solve the problem concerning the motive of the Incarnation.

The Scotists and Suarez answer this question in the affirmative, for they maintain that Christ as man was the head of Adam in the state of innocence, even as regards essential grace, because Christ is the first of all the predestined.

Many Thomists deny this assertion of the Scotists and Suarez, for they say that the primary and principal reason of Christ's coming was to redeem the human race, and Adam in the state of innocence did not need redemption. Nevertheless, among Thomists, Godoy and Gonet maintain that Christ as man was truly and in the strict sense the head of our first parents in the state of innocence about as in the case of the angels, as regards the accidental grace of faith in Christ to come not as redeemer, but as consummator of glory.

Let us now see how the more common opinion of the Thomists is explained by those who hold, as the Salmanticenses do, that God permitted Adam's sins for a greater good, namely, the redemptive Incarnation, so that the Incarnation is prior in the genus of final cause, and the fall of the human race is prior in the genus of material cause to be perfected or repaired, as we explained above in discussing the motive of the Incarnation.

Thesis. Christ as man was not the head of our first parents in the state of innocence as regards essential grace.

Authoritative proof. St. Augustine says: "He[Adam] was not in need of those graces resulting from Christ's death; the blood of the lamb absolved fallen men from both hereditary sin and personal sins." He calls the grace of the state of innocence, God's grace, and the grace bestowed on man after the Fall, Christ's grace.

St. Thomas likewise says: "Granted as true the opinion that Christ would not have become incarnate if man had not sinned, Christ before sin would have been the head of the Church only as God, but after sin He must be the head of the Church as man."

Fundamental theological proof. The more common opinion of the Thomists is proved by the following syllogistic reasoning.

Christ was willed by God first and principally as the Redeemer, and so the grace bestowed by Christ is a medicinal and healing grace. But Adam

had no grace in the state of innocence that was a medicinal and healing grace. Therefore Adam had no grace in the state of innocence that was bestowed on Him by Christ.

In other words, according to the present decree, Christ was willed as a remedy for the human race because of original sin. Thus the redemptive Incarnation depends on Adam's sin not indeed in the genus of final cause or of efficient cause or of formal cause, but in the genus of material cause that must be perfected or repaired, inasmuch as the alleviation of misery is the reason for being merciful. Hence every grace coming from Christ as head comes from Him by reason of His redemption and death for the human race.

Solution Of Objections

First objection. The principal reason for the opposite Scotist opinion is this. Christ is the first of all the predestined, as St. Thomas himself says. But the first of all the predestined is the cause of all the graces the other predestined receive, among whom are the first parents. Therefore Christ was the cause of all the graces received by the first parents, even their essential grace, and so He was their head.

Reply. I distinguish the major: that Christ is the first of all the predestined by a priority of dignity as regards all, even the angels, this I concede, because He is predestined to divine and natural sonship, and not to adoptive sonship; that He is the first of all predestined by a priority of meritorious causality of all, this I deny; for He is only thus first of all as regards the redeemed, since He came as redeemer for us men. I contradistinguish the minor; the first of all the predestined is the meritorious cause of all the graces of the predestined to be redeemed, as redeemed, this I concede; that He is the meritorious cause of the essential grace of the others, that is, of the angels and Adam, not as to be redeemed, but as innocent, this I deny. And I deny the consequent and consequence, for the notion of head requires causality by way of merit. Thus farther on we shall state that Christ as man is truly the head of the angels inasmuch as, if He did not merit for them the essential grace of justification and glory, at least He merited accidental graces for them to be ministers in the kingdom of God. Adam in the state of innocence, however, was not Christ's minister in the kingdom of God.

Third doubt. Was Christ, as man, the end of the essential grace bestowed on our first parents in the state of innocence? It is not here strictly a question of Christ's merits, but of Christ as He is the end of creatures.

The Thomists, as also the Salmanticenses, generally agree in saying that Christ was the end of this essential grace, not in its production but in its reparation. For Christ was first intended as the Redeemer of the human race, and therefore this presupposes the destruction of original justice through Adam's sin.

According to the interpretation of the Salmanticenses and Gonet concerning the teaching of St. Thomas on the motive of the Incarnation, which we admitted, the end to which Christ was appointed is the permission of original sin by which original justice is destroyed, and not the production of this original justice. Hence Christ is not appointed for the production of this original justice, but for its reparation. So say the Salmanticenses and Billuart.

As regards the essential grace and glory of the good angels, we shall discuss this farther on. Although this grace is not the result of Christ's merits, yet it is ordained to Christ as to its end. For this grace was neither destroyed nor to be repaired, and the decree of the Incarnation did not therefore presuppose its destruction by some sin permitted by God.

All these statements are consistent with what we previously said about the motive of the Incarnation, namely, that God among innumerable possible worlds saw by His knowledge of simple intelligence the world free from sin, perfect and glorious not redeemed by the Incarnation, and the world of sin made perfect and glorious by the redemptive Incarnation, and by one simple and efficacious decree for the manifestation of His glory chose this second world, that is, He permitted both Adam's sin destroying original justice and willed the redemptive Incarnation, as a greater good without which He would not have permitted the aforesaid sin. Hence the permission of original sin and the restoration of original justice are ordained to Christ, as to their end; in fact, as will be stated farther on, the angels themselves and their essential grace and glory not destined to be destroyed are likewise ordained to Christ, as to their end, because there is only one decree for all parts of the universe, so that they may pass from the state of possibility to that of futurity.

Second objection. Adam's essential grace in the state of innocence is the effect of his predestination. But Adam's predestination, like ours, is the effect of Christ's merits. Therefore Adam's essential grace in the state of innocence is the effect of Christ's merits, who was therefore in the strict sense his head.

Reply. I distinguish the antecedent: that the grace as first given in the state of innocence was the effect of Adam's predestination, I deny; that it was so as destined to be repaired, I concede. For this grace as first given was not ordained efficaciously to glory, but only as it was repaired after its loss. Hence in the state of innocence, this grace did not depend either on Adam's predestination or on Christ's predestination, but on God's general providence in the supernatural order, just like the sufficient graces that were given, for example, to the angels who were not predestined.

I insist. But God's general providence is subordinated to the providence of the hypostatic union as end. Hence there is no solution of the difficulty.

Reply. The Salmanticenses answer by making the following distinction: that this subordination to the hypostatic union prevails as regards the reparation of this original justice, I concede; as regards the state itself of original justice, I deny. "Although," as they say, "the providence of the hypostatic union, to which Christ's predestination belongs, which is the cause of ours, on behalf of the dignity of its object, namely, of Christ, was sufficient to subordinate to Himself and to that providence the state of original justice, and God could fittingly enough so decree; yet, on the present supposition that de facto God intended Christ as a remedy for original sin, He could by His consequent power extend His decree to the above-mentioned subordination. The reason is that He could not look upon that first state of innocence except through the medium of original sin, which is the formal destruction and non-existence of this state; and therefore He could exert no influence on this being, as stated above. Consequently the influx of providence in the hypostatic union de facto consists precisely in those things that concern or connote original sin; it does not extend to other things, although in another series of things, considering the sufficiency of this providence, it could be extended to include them."

Yet it remains true, as the Salmanticenses furthermore say, that "all things which God decreed in reparation after the Fall, were directed to Christ as to their end." Thus original justice was only mediately and indirectly the material cause of the Incarnation, since this latter was decreed in reparation after sin.

Still I insist. But in the other predestined, such as in St. Peter, even the first of the series of graces interrupted by sin, is the effect of the person's predestination, according to the Thomist doctrine. Therefore the same must

be said of Adam's first grace, though the series of graces was interrupted by sin.

Reply. There is not parity of argument in each case, for in the person predestined and redeemed, as in St. Peter, the first grace bestowed is given with the intention of leading him to glory by the recovery of this grace. On the contrary, grace was not bestowed on Adam in the state of innocence with the efficacious intention of leading him to glory in that state, but it came from God's general providence. That state of innocence had to be admitted and the decree of Christ's coming and His predestination depended on its loss, and through Christ's merits we are all redeemed. Hence Adam's first grace was the effect of his predestination, only as recovered, not as first bestowed.

Another difficulty. Is Christ as man Adam's head in the state of innocence as regards accidental graces, just as, as we shall immediately say, He is of the angels? Essential grace is habitual grace or sanctifying grace, and accidental grace is illuminating grace of the intellect, which is not absolutely necessary for justification.

It is a disputed question among Thomists. Some deny that Christ is Adam's head, because, so they say, the angels are Christ's ministers in the kingdom of God, but Adam in the state of innocence was not Christ's minister. So says Billuart.

Nevertheless Gonet's teaching is probable. He writes: "Christ as man was head of our first parents even in the state of innocence, for a moral influence came from Christ on our first parents still in the state of innocence, just as it was given to the angels, namely, some accidental grace, such as faith in Christ to come, not indeed as the redeemer, but as the consummator of glory."

Other Thomists, such as Billuart, reply with the following distinction: that Adam in the state of innocence believed in Christ, that is, in Christ objectively considered, I concede; that he had this belief through Christ, I deny. But if it is insisted that Adam believed in Christ as the consummator of glory, and therefore as the head, they reply: as the future head as being the consummator of glory, let this pass without comment; as the head actually exerting His influx in the state of innocence, this I deny.

At least it must be granted that Adam's belief in Christ to come as the consummator of glory was directed to Christ as to the end; and Adam continued in this belief, since it was not lost as the grace of original justice

was, because Adam, strictly speaking, did not sin against faith, and so he did not lose it.

Final doubt. If we admit the teaching of St. Thomas on the motive of the Incarnation, is it probable that Adam's essential grace in the state of innocence rests on a twofold title: namely, (1) on God elevating him to this grace, independently of Christ; (2) dependent on Christ's merits.

Reply. Certain Thomists, such as Godoy, O. P., and Cipullus, O. P., maintain this for the angels and also, so it seems, for Adam in the state of innocence. Their reason is that this contributes to Christ's glory, just as the glorification of His physical body rests on a twofold title: namely, (1) as being connatural, since it is the overflow of glory from the soul, and (2) on the title of merit. Likewise, so they say, the essential grace of the angels and Adam rested on a twofold title.

This opinion of Godoy and Cipullus is attacked by Billuart and by Gonet, and to these last-mentioned theologians Contenson replies by saying: "According to this opinion, God the Father by the first expression of His will freely gave His grace, and afterward also willed to confer it because of Christ's merits; so that, if at first He had not decided to give it, by virtue of this second will it would be bestowed efficaciously. Certainly this way of presenting the case claims for itself probability, since it by all means safeguards Christ's dignity."

Contenson says that this conclusion is only probable, because we do not know what is positively contained in God's free decree on this point. It has not been sufficiently revealed.

However, even though this opinion were probable concerning the essential grace of the angels, it is not so probable as regards the essential grace of Adam in the state of innocence, because Christ came as the Redeemer on the supposition that Adam's sin was permitted, by which the grace in the state of innocence was lost, whereas the first grace of the predestined angels was not lost.

FOURTH ARTICLE: WHETHER CHRIST IS THE HEAD OF THE ANGELS

State of the question. It concerns Christ as man, for there is not indeed any doubt that Christ, as God, is the head of the angels even as regards essential grace and glory, which is a participation of the divine nature.

There are three difficulties presented at the beginning of this article. (1) It seems that Christ is not the head of the angels, because the head and members are of the same nature; but Christ, as man, is not of the same nature with the angels. (2) The angels do not belong to the Church, which is the congregation of the faithful who are wayfarers exiled from the Lord. (3) Christ as man gives life to the souls of men, but in this respect He does not give life to the angels.

Reply. Christ is the head of the angels.

Scriptural proof. St. Paul says: “In Him[Christ] dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead Corporeally, and you are filled in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.” There is a similar text from St. Paul quoted in the body of this article. In fact, the words of Jesus, as quoted by the Evangelist, are evidence of this truth, for He says: “The Son of man shall send His angels.” And again: “He shall send His angels, and shall gather together His elect.” “He shall send His angels with a trumpet, and a great voice.” “All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth.” Likewise St. Paul declares that Christ has inherited “a more excellent name than the angels,” and this for three reasons, because He is the only Son of God, because He is the Lord of God’s kingdom, whereas the angels are His ministers, and because He is full of grace, this fullness being absolute and superabundant.

Theological proof. It is proved by two syllogistic reasonings, as follows:

There must be one head to one body. But there is one mystical body of the Church, which consists of men and angels, who are ordained to the same glory. Therefore this particular body, which is one because of the unity of its end, has one head.

But this one and only head is Christ, because He is nearer to God. Therefore not only men, but angels share in Christ’s influence.

The first syllogism has its foundation in the one end of the entire mystical body, inasmuch as men and angels are ordained to the same ultimate supernatural end. The source of their spiritual life is derived from the same divine truth and from the same supreme divine good.

The second syllogism has its foundation in this principle: that Christ is nearer God by the hypostatic union and more perfectly shares in God’s gifts, according to the absolute fullness of grace.

Thus the conclusion is that Christ is truly and in the strict sense the head of the angels, as attested by St. Paul.

The solution of the difficulties confirms this conclusion.

Reply to first objection. Christ as man is not in agreement with the angels in their specific nature, but in their generic nature, or in the generic grade of intellectuality. And though this does not suffice for natural headship, at least it does so for moral headship, otherwise God Himself would not be the head of the angels. Moreover, Christ has the same specific nature as the angels in the supernatural order, namely, the same and only species of habitual grace, which is the participation of the divine nature.

Reply to second objection. "The church in heaven is the congregation of comprehensors." But Christ already in this life was both wayfarer and comprehensor, having grace and glory to the fullest extent.

Reply to third objection. "Christ's humanity, by virtue of the divine nature, can cause something in the spirits of angels on account of its close conjunction with God, that is, by personal union."

Several doubts must be examined.

First doubt. Is Christ, as man, truly and strictly speaking, the head of the angels as regards their external government?

Theologians generally agree that Christ is the head in this sense, and to deny it would be an error on account of the very clear texts of Sacred Scripture, as quoted above. Also, just as the pope is called the head of the Church as regards its eternal government, so Christ as man, by reason of the hypostatic union, is the prince and lord of the entire Church triumphant, which consists of men and angels. Manifestly this is so from the very fact that Jesus said: "The Son of man... shall send His angels," and "All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth."

Hence St. Thomas shows that Christ ascended above every spiritual creature, and that Christ's judiciary power, as man, extends to the angels, who are His ministers concerning men.

Second doubt. What grace does Christ as man bestow on the angels?

Reply. There is no doubt that He bestows on them accidental grace, which consists in the illumination of their intellect concerning those things that pertain to our redemption, especially the mystery of the redemptive Incarnation, that they may cooperate with Christ as His ministers in the business of man's salvation. Thus the archangel Gabriel was sent to the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Joseph was enlightened by the angel concerning those things that pertain to Christ and His defense, and Christ sends His angels to be guardians of men.

Thus Christ, as man, bestows on the angels by a physically instrumental influx, accidental graces that they minister to us, and so He purges them from error in this ministry, illumines and perfects them. Similarly Christ as man bestows accidental reward or accidental glory on the angels, on account of this ministry, and accidental joy in the objective and indirect reparation made for those seats lost by the fallen angels, through the justification and glorification of the saints. Thus the angels rejoice in the fact that, because of Christ's merits, the Blessed Virgin Mary has been exalted above their choirs and that the soul of St. Joseph is among them.

But Christ formerly merited the accidental graces, which by His physical instrumentality He bestows on the angels; for He merited whatever He afterward confers. This is clearly enough expressed by St. Paul in the following text: "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent to minister for them, who shall receive the inheritance of salvation?"

Now indeed, since Christ as man rules over the angels, and merited the accidental grace and glory He now bestows on them, He is truly and properly called their head, more than the pope is as regards the faithful; for the pope only governs the faithful and does not either merit or bestow such accidental grace and glory on them. In fact, Christ is more the head of the angels than of infidels, who are not actually subjected to Him as their head; for He does not impart actual graces to infidels as to actual living members of the Church, but only to dispose them to receive the life of faith.

It is not necessary for the moral head of the angels to bestow on them essential grace, for it is not the primary function of the natural head to give essential life to the members of the body, for this comes from the soul as the substantial form of the body; but it imparts only some vital motion as its secondary act. A fortiori, it suffices that the moral head exert its influence by ruling, as the pope does in the Church and the king in his kingdom.

Third doubt. Does Christ as man bestow on the angels also essential grace and glory, these being a participation of the divine nature? It is certain that as God He bestows this grace on them; but the question is whether He bestows this grace in His human nature, inasmuch as it is personally united with the Word and because of the fullness of grace possessed by Christ in His human nature.

It is a disputed question among theologians. Some absolutely affirm that He does, such as Scotus, the Scotists, Suarez, Valentia, and Godoy, among

the Thomists. They give as their principal reason that Christ is the first of all the predestined, and therefore He is the cause of all graces for others.

On the contrary, some absolutely deny that Christ as man gives this grace to the angels. Many of these are Thomists, such as Medina, Alvarez, John of St. Thomas, Gonet, Billuart, and others; outside the school of St. Thomas, we have Vasquez and de Lugo.

The principal reason advanced by these Thomists is that Christ came as the Redeemer, to redeem us men, and He did not die for the angels who were not in need of redemption.

But others try to reconcile the two above-mentioned opinions. Among the Thomists are Vincent of Asturia and Cipullus, who maintain that the essential grace of the angels rests on a twofold title: (1) on God's liberality, and (2) on Christ's merits, just as there were two reasons for the glorification of Christ's body, namely, the connatural overflow of this glory from His soul, and the merit He acquired.

Finally, the Salmanticenses seem to solve the question better by saying: "Christ bestowed this essential grace on the angels, not indeed as physically efficient cause or as morally meritorious cause or as redemptive cause, but by way of objective end," inasmuch as Christ was first intended by God above the angels.

Let us first consider the more common opinion among the Thomists, namely, that Christ as man does not bestow essential grace and glory on the angels.

Scriptural proof. In the Gospel we read: "The angel said to them[the shepherds], "I bring you good tidings of great joy... for this day is born to you a Savior." The angel says: "to you," not "to us." Similarly St. Bernard in one of his homilies, quoting the scriptural text, "A child is born to us, and a Son is given to us," says: "He was not given also to the angels, who having the great, did not need the very little. Therefore He was born for us, given to us, because He is necessary to us."

But if St. Gregory the Great says, "No man or angel is holy except through Christ," this can be understood of Christ as God.

Moreover, the Church says of the Son of God: "Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and became incarnate," not for the angels.

Proof from various texts of St. Thomas. Thus he says: "The angels are not wayfarers as regards their essential reward and therefore in this sense

Christ did not merit anything for them. But they are in some manner wayfarers as regards their accidental reward; inasmuch as they minister to us, and this is what Christ merited for them."

Again he says: "He[Christ] does not exert His influence on the angels by removing the obstacle either by meriting grace for them or praying for them, because they are already in a state of bliss; but He exerts His influence in those things that pertain to hierarchic acts, inasmuch as one angel illumines, purges, and purifies another."

St. Thomas likewise says, concerning the extent of Christ's judiciary power as regards the angels: "They are submitted to Christ's judgment: (1) as regards the dispensation of those things which are done through them... whereas they minister to Christ as man; (2) as to other accidental rewards...; (3) as to the essential reward of the good angels, which is everlasting bliss; and as to the essential punishment of the wicked angels, which is everlasting damnation. But this was done by Christ from the beginning of the world inasmuch as He is the Word of God."

The principal theological proof for this more common opinion among the Thomists is about the same as for Adam's essential grace in the state of innocence and may be expressed by the following syllogistic reasoning.

Christ was willed by God primarily and principally as the Redeemer; and the grace that comes from Him is medicinal or healing, derived from His death. But the essential grace of the angels is not at all medicinal or healing, nor did Christ die for them.

Therefore the essential grace of the angels is not the result of Christ's merits.

Confirmation. In fact, God's efficacious decree of the Incarnation in passible flesh presupposes, even for the Scotists, that He permitted and foresaw Adam's sin; and this permission presupposes that He permitted the devil's sin, inasmuch as de facto Adam's sin came about from the temptation by the devil, who was the first to fall. Therefore the Word incarnate, as incarnate, was not the cause of essential grace in the angels, which had been lost through the devil's sin.

Solution of objections. The principal reason advanced by the Scotists in opposition to the Thomist opinion is as follows:

Christ as man is the first of all the predestined. But the first of all the predestined is the cause of all graces for the others, among whom are the

good angels. Therefore Christ as man was the cause of the essential grace and glory of the angels.

Reply. As in the case of essential grace for Adam in the state of innocence, the answer is made by distinguishing the major: that Christ is the first of all the predestined by a priority of dignity, this I concede, because He was predestined to natural divine sonship which far transcends adoptive sonship of the angels; that He is the first of all the predestined by a priority of meritorious causality, this I deny, because He is such only as regards those to be redeemed, since He came as Redeemer for us men and not for the angels. I contradistinguish the minor: the first of all the predestined is the meritorious cause of all the graces of the predestined to be redeemed, this I concede; of the others, namely, of the angels, this I deny. And I deny the consequent and consequence.

But I insist. The Scotists in confirmation of their thesis add: For Christ to be truly and in the strict sense the head of the angels, it is not enough for Him to bestow upon them accidental grace and glory. For Christ is the head only of those on whom He bestows those gifts by which they are constituted members either of the Church militant, suffering, or triumphant, and which are grace, charity, faith, and in heaven the light of glory and the beatific vision.

Reply. The Thomists distinguish the antecedent. That the bestowal of accidental grace and glory is not enough for Christ to be considered in the absolutely strict sense the head of the angels just as He is the head of the just, this I concede; that such is not enough for Him to be truly their head, this I deny. Indeed, it is not the primary function even of the natural head and a fortiori of the moral head to bestow essential life on the members. It is not the primary function of the head to make the members living members, for this pertains to the soul as the substantial form of the whole body; but the head imparts to the members a vital motion, which is life in its secondary act. A fortiori the moral head, such as the pope in the Church or the king in his kingdom, each exerts influence on the members by external government, and yet each is truly called the head. But Christ as man, not only governs the angels by sending them on this or that ministry, but He also bestows on them accidental graces or illuminations for the correct and devout fulfillment of their ministry; and because of their having fulfilled their ministry in this way, He bestows on them an accidental reward. Thus Christ as man is truly and in the strict sense the head of the

angels, although in a way not so perfect as He is the head of the just, though He is more the head of the angels than the pope is the head of the faithful.

Finally, the Scotists quote in their favor the following scriptural texts: “No man cometh to the Father, but by Me”‘ and “For if by the offense of one, many died, much more... the grace of one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.”

The Thomists point out that the scriptural texts and statements of the Fathers to which the Scotists refer on this subject, either do not certainly concern the angels but only the just, or if the angels are included, it is not evident from these texts that Christ as man bestows on them essential grace. Thus, when St. John quotes our Lord as saying: “No man cometh to the Father but by Me,” the meaning is: No one, either angel or man, comes to the Father, except through the Son, but in a different way; for man comes to the Father through the Son veiled in the flesh, but the angel through the Son inasmuch as He is God.

Fourth doubt. If the doctrine of St. Thomas on the motive of the Incarnation be admitted, is it probable that there are two reasons why the angels have their essential grace and glory, namely: (1) because of God’s liberality independently of Christ; (2) dependent on Christ’s merits?

Reply. Among Thomists, Godoy O. P. and Cipullus O. P., are of this opinion. Although Gonet and Billuart are against them, yet their opinion, as Contenson shows, does not lack probability. Their principal reason for this opinion is that it contributes to Christ’s glory for Him to be the source of all graces; and in truth, Christ Himself obtained the glorification of His body by a twofold right: (1) in that it was connatural to Him, as being the overflow of glory from the soul; (2) by having merited this right.

As Contenson remarks, this opinion is probable. But if against this opinion the objection is raised that Christ, however, did not die for the angels, and therefore He did not merit for them, then the answer is that neither did Christ die for Himself, and yet He merited for Himself the glorification of His body, and this by a twofold right.

But this opinion cannot be demonstrated because, if it is an established fact, then this opinion depends on God’s most free decree that has not been sufficiently revealed; nor can it be deduced with theological certainty from revealed principles. Hence St. Thomas observes a prudent silence concerning these things known to God alone. As the Apostle says, it behooves us “to be wise unto sobriety.”

Fifth doubt. Is Christ as man the final cause of essential grace and glory in the angels?

Reply. That Christ is the final cause, we affirm along with the Salmanticenses, who say: “We add that Christ bestowed substantial grace and first justification on the angels, not indeed that He was either the efficient physical cause or the moral, meritorious, or redemptive cause, but He was the cause by way of objective end.” This can most probably be declared in two ways.

The first reason, indeed, is that Christ was intended by God as the end of all things, to whom God ordained all things He decreed to make, as we explicitly showed. Now it suffices to say of this particular disposition on God’s part that on the one hand there is nothing derogatory to God, and on the other that it is most befitting the excellence of Christ, our Lord, who, as He was the first of the predestined and the exemplary cause of all the predestined, thus it was becoming for Him to be the quasi-intermediate end for whose sake all things were created, and to whom God referred and subjected all things, so that they should serve Him and increase His glory. Hence, whatever grace and perfection they had and the angels have, they all participate in Christ’s bestowal of this in the genus of final cause.

The second reason, however, is that the angels in the state of probation, and also our first parents in the state of innocence, believed in Christ as the consummator of glory. Thus Christ bestowed faith on the angels, and on our first parents in the state of innocence objectively.

Hence Christ is the end of essential grace in the angels, but He does not appear to be the meritorious cause of this grace, unless their grace rests on a twofold title, which is conjectural but cannot be proved; because, if it is so, this depends on God’s decree that is not sufficiently made manifest.

Conclusion. Therefore Christ is truly and in the strict sense the head of the angels, although not so completely as He is of the just, whom He redeemed and on whom He certainly bestows not only accidental grace, but also essential grace and glory. The unanimous teaching of theologians is that Christ did not redeem the angels, and it is the more common opinion among Thomists that He probably did not merit for them essential grace.

FIFTH ARTICLE: WHETHER THE GRACE OF CHRIST AS HEAD OF CHURCH IS THE SAME AS HIS HABITUAL GRACE, INASMUCH AS HE IS MAN

State of the question. Is Christ's grace as head of the Church really distinct from His personal habitual grace, or are the two graces identical?

It seems that they are not the same, for the following reasons.

1) The actual or personal sin of Adam differs from original sin which He transmitted to posterity. Therefore the personal grace of Christ the new Adam is not the same as His grace of headship.

2) These graces are distinct inasmuch as they are ordained to different acts, for Christ's personal grace is ordained for His sanctification, whereas His capital grace is for the sanctification of others.

3) Theologians usually distinguish between three kinds of graces in Christ: the grace of union, the individual grace of the man, and the capital grace.

Conclusion. Christ's personal habitual grace and His capital grace are essentially the same, though there is a mental distinction between them.

Very many theologians accept this conclusion, though Vasquez and certain others teach that Christ's capital grace and His grace of union are really the same.

Scriptural proof. The Evangelist says: "of His fullness we all have received." Hence Christ is our head inasmuch as He had the fullness of personal habitual grace. Hence there is no real distinction between Christ's habitual grace and His capital grace; at least, the text quoted above implies that these two graces are really identical.

Theological proof. There is no difference between the act whereby anything is in act and whereby it acts, and the agent must be nobler than the patient. But Christ as man is constituted supernaturally in act by the personal habitual grace which He received in the highest degree. Therefore Christ as man bestowed this same grace on others, namely, on those members whose head He is.

The major is evident, for it is founded on the principle that everything acts inasmuch as it is a being in act. Thus what is hot heats according to the heat whereby it is hot. For the agent acts, inasmuch as it determines, and the manner of its determination is in accordance with its own determination.

The minor was explained above: for personal habitual grace intrinsically and physically informs Christ, as man. Thus this grace is the operative principle whereby He radically operates supernaturally, performing acts that are infinitely meritorious and satisfactory. The principium quo of these operations is habitual grace as it connotes the grace of union, or as it

connotes the principium quod, or the person of the Word, from whom these works derive their infinite value.

Therefore this same habitual grace is called capital, inasmuch as by it Christ can bestow on the members of the Church grace and justification, that is, by exerting a moral influence on them by means of His infinitely meritorious and satisfactory works. It is precisely this influence that constitutes Him their head, although He also exerts a physically instrumental influence on them. Christ, the head of the faithful of the Old Testament, could not exert a physically instrumental influence on them, but only a moral influence by His merit and satisfaction, since they lived before His coming.

St. Thomas often speaks of this physically instrumental causality of Christ's human nature, inasmuch as it is the instrument united with the divine nature, whereas the sacraments are separate instruments. As one who blows a trumpet emits the sound by this instrument, so God can cause grace by Christ's human nature; so also our soul makes use of vocal chords as the instrument of speech. Moreover, it must be observed that, although Christ's body, inasmuch as it is in heaven as in a place, is locally distant from ours, the higher part of Christ's soul and of our soul are not of themselves localized, nor is Christ's mind locally distant from our mind, which is influenced by His mind, inasmuch as it is the instrument of His divine nature.

As regards moral causality by way of merit, it is not necessary that the moral cause already exist for it to exert its influence, since the moral cause operates inasmuch as it is known, and can be known as coming into existence. Thus God conferred grace on the faithful of the Old Testament because of Christ's future merits.

The solution of the objections confirms the conclusion.

Reply to first objection. We must distinguish in Adam between his personal sin and original sin that had its origin in him, which is a sin of the nature, "because in him the person, by turning away from God, corrupted the nature; and by means of this corruption the sin of the first man is transmitted to posterity.... Now grace is not vouchsafed us by means of human nature, but solely by the personal action of Christ Himself. Hence we must not distinguish a twofold grace in Christ, one corresponding to the nature, the other to the person." This means, as Cajetan observes, that "grace is not communicated to us by the action of the nature, or by

communicating the nature as Adam would have communicated it, not corrupted, to his children, if he had not sinned, but by Christ's personal action, by which He merited for us and of His own will bestowed grace on us."

Reply to second objection. The eminence of Christ's personal habitual grace is the reason for the justification of others.

Reply to third objection. "The personal and the capital grace agree in the essence of the habit"; they are the same habit inasmuch as their more proximate purpose is for the performance of some meritorious act. On the contrary, the direct purpose of the grace of union is not for the eliciting of a meritorious act, and it is not a habit but, as stated above, "the grace of union is the personal being that is given gratis by God to the human nature in the person of the Word."

Objection. But for Vasquez the capital grace and the grace of union are identical because, so he says, the infinite value of Christ's merits is derived from this grace of union.

Reply. That the value of Christ's merits is derived remotely from the grace of union as from the principium quod that is connotated, this I concede; that it is derived proximately as from the operative principium quo, this I deny, although charity is the immediate principle of merit. It pertains to the notion of capital grace, however, for it to be the root, instrumentally, of those merits because the head of the Church as such exerts at least a moral influence on the members by His meritorious works.

But I insist. If Christ did not have habitual grace, He would, nevertheless, still be our head; for habitual grace is not absolutely necessary so as to enable Him to elicit meritorious acts. Therefore Christ is not the head because of habitual grace.

Reply. I distinguish the antecedent: If Christ did not have habitual grace, He would still be our head because of His divine personality, this I deny, for His personality does not constitute Him the operative principle of merit; because of the transient help given by it, this I concede. But then Christ would not be the connatural operative principle of merit.

Again I insist. Grace that is ordained for the sanctification of others is not grace gratum faciens, but grace gratis data. Therefore Christ's capital grace that is ordained for our sanctification is not identical with His personal habitual grace.

Reply. I distinguish the antecedent: Grace that is primarily ordained for the sanctification of others is not gratia gratum faciens, this I concede; grace that is only secondarily so ordained is not such, this I deny. Thus the gift of wisdom is included in sanctifying grace, although its secondary purpose is for the direction of souls, which means that it is for the benefit of others. Such was Christ's habitual grace.

SIXTH ARTICLE: WHETHER IT IS PROPER TO CHRIST TO BE THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH

In this article, as in the remaining ones of this question, St. Thomas shows that it is proper for Christ to be the head of the Church by a certain intrinsic influence of grace and justification, because He has this power from habitual grace, inasmuch as it presupposes the grace of union, to which is attributed the infinite value of His merits. But to be the head of the Church in its external government for a time befits the pope as regards the Church militant during the time of his pontificate. In this way, he is the vicar of Christ.

SEVENTH ARTICLE: WHETHER THE DEVIL IS THE HEAD OF ALL THE WICKED

Lucifer, the prince of devils, is the head of all the wicked not by interiorly influencing their wills, for God alone can interiorly move the will; but he is their head by inducing them to commit sin by means of suggestions and temptations, it being easier to destroy than to build.

EIGHTH ARTICLE: WHETHER ANTICHRIST MAY BE CALLED THE HEAD OF ALL THE WICKED

Antichrist is neither the head of all the wicked as regards those that lived before his time, since he will come only about the end of the world, nor as regards his power of influencing them, since he cannot have any influence on those sinners who lived before his coming; but he is their head only by reason of the perfection of his wickedness, so that all the wicked who preceded him are, so to speak, signs of Antichrist.

CHAPTER XI: QUESTION 9: CHRIST'S KNOWLEDGE IN GENERAL AND HIS POWER OF CONTEMPLATION

After the consideration of Christ's grace, both personal and capital, we must discuss the question of His knowledge: (1) What knowledge indeed or what kinds of knowledge did He have? (2) Then we shall inquire into each particular kind of knowledge, namely, His beatific knowledge (q. 10), His imprinted or infused knowledge (q. 11), His acquired knowledge (q. 13), that is, Christ's intellectual life, even His most sublime contemplation.

It is therefore evident that, as St. Thomas says, "We are here taking knowledge for any cognition of the human intellect," even that which is not discursive. The most important article of this ninth question is the second, which inquires whether Christ had already in this life the knowledge that the blessed or comprehensors have, namely, the beatific vision. The first article, however, may be considered an introduction to the inquiries about Christ's created knowledge.

Notice must be taken of the fact that Sacred Scripture, which is a manifestation of divine truth for the purpose of salvation, insists more on the moral and religious than on the intellectual aspects of our Lord's life as Savior. But the idea of Christ as man is not of one who had the most sublime conception of moral and religious perfection to the exclusion of a proportionate knowledge of God, the soul, the world, the kingdom of God. It is in this way that the theologian is induced to treat of Christ's knowledge, and he inquires what can be known of Him from Sacred Scripture, tradition, and theological reasoning.

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER CHRIST HAD ANY KNOWLEDGE BESIDES THE DIVINE

State of the question. The meaning of the title is whether Christ had any other knowledge besides the uncreated knowledge. Why is it that any other

knowledge is not superfluous since the uncreated knowledge already includes all other kinds of knowledge?

Reply. The answer is in the affirmative, namely, that Christ had created knowledge as well as uncreated knowledge. The conclusion is de fide.

Scriptural proof. That Christ had created knowledge is, indeed, quite clear, for He says of Himself: “I know Him[My Father] and do keep his Word, ‘; but He kept his Father’s word by created actions as man. Therefore He likewise knew His Father by created knowledge. Moreover, Christ prayed, merited, obeyed, and performed many other human acts, and it is only by acts of the created intellect and of the created will that these can be performed. It was not, indeed, as God that He prayed, merited, and obeyed; for these acts presuppose the subordination of the created will under the guidance of the created intellect to the uncreated will.

Hence the Monothelites were condemned by the Third Council of Constantinople for refusing to admit two wills in Christ, namely, the uncreated will and the created will. This Council defined that Christ “is perfect both in His divine nature and in His human nature, truly God and truly man, of rational soul and body... and has two natural wills not contrary to each other..., and His human nature is in every respect human, sin absolutely excepted.”

Medina maintains that it is manifestly heretical to deny that Christ’s soul had created knowledge, at least in act.

As John of St. Thomas observes, concerning the last sentence in the body of this article, it was not indeed defined by the Council that Christ has two kinds of knowledge, but two wills and operations, and that He had a human nature, and all that belongs to it, except sin. From these definitions, by closer attention to the meaning than to the words, it follows that the Council condemned the view of those who deny two kinds of knowledge in Christ.

Theological proof. It is taken from the argumentative part of this article, and may be expressed in the following syllogistic form.

The human nature is imperfect without its connatural and proper act of knowledge. But the Son of God assumed a perfect human nature. Therefore the Son of God had the connatural and proper created act of intellective knowledge.

Major. Three reasons are given for its proof.

1) That the intellective soul is imperfect unless it be reduced to its act of understanding, for which it is ordained.

2) That everything is on account of its operation, or as Cajetan explains, operating on account of itself, not that the knowledge is innate, but inasmuch as, when the terms of the principles have been proposed, the intellect naturally adheres to them.

Minor. It is revealed, but it is also clearly stated in the previously quoted canons of the Third Council of Constantinople. Hence human intelligence would be for no purpose in Christ unless He could make use of it, and in this respect His soul would be more imperfect than the souls of the rest of mankind.

Doubt. Could Christ, as man, understand by communication from the uncreated act of understanding, as the Master of Good Hope thought?

Reply. This possibility is generally denied by theologians. For the act of understanding in the soul is a vital act, since it proceeds from an intrinsic principle, from the soul and its faculty. But the Deity cannot function as the soul, or a faculty, or a habit, for example, as the light of glory. In such a case it would not be the form as terminating but as confirming, and hence would be less perfect than the whole composite of which it is a part. Therefore Christ's soul could not understand by communication from the uncreated intellect.

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER CHRIST HAD KNOWLEDGE WHICH THE BLESSED OR COMPREHENSORS HAVE

State of the question. This article must be fully explained. First of all, it must be noted that Catholic theologians consider as theologically certain the doctrine that Christ's soul was free from all ignorance, that even from His conception He knew all things in the Word, which God knows by the knowledge of vision. This was formerly denied by several heretics and in our times especially by liberal Protestants and by Modernists.

Let us first consider these denials and their foundation.

The Nestorians, who said there were two persons in Christ, considered Christ as man to have been subject to ignorance and error. The Apollinarians and Anomoeans, who maintained that the Word functions as the mind in the Savior, denied all human knowledge to Christ. Likewise the Monophysites and Monothelites, who taught that there is only one operation in Christ, denied Him human knowledge. Finally, in the sixth century, the Agnoetae, under the leadership of Themistius, deacon of Alexandria,

contended that Christ, as other men, was subject to the corruption of the flesh and was, as a human being, ignorant. They quoted two Gospel texts in their defense: (1) “But of that day or hour[of the judgment], no man knoweth, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son.” (2) But of that day and hour no one knoweth, “not the angels of heaven, but the Father alone.”

In our times, particularly the liberal Protestants hold that Christ was ignorant of many things from the beginning, and it was only gradually that He acquired a knowledge of His mission. The disciples of Gunther and others, as more recently Dr. Schell, said that Christ’s knowledge was subject to the laws of human progress, and that in the beginning He did not have the beatific vision, but acquired it by His merits. Finally, the Modernists boldly asserted that Christ neither knew all things, nor was always conscious of His Messianic dignity, and even in some things He erred, for example, concerning the end of the world.

Against these errors, it is de fide that Christ never erred, that He even could not err, or in other words, that He was already infallible in this life. It is at least the commonly accepted and theologically certain doctrine that Christ’s soul was free from ignorance. What follows makes this clear.

It is de fide that Christ, as man, was free from all error in His knowledge, that Christ, in fact, the founder of the Church, even in this life was infallible, just as He was impeccable.

1) Sacred Scripture is evidence of this, inasmuch as Christ says of Himself: “I am the way and the truth and the life.” As God, He is truth and life; as man He is the way to essential truth, inasmuch as His human nature and His whole human intellectual life is personally united with essential truth. Thus, as man, He is presented to us as the master of truth, whom we must hear. “Neither be ye called masters, for one is your master, Christ,” and as the leader, following whom we never walk in darkness; who, in establishing His Church, made her infallible in her teaching, saying: “Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” But if it had been possible for Christ to err, a fortiori the Church He established could err in her teaching.

2) Christ was not only infallible in the doctrine He delivered to His apostles, but also in His acts, as is evident from the Gospel narrative, for it says that Christ, already in this life, saw and knew the thoughts of men, and had complete knowledge of the free future, foretelling the events long before the time. Thus He foretold the circumstances of His passion, the

destruction of Jerusalem, the continuance of His Church until the end of time.

Finally and especially in the Gospel it is recorded that Christ is the Word of God made flesh, “full of grace and truth.” That Christ was infallible, as we have seen, not only in the doctrine He delivered, and the events affirmed by Him, but this also follows as universally established by reason of the hypostatic union. The Word, indeed, assumed the complete human nature, but free from error and sin, for as sin is evil of the will, error is evil of the intellect; and as it is absolutely repugnant, as will be stated farther on, that the Word incarnate sinned or even was able to sin, so it was repugnant that He erred or even was able to err. For error would reflect on the very person of the Word in accordance with the adage: actions are attributed to the supposita. Hence error and sin cannot be attributed to the Word of God, who is essentially truth and holiness. Thus it is commonly said to be de fide that Christ, as man, the founder of the infallible Church, was infallible. To show the truth of this discursion by the explanatory method suffices, namely, an explanation of the terms of revelation, for an objectively illative method of reasoning is not necessary, namely, one by which a new truth is acquired that is not in itself revealed.

It is at least commonly accepted and theologically certain doctrine, that Christ’s knowledge was absolutely exempt from all ignorance and not only from error.

St. Thomas proves this, presupposing that Christ had both beatific knowledge and infused knowledge. But it is first fitting to manifest the truth of this assertion from Sacred Scripture and tradition, so that by a quasi a posterori method it may afterward be clearly seen how it befitted Him to have this beatific knowledge even in this life.

Sacred Scripture. The texts already quoted state clearly that Christ’s knowledge was absolutely exempt from all ignorance. Thus Christ is declared “full of grace and truth.” He also knew the secrets of hearts, as also distant objects and the free future. These texts, however, do not refer to His uncreated knowledge, but to His human knowledge, which governed His human operation. Therefore Christ as man was exempt from all ignorance. Thus as man He was, as He Himself said, the way that leads to the truth and life.

Tradition likewise establishes more clearly that Christ’s knowledge was immune from ignorance, especially from the declaration of St. Gregory the

Great to the patriarch of Alexandria against the Agnoetae. The Pope says: “[But] concerning what is written: “of that day or hour no man knoweth, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son,’ this has been most correctly understood by your beatitude, since this text most certainly refers not to the Son, inasmuch as He is the head[of the Church], but to His body which we are.[St. Augustine] also says... that it can be understood of the Son, because the omnipotent God does speak at times in a human way, as when He said to Abraham: “Now I know that thou fearest God., It is not because then God Himself knew that He was feared but because then He made Abraham acknowledge that he feared God. For just as we declare a day joyful, not that the day itself is joyful, but because it makes us joyful, so the omnipotent Son says that He does not know the day which He causes to be unknown, not because He does not know it, but because He does not at all permit it to be known.... And so the knowledge He did not have according to His human nature, which made Him, like the angels, a creature, this knowledge along with the angels who are creatures He said He did not have. Therefore He who is God and man knows the day and the hour of judgment; but the reason for this is because God is man. But the issue is most manifest, for whoever is not a Nestorian can nowise be an Agnoete. For anyone who confesses the very incarnate wisdom of God, how can he say there is anything that the wisdom of God does not know? It is also written: “Jesus knowing that the Father had given Him all things into His hands.’ If He knows all things, assuredly He knows the day and the hour of the judgment; therefore who is so foolish as to say that the Son received into His hands what He was ignorant of?”

In accordance with this doctrine thus explicitly formulated by Pope St. Gregory the Great, the common teaching of theologians will always be that Christ knew the day of judgment in His human nature, but not by reason of His human nature, which means that He did not know it by the natural light of the created intellect. Thus the angels, too, know this day only if they are supernaturally enlightened.

Before the time of St. Gregory several Fathers spoke in a similar manner, namely, that Christ knows all things, even the day and hour of the judgment; but He is silent about this latter event, or He says He does not know because He does not permit it to be known, and because it is not expedient that men be informed about it. St. Augustine teaches that

ignorance can in no way be attributed to that Infant in whom the Word was made flesh.

Sophronius is of the same opinion, and St. John Damascene says: “If the flesh from the moment of conception was immediately united with God... and the two constituted one identical suppositum, then how can it be that it was not endowed with absolutely all the gifts of wisdom and grace?” It is in this sense that the Fathers interpreted the words “full of grace and truth,” concerning the Word incarnate.

In our times there are several Modernist propositions that have been condemned by the Church concerning Christ’s knowledge. Among these are: “The natural sense of the Gospel texts cannot be reconciled with what our theologians teach about the consciousness and infallible knowledge of Jesus Christ.” “Christ was not always conscious of His Messianic dignity.”

Also later on the Holy Office declared that the following propositions cannot be safely taught: (1) “There is no evidence that Christ’s soul in this life possessed that knowledge which the blessed or comprehensors have; (2) That opinion cannot be called certain that concludes Christ’s soul was exempt from ignorance, but knew everything in the Word, past, present, and future, from the moment of His conception, or that He knew everything God knows by His knowledge of vision; (3) The opinion of certain more recent theologians about Christ’s limited knowledge is equally to be accepted in Catholic schools, as the opinion of the ancient theologians concerning Christ’s universal knowledge.”

We shall see later on, in the explanation of the article, the theological reasons given by St. Thomas for maintaining the universality of Christ’s knowledge.

Modernist objections. On the one hand, the Modernists assert that Christ erred in announcing that the end of the world was near; on the other hand, He said that He did not know the judgment day. These two objections are contradictory.

First objection. It has been examined at length by us in our work on apologetics, and there is no need to dwell upon it here. The difficulty arises from two Gospel texts. After foretelling the destruction of Jerusalem and the day of judgment, Jesus says: “This generation shall not pass till all these things be done.” In the other text it is recorded that before the transfiguration of Jesus, He said: “There are some of them that stand here,

that shall not taste death, till they see the Son of man coming in His kingdom."

Reply. This last text more probably alludes to the future and proximate resurrection of Christ. But other texts quoted from Sacred Scripture on this subject are indeed difficult to reconcile, for in this same discourse Christ spoke of both the end of Jerusalem and the end of the world, and although the first event is a figure of the second, it is difficult to detect what belongs to the first event, and what to the second. But what any particularly learned author has to say on this topic must be understood, if possible, as showing that there is no contradiction between the texts. However, as Catholic exegetes show, and several conservative Protestants, such as Godet and Sanday, the rationalist and Modernist interpretation is not founded on the Gospel texts, but is very much in contradiction to it.

1) Christ not only sent His apostles to the people of Israel, but He said to them: "Go ye into the whole world, and preach the gospel to every creature," and "Going therefore teach ye all nations." He expressly says: "And unto all nations the gospel must first be preached," before the second coming. Also: "And... many shall come from the east and the west...." But Christ did not announce these events as taking place in the immediate future.

2) He even distinguished in point of time between the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world, saying: "Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles, till the times of the nations be fulfilled," and de facto it is trodden down. Christ especially refused to state precisely when the end of the world would be, but He said: "It is not for you to know the times or moments which the Father hath put in His own power."

Second objection. Some of the earlier Fathers, such as St. Athanasius, St. Gregory Nazianzen, St. Cyril of Alexandria, say that Christ was ignorant of the Judgment Day.

Reply. These earlier Fathers were refuting the Arians and their only purpose was to bring out clearly the divinity of Christ in these texts, exempting it of every defect attributed to it, especially ignorance. Hence they said: If Christ was ignorant of the Judgment Day, He was ignorant of it not as the Word, but as man. The question of the perfection of Christ's human knowledge had not as yet been agitated. Hence no wonder that these earlier Fathers spoke somewhat inexactly on this subject.

Moreover, we shall see that also the more recent doctors and even Scholastics say that Christ knew the Judgment Day not from His human nature, that is, not by the natural light of the created intellect, but only by supernatural enlightenment.

Third objection. Some, too, have proposed the difficulty that the Gospel records that Christ often asked questions of men, such as, what they thought of Him, where the body of Lazarus was laid, and other such questions. They say that He even expressed amazement, for example, at the faith of the centurion and the incredulity of the people.

Reply. It is evident from the Gospel narrative that Christ asked questions in a human way, and likewise expressed admiration, but this was not from lack of knowledge, for the Evangelist says: “He needed not that any should give testimony of men; for He knew what was in man.”

It is therefore clearly established from all these texts that Christ was exempt from all error, which is de fide, and from all ignorance, which is at least theologically certain. Thus we gain a clearer understanding why the question is put about whether Christ already in this life enjoyed the beatific vision.

Did Christ, during His mortal life, enjoy the beatific vision?

Reply. The answer is that Christ did, and ever since the twelfth century it has been the traditional teaching of all theologians, so that it is at least a theologically certain truth.

Hence the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office declared (June 7, 1918) that the following proposition cannot be safely taught: “There is no evidence that Christ, living among men, had in His soul the knowledge the blessed or comprehensors have.”

Scriptural proof. There are, indeed, several texts in the New Testament from which it is evident that the Son of God, as God, sees the Father. Thus Jesus says of Himself: “As the Father knoweth Me, and I know the Father,” and “No one knoweth the Son but the Father; neither doth anyone know the Father, but the Son.”

It is considerably difficult to show from these texts that Christ even as man, already in this life, saw God immediately in His essence. But there are texts in the Fourth Gospel which make it sufficiently clear that Christ as man, already in this life, saw the Father.

For in this Gospel we read: “No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.”

And again: “He that cometh from above is above all.... And what He hath seen and heard, that He testifieth.” Also: “I speak that which I have seen with My Father.” Hence the common method of argumentation among theologians may be expressed in the following syllogistic form.

What Christ preached as man, He knew as man, for human speech is the result of human intellectual knowledge; otherwise the Word would take the place of the rational soul in Christ, which was the contention of Appollinaris. But as man, Christ declared what He saw with the Father and in the bosom of the Father. Therefore Christ saw those things in the bosom of the Father, as man, and it is also said that He heard them, which properly belongs not to God inasmuch as He is God, but to man.

Moreover, all knowledge of divine things, exclusive of the beatific vision, pertains to the order of faith. Hence, if Christ did not see those truths that are in God, we should have to say He believed them, and thus as man He would not have known many and most sublime truths. It would have to be said of Him that concerning God He had known what He is not, instead of what He is. But we have already seen that Christ, as man, was exempt from ignorance. Nevertheless there is truly a difference between nescience and ignorance, and it would be possible for one to say that Christ did not know the secret of God’s intimate life, but not that He was ignorant of it, simply because it was not as yet fitting for Him to know it. On the contrary, this fittingness will be clarified farther on in the theological proof from reason.

This argument is confirmed by the following Gospel text: “Not that any man hath seen the Father, but He who is of God, He hath seen the Father.”

This means that He not only saw the secrets of the Father in His hidden life, but He also saw the Father Himself. The word “Vidit” is written as a quasi-preterite so as to make it clear that this vision transcends time, or, as the theologians say, it is measured by participated eternity.

There are two other texts from the Gospel which make it manifest that Christ had consciousness of and not merely faith in His divine nature and personality. For the Evangelist records Jesus as saying: “Although I give testimony of Myself, My testimony is true, for I know whence I came and whither I go, I know and not only believe.” And again He says: “I came out from God. I came forth from the Father and am come into the world.” When Christ says, “I know whence I came.” He was conscious not only of His mission, but also of His divine nature and personality. But this clear

consciousness of His divine nature transcends the supernatural knowledge of faith, for faith is of things not seen, and above the supernatural knowledge of faith there is only the beatific vision, as will be more clearly seen farther on.

Finally, there is another Gospel text in which Christ speaks more clearly as man when He says: “No man hath ascended into heaven, but He that descended from heaven, the Son of man who is in heaven.” The Son of man is Christ as man, and it is said of Him that He has already ascended into heaven, and that He is now in heaven, which means in paradise or in the beatific state. It cannot be said that He is already in heaven solely by means of the hypostatic union, for the whole context is concerned with ascent in the order of knowledge; for in the text that immediately precedes, Jesus had said: “If I have spoken to you earthly things, and you do not believe; how will you believe if I shall speak to you of heavenly things.” Christ, in calling others to the faith, never says that He Himself believes, but that He sees, and knows whence He came, namely, by the knowledge of vision, and that already “He is in heaven.” This text is confirmed by another, in which Jesus says: “‘Father, I will that where I am, they also whom Thou hast given Me may be with Me; that they may see My glory, which Thou hast given Me.”

Proof from tradition. The above-mentioned texts of Sacred Scripture are furthermore declared and explained by tradition. The Second Council of Constantinople implicitly affirms Christ’s beatific vision in this life, when it says that “He did not increase in holiness as He advanced in the performance of good works.” If He did not have the beatific vision from the beginning of His existence, He would have very much increased in holiness, by passing from the state of faith and of wayfarer to that of vision, and to the final state of glory in heaven. The Fathers likewise in various ways affirming that Christ did not increase in holiness, implicitly teach that He was from the beginning of His existence both comprehensor and wayfarer, which we find afterward is the common teaching, especially since the twelfth century.

Rouet de Journel quotes several patristic texts that explicitly affirm Christ’s beatific vision in this life. Thus Eusebius of Caesarea says: “Then, too, when [Christ] was living among men, He nevertheless accomplished everything, in the meantime being with the Father and in the Father, and at the same time He likewise took care of all things, both celestial and

terrestrial, nowhere without that presence, which is in all things, our way excluded, nor hindered by the divine presence from acting in His accustomed way." St. Basil clearly enough affirms that Christ, our Savior, already had the beatific knowledge in the highest degree.

This is more clearly asserted by St. Fulgentius, who writes: "How harsh it is and entirely incompatible with sound faith to say that Christ's soul, even in this life, did not have complete knowledge of His divine nature, with which we believe that He naturally constituted one person." And he adds: "That soul knew His divine nature completely, yet the soul is not the divine nature. Therefore that very divine nature is naturally known to it, but that soul received from the divine nature, which it knew, the power to know It"

Finally, St. Augustine maintains that Paul, who was rapt to the third heaven, saw the divine essence and not merely a certain refulgence of this brightness. But if, as St. Augustine says, St. Paul had the beatific vision transiently, already in this life, then a fortiori Christ Himself must have had it, and not merely in a transient way.

Theological proof. The first argument is taken from the end of the Incarnation. It is one of fitness and from this point is most convincing. It may be expressed by the following syllogism.

What is in potentiality is reduced to act by what is in act. But men are in potentiality to see God to which they are ordained by God, and to which they must be brought by Christ's human nature. Therefore Christ as man most fittingly had the beatific vision.

Major. It is evident, for it enunciates the very principle of causality. Thus nothing becomes hot except by what is actually hot; and the cause must always be more efficacious than its effect.

It is, of course, true that Christ's soul is only the instrumental cause of glory in the blessed, not by its own power, but by the power of the principal agent, namely, the Deity. Nevertheless it is a most excellent instrument, which is capable of being instrumental in producing the form which is beatitude. Therefore it is fitting for the soul actually to have this beatitude. Hence St. Thomas does not infer that this was strictly necessary but that it was proper because it was becoming.

We thus have from this application of the major to Christ's humanity an argument of fitness. It must also be said, however, that what is more fitting and more excellent must be granted to Christ, unless it be incompatible with

the end of the Incarnation, and especially if it manifestly contributes to this end, as will be explained in the minor. Christ is, of course, the most perfect Redeemer.

Minor. It is de fide, both as to the ordaining of men to the beatific vision, and as to Christ's influence as Savior on them, in bringing them to eternal life. Christ said; "I am the way and the truth and the life." He is the way as man, and as God He is the truth and the life. Similarly a text from St. Paul is quoted in this article, which says: "It became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, who had brought many children into glory, to perfect the author of their salvation, by His passion." For Him to bring men into glory, He most fittingly had it already in this life.

The force of this argument of fitness is more clearly seen when Christ as man is compared with the apostles, the great doctors of later times, and the higher contemplatives. The Savior of all, as we said, the head of the Church, both militant, suffering, and triumphant; He was the supreme doctor in divine matters, the Master of all masters and contemplatives, from whom we have received the fullness of the revelation of life. In other words, already on earth, He was, as man, the supreme witness of divine truth, already transcending the beatified angels, so that St. Paul speaking in Christ's name, could say: "But though we or an angel from heaven preach a gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema." Thus Christ as the Master of all masters and higher contemplatives is the most perfect leader to beatitude even to the end of time, which means that He will be surpassed by no master. Therefore it was most becoming to him, as man, that He should give testimony as an ocular witness concerning the beatific vision, and that He should have complete knowledge of the ultimate end to which He must bring all wayfarers of all times in this life.

Confirmation. This argument of fitness is all the more convincing when we consider either the sublime contemplation of St. John the Evangelist concerning the Word, in the Prologue of his Gospel, or that of St. Paul, the doctor of the Gentiles, who says: "I know a man in Christ above fourteen years ago (whether in the body I know not, or out of the body, I know not, God knoweth), such a one caught up to the third heaven. And I know such a man, whether in the body or out of the body, I know not, God knoweth, that he was caught up into paradise, and heard secret word which it is not granted to man to utter." But if St. Paul, that he might be the doctor of the

Gentiles, and might always have more, by his preaching, in his mind and heart than in utterance, received such a gift of contemplation, so that his preaching came from the fullness of his contemplation, as St. Thomas says, what must be thought of Christ's contemplation, so that He might fittingly be the supreme Doctor of all generations of men? Christ must have, however, what is most fitting for Him to have.

Moreover, it must be noted that St. Thomas, following St. Augustine, maintains that St. Paul, when in rapture, "saw the very essence of God and not a certain reflection of His clarity"; and so he concludes: "Therefore it is more becoming to hold that he saw God in His essence." St. Thomas considers this view the more probable one. But if such was the case, then a fortiori, Christ already in this life saw the Deity.

St. Thomas, too, because of his sublime contemplation, toward the end of his life became incapable of dictating any more of his Theological Summa, which appeared to him as straw, and not wheat; yet Christ's contemplation was far more sublime. It certainly transcended Adam's contemplation in the state of innocence, concerning which St. Thomas says: "Adam did not see God in His essence.... The difference between the vision the blessed enjoy and that granted to the wayfarer does not consist in this, that the former sees more perfectly and the other less perfectly, but in this, that the former sees God and the latter does not see Him." To believe is not to see, for faith is of things not seen. Adam's contemplation in the state of innocence remained within the order of faith, whereas Christ's contemplation in this life transcended this order.

Thus we understand how Christ's preaching is both most sublime and most simple and beyond all possibility of contradiction. Moreover, it is adapted to all minds, to most learned or simple minds; whereas, on the contrary, human teachers often speak in a terminology that is not accessible to all, because they do not sufficiently realize the relations that should exist between the doctrine to be explained and the more profound aspiration of the human heart. On this subject Bossuet remarks: "Who would not admire the condescension He shows in adapting the sublimity of His doctrine to His audience? It is milk for children and entirely bread for the strong. We see Him filled with God's secrets, but He is not astonished at this, as other mortals are to whom He communicates Himself. He speaks in a natural way of them, as though born to these secrets and this glory. What He has beyond

measure, this He imparts to others by degrees, so that our weakness may be able to bear it."

He is the supreme Master, of unique and incomparable authority. Thus with the greatest simplicity He enlightens the mind, fills the heart with holy joy, and efficaciously moves the will to upright and holy action. This preaching must come from the plenitude of most sublime contemplation.

Finally, this argument would find its corroboration by considering what such mystics as St. John of the Cross and St. Theresa have to say about most sublime mystic contemplation in this life, and the intellectual vision of the Most Holy Trinity by means of infused species. This vision, so far as God is not yet seen directly as He is in His essence, belongs to the order of faith. There is not yet intrinsic evidence of the mystery of the Trinity, so that it is quite evident that God could not be God if He were not the triune God. But Christ already in this life certainly had a sublimer contemplation of the Trinity than that of the most sublime contemplative, even, as we shall see farther on, He was not without it when dying on the cross. Hence St. Paul says that in Christ Jesus "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

This argument is derived from the end of the Incarnation. There are other arguments that have their foundation in the divine personality of Christ, and His consciousness of this personality.

Second argument. It rests on the consciousness Christ had of His divine nature and of His divine personality. He said, as we already remarked: "Although I give testimony of Myself, My testimony is true, for I know whence I came and whither I go." And again: "I came out from God. I came forth from the Father and am come into the world." From these texts it is clearly enough established that Christ was conscious of His divine nature, for He does not say "I believe," but "I know whence I came." There is also another text in which He says: "I speak that which I have seen with My Father." He spoke as man, therefore He sees as man.

But this consciousness would not transcend the order of faith unless it were the direct vision of the Deity; for above the order of faith illuminated by the gifts of the Holy Ghost, such as we find in saints who are still wayfarers, there is only the beatific vision. Therefore, if Christ did not have this beatific vision, then He only believed in His divine nature and divine personality, just as the saints believe in the indwelling of the most Holy Trinity in the souls of the just.

Objection. The saints who are still wayfarers have a quasi-experimental knowledge of this presence of the most Holy Trinity through the filial love God enkindles in their hearts, as St. Thomas says, for concerning the following text of St. Paul, “The Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit.” he remarks: “He gives testimony by means of the filial love He enkindles in our hearts.”

Reply. This quasi-experimental knowledge does not rise above the order of faith, for it is the result of faith illumined by the gifts of the Holy Ghost, especially the gift of wisdom, and so it is faith penetrating and tasting the mysteries of God in accordance with the text: “Taste and see that the Lord is sweet.” But these saints who are still wayfarers do not see the Trinity present in themselves, but they have a certain experimental knowledge and belief of this presence. On the contrary, Christ said: “I know whence I came.” “I speak that which I have seen with My Father.”

Third argument. It has its foundation in the influences of the hypostatic union. By the very fact of the hypostatic union, which in itself is more exalted than the beatific vision, Christ’s soul was in the state of comprehensor. But this state of comprehensor pertains to the beatific vision. Therefore it was fitting for Christ to be both wayfarer and comprehensor, as all theologians commonly admit, especially after the twelfth century.

This argument is corroborated by considering the overflow from this grace of union. For the nearer any recipient is to an inflowing cause, the more it partakes of its influence, as already stated in discussing the fullness of habitual grace in Christ. But Christ’s human nature was united personally to the Word of God. Therefore it was supremely fitting for Christ as man, even in this life, to participate in this most perfect grace, which is the grace that is consummated by glory.

Fourth argument. It is founded on natural sonship. Christ as man, was predestined not to divine adoptive sonship, but to divine natural sonship, which surpasses even glory. But divine natural filiation implies the right to divine heirship, even to the immediate attainment of this heirship, which consists in the intuitive vision of God. Therefore the beatific vision was befitting to Christ as man, even in this life.

As we have already stated, what was befitting to Christ must be attributed to Him, especially if this serves, as we have seen, the end of the redemptive Incarnation, so that Christ may be the ideal Master of all masters even to the end of the world.

It must be noted that this doctrine is also confirmed from what St. Thomas teaches concerning the knowledge of the apostles.

The theologically certain conclusions to be deduced from all these arguments is that Christ already in this life had the beatific vision, and truly was, as commonly admitted by theologians since the twelfth century, both wayfarer and comprehensor. Thus Christ already in this life clearly saw the Trinity and all mysteries of grace, such as that efficacious grace is not only reconciled with free will, but is also the reason why the choice is free.

Doubt. Did Christ have the beatific vision from the first moment of His conception?

Reply. St. Thomas answers this question in the affirmative because Christ's human nature from the first moment of its creation was assumed by the Word, and the beatific vision befitted Christ as man, inasmuch as, by virtue of the hypostatic union, He was the head of the Church. Hence all the preceding proofs apply with equal force for the first moment of conception. For this was in no way repugnant to the end of the Incarnation; it was even befitting to this end. Moreover, the Council of Constantinople condemned the proposition that Christ would have become better; but He would have become better if He had received the beatific vision in the course of the present life.

Objection. It is more perfect to merit the glory of heaven than to have it without merit, and Christ's merits were completed only by His death. In fact, Jesus said, as recorded in the Gospel: "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into His glory?" Therefore Christ entered into glory only after His death.

Reply. With St. Thomas, I distinguish the antecedent, namely, that it is also more perfect for Christ to have a thing by merit than without merit "unless it be of such a nature[for example, a gift] that its want would detract from Christ's dignity and perfection more than would accrue to Him by merit. Hence He merited neither grace nor knowledge, nor the beatitude of His soul, nor the Godhead..., the want of which would have diminished Christ's dignity more than His merits would have increased it. But the glory of the body and the like are less than the dignity of meriting which pertains to the virtue of charity." Thus Christ merited the glory of His body, which is the sense of the text quoted above from St. Luke.

Second objection. Utmost joy is incompatible with utmost sorrow. But Christ said in the Garden of Gethsemane: "My soul is sorrowful even unto

death.” Therefore at this time He had neither this beatific joy, nor hence the beatific vision, to which this joy is the necessary sequel.

Reply. In answer to this, we say with St. Thomas: that utmost joy is incompatible with utmost sorrow concerning absolutely the same object considered in the same aspect, I concede; otherwise, I subdistinguish; naturally incompatible, I concede; supernaturally so, I deny. But Christ was supernaturally both wayfarer, inasmuch as His human nature was passible, and comprehensor in the higher part of the mind. Nay, even as we showed in another work, His utmost joy and His utmost sorrow were the result of this same plenitude of grace.

On the one hand, from the plenitude of consummated grace there resulted the light of glory, the beatific vision, the highest degree of love of God, and supreme joy. On the other hand, from this same plenitude of Christ’s grace as wayfarer, and from His utmost love for God and for us, there resulted the utmost of supernatural grief for the sins of men, inasmuch as they are an offense against God and bring supernatural death to our souls. Moreover, because of His utmost love for God and for us, Christ willed as priest and voluntary victim to offer Himself as a most perfect holocaust; and for this reason, in virtue of His love, He most freely delivered Himself up to grief, by preventing the overflow of glory from the higher part of His mind into the lower parts and allowed Himself to be overwhelmed by all manner of grief in His sensitive nature. Herein is the miracle consequent upon the unique state of Christ as both wayfarer and comprehensor.

St. Thomas says: “Christ grieved not only over the loss of His own bodily life, but also over the sins of all others. And this grief in Christ surpassed all grief of every contrite heart, both because it flowed from a greater wisdom and charity, by which the pang of contrition is intensified, and because He grieved at the one time for all sins, according to Isaias 53:4: “Surely He hath carried our sorrows. “

St. Thomas says likewise in another treatise about Christ’s passion: “These same things about which[Christ] grieved according to the senses, imagination, and lower reason, in the higher[reason] were a source of joy, inasmuch as He referred them to the order of divine wisdom.... He allowed each of the lower powers to be moved by its own impulse,” and He experienced sadness in the highest degree so that He might become a perfect holocaust. Thus He rejoiced in His passion inasmuch as it contributed to the redemption of the human race, and it made Him sad

inasmuch as it was contrary to nature. Thus He most freely abandoned Himself to grief, limiting the beatific joy to the summit of His mind and preventing it from overflowing into the lower part of His mind and into His sensitive nature. Thus, by most freely abandoning Himself to grief, as a most generous and voluntary victim, He prevented the overflow of joy of the higher part of the mind into the lower. But this grief ceased when Christ was no longer a wayfarer. Hence Christ suffering in His human nature is like a mountain, the summit of which is poised in the clear sky, the base of which is made desolate by stormy weather.

THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER CHRIST HAD IMPRINTED OR INFUSED KNOWLEDGE

State of the question. Besides the beatific vision, did Christ have knowledge infused by God, which is also called imprinted knowledge, inasmuch as it is given to the soul along with the nature as in the angels? The question concerns knowledge that is not only per accidens infused, but also per se, namely, that can be caused only by God, and cannot be acquired by one's own acts.

The difficulty is: (1) It seems that the beatific vision, since it is perfect knowledge, excludes that which is imperfect, and so it excludes faith; (2) it seems that infused knowledge is at least superfluous, just as the disposition for a form is superfluous, when it is already present; (3) finally, just as matter cannot receive simultaneously two forms, so also the intellect cannot simultaneously receive these two kinds of knowledge, the beatific and the infused.

Conclusion. It befitted Christ as man to have infused knowledge besides the beatific vision.

Scriptural proof. St. Paul says: "In Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." But included in these treasures is infused knowledge as found in the angels and in disembodied spirits, a knowledge which several of the saints also received in this life for the perfect exercise of their mission. Thus the apostles received the gift of tongues, but this knowledge of languages was in them only per accidens infused, because they could have learned these languages by their own efforts. Yet some saints also received knowledge that was at least per se infused concerning certain things, as mystic theologians show especially when they treat of intellectual visions that take place through the intermediary of infused

species. St. Paul, too, who heard “the secret words of God,” received either the beatific vision as a transient act, which is the opinion of St. Augustine and St. Thomas, or else a sublime form of infused knowledge, transmitted by means of infused species. Therefore infused knowledge pertains to these “treasures of wisdom and knowledge,” which St. Paul speaks of. The Fathers often speak of Christ’s imprinted knowledge, but they do not as yet explicitly distinguish it from beatific knowledge. But from the time of Peter Lombard, theologians commonly admit three kinds of knowledge in Christ, namely, beatific, infused, and acquired. This common consent of the theologians, however, would have for us the force of a certain argument from tradition if they were to assert that this doctrine is de fide; this, however, they do not assert. Hence it is only a theological conclusion that is commonly admitted by the Scholastics, which does not appear to be definable by the Church as doctrine that pertains to the faith, because it is the result of a strictly illative process of reasoning, and is not merely explicative. This consent of the theologians gives at least great probability to this opinion about the kinds of knowledge in Christ, as being a commonly accepted opinion.

Theological proof. It was fitting that the nature assumed by the Word should not be imperfect. But it would have been imperfect without infused knowledge. Therefore it was fitting that Christ as man should have infused knowledge.

Major. It expresses a certain moral necessity, which presupposes the hypostatic union, namely, that what is more worthy and more excellent and is not repugnant to the end of the Incarnation, must be granted to Christ. In other words, only corporal defects are to be attributed to Christ, such as passibility, death, thirst, and such defects that are necessary for our redemption by the sacrifice on the cross, as will be stated farther on.

This moral necessity did not lessen, as some said, the divine liberty, because it depends on the most free decree of the redemptive Incarnation. But this decree being posited, then the great fitness of the Incarnation follows as a necessary consequence, and it was necessary because it was fitting. In other words, it was necessary to grant the Word of God incarnate what manifestly befits Him. Thus the conclusion is proved and is not merely a persuasive argument.

Minor. It is proved by the following syllogism. Everything in potentiality is imperfect unless it be reduced to act. But the possible human intellect is

in potentiality to all intelligible things, and to know them not only in the Word by the beatific vision, or merely in themselves by acquired knowledge, but in themselves by infused knowledge, as the angels and disembodied spirits know them. Therefore the soul of Christ had infused knowledge inasmuch as His possible human intellect was in potentiality to know intelligible things as the angels and disembodied spirits know them, which is by infused species.

This knowledge befitted Christ even in this life, before the separation of His soul from the body, because He was not only wayfarer but also comprehensor. Hence St. Thomas says: “Since Christ was both comprehensor and wayfarer, He had each way of considering things, one by which He was like the angels, inasmuch as He considered things without process of reasoning, the other by having recourse to phantasms.” Thus anyone who has the gift of tongues can actually make use of it without having to study the grammar of the language, but this can also be studied. Hence, as St. Thomas says: “Even as in the angels, according to Augustine (Gen. ad lit., Bk. IV, chaps. 22, 24, 30), there is a double knowledge: one the morning knowledge, whereby they know things in the Word; the other the evening knowledge, whereby they know things in their proper natures by infused species, so also there was this twofold knowledge in Christ.” These species were imprinted on the minds of the angels by the Word of God, and it equally befitted the Word of God to perfect Christ’s soul, which was personally united to the Word. Finally, Christ’s soul would have been made more perfect if it had received these infused species only after its separation from the body. It was not fitting for Christ in this mortal life to be lacking in experimental knowledge of the mode of cognition pertaining to disembodied spirits, for whom He merited and grieved, and for whom He died. When in the parable of the wicked rich man He spoke of the state of the soul separated from the body, this shows that He had experimental knowledge of the mode of cognition of these souls.

This thesis finds its confirmation from the extraordinary events in the lives of the saints, for example, in the life of St. Catherine of Siena, for our Lord gave her infused knowledge concerning the hidden lives of several saints, and marvelous spiritual insight in doctrinal matters, a doctrine which she dictated when in ecstasy, and which is preserved for us in her Dialogue; she also learned to read and write not by her own efforts, but our Lord Himself was her teacher; even the secrets of hearts and distant events she

often knew by infused knowledge. Similar extraordinary knowledge was granted to other saints, and a fortiori this was the prerogative of the most holy soul of Christ.

Doubt. Is this knowledge only per accidens infused, or is it per se infused?

Reply. It is per accidens infused so far as it concerns things that can be known by human efforts, and it is per se infused so far as it concerns things that cannot be acquired by human efforts and are therefore beyond the powers of our intellect. In fact, we must, in the same way, distinguish in Christ between two kinds of subordinated infused knowledge, just as in the just there are two kinds of prudence, one infused and of the supernatural order, specified by a supernatural object, the other acquired and of the natural order, specified by a natural object. Thus a musician has in a certain manner the art of music in the practical intellect, but the ability to play is in the hands. Indeed, Christ could by His infused knowledge of supernatural things know also by this eminent knowledge natural things in their relation to supernatural things, but it befitted Him also to know these things in another way, namely, by knowledge that is per accidens infused to which His intellect was in potentiality. Thus Christ knew the supernatural secrets of hearts by knowledge that is per se infused, just as in our times He speaks in an exceptional way to certain saints, who are still wayfarers, in their own language or dialect.

Confirmation of this doctrine from the solution of the objections of this article.

Reply to first objection. The beatific vision excludes faith, which is of things not seen, but it does not exclude infused knowledge; for the same intellect can by two distinct means see things in two ways: first, in the Word, and secondly in themselves. Thus there are two ways, either by physics or by mathematics, whereby we can know the same conclusion, for example, the rotundity of the earth.

Reply to second objection. As he who knew some conclusion by a probable argument, and afterward knows it by a demonstrative argument, can still consider the probable argument; although he no longer holds it as an opinion that he fears may be wrong, that is, he no longer wavers between uncertainty and certainty, so Christ can have simultaneously both beatific knowledge and infused knowledge.

Reply to third objection. The beatific vision does not render infused knowledge superfluous; for the ineffable knowledge of things in the Word does not make the knowledge of them in themselves superfluous. Moreover, these two acts can be simultaneous, provided that there is subordination, just as we can have knowledge of principle and conclusion. The Blessed Virgin Mary also had infused knowledge on this earth.

FOURTH ARTICLE: WHETHER CHRIST HAD ANY ACQUIRED KNOWLEDGE

State of the question. This article concerns the habit of experimental knowledge acquired by the intellect through species abstracted from phantasms, or obtained gradually by individual acts.

The difficulty is: (1) If Christ had this knowledge, then He did not have it perfectly, because He never studied. (2) This acquired knowledge seems superfluous if Christ already had directly infused knowledge of created things, and especially if He already had accidentally infused knowledge of sensible things.

Conclusion. Christ had knowledge that is essentially capable of being acquired, and that was also actually acquired by Him.

Scriptural proof. St. Paul says: “Whereas, indeed, He was the Son of God, He learned obedience by the things which He suffered,” that is, by what He experienced. Farther on, St. Thomas quotes the following Gospel text: “Jesus advanced in wisdom and age, and grace with God and men,” which He explains as resulting from an increase of acquired knowledge.

St. Thomas himself admits in the present article that he corrects what he wrote in an earlier work on this subject, in which he taught that Christ had knowledge that is essentially acquirable, yet it was not acquired by His own acts, but was accidentally infused, as in the case of Adam who was created completely developed. But now St. Thomas maintains that, as it was fitting for Christ’s body to develop gradually, so also it was proper for His soul to advance gradually in the knowledge of natural things. Hence the Evangelist says: “Jesus advanced in wisdom and age.”

Theological proof. Nothing that God planted in our nature was wanting to the human nature of Christ, among which is the active intellect or the connatural active principle of intellectual knowledge.

But the active intellect would have been useless in Christ, lacking in its own and special operation, if He did not have knowledge acquired by His

own acts by abstracting intelligible species from phantasms.

Therefore Christ had this knowledge.

Objection. Scotus maintains that the active intellect neither was useless in Adam, nor is it so in the blessed. The purpose of the active intellect is not only to abstract species, but it also serves the purpose of illustrating principles to be made use of in conclusions.

Reply. The Thomists point out that there is a difference between Christ and Adam, who was created not as a child, but as fully developed, as there is a difference between Christ and disembodied spirits that no longer have the connatural mode of understanding by turning to phantasms. If Christ had not acquired knowledge by repeated acts of the intellect, His active intellect would have been useless, not absolutely so, but as regards its connatural mode of operating; for it would be deprived of that act to which it is entitled in such a state and at such a time.

Moreover, it was no imperfection for Christ that as a child He was deprived of speech, or that He was unable as yet to acquire perfect knowledge of things. He already had by the beatific knowledge superabundant cognition for the perfect knowledge of divine things and of other things in the Word. Therefore Christ in a certain sense progressed intellectually, but not morally.

The solution of the objections of this article confirms the reply of St. Thomas.

Reply to first objection. “It was more fitting for Christ to possess a knowledge acquired by discovery than by being taught”, hence He acquired acquirable knowledge not by learning, but rather by discovery, by a consideration of nature and men.

Reply to second objection. “It behooved Christ’s intellect to be also perfected with regard to phantasms,” although it was already perfected by infused knowledge. For this is a new and connatural mode of knowing. Someone may already have certainty of knowledge by the gift of prophecy that death will come on a certain day; in another way, however, there is experimental knowledge of the moment of death.

Reply to third objection. There was also a distinction between this acquired knowledge and infused knowledge concerning sensible things, for this second kind of knowledge, coming as it does from on high, is not proportioned to phantasms. Thus he who sings the melody of a musical composition solely from memory, not having studied music, can afterward

in another way know this melody by distinguishing the various parts and notes of the musical score, reading it even to the least detail. Previously he knew the musical composition as some general melody, but now he knows its parts and the way these are distinctly related to the whole.

Thus, then, it is the common teaching of theologians since the time of Peter Lombard, that there were three kinds of knowledge in Christ: the beatific, infused, and acquired knowledge.

Each particular knowledge must now be considered briefly.

CHAPTER XII: QUESTION 10: THE BEATIFIC KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST'S SOUL

1) Was it comprehensive? (2) Though not comprehensive, did it extend to all things; if not to all possible things, at least to all things that God knows by the knowledge of vision, including even the Judgment Day? (3) Did Christ's soul know the infinite in the Word? at least those things that are in the potentiality of the creature, such as the thoughts and affections of immortal souls, which will never end? (4) Did Christ's soul see the Word clearer than any other creature did?

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER THE SOUL OF CHRIST COMPREHENDED THE WORD

Reply. The answer is in the negative because "the infinite is not comprehended by the finite."

Reply to second objection. "Christ's soul sees the whole of God's essence, yet His soul does not see it totally," that is, "not as perfectly as it is knowable"; for it is infinitely knowable.

The contrary opinion was condemned in the Council of Basel, and this condemnation was approved by Nicholas V.

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER CHRIST'S SOUL KNEW ALL THINGS IN THE WORD

Reply. Christ's soul did not know in the Word all possible things, but it knew all present, past, and future things that will be.

Proof of negative part. If Christ's soul knew all possible things, this would mean that it comprehended all that God can do, which would mean that it comprehended the divine power, and consequently the divine essence.

Proof of affirmative part. It may be presented in the following syllogistic form.

No beatified intellect fails to know in the Word whatever pertains to itself. But to Christ all things belong, inasmuch as all things are subject to Him, as the head of the Church, the end of the universe, the Lord of heaven and earth, the judge of the living and the dead. Therefore Christ's intellect knows in the Word all things that are subject to Him.

Evidently it belongs to the moral head to know his members and his influence for them; to one who has knowledge of the end to know the means by which it can be attained; to the judge to know all things that concern his tribunal, such as each and every thought of all men; the judge must also know whom to punish, and whom to reward.

In fact, Christ's soul seems to have not only habitual knowledge but also actual knowledge of all these things, like a perfect theologian who not only could at will successively contemplate all theological conclusions, but who could simultaneously and actually contemplate all of them. The reason for this is that the beatific vision, objectively considered, is measured by eternity, which admits of neither succession nor change. Hence all the thoughts and actions of angels and men, known by Christ, although as regards their own duration they are successive, nevertheless are simultaneously present in the Word, according to the one now of eternity. It is like an intelligible panorama, just as in the sensible order the visible stars of the firmament are all seen in one glance. It must be observed that beatific love is likewise measured by participated eternity, as also Christ's adoration, thanks, and internal offering of Himself to His Father. Such enduring acts as these constitute, so to speak, the soul of the sacrifice of the Mass, whose principal priest is Christ as man.

The outstanding difficulty concerns the Judgment Day, inasmuch as we read in the Gospel that Christ says: "But of that day or hour no man knoweth, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father."

Reply to first objection. St. Thomas says: (1) "Arius and Eunomius understood this saying... of the divine knowledge of the Son, whom they held to be less than the Father.... But this will not stand, since all things were made by the Word of God" (John 1:3). Hence, especially inasmuch as Christ is God, He knew everything. (2) The Son knows also in the human nature the Day of Judgment, because, as Chrysostom argues (hom. 78 in Matt.); "If it is given to Christ as man to know how to judge which is greater, much more is it given to Him to know the less, namely, the time of Judgment" But "He is said not to know the day and the hour of the

Judgment, because He does not make it known." Pope St. Gregory the Great spoke similarly against the Agnoetae.

If some of the earlier Fathers spoke less accurately on this subject, this is because they were disputing with the Arians, to whom they replied: Christ did not know the Judgment Day, not indeed as God as if they conceded that He did not know it as man.

The question of the knowledge given to Christ's soul had not yet arisen, and it had not yet occurred to anyone to distinguish between knowledge acquired naturally by human efforts, and knowledge not so acquired but received from a supernatural source, which is not meant to be made known to men.

Reply to second objection. "The soul of Christ knows all things that God knows in Himself by the knowledge of vision," yet not so clearly and distinctly.

THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER THE SOUL OF CHRIST CAN KNOW THE INFINITE IN THE WORD

The answer consists of two conclusions.

First conclusion. The soul of Christ does not know the actually infinite; that is, as is evident from the context, He does not know an actually infinite multitude of substances, because such a multitude was not created, which was proved in a previous article, which stated: Multitude in nature is created, and everything created is comprehended under some clear intention. Nevertheless Christ's soul knows in the Word the thoughts and affections of angels and men. to which there will be no end, that is, they will go on for all eternity. But this multitude is not actually infinite, since all its parts do not constitute a simultaneous whole, and it is known, moreover, by Christ's soul inasmuch as it is represented in a certain unity, namely, in the infinitely perfect Word.

St. Thomas says: "But as material things can be received by the intellect immaterially, and many things unitedly, so can infinite things be received by the intellect, not after the manner of the infinite, but finitely." But what is infinite, not materially but in perfection, can be known, although it cannot be comprehended by Christ's soul, which can actually and simultaneously know all our thoughts throughout eternity. St. Thomas, inquiring whether the name "Word" imports relation to creation, says: "Because God by one

act understands Himself and all things, His one only Word is expressive not only of the Father, but of all creatures."

Second conclusion. Christ's soul knows in the Word infinite things that are in the potentiality of the creature. Thus, as stated in the counter-argument, "Christ's soul knows all its power and all it can do. It can cleanse, however, infinite sins."

Fourth Article: Whether Christ's Soul Sees The Word Or The Divine Essence More Clearly Than Does Any Other Creature

Reply. The answer is in the affirmative. This conclusion is de fide, as His fullness of grace is.

Scriptural proof. St. Paul says: "God set Christ on His right hand in the heavenly places, above all Principality and Power and Virtue and Domination, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." But this heavenly glory presupposes a more exalted knowledge of God.

Theological proof. The beatific vision is according to a participation of light that is derived from the Word of God. But Christ's soul, since it is united to the Word in person, is more closely associated with the Word than any other creature, even the angelic. Therefore Christ's soul received a greater influx of light, and thus sees the divine essence more perfectly.

Reply to second objection. Christ's soul sees the essence of God more clearly than even the highest of the angels, whose intellect is, nevertheless, naturally more powerful, because—and of this, Cajetan did not sufficiently take note—"the vision of the divine essence exceeds the natural power of any creature. And hence the degrees thereof depend rather on the order of grace, in which Christ is supreme, than on the order of nature, in which the angelic nature is placed before the human." Thus, granted an equal degree of glory, St. Joseph's soul sees the divine essence just as clearly as the higher angels do. Hence the beatific vision that belongs to Christ's soul is in the highest degree, "although, absolutely speaking, there could be a higher and more sublime degree by the infinity of the divine power." The highest possible degree of the light of glory cannot be conceived, because the divine nature is capable of infinite participation, and there is always an infinite difference between Christ's beatific vision and the uncreated and comprehensive vision, not as regards the object, but as regards the mode of cognition or penetration.

Cajetan seeks to explain the reply to the third objection of St. Thomas by saying: “If an angel were assumed by the Word of God in unity of person to an equal degree of glory, the angel would see God more perfectly than Christ’s soul would, and the degree of the beatific vision would be more sublime, not because of the more sublime light or degree of light, but because of the more sublime intellect that is equally illumined.” Thus, in Cajetan’s opinion, there can be a more sublime degree of the beatific vision in the angel, only because the angelic intellect is naturally more powerful than Christ’s human intellect, and therefore transcends it in this order.

A considerable number of the other Thomists do not agree with Cajetan, especially Alvarez, and they say against Cajetan that St. Thomas in his reply to the third objection had spoken “of a possibly more sublime degree,” not in the formal sense, but only materially, which is not his usual way of speaking. Moreover, they also remark that Cajetan’s view would conflict with the reply to the second objection in which St. Thomas said: “The essentially supernatural degrees of the vision depend rather on the order of grace... than on the order of nature.” Therefore, Christ’s soul sees God’s essence more clearly than the highest angels do. He received the light of glory in a degree that was in proportion to the plenitude of His grace, which is derived from the grace of union.

CHAPTER XIII: QUESTION II

The Infused Knowledge Of Christ's Soul

It is the knowledge by which Christ's soul knows things outside the Word. This question considers (1) the object of this knowledge, (2) its acts (a. 2-4), (3) its habits (a. 5, 6).

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER BY THIS KNOWLEDGE CHRIST KNOWS ALL THINGS

State of the question. The word "all" signifies not all possible things, but all things existing in any period of time, either natural or supernatural.

The difficulty is that it does not seem to pertain to the perfection of the human intellect to know things of which there are no phantasms. Therefore it does not seem that by this infused knowledge Christ knows angels as they are in themselves, or that He knows all singulars.

Reply. Nevertheless St. Thomas affirms that Christ by infused knowledge knew all things, both natural and supernatural, namely, all past, present, and future things; He did not, however, know the divine essence by this knowledge, since this is the proper object of the beatific vision.

St. Thomas, who is usually both conservative and prudent in his affirmations, does not fear to make this assertion, although not a few may look upon it as incredible.

Quasi-scriptural proof. The prophet says of Christ: "The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, of knowledge and counsel shall fill Him," under which are included all knowable things, both in the speculative and the practical orders. And Christ had these gifts more perfectly than the angels, because they were in proportion to the fullness of His grace and charity, and hence evidently without limitation.

Theological proof. It was fitting that Christ's soul should be entirely perfect by having all its power reduced to act.

But there is a twofold power in Christ's soul: one is natural for knowing all natural things, not only by acquired species, but also by infused species; the other is obediential for knowing all supernatural things, even by infused species, as often happens with the saints in this life. Therefore Christ knew all things by infused knowledge.

If perfect works of human art are at times most beautiful, how beautiful must be those of divine art and how sublime must be the spiritual and supernatural operations of divine goodness, actually in the Blessed Virgin and especially in Christ Himself !

This article defines most accurately the natural and the obediential powers, either as regards a natural agent or a supernatural and free agent. Thus the obediential power is insatiable, that is, it cannot be satisfied, but in Christ it is reduced to perfect act according to the most fitting purpose of divine wisdom, as already stated.

Reply to second objection. As separated souls see themselves and angels by their essence, so Christ's soul already in this life saw itself and angels by His essence, because Christ was both wayfarer and comprehensor. This seems to us incredible, as if one born blind were told that we have seen by one glance innumerable stars in the heavens most distant from one another.

Reply to third objection. The knowledge of singulars pertains to the perfection of practical knowledge. But Christ had fullness of prudence and of the gift of counsel. This befitted Him, as already stated, because He is judge of the living and the dead, head of the Church and even of the angels, supreme Lord of the whole world. It is, indeed, true that He already knew these singulars because of the beatific vision in the Word, but all comprehensors also know created things outside the Word.

Confirmation. The angels know all natural things even according to their individual conditions by means of infused species that are typified in or derived from the divine essence. But Christ, by infused knowledge, knows natural things by means of infused species similarly typified in or derived from the divine essence, and His cognition is not inferior to angelic cognition. Thus one who knows a melody merely from memory knows all its notes, although each successive note has neither been learned nor read, and at times some cannot read the notes.

These infused species in Christ's soul, although not so universal as the angelic species since they are proportioned to the vigor of Christ's human intellect, are not, however, so restricted as those that are abstracted from

sensible things, because they are likenesses derived from the divine essence. Moreover, the infused light of the gifts of wisdom, understanding, knowledge, and counsel is of a higher degree in Christ than in the angels, because it is proportioned to Christ's charity and the fullness of His habitual grace. But cognition is formally dependent more on light than on species, and thus the infused faith of angels as wayfarers was of the same species as ours, although the faith of the angels makes use of species that are infused and not acquired.

First doubt. How does Christ's infused knowledge include future contingent events and the secrets of hearts?

Reply. It includes these inasmuch as by this knowledge Christ knows the divine decrees in the terminative sense, not indeed as He knows them by the beatific knowledge, but through the intermediary of a certain species, which is a quasi-testimony of God revealing these future contingents and likewise the secrets of hearts.

Second doubt. Is this infused knowledge of future contingent events intuitive, just as by the beatific vision they are included in the Word and the now of eternity, in which futures are already present?

Reply. It is not intuitive. It is, however, called abstractive because it is measured by discrete time, which is not co-existent with the past and future as eternity is, which is the measure of beatific knowledge. Only eternity comprises all time, and in it future things are known not as future, but as present.

Third doubt. Does Christ's soul by means of essentially infused knowledge have quiddative knowledge of created supernatural gifts, for example, of sanctifying grace? Expressed more briefly: is it possible, apart from the beatific vision, to have quiddative knowledge or only analogical knowledge of sanctifying grace?

This question is of considerable importance, especially in its relation to the dignity of sanctifying grace.

Reply. The question is disputed among theologians, even among Thomists. Bannez, Alvarez, Lorca, and others deny that the knowledge is quiddative. They say that Christ's soul by inspired knowledge does not know sanctifying grace with objective evidence of it but with evidence that rests on divine testimony, which is objective evidence in the one who testifies. The reason is that sanctifying grace is intrinsically and essentially supernatural inasmuch as it is a formal participation of the divine nature as

this nature actually is, and there can be no quiddative knowledge of the formal participation of any object, unless there is quiddative knowledge of the object in which there is participation. Thus it is impossible to have quiddative knowledge of the power of a seed unless there is quiddative knowledge of the fruit from the seed. The divine essence, however, can be known quiddatively only by the beatific vision and not by infused knowledge, because no created species can adequately represent this essence. A fortiori, as these theologians say, the light of glory cannot be known quiddatively by infused knowledge, because it transcends any other created light whatever. Therefore, as these theologians say, this light of glory can be known quiddatively only in the Word, and not outside the Word. Still more so, according to these theologians, it is impossible for the soul of Christ by infused knowledge to know quiddatively the hypostatic union, for this union transcends the order of grace. Thus it was only by the beatific vision that Christ could have quiddative knowledge of the hypostatic union. This first opinion, proposed by Bannez, Alvarez, and others, if not certain, merits a degree of probability, in fact, it is the far more probable opinion.

Other theologians, however, such as Suarez, and several Thomists, such as the Salmanticenses, Gonet, John of St. Thomas, and Billuart, maintain that it is possible for Christ's soul by means of essentially infused knowledge to have quiddative knowledge of essentially supernatural created gifts. They give as their reason that these gifts are of limited entity and therefore representable by a limited infused species, such as the infused species of the angels. This opinion seems to me not so probable as the first, which is evident from the following objection.

Objection. These gifts, such as habitual grace and the light of glory, although they are created and limited, nevertheless are essentially supernatural and essentially refer to God as He is in Himself. But God cannot, by infused knowledge, be quiddatively known as He is in Himself. Therefore these gifts cannot be quiddatively known by infused knowledge.

Reply. These theologians deny the consequence, saying that grace is not a universal participation, but an analogical participation of the divine nature, and it suffices to know the existence of the divine essence. This reason does not appear convincing. They say: "Because the hypostatic union, a property of which is infused knowledge, is the radical principle of cognition of Christ's infused knowledge, it suffices that this union be of the same degree

of immateriality and perfection as the above-mentioned supernatural objects." This confirmation seems insufficient because the radical principle of infused knowledge does not change the nature of this knowledge, which is specified by its object, even though the infused light by which Christ's infused knowledge judges be substantially supernatural, as our faith is, which nevertheless does not give us quiddative knowledge of sanctifying grace. Hence it does not seem possible for infused knowledge, which makes use of created species, to have quiddative knowledge of sanctifying grace as it actually is. Thus the angels in the state of probation did not have quiddative knowledge of their grace, whereas on the contrary they already had quiddative knowledge of their angelic nature. This argument confirms us in saying that Christ already in this life had the beatific vision for the clear knowledge of His divine nature and personality.

Fourth doubt. Did Christ's soul by means of infused knowledge have evident cognition of the mystery of the Trinity as to its existence, it being supposed that only by the beatific vision is there quiddative knowledge of the Deity and the Trinity?

Reply. Alvarez and Lorca, as also Vasquez, answer in the negative, saying that the only way such knowledge is evident is from the evidence that is in the one testifying, inasmuch as the mystery of the Trinity was revealed to Christ's soul, yet it was not believed but seen by Him, by reason of the beatific vision He enjoyed, which is above infused knowledge, and this applies equally to the mystery of the Incarnation. This opinion, if not certain, is most probable.

But other Thomists, such as Gonet, John of St. Thomas, and Billuart, answer in the affirmative, because, so they say, by means of infused species Christ's soul outside the Word has knowledge of His beatific vision, the terminus of which is the Trinity. Thus He had by infused knowledge evidence concerning the existence of the Trinity, which is of a higher order that that enjoyed by the one who testifies to it.

It is difficult to prove the truth of this second opinion, since, as we saw in the solution of the preceding opinion, there is no certainty for its foundation, inasmuch as it is not certain and is even not probable, that by infused knowledge Christ's soul could have evident and quiddative knowledge of sanctifying grace and the light of glory. The possession of the beatific vision and a quiddative knowledge of the divine essence, of which

grace is a formal participation, are indispensable for a quiddative knowledge of sanctifying grace, which is the seed of glory.

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER CHRIST COULD USE THIS KNOWLEDGE WITHOUT TURNING TO PHANTASMS

Reply. Christ could use this infused knowledge without having to turn to phantasms. The reason is (1) that by this knowledge He could know separate substances, such as angels, that cannot be known by means of phantasms; (2) that Christ was both wayfarer and comprehensor, and the condition of a comprehensor's soul is for it to be nowise subject to its body, or dependent on it, but completely to dominate it. Thus Christ could merit even during sleep.

Reply to third objection. "Although the soul of Christ could understand without turning to phantasms, yet it could also understand by turning to phantasms," also by means of infused knowledge. This means that Christ could, as He chose, use this knowledge either by not turning to phantasms or by turning to them, forming or not forming in the imagination pictures of the same object as is known by this infused knowledge. Thus in the sensible order one may be inspired to sing the melody of a musical composition, writing or not writing the score at one's choice. Similarly one is free to think in one language, and possibly express one's thoughts in another language.

Corollary. We must take care to distinguish between infused contemplation and essentially infused knowledge, for this normally functions without having recourse to the imagination, as in the case of angels and separated souls, as also by very special favor with certain wayfarers. But infused contemplation, which is the result of living faith illumined by the gifts of wisdom and understanding, normally functions with the concurrence of the imagination, which is the normal manner of sanctification, but it is not infused knowledge.

THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER THIS KNOWLEDGE WAS COLLATIVE OR DISCURSIVE

St. Thomas replies that this knowledge was not collative or discursive in its acquisition, because it was divinely infused and not acquired by a process of reasoning. But Christ could use this knowledge in a discursive

way, like wayfarers, though He was independent of this discursive process. This means that He could, like wayfarers, by divers acts of reasoning deduce conclusions from principles, effects from causes, properties from essences, as men at times who already know the effects conclude them from their causes, not that they may learn them anew, but wishing to use the knowledge they have; or as theologians who at times deduce from some revealed truth another which is otherwise revealed, and which prior to its deduction is already a certainty of faith. The reason given by St. Thomas as stated in this article, is that the collative and discursive process is connatural to the rational soul, and also to the souls of the blessed, but not to the angels.

FOURTH ARTICLE: WHETHER IN CHRIST THIS INFUSED KNOWLEDGE WAS GREATER THAN THAT OF THE ANGELS

St. Thomas replies that this knowledge in Christ was far more excellent because of its influencing cause, which is the Word; for the light divinely infused in the soul of Christ is much more excellent than the natural light of the angels. So this infused knowledge in Christ was absolutely more certain than was the infused knowledge of the angels, and extended to many more things, namely, to all things, even Judgment Day, including everything that pertains to the supreme judge of the living and the dead, and to the king of the angels.

Nevertheless, in a qualified sense Christ’s infused knowledge was inferior to that of the angels, namely, on the part of the recipient, which is the rational soul, or as regards the mode of its reception, for, as we stated, Christ could use this knowledge by turning to phantasms and by having recourse to the discursive process of reasoning.

Moreover, as stated farther on it was connatural for Christ’s soul to receive species not so universal in scope as those of the angels. This means that the species are in proportion to the human intellect which is not so perfect as the angelic intellect. But if St. Thomas taught the contrary, namely, that the infused species in Christ’s soul were not so universal in scope as those of the angels, he clearly reversed his opinion in the sixth article of this question.

But although the infused knowledge of Christ as regards the mode of its reception is inferior to the angelic knowledge, this does not prevent it from

being absolutely more exalted. Thus St. Thomas teaches that “faith is simply more certain than wisdom, the understanding of first principles, and knowledge; but these three, as denoting evidence, are more certain relatively, that is, for us.” Similarly it is certain that the faith of the Blessed Virgin Mary was simply more exalted than the faith of the angels as wayfarers although she made use of species not so universal in scope; for the perfection of knowledge depends more on the light than on the species since the light is the more formal principle. For the light or the habit adapts itself to the faculty in the exercise of its act and especially in passing judgment.

FIFTH ARTICLE: WHETHER CHRIST’S INFUSED KNOWLEDGE WAS HABITUAL OR ACTUAL; THAT IS, WHETHER IT WAS ALWAYS IN ACT

The answer of St. Thomas: “The knowledge imprinted on the soul of Christ was habitual, for He could use it when He pleased.” The reason is that this knowledge was in Him according to the connatural mode of the human soul, which is to receive knowledge as a habit that can be used at will. Thus Christ’s infused knowledge was univocal to our knowledge, as stated in the argument and counter-argument of this article, though it was not univocal in species but in the genus of knowledge.

Reply to first objection. This infused knowledge of Christ was inferior to that of the beatific vision, for this latter was always actual with respect to everything He knew in this way; nevertheless it seems that Christ’s infused knowledge always actually knew certain objects even when He was asleep, during which times He could merit. Thus Christ’s soul in this way always knew itself.

SIXTH ARTICLE: WHETHER THIS INFUSED KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST WAS DISTINGUISHED BY DIVERSE HABITS

St. Thomas affirms that Christ’s infused knowledge was distinguished by different habits, because He made use of species not so universal in scope as those of the angels, and thus His knowledge was distinguished according to the different kinds of knowable things.

CHAPTER XIV: QUESTION 12: THE ACQUIRED KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST'S SOUL

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER CHRIST KNEW ALL THINGS BY THIS KNOWLEDGE

Reply. Christ did not know by this knowledge all things without exception, because all things cannot be known by species abstracted from the senses, and so by this knowledge He did not have quiddative knowledge of the angels, or also of all past, present, or future sensible singulars. By this knowledge, however, He knew everything capable of being known by the abstractive faculty, because Christ's intellective power was most excellent.

Objection. But Christ did not have experimental knowledge of all these things.

Reply to first objection. But from those things of which Christ had experimental knowledge, He came to acquire knowledge of everything else in this order by means of this actual experimental knowledge, namely, by induction and deduction, understanding causes from effects, effects from causes, like from like, contraries from contraries, according to the power of His intellective faculty.

Reply to second objection. "Thus in seeing heavenly bodies Christ could comprehend their powers and the effects they have upon other things here below."

Wherefore Christ's soul by this acquired knowledge did not know the rate of acceleration of falling objects, and hence the universal law of gravitation. St. Thomas, long before Newton, in explaining the following text of St. Paul, "Comforting one another, and so much the more as you see the day approaching," wrote this most profound comment: "One might say, why must we advance in faith? It is because natural motion, the more it approaches its terminus, the more it increases in intensity. It is the contrary with force. But grace inclines in a natural way. Therefore those in a state of grace, the nearer they approach their end, the more they must increase [in

grace] “ in accordance with the scriptural text: “‘The path of the just, as a shining light, goeth forward and increaseth even to perfect day.”

If St. Thomas, considering natural motion, such as that of a falling stone, observes not only that natural motion is swifter toward the end, but also that the connatural motion of souls toward God, their ultimate end, must be for them swifter as they approach nearer to God and are attracted by Him. If St. Thomas sees this, formulating, as it were, the law of attraction not only for bodies but also for spirits that tend toward God, what must have been the knowledge of Christ’s most sublime intellect, even by means of acquired knowledge !

This article presupposes the doctrine of inequality in human souls, notwithstanding their specific identity, as St. Thomas says: “The better the disposition of a body, the better the soul allotted to it.”

Hence, as St. Thomas says in another of his works: “We see real aptitude for vigorous thought in persons who are delicately constructed.... Likewise those in whom the imaginative, estimative, and memorative powers of the soul are better developed are better disposed for the act of understanding.” Providence eternally decreed in the case of Christ that this body of His should be better disposed for His soul. Christ’s body was formed miraculously in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary and destined for that most sublime soul united personally with the Word. Christ’s intellect was far nobler than the intellects of Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, and others.

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER CHRIST ADVANCED IN THIS KNOWLEDGE

St. Thomas affirms that Christ did advance in this knowledge, both in the habit and in the act of knowledge. Thus the Evangelist says: “Jesus advanced in wisdom and age, ... and grace with God and men,” which St. Ambrose understands of acquired knowledge.

The reason given by St. Thomas is that Christ, after abstracting the first intelligible species from phantasms, could abstract others, and others again.

Thus St. Thomas retracts here what he wrote in an earlier work.

On the contrary, Christ did not advance as regards the beatific vision and infused knowledge, but as He increased in age He performed greater works.

Reply to second objection. “This acquired knowledge was always perfect for the time being, “ which means that He always had every perfection of knowledge adapted to each age, so that He was never ignorant even by His

acquired knowledge of those things that according to time and place befitted Him. Thus certain saints who died very young, at about the age of ten years, such as Blessed Imelda, practiced heroic virtues proportionate to this age. What is said of their relatively perfect virtues, must be said of Christ's acquired knowledge, but not of His holiness, since from the first moment of His conception He had not only the commencement of this plenitude of holiness, as the Blessed Virgin had, but also the consummation of this plenitude of habitual grace and charity, as already stated.

THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER CHRIST LEARNED ANYTHING FROM MAN

State of the question. It seems that Christ learned something from man, for the Evangelist says that Jesus was in the Temple asking the doctors questions. But if He gradually acquired knowledge through the senses by the process of abstraction from phantasms, why not from men?

Nevertheless, St. Thomas denies that Christ learned anything from man. The reason is that, just as the first mover is not moved, the supreme teacher is not taught, but teaches. But Christ, even on this earth, was the supreme teacher of all men and even of angels. Therefore "'it did not befit His dignity that He should be taught by any man."

Reply to first objection. As Origen says: "Our Lord asked questions not in order to learn anything, but in order to teach by questioning." Thus Socrates made use of maieutics, and thus he illumined and was not illumined.

Reply to second objection. To acquire knowledge from things by abstraction, is to be taught by God, the author of things, and it is more dignified to be taught by God than by man.

FOURTH ARTICLE: WHETHER CHRIST RECEIVED KNOWLEDGE FROM THE ANGELS

Reply. It is denied that Christ received knowledge from the angels, because His soul was filled with knowledge and grace by reason of its immediate union with the Word of God.

Thus indeed the Evangelist says that in the garden of Gethsemane "an angel from heaven appeared to Christ, strengthening Him," and this strengthening must be understood, as stated in this article, for the purpose not of instructing Him, but of proving the truth of His human nature, as

Venerable Bede explains. Likewise St. Thomas remarks that Christ was strengthened by an angel by way of companionship and compassion, just as by the presence and conversation of a friend a man is naturally consoled in sadness, or also the angel strengthened the body of Christ, for instance, by wiping away the blood from His face.

This concludes the questions concerning the threefold knowledge of Christ. From what has been said, it is evident how sublime, even in this life, was Christ's contemplation, which continued on the cross, when He said, viewing all the fruits of the mystery of redemption: "It is consummated.... Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit."

Christ's doctrine, which St. Thomas discusses farther on, is the complimentary of this question. He shows that it was fitting for this doctrine to be preached both by Christ Himself and by the apostles, first of all only to the Jews, to whom He was sent. It was also His duty publicly to refute the scribes and Pharisees for the preservation and salvation of souls. It was likewise fitting that He should teach all that pertains to the salvation of mankind not secretly but openly. Nevertheless He often proposed to the people spiritual matters disguised in the form of parables, and more explicitly to the apostles so that they could teach others. Finally, St. Thomas shows that it was not fitting for Christ to commit His doctrine to writing, for the most excellent manner of teaching is for one to make his doctrine appeal immediately to the mind and hearts of his hearers. Moreover, Christ's sublime doctrine and all He accomplished in souls could not be understood in writing, and finally the new law was not first written, but it was first imprinted on the hearts by grace, as St. Paul says: "You are the epistle of Christ... written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not in tables of stone, but in the fleshly tables of the heart."

CHAPTER XV: QUESTION 13: THE POWER OF CHRIST'S SOUL

If Christ had, as stated, knowledge of all things and even practical knowledge, why did He not have omnipotence? Certain Lutherans who are called Ubiquists because of their heresy, say that Christ's humanity as also His divinity is everywhere, and always omnipotent.

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER THE SOUL OF CHRIST HAD OMNIPOTENCE IN THE ABSOLUTE SENSE

Conclusion. The soul of Christ could not have omnipotence in the absolute sense.

Scriptural proof. It is said of God: "Almighty is His name," which means that omnipotence applies only to God.

Theological proof. In the hypostatic union the two natures remained distinct, each retaining its own properties. But omnipotence in the absolute sense is a property of the divine nature. Therefore omnipotence in the absolute sense cannot be attributed to Christ's human nature.

Thus, in created things, operation follows being, and only the divine nature, or the self-subsisting Being, has active omnipotence with respect to everything to which the term "being" can apply, or to which the notion of being is not repugnant. Hence Christ's human nature can neither create, nor produce whatever does not involve contradiction, nor cause itself.

Reply to first objection. Nevertheless, just as, on account of the unity of person in Christ, we can say: "This man, Jesus, is God, " so we can say: "This man is omnipotent, " not because of His human nature, but because there is one person in Christ, who is both God and man.

Reply to second objection. Although the knowledge of Christ's soul extends to everything present, past, and future, it is not so with His active power, because infinite might is not required for the above-mentioned

knowledge, whereas, on the contrary, it is required in creating, for the most universal effect, namely, absolute being, can be produced only by the most universal cause.

Reply to third objection. “It is not necessary that Christ’s soul should have practical knowledge of those things of which it has speculative knowledge.” Thus Christ’s soul has speculative knowledge of creation, since it knows how God creates, but it has not factual knowledge of creation.

Another objection. Nevertheless Christ said: “All things are delivered to Me by My Father,” and “All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth.”

Reply. These words are true according to the predication of idioms, just as it is true to say, because of the one person in Christ, “this man is God.” Moreover, the above-quoted texts can be understood of Christ as man concerning the power of excellence He had in commanding the preaching of the gospel. Hence Jesus says: “Going therefore teach ye all nations.”

But I insist. According to the teaching of St. Thomas, there is only one being in Christ, namely, one divine existence, and even Christ’s human nature is holy because of His substantial and uncreated holiness. Therefore, on similar grounds, He can be omnipotent.

Reply. The difference here is that omnipotence not only includes divine being, divine sanctity, and divine perfection, but it also implies the infinite mode in which this perfection is in God.

Hence absolute omnipotence is incommunicable. Moreover, divine being and divine holiness are said to be communicated to Christ’s human nature because of the person, by means of the terminative but not informing union, for being follows person and where there is one person there is one being. Similarly the human nature is sanctified by the grace of union, inasmuch as it is terminated and possessed by the Word. But omnipotence could not be communicated to the human nature solely in the terminative sense, but only by way of the informing form, that is, as the operative principle, and there is no divine perfection that can be communicated by way of informing form, but only as a terminus; for the informing form is less perfect than the whole of which it is a part. Finally, it is evident that Christ’s human nature could not cause itself.

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER CHRIST’S SOUL HAD OMNIPOTENCE WITH REGARD TO THE TRANSMUTATION OF CREATURES

State of the Question. This article differs from the first article only in this, that the work of creation is included under omnipotence as discussed in the first article, whereas here we are concerned only with the miraculous transmutation of creatures.

It seems that Christ's soul would be endowed with this omnipotence, because He possessed most fully the grace of miracles which is mentioned among the graces gratis datae, and He also illumined the higher angels, inasmuch as they are ministers in the kingdom of heaven.

Conclusion. Nevertheless St. Thomas says that Christ's soul did not have omnipotence with regard to the transmutation of creatures.

1) General proof. It is taken from the counterargument of this article and may be expressed as follows: To transmute creatures miraculously belongs to Him who has the power to create and preserve them, as explained by St. Thomas. The reason is that only the most universal cause, which can immediately produce and preserve any universal effect, whether this effect is embedded in material things or separated from matter, can immediately effect a change in it, because this immediate change presupposes the same universality in the cause as this latter immediate production. Thus God alone, who created and preserved things in being, can immediately change being as such by transubstantiation, prime matter by acting immediately on its obediential potency, also immediately change internally the intellect and the will that is ordained to universal good.

Christ's soul did not have this same universality in causation as the divine nature, and so it cannot be the principal cause of miracles.

2) Particular proof. It is drawn more from the properties of Christ's soul, and is explained by three subordinated conclusions.

First conclusion. Christ's soul, by its own natural or gratuitous power, was able to produce those effects that are befitting to the soul, such as to rule the body, direct human acts and illumine by His plenitude of grace and knowledge even the angels. Nevertheless St. Thomas does not mean to say that Christ's soul is the physical and principal cause of grace, but that it is the moral cause by way of merit, and also, as he immediately remarks afterward, it is the physical and instrumental cause, by its effectiveness.

Second conclusion. Christ's soul, as it is the instrument of the Word, had instrumental power to effect all the miraculous transmutations ordainable to the end of the Incarnation, which is to restore all things either in heaven or on earth. This is evident from the end of the Incarnation.

Third conclusion. Christ’s soul, even as the instrument of the Word, has not the power to annihilate the creature, because annihilation corresponds to creation, which cannot be done by an instrument, because there is no presupposed subject that can be disposed for this action, as was shown above.

Reply to third objection. Thus Christ had most excellently the grace of working miracles.

The Instrumental Causality Of Christ’s Human Nature

The question, whether Christ’s human nature is the physical instrument of grace, miracles, and other supernatural effects, or merely the moral instrument, is one that is disputed in the schools of theology, and it finds its place here as an appendix to this article.

The Thomists maintain that Christ’s human nature is a physical instrument, whereas the Scotists hold that it is a moral instrument. There is this same divergence of opinion as regards the causality of the sacraments, which are instruments of grace separated from the divine nature, whereas Christ’s human nature is an instrument that is personally united with the divine nature.

It is presupposed as certain (1) that Christ’s human nature is not the principal physical cause of sanctifying grace, because St. Thomas makes it clear that “the gift of grace surpasses every capability of created nature, since it is nothing else than a certain participation in the divine nature.... And thus it is necessary that God alone should deify... just as it is impossible that anything but fire can enkindle.” (2) It is likewise certain that Christ’s human nature is also the principal moral cause of grace and miracles, because He merited these by condign merit, and there is no other assignable meritorious cause above Christ.

Therefore the only question is whether Christ’s human nature, after the accomplishment of the Incarnation, was not merely the moral cause, but also the physically instrumental cause of grace and miracles, and of other supernatural works that serve the end of the Incarnation.

It is a certainty that before the accomplishment of the Incarnation, Christ’s human nature was not the physical cause, but only the moral cause of the grace bestowed on the patriarchs of the Old Testament, because physical operation follows physical being, or the existence of a physical cause. Therefore the question concerns only the influence exerted by Christ’s human nature after the Incarnation.

The Thomists unanimously admit that after the completion of the Incarnation, Christ's human nature, either during His life on earth or as He is in heaven, was and is the physically instrumental cause of grace and miracles.

1) This conclusion is at least implied in Sacred Scripture, for the Evangelist says of Christ: "Virtue went out from Him and healed all," and Christ says of Himself: "I know that virtue is gone out from Me." This can scarcely be interpreted as meaning moral power, such as the power of prayer, which, since it is a mental process, can be said only in a very improper sense to go forth from the body.

Likewise, according to the Sacred Scripture, Christ by breathing upon His apostles gave them the Holy Spirit, in a loud voice and commanding tone raised Lazarus to life. All such acts seem to imply a causality that is not moral but physical. Likewise, when Christ says: "The works [miraculous] that I do in the name of My Father, they give testimony of Me." In other words, it was not only by means of prayer and merit that Jesus obtained the gift of miracles from His Father, but He actually performed them by His own power.

Similarly the First Council of Ephesus defined in its eleventh canon that "Christ's flesh has a vivifying power because of its union with the Word." But Christ's flesh cannot have vivifying power morally by way of merit or prayer; therefore the power must be physical. Likewise, in the liturgy it is said of Christ's body in the Eucharist, that it is "a living and vital bread," namely, a feeding and nourishing grace; therefore it produces graces not morally but physically.

But these quotations from Sacred Scripture and the councils are to be taken in their proper and obvious sense, according to the commonly accepted rule, unless anything unbefitting results therefrom. However, the words "healing power has gone forth from the body..., to do, to operate, to vivify, " in their proper and obvious sense denote physically instrumental causality, and, as will at once be seen, nothing unbefitting results therefrom.

Authoritative proof from St. Thomas. In this second article he says: "If we speak of the soul of Christ as it is the instrument of the Word united to Him, it had an instrumental power to effect all the miraculous transmutations ordainable to the end of the Incarnation." Evidently it is a question here not of moral causality that operates by way of merit or prayer,

but of physical causality. St. Thomas, in speaking of Christ as head of the Church, taught that He causes grace both meritoriously and efficiently.

To be sure, Christ's passion is now something of the past, but does it not virtually persist in the scars remaining from the wounds? Hence the physically instrumental cause is now Christ's human nature qualifiedly changed by His passion. Moreover, there remains in Christ's soul that willingness by which He offered Himself and by which "He is always living to make intercession for us," in that, as the Council of Trent says in its treatise on the Sacrifice of the Mass, "the same victim is now offering by the ministry of His priests, who then offered Himself on the cross."

Theological proof. To act not only morally but also physically is more perfect than merely moral action, so that a physical concurrence that truly produces its effect is more perfect than moral concurrence, by which the effect is obtained only by way of merit or prayer. But it must be admitted that Christ's human nature is more perfect if it proves to be compatible either in itself, or to the end of the Incarnation. Therefore, it must be conceded that Christ's human nature is the physically instrumental cause of supernatural effects that serve the end of the Incarnation.

Confirmation. According to the traditional terminology of the Fathers and theologians, Christ's human nature is the physical instrument of His divine nature in the production of grace and the working of miracles. It is not, however, the moral instrument, for Christ is the principal moral cause of the effects, inasmuch as there is no assignable meritorious cause above Him. Therefore Christ's human nature is the physical instrument, provided the distinction is drawn between physical and moral, to the exclusion of either metaphysical or spiritual.

Solution of objections.

First objection. An instrument must really contact the subject upon which it acts. But Christ's human nature, since it is now in heaven, does not really contact us in the production of our grace. Therefore Christ's human nature is not the instrument of our grace.

Reply. I distinguish the major: an instrument must really contact the subject upon which it acts, by virtual contact, this I concede; by quantitative and personal contact, this I deny. Thus a trumpet is a physical instrument for the transmission of sound, yet it does not touch the ears of the hearers. So also the sun illumines and heats the earth from on high, and the magnet attracts iron to itself from a distance. I contradistinguish the minor; Christ's

human nature as now existing in heaven does not really contact us, by His quantitative and personal contact, this I concede; by a virtual contact, that I deny.

There is no difficulty in this, especially for instruments made use of by divine power, in virtue of which all things that must be changed are made present to omnipresent omnipotence. Moreover, the superior part of Christ's soul is not itself located, and thus it is not locally distant from our souls. Finally, Christ's soul is united to God, and also our soul is united to God, although in a different way.

Second objection. An instrument, that it be not purely a medium, must by its own action have a disposing influence in producing the effect of the principal agent. But Christ's human nature cannot thus be a disposing influence, by producing some disposition for grace or for a miraculous effect. We can in no way conceive what would be the nature of this previous disposition.

Reply. I distinguish the major: that an instrument must by its own action exert a disposing influence on the manner of operating of the principal agent, this I concede; thus a trumpet reinforces and directs the sound in the mode of its transmission; that an instrument always produces something objectively real that is the result of its action, this I deny; some instruments do so, such as a pen that deposits ink on the paper, but not all instruments, such as a trumpet, act in this manner.

Thus an instrument does not have to produce in the subject to be changed some prior effect or previous disposition. It suffices that the instrument operates by disposing the subject that must undergo a change. Thus Christ's human nature had and has its own action as regards miracles and grace, for instance, operating by means of words, signs, gestures, acts of the will, and other ways. Thus it is a disposing influence in the production of the divine effect at this particular time and place, for example, the healing of this particular man, of this particular disease in preference to some other disease.

Third objection. An instrument must receive its power from the principal cause, so as to be capable of producing the effect that surpasses its own power. But the power derived from the principal cause in Christ's human nature is either spiritual, and as such it cannot be received in Christ's flesh, or else it is corporeal, and consequently cannot produce grace. Therefore

Christ's human nature cannot be the instrument of the principal cause in His operations.

Reply. I distinguish the major: that an instrument must receive transient power, or rather a transient motion from the principal cause, this I concede; a permanent motion, this I deny. I contradistinguish the minor: that this power is spiritual and cannot be in Christ's flesh as a permanent motion, let this pass without comment; as a transient motion, this I deny, because this transient motion is proportioned rather to the term of the action than to the subject of the action.

Explanation. This instrumental motion, however, as being something transient, differs completely from permanent power. For a permanent power is strictly for the benefit of the subject in which it inheres; hence it is proportioned to this subject. On the contrary, a transient motion, although it is in the instrument, since it is an accident, nevertheless, as it is formally transient, tending to produce the term of the action, must be proportioned preferably to the subject of inhesion. Thus, from the expression of a man's countenance, from the tone of his voice, and the manner of his utterance, something spiritual goes forth that is adapted to the hearer so that we say: a few words suffice to the wise.

In fact, this transient motion, also as a spiritual accident, is not received in Christ's body, inasmuch as Christ's body is formally something corporeal, but inasmuch as it is a being, for it is received in His body because of its obediential capacity, which applies to created things under the general notion of being and created substance. God makes use of bodies inasmuch as they are beings.

Finally, there seems to be nothing repugnant in the idea of a spiritual power being subjected to what is corporeal, inasmuch as the body is born to obey the spirit. Thus the rational soul, although it is spiritual, is dependent on the body, which it controls rather than being controlled by the body. Likewise the moral virtues of temperance and fortitude, although they are spiritual and infused virtues, are dependent on the sensitive faculties of the soul, which are intrinsically dependent on the animal organism.

Thus it befits Christ's human nature to be the physically instrumental cause of grace and miracles or of effects that serve the end of the Incarnation, as St. Thomas says in the present article. To exert one's influence on beings in both the moral and the physical orders shows greater

perfection than to manifest it merely in the moral order, and therefore this greater perfection must be conceded to Christ as man.

This is a better way of illustrating what was said above concerning Christ's headship and His influence on the members of His Church in the production of both habitual and actual grace.

THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER CHRIST'S SOUL HAD OMNIPOTENCE WITH REGARD TO HIS OWN BODY

Reply. Christ's soul in its proper nature and power was incapable of changing the natural disposition of its body, so that it could not have the effect of exempting the body from the laws of gravitation or of the necessity of taking food, or of feeling the blows inflicted on it. The reason is that the soul of its own nature has a determinate relation to its own body. Christ's soul, although it was already beatified, had assumed a passible body, namely, a body that conformed to the conditions of passibility.

Christ's soul, however, inasmuch as it was the instrument of the Word, could miraculously change the natural disposition of its body, so that the body was not subject to the laws of gravitation, or did not suffer from the blows and wounds inflicted on it. So also Christ miraculously preserved several martyrs from physical pain.

FOURTH ARTICLE: WHETHER CHRIST'S SOUL HAD OMNIPOTENCE AS REGARDS THE EXECUTION OF HIS WILL

Reply. (1) Christ's soul was able by its own power to bring about absolutely whatever was willed for it; but Christ, in His wisdom, did not will absolutely that it should by its own power do what surpassed it, for there could have been no presumption in Christ.

2) Christ's soul, as the instrument of the Word, could do whatever it absolutely willed was to be accomplished by divine power, such as the resurrection of its own body. But it could will in this way only what God had efficaciously decreed, and it knew these decrees.

Was Christ's prayer always heard? The prayer He made according to His absolute will, was always heard, but not the prayer that was conditional, such as when He said: "If it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me."

St. Thomas says farther on: “Christ willed nothing but what He knew God to will. Wherefore every absolute will of Christ, even human, was fulfilled, because it was in conformity with God.”

It is manifestly a sign of imprudence to will absolutely and efficaciously what certainly cannot come to pass. But Christ, as stated, certainly knew all future things by the beatific vision. Therefore He did not will absolutely and efficaciously what was not to be done either by His own power or by means of others.

This concludes the question of Christ’s power, and now we must consider antithetically the defects of Christ’s human nature inasmuch as it was passible before the Resurrection.

CHAPTER XVI: QUESTION 14: THE BODILY DEFECTS ASSUMED BY THE SON OF GOD

Our first consideration must be about Christ's bodily defects inasmuch as He assumed a passible body; then in the following question the defects of soul must be discussed, namely, the passions or propassions such as sadness and fear, so as to explain what the Evangelist means by saying: "And Jesus began to fear and to be heavy."

In this fourteenth question there are four articles about the bodily defects assumed by Christ.

1) Whether the Son of God ought to assume them.

2) Whether they were necessary or voluntary in Christ.

3) Whether He contracted these defects as we do.

4) Whether He assumed all bodily defects, such as sickness.

In these questions we see a marvelous progression in thought and methodical arrangement. They must be carefully considered. so as to avoid the confusion of ideas that not infrequently results concerning the death of Christ and that of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER THE SON OF GOD IN HUMAN NATURE OUGHT TO HAVE ASSUMED DEFECTS OF BODY

State of the question. The question concerns bodily defects inasmuch as the body is passible or subject to pain, hunger, thirst, and death.

It seems that Christ ought not to have assumed these defects, because, just as His soul had every perfection both of grace and of truth, why was not His body in every way perfect? Such perfection of body seems befitting for Christ, inasmuch as He was already in possession of the beatific vision and was likewise innocent, for punishment presupposes some fault. These bodily defects seem also to be an obstacle to the end of the Incarnation,

which was destined to be a manifestation not only of God's goodness but also of His strength.

Conclusion. Nevertheless it was fitting for the body assumed by the Son of God to be subject to human infirmities and defects.

Scriptural proof. St. Paul says of Christ: "For in that, wherein He Himself hath suffered and been tempted, He is also able to succor them that are tempted." There are likewise other texts that prove Christ was hungry and tired.

Traditional proof. It is also declared of Christ: "He suffered, was crucified, and died." The Church also declared in the Council of Ephesus: "If anyone does not confess that the Word of God suffered in the flesh, was crucified in the flesh, and experienced death, ... let him be anathema."

Theological proof. It was fitting for Christ's body to be subject to defects, and this for three reasons.

1) So as to satisfy for us, by enduring for us the penalty for sin, namely, death, hunger, thirst, for "by sin death entered into the world."

2) That He might establish the truth of His human nature, suffering truly as a man.

3) That He might give us a most heroic example of patience.

Reply to first objection. These sufferings are not contrary to the perfection of Christ's soul, for they are, as it were, the matter of satisfaction, whose meritorious principle was Christ's eminent charity. Thus in this reply St. Thomas draws a most admirable distinction between the matter of satisfaction and its principle or faculty. The principle of this satisfaction is Christ's love for God and for souls, and this love was of infinite value because of the divine personality of the Word incarnate.

In fact, Christ willed to fear and be weary, so that His holocaust be perfect, whereas, on the contrary, He preserved certain martyrs from pain.

Reply to second objection. According to God's will, before Christ's resurrection the beatitude of His soul did not overflow into His body, except on the day of His transfiguration. Thus Damascene says: "It was by the consent of the divine will that the flesh was allowed to suffer and do what belonged to it, " that is, what befitted a passible nature. His naturally passible flesh suffered under the blows inflicted on it.

Reply to third objection. Thus the absolutely innocent Christ was for us a voluntary victim.

Reply to fourth objection. “And although these infirmities concealed His Godhead, they made known His manhood, which is the way of coming to the Godhead.” In this bodily infirmity, Christ showed heroic fortitude, by which He conquered the devil and healed our human and moral infirmity.

It does not follow, however, from these reasons, as Calvin would have it, that for Christ truly to satisfy for us, He had to undergo the punishment of hell deserved by sinners. Satisfaction for the sin of another does not require that the one who satisfies for the sin of another should undergo all the penalty that is due to the sin of another; it suffices that the satisfaction be equivalent, and Christ’s satisfaction was more than this. As St. Thomas says: “He properly atones for an offense who offers something which the offended one loves equally, or even more than he detested the offense. But by suffering out of love and obedience, Christ gave more to God than was required to compensate for the offense of the whole human race”; for the immense charity of the incarnate Son was more pleasing to God than all the sins of men were displeasing to Him, because this act of charity was a theandric act, inasmuch as it proceeded radically from the person of the Word.

Moreover, if Calvin’s argument were valid, then it would follow that Christ ought to have suffered forever the punishments of hell, because sinners deserve eternal punishment. Calvin did not consider that the price of satisfaction, just as the value of merit, is the result of love. Merit and satisfaction have the same foundation, for the meritorious work is satisfactory when it is of an afflictive nature.

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER CHRIST WAS OF NECESSITY SUBJECT TO THESE DEFECTS

State of the question. It seems on the one hand that Christ was not, because He was a voluntary victim, and because His soul, united to His divine nature of which it was its instrument, could preserve His body from suffering, just as He did afterward to several martyrs. But, on the other hand, the Word assumed a passible body, which is under the natural necessity of dying and enduring other sufferings of a similar nature. Thus the saying that man is by nature mortal, and this necessity is physical. How then must this difficulty be solved?

Reply. St. Thomas says that as regards the assumed nature these defects were necessary, but as regards Christ's divine will and His deliberate human will these defects were objectively voluntary.

The first part of this conclusion is evident, namely, as regards the assumed nature, these defects were necessary, as it is necessary for a body composed of contraries to be dissolved. Thus every man is by nature mortal. And since the Word came in passible flesh for our salvation, He did not assume a body exempt from suffering, this exemption being a privilege bestowed upon Adam's body in the state of innocence. Hence St. Paul says: "God sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh." Hence Christ's death through the blows inflicted upon His body followed as a natural consequence, and was in no way, as in us, the consequence of original sin. Likewise in the Blessed Virgin Mary death followed as a natural consequence because she was conceived in passible flesh, and this death was not the result of original sin, from which she was preserved.

The second part of this conclusion is also apparent, namely, as regards Christ's divine will, and His deliberate human will, these sufferings were objectively voluntary. For indeed, by these two wills, He voluntarily accepted them, and He could have prevented them, if He had so willed, namely, if it had been the will of His Father. Thus the Blessed Virgin accepted her death in the natural order that she might be associated with the sacrifice of Christ for our salvation.

The reply of the following article completes this doctrine. What has been said shows clearly the most beautiful parallelism prevailing between Christ the Redeemer, and Mary the immaculate co-Redemptress.

THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER CHRIST CONTRACTED THESE BODILY DEFECTS

State of the question. In the title to this article the word "contracted" implies something more than "assumed" and "subjected to, " for what is derived from some cause is said to be contracted, and so a disease or bad habit is said to be contracted. On the one hand, it seems that Christ contracted these defects, because together with His passible nature He derived them through His birth from His mother; for these infirmities are natural, resulting from the principles of nature, as stated in the preceding article, and Christ was like other men in His human nature, and they

contracted these defects. On the other hand, however, St. Paul says. “By one man sin entered into this world, and by sin, death.”

But there was neither original sin nor actual sin in Christ, and the same must be said of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Reply. Christ did not, like us, contract these defects as the result of original sin, but He voluntarily took them upon Himself.

First part of conclusion. It is proved by the following theological reasoning in syllogistic form.

That is said to be contracted which is derived of necessity together with its cause. Thus a person suffering from some congenital hereditary disease is said to have contracted it from birth. But the cause of death and suffering is sin, which had absolutely no place in Christ. Therefore Christ did not contract these defects.

Second part of conclusion. It is proved from the consideration that Christ willed for our salvation to assume a naturally passible body, which is composed of contraries.

Reply to first objection. St. Thomas does not say: “the Virgin as a person was conceived in original sin, “ but “the flesh of the Virgin was conceived in original sin, “ and in accordance with this terminology of the thirteenth century, he distinguished between conception and subsequent animation when the rational soul comes that is created by God.

Nowadays we firmly believe, however, that the Blessed Virgin by a privilege was redeemed by preservative redemption. Thus she was preserved from sin, which from her birth she ought to have contracted with all its consequences. Hence in the Blessed Virgin death was not the effect of sin, but the consequence of a passible nature, which she voluntarily accepted to be offered up in sacrifice in union with Christ. Hence the death of Christ and that of the Blessed Virgin are not the result of original sin, although they presuppose it in this sense, that the Incarnation in passible flesh presupposes the reparation of sin. On this point confusions frequently arise because not sufficient attention is paid to the distinctions so magnificently formulated by St. Thomas.

FOURTH ARTICLE: WHETHER CHRIST OUGHT TO HAVE ASSUMED ALL THE BODILY DEFECTS OF MEN

State of the question. What is asked in this article is whether Christ ought to have assumed not only hunger, thirst, exhaustion, and death, but also other bodily defects, such as diseases, fever, leprosy.

Reply. Christ assumed only the defects that follow from the common sin of the whole human race, and that are not incompatible with the end of the Incarnation.

Christ assumed human defects precisely because He wished to satisfy for the sin of human nature. But satisfaction, which is penal, must correspond to the sin. Therefore, in reparation for the common sin, Christ voluntarily assumed common penalties, such as hunger, thirst, exhaustion, and death.

He did not assume, however, defects that are incompatible with the end of the Incarnation, such as difficulty in the performance of good works, proneness to evil. He did not either assume sicknesses and diseases that result from the actual sins of man, or from the defect in generative power. Christ was impeccable, and His body was most perfect in that it was miraculously conceived.

As regards the beauty of Christ's body, St. Thomas says: "Christ had beauty as it befitted His state and the reverence that is due to His condition"; and in another work he says: "Christ was not imposing in aspect as it is said of Priam that his countenance befitted his imperial dignity." In other words, the beauty of His countenance manifested especially the beauty of His most holy soul.

CHAPTER XVII: QUESTION 15: THE DEFECTS OF SOUL ASSUMED BY CHRIST

In this question St. Thomas asks: (1) whether there was sin in I Christ, or at least the inclination to sin; (2) whether He had passions, such as sadness, fear, anger, at least holy anger.

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER THERE WAS SIN IN CHRIST

State of the question. The particular purpose of this article is to inquire why Christ was sinless, in fact, why He was morally perfect

Reply. Christ in no way assumed the defect of sin, either original or actual. This doctrine is of faith and manifestly has its foundation in Sacred Scripture.

Scriptural proof. That Christ was without original sin is evident from the following words of the Evangelist: "'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." This means that Christ did not descend from Adam by the natural process of seminal propagation. He was conceived miraculously by the Holy Ghost. Moreover, from the moment of His conception, as stated above, He was full of grace and enjoyed the beatific vision, both of which are incompatible with original sin.

As regards actual sin, there is the testimony of Christ Himself, when He said to His enemies: "Which of you shall convince Me of sin?" Similarly St. John the Baptist says: "Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him who taketh away the sin of the world." Likewise St. Peter says: "Who did no sin." St. Paul also says: "For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners."

There are several definitions of the Church that affirm the sinlessness of Christ. Moreover, the Church has declared that Christ was impeccable (and

not merely sinless) even before His resurrection, and that He did not need purification. This last declaration is directed against the Jansenists, who said that the Blessed Virgin Mary was in need of purification at the time of her purification, and that her Son contracted this stain from his mother, as the Mosaic law says.

Theological proof. Christ assumed our defects that He might satisfy for us, and that He might prove the truth of His human nature, and be for us an example of virtue. But sin instead of being conducive to this threefold end was a hindrance to it. Therefore Christ did not assume the defect of sin.

Sin is more of a hindrance to satisfaction, and it does not prove the truth of human nature, since it is contrary to reason; and it is not an example of virtue, since it is contrary to it. This proof receives its confirmation from the solution of the objections of this article.

Reply to first objection. St. Thomas explains how the words of the psalmist, "O God, my God, look upon me; why hast Thou forsaken me. Far from my salvation are the words of my sins," are said of the person of Christ. He also shows with St. John Damascene and St. Augustine that certain things are said of Christ in our person, namely, those things that nowise befit Him, inasmuch as "Christ and His Church are taken as one person." And in this sense Christ, speaking in the person of His members, says: "Far from my salvation are the words of my sins," not that there were any sins in the Head. Such is the meaning of this particular Messianic psalm, the first words of which Christ uttered on the cross.

Reply to second objection. It explains how Christ was in Adam and how He is of the "seed of David." Christ, says St. Augustine, was in Adam "according to bodily substance" but not according to seminal virtue, that is, by way of natural generation. He did not receive the human nature actively from Adam but materially, and from the Holy Ghost actively. Thus He "was of the seed of David" only materially, but not formally and actively. But if He accepted circumcision, which was a remedy for sin, He did so not as in need of it, but that He might give us an example of humility.

Moreover, even though Christ had descended from Adam according to seminal propagation, He could not have contracted original sin, since this was incompatible with the grace of union and the fullness of inamissible habitual grace and by reason of the beatific vision, all of which adorned His soul from the moment of His conception. Thus the Blessed Virgin, although

she descended from Adam according to seminal propagation, was preserved from original sin.

Reply to fourth objection. St. Thomas here explains the meaning of the words: “Him who knew no sin, God hath made sin for us”; which means that God made Him a victim of sin, as the prophet says: “The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” Thus Christ willingly bore the punishment for sin.

Calvin objected that Christ in dying gave vent to feelings, if not of desperation, at least to words of such a nature when He said: “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” and in the Garden He prayed inordinately, saying: “My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me.”

Reply. Concerning these words uttered by our Lord in the Garden of Gethsemane it is generally agreed that they are an expression of His sensible will and are conditional, but that they are not an expression of His rational and absolute will. They manifest, as will be stated in the next question in treating of Christ’s sadness, that He completely gave Himself up to grief, even extreme sadness, so as to make His sacrifice perfect and more meritorious.

The first quotation is not the utterance of one who is in despair, but it is the expression of one who experiences the greatest of grief. In fact, the words, “O God, My God, look upon Me; why hast Thou forsaken Me?” constitute the first verse of one of the Messianic psalms. The end of this psalm, however, is a most beautiful expression of complete confidence in God, in spite of all adversities. Finally, immediately after these words, Christ says on the cross: “It is consummated.... Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit.” These final words are an expression of perfect confidence and love. Last of all, certainly how can He despair who has already acquired the beatific vision and who by His sacrifice gives eternal life to others?

First doubt. Was Christ not only sinless but impeccable already before His resurrection?

Reply. The Second Council of Constantinople affirms and declares this against Theodore of Mopsuestia. All theologians hold that at least according to the ordinary operation of divine law Christ was impeccable for three reasons; namely, because of the hypostatic union, the beatific vision, and the fullness of His inamissible habitual grace.

The Scotists, however, admit that, if God by His absolute power were to take away from Christ His habitual grace and the beatific vision, then He would be peccable.

But the common opinion of Thomists and other theologians is that Christ as man, precisely by virtue of the grace of union, even independently of the fullness of habitual grace and the beatific vision, was absolutely incapable of sinning, whether such sin left the union intact or destroyed it. The principal reason is that otherwise sin would redound upon the Word itself, inasmuch as elicited actions are referred to the suppositum, because the principle that elicits the actions is the suppositum. Thus, as will be more clearly explained farther on, the meritorious actions of Christ are of intrinsically infinite value because of the suppositum or divine person of the Word, and they are theandric. Thus it is absolutely impossible for the Word incarnate to sin.

The Thomists and other theologians generally assign three causes for Christ's absolute impeccability. These are: (1) the grace of union; (2) fullness of inadmissible habitual grace by reason of its connection with the grace of union; (3) the beatific vision by which even the rest of the blessed are confirmed in good, and are no more capable of sinning, or turning away from God clearly seen, or ceasing from the act of loving God, because this act is indeed spontaneous; but it is not a free act, since it transcends liberty, inasmuch as concerning God clearly seen and to be loved above all things, there is no longer indifference either of judgment or of will, and concerning particular goods the blessed are free, to be sure, but they are incapable of sinning; in other words, they are free to do only what is good. St. Thomas says: "The will of him who sees the essence of God, of necessity loves whatever he loves in subordination to God." Moreover, Christ always received efficacious grace by which de facto the will does not commit sin.

We shall see farther on that it is indeed extremely difficult to reconcile impeccability and free will in Christ, for without this freedom He would not have merited for us. We shall say here that Christ's impeccable liberty is the most pure image of God's impeccable liberty, and that the command of dying for us, given by the Father to Christ, takes away moral liberty but not psychological liberty, since it is given, like every command, for the free fulfillment of the act; for a command that would destroy psychological freedom in the fulfillment of the act, would destroy the very nature of the command.

Second doubt. Could there have been moral imperfection in Christ, such as less fervent acts of charity, and less promptitude in the observance of God's counsels?

Reply. The answer is that there could have been no moral imperfection. This question has been the subject of special investigation by the Salmanticenses who, in their commentary on this article, distinguish between imperfection and venial sin. For venial sin is absolutely an evil; although it is not a turning away from the final end, it is a morally evil deordination with reference to what pertains to the end. Moral imperfection, however, is not absolutely an evil, because it is not a privation of good that is strictly owing to one, for there is no obligation that we set before ourselves the greatest morally possible generosity as the ideal in our actions, except when anyone has made a vow to do what appears to be more perfect for such a person at the moment.

But imperfection is a lesser good. Thus a less fervent act of charity is not so great a good as a fervent act, but it is not an evil. In fact, in this less fervent act of charity, its diminished fervor or imperfection in the formal sense is indeed not a good thing, but it is not an evil, because it is not a privation of good that is strictly owing to anyone, because, as has been said, there is no obligation to set before ourselves the greatest morally possible generosity as the ideal in our actions each time we act. This imperfection is not good, it being a denial of greater perfection, rather than a privation in the strict sense. Thus, in some way, the fact that God does not preserve a creature in moral good, which means the permission by God to commit sin, is not a good thing, yet it is not an evil, not even an evil to which a punishment is attached. On the contrary, the refusal of efficacious grace by God is a punishment that presupposes sin or at least the beginning of the first sin.

Thus, even though moral imperfection is distinct from venial sin, there could have been no such imperfection in Christ because if we exclude God, no greater perfection could have been given to anyone than to Christ. Christ's acts of charity never diminished in fervor or were less in intensity or perfection as befitted the Word incarnate and He had the infused virtue of charity in the highest degree, according to the ordinary dispensation of God's power.

Expressed more briefly, there was never an occasion when Christ's human will was not so prompt in observing the divine counsels, in

following the inspirations of grace given by way of counsel, and this is also commonly admitted concerning the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The Salmanticenses, after proving that there could have been no transgression of the divine counsels in Christ, show clearly what is the foundation for the distinction between venial sin and imperfection. Concerning the distinction between a slight venial sin and imperfection, it must be observed that a few theologians do indeed call that an imperfection which is truly a venial sin, but these two are in themselves just as distinct as the difference between what is absolutely evil and that which is a less good. And this distinction is evident not only in the abstract but also in the concrete, especially in the lives of Christ and His Blessed Mother, who never were remiss in following the divine counsels.

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER THERE WAS THE FOMES OF SIN IN CHRIST

State of the question. The “fomes”, of sin implies the inclination of the sensual appetite to that which is contrary to right reason, as in the case of excessive pleasure. Thus, the “fomes” of sin is an inclination to sin, and when it actually inclines anyone to sin, it is called “fomes” in the second act.

St. Thomas does not even ask whether there was in Christ the “fomes” of sin in its second act, namely, an inordinate movement of the sensitive appetite.

Reply. The negative answer to this query is already sufficiently established from the first article. For the Word can and must prevent these irregular motions of the sensible nature, and He prevents them because He is under obligation to rule His assumed human nature, not only as it is rational, but as it is sensitive. These irregular motions of the sensitive nature not only were not in Christ, but could not have been in Him, because He was impeccable. The Second Council of Constantinople in canon ten declared: “If anyone defends the impious Theodore of Mopsuestia, who said that God the Word is different in person from Christ who suffered from the passions of the soul and the troublesome desires of the flesh, and who, gradually getting away from this inferior state, improved His condition by advancing in the performance of good works, ... let him be anathema.”

If Christ was tempted, however, St. Thomas explains farther on, He was tempted without having to endure sin and moral disgrace, consequences so

derogatory to His sanctity.

Therefore, what theologians especially ask here, is whether the inclination to sin in its first act was in Christ.

St. Thomas answers this question in the negative, meaning that there neither was nor could have been such an inclination.

Scriptural proof. The angel said: “That which is conceived in her, is of the Holy Ghost.” But the Holy Ghost excludes both sin and the inclination to sin, which is what is meant by “fomes.”

Theological proof. The moral virtues are in the sensitive appetite; and the more perfect they are, the more they subject it to reason. But these virtues were most perfect in Christ. Therefore there was no fomes in Christ or inclination of the appetite to that which is contrary to reason. This conclusion confirms the more common opinion of the Thomists, namely, that Christ possessed perfectly from the beginning not only the infused virtues, but also the acquirable moral virtues that make man absolutely good, and not merely good in a qualified sense, such as a good sculptor or carpenter.

Confirmation. The Word assumed all those human defects that can be ordained for the satisfaction of sins. The fomes of sin, however, cannot be ordained to this end, but, on the contrary, inclines to sin. Thus it was neither in Adam in the state of innocence, nor in the Blessed Virgin. But the grace of union is of a far higher order than the grace of original justice, which latter excluded the fomes of sin in Adam.

First objection. But if there was passibility of body in Christ and hence pain and death, why not the fomes of sin?

Reply to first objection. There is no parity of argument here, because the sensitive appetite must obey reason, whereas the vegetative powers of the souls do not obey it. Hence, among the principal consequences of original sin there are two that are deordinations, namely, error and concupiscence, and neither of these was in either Christ or the Blessed Virgin. There are two consequences, however, that imply no moral deordination, namely, grief and death, and these were both in Christ and in His Blessed Mother, not indeed as consequences of original sin, but as properties of nature, inasmuch as the Word assumed a passible flesh, and the Blessed Virgin was conceived without original sin but in passible flesh. But that the Word had to become incarnate in passible flesh, according to God’s decree, this

indeed presupposes God’s permission of original sin, reparation for which was to be made by the redemptive Incarnation.

THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER IN CHRIST THERE WAS IGNORANCE

St. Thomas answers that there was not, proving this from what He had already said about the fullness of grace and knowledge in Christ, where the following words of the Evangelist are explained: “We saw His glory, the glory as it were of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”

There could not have been either error or ignorance in Him who said: “‘I am the way and the truth, and the life.” Ignorance is a privation of that which a person ought to have, and so it is opposed to simple nescience, or simple negation or absence of knowledge, as in a child who is not yet capable of knowing. Thus in Christ there was a certain nescience as regards His acquired knowledge, in which He made progress, as stated above.

FOURTH ARTICLE: WHETHER CHRIST’S SOUL WAS PASSIBLE

State of the question. It seems that Christ’s soul was not passible, both because His soul was nobler than all creatures, and because the passions of the soul seem to be ailments of the soul as Tully says. Furthermore, the passions of the soul seem to be the same as the fomes of sin.

Reply. St. Thomas says, however, that in Christ there were both bodily passions and animal or psychological passions; yet they were otherwise in Christ than in us, and they are preferably called propassions.

Scriptural proof. The Psalmist says, speaking in the person of Christ: “My soul is filled with evils,” meaning that it is filled with pains and sadness. The Evangelist says that in the Garden of Gethsemane, “Jesus began to fear and to be heavy.”

Theological proof. First part. There are two kinds of passions in the soul: some are bodily passions, such as physical pain, by which the soul suffers when the body is hurt; others are called animal or psychological passions, because of some object that is presented to it, such as sensible sadness on foreseeing the details of a horrible death.

But Christ had a passible body and a sensitive appetite, both of which belong to the human nature, otherwise He would not have been truly man.

Therefore Christ had both bodily passions, and animal or psychological passions.

Second part. These passions were in Christ otherwise than in us In us the passions often tend toward what is unlawful, often enough forestalling the judgment of reason, and sometimes they deflect the reason and obtain the consent of the will.

But in Christ the passions were able to produce none of these effects, because “in Christ all movements of the sensitive appetite sprang from the disposition of the reason,” and according to the consent of His will, as St. Augustine says.

Hence, in Christ the passions never preceded the judgment of reason and the consent of the will, but followed them. Therefore they are preferably called propassions.

Therefore St. Jerome, commenting on the words, “He began to grow sorrowful and to be sad,” says: “Our Lord, in order to prove the reality of the assumed manhood, was sorrowful in very deed; yet lest a passion should hold sway over His soul, it is by a propassion that He is said to have begun to grow sorrowful.” Thus Christ’s sensitive nature was most holy, and devotion to His most Sacred Heart is an expression of this sensibility.

FIFTH ARTICLE: WHETHER THERE WAS SENSIBLE PAIN IN CHRIST

Reply. The answer is in the affirmative, for the prophet says: “Surely He hath borne our infirmities.” It is evident that Christ’s passible body was hurt during His passion, and He felt that He was hurt, since Christ’s soul was perfectly in possession of all natural powers. Thus His passible flesh naturally felt the pain of the blows inflicted on it.

SIXTH ARTICLE: WHETHER THERE WAS SORROW IN CHRIST

Reply. The answer is that there was sorrow in Christ, for He said: “My soul is sorrowful even unto death.” Truly Christ’s sorrow was natural at the thought of the horrible death He had to endure on the cross; and there was spiritual sorrow because of the sin of His disciples and of those who would kill Him, and this sorrow arose from His love for God and for souls and hence it was supernatural. Thus in the exalted region of Christ’s soul there was sorrow although not in the summit of His soul, because in the highest

part of His intellect He enjoyed the beatific vision; but He most freely prevented its overflow into the inferior parts of the soul so that He might deliver Himself up fully to pain, and so be a perfect holocaust.

SEVENTH ARTICLE: WHETHER THERE WAS FEAR IN CHRIST

It is not a question here of the gift of fear, which has already been discussed, but of fear inasmuch as it is a movement of the sensitive appetite.

Reply. The answer is that there was sensible fear in Christ, for the Evangelist says: “Jesus began to fear and to be heavy.” Truly, Jesus was able to perceive His death on the cross as an evil that cannot easily be avoided, which is the object of fear. There was natural fear in Christ, or the act of the soul naturally shrinking from evil and from contracting it. From another source Christ knew this evil as certainly to come, according to God’s decree, and in the higher part of His soul He rejoiced at the thought of having accepted this pain for our salvation.

EIGHTH ARTICLE: WHETHER THERE WAS WONDER IN CHRIST

St. Thomas replies by saying that there was wonder in Christ as regards His experimental knowledge, but not as regards His divine knowledge, His beatific knowledge, and His infused knowledge. The reason is that wonder concerns the attention given by the faculties of the soul to what is new and unwonted, and this wonder was in Christ as regards only His experimental knowledge. Thus, “Jesus hearing the words of the centurion, marveled.”

NINTH ARTICLE WHETHER THERE WAS ANGER IN CHRIST

Reply. There was holy anger or holy indignation in Christ against those buying and selling in the Temple, but in no way was there sinful anger in Him. This holy anger is called “the zeal of God’s house.” It is a passion that follows an act of avenging justice, which inflicts punishment in accordance with right reason, how, when, and where it must be administered, and neither in excess nor defect.

TENTH ARTICLE WHETHER CHRIST WAS AT THE SAME TIME WAYFARER AND COMPREHENSOR

Reply. The answer is that Christ was comprehensor, inasmuch as He enjoyed the beatific vision in the higher part of the soul. But He was also wayfarer, because concerning some things beatitude was wanting, for His soul was passible and His body passible and mortal.

Thus discussion ends concerning those things that pertain to what the Son of God assumed, along with His human nature, both as regards perfections, namely, His grace, knowledge, and power, and as regards defects, both of body and of soul.

CHAPTER XVIII: QUESTION 16 THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE HYPOSTATIC UNION

After considering the mode of the union in itself, as regards the person assuming, the nature assumed, and what was assumed with it, we come to discuss the consequences of the union.

There are three divisions to this part of the treatise on the Savior, inasmuch as the consequences of the union are considered, as to those things that belong to Christ:

1) In Himself as regards His being, will, and operation by which He merited for us.

2) In His relation to God the Father, for example, Christ's prayer, priesthood, predestination.

3) In His relation to us, namely, Christ as the object of our adoration, and His mediation on our behalf.

The Consequences Of The Union As Regards Those Things That Belong To Christ In Himself

This question is about the terms employed in speaking of the mystery of the Incarnation.

We are concerned here with what is technically called the communication of idioms. "Idiom" is derived from the Greek and means the same as property in Latin. Hence communication of idioms is communication of properties. In other words, although the two natures in Christ are really distinct and inconfused, as defined against Eutyches, yet by reason of the hypostatic union the properties of the divine nature can be predicated of this man Jesus, and human attributes of God. Hence the communication of idioms is usually defined as the mutual predication and interchange in themselves of the two natures, the divine and the human, and their properties, by reason of the hypostatic union. The foundation for this communication of idioms in Christ is the hypostatic union itself, by reason

of which one and the same suppositum has two natures, the divine nature and the human nature.

It must be observed concerning this communication that concrete names, such as God, man, in opposition to abstract names, such as Godhead, humanity, signify directly the suppositum, and indirectly the nature. For “God, ‘ signifies the suppositum that has the divinity, and “man” signifies the suppositum that has the humanity. If, therefore, the suppositum is the same for the two natures, then it is true to say: “God is man, “ although it is false to say: “The Godhead is the humanity.” Thus we shall see that the generally accepted rule, namely, concrete words of concrete subjects, both of natures and properties, generally speaking, can of themselves be predicated of either; but abstract words of abstract subjects cannot of themselves formally be predicated of either. Thus we shall see that we cannot say the Godhead is the humanity or that God is the humanity, or that the humanity is God.

Therefore we must take great care to distinguish between abstract terms and concrete terms. The abstract term signifies the nature separated from the subject, for example, humanity. The concrete term signifies the nature as existing in the subject, for example, man. Hence this distinction between concrete and abstract term is of great importance in distinguishing between the nature and the suppositum, since the nature is an essential part of the suppositum. There is the same distinction between “being” as a noun and “being” as a participle, or between the reality and the real itself.

The principal definitions of the Church about the communication of idioms are to be found in the fourth and tenth canons of the Council of Ephesus, and in the tenth and twelfth canons of the Second Council of Constantinople.

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER THIS IS TRUE: GOD IS MAN

Reply. The proposition is affirmed to be true, and proper on account of the truth of the predication.

The reason is that in this proposition the concrete term “God” stands for the person of the Son. But the person of the Son is a man, although not the humanity, which is only a part of this suppositum. It is true to say: “Jesus is a man, “ as when it is said: “Peter is a man.”

Hence to say: “God is a man” is to say: “God the Son is the same suppositum that is man.” In every affirmative judgment, however, the verb “is” expresses real identity between subject and predicate. Hence this proposition is true in the formal sense.

Doubt. Is the word “man” predicated univocally of God and human beings in this mystery?

Reply. The answer is in the affirmative. For the word “man” signifies the suppositum that subsists in the human nature. But this nature is of the same species in Christ as in human beings. Therefore Christ is truly called a man.

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER THIS IS TRUE: MAN IS GOD

Reply. The answer is yes, because in this proposition the subject “man” can stand for whatever hypostasis of the human nature, and therefore for the person of the Son of God, who is truly God.

THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER CHRIST CAN BE CALLED A LORDLY MAN

Reply. The answer is No, because “lordly” is said denominatively and by participation from Lord. But the name “Christ” stands for the person of the Son of God who is essentially the Lord, and not lordly by participation.

Hence it would be absolutely contrary to custom to conclude the liturgical orations by saying: “through Christ the lordly man”, and not: “through Christ our Lord.” Hence the expression that was in use among certain seventeenth-century authors in France is not entirely to be approved; namely, “Jesus is the perfect religious of His Father.” It cannot properly and truly be said that He who is the very Lord is a lordly man.

Reply to third objection. Nevertheless we generally speak of the divine Word, the divine person, because the adjective “divine” is wont to be predicated of God’s nature, which is called the divine nature and not merely as being a participation of this nature.

FOURTH ARTICLE: WHETHER WHAT BELONGS TO THE SON OF MAN CAN BE ASSERTED OF THE SON OF GOD AND CONVERSELY

Reply. The answer to this question is in the affirmative.

The reason for this is that, since there is one hypostasis of both natures, the same hypostasis is signified by the name of either nature. Thus it may be said that the Son of God suffered, was crucified; also it may be said that the Son of man is immortal, eternal, omnipotent, because the meaning is: this suppositum having the human nature is immortal, eternal, and possessing other divine attributes.

FIFTH ARTICLE: WHETHER WHAT BELONGS TO THE SON OF MAN CAN BE PREDICATED OF THE DIVINE NATURE, AND WHAT BELONGS TO THE SON OF GOD OF THE HUMAN NATURE

Reply. The answer is in the negative. Thus it cannot be said that the Godhead suffered, or that Christ’s human nature is omnipotent, because the two natures are entirely distinct, and abstract things, those that signify a nature and not the subject, cannot formally be predicated of abstract things (those that signify another nature), nor of concrete things. Hence, just as we cannot say the Godhead is the human nature, neither can we say that God is the human nature, or the human nature is God.

Only in the material sense and as expressing identity of person can it be said: “This man is the Godhead, the Godhead is this man, “ meaning that this man is God, who is His Godhead.

SIXTH ARTICLE: WHETHER THIS IS TRUE: GOD WAS MADE MAN

Reply. The answer is in the affirmative. Thus, we can say: “And the Word was made flesh.” For a thing is said to be made that which begins to be predicated of it for the first time.

However, the expression, “God becomes man, “ does not mean that God becomes so in the absolute sense of the term, for God became man without undergoing any change in Himself.

SEVENTH ARTICLE: WHETHER THIS IS TRUE: MAN WAS MADE GOD

Reply. The answer is in the negative, because in this proposition, since the subject “man” stands for the person of the Word, the meaning would be that the suppositum or person that is eternally God. became in time God, or that some pre-existing man became God, and each assertion is false.

For the same reason the expression, “man was assumed, “ cannot be admitted, but we must say: “the human nature was assumed, “ for the former statement would mean that some pre-existing man was assumed by the Word. Thus the Word would have assumed a human nature, and, if the human personality did not cease to exist at the moment of the assumption, there would be two persons, as the Nestorians maintained.

Hence, although this proposition is true, “Man is God, “ the following proposition is false: “Man became God.”

EIGHTH ARTICLE WHETHER THIS IS TRUE: CHRIST IS A CREATURE

Reply. The answer is that the proposition is not true. The purpose is to avoid the suspicion of favoring the Arian heresy, and moreover, the assertion is false. But it can and must be said that Christ has a created nature, namely, a human nature. The reason why we cannot say that Christ is a creature, is that creation belongs to subsisting things, and to be created is consequent to person as the one that has being, but it is consequent to the nature as that by which something is such as it is. But as the person of Christ is uncreated and eternal, “creature, ‘ would apply not only to the created nature, but to the person of Christ, and this is false.

NINTH ARTICLE WHETHER THIS IS TRUE: THIS MAN, POINTING TO CHRIST, “BEGAN TO BE”

Reply. The answer is that this assertion is not true, for Christ said of Himself: “Before Abraham was made, I am.” The aforesaid proposition must be avoided both because it sounds like Arianism, and also because it is false. Although the person of the Word for which Christ stands, began to be man, yet this person did not begin to be so in the absolute sense.

TENTH ARTICLE WHETHER THIS IS TRUE: CHRIST AS MAN IS A CREATURE

Reply. The answer is that this proposition is more to be accepted than rejected, because the term covered by the reduplication signifies the nature rather than the suppositum.

ELEVENTH ARTICLE WHETHER THIS IS TRUE: CHRIST AS MAN IS GOD

Reply. The answer is that this proposition is not true, because the term placed in the reduplication stands more for the nature, as stated above, than for the person.

TWELFTH ARTICLE WHETHER THIS IS TRUE: CHRIST AS MAN IS A HYPOSTASIS OR PERSON

Reply. This proposition must be avoided, because it favors Nestorianism and can be taken in a false sense. For if the word “man” taken exactly in its reduplicative sense, so that the particle as in its reduplicative sense, gives the formal reason why Christ is a person, then this assertion is false, because it would signify that in Christ there would be a created person, as the Nestorians said.

However, this proposition could be accepted if interpreted in a good sense, if the term “man, ‘ were taken for the suppositum or for the specific nature, because it belongs to the human nature to be in a person. Hence this proposition is equivocal and as such must be avoided.

This terminates the question concerning the manner of speaking about Christ.

CHAPTER XIX: QUESTION 17: WHAT PERTAINS COMMONLY TO CHRIST'S UNITY OF BEING

This question concerns unity in common, but not unity in detail. It has already been determined (q. 9) that there is only one knowledge in Christ, and farther on (q. 35) it will be concluded that there are two births in Christ, the one eternal, the other temporal, but only one real filiation.

In treating of Christ's unity in common, we must consider His unity (1) Of being, (2) of will, (3) of operation.

On unity of being there are two articles:

1) Whether Christ is one or two.

2) Whether there is only one being in Christ

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER CHRIST IS ONE OR TWO

Reply. It is of faith that Christ is one (unus).

This conclusion is evident from the condemnation of Nestorianism, that admitted two persons in Christ; for the masculine form "unus" signifies a person. Hence, the Church has defined that "Christ is not two, but one." And again: "I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ." Likewise it can and must be said that Christ is one in the neuter form. The reason is that there is one person and one suppositum in Christ.

Some erroneously said, however, that there is one person but two supposita in Christ, and therefore they maintained Christ is one in person, but that He is not one being, because there are in Him two supposita. But it is false to assert that there are two supposita in Christ. There is in Christ only one center of attribution, which is expressed by the personal pronoun I.

Fifth objection. The three divine persons are declared one in being on account of their one nature; therefore there must be two beings in Christ because of the two natures.

Reply to fifth objection. I deny the consequence, for the difference here is that, since God is His Godhead, in the mystery of the most Holy Trinity the Godhead is predicated even in the abstract of the three persons; hence it may be said simply that the three persons are one. But in the mystery of the Incarnation, both natures are not predicated in the abstract of Christ. For Christ is not His humanity, this latter constituting a certain part of Him, and the part is not predicated of the whole. Therefore it follows that it cannot be said simply that Christ is two.

Doubt. Can it be said that Christ is both His divine nature and His human nature?

Reply. This proposition is not true in the strict and formal sense, because the term “Christ” includes more than is signified by both the divine and human natures, for it includes the note of person. But it must be said that Christ is a person that has both the divine nature and the human nature. Therefore Christ is one and He is also one being.

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER THERE IS ONLY ONE BEING IN CHRIST

State of the question. It seems that there are two beings in Christ, that is, two existences, for being follows the nature. Moreover, the being of the Son of God is the divine nature itself and is eternal, whereas the being of the man Christ is not the divine nature and is not eternal.

Likewise in the Trinity there is one being on account of the one nature. Therefore in Christ there are two beings just as there are two natures.

Finally, in Christ the soul gives some being to the body, but it does not give the uncreated being. Therefore there are two beings in Christ.

There are three different opinions on this question.

1) The reply of St. Thomas is that there is one substantial being in Christ.

Thus the separated soul at the moment of the resurrection communicates its being to the re-assumed body. This thesis of St. Thomas is of sublime conception in that Christ’s human nature enjoys not only the ecstasy of knowledge and love because of the beatific vision, but also the ecstasy of His very being, inasmuch as it exists by reason of the eternal being itself of the Word. Such is the opinion of all Thomists.

2) On the contrary, Scotus, the Scotists, Suarez, and generally those who deny a real distinction between created essence and existence, hold that there are two substantial existences in Christ, the divine existence, which is

identical with His Godhead, and the human existence, which in their opinion is not really distinct from Christ's human nature.

3) Father Billot, however, defends the thesis that there is one substantial existence in Christ, but he identifies this unique existence with Christ's personality. According to his opinion, as stated above, personality or subsistence is identical with existence. Against this opinion we stated above, in challenging the major adduced by Father Billot to prove the real distinction between created essence and existence, by the following syllogism.

That which is not its own existence is really distinct from this existence. But Peter's person, even Peter's personality, is not his existence, which is predicated of it contingently. Therefore Peter's person, even Peter's personality, is really distinct from his existence.

Not even Peter's person is his humanity, because the humanity is only an essential part of his person. But the distinction is greater between Peter and his existence, than between him and his humanity, for he differs from his humanity as the whole from its essential part, whereas existence from which Peter differs is a contingent predicate of Peter, which nowise pertains to his essence. Therefore the denial of this conclusion would mean the destruction of the very foundation for the real distinction between created existence and created essence, a distinction that Father Billot always intended to maintain.

Moreover, if, in the opinion of St. Thomas, what formally constitutes personality were existence, being, then he would have spoken rather late of this formal constituent of personality in the present article, for he treated this subject ex professo concerning the mode of the union when discussing the union itself, showing what is meant by a personal or hypostatic union, and that this union is not accidental but substantial, that is, subsistential. In the present question he is concerned only with the consequences of the union. It would be most surprising if now he were to take up the question of what formally constitutes the hypostatic union, after having treated in fourteen questions concerning the mode of the union on the part of the person assuming, and on the part of the nature assumed and those things assumed with it.

These things being posited, let us see how St. Thomas proves his opinion, namely, that there is one substantial being in Christ.

Everything is said to be a being inasmuch as it is one, for one and being are convertible. But Christ is one, not two. Therefore in Christ there is one being and not two beings. For “being” comes from “to be”; being is that whose act is to be. It is that which is.

In other words, if there were two substantial existences in Christ, there would be two beings. This conclusion rests on the following words of Christ: “Before Abraham was made, I am.”

This argument is valid against Suarez. It must be said in refutation of his view that Christ’s human nature, if it had its own substantial being, would be entirely complete as a substance, with its ultimate actuality, and therefore complete as a suppositum, and hence its union with the Word could be only accidental, which is contrary to what was said above. Thus in Christ there would be two supposita, or two things, or two beings. The substantial mode of Suarez, which accrues to being that already has its own existence, appears to be something entirely accidental, and so there is a certain danger of Nestorianism suggested in this doctrine.

Second proof. It is founded on what properly belongs to the notions of substantial being, hypostasis, and nature, as declared in the argumentative part of this article.

Substantial being, which belongs to the notion of person as that which is, cannot be multiplied, since such multiplication is possible only of accidental being. Christ’s human nature, however, does not accrue to the Son of God accidentally but personally, so that there is only one person in Christ. Hence, there is only one substantial being in Christ.

Explanation of major. Substantial being belongs to the hypostasis as that which has being and to nature as that whereby anything has being. As St. Thomas says: “Being is consequent upon nature, not as upon that which has being, but as upon that whereby a thing is [such] ; whereas it is consequent upon person or hypostasis, as upon that which has being. Hence it has unity from the unity of hypostasis, rather than duality from the duality of the nature.”

This denial of multiplicity in substantial being is well explained in the body of this article, by a comparison with accidental being, that can be multiplied.

In fact, the being of an accident is to inhere; thus, to be white is the being of Socrates, not as he is Socrates but inasmuch as he is white. And there is no reason why this being should not be multiplied in one hypostasis or

person; for the being whereby Socrates is white is distinct from the being whereby he is a musician; but it is impossible that there should not be for one thing (or person) one (substantial) being. Being derives its name from “to be, “ because being is that which is or can be, and if there are two substantial beings, there are two beings, two supposita; and it is false to say that there are two such beings in Christ.

Explanation of minor. If, as Nestorius contends, the human nature of Christ were to accrue accidentally to the Word, as to be white or to be a musician accrues to Socrates, then there would be two substantial beings; but it accrues to him personally and substantially, just as when sight came to him who was born blind, this accrued to him as belonging to the constitution of his person. Hence there is only one substantial being in Christ, which is the eternal being of the Word that is communicated to the assumed human nature, just as at the moment of the resurrection substantial being of the soul is communicated to the re-assumed body.

This argument can be presented in another form, as several Thomists have so presented it.

A thing that has acquired its ultimate actuality is incapable of being in potentiality for further determination. But existence is the ultimate actuality of a thing or person, whereby person is placed outside all its causes. Therefore a person having one substantial existence is incapable of further substantial existence. The idea is especially repugnant for the uncreated person of the Word that already has its own uncreated existence to exist by a created existence. Cajetan’s interpretation concerning the formal constituent of person is completely in agreement with what is said in this article.

Conclusion confirmed. There are four reasons advanced for this.

1) If Christ’s human nature were to exist by its own created existence, it would also subsist by its own subsistence, because existence, since it is its ultimate actuality and presupposes subsistence, or personality, and there is only one personality in Christ, which is the divine personality.

2) If Christ’s human nature were to exist by its own created existence, it could not be terminated by the subsistence of the Word; because what has its ultimate act, cannot be further determined.

3) If Christ’s human nature were to exist by its own created existence, then it would not be one per se and substantial with the Word, because this supposition would postulate a double existence, one to which it would be in

potentiality, and the other which would be its ultimate act. But also one created substantial existence, since it is the ultimate act, makes the human nature incapable of receiving another substantial existence.

4) If Christ's human nature had its own created natural existence before it was assumed by the Word, then the Blessed Virgin Mary would not be the Mother of God. In fact, that Mary be truly the Mother of God, the term of her concurrence in the generation of the Son must be the God-man. But this could not be so if Christ's human nature had its own created existence, for the concurrence of whatsoever cause is considered totally terminated when the effect produced by it is existing, or has its ultimate actuality.

This conclusion of St. Thomas is also confirmed by the solution of the objections proposed in this article.

Reply to first objection. "Being is consequent upon person, as upon that which has being." Therefore, where there is only one person, there is likewise one being. It must be noted that St. Thomas says "'being is consequent upon person"; he does not say: "being constitutes person." This text proves St. Thomas to be of the opinion that personality or subsistence is not the same as existence, which is a contingent predicate of a created person.

Reply to second objection. "The eternal being of the Son of God, which is the divine nature, becomes the being of man, inasmuch as the human nature is assumed by the Son of God, to unity of person." Thus the being of the separated soul will become, on the resurrection day, the being of the reanimated body.

Reply to third objection. "Because the divine person is the same as the nature, there is no distinction in the divine persons between the being of the person and the being of the nature." Hence in the Trinity there is one being because of the unity of the nature, between which and both the being and the persons there is no distinction; and in Christ there is one being, because of the unity of the person, which is really distinct from the human nature.

It must be noted that this doctrine of St. Thomas, "the three divine persons have only one being, " cannot be reconciled with Father Billot's opinion and with that of certain other theologians who say that personality is the same as existence; for there are in the Trinity three personalities and only one existence.

Reply to fourth objection. Soul and body constitute the human nature, whereby Christ is man, and independently of Christ's divine person they are

not what is.

Those who deny a real distinction between essence and being (existence) present the following objection.

Being that is produced is prior to being that is assumed. But the production of anything terminates in its existence. Therefore Christ's human nature exists by its own existence before it is assumed by the Word.

In other words, it is assumed because it is; and it is, not because it is assumed.

Reply. I distinguish the major: that produced being exists by priority of reason, this I concede; that it exists by priority of time, this I deny. I subdistinguish the minor: that the production of anything terminates in its existence so that this thing always has this act of existence in the formal sense, please prove this; that it has this existence by something being, namely, by the being that assumes it, in a case that is absolutely miraculous, this I concede.

Hence, when it said, "Christ's human nature is therefore assumed because it exists, " a distinction must be made in the expression, "because it exists"; by saying, because it is in the process of becoming to exist, in that it tends to exist, this I concede; because it exists in the sense that it is a complete and existing being, this I deny.

Hence at the very same moment, all these things take place, namely, Christ's soul is created, it is united with the body, and is assumed by the Word; therefore we must not seek for a created existence where the divine existence is communicated.

Similarly, prime matter, which, as St. Thomas teaches, cannot exist without a form, was created prior to the production of the whole composite by a priority of reason on the part of the material cause; but it was created instantaneously along with the form. Hence it is more correct to say, that is created along with its form that has priority as formal and final cause. Therefore prime matter has not its own existence, but it exists by the existence of the whole composite, or of the suppositum. Causes mutually interact. Thus the Word that terminates is prior as the terminating form, but the human nature is prior as material cause. The general rule is for essence to precede existence as a quasi-material cause, and for existence to precede essence as a quasi-formal cause. But in the Incarnation, existence is the eternal existence of the Word. Hence Christ said: "Before Abraham was made, I am." He speaks as man, and hence implies that also His human

nature exists by the eternal existence of the Word; but what is directly affirmed is the eternal pre-existence of Christ's one and only person.

But I insist. The Word did not assume a possible human nature, but a complete being. Therefore it previously existed.

Reply. I distinguish the antecedent: that the Word assumed a human nature that is a complete being existing by its own existence, this I deny; that it existed by the existence of the Word, which was communicated to it by the assumption, this I concede.

Another objection. The Thomistic thesis presupposes that subsistence precedes existence. But this is false, because subsistence is the very act itself of existence.

1) Indirect reply. The argument is reversed. If subsistence is the same as existence, then the Word assumed the human nature before it existed and subsisted, which is the heresy of Nestorius.

2) Direct reply. To subsist in the concrete includes both subsistence and existence; for subsistence is the abstract correlative name of what in the concrete is called suppositum, just as personality is the correlative of person; and to subsist is the existing of the suppositum.

Hence there is a double correlative:

ABSTRACT—existence of substance
subsistence
personality
CONCRETE—to exist of the substance or to subsist
suppositum
person

Hence even Suarez in a certain way distinguishes subsistence from existence, saying that subsistence is a mode of existence. But this presupposes the denial of a real distinction between created essence and being. Thus the truth of this particular judgment is not preserved intact, namely, Peter's human nature before any consideration of the mind is not his being.

Moreover, since existence is the ultimate actuality of a thing, the Suarezian mode of subsistence accrues only as an accident to the already existing nature. Thus the hypostatic union would be accidental.

Another objection. St. Thomas says: "The being of the human nature is not the divine being. Yet it must not be said simply that there are two beings

in Christ; because the eternal suppositum does not refer equally to each being."

Reply. Certain Thomists, such as Billuart, say that this passage is concerned with the being of the essence, and not with the being of existence.

Yet this answer does not remove all doubt from the mind, because generally when St. Thomas speaks of being, he means existence, and from a consideration of the context of this quotation it appears, as at least more probable, that St. Thomas is concerned with existence.

According to some modern critics, such as Mandonnet and Grabmann, this disputed question was written before the third part of the Theological Summa, and so it is not surprising to find the more perfect formula in the Summa. But several other more recent critics, Peltzer, Synave, Glorieux, are of the opinion that this disputed question had been written after the third part of the Summa. They acknowledge, however, that the Compendium of Theology is still later, and in it St. Thomas speaks as he did in the Summa theologica.

Solution. This disputed question most probably concerns the distinction between the eternal existence of the Word and the same existence as communicated in time to Christ's human nature. Thus the existence of the separated soul at the moment of the resurrection is communicated to the body, and there is absolutely one existence, although it is true to say that now the human body again exists, but not before this reunion, because then there were only dust and ashes.

This interpretation of this particular disputed question has its foundation in the context, for in the body of this article it is said: "Existence properly and truly is predicated of the subsisting suppositum.... But Christ is absolutely one on account of the unity of the suppositum, and two in a qualified sense (secundum quid) because of the two natures; thus He has one existence on account of the one eternal existence of the eternal suppositum. But there is an other existence of this suppositum, not inasmuch as it is eternal, but inasmuch as in time this suppositum became man..., which is a secondary existence. But if there were two supposita in Christ, then each suppositum would have its own principal existence, and thus there would be absolutely two existences in Christ."

The present article gives us the simpler and more perfect formula, for the argumentative part most splendidly says: "By the human nature there

accrued to Christ no new personal being, but only a new relation of the pre-existing personal being to the human nature."

Last difficulty. No divine perfection can actuate a created nature, for then this perfection would be limited since it would be received in a created nature, and would constitute with it a composite that is more perfect than its parts.

Reply. That no divine perfection can actuate a created nature by way of an intrinsically informing form, this I concede; by way of an intrinsically terminating term, this I deny. Thus, God's essence clearly seen terminates the act of the beatific vision. Thus the eternal existence of the Word is the ultimate act that terminates Christ's human nature, just as the apex of the pyramid terminates the new lines that are directed toward it.

Hence some appropriately said that in Christ there is not only ecstasy of contemplation and love, but also ecstasy of His existence, inasmuch as Christ's human nature exists by the eternal existence of the Word; being rapt as it were toward it, just as an ardent lover is attracted to the object loved.

Thus the doctrine of this article is fully in agreement with what was said above, and Cajetan's interpretation concerning what constitutes personality plainly has its foundation in all these texts of St. Thomas and, moreover, is in conformity with natural reason, inasmuch as person is the intelligent and free subject or the ego, or the primary center of attribution to whom are attributed intellectual nature and existence. Thus, personality is distinct from both nature and existence.

This doctrine is the quasi-corollary of the real distinction between created essence and existence. Contrary to what Suarez says, however, this distinction most certainly follows from the fact that God alone is His existence, and, before any consideration of the mind, the creature is not its existence. This will be most clearly evident when we shall see God as He is, and then we shall realize what an infinite difference there is between our essence and the divine essence. Moreover, if the divine person of the Word can take the place of the created personality, why could not the uncreated existence of the Word take the place of the created existence?

CHAPTER XX: QUESTION 18: WHAT PERTAINS TO THE UNITY OF CHRIST AS REGARDS HIS WILL

This question concerns the human will of Christ as distinct from His divine will and as always freely in conformity with the divine good pleasure.

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER THERE ARE TWO WILLS IN CHRIST

State of the question. Several heretics denied that there are two wills in Christ, and for various reasons. Thus Apollinaris and his disciples said that the Word in Christ took the place of His mind; hence they denied that Christ had a human will and a human intellect.

Eutyches and the Monophysites, deciding that there is only one nature in Christ, concluded that there is only one will.

The Nestorians, asserting that there was only an accidental union of love between Christ and the Word, also posited one will in Christ.

Finally, the Monothelites, namely, Sergius of Constantinople, Macharius of Antioch, Cyrus of Alexandria, asserting that there are two natures in the one person of Christ, thought that Christ's human nature was never moved by its own proper motion, but only as it was moved by the divine nature; and so they denied two wills and two volitions in Christ and admitted only the divine will.

Reply. There are two wills in Christ, namely, the divine will and the human will.

This conclusion is de fide, defined by the Church, against the Monothelites.

This defined truth is expressed in several texts of Holy Scripture. Thus we read: "Father, if Thou wilt, remove this chalice from Me, but yet not My

will but Thine be done.” And again: “Not as I will, but as Thou wilt.” Also Jesus says: “I seek not My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me.”

Theological proof. The human will belongs to the perfection of the human nature, just as the divine will belongs to the perfection of the divine nature. But Christ is truly God and truly man, having two distinct natures. Therefore He likewise has two wills, namely, the divine will and the human will. Otherwise Christ could neither have obeyed nor have merited, for obedience and merit presuppose a created will that is subordinated to the divine will.

Reply to first objection. But Christ by His human will always followed the divine will. There was most perfect subordination of the human will to the divine will.

Reply to second objection. Thus the human nature of Christ was the animated and free instrument of the divine nature.

Reply to third objection. Christ’s human will, like ours, is inclined by its nature to something such as to happiness, or to good in general and to anything freely.

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER IN CHRIST THERE WAS A WILL OF SENSUALITY BESIDES THE WILL OF REASON

Reply. There was in Christ the sensitive appetite, which sometimes is called the sensual will, and this because the Word assumed a complete human nature.

Reply to second objection. In Christ there was no concupiscence (fomes peccatl), and there was no indeliberate act in Him that in the sensitive part preceded reason.

THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER IN CHRIST THERE WERE TWO WILLS AS REGARDS THE REASON

Reply. In Christ there is one power or faculty of the human will; but if we consider the human will with reference to its acts, then there is a distinction between the natural will that is naturally inclined to good in itself, shrinking from what is harmful to nature, and the rational will, or free will, that is drawn to its object by comparison and deliberation.

Reply to second objection. Thus in the same intellective faculty there is a distinction between the intellect inasmuch as it is drawn toward principles as its object, and the discursive reason inasmuch as it is drawn toward conclusions as its object.

FOURTH ARTICLE: WHETHER THERE WAS FREE WILL IN CHRIST

State of the question. The difficulty here is that the nature of free will is to be indifferent in its choice. But Christ's will was determined to be good, because He could not sin. Therefore it seems that there was not free will in Christ.

Reply. There was free will in Christ. This conclusion is of faith, just as it is of faith that Christ obeyed His Father and merited for us; for merit presupposes freedom not only from compulsion, but also from necessity.

Theological proof. The argument has its foundation in the previous article. Since there was in Christ not only the will as nature, but also the will as reason, we must say that He could choose, and consequently had free will, whose act is choice.

However, there was no doubt in Christ's deliberative judgment as to what must be chosen, because He had perfect knowledge of things.

Reply to third objection. St. Thomas answers the objection taken from Christ's impeccability by saying: "The will of Christ, though determined to good, is not determined to this or that good." Thus He was free to choose Peter in preference to John, as His vicar. "Hence it pertains to Christ, even as to the blessed, to choose with a free will confirmed in good." Thus God Himself cannot will evil, but most freely chooses this created good in preference to some other, this passible world in preference to some other.

In the above-quoted text, St. Thomas solves, indeed, the difficult problem of the compatibility of Christ's impeccability with His freedom. The words of the text were ever of penetrating clarity to him because he saw clearly that, just as God Himself is both impeccable and absolutely free, so also in due proportion is Christ as man, and it was a profound utterance when he said, "that it pertains to Christ, even as to the blessed, to choose with a free will confirmed in good, " who remain free, not only in loving God clearly seen, but also concerning the possibility of choice as regards particular goods, and yet there is no fear of their changing their mind.

Nevertheless afterward, as the history of theology shows, this problem was very much disputed, especially concerning Christ's freedom as regards the commands of His Father, which He was not free to disobey. Therefore this question must be given special consideration so as to make it clear how Christ's will was free, though confirmed in good.

Reconciliation Between Christ's Freedom Of Will And His Impeccability

State and difficulty of the question. It is certain that the soul of Christ was endowed with free will, which means not only freedom from internal compulsion, but also from external constraint. The Catholic Church defined against Calvin, Luther, and Jansenius, that free will implies these two kinds of freedom. The third condemned proposition of Jansenius reads: "For meriting and demeriting in the state of man's fallen nature, freedom from internal compulsion is not required; it is sufficient to be free from external constraint." This means that the contradictory proposition is true, namely, for meriting and demeriting in the state of man's fallen nature, not only freedom from external constraint or spontaneity is required, which is found in the irrational animal, but also freedom from internal compulsion, or a dominating indifference of choice, under the direction of free judgment, as St. Thomas explains. He also says: "The will of Christ, though determined to good, is not determined to this or that good. Hence it pertains to Christ, even as to the blessed, to choose with a free will confirmed in good."

Where there is no command there is no difficulty, and so Christ freely chose Peter as His vicar in preference to John.

It is of faith that Christ had free will, because it was defined that there are two inconfused natures in Christ, and that each nature retains its own properties, faculties of understanding and willing, and each its own operations.

The Catholic Church likewise defined that Christ freely merited and satisfied for us. But, as already stated, against the Jansenists, free will is required for meriting, and freedom from internal compulsion.

All Catholic theologians are agreed on these declarations and they reject the teaching of Jansenius, who said that Christ was interiorly compelled to observe the command of His Father, since freedom from external constraint was, in the opinion of Jansenius, sufficient for meriting.

Likewise it is certain that there never was the stain of either original sin or actual sin in Christ, and this statement is of faith, as was shown above. In

fact, the Second Council of Constantinople declared that Christ was impeccable even before the Resurrection.

All theologians maintain that Christ was thus impeccable at least by God's ordinary law, and this for three reasons, namely, because of the hypostatic union, the plenitude of inamissible habitual grace, and the beatific vision. In fact, as stated above, the Thomists contend against the Scotists that, if God were to take away habitual grace and the beatific vision from Christ, He would still be impeccable and not merely sinless, because of the hypostatic union. In any other case, sin would be charged to the Word itself, since actions belong to the supposita or are elicited by the suppositum.

Thus Christ even in this life was absolutely impeccable, and this for three reasons: (1) because He had the grace of union; (2) because He had the fullness of inamissible habitual grace; (3) because He had the beatific vision. He was also de facto sinless since He always received efficacious grace to do what is right, and this befitted Him as it did the Blessed Virgin Mary.

These facts being admitted, there arises the great difficulty about how we shall reconcile Christ's freedom from internal compulsion, in the acts commanded, with His absolute impeccability, which is more than sinlessness. For either Christ could refuse to perform the act commanded, and then He could sin, or He could not refuse, and then He was not free, with freedom from internal compulsion, and hence His act was not meritorious. It seems that Christ's impeccability and the freedom required in Him for meriting are irreconcilable. But our faith tells us that these two properties most certainly belonged to Christ even in this life. Christ's impeccability and His merits are underlying principles of all Christianity.

Scriptural proof. On the one hand, the Gospels and epistles state it to be an established fact that Christ's death was a truly free act. Thus Jesus says: "Therefore doth the Father love Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No man taketh it away from Me; but I lay it down of Myself and I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it up again. This commandment I have received of My Father." These words express Christ's liberty and the divine command. Christ reaffirms this in His discourse at the Last Supper: "The prince of this world cometh and in Me he hath not anything. But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father hath given Me commandment, so do I." It is also evident that

Christ's death was truly meritorious. On the other hand, it is certain that Christ was not only sinless but absolutely impeccable. Therefore He could not disobey. Then how was it possible for Him to obey or disobey as He chose?

Various Opinions Proposed For The Solution Of This Doubt

These may be reduced to the following three: (1) Some said that Jesus did not receive from the Father a true command to die. So said Lorca, who quotes Paludanus. Afterward Petavius and Franzelin held this view, and among more recent theologians was Father Billot. To these must be added, with some modification, Father de la Taille, as we shall state farther on.

According to this opinion, Christ was not free in things that are commanded, either by the natural law or the positive law, because it is physically impossible for the comprehensor to will not to obey.

2) Others said that Christ received from the Father a command that determined only the substance of the death, but not circumstances of time, manner of death, and other conditions. Tournely said that Christ could have been dispensed by His Father from this command to die. Vasquez, de Lugo, and Lessius held this view. This second opinion is eclectic and holds with the first opinion that Christ was not free in things commanded, though it maintains with the third opinion that Christ received the command to die. On seeking to reconcile the command with free will it restricts the command to the substance of the work.

3) There are those who say that Christ received a true and strict command to die, and it determined both the substance and the circumstances of His death. Nevertheless Christ offered Himself freely on the cross, because He was free not only from external constraint, but also from internal compulsion. This third opinion maintains, contrary to the two other opinions, that Christ was free even in things strictly commanded, both of the natural law and of the positive law. So say the Thomists; and also, with some qualification, St. Robert Bellarmine, and Suarez; who explain their view by means of the scientia media, which the Thomists do not admit. The Thomists maintain that Christ's impeccable freedom of will is like God's freedom, whose will is both absolutely free and absolutely impeccable, inasmuch as God loves His own good, but He most freely loves it as the reason for loving creatures. But there can be no command for God.

The secondary subject of dispute among Thomists, however, concerns the regulation of Christ's free choice, as to whether it was also possibly

regulated by the beatific vision, or only by the infused knowledge. This will be examined afterward.

Thus the fundamental difference between these opinions is clearly seen, inasmuch as the first two opinions assert that Christ was not free in things commanded, whereas the third opinion declares that He was free.

[summary diagram on page 446 skipped]

Importance of this discussion. Thomists believe that it is a grave matter to deny Christ's freedom of will in things commanded, because Christ is the exemplar of all virtues, and especially in the conformity of His will with the divine will that commands. The denial of this freedom appears to them to be an entirely rash statement and somewhat of an insult to Christ. They are generally chary of detracting from the sublimity of mysteries in seeking for apparent clarity, which, instead of disposing a person for the contemplation of divine things, has rather the opposite effect. First of all, we must bear in mind that faith is of things not seen, and so too is contemplation that proceeds from living faith, illumined by the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

Hence, concerning the method to be followed by the theologian in these things, it must be noted first of all that most certain truths must not be either denied or minimized, as in the present question Christ's impeccability and His freedom from internal compulsion. This freedom of Christ must not be restricted, because it is the exemplar for our life and undoubtedly the most sublime image of God's freedom, which is both supreme and impeccable.

But no wonder that there must be for us obscurity in the intimate reconciliation of these most certain truths. It is not obscurity of the lower order, namely, of incompatibility or absurdity, but it is the higher obscurity of the mystery itself which is the object of faith and contemplation. Thus in the question of predestination, on the one hand it is certain that God does not command the impossible, and He makes salvation really possible for all. On the other hand, it is certain that, although God's love is the cause of goodness in things, nobody would be better than another unless that person were loved more by God, as St. Thomas shows. But the intimate reconciliation of these two truths is hidden from us, because it is the reconciliation of supreme mercy, supreme justice, and supreme freedom in the Godhead. This intimate reconciliation can be seen only by seeing God Himself through the beatific vision.

Thomism does not fear either logic or mystery, for logic leads us to the most sublime of God's mysteries. Thus the beauty of the chiaroscuro in

these mysteries is apparent.

The first two opinions that declare Christ was not free in things commanded must now be examined.

Was Christ Truly Under Obligation To Die For Us, Because Of The Command Imposed Upon Him By The Father?

State of the question. That Christ had to die for us was denied by Lorca, Petavius, Franzelin, Billot, and de la Taille because, so they say, in such a case, He would not have been free, for, inasmuch as He was impeccable, He could not disobey this command. Hence they held that God, apart from the command by which Christ was compelled to die, in His foreknowledge disposed and decreed that order in which He knew that the Jews, through their own malice, would kill Christ, and that Christ, by conformity of His will with the divine good pleasure, which was not obligatory, freely would embrace death on the cross. Father de la Taille concedes to the Thomists that Christ was under a real moral obligation of dying for us, but in his opinion this obligation did not arise from the Father's command, for Christ contracted this obligation at the Last Supper by offering Himself to the Father to be put to death for us. Thus God inspires certain generous souls by way of counsel, but not of obligation, to offer themselves in holocaust along with Christ for the salvation of sinners, and they contract this obligation only after having freely accepted this divine inspiration, for example, by vowing to be a victim.

Reply. With the Thomists we say that Christ was really under obligation to die because of the command of His Father.

Scriptural proof. Sacred Scriptures speaks in various places of commands imposed upon Christ, especially of the command to die.

According to the general rule laid down by St. Augustine and commonly admitted by theologians, the words of Sacred Scripture are to be accepted in their literal sense when there is no incongruity.

We read in the Gospel that Jesus says: "Therefore doth the Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I may take it up again. No man taketh it away from Me, but I lay it down of Myself, and I have power to lay it down and have power to take it up again. This commandment I have received of My Father." The words used by Jesus to express His Father's command, are always technical terms in the New Testament, that signify divine commands in the strict sense. There is no reason for saying here that this is a command improperly so called; otherwise it could always be said,

when the word “command” occurs in the Scripture, that this word is not to be taken in the strict sense. Moreover, these words are said by Christ before He offers Himself at the Last Supper to the Father to die for us. Therefore Christ did not contract the obligation of dying for us from a later oblation of Himself, but from the command of the Father. In things that are partly clear and partly obscure, what is clear must not be denied, otherwise the mystery undergoes a change if the inferior obscurity of incoherence and contradiction is substituted for the higher obscurity.

Jesus also says after the Last Supper: “The prince of this world cometh, and in Me he hath not anything. But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father hath given Me a command so do I.” This text is concerned strictly with the command of dying for our salvation.

Again Jesus says: “If you keep My commandment, you shall abide in My love; as I also have kept My Father’s commandments, and do abide in His love.” In this text Christ gives the same meaning to the word “commandments” as imposed upon Him by His Father, and those He imposed on His apostles. But these were commandments in the strict sense, therefore those imposed upon Him by the Father were likewise strict commandments. Thus Christ was the exemplar of perfect obedience. Moreover, this text is concerned not only with the commandment to die, but with all the commandments of the Father observed by Christ, and He observed them indeed freely and meritoriously for us. It seems impossible to reconcile this text with the thesis that affirms Christ was not free in things commanded. But several of these commandments, those that are of the natural order, precede Christ’s spontaneous oblation.

Likewise Jesus says: “And the Son of man indeed goeth according to that which is determined.” Again Jesus says in the Garden of Olives: “Father, if Thou wilt, remove this chalice from Me; but yet not My will, but Thine be done.” The Apostle declares that Christ says, when He cometh into the world: “Sacrifice and oblation Thou wouldst not, but a body Thou hast fitted for Me; holocausts for sin did not please Thee. Then I said: Behold I come; in the head of the book it is written of Me that I should do Thy will, O God.” These texts concern Christ’s will in the strict sense, and are not merely a simple counsel given to the Son to make an oblation of Himself for our salvation.

Hence it seems impossible to exclude the notion of a divine command from these texts of Sacred Scripture.

Confirmation. There are other texts of Sacred Scripture that refer to Christ's obedience. St. Paul says: "He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross."

Again he says: "For as by the disobedience of one man, many were made sinners; so also by the obedience of one, many shall be made just." There is no reason to deny that these texts refer to both obedience and disobedience in the true and strict sense of these terms. But the formal object of obedience in the strict sense of the term consists in the absolute command given by the superior; for counsel is not of itself binding, nor does it distinguish the superior as such from inferiors; for equals and inferiors can also give advice as superiors can.

Finally, in the last quoted text (Rom. 5:19), Christ's obedience is placed in opposition to Adam's disobedience, which consisted in not complying with a strict command. Therefore the text refers to obedience in the strict sense, which consisted in complying with a strict command.

Furthermore it must be said that an appeal to God's counsel does not help in upholding Christ's freedom; for it is also repugnant to Christ's supreme holiness for Him to have been able to omit or neglect the counsels of God the Father, especially the counsel that is dependent on the eternal decree, and is that ordained for the salvation of mankind and for the greater glory of God. Even apart from any command, it remains true that Christ's death with all its circumstances was decreed before all time, and Christ also knew the will of His Father, and it was no less repugnant for Him not to be in conformity with it as to sin.

Two theological reasons are given which show clearly that the command to die cannot be denied.

First theological reason. It is a direct proof and it starts from the definition of command and it shows that a command does not take away psychological liberty.

Every command is given for the free fulfillment of the act. Thus it would be useless and foolish for fire to be commanded to burn, for the heart to be commanded to beat. Hence the command that would destroy psychological freedom in the person obeying, would destroy the essential meaning of command.

But the command to die for us, as a command, did not lose its essential meaning from the fact that Christ was impeccable. Therefore this command

to die did not take away psychological freedom from Christ, or His free will as regards the act to which He was inclined.

Major. It is absolutely certain, for a command does indeed take away moral liberty inasmuch as it makes the opposite act illicit, but it does not take away psychological liberty, for it even requires this liberty in that it demands the free fulfillment of what is commanded.

Minor. It is likewise certain. Thus the command given by God to the good angels to perform some ministerial work for Him, does not lose its nature as a command because they cannot sin. And they freely comply with this command, inasmuch as its object is not in every respect good so that it necessitates their will. Thus the object of this command differs from God clearly seen.

Second theological reason. If the strict command to die for us had destroyed Christ's freedom and power to merit, the result would have been the same with natural commands and thus Christ would neither have been free nor merited in the observance of all commands of the natural law.

But to affirm this is to restrict Christ's freedom and merit without any reason, and it would be an excessive restriction, even, so it seems, derogatory to Christ's honor because He would no longer be the model of all virtues.

Christ's merit must in no way be restricted; on the contrary, it is beyond our power of conception. Hence, too, His freedom must not be restricted, for it is the perfect image of God's supreme and impeccable freedom. Hence the idea of a command must be admitted.

What Was The Scope Of This Command To Die For Us?

Did it concern only the substance of the death, or did it include also circumstances of time, place, manner of death, and similar conditions?

As we remarked, Vasquez, de Lugo, and Lessius say that the scope of this command was only the substance of the death. Thus, in the opinion of these theologians, Christ was free only concerning the circumstances of His death, and it was not precisely because He died that He merited, but only because He died in such a place, such a time, and such a manner.

For these theologians, the command eliminates freedom in the impeccable Christ.

The Thomists give the following proofs of the contrary opinion.

Scriptural proof. St. Paul says of Christ: "He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross for which cause God also

hath exalted Him." Therefore the scope of Christ's obedience included even this mode of death, namely, death on the cross. Also, concerning the other circumstances, after Christ was apprehended by the Jews on the night of His passion, the Evangelist says: "Now all this was done that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled." Even the time is included: "Before the festival day of the Pasch, Jesus knowing that His hour was come, that He should pass out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them unto the end."

Doctrine of the Church. The councils of the Catholic Church always affirmed that Christ merited our salvation by His passion and death and not only by the circumstances of His death. There are many texts in Sacred Scripture, even in the Old Testament, that confirm this assertion. Thus the prophet says: "If He shall lay down His life for sin, He shall see a long-lived seed." The Council of Trent says that Christ "merited justification for us by His most holy passion on the wood of the cross." All the faithful, in all centuries, attributed our redemption to Christ's death, and not only to its circumstances.

Theological proof. It must again be said that a command, which would take away psychological freedom, would destroy its own nature as a command, since it is given for the free fulfillment of the act. It would likewise follow that there was no merit in Christ's obedience, because He would not have been free concerning the thing commanded, inasmuch as it was commanded, and He would not have been free concerning the commands of the natural law.

It cannot be said that the command to die was imposed upon Christ conditionally, so that whenever He wished He could be dispensed from it, which is the contention of Tournely. Thus there would be absolutely no merit in Christ's obedience, or at least hardly any at all; for there is scarcely any obedience in a subordinate who is given freedom of choice so as to be able at any time to obtain a dispensation. Moreover, the work of our redemption would be attributed more to Christ's human will than to the divine will, which is an unbefitting condition.

Finally, the precepts of the natural law do not depend on Christ's acceptance of them, nor do they allow of a dispensation, and yet He observed them freely and meritoriously, saying: "If you keep My commandments you shall abide in My love; as I also have kept My Father's commandments."

Hence the first two above-mentioned opinions: (1) have no basis in the Sacred Scriptures but, on the contrary, are rather in opposition to the testimony of Scripture; (2) they are false in presupposing a command that destroys psychological liberty whereas, on the contrary, the command presupposes this liberty; (3) they are useless as a means of reconciliation between Christ's freedom and His impeccability concerning the precepts of the natural law; (4) they unduly restrict the freedom and merit of Christ, who no longer would be the model of all virtues, and especially of perfect obedience. Thus they do not solve the difficulty but seek to escape from it. They do not ascend to a certain understanding of the mystery in this problem, but rather descend to merely human concepts of this mystery. Thus truth is sought, not so much by a penetration of the principles involved, but rather by a quasi-mechanical translocation of the element of the problem.

Principal Question

Positing the precepts of the natural law, and the strict command to die, how could Christ, who was impeccable, and free not only from internal compulsion but also from external constraint, perform a free and meritorious act in obeying?

The fact that Christ's freedom is compatible with His impeccability, notwithstanding the command, is expressed in the very words our Lord uttered, as recorded in the Gospel: "I lay down My life, that I may take it again. No man taketh it away from Me, but I lay it down of Myself, and I have power [freedom] to lay it down and I have power to take it up again."

The difficulty in explaining the compatibility of Christ's freedom with His impeccability is, as we already said, that He could either disobey the command, and so could commit sin, or He could not disobey, and so He was not free, and His obedience was not meritorious.

Prerequisites. In the solution of this difficulty, there being a real command, several requirements are to be noted.

1) Liberty of exercise alone suffices to preserve intact the essence of free will, because by it man is sufficiently master of his act, which he can do or not do: the essence of free will does not require liberty of specification either of contraries, as in the case of loving and hating, or of disparities, choosing for the end this means or another.

2) The power and freedom to commit sin is not required for real freedom of will; it is rather a sign of freedom, as a disease is a sign of life. This

freedom to sin pertains to the defectibility of our nature and is therefore an imperfection in freedom. It is nowise found either in God or in the blessed. God is both supremely free and absolutely impeccable. But Christ's human freedom must be the most perfect image of divine freedom. This calls for most special consideration, namely, that the impeccable God possesses this freedom only for what is good, but He created most freely. There is a certain fitness in His act of creating, inasmuch as good is self-diffusive; but He is most free in creating, so that neither His goodness nor His wisdom would have been less if He had not created. He is not better because He created the universe and because He sent us His only-begotten Son.

3) Not to obey can be taken either as a privation or as merely a negation. As a privation it signifies the omission of obedience that is of obligation, or a sin of disobedience, and this is therefore strictly to disobey rather than to obey. But taken in the negative sense, it signifies simply the absence of obedience, as when a person performs an act that is not commanded, as in the case of sleeping; and this is rather not to obey than to disobey; not to obey in the sense of a privation is to combine the omission of obedience with the command. Whereas not to obey in the negative sense is not to perform the act, prescinding from the idea of a command.

Thus that God does not preserve a creature in doing what is good and permits the beginning of the first sin is something that is not good, but it is not the evil of punishment. On the contrary, the divine denial of efficacious grace is a punishment that presupposes guilt, at least the beginning of the first sin. In all these most difficult questions, we must carefully distinguish between negation and privation. But as evil is the privation of a good that one ought to have, so the denial of a good that is not due to a person is not an evil; for example, that God does not preserve a certain creature in the performance of good at this very moment and in the present circumstances. For He is not bound to preserve every creature in the performance of good, otherwise He could not permit sin since this would be impossible and what is liable to fail would never fail.

Hence it must be said of Christ, who was impeccable, that He was incapable of not obeying in the privative sense, because in such a case He would have been able to sin; He was not only sinless but absolutely impeccable, just as He not only never erred, but He was infallible.

It remains for us to examine whether He could not obey in the negative sense, prescinding from the idea of a command, carefully bearing in mind

the distinction between privation and negation.

4) It is presupposed that death on the cross for our salvation has intrinsically no necessary connection, at the moment and in the present circumstances, with Christ's will, or with His enjoyment of the beatific vision. The present object differs from others that necessarily move the will as regards their specification, such as being, living, and understanding, if considered in themselves, without any annexed incongruity.

5) It is presupposed that a command is merely extrinsic to the will and nowise interiorly changes it, so that the will which before the command is presupposed to be psychologically free, after the giving of the command remains psychologically free, since a command cannot be given about necessary things. In fact, it is presupposed that God, in commanding His Son to die, at the same time willed that He should submit to death by obeying freely and thus meriting. For a command is given for the free fulfillment of the act; if it were to destroy this freedom, as stated above, it would destroy the very nature of a command. The distinction between psychological freedom and moral freedom is a common sense distinction which all understand; for a command that is a moral obligation is morally binding so that the act that is opposed to it is illicit or forbidden; but the command does not take away psychological freedom either as regards the exercise of the act or as regards its specification, and this psychological freedom or free will remains either in sin freely committed against the command, or in the free fulfillment of the command.

6) The common distinction of Thomists in the matter of helps in general are presupposed, such as necessity of consequence or hypothetical necessity and necessity of consequent or absolute necessity, as also the divided and composite senses, distinctions given by St. Thomas elsewhere, in which he shows that if I see Peter running, he must necessarily run, by a necessity of consequence but not of consequent, for he runs freely; but it is necessary for him to run as long as he is running and while I see him running, because as Aristotle says: "Everything that is, while it is, must be."

Likewise Peter must sit while he is sitting, that is, he cannot combine sitting with standing, or both sit and not sit in the composite sense; but while sitting he is able to stand, in the divided sense, that is, while sitting he retains the real power of standing, but not the act of standing; likewise, while sleeping he retains the real power of seeing and is not blind.

It remains, therefore, for us to see whether Christ's impeccability enabled Him not to obey in the negative or divided sense; so that, when He obeyed, His act of obedience was necessary by a necessity of consequence or hypothetical necessity, but not by a necessity of consequent or absolute necessity.

With these prerequisites, it must be shown in what the freedom of Christ's impeccability consists: (1) in its relation to God's impeccable freedom, of which it is the most pure created image; and (2) in its relation to command, especially the command to die for our salvation.

Christ's Impeccable Freedom Inasmuch As It Is The Most Pure Image Of The Uncreated Impeccable Freedom

It is evident that God nowise is free to sin, that is, He cannot turn away from Himself, from His infinite goodness which He necessarily loves. Nevertheless He is supremely free in what pertains to good, as regards His goodness inasmuch as it is the reason of His love for creatures, or the reason for the communication, diffusion, and manifestation of His goodness. These assertions are of faith as defined by the Vatican Council.

There is indeed a mystery in this, namely, although it was truly fitting that God create the world, inasmuch as good and especially the supreme good is self-diffusive, yet God created with such absolute freedom that He could have most properly not created; it would not have been improper if He had not created. Whatever Leibnitz may say, God would not have been deficient either in wisdom or goodness if He had not created. God is neither greater nor better for having created the universe.

Likewise, although it was truly fitting for God to have raised the human race and the angels to the life of grace, yet He could have not so raised them. Also, although it was truly fitting that God sent His Son into the world for our redemption, it was in His power not to have willed the redemptive Incarnation.

St. Thomas explains elsewhere the two aspects of this mystery of uncreated freedom.

The fittingness of creation, as also the fittingness of the Incarnation, is apparent from the fact that good is self-diffusive. As St. Thomas says: "If natural things, so far as they are perfect, communicate their good to others, much more does it appertain to the divine will to communicate by likeness its own good to others, as much as possible."

The fitness of creation that has its foundation in the aforesaid principle appears of such importance that Leibnitz, and several philosophers before him, said: “If God had not created, He would have been neither infinitely good nor infinitely wise.”

Nevertheless the Vatican Council defined it to be of faith that “God with absolute freedom of counsel created.” St. Thomas explains this assertion as follows: “The divine will has a necessary relation to the divine goodness, which is its proper object. Hence God wills His own goodness necessarily.... But God wills things apart from Himself so far as they are ordered to His own goodness, as their end.... Hence, since the goodness of God is perfect and can exist without other things, inasmuch as no perfection can accrue to Him from them, it follows that His willing things apart from Himself is not absolutely necessary.”

Hence we can present the argument in the following syllogistic form.

God is free, not to love His goodness in itself, but inasmuch as it is the reason for His loving creatures, which have no right to being. And although God is infinitely good and wise, He does not become better from the fact that He willed most freely to create. Thus, He enjoys supreme freedom as well as impeccability, namely, supreme freedom in what appertains only to good.

But the human will of Christ is the most pure reflection of the uncreated will, inasmuch as it is the human will of the incarnate Son of God. Therefore the human will of Christ must be likewise both impeccable and most free, not indeed in its relation to the divine goodness considered in itself and clearly seen, but in its relation to the divine goodness inasmuch as it is the reason for His loving creatures. There is no reason for surprise that there is a mystery in this, just as there is a mystery in uncreated freedom.

In other words, Christ as man, was not free to sin, for this results from a certain defectibility in our nature. He was truly not only sinless, but absolutely impeccable, and this for three reasons: (1) because of the hypostatic union; (2) because of the inamissible fullness of grace; (3) because of His having the beatific vision.

Strictly speaking, on account of the beatific vision, Christ necessarily loved the divine goodness clearly seen as it is in itself, and this act of love was indeed spontaneous, though it transcended freedom; but, like God, He freely loved the divine goodness, inasmuch as it is the reason for God’s love of creatures. The mystery, indeed, is that for God to create is so fitting that

not to create would be unfitting, and there is a similar mystery in Christ's human will.

However, there is a special difficulty to be explained. For God, though it is fitting for Him to create, there is no command. On the contrary, Christ was bound to obey the commands of His Father, even the command to die for our salvation. It is, indeed, easy to understand that, just as God most freely chose whom He wills for eternal salvation, Christ freely chose and called certain fishermen in preference to others for the grace of the apostolate. But it is very difficult to understand how He was free in the observance of His Father's commands. The whole difficulty, as we say, concerns the command; for if Christ could refrain from performing the act commanded, He could sin, for He was perhaps sinless but not impeccable. But if He could not refrain from performing the act commanded, then He was not free, and therefore He could not merit for us. This dilemma is the Thermopylae of theology, just as is the difficulty of defending the reconciliation of God's foreknowledge with free will, especially with true culpability in the sinner.

Solution

Christ, though impeccable, was free as regards the commands of His Father, especially concerning the command to die for our salvation.

The argument for reconciling freedom with the commands imposed upon the impeccable Christ may be reduced to the following syllogism.

A command in the strict sense does not indeed leave the will morally free, in that it imposes an obligation, but it does leave it psychologically free; in fact, of itself the command is given for the free fulfillment of the act, and, if it were to destroy this psychological freedom, it would destroy its very nature as a command.

But before the command, Christ has psychological and impeccable freedom of will, a freedom, as was stated, that is the most pure reflection of the uncreated freedom concerning those things that are not necessarily and intrinsically connected, hic et nunc, with beatitude.

Therefore this psychological freedom is not destroyed by the commands of the Father, otherwise these commands would lose their very nature as such.

The major is evident from what has been said.

Explanation of minor. Indeed Christ's love for God clearly seen, as the ultimate end, and the means that are intrinsically and necessarily connected

hic et nunc with this end, such as being, life, understanding, are not a free act but a necessary one; yet He freely loves the means that are only accidentally connected with the ultimate end because of an extrinsic command. There is, indeed, a speculative-practical judgment arising from the command, namely, this must be done; but the practico-practical judgment, namely, death on the cross here and now is simply to be loved, remains undetermined because of the indifferent merits of the object; for the object commanded is not universally good, but is good in a certain sense as being useful for the salvation of man, and as being commanded; and in another sense it is not good, on account of the horrible pain it involves.

For the formation of this practico-practical judgment, namely, death on the cross is here and now simply to be loved, there must be an actual preference for the offering of this holocaust, or there must be an intervention of the free will. But there is befitting intervention of Christ's will, because the will of Christ, who is impeccable, is absolutely upright. Hence this ultimate practical judgment and the subsequent choice are necessary only by a necessity of consequence or of infallibility, but not by a necessity of consequent. There remains, therefore, liberty of exercise between willing to obey and not willing to obey in the negative sense, or refusing death in itself, but not between willing to obey and not willing to obey, in the privative sense, or refusing death as a command. Experience itself makes sufficiently clear the distinction between not obeying in the negative sense and not obeying in the privative sense. For if a superior were to command a most obedient religious something truly difficult, for example, not to go on a long journey to give the last absolution to his most beloved spiritual son, whom another priest will be able to assist in this case, then this obedient religious is right in feeling sad because it would be most sweet for him to assist his spiritual son who is dying and clamoring for him. Nevertheless, because he is obedient, he is not even inclined to do so against the command of his superior, that is, not to obey in the privative sense. On the contrary, another less obedient religious in this case, not only would be right in feeling sad, but would be inclined not to obey in the privative sense, and perhaps would not sufficiently resist the temptation.

A good religious would wish to perform this ministerial act in itself, but not inasmuch as it is forbidden. Likewise Christ could refuse death in itself, and it made Him sad; but He could not refuse death inasmuch as it was commanded, nor did it make Him sad inasmuch as it was commanded.

Therefore this distinction is not merely a subtle play upon words, but has its manifest foundation in something psychological.

This problem is made clear for us in two most exalted examples of obedience: Abraham's obedience and that of the Blessed Virgin Mary on Calvary.

When Abraham had to prepare to sacrifice his son, he did not even think of the possibility of not obeying; he immediately was disposed to obey. Nevertheless he saw very clearly that the object of this act was in one aspect good, and in another aspect not good, even repugnant to natural paternal love. Therefore in the formation of the ultimate and determinate practical judgment, namely, this is for me here and now good, not only relatively but absolutely, and to be done, although it is most difficult, in the formation of this ultimate practical judgment, which directs the choice, Abraham's free will had to intervene, so that the former aspect of the object might prevail over the latter; but Abraham's will, moved by efficacious grace, befittingly intervened, freely indeed, and heroically. He could obey and not obey in the negative sense; in fact, because he was not impeccable, he could disobey in the privative sense by an act of disobedience or at least by a sin of omission, but he did not even think of this. So immediate, holy, and most meritorious was his obedience that he became for all posterity an example of both heroic obedience and perfect faith.

In this example we find verified what is said about free will in the twenty-four Thomistic theses proposed by the Sacred Congregation of Studies. The twenty-first reads: "The will that is free in its choice follows the judgment of reason, but that this judgment be the last and that another in opposition to it be not subsumed, this is effected by the free will, in accepting or not accepting this intellectual direction."

The Blessed Virgin Mary on Calvary gave us another example of heroic obedience. When she had to give her consent to the immolation of her Son, she did not even think of the possibility of disobedience or of deliberately praying that it may not happen.

Yet she most clearly saw that the object of this act of obedience was in one aspect good for our salvation, and in another aspect it was a very great affliction to her maternal heart. To form the ultimate practical judgment which directs the choice, the free will of the Blessed Virgin Mary must intervene, so that one aspect of the object may predominate over the other. But under the influence of efficacious grace and the special assistance of the

Holy Ghost, by which she was preserved from even the least stain of sin, the will of the Blessed Virgin intervened most befittingly, freely indeed and heroically, so that she became forever the Queen of martyrs.

In these two examples, we have a clarification of the problem concerning Christ's impeccable freedom which is increasingly seen to be the most perfect reflection of God's impeccable freedom. It is freedom for good and not for evil, namely, free will confirmed in good, as St. Thomas with the greatest of wisdom and brevity had said in the present article.

Confirmation. If this were not true, the blessed would not retain their freedom concerning those things that are not necessarily and intrinsically connected with beatitude. It is the common opinion among theologians, however, that the blessed, for example, St. Dominic, by necessarily loving God's goodness clearly seen, freely loves this son of his living on this earth and freely prays to obtain for him this or that grace. Even though God were to command St. Dominic to pray for this religious, he would still freely pray for him, because the command that is given for the free fulfillment of the act cannot destroy the psychological freedom of this act, for then the very nature of the command would be destroyed. Thus all the blessed are impeccable and yet they retain their freedom concerning certain things, but for good and not for evil. Such was the case for Christ here below. But the saints no longer merit because they are no longer wayfarers.

Solution Of Objections

If we posit the certainty of command to die for us, we say that Christ, who was impeccable, did not obey freely. Therefore the thesis is false. I prove it.

First objection. Anyone freely wills anything when he is able not to will it. But, posited the certainty to die for us, Christ, who was impeccable, had to will to die for us. Therefore, posited the certainty to die for us, Christ, who was impeccable, did not obey freely.

Reply. I distinguish the major: that anyone freely wills anything when he is able at least in one aspect of the object not to will it, this I concede; that anyone must be able not to will anything in every aspect of the object, I deny. I contradistinguish the minor: Christ had to will death as commanded, I concede; death in itself, that I deny; for this the object was not universally good, and the fact that it was also commanded did not change the nature of this object, and, through taking away moral liberty by imposing this obligation, nevertheless the command left the will free.

I insist. But Christ, posited the certainty of the command, was incapable of not willing death in itself. Therefore the difficulty remains.

Proof. Christ, who was impeccable, could not disobey. But if, the certainty of the command to die being posited, He had not willed death in itself, then He would have disobeyed. Therefore, posited the certainty of this command, He had to will death in itself.

Reply. I distinguish the major: Christ, who was impeccable, had to obey in the privative sense, this I concede; in the negative sense, that I deny. I contradistinguish the minor. So that He would have disobeyed in the negative sense, this I concede; in the privative sense, that I deny.

Explanation. Inasmuch as Christ was indeed impeccable, He did not have the power to sin, not even by omission; but this freedom as regards specification of the object that is a contrary to either good or evil, is not required for free will. But He was capable of not obeying in the negative sense, because the supervening command, as stated, being quasi-extrinsic to the will, did not change the will psychologically and is given for the free fulfillment of the act. Not even Christ could sin in sensu diviso (as we can), but He was capable of not obeying in the negative sense.

Again I insist. But Christ was also incapable of disobeying in the negative sense, though this was not disobedience in the privative sense. Therefore the difficulty remains.

Proof. Not to obey in the negative sense is to separate the refusal to die from the command to die for us. But Christ, who was impeccable, could not separate the refusal to die from this command, or rid Himself of the command. Therefore Christ, who was impeccable, was incapable of not obeying in the negative sense, though this was not disobedience in the privative sense.

Reply. I distinguish the major. That not to obey in the negative sense is a positive separation, a quasi-separation of the refusal of death from the command to die, this I deny; that it is a precise separation of the refusal to die from the command to die, this I concede. I contradistinguish the minor in the same way.

I explain the distinction. In a true and good object, the intellect in attaining to truth does not separate it from the good, for there is only a distinction of reason between them, but it prescinds from the good; there is nothing more possible to prescind from than the formal object of a faculty. Likewise we cannot separate essence from existence, but we consider

existence to be a contingent predicate of whatsoever creature, and that before the consideration of our mind, a creature is not its existence, and that its essence is really distinct from it. Therefore the notion of existence can be prescinded from that of essence without separating them.

Moreover, it sufficed for Christ's freedom that He could posit the refusal to die considered in itself, prescinding from the command, because the act was specified by an object that does not infallibly abstract the will, and the superadded command did not change the nature either of the specificative object or of the specified act; but the nominalists do not understand this, for they consider solely the concrete act but not its nature that is specified by the object. Moreover, it would follow from the denial of what has been said that the angels would not comply freely with God's commands; that the angel Gabriel did not come freely to the Blessed Virgin on the day of the Annunciation.

Hence Christ obeyed freely, not in this sense, that He could go against the command, but in this sense, that He had the power not to do what, because of another only, was commanded. Thus Christ freely obeyed the command to die for us by liberty of exercise.

Moreover, it must be noted that these objections presuppose the Molinist definition of psychological freedom; namely, a faculty that, presupposed all things required as prerequisite for acting, it can still act and not act.

The Thomists in their treatises on free choice most wisely distinguish by saying that psychological freedom is a faculty that, presupposed what is required by a priority of time for acting, can still act or not act, even in sensu composito; but, presupposed all that is required only by a priority of nature, such as the divine efficacious motion and the ultimate practical judgment, it can still act or not act only in sensu diviso, that is, under the divine efficacious motion to act there remains only the power not to act.

Finally, it must be noted that liberty of equilibrium is of rare occurrence, and it is not at all required for free will. Liberty of equilibrium is that which exists between two goods that are equally eligible, so that there is no reason why one is more to be preferred than the other. This is the very ideal of freedom, as when a workman constructs a wall of absolutely equal stones, he most freely takes one stone for the highest part of the wall and another for the lowest. Thus God could have chosen and predestined Judas in preference to Peter in accordance with His most free good pleasure.

But generally freedom is found without this perfect equilibrium as to choice, as when a man chooses honest good in preference to delectable and dishonest good. Honest good is absolutely good and qualifiedly not good, and the converse is true for merely apparent good.

Hence freedom is defined as the dominating indifference of the will concerning an object that is not universally good. St. Thomas does not say, concerning an object that is equally good under one aspect and not good under another; even though the object may appear far more lovable than what is lacking in some good, as God not yet clearly seen, freedom remains intact.

Moreover, our mind does not pass from the speculative-practical judgment, namely, to see the better things and approve of them, to the practico-practical judgment, but I follow the worse, judging practically here and now that they must be chosen, unless our will already begins to be attracted actually by the object which de facto is chosen, and which thus appears to me here and now as absolutely good, although to be sure, if it concerns a sinful object, it is good only in a qualified sense.

Hence it is false to say that anyone is said freely to will anything for which the will already has an actual affection, when the will has the power not to will it even though this incipient actual affection of the will for this same object remains. This actual incipient affection must be repressed so that here and now this object be repudiated. Thus anger must be repressed for correct judgment.

The adulterer never gives up the sin of adultery unless the actual affection for it is given up and yet, though this affection for it remains, the sin is freely committed.

Similarly, in the present case, Christ refrained from obeying only when there was no command and yet, posited this command, He obeyed freely. Hence He freely willed death as commanded, although He was obliged to will it inasmuch as it was commanded, that is, although He could not commit sin. Thus He could obey in the negative sense, but not in the privative sense.

This distinction, however, is not understood by the nominalists because they consider only the fact, for example, either of obeying or of disobeying, and not the very nature of the fact, in our case the very nature of the free act that is specified by an object that is not in every respect good. There is a very great difference between their mental attitude concerning this problem

and that of the truly speculative theologian. Their approach turns the mind away from the contemplation of divine things rather than disposing for it.

The distinction remains intact between disobeying in the privative sense and disobeying in the negative sense, which was explained analogically by examples taken from the lives of Abraham and the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Other objections concern the commandment of loving God, and other natural commandments of the Decalogue, especially negative commandments. In such cases the problem presents greater difficulty.

Objection. The blessed must love God clearly seen, even as regards the exercise of the act. But Christ already on earth enjoyed the beatific vision. Therefore He was not free concerning the command to love God.

The Thomists reply in two ways to this objection.

1) Capreolus, Francis Sylvester (Ferrariensis), Medina, and Soto say that the love of God in Christ, inasmuch as it was regulated by the beatific knowledge, was a necessary act, this I concede; that the love of God as regulated by the infused knowledge was a necessary act, this I deny. Thus there are two acts, or two kinds of love, which are specifically distinct, not substantially, but modally, on account of the twofold regulation, although they proceed from the same infused virtue of charity, concerning the same object, but taken in a different sense.

But this modal distinction suffices so that these two acts may be both present, one as a necessary act, the other as a free act.

Thus it is at least probable that Christ merited, not only by loving creatures for God’s sake, but by loving God in Himself and for His own sake as known, not by the beatific vision, but by the infused knowledge.

However, even though this probable solution were not true, there would be this second solution, that must immediately be explained.

2) John of St. Thomas, who thinks both solutions are probable, and Alvarez and Gonet say that in the same act of love that is regulated by the beatific vision, there is a double termination: the first terminates in the divine goodness considered in itself, inasmuch as it is the reason for loving God and His necessary perfections; the second terminates in the divine goodness, inasmuch as it is the reason for loving creatures or the means not essentially and intrinsically necessary for the preservation of happiness.

Proof. Thus, according to the teaching of St. Thomas, God’s uncreated love is necessary as regards His own goodness, and free as regards this same goodness, in that it is the reason for His loving creatures, inasmuch as

“God’s goodness, which is infinite in perfection, can exist without other things, ‘ But this twofold termination is not incompatible with Christ’s created love as regulated by the beatific vision; for even as regards this created love, creatures are not necessarily and intrinsically connected with the possession of God clearly seen. John of St. Thomas says: “It is befitting for the same act to be free and necessary, but from different points of view, as is evident in the act of beatific love, which, as it refers to God, is necessary, but as it refers to creatures is free.” Thus the saints in heaven, whereas they necessarily love God clearly seen, freely pray for this or that wayfarer, requesting for such a person this or that grace.

In fact, this free act that is regulated by the beatific vision could have been meritorious as long as Christ was both wayfarer and comprehensor; because the subject in question was still a wayfarer, this act was not only free, but meritorious. This second solution appears to us to be more probable.

Therefore Christ’s impeccability is compatible with His freedom even in things commanded. Therefore His freedom and His merit must not be restricted. It suffices to bear in mind: (1) that Christ’s will is the most pure reflection of God’s will that is both absolutely impeccable and absolutely free as regards creatures; (2) that, although the command takes away moral freedom, it does not take away psychological freedom concerning the means that are not necessarily, intrinsically, and evidently connected here and now with beatitude. In fact, every command presupposes this psychological freedom, inasmuch as it is directed for the free fulfillment of the act, and if it were to take away this freedom, then it would destroy its own nature as command.

These two truths are most commonly accepted.

Thus the mystery indeed remains, but contradiction is avoided, and Christ is the most perfect model of free and meritorious obedience to the divine commands. On the contrary, the other explanations unduly restrict Christ’s freedom and merit to those things that are not commanded. Thus they do not solve the question of Christ’s freedom and merit, but either take it away or avoid it.

Corollary. But if Christ’s freedom remains notwithstanding that there are three causes for His impeccability, namely, the hypostatic union, the fullness of inamissible grace, and the beatific vision, and notwithstanding the fact that He always received efficacious grace which is intrinsically

efficacious, a fortiori our freedom remains intact under the influence of intrinsically efficacious grace; but we have the power to sin, which Christ did not have. Under the influence of this grace the free will has the power to refuse its consent if it so wills, but under this influence it never wishes to refuse its consent.

FIFTH ARTICLE: WHETHER THE WILL OF CHRIST WAS ALTOGETHER CONFORMED TO THE DIVINE WILL IN THE THINGS WILLED

State of the question. This doubt arises because we read in the Gospel that Christ as man somehow did not will His own death, yet He evidently willed it by His divine will. Hence the following words of Christ: “not as I will, but as Thou wilt,” must be reconciled with the above-expounded principles, namely, that Christ’s charity was most perfect, the result of which is that His will was most perfectly in conformity with the divine will. Christ was also comprehensor, but comprehensors will only what God wills, otherwise they would not be blessed.

Reply. The rational will in Christ, considered after the manner of reason, as the absolute and efficacious will in that it was free, always was in conformity with the divine will, even in material things willed; it was not so, however, with either the sensual will, or the will considered after the manner of nature.

This is also the view of St. Augustine, who is quoted in the counterargument.

Proof of first part. Our Lord Himself says: “Not as I will, but as Thou wilt.” Christ, indeed, by His will as reason, because of His supreme charity that was illumined by the beatific vision, deliberately, absolutely, and efficaciously willed the divine will to be fulfilled, that is, He willed to die a violent death for our salvation.

Proof of second part. St. Thomas says: “Now it was said above (q. 14, a. I, ad 2) that by a certain dispensation, the Son of God before His passion allowed His flesh to do and suffer what belonged to it.... But it is plain that the will of sensuality, which is called will by participation, naturally shrinks from sensible pains and bodily hurt. In like manner the will as nature turns from those things that are against nature,” which at times are chosen for a higher end.

Reply to third objection. Christ was still a wayfarer and was passible in the flesh, although He was enjoying God in the mind.

Doubt. Can it be admitted that in Christ's will as reason, there were certain inefficacious and imperfect acts not in conformity with the divine will in material things willed, for example, concerning death on the cross, yet so that such an act was not a voluntary imperfection?

Reply. Several Thomists, such as Billuart, see no repugnance in this: that Christ could by His will as reason, shrink inefficaciously from death, not precisely as harmful to nature, but inasmuch as it presupposed several sins of the Jews, and others that united result therefrom. Thus from supreme charity He inefficaciously willed the salvation of all men; in fact, these acts can be declared also to be in conformity with the divine will, that is, to the inefficacious will.

Thus Christ's efficacious human will was always in conformity with the divine efficacious will, and Christ's inefficacious human will was always in conformity with the inefficacious divine will.

SIXTH ARTICLE: WHETHER THERE WAS CONTRARIETY OF WILLS IN CHRIST

State of the question. The purpose of this article is to explain that diversity of wills, which was discussed in the preceding article, was not such as to induce real contrariety, either between the divine will and the human will, or between the human will and the sensitive appetite; because the diverse movements of these wills, although they are sometimes concerned about the same thing, yet they are considered under different aspects.

Reply. There was no contrariety of wills in Christ. It is of faith, having been decided in the Third Council of Constantinople, and quoted in the counterargument of the article, the council declaring: "We confess two natural wills, not in opposition..., but following His human will, and neither withstanding nor striving against but rather being subject to His divine and omnipotent will."

Theological proof. Contrariety is opposition in the same subject and for the same reason. But this opposition was not in Christ, for the sensual will and the natural will shrank from death as harmful to nature, whereas the divine will and the rational will, in that it was free, willed death as good for the human race.

Moreover, Christ by His divine will and His rational will willed that both His sensual will and His natural will be moved according to the inclination of each, yet so that there be no deordination in them.

CHAPTER XXI: QUESTION 19: CHRIST'S OPERATION AND HIS MERITS

After considering the two wills in Christ, which are principles of action, the four articles of this question discuss His diverse operations.

1) Whether in Christ there is only one or several operations of the Godhead and manhood.

2) Whether in Christ there are several operations of the human nature.

3) Whether Christ by His human operation merited anything for Himself.

4) Whether He merited anything for us by it.

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER IN CHRIST THERE IS ONLY ONE OPERATION OF THE GODHEAD AND MANHOOD

The principal conclusion of this article is that there are two operations in Christ, one of the human nature, the other of the divine nature. It is of faith, decided in the Third Council of Constantinople, against Monothelitism as quoted in the body of this article.

Theological proof. It is evident, for operations follow forms, which are principles of action. But in Christ there are two principles of action, namely, two distinct natures and two wills. Therefore in Christ there are diverse operations.

Confirmation. The Scripture says that Christ was obedient and merited. But He could neither obey nor merit by the divine will. Therefore He obeyed and merited by the human will that was in conformity with the divine will. Manifestly obedience and merit presuppose subordination of the lower will to the higher will.

Second conclusion. Nevertheless the divine nature operates by means of the human nature, using it as an instrument. Thus Christ as man in His ministry worked miracles, and the principal cause of these can be only God.

Reply to fifth objection. It is pointed out that the two operations concurred even in these miracles; there was, for example, in the healing of the leper the proper operation of Christ's human nature, namely, contact with the body of the leper, and the divine operation, namely, the miraculous healing of the leper.

Corollary. We distinguish between three kinds of operations in Christ. Some are merely divine, such as creation and conservation. Some are merely human, namely, those which Christ performed by the power of His own human nature, such as eating, drinking, weeping, deliberating. Some are mixed, namely, those to which each nature contributes, the divine as the principal cause, the human as the instrumental cause, such as the raising of Lazarus, sight given to the man born blind, and others of this nature. The strictly miraculous operation, for example, the raising of the dead to life, is indeed one operation, which depends on God as the principal cause and on the human nature of Christ as the instrument in conjunction with it. But even in such a case there is at the same time the operation that belongs properly to the instrument, which does not exceed its own power, such as shouting, touching, speaking. This operation disposes for the effect of the principal agent, either producing its own disposition to be accomplished in the subject, as the pen contributes the ink, or acting only in a dispositive way, as the trumpet transmits the sound in a certain direction rather than in another.

What is the theandric or God-man operation?

St. Thomas explains this term in his reply to the first objection where he says: "Dionysius places in Christ a theandric, that is a God-man-like or divino-human operation not by any confusion of the operations or powers of both natures, but inasmuch as His divine operation employs the human, and his human operation shares in the power of the divine as when He healed the leper with a touch." Then there are two subordinated operations, namely, the touch that need not be miraculous, and the actual miraculous healing, which proceeds from God as the principal cause and from Christ's human nature as the instrumental cause. Yet it must furthermore be remarked that the very action alone of Christ's human will is usually called in another sense theandric on account of the infinite value it derives from the divine suppositum that is the agent which operates. Thus it is said that Christ's meritorious and satisfactory acts were theandric in this sense, that they proceeded both from His human will and from His divine personality.

And herein consists the essence of the very mystery of Redemption, in that the infinite value of these theandric acts of Christ, which are called theandric because of the suppositum or divine person of the Word incarnate, who operates through Christ's most holy soul.

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER IN CHRIST THERE ARE SEVERAL HUMAN OPERATIONS

Reply. St. Thomas says: "Much more than in any other man whatsoever, there is one operation in Christ." The sense is that according to the human nature there is in Christ one principle of free operation, to which every action of Christ as man was attributed as to the subject and was subordinated. For "there was in Him no motion of the sensitive part which was not ordered by reason. Even the natural and bodily operations pertained in some respects to His will, inasmuch as it was His will that His flesh should do and suffer what belonged to it, as stated above," but without any deordination.

THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER THE HUMAN ACTION OF CHRIST COULD BE MERITORIOUS TO HIM

State of the question. St. Thomas presupposes that Christ could have merited, and in the present article he teaches what He merited for Himself, and in the subsequent article what He merited for us.

Reply. The Council of Trent in its sixth session, the seventh chapter, defined it to be of faith that Christ truly and properly merited, and in the tenth canon of this session expressly stated that Christ was the meritorious cause of our justification.

Scriptural proof. The New Testament establishes clearly the fact that Christ merited something for Himself. St. Paul says that Christ's exaltation is the reward of His humility and obedience, as in the following text: "He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death... for which cause God also hath exalted Him." Therefore He merited His exaltation by obeying, and so He merited something for Himself. Similarly St. Paul says: "We see Jesus..., for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor." The Evangelist quotes Jesus as saying: "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and so to enter into His glory?" namely, glory of the body. At the

Last Supper Jesus said: “I have finished the work... and now glorify Me, O Father.” From these texts it is evident that Christ merited for Himself glory of the body, exaltation of His name, His ascension, and the adoration of the faithful.

Theological proof. It is nobler to merit anything than not to merit it, when there is parity in other respects, namely, when it does not detract from the greater dignity of another. But Christ could merit glory of the body, and other extrinsic good things, for He did not have these from the beginning, and these do not seem at all to have detracted from His greater dignity.

Therefore Christ merited for Himself this glory of His body and other extrinsic good things. Calvin unwarrantedly denied this merit to Christ, so that he might praise more His love for us, as if Christ willed to merit only for us.

Contrary to this, Christ did not merit for Himself either grace, or knowledge, or beatitude of soul, or the divine nature, because, since merit regards only what is not yet possessed, it would be necessary that Christ should have been without these at some time; and to be without them would have diminished Christ’s dignity more than His merit would have increased it. Moreover, the principle of merit, namely, habitual grace, does not come under merit. Consequently Christ did not merit for Himself the infused virtues and the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, for these are quasi-properties of habitual grace.

For the same reason Christ did not merit His incarnation, for this was in Him the principle of merit; for merit presupposes a constituted person who produces the meritorious act.

The principal conclusion of this article becomes more evident when we consider that the six conditions required for merit, as explained in the treatise on grace, were verified in Christ: (1) the acts of His will were free; (2) they were good on the part of the object and the circumstances; (3) they were the acts of a person who is just and pleasing to God; (4) they were ordered by the virtue of charity for the glory of God; (5) they were the acts of a wayfarer, for Christ was both wayfarer and comprehensor; (6) it was in accordance with the divine plan that they should be rewarded.

Objection. Christ was indeed a wayfarer as regards His passible and mortal body, but not as regards His soul that enjoyed the beatific vision; but it is the soul that must merit, not the body.

Reply. I distinguish the antecedent. That Christ was not a wayfarer as regards His soul considered in itself and as directed to God clearly seen, this I concede; considered as the form of the body, this I deny.

It suffices that the subject be still a wayfarer so that his acts, even those more sublime, be free and meritorious. Thus all Thomists maintain that Christ's acts of charity, which were regulated by His infused knowledge, were both free and meritorious, although the infused knowledge did not belong to the soul inasmuch as it is the form of the body. For the same reason it seems correct to say that Christ's acts of charity for the salvation of mankind, even as regulated by the beatific knowledge, were not only free but also meritorious, as stated above.

Reply to first objection. Christ merited as a wayfarer and therefore by charity not inasmuch as it was the charity of the comprehensor, but of the wayfarer.

Here it must be noted that Christ's merit could not be regulated by faith, which He did not have, but it was regulated either by the beatific knowledge or the infused knowledge, this latter presupposing the beatific knowledge and following from it as a property.

Thus the truth is established that Christ could not merit for Himself essential glory, or the beatific vision, which was in Him the principle of His merits; but the principle of merit does not come under merit.

Corollary. Christ obtained the glory of the body on two grounds, namely, that it was connatural to Him, and so it was already due to Him, as being a redundance of glory from the soul; it was also due to Him on the grounds of merit. Thus the king's son can possess the kingdom on two grounds, namely, of inheritance and of merit.

Solution Of Objections

First objection. If Christ had merited anything for Himself, He would have died for Himself, which is condemned by the Council of Ephesus.

Reply. The council condemned the proposition that Christ suffered for His own sins. It would be false to say that the primary purpose of Christ's sufferings was for Himself, for He came down from heaven for us men and for our salvation. Yet He could as a consequence of this and in a secondary sense merit something for Himself, and also for the angels, since He merited accidental graces for them, that they may be His servants in the kingdom of God.

Second objection. On the contrary, it is more perfect to merit glory of soul than not to merit it. But we must attribute to Christ what is more perfect. Therefore He merited glory of soul.

Reply. I distinguish the major: it is more perfect when glory is the terminus of merit, this I concede; but if glory is the principle of merit in anyone, then I deny it. In Christ, however, glory of soul is the principle of merit, for in Him the regulating principle of the meritorious act was not faith, but the beatific vision or infused knowledge which followed from the beatific vision as a property.

But I insist. There is no repugnance in the notion that Christ's merit be regulated by His infused knowledge and that He merited His beatific knowledge.

Reply. The notion is repugnant because Christ's infused knowledge was a quasi-property following from the beatific vision, just as habitual grace in some way followed from the grace of union; for infused grace was given to Christ on this earth as a consequence of the mystery of the Incarnation, for the perfection of the human nature assumed by the Word, and Christ enjoyed the beatific vision prior to this consequence of the grace of union. Thus we shall see farther on that Christ was predestined first to be the natural Son of God, then to glory, namely, to the beatific vision which He at once received as a consequence of the grace of union, and then to the graces of His life as a wayfarer.

FOURTH ARTICLE: WHETHER CHRIST COULD MERIT FOR OTHERS

State of the question. The article concerns condign merit. The difficulty is that other persons who are in the state of grace cannot merit condignly, but only congruously, grace for another, as shown in the treatise on grace. Moreover, if Christ as the God-man and the head of the Church condignly merited salvation for all, then, as stated in the third objection to this article, Christ would be unjust not to save all, and thus all would be entitled to grace, and all would have to be saved.

The common statement, indeed, is that "Christ's passion is of infinite value as regards its sufficiency for the salvation of all mankind, but it is efficacious only for those to whom it is applied." This must be carefully examined.

Reply. Christ's merit extends to others inasmuch as they are His members, says St. Thomas; and this refers to condign merit.

1) Scriptural proof. St. Paul says: "As by the offense of one, unto all men to condemnation, so also by the justice of one unto all men to justification of life," which means: just as others became partakers of Adam's transgression, so much more did they become partakers of Christ's merit. Thus he also says: "Blessed be the God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with spiritual blessings in heavenly places, in Christ." So also Christ Himself said: "Without Me you can do nothing." And the Evangelist says: "And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace."

2) The councils of the Church affirmed this truth on several occasions. The Council of Milevum against the Pelagians, and the Second Council of Orange against the Semi-Pelagians equivalently affirmed this truth under the metaphor of the vine and the branches. The truth is expressly declared in the Council of Trent, in which, discussing the causes of justification, it says: "The final cause indeed is the glory of God and of Jesus Christ, and life everlasting; while the efficient cause is a merciful God who washes..., but the meritorious cause is His most beloved only-begotten, our Lord Jesus Christ, who when we were enemies for the exceeding charity wherewith He loved us, merited justification for us by His most holy passion on the wood of the cross, and made satisfaction for us unto God the Father." The Council says the same in the corresponding canon on justification. In the strict sense, Christ as man is called the Savior, inasmuch as He merited our salvation.

Likewise the Church in all orations earnestly entreats graces of salvation, invoking the merits of Christ, when it says: Through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Theological proof. Merit is co-extensive with the divine plan and grace. But according to the divine plan, grace was in Christ not only as in an individual, but as in the head of the whole Church, to whom all are united as members to the head, who constitute one mystical person. Therefore Christ's merit extends to others as to His members. Thus this revealed proposition is explained by something previously and equally revealed.

Thus, analogically, in our organism the head and the members harmoniously combine in the processes of sense perception. The solution of the objections confirms this.

Reply to first objection. “Just as the sin of Adam, who was appointed by God to be the principle of the whole nature, is transmitted to others by carnal propagation, so, too, the merit of Christ... extends to all His members.”

Reply to second objection. Other men have only a particular grace and so they cannot merit for another condignly.

Reply to third objection. Grace that is granted to us by baptism and any other way, although it is owing to Christ’s merits, yet it is gratuitous with reference to us.

Moreover, Christ’s merits, the validity of which is sufficient for the salvation of all men, are efficacious for the salvation of those to whom they are applied and until the end of their lives; but several put an obstacle in the way.

This question receives but a brief comment here by St. Thomas because he discusses it farther on in this treatise, inquiring whether Christ’s predestination is the cause of ours.

He answers that it is, and in this sense: “For God, by predestinating from eternity, so decreed our salvation that it should be achieved through Jesus Christ.”

With reference to Christ’s merits several doubts demand an explanation.

First doubt. Did Christ merit all the effects in the predestination of the elect, namely, their calling, justification, and glorification?

Reply. The common teaching of the Thomists is that Christ did not merit our predestination on the part of God who predestines. But He condignly merited all the effects of our predestination. And this is true only of Christ, not of the Blessed Virgin, who, nevertheless, congruously merited these effects.

Thus St. Paul says: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with spiritual blessings in heavenly places, in Christ,” which means through Christ or through Christ’s merits; but the highest benediction given to man is his predestination. The Apostle also says: “God hath predestinated us unto the adoption of children through Jesus Christ.” This text also concerns predestination in the comparative sense, namely, of these in particular in preference to others in accordance with the Gospel text: “I have called you friends.... You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you.” Thus St. Thomas, following St. Augustine, says: “It

follows from this that our predestination is gratuitous as regards ourselves, but not as regards Christ."

Nevertheless the truth remains that the predestination of these in preference to others depends on God's good pleasure; for Christ neither chose these and those in preference to others, nor petitioned and merited that they be chosen, unless He had been directed and moved to do so by the will of His Father. Hence Christ Himself says: "Thine they were, and to Me Thou hast given them"; that is, "Thou hast given them to Me, moving My will by the offering of My merits to have these chosen in preference to others, and Thou hast given to Me in time those whom Thou hadst chosen from eternity in view of My merits." St. Thomas, too, inquiring whether Christ's prayer was always heard, says that it certainly was when it was the result of His consequent will.

Second doubt. Whether Christ's merits were predestined before God's consequent will of efficaciously saving these in preference to others for example, Peter in preference to Judas.

Reply. The answer is in the affirmative. Christ's merits were predestined or efficaciously willed by God, if not before His antecedent will of saving all men, at least before His consequent will of saving some and certain persons in preference to others, that is, before He chose and predestined the elect. Thus our predestination and salvation is the means ordained for the glory of Christ, the first predestined, which is the common teaching of the Thomists in their discussions on the motive of the Incarnation. Thus Christ evidently was predestined before Peter and Paul, for the latter apostle says: "He predestinated us to be made conformable to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren. And whom He predestinated, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified. And whom He justified, them He also glorified."

Third doubt. Whether Christ merited eternal life for all men.

Reply. Yes, He did; but He merited only for the elect the attainment of eternal life. Thus the just person who is not predestined while remaining just, by means of good works merits eternal life, but eventually these merits are lost and with them the attainment of eternal life. The Council of Trent declares: "If anyone shall say that the good works of one that is justified... do not truly merit increase of grace, eternal life, and the attainment of that eternal life, if so be, however, that he depart in grace and also an increase of glory, let him be anathema." Christ indeed did not lose His merits, but He

knew that God permitted the sin of those not predestined and He consented to this divine permission for a greater good, namely, the manifestation of God's attributes. He most deeply grieved at the loss of these souls, but already on this earth He most clearly saw the higher good for which God permits sins, even the sin of final impenitence, namely, to manifest the splendor of divine justice above diabolical and human malice.

Fourth doubt. How did Christ merit efficacious graces which de facto are not granted, such as would be the grace of a good death for Judas?

The Thomists answer that Christ merited these graces as offered to men in sufficient grace that is given, but not as here and now conferred or to be conferred. For God offers efficacious grace to us as contained in the sufficient grace, as the fruit is contained in the flower; but if the sufficient grace is refused, the efficacious grace is not conferred. So say Lemos, O. P., John of St. Thomas, and the Salmanticenses. The same distinction must be made concerning Christ's prayer, whether it was always heard. On this subject St. Thomas says: "Our Lord did not pray for all those who crucified Him, for all those who would believe in Him, but for those only who were predestinated to obtain eternal life through Him."

First corollary. Christ merited for the redemption of man all actual graces that dispose one for justification, such as the grace itself of justification, infused virtues, gifts, actual graces, and glory itself, that is, all the effects of predestination. Thus He could say: "Without Me you can do nothing" that concerns salvation.

The reason is that Christ merited for us all graces necessary for salvation; for St. Paul says: "Where sin abounded grace did more abound," and this properly belongs to the role of the perfect Savior and Redeemer as Christ was. As St. Luke says: "Neither is there salvation in any other."

First objection. Grace and justification are absolutely gratuitous. Therefore they are not on account of merits.

Reply. That they are gratuitous on our part, I concede; on Christ's part, I deny.

Second objection. Merit must precede the reward, since it is the cause of the reward. But Christ did not precede the fathers of the Old Testament. Therefore He did not merit grace for them.

Reply. That merit must precede reward as foreknown by the person rewarding, I concede; that it must actually, I deny. Since merit is only a moral cause, that it is foreknown by God is sufficient, for a moral cause

moves inasmuch as it is known as the regulation of the superior advising something to be done, and it can be known by God from all eternity as destined to exist in some future time.

Second corollary. Christ did not merit essential grace and glory for the angels, but only accidental graces by which they are His ministers.

Third corollary. Christ did not merit the grace that our first parents had in the state of innocence, because He was not their head for that state. But He merited all the effects of predestination for Adam converted after the sin or as redeemed.

Other Special Doubts

First doubt. Did Christ merit from the moment of His conception until the end of His life? Reply. It is generally affirmed with St. Thomas that He did. This answer has its foundation in the following scriptural text:

“Coming into the world, Christ says: Sacrifice and oblation Thou wouldst not, but a body Thou hast fitted to Me.... Then I said: Behold I come; in the head of the book it is written of Me, that I should do Thy will, O God.”

“Coming into the world” means from the moment of His conception, for afterward He had already come. But this oblation by which Christ offered Himself as victim was meritorious at this moment, for it had everything required for merit.

Theological proof. It explains this merit, for, although Christ did not have as yet acquired knowledge, He already had from the moment of His conception until the end of His life infused knowledge, which He could use independently of reverting to phantasms. Thus He could from the first moment of His life to the end uninterruptedly elicit meritorious acts. Thus certain saints had infused knowledge on various occasions so that they were able sometimes to merit even during sleep, and several theologians say that the Blessed Virgin Mary probably enjoyed this privilege.

Thus the very moment Christ’s soul was created, He already began to merit; and so His soul as regards merit had priority of nature, but not of time. Thus Christ merited neither the Incarnation nor fullness of grace and glory, but other things He merited for Himself and for us.

Objection. If Christ had merited from the moment of His conception, already this merit would have been of infinite value. Therefore He could not have merited anything afterward.

Reply. If this argument proved anything, it would prove that Christ could merit only at the last moment of His life. As a matter of fact, however, it

does not prove this. This first merit of Christ was, indeed, of infinite value, but not separated from the other merits ordained and accepted for a reward. In fact, already from the beginning Christ offered His whole life until His death.

Second doubt. Did Christ merit actually the moment of His death in fact?

Reply. St. Thomas denies this, saying: “Christ’s death in the becoming was the cause of our salvation, considered as His passion, that is, by way of merit; but Christ’s death in fact cannot be the cause of our salvation, by way of merit, but only by way of causality.” The reason is that a wayfarer can merit, and the first moment of ceasing to be a wayfarer is the first moment of separation of the soul from the body, and already at this moment there is no longer a wayfarer, but a separated soul. Christ did not give any indication that He was exempt from this law, for He said: “I must work the works of Him that sent Me, whilst it is day; the night cometh when no man can work.” The Fathers of the Church understand by “day” the time of this life. and by “night” the moment of death.

Third doubt. Were all the free acts of Christ’s human will meritorious?

Reply. The answer is that they were. The reason is that, freedom in Christ’s human actions as long as He was a wayfarer being presupposed, there was nothing that prevented them from being meritorious, as stated above. They were the actions of a wayfarer, in every respect good, in fact theandric, and were ordained by Christ’s charity to God’s glory and were ordained by God to a reward.

First corollary. Christ merited by an act of love for God inasmuch as it was regulated by infused knowledge, for thus this act was the free act of a wayfarer. Even the act of love for God, inasmuch as it is the reason for loving creatures, was a free act in that it was regulated by the beatific vision; yet certain Thomists say that this act so regulated belonged to Christ as comprehensor but not as wayfarer, and so they said it was not meritorious. That Christ merited by a free act of love for God, inasmuch as it is the reason for loving creatures is indicated by our Lord in these words: “‘That the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father hath given Me commandment, so do I. Arise, let us go hence.”

Second corollary. Christ, while still a wayfarer, merited by all acts elicited or commanded by charity, and by all acts of all virtues, for in these acts He was free.

Third corollary. Christ merited by all acts, even of His sensitive and vegetative faculties, inasmuch as these were under the dominion of His will. Thus He merited not only by acts of seeing, hearing, walking, groaning, and crying, but also by the beating of the heart, in His sleep, and when He was thirsty. They note that, although these actions, especially those that pertain to the vegetative life, are not in themselves formally free, they were nevertheless subjected to Christ's will, because of the control He exercised over His body and His faculties. Hence, inasmuch as they were permitted for good ends, there was a certain moral goodness in these actions. Thus he was able not to suffer and not to die under the blows inflicted upon Him, because He could have miraculously prevented the suffering, as He did for divers martyrs; but, on the contrary, He freely and fully delivered Himself up to suffering.

CHAPTER XXII: CHRIST’S RELATION TO THE FATHER : QUESTION 20: CHRIST’S SUBJECTION TO THE FATHER

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER CHRIST IS SUBJECT TO THE FATHER

It seems that Christ is not, because He is not a creature and because He is called Lord But on the other hand, it is said that “He took the form of a servant,” and “was obedient even to the death of the cross.” How shall we reconcile these seemingly apparent contradictions?

Reply. Christ as man is truly subject to the Father, and this for three reasons: (1) because His human nature only participates in the divine goodness; (2) because it is subject to the divine power; (3) because Christ’s human will must obey the divine commands. Hence it must be said that Christ is subject to the Father by reason of His human nature.

Reply to first objection. Nevertheless, on account of the uncreated person of the Word, it cannot be said that Christ is a creature, although He has a created nature.

Likewise, because Christ is a person, He is called Lord; in fact, Christ as man on account of the hypostatic union is King of kings, Lord of lords.

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER IT CAN BE SAID THAT CHRIST IS SUBJECT TO HIMSELF

Reply. This can be said of Christ, because of the diversity of natures in the same person. But this diversity must not be understood in the sense that there are two persons in Christ, one of which would be subject to the other, for this would be the heresy of Nestorius.

CHAPTER XXIII: QUESTION 21: CHRIST'S PRAYER

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER IT IS BECOMING FOR CHRIST TO PRAY

Reply. The Gospel records that Christ prayed, and to pray befitted Him as man, because His human will was incapable of doing all things, and Christ knew that it was in accordance with His Father's divine plan that He should receive certain things only by prayer. He also prayed so that He might give us an example of having recourse to God.

Doubt. Does Christ now in heaven truly and in the strict sense pray for us. Medina, Vasquez, and certain others, such as Father de la Taille, say that Christ now in heaven prays for us only in the broad sense of the term, showing His human nature and His past merits to the Father.

The Thomists and many other theologians reply that Christ in heaven in the strict sense prays for us, interceding as our advocate so that at the favorable moment the fruits of His past merits and satisfaction may be applied to us.

Scriptural proof. St. Paul says: "Christ... who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." Again he says of Christ: "Always living to make intercession for us." This prayer of Christ in heaven has its own particular name, being called "intercession." Elsewhere it is said of Christ now in heaven that He is "our advocate, " and that "we have an advocate with the Father."

Thus St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, St. Gregory the Great, and St. Thomas say that Christ also now in heaven prays for the Church. He can no more, indeed, either merit or satisfy for us, because He is no longer a wayfarer. But He can offer intercessory prayer for us; the saints pray for us in heaven, and the greater their charity is, the greater is their influence.

But if in the litanies of the Blessed Virgin Mary we do not say "Christ, pray for us, " but "Christ, hear us, " this is because Christ, as God, hears our

prayers, and we also say “Christ, hear us” to avoid the error of Nestorianism. Finally, it is a more perfect act to hear a prayer than to pray.

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER IT PERTAINS TO CHRIST TO PRAY ACCORDING TO HIS SENSUALITY

In other words, what did Christ mean when He said in the Garden of Gethsemane: “Let this chalice pass from Me”?

Reply. It means that then His prayer expressed to God the affection of His sensible nature, and in this His prayer was for our instruction in three things: (1) to show that He assumed a truly human nature with all its natural affections: (2) to show that we are permitted in accordance with our natural affection to request something conditionally from God; (3) to show that a man ought to subject his own affections to the divine will. Hence He said: “Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt.”

THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER CHRIST PRAYED FOR HIMSELF

Reply. Christ prayed for Himself in two ways: (1) by expressing to God the desire of His sensual nature and of His will, considered as a nature, as when He said: “Let this chalice pass from Me”; (2) by expressing the desire of His deliberate will, which is regarded as reason, as when He asked for the glory of His resurrection, saying: “Father... glorify Thy Son.” Thus He showed us that the Father is the author of all the good that He possesses in the human nature.

FOURTH ARTICLE: WHETHER CHRIST’S PRAYER WAS ALWAYS HEARD

Reply. A distinction must be made: Christ’s prayer in the strict sense, namely, that which proceeded from His absolute will as the result of deliberate reason, was always heard, because His will was always in conformity with the divine will, so that by this prayer He willed or sought only what He knew God wills. The words that Martha addressed to our Lord are to be understood in this sense when she said: “I know that whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee.” Also, when our Lord says: “And I knew that Thou hearest Me always.” And St. Paul says of Christ: “He was heard for His reverence.”

Christ’s conditional prayer expressing the desire of His sensitive nature or of His will considered as nature, was not always heard, which is evident from His prayer in the Garden.

Second objection. Christ prayed that the sin of those who crucified Him might be forgiven. Yet not all were pardoned this sin, since the Jews were punished on account thereof.

Reply to second objection. St. Thomas says: “Our Lord did not pray for all those who crucified Him, nor for all those who would believe in Him, but for those only who were predestinated to obtain eternal life through Him.”

CHAPTER XXIV: QUESTION 22: THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER IT IS FITTING THAT CHRIST SHOULD BE A PRIEST

State of the question. It seems that it is not fitting: (1) because a priest is less than an angel; (2) because Christ was not descended from the priests of the Old Law, but from the tribe of Juda; (3) because Christ is a legislator and in the Old Testament, which is a figure of the New Testament, legislator and priest are distinct.

Reply. Nevertheless the affirmative answer is of faith, for St. Paul says: “Having, therefore, a great high priest that hath passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God.” The councils of Ephesus and Trent and the encyclical of Pius XI concerning Christ’s kingship, confirm this truth.

Theological proof. The office proper to a priest is to be a mediator between God and the people, inasmuch as He bestows sacred things on the people, and offers to God the prayers of the people and sacrifice for them. But this is most befitting to Christ, for St. Peter says: “He hath given us most great and precious promises, that by these you may be made partakers of the divine nature.”

And St. Paul says: “In Him [Christ] it hath well pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell. And through Him to reconcile all things.” From these texts it is evident that Christ as man is a priest.

Reply to first objection. Christ the priest, as regards the passibility of His flesh, is inferior to the angels, but also as man He is superior to them because of the hypostatic union and His fullness of grace and glory.

Reply to second objection. Christ did not wish to be born of the stock of the figural priests, that He might make it clear that the true priesthood is not quite the same as the figural priesthood.

Reply to third objection. Christ, inasmuch as He is the head of all men, has the perfection of all graces and so He is eminently and formally legislator, priest, and king, as announced by the prophet.

State of the question. It seems that He was not: (1) because it is the duty of the priest to kill the victim or offer it in sacrifice, and Christ did not kill Himself; (2) because in the Old Testament, which is a figure of the New Testament, a man was never offered in sacrifice; (3) because every victim that is offered to God is consecrated to Him, but Christ's humanity from the beginning was consecrated to God.

Reply. Yet the answer is that Christ was both priest and victim. It is also of faith, for St. Paul says: "Christ also hath loved us, and hath delivered Himself for us, an oblation and a sacrifice to God for an odor of sweetness." It was also defined by the Council of Trent in its canons concerning the institution of the Sacrifice of the Mass and the priesthood of the New Law established by Christ.

Theological proof. St. Thomas shows that Christ was not only a victim, but a most perfect victim.

A man is in need of sacrifice for three reasons: first, for the remission of sins, for which the victim for sin was offered in the Old Testament; secondly, that man may be preserved in the state of grace, for which the sacrifice of peace-offering was offered under the Old Law; thirdly, that the spirit of man be perfectly united to God, which will be most perfectly realized in glory. Hence in the Old Law the holocaust was offered as symbolizing the state of the perfect, in which the victim was entirely burnt in God's honor. But Christ was a most perfect victim, being at the same time victim for sin, victim for a peace-offering, and a holocaust, as clearly established from the scriptural texts quoted in the argumentative part of this article.

Reply to first objection. Christ did not kill Himself, but He willingly exposed Himself to death, willingly offered Himself, inasmuch as He willingly endured the blows of those killing Him, whom He could easily have repelled, as shown in the Garden of Gethsemane, when He answered those that came to apprehend Him with such authority that they fell to the ground. Hence He had said: "No man taketh it [My life] away from Me, but I lay it down of Myself." It was the fire of love coming from heaven that burnt the victim, says St. Thomas elsewhere.

The difference between Christ's death and the death of the martyrs consists in this, that theirs is not a sacrifice in the strict sense, although it is voluntary. Granted that the wound was mortal, the martyrs, unlike Christ,

were not free to preserve their life or give it up, whereas Christ, unless the Father had given Him the command to die for us, miraculously had it in His power not to die under the blows inflicted upon Him. Hence Christ offered Himself as holocaust.

Corollary. The priesthood of Christ cannot be more perfect, because the priest cannot be more united to God, the victim, and the people. Christ is God, moreover, Christ is both priest and victim, and finally Christ is the head of His mystical body and of all mankind.

THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER THE EFFECT OF CHRIST'S PRIESTHOOD IS THE EXPIATION OF SINS

Reply. It is affirmed on the authority of St. Paul's texts quoted in this article.

Theological proof. St. Thomas shows that Christ by His death merited grace for us whereby sin is blotted out, and He fully satisfied for the punishments that are due to sin. Hence the effect of Christ's priesthood is the expiation of sins as regards both guilt and punishment. "He hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows."

Reply to second objection. "The sacrifice which is offered every day in the Church is not distinct from that which Christ Himself offered, but is a commemoration thereof." It is substantially the same sacrifice, inasmuch as it is the one identical victim, the one identical principal priest; but the manner of offering is different; for now Christ's sacrifice is not bloody, but unbloody and sacramental. Moreover, Christ does not now either merit or sorrowfully satisfy for us, but the fruits of His past merits and satisfactions are applied to us.

Reply to third objection. The paschal lamb was one of the principal figurative victims of the Old Testament; hence St. John the Baptist said of Christ: "Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him who taketh away the sin of the world."

FOURTH ARTICLE: WHETHER THE EFFECT OF THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST PERTAINED NOT ONLY TO OTHERS BUT ALSO TO HIMSELF

Reply. The Council of Ephesus denies that the effect of the priesthood pertains to Christ. The reason is that Christ as man was already most holy,

full of grace, impeccable, and the fountainhead of the entire priesthood. Thus the sun illumines but is not illumined. This is clearly expressed by St. Paul, for he says: “Who [Christ] is innocent, needeth not daily, as the other priests, to offer sacrifices first for His own sins.”

FIFTH ARTICLE: WHETHER THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST ENDURES FOREVER

Reply. The answer is in the affirmative, for the Psalmist says: “Thou art a priest forever.” Likewise St. Paul declares: “[Christ is] always living to make intercession for us.”

Nevertheless the difficulty is that the priesthood does not endure unless there is sacrifice in the strict sense, or a visible sacrifice, and this will cease after the celebration of the last Mass at the end of the world; for in heaven the blessed see God face to face, and no more need sensible signs.

Therefore St. Thomas answers the question of this article more precisely by saying that the priesthood of Christ is said to be eternal, not because of the sacrifice that is offered, but because of its consummation, namely, because of the perpetual union of men redeemed with God clearly seen, for this is the eternal fruit of the Savior’s sacrifice.

Wherefore St. Paul says: “But Christ, being come a high priest of the good things to come... by His own blood entered once into the holies, having obtained eternal redemption.” Hence, after the celebration of the last Mass there will be no more sacrifice in the strict sense, nor reparation, nor prayer of petition; but there will always be the cultus of adoration and thanksgiving.

Hence Christ’s priesthood is said to be eternal: (1) because its effect is the eternal salvation of men, (2) because He had no successor in this respect; (3) because He continually intercedes for us and will offer sacrifice by His ministers until the end of time; (4) because He is anointed as High Priest.

Several Thomists, such as Billuart, say that Christ’s priesthood is said to be eternal because of His imperishable anointing, which is nothing else but the hypostatic union itself. If there were in heaven a sacrifice in the strict sense, then it would be a more exalted sacrifice than the sacrifice on the cross, which would not be subordinated to this latter sacrifice, but would be coordinated with it also as more exalted, and therefore the words of Christ dying on the cross, “it is consummated,” would be meaningless. On the

contrary, the sacrifice of the Last Supper is directed to the sacrifice on the cross, and the sacrifice of the Mass is subordinated to the sacrifice of the cross, of which it is the application.

First doubt. What formally constitutes Christ's priesthood?

It is a disputed question among Thomists. The Salmanticenses and certain other theologians maintain that the grace of headship is what constitutes Christ's priesthood so far as this grace presupposes or connotes the grace of union. Thus Christ would be a priest by the same created habitual grace by which He is the head of the Church.

Several other Thomist theologians, such as Gonet and Hugon, are of the opinion, which is now becoming more generally admitted, that the substantial grace of union is what formally constitutes Christ's priesthood, whereby Christ as man is primarily holy by a holiness that is not only innate, but also substantial and uncreated. By this same grace Christ is holy and the sanctifier. Hence Pius XI says in one of his sacred discourses: "It is solely because it is the Homoousion of Nicaea who became incarnate... who gives Himself lavishly, inexhaustible and infinite in Jesus Christ, what the theologians call substantial victim, which consecrated Him a priest."

Scriptural proof. Christ as man is a priest inasmuch as He is anointed by God. But His primary anointing is by the grace of union. Therefore Christ is a priest by the grace of union.

Theological proof. Christ is a priest who must offer sacrifice that is of infinite value for the redemption of men. But it was only by the grace of union that His sacrifice was of infinite value; for the offering of Himself is a theandric act.

It is not enough for Christ to be the head of the human nature, for Adam was the head of the human nature raised to the supernatural order, and yet he was incapable of offering a sacrifice of infinite value.

It does not suffice to say with the Salmanticenses that what formally constitutes Christ's priesthood is habitual grace inasmuch as it connotes the grace of union, because Christ's priesthood, in what formally constitutes it as such, must be capable of offering a sacrifice that is of intrinsically infinite value; and this formally depends on the grace of union.

This seems to be the opinion of St. Thomas; for, speaking about Christ's human nature, he says: "It acquired then the actual holiness of a victim, [on the cross] from the charity it had from the beginning and from the grace of union sanctifying it absolutely." Likewise it is evident from another text of

St. Thomas that Christ was predestined to natural divine sonship before He was predestined to glory and habitual grace; for it was only because Christ had to be the Son of God that He was predestined to the highest degree of glory.

Also, in the opinion of St. Thomas it is especially by the grace of union that Christ is the mediator. This opinion is also admitted by Bossuet.

Second doubt. Which title is greater in Christ, Savior or Priest forever?

Reply. Savior is the greater title, for the name “Jesus” signifies Savior. Hence the title generally used in the treatise on the Word incarnate and the Redeemer is, as in the Theological Summa of St. Thomas, the Savior, in preference to Christ the priest.

Moreover, the Savior must be a priest capable of offering a sacrifice of infinite value. But not every priest is strictly speaking a savior. The idea of savior includes more than the idea of priest.

Finally, the principal act of a priest is the act that belongs to the virtue of religion, namely, to offer sacrifice for the people; whereas the principal act of the Savior is the act of a higher virtue, namely, of charity, which commands the virtue of religion. Thus the principal act of Christ the Savior is the act of love, whereby on the cross He showed His supreme love for His Father and for souls to be saved.

SIXTH ARTICLE: WHETHER THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST WAS ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHISEDECH

Reply. The answer is in the affirmative, for the prophet says: “Thou are a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech.”

The meaning is that the priest Melchisedech typified, far more than the other priests of the Old Law, Christ the priest: and there are four reasons given for this.

1) Because Melchisedech offered bread and wine, and not sheep and oxen, as Aaron did. But Christ at the Last Supper offered His body and His blood under the appearance of bread and wine.

2) Because Melchisedech is presented to us in Sacred Scripture as “without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life,” that is, contrary to the custom of Sacred Scripture, no mention is made of his parents. In this he represents Christ’s eternal priesthood, who had neither earthly father nor heavenly mother.

3) Because Melchisedech, having received tithes from Abraham as the superior of the latter, blessed Him and the lawful priests of the Old Law; and thus he typified the superiority of Christ’s priesthood over that of the Law.

4) Melchisedech means the same as king of justice and of peace; But Christ was king of justice and of peace.

What has been said suffices for Christ’s priesthood. It must be remembered that there cannot be a more perfect priesthood because no other priest can be more united to God, the victim, and the people.

CHAPTER XXV: QUESTION 23: THE ADOPTION OF CHRIST

The purpose of this question is to refute the heresy of the Adoptionists who, following in the wake of Nestorianism, said in the eighth century that Christ as man is the adoptive son of God.

The Church has defined that the man Christ is the only and natural Son of God, and nowise the adoptive son. The Church also declared that it is only allegorically on account of Christ's obedience to His Father that He is called a servant. He is not the Son of the Holy Spirit, but truly the Son of the Virgin Mary. In fact, He has two births, His eternal birth as God, and His temporal birth as man, but not two sonships, neither adoptive sonship as regards God the Father, nor a real relation of sonship as regards the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The principal definitions of the Church against the errors of the Adoptionists are to be found in the Enchiridion. The assertion that Christ as man is the adoptive son of the Father is rejected as heretical in both the Council of Frankfort and the Council of Frejus. This assertion was again condemned in the Second Council of Lyons.

This error gives St. Thomas the opportunity to explain here more fully what is the nature of divine adoption than in the treatise on grace, although the fundamentals of the doctrine concerning divine adoption are explained in the treatise on grace.

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER IT IS FITTING THAT GOD SHOULD ADOPT SONS

State of the question. It seems that it is not fitting, because only strangers are adopted, and nobody is a stranger to God.

Reply. Yet the answer is in the affirmative, for the Apostle says: "Who hath predestinated us unto the adoption of children."

Theological proof. To adopt is to admit someone to share in another's inheritance. Thus a rich man adopts a poor man's son. But it is fitting that God of His infinite goodness admit His intellectual creatures to share in His inheritance, which is the enjoyment of Himself. For God is rich and happy in Himself, that is to say, in the enjoyment of Himself. Therefore it is indeed fitting for God to adopt sons.

It must be noted that reason alone cannot apodictically prove the possibility of this adoption; for this would be to prove the possibility of grace, which is essentially supernatural in that it is a participation of the divine nature of God's intimate life which therefore transcends the scope of truths that can be proved by reason alone.

But posited the revelation of this truth, God's infinite goodness makes it clear that it befits Him to adopt. Its possibility can neither be proved nor disproved, but we are persuaded of it and it is firmly held by faith alone.

First doubt. What is the difference between divine adoption and human adoption?

Reply. The difference is that a man in adopting someone, for example, a poor man's son, does not make this son worthy to inherit from him, but in adopting such a person presupposes as worthy him whom he chooses. On the contrary, God makes the man whom He adopts worthy by the gift of His grace to receive the heavenly inheritance. Hence divine adoption is far superior to human adoption and much more real; for it elevates one to the higher order of the divine life and proceeds from uncreated love which is effective and productive of grace. It regenerates the soul so that the adoptive son is said to be "born... of God," not indeed by nature as the only-begotten Son, but by grace, that is, regenerated spiritually by infused grace.

Second doubt. What is the difference between adoptive sonship and natural sonship?

Natural sonship is the relation that befits anyone inasmuch as by virtue of birth such a person receives from the generator either the numerically identical nature as in the case of the divine person or specifically the same nature as in created beings. Hence taken in the strict sense it is defined as "the origin of a living being from a living principle in the likeness of nature." Thus the foundation of natural sonship is passive generation.

Adoptive sonship is a qualified imitation of natural sonship inasmuch as the adopted does not receive the adopter's nature, but a right to the inheritance as if he were the true son. Hence adoption among jurists and

theologians is generally defined as being the gratuitous and free assumption of a stranger to the inheritance of the adopter.

The solution of the objections of this article confirms the reply.

Reply to first objection. “Considered in his nature, man is not a stranger in respect to God as to the natural gifts bestowed on him; but he is as to the gifts of grace and glory, “ because he has these not by nature, but only by adoption.

Reply to second objection. Adoptive sonship is a participation in the resemblance of divine natural sonship, hence the Apostle says: “He predestinated us to be made conformable to the image of His Son.” In other words, just as the only-begotten Son received from all eternity the whole divine nature from His Father, so the adoptive son receives in time a participation of the divine nature.

Reply to third objection. “Spiritual goods can be possessed by many at the same time, not so material goods. Wherefore none can receive a material inheritance except the successor of a deceased being; whereas all receive the spiritual inheritance at the same time in its entirety without detriment to the ever-living Father.”

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER IT IS FITTING THAT THE WHOLE TRINITY SHOULD ADOPT

State of the question. The difficulty is that, on the one hand, men are made by adoption brethren of Christ rather than His sons, for the Apostle says: “That He might be the first-born among many brethren.” On the other hand, when in the Lord’s Prayer we say, “Our Father, “ this refers to the entire Trinity, equally with “Thy kingdom come, “ and “Thy will be done.”

Reply. To adopt is an act that belongs to the whole Trinity.

Authoritative proof. When in the Lord’s Prayer we say “Our Father, “ the word “Father” connotes the essence and not the person. The same is to be said of “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done.”

Theological proof. Every divine free action ad extra is befitting to the whole Trinity, because it proceeds from omnipotence, which, like the divine nature, is common to the three persons. But to adopt is a divine free action ad extra, for it is the bestowal of grace. Therefore to adopt is befitting to the whole Trinity.

In other words, whereas the natural Son of God is “begotten not made,” the adoptive son is made, for the Evangelist says: “He gave them power to be made the sons of God.” Nevertheless the adoptive son is said to be “born of God,” on account of the spiritual regeneration that is gratuitous and not natural.

Reply to second question. “By adoption we are made the brethren of Christ, as having with Him the same Father who, nevertheless, is His Father in one way and ours in another. Whence, pointedly our Lord says, separately: ‘My Father, and your Father.’ For He is Christ’s Father by natural generation, and this is proper to Him; whereas He is our Father by a voluntary operation, which is common to the three persons.” Hence, when we say, “Our Father, “ the word “Father” refers to the essence and not to the person. It is the opposite when Christ says, “My Father, “ for Christ is not the Son of the Trinity, as we are. Father Lebreton, S. J., in his recent work on the Trinity, insists exegetically very much on this point. This observation is referred to in its proper terms by St. Thomas in the present article, which is seldom quoted.

Doubt. Is adoption, although common to the whole Trinity, appropriated to the Father?

Reply to third objection. “It is appropriated to the Father as its author, to the Son as its exemplar, to the Holy Ghost as imprinting on us the likeness of this exemplar.”

Adoption is here taken in the active sense, and not in the passive sense, which is called “a participated likeness of eternal sonship,” in a quasi-passive sense.

The reason is that appropriation is a manifestation of the divine persons by means of essential attributes which enter more closely into what constitutes this or that person. Thus to the Father, inasmuch as He is the principle from no principle, omnipotence is appropriated; to the Son, inasmuch as He is the Word, wisdom is appropriated; to the Holy Ghost, inasmuch as He is personal love, is appropriated goodness, sanctification, which is the special effect of infused charity.

THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER IT IS PROPER TO THE RATIONAL NATURE TO BE ADOPTED

Reply. Every intellectual creature, and only such, can be adopted. for only such a creature is capable of grace on which adoption rests, and of happiness in which inheritance consists.

Therefore the angels are adoptive sons of God; likewise our first parents in the state of innocence; the just of the Old Testament; also all who are in the state of grace, as long as they remain so, even though they are not predestined.

Objection. St. Paul introduces a state of opposition between the Christians and the just of the Old Testament, inasmuch as the latter received the spirit of bondage in fear, whereas the Christians received the spirit of the adoption of sons.

Reply. St. Paul does not introduce opposition between them because of personal justice, but by reason of the difference of state and law in which each class lived; for the Old Law was the law of fear in itself, and of itself it did not have the power to justify; whereas the New Law is the law of grace previously imprinted on the hearts and having the power to justify. Thus it is sufficient for salvation, although not all the just are actually saved, for some fall away from grace.

FOURTH ARTICLE: WHETHER CHRIST AS MAN IS THE ADOPTED SON OF GOD

State of the question. About the end of the eighth century Archbishop Elipandus of Toledo, and Bishop Felix of Urgel, Adoptionists, taught that Christ as man is the adopted son of God. And more probably, whatever Vasquez says, they defended this thesis in the Nestorian sense, namely, by positing two persons in Christ. They were condemned as heretics in the Council of Frankfort (794) under Pope Hadrian I.

But Durandus and Scotus were unaware of the acts of the Frankfort council, which for a long time remained unknown because of the astuteness of the heretics. These theologians said: The unity of the person being preserved intact, Christ as man is the adopted Son of God, inasmuch as He received habitual grace by which we are adopted sons.

Is this opinion of Scotus and Durandus already condemned by the Council of Frankfort, the acts of which were unknown to these theologians? The answer is that the Council of Frankfort excludes even this opinion, for it says: “Adopted, if indeed this means that Jesus Christ is not the natural Son of God.” This council also says: “The unity of person eliminates the

insult of adoption." St. Thomas in the counterargument to this article also quotes St. Ambrose as against this opinion.

Theological proof. The argumentative part of this article refutes the adoptive sonship of Christ as follows:

Sonship properly belongs not to the nature, but to the person, and He who is already the natural Son cannot be called the adopted son, because He is not a stranger to His Father according to His nature. Thus a man cannot adopt a boy who is already his son. But Christ is the natural Son of God. Therefore Christ cannot be called the adopted son.

In explanation of this proof, it must be observed that: (1) Adoption cannot apply to the humanity of Christ, both because the humanity is not a person, and only a person can be adopted, and because, on account of the hypostatic union, it already is entitled to the inheritance of God, which is the beatific vision.

2) It must be noted that Christ as man is already in the formal sense the natural Son of God, inasmuch as the Word who subsists in the human nature is the natural Son of God, for by assuming the human nature Christ did not lose His divine natural sonship.

The solution of the objections confirms this answer.

Reply to first objection. If it is said that "carnal humility was adopted by the Word', ; the expression is metaphorical for "was assumed"; for adoption properly belongs only to the person, not to the nature, or to a part of the nature.

Reply to second objection. "Christ, by the grace of union, is the natural Son, whereas a Christian by habitual grace is an adopted son. Habitual grace in Christ does not make one who was not a son to be an adopted son, but is a certain effect of filiation in the soul of Christ."

Adopted sonship is not the formal and primary effect of habitual grace, but only the secondary effect; hence habitual grace can be in the soul without the former. It is present in Christ's soul as a participation of the divine nature rendering Christ more pleasing to God, and it enables Him in a special manner to merit continually by infused charity and the other virtues, of which habitual grace is the source.

Reply to third objection. We may say that Christ according to His human nature is a creature, and is subject to God; but we cannot say that He is the adopted Son of God, because sonship is not said of the nature but only of the person; for we do not say the humanity of Christ is the Son of God.

Corollary. The Blessed Virgin Mary is the first adopted daughter of God.

CHAPTER XXVI: QUESTION 24: THE PREDESTINATION OF CHRIST IMPORTANCE OF THIS QUESTION

This most famous question evidently belongs to the relations prevailing between Christ and His Father.

Scotus engages in a lengthy discussion on Christ's predestination, and in his theological summa he explains his own view about the motive of the Incarnation, seeking to rest it on the principle that Christ is the first of all the predestined, and therefore the first intended by God, even before Adam. To this the Thomists reply that Christ is the first intended by God in the genus of final cause; but because He was willed by God as the Savior or Redeemer, the permission of Adam's sin to be repaired is first in the genus of material cause. Thus God wills the soul prior to the body in the genus of final and formal cause, but He first wills the body in the genus of material cause to be perfected, and if the embryonic body were not disposed for the reception of the rational soul, this soul would not be created. Likewise, in virtue of the present decree, if Adam had not sinned, the Word would not have become incarnate. St. Thomas realized the importance of the predestination of Christ, who is the first of all the predestined.

St. Thomas says indeed, as we shall immediately see, that Christ was not predestined first to glory, as Scotus contends, but to divine and natural sonship, which is more exalted, and he shows that Christ's gratuitous predestination is the exemplar and cause of our predestination, inasmuch as Christ condignly merited all the effects of our predestination.

There are four articles to this question.

1) Whether Christ is predestinated.

2) Whether He is predestinated as man.

3) Whether His predestination is the exemplar of ours.

4) Whether it is the cause of ours.

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER IT IS BEFITTING THAT CHRIST SHOULD BE PREDESTINATED

State of the question. It would seem unfitting: (1) because Christ is not the adopted Son of God, for St. Paul says: “God hath predestinated us unto the adoption of children”; (2) because the person of Christ is uncreated and therefore not predestinated, but predestining, and it cannot be said that Christ is predestined by reason of His human nature, for only persons are predestined, for example, Peter, Paul; (3) Christ was always God and the Son of God; therefore He was not predestined to be the natural Son of God.

Reply. Nevertheless the answer is in the affirmative.

Scriptural and authoritative proof. St. Paul says of the Son of God: “Who was made to Him of the seed of David according to the flesh who was predestinated the Son of God in power.” But this text presents a difficulty.

St. Augustine understands the Greek word to mean “predestined,” because in Sacred Scripture, to destine, to define, to appoint, to declare, are the same in meaning. Thus divine knowledge is the same as foreknowledge.

Hence St. Augustine says: “Jesus was predestined, so that He who was to be the son of David according to the flesh would yet be in power the Son of God.”

The interpretation given by the Greeks seems to be more literal. But as regards the doctrine and the application of the notion implied in predestination, there is no difficulty, as will at once be evident from the argument as expounded in the body of this article.

Theological proof. Predestination, in its proper sense, is a certain divine preordination from eternity of those things which are to be done in time by the grace of God. But it was done in time by God, through the grace of union, that the man Jesus should be God. Therefore the union of natures in the person of Christ falls under eternal predestination, and because of this union Christ is truly said to be predestinated.

Reply to first objection. Christ is not predestined, however, as we are, to be the adopted son of God, but to be the natural Son of God.

Reply to second objection. Predestination is attributed to the person of Christ, not indeed in itself, but inasmuch as the person subsists in the human nature; for by the grace of union it befits Christ, in His human nature, to be the Son of God.

Reply to the third objection. The antecedence implied in eternal predestination is not to be referred to the person of the Word in Himself but

to Him by reason of the nature.

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER THIS PROPOSITION IS FALSE: CHRIST AS MAN WAS PREDESTINED TO BE THE SON OF GOD

Reply. The proposition is not false, because predestination is attributed to Christ only on account of His human nature, which means as man.

Reply to first objection. The meaning is that Christ as man was predestinated the Son of God, inasmuch as His human nature received the grace of union.

Reply to second objection. It is false to say that, just as Christ is visible by reason of His human nature, so it would be natural for Him to be the Son of God; but it is so inasmuch as His human nature is hypostatically united to the Word of God. Hence it is said that Christ as man was predestined the natural Son of God, but not the adopted son.

Doubt. Was Christ, as man, predestined primarily and principally to be the natural Son of God, and only secondarily to the beatific vision and other supernatural gifts bestowed on Him?

Reply. The Thomists affirm, against Scotus, that Christ was so predestined. They say that what was intended first and principally in the decree of predestination is to be the natural Son of God, or the hypostatic union, because it is greater to be God than to enjoy Him as the other blessed do. This decree of Christ's predestination to be the natural Son of God is nothing else but the decree of the Incarnation. It is only in consequence of this decree that Christ was predestined to glory, as to something secondary, resulting from the grace of union.

Likewise, in the treatise on Mariology, St. Thomas and very many theologians, such as Suarez and several others, say that by the decree of the Incarnation the Blessed Virgin Mary was first predestined to be the Mother of God, and only as a consequence of this to fullness of grace and glory "so that she might be fittingly and worthily the Mother of God."

Objection. But Christ is made more perfect by the light of glory and the beatific vision. Therefore these are more perfect than the hypostatic union.

Reply. I deny the consequence, because the hypostatic union is not related to the light of glory, as a disposition to a more perfect form, but rather as an eminent cause to what results from it. In fact, the hypostatic union formally constitutes the hypostatic order, which infinitely transcends

the order of grace and glory. Even the divine maternity belongs, because of that in which it terminates, to the hypostatic order, and it transcends the plenitude of grace in Mary although this plenitude is, indeed, a derived and most fitting perfection so that the Blessed Virgin Mary may be worthy to be the Mother of God.

Thus the rational soul, inasmuch as it pertains to the substantial order, is more perfect than the intellectual faculty and intellection, which pertain to the order of accidents and properties, though they perfect the substance.

Moreover, it must be noted that the common saying, namely, that everything is for its operation, does not mean that substance is for accident, for this would be false. The meaning of this axiomatic statement is, as Cajetan observes, that everything operates for its own sake. And the thing with its operation is a greater perfection than the thing apart from its operation, just as a tree and its fruit are more perfect than the tree alone. But it is better to give the tree than to give only the fruit or the usufruct. Wherefore, St. Thomas says: “He who vows something and does it, subjects himself to God more than he who only does it; for he subjects himself to God not only as to the act, but also as to the power, since in future he cannot do something else. Even so he gives more who gives the tree with its fruit than he who gives the fruit only, as Anselm says.” Operation follows being, and operation is for the perfection of the substance.

Hence Christ certainly was predestined to be the natural Son of God prior to His predestination to glory, and the Blessed Virgin Mary, by the same decree of the Incarnation, was predestined to be the Mother of God prior to her predestination to plenitude of grace and glory.

Corollary. Evidently both the predestination of Christ and that of the Blessed Virgin Mary are absolutely gratuitous. Neither Christ nor the Blessed Virgin Mary could merit the Incarnation, and the merits of Christ and of the Blessed Virgin Mary are the effects, and not the cause of their predestination; just as the merits of the elect are the effects and not cause of their predestination, as St. Thomas shows. St. Paul says: “What hast thou that thou hast not received?” And again: “God chose us before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and unspotted in His sight in charity,” not because He foresaw our future holiness. God is not only the spectator, but the author of salvation.

THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER CHRIST'S PREDESTINATION IS THE EXEMPLAR OF OURS

The answer is in the affirmative.

Authoritative proof. St. Augustine, in one of his works, explains in his own admirable way, how Christ's predestination to be the natural Son of God, which is the result of no foreseen merits, is the exemplar of our predestination to salvation or to adoptive sonship of glory, which likewise is not because of our foreseen merits, since the merits of the elect are the effects and not the cause of their predestination.

Theological proof. It is explained in the body of this article as follows:

Christ's predestination is the exemplar of ours not on the part of God willing, but on the part of the object willed.

It is not the exemplar because of God willing, for in God there are not several acts of intellect and will; hence St. Thomas says: "God wills this to be as means to that (on the part of things willed), but He does not on account of this (first intended) will that (by a consequent act)." In this God differs from us, who are moved by the end to choose the means.

On the part of the objects willed, however, Christ's predestination is the exemplar of ours in two ways.

a) As regards the good to which we are predestinated; for Christ was predestinated to be the natural Son of God, whereas we are predestinated to be the adopted sons of God, which is a participated likeness of natural sonship, for St. Paul says: "He predestinated us to be made conformable to the image of His Son."

b) As to the manner of obtaining this good, which is by grace, our preceding merits are not the cause but the effect of our predestination by God. Under this aspect, Christ's predestination is the exemplar of ours, because St. Thomas, following St. Augustine, says that "this is most manifest in Christ, because human nature in Him, without any preceding merits, was united to the Son of God"; and the Evangelist says: "of His fullness we have all received."

Reply to third objection. "The exemplate need not be conformed to the exemplar in all respects; it is sufficient that it imitate it in some." Our predestination, as we shall at once see, is because of Christ's merits, whereas Christ did not merit His predestination.

FOURTH ARTICLE: WHETHER CHRIST'S PREDESTINATION IS THE CAUSE OF OURS

State of the question. The meaning is whether Christ's predestination is not merely exemplar, but also the final and efficient moral cause of ours, inasmuch as Christ merited the effects of our predestination.

St. Thomas answers the first part of this question as in the preceding article by stating that, on the part of God who predestines, Christ's predestination is not the cause of ours, because by one and the same eternal act God predestined both Christ and us.

On the part of the things willed, however, Christ's predestination is the final and efficient moral cause of ours.

a) It is the final cause, indeed, because St. Paul says: "All are yours, and you are Christ's; and Christ is God's." And again: "He predestinated us to be made conformable to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren."

b) It is also the efficient moral cause, inasmuch as Christ condignly merited all the effects of our predestination, namely, calling, justification, glorification.

St. Paul says: "God hath blessed us with spiritual blessings in heavenly places, in Christ..., who hath predestinated us unto the adoption of children through Jesus Christ unto Himself... unto the praise of the glory of His grace, in which He hath graced us in His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the remission of sins, according to the richness of His grace, which hath super-abounded in us....[God willed] to restore all things in Christ... in whom we also are called by lot, being predestinated according to His purpose." Hence in the argumentative part of this article, St. Thomas says: "For God, by predestinating from eternity, so decreed our salvation that it should be achieved through Jesus Christ. For eternal predestination covers not only that which is to be accomplished in time, but also the mode and order in which it is to be accomplished in time."

Confirmation. Christ's merits were foreseen and predestined by God before He gave any sign that men were to be predestined.

It is not only a question here of the predestination of some undetermined number of persons but of a particular number of persons individually in preference to others.

Christ indeed said: "You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you." St. Augustine and St. Thomas interpret this text as referring not only to the grace of the apostolate, but also to glory, to salvation, or to the eternal

kingdom. Just before the above-quoted text, Jesus said, and this applies to all the just: “I will not now call you servants..., but friends.” And to whatsoever Christian the Apostle says: “What hast thou that thou hast not received?” and not only from God but from the merits of Christ, because “of His fullness we have all received.” Hence Christ merited all the effects of our predestination taken together.

Doubt. How then did Christ merit the efficacious graces that de facto are not granted, such as the grace of a happy death for Judas?

We already have answered this question in discussing Christ’s merits. He merited them not as conferred or to be conferred, but as offered to man in the sufficient grace; for the efficacious grace is offered to us in the sufficient as the fruit in the flower, but if one resists the sufficient grace, that person deserves to be deprived of the efficacious grace.

Hence Christ merited differently the grace of a happy death both for Peter and for Judas. The most holy soul of Christ was moved by God predestining to merit for Peter the grace of a happy death to be conferred and for Judas to be offered in the sufficient grace.

The mystery of predestination always remains a secret.

Objection. What is absolutely gratuitous does not depend on foreseen merits. But our predestination is purely gratuitous. Therefore it does not depend on any merits.

Reply. I distinguish the major: that it does not depend on our merits, I concede; on Christ’s merits, I deny. I contradistinguish the minor: our predestination is said to be gratuitous as regards ourselves, but not as regards Christ.

Likewise the Blessed Virgin Mary merited de congruo all the effects of our predestination.

Hence God chose the elect from all eternity in view of Christ’s merits, just as He willed from all eternity to preserve the Blessed Virgin Mary from original sin on account of Christ’s future merits, as declared by Pius IX.

But I insist. It seems that Christ’s merits are the means whereby we are predestined; in fact, whereby we are saved, which is first intended by God. Therefore the solution is false.

Reply. I deny the antecedent, for the means is subordinate to the end; whereas Christ’s predestination and His merits are of a higher order than our salvation. Hence it is rather our salvation that is the means, ordained by God for the glory of Christ, who is first predestined. St. Paul says: “For all

are yours. And you are Christ's; and Christ is God's." Therefore Christ is the first of all the predestined and was by God, who predestines, first willed in the genus of final cause; whereas the permission of Adam's sin to be repaired preceded in the genus of material cause to be perfected, as stated in our treatise on the motive of the Incarnation.

CHAPTER XXVII: QUESTION 25: THE ADORATION OF CHRIST

We have considered Christ in His relation to the Father, and now we must consider His relation to us. There are two questions: (1) the adoration of Christ; (2) His mediation inasmuch as He is our mediator.

Concerning the adoration of Christ there are six articles.

1) Whether Christ's humanity and Godhead are to be adored with one and the same adoration.

2) Whether His flesh is to be adored with the adoration of latria.

3) Whether the adoration of latria is to be given to the images of Christ.

4) Whether the cross of Christ is to be adored with the adoration of latria.

5) Whether His mother is to be adored.

6) Concerning the adoration of the relics of saints.

Prefatory Remarks

St. Thomas has three articles on adoration in his treatise on religion. In the first he shows that adoration is an act of latria, or religion. It is directed to reverence Him who is adored, and it belongs properly to the virtue of religion, or latria, to show reverence to God, on account of His supreme excellence as Creator and Lord of all creatures. Hence to the devil, who tempted Christ in the desert, saying: "All these I will give Thee if, falling down, Thou wilt adore me," Jesus answered: "Begone, Satan, for it is written: 'the Lord thy God thou shalt adore, and Him only thou shalt serve.", Adoration is an act of honor, but not every act of honor is adoration; for equals, even inferiors, are honored, but only the superior is adored. Adoration in the broad sense is not an act of latria, but of dulia. Thus the Scripture records that Nathan adored David, bowing down to the ground, and that Abraham adored the angels, bowing down before them to show his veneration. But the angels and the apostles refused to accept the adoration of latria. It would be idolatry as in paganism.

2) St. Thomas remarks that adoration is first an interior act, which is the cause of a bodily act that expresses our submission, such as genuflection, prostration, inclination. But the principal act is the interior act of the mind, whereby, acknowledging God's excellence, by a profound interior inclination before Him, He is acknowledged as the most excellent Creator and Lord. Wherefore Jesus said: "The true adorers shall adore the Father in spirit and in truth." St. Thomas says: "We prostrate ourselves, professing that we are nothing of ourselves."

3) It is in accordance with what is fitting that adoration requires a definite place, namely, a temple, which is the house of God, as being a place that is set apart, so to speak, from worldly affairs.

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER CHRIST'S HUMANITY AND GODHEAD ARE TO BE ADORED WITH THE SAME ADORATION

State of the question. It seems not: (1) because Christ's human nature is not, like the divine nature, common to the three divine persons that must be adored; (2) there is not the same excellence in the acts of Christ's human nature as in those of the divine nature; (3) if the soul of Christ were not united to the Word, then it would have to be venerated with the cultus of dulia, and it lost none of its dignity through the hypostatic union.

Reply. Nevertheless the answer is in the affirmative, and it is of faith. St. Thomas in the counterargument of this article quotes the Second Council of Constantinople.

On several occasions in the councils this truth has been declared, namely, that Christ's human nature is to be adored, and indeed directly inasmuch as it is united with the divine nature with only one kind of adoration, and it is also to be loved by the perfect as defined against Michael de Molinos. This cultus of latria also befits especially the Eucharistic Christ, and the most sacred Heart of Jesus.

The definition against the Nestorians must be remembered, in which the Church declared: "Christ must be adored by one adoration, by which we must adore God the Word incarnate together with His own flesh, which was the tradition in the Church of God from the beginning."

Theological proof. Strictly speaking, honor is given to the person, and to the hands or feet only inasmuch as they belong to the person. But there is only one person in Christ to whom the two natures belong. Therefore by

one and the same adoration the human and divine natures of Christ are to be adored.

Confirmation. A person of distinction is honored because of the qualities indeed of the soul, namely, wisdom and virtues, yet not only the soul is honored, but the whole composite, the body also. Likewise Christ is to be adored on account of His divine personality, but the whole person is to be adored, which includes His human nature.

We grant, however, to those who object, that there are two reasons for the adoration of Christ; for His divine nature of itself alone is to be adored, and His human nature in that it is hypostatically united to the Word. Yet it remains true that there is one honor of adoration on the part of the person who is adored.

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER CHRIST'S HUMANITY SHOULD BE ADORED WITH THE ADORATION OF LATRIA

State of the question. It seems not, because Christ's humanity is a creature. And Christ as man is less than the Father.

Reply. Authoritative proof. St. Thomas in the counterargument quotes the authority of St. John Damascene and of St. Augustine.

Theological proof. The honor of adoration properly belongs to the person. But the person to whom Christ's humanity belongs is divine, and the honor of latria is due to this person. Hence this adoration is not given to Christ's humanity because of itself, but because of the divinity to which it is united.

Corollary. We say that Christ's humanity must be adored, not by a relative adoration, as the image of Christ must be adored, but by adoration in the strict and absolute sense; because the person is adored whose humanity is a nature. However, first and primarily the person of the Word incarnate is adored, which is the terminus of the adoration.

Devotion To The Sacred Heart Of Jesus

The nature of this devotion is made manifest from its object and end. It is the physical heart of Christ, as united hypostatically to the divine person, and inasmuch as it is the symbol of Christ's love for us, which constitutes the object of this cult of adoration, Christ's love is the love that comes from His most holy soul and also from the uncreated Word. The motive of this devotion is the infinite dignity of the Word to whom the heart of Christ is

hypostatically united, and it is simultaneously the manifestation of both His uncreated and created love for us.

The terminus of this devotion is the very person of Christ inasmuch as it is by the heart that He manifests His love for us.

The end of this devotion is that our hearts may be inflamed with love for Christ, and as a consequence the reparation of injuries inflicted upon Him.

Our love for Christ must be both affective and effective, and it must manifest itself by imitating those virtues of which the most sacred heart of Jesus is the symbol, namely, charity, humility, and meekness, for He said: “Learn of me, because I am meek, and humble of heart.”

This devotion, repeatedly approved by the Church, whatever the Jansenists, unbelievers, and rationalists may have said, is most certainly lawful and holy. Discarding the physiological question, whether the material heart is the organ of love or not, it is certainly the organ that manifests emotional love, and hence it is the symbol of love. Therefore the heart of Christ is the symbol of the love whereby Christ “loved us and delivered Himself up for us.” All the graces we receive come from this love.

Thus there is a special reason for the adoration of this part of Christ’s body. Finally, this devotion arose in a most opportune time, that of Jansenism, for the practical refutation of this heresy, which denied that Christ died for all men, and which caused many of the faithful to abstain from frequent Communion.

Devotion to the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus is likewise a true, holy, and opportune cult, for it refers to the Heart of Jesus inasmuch as this Heart moved Jesus to give us the Eucharist as the daily sacrifice and the most perfect of all the sacraments. AS Leo XIII said: “This devotion reminds us of that act of supreme love by which our Redeemer, lavishing upon us all the riches of His Heart, so that on leaving this world, He might remain with us until the end of time, instituted the adorable sacrament of the Eucharist.” We owe a debt of deep gratitude for the institution of this devotion.

THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER THE IMAGE OF CHRIST SHOULD BE ADORED WITH THE ADORATION OF LATRIA

Reply. Relative but not absolute adoration of latria must be given to the image of Christ.

Authoritative proof. St. John Damascene quotes St. Basil as saying: “The honor given to an image reaches to the prototype.” There are several declarations of the Church concerning the relative cult of images. The Second Council of Nicaea says: “The honor paid to an image is transferred to the original, and whoever adores the image, adores the subsistence (or person) depicted in the image.”

Theological proof. There is a twofold movement of the mind toward an image; the first is toward the image itself as a certain thing; the second is toward the image so far as it is the image of something else. Moreover, as St. Thomas says in the body of this article: “the movement that is toward an image as an image, is one and the same as that which is toward the thing that is represented.”

Hence no reverence is shown to the image of Christ inasmuch as it is a certain thing of gold or silver; but inasmuch as it is an image of Christ, the same reverence is shown to it as to Christ Himself, but as referring to Christ.

FOURTH ARTICLE: WHETHER CHRIST’S CROSS SHOULD BE WORSHIPED WITH THE ADORATION OF LATRIA

Reply. The answer is in the affirmative, in accordance with the following chant of the Church: “Hail, O Cross, our only hope, during this Passiontide: give to the just increase of grace, grant to each contrite sinner pardon.”

St. Thomas gives two conclusions.

First conclusion. The true cross of Christ on which Christ was crucified is to be adored with the cult of latria both inasmuch as it represents to us the figure of Christ extended thereon, and because of its contact with the members of Christ, and of its being saturated with His blood.

Second conclusion. The effigy of Christ’s cross in any other material is to be adored with the adoration of relative latria, as being the image of Christ.

Reply to first objection. Thus in the cross is considered not Christ’s shame, but its divine power whereby it triumphed over its enemies.

Reply to second objection. Thus the true nails of the passion, and the true crown of thorns are adored, inasmuch as they came in contact with the members of Christ, and were likewise saturated with His blood.

Reply. The answer is in the negative; but the cult of hyperdulia must be given to her. The Collyridians were condemned because they said that the Blessed Virgin Mary is to be adored with the cult of latria. The reason is that the Mother of God is a mere creature and the adoration of latria is to be given to God alone, and to no creature.

The cult of dulia or veneration must be given to the rational creature, however, on account of its excellence. Thus, even in the civil order, the generals of the army, kings, and great philosophers are venerated; and in the order of grace, the cult of supernatural dulia is given to the saints. The cult of hyperdulia must be given to the Blessed Virgin Mary, which more probably differs specifically from the cult of dulia, because the eminent dignity of divine motherhood belongs, by reason of its terminus, to the hypostatic order, which specifically transcends the order of grace and glory. Billuart inclines to this view in his commentary on this article.

Thus, for example, munificence is a virtue that is specifically distinct from liberality, and St. Thomas says that virginity is also a specifically distinct virtue from even the perfect chastity of a widow.

Objection. If the images of Christ and the cross are to be adored, each with the adoration of latria, then this adoration applies likewise to the Blessed Virgin Mary, because the Mother is related to the Son.

Reply. There is no comparison in that the images of Christ and the cross are not in themselves objects of veneration, but refer solely to Christ. On the contrary, the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints are rational creatures, having an excellence of their own, and in themselves are objects of veneration. “Consequently, if the adoration of latria were shown to the rational creatures in which this image is, there might be an occasion of error,” namely, because not a few might conclude that these persons are to be adored in themselves with the adoration not of relative, but of absolute latria. In other words, such adoration might afford anyone the occasion of judging that it should be attributed to this person because of his or her own excellence.

Doubt. Is the cult of hyperdulia for its own sake greater and nobler than the adoration of relative latria?

Reply. The answer is in the affirmative with Billuart and several other theologians, because, although latria is a species of cult more perfect than

hyperdulia, nevertheless it can be that the act of hyperdulia is worthier than the act of latria in some individual; just as, although justice is a virtue specifically more perfect than temperance, nevertheless it is possible that the noblest act of temperance, for example, of virginity, is more perfect in some individual than the least act of justice, such as the payment of a debt in some business transaction.

This terminates the question of Christ's adoration.

Sixth Article: Whether Any Kind Of Worship Is Due To The Relics Of The Saints

In this article St. Thomas shows that the relics of the saints must be venerated with the cult of dulia, because the saints excelled in the practice of all the virtues.

He says: "The bodies of the saints were temples and organs of the Holy Ghost dwelling and operating in them, and are destined to be likened to the body of Christ by the glory of the resurrection. Hence God Himself fittingly honors such relics, by working miracles in their presence."

This argument is valid in refuting the error of Protestants who contend that the saints must not be venerated.

CHAPTER XXVIII: QUESTION 26: CHRIST THE MEDIATOR

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER IT IS PROPER TO CHRIST TO BE THE MEDIATOR OF GOD AND MAN

State of the question. It seems not to be proper to Christ, because this is also fitting to prophets, priests, and angels.

Reply. The answer is that Christ alone is the perfect mediator between God and men; but there are other mediators in a qualified sense, or secondary and subordinate mediators, inasmuch as dispositively or ministerially they cooperate to unite men with God.

There are two parts to this conclusion.

Authoritative proof of first part. St. Paul says: “There is one mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a redemption for all.” He also declares that Jesus is called the mediator of the New Testament, because He reconciled us to God by the shedding of His blood that speaks more eloquently than the blood of Abel.

Theological proof of first part. It belongs properly to the office of a mediator to unite those between whom he mediates. But to unite men perfectively to God belongs to Christ, who reconciled men to God, inasmuch as He condignly satisfied for them, and condignly merited for them the graces necessary for salvation and eternal life. St. Paul says: “God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself,” and again: “Christ gave Himself a redemption for all.”

Explanation of second part. There are other subordinate mediators inasmuch as they cooperate in uniting men to God, either dispositively, such as the prophets and priests of the Old Testament, or ministerially, such as the priests of the New Testament, who are strictly speaking Christ’s ministers in the bestowal of grace.

Even the prophets and priests of the Old Testament ministerially cooperated in uniting men to God inasmuch as they foretold and prefigured

the true and perfect mediator.

In this sense the Blessed Virgin is called the universal Mediatrix, subordinated to Christ, inasmuch as she merited strictly de congruo with Him what He merited de condigno for us, inasmuch as she also satisfied with Him de congruo. Now, too, she is also the Mediatrix inasmuch as she intercedes for us along with Christ "always living to make intercession for us," and finally inasmuch as she is the distributor of all our graces.

Reply to second objection. The good angels are also mediators ministerially and dispositively, inasmuch as they are Christ's ministers in the kingdom of God.

Reply to third objection. The Holy Ghost is not a mediator although it is said of Him that "He asks for us with unspeakable groanings," because He makes us ask by special inspiration.

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER CHRIST AS MAN IS THE MEDIATOR OF GOD AND MEN

State of the question. It seems that He is mediator inasmuch as He is both God and man. Moreover, He is mediator inasmuch as He reconciled us to God by taking away sin, but this He did as God.

Reply. Nevertheless Christ as man is mediator.

Authoritative proof. St. Augustine expressly says: "Christ, as man, is mediator." So, likewise, we said that Christ, as man, is a priest, for as priest He prayed, merited, and satisfied for us. But these acts belong to Christ, as man, for they imply the subordination of His human will to the divine will.

Theological proof. There are two things to be considered in a mediator, namely, that such a person acts as a man, and unites others. But neither of these applies to Christ as God, but only as man. Therefore it applies to Christ as man to be mediator.

The major is self-evident.

Proof of minor.

a) It is the nature of a mean to be distant from each extreme. But Christ as God does not differ from the Father and the Holy Ghost either in nature or power of dominion. Hence He is not distant from them.

On the contrary, Christ as man is distant from God in nature and from men in dignity, grace, and glory, especially by the grace of union.

b) The mediator, however, unites God and men, by communicating the precepts and gifts of God to men, and by satisfying and appealing to God

for men. But this Christ does, not indeed as God, but as man, because to satisfy and appeal presupposes subordination of the created will to the divine will. Hence Christ as man is mediator.

Reply to third objection. “Although it belongs to Christ as God to take away sin authoritatively, yet it belongs to Him as man to satisfy for the sin of the human race, and in this sense He is called the mediator of God and men.”

Doubt. Is Christ as man mediator because of the fullness of habitual grace, inasmuch as this presupposes the grace of union, or is He more so formally because of the grace of union from which results the fullness of habitual grace?

The question is almost the same as the one about what formally constitutes Christ’s priesthood. It is a disputed question even among Thomists. We have already seen that the Salmanticenses maintain that what formally constitutes Christ’s priesthood is the grace of headship inasmuch as it connotes the grace of union.

Others, such as Gonet, and in more recent times Father Hugon and many modern theologians, say that Christ is formally constituted priest and universal mediator by the grace of union, from which the fullness of habitual grace results. For He is priest and mediator as anointed by God, and He is anointed by God first by the grace of union. Moreover, as priest and mediator He must offer redemptive sacrifice or adequate satisfaction that is of infinite value. But the infinite value of Christ’s merits and satisfaction depend not only pre-supposedly but also formally on the grace of union, or on Christ’s divine personality.

This second opinion, which in our days is gradually gaining favor, seems to be the more correct one. We may quote in favor of this opinion what Pius XI teaches in his encyclical on Christ the king in which he states that Christ as man is the universal king of all creatures even of angels, inasmuch as by the grace of union His human nature is personally or hypostatically united to the Word. He says: “His kingship rests on that wondrous union which they call hypostatic. Hence it follows, not only that God is to be adored in Christ by angels and men, but also that angels and men are obedient and subject to His imperial sway as man, namely, that it is not only because of the hypostatic union that Christ has power over all creatures.... Moreover, Christ by the right of having redeemed us can command us.”

St. Thomas spoke in the same way about Jesus, in that He is the judge of the living and the dead. Jesus is judge even as man. “Judiciary power, “ says St. Thomas, “belongs to the man Christ on account of both His divine personality, and the dignity of His headship, and the fullness of His habitual grace.”

This judiciary power belongs to Christ with respect to all human affairs because “Christ’s soul, which is filled with the truth of the Word of God, passes judgment upon all things.”

Christ’s judiciary power, even as man, extends to the angels; “first of all from the closeness of His assumed nature to God.” Therefore it likewise seems that Christ as man is the universal mediator: (1) because of the grace of union; (2) because of the grace of headship. Thus He can have theandric acts of infinite value in meriting and satisfying for us, that is, in reconciling us to God, which is properly the office of the universal mediator.

This terminates the first part of this treatise on the Incarnation, namely, on the union of the Word incarnate, on the consequences of the union, as regards Christ in Himself, as also in His relation to the Father and to us. We now pass on to consider what Christ did and suffered for us.

CHAPTER XXIX: PREFATORY REMARKS

The second part of this treatise on the Incarnation by St. Thomas concerns “what Christ did and suffered.” It is explained from question twenty-seven to question fifty-nine, but it is too long a treatise for each question and its articles to be explained. We shall have to discuss what is more important. Thus we shall discuss the mystery of Redemption, and afterward there will be a compendium on Mariology.

The student must read carefully what St. Thomas wrote about Christ’s conception, about the mother who conceived, the mode of conception, the perfection of the offspring concerned, the birth of Christ, His manifestation, circumcision, and baptism, as also His manner of conversing with others, His temptations in the desert, His doctrine and miracles. Those questions must especially be read in which it is shown that the three persons of the Trinity cooperated in the conception of Christ’s body, though it is attributed by appropriation to the Holy Ghost. But nowise must Christ be called the Son of the Holy Ghost, or even of the entire Trinity. At the first moment of conception, Christ’s body was animated by a rational soul and was assumed by the Word. Likewise at the first moment of conception Christ was sanctified by grace, had the use of free will, and merited; in fact, from the first moment He was a perfect comprehensor. Birth is properly attributed to the person, as to the subject, and not to the nature, and so the Blessed Virgin Mary is the Mother of God. In Christ there are two births, one is eternal, the other is temporal, but there are not two real sonships. In Christ there is only one real sonship, namely, His eternal sonship from the Father, the other is a logical and temporal relation as regards the Mother, for every relation that is predicated of God in time, is only a logical relation. However, there is a real relation of the Mother to Him, who is really the Son of Mary.

State of the question on Redemption. We already discussed in the first part of this treatise the necessity of Redemption, and we said that redemption by a divine person who became incarnate is hypothetically necessary, after original sin, posited that God freely willed to exact

adequate reparation whereas He could have freely condoned the offense or even accepted inadequate reparation.

We must now consider the nature of Redemption, in what it consists, how it was accomplished by Christ's passion, and the ways by which our Lord's passion caused our salvation.

The adequate concept of redemption. As Father E. Hugon observes: "Sometimes redemption is taken in the strict sense for liberation from the slavery of sin and the devil; but sometimes it refers to the entire supernatural economy whereby Christ, our Head, taking our place, offers to God adequate reparation for the offense and at the same time a perfect sacrifice; He liberates us from the captivity of sin and He renews in us the supernatural blessings, lost by the Fall, giving them back to us. Redemption essentially implies... the payment of the price required for the adequate reparation of the offense, which is called satisfaction. Wherefore satisfaction is the primary and fundamental concept in the dogma of redemption. But Christ acts in our name, and hence His satisfaction is called vicarious, inasmuch as He not only suffers for our sins, but takes our place. In other respects this satisfaction is made in a certain laborious manner, by means of a true immolation, which is most pleasing to God, and for this reason it is also a sacrifice. Moreover, there is reparation for the offense, and God is satisfied, in consequence of this, and placated by the sacrifice offered to Him, so that we are made free, and supernatural blessings are restored to us or we are reinstated in grace. Therefore the following divers notions concur in the adequate analysis of redemption, namely, satisfaction which presupposes merit and sacrifice, that may be considered the constituent elements; then liberation and restoration, which may be called the consequences or effects."

That this was actually the concept of redemption held by St. Thomas is evident from what he wrote, when discussing the various aspects of this mystery.

But some in reading this forty-eighth question understand satisfaction in a quasi-univocal sense, as being a juridical payment of debt, which among men can be without any love of charity toward the other, and hence they say that this depreciates the sublimity of this mystery of redemption, which is essentially a mystery of love.

But if we answer by saying that in the order of grace, and especially in the hypostatic order, the payment of the debt must be understood not

univocally but analogically in the metaphorical sense, then they understand by this, analogically in the metaphorical sense, as when we say by figure of speech that God is angry. Thus the payment of the debt is no longer retained in the strict sense of the term.

On the contrary, St. Thomas understands satisfaction in the analogical though strict sense of the term, and not merely in the metaphorical sense, as when being, life, liberty, love, mercy, even vindictive justice but not anger, are attributed to God analogically and in the strict sense. Among men there may indeed be a legal payment of a debt that is true satisfaction, without the love of charity toward the other. But if we speak of the satisfaction offered by Christ for us, then we speak analogically, but still in the strict sense of satisfaction by the payment of the price offered because of His supreme love of charity toward God and toward us even because of His theandric love that is of infinite value.

Wherefore St. Thomas thus defines satisfaction: “He properly atones for an offense who offers something which the offended one loves equally or even more than he detested the offense.” But Christ offered for us His most precious blood by a theandric act of love, which God loves more than He hates all sins and crimes taken together. We shall see that the essence of redemption, inasmuch as it is properly a mystery of love, consists in this theandric love, which is both meritorious and satisfactory. Other aspects of this mystery are subordinated to this supreme love, just as the virtues of religion, penance, justice, obedience, and fortitude are subordinated to the virtue of charity. It is, indeed, true to say with St. Paul: “You are bought with a great price,” but this price is the infinite value of the love of Christ suffering for us.

Hence St. Thomas, starting from this theandric love, speaks of merit, which belongs to charity, namely, of Christ’s merit as our head, before he discusses satisfaction, which presupposes merit.

Since redemption is the work of the Word incarnate, in its explanation we must proceed in the descending order from the Word incarnate to the remission of sin, rather than in the ascending order from sin to our liberation and justification. Here we must observe what St. Thomas says in his treatise on justification, where he writes: “Because the infusion of grace and the remission of sin regard God who justifies, hence in the order of nature the infusion of grace is prior to the freeing from sin. But if we look at what is on the part of the man justified, it is the other way about, since in

the order of nature the being freed from sin is prior to the obtaining of justifying grace."

What predominates in the mystery of redemption as in the conversion of St. Mary Magdalen or of St. Paul, is the Redeemer's love. Hence the conception of this mystery must be rather spiritual than juridical, even when it is strictly a question of satisfaction. Similarly in the general concept of merit with reference to God, it must be noted that the notion of merit is analogical, that is, it is called analogical in divine things in comparison with merit in human things. Therefore we must not stress too much the right to a reward, but we must insist more on either the condignness or the congruity and fittingness as regards the divine rewards, inasmuch as merit proceeds from infused charity, and this results from God's uncreated charity. Thus we preserve intact the sublimity of divine things and especially of this mystery.

Errors. In this matter, as frequently happens, there were errors by defect as well as by excess.

In the first centuries, the Subordinationists, the Arians, the Nestorians, from the very fact that they denied the divinity of Christ, also rejected the infinite value of redemption. The Docetae denied the reality of the Passion. The Pelagians, who do not admit the reality of original sin, consequently perverted the concept of redemption.

On the contrary, the Protestants of earlier times said that Christ, taking upon Himself our sins, was hateful to God the Father, cursed by Him and, as a real sinner, truly suffered the torments of the damned.

Finally, in opposition to the above heretics, in the sixteenth century, the Socinians, just as before them Abelard had said, contended that Christ redeemed us only in the broad sense of the term and metaphorically, namely, by preaching and example, not at all by paying the penalty that is due to our sins; but He submitted to death so as to give us an example of fortitude. If that were so, then Christ would neither have satisfied for our sins nor merited for us grace and glory. This concept of redemption scarcely differs from rationalism, which denies the order of grace and glory, and therefore the hypostatic order. So say the liberal Protestants and the Modernists, who admitted only a moral redemption, declaring that the doctrine of Christ's sacrificial death is not Evangelical, but originated with St. Paul.

Doctrine of the Church. The Church never ex professo solemnly defined what is the revealed teaching on redemption. The schema of its definition

was prepared in the Vatican Council, as we shall at once declare. It was equivalently contained beforehand: (1) in the Nicene Creed, which says: “Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven.... And became man.... He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate”; (2) in the Council of Ephesus, which states that Christ “offered... Himself an oblation for us”; (3) in the Council of Toledo, which declares that Christ “alone was made sin for us, that is, sacrifice for our sins’; (4) also in the Fourth Lateran Council; (5) and in the Council of Florence; (6) in the Council of Trent, where we read: “Who [Christ], when we were enemies, for the exceeding charity by which He loved us merited justification for us by His most holy passion on the wood of the cross, and made satisfaction for us unto God the Father.”

Moreover, the Church condemned Abelard as a heretic, because he denied that “Christ assumed flesh so that He might free us from the devil’s yoke.” The Socinians, too, were condemned as heretics, because they denied that “Christ endured a most bitter death on the cross so that He might redeem us from sin and eternal death and reconcile us with the Father by restoring to us the right to eternal life.” Finally, Pius X rejected this proposition of the Modernists, that “the doctrine of Christ’s sacrificial death is not Evangelical, but merely the teaching of St. Paul.”

The Vatican Council intended to define this question and had already formulated this canon: “If anyone does not confess that God the Word suffering and dying in the flesh, could have satisfied for our sins or truly and properly did satisfy for them, let him be anathema.”

In fact, from the various documents on this subject, Denzinger deduces the following proposition: “Christ, the Redeemer, satisfied for the sins of the whole world, and this satisfaction is of infinite value and superabundant.”

The various aspects of redemption. Were there different theories among Catholics concerning the mystery of redemption? In recent times certain persons distinguish between: (1) the theory of expiation, or of substitution, which speaks especially of the guilt of undergoing punishment, and they bring forward many texts from the Old Testament; its over emphasis leads to the theory of the earlier Protestants concerning penal compensation; (2) the theory of satisfaction, which is more sublime and richer, especially as explained by St. Thomas; (3) the theory of reparation, which seeks to perfect the preceding theory, insisting more on this, that it is “not the death,

but the will of the person dying that placated [the Father], “ as St. Bernard says; (4) finally, others stress more the Father’s love for us (“God so loved the world, as to give His only-begotten Son”) and Christ’s love “even unto death.”

Truly, these four theories are more the different aspects of the mystery of redemption, and we shall see that St. Thomas admitted these different aspects, subordinating the first three to the last, in that the mystery of redemption is especially a mystery of love. Many times he says that Christ suffered for us; he speaks of satisfaction, of reparation, but he always affirms that the foundation of their validity is in Christ’s theandric love, which is the source of all His merits. St. Thomas says: “But by suffering out of love and obedience, Christ gave more to God than was required to compensate for the offense of the whole human race.”

Finally, at the beginning of this question on redemption, we must recall what St. Thomas had already taught when he said: “Mercy and truth are necessarily found in all God’s works.... Now the work of divine justice always presupposes the work of mercy, and is founded thereon.... We must come to something that depends only on the goodness of the divine will.... So in every work of God, viewed at its primary source, there appears mercy. In all that follows, the power of mercy remains and works indeed with even greater force.” Thus God purely of His goodness created us, elevated us to the order of grace which is the seed of glory, and gave us the Redeemer.

It is from the uncreated love of divine goodness that mercy proceeds, inasmuch as good is self-diffusive, and then comes justice by reason of which the supreme Good has a right to be loved above all things. But first of all, the divine good is self-diffusive in creation, in raising us to the supernatural order, and finally in God’s free decree to restore this order to us by means of the Word incarnate.

So as to proceed methodically in this second part, we shall see what Scripture and tradition have to say on this subject, and we shall also consult the teaching of St. Thomas as expounded in questions 46 to 48.

CHAPTER XXX: TESTIMONY OF SACRED SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION

FIRST ARTICLE: TESTIMONY OF CHRIST AND THE APOSTLES

This testimony concerns the redemption by way of merit, satisfaction, and sacrifice, if not as to the actual meaning of these words, at least as to what is signified by them.

It must be observed that Christ only gradually manifested His divine sonship so far as the people were able to assimilate this doctrine, so that He announced His sorrowful passion to His apostles only after Peter's confession of faith on their way to Caesarea Philippi, when he said: "Thou are Christ, the Son of the living God." It was more difficult, however, for the people to accept this revelation of Christ's passion and impending death on the cross, especially for those who still awaited the coming of the Messias as a temporal king, who would restore the kingdom to Israel, as the apostles said even on the day of the Ascension.

Synoptic Gospels. Hence Jesus at the beginning of His preaching manifests Himself as the Savior, not asserting as yet by what manner of sacrifice and satisfaction He had to save men. So He began by saying: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, wherefore He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor... to heal the contrite of heart." "I am not come to call the just, but sinners." When, after Peter's confession, "Thou are Christ, the Son of the living God," Jesus announces His passion for the first time, "Peter, taking Him, began to rebuke Him saying: Lord be it far from Thee, this shall not be unto Thee. Who turning, said to Peter: Go behind Me Satan, thou art a scandal unto Me because thou savorest not the things that are of God, but the things that are of men." Peter unknowingly spoke against the mystery of redemption that had to be accomplished according to God's most sublime decrees. From this moment Jesus speaks more clearly of His sacrifice that must be offered for the salvation of men. He says: "For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost." "The Son of man is not

come to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a redemption for many." This text of the Synoptics is of great importance in establishing against the Modernists and liberal Protestants that the doctrine of the sacrificial death of Christ is not merely of Pauline origin, but is also Evangelical.

Jesus likewise on several occasions announces His passion to His disciples, saying: "The Son of man shall be betrayed to the chief priests and the scribes, and they shall condemn Him to death... and they shall deliver Him to the Gentiles to be mocked and scourged and crucified, and the third day He shall rise again.... Can you drink the chalice that I shall drink?" But the apostles did not yet understand this most sublime mystery.

Before His passion, in instituting the Holy Eucharist, Jesus said more clearly: "This is My body, which is given for you. Do this for a commemoration of Me.... This is the chalice, the new testament in My blood, which shall be shed for you." Thus He explicitly enunciates the mystery of redemption both as sacrifice and as satisfaction, or as a propitiatory sacrifice.

Gospel of St. John. Here again this same truth is several times enunciated so that it becomes increasingly apparent that the value of Christ's satisfaction or of His propitiatory sacrifice is the result of His exceeding love for God and for souls that are to be saved. Penal satisfaction is indeed expressed, but the price to be paid is to be attributed more to Christ's love. This love is especially proclaimed in the parable of the Good Shepherd, where He says: "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd giveth His life for his sheep.... Therefore doth the Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I may take it again. No man taketh it away from Me; but I lay it down of Myself, and I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. This commandment I have received of My Father." Thus Christ enunciates the sacrifice of satisfaction to be offered because of His exceeding love for God and souls.

Somewhat later, Jesus says: "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall not perish forever and no man shall pluck them out of My hand." This is the fruit of sacrifice; therefore it is not only a moral example of self-denial, such as the example given by Socrates.

Afterward His sorrowful satisfaction is expressed in these words: "Amen, amen I say to you, unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die,

itself remaineth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.... Now is My soul troubled. And what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour." He means, deliver Me, if it be possible, as He had said in the Garden of Gethsemane. Then Jesus continues to say: "But for this cause I came into this hour. Father, glorify Thy name.... Now is the judgment of the world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from this world, will draw all things to Myself." Now this He said signifying what death He should die. Truly this concerns the sorrowful mystery of redemption. Christ came to offer Himself in sacrifice on the cross; of this hour, predetermined by the Father, Jesus several times says: "The hour is come."

Likewise, before the passion, He said: "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Therefore clearly and publicly Christ taught the dogma of redemption, and it is absolutely false to say with the Modernists that "the doctrine of Christ's sacrificial death is not evangelical, but only of Pauline origin."

Acts of the Apostles. St. Peter likewise says to the Jews: "Jesus of Nazareth... by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, you by the hands of wicked men have crucified and slain. Whom God hath raised up." And again he says: "But the Author of life you killed, whom God hath raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses." Also: "But those things which God before had showed by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ should suffer, He hath so fulfilled." Finally, he says of Jesus: "This is the stone which was rejected by you the builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other. For there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved." Thus Christ's sacrifice is evident, as foretold by the prophets, in accordance with God's eternal decree, and it is simultaneously the fount of salvation.

St. Paul. He explained, however, the evangelical teaching concerning the value of Christ's death, especially as it referred to the removal of original sin. On this subject he says: "For all have sinned and do need the glory of God. Being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption, that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath proposed to be a propitiation through faith in His blood." He afterward explains these texts, saying: "For as by the disobedience of one man [Adam] many were made sinners: so also by the obedience of one, many shall be made just," which means, inasmuch as "Christ became obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross." The

time eternally predetermined for this propitiatory sacrifice is also proclaimed in these words: “God spared not even His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all.”

Finally, He says: “Christ hath loved us, and hath delivered Himself for us, an oblation and a sacrifice to God for an odor of sweetness.” This doctrine is developed throughout the Epistle to the Hebrews, which strictly concerns the offering of propitiatory sacrifice for the redemption of man. St. John also says: “He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.”

Moreover, this revealed doctrine on the sacrifice of the cross is confirmed from what is said in the New Testament about the sacrifice of the Mass, whereby the fruits of the Passion are applied to us, according to our Lord’s words at the time of its institution, who said: “Do this for a commemoration of Me.”

SECOND ARTICLE: TESTIMONY OF TRADITION

This doctrine is often explained by both the Latin and the Greek Fathers. Christ accomplished our redemption, they say, by way of a true sacrifice, which He offered to God on the cross, as priest and victim, and by a true vicarious atonement He paid the debt owing to God, but not to the devil. This satisfaction is superabundant and universal. In the above-mentioned work, precisely as regards vicarious satisfaction in the strict sense, we find the testimonies of St. Ignatius of Antioch, St. Justin, Origen, St. Cyprian, Eusebius of Caesarea, St. Athanasius, St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, St. Augustine, St. Prosper, and St. Gregory the Great.

The prominent texts are the following.

St. Clement of Rome says: “Christ gave His blood for us.” He also says: “Because of His love for us, our Lord Jesus Christ, by God’s will, gave His blood for us, His flesh for our flesh, and His soul for our souls.”

St. Ignatius of Antioch says: “Christ died for us, that through faith in His death, we might escape death.” In another epistle he says: “The Eucharist is the flesh of our Savior Jesus Christ, which suffered for our sins.”

St. Polycarp says: “Jesus Christ, “who bore our sins in His own body on the tree, ‘ but for our sake that we might live in Him, He endured all things.”

St. Justin says: “The Father willed that His Christ take upon Himself the maledictions of the whole human race, and the Father also willed Him to suffer these things, namely, crucifixion and death, so that by His bruises the human race might be healed.”

St. Cyprian says: “He alone can pardon sins committed against Him, who took upon Himself our sins, who suffered for us, whom God delivered up for our sins.”

St. Athanasius says: Christ “in the body that He took to Himself, or in offering it as sacrifice and immaculate victim for death, immediately averted death from all alike, by offering it for others.”

St. Hilary says: “Therefore He offered Himself in sacrifice to death for those under the curse of the law, that it might be removed, willingly offering Himself as victim to God the Father, so that, by His becoming a voluntary victim, the curse... might be taken away.”

St. Basil says: “It was necessary for the Lord to experience death for all, and so justify all in His blood by having become a propitiation for the human race.”

St. Gregory of Nazianzus says: “By Christ’s suffering on the cross, ... we have been renewed, ... by the celestial Adam we are again saved.”

St. John Chrysostom says: “Although we were subject to the sentence of condemnation, Christ freed us.”

St. Ambrose says: “The Lord Jesus offered His death for the death of all men; He shed His blood for the blood of the whole human race.”

St. Jerome says: Christ “was wounded for our iniquities... so that, having become a curse for us, He might free us from the curse.”

St. Augustine says: “Christ, though innocent, took upon Himself our punishment, so that thereby He might atone for our guilt and also put an end to our punishment.” In another work, he says: “By His death, indeed, by the one true sacrifice offered for us, whatsoever sins... He purged, abolished, extinguished.”

Therefore it can be said concerning the reality and effects of redemption, that the Fathers are unanimous in attributing this redemption not only to Christ’s example, but also to His merits, satisfaction, and sacrifice on the cross. They do not either disagree among themselves as witnesses of tradition, although in their explanations some, such as the Greek Fathers, insist on the sanctifying power of the Incarnation, whereas others, especially the Latin Fathers, stress the passion and death of Christ.

Sometimes Origen declares that the price of our redemption was paid to the devil. But elsewhere he professes the true doctrine. The same is to be said of St. Gregory of Nyssa. This theory of payment to the devil was already refuted at the end of the third century and condemned as blasphemous. The common teaching is that sin is strictly committed only against God; hence the price of liberation from sin must be paid to God alone. Nevertheless it remains true that by redemption man is freed from the slavery of the devil.

From the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries, the theological thesis on the redemption gradually took shape under the doctrinal direction of St. Anselm and St. Thomas. According to St. Anselm, our redemption was accomplished through the satisfaction whereby Christ freely paid our debts by repairing the wrong done to God, and through His merits whereby He restored the good things we lost. This doctrine manifestly has its foundation in Sacred Scripture, and therefore was generally admitted. But St. Anselm exaggerated the necessity of adequate redemption after sin, not sufficiently acknowledging that God could have freely condoned the offense, or even have accepted imperfect satisfaction.

This exaggerated view was gradually corrected by Hugo of St. Victor, Peter Lombard, Alexander of Hales, and St. Bonaventure, who prepared the way for St. Thomas to elaborate the complete and sound synthesis that was afterward commonly accepted. It is this synthesis that must now be explained.

CHAPTER XXXI: QUESTION 46: CHRIST'S PASSION

The synthesis of St. Thomas contains especially the following three doctrinal points.

1) Redemption by the Word incarnate, posited the sin of our first parents, was not necessary, but fitting. For God could have either condoned the offense or accepted inadequate reparation; but the Incarnation as also the passion of God's son were fitting, and in all this we have the greatest manifestation of God's love for us.

2) The Word incarnate, as the moral head of the whole human race, redeemed us or caused our salvation in five ways: (1) by meriting it for us; (2) by satisfying for us; (3) by offering Himself in sacrifice; (4) by liberating us; (5) by being the efficient cause. In these ways Christ's love prevails, which is the principle of merit, satisfaction, and sacrifice.

3) Christ's redemption is of infinite value, in virtue of the hypostatic union, inasmuch as it is a theandric act of love for His Father and for all men. This makes it apparent that this mystery is especially a mystery of love.

In the explanation of this thesis, St. Thomas discusses: (1) the Passion itself; (2) its efficient cause, on the part of Christ, the Father, and those that killed Christ; (3) how Christ's passion was effective, that is, how it caused our salvation; (4) the effects of the Passion.

This forty-sixth question, which concerns Christ's passion, treats especially of its fitness and its extreme sufferings. The predominating elements of the Passion must be noted.

The Fittingness Of The Passion

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER IT WAS NECESSARY FOR CHRIST TO SUFFER FOR THE DELIVERANCE OF THE HUMAN RACE

Reply. Christ’s passion was not absolutely necessary, nor did He suffer because He was compelled to suffer; but, presupposing the end to be attained, it was necessary for Christ to suffer: (1) because we were freed by His passion; (2) because Christ, by the humiliation of His passion, merited the glory of His exaltation; (3) because God’s decree, concerning Christ’s passion, as foretold in the Scripture, had to be fulfilled.

Reply to third objection. “And this came of more copious mercy than if He had forgiven sins without satisfaction, “ because God gave us the Redeemer.

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER THERE WAS ANY OTHER POSSIBLE WAY OF HUMAN DELIVERANCE BESIDES THE PASSION OF CHRIST

Reply. Speaking simply and absolutely, it was possible for God to deliver mankind otherwise than by Christ’s passion, even without any satisfaction; for this would not have been contrary to justice, because God, who is infinitely above a simple judge, since He has no superior, decreed that His Son must die and can also forgive the offense committed against Him, without requiring satisfaction; and then He acts mercifully and not unjustly. But, supposing God’s foreknowledge and preordination concerning Christ’s passion, then man’s liberation from sin was not otherwise possible. The first part in the argument of this article and the reply to the third objection correct St. Anselm’s extreme view.

THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER THERE WAS ANY MORE SUITABLE WAY OF DELIVERING THE HUMAN RACE THAN BY CHRIST’S PASSION

Reply. The answer is that there was no other way more suitable; (1) because by Christ’s passion man knows how much God loves him and is thereby incited to love Him in return; (2) because thereby Christ gave us an example of obedience, humility, constancy, justice, and the other virtues; (3) because Christ by His passion not only delivered man from sin, but also merited grace and glory for him; (4) because thereby man is all the more bound to refrain from sin; (5) because in this way, it was in Christ that as man by dying, He conquered the devil and vanquished death.

FOURTH ARTICLE: WHETHER CHRIST OUGHT TO HAVE SUFFERED ON THE CROSS

Reply. The answer is that it was the most fitting for Christ to have suffered on the cross; (1) because Christ gave us an example of virtue, so that no kind of death ought to be feared by an upright man; (2) “so that whence death came [from the tree], thence life might arise, and that He who overcame by the tree, might also by the tree be overcome”; (3) and (4) that dying on a high rood, He might purify the air and prepare our ascent into heaven; (5) the fact that Christ died with outstretched hands signifies the universality of redemption; (6) because, as St. Augustine says, “The tree on which were fixed the members of Him dying was even the chair of the Master teaching”; (7) because there were very many figures in the Old Testament of this death on the cross.

First objection. In this kind of death the fire pertaining to holocausts is wanting. St. Thomas replies by saying that, “instead of material fire, there was the spiritual fire of charity in Christ’s holocaust.”

Second objection. Death on the cross is most ignominious. St. Thomas replies to this by quoting St. Paul: “He endured the cross, despising the shame,” so that by His humility, He made reparation for our sins of pride.

Third objection. Death on the cross is a death of malediction. St. Thomas again quotes the following text from St. Paul: “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us,” that is, He took upon Himself the penalty of sin.

All these remarks clearly manifest the fittingness of the Passion, and they better illustrate both God the Father’s love and Christ’s love for us. As the Evangelist says: “For God so loved the world, as to give His only-begotten Son.” As St. Paul says: “He that spared not even His own Son but delivered Him up for us all.” Therefore our redemption is predominantly a mystery of love.

The Extreme Sufferings Of The Passion

FIFTH ARTICLE: WHETHER CHRIST ENDURED ALL SUFFERINGS

Reply. Christ did not endure all sufferings specifically, because many of them are mutually exclusive, such as burning and drowning. It did not become Him to suffer interior bodily sicknesses, for, as St. John Chrysostom says: “It did not befit Him who healed the infirmities of others to have His own body afflicted with the same.”

But Christ endured every human suffering, because: (1) He suffered something from Jews and Gentiles, from the chief priests and their servants, from the mob, even from friends and acquaintances; (2) He suffered from His friends who abandoned Him, in His reputation, His honor, in His soul from sadness and weariness, in His body from wounds and scourgings; (3) He suffered in all His bodily members, from head to foot, and in all His senses.

Reply to second objection. “As Christ was uplifted above others in gifts of graces, so He was lowered beneath others by the ignominy of His sufferings.”

Reply to third objection. “The very least one of Christ’s sufferings was sufficient of itself to redeem the human race from all sins.” However, because of His great love for us, He willed to offer Himself as a most perfect holocaust for us, and generically endure all sufferings.

SIXTH ARTICLE: WHETHER THE PAIN OF CHRIST’S PASSION WAS GREATER THAN ALL OTHER PAINS

Reply. Christ experienced both sensible pain and interior pain, both of which were the greatest of pains in this present life. There are four reasons for this: (1) from the causes of this pain, because the death of the crucified is most bitter, and because He felt interior pain for all the sins of the human race, which He ascribed, so to speak, to Himself; (2) because of the susceptibility of His body that was endowed with a most perfect constitution, and because the interior faculties of His soul most efficaciously apprehended all the causes of sadness; (3) because Christ from His great love for us, in offering Himself as a perfect holocaust, refused to mitigate His pains and sadness by the overflow of contemplative joy through the higher part of His soul; (4) because “He embraced the amount of pain proportionate to the magnitude of the fruit which resulted therefrom, “ namely, that He might most perfectly accomplish His mission as the Redeemer of men.

Reply to second objection. Christ, that He might atone for the sins of all mankind, accepted indeed the greatest of sadness in absolute quantity, yet not exceeding the rule of reason.

Reply to fourth objection. “Christ grieved over the sins of all men, and this grief in Christ surpassed all grief of every contrite heart both because it

flowed from a greater wisdom and charity, by which the pang of contrition is intensified, and because He grieved simultaneously for all sins, as the prophet says: “Surely He hath carried our sorrows. ‘ “

Reply to sixth objection. In answer to the objection that the least of Christ’s pains would have sufficed for man’s salvation, St. Thomas says: “Christ willed to deliver the human race from sins not merely by His power, but also according to justice. And therefore He did not simply weigh what great virtue His suffering would have from union with the Godhead, but also how much, according to His human nature, His pain would avail for so great a satisfaction.”

SEVENTH ARTICLE: WHETHER CHRIST SUFFERED IN HIS WHOLE SOUL

It seems that Christ did not, because He did not suffer in the summit of His soul, in the higher faculties, namely, of reason and will.

Reply. In answer to this, St. Thomas says in the body of this article: “So, then, we say that if the soul be considered with respect to its essence, it is evident that Christ’s whole soul suffered. For the soul’s whole essence is allied with the body, so that it is entire in the whole body and in its every part. Consequently, when the body suffered and was disposed to separate from the soul, the entire soul suffered. But if we consider the whole soul, according to its faculties, speaking thus of the proper passions of the faculties, He suffered indeed as to all His lower powers... whose operations are but temporal. But Christ’s higher reason, since it considers only the eternal and not the temporal, did not suffer thereby on the part of its object, which is God, who was the cause not of grief, but rather of delight and joy, to the soul of Christ, “ for He continued in possession of the beatific vision and its resultant joy in the summit of His soul.

To understand the reply to the second objection, consult the eighth article and the footnote to the third objection of this article.

Reply to third objection. “Grief in the sensitive part of Christ’s soul did not extend to reason so as to deflect it from the rectitude of its act.”

EIGHTH ARTICLE: WHETHER CHRIST’S ENTIRE SOUL ENJOYED BLESSED FRUITION DURING THE PASSION

It seems that Christ's entire soul did not, because simultaneous sadness and joy are impossibilities; in fact, vehement sadness checks every delight, and the converse is true.

Reply. Nevertheless, as St. John Damascene says in the counter-argument of this article: "Christ's Godhead permitted His flesh to do and to suffer what was proper to it. In like fashion... His passion did not impede fruition [of mind]." St. Thomas explains this in the body of the article as follows: "If it be understood according to its essence, then His whole soul did enjoy fruition, inasmuch as it is the subject of the higher part of the soul to which it belongs to enjoy the Godhead.... But if we take the whole soul as comprising all its faculties, thus His entire soul did not enjoy fruition... because, since Christ was still upon earth, there was no overflowing of glory from the higher part into the lower, nor from the soul into the body. But since, on the contrary, the soul's higher part was not hindered in its proper acts by the lower, it follows that the higher part of His soul enjoyed fruition perfectly while Christ was suffering."

Reply to first objection. It is indeed impossible to be sad and glad simultaneously about the same object; but in Christ sadness and fruition were not about the same object. Thus, though Christ was in a way crushed by grief, He rejoices in His sorrow.

In the next three articles of this forty-sixth question, St. Thomas considers the fitness of the Passion as regards time, the place between two thieves, of whom the one on the right was converted, but the one on the left died impenitent, just as on the Judgment Day a distinction will be made among all human beings, inasmuch as the elect will be on Christ's right hand, and the reprobates on His left. In the last article of this question it is shown that Christ's passion is not to be attributed to His divine nature, which is incapable of suffering, but it is to be attributed to the person of the Word incarnate, because of His human nature.

CHAPTER XXXII: QUESTION 47: THE EFFICIENT CAUSE OF CHRIST'S PASSION

The efficient cause of Christ's passion must now be considered. (1) Was Christ an efficient cause? (2) Was the Father? (3) Were those who killed Him?

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER CHRIST WAS SLAIN BY ANOTHER OR BY HIMSELF

It seems that Christ was not slain by another, for He said: "No man taketh My life from Me." But, on the other hand, He declared of Himself: "And after they have scourged Him, they will put Him to death."

Reply. There are two parts to this answer.

1) Christ was not the direct cause of His death, for He did not kill Himself, but His persecutors killed Him, as He Himself declared: "they will put Him to death."

2) But Christ was the indirect cause of His passion and death, because He did not prevent it when He could have done so. "This He was able to do: (1) by holding His enemies in check so that they would not have been eager to slay Him, or would have been powerless to do so; (2) because His spirit had the power of preserving His fleshly nature from the infliction of any injury.... Thus He is said to have laid down His life, or to have died voluntarily."

Similarly Christ could say: No man taketh away life from Me, that is, against My will, and this He manifested for "He preserved the strength of His bodily nature so that at the last moment He was able to cry out with a loud voice, and hence His death should be computed among His other miracles."

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER CHRIST DIED OUT OF OBEDIENCE

Reply. It is affirmed that out of obedience Christ gave Himself up to suffer. Hence the Apostle says: “He became obedient unto death.” But this was most fitting: (1) because it was in keeping with divine justice that, “as by the disobedience of one man, many were made sinners, so also by the obedience of one, many shall be made just”; (2) So that Christ’s passion and death should be the result of obedience; (3) so that Christ should be victorious over death and the disobedience of the devil, as the Scripture says: “An obedient man shall speak of victory.”

Reply to first objection. Christ received a command from the Father to suffer. And so by dying He fulfilled all the precepts of the Old Law. He fulfilled all the moral precepts, for these are the result of His supreme charity and obedience; by the supreme sacrifice of Himself, all the ceremonial precepts; all the judicial precepts, by satisfying completely for so great a punishment. Thus Christ fulfilled all justice, and was obedient out of love for His Father, who commanded Him. In this we clearly see His supreme love both for God the Father, and for His neighbor, as St. Paul says: “He loved me, and delivered Himself up for me.”

THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER GOD THE FATHER DELIVERED UP CHRIST TO THE PASSION

The doctrine of this article, which is examined by St. Thomas, must be carefully considered. The holy Doctor begins by presenting three difficulties: (1) It seems wicked and cruel to hand over an innocent man to suffering and death. This objection is again brought up in these days by the liberal Protestants. (2) Christ delivered Himself to death; therefore it was not God the Father who did it. (3) Judas is accounted guilty for having delivered up Christ to the Jews. Therefore it seems that God the Father did not deliver up Christ to His passion.

Reply. Nevertheless the reply is in the affirmative, the Apostle saying: “He that spared not even His own Son but delivered Him up for us all.” The following explanation is given.

Christ suffered voluntarily and out of obedience to the Father. Hence in three respects, God the Father delivered up Christ to the Passion: (1) because God eternally preordained Christ’s passion for the liberation of the human race from sin; (2) inasmuch as God inspired Him with the will to suffer; (3) by not protecting Him from the Passion, but abandoning Him to

His persecutors; hence Christ on the cross said: “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?”, because, as St. Augustine says, He had abandoned His Son to the power of His persecutors.

The earlier Protestants adulterated this doctrine when they said that the Father delivered up Christ by inspiring the Jews to put Him to death and urging them to it.

What is said in the article has its foundation in what St. Thomas teaches about the efficacy of the decrees of God’s will. This divine will does not make our acts necessary, because God wills them to be accomplished freely, and He does not destroy but actualizes human freedom. Thus Christ freely and meritoriously suffered.

Reply to first objection. It would be cruel to hand over an innocent man to suffering and death against his will. “Yet God the Father did not so deliver up Christ, but inspired Him with the will to suffer for us. God’s severity is thereby shown, for He would not remit sin without penalty... and His goodness in that... He gave us a satisfier.” Wherefore the Apostle says: “God spared not even His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all.”

Reply to second objection. “Christ as man gave Himself up by a will inspired of the Father.” So also it is with victim souls, and for this reason it is imprudent to vow to become a victim soul except under special inspiration, or presupposing this as a condition.

Reply to third objection. “The Father delivered up Christ, and Christ surrendered Himself, from charity; but Judas betrayed Christ from greed, the Jews from envy, and Pilate from worldly fear.” All these things make it increasingly clear for St. Thomas as for all posterity that the mystery of redemption is especially a mystery of love.

FOURTH ARTICLE: WHETHER IT WAS FITTING FOR CHRIST TO SUFFER AT THE HANDS OF THE GENTILES

In the last three articles of this forty-seventh question, St. Thomas inquires how Christ’s persecutors were the cause of His passion, and first whether it was fitting for Him to suffer from the Gentiles.

Christ declared of Himself: “The Son of man shall be betrayed to the chief priests and the scribes, and they shall condemn Him to death, and shall deliver Him to the Gentiles to be mocked, and scourged, and crucified, and the third day He shall rise again.” But it was fitting that in this way the

effects of Christ's passion should be prefigured in what He suffered. The effect of Christ's passion was that many Jews were baptized and by the preaching of these Jews, the effects of Christ's passion were transmitted to Gentiles. Therefore it was fitting that Christ begin His suffering from the Jews and afterward, the Jews betraying Him, that His passion be accomplished by means of the Gentiles. In other words, the wicked Jews betrayed Him to the Gentiles to be scourged, and afterward the good and converted Jews, by their preaching, transmitted the effects of the Passion to the Gentiles.

Reply to first objection. Christ upon the cross prayed for His persecutors. Therefore Christ willed to suffer from both, so that the fruits of His petition might benefit both Jews and Gentiles.

Reply to second objection. Christ's passion on His part was the offering of a sacrifice out of supreme love for the human race; but on the part of His persecutors it was a most grievous sin.

Reply to third objection. "The Jews, who were subjects of the Romans, did not have the power to sentence anyone to death." What is meant here is the "power of the sword."

FIFTH ARTICLE: WHETHER CHRIST'S PERSECUTORS KNEW WHO HE WAS

In this article St. Thomas has in mind to reconcile the various texts of Sacred Scripture. On the one hand, Christ said: "Now they have both seen and hated both Me and My Father," and in the parable of the wicked husbandmen, these said: "This is the heir, come let us kill him." St. Matthew makes the additional comment farther on: "And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard His parables they knew that He spoke of them." On the other hand, Christ said: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." St. Paul, too, remarks: "If they had known it, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory," and St. Peter, likewise, says to the Jews: "I know that you did it through ignorance, as did also your rulers."

St. Thomas solves the difficulty by distinguishing between the elders and the common people, and also for the elders by distinguishing between Christ's Messiahship and His Godhead. He says: "According to St. Augustine the elders, who were called rulers, knew, as did also the devils, that He was the Christ promised in the Law: for they saw all the signs in Him, which the prophets said would come to pass; but they did not know

the mystery of His Godhead. Consequently the Apostle says that, if they had known it, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory. It must, however, be understood that their ignorance did not excuse them from crime, because it was, as it were, affected ignorance. For they saw manifest signs of His Godhead, yet they perverted them out of hatred and envy of Christ, and they would not believe His words, whereby He avowed that He was the Son of God"

St. Thomas, however, goes on to remark: "But those of lesser degree, namely, the common folk, who had not grasped the mysteries of the Scriptures, did not fully comprehend that He was the Christ or the Son of God. For although some of them believed in Him, the multitude did not; and if they were inclined to believe sometimes that He was the Christ, on account of the manifold signs and force of His teaching, nevertheless they were deceived afterward by their rulers so that they did not believe Him to be the Son of God or the Christ." This article seems to be the expression of most sublime wisdom and penetration.

The replies to the first, second, and third objections confirm what is said in the body of this article.

Reply to the third objection. It says: "Affected ignorance does not excuse from guilt, but seems rather to aggravate it; for it shows that a man is so strongly attached to sin that he wishes to incur ignorance lest he avoid sinning. The Jews therefore sinned not only as crucifiers of the man Christ, but also as crucifiers of God."

SIXTH ARTICLE: WHETHER THE SIN OF THOSE WHO CRUCIFIED CHRIST WAS MOST GRIEVOUS

Here, too, the question is how to reconcile these words of Christ, namely, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do," with the following text: "Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers."

There are three conclusions. (1) "The rulers of the Jews knew that He was the Christ, and if there was any ignorance in them, it was affected ignorance, which could not excuse them. Therefore their sin was most grievous, on account of the kind of sin, as well as from the malice of their will. (2) The Jews also of the common class sinned most grievously as to the kind of their sin; yet in one respect their crime was lessened by reason of their ignorance. (3) But the sin of the Gentiles, by whose hands He was

crucified, was much more excusable, since they had no knowledge of the Law."

Reply to first objection. "The excuse made by our Lord: 'they know not what they do,' is not to be referred to the rulers among the Jews, but to the common people."

Concerning the reply to the second objection, Cajetan says: "It is a matter of dispute here whether Judas sinned more grievously or the rulers of the Jews, ... and we must say that Judas sinned more grievously. For he was raised above them, inasmuch as he was an apostle. And he not only had seen Christ's miracles, but had also worked miracles in Christ's name, having received this power from Christ, just as the other apostles had. And he confessed Jesus to be the Christ, approving of Peter's answer who, in the name of all the disciples, said: "Thou art Christ'; and, in short, above the malice that he shared in common with the rulers, his ingratitude was the greatest, and he added to this kind of sin the baseness of betrayal."

Thus we have sufficiently examined the causes of Christ's passion.

CHAPTER XXXIII: QUESTION 48: THE EFFICIENCY OF CHRIST'S PASSION

This question of St. Thomas must be carefully considered, and all its articles must be explained, because it is of great importance. He answers that Christ's passion caused our salvation by way of merit, satisfaction, sacrifice, redemption or liberation, and that it was the efficient cause.

Division and orderly arrangement of this question. Certain recent historians seem to think that St. Thomas placed in quasi-juxtaposition the notions of merit, satisfaction, sacrifice, and redemption, not subordinating them. They also find that this question is too complex, as if the holy Doctor did not know how to preserve the unity of the mystery by showing how it predominantly illustrates Christ's love for the Father and for us.

Truly it would be contrary to St. Thomas, method of procedure, not to subordinate these various notions, for it is the mark of the wise man to do so. If, on the contrary, this question is carefully examined, its wonderful order becomes quite clear.

1) The holy Doctor finds these different notions in Sacred Scripture and tradition, and he had therefore to explain them all as to their theological significance in due order.

2) These notions are of themselves subordinated as in the present enumeration beginning from the more universal and ascending to the less universal, and they all presuppose Christ's charity, which holds the first place. For Christ's act of charity is primarily meritorious, but it is strictly satisfactory only if it is laborious and difficult; for every satisfactory act is meritorious, but not vice versa. Then an act that is both meritorious and satisfactory is not always in the strict sense a sacrifice, whereas, on the contrary, a perfect sacrifice, such as a holocaust, is both meritorious and satisfactory. Moreover, in the enumeration, redemption is taken in the restricted sense of liberation from the slavery of sin and the devil, but not in the complete sense, whereby Christ is said to be the cause or the author of

our salvation. Wherefore several authors explain this question of St. Thomas, as we shall, by considering the different ways of redemption in the adequate sense, that is, by way of merit, satisfaction, sacrifice, liberation, and effectiveness. But in this enumeration, as E. Hugon observes, merit, satisfaction, and sacrifice belong to redemption as constitutive elements, but our liberation and the efficiency of our salvation in the application of the merits and satisfaction of the Passion, belong to it as consecutive elements or effects. Thus the orderly arrangement of these articles and the beautiful structure of this question become increasingly apparent. But the liberation and restoration of the human race is called objective redemption, and to this Jesus has condign right, the Blessed Virgin Mary, however, a congruent title. The application of this liberation and restoration to this particular person, such as to Peter or Paul, is called subjective redemption.

3) Finally, Christ the Savior in redeeming us practiced different subordinated virtues. First of all, He practiced charity, to which merit strictly belongs, for the other virtues are meritorious only as they are commanded by charity. Secondly, He practiced justice, of which satisfaction is a part. Thirdly, He practiced religion, to which sacrifice belongs. But these three elements, as stated, constitute the work of redemption from which our liberation and restoration follow, by the effective application of the merits and satisfaction of the Passion. Thus St. Thomas succeeded very well in the orderly arrangement of this question. It is no wonder that this question is rather complex, because the higher and more universal is the cause, the more it includes several modes of causality; but in this complexity shines forth the splendor of its unity, inasmuch as all these elements manifest Christ’s love for the Father and for us.

This orderly arrangement is seen to be all the more profound when we take note of the fact that Christ, the head of the human race, as generally admitted, could have redeemed us by whatever meritorious act without painful satisfaction and sacrifice in the strict sense.

FIRST ARTICLE: ON REDEMPTION BY WAY OF MERIT

State of the question. At the beginning of this first article St. Thomas presents three difficulties. It seems that Christ’s passion was not the meritorious cause of our salvation: (1) because suffering, as such, is not meritorious; (2) He did not even merit our salvation as an interior offering

of Himself, because Christ from the beginning of His conception, merited for us in fact by merit that is of infinite value. Therefore it would be superfluous for Him to merit again what He had already merited; (3) because charity is the foundation of merit, and this charity did not increase in Christ by His passion. Therefore He did not merit our salvation more by His passion than He had merited it before.

Reply. Nevertheless the answer is that Christ by His passion merited salvation for all His members.

This conclusion is of faith, for the Council of Trent says: “Our Lord Jesus Christ, when we were enemies, for the exceeding charity whereby He loved us, merited justification for us by His most holy passion on the wood of the cross.” The Council also says: “If anyone shall say that men are justified without Christ’s justice, whereby He merited for us; let him be anathema.”

Scriptural proof. St. Paul says: “For as by the disobedience of one man, many were made sinners; so also by the obedience of one, many shall be made just.” In other words, just as by Adam’s demerit we lost grace, so by the merit of Christ’s grace we receive grace. Again he says: “Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” In another epistle, he says: “God hath predestinated us unto the adoption of children through Jesus Christ... unto the praise of the glory of His grace, in which He hath graced us in His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the remission of sins according to the richness of His grace.” Jesus Himself said: “The Son of man must be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting.” By His passion He merited exaltation for Himself, and for us sanctification, for Jesus said: “And for them do I sanctify [or sacrifice] Myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.”

Theological proof. St. Thomas gives the fundamental argument as follows: Grace was given to Christ, not only as an individual, but inasmuch as He is the head of the Church, and therefore Christ’s works are referred to Himself and to His members, just as the works of another man in a state of grace are referred to himself. But it is evident that whoever suffers for justice’ sake, provided he is in the state of grace, merits his salvation thereby. Consequently Christ by His passion merited not only His exaltation but also salvation for all His members.

We are concerned here with condign merit, whereby Christ the head, by His theandric supernatural love that is of infinite value, merited for us in

justice, the supernatural goods lost by sin, namely, grace and eternal life, as explained above. All the conditions required for merit are eminently verified in this great act of charity, namely, grace and eternal life; for Christ was still a wayfarer, and God by appointing Him mediator and Head, had ordained His works for the salvation of His members.

Reply to first objection. Christ's suffering was meritorious not inasmuch as it was suffering, but inasmuch as Christ bore it willingly.

Reply to second objection. "From the beginning of His conception Christ merited our eternal salvation; but on our side there were some obstacles, whereby we were hindered from securing the effect of His preceding merits." Thus the souls of the just were awaiting Him in limbo, for by His descent into limbo He delivered the holy fathers detained there. As St. Thomas says: "The holy fathers while yet living were delivered from original as well as actual sin through faith in Christ; also from the penalty of actual sins; but not from the penalty of original sin, whereby they were excluded from glory since the price of man's redemption was not yet paid." Farther on, St. Thomas remarks: "Original sin spread in this way, that at first the person infected the nature, and afterward the nature infected the person. Whereas Christ in reverse order at first repairs what regards the person and afterward will simultaneously repair what pertains to the nature in all men.... But the penalties of the present life, such as death, hunger, and thirst, will not be taken away until the ultimate restoration of nature through the glorious resurrection."

Reply to third objection. "Christ's passion has a special effect, which His preceding merits did not possess, not on account of greater charity, but because of the nature of the work, which was suitable for such an effect." This means that the other preceding merits of Christ had indeed already a personal and infinite value, but the merits of the Passion had a greater objective value on account of the dignity of the object itself most arduous, namely, the sacrifice on the cross or the supreme holocaust. Right from the beginning, Christ offered up to His Father all His future merits, even those of the Passion, for St. Paul says: "When He cometh into the world, He saith, ... "Behold I come.," Christ's oblation and merit continued throughout His life until He completed the work of redemption, by saying: "It is consummated."

What Christ Merited For Us By His Passion

He merited for us all we had lost in Adam. Thus the Evangelist says: “And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace,” from the first grace to the last grace.

Hence He merited for us sanctifying grace, the infused virtues, and the seven gifts, likewise all actual graces whereby we are prepared for justification, by means of which we perform meritorious acts and persevere. He likewise merited for us eternal life, or salvation, and also final resurrection or the preternatural gifts that we lost through Adam, namely, immunity from death, pain, concupiscence, and error.

But Christ’s passion is a universal cause that produces its effect only if the fruits of Christ’s merits are applied to us through the instrumentality of the sacraments or without them, and frequently men, because of concupiscence or pride, place obstacles in the way of their application. Wherefore we said above in treating of Christ’s merit, that the efficacious graces which de facto are not granted, such as the grace of a good death for Judas, these Christ merited as offered to men in the sufficient grace, but not as here and now bestowed or to be conferred. For God offers us the efficacious grace in the sufficient grace, as the fruit is contained in the flower, but if a person resists the sufficient grace, then the efficacious grace is not conferred. For we must cooperate in our salvation, wherefore St. Paul says: “And if sons, heirs also; heirs indeed of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; yet so if we suffer with Him that we may be also glorified with Him.” But Christ merited for the elect by His passion all the effects of their predestination, namely, their calling, justification, perseverance, and glorification.

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER CHRIST’S PASSION BROUGHT ABOUT OUR SALVATION BY WAY OF ATONEMENT

State of the question. St. Thomas asks in this second article whether Christ’s passion caused our salvation by way of satisfaction. In his accustomed way, he most wisely set forth the state of the question in the three difficulties he presented. But because this question is again raised by the Socinians, the liberal Protestants, and the Modernists, we must inquire: (1) what the liberal Protestants and Modernists denied about this mystery of redemption and what was their conception of it; (2) what Sacred Scripture and tradition have to say about it; (3) whether Christ truly and strictly, or

only improperly, satisfied for us; (4) whether Christ's operations were intrinsically of infinite value as regards both merit and satisfaction; (5) whether Christ's satisfaction was not only intrinsically condign, but also superabundant, and to what kind of justice it belongs?

The Stand Taken By The Earlier Protestants And The Opposite Opinion Of The Liberal Protestants

The general observation is that, as regards the dogma of redemption, the earlier Protestants erred by excess, whereas the Socinians and liberal Protestants deviated from the truth by defect, because of their excessive reaction against the Reformers. For in Luther's opinion and still more in Calvin's, Christ took upon Himself our sins as to become hateful to God and was cursed by Him, and on the cross, or in His descent into hell, He suffered the torments of the damned, so that He went so far as to be guilty of the sin of despair in saying: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" whereas, on the contrary, these words are a quotation from one of the psalms of the Old Testament, the concluding words of which express great confidence in God. The Reformers concluded from this teaching of theirs, that there is nothing left for us to do or suffer, for we are saved by faith alone in Christ's merits.

Going to the other extreme, however, the Socinians and liberal Protestants fell into the opposite defect, and said that Christ redeemed us only in a moral sense, in that He saves only by His doctrine and example, in the same way as the prophets and martyrs did, although in a higher degree.

Thus the Socinians said that Christ satisfied for us only in the broad sense and metaphorically, by His heroic preaching and example, dying like the martyrs, that is, by affixing the seal to His preaching by the shedding of His blood. Thus His death moves us morally to perform penitential acts whereby our sins are forgiven; but, as they say, Christ did not, strictly speaking, die for us, that is, in our place, by paying the penalty incurred by our sins. Consequently they deny vicarious satisfaction in the strict sense.

No wonder the Socinians ended in this heresy; for they denied Christ's divinity. The denial of the mystery of the Incarnation results in the denial of the mystery of redemption. Pope Paul IV condemned them, for they: "asserted that there are not three persons in the omnipotent God..., that our Lord Jesus Christ is not truly God... and did not undergo a most bitter death on the cross that He might redeem us from sins and eternal death and reconcile us with the Father for eternal life."

This Socinian error stems from another, namely, that, although they acknowledge that God punishes obstinate sinners, yet they want Him freely to forgive those that fall again, without demanding any satisfaction from them, otherwise, so they say, this would not be a manifestation of His mercy.

Liberal Protestants in our times and Modernists assent to this concept of redemption, as is evident from the Modernist propositions condemned by Pius X, one of which reads: “The doctrine of the sacrificial death of Christ is not evangelical, but originated with St. Paul.”

Scriptural proof. Sacred Scripture testifies that Christ redeemed us by paying the price, namely, by shedding His blood. But this means to satisfy in the strict sense and not merely metaphorically, namely, by preaching, giving us advice and example, as the apostles did. In the strict sense He died for us by paying the penalty that is due for our sins. This is already evident from the above-quoted scriptural texts concerning the mystery of redemption considered in a general way. To these must be added the following texts: “Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him who taketh away the sin of the world.” “Even as the Son of man is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a redemption for many.” “This is My blood of the new testament, which shall be shed for many unto remission of sins.” “For you are bought with a great price. Glorify and bear God in your body.” “You are bought with a price; be not made the bond-slaves of men.” “Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things as gold or silver..., but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled.” “He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.” In a word, as St. Paul says: “Christ died for our sins.”

Proof from tradition. We have already given the testimony of the Fathers, and the following patristic texts deserve special mention. Thus St. John Chrysostom says: “Christ died indeed for all that He might keep His promise to all in what concerns Him... for He took away the sins of men and offered them to the Father... that He might forgive them.” St. Augustine says: “In the remission of our sins the innocent blood of Christ was shed.... In this redemption, Christ’s blood is given for us as the price.... Christ undertook, though innocent, our punishment, that thereby He might free us from guilt and also put an end to our punishment.”

Definitions of the Church. The councils have frequently declared that Christ died so that the nature lost by Adam might be repaired by Him; that He satisfied for the sins of the whole world; that the satisfaction is infinite and superabundant. Christ, by His death on the cross, redeemed us from sins and reconciled us with the Father, and this He did because of His love for the human race, and not through fate. Hence He is the Redeemer, the Savior, the Mediator between God and men.

Theological Proof That Christ Truly And Strictly Satisfied For Us

The Socinians maintain that the above-mentioned texts from Sacred Scripture must be understood of satisfaction and redemption improperly so called, as we read in various passages of the Old Testament that God is said to have redeemed His people, or when Moses is said to have been sent as redeemer, although in these cases there was no real redemption.

Therefore the texts from Sacred Scripture must be examined by the light of revealed principles as enunciated in Scripture. In this way the subordination of revealed truths will be made manifest. It is thus that sacred theology proves from revealed principles conclusions otherwise revealed, and gives us a certain and indeed most fruitful understanding of these truths.

It is presupposed that a meritorious action becomes strictly satisfactory when it is of an afflictive nature and is offered in reparation for the offense. Wherefore St. Thomas proposes the argument in the following manner, saying: “He properly atones for an offense who offers something which the offended one loves equally, or even more than he detested the offense. But by suffering out of love and obedience, Christ gave more to God than was required to compensate for the offense of the whole human race. First of all, because of the exceeding charity (theandric) from which He suffered; secondly, on account of the dignity of His life, which He laid down in atonement, for it was the life of one who was God and man; thirdly, on account of the extent of the Passion, and the greatness of the grief endured, as stated above. And therefore Christ’s passion was not only a sufficient but a superabundant atonement for the sins of the human race.”

St. Thomas here soars above the purely juridical consideration of the offense to most sublime spiritual things, namely, to the infinite value of the theandric act of charity in Christ the Redeemer. What he affirms with such prudent judgment most beautifully expresses the very essence of the mystery of redemption, namely, the infinite value of Christ’s theandric act

of love in meriting and satisfying. This satisfaction must be meritorious, and we shall immediately remark in the next article that it is also a most sublime sacrifice. This sacrifice pleases God more than all the sins and crimes of men and devils included displease Him, because Christ's love in the order of good transcends the enormity of malice in the sins and the magnitude of the offense.

If the objection is raised, however, that nobody can be contrite and confess for another, and therefore neither satisfy for another, St. Thomas replies in his answer to the first objection: "The head and the members are as one mystic person; and therefore Christ's satisfaction belongs to all the faithful as being His members. Also, so far as any two men are one in charity, the one can atone for the other, as will be shown later. But the same reason does not hold good of contrition and confession, because atonement consists of an outward action, for which helps may be used, among which friends are to be computed." Contrition requires that the sinner's bad disposition be removed by his own act, and nobody can receive a sacrament for another.

Satisfaction is not indeed merely an external act, but it must be measured externally, that is, the satisfaction must be equal to the reparation of the offense, whereas contrition must directly remove the sinner's bad interior disposition.

Hence Christ, as head of the human race, could both merit and satisfy de condigno for us, whereas the Blessed Virgin Mary, who had neither the grace of union nor the grace of headship, merited de congruo for us what Christ merited de condigno, and she likewise satisfied de congruo, as explained in Mariology. Satisfaction corresponds to merit and is proportionate to it.

Reply to second objection. St. Thomas observes: "Christ's love was greater than His slayer's malice, and therefore the value of His passion in atoning surpassed the murderous guilt of those who crucified Him; so much so that Christ's suffering was sufficient and superabundant atonement for His murderer's crime." This means that God the Father loved more Christ's act of love in suffering for us than the malice and offense of deicide displeased Him.

Reply to third objection. "The dignity of Christ's flesh is not to be estimated solely from the nature of the flesh, but also from the person assuming it, namely, inasmuch as it was God's flesh, the result of which

was that it was of infinite worth." It is likewise with Christ's act of charity in offering Himself, for it was a theandric act. This constitutes essentially the mystery of the redemption. Thus Christ strictly satisfied for us.

Solution Of Objections

First objection. To make atonement belongs to the one who commits the sin. But Christ did not sin. Therefore it was not for Him to make satisfaction.

Reply. I distinguish the major: that it belongs to the one who commits the sin to atone for it, when the sinner or the representative are as one mystic person, this I concede; when the head of the human race is excluded, then I deny the major. But Christ is the head of the human race.

Second objection. There is no atonement by committing a greater offense. But in Christ's passion the greatest of all offenses was perpetrated. Therefore no atonement was made by committing a greater offense.

Reply. St. Thomas answers the second objection to this article by saying that "Christ's love was greater in His passion than the murderous guilt of those who crucified Him; so much so that Christ's suffering was sufficient and abundant atonement for His murderers' crime."

Third objection. Atonement implies equality with the trespass. But there is no equality in this case, because Christ did not suffer in His Godhead that was offended by sin, but in His flesh. Therefore Christ by suffering in the flesh did not establish equality of atonement.

Reply. I distinguish the major: that atonement implies material equality, this I deny; that it implies formal equality, that is, in accordance with the value of the price paid, this I concede. I distinguish the minor: that Christ suffered merely materially in the flesh, this I deny; in the flesh that was assumed by the Word, and offered to God by a theandric act of charity, this I concede; and I deny the consequent and consequence.

Fourth objection. If Christ died in our place, then why do we die and endure the other penalties of sin?

Reply. It is because the principal reason why Christ died is to free us from eternal death, but not immediately from temporal death and the other penalties of this life but afterward "in the ultimate restoration of nature through the glorious resurrection...; for Christ first repairs what regards the person, and afterward will repair what pertains to the nature in all men."

Fifth objection. For perfect atonement Christ ought to have submitted to the punishment of sin, namely, eternal death.

Reply. If the atonement concerned merely penal and material compensation, then I concede the antecedent; but I deny it if it is a question of formal atonement whose principal value is estimated from the love of the person who offers, because of His theandric act of charity. Moreover, Christ's voluntary and temporal death was of infinite value in that by it He offered to God the life of the Word incarnate.

Sixth objection. God is infinitely merciful. But to exact so great an atonement is repugnant to infinite mercy. Therefore God did not exact so great an atonement.

Reply. That God's infinite mercy excludes His infinite justice, this I deny; that it implies infinite justice conjoined with it, this I concede. Similarly I distinguish the minor.

God could have indeed pardoned the offense out of His pure mercy, but He willed to unite it with His justice, and so He mercifully gave us the Savior, who was able to offer adequate satisfaction to divine justice. "For God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son." "Mercy and truth have met each other; justice and peace have kissed." Hence in this mystery there is nowise a diminution of mercy, but its manifestation in the highest degree.

Seventh objection. God freely remits the sins of those who fall again into sin. Therefore He does not exact atonement from them.

Reply. I distinguish the antecedent: that God freely remits them as regards sinners, this I concede; as regards Christ the Redeemer, this I deny.

Eighth objection. God exhorts us to be benign, merciful, so that we do not become revengeful. Therefore in this way God pardons our offenses.

Reply. I distinguish the antecedent: if it is solely a question of our own subordinated right, then I concede the antecedent; if it also concerns higher rights, for example, the common good of one's country, then I deny it. Just as the judge must, for the common good of one's country, exact satisfaction from anyone who has done harm to or betrayed it, so the supreme Judge must proclaim the right of the supreme Good to be loved above all things. Moreover, the divine Judge, who is also merciful, gave us the Savior. So sometimes the general of an army for the safety of one's native land sends his most beloved son to death by placing him in command of a heroic legion, and his son freely accepts this glorious mission for the safety of the fatherland; in fact, he thanks his father for putting such a trust in him, and both are united in the same heroic love of their native land. Thus God the

Father and Christ the Savior are united in the same love of the supreme goodness and the diffusion thereof for the salvation of souls. Thus Christ became the glorious conqueror over sin, the devil, and death.

Hence St. Thomas very well says: “God loves Christ not only more than He loves the whole human race, but more than He loves the entire created universe; because He willed for Him the greater good in giving Him a name that is above all names, so far as He was true God. Nor did anything of His excellence diminish when God delivered Him up to death for the salvation of the human race; He rather became thereby a glorious conqueror: the government was placed upon His shoulder, according to Isaias 9:6.”

Ninth objection. The remission of sins was not gratuitous if Christ completely paid the debt. But the remission of sins is gratuitous. Therefore Christ did not completely pay the debt.

Reply. I distinguish the major: that it was not gratuitous as regards Christ, this I concede; that it was not for us, this I deny.

Tenth objection. It is inhuman for the innocent and just to be punished for the guilty one. But it would have been so in this case.

Reply. I distinguish the antecedent: that it is inhuman, if the innocent person is not a voluntary victim, this I concede: otherwise, I deny it. Here the voluntary victim, however, has the supreme love of God and His neighbor at heart, and His vocation is the most sublime of all vocations.

Eleventh objection. Then our satisfactions would be superfluous, which is unbefitting. Therefore Christ did not fully pay the debt.

Reply. That they are superfluous in the sense that they would again be meritorious for reconciling the human race with God, this I concede; for the application of this reconciliation, this I deny.

Thus St. Paul says: “I fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, in my flesh, for His body which is the Church.” This means that I fill up not what is wanting in the price paid for redemption but as to its application; for this application is effected only by good works, for St. Paul says: “We are joint-heirs with Christ, yet so if we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified with Him.” Just as the first cause does not nullify the effect of the secondary cause, but endows it with the dignity of causality, so Christ’s satisfaction does not nullify our satisfactions, but enkindles them and attributes validity to them. Thus Christ enkindles victim souls and assigns to them a share of His victory over sin and the devil.

Thus we conclude that Christ truly and in the proper sense redeemed us, by satisfaction strictly so called and a propitiatory sacrifice, both of which were the result of His supreme love for God His Father and for souls that must be saved. Thus God's love and mercy in a certain way transcend His justice, as already explained, because redemption is principally a work of love and mercy of both God the Father and Christ toward men to be redeemed.

Conclusion. The solution of these objections sets the mind at rest as far as discursive reasoning is concerned, but we must rise above discursive reasoning to the act of faith and also the simple intuition of contemplation, which proceeds from lively faith illumined by the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Thus we attain to "a certain and most fruitful understanding" Of this mystery, as the Vatican Council declares. We must firmly believe that Jesus is the Savior and Redeemer in the strict sense of these words, with no attenuation of their meaning. In fact, the divine reality of this mystery far surpasses our conception of it, which means that Christ is ever so much more profoundly and sublimely the Redeemer than we think Him to be, when we attribute satisfaction in the true and strict sense to Him. In this, not only is theology free from all exaggeration, but it also cannot sufficiently express the surpassing reality of this mystery. There is more in God and in Christ than in the whole of our theology.

The Infinite Value Of Christ's Satisfaction

Were Christ's operations intrinsically of absolutely infinite value both for meriting and satisfaction?

State of the question. Certain theologians such as Durandus, Scotus, G. Biel, Lychetus, and others teach that Christ's satisfaction is only extrinsically condign, superabundant, and of infinite value, namely, because of God's gracious acceptance. Yet these theologians acknowledge that Christ's works had, because of the divine person of the Word, the greatest of value, that was not capable of being equaled by a mere creature, and for this reason it was fitting that they should be accepted by God for infinite value.

On the contrary, almost all other theologians hold that Christ's works were intrinsically, because of the divine suppositum, of absolutely infinite value for both meriting and satisfying. So say William of Paris, Alexander of Hales, St. Thomas, and all Thomists, St. Bonaventure, and many others.

It must be observed that these same principles apply equally to both merit and satisfaction, for it is the meritorious act that becomes satisfactory, when it is of an afflictive nature, and when this affliction is accepted by God and offered to Him in reparation for the offense.

However, before we prove this more common opinion, it must be noted that there is a difference between merit and satisfaction. Merit concerns the reward to be obtained by the rewarded and it therefore concerns either the good of the person meriting or of another, for whom the person merits. But satisfaction refers to the reparation that must be made for the injustice done to another's right. But merit and satisfaction both enter into Christ's works.

Moreover, it must be observed that there is a real and intrinsic relation of Christ's theandric operations both to the object by which they are specified and to the principle by which they are elicited. In Christ the principle that elicits these acts is the divine suppositum or the divine person of the Word, and the principle whereby these acts are elicited is the human nature, that operates by means of the faculties and habits or the virtues and gifts.

These operative principles, by which the suppositum operates, are physically finite, and so in Christ's works as man there is no such thing as physical infinity. But as regards their moral value, this can be estimated either from the more or less exalted nature of the object, and thus Christ's dolorous passion is objectively more meritorious than His other operations, or they can be estimated from the subject eliciting these acts, that is intrinsically and morally infinite, namely, because of the suppositum, although these operations of Christ come in contact with their object in a finite way. Thus there is a distinction between the personal value of all Christ's acts of charity, and their more or less exalted objective value.

First authoritative proof. Pope Clement VI in explaining the words of St. Paul and St. Peter regarding the oblation of Christ, says: "The innocent Christ, who was immolated on the altar of the cross, shed not a little drop of blood, though this would have sufficed for the redemption of the entire human race, because of the union with the Word, but streams of it, like unto a river, so that "from the sole of the foot unto the top of the head, there is no soundness in Him., Thus it is an infinite treasure for men, whereby those who use it may share in God's friendship. There is not the least fear that this treasure will suffer any loss by its use, both on account of Christ's infinite merits, as already stated, and for this reason, that the more many are drawn

by the application of these merits to holiness of life, all the more there is an increase in the accumulation of their individual merits."

Clement VI says that Christ's merits are of infinite value, not because of their extrinsic acceptation by God, but "on account of the union of Christ's human nature with the Word." The Supreme Pontiff speaks as St. Thomas does, whom we shall immediately quote. It is evident that the hypostatic union with the Word is not something of extrinsic denomination, as, for example, a bank note is, whose value is by some law decreed to represent a determinate sum of money. This constitutes the outstanding difference between paper money and gold or silver.

Second authoritative proof. St. Thomas says: "Sin committed against God has a kind of infinity from the infinity of the divine majesty, because the greater the person we offend, the more grievous the offense. Hence for condign satisfaction it was necessary that the act of the one satisfying should have an infinite efficiency, as being of God and man." Again, he says: "Christ willed to deliver the human race from sins not merely by His power, but also according to justice. And therefore He did not simply weigh what great virtue His suffering would have from union with the Godhead, but also how much, according to His human nature, His pain would avail for so great a satisfaction." Such is the reply given by St. Thomas to his corresponding objection, which is as follows: "The slightest pain would have sufficed to secure man's salvation, because from His divine person it would have had infinite virtue. Therefore it would have been superfluous to choose the greatest of all pains." In this article he says: "The dignity of Christ's flesh (and likewise of His human nature) is not to be estimated solely from the nature of flesh, inasmuch as it was God's flesh, the result of which was that it was of infinite worth." If this is said of Christ's flesh, a fortiori this applies to charity. St. Thomas speaks in like manner in several other passages.

Theological proof. Both the meritorious and the satisfactory value of actions is derived not only from the object or from the principle whereby they are elicited, but also, and especially, from the dignity of the person who operates, and the greater the dignity of the person who operates, the more this increases the value of the operation. But Christ's person is infinitely worthy.

Therefore although Christ's operations, from the principle and the finite mode whereby they attain their object, are of infinite value, yet because the

infinite dignity of the person from whom they proceed, they have both meritorious and satisfactory values that are infinite; or the possibility of estimating their value is morally infinite.

The minor is certain, since Christ's person is the person of the Word.

First proof of major. Actions generally belong to the supposita, and moral immanent actions come from the person, as from the principle that formally and freely elicits them.

Second proof. In a special manner satisfactory and meritorious actions formally include the offerer, who by these actions submits and offers himself to the one to whom he avows his obedience. Thus in the notion of meriting and satisfying, the relation is not between merit and the person meriting, between satisfaction and the person satisfying; but the person is related to these actions by way of a moral form; for these actions are intrinsically related to the person who elicits them and who freely offers himself, the more what is offered to God belongs more intimately to the person, the more precious it is, for example, the immolation of the body or personal pain.

Wherefore we generally estimate of greater value a gift offered to us by a person of great merit than an equally valuable gift offered to us by a person of lower dignity. Thus it is said of God: "The Lord had respect to Abel and to his offerings," in that He considered more the person offering than the gift offered. Therefore, a fortiori, God looks upon the person of His Son offering Himself on the cross. More briefly, Christ's operations are intrinsically and morally of infinite value because they are theandric.

Confirmation. The common saying is: the greater the dignity of the person offended, the greater the offense, in that the greater the dignity of the person who honors and satisfies, the greater the dignity of the conferring honor and satisfactory work.

Another proof. There is a moral value in Christ's works of meriting always greater graces and of satisfying for an ever greater number of sinners. From this we clearly see that they are of infinite value.

Solution Of The Objections

First objection. Every created work is intrinsically finite. But every meritorious work of Christ is human and hence created. Therefore every meritorious work of Christ is intrinsically finite.

Reply. I distinguish the major: that every created work is intrinsically and physically finite, this I concede; that it is so morally, this I deny; if the

principle that elicits the act is of infinite dignity. I concede the minor. I distinguish the conclusion in the same way as I do the major. Christ's meritorious acts bear an intrinsic relation to the divine person of the Word.

But I insist. Even the oblation that the Blessed Virgin Mary made of Christ in the temple was intrinsically related to the person of the Word incarnate who was offered. And yet this action of the Blessed Virgin Mary was neither intrinsically of infinite value, nor sufficient for the redemption of the human race.

Reply. I distinguish the antecedent; that this oblation indicated an intrinsic order to the infinite person of Christ merely objectively considered, this I concede; that it indicates relation to Christ as to the principle, and subject which attributes a personal and infinite value to the action, this I deny. More briefly, this oblation of the Blessed Virgin Mary was objectively of infinite value, because she offered an infinitely worthy object, namely, the Word incarnate; but the oblation was not personally of infinite value.

Thus, in some manner, the act of charity whereby the Blessed Virgin Mary loved God was indeed infinite objectively considered, but subjectively or personally, it was of finite value, just as the act of charity is of any pure creature whatever; although the merits of the Blessed Virgin Mary were in their order of inestimable value because of the fullness of her charity.

Another objection. There is nothing greater than infinity. But the act of Christ's divine will is greater than the act of His human will. Therefore this second act is not of infinite value.

Reply. I distinguish the major: that there is nothing greater than absolute infinity in the order of being, namely, than God who is infinite, this I concede; nothing greater than infinity of a certain kind, for example, the moral value of acts, this I deny. I concede the minor because the act of Christ's divine will is infinite, not only morally, but also physically. I distinguish the conclusion: that Christ's meritorious act is not absolutely infinite even physically, this I concede; that it is not morally of infinite value, this I deny.

Still I insist. But in this order of moral value it is false to say that all Christ's merits are of infinite value, for His act of charity in offering Himself on the cross was of greater value than any other of His meritorious acts, for example, those of preaching to the people or conversing with His disciples.

Reply. I distinguish the proof: that this act of Christ in offering Himself on the cross was of greater value than the others, objectively, this I concede; personally, I deny. This personal value was of equal worth in all His meritorious acts, but their objective value depends on the dignity of the object.

Again I insist. Two acts of charity of equal intensity are equal in value although one of them is elicited by a holier person. Therefore acts do not derive their greater validity from the dignity of the person.

Reply. Let the antecedent pass without comment; but the argument does not equally apply to Christ, for the greater holiness of some individual, such as Paul, does not impart a greater value to all his acts, even those that are less fervent. On the contrary, the divine person of the Word always exerted a moral influence on all His meritorious and satisfactory acts, and there never was any diminution of fervor in Christ's acts of charity.

Other Objections

First difficulty. If this thesis were true, then Christ would have acquired just as much merit by shedding one tear as by His crucifixion.

Reply. I distinguish: that Christ would have gained just as much merit personally, this I concede; objectively, this I deny. There was equality of personal value in all Christ's works, but there was inequality as regards their objective value, because this depends on the more or less sublime nature of the object, the greater or less difficulty involved in attaining to it, and the accompanying circumstances. But Christ directed not only the personal value but also the objective value of His works, so that they might be meritorious and satisfactory.

Second difficulty. If Christ's first act on coming into this world would have been of infinite value, then His other works would have been useless.

Reply. It has already been said that Christ did not offer this first act separately, but in conjunction with all future acts until His death, as constituting the whole price of our redemption; and His oblation was a continuous act, which was not elicited just once and then not continued. So it ought to be with Christians, and especially religious.

Third difficulty. Then our satisfaction would be superfluous.

Reply. As was said in replying to the second difficulty: they are superfluous in reconciling the human race with God, this I concede; that they are so in the application of this reconciliation, this I deny. In fact, it pertains to the abundance of Christ's satisfaction not only that He Himself

satisfy, but that also He cause others to satisfy, just as it belongs to the perfection of the first cause to give the dignity of causality to others.

Fourth difficulty. Christ, however, in this way would have been entitled to a greater reward of merit than God could have given Him, for an infinite reward is a contradiction in terms.

Reply. Merit of infinite value does not demand an actually infinite reward, just as divine omnipotence is made manifest not because it produces something that is actually infinite, for this is an impossibility; but because of all things made by God, He can always make a better thing than He has made. Thus Christ merited the salvation of human beings without any limit to their number and although this would prolong the end of the world beyond the truly appointed time, human beings would always find in Christ's merits a sufficient source of salvation. Moreover, Christ merited something infinite in this sense, that He merited the Eucharist which is a sacrifice of infinite value, whereby the sacrifice of the cross is perpetuated until the end of time and whereby the merits of the Passion are continually applied to our souls. Likewise He merited the beatific vision for the elect and their love of God, which they cannot lose, and these are infinite on the part of the object seen and loved.

Finally, the infinite value of Christ's satisfaction is made manifested in the adequate reparation made for the offense against God, for this reparation demands an act that is morally infinite in value, not only potentially but actually.

Hence this thesis is certain chiefly on account of the proof given above.

First doubt. Was Christ's satisfaction not only intrinsically condign, but also intrinsically superabundant?

Reply. It is of faith that Christ satisfied for us condignly, for St. Paul says: "Christ Jesus who gave Himself a redemption for all"; and the Council of Trent declares: "Our Lord... made satisfaction to God the Father for us." It concerns condign satisfaction, or the voluntary and equal payment of the debt, namely, of the sins that offended God.

But from what has been said, it also follows that Christ's satisfaction was intrinsically superabundant. And this is the more common opinion.

Scriptural proof. St. Paul says: "Where sin abounded, grace did more abound," and this was especially so in the Savior.

The Fathers, too, in the explanation of this text affirm the superabundance of Christ's merits. Thus St. John Chrysostom says: "For

Christ paid for more than we owed."

Theological proof. The principal one is that given by St. Thomas, which is as follows: "He properly atones for an offense, who offers something which the offended one loves equally, or even more than he detested the offense. But by suffering out of love and obedience, Christ gave more to God than was required to compensate for the offense of the whole human race. First of all, because of the exceeding charity (theandric) from which He suffered; secondly, on account of the dignity of His life which He laid down in atonement, for it was the life of one who was God and man; thirdly, on account of the extent of the Passion, and on account of the greatness of the grief endured."

Several theologians give an additional reason, namely, that the satisfaction was superabundant because by sin God, who is offended, is made morally subject indeed to a creature; but by His passion and crucifixion the Word incarnate because of His exceeding love subjects Himself even physically and really to penalties and sufferings. This reason is cogent if we consider that Christ's acts of charity and humility in suffering on the cross were theandric acts of intrinsically infinite value. Hence the reply to the present doubt is a corollary to the preceding thesis.

As regards the extent of this satisfaction, it is universal, inasmuch as it is sufficient for the salvation of all men without exception.

Sacred Scripture declares it to be so in the following text: "He [Christ] is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world."

Second doubt. Was Christ's satisfaction for men according to strict justice and as absolute right demands.

State of the question. Satisfaction is said to be according to strict justice when it is perfect according to the nature of justice, that is, it must be made: (1) to another; (2) from the debtor's own means to which the creditor is not entitled on some other grounds; (3) the creditor must be under obligation to accept the satisfaction. The difficulty is that Christ Himself as God was offended, and that He could not, so it seems, satisfy to Himself; for justice concerns another.

The question so presented is disputed. Vasquez, Molina, Lugo, Billot and others deny that Christ's satisfaction was according to strict justice.

It is generally admitted by the Thomists, especially by Capreolus, Cajetan, Salmanticenses, Billuart, and others, who quote various texts of St.

Thomas. St. Bonaventure also forms the affirmative opinion. Suarez and, among more recent theologians, Franzelin, Pesch, Paquet, Janssens, and others take the affirmative view.

Proof of thesis. Strict satisfaction must be that which is made: (1) to another; (2) from the debtor's own means to which the creditor is not entitled on some other grounds; (3) the creditor must be under obligation to accept the satisfaction. But such was the nature of Christ's satisfaction. Therefore it was according to strict justice.

Proof of minor.

1) It was made to another, inasmuch as the divine person, who exists in both the divine nature and the human nature, satisfied to Himself, who exists in the divine nature. It is not necessary that satisfaction be made to another suppositum, for it suffices that it be made to another by reason of the nature, because the distinction between the natures is the foundation for the distinction between rights and correlative duties. Thus Christ merited not as God, but as man. If Aristotle says: "Justice concerns another," namely, another person, the reason is that he is speaking about human things.

2) This satisfaction must be made out of one's own means, namely, from what belongs to the divine person in the human nature, and to which the creditor is not entitled, because God the creditor was not strictly entitled to Christ's meritorious and satisfactory works inasmuch as He was man, but they belonged properly to Christ as man, inasmuch as He was free; and they belonged only in a general way to God. But general ownership does not do away with particular ownership, just as the universal cause does not do away with the particular cause, just as a citizen pays to the state something that belongs to him as his own, although the state has the title of general domain over it.

3) God is not absolutely bound to accept this satisfaction, but only hypothetically, on the supposition that God constituted Christ our surety and Redeemer, whom He inspired to make this satisfaction to Him.

Confirmation. Strict satisfaction is that which is equal to the offense; but Christ's satisfaction was superabundant, for as St. Thomas says: "He properly atones for an offense who offers something which the offended one loves equally, or even more than he detested the offense. But by suffering out of theandric love and obedience, Christ gave more to God than was required to compensate for the offense of the whole human race."

Therefore this satisfaction was more than equivalent, more than according to strict justice, but truly and properly superabundant. We must always have recourse to this celebrated text of St. Thomas, which more clearly solves these doubts than anything that has been written on this subject after his time.

Third doubt. Was Christ's satisfaction an act of commutative justice?

State of the question. Justice is a virtue that attributes to each one his own. It is divided into general and particular. General justice, which is also called legal, immediately concerns the common good, just as equity or epikeia does. Particular justice is divided into distributive, whereby the superior gives to the subjects what is due to them in proportion to their merits or their needs, and commutative, whereby one person gives to another not in proportion to the needs of the other, but pays according to equity the debt and the price owing to the other. To the question as thus presented, the more common answer is in the affirmative.

Scriptural proof. St. Paul says: "You are bought with a great price." Therefore it was the payment of the price that is strictly required for redemption, as above stated.

Theological proof. Two things are required and suffice for an act of commutative justice, namely, a strict obligation to pay the debt and absolute equality between the price and the debt. But it was so with Christ's satisfaction, which was not only equal, but superabundant, and Christ was bound to make this satisfaction because He was constituted as surety and Redeemer of men. Therefore this satisfaction perfectly complies with all that is required for commutative justice.

It must be noted, however, that, although Christ's satisfaction is especially and formally an act of commutative justice, it was commanded by charity toward God and men, and by the virtue of religion, so that it was a latreutic act. In fact, it reflects many other virtues, such as magnanimity and magnificence inasmuch as it was superabundant, mercy toward sinners, humility, meekness, and other virtues.

It must also be observed that Christ's commutative justice differs specifically from ours, because of its formal object. For its formal object is not a debt to man adjustable by a human method of reasoning in accordance with equality, but it is a debt owing to God adjustable in accordance with equality that transcends every human rule and measure. Wherefore we say

that this satisfaction perfectly complies with all that is required for commutative justice.

The question here would be the universality of Christ's satisfaction, inasmuch as Christ died for all men without exception. But this subject is now frequently discussed in the treatise on the One God, in connection with the question of God's universal will to save, and we therefore refer the student to that treatise. However, we shall take up the principal points farther on.

Reply. The answer is evidently in the affirmative, inasmuch as the value of redemption as to its sufficiency is infinite and thus it includes all men without exception, inasmuch as it is God's will to save all.

An example of the sublime genius of St. Thomas in comparison with all his commentators is apparent from the fact that he solves all these doubts about satisfaction in accordance with strict and even commutative justice, and this most briefly and clearly by means of this exalted principle, when he says: "He properly atones for an offense who offers something which the offended one loves equally [namely, satisfaction according to strict commutative justice] or even more [namely, superabundant satisfaction] than he detested the offense. But by suffering out of theandric love and obedience, Christ gave more to God than was required to compensate for the offense of the whole human race." In fact, what Christ offered was more pleasing to God than He detested the offense of the devils, although Christ did not redeem them, because they are incapable of redemption. The mystery of redemption consists essentially in this statement of St. Thomas.

THIRD ARTICLE: ON REDEMPTION BY WAY OF SACRIFICE

State of the question. In this third article St. Thomas asks whether Christ's passion operated by way of sacrifice. He begins by presenting three difficulties. It seems that it did not: (1) because the truth must correspond with the figure; but in the sacrifices of the Old Law, which were figures of Christ, human flesh was never offered; nay, such sacrifices were considered impious; (2) sacrifice is a sacred sign; but Christ's passion is not a sign, but the thing signified by other signs; (3) those who killed Christ did not perform any sacred act or offer sacrifice, but rather did a great wrong.

Several heretics de facto denied that Christ's passion was a true sacrifice. (1) Pelagius, Abelard, and Hermes considered it to be evidence of great

love and the most sublime example of heroism, such as martyrdom. (2) The Socinians said that Christ was a priest only on Ascension Day and then He offered sacrifice only in heaven, interceding with the Father for us. (3) The liberal Protestants and Modernists deny Christ's priesthood, and they see in His death only a most noble example of fortitude of soul, as in martyrdom. But martyrdom is not in itself strictly speaking a sacrifice, for it is not an elicited act of latria, but of fortitude, and not all martyrs are priests.

Catholic doctrine. It is of faith that Christ is a priest and that He offered Himself on the altar of the cross, a sacrifice in the true and strict sense. The Council of Ephesus teaches that Christ is "our High Priest and Apostle, who offered Himself for us as an odor of sweetness to God." Likewise the Council of Trent declares that Christ "offered Himself once on the altar of the cross to God the Father by means of His death, there to operate for them [men] an eternal redemption."

Scriptural proof. It is explicitly revealed that Christ offered a true sacrifice on the cross. Already in the Old Testament the prophet says of the innocent and just servant of Jahve: "Surely He hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows.... He was wounded for our iniquities; He was bruised for our sins." He was therefore a victim for us; but He was also a priest offering Himself for us to reconcile us with God, for it is said: "If He shall lay down His life for sin, He shall see a long-lived seed, and the will of the Lord shall be prosperous in His hand... and He shall see and be filled."

In the New Testament we read: "Christ hath loved us, and hath delivered Himself for us an oblation and a sacrifice to God for an odor of sweetness." "Christ our Pasch is sacrificed." "Him, who knew no sin yet He hath made sin for us [victim for sin], that we might be made the justice of God in Him." "Whom God hath proposed to be a propitiation, through faith in His blood," which means a propitiatory victim. Again the Apostle says: "Being now justified by His blood." And also: "Christ gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and might cleanse to Himself a people acceptable."

St. Paul treats especially of Christ's priesthood in the following texts: "Having therefore a great high priest that hath passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God." "For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men... that he may offer up gifts and sacrifices for sins." "But Christ... neither by the blood of goats, nor of calves, but by His own blood,

entered once into the holies, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats... sanctifies such as are defiled, to the cleansing of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who by the Holy Ghost offered Himself unspotted unto God, cleanse our conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" "Christ was offered once to exhaust the sins of many." "For by one oblation He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified."

Testimony of tradition. Both the Greek and Latin Fathers have commented on the above-mentioned texts from Scripture, such as St. Clement of Rome, St. Ignatius, Origen, St. Cyprian, St. Gregory of Nazianzus, St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. John Chrysostom, St. Cyril of Alexandria, St. Ambrose, and St. Augustine. Two famous testimonies of St. Augustine are quoted by St. Thomas in the present article.

Theological proof. St. Thomas shows that Christ's voluntary death was truly a sacrifice and the most perfect of all sacrifices. He proves this by saying: "A sacrifice properly so called is something done for that honor which is properly due to God, in order to appease Him. But Christ offered Himself up for us in the Passion, and this voluntary enduring of the Passion was most acceptable to God, as coming from charity. Therefore it is manifest that Christ's passion was a true sacrifice."

In this proof we find verified the definition of sacrifice as already explained by St. Thomas, in that it is, strictly speaking, the offering of a sensible thing by a priest made to God by means of a real, or in some way, change of the thing offered in testimony of God's supreme dominion, and our subjection to Him.

Thus Christ truly offered Himself to death by not repelling His killers, and after He was struck, by not preventing death, which He could have done.

Therefore His voluntary death differs from simple martyrdom, as Father Voste observes, who says: "The martyrs differ from Christ because, as a general rule, they were neither priests nor, strictly speaking, sacrificed themselves, for they were not free either to die or not to die, nor underwent death by some sacred rite, and their death was not an elicited act of religion, but an act of fortitude whereby they chose in preference to lose their life rather than deny the faith."

In fact St. Thomas, referring to St. Augustine, shows that the sacrifice of the cross, which was prefigured by the sacrifices of the Old Testament, was

the most perfect of all sacrifices. For a sacrifice is more perfect, the more the priest is united with God to whom he offers it, with the victim which he offers, with the people for whom he offers it. But Christ, who is priest as man, cannot be more united with God, for He is God; nor with the victim, for He offers Himself; nor with men, who are His members. For St. Augustine says: “That the same one true Mediator reconciling us with God through the peace-sacrifice might continue to be one with Him to whom He offered it, might be one with them for whom He offered it, and might Himself be the offerer and what He offered.”

The sacrifice of the cross is offered on account of four ends, namely, adoration, petition for graces to be obtained, reparation for offenses, and thanksgiving. So it is also with the Sacrifice of the Mass, whereby the fruits of the sacrifice of the cross are applied to us.

Reply to first objection. St. Thomas shows beautifully how the sacrifice of the cross surpasses all the sacrifices of the Old Testament which prefigured it, and he quotes St. Augustine’s wonderful text.

Reply to second objection. The sacrifice of the cross, typified by the ancient sacrifices of the Old Testament, signifies Christ’s immense love for us, and also the necessity for us to mortify the flesh and refrain from sin.

Reply to third objection. Christ’s passion on the part of His killers was a crime and a deicide; on Christ’s part suffering willingly out of love, it was the most perfect of all sacrifices. Hence the very slaying of Christ does not have to be renewed sacramentally in the Sacrifice of the Mass, but in the Mass “the victim is one and the same, the same now offering by the ministry of priests, who then offered Himself on the cross.”

Particular opinion. In recent times Father Maurice de la Taille conceived the notion that the Last Supper and the voluntary death of Christ on the cross are two component parts of the same sacrifice. At the Last Supper, Christ as priest offered Himself to be immolated on the cross, and on the cross, however, He was actually immolated and forever retains His state as victim.

However, if it were so, then Christ’s voluntary death on the cross would not be a sacrifice in the strict sense, but only a part of the sacrifice. But this seems to be contrary to the traditional teaching, which, even irrespective of the Last Supper, considers the passion and death of our Lord as a most perfect sacrifice, and as such is explained by St. Thomas in the present article and elsewhere without any reference to the Last Supper.

Truly Christ’s oblation not only continues throughout the Passion, but is expressed sensibly by these words of Christ: “Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit. And saying this, He gave up the Ghost.” These are, so to speak, the words consecrating the sacrifice on the cross. This sacrifice is eminently a ritual, since as it is the thing signified in all ritualistic sacrifices, and inasmuch as it is the perfect fulfillment according to God’s eternal preordination of the entire cultus of the Old Testament, a fulfillment that will ever afterward be commemorated by the Sacrifice of the Mass until the end of the world.

Hence this new theory does not seem to be in harmony with what the Council of Trent says about the Last Supper and the cross not being two complementary parts of one and the same sacrifice, but two sacrifices. The Council says: “Our Lord, though He was about to offer Himself on the altar of the cross unto God the Father... by means of His death..., in the Last Supper, on the night in which He was betrayed, that He might leave to His own beloved spouse the Church, a visible sacrifice, whereby that bloody sacrifice, once to be accomplished on the cross, might be represented..., He offered up to God the Father His own body and blood under the species of bread and wine.” This text distinguishes between “offered” and “about to offer, “ and the sacrifice of the Last Supper is called “unbloody, “ whereas the sacrifice of the cross is called “bloody.”

Hence the traditional teaching must be retained whereby, even irrespective of the Last Supper, Christ’s voluntary death on the cross was not only a part of the sacrifice, but a true and even most perfect sacrifice, and solely of itself fully sufficed. The Resurrection and Ascension strictly speaking add nothing to the redemptive value of the cross, but are a visible manifestation that the sacrifice on Calvary was ratified and accepted by the Father for our redemption.

FOURTH ARTICLE: REDEMPTION BY WAY OF LIBERATION

In this fourth article St. Thomas asks whether Christ’s passion brought about our salvation by way of redemption. In this article redemption is not taken in the general sense of the term as when Christ is said to be “cause of our salvation, “ but in a restricted sense as meaning, “liberation from the bondage of sin, from the debt of punishment and the bondage of the devil.” Thus a distinction is made between this mode of redemption and the others

previously considered. It is not now a question of what constitutes the mode of redemptive work, but of its effect, as also is the case in the sixth article.

St. Thomas begins by presenting three difficulties: (1) Men never ceased to belong to God; therefore they are not redeemed; (2) nor are they to be redeemed from the bondage of the devil, because the devil has no right over them; (3) because Christ did not pay the price of redemption to the devil.

Reply. Nevertheless the answer is that Christ's passion liberated us from the bondage of sin, the devil, and the debt of punishment.

Scriptural proof. It is of faith, for at the time of the Annunciation, the angel of the Lord said to Joseph: "Thou shalt call His name Jesus. For He shall save His people from their sins." The Precursor says of Him: "Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him who taketh away the sin of the world." Jesus says of Himself: "The Son of man is come... to give His life a redemption for many." Before His passion He says: "Now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself."

St. Paul says: "Giving thanks to God... who hath delivered us from the power of darkness and hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the remission of sins." Farther on he says: "And you, when you were dead in your sins... He hath quickened together with Him [Christ], forgiving you all offenses, blotting out the handwriting of the decree which was contrary to us. And He hath taken the same out of the way, fastening it to the cross; and despoiling the principalities and powers, He hath exposed them confidently in open show, triumphing over them in Himself."

And again he says: "That through death He might destroy him who had taken the empire of death, that is to say, the devil."

In other words, Christ by His passion regained the victory over the devil and sin, and already virtually over death, which is "the wages of sin," as is afterward made manifest by His resurrection, which is the forerunner of ours.

Testimony from tradition. Our liberation is likewise made clear from this source. Rouet de Journel has collected many passages from the Latin and Greek Fathers, who explicitly taught that Christ redeemed us from sin and the bondage of the devil, by paying the price of our redemption, not to the devil but to God.

Theological proof. St. Thomas proves this truth from other revealed texts as follows:

Man was held captive on account of sin in two ways: First of all, by the bondage of sin, because “whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin,” and “by whom a man is overcome of the same also He is the slave.” Since, then, the devil had overcome man by inducing him to sin, man was subject to the devil’s bondage. Secondly, as to the debt of punishment, to the payment of which man was held fast by God’s justice.

“Since, then, Christ’s passion was a sufficient and a superabundant atonement for the sin and the debt of the human race, it was as a price at the cost of which we were freed from both obligations.” This is the effect of the satisfaction; it is not a constitutive element, but a consequence of this satisfaction.

More briefly: Sin brings about a twofold bondage, namely, of sin and debt of punishment. But Christ’s passion was a superabundant satisfaction both for sin and the debt of punishment. Therefore it liberated us from both kinds of bondage. The Council of Trent retains this proof.

Reply to first objection. Men never ceased to belong to God, in that they were always under His power; but by sin they ceased to belong to God as regards union with Him by charity. And men liberated from sin by Christ suffering for them are said to have been redeemed by His passion.

Reply to second objection. “Man by sin had offended God and, by consenting to the devil, had become his subject. And therefore justice required man’s redemption with regard to God, but not with regard to the devil.”

Reply to third objection. “The price of our redemption had to be paid not to the devil, but to God”; but the price being paid to God, by the reparation of the offense, men were liberated from the bondage of sin, and consequently from the bondage of the devil. Thus we have a most excellent correction of certain exaggerations of Origen and St. Gregory of Nyssa, who seem to affirm that the devil has certain rights over us. The devil has no right over us, and these same Fathers elsewhere give the true teaching. Christ paid the price of our redemption by repairing the offense committed against God. Therefore He paid this price, not to the devil, but to God; and it follows from this that men are freed from the devil’s bondage.

FIFTH ARTICLE: WHETHER IT IS PROPER TO CHRIST TO BE THE REDEEMER

State of the question. It seems that also God the Father redeemed us, because He gave His Son in redemption for our sins. Moreover the sufferings of other saints were also conducive to our salvation for the Apostle says: “I rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ in my flesh for His body, which is the Church.” Therefore it seems that not only Christ ought to be called the Redeemer.

Reply. Nevertheless the answer is that to be the Redeemer immediately belongs properly to Christ, inasmuch as He is man, although the redemption may be ascribed to the whole Trinity as its first cause.

This article concerns the redemption of the whole human race, which, as stated in the preceding article, is the effect of Christ’s passion.

Scriptural proof. St. Luke records that St. Peter says: “There is not salvation in any other. For there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved.”

The Apostle declares that Christ is the Savior of all men, without exception, saying: “For all have sinned, and do need the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” He also says: “For it became Him... who had brought many children into glory, to perfect the author of their salvation, by His passion.”

Hence, too, the Blessed Virgin Mary was redeemed by Her Son, by the merits of her Son suffering, but by a preservative and most perfect redemption. Thus Christ merited de condigno for His mother also the first and last graces, but not the divine maternity, because thus He would have merited the Incarnation and Himself.

Theological proof. It is as follows: For someone to redeem, two things are required, namely, the act of paying and the price paid, which is his own. But the price of our redemption is Christ’s blood, or His bodily life, which is what Christ paid. Hence each of these belongs immediately to Christ as man; but to the whole Trinity, as to the first cause, to whom Christ’s life belonged, and from whom He received the inspiration to suffer for us.

Reply to first objection. Thus the redemption belongs immediately to the man Christ, but principally to God.

Reply to third objection. As Cajetan observes, a doubt arises concerning this reply, because the holy Doctor says elsewhere that the treasury of the Church, from which indulgences derive their efficacy, contains the sufferings of the saints. Pope Clement VI expressly says the same. But it is

an evident fact that the sufferings applied to us through indulgences by way of satisfaction and by this way of redemption, are of benefit to the Church.

Cajetan justly replies to this difficulty, by saying: “The author has in mind, however, the sufferings of the saints absolutely considered. Thus between Christ’s sufferings and those of the saints there are many points of difference. The first is in the word ‘sufferings. ‘ For Christ’s sufferings absolutely redeem the Church; whereas the sufferings of the saints do not do so absolutely, but satisfy for us only by way of superfluity, as stated by St. Thomas, here and as contained in the bull of Clement VI. The second difference is in the word “redemption’; for Christ’s passion redeems us absolutely, because it liberates us from guilt and punishment; but the sufferings of the saints redeem us only in a relative sense, namely, from a certain punishment, the temporal punishment that is due to actual sin. The third is in the word ‘beneficial. ‘ It is because Christ’s passion is of benefit to the Church by way of redemption, even if there is no key of the Church that unlocks the door for us; but the sufferings of the saints are satisfactory on my behalf only if by means of the authoritative power of the keys they be applied to me.

“Therefore so many conditions are required so as to verify the fact that the sufferings of the saints benefit the Church by way of redemption, and for this reason the affirmative answer is only relatively true; we could simply and unconditionally deny the assertion without any prejudice to the truth, and say that the sufferings of the saints do not benefit the Church by way of redemption. And along with the truth of this negative conclusion it is already evident that the same must be said of the doctrine concerning the efficacy of indulgences from the merits of the saints.” Such is Cajetan’s conclusion. More briefly, it is only Christ who frees us from guilt and eternal punishment, the merits of the saints free us from temporal punishment, and this only on the previous understanding that “our redemption was accomplished by Christ alone... inasmuch as He is the Head of the Church, and the Author of human salvation, as the Scripture says, and the saints can merit the first grace for another only congruously.”

Moreover, St. Thomas makes known more explicitly his mind on this subject concerning the words of the Apostle: “I fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ.” He says: “These words, taken literally, could be interpreted in a wrong sense, as meaning that Christ’s passion was not sufficient for our redemption, but that the sufferings of the saints were

added as complementary. But this view is heretical, because Christ's blood is sufficient for the redemption even of many worlds.... These words, however, must be understood as meaning that Christ and the Church constitute one mystical person, whose head is Christ, and all the just are the body; any just person is, so to speak, a member of this head.... However, God ordained and predestined how much merit there must be in the whole Church both in the head and in the members, just as He predestined the number of the elect. Among these merits the sufferings of the holy martyrs are especially included. The merits of Christ, the Head, are infinite; but each saint contributes proportionately his or her share of merits.... Thus also all the saints suffer for the Church, which is fortified by their example."

Hence Christ alone is the Redeemer. Nevertheless the Blessed Virgin Mary, as explained in Mariology, can truly be called the co-Redemptress, though subordinate to Christ. As Pius X said: "The Blessed Virgin Mary was admitted with Christ and by Christ to cooperate in the salvation of the human race, congruously as they say, to merit for us, what Christ condignly merited." Likewise, along with Him, she satisfied congruously, for Benedict XV says: "As she suffered with her Son in His passion and, so to speak, shared in His death, so she abdicated her maternal rights over her Son for the salvation of men and, as far as it was in her power, sacrificed her Son for the appeasement of divine justice, so that it can properly be said, that along with Christ she redeemed the human race."

In this sense the Blessed Virgin Mary cooperated in the acquisition of graces that flow from the sacrifice on the cross. The other saints, however, do not cooperate in the acquisition, but in the application of the fruits of the Passion. Finally, since the merits of Christ are infinite and those of the saints are finite, it can be said that the sufferings of the saints add something that is not intensively, but only extensively finite, as when we say that God and the creature do not make more of being than God alone, for after creation there are more beings, but only extensively more of being. Therefore only Christ is absolutely the Redeemer of the human race.

SIXTH ARTICLE: REDEMPTION BY WAY OF EFFICIENCY

State of the question. St. Thomas inquires in this article whether Christ's passion brought about our salvation by way of efficiency. The query is not concerned with what constitutes the work of redemption, but with what

follows from it as a part of the effect to be produced. It does not pertain to the faith as the preceding queries do, but belongs properly to theology.

It concerns not only moral causality, as being the causality of merit awaiting the effect from another, but also efficient and physical causality, which produces the effect. We have already seen that Christ's soul, inasmuch as it is the instrument united with the Word, had and has instrumental power to produce supernatural effects.

Yet there remains a special difficulty for Christ's passion, which could not be the case with any man; for no corporeal agent acts except by actual contact. Moreover, Christ's passion is no more, and therefore it cannot operate efficiently; for that which no longer exists, no longer operates physically.

Reply. Yet the answer is that Christ's passion efficiently causes our salvation, not indeed as principal cause, but as instrumental cause.

Theological proof. Christ's humanity is the instrument of His Godhead, with which it is united. Therefore, as a consequence of this, all Christ's actions and sufferings operate instrumentally in virtue of His Godhead for the salvation of men.

Reply to first objection. It explains the words of the Apostle: "The weakness of God is stronger than men."

Reply to second objection. "Christ's passion although corporeal, has yet a spiritual effect from the Godhead united, and therefore it secures its efficacy by spiritual contact." Corporeal contact is not required, but virtual or dynamic contact suffices. We find this to be true of several instruments used by man, as in the use of a trumpet to transmit a sound in a certain direction; for this instrument does not actually touch the ears of the hearers. A fortiori, God makes use of similar instruments to produce spiritual effects.

The objection that Christ's passion no longer is in action, and therefore cannot operate efficiently, is of no value; for it is a question of Christ's humanity, as formerly subject to suffering and now persists in His glorified wounds. Such is the explanation given by the holy doctor.

Reply to third objection. It is a recapitulation of this subject about Christ's sufferings, for it says: "Christ's passion, according as it is compared with His Godhead, operates in an efficient manner, but so far as it is compared with the will of Christ's soul it acts in a meritorious manner, considered as being within Christ's very flesh, it acts by way of satisfaction, inasmuch as we are liberated by it from the debt of punishment; while

inasmuch as we are freed from the servitude of guilt, it acts by way of redemption; but so far as we are reconciled with God it acts by way of sacrifice."

CHAPTER XXXIV: QUESTION 49: THE EFFECTS OF CHRIST'S PASSION AND THE UNIVERSALITY OF REDEMPTION

In this question St. Thomas shows the six effects of Christ's passion, I which are His merits and satisfaction. Since these six articles present no difficulty, it suffices to give a brief recapitulation of the doctrine contained in them, so that we may pass on to discuss the universality of redemption. All the conclusions of this question must be understood as meaning that Christ's passion is the universal and sufficient cause for the production of these effects; however, that His passion actually produces these effects, it must be applied to us by means of the sacraments and good works.

As regards the definitions of the Church, it has been especially defined in the Second Council of Orange, and in the Council of Trent, that Christ so redeemed us that "the nature lost by Adam was repaired by Him." Christ by His death on the cross redeemed us from sins and reconciled us with the Father. He satisfied for the sins of the whole world. Thus He suffered for all, even for the damned.

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER WE WERE DELIVERED FROM SIN THROUGH CHRIST'S PASSION

By Christ's passion we have been delivered from sin, in that Christ inasmuch as He is our head, by His passion which He endured for us out of love and obedience, as by the price of His passion, redeemed us as His members from sins. He redeemed us in the same way as if a man by the good industry of his hands were to redeem himself from a sin committed with his feet. We are here concerned with the sufficiency of the Passion as regards all past, present, and future sins, but the fruits of the Passion must be applied to us by means of the sacraments, or at least by implicit living faith in Christ.

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER WE WERE DELIVERED FROM THE DEVIL'S POWER THROUGH CHRIST'S PASSION

Conclusion. By Christ's passion we are freed from the devil's power, under whose slavery we had fallen through sin.

Reply to second and third objections. "God so permitting it, the devil can still tempt men's souls and harass their bodies; yet there is still a remedy provided for man through Christ's passion.... namely, a remedy for defending themselves against the wicked snares of the demons, even in Antichrist's time. But if any man neglect to make use of this remedy, it detracts nothing from the efficacy of Christ's passion."

THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER MEN WERE FREED FROM THE PUNISHMENT OF SIN THROUGH CHRIST'S PASSION

Conclusion. Sin having been taken away, we are freed from eternal punishment that is due to it.

Reply to second objection. "Hence no punishment of satisfaction is imposed upon men at their baptism, since they are fully delivered by Christ's satisfaction."

FOURTH ARTICLE: WHETHER WE WERE RECONCILED TO GOD THROUGH CHRIST'S PASSION

Conclusion. By Christ's passion we are reconciled to God, in that the cause of enmity against God, which was sin, has been taken away.

Reply to second objection. The general sense of this reply is that God is said to be placated by a change that is effected not in Him, but in us.

FIFTH ARTICLE: WHETHER CHRIST OPENED THE GATE OF HEAVEN TO US BY HIS PASSION

Conclusion. Christ opened the gate of heaven to us by His passion, in that He removed the obstacle to its entrance, which is sin.

Reply to first objection. Before Christ's passion no one could enter the kingdom of heaven, because living faith, which sufficed in the Old Testament for the cleansing of the individual, did not suffice for removing the barrier arising from the guilt of the whole human race because of original sin.

Reply to second objection. Elias and Enoch are believed to be living in the earthly paradise until the coming of Antichrist.

SIXTH ARTICLE: WHETHER BY HIS PASSION CHRIST MERITED TO BE EXALTED

Conclusion. Christ by His passion merited to be exalted as regards His glorious resurrection, His ascension, His sitting at the right hand of the Father, and His judiciary power.

The Universality Of Redemption

From what has been said, it follows that Christ's redemption is universal, inasmuch as, concerning its sufficiency, it included: (1) all men; (2) all sins; and (3) all good things lost by sin.

1) Redemption included all men, or Christ died for all men. This doctrine on redemption and God's universal will to save are about equivalent in meaning. Luther, Calvin, and the Jansenists, in denying that God wills to save all men, consequently denied that Christ, who came into the world to do His Father's will, died for all men, and so they said that Christ died only for the predestined.

This proposition of Jansenius was condemned, namely: "It is a Semi-Pelagian heresy to say that Christ died or shed His blood for all men without exception." This proposition, understood in this sense, that Christ died for the salvation only of the predestined, was condemned as heretical.

Moreover, that redemption includes all the faithful seems also to be de fide, for the Church declares of Christ: "Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was also crucified for us." All the faithful are bound to recite this symbol of the faith.

Finally, Alexander VIII condemned the following proposition of the Jansenists: "Christ gave Himself for us as an oblation to God, not for the elect only, but for all the faithful, and for the faithful alone."

The Council of Trent says: "But, though He died for all, yet all do not receive the benefit of His death, but those only unto whom the merit of His passion is communicated." Hence theologians generally maintain that it is certain, proximate to the faith, that Christ also died at least for all adult infidels. It is even commonly held against Vasquez that Christ died for all men without exception, even for infants who die without being baptized, inasmuch as Christ merited for them the grace of baptism; yet this was made dependent on secondary causes that sometimes prevent the conferring

of baptism. There is no passage in Scripture that excludes infants from the benefit of redemption, but it asserts in a general way that Christ died for all.

Scriptural proof. There are no limitations. Thus St. Paul says: “Therefore as by the offense of one man, unto all men to condemnation, so also by the justice of one, unto all men to justification of life.” “Christ died for all, that they also who live, may not now live to themselves, but unto Him who died for them, and rose again.” “God will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a redemption for all.” “We see Jesus... crowned with glory and honor that through the grace of God He might taste death for all.” In one of the epistles we read that “Jesus is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.”

Patristic testimony. The Fathers unanimously assert and explain this doctrine on redemption as shown from the texts quoted by Rouet de Journel. St. Augustine, too, says of infants: “Are not infants also men, so as not to belong to those of whom it is said that God wills all to be saved?” He also says: “God does not command what is impossible, but in commanding advises you to do what you can, and to ask for what you cannot do.” It is impossible, however, for adults to observe God’s commands without Christ’s grace. Therefore the Council of Quierzy declared against the predestinarians: “Just as there neither is, was, nor will be any man whose nature was not assumed by Christ Jesus our Lord, so there neither is, was, nor will be a man for whom Christ did not suffer, although not all are redeemed by the mystery of His passion..., because the goblet of Christ’s blood for the salvation of men, which was prepared... has indeed in itself the power to benefit all; but no one is healed except those who drink from this goblet.” Hence Christ’s redemption is universal as regards men, because all are included.

2) Christ’s redemption includes all sins. In other words, Christ truly satisfied for all sins, both original sin and the actual sins of all human beings. The Council of Trent says: “Him [Christ] God hath proposed as a propitiator, through faith in His blood, for our sins, and not for our sins only, but also for those of the whole world.”

This second point, namely, that redemption includes all sins, is de fide, for the sins of the faithful, certain for the sins of infidels, commonly

admitted doctrine for original sin of infants, as proportionately stated for the first point. Otherwise Christ would not have died absolutely for all men.

Moreover, since Christ's satisfaction is superabundant and of infinite value, it follows that He freed us not only from guilt, but also from eternal and temporal punishment. But we are de facto freed from punishment only if Christ's satisfactions are applied to us both by the sacraments, the Sacrifice of the Mass, and by living faith, "which operates by charity."

Christ's satisfaction is not applied to adults without their cooperation, for our Lord says: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me." The Prince of the Apostles also teaches that Christ left us "an example that we should follow His steps." Christ the Savior moves us to act and gives us grace, not that our will remain inactive, but that we act by means of the virtues to keep His precepts.

3) Christ's redemption also includes all good things lost by sin, so that we may be restored to our former state, a work begun in this life and completed in the next.

For, as St. Thomas says, by Christ's passion we are freed from sin, punishment, the power of the devil, reconciled to God, and by it the gate of heaven is opened to us. Thus Christ sufficiently merited for all men habitual grace, actual graces that prepare for or follow justification, and also eternal life. He also merited for us natural good things, inasmuch as these are conducive to salvation. He did not indeed merit that the preternatural gifts of immunity from death, suffering, concupiscence, and error should be restored to us in this life. As St. Thomas explains: "A Christian receives grace in baptism as to his soul; but he retains a passible body, so that he may suffer for Christ therein, ... and this is suitable for our spiritual training, namely, in order that, by fighting against concupiscence and other defects to which he is subject, man may receive the crown of victory." Yet Christ merited that these defects should not gain the mastery over us in this life, and that they be completely eliminated in the next.

Thus Christ's passion is the sufficient cause of salvation for all, and it is efficacious for those to whom it is applied either by the sacraments, or by living faith, and to those who do not resist sufficient grace. But those who resist it deserve to be deprived of efficacious grace. Thus Christ merited all the effects of predestination for the elect, namely, calling, justification, glorification, and also all the efficacious graces that de facto are and will be conferred. As regards the efficacious graces, however, which will not be

conferred because of the resistance to sufficient grace, He merited these as offered in the sufficient grace, but not as conferred or to be conferred. God offers the efficacious grace to us in the sufficient grace, as the fruit is contained in the flower; but when the sufficient grace is resisted, then the efficacious grace is not conferred.

Therefore Christ's redemption is universal including all men, all sins, and all natural good things that were lost by sin. This is a corollary resulting from the superabundant and infinite value of Christ's atonement.

CHAPTER XXXV: THE SUBLIME MYSTERY OF REDEMPTION INASMUCH AS IT IS A MYSTERY OF LOVE

By way of combining synthetically what St. Thomas has said, that we may see more clearly the sublimity of the mystery of redemption inasmuch as it is a mystery of love, two questions remain to be considered: (1) Why Christ suffered so much for us, when the least of His theandric acts of love already superabundantly satisfied for the redemption of all men. (2) How shall we reconcile in Christ crucified the union of supreme suffering with perfect peace and happiness resulting from the beatific vision?

FIRST ARTICLE: WHY CHRIST SUFFERED SO MUCH WHEN THE LEAST OF HIS ACTS OF LOVE SUPERABUNDANTLY SUFFICED FOR THE SALVATION OF ALL MEN

State of the question. When we meditate on Christ's passion, this question often arises: why Christ endured so many humiliations, so many physical and moral sufferings for our salvation, if even by the least act of theandric love He could have merited eternal life for all of us, if the least suffering, joined with theandric love and accepted by God, could have superabundantly redeemed and satisfied for the sins of a thousand worlds, as is commonly taught even in catechisms. It is certain, as was shown above, that the least of Christ's theandric acts of love has an infinite personal value for meriting and satisfying, because it pleases God the Father more than all crimes displease Him. St. Thomas says: "The very least one of Christ's sufferings was sufficient of itself to redeem the human race from all sins." St. Thomas also says:

"O loving Pelican ! O Jesu Lord !
Unclean I am, but cleanse me in Thy blood !
Of which a single drop for sinners spilt,
Can purge the entire world from all its guilt."

Clement VI likewise says: “The innocent Christ who was immolated on the altar of the cross shed not merely a little drop of blood, though this would have sufficed for the redemption of the entire human race, because of the union with the Word, but streams of it, like unto a river.” Wherefore, then, such great humiliations? Christ was forcibly stripped of His garments, scourged, struck in the face, spit upon by the soldiers, crowned with thorns, a reed in derision was placed in His hand; His entire body was made a victim of suffering, and even in His heart He suffered, being abandoned by His own nation, even by His disciples, and He was opposed by the priests of the synagogue, who preferred Barabbas to Him; He was a victim even in His soul, saying in the Garden of Gethsemane: “My soul is sorrowful even unto death,” and on the cross He cried aloud those words of the Messianic psalm: “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?”

Why all these physical and moral sufferings, when the pain endured from theandric love and accepted by God sufficed superabundantly for the redemption of all men?

St. Thomas answers this question by giving three reasons subordinated to one another in an ascending order for this supreme grief, and founded on revelation. They are: (1) on our part; (2) on the part of Christ crucified; (3) on the part of the Father, who did not spare His Son, but delivered Him up to suffer for us.

All these reasons are expressed, more or less explicitly, in the Messianic prophecies, which Christ explained to the two disciples going to the town of Emmaus, to whom He finally said: “Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into His glory?”

These three principal reasons must be separately explained; each consists of several subdivisions.

1) As regards ourselves, it was fitting for Christ to suffer in so many ways and to the utmost, so that He might give us the supreme example of love.

“The proof of love, “ as St. Gregory says, “is shown in act,” and especially in painful sacrifice. Hence Christ Himself said: “Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” But Christ also gave His life for His enemies, and for His executioners for whom He prayed.

St. Thomas says the same in the following words: “Man knows thereby how much God loves him, and is thereby stirred to love Him in return, and

herein lies the perfection of human salvation. Hence the Apostle says: God commendeth His charity toward us, for whereas yet we were sinners... Christ died for us."

On our part, there are other subordinated reasons why Christ suffered for us, reasons which are mentioned here, namely: Because thereby Christ set us an example not only of supreme charity, but also of such subordinated virtues as obedience, humility, constancy, justice, and the other virtues displayed in the Passion, which are requisite for man's salvation. Hence it is written: "Christ suffered for us, leaving you an example that you should follow His steps." In fact, Christ in His passion gave us an example of practicing virtues that are at such extremes from one another that they appear to be contraries, and yet they are intimately and perfectly united in most perfect sanctity, such as supreme fortitude and absolute meekness. St. Thomas, declaring that Christ willed to suffer for us, quotes St. Augustine, who says: "No kind of death should trouble an upright man... because among all kinds of death, none was more execrable, more fear-inspiring than this."

Consequently, as intimated, Christ's passion vividly manifests the gravity of sin, inasmuch as reparation is made for the sin of pride by great humiliations, sins of impurity by such intense sufferings, sins arising from concupiscence of the eyes by such want and deprivation, sins of disobedience by obedience even unto death on the cross.

Likewise Christ's passion most sublimely makes clear to us the value of both the supernatural life of grace and eternal life, which is obtained for us by so much self-denial, in despising all the joys and honors of this life; so that He appears to be completely conquered, stripped of all temporal goods, whereas He truly is the Savior of all these things. This constitutes the chiaroscuro of our Lord's passion considered as it concerns us. These reasons that refer to us are capable of different modes of development, according as they apply in various ways to us.

Finally, under this aspect it must be said with St. Thomas: "As man was overcome and deceived by the devil, so also it should be by a man becoming humble and perfectly obedient that the devil should be overthrown; and as man deserved death, so a man by dying should vanquish death. Hence it is written: "Thanks be to God, who hath given us the victory through our Lord, Jesus Christ. ' " Sinful men need this greatest proof of love for their conversion.

2) As regards Christ the Savior, it befitted Him to suffer in many ways and in the highest degree, so that He might most perfectly accomplish His glorious mission as Savior of the whole human race.

Christ truly fulfilled His mission by heroic obedience even to death on the cross, which was also a most perfect holocaust that was offered from supreme love. St. Thomas says: “Instead of material fire, there was the spiritual fire of charity in Christ’s holocaust.”

Thus the words of St. Paul are verified: “For as by the disobedience of one man, many were made sinners; so also by the obedience of one, many shall be made just.”

Moreover, Christ as priest could not offer any victim worthier than His own self. Hence it is said: “He hath delivered Himself for us, an oblation and a sacrifice to God for an odor of sweetness,” and it is a most perfect holocaust in which the whole victim is consumed in God’s honor and for the reparation of sin. As we said above, the more perfect the sacrifice is, the more the priest who offers it is united with God to whom he offers it, the more he is united with the people for whom he offers it, and finally with the victim, which is an external expression of adoration and of interior reparation. Hence Christ was most fittingly both priest and hostage, and hostage or victim not only in the body, by enduring physical pain, but also in the heart and soul by submitting to the most intense of moral suffering. Thus among the three apostolates of doctrine and prayer and suffering or sacrifice, the last is the more fruitful; Christ saved more by His death on the cross than by His preaching on the Mount of the Beatitudes, and He preached nowhere better and more sublimely than on the cross.

Thus it was fitting that the most perfect Redeemer should accomplish His mission in a most perfect manner, by a heroic sacrifice of supreme love, offered out of supreme love for God’s glory and the salvation of souls. Hence in this way Christ not only merited, but He merited in the highest degree the exaltation of His name, and what He was already entitled to because of His divine sonship, this He acquired because He had supremely merited it. But if anything can be the object of merit, it is better to have it from merit than without merit.

Moreover, as will be said in the following question, while Christ was still both wayfarer and comprehensor, He could not have fullness of grace, and love for God and souls without experiencing the greatest of grief for mortal sin, since it is an offense against God and the death of souls that leads to

eternal misery. On this point St. Thomas says: “This grief in Christ surpassed all grief of every contrite heart, both because it flowed from a greater wisdom and charity, and because He grieved at the same time for all sins, as the prophet says, Surely He hath carried our sorrows.”

Finally, it must be observed that very great holiness arouses men of bad disposition neither to admiration nor indifference, but to hatred which results in fierce persecution. The Evangelist says: “Men loved darkness rather than the light.” Hence Christ said of the Pharisees: “Now they have hated both Me and My Father.” The old man Simeon had said of Jesus in His early childhood: “Behold this child is set for a sign which shall be contradicted... that out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed.”

3) As regards God the Father, it was fitting that the Father should deliver up His Son to the greatest of suffering, so that Christ by this sorrowful way might attain to the greatest of all glory, namely, victory over sin, the devil, and death. It is in this way that in the case of certain great servants of God, such as St. Paul of the Cross, their life is made illustrious. The holy Doctor, St. Thomas, presents the following objection on this subject: “It seems that God does not always love more the better things. For it is manifest that Christ is better than the whole human race, being God and man. But God loved the human race more than He loved Christ; for it is said: “He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all. ‘ Therefore He does not always love more the better things.”

St. Thomas replies by saying: “God loves Christ not only more than He loves the whole human race, but more than He loves the entire created universe; because He willed for Him the greater good in giving Him a name that is above all names, so far as He was true God. Nor did anything of His excellence diminish when God delivered Him up to death for the salvation of the human race; rather did He become thereby a glorious conqueror. The government was placed upon His shoulder, as the prophet says.” In other words, Christ became conqueror of sin and the devil by offering Himself in sacrifice on the cross, and the conqueror of death by His resurrection inasmuch as “the wages of sin is death,” and it is destroyed after sin is destroyed.

Thus sometimes in human affairs, the general of the army in time of war must sacrifice several of his soldiers for the safety of his country; then he often chooses the better soldiers. The example is quoted of the magnanimous general who chose his son to lead the soldiers who were to

die fighting for the safety of their country. In such a case, the son thus chosen fulfils perfectly his military calling, thanks his father for this glorious mission, and in this we see clearly the heroic love of the father for his son, and of the son for his father and the safety of the fatherland. This is a remote comparison with the sacrifice on the cross; for God the Father truly “delivered up His Son for us” and gave Him a strict command to die for us on the cross.

St. Thomas beautifully explains this in commenting on these words of our Lord: “I lay down My life, that I may take it again. No man taketh it away from Me, but I lay it down of Myself, and I have power to lay it down of Myself and I have power to take it up again. This commandment I have received of My Father.” He considers that this text concerns a command in the strict sense, and says: “The fulfillment of a command is a proof of love for the person who commands.” St. Thomas in another article shows that, although this command is dour, yet it results from the supreme love of the Father for the Son.

At the beginning of the above-mentioned article, St. Thomas puts this objection to himself: “It is a wicked and cruel act to hand over an innocent man to torment and death; but the Apostle says: He spared not even His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all.”

We quoted the following reply of the holy Doctor: “In three respects God the Father did deliver up Christ to the Passion. In the first way, because by His eternal will He preordained Christ’s passion for the deliverance of the human race, according to the words of the prophet: “The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquities of us all, ‘ and again: “The Lord was pleased to bruise Him in infirmity.” Secondly, inasmuch as, by the infusion of charity, He inspired Him with the will to suffer for us. Hence we read in the same passage: “He was offered because it was His own will.” Thirdly, by not shielding Him from the Passion, but abandoning Him to His persecutors. Hence we read that Christ, while hanging upon the cross cried out: ‘My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?, because to wit, He left Him to the power of His persecutors, as Augustine says.”

There was not any cruelty in this on the part of the Father, because “God the Father did not deliver up Christ against His will, but inspired Him with the will to suffer for us. God’s severity is thereby shown, for He would not remit sin without penalty... and His goodness shines forth, since by no penalty endured could man pay Him enough satisfaction.”

Reply to third objection. “The Father delivered up Christ, and Christ surrendered Himself from charity, and consequently we give praise to both. But Judas betrayed Christ from greed, the Jews from envy, and Pilate from worldly fear, for he stood in fear of Caesar. And these accordingly are held guilty.” Thus on the part of God the Father inspiring and commanding and on the part of Christ offering Himself, His death was a sacrifice, whereas for the Jews it was a sacrifice and a crime.

But the divine decree concerning the command Christ received to die for us, can be illustrated by divers subordinated motives with respect to the glory which God the Father willed eternally for His Son.

1) The greatest degree of glory is acquired in accepting with great love the more profound humiliations. Thus Christ Himself said: “Everyone that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.” The parable of the Pharisee and the publican is likewise an example. This truth is often mentioned in the Old Testament, and it is clearly illustrated in the lives of Job, the prophet Joseph, who was sold by his brothers but was afterward exalted, as also in the life of Isaac, who was a figure of Christ, inasmuch as he was bound on the altar by his father to be sacrificed, and afterward he was blessed with an innumerable progeny. This law of the supernatural order finds its supreme verification in Christ. Because of His divine sonship, indeed, by reason of His birth and heredity, He already had the right to the greatest glory, namely, to sit at the right hand of the Father; but it was also most fitting that He should obtain this greatest of glory on grounds of supreme merit.

Thus also we find verified these words which the prophet said of our Lord: “Behold My Servant, My elect; My soul delighteth in Him... The bruised reed He shall not break, and smoking flax He shall not quench; He shall bring forth judgment unto truth.... I, the Lord, this is My name. I will not give My glory to another.” But God wills from all eternity to give this supreme glory to the incarnate Word, that He sit at the right hand of His Father forever, as supreme Judge of all, as King of kings, Lord of lords; but this highest glory is deservedly obtained by the more profound humiliations of the Passion accepted with great love. This explains clearly our Lord’s words to the disciples on their way to Emmaus: “Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into His glory?”

2) The greatest victory over sin whereby charity is lost, was deservedly obtained by that supreme act of charity, whereby Christ heroically gave His

life for us. Thus we have in this the most eminent verification of these classic words of St. Augustine: “And so the two loves made two cities; the love of self that resulted in contempt of God constituting the worldly city, and the love of God that resulted in contempt of self, constituting the heavenly city.” This contempt of self resulted in the perfect sacrifice of the present life, and of all humiliations; it ended in the ignominy or opprobrium of dying on the cross between two thieves.

3) The greatest victory over the demon of pride and disobedience was deservedly obtained also by humble “obedience unto death, even to the death on the cross.” Hence God the Father, eternally willing for His incarnate Son this most exalted victory, decreed that He become obedient even to the death on the cross. This follows from the supreme love of the Father for His Son and for us in His Son. St. Thomas quotes St. Augustine as saying: “It was fitting means of overthrowing the pride of the devil... that Christ should liberate us by the lowliness of the Passion.”

4) The greatest victory over death, which is the “wages of sin,” justly so is obtained by the resurrection. But this glorious resurrection presupposes death, and death that is accepted through love for the victory over sin, which is the cause of death.

St. Thomas quotes St. Chrysostom as saying: “How could Christ’s victory over death be apparent unless He endured it in the sight of all men, and so proved that death was extinguished by the incorruption of His body?” St. Thomas likewise says: “Christ’s obedience unto death befitted His victory, whereby He triumphed over death and its author.” Thus we chant in the liturgy: “O great work of mercy ! Death then died when Life died on the tree. Alleluia.”

Because of these subordinated motives, God the Father willing this glory and threefold victory of Christ over sin, the devil, and death, decreed to deliver Him up to sufferings, and the greatest humiliations of the Passion.

St. Paul enunciates all these victories in the following sublime combination: “Christ humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross. For which cause God also hath exalted Him, and hath given Him a name which is above all names. That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth. And that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father.”

All these victories appear the more sublime when we consider that the gratuitous predestination of Christ was eternal as regards: (1) His divine natural sonship; (2) His supreme degree of glory; (3) His fullness of habitual grace and charity, whereby Christ was to merit the glory previously intended by God.

These are the reasons for the supreme humiliation and sufferings of Christ, whose least act of love fully and superabundantly sufficed for the redemption of the whole human race.

These reasons must be sought partly in ourselves, partly in Christ, and partly in God the Father, for men needed this supreme manifestation of love; Christ had to accomplish His mission in the most perfect manner; and God the Father, in this way, willed to give His Son supreme victory.

Which of these is the more exalted? The more exalted reason is that of God the Father who predestines, as St. Paul says: “For all are yours; and you are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.” Hence the ultimate end of both the Incarnation and the Passion is the manifestation of God’s goodness, especially by way of mercy. Thus in the liturgy we say: “O God, who dost manifest Thine almighty power above all in showing pardon and pity,” for thus God not only makes something from nothing, as in creation, but from evil, even from the profound and universal evil of the fallen human race, He brings out the greatest good. Hence the Apostle says: “Where sin abounded, grace did more abound” for us, and it was at the same time a definite manifestation of Christ’s victory over sin, the devil, and death, as also of God’s goodness and mercy.

These are the reasons for the humiliations and most intense sufferings of Christ our Redeemer, who appears far more glorious as the Redeemer of the fallen human race and subjected to the various miseries of life than if He had come, in virtue of another decree of Providence, as the Head, the King, and the Teacher of the human race in the state of innocence.

Then Christ would not have come in passible flesh and as a victim; He would not have had the sufferings and humiliations of the Passion, and He would not have merited His future and supreme glory for all eternity in heaven. Hence the complete answer to this question is found in these words of St. Paul: “He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross. For which cause God also hath exalted Him, and hath given Him a name which is above all names,” since God exalted Him to the

highest of glory in that He sits at the right hand of the Father, as God equal to the Father, and as man glorifying the Father.

But the victory of the cross over the devil and sin far surpasses the victory over death on the Resurrection day. The Resurrection, indeed, is a resplendent miracle, but it is only the result of Christ's victory over sin, in that the "wages of sin is death."

This glory of the cross is wondrously expressed in the following lines of the sacred liturgy:

Resplendent is the mystery of the Cross,
On which Life itself died,
And by death our life restored.
Most royally empurpled o'er,
How beauteously thy stem doth shine,
How glorious was its lot to touch
Those limbs so holy and divine.
Hail Cross, thou only hope of man,
Now in this joyous paschal time
Justice in godly souls increase
And free the guilty from their crime.

Likewise in the following sequence:

Let me, to my latest breath
In my body bear the death
Of that dying Son of Thine.
Wounded with His every wound,
Steep my soul till it hath swooned
In His very blood away.
Christ, when Thou shalt call me hence,
Be Thy Mother my defense
Be Thy Cross my victory.

SECOND ARTICLE: ON THE UNION IN CHRIST THE SAVIOR OF THE GREATEST SUFFERING AND THE BEATIFIC VISION

After the discussion of the problem concerning the motive for the humiliations and very great sufferings of Christ the Redeemer, another very secret aspect of the Passion must be considered, namely, how Christ

endured the greatest sufferings, even in the moral order, and at the same time retained the joy of supreme happiness in the beatific vision.

This problem is examined by St. Thomas in four articles, wherein he asks: Whether Christ endured all sufferings; whether the pain of His passion was the greatest; whether He suffered in His whole soul; whether His entire soul enjoyed blessed fruition during the Passion. We have already discussed these articles, but now the doctrine contained in them must be considered more profoundly, and from a more exalted point of view.

Preliminary Remarks

What makes this whole question so famous is the fact that Christ as man received from the first moment of His conception fullness of grace and charity together with the beatific vision, and hence He always had an ardent desire of most perfectly accomplishing His mission as Redeemer, by offering Himself as a supreme holocaust.

Hence we shall see: (1) that He often expressed this desire during His life; (2) that He endured all kinds of sufferings and the greatest of pain; (3) that He always had, however, the greatest of peace and happiness; (4) that the greatest of sadness and the greatest of happiness were compatibly united in Him. Concerning this last inquiry, there are three theories which, as we shall declare, are insufficient. They are: (1) that Christ suffered only in the sensitive part of His soul, which is a grave error; (2) that Christ during His passion refused the joy of the beatific vision; (3) that the greatest of happiness and the greatest of sadness are strictly contraries, and yet they are miraculously united. We shall declare that they are not strictly contraries, but their union is, nevertheless, both a miracle and a mystery, and because of this mystery it followed that Christ was both a wayfarer and a comprehensor.

This whole question must be clarified by the aid of the principle that Christ from the beginning of His human life had absolute fullness of grace from which there resulted on the one hand the light of glory, the beatific vision, and supreme joy, and on the other hand supreme charity, the greatest of zeal for God’s glory and the salvation of souls, together with a most ardent desire of most perfectly accomplishing His redemptive mission by the supreme sacrifice of His life through the most perfect immolation of Himself. Hence these two effects that differ in the highest degree, namely, the greatest of joy and the greatest of suffering, originate from the same source, that is, the fullness of grace, and thus they must be intimately

reconciled. In fact, we shall see that Christ's most intense suffering was concerned with sin and was in accordance with the intensity of His charity or love for God who is offended, and for souls of sinners; for it was Christ's love for souls that made Him utterly sad at the sin and loss of many souls. St. Thomas says that Christ grieved exceedingly at the sin of the Jews killing Him (cf. IIIa, q. 15, a. 6; q. 46, a. 6). In this most exalted principle, we already clearly see the intimate reconciliation of those things that differ in the highest degree, and that are naturally incompatible.

1) The plenitude of Christ's charity is the cause of His ardent desire for the sacrifice of the cross.

It is a generally accepted principle in theology that, when God immediately entrusts anyone with a very special mission of a divine nature, He demands proportionate sanctity in His legate. For God's works are perfect, especially His own immediate and exclusive operations; in these works there cannot be any deordination or lack of proportion. This principle, especially as it applies to Christ, is a revealed truth, for the Apostle says: "In the dispensation of the fullness of times [God] proposed to re-establish all things in Christ." The importance of this most certain principle is still more clearly seen if by contrast we examine carefully what more often happens in the regulation of human affairs. Frequently incapable and imprudent persons are placed in very high positions to the detriment of those over whom they must rule. But nothing like this happens to those who, immediately chosen and prepared by God for this special ministry of the supernatural order, are called by Him. To these God gives proportionate grace, so that they may perfectly fulfill their mission, as is clearly seen in the lives of those saints who were founders of religious orders, and in the lives of the apostles. But we find this truth most of all verified in Christ the Savior.

For, as stated above, Christ had received both in intensity and in extent absolute plenitude of habitual grace and charity, and therefore in accordance with this fullness of charity He ardently desired from the beginning of His earthly life most perfectly to accomplish His mission by the sacrifice on the cross, willed by God for our salvation.

If Daniel the prophet was a "man of desires," if to all Christians our Lord said, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice, for they shall have their fill," then certainly Christ Himself had on earth an ardent desire of accomplishing His redemptive mission, no matter what obstacles and

persecution He had to encounter, so that even these persecutions might serve the purpose of His mission, which is to be both priest and victim.

Christ's mission is already clearly proclaimed by St. John the Baptist, who says: "Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him who taketh away the sin of the world."

But this ardent desire of most perfectly completing this sacrifice of Himself on the cross, is expressed by Christ Himself in various ways.

Thus St. Paul, who in one of his epistles speaks of Christ the great high priest and victim, points out the inadequacy of the sacrifices of the Old Law, and says: "For it is impossible that with the blood of oxen and goats sin should be taken away. Wherefore when He cometh into the world He saith: Sacrifice and oblation Thou wouldst not, but a body Thou hast fitted to Me. Holocausts for sin did not please Thee. Then I said: Behold I come. In the head of the book it is written of Me that I should do Thy will, O God.... Then I said: Behold I come to do Thy will, O God." St. Paul at once adds: "In the which will, we are sanctified by the oblation of the body of Jesus Christ once." He says "once, " because Christ's bloody sacrifice was accomplished once on the cross, and because the interior oblation of Himself thus made from the beginning continued without interruption, and this offering did not have to be renewed because it was never interrupted. If a perfect religious, after taking vows for life, lives always, so to speak, in a state of actual oblation, a fortiori this is so with Christ Himself.

Truly this oblation never ceased in Christ's soul, and He expressed it in equivalent words in the Garden of Gethsemane, saying: "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

But Christ, between the beginning and the end of His life on earth, clearly expressed this desire of suffering for us; for the Evangelist records Him as saying: "I am come to cast fire on the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled? And I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptized, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished." It concerns the baptism of blood, which is the most perfect of all, as St. Thomas shows, for it is at the same time a sacrifice.

Likewise the desire of the Passion or of the cross is most beautifully expressed in the parable of the good shepherd: "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep. But the hireling... seeth the wolf coming... and flieth.... I am the good shepherd... and I lay down My life for My sheep.... No man taketh it away from Me, but I lay it down of

Myself.... This commandment I have received of My Father.” Therefore this interior oblation continues without interruption in Christ’s will.

Similarly, after Jesus had foretold His sorrowful passion to His apostles, Peter “began to rebuke Him, saying: “Lord, be it far from Thee, this shall not be unto Thee. ‘ Who turning, said to Peter: “Go behind Me, Satan, thou are a scandal unto Me, because thou savorest not the things that are of God, but the things that are of men. ‘ “ Unknowingly Peter spoke against the whole economy of salvation, against the infallible disposition of Providence concerning the sacrifice of the cross for the salvation of the human race. Christ again affirms His mission and perfectly wills its accomplishment, notwithstanding the extreme pain of the crucifixion.

In like manner He speaks of taking up the cross in these words: “He that findeth his life [that is, in loving too much the joys of this world] will lose it; and he that shall lose his life [or sacrifice his life for God] shall find it.” To the sons of Zebedee, “Jesus answering said: “You know not what you ask. Can you drink the chalice that I shall drink? or be baptized with the baptism wherewith I am baptized?” They say to Him: “We can.” Jesus saith to them: “You shall indeed drink of the chalice.”

Again, after His triumphant entry into Jerusalem, Christ speaks of His glorification by means of the cross, when He says: “The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified. Amen, amen, I say to you, unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, itself remaineth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” A voice therefore came from heaven. “I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.” ... Jesus said to the multitude: “This voice came not because of Me, but for your sakes. Now is the judgment of the world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself.” This is a beautiful expression of Christ’s ardent desire for the passion. The Evangelist at once adds: “Now this He said signifying what death He should die.”

Finally, this ardent desire for the sacrifice of the cross is most clearly expressed on the day before He suffered, when Christ instituted the Sacrifice of the Mass, which is substantially the same as the sacrifice of the cross. As the Evangelist narrates, He said to the apostles: “With desire I have desired to eat this pasch with you, before I suffer.” In other words, I have desired most earnestly to eat this pasch with you, that is, as Eusebius observes, the pasch of the New Testament, which is the Eucharist in which

Christ is as a victim; hence He at once afterward said: “I say to you, that from this time I will not eat it, till it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.” “And taking bread, He gave thanks and broke, and gave to them saying: “This is My body, which is given for you. Do this for a commemoration of Me. ‘ In like manner the chalice also, after He had supped, saying: “This is the chalice, the new testament in My blood, which shall be shed for you.”

Immediately after the supper, on His way to the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus expresses this same desire, saying: “For the prince of this world cometh and in Me He hath not anything. But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father hath given Me commandment, so do I.”

He also says: “Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” “Sanctify them [the apostles] in truth.... And for them I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.” In other words, I sacrifice Myself.

From these different texts it is evident that Christ continually desired the perfect fulfillment of His mission by the sacrifice of the cross. These various passages are also clarified from the teaching on the plenitude of grace and charity in the Savior, as stated above. This fullness of grace disposed Christ so that He most perfectly desired and efficaciously willed to accomplish His mission of Redeemer and victim by offering Himself as a perfect holocaust, suffering for us all the physical and moral pains of the Passion and crucifixion. This explains why He willed to suffer sadness unto death for us, and why “He began to fear and to be heavy,” in that He willed to suffer this extreme anxiety, so that His sacrifice might be a perfect holocaust, in which the victim is completely destroyed and consumed in God’s honor for the remission of sins.

2) Did Christ endure all kinds of suffering, and even the greatest?

St. Thomas in examining this question shows that “it was not necessary for Christ to endure every kind of suffering, since many are mutually exclusive, as burning, and drowning,” and it did not become Him to suffer bodily sicknesses. But He endured all kinds of sufferings, in that: (1) on the part of men, He suffered from all classes, namely, from the Gentiles, the Jews, the rulers, the people, His apostles, as is evident from Judas who betrayed Him, and Peter who denied Him; (2) on the part of those things whereby man can suffer, He suffered from His friends deserting Him, from hunger, by contempts and blasphemies against His honor, in His body, in His soul through extreme sadness and weariness; (3) then He suffered in all

parts of His body, from the feet nailed to the cross to the head crowned with thorns.

But was the pain of Christ's passion greater than all other pains?

St. Thomas replies that the pain of Christ's passion was the greatest of all pains in the present life, and this for four reasons: (1) from the quasi-efficient causes of this pain; (2) from the susceptibility of the sufferer; (3) because of the lack of any mitigation of the pain taken in the formal sense; (4) from the end in view, because the pain willed by Christ was to be proportionate for the liberation of the human race, in that the sacrifice of Himself must be a most perfect holocaust.

St. Thomas develops this subject here, and thus explains the words of the prophet: "Attend and see if there be any sorrow like to my sorrow."

1) The cause indeed of the sensible pain was most bitter, in that the crucifixion affected His whole body, especially the most sensible parts, which are the hands and the feet. Also the cause of the interior pain could not be a greater evil, for it was first the sins of the human race, for which Christ satisfied by suffering, which he ascribes to Himself, and secondly, His being abandoned by His people and His disciples.

2) There could not have been greater sensibility in the sufferer, both as to soul and body, for "Christ's body was endowed with a most perfect constitution, since it was fashioned miraculously, and His sensitiveness of touch was most acute, which is the reason for our feeling pain. His soul, likewise, from its interior powers, apprehended most vehemently all the causes of sadness."

3) Christ's suffering was not mitigated, as in other sufferers, from some consideration of reason, by some derivation of joy from the higher powers into the lower, for as Damascene says: "He permitted each one of His powers to exercise its proper function," by not lessening the pain from some higher consideration, which He could have done. Thus He most freely and fully delivered Himself up to pain.

4) Because Christ willed to suffer pain that was in proportion to the liberation of men from sin. St. Thomas expresses it as follows: "Fourthly, the magnitude of the pain of Christ's suffering can be reckoned by this, that the pain and sorrow were accepted voluntarily, to the end of men's deliverance from sin; and consequently He embraced the amount of pain proportionate to the magnitude of the fruit which resulted therefrom."

Reply to second objection. “And so to atone for the sins of all men, Christ accepted sadness, the greatest in absolute quantity, yet not exceeding the rule of reason, “ that is, not preventing the use of reason. But, as it was said above, He delivered Himself up fully and most freely to pain for our salvation.

Reply to fourth objection. Christ grieved not only over the loss of His own bodily life, but also over the sins of all others. And this grief in Christ surpassed all grief of every contrite heart, both because it flowed from a greater wisdom and charity, by which the pang of contrition is intensified, and because He grieved at one time for all sins, according to the prophet who said: “Surely He hath carried our sorrows “

This last text could be developed at length. For Christ grieved not only in the sensitive part of His soul, but in His will motivated by charity. This finds its confirmation in the lives of the saints who offered themselves as victims for certain sinners only, and grieved very intensively for their sins. Thus it was, for example, with St. Catherine of Siena. But Christ not only grieved for the sins of certain sinners, but for those of all men of whatever generation and nation, and for all sins taken together. The chalice about which He said in the Garden of Gethsemane: “Let this chalice pass from Me,” was the chalice of all human iniquities. He accepted this chalice, so that He might give us another chalice, to wit, the chalice of His most precious blood. These two chalices represent the whole history of the human race, all the abundance of evil and all the superabundance of good.

Moreover, as St. Thomas says in the above-mentioned text, Christ grieved for all sins taken together, so that His grief might exceed the grief of any contrite person whatever, because it was a supernatural detestation not only of certain sins, but of all sins, and moreover because it was the result of greater wisdom and charity. This reason is most evident. St. Thomas says that contrition is grief of the intellective part of the soul, namely, a displeasure of the will about sin, and is always accompanied by grace and charity; for the soul grieves about sin because of God who is infinitely lovable and loved above all things. There was, indeed, neither contrition nor penance in Christ, because He had never sinned; in fact, He was absolutely impeccable. But there was supreme detestation of sin in the higher part of His soul, and as long as He was both wayfarer and comprehensor, He grieved to the utmost spiritually for the sins of men.

This point is clarified by the following principles.

The just person grieves all the more for sin, the more that person knows its gravity; but nobody knew better than Christ the Savior the quasi-infinite gravity of mortal sin, which practically denies God His dignity of being the ultimate end. If St. Catherine of Siena saw the interior state of souls as regards certain prelates of her time, so as to feel nauseated, then what effect must Christ's knowledge have had upon Him!

Likewise the greater the degree of love which the just person has for God who is offended by sin, the greater is the grief for sin. Sermons are preached about this on the feast day of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Compassion to show how great was her grief for sin. A fortiori, much more did Christ grieve for all sins because of the fullness of His love for God the Father, who is offended by sin, and for souls that through sin lose eternal life. In other words, the fullness of Christ's charity increased in Him to the utmost extent His capacity of suffering for the greatest of evils, which is sin. On the contrary, egotism prevents this holy grief, for the egotist, who lives only a superficial life of soul, grieves only superficially over evils that wound his sensuality or pride.

What has been said establishes how much Christ willed to suffer for us, as the following texts prove: "Surely He hath borne our iniquities and carried our sorrows"; "Who His own self bore our sins in His body upon the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live to justice"; "He appeared to take away our sins." Therefore most certainly, as our faith teaches, Christ most vehemently desired to suffer for our salvation even to the death of the cross.

This ardent desire of the cross and supreme happiness of the suffering Christ constitute, as stated, the two principal effects of His fullness of grace to which all other effects can be reduced. They are the two extremes of His interior life.

For Christ's supreme happiness, which consists in the beatific vision, is the nobler element in His human intellect, just as the love of God and peace of mind resulting from this beatific vision constitute what is nobler in His human will. But the ardent desire of Christ for the cross is another aspect of which Christ's life seems to be contrary to what has been said, but it most evidently corresponds to His primary mission of Savior and victim. Thus we have, as L. Chardon says, a beautiful combination of the whole of Christ's interior life.

We must now consider how these two principal effects of Christ's plenitude of grace, although apparently contraries, could simultaneously be present in the Passion.

All these statements pertain more to the teaching of faith than to theology. They transcend it. Yet theology is most useful in showing the subordination of these statements in the body of doctrine. In fact, the principal part of sacred theology is not the deduction of theological conclusions through the medium of a natural premise, but it is the explanation of the truths of the faith and their logical subordination. In the manifestation of this subordination, theology in some manner hides itself; somehow as St. John the Baptist says of Christ: "He must increase, but I must decrease." This means that sacred theology no longer uses strictly technical terms, but speaks in the words of Sacred Scripture, which are like precious stones logically arranged by it, so that in their subordinate and doctrinal setting they may interact as searchlights. This most exalted part of theology proposes the object of faith in a doctrinal manner, that is, in logical order, and thus it is of great service to contemplation, because thus it prepares for us a general synthesis of the truths wherein we have a view of the whole doctrine of faith, as also a complete and intelligent grasp of it.

3) Christ always retained His supreme happiness even when hanging on the cross.

We have seen, that Christ already in this life enjoyed the beatific vision. He says of Himself: "We speak what we know, and we testify what we have seen." "He that cometh from above is above all.... And what He hath seen and heard, that He testifieth." But Christ speaks of Himself as man, therefore He sees God as man. This vision is the direct source of His testimony. He has not only faith in His own divinity and personality, but something more than faith, namely, beatific vision or knowledge.

Likewise He says: "No man hath ascended into heaven, but He that descendeth from heaven, the Son of man who is in heaven." This is the same as saying that the Son of man, still living on earth as man, is already in heaven, or is both wayfarer and comprehensor, as tradition asserts.

Similarly, a short time before His passion, He says: "Father, I will that where I am, they also whom Thou hast given Me may be with Me, that they may see My glory which Thou hast given Me." The phrase, "where I am, " signifies the termination of this life, or glory.

This is also quite clear from the Transfiguration, which was the sign of Christ's hidden glory in the soul, which He then allowed to have its repercussion on the body, according to the common teaching of the Fathers.

Hence the Holy Office declared (June 7, 1918) that the following proposition cannot safely be taught. "There is no evidence that Christ when on earth had the knowledge of which the blessed or comprehensors have." To say that this proposition can be safely taught would be an error.

In fact, we have seen that, if Christ's soul did not have from the beginning the beatific vision but received it later on, then His charity was capable of increase, which is contrary to the teaching of the Second Council of Constantinople, which says: "Christ was not made better by advancing in perfection." From the first moment of His conception His soul was raised to the highest degree of being, namely, to the being of the Word, and consequently to the highest of all operations, that is, to the beatific vision, which was permanent in Christ continuing during sleep, just as His plenitude of grace was, which resulted from the uncreated grace of union. Thus because of the beatific vision He already enjoyed the utmost happiness.

But there is no reason why the beatific vision should have been interrupted at the moment of His passion and crucifixion. On the contrary, of its nature the beatific vision cannot be lost, and it is measured by participated eternity.

Even the theological reason that St. Thomas advances, shows that the sublime fitness of the beatific vision in Christ still a wayfarer, especially applies to the moment of His passion and crucifixion. The reason is this, that Christ already in this life had to be the Teacher of all teachers, namely, of the apostles and doctors of the Church, so as to lead the human race to eternal life, which is the vision of God. But what is in potentiality is reduced to act by what is already in act. Therefore it was most of all fitting that Christ, the Teacher of all teachers, in those things that pertain to eternal life, should already have in this life the immediate vision of God or eternal life to which He was to lead men.

But now it must furthermore be said that Christ, during His passion and on the cross, also teaches in a more sublime manner than before, in uttering the following last words of His: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do"; "This day thou shalt be with Me in paradise"; "Woman, behold thy son.... Behold thy mother"; "My God, My God, why hast Thou

forsaken Me?" "I thirst"; "It is consummated"; "Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit."

During these last moments, Jesus most sublimely teaches all men, more so than all the apostles, doctors, and saints. He teaches mercy toward those who err, promises the joys of paradise in the near future to those who invoke Him, teaches that the Blessed Virgin Mary is the spiritual mother of all men, and also by His sufferings satisfies the demands of divine justice. In fact, by the words, "It is consummated," He teaches that the mystery of redemption is accomplished by the victory of charity gained over sin and the devil.

Therefore, if the beatific vision befitted Christ, inasmuch as already on this earth He was the Teacher of all teachers, it especially befitted Him on the cross, because He never spoke so sublimely as the Teacher and Savior of all as at that time. Thus the martyrs receive special illumination at the time of their martyrdom, as St. Stephen did who "saw the glory of God and Jesus standing on the right hand of God." Hence no theologian of any importance is quoted as teaching that Christ's beatific vision was interrupted during His passion and crucifixion.

However, some such as Cano, Valentia, Salmeron, and Maldonatus said that Christ had the beatific vision at the time of His death, but renounced beatific joy, so as to suffer sadness for the purpose of man's redemption.

But, as Gonet shows, this opinion displeases other theologians, and rightly so. The beatific vision and beatific joy are inseparable, because it is impossible for the will to have supreme good presented to it, namely, God clearly seen, and not find joy and complete satisfaction in this. Granted the beatific vision, the created rational being finds complete satisfaction in its love for God, the uncreated Being, and it is not a free act either on the part of the object which specifies it or on the part of the act itself, for it is an absolutely spontaneous act, though it transcends liberty. As St. Thomas teaches: "If the will be offered an object which is good universally, and from every point of view, the will tends to it of necessity, if it wills anything at all."

Hence St. Thomas, in the solution of his objection concerning the incompatibility of supreme happiness with supreme sorrow in Christ during His passion, did not deny beatific joy to Him in the summit of His soul, but affirmed it.

It is also clearly evident from the foregoing that Christ often spoke of the utmost peace of mind which He had and which was the normal effect of His fullness of grace. Thus He says: “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, do I give unto you.” Before the Passion He says: “These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace.” Peace is the effect of charity, and it consists in the tranquility of order of all the affections subordinated to the love of God; it is the union of the powers of the soul subject to God, who is loved above all things. Likewise holy joy is the effect of charity. Hence in Christ it was in accordance with the fullness of His grace and charity, which He always had.

4) The intimate union prevailing between supreme peace and supreme sadness in Christ’s passion.

This union belongs to the very mystery of redemption. It is, as we shall see, a miracle and also an essentially supernatural miracle, being like two united extremes. Hence this intimate union cannot be explained in a natural way. But, as the Vatican Council says, “Reason enlightened by faith, when it seeks earnestly, piously, and calmly, attains by a gift of God some and that a very fruitful, understanding of mysteries.” It attains especially an understanding or contemplation of the above-mentioned union and connection between the virtues in Christ’s passion that is most fruitful for the spiritual life of which the Savior is the exemplar.

Our starting point must be the fact affirmed in the Gospel, that although Christ said, “My soul is sorrowful even unto death,” yet He maintained the utmost peace of mind in the midst of the greatest physical and moral sufferings of the Passion, complete mastery over Himself, and absolute conformity of His will with His Father’s will. This is so from the very words uttered by our Lord in the Garden of Gethsemane and during His passion, particularly these last words: “It is consummated,” and “Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit.” These last words are a quasi-consecration of the sacrifice on the cross, which therefore would be a true sacrifice even though there had not been a previous Eucharistic oblation at the Last Supper, as commonly taught. It was Calvin, indeed, who chose to see an expression Or desperation in the words, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” But these words are manifestly nothing else but the holy and inspired words of the Messianic psalm, wherein we read, on the contrary: “In Thee our fathers have hoped, they have hoped, and Thou hast delivered them.... But I am a worm and no man, the reproach of men

and the outcast of the people.... They have dug my hands and my feet. They have numbered all my bones.... But Thou, O Lord, remove not Thy help to a distance from me.... Save me from the lion's mouth.... I will declare Thy name to my brethren, and in the midst of the Church I will praise Thee. You that fear the Lord, praise Him... because He hath not slighted, nor despised the supplication of the poor man.... For the kingdom is the Lord's and He shall have dominion over the nations." There is no expression of desperation in this Messianic psalm, in which the details of the Passion are most completely given. There is nothing of despair, but it starts with an expression of greatest grief on the part of Christ suffering for the sins of the whole human race, which bring down God's malediction, in accordance with the following words of St. Paul: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, for it is written: Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Therefore they are the words of a victim who suffers to the utmost under the curse that is due to sin. But Christ wishes so to suffer because of His utmost charity, and He at the same moment also adores and loves God's infinite justice. Hence almost immediately afterward He says: "It is consummated," that is, the holocaust is completed; and then: "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." These last words evidently are not the words of a despairing and conquered person, but, as stated, they are the words of consecration in the sacrifice of the cross. They are the words of the conqueror over sin and the devil, who very soon will be, on the Resurrection Day, the conqueror over death that is the result of sin. "It is consummated" is the expression of peace that has been restored, which is tranquility of order. Christ could say: "I have overcome the world."

Hence it is thus that St. Thomas and St. Augustine explain these words: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?", because God left Him to the power of His persecutors. Thus St. Paul says: "He that spared not even His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all." And the prophet declares that: "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.... And was pleased to bruise Him in infirmity."

Hence there is no doubt about the union prevailing between utmost peace and utmost grief during the time of Christ's passion.

Explanation Of This Fact

But how can these two apparently contrary extremes be united in the same soul and at the same moment?

This aspect of the mystery of the redemption was often the object of speculation among theologians and of infused contemplation for mystics. It must be noted, as the Salmanticenses and Gonet report, in commenting on the beatific knowledge of Christ, that some not knowing how to explain this union, devised three insufficient theories that are generally rejected by theologians.

First theory. It is that of Aureolus and those who, as Capreolus reports, said that Christ suffered only in the sensitive part of His soul; but, as the Salmanticenses observe, this view is contrary to the common opinion of the Fathers, who said that Christ grieved for the sins of all men, and this grief is evidently in the will, just as contrition is in our will. This is evident, as the Salmanticenses state, from the epistle of Pope St. Agatho to which the Sixth General Council, the Third of Constantinople, referred against the Monothelites, wherein a distinction is drawn between Christ's human spiritual will and His divine will. Hence this theory seems heretical or at least proximately heretical, it being contrary to the general doctrine, in accordance with Scripture and tradition, of the ordinary magisterial teaching of the Church. Aureolus was a nominalist, and the forerunner of William of Occam.

Second theory. It is the view taken by Melchior Cano, Valentia, Salmeron, and Maldonatus. They say that Christ during His passion gave up His beatific joy, which is the normal consequence of the beatific vision. But this opinion, which is contrary to the teaching of St. Thomas, seems to involve a contradiction, as Gonet says, for it seems impossible for the will to have the supreme good presented to it, namely, God clearly seen, and not find delight therein, because, granted this immediate vision of God's essence and goodness, as already stated, the human will as regards this object no longer has either liberty of specification or liberty of exercise.

Third theory. It was proposed by Theophile Raynaud, who said that by God's absolute power, supreme happiness and supreme sadness can miraculously be present at the same time in the same subject, even though these are contraries. But as Gonet says, this theory does not seem to be reasonable, because this contrariety includes contradiction, if it be of the same object concerning which the will would experience both joy and sorrow. But not even God by His absolute power can cause contradictories to be present at the same time. Almost all theologians admit that this union of utmost grief and utmost joy was miraculous or the result of a miracle by

which Christ was both comprehensor and wayfarer, having prevented the overflow of glory into the inferior part of the soul; but a miracle cannot involve a contradiction.

Let us see what St. Thomas says. He has discussed this problem in various articles. He has most admirably presented the difficulty to be solved, by remarking that “it is impossible to be sad and glad at the same time, as the Philosopher says.” This first objection reads: “It is not possible to be sad and glad at the same time, since sadness and gladness are contraries. But Christ’s whole soul suffered grief during the Passion, and His grief was the greatest.” Therefore He could not have at the same time utmost joy.

St. Thomas answers this objection by quoting St. John Damascene, who says: “Christ’s Godhead permitted His flesh to do and to suffer what was proper to it.” He explains this assertion as follows: “The whole soul can be understood both according to its essence, which is entirely present in each part of the body and in each of its faculties, or according to all its faculties. If it be understood according to its essence, then His whole soul did enjoy fruition, inasmuch as it is the subject of the higher part of the soul to which it belongs to enjoy the Godhead.” So also as St. Thomas says in the preceding article, Christ’s whole soul suffered in the body that suffered, for it is entirely present in the whole body that suffers, and entirely present in each part of the body. “But if we consider the whole soul, as comprising all its faculties, thus His entire soul did not enjoy fruition... because, since Christ was still upon earth, there was no overflowing of glory from the higher part into the lower, nor from the soul into the body. But since, on the contrary, the soul’s higher part was not hindered in its proper acts by the lower, it follows that the higher part of His soul enjoyed fruition perfectly while Christ was suffering.” The first part of St. Thomas’ explanation is ontological, and the second part is psychological.

Objection. A superficial reading of this text of St. Thomas makes it appear that Christ suffered only in the lower faculties of His soul, or in His sensitive nature, as the nominalist Aureolus thought according to what Capreolus says. But this opinion of Aureolus is contrary to the teaching of the ordinary magisterial authority of the Church, since it declares that Christ grieved even morally for our sins.

Reply. Most certainly this is not what St. Thomas means, for just previously he had said: “Christ grieved... over the sins of all others [men].

And this grief in Christ surpassed all grief of every contrite heart, because it flowed from a greater wisdom and charity." He grieved also for man's perdition.

It is manifest that this grief does not belong to the sensitive appetite but to the will. In fact, it seems to pertain to the exalted part of the will that is regulated by greater wisdom and deified by charity.

Instance. But then it seems, as Scotus and Suarez contend, that Christ grieved also in the higher reason for the sins of all men, inasmuch as these are contrary to the eternal law which is the object of the higher reason. Likewise, so it seems, He grieved for the eternal perdition of a number of men, according to the higher reason. So say Scotus and Suarez. But St. Thomas teaches in various passages of his works that Christ did not grieve in the higher reason. These two difficulties, namely, that Christ grieved to the utmost for the sins of all men, but not in His rational will, find their mode of reconciliation in the doctrine of St. Thomas.

Reply. Certainly, as St. Thomas says, "Christ's higher reason did not suffer on the part of its proper object, which is God clearly seen." But it also appears certain, as Cajetan remarks, that, according to St. Thomas, Christ simply did not grieve in His higher will in what is concerned with eternal truths. The reason is, as Cajetan says, that Christ's higher reason already in this life was in full possession of the beatific vision, and the blessed do not grieve over sin; although it displeases them, this displeasure is not sadness, because sadness brings on depression and worry, as St. Thomas says. The angels in heaven do not grieve over sin. How then did Christ grieve to the utmost over the sins of men, yet not in His higher reason? Cajetan replies: "Grief over sin belongs to the lower reason, since the object of such an act is something temporal, namely, an offense against God. Nothing prevents this sadness from being present even when eternal truths are being considered, because the lower reason is regulated by the higher and receives its principles from the higher. According to the nature of their objects, either temporal or eternal, a distinction is drawn between the higher reason and the lower, as St. Thomas says (Ia, q. 79)."

Cajetan's explanation does not conflict with the teaching of St. Thomas in the above-mentioned texts. Hence, at least Christ grieved not only in His sensitive nature, but also in His lower reason inasmuch as this was regulated by the higher, that is, He grieved over the sins of all men in that

according to His higher reason He realized, better than we do, their infinite grievousness.

Therefore the higher reason, in which Christ did not grieve for sin, is the culmination of the human intellect and will, the summit of the mind. In this summit Christ enjoyed the beatific vision, and thus He saw the most sublime reason why God permits sins, which is the purpose of a greater good, namely, to manifest God's mercy and the splendor of His justice. This He saw most evidently, as the blessed see it, who no longer grieve over sin, for they see the victory of God's mercy and the splendor of His justice, since they are no more wayfarers.

Christ in this life still grieved for sin, and to the utmost, because He was both wayfarer and comprehensor, and He voluntarily prevented the connatural overflow of glory into the lower reason so that He might abandon Himself to grief.

Doubt. Was this intimate union of utmost joy and utmost grief in Christ a miracle?

As the Salmanticenses observe, this was a miracle, just as when Christ voluntarily and suddenly put an end to the storm on the lake; for in accordance with the natural laws connected with the life of the soul, joy in the higher part of the soul overflows into the lower part, and conversely it is natural for grief in the lower part of the soul to affect the higher. This deprivation of overflow was both voluntary and miraculous, or it was voluntary because of the miracle inasmuch as Christ was both wayfarer and comprehensor. It was both a miracle and a mystery, that is, it was something essentially supernatural and also extraordinary even in the supernatural order, and it pertains to the hypostatic order as a consequence of the Incarnation; for even according to the laws of the supernatural order, permanence of the beatific vision is not given in this life, but only in the next life. If the beatific vision as a transient act, which was probably granted to St. Paul on this earth, was miraculous, a fortiori the permanence of the beatific vision in Christ here on earth was miraculous. This was the consequence of the miracle and mystery of the Incarnation, while Christ was still in some way a wayfarer according to the lower part of His soul before His resurrection and ascension, He was also a comprehensor or at the end of His earthly life as regards the higher part of His soul. Thus Father Monsabre says that Christ, during His passion, was like a mountain peak

that is brilliantly illumined by the rays of the sun and remains most perfectly calm, whereas its lower part is very much disturbed by the storm.

St. Thomas, as the Salmanticenses remark, admits this miracle in replying to the following objection: “The Philosopher says (Ethics, VII, chap. 14) that, if sadness be vehement, it not only checks the contrary delight, but every delight; and conversely. But the grief of Christ’s passion was the greatest as shown above (a. 6); and likewise the enjoyment of fruition is the greatest.”

Reply to second objection. “The Philosopher’s contention is true because of the overflow which takes place naturally from one faculty of the soul into another; but it was not so with Christ, as was said above in the body of the article.”

In other words, beyond the natural laws connected with the life of the soul, or the miraculous, Christ the wayfarer voluntarily and most freely prevented the overflow of glory from the higher part of the soul to the lower, so that He might abandon Himself more completely to suffering as a voluntary victim offered in holocaust.

Yet I insist. But it seems that there is contrariety and contradiction inasmuch as in the same faculty Christ grieved to the utmost and greatly rejoiced in the same object, namely, His passion, inasmuch as it was fruitful for salvation and the effect of crime. Likewise in the same faculty He grieved to the utmost for the sins of men and rejoiced in the higher good for which sin was permitted.

Reply. This grief and joy were not about the same object considered under the same aspect. Christ grieved for His passion in that it was contrary to His nature, and the effect of the crime of those who killed Him. At the same time, in accordance with the eternal truths in the higher reason, “He rejoiced in this passion, inasmuch as it was, according to God’s good pleasure, conducive to God’s glory and the salvation of men.” St. Thomas well explains this when the question arises about how the penitent is saddened for his sins and rejoices in his sorrow. In his reply to this objection, he says: “Of sorrow and joy we may speak in two ways: first, as being passions of the sensitive appetite, and thus they can nowise be together since they are altogether contrary to each other, either on the part of the object (as when they have the same object) or at least on the part of the movement, for joy is with expansion of the heart, whereas sorrow is with contraction; and it is in this sense that the Philosopher speaks in

Ethics, Bk. IX, chap. 4. Secondly, we may speak of joy and sorrow as being simple acts of the will, to which something is pleasing or displeasing. Accordingly they cannot be contrary to each other, except on the part of the object as when they concern the same object in the same respect, in which way joy and sorrow cannot be simultaneous, because the same thing in the same respect cannot be pleasing and displeasing. [Theophile Raynaud saw the necessity of adverting to this.] If, on the other hand, joy and sorrow, understood thus, be not of the same object in the same respect, but either of different objects, or of the same object in different respects, in that case joy and sorrow are not contrary to each other, so that nothing hinders a man from being joyful and sorrowful at the same time; for instance, if we see a good man suffer, we both rejoice at his goodness and at the same time grieve for his suffering. In this way a man may be displeased at having sinned, and be pleased at his displeasure together with his hope for pardon, so that his very sorrow is a matter of joy. Hence St. Augustine says in De poenitentia, chap. 13: The penitent should ever grieve and rejoice at his grief."

Thus Christ in His higher reason rejoiced in His passion, inasmuch as it was pleasing to God for the redemption of the human race, as St. Thomas says. Thus, following our Lord's example, "the apostles went from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus." So St. Ignatius of Antioch rejoiced, when writing to his faithful followers and ardently desiring martyrdom; he said: "By the death of wild beasts, I am to be ground that I may prove Christ's pure bread." If the desire of martyrdom in St. Ignatius and in many martyrs was so ardent, then what must it have been in Christ, although it was His wish to experience the utmost grief in the Garden of Gethsemane so that He might be more perfectly a holocaust !

So likewise Christ grieved to the utmost for the sins of all men at one time, for "His grief surpassed all grief of every contrite heart, because it flowed from a greater wisdom and charity." Thus He grieved in His lower reason which was under the direction of His higher reason, whereby God's infinite dignity is known, who is offended by sin. And yet, at the same time, Christ in His higher reason did not grieve over the divine permission of sin, but He rejoiced at the sight of a greater good, for which God permitted the sins of men, that is, He rejoiced in the victory of God's mercy and in the

splendor of His justice, or in the supreme victory of the supreme good over sin, the devil, and death.

Thus there is no contradiction in this mystery, which is also a miracle just as the Incarnation is.

As the Salmanticenses say: “Christ’s supreme joy was not only that He saw God, but it was also that He realized that the fittingness of His death contributed to the glory of God and the exaltation of His own name. But His utmost sadness concerned the unfitness of His death as regards His human nature considered in itself, and the sins of men inasmuch as these are contrary to God’s glory and their redemption. Hence there was no contradiction.” So also says St. Thomas.

CONCLUSION

From all that has been said, it is clear that the plenitude of Christ’s created grace is the cause of these two apparently contrary effects, which are the two extremes of His interior life. These are, on the one hand, utmost happiness and, on the other, an ardent desire to suffer for us, even to suffer sadness unto death, so that His sacrifice might be complete, a perfect holocaust, and an efficacious manifestation of His love for God the Father for us, because peace, which is tranquility of order, is the effect of charity, whereby God is loved above all things and all things are subordinated to Him. At the same time this love of God in Christ was the principle of His ardent desire to make reparation for the offense, and it was the reason why He grieved to the utmost for sins.

Hence these two effects, namely, peace and utmost sadness, were the result of His love for God the Father.

These effects were likewise the result of His love for us. For Christ’s very great love for our souls was certainly the principle of great joy since it prompted Him to say on the cross: “It is consummated,” namely, the work of the redemption of souls is consummated, the tranquility of order is restored by the victory over sin and the devil, so that Christ could say: “Have confidence, I have overcome the world.”

But on the other hand, this utmost love of Christ for us was the cause of His utmost grief, for our Savior’s grief for our sins was proportionate to His love for our souls that are troubled by sin. Hence there is no contradiction in this, but supreme harmony, as when it is said that human liberty remains

under the influence of efficacious grace, which does not destroy liberty, but on the contrary actualizes it. In this consists the synthesis of the interior life of Christ the Savior as proposed by Father Louis Chardon, O. P., in his beautiful book.

Great saints in this life experience to a certain extent this intimate union between utmost grief and joy, especially those who are called to a life of reparation, such as St. Paul of the Cross, founder of the Passionists, who at about the age of thirty-five, after He had attained to the state of transforming union, remained nevertheless for forty-five years in a condition of very great aridity and perplexity of spirit for the salvation of souls, and yet in the midst of this perplexity he maintained a sublime peace, which he imparted to his brethren.

CHAPTER XXXVI: CHRIST'S THREEFOLD VICTORY PRELIMINARY REMARKS

Christ said to His disciples: "In the world you shall have distress; but have confidence, I have overcome the world." St. Thomas says in explanation of this text: "Christ overcame the world first of all by taking away its weapons of attack; for these are its objects of concupiscence. The Evangelist says: 'All that is in the world is the concupiscence of the flesh and the concupiscence of the eyes and the pride of life' (I John 2:16). But Christ overcomes riches by poverty, for the Psalmist says: 'I am needy and poor' (Ps. 85:1). And the Evangelist: 'The Son of man hath not where to lay His head' (Luke 9:58). He overcame honor by humility, for Christ says: 'Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart' (Matt. II: 29). He overcame pleasures by suffering and hardship, for the Apostle says of Him: 'He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death even to the death of the cross' (Phil. 2:8). This is the victory over sin gained principally by Christ on the cross.

"Secondly, " says St. Thomas, "Christ overcame the world by excluding the prince of this world, for He said: "Now shall the prince of this world be cast out' (John 12:31); and St. Paul says: "Despoiling the principalities and powers, He hath exposed them confidently in open show, triumphing over them in Himself' (Col. 2:15). From this He showed us how the devil must be overcome by us..., so that after His passion young maidens and boys, followers of Christ, deride the devil."

This twofold victory of Christ, namely, over sin and the devil, was made manifest by the conversion of many pagans, and thus the following words of Christ were verified: "and I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself."

Christ's final and third victory is over death, which is the result of sin; and this victory was clearly seen in His glorious resurrection and ascension,

and it will ultimately be manifested on the Judgment Day by the resurrection of all the dead.

CHRIST'S VICTORY OVER SIN

First of all, there is Christ's victory over original sin, for the Apostle says: "As by the offense of one, unto all men to condemnation; so also by the justice of one, unto all men to justification of life. For as by the disobedience of one man, many were made sinners; so also by the obedience of one man, many shall be made just.... Where sin abounded, grace did more abound; that as sin hath reigned to death, so also grace might reign by justice unto life everlasting, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

But the holy Doctor explains: "Original sin spread in this way, that at first the person [Adam] infected the nature, and afterward the nature infected the person [of Adam's posterity]. Whereas Christ in reverse order at first repairs what regards the person (by baptism of water or by baptism of desire), and afterward will simultaneously repair what pertains to the nature in all men. Consequently by baptism He takes away from man forthwith the guilt of original sin and the punishment of being deprived of the heavenly vision. But the penalties of the present life, such as death, hunger, thirst, and the like, pertain to the nature, from the principles of which they arise, inasmuch as it is deprived of original justice. Therefore these defects will not be taken away until the ultimate restoration of nature through the glorious resurrection."

St. Thomas explains: "A Christian retains a passible body so that "if we suffer with Christ, we may be also glorified with Him' (Rom. 8:11), and this is suitable for our spiritual training, so that, by fighting against concupiscence and other defects, we may receive the crown of victory."

Christ's victory over original sin fulfils the prophecy of St. John the Baptist, who said: "Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him who taketh away the sin of the world."

The Scripture records that, after St. Peter's first sermon to the Jews on the day of Pentecost, three thousand were converted and baptized: "And there were added in that day about three thousand souls." St. Peter had said to them: "Do penance, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

But during twenty centuries a vast number of infants and adults have been freed from the stain of original sin through baptism by water, or baptism of desire.

Likewise Christ's victory over actual sin is many times affirmed in Sacred Scripture. Thus St. Paul says: "But God, who is rich in mercy, for His exceeding charity wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in our sins, hath quickened us together in Christ (by whose grace you are saved) and hath raised us up together, and hath made us sit together in the heavenly places through Christ Jesus." Again he says: "And you, when you were dead in your sins..., He hath quickened together with Him, forgiving you all offenses."

Thus it is that very many persons rise again spiritually by means of sacramental absolution or without the sacrament by the grace of contrition. And every day the most abundant fruits of the sacrifice on the cross are applied to us through the Sacrifice of the Mass.

In fact, the victory over the spirit of the world, that is, over the concupiscence of the flesh, the eyes, and the pride of life, is clearly seen from the foundation of the Church, since many Christians actually observe the evangelical counsels of poverty, perfect chastity, and obedience, or at least by self-denial retain the spirit of the counsels, so that they may increasingly advance in the observance of the greatest commandment, which is "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with all thy strength, and thy neighbor as thyself."

Sometimes this victory over sin is strikingly illustrated in martyrdom, as happened in the first three centuries in the life of the Church amid incessant persecutions, and as happened in our times; for instance, during the revolution in Spain, when so much blood was shed that 6, 000 priests were killed. Thus the words of the Evangelist are verified: "For whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world; and this is the victory which overcometh the world, our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God...? He that believeth in the Son of God, hath the testimony of God in himself.... And this is the testimony that God hath given to us, eternal life. And this life is in His Son."

Thus amid the miseries of the present life, the holiness of the Church shines conspicuously in the lives of many servants of God who are truly His friends, and who lead others to Him.

The Savior Himself announced this second victory, when He said shortly before His passion: “Now is the judgment of the world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself., (Now this He said, signifying what death He should die.)” Immediately before, when Christ asked His Father to glorify His name, a voice from heaven was heard to say: “I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again,” which means, I will again glorify My Son in His passion whereby He will triumph over the devil, in His resurrection and ascension, and in the conversion of the whole world. The devil no longer controls the wills of men who are free from sin; he still tempts them, but does not reign over them.

Likewise the Evangelist says: “He that committeth sin is of the devil, for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God appeared, that He might destroy the works of the devil. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil.”

And St. Paul says: “God... hath quickened I you] together with Him [Christ], forgiving you all offenses; blotting out the handwriting of the decree that was contrary to us, and He hath taken the same out of the way, fastening it to the cross, and despoiling the principalities and powers, He hath exposed them confidently in open show, triumphing over them in Himself.” This means that Christ by His passion has freed us from sin, the punishment of sin, and the slavery of the devil. In former times almost the whole world served idols; now the devil no longer thus reigns; and although he still attacks the just, we have a most powerful help in Christ. Hence the Apostle says: “Finally, brethren, be strengthened in the Lord and in the might of His power. Put you on the armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the deceits of the devil.”

St. John announces the persecution of the dragon against the woman, and of Antichrist against the Church; but the triumph of the good and the condemnation of the wicked is foretold. Finally, from the seventh chapter there is a description of God’s last judgment, the fall of Babylon, the jubilation in heaven, the triumph of Christ over Antichrist and Satan. On the garment of the Word of God is written: “King of kings, and Lord of lords.” Satan is definitely conquered, the dead rise again and are judged; there is a new Jerusalem, and Christ renders to everyone according to his works, saying: “I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the

end. Blessed are they that wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb, that they may have a right to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city,"

Long ago the prophet had seen an immense and splendid statue whose feet of clay were destroyed "by a stone cut out of the mountains without hands... but the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth," says the prophet. He explains this vision, by saying that this statue represents various kingdoms, "but in the days of those kingdoms, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed... and it shall stand forever."

Christ is declared "the stone which the builders rejected, the same is made the head of the corner." By His humility and passion He overcame the pride of the devils. Hence St. Paul says: "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews indeed a stumbling block and unto the Gentiles foolishness. But unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men," Again he says: "Christ humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross. For which cause God hath exalted Him, and hath given Him a name which is above all names. That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth. And that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father." This victory of Christ over the devil is sometimes sensibly and vividly manifested in exorcism, especially where these words are said: "Christ, the eternal Word of God made flesh, who for our salvation, which was lost by thy envy, humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, commands thee, unclean spirit."

In the language of theology, however, Christ's victory over the devil implies victory over sin as previously established, and the consequence of this, namely, victory over death, immediately to be discussed. From what has been said, it is already certain, as St. Thomas said, that "Christ's passion frees us from sin, inasmuch as it causes forgiveness of sins by way of redemption," and "by Christ's passion man was delivered from the devil's power so far as Christ's passion is the cause of the forgiveness of sins... inasmuch as it reconciled us with God."

Christ gained victory over death first of all by His glorious resurrection, and He announced the resurrection of the body, which will take place on Judgment Day.

He had chosen and announced His resurrection to be the sign in proof of His miracles and the indisputable argument of His divine mission. This is developed at length in apologetics. We wish here only to show the connection between Christ's victory over sin and His victory over death.

The apostles particularly appeal to the miracle of Christ's resurrection to confirm the truth of their preaching. In fact, St. Paul twice declares: "If Christ be not risen again, your faith is vain."

St. Paul does not mean that other miracles are insufficient motives of credibility, but he intends to say and expressly affirms: "If Christ be not risen again, then is our preaching vain.... Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God"; that is, our preaching is false that rests on this fact attested to by all the apostles. Moreover, he explains himself by saying: "And if Christ be not risen again, your faith is vain for you are yet in your sins." This means that if Christ did not rise again, then faith in Christ risen, which is the root of justification, is false, and does not cleanse us from sins. In fact, as St. John Chrysostom, Theophylactus, and Oecumenius say, Christ's death proved inefficacious for the remission of sins, if Christ remained dead, and was conquered by it. For if Christ by His resurrection was unable to conquer death, then He did not conquer sin, for to conquer sin is more important and more difficult than to conquer death. Therefore sin is not destroyed unless its effect, namely, death, is destroyed.

St. John Chrysostom says: "If the dead cannot rise again, then neither sin is destroyed, nor death is overcome, nor the curse is taken away." Theophylactus is of the same opinion. Oecumenius likewise says: "If Christ Himself was also detained by death... then neither was sin destroyed by Christ's death; for if sin had been destroyed, then certainly death also which was caused by sin, would have been abolished." Cornelius a Lapide, quoting the above-mentioned authors, offers the same interpretation. In recent times, similar views are expressed by Father Ladeuze and Father J. M. Voste. In the foregoing we truly see the intimate connection between Christ's resurrection and the other mysteries of Christianity. This connection may be expressed by saying that, if Christ did not overcome sin by rising again, then we are not certain that He overcame sin on the cross and that our redemption was accepted by God. Why so? Because as

explained at length in the Old Testament and also by St. Paul: “As by one man sin entered into this world and by sin death; and so death passed upon all men in whom all have sinned.” And again: “The wages of sin is death. But the grace of God, life everlasting in Christ Jesus our Lord.” He also says: “And if Christ be in you, the body indeed is dead, because of sin, but the spirit liveth, because of justification.” Therefore He who invisibly takes away sin, must visibly take away death, or the effect of sin, so that we may have a most certain sign of His victory over sin and of our redemption. Christ on the cross does not appear visibly as conqueror but rather as conquered; through the Resurrection, on the contrary, He shows Himself as the master of death, and so we understand how He could say to His disciples: “In the world you shall have distress, but have confidence, I have overcome the world.” Hence Christ’s resurrection is the greatest motive of credibility, inasmuch as, according to divine providence, it is a most splendid sign of Christ’s victory over sin and the devil; it is also the fulfillment of several of Christ’s prophecies and the pledge of our future resurrection.

St. Thomas says about the same in the following passage: “Because it was shown above, that through Christ we have been freed from those things which we incurred through the sin of the first man; because the first man sinned, not only sin was transmitted to us, but also death, which is the penalty of sin (Rom. 5:12); it is necessary for Christ to free us from both, that is, from sin and from death.” Hence the Apostle says: “For if by one man’s offense death reigned through one, much more they who receive abundance of grace, and of justice, shall reign in life through one, Jesus Christ. Therefore, that He might prove both to us, He willed to die and to rise again. He willed to die, indeed, that He might cleanse us from sin.... He willed to rise again, however, that He might deliver us from death,”

Therefore Christ’s victory over death, by His own glorious resurrection, is the result and sign of His victory over sin and the devil. And because the Blessed Virgin Mary was associated with Christ’s perfect victory over the devil and sin, it was most fitting that she be associated with His perfect victory over death, and for this to be perfect her resurrection had to be anticipated as also her assumption. It was impossible for Christ to be detained in the bonds of death, for then He would have been conquered by death and not be its conqueror. The same must be said with due reservations for the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Finally, Christ's victory over death will be made manifest on Judgment Day, when all will rise again. He Himself announced this, saying: "This is the will of My Father that sent Me; that everyone who seeth the Son, and believeth in Him, may have life everlasting, and I will raise Him up in the last day.... No man can come to Me, except the Father who hath sent Me, draw Him, and I will raise him up on the last day.... He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up on the last day," St. Paul reaffirms this: "And as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive.... And the enemy death shall be destroyed last; for He hath put all things under His feet.... And when this mortal hath put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting? Now the sting of death is sin.... But thanks be to God, who hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." On this question, St. Thomas says: "The necessity of dying is a defect in human nature resulting from sin. But Christ by the merit of His passion repaired the defects of nature, which were visited upon Him because of the sin of man; for as the Apostle says: "But not as the offense, so also the gift. For if by the offense of one, many died; much more the grace of God, and the gift, by the grace of one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many, (Rom. 5:15). From this we see that Christ's merit is more efficacious in taking away death, than Adam's sin was in bringing it about. Therefore those who rise again through Christ's merit, are freed from death, and no longer will suffer from the penalty of death," Hence St. John says: "Death shall be no more, nor mourning nor crying nor sorrow shall be any more, for the former things are passed away."

From this it becomes apparent what already has been said, namely, Christ's perfect victory over the devil implies perfect victory over sin as presupposed and its consequence, perfect victory over death by an anticipated resurrection. The same must be said, with due reservations, of the Blessed Virgin Mary, inasmuch as, in that she is the Mother of the Savior, particularly on Calvary, she is most closely associated with Christ's perfect victory over the devil and sin. Hence she is also associated with His perfect victory over death, as the ancient and venerated prayer for the feast of the Assumption states, which says: "The Holy Mother of God underwent temporal death, yet could not be held down by the bonds of death, who of herself begot Thy incarnate Son our Lord."

CHAPTER XXXVII: CHRIST’S DEATH AND DESCENT INTO HELL

We shall consider briefly the question of Christ’s death and resurrection, which already have been discussed at length in their apologetic aspect in the treatise on revelation. The principal points in these questions of St. Thomas must be recapitulated, treating in order Christ’s death and descent into hell, His resurrection and ascension, Christ the king, judge, and head of the blessed.

QUESTION 50: CHRIST’S DEATH

FIRST ARTICLE:

It was fitting for Christ to die: (1) SO as to satisfy for us, who were sentenced to death because of sin; (2) to show that He truly assumed a human nature; for if, after conversing with men, He had suddenly disappeared without dying, then all would have looked upon Him as a phantom; (3) that by dying He might take away from us the fear of death; (4) that He might give us the example of dying spiritually to sin; (5) that by rising from the dead He might show His power whereby He overcame death, and instill into us the hope of rising again.

SECOND ARTICLE:

In Christ’s death the divine nature was not separated from His body. St. Thomas gives and explains the answer of tradition, namely, that the divine nature remained hypostatically united with Christ’s body. What is bestowed through God’s grace as something that is by nature destined to be permanent, is never taken away without sin, for “God’s gifts are without repentance.” Such is the grace of adoption in the just person. But the grace

of the hypostatic union is much greater and more permanent in itself than the grace of adoption, and Christ was absolutely impeccable.

Thus it is said of the Son of God that “He died and was buried,” which befitted Him on the part of His body before and after death. Not only His body was buried, but the Son of God was buried, for, during the three days of His death, His divine person was not separated from His dead body, nor even from His blood, all of which was shed.

THIRD ARTICLE:

In Christ’s death the divine nature was not separated from His soul. The reason is that the soul is united with the Word of God more immediately and more primarily than the body is. But in Christ’s death the divine nature was not separated from the body. Therefore, a fortiori, it was not separated from the soul. Hence it is predicated of the Son of God that His soul descended into hell.

FOURTH ARTICLE:

It is erroneous to assert that Christ during the three days of death was a man, because His soul was separated from His body and the human nature ceased as such through the separation of the soul from the body.

FIFTH ARTICLE:

Christ’s body, living or dead, was absolutely and identically the same, because anything is said to be absolutely and identically the same which is the same in its suppositum. But Christ’s body, either living or dead, was the same in its suppositum, as is evident from what was said. It was not, however, absolutely and totally the same identical body, because the life that was lost by death belongs to the essence of a living body. It is more probable that Christ’s body during the three days of death had its substantial form, but it had the form of a human corpse, for matter cannot naturally be without a form.

SIXTH ARTICLE:

Christ’s death in becoming (in fier1), or His passion, was the meritorious cause of our salvation. But Christ’s death in fact nowise caused our salvation by way of merit, because Christ, who was then dead, was beyond the condition of meriting, for He was no longer a wayfarer. However, Christ’s dead flesh remained the instrument of His divine nature with which it was united, and thus it could be the efficient cause of our salvation.

QUESTION 51: CHRIST’S BURIAL

FIRST ARTICLE:

It was fitting for Christ to be buried, because it proves the truth of His death and because by His rising again from the grave we are given hope of rising again through His resurrection.

SECOND ARTICLE:

Christ was buried in a becoming manner as the Evangelists record. His body was anointed with aromatic spices of myrrh and aloes, according to the custom of the Jews, so as to preserve it longer from corruption. It was buried in a clean shroud, according to the dictates of becoming propriety, and in another’s tomb, because He was the exemplar of poverty; in a new tomb in which no one had been buried before Him, lest by the burial of another there it might be pretended and believed that this other had risen again. It was buried in a monument hewn out of a rock, and thus according to the plan of divine providence, lest it might be said afterward that His disciples dug up the earth and stole His body. Finally, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus rolled a great stone against the opening of the sepulcher, so that the stone could be rolled away from the monument only by the help of many hands. Thus Providence forestalled the calumnies of the Jews.

THIRD ARTICLE:

Christ’s body remained incorrupt in the tomb so that divine power should be manifested and so that nobody might believe His death resulted from the weakness of nature, and was not voluntary.

FOURTH ARTICLE:

Christ’s body was fittingly one day and two nights in the tomb, because that was the required and sufficient time to prove the truth of Christ’s death, otherwise there would have been no true resurrection. The Evangelist says: “The Son of man will be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights,” by way of synecdoche, taking the part for the whole. Thus then, the first day and first night are computed from the end of Good Friday, the day of Christ’s death and burial, until midnight on Holy Saturday; the second day and second night, from midnight Saturday until midnight Sunday; the third night and the third day, from midnight Sunday to daybreak of the same day on which Christ rose again. This was the method of computing time among the Jews; for them, one day and one night signified a civil day of twenty-four hours, either complete or incomplete.

QUESTION 52: CHRIST’S DESCENT INTO HELL

It is of faith and is expressed in the Apostles’ Creed according to the Ordo Romanus, that Christ descended into hell, and it is afterward declared that His soul descended there, but He did not abolish hell.

This mystery is expressed in St. Peter’s sermon on Pentecost Day, in which he quotes the words of the Psalmist as referring to Christ, namely, “Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell,” and he says: “The prophet... foreseeing this, spoke of the resurrection of Christ, for neither was He left in hell, neither did His flesh see corruption.”

St. Paul also says of Christ: “Ascending on high, He led captivity captive; He gave gifts to men. Now that He ascended, what is it, but because He also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.”

Did Christ’s soul really and substantially descend into hell and not merely effectively; and then was this descent fitting; and what hell was this, and whom did He deliver? St. Thomas gives and exemplifies the answers of tradition.

FIRST ARTICLE:

Christ's soul really and substantially descended into hell and not merely effectively. The Apostles' Creed says: "He descended into hell," which obviously and naturally means a real and substantial descent. Similarly St. Paul says: "He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth. He that descended is the same also that ascended above all the heavens, that He might fill all things," Likewise St. Peter says, quoting the Psalmist: "Because Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell, nor suffer Thy holy one to see corruption." The Fathers thus understood this text, especially St. Ignatius, St. Gregory Nazianzen, and St. Augustine.

St. Thomas explains that Christ's soul did not descend into hell by that kind of motion whereby bodies are moved, but as the angels are moved. And Christ's separated soul was not inoperative in hell, for it operated as the instrument of the divine nature, expelling exterior darkness and illuminating this place.

SECOND ARTICLE: IT WAS FITTING FOR CHRIST TO DESCEND INTO HELL

There are three reasons for this.

1) Because man by sin had incurred not only death of the body, but also descent into hell. Therefore it was fitting for Christ to die and descend into hell, so that He might deliver us from the necessity of permanent death (because we shall rise again) and from descent into hell. In this sense Christ is said to have power over death and in dying to have conquered it, according to the prophet, who says: "O death, I will be thy death."

2) It was fitting for the devil to be overthrown by Christ's passion, so that He should deliver the captives detained in hell.

3) As He showed forth His power on earth by living and dying, so also it was fitting for Him to manifest it in hell, by visiting it and enlightening it; and so at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, not only of them that are in heaven, but likewise of them that are in hell.

THIRD ARTICLE:

Christ did not actually descend into the hell of the lost; because, as the Fathers teach, He descended into hell to console and liberate those who were detained there. But nobody is consoled and liberated in the hell of the lost, as will at once be stated. Moreover, the hell of the lost is not a fitting

place for Christ. Therefore He descended into the hell of the lost only effectively, arguing with them and convincing them of their infidelity and malice; and this He did by speaking to them or manifesting His will by signs, because local distance is no impediment for spirits.

FOURTH ARTICLE:

Christ's soul remained in hell, namely, in the limbo of the holy fathers, until the moment of His resurrection. Hence the Church in the blessing of the paschal candle, sings: "This is the night wherein Christ ascended victorious from hell." Such is the opinion of St. Irenaeus, St. Gregory of Nyssa, and Tertullian.

FIFTH ARTICLE:

Christ, descending into hell, delivered the holy fathers. He delivered them from the penalty of original sin, namely, from the penalty whereby they were excluded from the life of glory, of whom the prophet says: "Thou also, by the blood of Thy testament, hast sent forth Thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water," And St. Paul says: "Despoiling the principalities and powers," namely, the infernal ones, by taking away the just, He brought them from this place of darkness to heaven, that is, to the beatific vision. Such is the opinion of the Fathers, especially St. Augustine and St. Gregory the Great and St. Jerome.

Thus Christ's descent into hell was the cause of exceeding joy to those souls already purified, such as the souls of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, the prophets, as also many just and holy women of the Old Testament.

Thus we clearly see that the whole of the Old Testament was not an immediate preparation for eternal life, but for the coming of the Redeemer, who after having suffered and died, had to open the gates of heaven, so that we might enter into eternal life. The first and most abundant fruits of the sacrifice on the cross are also made manifest. Then, too, the fathers of the Old Testament fully understood that the passion of Jesus was the source of all graces, and that without it they could neither have been justified nor have merited an increase of grace, nor obtained eternal life. Therefore they were most sincerely thankful to the Savior whose coming they awaited for

many centuries, who is called “the desire of the eternal hills, the joy of the angels, the King of patriarchs, the Crown of all the saints, .”

By the mystery of the holy Incarnation, by the labors of Jesus, by His agony and passion, by His infirmities, and by His death they were liberated. In all these things they saw the most perfect fulfillment of what had been announced and the truth that the mystery of the redemptive Incarnation far transcends all figures, all sacrifices of the Old Law, all prophecies. Christ’s descent into hell truly meant for them, “it is consummated.” All these things proclaim the glory of the cross.

SIXTH ARTICLE:

Christ did not deliver any of the lost by His descent into hell; because, since Christ’s descent into hell operated in virtue of His passion, He liberated only those whom He found united to His passion by means of faith that is actuated by charity. But the lost did not believe in Christ’s passion and they were not finally united with Christ by charity, and after death there is no possibility of conversion, because the lost are confirmed in evil, as the just are in good.

SEVENTH ARTICLE:

For the same reason, the children who died in original sin were not liberated by Christ. Baptism is administered to men in this life, wherein man can be changed from sin to grace. But Christ’s descent into hell was granted to the souls after this life, when they are no longer capable of this aforesaid change.

EIGHTH ARTICLE

Christ did not deliver all the souls in purgatory by His descent into hell. For Christ’s passion did not have greater power then than now. But now it does not free all souls in purgatory, but only those that are sufficiently cleansed, or to whom Christ’s passion is applied by the Sacrifice of the Mass. Christ’s descent into hell was not satisfactory; it operated, however, in virtue of the Passion; thus He did not free all those who, when still living united with their bodies, had merited by their faith and devotion toward

Christ's death, that by His descent there, they should be freed from the temporal punishment of purgatory, as St. Thomas says.

Some theologians, however, said that Christ's descent, although it did not of itself free all souls from purgatory, there was then granted to them the favor of a quasi-plenary indulgence, which is a probable opinion. Yet the commentators of St. Thomas follow his view, and furthermore say that the souls in purgatory that were not then liberated, were consoled and also rejoiced at the thought of the glory they will at once receive after their purgation.

CHAPTER XXXVIII: CHRIST'S RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION

St. Thomas has discussed at length Christ's resurrection, the quality, manifestation, and causality of His resurrection, as also His ascension. The more important things will be recapitulated.

QUESTION 53: CHRIST'S RESURRECTION

It is of faith that Christ rose again from the dead on the third day, as declared in the Gospel, the Epistles of the apostles, and in the Apostles' Creed. In fact, it was declared that He rose again by His own power; that it was a true resurrection of the body, that the soul was reunited to the body, and that He afterward truly did eat, though He did not have to.

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER IT WAS NECESSARY FOR CHRIST TO RISE AGAIN

Christ's resurrection was not absolutely necessary, but it was necessary if we take into consideration the divine plan, the prophecies, the merits of Christ, and our benefit.

St. Thomas gives five reasons for asserting this necessity, all of which have their foundation in Sacred Scripture.

The resurrection was necessary:

1) For the commendation of divine justice, to which it belongs to exalt the humble. For Christ by His charity and obedience humbled Himself even to death on the cross; hence it behooved Him to be exalted by God to a glorious resurrection.

2) For our instruction in the faith; because by Christ's resurrection our belief in His divinity is confirmed.

3) For the raising of our hope, because in seeing Christ, who is our head, rise again, we hope that we, too, shall rise again.

4) To set in order the lives of the faithful, so that we also may walk in newness of life.

5) To complete the work of our salvation, because Christ was thus glorified in rising again, so that He might advance us to good things. For it was so ordained by God, that only after the resurrection would the Holy Spirit be given, or the apostles be sent to preach.

SECOND ARTICLE: IT WAS FITTING FOR CHRIST TO RISE AGAIN THE THIRD DAY

To confirm our belief in the truth of Christ's divinity, it was necessary for Him to rise soon, and that His resurrection be not delayed until the end of the world. But to confirm our belief in the truth of His humanity and death it was necessary that there be some delay between His death and resurrection. That the truth of His death be made manifest, however, it sufficed that His resurrection be deferred until the third day.

The third day, on which Christ rose again, was the first of the week, which is our Sunday; it was daybreak or about dawn. In other words, the night following the Sabbath, "when it began to dawn toward the first day of the week."

THIRD ARTICLE:

Christ was the first to rise again, His resurrection being perfect, in that He never died again. Some rose again before Him, resurrection was imperfect, for they were rescued from actual death, but not from the necessity and possibility of dying. Thus, like Lazarus, they returned to life, merely to die again.

St. Thomas says: "There are two opinions regarding those who rose with Christ. Some hold that they rose to life so as to die no more.... But Augustine seems to think that they rose to die again... and his reasons seem to be more cogent," The common opinion of the faithful is that nobody ascended bodily into heaven before Christ and the Blessed Virgin.

But some saints rose again with Christ though the Scripture does not give their names. It is very probable, according to the more common opinion, that these referred in a special manner to Christ, and were His more illustrious types, such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David,

Melchisedech, and such as these, as also some of those who died later on, such as Zacharias, John the Baptist, Simeon, and others of this kind.

FOURTH ARTICLE:

Christ according to His divine nature was the principal efficient cause of His resurrection, but His soul and body were instruments of His divine nature, and “they mutually took back each other.” Moreover, Christ by His passion was the meritorious cause of His resurrection.

QUESTION 54:

FIRST ARTICLE:

Christ rose again with the same true body, otherwise His resurrection would not have been true; for that is said to rise again, which has fallen.

SECOND ARTICLE:

Christ’s body rose again entire, because it was of the same nature after His resurrection as it was before death, although glorified. Christ also took again all His blood, morally speaking, all that is necessary for the integrity of the body.

THIRD ARTICLE:

Christ arose with a glorified body; for, the mystery of the redemption being completed by Christ’s passion and death, in the resurrection His soul at once communicated its glory to its reunited body.

FOURTH ARTICLE:

It was most fitting for Christ to rise again with scars, as permanent marks of His victory, so as to convince His disciples that the same crucified body rose again; that when He pleads for us with the Father, He may always show what manner of death He endured for us; that on the Judgment Day,

He may manifest these scars to all that are to be judged, to the just, indeed, as a motive for their love and gratitude, but to the reprobates for their reproof and shame.

QUESTION 55

FIRST ARTICLE:

Christ ought not to have immediately manifested Himself to all after His resurrection, but to some, who were as witnesses to make known His resurrection to others. For such things as concern future glory are beyond the common knowledge of mankind. Hence St. Thomas says: “Christ appeared first to the women... because the women, whose love for our Lord was more persistent, so much so that when even the disciples withdrew from the sepulcher they did not depart, were the first to see Him rising in glory.” And again he says: “A woman is not to be allowed to teach publicly in church; but she may be permitted to give familiar instruction to some privately.” Therefore, as St. Ambrose says: “A woman is sent to them who are of her household, but not to the people to bear witness to the Resurrection.” It is a pious and probable opinion that Christ first appeared to the Blessed Virgin His Mother; the affection of the Son for His most loving mother is the reason for this assertion. Such is the teaching of Abbot Rupert, St. Albert the Great, St. Bonaventure, and several more recent commentators.

SECOND ARTICLE:

Christ’s actual resurrection should not have been seen by His disciples, because the divinely established order is that those things above men’s knowledge be revealed to them by angels, or at least it is the accustomed way for these to be proclaimed by angels.

Second objection of St. Thomas. “In order to have certainty of faith, the disciples saw Christ ascend into heaven. Therefore it seems for the same reason that Christ ought to have been seen to rise again by the disciples.”

Reply to second objection. “Christ’s ascension as to its term, wherefrom, was not above men’s common knowledge, but only as to its term

whereunto.... Thus the disciples did not see how Christ raised from the earth was received into heaven."

THIRD ARTICLE:

Christ ought not to have lived continually with His disciples after His resurrection because, for the manifestation of the glory of Him who rose, this was not befitting, lest it might seem He rose to the same life as before. "But it is unknown, " says St. Thomas, "in what places He was bodily present in the meantime, since Scripture is silent and His dominion is in every place."

St. Thomas observes that there were apparitions not mentioned in the Gospels; for St. Paul records the appearance to five hundred brethren at once, afterward to James, and yet these are not mentioned by the Evangelists.

Hence several authors think that between the times of the ten apparitions recorded in the Gospels, it is very probable that Christ was for some time with His most beloved Mother.

What is the meaning of these words of Christ to Magdalen: "Do not touch Me, for I am not yet ascended to My Father"? St. Thomas gives the following explanation: "If you say that Christ wished to be touched by the disciples, but not by the women, this cannot be; for it is said of Magdalen and the other women that they came up and took hold of His feet, and adored Him." But St. John Chrysostom is of the opinion that Christ first said to Magdalen, "Do not touch Me, " as if to say: "Do not think that I am still mortal and living with you the same way as before."

FOURTH ARTICLE:

Christ appeared in His own shape to some who were well disposed to believe; but in another shape to those who already seemed to be getting tepid in their faith. Such is the view of St. Gregory the Great.

FIFTH AND SIXTH ARTICLES

Christ by various testimonies and signs sufficiently proved the truth of His resurrection. The first testimony is given by Christ to the disciples on

their way to Emmaus, as recorded in the Gospel. The second testimony is when the angels announced the Resurrection to the women. The third is when He appeared bodily present to the eyes of His disciples, in His own shape, conversing with them, eating, drinking with them, allowing them to touch Him, and showing them His scars. The fourth is where He asserted that it is He Himself confirming this assertion by miracles, by passing through closed doors, on the occasion of the catch of the vast number of fishes, and when He ascended into heaven.

The objection is raised that even the angels appeared in human form and spoke, and yet they were not truly human.

St. Thomas replies to this objection by saying that the angels who appeared in human form did not assert that they were truly men, and they did not work miracles in confirmation of this assertion. Hence all the above-mentioned arguments and signs "taken collectively perfectly manifest Christ's resurrection, especially owing to the testimonies of the Scriptures, the saying of the angels, and even Christ's own assertion supported by miracles."

Moreover, in the treatise on revelation, it is shown apologetically that the testimony of the apostles invincibly proves the truth of Christ's resurrection. This argument is ably set forth by Billuart in his treatise on Christ's resurrection.

QUESTION 56

Christ's resurrection is the exemplar and efficient instrumental cause of the resurrection of our bodies and souls. It is called an efficient instrumental cause, not inasmuch as it is an act that is immediately transient, but inasmuch as the humanity, according to which Christ rose, is the instrument of the divinity united with it to raise our bodies and sanctify our souls. St. Thomas says: "Christ's resurrection is the efficient cause of ours, through the divine power whose office it is to quicken the dead; and this power by its presence is in touch with all places and times; and such virtual contact suffices for its efficiency." Its contact is not quantitative, but virtual or dynamic.

QUESTION 57: CHRIST'S ASCENSION

It is of faith that Christ ascended into heaven, as stated in the Apostles' Creed; that He ascended body and soul; that He sits at the right hand of the Father, according to the natural mode of existing; that His kingdom is eternal; and that He will judge the living and the dead, coming in His body.

The principal passages from Sacred Scripture in testimony of the Ascension are: "And the Lord Jesus, after He had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God"; "And it came to pass whilst He blessed them, He departed from them and was carried up to heaven"; "And when He had said these things, while they looked on, He was raised up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they were beholding Him going up to heaven, behold two men stood by them in white garments, who also said: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand you looking up to heaven? This Jesus who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come as you have seen Him going into heaven. ' "

St. Thomas, having presupposed faith in Christ's ascension, in this question makes several inquiries about the fittingness, manner, and effects of Christ's ascension.

FIRST ARTICLE:

It was fitting for Christ to ascend into heaven because after the resurrection Christ's body was incorruptible, and heaven is a place of incorruption. Moreover, this was a better way of manifesting Christ's victory over death. Finally, it befitted Christ to ascend, since this increased our faith, which is of things unseen; it advanced us in hope, because thus Christ, our head, gave us hope of reaching heaven, for He said: "I go to prepare a place for you." This mystery also increases love in us, for St. Paul says: "Seek the things that are above. where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God."

Christ fittingly ascended into heaven forty days after His resurrection, so as to prove more efficaciously the truth of the Resurrection; and also as the Scripture says: "For forty days appearing to them, and speaking of the kingdom of God," in order to instruct them in those matters that pertain to the faith.

SECOND ARTICLE:

Christ ascended into heaven as man, but by the power of the divine nature.

THIRD ARTICLE:

Christ ascended into heaven by His own power, first of all by His divine power, and secondly by the power of His glorified soul moving His body at will, “inasmuch as His glorified body was endowed with the gift of agility.” Although Christ did ascend into heaven by His own power, yet “He was raised up and taken up into heaven by the Father, since the Father’s power is the same as the Son’s.”

FOURTH ARTICLE:

“Christ ascended above all the heavens,” and this was most fitting because of His dignity. Hence St. Paul says: “For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, ... and made higher than the heavens.” “God’s seat is said to be in heaven, not as though heaven contained Him, but rather because it is contained by Him.”

FIFTH ARTICLE:

Christ’s body ascended above every spiritual creature on account of the dignity of the hypostatic union, for St. Paul says: “He set Him above all principality and power, and virtue, and dominion, and every name that is named not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.”

SIXTH ARTICLE:

Christ’s ascension is the cause of our salvation. (1) On our part, because by it faith which is of things unseen, is increased, there is an advancement in hope, an enkindling of charity, and greater reverence for Christ is thereby fostered. (2) On His part, for by thus ascending into heaven He prepared the way for us, as our Head. In sign whereof He took to heaven the souls of the saints delivered from hell, as the Scripture says: “Ascending on high He led captivity captive.” So also Christ “entered into heaven to make intercession for us,” and “that He might fill all things.”

Reply to first objection. Christ’s ascension is the cause of our salvation, by way not of merit, but of efficiency, as His resurrection was.

Reply to third objection. “Christ... from some special dispensation sometimes comes down in body to earth, either in order to show Himself to the whole world, as at the judgment; or else to show Himself particularly to some individual, as to St. Paul. And lest any man may think that Christ was not bodily present, but in some way, when this occurred the contrary is shown from what the Apostle says to confirm faith in the Resurrection: “Last of all He was seen also by Me, as by one born out of due time. ‘ “

This vision would not prove, of course, the truth of the Resurrection, unless he had seen Christ’s true body.

St. Thomas does not here discuss the mission of the Holy Ghost, because He had already spoken about this mystery at the end of the treatise on the Trinity, concerning the mission of the divine persons.

It suffices to note that the effects produced in the apostles by the mission of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost were a great increase of sanctifying grace and charity, to confirm them in grace, a proportionate increase of the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, and the twelve fruits resulting from these gifts, and the gratiae gratis datae enumerated by St. Paul. Thus the gift of tongues was bestowed upon each of the apostles so that they might speak in the languages of the various nations, and also they sometimes spoke in one language so that the people of various nations understood them. Thus it is said: “They began to speak with divers tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak”; “They shall speak with new tongues”; “I thank my God I speak with all your tongues.”

The virtual catholicity of the Church was in this way manifested, which had to become increasingly an actual fact by the preaching of the gospel throughout the world.

CHAPTER XXXIX: CHRIST THE KING, JUDGE, AND HEAD OF THE BLESSED

FIRST ARTICLE: CHRIST THE KING

There are three parts: (1) The principal testimonies of the Old and New Testaments concerning Christ's universal kingship. (2) Whether and by what titles Christ even as man is the king of all, both spiritually and temporally. (3) Christ's universal influence as king over all men in the social order.

It is of faith that Christ after His ascension sits at the right hand of the omnipotent Father and reigns forever. The various symbols of the faith express this.

Testimony Of Scripture

1) In the time of the patriarchs, the Messias is announced as the Savior of the world, during the time of the kings He is described as king, Son of God, and priest; in fact, His passion or sacrifice are foretold. His royal dignity and universal power are proclaimed in the following text: "In His days shall justice spring up, and abundance of peace, till the moon be taken away. And He shall rule from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. Before Him the Ethiopians shall fall down... the kings of the Arabians and of Saba shall bring gifts. And all kings of the earth shall adore Him, and all nations shall serve Him. For He shall deliver the poor from the mighty, and the needy that had no helper.... And He shall save the souls of the poor.... For Him they shall always adore.... And in Him shall all the tribes of the earth be blessed; all nations shall magnify Him,"

Likewise it is said: "The kings of the earth stood up, and the princes met together, against the Lord and against His Christ.... He that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh at them... and trouble them in His rage. But I am appointed king by Him over Sion, His holy mountain, preaching His commandment. The Lord hath said: "Thou art My Son, this day I have

begotten Thee. Ask of Me, and I will give Thee the Gentiles for Thy inheritance. ‘ “

Also the prophet announces the Messias as king in this text: “For a child is born to us, and a son is given to us, and the government is upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, God the Mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of Peace.”

And similarly another prophet speaks of a stone that struck the statue, and the stone became a great mountain and filled the whole earth, which is a symbolical announcement that Christ’s kingdom is to replace all other kingdoms and be preferred to them.

One of the minor prophets describes also the powers of this king, saying: “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Sion.... Behold, thy King will come to thee, the just and Savior, He is poor and riding upon an ass and upon a colt, the foal of an ass.” This prophecy is quoted by the Evangelist: “Behold thy king cometh to thee sitting upon an ass.”

New Testament. Here Christ’s universal kingdom is more clearly affirmed. It is, indeed, first of all declared by the angel announcing Christ’s birth to the Blessed Virgin, and saying: “The Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of David His father and He shall reign in the house of Jacob forever.” Christ Himself says: “All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth,” which means right over all nations, so that nations are under obligation to hear His teaching, for He says: “Teach all nations,” and they must observe His laws, to which they are subject after having been baptized, for He says: “Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.”

This universal power of Christ includes both angels and the elect, for He says: “He shall send His angels, and shall gather together His elect.” This universal power extends to demons, whom Christ rejects by His power, and it also includes all created beings, inasmuch as miracles were worked over all creatures, which absolutely obey Him.

The Fourth Gospel frequently refers to Christ’s kingdom, especially in this text, when “Pilate said to Jesus: “Art Thou the King of the Jews?’ Jesus answered: “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would certainly strive that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from hence. ‘ Pilate therefore said to Him: ‘Art Thou a king then?’ Jesus answered: “Thou sayest that I am a

king.... Everyone that is of the truth heareth My voice. “ Therefore His kingdom is of a higher and universal order. Likewise Pilate orders the title to be inscribed on the cross, “King of the Jews, “ in three languages: Hebrew, Greek and Latin; that is, as Bossuet says, in the language of God’s people, in the language of philosophers, and in the language of imperial power, jurists, and statesmen.

Finally, St. John the Evangelist particularly exalts Christ the King, whom He calls: “beginning and the end, King of kings, and Lord of lords, the supreme Judge, who renders to each according to His works, the Prince of the kings of the earth.”

St. Paul in one of his epistles also often speaks of Christ’s universal reign; in fact, he even points out why Christ is the universal king, because He is: (1) the natural Son and heir of God; (2) the Redeemer. As for the first reason, he says: “In these days, [God] hath spoken to us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things... who sitteth at the right hand of the majesty on high.” The second reason is given as follows: “Who is He that shall condemn Christ Jesus that died, yea, that is risen also again; who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us?” And again he says: “For He must reign. All things are put under Him,”

The liturgy often recalls the title of King as in the hymn, “Thou art the King of glory, Christ,” and the antiphon, “O King of nations,” and in the invocation, “Christ the King, Ruler of nations, let us adore.” In the liturgy, Christ is called King of angels, of apostles, of martyrs; moreover, Christ conquers, Christ reigns, Christ commands. In the symbol of faith, we chant: “Whose reign will never end.” That Christ is King is therefore of faith.

By What Titles Is Christ Also As Man King Of All Created Things?

His claim to kingship rests on three titles: (1) the hypostatic union; (2) plenitude of created grace, and these titles He claims by natural right; (3) His redemption of us, which is not a natural right, but one that is acquired by His sacrifice on the cross.

1) The hypostatic union. Because of this title, Christ, as man, transcends all creatures, even the higher choirs of angels, who must adore and obey Him as we do. Moreover, because of this union His acts are theandric and of infinite value.

This doctrine is clearly expressed by Pope Pius XI in the following words: “His kingship is founded upon that wonderful union which is called hypostatic. Hence it follows that Christ is to be adored by angels and men

as God, and also that to Him as man, angels and men are subject and must recognize His empire, since, solely because of the hypostatic union, Christ has power over all creatures."

2) His claim to plenitude of grace, virtues, and gifts. Because of this title Christ excels all creatures, and is the head of the Church. The Evangelist says: "Of His fullness we all have received," For this reason He also has the highest degree of the light of glory and charity. This plenitude of grace He also has by natural right.

3) He is entitled to be King because He has redeemed us. Since all Christ's acts are theandric, they are meritorious and satisfactory, and of infinite value. Under this aspect, He transcends the angels who are His ministers and who must assist the redeemed in attaining their end. Therefore Pope Pius XI says: "But a thought that must give us even greater joy and consolation is this, that Christ is asking for us by acquired right as well as by natural right, because He has redeemed us. Would that they who forget what they have cost our Savior might recall the words: "You were not redeemed with corruptible things as gold or silver... but with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled." For we are no longer our own property since Christ bought us with a great price, and our bodies are the members of Christ."

St. Thomas expresses this doctrine clearly saying: "To sit on the right hand of the Father is nothing else than to share in the glory of the Godhead with the Father, and to possess beatitude and judiciary power, and that unchangeably and royally." Again he says: "Christ as man is exalted to divine honor, and this is signified in the aforesaid sitting."

He also asks whether it belongs to Christ as man to sit at the right hand of the Father. His reply is: "To sit at the right hand of the Father belongs to Christ first of all as the Son of God..., because He has the same nature as the Father.... Secondly, according to the grace of union.... According to this, Christ as man is the Son of God, and consequently sits at the Father's right hand; yet so that the expression 'as' does not denote condition of nature, but unity Or suppositum, as explained above (q. 16, a. 10, I1). Thirdly, the said approach can be understood according to habitual grace, which is more fully in Christ than in all other creatures, so much so that human nature in Christ is more blessed than in all other creatures, and possesses over all other creatures royal and judiciary power."

St. Thomas goes on to say: “If ‘as’ denote unity of person, thus again as man He sits at the Father’s right hand as to equality of power, since we venerate the Son of God with the same honor as we do His assumed nature, as was said above (q. 25, a. 1) concerning the adoration of Christ’s humanity inasmuch as it is personally united to the Word.” Afterward he says: “Judiciary power goes with royal dignity.”

Again he says: “It belongs to no one else, angel or man, but to Christ alone to sit at the right hand of the Father.” Thus He alone is the King of all. The holy Doctor also frequently speaks about Christ’s title of Redeemer. In fact, he says: “Judiciary power belongs to the man Christ on account of His divine personality and the dignity of His headship and the fullness of His habitual grace; and yet He obtained it also from merit.”

To understand these assertions, we must properly define with St. Thomas the meaning of “king.”

The word “rex” comes from “regere, “ which means to rule, to govern, and universal government belongs to the king, ordering things to a good end. Thus the king is in his kingdom as God is in the world, and as the soul is in the body.

Hence St. Thomas says: “To direct belongs more to the king, “ wherefore “prudence and justice belong most properly to a king,” especially legal justice and equity.

To direct and to govern are defined by St. Thomas as follows: “To govern the world is to bring the things of the world to their end,” and “the best government is government by one. The reason of this is that government is nothing but the directing of the things governed to the end; which consists in some good. But unity belongs to the idea of goodness.... Now the proper cause of unity is one.... From this it follows that the government of the world, to be the best, must be by one.”

Thus the supreme and intelligent designer, who directs all things, corresponds to the ultimate end.

But the spiritual king directs his subjects to a spiritual end; the temporal king, however, to a temporal end, to the common good of society, which is not only a useful good, but a moral good, and which is subordinated to the ultimate supernatural end.

Is Christ as man, both the spiritual and temporal king of the universe, and was He the king of all kings and kingdoms in the whole world? Let us first see the three assertions on which all theologians are agreed.

1) All theologians always held that Christ as God rules as Lord and King of all, both spiritually and temporally, because “in Him were all things created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible.”

2) All theologians also maintain that Christ, as man, is spiritual king of all men and societies, even of angels, as is evident from the above-quoted scriptural texts, for example: “King of kings, Lord of lords.” Thus civil governments must accept Christian revelation, and legislate, for example, as regards indissolubility of marriage, in accordance with this revelation.

3) Theologians are also all in agreement that-Christ did not exercise this power as temporal king of the whole world. In fact, as the Evangelist says: “Jesus, therefore, when He knew that they would come to take Him by force and make Him king, fled again into the mountain Himself alone.”

But the theologians disagreed whether Christ as man, had, if not the exercise of the power, at least the power of temporal king of the world.

St. Robert Bellarmine, Toletus, Sylvius, Billuart, and others reply in the negative. On the other hand, St. Antoninus, the Salmanticenses, and others replied in the affirmative, quoting several texts of St. Thomas, and this opinion afterward becomes the more generally accepted one, and is finally approved by Pius XI in his encyclical. The summary of his declaration is that Christ as man is king by legislative jurisdiction, coercion, and administration, and has this right over members of His spiritual kingdom, over all men, all civil affairs; hence laicism must be condemned.

Proof of affirmative opinion. St. Thomas says: “Christ, although established king by God, did not wish while living on earth to govern temporarily an earthly kingdom, because He came to raise men to divine things.”

Objection. But the pope has only indirect power over temporal things. Therefore Christ also.

Reply. The Salmanticenses are right in saying that, although the pope may have only indirect power in temporal affairs, Christ could have direct and immediate power, by reason of the hypostatic union. Not all power that Christ had was granted to the Roman Pontiff even in spiritual things. Thus the pope cannot institute new sacraments.

In our days, after the pope’s encyclical, there is no more disagreement among theologians on this point. Pope Pius XI says in this encyclical: “This kind of kingdom is especially of a spiritual nature and concerns spiritual things.... It would be a grave error, on the other hand, to say that Christ has

no authority whatever in civil affairs, since by virtue of the absolute empire over all creatures committed to Him by the Father, all things are in His power. Nevertheless, during His life on earth, He entirely refrained from the exercise of such authority."

Does this kingship of Christ consist of certain powers? The Pope's encyclical replies by saying that it consists of a threefold power, namely, legislative, judicial, and executive, "which, if it be deprived of these renders this kingship scarcely intelligible. This becomes sufficiently clear from the scriptural testimony already adduced concerning the universal dominion of our Redeemer, and moreover it is a dogma of faith that Jesus Christ was given to man, not only as our Redeemer, but also as a lawgiver, to whom obedience is due (C. Trid., Sess. VI, can. 21). Not only do the Gospels tell us that He made laws, but they present Him to us in the act of making them. Those who keep them show their love for their divine Master, and He promises that they shall remain in His love (John 14:15; 15:10). He claimed judicial power as received from His Father, when the Jews accused Him of breaking the Sabbath by the miraculous cure of a sick man. 'For neither does the Father judge any man, but all judgment He has given to the Son, (John 5:22). In this power is included the right of rewarding and punishing all men living, for this right is inseparable from that of judging. Executive power, too, belongs to Christ, for all must obey His command; none can escape the sanctions imposed by Him. Nevertheless this kingdom is in a special manner of a spiritual nature and concerns spiritual things."

The universal extent of Christ's influence as king is the same as His influence as head of the Church. Thus His influence is universal, bestowing upon the just grace and charity, upon sinners in the Church the supernatural virtues of faith and hope, upon schismatics, heretics, Jews, and pagans, actual graces of illumination and inspiration, which can dispose them for salvation. Christ died for all men, and is king and lord of all.

Christ also, as king of the angels, exerts at least accidental influence of grace and glory upon them, inasmuch as they are His ministers in the heavenly kingdom. He also reigns as judge by exercising His justice over demons whom He cast out of creatures during His life on earth.

Christ the King, as explained in the encyclical, reigns in the whole of man, in our souls which He deifies, in our intellects so that they may always think of Him, in our wills so that they may be subject to Him, in the affections so that Christ may be loved above all things, in our bodies so that

our members may serve “as instruments of justice unto God” for His honor and glory.

This kingdom also includes civil society, for as Leo XIII remarks, civil society no less than the individual is dependent on God as its author, for “there is no power but from God,” and without Christ’s help man cannot observe even the whole natural law, provide for sound morality, pass good laws, for, as St. Thomas says: “In the state of corrupted nature man cannot fulfill all the divine commandments without healing grace,” nor the whole natural law.

Hence Pope Pius XI declares against laicism, “that by the rejection of Christ’s universal kingdom, it gradually comes about that no distinction is made between the true religion and false religions, and then all religion, even natural religion, is abolished, and thus the reign of impiety and immorality is established,” so that the words of our Lord are verified: “He that is not with Me is against Me.”

In our times, because of the institution of this feast of Christ the King, some have taken occasion to object to the Thomistic doctrine concerning the motive of the Incarnation. They have said that Christ as man is King of all creatures, even of angels, independently of our redemption from sin. But in virtue of the present decree, Christ came as King. Therefore in virtue of the present decree, He came also independently of sin.

We concede that this could be so in virtue of another decree, but not in virtue of the present decree. And we reply: Let the major pass without comment, because for Christ to be King of all creatures, formally as such, does not depend upon redemption from sin.

I distinguish the minor: in virtue of the present decree that Christ came primarily as King, this I deny; that He came so secondarily, I concede; for He came primarily as Savior, priest, and victim, although He is also King of all creatures. I distinguish the conclusion in like manner. Therefore, in virtue of the present decree, He came independently of sin if He came only as King, this I concede; if He also came, even primarily, as Savior of men, then I deny that He came so as king.

For the present decree, since it is efficacious and most prudent, concerns not only the substance of the Incarnation, but also all its circumstances, and therefore it is about the redemptive Incarnation, that is, it is about Christ who is to come in passible flesh. Hence, in virtue of the present decree, Christ nowise would have come unless man had sinned. This means that He

would not have come in passible flesh, or in any other way, either as Savior or as King. But de facto, after the sin of the first man, He came principally as the Savior of man and as the King of all creatures. As we said, God, perceiving by His knowledge of simple intelligence the possibility of the fall of man and the redemption, by one decree willed the creation of the natural order, the elevation of the human race and of the angels to the order of grace, and at the same time, in permitting original sin, willed the redemptive Incarnation and therefore by the same sole decree ordered all created things for the incarnate Word and Redeemer, or for the conqueror of sin, the devil, and death, as also for Him as King.

This is also clearly seen in the Mass of Christ the King, in which the title of King is intimately connected with that of Savior, and this not only once a year in the Mass of this feast, but daily in every Mass that is celebrated throughout the year.

The Introit of this Mass reads: “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and honor. To Him be glory and empire forever and ever.” The oration says: “Almighty and eternal God, who has willed to restore all things in Thy beloved Son, who is King of all things, mercifully grant that all the nations of the earth, freed from sin, may be subject to His sweet rule.”

The Epistle thanks God “who hath delivered us from the power of darkness and hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the remission of sins... because in Him it hath well pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell, and through Him to reconcile all things unto Himself.” The Gospel of this Mass recalls that Christ affirmed His kingship during His passion and intimately connected this royal dignity with redemption. The same is said in the Secret prayer. Also the Preface, in which Jesus is declared Priest before He is called King, says: “Thou who didst anoint with the oil of exaltation Thine only-begotten Son Jesus Christ eternal Priest and King of all: so that of offering Himself... on the altar of the cross, He might accomplish the mysteries of human redemption, and having subjected all creatures to His empire, might deliver an eternal and universal kingdom to Thy immense Majesty....”

Therefore the title of “King of kings” is nowise in opposition to the teaching of St. Thomas concerning the motive of the Incarnation. Christ is first of all the Savior.

It is of faith that Christ will judge the living and the dead, coming corporeally.

1) Judiciary power befits Christ for three reasons: (1) because of the hypostatic union; (2) because of His fullness of grace and dignity of headship; (3) because of His infinite merits. Thus the Scripture says: “It is He who was appointed by God to be judge of the living and of the dead.” It was most fitting that He who fought for God’s justice and conquered, having been unjustly condemned, should be, even as man, judge of all in accordance with God’s justice.

2) Judiciary power befits Christ as regards all human affairs, according to both natures. Thus the Evangelist says: “The Father hath given all judgment to the Son.” And St. Paul says: “For this end Christ died and rose again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.... For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God.”

3) Christ’s judgment is twofold, that is, particular at death for every individual, namely, for each particular person; and it is also universal, inasmuch as each individual is a part of the universe, and this will be at the end of the world. Thus St. Paul says: “It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment,” that is, the particular judgment. And the Evangelist says: “The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.” The sentence delivered on the Judgment Day means the separation of all the good from the bad. It is more probable that the sentence and all that pertains to the general judgment is done mentally and not vocally.

There will be in the last days a world-wide persecution by the wicked against the good; therefore the wicked will feel secure, and the good will fear. But on the day of the Last Judgment the just will deride the condemned for three things, namely, their pride, their trust in themselves, and the passing glory of this world.

4) Christ according to His human nature exerts judiciary power over all the angels, as regards the dispensation of graces granted through them and their accidental rewards; but He gives essential reward only in accordance with His divine nature. On this point St. Thomas says: “As to the essential reward of the good angels, which is everlasting bliss, and as to the essential punishment of the wicked angels, which is everlasting damnation, this was

done by Christ from the beginning of the world, inasmuch as He is the Word of God."

Nevertheless, as St. Thomas says: "The angels are subjects of Christ's judiciary power even as regards His human nature: (1) from the closeness of His assumed nature to God, namely, by reason of the hypostatic union; (2) because by the lowliness of His passion, the human nature in Christ merited to be exalted above the angels, so that as is said: 'In the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth.' And therefore Christ has judiciary power also over all the angels both good and bad. In testimony of this the Scripture says: 'All the angels stood round about the throne.'"

5) Will Christ come to judge the whole world in His human nature? The answer is in the affirmative. The Evangelist says: "The Father hath given Him power to do judgment, because He is the Son of man." Christ truly judges inasmuch as He is Lord, and Lord not only as Creator, but as Redeemer, which means according to His human nature. Hence St. Paul says: "For to this end Christ died and rose again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living."

THIRD ARTICLE: CHRIST THE HEAD OF THE BLESSED

1) It is said that "Christ sitteth on the right hand of God," and according to both natures. By reason of His divine nature He is equal to the Father, and in His human nature He excels all other creatures in the possession of divine good things. And both claims befit only Christ.

2) Christ as God preserves all the blessed in being and in the consummation of grace. He preserves the light of glory and unfailing charity in them, and moves these powers to their respective acts. Christ as man illumines the blessed, rules them, gives them joy in accordance with the scriptural saying: "The Lord God Almighty is the temple thereof [of the new city], and the Lamb. And the city hath no need of the sun nor of the moon to shine in it; for the glory of God hath enlightened it, and the Lamb is the lamp thereof."

3) Christ glorious as man adores the Father, thanks and offers Him His whole mystical body; and until the end of the world intercedes for wayfarers. St. Paul says: "Christ, being come a high priest of the good

things to come," concerning which St. Thomas says: "He sits next to the Father to intercede for us. He likewise sits there to help us."

Likewise the Church chants in the Mass: "It is truly worthy and just... for us always and everywhere to thank Thee, O holy Lord, omnipotent Father, eternal God, through Christ our Lord, through whom the angels praise Thy majesty, the dominations adore Thy majesty."

Likewise St. Augustine says that all the blessed thank God through Christ for their predestination and for all its effects.

4) Christ glorious is adored by the blessed and He receives their thanks inasmuch as He is the Savior of all. The Church addresses Him in these words: "O Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son, O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father... Thou only art holy, Thou only art the Lord, Thou only, O Jesus Christ, together with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the glory of God the Father." St. John says: "I heard all saying: To Him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb, benediction and honor and glory and power, forever and ever."

Is There Sacrifice In Heaven?

This has been admitted by some and in recent times by Talhofer and Father Lepin because Christ offers to God the Father His glorious scars and because the Scripture says: "I saw the Lamb standing as it were slain."

There is a considerable difficulty here, because first of all sacrifice in the strict sense implies external immolation, at least sacramentally, and this does not continue in heaven any more than the sacraments do, because the blessed see God directly, without sensible signs.

Moreover, it seems that the sacrifice in heaven would not be subordinated, but coordinated with the sacrifice on the cross, whereby therefore the work of our redemption would not have been completed, and would be contrary to what our Lord said in dying: "It is consummated." In fact, it seems that the sacrifice in heaven as such would be more perfect than the sacrifice on the cross, which latter would be subordinated to it as a disposition to its ultimate perfection.

Wherefore neither a new sacrifice in heaven in the strict sense must be admitted, nor a new and formal oblation of the sacrifice on the cross, but merely its consummation, which, St. Thomas says, "consists in this, that those for whom the sacrifice is offered, obtain the end of the sacrifice... according to Heb. 9:11, that Christ is a high priest of the good things to come, for which reason the priesthood of Christ is said to be eternal."

Nevertheless, until the end of the world, Christ glorious appeals to the Father for us, as the fruits of the sacrifice on the cross are applied to us, and thus also He actually offers the Masses that are daily offered by His priests. After the end of the world, Christ as our High Priest along with the members of His mystical body, will offer to the Father the cult of praise, adoration, and thanksgiving, wherein the sacrifice on the cross will be consummated without a new sacrifice in the strict sense.

The sacrifice of the cross, however, is not actually but virtually perpetuated in its consummation; for it is more perfect to reach consummation than to tend toward it, and the mystical body already glorified is more perfect than the mystical body not yet glorified. Likewise, generally speaking, merit is subordinated to the reward toward which it tends.

CHAPTER XL: COMPENDIUM OF MARIOLOGY

These questions have been discussed fully enough in a special book. Therefore we shall give a very brief explanation of them in the present treatise, considering them in their speculative aspect, as they pertain to the body of theological doctrine.

FIRST ARTICLE: THE EMINENT DIGNITY OF THE DIVINE MOTHERHOOD

The Blessed Virgin Mary is the Mother of Christ, and is therefore truly and properly the Mother of God, as defined by the Council of Ephesus. St. Thomas says: “Conception and birth are attributed to the person and hypostasis in respect of that nature in which it is conceived and born. Since, therefore, the human nature was taken by the divine person (of the Word) in the very beginning of the conception, it follows that it can be truly said that God was conceived and born of the Virgin Mary.” Hence she is truly the Mother of God.

The Blessed Virgin Mary was first predestined to this divine motherhood and then as a consequence of this to fullness of glory and grace, so as to be worthy of being the Mother of God. This is sufficiently clear from the bull of Pope Pius IX in which it is said: “The ineffable God from the beginning and from all eternity chose and ordained for His only-begotten Son, a mother from whom His Son took flesh so as to be born in the blessed fullness of time, and pursued her with such great love above all creatures, so as to find the greatest of delight in her.” A little farther on it says: “By one and the same decree [He chose her] along with the Incarnation of divine wisdom.”

In other words, the eternal decree of the Incarnation is not directed toward the quasi-abstract Incarnation, but toward the Incarnation here and now to be brought into being or, so to speak, individualized; that is, it

concerns the incarnation of God's Son from the Virgin Mary, as stated in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan symbol.

Therefore by the same eternal decree Christ as man was predestined to be by nature the Son of God, and the Blessed Virgin Mary to be the Mother of God. But this decree is antecedent to the predestinating decree of men who are to be saved by Christ's merits, and of whatsoever other human persons to glory and grace. Therefore the Blessed Virgin Mary was predestined to be the Mother of God, as to what was principally intended, prior to being predestined to glory, just as Christ was predestined to be the Son of God by nature, as to what was principally intended, prior to being predestined to glory. That to which anyone is first predestined is called the end, and is nobler than any other things to which a person is afterward predestined. From this it is already apparent that divine motherhood is nobler than fullness of grace and glory, which is a consequence of the former and which accompanies it so as to render the Blessed Virgin worthy of being the Mother of God.

This superiority of divine motherhood is evident also for several other reasons. First, because the Blessed Virgin Mary could indeed merit eternal life, but she could not merit the Incarnation, which is the eminent principle of all Mary's merits, just as it is of all men after the Fall, and hence she could not merit the divine motherhood, which is closely connected with the Incarnation, and which, like the Incarnation, transcends the sphere of merit. From what has been said it is also apparent that the Blessed Virgin Mary's predestination is entirely gratuitous.

Secondly, the divine motherhood is a dignity which by reason of its terminus whereunto, namely, the Word incarnate, belongs to the hypostatic order, which transcends the order of grace and glory.

Thirdly, the divine motherhood is the reason for all the graces bestowed upon the Blessed Virgin Mary. Thus it is their measure and end, and is therefore of a higher order than these. Such is the common teaching of the theologians.

Fourthly, the divine motherhood is the motive for the cultus of hyperdulia paid to Mary, to which she would not be entitled if she were only full of grace and the highest of all the saints, but not Mother of God.

Fifthly, it follows from this that the divine motherhood is also considered in itself superior to the fullness of grace that was granted to Mary so as to render her worthy of being the Mother of God. So also in the natural order

the spiritual soul, even considered in itself, because it belongs to the substantial order, is more perfect than its intellectual faculty, although it is perfected by this latter.

SECOND ARTICLE: THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

The plenitude of grace in Mary was first made manifest through the privilege of the Immaculate Conception, which was more and more explicitly admitted in the Church, and was finally solemnly defined by Pope Pius IX on December 8, 1854. Pius IX says in this definition: “We define the doctrine that holds the Blessed Virgin Mary in the first instant of her conception was by a singular grace and privilege of almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ the Savior of the human race, preserved exempt from all stain of original sin, and that this is a doctrine revealed by God and therefore must be believed firmly and constantly by all the faithful.”

This privilege, according to the bull of definition, is implicitly affirmed by the archangel Gabriel to Mary on the day of the Annunciation, who said: “Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women”; and St. Elizabeth uttered similar words. The Blessed Virgin Mary would not have received this fullness of grace if her soul at any moment had been in a state of spiritual death because of original sin, that is, if at any moment she had been without sanctifying grace and charity, and therefore turned away from God the ultimate end, a daughter of wrath, whom the devil could have claimed as having once been his slave.

This is especially evident from tradition, as this same bull declares, for it quotes the testimonies of St. Justin, St. Irenaeus, Tertullian, St. Ephrem, St. Ambrose, and St. Augustine. The feast of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary has been celebrated especially in the Greek Church since the seventh century, and almost in the whole of Europe since the twelfth century.

The theological proof for this privilege completes by the notion of preservative redemption what St. Thomas had said for the sanctification of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the womb before her birth. He had said: “For it is reasonable to believe that she who brought forth the only-begotten of the

Father, full of grace and truth, received greater privileges of grace than all others."

Now it must be said to be fitting that the most excellent Redeemer most perfectly redeemed the person who was most closely connected with Him as Mother and associated with Him in the redemption of the human race. But most perfect redemption liberates not only from sin, but also preserves from sin. Therefore it was far more fitting that the most excellent Redeemer, by His merits, that were of infinite value, preserve His mother from original sin and also from actual sin, as tradition affirms.

This argument was proposed by Eadmer in the twelfth century, and was afterward more clearly explained by Scotus, and is valid even regardless of the special opinion held by Scotus concerning the motive of the Incarnation.

The bull of definition declares that it is not fitting for the most perfect Redeemer to have had a Mother conceived in sin.

The consequences of the particular privilege of the Immaculate Conception are that the Blessed Virgin Mary never had concupiscence, and never had any absolutely first deordinate movements arising in her sensitive nature, but that there was always perfect subordination of her sensitive nature to the intellect and will, which were fully in subjection to the divine good pleasure, as in the state of innocence. Thus the Blessed Virgin is inviolate and undefiled.

Her intellect was never exposed to either error or illusion, so that she was always correct in her judgments, and if she was not at any time enlightened about anything, then she suspended her judgment, avoiding all precipitation. Thus she is called Seat of Wisdom, Queen of Doctors, Virgin most Prudent, Mother of Good Counsel.

In what way was she subjected to pain and death? She submitted to it as Christ did, inasmuch as pain and death were in her not the result of original sin, but of human nature or of the body conceived in passible flesh. For human nature of itself, just like all animal nature, is subjected to pain and death, and man is by nature mortal. The human body in the state of innocence was endowed with the preternatural gift of immortality, but when this was taken away, then the laws of nature at once came into operation. But Jesus, that He might be our Redeemer by His passion and death, was conceived in passible flesh, and thus willingly accepted pain and death for our salvation. The Blessed Virgin Mary also accepted pain and death, so that she might be united with her Son in the sacrifice of redemption.

The privilege of the Immaculate Conception and the beginning of the fullness of grace very much increased in Mary her capacity of grieving for the greatest of all evils, which is sin. It is precisely because she was most pure, and loved God and her Son in the very highest degree, that she grieved to the utmost for our sins, whereby God is offended and for which Christ was crucified.

The Teaching Of St. Thomas On The Immaculate Conception

It seems that we must distinguish between three periods in the life of St. Thomas as to his teaching on this subject.

In the first period, which was from 1253 to 1254, he affirmed the privilege, for he wrote: “Such was the purity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who was exempt from both original and actual sin.”

In the second period, St. Thomas sees more clearly the difficulties of the problem, and, because some theologians said that Mary had no need of redemption, the holy Doctor affirms that, according to revelation, Christ is the Redeemer of the human race, and that nobody is saved without him. But giving no thought to preservative redemption, St. Thomas seems to deny the privilege of the Immaculate Conception, saying: “It remains, therefore, that the Blessed Virgin was sanctified after animation,” St. Thomas fails to distinguish, as he often does in other questions, between posteriority of nature, which is compatible with the privilege, and posteriority of time, which is incompatible with it. He says: “The Blessed Virgin did indeed, contract original sin,” not sufficiently distinguishing between the debt of incurring original sin and the fact of incurring it.

Concerning the question as to the precise moment when the Blessed Virgin was sanctified in the womb, St. Thomas does not come to any conclusion. He only says: “This sanctification took place immediately after her animation,” and “it is not known when she was sanctified.”

It must be observed with Fathers del Prado, O. P., Mandonnet, O. P., and Hugon, O. P., that the principles invoked by St. Thomas do not contradict the privilege and remain intact if preservative redemption be admitted. But St. Thomas, at least in this second period of his life as teacher, does not seem to have thought of this most perfect mode of redemption. Moreover, it must be noticed that the feast of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin was not as yet celebrated in Rome; but what is not done in Rome, does not appear to be in conformity with tradition.

In the last period of his life, however, from 1272 until 1273, St. Thomas wrote a work that is certainly authentic. In a recent critical edition of this small work made by J. F. Rossi, c. M., we read: “For she [the Blessed Virgin] was most pure because she incurred the stain neither of original sin nor of mortal sin nor of venial sin.” If it be so, then St. Thomas at the end of his life, after mature reflection, and in accordance with his devotion toward the Blessed Virgin, again affirmed what he had said in the first period of his life.

We must note other passages indicative of this happy return to his first opinion.

A similar change of opinion is often enough to be found in great theologians concerning very difficult questions that belong to Mariology. First something of the privilege is affirmed in accordance with tradition and devotion; afterward difficulties become more apparent which give rise to doubts, and finally upon more mature reflection, enlightened by the gifts of the Holy Ghost, the theologian returns to his first opinion, considering that God’s gifts are more fruitful than we think and there must be good reasons for restricting their scope. But the principles of St. Thomas, as we have observed, do not decide against the privilege, they even lead to it, at the same time as the mind is acquiring an explicit notion of preservative redemption.

Thus St. Thomas probably at the end of life reaffirmed the privilege of the Immaculate Conception. Father Mandonnet and Father J. M. Voste thought so.

THIRD ARTICLE: THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY WAS PRESERVED FROM ALL ACTUAL SIN, EVEN VENIAL SIN

The Council of Trent declares the belief of tradition in the following words: “If anyone shall say that a man once justified... is able, during his whole life, to avoid all sins, even those that are venial, except by a special privilege from God, as the Church holds concerning the Blessed Virgin, let him be anathema.”

St. Hippolytus, St. Irenaeus, St. Justin, Tertullian, and St. Ambrose are quoted as witnesses of tradition, who place opposition between Eve and Mary, and St. Augustine says: “About the holy Virgin Mary, on account of the Lord’s honor, concerning sins, I will that no questions at all be raised.”

St. Thomas gives the theological proof in the following words: “God so prepares and endows those whom He chooses for some particular office, that they are rendered capable of fulfilling it, for St. Paul says: “Who hath made us fit ministers of the New Testament.” But she would not have been worthy to be the Mother of God if she had ever sinned.... So that what is written is fulfilled: “Thou are all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee. ‘ “

Mary was not only sinless but incapable of sinning, yet not absolutely so and in her own right as Christ was, but in virtue of the confirmation of grace that was granted her from the beginning and because of the special assistance of divine providence. This special assistance was the effect of the Blessed Virgin Mary’s predestination, and under this particular help she retained her complete freedom in the performance of good, without deviating from the right path. This is a participation in the immortality and impeccability of God’s supreme liberty.

It is the common teaching of theologians that the Blessed Virgin was also preserved from every imperfection, either directly or indirectly willed, which means that she was never less prompt in following the inspirations of grace given by way of counsel, and her acts of charity did not vary in intensity.

FOURTH ARTICLE: THE BEGINNING OF PERFECTION IN THE BLESSED VIRGIN’S FULLNESS OF GRACE

Pius IX says: “The ineffable God... from the beginning and from all eternity chose and ordained for His only-begotten Son a mother from whom His Son took flesh, so as to be born in the blessed fullness of time, and pursued her with such great love above all creatures so as to find the greatest of delight in her. Wherefore, far excelling all the angelic spirits and the saints, He so enriched her with an abundance of all heavenly charismata drawn from the treasury of His divine nature, that always absolutely free from all stain of sin, and all beautiful and perfect as she is, He might present in her a fullness of innocence and sanctity, greater than which, after God, cannot at all be known and, after God, no one can be thought to attain.”

St. Thomas manifests the fitness of this privilege by this principle: “In every genus the nearer a thing is to the principle, the greater the part it has in the effect of that principle.... But Christ is the principle of grace,

authoritatively as to His Godhead, instrumentally as to His humanity. But the Blessed Virgin Mary was nearest to Christ in His humanity, because He received His human nature from her. Therefore it was due to her to receive a greater fullness of grace than others."

If this incipient fullness of grace in the Blessed Virgin is compared with the final grace of men and angels before their entrance into heaven, theologians commonly teach that this beginning of fullness already surpassed the final grace of any man or angel whatever. This is today considered certain and is expressed by Pius IX.

The reason is that grace is the effect of God's active love, which makes us pleasing in His eyes, as His adopted sons. But the Blessed Virgin from the first moment of her conception, destined to be the Mother of God, was loved by Him more than any saint or angel whatever. Therefore the Blessed Virgin received greater grace than any of them. Moreover, this incipient fullness of grace was already a worthy reparation, although remote, for divine motherhood, which transcends the order of grace inasmuch as terminatively it belongs to the hypostatic order.

In fact, the majority of theologians now teach as most probable, if not certain, that this incipient fullness of grace in the Blessed Virgin already transcended the final grace of all the saints and angels taken together.

Pius IX evidently favors this view, for he says: "God pursued her with such great love above all creatures, so as to find the greatest delight in her. Wherefore, far above all the angelic spirits and the saints, He so enriched her with grace..., and this fullness of grace is, after God, the greatest conceivable."

But these expressions denote not only every one of the saints and angels, but all of them taken together. In fact, a little farther on in this papal bull, the Blessed Virgin is said to be "above all the choirs of angels," that is, all the angels taken together.

This assertion is conceded by all concerning Mary as she is in heaven, but the degree of glory in heaven corresponds to the degree of merit at the moment of death, and this in the Blessed Virgin was in proportion to her dignity as Mother of God, for which the incipient fullness of grace already disposed her.

The theological proof of the aforesaid teaching, which is more generally accepted, is this. A person that is loved more by God than all creatures taken together, received greater grace. But God from all eternity loved Mary

more than all creatures taken together, because He loved her as His future mother. Therefore He enriched her with a greater fullness of grace. And He considered her as His future mother from the first moment of her conception, in fact from all eternity, when He predestined her to divine motherhood.

Moreover, if this incipient fullness of grace surpasses the final grace of the highest saint or the highest angel, for this reason it surpasses the grace of all the saints taken together, for grace does not belong to the quantitative order, but to the qualitative order.

Thus the intelligence of an archangel surpasses the intelligence of all angels inferior to him. The intellectual vigor of St. Thomas exceeds that of all his commentators taken together. Likewise the power of the king not only surpasses the power of his prime minister, but of all his ministers taken together.

Hence the Blessed Virgin even in this life, without the cooperation of the saints and angels, could obtain more by her prayers and merits than all the saints and angels taken together could obtain without her.

The consequences of this beginning in the fullness of grace are that all the infused virtues, and the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, which are connected with charity, were from the beginning in Mary in a proportionate degree.

Moreover, many theologians think that the Blessed Virgin more probably received, through infused knowledge, the use of reason and of free will from the first moment of her conception, for the purpose of offering herself to God and for the purpose that this beginning in the fullness of the graces of the virtues and gifts might produce fruit in her. It is also probable that she was not afterward deprived of this use of free will, because thus she would have become less perfect through no fault of her own.

FIFTH ARTICLE: THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY’S INCREASE IN GRACE

Whereas Christ received in the first moment of His conception, absolute fullness of grace, for the Second Council of Constantinople says, “He never was made better in the advancement of good works,” the Blessed Virgin Mary always was made better until death, increasing in the grace of the virtues and the gifts. Just as a stone falls more swiftly as it approaches the ground, so, says St. Thomas, the just soul more promptly goes to God the

more it approaches Him and is attracted and drawn by Him. Thus there was always an increase of progress in the Blessed Virgin Mary.

This spiritual progress in the Blessed Virgin Mary was the fruit of merit and prayer.

It was especially on the day of the Annunciation at the moment of the Incarnation that she received a great increase of grace. Then when the Word was made flesh, she received this Word with the greatest fervor, and the Incarnation by reason of the operation effected (ex opere operato) produced in her a great increase of grace more so than Eucharistic Communion does in a person very well disposed.

The spiritual joy of the Blessed Virgin Mary was made manifest on the day she uttered her canticle of praise, when visiting Elizabeth.

The Church has defined that the holy Mother of God was a virgin before her parturition, in her parturition, and after parturition, and always remained a virgin; wherefore she did not need to be purified. The Fathers of the Church have often said this. St. Thomas says: “The error of Helvidius, who dared to assert that Christ’s Mother, after His birth, was carnally known by Joseph, and bore other children... is derogatory to Christ’s perfection..., is an insult to the Holy Ghost..., and is derogatory to the dignity and holiness of God’s Mother, for thus she would seem to be most ungrateful, were she not content with such a Son, and were she of her own accord, by carnal intercourse to forfeit that virginity which had been miraculously preserved in her.”

Then the grace of the virtues and the gifts was in a special manner increased in-Mary on the day of our Lord’s birth, on the day when Jesus was presented in the Temple, during His flight into Egypt, afterward when the holy family lived in Nazareth. But this grace was especially increased in her on Mount Calvary, when the mother of our Savior was intimately associated with the sacrifice of her Son, also on the day of Pentecost, and when she most fervently received Holy Communion from the hands of St. John the Evangelist.

Therefore the Blessed Virgin Mary had the greatest of faith, illumined by the gifts of understanding, wisdom, and knowledge, and hence her knowledge of Sacred Scripture was profound, especially as regards those things that are more closely related to the mysteries of the Incarnation and Redemption.

It is commonly held that she was exempt not only from error, but also from ignorance in the strict sense, which is a privation in a fit subject. Certain things she did not know, but she was not ignorant of those things which it befitted her to know.

It is more probable that she had infused knowledge for the use of reason and free will from the first moment of her conception, and afterward was not deprived of this use, because she would have become less perfect through no fault of her own.

From her Canticle of the Magnificat it is evident that she had the gift of prophecy. Like many of the saints, she also received the gift of discernment of spirits, especially in giving counsel to those who appealed to her. Finally, perhaps toward the end of her life, she had the beatific vision in a transient manner, as St. Augustine and St. Thomas affirm that St. Paul probably had.

The principal virtues of the Blessed Virgin Mary were her most firm hope, especially her heroic charity on Mount Calvary, eminent prudence, enlightened by the gift of counsel, justice always tempered by the greatest mercy, the greatest of piety, invincible fortitude, most renowned virginity, exceeding meekness, and most profound humility. Thus she is the exemplar of the contemplative life in the hidden apostolate made most fruitful by prayer and sacrifice.

SIXTH ARTICLE: THE FINAL PLENITUDE OF GRACE IN MARY

1) What was this plenitude at the moment of death? The immaculate Mother of God did not die on account of original sin; her death, like that of Christ, as we have said, was not the result of sin but of nature, or of natural consequences, inasmuch as she was conceived in passible flesh, as Christ was, for man is by nature mortal.

In union with her Son on Calvary she offered the sacrifice of the cross and the sacrifice of her own life, and, as St. John Damascene, St. Francis de Sales, and Bossuet testify and explain, she died not only in love, but from love for her divine Son, that is, from a strong desire of seeing God immediately and forever. In accordance with this final plenitude of grace and charity, her soul was ultimately disposed for the beatific vision.

2) The assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. According to documents of tradition the feast of the Assumption has been solemnly celebrated both in the Latin Church and in the Greek Church since the seventh century. But

this solemn feast is the liturgical expression of the ordinary magisterial teaching of the whole Church, for the law of praying is the law of believing, and this presupposes that the privilege of the Assumption is certain and at least implicitly revealed. The Blessed Virgin Mary's entrance into heaven could not be naturally known with certainty; even though the apostles saw His body rise from the ground as to its term wherefrom, they did not see it as to its term whereunto as St. Thomas says of our Lord's ascension. Therefore the certainty of the Assumption as expressed in the institution of this solemn feast can be the result only of at least implicit revelation.

That this privilege, however, was implicitly revealed, is evident from especially two traditionally alleged theological reasons. For the Blessed Virgin Mary according to the angelic salutation was "full of grace and blessed among women." But this exceptional benediction excludes the malediction, "Unto dust thou shalt return." Therefore the body of the Blessed Virgin Mary was under no obligation to suffer the corruption of the tomb.

Moreover, according to the words of Simeon, "And thy own soul a sword shall pierce," the Blessed Virgin Mary was closely associated on Calvary with Christ's perfect victory over the devil and sin. Therefore she was associated with Christ's perfect victory over death, which is a part of the victory over the devil, and victory over sin follows, inasmuch as "death is the wages of sin." But perfect victory over death requires that the Mother of God "could not have been held down by the bonds of death." Therefore this victory requires an anticipated resurrection and assumption. Thus the privilege of the Assumption seems proximately definable as one hundred and ninety-seven Fathers of the Vatican Council postulated. Denzinger also points out: "Concerning the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, at the time of the Vatican Council two hundred and four bishops and theologians urged its dogmatic definition since, unless we wish to say that the most firm faith of the Church savors too much of slight credulity, which it is impious to think, without doubt it is of divine and apostolic tradition, that is, it must be most firmly held to have been revealed."

3) The final plenitude of the Blessed Virgin Mary's grace received its confirmation in heaven for she was raised "above the choirs of angels" as the liturgy says, to the highest degree of essential glory or of the beatific vision after Christ, as His worthy Mother, who was intimately associated with Him in the work of our salvation, and reached the highest degree of

charity after Him. The degree of glory corresponds to the degree of merits acquired at the end of this life.

But the accidental beatitude of the Blessed Virgin Mary consists in the intimate knowledge of Christ's glorious human nature, in the functioning of her office as universal Mediatrix and spiritual mother, and in the cult of hyperdulia that is owing to her as Mother of God. To her is attributed the threefold aureole of martyrs, confessors of the faith, and virgins.

SEVENTH ARTICLE: THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY'S UNIVERSAL MEDIATION

The holy Mother of the Redeemer is often called by the Fathers "the new Eve" or the spiritual mother of all men. Afterward, more and more explicitly her universal mediation was affirmed in the liturgy and in the works of theologians. In the Middle Ages St. Bernard says: "Mary is the procurer of grace, the mediator of salvation, the restorer of the ages," St. Albert the Great calls Mary "the coadjutor and associate of Christ," Finally, in most recent times, the Supreme Pontiffs expressly affirm that she is the Mediatrix of all graces.

Leo XIII says: "It is God's will that nothing be bestowed on us except through Mary; so that, as nobody can reach the supreme Father except through the Son, so that almost nobody can approach Christ except through Mary." Leo XIII also says: "She is the one from whom Jesus was born, His true Mother, and for this reason the worthy and most accepted Mediatrix to the Mediator."

Pius X more explicitly declared: "But from the communion of griefs and purpose between Mary and Christ she merited, as Eadmer says, to become most worthily the reparatrix of a lost world, and therefore the dispenser of all the gifts which Jesus procured for us by His death and the shedding of His blood.... Since she excelled all others in sanctity and in her union with Christ and was summoned by Him in the human work of salvation, it was congruous, as they say, that she should merit for us what Christ condignly merited for us; and she is the principal minister in the dispensation of graces."

Benedict XV likewise says: "As she suffered with her Son in His passion and, so to speak, shared in His death, so she abdicated her maternal rights over her Son for the salvation of men and, as far as it was in her power,

sacrificed her Son for the appeasement of divine justice, so that it can truly be said, that along with Christ she redeemed the human race."

Pius XI said in equivalent words: "The most sorrowful Mother participated in the work of redemption with Jesus Christ."

Finally, a decree of the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office praises the custom of attaching the name of Jesus to that of Mary: "His Mother, our co-Redemptress, the blessed Mary." Therefore the title "Co-Redemptress of the human race" is approved.

Theological proof. It shows the genuineness of this title, for in the strict sense this title of co-Redemptress and universal Mediatrix befits the Mother of the Redeemer, if she is associated with Christ in the work of the redemption of the human race by way of merit and satisfaction. But she was truly so associated with Him by a perfect communion of will and suffering, inasmuch as she gave her consent to the mystery of the Incarnation. Thus she gave us the Redeemer, and afterward, especially on Calvary, along with Christ congruously merited and satisfied for all of us; now finally in heaven she intercedes with Christ for us and distributes all graces we receive. Therefore the aforesaid title strictly befits her.

But this association with Christ the Redeemer is properly understood when we exclude what it is not. Certainly the Blessed Virgin Mary was not the principal and perfective cause of our redemption, for she could not condignly redeem us in justice. For this, Christ's theandric act of infinite value, as the head of the human race, was necessary. The Mother of the Savior could not elicit a theandric act of reparation, nor was she constituted the head of the human race. But, subordinated to Christ, she is really the secondary and dispositive cause of our redemption.

It is said "subordinated to Christ" not only in this sense, that she is inferior to Him, but that she concurs in our salvation, by the grace which comes from Christ's merits. Thus she operated in Him and through Him. Hence Christ is the supreme mediator of all, and the Blessed Virgin Mary was redeemed by Him by a most perfect redemption, not by being freed from sin, but by being preserved from it.

She is also the dispositive cause of our redemption, inasmuch as she disposes us to receive Christ's influence who, as the author of salvation, perfects the work of our redemption.

Some have raised the objection, that the principle of merit does not come under merit. But the Blessed Virgin Mary was redeemed by the sacrifice of

the cross. Therefore she could not even congruously merit the attainment of graces for us.

Reply. I concede the major and minor, but the conclusion does not follow. All that follows is that she could not even congruously merit the attainment of all these graces for herself, this I concede. But she could merit these for us.

Christ merited condignly all the effects of the Blessed Virgin Mary's predestination, except the divine motherhood, because in such a case He would have merited the Incarnation and therefore Himself. Hence Christ merited the first grace and final perseverance for the Blessed Virgin Mary. But the Blessed Virgin Mary did not even congruously merit for herself either the first grace or final perseverance, because the principle of merit does not come under merit. But the Blessed Virgin Mary merited for us congruously what Christ merited for us condignly, namely, all the graces we receive, even the first grace and final perseverance. In this there is no contradiction, but great harmony.

Hence the Blessed Virgin Mary was indeed redeemed by Christ through the sacrifice of the cross in the preservative sense, and so she was immaculate; but as a consequence of this, she merited congruously with Christ for us, not only the distribution or application of graces, but the attainment of graces that flow from the sacrifice of the cross; for in the strict sense together with Christ she offered this sacrifice. Thus she merited with Him redemption in the objective sense, namely, our liberation from sin and our reinstatement in grace.

But I insist. The Blessed Virgin Mary merited congruously for us what, for example, St. Monica congruously merited and obtained for St. Augustine, namely, the grace of conversion. Therefore there is only a difference of degree between her and other saints who intercede for us, and it must not be said that she is the Co-Redemptrix in the strict sense, but only in an improper sense, as the apostles are said to have labored for the salvation of souls.

Reply. The difference is that the Blessed Virgin Mary gave us the Redeemer, and with Him offered the sacrifice of the cross by meriting and satisfying. St. Monica and other saints, on the contrary, did not offer with Christ the sacrifice of the cross, and therefore did not merit congruously the attainment of graces that flow from this sacrifice but only the application of these, and therefore cannot be called co-redeemers. They can be said only

to labor in the salvation of souls. They did not merit congruously our redemption in the objective sense.

Hence St. Albert the Great could say that the Blessed Virgin Mary is not assumed into the ministry of our Lord, but as a consort and help, in accordance with the saying: “Let us make him a help like unto himself, “ (Gen. 2:18). In this the Blessed Virgin is above the apostles and she alone can be properly called the Mediatrix and co-redemptrix of the human race.

The Way The Blessed Virgin Mary Merited The Liberation And Restoration Of The Human Race

In these times, as is known, in divers theological periodicals, especially in Belgium, and also in Italy, France, Spain, and Germany, there was and still is a controversy concerning the exact meaning of this doctrine that is commonly accepted among theologians and is sanctioned by Pius XI, namely, that what Christ merited de condigno for us, the Blessed Virgin Mary merited de congruo for us as the Mediatrix of the human race.

What is the exact meaning of saying that the Blessed Virgin Mary merited de congruo for us? Many theologians say that, although she did not merit condignly, yet she still merited in the proper sense, or strictly congruously, the liberation and restoration of the human race. The Blessed Virgin Mary properly merited for us de congruo also the first grace and also the last grace, namely, that of final perseverance, but under Christ, through Him and in Him, inasmuch as she was most closely and indissolubly united with Him in offering up the sacrifice of the cross.

Among these theologians, some, a few indeed, hint and sometimes say that merit in the strict sense is condign merit. Therefore the Blessed Virgin Mary, if she strictly merited for us the first grace, merited it also condignly, which is admitted by very few theologians.

Against this last conclusion several wrote that this would detract from the primacy of Christ the Redeemer, by whom the Blessed Virgin Mary was redeemed by preservative redemption, and they appealed to the common teaching as formulated by St. Thomas, who says: “No one can merit condignly for another the first grace, except Christ alone... inasmuch as He is the head of the Church, and the Author of human salvation,” In fact, some, but a few, replied that merit in the strict sense is condign merit; but the common teaching is that the Blessed Virgin Mary did not merit condignly for us. Therefore she did not merit properly but only improperly for us the first and the ultimate grace.

Therefore these last theologians wish to reduce the Blessed Mary's merit for us to merit improperly so called or to the impetratory power of prayer, which can be in the sinner without merit, and which continues now in the blessed with merit. They interpret the following words of Pius X in this sense: "Since she excelled all others in sanctity and in her union with Christ, and was summoned by Him to the work of human salvation, it was congruous, as they say, that she should merit for us what Christ condignly merited for us." According to this interpretation Pius X, concerning the merit of the Blessed Virgin Mary for us, would have had in mind only merit improperly so called of intercession such as that which continues in heaven, which is not strictly merit, and which therefore does not refer to the attainment of graces, but only to their application, just as other saints intercede for us. This last opinion is admitted by very few.

Theologians generally hold that the Blessed Virgin Mary merited for us strictly speaking, but only congruously, the first and last grace.

I do not now wish to enter into the particulars of this controversy, but I should like to make some preliminary observation, which has not been sufficiently noted, the necessity of which is clearly seen from the extremely opposite views on both sides. Both parties to the controversy hold that merit in the strict sense is condign merit; and one party to the controversy deduced therefore that the Blessed Virgin Mary merited condignly for us, which is contrary to the common teaching; the other party to the controversy deduces therefore that the Blessed Virgin Mary did not strictly merit for us, which is likewise against the common teaching, but in the opposite sense.

This controversy seems to result from an insufficient analysis of the notion of merit in general. On the one hand, the adversaries take a quasi-univocal view of merit, and therefore consider merit in the strict sense to be only condign merit. Wherefore either the Blessed Virgin Mary merited condignly for us, or did not strictly merit for us; and both parties depart from the common opinion.

But the first question to be asked is whether the notion of merit is univocal or analogical; and whether merit that has its foundation in an amicable right may be called analogically but still properly merit.

We often take univocally what must be understood analogically, and we do not sufficiently distinguish between what is said analogically and

metaphorically, as when we say that God is angry, and what is said analogically and properly, as when we say that God is just.

Some, for example, seem to consider that cause in general is predicated univocally of the four causes, whereas it is predicated only analogically, or proportionately, but nevertheless it is still predicated properly of the final cause, the efficient cause, the formal cause, and the material cause. Others speak as if cognition would be predicated univocally of intellection and sensation, whereas it is predicated of them analogically, but still properly, for sensation is the lowest kind of cognition, but it is still cognition in the strict sense. Likewise love is predicated analogically of spiritual love and of sensitive love, but this second kind is strictly love. Also, life is predicated analogically of divine life, of our intellectual life, our sensitive life, even of vegetative life, which still is life properly so called, distinct from life in the metaphorical sense, as when we speak of living water. Also, being is not predicated univocally but analogically of God, created substance, and accident; although accident is being in another, it is still properly something real; the quantity of bread, the wisdom of the doctor, are strictly something real and entirely distinct from a logical being, which is not strictly being. In all these examples analogy of proper and not merely metaphorical proportionality is verified.

Finally, according to the teaching of St. Thomas, sin is not predicated univocally but analogically of mortal sin and venial sin; nevertheless, venial sin is still sin in the strict sense, and thus is distinct from imperfection, for example, from less generosity or promptness in following the divine counsel. But if sin or demerit is predicated analogically, but still properly, of venial sin, likewise merit is not predicated univocally but analogically of condign merit and congruous merit; and why could it not still be properly predicated of merit that has its foundation in an amicable right?

What St. Thomas says of sin or of demerit is equally applicable to merit. He writes: “The division of sin into venial and mortal is not a division of a genus into a species, which have an equal share of the generic nature, but it is the division of an analogous term into its parts, of which it is predicated, of the one first, and of the other afterward, consequently the perfect notion of sin, which Augustine gives, applies to mortal sin. On the other hand, venial sin is called a sin in relation to mortal sin, even as an accident is called a being, in relation to substance, in reference to the imperfect notion of being.” Nevertheless, just as accident is still properly something real and

not a logical being, so venial sin is still in the proper sense sin, but imperfectly so, just as vegetative life is very imperfect life, but it is still, however, properly called life.

Likewise merit, or the right to a reward analogically and not univocally is predicated of merit in the natural order, for example, in civil life or military life, and of supernatural merit. Likewise, in the supernatural order merit is predicated analogically: (1) of merit that has its foundation in strict justice in accordance with the absolute equality between the work performed and the reward, namely, Christ's theandric merit is of infinite value; (2) condign merit still has its foundation in justice, yet not so that the work performed is equal to the reward, but proportionately so and according to the divine ordination and promise; (3) congruous merit properly so called has its foundation in merit, or in an amicable right to a reward, presupposing the state of grace, and in the Blessed Virgin Mary fullness of grace. So far merit has been predicated analogically, indeed, but still in the proper sense, just as accident still is being, and just as vegetative life still is life properly so called; (4) merit is predicated improperly or metaphorically of congruous merit in the broad sense which has its foundation in God's liberality or mercy; then there is no more a right, not even an amicable right to a reward, because this last improperly called right does not suppose the state of grace, but a certain disposition for grace or prayer that the sinner offers, which has not a meritorious but an impetratory power.

St. Thomas, inquiring whether a man can merit the first grace for another, says: "No one can merit condignly for another his first grace; since each one of us is moved by God to reach life everlasting through the gift of grace; hence condign merit does not reach beyond this motion, but Christ's soul is moved by God through grace, not only so as to reach the glory of life everlasting, but so as to lead others to it, inasmuch as He is the head of the Church, and the author of human salvation.... But one may merit the first grace for another congruously; because a man in grace fulfills God's will, and it is congruous and in harmony with friendship that God should fulfill man's desire for the salvation of another." Thus it is commonly held that St. Monica not only obtained by her prayers, but also merited fittingly, though not condignly, the conversion of St. Augustine; a fortiori, the Blessed Virgin Mary, full of grace, the Mother of God and the spiritual mother of all men, merited for us in a strictly congruous sense the first grace, in fact, all the graces we receive and for the elect the ultimate grace of final perseverance,

which they cannot strictly merit for themselves, because thus the principle of merit or the state of grace lasting until the moment of death would come under merit.

This congruous merit has its foundation not only in God's liberality and mercy, like the impetratory power of a sinner's prayer, but has its foundation in an amicable right or in the rights of friendship, and presupposing the state of grace, and in the Blessed Virgin Mary fullness of grace, is still merit properly so called.

Nevertheless the idea of merit is not absolutely the same in condign merit and in strictly congruous merit; this notion is simply different, but in a qualified manner the same, that is, in accordance with a proper proportionality and is not merely metaphorical.

Thus the notion of life is not simply the same in the divine life and in the vegetative life, they are only proportionately the same; nevertheless the vegetative life is still life properly so called, and is not so metaphorically as when we speak of "living water." Thus it remains true that the Blessed Virgin Mary properly merited for us the first grace and others, yet not condignly, but in a strictly congruous sense. Thus the Blessed Virgin Mary with Christ, through Him, and in Him congruously merited objective redemption, that is, the liberation and restoration of the human race, or the attainment of graces, which afterward are applied to individuals.

Thus the solution of the objections against the title "co-Redemptress" presents no difficulty.

Objection. Only Christ is the Redeemer.

Reply. That Christ alone is the Redeemer essentially, condignly, perfectively, this I concede; the Blessed Virgin Mary is co-Redemptress through Christ, congruously and imperfectly.

But I insist. The principle of merit does not come under merit. But Mary was redeemed by Christ. Therefore she cannot be the co-Redemptress.

Reply. That she cannot be her own co-Redemptress, this I concede; of others, I deny. Thus she could not even congruously merit for herself either the first grace or the immaculate conception, or the grace of final perseverance; for in such cases the principle of merit would fall under merit. But she could merit in a strictly congruous sense for us the first and last graces which Christ merited for us condignly. First of all the Blessed Virgin Mary was preserved from sin, and she was afterward the co-Redemptress.

Still I insist. Redemption is one and indivisible. Therefore, if the Blessed Virgin Mary is redeemed and hence is not her own co-Redemptress, she is also not the co-Redemptress of others.

Reply. Father Merkelbach distinguishes the antecedent as follows: That redemption is one and undivided according to the principal and perfective cause, and thus is a theandric act of Christ, this I concede; that redemption is one and undivided in its effects as a secondary and subordinated cause, this I deny. This presupposes the preservative redemption of the Virgin in her action as Mediatrix and co-Redemptress for others. Thus the soul, which vivifies the head, through the mediation of the head moves the members. Thus Christ was predestined first of all before us.

Thus Christ's primacy is absolutely maintained, for the Blessed Virgin Mary is Mediatrix only, subordinately and in dependence on Christ. Only in virtue of her suffering and grace in union with Christ has she merited and satisfied congruously for us. It is only by Christ's grace that the Blessed Virgin gave her consent on the day of the Annunciation, and on Calvary said: "May the Father's will be done."

Final objection. The Blessed Virgin Mary could not immediately cooperate with the act of redemption, or offer the sacrifice of the cross, because she was not a priest.

Reply. That she could not immediately cooperate in the redemptive act, by eliciting a theandric act, or by exercising a truly sacerdotal and sacrificial action, this I concede: that she could not by suffering with Him, this I deny. It is in this sense that Benedict XV says: "As she suffered with her Son in His passion and, so to speak, shared in His death, so she abdicated her maternal rights over her Son for the salvation of men and, as far as it was in her power, sacrificed her Son... so that it can truly be said, that along with Christ she redeemed the human race."

In this sense the Blessed Virgin Mary congruously merited in the strict sense the attainment of graces that flow to us from Christ's passion, whereas other saints can only congruously merit for us not the attainment but the application of graces that flow from the passion. And just as Christ condignly merited all the graces we receive, so the Blessed Virgin Mary merited them congruously; and just as Christ merited for the elect all the effects of predestination, namely, calling, justification, and glorification, so the Blessed Virgin Mary congruously merited these effects for the elect. Thus she is to us the Mediatrix of all graces, and can and must be called the

co-Redemptress as subordinated to Christ in the work of our salvation. This nowise detracts from Christ's primacy, but better affirms it, for just as God gave to creatures the dignity of causality, so Christ gave to His mother the dignity of causality, as regards meriting and satisfying for us.

Thus the unity of Mariology is preserved intact. There are not two quasi-equal principles, namely, Mary is the Mother of God, and Mary is the Mediatrix of all. The supreme principle in Mariology is: Mary is the Mother of God the Redeemer, and hence she is intimately associated with Him in the work of redemption.

The mediation of the Blessed Virgin Mary as subordinated to Christ's mediation, is not necessary, but most useful and efficacious and is granted to us by God because of His mercy and our weakness. Truly the Blessed Virgin Mary congruously merited for us in the strict sense what Christ condignly merited. She also congruously satisfied for us, whereas Christ condignly satisfied for us.

Now in heaven the Mother of the Savior exercises her universal mediation by means of her all-powerful intercession, and by the distribution of all graces, congruously, since she already merited what she asks for. In this distribution, she is more probably, like Christ, not only the moral cause, but also the physical and instrumental cause of grace. Thus the parallelism with the Savior is preserved, as regards these four: namely, merit, satisfaction, intercession, distribution. There is no reason to deny this causality, which is found also in the priest absolving a penitent and in the wonderworker when he performs miracles. This causality is suggested in the liturgy when it chants: "Make my heart burn with the love of God.... Make me bear in my body the death of Christ.... Grant that I may be wounded with His wounds.... Grant that I may be inebriated with the teaching of the Cross."

On account of the aforesaid reasons the Blessed Virgin Mary's Universal mediation seems to be proximately definable.

The Blessed Virgin Mary especially shows herself as Mother of mercy toward men, inasmuch as she is the health of the sick, the refuge of sinners, comforter of the afflicted, help of Christians, mother of holy joy.

Similarly, as Mother of the Savior, she is queen of all, queen of angels, of patriarchs, of apostles, of prophets, of martyrs, of confessors, of virgins. As Mother of God, she is entitled to the cult of hyperdulia.

The Excellence Of St. Joseph Over All Other Saints

Finally, something must be said of St. Joseph's predestination and of his eminent sanctity. The doctrine according to which St. Joseph among the saints in heaven is the highest after the Blessed Virgin Mary, is the quasi-commonly accepted teaching in the Church, especially from the sixteenth century. It was approved by Leo XIII in proclaiming St. Joseph patron of the universal Church, who wrote: "Certainly the dignity of Mary as the Mother of God in heaven is so great that nothing greater can be attributed to her. But, because there intervened between St. Joseph and the most Blessed Virgin Mary a marital bond, there is no doubt that to the most distinguished dignity whereby the Mother of God very far surpasses all creatures, it came about that nobody is greater than St. Joseph. Marriage is a partnership and a necessity that is the greatest of all, which by its nature has added to it the mutual communication of goods. Wherefore, if God gave Joseph as spouse to the Virgin, He assuredly gave him not only as companion in life, as witness of her virginity, guardian of her virtue, but also as sharer by this conjugal bond in her high dignity."

The Church invokes St. Joseph immediately after the Blessed Virgin Mary and before the apostles in the oration of the Mass. She also addresses him with the following titles: "St. Joseph, light of patriarchs, spouse of the Mother of God, chaste guardian of the Virgin, foster father of the Son of God, diligent protector of Christ, head of the holy family..., glory of home life, guardian of virgins, pillar of families, solace of the wretched, hope of the sick, patron of the dying, terror of demons, protector of the holy Church, pray for us."

No one is greater among the saints after the Mother of the Savior.

But what is the principle of this doctrine about the excellence of St. Joseph, admitted for the last five centuries? It is that proportionate sanctity is required for an exceptional divine mission, as in the case of Christ, His holy Mother, the apostles, founders of orders, and others who are immediately chosen by God.

But Joseph was predestined for an exceptional mission, one that is unique in the world and throughout all time, namely, that he should be the spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the foster father of the Son of God, and that he should have in the guardianship of the Word incarnate the heart of a father, full of benevolence and love. There is nothing more exalted after the dignity of divine motherhood. Therefore St. Joseph received sanctity in proportion to this mission, and this sanctity increased until the end of his life. In fact,

St. Joseph was probably predestined to his exceptional mission before he was predestined to glory, for there is no distinction between his predestination and the decree of the Incarnation, which is directed to the Incarnation not in a general way but as to something individualized, namely, as concerning the incarnation of the Word by the Virgin Mary "espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David," This decree includes both Christ's predestination to be the natural Son of God, predestination of Mary to be the Mother of God, predestination of Joseph to the protection of the Son incarnate and His Mother. Hence it can be said that just as Christ was predestined to be the natural Son of God before He was predestined to glory, and the Blessed Virgin to divine motherhood before glory, so it seems that St. Joseph was first predestined to his exceptional mission, on account of which he was afterward predestined to a very high degree of glory and grace. The reason for this conclusion is that Christ's predestination as man to be the natural Son of God, precedes the predestination of any of the elect, because Christ is the first of all the predestined. But Christ's predestination to be the natural Son of God is nothing but the decree of the Incarnation thus fulfilled here and now. But this decree implies Mary's predestination to divine motherhood and Joseph's predestination to the protection of the Son of God incarnate and of His Mother.

Monsignor G. Sinibaldi says: "The mystery of St. Joseph is in close relation with the order of the hypostatic union as so constituted.... The cooperation of St. Joseph is not equal to Mary's cooperation. Whereas Mary's cooperation is intrinsic, physical, immediate, St. Joseph's is extrinsic, moral, through Mary's mediation; but it is a true cooperation."

It has recently been asked exactly in what sense St. Joseph is called father of Jesus, for example, when the Evangelist says: "The child Jesus remained in Jerusalem, and His parents knew it not.... And His mother said to Him: Son, why hast thou done so to us? Behold Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing."

Reply. St. Joseph is not called father in the strict sense. Three things are required to be father in the strict sense, namely, that he produce of his own substance, one like himself in species, and principally, as St. Thomas shows in many places, that the father gives to his son three things, namely, being, nourishment, and education. If he gives being, he is already father in the strict sense, even though his son be illegitimate; but to be father in the full

sense he must give not only being, but nourishment, good education, and instruction. Father in the strict sense is attributed analogically to the eternal Father because of the eternal generation of His only-begotten Son, and to the earthly father because of his temporal generation.

But many times the term “father, “ is not attributed in the strict sense as in the cases of adoptive father, spiritual father, foster father intellectual father. Among these paternities not taken in the strict sense the most exalted is the paternity of St. Joseph toward Jesus. It is a paternity absolutely of its own kind, which transcends common adoptive paternity and foster paternity. St. Thomas says: “The child is not called the good of marriage only inasmuch as it is the result of marriage, but inasmuch as it is received and educated in marriage. And so the good of the Blessed Virgin Mary’s marriage was that child, not taken in the first sense; neither a child born in adultery nor an adopted son who is educated in matrimony is the good of marriage, because matrimony is not ordered to the education of those, as this marriage between Mary and Joseph was ordered especially to this, that the child be both received and educated in marriage.” Thus St. Joseph’s paternity was absolutely of its own kind and therefore Joseph received from God, as Bossuet says, a paternal heart, so that with the greatest of affection, he might take care of the Word incarnate, the Son of God, who was truly and properly the Son of his consort, the Blessed Virgin Mary.

APPENDIX: THE DEFINABILITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY’S ASSUMPTION

Revelation declares that the Mother of the Savior is the vanquisher of and is not vanquished by the devil, sin, and death.

In recent times William Hentrich and Rudolf Gualtero de Moos published a work in two volumes, which contains the petitions addressed to the Holy See postulating the definition of the corporeal Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into heaven. These petitions were proposed by various members of the hierarchy, starting with the highest and included the reasons of the more prominent dogmatic theologians, from various parts of the world, and were arranged in chronological order in manifestation of the consent of the Church.

From the day when the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary was proclaimed a dogma of our faith, many bishops throughout the Catholic world, very many priests, religious, and faithful postulated the

definition of the Blessed Virgin Mary's Assumption as constituting the crowning doctrine of the Church concerning the privileges that stem from her divine maternity. From the time of Leo XIII these petitions have been placed on file by a special department of the Supreme Congregation of the Holy Office, but up to the present time these had not been published. The Most Reverend Fathers W. Hentrich and R. G. de Moos, S. J., qualifiers of the Holy Office, with the greatest of care prepared for publication a work containing all these petitions. For this all lovers of this cause of Mary's Assumption are most thankful, and especially theologians who study the questions about the definability of this privilege.

As explained in the introduction to the first part of this work, contained in the first volume and in the second volume up to page 658, these petitions are arranged in hierarchical order, beginning with the cardinals, patriarchs, councils and synods, residential bishops, vicars capitular, coadjutors, bishops, auxiliary bishops, prefects apostolic, religious orders, universities, Catholic faculties, and congresses.

Moreover, for each diocese, there is a collection of all the petitions sent in by each of the successive ordinaries. There is an analysis attached to each petition, so that its doctrinal import may be more clearly seen.

In this documentary part, petitions are collected of 113 cardinals, 18 patriarchs, 2, 505 archbishops and bishops, 383 vicars capitular, and a great number of other prelates, rectors of Catholic faculties, and also 32, 000 petitions from the secular and regular clergy, 50, 000 from nuns and sisters, and more than 8, 000, 000 petitions from the faithful.

In the second part, the possibility and opportunity of solemnly defining the dogma of the Assumption is methodically and clearly set forth. There is a special inquiry about what the teaching Church dispersed throughout the world, represented by more than 3, 000 petitions of bishops, apostolic vicars, and others, teaches concerning this question, namely, whether the truth of Mary's Assumption is contained in the deposit of revelation.

With this end in view, the dogmatic, geographical, and historical nature of the aforesaid documents was written. These petitions were arranged in thirty-five sections, according to the various formulas made use of by the authors of the petitions. As Hentrich and de Moos reported in their work: "Many argue from the fact that the faith of the whole Church in the Assumption cannot be explained without formal divine revelation." In this

same work the petitions are arranged according as they agree in their method of argumentation with this or that theological proof.

From all these inquiries it appears that almost all the petitions of the ordinaries from the year 1869 to 1941 postulate the definition of the Assumption as a dogma of the faith. Moreover, it must be noted that the number of dioceses that were not vacant, whose bishops sent in these petitions, represent almost three fourths of all the dioceses in the Catholic Church.

Then what results from this laborious compilation is that in the Eastern Church all the patriarchates, and three fourths of the dioceses with resident bishops in union with Rome, also postulate the dogmatic definition of the Assumption.

The geographical location of all the dioceses from which these petitions came is set forth.

Finally, the above-mentioned work records the history of this movement that postulates the dogmatic definition of the Blessed Virgin Mary's Assumption into heaven.

The publication of this great work was most gratefully received by all the bishops of the Catholic Church, by all Catholic universities and seminaries, and by all who discuss theologically the definability of this truth and who pray that this privilege of the Blessed Virgin Mary may be solemnly defined as a dogma.

Difficulty To Be Solved

Some will say perhaps that it is not quite certain that these petitions of the bishops are postulating the definition of the Assumption as formally and implicitly revealed. Several perhaps think that it is only virtually revealed, and according to the majority of theologians, this is not enough so that any truth can be defined as a dogma of the faith formally to be believed on the authority of God revealing.

There are two ways of answering this objection.

1) The bishops of almost the whole Catholic Church do not speak as private theologians, using the precise terminology of Scholasticism; but they speak as witnesses of tradition and judges in matters of faith, and, as was said: "many argue from the fact that the faith of the whole Church in the Assumption cannot be explained without formal divine revelation." This was already made clear by two hundred fathers of the Vatican Council, who said: "Most ancient and constant in both the Western Church and the

Eastern Church, in the Church both teaching and taught, is the opinion about the corporeal assumption of the Mother of God. But this fact, namely, that a man's body be living in heaven before the Judgment Day, cannot be confirmed either by the senses or any human authority.... Therefore, unless we wish to say that the most firm faith of the Church regarding the corporeal assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary savors of slight or excessive credulity, which is undoubtedly impious even to think of, it must be most firmly held that this opinion is of divine and apostolic tradition, namely, that it originates from revelation. We assert that this glorious event could have been revealed to the divine-like Evangelist St. John who died after the Blessed Virgin's repose."

It must be observed that the fact of the Assumption is certain from tradition, inasmuch as the solemn feast of the Assumption is universally celebrated in the Latin and Greek Churches, at least from the seventh century. For the institution of this solemn and universally celebrated feast is an expression of the general tradition of the Church, even of her ordinary and universal magisterial authority, and expresses the consent of the Church both teaching and taught, which is confirmed by these recent and most numerous petitions, which strictly postulate the dogmatic definition. All these facts presuppose that the fact of the Assumption is a certainty in the Church.

But this fact of the Assumption cannot be certain without divine revelation, as regards the term whereunto of the Assumption, or as regards the entrance of the Blessed Virgin Mary body and soul into heaven. St. Thomas well explains this for our Lord's ascension, whose term whereunto transcended any natural knowledge of the witnesses.

We already gather from the preceding that the certainty the Church has about the fact of the Assumption presupposes formal and at least implicit revelation. The history of this question was never concerned with any private revelation of the Assumption, which might have resulted, apart from any discussion, in the institution of this solemnity in both the Western and Eastern Churches.

Hence now, in our times, the bishops in almost all parts of the world speak, not as private theologians, but as witnesses and judges in the matters of faith, for whom the fact of the Assumption is certain because of the universal tradition, and it cannot be certain without formal and at least implicit revelation. Hence there is no need to inquire whether these bishops,

as private theologians, maintain these two propositions, namely: for the definability of any truth it must be formally and implicitly revealed and not merely virtually, and that it is sufficiently proved theologically that the privilege of the Assumption is formally and implicitly revealed. This calls for a deep and complex study of the question, and it is no wonder that in this difficult question not all theologians are in agreement.

2) Moreover, these bishops are aware of the fact that the majority of theologians maintain that for any truth to be defined as a dogma of the faith, it must be at least formally and implicitly revealed, which seems to us to be absolutely true, and many of the aforesaid petitions clearly state this. For many of these petitions point out that it was gradually and formally revealed that the Mother of the Savior is the vanquisher of the devil, sin, and death.

For example, 144 of the petitioners argue from the special victory gained by Mary over the devil and sin or from the absolute opposition prevailing between the Virgin and the devil and his kingdom. But this reason frequently proclaimed by the Fathers was invoked by Pius IX in the definition of the Immaculate Conception; it was proposed by 200 fathers of the Vatican Council, to show that the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary is formally and implicitly revealed, that is, not only as the effect is contained in the cause but as the part is in the whole; whereas the cause can be without its actual effect that is virtually contained in it, the whole cannot be without its parts.

The postulation of 200 Of the fathers of the Vatican Council begins by saying: “O most blessed Father, since in accordance with the doctrine of the Apostle, as given in Rom. V-VIII; I Cor. 15:24, 26, 54, 57; Heb., 2:12, 15, and in other passages, the threefold victory over sin, and the fruits thereof, concupiscence and death, constitute the quasi-integral parts of this triumph that Christ obtained over Satan, the ancient serpent; together with what is said in Gen. 3:15, the Mother of God is presented as singularly associated with her Son in this triumph; together with the unanimous consent of the holy Fathers, we do not doubt that in the above-mentioned oracle, the same blessed Virgin is presignified as illustrious in that threefold victory. Therefore, just as by her immaculate conception she conquered sin, and by her virginal maternity concupiscence, so also in. this same scriptural text it was foretold that she will obtain a singular triumph over hostile death, like her Son, by an anticipated resurrection”

This reason that associates the Blessed Virgin Mary with Christ's perfect victory over the devil and sin is a more proximate reason for the Assumption than the divine maternity, the fullness of grace and her divine blessedness among all women, all of which are likewise referred to by many of the petitioners. Hence it is no wonder that 144 of the petitions invoke this first reason, as well as 200 fathers of the Vatican Council.

There are two revealed premises, however, in this argument, which would be already sufficient for its definability, and moreover it is not a strictly illative argument of a new truth, but an explanatory argument wherein the conclusion is contained in the premises, not only virtually as the effect is contained in the cause, but also formally and implicitly, as the part is contained in the whole; whereas the cause can be without the effect afterward to be produced, on the contrary, the whole cannot be without its actual parts.

This theological reason may be expressed by the following syllogism.

Christ gained a perfect victory over the devil, which contains as parts a perfect victory over sin, and consequently a perfect victory over death, manifested by His glorious resurrection and ascension. This major is formally revealed even explicitly in the texts of St. Paul quoted by 200 fathers of the Vatican Council in their postulation.

But the Blessed Virgin Mary, as Mother of the Savior, who in all tradition is called the second Eve, is most closely associated with Christ's perfect victory over the devil and sin.

Therefore the Blessed Virgin Mary, as Mother of the Savior and the new Eve, is also most closely associated with Christ's perfect victory over death, so that "she could not be held down or detained by the bonds of death, " as the liturgy says; otherwise she would have been vanquished by death and would not have been the vanquisher, and her parallelism with Christ's resurrection and ascension, before the general resurrection of the dead, would be destroyed. Moreover, the exceptional benediction, "blessed art thou among women," excludes the malediction "into dust thou shalt return."

As we said, the major and minor of this argument are revealed, and this already suffices for the definability of the conclusion. Moreover, it is not a strictly illative argument resulting in a new truth, but an explanatory argument, whereby the parts contained in Christ's victory over the devil are shown, namely, victory over sin and consequently over death. But the

whole cannot exist without its parts. Hence in this way its definability is certainly proved.

Moreover, 171 petitions argue from the Immaculate Conception, showing in the same way that the Blessed Virgin Mary's victory over sin infers victory over death according to this revelation.

Likewise 196 petitioners argue almost the same way from the intimate union and consent prevailing between the Virgin and Christ, her Son.

Therefore the conclusion of the aforesaid traditional argument is not only virtually revealed, but is also formally and implicitly revealed. The denial of the Assumption means the denial of the major or minor, both of which are revealed; doubt about the Assumption means doubt about the major or minor. Therefore it was progressively and formally revealed that the Mother of the Savior, the new Eve, is the vanquisher of, and is not vanquished by, the devil, sin, and death.

Hence these very many petitions show the definability of this privilege of the Blessed Virgin Mary and with equal clarity they manifest the opportuneness of its dogmatic definition, as the crowning doctrine of the Church concerning the divers privileges that stem from the divine maternity. Thus also the existence of eternal life would again be solemnly affirmed, of which the present life, unless it be to no purpose, must be ordered as merit to reward, and as the precious commencement for the ultimate end.

CHRISTIAN PERFECTION AND CONTEMPLATION

REVEREND REGINALD GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE O.P.

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CHRISTIAN PERFECTION AND CONTEMPLATION

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This work is based on the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas and of St. John of the Cross. St. Thomas, “Doctor Communis,” as he is called in Pius XI’s encyclical Studiorum ducem, is preeminent among theologians, because he reached the heights of acquired and infused wisdom. To explain the secrets of this twofold wisdom, he received in a very high degree the special grace which St. Paul calls sermo sapientiae. By acquired wisdom he marvelously synthesized the knowledge of the philosopher and that of the theologian, and the gift of wisdom raised him to the highest degree of infused contemplation. Often accompanied by ecstasy and the gift of tears, it taught him what human language could not express. It was this infused contemplation which prevented him from dictating the end of the Summa theologica; what he could put in words seemed to him only straw in comparison with what he beheld.

The encyclical Studiorum ducem; by presenting St. Thomas to us as the undisputed master of dogmatic and moral theology, and also of ascetical and mystical theology, draws particular attention to a beautiful doctrine, which we have developed at length in this book (chaps. 4–6), namely, that the precept, of the love of God has no limit, and that the perfection of charity falls under this precept, not, of course, as something to be realized immediately, but as the end toward which every Christian must tend according to his condition.

St. Francis de Sales taught the same doctrine, which has often been misunderstood, although it was clearly formulated by the fathers of the Church, in particular by St Augustine.

St. Thomas, in his treatise on the infused virtues and the gifts of the Holy Ghost, sets forth particularly their nature and properties. St. John of the Cross explains the various phases of their progress, up to their perfect

development. Among spiritual authors, we have taken him as our guide: (1) He is certainly one of the greatest Catholic mystics. (2) He is canonized, and his doctrine, which underwent the test of criticism and was examined by the Church, is perfectly sound. (3) Coming as he did in the sixteenth century, he benefited by all the earlier tradition, especially by the works of St. Teresa, which he knew thoroughly, and explained by connecting the mystical states she experienced and described with the supernatural principles from which they proceeded; especially with the theological virtues and with the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which had attained their full development in her. Thus he goes beyond even St. Teresa, and as a theologian treats very lofty problems on which she wrote but little. In so doing, he unites the data of descriptive mysticism and the speculative theology of the virtues and gifts. (4) St. John of the Cross, like all Carmelite theologians, is fully in accord with St. Thomas on the great questions of predestination and grace.

The doctrine of these teachers is the safe expression of tradition, as we shall see by comparing it with that of doctors who preceded them, and of those who followed them.

Our aim is to explain the unitive way, that we may lead souls to aspire to it, and may encourage them to make generous efforts to attain it.

Some persons talk about mysticism, but misunderstand it and abuse it. These persons must be enlightened by the sound teaching of theology. Others, far greater in number, are altogether ignorant of mysticism and apparently wish to remain so. They rely only on their own efforts, aided by ordinary grace; consequently they aim only at common virtues, and do not tend to perfection, which they consider too lofty. Hence religious and priestly lives, which might be very fruitful, do not pass beyond a certain mediocrity that is often due, at Least in part, to their early imperfect training and to inexact ideas about the union with God to which every Christian can, and must aspire.

Some, who should be well acquainted with the writings of the great saints, rarely consult them, under the pretext that their teaching on mysticism is beyond reach, that it leads to divergent interpretations and that according to several theologians it is not possible as yet, to determine in what their teaching consists, even along broad lines, and in particular on this fundamental question: Is the contemplation, which they speak of, in the normal way of sanctity or not?

Consequently in the matter of mystical theology a certain agnosticism exists, just as there is agnosticism which maintains that true miracles cannot be discerned because not all the laws of nature are known, and that one cannot rely on the Scriptures because certain obscure passages of the Old and New Testaments have not been fully elucidated. We believe that this agnosticism about mystical theology is false, that it can do no good, and that it ends disastrously.

The teaching of St. Thomas and of St. John of the Cross on this problem seems very clear to us. If these great masters had left this important problem unsolved, the very elements of mystical theology would still have to be constituted.

Pope Benedict XV congratulated the editor of La vie spirituelle for making this doctrine known, and wrote to him as follows (September 15, 1921) : “In our day many neglect the supernatural life and cultivate in its place an inconsistent and vague sentimentalism. Hence it is absolutely necessary to recall more often what the fathers of the Church, together with Holy Scripture, have taught us on the subject, and to do so by taking St. Thomas Aquinas especially as our guide, because he has so clearly set forth their doctrine on the elevation of the supernatural life. We must also earnestly draw attention of souls, to the conditions required for the progress of the grace of the virtues, and of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, the perfect development of which is found in the mystical life. This is exactly what you and your collaborators have undertaken in your review, in a manner at once learned and solid.”

In the delicate questions that we have had to consider, in combating an error, it is not always easy to avoid alining oneself with the contrary error, and to formulate the doctrine which rises above these opposing deviations, and which is a just mean because it is a summit. If we have inadvertently employed any inexact expressions in this study, we retract them here and now, and declare that we reject all spirituality that deviates ever so little from that of the saints, which has been approved by Holy Church. That is why, as a rule, we have quoted only canonized mystics whose teaching is commonly received.

Our conclusions may be summed up in the table on the following page.

This table gives some idea of the progress of doctrine on this subject from St. Augustine to St. Teresa, passing as it does from the general to the particular. St. Augustine made a distinction between the beginners, the

proficients, and the perfect, a classification which, according to the terminology of Dionysius, corresponds to the purgative, illuminative, and unitive ways. St. Thomas several times in his writings, noted the corresponding progress of the virtues and gifts, which are the principle of supernatural acts, in particular the degrees of humility. The passive purifications of the senses and of the spirit indicated by St. Gregory the Great were described by Tauler and St. John of the Cross. The latter tells us that in the passive purification of the senses, “God begins to communicate Himself no longer by the senses as, formerly by means of reasoning . . . but in a manner purely spiritual, in an act of simple contemplation.” Evidently we are here considering infused contemplation, as the saint already declared. We can understand why St. John says: “The proficients are in the illuminative way. It is therein God nourishes, and fortifies the soul by infused contemplation.”

Degrees Of Charity (purgative way)	BEGINNERS
Ascetical life (illuminative way)	PROFICIENTS
Threshold of the mystical life (unitive way)	PERFECT
Mystical life	
Virtues	Initial Virtues, first degree of charity, temperance, chastity, patience, first degrees of humility
	Solid virtues, second degree of charity, obedience, more profound humility, spirit of the counsels
	Eminent and heroic virtues, third degree of charity, perfect humility, great spirit of faith, abandonment, almost unalterable patience
Gifts	Gifts of the Holy Ghost rather latent, inspirations at rare intervals, slight aptitude to profit by them, feeble docility. The soul is above all conscience of its activity.
	The gifts of the Holy Ghost begin to manifest themselves, especially the three inferior gifts of fear, knowledge, and piety. The soul more docile now, profits more from inspirations, and interior illuminations.
	The superior gifts manifest themselves more notably and in a frequent manner. The soul is, as it were, dominated by the Holy Ghost. Great passivity , which does not exclude the activity of the virtues

Purifications	Active purification of the senses, and of the spirit, or exterior and interior mortification.	Passive purification of the senses, under the influence especially of the gifts of fear, and knowledge. Concomitant trials.	Purification of the spirit under the influence especially of the gift of understanding. Concomitant trials, in which are manifested the gifts of fortitude and of counsel.
Prayers	Acquired prayer: vocal prayer, discursive prayer, affective prayer, which becomes more and more simple, called the acquired prayer of recollection.	Initial infused prayer, isolated acts of infused contemplation in the course of the acquired prayer of recollection; then, prayer of supernatural recollection and of quiet; manifest influence of the gift of piety.	Infused prayers, of simple union, of complete union, (sometimes ecstatic), of transforming union under the more marked influence of the gift of wisdom. Concomitant favours.
Mansions of St. Teresa	First and second mansions	Third and fourth mansions	Fifth, sixth and seventh mansions

In another place he says: “The passive purification of the senses is common. It takes place in the greater number of beginners.” It is indeed the threshold of the mystical life, like the prayer of supernatural recollection described by St. Teresa.” This prayer is often preceded by isolated acts of infused contemplation in the course of the acquired prayer of recollection described by the saint.” In the illuminative way, the gifts of fear and of knowledge are clearly manifested, (passive purification of the senses in which one recognizes the emptiness of created things) and also the gift of piety, (quiet of the will in which this gift is found).

In this approximate table, we consider the ideal soul in an abstract manner. The illuminative and unitive ways are therein considered, not only in their imperfect form but in their plenitude, in the same way as they are considered by St. John of the Cross, who is a faithful echo of tradition.

This lofty perfection is that described by St. Augustine and St. Gregory; the perfection to which the twelve degrees of humility enumerated by St. Benedict or the seven degrees counseled by St. Anselm lead: (1) to acknowledge ourselves contemptible; (2) to grieve on account of this; (3) to admit that we are so; (4) to wish our neighbor to believe it; (5) patiently to endure people saying it; (6) willingly to be treated as a person worthy of contempt; (7) to love to be treated in this fashion.”

This great conception of Christian perfection and of the illuminative and unitive ways is the only one which seems to us to preserve all the grandeur of the Gospel and of the Epistles of St. John and St. Paul.

As we have just said, the precept of love knows no limit. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with all thy strength and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself.” Christ adds for all of us: “Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect;” and the whole Sermon on the Mount, which begins with the beatitudes, is a sort of commentary on this exhortation. To raise us to this perfection, “the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, . . . and of His fulness we all have received.” The life of grace, which has been given to us, is the seed of the life of heaven, and is the same life in its essence. “Amen, amen I say unto you: He that believeth in Me, hath everlasting life.” The contemplation of the mysteries of Christ’s life will be given to those who follow Him faithfully. “He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me. And he that loveth Me, shall be loved of My Father. And I will love him, and I will manifest Myself to him.” “I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you forever. . . . The Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you.”

Love of neighbor, too, must go far. “A new commandment, I give unto you: that you love one another, as I have loved you.” “Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”

Our Savior, to make us understand in what the perfection of charity consists, prayed for us thus: “Holy Father, keep them in Thy name, whom Thou hast given Me; that they may be one, as We also are. . . . And the glory which Thou hast given Me, I have given to them; that they may be one, as We also are one.”

St. Matthew’s Gospel is not less sublime when it recalls these words of Christ: “I confess to Thee, 0 Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones.”

Lastly, St. Paul shows us all that the mystical body of Christ is and should be; how the Christian must be incorporated into Christ by a progressive sanctification, which gives a very broad idea of the three phases distinguished later on.

The purgative way. Incorporated in Christ, the faithful must orient their lives toward heaven and die more and more to sin. “Mortify therefore your members which are upon earth . . . stripping yourselves of the old man with his deeds.” “For we are buried together with Him by baptism unto death. . . . For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin may be destroyed to the end that we may serve sin no longer.” “And they that are Christ’s have crucified their flesh with the vices and concupiscences.” Moreover, the Apostles bore in their bodies, “the mortification of Jesus that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in their bodies.” He who sacrifices his life finds it again transfigured. “Unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, itself remaineth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.”

The illuminative way is also indicated by St. Paul, when he tells us that the Christian, by the light of faith and under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, must put “on the new, him who is renewed unto knowledge, according to the image of Him that created him. . . . Put ye on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, the bowels of mercy, benignity, humility, modesty, patience. . . . But above all these things have charity, which is the bond of perfection.” We must imitate Jesus Christ and those who resemble Him; we must have His sentiments, catch the spirit of His mysteries, of His passion, crucifixion, death, burial,” resurrection, and ascension.” St. Paul, moreover, suffers the pains of labor until Christ be formed in the souls of the faithful,” until they be perfectly illuminated by the light of life. “Furthermore, I count all things to be but loss for the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ, my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but as dung, that I may gain Christ.”

The unitive way is that followed by the supernaturally enlightened Christian who lives in a union that is, so to speak, continual with Christ. “Therefore, if you be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above; where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth. For you are dead (to the world); and your life is hid with Christ in God.” “And let the peace of Christ rejoice in your hearts, wherein also you are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you abundantly, in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual canticles, singing in grace in your hearts to God. All whatsoever

you do in word or in work, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him." Under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, such is indeed union with God, through Christ and the loving and delightful contemplation of the great mysteries of faith. It is the normal prelude to the beatific vision. "When Christ shall appear, who is your life, then you also shall appear with Him in glory."

CHAPTER II

THE ACTUAL MYSTICAL PROBLEM

ARTICLE 1

OBJECT AND METHOD OF ASCETICAL AND MYSTICAL THEOLOGY

WHAT is to be understood by ascetical and mystical theology? Is it a special science or a part of theology? What is its particular object? Under what light does it proceed? What are its principles? What is its method? These questions must be settled before we seek the distinction between asceticism and mysticism, and before we take up the chief problems, they must solve.

I. THE MEANING OF ASCETICAL AND MYSTICAL THEOLOGY; ITS OBJECT

Theology is the science of God. We distinguish between natural theology or theodicy, which knows God by the sole light of reason, and supernatural theology, which proceeds from divine revelation, examines its contents, and deduces the consequences of the truths of faith.

Supernatural theology is usually divided into two parts, dogmatic and moral. Dogmatic theology has to do with revealed mysteries, principally the Blessed Trinity, the incarnation, the redemption, the Holy Eucharist and the other sacraments, and the future life. Moral theology treats of human acts, of revealed precepts and counsels, of grace, of the Christian virtues, both theological and moral, and of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which are principles of action ordained to the supernatural end made known by revelation.

Modern theologians have often exaggerated the distinction between moral and dogmatic theology, giving in to the latter the great treatises on grace and on the infused virtues and gifts, and reducing the former to

casuistry, which is the least lofty of its applications. Moral theology has thus become, in several theological works, the science of sins to be avoided rather than the science of virtues to be practiced, and to be developed under the constant action of God in us. In this way it has lost some of its pre-eminence and is manifestly insufficient for the direction of souls aspiring to intimate union with God.

On the contrary, moral theology, as expounded in the second part of the Summa theologica of St. Thomas, keeps all its grandeur and its efficacy for the direction of souls called to the highest perfection. St. Thomas does not, in fact, consider dogmatic and moral theology as two distinct sciences; sacred doctrine, in his opinion, is absolutely one and is of such high perfection that it contains the perfections of both dogmatic and moral theology. In other words, it is eminently speculative and practical, as the science of God from which it springs. That is why he treats in detail in the moral part of his Summa not only human acts, precepts, and counsels, but also habitual and actual grace, the infused virtues in general and in particular, the gifts of the Holy Ghost, their fruits, the beatitudes, the active and contemplative life, the degrees of contemplation, graces gratuitously bestowed, such as the gift of miracles, the gift of tongues, prophecy, and rapture, and likewise the religious life and its various forms.

Moral theology thus, understood evidently contains the principles necessary for leading souls to the highest sanctity. Ascetical and mystical theology is nothing but the application of this broad moral theology to the direction of souls toward ever closer union with God. It presupposes what sacred doctrine teaches about the nature and the properties of the Christian virtues and of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and it studies the laws and conditions of their progress from the point of view of perfection.

To teach the practice of the highest virtues and perfect docility to the Holy Ghost, and to lead to the life of union with God, ascetical and mystical theology assembles all the lights of dogmatic and moral theology, of which it is the most elevated application, and the crown.

The cycle formed by the different parts of theology, with its evident unity, is thus completed. Sacred science proceeds from revelation contained in Scripture and tradition, preserved and explained by the teaching authority of the Church: It arranges in order all revealed truths and their consequences in a single doctrinal body, in which the precepts and counsels are set forth, as founded on the supernatural mystery of the divine life, of

which grace is participation. Lastly, it shows how, by the practice of the virtues and by docility to the Holy Ghost, the soul not only arrives at belief in the revealed mysteries, but also at the enjoyment of them, and at a grasp of the profound meaning of the word of God, source of all supernatural knowledge, and at a life of continual union with the Blessed Trinity who dwells in us. Doctrinal mysticism thus, appears as the final crown of all acquired theological knowledge, and it can direct souls in the ways of experimental mysticism. This latter is an entirely supernatural and infused loving knowledge, full of sweetness, which only the Holy Ghost, by His unction, can give us and which is, as it were, the prelude of the beatific vision. Such is manifestly the conception of ascetical and mystical theology which has been formulated by the great masters of sacred science, especially by St. Thomas Aquinas.

This conception corresponds perfectly to the current meaning and etymology of the words, “ascetical” and “mystical.” The term “asceticism,” as its Greek origin indicates, means the exercise of the virtues. Among the first Christians those were called ascetics who devoted themselves to the practice of mortification, exercises of piety, and other Christian virtues. Therefore asceticism is that part of theology, which directs souls in the struggle against sin and in the progress of virtue.

Mystical theology, as its name indicates, treats of more hidden and mysterious things: of the intimate union of the soul with God; of the transitory phenomena that accompany certain degrees of union as ecstasy; and of essentially extraordinary graces, such as visions and private revelations. In fact, it was under the title of, “Mystical Theology,” that Dionysius and many after him dealt with supernatural contemplation and the intimate union of the soul with God. By so doing, they pointed out the principal subject of this teaching. All this is equivalent to saying that ascetical and mystical theology, or spiritual doctrine, is not a special science but a division of theology. The great body of theologians has always so understood it.

This does not in any way hinder a psychologist, even though an unbeliever, from studying the outward aspects of ascetical and mystical phenomena in Christianity or in other religions. But this study would be only psychological, and would in no way deserve the name of ascetical and mystical theology. It would be mostly descriptive. If it should try to explain all these facts by the merely natural powers of the soul, it would be declared

false by all Catholics, because we would see in it a materialistic explanation of the higher by the lower, similar to that which the mechanists propose for vital phenomena.

Having stated these considerations, we may easily answer the question propsed as to what is the object of ascetical and mystical theology, without as yet making a distinction between these two branches of spiritual doctrine. It is Christian perfection, union with God, the contemplation, which this presupposes, the ordinary means leading to it, and the extraordinary helps favoring it.

We might now ask what distinguishes ascetical from mystical theology. But as this delicate problem is solved in a somewhat different way, according to the method of treating these matters, it is better to propose at once the question of method.

II. THE PRINCIPLES AND METHOD OF ASCETICAL AND MYSTICAL THEOLOGY

After what has just been said about the object of this branch of theology, it is easy to see what principles it must follow to attain this object.

The light of revelation contained in Scripture and tradition is explained by the teaching authority of the Church and commented upon by dogmatic and moral theology. From the principles of faith, theology deduces the conclusions that they implicitly contain. By the light of these principles the facts of the ascetical and mystical life must be examined if we wish to go beyond simple psychology, and by this light the rules of direction must be formulated that they may be something more than unmotivated, practical prescriptions.

This much is clear and is admitted by all Catholic writers. But if we attempt a more exact statement of the question of method, we find amongst authors certain divergences, which are not without influence on their theories. Some writers, especially in mystical theology, use almost exclusively the descriptive and inductive method, which proceeds from facts; others, on the contrary, follow principally the deductive method, which proceeds from principles.

A. Descriptive or inductive method. The descriptive school, without scorning the doctrine of the great theologians on the life of grace and on the ordinary or extraordinary helps of God, undertakes to describe the different spiritual states and particularly the mystical states by their signs, rather than

to determine their nature theologically, and to examine whether they proceed from the Christian virtues, from the gifts of the Holy Ghost, or from graces gratuitously bestowed, such as prophecy and the charisms connected with it.

Recently, several works have been written that are instructive in certain respects. They are especially collections of descriptions of mystical states, followed by practical rules of direction and by some supplementary material on theoretical questions, such as the nature of the mystical union. These treatises are analogous, as their authors declare to manuals of practical medicine, which teach how to make a diagnosis quickly, and how to prescribe suitable remedies without an extensive examination into the nature of the ailment, or into its relations with the whole organism.

These works, which are very useful from one point of view, contain only part of the science: the inductive bases or the facts, and practical conclusions. The light of theological principles and doctrinal co-ordination, however, are lacking. Therefore, the rules of direction contained in these books are generally, in the opinion of theologians, too empirical and insufficiently classified and justified. Science is the knowledge of things, not only from their appearances and their signs, but from their very nature and their causes. And, as action springs from the nature of things, no one can in a practical manner tell the interior soul what it must do, if he has not determined the very nature of the interior life. How can anyone say whether the soul may and ought without presumption desire the mystical union, before determining the nature of this union, and before recognizing whether it is an essentially extraordinary gift or an eminent grace generally accorded to the perfect, a grace necessary, at least morally, for high perfection? If this question is treated merely as an appendix, as a purely speculative and quasi-insoluble problem, the rules of direction previously formulated will not have sufficient doctrinal foundation.

Certain partisans of the descriptive school, although admitting the truth of the theological doctrine of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which are the principles of mystical contemplation, declare that it, “has only historical interest,” because, they say, it does not throw light on the facts or on the practical questions of direction. Many theologians think of the contrary, it makes it possible for the solution of the important question we have just been speaking of, and also permits a distinction between what in the spiritual life belongs to the order of sanctifying grace in its eminent forms,

and what pertains to gratuitous graces (gratis datae), which are essentially extraordinary. Perhaps this doctrine alone enables us to determine the culminating point of the normal development of the life of grace in an interior soul, which is perfectly docile to the Holy Ghost. This problem is, in fact, one of the most important in the realm of spirituality.

To supply this doctrinal lacuna and absence of directing principles, authors who adhere too exclusively to the descriptive method sometimes give, at the outset of their treatise on mysticism, and as it were a priori, a so-called nominal definition of the mystical state (quiet or union), which declares it as extraordinary, or almost so, as visions or private revelations. Such a definition presupposes a whole theory. These partisans of the method of observation, struck by certain signs of the mystical state, which are perhaps only accidental signs, precipitately determine its nature, before asking theology what it thinks about the matter. But this supreme science alone, enlightened, as it is by revelation, can say whether the state in question is the full, normal blossoming of the supernatural life of union with God, or whether, it is an extraordinary gift in no way necessary for the highest sanctity.

The exclusive use of this descriptive method would lead one to forget that ascetical and mystical theology is a part of theology, and to consider it as a part of experimental psychology. In other words, whoever neglects to have recourse to the light of theological principles, will have to be content with the principles furnished by psychology, as do so many psychologists, who treat of mystical phenomena in the different religions. This procedure, however, does not take faith into consideration at all; it permits a supernatural cause to be assigned only to facts, which are essentially and manifestly miraculous. Other mystical facts, which are deeper and hence less apparently supernatural, it declares inexplicable, or it tries to explain them by placing undue stress on the merely natural powers of the soul. The same remark applies to biographies of the saints, to the history of religious orders, and even of the Church.

The descriptive method, useful and necessary as it may be, cannot be exclusive. It is inclined not to appreciate the value of a fundamental theological distinction, which can throw light on all mystical theology. The distinction between the intrinsically supernatural (supernaturale quoad substantiam), characteristic of the intimate life of God, of which sanctifying grace, or “the grace of the virtues and the gifts,” is a participation, and the

extrinsically supernatural or preternatural (supernaturale quoad modem tantum), which is the character of the signs or extraordinary phenomena that the devil can imitate. St. Thomas, and also St. John of the Cross" have often stated that an abyss exists between these two forms of the supernatural. We have it, for example, between the essentially supernatural life of invisible grace, (which even an angel cannot know naturally), and the visible resurrection of a dead person, which is supernatural only by the mode according to which natural life is restored to the corpse; or again, between infused faith in the mystery of the Blessed Trinity, and the supernatural knowledge of a future event in the natural order, such as the end of a war. This is the difference between Christian doctrine and life on the one hand, and on the other, the miracles and prophecies, which confirm its divine origin and which are merely concomitant signs.

This notable distinction between the two forms of the supernatural dominates all theology, and is quite indispensable in mystical theology. But the purely descriptive method pays scarcely any attention to this distinction; it is impressed especially by the more or less sensible signs of the mystical states, and not by the fundamental law of the progress of grace. The essentially supernatural character of the latter is too profound and too elevated to fall within the scope of observation. Yet this supernatural element is what most interests faith and theology.

Moreover, the works of purely descriptive mysticism, useful as they may be, contain hardly anything but the material of mystical theology. That is why we fully agree with the following words of an excellent Thomist who wrote to us, saying: "Mystical theology as a special science does not exist; there is only theology, along with certain applications of it that concern the mystical life. To treat mystical theology as a science with principles of its own is to impoverish and diminish it all, and to lose its directing light. The mystical life must be set forth by the great principles of theology. Then all is illuminated, and we have a science, not a mere collection of phenomena."

B. Deductive method. We must not, however, fall into the other extreme and employ simply the deductive theological method. Some, with a tendency to simplify everything, would be led to deduce the solution of the most difficult problems of spirituality, by proceeding from St. Thomas' doctrine about the infused virtues, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost (clearly distinct from the graces gratis datae), without sufficiently considering the admirable descriptions of the various degrees of the spiritual life, notably of

the mystical union, given by St. Teresa, St. John of the Cross, St. Francis de Sales, and other great saints. And since, according to St. Thomas and tradition, the gifts of the Holy Ghost are in every soul in the state of grace, some persons might suppose that the mystical state or infused contemplation is very frequent, and might confound with them what is only their prelude, as, for example, the prayer of simplicity, so well described by Bossuet. Hence, the inclination not to take sufficient account of the concomitant, or auxiliary phenomena of certain degrees of the mystical union, such as the suspension of the faculties and ecstasy, and hence the danger of falling into an extreme, opposed to that of the partisans of the solely descriptive method.

These two extremes should be avoided. They recall the opposition in philosophy between those who consider only miracles and prophecies (concomitant signs of revelation), and those who speak only of the harmony and sublimity of Christian Life and doctrine.

As a result of these two excesses, there are two other extremes to be avoided in spiritual direction: advising souls to leave the ascetical way, either too soon or too late. We will return to this point.

Union of the two methods. Evidently these two methods, the inductive and the deductive, or the analytical and the synthetical, must be combined.

In the light of the principles of theology, we must determine what Christian perfection should be, without in any way diminishing it; what is the nature of the contemplation it supposes, the ordinary means leading to it, and the extraordinary helps favoring it. To do this, we must analyze the concepts of Christian life, perfection, and holiness furnished by the Gospel; and we must also describe the facts of the ascetical and mystical life, by studying the testimony of the saints, who have best experienced them, and revealed them. In this description of facts, accompanied by the analysis of the corresponding theological concepts, we must seek to determine the nature of these facts or interior states, and to distinguish them from the concomitant and auxiliary phenomena. The authors most helpful in this study are those who were both great theologians, and great mystics, such as St. Thomas, St. Bonaventure, Richard of St. Victor, St. John of the Cross, and St. Francis de Sales.

After analyzing these concepts and facts, we must synthesize them in the light of the evangelical conception of perfection or sanctity. We must show: (1) what is essential or conformable to Christian perfection, and what is

contrary to it; (2) what is necessary or very useful and desirable to reach it, and what is essentially extraordinary and not required for the highest sanctity.

In all this study, a supremely important distinction is that between the intrinsically extraordinary (the miraculous), and the extrinsically extraordinary, which is the ordinary or the normal in the lives of the saints, being at the same time as rare as sanctity itself. The omission of this distinction is the source of frequent ambiguities in several modern works, which do not sufficiently appreciate the great divisions of the supernatural. Thus, in the light of theological ideas and principles, we shall be able to discern the facts and to formulate rules of direction by motivating them. In our opinion, this is the true method of ascetical and mystical theology. No other method will serve, since mystical theology is the application of theology to the direction of souls toward an ever closer union with God.

We must now examine the distinction between ascetical and mystical theology, their relations, and the unity of spiritual doctrine. This is a delicate question. In its consideration we must not forget that God calls all interior souls to drink from the fountain of living water, where they will find life in abundance, even beyond their desires, “that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly.” According to the saints, the soul which, for the love of God, labors to strip itself of all that is not God, is soon penetrated with light, and so united to God that it becomes like Him and enters into the possession of all His goods.

ARTICLE II

THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN ASCETICAL THEOLOGY AND MYSTICAL THEOLOGY AND THE UNITY OF SPIRITUAL DOCTRINE

Ascetical and mystical theology is the application of theology in the direction of souls toward an ever more intimate union with God. It must use the inductive and deductive methods, studying the facts of the spiritual life in the light of revealed principles and of the theological doctrines deduced from these principles. We must now see what distinguishes ascetical from mystical theology; and whether this distinction is such, as to exclude continuity in the passage from one to the other, or unity in the spiritual doctrine. Earlier writers and a number of modern authors are not in agreement with this point.

I. TRADITIONAL THESIS: THE UNITY OF SPIRITUAL DOCTRINE

Until the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it was generally held that mystical theology included not only the mystical union, infused contemplation, its degrees and the extraordinary graces that sometimes accompany it (visions and private revelations), but also Christian perfection in general, and the first phases of the spiritual life, the normal progress of which thus seemed directed toward the mystical union as its culminating point. All these together formed a whole that was truly one: a spiritual doctrine dominated by a very high idea of perfection, drawn from the Gospel and the saints, and unified by the commonly accepted principle that infused or mystical contemplation is ordinarily granted to the perfect and proceeds especially from the gift of wisdom, the progress of which is proportionate to that of charity. In other words, they agreed in recognizing that an eminent degree of charity, which is the principle of a very intimate union with God, is normally accompanied by eminent, confused contemplation, which is at the same time very penetrating and delightful. This charity is likewise accompanied by a quasi-experimental knowledge of the mystery of God who is closer to the soul than it is to itself, of God who makes Himself felt by it, and who acts constantly on it, in trial as well as in consolation, as much to destroy what should die, as to renovate and build up.

These assertions may be verified by consulting the mystical theologies of Vallgornera (Dominican), of Thomas of Jesus, Dominic of the Blessed Trinity, Anthony of the Holy Ghost, Philip of the Blessed Trinity (Carmelites), and, farther in the past, the works of St. John of the Cross, St. Teresa, Venerable Louis de Blois, Venerable Dionysius the Carthusian, Tauler, Blessed Henry Suso, Blessed Bartholomew of the Martyrs, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Bonaventure, St. Albert the Great, Dionysius the Mystic, and St. Augustine.

St. Thomas especially showed the relation between what are today called ascetical theology and mystical theology, by treating of the mutual relations of action and contemplation. With St. Augustine and St. Gregory, this is what he teaches: The active life, to which is attached the exercise of the moral virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance, and the outward works of charity, prepares for the contemplative life, in so far as it regulates the passions that disturb contemplation, and in so far as it makes us grow in the love of God and of our neighbor. Then the contemplation of

God, which is proper to the perfect, leads to action, directs it, and renders it much more supernatural and fruitful! Thus, in the natural order the image precedes the idea and then serves to express it; the emotion precedes the will, and then serves to execute with greater ardor the thing willed; and so again, says St. Thomas, our acts engender a habit, then this habit makes us act more promptly and easily. In this way asceticism does not cease when the contemplative life begins; on the contrary, the exercise of the different virtues becomes truly superior when the soul receives the mystical grace of almost continual union with God.

Some souls, remarks St. Thomas, by reason of their impetuosity are more fitted for the active life; others have by nature the purity of spirit and the calm which prepares them more for contemplation; but all can prepare themselves for the contemplative life," which is the most perfect and in itself the most meritorious. "Love of God is in fact more meritorious than love of our neighbor." It is love which leads us, says St. Augustine, to seek the holy repose of divine contemplation "And if one of the signs of charity is the external labor that we impose on ourselves for Christ's sake, a far more expressive sign is to put aside all that pertains to the present life and to find our happiness in giving ourselves up exclusively to the contemplation of God." "The more closely a man unites his own or another's soul to God, the more acceptable is his sacrifice to God."

St. John of the Cross insists on this point: supernatural contemplation, which he speaks of in The Ascent of Mount Carmel and in The Dark Night, appears there as the full development of, "the life of faith," and of the spirit of wisdom. "Faith alone," he says, "is the proximate and proportionate means which can unite the soul to God." "Pure faith, in the denudation and abnegation of all, inclines far more, to divine love than spiritual visions."

This is true if we do not diminish, as several modern authors do, the essentially supernatural character of faith, and if we remember that even when this virtue is obscure and imperfect or separated from charity, it is, by reason its first object and its motive, infinitely superior to the loftiest natural knowledge of the angels, or even to the supernatural prevision of natural, contingent futures. It is of the same essentially divine order as the beatific vision. St. Paul says that infused faith, the gift of God, is "the substance of things to be hoped for." Especially when accompanied by the gifts of wisdom, and understanding in an eminent degree, it is, so to speak, the

beginning of eternal life, inchoatio vitae aternae, as St. Thomas says in De veritate, q. 14, a. 2.

If we wish to understand all the grandeur of the life of faith in which every Christian should make progress, we must read the masters of traditional mysticism. Once we have grasped their point of view, we will not be surprised that the perfect mystical life is the culminating point of the normal development of the life of grace. Thus the unity of doctrine and of the spiritual life is maintained in spite of the diversity of interior states.

II. THESIS OF SEVERAL MODERN AUTHORS: SEPARATION OF ASCETICAL FROM MYSTICAL THEOLOGY

Since the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, several authors have thought that it was necessary to separate ascetical from mystical theology, which since then have often become the subjects of special treatises called, “Ascetical Directory” and “Mystical Directory.”

This division followed upon lively discussions that were occasioned by abuses springing from a premature, and erroneous teaching of the mystical ways. From the time of St. Teresa, these ways seemed, to many theologians so suspect that the writings of St. John of the Cross had to be defended against the charge of illuminism, and superiors were roused to the point of forbidding their religious to read the works of Venerable John Tauler, Ruysbroeck, Blessed Henry Suso, St. Gertrude, and St. Mechtildis. After the condemnation of the errors of Molinos, the mystical ways were even more suspect.

Since then a rather large number of authors, who are excellent in many respects, have agreed on making an absolute distinction between ascetical and mystical theology. Excessively eager to systematize things and to establish a doctrine to remedy abuses, and consequently led to classify things materially and objectively, without a sufficiently lofty and profound knowledge of them, they declared that ascetical theology should treat of the “ordinary” Christian life according to the three ways, the purgative, the illuminative, and the unitive. As for mystical theology, it should treat only extraordinary graces, among which they included not only visions and private revelations, but also supernatural, confused contemplation, the passive purifications, and the mystical union.

Therefore, the mystical union no longer appears in their arrangement as the culminating point of the normal development of sanctifying grace, of the virtues, and of the gifts. According to their view, infused contemplation is not the life of faith and the spirit of wisdom carried to perfection, to their full efflorescence; but it seems rather to be attached to graces gratis datae, such as prophecy, or at least to an entirely extraordinary or miraculous mode of the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Because they place the mystical union, and infused contemplation among the graces gratis datae, these authors counsel already fervent souls against seeking not only visions and private revelations, but also the mystical union and infused contemplation, if they would avoid all presumption and would advance in humility: altiora te ne quaesieris. This seems quite like the mistake made by those spiritual directors, who refused daily communion to these same souls, alleging that humility does not permit one to aim so high.

These authors thus, distinguish a unitive life called “ordinary,” the only one necessary, they say, to perfection from a unitive life called “extraordinary,” which, according to them, is not even required for great sanctity. From this point of view, asceticism does not lead to mysticism, and the perfection, or “ordinary” union, to which it leads, is normally an end and not a disposition to a more intimate and more elevated union. Hence mystical theology is of importance only to some very rare, privileged souls; we may just as well, then, almost ignore it in order to avoid presumption and delusion.

In their desire to remedy one abuse, are they not falling into another which is clearly and repeatedly pointed out in The Ascent of Mount Carmel and in The Spiritual Canticle? Father Lallemant, one of the best spiritual writers in the Society of Jesus, complains rather bitterly of this conception of the mystical Life, as quasi-inaccessible. In his opinion, this conception bars the way to high perfection and intimate union with God. As a result of this teaching, many souls have been diverted from reading St. John of the Cross, although he is the master who best fortifies against illusion, and the desire for graces which are essentially extraordinary.

III. RETURN TO THE TRADITIONAL THESIS: UNITY OF SPIRITUAL DOCTRINE

The question may arise as to whether this absolute distinction and lack of continuity between ascetical and mystical theology does not notably

diminish the elevation of Christian perfection, which is the end of the normal progress of sanctifying grace and of charity in this life; whether it does not lose sight of the fact that the progress of the gifts of the Holy Ghost is proportionate to that of charity, which ought always to grow; and whether it does not confound strictly extraordinary graces with eminent, and rather uncommon graces granted ordinarily to lofty perfection, a state that is rather uncommon by reason of the very great abnegation which it supposes. In short, does not this distinction confound the extrinsically extraordinary, which is the very elevated ordinary life of the union with God in the saints in this life, and the intrinsically extraordinary or the miraculous, which, more often than not, is only a sign or a transitory help inferior in order to the life of grace?

We may ask whether this teaching does not misunderstand and lessen the traditional doctrine of the great theologians and mystics on the essentially supernatural quality of the life of grace, of faith, of charity, of the gifts of the Holy Ghost. That life is incomparably above the phenomenon of ecstasy, which in a certain sense is external, above miracles and prophecies, since in its perfection it is, as it were, the prelude to the beatific vision, which a holy soul, already perfectly purified, normally obtains without passing through purgatory.

During the past few years these questions have led several writers, such as Father Saudreau, Father LamballIe, and Father Arintero, O.P., to reject such an absolute distinction between ascetical and mystical theology, and to note the continuity existing between them. They appealed to the testimony of St. John of the Cross, who says: “Those, who in the spiritual life still exercise themselves in meditation, belong to the state of beginners. When it pleases God to make them leave it, it is for the purpose of introducing them into the way of progress, which is that of contemplatives, and of making them arrive safely, and surely by this means at the state of the perfect, that is to say, divine union.” This last, in the language of the author of The Dark Night of the Soul, is manifestly in the mystical order. As Father Lamballe shows in various texts taken from St. John of the Cross, it follows that mystical contemplation is ordinarily granted to the perfect, although certain perfect souls have it only in an imperfect manner and for short periods of time.’

St. Teresa expresses the same opinion, when she says: “His mercy is so great that He hinders no one from drinking of the fountain of life [infused

contemplation]. . . . Indeed, He calls us loudly and publicly to do so. He is so good that He will not force us to drink of it." The saint always teaches her daughters that they must direct all their efforts toward preparing themselves to receive this precious grace, even though certain souls, in spite of their good will, do not experience its joys in this life. Contemplation may, in fact, be arid for a long time, during which, one may be contemplative without knowing it. Pius X, in his letter (March 7, 1914) on the teaching of St. Teresa, says that the degrees of prayer enumerated by the saint are so many steps up toward the summit of Christian perfection: "Docet enim gradus orationis quot numerantur, veluti totidem superiores in christiana perfectione ascensus esse."

Moreover, according to several contemporary theologians, whose number is growing daily and who are eager to preserve the traditional teaching, as it is formulated in the great classics of mystical theology, it is laudable for every interior soul to desire the grace of mystical contemplation and to prepare for it with the help of God by increasing fidelity to His holy inspirations."

According to these theologians, especially Father Arintero, O.P., the mystical life is characterized by the predominance of the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Ascetical theology, they say, treats of the Christian life of beginners, and of those who advance with the help of grace in the exercise of the Christian virtues, the mode of which remains a human mode adapted to that of our faculties. On the other hand, mystical theology treats especially, of the unitive life of the perfect, in which there is clearly manifest the divine mode of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, in the exercise of which the soul is more passive than active, and in which it obtains a "quasi-experimental" knowledge of God present in it, as St. Thomas explains." "These gifts," the great doctor tells us, "exist in all souls in the state of grace"; but normally they do not predominate, nor do they act in a manner both frequent and manifest except in very humble, mortified souls that are habitually docile to the Holy Ghost. Some souls excel in the gifts relating to the active life, such as the gift of fortitude; others in those of the contemplative life, as understanding and wisdom. The latter especially enter the "passive ways," because they no longer direct themselves, but are habitually directed immediately by God. He gives to their acts that mode, which He alone can communicate to them, as, for example, when a master directs his pupil by holding his hand. These acts are thus doubly supernatural (reduplicative, as

the Scholastics say): by their essence, as acts of the Christian virtues of the ascetical life; and by this superior mode, which surpasses the simple exercise of the Christian virtues aided by actual grace. This is what makes it possible for St. Teresa to speak of “supernatural prayer,” when the passive ways begin.” But this divine mode of the supernatural acts, which spring immediately from the inspirations of the Holy Ghost, is not essentially extraordinary, like a miracle, a vision, a prophecy, but something eminent and ordinary in the perfect, who live habitually recollected in adoration of the mystery of the Blessed Trinity present in them.

Such, in fact, is the principal subject treated by all the great mystical theologians from Dionysius to Tauler and St. John of the Cross, who often uses the single word “faith” to indicate this virtue and the gift of wisdom in a superior degree.

These masters discuss secondarily the so-called exterior phenomena, which accompany certain degrees of the mystical union—for example, ecstasy, which disappears with the transforming union. They always make a sharp distinction between this very intimate union with God, which is the goal of their desires and of their entire life, and the extraordinary graces of inferior order, such as visions, or the prophetic knowledge of the future; graces which, in their opinion, we ought not to desire.

From this point of view, interpreters of St. John of the Cross, such as Father Lamballe and Father Arintero, O.P., consider that the transforming union or spiritual marriage is in this life the summit of the normal development of the life of grace in souls which are entirely faithful to the Holy Ghost, especially in those consecrated to God and called to the contemplative life. Some theologians have thought that this normal goal of spiritual progress does not pass beyond the prayer of quiet, after which the extraordinary, properly so called, would begin with union and ecstasy. According to what St. Teresa says of souls which do not progress beyond the prayer of quiet, it seems clear, however, that they failed in fidelity to the Holy Ghost, and that normally they should have arrived at a closer union with God, which she calls a “higher degree of perfection.” St. John of the Cross teaches the same doctrine.

It may well be that ecstasy does not (at least necessarily) imply anything extraordinary in the real sense of the word. It seems often to come from the weakness of the organism, which swoons under divine action. It may only be the reaction of a profound interior grace, which absorbs all the attention

and all the strength of the soul in God, who is intimately present to the soul, and who makes Himself felt by it. From this point of view, continuity would exist between all the degrees of the mystical union, from the prayer of quiet, to the transforming union, in which the soul no longer experiences “the weakness of ecstasy,” to use the expression of St. Hildegarde.

This is the opinion of Father Lamballe, of Father Arintero, O.P., and of several other contemporary theologians whom we have consulted. They hold, moreover, that simplified affective prayer, which precedes essentially mystical or passive prayer, is normally a disposition to receive the latter. Thus, continuity would exist between the ascetical and the mystical life; the first would be characterized by the human mode of Christian virtues, the second by the divine mode of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, intervening no longer in a latent or transitory way, but in a manner both manifest and frequent. Before the mystical or passive state, in a period of transition (the prayer of simplicity described by Bossuet), there would be transient mystical acts, which by their nature would dispose the soul for the true life of union. This would be the adult or perfect age of the spiritual life, or the life of grace aware of itself.

If the above is true—as we shall see, the authors cited adduce weighty reasons for their view—the soul which, as yet possesses nothing of the mystical life, has not passed beyond infancy or the adolescence of spiritual life. Such a soul should recall St. Paul’s words: “Brethren, do not become children in sense: but in malice be children, and in sense be perfect.” This soul has not reached spiritual maturity, the perfect age attainable in this life. It may have great learning, even in theology, may know how to live, may possess prudence, faith, charity, zeal, enthusiasm, and a great apostolic activity; but, in spite of its solid Christian virtues and zeal, it is not sufficiently spiritualized. Its manner of living remains too human, too exterior, and still too dependent on temperament. It does not give evidence of the entirely supernatural, divine mode of thinking, of loving God, and of acting, which characterizes those who are truly dead to themselves and perfectly docile to the Holy Ghost. Ordinarily the latter alone have, in all circumstances whether agreeable or painful, “the mind of Christ,” which enables them to judge soundly spiritual things, and to reconcile habitually in their lives virtues apparently contradictory in nature: the simplicity of the dove and the prudence of the serpent; heroic fortitude and gentle sweetness; humility of heart and magnanimity; a faith absolutely unyielding when

principles are at stake and a great mercy for the misguided; an intense interior life, continual recollection, and a fruitful apostolate.

This last conception of the connection between ascetical and mystical theology deserves consideration. Those who have often read and meditated on the great masters of traditional mystical theology will be inclined to acquiesce, we believe, in this interpretation, when they recall the following principles, which are the certain expression of the teaching of St. Thomas.

1) Christian perfection consists in union with God, which supposes in us the full development of charity, of the other virtues, and of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which supply for the imperfection of these virtues and are in us the immediate principle of supernatural contemplation.

2) The three theological virtues are supernatural in their essence (quoad substantiam), because of their formal motive and their proper object, both of which are unattainable by reason alone or even by the highest natural knowledge of the angels. Several theologians, following the inferior teaching of nominalism, have thought on the contrary that acts of faith, and of the other Christian virtues are essentially natural acts, clothed with a supernatural modality (supernatural in manner only, not by reason of their formal object). They would thus; more closely resemble a supernaturalized natural affection than an affection supernatural in its essence, and by its formal motive. An immense difference exists between these two conceptions of faith and of the other theological virtues.

Only the former is true, and shows clearly why faith in the mystery of the Blessed Trinity is infinitely superior to the natural intuitions of genius, and superior in general to graces gratis datae, even, for example, to the supernatural prevision of a future event, such as the end of a plague.

(3) The gifts of the Holy Ghost are doubly supernatural, not only in their essence (as the theological virtues and the other infused virtues), but in their mode of action. By them, the soul no longer directs itself with the assistance of grace, but is directed and moved immediately by divine inspiration; and when, by perfect fidelity to the Holy Ghost, it lives habitually under the regime of the gifts, it is in a passive state.

(4) These gifts rendering us docile to the breath of God; grow with charity like the infused virtues. Now, charity ought always to increase in this life by our merits and by holy communion. Whoever does not advance falls back, because, according to the observation of St. Augustine and of St. Thomas, the first precept has no limit and only the saints fulfill it perfectly.

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind.” 39

(5) If we consider, not what actually is, but rather what ought to be, not the weakness of our nature and the fickleness of our free will, but rather the very essence of the grace received at baptism and of charity, we must admit that normally, or according to its fundamental law, grace ought never to be lost (although many Christians fall into mortal sin). Similarly this life of grace, the germ of glory, the beginning of eternal life, should normally develop to such an extent that, the fire of charity would purify us of all stains before death and permit us to enter heaven without passing through purgatory. Through their own fault souls are detained in purgatory, where they no longer have any opportunity to merit. To see God face to face immediately after death would be in the radical order; that is why the souls in purgatory suffer so greatly at being deprived of this vision. Therefore, according to the fundamental law of the life of grace, the painful purifications that cleanse the soul of its impurities should be meritorious, and should precede death, as they do in the saints; they should not follow death. Since all this is true, why should not the mystical union, accompanied by these passive purifications, be the normal flowering of the life of grace, although few souls actually reach it, just as few preserve baptismal innocence? If the mystical union, as a matter of fact, is not ordinary, why should it not at least be expected at the end of a very generous interior life? The extraordinary would then still consist in the bestowal of these eminent graces from infancy on, as has happened in the lives of several saints.

Everyone agrees that practically two excesses must be avoided in the direction of souls: urging souls to leave the ascetical way too soon or too late. If they Leave too soon, they are exposed to the danger of falling into the idleness of quietism or a practical semi-quietism; if too late, they are in danger of abandoning prayer because they no longer find any profit in discursive meditation, where the director wishes to keep them, or in danger of not understanding anything about the obscure, but much more spiritual, way along which the Lord is beginning to lead them. On this point St. John of the Cross, in The Ascent of Mount Carmel and in The Dark Night, has left us valuable teaching. Among recent works on this subject, one of the soundest is Les voies de l’oraison mentale, by Dom Vital Lehodey.

What does experience teach? Does it not say that the actual condition and the normal ideal (that which should be expected) finally harmonize, at least at the end of a holy life? All the canonized saints seem to have had the mystical union often, except some martyrs, who may have had it only at the moment of their torture. St. Teresa declares that in her monasteries many souls that reach the essentially mystical prayer of quiet; that some, more advanced, habitually enjoy the prayer of union; and that a number of others enjoy it at intervals."

Especially in contemplative religious orders, at times souls are found to have certainly passed beyond discursive meditation or the prayer of simplicity. These souls experience great distress when they are obliged to cease their thanksgiving after holy communion; they are wholly caught up by God, as it were absorbed in Him, and live by the mysteries of the Blessed Trinity, the incarnation, and the redemption, in an incomparably deeper manner than the most learned theologian, if the latter is not truly a man of prayer. These lives, although acquainted with rather uncommon interior joys and sufferings, are not really extraordinary in the true sense of this word. They alone, on the contrary, are entirely in order; they even avoid the extraordinary, as much as possible according to the advice of St. John of the Cross, which is their daily sustenance. This great doctor directs them more and more toward the Blessed Trinity dwelling in us; they experience great joy in reading the beautiful pages of St. Augustine and St. Thomas on this mystery; and they express themselves even on the Fatherhood of God, on the infinite value of the merits of Christ, on the fruit of a fervent communion, with a spontaneity and freshness quite different from that produced by scholarly learning obtained from books. To the end that we may live in this way, these supernatural mysteries have been revealed to us. Such is Christian life in its full development, the profound reign of God in our hearts.

Grace superabounds in these souls after they have passed through the painful purifications, which are the veritable dark night. They have, so to speak, caught a glimpse of the most pure, holy, and fathomless abyss of God. They overflow with love and, in their great desire to love God; they long to do so immeasurably, with the heart of the Word made flesh. The Spirit of love has penetrated them and, in trial as in joy, they rest in the charity of the heavenly Father like a child in the arms of its mother. They see the fulfillment of Christ's prayer: "That they all may be one, as Thou,

Father, in Me, and I in Thee." This is the unitive life, but without anything extraordinary, in the sense of the miraculous. And this is truly the mystical, contemplative life. This is also the apostolic life; in their profound faith in the superabundance of the redemption, these souls make an offering of themselves that the chalice may overflow on sinners. Moreover, they earnestly desire to leave this land of exile for heaven. This is the perfection described by St. Thomas when, after speaking of those who start, and of those who advance in the spiritual life, he says of the perfect: "They tend principally to unite themselves with God, to enjoy Him, and they desire to die in order to be with Christ."

Therefore we find not only continuity between ascetical and mystical theology, but also a certain compenetration. They are not two distinct divisions of theology, but two parts or two aspects of the same branch, which shows us spiritual life in its infancy, adolescence, and maturity. Ascetical and mystical theology or, more simply, spiritual doctrine, is one. It must begin by setting before us the end attainable in this life, which is, spiritual perfection toward which spiritual progress should tend. It ought to show this perfection in all its elevation and grandeur, according to the testimony of the Gospel and of the saints. Then it should point out the means to this end: the struggle against sin, the practice of the virtues, perfect docility to the Holy Ghost. But the end proposed, such as we find it, for example, in the eight beatitudes when their full meaning is accepted, reaches beyond the domain of simple asceticism. Ascetical life, however, does not cease when the soul enters the mystical union. The practice of the virtues becomes, on the contrary, much more perfect, as is shown by the great austerities of the saints, their patience, and their zeal. Even to the end the soul must remember our Lord's words: "If anyone will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily."

This brings us back to the statement, based on the teaching of St. Thomas, which we made at the beginning of this article: Asceticism prepares the soul for the mystical union, which then renders the exercise of the virtues and our apostolate much more supernatural and fruitful. The practice of the virtues prepares for contemplation, and is then directed by it.

When ascetical and mystical theology are separated from each other, the ascetical lacks vitality, depth, and elevation; the mystical loses its importance, its gravity, and its depth, and seems to be solely a luxury in the spirituality of some privileged souls.

Such seems to us, the conception of ascetical and mystical theology, or of the spiritual doctrine, which conforms most closely to traditional teaching. This is the conception that we will attempt to formulate in this work.

ARTICLE III

MEANING OF THE TERMS OF THE PROBLEM

The question of vocabulary presents one of the main difficulties encountered by those who study mystical problems. Many controversies arise on account of the lack of a previous agreement as to the meaning of the words used. For instance, in the question as to whether the mystical life is the normal crown of the interior life, the word “mystical” is understood by some in so broad a sense that the mystical life seems almost identified with a barely fervent Christian life, or with mere perseverance in the state of grace. Other authors use the word “mystical” in so limited a sense that there seems to be no mystical life without ecstasy, visions, and prophetic revelations. Likewise the word “contemplation” has for some a very broad sense, while for others it can be used only with the exact meaning of infused and passive contemplation. The same thing is true for the word “normal.” If used by speculative theologians, it is applicable only to a general and superior law of the life of grace, a law which, in very diverse ways applies sooner or later, perfectly or imperfectly, to the development of generous souls that are called to the contemplative, or even to the active life. And this law exacts many conditions that may be lacking; it will have difficulty in functioning in the person who receives the grace, for instance, in an unfavorable environment, in too absorbing a life of study, or where proper direction is lacking, or in the case of a person who has an ungrateful temperament and certain imperfections, even though they are involuntary. Despite all these obstacles, this law governs the growth of the divine seed, a fact which the theologian considers and which experience proves. If, on the contrary, the word “normal” is used by a non-mystical director, seeing hardly anything but the particular phenomena and those from without, he gives the term “normal” a more concrete and material meaning, which seems to be contrary to fact when exceptions are noted. These exceptions, he does not scrutinize from within that he may ascertain whether they proceed from grace itself, or from the defects of the person receiving the

grace, from the nature of the seed itself or from the effects of the barren soil which requires extraordinary labor for its transformation.

The same difficulty arises if we express the problem by asking whether all interior souls are called to the mystical life.

Some who reply in the negative use the word “called” almost in the sense of “raised,” “led,” “predestined,” or “chosen”; and then it is clear that all interior souls are not called to the mystical life. This view ignores the statement of Scripture, “Many are called, but few are chosen.” These two words, “called” and “chosen,” differ greatly. On the other hand, some authors admit the general call of souls to the mystical life, but seem to forget the common teaching about the special signs of the individual call, signs that are not present in every pious soul. They are three in number and are enumerated by St. John of the Cross, and before him by Tauler. We will refer to them later on. These many consequent problems require a statement of the exact meaning of the word “call,” which may designate a remote or an immediate call. The same difficulty occurs in connection with the word “merit” in the question: Can a soul merit mystical contemplation?

We must try to establish precise meanings for the terms we are using. Although we would meet with difficulties in corning to an immediate agreement as to the real definitions, which express the basis of things and are the fruit of long research, yet we ought to at least have an understanding about nominal definitions, about the meaning of the principal terms of mystical theology in use today. Since mystical terminology was given precision by St. Teresa, St. John of the Cross, and St. Francis de Sales, we should take into account this established precision which rests on their authority, and is a real progress. If, for example, since the days of these great masters, the expression “essentially mystical prayer” means manifestly passive prayer, we ought henceforth to use the expression only with this precise meaning, which includes many degrees of prayer.

With a view to fixing the vocabulary, we wish to propose some definitions, at Least nominal ones, which are quite generally accepted by mystical theologians who follow simultaneously the doctrine of St. Thomas and that of St. John of the Cross, of St. Teresa, and of St. Francis de Sales. In the course of this work, we will show the basic soundness of these definitions, and their real value.

St. Thomas defines contemplation, as a simple intellectual view of the truth, superior to reasoning and accompanied by admiration. It may be

purely natural, as, for example, in an artist, a scholar, or a philosopher. Christian contemplation dwells on revealed truths and presupposes faith. Several theologians admit to the existence of an acquired contemplation, which follows upon meditation. They generally define this acquired contemplation as the loving knowledge of God, which is the fruit of our personal activity aided by grace. On the contrary, infused contemplation, that which the mystics speak of, is a loving knowledge of God, which is not the fruit of human activity aided by grace, but of a special inspiration of the Holy Ghost; so that it is not producible at will, as is an act of faith.

In the supernatural life, we understand by the word “ordinary,” every grace, every act, every state, which is in the normal way of sanctity; all that is morally necessary in the majority of cases for attaining sanctity. And by “sanctity” we must, at the very least, understand that which is generally required to enter heaven immediately after death, because a soul suffers in purgatory only through its own fault. The “ordinary,” thus defined comprises eminent graces that may be called extraordinary in point of fact, because they are rather uncommon, but that are ordinary according to the normal law if they are truly necessary for the attainment of sanctity, for the full perfection of Christian life, or for the complete purity of soul which merits immediate entrance into heaven.

Every favor, on the contrary, which is out of the normal way of sanctity and which is not at all necessary for its attainment, is extraordinary. We classify as such, especially the graces called gratis datae, as miracles, prophecies, visions, and other phenomena of the same kind.

As regards the word “call” or “vocation,” we will attempt to distinguish in this work the different meanings it may have, according as it concerns a general and remote call of all just souls, to mystical contemplation or, on the contrary, an individual and proximate call. As we shall see, this last may be merely sufficient and remain sterile; or it may be efficacious. In the latter case, it may be an efficacious call either to lower degrees, or to higher degrees of the mystical life.

In all these questions we must consider the full, normal development of the life of grace as such, and then see what it is in more or less well disposed souls which have received this germ of eternal life. To do this, we need to recall first of all the traditional doctrine of grace, such as it has been conceived, following St. Paul and St. Augustine, by the prince of theologians, St. Thomas Aquinas, and by the great Catholic mystics.

CHAPTER III

MYSTICAL THEOLOGY AND THE FUNDAMENTAL DOCTRINES OF ST. THOMAS

ARTICLE I

NATURAL INTELLECTUAL LIFE AND SUPERNATURAL LIFE

SEVERAL authors, struck by the difference which they find between the writings of the great mystical theologians (such as, Dionysius, Richard of St. Victor, St. Bonaventure, Tauler, St. John of the Cross), and the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas, are surprised that we should expect to find in St. Thomas' writing the principles of mystical theology. Some even consider St. Thomas, not a great theologian who from a supernatural point of view used Aristotle for the defense, and explanation of the divine truths of faith, but rather a philosopher of genius who gave us an interpretation of the Gospel, a Christian Aristotle, as later on Malebranche was a Christian Plato.

Anyone who accepts this view must lack an intimate knowledge of the writings of St. Thomas, especially his treatises on the Trinity, the incarnation, the Holy Eucharist, grace, the theological virtues, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Certainly such a person never read St. Thomas' commentaries on St. Paul, St. John, the Psalms, and the Canticle of Canticles. He must be ignorant of St. Thomas' short treatises on piety, his prayers, his office of the Blessed Sacrament; and he must be unacquainted with the saint's life, his nights spent before the tabernacle, his ecstasies, the eminent gift of contemplation which made him refer to his Summa as being only straw in comparison with what he beheld.

In this article we wish to show that this judgment of the great doctor springs from an entirely material manner of reading his works. We have a tendency to give a materialistic Interpretation to everything—doctrine, piety, rules of conduct, action. This is the inclination of our fallen and

wounded nature unless it is profoundly regenerated and completely vivified by grace which heals and elevates, and unless we are free from domination by our temperament; or if, despite the state of grace, we preserve a host of purely natural judgments, quite unconformable to the spirit of faith.

Influenced by these dispositions, we are unintentionally prone to interpret the loftiest doctrines materialistically; that is, we are inclined to note only their material elements, which adapt themselves better to our tastes, and to lose sight of the spirit that determines their nature, and is the soul of the doctrinal body. Once more St. Paul's expression is verified: "For the letter killeth, but the spirit quickeneth." Following this way, under pretext of reliance on what is tangible, mechanically exact, and incontestably certain even for the incredulous; we would end by explaining the higher by the lower, by reducing the first to the second, which is the very essence of materialism in all its forms. We would be inclined to explain the soul by the body, much more than the body by the soul; in the same way, to explain the life of grace by nature, theological doctrines by the philosophical elements which they have assimilated, the life of religious orders by the social conditions in which they had their origin, without thinking sufficiently of the incessant, but invisible work of God, who alone can raise up great doctors and saints. From this point of view, we would rapidly dwarf everything and, instead of living supernaturally according to the true sense of this word, we might, despite certain appearances, flounder about in what is mediocre and mean.

This disposition to explain the higher by the lower is found in varying degrees, from the gross materialism, which explains spirit by matter up to that which places a materialistic interpretation on spiritual philosophy, theology, exegesis, the history of the Church, asceticism, and the liturgy, the letter of which is kept, and not the spirit.

Even with a true desire to learn, we may read St. Thomas from this point of view. In his theological doctrine, numerous material or philosophical elements are found, which he intends to subordinate to the idea of God, the Author of grace. If we unduly emphasize these lower elements, which are within the reach of reason, instead of rising to the summit of the synthesis, we will find a real opposition between this doctrine, and that of the great mystical theologians, who have treated especially of union with God. The trees will prevent our seeing the forest. Absorbed in the details at the base of the structure, we shall fail to see the keystone of the arch. At least we

shall be considering only from below the supernatural principle of this masterpiece of the mind; seeing it only by its reflection on the lower realities which it regulates, instead of judging these matters from above, as ought to be done by the "higher reason," so greatly prized by St. Augustine, and by theological wisdom, not to speak of the gift of wisdom, which is even more elevated. Thus the reading of St. Thomas' Summa and commenting on it may be only slightly supernatural, and even anti-mystical. This manner of reading it directs the mind away from the view of the great commentators (Capreolus, Cajetan, Bannes, John of St. Thomas, the Carmelites of Salamanca), all of them inferior to the master. But they understood him better than we do, and lead us after him toward the same heights.

A delicate instrument of precision is easily injured so that it is no longer accurate; likewise the doctrine of St. Thomas is easily distorted. This results if we misplace the emphasis on what is secondary and material, thus explaining in a banal manner and without due proportion what is formal and principal to it. By so doing, we fail to see the glowing summits that should illumine all the rest.

We note here the chief confusions that would render this doctrine essentially anti-mystical. They have been made especially by nominalist theologians, who finally perceived nothing but words in the loftiest spiritual realities, when they did not see as materially evident; these realities had been revealed by God. Nominalist theology is a considerable diminution of the science of God. We point out these confusions to show that the teaching of St. Thomas is, on the contrary, the same as that to which St. John of the Cross, and his disciples developed. We make this point evident by insisting on what constitutes the grandeur of his teaching, and by manifesting the supernatural wealth it contains. For one who has read the Salamanca theologians, evidently the Carmelite doctrine and that of the Angelic Doctor, agree throughout, particularly with regards to the loftiest questions in the treatise on grace.

Let us consider briefly, in the Thomistic synthesis, the fundamental doctrines which are most closely allied to the spiritual life; especially those bearing on our natural, intellectual knowledge; then those bearing on the supernatural life, on the infused virtues, on the gifts of the Holy Ghost, on the efficacy of grace, and lastly on the very nature of God.

In the Thomistic synthesis our intellectual knowledge in the natural order is based on the first principles of reason: the principle of contradiction—no being, created or uncreated, can at the same time and under the same aspect be and not be; the principle of causality—all that has potential nonexistence, whether spirit or matter, has a cause; the principle of finality—every agent, whether material or spiritual, acts for an end; the first principle of morality—one must do good and avoid evil. St. Thomas declares that the intellectual knowledge of these primordial truths springs in a certain way from our senses, because our intelligence abstracts its ideas from sensible things. Understanding this doctrine materially, some people have thought that the intellectual certitude of the first principles resolves itself essentially or formally into sensation, and that it relies on sensation as on its formal motive. This point of view would reduce the higher to the lower, intelligence to sense; it would forget that rational principles are absolutely universal and necessary, and that they reach even the loftiest realities, God Himself, whereas sensation reaches only sensible, singular, and contingent objects. Were this done, the absolute universality and necessity of rational first truths would no longer be explainable; reason would remain the prisoner of phenomena, like the senses of an animal, and our liberty, which follows from our intelligence, would disappear. We would not be able to resist the attraction of sensible goods, because we would not dominate them. Our nature, like that of animals, would be incapable of receiving grace and of being raised to the vision of God.

According to St. Thomas, on the other hand, intellectual certitude of rational first principles resolves itself only materially into the prerequisite sensation; it resolves itself formally into purely intellectual evidence of the absolute truth of its principles, which appear as the fundamental laws, not only of phenomena, but of being or of all intelligible reality, whether corporal or spiritual. This evidence presupposes in us a constantly increasing intellectual light of an order infinitely superior to sensation or to the most subtle imagination; an intellectual light which is a distant image of the divine light and which can illumine nothing without the constant concurrence of God, Sun of spirits, Master of intelligences. Although St. Thomas here treats subjects in the natural order, he already speaks almost as a mystic: “As any human doctrine exteriorly proposed instructs us because of the intellectual light which we have received from God, it follows that God alone teaches us interiorly, and as principal Cause.”

Malebranche and the ontologists exaggerated these words of St. Thomas, and seemed to still have a higher idea of our natural intelligence, by claiming that our intelligence sees first principles in God Himself. The apparent elevation of this Christian Platonism is not, however, that of true mystical theology, because it tends to confound the natural order and that of grace, instead of maintaining the absolute superiority of the latter.

According to the ontologists, our intellect is capable of knowing being, because it is capable of knowing God; according to St. Thomas, our intellect is capable of knowing God by grace, because it is first of all capable of knowing, being by nature. This teaching places it infinitely above the senses.

In respect to the supernatural life, we know the principle of St. Thomas: "Grace perfects nature and does not destroy it." A great spirit of faith is necessary, however, if we are always to interpret this principle correctly without inclining practically toward naturalism. Some people will understand this principle materially, or will be more attentive to nature, which must be perfected, than to grace, which should produce this transformation in us. Furthermore, considering nature as it actually is since original sin, they will not sufficiently distinguish in nature what is essential and good, what ought to be perfected, from what ought-to be mortified, egoism under all its forms gross or subtle. By failing to make this distinction, they find a real opposition between the doctrine of St. Thomas thus materialistically interpreted and the famous chapter of the Imitation (Bk. III, chap. 54), "On the Divers Movements of Nature and Grace." They forget what the holy doctor teaches about the wounds consequent upon original sin which remain in the baptized soul?

They will forget even more completely what he says about the infinite distance, which separates the most perfect nature, even that of the most exalted angel, from the slightest degree of sanctifying grace, which St. Thomas declares "superior to the natural good of the entire universe" of matter and spirit. All angelic natures taken together are not equal to the slightest movement of charity.

Nominalists have diminished this doctrine to the point of thinking that grace is not a supernatural reality by its essence, but that it has only a moral value, which gives us a right to eternal life, as a bank note gives us the right to claim a certain sum of gold. Likewise for them the baptismal and sacerdotal characters are only extrinsic titles, relations established by reason

without a basis in reality (for example, an adopted son). Luther, a disciple of the nominalists, went so far as to say that sanctifying grace is not a reality in us, is not a new life, but only the pardon of our faults exteriorly granted by God.

Without going to such extremes, some theologians have thought that God could create an intelligence for which the beatific vision would be natural. They failed to see the infinite distance that necessarily separates the nature of all created and creatable intelligence from grace, which is a "participation in the divine nature."

To grasp what this distance is, we must bear in mind that grace is really and formally a participation in the divine nature precisely in so far as it is divine, a participation in the Deity, in that which makes God, God, in His intimate life. As rationality is what makes man a man, the Deity is the constituent essence of God, such as He is Himself. Grace is a mysterious participation in this essence, which surpasses all natural knowledge. Even stones, by the fact of their existence, have a remote likeness to God in so far as He is being; plants also distantly resemble Him in so far as he is living; human souls and angels are by nature made to the image of God, and resemble Him by analogy in so far as He is intelligent; but no created or creatable nature can resemble God exactly in so far as He is God. Grace alone can make us participate really and formally in the Deity, in the intimate life of Him whose children we are by grace. The Deity, which remains inaccessible to all natural created knowledge, is superior to all the divine perfections naturally knowable, superior to being, to life, to wisdom, to love. All these divine attributes, diverse as they appear to be, are one and the same thing in God and with God. They are in the Deity formally and eminently as so many notes of a superior harmony, the simplicity of which is beyond our comprehension.

Grace makes us participate really and formally in this Deity, in this eminent and intimate life of God, because grace is in us the radical principle of essentially divine operations, will ultimately consist in seeing God immediately, as He sees Himself, and in loving Him as He loves Himself. Grace is the seed of glory. In order to know its essence intimately, we must first have seen the divine essence of which grace is the participation. By grace we are veritably "born of God," as St. John says. This is what makes Pascal say: "All bodies together and all spirits together and all their

productions are not equal to the slightest movement of charity, which is of another and infinitely more elevated order."

If we clearly understand this doctrine, we know that grace not only vivifies and spiritualizes us, but also deifies us. "As only fire can render a body incandescent," says St. Thomas, "God alone can deify souls."

Hence the slightest degree of sanctifying grace is infinitely superior to a sensible miracle, which is supernatural only by reason of its cause, by its mode of production (quaod modum), not by its intimate reality: the life restored to a corpse is only the natural life, low, indeed, in comparison with that of grace. The paralytic, when his sins are forgiven, receives infinitely more than his cure. At Lourdes the greatest blessings are not those which heal the body, but those which revivify souls. The "modal" supernatural, or the preternatural, does not count, so to speak, in comparison with the essentially supernatural.

The slightest degree of sanctifying grace is, as a result, infinitely superior to the phenomenon of ecstasy, to the prophetic vision of future events, or to the natural knowledge of the loftiest angel.

The natural knowledge of the highest angel could in its natural order grow indefinitely in intensity, yet it would never reach the dignity of the supernatural knowledge of infused faith or of the gift of wisdom. It would never even obscurely attain the intimate life of God, just as the indefinite progress of the imagination would never equal the intelligence; as the indefinite multiplication of the sides of a polygon inscribed within a circle never equal the latter, however, no matter how small it may be, never becomes a point. While in the state of probation, the angels, and likewise man, possessed, over and above the natural knowledge of God, the knowledge which proceeded from infused faith and from the gifts.

From all this we see the distance separating the essentially supernatural character of sanctifying grace from the supernatural character of sensible miracles or even of prophecy.

We have elsewhere examined at length the value of this division of the supernatural, which is generally admitted, and of its subdivisions. This is an important point in theology, and a particularly important one in mystical theology. This fact can be noted in the tabulation on page 59, where the supernatural quoad substantiam, (by its essence) is clearly distinct from the miraculous quoad substantiam, (miracles of the first order). In the first we consider the formal cause; in the second, an extrinsic cause, the efficient

cause. Thus sanctifying grace is supernatural by its essence, or formal cause; miracles, even of the first order, are supernatural only because no created force can produce them. By the resurrection of a dead person, natural life is supernaturally restored to him.

The problem to be discussed in the present work can be reduced to the following terms: Does the mystical life belong to the category of sanctifying grace, the virtues, and the gifts, or to the relatively inferior category of miracles and prophecy?

For the solution of the actual mystical problem, the greatest consideration must be given to the supernatural elevation of sanctifying grace as it was conceived by St. Thomas. No theologian, as we have shown, has been able to make as clear a distinction as he did between the natural order and the essentially supernatural order. No one has better affirmed the absolute gratuity of the life of grace, and its elevation infinitely surpassing, as it does, every claim and innate desire of human and angelic nature. Yet no one has better shown how this gift, gratuitous though it is, is wonderfully suited to our loftiest aspirations. Nothing is more gratuitous and desirable than the beatific vision, and in this life nothing is more so than Holy Communion.

Supernatural

God in his intimate life, mystery of the Blessed Trinity.

Quoad substantiam

(in essence) Uncreated

Uncreated Person of the Word made Flesh

Created

Light of glory.

Habitual grace of the virtues and the gifts, and actual grace.

By reason of final causality The natural act of an acquired virtue, supernaturally related by charity toward a supernatural end.

Quoad modum

(in mode) Miracle quoad substantiam (e.g., glorious resurrection) and prophecy

By reason Of efficient Causality

Miracle quoad subjectum (e.g., resurrection without glory) and knowledge of the secrets of hearts.

Miracle quoad modum (e.g., sudden cure of an illness curable in time); gift of tongues and similar graces.

When we consider the conformity of Christianity with our natural aspirations, very often we cease to note the absolute gratuity of the divine gift and thus, we incline toward practical naturalism. On the other hand, whoever fails to see this admirable conformity is led to conceive a rigid super naturalness, which is contrary to nature and lacking in simplicity. This conception would lead to exaltation and the follies of false mysticism.

St. Thomas maintains the infinite elevation of grace above our nature and also the harmony between the two. But he adds that this harmony really appears only after a profound purification of nature by mortification and the cross, as the lives of the saint's show. He repeatedly tells us that this harmony has been fully realized in this world only in our Lord Jesus Christ. Bossuet says the same thing in speaking of Jesus: "Who would not admire the condescension with which He tempers the loftiness of His doctrine? It is milk for children and, at the same time, bread for the strong. It is full of the secrets of God, but it is evident that Jesus is not astonished at this, as other mortals to whom God communicates Himself. Our Lord speaks naturally of these matters, as one born in this secret and in this glory; and what He has without measure (.John 3: 34) He bestows with measure that our weakness may be able to bear it."

By this marvelous conciliation of qualities so diverse, that is, of the absolute gratuity and supreme fitness of grace, St. Thomas directs us toward the loftiest orthodox mystical theology, which is in reality a commentary on our Lord's expression: "If thou didst but know the gift of God."

We will see this clearly when we speak of the supernaturalness of the infused virtues, both moral and theological, and of the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

ARTICLE II

MYSTICAL THEOLOGY AND THE ESSENTIALLY SUPERNATURAL CHARACTER OF INFUSED FAITH

The doctrine of St. Thomas is about our natural intellectual knowledge, and the essence of sanctifying grace directs us toward the loftiest orthodox mystical theology. The same is true of his teaching about the supernatural character of the infused virtues and of the gifts of the Holy Ghost. In this article we will treat especially the supernatural character of faith. But first

we must say a few words about the supernatural character of the Christian moral virtues.

These moral virtues are the four cardinal virtues (prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance) and the virtues joined with them, particularly those of religion (or justice in regard to God), of magnanimity, patience, perseverance (all related to fortitude), of chastity, gentleness, modesty, and humility.

While reading the part of St. Thomas' Summa dealing with these Christian moral virtues, especially prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance, many think these are only the natural virtues described by Aristotle and that they are clothed with a simple adventitious supernatural modality, springing from the influence of charity, which should direct all our acts to God. Some theologians have not gone beyond this conception.

The thought of St. Thomas is far loftier. According to his teaching, the Christian moral virtues are infused and, because of their formal object, essentially distinct from the highest acquired moral virtues described by the greatest philosophers. These acquired moral virtues, useful as they may be, could be continually developed without ever attaining the formal object of the Christian virtues. An infinite difference exists between Aristotelian temperance, governed solely by right reason, and Christian temperance, ruled by divine faith and supernatural prudence. St. Thomas says: "Evidently the measure to be imposed on our passions differs essentially according as it springs from the human rule of reason or from the divine rule. For example, in the use of food the measure prescribed by reason has for its end the avoidance of what is harmful to health and to the exercise of reason itself, while according to the divine law, as St. Paul says, man must chastise his body and bring it into subjection by abstinence and other similar austerities." This measure, which belongs to the supernatural order, is in fact animated by that which unaided reason is ignorant of, but which faith teaches us about the results of original sin and of our personal sins, about the infinite elevation of our supernatural end, a bout the obligation of loving God, the Author of grace, more than ourselves and above all, and of renouncing self in order to follow our Lord Jesus Christ.

St. Thomas is equally insistent on the necessity of a progressive purification in order that the Christian moral virtues, aided by the acquired virtues, may reach their perfection. He shows us what they should become in those who really strive for divine union. "Then," he says, "prudence

scorns the things of the world for the contemplation of divine things; it directs all the thoughts of the soul toward God. Temperance abandons, so far as nature can bear it, what the body demands; fortitude prevents the soul from becoming frightened in the face of death and when confronted with the unknown supernatural. Justice leads the soul finally to enter fully on this entirely divine way." Loftier still, he says, are the virtues of the soul that is already purified, those of the blessed and of the great saints on earth.

This teaching is not less elevated than that offered by Tauler in his Sermons, or by St. John of the Cross, (The Ascent of Mount Carmel and The Dark Night of the Soul) in the chapters which he devotes to the active and passive purification of the soul.

In regards to the theological virtues, some who read the Summa theologica in an entirely material manner, reach the conclusion that our act of faith is a substantially natural act clothed with a supernatural modality: substantially natural, because it reposes formally on the natural, historical knowledge of Christ's preaching and of the miracles which confirmed it; clothed with a supernatural modality, so that it may be useful to salvation. This modality is often said to resemble a layer of gold applied to copper in order to make plated metal. We would thus have "plated supernatural" life and not a new, essentially supernatural life.

According to this conception, the certitude of our supernatural faith in the Blessed Trinity, the incarnation, and other mysteries, would rest formally in the last analysis on the inferior though morally certain knowledge which our unaided reason can have of the signs of revelation and of the marks of the Church. The act of faith would be a sort of reasoning, formally based on certitude of inferior order. Often this certitude rests merely on the human testimony of our parents and of our pastors, for very few of the faithful can make a critical study of the origins of Christianity. The act of theological faith, thus conceived, is no longer infallibly certain, and preserves almost nothing that is supernatural and mysterious. It is no longer evident why interior grace is absolutely necessary not only to confirm it but to produce it. This last point was definitely defined by the Church against the Pelagians and the semi-Pelagians.

This material conception is simply another case of the reduction of the higher to the lower. It is an error analogous to that discussed above, in relation to rational first principles.

St. Thomas teaches that, just as sensation is only an inferior knowledge prerequisite to that of principles, a knowledge which is founded on intellectual evidence, so also the rational knowledge of the signs of revelation plays only the part of a preamble to prepare our intellect to receive the influence of grace, which alone can make us adhere infallibly to the formal motive of faith, to the authority of God revealing, in an order infinitely superior to the reasoning that went before.

St. Thomas saw the entire meaning and range of our Lord's words: "No man can come to Me, except the Father, who hath sent Me, draw him. . . . Everyone that hath heard of the Father, and hath learned, cometh to Me. . . . Amen, amen I say unto you: He that believeth in Me, hath everlasting life." "My sheep hear My voice." "Everyone that is of the truth, heareth My voice." St. Paul says the same thing: "Faith is a gift of God. . . . Faith is the substance of things to be hoped for," or the seed, the beginning of eternal life.

And the Council of Trent defined as follows: "In justification man receives, with the remission of sins, the three virtues of faith, hope, and charity, infused at the same time into his soul by Jesus Christ, on whom he is grafted."

Thus, as St. Thomas teaches, faith is substantially supernatural, specified by a formal motive of the same entirely supernatural order, a motive that faith attains in an absolutely infallible manner. This is why, rather than call it in question; we must undergo the worst torments, as the martyrs did.

This absolutely infallible and essentially supernatural certitude resolves itself only materially into our morally certain knowledge (critical or non-critical) of the signs which confirmed Christ's preaching and also such knowledge of the marks of the Church. It is based formally on the authority of God revealing, on the first revealing untreated Truth which reveals itself with the mysteries that it manifests, which is believed with the mysteries in an order infinitely superior to rational evidence, just as physical light appears and is seen at the same time as it makes us see colors As the Thomists usually say, "The first revealing Truth is at once that which is believed and that by which one believes, as light is that which is seen and that by which one sees." St. Augustine expressed this idea in his commentary on St, John.

The question concerns not only belief in God, the Author of nature and of sensible miracles which reason can know by its own power; it concerns also

belief in God, the Author of grace, in God considered in His intimate life, in God who leads us to a supernatural end by giving rise in us to essentially supernatural acts.

If God had supernaturally revealed only the natural truths of religion, as, for example, His natural providence, without telling us anything about supernatural mysteries (e. g., the Blessed Trinity), our faith would have been supernatural only by reason of its origin, by its mode of production, but not at all by its formal object or by its essence. It would have been specifically inferior to Christian faith, whatever the semi-rationalists, who wished to prove the mysteries of Christianity, may have said about it. On the contrary, our infused faith is not specifically inferior to that which the angels had before enjoying the beatific vision, even though our faith expresses itself in acquired ideas and theirs in infused ideas.

In reality, it is the supernatural mystery of His intimate life which God has revealed to us. Consequently our faith is based on the very truth of God, the Author of grace, on the uncreated knowledge of His intimate life which He possesses: an entirely supernatural first Truth, to which the infused light of faith raises us, and to which it makes us adhere infallibly. It is eternal first Truth, which is still obscure for us because transluminous, says Dionysius, and is infinitely superior not only to the evidence of rational principles which enable us to recognize a miracle, but even to the evidence which the angels naturally enjoy, and which the demons preserve; “the First Truth which interiorly illuminates and teaches man.”

Therefore without the infused light of faith man remains in the presence of the Gospel like a hearer deprived of musical sense who listens to a symphony without really perceiving its beauty. “But,” says St. Paul, “the sensual man perceiveth not these things that are of the Spirit of God; for it is foolishness to him, and he cannot understand, because it is spiritually examined.”

The faithful, on the contrary, understand “the deep things of God,” spoken of by the revelation which is proposed by the Church. “This school, where God teaches and is understood, is far removed from the senses,” says St. Augustine. “We see many men come to the Son of God, since we see many who believe in Christ; but where and how they have heard and learned this truth of the Father, that we do not see. This grace is entirely too intimate and too secret for us to see it.”

St. Thomas says: “Three things lead us to believe in Christ: “first, natural reason; . . . secondly, the testimony of the law and the prophets; . . . thirdly, the preaching of the Apostles; but when thus led we have reached belief; then we can say that we believe, not for any of the preceding motives, but solely because of the very truth of God . . . to which we adhere firmly under the influence of an infused light; because faith has certitude from light divinely infused.” Elsewhere St. Thomas says: “God dwells in us by living faith, according to the expression of St. Paul: ‘Christ dwells in your hearts by faith. “

This lofty doctrine has often been given a materialistic interpretation and has been considerably diminished. The great commentators of St. Thomas for the last seven centuries have always defended it and cherished it. To be convinced of this, we need only read what they have written about the articles of the Summa relative to the supernatural character of the theological virtues and especially of faith. One should read particularly the fine writings of the Carmelites of Salamanca on this point, which they regard as the foundation of the mystical doctrine of their father, St. John of the Cross. Both St. Francis de Sales and Bossuet likewise express the same opinion.

Among modern theologians, Scheeben, who clearly understood this teaching, wrote as follows: “The formal motive of faith is purely and immediately divine and therefore absolutely one and simple, firm and subsistent, identical with the first and immutable source of all truth (First Truth). On the other hand, faith itself appears as a direct commerce, an intimate union with the interior word of God, and consequently with His interior life. As this interior word not only existed at the time of the manifestation of the exterior word, but also subsists in its quality as eternal word of God, in an eternal present, it elevates our mind to participation in His truth and immortal life, and makes it rest therein.

“The contrary opinion, according to which the exterior act of revelation would be a partial motive of faith, rests on a mechanical conception, in which faith appears as a deductive process helping us to discover the truth of its contents. It lessens the transcendental character of faith, which is essentially an impulse toward God.”

This is what prompted Lacordaire to say: “What takes place in us when we believe is a phenomenon of intimate and superhuman light. I do not say that exterior things do not act on us as rational motives of certitude; but the

very act of this supreme certitude, which I speak of, affects us directly like a luminous phenomenon (infused light of faith), like a transluminous phenomenon. . . . We are affected by a transluminous light. . . . Otherwise where would be the proportion between our adherence, which would be natural and rational, and an object surpassing nature and reason? . . . It is somewhat like a sympathetic intuition that in a single moment establishes between two men what logic could not do in many years. Just so a sudden illumination at times enlightens the intelligence." Bishop Gay holds the same opinion.

To make us thus adhere to the supreme, essentially supernatural Truth, infused faith should therefore also be supernatural in its essence and not merely by an accidental modality. It is thus infinitely superior to the light of reason, as the latter is to the senses.

When this great doctrine of St. Thomas is not lessened by a materialistic interpretation, it is, by reason of its loftiness, evidently the foundation of mystical theology, and is in no way inferior to the most beautiful pages on the life of faith in the writings of Dionysius, Tauler, Blessed Henry Suso, or St. John of the Cross. We shall see that the passive purifications of the spirit especially, which are described in The Dark Night of the Soul, can be understood only by what we have just said about the absolute supernaturalness of the formal motive of the theological virtues. These painful passive purifications, in which the gifts of the Holy Ghost have a great share, bring out strikingly this pure, supernatural motive by freeing it more and more from every inferior motive accessible to reason.

To show that mystical contemplation is only the plenitude of the life of faith, the essence of which we have just determined, we need only quote some characteristic passages from the writings of St. John of the Cross. In The Ascent of Mount Carmel he writes: "To be prepared for the divine union, the understanding must be purified, emptied of all that comes from the senses, of all that may present itself dearly. It must be intimately at peace, recollected, and abandoned in faith. This faith alone is the proximate and proportionate means which can unite the soul to God, for faith is in such intimate connection with God that what we believe by faith and what we see by the beatific vision are one and the same thing. God is infinite; faith proposes the infinite to us. God is one and triune; faith proposes Him to us as one and triune. In the same way that God is darkness for our mind, faith enlightens our understanding by blinding it. By this means only does

God manifest Himself to the soul in a divine light, which exceeds all understanding; whence it results that the greater faith is the more profound is the union. . . . For under the darkness of faith, the understanding is united to God; under cover of this mysterious darkness, God is found hidden."

Further on in the same work, St. John of the Cross says of spiritual visions in which creatures are seen: "I do not deny that the memory of them may give rise to some love of God and contemplation; but pure faith and detachment in darkness from all this stimulates and raises the soul much more thereto, without the soul's knowing how or whence it comes. If it happens that the soul experiences an anguish of very pure love of God, and is ignorant of its cause and motive, it is the effect of faith, which has developed in the night, in nudity and spiritual poverty, and which is accompanied by a more profound, infused love of God. Whence it follows that the more eager the soul is for obscurity, for annihilation in regard to every exterior and interior object which it is capable of possessing, the more it increases its faith, and also hope and charity, inasmuch as the three theological virtues form a unity. Often the person favored does not understand this love and has no feeling of it, since it is not established in the senses by tenderness, but in the soul by a fortitude, courage, and daring hitherto unknown."

Previously St. John of the Cross had written: "In order to be supernaturally transformed, the soul must enter the darkness (not only in regard to creatures, but in regard to what reason can know of God). It must remain in the darkness, like a blind person, relying on obscure faith, taking it as light and guide. The soul cannot help itself with any of the things which it understands, tastes, feels, or imagines. . . . Faith dominates all these ideas, tastes, sentiments, and images. If the soul does not wish to extinguish its lights by preferring total obscurity to them, it will not reach what is superior, that is, what faith teaches . . . The soul creates great obstacles for itself in its ascent toward this lofty state of union with God when it relies on reasoning or is attached to its own judgment or will." Elsewhere the saint states that by so doing the soul mingles with its supernatural acts an act of coarse quality which does not attain the end.

And again St. John of the Cross says: "To busy oneself with things which are clear to the mind and of little value, is to forbid oneself access to the abyss of faith where God in secret supernaturally instructs the soul, and without its knowledge enriches it with virtues and gifts. . . . The Holy Ghost

enlightens the recollected intellect according to the measure of its recollection. But the most perfect recollection is that which takes place in faith, and for this reason the Holy Ghost does not communicate His lights outside of faith." In all these texts the saint is concerned with living faith enlightened by the gift of the Holy Ghost.

We find the same teaching for more advanced souls in The Dark Night of the Soul: "The soul ought then to enter the second night in order to strip itself perfectly of all perceptions and savors, whether of sense or of spirit, in order to walk in the purity of obscure faith. There only can it find the fitting means by which the soul is united to God, as He Himself declares by the prophet Osee (2: 20); 'I will espouse thee to Me in faith.'

In The Spiritual Canticle, St. John beautifully sums up this doctrine and shows its loftiness. He insists on the absolute super naturalness of the object which faith attains by the articles of the Credo:

"0 crystal well!
Oh, that on Thy silvered surface
Thou wouldest mirror forth at once
Those eyes desired
Which are outlined in my heard!"

"By 'silvery surfaces' the soul means the propositions or articles of faith. To understand these verses and those which follow, we must observe that the articles of faith are represented by silver as compared to gold, which is the substance of faith or the truths which it contains considered in themselves. During our lives we adhere to this substance of faith, although it is hidden in a silvered envelope. It will appear unveiled in heaven, and we shall contemplate this pure gold with delight. . . .

Thus faith gives us God even in this life, although under a veil of silver. This does not hinder us from truly receiving Him."

St. Thomas holds the same opinion. In correcting Hugh of St. Victor, he observes that the only contemplation that surpasses faith is the beatific vision. According to his opinion, the contemplation of the angels and that of Adam before the fall, was not superior to faith, but, he says, they received the light of the gift of wisdom in greater abundance than we do. And he shows that uniform or circular contemplation, of which Dionysius speaks, presupposes the sacrifice of the senses and of reasoning, or the multiplicity in which they tarry.

St. Thomas is not speaking here merely of the contemplation called "ordinary," and not at all of mystical contemplation. If we should thus misunderstand him, we would confound the latter with its concomitant phenomena and would forget that the holy doctor recognizes that the superior degree of uniform or circular contemplation, which is called by Dionysius the great darkness, or the plenitude of faith. St. Thomas says: "Then we know God through ignorance, by a union which surpasses the nature of our soul and in which we are enlightened by the depths of divine wisdom, which we cannot scrutinize." St. Albert the Great teaches the same doctrine.

This teaching is confirmed by the testimony of souls experienced in the mystical ways. "One day," says Blessed Angela of Foligno, "I saw God in darkness and necessarily in a darkness, because He is situated too far above the mind, and no proportion exists between Him and anything that can become the object of a thought. It is an ineffable delectation in the good which contains all. Nothing therein can become the object either of a word or a concept. I see nothing, I see all. Certitude is obtained in the darkness. The more profound the darkness, so much more does the good exceeds all. This is the reserved mystery. . . . Pay attention. The divine power, wisdom, and will of which I have had marvelous visions at other times, seem less than this which I saw. This is a whole; one would say that the others were parts." It is the Deity superior to being, to wisdom, to love, which is identical with each other in its infinity.

Such is manifestly the full development of infused faith, of which St. Thomas has so well determined the essential super naturalness; it is faith based on a formal motive, inaccessible to reason and to the natural knowledge of the angels. Contemplative souls have found great light in learning the true thought of the holy doctor on this fundamental point.

In fact, if we are truly convinced of the essential super naturalness of faith, we understand that mystical contemplation is the normal blossoming of this theological virtue united to charity and to the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Only the contemplative rises to the heights of his faith.

The certitude of his contemplation is based formally on a secret illumination of the Holy Ghost, while the concomitant phenomena of suspension of the faculties and of ecstasy are only effects and signs of a state with a supernatural quality beyond the grasp of observation. Here, as also for the natural knowledge of the first principles and for the certitude of

faith, we must distinguish clearly between the entirely spiritual, formal motive of our adherence and the sensible signs accompanying it.

If, on the other hand, the teaching of St. Thomas on the supernatural character of faith is interpreted materialistically, mystical contemplation will be materialized. Too much attention will be paid to the phenomena that sometimes accompany it, and it will be declared absolutely extraordinary because the fundamental law of the continual development "of the grace of the virtues and of the gifts," will be lost sight of.

What the holy doctor teaches about hope and charity will also be materialistically interpreted. If anyone should imagine that reason alone, studying historically the Gospel confirmed by miracles, can without grace attain the formal motive which specifies infused faith, he would be led to think that reason can in the same way know the formal motive of hope and of charity. Were this the case, the acts of these virtues would be substantially natural, and would require only a supernatural modality in order to be useful to salvation. Our act of charity would thus resemble a natural and reasonable affection, which had been supernaturalized in order to become meritorious. In this case we no longer see the infinite distance which separates, in their very essence and in their essential vitality, the natural desire to be happy from the act of infused hope, or again that distance which separates the natural love of the sovereign Good, which Plato speaks of in The Banquet, from the divine charity which is mentioned so repeatedly in the Gospel.

Some theologians, following the nominalists, have seriously diminished the supernatural character of the Christian virtues, even of the theological virtues; but such diminution is certainly not found in St. Thomas. In his opinion, these virtues are supernatural in their very essence, which raises infinitely the vitality of our intelligence and of our will. They are specified by a formal object, or a formal motive, which infinitely surpasses the natural powers of the human soul and those of the highest angels.

This doctrine of the essentially supernatural, formal motive of the three theological virtues places the teaching of St. Thomas on the same level as that of the greatest orthodox mystics.

Finally, we are confronted with the question of the gifts of the Holy Ghost and of the supernatural inspiration to which they render us docile, as sails render a ship responsive to the breath of the wind. Some theologians, who did not see the necessity of the infused moral virtues, which are

superior to acquired moral virtues, were surprised to learn that in every soul in the state of grace there are, in addition, gifts of the Holy Ghost, superior by their divine mode to the infused moral virtues. They denied this essential superiority, because they failed to recognize the supernatural riches, which the mystical life especially manifests to us. Understanding St. Thomas materially, they confused the inspiration of the Holy Ghost with the actual grace necessary for the exercise of the virtues as soon as some special difficulty presents itself.

St. Thomas, on the contrary, teaches explicitly the essential distinction between the virtues and the gifts, and consequently he distinguishes exactly the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, which surpasses the human mode, from the simple actual grace which is adapted to this mode. On this point also, by declaring the gifts necessary to salvation, St. Thomas agrees with the greatest mystics. He adds, as they do, that the gifts, although subordinated to the theological virtues, greatly assist in their development. The Holy Ghost communicates His lights to us in the recollection of faith. Thus the difference is very great between that supernatural faith which subsists without charity in a soul in the state of mortal sin, and living faith which is aided by the gifts and profound touches of the Holy Ghost.

We shall find the same loftiness in the doctrine of St. Thomas on actual grace, on the mode of God’s presence in the just soul, and on the eminent and absolute simplicity of the divine essence.

The humble Thomas Aquinas, who was always inclined to silence and always recollected, lived this supernatural doctrine. His whole heart was given up to the love of God while he was pondering and solving the most difficult questions. How could it be otherwise in a great saint destined to remain throughout the centuries the light of theology?

The heavenly gift of wisdom illumined his research, directed his intelligence, and will toward an ever deeper possession of divine truth and life, and this it did although he was engaged in the most diverse studies. Questions seemingly remote from this supreme end are so only for a soul that has not yet reached that height where all is lost in God, the beginning and end of all things. Undoubtedly St. Thomas was raised to the highest degrees of mystical contemplation, and certainly his teaching will not hinder souls in their ascent.

ARTICLE III

MYSTICAL THEOLOGY AND THE DOCTRINE OF ST. THOMAS ON THE EFFICACY OF GRACE

Those who are surprised that we seek the principles of mystical theology in the writings of St. Thomas should consider especially his teaching on the efficacy of grace.

This doctrine, precisely because it is very lofty, is not generally well understood except by speculative theologians and souls that have entered the passive ways. The reason for this is found in the fact that speculative theologians are accustomed to consider everything in relation to God, the universal first cause and Author of salvation. Souls in the passive ways know from experience that in the work of salvation everything comes from God, even our co-operation—in this sense, that we can distinguish therein no part that is exclusively ours and that does not come from the Author of all good.

The expression “no part exclusively ours,” occurs frequently in the works of the fathers and in those of St. Thomas. As we shall see, it clearly expresses his thought; but to grasp all its loftiness and profundity, we shall, first of all, state the less lofty conceptions proposed by certain theologians. It will be to our advantage to understand the efficacy of actual grace, which we need for our conversion, then to resist temptation which at times is violent, so as to merit, to grow in the love of God, to pass through the crucible of the purifications, and to persevere in good until death.

Some theologians thought that the grace, which is profitable to salvation, is called efficacious, not at all because of itself, it leads us gently and mightily to consent to good, but because it is given to us at the moment when God has foreseen that by ourselves alone we would choose to accept it rather than to resist it. The divine prevision of man’s response is what distinguishes efficacious grace from grace that is not efficacious. In other words, this efficacy does not come from the divine will, but from the human will; the grace is efficacious, not at all, because God wills it so, but because man accepts it. According to this idea, it may happen that of two sinners under the same circumstances receiving equal actual graces, one will be converted and the other will remain in his sin. Hence this difference of determination between these two men springs solely from the human will, and not at all from the difference in the divine help which they received.

The same grace, which was only sufficient, and which remained sterile in one, was efficacious in the other, because he himself made it efficacious. If this is the case, evidently the salutary act is called forth by the divine attraction, but the initial distinction separating the just from the sinner does not come from God; it is exclusively ours. And this conception of the efficacy of grace is applied not only to the salutary acts preceding justification, but also to all meritorious acts, even to the last which crowns the work of salvation.

Does such a very human explanation of this divine mystery preserve the grandeur of the mystery? The School of St. Thomas never thought so. Is not free determination the most important part of the work of salvation? This determination is what distinguishes the just from the sinner in the production of every salutary act; every time he avoids sin in the course of his life, every time he triumphs over temptation, or merits and perseveres in good. According to St. Thomas, we cannot admit that this important distinction comes exclusively from us and not at all from God, the Author of salvation. St. Paul says: “For who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?” “Without Me,” says our Lord, “you can do nothing.” In these words the fathers, especially St. Augustine and following him St. Thomas, have seen the affirmation that in the work of our salvation all comes from God, even our co-operation, even the distinction between the just and sinners, so that we cannot find therein a part which is exclusively ours. Moreover, if God were in no way the cause of our choice, He would not have been able to foresee it infallibly from all eternity; for He alone is eternal, and our free acts are future from all eternity only because He decided to produce them in us and with us, or at least to permit them if they are bad.

Other modern theologians have sought to correct the doctrine which we are examining, by saying that grace, followed by consent to good, is called efficacious because it is more adapted (congrua), than simply sufficient grace, to the temperament of the subject who receives it, and to the circumstances of time and place in which he is. Grace thus urges us to give our consent, but the free determination of the latter remains exclusively our work. God’s action inviting us to good is analogous to that of a mother who, when she wishes to do so, can find the best means to persuade her child and to lead him to conduct himself well.

In spite of this slight modification, we can truly say that in this second doctrine as in the preceding the efficacy of grace does not come from the divine will, but from the human Will, and also from our temperament and circumstances. In other words, grace, in this doctrine also, solicits our good consent, but the determination of the latter is exclusively ours. If this were the case, the most important part of the work of salvation would not come from the Author of salvation; it would only have been foreseen by Him.

In reality, according to St. Thomas, the action of God on the will of a converted sinner is infinitely deeper than that of a mother on the heart of her child. The mother's action could grow forever without ever attaining the action of God. Of God alone, Holy Scripture says: "For it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will." He Himself says by the mouth of Ezechiel: "And I will give you a new heart, and put a new spirit within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My spirit in the midst of you; and I will cause you to walk in My commandments, and to keep My judgments, and do them." "As the division of waters, so the heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord: whithersoever He will He shall turn it." And St. Paul asks: "Or who hath first given to him, and recompense shall be made him?" "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy,"
"but the same God, who worketh all in all." "For in Him we live and move and are." "For of Him and by Him and in Him are all things."

After quoting two of these texts from Scripture, St. Thomas remarks: "Some, who do not understand how God can cause in us the movement of our will without prejudice to liberty, have done their best to wrest a different interpretation from these divine words. For them, they mean that God causes in us the will and the act, in as far as He gives us the faculty to will, but not in as far as He makes us will this or that. Origen has understood it thus (Peni Archon, Bk. III). . . . To hold this opinion is manifestly to resist the authority of Holy Scripture. It is said in Isaias (26: 12): Thou hast wrought all our works for us. It is not, therefore, only the faculty of will that we have from God, but the very operation."

The Council of Orange explains these words of Scripture by saying: "God effects in man several blessings without man's co-operation, but man can do no good without the help of God, who enables him to accomplish all his good works. No one has anything of himself except his deceitfulness

and sin. Whatever truth and justice we have in us, we have received from that source whence we should all drink in this life, if we do not wish to faint on the way."

Following in this the doctrine of St. Augustine, expressed in the Council of Orange, St. Thomas teaches that grace is efficacious of itself and not by reason of the consent following it. Let us consider what occurs in the innermost depths of the will of a converted sinner. If God wishes efficaciously that a certain sinner should be converted at a given moment, "this divine will," says St. Thomas, "cannot fail to be accomplished"; as St. Augustine observes: "It is by the grace of God that all who are saved are very surely saved." "If then," continues St. Thomas, "it is in the intention of God, who moves wills, to convert or to justify a certain sinner; this sinner will be infallibly justified according to the expression of Jesus: Everyone that hath heard of the Father and hath learned cometh to Me."

According to St. Thomas, divine grace, which efficaciously inclines us to salutary good, is not, therefore, indifferent or changeable. It is not made efficacious by our foreseen consent; but it moves us surely, powerfully, and gently to follow the way of good rather than that of evil.

Thus in the work of salvation man can do nothing without the help of God, but unfortunately he is sufficient unto himself to fall or to sin. And precisely because sin as such is a deficiency or the privation of a good, it demands for its production only a defectable and deficient cause according to Scripture: "Destruction is thy own, 0 Israel: thy help is only in Me." "God permits this failure to occur, or rather does not prevent it, only because He is sufficiently powerful and good to draw a greater good from it —the manifestation of His mercy or justice."

Accordingly no one who has attained the use of reason is deprived of the efficacious grace necessary for salvation, except for having freely resisted a sufficient grace, a good inspiration which recalled the duty to be accomplished. The sinner thus, places an obstacle in the way of efficacious grace which had been offered in the sufficient help. For example, fruit is offered in the flower, but if hail falls on a tree in blossom, we will never see its fruit. St. Thomas observes: "Only those are deprived of grace, which place in themselves an obstacle to grace. Thus when the sun is shining, if someone closes his eyes and falls over a precipice it is his own fault, even though sunlight is necessary for him to see. . . . On the subject of certain

sinners, we read in Job (21: 14): Who have said to God: Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways. . . . They were enemies of the light."

God is not obliged to remedy our voluntary faults, especially when they are repeated. The truth of the matter is that He often does remedy them, but not always. Therein lies a mystery.

In this sense we understand the profound meaning of the words of the Council of Trent (Sess. VI, chap. 13): "If men do not resist His grace, as God has begun in them the work of salvation, He will pursue its accomplishment by working in them both to will and to accomplish. But he that thinketh himself to stand, let him take heed lest he fall, and let him with fear and trembling work out his salvation." In the same chapter, the Council reminds us that, "the grace of final perseverance can come only from Him who has the power to sustain those who stand, that they may persevere, and to lift up those who have fallen. No one can be absolutely certain of obtaining this final grace, although all should constantly place firm hope in the help of God."

The Church speaks as follows in her liturgy: "Forestall, we beseech Thee, 0 Lord, all our thoughts, words, and actions by Thy holy inspirations and carry them on by the assistance of Thy grace, so that every prayer and work of ours may begin always from Thee and by Thee be happily ended."

As St. Augustine says, "Free will is of itself sufficient for evil but, so far as good is concerned, it does nothing unless aided by all-powerful goodness." Although our resistance to sufficient grace is of ourselves alone, we freely give our cooperation, our consent, to good only in virtue of intrinsically efficacious grace, a new gift of God which produces in us the will and the act. "Without Me you can do nothing," says our Lord; and, on the other hand, the soul united to God says with St. Paul: "I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me;" that is, co-operate in His sanctifying work, labor for eternity.

Some have thought that this doctrine of intrinsically efficacious grace destroys human liberty and contains an absurdity. Far from being absurd, in the opinion of St. Thomas it expresses a sublime mystery: the mystery of God more intimately present to our free will than our free will is to itself.

Grace does not destroy our liberty by its certain efficacy; rather by that very efficacy divine grace moves the free will without doing violence to it. This is the inspired idea of St. Thomas Aquinas when he interprets revelation. "When a cause," he says, "is efficacious to act, the effect follows

upon the cause, not only as to the substance of the effect, but also as to its manner of being, and of being made; when a cause is feeble, on the contrary, it does not succeed in giving to its effect the manner which is in it." It is not capable of leaving its imprint on the effect. The property of powerful agents in the physical, intellectual, and moral order is to imprint by the very force of their action their likeness on their works, on their children, on their disciples. Artistic geniuses are aware of it in themselves, great military leaders experience it. St. Thomas says: "Since the divine will is perfectly efficacious, it not only follows that things happen that God wills to happen, but happen also in the way that He wills from all eternity. God wills some things to happen necessarily, some contingently and freely." With this end in view He has given us free will. And why should He be unable to produce in us and through us even the free manner of our acts? As Sophocles, Dante, and Corneille have their way of touching us and of stirring up our emotions, just so God has His way when He moves our will. St. Thomas states: "Free will is the cause of its own movement, because by his free will man moves himself to act. But it does not of necessity belong to liberty that what is free should be the first cause of itself, as neither for one thing to be cause of another need it be the first cause. God, therefore, is the first cause, who moves both natural and voluntary causes. And just as by moving natural causes He does not prevent their acts being natural, so by moving voluntary causes He does not deprive their actions of being voluntary: but rather is He the cause of this very thing in them; for He operates in each thing according to its own nature." Thus a great master communicates to his disciples not only his knowledge, but his spirit and his manner. Leo XIII says the same thing in the encyclical Libertas. "God," adds St. Thomas, "immutably moves our will because of the perfect efficacy of His power, which cannot fail; but liberty remains because of the nature (and of the unlimited amplitude) of our will (which is ordered to universal good, and which is as a result) indifferent in regard to the particular good which it chooses. Thus in all things, Providence works infallibly, and yet contingent causes produce their effects in a contingent manner, for God moves all things proportionately to the very manner of the nature of each being."

Under the impulse of intrinsically efficacious grace, the will moves itself freely, for it is moved by God in a manner befitting its nature. By nature it has for its object universal, limitless good, conceived by the intellect, which

is infinitely superior to the senses; only the attraction of God seen face to face could invincibly captivate this faculty to will and to love. It enjoys a dominating indifference in regard to every particular good, judged good under one aspect, but insufficient under another. The relation of our will to this object is not necessary; rather our will dominates the attraction of this good. The act is free because it procedes, under the indifference of judgment, from a will, the universal amplitude of which projects beyond the particular good toward which it is inclined. By His efficacious motion God does not change, and even cannot change, this contingent relation of our voluntary act with this object, since the act is specified by this object itself. The divine motion does not do violence to our will, since it exercises itself interiorly according to the natural inclination of our will towards the universal good, an inclination, which comes from God and of which He is the master. To say that liberty remains, is not contradictory; but in all of this we have an infinitely profound mystery analogous to that of the creative act: the mystery of God nearer to His creatures, whose existence He preserves, than they are to themselves.

God moves our liberty fortiter et suaviter. Power and gentleness are so intimately united in efficacious grace that failure to recognize the first is a suppression of the second; it is a failure to see the infinite abyss separating the divine influence from the created influences that exert themselves on our free choice. The beings dearest to us, exercise a great persuasive influence on us. Let us suppose it is continually on the increase. Then let us consider the influence which the greatest of the angels can exercise; and let us remember that God can always create more perfect angels who would exert over us a still greater influence. But all this will never attain the efficacy of divine grace.

Does it follow that efforts and willing are useless? It is quite the contrary. Precisely because good will and holy effort are most important in the work of salvation, they cannot be exclusively our work. Grace is what causes us to make this choice, what makes us struggle against temptation and overcome it. As St. Augustine frequently says, God moves us, not that we should do nothing, but precisely that we should act. And often, if we demand too little of ourselves, this is because we do not count sufficiently on grace, because we do not sufficiently ask for it. If our spiritual life declines to a lower level, and if we are satisfied with an entirely natural life,

this is a consequence of our believing we are alone in acting, forgetting that God is in us and with us, nearer to us than we are to ourselves.

We now come to the foundation of the loftiest mystical theology, that of St. Paul, St. Augustine, Dionysius, St. Bernard, St. Thomas, Tauler, Ruysbroeck, the author of the Imitation, and St. John of the Cross. In the work of salvation, all comes from God, even our co-operation. We cannot glory in contributing a single part, however small, that would be exclusively ours. Man of himself is sufficient for evil; but for good, he can do absolutely nothing without the natural or supernatural help of God. On the other hand, with God and through Him he can achieve the greatest actions: he can co-operate in the salvation of souls, each of which is of more value than the entire material universe; he can make acts of charity, the least of which has greater value than all angelic natures taken together. “But they that hope in the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall take wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.”

In conclusion, we simply quote the masterly passage where Bossuet, in the eighth chapter of his treatise on free will, sums up this doctrine of St. Thomas. “To reconcile God’s decree and His omnipotent action with our free will, we need not attribute to Him a concurrence, (in our action) which is equally ready for anything, and which will become whatever we choose to make of it. Still less is it necessary for Him to await the decision of our will, that He might thereupon form His decree in accordance with our resolutions. Aside from this weak device, which deforms the whole idea of first cause, we need merely consider that the divine will, with its infinite power reaching not only into the essence of all things, but into their every mode of being, is of itself in accord with the whole and entire effect, producing in it whatever we conceive to be in it, because His will ordains that it shall come into being endowed with every property that belongs to it.”

The same chapter continues: “In the creature there is nothing that has being, no matter how little of it, but what has, for that very reason, received from God everything it possesses. And no one may object that the special property of the exercise of free will is that it comes solely from free will itself. This would be true if man’s liberty were a primary and independent liberty and not a liberty, which flows from a higher source. God, who, as first being, is the cause of all being, as first mover must be the cause of all action so that He produces in us the action itself, just as He placed in us the

power to act. And the created action does not cease to be an action because it was produced by God. On the contrary, it is action all the more because God has invested it with being. . . .

"If the power to produce our action in us were attributed to any other but our Maker, it might well be believed that He would do violence to our liberty and by moving it would break so delicate a spring, which He had not made. But God does not have to guard against His action taking anything out of His work, because He produces everything in it down to the last detail. Consequently He produces not only our choice, but also the very freedom that is in our choice. . . . To put freedom in our action is to cause us to act freely; and to accomplish this, is to will that the action should exist; for with God, to accomplish is to will. . . . Thus, in order to understand that God creates our free will in us, we must understand only that He wills us to be free. But He wills not only that we should be free in power, but that we should be free in its exercise. And He wills not only in general that we should exercise our liberty, but that we should exercise it in such and such an act. For He, whose knowledge and will extend to the uttermost detail of things, is not satisfied to will that they exist in general, but descends to what is called such and such, that is, to what is most particular; and all of this is comprised in His decree.

"Thus God from all eternity wills every future exercise of human liberty in so far as it is good and real. What could be more absurd than to say that it is not, because God wills it to be? On the contrary, we must say that it is, because God wills it; and since it happens that we are free in virtue of the decree which wills that we should be free, the result is that we act freely in such and such an act in virtue of the decree which reaches into all this detail."

Therefore absolutely everything in the world of material bodies and of spirits, in their being and their actions, comes from God, with the single exception of evil, which are a privation and a disorder. Evil is permitted by the supreme goodness only because God is powerful enough to draw an even greater good out of it: the striking manifestation of His mercy or justice.

This doctrine praises the glory of God. Often it is not understood, because it is at one and the same time too lofty and too simple. Those who do not attain its loftiness disdain its simplicity. "But the humble of heart enter the depths of God without being disturbed and, remote from the world

and its thoughts, they find life in the loftiness of the works of God." They do not feel their liberty oppressed by the divine force of grace; rather they find in this power deliverance and salvation.

St. Thomas and the greatest mystics who have come after him tell us that this doctrine should lead us to great depths of humility, continual prayer, practical and sublime faith, abandonment in hope, thanksgiving, and intimacy of love.

ARTICLE IV

THE PRACTICAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE DOCTRINE OF ST. THOMAS ON GRACE

St. Thomas, following St. Augustine and opposing Pelagian or semi-Pelagian naturalism, grasped the depth and the height of our Lord's words: "Without Me you can do nothing," and of St. Paul's words: "For it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will." "For who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received?" In the work of salvation we cannot distinguish any part that is exclusively ours; all comes from God, even our free co-operation, which efficacious grace gently and mightily stirs up in us and confirms.

This grace, which is always followed by its effect, is refused to us, as we said, only if we resist the divine, auxilium praeveniens, sufficient grace, in which the efficacious help is already offered to us, as fruit is in the flower. If we destroy the flower, we shall never see the fruit, which the influence of the sun and of the nourishment of the earth would have produced. Now man is sufficient to himself to fall; drawn from nothingness, he is by nature defectible. He is sufficiently assisted by God so that he falls only through his own fault, which thus deprives him of a new help. This is the great mystery of grace. We have elsewhere explained what St. Thomas and his best disciples teach about this mystery.

With him and St. Augustine, we must submit our intelligence before this divine obscurity, and as Bossuet says, "Confess these two graces (sufficient and efficacious), one of which leaves the will without excuse before God, and the other does not permit the will to glory in itself." Is this not in conformity with what our conscience tells us? According to this doctrine, all that is good in us, naturally or supernaturally, has its origin in the Author of all good. Sin alone cannot come from Him, and the Lord allows it to

happen only because He is sufficiently powerful and good, to draw from it a greater good, the manifestation of His mercy or justice.

This teaching of the great doctors of grace lifts our mind to a lofty contemplation of God's action in the innermost depths of our heart. To prove this, we have only to demonstrate that this doctrine should lead those who understand it well to profound humility, to almost continual interior prayer, to the perfection of the theological virtues and of the corresponding gifts of the Holy Ghost. Besides, we find it in the writings of all the great masters of the spiritual life. Considering the importance and the difficulty of the problem, we shall affirm nothing in this article except according to the very words of Scripture, as the greatest doctors explain them.

This doctrine first leads all too profound humility. According to this doctrine man has as his own, something coming exclusively from himself, only his sin, as the Council of Orange declared. He never performs any natural good act without the natural aid of God, or any supernatural good act without a grace which solicits or attracts him, and also efficaciously moves him to the salutary act. As St. Paul says: "Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God."

Even holy souls that have reached a high degree of charity are always in need of an actual grace in order to merit, to advance, to avoid sin, and to persevere in goodness. They should say: "For the thoughts of mortal man are fearful, and our counsels uncertain," "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven . . . and lead us not into temptation." After striving greatly, they should admit: "We are unprofitable servants," for the Lord might have chosen others who would have served Him much better. In all truth we should say, according to the teaching of St. Thomas, that there is no sin committed by another man which I might not commit in the same circumstances by reason of the infirmity of my free will, and of my own weakness, (the Apostle Peter denied his Master three times). And if actually I have not fallen, if I have persevered, this is doubtless because I worked and struggled, but without divine grace I should have done nothing. "Not to us, 0 Lord, not to us; but to Thy name give glory"; "as the potter's clay is in his hand, to fashion and order it . . . so man is in the hand of Him that made him." "Thy hands have made me and formed me"; "Thou hast redeemed us to God, in Thy blood." "If I have not perished, it is because of Thy mercy." "Into Thy hands I commend my spirit." "This," says St. Augustine, "is what

must be believed and said in all piety and truth, so that our confession may be humble and suppliant, and that all may be attributed to God." Such is true humility. "Or what hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?"

The saints, considering their own failures, say to themselves that if such and such a criminal had received all the graces the Lord bestowed on them, he would perhaps have been less unfaithful than they. The sight of the gratuity of the divine predilections confirms them in humility. They recall our Lord's words: "You have not chosen Me: but I have chosen you."

This doctrine leads also to continual intimate prayer, to profound thanksgiving, to the prayer of contemplation.

It leads to intimate prayer; for this is a very secret grace that must be asked. We must ask not only the grace which solicits and excites the soul to good but also that grace which makes us will it, which makes us persevere, which reaches the depths of our heart and of our free will; that grace which moves us in these depths, so that we may be delivered from the concupiscence of the flesh and the eyes, and from the pride of life. God alone saves and snatches us from these enemies of our salvation. At the same time He does not wound our liberty, but establishes it by delivering us from the captivity of these things of earth.

Thus Scripture teaches us to pray: "Have pity on me, 0 Lord, according to Thine infinite mercy. Be propitious to a sinner. Help my unbelief. Create a clean heart in me, and renew a right spirit within me. Convert me, 0 Lord, make me return to Thee, and I shall return. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Give me Thy sweet and mighty grace in order that I may truly accomplish Thy holy will. As St. Augustine says: "Lord, give what Thou dost command, and command what Thou pleasest."

Thus, again the Church prays in the Missal: "Lord, direct towards Thyself our rebellious wills; grant that unbelievers, who are unwilling to believe, may have a will to believe. Apply our hearts to good works. Give us good will. Convert us and draw us strongly to Thyself. Take from us our heart of stone and give us a heart of flesh, a docile and pure heart. Change our wills and incline them toward what is good."

Such is the holy confidence of the prayer of the Church because she is sure that God is not powerless to convert the most hardened sinners. What should a priest do who cannot succeed in converting a dying sinner? Persuaded that God can convert this guilty will, above all the priest will

pray. If, on the contrary, he imagines that God holds this will only from without, by circumstances, good thoughts, good inspirations, which remain external to the consent to salutary goodness, will not the priest himself delay too long in the use of superficial means? Will his prayer possess that holy boldness which we admire in the saints, and which rests on their faith in the potent efficacy of grace?

Likewise prayer should be, in a sense, continual, since our soul needs a new, actual, efficacious grace for every salutary act, for each new merit. With this in mind, we clearly see the profound meaning of our Lord's words: "We ought always to pray, and not to faint." This truth is fully realized only in the mystical life, in which prayer truly becomes, as the fathers say, "the breath of the soul," which hardly ceases any more than that of the body. The soul constantly desires grace, which is like a vivifying breath renewing it and making it produce constantly new acts of love of God.

Such ought to be the prayer of petition. And we ought also to thank God for alI our good actions, since without Him we could have done nothing. This is what makes St. Paul say: "Pray without ceasing. In all things give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you all." "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual canticles, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to God and the Father."

This doctrine of the intrinsic efficacy of grace, also leads directly to the prayer of contemplation, which considers chiefly the profound action of God in us to mortify and to vivify, and which is expressed by the fiat of perfect abandonment. In contemplation we see realized in the intimate depths of souls the words of Scripture: "Thou are great, 0 Lord, forever. . . . For Thou scourgest, and Thou savest: Thou leadest down to hell, and bringest up again." "Thy word, 0 Lord, which healeth all things." To utter a perfect fiat to this intense and hidden work of grace in us, even when it crucifies and seems to destroy all, is the most secret but also the most fruitful co-operation in God's greatest work. It is the prayer of Jesus in Gethsemane and that of the Blessed Virgin at the foot of the cross.

Lastly, this doctrine reminds us that even for prayer efficacious grace is necessary. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity. For we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit Himself asketh for us

with unspeakable groanings. And He that searcheth the hearts, knoweth what the Spirit desireth; because He asketh for the saints according to God." This mystery is verified especially in the mystical union, often obscure and painful, in which the soul learns by experience what great need we have of grace in order to pray, as also to do good. But, says St. John of the Cross, souls that have reached a certain degree of union "obtain from God all that they feel inspired to ask of Him, according to the words of David, 'Delight in the Lord, and He will give thee the request of thy heart' " (Ps. 36: 4). Moreover, every humble, confident, persevering prayer by which we ask what is necessary or useful for our salvation is infallibly efficacious, because our Lord uttered such a promise and because God Himself caused this petition to well up in our hearts. Resolved from all eternity to grant us His benefactions, He leads us to ask them of Him.

This doctrine of the powerful efficacy of grace leads finally to great heights in the practice of the theological virtues. This it does, because it is intimately bound up with the sublime mystery of predestination, the grandeur of which it fully preserves. St. Paul, in the Epistle to the Romans, tells us: "And we know that to them that love God, all things work together unto good, to such as, according to His purpose, are called to be saints. For whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son; that He might be the first-born amongst many brethren. And whom He predestinated, them He also called. And whom He called, them He also justified. And whom He justified, them He also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who is against us?" St. Paul teaches the same doctrine in the Epistle to the Ephesians.

St. Augustine, and St. Thomas have explained these words of St. Paul without lessening their real meaning. Bossuet, their disciple, sums them up with his usual mastery by saying: "I do not deny the goodness of God toward all men, or the means which in His general providence He offers them for their eternal salvation. The Lord does not will that any should perish, but that all should return to penance. But however great His designs may be on everyone, He fixes a certain particular gaze of preference on a number that is known to Him. All those on whom He gazes in this way, weep for their sins and are converted in their time. That is why Peter burst into tears when our Lord looked at him benignly. Peter's repentance was the result of the prayer which Christ had offered for the stability of his faith; for it was necessary, first of all, to rekindle his faith, and then to strengthen it

that it might endure to the end. The same is true of all those whom His Father has given Him in a special manner. Of these He said: ‘All that the Father giveth to Me shall come to Me. . . . . Now this is the will of the Father who sent Me: that of all that He hath given Me, I should lose nothing; but should raise it up again in the last day’ (John 6: 37, 39).

“And why does He make us penetrate these sublime truths? Is it to trouble us, to alarm us, to cast us into despair, to disturb us and make us question whether or not we are of the elect? Far be it from us to indulge in such thoughts, which would make us penetrate the secret counsels of God, explore, so to speak, even into His bosom, and sound the profound abyss of His eternal decrees. The design of our Savior is that, contemplating this secret gaze which He fixes on those whom He knows and whom His Father has given Him by a certain choice, and recognizing that He can lead them to their eternal salvation by means which do not fail, we should thus learn first of all to ask for these means, to unite ourselves to His prayer, to say with Him: ‘Deliver us from evil’ (Matt. 6: 13); or, in the words of the Church: ‘Do not permit us to be separated from Thee. If our will seeks to escape, do not permit it to do so; keep it in Thy hands, change it, and bring it back to Thee.’”

This prayer assumes its full value in the plenitude of the life of faith, which is the mystical life; faith, as practical as sublime, in the wisdom of God, in the holiness of His good pleasure, in His omnipotence, in His sovereign dominion, in the infinite value of the merits of Jesus Christ, and in the infallible efficacy of His prayer.

Faith in the wisdom of God. “0 the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are His judgments, and how unsearchable His ways! . . . Or who hath first given to Him, and recompense shall be made him? For of Him, and by Him, and in Him, are all things: to Him be glory forever. Amen.”

Faith in the holiness of the divine good pleasure. “I confess to Thee, 0 Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones. Yea, Father; for so hath it seemed good in Thy sight.” Jesus spoke in the same manner to the Pharisees: “Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to Me, except the Father, who hath sent Me, draw him; and I will raise him up in the last day.”

Faith in the divine omnipotence. God can convert the most hardened sinners. “The heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord: whithersoever He will He shall turn it.” “For it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will.” “My sheep hear My voice; and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them life everlasting; and they shall not perish forever, and no man shall pluck them out of My hand. That which My Father hath given Me, is greater than all: and no one can snatch them out of the hand of My Father. I and the Father are one.”

Faith in the sovereign dominion of the Creator. “Behold as clay is in the hand of the potter, so are you in My hands, 0 house of Israel.” “Or hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump, to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor? What if God, willing to show His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction, that He might show the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He hath prepared unto glory?”

Faith in the infinite value of the merits and of the prayer of Jesus. “The Father loveth the Son: and He hath given all things into His hands.” “Amen, amen I say unto you: He that believeth in Me, hath everlasting life.” “I have manifested Thy name to the men whom Thou hast given Me out of the world. Thine they were, and to Me Thou gavest them; and they have kept Thy word. . . . I pray for them. . . . Holy Father, keep them in Thy name whom Thou hast given Me; that they may be one, as We also are. . . . While I was with them, I kept them in Thy name. Those whom Thou gavest Me have I kept; and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition, that the Scripture may be fulfilled. . . . I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from evil. . . . And not for them only do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall believe in Me. . . . Father, I will that where I am, they also whom Thou hast given Me may be with Me; that they may see My glory which Thou hast given Me, because Thou hast loved Me before the creation of the world.”

This act of serene and invincible faith in the infinite merits of Christ ravishes the heart of God, who at times allows everything to seem outwardly lost, that He may give His children the opportunity to prove their faith in Him by such an act.

This doctrine of grace leads us also to an entirely supernatural hope composed of confidence in the divine mercy and abandonment to it. The formal motive of hope is, in fact, the infinitely helpful divine mercy (Deus

auxilians). That this virtue of hope may be divine and theological, we must hope in God and not in the power of our free will. “He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool; but he that walketh wisely, he shall be saved.” Considering our weakness, we must “with fear and trembling work out our salvation,” and “he that thinketh himself to stand, let him take heed lest he fall.” But, considering God’s infinitely helpful goodness, we must say to Him: “In Thee, 0 my God, I put my trust; let me not be ashamed.” “Into Thy hands I commend my spirit.” “0 taste, and see that the Lord is sweet; blessed is the man that hopeth in Him.” “Preserve me, 0 Lord, for I have put my trust in Thee.” “In Thee, 0 Lord, have I hoped, let me never be confounded.” “Behold, God is my savior, I will deal confidently, and will not fear: because the Lord is my strength, and my praise, and He is become my salvation.” “I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me.”

Such is the abandonment which Christ wishes us to learn. It has no quietism in it, as Bossuet so well explains. He says: “We must abandon ourselves to the divine goodness. This does not mean that we need not act and work, or that, in opposition to God’s command, we may yield to unconcern or to rash thoughts. Rather, while acting to the best of our ability, we must above all abandon ourselves to God alone for time and for eternity. . . .

“A proud man fears that his salvation will be uncertain unless he keeps it in his own hand, but he is deceived. Can I rely on myself? I feel that my will escapes me at every moment.

If Thou, 0 Lord, didst wish to make me the sole master of my fate, I should decline a power so dangerous to my weakness. Let no one tell me that this doctrine of grace and preference leads good souls to despair. How mad for me to think I can be reassured by being hurled back on myself and delivered up to my inconstancy! To this, 0 my God, I do not consent. I find assurance only in abandoning myself to Thee. And in this abandonment I find even greater trust, for those to whom Thou dost give this confidence in entire abandonment, receive in this gentle impulse the best mark we can have on earth of Thy goodness. Increase this desire in me; and by this means put into my heart the blessed hope of being at last among the chosen number. . . . Heal me and I shall be healed; convert me and I shall be converted.”

In the painful, passive purifications of the spirit, souls are often tempted against hope and are troubled about the mystery of predestination. In this

temptation all created helps fail them, and they must hope heroically against all hope for this single, pure reason, namely, that God is infinitely helpful and does not abandon the just unless they desert Him, that He does not let them be tempted beyond their strength aided by grace, that He sustains them by His all-powerful goodness, as He said to St. Paul: “My grace is sufficient for thee; for power is made perfect in infirmity.” “Gladly, therefore,” says the great Apostle, “will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me. For which cause I please myself in my infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ For when I am weak, then am I powerful.”

We ought in great difficulties to think of this formal motive of hope: God our helper; for He comes efficaciously to our assistance by the grace that urges us to the practice of goodness, and in a gentle and powerful way causes it to be accomplished. “But the salvation of the just is from the Lord, and He is their protector in the time of trouble. And the Lord will help them and deliver them: and He will rescue them from the wicked, and save them, because they have hoped in Him.”

Lastly, this doctrine of the efficacy of grace confirms our charity toward God and souls. This charity is a friendship based on God’s communication to us of the divine life through grace. Therefore the more intimate and efficacious the grace, which is given us, the more we should love God and correspond to His love. “Not as though we had loved God, but because He hath first loved us.” The Master Himself said to His Apostles: “You have not chosen Me: but I have chosen you; and have appointed you, that you should go, and should bring forth fruit: and your fruit should remain: that whatsoever you shall ask of the Father in My name He may give it you.” And in the exercise of the apostolate, because he believed in the potent efficacy of grace, St. Paul wrote: “Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation? or distress? or famine? or nakedness? or danger? or persecution? or the sword? . . . But in all these things we overcome, because of Him that hath loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present . . . nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Christ said to His heavenly Father: “Those whom Thou gayest Me have I kept. . . . Father, I will that where I am, they also whom Thou hast given Me may be with Me. . . . And I have

made known Thy name to them, and will make it known; that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me, may be in them, and I in them."

These words of our Lord are fully realized on earth only in the mystical life, the prelude to the life of heaven. And the great theology of St. Augustine and St. Thomas on grace, thus, reaches the loftiest orthodox mysticism, if care is taken not to lessen its meaning.

No power is gentler than the infallibly efficacious grace of God. It diffuses itself gently in the soul which begins to will; the more the soul wills and the greater its thirst for God; the more it will be enriched. When God becomes more exacting and wishes pure crystal where there has been only sin, then He will give His grace in abundance that the soul may correspond to His demands. He Himself said: "I am come that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly." The purified soul ends by praising the power of God: "The right hand of the Lord hath wrought strength. I shall not die, but live: and shall declare the works of the Lord."

We are not surprised to find this doctrine in the works of the greatest masters of the spiritual life.

St. Bernard says: "Grace is necessary to salvation, free will is equally so; but grace in order to give salvation, free will in order to receive it. . . . Therefore we should not attribute part of the good work to grace, and part to free will. It is performed in its entirety by the common and inseparable action of both; entirely by grace, entirely by free will, but springing completely from the first in the second."

St. Bonaventure is of the same opinion: "Devout souls do not seek to attribute to themselves in the work of salvation some part that does not come from God. They recognize that all issues from divine grace."

Tauler speaks of the efficacy of grace as St. Thomas does.

In The Imitation of Christ we read: "Never esteem thyself to be anything because of thy good works. . . . Of thyself thou always tendest to nothing: speedily art thou cast down, speedily overcome, speedily disordered, speedily undone. Thou hast not whereof to glory, but many things for which thou oughtest to account thyself vile; for thou art much weaker than thou art able to comprehend." "For I am nothing and I knew it not. If I be left to myself, behold I become nothing but mere weakness; but if Thou for an instant look upon me, I am forthwith made strong, and am filled with new joy." "From Me, as from a living fountain, the small and the great, the poor and the rich, do draw the water of life; and they that willingly and freely

serve Me, shall receive grace for grace. . . . Thou oughtest, therefore, to ascribe nothing to thyself, nor attribute goodness unto any man, but give all unto God, without whom man hath nothing. I have given thee all, and My will is to have all again. . . . This is the truth whereby vainglory is put to flight, and if heavenly grace enter in and true charity, there will be no envy or narrowness of heart, neither will self-love busy itself. For divine charity overcometh all things and enlargeth all the powers of the soul." "0 most blessed grace, that makest the poor in spirit rich in virtues. . . . Come Thou down unto me, come and replenish me early with Thy comfort, lest my soul faint for weariness and dryness of mind. . . . This alone and by itself is my strength; this alone giveth advice and help; this is stronger than all enemies, and wiser than all the wise. . . . Without this, what am I but a withered branch and an unprofitable trunk, meet only to be cast away? Let Thy grace, therefore, 0 Lord, always go before and follow me, and make me continually intent on good works." "I am to be praised in all My saints; I am to be blessed above all things, and to be honored in all whom I have thus gloriously exalted and predestined without any merits of their own . . . These all are one through the bond of love. . . . They love Me more than themselves. . . . For being ravished above self and self-love, they are wholly absorbed in the love of Me, in whom also they rest with full fruition."

Whenever St. Teresa touches on the question of grace, her doctrine is similar to that of St. Augustine and St. Thomas. St. John of the Cross always assumes the truth of this doctrine.

St. Francis de Sales states this doctrine in the following terms: "The chains of grace are so powerful, and yet so sweet, that though they attract our heart, they do not shackle our freedom. . . . Our yielding to the impulse of grace is much more the effect of grace than of our own will, and resistance to its inspirations is to be attributed to our will alone. . . . 'If thou didst know the gift of God.'

Good spiritual authors, no matter to what theological school they belong, are led to the same doctrine by the loftiness of the subjects with which they deal.

All the difficulties of the mystery of grace are solved practically by humility. Bossuet says: "Behold a terrible danger for human pride. Man says in his heart: I have my free will. God made me free, and I wish to make myself just. . . . In my free will, which I cannot harmonize with this abandonment to grace, I wish to find something to cling to. Proud foe, do

you wish to reconcile these things, or rather to believe that God reconciles them? He reconciles them in the way He wishes, without releasing you from your action and without ceasing to demand that you attribute to Him all the work of your salvation, for He is the Savior, and He said: ‘I am the Lord; and there is no savior besides Me’ (Is. 43: 11). Believe firmly that Jesus Christ is the Savior, and all difficulties will vanish.”

As is evident in the passages quoted from the writings of St. John of the Cross, this great doctrine of St. Paul, St. Augustine, and St. Thomas, manifestly turns souls toward the loftiest mystical union, which is none other than the fulness of the life of faith. This truth will become clearer in the two following chapters, where we will treat of the nature of Christian perfection and of what constitutes the essence of mystical contemplation.

CHAPTER IV

THE FULL PERFECTION OF CHRISTIAN LIFE

ARTICLE I

CHRISTIAN PERFECTION OR THE BEGINNING OF ETERNAL LIFE

CAN Christian perfection, its nature and conditions, be discussed without in any way lessening its essential sublimity? Is it possible to reach an understanding of the Master's words: "Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect"? If we ask the Apostle St. John this question, he will answer us in Christ's very words, that Christian life, particularly Christian perfection, is the beginning of eternal life.

In the Fourth Gospel, the Savior says on several occasions: "He that believeth in the Son, hath life everlasting." In other words, not only will he have eternal life later on if he perseveres; but he who believes has it already in a sense, because the life of grace, even on earth, is the beginning of eternal life, as St. Thomas states repeatedly. As a seed is defined only by the plant that springs from it, or the aurora by the day that it heralds, so we can conceive the life of grace only by considering, first of all, the life of glory, of which it is the seed. For the same reason, we cannot determine what Christian perfection is without speaking first of eternal life, of which it is the prelude.

We will consider eternal life in the first part of this article; in the second part we shall see how the life of grace on earth is essentially the same as the life of heaven; the same also through charity, which will never cease. We shall also see how the life of grace differs from that of heaven through faith and hope, which must disappear in order to give way to the positive possession of God by vision.

In the following articles, with St. Thomas as our teacher, we will study what in this life principally constitutes Christian perfection, properly so

called; what its relations are with the gifts and the virtues, and with the precepts and counsels. Thus we shall see all that Christian perfection requires.

ETERNAL LIFE IN ITS COMPLETE DEVELOPMENT

"Now this is eternal life: that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." St. John explains this passage by saying: "Dearly beloved, we are now the sons of God; and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like to Him: because we shall see Him as He is." St. Paul says: "We see now through a glass in a dark manner: but then face to face. Now I know in part; but then I shall know even as I am known. We shall see face to face, that is, immediately, such as He is in Himself, God "who inhabiteth light inaccessible" to all natural, created and creatable knowledge.

The Church teaches us expressly that, "the souls of the blessed in heaven have an intuitive and direct vision of the divine essence without the intermediary of any previously known creature. The divine essence manifests itself directly and openly in perfect clarity. The souls of the blessed enjoy it continually and will enjoy it forever. Such is eternal life, to which the "light of glory" must raise us.

We are therefore called to see God not merely by the reflection of His perfections in material creatures, or by His marvelous radiation in the world of pure spirits, but to see Him without any intermediary, more clearly indeed than we see here on earth the people with whom we speak; for God, being entirely spiritual, will be intimately present in our intellect, which He will illumine at the same time that He gives it the power to endure His dazzling splendor.

Between Him and us, there will not be even the intermediary of an idea, for no created idea can represent being as it is in itself, pure, infinitely perfect act, uncreated, eternally subsistent thought, light of life, and source of all truth. And we shall not be able to express our contemplation by any word, even by any interior word. This contemplation, superior to every finite idea, will absorb us in God, and will remain ineffable, just as in this life we lose the gift of speech when the sublime ravishes us. The Deity, such as it is in itself, can be expressed only by the consubstantial Word,

which is the uncreated Word, “the brightness of eternal light, and the unspotted mirror of God’s majesty, and image of His goodness.

By reason of its object, this face to face vision of God infinitely excels the most sublime philosophy, and also the loftiest natural knowledge of the angels. We are called to see all the divine perfections together, identified in their common source, the Deity; to grasp how the tenderest mercy and the most inflexible justice proceed from one and the same infinitely generous and infinitely holy love, love of the supreme good. This good, wishing to communicate itself as much as possible and possessing an incontestable right to be loved above all, thus wonderfully unites justice and mercy in all the works of God. We are called to see how this love, even in its freest good pleasure, is identical with pure wisdom; how in this love there is nothing that is not wise, and in this wisdom nothing that is not converted into love. And we are called to see how this love is identical with the supreme good, loved from all eternity; how divine wisdom is identical with the first truth always known; how all these perfections harmonize and are but one in the very essence of Him who is.

We are called to contemplate the intimate life of God, the Deity itself, absolute purity and sanctity; to lose our gaze in its infinite fecundity, blossoming into the three divine Persons; to see the eternal generation of the Word, “splendor of the Father and figure of His substance”; to gaze in endless rapture upon the ineffable procession of the Holy Ghost, that torrent of spiritual flame, term of the common love of the Father and of the Son, the bond uniting Them eternally in the most absolute diffusion of Themselves.

Who can tell the love and joy that will be born in us of this vision? If we are delighted here below by the reflection of the divine perfections shared by creatures, by the fairy magic of the material world, by the harmony of sounds and colors, by the azure of a cloudless sky above a sunlit sea, which makes us think of the tranquil ocean of being and of the infinite light of divine wisdom; if we are lost in wonderment at the splendors of the world of souls revealed to us by the lives of the saints; what will we feel when we see God, the eternally subsistent flash of wisdom and of love, whence proceeds all the life of creation? We speak of a flash of genius to designate a sudden illumination of the mind. What shall we say of the uncreated light of God? For us it remains hidden only because of its excessive splendor, as too strong a ray of sunlight seems like darkness to the weak eye of an owl.

The joy born of such a vision will be so strong, and absolute a love of God that nothing will ever destroy it or even diminish it. This love, necessarily following the beatific vision of God, the sovereign good, will be absolutely spontaneous, but will no longer be free. The infinite Good, by presenting Himself to us in this way, will quench our insatiable thirst for happiness, and will fill and satisfy the capacity of our power to love, "which will necessarily adhere to Him." Our will, by reason of its nature, will turn toward Him with all its inclination and strength. It will no longer have any energy to suspend its act, which will be ravished from it, in a way, by the infinite attraction of God seen face to face. In regards to all finite good, our will remains free; it can even yield or not yield to the attraction and to the law of God as long as we do not see His infinite goodness directly. But when His glory appears to us, our desires will then be gratified and we will no longer be able not to correspond to His love. "I shall be satisfied when Thy glory shall appear."

This love will be composed of admiration, respect, gratitude, and especially friendship, with simplicity and a depth of intimacy that no human affection can have. It will be a love by which we will rejoice especially that God is God, infinitely holy, just, and merciful; a love by which we will adore all the decrees of His providence in view of His glory, which will radiate in us and through us.

Such, must eternal life be in union with all those who died in charity, and particularly with those whom we have loved in the Lord.

Eternal life, therefore, consists in knowing God as He knows Himself, and in loving Him as He loves Himself. But, if we penetrate more deeply into this matter, we see that this divine knowledge and love are possible only if God, so to speak, deifies us in our very soul. In the natural order, man is capable of intellectual knowledge and of an enlightened love superior to sensible love only because he has a spiritual soul. In like manner we will be capable of a divine knowledge and of a supernatural love only if we have received a participation in the very nature of God, of the Deity; only if our soul, the principle of our intellect and will, has been, in a sense, deified or transformed into God, as iron plunged into the fire is transformed, so to speak, into fire, without ceasing to be iron. The blessed in heaven can share in the essentially divine operations only because they participate in the divine nature, the principle of these operations; only

because they have received this nature from God, somewhat as a son on earth receives his nature from his father.

From all eternity, God the Father necessarily engenders a Son equal to Himself, the Word. To Him He communicates all His nature, without dividing or multiplying it; He gives Him to be “God of God, light of light.” Out of pure goodness, He has willed to have in time other sons, adopted sons, according to a sonship not only moral and figurative, but very real, which makes us truly participate in the divine nature, in its intimate life. “This sonship by adoption,” says St. Thomas, “is thus really a participated likeness of the eternal sonship of the Word.” St. John exclaims: “Behold what manner of charity the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called and should be the sons of God.” We are “born of God”; and St. Peter says that we are “partakers of the divine nature.” “Whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son; that He might be the first-born amongst many brethren.”

Such is the essence of the glory that God reserves for His children: “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him.”

The elect truly belong to the family of God; they enter heaven in the cycle of the Blessed Trinity who dwells in them. The Father engenders His Word in them; the Father and the Son breathe forth love in them. Charity likens them to the Holy Ghost; the beatific vision makes them like the Word, who renders them like the Father of whom He is the image. In each of them the Trinity, known and loved, dwells as in a living tabernacle; and furthermore, they are in the Trinity, at the summit of being, of thought, and of love.

Such is the goal of all Christian life, of all spiritual progress. In it there is no concern for earthly interests, or for the development of our personalities (a poor formula, foolishly repeated by many Christians who forget the true grandeur of their vocation). Revelation tells us we must tend infinitely higher. God has predestined His elect to become conformable to the image of His Son. The world, in its wisdom, rejects this doctrine; its philosophers refuse to listen to it. Then the Lord calls the humble, the poor, the infirm, to share in the riches of His glory: “I confess to Thee, 0 Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones.”

How can we attain so lofty an end as eternal life? Spiritual progress can tend to this end only because it presupposes in us the seed of glory, that is, a supernatural life identical in its essence with eternal life. The seed contained in the acorn could not become an oak unless it had the same nature as the oak, unless it contained the same life in a latent state. A child could not become a man unless he had a rational soul, unless reason were slumbering in him. Similarly a Christian on earth could not become one of the blessed in heaven unless he had already received divine life.

If we wish to understand the nature of the seed contained in the acorn, we must consider this nature in its perfect state in the fully developed oak. In the same way, if we wish to know the life of grace, we must contemplate it in its supreme development; in glory which is its consummation.

Fundamentally the life of grace and the life of glory are the same supernatural life, the same charity, with two differences. Here on earth, God is known only in the obscurity of faith, not in the clarity of vision. In addition, we hope to possess God in an inadmissible manner; but as long as we are on earth, we can lose Him through our own fault.

In spite of these two differences, it is the same life. Our Lord said to the Samaritan woman: “If thou didst know the gift of God. . . . Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again; but he that shall drink of the water that I will give him, shall not thirst forever. But the water that I will give him, shall become in him a fountain of water, springing up into life everlasting.” In the Temple on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus stood and cried in a loud voice: “If any man thirst, let him come to Me, and drink. He that believeth in Me, as the Scripture saith, Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” As St. John adds, He said this of the Spirit, which they should receive who believe in Him. On several occasions Jesus repeats: “He that believeth in the Son, hath life everlasting.” “He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up in the last day.” “The kingdom of God cometh not with observation. Neither shall they say: Behold here, or behold there. For lo, the kingdom of God is within you.” It is hidden in you as the grain of mustard seed; as the leaven that causes the loaf to rise; as the treasure buried in the field.

And how are we to know that we have already received this life which should last forever? St. John expounds the matter for us at length “We know

that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not, abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer. And you know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in himself." "These things I write to you, that you may know that you have eternal life, you who believe in the name of the Son of God."

And in truth, Christ said in His sacerdotal prayer: "Now this is eternal life: that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." Through supernatural faith this knowledge has its beginning; and through living faith, or faith vivified by charity, Christ "dwells in us and we in Him," a statement that St. John himself explains by saying: "God hath given to us eternal life. And this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son, hath life. He that hath not the Son, hath not life."

Since this is true, what does death become for the true Christian? A passage from the supernatural life, which is as yet imperfect to the plenitude of this life. In this sense we must understand our Lord's words: "Amen, amen I say to you: If any man keep My word, he shall not see death forever."

In amazement the Jews answered: "Now we know that Thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and Thou sayest: If any man keep My word, he shall not taste death forever. . . . Whom dost Thou make Thyself?" At the tomb of Lazarus, Christ said: "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in Me, although he be dead, shall live. And everyone that liveth and believeth in Me, shall not die forever." And again to the Jews: "Your fathers did eat manna in the desert and are dead. This is the bread that came down from heaven. . . . He that eateth this bread shall live forever."

The liturgy expresses the same thought in the mass for the dead: "For Thy faithful, 0 Lord, life is changed, not lost."

Sanctifying grace, received in the essence of the soul, is, therefore, by its nature imperishable. It should last forever and blossom into eternal life. Moreover, among the theological virtues is one, charity, which ought not to disappear. "Charity never falleth away," says St. Paul. . . ."And now there remains faith, hope and charity, these three: but the greatest of these is charity." Indeed some saints on earth have a far greater degree of charity than certain of the blessed in heaven, but without having as much continuity in the act of love. St. John while on earth had a degree of charity superior to that possessed by the soul of a little child, who died immediately after

baptism: The gifts of the Holy Ghost also subsist in heaven. The life of grace is therefore the same as that of the blessed in heaven.

True, we do not attain God in the clarity of vision, yet it is He that our faith attains. The grace of faith makes us adhere to the uncreated, revealing Truth. We believe in God's word, not in that of St. Peter or of St. Paul, and this word reveals to us "the deep things of God." Our faith is thus "the substance (or the principle, the seed) of things to be hoped for," which we shall contemplate in heaven. This faith, in spite of its obscurity, infinitely surpasses the keenest natural intuitions and even the most sublime natural knowledge of the loftiest angel. St. Paul declares: "Though we or an angel from heaven, preach a gospel to you, besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema."

So long as hope has not given place to the definitive possession of God, the supernatural life of grace and charity can be lost, but solely because we can grow weak and fail to co-operate. Sanctifying grace, considered in itself, and the charity which is in us are of themselves incorruptible, like living water that would always remain pure, unless the vase containing it should happen to break. "For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts. . . . But we have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency may be of the power of God, and not of us." We can, alas, lose charity, because of the fickleness of our free will; but, be our weakness what it may, the love of charity considered in itself "is strong as death, jealousy as hard as hell, the lamps thereof are fire and flames. Many waters cannot quench charity; neither can the floods drown it." It is this love which daily snatches souls from the demon, from the seductions of the world; it is this love which has triumphed over persecutions and the most frightful torments. If we allow ourselves to be penetrated by it, we are invincible.

This love of charity is the same as that which subsists in heaven. It presupposes that we are born, "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God"; that we are not only the servants of God, but His children and friends according to an adopted sonship, which is as real as grace. But the reality of grace differs from that of the flesh, since grace is given to us to last forever.

We now see clearly why revelation teaches us that the Blessed Trinity dwells in every soul in the state of grace as in a temple where it is known and lovedjBut when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will teach you all

truth." "Know you not," says St. Paul to the Corinthians, "that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" "Or know you not, that your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost, who is in you, whom you have from God; and you are not your own?" "For you are the temple of the living God."

This indwelling of the Blessed Trinity in us is attributed to the Holy Ghost because charity, which will remain in heaven, likens us more particularly to the Spirit of love; whereas faith, which will be replaced by vision, likens us as yet only imperfectly to the Word, the figure of the Father and splendor of His substance. The Blessed Trinity is none the less entirely in us, as the life of our life, the soul of our soul; occasionally it makes itself felt by us especially by the gift of wisdom, and thus prepares us in the obscurity of faith for the life of heaven.

"Eternal life begun," says Bossuet, "consists in knowing by faith (a tender and affectionate knowledge which inclines the soul to love); and eternal life consummated consists in seeing openly and face to face. Jesus Christ gives us both the one and the other because He merits this life for us, and is its principle in all the members whom He animates."

Such is the life of grace and of charity; it is infinitely superior to genius, to the gift of miracles, to the knowledge of the angels. In particular such should be Christian perfection, the true nature and conditions of which we can now more easily determine without lessening them. We have already seen the nature of conformity to the only Son of God, a progressive conformity that should render us like Christ Jesus in His hidden, apostolic, and suffering life, before making us share in His glorious life, the seed of which we already possess: "He that believeth in the Son, hath life everlasting."

We shall now note two important consequences of this doctrine.

1) Since sanctifying grace is the beginning of eternal life, and since every just soul enjoys habitual union with the Blessed Trinity dwelling in it, the mystical union, or the actual, intimate, and almost continual union with God, such as is found here on earth in holy souls, appears as the culminating point on earth of the development of the grace of the virtues and of the gifts, and as the normal, even though rather infrequent, prelude to the life of heaven. This mystical union belongs, in fact, to the order of sanctifying grace; it proceeds essentially from "the grace of the virtues and of the gifts" and not from graces gratis datae, which are transitory and in a

sense exterior (as miracles and prophecy) and which may accompany it. The mystical life is Christian life, which has, so to speak, become conscious of itself. It does not give us the absolute certainty that we are in the state of grace, a certitude which, according to the Council of Trent, would presuppose a special revelation, but as St. Paul says: “The Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit, that we are the sons of God.” He makes us know this, observes St. Thomas, “by the filial love which He produces in us.”

2) As the life of grace is essentially ordained to that of glory, the normal, although in fact quite rare, summit of its development, should be a very perfect disposition to receive the light of glory immediately after death without passing through purgatory; for it is only through our own fault that we will be detained in that place of expiation, where the soul can no longer merit. Now this very perfect disposition to immediate glorification can be nothing other than an intense charity, coupled with the ardent desire of the beatific vision, such as we find them particularly in the transforming union, after the painful passive purifications which have delivered the soul from its blemishes. Since nothing unclean can enter heaven, in principle a soul must undergo these passive purifications at least in a measure before death while meriting and progressing, or after death without meriting or progressing.64

These consequences, to which we will return, disclose the grandeur of the Christian perfection which can be realized on earth, and they contain the loftiest and most practical teaching.

ARTICLE II

CHRISTIAN PERFECTION CONSISTS ESPECIALLY IN CHARITY

In our treatment of Christian perfection, we have considered the end toward which it is essentially ordained, and from this point of view we have defined it as the beginning of eternal life in our souls, or eternal life begun in the obscurity of faith. Perfection in this life is the development of grace, which has been defined as the seed of glory. Of the three theological virtues that we possess, one, charity, should endure forever.

With St. Thomas Aquinas as our guide, we must now consider in what Christian perfection especially and chiefly consists here on earth; what its

relations are with the virtues and gifts of the Holy Ghost, and with the precepts and the counsels.

We shall see that Christian perfection consists especially in charity: primarily in charity towards God; and secondarily in charity toward our neighbor. We will then study the charity of the perfect in contrast with that of beginners and of proficient's, and shall see what are the degrees of perfect charity, even to heroism and sanctity. This will lead us to a consideraion of the relations of the charity of the perfect with the other virtues, with the passive purifications of the soul, and with the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which are the principles of contemplation. By this method we shall clearly see the difficulty and grandeur of evangelical perfection considered in all its loftiness, as it is proposed to us by our Lord in the eight beatitudes at the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount. In the second place, we will treat of the relations of perfection, thus defined with the precept of love and with the counsels; and lastly, we shall see in what varying degrees the obligation to tend to perfection binds all Christians, whether clerics, religious, or seculars. This is, with several additions, the order followed by St. Thomas in his exposition of the subject.

ERRONEOUS OR INCOMPLETE DOCTRINES ON THE ESSENCE OF PERFECTION

To solve the question as to what especially constitutes Christian perfection, St. Thomas asks, by way of objection, whether it consists mainly in wisdom, or in fortitude, or in patience, or in the aggregate of the virtues. Such different conceptions do, in fact, present themselves more or less explicitly to the mind.

The Greek thinkers considered that perfection lay especially in wisdom, so much esteemed by the philosopher; in that higher view of all things viewed in their first cause and last end, a view which perceives the harmony of the universe and should direct our whole life.

Today theosophists make perfection consist in a "consciousness of our divine identity," in the intuition of our divinity. Theosophy presupposes pantheism; it is the radical negation of the supernatural order and of all Christian dogmas, although it often preserves the terms of Christianity while giving them an entirely different meaning. It is a very perfidious imitation and corruption of our asceticism and mysticism.

Some Christians would be inclined to say that perfection consists principally in contemplation, which has its origin in the gift of wisdom. To prove their contention they would cite St. Paul's text: "In malice be children, and in sense be perfect." "We speak wisdom among the perfect. . . . The spiritual man judgeth all things. . . . We have the mind of Christ." Reading these inspired texts in too natural and too hasty manner, some will perhaps expect to reach perfection rapidly by the assiduous perusal of the great mystics without, however, sufficiently concerning themselves with the practice of the virtues, which these authors recommend, and also without keeping clearly in mind the fact that true contemplation must be entirely penetrated by supernatural charity and forgetfulness of self.

From a lower point of view, some might even think that the study of theology and of its related sciences is the most important thing in the life of the priest, of the apostle, because he must fight against error and illumine minds. One might thus, be led to consider practically as secondary in a sacerdotal and apostolic life the celebration of mass and union with God; yet this union is the very soul of the apostolate. Without being actually aware of it, how many make perfection consist in what they call the full development of their personality. They seek it chiefly in a broad, nicely balanced human culture that is "well informed" on actual problems, and careful to grasp those phases of Christianity which are most attractive to a lofty nature. But they have only a superficial knowledge of it, and they are given up to a practical naturalism devoid of any vivifying influence on souls. Those among them, who, in the course of time, are deeply touched by the grace of God, perceive their peculiar mistake and understand that to build on the intellect alone is to build on sand, as St. Thomas says when commenting on our Lord's expression, "like a foolish man that built his house upon the sand." Unless vivified by the love of God, "knowledge puffeth up," says St. Paul, "but charity edifieth." This it does because it makes us live not for ourselves, as he does who seeks only the full development of his own personality, but for God: "Charity, properly speaking, makes us tend to God, by uniting our affections to Him, so that we live, not for ourselves, but for God.

Another equally imperfect tendency is opposed to this ultra-intellectualism. Natures inclined to action are by this very tendency, led to make perfection consist chiefly of outward activity, in fortitude, or the courage that must be shown in such activity, or in patience when

circumstances are unfavorable. For the heroes of antiquity, the perfect man is first and foremost the strong, the brave man. If this conception is transposed into the supernatural order, St. James' words will be quoted: "Patience hath a perfect work." This is, in fact, the great virtue which demonstrates the sanctity of the martyr. But this patience is inspired and controlled by a higher virtue.

According to an analogous tendency, some might be led to make perfection consist especially in austerity, fasting, penitential practices; from this point of view, the most austere religious orders would be most perfect. A certain love of austerity, not unmixed with pride, such as we find in the Jansenists, might thus be developed, which would then become false zeal and bitterness. Charity would be sacrificed to it, and virtue would be made to consist in what is hard rather than in what is good and in the order willed by God. This error would confound the means with the end, or even invert the order of the means to the end, which is union with God. Austerity ought to be proportioned to this end; it is not the end. The same must be said of humility, which prostrates us before God that we may with docility receive His influence, which should lift us up to Him.

Others might be led to make perfection consist especially in the interior and exterior worship due to God, in acts of the virtue of religion, in the faithful accomplishment of exercises of piety, and in the devotion which animates them. This opinion approaches the truth; yet this view does not sufficiently discern the superiority of the theological virtues which, more than the others, unite us to God because they are immediately specified by Him. The virtue of religion is inferior to them because it is immediately concerned not with God Himself but with the worship due Him. From this point of view, one might perhaps be more attentive to worship and to the liturgy than to God Himself; to the figures than to the reality; to the manner of reciting an Our Father or a Gloria than to the sublime meaning of these prayers. The service of God would take precedence over the love of God.

Others, although few in number, might be tempted to see perfection in the solitary life, especially if the soul is there favored with visions and revelations. Aristotle says in the first book of his Politica: "He who lives in solitude and no longer communicates with men, is either a beast or a god." And the Holy Ghost Himself, by the mouth of the prophet Osee, says of the chosen people, the figure of the interior soul: "I will allure her, and will lead her into the wilderness: and I will speak to her heart." But does it follow

that love of solitude is the essence of perfection? If this were true, how could fervent Christians who are detained in the world by their duties attain perfection? What of the apostles and priests consecrated to the ministry, who cannot withdraw to a Thebaid? St. Thomas believes that, “solitude, like poverty, is not the essence of perfection, but a means thereto.”

St. Francis de Sales says: “Everyone paints devotion according to his own passion and fancy. He that is addicted to fasting, thinks himself very devout if he fasts, though his heart be at the same time full of rancor. . . . Another accounts himself devout for reciting daily a multiplicity of prayers, though he immediately afterwards utters the most disagreeable, arrogant, and injurious words amongst his domestics and neighbors. Another cheerfully draws alms out of his purse to relieve the poor, but cannot draw meekness out of his heart to forgive his enemies. Another readily forgives his enemies, but never satisfies his creditors, but by constraint. These, by some, are esteemed devout, when, in reality, they are by no means so.” Each one is inclined to judge according to his individual aptitude and tastes, and then to seek a justification of his views.

To avoid this fault, some make perfection consist in the ensemble of the Christian virtues, and they invoke St. Paul’s words: “Put you on the armor of God that you may be able to stand against the deceits of the devil . . . that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and to stand in all things perfect.” It is certain that all the Christian virtues are necessary for evangelical perfection: faith, hope, charity, and the moral virtues, among which the most important is the virtue of religion, which is justice in regard to God. But all these virtues are regulated like the functions of an organism. Is there not one among them which dominates all the others, which inspires them, commands them, animates or informs them, and makes their efforts converge toward one supreme end? And is it not in this directing virtue that perfection especially consists? Therefore, must not the other virtues be subordinated to this directing virtue?

TRUE SOLUTION: PERFECTION CONSISTS CHIEFLY IN CHARITY

To solve the question thus proposed, we will consider the teaching of Scripture, and then that of theology.

St. Paul teaches, and all Christian tradition follows him: “Put ye on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, the bowels of mercy,

benignity, humility, modesty, patience: bearing with one another. . . . But above all these things have charity, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of Christ rejoice in your hearts, wherein also you are called in one body." It is this virtue of charity which corresponds to the two greatest precepts, which are the end of all the others and of the counsels: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind: and thy neighbor as thyself."

St. Paul is so firmly convinced of this superiority of charity over all the other virtues, over the gifts, and over graces gratuitously bestowed, that he writes: "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And if I should have prophecy and should know all mysteries, and all knowledge, and if I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. I do not fulfill the first commandment of God; I do not conform my will to His; I remain turned away from Him.

Moreover, charity in a way implies all the virtues which are subordinated to it, and which appear as so many modalities or aspects of the love of God. This is what St. Paul says in the same epistle: "Charity is patient, is kind: charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely; is not puffed up; is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." To this we must add with the great Apostle: "Charity never falleth away: whether prophecies shall be made void, or tongues shall cease, or knowledge shall be destroyed, for we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away. . . . We see now through a glass in a dark manner; but then face to face. Now I know in part; but then I shall know even as I am known. And now there remain faith, hope, and charity, these three: but the greatest of these is charity." It will subsist eternally, when faith and hope shall have disappeared in order to give way to the vision and the definitive possession of God. In addition, according to St. Paul, in the measure with which we love God, we know Him with that sweet knowledge, which is divine wisdom: "Being rooted and founded in charity, you may be able to comprehend with all the saints,

what is the breadth, and length, and height, and depth: to know also the charity of Christ, which surpasseth all knowledge, that you may be filled unto all the fulness of God." Finally, St. Paul says, on several occasions, that by charity we become the temples of the Holy Ghost.

The Apostle St. John teaches the same doctrine: "God is charity: and he that abideth in charity, abideth in God, and God in him." "He that loveth not, knoweth not God: for God is charity." "We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not, abideth in death."

St. Peter expresses the same thought: "But before all things have a constant mutual charity among yourselves: for charity covereth a multitude of sins." Our Lord Himself said of Magdalen: "Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much."

The full value of this teaching of Holy Scripture, commented on by the fathers, is brought home to us through the clarifying light of theology. St. Thomas proves that Christian perfection consists especially in charity: "A thing is said to be perfect in so far as it attains its proper end, which is the ultimate perfection thereof." Take for example, the soldier who knows how to fight, the physician who knows how to heal, and the learned teacher who has the art of communicating his knowledge. We must not, however, confound these particular ends of the soldier, the doctor, and the teacher with the universal end of man and of the Christian. "Now," continues St. Thomas, "it is charity that unites us to God, who is the last end of the human mind, since he that abideth in charity abideth in God, and God in him (I John 4: 16). Therefore the perfection of the Christian life consists chiefly in charity."

Farther on, the holy doctor adds: "Perfection is said to consist in a thing in two ways: in one way, primarily and essentially; in another, secondarily and accidentally. Primarily and essentially the perfection of the Christian life consists in charity; principally as to the love of God, secondarily as to the love of our neighbor, both of which are the matter of the chief commandments of the divine law. . . . Now the love of God and of our neighbor is not commanded according to a measure, so that what is in excess of the measure be a matter of counsel. We shall return later to the question of the counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience, but it is clear even now that they are subordinated to charity. No less certainly the first object of this theological virtue is God Himself. Our neighbor is the

secondary object of it, and he must be loved for the sake of God, whom he is to glorify eternally with us by participating in His beatitude.

Charity thus conceived is truly “the bond of perfection,” as St. Paul says, because if man is rendered perfect by all the virtues, charity unites them all, inspires them, rules them, animates them, or informs them, and assures their perseverance by making their acts converge toward the last end, toward God loved above all. Charity not only binds us to God, but, in a sense, it also binds all the virtues, and makes them all one.

In addition, because charity unites us to our last end, it cannot co-exist with mortal sin, which turns us away from that end. Therefore charity is inseparable from the state of grace, or of divine life, while faith and hope can be found in a sinful soul in a state of mortal sin. This is the explanation of St. Paul’s statement: “If I should have all faith so that I could remove mountians, and haxe not charity, I am nothing.” Without charity we abide in death, says St. John. This also explains St. Peter’s words: “Charity covers a multitude of sins.”

Lastly, since charity has none of the imperfections of faith and of hope, it will subsist eternally; even here on earth charity attains God directly, and that is why it makes us the temples of the Holy Ghost. Hence perfection consists especially in charity. Not only does it assemble all our powers, inspire our patience and perseverance, but it also unites souls and leads them to unity in truth.

THE OBJECTION OF INTELLECTUALS: WHY IS CHARITY SUPERIOR TO OUR KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

Some people, especially intellectuals, will offer an objection to this traditional doctrine. Is not the intellect, they will say, man’s first faculty, the one that directs all the others, that primarily distinguishes us from animals? Must we not conclude that the perfection of man lies especially in the intellectual knowledge he can have of all things considered in their beginning and their end; and therefore, that the perfection of man lies in the knowledge of God, the supreme rule of human life?

St. Thomas has certainly not failed to recognize this aspect of the problem of perfection. He himself admits that the intellect is superior to the will which it directs. The intellect has, in fact, a simpler, more absolute, more universal object, being in all its universality and consequently all

being; the will, on the other hand, has a more restricted object, the good, which is a modality of being, and which in everything is the perfection that renders it desirable. As good supposes being, the will presupposes the intellect and is directed by it. It is, then, by the intellect, the highest of his faculties, that man differs specifically from animals.

St. Thomas also admits that in heaven our blessedness will consist essentially in the beatific vision, in the intellectual and immediate vision of the divine essence; for it is chiefly by this vision that we will take possession of God for eternity. Beatific love will be only the necessary consequence of this immediate knowledge of the sovereign good. As the properties of an object spring from its essence, our immutable love of God and the joy of possessing Him will necessarily follow the beatific vision, which will thus be the essence of our beatitude.

The Angelic Doctor could not better affirm the superiority of the intellect over the will, in principle, and in the perfect light of heaven. Why does he now tell us that Christian perfection in this life consists especially in charity, which is a virtue of the will, and not in faith, or in the gift of wisdom, or in contemplation, all of which belong to the intellect?

He himself has given us a profound answer to this question and an answer of prime importance in ascetical and mystical theology. He tells us in substance that although one faculty may by its very nature be superior to another, as sight is to hearing, it is possible that an act of the second may be superior to an act of the first, as the hearing of a sublime and a rare symphony is of a higher order than the sight of an ordinary color. Thus, although the intellect by its very nature (simpliciter) may be superior to the will which it directs, because it has a simpler, more absolute, more universal object, yet in certain circumstances (secundum quid) and with relation to God, the intellect in this life remains inferior to the will; in other words, here on earth the love of God is more perfect than the knowledge of God; while it is better to know inferior things than to love them. A profound observation on which one cannot meditate is too much.

And whence comes this superiority of the love of God over the knowledge we have of Him on earth? “The action of the intellect consists in this,” says St. Thomas, “that the idea of the thing understood is in the one who understands; while the act of the will consists in this—that the will is inclined to the thing itself as existing in itself. And therefore the Philosopher says (Metaph. VI) that good and evil, which are objects of the

will, are in things, but truth and error, which are objects of the intellect, are in the mind." It follows that in this life our knowledge of God is inferior to the love of God, since, as the Angelic Doctor says, in order to know God we, in a way, draw Him to us, and in order to represent Him to ourselves we impose on Him the bounds of our limited ideas. On the other hand, when we love Him, we raise ourselves toward Him, such as He is in Himself.

It is better, therefore, to love God than to know Him, although love always presupposes certain knowledge and is directed by it. On the other hand, it is better to know inferior things than to love them. By knowing them we raise them, in a way, to our intelligence; whereas by loving them, we stoop toward them, and we might become subservient to them as the miser is to his treasure. It is better to know the properties of gold than to love it. This is one of the principal doctrines of the tract on man left us by St. Thomas.

The holy doctor repeats this teaching in the tract on charity when he asks: "Whether God can be loved immediately in this life?" He answers: "Knowledge of God, through being mediate, is said to be enigmatic, and falls away in heaven. . . . But charity does not fall away. . . . Therefore, the charity of the way adheres to God immediately. The reason for this is that the act of a cognitive power is completed by the thing known being in the knower, whereas the act of an appetitive power consists in the appetite being inclined toward the thing itself. . . . We must assert that to love, which is an act of the appetitive power, even in this state of life, tends to God first, and flows on from Him to other things, and in this sense charity loves God immediately, and other things through God." This love should extend to our neighbor, who should be loved for the love of our common Father. "For knowledge begins from creatures, tends to God, and love begins with God as the last end, and passes on to creatures."

By this we see the superiority of charity as compared with faith and hope. "But faith and hope attain God indeed in so far as we derive from Him the knowledge of truth or the acquisition of good, whereas charity attains God Himself that it may rest in Him, but not that something may accrue to us from Him. Hence charity is more excellent than faith or hope, and consequently, than all the other virtues, which have not God directly for their object. In this way it is explained that charity, unlike faith and hope, is inseparable from the state of grace and from the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity in us: "He that abideth in charity abideth in God, and God in him."

In virtue of the same principle enunciated by St. Thomas, we see again that charity is superior to all knowledge in this life, even to contemplation, which proceeds from the gift of wisdom. This quasi-experimental knowledge of God also imposes on Him, in fact, the limits of our ideas, and it draws its savor from the very love which inspires it. It is charity that establishes in us a sympathy with divine things, which are thereby rendered desirable. The gifts of the Holy Ghost thus, find their remote rule in the theological virtues; they are ruled immediately by divine inspirations according to a superhuman mode, and from this point of view they add a new perfection to the theological virtues. Nevertheless they remain subordinated to them by nature, and their fruits are the very fruits of charity —joy and peace.

All this shows us the profound meaning of St. Paul's expression, "Charity is the bond of perfection." Not only does charity unite us to God more than do the other virtues, but it unites them all by inspiring them, and by ordering all their acts to a final end, which is its own object, to God loved above all. Therefore it is called the mother of all virtues. With this interpretation in mind, St. Augustine could say: "Love, and do what you will." And indeed you may, love the Lord in very truth, more than yourself and above all things. How can we love Him unless we observe His commandments the first of which, that of love, is the beginning and end of all the others?

We must conclude with all theologians that the perfection of Christian life consists especially in charity, in an active charity, which actually unites us to God, and is fruitful in every type of good work. This virtue should, without a doubt, hold the first place in our souls.

PERFECTION IS A PLENITUDE

From what we have just said, must we conclude that the other virtues, important as they are, such as faith, hope, the virtue of religion, prudence, justice, fortitude, patience, temperance, mildness, and humility, do not contribute toward the essence of perfection, and belong to it only accidentally as instruments, or secondary means? Some theologians have thought so. We believe, however, with Father Passerini, O.P., who among Thomists has most profoundly commented on the article of St. Thomas, which we are now explaining, that such is not the thought of the holy

doctor. St. Thomas himself says: “Primarily and essentially the perfection of the Christian life consists in charity, principally as to the love of God, secondarily as to the love of our neighbor, both of which are the matter of the thief commandments of the divine law. . . . Secondarily and instrumentally, however, perfection consists in the observance of the counsels. . . . For the commandments, other than the precepts of charity, are directed to the removal of things contrary to charity, with which, namely, charity is incompatible, whereas the counsels are directed to the removal of things that hinder the act of charity, and yet are not contrary to charity.” it follows, as Passerini shows, that perfection consists essentially not in charity alone, but also in the acts of the other virtues, which are of precept, and which are ordered by charity. Thus the acts of faith, hope, religion, and prayer, attendance at mass, and reception of holy communion, belong to the very essence of perfection, which is a plenitude. To use St. Paul’s word, charity is the bond of this plenitude. We can, therefore, truthfully say with St. Thomas, that perfection consists particularly in charity, and principally in the love of God. Just so, the body and soul constitute the very essence of man, although this essence is chiefly constituted by the rational soul, which distinguishes man from animals. Such is the place of charity in the Christian life. St. Thomas rightly says: “Christian life consists chiefly in charity, which unites the soul to God.” Unlike faith and hope, and charity absolutely excludes mortal sin, and requires the state of grace or of life.

Does it follow that every soul in the state of grace is perfect? As yet it has perfection only in the broad sense of the term (perfectio substantialis), which excludes mortal sin; but not for that reason alone has it perfection, called (perfectio simpliciter), which ascetical and mystical theology speak of and which interior souls, especially those consecrated to God in the religious state, aspire to.

In the following article we shall see in what this perfection, properly, so called, consists—the perfection of charity, or the charity of the perfect, in contradistinction to that of beginners and to that of proficients. But already we catch a glimpse of the inexpressible grandeur of charity even in the soul that has just been snatched from mortal sin, and that is beginning to walk in the way of perfection. This soul has truly passed from death to life, to the life which ought never to end.

ARTICLE III

THE FULL PERFECTION OF CHARITY PRESUPPOSES THE PASSIVE PURIFICATION OF THE SENSES AND OF THE SPIRIT

We have seen that Christian perfection consists chiefly in charity. Quite evidently, the possession of this virtue, the state of grace, is not sufficient for the attainment of perfection, properly so called, which ascetical and mystical theology speaks of and which all interior souls, particularly those consecrated to God in the religious state, aspire to. “Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect,” says St. Paul, “but I follow after, if I may by any means apprehend.” This perfection consists precisely in the charity of the perfect, which is superior to the charity of beginners and of souls that are making progress. In this article we are going to treat of this charity of the perfect, and we will consider it both in its essence, in its integrity, or its normal plenitude.

We are concerned by the summit of charity in its normal development, the fundamental law of which, quite different from that of our fallen nature, is the law of grace, which regenerates us progressively, and the consummation of which is eternal life.

All spiritual writers admit three phases in this development of charity: (1) That of beginners whose main effort is strife against sin. For this reason, it is called the purgative way. (2) That of those who are making progress in the virtues by the light of faith and of contemplation. It is often called the illuminative way. (3) That of the perfect, who live especially in union with God through charity. It is called the unitive way. These three degrees constitute the infancy, adolescence, and adult age of the spiritual life.

These general terms are commonly accepted, but they have not exactly the same meaning for all theologians. Beginning in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a number of authors have admitted two unitive ways; the one ordinary and ascetical, the other called “extraordinary,” passive, and mystical, which cannot be reached without a special vocation. From this point of view, souls can generally be perfect, and even reach the lofty perfection required for beatification, without having received any mystical grace. Others maintain, according to the traditional doctrine, that there is only one unitive way, and that its full, normal development is the perfect mystical union, or the transforming union. In their opinion, this way belongs in its essential quality to the order of sanctifying grace, or “the

grace of the virtues and of the gifts," and not to the lower order of graces gratis datae, such as the gift of prophecy or that of miracles, which sometimes accompany it. We touched on this question when we discussed the relations between ascetical and mystical theology.

The authors of whom we have just spoken appeal to tradition previous to the seventeenth century, and in particular to St. John of the Cross. Therefore we must examine closely his doctrine on this subject, so that we may see how it should be interpreted and what its relations are with earlier tradition.

I. DOCTRINE OF ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS ON THE PERFECTION OF CHARITY

This great saint speaks of the three ways, purgative, illuminative, and unitive, in several of his works, notably in The Ascent of Mount Carmel (Bk. I, chap. 1), The Dark Night of the Soul (Bk. I, chaps. 1, 14), and The Spiritual Canticle (stanzas 1, 4, 6, 22, 26). According to him the illuminative way, or the way of souls that are making progress, begins with the cessation of meditation and the beginning of infused or mystical contemplation. Treating of this contemplation, he says: "Souls begin to enter this dark night (passive) when God Himself disengages them little by little from the state of beginners, that in which one meditates, and introduces them into the state of proficient's, which is that of contemplatives. They must pass through this way to become perfect, that is, to attain the divine union of the soul with God."

This ascent is not without suffering, as St. John of the Cross warns us in The Ascent of Mount Carmel: "To attain the divine light and the perfect union of the love of God—I speak of what can be realized in this life—the soul must pass through the dark night. . . . Ordinarily, when chosen souls strive to attain this state of perfection, they encounter such darkness, endure such severe physical and moral sufferings, that human science is unable to penetrate them, and human experience to represent them."

Not without difficulty does one succeed in completely conquering selfishness, sensuality, laziness, impatience, envy, unjust judgment, impulses of nature, natural haste, self-love, foolish pretensions, and also self-seeking in piety, the immoderate desire for sensible consolations, intellectual and spiritual pride; in a word, all that is opposed to the spirit of faith and confidence in God; that one may succeed in loving God perfectly with all one's heart, soul, strength, and mind, and one's neighbor (enemies

are included under this title) as oneself; in short, to remain firm and patient and to persevere in charity, whatever may happen, when the expression of the Apostle is verified, that “all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution.”

To reach this perfection, the mortification or active purification of the senses and of the spirit is not all that is necessary: “In spite of all its generosity, the soul cannot completely purify itself, so that it will be even slightly fit for divine union in the perfection of love. God Himself must put His hand to the work, and purify the soul in this fire that is hidden from it, according to the mode and manner, which we shall explain in what follows.”

First of all, the soul is weaned from sensible consolations, which at a certain time have their value, but which become an obstacle when they are sought for their own sake; hence the necessity of the passive purification of the senses, which establishes the soul in sensible aridity and leads it to a spiritual life, which is much more detached from the senses, the imagination, and reasoning. By the gifts of the Holy Ghost, the soul at this time receives an intuitive knowledge, which despite a very painful darkness initiates it profoundly into the things of God. Occasionally it makes the soul penetrate them more deeply in one instant than months and years of meditation would have done. Resistance to temptations, which frequently present themselves in this night of the senses, requires heroic acts of chastity and patience. This period has justly been compared to that of teething in children, who have just been weaned. In fact, at this stage the soul is prepared to receive a stronger food, the spiritual graces, which are bestowed on it. These are far more precious than the preceding graces, but they disconcert the soul by giving no satisfaction to its desire for sensible graces.

After treating of this purification, St. John of the Cross observes: “The soul has, therefore, gone forth; it has begun to penetrate into the way of the spirit, which is followed by proficient’s and advanced souls, and which is also called the illuminative way, or the way of infused contemplation.” This text is very important, for St. John here speaks expressly of infused contemplation and not of acquired contemplation.

But to reach the perfection of charity, the passive purification of the senses does not suffice: “On leaving the state of beginners, the soul remains more often than not immobile in the exercises proper to the advanced for an

indeterminate period, which may last for years. Like the prisoner who has just left his narrow prison, the soul is more at ease in divine things and finds more satisfaction in them. . . . Neither the imagination nor the powers of the soul preserve any longer, in fact, the former attachment to discursive prayer and to spiritual effort, because the soul now tastes without any intellectual effort, a very calm and affectionate contemplation accompanied by spiritual delights. . . . The purification of the soul is, however, not yet complete and cannot be so, since the principal one, which is that of the spirit, is still lacking. . . . The soul has still, therefore, to undergo dryness, darkness, and anguish, often far more severe than the preceding experiences." The necessity of this passive purification of the spirit could not be more clearly affirmed. In one way or another, it must be undergone for the attainment of perfect purity of soul.

In this period there are no longer any deliberate venial sins, but there are still the imperfections peculiar to the advanced, imperfections that are incompatible with the full perfection of charity. "The stains of the old man still remain in the spirit, though it does not suspect their presence, nor scarcely perceives them. They must, however, yield to and be removed by the strong soap and lye of the passive purification of the spirit, without which the purity required for union will still be lacking. These proficients suffer also from dullness of mind and from the natural rudeness which every man contracts by sin. They are subject to distractions and to dissipation of mind. . . . The devil often dupes many by imaginary visions and false prophecies which lead to presumption. . . . This matter is inexhaustible, and these imperfections are so much the more incurable because these proficients consider them spiritual perfections. Therefore he who wishes to make progress must, of necessity, pass through the purification of the spiritual night. . . . Therein only can the soul find suitable and adequate means for uniting itself to God."

The perfect are, therefore, not only those who have imposed on themselves exterior and interior mortifications, but who have passed through the purifications of the senses and of the spirit. The soul which has not passed through this crucible is not yet cleansed from its blemishes.

Speaking of the night of the spirit, St. John of the Cross observes: "How often on this way exaltation and depression succeed one another and how often, too, is prosperity enjoyed for a moment and then followed by storms and trials. . . . These fluctuations are ordinary in the contemplative state.

Before attaining the state of definitive peace, rest is unknown; life is a constant succession of ascents and descents. As the state of perfection consists in the perfect love of God and contempt of self, it cannot be conceived without its two parts, the knowledge of God and the knowledge of self. From this we see how necessary it is that the soul has a preliminary formation in both. This is why God at times lifts the soul up by making it taste its own greatness, and at times humbles it by showing it its baseness. This movement of ascent and descent can, therefore, be stopped only when the perfect habit of the virtues is acquired, when the soul has reached union with God."

To resist temptations against the theological virtues which present themselves rather frequently in the night of the spirit, the soul must make heroic acts of faith, hope, and charity, which notably augment the intensity of these virtues. At the same time the illuminations of the gift of understanding enlightens the soul to unknown depths of mysteries of faith, on the fathomless perfections of God, on the nothingness of creatures, on the infinite gravity of mortal sin, on the ineffable abasement of Christ, to such an extent that the incarnation and the Eucharist seem absolutely impossible. The understanding, which is still too feeble, is bewildered and helpless like a man who does not know how to swim and who, upon being cast into the open sea, believes himself on the point of drowning. Therein lays the purifying action of God, opposed to the temptation of the demon, which is often simultaneous and which the Lord makes serve His ends.

Once this passive purification of the spirit is completed, souls are normally ready to enter heaven immediately after death: "Because of their perfect purification by love, they are not obliged to pass through purgatory." They have had their purgatory in this life and in a fitting manner; that is, while meriting; whereas after death souls, which by their fault must be purified, no longer merit. We will treat more at length of the nature of these purifications in chapter 6, article 2.

According to St. John of the Cross, the full perfection attainable in this life is found only in the transforming union, or the spiritual marriage. "Then, in fact, the soul is no longer disturbed by the demon, nor by the world, nor by the flesh, nor by the appetites; it can then utter the words of the Canticle, 'For winter is now past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers have appeared in our land.' This state represents the full development of charity; perfect love accepts any work or suffering whatever for God, and

even finds a holy joy in suffering. It does not fear death, but desires it. It attributes nothing to self, but refers all to God, and is transformed so to speak in Him, according to St. Paul's expression, "He who is joined to the Lord, is one spirit." "It is, in short, God Himself, who communicates Himself to the soul by an admirable glory and transforms it in Himself; Then there takes place the perfect union of the soul and God, who are as intimately united as glass and sunlight, as coal and fire, as starlight and sunlight. Nevertheless, such a union is neither as essential nor as complete as that of heaven."

When charity is perfected, all the Christian virtues reach their perfect development. "They are intertwined, closely united to each other, which renders their resistance stronger by reason of their mutual support. From this union there results a whole, which constitutes the complete perfection of the soul, a compact ensemble, a solidarity, which excludes the possibility of any weak, spot which might facilitate the entrance of the devil or things of the world into the soul."

Finally, "the soul possesses the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost according to the entire perfection compatible with life here below." "The operations of the soul in union come from the divine Spirit. . . . They alone, as a result, are perfectly harmonious . . . without ever being untimely. . . . The Spirit of God reveals to these souls what they should know, reminds them of what they should remember, . . . causes them to forget whatever deserves to be forgotten, to love what is worthy of their love, and to love nothing that is not found in God. Thus, all the first movements of the powers in such souls are divine, and we must not be surprised that the movements and operations of these powers are divine because they are transformed in the divine Being."

According to St. John of the Cross, the illuminative and the unitive ways belong, therefore, to the mystical life. This is without doubt a very lofty conception of what the full development of "the grace of the virtues and of the gifts" ought to be, of what the intimacy of divine union should normally become in an interior soul after a life spent in great fidelity to the Holy Ghost.

Needless to say, this conception of the unitive or perfect life far surpasses what many modern writers on asceticism call the ordinary unitive way. In their opinion, this way does not presuppose the painful passive purifications, at least not those of the spirit, which belong to the mystical

states. There is a considerable difference between souls which have valiantly passed through these great trials, and those which have not as yet undergone them. In the following article we will seek the source of this divergence between the ascetical teachings of these modern writers and the doctrine of St. John of the Cross.

The problem is a serious one. Is not the ideal of perfection notably lessened by maintaining that we can reach the full, normal development of Christian life without passing under one form or another through the passive purifications, which belong to the mystical order, and without being raised to infused contemplation, dark and secret initiation into the mystery of God present in us? Are not the impulse and the great aspirations of the interior life suppressed under the pretext of avoiding illusion, of following the common way, the beaten paths? Is this not equivalent to proposing to souls a comfortable illuminative and unitive way, which is of a nature to give them an illusion just the opposite of those which they wish to avoid? Under pretext of combating one form of presumption, is this not yielding to another? Is this not leading souls to believe that they are on the point of attaining perfection, that they are already in the unitive life, when perhaps as yet they are only among the beginners and have only a faint notion of the true illuminative life, that of the proficient's? Is this not also exposing them to complete divergence from the right road when the painful passive purifications come, during which they will think they are retrogressing, while in truth these trials are the narrow gate leading to true life? "How narrow is the gate, and strait is the way which leads to life, and few there are that find it" (Matt. 7: 14). It would be well to consider the words of St. John of the Cross on this subject, which we have quoted in the preceding pages. As yet we have only proposed the question. Finally, it is well to remember the sayings of St. Thomas Aquinas: "The servant of God ought always to aspire without ceasing to more perfect and holier things."

ARTICLE IV

ACCORDING TO TRADITION THE FULL PERFECTION OF CHRISTIAN LIFE BELONGS TO THE MYSTICAL ORDER

According to St. John of the Cross, the full perfection of Christian life belongs clearly to the mystical order, and is truly realized only in the

transforming union. However, many modern writers on asceticism hold an entirely different opinion. Whence comes this divergence?

Father Poulain's explanation is well known. He says: "All the ascetic writers speak of the three ways, the purgative, the illuminative, and the unitive, and they make them correspond, approximately at all events, to the terms: way of beginners, of proficient's, and of the perfect. Some allow mysticism to play no part here; others at the most, place it only at the end of the third way. St. John of the Cross also employs these six terms, but gives them a meaning peculiar to his teaching. He looks at matters from the special point of view of mysticism, and places it in the second and third way. . . . 'The way of the spirit, which is that of proficient's, is also called the illuminative way, or the way of infused contemplation' (The Dark Night of the Soul, Bk. I, chap. 14). Certainly this language is very different from that of other spiritual authors."

The language of St. John of the Cross, to be sure, differs notably from that of many modern writers on asceticism. Some of the latter distinguish not merely three ways, but six; three ascetical, and three mystical. Is this not placing a materialistic interpretation on everything under the pretext of being more precise? Tradition has always spoken of only three ways, not six; but materially they appear in an imperfect manner or in their plenitude, according to the spiritual condition of the subject. Although St. John of the Cross clarifies on several points the language of the great doctors who preceded him, nevertheless he teaches the same doctrine as they do.

Is a less elevated doctrine found in the spiritual works of the fathers, of St. Augustine, Dionysius, St. Bernard, St. Bonaventure, St. Thomas, Tauler, Louis de Blois, Dionysius the Carthusian, the author of The Imitation, St. Francis de Sales, and, in a general way, in the works of the saints who have spoken of the perfect life considered in its plenitude? We cannot find in their works, any more than we can in those of St. John of the Cross, mention of a twofold unitive life; the first ordinary, and the second extraordinary by its very nature and, as such, inaccessible to the majority of interior souls.

How can we, then, explain the divergence which we have just pointed out? While certain authors are especially concerned with beginners and with souls that have only a relative perfection in view, St. John of the Cross writes, "for those who are determined to pass through nudity of spirit," especially for contemplative souls. He proposes to them the loftiest

perfection attainable in this life, and the most efficacious and direct means to reach it. He himself states this fact in the prologue of The Ascent of Mount Carmel; This explains the apparent exaggeration of his insistence on mortification. It explains also his very lofty idea of the illuminative and of the unitive ways, which he presents to us in their plenitude, which is found only in the mystical life. Some modern writers on asceticism gives us, on the contrary, only an inferior and a diminished idea of them; for if these two ways appear in the course of the ascetical life, it can only be in a manner that is still imperfect.

We find here something similar to that, which occurs in intellectual culture. For many, adequate theological training is given by a manual that can be studied in three years, and that one does not feel impelled to reread, because all it contains is quickly exhausted. Who can claim that the perfection of theological culture is found in such a study? Others can satisfy the demands of their minds only by the profound study of St. Thomas and of his principal commentators. This study is neither an extraordinary undertaking nor a luxury for them; it is necessary for the training of their minds. They realize that even if they spend all their lives teaching the Summa theologica, written though it is for novices, they will never exhaust it, and will never arrive at a complete grasp of its breadth, height, and depth; to do so, would require an intellect equal to that of the master. “To comprehend is to equal,” said Raphael. To study the tract on grace, some will consecrate three months to it and scarcely ever return to it; others understand that the work of a lifetime would not suffice to penetrate what the doctors of the Church wished to tell us about this great mystery.

Thus, from the spiritual point of view, many souls are quickly, even too quickly, satisfied by a very relative perfection, which seems altogether insufficient to others. The latter feel a need for the eminent exercise of charity, and of the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Certain very passionate temperaments and extremely vigorous intellects seem to find peace only in a lofty perfection, even that described by St. John of the Cross. With still greater reason, this is true of souls which received early in life a superior attraction of grace. They will find rest only after the painful purifications, in the transforming union, in which they will no longer be disturbed by the devil, the flesh, and the world.

Why should we not believe that St. John of the Cross has preserved in its essentials the true and very lofty traditional conception of Christian

perfection or of union with God? Should we not believe, on the contrary, that some modern writers on asceticism have impoverished tradition by confounding the full normal development of the life of grace on earth with what is only its prelude? This is the opinion of some contemporary theologians who consider the mystical life necessary to full perfection, to that required, for example, for beatification. They add that the other opinion, while claiming to combat presumption, might cause some souls to believe they have reached the unitive life, when, as a matter of fact, they are far from it. As a result, the ideal of perfection, the aim of the religious life, might be lowered and souls deprived of one of the greatest stimulants to an increasingly fervent and more generous life in closer union with God.

The true view seems to us to be the latter; namely, there are not two unitive ways, the one ordinary and the other extraordinary by its nature,' to which all fervent souls could not aspire, but only one unitive way, which, by an ever more perfect docility to the Holy Ghost, leads to a more intimate mystical union. This way is extraordinary in fact because of the small number of souls that are completely docile, but it is not extraordinary in itself or by its nature, like miracles or prophecy. On the contrary, it is in itself the perfect order, the full development of charity, actually realized in truly generous souls, at least at the close of their lives, if they live long enough. It may well be that, for lack of proper direction or favorable surroundings, or again by reason of a nature given to exterior activities, certain generous souls, would reach the mystical life only after a much longer time than the ordinary span of life. But these are accidental circumstances and, however frequent they may be, they do not affect the fundamental law of the full development of the life of grace. St. John of the Cross makes this point very clear when, at the beginning of his works, he says they are written "in order to help many souls, which are in need of assistance. After the first steps in the path of virtue, when the Lord wishes to make them enter the dark night in order to lead them to divine union, there are some that go no further. Occasionally, it is the desire which is lacking, or they are not willing to let themselves be led therein. At times, it is because of ignorance, or because they vainly seek an experienced guide capable of leading them to the summit."

This summit is not reached without infused contemplation; and certainly infused contemplation is not the fruit of our personal effort, for it surpasses the human mode of the Christian virtues. We do not have it when we wish

it; it comes from a special grace, from an inspiration and illumination to which the gifts of the Holy Ghost render us docile. Though we do not have this inspiration when we wish it, we can hold ourselves ready to receive it; we can ask it, and merit it, at least in the broad sense of the word “merit.” Every soul in the state of grace has, in fact, received the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which develop with charity. As a general rule, the Holy Ghost moves us according to the degree of our habitual docility.

“The conclusion is clear,” says the holy doctor, “that, as soon as the soul has succeeded in carefully purifying itself of sensible forms and images, it will bathe in this pure and simple light, which will become for it the state of perfection. In truth, this light is always ready to penetrate us. Its infusion is prevented by the forms and veils of creatures, which envelop and hamper the soul. Tear aside these veils . . . and little by little, without delay, rest and divine peace will overwhelm your soul with admirable and profound views on God, which are enfolded in divine love.”

We shall demonstrate that this doctrine of St. John of the Cross, while clarifying that of the great doctors who preceded him, remains perfectly conformable to their teaching, and that it is contained in the evangelical beatitudes. These propose to us Christian perfection in all its grandeur, and are certainly not inferior in elevation to what the author of The Spiritual Canticle has written.

Thus we begin to see the answer which should be made to three questions already proposed:

1) What characterizes the mystical life? A special passivity or the predominance of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, having a superhuman mode specifically distinct from the human mode of the Christian virtues, without, however, being confounded with graces gratis datae, such as prophecy. These last are in no way necessary to the mystical life; they are in a certain sense exterior, and given especially for the benefit of one’s neighbor.

2) When does the mystical life begin in the course of the spiritual life? Normally with the passive purification of the senses, and the prayer of passive recollection which St. Teresa speaks of in the fourth mansion.

3) Is a special vocation necessary to reach the mystical life? In principle, no. “The grace of the virtues and of the gifts” suffices in itself by its normal development to dispose us to the mystical life, and mystical contemplation is necessary for the full perfection of Christian life. But in fact, for lack of certain conditions which at times are independent of our will, even

generous souls would attain contemplation only after a longer space of time than the ordinary span of life; just as some minds, which are capable of a superior intellectual development, never reach it for lack of certain conditions. And lastly, in some who are more fitted for the active life, the gifts of action dominate.

This teaching antedates that of St. John of the Cross. It will be interesting to recall the chapter of The Imitation on “True Peace” (Bk. IV, chap. 25). It is certainly not inferior to the doctrine we have just set forth, and it is addressed to all souls to show them an ideal of perfection, which they may aspire to without presumption. We quote some passages. “Peace is what all desire, but all do not care for the things that pertain to true peace. My peace is with the humble and gentle of heart; in much patience shall thy peace be. . . . Direct thy whole attention to please Me alone, and neither to desire nor to seek anything besides Me. . . . The spiritual progress and perfection of a man consist in these things . . . in giving thyself up with all thy heart to the divine will, not seeking thine own interest either in great matters or in small, either in time or in eternity. So shalt thou keep one and the same demeanor always giving thanks both in prosperity and adversity, weighing all things in an equal balance. Be thou so full of courage and so patient in hope, that when inward comfort is withdrawn thou mayest prepare thy heart to suffer even greater things; and do not justify thyself. As though thou oughtest not to suffer such and so great afflictions, but justify Me in whatsoever I appoint, and cease not to praise My holy name. Then thou walkest in the true and right way of peace, and thou shalt have a sure hope to see My face again with great delight. Now, if thou attain to the full contempt of thyself, know that thou shalt then enjoy abundance of peace, as great as is possible in this thy state of sojourning.”

This peace is the fruit of an eminent charity and of the gift of wisdom which makes us see everything, whether agreeable or painful, in relation to God, the beginning and end of all things. St. Augustine says that the beatitude of the peacemakers corresponds to this gift.

And this is why, in the same book of The Imitation, the disciple asks for the superior grace of contemplation, saying: “0 Lord, I stand much in need of yet greater grace if it be Thy will that I should attain to that state where neither man nor any creature shall be a hindrance to me. . . . He desired to fly freely that said, ‘Who will give me wings like a dove, and I will fly and be at rest?’ (Ps. 54: 7.) . . . A man ought, therefore, to mount above all

creatures and perfectly renounce himself, and in ecstasy of mind perceive that Thou, the Creator of all things, hast nothing amongst creatures like unto Thee. Unless a man be set free from all creatures, he cannot wholly attend unto divine things and therefore are there so few contemplative, because few can wholly withdraw themselves from things created and perishing. To obtain this there is need of much grace to elevate the soul and carry it away above itself, and unless a man be uplifted in spirit and be freed from all creatures and wholly united unto God, whatsoever he knoweth and whatsoever he hath are of small account."

This remarkable chapter is not less sublime than the chapters of St. John of the Cross on the transforming union. Properly speaking, it belongs to the mystical order, in which alone the true perfection of the love of God is to be found.

The saints use such language as this when they speak of perfect love, of the intimate knowledge of God and of ourselves which it presupposes, and of the signs by which it may be recognized.

God Himself used such words as these when speaking to St. Catherine of Siena: "I must now tell thee the sign that gives evidence that the soul has reached perfect love. This sign is the same as that which was seen in the Apostles after they had received the Holy Ghost. They left the Cenacle and, freed from all fear, they announced My word and preached the doctrine of My only Son. Far from fearing suffering, they gloried in it. . . .

"Those who passionately desire My honor and who hunger for the salvation of souls hasten to the table of the holy cross. Their only ambition is to suffer and to bear a thousand fatigues for the service of their neighbor. . . . They bear in their bodies the wounds of Christ, and the crucified love which burns them bursts forth in the contempt they feel for themselves, in the joy they experience in opprobrium, in the welcome they give to the contradictions and the pains that I grant them, wherever they may come from, and in whatever manner I may send them. . . .

"They run ardently in the way of Christ crucified. They follow His doctrine, and nothing can slacken their course, neither injuries nor persecutions nor the pleasures which the world offers them and would wish to give them. With unshakable fortitude they pass all this by, equipped as they are with a perseverance which nothing can trouble, their hearts transformed by charity, tasting and enjoying this nourishment of the salvation of souls, ready to bear all things for them. This is the incontestable

proof that the soul loves God perfectly, and without any selfish motive. . . . If the perfect love each other, it is for My sake. If they love their neighbor, it is for Me, in order to give honor and glory to My name. That is why suffering always finds them strong and persevering. . . . In the midst of injuries, patience shines forth and proclaims its royalty.

"To these souls I give the grace of a consciousness of My continual presence, while to others I give it from time to time; not that I withdraw My grace from them, but rather the feeling of My presence. . . . These souls are plunged into the burning flames of My charity, purified of everything that is not I, stripped of all self-will and consumed with love of Me. Who then could withdraw them from Me and from My grace? . . . They always experience My divine presence in them, and I never deprive them of this feeling. . . . Moreover, their bodies are frequently raised from the earth by reason of this perfect union. . . . The body remains, as it was, motionless, broken by the love of the soul to such an extent that it would die, did not My goodness gird it with strength.

. . Furthermore, I interrupt this union for a time in order to permit the soul to remain united to the body. St. Paul complained of this body to which he was enslaved, because it hindered him from the immediate enjoyment of My divinity. He groaned because he was among mortals who continually offend Me, because he was deprived of the sight of Me, deprived of seeing Me in My essence."

The sober, theological language of St. Thomas Aquinas is no less sublime when he treats of the question: "Whether anyone can be perfect in this life."

"The divine law," he answers, "does not prescribe the impossible. Yet it prescribes perfection, according to Matt. 5: 48, 'Be you . . . perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect.'

"The perfection of the Christian life consists in charity. Now, perfection implies certain universality, because the perfect is that which lacks nothing. Hence we may consider a threefold perfection. . . . Absolute perfection consists in loving God as much as He is lovable. Such perfection as this is not possible to any creature; for God alone can love Himself in this way, that is to say, infinitely. Perfection consists of loving God to the extent of our power, so that our love always actually tends to God. Such perfection as this is not possible in this life, but we shall have it in heaven. Finally, there is a third perfection which consists in loving God not as much as He is

lovable, nor in always actually tending to Him, but to the exclusion of whatever is opposed to the love of Him. ‘The poison which kills charity,’ says St. Augustine ‘is cupidity or covetousness. When this is destroyed, perfection exists.’ On earth this perfection can exist, and that in two ways. Man may exclude from his affection all that is contrary to charity, and which would destroy it, such as mortal sin. This is necessary to salvation. Secondly, man may exclude from his affection not only what is contrary to charity, but also whatever hinders his love from being directed completely toward God. Without this perfection, charity can exist, for instance, in beginners and in proficients.”

It is this last perfection which is peculiar to the perfect. They still commit venial sins through frailty or surprise, but they avoid deliberate venial sin and also slight, conscious, and voluntary imperfections. They are very faithful to the inspirations of the Holy Ghost, whether these inspirations remind them of a duty, even though quite unimportant, or of a simple counsel. Moreover, instead of being content to make acts of charity which are comparatively weak for the degree of supernatural life to which they have attained (actus remissi), the perfect frequently make acts, which are at least as intense as their degree of charity. By these acts they merit an immediate and notable increase of this virtue. Having ten talents, they take good care not to act as if they had only two. Moreover, they receive communion with great fervor of will; they hunger for the Eucharist. Ever tending toward great things by reason of the virtue of magnanimity, they show a profound humility in their confessions, as also in their whole life, and, in their own opinion, they are the least of men. They are meek and humble of heart, as well as firm and strong. In them “prudence scorns the things of the world for the contemplation of divine things; it directs all the efforts of their souls toward God. Temperance abandons, in so far as nature can bear it, whatever the body demands. Fortitude prevents the soul from becoming frightened in the face of death and the supernatural. Finally, justice leads the soul to enter fully on this wholly divine way.” Higher still, according to St. Thomas, are the virtues of the soul that has been completely purified. They are those of the great saints in this life, and of the blessed in heaven.

In the perfect, the prayer of desire is almost continuous. They understand our Lord’s saying that we must pray always. Their faith has become loving contemplation; their hope, invincible confidence.

St. Thomas states that, “while beginners strive above all to flee sin, to resist the movements of concupiscence . . . and proficient’s direct their principal efforts toward advancing in the practice of charity and of the other virtues . . . the perfect tend, above all, to unite themselves with God, to adhere to Him, to enjoy Him. They desire to die in order to be with Christ.”

We find that St. Thomas expresses a no less sublime idea of what the love of one’s neighbor should be in the perfect: “There are, likewise, three degrees in charity toward one’s neighbor. In the first degree, our charity, without excluding anyone, extends positively only to our friends and to those who are known to us. Then it wishes well to strangers and does good to them, and finally, to our enemies. The last, says St. Augustine, is characteristic of the perfect.

“This progress in the extension of charity is accompanied by like progress in the intensity of this virtue. This growing intensity displays itself in the things which a man despises for the sake of his neighbor. He finally reaches a point where he despises not only exterior goods, but bodily afflictions and ultimately death itself, according to our Lord’s expression, ‘greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends.’ Last of all, the progress of fraternal charity is manifested by its effects, so that a man will surrender for his neighbor not only his temporal but also his spiritual goods, and even himself, according to the words of St. Paul: ‘But I most gladly will spend and be spent myself for your souls; although loving you more, I be loved less.’ St. Bonaventure teaches the same doctrine.

St. Thomas teaches that to these three degrees of charity correspond three degrees in the moral virtues, and also in the gifts and in contemplation. A more sublime idea of Christian perfection can hardly be conceived. This conception excludes everything that would hinder the soul from belonging completely to God. To adhere to Him, to aspire eagerly to the beatific vision, to love effectively and in particular even our enemies, to scorn death for the glory of God and for the salvation of souls, such is the perfect age of the spiritual life.

An examination of the early doctors, who first spoke of the three ways, (the purgative, the illuminative, and the unitive) and of the corresponding degrees of charity, shows that they used these terms in a broad sense, which has been preserved by St. John of the Cross, and not in the narrow acceptation of these terms, which has become current among several

modern writers on asceticism. Evidently the distinction of the three ways owes its origin to the doctrine of Christian contemplation as formulated by St. Augustine and Dionysius. Pourrat recognizes this fact in his recent work, La spiritualité chrétienne, when he says: “The doctrine of the three stages, the purgative, the illuminative, and the unitive . . . was gradually generalized and applied to the ordinary Christian life”; that is, in the course of time these expressions were often used in a diminished sense. At the beginning they were understood in their loftiest acceptation, which did not designate something extraordinary in itself, or something miraculous, but something of eminent degree, the perfect order, or the full development of the supernatural life here below.

Dionysius often speaks of these three ways, especially throughout chapter five of his book, The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy. “God,” he says, “first purifies the souls in which He dwells, and then He illumines them, and finally leads them to divine union. . . . In the same way, in the Church the power of purifying belongs to the diaconate, . . . The power of illuminating, to the priesthood, and that of perfecting, to the episcopate.” St. Thomas later repeats this doctrine and makes it his own.

In his Mystical Theology, Dionysius shows more explicitly what he understands by these words, which he uses so frequently: “As for thee, 0 well beloved Timothy, in thy desire to reach mystical contemplation strive without wearying to detach thyself both from the senses and from the operations of the understanding, from all that is sensible and intellectual, and from all that is or is not, in order to raise thyself by unknowing, as much as it is possible to do so, to union with Him, who is above all being and all knowledge; that is to say, to raise thyself by detachment from self and from all things, stripped of all and untrammeled, to that supernatural, transluminous way of the divine darkness.” This is exactly the same doctrine and the terms are the same as those which in a later age St. John of the Cross often used.

St. Augustine employs the same language when he discusses contemplation in the Canfessions, in the Soliloquies, in De Beata vita, and in De quantitate animae. In particular in this last named work, when he is describing the various degrees of the life of the soul, after considering the vegetative, the sensitive, and the intellectual life, or the knowledge of the sciences, he studies the degrees of the spiritual life: (1) The struggle against sin, the very difficult work of purification, during which entire confidence

must be placed in God. This purification, he says, leads to true virtue, which shows all the grandeur of the soul, its incomparable superiority over the world of bodies. (2) The entrance into the light, which is possible only to those who are purified, for infirm eyes cannot endure the light which a pure and healthy eye desires. (3) Contemplation and divine union, which permit us to enjoy the sovereign good: “How shall I describe the joys and the foretastes of eternal serenity which the soul experiences in the intellectual vision and the contemplation of truth? Some great and incomparable souls have related these marvels. . . . We know that they have seen them and still see them.”

St. Augustine describes this contemplation in the Confessions, when he relates his meeting with his mother at Ostia. In the following phrases he indicates his conception of the contemplative state: “He who would silence in himself the tumult of the flesh, who would close his eyes to the spectacles offered by the earth, the waters, the air, and the firmament, who would impose silence on his very soul, suppressing self, . . . he who would no longer hear these creatures . . . and to whom God alone would speak directly . . . in an entirely spiritual manner. . . . Were this rapture to continue and this contemplation alone to absorb him who would enjoy it? Would not this state of things be the fulfillment of the expression found in the Gospel: ‘Enter thou into the joy of the Lord?”

It is not surprising that, to reach such contemplation and divine union, the full purification, spoken of by St. John of the Cross, is necessary. St. Augustine himself insists upon it, and it would be an error to separate his asceticism from his mysticism. The first leads to the second, as adolescence does to maturity. The three ways that he speaks of, in terms quite similar to those used by later great masters, correspond to the three degrees of charity which he mentions elsewhere, that of beginners, of proficients, and of the perfect.

According to St. Augustine, a soul must, in fact, possess great charity to be numbered even among the proficients. We may say that a Christian is not of that number until he has undergone the trial of criticism, and contradiction on the part of people who cannot bear to have anyone surpass them in virtue. The perfect charity, which St. Augustine speaks of in The Canticle of the Degrees, and in the Confessions, presupposes that one is ready to die for his brethren, and cannot be conceived as existing without that intimate and penetrating knowledge of God, which is mystical

contemplation. The gift of wisdom grows with charity; the supernatural organism of grace, of the virtues, and of the gifts develops at the same time.

Therefore we conclude that St. John of the Cross, in his description of the three ways (the purgative, the illuminative, and the unitive) and in his account of the three corresponding degrees of charity, agrees perfectly with St. Augustine, Dionysius, St. Thomas Aquinas, and also with St. Bernard, St. Bonaventure, and the true disciples of these great masters. He clarifies their teaching on several points, but he does not alter it. His lofty conception of the illuminative and unitive ways is therefore entirely traditional. He does more than depict them in an inferior or embryonic form, as do several modern writers on asceticism. He shows them to us in their plenitude; thus considered, they belong to the mystical order.

In company with this great master, who is the faithful echo of tradition, we must hold that the full perfection of charity in this life cannot exist without mystical contemplation, without the full development of the gifts of understanding and of wisdom, which grow with charity. The entire supernatural organism should develop at the same time. This development is not anything extraordinary in itself; it is the full harmony, the perfect order, of the life of grace which has attained here on earth the summit of its normal development. This grace, called by St. Thomas “the grace of the virtues and of the gifts,” is entirely distinct, as we have seen, from the graces gratis datae, such as prophecy or the gift of miracles.

This is what makes St. John of the Cross exclaim: “0 souls created for such glories, and called to them, of what are you thinking? With what are you occupied? How mediocre are your aspirations, and how wretched is your pretended good! How sad is the blindness of your soul! You are blind to the most dazzling light and deaf to the powerful voices which solicit you. By allowing yourselves to be led by what you consider happiness and glory, you do not see that you remain plunged in your wretchedness and your mediocrity, and you render yourselves ignorant, and unworthy of the treasures destined for you.”

All should say with the psalmist: “As the hart panteth after the fountains of water; so my soul panteth after Thee, 0 God. My soul hath thirsted after the strong living God; when shall I come and appear before the face of God?”

Mystical theologians have remarked that even among the perfect we should distinguish between those who are beginning to live a perfect life, those who are making progress in this life by heroism of virtue, and those who reach full perfection or sanctity.

Immediately after the passive purification of the senses, the soul already possesses a relative perfection. It generally avoids deliberate venial sins, and enjoys a very calm, and loving contemplation of God, described by St. Teresa in the fourth and fifth mansions. But it still has many imperfections to remove.

Especially during the passive purifications of the spirit and their concomitant trials, heroic virtues, particularly those of faith, hopes, and charity, are practiced, as St. John of the Cross shows, and as St. Teresa describes them at the beginning of the sixth mansion.

Finally, when the soul has passed through and beyond the passive purifications of the spirit, it reaches the full perfection of the interior life, described by St. John of the Cross in The Living Flame and in the third part of The Spiritual Canticle; by St. Teresa in the seventh mansion; and by St. Bernard in the higher of the ten degrees of charity, which he enumerates. Because of this distinction made even among the perfect, we have in this present work, as a rule, purposely spoken of the full perfection of Christian life, and not only of that lesser, relative perfection discussed in several works on asceticism, which do not deal with the mystical life, properly so called.

Is not this full perfection truly the summit of the normal development of the life of grace? The word “normal” should not make us forget the word “summit,” and vice versa. To understand it clearly, we must remember that Christian life requires all souls heroism of virtue, (according to the preparation of the mind); that is, in the sense that every Christian must be ready, with the help of the Holy Ghost, to accomplish heroic acts when circumstances require them. Martyrdom in certain cases is of precept and not only of counsel, for we must all prefer torments and death to abjuration, and we must love God more than life. Otherwise how should we be conformed to Christ crucified and sealed with His countenance? Christians who habitually fulfill their duties must hope that, if they ask with humility, trust, and perseverance, the Holy Ghost will grant them the strength to remain faithful even in torture, should they have to undergo such a trial. Our Lord told His disciples not to fear those who kill the body, and He

assured them that the Holy Ghost would inspire them on occasion with what they should say. Considering the matter from a purely human point of view, should we not say that every citizen ought to be ready, if necessary, to die heroically in defense of his country?

Moreover, every Christian ought to prefer the supernatural good, the salvation of his neighbor, to his own natural good. Charity counsels him to assist, even at the risk of his life, a soul in extreme spiritual need. This obligation is stricter for a priest, who has charge of souls and for a bishop in regard to his flock. Although the latter is not obliged to have the virtues in a heroic degree, he must be ready, if the occasion arises, to give his life for the faithful of his diocese.

Therefore it must be conceded that Christian charity should in its daily progress tend normally to the heroic degree, which permits the prompt and even joyful performance of most difficult acts for God and our neighbor. Every soul that has undergone the passive purifications of the spirit feels strongly inclined to this heroic degree of charity.

These purifications lead finally to true sanctity, which is perfect purity, immutable union with God, and also the intimate harmony of all the virtues, even of those which to all appearances are most opposed: the perfect accord of great fortitude and unalterable meekness, of rigorous justice and tender mercy, of the loftiest and simplest wisdom with all-embracing prudence. This is truly sanctity before God, although it may not always be manifested by definite signs to the Church. Only in this sanctity is found the full perfection of Christian life, perfection truly superior to the relative perfection, which is mentioned by several authors on asceticism, and which is the only entrance into the way of the perfect.

Evidently we are speaking not merely of the essence of perfection, but of its normal integrity; as, for example, to have good eyes belongs, if not to the essence of the human body, at least to its integrity. Similarly, as will become more and more evident, infused contemplation belongs, if not to the essence of Christian perfection, at least to its integrity. This contemplation, very manifest in the perfect who are more fitted to the contemplative life, is diffuse in the other perfect in whom dominate especially the gifts of the Holy Ghost which relate to action—the gifts of fear, fortitude, counsel, and knowledge, united to the gift of piety, under a less visible influence of the gifts of wisdom and of understanding.

ARTICLE V

PERFECTION AND THE PRECEPT OF THE LOVE OF GOD

A. IS THE FIRST PRECEPT WITHOUT LIMIT?

The twofold precept of love is strictly formulated in the Gospel of St. Luke: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind: and thy neighbor as thyself.” After weighing the meaning of each of these terms and considering the insistence with which the word, “all” is repeated, we might ask with St. Thomas whether the precept of the love of God has a limit; and, if it has, whether it follows that beyond this limit, there is only a counsel of charity in which perfection would consist.

Some have thought so, and have insisted that even to observe this precept perfectly, we need not possess a high degree of charity. Higher perfection, which suppresses deliberate venial sin and voluntary imperfections, is only of counsel. It is not included under the precept, but goes beyond it. Perfection would thus consist of the accomplishment of certain counsels of charity, superior to the first precept itself.

This may seem true if we consider matters superficially. In stating the problem, St. Thomas carefully notes it in his objection: “All are obliged to observe the precepts in order to obtain salvation. If, therefore, the perfection of Christian life consisted in the precepts, it would follow that perfection would be necessary to salvation and that all would be obliged thereto, which is false.” This is a specious objection. St. Thomas solves it by showing, as St. Augustine does, the grandeur of the precept of the love of God, which is superior to all the counsels. It is surprising to find that modern theologians, and not the least among them, as a result of their failure to comprehend the doctrine of the greatest masters on this fundamental point of spirituality, have turned this objection into a thesis.

Instead of being content with appearances, and the material side of things, we will consider the deep meaning and extent of the precept. As a basis for this discussion, we will follow as exactly as possible, the text of a little known article by St. Thomas, “Whether perfection consists in the observance of the commandments or of the counsels.”

“It is written in Deuteronomy: ‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart,’ and in Leviticus: ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbor as

thyself.’ Our Lord adds: ‘On these two commandments dependeth the whole law and the prophets.’ Now the perfection of charity, according to which Christian life is perfect, consists precisely in this, that we love God with all our hearts and our neighbor as ourselves. It would seem, therefore, that perfection consists in the fulfillment of the precepts. To understand it clearly, it must be observed that perfection consists necessarily and essentially in one thing, secondarily and accidentally in another.

“Necessarily and essentially, the perfection of Christian life consists of charity; primarily in the love of God, and secondarily in the love of our neighbor. This charity is the object of the two chief precepts of the divine law. Now it would be a mistake to imagine that the love of God and of our neighbor is the object of a law only according to a certain measure, that is to say, up to a certain degree, after which it would become the object of simple counsel. No, the message of the commandment is clear and shows what perfection is: ‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart.’ The two expressions, all and entire or perfect are synonymous. Similarly, it is said: ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself’; and each one loves himself, so to speak, without limit (maxime). This is so, because, according to the teaching of the Apostle, ‘The end of the commandment is charity.’ Now, the end does not present itself to the will in a fragmentary manner, but in its totality. In this it differs from the means. Either one wishes it or one does not wish it. One does not wish it by halves; as Aristotle observes. Does a doctor seek only half the cure of a sick person? Obviously no. What he measures is the medicine, but not health, which he wishes without measure. Manifestly, therefore, perfection consists essentially in the precepts. Moreover, St. Augustine says, in his book De perfectione justitiae: ‘Why, therefore, should this perfection not be prescribed to man, although he cannot have it (fully) in this life?’ “

This is so much the more true, because the end in question is not an intermediary end, such as health, but the ultimate end, God Himself, who is infinite good. St. Thomas says: “We can never love God as much as He ought to be loved, nor believe and hope in Him as much as we should.” Moreover, the theological virtues differ from the moral virtues in that they do not essentially consist in a happy mean. Their object, their formal motive, their essential measure, is God Himself, His infinite truth and goodness. If, from one point of view, these supreme virtues are a happy mean, it is accidental, and on the part of the human subject, not of the

divine object. For example, the proficient can and should love God more than the beginner, yet without being able to love Him as the perfect do, or as the blessed in heaven.

Finally, another reason why the precept of love has no limit is that our charity ought always to grow even until death, for we are travelers on the road to eternity. The way to eternity is not made to be used as a place of rest and sleep, but rather to be traveled. The lazy are those who rest along the road instead of pushing on to their goal. The traveler who has not yet reached the fixed term of his pilgrimage is commanded and not only counseled to advance, just as the child must grow, according to the law of nature until he has reached maturity. Now, when it is a question of walking toward God, it is not by the movement of our bodies that we advance, but rather by the steps of love or charity, as St. Thomas says. Therefore we ought daily in this way to draw nearer to God, without placing a limit on the progress of our charity. We have no right to say that we will love God so much and no more. Such a restriction of charity would fail to observe the first commandment, which is measureless: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind.”

Does it follow that perfection in no way consists in the evangelical counsels? In the passage we have quoted above, St. Thomas replies: “Secondarily and instrumentally, however, perfection consists in the observance of the counsels; in other words, they are only precious instruments to attain it. In fact, all the counsels, like the commandments, are ordained to charity, with one difference however. The commandments, other than the two great precepts of love, are intended to remove whatever is contrary to charity, whatever might destroy it; while the end of the counsels is to remove whatever hinders or prevents the perfect exercise of charity without, however, being opposed to it, as for example, marriage, the necessity of being occupied with secular affairs, and things of this sort. This is what St. Augustine teaches (Enchiridion, chap. 2 1): ‘Precepts . . . and counsels . . . are well observed when one fulfils them in order to love God, and one’s neighbor for God, in this world and in the next.’

This is why Abbot Moses says: “Fasts, vigils, meditation on Holy Scripture, nudity, and the privation of external goods, are not perfections, but instruments or means of perfection. It is not in them that perfection consists, but by them that one attains it.”

This is what our Lord had in mind when He said to the rich young man: “If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow Me.” As St. Thomas observes (loc. cit., ad 1um), by these words our Lord indicates, first of all, the road which leads to perfection: “Go sell what thou hast, and give to the poor”; then He adds in what this perfection consists: “and follow Me,” in spirit through charity. As St. Ambrose says, “He orders him to follow, not with the steps of the body, but with devotion of the soul.” The counsels are, therefore, instruments or means to attain perfection, but they do not constitute it essentially. Perfection is found in the fulfillment of the supreme and limitless precept of the love of God, and of our neighbor.

Let us return to the difficulty pointed out at the beginning of this article. The following objection is raised: “All are bound to the observance of the commandments, since this is necessary for salvation. Therefore, if the perfection of Christian life consists essentially in the commandments, it follows that perfection is necessary for salvation and that all are obliged to be perfect, which is manifestly false. Moreover, imperfect charity already observes the precepts. It seems, therefore, that perfect charity consists essentially in observing the counsels.”

To these two difficulties St. Thomas (ibid., ad 2um and 3um), following St. Augustine, offers a profound reply showing the sublimity of the precept of love, which only the saints observe in its fullness: “As St. Augustine says in De perfectione justitiae, the perfection of charity is prescribed to man in this life because ‘one runs not in the right direction unless one knows whither to run. And how shall we know this, if no commandment declares it to us?’ But the matter of the precept (of love) can be fulfilled in different ways. Moreover, he who does not fulfill it in the most perfect manner does not for that reason transgress the precept. To avoid this transgression, it is enough to fulfill the law of charity to a certain extent as beginners do.

“The perfection of divine love falls entirely within the object of the precept; even the perfection of heaven is not excluded from it, since it is the end toward which one must tend, as St. Augustine says. But one avoids the transgression of the precept by putting into practice, a little love of God.

“Now, the lowest degree of the love of God consists in loving nothing more than God, or contrary to God, or equally with God, and he who has not this degree of perfection nowise fulfils the commandment. There is another degree of charity, which cannot be realized in this life, and which

consists of loving God with all our strength, in such a way that our love always tends actually toward Him. This perfection is possible only in heaven, and therefore the fact that one does not yet possess it, does not entail a transgression of the commandment. And in like manner the fact that one has not attained the intermediate degrees of perfection does not entail a transgression, provided only that one reaches the lowest degree."

But evidently, he who remains in this lowest degree does not fulfill the supreme commandment in all its perfection. He does not accomplish fully what the law of love demands: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind."

It would, therefore, be a great illusion to think that only imperfect charity is prescribed, and that the higher degrees of this virtue are only of counsel. They fall under the precept, if not as something to be realized immediately, at least as that toward which we must tend, as the Thomists say. Even the charity of heaven is prescribed as the end toward which the soul in this life must always strive, and even run, as St. Paul says, without losing the time granted to it. Purgatory is for those who have not well enough employed their time of trial on earth. This great doctrine seems subtle at first glance, merely because of the objection that might embarrass the mind. In reality, it is quite conformable to what common sense in the natural order tells us. "Thus, in fact," observes St. Thomas, "man, even from birth, has a certain essential perfection by which he belongs to the human species, and is quite superior to the animal; but he has not, as yet, the perfection of maturity, the full development of the body and of the faculties of the soul. In like manner, there is a certain perfection of charity which is none other than its very essence: to love God above all things, and to love nothing contrary to Him. But there is also, even in this life, another perfection of charity which one attains only by spiritual progress, analogous to natural growth. To reach this perfection, the Christian abstains even from lawful things, so as to fulfill more freely his duties toward God."

The analogy is evident. To belong to the human race, it is enough to be a child, but that is not sufficient to be a fully developed man. Further, by virtue of a necessary law, a child must grow under pain not of remaining a child, but of becoming a deformed dwarf. Likewise it suffices to have a very low degree of charity in order to avoid the transgression of the precept of love, but that does not suffice for the perfect fulfillment of this first

precept, which is superior to all the others and to all the counsels. Moreover, if the beginner does not grow in charity, he will not remain a beginner, but will become an abnormal creature and, as it were, a dwarf from the spiritual point of view. For example, he has faith and piety which are, so to speak, embryonic, coupled with a highly developed literary, scientific, or professional culture. The disproportion is evident; balance is altogether lacking. Objections arise, disconcert the soul, and put it to rout. For lack of development, the divine seed which is in the soul runs the risk of dying, as we learn in the parable of the sower. In the spiritual life these abnormal souls are certainly not the true mystics and saints, but the retarded and the lukewarm.

This point of doctrine is evidently of primary importance in the spiritual life, but, strange to say, it is often misunderstood or at least forgotten. The perfection of charity is not only counseled, it is prescribed, as the end towards which every Christian should tend, if not by the practice of the counsels, at least by their spirit while continually growing in charity. Pope Pius XI recalled this doctrine in his encyclical on the spiritual doctrine of St. Francis de Sales. The rejection of this doctrine is the suppression of the final cause in the question we are considering.

When a soul, after living for a long time in the state of mortal sin, returns to God, it should do more than simply take care not to fall again and avoid the occasions of evil; it should ascend higher. The precept of love has no limit; it does not stop at a certain degree, beyond which there is only a counsel, but it commands us to grow continually in charity without ever stopping. God, who is infinitely good, deserves to be loved without measure, continually more and more “with all our heart, and with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind.” Only the saints perfectly observe this great law, which is the soul of Christian life.

B. THREE CONSEQUENCES OF THE PRECEPT OF THE LOVE OF GOD

Three important consequences result from this lofty doctrine of the precept of the love of God which teaches that the first precept, superior to all the others and to all the counsels, has no limit; that by it, the perfection of Christian life is not only counseled, but commanded, to all; and that it is commanded not as something to be realized immediately, but rather as the end toward which everyone should tend according to his condition.

Since the charity of a Christian should increase until death, any halt in its development is in opposition to the law of the love of God. This is the explanation of the expression used by several fathers of the Church: “In the way of salvation, he who does not advance goes back.” If life does not ascend, it descends. The soul cannot live without love. If it fails to make progress in the love of God, it falls back into self-love. This is the danger of imperfect acts (actus remissi, as the theologians say) which proceed from charity, but are inferior in intensity to our degree of that virtue.

Three points are to be noted in regard to these acts: (1) These acts are still meritorious but, according to St. Thomas and the best theologians, they do not immediately obtain an increase of charity. They will obtain it only when we make a more fervent act, equal or superior to the degree of our virtue; just as in the natural order a virtuous friendship grows only through more generous acts. (2) Acts of charity relatively too feeble for our degree of virtue show even a deficit, in this sense that the soul ought always to progress instead of remaining stationary; just as a child ought always to grow in order not to be stunted. (3) Lastly, these acts dispose us to positive retrogression, for by reason of their weakness, they permit the rebirth of disordered inclinations, which lead to venial sin, and may end by overcoming us , or leading us to spiritual death. Does the virtue of charity thus, directly diminish? Not directly in itself; but its radiation, its influence, become weakened as a result of the obstacles that gradually accumulate about it, as the light of a lantern which, while keeping its intensity, sheds less and less light in proportion, as its chimney becomes dimmed and soiled with the splashing of mud on the road.

In the same way, a retarded soul falls back like an intelligent man who ceases to apply his mind to study. If, possessing five talents, he acts as though he had only two or even four, he does not sufficiently increase the treasure entrusted to him. He is thereby guilty of negligence and spiritual laziness, which hinder him from perfectly observing the precept of love, the fundamental law of Christian life. From all this, we see that a meritorious act which is too weak is an imperfection disposing to venial sin, as the latter disposes to mortal sin.

The proficient who is satisfied to act like a beginner ceases to make progress and becomes a retarded soul. People do not give sufficient thought to the fact that the number of these souls is considerable. Many indeed think of developing their intellect, of expanding their knowledge, their exterior

activity or that of the group to which they belong (in which there may be not a little selfishness), and yet scarcely think of growing in supernatural charity, which ought to have first place in us, and ought to inspire and vivify our entire life, and associate us intimately with the great life of the Church and that of Christ. And many retarded souls end by becoming lukewarm, cowardly, and careless, especially when their natural bent is towards skepticism and raillery. In the end they may become hardened and, as a result, it is often more difficult to bring them back to a fervent life than to bring about the conversion of a great sinner.

Certain modern writers do not devote enough thought to considerable number of retarded souls that are in the so-called category of proficients. They then describe the illuminative way by being too easily satisfied with showing what it is rather generally in fact, that is, notably inferior to infused contemplation, which thus appears as an extraordinary grace. St. John of the Cross, who follows the teaching of the greatest masters, has, on the contrary, shown what ought to be if it is to correspond fully to its great name. Considering the matter from this higher point of view, we are not surprised that he makes the illuminative way (that of proficient's) begin with, the passive night of the senses or the beginning of infused contemplation, which then appears in the normal development of the interior life.

This first consequence of the precept of the love of God—he who does not advance, falls back—shows that the progress of charity ought to be continual. It thus opens up great perspectives.

A second result of the precept of the love of God is that every Christian, each according to his condition, must strive for the perfection of charity. For each and every one it is a general obligation, and is not reserved to religious and clerics.

Because of his vows, a religious must tend to perfection by practicing the counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and by keeping the rule of his order. This special obligation places him in the state of perfection, without at once making him perfect. It is identical with that of the observance of the vows, the transgression of which in a grave matter is a mortal sin. In the way of progress, as marked out for him by his rule, the religious can never set a limit. He must always aspire to greater perfection.

Although a secular priest is not in the state of perfection, nevertheless he must tend to perfection on account of the holy orders he has received. Even

if he has not the care of souls, he is obliged to a greater inward holiness than that required of a religious who is not a priest. “By holy orders,” says St. Thomas, “a man is appointed to the most august ministry of serving Christ Himself in the sacrament of the altar. This requires a greater inward holiness than that which is required for the religious state.”

The ordinary Christian must strive for the perfection of charity according to the general obligation of the first commandment. How shall he do this? By avoiding mortal and venial sin, by having the spirit of the counsels, without binding himself to practice those which do not correspond to his condition, and by thus growing in charity until death. If a Christian follows this way generously, he will be called not only in a remote manner, but in a proximate and even efficacious manner, to a very high perfection, to which he can attain though married. All ought to, therefore, grow in charity, each according to his state in life, whether it be that of a simple layman, a secular priest, or a religious; in other words, each according to his condition, whether it be that of beginner, proficient, or perfect. It was with this meaning that our Lord said to all: “Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect.” This call is not merely to the perfection of the angels, but to that of God Himself, since we have received a participation not only in the angelic nature but in the divine nature, and since this participation, sanctifying grace, is the beginning of eternal life, that will develop into glory in which we shall see God as He sees Himself, and love Him as He loves Himself.

In the same sense, St. Peter wrote for all the faithful: “As newborn babies, desire the rational milk without guile that, thereby you may grow unto salvation; if so be you have tasted that the Lord is sweet. Unto whom coming, as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen and made honorable by God: be you also as living stones built up, a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” “But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” St. Paul also teaches us: “But doing the truth in charity, we may in all things grow up in Him who is the head, even Christ.”

“Therefore, we also . . . cease not to pray for you, and to beg that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will, in all wisdom, and spiritual understanding: that you may walk worthy of God, in all things pleasing; being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God: strengthened with all might, according to the power of His glory, in all

patience and long-suffering with joy." "Wherefore, leaving the word of the beginning of Christ, let us go on to things more perfect" (Heb. 6: 1).

Commenting on this last text of St. Paul, St. Thomas observes: "In regard to his judgment of himself, a man ought not to consider himself perfect, but he ought always to be like a pilgrim who continues on his way and ever tends higher, as the Apostle states: Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect' (Phil. 3: 12). In regard to the progress to be made, man ought always to strive to attain perfection: 'Forgetting the things that are behind, and stretching forth myself to those that are before' (ibid., 3: 13). As St. Bernard says, not to advance in the way of salvation is to fall back. . . . To be sure, this does not mean that all are obliged to that perfection, in a certain sense exterior, which consists, for example, in voluntary poverty and virginity. . . .But all ought to strive for the inward perfection of charity . . . for if a man did not wish to love God more, he would fail in that which charity requires." "He who would not always wish to become better, would not be able to avoid contempt for that which is worthy of all respect."

St. Francis de Sales, quoting these words of Scripture, teaches the same doctrine: 'And he that is just, let him be justified still: and he that is holy, let him be sanctified still.' 'But the path of the just, as a shining light, goeth forward and increaseth even to perfect day.' 'So run that you may obtain.' If you follow Christ, you will always run, for He never stopped, but continued the course of His love and obedience 'unto death, even to the death of the cross.'

According to this same law, the progress of charity in the Blessed Virgin, who was preserved from every stain of sin, was continual in this life. It was not even interrupted by sleep, for the infused knowledge which she had received kept the superior part of her soul always on the alert and her meritorious acts did not cease, any more than did the beating of her heart. The initial plenitude of grace, which she had received from the instant of her immaculate conception, was thus multiplied by every act of charity, each one more intense than the preceding, and incessantly multiplied according to a marvelous progression, which we could never calculate.

What a prodigious acceleration in the progress of divine love takes place when there is nothing in the soul to arrest its growth! Reason is overawed in the presence of this masterpiece of God. Is it credible? Indeed, so much so that if we look about us, we find even in the material world a semblance of

this wonderful law of the spiritual life; namely, every material body falling freely in space takes on a uniformly accelerated movement, the speed of which grows in proportion to the time of the fall.

This is a particular case of the law of universal gravity, which is analogously applied in the spiritual order. If bodies attract each other in the direct ratio of their mass, and in the inverse ratio of the square of their distance, similarly souls are so much the more drawn by God, as they are nearer to Him by the intensity of their supernatural charity. Were a soul always to remain faithful, the progress of the love of God encountering no obstacle would thus be uniformly accelerated, and would be just so much more intense, as the initial speed or the first grace was greater. This gives us a glimpse of what this progress must have been in the soul of the Blessed Virgin, in whom the initial grace was superior to that of all the saints and angels together, as the diamond is worth more than all other precious stones. Mary was also able to avoid not only every venial sin, but all taken collectively, and she never produced acts inferior to her degree of charity; consequently the progress of the love of God never encountered in her the slightest obstacle or the least retardation.

St. Thomas, who knew that bodies fall more rapidly as they approach the earth, also noted this acceleration of the progress of charity in the souls of the saints in the measure in which they drew nearer to God: “Those,” he says, “who are in the state of grace ought to grow the more in it as they draw closer to the end.” This is the way he understood the expression in the Epistle to the Hebrews: “Comforting one another, and so much the more as you see the day approaching,” so much the more as we approach the end of the journey.

There is a third consequence of the precept of the love of God, namely, since the perfection of charity falls under the precept as the end towards which one must tend, assuredly actual graces are progressively offered to us, proportionate to the end to be attained. Knowing this; how is it possible that we should not hope to attain this end and how can we make it a matter of humility not to pretend to ascend so high? Our Lord Jesus Christ continually repeats: “Sursum corda,” and He adds: “Without Me you can do nothing.” If you ascend, do not take the glory to yourself. It is I who carry you, who lift you up, who constantly give you life, and I wish to give it to you in ever greater abundance so that you may correspond ever more perfectly with the commandment of My Father. Perfect charity, as it exists

in the transforming union, appears thus more and more as the summit of the normal development of the grace of baptism. It seems quite difficult now to admit possible discussion on this point. And to think that contemplative souls have suffered so greatly, because they of a St. Augustine, or a St. Thomas have been, living habitually in the peace-giving contemplation of the being and unity of God! What love burst forth also from the sweet knowledge of the supreme precept and of the grace offered to fulfill it ever more fully! However sublime the degree to which divine mercy raises a soul in this life, it ought always to say that it would be its own fault if it did not ascend higher in the time remaining to it on earth. The same profound mystery exists in regard to the degree of sanctity and the degree of glory as in regard to salvation. It is the goodness of God that awakens our goodness that saves us, and makes us advance. It is a creature's own ill will that condemns him, or at least delays him on the way of eternity: "Destruction is thy own, 0 Israel; thy help is only in Me." The depths of humility open up for the contemplative soul at the same time as the abyss of the divine mercy into which it is more and more deeply plunged. To wretchedness which humbly petitions, infinite mercy from its height stoops to give us the strength always to fulfill more perfectly the first precept, which is the generating law of all our life. This is the burden of Psalm 41: "My soul is troubled within myself; therefore will I remember Thee. . . . Deep calleth on deep, at the noise of thy flood-gates. . . . With me is prayer to the God of my life. . . . Hope thou in God, for I will still give praise to Him: the salvation of my countenance, and my God!" The great poetry of the psalms has been revealed to us in order to be understood. To understand it well, however, and to make it vibrate in the depths of the soul, should we not have received infused contemplation, which raises the mind and the heart even to the fountain of living water and to the light of life? This contemplation and its degrees are the subject of the following pages.

CHAPTER V

CONTEMPLATION AND ITS DEGREES

SINCE we have determined in the light of revelation and also in that of experience what the full perfection of the Christian life should be, we must now examine the second part of the problem and see whether this full perfection truly supposes infused or mystical contemplation. With this end in view, after recalling what prayer in general and common prayer should be, we will consider: (1) the different meanings of the words, “contemplation,” “ordinary,” and “extraordinary”; (2) the description of mystical contemplation and its degrees according to the most authoritative saints; (3) what infused contemplation does not essentially require; (4) what constitutes contemplation and from what principle it proceeds. From the consideration of these points, we shall see whether contemplation is extraordinary in itself, as a miraculous favor is, or whether it belongs to the full, normal development of the life of grace on earth.

ARTICLE I

PRAYER IN GENERAL AND COMMON PRAYER

First of all, we must have a correct idea of prayer in general and recall what St. Augustine and St. Thomas teaches about the prayer of petition.

I. THE PRAYER OF PETITION

We seem at times to believe that prayer is a force, with its first principle in ourselves, by which we try to bend the will of God with persuasion. Immediately we are confronted with this difficulty, often formulated by unbelievers and in particular by deists, namely, that no one can move or

bend the will of God. God is without doubt goodness, which asks only to give itself, mercy ever ready to come to the help of him who suffers and implores; but He is also perfectly immutable being. The will of God is from all eternity, as inflexible as it is merciful. No one can boast of having enlightened God, of having made Him change His will. “I am the Lord and I do not change.” The order of the world and the course of human events are, by His providential decree, mightily and gently, as well as irrevocably, determined in advance. Must we conclude that our prayer can accomplish nothing, that it comes too late, and that, whether we pray or not, what is going to happen will happen?

We have our Lord’s words in the Gospel: “Ask and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened to you.” Prayer is not a force with its first principle in ourselves; it is not an effort of the human soul trying to do violence to God to make Him change His providential dispositions. At times these human ways of expression are used metaphorically. In reality, the will of God is absolutely immutable; and precisely in this immutability lays the source of the infallible efficacy of prayer.

Basically it is very simple. True prayer, by which we ask for ourselves with humility, confidence, and perseverance, the gifts necessary for our sanctification, is infallibly efficacious, because God, who cannot contradict Himself, has decreed that it should be so, and because our Lord has promised it.

It is puerile even to conceive of a God who would not have foreseen and willed from all eternity the prayers we address to Him, or of a God who would incline before our will and change His designs. Not only all that happens has been foreseen and willed, or at least permitted, in advance by a providential decree, but the way things happen, the causes that produce events, all have been determined from all eternity by Providence. In all orders, physical, intellectual, and moral, in view of certain effects, God has prepared the causes that must produce them. For material harvests, He has prepared the seed; to make parched soil fertile, He willed abundant rainfall. He raises-up a great military leader to bring about a victory, which will be the salvation of a people. To give the world a man of genius, He prepares a superior intellect served by a better brain, by special heredity, by a privileged intellectual environment. To regenerate the world in its most troubled periods, He decided there should be saints. And to save humanity,

divine Providence prepared from all eternity, the coming of Jesus Christ. In all orders, from the lowest to the highest, God disposes causes in view of certain effects which they are to produce. For spiritual as well as material harvests, He has prepared the seed, without which the harvest will not be obtained.

Prayer is precisely a cause ordained to produce this effect, the obtaining of God's gifts necessary or useful for salvation. All creatures live by the gifts of God, but only intellectual creatures take cognizance of this fact. Stones, plants, and animals receive without knowing that they do so. Man lives by the gifts of God, and he knows it. If the carnal man forgets this fact, it is because he does not live as a man. If the proud will not admit it, that is because pride is the greatest foolishness. Existence, health, strength, the light of understanding, moral energy, the success of our undertakings, all are the gift of God; but especially is this true of grace, which leads us to salutary good, makes us accomplish it, and persevere therein.

Is it surprising that divine Providence wills that man should ask for alms, since man understands that he lives only on alms? Here as elsewhere, God wills first of all the final effect. Then He ordains the means and the causes which are to produce it. After deciding to give, He decides that we shall pray in order to receive; just as a father, who purposes in advance to grant a favor to his children, resolves to make them ask for it. The gift of God is the result; prayer is the cause ordained to obtain it. It has its place in the life of the soul, that it may receive the good things necessary or useful for salvation, as heat and electricity have their place in the physical order.

Jesus, who willed to convert the Samaritan woman, said to her, for the purpose of leading her to pray: "If thou didst know the gift of God . . . thou perhaps wouldst have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water . . . springing up into life everlasting."

From all eternity God foresaw and permitted the falls of Mary Magdalen, but He had His designs on her and willed to restore life to that dead soul. He decided, however, that this life would be restored to her only on condition that she desired it. He also decided to give her a very strong and gentle actual grace that would make her pray. This is the source of the efficacy of prayer. Because Magdalen prayed, sanctifying grace was given to her; but certainly, without prayer she would have remained in her sin. It is, therefore, as necessary to pray if we are to obtain God's assistance which

we need for the observance of the divine law and for perseverance in it, as it is necessary to sow seed if we are to reap grain.

Consequently we should not say: “Whether we prayed or not, whatever was going to happen would happen.” This would be as silly as to say: “Whether we sow or not, once summer has come, if we are to have wheat, we shall have it.” Providence has to do not only with the result, but also with the means to be employed. It safeguards human liberty by a grace as sweet as it is strong. “Amen, amen I say to you: if you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it you.”

Prayer is not, then, a weak force with its first principle in us. The source of its efficacy is in God and the infinite merits of Jesus Christ. It descends from an eternal decree of God; it springs from redeeming love, and it reascends to the divine mercy. A jet of water cannot rise unless the water descends from an equal height. Likewise, when we pray it is not a question of persuading God, of inclining Him, of changing His providential dispositions; it is simply a question of raising our will to the level of His will so as to will with Him what He has decided to give us, the good things useful to our sanctification and salvation. Prayer, instead of tending to bring down the Most High to us, is an elevation of our soul to God. Dionysius compares the man who prays to a sailor who, in order to land, pulls a cable fastened to a rock on the shore. This rock, which rises above the water, is motionless; to the man in the boat, however, the rock appears to be advancing; although in reality, only the boat is moving. Likewise, it seems to us that the will of God bends when our prayer is heard and granted; yet it is our will alone that ascends. We begin to will in time what God has willed for us from all eternity.

Prayer is not in opposition to the divine government; rather it co-operates with that government. There are two of us who will, instead of one. When a sinful soul, for which we have long prayed, is converted, it is God who converts it, but we have been the associates of God in this work. From all eternity, He decided to produce this salutary effect in that soul only with our co-operation.

The Church has defined, as a point of doctrine against the Pelagians and semi-Pelagians; we cannot form a true prayer without actual grace. We ask only for what we desire, and it is a question here of desiring what God wishes for us in the way in which He wishes it; in other words, it is a question of making our will conform to His. To do that He must draw us,

and we must allow ourselves to be attracted by Him. “No man,” says our Lord, “can come to Me, unless the Father who hath sent Me, draw him,” and St. Paul says: “Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God” (II Cor. 3: 5). A sinner is deprived of sanctifying grace and in that state is incapable of meriting; but he can pray. An actual grace suffices; it is offered to all, and only those are deprived of it, refuse it. At the moment this grace is granted to him, a sinner should fall on his knees. If he does not resist, he will be led from grace to grace, even to conversion and salvation. With humility, confidence, and perseverance, a Christian must throughout his life ask God for the supernatural energy which he needs to obtain heaven.

From all this we see what prayer can obtain for us. Heaven is the goal of the life of the soul. To this supreme end God subordinates whatever He is pleased to grant us, for He gives us both corporal and spiritual things only for the conquest of a blessed eternity.

Therefore prayer can obtain for us only the things that help in the attainment of our last end, eternal life. Beyond that it can do nothing. It is too lofty to obtain for us temporal success without regard or relation to our salvation. We must not expect such a result from it.

There are two types of goods which advance us on our way to heaven: spiritual goods, which bring us there directly; and temporal goods, which can be indirectly useful for salvation in the measure in which they are subordinated to the first. Spiritual goods are grace, virtues, and merits. Prayer is all-powerful in obtaining for a sinner the grace of conversion, and for a just man the actual grace necessary for the accomplishment of his duties as a Christian. Prayer is supremely efficacious in obtaining for us a livelier faith, a more confident hope, a more ardent charity, and a greater fidelity to our vocation. The first petition in the Lord’s Prayer is that the name of God be sanctified, glorified by a radiant faith; that His kingdom may come is the object of our hope, and that His will may be done and accomplished with love and a more fervent charity. Prayer is all-powerful in obtaining our daily bread, not only the food of the body, but of the soul, the super-substantial bread of the Eucharist and the dispositions necessary for good communion. It is efficacious in obtaining for us, the pardon of our faults, with the interior disposition to pardon our neighbor. Likewise it is efficacious in making us triumph over temptation; “Watch and pray that you enter not into temptation,” said our Lord. He has also told us that, to be

delivered from evil and from the spirit of evil, we must pray; “This kind is not cast out, but by prayer and fasting.”

Obviously prayer must be sincere. To ask for grace to overcome a passion without avoiding the occasions of sin, to ask for the grace of a happy death without trying to lead a better life, is not to formulate a true prayer, a true desire; it is scarcely indeed a vague wish. Prayer must also be humble, since it is the petition of a beggar. It must be confident, trusting in the mercy of God, never doubting His infinite goodness. It must be persevering to show that it springs from a profound desire of the heart. Occasionally God seems not to hear us immediately, that He, may try our confidence and the strength of our good desires, as Jesus tried the confidence of the woman of Canaan by severe words that appeared to be a refusal: “I was not sent but to the sheep that are lost of the house of Israel. . . . It is not good to take the bread of the children, and to cast it to the dogs.” Under divine inspiration, the woman of Canaan answered; “Yea, Lord; for the whelps also eat of the crumbs that fall from the table of their masters. Then Jesus answering, said to her: 0 woman, great is thy faith: be it done to thee as thou wilt. And her daughter was cured from that hour.”

If we have truly prayed with perseverance and if, in spite of our supplications, God leaves us to grapple with temptation; we should recall the example of St. Paul, who also asked repeatedly to be delivered from the sting of the flesh which tormented him. And he received this reply: “My grace is sufficient for thee.” With the Apostle, believing that this struggle is profitable for us, let us not cease to ask for grace, which alone can keep us from weakening. Let us thus, learn our indigence, that we are really poor and that it is fitting for a poor man to ask for aid. All his life a Christian must ask for the supernatural energy necessary to work out his salvation. The human soul cannot attain heaven unless it is propelled by God. Once it is launched on its way, it must fly. Prayer is like the beating of the wings of a little bird which has been thrown out of its nest and needs help.

As regards temporal blessings, prayer can obtain for us everything that in some way or other will assist us on our voyage to eternity: food, health, strength, prosperity. Prayer can obtain all, on condition that we ask first and foremost for grace to love God more: “Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven, and all these things will be added unto you.” Is prayer inefficacious because we have not succeeded in some undertaking? If we have prayed truly, we have not asked for this temporal favor in itself, but only in the measure in

which it would be useful to our salvation. If we have not obtained it, that is because we are to be saved without it. Our prayer is not lost; we have not obtained this temporal favor which was useless to us, but we have obtained or will obtain another more precious grace.

Humble, trusting, persevering prayer, by which we ask for the things necessary for salvation, is infallibly efficacious by virtue of our Lord's promise. God indeed commands us to work for our salvation. He adds: "Without Me (without My grace) you can do nothing"; "ask, and you shall receive." He promises that if we ask this grace of Him, He will give it to us. What is more, He causes this prayer to spring up in our hearts, and inclines us to ask Him for what He wills from all eternity to grant us. If such a prayer were not infallibly efficacious, salvation would be impossible. God would be commanding us to do something impossible of realization, and contradiction would exist in Him who is supreme truth and supreme goodness. A simple soul immediately understands Christ's words: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you." "And which of you, if he ask his father bread, will he give him a stone? or a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? . . . If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father from heaven give the good Spirit to them that ask Him?" Prayer is the breath of the soul.

Prayer is a more powerful force than all physical energies taken together, more powerful than money, than learning. Prayer can accomplish what all material things and all created spirits cannot do by their own natural powers. According to Pascal: "All bodies, the firmament and its stars, the earth and its kingdom, are not equal to the least of spirits . . . By assembling all material things one could not succeed in producing even a small thought. This is impossible and belongs to another order. . . . All material bodies together and all spirits, and all that they produce are not worth the slightest movement of charity, which belongs to an infinitely more elevated order." Prayer can obtain grace for us which will make us produce this act of charity.

Prayer thus plays an infinitely greater rôle in the world than the most amazing discovery. Who would presume to compare the influence exercised by an eminent scholar like Pasteur with that exercised through prayer by a St. Paul, a St. John, a St. Benedict, a St. Dominic, or a St. Francis?

Each immortal soul is worth more than the entire physical world. It is like a universe, since by its two superior faculties, intellect and will, it dwells on all things, even the Infinite. Prayer assures two things to souls striving to attain to God: supernatural light, which directs them; and divine energy, which urges them on. Without prayer darkness reigns in souls; they grow cold and die like extinguished stars. It is essential to trust in this force, which is of divine origin; to keep in mind whence it comes and whither it goes. It descends to us from eternity by a decree of infinite goodness, and it is to eternity that it again ascends.

II. COMMON PRAYER

Prayer is an elevation of the soul to God, by which we will in time what God from all eternity wills that we should ask of Him, namely, the different means of salvation, especially progress in charity. “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things will be added unto you.” But we feel the need of a more intimate prayer in which our soul, in deeper recollection, may come into contact with the Blessed Trinity dwelling in us. This we desire that we may receive more abundantly from the interior Master that light of life, which alone can make us penetrate and taste the mysteries of salvation, and reform our character by supernaturalizing it, by making it conformable to Him who invites us to seek peace of soul in humility and sweetness. This intimate prayer is mental prayer. This is the prayer that prepares for infused contemplation. We will briefly consider how to attain this acquired prayer, and how to persevere in it.

Our Lord tells us in the Gospel: “And when ye pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites that love to stand and pray in the synagogues and corners of the streets that they may be seen by men . . . But thou when thou shalt pray, enter into thy chamber, and having shut the door, pray to thy Father in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret, will repay thee.” St. Teresa says simply: “Mental prayer is nothing else, in my opinion, but being on terms of friendship with God, frequently conversing in secret with Him who, we know, loves us.” Truly simple Christian souls are acquainted with spontaneous, intimate prayer. A certain peasant, questioned by the Curé of Ars, gave an excellent definition of it. The Curé, noticing that he remained silent, without even moving his lips, during long periods of adoration, asked

him what he said to our Lord during those hours of recollection. “Oh, I don’t say anything to Him,” replied the peasant; “I look at Him, and He looks at me.” This is that interior prayer which was so often the prayer of the Christians of the catacombs, and of all the saints, long before modern treatises on meditation.

What is more simple than prayer? Its spontaneity is sometimes lost by the use of methods that are too complicated. They may be useful to beginners, but they are apt to provoke an excessive reaction in many souls. The latter, wearied by this complexity, sometimes sink into a pious reverie without any real profit. The truth, here as elsewhere, is above these two extreme errors and lies in a happy medium. A method is useful in the beginning, especially as a means of preventing distractions. But if we are to keep it from becoming an obstacle, rather than a help, it must be simple; instead of breaking the spontaneity and continuity of prayer, it must simply describe the elevation of the soul toward God. It must merely indicate the essential acts which compose this movement.

What are these acts? Evidently prayer is more than an act of the intellect like a simple study. Speculative souls, curious about the things of God, are not for that reason contemplative souls or prayerful souls. In their reflections they may experience a pleasure far surpassing that of the senses; but this pleasure often comes merely from their knowledge, and not from charity. They are moved by a love of knowledge much more than by the love of God. This pleasure sometimes increases their pride and self-love. Study and speculation do not necessarily suppose the state of grace and charity, and do not always assist in developing this state. Prayer, on the contrary, must proceed from the love of God and must end in Him. The contemplation of God is desired out of love for Him, and the contemplation of His goodness and beauty increases love. Moreover, love of God in this life, as we have seen, is more perfect than the knowledge of God. Charity is more perfect than faith, because knowledge in a way draws God down to us and, as it were, reduces Him to the measure of our ideas; whereas love draws us towards God, elevates us to Him, unites us to Him. And, as long as we are deprived of the beatific vision, it is charity especially which unites us to God and constitutes the bond of perfection. Consequently this virtue must have first place in our soul. The soul must lift itself to God on the wings of the intellect, and the will aided by grace. Therefore prayer is a movement of supernatural knowledge and love.

What are the essential acts of prayer? That it may be the lifting up of the whole soul to God, prayer must be preceded by an act of humility and must proceed from the three theological virtues, which unite us to God, animate the virtue of religion, and obtain for us the illuminations and inspirations of the Holy Ghost. The soul flies, so to speak, like a bird by the effort of its wings, but the breath of the Holy Ghost sustains this effort, and often carries the soul higher than it could go by its own virtues. We will consider these different acts of prayer. In the perfect they are often simultaneous and continuous; but, in describing them, we will enumerate them one after the other as they appear to beginners.

Prayer should begin with an act of humility, a fundamental virtue, for every prayer should be humble. When we begin to converse with God, we should recall what we are. Of ourselves we can do nothing and less than nothing, since our sins are a disorder inferior to nothingness itself. The basic virtue of humility removes pride, which is the chief obstacle to grace. Humility does not crush us; it leads us to adoration and reminds us that in a very fragile vessel we bear an infinitely precious treasure, sanctifying grace and the Trinity dwelling in us. We do well to think of this truth at the outset, so that our prayer may not proceed from vain sentimentality, but from grace itself which is infinitely superior to our emotions. We should humbly adore the Blessed Trinity who vivifies us interiorly. Adoration is one of the first acts of the virtue of religion, which is quite naturally joined to that of humility.

This act of humility should be followed by an act of faith, a very simple, wordless, deep, and prolonged act on some fundamental truth, such as: God, His perfections, His goodness; our Lord, the mysteries of His life, passion, and glory; or again our great duties, sin, our vocation, the duties of our state in life, our last end. These subjects should recur frequently. On feast days the liturgy suggests the subject. For this consideration of faith, some words of the Gospel or of the divine office suffice. St. John of the Cross taught his disciples to spend very little time on the representation of figures formed in the imagination, but to elevate themselves by discursive acts to the consideration of the mystery itself in the light of faith: for example, to the consideration of what constitutes the price of Christ’s sufferings, His redeeming love which is of infinite value. It is not necessary to reason much, because the simple act of theological faith is superior to reasoning. It becomes more and more a simple gaze, which ought to be accompanied by

admiration and love. This faith, which is higher than all philosophical or theological speculation, makes us adhere infallibly and supernaturally to the mysteries, which the elect contemplate in heaven. In this sense it is, as St. Paul says, “the substance of things to be hoped for.” Its obscurity does not hinder it from being infallibly certain. It is the first light of our interior life. I believe what God has revealed, because He has revealed it. This Credo seems at times to become a Video. We see from afar the fountain of living water.

This act of faith in the divine truth, which is being considered, gives rise naturally to an act of hope. We desire beatitude, the peace promised by God to those who follow Jesus Christ. We see clearly, however, that by our own natural strength, we shall not be able to realize this supernatural ideal. Then, turning to the infinitely helpful goodness of God, we ask His grace. This is supplication, the ordinary language of hope, the formal motive of which is the divine help, Deus auxilians. After uttering its Credo, the soul is led spontaneously to say; desidero, sitio, spero. Having seen from afar the fountain of living water, we desire to attain it that we may drink long draughts from it: “As the hart panteth after fountains of living water, so doth my soul pant after Thee, 0 God.”

The act of hope in its turn disposes us to an act of charity; for confidence in God’s help makes us reflect that He is good in Himself and not only because of His favors. Then spontaneously an act of charity arises in us, at first under an affective form. If in this act our feelings offer us their inferior assistance, we should accept it. It may indeed be useful, on condition that it remains subordinated; but it is not necessary, since it disappears in aridity. We are here speaking of a calm but profound affection, which is surer and richer than superficial emotions. It expresses itself somewhat in this manner: My God, I no longer wish to lie by telling Thee that I love Thee. Grant that I may love Thee and please Thee in all things. Diligo.

This affective charity should finally become effective charity. It may take this form of expression: I wish to conform my will to Thine, O good God; to break whatever renders me the slave of sin, of pride, of selfishness, of sensuality. I wish, O Lord, to participate more and more fully in the divine life Thou dost offer me, for Thou didst come that we might have life in abundance. Increase my love; Thou dost ask only to give, and I in turn wish to receive as Thou desirest me to do, in trial as well as in consolation, whether Thou dost come to me to associate me with the joyful or the

sorrowful mysteries of Thy earthly life, for all lead to eternal life which will unite us forever. I resolve today to be faithful to Thee in this matter which I have so often neglected. Volo.

In this culminating point of prayer, the knowledge of faith and the love of hope and charity tend under the divine influence to fuse into a gaze of supernatural love. As we shall see, this gaze is nascent contemplation, an eminent source of action; it is Christian contemplation dwelling on God and our Lord, as an artist's contemplation dwells on nature, and that of a mother on the face of her child.

This loving contemplation supposes an inspiration of the Holy Ghost. His gifts, especially the gift of wisdom, which we received in baptism and which increases in us with charity, render us particularly docile to these good inspirations. Thus the Holy Ghost answers the prayer which He inspired. From time to time, He makes Himself felt by us as the soul of our soul, the life of our life; He "asketh for us with unspeakable groanings," as St. Paul says. It is He who makes us cry "Abba, Father" to our Father in heaven and, after letting us taste the beauty and riches of the mysteries of salvation, gives us a quasi-experimental knowledge of His presence and leads us to that fountain of living water which is Himself; there we may drink the light of life without the intermediary of human reasoning even though it is always in the obscurity of faith. "Taste and see that the Lord is sweet." How the Gospel fulfils our aspirations, surpasses them, and elevates them!

The knowledge of truths about the historic life of Christ which are preserved in our memory is superseded by the living, and as it were experimental, knowledge of God's action in us, of the actual influence of Christ's humanity which transmits all grace to us, and of the presence of the Blessed Trinity in our souls. Prayer, thus introduces us into the intimacy of love. Nothing is better able to correct our defects of character, give us a keen desire to resemble our Lord, lead us to imitate Him in everything, and arouse the highest virtues in us. Some characters will succeed in reforming themselves only by the loving contemplation of the divine Master; for we imitate those whom we love, without being conscious of doing so.

Prayer is, "the intercourse of friendship by which the soul often converses alone with God, knowing that it is loved by Him." "My Beloved to me, and I to Him." The acts of humility, faith, hope, and charity, and the influx of the gifts of the Holy Ghost tend, in proportion as the soul grows,

to fuse into a gaze of ardent love. Consequently methods useful at the beginning must increasingly give place to docility to the Holy Ghost, who breathes where He will.

Prayer tends to become a prolonged spiritual communion: “I look at our Lord, and He looks at me.” As the fathers have said, it is truly the repose of the soul in God, or the respiration of the soul which breathes in the truth, and beauty of God by faith and breathes out love. What it receives from God under the form of grace, it returns to Him as adoration. This prayer, as we shall see farther on, is a disposition to contemplation. For the moment it will suffice to quote St. Teresa: “Those who are able thus to enclose themselves within the little heaven where dwells the Creator of both heaven and earth. . . . May feel sure that they are travelling by an excellent way, and that they will certainly attain to drink the water from the fountain, for they will journey far in a short time. They resemble a man who goes by sea, and who, if the weather is favorable, gets in a few days to the end of a voyage which would have taken far longer by land. These souls may be said to have already been put out to sea.”

This method, or rather this very simple manner of making prayer, by recalling the necessity of the acts of the three theological virtues, makes it possible to unite the simplicity of prayer, as described by the ancient writers, with what is useful in the teaching of more recent masters. It is easy to make acts of faith, hope, and charity on all subjects. But if no subject attracts us, and if, on the other hand, we do not feel ourselves sufficiently united to God, to avoid loss of time and to flee distractions, we will do well to follow St. Teresa’s advice and meditate as slowly as possible on the Our Father. This is the greatest of prayers; composed by our Lord, it contains all possible petitions in a perfect order. We often recite it during the day, but so rapidly as not to taste all it contains. It is the true conversation of the soul. Let us say it with Christ who taught it to us. The first three petitions correspond exactly, as St. Thomas says, to the three acts of faith, hope, and charity, which we have pointed out.

Our Father who art in heaven. Thou art also in us, for our souls are a heaven which is still in darkness.

Hallowed be Thy name. Glorified, that is, recognized and adored (gloria est clara notitia cum laude). May Thy word be accepted by a living and unshakable faith. Credo.

Thy kingdom come. This is the object of our hope, which rests especially on Thy infinitely helpful goodness. May this reign be more and more established in me and round about me. Sitio, spero.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. May our will, like that of the saints in heaven, be conformable to Thine.

This is the greatest desire of affective and effective charity, which also asks for the daily bread of the Eucharist, and the forgiveness of sins. This charity also forgives the offenses committed by our neighbor, and it makes us ask to be kept from sin in the future. It is the elevation of the soul to God; in the morning before work, at night before sleep, and as often as possible during the day, at least by some short ejaculation. If at times we are not able to meditate on the Our Father in this simple manner and cannot succeed in freeing ourselves from distractions, finding only aridity, it is well for us to practice affective prayer. This prayer consists simply in willing to be in that condition so as to love our Lord more than ourselves; willing to remain thus abandoned to His divine will, accepting our powerlessness and uniting ourselves to Christ in the abandonment which He experienced while on earth, in Gethsemane and on the cross, and which He still experiences in the Blessed Sacrament. This prayer, which sometimes resembles a purgatory, is not inertia; on the contrary, it is distinguished from it by the vigilance of love. It is very fruitful, since merit has its source in charity, and the end of prayer is not so much the forming of lofty considerations as the uniting of our souls to God, in Christ Jesus, in our sufferings as well as in our joys. Many intimate friends of our Lord are for many years associated in this manner with the sufferings of His heart. He makes them share in the sorrowful life, which He led on earth before communicating to them His glorious life for eternity. A Christian soul is thus, led to the “love of God even to the despising of self,” or at least to forgetfulness of self, and absorption in the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

III. HOW TO ATTAIN TO A LIFE OF PRAYER AND PERSEVERE IN IT

We have demonstrated what common prayer, which tends to become more and more simple should be. How can one attain this prayer and persevere in it? First of all, we must confess that even common prayer, it depends chiefly on the grace of God, and consequently, the soul prepares for it less by mechanical processes than by humility. God gives His grace to

the humble. “Unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” It is the little ones that God is pleased to instruct interiorly; humble souls like the peasant of Ars. In addition to the cultivation of humility, we must prepare ourselves for a life of prayer by mortification, and detachment from sensible things and from self. Evidently, if our minds are preoccupied with worldly affairs and our souls disturbed by too human an affection, by jealousy, rash judgment, and the memory of wrongs we have suffered from others; we shall not be able to converse with our Lord. If in the course of the day we have criticized our superiors, in the evening we cannot feel united to God.

It is evident that all inordinate inclinations must be mortified, so that charity may take the first place in our souls and rise spontaneously to God. On all occasions, in suffering or in consolation, we must form the habit of raising our hearts to God and of blessing the coming hour. Silence must reign in our souls, and our passions must be suppressed, if we are to hear the interior Master who speaks in a low voice as friend to friend. If we are habitually concerned with ourselves, how shall we taste the sweetness of the Trinity, the incarnation, the redemption, and the Eucharist?

All this work may be called a remote preparation for prayer. It is, however, far more important than the immediate preparation and the choice of a subject. The purpose of the immediate preparation is merely to stir up the fire of charity, which ought never to be extinguished in us and which must be nourished by a continual generosity. In this way very simple and fervent souls may reduce the immediate preparation to a minimum and may often during manual labor, make fervent mental prayer of habitual conformity to the will of God.

It is not sufficient to attain to a life of prayer; we must persevere in it. By persevering effort the soul is sure to make great gain; without it, everything may be lost. Perseverance is not an easy task, for we must struggle against self, against spiritual laziness, and against the devil, who inclines us to discouragement. Even among the far advanced, how many souls have turned back when deprived of the first consolations they received. St. Catherine of Genoa, who devoted herself to prayer from the age of thirteen and made great progress in it, abandoned the interior life after five years of sufferings. For five years she neglected the interior life. But one day she felt keenly the frightful emptiness of her soul, and the desire for prayer revived in her. God received her back instantly. After fourteen years of terrible

penance, she was granted the assurance that she had fully satisfied the divine justice. “If I should turn back,” she used to say, “I should wish someone to tear out my eyes, and even that would not seem sufficient punishment.”

Other souls, after struggling for a long time, become discouraged, says St. Teresa, when they are within a few steps of the fountain of living water. They fall back and, since without prayer they no longer have the strength to carry the cross, they lapse into a superficial life in which others might perhaps be saved, but in which they run the risk of being lost because their powers will carry them to excesses. The measureless love of God permitted and even asked excess of them; but this same excess, if indulged outside of God, would be their ruin. For certain souls of a naturally lofty turn, mediocrity is impossible; either they give themselves wholly to God, or wholly to themselves in opposition to God. They wish to enjoy their ego and their abilities and, as a result, run the risk of setting up self instead of God as their absolute end. The angels can know only ardent charity or unpardonable mortal sin. Venial sin, according to St. Thomas, is impossible for them because “from their very nature they can have no inordinateness in respect of the means, unless at the same time they have inordinateness in respect of the end, and this is a mortal sin.” Angels or devils, very holy or very wicked, for them there is no other alternative. Certain souls have something angelic about them; for them it is very dangerous not to persevere in prayer, or at least to be at prayer only bodily without any act of true love. This amounts to the abandonment of interior life, perhaps ruin.

The saints tell us that, if we are to persevere, we must, first of all, hope in our Lord who calls all devout souls to the living waters of prayer. On this point we will consider particularly the testimony of St. Teresa. In the second place; we must humbly allow ourselves to be led along the road which our Lord has chosen for us.

1) We must hope, with trust in our guide. We fail in this confidence when, after the first aridity, we say that prayer is not for us. We might just as well say with the Jansenists that frequent communion is not for us, but only for a few great saints. Our Lord calls all souls to this intercourse of friendship with Him. As He says, He is the good shepherd who leads His sheep to the eternal pastures that they may feed on every word of God. In the midst of these pastures is the fountain of living waters, which Jesus spoke of to the Samaritan woman, who was, nevertheless, a sinner; “If thou

didst know the gift of God, and who He is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink, thou perhaps wouldst have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water. . . . He that shall drink of the water that I will give him, shall not thirst forever. But the water that I will give him, shall become in him a fountain of water springing up into life everlasting." At Jerusalem on a certain festival day, Jesus stood in the Temple and cried out to all: "If any man thirst, let him come to Me, and drink_ He that believeth in Me, as the Scripture saith, Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Later on our Lord explains that this fountain of living water is the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, whom He will send to us, and who will make us penetrate and taste the intimate meaning of the gospel.

According to St. Paul, the Holy Ghost dwells in us by charity. Therefore He is in every soul in the state of grace. He dwells in the soul not to remain idle, but rather to make Himself its interior master by His seven gifts, which develop in proportion as charity grows in the soul. The growth of charity should continue until death, without any assigned limit. Our failure to understand the holy inspirations of the interior Master is probably due to the fact that we listen to ourselves, that we are not humble enough, and desirous of the reign of God in our souls.

2) The second element necessary for perseverance in prayer is that we allow ourselves to be led by the road that our Lord has chosen for us. The great highway is the road of humility and conformity to the divine will. All should pray as the publican did. Along this road, however, are stony spots and level stretches, some sections covered with grass, others burned by the sun, and still others shady. The good Shepherd leads His sheep as He judges best: some by the way of parables, others by that of reasoning, before bringing them to simple intuition in the obscurity of faith. He leaves some souls for a long time in difficult spots for the purpose of inuring them to hardships. Our Lord raises Marys to contemplation sooner than He does Marthas. The former find in contemplation interior sufferings unknown to the latter; but these, if they are faithful, will reach the living waters and will quench their thirst according to their desires.

We will now consider what these living waters are, because they are the symbol of contemplation.

ARTICLE II

I. SO-CALLED ACQUIRED CONTEMPLATION AND INFUSED CONTEMPLATION

Contemplation in general, such as may exist in a non-Christian philosopher, for example, in Plato or Aristotle, is a simple, intellectual view of the truth, superior to reasoning and accompanied by admiration, simplex intuitus veritatis, as St. Thomas says. An example of this contemplation is the admiring knowledge of that supreme truth of philosophy, namely, that at the summit of all composite and changeable beings, there exists absolutely simple and immutable being itself, the principle and end of all things. It has not received existence; it is of itself existence, truth, wisdom, goodness, love, just as, in the physical order, light of itself is light and has no need to be illumined; just as heat of itself is heat. Reason by its own strength, with the natural help of God, may rise to this contemplation.

The contemplation of the faithful is, on the contrary, founded on divine revelation received through faith. Although faith is an infused gift of God received at baptism, several theologians admit to the faithful a so-called “acquired” contemplation. They generally define it as a simple and loving knowledge of God and of His works, which is the fruit of our personal activity aided by grace. They usually agree that this so-called “acquired” contemplation exists in a theologian at the end of his research, in the synthetic view which he reaches; or in a preacher who sees his entire sermon in one thought, and in the faithful who listen attentively to this sermon, grasp its order, admire its unity and, as a result, taste the great truth of faith which they see in its radiation.

In these cases we have a certain contemplation which is, with the help of grace, the fruit of human activity, of our reflection, or of the meditation of the author we are reading or the preacher we are listening to. Grace and the theological virtues certainly enter in. Even the gifts of the Holy Ghost exercise a latent influence. But if well ordered human activity were lacking, the soul would not reach this contemplation, which is therefore called “acquired.” A poorly prepared sermon, lacking order, vigor, or unction, will produce the contrary effect and will weary most of the hearers. In an order quite superior to philosophical speculation, many of the faithful can by reading and meditation experience the deep meaning of these words of God: “I am who am . . . God is a spirit, and they that adore Him, must adore Him

in spirit and in truth. . . . God is charity: and he that abideth in charity abideth in God and God in him."

Since the loving contemplation of God is not the fruit of human activity aided by grace, it cannot be called acquired, but rather must be called infused. For example, in a poorly arranged, lifeless sermon, that merely tires most of the listeners, the preacher may, however, quote an expression of our Lord which profoundly seizes a soul, captivates it, and absorbs it for an hour. That is an example of contemplation, which is not the fruit of the preacher's human activity or of personal reflection; it springs from a manifest divine inspiration. It is called infused. Why? Not only because it springs from infused virtues; this, was also the case with so-called "acquired" contemplation. Nor is it called "infused" in this sense, that the very act of contemplation is infused or directly produced by God alone in us; it would then no longer be a vital, free, and meritorious act. It is called infused, and also passive in this sense that, it is not in our power to produce this act at will, like an ordinary act of faith. We can only receive the divine inspiration with docility, and dispose ourselves to it by pious recollection. "This infused or passive contemplation is in us without our deliberation, though not indeed without our consent.

This infused contemplation is also called supernatural because it is so by its very nature (reduplicative ut sic) not only as regards the substance of the act, like the act of infused faith, but as regards the mode, which in this case is the superhuman mode of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, a mode no longer latent, but manifest. This essentially infused contemplation begins with what St. Teresa calls the prayer of passive recollection, and what St. John of the Cross calls the passive night of the senses; in other words, at the beginning of the mystical life, strictly so called. Whence, it follows that essentially mystical contemplation is that which is manifestly passive, in the sense we have indicated, if it lasts and becomes frequent as in the mystical state.

All we have just said about the meaning of the words "acquired contemplation," and "infused contemplation," is generally accepted. But the expression, "acquired contemplation" is not found in the writings of the great masters. According to them, contemplation properly so called, is infused, and they simply call it contemplation. St. John of the Cross says: "Contemplation is a science of love; it is an infused, loving knowledge of

God.” St. Teresa, St. Francis de Sales, and St. Jane de Chantal, hold the same opinion.

Canon Saudreau observes that Thomas of Jesus (1564_ 1627), in his book De contemplatione divina, was the first Carmelite to speak of an acquired contemplation as a degree of prayer intermediate between affective meditation and infused contemplation. He adds: “The same author, in the prologue of his first work, divided prayer into two classes: acquired prayer (meditation) and infused prayer (contemplation). This division is correct and entirely conformable to the doctrine of St. Teresa. This prologue, found in the editions of 1610, 1613, 1616, and 1623, were suppressed in the later editions of 1665 and 1725, undoubtedly because the doctrine exposed therein, does not conform to that which recognizes a non-mystical contemplation.”

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, glosses were introduced into the works of St. John of the Cross to defend them against unjust charges of illuminism. These glosses often attenuated the meaning of the terms. Indeed certain authors maintained that the saint had treated only acquired contemplation, which is inferior to the infused contemplation spoken of by St. Teresa. The meaning of these terms were not clearly fixed at this time. Some even claimed that acquired contemplation is the summit, or the term of the normal development of the interior life, and that infused contemplation is absolutely extraordinary, like graces gratis datae, and that consequently it could not be desired without presumption. This was in particular the teaching of Anthony of the Annunciation, C.D.; but on this point, he was not followed by the Carmelite theologians, as may be clearly seen from what another well-known Discalced Carmelite, Joseph of the Holy Ghost, says of him.

These difficulties and divergences explain the reservations of certain authors. In their eagerness to preserve St. Teresa’s teaching, they are reluctant to admit a degree of prayer which she probably did not mention. And in fact we would be creating a degree of prayer not referred to by St. Teresa, and would be opposing her explicit teaching, if by acquired contemplation we meant a prayer distinct from simplified affective prayer, a prayer in which the intelligence would be completely absorbed by its object, and which the soul would attain by the suppression of all rational activity. As a matter of fact, the saint repeatedly opposes the total

suppression of reasoning and thought, as long as one has not received infused contemplation.

Such is not, however, the Carmelite theologians' conception of acquired contemplation. Their detailed descriptions of it show that, the prayer they have in mind corresponds to what St. Teresa in The Way of Perfection (chap. 28) calls "the (acquired) prayer of recollection," a prayer in which intellectual activity is simplified, but not suppressed. These theologians call this prayer contemplation, because the act of simple intellectual intuition is frequent and predominant in it, and meditation, on the other hand, is reduced. This conception removes the substance of the difficulty, and the question becomes one of terminology.

As a rule the Carmelite theologians who admit the existence of acquired contemplation have been right in refusing to see in it the normal term of spiritual progress on this earth. According to them, in generous souls truly faithful to the Holy Ghost, it is a proximate disposition to receive infused contemplation normally. Different opinions have been brought forward as to the time when infused contemplation begins; certain authors link quiet, and even spiritual intoxication, with acquired contemplation. But anyone who reads carefully the third chapter of the fourth mansion, will see that contemplation begins with the prayer of supernatural recollection, which we cannot obtain for ourselves by our own activity aided by grace, and which almost always precedes the supernatural prayer of quiet. This supernatural recollection is quite different from the acquired prayer of recollection, which is the fruit of our activity, and which St. Teresa speaks of. It is altogether untenable to say that acquired contemplation is that in which we can place ourselves by our own industry, and to include in its supernatural recollection, quiet, spiritual intoxication, and mystical sleep. And if the expression, "acquired contemplation" is applied to what St. Teresa, when treating of acquired prayer, calls "the prayer of recollection," her doctrine is kept without preserving her terms; because in her writings, as we shall see later on, the word "contemplation" designates infused contemplation.

It would be difficult to improve on St. Teresa's description of the essential difference separating the last acquired prayer from the first infused prayer, and the passage from one to the other. Speaking of "the (acquired) prayer of recollection," which has often since been called "affective prayer," she says: "This kind of prayer has many advantages. It is called 'recollection,' because by its means the soul collects together all the

faculties and enters within itself to be with God. The divine Master thus, comes more speedily than He otherwise would teach it and to grant it the prayer of quiet. . . . Those, who are able to enclose themselves within the little heaven of their souls, where dwells the Creator of both heaven and earth, and who can accustom themselves not to look at anything, nor to remain in any place which would preoccupy their exterior senses, may feel sure that they are travelling in the right direction, and that they will certainly attain to drink the water from the fountain, for they will journey far in a short time. They resemble a man who goes by sea and who, if the weather is favorable, gets in a few days to the end of a voyage, which would have taken far longer by land. These souls may be said to have already put out to sea, and though they have not quite lost sight of terra firma, still they do their best to get away from it by collecting their faculties."

In the following chapter St. Teresa states dearly the nature of this last acquired prayer and shows in it a disposition to receive infused contemplation. She says: "I advise whoever wishes to acquire this habit (which, as I said, we have the power to gain) not to grow tired of persevering in trying gradually to obtain the mastery over herself. . . . I know that, with His help, if you practice it for a year, or perhaps for only six months, you will gain it. Think what a short time that is for so great an advantage as laying this firm foundation, so that if our Lord wishes to raise you to a high degree of prayer, He will find you prepared for it, since you keep close to Him. May His Majesty never allow us to withdraw from His presence. Amen." Speaking of this acquired prayer of recollection, she says: "You must understand that this is not a supernatural state, but something which, with the grace of God, we can desire and obtain for ourselves. This 'grace' is always implied whenever I say, in this book, that we are able to do anything, for without it we can do nothing—nothing nor could we, by any strength of our own, think a single good thought. This is not what is called silence of the powers; it is a recollection within the soul itself."

On the contrary, the supernatural recollection described in The Interior Castle, is not in our power with the help of God, and does not depend on our will. St. Teresa says it is a prayer, which almost always precedes the supernatural prayer of quiet: "This is a recollection which also seems supernatural to me. It neither consists in placing oneself in a dark corner, nor in closing one's eyes; it in no way depends on exterior things. And yet,

without wishing to do so, one closes one's eyes and desires solitude. Then the palace of prayer of which I have just spoken is built, so it seems to me, but without the labor of human art. . . . The King, who holds His court within it, seeing their good will, out of His great mercy is kind enough to recall them to Him, (the senses and the powers). Like a good Shepherd, He makes them hear His voice, and He plays so sweetly on His pipe, they scarcely hear it. He invites them to desist from their wanderings, and return to their former dwelling. This piping of the Shepherd has such power over them, that forsaking the exterior things which captivated them, they re-enter the castle. I think I have never put this matter so clearly before.

"When God bestows this grace, it helps greatly to seek God in oneself. . . . But do not fancy that this recollection can be obtained by the work of the understanding, by forcing yourself to think of God dwelling within you, or by that of the imagination by picturing Him as present in your soul. This is a good practice and a very excellent kind of meditation, because it is founded on the indisputable truth that God dwells within us. It is not, however, the prayer of recollection, for by the divine assistance everyone can practice it. What I mean is quite a different thing. Sometimes even before they have begun to think of God, the powers of the soul find themselves within the castle. . . . Here this act does not depend on our will; it takes place only when God sees fit to give us this grace. In my opinion His Majesty only bestows this favor on those who have renounced the world. . . . He thus specially calls them to devote themselves to spiritual things. Moreover, I am convinced that if they allow Him power to act freely, He will bestow still greater graces on those whom he thus, evidently calls to a higher life." The saint adds that if God has not yet granted this grace, she cannot well understand, "how we are to stop thinking, without doing ourselves more harm than good.

Supernatural recollection is manifestly a mystical prayer, the beginning of infused contemplation. It would be difficult to show more definitely how it differs from the acquired prayer of recollection, often called simplified affective prayer. St. Teresa also clearly indicates how the transition is made from one to the other.

This transition is also described by Bossuet, but he does not show so plainly the distinction between the last acquired prayer, and the first infused prayer.

If the phrase “acquired contemplation” is applied to the last of the acquired prayers, called by St. Teresa “the prayer of recollection,” the saint’s doctrine is kept, but not her terms; for, like all great mystics, by the word “contemplation,” she means infused contemplation. We can easily become convinced of this by reading the sections of her works where she begins to use this word. Evidently also St. John of the Cross is speaking of infused contemplation in The Dark Night of the Soul when he describes God’s action, and our passivity. The contemplation he describes in his earlier work, The Ascent of Mount Carmel, is not specifically different. In this study he sets forth the part we can take in it, and shows that, though we cannot procure infused contemplation by our efforts, we can place obstacles in its way, or, on the contrary, dispose ourselves for it and favor its exercise. The Discalced Carmelite, Nicholas of Jesus Mary, was quite right in his opinion that, beginning with Part I, Bk. II, chapter 13, of The Ascent of Mount Carmel, infused contemplation is clearly meant. St. Francis de Sales, the Carmelites, John of Jesus Mary, C.D., and Michael de la Fuente also place infused contemplation immediately after meditation, without mentioning acquired contemplation as a special degree of prayer.

Spiritual writers of the Middle Ages expressed the same teaching. We find in particular that St. Bonaventure, Tauler, and Louis de Blois mean infused contemplation by the words contemplatio divina, or quite simply contemplatio. Moreover, authors on all sides who are anxious to return to traditional terminology think that contemplation, properly so called, is infused.

If by the expression, “acquired contemplation” something other than simplified affective prayer, called by St. Teresa the “(acquired) prayer of recollection,” is meant, and if the supernatural prayers that are beyond our power, (which she describes in the fourth and fifth mansions) are classed in this group, then violence is offered to her words and opposition to the authorities we have just quoted. Moreover, numerous difficulties, the chief of which we shall point out, would be encountered.

1) It is explicable that there may be a certain acquired contemplation at the end of a captivating study, or reading when the soul is suspended in admiration of the divine truths, which it discovers or which are proposed to it. Thus, the philosopher and the theologian have it as the fruit of their study. It may also exist in a simple Christian while he is listening to a good sermon, or at the end of meditation. During the psalmody or during mass

and the liturgical chant, it may exist in souls that are accustomed to meditation on divine things, but have not yet received the grace of infused contemplation. The variety of the divine office favors a certain activity of the superior and inferior faculties, inclining us to taste the word of God. But in the prayer of the simple presence of God, where the object known is almost always the same, if the soul is really captivated in its superior faculties, this state is no longer the fruit of human activity, for one is not captivated at will. It is the result of a special grace of light and attraction which is the germ of infused contemplation.

2) It may be said that the soul remains captivated by the intensity of its love, without anything new in the consideration of the object attracting it. But this intense love normally supposes a lively and penetrating knowledge of the goodness of God, and is a proximate and immediate disposition to receive the grace of infused contemplation. This consideration leads Father Arintero to think that so-called acquired contemplation is rare in prayer, or at least that it lasts but a short time in generous souls; for when the soul reaches this stage, God, finding it disposed to receive the action of the Holy Ghost, gives it a beginning of infused contemplation.

3) Acquired contemplation excludes distractions, or ceases when they begin. This is what happens to a philosopher or theologian. As the great mystical writers commonly teach, initial contemplation is often accompanied by distractions of the imagination, yet it lasts in spite of these ramblings. St. Teresa explains this at length when she speaks of quiet. This initial contemplation is not, therefore, the fruit of the activity of our intellect directing the imagination, but the effect of a special inspiration of the Holy Ghost fixing our mind in spite of the movement of the inferior faculties.

4) Those who admit acquired contemplation as a special state of prayer between simplified affective prayer and infused contemplation, say there is in acquired contemplation an influence in the gifts of the Holy Ghost, latent as yet, but more marked than in discursive meditation. It seems difficult to distinguish this influence from that, which produces initial infused contemplation, or incompletely passive prayer, called by St. Teresa, supernatural recollection and quiet. Since the latter is not in our power, it cannot be called acquired.

5) Finally, St. Teresa observes with great insistence in the same passage, when speaking of supernatural recollection, which is the beginning of infused contemplation, that as long as anyone has not received this gift, he

must “be careful not to check the movement of the mind . . . and to remain there like a dolt.” If she admitted acquired contemplation as an intermediate state of prayer between simplified affective meditation and initial infused contemplation, she would grant that the soul can “stop the deliberation of the mind” before receiving “supernatural” or passive “recollection.” If anyone were to do this, in St. Teresa’s opinion he would be guilty of thrusting himself into the mystical ways, as do the quietists, who in reality remain there “like dolts.”

To acquired contemplation, which the quietists continually recommended to everybody, they applied what the saints say about infused contemplation. This mistake was one of their principal errors. They presumptuously thrust themselves into the mystical or passive ways, and they “remained there like dolts,” to use St. Teresa’s expression. In the twenty-third proposition of Molinos, which has been condemned, it is evident that he applied the term contemplatio acquisita to that which he continually recommended, and which, according to his teaching, precedes infused contemplation, which he considered a very special favor. At any rate, he simulated the passive state before the hour willed by God.

As Father Dudon, S.J., has justly observed, Molinos believed that St. John of the Cross, in The Ascent of Mount Carmel, spoke only of acquired contemplation. From this contemplation, wrongly termed acquired, he took the rule of passivity and also made from it an acquired passivity also. By applying this passivity to a prayer, which in reality was ascetical, he introduced it into all of asceticism, which thereafter was, so to speak, suppressed.

In consideration of all these reasons, we do not believe that so-called acquired contemplation is a special state of prayer, distinct from simplified affective prayer, called by St. Teresa “the (acquired) prayer of recollection.” What the great mystics understand by “contemplation” is undoubtedly infused contemplation.

II. THE ORDINARY AND THE EXTRAORDINARY IN THE SUPERNATURAL LIFE

In order to learn whether infused or characteristically mystical contemplation is extraordinary or whether it is ordinarily granted to the perfect, we must clearly define these terms.

In the supernatural life, whatever is outside the normal way of sanctity and not at all necessary to attain it, is, strictly speaking, essentially, or by its nature, extraordinary. For example, graces gratis datae, such as the gift of prophecy, of tongues, of miracles, the gift of expressing the loftiest mysteries of religion (sermo sapientiae), are in no way necessary for personal holiness. They are granted primarily for the good of others, although they may, secondarily help in the sanctification of him who receives them, if he uses them with charity. The beatific vision, received in a transitory manner before death, as St. Paul seems to have received it, (according to the opinion of St. Augustine and St. Thomas), is with even greater reason essentially extraordinary, a miraculous conversion, which without any previous preparation instantly purifies the soul and introduces it immediately into the mystical life, such as the conversion of St. Paul, is also essentially extraordinary. Likewise the grace of the transforming union or of the spiritual marriage granted from childhood, that is, at the age of six or seven, to certain saints, is manifestly extraordinary. Less elevated mystical graces bestowed on souls still imperfect, before they have the dispositions ordinarily required, are extraordinary in a lesser degree.

On the contrary, in the supernatural life whatever belongs to the normal way of sanctity and in the majority of cases is absolutely or morally necessary to attain it, is essentially ordinary. In other words, whatever in the supernatural life is accomplished in accordance with even the superior laws of its full development, is ordinary in itself, though these laws are infinitely more elevated than those of our nature. This is why the beatific vision after death, although entirely supernatural, is not an extraordinary gift; it is the normal crowning of the life of grace, such as God has gratuitously willed it for us all. But we are not to conclude that the majority of men will reach this very high end. “Many are called, but few are chosen.” The elect in heaven will evidently be an élite, as the name indicates, but élite chosen from men of all classes, to which we should all eagerly desire to belong.

Likewise here on earth, the summit in the normal development of the Life of grace, no matter how elevated, should not be called essentially extraordinary (per se), although it may be rare or extraordinary in fact, like the perfect generosity which it supposes. This summit is called sanctity, even lofty sanctity, which implies heroic virtues. Before reaching it, we can have certain perfection, but it is not yet the full perfection to which the life of grace is essentially ordained. Just as a distinction is made between

beginners, proficient's, and the perfect, so among the latter a distinction must be drawn between those who have just entered upon the unitive way, those who are more advanced in it, and finally those who have reached the plenitude of perfection, lofty sanctity, which alone deserves to be called the culminating point in the development of the life of grace.

It follows, then, whatever in the majority of cases is either absolutely or morally necessary to attain this summit, is not essentially extraordinary. On the contrary, these things belong to and make up the plenitude of the normal order willed by God. In studying this point, we must take care not to confound what is eminently useful for reaching sanctity in the majority of cases, with what is observed in the majority of pious souls, with what is common among them; for many of them are still far from the goal. Consequently, without admitting that the mystical prayers are essentially extraordinary, we can distinguish them from the common forms of prayer, because the former suppose in fact an eminent or superior grace.

The passive purifications of the senses and of the spirit, (a mystical state) and infused contemplation, even in its highest degree, which is realized in the transforming union, as St. John of the Cross teaches, are generally necessary to the perfect purification and sanctification of the soul. Therefore they should not be called essentially extraordinary, although in fact they may be quite rare because of the common mediocrity of souls. These passive purifications seem extraordinary to us because they are so painful, and take our nature by surprise; they are an anticipated purgatory. Very generous souls ought to normally suffer their purgatory on earth while meriting, rather than after death without meriting. If we go to purgatory after death, it will be our own fault, it will be because we have neglected graces that were granted us or offered to us during life. Purgatory after death, frequent though it may be, is not according to the order arranged by God for the full development of the supernatural life, since immediately after death it is radical to the order established by Him that the soul should possess God, by the beatific vision. Hence the precise reason why the soul suffers so greatly in purgatory is because it does not see God. We will consider, by a study of the writings of the saints, what in their opinion is the normal way to holiness here on earth.

ARTICLE III

DESCRIPTION OF INFUSED CONTEMPLATION AND ITS DEGREES ACCORDING TO ST. TERESA

We might have borrowed the description of mystical contemplation and its degrees from authors other than St. Teresa. We have chosen St. Teresa because she clarifies several points, because her description has become classical, and also because those who consider infused or mystical contemplation an essentially extraordinary favor declare that they base their doctrine on her teaching.

When we read The Life of St. Teresa, written by herself, or her Interior Castle, we seem to at first, come into contact with an inaccessible spiritual world, quite above what every interior soul may legitimately desire. True, she often deals with extraordinary phenomena: visions, which make us, anticipate even here on earth the life of heaven, and revelations or interior words, which the majority of devout souls have never heard. These extraordinary phenomena, which strike us at the first reading, may, if we give our attention entirely to them, hide From us instead of manifesting to us what is most profound and elevated in her life; in other words, the full development of the Christian virtues that we ought all to have, but that in many souls remain mean, colorless, and without vigor.

But when St. Teresa's work is read in an effort to see in it the perfect development of that spiritual organism which exists in every just soul, we cannot fail to recognize that she clearly shows how the grace of the virtues and the gifts received at baptism ought to develop when obstacles have been removed. When read with this intention, the more or less extraordinary exterior manifestations of the supernatural life fade into the background.

We do not sufficiently grasp the value of the treasure that every true Christian bears in a fragile vase. Our human eyes see only the vase. We forget that sanctifying grace, which is in us, is the beginning of eternal life, semen gloriae, inchoatio vitae aeternae. We forget practically that it is a real and formal participation in the intimate life of God, and that some day it absolutely must either die forever in us or flower into glory by making us see God as He sees Himself, and love God as He loves Himself. Such is our destiny; for each of us only one inevitable alternative exists—eternal life or eternal death. Therein lays our wealth and our nobility. By grace we are of God, born of God, and even here on earth our supernatural life is basically the same as that of heaven, just as the vegetable life hidden in the acorn is the same as that of the vigorous oak that springs from it; as the intellectual

life slumbering in a child is the same as that of an adult who has reached the full development of reason.

Sanctifying grace deifies our souls; to elevate our faculties, it brings forth in them the supernatural virtues, especially the theological virtues, faith, hope, and charity, the last of which must endure forever. This entirely supernatural life is incomparably superior to a miracle perceived by the senses, which is only a sign. It is also superior to the natural life of created and creatable angels, since it is a participation in the very life of God. With this supernatural treasure which divinizes all our energies, we receive the Author of grace, the Holy Ghost who was sent to the Apostles on Pentecost, and who was given to us by confirmation with the seven gifts, which dispose us to receive His divine inspirations. Christ addressed us all when He said: “The Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you . . . He will teach you all truth.” “His unction,” says St. John, “teacheth you of all things.”

This supernatural life remains anemic and weak, and is without radiance in many Christians because they are too absorbed by worldly things. Instead of living with God, their divine and interior Guest, their Father and Friend, who is closer to them than they are to themselves, they scarcely ever raise their minds and hearts to Him. In the souls of the saints, on the contrary, this supernatural life appears in all its vigor, and it is this life especially, which we should consider in them more than the extraordinary, miraculous, and inimitable gifts by which their sanctity is outwardly manifested.

We will therefore consider union with God in the souls of the saints, which are the basis of their life; in what this union consists; and what are its degrees. To do this, we will follow St. Teresa step by step, using her own words; for in our opinion the best commentary consists in bringing together her various writings on one subject, and in allowing these texts to throw light on one another.

I. THE MYSTICAL STATE IN GENERAL: PREPARATION; GENERAL CALL AND INDIVIDUAL CALL; NATURE OF THE MYSTICAL STATE

I) St. Teresa shows that at first, the soul, which seeks to unite itself to God present in it, must ordinarily raise itself above sensible things by its own efforts aided by grace, by making frequently acts of humility, faith,

hope, and charity, which are suggested by Our Fathers. To penetrate revealed truths, it meditates on them, making use of a book if necessary; it brings them together and from them draws practical consequences, which in turn leads more and more fully toward God. This is the human work of the understanding which rather rapidly becomes simplified, like reading in the case of a child who no longer needs to spell. Meditation thus becomes a very simple, affective prayer, an active recollection which is a preparation or disposition to receive the grace of contemplation. The soul has so far succeeded in drinking only "the water of sensible devotion, which . . . has run its course over the earth and always contains a certain amount of mud." The divine truth it attains is still mingled with human considerations.

2) There is, however, a fountain of living water of which our Lord spoke to the Samaritan woman: great indeed are "the benefits of drinking of this fountain of living water." This is the figure of contemplation, which is given to us by the Holy Ghost. Whatever the obstacles to be found on the road leading to this source are, we must "be courageous and not grow weary. . . . Remember, our Lord invited 'Any man.' He is truth itself; His word cannot be doubted. If all had not been included, He would not have addressed everybody, nor would He have said: 'I will give you to drink.' He might have said: 'Let all men come, for they will lose nothing by it, and I will give drink to those I think fit for it.' But as He said, unconditionally: 'If any man thirst, let him come to Me,' I feel sure that, unless they stop halfway, none will fail to drink of this living water. May our Lord, who has promised to grant it us, give us grace to seek it as we ought, for His own sake." This is the general and distant call; as yet it is not the individual and proximate call. In other words, if we are humble, generous, and faithful in the practice of the virtues and of common prayer, a time will come when the Holy Ghost, dwelling in us to enlighten and sanctify us, will take over the direction of our life and ask us to be entirely docile to His divine inspirations. Then, will begin for us a more intimate union with God, called by St. Teresa supernatural prayer, and generally today the "mystical state."

3) 'What essentially characterizes this mystical life is an infused and loving knowledge of God; in other words, it is an infused light and an infused love coming to us from the Holy Ghost and from His gifts in order to make us grow in charity. In certain souls it is love which dominates, in others light. Since we love only what we know, and since we cannot love ardently what we know but poorly, every soul ought to be enlightened if it

is to be inflamed with love. In this state, the soul is no longer inclined to meditate by itself, to reason on the great truths of faith so as to arouse itself to acts of love of God. It receives “a supernatural recollection,” which could never acquire by its own efforts, and “which does not depend on our will.” It is no longer the soul recollecting itself, it is God who recollects it and draws it towards the inner sanctuary. This is the beginning of contemplation, properly so called ; it is infused since we cannot procure it for ourselves by our activity aided by grace. St. Teresa, in opposition to the quietists, says that, if we have not as yet received this gift, we should be careful not “to stop the movement of our thoughts . . . and to remain there like blockheads.” This recollection and the quiet which follow are “a supernatural state to which no effort of our own can raise us.” “As for disposing oneself to it, can be done, and that is without doubt an important point.” Psalmody, for instance, disposes the soul to contemplative prayer and also makes the soul desire it.

During this passive recollection, “when our Lord suspends the understanding and makes it cease from its acts, He puts before it that which astonishes and occupies it: so that, without making any reflections, it shall comprehend in a moment more than we could comprehend in many years with all the efforts in the world.” In contemplation “the soul understands that the divine Master is teaching it without the sound of words.” “It was not by way of vision; I believe it was what is called mystical theology . . . The understanding stands as if amazed at the greatness of the things it understands; for God wills it to understand that it understands nothing whatever of that, which His Majesty places before it.” “The presence of God is frequently felt, particularly by those who have attained to the prayer of union and of quiet, when we seem, at the very commencement of our prayer, to find Him with whom we would converse, and when we seem to feel that He hears us by the effects, and the spiritual impressions of great love and faith of which we are then conscious, as well as by the good resolutions, accompanied by sweetness, which we then make. This is a great grace from God; and let him to whom He has given it esteem it much, because it is a very high degree of prayer; but it is not vision. God is understood to be present there by the effects. He works in the soul: that is the way His Majesty makes His presence felt.”

Under this infused light, “the soul is inflamed with love without comprehending how it loves.” “This very sweet love of our God enters our

soul with an extreme gentleness; it fills it with pleasure and joy without being able to understand how or where this good was introduced into it." It is therefore clearly an infused love like the light it supposes; it is, as the Thomists say, the fruit of an operating grace by which the soul is vitally and freely moved by God without deliberate movement on its own part. "When God will make you drink this water (of contemplation) . . . you will understand that the true love of God, when it is in its vigor, that is to say entirely free from earthly things and soaring above them, is master of all the elements and of the world itself." "The prayer of quiet is a little spark of the true love of Himself, which our Lord begins to enkindle in the soul," and this fire "purifies the soul of the dross and the wretchedness into which its faults have plunged it." This infused knowledge and love, which are the superior exercise of the theological virtues under the influence of the Holy Ghost, constitute the essential foundations of the mystical life. The Holy Ghost alone can give us this knowledge and love of God, which has a superhuman mode exceeding our personal efforts aided by grace. St. John of the Cross, expresses the same doctrine when he says: "Contemplation is a science of love, an infused and loving knowledge of God." "This obscure contemplation . . . is mystical theology which the doctors call secret wisdom, communicated according to the doctrine of St. Thomas, by the infusion of love into the soul. This communication is made secretly . . . our faculties are incapable of acquiring it; it is the Holy Ghost who pours it into the soul." Under its influence the three theological virtues are exercised in the highest degree. If this infused and loving contemplation lasts a certain time, it is called a state of prayer; a passive state, or at least one that is more passive than active, in this sense we cannot produce it, but only dispose ourselves for it.

II. THE DEGREES OF THE MYSTICAL STATE; FROM THE FOURTH TO THE SEVENTH MANSIONS

In this section we will consider particularly the growing intensity of charity, of living faith, and of the corresponding gifts in the mystical state. St. Thomas studied this intensity from an abstract and theoretical point of view; St. Teresa described it from experience and in its loftiest forms. To show this growing intensity of the mystical state, St. Teresa insists on its progressive extension to the different faculties of the soul, which are

gradually suspended or captivated by God. First of all, the will is seized and held, then the intellect and the imagination; finally in ecstasy, the exercise of the exterior senses is suspended. St. Teresa knows, however, that the suspension of the imagination and of the senses is only a concomitant and accidental phenomenon, sign of a greater intensity of knowledge and love of God, since it generally ceases in most perfect mystical state, the transforming union. The mystical state, complete in regard to its extension, is not therefore necessarily the most intense or the most elevated. St. Teresa does not overlook this fact; but this extension, which is at first progressive, then restrained and rather easy to determine and describe, may give some light on the growing elevation of the mystical state, if it is joined to another sign, which is more profound, one on which St. John of the Cross strongly insisted. This more profound sign is found, first of all, in the passive purification of the senses, then in that of the spirit, both of which denote progress in the intensity of the knowledge and love of God. St. Teresa did not neglect this second sign.

A third and still more decisive indication arises from the fact that virtue normally increases with prayer. The increasingly intimate action of God must be judged especially by this sign rather than by the passive purifications. These, in fact, depend greatly on the obstacles that grace encounters, and also on the types of temperament and on morbid dispositions. Although these passive purifications are inseparable from the development of the mystical life, they cannot measure it with as great certainty as can progress in virtue. Progress in virtue, not as man judges it, but rather as it appears in the sight of God, the only judge of souls, corresponds to the growing intensity of infused contemplation and of the love of God. St. Teresa has noted this in an admirable manner. Pope Pius X praised her especially for this, saying: “The degrees of prayer enumerated by the saint are so many superior ascents toward the summit of perfection.”

At first, in the prayer of quiet “the will alone is made captive” by the mysterious light received, which manifests to it the goodness of God present in it, as a little child enjoys the milk which is given to it. Better still, it is like the gushing forth of the living water which Jesus spoke of to the Samaritan woman: “The water flows from the very fountain itself, which is God . . . it wells up from the most intimate depths of our being with extreme peace, tranquility, and sweetness . . .

Hardly has this celestial water begun to flow from its source . . . , when one experiences a great interior dilation and increase. The soul then receives inexpressible spiritual benefits and indeed is incapable of understanding what it receives at that moment." In this state, however, the understanding, memory, and imagination are not captivated by the divine action. Sometimes they act as the auxiliaries of the will and engage in its service; at other times their contribution serves only to trouble it. St. Teresa says: "Often during this prayer you will not know what to do with your understanding and memory, (which never cease to be agitated) . . . But when the will enjoys this quiet, it should take no more notice of the understanding than it would of an idiot."

This quiet is often interrupted by the acridities and trials of the passive night of the senses and by temptations against patience and chastity, which oblige the soul to a salutary reaction. This greatly strengthens the moral virtues which have their seat in the sensitive appetites. The effects of the prayer of quiet are a greater virtue, especially a greater love of God and ineffable peace, at least in the superior part of the soul.

If the soul is humble and generous, it will be raised to a higher degree. In simple union, God's action is strong enough to absorb completely the activity of the interior faculties of the soul; all this activity is directed toward Him and no longer goes astray. God seizes and captivates the will, and also the thoughts, memory, and imagination. Furthermore, the soul is usually no longer troubled by distractions. God suspends the natural action of the intellect "in order to impress on us true wisdom." The memory and imagination are likewise arrested in their natural operations and intimately united to God in a way suitable to them. The soul no longer seeks with effort to draw the salutary water which refreshes and purifies it; it receives this water simply, like rain falling from heaven. "God does not leave us any share other than that of an entire conformity of our will to his." "How beautiful is the soul after having been immersed in God's grandeur and united closely to Him for but a short time! Indeed, I do not think it is ever as long as half an hour!" The soul has, so to speak, changed form, by dying entirely to the world, like the silkworm which becomes a white butterfly.

St. Teresa observes that this prayer of union is frequently incomplete, without suspension of the imagination and memory, which at times wage a veritable war on the intellect and will. Here, as in the prayer of quiet, no more attention should be paid to the imagination than to a madman. St.

Teresa speaks of this incomplete mystical union in The Interior Castle when she says: “Is it necessary, in order to attain to this kind of divine union, for the powers of the soul to be suspended? No. God has many ways of enriching the soul and bringing it to these mansions, besides, what might be called a ‘shortcut.’”

The effects of the prayer of union are most sanctifying. The soul experiences a great contrition for its faults, an ardent desire to praise God, and strength to face every trial so as to serve Him. It is bitterly grieved at the loss of sinners, and thus it sees what the sufferings of Christ must have been during His earthly life.

At this time, a period of trials generally comes, described by St. Teresa at the beginning of the sixth mansion, and called by St. John of the Cross the passive night of the soul. “There is an outcry raised against such a person by those amongst whom she lives. . . . They say she wants to pass for a saint that she goes to extremes in piety. Persons she thought were her friends, desert her, making the bitterest remarks of all . . . She suffers scoffing remarks of all sorts . . . and the worst of it is, these troubles do not blow over but last all her life.” But the soul enlightened by God is “strengthened rather than depressed by its trials; experience having taught it the great advantages derived from them. . . . Moreover, the soul conceives a special tenderness for these people who make it suffer.” “Our Lord now usually sends severe illnesses. . . . The rest would seem trifling in comparison. If one could relate the interior torments met with here, but they are impossible to describe. . . . A confessor who dreads and suspects everything. . . . Interior anguish of the soul at the sight of its own wretchedness. . . . It believes that God permits it to be deceived in punishment for its sins. This suffering becomes almost unbearable, especially when such spiritual dryness ensues that the mind feels as if it had never thought of God nor ever will be able to do so. When men speak of Him, they seem to be talking of some person heard of long ago. . . . The understanding is so obscured that it is incapable of discerning the truth; it believes all that the imagination puts before it, besides crediting the falsehoods suggested to it by the devil. Our Lord doubtless gives the devil leave to tempt it, and even to make it think that God has rejected it. . . . During this tempest, the soul is incapable of receiving any comfort. The only remedy is to wait for the mercy of God who, when the soul least expects it, delivers it from all its sufferings by a single word addressed to it, or by some unforeseen happening. Then it

seems as if there had never been any trouble and the soul praises the Lord, for it is He who has fought for it and rendered it victorious. The soul sees clearly that the conquest was not its own. . . . Then it recognizes perfectly its weakness and how little we can do by ourselves when the Lord withdraws His help. It no longer needs to reflect in order to understand this truth."

"Since these troubles come from above, no earthly comfort can avail. This great God wishes us to acknowledge His sovereignty and our misery. . . . The best means . . . to succeed in bearing this anguish is to perform external works of charity and to hope for everything from the mercy of God. He never fails those who hope in Him. . . . The exterior sufferings caused by the devils are more unusual . . . and all the sufferings which they may cause are slight in comparison with those which I have just described." Farther on, St. Teresa speaks of a still more painful purification of love which occurs at the entrance to the seventh mansion, "as the purification of purgatory introduces the soul into heaven"; but then the soul, while bearing this suffering, is aware that it is an eminent favor.

After passing through these interior sufferings, the soul receives such a knowledge of God's grandeur that frequently partial or complete ecstasy follows Union with God is so perfect that it suspends the operations of the exterior senses; all the activity of the soul is ravished toward God, and consequently ceases to function in regard to the exterior world. If at times a scholar, like Archimedes, is so absorbed by speculation that he no longer hears words spoken to him, with greater reason is this true of the contemplative soul when a very strong grace, making it experience God's infinite grandeur, absorbs it in this blessed contemplation.

At other times, the soul exults and cannot refrain from singing the praises of God. This is a very desirable grace: "May His Majesty frequently grant us such a prayer which is both safe and advantageous! We cannot acquire it for ourselves as it is quite supernatural. Sometimes it lasts for a whole day. . . . This jubilation plunges the soul into such forgetfulness of itself and of all things that it is incapable of thinking or of speaking, except to offer to God praise, which is, as it were, the natural fruit of its joy."

St. Teresa says, on the contrary, when speaking of visions impressed directly on the imagination: "It is not at all fitting . . . to desire them"; they are extraordinary favors quite distinct from the full development of the life of grace in us. "Know that for having received many favors of this kind, a

soul will not merit more glory. . . . There are many saints who never knew what it was to receive one such favor, while others who have received them are not saints at all. . . . Often for even one of these favors the Lord sends a great number of tribulations."

Finally the soul is introduced into the seventh mansion, the transforming union with God, which is immediately preceded by a last and very painful purification, that of love, "where the soul dies with the desire to die." In this mansion some souls have an intellectual vision of the Blessed Trinity who dwells in us; but this vision, with a clarity that varies and is as it were intermittent, is not of the essence of the transforming union. Indeed it does not seem necessarily to be linked with it. Moreover, ecstasies have generally ceased; and what constitutes the foundation of this eminent state is in no way miraculous, that is, the superior faculties are passively drawn to the deepest center of the soul where the Blessed Trinity dwells. Under the influence of this grace, the soul cannot doubt that divine Persons are present in it; it is, besides, practically never deprived of Their Company. "The soul recognizes by certain secret aspirations that it is God who gives it life," and that He is the Life of our life. The Christian who has reached this perfect age is morally one with Him, in the sense in which St. Paul says: "He who is joined to the Lord, is one spirit." As far as it is possible on earth, this is the full realization of our Lord's prayer: "That they may be one, as We also are one; I in them, and Thou in Me . . . and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, . . . and hast loved them, as Thou hast also loved Me." In the same way, rain falling into a river is so mingled with the stream that it can no longer be distinguished from it; or, to use the figure employed by St. John of the Cross: "It resembles the condition of wood when the fire has attacked it with its flames, dried it out, and finally penetrated it and transformed it into itself." It is still wood, but incandescent wood which has taken on the properties of fire. In the same way, a flame rises almost constantly toward God from a purified heart.

The effects of the transforming union are those of the perfect exercise of the theological virtues and of the gifts, which have reached their full development. The soul is practically freed from the disorders of passions; as long as it is under the actual grace of the transforming union, it does not commit deliberate venial sins. At other times, it still occasionally commits some venial faults, which are quickly atoned for. What is outstanding in the soul is a great forgetfulness of self, a keen desire to suffer in imitation of

our Lord, a true joy in persecution. Aridities and interior sufferings have ceased as well as the desire to die. These souls, inflamed with zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of their neighbor, “desire to live long years in the midst of the most severe trials in order that the Lord may be ever so little glorified by them.” This is truly the apostolic life (manifest or hidden), which flows from the plenitude of contemplation, to use the expression of St. Thomas. It is the full perfection of Christian life, which our Lord, the Blessed Virgin, and the Apostles have exemplified in the highest degree. “God cannot bestow upon us a more precious favor than a life conformed to that of His well-beloved Son. Moreover . . . these graces are intended to strengthen our weakness and to make us able to bear great sufferings in imitation of this divine Son.” The soul is thus, truly spiritualized and shares in the very strength of Christ and in His immense love for God and for souls. Such is, on earth, the perfect age of the life of grace, the full realization of the first precept: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind.”

All just souls are called, at least in a general and remote manner, to this transforming union, which is the normal prelude to the life of heaven. If they are faithful to this call, and at the same time humble and generous, they will hear a more proximate and urgent invitation. St. Teresa repeats this in the Epilogue to The Interior Castle: “In truth you cannot by your own strength, no matter how great it may seem to you, enter all the mansions. The Master of the Castle must Himself admit you. If you encounter any resistance on His part, I advise you not to try to use violence. You would so greatly displease Him that He would forever close the doors to you. He deeply loves humility; if you believe yourself unworthy to enter even the third mansion, you will soon obtain admission to the fifth. You will even be able to frequent it so assiduously and to serve Him so well, that He will admit you to the mansion which He has reserved for Himself.” She makes the same statement in her Life.

In conclusion, let us point out that in St. Teresa’s writings the normal way of sanctity consists of humility and abnegation, which prepares the soul for infused contemplation, highly desirable for all, and also for a more and more intimate divine union, indeed even for the transforming union, the culminating point in the normal development of the supernatural life. As for extraordinary facts, such as visions, interior words, and private revelations,

however useful for the sanctification of the soul, they ought not to be desired. They are accidental, transient phenomena, whereas infused contemplation continues. They do not unite us as closely to God as do perfect faith and the gift of wisdom which, in varying degrees, exists in all the just.

What the interior soul should desire above all else is the ever deeper reign of God in it, continual growth in charity. This, it should long for because the precept of love is without limit, and obliges us, if not to be saints, at least to tend to sanctity, each one according to his condition, and because Christ said to all: “Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.” This is the goal St. Teresa has shown us. The greatest tribute that can be given to her, is that she has marvelously praised the glory of God by making us see, in her writings and in her life, God’s great love for the humble, and all that He wishes to do for “souls determined to follow our Lord and to journey on, in spite of the cost, even to the fountain of living water. . . . This is the royal road which leads to heaven.”

ARTICLE IV

WHAT INFUSED CONTEMPLATION DOES NOT ESSENTIALLY REQUIRE

The different definitions of infused contemplation given by theologians agree on one fundamental point. Infused contemplation, they say, is, above reasoning and in the obscurity of faith, a simple and loving knowledge of God, which cannot be obtained by our personal activity aided by grace, but rather demands a manifest, special illumination and inspiration of the Holy Ghost. When it lasts for a certain time, this contemplation is a state of passive prayer. Theologians generally agree on this fundamental point. We believe it is the true definition, which retains what is essential in the descriptions given by the most accepted mystics. To understand this definition well, we will show first what infused contemplation does not require. Once the ground has been cleared, we shall more easily see what really constitutes it, by seeking the principle from which contemplation proceeds.

There have been theologians who thought that more distinctive marks should be added to the definition we have just given. Some have declared that infused contemplation is given suddenly, unexpectedly, without

preparation on our part, and that it is accompanied by an absolute impossibility of discursive reasoning. Others, confusing it with certain accidental and concomitant phenomena, have seen in it a gratuitous grace (gratis data), an extraordinary gift such as prophecy. According to others, it would require infused ideas similar to those of the angels and would make us see God not in an image, but as He is in Himself. Some have even added that infused contemplation is not a meritorious act. These confusions may be easily dispelled by an examination of St. Teresa's descriptions, quoted in the preceding article. It is a simple matter to show that the definition which we have given fully suffices, without the addition of other ideas.

1) Infused contemplation is not always given suddenly, unexpectedly, like rain falling from heaven. More often than not, it is granted after a certain preparation, when the soul is already recollected. Thus, according to St. Teresa (The Interior Castle, fourth mansion), the prayer of quiet is a "supernatural" prayer, which we are incapable of procuring for ourselves by our own efforts. But she says that the soul prepares itself to receive this prayer by pious thoughts, by labor of the understanding, as one turns a noria (water wheel) in order to draw water. On this point, it is also good to consult St. John of the Cross.

2) Infused contemplation is not necessarily accompanied by an absolute impossibility to discourse or to reason, which would come from the suspension of the imagination. It is possible for this ligature not to exist, since according to the saints there are often distractions in the supernatural prayer of quiet. They also say that some souls, which are in this state, are wrong in leaving it by being willing to discourse too much.

3) Another error is to hold that infused contemplation is not a meritorious act. Although we cannot have it at will like an act of faith, we can freely consent to be moved in this way by the Holy Ghost. Consequently the act is vital and free, without in itself being deliberate and the fruit of our personal effort. In the same way a good student, attentive to the doctrine proposed by his teacher, is passive while receiving it, for he could not have discovered it himself; but he receives it voluntarily and with facility. In infused contemplation the soul exercises this docility toward God; this docility is free and also meritorious, because it proceeds from charity, the source of all merit.

4) Neither the consciousness of being in the state of grace nor a sense of delight is necessary to infused contemplation, since neither this

consciousness nor this joy is found in the periods called the passive night of the senses and of the soul; yet these periods are a mystical state. As we shall see later, in the night of the senses the gift of knowledge dominates by showing us especially the vanity of created things; and in the night of the soul the gift of understanding manifests less the goodness of God than His infinite majesty, and by contrast our own wretchedness. Sweetness and peace, the fruit of the gift of wisdom, are experienced especially between the two nights, and much more strongly after the second. Although great consolations are to be found in the mystical life. There are also terrible interior trials lasting for months and years.

5) For the same reason the feeling of the presence of God is not essential to the mystical state. This feeling does not exist at all in the night of the spirit, during which the soul thinks it is rejected by God, and seems almost to despair of its salvation. Nevertheless the soul still possesses the loving and profound knowledge of God's infinite grandeur, but is, as it were crushed by it. "Then," says St. John of the Cross, purifying "contemplation consists in feeling oneself deprived of God, chastised, repulsed by Him." If anyone were to admit that the essence of the mystical state is the feeling of God's presence, he would be led to maintain, with a recent author, that the mystical state does not exist in the periods of desolation through which contemplatives pass. This view is utterly opposed to the entire doctrine set forth by St. John of the Cross in The Dark Night of the Soul on the infused, purifying light, which gives an impression of great darkness to the soul, which is still too weak to bear it. This teaching is founded on the description given to us by the most accepted mystics. We will now devote our attention to considerations of a more abstract order.

6) Infused contemplation is certainly not a grace gratis data bestowed especially in view of the sanctification of others, like prophecy or the gift of tongues, because contemplation is directly ordained to personal sanctification, and more often than not, is known only to the person receiving it and to his confessor. Joseph of the Holy Ghost, C.D., is therefore, quite right in saying that he cannot comprehend why Anthony of the Annunciation, C.D., in contradiction to tradition, placed infused contemplation among the graces gratis datae and insisted that it should not be asked of God, except with the reservations with which one may ask for the grace of miracles and the gift of prophecy.

7) Infused contemplation does not require infused ideas like those of the angels. Infused ideas may indeed be found in certain mystical states as a concomitant phenomenon, for example, in intellectual visions and certain revelations. But prophecy itself, according to St. Thomas, does not generally require these infused ideas; it suffices to have an infused light, which is quite a different thing, and a new co-ordination of acquired ideas. We would be greatly in error if we confounded the impressio specierum with the impressio Iuminis; the material element of knowledge (species or ideas) would no longer be distinguished from the formal element (the light which elevates the intellect and gives it the strength to perceive and to judge).

Moreover, if mystical contemplation required infused species of angelic order, it would ordinarily require no cooperation on the part of the imagination. If this were true, all who are in the mystical state, even simply in quiet, would operate without the assistance of the brain, and sleep itself would offer no obstacle. They would contemplate even while asleep. Experience proves that this is true only in very special and truly extraordinary states. According to St. Thomas, who follows Dionysius and St. Albert the Great in this matter, there is in infused contemplation (setting aside certain very superior intellectual visions) a certain almost imperceptible contribution on the part of the imagination; although the soul does not pay attention to images, they are not excluded. In the same way, in the ordinary course of life we use a pen to write, without observing its form; when we read we see letters, but are attentive only to their meaning. A theologian, speculating on the Deity, superior to being, to unity, to the good, has only a verbal image, the word “Deity,” to which he does not give any heed. At other times we may start with the image of a body so as to come to the idea of the incorporeal. St. Thomas clearly states that infused contemplation is more perfect in proportion as it is freed from sensible images.

Often it suffices to have the impression of a light in the imagination, or on the contrary, in the period called the dark night, the impression of darkness; or again a very confused impression suggestive of life. In any case, infused ideas, similar to those of the angels, are not at all necessary, although they may sometimes be granted in exceptional favors.

8) Notwithstanding what has recently been written, it is even truer that infused contemplation does not require an immediate perception of God,

which would make us know Him as He is. This immediate perception of God does not exist, in fact, in the great anxieties of the passive nights of the senses and of the soul, which are, nevertheless, mystical states and are accompanied by infused contemplation. Does this perception exist in the other phases of the mystical ascent? Nothing permits such an affirmation; on the contrary, everything leads us to think that it is impossible. The texts of St. Thomas, on which this theory claims to be based, cannot have the meaning attributed to them. One writer asserts: “It is sufficient (in mystical contemplation) to know God as He shows Himself, partially, in order to know Him as He is.” God, however, being incapable of division, cannot show Himself partially in such a way that He would make Himself seen as He is. The divine attributes exist in Him formaliter eminenter, and they are only virtually distinct, because they are really identical in the eminence of the Deity. Consequently nobody can see one of them as it is, without seeing the others and without seeing the Deity itself, which, as Dionysius says, is super ens et super unum. St. Thomas states explicitly, and proves that no vision inferior to the beatific vision can make us know God as He is in Himself; no created, infused idea can manifest just as He is, Him who is being itself, who is eternally subsistent intellection itself. In theology the expression sicuti est has a formal meaning which is fulfilled only in the beatific vision. Neither angels before receiving the light of glory nor Adam before his sin, knew God as He is. St- Thomas is explicit on this point He says as clearly as possible: “The vision of the blessed in heaven differs from that of creatures still in the state of trial, not as seeing more perfectly and seeing Less perfectly, but as seeing and not seeing. Consequently neither Adam nor the angels in the state of trial saw the divine essence.”

If St. Paul, while on earth, received the beatific vision in a transitory manner when he was ravished to the third heaven, as St. Augustine and St. Thomas think he did, he certainly enjoyed an altogether extraordinary grace far above the highest mystical state described by St. Teresa.

According to Farges, the immediate perception of God, which would be essential to mystical contemplation, is none other than that which the angels naturally possess according to St. Thomas. But St. Thomas teaches that this natural knowledge, which an angel has of God, is not immediate. He does not say, as some authors claim he does, that it excludes the species expressa or verbum mentis, but that it is not obtained through the mirror of creatures exterior to the angels. The difference is considerable. St. Thomas says: “The

angel knows God naturally, in as far as he is himself (by his angelic nature) a similitude of God; but he does not see the divine essence, for no created similitude can represent it. Moreover, this angelic knowledge is related rather to specular knowledge, for the nature of the angel is like a mirror reflecting the image of God."

If, as has been said, the immediate intuition of God, essential to mystical contemplation, "is at one and the same time, the natural gift of the angels and the supernatural gift of contemplative mystics," it would follow that mystical contemplation would be in an order immensely inferior to that of sanctifying grace, and of the theological virtues. It would not be a participation in the divine nature and life, but only a participation in the angelic life; there is a great abyss between these two. And contemplation would not attain to more than the natural knowledge of God, which the devil preserves, for the fallen angel retains the integrity of his natural knowledge. On the contrary, it is absolutely certain that infused contemplation, like sanctifying grace or the grace of the virtues and of the gifts, is essentially supernatural (quoad substantiam), as well in the angels in the state of trial as in man. By this very fact, contemplation is infinitely superior to the natural knowledge of the greatest human geniuses, and also to the natural knowledge of the highest angel, and even of creatable angels.

Evidently this theory of mystical contemplation, which seems greatly to elevate it by making it an extraordinary, angelic thing, generally inaccessible to interior souls, lowers it exceedingly by identifying it with the natural knowledge which the devil preserves. This point of view springs from the confusion, which we have pointed out several times, between the essential (quoad substantiam) supernaturalness of the grace of the virtues and of the gifts, and the modal (quoad modum) supernaturalness of miracles, prophecy, and other extraordinary facts of the same class. The difference is considerable: the resurrection of a dead person supernaturally restores natural life, which is infinitely inferior to that of grace; the life restored is not essentially supernatural, but only so by the mode of its production (quoad modum). Likewise, if the natural knowledge of the angels is communicated to man by infused ideas, it is supernatural for man by the manner of its production (quoad modum), but not essentially so. Hence it remains infinitely inferior to the order of grace, and it could become increasingly perfect in its order without ever attaining the dignity of infused faith by which we believe in the Trinity and in the incarnation.

Thus, the sides of a polygon inscribed in a circle can be multiplied infinitely, and the polygon will never coincide with the circle, for no matter how small each side may be, it will never become a point.

The theory of the immediate perception of God is likewise contrary to the common teaching of the mystics. St. John of the Cross tells us that even in the spiritual marriage contemplation takes place in faith. For him, as well as for St. Thomas, faith and immediate, positive perception are mutually exclusive: the act of vision cannot be an act of faith. Consequently we can admit here only an obscure, negative (per viam negationis) intuition. According to St. Thomas, this intuition shows us better and better what God is not, that He surpasses all conception; it is to this quasi-unknown God that infused love unites us.

All mystics tell us that they perceive, not God Himself, as He is, but the effect of His action on their souls especially in the sweetness of love which He causes them to experience. Speaking of what often happens to those who have the supernatural prayer of union or that of quiet, St. Teresa writes, as we have already observed: “The presence of God is frequently felt, particularly by those who have attained to the prayer of union and of quiet, when we seem, at the very commencement of our prayer, to find Him with whom we would converse, and when we seem to feel that He hears us by the effects and the spiritual impressions of great love and faith of which we are then conscious, as well as by the good resolutions, accompanied by sweetness, which we then make. This is a great grace from God; and let him to whom He has given it esteem it much, because it is a very high degree of prayer; but it is not vision. God is understood to be present there by the effects He works in the soul: that is the way His Majesty makes His presence felt.” We could quote many similar texts from the greatest masters of mysticism. St. Thomas teaches the same doctrine in his explanation of the classic expression of Dionysius: “Not only learning but also experiencing divine things.” “There is a twofold knowledge of God’s goodness or will. One is speculative. . . . The other knowledge of God’s will or goodness is affective or experimental, and thereby a man experiences in himself the taste of God’s sweetness, and complacency in God’s will, as Dionysius says of Hierotheos (Div. nom., II), that he learns divine things through experience of them. It is in this way that we are told to prove God’s will, and to taste His sweetness.” This is the way that, we know God, not immediately as He is, but by the effects which He produces in us.

ARTICLE V

THE ESSENTIAL RELATION OF INFUSED CONTEMPLATION AND OF THE MYSTICAL LIFE WITH THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY GHOST

We have seen what infused contemplation does not essentially require. We must now see what constitutes it formally and from what principle it proceeds. By so doing, we shall explain the definition given at the beginning of the preceding article.

According to the common teaching of theologians, infused contemplation is, above reasoning and in the obscurity of faith, a simple and loving knowledge of God which cannot be obtained by our personal activity aided by grace; but, on the contrary, it requires a special, manifest inspiration and illumination of the Holy Ghost. In other words, whereas the ascetical life is characterized by the predominance of the human mode of the Christian virtues, which we exercise at will, the mystical life has as its distinctive character, the predominance of the superhuman or divine mode of the gifts of the Holy Ghost; that is, an infused knowledge and love that cannot be the fruit of our personal effort. To understand this doctrine clearly, we must recall the rôle and the necessity of the gifts of the Holy Ghost in our supernatural life, and in particular that of the gift of wisdom, which theologians commonly consider the superior principle of infused contemplation. The best means of learning the traditional teaching on this point is to consult St. Thomas, who has been generally followed.

I. The gifts of the Holy Ghost. Are they specifically distinct from the acquired virtues and from the infused virtues?

We have explained (supra, chap. 3, art. 2) the specific distinction between the infused virtues and the acquired virtues by their formal object. It is of faith that over and above the natural virtues, which are acquired and developed by the frequent repetition of the same acts, we have received with sanctifying grace the infused virtues of faith, hope, and charity. As for the infused moral virtues, such as Christian prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance, they differ from the corresponding acquired moral virtues, because they have a superior rule—in other words, not only natural reason, but reason illumined by faith; they are inspired by much loftier views. It is thus that Christian temperance implies a mortification, which purely natural ethics would not know; it is founded on the revealed doctrines of original sin, of the gravity of our personal sins, of their results, of our elevation to a

supernatural end, and of the imitation of Jesus crucified. What a distance there is between the temperance described by Aristotle, and that of which St. Augustine speaks!

The gifts of the Holy Ghost are, moreover, superior to the infused moral virtues; although they are less elevated than the theological virtues, nevertheless they bring them, as we shall see, an added perfection. “In order to differentiate the gifts from the virtues,” says St. Thomas, “we must be guided by the way in which Scripture expresses itself, for we find there that the term employed is ‘spirit’ rather than ‘gift.’ For thus it is written (Is. 11: 2, 3): ‘The spirit . . . of wisdom and of understanding . . . shall rest upon him . . . ‘ From these words we are clearly given to understand that these seven are there set down as being in us by divine inspiration. Inspiration denotes motion from without. For it must be noted that in man there is a twofold principle of movement, one within him (the reason), the other extrinsic to him (God), as stated above (q. 9, a. 4, 6), and also by the Philosopher in the chapter on Good Fortune (Ethic. Eudem., VII).

“Now it is evident that whatever is moved must be proportionate to its mover: and the perfection of the mobile as such, consists in a disposition, whereby it is disposed to be well moved by its mover. Hence the more exalted the mover, the more perfect must be the disposition whereby the mobile is made proportionate to its mover: thus we see that a disciple needs a more perfect disposition in order to receive a higher teaching from his master. Now it is manifest that human virtues perfect man, according as it is natural for him to be moved by his reason in his interior and exterior actions. Consequently, man needs, higher perfections, whereby to be disposed to be moved by God. These perfections are called gifts, not only because they are infused by God, but also because by them man is disposed to become amenable to the divine inspiration, according to Is. 50: 5: ‘The Lord. . . . hath opened my ear, and I do not resist; I have not gone back.’ Even the Philosopher says in the chapter on Good Fortune, (Ethic. Eudem., loc. cit.) that for those who are moved by divine instinct, there is no need to take counsel according to human reason, but only to follow their inner promptings, since they are moved by a principle higher than human reason. This then is what some say, viz., that the gifts perfect man for acts which are higher than acts of virtue.”

From this we see that the gifts of the Holy Ghost are not acts or actual movements or passing helps of grace, but rather permanent qualities or

habits, conferred on the soul in view of certain supernatural operations.

Holy Scripture, in the classic text of Isaias, represents them as existing in a stable manner in the just, and it is said of the Holy Ghost: “He shall abide with you, and shall be in you.” The Church in her liturgy considers the “sevenfold gift,” sacrum septenarium, as constituting an organic whole, with habitual or sanctifying grace, which is often called “the grace of the virtues and of the gifts.” St. Gregory the Great insists on this permanence, saying: “By the gifts, without which one cannot attain to life, the Holy Ghost dwells in a stable manner in the elect; while by prophecy, the gift of miracles, and other gratuitous graces, He does not fix His dwelling in those to whom He communicates Himself.”

St. Thomas defines them: “The gifts of the Holy Ghost are habits (or essentially supernatural, permanent qualities) whereby man is perfected to obey readily the Holy Ghost.” The word “obey,” used by St. Thomas, does not express a pure passivity. As the moral virtues subject our appetitive faculties to the domination of reason, and thus, dispose them to act well, so the gifts render us docile to the Holy Ghost, in order to make us produce those excellent works known as beatitudes. In this sense we can say of the gifts: “They confer at one and at the same time pliability and energy, docility and strength, which render the soul more passive under the hand of God, and likewise more active in serving Him and in doing His work.”

According to these principles, the great majority of theologians holds with St. Thomas that the gifts are really and specifically distinct from the infused virtues, as the principles which direct them are distinct: that is, the Holy Ghost and reason illumined by faith. We have here two regulating motions, two different rules, which constitute different formal motives. It is a fundamental principle that habits (habitus) are specified by their object and their formal motive, as sight is by color and light, and hearing by sound. Virtue is a habit inclining us to follow the rule of right reason, whereby we lead a good life measured by the rule of reason. The gifts are higher perfections which have divine inspiration as their rule. A virtue and the corresponding gift (for example, fortitude and the gift of fortitude) have the same material, but they differ in the rule, which serves as a measure for their acts, and also by their mode of acting; therefore their formal object is not the same. Reason, even illumined by faith and infused prudence, directs our acts according to a human mode; the Holy Ghost, according to a superhuman mode.

Likewise, while faith adheres simply to revealed truths, the gift of understanding makes us scrutinize their depths. The theologian points out what is of faith, and answers the sophisms of heresy by collating texts from Scripture and from the councils according to a human method of procedure, which is often very complicated. Simple souls, on the contrary, under a special inspiration of the Holy Ghost answer in a different manner, at times with an astonishing and unanswerable perspicacity which causes the theologian to exclaim: “Mirabilis Deus in sanctis suis.”

The same difference exists between prudence, and the gift of counsel. When a grave decision is to be made, prudence, whether acquired or infused, must take counsel, examine all the circumstances and consequences of the act to be performed; it deliberates at length, without always reaching certitude, as to what is best to choose. On the contrary, if we have prayed with humility and trust, sometimes an inspiration of the gift of counsel instantly clarifies the whole problem. In a difficult situation, where two duties in apparent opposition must be harmonized, prudence is, as it were, perplexed; it hesitates, for example, about what answer to give, so as to avoid a lie, and keep a secret. In certain cases, only an inspiration of the gift of counsel will enable us to find the proper reply without in any way failing in the truth, and without having recourse to mental restrictions of dubious morality.

II Are the gifts of the Holy Ghost necessary for salvation? The necessity of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, as we have seen, springs from the imperfect mode of even lofty Christian virtues in our souls. Consequently the more the soul advances toward perfection, the more the gifts must intervene; so much so that their superhuman mode must end by prevailing, in an order superior not only to the processes of casuistry, but also to those of asceticism and to methods of prayer. This is the very foundation of our doctrine.

Here, in imitation of St. Thomas, we must proceed with measure. Were one to neglect to examine for himself, when possible, what should be thought, said, and done, under the pretext of abandonment to Providence, he would be tempting God. But we must take into account our insufficiency with regard to the supernatural end towards which we should tend.

St. Thomas teaches that the gifts of the Holy Ghost are necessary for salvation. “Of all the gifts,” he says, “Wisdom seems to be the highest, and fear the lowest. Each of these is necessary for salvation: since of wisdom it

is written (Wis. 7: 28): ‘God loveth none but him that dwelleth with wisdom’; and of fear (Eccles. 1:28): ‘He that is without fear cannot be justified.’” Because our Lord knew the profound needs of our souls, He promised us the Holy Ghost, from whom we have received the sevenfold gift.

To explain this necessity of the gifts, St. Thomas makes use of a profound reason: “The gifts are perfections of man, whereby he is disposed so as to be amenable to the promptings of God. Wherefore in those matters where the prompting of reason is not sufficient, and there is need for the prompting of the Holy Ghost, there is, in consequence, need for a gift. Now man’s reason is perfected by God in two ways: first, by its natural perfection, viz., by the natural light of reason (like the acquired virtue of wisdom); secondly, by a supernatural perfection, viz., by the theological virtues. And, though this latter perfection is greater than the former, yet the former is possessed by man in a more perfect manner than the latter: because man has the former in his full possession, whereas he possesses the latter imperfectly, since we love and know God imperfectly. Now it is evident that anything that has a nature or a form or a virtue perfectly, can of itself work according to them: not, however, excluding the operation of God, who works inwardly in every nature and in every will. On the other hand, that which has a nature or form or virtue imperfectly, cannot of itself work, unless it be moved by another. Thus the sun, which possesses light perfectly, can shine by itself; whereas the moon, which has the nature of light imperfectly, sheds only a borrowed light. Again a physician, who knows the medical art perfectly, can work by himself; but his pupil, who is not yet fully instructed, cannot work by himself, but needs to receive instructions from him.

“Accordingly, as to things subject to human reason, and subordinate to man’s connatural end, man can do them through the judgment of his reason (with the ordinary help that Providence gives to secondary causes). If, however, even in these things man receive help in the shape of special promptings from God (instinctum specialem), this will be out of God’s superabundant goodness (hoc erit superabundantis bonitatis): hence, according to the philosophers, not everyone that had the acquired moral virtues had also the heroic or divine virtues. But in matters directed to the supernatural end, (which absolutely surpasses the forces and exigencies of our reasonable nature), to which man’s reason moves him, according as it

is, in a manner, and imperfectly, actuated by the theological virtues, the motion of reason does not suffice, unless it receives in addition the prompting or motion of the Holy Ghost, according to Rom. 8: 14, 17: ‘Whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God . . . and if sons, heirs also’: and Ps. 142: 10: ‘Thy good Spirit shall lead me into the right land’; because, to wit, none can receive the inheritance of that land of the blessed, except he be moved and led thither by the Holy Ghost.” In this sense, the gifts are necessary to salvation as habitual dispositions to receive divine inspirations, just as sails are necessary on a boat that it may be responsive to the winds.

This does not mean that, without the intervention of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, a Christian is never capable of a supernatural act. But, if by mortal sin he has lost these gifts together with charity, he can still, with an ordinary actual grace, make a supernatural act of faith; and rather often the just man also acts in a supernatural manner without a special inspiration of the Holy Ghost. But, as St. Thomas says, it is not in the power of reason, even when enlightened by faith and infused prudence, “to know all things or all possible things. Consequently it is unable to avoid folly (stultitia) and other like things. . . . God, however, to whose knowledge and power all things are subject, by His motion safeguards us from all folly, ignorance, dullness of mind, and hardness of heart, and the rest. Consequently the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which make us amenable to His promptings, are said to be given as remedies to these defects.” “By the theological and moral virtues, man is not so perfected in respect of his last end, as not to stand in continual needs of being moved by the yet higher promptings of the Holy Ghost.”

III. Necessity of an increasingly perfect docility to the interior Master.

This special assistance, of which we have spoken, is so much more necessary, since the soul, in advancing, should perform more perfect works, and since the Lord wishes to conduct us to a deeper and more loving knowledge of the supernatural mysteries. The infused moral and theological virtues, even when they have reached a high degree, without a special help of the Holy Ghost still operate according to the human mode of the faculties in which they are received.

Faith makes us know God in a way which is still too abstract, too exterior, in specula et in aenigmate, by excessively narrow formulas that must be multiplied. We should be able to condense them into one that would bring us into close contact with the living God, and that would

express for us the Light of life, which more and more He ought to be for us. Hope and charity, which are directed by faith, share in this imperfection of faith. These two virtues of the will lack vitality, and keep too much of the human manner as long as they are directed only by reason illumined by faith.

No matter how circumspect Christian prudence, which rules the other moral virtues, may be, though it is quite superior to purely natural prudence, which is described by the philosophers, it still frequently remains timid, uncertain in its foresight, and too cautious to respond to all the exigencies of divine love; just as our fortitude and patience do not suffice in certain trials, or our chastity in the face of some temptations. Because our supernatural virtues must be adapted to the human mode of our faculties, they leave us in a state of inferiority with respect to the supernatural end towards which we should advance with greater eagerness.

With only the virtues, even though they are supernatural, man is like an apprentice who knows fairly well what he must do, but who has not the skill to do it in a suitable manner. Consequently the master who is teaching him must come from time to time, take his hand, and direct it so that the work may be presentable. Thus, as long as our prayer is only the fruit of an assiduous meditation, it remains too human to taste truly the word of God. In meditation we drink only of water, which has flowed along the ground and is mixed with mud, as St. Teresa says. That we may drink from the fountain, the Holy Ghost must, like the master of the apprentice, directly intervene, take possession of our intellect and will, and communicate to them His manner of thinking and of loving; a divine manner, which alone is worthy of God, who wishes to be known as a living truth and divinely loved. As we always remain apprentices towards God, the Holy Ghost must intervene habitually in our prayer, and works that they may be perfect. That is why, unlike purely gratuitous graces, (gratis datae) such as prophecy, the gifts, which make us amenable to divine inspirations as the virtues do to the directions of reason, should be permanent in us. They are in our soul what sails are on a boat. Two means can be used to move a small sailboat through the water: rowing, which is slow and laborious, and sailing. A soul can make progress and can advance by the exercise of the virtues; in this it is active; or by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, who breathes where He wills and when He wills. Here the soul is docile; acting less than it is acted upon. “The gifts of the Holy Ghost perfect man . . . for he is so acted upon

by the Holy Ghost, which he also acts himself in so far as he has a free will. Therefore he needs a habit." From this we see that the soul approaches perfection only by a great docility to the Holy Ghost, in which the superhuman mode of the gifts must normally prevail so as more and more to remedy what is essentially imperfect in the human mode of the virtues. This is the function of the gifts.

IV. The special inspiration of the Holy Ghost and the progress of charity.

No one questions that St. Thomas' mystical theology is found especially in his teaching about the gifts of the Holy Ghost, their relation to charity and to infused contemplation. But some persons merely read rather hastily in the Summa (Ia Ilae, q. 68), the articles devoted to the gifts of the Holy Ghost in general, and (IIa IIae, q. 8, 9, 45) the articles that relate to the gifts of understanding, knowledge, and wisdom, without considering sufficiently their connection with what is said (IIa IIae, q. 24, a. 9) about the three degrees of charity in beginners, the proficient, and the perfect, and without recalling what St. Thomas teaches (Ia IIae, q. 111, a. 2) about operating grace, to which he attaches the special inspiration of the Holy Ghost. As a result, they fail to see clearly what is original and very deep in the Thomistic doctrine of the gifts.

This point is briefly and lucidly set forth in the most thorough treatment that has been written on the subject of the gifts. We refer to the article by Father Gardeil, O.P., in the Dictionnaire de théologie catholique. In the historical part of the article, after showing the sources for the doctrine of the gifts in Scripture and in the Greek and Latin fathers, and after mentioning the treatises of the first Scholastic theologians, Father Gardeil analyzes what has been written on the gifts by the founders of systematized theology —Alexander of Hales, St. Bonaventure, St. Albert the Great, and St. Thomas Aquinas. It is interesting to see how these four great Scholastics reacted against William of Auxerre and William of Paris, who denied the specific character of the gifts and reduced them to the virtues, thus preparing the ground for the minimist doctrine of the decadent nominalists of the fourteenth century. Father Gardeil says: "These four great theologians fundamentally consecrated the ancient doctrine, which distinguished the gifts from the virtues, by considering them as primi motus in corde . . . but, instead of identifying the gifts and actual graces, they saw in the gifts, at least St. Thomas did subjective dispositions to receive the most sublime actual graces. With an incomparable and magnificent synthesis, St. Thomas

attached this point of doctrine to what, both in the philosophy of Aristotle and in his own theology, is most elevated and most profoundly true on the pre-eminence of the divine action. He thus, brought this point of doctrine back to absolutely first principles, which, in philosophy as well as theology, govern questions about the divine action as such; that is, developing it in conformity with the inner law of the divine being. By this systematization, he assured it the indestructible solidity of every doctrine which is attached to first principles, evident in themselves, or primarily revealed."

It is our wish: (I) to show how, according to St. Thomas, the special inspiration of the Holy Ghost, to which the gifts render us docile, differs from the common, actual grace necessary to the exercise of the infused virtues; (2) to follow the growing elevation of this special inspiration, in beginners, the proficient, and the perfect, by considering especially the gifts of wisdom, understanding, and knowledge.

THE SPECIAL INSPIRATION OF THE HOLY GHOST AND COMMON, ACTUAL GRACE

For a clear Understanding of this teaching, as Father del Prado remarks, we must distinguish, as St. Thomas does, the different ways in which God moves our intellect and our will, whether in the natural or in the supernatural order. St. Thomas distinguishes between three principle modes of the divine motion in the order of nature, and three others proportionately similar in that of grace. They can be expressed in the following division which we will explain:

Our mind (mens) is moved by God

In the natural order

In the Supernatual order

To will beatitude in general.

to resolve upon

by a special inspiration, for example, in the philosophical or poetic order, etc

to be converted to God, supernatural last end.

to resolve upon the use of the infused virtues

by a special inspiration to which

the gifts render us docile.

The first mode of motion is before human deliberation, the second is after or with it, the third is above it, and that in the order of nature as well as in that of grace. St. Thomas has enumerated them in Ia IIae, q. 9, a. 6 ad 3um; q. 68, a. 2, 3; q. 109, a. 1, 2, 6, 9; q. 111, a. 2; De veritate, q. 24, a. 15. It will suffice to translate the first of these texts, which—many seem to ignore the fact—is explained by those that follow, as we shall see: "God moves man's will, as the Universal Mover, to the universal object of the will, which is good. And, without this universal motion, man cannot will anything. But man determines himself by his reason, to will this or that, which is true or apparent good. Nevertheless, sometimes God moves some specially to the willing of something determinate, which is good; as in the case of those whom He moves by grace, as we shall see later on (q. 109, a. 2; q. 109, a. 6; q. 111, a. 2)."

By the first mode of divine motion in the natural order, our will is therefore moved, as to its exercise, to will good in general or beatitude, and this act, by which each one of us wishes to be happy or desires happiness, is without doubt a vital act determined upon by the will; but it is not free, in this sense that we cannot hate beatitude or prefer anything else to it. We always aspire to it, and this aspiration bears thus confusedly on God, although we do not always judge that our true beatitude is to be found in Him. Every man naturally desires to be happy, "and the source of all good consists in placing happiness where it should be, and the source of all evil lies in misplacing it." This is why our Lord began His preaching with the evangelical beatitudes, which tells us, as opposed to the maxims of the world, where true happiness is to be found.

In this first act of will, in this natural desire for happiness, there can be no sin, if the act is considered in itself independently of the acts that may follow it. We do not say that the will moves itself to this first act; strictly speaking, it moves itself to an act only in virtue of an anterior act. Thus it moves itself to choose the means in virtue of the act by which it wishes the end. The question here concerns the first act in the strict sense; hence in this

case the will cannot sin; it is moved by God without moving itself, although it produces this act vitally.

The second mode of divine motion is that in virtue of which our free will, still in the natural order, determines upon a good or an apparent good. This movement of our will is not only vital but free, and to produce it, the will moves itself in virtue of an anterior act; hence it can sin in this case. But, since God cannot by His motion be equally the cause of evil and of good, we must say that the motion by which He moves the free will to determine upon a good natural act, is not the same as that by which He is the cause of the physical act of sin and not of its malice The good act comes entirely from God, as from its first cause, and entirely from us as from its second cause: “What hast thou that thou hast not received?” On the contrary, the evil act, considered with respect to what is disordered and evil in it, does not come from God, but only from our detectible and evilly disposed free will. Just so, the gait of a lame person, in so far as the action is concerned, springs from his vital energy, but its defectiveness comes only from the malformation of his leg. As opposed to the divine motion which moves to good, the motion required for the physical act of sin is accompanied by the divine permission of the disorder contained in the sin. God allows this disorder to occur for very lofty reasons of which, He is the judge, but He can in no way be its cause. Indefectible principle of all good and of all order, He can no more cause the evil involved in the act of sin than the eye, seeing the color of a fruit, can perceive its taste. Moral evil is no more the object of omnipotence, than sounds are the object of sight. Without being obliged thereto, God often remedies the weaknesses of our free will; He does not always do it. Therein lays a mystery.

The third mode of divine motion in the natural order is mentioned by St. Thomas “when he quotes the Eudemian Ethics (Bk. VII, chap. 14). In this work, which is attributed to Aristotle but was composed under his influence by one of his platonizing disciples, the author says: “Someone will ask, perhaps, whether a person’s good fortune makes him desire what he should, when he should. . . . Without reflecting, deliberating, or taking counsel, it happens that he thinks and wills what is most suitable. . . . To what is this due, if not to good fortune? What is good fortune itself and how can it give such happy inspirations? This is equivalent to asking, what is the superior principle of the movements of the soul. Now, it is manifested that God, who is the principle of the universe, is also the principle of the soul. All things

are moved by Him who is present in us. The principle reason is not reason, but something superior. What is superior to reason and intelligence except God? . . . This is why the ancients used to say: 'Happy are they who without deliberating are led to act well.' This does not come from their own will, but from a principle present in them which is superior to their intellect and to their will. . . . Under a divine inspiration, some even foresee the future."

In the Nicomachian Ethics, Bk. VII, chap. 1, Aristotle speaks of heroes, such as Hector, who "because of the excellence of their courage are called divine . . . , for there is something superior to human virtue in them," or to human science. Thus, it was customary to say "the divine Plato," because of the superior inspiration which often animated his discourse. This inspiration is in the natural order and takes different forms, philosophical, poetical, musical, and strategic. These are the various forms of genius.

St. Thomas clearly states that this special inspiration is not at all necessary to man for the attainment of his natural last end. But he maintains that it is otherwise in the order of grace, where the gifts of the Holy Ghost and the corresponding inspirations are necessary for salvation.

These three modes of divine motion, which we have defined, are transposed in the order of grace; in this order the three are normal.

1) At the moment when a sinner is justified, God as the Author of grace moves the sinner's free will to be converted to his supernatural last end. Under this divine motion and by it the sinner is made just or is justified, and begins to act no longer merely in view of happiness naturally desired, but for God supernaturally loved above all things. This supernatural motion first of all prepares the sinner to receive sanctifying grace, and justifies him through the infusion of this grace and of charity by moving him to a free act of faith, charity, and repentance. In this case the free will does not, strictly speaking, move itself to this act of living faith and charity; it is moved thereto by operating grace. In this act there cannot be sin; on the contrary, there is hatred of sin. This act is freely produced under the impulse of efficacious grace. Although entirely free, this supernatural movement of the will resembles the first natural movement by which we wish happiness. Strictly speaking, man cannot move himself; that would suppose an efficacious anterior act of the same order. This anterior act does not exist, since the question here concerns the first efficacious act of love of the supernatural end. This act is not preceded by personal merit; rather it opens

the way of merit. It is, as it were, the threshold of the order of grace, or the first step in the execution of divine predestination.

2) The second mode of motion in this order is that by which God moves a just man to act well supernaturally by using the infused virtues as he ought. In this movement of the free will, the will is moved and moves itself by virtue of an anterior supernatural act. Here there is deliberation, properly so called, regarding the means in view of the end, and a human manner of acting under the direction of reason enlightened by faith. Moreover, this grace is called co-operating grace. When this grace is efficacious, free will can still resist if it wishes, but it never wills to do so. In fact it cannot happen that sin is produced in the very use of grace, when man is moved by efficacious actual grace. Thus he who is seated can indeed rise, but he cannot at one and the same time be seated and standing. Liberty is not destroyed because God, who is infinitely powerful and closer to us than we are to ourselves, moves our will according to its natural inclinations freely to will one thing or another.

3) Lastly, the third mode of the divine motion in the order of grace is that by which God especially moves the free will of a spiritual man, who is disposed to the divine inspiration by the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Here the just soul is immediately directed, not by reason enlightened by faith, but by the Holy Ghost Himself in a superhuman manner. This motion is not only given for the exercise of the act, but for its direction and specification; consequently it is called illumination and inspiration. It is an eminent mode of operating grace which thus leads to the highest acts of the virtues and of the gifts: faith, illumined by the gift of understanding, becomes much more penetrating and contemplative; hope, enlightened by the gift of knowledge as to the vanity of all that is transitory, becomes perfect confidence and filial abandonment to Providence; and the illuminations of the gift of wisdom invite charity to the intimacy of the divine union. As the bee or the carrier pigeon, directed by instinct, acts with a wonderful certainty revealing the Intelligence which directs them, just so, says St. Thomas, “the spiritual man is inclined to act, not principally through the movement of his own will, but by the instinct of the Holy Ghost, according to the words of Isaias (59: 19): ‘When he shall come as a violent stream, which the Spirit of the Lord driveth on.’ And in St. Luke we find: ‘Jesus . . . was led by the Spirit into the desert.’ It does not follow that the spiritual man does not operate by his will and his free will, but it is the Holy Ghost who causes this

movement of the will and of the free will in him, as St. Paul says: ‘For it is God who worketh in you both to will and to accomplish.’” These words of St. Thomas are the best commentary on what he has written about operating grace. Again he says: “The sons of God are led by the Holy Ghost in order that they may pass through this life which is full of temptations (Job 7: I) and gain the victory by the grace of Christ.”

Although the illumination of the Holy Ghost dispenses us from deliberating, nevertheless the act remains free and meritorious, for we consent to be moved in this way, as a good student wills to profit from the lesson of his teacher, and as an obedient man is perfectly and freely docile to the order given to him. This third mode of divine motion thus safeguards liberty and harmonizes with the infallibility of the divine foreknowledge and of the divine decree: “The Holy Ghost . . . does unfailingly whatever He wills to do. Hence it is impossible for these two things to be true at the same time—that the Holy Ghost should will to move a certain man to an act of charity, and that this man, by sinning, should lose charity.”

Evidently these three modes of motion, in the natural order and also in that of grace, are distinct, as accordingly they are before human deliberation, after it (or with it), or above it. But the third of these modes is rarely found in the natural order, in geniuses or heroes, whereas in the order of grace it is normal, for reason, even enlightened by faith, acts in so human a manner as not to suffice to direct us towards our supernatural last end.

This doctrine of St. Thomas, confirming what he teaches on “the virtues of the purified soul,” is reiterated exactly in the writings of St. John of the Cross, where he speaks of these purified souls: “Thus ordinarily the first movements of the powers in such souls are, as it were, divine. This is not to be wondered at since these powers are, in a fashion, transformed into the divine Being. . . . God moves specially the powers of these souls . . . ; consequently, their works and prayers are always efficacious. Such were those of the glorious Mother of God, who from the beginning of her life, was raised to this high degree of union. There was never in her soul the impress of any created form, whatsoever, capable of distracting her from God, for she was always docile to the motion of the Holy Ghost.”

Therefore every just man has, together with grace and the infused virtues, the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, which are related to charity, perfect the different virtues, and with them constitute a perfect supernatural organism ready to move deliberately, and also to be moved by the Holy Ghost in a

manner beyond all human consideration. This is why habitual or sanctifying grace is called, “the grace of the virtues and of the gifts,” from the name of the infused habitus which spring from it, just as the faculties have their origin in the essence of the soul.

This supernatural organism, according to the teaching of St. Augustine and St. Thomas, we illustrate by the synopsis on the next page, where we note the correspondence of the virtues, the gifts, and the beatitudes indicated by these two great doctors.

In this summary, in which we have brought together the teaching of Scripture and of tradition on this subject, the virtues are set down according to the order of their hierarchy, and the corresponding gifts in like manner.

The grace of the virtues
and of
the gifts

Theological virtues bearing directly the end	
moral virtues bearing directly on the means	Virtues
charity	
faith	
hope	
prudence	
justice	
(religion)	
fortitude	
temperance	
Wisdom	Gifts
Understanding	
Knowledge	
counxel	
piety	
fortitude	
fear	
Peacemakers	Beatitudes
pure of heart	

those who weep
the merciful
the meek
those who hunger
after justice
the poor in spirit Fruits of the
Holy Ghost (Gal. 5:22-23)
Charity
Peace
Joy
Patience
benignity
goodness
longanimity
faith
modesty
continency
chastity

The gift of knowledge is placed opposite hope, inasmuch as it acquaints us with the vanity of created things and human help, and thus leads us to desire the possession of God and to hope in Him. The correspondence of the beatitudes is more clearly seen if we recall the reward promised to each one. The last one, (“Blessed are they who suffer persecution”) is not indicated, even though it is the most perfect, because it contains all the others in the midst of the greatest difficulties.

The order of the gifts of the Holy Ghost is clearly seen from the outline of what St. Thomas says of them, as appears in the synopsis on the next page.

From this outline we see that the gifts of the intellect, which direct the others, are superior to them. They perfect the intellect in its first two operations: simple apprehension and penetration of the truth, and judgment. There is no question of the third, reasoning or discourse, because the acts dependent on the gifts are not discursive, and are superior to the human mode of reasoning. The gift of wisdom is superior to that of understanding, for wisdom judges first principles themselves by the highest Cause. Here we are concerned with judgment, not only according to the perfect use of speculative reason, as in acquired wisdom, but by connaturality or

sympathy with divine things; a connaturality founded on charity, or the supernatural love of God.

Gifts Virtues

The understanding enlightened

by faith For the penetration of

Truth

understanding

wisdom

knowledge

counsel faith

charity

hope

prudence

theological

The gifts

perfect

The will and the sensitive

appetites relative to the worship due to God

against the fear of danger

concupiscences

Piety

Fortitude

fear

(religion)

Justice fortitude

temperance

moral

GROWING ELEVATION OF THE SPECIAL INSPIRATION OF THE HOLY GHOST IN BEGINNERS, PROFICIENTS, AND THE PERFECT

All the gifts are related to charity, and as infused habitus they grow with charity, which ought always to increase until death. Consequently, as we distinguish three degrees of charity (that of beginners, of proficient's, and of the perfect), we make the same distinction in regard to the gifts of the Holy Ghost. This point has been especially developed by Dionysius the Carthusian in his treatise on the gifts, where he shows that their first degree corresponds to strict obligation, the second to the practice of the counsels, and the third to heroic acts. We will briefly indicate these three degrees:

first, in the gift of knowledge and in the gifts subordinated to it; then, in the more elevated gifts of understanding and wisdom.

The gift of knowledge makes us judge created things supernaturally, either by showing us their nothingness, or by disclosing to us the divine symbolism hidden in them. In the first degree, it makes us recognize the fact that, in themselves, creatures are nothing and that we should not be attached to them as to our last end, but should use them solely as a means to bring us to God. In the second degree, it leads us to use creatures with moderation and with interior detachment; at the same time, by the spectacle of nature, it lifts us to God. In the third degree, it bestows the spirit of renunciation, carried even to the heroic practice of the counsels. It makes us see the value of humiliations and sufferings, which render us like Christ crucified, and which associates us with the great mystery of the redemption. This knowledge is no longer superficial and a simple remembrance of pious reading, but a profound conviction and true participation in the divine knowledge of created things. It consists particularly in the knowledge of the gravity of sin, and has as its fruit the tears of contrition. Under the direction of the gift of knowledge, the gifts of counsel, fear, piety, and fortitude are exercised.

While the gift of knowledge directs us to a general point of view, (detachment from created things), that of counsel, perfecting prudence, shows us in particular the best means of attaining the end. Where prudence would hesitate, it shows us what to do or to avoid, what to say or to suppress, and what to undertake or to abandon. In the first degree, it directs us in matters of strict obligation; in the second, it inclines us to the generous practice of the evangelical counsels; and in the third, it makes us undertake holy works with heroic perfection. It corresponds to the beatitude of the merciful, for it counsels the works of mercy. Only the merciful really know how to give afflicted souls good advice that will encourage them.

Under the direction of the gift of knowledge, the gift of fear strengthens temperance and chastity by making us avoid, in the sight of God, the mistakes that our corrupted nature is prone to. It corresponds to hope by leading us to a filial respect toward God. In the first degree, it inspires horror of sin and arms us against temptation. In the second, it bestows deeper filial respect for the divine Majesty, preserves us from irreverence to holy things, and also from presumption. In the third, it leads to the practice of perfect renunciation and of the mortification which St. Paul describes in

the following words: “Always bearing about in our body the mortification of Jesus, which the life also of Jesus may manifest in our body.” Thus we can see how this fear, which has for its fruit the beatitude of the poor in spirit, is “the beginning of wisdom,” of a very lofty wisdom.

This holy fear, however, should be accompanied by the gift of piety, which fills us with a filial affection for God our Father and makes us accomplish with our whole heart and with religious eagerness all that has to do with divine worship. This gift makes us cry: “Abba (Father),” as St. Paul says. It corresponds to the beatitude of the meek, since it bestows a heavenly sweetness and thus leads us to comfort our afflicted neighbor, because it makes us see in him a brother, or a suffering member of Christ. In its highest degree, the gift of piety strongly inclines us to give ourselves entirely to the service of God, to offer Him all our acts and sufferings as a perfect sacrifice. This gift makes us realize that communion is a participation in the sacrifice of the cross perpetuated on our altars; a participation by which our Lord wishes to render our hearts like His Sacred Heart of priest and victim, and to associate us with the deepest sentiments He experienced when instituting the Holy Eucharist just before He went forth to die for us. Of this union with Christ the priest, St. Peter says: “Be you also as living stones built up, a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”

The gift of fortitude, under the same direction of the gifts of knowledge and counsel, gives us the courage to undertake great things for God, and to bear crushing trials for Him. It comes to the aid of the virtue of fortitude in very difficult circumstances. This gift corresponds to the fourth beatitude: “Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after justice,” and who, in spite of all obstacles, maintain unshaken confidence in the help of God. In the perfect, this gift imbues the soul with an irresistible attraction to the things of God; it leads the soul to suffer joyfully the most painful torments for God, for faith, and for justice. This gift enables humble virgins and weak children to win the crown of martyrdom. It also sustains those who pass without weakening through the bitter crucible of the passive purifications of the soul, and who experience the truth of the Scriptural expression: “Many are the afflictions of the just; but out of them all will the Lord deliver them.” This gift is what made St. Paul exclaim: “I exceedingly abound with joy in all our tribulation”; and also, “who now rejoice in my sufferings for

you, and fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ in my flesh, for His body which is the Church."

Knowledge, counsel, fear, piety, and fortitude are, as we have seen, the inferior gifts directed to victory over sin and to action. The soul, living habitually under the régime of these gifts, is already in the mystical life, even though mystical contemplation, which proceeds from the higher gifts, is not yet clearly discerned in it. This fact is important in practice, and should be clearly noted so as to maintain, always without exaggeration, the exact meaning of the doctrine which we defend, namely, the normal though eminent character of infused contemplation. Although infused contemplation is, generally granted to the perfect, it is not always clearly characterized in them. But they are already in the mystical life if they live habitually under the régime of the gifts, which corresponds to the beatitudes of the flight from sin and to those of the active life. This is evident from what St. Thomas says about the first five beatitudes. Thereby the soul is immediately prepared for infused contemplation, which is chiefly the fruit of the gifts of understanding and wisdom.

The gift of understanding makes us penetrate the meaning of revealed truths and discover the spirit beneath the letter. While faith is a simple assent to the word of God, an assent that exists in a believing soul, even in the state of mortal sin, this gift, which like the others is found only in the just, implies a penetrating and progressive understanding of the mysteries of faith, the precepts, and the counsels. It does not remove the obscurity of faith or its merit. It never gives us, while on earth, the evidence of mysteries, properly so called, for example, those of the Blessed Trinity, the incarnation, the redemption, and predestination. But it makes us perceive more clearly that the obscurity of these mysteries is the very opposite to the obscurity of incoherence and absurdity, and that it comes from a light which is too strong for our weak eyes. Thus, it shows us the emptiness of the objections raised against faith, and it greatly confirms the motives of credibility, or signs of revelation.

In the first degree, the gift of understanding strengthens the faith of every good Christian to such an extent that illiterate people, who cannot make a study of the motives of credibility, adhere to the word of God with a firmness which may surpass that of the faith of learned men. In the second degree, this gift discloses the consistency and sublimity of revealed mysteries. It also contributes greatly to the passive purification of the soul,

by making us glimpse the infinite grandeur of God, His unfathomable perfections, the annihilations of the Word made flesh and, on the other hand, the depth of the wretchedness subsisting in us. It corresponds to the beatitude of the clean of heart. In the third degree, this gift makes the soul penetrate the hidden depths of the divine mysteries; it unveils more and more the meaning of the prophecies and of our Lord's words, and in a way makes us see God; "by the gift of understanding, we can, so to speak, see God," not by a positive, immediate intuition of the divine presence, but by showing us more and more clearly what God is not, and how His intimate life infinitely exceeds the natural knowledge of every created and creatable intelligence. Evidently the third degree of the gift of understanding, that which is normally proper to the perfect, belongs to the mystical life, strictly so called, as the principle of infused contemplation. We can easily understand this by reading the description of the third degree in the work of Dionysius the Carthusian.

Lastly, whereas the gift of understanding conceives and penetrates, wisdom makes us judge all created things by the taste, by the affective and sweet knowledge of God, their beginning and end. Although in this life wisdom remains in the obscurity of faith, without seeing God as He is (sicuti est), nevertheless it contemplates Him in His intimate life in the measure in which we have an experimental knowledge of Him as the soul of our soul, the life of our life. As we take cognizance of our soul in our actions, so, in a certain way, we have a quasi-experimental knowledge of God by the action He exercises in us and by the spiritual joy and peace we experience therefrom. Thus St. Paul says: "For the Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit, that we are the sons of God." Such is indeed, as St. Thomas and John of St. Thomas show, the effect of the gift of wisdom. We will quote in a note the formulas of the Master to which one must continually revert, as will be seen from what follows.

The gift of wisdom is thus the most perfect of all; it exerts the same influence over the other gifts as charity does on the virtues which are subordinated to it. Wisdom is, at one and the same time, eminently speculative and practical; it appears in some souls especially under the first form, and in others more particularly under the second. Thus, there are saints called to the active life, like St. Vincent de Paul, who under a practical form have, nevertheless, a very profound mystical union with God. It is this which makes them see constantly in the poor, the sick and

abandoned children, the suffering members of Christ. It is very important to note these practical forms of the mystical life if we are to understand clearly the meaning of the doctrine which we hold as traditional, and if we do not wish to apply it materially in the same way to all souls. St. Paul was thinking of this gift when he said: “Howbeit we speak wisdom among the perfect. . . . But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, a wisdom which is hidden. . . . So the things also that are of God no man knoweth, but the Spirit of God. . . . Now we have received . . . the Spirit that is of God. . . . The spiritual man judgeth all things; and he himself is judged of no man. . . . But we have the mind of Christ.” This experience of divine things gives a certitude which fills the soul with ineffable consolation. The gift of wisdom thus corresponds to the beatitude of the peacemakers, who, in the midst of all that might trouble them, preserve deep peace, the tranquility of order, so as to communicate it to others. They are accustomed to contemplate all things in God, unforeseen and most painful events, as well as those that are most consoling.

This gift is bestowed on us according to the measure of our charity, by virtue of its intimate connection with charity. Moreover, we can see in it, better than in the other gifts, the three degrees corresponding to those of charity. In the first degree, wisdom shows us principally the grandeur of God’s commandments and gives us an attraction to what is good. “But it is good for me to adhere to my God.” In the second degree, it makes us see how valuable the counsels are and how all Christians should have the spirit of the counsels, even when their condition does not permit the practice of them. Illumined by the light of contemplation, a soul which passes through the night of the spirit appreciates the cross of Jesus more; at times, it even finds therein a spiritual sweetness and a “peace which surpasses all understanding.” In the third degree, the soul is transformed by the gift of wisdom. In the light of this gift, says St. Thomas, “the perfect aim chiefly at union with and enjoyment of God, and desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ.” Like St. Paul the soul takes pleasure “in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ.” This is the eighth beatitude, the highest of a11.

Evidently this third degree of the gift of wisdom belongs to the mystical life, even when this degree of wisdom appears under a practical form, as it does in the saints called to the active life. Dionysius the Carthusian, following the principles of St. Thomas, brings this out in his description of

this third degree. He says: “The spirit no longer rests in any created thing for itself; it is completely fixed in the contemplation of divine things, a contemplation, which is very pure, easy, and sweet, now that the passions are calmed and the soul purified . . . as far as human frailty permits. This wisdom belongs to those who can say with St. Paul (II Cor. 3: 18): ‘But we all beholding the glory of the Lord with open face, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory as by the spirit of the Lord.’” We ought all to desire this divine wisdom which normally increases with charity, which ought to grow continually in this life.

What is extraordinary is super eminent contemplation which proceeds not only from the gifts of the Holy Ghost, but from a grace gratis data, like that of prophecy, or that called by St. Thomas sermo sapientiae. Moreover, after stating that all the just receive the gift of wisdom in the measure necessary to their own sanctification, St. Thomas adds: “Some, however, receive a higher degree of the gift of wisdom, both as to the contemplation of divine things, (by both knowing more exalted mysteries and being able to impart this knowledge to others), and as to the direction of human affairs according to divine rules, (by being able to direct not only themselves but also others according to those rules). This degree of wisdom is not common to all that have sanctifying grace, but belongs rather to the gratuitous graces.” We must also remark that these graces, like prophecy, are not precisely necessary for this act of contemplation, but they simply help to render it more complete and more perfect. What would be even more extraordinary is the beatific vision granted in a transitory manner in this life, as St. Augustine and St. Thomas thought that it was granted to Moses and St. Paul.

This is the Angelic Doctor’s teaching on the special inspiration of the Holy Ghost in the souls of the just, and on its progress, which usually accompanies that of charity. If we recall that, in his opinion, the perfection of charity is not only of counsel, but falls under the first precept as the end to which all must tend, each one according to his condition, we shall see more and more clearly that infused contemplation, proceeding from the gift of wisdom, is truly found in the normal way of sanctity and that it is generally granted to the perfect.

We must now make a more profound study of the gift of wisdom in particular of its relation to faith and to infused contemplation.

ARTICLE VI

THE ESSENTIAL CHARACTER OF INFUSED CONTEMPLATION; HOW IT PROCEEDS FROM THE GIFT OF WISDOM AND FROM FAITH

For the reasons we have just set forth, theologians commonly teach that infused contemplation proceeds formally from the gifts of the Holy Ghost, particularly from the gift of wisdom which makes us taste the mysteries of salvation and, so to speak, see all things in God, just as acquired wisdom tries to judge everything by the supreme cause and the last end. The gift of understanding also contributes to contemplation by making us penetrate these mysteries. The gift of knowledge may also have a share in it, by manifesting to us the emptiness and the vanity of all created things in comparison with God, or by revealing to us, in a more striking manner than years of meditation could, the infinite gravity of mortal sin.

All tradition associates with the inspirations of the gift of wisdom that loving knowledge of God, which is quite different from speculative knowledge. This loving knowledge supposes, together with the special illumination of the Holy Ghost, a living "connaturality with divine things," based on infused charity, a wholly supernatural attraction of the soul for God, who makes Himself felt by it as the life of its life. This living knowledge is an affective knowledge, which becomes more lively, penetrating, and sweet, because the gift of wisdom grows with charity and is related to it as the infused virtues and the other gifts are.

I. THE SPIRIT OF WISDOM IN SCRIPTURE

This doctrine, which is commonly accepted in the Church, is manifestly founded on what Scripture tells us of the spirit of wisdom. It was not only of the Messias that Isaias spoke when he declared: "And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him: the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel, and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge, and of godliness. And he shall be filled with the spirit of the fear of the Lord." The Old Testament applies to all men the following words, which we have already quoted: "God loveth none but him that dwelleth with wisdom"; "for wisdom will not enter into a malicious soul, nor dwell in a body subject to sins." St. John writes to the faithful: "Let the unction which you have received from Him abide in you. . . . His unction teacheth you of all things,

and is truth, and is no lie." St. Paul, after stating that "the charity of God is poured forth in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us," then adds: "For you have not received the spirit of bondage again in fear; but you have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry: Abba (Father)." "Howbeit we speak wisdom among the perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, neither of the princes of this world that come to nought: but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, a wisdom which is hidden, which God ordained before the world, unto our glory: which none of the princes of the world knew; for if they had known it, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory. But, as it is written: That eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him. But to us God hath revealed them, by His Spirit. For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, but the spirit of a man that is in him? So the things also that are of God no man knoweth, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of this world, but the Spirit that is of God: that we may know the things that are given us from God. Which things also we speak, not in the learned words of human wisdom: but in the doctrine of the Spirit, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the sensual man perceiveth not these things that are of the Spirit of God: for it is foolishness to him, and he cannot understand, because it is spiritually examined. But the spiritual man judgeth all things: and he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ."

These words about the wisdom preached "among the perfect" are fully lived only by souls raised to mystical contemplation; especially to them, the unction of the Holy Ghost "teaches all things." By Him they cry to God in their prayers; they scrutinize the deep things of God; they anticipate all He has prepared for those who love Him; they know experimentally all the riches already received; and they judge all things, whether painful or pleasurable, by referring them to the glory of God. Again St. Paul writes for all Christians: "But we all beholding the glory of the Lord with open face, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord." Only in infused contemplation is this transformation a certainty is fully realized on earth.

Without the mystical knowledge of God, how can we possess the full perfection of Christian life? "Now all good things came to me together with

her." As the Apostle St. James says: "But the wisdom, that is from above, first indeed is chaste, then peaceable, modest, easy to be persuaded, consenting to the good, full of mercy and good fruits, without judging, without dissimulation."

The doctors of the Church, following the lead of St. Augustine and St. Gregory the Great, have interpreted these passages of Scripture as referring to the gift of wisdom, the principle of infused contemplation. The liturgy likewise brings this message to all the faithful in the Veni Creator.

II. THE GIFT OF WISDOM AND INFUSED CONTEMPLATION ACCORDING TO THEOLOGY

St. Thomas, in conformity with tradition, teaches that contemplation is chiefly the fruit of the gift of wisdom. This gift is an infused disposition (habitus infusus) of the intellect, as contemplation is an intellectual act, requiring an illumination of the Holy Ghost. But as the gift of wisdom presupposes charity, contemplation depends essentially also on charity, which makes us desire to know God better, not for the joy of knowing, but for God Himself, that we may love Him more. In this act the will applies the intellect to the consideration of divine things in preference to all others (order of exercise), and also (in the order of specification), from the fact that this will is fundamentally rectified and elevated by an eminent charity, these divine things appear to us more and more conformable to our highest aspirations. By experience we learn that they fill and surpass these aspirations, and never cease to elevate them. Consequently we live more and more by God, by His supreme goodness, which makes itself felt by us as the life of our life. We "taste the sweetness of God": "0 taste, and see that the Lord is sweet."

St. Thomas says: "Wisdom denotes certain rectitude of judgment according to the Eternal Law. Now rectitude of judgment is twofold: first, on account of perfect use of reason, secondly, on account of certain connaturality with the matter about which one has to judge. Thus about matters of chastity, a man after inquiring with his reason forms a right judgment, if he has learned the science of morals, while he who has the habit of chastity judges of such matters by a kind of connaturality. Accordingly, it belongs to the wisdom that is an intellectual virtue to pronounce right judgment about divine things, after reason has made its

inquiry; but it belongs to wisdom as a gift of the Holy Ghost to judge aright about them on account of connaturality with them: thus Dionysius says (Div., Nom., ii) that Hierotheus is perfect in divine things, for he not only learns, but he is patient of divine things. Now this sympathy or connaturality with divine things is the result of charity, which unites us to God, according to I Cor. 6: 17: He who is joined to the Lord, is one spirit."

Thus love makes the object loved better known, affectus transit in conditionem objecti, as John of St. Thomas says, "for by it and by affective experience this object appears to us more and more conformable to our aspirations and intimately united to us. The intellect is thus, directed toward God, as if it touched Him experimentally. In this way, love moves the understanding, by applying it to consideration (in genere causae efectivae), and also in an objective manner (in genere causae objectivae), since by this experience the object appears quite otherwise than without it" and manifests itself as supremely suitable, as Goodness itself that is felt. This is what made our Lord say: "If any man will do the will of Him (the Father); he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of MyseIf." This love unites us more closely to God than abstract knowledge; and by the experience it gives us, it makes us more and more keenly desire the intuitive knowledge of the life to come, the beatific vision. This true pragmatism, which scoffs at pragmatism, is born of supernatural charity, which supposes faith.

A soul might have affective knowledge from the simple fact that the love of charity is united to the act of faith; this is what occurs in affective, discursive prayer. But in infused contemplation there is, in addition, an inspiration and special illumination of the Holy Ghost. This subject was discussed at length in article 5 above.

When a distinction is made, as often occurs in the writings of the fathers and of theologians, between illumination and inspiration, special illumination is a grace for the intellect, inspiration a grace for the will. In this sense we speak of infused knowledge and love that we cannot produce at will. No one can set a limit to the growing intensity of the illumination, which the gift of wisdom renders us apt to receive. This illumination, as we shall see, can always grow in intensity in this life, just as charity can.

This infused contemplation is obscure, because it is superior both to every sensible image and to every distinct idea. This state of transluminous obscurity is indeed; in so far as the intelligence is concerned, what

constitutes the foundation of the mystical state, according to the opinion of Dionysius, St. John of the Cross, and the other great spiritual teachers. It is very difficult to describe, for it is entirely supernatural and surpasses all expression. It is something akin to death of the understanding, which in reality is an incomparably superior new life, the true prelude of the life of heaven. St. John of the Cross should be consulted on this point, which he discusses in The Dark Night of the Soul. He says: “The imagination is bound, and unable to make any profitable reflections; the memory is gone; and the understanding, too, is darkened and unable to comprehend anything.” The faculties are, as it were, annihilated according to their human mode; here, there is a deeper and more vital communication of the divine mode of knowing and loving. St. John of the Cross quotes St. Thomas (IIa IIae, q. 180, a. 1) and adds: “This happens in a secret, hidden way in which the natural operation of the understanding and the other faculties have no share. And, therefore, because the faculties of the soul cannot attain it, and since the Holy Ghost infuses it into the soul in a way unknown to it, as the Bride declares in the Canticle, it is called ‘secret.’ And, it is not only the soul that is ignorant of it, but everyone else, even the devil; because the Master, who now teaches the soul, dwells substantially within it where neither the devil, nor the understanding, nor natural reason can penetrate.”

This is why so much difficulty is found in describing psychologically what theology calls the superhuman mode of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, especially of the gift of wisdom. Among the best descriptions are the one we have just quoted, and also the passage where St. Teresa distinguishes the first infused prayer (supernatural recollection), from the last of the acquired prayers which preceded it. We quoted this description above (chap. 5. arts. 2, 3).

It is important, however, not to believe with liberal Protestantism and modernistic agnosticism that this transluminous obscurity of infused contemplation, which brings no distinct knowledge, can do without a definite Credo, or that it finds an obstacle in such a Credo. On the contrary, this obscurity is at the opposite extreme from the “unstable wandering of the soul” with which sentimentality, or theosophy is satisfied. To this it is somewhat opposed, as God, its object, is opposed to prime matter, which is capable of receiving all forms. In fact, infused contemplation is what gives ever more clearly the spirit of the words, concepts, and formulas of faith. It

thus, makes us, in a way; pass beyond the formulas of dogmas in order to enter into the deep things of God by believing in the mysteries, as they are in Him, without its being granted us to see them. Thus conceived, this contemplation, far more profoundly than any study or meditation could, enables us to grasp the evangelical parables, the different mysteries of salvation, the unfathomable perfections of God, the supreme mystery of the Deity which contains them all, and the ineffable relations of the divine Persons.

Hence St. Thomas, following Dionysius, distinguishes three principal degrees in this contemplation, according to the brilliance of the illumination of the Holy Ghost, which has an unlimited intensive progress.

1) The soul contemplates God in the mirror of sensible things of which He is the author, or in the mirror of the evangelical parables, as for instance, infinite mercy in the story of the prodigal son. The soul rises from a sensible fact toward God by a straight movement, like that of a lark soaring directly from earth toward heaven. While preaching the parable, our Lord placed His hearers in this prayer.

2) The soul contemplates God in the mirror of the mysteries of salvation, the mysteries of the Word made flesh, the incarnation, redemption, Holy Eucharist, the life of the Church; mysteries which the rosary constantly sets before our eyes to familiarize us with them. In this spiritual mirror the soul contemplates the goodness of God. It comprehends better and better the harmony of these mysteries, and passes from one to another by an oblique movement analogous to that of a bird which, being already aloft, flies from one point to another, its gaze lost in the azure depths of the sky.

3) The soul contemplates God in Himself, not as the blessed in heaven do, but in the penumbra of faith. Here the soul has risen above the multiplicity of sensible images and ideas. It sees, but a little indistinctly, that God our Father, who is infinitely good, is superior to every idea we can have of Him; and it sees that His goodness surpasses everything He Himself could put into human formulas for us, as the sky includes all the stars which manifest its depths to us. The soul not only tells itself these things, which every philosopher can think, even though he be in the state of mortal sin; but, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, by a loving and quasi-experimental knowledge, it is wholly united to this unknown God; holy and sweet ignorance, superior to all knowledge. This is the pure contemplative movement which recollects the soul in God alone above all things, as

Dionysius describes it in The Divine Names. This prayer has been compared to an eagle's circular movement high up in the air, or to the movement of a bird hovering as though suspended and seeming to be motionless. This immobility is far more perfect than the varied movement that preceded it. As a circular movement has neither beginning nor end, there is no method, for one does not start from principles in order to reach conclusions. Under the illumination of the Holy Ghost, it is truly simplex intuitus veritatis, the simple intuition of divine truths in the obscurity of faith, and the impetuosity of love which mysteriously unites us to God. Christ's sacerdotal prayer in the Gospel of St. John gives us the idea of this circular contemplation. An argument with major, minor and conclusion must not be sought in it; on the contrary, it is composed, as it were, of luminous undulations which descend from heaven to us.

This circular contemplation no more resembles meditation or abstract speculation on the divine essence, than a circumference resembles a polygon inscribed within it; in proportion as the circumference is simple, the other is complex. Very often commentaries on the works of the saints give the same impression as this polygon; in vain we would multiply its sides in an attempt to make them identical with the circle enclosing them.

As can be seen from his Commentary on the Divine Names, St. Thomas follows Dionysius. Above symbolical theology, which speaks of God in metaphors, and above speculative theology, which is expressed in less unsuitable terms, and which reasons on the divine perfections and mysteries, there is "a perfect knowledge of God, which is obtained by ignorance in virtue of an incomprehensible union. This takes place when the soul, leaving all things and forgetting self, is united to the splendors of the divine glory and is enlightened in the splendid depths of unfathomable wisdom." Only a person who has received this grace can clearly understand all that these words express. St. Thomas adds: "We know God by ignorance, by a certain union with the divine which is above the nature of the mind . . . and thus knowing God, in such a state of knowledge, the soul is illumined from the very depths of divine Wisdom, which we cannot scrutinize."

We attain the mysterious ocean of being, which is superior to substance, to life, and to light, only by the repose of the superior faculties, not by reasoning or by a sight of God, but by a most loving and intimate union, "by a sort of initiation which no master can teach." Dionysius says: "We

desire to enter that transluminous obscurity and to see and know, by the very fact of not seeing and not knowing, Him who is above all sight and all knowledge. For the soul truly sees and knows and supersubstantially praises the supersubstantial when it declares that the supersubstantial is nothing of that which other beings are." "The good Being . . . drives away ignorance and error from all souls in which He reigns; He dispenses to them all sacred light. . . . First of all He gives them a little light; then when, having tasted it, they desire it in greater abundance; He distributes it to them with greater largess. Because they have loved much, He inundates them with this light; and He ever urges them forward in proportion to the zeal they exercise in directing their faculties toward Him."

The soul cannot by its own efforts reach this infused contemplation, but it ought to prepare itself to receive it. This it should do by prayer and mortification, and by setting aside the senses and reasoning: "As for thee, 0 well beloved Timothy, exercise thyself unceasingly in mystical contemplation. Put aside the senses and the operations of the understanding, all that is material and intellectual, all the things that exist and those that do not, and by a supernatural flight unite thyself as intimately as possible with Him who is above all being and all knowledge. For it is by this sincere, spontaneous, and total abandonment of thyself and of all things that, free and disengaged from all ties, thou wilt cast thyself into the mysterious splendor of the divine obscurity."

"This intimate union, which surpasses the range of non-mystical minds, is a fusion produced by divine love . . . for love is a unifying force." It is the perfection on this earth of the "deification of the soul."

"Mystical knowledge," says St. Albert the Great, "does not proceed from the findings of reason, but rather from a certain divine light. The object seized by the soul, (God Himself) acts so strongly on the intellect that the soul wishes at any price to be united to it. Since this object is above the grasp of the intellect, it does not make itself clearly known to it; consequently the understanding rests on something which is not determined."

This contemplation gives us a foreknowledge of the divine perfections, which are identical with each other, without excluding each other, in the eminence of the Deity. It shows us how infinite justice harmonizes with infinite mercy, without ceasing to be justice; how sovereign mercy could not exist without being identical with this justice, in appearance so contrary

to it. The soul is introduced into the divine darkness, which Dionysius speaks of and which Blessed Angela of Foligno so wonderfully praises, by a speculative and a quasi-experimental knowledge that God in His intimate life, in what constitutes Him as such, (in His nature as God) is, so to speak, superior to being, truth, good, wisdom, love, mercy, and justice; and that nevertheless these divine perfections are in Him formally in an eminent manner, without any real distinction.

How can the soul know in this way that Deity, which is common to the three divine Persons and from which they are not in reality distinct? Grace alone permits us to know it in this way, because grace is precisely a real and formal participation in this Deity, in the divine nature as such. Whereas a stone resembles God because it has existence; a plant, because it has life; and the natural man, because he is endowed with intelligence; grace makes us resemble God precisely inasmuch as He is God, in His Deity, superior to being, life, and thought. This relationship belongs to an order quite superior to a sensible miracle and to the prophecies of possible future events. Such is this connaturality, this natural resemblance with God, the grace of the virtues and the gifts. It makes the just soul, as it were, an Aeolian harp which, under the breathing of the Holy Ghost, gives forth the most harmonious sounds, the sweetest as well as the most brilliant, the most piercing as well as the most solemn. As a new leitmotif, which at first is imperceptible and distant, little by little rises, approaches, envelops us, and ends by dominating all, so the mysterious harmony of the gift of wisdom rises in our 69n rather a negative manner by the disappearance of the human mode of thinking. As St. John of the Cross says, meditations becomes impossible or impracticable; the soul has no desire to fix its imagination on any particular interior or exterior object; it is pleased in prayer to find itself alone with God, and to fix its attention lovingly on Him. This is the beginning of the divine intimacy.

Theology, by what it teaches about the gift of wisdom, makes us know ontologically the spiritual organism of contemplation; but it leaves to mystics the description of the psychological signs that correspond to contemplation. It thus, remains a superior science, distinct from the eminent art of the direction of souls, which is its application. We can see from this point of view why St. Thomas (IIa IIae, q. 180) treats contemplation in a formal manner. He determines its essence, which is analogically found in both philosophical and infused contemplation; but he does not describe the

different types of the latter according to the psychological and material signs that manifest it. St. Teresa is essentially descriptive; St. John of the Cross, both a mystic and a theologian, takes his place between the two. A number of authors make a mistake in wanting to discern which of these three points of view is the highest. In the great sobriety of his language, St. Thomas expresses the essence of things; without writing of mystical theology, he has given us its principles.

III. PROGRESSIVE PREDOMINANCE OF THE DIVINE MODE OF THE GIFT OF WISDOM IN PRAYER

When we say that spiritual progress normally demands the progressive predominance of the divine mode of the gifts of the Holy Ghost in order to remedy the imperfect mode of the infused virtues, and when we add that the mystical life is precisely characterized by this predominance and by perfect docility to the interior Master, we do not mean to reserve to the mystical state the intervention of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, or to exclude the exercise of the virtues from this state. On the contrary, we have always said that, before the entrance into the mystical state, the gifts intervene in a manner that may be latent and rather frequent, or that may be manifest but rare. When this intervention becomes frequent and manifest, then the mystical life begins, characterized by this predominance of the divine mode of the gifts, whereas the ascetical life is characterized by the human mode of the virtues.

What we do not admit is that the gifts must enter into play every time the soul receives an actual grace; because an actual grace is required for even the most imperfect exercise of the Christian virtues, for remissi acts notably lower than the degree of charity we possess. In these acts no influence of the gifts is seen. It would be an error to confound actual grace, at first exciting, then co-operating, which moves us to deliberate well according to the human mode, to will, and to act in consequence, with the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, to which the gifts render us docile, without our having to deliberate according to the human mode. It may well be that a latent inspiration rather often accompanies human deliberation and work, just as a breeze facilitates the labor of a man who is rowing; but the divine mode of acting remains specifically distinct from the human mode. When the divine mode predominates in an act or a state, to such an extent that this act and

this state cannot be produced by our industry or human activity aided by the actual grace required for the exercise of the virtues, then that state is called passive. For example, when the wind blows with such force that a boat advances without the necessity of rowing; its progress does not depend on the activity of the oarsman. There is, therefore, more than a difference of degree between the human modes of virtues, and of the corresponding actual grace, and the divine mode of the gifts of the Holy Ghost; there is a specific difference. This specific difference would not exist if the divine motion were only more intense. The difference arises from the fact that the objective regulation of the act is formally different, as it proceeds from reason, which, enlightened by faith, deliberates in a human manner; or from the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, superior to all human deliberations and to every discursive process, whether it is intrinsic to prudence, or whether it disposes the soul to make at a desired moment acts of faith, hope, or charity.

This difference appears in infused contemplation especially at its beginning and in its progress. It is helpful to recall the ascent described by St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross. In the aridity of the night of the senses, the gift of knowledge dominates by acquainting us especially with the vanity of created things; in the night of the soul, the gift of understanding shows us not so much the goodness of God as His infinite majesty, and by contrast our wretchedness. Between the two nights, and especially after the second, the superhuman mode of the gift of wisdom is not only latent, but becomes more and more manifest to an experienced spiritual director. The soul, under the illumination of the Holy Ghost, thus possesses this quasi-experimental knowledge by connaturality with divine things. This knowledge can certainly not be had at will; while one can at will, with an actual grace, make an act of faith even when in the state of mortal sin.

In some perfect souls, this predominance of the superhuman mode of the gift of wisdom is striking, (and at times even accompanied by graces gratis datae, by prophetic light); in others it is diffused, but nevertheless very real. In these souls the practical gifts of counsel, fortitude, and fear, or those of piety and knowledge, are manifested more. But they are under the direction of the spirit of wisdom, and its light, like that diffused in the air, without attracting one’s gaze, penetrates everything and gives to all life a superior tone, as appreciable as the difference between day and night.

This grace of infused contemplation, even in the diffuse state, certainly differs from the sensible consolations which sometimes accompany vocal

prayer or the meditation of beginners. St. Teresa clearly marks this difference by showing what distinguishes “spiritual tastes from the consolations acquired in meditation.” “We secure the latter,” she says, “by our reflections, by means of considerations on created things, and by a painful labor of the understanding. And as, after all, they are the fruit of our efforts, they noisily fill the basin of our soul with some spiritual profit.” The saint also compares these acquired consolations to water, which comes through pipes from a distance. On the contrary, when speaking symbolically of the consolations of God, which she has called elsewhere the prayer of quiet, she writes: “In the other fountain, the water proceeds from the same source, which is God. Moreover, when it pleases His Majesty to grant us a spiritual favor, this water flows from the most intimate depths of our being with extreme peace, tranquility, and sweetness; But, whence it springs, and in what manner, that I do not know.”

It is possible to have a certain affective knowledge of God by the simple exercise of faith united to charity. This is the case with the consolations acquired in meditation, in which emotion may have a large part. Infused contemplation, moreover, requires a special illumination or inspiration of the Holy Ghost to which precisely, as we have seen, the gift of wisdom renders us docile.

This gift, like the other six gifts and the infused virtues, is related to charity and most certainly grows with it. In a truly docile soul, infused contemplation ought thus normally to appear and then to develop. Consequently there should normally be a progressive predominance, either striking or diffuse, of the divine mode of the gift of wisdom over the human mode of meditation or of acquired prayer. In this way appears the supernatural prayer of which St. Teresa speaks. This prayer, which ought always to unite the soul more closely to God, is sometimes accompanied by ecstasy, by interior words, or even by visions. Yet these things are only accidental and transitory phenomena which pass, while infused contemplation continues. If the light of prophecy (lumen propheticum) co-operates at times in this contemplation, it is in a concomitant manner. Graces gratis datae belong to an order inferior to that of the virtues and gifts. With this in mind, we can easily harmonize four recently proposed opinions as to the nature of the mystical state. The first holds that it consists in an infused knowledge of God and of divine things; the second, in an infused love; the third, in a special passivity of the soul more acted upon

than acting; and the fourth, in a simple and loving attention to God. The last cannot, in fact, be prolonged without rather a manifest intervention of the gifts.

IV. WHETHER CONTEMPLATION PROCEEDS EXCLUSIVELY FROM THE GIFT OF WISDOM, OR ALSO FROM FAITH UNITED TO CHARITY

It would be an error, as we have seen, to declare that the intervention of the gifts of the Holy Ghost is reserved to the mystical state. It would assuredly be another mistake to exclude the exercise of the theological virtues from the mystical state. On the contrary, the mystical state, according to the great masters, consists in the most perfect exercise of these virtues, which are the highest of all. How can this assertion be reconciled with what we have just said about the predominance of the divine mode of the gifts in this state?

Some writers seem to hold that contemplation is not an act of faith, but that it presupposes an act of faith, at once distinct from it and simultaneous with it, as the deduction of a theological conclusion presupposes the knowledge of the principles of faith. This conception seems to conform but slightly to the perfect simplicity of the contemplative act, which is in no way discursive, and which dwells immediately on the mysteries of faith, penetrating and tasting them. Besides, the greatest mystics, such as St. John of the Cross, always declare that infused contemplation is an eminent act of living faith. Evidently they mean faith united to the gift of wisdom, and to a superior degree of this gift. Therefore, together with Cajetan, Joseph of the Holy Ghost, and a number of other commentators of St. Thomas, we think that there are not two simultaneous acts, but that infused contemplation is an act which proceeds, in so far as its substance is concerned, from infused faith, and with respect to its superhuman mode, from the gift of wisdom. The perfect contemplative is he who lives by faith and who, while believing supernatural mysteries, penetrates them, sounds their depths, tastes them, and assimilates them, or rather allows himself to be assimilated by them. It is he who is not content with believing, but who fully lives his faith (justus ex fide vivit), and who judges everything according to it, that is, according to the very thought of God, as if he saw with the eye of God. Charity also co-operates in contemplation, since charity is what moves us to contemplate God that we may love Him better.

This would seem to be the meaning of St. Thomas' statement that: "The gifts perfect the virtues by raising them above the human mode; as the gift of understanding perfects the virtue of faith." "The theological virtues (uniting us to the Holy Ghost) are superior to the gifts which they regulate," and nevertheless receive a new perfection from them. "The operation which proceeds from the virtue perfected by the gift is called a beatitude."

V. THE FRUITS OF THE HOLY GHOST AND THE BEATITUDES

By the gifts of the Holy Ghost the just soul becomes, as it were, a musical instrument from which the interior Master may draw marvelous harmonies: "Instrumentum musicum a Spiritu pulsatum divinamque gloriam et potentiam canens." The soul thus sings the glory of God, a fact demonstrated by every page of the lives of the saints.

Scripture compares a just man to a tree planted near running water, and giving its fruit in due season. "The fruit of the Spirit is charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, longanimity, mildness, faith, modesty, continency, and chastity."

In what do these fruits differ from the virtues and the gifts? As St. Thomas explains, they are not habits, but acts which proceed in us from the influence of the Holy Ghost, and which man delights in. They are thus opposed to what may be called the fruits of reason.

The beatitudes are still higher. By this term we designate certain acts of the present life which, by reason of their very special perfection, are the pledge, the meritorious cause and, as it were, the first fruits of perfect beatitude. "By reason of their perfection, they are assigned to the gifts rather than to the virtues."

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." The virtue of poverty may inspire the detachment that makes us use the goods of earth with moderation; but it is the gift of fear that inspires scorn of them in comparison with superior goods.

"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted." It is the gift of knowledge which shows us the vanity of transitory good, the gravity of sin as a spiritual evil, as an offense against God. Happy is he who sheds the tears of a holy contrition.

"Blessed are the meek: for they shall possess the land." The virtue of meekness makes us completely overcome the impetuosity of anger; but it is

especially the gift of piety that bestows calmness, serenity, perfect self-possession, and entire submission to the will of God.

These three are the beatitudes of flight from and deliverance from sin. The next two, as St. Thomas says, are the beatitudes of the active life of a Christian who, freed from evil, engages in the pursuit of good with all the ardor of his heart.

“Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice: for they shall have their fill.” To desire justice, perfect order, is the effect of the virtues; but to hunger and thirst after it, to be tormented by this hunger, is the fruit of a loftier inspiration.

This thirst for justice should not become a bitter zeal with regard to the guilty; consequently our Lord says: “Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.” Attentive to the sufferings of others, the merciful are able to give counsel, which reanimates and encourages. Accordingly the spirit of counsel corresponds to this beatitude.

This union of justice and mercy is one of the most striking signs of the presence of God in the soul; for He alone can intimately harmonize virtues that are apparently so contrary.

Lastly we have the beatitudes of the contemplative life. “Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God.” A truly pure heart is like a limpid fountain where God is reflected even in this life. The gift of understanding enables us to catch a glimpse of the divine beauty, in proportion to the growing purity of our intention.

“Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.” According to St. Augustine and St. Thomas, this beatitude corresponds to the gift of wisdom which makes us see, as it were experimentally, all things in God; for every good thing comes from Him, and evil occurs only when it is permitted in view of a greater good. The gift of wisdom thus reveals the admirable order of the providential plan. Now, peace is the tranquility of order. A contemplative soul not only possesses peace; it can communicate it to others. A contemplative soul does not allow itself to be troubled in its higher part by painful, unexpected events; it receives all from the hand of God as a means or an occasion of approaching closer to Him. Wisdom bestows a radiant peace, leading us to love our enemies. It is the mark of the true children of God, who never for an instant, so to speak, lose the thought of their heavenly Father. At the beginning of its life, a soul that was stained with egoism, was often preoccupied with

self, and perhaps referred everything to self; now it is the thought of God which possesses it, and it refers everything to Him. This peace, which is the fruit of the gift of wisdom and which the world cannot give, is found fully on earth, only in the mystical life, which is characterized precisely by this gift, united to perfect charity and very lively faith. This is what makes St. Paul say to the Philippians: “Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I say, rejoice. Let your modesty be known to all men. The Lord is nigh. Be nothing solicitous; but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your petitions be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding, keeps your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.”

Such is the fruit of that wisdom which Scripture praises in these words: “And I preferred her before kingdoms and thrones, and esteemed riches nothing in comparison of her. . . . For all gold in comparison of her, is as a little sand, and silver in respect to her shall be counted as clay. I loved her above health and beauty, and chose to have her instead of light: for her light cannot be put out. Now all good things came to me together with her, and innumerable riches through her hands. And I rejoiced in all these: for this wisdom went before me, and I knew not that she was the mother of them all. Which I have learned without guile, and communicate without envy and her riches I hide not. For she is an infinite treasure to men, which they that use, become the friends of God.” “And if a man desire much knowledge: she knoweth things past, and judgeth of things to come: she knoweth the subtilties of speeches, and the solutions of arguments. . . . I purpose therefore to take her to me to live with me.” . . .”Lord of mercy . . . give me wisdom that sitteth by Thy throne, and cast me not off from among Thy children. . . . Send her out of Thy holy heaven, and from the throne of Thy majesty, that she may be with me, and may labor with me, that I may know what is acceptable with Thee. . . . For who among men is he that can know the counsel of God? Or who can think what the will of God is? . . . And who shall know Thy thought except Thou give wisdom, and send Thy Holy Spirit from above.” What more beautiful prayer could be found by which to ask God with humility and confidence for the spirit of wisdom, which is the principle of contemplation, and the source of peace?

To the beatitude of the peacemakers is added the last, which is the confirmation and manifestation of the others: “Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” When

man is confirmed in spiritual poverty, meekness, love of justice, and the other beatitudes, persecution is powerless to detach him from these goods and to deprive him of interior peace and joy. Thus the soul is stamped with the likeness of Christ crucified by the last trials it undergoes to reach sanctity. Then it comprehends in a practical way our Lord's words: "Blessed are ye when they shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you, untruly, for My sake. Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven." Are not these the words that gave birth in the hearts of the saints to their thirst for suffering and martyrdom?

In this way the gifts of the Holy Ghost which are in every just soul and which develop normally, as infused habits, with charity, prepares us progressively for the loftiest and most heroic acts of the spiritual life. The word "mystical" is rightly applied to the spiritual life that has reached this degree of intimacy with God. In some perfect souls, the gifts of contemplation especially are manifest; in others, those of action. But even among the latter, the spirit of wisdom is what directs their lives and illumines all with its diffused light.

CHAPTER VI

THE CALL TO CONTEMPLATION OR TO THE MYSTICAL LIFE

ARTICLE I

THE DIFFERENT MEANINGS OF THE WORD “CALL”

WE will consider the general and remote call, the individual and proximate call, the sufficient call, and the efficacious call.

When the call to mystical contemplation, properly so named, is discussed, and the question is raised as to whether this call is general or particular, we need a clear definition of the word “call” or “vocation,” which may have very different acceptations.

First of all, “called to the mystical life” does not mean raised, conducted, chosen, or predestined to the mystical life. “For many are called, but few chosen,” are the words used in the parable of the wedding guests.

Theologians observe that the vocation may be either exterior that is, it may come through the Gospel, preaching, direction, reading; or interior, by reason of a grace of light and attraction. The exterior call is general when it is addressed to all without distinction; it becomes individual when it reaches such or such a one in particular. Thus, all pagans are in general called to the Christian life by the Gospel, before such or such a one is called in an individual manner.

The vocation may, on the contrary, be special when it is addressed only to a group of men, such as the vocation to the priesthood. It may even be very special and unique, as the vocation of Mary, Mother of God, or that of St. Joseph. It may be very particular, as that of a founder of a religious order, or indeed as to enter a determined order, for example, the Carthusians.

The interior vocation may be, like sufficient grace, remote or proximate. Since “the habitual grace of the virtues and the gifts,” which all the just

possess, reaches the plenitude of its normal development only in the mystical life, properly so called, all the just are called to this life in a remote manner. This is our opinion, as well as that of the authors who admit the general call to the mystical life. St. Teresa found this teaching expressed in several passages in Scripture, two of which she quotes in The Way of Perfection.

Even in the opinion of these authors, all souls do not individually receive the proximate vocation to the mystical life. This vocation exists only when the three signs mentioned by St. John of the Cross, and before him by Tauler, can be proved to exist in the soul: (1) meditation becomes impracticable; (2) the soul has no desire to fix its imagination on any particular interior or exterior object; (3) the soul takes delight in being alone with God and fixing its loving attention upon Him. We will explain these signs further on (pp. 372 f.).

This proximate vocation to the mystical life may itself be either sufficient or efficacious, as we find in the parable of the wedding feast. Each of the guests was called individually. “The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king, who made a marriage for his son. And he sent his servants to call them that were invited to the marriage; and they would not come. . . . But they neglected, and went their ways, one to his farm, and another to his merchandise. . . . Then he saith to his servants: The marriage indeed is ready; but they, whom were invited, were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways; and as many as you shall find, call to the marriage.”

“Efficacious” may, in this case, be understood either in the Thomistic sense, which is ours, or in the Molinistic sense. The Thomists find a greater gratuity in the gift of God because, according to St. Thomas, grace is efficacious of itself, and leads us sweetly and firmly to the salutary consent which it produces in us and with us. In Molina’s opinion, grace is rendered efficacious by our good consent, the free determination of which, as determination, would come exclusively from us and not from God.

Although the Thomists commonly say that the remote call to the mystical life is general, they in no way diminish the gratuity of the individual, proximate call. They always presuppose the mystery of predestination, as St. Augustine and St. Thomas understand it.

Moreover, the proximate vocation to the mystical life may be delayed, Iike that of the laborers of the eleventh hour, who received as much as those

who had been called earlier. At the end of this parable and that of the wedding feast, our Lord says: “For many are called, but few are chosen.”

A proximate, efficacious vocation to the mystical life is not necessarily an efficacious vocation to the highest degrees of the mystical life, or to a high perfection; this depends on predestination in the order of the divine intentions, and on the fidelity of the soul in the order of execution. “It is true,” says St. John of the Cross, “that souls, whatever their capacity, may have attained union, but all do not possess it in the same degree. God disposes freely of this degree of union, as He disposes freely of the degree of the beatific vision.” St. Thomas expresses the same opinion when he discusses predestination.

Such are the different meanings of the word “call.” They can be seen at a glance in the following synopsis, which should be read from the bottom up, as to follow the ascending progress. In it we do not mention the special vocation, such as that to the priesthood, since we are speaking here only of the call to the mystical life, which, in our opinion, is first of all general, then individual; first remote, then proximate.

proximate (3 signs) efficacious To spuerior degrees

To inferior degrees

interior sufficient to which many do not respond

Call to the mystical life remote (from the fact of being in the state of grace)

individual (for example by the spiritual director)

exterior

general (for example by Scripture)

This division should solve several other questions.

If, therefore, a writer who is accepted as an authority denies the call of all souls to contemplation, meaning by this the proximate call, as one can see from the principles of his teaching and from the context, we need not for this reason conclude that he denies the remote call.

With the different meanings of the word “vocation” thus, precisely determined, the teaching on the general and remote call of souls to the mystical life is more easily understood. To have a clear grasp of this doctrine, we must distinguish, as is always done in ethics, what belongs to the nature of things (per se) from what is an accidental exception (per accidens). Theologians, seeking to establish a law, speak formally of the

nature of things, and not of the accidental circumstances that cause variations in the application of the law. For example, a certain act is morally good by its very nature, because of itself it produces a certain effect willed by God; and it remains morally good even if accidentally it no longer produces that effect. Or again, what is entirely legitimate and salutary in itself, such as daily communion, may accidentally cease to be so, if the subject does not fulfill the required conditions. Nothing is more sanctifying in itself than Eucharistic communion, but accidentally it may become sacrilege. Corruptio optimi pessima. Nothing is better than true mysticism, nothing worse than false mysticism.

Even in the order of vegetable and animal life, for lack of certain conditions, many laws are applied only in the majority of cases, ut in pluribus as the Scholastics say; these are approximative laws, to use the terminology of present-day scholars. Because many acorns do not produce oaks, we cannot deny the law that the acorn is naturally made to produce an oak. Even if it is planted with this end in view, favorable external conditions, required for the development of the seed that it contains, may be lacking.

Likewise, because the majority of men follow their passions instead of controlling them, as St. Thomas observes, must we reject the law that man, by his nature as a rational being, is called to live in a reasonable manner? Because many men are lost, must we deny that the entire human race was ordained by God for a supernatural end, the beatific vision? Because many Christians sin mortally, is it necessary to deny that the grace received in baptism is by its very nature made to endure forever, and to grow unceasingly until death? Is it not eternal life begun?

Normally a little child, who from the age of seven receives communion several times a week, should not cease receiving the bread of life, and each day he ought to approach the holy table with better dispositions. If he perseveres in this way and is generally faithful to the graces he receives, will he not normally, at least at the end of his life, reach the mystical life, properly so called? Is this something different from the plenitude of the life of faith and of the love of God, different from perfect docility to the Holy Ghost?

After having determined the various meanings of the word “call,” general or individual, remote or proximate, sufficient or efficacious, we will examine whether it is true that all souls in the state of grace are called in a

general, remote, and sufficient manner to the mystical life, and how the individual, proximate call, whether sufficient or efficacious, is manifested.

These distinctions are necessary if we are to solve this problem of spirituality, which is much studied in our day. It is practical, however, to recall that more attention must be paid to the perfect practice of the virtues —humility, self-denial, obedience, patience in trial, the spirit of faith and confidence in God in prayer despite interior aridities' and obscurities, and fraternal charity—than to the more or less mystical form of prayers which may lead thereto. This is so much the more true because the degree of prayer is not easily known, especially in those periods called the dark night where the soul is contemplative without knowing it. This is the explanation of the fact that in the process of beatification the heroic degree of the virtues is examined much more closely than the form of prayer. The latter is learned only with difficulty from documents; it suffices, however, to become acquainted with the heroic practice of the theological virtues in order to know that a soul was very intimately united to God. Moreover; certain souls reach mystical prayer with greater rapidity than others, which are much more advanced. Souls are also found, which draw greater profit from these prayers, others less. Some souls are more virtuous than mystical, and vice versa.

All of this is very important in fact, and should not be forgotten when insistence is laid, as is done in this article, on the general law, and on the extremely varied applications of which we seek the formula and the doctrinal basis according to traditional teaching. But conformably to this law, it is also very useful and practical to know whether or not souls have passed through the night of the senses and that of the soul; for without this double passive purification, souls cannot attain the full perfection of the Christian life. The way leading to it in the midst of trials is that indicated by St. Teresa in her well-known Bookmark:

"Let nothing disturb thee;
Nothing affright thee;
All things are passing;
God never changes;
Patient endurance
Attaineth to all things;
Who God possesseth
In nothing is wanting;

Alone God sufficeth.”

Anyone who is imbued with these dispositions, who has taken this step and willingly allows himself to be conducted in his prayer, and in all phases of his life by Mary Mediatrix, who leads us to the intimacy of Christ, and by Christ, who brings us to the Father, will attain humility, which will draw upon him the grace of contemplation and of divine union. This happy result will be attained in spite of unfavorable conditions, by reasons of the profound, strong, and gentle influence of these two mediators, who have been given to us in our weakness.

ARTICLE II

THE GENERAL AND REMOTE CALL TO MYSTICAL CONTEMPLATION

The question we are studying may be formulated exactly either by considering the life of grace in an abstract manner, or concretely by studying the souls which have received this light. In the first case, the intimate law of the superior development of the divine seed, semen gloriae, is considered; in the second case, as in the parable of the sower, the variable conditions of the soil are considered. Likewise the two following questions are distinct: (1) Is grace by its very essence the seed of eternal life? (2) Does God give, not only to all men in general, but to each person individually, sufficient grace to obtain salvation?

We will, therefore, consider first the general and remote call of souls in the state of grace to the mystical life; and secondly, the individual and proximate call. In another article, we will examine the objections that may be raised against this doctrine.

THE THREE PRINCIPAL REASONS WHICH ESTABLISH THE GENERAL AND REMOTE CALL

The question confronting us is whether the life of grace can have its full, normal development without the mystical life, properly so called. This latter, as we have seen, is characterized by the predominance of the gifts of the Holy Ghost and of their divine mode, specifically distinct from the human mode of the virtues which characterizes the ascetical life. According to what we have said in the preceding article, it appears to us that the

mystical life thus, defined is the adult age of the Christian life. For a clear grasp of this doctrine, the division of the supernatural should be recalled (cf. supra, p. 59).

It is evident from this division that the supernatural nature of a miracle, of prophecy, of the gift of tongues, etc., is inferior to that of sanctifying grace, of the infused virtues, and of the gifts of the Holy Ghost. As a help in discerning among these forms of the supernatural, those which are ordinary, although eminent, and those which are extraordinary, the classic division of the divine power directed by wisdom should also be recalled.

Our problem in this question is to examine whether the essential foundation of the mystical state belongs to the first category or to the third; the third, while extraordinary, is inferior to the first, which alone contains eternal life begun. Is the mystical life the full normal development of the life of grace?

God in His intimate life mystery of the Trinity

uncreated

quoad substantiam Uncreated Person of the Word made flesh

created Ligiht of glory. Habitual grace of the virtues and gifts and actual grace

Supernatural

of finality Natural act of an acquired virtue, supernaturally ordained by charity to the supernatual end.

quoad modum Miracle quoad substantiam (ex., glorification of the body and prophecy).

of effeciency Miracle quoad subjectum (ex., non-glorious resurrection) and knowledge of the secrets of hearts

Miracle quoad modum (sudden change of water into wine), and gift of tongues and similar graces

We are concerned here not only with the collective sanctity of the Church, which requires even graces gratis datae, such as that of the discernment of spirits, but with what is normally necessary in the majority of cases for a soul to reach sanctity.

Divine power ordained or directed by wisdom Ordinary (according to laws) supernatural 1: life of grace, samctity,

eternal life

natural 2: ex., natural life of the intellect.

Extraordinary (outside of ordinary laws)

supernatural 3: ex.,extraordinary visions, private revelations

natural 4: ex., miracle in the physical order.

The reasons for the affirmative answer must be based on the life of grace considered in its essence, and not only on exterior signs or statistical material. As a matter of fact, it is not sufficient to say that this call is general because there are mystical souls in every human condition; among the ignorant and the learned, priests and laity, religious and seculars, in the contemplative orders and also in the active orders. This reason is probable, but is insufficient; for we can just as well say that artists are to be found amongst all classes of people, and yet the artistic vocation in the natural order is not general but special. It is a particular gift not granted or promised to all.

Likewise, to establish that God wishes to save all men, we must do more than show that He wishes to save men from every condition of life; Jews and pagans, learned and illiterate, rich and poor.

To prove that all souls in the state of grace are in a general and remote manner called to the mystical life, as they are to that of heaven, the reasons for this call must be based on the very nature of the life of sanctifying grace, or “grace of the virtues and the gifts.” This life may be considered chiefly in three ways: in its principle, grace itself; in its progress, perfect purification from sin and imperfection; in its end, the life of heaven. These three considerations are not accidental, exterior, or material, but essential and formal. In other words, to show that the interior life has its full, normal development here only in the mystical life, properly so called, we must demonstrate: (1) that their principle is the same; (2) that the progress of one is complete only in the other; (3) that their end is the same, and that only the mystical life prepares immediately and perfectly for this end. These are, as we shall see, the principal reasons proving the normal though eminent character of the mystical life.

A. THE BASIC PRINCIPLE OF THE MYSTICAL LIFE IS THE SAME AS THAT OF THE COMMON INTERIOR LIFE

The basic principle of the mystical life is sanctifying grace, or “the grace of the virtues and the gifts.” It manifests itself in the interior ascetical life according to the human mode of the virtues; in the mystical life, according to the superhuman mode of the gifts which predominates in it. These gifts, as habitual dispositions, rendering us docile to the inspirations of the Holy Ghost, grow, as do the infused virtues, with charity, which in this life ought always to develop, through our merits and holy communion, according to the requirements of the first precept of love, which has no limit. Therefore the soul cannot possess charity in a high degree without having the gifts, as habitual dispositions, in a corresponding degree. It follows that a truly generous and faithful soul will come more and more under the immediate direction of the Holy Ghost, and the human mode of its activity will be gradually subordinated to the divine mode of the inspirations of the interior Master. This mode should end by dominating, a condition which characterizes the mystical life.

The objection has been raised that if progress is normal, the virtues and gifts should be perfected pari passu, without the mode of the gifts eventually prevailing over the mode of the virtues. This objection fails to reckon with what St. Thomas has proved and with what we have explained in accordance with his teaching, namely, that the human mode of the infused virtues is essentially imperfect in relation to our supernatural end, for it is that of the human faculty in which these virtues are received. The purpose of the gifts is precisely to remedy this imperfection by joining with the virtues, as occurs especially in infused contemplation.

Hence the imperfection of the human mode of the virtues should be corrected in proportion as the soul approaches perfection, so much the more so, as it is a question here, not only of believing the mysteries, but of penetrating them, tasting them, judging all by them, living by them and that, not in a transitory, but in an habitual manner. The influence of the gifts should be exercised more in proportion as the soul needs to be purified in its inmost depths, where God penetrates, so as to root out the seeds of death, the existence of which we ourselves do not suspect. God alone can eradicate them by applying iron and fire to them. This explains why, in the normal progress of the life of grace, the superhuman mode of the gifts should end by dominating and prevailing over the human mode of virtues. Habitual facility thus, super-naturalizes us more and more, and eventually the virtues are no longer exercised without the co-operation of the gifts, without an

almost constant direction on the part of the interior Master, who unites us more and more closely to His life and His action. This is the prelude of eternal life. “A thing is perfect so far as it attains to its principle” and is united to it. Each of our acts is perfect in proportion as God imprints His manner, His inimitable mark, more deeply upon it. The sovereign efficacy of His action in us does not destroy our liberty; it is His action which causes our liberty, by producing in us and with us even the free mode of our acts. He alone can thus penetrate our souls, since He is closer to us than we are to ourselves. The mystical state with its constant docility is none other than the perfect fruit of efficacious grace, as conceived by St. Paul, St. Augustine, and St. Thomas. Only in this way does the soul attain to the living and profound knowledge of God’s infinite grandeur and of its own wretchedness, of the value of grace and the gravity of sin.

“But, someone will say,” declares St. Teresa in the objection she raises to her own doctrine, “if for long days and years I considered what a frightful thing it is to offend God, and how those who are lost are His children and my brethren; and if I were to weigh the perils to which we are exposed in this world, and how advantageous it would be for us to leave this wretched life, would that not suffice? No, my daughters, the pain to which these reflections give rise in us would be quite different from the torture of which I speak. With the grace of God and by many considerations we can experience this grief; but it does not penetrate the very depths of our being like the other which seems to rend and grind the soul without its co-operation, and at times even without its wish. What is this sorrow, then, and whence does it come? I will tell you. You remember those words of the Bride, which I quoted to you, but with another meaning: ‘He brought me into the cellar of wine, He set in order charity in me.’ In this quotation you have the explanation of what you asked me. This soul has so completely abandoned itself into the hands of God and loves Him so greatly that, as a result, it is so submissive that it knows and wishes nothing, but that God should dispose of it according to His good pleasure. In my opinion, this is a grace which God bestows only on a soul which He considers entirely His. His will is that, without knowing how, the soul should issue forth stamped with His seal. . . . 0 God of goodness! It is Thou alone who dost all! Thou dost demand but one thing, that we abandon our wills to Thee, in other words, that the wax offers no resistance.”

Attentive reading of this quotation, which expresses the mystical suffering of the soul at the sight of the greatest evil, sin, will reveal the full development of the grace of the virtues and the gifts which we received in baptism—perfect abandonment, most pure charity, equally lively faith, and complete docility to the Holy Ghost, who impresses His seal on the faithful soul. This demonstrates that the principle of the common interior life contains the seed of the mystical life. It is, therefore, called to develop under this superior form, which is on earth the flower of the supernatural life.

In some perfect souls the gifts of action will be especially prominent; but the gift of wisdom will have a diffuse, though very real, influence.

In virtue of the fact that this principle is common both to the ordinary interior life, and to the mystical life, we must add that by the progress of charity we can come to merit, in the strict sense of the word (de condigno, condignly), the superior degrees of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, considered as habitual dispositions, connected with charity. Thereby we merit, at least in the broad sense (saltem de congruo, congruously), the actual inspirations corresponding to these superior degrees of the gifts; for, as a rule (and the propriety of this is evident), the Holy Ghost enlightens and inspires souls according to the degree of their habitual docility, humility, and love of God.

This is the teaching concerning the merit saltem de congruo of Thomistic mystical theologians who follow St. Thomas, St. John of the Cross, and St. Teresa. Among these theologians are Philip of the Blessed Trinity, 0.C, Vallgornera, O.P., and Meynard, O.P. From this teaching on merit, it is evident that the actual grace of contemplation can be merited more than that of a happy death, which is, nevertheless, necessary to salvation.

The first reason for the remote and general call of souls in the state of grace to the mystical life rests, therefore, on the basic principles of this life, that is, the grace of the virtues and the gifts. This fundamental reason may also be more concretely expressed and even confirmed thereby in the following terms: there is no sanctity without the heroism of the infused virtues, connected with charity; that is, without a high degree of these virtues, described by St. Thomas when he speaks of the perfecting virtues, and especially of the perfect virtues.

The gifts of the Holy Ghost, as habitual dispositions connected with charity, grow with it. The Holy Ghost ordinarily moves us according to the degree of our habitual docility, and with greater frequency as we become

more docile. Consequently, as a rule, there is no sanctity unless the soul is often moved by the Holy Ghost according to the superior degrees of the gifts. This constitutes the mystical life in the broad sense and also in the strict sense, the passive state in which the human mode of our activity no longer dominates, but rather the activity of the Holy Ghost, and our completely docile passivity.

In relation to this subject, the statement of Benedict XIV in regards to the heroicity of virtues and their connection should be read. It is this connection, he says, which was lacking in the heroes of paganism and also in the false martyrs, who died obstinately persisting in their errors; they did not pray for their executioners. For the proof of heroic virtue, he lays down four necessary conditions: (1) the matter must be difficult, above the common strength of man; (2) the acts must be accomplished promptly, easily; (3) they must be accomplished joyously; (4) they must be performed not only once or rarely, but often, when the occasion presents itself.

This supposes a high degree of charity and a proportionate degree of the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

This teaching clarifies the meaning and the compass of the first reason that we invoked: namely, that the basic principle of the mystical life is identical with that of the common interior life. Further on we shall see the objections that may be raised against this first reason. We will now consider the second, which considers what the progress of the interior life demands.

B. IN THE PROGRESS OF THE INTERIOR LIFE THE PURIFICATION OF THE SOUL IS NOT COMPLETE WITHOUT THE PASSIVE PURIFICATIONS, WHICH BELONG TO THE

This progress should, in fact, be brought about by the purification from sin, from its results, and from imperfections. It is twofold: an active purification or mortification which we impose on ourselves; and a passive purification which has its origin in the divine action within us. Although exterior trials supernaturally borne contribute greatly to our purification, yet, according to the great masters, especially St. John of the Cross, this work is normally completed only by passive purifications of the senses and of the soul.

According to these same masters, these painful purifications, which are a sort of anticipated purgatory, belong to the mystical order, properly so called. Wholly generous souls are purified by the Holy Ghost while they are on earth, to such an extent that they do not, through their own fault, have to undergo after death the meritless purification of purgatory. Ordinarily we must pass through this crucible in one way or another; either in this life while meriting, or in the life to come without meriting.

This reason appears decisive to one acquainted with the reasons given by St. John of the Cross, to explain the necessity of the double, passive purification of the senses and of the soul. We have already (chap. 4, art. 1) given a brief exposition of these purifications, and (chap. 5, art. 3) we have shown how St. Teresa describes the night of the soul at the beginning of the sixth mansion

According to St. John of the Cross, God almost immediately bestows the grace of the passive purification of the senses on people who are habitually recollected. The entrance into this purification is indicated by inactivity of the imagination, the human or discursive mode of prayer disappears; the soul must content itself with a loving and peaceful attention to God. His grace, which is then given to it, is no longer sensibly manifest; it is entirely spiritual, which explains why the sensible part is cowardly with regards to action, but the spirit is generous and strong. In the light of the gift of knowledge, the soul sees in itself wretchedness and unworthiness which it was ignorant of in the time of its prosperity; at times it believes itself abandoned by God. But in suffering, it is purified of numerous imperfections and exercised in the virtues that perfectly subject the flesh to the spirit. Thus; interior liberty grows through the twelve fruits of the Holy Ghost, and the love of God through an ardent desire to serve Him. St. John of the Cross offers a good summary of his doctrine when he says: “The night of sense is common and a lot amongst many beginners. . . . As the manner in which they behave when they first start out on the way to God is not noble, and since they become entangled in sensible tastes and self-love, God intervenes to make them progress by freeing them from their vulgar conception of love. He wishes to lift them up to Himself, to make them abandon the inferior exercise of sense and reasoning, by which they seek God in a petty manner in the midst of the obstacles, we have pointed out, and to introduce them into the more profitable exercise of the spirit, which will permit them to communicate less imperfectly with God.”

This passive night of the senses, which seems to consist especially in the disappearance of the so-called sensible graces, marks rather the appearance of spiritual graces; the human mode of prayer ceases only because the superhuman mode of the contemplative gifts begins to become frequent and manifest. Corruptio unius, generatio alterius,.

Since the object of the passive purification of the senses is the perfect subjection of the passions to the intellect and will, the object of the purification of the soul—proceeding especially from the illumination of the gift of understanding—is the full subjection of the spirit to God and the purification from all alloy, not only of the moral virtues, but also of the theological virtues, which unites us immediately to God. This purification, granted to souls that have already made progress, is intended to remove habitual imperfections of which we are so often unaware, and which are an obstacle to divine union. It marks the entrance into the unitive way, according to St. John of the Cross. He expresses himself in the following terms: “The dark night (of the soul) is an inflowing of God into the soul, which cleanses it of its ignorance’s and imperfections, habitual, natural, and spiritual. Contemplatives call it infused contemplation. . . . But it may be asked: ‘Why does the soul call the divine light, which enlightens the soul and purges it of its ignorances, the dark night?’ . . . The first reason is that the divine wisdom is so high that it transcends the capacity of the soul, and is, therefore, in that respect, darkness. The second reason is based on the meanness and impurity of the soul and, in that respect, the divine wisdom is painful to it, afflictive and dark also. . . . We take for granted a principle of the Philosopher, namely, the more intelligible and evident divine things are the darker and more hidden they are to the soul naturally. Thus, the clearer the light, the more it blinds the eyes of the owl. So the divine light of contemplation, when it beats on the soul not yet perfectly enlightened, causes spiritual darkness, because it not only surpasses its strength, but because it blinds it, and deprives it of its natural perceptions. It is for this reason that St. Dionysius and other mystical theologians call infused contemplation a ray of darkness, that is, for the unenlightened and unpurified soul . . . ‘clouds and darkness are round and about him.’ . . . God is surrounded by a cloud and darkness. He dwells in light inaccessible.’

“The soul seeing its own impurity distinctly though dimly in this bright pure light, acknowledges its own unworthiness before God and all creatures. What pains it more is a fear that it never will be worthy and that

all its goodness is gone." The suffering is such that the soul believes itself crushed under an immense weight; it is broken and overwhelmed at the sight of its miseries and feels itself wrapped in a mortal cloud. "So great are the weakness and impurity of the soul that the hand of God, which is so soft and so gentle, is felt to be so heavy and oppressive, though neither pressing nor resting on it, but merely touching it and that, too, most mercifully; for He touches the soul not to chastise it, but to load it with His graces."

The soul cannot, as before, raise its mind and heart to God; it feels that God has interposed a cloud which cuts off the way of prayer. The light of this purification allows the soul to see only its sins and miseries. In this darkness it distinguishes, however, better than before, what is more and what is less perfect. To enjoy the fruits of this purification, the soul must suffer from the impression that it will never possess God. It must pass through this crucible for, "one single, actual, or habitual particular affection is sufficient to prevent the perception, taste, and communication of the subtle sweetness of the spirit of love which contains all sweetness within itself in an eminent degree." This night of purification is also a safe road, "for it holds the appetites, affections, and passions, lulled, asleep, and mortified. Were they awake and active, they would not fail to oppose the departure" of the soul toward these higher regions.

This passive purification, this refinement of the spirit, is "indispensable for union with God in glory. After death, impure souls pass through the fires of purgatory; in this life, the soul attains to union only by undergoing the fire of trials, which are more violent for some than for others, and proportionate in length to the degree of union to which God intends to raise them and to their need of purification." From these trials we can judge the sufferings of purgatory. Its fire has no effect on those who have no faults to expiate; it is dark and material; that of this life is spiritual and obscure. In this life, the soul is purified while meriting; after death, without meriting.

These purifications are the most efficacious means leading to divine union, because they alone free humility, and the three theological virtues from all alloy. They alone bring into powerful relief the entirely supernatural formal motive of these highest virtues. They oblige us to make extremely meritorious acts, which thus, increase the gifts tenfold by immediately obtaining for us a great increase of faith, hope, and charity. They oblige us to believe the sole motive that God has said it. Moreover, they make us adhere firmly to the first revealing Truth, in an order infinitely

superior to a sensible miracle and to the human reasoning that discerns it. They oblige us to hope against all human hope for the pure motive that God, who is all powerful and good, is infinitely helpful, Deus auxilians, and will not abandon us first. They lead us to love Him, not for the sensible or spiritual consolations He grants us, but for Himself, because He is infinite goodness; to love Him above all things and more than ourselves, because He is infinitely better than we are.

Happy are those who pass through these painful purifications, which alone can fully super naturalize them and conduct them to the summit of faith, hope, and charity. Since these passive purifications belong to the mystical order, we must conclude that the mystical life is not extraordinary in its very essence, but is on the normal way of sanctity. Now that we have studied the means, we will consider the end of the interior life.

C. THE END OF THE INTERIOR LIFE IS THE SAME AS THAT OF THE MYSTICAL LIFE, BUT THE LATTER PREPARES THE SOUL MORE IMMEDIATELY FOR IT

Heaven is the end of the interior life. Although in fact quite rare, the normal summit of the development of the life of grace on this earth, should be a very perfect disposition to receive the light of glory immediately after death, without passing through purgatory. As a matter of fact, no one goes to that place of suffering, where there is no merit, except through his own fault, because he has neglected graces received or offered. It is in the radical order to see God immediately after death; that is why the souls in purgatory, suffers greatly at not seeing Him.

The perfect disposition to receive the beatific vision immediately after death can be only the intense charity of a fully purified soul, coupled with the earnest desire to see God, such as we find them in the mystical union, and more especially in the transforming union. This last is, therefore, the summit of the development of the life of grace on earth; in it alone, do we find the full development of the supernatural life.

It would be easy to show that this third reason, like the two preceding reasons, has been more or less explicitly formulated by all the great masters of mysticism. Let us merely recall what St. Thomas says about the superiority of the contemplative life over the active life.

The contemplation of God is not a means to the moral virtues and the works of the active life; on the contrary, it is the end to which they are subordinated as means and dispositions. The moral virtues dispose to the

contemplative life by producing peace, quiet in the passions, and purity. Prudence serves wisdom, as a guard serves the king.

God is the end and object of the theological virtues and the corresponding gifts, whereas He is merely the end of the moral virtues, which have a created object.

The contemplative life, with its beginning and end in love, is the eminent exercise of the theological virtues. In it, the soul burns to see the beauty of God. Contemplation itself is not perfection; perfection is found essentially in charity. But contemplation is the most excellent means united to the end, since it joins us to God, for "the contemplative life is directed to the love of God, not of any degree, but to that which is perfect." By it, man "offers his soul in sacrifice to God," and it is so to speak, a beginning of perfect beatitude, "for it bestows on us a certain inchoate beatitude, which begins now and will be continued in the life to come."

Thus the contemplative life is better than the active life. It is proper to man according to his soul's noblest faculty. It can be more continuous than the active life. For example, Mary remains at our Lord's feet to listen to His words, while Martha busies herself. Although it contains great trials, the contemplative life is more delightful and more meritorious, because the love of God is in itself more meritorious than love of our neighbor. It is sufficient to itself, moreover, and is not busy about many things. It is loved for itself, while the active life is ordained to something other than itself. This is why the psalmist says: "One thing I have asked of the Lord, this will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life." The contemplative life is a sort of holy repose in God (otium sanctum): "Be still and see that I am God." It is occupied with divine things; the active life, with human affairs: "In the beginning was the Word; behold Him to whom Mary listened," says St. Augustine. "And the Word was made flesh; behold Him whom Martha served." Moreover, Christ Himself said: "Mary hath chosen the best part, which shall not be taken away from her." St. Augustine observes: "It is not that your part, 0 Martha, is bad, but that Mary's is better. Why is it better? Because it will not be taken from her; a day will come when the burden, which necessity imposes on you will be withdrawn; but the sweetness of truth is eternal."

This contemplative life exists fully only in the mystical life, which is the true prelude to that of heaven. All, even those who are engaged in the active Iife, should strive for it in virtue of the first precept; prayer is no less

necessary to them. If the conditions of their life render the highest forms of contemplation less accessible, its substance is not refused to them; on the contrary, our Lord invites us all. “Those who are more adapted to the active life can prepare themselves for the contemplative by the practice of the active life,” by fulfilling its duties for the love of God. It would be an error to think that a person should pray well for the purpose of accomplishing well the duties of his state: for example, in order to take care of the sick or to teach well, as if prayer and union with God were ordained and subordinated to these acts which are inferior to them. Rather, the active soul should accomplish the duties of its state out of love for God, to be more closely united to our Lord and to make Him loved more, so that its activity should become as it were the exterior radiation of its prayer, of its union with God, which is the most important part of activity. Thus, the mystical life, far from harming action, is its living source.

St. Augustine says: “Holy leisure is longed for by the love of truth; but it is the necessity of love to undertake requisite business. If no one imposes this burden upon us, we are free to sift and contemplate truth; but if it is laid upon us, we are necessitated for love’s sake to undertake it. And yet, not even in this case are we obliged wholly to relinquish the sweets of contemplation; for were these to be withdrawn, the burden might prove more than we could bear.” St. Thomas says that, when a person is called from the contemplative to the active life, it should not be by way of subtraction from the first, but by addition of the second. This is why the apostolate should flow, as he says elsewhere, from “the plenitude of contemplation.” The faithful, the interior souls who come to listen to the word of God, expect it to be given to them in a divine manner, which is but the radiation of contemplation.

The contemplative life, which by its intimacy with the interior Master and its perfect docility to His inspirations merits the name of mystical life, or life hidden with Christ in God, is therefore truly the normal prelude to that of heaven.

In the preceding pages we have discussed the three principal reasons for the remote and general call of just souls to the mystical life. They are fundamental since they rest: (1) on the common principle of the interior life and of the mystical life, and on the law of the progress of the gifts as habitus, or habitual dispositions, connected with charity; (2) on the necessity of the passive purifications, which belong to the mystical life, and

are the most efficacious means to lead the soul to divine union on earth; (3) on the common end of the interior and of the mystical life, and on the perfection normally required to receive the beatific vision immediately after death, and that not in its lowest degree. These three considerations of the principle of the supernatural life, of its most efficacious means, and of its end are not accidental or material; they are essential and formal, and thus permit us to establish the law of the superior development of the divine seed, of the life of grace, semen gloriae.

Therefore, it seems certain that the mystical life, characterized by the predominance of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, is required for the full perfection of the Christian life. Is this likewise true of mystical contemplation, properly so called? After granting what precedes, certain writers, who hesitate to answer this question, explain their attitude by saying that in some souls, the dominant gifts of the Holy Ghost are those relating especially to action; in their prayers and in the psalmody the dominant gift is piety; yet their prayer is not properly passive, nor is there any frequent and manifest intervention of the contemplative gifts of understanding and wisdom. Consequently these souls would be in the mystical life, which is superior to the ascetical, but without having mystical contemplation, the prayer of passive recollection or of quiet.

As we have already stated, the gifts of contemplation may as yet, intervene in these souls only in a diffuse manner; the mystical life is still imperfect in them. It may be accompanied by a great generosity, which merits the name of perfection without, however, being the full perfection of the Christian life. This last, to be truly a plenitude, requires a complete development of the entire spiritual organism, including the superior gifts of understanding and wisdom. It is the prelude to the life of heaven, the perfect, immediate preparation for the beatific vision, which is given only to entirely purified souls when they desire it keenly.

This seems to us, in conformity with tradition, to be St. Thomas' doctrine on the relations of the gifts of the Holy Ghost with the progress of charity. In the different religious orders, it is also the teaching of St. Bonaventure, Tauler, Ruysbroeck Louis de Blois, Dionysius the Carthusian, St. Teresa, St. John of the Cross, Father Lallemant, S.J., and his disciples, Father Surin, S.J., and others as Canon Saudreau proves at length in the third edition of his work on The Life of Union with God according to the Great Masters of Spirituality. Father Lamballe holds the same opinion in his book called

Contemplation. We agree with these authors and with Father Arintero, 0.P., that the supernatural life has its full development in this life only in the transforming union, such as it is described by St. John of the Cross and by St. Teresa in the seventh mansion. It will be sufficient to recall here some characteristic texts and also those which seem opposed to them.

Speaking of the passive purification of the senses, which belongs to the mystical order, St. John of the Cross says, as we have seen: “The soul must pass through this dark night in order to become perfect.” “The soul has set out and begun to penetrate the way of the spirit, the way of the proficient and the advanced, which is also called the illuminative way, or the way of infused contemplation.” “It is God alone, who must raise the soul to this supernatural state. What is required of the soul is that, so far as it can, should prepare itself for it. This is possible naturally, especially when we consider the divine help which ordinarily accompanies effort. As the soul makes progress in rejecting forms and emptying itself of them, God gives it union. In this operation the soul is passive.” “In the case of religious, this change often takes place after a relatively short time, for having renounced the world, they more easily fashion their senses and spirit according to the will of God.” “As soon as the soul succeeds in carefully purifying itself of forms and sensible images, it will bathe in that pure and simple light, which will become for it the state of perfection. As a matter of fact, this light is always ready to penetrate the soul; forms and veils of creatures create an obstacle to its infusion.”

Farther on, after showing the necessity of the passive purification of the soul in order to reach full perfection, St. John of the Cross tells us that such perfection is found only in the transforming union where “the soul is no longer troubled by the devil, or the flesh, or the world, or the appetites. It can now say: ‘Winter is now past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers have appeared on our land.’”

St. Teresa expresses the same idea in the beginning of the fifth mansion: “Thus, all we who wear the holy habit of Carmel are called to prayer and contemplation. This is our first object . . . and yet, I declare to you that very few of us prepare themselves so that our Lord may reveal to them the precious pearl of which we are speaking. I admit we are outwardly virtuous. But how many things we lack, and what need we have to banish all negligence in order to acquire the virtues necessary to attain to contemplation!”

In The Way of Perfection, speaking of infused contemplation and the living waters of prayer, St. Teresa enunciates this general principle, which she later develops (chaps. 20, 21, 23, 25, 29, 33). We have already quoted some of these texts. “Remember, our Lord invited ‘Any man’: He is truth itself; His word cannot be doubted. If all had not been included He would not have addressed everybody, nor would He have said: ‘I will give you to drink.’ He might have said: ‘Let all men come, for they will lose nothing by it, and I will give to drink to those I think fit for it.’ But as He said, unconditionally: ‘If any man thirst let him come to Me,’ I feel sure that, unless they stop halfway, none will fail to drink this living water.” The saint says in chapter 21: “I maintain that this is the chief point; in fact, that everything depends on their having a great and a most resolute determination never to halt until they reach their journey’s end, happen what may, whatever the consequences are, cost what it will, let who will blame them . . . whether the earth itself goes to pieces beneath their feet.” The general call of souls to the mystical life could not be more clearly affirmed.

And yet, St Teresa, Tauler, and St. John of the Cross occasionally make reservations. We read, for example, in The Way of Perfection: “It does not follow, because all the nuns in this convent practice prayer, that they must all be contemplatives. Such an idea would greatly discourage those who do not understand the truth that contemplation is a gift of God . . . Sometimes our Lord comes very late, and pays everyone at once, as He has given to others during many years.”

Why does St. Teresa make these reservations, which seem at first glance to contradict the principle of the general call of souls to infused contemplation? She herself says: “The Last chapter seems to contradict what I said, when in order to console those who were not contemplatives, I told them that God had made many ways of reaching Him, just as He has made ‘many mansions.’ I repeat that His Majesty, being God, knows our weakness and has provided for us. He did not say: ‘Let some men come to Me by drinking this water, but let others come by some other means.’ His mercy is so great that He hinders no one from drinking of the fountain of life. . . . Indeed, He calls us loudly and publicly to do so. He is so good that He will not force us to drink of it, but He gives it in many ways to those who try to follow Him, so that none may go away disconsolate, or die of thirst. From this overflowing river spring many rivulets, some large, others

small, while there are little pools for children—by children, I mean beginners, unformed in virtue. You see, sisters, there is no fear you will die of drought on the way of prayer. . . . Then take my advice; do not loiter on the road, but struggle manfully, until you perish in the attempt."

The restrictions made above by St. Teresa do not, therefore, concern the remote general call, but the proximate individual call, which we shall now consider.

ARTICLE III

THE INDIVIDUAL AND PROXIMATE CALL TO CONTEMPLATION

The aforementioned reservations made by St. Teresa, St. John of the Cross, and Tauler, are not, we maintain, directed toward the general law of the full development of the life of grace, considered in itself, but toward the ground in which the divine seed is received, as we read in the parable of the sower. "And whilst he soweth some fell by the wayside, and the birds of the air came and ate them up. And other some fell upon stony ground, where they had not much earth: and they sprung up immediately, because they had no deepness of earth. And when the sun was up they were scorched: and because they had no root, they withered away. And others fell among thorns: and the thorns grew up and choked them. And others fell upon good ground: and they brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, and some thirty-fold. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." Again, among trees, the cedar or the palm normally reaches a great height when the soil and climate are favorable; but it is quite otherwise in an unfavorable climate. Just so, the question of the call to the mystical life is complicated and in a way materialized as soon as the life of grace is no longer considered in itself, but in the souls that receive it.

Because souls are in the state of grace, are they thereby called one and all to the essentially mystical life? First of all, clearly they are not all predestined to it; for predestination infallibly produces its effect, without, however, doing violence to liberty. It is a fact that all souls in the state of grace do not reach the mystical life. It is also evident that they are not all individually called to it in a proximate manner; for the three signs of this call, enumerated by Tauler, later on by St. John of the Cross, commonly accepted, are certainly not found in all of them.

1) Meditation becomes difficult or even impracticable. “The imagination remains inert; the taste for this exercise has disappeared; and the sweetness formerly produced by the object on which the imagination dwelt, has changed into dryness. As long as sweetness persists and the soul can in meditating, pass from one thought to another, meditation must not be abandoned, except when the soul is in peace and in quiet, of which I shall speak in describing the third sign.” St. Teresa teaches the same doctrine in the fourth mansion, where she says that if the soul has not yet received the grace of “supernatural recollection,” we must “take care not to stop the movement of our thoughts . . . and remain there like dolts.” From these quotations it is evident that these two great saints are speaking of the passage from meditation to infused contemplation, and not to an acquired contemplation, which would be an intermediate state.

2) A second sign is necessary, for the difficulty or impossibility of meditating might come from physical illness, from a distraction, from lack of recollection, or from some other similar cause, as happens even to those who preserve a taste for this exercise. Exactly stated, the second sign is that “the soul no longer has any inclination to fix the imagination or the senses on any particular interior or exterior object. I do not say that the imagination will no longer manifest itself by the coming and going which is characteristic of it—and which takes place even in profound recollection,—but that the soul will have no desire to fix it deliberately on these objects.” For example, when reading, one feels the need of closing the book; if praying vocally, one is inclined to interrupt this prayer in order to give oneself up to the contemplation of God. This is due to an interior inspiration. “It is not, therefore, surprising that such a soul should experience pain and distaste when, once it has begun to enjoy this peace, it is forced to resume meditation and to begin again the work of particular considerations. Its condition is like that of an infant torn away from its mother’s breast while it was nursing. . . . Or picture to yourself one who, after having removed the rind from a fruit, when tasting it, commanded to peel the rind which has already been removed. He can find no rind and ceases to taste the fruit which he already had. He is like one who lets go the prize in order to grasp a shadow.” These explanations from the writings of St. John of the Cross show clearly that, in his opinion the passage from meditation to infused contemplation is normal, even though we cannot

produce contemplation by our own effort. After peeling the fruit, we taste the substance.

3) A third sign is necessary because the first two are not decisive. Melancholy or some other indisposition might produce in us a suspension of our faculties, as it were, during which the soul would take pleasure in doing nothing and in remaining inactive. “The third and most decisive sign is this: The soul delights in being alone with God, fixing its attention lovingly on Him. It does not make any particular considerations, and enjoys interior peace and an impression of repose and quiet. The powers, memory, understanding, and will, do not manifest themselves by acts and exercises. I mean that the soul does not give itself up to discursive acts, which consists going from one subject to another, but is absorbed in the knowledge of and attention to God. This knowledge is confused, general, and loving, and does not tarry on any particular perception.” Just so, a child looks lovingly at its mother without thinking of anything distinct, but only of the fact that she is its mother. At the outset this loving gaze of the soul is so subtle and delicate that it passes almost unperceived. Here, there is no longer, as there was in meditation, clearly perceptible co-operation on the part of the imagination. Moreover, at the beginning the soul does not let itself be satisfied with this love which is given to it; it seeks love under a more sensible form. “Once the soul, however, lets itself be introduced into peace, it will not fail to penetrate farther and farther into it. As the loving thought of God becomes clear, the soul finds it more attractive than anything in the world because of the peace, rest, sweetness, and delight which it draws from it without effort.” The last words of this sentence help to prove that St. John of the Cross is really discussing infused contemplation, even in this first work, The Ascent of Mount Carmel. Chapter 15 makes the matter clear. In The Ascent of Mount Carmel, St. John describes chiefly the part we can have in this contemplation, not indeed in producing it, but in preparing ourselves for it or in favoring its exercise. In the following work, The Dark Night of the Soul, he describes particularly God’s action and our passivity. These phases do not follow each other chronologically; instead, they are two subordinate aspects of the interior life; in this case, the soul is “more passive than the active is,” but preserves the liberty of consenting to the superior inspiration which the Holy Ghost gives it to make it act divinely.

The three signs given in The Ascent of Mount Carmel are repeated in The Dark Night of the Soul; there they are more markedly formulated as indications of God's purifying work in us, or of purifying aridity: (1) The soul no longer finds savor or consolation in divine things (known by way of the senses) or in any created thing—these last words indicate that this state does not come from tepidity or attachment to creatures; (2) The soul preserves ordinarily in its remembrance of God the fear of not serving Him and of going backwards, because it no longer experiences sweetness in divine things—this fear is another sign that this powerlessness does not come from tepidity; (3) The soul finds difficulty in meditating, as it did in the past, by having recourse to the imagination. "The reason for this is that God is beginning to give Himself no longer by means of reasoning, but by the simple act of contemplation which He inspires in us."

Other indications may confirm these three necessary and classic signs. St. Teresa delights in adding the complete gift of oneself to God, scorn of all earthly things, a great humility, and the desire for heaven. Infused contemplation may, however, be granted to souls that do not as yet, possess such high virtues; often it is contemplation which gives them: "All good things came to me with her," as the Book of Wisdom says. It is especially the infused knowledge of the goodness of God which makes us love Him and practice virtue for love of Him. These three signs, then, suffice to prove the proximate call of a soul to infused contemplation.

II OBSTACLES TO THIS PROXIMATE CALL; ITS VARIETIES

True, the three signs, which we have just explained, are not found in all souls in the state of grace. But we believe that each and every one is called to the mystical life in a remote and sufficient manner, since the grace of virtues and gifts, which they have received, contains, by reason of the intimate law of its development, the seed of the mystical life, which is the normal prelude to that of heaven.

What is meant by a remote and sufficient call? It means that, if all souls were faithful in avoiding, as they ought, not only mortal but venial sin, if they were, each according to his condition, generally docile to the Holy Ghost, and if they lived long enough, a day would come when they would receive the proximate and efficacious vocation to a high perfection and to the mystical life. They have, in fact, received its radical principle. Until that

day comes, however, we may simply say that they are not as yet called to it; just as we say that infidels, who have never heard the Gospel preached, are not as yet individually called to the Christian life, even though all pagans have a general vocation to the Christian life, as the sole way of salvation willed by God for all men.

Many souls will not develop spiritually enough to be suitably prepared for the mystical life. This is due especially to a lack of humility, purity of heart, simplicity of gaze, recollection, and generosity; or also because they are naturally too much inclined to be outward-minded; or because, being too much absorbed in study or the cares of administration, they do not sufficiently love the silent and profound prayer, which leads to union. How easy it is to tarry on the way and to live a superficial life! Lastly these souls often lack good spiritual direction or a suitable environment. They will not be called to the mystical life in a proximate manner. Perhaps, for lack of certain conditions which do not depend on their will, some of them, although generous, would reach the mystical life only after a longer period than the ordinary span of human existence.

Others, who as a rule are more advanced, will be called to the mystical life in a proximate and sufficient manner, but all will not respond to this call. Many will become discouraged after their first steps in the dark night. This last group is numerous, and according to St. John of the Cross, in this difficult passage they are often badly directed by their spiritual guide.

Others will be called in a proximate and efficacious manner to the mystical life, but they will not advance beyond its lower degrees because of lack of generosity or direction. As the parable of the sower tells us, there are good souls which yield thirtyfold; this does not represent the summit of the normal development; others give sixtyfold; and some yield a hundredfold. These last will be called in a proximate and efficacious manner to the higher degrees of the mystical life, to the transforming union. From this fact, we shall see that they were predestined to it.

“Many are called, but few are chosen,” St. Teresa remarks apropos of the fifth mansion. We should humbly aspire to be amongst this élite. As it is of faith, in contradiction to Jansenistic teaching, that he who does not save his soul, can do so by means of the sufficient grace given him; we must also say that an adult who, after neglecting many graces, reaches only a lower degree of glory, could without being predestined thereto reach a much higher degree, and he would have attained it if he had been more faithful.

Only the saints, after generously using the time of trial, reach the plenitude of the perfect age, though not all, however, attain to great sanctity. In the transforming union, which is in this life the age of sanctity, there are, to be sure, many degrees lower than that attained by St. Paul or St. John. Likewise in a forest, many oaks reach their full normal height and tower above many others less developed, without reaching the height of certain giant oaks, which are truly exceptional.

This explains a much controverted text from The Dark Night of the Sou1. In this passage, St. John of the Cross states first the general principle: “Once the soul has entered the purification (i. e., the passive purification of the senses), inability to discourse only increases. . . . The soul will end by abandoning (in prayer) all sensible operations, if it is truly to advance (si es que han de ir adelante).” Then he adds: “For those who do not go by the way of contemplation (porque los que no van por camino de contemplación), it is otherwise; in their case, the night of the senses is often interrupted. In turn, it makes itself felt and then disappears; at one time discursive meditation is impossible, and at another, it becomes easy. God keeps them in this way, then, only in order to try them and humble them; to refine their appetites in order to turn them away from a vicious gluttony in spiritual matters; and not to lead them to the way of the spirit, which is that of contemplation, properly so called. God does not, in fact, raise to contemplation all who desire to attain it by following the way of the spirit; He does not even take half of them. Why? He alone knows. These last (whom God does not raise to contemplation, properly so called) never finish weaning the senses so that they completely abandon considerations and reasoning. They have this grace only intermittently, as we have just said.”

This text does not deny the remote general call of souls in the state of grace to the mystical life; it only denies the proximate and efficacious individual call of many to the perfection of this life. The good souls mentioned in this text are those which, in the parable of the sower, yield a thirty-fold harvest. This does not represent the normal summit of the life of grace; others will yield sixtyfold and even a hundredfold, as the parable tells us.

St. John of the Cross does not say that the souls of which we are speaking are called to a high perfection without being called in a proximate manner to the superior degrees of the mystical life. He even teaches the contrary. In

his opinion, a soul cannot obtain lofty perfection without passing through the night of the senses and even that of the spirit.

And if St. John of the Cross is asked why God does not raise to contemplation, properly so called, all those who desire to attain it by following the way of the spirit, and why He takes only half of them, he will not answer, as certain commentators would have him do, that contemplation, is essentially extraordinary and that it reaches beyond the summit of the normal life. On the contrary, he answers: “God alone knows.” In like manner, St. Augustine says apropos of the text, “Many are called, but few are chosen”: “Why God draws one and not another, seek not to judge, if thou dost not wish to fall into error.” This is the mystery of predestination, of which St. John of the Cross himself says: “It is true that souls, whatever their capacity, may have attained union, but all do not possess it in the same degree. God disposes freely of this degree of union, as He disposes freely of the degree of the beatific vision.” In this opinion, St. John of the Cross agrees with Tauler, Louis de Blois, Ruysbroeck, and the other great mystics.

Finally, St. John of the Cross speaks more clearly on this subject in The Living Flame of Love: “We must explain here why there are so few who reach this high state of perfection and union with God. It is certainly, not because God wishes to limit this grace to a small number of superior souls; His desire is rather that this high perfection should be common to all. It is only too often that He seeks in vain for vessels capable of containing such perfection. He sends light trials to a soul, and it shows itself weak and immediately flees all suffering, which is intended to refine and to polish it. Consequently, God does not continue to purify such souls and to draw them from earthly dust by mortifying them . . . 0 souls who dream of walking in tranquility and consolation in the spiritual way, if you but knew how necessary it is for you to be tried in order to attain this security and consolation!” After the description of the transforming union, he says: “0 souls created for such glories . . . of what are you thinking? What are you doing? How sad your blindness is! You close your eyes to the most dazzling light and do not listen to the powerful voices which solicit you!”

Even in the natural order, a number of men do not succeed in disciplining their passions, although they are all called to do so by their very nature as rational beings. Likewise, among those who spend many years in the study of some science (such as mathematics, law, or medicine), only a small

number acquire a profound knowledge of it. Inventors and extraordinary geniuses are rare. Similarly in the order of the life of grace, not even half the number of interior souls is raised to the summit of the normal development of the supernatural life; “Many are called, but few are chosen,” as St. Teresa so often remarks. We should, however, humbly desire to be numbered in this élite, as we should desire to grow in charity without placing any limit on its progress.

The doctrine that all souls in the state of grace have the remote and sufficient helps to reach the mystical life offers no greater difficulties, than that other doctrine, which is certain, .

ARTICLE IV

THE CONDITIONS ORDINARILY REQUIRED FOR INFUSED CONTEMPLATION

1. AN EXAMINATION OF THE PRINCIPAL DIFFICULTIES RELATING TO THE GENERAL CALL

We have given the reasons for our acceptance of a general and remote call to the mystical life of all souls in the state of grace, although this call becomes individual and proximate only when it can be proved that the three classic signs of the beginning of the mystical life, explained by St. John of the Cross, exist in the soul. This individual proximate call remains sufficient and inefficacious in those who resist it. In others it is efficacious in one of two ways: either it leads only to the inferior degrees of the mystical life, or it leads higher and even to the transforming union, the summit of the normal development of the interior life.

The three principal reasons we adduced for affirming the general and remote call that are : (1) The radical principle of the mystical life is the same as that of the common interior life, the grace of the virtues and the gifts; (2) In the progress of the interior life, the purification of the soul cannot be complete without the passive purifications, which belong to the mystical order; (3) The mystical life is the normal prelude to the beatific vision, the goal of the life of grace.

This teaching presupposes what we have set forth on sufficient and on efficacious grace. We summed it up in the masterly words of Bossuet: “Let us learn to bow our intellects before the divine obscurity of this great

mystery and confess two graces, one of which (sufficient grace) Ieaves the intellect without any excuse before God, and the other (efficacious grace) does not let it glory in itself."

It is not surprising that the traditional teaching about the general and remote call of all just souls to the mystical life should encounter obscurity or difficulty. These difficulties are not any greater than those raised against the doctrine commonly taught in the Church, as to the salvation which is offered and is possible to all men who have the use of reason, even to those who have not been able to hear the Gospel preached. All receive sufficient grace, (at least remote) to reach eternal life.

Since this is so, and since the mystical life is the prelude to eternal life, why not admit the general and remote call which we maintain? The principle difficulties are three: (1) It is objected that, even while admitting the principles of St. Thomas in relation to the increase of the grace of the virtues and gifts, if things are considered in the concrete rather than in the abstract, it becomes evident that Christian souls generally lack the conditions of the mystical life, and that through no fault of theirs; (2) It must not be forgotten that some souls have received only one or two talents, and not five; (3) The doctrine of the general, even though remote, call seems by its nature to lead some to presumption and illusion, and others to discouragement. We will examine these different points.

I. DO GENEROUS INTERIOR SOULS GENERALLY LACK THE PRINCIPAL CONDITIONS ORDINARILY REQUIRED FOR THE MYSTICAL LIFE?

Some writers tell us that the attainment of mystical contemplation requires conditions that are impossible of realization for the majority of souls, no matter how generous they may be. According to this opinion, a special environment is necessary, such as a Carthusian or a Carmelite monastery, where silence, solitude, and long hours of prayer are the common rule. Without this atmosphere, a special temperament inclined to recollection and prolonged prayer is needed. Lastly, we are told that a soul must have appropriate spiritual guidance, directing it more and more toward the contemplative life. These conditions are usually wanting in the lives of the majority of generous interior souls that remain in the world, or that enter active or even mixed religious orders. The cares of administration, which occupy superiors and the demands which intellectual work makes on a

priest, whose principal activity is teaching, also hinder the development of the mystical life, even in interior souls much attached to their duties.

We now offer our reply to this objection. Even if the above, mentioned conditions, difficult of realization for many, were required, we should not, as a result, necessarily conclude that the mystical life is not the normal summit of the development of the life of grace. We should simply have to say that, for the attainment of this summit, conditions are demanded which are difficult of realization in the world, or even in a religious life that is not very fervent. In this case the soul is like a cedar, which attains the summit of its normal development only in certain conditions of soil and climate.

Moreover, the conditions enumerated, though very useful, are not the chief ones. We recognize the fact that environment has its importance; also that a calm temperament is much better disposed to the contemplative life than a restless and agitated spirit. It may indeed be that among these last, some, even though quite generous, would reach the mystical life only after a period longer than the ordinary life span. And it is certain that bad spiritual direction often allows souls to vegetate or turns them away from infused contemplation, whereas another type of direction would definitely turn them toward contemplation.

However important these conditions may be, they remain superficial compared to others which are the chief ones. Here again the same rule holds true as in the matter of salvation, which is possible to all who possess a developed conscience, even to those not born in a Christian environment, who are strongly inclined to evil, and who have not had an opportunity to hear the Gospel preached. If they ordinarily follow the dictates of their conscience, they will be mysteriously led from grace to grace, from fidelity to fidelity, to eternal life.

Anyone who wishes to advance in the spiritual life and to prepare himself for the grace of contemplation must, to the best of his ability, use the great means which the Church gives us all. The assiduous reception of the sacraments, daily hearing of mass, frequent communion, love of the Eucharist, devotion to the Holy Ghost, filial and incessant recourse to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and to the Blessed Virgin, mediatrix of all graces, are evidently necessary.

Contemplation is a fruit of true devotion to the Blessed Virgin, as explained by Blessed Grignion de Montfort. He says that, without a great love for her, a soul will attain union with God only with extreme difficulty.

“It is necessary to pass through dark nights, combats, strange agonies, sharp thorns, and frightful deserts. By the way of Mary, the soul advances with greater sweetness and tranquility. Along this way it encounters many crosses and great difficulties to overcome, but our good Mother keeps so close to her faithful servants . . . that, in truth, this virginal road is a path of roses in spite of the thorns.” It thus leads more easily and surely to divine union. Mary, wonderful to relate, makes the cross easier and, at the same time, more meritorious: easier, because she sustains us with her gentle hand; more meritorious, because she obtains for us greater charity, which is the principle of merit, and because, by offering our acts to our Lord, she increases their value. By reason of her pre-eminent charity, Mary merited more while performing the easiest acts than all the martyrs in their tortures.

Another great means to prepare for the grace of contemplation, a means within the reach of all interior souls, is found in the liturgy, in an ever more intimate union with the great prayer of the Church. “The graces of prayer and of the mystical state have their type and source in the hieratic life of the Church; they reflect in the members the likeness of Christ, which is perfect in the body.” Liturgical prayer recited with recollection, in union with our Lord and His mystical body, obtains for us holy lights and inspirations, which illumine and inflame our hearts. Consequently it is advisable to make mental prayer after the psalmody which prepares us for it; just as after mass and Holy Communion, it is well to prolong our thanksgiving, and if possible devote an hour to it.

Lastly, the frequent reading of Scripture and the study of sacred doctrine, undertaken in a truly supernatural manner, are other excellent means to prepare the soul for contemplation. Thus, the ancients used to say that divine reading (lectio divina) by pious study (stadium) leads to meditation (meditatio), then to prayer (oratio), and finally to contemplation (contemplatio).

Of course certain interior dispositions are necessary if we are to make good use of the great means which the Church proposes to all. These dispositions constitute the chief conditions ordinarily required for the mystical life. As a rule they accompany the proximate individual call to contemplation; in very generous souls they may supply for exterior conditions if these cannot be had.

Spiritual authors group these dispositions as follows: (1) purity of heart; (2) simplicity of spirit; (3) profound humility; (4) love of recollection and

perseverance in prayer; (5) fervent charity.

Who can say that these interior dispositions are beyond the strength and the graces offered him? St. Jerome writes: “One man may tell me that he cannot fast; but can he declare that he cannot love? Another may affirm that he cannot preserve virginity, or sell all his goods in order to give the price to the poor; but can he tell me that he cannot love his enemies? All that is necessary is to look into one’s own heart . . . , for what God asks of us is not found at a great distance.” On the other hand, if we become even a little negligent, how easy it is to fail in the interior conditions we have just enumerated!

The purity of heart mentioned in the beatitude, “Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God,” is the fruit of exterior and interior mortification, which is not practiced without suffering. We must not be attached to sin, must not condone our faults or make peace with them. The soul must enter upon the narrow way that leads to true life; better than ever before, it will understand our Lord’s words, “Many are called, but few are chosen.” It must also be ready to pass through the fire of sufferings, for purity of heart should grow with contemplation through the purifying trials, which God sends to those humbly and ardently desiring His divine intimacy. As Scripture tell us, He is jealous; He removes the persons and the things to which the soul might become attached, and makes it pass through a crucible to cleanse it of all its blemishes. When inordinate inclinations and the disorders of sensuality, egoism, self-love, and intellectual and spiritual pride have disappeared, and purified heart is like a spotless mirror reflecting the beauty of God. Who can say that he is unable to have a clean heart?

Simplicity of spirit is born of this cleanness of heart and, like it, should be keenly desired by everyone. Holy Scripture often mentions it: “His communication is with the simple.” “If thy eye be single, thy whole body shall be lightsome.” “Be ye therefore wise as serpents and simple as doves.” Without simplicity it is impossible to have a high degree of wisdom, which is learned from God without guile. Simplicity of spirit evidently does not consist in unceremoniously telling of our every thought and feeling, at the risk of contradicting ourselves from day to day when circumstances and impressions are changed. In spite of appearances, such conduct is quite the contrary of simplicity; it leads to confusion, disturbance, incoherence, and rambling. The simplicity of which we are speaking shares in that of God

and consists in seeing in God all things, all events, whether happy or unhappy, all persons, friends or enemies, and all we have to do, whether agreeable or painful. It produces unity of spirit, for he who possesses it sees that everything is willed, or at least permitted, by God for His glory and that of His elect. Consequently, all ought to aspire to this superior unity and simplicity of spirit, is evident. The presence of simplicity in the soul indicates that the gift of wisdom is already well developed, and that the soul possessing it habitually is very close to mystical contemplation, if it does not already have it.

This simplicity is manifested by a great rectitude of life; from this point of view, St. Thomas speaks of it when he is discussing the virtue of truth or veracity as opposed to falsehood. “Simplicity,” he says, “is contrary to duplicity, by which a man makes himself out to be something other than what he is interiorly.” It is a perfect uprightness and even a certain candor, in the good sense of the word, which leads us to acknowledge our defects easily, because we do not cease to see the one thing necessary above all others. To have ordinarily in our relations with our neighbor the undiminished simplicity of the dove together with the prudence of the serpent evidences a high degree of the light of divine wisdom. It is a proximate disposition for mystical contemplation. Who can say that this superior simplicity is not, upon the whole, within the reach of generous souls?

Humility of heart is no less attainable than the preceding dispositions. In fact, it is born of them at the realization of the distance separating the infinite perfection of God from the nothingness of creatures, which of themselves are incapable of existing, acting, and directing themselves as they should. Anyone who already possesses this virtue in a high degree, who is happy to recognize his nothingness and abjection before God, who loves to be nothing so that God may be all, to humble himself before what is divine in every other soul, is prepared for the grace of contemplation. Our Lord Himself says: “I confess to Thee, 0 Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones.” “Unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” If you become as little children, you shall enter heaven; and by contemplation the soul enters it in a quasi-experimental manner even in this life. “Take up My

yoke upon you, and learn of Me, because I am meek, and humble of heart: and you shall find rest to your souls."

This rest for the soul is to be found especially in loving contemplation. "God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble." He makes them humble in order to load them with His gifts. Humility prepares the soul for contemplation, for it already sings the praise of God's glory. The Imitation says that contemplatives are few in number because there are few souls profoundly humble. To receive the grace of contemplation, ordinarily the soul must have made a profound act of true humility which colors its whole life. When a soul has often and practically recognized the fact that its entire existence depends absolutely on God, that it continues to exist only by Him, that it acts well only by reason of His grace, which works in us both to will and to accomplish, that it directs its energies only by His light, that it has sinned frequently, and that it is an unprofitable servant deserving of scorn; then the soul generally obtains the grace we are speaking of.

Love of recollection, fidelity to the grace of the present moment, and perseverance in prayer are also dispositions which should not be lacking in generous souls. These dispositions necessitate a reaction against the agitation of what today is called strenuous life. As a matter of fact, it is not life, but a fever, a deadly illness; it is materialism in action. After turning away from God and from the true life of the soul, it seeks its equivalent in multiplied and increasingly intense activity, which is often a complete loss; for the finite can never equal or become the Infinite. To a true contemplative, people who are devoted to an exaggerated intensity of life must seem like walking corpses; dead men running, as an old ballad says.

"Is the decay of faith astonishing," asks a recent translator of the works of Tauter, "since no one any longer has time to think of faith? Materialism has snuffed out spirituality. Yet, the desire for God, who is man's end, still persists in human hearts, with the result that more than ever before there is an indefinable uneasiness in the world. Souls are suffering and dying of this unconscious desire for the Infinite." The reaction from this uneasiness should raise up many contemplative vocations. This is an important argument for the doctrine we are defending here, namely, that an unfavorable environment provokes a salutary reaction in good souls.

Materialism in action extends unfortunately to the things of the spirit and prevents many souls from believing they are called to contemplation. It turns them away from recollection and perseverance in prayer. Even

spiritual subjects have been developed along the lines of a material science which, instead of giving us a doctrinal judgment founded on principle, presents us with a jumble of material information which is often useless and impossible to classify. Apparently the more there is, the more science grows. In reality, this entirely material multiplicity puts a great distance between us and the unification of learning, that higher view of the whole which deserves to be called wisdom, and to be called contemplation when it is accompanied by the love of God.

If the present problem of the general call of souls to the mystical life were studied according to the methods of this material science, a doctrinal solution would never be reached; on the contrary, it would seem that no conclusions can be reached, a skeptical attitude, which is no evidence of superiority.

Were this problem studied in the light of theological wisdom, in the works of the great masters, and also in the light of the gift of wisdom, which is particularly important here, the result would be quite different.

We can scarcely exaggerate the importance of Tauler's teaching on the dangers of a completely material study for a religious, who should aspire to contemplation. Speaking even of religious, the great mystic observes that some of them are like cisterns receiving water only from drains and not from the fountain of living water. Without an interior life, they spend themselves on outward things, and pride is the result. He says these intellectuals, infatuated with themselves and their intellect, which is nourished solely by creatures, are cisterns. Their mental attainments cannot support them in trials and will be confounded at death.

In his explanation of the parable of those who refused the invitation to the feast, Tauler says: "Who could count today the number of men who act in the same way. . . . Everyone, I speak not only of lay people, but also of ecclesiastics and religious, is busy about his affairs. What negotiations and innumerable occupations continually distract and absorb the world! The very thought of it all is enough to set one reeling. We surround ourselves with so many things, whereas a tenth of them would suffice; for, after all, time on earth is short and uncertain. We ought to remember that this world is merely a passage to eternity, and then we would use temporal things with moderation and be satisfied with the necessities of life. It would be better to die of hunger on the way than to let ourselves be encumbered and crucified by so many occupations."

Tauler is not speaking here of apostolic work which is the radiation of the interior life, but of countless useless, or at least unsanctified, occupations. If his words were true of his time, what must be said of ours? With such conditions it is not astonishing that only a small number of souls attain to contemplation. These conditions, however, represent essential disorder, which turns souls away from the recollection and prayer necessary to any interior life. Keeping this in mind, we easily understand why our Lord said at the end of the parable of the wedding feast: “Many are called, but few are chosen.”

This is not true in a normal Christian life, even in the world. Without excessive difficulty, generous souls attain by meditation to a simple and spontaneous affective prayer, which is an excellent disposition to mystical or infused contemplation.

Fervent charity toward God and our neighbor is the last of the dispositions that we listed as requisite for contemplation. The love of God for man unites us to Him; and the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which are the principles of infused contemplation, being connected with charity, develop with it. “Wisdom as a gift of the Holy Ghost judges aright about them (divine things) on account of connaturality with them. . . . This sympathy or connaturality for divine things is the result of charity, which unites us to God.” Hence it is inconceivable that a soul should reach a high degree of charity without having a proportionate degree of the gift of wisdom as an habitual disposition, because the Holy Ghost inspires and illumines souls, as a general rule, according to the degree of their habitual docility. These souls not only earnestly desire and humbly ask for the grace of contemplation, which will increase their love and adoration, but they cannot restrain themselves from exclaiming: “God is so beautiful; everything in Him deserves admiration even to the forgetfulness of all else. He should indeed be the sole object of our love. It is painful to see how little He is known and how few souls admire His infinite grandeur. How many Christians would love Him if they knew by experience His goodness and tenderness, which are so different from what these words usually connote! They would love Him, even to the complete forgetfulness of self and the world, that they might find again all souls in Him, since these souls are loved by Him.”

This explains why the gift of infused contemplation is ordinarily granted to the perfect, as many theologians teach. The perfect have, in fact, merited

in the strict sense of the word (condignly) a high degree of the gift of wisdom, considered as an habitual disposition; and they have thus merited, at least in the broad sense of the word (congruously), the actual superior inspirations commensurate with this degree of the gift.

Evidently the principal conditions ordinarily required for the mystical life are not, as a rule, lacking in generous interior souls, even if they are detained in the world and are unable to enjoy the silence and solitude of the cloister. Like St. Catherine of Siena, they can build an interior cell in their hearts and find God there.

2. PARTICULAR OBSTACLES TO CONTEMPLATION

After reading the preceding section, souls that have not received the grace of contemplation may question whether they themselves are setting up some obstacle to contemplation.

The obstacle always comes from an inordinate attachment, from selfishness. In many souls it is in the will; they choose their own way; in other words, they wish to go to God by using means of their own selection, and they demand, as it were, that God should come to them according to their way. They count not a little on their own activity instead of allowing God to act in them, and they desire to build up their perfection without His help. No slight obstacle is interposed when a soul wishes to direct itself in matters that should not be under its direction; it runs the risk of more or less consciously opposing the superior direction of the Holy Ghost. To want to be a center, to wish that good be done by us, or at least by our religious family or convent, and in our way, is an ineffectual preparation for contemplation, which is characterized precisely by being God’s way. “I confess to Thee, 0 Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones.” Occasionally, it is in the poorest little convents, which seem to have no influence, which the most contemplative and holiest souls are to be found.

In other souls, the obstacle to contemplation is found in the mind. They try to analyze everything psychologically, and to record it in order to evaluate their slight progress. Consequently they turn their gaze upon themselves instead of on God. True, self-knowledge is always necessary even in the highest states, but this self-scrutiny should not be separated

from the soul's attention to God. Is not the best examination of conscience that which questions sincerely, what record the day has left in the Book of Life? If this is done, the light of the Holy Ghost will effect what St. Augustine asked in his prayer: "That I may know Thee, 0 Lord, and that I may know myself." "In my opinion," says St. Teresa, "we will never succeed in knowing ourselves well unless we try to know God; by contemplating His greatness, we will discover our baseness. . . . If, on the contrary, we never rise above our own miseries, we will reap distinct harm. . . . Self-knowledge becomes warped if we never take our thoughts off ourselves, and I am not a bit astonished at that. That is why I maintain, my daughters, which we should fix our eyes on Jesus Christ, our treasure, and on the saints; there we shall learn true humility. By this way, I repeat, our intellect will be ennobled, and self-knowledge will cease to make us fearful and cowardly."

Among those who analyze themselves too much, some leave off their prayer to find out whether it conforms to the descriptions given by mystical authors, and also to ascertain what degree they have reached. Others imagine that, in order to live by these things, it is sufficient to know them exteriorly, and they try for themselves "to eliminate images and to empty their minds." By so doing they expose themselves to every kind of illusion; they confound a simple intellectual speculation about the Deity, which is superior to the divine perfections that it contains in its eminence, a speculation within the reach of every philosopher, even though he is in the state of mortal sin, with the infused contemplation described by Dionysius when he speaks of the great darkness. They forget that the principle which leads to Christian contemplation is to love God for Himself. They lose themselves in abstract speculations and do not comprehend the love of Christ. With a great amount of unconscious pride, they might thus go completely astray and end in a theosophical or Buddhistic contemplation.

Lastly, certain souls appear better prepared in some respects, since they would willingly allow God to operate in them, and do not pride themselves on knowing everything; but their heart seeks in God enjoyment rather than God Himself. In this they are deceived, for it is a crucified God whom we must love, and intimacy with Him is often found in suffering. Undoubtedly joy and unequaled happiness come later, but this is not what the soul should seek.

Some souls that have opposed all these obstacles to the grace of God, have had the happiness of seeing Him overthrow them all in order to prove once more that He came to seek sinners and to save that which was lost. Perhaps the intimacy of prayer was necessary for their salvation; if they had not obtained it, they might have wished to enjoy their faculties for themselves and to find in a forbidden love or in the satisfactions of pride what exists in divine love alone. Priceless treasures are often wasted by shutting oneself up in self. We should invoke God's help in the following prayer: "0 Lord, take me from myself, and give me strength to give myself completely to Thee."

3. WHAT SHOULD BE THOUGHT OF SOULS THAT HAVE RECEIVED ONLY ONE OR TWO TALENTS?

Is it morally possible for souls that have received only one or two talents to reach the divine intimacy we are now discussing? Even though they could do so only with great difficulty, it would not follow that this divine intimacy is essentially extraordinary. Not all the oaks in a forest attain the height of their normal growth; some are stunted. We find an analogy in the spiritual order. God casts more or less beautiful divine seed into souls according to His good pleasure; and sometimes this seed encounters such obstacles that it is very difficult for it to attain its complete normal development.

But we must remember what St. Thomas says: "The very least grace is sufficient to resist any degree of concupiscence"; that is, the very least sufficient grace gives this power, and the very least efficacious grace makes it become an act. As Cajetan, Gonet, and several other Thomists remark, this is true of the slightest sufficient grace considered in itself, but perhaps not of this grace when it is in a soul that is both very weak and much tempted. Thus, the heat of boiling water drives away the cold; but, since water is not the natural subject of heat; the heat in turn is driven out by the cold if the fire is not kept up.

It should be remembered, however, that the privilege of frequent communion is offered to these less favored souls. If they receive the Holy Eucharist frequently with growing fervor of will, why should they not, at the end of a long life, by daily fidelity reach at least the lower degrees of the mystical life? Perhaps, as the parable of the sower relates, they will yield a

thirtyfold harvest, while others will yield sixtyfold or a hundredfold. We must keep in mind the parable of the laborers of the eleventh hour, who, out of gratitude, worked so well that they earned the same reward as those who had worked since morning. Let us also recall the good thief and the graces he must have received when he heard the words of the dying Christ: “Amen, I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with Me in paradise.” Finally, it must be remembered that the majority of the elect pass through purgatory after death by reason of their own fault, that is, because of negligence’s that prevented the perfect purification they could have reached in this life with the help of grace.

4. IS THIS DOCTRINE OF A NATURE TO LEAD SOME SOULS TO PRESUMPTION AND OTHERS TO DISCOURAGEMENT?

The objection may be raised that, if the doctrine of the general and remote call of all just souls to the mystical life is accepted, some souls may be inclined to anticipate God’s time and simulate passive prayer, which would lead them to quietism or semi-quietism. Others, it may be objected, may become discouraged if, in spite of their generosity, they do not have the signs of passive prayer, and they may be led to think they will never be able the full to reach perfection of the Christian life.

This objection fails to appreciate the true meaning of the doctrine we have just set forth, or it considers only the harmful application which an imprudent director might make of it.

This is evident from the way St. Thomas answers a similar objection to the expediency of vows. The objection is phrased: He who makes a vow exposes himself to sin against this vow; therefore it is not expedient for him to make it. St. Thomas answers: “When danger arises from the deed itself, this deed is not expedient—for instance, that one cross a river by a tottering bridge. But if the danger arises through man’s failure in the deed, the latter does not cease to be expedient: thus it is expedient to mount on horseback, though there is danger of a fall from the horse: else it would behoove one to desist from all good things, since they may become dangerous accidentally. Wherefore it is written (Eccles. 11: 4): ‘He that observeth the wind shall not sow, and he that considereth the clouds shall never reap.’” Should people quit using knives because now and then a man cuts himself? Are the vows an obstacle to perfection, because by making them a person indirectly

exposes himself to transgress them occasionally? And should we fear to lead fervent souls humbly to desire the true mystical life, simply because there is a false one? Must a very great good be renounced through fear of something unbecoming which might accidently arise?

What does St. Teresa say about those who think it's dangerous to follow the way of prayer and to desire to drink from the fountain of living water? In The Way of Perfection she says: "A want of humility, of the virtues, may endanger you, but prayer—prayer! Never would God permit this. The devil must have originated these fears and so brought about, by crafty tricks, the fall of certain souls that practiced prayer.

. . Therefore, sisters, banish these misgivings: take no notice of public opinion. . . . Cast aside these causeless fears. . . . Beware, daughters, of a certain kind of humility suggested by the devil, which is accompanied by great anxiety about the gravity of our past sins. He disturbs souls in many ways by this means, until at last he stops them from receiving Holy Communion by doubts as to whether they are in a fit state for it." Elsewhere, speaking of those who inspire such vain fears in souls, she says: "I, also, am acquainted with these semi-doctors who are always suspicious. They have cost me quite dear."

The doctrine which we have explained is not at all dangerous in itself, or when applied by prudent directors. Joseph of the Holy Ghost, a Carmelite well known for his work on mystical theology, sums up this doctrine in two propositions, which he gives exactly as the expression of traditional teaching: "If it is a question of infused contemplation, taken in the sense of rapture, ecstasy, and similar favors, we can neither apply ourselves to it nor ask it of God nor desire it. But if it is a question of infused contemplation itself, as an act of contemplation, although we can certainly not have it through our own activity aided by grace, we can aspire to it, by desiring it ardently and humbly asking God for it" The union of these two words "ardently" and "humbly" recalls the fortiter et suaviter of Scripture; it solves the problem by the conciliation of humility and magnanimity. St. Thomas has beautifully explained the harmony between these two virtues which are apparently contrary. Humility, he says, by inclining us profoundly before God, reminds us of our wretchedness; while magnanimity makes us aspire to great things, even to the divine intimacy which God offers us. A Christian should keenly aspire to these great things, and by increasingly perfect fidelity prepare himself for them, and humbly wait for the divine

mercy to bestow them. In the present article, we have insisted particularly on humility, which corrects presumption, and on the desire of hope and charity, which, united to forgetfulness of self, corrects discouragement. It is well to keep in mind that, by reason of the connection of the virtues, profound humility is impossible without great magnanimity, as the lives of the saint's show. As St. Paul says, we bear an exceedingly precious treasure, grace and the Blessed Trinity, in a fragile vase; the greater our knowledge of the fragility of the vase, the greater also will be our appreciation of the value of the treasure, and the keener our aspiration to live intimately by it. This is taught by the passive purifications, a mystical state which, far from making the soul proud, humbles it profoundly. Without these purifications, it is scarcely possible to love to be nothing in order that God may be all; amare nesciri et pro nihilo reputari.

The doctrine leading to presumption is the teaching that all interior souls are called to the mystical life, not only in a general and remote manner, but in a proximate and individual way. Were this mistake made, the director should advise souls to practice the repose of passive prayer, even before he had been able to prove the existence in them of the three signs enumerated by St. John of the Cross, and discussed in the course of these pages. The soul would thus, end in quietism.

The doctrine leading to discouragement is that, which maintains that interior souls are not generally called, even in a remote manner, to the divine intimacy of the mystical life. Many souls would thus, be retained in the lower forms of the spiritual life and many, in spite of their generosity, would despair of reaching intimate union with God in this life.

Others, before undergoing the passive purifications of the senses and of the soul, might decide, and not without presumption, that they had reached the ordinary unitive life, and that it would be enough for them to remain in it, since the higher degrees are extraordinary, and humility does not permit one to aspire to them.

To combat the excess of quietism or semi-quietism, care should be taken not to fall into the opposite extreme, a sort of practical naturalism which breaks the progress of the interior life. As usual in these great problems, truth is found in a happy mean above two extreme errors, which are opposed to each other; truth, like a summit, dominates the ramblings and contradictions of error. Moreover, it rises above an inconsistent eclecticism, which always goes only halfway, which cannot affirm anything precisely,

and which oscillates from right to left because it fails to see the superior principles that alone reconcile the most varied aspects of reality. The apparent antagonisms are resolved by the equilibrium of their terms carried to the highest degree; on this summit harmony is reached, for example, between humility and magnanimity. Every interior soul ought to strive humbly and ardently for great things. Humility in itself should not be inferior to magnanimity, for these virtues, in appearance so contary, grow together and mutually strengthen each other; at one and the same time, they preserve the soul from pride and discouragement. The apparent contradiction between them is solved by what St. Paul says: “For God . . . has shined in our hearts . . . but we have this treasure in earthen vessels.” If we consider the fragility of the vessel, we can never humble ourselves too greatly; if we consider the value of the treasure, we can never too greatly desire the intimate reign of God in our souls and the more and more perfect fulfillment of the first precept which knows no limit. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind,” in order to become truly “an adorer in spirit and in truth.” We can never too greatly desire to grow in charity and in divine wisdom which, like all the gifts, grows with it.

This doctrine does not, therefore, lead good souls either to discouragement or to presumption, but, like the dogma of predestination, it makes them aspire to divine union by instilling in them a holy fear of not being sufficiently generous and docile to the Holy Ghost. It does not lead to discouragement any more than do the passive purifications, which are intended to refine the virtue of hope by the struggle against temptations to despair. These temptations arise when God Himself reveals more clearly to the soul the height of the goal to be attained. In this light the soul sees more and more its own wretchedness, and must then, in spite of the devil’s suggestions, hope against all hope. This purification is necessary that the soul may be completely and forever cured of vain self-complacency, and that the roots of pride and presumption may be completely extirpated. Instead of leading to pride, mystical contemplation destroys it and teaches humility, as God alone can. “Where humility is, there also is wisdom”; and where profound humility is, there is also lofty wisdom, that which comes from the Father of light. As the author of The Imitation says, there are so few contemplatives, because the number of profoundly humble souls is so small.

This doctrine, therefore, makes it possible to reply to the difficulties proposed against it; it is thereby newly confirmed and appears more and more as the true expression of traditional teaching. To live it, however, we need what many authors have called “the second conversion.” What this should be may be determined from what we have just said about the interior conditions ordinarily required for mystical contemplation or for the virtues which prepare for it. If there are few perfect souls, this is because there are few that follow the direction of the Holy Ghost. His seven gifts often have little effect in many souls because they are, as it were, fettered by contrary habits and affections. More or less deliberate and frequent venial sins exclude the graces necessary to produce the acts of the gifts. But we cannot doubt their existence, because Scripture, tradition, and the liturgy speak of them, and, if the obstacles were removed, we should ordinarily see the gradual realization of what the Church makes us implore in the Veni Creator:

Creator, Spirit, all divine,
Come visit every soul of Thine,
And fill with Thy celestial flame
The bosoms Thou Thyself didst frame.
The sevenfold mystic gifts are Thine,
Finger of God’s right hand divine;
His gracious promise sent to teach
The tongue a rich and heavenly speech.
Kindle with fire brought from above
Each sense, and fill our hearts with love
And grant our flesh so weak and poor
That strength which lasts forevermore.

This prayer, which should be said by the faithful soul with an ever increasing fervor of will, reminds us that the life of grace is eternal life begun; and it ends by asking for the normal fruit of this “grace of the virtues and of the gifts,” the infused contemplation of the Blessed Trinity dwelling in us:

To us, through Thee, the grace be shown
To know the Father and the Son:
And Spirit of Them both, may we
Forever hold firm trust in Thee.

Consequently the mystical life is the plenitude of faith, hope, charity, and the gifts which accompany them; in other words, the normal prelude to the life of heaven.

We must have confidence in the divine promises. Aridity is not the result of tepidity, when, instead of love of the world, interest in our spiritual advancement predominates. We must trust in the Holy Ghost who dwells in us and who increases His work in us in proportion to our growing fidelity to the first commandment: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind” in order to become “adorers in spirit and in truth.” Our Lord said: “I will not now call you servants . . . but I have called you friends.” We should believe in the wholly divine strength of the grace received in baptism, of the Holy Ghost who was given to us. We do not see this strength any more than we see the life hidden in an acorn from which a vigorous oak grows. If the oak is encircled by a band of iron, the bark will soon grow over it. Who can measure the supernatural energy contained in the grace of the virtues and the gifts, which is none other than eternal life begun? Who can set a limit to the work of sanctification which the Holy Ghost has begun in us, and prevent souls from reaching even the inner sanctuary where the Blessed Trinity dwells? “Wherefore I wished, and understanding was given me: and I called upon God, and the spirit of wisdom came upon me.” “I confess to Thee, 0 Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones.”

SOME THEORETICAL DIFFICULTIES: CAN THE GRACE OF CONTEMPLATION BE MERITED? ARE THE REQUIRED CONDITIONS NORMAL?

Some objections in the speculative order may be raised against the doctrine we have expounded. Particularly deserving of examination is the objection which bears on the question as to whether the grace of contemplation can be merited at least congruously.

The first objection: “The law of the development of grace in man ought not to be understood only for grace abstractly considered, but for grace as capable of being shared by human nature. It is thus St. Thomas (qu. disp. de caritate, a. 10) distinguishes between: (1) the absolutely perfect charity which God alone can have; (2) the perfect charity which man can have only in heaven; and (3) the perfect charity which he can have in this life. St.

Thomas expresses the same opinion in I Ia Ilae, q. 24, a. 8, and Ilae, q. 7, a.10."

It is easy to answer that, in the question of the general and remote call, we considered the grace of the virtues and the gifts, not in a purely abstract manner, independent of the mode according to which it exists in angels or in man, but as it exists in the human soul even in this life. This quasi-ideal soul was itself considered as a beginner, a proficient, and finally as perfect. And we insisted particularly on one point, namely, that infused contemplation does not require infused ideas like those of the angels, but that acquired ideas suffice, as they do for the act of faith. The question is, therefore, concerned with grace in so far as it can be shared by man in this life, and not in purgatory or in heaven.

Moreover, in the question of the individual call we considered the life of grace as capable of being shared in and as participated in by an individual soul, according as it possesses or does not possess the three signs mentioned by Tauler and later by St. John of the Cross, signs which have become the classic indications of the beginning of infused contemplation. Furthermore, in this second question, the distinction between the merely sufficient call and the efficacious call (efficacious in the Thomistic sense, whether it is to the lower degrees of the mystical life or to the higher degrees), safeguards the gratuity of God's gift, just as in the case of the grace of conversion or that of final perseverance.

Therefore it is in entire conformity with the doctrine taught by St. Thomas (qu. disp. de. caritate, a. 10), since even the transforming union is included in what St. Thomas calls caritas perfecta secundum tempus, scilicet quae potest haberi in hac vita.

Every soul should be sufficiently purified at the moment of death to go straight to heaven without passing through purgatory, where it will be detained only through its own fault in neglecting graces that were granted or offered it. It will suffer so greatly in purgatory from the deprivation of the sight of God only because it is radical to the order established by God to see Him immediately after death. The fact that there are a great many retarded souls should not make us forget the normal way of sanctity, to which every Christian should aspire in order to be in the radical order willed by God.

Those who object to our teaching on this subject insist further. "It seems," they say, "that a law of grace (of its growth and perfection) cannot

be as rigorously formulated as a law of nature; Grace, which is a participation in the divine nature and an absolutely gratuitous gift, has not by reason of this double title and, as it were, form, any measure that can regulate its perfection and mode of growth other than the free love of God for each man in particular."

This interesting objection leads us to state definitely an important point. Certainly, according to the teaching of St. Thomas—and St. John of the Cross expresses the same opinion—the degree of glory of each predestined soul and the corresponding degree of charity at the hour of death depends on God's good pleasure. In addition, neither the first grace nor that of final perseverance can be merited; and we shall see that not even any efficacious help which keeps us in the state of grace can be merited condignly, or according to the strict meaning of the word "merit."

Nevertheless, if God gratuitously places a soul in the order of grace, and maintains it therein, then the laws of this order apply to that soul. Among these laws of the order of grace, some are absolutely rigorous and without exception; for example, there are truths of faith which must, not only of precept but of necessity, be believed by adults as an indispensable means of salvation. Likewise, it is impossible to have a supernatural love of God without faith; besides, the infused virtues are connected with charity, just as the gifts are. This connection presupposes numerous mutual relations between the infused virtues and the gifts, relations which are the laws of the supernatural organism. As a result, in Ia Ilae and IIa IIae of the Summa, almost every article dealing with the relations of the virtues to each other, or of the gifts to each other, or of the gifts with the virtues, contains a law belonging to the order of grace.

This is the way we can merit condignly (or in the strict sense, a rigorous law) the increase of charity which is accompanied by that of the infused virtues and of the gifts. This is so true that a soul cannot have charity in a heroic degree without having the other infused virtues and the gifts (as habitus) in a proportionate degree. This law is more rigorous than the law in virtue of which the five fingers of the hand develop at the same time. In the sensible order, there are exceptions, inasmuch as matter sometimes escapes the domination of the directing form or idea which organizes it. The infused virtues, which are mutually connected, considered formally, grow simultaneously without exception: "Their growth in man is equal, as the

fingers . . . grow in proportion to one another." The same is true of the gifts that are connected with them in charity.

A further objection is offered: "If this point of view were entirely exact, there would be no need of hesitation in saying that the mystical state can, at a given moment, be merited condignly."

We answer this objection in our frequently reiterated statement that a distinction must be made between the gifts themselves, considered as habitual dispositions, and the acts that proceed from them.

It is true that we can merit condignly the increase of charity, of the virtues, and of the gifts as habitus, and that in this life no limit can be placed on this augmentation.

The Holy Ghost moves souls as a rule according to the degree of their infused habitus; of their habitual docility (provided there is no obstacle, venial sin or imperfection; in case there is, the meritorious act is weak, remissus, inferior to the degree of charity). Consequently Thomists usually say that the just man, who perseveres in fervor, can merit saltem de congruo (at least in the broad sense of the word "merit") the grace of infused contemplation. Why do they say saltem, at least congruously? Because in the grace of infused contemplation there is something merited strictly or condignly, that is, a high degree of the gifts of understanding and wisdom, considered as habitus; it is an act, and the mystical state is this act which lasts a certain time. But this act supposes an efficacious, actual grace. According to Thomists, we cannot strictly or condignly merit the efficacious help which keeps us in the state of grace. Why is this? Because the principle of merit does not fall under merit: that is why neither the first grace nor the efficacious help which maintains us in the state of grace nor the gift of final perseverance, though so necessary to salvation, can be merited condignly.

Moreover, if a just man could strictly merit efficacious grace A, by it he would likewise merit efficacious grace B, and so on to the grace of final perseverance, which would be merited condignly. Whence it follows that many graces necessary to salvation cannot be the object of strict merit. It should not surprise us then that the actual efficacious grace of infused contemplation cannot be merited condignly, even though it is in the normal way of sanctity. It can be merited more than the grace of final perseverance, for it would be an exaggeration to say that this last can be merited at least congruously. But in one sense, the actual grace of infused contemplation is

more gratuitous than that necessary to the obligatory exercise of the infused virtues, for we use infused virtues when we wish to do so. The same is not true of the gifts, although by our fidelity we can prepare ourselves to receive the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Indeed, we ought to prepare ourselves for it; and if we do this generously, a day will come when the grace of contemplation will be given to us quite frequently. God ordinarily gives it to the perfect, provided there are no accidental obstacles; but He gives it either in aridity and night, or in light and consolation.

The following objection is offered: “What you consider accidental and what you are a bit inclined to scorn theoretically because it is material, is perhaps part of that material causality, which is as indispensable to the essence of the composite (nature and grace) as formal causality, although in an inferior rank.”

We must answer this objection by stating that souls receive grace according to the obediential power which is the same in all. As for the material causality, which prepares for the reception and increase of grace, it is itself the effect of an actual grace of supernatural order. According to St. Thomas, this is the meaning of the axiom: “If man does what is in him to do, God will not deny him grace.” The infusion and increase of grace certainly require an aptness, for no form or perfection is produced in a subject unless the subject is disposed for it; but it is God Himself who thus disposes our souls, or who moves them supernaturally to prepare themselves. Grace and charity are not given to us in proportion to our natural capacities or dispositions, for they surpass them infinitely. Consequently Thomists teach that it is our super-natural acts, which not only merit, but physically prepare for the augmentation of charity.

We considered these supernatural dispositions for infused contemplation at considerable length in the preceding chapters. That teaching on the subject is classical, and it would be an unpardonable fault to neglect it. These dispositions, as we have seen, are chiefly: (1) great purity of heart, “Blessed are the clean of heart”; (2) great simplicity of mind which seeks only the truth; (3) profound humility; (4) habitual recollection; (5) perseverance in prayer; (6) fervent charity. This last disposition is the most important together with a profound humility. In the order of material preparation, humility is fundamental, according to St. Thomas, ut removens prohibens, inasmuch as it removes the principal obstacle which is pride, intellectual pride so frequent in a certain type of learning, or spiritual pride.

This is why St. Teresa insisted so strongly on this fundamental disposition in all her works, particularly in the Epilogue to The Interior Castle. Our Lord Himself taught this to us when He exclaimed: “I confess to Thee, 0 Father, Lord of heaven and earth because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones.” Often, by reason of humility, the inequality of supernatural conditions or of graces balances marvelously the inequality of natural conditions or dispositions. In the exposition of traditional teaching, too much insistence cannot, therefore, be placed on the supernatural dispositions to contemplation. And who can answer that he is unable to have this purity of heart, simplicity of mind, profound humility, spirit of prayer, and charity? We ought to beg God to give us these dispositions.

We have, moreover, considered the external conditions that favor contemplation and union with God. They are: a certain solitude, silence, sufficient time given to prayer, no overburdening, no useless reading, and no preoccupations foreign to our vocation. To these external conditions must be added natural aptitude and also enlightened direction. If many of these exterior conditions are lacking, it is difficult to reach contemplation, which no longer has its normal environment, Profound humility and ardent charity, however, may supply this lack, especially if joined with great devotion to the Blessed Virgin and to the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus. He who habitually begins his prayer with these two mediators, will be led by them to intimate union with God, since the object of the Blessed Virgin’s influence is to lead us to her Son, and that of Christ to lead us to the Father.

When suitable external conditions are lacking, it may happen that generous souls will reach contemplation only after a period of time longer than the usual span of life; but they tend to it as to the normal prelude of the beatific vision. And the active life itself, according to St. Thomas, is thus ordained to the contemplative life, for which it should prepare us.

To revert to the proposed objection, we have shown in the preceding chapter that we understand “accidental” or per accidens in the same sense as St. Thomas does, since sanctifying grace is, in fact, a beginning of eternal life (inchoatio vitae aeternae, semen gloriae), it is of itself (ratione sui) inamissible and should continually increase, especially through daily communion. But we hold this treasure in a fragile vessel and, because of the subject or of the defectibility of our free will; grace can be lost or may increase very little. Now this loss or even this check in its development is

opposed to the intrinsic law of the divine seed, which was created to develop continually until eternal life is reached. This opposition characterizes sin in its various degrees. Whoever does not advance in the spiritual life, retrogresses.

In view of the three fundamental reasons quoted in the preceding chapter, we know that in principle (per se loquendo), infused contemplation is in the normal way of sanctity, given the above mentioned interior dispositions and good direction in a favorable environment. But if accidentally good direction, which should be normal in the Church, is lacking, and with it silence and recollection, and if the environment opposes contemplation instead of favoring it, then even generous souls may possibly not attain to infused contemplation in this life. This is similar to the case of a good intellect in a milieu that is strongly prejudiced against the teaching of St. Thomas. In such a situation, a good intellect will find great difficulty in reaching a clear grasp of St. Thomas' doctrine. This also represents something accidental.

To know what is the normal way of sanctity, and the full development of the grace of the virtues and the gifts, we must consider how this grace grows in principle (per se) in suitable and not contrary interior and exterior conditions. The same rule holds well in the spiritual order, as in the natural order. When we wish to discover what a certain seed will produce, for example, the seed of a cedar, we plant it in suitable soil; otherwise it will not reach the summit of its normal development. We are speaking, therefore, of souls in a Christian environment which corresponds to the designs God has on them.

Another difficulty may be stated as follows: "From the sole concept of grace formally considered, we cannot deduce a priori that the mystical state is normal, even in the sense which has just been expressed. The proof should be supplemented at least by the observation of facts, or by having recourse to theological authority, tradition for example."

This objection is easily answered. The three fundamental proofs proposed in the preceding chapter are individually, as well for the major as for the minor and the conclusion, founded not only on the concept of the grace of the virtues and the gifts, but on tradition and the experience of the perfect life, as it has been described especially by St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross. Moreover, ten to fifteen years' experience in ministering to contemplative communities, and even to those of fervent mixed life,

suffices to show that the experience of the perfect life conforms even today, with what the saints have told us about it.

Therefore infused contemplation is in the normal way of sanctity for the following reasons: (1) It proceeds from the grace of the virtues and the gifts accorded to every baptized person, and it appears when the superhuman mode of the gifts begins to prevail, as is proper for perfection, over the human and imperfect mode of the virtues. This takes place in the illuminative and especially in the unitive way. (2) In this life the soul is perfectly purified in the depths of its faculties only by the passive purifications of the senses and of the soul, which belong to the mystical order and are accompanied by infused contemplation, at least by initial or arid contemplation. (3) Infused contemplation and the very ardent desire to see God are, according to tradition and the experience of the perfect life, the normal prelude to the beatific vision. Therefore, since heaven is accessible to all, much must be said of what is its ordinary prelude in the perfect.

Although eminent, the grace of infused contemplation is in the normal way of sanctity, even of the sanctity which every Christian should have before death in order to avoid purgatory and, immediately after the separation of the soul from the body, to be in the radical order willed by God, and not to be painfully deprived of the beatific vision for a longer or shorter time.

There is a further objection: “No one can question the fact that the spiritual progress expressed under these three aspects is in the normal line of the formal development of grace. But does not human nature in this life (in via) present in its normal state such resistance to this growth that this development should be considered an extraordinary favor? The beatific vision is, indeed, in the order of the formal development of grace, but it would be essentially extraordinary to receive it here below. Now, between the normal conditions of human life and the exterior and interior conditions required for the mystical life, almost as great a distance exists as between life and death.”

Here again we reply with St. Thomas, that the beatific vision cannot take place in this life without rapture, and that it excludes the co-operation of the imagination. The case is quite otherwise with infused contemplation, which we are here considering. It is, therefore, conformable to the normal state of man in this life. In addition, we should not forget that there is less distance between a just man on this earth, even though he is not a mystic, and a saint

in heaven, than between this just man and a sinner deprived of grace; for nature is not the seed of grace, whereas grace is the seed of glory, or eternal life begun, inchoatio vitae aeternae. No great distance separates the normal conditions of a perseveringly fervent Christian life from the conditions required for the mystical life.

The conditions required for the mystical life are found both in contemplative orders, and in fervent communities devoted both to contemplation and to action, and even in Christian marriage when it is truly what it ought to be. Many experienced directors have found in all these walks of life, amongst generous souls habitually faithful to the Holy Ghost, many that have reached the mystical state. Recently one of these directors wrote as follows: “Many believe themselves to be on the mystical way and qualified to write and speak about it, who have no true experience of it. . . . On the other hand, many lead the mystical life unawares and sometimes are very far advanced in it without suspecting that God is doing very great things in them, or realizing that theirs is the mystical life. I have found such in all walks of life, notably among the poor and little children and among illiterate persons, and even among savage tribes of North America.” The author of these lines goes so far as to maintain that a soul does not persevere in fervor, humility, self-forgetfulness, and generosity, without attaining to the life of intimate union with God; in other words, the essence of the mystical life. This does not prevent him from writing: “An amazing fact is that a comparatively enormous number of persons remain beginners all their lives. Very few, even amongst religious and clerics and secular persons make a profession of piety, very few indeed are those who really go beyond the threshold of the mystical life and who answer the loving, pressing invitation of God: ‘Friend, go up higher’ (Luke 14: 10).” As we said in the preceding chapter, this explains the fact that conditions necessary for the mystical life are not generally lacking in the case of generous interior souls. If we are inclined to hold a contrary opinion, we should take care not to seek in an unfounded theory the justification of a certain spiritual mediocrity. We should not assert that the mystical life is extraordinary, simply to avoid the obligation of aspiring to it by despoiling of self, which prepares for it.

We might add that unfavorable surroundings often provoke a salutary reaction in good souls, especially in very good ones; and the Lord helps them in proportion to the difficulties to be overcome. For example, the

suffering caused by injustice reveals to us the worth of justice; self-sufficiency and pride, which become unendurable, demonstrate the worth of humility. Love of truth, relish for the word of God, solid piety, all of which are not content with appearances, react by common accord, and quite spontaneously against empty and pretentious learning, which alters everything by its false spirit. The lack of simplicity in life emphasizes the desirability of that frank cordiality without which, there is no true union of hearts and minds in God. A discordant note, which violates the order of charity by placing the love of neighbor above the love of God, startles us and by contrast recalls the grandeur of the first precept. Falsehood under its various forms shows us the worth of truth; the absence of truth in varying degrees is one of the greatest obstacles to the life of prayer. A soul becomes contemplative only if it is established in the truth, because infused contemplation is simply the immediate effect of the direct operation of God's truth on the soul to bring it to a greater love.

Finally, the chief obstacle comes from certain subtleties of intellectual or spiritual pride which, especially when found in those whose direct souls, can have irremediable consequences, at least for a time. In this case, mystical grandiloquence is no less to be feared than a certain sterile intellectualism. This explains by contrast why more real contemplation and sanctity are sometimes found in poor convents, that are very little known, but are exceedingly dear to our Lord Jesus Christ. The divine mercy often compensates for the inequality of natural conditions by great graces. "Blessed are the poor in spirit." Deep humility supplies other conditions in the life of union with God. The two great mediators, Jesus and Mary, stoop to the humble in order to lead them to the intimacy of the Father. We have only one life, and on it our eternity depends. As Tauler says, if we have not entered the divine intimacy before we are advanced in years, we run the risk of not entering it in this life, even though it is the normal prelude to heaven.

Lastly, this objection is offered: "The conditions generally required for the mystical life, although normal to grace, are abnormal to human nature, which is not made normally for these conditions of life. In the habitual mode of acting which characterizes the mystical state, and in the terrible passive purifications, there is an annihilation of nature to which nature is not essentially ordained. This annihilation is not required for simple justification or for the life of grace according to the human mode of the virtues. . . . Finally, in this life the normal prelude of the beatific vision is

charity, strictly speaking, and not infused contemplation proceeding from the gift of wisdom."

This objection, which devotes more attention to the exigencies of nature than to those of grace, is reminiscent of the spirit of certain Christian humanists rather than of the spirit of wisdom mentioned here. It fails to recognize several essential points that we have expounded at length.

1) It loses sight of the scope of our Lord's teaching on the mystery of the cross. In St. Luke's Gospel (9: 23) we read: "And He said to all: If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; for he that shall lose his life for My sake, shall save it." From this point of view, the conditions of the mystical life which seem abnormal to nature are not by nature regenerated by grace; they are not abnormal to Christian life, considered especially in its full perfection attainable on this earth. A Christian should imitate Christ crucified. The passive purifications are not opposed to the harmony of nature and grace. These purifications, more or less painful according to the faults to be expiated, and to the degree of supernatural life to which God wishes to conduct the soul, are, like the cross, necessary, according to the saints, in order to reach this perfect harmony, which on earth finds its complete realization only in the fully developed unitive life, that is, in the mystical life and its superhuman mode. In it alone, the virtues apparently so contrary harmonize completely: the loftiest wisdom with prudence, attentive to the slightest detail; strength with meekness; mercy with justice. In the unitive life alone, the supernatural life becomes truly connatural without losing any of its elevation. It is like a second nature, whose acts are spontaneous and very simple, because the purified soul refers all to God instead of referring all instinctively to self.

We should not forget, however, that fallen nature rises again to its natural normal state only by the grace which heals (gratia sanans), and that without this grace we cannot observe all the natural laws or love God, the Author of our nature, above all else, even in a natural way. St. Thomas is explicit in his teaching on this point. He says: "In the state of perfect nature, man referred the love of himself and of all other things to the love of God as to its end; and thus, he loved God more than himself and above all things. But in the state of corrupt nature, man falls short of this in the appetite of his rational will, which, unless it is cured by God's grace, follows its private good, on account of the corruption of nature."

2) The objection would, in addition, lead one to maintain, in opposition to what we have set forth about the sublimity of the first commandment, that the majority of just souls could not by progressive fidelity reach Christian perfection, that is, the third degree of charity. As we have seen, this degree is normally accompanied by the third degree of the gifts, which belongs to the mystical order. God is prompt in giving the grace of contemplation to those who are prepared for it, but man is slow in preparing suitably by perfect humility, and abnegation.

(3) It would also follow that for the majority of the elect purgatory would be inevitable, since they could not be perfectly purified in this life. This error fails to take into account the fact that, in the order willed by God, purification should be undergone in this life with the resulting merit, instead of after death without merit.

(4) It is not only charity which in perfect souls is the normal prelude to the beatific vision, but charity accompanied by the virtues of the purified soul (purgati animi), by the gifts in the third degree, and by the beatitudes, the reward of which belongs in a sense to this life.

The solution of these objections confirms the doctrine we taught in the preceding chapter on the general and remote call of just souls to the mystical life, which is in the normal way of sanctity, on the normal way to heaven, to which all the just are most certainly called. This explains our summary of this doctrine in the following outline. Its meaning and scope can now be better understood. By reading from the bottom up, the ascending movement of grace in our souls is followed.

interior proximate three signs enumerated by St. John of the Cross efficacious to the superior degrees of the mystical life

to the inferior degrees of the mystical life

remote sufficient (call wich many resist. “Many are called, but few are chosen”).

Call to the Mystical life

exterior individual e.g., by the director

general e.g., by Holy Scripture

Too much insistence cannot be placed on divers obstacles hindering the exercise of the gifts of the Holy Ghost in our souls. Father Lallemant, S.J., gives a clear exposition of these hindrances in his beautiful book, The Spiritual Doctrine. He says: “It has been asked why the majority of religious and devout people who lead a lukewarm spiritual life make so few acts of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, since, being in the state of grace, they possess them. . . . It is surprising to see so many religious who, after living in the state of grace for forty or fifty years, saying mass daily, and performing all the holy exercises of the religious life, and consequently possessing the gifts of the Holy Ghost in a very high physical degree, corresponding to that sort of perfection in grace which theologians call gradual or a physical increase—it is surprising, I repeat, to see that these religious give no evidence of the gifts of the Holy Ghost in their actions and conduct. Their life is entirely natural, for when blamed or disobliged, they show their resentment; they are very eager for praise, esteem, and the applause of the world, and take great pleasure in these things. They love and seek their ease and all that flatters self-love.

“This should not be a subject of amazement, for the venial sins which they commit continually hold the gifts of the Holy Ghost, as it were, bound in such a way that it is not at all surprising that they do not show their effect. It is true that the gifts grow, like charity, habitually and in their physical being; but not actually, and in that perfection which corresponds to the fervor of charity and which increases our merit, because venial sins are opposed to the fervor of charity, and consequently hinder the operation of the gifts of the Holy Ghost. . . . It is past all conception, says St. Lawrence Justinian, how many sins fill our hearts if we do not take care to purify them constantly. . . . Few people give themselves wholly to God, and abandon themselves so completely to the conduct of the Holy Ghost that He alone lives in them and is the principle of all their actions.”

Moreover, people often neglect to correct a multitude of imperfections, which are not, at least essentially, venial sins. St. John of the Cross names many of them, when he speaks of the imperfections of beginners and of proficient’s.

In this matter, it is important to see how, according to the opinion of the best Thomists, imperfection differs from venial sin. At first glance, this distinction seems contrary to two principles enunciated by St. Thomas. He teaches that there are no deliberate individual or concrete acts which are

indifferent, that is, which are neither morally good nor morally bad. If they are indifferent by reason of their object, as, for example, taking a walk, they are either good or bad by reason of the end, which the person intends; because man, when acting deliberately, ought always to do so for a right end. If he does this, the act is morally good; otherwise, it is bad. Hence it does not seem that between virtuous acts and venial sins there can be any place for what is called an imperfection.

Elsewhere St. Thomas teaches that the perfection of charity falls under the precept of the love of God, if not as matter, or something to be accomplished, at least as the end toward which, every Christian, each according to his condition, should tend. Consequently it seems that when he does not accomplish all that he can at a given moment, he commits a venial sin, slight perhaps, but real. Therefore imperfection does not seem distinct from venial sin.

St. Thomas, nevertheless, often speaks of good acts which are imperfect. This is the case with acts of charity that are notably inferior to our degree of charity (actus remissi): for example, when, having five talents, we act as though we had only two. Besides, when St. Thomas defines initial fear, which is intermediate between servile fear, (the fear of suffering) and filial fear (the fear of sin), he says that initial fear does not differ essentially from filial fear (it is, therefore, not a venial sin); but that it is something imperfect, for it is accompanied by a certain amount of servile fear. A man who as yet, possesses only initial fear, says St. Thomas, “is inclined towards good, not only through love of justice, but also for fear of punishment; for this fear ceases in a soul that possesses perfect charity.” As a matter of fact, servile fear diminishes with the progress of charity, while filial fear increases.

The reason which serves as a basis for the distinction between venial sin and imperfection has been clearly expounded in the Thomistic school by the Carmelites of Salamanca. Their doctrine is as follows: Venial sin cannot be ordained to the end of charity (est irreferibile ad finem caritatis) for it is a disordered act, in the order of means, as mortal sin is disordered in relation to the last end from which it turns us aside.

On the contrary, what is called “an imperfection,” is morally a good act, which can be ordained at the end of charity, but which lacks certain perfection suitable for spiritual progress.

For a clear understanding of this distinction, we must, as the Carmelites of Salamanca say, observe that an imperfect act (often called an imperfection), is not absolutely identified with the absence of perfection (or formal imperfection), which is found in it. This absence of perfection is certainly not good. But the imperfect act we are speaking of is morally good, though it does not possess the degree of perfection suitable for spiritual progress. It can, therefore, be ordained to the end of charity.

It is not an indifferent act in individuo, since it is good. Properly speaking neither is it opposed to the precept of the love of God, for the perfection of charity does not fall under this precept as materia, something to be done sub gravi or sub levi, but only as the end. Sin is committed only when there is a transgression of a precept with respect to the matter of this precept, whether obligatory sub gravi or sub levi. An imperfect act is opposed only to a counsel, which in itself does not oblige. As a matter of fact, we must preserve the distinction between the precepts and the counsels, whether the latter are contained in the Gospel, or are directly inspired by God in a certain soul. The Holy Ghost often makes a soul comprehend that a certain act is better for it, but that it is not obliged to that act, unless it has made the vow of doing what is most perfect.

The division of imperfections, analogous to that of venial sins, has its origin in this definition. Thus, there are imperfections: (1) ex genere suo; (2) ex parvitate materiae; (3) ex indeliberatione.

1) An imperfection ex genere suo, or by its very nature, is of such a kind that even when deliberate it does not become a venial sin. To this class belong supernatural and meritorious acts that are imperfect (remissi) relative to our degree of charity: for example, when a proficient makes an act of charity proportionate to the virtue of beginners. Likewise initial fear is imperfect because of servile fear, which accompanies it, and which should diminish with the progress of charity. To this category may also be linked natural acts that are not forbidden, but that are not in accord with spiritual progress, and that would surprise us in a mortified person and especially in the saints, unless a special reason motivated them: for example, the use of certain needless things, such as tobacco; certain ways of amusing oneself or of taking pleasure in scientific or artistic things; in study, an activity that has been branded as “natural,” because it is not sufficiently super naturalized by the motive prompting it. We may place in this class the omission of something which we think is better for us, and to

which at the time, from a lawful but less perfect motive, we prefer something less good: for example, when, although we could make a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, we prefer to spend our time at a useful philosophical study which could be postponed. This act in itself is not evil, nor is it so for us unless by a special vow we are obliged to do what is most perfect. Therefore it is good, since concretely no deliberate act is indifferent; but it is less good than the other. We should not stigmatize as evil what is only less good. But we should keep in mind this imperfection in the order of good, remembering that, as venial sin disposes to mortal sin, imperfection disposes to venial sin. If we desire to keep to what is strictly obligatory with God, He, who often gives us much more than what is strictly necessary, will on His part, diminish His graces.

Moreover, in the cases quoted, there will, as a matter of fact, accidentally be venial sin, since the motive for our not doing what is best for us here and now is frequently negligence or laziness.

2) There are imperfections ex levissima materia, because the matter or object involved is extremely slight, and man is not obliged to deliberate on these extremely slight things: for example, some little negligence in one's bearing.

3) Finally, there are imperfections ex imperfectione actus, that is, through lack of attention or deliberation. In this category are ranged acts that are good by reason of their object, but are accomplished in a mechanical fashion as a result of involuntary distraction. These acts are not sins, although they lack the perfection, which comes from attention. To this class belong also the very first disordered movements of sensuality, which are produced before we can be aware of them and repress them. They are an imperfection destined to disappear chiefly as a result of the passive purifications of the senses and of the soul; and they become rare in a perfect soul. As much must be said of the defective way in which a perfect soul accomplishes a good act; for example, in the necessary repression of evil, even the saints sometimes—and that quite contrary to their intention—mingle some movement of anger which slightly exceeds the just measure. Lastly, to this class belongs the purely material transgression of a precept through invincible ignorance.

There are certainly many imperfections which, though not essentially venial sins, take from our lives the harmony, peace, and vigor suitable to spiritual progress. They appear particularly in the common life, especially

in acts requiring a greater perfection: for example, chanting the office too slowly or too rapidly may annoy our neighbor without being aware of it; playing the organ in a certain way may become a hindrance to prayer rather than an aid. It may be these acts contain no venial sin, but an imperfection springing from our temperament, from fatigue, from a defect in our training, or from a certain cast of character inclined either to neglect details or, on the contrary, to become absorbed in them. A more perfect charity, characterized by a greater delicacy towards God and our neighbor, accompanied by the gifts of the Holy Ghost in a proportionate degree, would cause these imperfections to disappear gradually.

We have already listed several imperfections that constitute obstacles to contemplation. Especially important are those indicated by St. John of the Cross in The Dark Night of the Soul: the inclination to seek enjoyment in God rather than God Himself; the first movements of spiritual pride; the stains of the old man which persist in the spirit even after the passive purification of the senses; a certain dullness of the mind; natural rudeness, the result of sin. “ or their own fancy. . . . This matter is inexhaustible. . . . In order to show the necessity of the night of the soul, we must add that there is not one among the proficient’s, however great may be his efforts, which is exempt from many natural affections and imperfect habits, which must be purified before divine union is attained.”

This is another argument in favor of the doctrine that these passive purifications and infused and obscure contemplation, which is the principle of the purifications, are truly in the normal way of sanctity. “This dark night is an inflowing of God into the soul to purify it of its habitual ignorance’s and imperfections, both natural and spiritual. Contemplatives call it infused contemplation and mystical theology, in which God instructs the soul secretly in the perfection of love, without any intervention on its part, and without its understanding in what this infused contemplation consists. . . . How does it happen that the soul calls the divine light a dark night? . . . There are two reasons for this. The first is that the divine wisdom transcends by reason of its elevation the capacity of the soul, and for that very reason is darkness for it. The second reason lies in the baseness and impurity of the soul which makes the light painful, afflictive, and at the same time dark fo it. . . . Although still in darkness, the soul sees none the less clearly its own impurity by means of this light. It is persuaded that it is unworthy of God or of any creature. . . . The divine and obscure light places

clearly before it all its infidelities." Thereby, it learns true humility, which prepares it to receive an abundance of divine grace, for "God gives His grace to the humble," and He makes them humble in order to load them with His gifts.

Such is the way of true life, the only sure road to eternal beatitude. "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord. Blessed are they that search His testimonies: that seek Him with their whole heart. . . . I have run the way of Thy commandments, when Thou didst enlarge my heart," by divine charity, in the light of life, which reveals Thy grandeur and omnipotence, and Thy infinite mercy toward us. The voice of the psalms is that of contemplation, animating the great prayer of the Church. To live truly by faith, every believing soul should aspire to this contemplation. In this aspiration humility and magnanimity, by reason of the connection of the virtues, ought to be united; and only when they are united, are they genuine. Only a profoundly humble soul can in a fitting manner aspire to the great things promised by Christ to those who wish to follow Him; from the very fact that a soul is humble, it will be filled to overflowing: Deposuit potentes de sede, et exaltavit humiles.

ARTICLE V

EXTRAORDINARY GRACES THAT SOMETIMES ACCOMPANY INFUSED CONTEMPLATION

The doctrine we have expounded receives additional confirmation from the comparison of infused contemplation, with the extraordinary graces that sometimes accompany it, and yet, are distinct from it. These extraordinary graces generally belong to the charisms, or graces freely bestowed (gratis datae), enumerated by St. Paul: "Now there are diversities of graces, but the same Spirit. . . . And the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man unto profit. To one indeed, by the Spirit, is given to the word of wisdom; and to another, the word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit; to another, faith in the same Spirit; to another, the grace of healing in one Spirit: to another, the working of miracles; to another, prophecy; to another, the discerning of spirits; to another, diverse kinds of tongues; to another, interpretation of speeches. But all these things one and the same Spirit worketh, dividing to everyone according as He will." St. Paul places charity

far above these gifts: “And if I . . . have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.”

As St. Thomas shows, sanctifying grace and charity are more excellent than these charisms; the former unites us immediately to God, our last end, whereas the charisms are ordained chiefly for the benefit of our neighbor and only to prepare him to be converted, without giving him divine life. As a rule, they are not essentially supernatural like sanctifying grace, but only preternatural like a miracle and prophecy.

St. Thomas shows clearly the nature of these charisms by his division of them. This classification is set forth in the following table:

1.Graces that give full knowledge of divine things Faith or special certitude as to principles

word of wisdom, on the principal conclusions known through the first cause.

word of knowledge, on the examples and effects which manifest the causes.

Graces gratuitously given to instruct one’s neighbor concerning divine things 2.Graces that confirm divine revelation by works

gift of healing.

gift of miracles.

by knowledge discerning of spirits.

prophecy

3.Graces that aid in preaching the word of God gift of tongues.

gift of ineterpretation of speeches.

To these charisms may generally be attached the extraordinary favors that sometimes accompany infused contemplation; that is, private revelations, visions, and supernatural words, which St. John of the Cross discusses at length in The Ascent of Mount Carmel. He takes great pains to distinguish them from infused contemplation, which is attached to the grace of the virtues and of the gifts, or sanctifying grace. This teaching of St. John of the Cross rests theologically on St. Thomas’ treatise on prophecy, where six articles are devoted to the rapture, which sometimes accompanies prophetic revelation, as it may also accompany infused contemplation.

According to St. Thomas, prophetic revelation may be made in three ways: by a sensible vision; an imaginary vision; or an intellectual vision; and the prophet may be awake, asleep, or in ecstasy. Occasionally in fact, a

sensible, outward sign appears to the eyes, or an exterior voice is heard. At other times, to express His thought to us, God co-ordinates certain images that pre-exist in our imagination, or He imprints new ones on it. More rarely He acts directly on the intellect by co-ordinating our acquired ideas or by imprinting new ideas, called infused. There is always infused prophetic light, and indeed it alone suffices, for example, to interpret certain signs, as Joseph interpreted the dreams of Pharao.

If the prophet is awake, the vision is more perfect than if given to him during sleep, because he has the full use of his faculties. Occasionally the so-called imaginary vision or the intellectual vision is accompanied by ecstasy, or alienation of the senses.15 A partial or total ecstasy may be a natural effect of the absorption of the superior faculties in the object manifested; the soul may no longer be attentive to exterior things. If, on the contrary, ecstasy, so to speak, precedes the vision or contemplation and prepares for it, it is extraordinary like rapture, properly so called, which carries with it the idea of a certain violence, by lifting the soul above inferior things in order to fix it in God. Christ and the Blessed Virgin had all these charisms in an eminent degree, but without losing the use of their senses; from the very beginning of their lives, they were superior to ecstasy and rapture.

Following these principles, St. John of the Cross draws a clear distinction between general and obscure infused contemplation and different modes of particular and distinct supernatural knowledge: (1) visions, sensible, imaginary, or intellectual; (2) revelations; (3) interior words. After enumerating these modes of knowledge, St. John of the Cross adds: “In regard to obscure and general knowledge, there is no division; it is contemplation received in faith. This contemplation is the end to which we should lead the soul; all other knowledge should be directed toward this, beginning with the first; and the soul should progress by detaching itself from all of them.”

To bring out clearly what is explicit in the traditional teaching on this point, we will proceed from the general to the particular. Consequently, following the example of St. Thomas, we will first discuss revelations, to see the special modes of their manifestation, that is, either by vision, or by words. But we should note that visions and locutions are particular modes of revelation only when they disclose hidden things of the future, the present, or the past.

We will also proceed from the lower to the higher by considering in each of these categories the sensible, imaginary, and intellectual manifestations, according as they progressively reveal the works of God, and God Himself.

Finally, it is also fitting to go from the exterior to the interior by considering first among these favors those that are manifestly directed toward the benefit of our neighbor, and are more directly connected with charisms or graces gratis datae, particularly with prophecy; this is the case especially with private revelations. Others among these favors approach the order of sanctifying grace, because they are directly ordained to the sanctification of the person who receives them. They prepare the soul for divine union; they make God better known and lead the soul to love Him, often amid great trials. This is particularly the case with various interior words and also with divine touches received in the will, which St. John discusses last.

DIVINE REVELATIONS

Divine revelations are the supernatural manifestation of a hidden truth by means of a vision, a word, or a prophetic instinct; they presuppose the gift of prophecy. They are called public if they have been made by the prophets, Christ, or the Apostles, and are proposed to all by the Church, which preserves them in Scripture and tradition. They are called private when they are ordained, only for the particular benefit of those who are favored with them. Private revelations, no matter what their importance, do not belong to the deposit of Catholic faith.

Those who receive divine revelations, recognized as such, should after prudent judgment most certainly incline respectfully before this supernatural manifestation. According to some theologians, they ought even to believe in them with divine and theological faith, for, in their opinion, these revelations contain the formal motive of faith, the authority of God revealing. According to other theologians, anyone who receives a certain private revelation should adhere to it immediately, not through divine faith but by prophetic light; and the supernatural certitude should last or, on the contrary, give way to a moral certitude if the prophetic illumination disappears.

In approving the revelations made to the saints, the Church declares simply that they contain nothing contrary to Scripture and to Catholic

teaching, and that they may be proposed as probable to the pious belief of the faithful. Private revelations may not be published without the approbation of ecclesiastical authority. Even in those approved as probable by the Church, some errors may slip in; for the saints themselves may attribute to the Spirit of God what proceeds from the depths of their own soul, or may falsely interpret the meaning of a truly divine revelation. This is explained by the fact that there are many degrees in prophetic light, from the simple, supernatural instinct to perfect revelation. When there is only a prophetic instinct, the meaning of things revealed and even the divine origin of the revelation may remain unknown. It was in this way that Caiphas prophesied, without being aware of it, when he said, “that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.”

The soul receiving a truly divine revelation should with humility and simplicity communicate it in a few words to its spiritual director, but should not become attached to it and should perfectly obey the minister of Jesus Christ. The gift of prophecy may, it is true, be found in those who do not possess these qualities, but such an exception is rare.

Before regulating its conduct by private revelation, a soul that is truly enlightened by God will always consult its director, or some other learned and discreet person. St. Teresa insists particularly on this point. This is especially necessary since the soul may easily go astray in the interpretation of revelations, either because it considers them too literally, or because they are sometimes conditional. A learned, prudent, and virtuous confessor, however, has graces of state which make him avoid error, especially when he fervently prays for these graces.

St. John of the Cross, who so often invites us to desire ardently and humbly the infused contemplation of the mysteries of faith and also divine union, reproves the desire for revelations in terms even more forcible than those employed by the other saints. On this point, he is in complete accord with St. Vincent Ferrer, and shows that by this curiosity, the soul desiring revelations gives the devil an opportunity to lead it astray; that this inclination takes away the purity of faith; produces a hindrance for the spirit; certainly denotes a lack of humility; and exposes it to many errors. To ask for revelations shows also a lack of respect toward Christ, because the fullness of revelation has been given in the Gospel. God sometimes grants these extraordinary favors to weak souls; but to desire them is at least a venial sin, even when the soul has a good end in view. They are of value

only because of the humility and love of God which they awaken in the soul. This statement in regard to revelations, shows clearly the error of imprudent directors who, impelled by curiosity, are excessively concerned with souls favored by visions and revelations. This attention is likely to cast the soul into trouble and illusion, and turn it away from the road of humility through a vain complacency in extraordinary ways.

Furthermore, the desire for revelations turns the soul from infused contemplation. St. John of the Cross makes this clear when he says: “The soul imagines that something great has taken place that God Himself has spoken, when in reality there is very little, or nothing, or less than nothing. In truth, what use is that which is void of humility, charity, mortification, holy simplicity, silence, etc? This is why I affirm that these illusions offer a great obstacle to divine union, for if the soul makes much of them, this fact alone drives it very far from the abyss of faith. . . . The Holy Ghost enlightens the recollected intellect according to the measure of its recollection. The most perfect recollection is that, which takes place in faith. . . . Infused charity is in proportion to the purity of the soul in a perfect faith: the more intense such charity is, the more the Holy Ghost enlightens the soul and communicates His gifts to it.” No words could more strongly condemn the longing for revelations and make the soul desire that perfect spirit of faith, which is found in infused contemplation and which leads to divine union.

Therefore it is a serious and frequent error to confound the desire for revelations, with a desire for infused contemplation; the former is blameworthy and also turns the soul away from infused contemplation, which is highly desirable. St. John of the Cross thus gives us the best commentary on St. Thomas’ words: “Sanctifying grace is nobler than gratuitous grace.” In other words, sanctifying grace, (with charity and the gifts connected with it) is far superior to the charisms, and even to prophecy, the highest of all. We thus return to the teaching of St. Paul on the eminence of charity.

We must distinguish two kinds of private revelations: (1) revelations properly so called, disclosing secrets about God or His works; (2) revelations improperly so called, giving a greater understanding of supernatural truths already known by faith.

1) Revelations manifesting secrets to us are much more subject to illusions. God sometimes reveals to the living the time which remains to

them on this earth, the trials which they will undergo, what will happen to a nation, to a certain person. The devil is clever in counterfeiting these things and, to gain credit for his lies, he begins by nourishing the spirit with truths and likely things. St. John of the Cross says: “It is almost impossible to escape his wiles if the soul does not immediately get rid of them, because the spirit of evil knows well how to assume the appearance of truth and give this appearance credit.” “In order to be perfect there is, therefore, no reason to desire these extraordinary supernatural things. . . . The soul must prudently guard itself against all these communications if it wishes, in purity and without illusions, to reach divine union by the night of faith.” No words could make a clearer distinction between these extraordinary supernatural things and infused contemplation, and more effectively show that infused contemplation is normal in the perfect.

2) Revelations improperly so called, which give us a greater understanding of revealed truths, are associated with infused contemplation, especially if they concern God Himself and do not stop at particular things, but profoundly penetrate His omnipotence, wisdom, or infinite goodness. “This profound loving knowledge is, moreover, accessible only to a soul in union with God; they are this union itself, for they have their origin precisely in a certain contact of the soul with the Divinity. Consequently it is God Himself who is felt and tasted, though He is not perceived manifestly in full light, as He is in glory; but the touch is so strong and so profound, by reason of the knowledge and attraction, that it penetrates the substance of the soul. It is impossible for the devil to interfere in this and to deceive by imitation, for nothing is comparable to it, or approaches it in enjoyment and delights. These touches savor the divine essence, eternal life, and the devil cannot counterfeit such lofty things.” We will treat this subject again at the end of this article when we speak of divine touches. “In regard to the other perceptions,” St. John of the Cross adds, “we said that the soul should abstract itself from them, but this duty ceases before these, since they are the manifestations of that union to which we are trying to conduct the soul. All that we have taught previously on the subject of despoliation and of complete detachment was directed towards this union; and the divine favors, which result from it, are the fruit of humility, of the desire to suffer for the love of God, with resignation and disinterestedness as to all reward.”

Visions are revelations when they disclose hidden things; otherwise, they are distinguished from revelations. They are, as we have said, either sensible, imaginary, or intellectual.

Sensible or corporal visions generally represent our Lord, the Blessed Virgin or the saints. They are not signs of great virtue, for they are sometimes granted to beginners to detach them from worldly things. They are subject to the illusions of the imagination and of the devil. If the vision is common to a great number of people, it is a sign that the apparition is exterior, without, its thereby being certain that it is of divine origin. If it is individual, the dispositions of the witness who declares that he has had it must be attentively examined and great circumspection must be exercised.

Those who are favored with these apparitions of our Lord, the Blessed Virgin, and the saints, should render to the persons represented the honors due to them, even though the apparition should be the result of an illusion of the imagination or of the devil, for as St. Teresa says: “Although a painter may be a wicked man, honor should none the less be paid to a portrait of Christ done by him.” In this case also, the director should be consulted, for he will be able to recognize whether these apparitions are graces of God, by their conformity to the teaching of the Church and by the good dispositions toward the practice of virtue which they leave in the soul. The soul itself should be faithful in reaping the fruits of sanctity, which God proposes by granting it these favors. These apparitions must never be desired or asked of God.

Imaginary visions, so called because they are produced in the imagination by God or by the angels, are granted when a person is either awake or asleep. According to the Gospel, St. Joseph was on several occasions supernaturally instructed in a dream; and the lives of the saints contain many similar instances. That a dream may be supernatural, it should not be explicable by the laws of memory and imagination; to be divine, it should not contain anything contrary to revealed doctrine or to good morals. Although this divine origin may be hard to discern, ordinarily when the soul seeks God sincerely, He makes Himself felt either by a profound feeling of peace, or by events that confirm the vision; thus, in a dream a sinner may be warned of the urgent necessity of conversion, or a just man may be advised of a grave decision to be made.

Imaginary visions are subject to the illusions of the imagination and of the devil. We have three signs by which to discern whether they are of

divine origin: (1) when they cannot be produced or dismissed at will, but come suddenly and last but a short time; (2) when they leave the soul in great peace; (3) when they produce fruits of virtue, a very great humility and perseverance in good.

A divine imaginary vision, granted while a person is awake, is almost always accompanied by at least partial ecstasy so that the soul may distinguish the interior apparition from external impressions; there is ecstasy also, because a soul enraptured and united to its God loses contact with external things. There is no perfect imaginary vision without an intellectual vision, which makes the soul see and penetrate its mystical meaning. For example, the former may concern the sacred humanity of Christ; the second, His divinity.

Imaginary visions should not be desired or asked of God any more than sensible visions; they are in no way necessary to holiness. The perfect spirit of faith and obscure contemplation are of superior order and prepare the soul more immediately for divine union.

An intellectual vision is the certain manifestation of an object to the intellect without any actual dependence on sensible images. It is brought about either by acquired ideas supernaturally co-ordinated or modified, or by infused ideas, which are sometimes of angelic order. It requires an infused light, that of the gift of wisdom or of prophecy. It may refer to God, spirits, or material things, like the purely intellectual knowledge of the angels. The intellectual vision is at times obscure and indistinct, that is, it manifests with certitude the presence of the object without any detail as to its intimate nature. Thus, St. Teresa often felt our Lord near her for several days. At other times the intellectual vision is clear and distinct; it is then more rapid and is a sort of intuition of divine truths or of created things in God. It cannot be translated into human language.

Intellectual visions, especially those caused by infused ideas, are free from the illusions of the imagination and of the devil; but at times what is only an over-excitement of the imagination, or a suggestion of the devil may be taken for an intellectual vision. The divine origin of these favors may be recognized from the effects they produce: deep peace, holy joy, profound humility, unshakable attachment to virtue.

“By the very fact that this knowledge is communicated suddenly, independently of the will, it is useless for the soul to desire it . . . ; it ought simply to allow God to act when and how He wills . . . These favors are not

given to a soul which is attached to any good; they are the effect of a special love, which God bears toward the soul which strives for Him in detachment and disinterested love."

The loftiest intellectual visions, since they are inferior to the beatific vision, cannot attain the divine essence sicuti est, but only by a certain manner of representation due to infused ideas, "por cierta manera de representación." In the opinion of a number of authors, the intellectual visions, which frequently accompany the transforming union, are the equivalent of a special revelation, which gives the soul the certitude of being in the state of grace and of predestination. St. John of the Cross even says: "In my opinion, the soul can never be placed in possession of this state, (the transforming union) without at the same time being confirmed in grace." Supernatural words are manifestations of God's thought, which are heard either by the exterior senses or by the interior senses or directly by the intellect. Hence there is an analogy between them and visions, which they sometimes accompany.

An auricular supernatural word is a vibration formed in the air by the ministry of angels. For example, St. Luke tells us that Zachary heard the angel Gabriel speak to him. The same angel Gabriel said to Mary: "Hail, full of grace." Like corporal visions, these locutions are subject to illusions; the same rules should be applied to them for discerning those of divine origin.

Imaginary supernatural words are heard by the imagination, when the person is either awake or asleep. They sometimes seem to come from heaven; at other times from the depths of one's heart. They are perfectly distinct, although not heard with bodily ears. They are not easily forgotten; those especially which contain a prophecy remain graven on the memory. They can be distinguished from those of our spirit by the fact that they are not heard at will, and that they are words and works at one and the same time. For example, when they reprove us of our faults, they suddenly change our interior dispositions and render us capable of undertaking everything for the service of God. Consequently it is often easy to discern them. When it is the devil who makes these imaginary words heard, they not only produce good effects, but, on the contrary, produce evil effects. The soul is disturbed, troubled, frightened, disgusted; and if it experiences any sensible pleasure, it is very different from divine peace.

Intellectual words are heard directly by the intellect without the intermediary of the senses or imagination, in the way the angels communicate their thoughts to one another. They suppose a divine light and the co-ordination of pre-existent acquired ideas, and at times of infused ideas. “It is a wordless language, which is the tongue of the fatherland.”

St. John of the Cross teaches that intellectual words may be either successive, formal, or substantial. Successive intellectual words are produced only in the state of recollection; they come from our spirit which is enlightened by the Holy Ghost, and with such facility and new views that the understanding cannot imagine they spring from its own depths. These successive words are subject to illusion, for the spirit, which at the beginning followed only the truth, may deviate, go astray, and fall into a thousand extravagances, inasmuch as the devil often insinuates himself into these successive words, especially when people are attached to them. He acts with even greater reason in this way toward those who are bound to him by a tacit or formal act, with heretics, and especially with heresiarchs.

Successive words come from God when they simultaneously produce in the soul an increase of charity and humility. But it is often difficult to discern clearly supernatural love from a certain natural love, and true humility from pusillanimity. Hence it is difficult to recognize the divine origin of successive words. They should not be desired, for obscure faith is far superior to them.

Formal intellectual words are so called, “because the soul knows formally that they are uttered by another, without any contribution on its part . . . and it can hear them when not recollected, and even when far from thinking of what is said.” They are, therefore, very different from those we have discussed, and are at times very precise; for example, Daniel says that an angel spoke to him. These locutions ordinarily explain some teaching, clear up some point; this effect is always produced, even though the soul may experience repugnance in fulfilling the divine order. God allows this repugnance to subsist that He may preserve the soul from natural eagerness, with regards to great things; if, on the contrary, the Lord inspires humiliating things, He gives greater facility to accomplish them.

These formal intellectual words are in themselves free from illusions, since the understanding cannot contribute anything to them, and the devil cannot act directly on the intellect. “The soul ought not, however,” says St. John of the Cross, “to esteem formal words much more than successive

words. If it pays attention to them, it swerves from faith, which is the proper and immediate means of divine union. This exposes it to easy deception by the devil, the more so as in many cases good communications are with difficulty distinguished from evil communications. What they say should not be immediately translated into action, nor should they be held in esteem no matter what their origin. It is indispensable to make them known to an experienced confessor, or to a discreet and learned person. . . . If an experienced person is not to be found, the soul should keep whatever is substantial and sure in these words; disregard the rest; and speak of it to no one, lest a counselor be found who would do the soul more harm than good. The soul should not place itself at the mercy of anyone at all, for it is of prime importance whether one acts judiciously or is deceived in such matters."

Substantial intellectual words are formal locutions which effect immediately what they announce. We read in The Ascent of Mount Carmel: "For example, God says formally to a soul: Be good! And instantly the soul becomes good. Or He says: Love Me! And at once the soul possesses and experiences in itself true love of God. Or again He may say: Fear nothing, and at that very instant, strength and peace come upon that soul. . . . Thus, God said to Abraham: 'Walk before Me, and be perfect.' (Gen. 17: I), and instantly perfection was given to him, and thenceforth he walked reverently before God. . . . A single one of these words instantly operates more good than the efforts of a lifetime. When the soul receives such locutions, it has only to abandon itself; it is useless to desire or not to desire them, for there is nothing to repulse, nothing to fear. The soul ought not to even to seek to effect what is said, for God never utters substantial words in order that we should translate them into acts; He Himself brings about their effect. This is what distinguishes them from successive and formal locutions. . . . Illusion is not to be feared here, for neither the understanding, nor the devil can interfere in this matter . . . unless the soul has given itself to the devil by a voluntary pact; but then the effect is quite different. . . . Every word of his is as pure nothingness in the presence of God. . . . Substantial words are, therefore, a powerful means of union with God . . . Happy the soul to which God addresses them." God's words are living flames in purified souls.

There is a fourth kind of favor which frequently accompanies infused contemplation, that is, divine touches, which are imprinted in the will and which "react on the intellect. . . . They give, thus, a very lofty and sweet

intellectual penetration of God." These touches are thereby attached to "particular and distinct contemplation." They do not depend on the activity of the soul, or on its meditations, although these prepare the soul for them.

These divine touches are occasionally so profound and intense that they seem imprinted "in the very substance of the soul." God, in fact, who preserves the very substance of the soul in existence by a virtual contact, which is creation continued, produces, preserves, and increases sanctifying grace therein, whence the virtues infused into the faculties spring. He also moves these faculties, either by proposing an object to them, or by applying them to the exercise of their acts, and that from within. The divine touch of which we are speaking is a supernatural motion of this type, but one of the most profound. It is exercised on the very depths of the will and of the intellect, where these faculties take root in the substance of the soul whence they arise. In truth, our will is, in a way, infinite in its profundity; for this reason created things cannot exercise an invincible attraction on it. It is free to love them or not to; only God seen face to face infallibly attracts it and captivates it, even to the very wellspring of its energies. So called substantial divine touches affect this basis of the will and of the intellect. The very substance of the soul experiences things only through these faculties. But God, who is closer to the soul than it is to itself, inasmuch as He preserves it in existence, can from within touch and move the very foundation of the faculty by a spiritual contact, which reveals itself as divine. This depth is also called the summit of the spirit in relation to sensible things, according as they are considered, either as exterior or as inferior to it. With this in mind, we understand what St. John of the Cross says on this subject: "Nothing is more calculated to dissipate this delicate knowledge than the intervention of the natural spirit. Since it is a question of a sweet supernatural communication, it is useless to try to comprehend it accurately, for that is impossible; the understanding has only to accept it. If, on the contrary, the soul seeks to provoke it or desires it, it may happen that what it conceives comes from itself, and thereby gives the devil the opportunity of presenting counterfeit knowledge. . . . Passive acceptance in humility is, therefore, incumbent on the soul. God grants these favors according to His good pleasure, and it is the humble and thoroughly detached soul that receives God's preference. By acting in this way, the progress of the soul suffers no interruption, and such knowledge serves

efficaciously to advance it. These touches are touches of union serving to unite the soul passively to God."

St. John of the Cross has described these favors at greater length in The Dark Night of the Soul and in The Living Flame. In his opinion, they are obtained only by the practice of despoilment and detachment from all creatures. By one of these touches of love, the soul is rewarded for all its works and sufferings. The substance of God, which is identical with His creative, preserving, and sanctifying action, touches the substance of the soul, and makes itself felt as divine and sovereign. This teaching clarifies the doctrine that the mystical state is the normal completion of Christian perfection, provided it is distinguished from certain accessory facts which sometimes accompany it. But, to establish the truth of this doctrine, we must guard against several confusions, which contemporary writers, in their desire to return to traditional teaching, apparently have not always sufficiently avoided.

II CONFUSIONS TO BE AVOIDED IN EXPOUNDING THE TRADITIONAL DOCTRINE

1) In order to show that infused contemplation is not an extraordinary grace like revelations and visions and that it ought to be desired and asked for by generous interior souls, we need not lessen the mystical state or link it too closely with what it really is not. Affective prayer, or the acquired prayer of recollection, described by St. Teresa, should not be confounded with the supernatural recollection which she speaks of.

2) A chasm should not be interposed between the initial mystical state (fourth mansion) and what essentially constitutes simple union, complete union, and the transforming union, described in the fifth, sixth, and seventh mansions. The summit of the normal development of the grace of the virtues and of the gifts is, in this life, found only in the transforming union, which is the normal termination of the initial mystical state.

3) The essence of these supernatural mystical states should not be confounded with the extraordinary facts which sometimes accompany them. These accessory facts, described by St. Teresa especially in the fifth and sixth mansions, often disappear in the seventh. In fact, these phenomena accompany chiefly the influence of the Holy Ghost "on the faculties" rather than what "touches the substance of the soul," as the mystics say. This

wholly intimate action of God on the depths of the soul is found principally in the transforming union, a state in which, as a rule, ecstasies have disappeared.

It is in the depths of the soul that everything ends, and in a sense it is there that everything began, without our having been aware of it. This influence of the Holy Ghost "on the depths of the soul" in fact proceeds, without our knowing it, the influence which the Holy Ghost exercises more manifestly "on the faculties." The completely purified soul experiences this action in its very depths, when it has at length entered the sanctuary where God dwells and operates from the moment of justification or of conversion. In the opinion of Tauler, Louis de Blois, St. John of the Cross, and St. Teresa, who have spoken so frequently of this "depth of the soul," at the end of the passive purifications of the spirit the soul experiences, without seeing it, this "substantial" action of God in which everything has its beginning, at which everything terminates, and beyond which it seems that there is nothing. This is why what is called the depths of the soul, in relation to sensible things considered as exterior, and is called the summit of the spirit in relation to these same things considered as inferior.

(4) The three traditional ways should, moreover, not be confused with what is only an imperfect form of them. From what precedes, it is clear why, according to the tradition preserved by St. John of the Cross, the perfect purgative way requires the passive purifications of mystical order; why he calls the illuminative way, the way of infused contemplation; and why the unitive way is normally completed only in the transforming union, the prelude to heaven. These three ways are often lessened, because writers describe them merely from the outside. St. John of the Cross gazed upon them from above, and this is why he penetrated to their depths. He must have received the gift of wisdom in a very high degree in order to have discussed with so great mastery such deep supernatural things, for the light of life illumines all the pages of his work.

(5) Divine touches must not be likened to revelations and visions, which are, properly speaking, extraordinary and, as it were, exterior facts. It is true that St. John of the Cross distinguishes general and obscure infused contemplation from distinct supernatural knowledge, and that he links with the latter the divine touches impressed on the will, which have their reaction on the intellect. But these divine touches, without being essential to infused contemplation, by their influence on the will help to constitute union with

God and are not to be feared. Thereby they differ notably from events which are properly extraordinary and in a way exterior, like revelations and visions, which the saint declares are often dangerous.

It would also be a gross error to confound these divine touches, this contact which has been called substantial, with the emotions of the sensitive part; and likewise it would be a mistake to confuse "the tastes," which St. Teresa mentions, with the consolations acquired by meditation.

6) Since analysis is necessary because of our weakness, it has, especially in these matters, a drawback that must be corrected by synthesis. The desire to be too precise in this matter leads to division, and as a result to the materialization of what is a unit in the reality of the spiritual life. Therefore, in these questions we can keep to the truth, only by considering them in the light of higher principles, as did St. Thomas and great mystics like St. John of the Cross. Consequently a material and mechanical exactness, which they do not share, has been applied to these spiritual matters. Hence many commentaries on the spiritual works of the great doctors resemble these works in the same way as a polygon inscribed, within a circle resembles the circle; the complexity of the former is in proportion to the simplicity of the latter. This brings about the loss of the strong security with which these great speculative and mystical teachers dealt with these lofty questions. By applying the highest principles to them, they gave in controversies over secondary points only due importance to them. This attitude alone, which is notably different from that of many modern writers, placed them on the way of truth, and enabled them to formulate it with a perfection that has never since been attained. No one will be able truly to perfect their work, unless he has received the same grace as they received. We should, therefore, become their disciples without pretending to complete their work immediately. We would accomplish much if we could even succeed in understanding them clearly. In order even to comprehend them fully, it would be necessary to equal them.

Some recent critics have claimed that the mystical life properly so called cannot be explained by the principles formulated by St. Thomas. In their opinion, probably he did not have this special form of the interior life in view when he formulated them. To this we answer with Dom Louismet: "If such a universal writer as St. Thomas Aquinas does not speak of mystics as a peculiar class, is it not because for him, as for the Areopogite, all Christians are de jure mystics? . . . And if he never mentions a separate

body of mystical doctrine, is it not because for him there is no mystical doctrine distinct from the common deposit of faith?" As a matter of fact, it is faith fully lived in persevering generosity in the love of God. "By Catholic traditional mysticism I mean the mysticism with which the Epistles of St. Paul and St. John, and the other canonical epistles, and all the other Scriptures, are overflowing. It is the mysticism of the everlasting sacrifice of the Lamb on the cross and on our altars, and of the whole sacred liturgy around it: the mysticism of the Missal, of the Ritual, of the Pontifical, of the Ceremonial of Bishops, of the Breviary, and of the Martyrology." We do not believe that this assertion would be contradicted by true mystics who experience the higher life to which every Christian should aspire.

GOD

REVEREND REGINALD GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE O.P.

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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

In a book entitled, Le Sens Commun et la Philosophie de l'Être, we have shown that common sense or natural reason is a rudimentary philosophy of being, opposed to the philosophy of the phenomenon and to that of becoming; that being and the principles implied in it constitute the formal, primary and adequate object of common sense.

Here we again take up the study of these first principles, not so much as they are concerned with the functioning of the faculty of common sense, but with reference to the classical proofs for God's existence. We have set ourselves the task of demonstrating the necessity of these principles, their dependence upon the first principle, and their ontological and transcendent validity. It will be seen that the proofs for God's existence rest ultimately upon the principle of identity or of non-contradiction, their proximate basis being the principle of sufficient reason, and their immediate basis the principle of causality. Each of the proofs will establish clearly the fact that the principle of identity, which is the supreme law of thought, must be at the same time the supreme law of reality; that the reality which is fundamental must be absolutely identical with itself; that it must be to "being" as A is to A, the self-subsisting Being; consequently, it must be essentially distinct from the world, which on its part is essentially composite and subject to change. Hence the alternative: either the true God or radical absurdity.

The fundamental ideas of the first part of this work were set forth in 1910, in an article entitled "Dieu," written for the "Dictionnaire Apologétique de la Foi Catholique." This article has been revised, recast, and more fully developed on a number of points. Particularly has the terminology of the Vatican Council's definition in reference to the demonstrability of the existence of God been explained by the corresponding proposition of the Antimodernist Oath. The proofs establishing the ontological and transcendental validity of the primary ideas, as also the various formulas of the principle of identity, the defence of the absolute necessity of the principles of sufficient reason, of causality,

and of finality have been presented more clearly and extensively. On these various questions we have made every effort to answer the difficulties raised. The proof based on the order prevailing in the universe has been slightly modified in reference to the question of chance.

The second part, which treats of the nature of God and of His attributes is almost completely new. We have made every effort to solve the antinomies of the Agnostics, basing our argument upon the Thomistic doctrine of analogy. To set forth the purport and scope of this doctrine, which is an application of mitigated realism, it seemed necessary for us to attack, on the one hand, the Nominalism of the Agnostics, especially that of Maimonides, and, on the other, the exaggerated Realism which Duns Scotus did not sufficiently avoid. This was necessary in order to safeguard the absolute simplicity of God.

We have devoted the second-last chapter to a critical examination of certain antinomies very difficult to solve, namely, those which concern free will. How can we reconcile the freedom of the will with the principle of sufficient reason, the foundation upon which the proofs for God's existence ultimately rest? How can we reconcile the liberty of God with His immutability and His wisdom? How the liberty of man with the fact that all things are set in motion by God?

Our conclusion with regard to God's ineffability and the absurdity of the unknowable brings out clearly all that we have maintained both in the theoretical and the practical order of the inevitable alternative developed throughout this work: either the true God or positive absurdity.

PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

The first two editions of this work, printed in 1914 and published in 1915, were quickly sold out, in spite of the difficulties caused by the war. During the four years which have elapsed since, few works have appeared on this subject, and hence we have not much to add or to modify in this third edition.

However, for the more difficult questions, we have here and there quoted more freely from St. Thomas passages which throw additional light upon the subject. Various pages have been modified for the special purpose of giving a clearer explanation of the proper cause of individual and transitory effects as well as that of universal and permanent effects, and also so as to determine more closely the nature of the free act in God and to give a more exact demonstration of the possibility of miracles.

We could have eliminated some abstract discussions, which refer to the objections of contemporary Agnostics; but our purpose here was not to exhaust the objection, but to establish as soundly and precisely as possible what are the immediate data of the intelligence which constitute the basis of our rational certainty of God's existence.

Some readers requested us to translate the Latin quotations, since a good understanding of them is difficult without being well versed in Scholastic terminology. We have done this in some cases; but on the whole it was necessary to stick to the original, which, for the rest, is explained by the context.

We have been particularly careful in the use of terms. Every science has its special terminology. We find this to be so in mathematics, in physics, and in biology; it is the same for philosophy and theology. If we wish to avoid the abuse of circumlocution, we must employ special terms to designate the concepts which are more distinct than those of common experience. That is why we have retained the technical terms, especially where, concerning the existence and nature of God, we explain what it is that distinguishes Nominalism, Conceptualism, and Pantheistic Realism,

from that traditional realism the truth of which we demonstrate. The fundamental question is, whether God is merely a name, or an idea, or the universal being of all things. Is He truly the One who is, infinitely superior by reason of His absolute simplicity and immutability to the world of corporeal and incorporeal beings—a world which is essentially composite and subject to change?

We have added by way of appendices a critical inquiry into certain special difficulties, which have been submitted to us since the publication of the first edition. The difficulties follow the order of subjects discussed in this work and refer to such questions as these:

Concerning the proofs of God's existence: I. The synthesis of the Thomistic proofs for God's existence and the notion of the proper cause. II. The validity of the principles of inertia and conservation of energy.

Concerning the distinction between God and the world: III. The simplicity of the analogical notion of being. IV. The various forms of Pantheism refuted by St. Thomas.

Concerning Providence and divine causality: V. St. Thomas and Neomolinism. A synthesis of the teaching of St. Thomas is given on these questions.

A detailed exposition of these problems would have unduly impeded the progress of the demonstrations given in the course of this work. Moreover, we shall see that the discussion of these problems serves but to confirm our demonstrations. We would not have written the last of these appendices, if it had not been necessary in answer to the criticisms which we received, and this gave us an opportunity to synthesize the scattered teaching of St. Thomas on these great problems. May these closing pages, far from the noise of dispute, cause some souls to understand better the words of Our Lord: "If thou didst but know the gift of God." (John IV, 10).

The first two editions lacked an alphabetical index of the subjects discussed and the principal authors quoted. The one now given, even though not detailed, will enable the reader to group together the various aspects of the same question, explained in different parts of the book.

May this book, in spite of its rather abstract character, give to those who read it that real joy which is the result of having seen the truth, and cause them to have a greater love for the Author of all goodness, in whom we must find our happiness. "Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God." (Matt. V, 8).

PREFACE TO THE FIFTH EDITION

Two more appendices have been added in this fifth edition. The first is on “God Determining or Being Determined; there is no middle course.” It is the conclusion of a controversy waged between 1925 and 1927, after the publication of my article on “Predeterminism” in the Dictionnaire Apologétique. The second is entitled: “The Foundation of the Real Distinction between Potency and Act, according to the Teaching of St. Thomas.” This was written to answer the objections raised by M. L. Rougier in a recent book, in which he attacked the Christian faith and Thomism.

PART I

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

Concerning the knowledge of the existence of God that can be acquired by human reason we shall consider: 1) What the Catholic Church teaches on this point; 2) That the ontological and transcendental values of our primary ideas establish the possibility of proving this existence; 3) The principal proofs for the existence of God.

CHAPTER I

WHAT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH TEACHES ABOUT GOD'S EXISTENCE AND HIS NATURE, AND THE KNOWLEDGE WHICH WE CAN HAVE OF HIM BY MEANS OF THE NATURAL LIGHT OF REASON.

I. The existence and nature of God as defined by the Vatican Council.

"The Holy, Catholic, Apostolic, Roman Church," declares the Vatican Council (Const. "Dei Filius," ch. I), "believes and confesses that there is one true and living God, Creator and Lord of Heaven and earth, almighty, eternal, immense, incomprehensible, infinite in intellect, in will, and in every perfection; who, being one, sole, absolutely simple and immutable spiritual substance, is to be declared as really and essentially distinct from the world, of supreme beatitude in and by Himself, and ineffably exalted above all things which, beside Himself, exist or are conceivable." (Abbot Butler's translation; Vatican Council, Vol. II).

The truths of our Catholic faith contained in this paragraph can be explained more fully by a résumé of the conclusions expressed by Vacant in his treatise entitled, Etudes théologiques sur les constitutions du Concile du Vatican, d'après les Actes du Concile.

The Council, having affirmed its belief in the existence of God, designating Him by the principal names which the Bible gives to Him, proceeds to discuss the nature of God and the constituent attributes of the divine essence. His eternity, His immensity, and His incomprehensibility imply that the Divine Essence is beyond time, space, and every creatural concept. Eternity means that in God there neither is, nor can be, beginning, end, or change of any kind. The exclusion of any idea of succession,

admitted by all theologians as an element included in the concept of eternity, though apparently not as yet a dogma of the Catholic faith, nevertheless is a certain truth, proximate to the faith.

The divine immensity, as defined by the Council, means that the substance of God is and must be wholly present to all creatures, conserving them in their mode of being, wherever they are.

The divine incomprehensibility means that God cannot be fully comprehended by anyone but Himself. The intuitive vision of God granted to the blessed in Heaven does not include such a plenitude of knowledge.

In defining that God is infinite in every perfection, the Council states precisely in what sense we are to understand the term “infinite.” The ancient philosophers gave the name infinite to anything which had not yet received its complete determination. When the Catholic Church declares that God is infinite, she means, on the contrary, that He possesses all possible perfections, that there is no limit to His perfection, and no admixture of imperfection to be found in them, so that it is impossible to conceive anything that would render Him more perfect. By this definition the Council avoided Hegel’s error, that the Infinite Being, comprising all possible perfections, is an ideal tending to realize itself, but incapable of ever becoming a reality. By adding the phrase, “in intellect and in will,” the Council condemns the materialistic Pantheism which considers the Divinity as merely a blind and impersonal necessity, a sort of law of fatality without either intelligence or will.

As for the other perfections which may be attributed to God, and of which the Council makes no mention, they are simply those which imply no imperfection in their concept. All these absolute perfections (simpliciter simplices, as they are termed in theology) are identified in an absolutely simple eminence, of which they constitute, as it were, the virtual aspects, and which is strictly and properly the Deity.

2. The distinction between God and the world, as defined by the Council. The meaning and import of this definition.

The Council then considers the question of the distinction between God and the world. The Fourth Lateran Council (1215) had condemned the Pantheism of Amaury of Chartres as an absurdity rather than a heresy. The reappearance and spread of this error necessitated a more explicit and reasoned definition. The Council, therefore, defines the distinction between God and the world and indicates its principal proofs: “Deus, qui cum sit una

singularis, simplex omnino et incommutabilis substantia spiritualis, praedicandus est re et essentia a mundo distinctus; God, being one sole, absolutely simple and immutable spiritual substance, is to be declared as really and essentially distinct from the world."

1) God is unique by nature. This means that the Divine Nature cannot be considered as a common note of any class of created beings nor be realized anywhere but in Him. The Divine Being is, therefore, really and essentially distinct from the world, in which there exists a multiplicity of genera, species, and individuals.

2) God is absolutely simple. This implies that the Divine Being is really and essentially distinct from the world, where we find beings that may be considered either as physical compounds (i.e., corporeal beings whose constituent physical parts are really distinct from one another), or as metaphysical compounds (i.e., essence potentially realizable and actual existence); or, lastly, we may view them as forming a logical compound (i.e., as classified in the order of genus and specific difference).

3) God is immutable. Since everywhere on this earth we find the process of change in beings or the possibility of the same, the unchangeableness of the Divine Being is another mark by which He is really and essentially distinguished from this world. The Council points out the precise nature of this distinction when it says: "really and essentially distinct from the world." It is not a distinction of the mind, nor a virtual distinction, such as exists between any two divine attributes; but it is a real distinction, in virtue of which God and the world are not one reality, but two separate realities. This distinction is not only real, as that between two individuals of the same species, but in addition to this it is also essential: God is distinct from the world by His essence.

The third canon of the Council is even more precise, condemning Pantheism in general, which views God as a substance immanent in the world, and finite things as the accidents of this substance. The canon reads: "If any one shall say that the substance and essence of God and of all things is one and the same; let him be anathema." Finally, this distinction is infinite. God is sufficient for Himself; "of supreme beatitude in and by Himself, and ineffably exalted above all things which, beside Himself, exist or are conceivable."

There are four canons that correspond to the doctrine contained in this paragraph from the Constitution Dei Filius, to wit:

First, the canon condemning atheism: “If anyone shall deny one true God, Creator and Lord of things visible and invisible; let him be anathema.”

Secondly, the canon condemning Materialism: “If anyone shall not be ashamed to affirm that, except matter, nothing exists; let him be anathema.”

Thirdly, the canon condemning the fundamental tenet of Pantheism: “If anyone shall say that the substance and essence of God and of all things are one and the same; let him be anathema.”

Fourthly, the canon condemning the principal forms of Pantheism, namely: (1) Emanatistic Pantheism; (2) the essential Pantheism of Schelling; (3) the essential Pantheism of the universal being. “If anyone shall say that finite things, both corporeal and spiritual, or at least spiritual, have emanated from the divine substance; or that the divine essence by the manifestation and evolution of itself becomes all things; or, lastly, that God is universal and indefinite being, which by determining itself constitutes the universality of things, distinct according to genera, species, and individuals; let him be anathema.”

The theories of Rosmini condemned by decree of the Holy Office (14th Dec., 1887), and the teachings of Ontologism condemned 18th Sept., 1861, must be referred to this canon. Two of these latter propositions read: (1) “What we understand by the term being as applied to all things and without which they mean nothing to us, is the divine Being. (2) “Universals, objectively considered, are not really distinct from God.” (Cf. Denzinger, Enchiridion, nos. 1660 and 1661).

This, then, is the teaching of the Church on the existence of God, His nature, His essential attributes, and the distinction between Him and the world. With these doctrinal statements the Council associates those referring to the creation of the world and to Divine Providence: “This one only true God, of His own goodness and almighty power, not for the increase and acquirement of His own happiness, but to manifest His perfection by the blessings which He bestows on creatures, and with absolute freedom of counsel, created out of nothing from the very first beginning of time, both the spiritual and corporeal creature, to wit, the angelical and the mundane, and afterwards the human creature, as partaking in a sense of both, consisting of spirit and of body.”

Concerning the Providence of God we read: “God protects and governs by His Providence all things which He hath made, ‘reaching from end to end mightily, and ordering all things sweetly’ (Wisd. VIII, I). ‘For all things

are bare and open to His eyes' (Heb. IV, 13), even those that are yet to be by the free action of creatures." (Const. Dei Filius, ch. 1).

It cannot, therefore, be maintained with Abelard that God cannot prevent evil (Denz., n. 375), or with Eckhard, that He wills not only what is good, but also somehow what is evil (Denz., n. 514). On this point a later decision tells us that it is impossible for God to will what is sinful; He can only permit it. (Denz., n. 816).

What the Church teaches about the divine mysteries properly called supernatural, such as the Holy Trinity, does not concern us here.

3. Definition of the Vatican Council on the ability of human reason to know God with certainty. Condemned errors: Positivism, Traditionalism, Fideism, Kantian Criticism.

The Vatican Council has also defined what can be known of God by the natural light of human reason. "The same Holy Mother Church," says the Council, "holds and teaches that God, the beginning and end of all things, may be known for certain by the natural light of human reason, by means of created things, 'for the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood from the things that are made' (Rom. I, 20) ; but that it pleased His wisdom and goodness to reveal Himself and the eternal decrees of His will to mankind by another, namely, the supernatural way." Canon I of this chapter reads: "If any one shall say that the one true God, our Creator and Lord, cannot be certainly known by the natural light of human reason through created things; let him be anathema." (Dei Filius, Ch. 2, Of Revelation).

To obtain the exact meaning of this definition and of the corresponding canon, we shall have to review the errors which the Council had in view. Since the first proposition of the Anti-modernist Oath contains the same terms as those used in this definition of the Council, a comparison of the two paragraphs will enable us to determine the import of each term in the definition.

The preliminary memorandum distributed among the Fathers of the Council, together with the schema prepared by the Deputatio de Fide, included this declaration: "The definition that God can be certainly known by the light of natural reason, through the medium of created beings, as well as the canon corresponding to this definition, were deemed necessary, not only because of Traditionalism, but also because of the wide-spread error that the existence of God cannot be proved by any apodictic argument, and

consequently that by no process of human reasoning can the certainty of it be established." (Cf. Vacant, Etudes sur les Const. du Concile du Vatican, p. 286, and Document VII, p. 610). Hence it is heretical to maintain, as do the atheists and the Positivists, that there is no way by which we can arrive at the knowledge of God, or to assert with the most advanced of the Traditionalists and Fideists, that we can know God only through revelation or by some positive teaching received by tradition.

In the condemnation of Fideism we can see clearly what is the mind of the Church on this point. Amongst the various propositions which the Congregation of the Index required the Abbé Bautain to accept, in 1840, was one which declared that human reasoning is of itself sufficient to prove with certainty the existence of God (ratiocinatio Dei existentiam cum certitudine probare valet). Faith, being a supernatural gift, presupposes revelation, and hence cannot be consistently invoked to prove the existence of God against an atheist." (Denzinger, n. 1622). From Augustine Bonnetty, who was likewise suspected of Fideism, the same Congregation of the Index, on June 11, 1855, demanded formal assent to four propositions, the second of which affirms that "human reasoning has the power to prove the existence of God with certainty (ratiocinatio cum certitudine probare valet), as well as the spirituality and liberty of the soul," while the fourth proposition declares that "the method employed by St. Thomas, St. Bonaventure, and other Scholastics after them, does not lead to rationalism, nor can it be blamed for the fact that the contemporary philosophy of the schools drifted into Naturalism and Pantheism. Hence no one has the right to reproach these doctors and teachers for having employed this method, especially since they did so with the at least tacit approval of the Church." (Cf. Denz., nos. 1650-1652). There is no doubt that the Council in this definition and its corresponding canon condemned Fideism. But the question may be asked: "Is the Kantian doctrine also involved in this definition?"

Kant maintained that the speculative proofs for the existence of God are not convincing, that metaphysics is an impossibility, and that there are no other proofs for the existence of God except those of the practical or moral order, productive of moral faith, which is sufficiently certain, subjectively considered, but objectively considered, is insufficient. (Critique of Practical Reason, I, Bk. ii, ch. 5). We shall consider this proof later on. For the present we may say that the Vatican Council, in condemning Fideism and

Traditionalism, also had in view the Kantian theory. This is clearly evident from the fact that the six amendments proposed for the suppression of the word “certo” in the definition were all rejected. “You know, very Reverend Fathers,” replied Bishop Gasser in the report which he presented to the Council in the name of the Deputatio de Fide, “what opinion has become prevalent in the minds of many through the teaching of the French encyclopedists and the foremost defenders of the critical philosophy in Germany; this widely spread opinion is none other than that the existence of God cannot be proved with full certainty, and that the arguments which have at all times been so highly regarded, are still open to discussion. As a result, religion has been despised as if it had no foundation. Moreover, in these latter days attempts have been made in various places to separate morality from all religion; this is said to be necessary because of the fear that, when a man has reached a certain age and perceives that there is nothing certain in religion, not even the existence of God, he may become a moral pervert. But you also know, very Reverend Fathers, what is the value of this moral education which does not receive its inspiration from the words of the Psalmist: The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” (Ps. 110, 9). (Cf. Vacant, Const. du Concile, pp. 301 and 657). See also Acta et Decreta Sacrorum Conciliorum Recentiorum, Collectio Lacensis, Tomus VII, p. 130, and the condemnation of Hermes (Denz., n. 1620), and Frohschammer (n. 1670).

The Scholastics had always considered as erroneous the opinion of those who denied the demonstrability, properly speaking, of God’s existence. (Opinion of Peter d’Ailly and of Nicholas d’Autrecourt) St. Thomas Aquinas qualifies this opinion as erroneous (Contra Gent., I, ch. 12), and manifestly false (De Veritate, q. 10, art. 12). Duns Scotus (In IV Sent., I, dist. 2, q. 3, n. 7), Bañez, Molina, Suarez, and other theologians express themselves in similar terms.

4) Explanation of the theological terms employed by the Council in the antimodernist oath.

The oath prescribed by the Motu Proprio “Sacrorurn Antistitum,” of September 1, 1910, is a profession of faith, which reproduces the same terms as used by the Council on this question, and defines them so clearly as to remove all possibility of a false interpretation.

The opening words of this oath are a profession of faith in God, the beginning and end of all things, whose existence can be known with

certainty and even proved by the natural light of reason, through the medium of created things, or, in other words, by the visible works of creation, just as a cause is known and proved by its effects.

The foregoing is but a paraphrase of the Latin text, which reads as follows: “Ego — firmiter amplector ac recipio omnia ac singula, quae ab inerranti Ecclesiae magisterio definita, adserta, ac declarata sunt, praesertim ea doctrinae capita, quae hujus temporis erroribus directo adversantur. Ac primum quidem Deum, rerum omnium principium et finem, naturali rationis lumine per ea quae facta sunt, hoc est per visibilia creationis opera, tamquam causam per effectus, certo cognosci, adeoque , demonstrari etiam posse, profiteor. I [name], firmly hold as true and accept everything which the infallible teaching authority of the Church has defined, maintained, and declared, especially those points of doctrine which are directly contrary to the errors of the present time. And first of all I profess that God, the beginning and end of all things, can be known for certain and proved by the natural light of reason, through the things which He has made, that is to say, through the visible works of His creation, just as the cause is made known to us by its effects.”

That the possibility of proving the existence of God may receive its due emphasis, the Church distinguishes between: (1) the object to be known, namely, God, the beginning and end of all things (Deum, rerum omnium principium et finem); (2) the efficient cause of this knowledge, which is the natural light of reason (naturali rationis lumine); (3) the means by which this knowledge is acquired, which is “the things which have been made,” that is to say, the visible works of creation, just as a cause is known by its effects (per ea quae facta sunt, hoc est per visibilia creationis opera tamquam causam per effectus); (4) the degree of certitude in this knowledge is expressed by the words, “can be known with certainty, and moreover even proved”(certo cognosci adeoque demonstrari etiam); (5) finally, the possibility of acquiring this knowledge is expressed by the word “posse.”

1) The object to be known: “God, the beginning and end of all things,” is expressed in practically the same words as are used by the Vatican Council in Chapter 2 of the Constitution “Dei Filius.” This similarity of expression applies also to the corresponding canon, which is the first of the four attached to the second chapter of the Constitution. Strictly speaking, the opening words of the canon: “Deum unum et verum, Creatorem et

Dominum nostrum: the one and true God, our Creator and Lord," read more like a profession of faith in dogmatic form.

In the doctrinal explanation of this canon, as given by the spokesman of the Deputatio de Fide, we clearly see that what is defined is that man, by reason alone, can come to recognize God as his destined end, and consequently to realize what his principal obligations are towards Him. But, on the other hand, in giving to God the title of Creator, it was not the intention of the Council to define as a dogma of faith that creation in the strict sense of the term (which means "ex nihilo or from nothing") can be proved by the power of the reasoning faculty alone. The mind of the Council on this point was to retain the same terms which Holy Scripture employs in designating the "true God," who is the beginning and end of all things, and especially of man.

This idea of the true God, which, as the Council states, can be acquired by human reason—in what precisely does it consist? On this point we may consult the Council's definition of the true God, as given in Chapter 1 of the Constitution "Dei Filius," and also the canons corresponding to this chapter. In explaining this definition, it was pointed out above that the Council, in formulating it, had in view not only the refutation of Pantheism in general, but its various forms. In the enumeration of the various attributes that denote the true God, it was not the intention of the Council to define as a dogma of faith that all these attributes can be proved by reason alone; but the Council wished it to be understood that these attributes are all implicitly or virtually included in the formula that "God is the beginning and end of all things."

If these attributes and the refutation of Pantheism as heretical, were not implicitly or virtually included in the idea of God as acquired by reason, then this idea would not be an expression of the true God. To escape the charge of heresy it is not enough to admit, as some agnostics do, that by reason alone we can conclude with certainty as to the existence of God, but that we cannot conclude definitely that either transcendence, or immanence, or personality, or infinity, or finiteness properly belong to Him.

Neither is it enough to say that the mind can form a concept of God in which it is a matter of indifference whether the attributes of transcendence, personality, infinity, or even their contraries, are included. We must admit that the human mind is capable of forming a concept of God which implicitly or virtually includes the distinctive attributes of the true God and

the falsity of the contrary concepts, just as in argumentation a general principle includes the conclusions deduced from it. The Pantheistic concept of an immanent and impersonal God, the Panentheistic concept of an immanent and personal God (πᾶν ἐν τῷ Θεῷ) that of a transcendental but finite God held by some Empirics, must all evidently be classed among those that are false. In the formulation of the Antimodernist Oath it was considered sufficient if, in combating the errors of the present time, the same terms were retained as those used by the Vatican Council. Evidently it will not do to admit the possibility of knowing with certainty the existence of God, if we understand this as William James does, or, as we shall see later on, as Bergson and Le Roy do.

Is reason able to prove by explicit deduction the distinctive attributes of God, especially that of infinity? This point was not defined by the Vatican Council, nor is there any reference to it in the above-mentioned proposition of the Antimodernist Oath. But the S. Congregation of the Index in 1840 ordered Bautain to give his formal assent to a proposition which declared that not only the existence of God can be proved with certainty by reasoning, but also the infinity of His perfections (ratiocinatio potest cum certitudine probare existentiam Dei et infinitatem perfectionum ejus; Denz., n. 1622). If, indeed, human reason, can know God with certainty, not merely on the testimony of authority, but by its own light, it must be able to account for this truth and for the falsity of the contrary doctrine, and one can hardly admit the true God, principle and end of all things, without being persuaded to acknowledge His right to the title of Creator and to deduce from this the conclusion that He must possess all the divine attributes enumerated by the Council.

2) What is implied in this principle of knowledge expressed in the words, “naturali rationis lumine,” which are also employed by the Vatican Council? It is evident that by “reason” the Council understands our natural faculty of perceiving the truth. In chapter 3 of the Constitution “Dei Filius” reason is placed in contrast with supernatural faith, since whatever we know with certainty to be true, is due to the intrinsic evidence of things, “propter intrinsecam rerum veritatem rationis lumine perspectam,” as perceived by the reasoning faculty, and not because of the authority of God, who may have revealed such a truth. The knowledge of God which can be acquired by the natural light of reason, is not merely a true knowledge, i.e., conforming to the reality; but it is also a knowledge of truth for which we

are able to give a reason; hence it is not simply a belief resting on the testimony of God, or on that of tradition, or on that of the human race. It is the result of rational evidence.

We must not confound this “natural light of reason” with conscience, the religious sense, or religious experience, of which the Modernists speak. The terminology of the Vatican Council, as well as that of later decrees, has eliminated the possibility of such confusion. Moreover, the encyclical “Pascendi,” as we shall have occasion to see later on, has given to these words a precise meaning.

Nor is it enough, as we have already remarked, to understand by “the natural light of reason” the practical reason of Kant. Such an interpretation would evidently be contrary to the teaching of the Council, for practical reason, as understood by Kant, does not adhere to objective truth because it perceives that truth, but merely concludes that something is worthy of moral belief, even though objectively inadequate. (Critique of Practical Reason, I, Book ii, c. 5). The terms which we shall explain further down, show clearly that it was the intention of the Council to condemn this error as well as Traditionalism and Fideism.

3) The means by which this knowledge of God can be acquired is made known to us by the words, “per ea quae facta sunt, hoc est per visibilia creationis opera, tamquam causam per effectus (by the things which are made, that is to say, by the visible works of His creation, just as a cause is made known to us by its effects”). The canon of the Vatican Council simply contains the words, “per ea quae facta sunt,” whereas in the corresponding chapter the words “e rebus creatis” (from created things) have been added, with the following quotation from St. Paul: “For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood from the things that are made” (Rom. I, 20).

The question might be asked, whether the Antimodernist Oath adds any new declaration concerning this dogma of the faith defined by the Council, or whether it merely insists that the terms of the definition are to be understood in their natural sense, in order to avoid all danger of sophistry.

Would the words of the Council, “through the things that are made,” and “from created things,” be interpreted in their natural sense if they were explained simply as meaning that either created things are the occasion of this knowledge of God, or that on account of the practical demands of morality they appeal to us in this way, or that sensible or visible things are

to be excluded from those created realities which enable us to conclude with certainty that there is a God?

The first question is prompted by the attitude of Cartesianism. It has been asked whether it is sufficient to admit that created things are the means by which we know God, because they are occasional causes, in the sense that they awaken in us an inborn idea of God, and cause it to become conscious and clear. Some theologians (e.g., Vacant in his work above-quoted, p. 296) held this view, though they admit that "the Council is entirely favorable to the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas and the majority of theologians," according to which our knowledge of God is essentially acquired, mediate, and attained by the medium of created things.

We upheld the same view as Vacant in our article "Dieu," written for the Dictionnaire Apologétique de la Foi Catholique (col. 947). But after reconsidering the question we came to the conclusion that no such concession can be made nor is it necessary, as Vacant believed, to save the Cartesian theory of innate ideas.

Vacant gives their true meaning to the words, "e rebus creatis," but he concedes too little when he explains this phrase as merely an "indication." "The Council," he remarks, "believed it would serve a useful purpose to point out created things as the means by which we are enabled to acquire a natural knowledge of the existence of God; for it is difficult to see why the Council should have given this indication, if they were not the means of awakening in us an idea of God, which is present in the minds of all men from the time of birth. Moreover, the propositions drawn up by the Council signify in their natural sense [the italics are mine], that created things furnish the principles from which the human mind derives its knowledge of God, and by which it draws its conclusion, 'through the things that are made,' that God exists." (See Vacant, op. cit., p. 297). This is indeed the natural sense of the words, but they seem to be of greater force than a mere indication. The words, included in a dogmatic formula that reads like an anathema, form a part of the definition, and though they may seem to have been added as an after-thought, yet, if their insertion or omission really modifies the meaning of the proposition, they must be considered as expressing a defined truth. If it were not so, we could never refer with confidence to such definitions; for doubts or evasions would always present themselves to the mind as possibilities, which would be foreign to the mind of Holy Church, who instructs her children simply and sincerely in the

truths of the Catholic faith and demands that they receive them with the same disposition. That is why the first proposition of the Antimodernist Oath merely insists upon the natural sense of the words of the Council, as is shown by the insertion of the phrase: “tamquam causam per effectus (as a cause [is known] by its effects).” This fact obliges us to assign to the principle of causality an ontological and transcendental value, for without it reason could never rise from created things to the existence of God, as from effect to cause.

Thus we see that Kantism is formally condemned, but not exactly the theory of Descartes. Kantism, as we shall explain later on, in discussing the word “certo,” was certainly included in the Council’s condemnation, just as Traditionalism and Fideism. The Kantian theory cannot explain the expressions, “e rebus creatis” and “per ea quae facta sunt” by saying that the existence of God is merely a postulate of practical reason, a practically necessary supposition, granted that duty is an established fact and that in this life there is absence of harmony between virtue and happiness. This false interpretation of the language of the Council is definitively disproved by the terms of the Antimodernist Oath. But the Cartesian theory of the innate idea of God is not condemned. Howsoever the origin of this idea and of the principle of causality may be explained, it is sufficient to admit that they have an ontological and transcendental value, enabling reason to rise from created things to the existence of God. This proof, derived from the notions of contingency and causality, was not rejected by Descartes; nay, he even developed the argument: “e contingentia mentis,” though he strongly insisted upon two proofs, concerning the validity or non-validity of which the Council made no pronouncement. One of these was the proof deduced from the idea of the infinite and of the necessity of an adequate cause for this idea. The other proof was that known as ontological. It is quite certain that die Council never thought of condemning the ontological proof, which takes as its principle of argumentation not the works of God, but the very idea of God. On this point the spokesman of the Deputatio de Fide made the following observation: “Who among us, in confirming by his vote the doctrine contained in this proposition, thinks of condemning the famous argument of St. Anselm, no matter what his private opinion of the same may be?” (See Vacant, Vol. I, p. 298). Still less does the conciliar definition mean to exclude the proof for the eternal truths so often set forth by St. Augustine and many Catholic philosophers.

It is only Ontologism that was condemned by the Holy Office. (See Denzinger, nn. 1659-1663, 1891-1930). For the innate idea of God that the Cartesians say we have, the Ontologists substituted an intuitive vision of Him, considering that this knowledge of God, essential to the human mind, is the source of all our other ideas.

The insertion of the word "visibilia," and this in italics, in the first proposition of the Antimodernist Oath, is a sign that the Church insists upon the literal interpretation of the words of the Council and of the quotation from St. Paul. To exclude sensible things from the phrase "e rebus creatis," and to say that the only certain proofs for the existence of God are those based upon the intellectual and moral life of man, would evidently be to depart from the original and plain meaning of these words. From such an interpretation it would follow that created things, as such, do not enable us to arrive at a knowledge of God, as from effect to cause.

Would it be sufficient to admit that the arguments based on the principle of causality lead us to acknowledge the fact of a prime mover, a first cause, a necessary being, an intelligent designer, but that they cannot give us the certainty that there is an infinitely perfect God, and that to acquire such a certainty, the ontological argument is absolutely necessary? This is clearly a Kantian idea. We do not believe that this explanation is acceptable, since the proposition is concerned with "God, the beginning and end of all things." It is, indeed, the true God, who can be known with certainty by the way of causality from sensible things. Besides, the knowledge of God, thus acquired, must include, at least implicitly or virtually, along with the various other divine attributes, absolute perfection. This means, as we have already pointed out, that this attribute of God is such that it can be logically deduced therefrom.

4) The kind of knowledge thus acquired is expressed by the words, "certo cognosci, adeoque demonstrari etiam posse (can be known with certainty, and therefore also proved)." The Council had simply said, "certo cognosci." Here, also, it may be asked: Does the Antimodernist Oath merely emphasize the natural sense of the conciliar definition, so as to exclude unjustifiable interpretations, or does it add a new declaration?

That the words "certo cognosci" mean the same as "demonstrari," can easily be shown from the fact that "certo cognosci," in the canon of the Council, signifies: (1) a certainty which is the result of reasoning (naturali

rationis lumine); (2) an absolute certainty; (3) a certainty acquired by indirect reasoning “e rebus creatis” by “ea quae facta sunt.”

We have had occasion to note that this certain knowledge obtained by reasoning is, as the Council says, that which causes us to adhere to the intrinsic truth of things “because of the intrinsic evidence of such truth, as perceived by the natural light of reason.” It is a knowledge by means of which we are able to give an account of what we affirm to be true.

We have seen that this particular knowledge, acquired by reasoning, is, according to the Council, a mediate knowledge, acquired through the medium of the visible works of God. What else is a certain and mediate knowledge acquired by reasoning, but a demonstration? And what else is a certain knowledge acquired by reasoning “ab effectu,” but an “a posteriori” demonstration? Being the result of reasoning, it differs from faith; being mediate, it is opposed to intuition; being certain, it differs from opinion.

The only difficulty that might present itself is whether the Council meant to say that absolute certainty could be obtained by this process of reasoning. There is no possible doubt on this head. We have already remarked that amongst the comments which, together with the elaborate schema, were presented to the Fathers of the Council by the Deputatio de Fide, there was one to the effect that “the definition that reason can acquire a certain knowledge of God by means of created things, seemed necessary, as well as the corresponding canon, not only on account of Traditionalism, but also because of the wide-spread error that the existence of God cannot be demonstrated by any apodictic proof, and therefore cannot be known with certainty by reason.” (See Vacant, Vol. I, pp. 286 and 609). As previously stated, Bishop Gasser, in the report read by him before the Council in the name of the Deputatio de Fide, was somewhat more explicit, referring to the opinion maintained by the Positivists, or, as he styled them, “the French Encyclopedists and the foremost defenders of the critical philosophy in Germany.” “This very common opinion,” he remarked, “is that the existence of God cannot be proved with absolute certainty, . . . and that the arguments which have always been considered so forceful, are still open to discussion.”

We shall realize more fully the import of the word “certo,” if we recall that of the six amendments demanding the omission of this word, and which were rejected by a large majority, one read as follows: “I approve of the omission of the word certo, for although the proposition in which it occurs

seems to me to be philosophically true, nevertheless, if the word be included, it does not seem to me to be sufficiently clear that the proposition is a revealed truth, so as to have it defined as an article of faith."

These amendments could not be accepted: for Sacred Scripture (Wisd. XIII, 1-5; Rom. 1, 20) . . . calls vain, foolish, and inexcusable those persons who could not discover God by means of reason. It is evident, therefore, that the Council by the word "certo" meant to designate absolute certainty; and since this certainty is at the same time rational and mediate, i.e., acquired by an indirect process of reasoning, it must be the result of a demonstration.

Moreover, the Council, in the chapter which treats of the connection between faith and reason, expressly declares that "right reason demonstrates the foundations of faith (recta ratio fidei fundamenta demonstret)." These foundations are, on the one hand, the existence of God and His veracity; on the other, the fact of revelation. One of the Fathers of the Council requested that, since the word "demonstret" implies that the process of reasoning starts from principles the truth of which has been perceived by the light of reason itself, the word "probet" should be substituted for it, as this latter word does not involve such an inference. The suggested amendment, however, was rejected by the Council. Monsignor Pie, Bishop of Poitiers, opposed it in the name of the Deputatio de Fide, for the reason that, "though the intrinsic truth of the faith cannot be demonstrated, the foundations of the faith, in a certain sense, can be demonstrated, and bearing this in mind, such expressions as 'the demonstration of gospel truth,' 'the demonstration of the faith,' have been of frequent, nay habitual, usage in ecclesiastical tradition."

If, then, the Council does not hesitate to speak of "demonstration" when it is a question of establishing the fact of divine revelation, even though this fact can be proved but indirectly by referring to external signs (miracles), which in themselves directly manifest only the free intervention of divine omnipotence: with far more reason does it acknowledge the demonstration of the existence of God, since this fact is proved not only by external signs, but also by effects proceeding directly from the First Cause, capable of furnishing a direct a posteriori demonstration.

Therefore, we must conclude that this passage from the Anti-modernist Oath does but emphasize the natural sense of the definition, in order to guard against unjustifiable interpretations. And hence this same proposition of the Oath merely reproduces in more formal terms the teaching of the

Holy See, which on various occasions, when referring to the existence of God, has made use of terms equivalent in meaning to “demonstration.” On this point, see the propositions which Bautain and Bonnetty were compelled to sign (Denz., nn. 1622 and 1650). The condemnation of Hermes (Denz., n. 1620) and of Frohschammer (Denz., n. 1670) may also be consulted.

Now that the Church has adopted into her official language the precise term “demonstration,” and added the phrase, “per visibilia,” and especially, “tamquam causam per effectus,” she has shown without a doubt, that she officially adopts as her own the teaching of St. Thomas and of almost all other theologians on the natural means at our disposal for acquiring a knowledge of God and accepts as valid the proofs based on causality, which originate from the world of sense, without pronouncing on the validity or non-validity of other proofs, as, for instance, that based upon the ontological order.

5) The possibility of demonstrating the existence of God is expressed in the Antimodernist Oath by the simple word “posse,” which is but a repetition of the term employed by the Council.

Here we must point out that the question is not one of fact, as a note attached to the schema drawn up by the special commission on Catholic doctrine appropriately remarked: “The question is not whether, de facto, individual human beings derive their rudimentary knowledge of God from this natural manifestation, or if they are not rather urged to seek it in the revelation proposed to them, being made cognizant of His existence through the revealed teaching given to them. The point at issue is the power of reason. The possibility defined is simply the physical possibility common to all human beings. On this point the spokesman of the Deputatio de Fide remarked: “The doctrine hereby submitted must be considered as generally true, whether man is viewed in the purely natural state or in that of fallen nature.” Hence it cannot be maintained that, in consequence of original sin, there is no justification for the assertion that reason is assured of the objective validity of its conclusions, unless this same faculty is fortified by the superadded light of an illuminative grace.

It has not been defined as de fide that there is no difficulty in the actual exercise of this natural power of reason, but the doctrine itself is the commonly accepted teaching of theologians and is proxima fidei. This does not mean that scientific demonstration is accessible to all, but that reason, by a simple inference deduced from the principle of causality, immediately

rises to the certainty that God exists. The sensus communis need not trouble itself with the difficulties that present themselves from the point of view of objectivity or from a consideration of the transcendental value of the principle of causality. It leaves the discussion of these problems to the metaphysicians, and continues spontaneously to avail itself of these principles as often as these same principles demand it. The reason for saying that this common teaching of the theologians is proxima fidei is that the Scripture declares pagans to be unreasonable and inexcusable for not having any knowledge of God. (Rom. I, 20-21; Wisd. XIII, 1-9). In other words, it was morally possible for them to acquire a certain knowledge concerning the existence of the true God. As Petau and Thomassin point out, the Fathers of the Church all agree in saying that one could not be ignorant of the existence of God without sin. All theologians deny the possibility of ignorance or of invincible error on the subject of God's existence. This means that speculative atheism is an impossibility for any man who has the use of reason and is in good faith. Good faith, in the sense in which the Church understands the term, differs considerably from what the world generally means by it. It implies not only that sincerity which is contrary to deceit, but it also denotes that one has made use of all the means at his disposal in order to arrive at the truth. In the quest of truth one may fail deliberately, not only in a direct way, when one does not want to see the truth, but also in an indirect way, when one does not want to avail oneself of the means that one ought to use, or when, through a perversion of the intellect, one agrees to doctrines that he ought to reject.

This remark permits us to acknowledge the portion of truth contained in the philosophy of human acts. From this point of view, the Church has condemned as scandalous and foolhardy the opinion of those who maintain the possibility of a purely philosophical sin, which would be a fault against right reason, but not an offence against God. (Denz., n. 1290). The knowledge of moral obligation involved in the process of reasoning, which is the result of using reason in the right way, could not be explained satisfactorily without the admission of at least a confused knowledge of God as the supreme legislator, if it be true, as the Syllabus of Pius IX affirms against those who defend the theory of an independent moral code, that all law derives its binding power from God.

The idea of God as the primary being, the primary intelligence, the sovereign good, is as indelibly stamped upon the human conscience as are

the first principles of the natural law. It is only one or the other of the essential attributes of God that may for a time be unknown. Thus the secondary precepts of the natural law may be blotted out of the human heart as a result of bad habits, as is the case with those who do not consider theft and unnatural vices as sinful. (St. Thomas, Ia IIae, q.94, a.6).

This common teaching of theologians is being confirmed more and more by such works as Andrew Lang's The Making of Religion (2nd ed., London, 1900), Msgr. Le Roy's La Religion des Primitifs (Paris, 1909), and the articles written by Fr. Wilhelm Schmidt for the Anthropos (1908-1909).

According to Lang and Schmidt, the idea of God is not derived, as was commonly held since Tylor and Spenser, from Animism, ancestor worship, and the cult of nature personified, but antedates all these primitive forms of belief and is the result of the natural development of the fundamental principles of reason, especially that of causality. This rational idea of a supreme Being underwent certain modifications through the mythical additions of the imagination. Throughout the centuries there has been opposition between reason and imagination. To a great extent the history of religions is but an account of the rivalry existing between these two faculties.

Some Modernists claimed that the moral impossibility of acquiring a knowledge of God by natural means was beyond any doubt in view of the Council's express teaching on the moral necessity of revelation. We need but to read this particular passage of the Council attentively to see that there is nothing in it which contradicts the common opinion of theologians. If revelation is morally necessary, this is the case not solely that we may know the existence of God and our principal moral and religious obligations, but also in order that "the truths which among things divine (in rebus divinis) are not of themselves beyond the ken of reason, may, even in the present condition of mankind, be known by all with facility, with firm assurance, and with no admixture of error."

All about God that in itself is accessible to reason, or, in other words, the ensemble of attributes studied in natural theology, constitutes the subject-matter of that knowledge for which revelation is declared to be a moral necessity. These attributes are: immutability, infinity, immensity, omniscience, absolute liberty, etc., etc. Now it is clear that not all persons can by their own powers of reason acquire a knowledge of this kind that would exclude both error and doubt. In this particular passage of the

Council's definition, stressing the moral necessity of revelation, it was proposed to substitute for the words, "things divine," the phrase, "God and the natural law." The comment on this suggested amendment was, that though the formula was not so restricted in meaning, it had been chosen for that very reason. (See Acta Concilii Vaticani, col. 509 and 122, amend. 19, and Chossat, art. "Dieu," in the Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique, col. 827).

If there is question of a scientific demonstration of the existence of God, we must admit that those philosophers who are of the sensualistic or subjectivistic school of thought can scarcely appreciate its true value. For them the arguments based on the theory of immanence will be more convincing, perhaps the only convincing ones. But it does not follow that this theory is necessarily and universally indispensable, and that we must raise to the rank of a thesis what, in matter of fact, is but the corollary of a false philosophy. And these same persons, if they possess supernatural faith, may by this faith give their assent to the first proposition of the Oath, without perceiving that what is said is intrinsically true, just as they give their assent to the supernatural mysteries of the Trinity or the Incarnation.

It remains for us to decide just what authoritative value is to be assigned to this particular proposition of the Antimodernist Oath, which recapitulates the doctrine contained in the dogmatic definition of the Council. Is this proposition a truth of the Catholic faith, to deny which would be heresy? Or is it to be considered as a truth of divine faith, not formally defined as such, so that it would be haeresi Proxima to make the contradictory assertion? Or, finally, is it merely a certain truth connected with a dogma, so that its denial must be considered as erroneous?

First of all, it is clear, and also essential, that this proposition, taken as a whole, is inculcated by the infallible teaching office of the Church, for the opening words of the Oath plainly affirm: "Ego firmiter amplector ac recipio omnia et singula, quae ab inerranti Ecclesiae magisterio definita, adserta, ac declarata sunt, praesertim ea doctrinae capita, quae hujus temporis erroribus directo adversantur."

If the Church does not teach this first proposition of the Oath as contained in divine revelation, then she does not demand of us that we believe it on the authority of God. But we are obliged to accept it formally, because of the infallible authority vested in her, not only in proposing to us what belongs to revelation, but in declaring whatever is certainly either in

harmony with or in opposition to the revealed word of God. If one were to deny those truths which the Church teaches with infallible authority, though not declaring them to be revealed truths, one would not, on that account, be a heretic, for one would not be formally denying a doctrine revealed by God. But in the eyes of the Church one would be suspected of heresy and, practically speaking, would have lost the virtue of faith; for more often than not, it is difficult to withhold one's assent to these decisions without at the same time denying the dogma that the Church is infallible, or other revealed truths.

But it seems certain that this proposition is inculcated as a truth of divine faith, and this for the following reasons: (1) because the proposition forms part of a profession of faith; (2) because this profession of faith is introduced by the word "profiteor," which in ecclesiastical terminology signifies an act of faith; (3) because the meaning of this word, "profiteor," is accurately determined by the concluding words of the third proposition, which are: "Firma pariter fide credo." These words certainly imply a supernatural act of faith, and the adverb "pariter" shows that the two preceding propositions are also de fide.

There are doctrines which are regarded as belonging to the deposit of divine faith in virtue of the almost unanimous consent or teaching of the Church, though they are not formally defined as truths of the Catholic faith, and consequently are not imposed under penalty of heresy. But the case is different with propositions of other professions of faith which are included in professions of faith employed by the universal Church. It may be objected that the Antimodernist Oath was not imposed on all the faithful, but only on the clergy. The answer to this objection is that some points of doctrine are certainly de fide and imposed as such, even by solemn judgments, which, being beyond the mental capacity of most laymen, are not explicitly taught to all the faithful, though all must implicitly believe them.

Another reason which leads us to conclude that this first proposition of the Antimodernist Oath, taken as a whole, enunciates a truth of the Catholic faith, is the fact, as we have already remarked, that it adds no new declaration to the dogmatic formula defined by the Vatican Council, but merely insists upon the natural meaning of the text, in order to guard against wrong interpretations of the same.

5) The condemnation of Modernist Agnosticism by the Encyclical "Pascendi."

The teaching contained in the Antimodernist Oath may without difficulty be supplemented by what is said on this point in the paragraph commencing with the words "Atque haec" of the Encyclical "Pascendi." (See Denz., n. 2081). The Modernists repudiate "all ontological realism as absurd and baneful . . . as an appearance beyond the scope of thought, which by its very definition denotes something absolutely unthinkable. We shall never succeed in explaining away this objection, and must therefore conclude, in agreement with all modern philosophy, that a certain type of idealism has obtruded itself upon us." (E. Le Roy, "Comment se pose le Problème de Dieu" in the Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale, March and July, 1907, pp. 495 and 488). Kantian and post-Kantian criticism had almost ruined the foundation of the traditional proofs for the existence of God, namely, the objectivity of the principles of right reasoning. The Encyclical "Pascendi" condemns this "phenomenalism" and reminds us that its agnostic consequences have been denounced by the Vatican Council. The condemnation reads as follows: "And to begin with the philosopher, the Modernists posit as the basis of their religious philosophy the doctrine known as agnosticism. Human reason, strictly limited in range to 'phenomena,' which means to the appearances of things exactly as they appear, has neither the power nor the right to go beyond these limits, and is, therefore, incapable of acquiring any knowledge of God, not even knowledge, by means of created things, of His existence. From this they infer: (1) that God cannot be the direct object of our knowledge; (2) that His actual intervention in this world of ours cannot be a historical fact. In the light of such principles, what becomes of natural theology, of the motives of credibility, of external revelation? The Modernists have given them up as belonging to intellectualism, a system which, they say, is to be considered as ridiculous, and long ago obsolete. That the Catholic Church has publicly condemned these monstrous errors is for them no deterrent. For the Vatican Council has decreed . . ." (here the canons of the Council are quoted which refer to the knowledge of God from the two sources of reasoning and revelation. See Denz., n. 2072).

The agnostic denial of the possibility of demonstrating the existence of God is, therefore, a heresy.

It would also be heretical to assert that God is not intelligent, free, just, or merciful, in the literal meaning of these words, but merely in a metaphorical sense. As a matter of fact, these divine attributes have been formally defined as of faith by the Vatican Council. (See Denz., n. 1782).

Neither can it be maintained that, apart from the knowledge we have of God through the sensus communis, and the propositions defined as of faith, there can be no question of a scientific knowledge of His existence and principal attributes; for this would be to deny the scientific character of natural as well as supernatural theology, and to maintain that these disciplines, whose purpose it is to define more clearly what we know by the sensus communis, or by faith, becomes hopelessly entangled in the error known as Anthropomorphism. From this it would follow that it is impossible to defend by any scientific argument the claim of the sensus communis against the objections of the Agnostics, Pantheists, Determinists, etc., and to explain satisfactorily the apparent antinomies raised against us. The Encyclical "Pascendi" draws special attention to the formula that "God can in no way be the direct object of knowledge," as being an expression of Agnosticism. (Denz., n. 2072).

Among the Agnostic propositions previously condemned was Eckhard's, that "God is neither good, nor better, nor the best; therefore, I speak incorrectly if I call God good, just as if I were to call black, white." (Denz., n. 528). Another condemned proposition is that of the Nominalist, Nicholas d'Autrecourt, disciple of Ockham, who said that "God is, and God is not, mean exactly the same thing, although in a different way." (Denz., n. 555). St. Thomas rejected as contrary to the faith the Agnosticism of Maimonides (Rabbi Moses), who said that God is not formally, but only virtually good, as the cause of goodness found in created things. (St. Thomas, Ia, q. 13, a. 5; De Potentia, q. 7, a. 5). We shall have to recur at length to this error of Maimonides when we come to discuss the nature of God and His attributes.

The Encyclical likewise condemns the theory of "immanence, which is the positive side of the Modernist system, just as Agnosticism is the negative side. Once natural theology is repudiated, . . . all external revelation abolished, the explanation of the fact of religion must be sought in man himself, in vital immanence and the subconscious self." (Denz., n. 2074).

Finally, the Encyclical declares inadequate the proof for the existence of God based upon the theory of immanence, as is evident from the following

paragraph: “If now, passing on to the believer, we want to know what, according to the Modernist view, distinguishes the Modernist from the philosopher, the first thing to notice is that the philosopher admits the divine reality as the object of faith, but for him this reality exists only in the soul of the believer, that is to say, as object of his sentiment and his affirmations, which are limited to the sphere of phenomena. If God exists as a separate being, apart from individual sentiments and affirmations, this fact does not interest the philosopher, and he abstracts from it entirely. Not so with the believer. For him, God really exists, independently of the believer; he is certain of it, and in this he differs from the philosopher. If you ask on what foundation this certainty rests, the Modernists reply, on ‘individual experience.’ In taking this attitude, they separate themselves from the Rationalists, only to fall into an error of the Protestants and certain pseudo-mystics. [See, e. g., the errors of Michael de Molinos; Denz., n. 1273]. They explain this process as follows. If we scrutinize the religious sentiment, we discover a certain intuition of the heart, by means of which, and without any intermediate process, man grasps the reality of God and from it concludes that He exists, with a certainty that far surpasses the certainty of any of the sciences. And this is truly an experience, superior to that of any mental process. Many look upon it with contempt and deny it, as, e. g., the Rationalists, but that is simply and solely because they refuse to place themselves into the necessary moral conditions. Therefore, according to the Modernists, the true and proper explanation why one believes, is to be sought in this experience. How contrary to the Catholic faith all this is, we have already seen in a decree of the Vatican Council. Further on we shall see that such a view opens wide the door to atheism.” (Denz., n. 2081). No one was surprised that Modernism was condemned, except those who were unaware of the definitions of the Vatican Council against Fideism.

The words of the Encyclical “Pascendi” concerning the Pantheistic tendencies of Immanentism have been verified in our own times. We find traces of this error, with slight nuances, both amongst philosophers and Christian believers. Thus Bergson, who holds to the principle of Idealism (that there is no such thing as a reality corresponding to thought), substituting for objective reality, which admits the ontological value of the principles of reasoning, what he calls the “direct perception of the essence of life, the flux of experienced duration,” is led to conclude “that there is nothing but obscurity in the idea of creation, if we think of things which are

created, and a thing which creates, as we habitually do, as the understanding cannot help doing. This illusion is natural to our intellect, which functions essentially in a practical way, constituted as it is to make known to us things and states, rather than changes and acts. But things and states are only views taken by our mind of the process of becoming. Things do not exist, only actions. . . . From this point of view we must conceive God as a centre from which worlds shoot out like rockets in a display of fire-works, always with the proviso that I consider this centre, not as a thing, but as a continuous projection. God, thus interpreted, has nothing of the already made; He is unceasing life, action, freedom. Creation, so conceived, is not a mystery: we experience it in ourselves when we act freely. That new things can be added to those already existing, undoubtedly is an absurdity, since the thing is the result of a solidification brought about by our understanding, and there are never any other things except those which the mind has evolved. . . . But that action increases, as it goes on, that it creates in the measure of its advance, is what each of us finds when he watches himself acting." (L'Evolution Créatrice, 2nd ed., 1907, p. 270). What name shall we give to this principle, which is the source of all life and of all reality? "For want of a better name," says Bergson, "we have called it consciousness. But this is not the narrowed consciousness which functions in each of us." (P. 258). "Consciousness or supra-consciousness," he says again, "is the name for the rocket whose extinguished fragments fall back as matter; consciousness, again, is the name for that which remains of the rocket itself, passing through the fragments and lighting them up into organisms. But this consciousness, which is a need of creation, does not manifest itself to itself except where creation is possible. It goes to sleep when life is condemned to automatism; it awakens from slumber as soon as the possibility of making a choice arises." (Ibid., p. 283). It is immanent in all that which is life and freedom.

Clearly this Immanentist philosophy of "becoming" is in direct opposition to the definition of the Vatican Council asserting a real distinction between God and the world. God is no longer "una singularis substantia" (one sole substance); substances or things do not exist. Neither is God "simplex omnino et incommutabilis" (absolutely simple and unchangeable). He is "a reality which makes itself in a reality which unmakes itself." (Evolution Créatrice, p. 269). He is not "re et essentia a mundo distinctus" (really and essentially distinct from the world), but "a

continuous protection," and can neither exist nor be conceived apart from the world which issues from Him. He is that vital urge prior to the intellect which reappears in all becoming, but especially so in that of which our consciousness has experience. This vital urge is called freedom; but this freedom, which acts neither intelligently nor according to any law, is a sort of blind instinct that reminds us very much of the "unconscious" of Schopenhauer.

This same doctrine, with slight changes in the manner of presentation, was held by the Catholic Modernists. In July, 1907, Le Roy wrote as follows: "Our life is incessant creation. And the same is true of the world. It is for this reason that immanence and transcendence are no longer contradictories; they correspond to two distinct moments of duration, namely, immanence to what has become, transcendence to what is becoming. If we declare that God is immanent, it is because we know what He has become in us and in the world; but for the world and for us He always remains an infinite in the becoming, an infinite which will be creation in the strict acceptation of the term, not mere development, and from this point of view, God appears as transcendent, and it is especially in our dealings with Him that we must treat Him as transcendent, as we pointed out apropos of the divine personality." (Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale, July, 1907, P. 512).

This theory conceives God as incapable of existing apart from the world in which He is becoming. Nevertheless, it is of faith that it would have been possible for God not to create and that He did not create from eternity. (Denz., nn. 391 and 501). The Modernists, it is true, affirm the divine personality in a pragmatic sense (that we must behave towards God as towards a person), but evidently such a view of the divine personality in no way implies that independence and metaphysical transcendence which is defined by the Vatican Council. In a former treatise we pointed out how these Pantheistic conclusions inevitably flow from the theory of immanence. They are summed up in the first proposition of the series condemned by the Syllabus of Pius IX, which reads as follows: "God is identical with the nature of things, and, therefore, subject to change; He becomes God in man and in the world, and all things are God and have His very substance; God is identical with the world, and hence spirit with matter, necessity with freedom, truth with falsity, good with evil, justice with injustice." (Denz., n. 1701) .

Immanentism, considered as a doctrine, is therefore absolutely contrary to the faith of the Church; can we say the same of Immanentism considered merely as a method?

6) Does the teaching of the Church permit us to maintain that the method of immanence is indispensable and that it precedes all others?

The new apologetic spoken of so highly by Blondel and Laberthonnière, though repudiating immanence as a doctrine, admits it to be indispensable as a method and asserts that this method is the only one that can succeed in coordinating the various arguments offered by the other methods in such a way that there results from it a valid demonstration; and that this method, therefore, holds the first place, because without it the other methods would be inadequate and ineffective.

Fr. Schwalm, O.P., examined this theory at length from a philosophical and theological point of view, in a series of articles written for the Revue Thomiste. This criticism was resumed by Fr. Chossat, S.J., in the Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique, art. “Dieu” (cols. 799-802 and 859-871). Michelet also pointed out the dangers of this method in a work entitled, Dieu et l’Agnosticisme Contemporain, pp. 246 ff . . . , and, finally, Fr. Tonquédec, S.J., attacked it in his book entitled, Immanence, an essay in criticism of Maurice Blondel’s doctrine. It seems difficult not to accept the conclusions arrived at by these four critics and several others. It seems that this apologetic by the method of immanence, thus understood, cannot be reconciled with the definition of the Vatican Council and it unconsciously revives the error of Baius and Jansenius.

As a matter of fact, in proportion as this method denies the validity of the proofs for the existence of God as given by the schools and traditional theodicy from Plato to Leibniz, it accepts the Kantian and Positivist thesis of the inability of speculative reason to know God with certainty.

M. Blondel states precisely what he thinks on this point in his book, L’Action, page 341, where we read: “A proof which is merely a logical argument always remains abstract and incomplete; it does not lead to being; it does not compel the mind to admit that such is a real necessity. On the other hand, a proof based on the total movement of life, a proof which takes in all action, will compel conviction. If such a proof, following the logical method of exposition, should have the force of immediate conviction, it must leave the mind no avenue of escape. It is indeed the special function of this action to bring them all together; by this means all the incomplete

proofs are united and form one synthetic demonstration; considered apart, as so many units, they are ineffective; united, they have demonstrative value. It is only on this condition that they will reflect the movement of life and stimulate the same. Under the dynamic influence of action, they will lose none of their efficacy." A few pages further on he remarks: "The notion of a first cause or of a moral ideal, the idea of a metaphysical perfection or of a pure act, all these concepts of human reason, vain, false, and idolatrous, if one considers them separately as abstract concepts, become true, vivid, and effective as soon as they are united, and are no longer a sport of the understanding, but a practical certainty. . . . The foundation for this certitude of the 'one and only necessary' is, therefore, to be sought in practice. As far as life in all its complexity is concerned, it is action alone that is by its very nature complete and expressive of totality. It embraces everything; and that is why we appeal to this same principle to explain the incontestable fact of being and the convincing proof of the existence of the same. The subtleties of dialectics, no matter how elaborate and ingenious they may be, are of no more consequence than would be a stone thrown by a child at the sun." (Ibid., p. 350). On page 428 we read: "To believe that one can arrive at the idea of being and legitimately affirm whatever reality there may be to it, without having gone through the whole process which originates from an intuitive perception of the necessity of God and of religious experience, means that one is the victim of an illusion." A few pages further on he writes: "There is no object of which it is possible to think and to affirm the reality, without having embraced by an act of the mind the entire series, without in fact surrendering oneself to the demands made by the alternative. To put it briefly, we may overlook the main point in which the truth of being shines conspicuously; that being which enlightens every understanding, and in whose presence the will without exception must come to a decision. We have an idea of objective reality, we affirm that external objects are real; but to do this, we must implicitly place before ourselves the problem of our destiny, and subordinate to option all that we are and all that concerns us. We cannot acquire the notion of being and of beings, except by way of this alternative. It follows inevitably that, as the decision varies, so does the idea of being. The knowledge of being implies that option is a necessity, being becomes known, not before, but after this freedom of choice" (pp. 435-436).

A. Valensin in an article written for the Dictionnaire d'Apologétique tries his best to bring Blondel's doctrine into agreement with the traditional philosophy, and believes that he has interpreted him correctly. He says (col. 598) : "The method of immanence supposes that attitude of mind in which, as a matter of fact and right, we distinguish, as it were, two phases in the knowledge which we have of being: the phase that precedes and that which follows the intervention of the will. The first kind of knowledge, that which precedes the exercise of free will, obtrudes itself on us. It is objective. It also appeals to us. It is for us a principle of decision and responsibility. We may call it, if we wish, a conceptual knowledge (per notionem). It leads one who makes good use of it into a knowledge that is, as it were, per connaturalitatem. This latter knowledge contains within itself the true germ of perfect intellection and veritable possession."

From this point of view there would seem to be hardly any difference between Blondel's general philosophy and, let us say, that of Ollé-Laprune, or even of St. Thomas, and it is difficult to explain the merciless criticism of intellectualism made by the author of L'Action. Fr. Schwalm and several others who agree with him must have been seriously mistaken, and the present writer must have been guilty of the same error in his criticism of the validity of the proofs for the existence of God proposed by Blondel. (See Dictionnaire d'Apologétique, cols. 952-956).

Is the knowledge which precedes option objective according to Blondel, as Valensin affirms, and as must be admitted if one wishes to defend the validity of the traditional metaphysics of the Schools?

We find the answer to this question in the author's work, Action, where on pages 437-438 we read: "The knowledge which, before option, was purely subjective and propulsive, after the choice becomes privative and constitutive of being. . . . The first [knowledge], which necessarily brings up the problem, and by which we are given an integral view, although often confused and condensed, of the order existing in the universe, is but a mental image of the object in the subject, or, better still, we may say (so as to impress upon the mind the origin of this subjective truth), it is merely the production by man of the idea that the objects of his thought and the conditions of his action are convincingly real. The second kind of knowledge, that which follows the free choice made in the presence of this reality conceived as necessary, is no longer merely a subjective state of mind; for instead of positing the problem in the practical order, this

knowledge translates the solution of it into our thought; instead of confronting us with what has to be done, it directs the attention to what is an accomplished fact, to that which is. Thus it truly is an objective knowledge, even though it is obliged to admit a deficiency in action."

This solution savours of metaphysical voluntarism; before freedom of choice we have only "subjective truth," "a subjective state of mind"; "the will solves the problem presented by the intellect." (Action, p. 439)

If, then, the knowledge preceding free choice can be called objective, as Valensin would have it, this word cannot mean, according to Blondel, a knowledge which has direct contacts with being, but merely one which is necessarily engendered by the movement of our spirit in determining phenomena. This, as has been said on a previous occasion, is the objective reality of an idea which is the object of knowledge, but not a sufficient means of acquiring a certain knowledge of reality. When this idea is ratified by subsequent action, it becomes the principle by which we get to know not merely phenomena, but being itself. This implies that, de facto, it corresponded to the reality before it was unified and vivified by action, but it did not correspond in its own right, by virtue of a conformity founded on its intentional or representative existence in the mind. The Encyclical "Pascendi," in its criticism of the Modernist doctrine, clearly distinguishes between these two phases of knowledge.

By those who have made only a superficial study of this question, the term "objective" will be accepted as expressing the traditional teaching; but by the defenders of the philosophy of Action it will be understood in exactly the opposite sense.

Blondel's own statements admit of no doubt on this point. On pages 426 f. of L'Action we read: "Finally, even when we feel the need of determining the idea that has necessarily been germinated in us of a subsistent reality, of affirming the existence of objects of knowledge, of defining the nature of this objective existence, we have first of all to consider only the inevitable sequence of relations that have been taken as integral by the consciousness: this is the science of the solidarity of appearances, the integration of which we are concerned in establishing. . . . To show that we cannot help affirming (whatever may be the value of this assertion) the reality of the objects of knowledge and of the motives of action . . . does not mean, despite the change of perspective, that we have gotten away from phenomenal determinism; it merely shows how, by the very fact that we think and act,

we must of necessity so conduct ourselves as if this order in the universe were real, and these obligations well founded."

Again, on page 463 occurs the following statement: "As for science, what difference could one discover between what anything seems to be, and what it actually is? And how does the reality itself differ from an invincible and permanent illusion, or, we might say, from an eternal appearance? If we consider the practical order, the case is different. In acting as if it were true, a thing possesses that which is, if it truly is." This reads like an abstract from the writings of Hermes.

The truth of the knowledge that precedes option, as Blondel admits, is merely "subjective." But what is the so-called objective truth of the knowledge that follows? Blondel replies: "For the abstract and chimerical notion of truth as a perfect correspondence between thought and thing, we must substitute this —that it is a real correspondence between mind and life." We must "substitute for the question of the agreement between thought and reality the problem . . . of the immanent agreement of ourselves with ourselves?"

"Metaphysics," he says, "has its substance in the will when in operation. Only under this experimental and dynamic aspect has it any truth; it is not so much a science of what actually is, as of what is brought into being and becoming: the ideal of to-day may be the real of tomorrow. But the ideal always survives, and is ever the same, more or less misjudged, and asserting its presence in proportion as mankind advances to intellectual maturity. Although the science of metaphysics remains variable, therefore, although it may be merely in a state of transition, like all the phenomena of life and thought hitherto studied, we may say that it determines what in the real transcends the fact. By this is made known to us what is relatively permanent, absolute, and transcendent, what the voluntary action has necessarily contributed to reality, given for the purpose of establishing it in the same—in a word, what constitutes the permanent contribution of thought and reason to the world's knowledge and the organization of human life." (L'Action, p. 297).

If the objective truth which follows option is nothing more than the complete agreement between mind and life, since the life here in question is subject to the law of change, and since it is not certain that our human nature, as such, is any different in this respect, I do not see how there can be any such thing as absolute permanence for any truth. From the last passage

just quoted from Blondel's Action it follows that truth has only a relative permanence. Is this opinion not the same as the condemned Modernist proposition which reads as follows: "The truth is no more unchangeable than is man, since it develops with him, in him, and through him"? (Denz., n. 2058). The new definition of truth leads directly from Blondelism to Bergsonism.

How do the general principles of Blondel's philosophy permit him to maintain the proposition of the Antimodernist Oath concerning the proof for the existence of God?

The Oath says: "I profess that God can certainly be known, and also demonstrated, by the natural light of reason . . . through visible works of His creation, as a cause by its effect." On page 347 of Blondel's Action we find the following statement: "I do not invoke any principle of causality; but I find in this imperfect knowledge of things and of my own thought, the presence and necessary action of a perfect thought and power." From such a statement how could one prove that God is essentially distinct from the world, or that the words do not convey the idea of an immanent God à la Schleiermacher?

The oath speaks of the rigorous demonstration which leads to objective certainty of the existence of God—to a knowledge which is said to be true because it is in conformity with the affirmed reality, and not simply because it conforms to human life. On page 426 of L'Action we read: "In pointing out that this concept [of God], which most certainly originates in the consciousness, forces us to affirm, at least implicitly, the living reality of this infinite perfection, it was not at all meant that we thence conclude that God exists. It was a question of stressing the fact that this necessary idea of God as a real being, leads us to the supreme alternative, from which it follows that God does or does not exist for us in a real sense. It is this alone which is of supreme importance for us."

Some years ago, in a critical study of Fr. de Tonquédec's book, we examined more at length the general principles of Blondel's philosophy relative to the three operations of the mind: conception, judgment, and reasoning. We found in that philosophy a subjectivistic and nominalistic theory of the concept, which considers it to be purely an "artificial abstraction," rendered necessary for the purpose of visualizing and systematizing the immanent appearance, and for the purposes of language. The judgment can have only practical truths, which means conformity of

the thought with human life, and not with the reality affirmed. Finally, we find in Blondel's system the nominalistic theory of reasoning which is a necessary consequence of the conceptual theory. Like Sextus Empiricus, John Stuart Mill, and Hegel, Blondel writes: "The syllogism supposes 'intellectual atomism'; its apparent rigour rests on the theoretically false and practically useful hypothesis of partial identities, and is no more than an approximation." From which it follows that logic cannot have more than a "symbolic" value.

Concerning the proofs for the existence of God, it is not surprising, therefore, to find Blondel writing as follows: "A proof which is but a logical argument, always remains abstract and incomplete; it does not lead to being; it does not compel the mind to admit the necessity of the real." (L'Action, p. 341).

If, on the contrary, as the Antimodernist Oath declares, "the existence of God can be proved by the light of reason from visible things, as cause from effect," it seems impossible to pretend that "it is by action that all the incomplete arguments are united into a synthetic demonstration; taken by themselves," remarks Blondel, "they are sterile; united, the result is a demonstration." (L'Action, p. 341). It also seems silly to write: "The notion of a first cause, or of a moral ideal, the idea of a metaphysical perfection or of a pure act—all these concepts of human reason are vain, false, and idolatrous, if considered separately as abstract representations, but they become true, vivid, and effective as soon as they are united, and are no longer a sport of the understanding, but a practical certainty. . . . It is in action alone that we must seek for the incontestable fact of being and the convincing proof of the same." (L'Action, p. 350).

But in what sense is this practical certainty an improvement upon the moral certainty of Kant, which was declared to be inadequate by the Fathers of the Vatican Council? We might say that it is, like Kant's certitude (to borrow his own terminology), "subjectively adequate, but objectively inadequate." If there is danger that the knowledge acquired by the senses and the intellect, when separated from action, may prove to be an illusion, may we not say that this action adds to the figment of the mind nothing but movement in the order of phenomena, and following in the wake of this movement, a chimerical joy M. Laberthonnière has in mind is no more that of the intellect which recognizes that it is in agreement with the object it affirms (veritas per conformitatern ad rem), but it is that certitude of the

intellect which knows itself to be in agreement with the upright will. As Aristotle (Ethic., VI, c. II) and St. Thomas (Summa Theol., Ia, IIae, q. 57, a. 5, ad 3), express it: “The truth of the practical intellect depends on conformity with a right desire (appetitus).”

In Scholastic circles, this kind of certitude is called “practicopractical,” and has nothing to do with metaphysics, nor with any of the speculative sciences, nor even with ethics, but belongs to prudence, a faculty which functions every time the necessity arises of deciding in the contingent events of life what is the just mean between the two extremes of excess and defect. This “practico-practical” certitude presupposes a speculative certitude of those principles by which the will is judged to be upright or good. This truth of the practical order, which consists in harmony with the upright will, may be in conflict with the reality. Not infrequently, people who are more sincere than intelligent, with the best of intentions and in perfect good faith, defend statements that are theoretically false.

It is easy to see that this kind of experimental certitude is found also in two of the gifts of the Holy Ghost (wisdom and understanding), but these gifts presuppose faith and charity. All Catholic theologians distinguish with St. Thomas between speculative and experimental wisdom, this latter being the gift of wisdom. “Wisdom,” says the Angelic Doctor, “implies a rectitude of judgment in conformity with the divine plans. Now this rectitude of judgment may arise from two causes: (1) it may be the result of a perfect use of reason; (2) it may be the fruit of a certain natural conformity which one has with those things about which one must judge. Take chastity, for example; one who is versed in the moral law, judges it in the light of reason; but one who is habitually chaste, judges this virtue from the conformity of nature (connaturalitas) which he has with it. Therefore, in regard to divine things, it belongs to wisdom, as an intellectual virtue, to judge of these things by intellectual research. But if it is a question of judging about these same things according to a certain conformity between nature and them, this belongs to wisdom in so far as it is a gift of the Holy Ghost. For this reason Denis the Carthusian (De Div. Nom., c. 2) declared that Hierotheus had arrived at perfection in the things which pertain to God, not only because he had acquired a knowledge of them, but also because he had experienced them in his own life (non solum discens sed et patiens divina). This sort of passivity, or conformity of nature with divine things, is the result of charity, which unites us to God, as the Apostle says (I Cor. VI,

17): ‘He who is joined to the Lord, is one spirit.’ Hence the gift of wisdom has its cause in the will, which is charity, but its essence in the intellect, which has as its own proper act to judge correctly.” (IIa, IIae, q. 45, a. 2). This is the true pragmatism, compared with which the pragmatism of modern philosophers is ridiculous. John of St. Thomas, in a series of brilliant dissertations on the gift of wisdom, has given us a full account of the nature of this judgment which operates “by way of connatural inclination.” (See Cursus Theol., in IIam IIae, disp. 18, a. 4). In this experimental knowledge of the things that appertain to God, not only does the will apply the intellect to consider the divine truths in preference to everything else (liberty of action), but from the fact that the will, acting under the divine impulse given to it by the virtues of faith and charity, has been completely transformed, divine things are considered by the intellect to be in agreement with one’s aspirations and good for one—all the more as charity increases. Finally, they are held to be true, since they fully satisfy the desires which have been incomparably regulated by the divine light of faith, which rests on the authority of God, as proposed by the Catholic Church. By charity, the object becomes a colourful reflection of the divine, or, as John of St. Thomas says, “sic amor transit in conditionem objecti.”

But let us not mistake this religious experience of the gifts, which presupposes charity, for faith, which precedes charity, and, above all, let us not confuse it with the natural knowledge of God, which precedes supernatural faith. If there is an analogous experimental certitude in the natural order, it presupposes the certitude of the sensus communis or spontaneous reasoning, which certitude is not experimental and does not differ from that furnished by the classical proofs, except by the difference which separates the implicit from the explicit.

We see that, for M. Laberthonnière, the affirmation that God exists is a free affirmation. We might view in the same way, as Fr. Chossat, S.J., remarks, our belief in a sense of duty, and say that it also is a matter of free choice. The will imposes the obligation. That we are absolutely in need of supernatural assistance before we can be certain of God’s existence, must not, therefore, surprise us. (Laberthonnière, Essai de Phil. Relig., p. 317). On this point Blondel writes: “It is not because we positively stand in need of the supernatural, and because it is a necessity arising from our human nature, but it is because nature demands this as a necessity and because it is an exigency that is felt within us.” (Quoted by Laberthonnière, op. cit.).

Such statements are in agreement with the immanent method, which may be summed up in the sentence that nothing is imposed upon us from without.

Concerning this method, the Encyclical “Pascendi” says: “We cannot refrain from once more and very strongly deploring the fact that there are Catholics who, while repudiating immanence as a doctrine, nevertheless employ it as a system of apologetics; they do so, we may say, with such a lack of discretion, that they seem to admit in human nature not only a capacity and fittingness for the supernatural order—both of which Catholic apologists have always been careful to emphasize—but assert that it truly and rigorously demands the same.” (Denz., 2103).

The sort of demonstration of the existence of God admitted by those who adopt the method of immanence—since they hold that the Scholastic proofs are inadequate—is practically a defense of the theory that, in our present condition, in order to be sure of God’s existence (since human nature left to itself is incapable of this), we have an absolute claim upon the necessary help in the supernatural order. P. Chossat, S.J. (loc. cit., cols. 864-870) points out that if some theologians admitted that, in our present condition, we cannot be certain of the existence of God without supernatural help, they were considering only the actual fact, or the conditions under which this natural potency operates, by which we acquire a knowledge of God; they did not deny this potency, nor in any way restrict its specification. They distinguished carefully between essence and existence, specification and operation, right and fact. What these theologians meant is that, in our present state, due to original sin, a supernatural help is required for the will to apply (operative order) the intellect to the consideration of God in preference to any other object, and also to eliminate (removens, prohibens, a purely negative process), the moral dispositions which prevent us from perceiving the cogency of the proofs; but they did not maintain the necessity of this help for the will in the order of specification, so that it might contribute in some particular way to modify the proofs for the existence of God. They considered these proofs sufficient just as they are.

The distinction between specification and operation, between right and fact, can find no place in this new system of apologetics. The reason for this is that the defenders of this system have discarded the classical proofs for the existence of God as unconvincing, and have chosen to adopt the Kantian view, that reason of itself, by its very nature, cannot prove the existence of God with a certainty that is objectively sufficient. From this it follows that

the supernatural—no matter what Blondel may say—not only makes its demands felt, but is also absolutely required by us. It seems, therefore, that this teaching of the modern school of apologists can no more be reconciled with the definition of the Vatican Council than could the views held by the Traditionalists of Louvain and the Fideists of Bautain's school. These apologists, though starting from different points, arrive at the same conclusions as those who held that the supernatural gifts belonged by right to the first man in a state of innocence, and who exaggerated the fall from original justice so as to admit with Luther, Calvin, Baius, Jansenius, and Quesnel, that reason is incapable of proving the existence of God. The 41st proposition of Quesnel reads as follows: "All knowledge of God, even natural knowledge, even in pagan philosophers, can come only from God; and without grace produces only presumption, vanity, and opposition to God, instead of fostering acts of adoration, gratitude, and love." (Denz., n. 1391). Abbé Laberthonnière expresses himself in almost the same way when, besides what he calls "the faith of love," he admits in certain others who reject God, "a faith of fear." "But to believe solely out of fear," he says, "is to believe and deny at the same time. Such faith is like that of an enemy believing in the existence of his enemy whilst hoping to crush him. Faith actuated entirely by fear, therefore, is not a sincere faith, because it contains within itself the desire not to believe. With it and by it, one plunges into darkness." (Essai de Phil. Relig., p. 80). "They speak and write," justly observes P. Chossat, S.J., "as if all the theories evolved on these questions by Protestants, Jansenists, and even by otherwise orthodox theologians, were tenable at the present day. We ought not to forget, however, that the notion of the supernatural, and especially the question of the possibility of acquiring certain knowledge about God by the natural light of reason, are not discussed from the same point of view to-day as they were forty or 400 years ago. . . . This fact fully explains why the Essais of Abbé Laberthonnière were put on the Index." (Dict. de Théologie, cols. 869-871). In 1913, all the volumes of Les Annales de Philosophie Chrétienne, from 1905 to 1913, were likewise placed on the Index for ventilating the same ideas as the Essais.

To present Blondel's views in a more favorable light, Abbé Rousselot proposed the following interpretation: "In the most primitive and spontaneous operation of reason, analysis promptly discloses to us the certain assurance that it is possible for reason to form a clear notion of

being, and also that one can get into such a frame of mind as to be satisfied with oneself, with the world, and with life in general. This presumption (I use the word in no disparaging sense) is natural, essential to the intellect, an a priori condition of its existence, and, as it were, the vital principle of each of its particular intentions. Now, in addition to this, in the present state of our fallen nature, transmitted by Adam to all his descendants, this presumption, without a special grace of illumination for the intellect, is unjustified. . . . Without a revelation from above, without a cure in no wise due to human nature, the intellect cannot come into possession of the truth concerning its real destiny. There follows a deordination of the cognitive powers of the soul, which interferes with the proper functioning of these powers, and which, without rendering each of them false or 'spurious,' separates them from what ought to be their means of full development and for which they are truly intended. . . . Viewing things this way, we can understand how supernatural faith alone, considered as a perfection of the intellect, comes to the aid of natural reason, and gives to the knowledge that one may have of any object, its full right to such a claim."

This interpretation recalls that of the older theologians refuted by St. Thomas in the Second Book of the Sentences, dist. 28, q. 1, a. 5, and also that of Vasquez, generally combated by the Thomists, and may be summed up in this statement: "Supernatural faith alone gives to the knowledge that one may have of any object, its full right to such a claim."

It seems scarcely possible to reconcile this proposition with that to which Abbé Bautain had to subscribe, to wit: "However feeble and obscure the light of reason may have become through original sin, it still retains sufficient clarity and power to lead us with certainty to the existence of God and to the revelation given to the Jews through Moses and to the Christians through our adorable God-Man." (Denz., n. 1627). In 1844, the Abbé Bautain had to promise "never to teach that reason cannot acquire a true and complete certitude concerning the motives of credibility, especially such as miracles, prophecies, and most particularly the Resurrection of Jesus Christ." (Denz., n. 434) . In discussing the definition of the Vatican Council concerning the power of reason to acquire a certain knowledge of the existence of God, we pointed out that it was precisely human nature in its fallen state that was meant. This knowledge, therefore, appears to be fully accounted for without grace.

If one wishes to adopt the method of immanence, one must not view it as an exclusive or indispensable method, so superior to all the others as to deserve first consideration. The classical arguments have demonstrative force without it, though we may say that it disposes one to consider them and it confirms them.

This doctrine was commonly admitted by the Fathers of the Church and by all those who have defended, as we shall do later on, the proof for the existence of God derived from the soul's aspiration towards the absolute and infinite Good. (See proof from the gradation to be found in things, as applied to good: the first to be desired, the Sovereign Good, the source of all our happiness and the ultimate reason of all our obligations). We shall also see that the argument based on love or on action would be ineffective and objectively inadequate, if it did not take into consideration the argument from intelligence, which presupposes the ontological and transcendental validity of the principles of reasoning, and it is precisely this validity that is denied by the opponents of the classical proofs.

CHAPTER II

THE POSSIBILITY OF PROVING THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

Our purpose is to point out that the Catholic Church has sound reasons for believing in the possibility of acquiring a knowledge of God by natural means. We shall, therefore, consider: (1) The possibility of proving the existence of God; (2) the proofs for the existence of God, and (3) the proofs for the principal attributes of God. Above all we shall strive to show that the traditional theodicy, conceived entirely from the point of view of the philosophy of being (an explanation and defense of the sensus communis), retains its full validity to-day, and that its arguments lose none of their force because of the objections made either by the philosophy of Phenomenalism or that of Becoming; for, apart from the philosophy of being, these are the only two conceivable theories.

In showing the demonstrability of the existence of God we shall consider: (1) The genus and species of the demonstration it demands, (2) the objections raised against, and (3) the proof given for, this demonstrability.

SECTION I

WHAT GENUS AND WHAT SPECIES OF DEMONSTRATION DOES THIS DEMONSTRABILITY DEMAND?

7) We are here concerned with a philosophical or, more precisely, a metaphysical demonstration. In the rigor of its proof and its power to convince, it must surpass the so-called scientific demonstrations of the present day.

It seems hardly necessary for us to point out that we do not claim to give a scientific demonstration for the existence of God, if by that term is

understood, as is often the case nowadays, a process that does not go beyond the data of observation and experience. But if reason tells us that beings and phenomena, which are objects of experience, cannot explain themselves, but of necessity require the presence of a cause which renders them real and intelligible; if reason furthermore establishes the fact that this cause must be sought for beyond the limits of observation and experience—then we shall have a demonstration, not indeed scientific in the modern acceptation of the term, but philosophical or metaphysical. (See Zigliara, Summa Philosophica, Vol. I, p. 157). And if we also bear in mind, with Aristotle, that science does not really differ from ordinary knowledge, and that any branch of knowledge may be truly termed a science only when it gives the "why" or the necessary raison d'être of what is affirmed, then we shall see that metaphysics merits the name of science far more than any of the so-called positive sciences. "Scire simpliciter est cognoscere causam, propter quam res est et non potest aliter se habere," i.e., to know is simply to perceive the reason why a thing is actually so, and cannot be otherwise. (Post. Analyt., Bk. I; Commentary of St. Thomas, 4th lesson).

The positive sciences cannot give us this propter quid, this raison d'être, that would make intelligible the laws, which, after all, are but general facts. As Aristotle expresses it, they remain sciences of the quia, which means that they state the fact without being able to explain it, without giving the reason why it is so and not otherwise. The inductive method of reasoning, which can be traced back to the principle of causality, enables us to conclude with physical certainty that heat is the cause of the expansion of iron, but we do not see "why" this effect is to be assigned precisely to this cause and not to any other. We account for the antecedent phenomenon merely by empirical and extrinsic processes of reasoning, and this is because we do not know why heat and iron are specifically constituted as they are. When positive science proceeds from general facts or laws, to explain the reasons for these laws, it can only provide us with temporary working hypotheses, which are not so much explanations as convenient representations apt to classify the facts. Scientists state that the distance traversed by all falling bodies through space is proportionate to the square of the time taken. That is a general fact or law; but what is the nature of the force that causes bodies to fall in this way? Are they driven towards one another or mutually attracted? If there is mutual attraction, how are we to explain it? It is a mystery. The laws according to which light travels have

been discovered; but what is light? Is it a vibration of a rarefied medium, the ether, or is it an extremely rapid current of impalpable matter? Neither hypothesis claims to be the true solution, excluding the other as false. The scientist's only concern is to give a more or less convenient classification of the phenomena.

The intelligible element found in the positive sciences is to be explained by the fact that they have recourse to the metaphysical principles of causality, induction, and finality. Since their objects, as Aristotle has pointed out, are essentially material and changeable, they reach but the fringe of being, and consequently of intelligibility. (Phys., Bk. II, ch. 1; Bk. VI, ch. 1). The objects accessible to our senses are hardly intelligible in themselves. They belong to the domain of the hypothetical and conjectural, to that which Plato termed δόξα (opinion). The intelligible world is the sole object of true science (ἐπιστῆμη). In fact, the certitude properly called scientific grows in proportion as what one affirms approaches nearer to those first principles which are, as it were, the very structure of reason—the principle of identity implied in the idea of being, that most simple and universal of all ideas, the principles of contradiction, causality, and finality. If the principle of identity and non-contradiction is not only a law of thought, but also of being, if the other principles (in order to escape the charge of absurdity) must necessarily be referred to it, then every assertion necessarily connected with such principles will have metaphysical or absolute certainty, and its negation implies a contradiction. On the other hand, no assertion relying solely on the testimony of the senses can possess other than physical certainty, and, finally, every assertion based on human testimony cannot have other than moral certainty. That is why, according to the traditional philosophy, metaphysics—the science of pure being and of the first principles of being—deserves to be called "the first of all sciences," for it is more of a science than all the other sciences. The demonstration of the existence of God must, therefore, be in itself far more exacting than is usually the case nowadays with scientific demonstrations. It must not only establish, by reasons drawn from observation, that the world has need of an infinitely perfect cause, but also why it needs this cause and no other. Moreover, the reason given must not be a mere working hypothesis, but definitive; it must necessarily flow from the highest principle of our intelligence and from the very first of all our ideas, namely, that of being.

This demonstration, though far excelling the empirical demonstrations in point of rigor and certainty, will, however, not be so readily understood by us, at least when presented in scientific form. As Aristotle remarked (Met., Bk. I; Commentary of St. Thomas, Lect. 2; Met., Bk. II, Lect. 5; Bk. VI, Lect. 1), the realities of sense perception are in themselves not so readily knowable, because they are material and changeable (the mind must abstract from material conditions, since they are a hindrance to intelligibility), but are more readily knowable by us, since they constitute the direct object of sensible intuition, and we acquire our ideas through the senses. Metaphysical truths and realities of the purely intelligible order, though they are more easily knowable in themselves, are not so easily known by us, because sensible intuition cannot reach them. The image accompanying the idea is extremely deficient, and the idea which we obtain through the medium of the senses, is but an analogical expression of the purely intelligible reality.

Between the physical sciences (which abstract only from individual matter and consider matter in common, such as, for instance, the sensible qualities, not of any particular molecule of water, but of water in general), and metaphysics (which abstracts from all matter), is the science of mathematics (which abstracts from sensible qualities and considers quantity as either continuous or discrete). It is, to a certain extent, a combination of the rigorous exactitude of metaphysics and the facility of the physical sciences, because its proper object, quantity, on the one hand, may in itself be defined by terms that are intellectual and fixed, and, on the other hand, it may be adequately expressed by the ideas we derive from the senses, and made clear by appropriate illustrations. In this way a superficial aspect of being is presented to us, evidently very different from pure being, which is the object of metaphysics. We cannot claim to prove the existence of God by a mathematical demonstration; the nominal definition of God assures us that, if He exists, He does not belong to the order of quantity, because He is the first cause and final end, two aspects of causality with which mathematics is not concerned.

Our demonstration will, therefore, be more exact in itself than any empirical demonstration could be, but it will not be as easy to understand as is a mathematical demonstration; to grasp its full force, a certain philosophical training is required, and conflicting moral dispositions can prevent a man from perceiving its efficacy. “Some there are who do not

grasp what is said to them, unless it is presented in a mathematical form. Others refuse to accept anything that does not appeal to the senses. That which is more according to general custom is better known to us, for habit becomes second nature. Aristotle observes that we must not expect the same degree of certitude from physics, mathematics, and metaphysics." (St. Thomas, Comment. in II Met., Lect. 5).

This difficulty, for the rest, applies only to the scientific form of the demonstration. Reason spontaneously rises to a certain knowledge of God's existence by a very simple inference derived from the principle of causality. The sensus communis need not bother itself with the difficulties presented by objectivity and the transcendental and analogical value of the principle of causality, but quite naturally arrives at a knowledge of the first cause, one and unchangeable, of multiple and changeable beings. The orderly arrangement of things in this world and the existence of intelligent beings prove that the first cause is intelligent; the moral obligation made known by conscience necessarily calls for a legislator; lastly, the principle of finality demands that there should be a supreme, sovereignly good end, for which we are made, and which, therefore, is superior to us. The manner in which we shall present the traditional proofs for the existence of God, from the point of view of the philosophy of being, (which in reality is but an explanation and vindication of the sensus communis), makes it unnecessary for us to treat ex professo of the problems arising from spontaneous knowledge. The teaching of Catholic theology on this point will be found in the Dictionnaire de Théol. Cath., art. "Dieu," cols. 874-923.

8) This will not be an "a priori" demonstration. Insufficiency of the ontological proof.

How shall we proceed in the philosophical demonstration of the existence of God? The Vatican Council tells us that it is from created things that God can be known with certainty (e rebus creatis certo cognosci potest). We do not, therefore, as the Ontologists contended, come to know of God's existence and His attributes by a direct intuition of His essence. This vision is the ultimate crowning of the supernatural order. The created intellect, by its unaided natural powers, can by no means rise to such a knowledge; created and finite as it is, the intellect has for its proportionate object created and finite being, and possesses direct knowledge only of creatures. (St. Thomas, Summa Theol., Ia, q. 12, a. 4). By means of created things it can come to know God, not indeed as He is in Himself, in that

which essentially constitutes Him what He is (quidditative; see infra, no. 32), not in the eminent simplicity of His Godhead, as if the intellect had an intuitive perception of this, but only in so far as there is an analogical similarity between Him and His works. The great number of analogical concepts derived from created things, to which we must have recourse in order to form an idea of God, is sufficient proof that we have not that immediate intuition of which the Ontologists speak.

Might not the existence of God be a self-evident truth (veritas per se nota), which needs not to be proved, as, for instance, is the principle of identity: "That which is, is," or the principle of contradiction: "What is, cannot at the same time and in the same sense be and not be"? Or at least, might it not be possible to give an a priori demonstration of the existence of God, abstracting from contingent realities? St. Anselm and the defenders of the ontological argument thought so. St. Anselm points out that existence is implied in the notion conveyed to the mind of every man by the word "God." When one fully realizes what is meant by that word, he says, one conceives of a being greater than which none can be conceived. But if such a being does not exist, then it is possible to conceive of another being, which has all the qualifications of the former, and which, in addition, really exists, and so it would be greater than the being considered to be the greatest that can be conceived. Therefore, if we wish to retain the meaning that the word "God" conveys to the mind, we must affirm that God exists.

The proposition, "God exists" or "the most perfect being that can be thought of, really exists," is, according to St. Anselm, evident in itself and also for us (per se nota quoad nos); and in this respect it does not differ from those other two principles, "That which is, is," and, "What is, cannot at the same time and in the same sense be and not be."

St. Thomas and many other theologians reject St. Anselm's view on this point. Without doubt, they say, in itself (quoad se), the essence of God implies His existence, since God is the necessary being and cannot but exist; but the proposition, "God exists," is not in itself evident for us (quoad nos). In fact, we do not know the divine essence such as it is in itself (quidditative); we can reach it only by means of positive analogical concepts which reveal to us the traits it has in common with created things; but what it possesses as peculiarly its own, this we know only in a negative way (non finite being) or relatively (supreme being) It follows that we know the Deity just as we know all other essences, in an abstract way. This

abstract idea which the mention of the word “God” awakens in us, though it differs from all other ideas in that it implies aseity or essential existence (existentiam signatam), abstracts, like all other ideas, from actual or de facto existence (ab existentia exercita).

To the a priori argument of St. Anselm we reply by distinguishing the minor. St. Anselm says: If the most perfect being that can be conceived did not exist, it would be possible to conceive of a being which has all the qualifications of the former, plus existence, so that this latter being would then be more perfect than the most perfect being that can be conceived. I admit that if this being did not exist, and was not conceived as self-existing, it would be possible to conceive one more perfect. But I deny the assertion that if it did not exist, though it was at the same time conceived as self-existing, then it would be possible to conceive of a more perfect being. Hence it is not logical to conclude: “Therefore, God exists”; all that can be logically concluded is: Therefore, God must be conceived as self-existing, and in truth does so exist, and is entirely independent of any other being, if He exists. (St. Thomas, Summa Theol., Ia, q. 2, a. 1).

Descartes (Méd., V, rép. aux object.) and Leibniz (Méd. sur les Idées, ed. Janet, p. 516; Monadologie, § 45) vainly endeavored to give to this argument, generally known as ontological, that logical exactness which it tacked. To regard it as conclusive in the form given it by Leibniz, two propositions would have to be established a priori: (1) that God is possible, and (2) that if He is possible, He exists. Now, whatever one may think of the second of these propositions (that it is possible to argue from logical possibility to a real intrinsic possibility, in virtue of the principle that the operations of the intellect have objective validity, and then from this real possibility to actual existence) the first proposition of Leibniz is certainly not self-evident for us, nor can it be demonstrated a priori. The only thing that Leibniz, like Descartes, can demonstrate is, that we cannot perceive the impossibility of the existence of God. So long as we have not a direct knowledge of the divine essence, we cannot give an intrinsic reason for this possibility, and never shall be able to do so. We must recall to mind what St. Thomas wrote against St. Anselm, and say: “Because we do not know of God what He is, we cannot know whether it is possible for Him to exist.” Moreover, the idea of a being, the most perfect that can be conceived, necessarily demands certain absolute perfections, such as immutability and liberty, which seem incompatible. Herbert Spencer developed this

objection, which is also one of the standard objections among theologians, at considerable length. Later on we shall see that the a posteriori proof is not affected by it. Leibniz claims to have proved that the infinite being is possible, because the negative element, being excluded from that idea, removes from it the presence of contradiction. It was pointed out to him in reply, that there is nothing negative about the idea of the swiftest possible movement, which yet involves a contradiction.

We cannot affirm the possibility of God a priori. We only know that our ideas of being, goodness, intelligence, liberty, acquired from finite things, can be applied by way of analogy to a reality of another order, and that if a reality of another order is required to account as cause for the finite beings from which we derived these ideas, that cause must necessarily have a similarity, at least analogical, to its effects. (St. Thomas, Summa Theol., Ia, q. 4, a. 3; q. 88, a. 3; see infra, no. 29).

Fr. Lepidi (Revue de Philosophie, Dec. 1, 1909) presented the ontological argument in a new way, which we are sorry we cannot give in full here. Notwithstanding the skill and profound learning displayed in this new method, it fails to answer satisfactorily the objections raised against Leibniz, and merely transforms the ontological argument into an argument based upon the contingency of finite being. Later on we shall show (nos. 20 and 38 d) that a trained metaphysician could interpret such a proof in a sort of intuitive sense: in that the intellect, fully understanding both the sense and the import of the principle of identity, the supreme law of thought and of the reality directly implied in the idea of being, would see “quasi a simultaneo” (almost simultaneously) that the fundamental reality, the Absolute, is not this composite and changing universe, but a reality in every way identical with itself, ipsum esse subsistens, the self-subsisting being, and, therefore, essentially distinct from all that is by nature composite and subject to change.

9) The demonstration will have to be a posteriori. For it to be rigorously exact, it must start with a particular effect, and trace this effect back to its proper (i.e., to its necessary and immediate) cause.

We cannot, therefore, demonstrate a priori that the essence of God is possible, and even less, that it exists; but there is another kind of demonstration, known as a posteriori. These two demonstrations, like every process of reasoning, proceed from the better known to the less known; but when we demonstrate anything a priori, the better known is at the same

time not only the source, but also the raison d'être of our knowledge. To demonstrate a priori means to give the reason why (propter quid) the predicate of the conclusion necessarily belongs to the subject. This demonstration presupposes that one knows the essence of the subject, which is the, reason for what has been demonstrated as belonging to that subject. Thus, it is demonstrated a priori that man is free, because he is a rational being and knows, not only this or that particular good, but good in general.

The a posteriori demonstration, like the preceding, is a syllogism that results in a necessary conclusion; but here the better known is not the raison d'être of what we know by it; only in the order of things known by us does it come first; in the order of reality it is not dependent upon our knowledge. The knowledge of the effect necessarily leads us to conclude to the existence of the cause. This a posteriori demonstration does not tell us why (propter quid) the predicate of the conclusion necessarily belongs to the subject; it merely establishes that (quia) the predicate refers to the subject, that the cause exists. It does not give us the reason for what is affirmed by the conclusion, but only the raison d'être of the affirmation of the object. Without knowing God as He is in Himself, as the ontological argument demands, we nevertheless can know by such a demonstration that He is. "To be can mean either of two things. It may mean the act of being, or it may mean the composition of a proposition effected by the mind in joining a predicate to a subject. Taking to be in the former sense, we cannot understand the being of God, nor His essence; but only in the second sense. For we know that this proposition which we form about God when we say God is, is true, and we know this from His effects." (St. Thomas, Summa Theol., Ia, q. 3, a. 4, ad 2um). This a posteriori demonstration proving that God exists, in itself is superior to any empirical demonstration; for, as we have already remarked, it will have to explain just why the world demands a cause corresponding to the nominal definition of God, and which cannot be attributed to any other cause. (See supra, no. 7).

This a posteriori demonstration, or demonstration from the effect, cannot be considered a strictly metaphysical process, unless it argues from the proper effect to the proper cause, which means to the necessary and immediate cause of the effect. "From every effect," says St. Thomas, "the existence of its proper cause can be demonstrated; because, since every effect depends upon its cause, if the effect exists, the cause must pre-exist."

(Ia, q. 2, a. 2). “Every effect depends upon its cause, in so far as it is its cause.” (Ia, q. 104, a. 1).

The proper cause in metaphysics is that which the Scholastics, following Aristotle, call causa per se primo, i.e., the absolutely first cause. (See Aristotle, II Phys., c. iii; V Met., c. ii; St. Thomas, Summa Theol., Ia, q. 45, a. 5; Commentary of Cajetan, q. 104, a. 1; John of St. Thomas, In Iam, q. 44, De Creatione, disp. XVIII, a. 1 and 4).

These articles of St. Thomas, taken from his treatise on creation and the divine government of the world (conservation in being and divine movement), are the veritable and indispensable commentary on the proofs for the existence of God as given in the first part of the Summa Theologica, q. 2, a. 2. Theological speculation follows the reverse order of philosophical speculation; it argues from God to created things, and discusses the great metaphysical problems concerning God and the world, not with reference to the existence of God, but as presented by creation, conservation, and divine movement.

Why does St. Thomas say: “Ex quolibet effectu potest demonstrari propriam causam ejus esse (from every effect the existence of its proper cause can be demonstrated)”? It is because, if any other than the proper cause is assigned, the demonstration is not conclusive. For instance, it would be false to argue: “This man exists; therefore his father exists also”; and yet the father is in a certain sense the cause of the existence of his son, who often survives him. In like manner, every phenomenon presupposes an antecedent phenomenon; but frequently all trace of the latter is gone, whereas the former endures. The agnostics also refuse to acknowledge the principle of St. Thomas just mentioned, but say that from every effect it can be demonstrated, not that its cause exists, but that it has existed. Thus, they would argue that local movement presupposes a certain form of caloric energy which has disappeared; that another phenomenon preceded this one, and so on, ad infinitum.

The answer which St. Thomas would give to this would be that in the principle just mentioned the proper cause means that cause from which the effect necessarily and immediately proceeds. Now, if the proper causes of effects, however particular and momentary they may be, are also particular and transient, then the proper causes of universal and permanent effects are likewise universal and permanent, and hence belong to a higher order. For instance, to say that this particular animal is the direct cause of this other

animal, does not suffice to explain the presence of animal life on the surface of the earth, which compels us to have recourse to more important and general principles, such as the sun, which is the permanent source of the heat required for the generation of plants and animals, and for their continuance in life. In like manner, this particular motor, which was itself set in motion by something else, truly accounts for the presence of this movement, but it does not explain the movement in itself; and if this movement (wherever it may be found) does not contain in itself a sufficient reason for its existence, it demands a universal cause, constantly in action and of a higher order, a source of energy which does not stand in need of actuation or conservation, but which produces and conserves all movement in the universe.

This argumentation is based on Aristotle's profound analysis of the notion of the proper cause, which we were able to give only in a brief note, but which must be studied for a complete understanding of the demonstrability of God's existence.

The principle here invoked, "that the proper effect demonstrates the existence of the proper cause," may in the last analysis be reduced to the principle of causality, which gives us the metaphysical aspect of being, and may be formulated thus: "That which exists, but not by itself, exists in virtue of some other being, which is self-sufficient." A contingent existence cannot have its completely sufficient cause in another contingent existence as dependent as itself; but both equally demand a necessary existence of a higher order.

The permanent causality which a being of a higher order exerts upon one of a lower order is called by the Scholastics equivocal or non-univocal causality, because it produces an effect which is not of the same nature as the cause. Thus heat is the proper cause, not only productive, but also preservative, of the expansion of bodies, of the fusion of solids, and of the vaporization of liquids; electricity also has its own proper effects, which are, as it were, its properties ad extra.

This causality of the superior over the inferior is, of course, particularly manifest when in the hierarchy of being we consider the influence which one order exerts upon another, lower order, for instance, the influence of a living being upon nutritive minerals, which it transforms into organic substances; in the animal, the influence of sensation and desire upon the action aroused by this desire; in man, the influence of the intellect upon all

the activities under its direction, and that of the will upon the other faculties under its control; in the sciences, the influence of principles upon conclusions. In all these cases the superior cause not only produces, but also conserves the effect. The evidence of principles not only engenders, but also preserves in us the evidence of conclusions; if the first disappears, then the second vanishes, just as light ceases at the setting of the sun. In the same way the attraction of the good which we perceive, stirs up and foments within us a desire for the same; especially is this the case concerning that good which we propose to ourselves as the ultimate end. When this idea of good ceases to be for us a source of attraction, then our desire itself and our activity are at an end; as long as the attraction lasts, it may buoy us up for years in our daily labors.

On the contrary, a succession of univocal or specifically similar causes, as, for instance, the temporal succession of human lives or of physical movements in the past, are at bottom but a series of effects coming from a higher cause; if the movement as such cannot be explained sufficiently in itself, it demands a prime mover, who in his turn does not have to be set in motion.

This is the deeper sense of the principle: universal and permanent effects have for their proper cause a cause that is universal, permanent, and consequently of a higher order. This cause may truly be called the first principle or highest foundation. Thus we speak of the fundamental truth of philosophy, of the fundamental principles of the sciences, of the foundations of morality. If there is a first cause, it must evidently be a cause in this profound sense. Empiricism, which accepts only univocal causes, material or accidental, which denies the superior validity of the principles of reasoning, which rejects all foundations (the foundation of induction, that of the syllogism, that of morality, and that of society), must end by denying, or at least not affirming, the existence of God. For the Empiric, who is necessarily a Nominalist, as for the ordinary grammarian, the two propositions, “God is” and “Peter is,” have about the same meaning; just as the world has no need of Peter, so it can get along without God.

Shall we fall into the other extreme, and return to the “ideas” of Plato, those supreme types, those “mothers” (see the Timaeus), which Goethe, following his natural mysticism, resuscitated in the second part of Faust? Shall we admit the self-sufficiency of man? By no means. All the material elements implied in any definition (such as that of man) cannot exist apart

from matter, which is their principle of individuation. (See no. 39). But it is not so with being, truth, goodness, intellect, and will; there is nothing material or even imperfect involved in their formal notions. This will naturally lead us to conclude that the proper cause of pure being and of all contingent realities, is a self-subsistent Being, which, for that very reason, is the Supreme Truth, the foundation of all truth, the First Intellect, which conceives the eternal types of things, the Sovereign Good and Supreme Love, and the pre-eminent Source of every good desire.

This idea of the proper cause of universal effects will assume concrete shape and thus become clearer in the general proof for the existence of God, derived from the contingency of existing things, and which may be summed up by saying that the greater does not come from the less, nor the higher from the lower. (Cfr. no. 35).

10) Therefore, it is not in a series of accidentally connected past causes that we must seek for the original cause, but in one in which there is an essential connection between the causes.

From what was said above we see that the proofs for the existence of God, if they are to refer the effect back to its absolutely necessary cause, must not get hopelessly involved in a series of accidental causes. This mistake is frequently made by those who argue that the hen is the cause of the egg, and the egg the cause of another hen, and so on, indefinitely. St. Thomas can see no reason why there should be an end to such a series of causes. “It is not regarded as impossible to proceed to accidental infinity in efficient causes.” (Ia, q. 46, a. 2, ad 7um). It is only in the order of necessarily and actually connected causes, the holy Doctor continues, that we must of necessity arrive at a final cause. If a clock consisted of an infinite number of wheels, each one depending on another in ascending order, there would be in fact no principle of movement, and it would make little or no difference whether this clock were wound up a hundred times, a thousand times, or ever so many times; for the one who winds it up is only per accidens the cause of its movement. So also, in the example which St. Thomas gives, for the sound of the anvil we ascend first to the movement of the hammer, then to the movement of the blacksmith’s hand, and, finally, to some first principle of this local movement. But it does not matter much whether the blacksmith makes use of an indefinite number of hammers: “An artificer acts by means of many hammers accidentally, because one after the other is broken. It is accidental, therefore, that one particular

hammer acts after the action of another. In like manner it is accidental to this particular man, in so far as he generates, to be generated by another; for he generates as a man, and not as the son of another man. . . . Hence it is not impossible for a man to be generated by man in infinitum." (Ia, q. 46, a. 2, ad 7um). If the blacksmith takes up a different hammer each time he strikes the anvil, the causal action of each hammer is not necessary in order that the following one should be able in its turn to strike the anvil. Similarly, there is no need that the son in his turn should have children, for him to be dependent on his father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and others as efficient causes. Neither does it seem to be metaphysically impossible for the world always to have been revolving on its axis; in this case there would have been no commencement of rotation; for, as St. Thomas remarks, "Quaelibet circulatio praecedentium transiri potuit, quia finita fuit; in omnibus autem simul, si mundus semper fuisset, nonesset accipere primum, et ita nec transitum, qui semper exigit duo extrema," that is, "any of the previous revolutions could be completed, because it was of finite duration; but in all things that happen simultaneously, if the world had always existed, there would have been no beginning, and hence no transition, since this always demands the presence of the two extremes." (C. Gentes, 1. II, c. 38). That there should be an actually infinite series of phenomena is not in itself an impossibility; for the series would be infinite "a parte ante" only, and finite "a parte post."

Aristotle, who held that the world and movement are eternal, said that this was an additional reason for assuming that there must be an eternal and infinite principle of all movement, capable alone of producing perpetual motion. As for St. Thomas, he taught that we know for certain only from revelation that the world had a beginning and is, therefore, not created ab aeterno. This depends entirely upon the divine will. (Ia, q. 46, a. 2).

That in a series of accidentally connected causes we must finally arrive at the first of these causes, is not because we understand what is implied by the term causality, but simply for the reason that an actually infinite multitude is an impossibility. But, as St. Thomas remarks (Ia, q. 7, a. 3, ad 4um; q. 46, a. 2, ad 6um and ad 7um), there can be an actually infinite multitude only if all the units comprising it coexist simultaneously; but this is not the case with an infinite series in the past; because that which is past no longer exists. Moreover, while it is evident that an infinite number involves a contradiction in terms, it is very difficult to prove the

impossibility of an actually infinite and innumerable multitude. In his opusculum, “De aeternitate mundi,” St. Thomas about the year 1264 wrote: “Adhuc non est demonstratum quod Deus non possit facere ut sint infinita in actu,” that is, “it has not as yet been proved that God cannot bring it about that there be infinite beings in actu.” In the “Quodlibeta,” which he wrote towards the end of his life, he recapitulates (No. 12, q. 2) with greater exactness what he had said on this point in the Summa Theologica (see Ia, q. 7, a. 4). The passage reads as follows: “To make something infinite in actu, or to bring it about that infinites should exist simultaneously in acau, is not contrary to the absolute power of God, because it implies no contradiction; but if we consider the way in which God acts, it is not possible. For God acts through the intellect and through the word, which assigns to all things their forms, and hence it must be that all things are formally made (that is, determined) by Him.”

Finally, in his Commentary on the Physics of Aristotle (Book III, Lect. 8), St. Thomas, discussing the Aristotelian proofs for the impossibility of an actually infinite multitude (proofs which he himself had reproduced in his Summa), emphatically says: “It must be observed that these arguments are probable, expressing the commonly accepted view; they are not, however, rigorously conclusive: because . . . if anyone were to assert that any multitude is infinite, this would not mean that it is a number, or that it belongs to the species of number: for by number a multitude becomes measurable, as is stated in the tenth book of the Metaphysics, and, therefore, number is said to be a species of discrete quantity; but this is not the case with multitude, which is of the nature of a transcendental.”

Among those who admit that an actually infinite multitude is not an intrinsic impossibility, we must include Scotus, the Nominalists, Vasquez, Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz. The Jesuits of Coimbra, and Toletus (in the first part of his Summa, q. 7) defend as probable the opinion that the actually infinite is a possibility. Just recently Renouvier’s argument for the finite has been refuted by Milhaud (Essai sur les Conditions de la Certitude Logique, p. 177). In our day mathematicians versed in the theory of transfinite ensembles are increasingly less disposed to accept as valid any of the arguments by which the notion of an actually infinite multitude is proved to involve an intrinsic contradiction.

It is important to note, therefore, that in any of the classical proofs for the existence of God, this disputed point must be taken into consideration. Just

why we cannot proceed to infinity, is because there must be a sufficient reason, a cause. Even if we could go back to infinity in a series of past accidental causes, as, for instance, transformations of energy, or of generations of living beings, or of human beings: movement, life, the human soul would still have to be explained. These accidental causes are in themselves insufficient, and demand a further explanation. To carry the series to infinity would not change their nature. As Aristotle remarked: If the world is eternal, it is eternally insufficient and incomplete; it eternally demands a sufficient reason for its reality and intelligibility. (Met., 1. XII, c. 6. See also Sertillanges, “Les preuves de l’existence de Dieu et l’éternité du monde,” four articles in La Revue Thomiste of 1897 and 1898).

This remark makes it unnecessary for us to discuss at length the first Kantian antinomy concerning the eternity of the world.

11) In this series of essentially connected causes, we eventually arrive at one which must be the proper cause, without any further affirmation.

The proper cause is that which is necessarily (per se) and immediately (primo) required. Of course, there are necessary causes which are not immediate causes (per se non primo). We can more readily understand the reason why of anything than we can discern its true cause. Aristotle says that the essence of the triangle contains the necessary though not immediate reason for the properties of the scalene triangle. These properties, in fact, necessarily presuppose that the scalene is a triangle, but they cannot be said to follow as an immediate deduction from the definition of a triangle; if such were the case, they would belong to every kind of triangle and not to the scalene per se primo καθ’ αὐτό καὶ ᾗ αὐτό (of itself and from its nature). (Post. Anal., I; Commentary of St. Thomas, Lect. II). The same holds good for metaphysical causality: for the proper effect of a cause is, as it were, one of its properties ad extra, existing by reason of something else, which is its principle of inherence. The proper effect bears the same relation to its proper cause, as property does to the essence upon which it necessarily and immediately depends. It is of this proper cause that Aristotle writes (Post. Anal., I; Commentary of St. Thomas, Lect. 10: “Quartus modus dicendi per se”: immediate necessity in the order of causality). He gives as examples: “the murderer is the cause of death;” “the doctor cures one,” “the chanter sings.” If one were to say, “the man sings,” this would not be an example of an immediate cause. To say, “the doctor

sings," would be an example of an accidental cause, since it is purely an accident that he who sings happens to be a doctor.

Other more appropriate examples of the proper cause could easily be given. St. Thomas frequently refers to the fire which generates heat; to the light which dispels the darkness; to color which is the immediately predisposing cause (formal object) of sight, as sound is of hearing; to being, which is the direct object of the intellect as goodness is of the will. In matter of fact, it is by color that we see things, it is by sound that we hear, and things become intelligible to us according to the degree in which they participate in being, desirable in so far as they are good. Thus we may say that the ens realissimum, the absolutely Real Being, makes all things real, just as fire creates heat, and light, illumination, in the sense that the self-existing Being is the proper cause not of this or that mode of being, but of being in general. (See Ia, q. 45, a. 5). In like manner, the primary intelligent Being is the proper cause of our intelligence and of whatsoever intelligibility there may be in material things. The sovereign Good is the cause of all goodness, of all attraction to the same, and of all obligation founded on the idea of good.

Many authors, in presenting the proof for the existence of God, argue from a cause which is not immediate, and as a result, their demonstration is not conclusive. If, for instance, it is a question of explaining the order in the world, we do not have to affirm the existence of an absolutely perfect being, but it is enough if we prove the existence of a primary intelligence disposing all things, one that is the proper cause of this order. In explaining local movement it is not necessary to arrive forthwith at the "Actus Purus," but it is sufficient to show that there is a mover which itself is not moved locally, as would be a world-soul (see Cajetan, In Iam, q. 2, a. 2). If this soul is itself moved by some spiritual force, we must explain the difference in movement (which is movement in general and no longer a particular kind, such as local movement), by recourse to a prime mover of a higher order, which does not have to be started in its activity. But even this would not immediately prove the existence of an infinitely perfect being. To explain the existence of contingent beings, all that is required is to show the existence of a necessary being, but it is not necessary to prove immediately the existence of a personal, intelligent, and free God.

The five classical proofs given by St. Thomas (Ia, q. 2, a. 3) ascend per se primo, necessarily and immediately, to five divine predicates, to wit, (1)

that there is a first unmoved mover of all things; (2) a first efficient cause; (3) a necessary and self-existent being; (4) the maximum in being; (5) the first of intelligent beings who directs all things to their predestined end. He then proceeds to show that these five predicates cannot be affirmed of anything corporeal (q. 3, a. 1), not even of a being composed merely of essence and existence, such as we find to be the case with spiritual beings of the finite order; but that they belong exclusively to the one who is Being itself (ipsum esse subsistens, q. 3, a. 5). In the fourth article of question 3 of the Summa St. Thomas finally proves that essence and existence are the same in God. This truth is the keystone of the two theological treatises in which God and Creation are discussed. Without it, the proofs for the existence of God cannot be said to be complete. The divine attributes—absolute simplicity, perfection and infinite goodness, immutability, eternity, uniqueness, omniscience, absolute freedom in regard to creation, omnipotence, universal providence, infinite beatitude—are all deduced from the single truth that God is the self-subsistent Being. From this it is also concluded that between God and the world there is this difference: He is essentially simple, immutable, and incapable of further perfection, and therefore necessarily distinct from the world, which is essentially composite, changeable, and imperfect.

Such, then, is metaphysical causality (causality necessarily and immediately required), and it is only upon this solid basis that we can construct the a posteriori proofs for the existence of God: for, “the proper cause of anything can be demonstrated from any of its effects.” The foundation of all these proofs is, therefore, the principle of causality, which may be expressed metaphysically by saying that “what is not per se or self-existing, necessarily depends upon some other being which is self-existing” (“quod est non per se, est ab alio, quod est per se”).

SECTION II

OBJECTIONS RAISED AGAINST THE DEMONSTRABILITY OF THE EXISTENCE OF GOD. EMPIRICAL AND IDEALISTIC AGNOSTICISM

Before establishing, by means of a reductio ad absurdum, the necessity of the principle of causality as well as its ontological and transcendental validity, it seems preferable to us to state the objections raised against this thesis by Agnosticism. Empiric Agnosticism disputes the necessity of the

principle of causality and also its ontological and transcendental validity; idealistic Agnosticism concedes to this principle merely a subjective necessity.

12) The objection of the Empirics against the necessity and the ontological and transcendental validity of the principle of causality. This objection and the resulting Agnosticism are derived from Sensualistic Nominalism.

Since the time of Hume the Empiric or Sensualist objection has undergone scarcely any change. The English Positivists, John Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer, and more recently William James, simply repeat the old objection, while the French Positivists, Aug. Comte, Littré, and their followers, stress its materialistic origin and its antireligious consequences. The Neopositivists of the present day are related to Hume and Mill in much the same way as the Scholastics who lived after the thirteenth century are related to St. Thomas. We shall consider first of all, the leaders of this school of thought, especially John Stuart Mill, whose Nominalistic logic will enable us to discern the true sense and purport of the objection.

The Empirics deny: (1) that the principle of causality is a necessary truth, and (2) that this principle permits us to get away from the order of phenomena, in order to ascend to the first cause. Hume, following closely the teaching of the Epicureans, the sceptic Sextus Empiricus, Ockham, Hobbes, and Berkeley, in reality denies intelligence, reason, or, what amounts to the same, he reduces it to the senses. According to his view, the idea expresses nothing more in itself than what is derived from the senses and the imagination. It is merely an image under a common name. This constitutes the very essence of empirical Nominalism. “All our general ideas,” says Hume, “are in reality but particular ideas to which a common term is assigned, and this latter occasionally recalls other particular ideas which correspond in certain respects to the idea that the mind actually has.” The idea, according to him, expresses nothing more profound than what the senses and the imagination furnish—it is solely an image accompanied by a common name. This is the essence of Empiric Nominalism. According to this sensualistic principle, if what the senses perceive is merely a succession of phenomena, the idea of cause is nothing else but a common image of phenomena that succeed each other, to which the common name of cause is assigned; all the rest cannot be anything more than verbal entity. In fact, Hume points out that, by means of the external senses, we perceive only

phenomena followed by other phenomena instead of the causes of phenomena. “One billiard ball impinges upon another, and this other one moves; the senses tell us nothing more. . . . A single case, a solitary experience, in which we observed that one thing happened after some other, does not justify us in formulating a general rule and predicting what will happen in similar cases. It would be, indeed, unmitigated temerity to judge of the whole course of nature from a simple experience, however exact and certain this might be. But when we have seen on every occasion, that two mutually related phenomena follow each other, we have not the slightest hesitation in predicting the one from the appearance of the other. We call one of these the cause, the other the effect. We take it for granted that there is some connexion between them. We say that there is in the first a power, by which it can produce infallibly the other. . . . How did this new idea, therefore, of a relationship, originate in the mind? In no other way did this come about but because of the sentiment which we have in our imagination of the connexion between these facts, and of the tendency which urges us to foresee the existence of the one from the appearance of the other.” (Essay on the Human Understanding, VII).

But whence comes the idea of this force, of this power attributed to the cause in producing the effect? Hume explains it by the contact which is established between inanimate things and the sentiment of resistance or the feeling of effort that we experience whenever our body gives rise to, or, on the contrary, opposes movement. “A living being cannot move external objects without experiencing the feeling of a nisus, of an effort; likewise, every animal receives an impression or feeling of shock from every external object that is moved. These sensations, which are exclusively of the animal order, and from which we cannot a priori draw any inference, we are, nevertheless, inclined to transfer to inanimate objects and to suppose that these objects experience feelings somewhat analogous, whenever they impart or receive movement.” (Ibid.). Are there any grounds for believing that the relation between cause and effect is anything more than an invariable succession? Not at all, answers Hume, for even in the domain of internal experience we have not the slightest means of knowing whether the voluntary effort that we experience is really what produces the corporeal movement which follows. This voluntary corporeal movement is not even the immediate result of volition. It is separated from it by a long chain of

causes which we have neither known nor willed (movements of certain muscles, of certain nerves, and of animal spirits).

For Hume, therefore, causality, in the final analysis, is but the succession of two phenomena. We are led to believe that this succession is invariable; but this belief is merely the result of a habit. So far as we know, there has always been a succession of contingent facts; but we have no assurance that it must always be so. Moreover, granted that causality accounts for, and always will account for, all the phenomena of the universe, what right have we to argue from this to a first cause situated beyond the world of phenomena? Arguing from this Sensualistic principle, Hume, like Berkeley, is led to deny the existence of matter; his only realities are sensations, phenomena without a substance. The same must be said about the mind. By a strange contradiction, Hume, in the beginning of his Natural History of Religion, esteems and appreciates the proof for the existence of God drawn from the order found in nature. “The wondrous arrangement in the whole of nature,” he says, “speaks to us of an intelligent Designer; and there is no philosophical thinker who can, after serious reflexion, for one moment suspend his judgment when he has placed before him the first principles of Deism and of natural religion.” (Concerning this contradiction, see Hume, His Life and Philosophy, by Thomas Huxley).

We find the confirmation and development of this same doctrine in the works of John Stuart Mill. He starts from the same principle: that concepts are but concrete images to which a common name is given. (Philosophy of Hamilton, pp. 371-380; Logic, I, p. 119). From this is deduced the principle of causality. Mill premises (Logic, III, ch. 5, § 2) that he does not mean “to speak of a cause which is not itself a phenomenon. I make no research,” he says, “into the ultimate or ontological cause of anything. To adopt a distinction familiar in the writings of the Scotch metaphysicians, and especially of Reid, the causes with which I concern myself are not efficient, but physical causes. . . . Of the [efficient] causes of phenomena, or whether any such causes exist at all, I am not called upon to give an opinion. . . . The only notion of a cause which the theory of induction requires, is that which can be gained by experience. The law of causation, which is the main pillar of inductive science, is but the familiar truth that invariability of succession is found by observation to obtain between every fact in nature and some other fact which has preceded it, independently of all considerations respecting the ultimate mode of production of phenomena.” From this

entirely empirical point of view “the cause of a phenomenon is an antecedent and invariable phenomenon; or, better still, is the whole of these antecedents; and we have, philosophically speaking, no right to give the name of cause to one of them, exclusively of the others.” Finally, the succession (of facts in nature) must not only be invariable in the manner that night follows day, it must also be unconditional. This leads Mill to conclude that the distinction made between agent and patient is an illusion. It is the principal objection of the Modernists against the traditional proofs for the existence of God that “the distinction between mover and moved, movement and the object moved, and the affirmation of the ascendancy of action over potency, all start from the same commonly accepted postulate, the postulate of morcellation.” The passage deserves to be quoted, because it shows clearly how Empiricism leads fatally to Radical Nominalism, since it freely admits that whatever is not immediately grasped by the senses results in verbal entity. “In most cases of causation,” says Mill, “a distinction is commonly drawn between something which acts and some other thing which is acted upon; between an agent and a patient. Both of these, it would be universally allowed, are conditions of the phenomenon; but it would be thought absurd to call the latter the cause, that title being reserved for the former. The distinction, however, vanishes on examination, or rather is found to be only verbal: arising from an incident of mere expression, namely, that the object said to be acted upon, and which is considered as the scene in which the effect takes place, is commonly included in the phrase by which the effect is spoken of, so that if it were also reckoned as part of the cause, the seeming incongruity would arise of its being supposed to cause itself. . . . Those who have contended for a radical distinction between agent and patient, have generally conceived the agent as that which causes some state of, or some change in the state of, another object, which is called the patient. . . . But to speak of phenomena as states of the various objects which take part in them, is simply a sort of logical fiction, useful sometimes as one among several modes of expression, but which should never be supposed to be the enunciation of a scientific truth.” (Logic, III, ch. 5, § 4).

It is in his Essays on Religion (first part, written in 1868 and 1870), that Mill gives us the conclusions from his Sensualistic and Nominalistic principles. He begins with the admission that “there is nothing in scientific experience that is incompatible with the belief that the laws and the

successions of facts should themselves be the result of a divine volition" (p. 127). But of what value is the argument of a first cause? "Experience properly interpreted tells us only this: that all change proceeds from a cause, and that the cause of all change is a previous change. . . . But there is in nature an element or rather permanent elements (matter and force), and we do not know whether these elements ever had a beginning. Experience affords us no proof, not even an analogy, which would justify us in asserting that a generalization based upon our experience of variable phenomena has established for us what seems to be the immutable. . . . Besides, since all change has its cause in a previous change, our experience, far from providing us with an argument in favour of a first cause, seems to militate against it, and make us incline to the view that the very essence of causality, such as we know it to be according to our limited capacity, is incompatible with the idea of a first cause" (p. 133).

Because of his Nominalistic principles, Mill likewise rejects the syllogism which, from the fact that there are human intelligences and consciences, argues by the method of causality that there is a first intelligence and conscience. On this point he writes: "If we say from the fact alone that there is such a thing as intelligence, that this demands as its pre-requisite antecedent the existence of an Intelligence far greater and more powerful, the difficulty is not removed by this one regression we have made. The creative intelligence, just as much as the created one, demands another intelligence to explain its own existence" (p. 140). Hence, what a Nominalist understands by intelligence is not an idea that can be applied to being, and by which we could identify the self-subsisting Intelligence with the self-subsisting Being; but it is merely a common image, with a name assigned to it, which refers to phenomena and not to being.

Mill plunges even deeper into Empiricism. "What proof have we," he asks, "that only the intellectual can produce that which is intellectual? Have we any other means but experience, for knowing what thing produces another of its kind, what causes are capable of producing certain effects? . . . Apart from experience and especially for what goes by the name of reason, which is concerned with the self-evident, it seems that no cause can produce an effect of a higher order than itself. But this conclusion is entirely different from anything we know about nature. Are not the vegetables and the superior species of animals far nobler and more precious, for instance, than the soil and the pastures upon which they depend and from which they

draw their nourishment for their growth? The purpose of all the researches of modern science is to convince us completely that the higher forms of life arc evolved from the lower, and that the more elaborate and superior organization in life must yield to the inferior" (p. 142). This is the same as saying that the greater comes from the less, that being springs from non-being, that the intellectual life is the result of a material and blind fatalism, that the thoughts of the man of genius and the charity of the saints originate from a lump of dirt.

However, Mill acknowledges that there is considerable probability for the proof of God's existence drawn from the evidence of design in nature. In fact, as we shall see later on, this proof, in his opinion, is an inductive argument corresponding to the method of congruencies, "a poor argument in most cases, but also at times a rather forceful one, especially when it concerns the delicate and complicated dispositions of the vegetative and animal life" (p. 162). This means that, according to the laws of induction and the present development of science, the most probable cause of the organic structure of the eye or the ear is not "the survival of the fittest," but a pre-ordaining intelligence.

Mill is thus logically led by the principles of Empiricism to admit that there are not really any convincing proofs for either theism or atheism. He strives even to prove that the attributes of the God of Christians, especially omnipotence and wisdom, cannot be reconciled; here, too, all his arguments are drawn from the empirical point of view. According to his theory, our imagination affords us glimpses of a God who exists, who is just and good; now it is not unreasonable for anyone who thinks so, to let himself go still farther and hope that this God exists, provided he recognizes that, if there are any reasons for hoping that it is so, there are no proofs (p. 227).

It is from his Nominalistic thesis on causality that John Stuart Mill draws all these conclusions.

The same thesis, though in a somewhat modified form, was accepted by Herbert Spencer. Mill, who was an idealist of the Berkeley type, did not admit the existence of an external world and believed that the principle of causality, like the other principles, is established by the repetition of the same psychic phenomena in each individual conscience. Spencer, on the contrary, admits the world of external things and considers the so-called principle of causality as the result of a habit which men have formed by having witnessed the constant succession of the same phenomena. He,

moreover, invokes heredity, in order to explain the tendency which we experience from birth to regulate our conduct and our reasoning in accordance with this principle. He writes as follows: “Habitual psychical successions entail some hereditary tendency to such concessions, which, under persistent conditions, will become cumulative in generation after generation, and this supplies an explanation of the so-called forms of thought.” (Principles of Psychology, Part 4, ch. 7, 3rd ed., vol. I, p. 466). Thus the vast edifice of our judgments is the result of experimental perceptions, the consolidated accumulations of centuries, just as our continents were formed by the aggregation of almost imperceptible zoöns. According to Spencer, there is a difference of degree only between animal sensation and the intelligent acts of men. “It is certain,” he says, “that amongst the automatic acts of the lowest forms of beings and the most highly developed conscious acts of human beings, we could set forth an entire series of acts manifested by the divers species of the animal kingdom, in such a manner that it would be impossible to say of any particular stage in the series: here intelligence begins.” Here indeed we find the explanation of the Positivist objection against the demonstrability of the existence of God: it is the subversion of the foundations of reason. (See solution in nn. 15, 18, 25, 29).

Spencer’s Agnosticism is but a logical consequence of this Nominalism. “It is impossible,” he writes, “to avoid making the assumption of self-existence somewhere; and whether that assumption be made nakedly (Theism), or under complete disguises (Pantheism, Atheism), it is equally vicious, equally unthinkable. . . . We find ourselves obliged to make certain assumptions; and yet we find these assumptions cannot be represented in thought. We are obliged to conclude that a first cause, infinite, absolute or independent, does exist; however, the materials of which the arguments are built, equally with the conclusions based on them, are merely symbolic conceptions of the illegitimate order.” (First Principles, pp. 30-32). This means that our ideas are merely common images that go by a certain name (Nominalism), images which refer directly to sensible phenomena, and which we, without any right, attribute to the absolute.

Taking up the Kantian antinomies, Spencer goes on to say “that the fallacy of our conclusions becomes manifest through their mutual contradictions. The absolute, as such, cannot be a cause; it would be related to its effect. If you say that it exists first by itself, and afterwards becomes a

cause, you are confronted with another difficulty: for how can the infinite become that which it was not from the first? If you say that this can be so because it is free, then you again contradict yourself; for freedom supposes consciousness, and consciousness, being only conceivable as a relation, cannot belong to the absolute. The fundamental conceptions of traditional theology are self-destructive. The absolute cannot be conceived as conscious, neither can it be conceived as unconscious; it cannot be conceived as complex, neither can it be conceived as simple; it cannot be identified with the universe, neither can it be distinguished from it. There is the same antagonism manifested between infinite justice and mercy, between wisdom which knows all that is to come, and freedom, between infinite power and goodness, and the existence of evil. Atheism, Pantheism, and Theism are wholly unthinkable." (First Principles, pp. 33-37).

But these three systems and the religions diametrically opposed to them, Polytheism and Monotheism, agree in recognizing that the facts of experience call for an explanation, and the "belief in the omnipresence of something which surpasses understanding, common to all religions, not only becomes more and more distinct in proportion as there is further development of thought in the religions, but it also remains after the various elements have mutually nullified each other; yet, it is this belief that the most merciless criticism of all religions allows to remain, or rather sets out in bolder relief" (pp. 37-39).

Further on we shall show (nos. 29, 39, 70) that these alleged contradictions pointed out by Spencer are the result of his Nominalistic Empiricism, which makes it impossible for him to conceive the divine attributes analogically. The univocal and simple conception that he is necessarily led to form of them, must inevitably result in contradiction.

William James has made no new contribution to this subject. Concerning the traditional proofs for the existence of God he writes: "I will not discuss these arguments. The bare fact that all idealists since Kant felt entitled either to scout or to neglect them, shows that they are not solid enough to serve as religion's all-sufficient foundation. Causation is indeed too obscure a principle to bear the weight of the whole structure of theology. As for the argument from design, see how Darwinian ideas have revolutionized it. The benevolent adaptations which we find in nature, being only fortunate escapes from almost limitless processes of destruction, suggest a deity very different from the one who figured in the earlier versions of the argument."

(Religious Experience, pp. 437-438). Of the divine attributes he regards those known as metaphysical, as meaningless. “Our conception of these practical consequences,” he says, “is for us the whole of our conception of the object” (p. 445). A few lines further on he says: “God’s aseity, his necessariness, his immateriality, his simplicity, his indivisibility, his repudiation of inclusion in a genus, his infinity, his metaphysical personality, his relations to evil, being permissive and not positive, his self-sufficiency, self-love, and absolute felicity in himself:—candidly speaking, how do such qualities as these make any definite connection with our life? And if they severally call for no distinctive adaptations of our conduct, what vital difference can it positively make to a man’s religion whether they be true or false? . . . Verbality has stepped into the place of vision, professionalism into that of life. Instead of bread, we have a stone; instead of a fish, a serpent” (p. 445 f.). He even thinks “that a final philosophy of religion will have to consider the pluralistic hypothesis [Polytheism] more seriously than it has hitherto been willing to consider it” (p. 526). As for the moral attributes, “as spiritual assets they are bound up closely with pragmatism; for the tree is known by its fruits. But this idea of a practical fecundity likewise vanishes in the universal flux of empirical evolution. The moral and religious ideas undergo a change,” as their insight into nature and their social arrangements progressively develop. “After an interval of a few generations, the mental climate proves unfavourable to notions of the deity which at an earlier date were perfectly satisfactory” (p. 328). From his further comments on this subject we understand James as meaning to infer that formerly the cruel appetites of a sanguinary god were proofs of his reality in the eyes of his devotees, and that, like us, they judged the tree by its fruits. What remains, then, of the fabric of religion? Nothing but personal experience and those direct assertions that we make in its name. James arrives at practically the same conclusion as Spencer, when he writes: “What the more characteristically divine facts are, apart from the actual inflow of energy in the faith-state, I know not. . . . The whole drift of my education goes to persuade me that the world of our present consciousness is only one out of many worlds of consciousness that exist, and that those other worlds must contain experiences which have a meaning for our life also,” ennobling and transforming it (p. 519). This unknowable transcendental world is none other than the subconscious or subliminal self, and it is this subconsciousness that James calls God.

The French Positivists, following Comte and Littré, have generally regarded the investigation of the problem of God not only as useless, but also as dangerous. For A. Comte, e.g., this problem, is vain, since the author of the Cours de Philosophie Positive (see 5th ed., Vol. III, p. 623) holds "that there is no essential difference between man and the brute beast, and hence we must say with Gall, that sensation, memory, imagination, and even judgment, are but various degrees of one and the same phenomenon that manifests itself in each of the truly elementary functions of the brain" (ibid., III, p. 627). The intellectual and moral phenomena belong properly to animal physiology. This teaching spells the abandonment of all our metaphysical theories, since "purely verbal entities would be superseded continually by real phenomena" (ibid., III, p. 616). To be true to his principles, Comte ought to see in the real simply what corresponds to the capacity of animals, and nothing more; for what distinguishes the animal from man, as Rousseau, following Aristotle, remarks, is precisely "that it cannot attach any meaning to the little word is." Comte is naturally led to conclude that "the traditional demonstrations for the existence of God must yield to the attacks of adverse criticism" (ibid., V, p. 590). Moreover, this belief in God is useless and dangerous. "Artfully to contrive by vain and laborious methods, first of all to bolster up the religious principles so that, thus deprived of all intrinsic and immediate force, they may serve as the basis of the moral order, would not this be, henceforth, like arguing in a vicious circle? . . . Beliefs, themselves incapable of resisting the universal development of human reason, could, therefore, serve no truly useful purpose; for, certainly, reason in its full vigour would not fetter itself again with those oppressive shackles which in its adolescent stage it had once for all completely severed. . . . Most of the time, does not the practical tendency of religious beliefs in the present condition of society chiefly consist in instilling into the hearts of the greater number of those who still hold somewhat tenaciously to these beliefs, a certain instinctive and insurmountable hatred for all those who have liberated themselves from the same, without, moreover, anything useful accruing to society from this form of emulation?" The spirit of the present day is to recognize no other cult but that of Humanism.

Is it necessary for the theologian to have received the gift of discernment of spirits, in order that he may correctly judge whether this extract from the writings of August Comte proceeds from the love of God or from pride?

Littré is of the same opinion. “Science,” he says, “does not declare that there is no God, but that everything happens as if there were no God. Positive philosophy accepts this declaration, and refuses to discuss further what can neither be known from experience nor in any way proved.” (Philosophie Positive, VI, 159). “Kant and the Nominalists have made of the metaphysical arguments a tabula rasa” (ibid., I, p. 238), “for the metaphysical entities are purely imaginary, and they can in no way be verified as facts; the existence of God deduced from them, has no more reality than they have” (ibid., X, p. 14). Continuing in this strain, he writes elsewhere: “Why, then, obstinately persist in inquiring whence you came and whither you are going; whether there be an intelligent, free and good creator? . . . You will never find out anything at all about that. Give up such vain chimeras. . . . Man’s perfection and that of the social order consists in paying no attention to such things. The mind becomes clearer in proportion as it allows these so-called problems to remain in greater obscurity. These problems are a disease, which is cured simply by not thinking of such things.” We find the same ideas expressed in the writings of the Neo-Comtistes, Lévy-Bruhl and Durkheim.

More recently the question of God’s existence has again been brought up by Le Roy in his defence of the Positivist objections against the traditional proofs. Le Roy adopts the Bergsonian type of Sensualism or Nominalism. “The general idea,” he says, “is due to the way in which our nervous system is constituted, the apparatus of perception being of very different kinds, all closely related through the medium of the centres with the same motor phenomena. Abstraction is, therefore, a setting-in-relief due to a motor phenomenon.” (Matière et Mémoire, pp. 168-176). “The idea is but a mediating image.” (Evolution Créatrice, p. 327). “Of becoming in general I have but a verbal knowledge” (p. 322). From this point of view, Le Roy is drawn to conclude with John Stuart Mill that “all the proofs for the existence of God are based upon the purely utilitarian principle of morcellation, introducing a distinction between mover and moved, movement and the object moved, potency and act . . . Substances and things are but verbal entities, by which we ‘objectify’ and mobilize the universal flux; they are convenient arrangements and simplifications for the name and action implied. . . . If the world is a vast connected whole of unceasing transformations, one need not think that this graduated and far-stretching cascade of happenings necessarily demands a first source. . . . To affirm the

primacy of act is a tacit admission of the same postulates. If causality is merely the outpouring of a full into a void, the reception by one object of the communicated contents of another, in one word, if it is the anthropomorphous operation of an agent, then well and good! But of what value are these idols of the practical imagination? Why not simply identify being with becoming?" Le Roy also invokes the Kantian objection which shall be discussed later on in this work: that to arrive at any conclusion, the traditional proofs must inevitably have recourse to the ontological argument. God, according to Le Roy, is "a reality in the becoming," who as yet is not and never will be, and who is transcendental merely in name. "Immanence and transcendence correspond to two moments in duration: immanence to what has become, transcendence to what is becoming. If we declare that God is immanent, this means that we consider Him in the light of what he has become in us or in the world; but for the world and for us He ever remains an infinite in becoming, an infinite, which is creation in the true sense, not mere development; and viewed in this way, God appears to be transcendental." We wonder whether the author grasped the full import of these words, for, as we have already remarked, his conclusion is manifestly opposed to what was defined by the Vatican Council. (See nos. 4 and 5).

We see what this objection of the Positivists against the possibility of proving the existence of God amounts to. Nothing new has been added to it since the time of Hume, who reduced every idea to a common image with a name, and causality to a common image of an invariable succession of phenomena, called by the name of cause. Everything which is not directly grasped by the senses and the conscience is but a verbal entity, and as for reason, there is no such thing. Apart from the phenomenal order, the principle of causality is valueless; and even here we have no assurance that it must be always referred absolutely to this order.

13) Kant's objection against the ontological and transcendental value of the principle of causality.

The Kantian theory of knowledge likewise undermines the foundation of the traditional proofs for the existence of God. Kant rejects Empiricism, because all idea of necessity is eliminated from this system and for Kant, Newton's physical laws, and also the moral law, are a necessity that cannot be doubted. But in his opinion, Dogmatic Rationalism is wrong in claiming to have an intuition of the intelligible, and to be able by a scientific process

of reasoning to conclude that causes and substances exist; he becomes involved in antinomies whenever it occurs to him to approach these problems. On this point the Empirics are right, and Kant is wrong. Metaphysics has not succeeded in establishing itself as a science, and never will do so; for that is impossible. The only science is that of phenomena and the Newtonian physics imposes itself upon us as a necessity. How shall we explain this necessity of scientific knowledge? We know from experience that a connection exists between facts, but experience tells us nothing about the necessity for this. It must, therefore, be the mind which, by consulting its categories of substance, causality, reciprocal action, etc., concludes that there is a necessary connection between phenomena. These categories enable us to establish a priori contacts between phenomena, or to form what Kant calls "synthetical a priori judgments."

The principle of causality, by which metaphysicians claim to arrive at the idea of a first cause, is only one of these "synthetical a priori" principles. We must agree with Hume in admitting that the proposition, "Everything which happens has a cause," is not an analytical judgment, for the predicate is not included in the idea of the subject. Nor is it a purely explicative judgment, which merely develops the notion of the subject in order to reveal the presence of the predicate, as, for instance, when we say, "What contradicts something does not apply to it," or, "All bodies are extended." It is an extensive judgment which really adds to the sum of knowledge, and therefore, is synthetical, as too is this other judgment, "All bodies are heavy"; but at the same time we are compelled to accept it as an a priori judgment, rendered necessary by the exigency of science. It might be expressed by the following formula: "All changes take place in accordance with the law of connexion between cause and effect"; it applies only to the world of phenomena and does not justify us in attributing all these changes to a cause of another order, which is not itself also a change. (Critique of Pure Reason, Introduction, § IV; Transcendental Analytic, II, c. 2, sect. 3, n. 3; Transcendental Dialectic, II, c. 2, sect. 9, n. 4, 4th antinomy). Such a concept of the principle of causality always postulates an antecedent phenomenon, never an absolute cause.

From the noumenal point of view, it may still be possible that there is a first cause. The idea of God is an ideal necessary for the completion of knowledge, which is irresistibly drawn to explain the conditioned by the absolutely unconditioned. The natural tendency of the human mind is to

conceive God as the prototype of all things, the supreme reality, absolutely one, simple, completely determined, possessing all the perfections which constitute personality. But this metaphysical demonstration is absolutely insufficient, for want of an intelligible intuition that would serve as a basis for it; the analysis of the concepts and of the principles has made this clear in advance. However, Kant undertakes to establish that the transcendental illusion hidden in the ontological argument vitiates the proof of God's existence derived from the notion of contingency, as also that from the teleological argument. (Transcendental Dialectic, II, c. 3). When we come to discuss these proofs, we shall consider these special difficulties.

Likewise, for pure reason, the idea of a personal God is a hypothesis which invests our ideas with the greatest possible unity; it is "simply a regulative principle," which stimulates the mind in the unification of knowledge.

Practical reason alone leads us to admit the existence of God, not by any demonstration, but by a free act of faith, a purely rational belief, of which "the certitude is subjectively adequate, although objectively insufficient." The existence of God and the future life are two inseparable assumptions that follow inevitably from the idea of moral obligation. The moral law says: "Do what

may render you worthy of happiness" (happiness and virtue are necessarily connected by a synthetical a priori judgment). Now God alone can realize the harmony between virtue and happiness. Therefore, God must exist. The moral unbeliever is the one who does not admit what, in truth, cannot possibly be known, but what is morally necessary for one to suppose. This sort of incredulity always has its origin in a lack of moral interest. The greater the moral sentiment in a man, the firmer and livelier must be his faith in everything he feels himself obliged to assume, from the point of view of practical necessity. (Logic, Introduction, IX; Critique of Practical Reason, II, c. 5).

Such, then, is Kant's objection against the demonstrability of God's existence. He does not deny, as the Empirics do, the necessity of the principle of causality; but he does dispute its ontological and transcendental validity. (See solution in nos. 18, 25, 29).

Kant, as Spencer after him, confirms his thesis by an exposition of the antinomies with which, in his opinion, speculative reason clashes, whenever it proposes to go beyond the range of phenomena. The antinomy which

most of all interests us here, is the fourth, which concerns the necessary being that is the cause of the world; but it becomes involved with the third, relating to freedom, if it demands that the first cause be a free cause; and also with the first relating to the eternity of the world and its extension, and with the second, which concerns the nature of cosmic matter.

It will be sufficient for us to consider the fourth antinomy, at the same time briefly commenting on the other two.

According to the thesis of this fourth Kantian antinomy, there exists either in, or in connection with, the world, a necessary being, which is the absolute cause of the universe. Without such a being, we could not explain the various changes that take place in the world; for all change presupposes a complete or determined series of causes or conditions, and therefore, postulates a first cause or condition, an unconditioned existence, not contingent, but necessary.

According to the antithesis, an absolutely necessary being does not exist, either in the world or out of it, as its cause. Granted that there is in the world a necessary being, this being either constitutes an integral part of the cosmos, or it coincides with the sum-total of phenomena. But if a part of the cosmos were necessary and uncaused, it could have no possible reference to the conditioned phenomena that succeed each other in time. If the whole cosmic series constituted the necessary being, this would be the same as saying that a hundred thousand idiots can constitute one intelligent man. Finally, if this necessary being is outside of and apart from the world, directly it begins to act, it admits a beginning of something within itself, and therefore belongs to time and is in the world, which is contrary to the hypothesis.

This fourth antinomy is involved with the third, which concerns freedom. Its thesis states that we must admit a free causality. In matter of fact, there can be no regress to infinity in the series of causes; for in that case there would be no first cause of the phenomena about which we are certain, and hence they would be without sufficient reason for their existence. But to have a finite series of causes, we must commence with a cause which does not have to be determined by any preceding cause. In other words, we must have recourse to a free causality.

According to the antithesis, there can be no such thing as freedom. A free act would be an act without any assignable reason for its determination as such; the free cause would pass from indetermination to determination

without sufficient reason. (See solution of this antinomy in Volume II, of this work, ch. IV, nos. 59, 61-63).

The two other antinomies relating to time, space and matter, may be passed over as of less importance in the discussion of this question of the demonstrability of God's existence. We have already remarked (no. 10) that the great classical proofs for the existence of God do not take into consideration the question of the eternity or non-eternity of the world. It is evidently not impossible to establish by an a priori argument that God created freely from all eternity, just as the sun and its rays of light are simultaneous. There would, in that case, be an infinite series of actually completed phenomena, in which there is nothing contrary to reason, regardless of what the first Kantian antinomy may say on the subject; for this series would be infinite only a parte ante, and completed a parte post. The objection that creation by God could have had no beginning in time, simply because no sufficient reason can be given why the world should begin to exist at a certain moment rather than at any other, again brings up the same difficulty as that about freedom. If freedom involves no contradiction, then creation in time is a possibility.

As for the second antinomy, which concerns divisible matter, or matter which is not infinite in extension, we shall discuss this problem in connection with the principle of substance (see no. 23).

Kant solves the antinomies of time, space, and matter by rejecting both thesis and antithesis. It cannot be said of the world, as a thing in itself, either that it is finite or that it is infinite in time and space; neither that it is composed of simple parts or that it is divisible ad infinitum. Space and time are the a priori forms of sensibility.

As for freedom and necessary being, they cannot exist in the phenomenal or sensible order; but Kant sees no reason why they could not exist in the noumenal or intelligible order; and that is all that speculative reason can say about it: for it is unable to prove that God exists.

14) The general principle of modern agnosticism.

By way of a brief summary, we may say that Kantian Empiricism and Idealism are two phases of Agnosticism. As the Encyclical "Pascendi" remarks, the general principle of Agnosticism is nothing else but Phenomenalism. "Human reason strictly limited to the sphere of things phenomenal, which means to the appearances of things, and precisely such as they appear, has neither the power nor the right to go beyond these limits;

hence it cannot rise up to God, not even so much as know whether He exists through the medium of created things." (Denz., 2072). Human reason can have knowledge only of phenomena and of the laws by which they are governed. Our ideas, even the very first ones implied in the first principles, have merely phenomenal, but no ontological, validity. From them we can form no concept of the substantial being, if such a being exists under the veil of these phenomena. With far more reason we may say that they have no transcendental value; for they do not permit us to know God, the transcendental Being, supposing that He really exists.

The first principles include such primary notions as being, essence, existence, unity, identity, truth, goodness, efficient and final cause, and, as a consequence, intelligence essentially related to being, as also volition essentially related to goodness. The corresponding first principles are those of identity, contradiction, sufficient reason, causality, finality, to which may be added the following axioms: (1) Whatever is a subject of existence is called substance; (2) the intelligibility of anything corresponds to the degree of its participation in being. (Nihil est intelligibile nisi in quantum est in actu); (3) only that can be the object of volition which appeals to one as being good. (Nihil volitum nisi praecognitum ut conveniens).

By ontological validity we understand the inherent aptness of these first principles to make known to us not only the phenomena previously perceived by the senses or by consciousness, but also being itself (τὸ ὂν), the senses revealing the presence of the same to us by means of these phenomena.

By transcendent validity we mean that these first ideas are in themselves apt to convey to us a true knowledge of God, considered as the first transcendental and non-immanent cause. The principal ideas of this type are called by the Scholastics, transcendentals; though the term is used in a different sense, meaning that such ideas transcend not only created beings, but also the limits of the genera or the categories and may be found according to their various modes in all these genera. Thus, being and the properties of being, such as unity, truth, goodness, quality, relation, action, passion, place and time, are found in varying degrees in each of them.

This twofold validity, ontological and transcendental, of first ideas and first principles, is generally rejected by agnostics.

Empirical Agnosticism (such, for instance, as we find in the writings of Spencer, Mill or W. James) rejects it, since it reduces first ideas to mere

composite ideas, to which a general name is given. It is the most radical form of Nominalism. These composite images, formed according to the laws of association of particular images, the residua of sensation, are such that the similarities between the ideas have a constructive and the differences between them a neutralizing effect. Just like sensation, they represent merely sensible phenomena. From this point of view substance is simply a collection of phenomena, and causality a succession of phenomena that cannot be said really to have been produced.

Personality is nothing else but a sequence of interior phenomena mysteriously grouped together by our consciousness of them. Reason can have knowledge only of phenomena, because between it and the senses there is no essential difference.

In the idealistic Agnosticism of Kant and his disciples, the neocritics, the ontological and transcendental validity of first ideas finds no acceptance, since these are reduced to purely subjective forms of thought, the sole purpose of the names being to indicate the various groups of phenomena. Causality is but a subjective form, uniting the phenomena which occur successively in time.

Agnosticism, whether empirical or idealistic, as a general rule confirms its thesis by an exposition of the antinomies in which, as it claims, reason always ends whenever it seeks to transcend phenomena. Briefly, they say that, on the one hand, a necessary and unconditioned being is required to explain this world of ours; on the other hand, the unconditioned cannot be a cause, for it would come into relation with its effect. If, to safeguard its independence, we say that it was first of all self-existent and afterwards began to act, we find ourselves obliged to admit that it had a beginning, which is an open contradiction. (Fourth antinomy of Kant and Spencer.)

If we say that it can act when it so wishes, because it is free, we find ourselves confronted with the special antinomy of freedom. The free act, which, on the one hand, seems to be a requisite, is, on the other hand, without a determining cause, without a sufficient reason. (Third antinomy of Kant). We also get in conflict with the antinomy relating to time; for if the world had a beginning in time, no cogent reason could be given why it should have begun at a certain moment in time rather than at any other. (First antinomy of Kant). Finally, freedom presupposes consciousness, and since we cannot conceive of consciousness except as a relation implying a

duality consisting of subject and object, it cannot be predicated of the absolute, which must be both one and simple (Spencer, Fichte).

The fundamental conceptions of traditional theology are irreconcilable. The absolute, on the one hand, must be conceived as absolutely simple, while on the other hand we must attribute to it a multiplicity of perfections which it cannot formally possess without their destroying its simplicity. In addition to these antinomies, we have the classical difficulties as to how infinite justice can be reconciled with infinite mercy, foreknowledge with freedom, the omnipotence of an infinitely good God with the existence of evil.

Thus, these antinomies seem to confirm the general principle of Agnosticism, which, as we have seen, is nothing else but Phenomenalism, or the negation of the ontological and transcendental validity of reason.

All the objections raised against the demonstrability of God's existence can easily be traced to the Empirics or Idealists.

SECTION III

PROOF OF THE DEMONSTRABILITY OF GOD'S EXISTENCE

To prove this demonstrability we shall defend: (1) the ontological validity of first ideas and first principles, and at the same time show the necessity of these principles; (2) their transcendental validity. The ontological range of first ideas is essentially presupposed by their transcendental validity. It is clear that if these ideas have but a phenomenal import, and do not enable us to detect the substantial being underlying the phenomena, they cannot be the means of our reaching God, the first transcendental cause.

Perhaps some may be surprised that so many pages of this book are taken up with the discussion of the abstractive intuition of intelligible being and of the first laws of being. The reason is that it seems to us impossible to reply to the current objections against the traditional proofs for the existence of God, without recurring to these preliminary fundamentals of general metaphysics concerning being, identity, becoming, multiple, substance, causality, and finality, If there are any ideas that are of profound and permanent significance from an apologetic point of view, may we not say that it is above all these first notions which demand our serious

consideration? From their analysis we obtain an explanation and justification of the senses communis or natural reason.

ARTICLE I

THE ONTOLOGICAL VALIDITY OF FIRST IDEAS AND FIRST PRINCIPLES

The agnostic denial of the ontological validity of first ideas and their correlative first principles is nothing else but the negation of the abstractive intuition of the intelligible, commonly called by St. Thomas and the Scholastics “the simple apprehension of the intelligible in the sensible,” or “indivisibilium intelligentia.”

Empirical Nominalism reduces the concept to a composite image with a common name. According to Kant, the concept is merely an a priori form of thought, its sole purpose being to unite phenomena. According to these theories, all intuition of the intelligible, no matter how imperfect, is thus suppressed.

We certainly have no intuition of intelligible being considered in its pure state, as if we were pure spirits. This was the error of Plato, Spinoza, and the Ontologists. But we have a certain intuition of intelligible being, derived by the process of abstraction from being as made known to us by the senses.

“Circa naturas rerum sensibilium primo figitur intuitus nostri intellectus, qui ratio proprie dicitur. Ex hoc autem ulterius assurgit ad cognoscendum spiritum creatum (it is to the natures of things as presented by the senses that our intellect first of all is directed, and this act is rightly called reason. From that, however, it proceeds farther, to acquire a knowledge of the purely immaterial in creation).” (St. Thomas, De Veritate, q. 15, a. 1, ad 7um). Just because man is not an angel, we must not, like the Empirics, practically identify him with the beast, nor must we claim, as Kant does, that his intellectual life is perhaps but a well-connected dream.

It is this imperfect intuition of the intelligible, united with abstraction, which we must briefly explain before we defend its ontological validity.

15) The intellectual apprehension of intelligible being and the intuition of its first principles.

What is meant by this imperfect intuition, united with abstraction, is sufficiently explained by St. Thomas in the First Part of his Summa Theologica, question 85, article 1. The cognizable object, he says, is

proportional to the cognitive faculty. If this faculty is, like that of any of the senses, dependent upon some corporeal organ, it can have knowledge only of that which is material and sensible, precisely in so far as it is material and sensible. In the case of pure spirits, since the cognitive faculty is intrinsically and extrinsically independent of any corporeal organ, its proper object is immaterial being, not sensible, but purely intelligible; and if it has any knowledge of material things, this can be only because it views them from a higher plane, in that it has a direct intuition of them in the purely intelligible. Finally, if the cognitive faculty is, like the human intellect, intrinsically independent of any bodily organ, but nevertheless united with the sensitive faculties, its proper object is intelligible being as existing in sensible and individual matter, but not precisely as existing in such matter. Now, to know what happens to exist in sensible and individual matter, but not just as existing in such matter, is to abstract the immaterial from the sensible.

So then, whereas the pure spirit views material things from a higher plane, in that it knows them through the immaterial: the human intellect reaches the immaterial from a lower level, through the immateriality hidden under the veil of things material. (For a fuller development of this subject see St. Thomas, q. 85, a. 1.).

Whatever the Agnostics may say about it, this consideration or imperfect perception of our intellect differs essentially from sensible intuition, in that it penetrates beyond the sensible phenomena. “The word intelligence,” says St. Thomas (IIa IIae, q. 8, a. 1) “signifies a certain intimate knowledge, for it is derived from intus legere, which means, to read what is within (to read in anything its sufficient reason for existing). And this is evident when we observe the difference between the intellect and the senses. In matter of fact, sensible knowledge is concerned only with external and sensible qualities. Intellectual knowledge, on the contrary, penetrates to the very essence of a thing. The proper object of the human intellect is that essence or quiddity of sensible things, and of this it has at least a confused knowledge. [The animal sees the color of the plant, but we know what that plant is—matter endowed with vegetative life; and we know enough of the lower forms of life to realize that the smallest blade of grass, because it has life, is worth more than all the gold found in the earth. See Aristotle, De Anima, Bk. III, c. VI; St. Thomas, Lect. 11]. The specific nature of a thing is hidden under its accidents, just as the meaning of anything is contained in

the written or uttered words, just as by means of symbols truth is expressed. . . . And the stronger is the light of reason, the better it can penetrate to the innermost nature of things."

Without a doubt, the natural light of our mind, while united with the body, is feeble when compared with the angelic, and above all with the divine intellect; still it is an intellectual light, and if it does not give us an immediate and distinct intuition of the essences of things, it at least acquires, in a general and confused manner, from the sensible phenomena, a knowledge of intelligible being, and its most general laws, known as first principles.

This first knowledge is truly an apprehension, a mental perception, an imperfect intuition, associated with abstraction. The intellect considers, in sensible things, intelligible being and its most general aspects, without actually considering the sensible qualities; just as with words it is not the arrangement of the letters that arrests the attention, but the meaning of the words. This simple apprehension of intelligible being and the intuition of its first principles enables the mind to acquire a more complex knowledge by subsequent reasoning, and it judges of the validity of the same by referring again to those principles by means of which it obtained such knowledge. (See IIa IIae, q. 8, a. 1, ad 1 and 2; Ia, q. 79, a. 8 and 9; and De Veritate, q. 1, a. 12; q. 15, a. 1, Whether intellect and reason are different faculties). Hence, all reasoning starts first from intuition and ends again in this intellectual intuition by a reduction of all things to first principles. (See Ia, q. 79, a. 8). Therefore, our reason deserves to be called intelligence.

If our intellect were more powerful, there would be no need of this investigation, which by a series of judgments and conclusions proceeds from first to more complex ideas, from a confused knowledge of essences to a more distinct knowledge of them (definition), and then, by means of this knowledge, deduces the various properties of a being. By a simple act of intuition the intellect would then have all at once a perfect knowledge of things; it would have a direct and distinct perception of their essences, and in them their properties. It would instantaneously comprehend the full import of the principles and would immediately perceive in them the truth of the conclusions. It is in this manner that the Divine Intellect knows all possible truths by a simple intuition of the Divine Essence. And the angels are so far superior to us that they know a greater number of things by means of fewer ideas, immediately perceiving them in all their aspects. The angels

may be viewed as spheres of intellectual light, those of the higher orders becoming brighter, the nearer they are to God; and those of the lower orders gradually flickering and finally dying out in the obscurity of material things. (See Ia, q. 85, a. 5; q. 58, a. 3 and 4).

Our power of intuition is feeble, and that is why it is so divided (morcelated). Nevertheless, it is truly an intellectual intuition, an intellection infinitely superior to sensation. It is feeble and cannot immediately, by its own power, reach the source of all that is intelligible, namely, the Divine Essence. It cannot perceive things in the brightness of their pure intelligibility, but only in the obscurity of the senses. The reason for this is that our intellect is united with a body, and in point of mental vision is, as Aristotle remarks (II Met., c. 1), like the owl, whose power of vision is so feeble that it is blinded by the light of the sun and can see only at night. (S. theol., Ia, q. 76, a. 5).

Because our power of intellectual intuition is feeble, and cannot grasp the intelligible essences of things except in the obscurity of sensible qualities, thus slowly deducing their properties, it is of necessity divided (morcelated). It may be compared with the eyes of certain insects, in which the image of things seen resembles a sort of mosaic, which sufficiently preserves the general outline of the objects, though no longer clearly distinguished from each other.

Nevertheless, as soon as we are able to reason, it is only in the obscurity of things perceived by the senses that we detect intelligible being and its fundamental principles. “That being is what our intellect first of all sees in anything,” is a frequently recurring statement of St. Thomas. “This is what is more known for it, and by which it knows everything else; and every idea presupposes the idea of being, just as every demonstration is based upon the first principles of being.”

St. Thomas often mentions also the other first concepts which, together with that of being, are included in the first principles; for instance, unity, truth, goodness, etc.

16) How shall we defend the ontological validity of our intellect and of its first ideas?

This ontological validity cannot be demonstrated by any direct method, for, like the necessity of first principles, it is an immediately evident truth. The immediately connected subject and predicate do not admit of a demonstrative middle term. All that we can do is to explain the meaning of

the subject and the predicate, what is meant by intellect or the idea of being on the one hand, and, on the other, what is ontological validity. This explanation will immediately enable us to see that intelligence essentially implies a relation to being. This explanation may be presented in the form of a syllogism; it is not, however, strictly speaking, a direct demonstration, but can at most be called a direct defence. First evidences can be defended, but, not directly demonstrated; for an attempt at demonstration would result merely in a vicious circle, since one would have to assume as true what remains to be proved, to wit, the ontological validity of first principles.

Even the Agnostics, in spite of their system, as soon as they cease to philosophize, or even whilst they philosophize, are naturally forced to admit —as their language proves—that the direct purpose of the intellect is to acquire knowledge, that the idea of being is the idea of something real, that the principle of contradiction is a law of real objects, and not merely of thought, and that the absurd is as incapable of realization as it is inconceivable. Not one of these propositions can be demonstrated directly; it is sufficient that the meaning of the terms be understood.

But if the ontological validity of our intellect, and of its first ideas and its first principles, cannot be directly demonstrated, it admits of a sort of indirect proof, by the logical process of reductio ad absurdum, by a recourse to the principle of contradiction in so far as this principle is at least the necessary law of human thought.

We shall set forth, first of all, this indirect defence, which will enable us to realize more fully the force of the direct defence. Although the latter is but an explanation of terms, it contains virtually the solution of the problem of universals, by establishing the truth of Moderate Realism against Nominalism (or Empiricism), and against Subjectivistic Conceptualism (or Idealism in the Kantian sense), at the same time avoiding such exaggerated Realism as that of Plato, Spinoza, or the Ontologists.

17) Indirect defence of the ontological validity of first ideas.

We shall show: (A) that the denial of this validity leads the Empirical Agnostics or Idealists into insoluble difficulties; (B) that it leads them to absurdity.

A. Insoluble difficulties

The primary principles of reasoning are necessary and universal, and, moreover, cannot be the subject of doubt. How to explain this fact is an impossibility for Empiricism. We are conscious that we consider them as

universal and necessary (we are quite certain that in absolutely all cases what is real cannot be non-real; that every beginning has a cause); besides, science demands this necessity and this universality. Now, experience, which is always particular and contingent, cannot account for these two characteristics. Concerning the principle of causality, we all—except the Positivists when they begin to philosophize—think that what happens must necessarily have a cause, and that the cause is not only followed by its effect, but produces the effect. Though we have actual experience of any effect only as the result of some voluntary effort on our part, we affirm this fact of all external causes, of the hammer striking the stone, and of the movement imparted by one billiard ball to another. Evidently, this universal and necessary principle does not arise from the recurring experience of phenomena that succeed one another. Moreover, there are just as many phenomena the causes of which the majority of men seek for in vain, as those, the causes of which they think they know. The child wants to know the reason for many things which cannot be explained to him. Yet, like a grown-up person, he is convinced that there is a reason for the phenomena which he cannot understand. Reason, therefore, is forced to accept the principle of causality as universally true, although experience does not establish the fact of universal causality. It is of no avail to invoke the principle of heredity, for our ancestors had no clearer conception of causes than we have. It is, therefore, contrary to reason for the Empiric to hold that there is no contradiction in the assertion of the possibility of things happening without a cause in some world unknown to us.

To deny the necessity and the absolute universality of principles means the reduction of the syllogism to a mere tautology and the complete destruction of the basis of induction. As a matter of fact, the major of a syllogism is but a generalization of particular cases and ought to include actually, and not merely virtually, the particular case which it is the purpose of the conclusion to establish. It presupposes that the case has been verified by experience. If causality were such as is stated above, then we could not find any universal principle by means of which we could formulate a truly general law from particular facts of experience. The principle that “in the order of nature the same cause in the same circumstances always produces the same effect,” would have but the force of a strong presumption, based upon experience of past events.

The Kantian theory explains the universality and necessity of the principles, but denies their objectivity, naturally affirmed by the intellect with no less certainty than the two preceding characteristics. Philosophical reflection must give the explanation that is in agreement with nature and not in contradiction to it, and if one succeeded in showing that it is a “natural illusion,” that our own intellect deceives us, he would at least have to explain why it is an illusion. On the other hand, by admitting the abstractive intuition of the intelligible, as Aristotle and the Scholastics understood it, the objectivity of the principles is explained, as well as their necessity and universality. The denial of this intuition led Kant to admit synthetic judgments a priori, i.e. blind judgments for which there is no foundation, intellectual acts for which there is no sufficient reason. This is tantamount to saying that the irrational is imbedded in the rational, and that ignorance is of the very warp and woof of knowledge. The mind cannot by the verb “to be” affirm real identity between subject and predicate (that a thing is such), except when it has evident certainty of this real identity, derived either from the analysis of the ideas (a priori), or else from a critical inspection of existing things (a posteriori). But if both of these evidences are wanting, then the affirmation is irrational, without reason. How can the intellect blindly assign to the phenomena an intelligibility that they in no way possess? In fact, as we shall see later on, the principle of causality and the other principles derived from the principle of sufficient reason, are analytical in this sense that the analysis of the ideas which they imply, shows there exists under the logical diversity of subject and predicate, a real identity, which cannot be denied without contradiction. As for the principles of Newtonian physics, everyone now-a-days admits that they are synthetic a posteriori. Another difficulty that arises from the preceding is, that the application of the Kantian categories to phenomena is arbitrary. Why is it that certain phenomena are classed under the category of substance and others under that of causality? Why is it that all cases of phenomena which succeed one another, such as that of night and day, may not be explained by the principle of causality? If, in order to avoid saying that it is arbitrary, we admit that we recognize the relationship existing in the objects themselves between substance, causality, etc., is not this the same as admitting the intuition of the intelligible? In that case, of what use is the category? Finally, as Fichte remarked (and the Empirics repeated, though from an opposite point of view), there is no proof that the phenomena, if they are

external to us, can always be assigned without the least violence to the various categories. What guarantee have we that the world of sensation will always be susceptible of becoming the object of thought, and that some day it may not exhibit the present spectacle of disorder, chance, and chaos?

From this latter difficulty the only way of escape for the Subjectivist is to maintain with Fichte that these phenomena proceed from the ego, and that just as God's knowledge is the measure of all things, so also is ours; but in that case the human mind could not be ignorant about anything, a theory which is most certainly contradicted by the facts of experience.

Thus the denial of the direct perception of the intelligible led Kant into insoluble difficulties; for he not only refused to concede to the metaphysical principles any force beyond mere phenomena, but even in the phenomenal order he admitted that their value is merely subjective, consisting in an arbitrary and precarious application of the principles. "In a word, the Kantian theory has in no way succeeded in giving to the principles that absolute and scientific certitude which it promised." (Rabier, ibid).

B) Indirect defence by the method of reductio
ad absurdum

The denial of the ontological validity of the intellect and of its primary notions results, moreover, in rendering absurd the essential elements of intellectual cognition, such as (a) the object, (b) the idea, (c) the principles, (d) the act of understanding, (e) the faculty of knowing.

a) The object. There is no longer a known object; what we know is merely an idea. Hence it follows that we cannot distinguish the object from the act of direct understanding (e. g., causality), from the object of reflex understanding (e. g., the idea of cause), since de facto the object of direct understanding is identical with the idea.

Now it is evident that the knowledge of causality and the knowledge of the idea of cause are two altogether distinct things; for the reflex act necessarily presupposes the direct act and cannot be identified with it except by a formal contradiction. (See St. Thomas, Summa Theologica, Ia, q. 85, a. 2). In other words, the intellect cannot reflect on itself as long as it has no knowledge of any definite object. Before it can reflect upon itself and its own ideas, it must have had something definite to think of; there is no such thing as thinking of nothing.

b) The idea. To maintain that in the process of direct intellection the idea is the object known, and not the means by which the intellect acquires

knowledge of something else, means that we must admit that there is nothing real corresponding to what is represented by the idea, which is, therefore, an idea of nothing; in other words, the idea is an idea and no idea at the same time and in the same sense. To put it differently—to maintain that the idea, being an intellectual impression or expression of the human intellect, corresponds to nothing real, is the same as saying that, at the same time and in the same sense, it is something relative and non-relative, which means the destruction of the very concept of both the idea and the mental expression. Fichte himself is forced to admit that this duality of representation and represented object is necessary for acquiring knowledge, and he goes so far as to conclude from this that if God is absolutely simple, there can be no knowledge in Him.

To be sure, an idea does not necessarily refer to an actually existing thing, but it must at least refer to something that is possible. It cannot refer to pure nothingness; for that would involve a contradiction, e. g., a square circle; and in that case we should no longer have an idea, but conflicting images. Now it is evident that there can be nothing contradictory in primary ideas, because of their simplicity. (See Ia, q. 85, a. 6).

c) The principles. The Agnostic who doubts the ontological validity of primary ideas, must also doubt that of correlative principles, especially the validity of the principle of contradiction, which is founded on the notion of being. The Agnostic, though admitting that the absurd is inconceivable, must doubt whether it is actually impossible. He concedes that a square circle is inconceivable, but from his point of view a square circle is not evidently impossible of realization. It might be possible for some canny genius to produce something which at the same time and in the same sense exists and does not exist. Now, this doubt is absurd; for a being supposed to exist and not to exist at the same time, would both correspond and not correspond to our idea of being, and as this idea is simple, there can be no question of a partial correspondence. The supposition, even subjectively considered, is inconceivable.

d) The act of thinking. The Agnostic from his point of view cannot be aware of the reality of the act of thinking; all that he can know is the representation of this act. And even if he were directly conscious of its reality, he is not absolutely certain of this fact, for if he doubts the objectivity of the principle of contradiction as a law of being, if the real is in itself susceptible of contradiction, there is nothing to assure him that the

action which he regards as real is actually real. If being is not the primary and formal object of the intellect, the intellect will never acquire any knowledge of being; admitting the hypothesis, the Phenomenalists are manifestly in the right. It was thus that the seventeenth-century Thomist Goudin (Philosophia, ed. 1860, t. IV, p. 254) refuted the claim that “cogito, ergo sum” is the first of all principles, more certain than the objective principle of contradiction. Aristotle had shown in his defence of this principle (Meta., Bk. IV) that anyone who in the cognitive order refuses to start from the idea of being (as the primary and formal object of the intellect), and from the first principle implied by it, denies himself the right to affirm anything, either about being, or about the existence of his own thought, or even his own ego. “In what way, then, does this or that man differ from the plant, which is entirely devoid of knowledge? He must imitate Cratylus, who, incapable of the least assertion, contented himself with moving his finger.” (Met., Bk. IV, chs. iv and v).

e) The intellect. To doubt the ontological validity of primary ideas and first principles, ends in making the intellect itself absolutely unintelligible and absurd. It simply means to doubt that the intellect and intelligible being are essentially related to each other. Now this relationship is included in the notion we have of intellect, and its denial means the denial of the intellect itself; for in that case there would be no intelligible object corresponding to the intellect, which is absurd.

The Agnostic of the sensist type classes the operations of the intellect in their final analysis amongst those which belong to the senses, the sensible memory and the imagination.

According to the Agnostic of the idealistic type, there are two ways of viewing the human intellect, and both of them are meaningless. (α) With Kant, the Agnostic may deny to the intellect all passivity with regard to intelligible being, and admit merely the passivity of the senses with regard to phenomena; hence, for the rational and evident principles by which the intellect can establish contact with being, the Agnostic must substitute synthetic a priori principles, which are blind, unmotivated, and irrational syntheses. Thus, the irrational becomes the essential structure of reason, and the intellect, deprived of its relation to intelligible being, which is its formal object, is rendered meaningless. (β) On the other hand, he may, with Fichte, deny absolutely the passivity of the human intellect with regard to phenomena as well as to intelligible being. In that case he must identify the

human with the divine intellect, whose knowledge is the cause of things, and it would follow that the human mind, the source of all intelligibility, must be omniscient ab aeterno, and no ignorance of any kind is possible. (See Ia, q. 79, a. 2).

The above-mentioned remarks outline the indirect defence of the ontological validity of primary ideas considered in their general aspect. The Agnostics, in denying this validity, are confronted with the insoluble difficulty of making an absurdity of all the essential elements of intellectual knowledge. In order to prove the natural range of the intellect with regard to being, the Agnostic deprives the intellect of its essential relationship to being. It is as if one were to break a spring in order to test its elasticity.

18) Direct defence of the ontological validity of primary ideas.

As we have previously remarked, there is no question here of a direct demonstration. What immediately appeals to one as immediately self-evident cannot be directly demonstrated. All that one can do is to explain the terms, so that their immediate connection may be more clearly perceived, and then to solve the objections.

First of all, we shall make a few general remarks upon primary ideas and their correlative principles. Following the logical order, we shall consider: (a) the ontological validity of the intellect, (b) the validity of primary ideas in general; which we shall confirm (c) by showing that being constitutes the very basis of judgment and reasoning. Then we shall answer the objections.

a) The intellect. The intellect is a cognitive faculty superior to the senses. Has it ontological validity? In other words, can it acquire knowledge not only of the phenomena perceived by the senses and the consciousness, but also of being itself (τὸ ὂν), of which the phenomena are but the sensible manifestation? A proper understanding of what is meant by the word “intellect” will answer this question.

Every faculty, says St. Thomas, must have its formal object, to which it is naturally ordained, to which it attains first of all, and by means of which it comes to know everything else. Thus, the formal object of the sense of sight is that sensible quality known as color, for nothing is visible except by means of color; sound is the formal object of the sense of hearing; consciousness has for its object the internal impression made upon us by something external, and good is the formal object of the will, so much so that we cannot desire evil except in so far as it appears good. The intellect, too, cannot be conceived except in relation to a formal object, and if the

intellect is a faculty distinct from the senses or the consciousness, its formal object must also be different. That its formal object is the result of a greater penetration than that of any of the senses is clear from the very meaning of the word intellect (from intus legere), which implies a reading of what is within. Now for the intellect and the object to be in due proportion to each other, the latter must be formally intelligible, since formal sensibility will not suffice. What the intellect immediately perceives as its formal object, without any process of reasoning, is intelligible being, of which the phenomena are but the external manifestation. We cannot conceive of intellect apart from a relation to intelligible being, no more than we can conceive of sensation without a relation to sensible phenomena, or of sight without relation to color. And just as nothing is visible except by color, so nothing is intelligible in any of the three operations of the mind (conception, judgment, and reasoning), except in so far as it has a relation to being.

Thus the study of the three operations of the mind shows us a posteriori what we have already seen a priori, namely, that the intellect is not in itself intelligible except as a living relation to being, which is the center of all its ideas, the "soul" of all its judgments and all its conclusions. Thus the intellect appears more and more as the "faculty of being," whereas the external and internal senses stop short at phenomena which constitute the fringe of reality. On this point St. Thomas remarks: "Just as the sense of sight naturally perceives color, and the sense of hearing sound, so the intellect naturally perceives being and all that which directly pertains to being, considered as such, and on this cognition is founded the perception of first principles, e.g., that there can be no affirmation and denial of the same thing at the same time and in the same sense, etc. Only these principles, therefore, does the intellect know naturally, and by their means, it perceives the conclusions, just as sight, by means of color, perceives not only all those sensible objects susceptible of perception by more than one of the sensitive faculties, but also what may be inferred from such perception." (See C. Gentes, Bk. II, c. 83, § 32).

b) Primary ideas. The first operation of the mind, which is called conception or simple apprehension, directly perceives the truths expressed by primary ideas. A vindication of the ontological validity of these ideas implies that by means of them we can come to know not only sensible phenomena, but also the being which they contain, just as written or oral

words contain an intelligible meaning. It is sufficient for our purpose to show that there is something which essentially differentiates these intellectual ideas from imaginative and sensitive representations, which latter are but the direct expression of phenomena.

Our argument may be summed up in the following syllogism, which is not demonstrative, but merely explanatory:

Ideas which express not sensible qualities, but something which is in itself intelligible and accidentally sensible (sensibile per accidens et intelligibile per se), have not only phenomenal, but likewise ontological validity.

Now, the primary ideas of being—essence, unity, truth, goodness, substance, causality, finality—do not express sensible qualities, but something which is in itself intelligible and accidentally sensible.

Therefore, these primary ideas possess a validity which is not only phenomenal, but likewise ontological.

The major of this explanatory syllogism is evident from its very terms. By ontological validity is meant the aptitude to manifest the being which lies beyond or beneath the sensible or phenomenal qualities. This validity must, therefore, belong to those ideas which express, not sensible qualities (sensibile per se), such as color, sound, heat, etc., but something more profound, which in itself or directly can be perceived only by the intellect, and not by the senses (intelligibile per se). This intelligible object is sensible only per accidens.

It is because of the phenomena associated with the intelligible object, and which declare its presence to the intellect at the very moment when sensation is experienced, and this without any process of reasoning, that we say that the intelligible object is only accidentally sensible (sensibile per accidens).

The minor of our syllogism presents no difficulty. The primary ideas of being—essence, existence, unity, truth, goodness, substance, efficient causality, finality, etc., do not express phenomena or sensible qualities, but something which is per se or directly intelligible and accidentally sensible.

This is immediately evident from the notion of being, which does not appeal directly to the senses, as color or sound does, but is something profounder and more universal. No simple sensible image, not even a composite one, to which a name is assigned, is an expression of being, even though the Empiric Nominalists say that it is. This image can never be

anything else but a representation of phenomena in juxtaposition, and not of their intimate raison d'être. This intimate raison d'être is not something which has extension, color, heat, or cold; it implies nothing material, but itself imparts intelligibility to the various sensible elements, and is the luminous centre of every idea. Thus, the composite image with a common name, which the parrot has of a clock, differs essentially from the idea of this clock, for it is the idea alone which expresses the rationale of the movement of the clock, and tells us what the clock is, instead of merely manifesting its sensible phenomena in juxtaposition.

Being does not per se appeal to the senses, but to the intellect, and is the source of intelligibility. In addition it is accidentally sensible, because it is immediately apprehended by the intellect whenever a sensible object is presented to this faculty. It is at once perceived by it, as color is perceived by the sense of sight, and sound by that of hearing.

If the subjectivistic Conceptualists after the manner of Kant object that being, though it directly belongs to the intelligible and not to the sensible order, is perhaps but a subjective form of the mind, we answer by showing the opposition between the idea of being and those other ideas which express only imaginary beings that can exist nowhere but in the mind, i.e., are capable of conception, but not of realization, as, for example, the logical notions of universality, species, predicate, etc. Or again, to present this same truth in a clearer light, we have only to contrast the ontological formula with the logical principle of contradiction. The ontological formula states that "a being, viewed under the same aspect, cannot at the same time exist and not exist." The logical formulation of the same principle is "that we cannot affirm and deny the same predicate of the same subject under the same aspect." This latter formula merely declares the inconceivability of the absurd, whereas the former states that the absurd is objectively impossible. To seek to reduce the idea of being to a subjective form of the mind, and the principle of contradiction to a purely logical law having no ontological value, is tantamount to identifying two manifestly distinct ideas: the impossible (or unrealizable) and the inconceivable; or at least, it means that we do not dare to affirm the latter and doubt the extra-mental impossibility of the absurd. He who would doubt the ontological validity of the idea of being and of the principle of contradiction would have to maintain that a square circle is inconceivable, but not, perhaps, unrealizable outside of the

mind. We have seen in the indirect defence that this doubt is absurd, even subjectively, and impossible.

The ontological or ultra-phenomenal validity of the ideas of unity, truth, goodness, substance, efficient causality, and finality, can be directly defended by referring them back to being as different modes thereof. We will discuss this point but briefly here, but later on shall demonstrate in particular the necessity and ontological validity of each of the principles founded on these ideas.

It is clear that unity, truth, and goodness are directly connected with being as properties thereof. Unity is undivided being (Ia, q. 11, a. 1). Truth is the conformity of being with the intellect upon which it depends, or the conformity of the intellect with being of which it is the measure (Ia, q. 16, a. 1-3). Goodness is desirable being (Ia, q. 5, a. 1—2). These ideas, therefore, do not express sensible phenomena, but something more profound, which is intelligible in itself, and do not, like being, imply anything material in their formal signification.

It is the same with the idea of substance, which is but a determination of the idea of being. Substance is being capable of existing in itself and not in something else. The intellect, which at once perceives being underneath the phenomena (something which is), observes that these phenomena are many and variable, while being, on the contrary, is one and the same, and that it exists in itself, and not as an attribute in another. Being considered as such is called substance.

Efficient causality is nothing else but the realization or actualization of something which did not previously exist. It is clear that this realization, defined in terms of its immediate relation to potential and actual being, is perceived by the intellect, the faculty of being, under the appearances of color, heat, etc., which are perceived by the senses.

Finality is nothing else but the raison d’être, the why and wherefore of the means. The intellect immediately apprehends the purpose of the eye, made for seeing, and that of the ear, made for hearing; but the senses cannot perceive this why and wherefore.

Thus the ontological validity of these primary ideas is explained and can be directly demonstrated by the fact that they denote the very opposite of what is implied by the sensible elements or phenomena.

Thus, too, we see that the true solution of the problem of universals is to be found only in moderate Realism. Empirical Nominalism abolishes the

intellect and intelligibility. Subjectivistic Conceptualism reduces our intellectual life to a coherent dream. Moderate Realism, on the other hand, as formulated by Aristotle, St. Thomas, and the traditional philosophy of the Schools, safeguards our intellectual life and its real validity, without admitting the exaggerated Realism of Plato, Spinoza, and the Ontologists, who claim to possess, without abstraction, an intuitive knowledge of purely intelligible realities, and who, in various degrees, confuse universal being in sensible things with the divine being. We shall return to this subject when we discuss the principle of substance, and in refuting Pantheism, which is the logical outcome of this exaggerated Realism.

From our previous remarks about the idea of being and the other primary ideas, we see, in contrast with Nominalism, that there is a fundamental difference between the image and the idea. The idea, in matter of fact, differs from the image because it contains the raison d'être of the object which it represents (quod quid est, seu ratio intima proprietatum), whilst the common image of the Nominalists, to which a common name is assigned, contains only the external notes of the object in juxtaposition, revealing them to us without rendering them intelligible. The idea and the image are often contrasted by saying that the idea is abstract and universal, while the image is concrete and particular. In case of a composite image with a common name, the contrast between it and the idea is not so pronounced. Moreover, the character of abstraction is merely a property of the idea, and even a property of the human idea, qua human, derived from sensible data. Universality is also but a property of the idea, and does not designate its essence. Whether we consider the human, the angelic or the divine idea, the essence of the idea, qua idea, is that it contains the formal object of the intellect, qua intellect, that is to say, being, or the raison d'être.

An example cited by Vacant in his Etudes Comparées sur la Philosophie de St. Thomas d'Aquin et celle de Scot (Vol. I, p. 134) will help us to understand what is meant by the intuition of the intelligible in the most rudimentary kind of intellectual knowledge. "Place a savage in the presence of a locomotive," he writes; "have him walk around it, and give him time to examine it and other similar machines. So long as he only sees them running, and is content to observe the various parts of their mechanism, he will have but a sensible and particular knowledge of them (or, if you wish, a common image, accompanied by a name, just as a parrot would have). But if he is intelligent, he will sooner or later come to realize that there must be

in such an object a motive power, which the locomotive either generates or applies. . . . If he finally learns that it is by the expansion of the imprisoned vapor that this motive power is obtained, he will understand what a locomotive is (quod quid est) and will form a specific concept thereof. . . . The senses perceive only its material elements, a black mass of iron, with a special arrangement of parts. The idea represents something immaterial; it gives the why and wherefore of this arrangement and of the functioning of the various parts. Consequently, the idea becomes stamped with the mark of necessity, and by it we see that every locomotive must move, granted the conditions for which previously we could find no reason. The idea, finally, is universal, and by means of it we understand that all machines thus constructed have the same power and attain the same end."

The common image of the locomotive contained merely the common sensible elements in a state of juxtaposition, and did not explain their raison d'être nor render them intelligible.

This is what is generally understood by abstractive intuition of the intelligible element or the raison d'être of an object. Let us now take an example from rational psychology, say, the idea of man. This idea is something more than a merely mechanical juxtaposition and association of common traits possessed by all human beings, such as those of rationality, freedom, morality, religion, sociability, etc. It also renders all these traits intelligible, by showing that the first of them, rationality, is the raison d'être of all the rest; it expresses what man is (quod quid est). That which constitutes man truly a man, is not liberty, or morality, or religion, or sociability, or even the power of speech, but reason; for from reason all the other traits are deduced. The ability to reason becomes intelligible when the fact is established that the raison d'être of the three operations of the mind (simple apprehension, judgment, and reasoning) is an essential relation between the intellect and being, which is its formal object.

In truth, we must admit that the Nominalists are right in maintaining that there are but few ideas susceptible of becoming fully intelligible, namely, those which can be referred to being, which is the primary objective light of man's intellectual cognitions. These ideas are principally those which belong to what Aristotle (Met., Bk. X, c. iii) calls the third degree of abstraction, i.e., abstraction from all matter; they appertain to the metaphysical, spiritual, and moral order (ideas of being, unity, truth, goodness; the idea of intellect, defined in terms of its relation to being; the

idea of will, defined in terms of its relation to goodness. In this class must also be included the ideas of the primary divisions of being, such as potency and act, and the four causes). In the second degree of abstraction (mathematical abstraction, which is concerned, not with sensible qualities, but only with quantity, continuous or discrete), the intelligibility is less, although the study of these sciences comes easier to man, because their object is less abstract and nearer to the senses. Finally, in the first degree of abstraction, we have the natural sciences, which are concerned with sensible qualities, merely abstracting from individual circumstances; here we can give empirical and descriptive definitions, but we can never come to know the intelligible properties of an object, explaining their raison d'être by a specific difference. Most of the time we have to be satisfied with a statement of general facts, and the low degree of intelligibility found in these sciences—as we have just seen in the case of the savage and the locomotive—arises from the application of the metaphysical principles of causality and finality, which the intellect spontaneously perceives in being.

Such, then, is the abstractive intuition of the intelligible in the first operation of the mind, which is denied by the Sensualists and the subjectivistic Idealists.

c) Confirmation: "Being" occupies the first place in the two processes of judgment and reasoning. In the second operation of the mind, that of judgment, we also see the falsity of these two systems and the truth of traditional Realism. What radically differentiates judgment from the association of ideas by which the Empirics seek to explain this mental process, is that this association is merely a mechanical juxtaposition of two images, whereas judgment by the verb "is" affirms the real identity of the subject with the predicate of a proposition, which are but logically distinct. The verb "is" constitutes the very soul of every judgment. As Aristotle remarks (Met., Bk. V, c. vii), "there is no difference between these two propositions: 'this man is in good health,' and 'this man is healthy'; nor between these: 'this man is walking, advancing on the road,' and 'this man walks, advances on the road'; the same is true of the other cases." By using the copula "is" we affirm that the being called man is (i.e., is the same as) the being that is in good health. Empiricism is sufficiently refuted by this simple observation. As J. J. Rousseau remarked, "the distinctive sign of an intelligent being is the ability to give a meaning to this little word is, which he utters every time he pronounces a judgment.

At the same time we perceive the falsity of the subjectivistic Rationalism of Kant, as proved by Msgr. Sentroul in his thesis, “L’objet de la Métaphysique selon Kant et Aristote” (Louvain, 1905, a work crowned by the Kantgesellchaft of Halle). “Kant, maintaining the very opposite of what Aristotle taught,” says this writer, “failed to realize that all knowledge expresses itself exactly in the verb to be, the copula of every judgment, . . . that the union of the predicate with the subject by means of the verb to be, used as the sign of identity between the terms, constitutes the formal essence of every judgment. . . . The knowledge of anything consists precisely in perceiving its identity with itself from two different points of view. (Met., Bk. v, c. vii). To know what a triangle is, means to know that it is a certain figure, the cause, to know that the effect is included in it, the man, to know that he is endowed with the power of imagination. And to take a purely accidental judgment, to say of some particular wall that it is white, is to say of this wall that it is a white wall. . . . If the subject and the predicate refer to each other in such a way that they can be connected by the verb to be, this is because both predicate and subject express one and the same reality (either possible or actual).” Kant acknowledges identity only in what he calls analytical judgments, pure tautologies in his opinion, and not in extended judgments, which alone add to the sum of human knowledge and which he calls synthetical a priori or a posteriori, because they are formed, according to his view, by the juxtaposition of distinct notions. He thus misunderstood the fundamental law of all judgment. Msgr. Sentroul (p. 224) truly remarks that “a judgment formed by the juxtaposition or the convergence of various notions would be a false judgment, since it would express identity between two terms which are not identical, but merely related to each other in some other way. . . . Aristotle’s principle of distinction between propositions is not the identification or non-identification of the predicate with the subject: he distinguishes them according as the knowledge of this identity (not logical, but real) is derived solely from the analysis of the ideas or from the scrutiny of existing things.” Like the sophists of old, Kant must maintain that we have no right to say, “the man is good,” but only, “the man is the man, the good is the good;” but this amounts to a denial of the possibility of any judgment whatever. (Cfr. Plato, Sophist., 251 B.; Aristotle, Met., Bk. V, c. 29). The reason of this opposition between Kant and the traditional philosophy is that Kant, starting with the subject, considers the categories as purely logical, whereas

Scholastic philosophy, which starts from being, regards the categories as partly logical and partly ontological. What was separated by abstraction from the real is thus reconstructed and restored to it by the affirmative judgment, and the entire life of the intellect can be explained by its ordination to being.

As for the necessity of starting from being, we have already seen that it is mandatory, under pain of rendering absurd all the elements—the object, the idea, the act of thinking and the intellectual faculty of knowledge.

The third operation of the mind, that of syllogistic reasoning, like the two preceding ones, cannot be anything else but the act of a faculty which has being as its formal object. Whereas empirical findings, governed as they are by the laws of the association of ideas, are but a series of images in juxtaposition, reasoning gives us the (extrinsic) raison d'être of the less known in that which is known more explicitly. The demonstration a priori gives us the extrinsic reason of what has been affirmed by the conclusion. The demonstration a posteriori gives us the extrinsic reason why something has been affirmed. Direct or ostensive demonstrations are founded on the principle of identity, which is immediately implied in the idea of being (the syllogistic process is based upon the principle that two things equal to the same third thing [middle term] are equal to each other). Indirect demonstrations, also known as reductio ad absurdum, rest on the principle of contradiction, which is merely a negative formulation of the principle of identity. Inductive reasoning rests on the principle of induction, which is a derivative of the principle of the raison d'être. If the same cause, in the same circumstances, did not produce the same effect, the change in the effect, without a previous change in the cause or the circumstances, would be without a sufficient reason for its existence. For the Empiric, who reduces the concept to a common image with a common name, the syllogism must be a needless repetition, as Sextus Empiricus, John Stuart Mill, and Herbert Spencer held. Since the major is not a universal statement, but merely expresses a congeries of individual cases, it presupposes that all the particular cases, including the one mentioned in the conclusion, have been verified. From this point of view any rational proof of the existence of God is evidently impossible, nor can there be any truly scientific knowledge even of sensible things, because induction no longer has any foundation in fact.

Finally, the first principles which constitute the basis of all reasoning, are immediately perceived in being, which is the primary object of abstractive intuition on the part of the intellect. “The intellect naturally knows being, and all which directly pertains to being, considered as such, and the knowledge of first principles has its foundation in this cognition of being.” (St. Thomas, C. Gentes, Bk. II, c. 83, § 32). A child does not need to be taught the principles of identity, contradiction, substance, sufficient reason, causality, and finality. It seeks for the cause of everything that attracts its attention, and wearies its elders by constantly asking for the reason why. As Aristotle remarks (Anal. Post., Bk. I, c. 1), if the child had no knowledge of these principles, the teacher could not influence its mind; for all instruction assumes some previous knowledge in the pupil.

19) Objections of the Idealists: We cannot start from being; something corresponding to thought is a necessity. Reply.

1. The subjectivistic Idealist raises this objection: “You always start from being, and not from the representation of being. How can you be sure of the validity of this representation, since you cannot compare it with the object itself, as it exists outside of the mind, and since it is impossible for you to establish an immediate contact with the object?” Moreover, Le Roy maintains “that Ontological Realism is absurd and disastrous; an external something, beyond thought, is by its very nature impossible of conception. This objection will always remain unanswerable, and we shall have to conclude, as all modern philosophy does, that we are under the necessity of admitting some form of Idealism.”

This difficulty is not new, for Protagoras and other Sophists raised it centuries ago, as may be seen from the fourth Book of Aristotle’s Metaphysics, where it is refuted. St. Thomas (Ia, q. 85, a. 2) reproduces this objection in the following form: “Nothing is known, except it is in the mind of the knowing subject. Now, extra-mental realities cannot be in the mind of the knowing subject. Therefore, they cannot be known; the ideas in our mind are all that we can know.”

St. Thomas replies by distinguishing the major: nothing is known, except it is in the knowing subject, either by itself, or by its likeness (intentionalis) —this I concede; but if the proposition means that the object itself must be in the knowing subject, the statement is false. Now, it is evident that extra-mental realities cannot be in the mind of the knowing subject per se, but they can be there by representation. And it is the special purpose of this

representation, which is essentially relative (intentionalis) to the object represented, to make known the object by a direct act of the mind, without being known itself. The representation becomes known only afterwards by means of reflection. The idea impressed upon the mind, or the idea expressed by it, are both the means by which the mind knows the object, and not the object which it knows. It is essentially what the Scholastics call "intentionalis," a term which means that it refers to what is represented by the idea; and if this idea is a simple one, like that of being and other such primary notions, it cannot be an artificially composite notion, which would misrepresent the reality.

To grasp the meaning of this reply, we must fully understand what is meant by the term representation or idea. The Idealists declare that "something external to or beyond thought is by its very definition unthinkable," because they consider the idea as an isolated object and not as a manifest relation. They find fault with traditional philosophy for considering space as belonging to the imaginative order. But from the way in which they view it as external to thought, we may say that they commit the same error. This concept of the representation is entirely quantitative and material. Though this may seem paradoxical, Idealism has a completely materialistic conception of the idea, which it regards as a material portrait, situated in some point of space and capable of being itself considered as an object, independently of the person whom it represents. It is like the effigy stamped on a coin. In direct contrast to this, the cognitive faculty (the intellect and, for that matter, even the sense), like the representation by means of which it knows the object, is a living and immaterial quality, not something closed, shut up within itself, but essentially relative to something other than itself, which it represents to itself. This function belongs to it by its very nature (quid proprium). Therefore, far from a something beyond thought being unthinkable, thought is not intelligible except as a living relation to something external, which it expresses. We could not possibly judge of the validity of the idea, if it were in the direct act, as a material portrait, the very object of knowledge: for in that case we should have to compare this interior object with an intangible external object. In matter of fact, however, the idea in the direct act of knowing is not the object of knowledge, after the manner of a picture or a statue. It is only the means by which the object is known. Because it is a vital, immaterial quality, entirely relative to something other than itself, it reveals the presence of things

without being itself revealed. Afterwards, by means of reflection, the intellect assures itself of the validity of this means, of its conformity with the extra-mental object, because, as St. Thomas remarks, “the intellect knows its ideas and its own direct act by reflection, and it not only knows, like the senses, the fact of its own activity, but also the nature of its act, and hence its own nature as an intellective faculty, which is that it is essentially relative and in conformity with being.” It sees that if complex ideas can accidentally imply an error in uniting elements incompatible with the reality, such cannot be the case with primary ideas on account of their simplicity.

In its ultimate analysis this doctrine implies that the immateriality of the representation is the principle of its power of representation. “Cognoscens secundum quod cognoscens differt a non cognoscentibus prout fit aliud in quantum aliud; et hoc immaterialitatem supponit” (“by the mere fact that a being knows, it differs from those who do not know, in that it becomes some other thing, in as much as it has the form of that other thing; and this presupposes immateriality”) (St. Thomas, Summa Theol., Ia, q. 14, a. 1). Like Aristotle (De Anima, Bk. II, c. xii; Bk. III, c. viii) the Angelic Doctor considers it to be a fact that the animal, by reason of sensation, in a certain way becomes the other beings which it sees and hears, whereas the plant is shut up within itself. And, far from denying this fact, under the pretext that something external to or beyond thought is an impossibility, he explains it by the immateriality of the cognitive faculty. Why is it that the animal, by its senses, responds to everything in the sensitive order, and, so to speak, goes out of itself, beyond the limits of its corporeity? This sortie would be inexplicable if it were of the spatial order; but, on the contrary, it presupposes a certain independence with regard to extended matter, that is to say, a certain spirituality. The representation in the irrational animal is of an order superior to the material bodies which it represents, because it is the act of an animated organ (and not of the soul alone), it can be born of the impression gained from these material things. It is a quality essentially relative to them, somewhat like the reflection of an object formed in a mirror, with this difference, that the eye is a living mirror which sees. Being by its very nature essentially relative or intentional, the representation cannot be that which is known first, but in the direct act it makes known the object which it represents without being known itself (non est quod cognoscitur, sed quo) . It is not something closed, but openly in contact with

the object to which it essentially refers, and thus leads us immediately to the object and determines the cognitive faculty to know the same, like a fire started in a grate, which essentially refers to the luminous object or to the source of the heat which it produces.

What has already been realized in the simple form of sensible cognition in the animal, namely, the spontaneous transition from the ego to the non-ego (even to the imaginary non-ego), cannot be explained in any other way. To say that all sensation has a tendency to become objective, similar to that which we notice in the case of hallucination, is to explain a primitive fact by a derived fact. Every hallucination presupposes anterior sensations; one born blind never has visual hallucinations. “One might just as well explain the sound by the echo.”

Moreover, this tendency towards objectivation would still be but a fact which must be made intelligible. The reason why we do not objectivate our emotions, but only our sensations, is because the latter alone are essentially intentional or representative.

Finally, as the contemporary English Neorealists point out, if Idealism is true, then cerebral perception is just as subjective as that of the external universe, and consequently the brain no longer acts as an intermediary which separates sensation from its objects, and prevents it from coming in contact with them. Directly the external universe is perceived, either the cerebral phenomenon is real, though not perceived, which is contrary to the accepted principle of Idealism, “esse est percipi”; or else this cerebral phenomenon, not being perceived, is unreal, and in that case it no longer impedes the immediate external perception of the universe. Thus one of the principal arguments in defence of Idealism falls to the ground.

In the case of intellectual cognition, which is purely immaterial, the transition from the ego to the non-ego is not only spontaneous, but also reflexive, and the ego and the non-ego are known precisely as such. This is in fact the very first “morcellation” (division) of being into object and subject, into absolute (entitative) and intentional being. In simple apprehension the intellect obtains a knowledge of being, of something which is, before it knows itself; for how could it know itself in a state of vacuity before it has acquired a knowledge of anything? But in this first apprehension, the intellect knows being without knowing it precisely as non-ego. Later on, the absolute spirituality of the intellect enables it to reflect fully upon itself, and thus to know not only that its act is an actual

fact, but also what is the nature of that act and thereby to perceive its own immateriality as an essentially relative faculty in conformity with intelligible being. The intellect then judges being as something distinct from itself, i.e., as a non-ego. (St. Thomas, De Veritate, q. 1, a. 9 and q. 2, a. 2). This division of being into absolute and intentional must be admitted, otherwise all three operations of the intellect become meaningless.

Therefore, it is not Ontological Realism which is "absurd and disastrous," but Idealism, which is absolutely inconceivable. A representation which does not represent anything, would be at the same time and in the same respect both relative and non-relative. Idealism is as disastrous as it is absurd (cfr. no. 17); it locks up man within himself, as it were, preventing him from recognizing even the reality of his own action, and thus destroys all knowledge and reduces man to the condition of the plant, ὅμοιος φυτῷ; (IV Metaph., c. iv). It must be so unless it be claimed that human thought, like divine thought, is identical with being; but in that case man must be omniscient and there can be no mystery for him. (St. Thomas, Summa Theol., Ia, q. 79, a. 2). Either God or the plant—we must choose one of the two.

A close study of the first principles of knowledge makes it increasingly evident that between the traditional philosophy and Idealism, the question of paramount importance is to know whether we are at least certain of the objectivity of the principle of non-contradiction or identity.

It is evident for us that the absurd is not only unthinkable, but that it is also really impossible, or in itself impossible of realization, even for the Omnipotent Being, if such a one exists. That which is impossible of realization stands de facto in correlation to the unthinkable. Now the real impossibility of the absurd is for us an evident fact, the very first, anterior and superior to that of Descartes' "cogito." We feel ourselves dominated and regulated by it, that is to say, by evident being, which excludes non-being or contradiction. In this first of all its acts, that of adherence to being, the created intellect manifests itself as potential and conditioned.

This primordial evidence is a fact attested by the reason or the intellect. By what secret process this fact is established, remains for us a profound mystery, because it is an entirely immaterial process, and too dazzling a light in itself for the feeble vision of our intellect. In this life we have but indirect knowledge of the immaterial, by way of analogy with material things; and we know the properties of things only in a negative and relative

sense, by saying that they are not material and that their vitality is superior to that of the senses. Hence the obscurity of all our theories of knowledge. But simply because the intrinsic nature of a thing remains for us obscure, we can neither deny the fact itself of knowledge nor give an explanation of it, which is tantamount to a denial of the same by introducing the element of contradiction into each of its component parts. It is this which Idealism does. (See no. 17). Philosophical reflection must explain this process of knowledge in harmony with the nature of things, and not in opposition to it. The theories must interpret the facts and not deny them. If the theories are obliged to assume illusions of nature, then they are illusory themselves. In proving the natural range of the intellect with regard to being, we must not deprive it of its essential relationship to being; one does not have to break a spring in order to test its strength.

About twenty-five years ago Rousselot wrote on this point: “After having assured oneself of the evidence of being and the fact of its affirmation, it remains to give a satisfactory account of the meaning and validity of this fact. Failure to see or to accept this duty would be to finish too soon with philosophy and to mutilate it. . . . To be sure, this explanation can be given only by the application of some system of metaphysics. Now, if it is given by means of the metaphysics which starts from the ‘philosophy of being’ and which satisfies dogmatic reason before any critical question arises, the problem is solved.” On his part Rousselot believes that we must explain our first affirmation of being (that being exists or that the reality is intelligible being) by saying that this affirmation “marks the transition to the act expressive of that desire for the divine known as intellection;” and he adds that, according to St. Thomas, “it is God who first arouses the rational appetite of a creature to action.” (Ibid., p. 505).

We never claimed that our first affirmation of being did not need to be explained; and it is clear that it can be explained by means of the four causes. On the contrary, we have always explained it by actual immateriality of the intellect, which by reflection can know not only the fact of its own activity, but the very nature of its act, and of this act towards its own self, which essentially refers to being. We have elucidated this point by giving in substance the argument of St. Thomas in De Veritate, q. 1, a. 9, and q. 2, a. 2. We admit then, with Rousselot, that the certitude of the objectivity of our knowledge has its foundation not only in a formulated principle, such as that of contradiction, but also in the knowledge which the

mind has of its own nature whenever it reflects upon its actions. Criticism must try to grasp the full meaning and range of this act of reflection.

After that, we may consider ourselves as having passed not only beyond the stage of spontaneous discovery of being and its principles (in via inventionis), but also beyond that of critical reflection, and to be in possession of those ontological principles by which the ultimate reasons of things are made known. The reason or ultimate cause of our certitude may then be discovered a posteriori, and thus the point of departure of the argument for the existence of a prime intellectual mover will be the fact that our intellect is itself moved whenever it is in action. (Sec further on, no. 36, c). We may also suppose this supreme cause to be already known and by means of it give an a priori explanation of the objectivity of our knowledge.

In this ontological order of the ultimate reasons of things, we must say that the supreme foundation of the certitude that our intellect has concerning the objectivity of first principles is to be found in God, inasmuch as our intellect is a participated likeness of the Divine Intellect, which is absolutely identical with Being itself. Though St. Thomas rejects Platonism and the theory of the Ontologists that necessary and eternal truths are intuitively known by us in God, he admits that, in this life, God is in a certain sense the source of our knowledge, in that the natural light of our intellect is a participated likeness of the divine and uncreated light, and that, in order to operate, the intellect needs to be illumined by the self-same intelligent and subsistent Being. “The intellectual light which is in us,” he says, “is nothing else but a certain participated likeness of the uncreated light, in which are contained the eternal types.” (Ia, q. 84, a. 5). Elsewhere he writes that “there must needs be some higher intellect, by which the soul is helped to understand.” (Ia, q. 79, a. 4). This illuminative divine concurrence is required not only for the first act of our intellect, but for all its acts?

Pure intellect, containing no imperfection, is identical with pure being; but an intellect that is imperfect cannot be identified with imperfect being as its proper object; for otherwise it would no longer be an intellect at all. And the intellect cannot attain to such being except by the illuminating guidance of that First Intellect, who is the self-subsistent and intelligent Being. This is the ultimate reason assigned by metaphysics to our primary affirmation of being. But this explanation presupposes (quoad nos) the proofs for the existence of God, and cannot, therefore, be adduced as their

principle; it merely confirms them by giving the fundamental ontological and ultimate cause of our certitude.

Rousselot goes even farther. “If the soul responds sympathetically to being as such,” he says, “the final reason for this is because the soul is capable of communing with God” (l. c., p. 504). The affirmation of being “marks the transition to the act expressive of the desire for the divine known as intellection” (p. 505). This explanation, which reminds us in certain respects of that given by Rosmini, in our opinion is wrong, in that it defines the intellect not in its relation to being, but in its relation to the divine. As a matter of fact, the intellect and being are two correlative analogues; only the divine intellect refers directly to divine being, with which it is identical; the created intellect refers to created being, and comes to know God by this means. Moreover, that the intellect knows of the certitude it has acquired, in which intellection more specifically consists, Rousselot attributes to its natural inclination (appetitus naturalis), a characteristic of the will and of every other faculty.

That which belongs to a species as its property cannot be explained by what is common to all species of the same genus. In fact, the certitude of our primary affirmation of being is explained by the objective evidence of being, and by the very nature of our intellect when influenced by the divine, the former being a participated likeness of subsistent intellection, which includes in its embrace both the subsistent Being and all possible beings of which the Supreme Being is the exemplar. God has a pure and absolutely immediate intuition of purely intelligible Being; our human intellect abstracts the intelligible from its sensible surroundings, and hence has an abstractive intuition of the intelligible.

2) Second objection of the Idealists. Because thought is immaterial, a new difficulty presents itself. The intelligible known by our intellect is not real unless it is found in the things themselves. But how can it be found in the sensible things from which it is said to be abstracted, since it is not contained in them? As there can be nothing actually intelligible, immaterial, and universal in sensible things, the intelligible, the object of our intellectual cognition, is not real.

This is the classical objection against the solution given by Traditional Realism to the problem of universals. St. Thomas foresaw and solved it in his Summa (Ia, q. 85, a. 2, ad 2um). That the intelligible, he says, cannot be present in material things in the abstract, immaterial, and universal mode in which it is found in the mind, I concede; that it cannot be there without this mode on account of its nature or essence known by the intellect, I deny. “In speaking of the intelligible, the universal, the abstract, we imply one of two things—the nature of the thing known, and its actual intelligibility, universality or abstraction. Nature, e.g., humanity which is intellectually understood, abstracted or considered as universal, exists only in individuals, while that mode which is actual intelligibility, universality, abstraction, exists only in the intellect. We have something similar to this in the senses. For sight perceives the color of the apple apart from the smell. If it be asked, where is the color which is seen apart from the smell, the answer is: in the apple. But that the color is perceived without the smell, is owing to the sight, since the faculty of sight receives the likeness of color and not of smell.”

3) Third objection. Our concepts cannot express as universal what the senses perceive as singular. Now, the senses perceive only sensible phenomena. Therefore, our concepts are valid merely as representative of phenomena.

The answer to this objection is included in what has been said above in connection with Idealism. Our concepts cannot represent as universal what our senses perceive as individual, whether what is perceived be directly or only accidentally sensible. That the senses perceive only sensible phenomena, which do not constitute the direct and proper object of the sensitive faculties, is true. But it is not true that the senses do not perceive the subject of phenomena, being and substance, even accidentally. It is not color in general that is perceived by the sense of sight, but a colored object, inasmuch as it is colored; the intellect, on the other hand, perceives being and substance in the object, it reads in the phenomena (intus legit), at least indistinctly, the principle of their intelligibility, the essence of which they are the property (Cf. St. Thomas, De Anima, Bk. II, Lect. 13; Summa Theol., Ia, q. 17, a. 2; q. 78, a. 3, ad 2um).

4. Fourth Objection. After all, the ontological validity of first ideas and first principles depends upon the validity of sensation. Now, the knowledge acquired by the senses cannot have metaphysical, but only physical

certainty, derived from experience. Therefore, we cannot be metaphysically certain of the ontological validity of first ideas and first principles.

Reply. The ontological validity of first ideas and first principles depends upon the validity of sensation—not as if this latter were the real reason in some formal and intrinsic manner of that ontological validity; the dependence must be interpreted as meaning that sensation in some material and extrinsic way is a predisposing cause and a required condition. The real reason for the certainty of this ontological validity is not the evidence obtained from sense experience, but belongs to the intellectual order, and is a vision of the intellect, not of the senses. For this reason the certitude is metaphysical and superior to that acquired by the senses. As St. Thomas remarks: “It cannot be said that sensible knowledge is the total and perfect cause of intellectual knowledge, but rather that it is in a way the material cause. . . . We must not expect the entire truth from the senses. For the light of the active intellect (intellectus agens) is needed, through which we achieve the unchangeable truth of changeable things and discern the things themselves from their likenesses.” (Ia, q. 84, a. 6, ad 1um). “All the certitude of the knowledge that we have depends upon the certitude of the principles . . . and therefore, that anything is known for certain is due to the fact that man has been divinely endowed with that interior light of reason by which God speaks in us,” (St. Thomas, De Veritate, q. 11, a. 1, ad 13 et 17um). The intellect, by the light that is in it, and by means of its own principles, judges of the validity of sensation, of which it makes use. Intelligible being and its opposition to not-being are known by the human intellect before it judges of the validity of sensation, nay, even before abstraction is assigned as the reason of this knowledge. Then, by means of the light of being and certain first principles, it judges of the validity of sensation and of abstraction. It is in this way that philosophical reason is able to proceed in the critical discussion of metaphysical questions, as Aristotle did. (See Metaph., Bk. IV). It can defend the ontological validity of the notion of being and of the principle of contradiction, by a simple analysis of the terms: intellect and idea. This it is able to do even before it solves the problem of the origin of ideas. Hence a number of contemporary Scholastics, such as Zigliara, in their refutation of Scepticism solved the criteriological problem before they considered the question of the origin of ideas, which was assigned by them to rational psychology. A sensation which is the record of no sense perception would be contrary to the

principle of contradiction; a sensation which is not the effect of a determining external cause would be contrary to the principle of causality. If the purpose of the senses as such is not to know the realities of sense perception, then they are contrary to the principle of finality. It may happen that the senses are deceived, even as regards their proper object, but this is due to some organic defect. (See Ia, q. 17, a. 2). On the other hand, the intellect can never be deceived concerning primary and simple ideas and first principles. (Ia, q. 17, a. 3, c., and ad 2um). The natural certitude of these principles persists in spite of the systematic errors by which they are deprived of their original meaning, or even denied. These errors are like a cloud of the imagination on the fringe of the intellect, and they cannot succeed in penetrating the faculty so as to change it completely; for that would mean the complete destruction of reason itself. “We do not always have to think as we speak,” was Aristotle’s remark to those who denied the principle of contradiction. (IV Met., c. iii).

Thus all our explanations eventually lead us back to those primary ideas and first principles, and to the intellectual light which reveals them to us. The object of these ideas and principles is evident, since it is being itself, which is evident. With regard to the intellectual light, it makes known everything to us, but in this life we do not know it as it actually is, namely, in its pure immateriality. When we wish to tell what it is, we are obliged to describe it by analogy, in terms applicable to material light and its effects; when we wish to state in what it formally consists, we make use of negative and relative terms, by saying that it is a non-material light and a vivid light, emanating from a faculty superior in vitality to that of the senses. We describe this light by means of a sensible image, since it is too brilliant for us to perceive in its pure immateriality. In this life our intellect, functioning as it does in connection with the senses, when confronted with this light, resembles an owl looking at the sun; for it is only by reason of the reflection of this light in sensible things that the intellect sees it, making known its dormant intelligibility. The fact that we are incapable of acquiring a direct and precise knowledge of the immaterial nature of our intellectual faculty, is the reason why, in this life, there will always be an element of obscurity in every theory of knowledge, no matter how true it may be. But because this obscurity remains even after all diligent inquiries have been made, we are not justified in rejecting what is undoubtedly certain. It is a task of critical philosophy not to suppress mysteries, but to take note of them when and

wherever they occur, and to throw light upon them by means of analogies with things that are more familiar to us.

The certitude and the ontological validity of primary ideas and first principles is naturally and logically prior to the theory by which the philosopher seeks to explain how this certitude is acquired, how our intellect comes into contact with being, and is determined and measured by it. The theory advanced in explanation of the exact manner by which something comes into existence, necessarily presupposes the existence of this same thing as an established fact. The obscurities accompanying any theory advanced in explanation of the way in which the actualization of the intelligible hidden in the sensible thing is effected, and how it is that the intellect gets to know by means of this actualized intelligible, must not cause us to deny, as the Subjectivists do, the fact that the intellect does know in this manner. In testing the power of our intellect, we must not strain it to the breaking point. We must proceed from the more certain to the less certain, and the obscurity of the latter must not cause us to reject the evidence of the former, no more than the difficulty of reconciling the immutability of God with divine freedom is a reason for doubting the existence of these two attributes, provided each has been logically deduced. If, in following strictly the rules of reasoning, we meet with certain obscurities, we must conclude that these veil a mystery, but not a contradiction. The classical theory of knowledge founded on the mutual relationship existing between being and intellect (considered in their vital aspects), and between intellect and being (objectively considered), in spite of its inevitable obscurities, nevertheless is in perfect conformity with the first principles of reason.

Having defended the ontological validity of the idea of being, and of primary ideas in general, we must now take up the defence of the ontological validity of first principles and their absolute necessity, by showing what is their connection with being.

20) Intuition of first principles. They are perceived in the idea of being, which is the formal object of the intellect. The transcendent principle (principle of identity) is the ultimate basis of every proof for the existence of God. The affirmation of the objective validity of this transcendent principle tacitly implies the admission of the existence of the divine and transcendental being, who is absolutely identical with himself. In all forms of evolutionary Pantheism contradiction necessarily is the first principle.

By the process of analysis the philosophical reason refers these principles, which the intellect instinctively perceives in being, to being itself. We must give a detailed account of this connection, for it will furnish the answer to the objections of the Empiricists and of Kant against the necessity and the objective validity of the principles of sufficient reason and of causality. A critical survey of the principles of substance and finality will result in removing many of the difficulties which otherwise would greatly complicate the exposition of the proofs for the existence of God.

What the intellect first of all spontaneously perceives in being, is the truth of the principle of identity and of the principle of non-contradiction. For "that which before aught else falls under apprehension, is being, the notion of which is included in all things whatsoever a man apprehends. Therefore, the first undemonstrable principle is that the same thing cannot be affirmed and denied at the same time; this is based on the notion of being and not-being, and on this principle all others are based as is stated by the Philosopher in Met., IV, c. 6, n. 10." (St. Thomas, Ia IIae, q. 94, a. 2.)

In the IIa IIae, q. 1, a. 7, he writes: "The articles of faith serve the same purpose with regard to revealed truths, as self-evident principles do with regard to the truths acquired by natural reason. And in these principles there prevails a certain order, as some are positively included in others. Thus, all principles are finally reduced to this one, as to their first: 'It is impossible for the same thing to be affirmed and denied at the same time,' as is evident from what the Philosopher says in the Fourth Book of his Metaphysics."

A truth which has not been sufficiently emphasized is that, when we set down as an established fact the necessity and the objectivity of the principle of identity, it means that this principle is the ultimate basis of every proof for the existence of God, who is the self-subsisting Being, "ipsum esse subsistens." In explaining how the principle of identity is the fundamental law of thought and of reality, we are led to conclude that the fundamental reality, the Absolute, is in all things one and for all purposes identical with itself, Being itself, pure actuality, and, therefore, necessarily distinct from the world, which is composite and changing.

All the errors of the Empiricists and Subjectivists are refuted by means of this principle, which, therefore, must he fully discussed by us here.

St. Thomas, in his Commentary on the fourth book of Aristotle's Metaphysics (Lect. VI), proves that there must be a transcendent principle, by which simple apprehension and judgment, the first two operations of the

mind, are compared. There can be no such thing as an indefinite series of concepts, for by the analysis of those which are more comprehensive than others we finally arrive at a first concept, the simplest and most universal of all, namely, the concept of being—that which exists or can exist. This idea of being, which is implied in all other ideas, must be absolutely the first for the intellect, which otherwise could form no concept of anything whatever. If, in the series of concepts, there is one that is first, then in the series of judgments also, there must be one that is first. And the first judgment, the simplest and most universal of all judgments, must depend upon the first idea, and being must be the subject of the proposition, and what first of all applies to being must constitute the predicate. By what formula can this truth be accurately expressed? Aristotle says that "it is impossible for anything to exist and not to exist at the same time and in the same sense." This axiom may be expressed in a simpler form by saying: "That which is, cannot be that which is not." It is important to note carefully the order of these primary notions.

Idealistic evolutionism, not distinguishing between being in general and divine being, starts out, as can be seen in the case of Hegel, by accepting the idea of being and its opposition to not-being, but denies that this opposition is absolute. Let us see how St. Thomas views this question, following, as usual, the teaching of Aristotle.

Our intellect perceives first of all the idea of being, and afterwards, by opposition, not-being; it then formulates three affirmative propositions, to which correspond three negative propositions.

The first of these propositions is: "Being is being," and the negative proposition corresponding to it: "Being is not the same as not-being." The second is that: "Everything that is being, is being," from which it follows that "no being can be not-being." The third is: "Every being either is or is not," from which it follows that "Nothing can at the same time be and not be."

In the first of the negative propositions we have the principle of contradiction, or rather the principle of non-contradiction, in its simplest form. Its corresponding affirmative may seem to be tautological. In matter of fact, however, the accompanying predicate serves a real purpose, as clearly appears if both propositions are combined into one, after the manner of Parmenides, to wit: Being is being, not-being is not-being. Such expressions serve a useful purpose, for when we wish to emphasize the

difference between things we often say, for instance, that “flesh is flesh,” and “spirit is spirit.” But these two affirmative propositions, which are in opposition to each other, can be reunited in one negative by saying: “Being is not not-being.”

It is in this formula, which manifestly excludes tautology, that St. Thomas and his school, following Aristotle, recognize the supreme principle of thought, which they call the principle of contradiction.

As for the principle of identity, it may be formulated thus: “Being is being, or, every being is being.” Expressed in this simple, though apparently tautological form, the principle of identity precedes that of contradiction, and this for the reason that every negation must be based on an affirmation. But if we wish to express explicitly the notion of identity contained in the formula which enunciates the principle of identity, it must assume the simplest form of the principle of contradiction. In matter of fact, identity is unity of substance, just as similarity is unity of quality, and equality is unity of quantity. The opposition between “the same,” and “the other,” and between “identical” and “different,” presupposes that between “one” and “several.” And the idea of unity or undivided being presupposes the ideas of “being,” “not-being,” and “division;” and these ideas are all that we require to enable us to formulate the principle of contradiction.

If we wish to arrive at a clearer understanding of the explicit formulas of the principle of identity, we must note, as St. Thomas did, the order in which the notions of “being” (ens), “thing” (res), “unity” (unum), “something” (aliquid), “true” (verum), and “good” (bonum), follow one another. In De Veritate, q. 1, a. 1, St. Thomas explains this order as follows: “That which the intellect perceives first of all, and which is most evidently known by it, is being (ens), and it is into this concept that the intellect resolves all its other concepts. All the other concepts, therefore, denote something which is added to being. But ‘being’ cannot receive any additions which are extrinsic to it, as is the case with additions accruing to a genus; for these differences, external to the idea of ‘being,’ would mean nothing; and all nature, even in that which is specific to it, is still essentially ‘being.’ Therefore, that which is added to ‘being’ cannot be extrinsic to it, but simply expresses a mode of being not denoted by the term ‘being’ itself. Amongst the modes of being we must distinguish (1) the particular modes which constitute the various genera or categories of the real, such as substance, quantity, quality, relation, action, passion, etc.; (2) the general

modes which belong to every being, to every substantial or accidental reality, and which transcend the categories, and for this reason are called transcendentals. These general modes are in turn subdivided, according as they apply to every being, either as considered in itself, or relatively to something else.

“What applies to every being considered as such, may apply to it either affirmatively or negatively. Affirmative predication is concerned first of all with the essence, which is expressed by the word ‘thing’ (res). This name, as Avicenna pointed out, differs from that of ‘being,’ in that ‘being’ denotes primarily the act of existing and through it that which exists; whereas the word ‘thing’ (res) primarily denotes the essence or quiddity of that which is.

“Negatively, what is predicated of every being as such is ‘indivision,’ which is expressed by the word ‘one.’ To say of a being that it is one, is to say that it is undivided. If a being were actually divided, it would have no determinate essence. If it is simple, it is undivided and indivisible; if it is composite, it ceases to be when it is divided. (See Ia, q. 11, a. 1).

“Relatively to some other thing than itself the name ‘something’ applies strictly to every being, precisely for the reason that it is distinct from any other thing (aliquid quasi aliud quid). Hence every being is one, in so far as it is undivided in itself, and it is something, in so far as it is divided or distinct from others.

“Finally, every being may be considered relatively as referring to that which by its nature comes in contact with all things, that is to say, the soul or the spiritual nature in general, in which we distinguish a cognitive faculty and a volitional or appetitive faculty. The relation of being to intellect is expressed by the word ‘true,’ and its relation to appetite by the word good.”

TABULATION OF THE MORES OF BEING

BEING General modes Absolute Affirmative: Essence, expressed by the word “thing” (res)

Negative: indivision, expressed by the word “one” (unum)

Special modes. Relative to another thing distinct from it is:—”something” (aliquid)

to the intellect—”true” (verum)

to the appetitive faculty -”good” (bonum)

The Categories.

The order in which these primary notions are arranged shows us the order of the formulas, more and more explicit, expressing the principle of identity. The simplest formula, as we have seen, is this: “Being is being, not-being is not-being,” and it may be condensed into the negative formula of the principle of contradiction: “Being is not not-being.” The identity of being, and of every being with itself, is expressed by the following formulas: “Every being is a thing,” or, “Every being has an essence or nature.” Or we may say: “Every being is one,” and if we wish to emphasize the perfection of its unity, which means more than similarity or equality, we may add: “Every being is one and the same,” or identical with itself. “It is one and the same thing,” is an expression frequently heard. Further, in relation to some other thing distinct from itself, we say that “Every being is something”— which means that it is some definite thing, some determinate nature, constituted as such by some property of its own, that it is one thing and not another.

All these formulas are more or less explicit expressions of the principle of identity, of which the principle of contradiction is but the negative formula. Clearly all these formulas are implied in the notion of being, and in that of not-being. Being is being, not-being is not-being, flesh is flesh, spirit is spirit, good is good, evil is evil (est est, non non); a square is a square, a circle is a circle; that a square is a figure with four equal sides is of its very nature and cannot be otherwise. Peter is a human individual and cannot, while remaining Peter, cease to be a human individual. Every being has a definite nature; it is its own self and cannot at the same time be and not be what it actually is.

This is the first principle of our reason. It forms the basis of all direct demonstrations, which presuppose the identity of the terms employed, and rest on the real identity of the extremes with the middle term, to conclude that the extremes themselves are really identical. Indirect demonstrations, or those by the method of reduction to absurdity, are also based on this principle.

In conclusion, we may say that if, as we have shown, the principle of sufficient reason has ontological validity, then this must also be true of the principle of contradiction; it is not only a logical law of thought, but also the metaphysical law of reality. In other words, the absurd is not only unthinkable, but it is also absolutely impossible of realization.

21) The anti-intellectualistic objection raised against the principle of non-contradiction. Solution of the same by means of the concept of potency, which enters into all the proofs for the existence of God.

This first principle—whether the formula by which it is expressed be affirmative or negative—is not tautological; in fact, there is a certain school of philosophers which denies its truth, and consequently rejects all the proofs which reason offers for the existence of God. The philosophy of this school is based on the theory of "becoming"; it denies the existence of "things," admitting only "actions"; it defines the real, not as that which is (a certain determined nature), but as that which becomes and changes incessantly. Bergson writes in his book on Creative Evolution, p. 270: "There are no things, there are only acts; things and states are merely modes of thinking, which our mind derives from the idea of becoming." Accordingly, this philosopher refuses to see a real distinction between "a glass of water, water, sugar, and the process by which sugar is dissolved in water." (Ibid., pp. 10 and 366). This amounts to saying that everything is what it is, and what it is not; hence the square is a square and no square, since it constantly changes and, therefore, has no proper nature. Likewise, man is rational and irrational, and not having any proper nature of his own, it was possible for him to have evolved from pure animality by the process of creative evolution. Everything is in everything.

Le Roy reduces all his objections to the traditional proofs for the existence of God to this: that they all depend upon the postulate of morcellation. "The distinctions between mover and moved," he says, "between movement and the object moved, between the affirmation of the primacy of the act over the potency, rest on the same postulate of common thought. . . . But of what value are these idols of the practical imagination? Why not simply identify being with becoming? Since all things are movement, there is need to ask ourselves what causes them to be in movement." Such a view leads one to conclude that God, far from being "He who is," in every respect identical with Himself, is but "a reality in the making, . . . a continuous projection," that He is "an infinite in becoming." He is no longer conceived as apart from the world which is projected from Him, but He is the process of becoming, is always becoming, yet will never be.

Those who profess this Pantheistic philosophy are fully aware that the stand which they take is the result of denying the objective validity of the

principle of identity or non-contradiction. According to Le Roy, “the principle of non-contradiction is not as universal and necessary as has been believed; its application is limited; it is restricted and circumscribed in meaning. Being the supreme law of speech, but not of thought in general, its influence extends merely to what is static, morcellated, immobile, in a word, to the things endowed with identity. But just as there is identity in the world, so also there is contradiction. Such are those fugitive fluxes, as becoming, duration, life, which of themselves are not of the rational order, and which speech transforms so as to incorporate them into contradictory schemata.” Our intellect reifies (objectivates) the universal flux for the needs of speech and of practical Life, and in that way pretends to submit all that is real to the principle of identity.

The moral consequences of this doctrine have been stated by Jean Weber of the Bergsonian school. It ends in unmorality of conduct; there is no more a distinction between good and evil than there is between being and not-being. “Morality, in planting itself on a terrain from which invention grows in all its vigour, immediately and full of life; in manifesting itself as the most insolent encroachment of the realm of the intellect upon spontaneity, was fated to encounter the continual contradictions of that undeniable reality of dynamism and creation which is our activity. . . . Confronted with these morals of ideas, we outline morality, or, more correctly, the unmorality of the act. . . . We call ‘good’ whatever has triumphed. Success, provided it is fierce and implacable, provided the vanquished are completely defeated, destroyed, abolished beyond hope—success justifies everything. . . . The man of genius is profoundly immoral, but for anyone to be immoral is not the proper thing. . . . ‘Duty’ is nowhere in particular, and yet it is everywhere, for all actions possess absolute value. The repentant sinner deserves all the anguish of his contrite soul, because he was not strong enough to transgress the law, and unworthy to be a sinner.” Hence there is no longer any difference between Ravachol and a Christian martyr. This conclusion of “the philosophy of becoming” was clearly condemned in the first proposition of the Syllabus of Pius IX.

This denial of the objective validity of the principle of identity is of Sensualist origin; it originated in the theory of the perpetual movement of sensible appearances, and especially in the facts of consciousness. Heraclitus said: “No one goes twice into the same river, . . . where everything is flowing, proceeding on its course, without ever stopping.” We

can never say of anything which changes that “it is such and such a thing,” because at the very moment when we say so, it is something else. In matter of fact, nothing is, everything is becoming. This argument has been thrown into logical form by saying that “Ex ente non fit ens, quia jam est ens,” i.e., nothing can come from being, since whatever is, already exists, and what is becoming, before becoming does not exist; on the other hand, “Ex nihilo nihil fit” (nothing can came from nothing); if at any given moment nothing exists, then nothing ever will come into existence. From these two principles Parmenides concluded that becoming is an illusion, and the only thing he was willing to affirm was the principle of identity that: “Being is, non-being is not, and we can never escape from this thought.” From these same principles Heraclitus concluded that being and non-being are mere abstractions of the mind, and “becoming” is the only reality, a mobile identity of contraries. This explains the universal “contradiction” which is found in all things.

Aristotle devotes to the defence of the principle of contradiction Book IV of his Metaphysics, from the third chapter to the end of the fourth. “It is not possible,” he writes, “for anyone ever to think that the same thing exists and does not exist. Heraclitus, according to some, is of a different opinion, but a man need not believe all that he says. This would be an affirmation which would deny itself. . . . (c. 3). It would mean to deny language and then to admit that we can speak (c. 4); all words would be synonymous, and all beings would be reduced to one single being; a galley, a wall, a man would all be one and the same thing (c. 4). The admission of a becoming without a something which is becoming, completely destroys substance and forces one to assert that everything is accident, to admit a process of becoming without a subject which becomes (c. 4). The reason why these philosophers [of the school of Heraclitus] held such an opinion is, that they regarded only objects of sense perception as constituting being, . . . and seeing that all sensible nature is in perpetual flux, . . . certain ones amongst them, such as Cratylus, believed that we must affirm nothing. Cratylus deemed a movement of the finger to be a sufficient answer (c. 5).”

We cannot deny, therefore, as Heraclitus did, the principle of non-contradiction. It remains for us to refute the objection derived from the idea of movement. Aristotle met this objection by introducing the notion of potency, as an intermediary between actual being and pure nothingness. (Phys., Bk. I, c. viii; Met., Bk. IX). He says that it must be conceded that

whatever becomes, does not come from actual being (ex ente non fit ens), and that nothing cannot come from nothing (ex nihilo nihil fit). And yet, whatever Parmenides may say, there is such a thing as becoming. To admit this, must we, like Heraclitus, deny being, the principle of all intelligibility, and say that becoming has its reason within itself? By no means; for becoming marks the transition from undetermined being to determined being. We have examples of this in the difference between one's capacity for acquiring knowledge and the knowledge acquired, between the embryo and the fully constituted being, between the seed and the plant, etc. Undetermined being is susceptible of receiving a determination, and this susceptibility we call potency. This potency, which is not being, cannot pass into actuality, but demands to be reduced to actuality by an active power, which itself must be aroused to action by some previous power, and, in the final analysis, by an active supreme power, which is its own activity, and hence unmoved, pure actuality, always absolutely the same. In that way becoming is explained, and the principle of contradiction remains intact.

Aristotle even goes so far as to claim that his position alone entitles us to affirm the process of becoming, just as it permits us to affirm identity. "This system [of Heraclitus], in which being and not-being are alleged to exist simultaneously, must lead to the admission of perpetual repose rather than of perpetual movement. In fact, there is nothing left which beings may become, since everything is in everything else." (IV Met., c. v). A becoming without a "subject" which remains unaltered throughout the process of change, would no longer be a becoming, for at each instant there would be both annihilation and creation. Later on we shall see that a causeless and purposeless process of becoming is no less an impossibility. (See nos. 26 and 27).

Bergson presents the argument of Heraclitus in a new form. "There is more," he says, "in a movement than in the successive positions attributed to the moving object, more in a becoming than in the forms passed through in turn, more in the evolution of form than in the forms realized one after another. Philosophy can, therefore, derive terms of the second kind from those of the first, but not vice versa; for it is from the first terms that speculation must take its start. But the intellect reverses the order of the two terms, and on this point ancient philosophy proceeds as the intellect does. It installs itself in the immutable, it posits ideas, and passes to becoming by way of attenuation and diminution." "A perpetual mobility is possible only

if it is backed by an eternity of immutability, which it unwinds in a chain that has neither beginning nor end. Such is the last word of Greek philosophy. It has its roots deep down in the soul of pagan antiquity. It would, therefore, be useless to try to deduce it from a simple principle. But if every element derived from poetry, religion, social life, and a rudimentary system of physics and biology be removed from it, if we take away all the light materials that may have been used in the construction of the stately building, a solid framework remains, and this framework marks the main lines of a metaphysic which is, we believe, the natural metaphysic of the human intellect."

Bergson's philosophy is of the dynamic order, which is the very opposite of the natural metaphysic of the ancients, for the reason that such a metaphysic is merely the systematization of dissociated objects, and of the morcellation to which the universal flux has been submitted by common opinion, or, in other words, by the practical imagination and by speech. In Bergson's opinion the intellect is made only for considering "inert objects, more especially solids, where our action finds its fulcrum and our industry obtains its tools; our concepts have been formed on the model of solids, our logic is pre-eminently a logic of solids," incapable of representing the real, which is essentially becoming and life.

This argument has remained almost unchanged since the time of Heraclitus, and its Sensualist origin becomes more and more evident as we go along. If solid bodies constitute the sole object of the intellect, how are we to explain the verb "to be," which is the soul of every judgment, and in what way does man differ from the animal? If the object of the intellect is not the solid body, but being and all which has a raison d'être, the Bergsonian proposition that "there is more in the movement than in the immobile," is true only of immobilities viewed by the senses as actual becoming. But it is false, if interpreted in the sense of an absolute principle, because in that case it would imply that "what is as yet merely a becoming, is more of a reality than what actually is." The senses see in the immobile object something which is at rest; the intellect, something which is, in opposition to something which is becoming, just as the immutable is that which it is and cannot be other than what it is. Bergsonian Sensualism confuses immutability, which transcends all movement, with something which is inferior to it; namely, the terminus ad quem with the terminus a quo, actuality with potency. In this way it lowers the immobile life of the

intellect, which contemplates the highest eternal laws, to the level of the inertia of inanimate solids. From this point of view, the vegetative life of the stomach is superior to the immobile life of the intellect; time is superior to eternity, for it is life, whereas eternity is death.

Boutroux answers Spencer by remarking that "evolutionism is the truth envisaged from the point of view of the senses, but as the intellect considers things, it remains true that the imperfect does not exist and does not determine itself except by reason of the more perfect. . . . Moreover, the intellect persistently proclaims with Aristotle that everything has a reason, and the first principle must be the ultimate reason of things. Now, to explain means to determine, and the ultimate reason for the existence of things must be sought in the completely determined being." "This is the last word of Greek philosophy," but it is not, as Bergson says, "connected by invisible threads with all the fibres of the ancient soul" and with what constitutes the basis of the human intellect. It is not true to say that we cannot "deduce it from a simple principle." It is connected with the intellect by the supreme law of thought and of reality—the principle of identity, implied in the very first of all ideas, which is that of being. It is connected with the intellect, not by a utilitarian division of the sensible content, imposed by the conventional modes of practical life and speech; but, if we wish to avoid an absurd conclusion, it rests of necessity upon the principle of the morcellation of intelligible being.

22) Hegel's objection (absolute intellectualism) to the principle of identity.

The anti-intellectualism of Heraclitus, repeated at the present day by Bergson, is at the opposite pole of the absolute intellectualism of Hegel, which also denies the objective validity of the principle of identity. While the Sensualist philosophy of becoming reduces the rational to experimental reality, to the fact of consciousness, what must be to what actually is, right to the fait accompli, morality to success, necessity to a meaningless and lawless liberty, to a sort of blind spontaneity resembling the "unconscious" of Schopenhauer; the intellectualist philosophy of becoming, on the contrary, restores experimental reality to the rational order, that which is to that which ought to be, the fait accompli to right, success to morality, liberty to necessity. Thus Bergsonism appears like a reversed Hegelianism.

Hegel's Pantheism was the result of his denial, from an intellectualist point of view, of the principle of non-contradiction, in the very name of the

idea of being. His argumentation, as set forth in his Logik (French translation by A. Véra, 2nd ed., § 85, Bk. 1, pp. 393-412), is correctly summed up by the historian Weber in the following words: “Being is the most universal of all notions, but for this very reason it is also the poorest and the most negative of notions. To be white or black, to have extension, to be good, means to be something; but to be without any determination, is to be nothing, is simply not to be. Pure and simple being is, therefore, equivalent to not-being. It is at one and the same time itself and its contrary. If it were merely itself, it would remain immobile and sterile; if it were mere nothingness, it would be synonymous with zero, and in this case also completely powerless and infecund. It is because it is the one and the other that it becomes something, another thing, everything. The contradiction contained in the notion of being resolves itself into becoming, development. To become is at the same time to be and not to be (that which will be). The two contraries which engender it, namely, being and non-being, are rediscovered, blended and reconciled in becoming. The result is a new contradiction, which will resolve itself into a new synthesis, and thus the process will continue until the absolute idea is reached.”

To perceive the sophism contained in this argument, we need only cast it into syllogistic form: Pure being is pure indetermination. But pure indetermination is pure non-being. Therefore, pure being is pure non-being. The middle term, “pure indetermination,” is used in two different senses, In the major it means the negation of all determination, generic, specific, or individual, but not the negation of (ideal or real) being, which transcends the generic determinations of which it is susceptible. In the minor, on the other hand, pure indetermination is not only the negation of all generic, specific, and individual determination, but also implies the negation of any further determination of which being is capable. Therefore, the argument amounts to this: that pure being is undetermined being; but undetermined being is pure non-being. The minor is evidently false.

Besides, there is no apparent reason why becoming should emerge from this realized contradiction, this identification of contradictories. On the contrary, we must hold with Aristotle that “to maintain that being and non-being are identical, is to admit permanent repose rather than perpetual motion. There is in fact nothing into which beings can transform themselves, because “everything includes everything.” (IV Met., c. v).

Finally, this absolute intellectualism of Hegel is no less destructive of all knowledge than is the anti-intellectualism of Heraclitus and Bergson. All reasoning presupposes that every idea employed in the process represents a reality, the nature of which remains the same; but for Hegel, the principle of identity is merely a law of inferior logic, of the mind working with abstractions, and not a law of superior logic, of reason and reality. “From this it follows,” as Aristotle remarked (IV Met., c. iv), “that one can with equal right affirm or deny everything of all things, that all men tell the truth and that all lie, and that each one admits that he is a liar.”

For the rest, Hegel himself acknowledges “that if it is true to say that being and non-being are one and the same, it is also true to say that they differ, and that the one is not the other.” (Logik, Bk. I, p. 404). It follows from this that, according to Hegel, nothing can be affirmed and everything can be affirmed. If this attitude does not destroy all science, it cannot at least be said to have more than a relative value, and hence to possess nothing more than the name of science.

We may rightly conclude, therefore, that the objections raised against the principle of contradiction in no way affect its validity. Those of Hegel as well as those of Heraclitus and of Bergson are mere paralogisms. These philosophers admit that the principle of contradiction is a law of the reasoning mind and of speech, and it must also be accepted as the law of being. In other words, the absurd is not only unthinkable, but also impossible of realization, because no power, however great, can make it real. For the mind, this principle is the first of all evident certainties; its ontological validity is based on that of the notion of being, which has occupied us through so many pages. The objections just examined are powerless to weaken or depreciate the soundness of this principle in any way.

Renouvier, as various philosophers before him, in his Dilemmes de la Métaphysique Pure, p. 2, casts doubt upon the objectivity of the principle of contradiction. In reference to this it suffices to say, with Evellin (Congrès de Métaphysique, Paris, 1900, p. 175), that “if the law of non-contradiction were merely a law of thought, but not of reality, being would lose precisely that which constitutes it what it is—its identity with itself, and consequently, being as such would be non-existent. Everything would disappear in an intangible flux. . . . The principle of identity is not only an essential requisite of thought, but it also constitutes nature, having

thoroughly emancipated it from the tyranny of the phenomenon." In fact, as we shall see further on, the principle of substance is merely a determination of the principle of identity. The principles of sufficient reason and of causality can also be traced back to this principle of identity, by showing the absurdity of the opposite contention; which means that they, too, have ontological value, i.e., are laws of being.

From the preceding discussion it is evident that, if the principle of identity and of non-contradiction had no objective value, evolutionistic Pantheism would be victorious and "becoming" would be the fundamental reality. If, on the contrary, the absolute universality and objectivity of this principle are established, the fundamental reality is necessarily pure identity, or self-subsistent Being (ipsum esse subsistens), pure being, pure actuality, pure perfection, a transcendent reality essentially distinct from the world, which is composite and subject to change.

Hegelianism, Heraclitism, and Bergsonism thus, by their avowed contradiction, which is an essential feature of their systems, furnish a proof per absurdum for the existence and transcendental nature of God.

23) Substance is the determining principle of identity. What place it holds in the demonstration of the existence of God.

It is easy to see that the principle of substance, denied by the philosophy of becoming, is nothing but a determination of the principle of identity. It is important to recall this truth here, because the proofs for the existence of God presuppose the existence of substances, and of substances distinct from one another. In an article entitled "La Dernière Idole," which appeared in the Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale, of July, 1902, M. Hébert wrote: "The principle of causality, bringing us back to a first extrinsic cause in accordance with the axiom that 'quidquid movetur, ab alio movetur' [whatever is in motion, is set in motion by another], derives its apparent lucidity from a spatial image which has been illicitly introduced into a metaphysical problem. It is based on the supposition that the movers and those moved are distinct substances, which Pantheism denies." We have already had occasion to note that this same objection was developed by Le Roy in discussing the postulate of morcellation. In his view, as in Bergson's, substance is "a position in space," resulting from the advantageous morcellation of the continuous in sense perception. From the empirical point of view, or as far as the senses are concerned, it is difficult to see how it could be defined otherwise. But from the intellectual point of

view, substance is conceived as a fundamental reality belonging to a different order than quantity and sensible qualities. Being present entirely in the whole and in every part of it, it gives to the object its unity. It cannot be perceived as such by the senses, but only by the intellect. (St. Thomas, IIIa, q. 76, a. 7). Nevertheless, it is called a sensibile per accidens (an accidentally sensible object) because the senses recognize it accidentally as the subject of phenomena concerning which they have a direct knowledge. As a matter of fact, the sense of sight perceives, not color in general, but that which is colored, a colored object perceived precisely as colored, whereas the intellect, upon the simple presentation of a sensible object, perceives it as a substance without any investigation. “What is immediately apprehended by the intellect, when confronted with the object of sense perception, is called sensibile per accidens (accidentally sensible).” (Aristotle, De Anima, Bk. II; Comment. of St. Thomas, Lect. 13). As soon as the dominant one of the internal sense faculties has reunited the data presented by each of the external senses, therefore, the substance is thus grasped by the intellect.

In its relation to the intellect, substance is but a primary determination of being, necessary for the purpose of rendering intelligible, in the role of being, a group of phenomena which presents itself as autonomous. On the first presentation of any sensible object whatever, such as, e. g., the swaddling-clothes in which an infant is wrapped, whilst the sense of sight perceives the color of this object, that of touch its shape and resistance, the intellect acquires a confused knowledge of its being—that the object is “something which is.” This first known object of the intellect becomes more clearly defined as something which is one and permanent (a substance), after the intellect has noted the multiplicity of its phenomena and the changes which they undergo. In fact, it is only by reason of this oneness that the multiple becomes intelligible, just as the permanent or the identical explain the transitory; for one of the formulas of the principle of identity is that “every being is one and the same with itself.” To say of a being that it is a substance, is to assert that it remains one and the same under its multiple and changing phenomena. The principle of substance, therefore, is simply a determination of the principle of identity, and the idea of substance a determination of the idea of being. In the acquisition of its knowledge the intellect proceeds from the idea of being—in which that of substance is de facto implicitly included—to the somewhat confused ideas

of the manner of being implied in phenomena, multiplicity, and change. It seeks to render these new ideas intelligible in the light of the idea of being, and comes to recognize the "something which is" as one and a permanent subject, as a being in the full sense of the word, as something which exists in itself or subsists (a substance). The intellect is now in a position to narrow down the concept of the manner of being implied in the phenomenon, which cannot be defined except in terms of what exists in itself, for it is ens entis, "an entity of an entity." Thus, the confused concept of the phenomenon adds to the definiteness of the concept of substance, and is in turn more clearly defined by it. (St. Thomas, Summa Theol., Ia, q. 85, a. 5). Therefore, the morcellation which separates being from the phenomenon is not a utilitarian division of the continuous in sense perception, but a division of the intelligible, which, by reason of the principle of identity, is a metaphysical or a priori requisite.

From this point of view, the second Kantian antinomy, which concerns corporeal substance, presents no difficulty. The continuous is divisible, but not divided indefinitely; the corporeal and extended substance is not a contradictory collection of unextended indivisible parts, but its unity is assured by a principle superior to that of the spatial order, namely, the substantial form, which exists as a whole in the object as a whole and in each part of the object, and which demands such extension—the least possible—as a condition for the subsistence of the composite.

As for the numerical distinction of individual substances of the sensible order (a distinction presupposed by certain proofs for the existence of God, but not essential to these proofs), we often have only physical certitude, derived from experience and the laws which experimental science has discovered. But the criterion of the substantial unity of a being is not merely, as Le Roy would have it, its quantitative unity in space, a unity perceptible to the sense of touch, for this sort of unity often presupposes only an accidental union, namely, that of an aggregation of molecules. The true criterion of the substantial unity of a being is activity, and "the action which reveals the unity of the whole must be produced by a single part, and not by the association of parts; but the influence of the other parts must also be revealed in this action. A frequently quoted example is that of a mare with a broken cannon bone, having a colt whose cannon bone looks as if it were broken but grown together again." It is by means of this principle that the individuality of the higher animals is established. When, in reality, we

distinguish between two animals, or between an animal and its environment, this is not merely “an arrangement, a simplification convenient to the word and the action.” Bergson in his Creative Evolution admits that the living body is isolated by nature itself, even though its individuality is not perfect.

As for the substantial distinction between human souls, it is the object of metaphysical certitude and can be scientifically demonstrated. The intellect, which is the basis of freedom, is intrinsically independent of the organism when in operation, and its object is universal being. It presupposes, therefore, a subsistent and simple principle, intrinsically independent of matter and of the world of corporeal beings (operari sequitur esse, et modus operandi modum essendi). This subsistent and simple principle, which is conscious and master of itself, must be distinct from similar subsistent principles. St. Thomas proves this in his Summa Theologica, Ia, q. 76, a. 2, saying that “it is absolutely impossible for one intellect to belong to all men; if there were one intellect for all men, it would not be possible to distinguish my intellectual action from yours on the basis of one intelligible object; there would be only one intellectual act.” Finally, it follows as an evident conclusion that human souls are distinct from the Absolute, if it is proved that the Absolute cannot harbor within itself either multiplicity or becoming.

The principle of sufficient reason, which we are about to consider, will show us clearly that whatever is multiple (composite) and changing, cannot have a sufficient reason for its existence in itself, but in the final analysis this reason must be sought in a being which is pure identity, pure being, pure act, pure perfection. From this point of view, it matters not whether the world from which we start to prove the existence of God is one single substance, or a number of substances. It is sufficient for our purpose if there be found in it (at least accidental) multiplicity and becoming. God cannot be conceived as the substance of the world, for that would mean that He is determined and consequently perfected by the multiple and transitory phenomena superadded to Him. He would no longer be identified with His being as A is A, be pure being or pure act.

24) The principle of sufficient reason is the immediate basis of the proofs for the existence of God. By the appeal to the impossible it resolves itself into the principle of identity. In this sense, it is an analytical principle.

The principle of sufficient reason, on which the proofs for the existence of God are based, is not, like the principle of substance, a simple determination of the principle of identity, but resolves itself into this principle by an appeal to the impossible. The principle of sufficient reason may be expressed by the following formula: “Everything which is, has a sufficient reason for existing,” or, “Every being has a sufficient reason;” consequently, “everything is intelligible.” This principle is self-evident, and though it cannot be directly demonstrated, it can be indirectly demonstrated by the indirect method of proof known as reductio ad absurdum. The direct demonstration furnishes, by means of a middle term, intrinsic evidence of a proposition not immediately evident, or not self-evident. The demonstration by the method of reductio ad absurdum of an immediately evident principle cannot make this principle intrinsically evident for us, but merely proves that he who denies this principle must also deny the principle of contradiction, and that he who doubts it must also doubt the principle of contradiction. It is a unanimously accepted doctrine in Scholastic philosophy, that metaphysics explains and defends the first principles by the method of reductio ad impossibile, referring them to the principle of identity, which is immediately implied in the first of all ideas, that of being.

“In principles which are knowable in themselves,” writes St. Thomas, “there is found a certain order, so that some of them are plainly included in others; just as all principles are reduced to this one as to their first: that it is impossible to affirm and deny at the same time, as is evident from what the Philosopher says in the Fourth Book of his Metaphysics, text. 9.” (IIa IIae, q. I, a. 7).

Let us explain in what this reductio ad absurdum consists. First of all, we must show what is the exact meaning of the formula as an expression of the principle: “Everything which is, has its reason for being.” The reason for being is twofold: intrinsic or extrinsic. When we speak of the intrinsic sufficient reason of anything we mean that which constitutes it to be of such and such a nature, endowed with certain properties and none other. Thus, there must be something in a square which makes it to be what it is, a square with certain properties, rather than a circle with certain other properties. If it were only a question of the intrinsic sufficient reason, this principle would merely be a determination of the principle of identity, and from this point of view, envisage substance as essence. To deny that every being has in itself that by which it is as it is, when it is such of itself and by

what properly constitutes it as such, would evidently be tantamount to denying the principle of identity, to deny that red is red in itself and that a square has in it something which constitutes it as such with certain properties, rather than a circle with certain other properties.

But the sufficient reason can also be extrinsic. Thus we say that the properties of a thing have their sufficient reason in the nature from which they are derived, and in the specific difference from which they can be deduced, and which gives them their intelligibility. The investigation of the nature of a triangle, for instance, reveals its properties, and in the deliberative capacity of the reason we detect the presence of freedom. Again, we say that the sufficient reason for the existence of a being which does not exist of itself, must be found in another being which exists of itself. This extrinsic sufficient reason of a contingent being is called its efficient cause; it is its realizing or actualizing raison d'être, i.e., that which makes it a reality or an actuality. Finally, we say that a means which is not willed for its own sake, but in view of an end, has its extrinsic sufficient reason in that end. Thus we see that the extrinsic sufficient reason may be either the efficient or the final cause. Without going into details, we shall apply the term cause in its generic sense to this principle, not considering, for the present, the question of efficiency.

If, therefore, we wish to express concisely the formula of the intrinsic and extrinsic elements in the principle of sufficient reason, we may say that "Every being has a sufficient reason, either in itself or in some other being, for being what it is; in itself, if what constitutes it as such belongs to it by its very nature; in another, if what is attributed to it does not belong to it by its very nature."

As we have already seen, the first part of this formula, which concerns the intrinsic sufficient reason, is simply a determination of the principle of identity. It is the second part which, by the method of reductio ad impossibile, can be referred back to the supreme principle. In other words, it is not only unintelligible, as the followers of Kant claim, but also contradictory, to say that a being which has not in itself a sufficient reason for what it is, cannot be said to have its raison d'être in another. That such is the case can easily be proved. A. Spir's Pensée et Réalité will help us to present this argument in a convincing form.

The principle of identity may be stated as follows: "Every being is by itself constituted in its own specific nature." Thus A is A; what is red, is red

by its very nature; the square is by its very nature a square. From this we derive the negative formula, which is the principle of non-contradiction: “One and the same being cannot be and not be what it is;” it cannot, for instance, be round and not-round. A third formula resulting from this, which may be called the principle of contraries or disparities, is: “One and the same being cannot be at the same time and in the same sense determined in two different ways;” it cannot, for instance, be round and square, for what is square, as such, is the opposite of what is round, and by its very nature is not-round. This prepares us for a fourth formula: If it is a contradiction to say that “the square is round,” it is no contradiction to say that “the square is red,” since the attribute in this case is of a different order. In a square it is the form that we are considering, but in a red object it is the color. The square can be red without ceasing to be a square. But there is a contradiction in terms if we say that “the square of itself, and as such, that is to say, by what determines it in its own nature, is red;” for what determines a square to be a square is something different than what determines an object to be red. It cannot be said that it belongs to the essence of a square to be red. Hence the fourth formula may also be stated as follows: “That which is predicated of a being, without properly belonging to it, as constituting it in its species, does not have its raison d’être in itself.” This formula, a direct deduction from the principle of identity, may also be expressed in this way: “Elements which are different in themselves, do not of themselves coalesce to form some sort of unity, and cannot of themselves be united or mutually predicated.”

Finally, the extrinsic principle of sufficient reason in addition to this affirms that “what is predicated of a being, though not belonging to it as properly constituting it in its species, has of necessity its sufficient reason in something external to it.” St. Thomas puts it thus: “Omne quod alicui convenit non secundum quad ipsum est, per aliquam causam ei convenit, nam quod causam non habet primum et immediatum est” “whatever a thing may fittingly have, according to its nature, accrues to this thing from an extrinsic cause, for what has no cause, is primary and immediate.” (C. G., II, ch. 15 c. 2). In another of his works he expresses the same thought more briefly by remarking that “things in themselves different cannot unite, unless something causes them to unite” (Ia, q. 3, a. 7).

This principle enunciates a new truth, not included in the fourth formula, for it affirms a relation of dependence, the presence of an external cause,

which cannot be deduced from the principle of identity by a direct demonstration, but is in itself immediately evident; however, it can be referred to the principle of identity by an indirect demonstration, or, in other words, by the method of reductio ad absurdum.

It has often been disputed whether it is possible to invoke this particular method of proof against one who would deny the extrinsic principle of sufficient reason. All reductions so far proposed would seem to imply a begging of the question. Hence it is contended that the negation of the principle of sufficient reason is unintelligible, but not absurd. In other words, it is unintelligible, but it is not absurd, that the contingent should be uncaused. If it were uncaused, it would exist without a sufficient reason; for it could not be explained by anything intrinsic or extrinsic to it.

Those who reason in this manner depart from the principles of traditional philosophy and can be refuted by the very fact that several of their own number admit the absolute necessity of the principle of sufficient reason or causality. That something should be absolutely necessary and yet not exist, is an absolute impossibility. Now, the metaphysical principle of sufficient reason is not simply a necessity of the hypothetical order, such as the laws of physics, but it is also an absolute necessity. Therefore, its denial involves an absolute impossibility, or an absurdity, for the absurd is that which is absolutely impossible. In other words, all those who are at variance with us on this point must concede, as Hume and radical Empiricism do, that, absolutely speaking, a contingent being can be uncaused, which is the same as denying the absolute necessity of the principles of sufficient reason and of causality, which in this case are nothing more than empirical laws endowed with a purely hypothetical necessity. And just as God can miraculously raise the dead to life and conserve an accident in existence apart from its substance, so also He could by His absolute power have created a world in which there would have been effects without causes, an absolute beginning of things, uncaused beings springing from nothing. These absolute beginnings would be incomprehensible mysteries, but they would no more involve a contradiction than the Divine Trinity and the Incarnation. These stringent deductions will not be accepted by any one who wishes to conform to the general principles of traditional philosophy.

In the second place our answer to those who deny the absolute necessity of the principle of sufficient reason must be that the reductio ad absurdum

method of proof, rejected by them, can be established without begging the question, in the following manner:

To deny the principle of sufficient reason is to affirm that a contingent being which exists, though not by itself, can be uncaused or unconditioned. Now, what is uncaused or unconditioned exists by itself. Therefore, an uncaused contingent being would at the same time exist by itself and not by itself—which is absurd. This is precisely what St. Thomas means when he says: "Whatever it is proper for a thing to have, but not from its nature, accrues to it from an extrinsic cause; for what has no cause, is first and immediate." (C. Gentes, Bk. II, ch. 15, § 2). What is uncaused must by itself and immediately be existence itself. If the unconditioned were not existence itself, there could be no possible connection between it and existence, and it could not be distinguished from nothing. An absolute beginning, a being originating from nothing without any cause, is, therefore, an absurdity, since it would be both contingent, that is to say, not caused by itself, and at the same time uncaused, unconditioned, non-relative, that is to say, absolute or caused by itself. Its existence would be its own a se and not a se. Therefore, between unconditioned or uncaused contingency there is a contradiction.

Against this argument Hume objected that an uncaused contingent being is only negatively a se, that is to say, not caused by another, but not positively, because it has neither within nor outside itself a sufficient reason for its existence.

In answer to this objection we say that what is neither positively its own reason for existence nor derives this reason from something else, is not only unintelligible, but also absurd and impossible, and cannot be distinguished from nothingness. In fact, intelligibility, like possibility, cannot be conceived except in relation to being. That is possible which is capable of existing, and that is intelligible which has reference to being, the primary object of the intellect. Consequently, what can in no way refer to being is absolutely unintelligible; likewise, what in itself excludes the idea of existence as something repugnant to its nature, what is not susceptible of existence, is absolutely impossible. Hence it follows, with regard to actual existence, that a thing cannot actually exist unless it has an actual relation to existence. Now, an uncaused contingent being could in no way be said actually to be related to existence. In fact, according to the previous hypothesis, it is not caused either by itself or by something else, and

consequently cannot be said either of itself or by reason of something else to be actually related to existence. But a relation without any foundation is an impossibility.

Yet this answer does not fully solve the difficulty, for we may say that this actual relation to existence would be indeed without a foundation, that is to say, without any raison d'être, and therefore unintelligible, but not absurd. The answer to the preceding objection is simply a begging of the question, because it presupposes the principle of sufficient reason, which it claims to defend by a reductio ad absurdum.

In reply we may say that this relation without a foundation is unintelligible only for the reason that it is in no possible way related to being; it is beyond the sphere of being and of intelligibility, just like mere nothing, and consequently, is not only unintelligible, but also absurd and impossible. To make this point still clearer, we must consider that this relation without a foundation would be a relation denoting an agreement between actual existence and uncaused contingent being. Now, a relation which denotes an agreement necessarily presupposes two terms which have some element in common, by which the one refers to the other; but in this case actual existence and uncaused contingent being have nothing in common by which they could be referred to each other, since the very definition of uncaused contingent being implies that which exists neither by itself nor by reason of anything else, and has, therefore, nothing by reason of which it could be said to exist. This relation of agreement consequently is not only unintelligible, but also absurd, since it would be a relation of agreement between terms which are in no way related to each other, and have nothing in common which might constitute a basis of agreement.

Hegel perceived this truth clearly when he admitted that a becoming which is its own sufficient reason involves a contradiction.

In a word, the uncaused contingent being either is without any sufficient reason for its existence, in which case it is and is not distinguished from nothing; or else it is its own sufficient reason, and then it is and is not distinct from self-existent Being.

Of course, this indirect demonstration does not pretend to give the intrinsic evidence of the principle of sufficient reason —which principle is immediately self-evident and therefore needs no proof. But it does show that the denial of the necessity of this principle is not only unintelligible and disastrous, as Kant maintains, but also contradictory. To deny this principle

means to deny the principle of contradiction; and to doubt it means to doubt the principle of contradiction. In this sense we say that the principle of sufficient reason is analytical. For a judgment to be analytical, it is not necessary that there should be logical identity between the subject and the predicate, for in that case the judgment would be purely tautological and convey no knowledge whatever to the mind. In every affirmative judgment, even in the principle of identity, there is real identity between subject and predicate, though they differ logically. A judgment is analytical and a priori or synthetical and a posteriori, according as this real identity appears from a mere analysis of the notions implied in the subject and the predicate, or is acquired by observation of existing things. In the present case the analysis of the terms reveals to us that a real identity underlies the logical difference between subject and predicate, which cannot be denied without absurdity.

However, the principle of sufficient reason is not analytical on the same grounds as the principle of identity. In fact, the predicate of this latter principle is included in the notion of the subject, as the elements of a definition are included in the defined subject; whereas in the case of the (extrinsic) principle of sufficient reason, the predicate agrees with the subject merely as an immediate property agrees with the essence from which it derives. Aristotle distinguishes these two different modes of necessary attribution. (Analytica Post., Bk. I, ch. iv; Comment. of St. Thomas, Lect. 10). In the principle of identity we affirm that “every being has its own proper essence,” by which it is defined; thus a man is a man, a lion is a lion, what is necessary is necessary, and cannot as well not be, the contingent is the contingent, and can as well not be. We are here concerned with definitions which, as the Scholastics say, belong to the first mode of per se predication (in primo modo dicendi per se) as explained by Aristotle in the above-quoted passage. The principle of sufficient reason, on the contrary, affirms of a contingent being not that which defines it, but a property which immediately follows from its nature, and this is known as the second mode of per se predication (in secundo modo dicendi per se). “Though the relation to its cause,” says St. Thomas (Ia, q. 44, ad 1), “is not part of the definition of the thing caused, it follows from its nature; from the fact that a thing has being by participation, it follows that it is caused by another being. Hence such a being cannot exist without being caused, just as a man cannot be a man without having the faculty of laughing,” which is one of the properties of human nature. The contingent being can and must

be defined without reference to its relation of dependence upon some other being. Contingent being is in fact defined as that which can be and just as well not be. But we cannot deny that a contingent being is related to some other being upon which it depends, without at the same time denying its very contingency. This point has been established by our method of proof showing that such a view leads to an absurdity or impossibility. To deny to such a being this relation of dependence is to identify it either with self-existent Being or with nothing.

The chief difficulty presented by the principle of sufficient reason is, how to reconcile it with (divine or human) liberty. For either there is a sufficient reason which determines the free act as such, and then it is no longer free, or else it has no determining cause, and then its beginning is absolute, which implies a contradiction. We shall discuss this problem later.

25) The principle of efficient causality is the immediate basis of the proofs for the existence of God. The idea of efficient cause and its ontological validity. Efficient causality, defined in terms of actual being, transcends the order of phenomena and is an accidentally sensible, but essentially intelligible, entity.

From the principle of sufficient reason are derived the principle of efficient causality, properly so called, of finality, and of induction. The sufficient reason of a thing is more general in scope than its cause. The cause is that upon which something depends for its existence; in other words, it is the sufficient reason for the existence of its effect, and especially is this the case with the efficient cause, in that it realizes, or, more correctly, actualizes the effect; but not every sufficient reason is a cause; thus, the specific difference is the reason for the properties of a being, but not their cause.

We shall not investigate, in order to refute the Empirics, whether this idea of the efficient cause comes to us from external experience (resistance offered by material things with which we come in contact), or whether it is the result of internal experience (a consciousness of the effort which we exert upon these external objects). It would also be futile to inquire, concerning the knowledge acquired by sense perception, such as found in animals, whether the effort is merely followed by a displacement of an external mobile, or whether it produces or realizes this displacement. Hume and all his followers affirm that the senses tell us nothing about the effects of causality, but merely that there is a succession of events. It is certain that

causality cannot be perceived by the senses in the same way as color or sound; not being directly sensible (sensibile per se) it is, like substance, a reality of the intelligible order per se (a noumenon) ; but it can truly be said to be accidentally sensible (sensibile per accidens) “because the intellect immediately perceives it when confronted with the object of sense perception.” (De Anima, Bk. II; Comment. of St. Thomas, Lect. 13). The sensitive faculty perceives the object which is the cause, but not precisely qua cause. In like manner the intellect perceives being as such, just as it alone perceives substance as such, underneath the sensible qualities of color, sound, and smell, which are direct objects of sense perception; in the same way the intellect alone can perceive directly (per se) the realization, or production, or actualization of that which comes in addition to existence. In fact, this realization can have no meaning except in so far as it refers to being, and cannot, therefore, be perceived as such except by that faculty which has for its formal object being, and not color, or sound, or the internal act. As soon as the senses show that a change has taken place, reason seeks to explain the why and wherefore. Hence it is of little consequence, by what experience, or by what sensible image we arrive at the idea of cause. This idea does not derive its absolute, universal, and supra-phenomenal entity from sense perception (for it could be an innate idea and still have these same traits), but from its relation to being, which is the formal object of the intellect. We are absolutely certain that every being which is indifferent to existence requires an efficient cause, that is to say, has to be realized (whether in time or from eternity, makes no difference), because the intellect knows intuitively that this being does not exist as something which has existence intrinsically and primarily as its own (per se primo), but as something which gets this existence from another (ab alio or per aliud).

Having proved the absolute necessity of the extrinsic principle of sufficient reason, it is unnecessary to stress the point any further. So far we have referred only to the principle of efficiency in support of this principle, but later on we shall see that it receives additional confirmation from the principle of finality.

This concept of causality, therefore, is by no means anthropomorphic; universal causality is not an externally exerted influence of an internal experience, of an occurrence in human life. Causality is not, like universal attraction, a generalized experience; it is the object of a primary idea of the human intellect, considered not as human, but as intellect. In so far as it is

human, our intellect has for its object the essence of sensible things; in so far as it is intellect, like all intellects, its formal and adequate object is being. (St. Thomas, Summa Theol., Ia, q. 12, a. 4, c and ad 3um). Now, we have just defined causality as immediately referring to being, and have thus established its ontological validity and laid the remote foundation of its transcendental and analogical validity—in other words of the possibility of attributing it to God. Further on (nos. 29 and 30) we shall see that being can be attributed to God, because the notion of being, unlike that of genus, is not univocal, but transcends all genera. The same must be said of causality and of certain other notions (such as those of intellect and will) which are defined by reason of their immediate reference to being, and not to some particular mode of being.

26) All "becoming," and every composite, necessarily demands a cause.

The metaphysical principle of causality, so closely connected with being, applies to everything which does not exist by itself. It includes within its scope all becoming, and, on a closer consideration of the question in its more general aspect, everything composite comes under its influence.

First of all, becoming demands an extrinsic and sufficient reason, because it is a successive union of diverse elements (for instance, when what is violet becomes red). Now, the unconditional union of diverse elements is impossible, for elements that are different in themselves cannot be united (principle of identity). This extrinsic reason is an efficient cause. Becoming, which is a gradual process of realization, must be realized by some other thing than itself. In fact, as Aristotle points out in his reply to the arguments of Parmenides and Heraclitus (Phys., Bk. I, c. 8; Met., Bk. IX), the origin of becoming presupposes an intermediate state between being, which is determined, and mere nothing; this intermediate state is being as yet undetermined or in potency, for what is already determined, since it is actually being, cannot be the cause of being as such; from nothing, nothing comes; and yet being becomes. (See no. 21). Hence becoming is a transition from potency to act; what becomes hot had a capacity for becoming hot, though it was not actually hot; the pupil who was capable of becoming a philosopher (a potency which no dog possesses), but who was not a philosopher, becomes one. Potency, which of itself is not an act, or is not actualized, cannot by itself pass from potentiality to act. To deny this would be to deny the principle of identity. It cannot, therefore, be actualized, except by something which is in act. But it is impossible for the same thing

in the same sense to be both in potentiality and in act, and, therefore, the transition from potentiality to actuality must be accomplished by something else; and this actualizing or realizing principle is precisely what we call the efficient cause. “Nothing can be reduced from potentiality to actuality, except by some being already in a state of actuality. But it is not possible that the same thing should be at once actual and potential in the same respect.” (Ia, q. 2, a. 3).

Becoming is thus rendered intelligible, not by interpreting it in terms of rest (as did Descartes, who considered it to be a mechanical and not a metaphysical problem), but by considering it from the standpoint of being, in accordance with the theory of potentiality and actuality into which being is divided. As we have already observed (no. 21), this division of being must needs be admitted if we wish to defend against Parmenides the existence of becoming, and against Heraclitus the objective validity of the principle of identity. The proofs derived from the theories of movement, efficient causes, and contingency are grounded on this division of being.

From this point of view we not only arrive at a satisfactory explanation of becoming, but also, in the static order and in accordance with the ultimate profundities of being, which are beyond the scope of becoming, we get an explanation of multiplicity or diversity. In the first place, whether we consider multiplicity as a plurality of beings having a common element which establishes their claim to a unity consisting in a certain similarity, which is either specific, generic, or only analogical; or whether we view it as a plurality of parts in one and the same being, by reason of which it claims for them a unity of composition—all multiplicity demands an extrinsic sufficient reason. In fact, such a multiplicity is a union of diverse elements. Now, an unconditional union of diverse elements is impossible. Elements which are in themselves diverse cannot of themselves and as such be united, nor even be similar (principle of identity). “Multitudo non reddit rationem unitatis” (multitude does not explain the notion of unity). See further on, in no. 39, the proof for the existence of God from the degrees of perfection in being.

This extrinsic raison d’être must be an efficient cause, or, in other words, a principle of actualization. In fact, multiplicity, like becoming, is always a composition of potentiality and act, and not pure actuality. Aristotle showed how Parmenides was mistaken on this point when he declared all multiplicity, like all movement, to be an illusion. “Everything external to

being (other than being itself) is non-being," said the Eleatic philosopher; "and what is non-being is non-existent. Therefore, being is one, and there is only one being; we can conceive of nothing that could be added to being as a differentiating element, for anything thus added would also be being. In other words, if there were two beings, they would have to be distinguished the one from the other by something other than being, and what is other than being is non-being. Now, being exists, whereas non-being does not exist; and we cannot think otherwise." (Aristotle, I Met., Bk. I, c. 5; Comment, of St. Thomas, Lect. 9). This was practically a denial of the world as something external to us and its absorption in God, who alone is absolutely one and immutable. Yet we must be grateful to Parmenides for so resolutely affirming the supreme law of thought and reality, i.e., the principle of identity, which is the basis of every proof for the existence of God. After all, it is a fact attested by experience that the world exists, and in it we observe that there is multiplicity. This same multiplicity is noticeable also in the conceptual order. It must be explained, without, however, abandoning the first principle of reason.

Plato in his Sophist (241 D, 257 A, 259 E), in order to explain the notion of multiplicity, does not fear to "incur the risk of being considered a parricide, by attacking the formula of Parmenides and affirming the existence of non-being," which is the intermediate state between being and mere nothing, the limit with regard to being. In virtue of this very principle of identity, since the objects of our knowledge all have being as their common element, it is only by this common element that they can differ from one another. We are, therefore, compelled to say that they differ by something other than being; and what is other than being, is non-being. We must consequently admit that non-being is the intermediate state between being and mere nothing, the limit of being.

Aristotle says that the distinction between various individuals of the same species cannot be explained except by admitting the reality of non-being, or matter, as the subject and limit of the form common to these individuals. Thus matter—inasmuch as it postulates this particular quantity and not some other—is the principle of individuation and suffices to distinguish two individuals which, if we were to consider merely their form and qualities, would be as indistinguishable as two drops of water. St. Thomas states still more precisely that multiplicity or distinction between beings in general can be explained only by assuming the reality of non-being in each of them, or,

in other words, a potency, which is the subject and limit of the existential act common to all these beings. Hence we say that “actus multiplicatur et limitatur per potentiam” (act in its recurrence and restriction depends upon potentiality. (Ia, q. 7, a. 1; C. Gentes, Bk. II, c. 52). Minerals, vegetables, animals, men, and angels all have one element in common, namely, existence; one principle which differentiates them, namely, an essence susceptible of existence and which in the scale of beings ranging from stone to pure spirit receives existence according to its more or less limited capacity for it. We see that this composite of essence and existence, which results from a union of diverse elements, demands an extrinsic raison d’être, since an unconditioned union of diverse elements is impossible. This raison d’être must be the cause of actualization, since this composite does not actualize itself and is not, as such, self-existent. “Every composite has a cause, for things which are different in themselves cannot unite into one, unless something causes them to unite.” (Ia, q. 3, a. 7).

Multiplicity is thus made intelligible by means of being, by the division of being into potency and act. This division imposes itself if we wish to maintain that the multiple exists, without denying the objective validity of the principle of identity. It is this principle which compels us to distinguish in everything that is, and can as well not be, non-being (real or potency) and actual being, essence and existence. This same principle, together with that of sufficient reason, constrains us to refer all beings to a self-subsistent Being, “Ipsum esse subsistens,” namely, God, who alone is His own sufficient reason for existing, because He alone is pure identity. The supreme principle of thought will then appear as the supreme principle of reality. (Ia, q. 3, a. 4 and 7).

27) The principle of finality, derived from the principle of sufficient reason. The knowledge of its absolute validity, far from presupposing the knowledge of God’s existence, must be the means by which it becomes known to us.

All becoming and every composite, therefore, demands an efficient cause, and likewise a final cause, and two external raisons d’être. We shall stress this second point, that of finality, when we come to discuss the proof for God’s existence derived from the order observable in the universe. For the present it is sufficient if we show how the principle of finality is connected with that of sufficient reason, in order to complete the general

metaphysical notions upon which the proofs for the existence of God ultimately rest.

The idea of an end or purpose is derived from our activity as reasonable beings; we propose to ourselves certain ends, and act for the purpose of reaching them. As for the senses, these, if left to themselves, are no more capable of acquiring the notion of finality than they are of arriving at the notion of causality, or that of substance, or that of being. The animal, remarks St. Thomas, tends by instinct both toward the means and toward the end of its action, without perceiving the reason why there is a connection between means and end. Thus the bird picks up wisps of straw for building its nest, without adverting to the fact that the nest is the end or reason of its action. (Ia IIae, q. 1, a. 2). Man, on the other hand, endowed with intelligence, which is a faculty of being, discovers in his own actions the idea of finality, and when he wishes to give an intelligent explanation of any action as a faculty of being, no matter whether the one performing the action be intelligent or non-intelligent, animate or inanimate, perceives that this action just as necessarily postulates a final as it does an efficient cause. And so he formulates the principle of finality by affirming that "Omne agens agit propter finem" (every agent acts for an end). (Aristotle, Phys., Bk. II, ch. 3; St. Thomas, Summa Th., Ia, q. 44, a. 4; Ia IIae, q. 1, a. 2; C. Gentes, Bk. III, ch. 2).

This principle, which is self-evident to all who correctly understand the terms, is by no means an anthropomorphic extension of our internal experience, but can easily be referred back to the principle of sufficient reason.

As soon as we understand what is meant by the word end, this principle is self-evident. End is not only the terminus or result of an action, but the reason why the action has taken place; it is the τὸ οὗ ἕνεκα, id cujus gratia aliquid fit—that for the sake of which an agent acts. It is a definite perfection, which directly refers to the agent as its own good, and for the sake of which the agent acts. It will not do to say that the agent has acquired this end accidentally, by some fortunate chance; it must be the result of a pre-ordained action on his part.

Now every agent, aside from the accidental effects which result from its contact with other agents, produces a definite effect according to its own natural law, and this effect directly accrues to it as its own perfection, its own good. It cannot produce this definite and appropriate effect rather than

any other, except on condition that it has a tendency to produce this particular effect rather than any other. It is not necessary for the agent to know the cause of this tendency, but at least that it is by its nature ordained towards this object. Thus the sense of sight produces an act which is not indifferent, but determined, and this act constitutes for it a good, a perfection, which it is natural for it to have. The reason why the sense of sight perceives colors instead of hearing sounds is because it is naturally ordained to seeing and not to hearing, because seeing is its very raison d'être. This is a self-evident truth, which certainly transcends the range of sense perception, but is perceived at once by the intellect, a faculty of being, when it considers such an organ as the eye or ear. Finality is sensibile per accidens and intelligibile per se. No process of reasoning is required to satisfy ourselves that the eye is made for seeing or that the wings of a bird are made for flying. Natural reason sees at once that the bird does not fly because it has wings, but it has wings in order that it may fly. Flying is of its very nature. The mind has intuitive knowledge of this fact, which is practically an answer to the objection that it may have happened by some fortunate chance; for chance is accidental and the fortuitous effect is an accidental result of the contact of two agencies, whereas vision, on the contrary, is not an accidental effect of the eye, but the natural exercise of this organic faculty.

This principle of finality ("every agent acts for an end") is not only self-evident as soon as the terms of the proposition are understood, but it can also be proved indirectly by showing that to deny it leads to the absurdity of denying the principle of sufficient reason, which latter cannot be rejected without necessarily rejecting the principle of contradiction.

If every agent produces, not an indifferent effect whatsoever, but a determined effect which belongs to it by right, though it does not tend towards this effect, and is not ordained for it; if, e. g., the acorn produces the oak rather than the poplar, though it is not ordained for the one rather than for the other; if the eye sees rather than hears, though it is not naturally predisposed for the former act instead of the latter—it follows that there is no way of explaining by the principle of sufficient reason how it is that the effect is definitely established and essentially refers to a definite cause. Unless these qualities were somehow present in the efficient cause, they could not be produced in the effect. Now, they are there merely in a virtual manner, inasmuch as the efficient cause tended to produce this particular

effect rather than any other, and inasmuch as it was ordained for this effect. Thus, nutrition is virtually contained in the vegetative faculty and in the food, whereas this nutritive element is not contained in the faculty of sight and the object seen. A fine play at the theatre is not food for the body, nor is the process of digestion accomplished with the eyes. The stomach is ordained for that purpose, just as the eye is ordained for seeing. To deny this order is to deny the raison d'être of the determination and inherent goodness or essential appropriateness of the effect produced. As St. Thomas remarks (Ia, q. 44, a. 4), "Every agent acts for an end, otherwise one thing would not follow from the action of the agent more than another, unless it were by chance." If the agent did not tend towards its effect, if it did not have at least a natural intention for it, if it were not naturally ordained to produce it, it would no more produce this particular effect than any other, except by accident or chance—which would mean that it had no natural effect. In other words, action is essentially intentional, i.e., ordained towards some end. Without this tendency not only the effect, but the activity itself, would be without a sufficient cause, i.e., without determination or congruity, or, to put it differently, it could no more be said to be an attraction than a repulsion, vision than audition, digestion than respiration. There must be some special reason why the efficient cause begins to operate, instead of remaining inactive, and why it produces this particular effect rather than another. Finally, the principle of activity itself, i.e., potency (active or passive) cannot be conceived except as something essentially ordained towards its act. "Potentia dicitur ad actum," is one of the formulas expressing the principle of finality. As the imperfect is to the perfect, the relative to the absolute, so is potency to actuality. Only the absolute has its own sufficient reason in itself. That is why the final is the noblest of the four causes.

To say that finality operates after the manner of fortuitous chance, does not explain this principle. Chance is, indeed, an accidental cause (Aristotle, Phys., Bk. II, ch. 8; Lect. 7 to 10 of the Commentary of St. Thomas); but it explains only accidental effects and congruities. In digging a grave, one may accidentally find a treasure. But it cannot be maintained that all the effects produced in nature are accidental, for it is a philosophical truth that the accidental presupposes the essential ("quod est per accidens, accidit ei quod est per se"). It is an accident if a doctor happens to be a musician, says Aristotle, but that he is a physician and can cure diseases, is no more

accidental than it is for a musician to be a musician and to possess a knowledge of his particular art. To relegate the essential to the accidental would mean the complete destruction not only of all nature, but of all being. We should then have simply a series of fortuitous events with nothing to bring them about, which is absurd.

Nor will it do to reject the final and have recourse solely to the efficient cause; for in that case there would be no raison d'être for the action produced by the agent. If there is not in it some good corresponding to the agent's natural inclination, the action itself, and the fact that it is directed towards some certain end rather than another, would both be inexplicable.

Therefore, every agent acts for an end. The word for has a meaning, not only when applied to human activity, in which the end is known and intended, but also when applied to any other kind of activity. Whereas the efficient cause is the sufficient reason as a realizing principle (or that by which a thing is accomplished), the final cause is the sufficient reason for the thing which is accomplished. The eyes are made for seeing, and not for hearing. Therefore, the principle of finality, like that of causality, is an analytical one in the Aristotelian sense.

Two agents may come in contact by chance, but the proper action of each must necessarily have an end in view. Some have thought that the knowledge of the absolute validity of the principle of finality presupposes absolute certainty of the existence of God as the intelligent cause of the world. They retain the argument based on the order to be found in the world as a popular proof, but they reject every proof for the existence of God based upon intrinsic finality, as begging the question. This finality rests upon the principle that a natural desire cannot remain unfulfilled. We have just seen that the principle of finality, on the contrary, is an analytical principle.

Not only is it self-evident, anteriorly to any knowledge whatever of the existence of God, that every agent acts for an end, but, as we shall see, it can be shown that this end must be known precisely as an end (sub ratione finis) by this or some other agent. A means cannot be ordained to an end, except by an intelligent agent, for only an intelligent being can perceive this reason for being ("the object of the intellect is being"), and unite both means and end in one concept. And if intelligence can be referred as a transcendental relation to being, and does not imply an imperfection, any

more than this is implied in being, then intelligence can and must be attributed analogically to the first cause.

This idea of an intelligent designer will be the basic principle in the proof of the existence of God from the order that exists in the world (see infra, no. 40).

These are the metaphysical principles of the proofs for the existence of God. They are connected with each other in the following manner: First of all we have the proper object of sensible intuition, which is the phenomenon; then the intellect, by means of abstractive intuition, acquires a knowledge of being and its first principles, which it connects one and all with the principle of identity, which declares what belongs primarily to being.

Thus we have established the ontological validity of first ideas and first principles. All that now remains is to defend their transcendental validity, or their aptitude to enable us to acquire a certain knowledge of God as the first and transcendental cause.

ARTICLE II

THE TRANSCENDENTAL VALIDITY OF FIRST IDEAS AND FIRST PRINCIPLES

So far we have defended simply the necessity and the objective or ontological validity of the metaphysical principles of identity, sufficient reason, causality, and finality, which serve as the basis upon which the proofs of God's existence are proximately and immediately grounded. We have seen that these principles are not merely the result of a series of frequently recurring associations, or simple and necessary laws of thought; for they not only affect (internal and external) phenomena, but also being itself. Empiricism and the Subjectivistic Conceptualism of Kant, far from rendering intelligible those facts which we have proved evident to natural reason, attempt to suppress them. It is only traditional Realism or the philosophy of being which upholds and explains them.

Here a new difficulty arises: Does the principle of causality enable us to rise from finite beings to the existence of that infinitely perfect transcendental Being, distinct from the world, which we have in mind when we utter the word God? Does the principle of causality entitle us to put the

little word is after the nominal definition of God and say that there is a first cause, distinct from the world and infinitely perfect?

This constitutes the problem of not merely ontological, but also transcendental validity, of the notion of efficient cause and of the principle of causality; and as this notion and its correlative principle presuppose others that are more universal and simpler, the problem here at issue may be considered in a general way as that of the transcendental validity of first ideas and first principles.

28) The objections of modern idealistic and empirical Agnosticism and those of medieval Agnosticism.

Modern Agnosticism, whether it be idealistic or empiristic, denies the ontological validity of first ideas or their bearing upon being beyond phenomena and, a fortiori, their transcendental validity, or that they lead up to a knowledge of God. It confirms its negation by a reference to the antinomies, before which, it claims, reason comes to a halt whenever it seeks to pass beyond phenomena, and especially when it attempts to prove the existence of God and His attributes.

Mention has already been made (no. 13) of the Kantian antinomies, especially the fourth, which directly bears upon the question of the existence of God. On the one hand, the "thesis," which is identical with that defended by the metaphysics of the Schools, concludes to the existence of a necessary being, a fast cause, in order to explain the manifest changes in the universe. But the "antithesis" seems to be no less conclusively demonstrated, namely, that a necessary being and first cause cannot exist outside of the world, for, directly this cause began to act, it would admit that it had a beginning, and would therefore belong to time and consequently to the world.

Moreover, according to the third antinomy of Kant, the first cause must be a free cause. For a series of causes, to be finite, must start with a cause which has no need of being previously determined and which can determine itself. On the other hand, however, the free act would be without a determining cause; for no sufficient reason could be given why the free cause, from being undetermined, should become determined. (For a solution of this antimony see the second volume of this work, infra., no. 61).

The other two Kantian antinomies, which refer to time, space, and matter, are of less importance in the question that concerns us here. With regard to

the first, it is questioned whether the world had a beginning or is caused ab aeterno. On this point we remarked above, referring to St. Thomas (Ia, q. 46), that neither the thesis nor the antithesis of this antinomy can be demonstrated, and a positive answer can be given only from revelation, since this question is one of those which depend solely upon the divine freedom. As for the second antinomy, which concerns matter or indefinitely divisible corporeal substance, the difficulty is solved by means of the distinction between potency and act, as we explained when discussing the principle of substance. This distinction will also enable us to solve the third and fourth Kantian antinomies, both of which concern freedom and the First cause.

We know how Kant solves this fourth antinomy, as well as the third, by distinguishing between the world of sense or of sensory phenomena, and the intelligible world or of noumena. On this point he follows the metaphysics of the Schools. The antithesis (empiristic in scope), is true of the world of sense, which does not contain a necessary being, and the empirical point of view does not permit us to ascend to the existence of an uncaused first cause, So far we are in agreement with Kant. As for the thesis (a metaphysico-dogmatic assertion), inasmuch as it admits, outside of the series of sensible objects, a necessary cause in the intelligible or noumenal order, he says it does not involve a contradiction, and we can grant the possibility of a first cause. But does this cause really exist? According to Kant, it can be affirmed only as the result of an act of moral faith. Practical reason postulates the existence of God as the supreme guarantee of the moral order and of the definitive triumph of good, and thus rational theology is subordinated to an independent morality. As for the classical proofs of rational theology, Kant took it upon himself to demonstrate their insufficiency by showing that they are vitiated by that transcendental illusion which lurks in St. Anselm’s well-known argument. Reason (Vernunft), relying as it does upon causality, which is nothing but a category of the understanding (Verstand), cannot claim to go beyond the order of phenomena.

We shall see in our exposition of the classical proofs that our concept of causality is defined, not as Kant defines it, as a functioning of phenomena, but of being: for causality means the realization of that which is without being. From this vantage ground it will be possible to conclude to the existence of the primary being or first cause, and to answer the objections

formulated by Kant against each of the traditional proofs. For our present purpose it is sufficient to show that the distinction which Kant draws between reason and understanding is false.

When we explained that in each of its three operations (simple apprehension, judgment, and reasoning) the intellect has being for its formal object, we sufficiently proved the falsity of the Kantian distinction between reason (Vernunft) and understanding (Verstand). Besides the three degrees of abstraction, there is no other way in which the intellect can be distinguished in its reference to objects of the sensible and intelligible order. The first degree abstracts solely from individual matter; it is proper to the experimental sciences, such as chemistry, which considers not this or that particular molecule of water, but the molecule of water as such. The second degree abstracts from all sensible matter, that is to say, from all sensible qualities, but not from quantity; this kind of abstraction is used in mathematics. The third degree abstracts from all that is material (space and time), and only considers being as such and its laws; this abstraction is that of metaphysics. This third degree corresponds in a measure to the operations of what Kant calls reason (which strives to attain the purely intelligible); but the abstractive intuition of this third degree, though empty of all sensible content, is not, as Kant claims, devoid of all reality. On the contrary, it arrives at being, which dominates and transcends all the categories or predicaments or supreme genera, and also at a knowledge of everything which in its definition expresses an immediate relation to being, and, like being, abstracts from everything which is material, from space and time. This degree of abstraction includes: (1) the primary divisions of being into potentiality and actuality, essence and existence; (2) the transcendental properties of being; namely, unity, truth, goodness, and consequently also intelligence (which has a vital relation to being), and free will (which has a vital relation to goodness); (3) the four causes conceived as functioning by reason of the potentiality and actuality into which being is divided.

Kant could not see how the formal reason of causality transcends time as well as space, and how it can have unchanging eternity for its measure.

Modern Agnosticism, in its empirical phase, likewise rejects the transcendent validity of primary ideas, since it does not admit that they have an ontological bearing, but holds that their value is purely phenomenal and empirical. Like the Agnosticism of Kant, this modern form of Agnosticism confirms its denial by appealing to the antinomies in which, so it claims, the

rational theology of the Schoolmen becomes hopelessly involved. “On the one hand,” writes Spencer, “the absolute is required as first cause, and on the other hand the absolute as such cannot be a cause; it would be related to its effect. If you say that it exists first by itself and afterwards becomes a cause, you are confronted with another difficulty: for how can the infinite become that which it was not from the first? (This would mean that it acquires a perfection). If you say that this can be so because it is free: then you again contradict yourself; for freedom supposes consciousness, and consciousness, being only conceivable as a relation, cannot belong to the absolute,” but implies a duality of subject and object, which is opposed to the perfect simplicity of the Absolute. Along with these objections we have certain well-known classical difficulties, for instance, how can we reconcile the divine simplicity with the plurality of perfections which are formally, and not merely virtually, attributed to God? How can we reconcile God’s infinite justice with His mercy, His foreknowledge with the freedom of the human will, the omnipotence of an infinitely good God with the existence of evil?

Before concluding our exposé of these objections, a few words must be said about medieval Agnosticism, whose chief exponent was Maimonides (Rabbi Moses). In these latter days, certain Catholic writers have found fault with the Thomistic doctrine of analogy as scarcely differing from the teaching of Maimonides, except perhaps in words. In matter of fact there is a very real and profound difference between the two positions.

Maimonides did not, like the modern Agnostics, deny the ontological validity of primary ideas, but he so depreciated it that the only logical consequence for him would have been to reject it altogether. It was beyond his comprehension how ideas acquired from finite things can express a perfection which is formally present in the Infinite, and how the plurality of these perfections can be reconciled with the absolute simplicity of God.

In his De Potentia (q. 7, a. 5), where he discusses this question more fully than in the Summa Theologica, St. Thomas sums up the opinion of Maimonides as follows: “According to him, the positive absolute terms (good, wise), when applied to God, must be understood in two ways: (1) To say that God is wise does not mean that wisdom is in Him, but that He performs His works after the manner of a wise man, who ordains all things to a legitimate end; (2) To say that God is good, or that He lives, does not mean that wisdom and life are in Him, but that He is not like non-wise and

non-living beings. Others say that the expression, ‘God is good’ simply means that God is the cause of goodness which is found in things; in other words, goodness is in God not formally, but solely in a virtual manner, in so far as He is able to produce it.” (Cfr. S. Th., Ia, q. 13, a. 2).

In article 7 of the same question of his De Potentia St. Thomas restates the opinion of Maimonides in the following simple words: “Some have thought that nothing which can be attributed to God and the creature belongs to them analogically, but merely in a purely equivocal sense. This was the opinion of Maimonides, as is evident from his writings.” “This opinion,” adds the Angelic Doctor, “cannot be true. . . . If it were, the words we use to express our knowledge of God would be vain, devoid of meaning, and all the demonstrations of the existence of God given by the philosophers would be sophistical; for instance, that based on the principle that whatever is in potentiality becomes an act by some active being, would not permit us to conclude that all other beings depend for their actuality upon God’s being; to conclude thus would be a fallacy of equivocation, and the same is true of the other demonstrations referring to God.” The same judgment is expressed in the Summa, q. 13, a. 5.

This Agnostic opinion, according to St. Thomas, is not only false, but also contrary to the faith. He says in effect: “This view is opposed to what the Apostle says: ‘The invisible things of God are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.’ (Rom. I, 20),” (Ia, q. 13, a. 5). And in the treatise De Potentia (q. 7, a. 5) he writes: “If this opinion were true, it would be just as correct to say that ‘God is angry,’ or that ‘God is a fire,’ as to say that ‘God is wise;’ but this is contrary to the teaching of the saints and the prophets when they spoke of God (hoc autem est contra positionem sanctorum et prophetarum loquentium de Deo).” It is not, therefore, in a merely equivocal or metaphorical sense that absolute perfections are attributed to God.

In addition to this St. Thomas remarks (De Potentia, q. 7, a. 5): “These perfections are not to be taken simply in a negative sense. To say that God is living, does not merely mean that He is not non-living, that He is not like inanimate beings. A negation is always understood on the basis of an affirmation, for every negative proposition is proved by an affirmative; and hence if the human intellect could not positively affirm anything about God, it could not deny anything about Him, and He would be absolutely unknowable.”

Finally, as St. Thomas remarks (Ia, q. 13, a. 2), it is not enough to say that the propositions, "God is good, God is being, merely signify that God is the cause of goodness and of being in created things." It might in like manner be said that "God is a body, or an animal," because He is the cause of bodies and of animals. Corporeity and animality are perfections which by their very nature include imperfection; for this reason they are called mixed perfections, and cannot exist in God except virtually, inasmuch as He can produce them. But on what grounds shall we claim the same for being, goodness, and intellect, all of which, as is generally admitted, are predicated formally of God?

We will now prove the transcendental validity of primary ideas, first directly, and, secondly, indirectly by showing the absurdity of the contradictory proposition.

29) Direct proof of the transcendental validity of primary ideas.

Let us present this proof in its simplest form, without as yet going deeply into the Thomistic doctrine of analogy, as we shall have to do later, when we come to discuss the nature of God and how His various attributes can be reconciled with the divine simplicity.

This proof may be condensed into the following syllogism:

There is nothing repugnant in the notions of absolute and analogical perfections expressing analogically, according to their proper meaning, the absolutely perfect Being; and in matter of fact they will truly make known this same Being to us, if the universe demands a first cause which possesses these perfections.

Now, the primary notions of being—unity, truth, goodness, cause, end, intellect, will, etc.—denote absolute and analogical perfections.

Therefore, there is nothing repugnant in holding that these primary notions should express analogically the supremely perfect Being; and they will actually and truly make known this Being to us, if the universe demands a first cause which possesses these perfections.

The major of this syllogism becomes evident if we advert to the fact that an absolute perfection (perfectio simpliciter simplex), in contradistinction to a mixed perfection, is one whose formal concept includes no imperfection. The notions of these perfections cannot be said to be unfit to express, after a fashion, the supremely perfect Being; for it is only the imperfect which is incompatible with the idea of God. If, moreover, these perfections are analogical, or, in other words, capable of existing according to their

essentially different modes, there is no reason for regarding it as impossible that they should conform to an infinite mode, provided such a mode includes nothing more than what is implied by the formal concepts of the various perfections; consequently, their manner of expressing God will be analogical, and it is only in a negative and a relative sense that the mode of the divine Being will be known. The development of the minor will make this point clearer.

This minor can be based first of all on the absolutely primary notions of being, unity, truth, and goodness; then, as a corollary to this, it can be shown to apply to the ideas of cause, end, intellect, and will.

As St. Thomas shows (Ia, q. 13, a. 3, c, ad 1um), the absolutely primary notions of our intellect, such as being, truth, goodness, do not include in their formal concept any imperfection, although the limited mode of their realization in created things is an imperfection. In their formal concept they are independent of this mode, and every element of imperfection can be removed from them. In fact, the notion of being does not per se include such limitations as that of species or genus, but dominates (transcends) the genera, and for that reason is called by the Scholastics a transcendental; though it dominates them, yet it is predicated of all the genera or categories of being, according to essentially different modes; such modes are substance, quantity, quality, action, etc.

Likewise, from, a philosophical consideration of the hierarchical order in the scale of beings, we perceive that the term being applies to all things, to the stone, to the plant, to the animal, to man—though the concept itself of being does not admit of any of the limitations and imperfections essentially inherent in the objects of which it is predicated. If the idea of a man who is infinitely great, powerful, and perfect, manifestly implies a contradiction, it cannot be said to be an absurdity to speak of an infinitely perfect being, one without limitations. The term humanity designates a mixed perfection, which essentially includes imperfection, whereas the notion of being implies pure or absolute perfection.

It is the same with unity, truth, and goodness. For unity is the undividedness of being; truth is the conformity of being with the intellect, or, conversely, the conformity of the intellect with the being that measures it; goodness implies the desirability of being by reason of the perfection inherent in it. There is no imperfection formally implied by these notions,

and if an infinitely swift movement is a manifest contradiction, the same cannot be said of infinite goodness.

Moreover, in the order of finite beings we observe that the absolute perfections expressed by these primary notions are essentially analogical, that is to say, they are susceptible of formally existing according to essentially different modes. Being, indeed, by the very fact that it dominates the genera and is found in each of them on different grounds, applies to all of them in an analogical or proportionate sense. It embraces everything and penetrates into the very differentiae of the genera; it is essentially diversified, according to these diverse modes. We say of substance that it exists in itself; we also speak of accident as existing, but in quite a different sense, namely, in another. The being of accident is not in every respect like that of substance, but it is both like and unlike; in other words, it is analogous. On the other hand, perfect similarity, for instance the similarity between two men who belong to the same human species, may truly be called univocal; whereas mere homonyms, or words spelled alike, but which otherwise have nothing in common, are called by the Scholastics equivocal terms; thus the term dog, as applied to an animal and to a certain astronomical constellation, is used in what we call an equivocal sense.

The one, the true, and the good are also predicated analogically or proportionally of all the categories of being. We speak of a good fruit, a good quality, a good action, etc. When we say of a fruit that it is good, we refer to its natural quality; but when we say of a virtuous man that he is good, we use the term in quite a different sense, for we mean that he has a moral character.

If, therefore, the notion of being is that of an absolute perfection, it cannot be said to be impossible that it should denote, in its own proper sense, the absolutely perfect Being, for it is only the imperfect which is incompatible with the idea of God. Neither is it an impossibility for this notion of being to be applied analogically to the Supreme Being, for being is capable of realization according to its essentially different modes, and there are no a priori grounds for saying that an infinite mode is inconsistent with the notion of being. Being, according to its formal notion, is a pure perfection without any limitations.

The same must be said of unity, truth, and goodness. Why cannot goodness be realized according to an infinite mode, since in itself this term implies neither limitation nor imperfection? Why can we not say of

something that it is absolutely and infinitely good, since de facto in the order of created things it is legitimate to say of things that they are physically or morally good, though, of course, we use the term in essentially different senses?

We cannot, therefore, affirm that these primary notions are insufficient in themselves to enable us to acquire some positive knowledge of God, if He exists. But it is only in a negative and relative way that the divine mode of being, of unity, truth, and goodness is known by us, and hence we speak of such goodness as non-finite or supreme.

This was evidently the conviction of St. Thomas when he opposed Maimonides.

What has just been said of being, unity, truth, and goodness, must also be said of the notions of efficient cause, end, intellect, and will. In truth, these latter notions are not classed among the transcendentals, which dominate all the genera of being and are found present according to their various modes, analogically, in each of them. The notions of cause, end, intellect, and will are not in fact found in all the genera, but are defined by their immediate relation to one of the transcendentals, and thus in their formal concept transcend the limitations or imperfections of the genera, and, like the transcendentals to which they are essentially related, are analogical.

Thus the efficient cause and the final cause are related to being, for they constitute the sufficient extrinsic reasons why a thing is not self-existent. To cause or produce implies no imperfection, for it means nothing else but the realization of something. We can see that an all-perfect being cannot be the formal principle of physical heat or light, because heat and light, implying limitation, cannot be formally in such a being. But why cannot an infinitely perfect Being be a realizing principle, just as it is of the very nature of light to illumine and of fire to heat? And if this Being can be an efficient cause, it a fortiori can be a final cause, which is the supreme raison d’être of the order we perceive in things.

We can eliminate from the efficient cause that imperfect mode which is found to be its inseparable accompaniment in finite causes; for there is nothing in the notion of such a cause which militates against this; and since, like being, it is analogous, we cannot say on a priori grounds that it is opposed to an infinite mode. This mode would explain why the causal or realizing action is not an accident, but is identified with the infinite being of the agent; why it is not transitory and passing, but permanent and eternal;

why it is not formally transitive, but formally immanent, though capable of producing an external effect, for which reason it could truly be called a virtually transitive action. And this eternal action, which would add nothing to the being of the primary agent—why could it not have its effect in time, at a moment previously willed, if it is a free action, and if it dominates time and its product, like the movement of which it is the measure? The formal concept of causality does not per se include any of those imperfections which are found in finite beings. To say that an action is causal, means that it is a realizing action, but not necessarily accidental, temporal, formally transitory and transitive. These imperfections constitute the created mode of causality, but this notion, for the sole reason that it denotes an absolute and analogical perfection, is susceptible also of another mode.

As for the notions of intellect and will, the former is defined by its immediate relation to being, the latter by its immediate relation to goodness. Therefore, like being and goodness, the notions of intellect and will are analogical, and like them, too, they imply no imperfection. As we shall see, the same must be said about the intellectual virtues of wisdom and prudence (providence) and about the virtues of the will—justice and mercy.

Undoubtedly, the intellect, like the will, is a faculty or power capable of acting, and distinct from the numerous acts which it produces; but this is merely the finite mode of the intellectual life which, because it is an absolute and analogical perfection, is susceptible of a higher mode. Since the formal object of the intellect is being, is there anything repugnant in the notion that there should be an intellect which is the adequate measure of being, of all things, both real and possible, and which is, therefore, omniscient? And since the knowledge of everything that is intelligible would be the constant attribute of such an intelligence, why could it not be said to be the identification of absolute intelligence with pure being? Reason cannot prove this to be an evident impossibility.

The same must be said of the will, which is specified by goodness in general, and is free to accept or reject any particular form of good which may be presented to it. In us, of course, the will is simply a faculty distinct from its acts of love or the volitions which it produces. But why should it be unreasonable to admit an absolutely perfect will, which would be an eternal act of love identified with the supreme good, the constant object of this love, and therefore free in its love of finite goods?

Finally, the virtues of the intellect and of the will—wisdom, mercy, justice—are in us accidents, qualities, acquired habits which are capable of development. But that is merely their finite mood of being; the formal concept of these virtues is independent of this mode, and implies no imperfection, and as an analogical concept, it is not incompatible with a higher mode of being. Wisdom formally denotes knowledge acquired by a scrutiny of the highest causes, and this knowledge need not be the result of a transitory act proceeding from an intellectual habit acquired by study and experience. Why should it be impossible to admit an infinite and eternal wisdom which would exhaust all the possibilities of whatever is knowable?

Our conclusion is that it is not incompatible with reason to assume that these primary notions express analogically the supreme and perfect Being, and that de facto they will truly make known to us this Being if the universe demands a first cause possessing these perfections.

Thus far we have shown that it is not contrary to reason to predicate in an analogical sense these absolute and analogical perfections of a supremely perfect Being, if such a Being exists. It is not necessary to establish a priori the positive possibility of this attribution, because it can be proved a posteriori, by way of causality.

The proofs for the existence of God will plainly show that the movement which is in the universe demands a mover who does not need to be moved himself; that contingent beings ultimately demand a cause necessary in itself; that composite and imperfect beings demand an absolutely simple and perfect cause, and that, finally, the order in the universe necessarily presupposes an intelligent designer. The first cause thus required must possess those absolute perfections which are to be found in the world, for otherwise it could not be said to have caused them, and there would be no resemblance or analogy between this cause and its effect—which would be contrary to the very notion of cause (see Ia, q. 4, a. 3). To be the cause of another being means, indeed, to bring this other being into existence, to actualize or determine it. Now, since a determining cause, as such, is restricted by the limits of its own determination, it follows that between the cause and its effect there must be a resemblance, not necessarily generic or specific, but at least analogical. This is the meaning of the principle: Omne agens agit sibi simile—every agent produces its own kind—which is derived directly from the principle of causality.

Before returning to this way of causality, we know that it is not contrary to reason to state that the absolutely perfect Being, if it exists, can be expressed analogically by means of the primary notions. The positive perfections in God will be made known to us by an analysis of the principle of causality; by the processes of negation and eminence we shall acquire a negative and relative knowledge of the divine mode of these perfections.

These considerations constitute the direct defence of the transcendental validity of primary notions, which may be succinctly formulated thus: these notions express the absolute and analogical perfections that the first cause of necessity possesses. This direct defence can be supplemented by an indirect proof showing the absurdity of the contrary assumption.

30) Indirect proof of the transcendental validity of primary notions.

To deny this validity, or even to declare it to be doubtful, involves the contention that reason left to itself must always at least remain in doubt concerning the existence of a transcendental primary cause. What would follow from this?

Such an invincible doubt would refer either to the primary cause as such, or to its transcendental character.

If the existence of a primary cause must remain forever in doubt, it follows either that a thing may begin to exist without a cause, or that the ensemble of things which are not self-existent may exist without a cause, in which case the principle of causality itself is doubtful, and the principle of contradiction is no longer certain, for then it may be that some things exist neither by themselves nor are produced by a cause, and consequently do not differ from nothingness; for it is of the very nature of nothingness to be neither self-existent nor conditioned, and since it is a non-entity, it is independent of the principle of sufficient reason. Now, to doubt the principle of contradiction, or the opposition between being and nothingness, is absurd.

If the invincible doubt is concerned only with the transcendence of the primary cause, it follows that this cause is perhaps immanent, not really distinct from the world, which is composite and changing; that it is a creative becoming, a creative evolution, or a creative idea, which admits of composition and change; and in that case we are confronted with the absurdities of Pantheism and must admit with Hegel that a creative becoming, which is its own sufficient reason, implies a contradiction in terms.

Hence we see that this indirect proof of the transcendental validity of primary notions is a proof of God's existence by the logical method known as reductio ad absurdum.

We have yet to discuss the question how these primary notions enter into the a posteriori demonstration of the existence of God. What is the middle term of this demonstration, and how can it be given transcendental validity?

31) The middle term of our demonstration is analogical. The force of such a demonstration.

As we have already remarked, it is by means of analogical, and not by means of univocal concepts that we demonstrate the existence of God. The middle term, therefore, will have to be an analogous term, and the proof will assume the following syllogistic form: The world necessarily demands a primary extrinsic cause. Now, we call the primary extrinsic cause of the world by the name of God. Therefore, God exists.

We here presuppose only the nominal definition of God, the idea that comes to the mind when the word God is mentioned. This is the middle term of all the demonstrations which follow (cfr. Ia, q. 2, a. 2, ad 2). It is an analogical term, which is all that is required. Though analogical, it has a sufficient unity, so that the syllogism does not contain four terms. Cajetan shows in his treatise, De Nominum Analogia (ch. 10), that a concept which has unity of proportion can be the middle term in a syllogism, provided it has the same extension in the major and minor. For this condition to be realized, the term must be employed according to the similarity of proportion which exists between the analogues, and not according to what properly constitutes this analogue in itself. For instance, the relative concept of cause, which we shall use as middle term in all our demonstrations, must denote causality, both in the major and in the minor, causality not precisely as it applies in the order of created things, but in this that the causality of created things is similar, by a certain similarity of proportion, to causality of a higher order. Whatever is predicated of a similar object as such, is predicated also of that which it resembles (quidquid convenit simili in eo quod est simile, convenit etiam illi cujus est simile; Cajetan, ibid.). The principle of identity, or of contradiction, which assures us of the formal validity of the argument, must not be restricted to equivocal notions. "Contradiction consists in the affirmation and negation of the same attribute of the same subject, and not in the affirmation and negation of the same univocal attribute in the same univocal subject. The identity between things

and their objective reasons has the force of an identity which is by way of proportion." (Cajetan, ibid.).

This is not a logical thesis set up for the purpose of demonstrating the existence of God, but is clearly expressed by Aristotle, who was the first to establish the theoretical principles of demonstration (Anal. Post., II c. xii and xiv; cfr. the Comment. of St. Thomas, Lect. 17 and 19). After having discussed the middle term when it is univocal, he remarks: ῎Ετι δἄλλος τρόπος ἐστὶ κατὰ τὸ ἀνάλογον ἐκλέγειν (there is another way in which we say that the concept is common by way of analogy, i.e., by way of proportion). The comment of St. Thomas on this passage is as follows: "But when the concept is a common analogue, the unity of proportion between the analogous objects reveals certain other characteristics, as, for instance, that they are of the same generic or specific nature." This unity of proportion is the basis of all reasoning in natural theology. Having demonstrated the existence of God and that He is not dependent upon matter, this unity of proportion will be our authority for asserting also of rational beings that immateriality explains why they have intelligence (a positive analogical concept), and hence that they have a will and that this will is free (likewise positive analogical concepts); it is also true, in a proportionate sense, to say of God that His absolute immateriality is the reason why He knows all things (Ia, q. 14, a. 1), and why His will is absolutely free (Ia., q. 19, a. 1, 2, 3).

Further on (Vol. II, ch. III) we shall explain more at length that there are not two unknown elements in each of these proportions, but two terms known immediately with their created mode, one term expressing the untreated analogue which is mediately known (the first cause), whence we infer the presence of the fourth term, which until then remained unknown. It may be expressed by saying that there is a similarity of proportion between the creature with its mode of being and the first cause with its mode of being.

32) This analogical knowledge enables the human mind to grasp the fact of God's existence, and to perceive something of His essence; but it is not a quidditative perception, that is, a perception of what properly constitutes the essence of the Deity.

From what has been said it follows that this analogical knowledge cannot be a knowledge of the divine essence such as it is in itself (prout est in se); nor can we positively define the same by any definition strictly so-called;

however, by means of this knowledge we can perceive the existence of God and gain some idea of His essence. This is the common teaching of the School-men (see St. Thomas in the Summa Theol., Ia, q. 12, a. 12; q. 13, a. 1; q. 88, a. 3; Cajetan, De Nominum Analogia; Scotus, In I, Dist., 3, q. 1; Capreolus, In I, d. 2, q. 1, a. 1, 4th to 8th conclusion). True, as Cajetan remarks (Comment. in Iam, q. 88, a. 3 § Adverte), there was some difference of opinion on this point between the Scotists and the early Thomists. Scotus and his school admitted that we can acquire a natural knowledge of the divine essence by reasoning, whereas the Thomists denied this and maintained that we cannot know naturally what God is (quid est), but only that He is (quia est), and what He is not (quid non est). However, as Cajetan observes, in the above-mentioned treatise and in his De Ente et Essentia (c. VI, q. 14), the difference between the two schools is merely a matter of words. “We must distinguish,” he writes, “between knowing an essence (cognoscere quidditatem), and knowing it quidditatively (cognoscere quidditative). To know an essence, it suffices to apprehend one of its essential predicates, for instance, one that is generic; to know it according to its quiddity, we must apprehend all its essential predicates, down to the ultimate difference. On the basis of this distinction it must be affirmed that we can acquire a natural knowledge of the divine essence by reasoning, and that is what Scotus meant; but we cannot know the divine essence according to its quiddity, and that is what the early Thomists had in mind.” To know God according to His quiddity is the same as to know Him as He is in Himself, and this knowledge demands that human nature be raised to the supernatural order. Unaided natural reason alone cannot know what constitutes the Deity, in which the absolute perfections are identified. It can acquire positive knowledge only of the analogical predicates common to God and to creatures (such as being, act, one, true, good, etc.), and the divine mode of the absolute perfections is known only negatively and relatively. Aristotle called this knowledge derived from common predicates, knowing that a thing is (Anal. Post., II, c. VIII; Comment. of St. Thomas, Lect. 7), and that is the reason why the early Thomists said that we can know of God only that He is, which evidently did not mean that theodicy was restricted to the mere affirmation of His existence.

This conclusion, formulated by Cajetan, admitted by Suarez (Disp. Met., disp. XXX, sect. 12), and unanimously accepted by the Scholastics, can easily be proved. From the fact that we cannot naturally know God except

by His effects, the perfection of which is necessarily an inadequate expression of the divine perfection (Ia, q. 12, a. 12), we can affirm but three points: (1) that these effects necessarily demand the existence of a first cause which exists of and by itself; (2) that whatever perfection there is in the effects must pre-exist in the cause; (3) that the perfections which formally do not imply any imperfection, that is to say, of which reason formally abstracts from the created mode, which is essentially imperfect, must exist in God according to a divine mode. We may even say that absolute perfections, such as being, truth, goodness, intellect, freedom, justice, mercy, can be found without any admixture of imperfection only in God. “None is good but God alone,” we read in the Gospel of St. Luke (XVIII, 19), which means that wherever else they are found, these perfections invariably have an admixture of imperfection. Therefore, we predicate them formally of God, according to an intrinsic denomination (see infra, Vol, II, ch. 3). But we do not positively know the nature of the divine mode, according to which they are identical with the divine essence, and hence we say that they exist in God formaliter eminenter-formally and eminently. “But to express the super-eminent mode according to which these perfections exist in God, only such terms are available which have either a negative meaning, as when we say that God is eternal or infinite, or else express His relation to creatures, as when He is said to be the first cause or supreme good” (C. Gentes, I, c. XXX, towards the end). The error of Maimonides and of some of our own contemporaries is to apply what St. Thomas said of the mode in which the perfections are verified in God, to the formal reason of these absolute perfections. If this were correct, the only knowledge we could have of God would be by means of extrinsic, negative or relative terms, as when we say metaphorically that He is angry with a sinner. Our knowledge of absolute perfections is analogical and positive, and we affirm them of God as expressive of causality (per viam causalitatis); “not that God is good because He causes goodness, but, on the contrary, He diffuses goodness in things because He is good.” (Ia, q. 13, a. 2). The mode in which these perfections exist in God, we express either negatively, as when we speak of unlimited goodness, or else in an eminent sense (relatively), as when we speak of sovereign goodness. Hence we do not positively know in what precisely the mode consists intrinsically according to which these perfections are predicated of God; we possess but a negative and relative knowledge of this mode, and in this sense we can

truthfully say that we cannot know what God is (prout est in se seu quidditative). It is only by means of the common concepts of analogy that we can acquire a knowledge of God (cfr. Cajetan, In Iam, q. 39, a. 1). Similarly, theodicy can never define the divine intellect, the divine will, the divine movement, as they are in themselves; it can conclude that intellect, will, and causality belong to God, but it cannot give us any other than a negative or relative knowledge of the divine mode of these attributes.

Moreover, the created and human mode will enter into the propositions which we shall formulate concerning God, so that when absolute perfections are attributed to Him, the attribution itself will be formal, but not so the mode of attribution. St. Thomas says in the Contra Gentes (Bk. I, ch. 30): “Names of this kind can be both affirmed and denied of God: affirmed on account of what the name signifies (formal reason); denied because of the mode of its signification (created mode).” In fact, he adds, “since our intellect derives its ideas through the senses, it either conceives of a thing and designates it in the abstract (as goodness), and then the thing signified is simple, but not subsisting; or else it thinks of a thing and designates it in the concrete (individual good), and then the thing signified is subsisting, but not simple. Such is the mode of created things, whereas that which pertains to God is both simple and subsisting. Hence there is always an element of imperfection in the mode in which we speak of God; when we have stated that He is good, we add that He is goodness itself, subsisting goodness, not goodness in the abstract; likewise, having asserted that He exists, we add that it is not that He has existence, but that He is existence, subsisting existence, ipsum esse subsistens.” (Cfr. Contra Gentes, ibid.).

Such is the knowledge that human reason, when left to its own resources, can acquire of God. It knows that He exists and has some idea of His essence, but it does not know Him as He is in Himself (in what properly constitutes Him as God). In a similar manner we know our friends, but we do not fully enter into their sentiments, such as they are in themselves.

33) Solution of the objections raised against the transcendental validity of primary notions.

Marcel Hébert, in an article entitled “Anonyme et Polyonyme,” in the Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale, 1903, p. 241, proposed the following objection against the doctrine which we have just presented: “This doctrine of analogy presupposes that we admit the fact of a ‘causal connection’

between God and the world: between a God who, as a perfect substance, creates a world of imperfect substances, which participate in varying degrees in His infinite perfection. But this causal connection is itself an analogy. The theologians say that God is the ‘analogical cause’ of the world. Now all these analogies are based on a primary analogy, and the only way in which the theologians avoid what is known as begging the question, is by assuming the fact of creation as certain on other grounds. That we have the certainty of faith on this head is irrelevant to the point in dispute, since we are here concerned only with that certitude which is acquired by reasoning. Now, what has reason to say about this fundamental problem? We know quite well that it is not content with a series of phenomena, but demands an absolute raison d’être; it does not, however, in any way demand that there should be a realization of this absolute in any ‘particular substance,’ transcendent by reason of its relation to the essence of things.”

Thus M. Hébert, like the Abbé Le Roy, admits that the principle of causality, leading to an extrinsic cause (whatever is set in motion, is set in motion by another), “derives its apparent lucidity from a spatial image which has been introduced surreptitiously into a metaphysical problem; it supposes that movers and things movable are distinct substances (so-called postulate of morcellation), which is denied by Pantheism.” “We cannot, without having recourse to anthropomorphism, introduce the idea of causality in the psychological sense, and besides, this would simply result in the admission of a world-soul.”

We answered this objection, though not completely, when we showed that the sufficient reason for the existence of a contingent being must be an actualizing or realizing sufficient reason. This is the principle of causality, in no sense anthropomorphic, of which we make use in proving the existence of God. It abstracts from every particular image derived either from external experience (postulate of morcellation), or from internal experience (psychological causality); it is conceived as a function of being, which is the formal object of the human intellect, considered not as human, but as intellect (for the proper object of the human intellect qua human is the essence of sensible things, and not being). Hence anthropomorphism is out of the question. Moreover, as we have already remarked, it matters not whether the world from which we start to prove the existence of God is a single substance, or a number of substances, provided only we can say of it that it has multiplicity and becoming. From what we know of the principles

of identity and of sufficient reason we must say that the world has not its raison d'être within itself, that it is contingent, and that for a reality to be its own sufficient reason, it must be in every respect identical with itself, that it must be to being as A is to A; in other words it must be Being itself (ipsum esse), pure actuality, and hence essentially distinct from the world, which is multiplex and changing. To deny this would be to deny that the principle of identity is the fundamental law of reality as well as of thought, and to admit with Hegel that the fundamental law is contradictory or absurd. A world-soul, one in substance and multiple in the phenomena by which it is determined, would be contingent. From the very fact that it is capable of receiving a multiplicity and variety of modes, it follows that it is not pure identity, pure being, absolute perfection; the very principle of identity itself demands that it have a cause, since it is by nature composite; for elements in themselves different cannot of themselves be united. It is not here a question of any veiled reference to the argument of St. Anselm, but simply a matter of appealing to the supreme principle which governs thought.

There is a more serious difficulty than the one presented by Hébert, namely, that we cannot positively apply to God the analogical concept of being (and affirm the existence of God), except by assuming that the concept of cause is one of transcendental validity; but this assumption is not only gratuitous, it is also unwarranted: for the transcendental validity of the concept of cause, far from being able to establish the ontological validity of the concept of being, presupposes the latter, since being is the most universal of all concepts and implied in every other.

The objection, when cast into syllogistic form, reads something like this: The transcendental validity of the most universal ideas cannot, without begging the question, be based upon the validity of an idea that is less universal in extent. Now, in the preceding proofs the transcendental validity of the most universal concepts (being, unity, truth, etc.) is based upon the validity of the less universal concept of cause. Therefore, the transcendental validity of the most universal concepts of being, truth, unity, etc., is without sufficient foundation.

For the sake of brevity and clearness, we will give a formal answer. We distinguish the major as follows: we admit that, considered in the abstract, the most universal of concepts do not depend for their transcendental validity upon that of a less universal concept; relatively to us, however, it is a different matter. St. Thomas declares that the proposition, "God exists,"

considered in itself, is self-evident, but not so for us (est per se nota quoad se, non quoad nos; Ia, q. 2, a. 1). The sun, for instance, is a source of light in itself, but not so for the owl, whose vision is so feeble that it can only see at night.

So far as we are concerned, I draw another distinction: that the most universal of concepts cannot depend for their transcendental validity upon that of a concept less universal in extent is true in the sense that there is nothing these concepts in themselves denote, which prevents their being attributed; but if it be a question of the actual attribution of such concepts, then the reverse is true, if the less universal concept is essentially relative to the world of which we have direct knowledge, and by means of which we rise to a knowledge of hitherto unknown things of a higher order. Now this is precisely the case with the concept of cause, for in direct contrast with the most universal concepts of being, unity, etc., which are absolute, that of cause is essentially relative, referring to the effect produced.

That is why we proved first of all that there is nothing which the most universal concepts of being, unity, truth, goodness, in themselves denote that would render it impossible for an infinitely perfect being, if such a one exists, to be expressed by these concepts, because they represent absolute and analogical perfections, and from this point of view the notion of being is prior to that of cause. But the actual attribution of these perfections to God, for us, rests upon this principle: that the world demands a first cause possessing these perfections. Just as the necessity of a first cause, too, depends in its final analysis upon the analogous concept of being, just as the principle of causality refers indirectly to the principle of contradiction, so the concept of cause, not being absolute, but relative to the world which is caused, may serve as the connecting link between the lower and the higher, that is, between the finite which is directly known, and the infinite which we are striving to know.

If we wish to consider the further question, how the concepts of being and cause are inter-related, and why it is that being holds the first place, we must bear in mind that there are five stages in the process of human knowledge. (1) For us the concept of being denotes a perfection without any admixture of imperfection; it is an analogical concept, which means that it is capable of existing according to essentially different modes, and from this point of view an infinite mode is not beyond the scope of being. (2) Since the notion of cause is closely associated with that of being, we conceive of

it as a perfection without admixture of imperfection and one that is analogical. In fact, causality is defined as a realization. Now, there is nothing of imperfection implied in the notion that something is realized or comes into existence; besides, there is nothing to prevent this perfection of being, which is realized in the present order of things in different modes, from accommodating itself to an infinite mode of being. (3) All the finite realities of which we have knowledge, in the multiplicity and becoming that they imply, appear to us as contingent, and hence of necessity demand an actualizing raison d'être or a cause. This exigency, expressed by the principle of causality, is itself based upon being, just as the latter principle depends upon that of contradiction or identity. The contingent being, since it is not unconditioned, can exist only through or by something else, which means that it demands a cause. The concept of cause being essentially relative, enables us to transcend the finite order of things. That which is finite, composite, and subject to change cannot of itself explain its actuality, and hence its cause must be sought in something outside of it and above it. Here again it is the concept of being upon which the principle of causality ultimately rests, and which, in conjunction with that of cause, forces us to rise above the world in seeking the raison d'être of its existence. (4) By the very fact that finite beings are composite and subject to change, the cause which they postulate must itself be free from composition and change, otherwise the cause would demand another cause of a higher order. Hence we must conclude that this cause is absolutely simple and immutable, that it is pure being. In this way we arrive at the supreme analogue of being, and by a negative and relative process we determine the non-finite and eminent mode of being by which God is constituted essentially distinct from the world. (5) Finally, starting not from the notion of being in general (analogous concept), but from the Divine Being (supreme analogue), we negatively and relatively determine the mode of the divine causality (the supreme analogue), and perceive that this dominating causality is pure cause, not caused, not pre-moved, that it is its own activity, its own action, and transcends time, and consequently is the cause of time as well as of movement, of which it is the measure, though always retaining its freedom of action. Thus the demands of being in general prepare the way for the transcendental application of the principle of causality, and by this means the mind acquires its knowledge of the supreme analogue of being, which, in turn, enables us to determine, though in an imperfect manner, the mode

of the divine causality. In this way being retains its primacy in the order of invention (in via inventionis), and also in the order of judgment by means of the ultimate causes of things (in via judicii).

We have already remarked (no. 23), that what the mind first of all acquires is a confused concept of being before that of the mode of being or of the phenomenon. By means of this latter concept the confused concept of being becomes more clearly defined; being is conceived as a substance, and the notion of substance thus acquired, acts as a searchlight and clarifies the concept of the mode of being, of accident, or of the phenomenon.

Thus the primacy of being is assured and continues to be the objective light of our intellect, causality being subordinate to being as one of its modes.

Objection. But to attribute causality to a God who transcends the world seems to be inconceivable, or at least dubious (fourth antimony of Kant). In fact, such attribution necessitates that God be the absolutely immobile first cause. Now, an immobile first cause which, though not being the principle of its action, would produce effects that would begin to exist, is inconceivable. Therefore, the attribution of causality to a God who transcends the world is inconceivable.

Reply. I distinguish the major as follows: that it is necessary to admit God to be the absolutely immobile first cause, of which we shall have positive knowledge, both as to what is formally implied in the concept of cause, and as to the divine mode of causality—this I deny; that we shall have positive knowledge of what is formally implied in the concept of cause, but that we shall have only a negative and relative knowledge of the divine mode of such causality—this I concede. But it is precisely this imperfect knowledge of the mode of the divine causality which renders the problem so mysterious. We may say that no positive concept can be formed of the mode of this causality, but we speak of it in negative and relative terms, as when we say that it is an uncaused cause, or that it is a cause which, by reason of its eminence, transcends time, of which it is the cause as well as of movement, though still retaining its freedom of action. (See no. 36, proof of the existence of God by the argument from motion).

Objection. But even if it be granted that the relative concept of cause is a sufficient basis for the actual attribution of absolute concepts, it does not seem possible that these same concepts, considered in themselves, can be predicated of a transcendental God. In fact, God, if He is transcendental and

infinite, differs from the creature in a far greater measure than the creature differs from nothingness. Now, between the creature and nothingness there is no analogy. With far more reason, therefore, must this be the case between a transcendental and infinite God and the creature. The major of this objection is undeniable. The distance which separates the creature from nothingness is but negatively infinite, since one of the terms is negative, thus enabling creative power to bridge the gulf. Between the creature and God, on the contrary, there is a positively infinite distance, since both terms are positive, and hence absolutely unapproachable. That omnipotence itself could transform or transubstantiate a creature into God, is inconceivable.

Reply. As in the answer to the preceding objection, we distinguish the major as follows: That a transcendental and infinite God differs in a far greater measure from the creature, than the creature differs from nothingness—this I admit, if we consider God and the creature according to their respective modes of being, for one of these modes is infinite, whereas the other is finite; but if we consider being according to its formal aspect, then the proposition must be denied; for this formal aspect is verified both in the creature and in the transcendental cause which it postulates, not, however, in nothingness.

Objection. But under this formal aspect being, compared with God, takes precedence of Him and is more universal than He. Now, nothing can take precedence of God. Hence the reply is unconvincing, and the difficulty remains.

Reply. Being in its formal aspect has a priority that is logical with reference to God and is logically more universal than He, according to our imperfect mode of conception. But it has no real priority, nor any universality of the real order of containment and causality. Since our knowledge is abstracted from sensible things, we conceive of being in general and the analogue, before we come to know the supreme analogue or primary Being. But when we realize that this latter is the self-subsistent Being, infinite plenitude of being, capable of producing everything than can possibly exist, then we see clearly that being abstracted from sensible things is truly subsequent to primary Being.

Objection. Nevertheless, if we consider the absolute perfections, not as isolated, by themselves, but as interrelated, their coexistence does not seem possible in one and the same transcendental being. In fact, if they exist formally in God, they posit in Him a real-formal multiplicity which is

incompatible with His absolute simplicity. If, on the other hand, they are identified eminently in the Deity, they are formally destructive of each other, and have but a virtual existence after the manner of mixed perfections. Then the statement, “God is good,” can have but one meaning, namely, that God is the cause of goodness. This brings us back to the opinion of Maimonides. And as God is the cause of bodily things, we could just as well affirm of Him that He is corporeal, as to say that He remains unknowable.

Such is the general antinomy of the one and the multiple, with which reason clashes whenever it seeks to attribute the primary notions to God. The multiplicity of the absolute perfections attributed to God, not only virtually, but formally, seems to destroy the divine simplicity, or conversely, to be destroyed by it.

Apart from this general antinomy, other difficulties present themselves. How, for instance, can we reconcile (a) the divine simplicity with that duality of subject and object which is an essential condition of knowledge; (b) the free act of God, which would seem to imply something contingent and defectible, with His absolute immutability; (c) the divine life, which seems to imply a process of becoming, with that same absolute immutability; (d) the permission of evil with God’s supreme goodness and omnipotence; (e) infinite mercy with absolute justice?

Reply. We must postpone the solution of these difficulties concerning the reconciliation of the divine attributes until the proofs have been given for God’s existence. These proofs will be sufficiently established by defending the twofold validity, ontological and transcendental, of primary ideas in general, and of each one in particular, especially those of being and cause. After we have proved the existence of a primary cause which transcends the created universe, after we have shown that this cause must be the self-subsistent Being, and deduced the principal attributes of that Being, we shall be able to explain why there can be no conflict between the various attributes, and thus resolve the alleged antinomies.

Having established the fact of the demonstrability of the existence of God, we now pass on to the demonstration itself.

CHAPTER III

EXPOSÉ OF THE PROOFS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

To grasp the profound meaning and the metaphysical import of the traditional proofs for the existence of God, we cannot do better than study them as set forth in the third article of the second question of Part I of the Summa Theologica of St. Thomas, where that learned philosopher and theologian reduces these proofs to their essential principles. See also Contra Gentes, Bk. I, cc. 13, 15, 16, 44; Bk. II, c. 15; Bk. III, c. 44; De Veritate, q. 5, a. 2; De Potentia, q. 3, a. 5; Compendium Theologiae, c. 3; Physica, Bk. VII, Lect. 2; Bk. VIII, Lect. 9 ff.; Metaphysica, Bk. XII, Lect. 5 ff.

Our purpose here is not historical, but merely to show that these proofs are closely connected with the first principles of reason, especially with the principle of non-contradiction or identity, and with the first of all human ideas, namely, that of being.

The two objections with which St. Thomas opens the above-mentioned article of the Summa Theologica are sufficient evidence that he was aware of the difficulties of the problem. They are the fundamental objections to which all others can easily be reduced. The first objection voices the opinion of the Pessimists; the second that of the Pantheists.

1. The first objection may be expressed briefly as follows: Evil exists; therefore an infinitely good God does not exist. For if He did exist, how could one account for all those defects, sufferings, and disorders in His work? This objection has been developed at great length by Schopenhauer. To say with Voltaire (Third Letter to Memmius), with John Stuart Mill (Essays on Religion, p. 163), with J. G. Schiller (cfr. Revue de Philosophie, 1906, p. 653), and with several contemporary authors, that it is a question of a finite God, very wise and very powerful, but not omnipotent, does not

leave us so much as the nominal definition of God which determines the object itself of our proof.

The solution of this difficulty belongs to the treatise on Providence (Ia, q. 22, a. 2, ad 2um), and we shall recur to it when we come to consider the harmonization of the divine attributes. For the present it is enough to indicate the answer of Catholic theology. St. Augustine has condensed it into a few words, which are quoted by St. Thomas: “If evil exists, it is not because God lacks power or goodness, but, on the contrary, He permits evil only because He is powerful enough and good enough to bring good out of evil (“Nullo modo sineret aliquid mali esse in operibus suis, nisi esset adeo omnipotens et bonus ut bene faceret etiam de malo.” Enchiridion, ch. 2). In the presence of evil we see the triumph of the omnipotence and infinite goodness of God. He allows the death of the gazelle in order that the lion may live, and causes persecutions and the greatest of sufferings to redound to the glory of His martyrs. Not only does He enable souls to triumph over suffering, but He strengthens them by means of it, inspires them to become ever more serious of purpose and to attach themselves only to the things that are eternal. He purifies them by adversity and by the humiliations that He sends them. He protects them against pride or cures them of it. Moreover, physical evil is as nothing in comparison with moral evil or sin; and how could this latter make it impossible for Sovereign Goodness to exist, since sin presupposes it? In matter of fact, there is but one offence against God, which, like physical evil, He has permitted only in view of a greater good. It is our misery, which enables God to be merciful, just as creative power postulates absolute nothingness (Ia, q. 21, a. 3). The redemption, effected by the Incarnation of the Son of God, has made it possible for us to say “felix culpa.” As for moral evil, which refuses to cooperate in what is good, it is compelled to do so by the chastisements which it calls down, by the manifestation both of Divine Justice and of the inalienable rights of Goodness, and it enables God to show Himself in all His majesty as the Judge (Ia, q. 25, a. 5, ad 3um). The small catechisms simply say: “There will be a general judgement, in order that all the good deeds and all the sins of men may be made known, and that all men may recognize the justice of God in rewarding the good and punishing the wicked.” (See infra, no. 65, B).

Such is the Catholic answer to the problem of evil. In proving the existence of God, the theologian is well aware of the difficulties upon

which the Pessimists insist; nay, he even foresees others. Far from stopping, as Voltaire did, at such disasters as the Lisbon earthquake, the theologian foresees that he will have to explain the rigors of Divine Justice by the very exigencies of the Sovereign Good. We shall return to this problem of evil in Part II, chs. 2, 3, and 4, of this book.

2. The second objection mentioned by St. Thomas is against the existence of God. It is said by the Pantheists that it is sufficient to admit two principles, nature and spirit; an eternal principle is not necessary, for: "Quod potest compleri per pauciora principia, non fit per plura." To claim, therefore, as Hébert does, that St. Thomas did not know Pantheism, or chose to ignore it, is beside the question. It is certain that St. Thomas was aware of the two general types of Pantheism—that which reduces the multiple to one, becoming to being, and must end in denying the existence of the world (Acosmism), commonly attributed to Parmenides (Met., I, Lect. 9 of St. Thomas; Phys., Bk. I, Lect. 3, 4, 5 and 14); and that which, on the contrary, reduces everything to becoming, and inevitably results in a denial of the existence of God. This is atheistic Evolutionism, which is based upon Heraclitean principles (Met., Bk. I, Lect. 4). St. Thomas did not fail to see that Pantheism, in a certain sense, never existed, because it is absurd. Either the world is absorbed by God (Acosmism), or God is absorbed by the world and hence does not exist (Atheism). Against the Materialistic Pantheism of David of Dinant see Sent., II, dist. 17, q. 1, a. 1, and the Summa Theol., Ia, q. 3, a. 8: "Whether God enters into the composition of other things?" In the Ia, q. 76, a. 2 (see Cajetan's Commentary), and question 79, a. 5, as well as in the treatise entitled De Unitate Intellectus, we find the refutation of Averroism, which admitted but one intellect for all human beings.

The following proofs contain the solution of this Pantheistic objection.

34) The five main proofs. Their universality. Their order. What they are intended to demonstrate.

Before entering upon the classical proofs, it will be useful to determine the degree of their universality, to explain the order in which St. Thomas presents them, and to state precisely what each proof is intended to demonstrate.

These five arguments are typical and universal in range. All others can be reduced to them. They may truly be called metaphysical, for they are based on the highest metaphysical principles (ex summis metaphysicae fontibus

sumuntur), in this sense that any created being whatever can be taken as the starting-point in the argument, ranging from stone to angel and ending in those five attributes which can be predicated only of that Being that subsists above all—Ipsum esse subsistens, subsistent Being itself, whence flow all the divine attributes. These five proofs are deduced from the laws of created being, viewed not inasmuch as they may happen to be of the sensible or of the spiritual order, but inasmuch as they are created. Every created being is mobile, caused, contingent, composite, imperfect, and relative. St. Thomas preferred to select his examples from the objects of sense perception, but he also applied these same proofs to purely spiritual things, to the soul and its intellectual and volitional movements. (See his answer to the second objection in the article just quoted; also Ia, q. 79, a. 4, and Ia IIae, q. 9, a. 4). Following the example of Aristotle, all treatises on general metaphysics or ontology, devoted to being as such, study the opposition between being moved and unmoved, conditioned and unconditioned, contingent and necessary; between being that is composite and imperfect and being that is simple and perfect; between relative and absolute being. St. Thomas here considers every created being (1) as subject to change; (2) as caused; (3) as contingent; (4) as composite and imperfect; (5) as multiplicity of design directed to some end. From these he concludes that there is a being which is (1) not moved; (2) not caused; (3) necessary; (4) simple and perfect; (5) directing all things to their proper end—which cannot be other than the Self-subsisting Being that is above all things, the “Ipsum esse subsistens” (Ia, q. 3, a. 4).

The general arrangement of these arguments, both with regard to their premises and their conclusions, must be carefully noted.

Since God is known by His works (“per ea quae facta sunt”) St. Thomas first of all presents the most evident signs of contingency in the world; for that which did not exist, and suddenly comes into being, is obviously contingent. The most striking example is that of a body which passes from a state of repose to a state of movement. It is evident that such a body does not set itself in motion. From local movement we may pass on to qualitative movement (gradual intensification of a quality such as heat and light), to accelerated movement, in fact, to all kinds of becoming, even that form of it which is found in the intellect and the will and which exists in every finite mind. A thought, a volition arises in consciousness which was previously

non-existent. Clearly it does not come into existence by itself, nor does the soul possess it by its own power.

It has been asserted that this first proof given by St. Thomas applies only to movements of the physical order, especially to local movement. As a matter of fact, local motion is merely given as the most striking example of movement in the sensible order. To be convinced of this, one has only to read the article in the Summa Theologica entitled: “Whether God works in every agent?” in which St. Thomas presents this argument from motion, referring to God as the first cause. He writes: “The first agent moves the second to act. And thus all agents act by virtue of God Himself. . . . God moves things by applying, as it were, their forms and powers to operation.” (Ia, q. 105, a. 5). In three other passages, to which we have had occasion to refer previously, (Ia, q. 2, a. 3, ad 2um; Ia, q. 79, a. 4; Ia, IIae, q. 9, a. 4), the proof from motion is expressly applied to movements of the intellect and the will.

This first argument is designed to establish the fact of a source of becoming, of a first mover who is immovable, in this sense that he possesses within Himself the source of His own activity and has no need of being moved by another. Thence may be deduced: the pure actuality of the first mover (Ia, q. 3, a. 1 and 2); His aseity (ibid., a. 4) ; His absolute immutability. (Ia, q. 9, a. 1 and 2); His eternity (Ia, q. 10, a. 2), etc.

St. Thomas could have established by an a priori proof that the first mover must be the first efficient cause, the source, not only of becoming, but also of being. He preferred to give an a posteriori proof of this, and the second proof is based, not upon the dependence of becoming on the force which previously set it in motion, but on that of being (which is the permanently abiding terminus of becoming) with respect to efficient causes which not only produce it, but conserve it in being. If we wish to grasp the full force of this argument, we must read the two articles in which St. Thomas discusses this question from the opposite point of view. In the first of these (Ia, q. 104, a. 1), “Whether creatures need to be kept in being by God?” he distinguishes clearly between being and becoming, between fieri and esse. The second article is entitled, “Whether God preserves every creature immediately?” and arrives at the conclusion that there is a first cause, the source of being, which is not itself the effect of any cause, nor preserved in its being by any higher cause. From this follow the Prime

Mover's aseity (Ia, q. 3, a. 4), creative omnipotence (Ia, q. 25, a. 3; q. 44, a. 1 and 2; q. 45, a. 2 and 5), immensity and ubiquity (Ia, q. 8, a. 2), etc.

St. Thomas could have proved a priori that the first mover and the first cause must be the necessary being. But he proved a posteriori the existence of a necessary being by a third argument, which starts out, not from the dependence of becoming or being on their respective causes, but from the possibility of the nonexistence of a being which is caused; in other words, its contingency. Thus this proof is more general than the preceding ones, for it can be applied not only to becoming, not only to being which did not previously exist, but to everything which has not its sufficient cause in itself. St. Thomas particularly insists on the evidence of the senses attesting to the contingency of material things; but his point of departure is more universal, namely, the basic proposition that what can just as well not be, must have for its cause a necessary being ("quod possibile est non esse pendet a necessario"). This third proof, universal in its scope, concludes merely to the existence of a necessary being, which exists of and by itself (a se). From this fact (aseitas) we argue that such a being is self-subsistent, or Being itself (Ia, q. 3, a. 4), whence all the absolute perfections can be deduced.

The fourth way seeks for a sign of contingency in the ultimate profundities of created being. Here we find ourselves placed in the static order, confronted with beings which we do not necessarily need to have seen coming into existence or ceasing to exist. To detect their contingency, we have recourse to something which, on first consideration, appears not so convincing, but is more profound and more universal than movement, generation or corruption, namely, multiplicity, composition, and imperfection. The multiple, the composite, the imperfect—all demand a cause just as well as becoming does; and this cause must be not only uncaused, but unique, absolutely simple, and absolutely perfect. From this we conclude that God is not corporeal (Ia, q. 3, a. 1), that He is not composed of essence and existence, but that He is the self-subsistent Being at the head of creation (Ia, q. 3, a. 4); that He is not included in any genus (Ia, q. 3, a. 5); that He is sovereign goodness (q. 6, a. 2) ; that He is infinite (q. 7, a. 1); that He is the sovereign truth (q. 16, a. 5); that He is invisible and incomprehensible (Ia, q. 12, a. 4 and 8). The proof based on the eternal verities which concludes the existence of a Supreme Truth, as well as those derived from the notions of absolute goodness and of the compelling force

of what is upright and good, enable us to conclude to the existence of that Supreme Good, which is the source of all happiness and the foundation of all becoming, are but variations of the fourth way.

The fifth proof emphasizes the preceding fourth. It is based upon the notion of multiplicity—not of any sort of multiplicity, but of that which gives evidence of design. In other words, the argument derives its force from the idea of the orderly arrangement of things in the world. It establishes as its conclusion, not a unity of some kind or other, but a unity of conception, which means that there is an intelligent designer. This argument applies to every being in which there is a trace of design: whether it be a case of essence designed for existence, or of intelligence ordained to its proper act (potentia dicitur ad actum). Since the existence of a first cause has already been proved, the fifth proof reveals this cause to us as a Supreme Intelligence. From this intelligence, considered as an attribute of the self-subsisting Being (Ia, q. 14, a. 1), we conclude to the Wisdom and Foreknowledge (Ia, q. 14), the Will (q. 19), and the Providence (Ia, q. 22) of that same Being. This last and more popular proof, which seems to be simpler than the preceding one, in reality presupposes it, and of all the proofs for the existence of God is perhaps the one which, considered strictly on metaphysical grounds, presents the greatest difficulty in being referred back to the first principles of reason, on account of its complexity. It is probably on this account that St. Thomas put it in the last place.

Briefly, then, and in a general way, we may say that the contingent (that which, by its definition, may either exist or not exist), demands a necessary being (third proof); that movement, which is the simplest example of contingency, demands an unmoved mover (first proof); that conditioned being demands an unconditioned being (second proof); that the multiple presupposes the one, the composite the simple, and the simple and imperfect presuppose the perfect (fourth proof); that a multiplicity of design postulates an intelligent designer (fifth proof). Now the necessary being, the first mover, the first cause, which is absolutely one, simple, perfect, and intelligent, is that being which corresponds to the idea that comes to the mind when one utters the word God (nominal definition). Therefore, God exists.

From any one of these five divine attributes we may establish the reality of that Being whose essence is identical with His existence, and who for this reason is Being Itself (Ia, q. 3, a. 4). The proof for God’s existence is

thereby firmly established. The nature of God is all that remains for us to study, and Self-Subsisting Being becomes the principle from which we can deduce the divine attributes. Thus we shall see, as Fr. del Prado, O.P., shows in his treatise De Veritate Fundamentali Philosophiae Christianae, that the supreme truth, not in the analytical order or the order of invention, but in the synthetic or deductive order, that truth which is the final answer to our questions concerning God and the world, is the identity of essence and existence to be found in God alone. “In solo Deo essentia et esse sunt idem,” whence the definition of God expressed in His own words: “I am He who is.”

This will be the last word in reply to such ultimate metaphysical questions as: Why is there but one being who is uncreated, immutable, infinite, absolutely perfect, sovereignly good, omniscient, free to create, etc.? Why did all the other beings have to receive from Him all that they are, and why must they expect from Him all that they desire and may become? The treatise on God thus rests fundamentally on the proposition that “In solo Deo essentia et esse sunt idem: in God alone are essence and existence identical.” This same proposition is the terminus in the inductive order of metaphysical reasoning, by which we conclude to God’s existence, and it is also the principle from which, by the method of deduction, we arrive at the same conclusion.

35) General proof, which includes all the others. Its principle is that the greater cannot proceed from the less. The higher alone explains the lower.

Before examining each of these five typical proofs in detail, we shall give a general proof which includes all the others, and which, we believe, most aptly illustrates what is commonly accepted as the essential point in establishing the existence of God. The principle of this general proof, i.e., that “The greater cannot proceed from the less,” condenses into one formula the principles upon which our five typical proofs are based. These principles may be stated as follows: “Becoming depends upon being which is determined;” “Conditioned being depends upon unconditioned being;” “Contingent being depends upon necessary being;” “Imperfect, composite, multiple being depends upon that which is perfect, simple, and one;” “Order in the universe depends upon an intelligent designer.” The principles of the first three proofs especially emphasize the fact that the world depends for its existence upon a cause, while the last two principles stress the superiority and perfection of this cause. These may then all be summed up

in the formula that “The greater cannot proceed from the less; only the higher grade of being explains the lower.”

This general proof will have to be scientifically established by the five other proofs. Though it is in itself somewhat vague, it becomes strong and convincing when united with the others. We have here a concrete case of what the theologians teach about the natural knowledge of God. “Although the existence of God needs to be demonstrated,” writes Scheeben (Dogmatik, II, n. 29), “it does not follow that its certainty is merely the result of a scientific proof, one of conscious reflection, based on our own research or on the teaching of others; nor does it follow that this certainty is due to the scientific accuracy of the proof. On the contrary, the proof required so that anyone may arrive at complete certainty is so easy and so clear that one scarcely perceives the logical process which it involves, and that the scientifically developed proofs, far from being the means by which man first acquires certainty of the existence of God, merely clarify and confirm the knowledge which he already has. Moreover, since the proof, in its original form, presents itself more or less as an ocular demonstration, and finds an echo in the most hidden recesses of the rational nature of man, it establishes a conviction on this basis which is firmer and less open to attack than any other, no matter how ingeniously contrived, and cannot be assailed by any scientific objection.” Thus are verified the words of Scripture when it chides the pagans, not for having neglected the studies necessary for acquiring a knowledge of God, but for having violently suppressed the divine truth clearly made known to the mind of man. (Rom. I, 18; II, 14). To deny the existence of God is an insult to nature (μάταιοι φύσει; Wisd. XIII, 1) as well as to reason (“Dixit insipiens in corde suo: non est Deus; Ps. XIII).

This general proof may be stated as follows, by ascending from the lower beings up to man:

We know from experience that there are beings and events belonging to different orders. Certain things in nature are inanimate (minerals); and there is the vegetative life (in plants), the sensitive life (in animals), and the intellectual and moral life (in man). All these things come into existence and disappear again, they are born and they die, which shows that their activity has a beginning and an end. Evidently they do not exist of and by themselves. What, then, causes them to come into being?

If there are things in existence at present, there must have been some thing in existence always. “If at any particular moment of time nothing exists, then nothing will ever come into existence.” “Ex nihilo nihil fit.” The principle of causality tells us that nothing cannot be the reason or cause of actual being. To say that the series of perishable things had or did not have a beginning, does not solve the problem. If the series is eternal, it remains eternally insufficient; for the perishable beings of the past were just as indigent as those now existing, and not in any sense self-sufficient. How could any one of them, not being able to account for its own existence, account for those that follow? This would be the same as admitting that the greater proceeds from the less. We must admit, therefore, that above perishable beings there is a First Being, who owes existence only to Himself and can give it to others. (General Proof based on the fact of contingency; see n. 38).

If living beings exist to-day, and if life is superior to brute matter, it could not have evolved from the latter, for to assert this would mean that the greater comes from the less, or, what amounts to the same, that being comes from nothing. Just as being, as such, cannot come from nothing, living being cannot proceed from that which is non-living and of a lower order than life. The First Being must, therefore, have life (n. 49). This necessary conclusion becomes practically evident to the senses if we suppose that it is an established fact of positive science that the series of living beings had a beginning.

If there is such a thing in the world to-day as intelligence and knowledge; if intelligence is superior to brute matter, to the vegetative and the sensitive life; if the most domesticated of animals can never be trained so as to grasp the principle of sufficient reason or the first principle of the moral law: intelligence could never have evolved from these lower grades of being, but it is necessary to admit an intelligent being existing from all eternity. The intellectuality of this being cannot be, like ours, contingent; for, not being responsible for its own existence, how could it account for that of others? This means that the First Being is of necessity intelligent. If everything originated from matter, from a lump of clay, how could human reason, or the mind of man, have evolved? “There is no greater absurdity than to admit that intelligent beings are the result of a blind and material fatalism,” says Montesquieu (proof based on the contingency of mind; see infra, n. 39,

b). And how could there be order in the world without an intelligent designer? (proof from the evidence of order in the world; infra n. 40).

If the series of rational principles, which dominate our reason and all reality, actual as well as possible, are necessary, and consequently superior and anterior to all contingent intellects and realities which they regulate, then they are independent of the latter, and there must always have been some intelligent being reigning supreme in the realm of the possible, the real, and the intellectual. This supreme intellect must have been in possession of a first and unchangeable truth. In other words, if the intelligible and its necessary laws are superior to the unintelligible and the contingent, they must have existed from all eternity, for they could not possibly have originated from that which in no wise contained them (proof based on the eternal truths; infra n. 39, c).

If, finally, there are in the world to-day, morality, justice, charity, if we can attribute sanctity to Christ and Christianity, if this morality and this sanctity are of a higher order than what is neither holy nor moral, there must have been from all eternity a moral, just, good, and holy Being. The soul of a St. Augustine or a St. Vincent de Paul, the humblest of Christians for whom the words of the Pater Noster have a message to convey—is there anything more absurd than to say that these are the result of a material and blind fatality? Can the desire for God and for perfect holiness be explained apart from God? Can the relative be explained apart from the absolute? (Proof based on the contingency of mind, applied to morality and religion in practice).

If the first principle of the moral law, namely, that we must do good and avoid evil (“Do your duty, let happen what may,”) forces itself upon us with no less objectivity and necessity than the principles of speculative reason; if the really good, which is the object of our will (good in itself, superior to useful and delectable good), has a right to be loved and willed apart from the satisfaction and the advantages to be derived from it; if the being capable of such an act of the will must so will, in order to retain its raison d’être; if the voice of conscience proclaims this right of the good to be loved, and afterwards approves or condemns, without our being able to stifle the feelings of remorse; if, in a word, the right of good to be loved and practised dominates our moral activity and that of societies, actual and possible, just as the principle of identity dominates the real, both actual and possible, then there must have been from all eternity a foundation for these

absolute rights. These necessary and dominant rights cannot be explained and regulated by any contingent reality. Since they are above everything except the Absolute Good, it is only the latter that can explain their existence. (Proof based on the moral law; n. 39, c). If we are conscious of a moral law within us which is superior to all human legislation, there must be a supreme legislator.

Therefore, there must be a First Being, who is at the same time Life, Intelligence, supreme Truth, absolute Justice, perfect Holiness, and sovereign Goodness. This conclusion is based on the principle that "the greater cannot proceed from the less," which in turn is merely a formulation of the principle of causality, already discussed. "Quod est non a se, est ab alio quod est a se": That which has not its reason for existing in itself, must derive that reason from another being, which exists by and for itself (see supra, no. 9). The lower grades of being (lifeless matter, the vegetative and sensitive life), far from being able to explain the higher (intelligence), can be explained only by this latter. The simplest of material elements, such as the atom and the crystal, far from being the principle of things, can be explained only by an idea of type or final end. The display in them of intelligent design can have been caused only by an intelligent designer. The physical sciences, if they have any objective validity, reveal this intelligible law or sufficient reason, but are not the cause of it. (Proof based on the notion of final causes; n. 40).

This general proof shows us the absurdity of Materialistic Evolutionism, based on an antiscientific and antiphilosophical hypothesis. It is antiscientific, because it presupposes the homogeneity of all phenomena, from the physical-chemical up to the most sublime acts of philosophical and religious contemplation. Now, science has nothing to adduce in favor of such a homogeneity; on the contrary, as Dubois-Reymond remarks in his work, Les Limites de la Science, science is confronted with seven baffling problems, namely, (1) the nature of matter and of force; (2) the origin of movement; (3) the first appearance of life; (4) the apparent finality of nature; (5) the appearance of sensation and consciousness; (6) the origin of reason and language; (7) free will. This is tantamount to saying that science cannot explain the higher forms of reality by the laws of inanimate matter. Materialistic Evolutionism is also antiphilosophical. Whatever the degree of fecundity and however numerous the qualities which may be ascribed to it, it is always, by its very definition, blind necessity or a blind contingency

(absence of intelligence). How could a superior intelligence ever have evolved from it? The physical and chemical laws cannot explain intelligence, but receive their own explanation from it alone.

This general proof also furnishes a virtual refutation of Idealistic Pantheism. The required First Being, who is entirely independent of everything not itself, is also endowed with intellect and will—and these three notes constitute personality. Moreover, we cannot think of ourselves as modes or accidents of this Being, for if the greater cannot proceed from the less, the principle of things must from all eternity possess the plenitude of being, intelligence, truth, and goodness. It is not susceptible of further perfection, nor can becoming be attributed to it, since becoming in its final analysis presupposes privation. (See nos. 36, a and 39, a.).

Some Evolutionists (e. g., John Stuart Mill; supra n. 12), make bold to affirm that the greater does proceed from the less, being from nothingness, mind from matter. Hegel sees no difficulty in admitting the same conclusion, since for him the principle of contradiction has no objective significance, and being and non-being are identical.

Many Positivists (Haeckel, for instance) are inclined to accept the principle that the greater cannot proceed from the less, but deny the superiority of life, sensation, and thought, which they regard as merely the result of physical forces in harmonious combination. Primitive matter, they say, is not only ponderable, inert, and passive, but also ether, which is imponderable matter perpetually in motion. The atom which is attracted by another atom is an example of sensation and inclination in the rudimentary stage; in other words, it is a soul in embryo. The same must be said of molecules, which are composed of two or more atoms, as well as of the far more complex compounds of these molecules. The way in which they combine is purely mechanical; but by reason of this very mechanism the psychic element of things becomes complicated and diversified in accordance with their material elements.

From this point of view, philosophical or religious contemplation is not essentially of a higher order than the functions of the liver or the kidneys. These Materialistic Positivists are forced to conclude that the harmony prevailing in the laws of nature cannot be ascribed to an intelligent cause, but is the result of chance or blind necessity. In defence of their thesis they appeal to the principles of modern physics, especially to the principle of the conservation of energy, which is commonly interpreted as meaning that

“nothing is lost and nothing is created.” If nothing is lost and nothing is created, then a living, rational being can, strictly speaking, only expend and restore the motive energies received from outside, not only without any quantitative additions, but even without modifying the natural tendencies of these energies by their own spontaneous action; for to change the direction of a force requires force, and we cannot create force. The sum-total of available energy in the universe is fixed, either from all eternity or since the coming into being of things. The intellectual and moral life is but a reflex of the physical life.

In his thesis on La Contingence des Lois de la Nature (1874), E. Boutroux replied to this objection by pointing out that the conservation of energy cannot be advanced as a primordial and universal necessity which would explain everything else, since it is itself but a contingent and partial law in need of a cause. “The most elementary and the most general of the physical and chemical laws of nature,” he says, “declare what relationships exist between things so heterogeneous that it is impossible to say that the consequent is proportionate to the antecedent and results from it, as the effect from its cause. . . . For us they are merely a series of connected events which we have experienced, and no less contingent than experience itself. . . . The quantity of physical action may increase or decrease in the universe or in parts of the universe.” (3rd ed., p. 74). This law of the conservation of energy is not a necessary truth, a supreme law which nature is compelled to obey; itself contingent, it demands a cause. Even if it were a necessary law, like the principle of contradiction, it would not explain the existence of nature, the existence of beings in which it is found, and which may be conceived as not existing. Furthermore, it is but a partial law; man finds it operative in a special sphere, that of physics and chemistry, and even in this inorganic sphere its verification is but approximate. “How can it be proved that the phenomena observed in physics are not in any way deflected from their own natural course by some superior intervention?” The law is true only of a closed system, removed from all external activities, in which the sum-total of potential and actual energy remains constant; but how can it be proved that the physical universe is a closed system?

In the biological field the verification of this law is an impossibility, “for we cannot pass judgment on an infinitely large number of infinitely small forms of life.” As for the extension of this law to the domain of the spirit, the hypothesis is not only incapable of verification, but absolutely

gratuitous. “Not only is it unnecessary that the world of the spirit should be governed by the same laws which regulate the world of bodies, but since the spiritual is of a different nature from the corporeal, it would be most extraordinary if it did not have its own laws.”

Boutroux in his thesis on the Contingency of the Laws of Nature has also established the fact that there is no inherent necessity with regard to the physical and chemical forces of nature, in virtue of which they are bound to produce that combination which results in life, sensation, and intelligence. The actualization of these higher forms of life is contingent, and hence demands a cause different from that demanded by the physical and chemical laws. The universe presents itself to us as a hierarchy of natures, of which the higher forms cannot be conceived as a mere production or development of the lower. Thus the traditionally accepted general proof is confirmed, and has lost nothing of its validity.

We shall now explain more fully and defend scientifically, i.e., with metaphysical arguments, this general proof by means of the five typical proofs as formulated by St. Thomas.

36) Proof from motion. A. The proof.—B. Objections.—C. Consequences.

A. The proof. We shall first present this proof in its widest sense (a) by starting from the notion of motion; then we shall apply it to (b) physical motion, and afterwards to (c) spiritual motion. (Concerning this proof, see Aristotle, Physics, Bk. VII, Comment. of St. Thomas, Lect. 1 and 2; Bk. VIII, Lect. 9, 12, 13, 23; John of St. Thomas, Cursus Philosophicus; Philosophia Naturalis, q. 24, a. 3, and Cursus Theologicus, In Iam, q. 2, a. 3).

a). Taken in its widest sense, this proof claims to establish the existence of a being immovable from every point of view, and, therefore, uncreated; for in the case of every created being there is at least the transition from non-being to being, which conflicts with the notion of absolute immutability.

The existence of motion or change is the starting-point of the argument, without stating precisely whether the change is substantial or accidental, whether the motion is spiritual or sensible, local, qualitative or by way of augmentation. When arguing against Pantheism it is not at all necessary to assume a plurality of distinct substances, but it suffices to admit the existence of any kind of motion and to study it as motion. Internal and

external experience confirms the existence of motion. Zeno declared motion to be impossible, but this declaration was based on the gratuitous and false hypothesis that the continuous is composed of indivisible parts.

Starting from motion, we gradually arrive at the conclusion that there is an absolutely immovable being, and this by means of two principles: (1) Whatever is in motion, is set in motion by another; (2) in a series of actually and essentially subordinate movers, there is no regress to infinity. Hence we must finally arrive at a first mover which itself is not moved by any kind of motion.

The first proposition, "Whatever is in motion, is set in motion by another," is based on the nature of motion or becoming. As we have already shown (see nos. 21 and 26), becoming presupposes the absence of identity; it is a successive union of diverse things (for instance: that which is here, afterwards is there; that which is white becomes grey; the intellect from a state of ignorance gradually acquires a knowledge of things, becomes more penetrating, etc). This successive union of diverse things cannot be unconditioned; to deny this proposition would be to deny the principle of identity and to say that diverse elements, which of themselves do not follow one another, do of themselves follow one another; it would mean to say that ignorance, which of itself is not knowledge, nor in any way connected with knowledge, nor the result of knowledge, can of itself be the result of knowledge. To say that becoming is its own sufficient reason, is to make contradiction the principle of all things (see n. 21).

If we study this becoming more closely, we observe not only that it is not unconditioned, but also that it requires a determinate cause, i.e., one that is in act. In fact, if we consider that which becomes, we are obliged to say that it is not yet what it will be (ex ente non fit ens, quia jam est ens), and that it is not the absolute nothing of that which will be (ex nihilo nihil fit); at least, there must be a possibility of its being what it will be; for instance, that only can be moved locally which is susceptible of being moved; that only which is susceptible of heat, light, and magnetism is susceptible to these influences; the child who as yet does not know anything, can know something, and this constitutes the real difference between him and the irrational animal; finally, that alone will become a reality which is capable of existing, and which involves no contradiction in terms. (In this latter case no real power is required, but a possibility is). Therefore, becoming is the transition from potency to act, from indetermination to determination. But

the sufficient reason for this transition is not to be found in the transition itself, since it is not unconditioned. Potency does not bring itself into act, and unconditioned union of diverse things is impossible. Therefore, becoming demands an extrinsic actualization or realizing raison d'être, which we called efficient cause (n. 25) when we showed the necessity as well as the twofold validity, objective and transcendental, of the principle of causality (see n. 25 and 29). This realizing raison d'être must itself be real before it can realize, must itself be actual before it can actualize, must itself be determined before it can determine anything. This means that it must actually have that for which becoming is as yet only in potentiality. To deny this is to assert that the greater can proceed from the less, or, what amounts to the same thing, that being arises out of nothingness. St. Thomas expresses this truth in the formula: "Nihil movetur nisi secundum quod est in potentia ad illud ad quod movetur; movet autem aliquid, secundum quod est actu (nothing is moved except in so far as it is potentially capable of receiving such motion; only in so far as anything is actually in motion, does it move anything else").

Now, if it is impossible that one and the same being can at the same time and in the same sense be both in potency (undetermined) and in act (determined), it is equally impossible that one and the same being in the same sense can be both mover and moved; hence, if it is in motion, it is moved by some other being, unless it happens to be in motion in a certain sense with respect to one part of its being, in which case it can be moved by another part of its being. Such is the case with living beings, and even more so with sentient and intelligent beings. But since the part which moves is subject to a motion of another order, it demands in its turn an external mover. Hence we see that whatever is in motion, is moved by another.

The second proposition: "There is no regress to infinity in a series of movers which are actually and essentially subordinate," is based upon the principle of causality and in no way upon the fact that an infinite and innumerable multitude is an impossibility. With Aristotle, St. Thomas, Leibniz, and Kant we do not see that it is a contradiction to admit a regress to infinity in a series of movers which were accidentally subordinate in the past. It cannot be proved that the series of generations in the animal kingdom or of the transformations of energy had a beginning and are not eternal (see Ia, q. 46, and supra, n. 10). It is contrary to reason to say that an actually existing motion can have its sufficient reason, its actualizing raison

d’être, in a series of movers, each one of which is itself moved by some external cause. If all the movers receive that impulse which they transmit, if there is not a prime mover which imparts movement without receiving it, then motion is out of the question, for it has no cause. “You may conjure up an infinite number of intermediate causes, but by this process you merely complicate the series, yet do not establish a single cause. You make the channel longer, but it has no source. If it has no source, then the intermediate causes are ineffective, and no result could be produced, or rather there will be neither intermediate causes nor result, which means that everything has vanished.” To try to dispense with the necessity of a source is the same as saying that a watch can run without a spring, provided it has an infinite number of wheels, “that a brush can paint by itself, provided it has a very long handle.” Such statements are a denial of our first proposition, for they imply that becoming is its own sufficient reason, that the un- conditional union of diverse things is a possibility, that the greater proceeds from the less, being from nothingness, that the conditioned does not have to be explained by the unconditioned.

But there is no need of stopping anywhere in a series of past movers, since they exert no influence upon the actual movement which has to be accounted for; they are merely accidental causes (see n. 9 and 10). The principle of sufficient reason does not compel us to terminate this series of accidental causes, but to get away from it, in order to rise up to a mover of another order, not pre-moved, and immobile in this sense, that immobility is not of potency, which is anterior to motion, but that it is of act, which has no need of being subjected to the process of becoming because it already exists. (Immotus in se permanens).

By applying these two principles to motion of any kind, we at last come to admit the existence of a prime mover which is in no way set in motion by another. We must draw special attention to the fact that physical motion, not so much as motion, but insofar as it is physical, only demands an immobile mover from the physical point of view, for instance, a world-soul. But is this soul itself the subject of a spiritual motion, is it the substratum of a process of becoming? This appearance of something new, this fieri (becoming) presupposes in the soul the presence of a potency or faculty which was not its activity, in fact, which was not even in action, but merely had the power to act. Therefore, the intervention of a higher cause was necessary to set it in motion. If this higher mover is itself set in motion, then

the question rests. In a series of essentially subordinate movers we must finally arrive at one which is its own principle of motion, and which can explain the entity of its own action. But that alone can explain the entity of its action, to which the action belongs intrinsically, not only as a potency, but also as an act, and which, consequently, is its own very action, its very activity. Such a mover is absolutely immobile in this sense that He has by and of Himself that which the others acquire by motion. Therefore, He is essentially distinct from all mobile beings, either corporeal or spiritual. This statement constitutes the first refutation of Pantheism, as the Vatican Council expresses it (Session III, c. 1): “Since God is absolutely immutable, He is to be declared as really and essentially distinct from the world.” The first mover, being essentially immobile, superior to all motion, is necessarily distinct from the corporeal or spiritual world, which is by its very nature subject to change.

Moreover, such a mover must be self-existing; for that alone can act of itself which exists by itself; “operari sequitur esse et modus operandi modum essendi” (action follows upon the nature of a being, and the mode of its action is according to the mode of its being); in other words, for a being to contain within itself the explanation of the entity of its action, it must be self-existing (Ia, q. 3, a. 1 and 2; q. 54, a. 1 and 2). Finally, just as A is A, so it must be with what is self-existing in regard to its existence (Ia, q. 3, a. 4). It must be the self-subsistent being, pure being, pure act, absolute identity, the reverse of that want of identity which is found in all becoming. This last-mentioned point will be brought out more clearly a posteriori by the fourth proof for the existence of God.

From the above remarks we see that the principle of identity is not only the supreme law of thought, but also the supreme law of reality. The identity here established is that of immutability, and the fourth proof will establish the more profound attribute of simplicity.

b) It may be of help to the imagination to present the proof for the existence of God drawn from motion by taking an example of subordinate causes which appeals to the senses. “A sailor holds up an anchor on board ship, the ship supports the sailor, the sea enables the ship to float, the earth holds in check the sea, the sun keeps the earth fixed in its course, and some unknown centre of attraction holds the sun in its place. But after that? . . . We cannot go on in this manner ad infinitum in a series of causes which are actually subordinate.” There must be a primary efficient cause which

actually exists and gives efficacy to all the other causes. It is useless to appeal to the past series of transformations of energy, so as to discover the one which immediately preceded the present condition of our solar system and of the entire universe; these anterior forms of energy are not causes; they were, besides, transitory and as indigent as the actual forms, and just as much in need of explanation as they. If the series is eternal, it is eternally insufficient. We must necessarily admit the existence of a non-transitory cause, one in itself permanently immobile (immota in se permanens), not at the beginning of the series, but above all others, a sort of permanent source of life in the universe, and the origin of all becoming.

This all-sufficing cause could not be material, even if, accepting the theory of the Dynamists, we conceived of matter as endowed with energy and with certain primitive essential powers. The question here at issue is not physical, but metaphysical. Physics, a particular science, considers the cause of motion precisely as motion. We have to consider it from the metaphysical point of view, insofar as it is a manifestation of being. The question remains, therefore, whether this matter, endowed with energy, is an agent that can of and by itself explain the being of its action: in other words, an agent whose power to act is its very action, per se primo agens: intrinsically and immediately operative? (Ia, q. 3, a. 2, 3a ratio; q. 54, a. 1). This is impossible, for, as we have just seen, such an agent cannot be the subject of becoming, and matter is pre-eminently such a subject.

c) This proof from motion may be exemplified in another way by considering motions of the spiritual order, as St. Thomas has done in the article of his Summa entitled, “Whether the Will is Moved by any External Principle?” (Ia IIae, q. 9, a. 4). Our will begins to will certain things which it did not will before; in fact, when striving to attain a certain end, the will, in virtue of this first volition, moves itself to will the means for attaining that end. Thus, a sick person wishes to be cured, and as a consequence decides to see the doctor. But the will was not always actuated by this superior tendency towards an end. Since to be restored to health is something good, the will began to wish for this good. Moreover, this actual willing of what is good is an act distinct from the faculty of willing. Our will is not an eternal act of loving what is good; of itself it does not contain its first act except in potentia, and when it appears, it is something new, a becoming. To find the realizing raison d’être of this becoming and of the being of this act itself, we must go back to a mover of a higher order, to one

that is its own activity, determines itself to act, and, therefore, is self-existent Being itself. Only self-existent Being can explain the entity of a becoming which does not determine itself. “Therefore we must of necessity suppose that the will advances to its first movement in virtue of the instigation of some exterior mover, as Aristotle concludes in his Eudemian Ethics, VII, ch. XIV” (Ia IIae, q. 9, a. 4). Afterwards the will, already in action, moves itself to further acts; but in doing so it functions merely as a secondary cause, always subordinate to the impulse or motion of the first cause.

St. Thomas also proposes the question (Ia, q. 82, a. 4, ad 3um), whether every act of the intellect presupposes an act of the will, applying the intellect to consider what is presented to it. He answers that the first act of the intellect does not presuppose an anterior act of the will, but only that it be moved by the primary intellect. “There is no need to go on indefinitely,” he says, “but we stop at the intellect as preceding all the rest. For every movement of the will must be preceded by apprehension, whereas every apprehension is not preceded by an act of the will; but the principle of counsel and understanding is an intellectual principle higher than our intellect, namely, God, as Aristotle also says (Eth. Eudem., VII, ch. XIV). And in this way he shows that there is no procedure in infinitum.” See also Ia, q. 2, a. 3, ad 2um; q. 79, a. 4; q. 105, a. 5, where St. Thomas explains that the concurrence of the Supreme Intellect is necessary not only for the first act of the created intellect, but also for each successive act, and hence the secondary cause always remains subordinate to the primary cause, and every movement relating to participation in an absolute perfection presupposes an intervention of God by reason of this same perfection, which is not such by participation. No created mover acts without the concurrence of the prime mover; no created intellect without the concurrence of the primary intellect, and there is no created freedom of action without the concurrence of the primary freedom.

B. Objections. Quite a number of objections have been raised against this proof. The most important of them, which we shall discuss first, concern the first proposition, namely, that whatever is in motion, is set in motion by another (quidquid movetur ab alio movetur). Then we shall examine those objections which deny the necessity, in a series of actually subordinate movers, of finally coming to one that is first. Last of all we shall discuss those objections which directly attack our conclusion and claim to prove

that a motionless mover is an intrinsic contradiction, or that such a mover is not to be identified with the true God.

a) The principle, “Whatever is in motion, is set in motion by another,” is contested, as far as physical motion goes, by a number of modern physicists, whose philosophy is either (α) mechanistic or (β) dynamistic. As far as psychic motion is concerned, the principle is disputed by some Scholastics, including Suarez (γ). According to certain followers of the philosophy of becoming, it would seem that this axiom derives its apparent lucidity from a spatial image and rests upon the imaginary postulate of the substantial distinction of bodies (δ).

In the physical order, various objections have been raised, attacking the principle, both by the Mechanists and the Dynamists.

α) As for the Mechanists, who follow Descartes, and Democritus amongst the ancients, motion (they mean local motion, the only kind which they admit), is a reality distinct from extension, which, always remaining the same, surrounds extended matter and passes from one body to another. According to Democritus, motion, like matter, is absolute. According to Descartes, God has from the beginning placed in things an in-augmentable quantity of motion, and conserves this motion just as He conserves the things themselves. This mathematical conception of motion, which has passed into modern physics, rejects the question of the relations between motion and being, and consequently also that of the origin of motion, and considers merely its transformations. Descartes has deduced from it the principle of inertia in explicit terms: “If a portion of matter is at rest, it does not begin to set itself in motion; but once it is in motion, we have no reason to suppose that it will ever be compelled to cease moving itself, so long as it does not meet with anything that retards or stops its motion.” (Principes, II, 37; Le Monde, VII). He adds that “Every moving body has a tendency to continue moving in a straight line.” (Principes, II, 39; Le Monde, VII). This principle, admitted a priori by Descartes, was accepted as the result of experience by Galileo. Newton, Laplace, and Poisson believed in its absolute validity. To-day it is looked upon as a hypothesis suggested, but not verified, by the facts. From his concept of motion Descartes deduced what in our present terminology is known as the principle of the conservation of energy. “It is impossible,” he said, “for motion ever to cease, or even for it to change, except insofar as it passes from one subject to another;” if it disappears in one form, it reappears in another. (Principes,

II, 36). Robert Mayer, the originator of thermodynamics, would say that "the totality of energy in a system in which the bodies are removed from all external influence (the sum of their actual and potential energy), remains constant."

From this point of view, anything that is in motion no longer needs an actual mover whilst it is in motion; it needs him only when it passes from a state of rest to what since Descartes has been called the state of motion (état de mouvement). By local motion a body would acquire nothing; it would merely pass from potency to act, it would merely change its position.

Considering this new theory of local motion as an advance in science, Fr. Bulliot, at a Catholic Congress held in Brussels, in 1894, proposed to use as a basis for the proof of God's existence from motion, not motion itself, but the transition from repose to motion.

It has been rightly said in answer to this proposal, that the famous proof in that case is no longer a proof based on motion, but one based on contingency, and in this hypothesis motion, like stable and permanent realities, needs only a conservative cause, but no prime mover. Moreover, many other things are required before the Cartesian idea of motion can be accepted, either from the philosophical or from the scientific point of view, and if it were acceptable for local motion, our proof could still be based on qualitative motions or augmentation.

From the philosophical point of view it cannot be admitted that motion, while remaining numerically the same, passes from one subject into another; neither can it be admitted that energy is a reality which remains numerically the same, though passing in different forms from one subject into another. It is a means by which the imagination of the savant can represent the phenomena, of which all he has to do is to determine what are their permanent relations. The concept thus formed cannot claim to express the intrinsic nature of the realities. It belongs to metaphysics, and not to positive science. Now, from the metaphysical point of view or that of being, "it is false to assert that local motion and heat are something external to the bodies which they affect. Motion and heat are accidents which cannot possibly be conceived outside of a subject. It is the subject which gives them their entity; and they are this motion and this heat because they are the motion or the heat of this subject. To affirm that motion is something which, while remaining what it is, can pass from one body into another, is to affirm a contradiction. Motion does not leave the moving body, it does

not communicate itself, but imparts motion to another body; heat does not change its locality, but produces heat within a given circumference."

This Cartesian theory of local motion involves other metaphysical impossibilities. Thus we cannot speak of a state of motion. Motion, being essentially a change, is the opposite of a state, which implies stability. There is no less change in the transition from one position to another in the course of movement, than in the transition from repose to motion itself; if, therefore, this first change demands another cause, the following changes demand it for the same reason. To deny that the change which takes place in the course of motion demands a cause, is tantamount to denying the principle of identity or non-contradiction. In fact, this change of position is a successive union of the diverse (of positions A, B, C. . .), and to say that the unconditional union of the diverse is possible is to say that elements of themselves diverse can of themselves be something of a one, that elements which of themselves are not united can be of themselves united and succeed each other. Such an admission involves a denial of the principle of non-contradiction. Generalized and raised to the standard of a supreme principle, this negation implies Evolutionistic Pantheism of the Heraclitan, Hegelian or Bergsonian type (cfr. supra, n. 4 and 21), in which becoming is its own sufficient reason. All theories which, like that of Descartes, refuse to study becoming as a function of being, which alone is intelligible of and by itself, regard it merely as a function of repose. The state of repose may be inferior to becoming, that is, to the terminus a quo kind of repose, which means the point that marks the beginning of motion. Being is always superior to becoming; that which is, is always more than that which is becoming, and which as yet is not. Being is the efficient and final cause of becoming, but of itself postulates neither an efficient nor a final cause. The Mechanistic theory, which considers motion as local, may well study it as a function of repose; but metaphysics, which considers local motion precisely as motion, as a process of becoming, must study it as a function of being, which is its formal object.

Another philosophical impossibility, which arises from the preceding one, consists in explaining how a finite and minimum impulsion could produce an infinite effect, i.e., a perpetual motion, in which there would always be something new, a perpetual absence of identity. Aristotle was more to the point when he demanded an infinite potency for a motion which

is infinite in duration. (Cfr. Physics, Bk. VIII; Comment. of St. Thomas, Lect. 21; and Cajetan's opuscule, De Dei Gloriosi Infinitate Intensiva) .

It is true that the Aristotelian idea of motion, which is applied without difficulty to either qualitative or augmentative motion, cannot at first glance be easily reconciled with the motion of projectiles which continues after their impulsion. (Cfr. Physics, Bk. VII, Lect. 3; Bk. VIII, Lect. 22: "Whether the Motion of Projectiles can be Continuous?") The explanation given by Aristotle is obscure; he has recourse to the propulsive elasticity of the circumambient air, which would sustain the projectile in its motion. St. Thomas is much clearer when he states that there is in the projectile a force or instrumental power imparted to it by the principal agent. It has been admitted by a number of Scholastics and some Thomists, Goudin for instance, that the initial impulse generates in the projectile an impetus, a force capable of serving as motor. This explanation safeguards the universal principle that "whatever is moved, is set in motion by another." In fact, as Goudin remarks, "by reason of the impulse given to the projectile it is not at the same time and in the same sense in potentiality and in act; it actually has this impetus, but it is in potentia with regard to the position towards which it is tending." In other words, the projectile is in act so far as its dynamic properties are concerned, and in potentia with regard to its future positions in space. Thus all contradiction is avoided. This idea of an impetus, which may be mathematically expressed as a vital force, seems destined to play an essential role in the metaphysics of local motion, the purpose of which is to show that the principle of inertia, as to what there is of experimental truth about it, is itself subordinate to the principle that "there is no change without a cause."

For the rest, the principle of inertia, insofar as it affirms that an imparted motion continues without a cause, cannot be verified by experience. H. Poincaré, in his work La Science et l'Hypothèse (pp. 112 ff.), has made it clear that this principle is neither an a priori truth, "susceptible of being deduced from the principle of sufficient reason," nor a truth demonstrated from experience, as Newton thought it was. "Has it ever been proved from experiments with bodies removed from the influence of all external force, that these bodies are not influenced by any force?" This hypothesis was suggested by some particular facts (projectiles), and "extended without fear to the most general cases (in astronomy, for instance), because we know that in these general cases experience can neither confirm nor deny it."

(Ibid., p. 119). The same has been said of the principle of the conservation of energy: “In a system of bodies removed from all external influence, the total energy of this system remains constant.” It has never been possible to withdraw a system of corporeal beings from the influence of invisible forces, such as that of God or of free will, and, above all, it has never been and never will be proved that the whole universe is a closed system.

Therefore we maintain that the Aristotelian definition of motion as a transition from potentiality to act is applicable to local as well as to the other physical motions (either qualitative or augmentative); in other words, local motion is no more a state than the other motions; it is a process of becoming. Hence this proof for the existence of God can start from motion as its principle.

Against those who refuse to see that there is question of becoming in local motion, it would be possible, it is true, with Fr. Bulliot to take the transition from the state of rest to motion as the basic principle in the argumentation and say with Paul Janet, that if bodies are equally indifferent with regard to rest as to motion, there must be some reason to account for the fact that they are more often in motion than at rest, and this reason cannot be in the bodies. Moreover, we may argue from this fact that bodies are contingent. If they are equally indifferent with regard to rest and to motion (since it is only in one of these two states that they can exist), we must conclude that they have not the reason of their existence in themselves, but postulate an extrinsic cause.

If it is claimed that local motion can be explained by another form of energy, such as heat, then this is merely delaying the question. This anterior form of energy is not numerically the same reality as that which exists in local motion, but it is a reality of the same kind, likewise transitory, requiring just as much an explanation as local motion and every preceding form does. It matters not whether the series of transformations is eternal, for it would be eternally insufficient. Hence we come back to our proof, which is that, to account for these transformations, there must be a mover which is not transitory itself, and which not only can come into action, but which goes into action by itself, and contains the source of its activity within itself. Such a mover cannot be anything material, for, unlike matter, it cannot be the substratum of any becoming, but possesses primarily and essentially everything that is gradually acquired in the process of becoming. The principle of the conservation of energy is not, therefore, any more in

conflict with the proof from motion than is the old principle that “the corruption of one thing means the generation of another.” The energy remains the same, but not numerically so; a transformation has taken place within it, which is the very reverse of what is permanent and which, like everything that lacks identity, demands a cause.

Moreover, we know that the principle of the conservation of energy has its corrective in the principle of the diminution of energy. Mechanical energy, when transferred into thermic energy, cannot be restored in equivalent quantity; thus more mechanical energy is absorbed for the generation of heat than can be given back by it. Some thought it possible to deduce a proof for the existence of God from this principle. If the world thus approaches a state of equilibrium and final rest, they argued, it is because motion is not necessary, and therefore, must have an extrinsic reason, a cause.

This is an argument ad hominem, and is worth just as much as the principle of the diminution of energy is worth. Accepting Duhem’s warning at the Brussels Congress, let us not “have recourse to disputed theories of physics in establishing the laws of metaphysics.” In matter of fact we need not have recourse to the principle of the diminution of energy in order to preserve the true meaning of the proof of the prime mover against the Mechanists, who, like Descartes, are content with a brief allusion to the origin of things in the past. In all becoming there is something new, which demands, not a creative evolution, but the intervention of the Primary Being.

β) Certain Dynamists present an objection which directly contradicts the principle that whatever is moved is set in motion by something else (“quidquid movetur, ab alio movetur”). They admit with us against Descartes, that motion is not imparted ready-made to an object by some external force, but their reason is that they do not see the necessity of admitting an external mover and view the activity of inanimate things after the manner of living organisms. According to Schiller, “the proofs based on motion and on causes are possible only if we accept a Mechanistic hypothesis for the world; in a Dynamic system of philosophy they are of no value.” We ask: Did Aristotle and St. Thomas teach Mechanism?

This objection does not affect our principle, which is true even of living organisms. A living organism cannot, without contradiction, be in the same sense both mover and moved; it is moved by one part of itself (its

members), and another part of it (the heart and the nerve centres) acts as mover; but this other part, being the substratum of a motion, demands an external mover, and in the final analysis, a mover not subject to any process of becoming.

γ) The Dynamists think they can explain away the force of this argument by admitting a force which acts as an intermediary between potency and act, and which can bring itself into action. This force is the virtuality spoken of by Leibniz and the virtual act by which Suarez believed he could explain how the will can bring itself into action without a divine impulse. In the system of Dynamic philosophy this objection ranks as final.

We can easily answer this objection by saying that the virtual act is distinct from the action which results from it. Is there, or is there not, a trace of becoming in this act? Is its action eternal, or, on the contrary, did it come about in time? This appearance of something new, this process of becoming, presupposes an active potency which is not the source of its activity, which did not even bring itself into action, but which only proves that it could come into action. And then, how are we to account for the transition of this virtual act to the second act, which previously was non-existent? To say that it effects this by its own power is to posit an absolute beginning, which is contrary to reason. The greater does not come from the less, nor being from nothingness. Therefore, the virtual act has been brought into existence by an external mover, which, in the final analysis, must be its own Activity, and cannot be the substratum of any becoming.

We see, then, how false it is to say with Hébert that the apparent clarity of the principle, “Whatever is moved is set in motion by something else, is based upon a spatial image illegitimately introduced into a metaphysical problem;” or to assert with Le Roy, that this axiom rests upon a postulate of the practical imagination, according to which there are movers and moved objects substantially distinct. One recalls to mind that famous postulate of morcellation: The distinctions between mover and moved, between motion and its subject, and the affirmation of the primacy of act over potency, all proceed from the same postulate of common thought. . . . Criticism shows that this morcellation of matter is but the result of a mental process, prompted by the dictates of practical utility and discourse. . . . If the world consists of an immense continuity of unceasing transformations, it is no longer a question of a graduated and innumerable series of beings which necessarily calls for an absolute beginning. . . . In affirming the primacy of

act, these same postulates are understood. If causality is but the outpouring of a fullness into a void, a communication to a receptive term of that which another term possesses, in a word, if it is the anthropomorphic operation of an agency, then well and good! But what do these idols of the practical imagination amount to? Why not simply identify being with becoming? . . . As things are motion, there is no longer any need of asking whence they derive motion." Motion not only does not demand an explanation, but it explains everything else. Nominalistic Sensualism can scarcely put the case differently.

We may refuse to go beyond the limits of this Empiricism, and rest with Heraclitus and Bergson in the πάντα ῥεί or universal flux of things; but if we wish to find an intelligible interpretation of the real, if we wish, without denying the process of becoming (as Parmenides did), to conceive this process as a function of being, which alone is intelligible by itself, what other explanation is there than that given by Aristotle, who declared that what already is, cannot become; nothing comes from nothingness? Nevertheless, there is such a phenomenon as becoming. Where does it come from? It comes from a certain milieu intermediary between determined being and pure nothingness; in other words, it comes from undetermined being or potency. Now, potency not being the same as act, it cannot be actualized or determined except by a being which is in act. The principle, "Whatever is moved, is set in motion by something else," therefore, far from being based upon a spatial image, is based upon the very nature of becoming, rendered intelligible not by reason of corporeal being, but of being itself, which is the formal object of the intellect. Thus this notion and this principle can be applied to a becoming which has nothing spatial about it, as in the case of the will. The division of being into potency and act, which is necessary in order that becoming may be rendered intelligible, may well be called a morcellation; but it is not a utilitarian morcellation of the sensibly continuous, but a morcellation of intelligible being, which, as we have seen (n. 21), must be admitted under penalty of making ourselves ridiculous by interpreting, as Heraclitus and Hegel did, the supreme law of the real in such a way that it becomes an absurdity.

"Why not simply identify being with becoming?" asks Le Roy. For this very good reason that becoming is not, like being, intelligible by itself. Becoming is a successive union of diverse elements. This union cannot be unconditional, for diversity, of itself and as such, cannot be one. Becoming

is the transition from indetermination to determination, and hence presupposes a determinate cause; to deny this is to say that nothingness can be the cause of being, which is a denial of the principle of identity and a setting up in its place of the principle of Pantheism.

Our proof, therefore, in no way presupposes the numerical distinction of substances, which Hébert and Le Roy assert. Even if the world were but one substance, as long as there is in it such a thing as becoming, it demands a mover which is not the subject of any becoming, and which consequently is distinct from it. Diversity presupposes identity in things, the changeable presupposes the permanent, and the undetermined, the determined. In this there is no question of spatial imagination nor of anthropomorphism (see n. 23). Seek not for the permanence which matter or force intrinsically calls for; it is too evident that they do not possess that attribute, since this matter and this force transform themselves, and this transformation, which is added to their permanence, demands a cause which in itself is not the substratum of the transformations. The principle, "Whatever is moved, is set in motion by something else," loses none of its validity.

b) Let us now pass on to the objection raised against the principle of ἀνάγκη στήναι, that we must finally arrive at the first in a series of movers which are essentially and actually subordinated to one another. It is clearly not a question of a series of movers which were accidentally subordinated to each other in the past. The necessity of coming to an end in this series cannot be demonstrated, but only that we must terminate the series (Ia, q. 46). The objection that arises here is the same as that which Aristotle proposed to himself, namely, may it not be a case of a vicious circle in the causes—so that the prime mover would be the moved in a kind of motion different from that in which it is the mover? Thus the intellect moves the will in the order of specification by placing the good before it, and the intellect is moved by the will in the practical order by directing the intellect to consider this same good. "Causae ad invicem sunt causae in diverso genere," i.e., causes mutually interact, though in a different order.

To answer this difficulty it will suffice to show that there can be no vicious circle here in the same genus of causality. The cause would have and would not have what is required for causation. It would and would not presuppose its effect. If the warmth of the earth depends upon the radiation of solar heat, the latter cannot depend upon the former. If the intellect is prompted to act by the will, the latter cannot, from this same point of view,

depend upon the intellect. Now, in the order of efficient causality the prime mover demands, both for psychic and for physical movements, that, inasmuch as it is prime mover, it must be self-existent; for only that acts of itself which is self-existent, since action presupposes being, and the mode of action follows the mode of being. It cannot, therefore, be dependent in its being and action upon any of the subordinate causes, since all these causes depend for their action upon the being and action of this same prime mover. In the order of efficient causality all that is required is that there be no vicious circle to enable us to establish the existence of a prime and uncreated mover, who, as such, cannot be dependent in any other order of causality (objective or final).

c) We come finally to a consideration of the objections which directly attack our conclusion that "there is a prime mover not moved by any kind of motion, whose very action and, consequently, whose very being is unconditioned, and who is none other than the true God." Some claim that a motionless mover is a contradiction, while others assert that such a mover is not necessarily transcendental, distinct from the world, or identical with a personal God.

A motionless mover would be a contradiction; for who says "mover" says "beginning," and beginning is opposed to immobility (Kant's fourth antinomy). This objection is presented in all its force by Penjon in his Précis de Philosophie. After having decided with Spir, that the unconditional union of diverse elements is an impossibility, and that, for this reason, every change (the successive union of the diverse) demands a cause, he concludes: "There can be no connection between a being identical with itself and a change which postulates a cause only and precisely for this reason that there is no point of contact between it and the absolute and invariable nature of things. Only, from the fact that a change has taken place, another change must occur to account for this one, and so on in an indefinite regression." "Far from positively affirming the existence of a prime mover and a first or absolute cause, the principle of causality necessarily excludes it."

Aristotle was fully aware of this objection, and even though he did not go so far as to admit the idea of creation (the production of all being or of being as the being of things), and especially the idea of a free creation, he admitted that the series of changes is infinite in the regressive order (a parte ante) and that the world and the changes therein exist from all eternity (ab

aeterno; Physics, Bk. VIII; Comment. of St. Thomas, Lect. 1 and 2). But for all that he did not deny the fact of a prime mover. He would have replied to the above-quoted objection by saying that all these past changes are not the cause of the actual change, and exert no influence upon it; nay, more, since each of these changes has not its sufficient explanation in itself, it cannot be the reason for subsequent changes. A prolongation of the series does not change the nature of them: ten thousand idiots do not make one intelligent man. Since the union of the diverse has not its sufficient reason within itself, it demands an explanation outside of itself, and since the union of the diverse cannot be explained by anything within itself, it presupposes a unity of a higher order; the multiple brings us back to the one which is intelligible in and by itself. The fact that we regard it as mysterious that the multiple results from the one, and motion from the motionless, does not justify us in denying the existence of this higher cause. It is absolutely required by the principles of our reason and by the mobile and multiple beings of the lower order of which we have direct and certain knowledge. Moreover, the higher cause, which we know only indirectly and inadequately by its effects, must remain obscure for us, and the proper manner of its action must escape our detection. We have no positive knowledge of this mode, as it is in itself, but know it merely in a negative and relative manner, as when we say that it is an unmoved mover or the prime mover. What is this divine causality in itself? It is a mystery. But the obscurity in which it is wrapped, so far as we are concerned, should not cause us to doubt the certainties which lead us up to it, especially if these certainties give us due warning that they can only end in obscurity and that the mystery will remain.

For the rest, Aristotle did not consider himself dispensed from the obligation of proving that there is nothing repugnant in the idea of a motionless mover. He proves this point in his Physics, Bk. III; Comment. of St. Thomas, Lect. 4.; Bk. VIII, Comment. of St. Thomas, Lect. 9. He even goes so far as to prove that every mover as such [per se] is immovable, and movable only per accidens, just as it is per accidens that an architect is a musician. To understand his reasoning, we have but to rise above the imagination and define the action of the mover as a function of being, and not as a case of local repose. To move means to determine, to actualize, to realize; it is accidental for that which determines to have been itself determined (e. g., for that which heats to have been itself heated). How indeed, could that which is still in the stage of becoming and as yet is not an

actuality, move something else? The previous changes referred to in the objection are, therefore, but the accidental cause of the actual change. What is necessarily demanded of a mover is that it be in act; a thing must be hot before it can heat something else; in order to teach, one must actually have knowledge. If, therefore, a being is by its nature determined and in act, if it not only can act, but if it is its own action, it will act of its own accord, not having to be moved by another. From this superior point of view such a being will be immobile, not with the immobility of inertia, but with the immobility of supreme activity. There is nothing for it to acquire, since it has of and by itself, and all at once, everything which it can have and which can accrue to it from without. Just as diversity presupposes identity, and as the multiple presupposes the one, so also the undetermined presupposes the determined, and the transition from potentiality to act presupposes the pure act. If the change is that of being in the stage of becoming, it must necessarily have its reason in the being which is and which has no need of becoming. How could a being in the act of becoming be the cause of becoming in another? Can the child which is not yet born, procreate? Penjon has confused the immobility of potency with that of act; the former cannot account for motion, because it is inferior to it: the latter, on the contrary, is superior to motion, and for this reason can explain it.

It is said that while a motionless mover may have been moving from eternity, as Aristotle held, it could not have begun to move. We shall reply to this objection by showing that the “prime mover” by its very definition means that it is eternal, and that its action dominates time, which is the measure of motion.

Thus we see how it is that this prime mover, which cannot be the substratum of any becoming, is transcendental and essentially distinct from the world, which is by its very nature changeable. If we note further that this prime mover is not confined to beings of the material order, but also controls those endowed with intellect and will, we already have the personal God, “in whom we live, move, and have our being.” The God to which the proof from motion leads us, is not, therefore, so far removed from the God of whom St. Paul speaks and of whom the liturgy sings:

Rerum Deus tenax vigor
Immotus in te permanens.
(God, powerful sustainer of all things,
Thou who dost remain permanently unmoved.)

C) The results of this proof from motion.—From this argument we conclude that the prime mover must be: (1) pure act; (2) infinite; (3) incorporeal and immaterial; (4) intelligent; (5) omnipresent; (6) eternal, and (7) unique.

(1) The prime mover is pure act, that is to say, there is nothing potential in him. We have already excluded all potentiality in the order of action. The prime mover not only can act, but its action is identical with itself. Also there cannot be any potentiality in its being, for "operari sequitur esse et modus operandi modum essendi," that is, first comes the nature of a being, and then its operation; and the mode of operation follows the mode of being. That which is self-operative must be self-existent. If there were in this prime mover a transition from non-being to being, this could be so only in virtue of a higher cause, and then we should no longer have the prime mover (Ia, q. 3, a. 1, 2, 4). In considering the fourth proof of God's existence we shall see that the self-existent being must be the Supreme Being (see n. 39 a).

(2) The prime mover is infinitely perfect, because pure actuality without any admixture of potentiality. And this is equally true whether we consider the essence or the action of such a being (Ia, q. 4, a. 1 and 2; q. 7, a. 1). Act means the determination of being in point of accomplishment and perfection; pure act is, therefore, pure perfection. It is at the same time pure being; pure intellection, always in act, of pure being always actually known; pure love, always in act, of the plenitude of being always actually loved.

(3) The prime mover is immaterial and incorporeal. Immaterial because matter is essentially a potential subject, susceptible of change, pre-eminently the subject of becoming. The prime mover, on the contrary, is pure act, without any admixture of becoming. He is not corporeal, since He is not material. Besides, a body is composed of parts and depends on its parts, whereas the pure act excludes all composition and dependency. In Him there can be no question of more perfect and less perfect, as is the case with the whole and its parts. Because He is pure act, He is pure perfection (Ia, q. 3, a. 1 and 2; Physics, Bk. VIII, Lect. 23).

(4) The prime mover is intelligent. We know this not only a posteriori, because He moves the intellects (Ia, p. 79, a. 4), but also a priori, because immateriality is the basis of intelligibility and of intelligence (Ia, q. 14, a. 1). It will be the special task of the fifth proof of God's existence to establish the reality of this attribute (n. 40).

(5) The prime mover is omnipresent, because to move all beings, whether spiritual or corporeal, He must be present, since these beings do not move themselves, but are moved by Him. “He works in every agent,” writes St. Thomas (Ia, q. 8, a. 1; q. 105, a. 5). The Prophet Isaias proclaims this truth as follows: “Lord, thou hast wrought all our works for us.” (Is. XXVI, 12).

(6) The prime mover is eternal, for He has always, by and of Himself, had His own being and action without any change. His action is not measured by time, since in Him there can be no succession. It is only the effect of this action which can be said to occur in time, because it is only this effect which can be said to be successive. In this there is no contradiction. Since this eternal action is superior to time, it creates time as a modality of its effects (see Ia, q. 10, a. 2).

(7) The prime mover is unique, because pure act cannot be multiplied. Anything which would bring about a differentiation in pure act, so as to make two or several pure acts, would set a limit to the perfection of pure act, and thus destroy it.

Moreover, a second pure act could be nothing more than the first, and would be superfluous. Could there be anything more absurd than a God who is superfluous? (Ia, q. 11, a. 3). In the fourth proof for the existence of God not only this attribute, but also that of infinite perfection, will be conclusively proved.

37) Proof by means of efficient causes.

The point of departure of this proof is not becoming, but being, which is the termination of becoming and which remains after it. In the article entitled: “Whether Creatures Need to be Kept in Being by God?” (Ia, q. 104, a. 1), St. Thomas distinguishes clearly between becoming (fieri) and being (esse). See also Ia, q. 104, a. 2: “Whether God Preserves Every Creature Immediately?”

Certain agents are the cause of the becoming of their effect, but not directly of the being of this effect. Thus a father is the cause of the passive generation of his son, but he may die, while the son continues to live. Other agents are the causes both of the becoming and of the being of their effect, and any cessation in their action could only mean that the corresponding effect ceased to exist. The generation of an animal depends not only upon the male parent of the species, but also upon the numerous conditions and cosmic influences which are necessary for its conservation. The effects of atmospheric pressure upon the organism are a sufficient illustration of this

truth. Any notable decrease or increase of this pressure causes great uneasiness in the organism, due to the lack of equilibrium between the elastic force of the internal gases and the external pressure. If this pressure were to be completely removed, the walls of the organism would collapse under the action of the internal gases. Likewise, if solar heat is eliminated from animal life, even the most vigorous of animals will soon die. “Remove the chemical activity from the air which the animal breathes, or from the food which it assimilates, and it perishes at once. This animal existence is of such a nature that, while at first sight it appears to be independent, it is, on the contrary, at every moment of its existence, actually dependent upon a vast number of influences.”

Such is the basic principle of this second proof. It is no longer expressed by saying that “It is certain and evident to the senses that in this world some things are set in motion,” but by saying that ‘In these objects of sense perception we find that there is a certain order of efficient causes. “For instance, all the cosmic influences are necessarily subordinated to the production and conservation of a mere gnat.

But these causes, as St. Thomas remarks, cannot, in their turn, cause themselves, for before anything can be a cause of something else, it must be first in existence. As St. Thomas says: “Non est possibile quod aliquid sit causa efficiens sui ipsius, quia sic esset prius seipso, quod est impossibile.” (It is not possible for anything to be the efficient cause of itself, because in such a case it would have to exist before it actually exists, which is an impossibility). If, therefore, the above-mentioned causes are not self-existent, their existence depends upon higher causes, and so forth. But we cannot proceed ad infinitum, but must finally arrive at a primary cause, itself uncaused, which has being from itself, which it can give to, and preserve in, others, and without which nothing that actually exists could continue to exist. “Examine separately each of the cosmic influences necessary for the conservation of an animal, and you will find that it is itself the result of a series of subordinated causes, either known or unknown, but of which the existence is certain; and this series will permit you to ascend from ring to ring, not in the past, but in the present, until you finally arrive at the primary source of all activity, without which the animal itself and all vital functions as well as all causes which condition them could not exist.”

What is the validity of this proof? Its basic principle is no less certain than that of the preceding proof. Just as there is a becoming, so also there

are permanent and dependent existences. Starting from this as an established fact, the two principles by means of which we prove the existence of a first cause are nearly the same as those by which we conclude that there is a prime mover. The first principle is that whatever is caused, is caused by something else; nothing can be its own cause, since for anything to be a cause, it must first exist. The second is that there can be no regress to infinity in a series of essentially and actually subordinated causes. This proof, just like the preceding and succeeding ones, abstracts from the question whether the world is eternal or had a beginning in time. The difficulties that might be raised against it do not differ from those previously examined in connection with the prime mover. If this argument presupposes a morcellation, it is not the utilitarian morcellation of the continuously sensible, but the absolutely necessary morcellation of intelligible being. (See n. 21, 23 and 36, B, δ).

We are thus led to the source of being, to a supreme efficient cause, which has no need of being caused nor of being preserved in existence. It must, therefore, be identified with the prime mover, the source of becoming. Like this latter, and a fortiori, it must be self-operative, nay, it must be its own activity and exist a se.

In starting from the order of sensible things it was sufficient to consider the problem from the general point of view of being, which is common to both the corporeal and the spiritual, and we shall thus be able finally to arrive at a cause which appears not only as the primary productive and conservative cause of bodies, but also as the cause of everything which is not self-existent, of everything which is not its own activity, but passes from potentiality to act.

In fact, the unconditioned cause must be: (1) pure act; for, whether we consider it in its being or in its operation, in either case it is pure act, since it has never been reduced from potentiality to act (Ia, q. 3, a. 4). By the very fact that it is being a se, we shall see from the fourth proof that it is the Being itself, for that alone is the being a se which is to being as A is to A. (2) It is one, immaterial, intelligent, like the prime mover, and for the same reasons, as the following proofs will establish more clearly. (3) It is omnipresent, since it must come in contact with all beings, not only to move them, but also to conserve them in being (Ia, q. 8, a. 1; q. 104, a. 1 and 2). (4) Its creative power is all-pervading. The Being a se, the Supreme Being, which is the direct cause not of some mode of being (such as heat or light),

but of being as such, is the cause of everything which is not its own cause, and it can be the cause of everything which is capable of existing. The Being a se endows everything with reality and is the direct cause of being, just as fire is of heat, and light of illumination; it can endow with reality all things which do not involve a contradiction, just as fire can heat all things which are capable of being heated (Ia, q. 25; q. 45, a. 5).

38) Proof based on contingency.

We have just shown that the source of becoming and of being must be self-existent; but the existence of a necessary being can be proved a posteriori by starting with the principle, not of the dependence of becoming or of being on its causes, but of being considered in itself as contingent.

We observe that some beings are contingent, that is to say, do not exist forever, but, on the contrary, are born and die. Of such a nature are the minerals which decompose or form a constituent part of fresh matter, such as plants, animals, and human beings. This we know to be a fact. From it we proceed to deduce the existence of a necessary being, of one which always existed a se and cannot cease to exist. It is only a self-existent being that can explain the existence of beings which can either exist or not exist. The principle upon which this proof is based is the metaphysical principle of causality in its most general form. It may be stated as follows: That which has not a sufficient reason for its existence in itself, must have this reason in something else. And this other being, in the final analysis, must exist of and by itself, for if it were of the same nature as contingent beings, far from explaining the others, it would not be able to explain itself. And—we say it again—it does not matter whether the series of contingent beings is eternal or not; if it is eternal, it is eternally insufficient, and always demands a necessary being.

St. Thomas develops this proof more fully by taking into consideration the time element. After having established the existence in the world of beings which begin to exist, and then cease to exist—that is to say, of contingent beings—he remarks that if there were none but contingent beings, it would be impossible for them to have existed always. To exist without a beginning cannot properly be said of any but self-existent beings, and this could not apply to a series of contingent beings, unless they received their existence from a self-existent, or, in other words, from a necessary, Being. Hence, if there were in existence only contingent beings, there must have been a time when nothing at all existed. Now, “if at any

particular moment nothing actually exists, then nothing can ever come into existence." Therefore, some necessary being must exist, that is to say, one which cannot not exist; if this being has not its necessity from itself, it derives its necessity from something else. But we cannot continue to proceed indefinitely in this process of dependence of being upon being, and hence we must conclude that there exists a Being which is necessary of and by itself, and which explains the being and continuance of everything else.

The objection is often raised that this demonstration makes scarcely any advance towards the solution of the problem, because it fails to establish conclusively that the necessary being is distinct from the world and infinitely perfect, but merely proves that there is some thing which is necessary. Cajetan replies that this proof may be considered as sufficient in the strictest sense, as the two preceding proofs established conclusively that the prime mover and the first cause are distinct from the world (because the world is subject to becoming, which the prime mover and the first cause is not), and the succeeding proof will demonstrate a posteriori the unity, simplicity, and absolute perfection of the necessary being.

It is now easy to demonstrate a priori that the necessary being, whose existence has just been proved, is not: (a) either an aggregation of contingent beings; or (b) the law governing such beings; or (c) a becoming underneath the phenomena, or a substance common to them; but (d) it is Being itself, pure being, absolute perfection.

a) The necessary being is not an aggregation of contingent beings. A series of contingent and relative beings, even if it were without a beginning, i.e., eternal, could no more result in an absolutely necessary being, than could a numberless series of idiots result in an intelligent man. "But," it may be objected, "how can it be proved that a being is really and truly contingent? Is it not a semblance of reality, which is the result of our having abstracted it from the continuous whole?" The kind of being here referred to, such as plants and animals, is at least a part of the continuous whole, but not the whole; moreover, it is a part which comes into existence and ceases to exist, and, therefore, is contingent. An aggregation of similar parts, even though infinite in time and space, could not constitute a necessary being. For a thing to have a semblance of reality, it would be necessary to add to these parts a dominating principle, be it either the law which governs them, or the process of becoming through which they must pass (creative evolution), or the substance common to all the parts.

b) The necessary being cannot be the law which unites contingent and transitory elements. For this law, in order to be the necessary being, would have to have its sufficient reason within itself and also contain the sufficient reason for all the phenomena that it has controlled, now controls, and will control in future. Now, a law is nothing but a constant relation between various phenomena or beings, and as every relation presupposes the extremes upon which it is based, the existence of a law presupposes the existence of the phenomena which it unites, instead of being presupposed by them. It exists only if they exist. Heat expands iron on condition that there are heat and iron. Energy conserves itself if there is energy.

It is objected that while the application of a law indeed presupposes the existence of phenomena which it unites, the existence of a law is independent of its application. We answer that what is independent of this application is the ideal existence of the law, its existence in a mind, to which there corresponds a hypothetically objective truth (for instance, if there are heat and iron, the heat will expand the iron). But it cannot be claimed that the actual existence of a law is independent of its application and of the existence of the phenomena which it controls. Now, it is the actual existence which the Pantheists have in mind when they say that the necessary being, actually existing, is nothing else but the law of phenomena. Eliminate the contingent existence of phenomena, and this necessary being, which is the law, is no more than a hypothetical truth, which demands an existing Absolute for its foundation (proof based on the eternal verities), but which cannot itself be that Absolute. We have previously shown (n. 10) why heat in itself cannot exist in a state separated from the subject which it affects; its very concept implies a common matter, which cannot be realized without at the same time being individualized.

But the Positivists insist that it is a law which produces the phenomena that explain its presence, namely, the law of the conservation of energy, which is a primordial and universal necessity explaining everything else. If “nothing is lost and nothing is created,” as this law affirms, then the necessary being is the material world itself, governed by this law. We have already quoted (see n. 35, towards the end) Boutroux’s answer to this objection, as given in his thesis entitled, La Contingence des Lois de la Nature. First of all, to repeat briefly, this law, far from being a primordial necessity, is itself contingent; it does not contain its own sufficient reason within itself, and because of this, it demands an extrinsic sufficient reason,

or a cause. If this law were necessary, like the principle of identity, it would not actually exist by itself, but, like every other law, would presuppose the existence of beings in which it is realized—in this case the existence of energy. Secondly, this law, far from being universal, is not even susceptible of strict verification in the inorganic world; biology cannot prove its existence, nor, a fortiori, can psychology. Thirdly, the laws which govern living beings, such as the sentient and the intelligent, cannot be deduced from this law. The combination of elements which produces life and sensation appears as contingent and demands a sufficient reason, which the law of the conservation of energy cannot furnish.

c) The necessary being cannot be the process of becoming (creative evolution) through which the contingent elements must pass, nor can it be their common substance. A well-known objection runs as follows: "Suppose every being, viewed separately, were contingent, it would have to be proved that the whole world, or all beings taken together, were also contingent. Does the real contingency of the world follow from the fact of its imperfection, or from the fact that the idea of its non-existence is not repugnant to reason? This brings us back to the argument of St. Anselm, that God really exists because the idea of his nonexistence is repugnant to reason."

In the fourth proof we shall establish the conclusion that the world is really contingent by reason of its imperfection. This conclusion may also be drawn from the fact that its nonexistence is not repugnant to reason, and because there is no question here of an unlawful transition from the ideal to the real, as in the argument of St. Anselm. All that St. Anselm, starting from the purely nominal definition of God, could say, was that the most perfect being which can be conceived implies existence as an essential predicate in its definition, that is to say, it exists necessarily of and by itself, and not by another, it is its own existence—if it exists. This proposition is strictly true, but it is purely hypothetical. The mistake St. Anselm made was that he wanted the proposition to be taken as an absolute or categorical one, and concluded from it that God actually exists. On the other hand, the definition of any finite being (even though infinite with regard to time and space, provided that it be not infinite considered as being, potentiality, intelligence, etc.), of a plant, for instance, or of an animal, or of matter, or of a spirit, in no way implies existence in its comprehension. Each of these beings is defined without regard to existence; its essence is conceived as capable of

existing, and there are no grounds for asserting that its concept postulates essential existence or aseity. Hence we may legitimately formulate the hypothetical conclusion that if this being exists, its existence is not due to itself. This truth belongs to the ideal order or that of essences, and St. Anselm should have kept within this order.

Moreover, we make so profound a study of the subject in order that we may come to the conclusion that the necessary being can be neither the becoming which forms the substratum of phenomena, nor the substance common to them. In fact, it has been fully established in connection with the proof from motion, that becoming cannot have its raison d'être in itself: (1) because it is a successive union of diverse elements, and to say that an unconditional union of diverse elements is possible is to assert that elements, in themselves diverse and not united, can unite themselves or succeed each other by themselves, which would mean the denial not only of St. Anselm's argument, but also of the principle of identity; (2) becoming is the transition from an undetermined to a determined state; to deny that it needs a self-determined cause, is to say that the greater can come from the less or being from nothingness. The imagination alone can combine the two words creative and evolution, but that which comes into being through evolution is not its own sufficient raison d'être, and for anything to be created, this must be the case. (See Ia, q. 2, a. 3, ad 2um).

Finally, the necessary being cannot be a substance common to all beings, for such a substance would be the subject of becoming. Now, the process of becoming, as we have seen, demands a cause which is not itself subject to that same process. In such a case the necessary being would at any moment be deprived of that which, so far, it does not possess, and which it could not give itself, because the greater does not proceed from the less. The necessary being, which must be the sufficient reason for everything which now exists or will exist in future, may give, but it cannot receive; it may determine, but it cannot be determined; it must have of and by itself and from the start, not only in potentiality, but also in act, whatever it must and can have. Ia, q. 3, a. 6: "Whether there is a Composition of Subject and Accident in God?"

d) The necessary being is being itself, pure being, absolute perfection. Kant maintains that we cannot argue from the existence of a necessary being that it is sovereign perfection, ens realissimum, except by unconsciously reverting to the ontological proof. He believes that he has

proved this point by the simple conversion of a proposition. Let us, he writes, according to the rules of formal logic, convert the proposition, "Every necessary being is perfect," and it becomes: "Some perfect being is necessary." But in that case we should have no means of distinguishing between perfect beings, since each of them is ens realissimum. The converted proposition is, therefore, equivalent to the universal one that "Every perfect being is necessary," which is identical with the thesis of the ontological argument. As the transition from the first proposition to the second is effected by a process which is purely logical and according to rule, the truth or falsehood of the one is dependent upon the truth or falsehood of the other. Such is Kant's principal objection against the classical proofs for the existence of God, considered not according to their basic principle, which is that of causality, but according to that step in reasoning by which they proceed from the first cause to the existence of the perfect Being.

This objection is answered sufficiently by stating that St. Anselm was wrong in concluding that "the perfect being necessarily and actually exists." He ought to have been satisfied with affirming that "the perfect being is self-existent, if it exists." He could just as easily have proved a priori the hypothetical contrary, namely, "if a self-existent being exists, it is sovereign perfection." To establish the truth of this proposition is precisely what remains for us to do, having demonstrated by the argument from contingency that a necessary being actually exists. That the two concepts (necessary and perfect), the very definition of which reveals that they are essentially linked together by their very definition, are equivalent, is a legitimate assumption for those who, unlike Kant, admit that necessary realities correspond to necessary concepts of the mind, and that the unthinkable and the impossible are correlative terms. (Consult what was said supra in n. 17, 18, 19, and 21, concerning the objective validity of the principle of non-contradiction).

It is by the following a priori method of reasoning that the transition from the necessary to the perfect being is effected. We will content ourselves with giving a brief résumé of the teaching of St. Thomas, since the fourth proof will lead us a posteriori to the same conclusion.

1) The self-sufficient being, recognized as actually existing, implies existence as an essential attribute, which means that it must not only have existence, but that it must be its own very existence (Ia, q. 3, a. 4).

1) This being, which is its own existence, cannot belong to any species, nor to any genus; in fact, its genus could not be less universal than being itself, since being is essentially predicated of it. Now, being, which admits of no extrinsic difference, is not a genus (Ia, q. 3, a. 5).

3) This being is sovereignly perfect, because a being which is its own existence must contain within itself the whole perfection of being ("totam perfectionem essendi"). "All the created perfections," says St. Thomas, "are included in the perfection of being; for things are perfect precisely in so far as they have being after some fashion." (Ia, q. 4, a. 2). Every perfection (goodness, wisdom, justice, etc.) is a mode of being which is capable of existing —something which can participate in existence ("quid capax existendi"). Existence is, therefore, the ultimate act of every thing which can exist. It is the maxime formale omnium: the most formal of all things, the final determination placing that which is capable of existing outside of nothingness and its causes. But actuality is superior to, and more perfect than, potentiality; for the former is an absolute, whereas the latter is merely a relative thing. We must, therefore, conclude that being which is its own existence, is pure actuality and absolute perfection.

4) This being is one of infinite perfection (Ia, q. 7, a. 1). In truth, if self-sufficient being were limited in its being, it would merely participate in existence and would be a compound of essence as the limiting and of existence as the limited element. For this very reason, its essence would cease to be its existence, and could be conceived apart from its existence, and hence the latter could no longer be predicated except as something accidental to it. If the essence of the self-sufficient being is in no wise limited (as the being, the intelligence, and the potentiality of a finite spirit are limited), it must a fortiori be said that this being cannot be subject to material and spatial limitations. It belongs to an order which infinitely transcends both space and time, the infinity of which, if it were possible, would never be other than one of quantity, and not of quality, which is the kind here in question. From the foregoing we conclude that just as A is A, so the self-sufficient being must be identical with its existence. The fourth proof will demonstrate this point a posteriori.

39) Proof based on the various grades of being.

The purpose of this fourth proof, as we have already remarked, is to seek for a sign of contingency in the ultimate profundities of created being, which the proof from motion did not touch. Approaching the subject now

from the static point of view, we notice that beings happen to come into existence, or else to die. To prove their contingency, we have recourse to an observation which, though less convincing at first sight, nevertheless, has a deep significance and is more universal in its application than either motion, generation or corruption. We refer to the multiplicity of these beings, to their composite nature, and to the fact that they are to a greater or less degree, imperfect. This argument has been called the henological proof (ἓν = one), because it proceeds from the multiple to the one, from the composite to the simple. Kant did not choose to criticize this argument. If he had studied it closely, he would undoubtedly have been less inclined to reproach modern Scholastics for continually falling back, either unconsciously or insincerely, upon the argument of St. Anselm. He furthermore did not perceive that this fourth proof prepares the ground for the fifth, which is that based upon the multiplicity of purpose in things or design in the universe. His objections against this last proof, too, are rather superficial.

Quite recently the following objections have been raised against the argument based upon the various grades of being: (1) The presence of imperfection in the world cannot be alleged as a proof of its contingency, for that would be a return to the ontological argument by combining the idea of necessary existence with that of a perfect being. (2) Strictly speaking, the greater and the less are predicated only of quantity, for quantity alone is greater and less. (3) This proof, like the previous ones, is based upon the postulate of morcellation. (4) It is difficult to conceive a typical essence for all things.

We shall see that the henological argument contains no feigned reference to the syllogism of St. Anselm, because this argument in reality is based upon the fundamental law of thought, which is the principle of identity. The supposed morcellation in this case is again that of intelligible being, and not that of the continuously sensible. Finally, a typical essence, separated from matter and of a higher order than the individuals which represent the species and the genera, can be required only for the transcendentals (being, unity, truth, goodness, intellect, vital relation to being, etc.), which, by their definition, abstract from everything material, dominate the species and the genera, imply no imperfection in their formal concepts, and are realized analogically in various degrees. (See n. 29).

We shall first study: (a) the proof in its general outline, as sketched by St. Thomas, and we shall show that it leads to a Primary Being, absolutely simple and perfect, and consequently distinct from the world, which is composite and imperfect. This proof will then be more accurately defined by arguing that (b) the series of human intellects, though imperfect, can always advance towards perfection, until at last we come to a Primary Intellect, the source of all the others. (c) From a graduated series of intelligible beings, from eternal truths, we finally come to a Supreme Truth, a primary intelligible, which is the fount of all truth. (d) From the yearning of the human soul for absolute goodness we conclude that there must be a primary desirable object, which is the source of all happiness. (e) From the fact that we feel morally bound to choose what is good and to fulfill our obligations, we argue that there must be a Primary and Sovereign Good, which is the foundation of all duties.

Thus we shall see that the proof based on the various degrees of being, or upon the actually existing and graduated series of transcendentals (being, unity, truth, goodness; intellect, vital relation to being; will, and vital relation to goodness) necessarily implies the proof from the contingency of the mind, based on the perfection of our intellectual and volitional activity. The above-mentioned proof also implies the arguments based upon the eternal verities, upon the sense of obligation which goodness inspires, and upon the yearning of the human soul for the infinitely good. St. Thomas has given us a detailed account of these proofs in his treatise on man (Ia, q. 79, a. 4), at the beginning of the moral part of his theological Summa, where he discusses sovereign goodness and beatitude (Ia IIae, q. 2), and in his treatise on the divine and the natural law (Ia IIae, q. 91).

Here, at the commencement of his treatise on God, he considers it sufficient to present the proof in its most general aspects and to conclude from the various degrees of goodness, truth, and perfection observed in the world, that there is “something which is the true, the good, the noble, and consequently, being par excellence.” (Ia, q. 2, a. 3).

a) The proof in its general outline. It is important to determine exactly the starting point of this argument, which is that there are various grades of being. As St. Thomas expresses it: “Among beings there are some more and some less good, true, noble, and the like.” (Ia, q. 2, a. 3).

Concerning the point that things can be more or less in a certain respect, one may profitably read the lengthy first article of question 52 in the Ia,

IIae, in which St. Thomas explains and discusses the opinions of Plotinus, of the Stoics, and of two other writers quoted by Simplicius. Here, too, he explains how the “more” and the “less” degrees which are predicated primarily of quantity, continuous or discrete, are afterwards legitimately applied to qualities, such as heat and light, which are more or less intense, just as science itself, which is capable of progressing either intensively or extensively according as it becomes broader in its application or penetrates its subject-matter more deeply; for as science is always able to penetrate more deeply into its subject-matter, so also are virtues.

We can readily understand that relative qualities, which derive their specification from an object to which they refer (for instance, science and virtue), are susceptible of the greater and the less, not only with regard to the subject in which they are partially verified, but also in themselves more or less closely approach the term to which they refer.

As for the absolute qualities and characteristics, which bear their specification within themselves (such as being, unity, substance, corporeity, animality, rationality) they are not all susceptible of more or less, even with regard to the subject in which they are partially verified. The specific difference of any species whatever is, indeed, an indivisible. Either one has or has not the ability to reason, which is the specific difference in man; the reasoning faculty, of course, can be used and it can be more or less developed; but in every human being this faculty has the same proper object, namely, the essence of sensible things; the same adequate object, which is being, and the same specific capacity. Likewise, a genus is not, strictly speaking, realized in various degrees; for although it is diversified by specific differences, some of which are more perfect than others, these differences are extrinsic to it. Animality, for instance, or the sensitive life, applies equally to man and lion, for man is not more of an animal than the lion; his animality, as such, is not more perfect, although he is a more perfect animal. In like manner, too, gold is not more a body or a substance than copper; a thing is or is not a substance or a body; it cannot be more or less so.

But when we come to those most general notes known as transcendentals, because they transcend the species and the genera, we notice that they are susceptible of greater and less, and it is these which constitute the basic principle of our proof. These notes (being, unity, truth, goodness), are not diversified, like the genera, by an extrinsic specific

difference; for they all apply to that which distinguishes one being from another. We find them verified in each existing being, each in its own way and in different degrees, or, as we say, analogically. Thus, while animality (the sensitive life) applies in the same sense to man and lion; being, unity, and goodness are predicated of different beings on various grounds and in varying degrees. The difference proper to each of these beings is still, in fact, being, since in its own way it is something one and good. A stone is good with its own kind of goodness, in that it does not deteriorate; a fruit is good with its own kind of goodness, in that it refreshes; a horse is good, because it can be used for a race or journey; a professor is good, because he has knowledge and knows how to impart it; a virtuous man is good, because he wills and does what is good; a saint is better still, because he ardently desires goodness, In like manner, too, what is truly good is of a higher order than what is useful or delectable, and an end is in itself better than a mere means thereto. Goodness is, therefore, realized in various degrees. The same is true of perfection or nobility. The plant is of a higher order than the mineral, the animal is superior to the plant, and man to the beast. Again unity applies more to the mind than to the body; for the former is not only undivided in itself, but also indivisible; one society possesses greater unity than another, one science more than another. Likewise, truth is susceptible of various degrees, according to the being on which it is based and the firmness or necessity of the propositions in which it is couched. As St. Thomas points out, truth, being conformity of a judgment with reality, does not admit of greater and less in this respect, for either there is or there is not conformity between the terms. But if we consider the being that is the foundation of truth, there are various degrees for, “the things that are greater in being, are greater in truth”; that which is richer in being is also richer in truth. From the same point of view a first self-evident principle, necessary and eternal, such as the principle of non-contradiction, is truer than a necessary conclusion drawn from it, because it expresses conformity not only with some mode of being, but also with what is found to be more profound and more universal in reality, both possible and actual. A necessary conclusion is likewise truer than a contingent one, not only because it expresses conformity of thought with something transitory, such as the fact that Cæsar is dead, but also because it perfectly corresponds with something eternal, such as, for instance, that man is free.

Apart from any consideration of the scale of beings, we ourselves, in our own lives, are more or less good, true, or noble-minded, in proportion as we live in the way that we ought to live. If there is any question of morcellation here, it is evidently not that of the continuously sensible, and the subtlest criticism of the physical sciences can in no way affect this basic principle.

The actually existing and graduated series of transcendental notes of being, therefore, is the basic principle of this proof. From it reason deduces the existence of a being absolutely simple, absolutely true, absolutely good, a God who is Being itself, Truth itself, Goodness itself, and, consequently, sovereignly perfect. Have we here a veiled recourse to the argument of St. Anselm? Not at all.

The principle by which we argue from the various grades of beings to the existence of God is this: “When a perfection, the concept of which does not imply any imperfection, is found in various degrees in different beings, none of those which possess it imperfectly contains a sufficient explanation for it, and hence its cause must be sought in a being of a higher order, which is this very perfection.” As St. Thomas remarks: “More and less are predicated of different things, according as they resemble in different ways something which is the maximum” (Ia, q. 2, a. 3). If we wish fully to understand what is the meaning, the validity, and the range of this principle, which contains in condensed form all the dialectics of Plato, it is Plato himself whom we must consult. The correct meaning which we shall afterwards give to this principle, will prevent us from following him in his exaggerated realism. The dialectics of Plato are the method by which the soul convinces itself of the reality of these transcendentals, or eternal types, which Plato called “Ideas.” There is the dialectic of the intellect, which is based upon the principle we have just enunciated, and there is the dialectic of love, which implies the other, though not demanding the same amount of reasoning, and is within the reach of every soul eager for that Goodness which no particular good can satisfy.

This dialectic of love is found towards the end of Plato’s Symposium. He says there that the soul must learn to love beautiful colors, beautiful forms, a beautiful body; but it must not stop at any one of these, for they are but a reflection of Beauty. It must love all beautiful bodies and thence proceed to love the soul, which is the principle of the life and beauty of the body. It must attach itself to beautiful souls, beautiful by their actions, and thence rise to contemplate the beauty of the various kinds of knowledge which

engender beautiful actions, until, having advanced in knowledge, it finally arrives at that pre-eminent knowledge which is nothing else but the knowledge of beauty itself, and it ends by knowing it as it is in itself. The dialectic of love ends with the natural desire (conditional and inefficacious, says theology) of seeing God face to face and of contemplating "that beauty which is without diminution and without increase; which is not fair in one point and foul in another; which is beautiful only at one time and not at another, beautiful in one relation and foul in another, beautiful at one place and foul at another, fair to some and foul to others; . . . a beauty which does not reside in any other being different from itself, as, for example, in an animal, or in heaven, or on earth, or in any other thing; but which exists eternally and absolutely, by and in itself, which without diminution and without increase, or any change, is imparted to the ever growing and perishing beauties of all other things." (Symposium, 211, C).

This dialectic of love is also discussed by St. Thomas at the beginning of his Ia, IIae, in the Treatise on Happiness, in a series of articles entitled: "Whether Man's Happiness Consists in Wealth, Honors, Fame or Glory, Power, in any Bodily Good, in Pleasure, in Some Good of the Soul, in any Created Good?" His answer is always in the negative, and he maintains that it is only the absolute good which can fully satisfy an appetite controlled by an intellect which knows not only some particular good, but good in general. This dialectical method is rigorous and proves apodictically, as we shall see, the existence of the absolute Good, provided we view this method as a simple application of the proof of God's existence which we are studying, and which presupposes the objective and transcendental validity of the first principles of reason.

If, on the contrary, we admit the primacy of the immanent method, if we maintain that, without it, "the dialectic (speculative) subtleties, no matter how long and ingenious, are of no more consequence than the throwing of a stone at the sun by a child;" if it is claimed that "the incontestable presence and the convincing proof of being are the result of action, and of that alone," then no more than practical certitude can result from this dialectic of love, however learned it may be; and this certitude may perhaps be subjectively adequate, but objectively it is inadequate. (See supra, no. 6, and infra, n. 39 d).

But if it is true that the idea of goodness presupposes the simpler, more absolute and more universal notion of being; if the will and love presuppose

the simpler and more absolute activity of the intellect, which merely attains not the good, but also the reason for it; if the intellect alone can receive being into itself, completely possess it, become one with it; if it is preeminently “the totally intussusceptive faculty,” as explained by P. Rousselot in his book entitled L’Intellectualisme de St. Thomas, p. 20; if the will, on the contrary, cannot receive being into itself in this manner, completely possess it and become one with it, but can only tend towards it when it is absent, and take delight in it when it is made present by an act of the intellect —then the dialectic of love engenders a certitude which is objectively adequate and absolute, and this by reason of the dialectic of the intellect which it implies. And the fundamental principle of the latter is precisely the principle upon which our proof is based: “When there is a greater or less, when there are degrees in anything, then the perfect also exists; if, then, a certain being is better than a certain other, there must be one which is perfect, and this can only be the divine.” It is in this way that Aristotle expresses with admirable precision the fundamental procedure in the Platonic process of thought, as presented in his treatise Concerning Philosophy, in which he gives a résumé of the teachings of his master. See also the text of Aristotle quoted by St. Thomas in his Commentary on the Metaphysics, Bk. II, ch. 4.

This dialectic principle, which constitutes the major of our proof, includes two other closely connected principles in the system of Plato. To say that there are various degrees of being is to say that there is multiplicity, and also that there is a greater or less degree of either imperfection or perfection. Hence these two principles: (1) If the same note is found in various beings, it is impossible that each should possess it in its own right, and what is not possessed by a being in its own right, is received from another and, therefore, is held by participation; (2) If a note, the concept of which implies no imperfection, is found in a being in an imperfect state, i.e., mingled with imperfection, this being does not possess this note in its own right, but has it from another which possesses it in its own right. By means of this latter principle we argue not only from the multiple to the one, but also from the composite to the simple, and consequently from the imperfect to the perfect.

Let us examine these two principles more closely and see how they are connected with the principle of identity, which is the supreme law of thought.

1) If the same note is found in various beings, it cannot be said that each possesses this note in its own right, and what a being does not possess in its own right, it has from another by participation. Phaedo is beautiful, but beauty is not something which is proper to Phaedo, for Phaedrus also is beautiful. “The beauty found in any corporeal being, is sister to the beauty found in all the others.” Not one is beauty, but all merely participate in it, are a part or reflection of it. Phaedo cannot be the source of his own beauty any more than Phaedrus; but the beauty of both must be ascribed to a higher principle, to one to whom beauty belongs by his very nature, who is beauty itself. It is this point which St. Thomas emphasizes when he says: “Multitudo non reddit rationem unitatis” (multitude does not explain the reason for unity). That unity of similitude which is found in multitude cannot be explained by it, but presupposes a higher form of unity. And in his De Potentia (q. 3, a. 5), St. Thomas shows how this principle is connected with that of identity, which is the supreme law of thought and reality: “If one of some kind is found as a common note in several objects, this must be because some one cause has brought it about in them; for it cannot be that the common note of itself belongs to each thing, since each thing is by its very nature distinct, one from the other, and a diversity of causes produces a diversity of effects.” Phaedo and Phaedrus cannot possess beauty from themselves; what properly constitutes them as individuals cannot explain why they are beautiful; for the individualizing traits in each of them are different, whereas both have beauty in common; the diversity cannot be the reason of unity. To say that Phaedo and Phaedrus are beautiful in and by themselves, would be to say that the diverse is of itself one with a unity of similitude, in other words, that elements in themselves diverse and not alike, are of themselves alike by reason of that which properly constitutes them as individuals. This would involve a denial of the principle of identity or non-contradiction. There is no recourse here to the argument of St. Anselm,

By means of this principle Plato argued from the multiple to the one, from the multiplicity of individual things to the existence of eternal types of things, to the idea of eternal Truth, eternal Beauty, and eternal Justice. But he found that there was still a certain diversity, which led him to conclude that there is a supreme unity, which is the Idea of ideas, the Sun of the intelligible world, which was for him not the Idea of Being, but the Idea of Goodness, or of the plenitude of being. In the world of knowledge the idea

of good appears last of all, and is seen only with an effort; and when seen, is also inferred to be the universal author of all things beautiful and right . . .” St. Thomas concludes in almost the same manner: “There is something which is the True, the Good, the Noble, and consequently, Being par excellence, which is the cause of whatever there is of being, goodness, and perfection in all things; we give the name of God to this cause.”

It is objected that we can hardly conceive a typical essence for each thing. This difficulty embarrassed Plato, because he failed to distinguish clearly the transcendentals from the genera and species. It is a disputed question whether he made man out to be a separate entity, distinct from the idea of the Good, or whether he considered man to be merely a divine idea. Whatever opinion he held on this point, we may say with Aristotle, that only those characteristics whose formal reason abstracts from everything material, can exist in a state separated from matter and individuals. On the contrary, whatever in its concept implies a combination of material elements, is incapable of existing apart from matter and from the individual in which it is found. Flesh and bones, for instance, are implied in the concept of man. Flesh cannot exist except as this particular flesh; for flesh is something which is necessarily material and extended, and which has certain parts and a certain extent, and not any other. Flesh can be thought of separately (separatim), apart from its individualizing notes, but it cannot exist apart from them (separata). The exemplars of material things can never be anything but ideas, not real types. This logical precision applied to Plato’s principle saves us from following him in his exaggerated realism.

But the case is quite different with the characteristics which, according to what they formally denote, abstract from all that is material, and which, moreover, transcend the genera and the species, and for this reason are realized analogically in various degrees (as is the case with being, unity, truth, goodness, beauty, intellect. . . .). They can and must exist apart from matter and

from the individuals in which they are found realized, in a being of a higher order who possesses these characteristics in the highest degree.

It is precisely for this reason that our proof does not start with a characteristic found in the same degree in various beings, e. g., humanity. Such a characteristic is of necessity caused not in all save one, but in all. One of these beings cannot be the first cause of the others, since it is of the same nature with them and just as indigent as they are.

The proof from the degrees of beings does not ascend from the multiple to the one, without at the same time ascending from the composite to the simple, from the imperfect to the perfect. It is not enough to posit as a principle that “if the same characteristic is found in various beings, it is impossible for each of them to possess this characteristic in its own right;” but we must add that “if a characteristic, the concept of which does not imply imperfection, is found to be present in a being in an imperfect state, mingled with imperfection, then this being does not possess it in its own right, but has it from another, to whom it belongs in its own right.”

2) This second principle, implied with the first in the major of our proof, has been expounded by Plato in his Philebus, Phaedo, and other dialogues. It cannot be said, he remarks, that Phaedo is beautiful without restriction, or that Socrates is great without restriction; that the knowledge which men have is a knowledge without restriction. In them these qualities (beauty, greatness, knowledge) are not pure, but mixed with their opposites. In fact, Socrates is both small and great. He is great when compared with Phaedo, small when compared with Simmias, and therefore he has not the greatness which excludes smallness, but merely partakes of greatness in a measure. A man has knowledge of a certain thing and is ignorant of certain other things; his knowledge is mixed with ignorance; it is not knowledge without restriction, but a participated knowledge.

But how shall we proceed from this to affirm the existence of absolute beauty and absolute knowledge? The Cartesians often pass immediately from the imperfect to the perfect; they neglect to resolve these notions into those simpler and nearer to being, composition and simplicity, admixture and purity. That is why the Kantians reproach them for unconsciously having recourse to the ontological argument; in reality the Cartesians appeal to the principle of identity, but they fail to establish this fact.

To say imperfection is the same as saying composition or mixture of a perfection with that which limits it. The limit may be either the opposite of the perfection, as when Socrates is said to be great and small from different points of view; or privation, as when human knowledge which knows certain things, is said to be ignorant of certain others, which, however, it is capable of knowing; or negation, as when a human being has knowledge of certain things and is ignorant of certain others which are inaccessible to it. It makes little difference whether the limit which constitutes the imperfection be contrary, privative, or negative; what we want to know is,

why it affects the perfections known as beauty, goodness, knowledge. . . . Evidently none of these perfections in themselves imply a limit, least of all such a limit. In itself, beauty excludes ugliness, knowledge excludes ignorance or error, and goodness excludes egotism. To say that such is not the case would be to maintain that the unconditional union of diverse elements is possible; that the diverse is, of itself, one, at least with a unity of union; that elements, according to what constitutes them as individuals, though they do not necessitate their being united, are of themselves united. This would involve a denial of the principle of identity. If any one of these perfections does not of itself denote a limit, still less does it denote of itself a certain kind of limit, since this limit is subject to variation. There is progress in knowledge, and our goodness is susceptible to increase and decrease.

The union of a perfection with its limit, not being unconditional, therefore, demands an extrinsic raison d'être. "Things in themselves different cannot unite, unless something causes them to unite." (Ia, q. 3, a. 7). To deny this would be to identify that which has not its own sufficient reason in itself, either with what is not self-determined (and has no need of a sufficient reason) or else with what is self-determined (and has no need of an extrinsic sufficient reason). To doubt this would be to doubt the distinction between what is self-determined and not self-determined. "Everything that is composite, just as every becoming, demands a cause." (See supra, n. 24 and 26.)

But this extrinsic raison d'être, this realizing principle, or, in other words, this cause—where shall we seek for it? Could it be found in a subject possessing a perfection with its limit? Is Phaedo able to account for that imperfect beauty which he possesses? It is evident that Phaedo does not possess this perfection through that which constitutes him an individual, for two reasons. First, as we have already remarked, because what really constitutes him as an individual, properly belongs to him, whereas beauty is found also in other beings. Secondly, that which properly constitutes him as an individual is something indivisible, which denotes neither more nor less, whereas beauty, even in Phaedo, has degrees. "Whatever belongs to a being by its very nature, and not by reason of any cause, cannot be either partially or completely taken away." To say that Phaedo is beautiful in his own right, admitting at the same time that what properly constitutes him as an individual is something different from beauty, would be the same as saying

that elements of themselves diverse are of themselves in some way one; that the unconditional union of diverse elements is possible—which would involve a denial of the principle of identity. “Whatever a thing may fittingly have, if it does not originate from its nature, accrues to it from an extrinsic cause; for what has no cause is first and immediate.”

What is found in a being without properly belonging to it according to its nature, is something which has been caused in it. In fact, not possessing this characteristic of itself and immediately (per se et primo), it can possess the same only in a conditional manner, by reason of another, and, in the final analysis, from another which possesses the same of itself and immediately, as something belonging to its nature (“secundum quod ipsum est”). Wherever there is diversity or composition, it is conditional, until we finally arrive at pure identity. It is only the latter that is capable of self-existence, whose existence originates from its nature, which is to being as A is to A, which is Being itself, or existence itself, ipsum esse subsistens. Every limitation of an essence would involve positing in it a duality between that which is capable of existing and existence itself. In such a case, existence could be attributed to it only as something accidental or contingent, and we should have to seek for a higher cause, continuing our search until at last we arrived at pure simplicity and pure perfection with no admixture of imperfection. Every limit imposed upon the supreme attributes of Goodness, Beauty, Knowledge, and Justice would mean the positing in them of a duality, and, therefore, of contingency. Thus the principle of identity again appears, not only as the supreme law of thought, but also as the supreme law of reality, and we have another refutation of Pantheism. The first of all beings is essentially distinct from the world, and this not only because he is essentially immutable, whereas the world is essentially changeable, but also because this being is by his very nature simple and pure, whereas the world is essentially mixed and composite. This, as we have already remarked, was the argument by which the Vatican Council refuted Pantheism. “God as being one sole, absolutely simple and immutable spiritual substance, is to he declared as really and essentially distinct from the world.” God is pure Being without any admixture of non-being. St. Augustine expressed this truth in almost the same words, both in his City of God (Bk. VIII, ch. 6) and in his treatise De Trinitate (Bk. VIII, ch. 4), and he combined the proof based on the degrees of being with the argument from motion, thus rendering his contention more striking. If a

being, he says, is more or less beautiful at different moments, if its beauty varies, evidently it does not possess beauty a se. Since it advances from the less to the greater, it cannot give itself what it does not have, and so “there must be some being in which immutable, incomparable, and pure beauty resides.”

This proof drawn from the degrees of being is even more convincing if we remark, with Aristotle, that the non-being which limits being is something intermediary between pure being and pure nothingness, called potency. A perfection which of itself implies no limit cannot be limited either by itself, or by any other perfection, or by pure nothingness, but only by something intermediary. Knowledge, for instance, is not limited by itself nor by another perfection, such as holiness, but by the restricted capacity of man to acquire knowledge, by our potentia for knowledge, which gradually attains to act. Similarly, existence, in which all beings participate, has various degrees, and is not limited by itself, but by the essence into which it is received, since essence denotes a capacity for receiving existence, quid capax existendi, and it is all the more perfect in proportion as it denotes a capacity less subject to restrictions, and susceptible of greater participation in the act of existence. The mineral and the plant participate in this existence, subject to the limitations of matter and extension; the animal, by the knowledge it acquires from sense perception, participates in the same in a less limited way; man transcends the limits of matter and extension, of time and space, since knowledge and desire in him, by reason of the soul, the spiritual part of his nature, may in some sense be said to be infinite; with those created beings known as pure spirits, since they are by nature pure and immaterial forms, limitation in the existence in which they participate can come only from this source; but that they are capable of existing is in them something finite; potentiality is included in the notion of their essence, an idea of limitation with regard to existence, which is their ultimate actualization. This composition, this duality, consisting of essence as limiting and of existence as limited, presupposes a cause, and, in the final analysis, a cause in which there is absolutely nothing of composition, which is not a combination of potentiality and actuality, a cause which is pure actuality, a cause which was always and in all ways self-determined, pure being to the exclusion of all non-being, and consequently infinite perfection.

It is easy to see how St. Thomas was able to conclude that the First Being is not a body, since He is absolutely simple (Ia, q. 3, a. 1); that He is not composed of essence and existence, but that He is Existence itself (Ia, q. 3, a. 4); that He is not composed of genus and a difference (Ia, q. 3, a. 5); that He is sovereign goodness, absolute plenitude of being (Ia, q. 6, a. 2); that He is infinite (Ia, q. 7, a. 1); that He is supreme truth (Ia, q. 16, a. 5); that He is invisible (Ia, q. 12, a. 4), and that He is incomprehensible (Ia, q. 12, a. 8).

Let us now consider the different applications and more precise determinations of this general proof, by means of which we conclude that there is not only a First Being, but also a First Intellect, a First that is intelligible, a First that is desirable, the source of all happiness, the First and Sovereign Good, and the fundamental reason of all our obligations.

b) The first intellect. St. Thomas (Ia, q. 79, a. 4) applies the proof based on the degrees of being to the intellect and, like St. Augustine, combines it with the proof based on motion. “That which participates in a perfection, that which is mobile and imperfect, necessarily depends upon that which is the essence of this perfection, upon that which is immovable and perfect. Now, the human soul participates in the intellectual life, and is intellectual only in the noblest part of its being. It attains to the knowledge of the truth only by the gradual process of reasoning. Finally, it has but an imperfect knowledge of things; it does not know everything about them; and it has a confused apprehension of things known before acquiring a distinct knowledge of them. Therefore, there must be some intellect higher than that of any human soul, which is pre-eminently intellection, and which is immovable and perfect,” and which was always in possession of all knowledge as something distinct from everything knowable. (See Ia, q. 14, a. 4; q. 79, a. 4). Such an intellect is demanded to explain the origin of human understanding, manifold and imperfect as it is, and without the concurrence of this intellectual light nothing intelligible could be known by us, just as without the light of the sun there could be no such thing as the sense perception of color.

This application of the proof presents no difficulty if we recall to mind what we previously said (n. 29) concerning the understanding. It is a notion which, according to what it formally implies, does not belong to any genus. Since it is defined by reason of its relation to being, it is, like being, analogous. That is why it can be realized in various degrees, and in the

highest degree can exist in a pure state, not subject to any potentiality or limitation.

Need it surprise us that the supreme intelligence is identified with being itself? By no means. If there were duality here, we should have to keep on seeking for a higher cause, until we finally arrived at pure identity.

Plotinus and Spencer raised the objection that knowledge necessarily implies a duality of subject and object. This objection in its various forms has been refuted by St. Thomas (see Ia, q. 14, a. 1-4). He commences with a consideration of man, in whom knowledge implies such a duality. Man, he remarks, is intelligent in proportion as he is immaterial, in so much as his form, which transcends matter, space, and time, enables him to know, not only this or that particular and contingent being, but being in general. And since man is not being, the intellectual faculty is in him merely a potentiality, which is in relation to being, something intentional. It is an accident of quality, and the act of understanding in human beings is merely an accidental act of this potentiality. The self-subsisting Being must also be intelligent, in proportion as He is immaterial, and since, according to the definition, He is independent not only of all material and spatial limitation, but also of every limitation on the part of essence, He is not only sovereignly intelligent, but the intellect and its act in Him are identical, that is to say, He is Being itself in the highest degree of intelligibility, always actually known, a purely intellectual and eternally subsisting light. Let us not search here for the duality of subject and object, which is the result, as St. Thomas remarks, of potentiality (or imperfection), in fact of both, “because from this only it follows that sense or intellect is distinct from the sensible or intelligible object, in that both are in potentiality” (Ia, q. 14, a. 2). Even in the act of our intellection, the intellect and its object, insofar as it is known, are identified; and Cajetan, in his Commentary on the Summa of St. Thomas (see q. 79, a. 2, no. 19), points out, as Averroes had done before him, that the intellect does not receive the object as matter receives the form, thus constituting a composite with the latter. No; the intellect becomes intentionally the known object (“fit aliud in quantum aliud”: it becomes that which as such is something other than itself”). In the act of reflection, the intellect in the act of knowing is identified with the intellect knowing this of itself. That this duality still remains is due to the fact that our intellect is not of itself and always in the act of knowing and actually

being known. In God there is absolute identity between the pure intellect and pure being, which is the object of the intellectual act.

We shall see that this conclusion is no less evident if we take as the basis of our argumentation not the primary intellect, but the primary intelligible. For a being to be pure act from every point of view, it must be always intelligible, not only in potentiality, but also in act; in fact, it must be always actually known (intellectum in actu). Now the intelligible always actually known is nothing else but eternal intellection.

What has just been said is as certain as the absolute certainties of the positive sciences, for this excellent reason that the intellect perceives it immediately in being, which is its formal object. It is a fruit of purely intellectual light. This analogical attribution of intelligence to God is certain in the strictest sense of the term. The same must be said of the formal reason of existence, which is independent of its created mode (limited by the potentiality of the essence into which it is received). In like manner, the formal reason of intellection is independent of its created mode, which declares such intellection to be the accidental act of a faculty and assigns it to a category, namely, that of "quality," which is distinct from the category of "substance." In God, intellection is His very nature, that is to say, Being itself (Ia, q. 14, a. 2 and 4). This identification of being and intellection is not, therefore, due solely to the fact that a proof based upon their common traits (ex communibus) makes it a necessity (for there can be no question either of duality or of multiplicity in the Absolute), but this identity is postulated by the formal reason of each of these two perfections (ex propriis). Pure thought, of itself and always in act, must be pure being actually known; and pure being of itself and always in act from every point of view, must be the intelligible in act and intellection in act. Wherever there is a duality of subject and object, the understanding is imperfect and to a certain extent unsatisfactory. The created intellect would like to establish an immediate contact with being, without having to question itself about the validity of the representation by means of which it apprehends being. This unsatisfactoriness, which is common to every created intellect, will be dispelled only by the beatific vision, in which there will be no intermediary idea between the human intellect and the divine essence (Ia, q. 12, a. 2); this condition never existed for God, since it is in Him alone that intellect is identical with being, because in Him alone the intellect is in a pure state.

c) The first intelligible, the first truth, source of all truth. The proof for the existence of God based on the degrees of being, developed in the Ia, q.

2, a. 3 of the Summa Theologica of St. Thomas, ascends not only to a first being, but to a first truth, which is the ultimate basis of all other truths. “In beings there is found something more or less true. But more and less are predicated of different things, according as they resemble in different ways something which is the maximum. There is, therefore, something which is most true. Now, what is called maximum in any genus is the cause of all comprised in that genus.” (Ia, q. 2, a. 3). Sometimes people are surprised at not finding in the writings of St. Thomas the proof for the existence of God based on the eternal verities, which was a favorite one with St. Augustine, St. Anselm, Descartes, Bossuet, Fénelon, Malebranche and Leibniz. Even Kant, in 1763, when he wrote his treatise on The Only Possible Foundation for the Proof of God’s Existence, described the argument based on the eternal verities as the only rigorously compelling one. The possible, he said, which is given with thought itself, presupposes being, for “if nothing exists, nothing is given which may be the object of thought.” He declared it to be an established fact that the Absolute, which is the ultimate basis of possible things, is unique and simple, and confirmed his proof by showing the unity and harmony which exist in the infinite world of essences or possibles, for instance, in mathematics. The proportions, the connections, the unity revealed by these ratiocinative sciences, were for him a proof that the ultimate basis of the possibles is unique and infinite, nay more, that it is an intelligence, since these harmonies are of the intelligible order.

The argument based on the eternal verities is to-day defended by many Scholastics. Its validity was formerly denied only by the Nominalists, who regarded the universal as nothing but a collection of individuals. If such were the case, and all the individuals of a species disappeared, it could no longer be said that there was any real truth in the propositions formulated about their specific nature.

St. Thomas has often pointed out that, just as in the order of being and goodness, there is a certain hierarchy also in the order of truth. Contingent truths or facts are of the lowest degree; above these rank the necessary conclusions of the sciences, and in the highest place are the first principles. Moreover, St. Thomas does not hesitate to say that the necessary truths would remain as objective truths even if all contingent reality disappeared. If, for example, all human beings ceased to exist, it would still be true to say that rationality is a specific characteristic of human nature. “Remotis omnibus singularibus hominibus adhuc remaneret rationabilitas attribuibilis

humanae naturae," St. Thomas says in his Quodlibeta, VIII, q. 1, art. 1, ad 1um. He repeats the statement in his answer to the third objection (ibid., ad 3um). It is worth while to read this article, in which he distinguishes human nature in three ways: (1) as it exists in individuals; (2) as it is in itself, and (3) as it is in the divine intellect. Concerning these eternal truths, which are independent of all contingent existence, the following authors may be consulted: Albert the Great, Tract. de Praedicamentis, c. ix; Capreolus, I, dist. 8, q. 1, concl. 1; II, dist. 1, q. 2, a. 3; Cajetan, De Ente et Essentia, c. iv, q. 6 (the real is of two kinds: the possible real and the actual real; the possible is not merely the thinkable, or the ens rationis); Soncinas, In Met. IX, c. iv and v; V, q. 30; Ferrariensis, Comment. in C. Gentes, Bk. II, c. 52 and 84; Soto, Dialectica Aristotelis, q. 1a, towards the end; Suarez, Disp. Met., Vol. I, p. 230; Vol. II, pp. 231, 294-298; Bannez, In Iam., q. 10, a. 3; John of St. Thomas, Logica, q. 3, a. 2; q. 25, a. 2; Goudin, Logica, p. 256. We now understand how Leibniz could have written as he did in his New Essays, Bk. IV, c. ii, and also in his Theodicy, § 184: "What the Scholastics called constantia subjecti (permanence of the subject) was very much discussed by them; what they meant by this phrase was that they could not see how a proposition formulated about a given subject can have any real truth if the subject does not exist."

Bannez, in his commentary on the First Part of the Summa Theol. of St. Thomas (q. 10, a. 3), formulated this common teaching of the Schools in three propositions, to wit: (1) The essences of things signified by those complex concepts are not eternal as to their existence (this is de fide), nor as to the essence of their being in them, because essence without existence is nothing actual. (2) That man is an animal is an eternal truth, if the word is implies that animality is an essential note of human nature; for it belongs eternally to the essence of man to be an animal. Note, however, that, with regard to creatures, this esse is not esse simpliciter, but esse secundum quid, for it is esse in potentia. (3) That man is an animal is not eternal, except in the divine intellect, if the word is refers to the truth expressed by the proposition; for truth resides in the intellect, but eternal truth resides only in the divine intellect. The few contemporary authors who refuse to accept the proof based on the eternal verities, and who claim that it is foreign to the teaching of St. Thomas, fail to see that it is according to the tenor of the third proposition of Bannez that St. Thomas speaks in his De Veritate (q. 1, a. 4, 5, 6 and Summa Theol., Ia, q. 16, a. 6, 7, 8), whereas it is in

accordance with the second proposition that he writes in his Quodlibeta, (VIII, q. 1, a. 1, ad 1um and ad 3um). St. Thomas, therefore, admits the final conclusion arrived at by Bannez, that “from these conclusions it follows that the essences of things are real beings before they exist, insofar as real being is distinct from imaginary being [ens rationis, or what is merely thinkable]; but not insofar as it is distinct from actually existing being, according to Cajetan’s distinction as given in De Ente et Essentia, c. iv, q. 6.”

Suarez justly remarks that “certain modern theologians admit that necessary propositions are not perpetually true, but that they commence to be true when they become a reality, and cease to be true when the things cease to exist. But this opinion is in direct conflict, not only with that held by modern philosophers, but also by those of ancient times, and even by Fathers of the Church. . . .” Then follow quotations from St. Augustine and St. Anselm. The propositions: “Every being is of a determined nature,” “Everything has its sufficient reason,” “Man is free,” “We must do what is good and avoid what is evil,” unlike certain others, e. g.: “Every Frenchman has a right to vote,” have always been true, from all eternity. The copula is does not denote that the two extremes are really and actually united in an existing reality, but merely that the predicate necessarily refers to the subject, regardless of whether the latter exists or not.

These truths are conditional, so far as existence is concerned, but they are absolute in the order of possibility and intelligibility, and consequently dominate the contingent realities and control the future. They state, as Leibniz remarks, “that if the subject ever does exist, it will be found to be such.” (Nouv. Essais sur l’Entend., Bk. IV, ch. ii).

Only consistent Nominalists can deny this conclusion; but then they must, like the Positivists, end in rejecting the absolute necessity of the first principles of reason, as if in some unknown world there could actually be effects without a cause or realized contradictions.

Starting from this point, can we prove the existence of God? Leibniz no more doubts than does St. Augustine that “these necessary truths, being prior in existence to contingent beings, must certainly have their foundation in the existence of a necessary substance” (ibid.) and as intelligible truths must be known from all eternity. Bossuet beautifully says that “even if there were no such thing in nature as a triangle, it would still remain indisputably true that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles. What

we see of the nature of the triangle is certainly independent of every existing triangle. Moreover, it is not the understanding that gives truth to being; even if the understanding were destroyed, these truths would still remain immutably the same." (Logique, I, 36). Again: "If I ask myself where and in what subject these truths subsist as eternal and unchangeable, I am obliged to avow that there is a being in whom truth eternally subsists and is always known; and this being must be Truth itself and in possession of all truth." (Connaissances de Dieu et de Soi-même, IV, 5). And again: "It is to this intellectual world that Plato sends us, if we would know what is truth. If he went too far in his reasoning, if he thought from these principles that souls have innate knowledge, . . . St. Augustine has shown us how to adhere to these principles without falling into extreme and untenable views." (Logique, I, 37).

This proof is truly one a posteriori (from intelligible effects), and not a priori (like the argument of St. Anselm). It does not start from the notion of God, but from the multiplicity of rational truths arranged in ascending order, until it finally reaches the source of all truth. This proof, whatever may have been said about it, was not unknown to St. Thomas. In C. Gentes, Bk. II, c. 84, he explicitly states that "from the fact that truths known by the intellect are eternal with regard to what is thus known, one cannot conclude that the soul is eternal, but that the truths known have their foundation in something eternal. They have their foundation in that first Truth which, as the universal cause, contains within itself all truth."

Why did St. Thomas not develop this Augustinian argument in the article which he set aside for a special discussion of the proofs of God's existence? The reason is because this proof can be referred back to the fourth, which establishes the presence not only of a Primary Intelligence and of a Primary Being, but also of a Primary Truth (maxime verum).

In the manifold and necessary verities made known to us by reason, there is a common element, that of necessary and eternal verity, which is realized in each in varying degrees. It is found in a more perfect degree in a first principle than in a conclusion. How are we to account for this element? Manifestly it is not to be explained by the contingent realities regulated by it. Just as Phaedo has not in himself the ultimate reason for his beauty, so also he cannot be the principle of contradiction which is found realized in him as in every other being, both actual and possible. Neither can our manifold and contingent intelligences account for this common and

necessary element, since it regulates all of them, instead of being regulated by them. Shall we say that the eternal verities subsist apart from one another, independently of things and of contingent intelligences? This would be a reversion to those eternal types which Plato seems to have admitted, and we have stated why the transcendentals alone are capable of realization apart from matter and individuals, and why they are identified ex propriis (that is, intrinsically) with the primary being and the primary thought. It suffices to point out here that the eternal verities cannot possess, each in itself, the ultimate reason of their necessity, since they are many and constitute a series of an ascending order; they necessarily presuppose a supreme truth, a primary ens intelligibile, which is the source of all intelligibility, the maxime verum of which St. Thomas speaks.

This maxime verum cannot be merely what is potentially intelligible; it must be of itself and always intelligible, nay, actually known by the intellect. For this reason, as we have already seen, it is identified with the primary intelligence, which is pure understanding. Hence it appears a posteriori that the primary intelligence is infinite; in fact, the laws of the intelligible order, such as, for instance, of geometrical figures, are everlasting. Moreover, the least of things contains an infinite number of details, so that we can never know all about anything. This elusive element is nevertheless intelligible in itself, and its derived intelligibility must of necessity come from an intellect that is always in action. Act always precedes potency. Revelation says the same, for we read in the prologue of St. John's Gospel that "all things were made by Him [the Divine Logos]: and without Him was made nothing that was made."

It is impossible to admit with the Pantheists that the principle of the ideal order is immanent in the world, and would have no existence apart from the concepts formed of it by the human mind. If we grant that this principle is necessary and universal, we must admit that it is independent of our intellects, which are regulated by it. The contingent, being essentially dependent upon the necessary, cannot condition the existence of the latter. To say that it does, would be the same as saying that the contingent, which is not its own cause, is the cause of the necessary, which would be absurd. Just as becoming cannot be the cause of being, so multiplicity cannot be the raison d'être of unity.

But how can all intelligibles be contained in the primary intelligible—the τὸ πρώτον νοητόν? St. Thomas has explained this in his treatise on the

Divine Knowledge. This primary intelligible is the Divine Essence itself. To know this essence adequately and exhaustively, is to know everything that it contains virtually and eminently, which means everything that can resemble it by way of analogy, that is to say, not only all actual, but also all possible, realities.

d) The primary and sovereign good, the primary object of desire. St. Thomas by the via quarta also rises to the maxime bonum, i.e., Sovereign Goodness. That which is good may be considered as simply desirable, i.e., capable of attracting our appetite, of filling a void in us, of making us truly happy, and also as that which has a right to be loved, and which imperiously compels our love, and is the basis of duty. The argument which concludes that there is a first and sovereign good, therefore, implicitly includes that by which we rise to the primary object of desire, τὸ πρώτον ὀρεκτόν of (Aristotle), the source of all happiness; and it also includes the argument by which we prove that there is a sovereign good, the foundation of all duty, τὸ ἀγαθόν καὶ τὸ ἄριστον.

We may arrive at a knowledge of the supreme good, which is the source of perfect and unalloyed happiness, by arguing from the various kinds and degrees of goodness in created things, or else from the fact that these various kinds of goodness do not satisfy the natural desire of men.

If we start from the idea of the various kinds of finite goodness in beings, such as health, the pleasures of the body, wealth, power, glory, scientific knowledge, the joys of the mind and of the soul, we must insist upon their multiplicity and still more upon their imperfection, i.e., their limitation. Just as the multiple presupposes the one, the composite the simple, the imperfect the perfect, so we shall be led by reason to a Supreme Good, who is Goodness itself, without any admixture of non-goodness or of imperfection. This is the dialectic of the intellect.

If we start from the natural desire which finite goods cannot satisfy, then we must emphasize the restlessness which the soul experiences as long as it has not found an infinite good, or a good free from imperfection. “Restless is our heart, until it finds its rest in Thee, O Lord,” said St. Augustine. The unsatisfied soul will seek to find its contentment in goods of a higher and still higher order. This is what is known as the dialectic of love. Does the unrest resulting from this dialectic prove that there is an infinite good? Yes and no. It may engender in the mind of him who experiences it a certitude which is subjectively sufficient and objectively insufficient, like the moral

faith of Kant. The exclusive method of immanence, however scientific it may be, cannot go farther than this. Objectively sufficient certitude can be had only by recognizing the ontological and transcendental validity of those first principles of reasoning known as the principles of identity, of sufficient reason, and of efficient and final causality. (Cfr. supra, n. 6).

Hence the proof may be presented in the following manner: Our will, which has for its object the universal good (not this or that particular good known by the senses or the conscience, but the good, according to what is implied by this term, and known as such by the intellect) cannot find its happiness in any finite good; for however perfect a finite good may be, it is infinitely inferior to that pure good which has no admixture of non-good, and which is conceived as such by the human intellect. An infinity of finite goods cannot satisfy the will, for this could never be anything but successive and potential, not an actual infinity of quality and perfection. This impossibility of finding our happiness in any finite good, thus proved a priori by St. Thomas, is also proved a posteriori, or by experience, as St. Augustine has shown in his Confessions. Therefore, the human will desires naturally (i.e., by its very nature) a pure good without admixture of non-good, just as our intellect desires absolute truth without admixture of error. Can this natural desire be vain, as if it were merely a product of the imagination?

Certain theologians maintain that the principle, “The desire of nature cannot be purposeless,” is not certain for us except and until we have demonstrated that our nature is the work, not of chance, but of an intelligent and good God. Thus the proof based on the aspiration of the soul for the absolute good would have merely the force of a naturalistic argument, based on this induction: Throughout the vegetable and animal kingdoms we see that an object, e. g., a food, corresponds to the natural desire which calls for it; it must be the same for man, since his natural desire cannot be frustrated.

We, on the contrary, believe in the absolute validity of this proof for the existence of God. If the demonstration of God’s existence were a necessary pre-requisite before we could trust the natural tendency of our faculties, we might doubt the objective validity not only of our intellect, but also of the natural desire of our will. Moreover, previous to any demonstration of the existence of God we perceive clearly that our intellect and will cannot be the work of chance, the result of a fortuitous encounter. How could a simple principle, a principle of order as well as of intellect, ever have resulted from

a multiplicity without order? To say that it could would be the same as saying that the greater can proceed from the less, being from nothingness. Finally, according to Aristotle, St. Thomas, and all the great intellectualist philosophers, the principle of finality is necessary and self-evident, like the principle of sufficient reason, from which it is derived on the same grounds as the principle of causality. (See supra, n. 27). A natural desire, therefore, cannot be purposeless, for if it were, it would be without a sufficient reason, and, as we have seen, for anything to be without a sufficient reason for what it is, is a contradiction. Also, by the method of reductio ad impossibile the principle of sufficient reason resolves itself into the principle of identity. (1. Everything which exists, has its sufficient reason, necessary for it as such, without which it could not be distinguished from that which is not. 2. Everything which is, but does not exist of itself, has its sufficient reason in something else, without which it could not be distinguished from that which exists of itself). This extrinsic sufficient reason is necessarily twofold: the one is a realizing or actualizing principle, which accounts for the existence of the thing (efficient cause), while the other explains the purpose of the action and why it is performed in this way rather than in any other (final cause). The necessity of the final cause is more clearly seen in the case of an intentional being, that is to say, a being whose whole nature is a tendency towards something else. We find it to be so with the natural desire which we have been discussing. This something which is relative and imperfect necessarily tends towards something else. Just as the imperfect cannot exist except by the perfect (efficient cause), so it cannot exist except for the perfect (final cause); for the relative can exist only for the absolute. In fact, it is only the absolute which has its own sufficient reason in itself. “Potentia dicitur ad actum,” i.e., a potency cannot contain its own raison d’être within itself. The natural desire for God, the natural inclination towards God, therefore, would be absurd if God did not exist; it would be an inclination tending towards something and at the same time towards nothing. It was in this sense that Hemsterhuys could say that “a single sigh of the heart for what is best and perfect is more convincing than a geometrical demonstration of the existence of God.”

This demonstration does not differ from the via quarta of St. Thomas, which ascends to the primary good not only by way of exemplary and efficient causality, but also by way of final causality. This desire for God,

from the very fact that it is something imperfect and limited, presupposes the perfect, just as the relative presupposes the absolute.

In presenting this proof we must bear in mind that there is question here of a natural and efficacious desire, and not of a natural desire which is inefficacious and conditional, like that which has for its object the beatific vision of the divine essence.

The Thomists distinguish two kinds of natural love, one innate, the other elicited. The former precedes all knowledge, and is identical with the natural inclination of the will; the latter follows upon the apprehension of good. This elicited love is necessary, if it results from the simple apprehension of good without deliberation; in the contrary case it is free. Moreover, it may be either absolute and efficacious, if our nature furnishes us with the means of attaining the object desired; or conditional and inefficacious, if the object desired is beyond the reach of our natural faculties.

Now, according to St. Thomas (Ia, q. 60, a. 5), every creature, each in its own way, by reason of an inborn natural inclination, loves God more than itself, that is to say, it is more strongly inclined towards the author of its nature than towards itself, just as a part is naturally more strongly drawn to the preservation of the whole than to its own preservation. Thus it is natural for the hand to expose itself in order to save the head. Moreover, every reasonable creature, with a love which is elicited and spontaneous, loves above all else the sovereign good which it seeks in all things, and which can be found only in God. By an elicited and deliberate act of natural love man can afterwards prefer God to everything else, and perceive that natural happiness is to be found only in the knowledge of God derived from His works, and in the love of God which follows this knowledge, and which implies all the natural virtues.

Finally, man can naturally conceive that it would be a good thing to know God, not only through His works, but immediately as He knows Himself. But it is beyond the scope of our nature to attain to this intuitive vision; and hence the natural desire for this object can only be conditional and inefficacious; e. g., if God were gratuitously to raise me above my natural powers, so that I could see Him as He sees Himself, this would make me supremely happy. This velleity does not enter into our proof for God’s existence, for, strictly speaking, it can be frustrated, since it depends upon the free will of God to comply or not to comply with it. We are concerned

here with a natural desire that is absolute and efficacious. The human will, on account of its universality, which accrues to it naturally from the universality of the intellect, anteriorly to any act, cannot be satisfied with anything less than a complacent love of the principle of all good, which alone is Goodness itself. This love of the absolute above all things is also the basic principle, or at least the crown, of the great spiritual and moral systems of Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, Descartes, Malebranche, Leibniz, and others. Immediate intuition of this Good (which is entirely a supernatural gift) is not necessary to make us love it. It is sufficient for us to know it through its works and to love it as the author of our nature. It is this Good which we love when we practice virtue and refer all our acts to it, and not to ourselves.

e) The primary and sovereign good as the basic principle of duty. But the good is not only something to be desired, as capable of appealing to the appetitive part of our nature and making us happy; it is also something which must be the object of volition and has a right to be loved, nay positively demands our love and constitutes the basis of duty.

St. Thomas expresses himself very clearly on this point in his treatise on law in the Summa Theologica, Ia IIae, q. 94, a. 2: “Whether Natural Law Contains Several Precepts, or only One?” He says that there are several precepts included in the natural law, but that they all refer to the same first principle of practical reason, which is “that good must be done and evil must be avoided.” This first principle of conduct, he remarks, is based upon the notion of good, just as the first principle of the speculative reason, upon which all others of the same order depend, is itself based upon the notion of being. “That which first falls under apprehension, is being, the notion of which is included in all things whatsoever that a man apprehends. Therefore, the first indemonstrable principle is that the same thing cannot be affirmed and denied at the same time; this is based on the notion of being and not-being; and on this principle all others are based, as is stated in the Fourth Book of Metaphysics. Now, as being is the First thing which falls under simple apprehension, so good is the first thing which falls under the apprehension of the practical reason, which is directed to action; for every agent acts for an end which has the aspect of good. Consequently, the first principle of practical reason is one founded on the notion of good” (q. 94, a. 2).

In truth, it is not this or that good that must be done; it is that to which our nature by its activity is essentially ordained as to its proper end. Now, common sense, like philosophical reason, distinguishes three kinds of good: (1) sensible good, or that which is merely delectable; (2) useful good, by reason of the end; (3) virtuous good. The irrational animal finds its contentment in the first kind of good, and instinctively makes use of the second without perceiving the connection between it and the end in view (non cognoscit rationem finis; Ia IIae, q. 1, a. 2). It is man alone who, because of his reason, knows the usefulness or the sufficient reason of the means employed for the end. He alone knows and can love virtuous good. This latter appears to him as good in itself, desirable in itself, and this independently of the joy experienced in its possession and of any advantage to be derived from it. Such an end is good and desirable precisely because it is in conformity with right reason and appears to be the normal perfection of man as man (qua rational and not qua animal). It is good in itself, apart from the pleasure man takes in it and the advantages derived from it, such as knowing the truth, loving it above all things, acting always according to right reason, prudently, justly, firmly, and temperately. Moreover, this virtuous or rational good appears to us as the necessary end of all our actions and, consequently, as of obligation. Every man understands that the acts of a reasonable being must conform to right reason, just as right reason itself conforms to the absolute principles of being. Hence it is that duty is expressed by the formula that "we must do what is good, and avoid what is evil;" "Do your duty, let happen what may." Pleasure and personal interest must be subordinated to duty; the virtuous must be preferred to the delectable and the useful.

It is not a question here of something optional, but of something which is of obligation. In truth, it is by means of the principle of finality that reason validates its command; or, what comes to the same thing (as we have seen in n. 27), it is because of the division of being into potency and act that the will of a rational creature must tend towards virtuous or rational good, in regard to which it has a right to be called a potency, because the very raison d'être of potency is to be found in the act (potentia dicitur ad actum). Potency does not merely come to an end in the act, it is for the act, just as the imperfect is for the perfect, and the relative is for the absolute. In truth, it is only the absolute which contains its own sufficient reason in itself. A will which is by its very nature capable of willing rational good, and whose

natural tendency is towards this good, cannot refuse to will it, for that would mean a complete revocation of the very purpose of its being. The will is for rational good. This good must, therefore, be realized by that which can make it a reality and which exists for that purpose. The will considered from this point of view constitutes the proximate, though not the ultimate, basis of obligation.

The common opinion of mankind and the spontaneous promptings of reason confirm the conclusions of philosophy. Starting from this point, can we construct an argument for the existence of God? St. Thomas is just as certain as St. Augustine that we can. According to him, “the natural law, and especially its first principle, is nothing else but an imprint made on us by the Divine Light, a participation in the eternal law, which is in God” (Ia IIae, q. 91, a. 2). “This eternal law is nothing else but Divine Wisdom, which directs all actions and all movements of creatures” (Ia IIae, q. 93, a. 1). “Only God and the blessed, who see Him in His Essence, know the eternal law as it is in itself. But every rational creature knows it in its reflection, which is more or less brilliant. For every knowledge of truth is a kind of reflection and a participation in the eternal law, which is the unchangeable truth, as St. Augustine says (De Vera Relig., c. XXXI.” (Ia IIae, q. 93, a. 2).

If the natural moral law is a participation in the eternal law, which is in God, why can we not argue from the first to the second of these laws, and in like manner, from a consideration of the various kinds of goods which constitute the basis of our divers obligations, to the Supreme Good, which is our final end?

If we ascend by a sort of necessity from eternal truths to a supreme truth, upon which all other truths are based, why can we not ascend from the first principle of the moral law to the eternal law? We start here from practical principles, not from principles of the speculative order. The obligatory character of that which is good merely adds a new element to the demonstration, and this trait, manifested in the proximate foundation of the obligation, urges us on to seek for the absolute foundation.

As we remarked in the general proof, which includes all the others, if the virtuous good, towards which our nature is ordained, must be loved, apart from the satisfaction or advantages derived from it; if the being capable of willing it must will it, or else be purposeless; if our conscience proclaims this to be our duty, and afterwards approves or condemns without our being

able to stifle remorse; if, in a word, the right of good to be loved and put into practice, dominates our activity in the moral order and that of actual and possible groups of human beings, just as the principle of identity dominates all the actual and possible realities—then there must have been from all eternity some foundation for these absolute rights of the good. For these necessary and dominant rights cannot have their raison d'être either in contingent realities dominated by them, or in those many kinds of good which, arranged in hierarchical order, are imposed a priori on human nature. These rights, since they are above everything except the Absolute Good, can have their foundation only in the latter.

If, then, the proximate foundation of moral obligation is the essential order of things, or, to be more precise, if it is the rational good for which we are by nature and by our activity essentially ordained, then the absolute foundation of this obligation must be sought for in the Sovereign Good, which is our final objective. And this obligation could not have received its formal sanction except from a law of the same order as the Sovereign Good, that is to say, it could have come only from the Divine Wisdom, whose eternal law ordains and directs all creatures to their respective ends.

Thus we rise up to the Sovereign Good (maxime bonum), not only inasmuch as it is the first to be desired, the source of all happiness, but also inasmuch as it is the first Good in itself, and the absolute foundation of all duty. And this Sovereign Good, as we have seen, is identical with the First Being, the First Intellect, which is, therefore, entitled to be called the First Lawgiver. There is correlation in the order of agencies and ends, and the ultimate end becomes identified with the First Cause, in the moral as in the physical order.

The objection is sometimes raised that this demonstration of the existence of God implies a petitio principii, Strictly speaking, we are told, there can be no moral obligation without a supreme lawgiver, and it is impossible to feel oneself bound by a categorical moral obligation, unless one is aware that a supreme lawgiver exists. Therefore, the proposed proof takes for granted what is to be proved, and merely expresses in a more explicit manner that which it implicitly assumes.

In reply we may say that it suffices to show that there is a moral obligation because of its effects, such as, for instance, the remorse of conscience, and to prove that it has its proximate foundation in the essential order of things, or, to be more precise, in rational good, towards which our

nature is ordained as its general end. Thence we are led to seek for the absolutely ultimate basis of obligation—on the one hand, in the Sovereign Good which is our ultimate end, and on the other, in Divine Wisdom, which ordains all things for the Supreme Good.

There is a certain connection between this last proof, based on the moral law, and that drawn from moral sanction. We can demonstrate a priori that the Supreme Lawgiver, whose existence we have proved, must also be the Sovereign Judge, the Rewarder of good and the Avenger of evil. He owes it to Himself, as intelligent and good, to give to every being all that is necessary for it to attain the end which He has assigned to it (Ia, q. 21, a. 1), and to give to the just that knowledge of truth and that happiness which they have merited. Moreover, loving the absolutely supreme Good of necessity and above all else, He owes it to Himself to make these rights respected and to punish their violation (Ia IIae, q. 87, a. 1 and 3).

But the existence of a Supreme Judge and of an eternal sanction can also be proved a posteriori, from the insufficiency of all other sanctions. This proof is the one which, according to Kant, engenders rational faith in the existence of God—a faith with a "certitude that is subjectively sufficient, though objectively insufficient." Kant's argument is well known. The existence of God, he says, and the future life are two inseparable assumptions upon which moral obligation rests. The moral law can be expressed by the formula: Do that which can render you worthy of being happy (for virtue and happiness are necessarily connected with each other by reason of a synthetic judgment a priori). Now, God alone can realize this harmony between virtue and happiness. Therefore, God must exist. The nobler the moral character of a man is, the firmer and more lively is his faith in everything which he feels himself obliged to admit from a practically necessary point of view. This proof would possess sufficient objective certitude if the principle that "the just man must be perfectly happy," were self-evident a priori, that is to say, for us who do not admit that there are any a priori synthetic propositions, if it were analytic.

Without inquiring into the possibility of satisfying ourselves of the evidence of this proof before we are certain of God's existence, we may rest content in seeing in this proof, based on moral sanction, an a fortiori argument for the proof from the prevailing order of the universe, which we have still to discuss. If there is order in the material world, and if this order demands an intelligent designer, then, a fortiori, there must be order in the

moral world, which is far superior to the physical. Therefore, there must be ultimate harmony between the moral law, which obliges us to practise virtue, and our natural desire for happiness. The just man must some day be perfectly happy.

The proof based on the sanction of the moral law may also be presented as an a fortiori argument for that proof, based on the natural desire of the heart for the supreme good. If this natural desire postulates the existence of this good and the possibility of attaining it, at least mediately, just as the relative which is not its own sufficient reason for what it is, postulates the absolute, then, a fortiori, a deliberate and meritorious act on the part of the just man, which is something more than the natural desire common to all rational beings for happiness—must result in the possession of this (natural) happiness. This can be affirmed with a certainty which is objectively sufficient even before the existence of God has been scientifically demonstrated.

40) Proof based on the order prevailing in the world.

The fifth typical proof presented by St. Thomas is that based on the order prevailing in the world. The way for it has been prepared by the preceding proof, which concluded from the multiplicity in things to the existence of a higher unity. The present proof argues from the orderly arrangement in multiplicity to the existence of a unity of concept and an intelligent designer. We shall see that the argument can start not only from the order prevailing in the physical world, but from every being in which is found a part ordained towards another, whether it be the essence which is ordained for existence, or intelligence, which is ordained for its act (potentia dicitur ad actum). We shall thus be able to arrive at an intelligence which is its own understanding, nay, more, which is the always actually intelligible in contemplation of itself, that it is, self-subsistent Being. After a cursory exposé of this proof we shall show that it is rigorously exact in answering the objections raised against it.

The proof is presented by St. Thomas in this shape: “We see that things which lack intelligence, such as material beings, act in a manner conformable to their end, for we perceive that they always, or nearly always, act in the same way, in order to obtain the best results. Hence it is plain that they achieve their end not fortuitously, but designedly. Now, whatever lacks intelligence cannot move towards an end unless it be directed by some being endowed with intelligence, just as the arrow is

directed to its mark by the archer. Therefore, there is an intelligent being which directs all natural things to their end, and this being we call God."

This can be expressed more briefly if we begin with the major, thus: "A means cannot be directed to an end except by an intelligent cause. Now, we find in nature, in the things which lack intelligence, means directed to ends. Therefore, nature is the result of an intelligent cause."

This proof, of which Kant always spoke with respect, proceeds in a perfectly natural way from the spontaneous reason, when put in contact with the world, and it is historically one of the oldest proofs for the existence of God. According to Homer, Zeus is the designer, who arranges and directs all things, (Iliad, VIII, 22; XVII, 339). Among the Greek philosophers Xenophanes says that God "directs all things by the power of the mind." Anaxagoras was the first thinker who clearly distinguished mind from matter and placed intelligence at the source and above all things, over which it presides (see Aristotle, Met., Bk. I, ch. iii). Socrates developed the proof from the final causes (Memorabilia, I, 4; IV, 3; Phaedo, 96, 199). He emphasizes the admirable disposition of the parts of the human body and the harmonious connection between means and ends. He sees in nature not only traces of intelligence, but also finds there the proof of a beneficent power, full of solicitude for men. (Mem., IV, 3). He does not say that the phenomena come into existence of necessity, but because it is good that they should. Such at least is the résumé of the discourse of Socrates as recorded by Plato (Phaedo, 96, 199). St. Thomas repeats it "Things which lack intelligence act almost always so as to obtain the best result." Plato (Phaedo, 100) declaims loudly against those who, like Democritus, sought to explain the universe by ascribing it to a material and efficient cause without intelligence. In the tenth book of the Laws he argues from the fact that God has arranged all things in the world even to the smallest detail, and draws the optimistic conclusion that God ordained all things in view of the greatest possible perfection. The problem of evil is solved by a consideration of the whole. Aristotle pointed out, and defended metaphysically the minor of this syllogism, namely, that "every agent acts for an end." Regarding the major, his teaching is not so clear. According to Zeller, the God of Aristotle had no knowledge of the world. We do not think that there is anything in his text to that effect; in fact, several passages rather indicate the contrary. The controversies which have arisen on this point may be studied in Kaufmann's La Finalité dans Aristote, and in

Aristoteles Metaphysik, by Eugene Rolfes (Leipsic, 1904). After the time of Aristotle the Epicureans again took up the doctrine of Democritus, whereas the Stoics developed the proof based on the final causes, insisting upon particular happenings in the universe; but they did not go farther in their reasoning than to establish the existence of a "world-soul," or an artistic fire, πύρ τεχνικόν, as they called it.

Among modern writers, Descartes, Spinoza, and, following them, the defenders of Mechanistic Evolution attacked the minor, which Leibniz defended by insisting upon the contingency of the order prevailing in the world. Kant attacked also the major, and was followed by those who, like Hartmann, are satisfied with explaining finality by an unconscious will.

We shall examine: (1) the principal objections raised against the minor, that "things which lack intelligence act for an end," and then (2) deal with the objections against the major, namely, that "things which lack intelligence cannot tend towards an end, unless they are directed by an intelligent being which knows this end."

1) The minor, as formulated by St. Thomas, concerns the intrinsic finality observable in the activity of all beings which, taken separately, lack intelligence. For instance, the eye is for seeing, and wings are for flying. Certain philosophers, e. g., the Stoics, insisted just as strongly on extrinsic finality, which subordinates things to one another. Cicero writes: "The fruits of the earth are for the animals, said the Stoics; the animals are for man, the horse to convey him, the ox for ploughing the land, and man for contemplating and imitating the universe."

Descartes objected to extrinsic finality. "It is not likely," he says, "that man should be the end of creation: how many things, indeed, are in the world, or were at one time, but are now no more, without any man ever having seen them or known of them, without having been of any use to humanity!" Again: "It is absurd to claim that the sun, which is several times larger than the earth, has been made for no other purpose than to offer light to man, who occupies but a part thereof."

In answer to this objection we must say that final causes have been abused, and that the extrinsic finality of things often escapes us. But their intrinsic finality is a certainty, as Descartes himself recognized, saying: "In the admirable purpose assigned to each part, both in plants and animals, it is proper to admire the hand of God who made them, and by an inspection of the work, to know and praise the Author; but we cannot surmise for what

purpose He created each particular thing." (Principes, I, 28). We see that the organs of the viper, as well as its actions, are ordained for its preservation and propagation (intrinsic finality); but it is more difficult to say what purpose vipers serve (extrinsic finality). We do not know; this ignorance may prove the limitations of our mind, but it does not prove that there is no final cause. The ignorance does not prevent us from affirming with certainty, that eyes are made for seeing and wings for flying, and that the swallow gathers the straw for making its nest; the word "for" is not meaningless, but points to something real, just as the word by expresses efficient causality.

But Descartes goes farther than this. He revives the Epicurean doctrine, adopted by the Evolutionists of our day, that the efficient causes explain everything. "Even though we were to believe in the existence of the chaos of the poets," he says, "it could always be proved that, thanks to the laws of nature, this confusion must gradually resolve itself into the actual order of things. The laws of nature are such, indeed, that matter must of necessity take all the forms which it is capable of receiving." Judging from this passage it would seem that Descartes, like Spinoza after him, was quite ready to admit with the Epicureans and the present-day Evolutionists, not that the bird has wings for the purpose of flying, but that it flies because it has wings: that the mother has milk not for the purpose of suckling her baby, but she suckles her baby because she has milk which she wishes to get rid of. Epicurus considered living things to be the result of all sorts of combinations, some of which necessarily turn out to be harmonious. The Evolutionists (Darwin, Spencer, Haeckel and others) believe that the finality apparent in living beings can be explained by vital concurrence and natural selection. Among living beings only those survive and propagate their species which happen to be adapted to the conditions of existence. We have already seen that William James maintained that Darwinism has overthrown the proof for the existence of God drawn from final causes. "The adaptations which we find in nature," he writes, "since they are nothing else but chance successes amidst innumerable failures, suggest to us the idea of a divinity far different from that demonstrated by finalism." He thinks that "we ought to pay more attention than we have hitherto done, to the pluralistic or polytheistic thesis."

This denial of intrinsic finality conflicts with the findings (a) of common sense, (b) of science, (c) of philosophical reason.

a) In the coordination of the parts of an organism, or of some particular organ such as the eye or the ear; in the coordination of the actions of an animal when it instinctively builds a nest, a hive, etc., common sense or spontaneous reason, which has for its object the raison d'être of things, cannot avoid seeing precisely a raison d'être which fundamentally differentiates these organisms and their activity from any aggregation of things in which the union between the parts is purely accidental. No objection will ever destroy this certainty, which arises spontaneously in, and belongs to the very essence of, our intellect. Whenever reason comes in contact with the rational, it cannot help recognizing it, and whenever our intellect discovers an intelligible element in things, it knows very well that it did not put them there. If the Evolutionist wishes to assimilate an organism to an inanimate aggregation, common sense will say with Ruskin: "The philosopher tells us that there is as much heat, or motion, or calorific energy, in a tea-kettle as in a Gier-eagle. Very good; that is so; and it is very interesting. It requires just as much heat as will boil the kettle, to take the Gier-eagle up to its nest. But we painters, acknowledging the equality and similarity of the kettle and the bird in all scientific respects, attach, for our part, our principal interest to the difference in their forms. For us, the primarily cognisable facts in the two things are, that the kettle has a spout, and the eagle a beak; the one a lid on its back, the other a pair of wings; not to speak of the distinction of volition, which the philosophers may properly call merely a form or mode of force. The kettle chooses to sit still on the hob; the eagle to recline on the air. It is the fact of the choice, not the equal degree of temperature in the fulfillment of it, which appears to us the more interesting circumstance."

b) The negation of intrinsic finality is equally opposed to science. John Stuart Mill, as we have already seen, recognizes that, according to the laws of induction and the actual state of science, the most probable cause of the organic structure of the eye or of the ear, is not the "survival of the fittest," but a designing intelligence. He considers the proof for the existence of God based on finality to be an inductive argument, which in its manner of development follows closely the method of concordances. It is a "poor argument in many cases, though at times, too, it has considerable force of conviction; especially is such the case with those delicate and complicated adjustments of the plant and animal life." In fact, from the mere standpoint of experimental science, the odds are overwhelmingly in favor of saying

that a structure so complicated and so harmonious as the eye or the ear, could never be such without an intelligent designer, any more than the setting up of the type in the printing of the Iliad could ever be arranged again in the same way without an intelligent designer. In an organism such as the human body, the various parts are so interconnected that they are, from different points of view, causes one of the other, and concur in bringing about one complete effect. In an organic structure such as the eye, the act of seeing presupposes the simultaneous presence of thirteen conditions, and each of these conditions presupposes many others. Hartmann has shown that, according to the law of probabilities, without any designing cause, there are 9,999,985 chances against 15 for the possibility of these thirteen conditions meeting so as to make seeing possible. Kant recognized the impossibility of explaining the appearance of a blade of grass by natural laws in which there is no design, but thought that an intellect which could penetrate to the very heart of nature, might perhaps explain the phenomenon without reference to design. There is nothing to this theory, as we shall see. The negation of intrinsic finality is just as much opposed to philosophic reason as it is opposed to common sense and experimental science.

c) Philosophic reason proves the insufficiency of the two explanations by which it is claimed that intrinsic finality can be discarded, and rigorously defends the principle of finality. Even if we grant that Mechanistic Evolutionism explains the survival of the fittest, it cannot explain why there should be adaptations, except by ascribing them to chance or necessity—neither of which offers a sufficient explanation.

Chance is merely the absence of an explanation for those things, of a raison d’être, of intelligibility in things. Consequently, we shall see that to try to explain everything by chance is absurd.

Marvelous things do sometimes happen by chance; thus an archer may by sheer luck hit the target; but experience shows that such cases are exceptional. Aristotle has proved convincingly that reason can see in chance only something which is accidental. It is the accidental cause of an effect produced without any intention, either natural or conscious, such that it could be said to have been directly intended. The chance effect is an accidental effect which happens so as to make it seem that the action which brought it about was meant for that purpose. One digs a grave, which is the end intended, and accidentally finds a treasure. But precisely because it is

accidental, chance cannot be considered the cause, in the natural order, of each agent which produces its own effect. We cannot claim that all the effects produced in nature are accidental; for the accidental necessarily presupposes what is essential. One finds a treasure in digging a grave, but it is intentionally that one digs the grave, and previous to this, the treasure was intentionally buried in the ground. Chance is but the coming together of two actions which in themselves are not fortuitous, but intentional. Aristotle says that it is accidental for a doctor to be a musician; but this accidental union presupposes two terms, which in themselves are not accidentally constituted as such. It is not an accident that a doctor is a physician, and able to take care of the sick, any more than it is accidental for a musician to be proficient in music. To seek to reduce the whole natural order to chance would mean, therefore, to reduce the essential to the accidental, and, consequently, to destroy every nature and every being; for every being has a nature which is peculiarly its own (principle of identity). All that we should have left in such a case would be fortuitous encounters, but not things capable of making such encounters, which is absurd. Two wisps of straw blown by the wind accidentally come together; but the motion of each is not accidental, for it proceeds according to determined laws of nature. Agents which encounter each other accidentally, have each his own action, and it is this action which, independently of their encounter, demands an explanation. To say, as Epicurus did, and as so many Materialists or modern Positivists have repeated after him, that chance is the cause of the natural order, is not only no explanation of anything, but an absurd hypothesis, for it is making in principle the accidental to be the basis of the natural or the essential. “Ens per accidens non potest esse causa entis per se, sed e contra essentialiter dependet ab ente per se,” that is to say, accidental being cannot be the cause of substantial being, but, on the contrary, essentially depends upon substantial being.

But though the accidental, and particularly chance, cannot be the principle of all things, it has its place in the world. How, then, shall we distinguish fortuitous events from natural effects, which cannot be explained by chance? We recognize the latter by their constancy and by their perfection, which is revealed to us in their harmony, or, in other words, by the fact that there is unity in diversity, and the more pronounced this unity is, the more it excludes chance, which is nothing else but the accidental encounter of two causes or series of causes.

α) What happens always, or nearly always, cannot possibly be the result of chance. This constancy would be without a sufficient reason, if it were not founded on the very nature of things, which is the ultimate source of their identity.

β) It is impossible for a great number of causes to combine by chance, to produce an effect essentially one and perfect in its kind, as is the case, for instance, with the act of seeing, in which the various parts of the eye concur. If this act were the effect of chance, something essentially one would be the result of an accidental combination (ens per se ab ente per accidens produceretur), the perfect would be produced by the imperfect, order would result from the absence of order, and the greater would proceed from the less. Such being the case, the unity and perfection of the effect would be without a raison d'être, which is absurd.

γ) It cannot possibly be ascribed to chance that manifold and perfectly connected elements come from a germ of which unity is one of the essential notes, as, for instance, in the case of the oak, the various parts of which come from the acorn. Evidently chance is out of the question here, from the very simplicity of the origin, which cannot be attributed to an accidental combination of elements.

δ) A fortiori it cannot be by chance that an effect which is essentially one and perfect comes from a principle that is essentially one, as, for instance, the act of understanding comes from the intellect. Chance, being an accidental encounter of things, is evidently excluded by reason of the simplicity of the beginning and of the end of this process.

For the full development of these ideas we must emphasize the harmony prevailing in the organisms of plants and animals, or, in other words, the unity in the diversity of causes which combine and are necessary for life. We must also stress the permanence, not only in time, but also in space, of the thousands of species in the plant and animal kingdoms.

We must also insist on the instinct in animals, and note that the three characteristics just mentioned are to be found in their operations. (a) The plurality of the elements which enter into the composition of their works; (b) the harmony of the effect produced, and (c) its constancy. "We see them," says St. Thomas, "always or nearly always acting in the same manner so as to obtain the best result." The spider works very much like a weaver, the bee seems to be a perfect mathematician. (This characteristic of constancy or permanence of type, which surely is not the result of chance,

shows us also, as Aristotle remarks in the second book of his Physics [ch. VIII], that the animal does not act intelligently; for it cannot, like the architect, pass judgment on the appearance of its work when completed, nor can it make any alterations in the same. If one upsets what an animal is constructing, it often, urged on by instinct, continues to work in the same way to no purpose).

Chance, therefore, leaves everything to be explained. To wish to explain all things by it, to say that it is the cause of order in the universe, is tantamount to saying that there are effects without causes, that the greater comes from the less, the higher from the lower; that the accidental is prior to the essential, that the essential is but a name—a denial of the principle of identity—that, in consequence, the real is not intelligible. Does this mean that we deny there is such a thing as chance? Not at all. Things do sometimes happen by chance, as far as secondary causes are concerned. But to an intelligence knowing and disposing of the ensemble of causes and forces, and governing their tendencies, all the seemingly fortuitous events in life would be predetermined and foreseen. But that does not mean that all these fortuitous encounters were intended as an end; they could only be the result of what is desired for its own sake, and they could not be desired for their own sake except ex consequenti. We merely affirm that to explain by chance the constant harmony of effects produced in nature, is no explanation at all, and, moreover, lands one in absurdity.

Is necessity a sufficient explanation, as Democritus and many modern Mechanists would have it? In other words, is it enough to appeal merely to the efficient cause and to the determining element it carries within itself?

We have yet to explain why this efficient cause acts, instead of remaining inert. If there is no perfection in its action, a good corresponding to the natural inclination of the agent, then this action was taken without a raison d’être. It will not do to say that this efficient cause acts because it is moved to action by another, and this in turn by still another, and so on, ad infinitum. This would be but to postpone, not to answer, the question. We want to know why it is that every efficient cause acts instead of not acting.

Moreover, the determination which bears within it the efficient cause, must also be explained, St. Thomas proposes to himself this objection: “Illud quod est de se determinatum ad unum non indiget aliquo regente; quia ad hoc regimen alicui adhibetur ne in contrarium dilabatur. Res autem per propriam naturam sunt determinatae ad unum, i.e., that which is

determined to one line of action, does not need any directive agency; because a directive agency is given to anything in order to keep it from acting contrariwise. But things are determined by their very nature to one line of action." According to the Mechanists, things are constituted as follows: fire, by reason of its nature, must burn; the bird must fly; it must fly, but it has not wings for flying, In like manner, says Spinoza, the triangle, by its very nature, must have its three angles equal to two right angles; but no one will say that it possesses its peculiar nature for the purpose of having its three angles equal to two right angles.

St. Thomas answers as follows: "Ista determinatio, qua res naturalis determinatur ad unum, non est ei ex seipsa, sed ex alio; et ideo ipsa determinatio ad effectum convenientem providentiam demonstrat, ut dictum est, i.e., this determination, by which a thing in nature is determined to one line of action, belongs to it, not as coming from itself, but as coming from another; and, therefore, as has been said, this very determination for a suitable effect demonstrates that there is a providence." In other words, if you seek to explain the flight of a bird by the necessary conformation of its wings, the necessity of this conformation has still to be explained, and if it has not its own raison d'être within itself, then we must seek this raison d'être in something higher. In truth, we can explain such and such a property of a triangle by showing that it is derived from the nature of the triangle, and this fully explains it. The nature of the triangle, as geometry considers it, abstracting from all sensible matter and from all efficient causality, is something which has its own sufficient reason for what it is within itself; the triangle is of itself a triangle. The case is different with a triangular object; here we may ask why it is triangular. We have a composition (a lack of identity), which demands a cause. Likewise, we may ask ourselves: Why are the bird's wings so conformed? St. Thomas says that "this determination, by which a thing in nature is determined to one line of action, belongs to it, not as coming from itself, but as coming from another." And if in answer to this question, the Mechanists appeal to the presence of a prior efficient cause, and, in the final analysis, to a general law of physics, such as the law of the conservation of energy, they merely evade the question. We still ask, why the prior efficient cause acts, and has such and such a determination and direction, why the force operates in a certain determined manner, and why there is conservation of the same.

Descartes and Spinoza sought to reduce physics to mathematics, which latter science excludes the consideration of perceptible matter, of efficient and of final causes, and is concerned only with the formal cause. They emphatically declared that the laws of physics are absolute and necessary a priori, like the laws of mathematics, and hence denied the possibility of miracles. Spinoza held that God can no more prevent fire from burning, than He can prevent a triangle from having three angles equal to two right angles.

We fully understand that mathematics, since it considers merely quantity, should exclude the efficient cause, and consequently also the final cause, which corresponds to the efficient cause. But what right has anyone to impose mathematical abstraction upon such sciences as cosmology and metaphysics, which have for their object not only quantity, but also being, becoming, and action?

Leibniz, recurring to Aristotle, replied to Descartes and Spinoza by insisting that the order or laws of nature are contingent. He pointed out that the laws of motion and of the conservation of energy are not necessary, but could have been formulated differently. They were chosen as the most suitable, but others suggested themselves, and a choice had to be made. Is it of absolute necessity that the apparent motion of the sun should take place in a certain way, and not in reverse order? Or that there should be on earth such a vast number of animal and plant species? Boutroux has defended this thesis at length in his book on the Contingency of the Laws of Nature. “The most elementary and the most general laws, both physical and chemical, express relations between things so heterogeneous that it is impossible to say whether the consequent is proportionate to the antecedent and is truly the result of this latter, as the effect is the result of a cause. . . . For us they are merely so many contacts given by experience, and, like it, contingent.” The law of the conservation of energy is not a necessary truth, a supreme law from which nature cannot escape. Neither is there inherent in the physico-chemical forces any intrinsic necessity compelling them to produce this particular combination which results in life, sensation, and intelligence.

Therefore, necessity is not sufficient to explain, anteriorly to the “survival of the fittest,” the origin of adaptations. The necessity of physical laws is merely hypothetical; i.e., it presupposes something. And precisely what does it presuppose? Finality. The expression, “hypothetical necessity” is the English equivalent of τὸ ἐξ ὑποθέσεως ἀναγκαίον of Aristotle. If the

end must exist, then such and such means are necessary. Thus, if a man has vision, the thirteen conditions for seeing are necessary. This necessity is not absolute, but always presupposes the means viewed in relation to the end. Then, too, there might be exceptions, as, for instance, monsters. Whereas in metaphysics and in mathematics the laws are absolute and admit of no exception, in physics they apply to the generality of cases (ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολύ, ut in pluribus), and the exceptions are all the more numerous, the more complicated the law is.

Finally, philosophic reasoning establishes the fact that, even if necessity existed throughout nature, and admitted of no exception, it would still presuppose finality. Let us take, for instance, a principle of operation as simple as possible, such as the force of attraction, or, better still, the intellectual faculty. There is nothing in it, no complexity of organization that needs to be explained, but there is something relative, which can be explained only by the law of finality. In fact, the principle that "every agent must act with an end in view," is derived directly from the principle of sufficient reason, just as is the principle of causality, and the principle of sufficient reason itself, as we have observed (supra, n. 24), referred back to the principle of identity, by a process of reductio ad impossibile. We have pointed out previously (n. 27), how the principle of finality is self-evident and reducible to the principle of sufficient reason. We must stress the importance of this truth.

Jouffroy, in his Cours de Droit Naturel, where he inquires into the truths upon which the moral order is based, correctly says that "the first of these truths is the principle that every being has an end or a purpose. Like the principle of causality, it has all the evidence, universality, and necessity which we find in the latter principle, and we can see no exception to either." Paul Janet, in his in other respects so remarkable book on Final Causes, fails to see that the principle of finality is necessary and self-evident, because he never discovered its exact formula, but stopped at the too general formula, "Everything has an end." He did not think it possible to affirm a priori, and before proving the existence of God, that the various Alpine slopes, for instance, have their end as well as their efficient cause. The true formula of the principle of finality is that given by Aristotle, and constantly quoted by St. Thomas: "Every agent necessarily acts for an end." The necessity of a final cause is declared to be an immediate necessity, not for every thing, but for every agent. The encounter of two agents, from

which the mountain slopes result, may be fortuitous, but each of them must of necessity act for an end. In fact, the final cause is the raison d'être of the efficient cause. This is what Paul Janet failed to see. He also failed to realize that the principle of finality is a necessary and immediately evident principle. Ravaisson, on the other hand, was not mistaken. "We conceive it as necessary," he said, "that the cause, together with the reason for beginning, also includes the end to which a thing tends." Lachelier bases the induction just as much on the final as on the efficient cause. Hartmann clearly explains this necessity of a final cause, by taking for an example the simplest of all cases, that of the attraction between atoms. "The attractive force of a corporeal atom," he says, "tends to approach every other atom; the result of this tendency is the production or realization of this rapprochement. Therefore, we must distinguish in force between the tendency itself, considered as a pure and simple act, and the end in view, i.e., the content or object of the tendency. . . . If the motion thus produced were not contained in the tendency, there is no reason why this latter should produce attraction rather than something else—repulsion, for instance, or why it should obey a certain law rather than some other, in the change which it undergoes during the distance traversed. . . . The tendency would not be towards any end; it would have no object, and consequently would produce no result." This reads almost like a translation of the second chapter of Book III of the Summa contra Gentes, in which St. Thomas says: "If the agent did not tend towards some particular effect, all effects would be indifferent. But that which is indifferent toward many things, no more produces one of these than any other. Therefore, from whatever is indifferent to one thing or the other, no effect follows, except by something which is determined to produce one specific effect, because otherwise it would be impossible for it to act. Hence every agent tends to some determinate effect, which is said to be its end."

The principle that "every agency acts for an end," is self-evident, with an evidence which is not of sense perception, but of the intellect, provided that the exact meaning is given to the words: action and end, as we pointed out supra, n. 27. In fact, the end is a determined perfection which it is fitting for the agent to have as a good of its own and for the sake of which the agent acts. Now, every agent, according to the law governing its nature, produces a determined effect, which belongs to it as its perfection, and it cannot

produce this effect, unless it tends towards this effect in preference to any other, and unless it is ordained towards the same.

Thus without reasoning we discover that the eye is made for seeing, the ear for hearing, the wings for flying, etc. Finality, which is a necessary raison d'être of action, applies equally to the intelligence, because this latter is a faculty of being.

The self-evident principle of finality can be defended by showing that it refers back to the principle of sufficient reason, so that to deny the former would lead to a denial of the latter. St. Thomas briefly points this out when he says that "Every agent acts for an end: otherwise one thing rather than another would not follow from the action of the agent." If every agent produces, not any sort of effect indifferently, but a determinate and suitable effect, and this without tending towards this effect, without being ordained towards this effect rather than towards another; if the acorn produces the oak and not the ash, without its having a definite tendency for the one rather than for the other; if the eye sees instead of hearing, without being meant for seeing rather than hearing—it follows that the non-accidental determination and appropriateness of the effect are without a raison d'être, that determination comes from indetermination, that order arises from the lack of order, that the perfect originates from the imperfect, the greater from the less—all of which statements are absurd. The determination and the perfection of the effect could not have been realized in it, unless they were in a certain manner contained in the efficient cause. Now, for the effect not to be contained in the cause actually, but only virtually, this could not be, unless the efficient cause tended towards this effect rather than another, unless it were directed towards this effect.

Without this tendency and this order, not only are the determination and the appropriateness of the effect without a raison d'être, but even the determination and the appropriateness of the action cannot be explained. Finally, the principle itself of action or potency (active or passive) cannot be conceived except as preordained to the act. Potentia dicitur essentialiter ad actum (potency essentially refers to act) is one of the formulas pertaining to the principle of finality, which refers primarily to action and secondarily to potency, the principle of action.

Potency does not end merely in the act; this latter is not simply a result of it, for in that case the act would not be predetermined and would have no raison d'être. And how could this sufficient reason be in the potency, since

the act is more perfect than the potency, having more of being in itself? The act is the answer to the why of potency. It is the τὸ οὗ ἕνεκα, the id cujus gratia, the purpose of the potency, just as the imperfect is for the perfect, and the relative for the absolute. In fact, it is only the absolute which has its raison d'être within itself.

So also the act in its actual operation is for the perfection which is acquired or manifested by it. The immanent actions of knowing and of loving are ordained for the acquisition of truth and goodness. The transitive action of any agent is ordained either for the attainment of some good, or else for the communication of a good possessed by the agent, so that other beings may share in it.

Potency is for the act, and action is either for the attainment or for the communication of some perfection. The word for is not a meaningless term. Thus philosophical reason reunites with the sensus communis and justifies it.

Therefore, if there is action in the world, there is finality; for without it, this action would produce everything or nothing, but not a determined effect. For this reason we may say that the proof for the existence of God based on the finality prevailing in the world, may start not only from a consideration of the marvelous organisms or instincts of animals, but also from a consideration of any ordained multiplicity of design in things, even if it be only that which is found in every created being, whose essence is ordained for existence and whose operative power is designed for action.

The existence of the internal finality being thus affirmed and established by the sensus communis, by science and reason, there may be deduced from it the existence of external finality, as Paul Janet has demonstrated. In fact, we notice in the scale of beings that the, higher make use of the lower. Thus the mineral is utilized by the plant, which in its turn is utilized by the animal, which in turn is utilized by man. To say that the higher makes use of the lower is to say that the higher directs the lower to its own proper (intrinsic) end. Thus the animal for its own preservation utilizes the plant, which is its internal end; but this preservation is made possible only by the use of appropriate matter. Whence it follows that, corresponding to this intrinsic end, there is an extrinsic end, which is the intrinsic end of the higher being. St. Thomas says: "The end of the agent and of the patient, considered as such, is identical, but in a different way, respectively." The patient, as such, not as a being, has the same end as the agent. Food is

directed to nutrition, just as is the nutritive power. If the extrinsic finality of things frequently escapes our notice, and if inexperienced apologists have made too free a use of this argument, this is no reason why we should deny it. The same must be said of those cases in which there seems to be sufficient evidence of finality. Thus by means of the functioning of the chlorophyll substance in plants they purify the air by absorbing the carbonic acid in it which comes from the breathing of animals. During the hours of daylight, by means of this absorption, the plant decomposes this carbonic acid, restoring the oxygen necessary to the animal, and absorbing the carbon, with which it composes the hydrates of combustible carbon, using it to form other compounds of combustible hydrocarbons, which serve as food for the animal. But this extrinsic finality need not always be realized. It is demanded for the higher forms of life, but not for the lower. During the time when there was as yet no animal life on earth, plant life, if it existed, did not attain its extrinsic end.

It is thus that we prove the existence of finality in the world. This relation of means to an end seems even more evident in the organism or the instinctive activity of the animal, but it is also found in every agent and constitutes the connecting link between the various beings in the universe, which react mutually upon one another. The subordination of agents corresponds to the subordination of ends.

We can now understand why Aristotle wrote: “Everything in the universe is subject to a certain order, though this order is not the same for all beings, for fishes, birds, plants. Things are not so arranged as if each were unrelated to the other. Far from this being the case, they are all interrelated and all concur with a perfect regularity in producing a unique result. Hence the universe resembles a well arranged house.”

In view of what we have said, but little of consequence remains in the objections raised by the Abbé Le Roy against the minor of the proof for the existence of God from final causes. This proof, according to the Abbé Le Roy, is based on extrinsic finality and is contradicted by science and critical philosophy, which admit only intrinsic finality. The principle of analogy which it establishes between our activity and that of nature, is contested by psychology. Finally, the argument regards order as something superadded, as it were by way of an afterthought, to already existing elements. We have seen that our minor is directly concerned with intrinsic finality. The affirmation of this intrinsic finality is not an anthropomorphic view, a sort

of projection beyond ourselves of what we experience within the domain of our own activities, in which we find finality to be an indisputable fact. But it is quite certain that Empiricism and Subjectivistic Rationalism cannot conceive finality in any other way. In systems such as these, finality is almost inevitably a more or less gratuitous attribution to corporeal things of what we experience within ourselves. In reality, the principle of finality is not an experimental truth drawn from internal experience, but a necessary law of being, derived from the principle of sufficient reason. We do not content ourselves with asserting, as Stuart Mill does, that there is an analogy between nature and the works of human art, but we go farther and demonstrate a priori that every agent acts for an end. Finally, order is by no means to be considered as something superadded like an afterthought to already existing elements, for these elements could not exist or act without being preordained or predetermined. The end, far from being something superadded, is the first in intention of all causes (prima in intentione), even though it be the last in point of realization (ultima in executione). Before the acorn produces an oak, it is preordained for this purpose, it is made for the purpose of producing the oak.

2. Does this relation of means to end, this orderly arrangement of things, demand an intelligent cause? The major of our proof says that it does: “Beings which lack intelligence cannot tend towards an end, unless they are directed to it by an intelligent cause,” or, more simply, “a means cannot be directed to an end except by an intelligent agent.”

This major is often proved by saying that the end which determines the tendency and the means, is none other than the effect to be realized at some future time. But a future effect is a mere possibility, which, in order to determine its own causes, must be real and present in some way, and such a presence is possible only in a being cognizant of itself.

This argument proves that there must be a being cognizant of itself, but not that this being must be intelligent. “The animals,” says St. Thomas, “have knowledge of that which constitutes the end, (for instance, they go in search of prey), and they make use of the means which will enable them to attain that end; but they do not know the nature of an end as such; they know the thing which constitutes the end, but they do not know it as an end.” The id cujus gratia aliquid fit, that for the sake of which something is done, they do not know. They cannot perceive the relation of the means to the end; likewise, they are incapable of appropriating to themselves the

means of attaining the end. Only an intelligent being can perceive this relation, because a being endowed with intelligence, instead of merely associating or juxtaposing images, perceives the reasons why things are, and the means is related to the end as such precisely because it has its raison d'être in the end. Evidently this raison d'être can be perceived only by that faculty which has for its formal object being itself, and not color, or sound, or any of the facts of internal experience. Moreover, the perception of this raison d'être presupposes that the means and the end have been reduced to the unity of a single representation, and it is only the intellectual concept that can effect such a unity. Just as we rise from the multiple to one in the proof based upon the various grades of being, so in this proof we conclude from the ordained multiplicity of things to an ordaining unity. "It belongs to reason to direct, because reason has the faculty of ordaining things to their end." Therefore, the order prevailing in the world calls for an intelligent designer.

Kant objects that, granted the existence of finality, we cannot affirm that the proper reason of the order in the world is because it is the result of an intelligent designer. He says that it is merely an analogy; we say that it is the result of intelligent design, because we do not know any other cause.

We say that this order is the result of intelligent design, not only because chance, blind necessity, instinct, or blind freedom explain nothing, but also because order presupposes that the means find their raison d'être in the end, and because it is of the very essence of intelligence to perceive the raison d'être, which is its formal object. Moreover, intelligence is a vital and transcendental relation to being, and is, therefore, like being, analogous, and no more implies imperfection in its concept than being itself; it is an absolute perfection.

It is further objected that there could be several intelligent designers. In answer to this we would say that we observe all the forces of nature harmoniously combining for one common end, which presupposes a common purpose. Against those who admit several first principles, Aristotle remarks: "The world refuses to be governed badly. 'The rule of many is not good; one ruler let there be.' " Moreover, these many intelligences would all have some relation to the intelligible and to being, but they would not be the being. In each of them there would be a multiplicity of design, because of its capacity for knowing and its object. We must continue our search until

we arrive at a supreme intelligence, which is identified with being, and by which all the minor intelligences are definitely directed to being.

Kant insists that this proof can at most demonstrate the existence of a mighty and vast, but not of an infinite intelligence. It leads us to conceive God as the architect of the world, but not as its creator.

Cajetan had already answered this objection when he pointed out that it is sufficient if this proof leads us to an intelligence, without going into details, since the four preceding proofs have demonstrated the existence of a prime mover, of a first cause, of a necessary being, and of a first being that is absolutely simple and of sovereign perfection. But if we look more closely into this matter, we perceive that the intelligence claimed by this fifth proof must be pure act. If it were not so, we should have to say that its essence differed from its existence, that its intelligence was not its intellection, and that in it intellection and the intelligible were not identical. Now, essence cannot be directed to existence, nor intelligence to the intelligible object, except by a higher intelligence which is identical with its very being, always in the act of knowing itself.

Schopenhauer admits the presence of finality in the world, but ascribes it to no other cause than an unconscious will, as an example of which he cites instinct. Bergson upholds more or less the same doctrine. It has been said in reply that this teaching substitutes zoömorphism for anthropomorphism, which brings us no farther. But to affirm that there is an intelligence is not an anthropomorphism, since intelligence, considered as such, and not merely insofar as it is human, is an absolute perfection with no trace of imperfection. If it is realized in its pure state in any being, it is not in man, but in God.

Moreover, in seeking to replace intelligence by instinct, we again encounter finality, which calls for an explanation. Finally, the cause which has produced man must be at least of equal dignity with him. To rest satisfied with an instinctive finality is to return to the hylozoism of the ancients and to endow matter with sympathies and antipathies which, far from constituting a supreme principle by which all things can be explained, need to be explained themselves. The simplest of material elements, the atom and the crystal, far from being the principle of things, cannot be explained except by some idea of a type or end, which only an intelligence could conceive and endow them with.

Hartmann recognizes that the unconscious will of Schopenhauer cannot harbor within itself any principle of determination, and acknowledges the existence of an intelligence, but describes it as unconscious. We ask: how could an unconscious intelligence know the end and meaning of finality, and how could it adapt means to that end?

Lachelier comes with an objection taken from Hegel. Let us suppose, he says, that order originates in God; now order, in a certain sense, must be prior to God's intellectual operation. Therefore, all regularly constituted order does not presuppose the operation of an intelligence. Hence, why not suppose, in accordance with the Absolute Idealism of Hegel, that nature is eternal and bears its own order within itself, that is to say, is the self-evolving idea? We should then have an unconscious finality of the logical order, which would ultimately reach the stage of consciousness in man.

It is easy to answer this objection. The order which demands a cause, is that which is in process of formation, that which is becoming, and not that which is. The order which demands a cause is that which implies an actual multiplicity of parts, and not that implied in the virtual multiplicity inherent in absolute unity. Becoming presupposes being, the multiple presupposes one, the composite presupposes the simple. All these points have been demonstrated in the preceding proofs. The order which is in God, and which has a logical priority over the divine thought, is that which is virtually implied in the very essence of God, whose perfection is infinite in its possibility of participation and whose eminent simplicity is fecund with an infinity of virtual multiplicity. How does this supreme indivisible concentrate within itself this multiplicity? It begins to suggest itself to those who grasp a whole science in its fundamental principles, or who succeed, as Mozart did, in hearing a melody not successively, but all at once in the very law which governed its composition. A return to the Idealistic Evolutionism of Hegel, on the contrary, is to posit a becoming which is its own reason for being what it is, and, therefore, a denial of the objective validity of the principle of identity or non-contradiction; it makes the conscious originate from the non-conscious, or, what amounts to the same thing, it makes the greater come from the less, and being evolve from nothingness.

Therefore, the proof based on final causes has lost none of its validity. Like the preceding proofs, its certainty is not merely physical, but metaphysical. It is not founded solely on the experimental or inductive method, as John Stuart Mill maintains. Its minor is based upon the

necessary and self-evident principle of finality, while its major is derived from the immediate and analytic relation of the intelligence either to being or to the raison d'être of things.

41) These five typical proofs establish five attributes, which can be predicated only of the self-subsisting being, who subsists above all things.

We may now summarize the results achieved by the five typical proofs of God's existence. They establish in Him five attributes: that of First Mover, that of First Efficient Cause, that of First Necessary Being, that of First and Greatest Being (primum verum, primum intelligens, primum bonum), and, finally, that of First Intelligent Ruler. We have already shown that each of these attributes can be predicated only of that Being whose essence is identical with its existence, and which for this reason is self-subsistent being, ipsum esse subsistens.

The proof for the existence of God is completed by a combination of these five ways.

The first mover must be its own activity, and being pure act in the operative order, it must be the same in the entitative order, for the mode of operation follows the mode of being. Therefore, its essence is not merely capable of existing, it is Being itself.

The first cause, to be uncaused, must contain within itself the reason for its own existence. Now, it cannot cause itself, for it would have to be in existence before it could cause itself. Therefore, it has not received existence, but is existence itself.

The necessary being implies existence as an essential predicate, that is to say, it must not only have existence, but be its very existence.

The supreme being is absolutely simple and perfect, and hence could not participate in existence, but must be self-existent.

The first intelligence, which directs all things, cannot be directed to being as to some object distinct from itself. It must be absolutely the Being always actually known to itself.

The proofs of God's existence lead up to this as their terminus, the terminus of ascending metaphysics, which rises from sensible things up to God (via inventionis), and is the starting-point in the metaphysics of the descending order, which judges everything by the ultimate reasons of things (via judicii).

Hence we see that in this order of the ultimate reasons of things the fundamental verity is that "in God alone essence and existence are

identical." This is the supreme principle of the essential distinction between God and the world. That essential distinction is at once evident to us, because God is immutable, whereas the world is subject to change (1st, 2nd, and 3rd ways); because God is absolutely simple, whereas the world is composite (4th and 5th ways). It finds its definitive formula in the phrase that God is "He who is," whereas all things outside of Him are by their very nature merely capable of existing, and composed of essence and existence.

The sensus communis sees all this implicitly, though it cannot reduce it to a formula. It does not demonstrate it, but, because of its instinct for being, it feels it. It has a sort of vague intuition that the principle of identity is the supreme law of objective reality, as well as of thought, and that the supreme reality must be to being as A is to A, absolutely one and immutable, and consequently, transcendental, distinct from the universe, which is essentially manifold and changeable. We do not need to be deeply versed in Plato's Sophist or Aristotle's Metaphysics, to find out the meaning of those words which God spoke to Moses: "I am who am" (Ex. III, 14), or of St. Augustine's commentary: "In comparison with Him, the things that are mutable, are as if they were not."

Hence, we see the meaning and the bearing of the proof for God's existence based on the universal consent of mankind. It is a confirmation of the truth. "How are we to explain this universal belief in God, if not by the persuasive force of the arguments which we have set forth? . . . If faith in the divine were the result of an unreasonable fear, or if it had been imposed upon nations by legislators for the purpose of investing their laws with a sacred authority, it would have disappeared from our midst along with the causes which gave it birth. On the contrary, this faith is everywhere maintained with a tenacity which nothing can conquer." Concerning this universal consensus of mankind we may say with de Quatrefages that "nowhere do we find atheism either among the inferior or the superior races; we come across it only in individuals or in schools of a more or less restricted nature." The recent discoveries in the history of religions "show that all religions acknowledge a belief in a supreme being, a creator, an organizer and master of the world, and in one who is also a father to men."

A final proof of God's existence may be deduced from supernatural effects such as miracles. Every supernatural effect which can be known in a natural way, but cannot be explained except by attributing it to divine intervention, furnishes us with a proof of God's existence. Such is the case

with every extraordinary event of the sensible order, which surpasses all the forces of nature, such as the resurrection of a dead man, or the multiplication of loaves, as recorded in the Gospel. This proof is not within reach of the sensus communis, which sees vaguely (though with certainty), in a miraculous occurrence such as the resurrection of a dead man, that it bears an immediate relation to being, its formal object, and to the proper cause of being as being, i.e., God. Because of this intuition, spontaneous reason refuses to be influenced by those philosophers who are opposed to the miraculous, and object that we do not know all the forces of nature. There can be no doubt about that, but when we see an effect so profound and universal that it cannot be produced except by the first and universal cause, we know that this effect is being itself.

By intuition the intellect spontaneously perceives a miracle to be an exceptional production of being, like creation, or an immediate modification of being as such, of what there is substantial about it. Such is the case with the multiplication of loaves and resurrection from the dead. These events presuppose an agent with immediate power over being, substance, and matter and capable of exercising this power without the intervention of any accidental modifications. The substantial reunion of the soul with its body can only be the effect of a cause which is capable of immediate contact with the very substance of being. Hence, to see the finger of God in a miracle, it is not necessary for us to have faith; the innate sense of being, which is natural reason or the sensus communis, is sufficient for the purpose.

As Vacant points out, “this demonstration of the existence of God finds its corroboration when it is based upon a group of facts in which the action of a supernatural providence is manifest.” The vitality and wonderful spread of the Church, its eminent sanctity, and the fact that it is an inexhaustible source of all kinds of spiritual benefits, prove that from all eternity there was a being from whom all justice, goodness, and sanctity proceeded, and who must be Goodness, Justice, and Sanctity itself.

The existence of physical and moral evil, as we have already remarked (n. 34), cannot cause us to doubt the existence of God. Moral evil, which is far more grave than physical evil, so far from disproving the existence of God, presupposes His existence, because, in the final analysis, it is nothing else but an offence against God. If evil exists, no matter of what kind it may be, God has permitted it for the purpose of manifesting His power and His

goodness, for, as St. Augustine says, “He would not have permitted it, if He did not have power and goodness enough to draw good even out of evil.”

Such are the proofs for the existence of God. They engender a certainty which is neither moral nor physical, but metaphysical or absolute. It is absolutely certain that God exists, that the greatest Being which can be conceived, has objective reality. To deny this statement would be to deny the principle of causality, the principle of sufficient reason, and, finally, the principle of non-contradiction. The Hegelian system furnishes historic proof for this. Having set out with the avowed purpose of denying the true God, transcendental and distinct from the world, its author had to admit that contradiction is at the root of all things. The choice between God and absurdity is inexorable.

APPENDIX

THE THOMISTIC PROOFS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD IN THEIR RELATION TO THE NOTION OF PROPER CAUSE

St. Thomas defines the notion of proper cause in his Commentary on Aristotle’s Metaphysics, Book V, ch. ii, lect. 3, and in the Alnalytica Post., Book I, lect. 10, entitled “Quartus Modus Dicendi per se,” i.e., the fourth mode of per se predication. His teaching, which constitutes the basis of the proofs for the existence of God, is summed up in the following propositions.

1) The proper cause is that which can produce a certain effect by itself (per se) and immediately as such (primo). It is that cause upon which the effect per se primo, necessarily and immediately, depends, just as a property depends upon the essence from which it is derived, e. g., the properties of a circle from the nature of the circle. The proper effect is like a property manifested ad extra.

2) The proper cause, inasmuch as it is a necessary requisite, differs from the accidental cause, just as there is opposition between these two propositions: a man generates a man; Socrates generates a man. It is purely accidental for the one who generates to be Socrates, and still more so for him to be a philosopher. Thus we say that the movements in the universe required a prime mover, but we should be guilty of precipitation if we at once concluded that this prime mover must be free.

3) The proper cause, inasmuch as it is an immediate requisite, differs from every other cause, no matter how strictly it is required. Thus, to carve a statue requires a sculptor. To say that it requires an artist would be to designate too general a cause. We must state precisely the kind of cause required. Similarly, it would not be definite enough to say that the movements in the universe require a primary being: what they immediately demand is a prime mover.

4) The most particular causes are the proper cause of the most particular effects. Thus, this animal is the proper cause of the generation of this living exemplar of the same species; but it does not explain the existence of animal life on earth, and it stands as much in need of being explained, as does its proper effect, of which it is said to be the univocal cause or one which belongs to the same species. We have here a causality of a very inferior order. St. Thomas writes: “It is clear that of two things in the same species, one cannot per se cause the form of the other as such, since it would then be the cause of its own form, which is essentially the same as the form of the other; but it can be the cause of this form inasmuch as it is in matter, in other words, it may be the cause that this particular matter receives this particular form.

5) The most universal effects demand as their proper cause a cause higher than all others. This body, which is in motion, may truly be the cause of this other motion, but if the motion itself, wherever we find it realized, whether in corporeal or incorporeal beings, has not within itself its own sufficient reason for what it is, then it must have for its cause a primary and universal mover of corporeal and incorporeal beings. Therefore, this cause must be a prime mover, superior to all motion, of a much higher order, and for this reason the cause is said to be equivocal and not univocal.

6) Finally, we must distinguish between the proper cause and becoming, i.e., the apparition of such and such an individual effect; also, between the proper cause of the being itself and the conservation of this effect. According to Aristotle’s example, the builder is the proper cause of the construction of the house, and if he stops working before the house is completed, the house is no longer in course of construction; but he is not the proper cause of the being of this house; if he dies, the house will not cease to exist. Likewise, the son survives his father; the heat of the sun is necessary, not only for the generation of plants and animals, but also for their preservation. Hence, universal and higher causes are not only

productive, but likewise preservative of their effects. Their causality is permanent, always in act, and we affirm the same of God's causality.

This notion of proper cause illuminates the Thomistic proofs for the existence of God, so that we can perceive the connection between them.

In each of these a posteriori proofs, St. Thomas starts from a fact known as certain from experience, and from a rational principle, which is necessary and evident, he proves the existence of God, the proper and universal cause of the universal effects which originate from Him. "Oportet enim universaliores effectus in universaliores et priores causas reducere" (for the more universal effects must be reduced to more universal and prior causes).

The order of these five proofs corresponds to the natural process of the reasoning mind. In fact, St. Thomas begins with the most evident signs of the contingency of earthly things, such as motion, and then goes on to consider those which bear a deeper significance, such as the imperfection and the orderly arrangement of composite things. Likewise, in order to arrive at the conclusion of his proofs, he shows step by step the necessary existence and absolute transcendence of the First Cause, so as to make it evident that this cause is essentially distinct from the world, which is changeable, composite, and imperfect, and that the name of God can be given to it. In fact, what people generally understand by this name is the prime mover, the first cause, the necessary and supreme being, who has created and ordained the whole universe.

All these arguments can be summed up in a more general one, based on the principle of causality, which may be stated as follows: That which does not exist by itself, can exist only by another, which is self-existent. Now, experience shows that there are beings endowed with activity, life, and intelligence, which do not exist of and by themselves, since they are born and die. Therefore, they received their existence from another, who must be existence, life, and intelligence itself. If such were not the case, we should have to say that the greater comes from the less, the higher form of life from the lower, and that the plurality of beings comes from a primary being less perfect than all the others taken together.

FIRST PROOF: FROM MOTION

That there is motion in the world is a certainty attested by experience. There is not merely local motion, but there are also substantial changes,

qualitative movements according to the increasing or decreasing intensity of a quality, and even spiritual movements of the intellect and will.

Now, everything which is in motion is moved by another. This principle is a necessary and absolutely universal one. Motion, in fact, is the transition from potentiality to act, from indetermination to determination. Thus a body which was cold becomes warm, an inert body is moved locally. Now, nothing can be reduced from potentiality to act, except by a being which is already in act, and it is impossible for a being to be at one and the same time and in identically the same sense, both in potentiality and in act. In living beings, one part is moved by another; but as this other part is itself set in motion by a movement of a different order, this can only be the result of the influence exerted upon it by a mover of a higher order. Therefore, every being that is in motion, body, soul, or spirit, is moved by another.

Moreover, there cannot be an infinite series of movers essentially and actually subordinated one to another. It is not a question here of a regressive series of movers, such as we find amongst generators in a series of animals generated; for these movers are but accidentally subordinated to one another, and none of them exerts an actual influence upon the other. Also, as St. Thomas says, “it is not impossible for a man to be generated by a man ab aeterno, that is to say, without there having been a first in this series of human generations.” But it is impossible for motion to find its completely sufficient reason or its first cause in a series of past movers, even if the series were ab aeterno, since each of these movers was himself set in motion by another. If this series is eternal, or had no beginning, it is eternally insufficient, for it has not in itself a sufficient reason for existing.

Therefore, we are dealing with movers which actually exert an influence upon one another and which are essentially subordinated one to the other. Thus the moon attracts the bodies which surround it, and is itself attracted by the earth; the earth in turn is attracted by the sun, and the sun has some other center of attraction. We cannot go on indefinitely in this ascending series. If, indeed, each of these movers essentially subordinated to one another, receives an impetus which it transmits to another, in such a manner that there is no prime mover which is the source of motion, which is itself not set in motion, then there never will be any motion. Thus a clock will not go without a spring, and multiplying the number of its movements ad infinitum would not give to it a principle of movement.

We must, therefore, conclude that there is a prime mover, who is not himself set in motion by a mover of a higher order, and whom we call God. This supreme mover is immobile, not with an immobility of an inferior kind, or the inertia of passive potency, which implies far more of imperfection than motion itself; but with an immobility of a nobler kind, namely, that of act, which has no need of being premoved or conditioned so that it may act. In other words, we must admit the existence of a prime mover, who acts by himself, who has never been reduced from potentiality to act, but who is his own activity, his own action, and consequently, his very own being, for action presupposes being, and the mode of action follows the mode of being.

The prime and most universal mover of bodies and of spirits must, therefore, be pure act, without any admixture of potentiality capable of further determination, and consequently free from all imperfection, both with regard to action and with regard to being. In other words, it (or rather he) must be the self-subsisting Being.

And so it is evident that this prime and immobile mover is transcendental, being by his very nature infinitely above the world of corporeal and incorporeal beings, which he moves incessantly.

This argument refutes the theory of absolute Evolutionism, according to which becoming, or the evolution of phenomena, is the principle of all things. This is impossible, since the sufficient reason or cause of becoming cannot be found in this process itself, but becoming involves the presence of an additional element, which calls for a higher cause, otherwise we should have to say that the greater comes from the less, being from nothingness, without any cause. This would not only be a greater mystery than creation, but a manifest absurdity, which, as Hegel admits, must be acknowledged by all who believe in a progressive evolution, in the course of which the more perfect is always produced by the less perfect.

SECOND PROOF: FROM EFFICIENT CAUSES

We are not here concerned with movements or changes which happen in the world, but with efficient causes upon which depend such permanent beings as plants, animals, and men. In other words, this proof does not start precisely from the principle of motion or from becoming, but from being, which is the terminus of becoming, and leads us to admit the existence of a

first efficient cause, which is necessary not only for the production of all things, but also for their preservation in existence.

In the world there are efficient causes which are essentially subordinated to one another, e. g., all those cosmic influences, such as the chemical action in the air, atmospheric pressure, solar heat, etc., which are necessary not only for the production, but also for the preservation of plants and animals. Thus the ancient philosophers used to say that “man and the sun cooperate in the generation of man,” for the sun is necessary both for the production and the preservation of vegetable and animal life on this earth of ours.

Now, these efficient causes, which are thus subordinated to one another, presuppose a first cause which is not caused. On the one hand, it is impossible for a being to cause itself, for in that case it would exist before it actually did exist; on the other hand, it is impossible to proceed ad infinitum in a series of essentially subordinated causes, as we have seen above (first proof).

Hence, there exists, above the caused efficient causes, a first cause which is not caused, which has being from itself, not from another. This first cause must, therefore, be Being itself (a point which will be more clearly understood at the close of the next proof) and may justly be called God.

THIRD PROOF: FROM THE CONTINGENCY OF BEINGS IN THE WORLD

There are beings in the world which are evidently contingent, that is to say, they can exist or not exist. Thus plants and animals live and die, and science assures us that there was a time when there were neither plants nor animals, nor men on this earth, and when the stars were not as they are to-day, but in a nebulous state.

Now, contingent beings presuppose a necessary and self-existing being. What is contingent has not its own raison d’être within itself, nor is it the cause of its own existence. Therefore, there must be some necessary being. Moreover, if the necessity of this being or principle is merely relative (for instance, limited from the physical point of view, so as to account for the physico-chemical phenomena of the lower order), then we must continue our inquiry, until we arrive at an absolutely necessary being; for, as we have seen, we cannot proceed ad infinitum in a series of causes which are

essentially subordinated one to another. Consequently, there must be an absolutely necessary Being, the cause of all the others.

a) This necessary Being is not the sum-total of contingent beings, even if this series were infinite in space and time; for we may go on increasing the number of contingent beings, but they will always be contingent, and can no more constitute a necessary being, than a countless number of idiots can constitute an intelligent man.

b) Neither is the necessary Being the law of contingent beings, since this law depends for its existence upon the existence of contingent beings.

c) Finally, the necessary Being is not a substance common to all phenomena; for this substance would be subject to motion (see First Proof), and would receive determinations or new perfections, which it could not have produced itself, since the greater cannot come from the less. The necessary Being can certainly give, but it cannot receive; it can determine, but it cannot be determined. It has of itself and from all eternity, all that it can have.

Moreover, from the fact that the necessary Being is self-existent, it follows that its essence is not merely a capacity to exist—which capacity receives and limits existence—but it is unreceived or subsistent existence, self-subsisting Being.

FOURTH PROOF: FROM THE DEGREES OF PERFECTION IN BEINGS

The special feature of this proof is the perfection of the First Cause. It runs as follows: The beings in this world form a hierarchy: some of them are more perfect than others, in passing through the various degrees of the vegetative and sensitive life, from the stone up to man. All beings have their perfection or goodness, but the word good denotes merely a similitude or analogy in such phrases as: a good stone, a good fruit, a good house, a good master, a thoroughly good man. In like manner, unity is of various degrees, and the unity of the soul excels that of the body. Thus, also, there is a greater degree of truth in principles than in conclusions, and in necessary propositions than in those that are contingent.

Now, we speak of different things as more or less perfect, according to the varying degrees in which they approach that which is the most perfect, and the cause of the others. In fact, as St. Thomas points out, “whatever belongs to a thing by its very nature, and has not been caused in it, cannot

belong to it in an imperfect manner." A being which has but imperfect goodness does not possess this quality of and by itself; for if the goodness were not caused in it, it would demand such limitation by and of itself, and at the same time it would not demand such limitation by and of itself, since it is not limited in the same manner. In other words, every imperfect being is caused, because it is composite, mixed, and the perfection which it contains is mingled with imperfection. Now, as St. Thomas says, "things which are in themselves different cannot unite, unless something causes them to unite." Thus, existence, perfection, and beauty, are limited in different ways in plants, in animals, and in man. Of themselves they do not imply this or that particular limitation, and in their formal concepts they do not even imply any limitation. Therefore, in all these imperfect beings, existence, perfection, and beauty are the effects of a Supreme Cause, which must be absolutely perfect, free from all imperfection, and absolutely simple. Moreover, this Cause must be a self-subsisting Being, unlimited, infinitely perfect, i.e., Goodness, Truth, and Beauty itself. Hence it follows that this Supreme Being is absolutely transcendental, really and essentially distinct from the world, which is always composite and imperfect.

This proof clearly differs from that of St. Anselm, since it does not start from the notion of the supremely perfect Being, but from the actual existence of various degrees of perfection in things. Thus it ascends by way of causality to the absolutely perfect Being, because no imperfect being can have its raison d'être in itself.

It is by this demonstration that St. Thomas establishes the existence of intelligence, of truth, of goodness, and of the natural law.

FIFTH PROOF: FROM THE ORDER PREVAILING IN THE UNIVERSE

We observe that irrational beings act for an end. Indeed, we notice that there is a wonderful order prevailing in the regular courses of the heavenly bodies. The centripetal and centrifugal forces are so regulated that the heavenly bodies move in their orbits with enormous speed and in perfect harmony. No less striking are the unity and variety which we behold in the organic structures of plants, animals, and man. Finality, or the relation to an end, is clearly seen in the evolution of an egg, which virtually contains a certain determined organism, and in the case of those organs which are adapted to certain very special functions, such as the eye, which is for

seeing, and the ear, which is for hearing. Finally, we find the same to be the case with those animals which act by instinct, for instance, the bee, which builds its hive.

What particularly manifests this finality, as St. Thomas notes, is the fact that natural agents of the irrational order "always or nearly always act in the same way, and in a way designed to obtain that which best agrees with their nature," e. g., for their development, nutrition, reproduction, etc.

This terminus of their action, precisely because it is something determinate and in complete conformity with their nature, is entitled to the name of end; for the end is the good in view of which an agent acts.

Moreover, even before the existence of God has been proved, the necessity and universality of the principle of finality are evident truths. The principle may be expressed by the following formula: "Every agent acts for an end." "Were it otherwise," says St. Thomas, "one thing would not follow from the action of the agent more than another, except by chance. . . . For the natural agent to produce an effect which is determinate, it must be determined for some particular effect, and this is what is meant by the word end."

It will not do to have recourse to chance, for chance is an accidental cause (causa per accidens), and hence is not the cause of what happens always and according to nature. Otherwise, the accidental would no longer be accidental; instead of being something which accrues (accidit) to the essence, it would be its foundation, and in that ease the essential would be subordinate to the accidental, which is absurd. The wonderful order existing in the universe would be the result of no order, the greater would proceed from the less.

Neither will it do to appeal solely to the efficient cause, and to reject the final cause. For in that case we could not give any reason for the action of an agent: why, for instance, a certain organ has a certain determinate tendency; nor could we say why an agent acts instead of not acting. There would be no raison d'être for the action. The active potency or the inclination of the agent is not without a motive, called tendency, because it tends essentially towards something, just as the imperfect tends towards the perfect. "Potentia dicitur ad actum," potency essentially refers to act, or is essentially of the intentional order. For instance, the faculty of sight is expressly designed for seeing.

Therefore, we cannot doubt the existence of finality in the world, the wonderful order of which is nothing else but the suitable arrangement of means in view of an end (apta dispositio mediorum ad finem). The bird flies not only because it has wings (efficient cause), but the wings are for the purpose of flying (final cause). Otherwise, the particular formation of its wings would be without a sufficient reason. To affirm that anything is without a sufficient reason, is to formulate a proposition which is unintelligible and absurd (see supra, n. 24). St. Thomas would have said: "It would be foolish to make such an assertion," just as he said that "David of Dinant foolishly declared God to be prime matter." According to the philosophical acceptation of the word stultitia, namely, the opposite of wisdom, there is nothing more foolish than Materialism or Mechanism.

Now, irrational beings cannot tend towards an end, unless they are directed by an intelligence, as the arrow is shot to the mark by the archer. In fact, one thing cannot be directed to another, unless there be a directing cause, which must, of necessity, be intelligent, for, "sapientis est ordinare." Why? Because an intelligent being alone perceives the raison d'être of things, and the end is the raison d'être of the means. "Irrational beings," says St. Thomas, "tend towards an end by natural inclination; they are, as it were, moved by another and not by themselves, since they have no knowledge of the end as such." Animals have a sensitive knowledge of the thing which constitutes their end, but they do not perceive the formal end as such in this thing. If, therefore, there were no intelligent designer directing the world, the order and intelligibility existing in things, which science reveals to us, would be the effect of an unintelligible cause, and, in addition to this, our own intelligences would originate from a blind and unintelligent cause, and again we should have to say that the greater comes from the less, which is absurd.

There is, therefore, a supreme intelligent Being, who directs all things to their respective ends. It will not do to say that the universal Designer has, like ourselves, an intellectual faculty directed to intelligible being, but what is demanded is a designing intelligence of a higher order. The supreme Designer cannot be designed for any other purpose. He must be Thought itself, self-subsisting Intellection, just as he is self-subsisting Being: "ipsum intelligere subsistens."

We have pointed out that the result of each of these five demonstrations is to move us to admit the existence of a divine attribute which can be predicated only of the self-subsisting Being, as St. Thomas explicitly proves. The article referred to serves the double purpose of pointing out to us what is the terminus in the ascending process of reason, which rises from sensible things until it reaches the supreme cause, and it is also the principle in the descending or synthetic process, by which reason deduces the divine attributes of the one who is Being itself, and judges of all things by the highest cause. These two inverse methods are called by St. Thomas, respectively, via inventionis and via judicii.

In fact, as we have seen, the prime and universal mover must be his own action (suum agere), and, therefore, his own existence (suum esse), and the same must be said of the first uncaused cause, of the necessary being, of the sovereignly perfect being, and of the ruler of the universe. Thus the supreme truth of Christian philosophy, or the fundamental truth in the synthetical order (in via judicii) is that in God alone essence and existence are identical. God is "He who is" (Ex. III, 14).

Such are the five metaphysical proofs for the existence of God, to which all others can be easily reduced. If we study them carefully, we see, contrary to the assertions of modern Agnostics, that the existence of God, who is transcendental or distinct from the world, cannot be denied without denying the principle of causality, namely, that "every being which is mobile, contingent, composite, imperfect, and relative, is caused, and in its final analysis requires a primary and immovable being, one which is absolutely simple, perfect, and intelligent." Now, the principle of causality cannot be denied or doubted without denying or doubting the principle of contradiction, for "a contingent and uncaused being" would exist neither of itself, nor by reason of another, and consequently, could not be distinguished from nothingness, since it would exist without a sufficient raison d'être, either intrinsic or extrinsic. This would mean the subversion of the principle of contradiction, that "being is not non-being," and of the principle of identity, that "being is being, non-being is non-being," and human reason would be lost in absurdity.

If, on the contrary, the principle of contradiction or identity is the supreme law of reality and of our reason, then the supreme reality must indeed be the identity of essence and existence, or self-subsisting Being (ipsum esse subsistens). Thus the five ways which lead to the existence of

God, unite in the opposition prevailing between the principle of identity and the changeableness and composition of the world, or the lack of identity displayed in the latter. From this opposition it is at once evident that the world is contingent and depends upon the immutable and pre-eminently simple Being whose name, as given to Moses, “I am who am,” denotes absolute identity.

Hence, the ancient philosophers used to say that our intellect knows God in the mirror of sensible things, by means of the broken ray of light reflected from rational principles. The principle of identity or of contradiction shows the contingency of this mirror and is reflected in the image of the principle of causality, which manifests to us the existence of the supreme Being.

It is, therefore, absolutely necessary to choose between the existence of the true God, transcendental or distinct from the world, and the Hegelian denial of the principle of contradiction as the law of reality. In other words, we must choose between Theism and Atheistic Evolutionism, which latter maintains that the more perfect comes from the less perfect, and that contradictories are identified in a universal process of becoming. Thus we see in absolute Evolutionism an incontestable proof by the reductio ad absurdum of the existence of the true and transcendental God, since this existence cannot be denied without at the same time denying the validity of the principle of contradiction, and without positing a fundamental absurdity at the root of all things.

This radical absurdity is expressed in the first of the propositions condemned in the Syllabus of Pius IX, which reads as follows: “There is no supreme Being, who is all-wise, ruler of the universe, and distinct from it; God is identical with the nature of things, and is, therefore, subject to changes; God really becomes or begins to be in man and in the world, and all things are God and have the same substance with Him; thus God and the world, spirit and matter, necessity and liberty, truth and falsehood, goodness and evil, justice and injustice are all identified in the one same and only reality.”

To avoid this manifest absurdity, we must affirm the existence of God, who, according to the Vatican Council, “being one, sole, absolutely simple and immutable spiritual substance, is to be declared as really and essentially distinct from the world, of supreme beatitude in and from Himself, and

ineffably exalted above all things which exist or can be conceived beside Himself.”

PART II

THE NATURE OF GOD AND HIS ATTRIBUTES

CHAPTER I

WHAT FORMALLY CONSTITUTES THE DIVINE NATURE ACCORDING TO OUR IMPERFECT MODE OF KNOWING IT

42) The problem. The Deity, as it is in itself, cannot be known by our natural powers. But among the divine perfections which are contained formally and eminently in it, and of which we have a natural knowledge, is there not one which claims priority over the others? Various solutions.

Having proved that God is, we must proceed to the consideration of what He is. We have already (n. 32) proved that reason can acquire some knowledge of the divine essence, but that it is incapable of knowing positively what properly constitutes the Deity or of knowing it quidditative. "God can be known indeed," says St. Thomas, in a natural way "through the images of His effects," in that these effects are a reflection of Him. Now there cannot be equality between the divine effects and the infinite virtue or power which produced them, and they can be only imperfect and very faint images of this power, so that they present as multiplied and divided the attributes which are present in the first cause in an absolutely simple unity. Thus, in a way, the sun contains eminently the various forms of energy which we undoubtedly find on the earth. Thus colors are contained in light, and in a higher order the unity of the human soul includes the perfection of the sensitive and vegetative souls, such as we find these in animals and plants. Therefore all the perfections which are many and separate in creatures are found unitedly in the eminent simplicity of the Deity. We see this to be particularly so from the proof based on the various degrees in being (fourth proof), arguing as it does from the multiple to the one, from the composite to the simple, from the imperfect to the perfect (n. 39).

St. Thomas discusses this question at length in connection with the names given to God. “When any term expressing perfection,” he says, “is applied to a creature, it signifies that perfection distinct in idea from other perfections; as, for instance, by the term ‘wise’ applied to a man, we signify some perfection distinct from a man’s essence, and distinct from his power and existence, and from all similar things; whereas, when we apply it to God, we do not mean to signify anything distinct from His essence or power or existence. Thus also this term ‘wise’ (or the term ‘being’), applied to man, in some degree circumscribes, envelops, and comprehends the thing signified; whereas this is not the case when it is applied to God; but it leaves the thing signified as incomprehended, and as a perfection which infinitely surpasses all the meanings of which it is susceptible. Hence it is evident that this term ‘wise’ is not applied in the same way to God and to man. The same rule applies to other terms. Hence no name is predicated univocally of God and of creatures . . . but in an analogous sense.

“However, we cannot say, as some have said, that the names predicated of God and of creatures are purely and simply equivocal, in such a way that there is no similarity between the uncreated and the created being. If such were the case, nothing could be known or demonstrated of God through creatures; for the reasoning would always be exposed to the fallacy of equivocation; the same term would be employed in totally different senses, a verbal similarity being the only thing in their favor. How could the Philosopher have demonstrated so many important truths concerning the Author of all things? How could the Apostle St. Paul have said in Rom. 1: 20: ‘The invisible things of God are clearly seen being understood by the things that are made’?

“If the names of the absolute perfections predicated of God and of creatures are neither univocal nor equivocal, what are they? They are analogous. This means that they denote things essentially different between which there is a certain proportion.”

We have already (n. 29) proved the transcendent or analogical validity of the primary ideas which denote absolute perfections. These perfections, as we said, may be predicated of God not merely by way of metaphor, as when we say of God that He is angry; but they may be said of Him literally. As a matter of fact, they imply no imperfection and therefore are in no way opposed to the supremely perfect Being.

Although they may be predicated of God according to their proper meaning, or formally, these notions denote, nevertheless, things essentially different when applied to God and to creatures. Thus, even in the created order, the notion of knowledge which is applied, according to its proper meaning, both to sensation and to intellection, denotes in both cases essentially different things, there being a resemblance only of analogy or proportion between them. Sensation is to the sensible as intellection is to the intelligible. For this reason we can truly say of each that it is knowledge.

In like manner we say that the first cause is to its existence, as the creature is to its existence: the first cause is to its goodness, as the creature is to its goodness. This permits us to say of God that He is good, and to call Him "being," using these terms in an analogous sense.

It is only in a negative and relative way that we can acquire by our natural powers a knowledge of the divine mode of these perfections. Thus we say that God is an infinite being, meaning by this that He is not finite, not limited. Or again, by comparison with the goodness of created beings, we say of God that He is the sovereign Good. The argument from causality enables us to affirm the existence of God and of His perfections. The mode of the presence of these attributes in God is but very imperfectly determined by way of negation and of eminence.

In chapter three we will explain how these absolute perfections can all be found formally identified in the eminence of the Deity without being destructive of one another, and without ceasing to be formally in the Deity.

It is of importance to point out here that the formal principle of the Deity as to what properly constitutes it as such, cannot be known by our natural powers. This proves that in God there are truths of a supernatural order. Cajetan, merely repeating the doctrine of St. Thomas and recalling the terms used by Dionysius, says that the formal concept of the Deity is superior to the concepts of being, of unity, and of goodness. "The divine reality is prior to being and to all its differences: it is above being and above the one."

The Deity contains formally the notes of being, unity, and goodness, but it is above these. That is why they can be identified in the eminence of the Deity without being eradicated.

All Thomists agree in saying that there is no real or formal distinction between the divine attributes previous to that made by the mind. Likewise

in created things, between the genus and specific difference (animality and rationality, for instance, as found in man), there is no distinction previous to that made by the mind. We also say that they are only virtually distinct, or that their reality is the foundation for making this distinction which actually exists as such only in the mind. Even less than this is the virtual distinction between the divine attributes. We are right in conceiving the genus as potential and imperfect, and the specific difference as its extrinsic perfection, which is superadded to it and which is its determining element. But in God there is no foundation for such a distinction. We have no grounds for conceiving a divine perfection as potential, imperfect, and determined by another divine perfection extrinsic to it. Hence, even according to our very imperfect mode of knowing, the divine perfections must be conceived not as extrinsic to one another, but as actually included in one another in an implicit way, though each is not explicitly included in the others; otherwise we would have to admit a purely verbal distinction between them. Among the virtual distinctions, this one between the attributes is therefore the least that can be conceived.

Hence we see that it is impossible for us to know, by the natural power of reason, what formally constitutes the divine nature as it is in itself. To arrive at a knowledge of God, according to what properly and intrinsically constitutes the Deity, there must be a supernatural revelation. It is only by divine faith that we are able in this life to know in an obscure manner the mystery of the intimate life of God. But to have evident knowledge of what constitutes the Deity, we should have to see it directly, as the blessed do in heaven. Only then could we see the intimate manner in which the divine perfections, which can be known in a natural way, are indentified in the eminence of the Deity without being destructive of one another.

Although it is not possible to know in a natural way what constitutes the Deity as it is in itself, among the absolute perfections which can be known in a natural way, is there not one, according to our imperfect mode of knowing them, which is the fundamental principle of the distinction between God and the world and which is the source of all the divine attributes? If such be the case, we should be right from the logical point of view of our imperfect knowledge in saying that this perfection is what formally constitutes the divine essence. It would be in God what rationality is in man: the specifying principle which distinguishes Him from other beings, and from which His properties are derived.

The divine perfections, as they are in themselves, though not distinct from one another, are all equal, in the sense that no one of them is more perfect than the others, each of them implying the others. But, inasmuch as they are distinct from one another according to our mode of knowing them, and are analogically like created perfections, it is possible to find a certain order among them, in that there is a first among them.

The problem thus stated has been solved in various ways by the Scholastics. We must give a brief account of these solutions.

1) Ockham and the Nominalists do not admit that any one of the perfections explains all the others. This is perfectly in agreement with their theory about universals. They maintain that an essence is merely a collection of individuals; a substance, the aggregation of its different characteristics. Likewise, according to them, the divine essence is nothing more than the grouping of all the perfections, and there is no need to seek for a logical priority of one of them over the others. Moreover, the Nominalists admitted merely a verbal distinction between the divine attributes, a purely mental one (rationis ratiocinantis), such as we have between Tullius and Cicero.

This opinion of the Nominalists leads to Agnosticism. In fact, it would no longer be possible to deduce the other divine attributes from one divine and fundamental perfection. Absolute immutability, for instance, would not have logical priority over eternity. Theology as a science would no longer be possible.

2) According to Scotus, the divine essence is formally constituted by radical infinity, and he considers that this means the exigency of all possible perfections. Also, according to this view, these perfections would be formally distinct from one another in God, before any consideration on the part of our mind.

The Thomists reject this opinion, because radical infinity or the exigency of all perfections cannot be thought of, so they say, except in a subject whose essence includes precisely this idea of exigency. This latter does not constitute the divine essence, but presupposes it and is founded upon it. In fact, we shall see that infinity is deduced from the fact that God is the self-subsisting Being (Ia, q. 7, a. 1). Besides, infinity is a mode of each of the divine attributes and not the principle from which they are derived. Finally, the simplicity of God does not admit of a formal distinction between the

divine perfections previous to any consideration of them on our part. God would thus be an accumulation of perfections and not Perfection itself.

3) Several theologians—among whom are the Thomists John of St. Thomas, Gonet, and Billuart—are of the opinion that what formally constitutes the divine essence is subsistent intellection which is always in actu. This reminds us of Aristotle's νόησις νοήσεως νόησις : thinking is a thinking on thinking.

Their principal argument is as follows: The most perfect of the metaphysical degrees is intellection, according to the gradation which we find among beings. Lifeless creatures have only being; above them we have beings endowed with life, and intelligence belongs to the higher form of life.

This opinion differs totally from absolute intellectualism, such as we find, for instance, advocated by Hegel. According to his view, being resolves itself into thought, an opinion which leads to panlogism and to the negation of freedom.

4) Most theologians consider self-subsisting Being (aseity, ens a se) as formally constituting the divine nature, that is, ultimately distinguishing it from everything created, and as the principle from which are deduced all the divine perfections, intellection included. First of all, according to this view, God is "He who is," as revealed to Moses (Exod., ch. iii). This is what Aristotle means when he says that God is Actus purus. Among the Thomists holding this opinion, we have Capreolus, Bannez, Gotti, Contenson, Ledesma, Del Prado, and others. Molina, Vasquez, Torres, and others not of the school of St. Thomas side with these Thomists.

Before examining the soundness of these two last named opinions, let us point out the principal solutions given by those outside the Catholic schools of theology.

5) Certain ones are inclined to hold the priority of goodness over all the other attributes. This view recalls the following famous passage of Plato: "In the world of knowledge the idea of good appears last of all, and is seen only with an effort; and, when seen, is also inferred to be the universal author of all things beautiful and right, and the immediate source of reason and truth in the intellectual world. However beautiful science and truth may be, you can feel sure, without fear of being deceived, that the good exceeds them in dignity." Republic, Bk. VII, 517, D.

6) Modern Voluntarists, such as Secrétan, maintain that liberty is what formally constitutes the divine nature. For absolute being to be its own reason for what it is (ratio sui), according to Secrétan, it must be absolute liberty, liberty of second potency, free to be free. “As substance, it gives itself existence; as living, it gives itself substance; as spirit, it gives itself life; as absolute, it gives itself liberty. . . . The finite spirit is both spirit and nature, and not merely spirit. It would be the perfection of the spirit to be a pure spirit, having nothing material. The pure spirit consists only in what it does, which means that it is absolute liberty. . . . I am what I wish. This formula is therefore the factotum.” Lequier, too, had to admit that the fundamental truth in the deductive order, the truth which is the principle upon which all others are based, is the fact of divine liberty, since for him the fundamental truth in the order of invention is not the principle of identity, but the fact of human liberty. He also maintains with Secrétan that God willed to restrict His foreknowledge with regard to our acts so as to leave us free. Boutroux held and taught a similar view. “In God, power or liberty is infinite; it is the source of His existence and what comes from it is not subject to the constraint of fatality. The divine essence co-eternal with its power is actual perfection. Its necessity is that of the practical order, that is, it ought to be realized, and cannot be itself, unless it freely becomes a reality.” Not long ago in Germany, Dr. Hermann Schell held that God is not only ratio sui, but causa sui.

It is difficult to conceive of other ways of solving the problem as to what formally constitutes the divine essence. Priority is given either to Being or to the Good or to the Infinite or to intellection or to liberty. Whether we consider in God what is subjective or what is objective, no other answers than these can be found.

43) Neither free will nor the good is what formally constitutes the divine nature.

It is easy to explain why Scholastic philosophy never thought of saying that liberty is what formally constitutes the divine essence. In fact, it is difficult to conceive liberty as being prior to intelligence. Even Secrétan admits this without seeming to suspect that this acknowledgment means the very ruin of his libertarian system. “Liberty without intelligence is impossible,” he says, “it would be mistaken for chance, which latter is not a species of causality but its negation. . . . It would be a potency which of itself would unconsciously determine the law according to which it

becomes a reality. That is a contradiction in terms. No, the free being is intelligent. It is useless to dwell on this point." "But, on the contrary," remarks Pillon on this subject, in his criticism of this philosophy, "it is of great importance to dwell on this point," for we must say whether, in the Absolute, liberty is dependent upon intelligence as it is with us—and this would be the ruination of Secrétan's system—or, if the reverse is true, "whether absolute freedom cannot be distinguished from this radical contingency which they tell us is the negation of causality. That is the dilemma which must be faced and which really deserves some notice. Secrétan passes over it without making the least effort to escape from it." Whereas we cannot think of liberty without deliberation of the intellect, we can conceive of intellect apart from liberty. First comes the intellect, and liberty, as we shall see, is derived from it. Besides, the Libertarian thesis leads one to hold with Ockham and Descartes, that by a purely arbitrary decree God has distinguished good from evil. St. Thomas looked upon this doctrine as blasphemous. It is "dishonoring" God, as Leibniz says. "Why should not God be, therefore, just as well the principle of evil which the Manichaeans believed in, as the principle of good of orthodox thinkers?"

It is no less contradictory to maintain that God is cause of Himself. For a thing to cause, it must exist, "for nothing can be the sufficient cause of its own existence, if its existence is caused," says St. Thomas (Ia, q. 3, a. 4). God can only be ratio sui (His own sufficient reason), inasmuch as His essence in its formal concept implies actual existence; now this is precisely what is meant by aseity. God is a se, of Himself, without being cause of Himself. Likewise, in the order of invention, the principle of causality is not the ultimate principle. It is but a principle derived from that of sufficient reason, and this latter refers back to the principle of identity.

Neither can we admit that the Good is what formally constitutes the divine essence. St. Thomas (Ia, q. 5, a. 2: "Whether goodness is prior in idea to being.") proves that being has a logical priority over the good. The formal concept of goodness adds something to that of being. Goodness is being that has reached its fullness and perfection, that is capable of appealing to the appetitive faculty, as something desirable, of arousing one's love for it, of perfecting one, and of making one happy. The good is what all seek for. In a word, the good is being inasmuch as it is desirable, and it is virtuous good that is meant, for which we are by nature ordained in our actions. It is being inasmuch as it is what must be desired. For this

reason, the notion of good is less simple, hence less independent, less absolute, less universal than the notion of being. Being does not presuppose the good; it is the good that presupposes being, and this latter is the first of notions. We shall see that God is the sovereign Good only because He is the plenitude of being, the self-subsisting Being. In the same way, intellect which receives its specification from being, is superior to the will which receives its specification from the good, and that is why the intellect directs the will.

But if in itself and absolutely (simpliciter) being is prior to goodness, in a certain sense (secundum quid), goodness is prior to being. The explanation given by St. Thomas is as follows: “From the point of view of causality, goodness is prior to being. But goodness, since it has the aspect of desirable, implies the idea of a final cause, the causality of which is first among causes, since an agent does not act except for some end; and by an agent matter is moved to its form. Thus goodness, as a cause, is prior to being, as is the end to the form. It is for this reason that Dionysius (De div. nom., ch. v), among the names signifying the divine causality or the relation of God to creatures, gives good priority over being” (Ia, q. 5, a. 2 ad 1um). Wherefore, for us, or in the causal relations which He establishes with us, God is, first of all, the good God, Goodness itself: for good is essentially diffusive of itself. And this sums up all the truth contained in the famous passage we have quoted from Plato’s Republic. But if we consider God as He is in Himself and as He is related to us, He is pre-eminently Being itself. Being is, in itself and absolutely so, prior to good.

It is by this profound distinction that St. Thomas reconciles his doctrine with that of the Augustinians, who instead of considering the object of theology as it is in itself, considered it as it is related to us, in that it is the object of the appetitive faculty or of the will, and of its two acts of fruition and of use. In Peter Lombard’s Sentences this relative aspect of the object of theology is made the principle in distinguishing between God and created things. In the Sentences, God is primarily the being which for us cannot be the means, but which must be the source of our joy, whereas created things serve as the means by which we attain to eternal happiness. On the other hand, in the Summa theologica, St. Thomas considers the object of theology as it is in itself, in which God is primarily the First Being. “As far as our intellect can judge of the matter, goodness, action, and desire belong essentially to being, and are modes of being. It is impossible for us to say

that being is a mode of the good and of action. It is the ontological concept of being which comprises the dynamic concept, and not vice versa."

That St. Augustine and St. Thomas held opposite opinions on this point, has been far too much exaggerated, we think, in these latter times. It is particularly from the psychological and moral standpoint that St. Augustine considers the object of theology, whereas St. Thomas considers the object from the metaphysical point of view. In this there is no contradiction, but subordination of views. The way in which St. Thomas reconciles these two points of view, is by distinguishing, as we have just explained, between God considered either as He is in Himself or only as He is related to us.

44) Does being itself or subsistent thought formally constitute the divine nature?

In determining God's nature, St. Thomas (Ia, q. 3) begins by proving that God is pure Spirit, and that He is Being itself. This, we think, solves the problem which confronts us. God is pure Spirit. How could He have a body? However perfect this body might be, however subtle, delicate, and endowed with vitality, the divine soul which gave it life would still be the nobler part. We should have to say, therefore, that there is something imperfect and limited in God. This body would not be life, but only a participation in life. This body would not be the prime mover, the principle of all motion, but would itself be set in motion. This body would not be the principle of all order in the universe, but would itself require an organizing principle. Finally, this body would constitute with the divine soul a composite, more perfect than the parts. But, for the elements of a composite to be united, a cause is required (see n. 26). The First Being, as we have said, must be absolutely simple, simpler than a perfect diamond, and therefore must be pure spirit.

This prime being is without organs of sense perception, sees not with the eyes but in a purely spiritual manner. It has no passions or emotions, but a love which is entirely spiritual. Only in a metaphorical sense can we, to express the strictness of its justice, speak of it as being angry.

In this life we can have no positive concept of this spirit, except by denoting it in terms borrowed from corporeal things, as when we say that it is a substance and that it acts. But we can have only a negative and relative knowledge, derived from objects of sense experience, of what properly constitutes this being as such. In a negative way, we say of this being that it is incorporeal and immaterial, which means that it is without a body and

without matter. In a relative way we try to define this being, referring to what is nobler in the sensible order, comparing it to light, as when we say that it is a bright light, at the same time remarking that its light is of a higher order than material light. Though we know quite well that a spirit has no spatial dimensions, yet, by way of analogy, we attribute dimensions to it, as when we speak of a high-minded person, a profound intellect, an intellect of wide range, one so vast that it sees things from on high and from afar. By way of analogy with the resistance of material objects, we speak of a firm mind, or of one that is inconstant, yielding, or subtle. When we wish to designate an unusual subtlety of mind, we speak of the sharpness of the intellect.

Even though we were to know definitely what constitutes a pure spirit, we should still be in ignorance of what formally constitutes the divine nature. In fact, it is possible for a pure spirit to be created; our created intellect is of the purely spiritual order, and faith tells us of the existence of angels. But a speck of dust compared with an angel is not so insignificant as an angel compared with God. Whether we consider the vast number of angels in the heavenly choirs, or the numerous suns of the nebulae, or the innumerable grains of sand on the seashore, all of these, in a sense, are equally infinitesimal compared with God. What separates a speck of dust from God is infinity, and between an angel and God the difference is also infinity.

By what name, then, shall we truly designate God, if it does not suffice to say of Him that He is pure Spirit? God Himself has told us His name. He revealed it to Moses from the midst of the burning bush: “Moses said to God: Lo, I shall go to the children of Israel, and say to them: The God of your fathers hath sent me to you. If they should say to me: What is His name? what shall I say to them? God said to Moses: I am who am. Thus shalt thou say to the children of Israel. He who is has sent me to you” (Exod. 3: 13, 14). The Hebrew word “Yahveh,” from which the word “Jehovah” is derived, is the equivalent of “He who is.” “This is my name forever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.” We come across the same words in the last book of the New Testament (Apoc. 1: 4, 8): “I am Alpha and Omega, saith the Lord, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.” Thus God revealed Himself to His saints, as He did, for instance, to St. Catherine, when He said to her: “I am He who is, thou art who art not.”

God is not only pure spirit, He is Being itself, that subsists immaterial as such above all created things, not subject to any of the limitations that can be imposed on beings by space, matter, or any of the finite spiritual essences. The fourth proof of God's existence, based on the degrees of being, makes this point quite clear. (See n. 39.)

From the standpoint of our imperfect knowledge, is it not true that self-subsisting Being, or Actus purus, as Aristotle termed it, is the formal constituent of the divine essence? It seems easy to prove this.

The formal constituent of the divine nature, according to our imperfect mode of knowing it, is what we conceive in God as being the fundamental principle that distinguishes Him from creatures, and that is the source of His attributes. Now, since God is self-subsisting Being, He is fundamentally distinct from everything created, and all absolute perfections must be attributed to Him. Therefore, self-subsisting Being is the formal constituent of the divine nature.

This doctrine is explained by the very prominence which St. Thomas gives to the fundamental proposition: "The divine essence is the self-subsisting existence, the self-subsisting Being." The article in which this question is discussed is the terminus in the ascendant order of metaphysical reasoning, the culminating point of the five ways by which we prove the existence of God who is distinct from the world. This article also gives us the principle in the descendent process of metaphysical reasoning, or of that method by which we deduce the divine attributes and establish in what way the world is related to God.

The prime mover, as we have said, must be its very own activity and, being Actus purus in the operative order, it must be so also in the entitative order; for the mode of operation follows the mode of being. Its essence, therefore, is not only capable of existing, it is its very Being.

St. Thomas is more explicit when he says: "Existence is that which makes every form or nature actual; for goodness and humanity are spoken of as actual, only because they are spoken of as existing. Therefore existence must be compared to essence, if the latter is a distinct reality, as actuality to potentiality." And since in God there is no potentiality, as shown above, it follows that in Him the essence does not differ from existence.

The first cause must find within itself the reason of its own existence. But it cannot cause itself, for to do so it would have to be already in existence. Therefore it did not receive existence, but is this very existence.

Necessary being implies existence as an essential predicate, which means that it must not only have existence, but that it must be its very existence.

The supreme being, absolutely simple and perfect, could not participate in existence, but must be essentially Being; therefore there could be no distinction in it of an essence as limiting and of an existence as limited, of an essence as capable of existence and of an existence as actualizing or determining this essence.

The first intelligence, which directs all things to their ends, cannot be itself directed to being, as to an object distinct from itself; it must be Being itself always actually known to itself.

As we have said, such is the conclusion to which we come from the proofs of God's existence, a conclusion which constitutes the fundamental principle of the distinction between God and the world. This distinction comes first to our notice from the fact that God is immutable, and the world is subject to change (first, second, and third proofs). It is confirmed by the fact that God is, absolutely simple and perfect, whereas the world is composite and imperfect (fourth and fifth proofs). Its definite formula and ultimate claim to recognition come from the fact that God is He who is, Being itself, whereas everything else which exists is by its very nature only capable of existing, and is a composite of essence and existence. It is clear that no created being can be self-existent; even when actually existing, it is only contingent or non-essential existence that can be predicated of it. This existence is really distinct from the actual essence in which it is received and by which it is limited. "Along with the essence given by God, He produces that which the essence receives."

This real distinction, which is beyond the scope of the senses or of experience, is imposed upon human reason so as to enable it to decide the arguments advanced by Parmenides against the multiplicity of beings. This multiplicity is a fact, and cannot be explained except by admitting a limiting principle, which is that of real and created essence. In fact, existence cannot of itself be multiplied, but only in so far as it is received in essences capable of existing, just as the form is multiplied only in so far as it is received in matter. This composite of essence and existence is the principle of the imperfection and the mutability in created things. It presupposes that the notion of being as such is not univocal (as Scotus maintained), but analogous (Ia, q. 13, a. 5). Only in this sense can it be said that real essence, a potentiality which in receiving existence limits the same, is a part of

being, though it is not existence. Being is predicated analogically or in a different way, of these two elements which constitute created being. Thus sensation and intellection are spoken of as knowledge, though the connotation is essentially different in each case, as also when the term is applied to the thought of created beings and of the uncreated Being.

To declare, on the contrary, that the notion of being as such is univocal, makes impossible any explanation of the fact of the multiplicity of beings, and thus obliges the acceptance of Monism, as St. Thomas remarked of Parmenides; and the same may be said of Spinoza, the modern Parmenides. The old philosopher of Elis, as also Spinoza, was of the opinion that being is univocal, and from this he concluded the unicity of both being and substance. St. Thomas reduced the Eleatic argument to this syllogism: A thing that is simple cannot be diversified by itself, but only by, something other than itself. Now being as such is simple; and what is not being, is nothing. Therefore, being cannot be diversified, and so there is only one being.

To this objection St. Thomas replies as follows: “The mistake which Parmenides made was in believing that being, like a genus, is univocal. But, as a matter of fact, being is not a genus, and is predicated of the different types of being in very different senses.” If it were a genus, like animality, it could be diversified only by differences which would be extrinsic to it, and since what is not being is nothing, there is no way by which it could be diversified.

As a matter of fact, being is analogous, and the only unity it has is that of proportion, like that of the word “know,” which denotes either sense perception in its relation to the sensible object, or intellectual perception in its relation to the intelligible object. From this point of view, being as such contains actually and implicitly the various modes by which being is diversified. It is predicated, but with very different meanings, of potentiality and of act, and also of created things which are composites consisting of potentiality and of act, and it is also predicated of pure act.

Certain theologians, following Scotus, reject the real distinction between essence and existence in created things, and cause the analogy of being to be merged in univocity. It is not surprising that the Thomists consider that these theologians thus undermine the distinction between God and the world and prepare the way for Pantheism.

On the other hand, by at once admitting these fundamental and essentially connected truths, we avoid all forms of Pantheism as well as the theory of those who say that we are modes of the divine essence, and the theory of those who make God the formal principle by which all beings are determined.

It is truly impossible to conceive the divine essence as passing through a process of evolution and enriching itself by the acquisition of new modes of being. God is being itself, completely determined, and therefore incapable of further determination (Ia, q. 3, a. 6).

It is equally absurd to maintain that God is the formal principle by which all beings are determined. In that case these beings would participate in His nature, as matter participates in the form (Ia, q. 3, a. 8). He would constitute with these beings a composite more perfect than Himself.

God cannot be the subject of the material or spiritual changes which we observe in the world, nor can He be the formal law of these changes. His relations with the world cannot be those of immanent cause but only of extrinsic cause, both efficient and final (Ia, q. 3, a. 8).

Spinoza admitted only an immanent cause for the origin of the world, because of his theory of absolute realism by which he maintained that universal being exists as such apart from spirit. Thus he confuses being as such with the divine Being, at the same time admitting both the univocity and unicity of being. Another reason for this view held by Spinoza was that he unjustly applied to metaphysics that process of reasoning which belongs to mathematics.

This latter science, which is concerned only with quantity, rightly abstracts from sensible qualities, as well as from efficient and final causality. This cannot be the case with that science which is concerned only with being and which considers individual things in so far as they have being, and in so far as they come into existence and are kept in existence. This science must seek for the efficient and final cause of these beings. (See Also Appendix III: “The Various Kinds of Pantheism Refuted by St. Thomas.”)

Being itself is finally the principle of all the divine attributes. Despite what Scotus says, this principle could not consist in radical infinity or in the exigency of all possible perfections. For we cannot conceive of this exigency apart from a subject whose essence precisely calls for all perfections.

In the “question” treating of the Perfection of God, St. Thomas clearly explains what is the foundation of this exigency. (Ia, q. 4, a. 2). “God is existence itself, of itself subsistent. Consequently He must contain within Himself the whole perfection of being. For it is clear that if some hot thing has not the whole perfection of heat, this is because heat is not participated in its full perfection; but if this heat were self-subsisting, nothing of the virtue of heat would be wanting to it. Since therefore God is subsisting being itself, nothing of the perfection of being can be wanting to Him. All created perfections, however, are included in the perfection of being; for things are perfect, precisely in so far as they have being after some fashion. It follows, therefore, that no perfection is wanting to God. This line of argument, too, is implied by Dionysius in his De divinis nominibus (ch. v), when he says: God exists not in any single mode, but embraces all being in Himself, absolutely, without limitation.” Being itself demands all perfections, both those of the operative order and those of the entitative order, since operation presupposes being. In the discussion which follows we shall see how each particular attribute is deduced from subsistent Being.

Thought or subsistent intellection, since that is merely the basis of those perfections pertaining to the intellect and to the will, cannot be taken as the principle upon which we base this derivation. The derivation of these attributes is based upon the immateriality of the divine Being (Ia, q. 14, a. 1). God is intelligence because He is the absolutely immaterial Being. Moreover, intelligence presupposes an intelligible object, and the supremely intelligible is none other than Being itself, which contains virtually all possible beings viewed as so many analogical reflections of itself, somewhat after the manner of light which contains virtually all colors. Hence St. Thomas does not study the question of God’s knowledge of Himself until he has discussed the attributes relating to the divine Being, and has touched upon those relating to the divine operations.

From the fact that intellection denotes the highest degree of being, above all that is corporeal, and all forms of vegetative and sensitive life, we cannot conclude that it is what formally constitutes the divine nature. In fact, what constitutes the divine nature, is not a degree of being however noble, but it must be that which is presupposed in every being, the very self-subsisting Being in all the plenitude of its being.

With regard to the Hebrew tetragrammaton Yahveh (or Jehovah), St. Thomas (Ia, q. 13, a. 11), with his usual precision of thought, says: “This

name, He who is, is most properly applied to God, for three reasons:

"First, because of its signification. For it does not signify form, but simply existence itself. Hence since the existence of God is His essence itself, which can be said of no other, it is clear that among other names this one specially denominates God.

"Secondly, on account of its universality. For all other divine names are either less universal than 'He who is' or, if convertible with it, add something above it at least in idea; hence in a certain way they inform it and determine it. Now our intellect cannot know the essence of God itself in this life, as it is in itself; but whatever mode it applies in determining what it understands about God, it falls short of what God is in Himself. Therefore the less determinate the names are, and the more universal and absolute they are, the more properly are they applied to God. Hence Damascene says: 'He who is, is the principal of all names applied to God; for comprehending all in itself, it contains existence itself as an infinite and indeterminate sea of substance.' Now by any other name some mode of substance is determined, whereas the name He who is, determines no mode of being, but is indeterminate to all, and therefore it denominates the infinite ocean of substance.

"Thirdly, from its consignification, for it signifies present existence; and this above all properly applies to God, whose existence knows not past or future, as Augustine says (De Trinitate, V)."

Finally, no matter what the modern idealists may say, all the theologians admit priority of being over thought. This latter, from both the subjective and the objective points of view, can be defined only by reason of its reference to being. Thought is the thought of a thinking being, and its tendency is for the being thought of.

In the passage in which Aristotle discusses the νόησις νοήσεως νόησις, the thinking on thinking (Met., XII, ch. ix), he shows that the perfection of intellection consists precisely in this, that it receives its specification from the intelligible object. "What proves this," he says, "is that there are things which it is better not to know." To know them is not a perfection. Hence perfection of knowledge depends upon the dignity of the thing that is known. Also pure Act is considered by Aristotle to be the very first intelligible, τὸ πρῶτον νοητόν (Met., XII, ch. vii). It is the objective νόησις more so than the eternal act of intellection, which has for its object this supreme intelligible. In this we recognize the old objectivism.

Whereas being is an absolute of direct apprehension, intelligence cannot be conceived except as something which is vitally related to being. Our very first idea in the order of invention, is the idea of being; our very first principle is the principle of identity, which enunciates what applies primarily to being, that "a being is what it is and cannot be what it is not." In the synthetic or deductive order, in via judicii, it is this first principle of identity which is the fundamental truth. It is that which ultimately explains all other things, and which is the answer to our final inquiries about God and the world. But it is now expressed in the following form: "I am who am and cannot not be." As Father Del Prado has shown in his treatise De veritate fundamentali philosophiae christianae, of such a nature is this principle that it constitutes the corner-stone of the treatise on God. It is the terminus of the proof of God's existence, and the starting-point in the deduction of the divine attributes. Along with the principle of identity implied in the first of our ideas, which is that of being, there is needed a being in whom essence is identical with existence, one who is pure being, without any admixture is potentiality, without limitation, who is to being as A is to A, in whom the principle of identity is completely realized and who is Being instead of simply having being: "I am He who is" (Exod., ch. iii).

By making intelligence dependent upon truth or upon being, we depart from the absolute intellectualism of Leibniz. As Boutroux remarks (La Monadologie, p. 84), "Leibniz, taking the modern point of view of the glorification of personality, considers intelligence . . . the indispensable substratum of truth." It may well be questioned whether Leibniz' absolute intellectualism, in which liberty is stripped of everything but the name, does not logically result in Hegel's absolute idealism, which relegates being to thought, and hence consigns what is to what must be, liberty to necessity, actual fact to right, success to morality. If we take this view of the question, we are obliged to make "becoming" the fundamental reality, and thus deny the objective validity of the principle of non-contradiction, which therefore ceases to be the norm for the reasoning mind and its abstractions. St. Thomas, as we shall see later on, by maintaining that the will is subordinate to the intellect, avoids the error of psychological determinism; for he is more emphatic than Leibniz in affirming the dependence of the intellect upon being. If being, conceived as an absolute, is prior to intelligence conceived as related to being, then what the real denotes need not be positively intelligible and of itself predetermined, in order that the transition

from Being itself to the existence of this world by means of creation, and the transitions from the infinite to the finite, from the one to the multiple, from the universal to the particular, be deduced from the principle of sufficient reason. Intellectualism limits itself when it claims to be a realism, and when it distinguishes in being—which it regards as prior to thought—two elements, one completely intelligible (act), and the other (potency) thoroughly obscure for the intellect, but necessary so as to enable it to solve the arguments advanced by Parmenides and also to explain multiplicity and becoming in terms of being. At present we cannot insist further on the importance of these notions, but we will return to the subject in chapter four.

Therefore we conclude that self-subsisting Being is what formally constitutes the divine nature, according to our imperfect way of knowing it. This thesis is confirmed by the fact that the attributes are derived from the self-subsisting Being. These attributes are in this Being, not merely in a virtual manner (as properties are contained virtually in the created essence from which they are derived), but in an actual and implicit manner, although not as yet explicitly expressed. That is why the Thomists and almost all theologians say there is only a virtual and minor distinction between the divine attributes and the divine essence. Since, in speaking thus of the divine essence, we do not simply mean to imply our imperfect mode of knowing it, but the divine essence as it is in itself, then we must say that in the eminence of the Deity, according to what properly and intrinsically constitutes it as such, are contained all the divine perfections actually and explicitly, and that there is no distinction between them except those made by the human mind. That is why St. Thomas (Ia, q. 13, a. 11 ad 1um) says: “The name God is more proper than the name He who is, as regards the object intended by the name, as it is imposed to signify the divine nature.”

Between the divine essence and the attributes there is no mental distinction either for God or for the blessed who contemplate Him face to face. The intimate life of the Deity in its eminent simplicity is the immediate object of the beatific vision.

Sanctifying grace is a physical, formal, and analogical participation of the divine nature. If in this life we had such a knowledge of grace that we could say in what it intimately consists, we should then have a certain knowledge of what intimately constitutes the divine nature. There is resemblance by way of analogy, between inanimate beings and God, in so

far as He is being; between living beings and God, in so far as He is living; between intelligent beings and God, in so far as He is intelligent. That is why we say that beings are made to God's image (Ia, q. 93, a. 2). By the supernatural life of grace we are like unto God, precisely in this that He is God, and we thus participate in the ultimate life of the Deity according to the strict acceptation of the term. Hence St. Thomas says: "The least degree of sanctifying grace in the soul of a single man or infant is incomparably more precious than all created beings both corporeal and spiritual." "The good of grace in one is greater than the good of nature in the whole universe" (Ia IIae, q. 113, a. 9 ad 2um).

Pascal likewise says: "The least of minds is greater than all material objects, the firmament, the stars, the earth and its kingdoms; for the mind has knowledge of all these things and of itself; whereas things material have no knowledge at all. Bodies and minds, all these taken together and the effects produced by them, do not equal the least act of charity. This latter is of an infinitely higher order. From the sum-total of material things, there could not possibly issue one little thought, because thought is of another order. From bodies and minds we cannot possibly have an act of true charity, for the latter, too, is of another order, pertaining to the supernatural. The saints have their realm, their glory, their victory, their luster, and have no need of temporal or spiritual aggrandisement, which in no way affects them, neither increasing nor decreasing their greatness. The saints are seen by God and the angels, not by bodies or by curious minds. God suffices for them."

Sanctity, which is the life of grace having reached its perfection, is a participation of the intimate life of God, of that which properly constitutes the Deity such as it is in itself.

CHAPTER II

THE DERIVATION OF THE ATTRIBUTES FROM SELF-SUBSISTING BEING

45) Notion, division, and derivation in general of the attributes.

The expression “divine attribute,” in its strict sense, is usually defined as an absolutely simple perfection which exists necessarily and formally in God and which, according to our imperfect mode of knowing it, is deduced from what we conceive as constituting the divine essence.

God’s free acts and the real relations which constitute the Trinity of divine persons are not attributes in the strict sense of the term. Of course, any perfection (such as rationality or animality) which essentially includes imperfection cannot be called a divine attribute. These mixed perfections are not in God formally but only virtually, in that He can bring them into existence. Maimonides and the Agnostics erred in claiming that even absolute perfections exist in God only virtually. From this point of view, we should have no more right to attribute intelligence to God, than to attribute animality or materiality to Him (Ia, q. 13, a. 2). Nothing is opposed to God except in so far as it is an imperfection.

St. Thomas considers first those divine attributes which refer to the being of God, and then those which concern His operations. The attributes which relate to God’s very being are, first of all, those properties belonging to being as such and considered in the highest degree of their perfection. They are simplicity or unity, truth, goodness or perfection. Then come infinity which excludes any limitation of essence, immensity and omnipresence which exclude spatial limitation, eternity which excludes all time limitation; finally, with regard to our natural knowledge, the being of God is invisible, and it is incomprehensible, yet able to be known by analogy with created things.

In the attributes which relate to the divine operations, a division is made between those referring to the immanent divine operations and those which are causes of an effect external to God. To the former class belong, on the part of the intellect, wisdom and providence; and on the part of the will, love and its two great virtues of mercy and justice. The immediate principle of the external divine effects is omnipotence, both creative and conservative, upon which depends the divine concurrence which is necessary for all beings to enable them to act and attain their end.

Such is the main division of the divine attributes. From a secondary point of view and more as regards the mode of our knowledge, we distinguish between positive and negative attributes. In fact, there are some perfections expressed by terms that are positive in form but negative in implication, such as simplicity, which is the negation of composition. On the other hand, there are attributes expressed by terms which are negative in form (such as infinity), but which denote a positive perfection.

Anyone who has duly considered the orderly arrangement of the questions in the treatise on God, which forms part of St. Thomas' Summa theologica, can easily enough, by following this order closely, derive all the attributes from the self-subsisting Being.

We will give a general outline of the derivation of these attributes. After that we will consider each of them in turn and endeavor to solve the seeming antinomies which confront one in the reconciliation of these attributes. The derivation of the attributes may be summed up by the following diagram.

If unity, truth, and goodness (see Vol. I, nn. 18, 20, 29) are transcendental properties of being as such, which transcends or dominates species and genera, then the self-subsisting Being must be absolutely one (simple and unique, Ia, q. 3, 11). More than just intelligible, He must be Truth itself, or the first intelligible, τὸ πρῶτον νοητόν (Met., XII, ch. vii; Ia, q. 16).

Having plenitude of being, He is also the sovereign good, capable of attracting to Himself the primary desirable, τὸ πρῶτον ὀρεκτόν, the one who constitutes the basis of all our obligations, the τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ τὸ ἄριστον, the good and the best (Ia, q. 4, 5, 6). He must also be infinite, which means without limitation of essence (Ia, q. 7).

Necessarily above the limitations of space and time, He is immense, everywhere present by His power with which He conserves all creatures in

existence (Ia, q. 8). He is absolutely immutable (Ia, q. 9), and consequently eternal (Ia, q. 10).

Lastly, as regards our naturally acquired knowledge, He is invisible and incomprehensible (Ia, q. 12). However, He can be known in a natural way, by analogy derived from creatures (Ia, q. 13).

We will consider Him in His operations, and what these operations are (Ia, q. 14, prologue).

From the definition of self-subsisting Being it follows that He is immaterial and consequently the intelligible in act and the Intellect in act (Ia, q. 14, a. 1). Since the intellect is defined by reason of its immediate reference to being, it too, like being, is analogous and, like being, can have every imperfection eliminated from it. The same must be said of the will and of love which are defined by reason of their immediate reference to good.

Being itself is not only intelligent but is independent of all material and spatial limitations, especially of any limitation of essence. He is supremely intelligent, and His intelligence cannot be a mere faculty or potentiality, but is an eternal act of intellection. And this thought ever in act cannot but be identified with Being itself supremely intelligible and always actually known. Let us not seek here, as Fichte or Spencer did, for a duality of subject and object. This duality, says St. Thomas (Ia, q. 14, a. 2), comes about only as the result of the potentiality or imperfection of subject and object. When the subject can know but is not knowledge itself, when the object can be known without being the Truth always known, then the two are distinct. But eternal intellection demands that it be absolutely identified with the supremely intelligible Being, and vice versa. Not only the general requirements of divine simplicity make this identification a necessity, but each of these two perfections peculiarly demands it. When all potentiality has been eliminated, pure thought is pure being, and pure being is pure thought: ἔστιν ἡ νόησις νοήσεως νόησις: its thinking is a thinking on thinking (Met., XII, ch. ix).

Divine wisdom, in so far as its object is the divine essence and all possible things virtually contained in it, is called knowledge of simple intelligence. In so far as things created, either past, present, or future, constitute its object, it is called knowledge of vision.

If He who is is intelligence itself, it must be most evident, continues St. Thomas (Ia, q. 18), for life to be attributed to Him in the highest degree.

The more immanence there is in life, the greater is its perfection, since vital movement is that which proceeds, not from an external principle, but from a principle within the living being. This same immanence is more or less perfect, varying in degree, according as the life is vegetative, sensitive, or intellectual. It reaches its perfection in supreme Thought, which does not have to seek for its object outside itself, and which is under no necessity of being aroused to action by the illuminating concurrence of a higher Cause. "There is life in God," said Aristotle, "for the act of the intellect is life, and God is intellect supremely in act. It is this eternal act of Thought which gives Thought its perfect life. We also say of God that He is a perfect and eternal living being: ξῶον ἀίδιον ἄριστον. Hence eternal life belongs to God, for it is God Himself" (Met., Bk. XII, ch. vii).

If He who is is intellect and life itself, then will must also be attributed to Him. Will indeed follows upon intellect, says St. Thomas (Ia, q. 19, a. 1), just as a natural and unconscious inclination follows upon the form itself or the nature of unconscious beings. Besides, since will and love are defined by reason of their immediate relation to good, which is a property of being, they too, like being, are analogous and can have every imperfection removed from them. The will in God, just as much as the intellect, is not a faculty or potentiality. It is the act itself of the love of the good, and the good itself always actually loved.

The divine will is free (Ia, q. 19, a. 3), not as regards the absolute Good which it must love, but as regards finite good by which no further perfection can accrue to it. What constitutes the basis of divine liberty is that the self-subsisting Being is absolutely independent of everything created. It is nothing but the predominating indifference of Being with regard to what is simply possible and is not repugnant to existence, but which has no claim to existence. It is fitting that He who is the sovereign Good should impart what is in Him to others; but He does so with absolute freedom, for there can be no increase in His perfection from the fact that He allows others to share in it.

Still more so God is free to create a certain world in which all things are wisely ordained, rather than some other which would also be a proof of His wisdom. Whatever be the inequality between two things of finite goodness, they remain equally the same for the infinity of the supreme Good (Ia, q. 25, a. 5, 6).

The One who is being itself must also be omnipotent, which means that He can give reality to everything which does not imply contradiction, to everything which can be. In fact, being is the proper effect of the first Being, who gives reality to things just as light illumines, and fire generates heat (Ia, q. 25). As first cause and first mover of everything which exists, God must be present to all things, preserving them in their being (Ia, q. 8).

Providence is attributed to the One who is being itself, because His external action extending to all created beings even to their smallest parts, is the action of an intelligent agent. But an intelligent agent acts for an end known by it, and this end is the raison d'être of all the means that are employed. God, therefore, orders all things to an ultimate end, which is Himself. Providence, or this type of the order in things to an end, is also a pure perfection and is defined, like the intellect by which it functions, by reason of its relation to being or to the raison d'être of things (Ia, q. 22, a. t).

The One who is being itself is just and merciful; justice and mercy are virtues which reside in His will. He is just because His intelligence and goodness oblige Him to give to each created nature all that is necessary for its attainment of the end assigned to it (Ia, q. 21, a. 2). On the other hand, loving as He must His own good above all things, He is bound to see to it that His inalienable rights are respected and must punish violation of them (Ia IIae, q. 87, a. 1, 3).

The One who is being itself is merciful, for it belongs properly to the omnipotent and infinitely good Being to give what is good to others, to come to their assistance, to raise them up from their wretchedness, and, if we may so speak, to bring being out of nothingness, good out of evil, repentance and love out of sin, a love corresponding in intensity to the malice of the sin. Therein is God's triumph and the motive attracting "extreme wealth to extreme poverty." "It belongs to divine mercy," says St. Thomas, "to give generously to others and to help them in their need. And this properly concerns the superior in his dealings with his subjects (et hoc maxime superioris est: and this most properly concerns the superior). Hence mercy properly belongs to God" (Ia, q. 21, a. 3; IIa IIae, q. 30, a. 4).

The One who is being itself is supremely happy. Beatitude is the perfect felicity of an intellectual nature, which finds its satisfaction in the good which it possesses, knowing itself to be beyond the reach of passing misfortune, and being always master of its actions. Evidently all these

conditions for happiness are verified in God, since He is the embodiment of all perfection and intelligence (Ia, q. 26, a. 1).

Lastly, the One who is being itself is also beauty, consisting in the closest and most striking harmony between most varied perfections, so varied, indeed, that some of them, though seeming in certain respects to be irreconcilable, such as infinite mercy and infinite justice, are nevertheless identified in the divine love of the supreme Good (Ia, q. 5, a. 4 ad 1um).

The One who is being itself is also holiness, or that indissoluble union of all spiritual perfections in their highest degree without any trace of imperfection (IIa IIae, q. 81, a. 8).

The sum-total of these attributes thus derived from Being itself enables us to say of God that He is personal. In fact, personality is nothing else but subsistence which is independent of matter and which is the basis of intelligence, of consciousness, and of liberty in beings. God, as we have just seen, subsists independently of the world of corporeal beings, like every immaterial being. Besides this, He is intelligent, conscious of Himself, and free. Moreover, since God is absolutely and solely self-subsistent, independently of every other being, since He is omniscient and absolutely free of everything created, He is supremely personal. However, as Vacant remarks, “The Vatican Council did not adopt the formula: God is a personal being. This way of speaking of the divine nature contradicts the error of materialists. However, it has the disadvantage of giving the impression that there is only one person in God. But the Catholic Church believes in the Trinity of divine persons.” To be sure, it is only by means of revelation that we can know of this mystery which introduces us into the intimate life of God, such as He is in Himself, according to what properly constitutes Him (Ia, q. 32, a. 1).

It is not the province of theology to demonstrate the possibility of a real distinction between the divine persons, or, what comes to the same thing, that in itself this distinction is not impossible or contradictory. To affirm the possibility of this demonstration would be to confuse the natural with the supernatural. Theology merely shows that we cannot see anything evidently contradictory in the Trinity of divine persons. After the revelation of this mystery, each of the divine persons is conceived as a subsistent relation or as a relative subsistence. Reason does not have to prove positively the analogical validity of this concept of relation, as it had to do in the case of the concepts of natural theology. Since God has made use of this concept as

the means of revealing Himself to us, it suffices if theology proves that the relation does not posit in God an evident imperfection, but on the contrary that there are certain congruent reasons which permit us to surmise its possibility and its necessity.

We also see that the natural knowledge of God is not anthropomorphic, as the Modernists claimed it to be. We do not conceive God as if He were a man of infinite proportions; but we conceive of Him as Being itself, and we admit in Him only those attributes which are derived necessarily from this concept of self-subsisting Being. We do not conceive God in the image of man; it is man who is made in the image of God, inasmuch as man has been given an intellect, the object of which is being and its absolute laws. “The light of Thy countenance, O Lord, is signed upon us” (Ps. 4: 7). The human intellect is not merely human, it is also an intellect. Inasmuch as it is human (united to the body), its object is the essence of sensible things. Inasmuch as it is an intellect, its object, like that of every intellect, is being itself, and consequently it can rise to the knowledge of God.

Though we do not attain to a knowledge of God as He is in Himself, it is truly God Himself that is known by our reason. Do we not know our friends, though not knowing them such as they are in themselves? Moreover, we cannot stress too much in these days of Agnosticism, that, in one way, we have a more certain knowledge of God than of the intrinsic properties of plants or animals. These essentially material natures cannot be fully intelligible to us. They are within close range of our senses, but they are far removed from the source of all intelligibility, as Aristotle said. And we have a far more certain knowledge of God than we have of men with whom we are living in close intimacy. Reason alone actually assures us that we are more certain of the goodness of God in our regard than of the rectitude of our own intentions. We know the goodness of God better than we do the uprightness of our own heart.

ARTICLE I

ATTRIBUTES RELATIVE TO THE BEING OF GOD

These attributes, as we have said, are those properties of being in general which are found in God in the highest possible degree of perfection. They are unity, truth, and goodness. Then come infinity which excludes all

limitation of essence, immensity and ubiquity which exclude all spatial limitation, eternity which excludes any time limit. Finally, as regards our knowledge, the divine Being is invisible, incomprehensible, and nevertheless able to be known by analogy derived from created things.

46) Unity and simplicity; truth; perfection and goodness; infinity.

He who is Being itself is absolutely one and simple. Unity is the undividedness of being; every being, considered as such, is one or undivided. If it were divided, it would no longer be one being, but two beings (Ia, q. 11, a. 1). However, it is possible for a being to be divisible or to be composed of parts. We can distinguish in it either quantitative parts, as in the case of a material thing, or the parts constituting its essence (matter and form, body and soul), or the logical parts (genus and the specific difference: animality and rationality). We may also distinguish in it the abstract and the concrete (humanity and this man), substance and accident, or, finally, essence and existence.

Now there can be no kind of composition in the self-subsisting Being. As He possesses all the perfection of being, He must also have all the perfection of unity, since this latter is a property of being (Ia, q. 11, a. 4). Besides, every composite demands a cause. Now Being itself is uncaused. In every composite, what belongs properly to the whole cannot be predicated of the parts, for these are less perfect than the whole. But everything in the self-subsisting Being is identified with this very Being, and there is no imperfection in Him (Ia, q. 3, a. 7). We may consider all the modes of composition, and not one of these can be applied to Him (Ia, q. 3).

There are no quantitative parts in Him, since He is not corporeal. He is not composed of matter and form, for these are merely imperfect and limiting modes of being. He is not composed of genus and differentia, since self-existing Being, transcending the limits of all genera, is what properly constitutes Him. He is not a composite of essence and existence, since He is existence itself. We cannot distinguish in Him between what is abstract or universal (the Deity), and what is concrete or individual (God), since the concrete is opposed to the abstract by reason of its individualized material conditions and actual existence. Now the self-subsisting Being does not admit of individualized material conditions, and He is essentially actual existence. It is impossible to distinguish in Him between substance and accident, since His substance, supremely determined by itself, is incapable of further determinations.

The subsisting Being is therefore absolutely one and simple, and consequently ever unique of its kind. If there could be a multiplication of the Deity, we should be able to distinguish in each of the gods the abstract from the concrete, the divine essence common to all of them from their individualized conditions. There would be two divine existences. The Deity would no more then be existence itself, the self-subsisting Being (Ia, q. 11, a. 3).

He who is Being itself is the First Truth. Every being is true in so far as it is in conformity with its eternal type. Thus we say, when we notice that a metal is of the nature of gold, that it is genuine gold and not merely what passes for gold. Or again we say of a plant that it is a real and not an artificial plant, and of a man that he is a real savant. According to this primary acceptation of the term, truth is called ontological. We say also of a judgment that it is true, in so far as it is in conformity with the thing judged. This is called logical or formal truth (Ia, q. 16, a. 1, 2, 3).

The self-subsisting Being is not only in conformity with an eternal type known by the divine intellect, but, by reason of His absolute simplicity, He is the divine intellect itself always in act (Ia, q. 16, a. 4). He is therefore the First Truth, and in Him are identified ontological and logical truth, the real and the ideal. Contrary to the testimony of conscience and to the principle of contradiction, Hegel identifies the idea of being in general with the reality of being in general, and ends in panlogism. The principle of contradiction or that of identity obliges us in each case to identify in God, but in God alone, the self-subsisting Being and the supreme Intelligible always actually known.

Without ending in panlogism, which means the negation of creative liberty and of human liberty, the fact remains that the First Truth is immutable and eternal, the cause and the supreme measure of all other truth, just as the self-subsisting Being is the principle of all other beings which are analogous reproductions of the perfections contained in this Being.

He who is Being itself is perfection and sovereign Goodness. Every being is good according to the degree of its being. Even if it possesses only substance, in spite of its deficiencies it has a certain goodness, the goodness of being. In it we find verified the laws of created being as such, thus revealing to us the existence of the primary being, and that itself is a real goodness. But we do not say of a thing that it is good, except when it has

that perfection which is appropriate to its nature. Thus we speak of a stone as good for building purposes, of a good fruit, of a good servant, of a good horse. The goodness of a being is that perfection which makes it desirable and lovable, inasmuch as it has in itself the capacity of perfecting things, and of corresponding to some need or desire (Ia, q. 5).

Now the first cause of all beings, the source of all life in the universe, must possess all created perfections in an eminent degree. Moreover, since this cause is the self-subsisting Being, it has of necessity all the perfection which pertains to being, and consequently all absolute perfections which are but modes of being (Ia, q. 4, a. 2; q. 5, a. 2). God is thus essentially sovereign goodness, and there is no accidental or acquired goodness in Him. By His very essence He is His own end and that of everything else. Every creature tends toward its own perfection, which is a participated likeness of supreme perfection. Thus there is a corresponding proportion between the various agents and their respective ends.

From this it follows, says St. Thomas (Ia, q. 60, a. 5), that "every creature is naturally inclined to love God in its own way more than itself. Thus in the human body the hand is, without deliberation, exposed to the blow for the safety of the whole body, of which it is a part. It belongs, indeed, more to the whole than to itself. Otherwise, it would follow that this natural inclination is perverse." In free beings, liberty may be contrary to this natural inclination but cannot destroy it. It must follow this inclination after the manner of a known cause. It is clear that we must love the sovereign Good more than ourselves, since it is infinitely better than ourselves.

Since God is the sovereign Good, it follows that He cannot be the cause of evil as such. Evil is either physical or moral (Ia, q. 48, a. 5, 6). God can in no way will moral evil or sin, which is the result of preferring created good to the sovereign Good. God cannot prefer anything to the sovereign Good, which is Himself. He can only permit sin though disapproving it. Furthermore, only because He has a higher good in view, does He permit that the free will, which by nature is detectible, should fail to function properly, because He is good enough and powerful enough to draw good even out of evil. Thus persecution is permitted by God as the means of the martyr's glory (Ia, q. 19, a. 10).

As to physical evil, such as our sufferings or those of animals, God cannot be said to will these directly, but only accidentally, as being the means of a higher good. Thus the death of a gazelle becomes the means of

life for the lion; our sufferings enable us to practise patience; the punishments inflicted by God lead us to repentance and manifest His justice and the inalienable right of the sovereign Good to be loved above all things (Ia, q. 49, a. 2).

He who is Being itself is infinite in perfection. There is a kind of imperfect infinity which can be attributed to matter in that it is not determined. Matter receives its perfection from the form by which it is determined, just as the clay receives its perfection from the form of the statue. On the contrary, there is a formal infinity which consists in that perfection which is independent of all material limitations. Thus the ideal in the mind of the artist may be reproduced indefinitely and, before it becomes a reality limited to a certain locality in space and to a certain portion of matter, it is in a certain sense infinite. Now, of all formal perfections, the most perfect is that of being, which is the ultimate actuality of all things. The self-subsistent Being is therefore infinite, not as a corporeal or extended infinity, but as a spiritual infinity of perfection which surpasses not only all spatial and material limitations but even all limitations of essence. In Him existence is not received in an essence capable of receiving existence. He is eternally subsisting and unreceived existence itself. Thus God is supremely determined; perfection in His case is without limitations. He is incomprehensible, “the infinite ocean of being.” Hence it follows that He is infinite in wisdom, in goodness, in power, and in all His perfections.

Thus the infinity which we deduce from the notion of self-subsisting Being may also be proved a posteriori by considering that the production of finite beings as such presupposes an active and infinite power which is possessed only by an infinite and perfect cause. In fact, a finite cause cannot produce any effect whatever, except by the transformation of a pre-existing subject which is capable of this transformation. Thus the sculptor cannot produce a statue unless he has the required material. A teacher gradually molds the intelligence of the pupil, but he did not give him intelligence. Now the more destitute the passive potentiality is, which is a prerequisite of our activity, the richer and more productive must be the active potentiality. The most that we can say is that, when the passive potentiality is nothing more than a mere possibility or non-repugnance to existence, then the active potentiality must be infinite. It follows that, however low in the scale of being a finite being may be, to produce the totality of its being from nothing requires an infinite power which is found only in an infinitely perfect being.

Therefore the first cause of all things which exist must be an infinitely perfect one.

Pantheism objects to this as follows: but nothing can be added to the infinite. If, therefore, the world is added as a new reality to the being of God, the being of God is not infinite.

It is easy to answer this objection. We agree that nothing can be added to the infinite in the same order. But the contradiction of Pantheism consists in adding finite modes to the infinite, in such a way that the infinite is at the same time finite. But reason does not reject the idea that in an inferior order something may be added to the infinite, just as the effect is added to the eminent cause producing it. To deny such a possibility would be refusing to infinite Being the perfection of causality, and hence He would be no longer infinite.

But Pantheism maintains that, after the production of created beings, there is more being than there was before. Thus we find ourselves maintaining what we imputed as an error to the Evolutionists, namely, that the greater comes from the less.

There is not more being or more perfection as a consequence of creation; rather there are many beings; just as when a teacher has trained a pupil, there is not an increase in the sum of knowledge, but an increase in the number of the learned. Yet this is but a faint analogy. No matter how excellent a teacher may be, he and his school are more perfect than he is alone. But if a cause is infinite, it already contains eminently all the perfections of its effects.

In the order of quantity, it is true to say that infinity plus one is still infinity. If we suppose that the series of days had no beginning, or that it is infinite a parte ante (regressively), then the addition of other days is possible a parte post (successively). It is only from the finite point of view (in ratione finiti) that the series admits of increase, inasmuch as it is finite in one direction. Inasmuch as the series is infinite, it admits of no increase.

If we speak of the infinity of perfection (which means plenitude not of quantity or extent, but of being, of life, of wisdom, of love, of holiness), then with greater reason we must declare it to be evident that, as a consequence of creation, there is not more perfection, more being, more life, more wisdom, more holiness. But that presupposes that being is analogous and not univocal. Only on this condition do we find that the First Being contains within Himself the plenitude of being.

47) Immensity, immutability, eternity.

If we consider the self-subsisting Being as He is related to space, we attribute to Him immensity and ubiquity. When we say that He is immense, we mean that He is immeasurable, and able to be in every place. In attributing ubiquity to Him, we affirm that He is actually present everywhere. Before creation God was immense, but He was not actually present in all things, since things as yet did not exist. He is everywhere by His power, to which all things are subject; by His presence, since He knows everything, even to the smallest details; by His essence, inasmuch as He maintains all things in existence by means of His preservative act which is His very being. As God creates immediately and not through the medium of a creature or of an instrument, so His preservative act, which is the continuation of His creative act, extends immediately to the very being itself of all created things, to that which is innermost in each of them.

Thus, without being corporeal, simply by virtual contact, the supreme Being who is a pure spirit, is in every place and in all parts of space in which there are bodies. Moreover, He is present to all spirits, that type of being which is not subject to spatial limitations, preserving them in their being as He preserves all created things. This immensity and ubiquity have nothing material and quantitative about them, as Spinoza incorrectly thought to be so. There is not a grosser conception than to imagine God, who is Being itself, to have a body without limitations, as though He were like a circle with its circumference everywhere and its center nowhere. Since He is pure spirit, He is above all considerations of space; and by His creative and preservative power He maintains all material bodies, somewhat as the sun is present to the rays emanating from it, as a principle is present to its immediate consequences, as a soul is present to the thoughts coming from it. Thus God is present to all beings, to all souls of which He is eminently the center. To be conscious of this presence is to approach Him and all creatures in Him. “For in him we live and move and are” (Acts 18:28).

He who is Being itself is absolutely immutable. He can acquire nothing, not being in potentiality for further determination, since He is supremely determined and pure act. Neither can He lose anything, since He is absolutely simple. This absolute stability of the divine being applies necessarily to His wisdom and will. All mutability, all progress in knowledge or in love presupposes imperfection. This immutability is not

that of inertia or of death. On the contrary, it is the immutability of supreme life which possesses everything which it can and must have, there being no need of acquiring it and no possibility of losing it (Ia, q. 9).

Eternity consists in the uniformity of an unchangeable life which has neither beginning nor end, and which is possessed all at once. “Eternity is a simultaneously full and perfect possession of interminable life.” It is said of Mozart that he always heard a melody, not successively, like other listeners, but “simultaneously,” in the law itself of its composition. Plato (Timaeus, 37, d) calls time “the mobile image of motionless eternity.” Even if time were without either beginning or end, it would none the less continue to pass. It never stops, it is fleeting. We necessarily distinguish in time between the past, the present, and the future from Aristotle. Eternity, which is the uniformity of the wisdom and life of the absolute Being, is obscure for us only because it is too bright a light for the feebleness of the mind’s eye.

48) Invisibility, incomprehensibility, knowableness.

Compared with our naturally acquired knowledge, whether of the sensitive or the intellectual order, the divine Being remains invisible, precisely because He is too luminous in Himself. “Everything is knowable according as it is actual,” says St. Thomas (Ia, q. 12, a. 1); “consequently God, who is pure act without any admixture of potentiality or imperfection, is in Himself supremely knowable. But what is supremely knowable in itself, may not be knowable to a particular intellect, on account of the excess of the intelligible object above the intellect. Thus the sun, which is supremely visible, cannot be seen by the bat by reason of its excess of light.” This comparison was a familiar one with Plato and Aristotle (Met., Bk. I, ch. ii).

Evidently God, who is a pure spirit, cannot be seen by bodily eyes which perceive only sensible things. Neither can He be seen by the merely natural powers of any created intellect. The proper object of this intellect, which is created being, must be proportionate to it. Moreover, the proper object of the human intellect, naturally united with a body, is the intelligibility of things sensible. Hence it is only through the mirror of sensible things that we can acquire a natural knowledge of God, just as we know causes through the perfections reflected in the effects. A created intellect, however elevated in the scale of being, even if it were the highest that we can think

of in the angelic order, cannot acquire a natural knowledge of God except through the medium of spiritual beings (Ia, q. 12, a. 4, 12; q. 56, a. 3).

God Himself cannot give us any created idea which is representative in itself of His divine essence such as it actually is. This created idea could not be intelligible except by participation and so it would be incapable of representing the unparticipated Intelligibility, the ever actual and eternally subsistent Intellection, "the self-subsisting intellect" (Ia, q. 12, a. 2).

Yet there is no repugnance in the idea that God, by an absolutely gratuitous gift, by a purely supernatural light, should so fortify our intellect that it could see Him as He sees Himself. Although, to be sure, the divine essence surpasses the proper object of our intellect, it does not surpass the adequate object, which is "being" in all its amplitude. The divine essence, such as it is in itself, still belongs to the category of being. Although the formal concept of the Deity transcends the formal concept of being (super ens, above being), nevertheless this latter is formally contained in the eminence of the Deity. To see supreme Being as it actually is, without any admixture of potentiality or of imperfection, one must see the Deity (Ia, q. 12, a. 4 ad 3um).

The natural desire that we have of seeing God's essence is also a sign that it is possible for us to be elevated above our natural state so as to see God in the supernatural order. (See Ia, q. 12, a. 1; Ia IIae, q. 3, a. 8; Contra Gentes, Bk. III, ch. 1.)

Plato, toward the end of his dialectic on love, went so far as to say: "If there is anything which appraises this life at its true proposition and each of its parts, the subject, the predicate, and the composition; but they do not grasp the truth by a scientific demonstration. They do not know it as it is capable of being known." Thus a disciple who knows his master's teaching in all its parts, does not comprehend it as the master does. He does not penetrate so deeply into it, and perceives only in a confused manner how closely related each part is with the supreme principles. Thus the short-sighted person sees a whole landscape, though he does not see it as clearly as a person who has good eyesight.

The divine essence, which is the infinite Being, is infinitely knowable; and created intellects, raised to the supernatural order so as to be able to enjoy the beatific vision, cannot know the infinite except in a finite way, more or less perfect, according to the intensity of supernatural light which they receive. They truly see directly the whole divine essence, but not in its

totality, not in that infinitely perfect way which belongs to God alone. They do not exhaust its infinite cognoscibility, and they do not perceive the innumerable multitude of possible beings that it virtually contains.

Invisible and incomprehensible as the nature of God is for us, yet it is naturally knowable in this life by the use of reason. This knowledge, which we have already considered at length (nn. 29, 33, 42), can be only analogical. We find the absolute perfections of God reflected in the mirror of created things. Thus we positively know Him in that He has something analogically in common with His effects, inasmuch as He is being, good, wise, or powerful. But we cannot express what it is that properly constitutes Him as He is, except in a negative and relative way by means of objects derived from sense experience. Thus we say of Him that He is the infinite Being, or the supreme Being Ia, q. 13).

Unity, truth, goodness or perfection, infinity, immensity, immutability, eternity, invisibility, and incomprehensibility—these are the principal attributes relative to God's being itself.

Since action or operation follows being, and the mode of operation follows the mode of being, we now come to discuss the attributes relative to the divine operations. The activity of a material body is corporeal, that of a spirit is spiritual. What must be our concept of the divine action, and what are its relations with the divine Being and with the world?

ARTICLE II

ATTRIBUTES RELATIVE TO THE DIVINE OPERATIONS

According to the definition of self-subsisting Being, it is immaterial or spiritual and hence intelligent. The two great attributes of the divine Intellect are wisdom and providence. Free will is an absolute perfection which is the necessary consequence of intelligence. The act of the divine will is love, and its two great virtues are justice and mercy. If we pass from the immanent operations to discuss the immediate principle of God's external operations, then this principle merits the name of omnipotence. All these operations constitute the divine life, the intimate nature of which is known to us only by revelation. It is in this order that we shall consider this second category of attributes so that we may show how they are deduced from Being itself.

49) Wisdom, foreknowledge, providence.

Under the general term “wisdom,” the word most frequently used in Scripture, we shall discuss the following: divine knowledge, determining its primary and secondary object; God’s foreknowledge of future contingent events; His providence.

Divine knowledge. All men flatter themselves that they know what wisdom is, even the sceptics who make it consist in doubting everything. Wisdom is a general view of all things. But it is possible for us to view all things from on high, to believe that all things proceed from a holy love, or are permitted by it and concur toward a supreme Good. On the contrary, it is possible for us to view all things from below, to believe that they are all the result of material and blind fate, with no end in view. There is an optimistic wisdom which shuts its eyes to the existence of evil, and there is a pessimistic and discouraging wisdom which sees no good in anything.

The characteristic of the wisdom which Scripture calls “the wisdom of the world” is to see all things from below. It judges all things in human life either from the worldly pleasures they afford or from the material interests they safeguard or from the satisfaction that our ambition or pride finds in them. Worldly-minded people are thus led to make the wisdom of this life consist in striking an average medium between true good and evil of too gross or perverse a nature. The wise man, so they say, must not go to excess in anything. Thus it often happens that such people call “good” what is indifferently so, and what is but a confusion of the ideas of good and evil. Under the name of tolerance, this “carnal wisdom” is as indulgent to vice as it is indifferent to virtue. It is particularly severe in its judgment of whatever surpasses it in ideal and seems a reproach to it; at times, it even expresses its hatred for eminent virtue, known as sanctity.

Such is the wisdom of the world; St. Paul says “it is foolishness with God” (I Cor. 3: 19). It judges all things, even those the most sublime or the most necessary, such as salvation, by the vainest of things. St. Paul, having the divine wisdom in mind adds: “If any man among you seem to be wise in this world, le him become a fool, that he may be wise” (I Cor. 3:18).

What then is divine wisdom? It is a luminous and uncreated knowledge, which penetrates the whole being of God and which from its high abode, by its very purity, without suffering the least defilement, extends to everything which is and can be, however insignificant or bad the thing may be.

The ever self-subsisting Being, because absolutely immaterial or spiritual, is supremely intelligent. Immateriality is the principle of knowledge, and the greater the degree of immateriality, the higher is the form of knowledge. Plants have not knowledge; they are enclosed within themselves, since they are wholly material. Our senses have knowledge of the sensible qualities of external objects; they are susceptible of everything which pertains to the sensible order, because they are already to some extent immaterial. Our intellect knows things in a more perfect manner, and rises above the particular limitations of space and time: being, truth, goodness, and justice are its province. What enables the intellect to know these immaterial objects, unless it be its absolute immateriality?

Dominating all things is the ever self-subsisting Being, absolutely immaterial, and independent of all limitations arising from matter, space, and time, independent, too, of all limitation caused by essence. In Him, there is nothing carnal, nothing corporeal. He is purely immaterial, therefore He must be supremely intelligent (Ia, q. 14, a. 1).

In attributing intelligence to God, do we imply an imperfection which is unworthy of Him? Undoubtedly in us, intelligence is a faculty, the principle of a multiplicity of transient acts; but it is really distinct from its acts and from its object. In us, wisdom is a habitual disposition of this faculty, one that is acquired by experience and reflection. In the divine essence there is nothing potential, nothing acquired, nothing multiple. All these imperfections are but created modes of intelligence and of wisdom, which in their formal concepts do not include these imperfections. If our intellect is only a faculty relative to being, that is because we are not the subsistent Being. In God His intellect is His very Being, which is always actually known to Him. It is not a faculty which is the principle of various acts, but is the eternal intellection of infinite truth.

This intellectual act, which does not proceed from a faculty, is not distinguished even virtually from the divine essence which is the thinking subject, nor from the divine essence which is the object known. Since it is pure actuality in the order of being, the divine essence is not in potentiality with regard to the act of knowing; it is this very act. On the other hand, since the divine essence is pure actuality in the intelligible order, by reason of its absolute immateriality it is not merely potentially intelligible, as if it had need of some idea which would express it, but it is of itself actually known. Hence the divine intellection is identified with the divine essence

which is the subject and primary object of the operation. “The absence of potentiality in each accounts for the absence of a duality consisting of a subject and object.” This is the reply that can be made to Plotinus, Fichte, and Spencer, who declare that the intellect implies a duality which is irreconcilable with the simplicity of the Absolute.

There is therefore absolute identity, without an intrinsically virtual distinction, between the divine essence (thinking subject) and the intellect, the idea, the intellection, and the divine essence as known. To admit in this case a virtual distinction, an intrinsic one which has its foundation in God, would be to say that one of these divine perfections can be conceived as being potential, having its foundation in the divine reality itself (cum fundamento in re).

“Thus we see,” says St. Thomas, “that in God the intellect as knowing, the divine essence as immediately known, and His act of understanding are absolutely one and the same thing. Even when we say that God `has knowledge,’ we do not place any multiplicity in His being, and we do not destroy His supreme simplicity.”

From this we see that the knowledge which God has of Himself infinitely surpasses that which we have of ourselves. There is nothing obscure, nothing mysterious, for the divine intellect. Because of the numerous impulses more or less conscious which influence our judgments and our wishes, because of the graces offered and perhaps often refused, we remain a mystery, indeed, to ourselves. The most intelligent persons do not fully know themselves. “But neither do I judge my own self,” says St. Paul; “for I am not conscious to myself of anything. Yet I am not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord” (I Cor. 4: 4).

It is the Lord who fully knows Himself as far as He is knowable. Not only does He exhaust by His comprehensive knowledge the infinite abyss of truth which He is, but His luminous thought so penetrates His Being, that it is identified with Him, without any distinction between them. God is a purely intellectual and eternally subsistent scintillation. He is the highest and the uncreated spiritual light. Compared with it the sun is but a shadow, a dark stain. “For she is more beautiful than the sun, and above all the order of the stars; being compared with the light she is found before it. For after this cometh night; but no evil can overcome wisdom. For she is the brightness of eternal light” (Wisdom 7:26, 29, 30).

In so far as the divine essence explicitly contains in an eminent way all its attributes and the relations of the Trinity, it is the formal and primary object of divine knowledge. This eminent knowledge of the divine Being embraces everything actual and possible. This constitutes the secondary object of His knowledge. With regard to this secondary object, a twofold distinction is made in the knowledge of God, one being called the knowledge of simple intelligence, and the other of vision.

God's knowledge of possible things is called His knowledge of simple intelligence, because it does not presuppose any act of the will or the actual existence of the object of this knowledge. God sees the infinite multitude of possible things in His essence as so many ways by which it is analogically imitable. Thus the artist who has conceived something ideal, imagines the various possible ways in which it can be realized.

God's knowledge of what exists, what has existed, or what is yet to come into existence, is called His knowledge of vision, because, like vision, it is concerned with things, not merely possible, but really existing. This knowledge of vision is further distinguished in God, according as He approves of what is good and disapproves of all that is evil, merely permitting it. The reason for these distinctions is to be sought for in the objects of the divine knowledge and in our imperfect mode of knowing things. They in no way affect the unity of this knowledge which by a single act, absolutely simple, comprehends both the divine essence and all possible and created things.

It is in Himself that God sees possible things, by reason of the infinitely variable irritability of the divine essence. To deny God this knowledge would be to deny that God comprehends Himself and His possibilities. It would be also a limited view and unworthy of God to say that He has merely a general, confused, or progressive knowledge of things. It embraces at once, without any reasoning, all the possible details of each individual thing; for these very details also remotely participate in the divine perfections, and are virtually contained in His omnipotence, which can bring them into being. Neither would God have a comprehensive knowledge of the nature of being, if He did not know all the possible modes of being, even each individual being (Ia, q. 14, a, 3, 5, 6, 7). But if it is in contemplating Himself that God knows all possible things, whence and how does He know all past, present and future things?

St. Thomas (Ia, q. 14, a. 8) answers this question by pointing out that the knowledge of God, far from being, like our knowledge, determined and measured by things, is the cause of things. It is evident that God cannot be informed, as we are, by the facts which we are obliged to wait for and to verify. The divine intellect cannot derive any knowledge from things, but, on the contrary, by its creative knowledge it gives existence to things. It is not, therefore, because things are or will be, that God knows them, but it is because He knows them and wishes them to be, that they are and that they will be. Analogous to the practical knowledge of the artist by which he produces a work of art, the divine knowledge is the cause of things, in so far as the divine will is joined to it. "The knowledge of God is the cause of things, in so far as His will is joined to it" (Ia, q. 14, a. 8). This union of God's knowledge with His will constitutes the divine decree.

Again, therefore, it is in contemplating Himself that God knows all things, past, present, or future. He sees them in all their details with the greatest accuracy; but especially He sees them, and can see them only from on high, in His all divine light, in their eminent cause. He knows them in their origin, which is by all means a more perfect way than knowing them immediately in themselves, in the obscurity of created light. In the City of God (Bk. XI, ch. vii) St. Augustine expresses this truth when he says: "In comparison with the Creator's knowledge our knowledge is, so to speak, an evening knowledge. . . . The knowledge which the creature has, of itself is faded and obscure; known in God, as works of a skilled artificer, created things are incomparably more luminous." St. Augustine delights in calling this knowledge which God has, morning knowledge, calling ours evening knowledge. He concedes both kinds to the angels; but only the more perfect belongs to God; the other is too obscure and in God would be an imperfection. This knowledge is inferior to divine contemplation.

Dionysius (De div. nom., ch. vii) speaks in the same way. He says: "Not each and every thing is submitted to God's knowledge of vision, but He knows all things in that He knows them in their cause." Concerning angelic knowledge and God's knowledge, St. Thomas says the same: "So we say that God sees Himself in Himself, because He sees Himself through His essence; and He sees other things not in themselves, but in Himself, inasmuch as His essence contains the similitude of things other than Himself" (Ia, q. 14, a. 5). In addition to this the Angelic Doctor says: "The authority of Holy Scripture seems also to uphold this opinion; for in Psalm

101, verse 20, it is said of God: `He hath looked forth from His high sanctuary,' seeing all else, as it were, from His own lofty self."

Various theologians, such as Vasquez, Suarez, and many Molinists depart from this sublime doctrine of St. Thomas. Vasquez believes it to be more perfect for God to know things immediately in themselves. This error is the very opposite to that of Malebranche, who says that in this life we see all things in God. Suarez and several Molinists, in order to safeguard their special theory about the foreknowledge of future free things, maintain that God knows created things in two ways: either in Himself, as in their cause, or in themselves immediately. The unanimous teaching of the Thomists is that it would be an imperfection for God to know created things in any other way than in Himself. In such a case His intellect would be immediately specified by a created object, and there would be in it a finite image of finite things, an image which would have to be derived from created things, like the image which determines our intellect to act (Ia, q. 14, a. 5 ad 3um). The infinite intellect would thus depend upon the finite.

In fact, God sees things of this world, not in the paleness of their created light, but in the brilliance of His light. On the other hand, we see spiritual things only in an inferior manner as reflected in material things. We know divine things only through the mirror of created things. It is what St. Augustine calls evening knowledge.

God sees Himself in an eternal morning light. He sees from on high all possible creatures in the clarity of His essence. Material things He sees in His absolute spirituality. Let us take the case of an artistic genius who has planned a masterpiece of art. He contemplates it in its ideal state, he hesitates to put it into effect, to materialize it in bronze or marble, because he knows that in its ideal state it will be always more beautiful than when it is materialized. How much more beautiful the Roman Campagna appeared to Raphael than as seen by us. Thus things of this world, whatever good there is in our lives, are incomparably more beautiful as seen by God in His divine light, than as they are in their contracted reality. It is not that God overlooks their defects, but it is only because of their very close and fundamental relations with the infinite Cause which they reveal, and with the ultimate end to which they all tend, that He can come in contact with these meager and finite realities. He sees them only as reflections of His perfections, in the divine idea by which they are directed to their ends.

Such is divine wisdom. It can see and judge all things only from on high, in their highest cause and in their ultimate end. It is influenced neither by the dazzling effects of fortune nor of talent. With divine wisdom it is charity that counts, that “pearl of great price.” Benedict Labre, who was clothed in rags but had the heart of a saint, was of far greater value before God than a Caesar or a Napoleon in all the splendor of their worldly glory. Viewed in the light of earthly things, the Passion of Christ appears somber to us. Viewed from on high in the divine light, how radiant it must be! The divine wisdom sees everything as the reflection of the glory of “He who is.”

If God knows all things in Himself, then how does He know evil, which is absolutely foreign to Him and which He cannot cause? St. Thomas says: “God knows evil through the good of which it is a privation, as darkness is known by light. He would not know good things perfectly unless He also knew evil things.” How can anyone know what justice is, if he does not know what injustice is? The presence of sin in someone’s soul is known to God inasmuch as He permits this moral defect in which He cannot concur, and inasmuch as He concurs as first cause in the physical entity of the sin. He cannot turn a created will away from Himself; but He is not bound to prevent the will, which is subject to defect, from falling into sin. Therefore, although He permits this failure, He is not responsible for it. As for the physical entity of sin, God can be the primary cause of this, just as a great painter, in using a poor brush, is the cause of its movement, but not of what is defective about it.

Therefore evil is known by God in His decree permitting though condemning it. He also envisages it in His sublime motives for permitting it. He knows it in all its baseness and in all its bearings. Above all He perceives the final outcome of this defect, how evil, even in its most stubborn form, necessarily concurs with appealing force in proclaiming the absolute rights of the Good. The divine wisdom, without becoming obscured, knows, in the uncreated light, the blackest of crimes. Because of the very purity of this light, it sees through them. Thus the rays of the sun are not sullied by being reflected in muddy water.

God’s foreknowledge of future contingent things. What we have just said of God’s knowledge of things, may be applied to His foreknowledge of future contingent things and especially of free future actions. It is a defined dogma of the Catholic Church that God knows them from all eternity. St. Thomas (Ia, q. 14, a. 13) views this problem as a particular case of the

general doctrine, established in the eighth article of the same question, that the knowledge of God is the cause of things. The Molinists, on the contrary, seek to separate the thirteenth article of St. Thomas from the eighth, as if God's knowledge of future free actions were an exception to the general law that "God's knowledge is the cause of things."

Let us see what is stated in article 13. St. Thomas begins by connecting it with article 8. "Since, as was shown above," he says, "God knows all things, not only things actual but also things possible to Him and to the creature, and since some of these are future contingent to us, it follows that God knows future contingent things.

"In evidence of this we must consider that a contingent thing can be viewed in two ways; first, in itself, in so far as it is now in act, and in this sense it is not viewed as future, but as present; neither is it viewed as contingent, as having reference to one of two terms, but as determined to one; and on account of this it can be infallibly the object of certain knowledge, for instance to the sense of sight, as when I see that Socrates is sitting down. In another way a contingent thing can be viewed as it is in its cause; and in this way it is viewed as future, and as a contingent thing not yet determined to one. Forasmuch as a contingent cause has relation to opposite things, then in this sense a contingent thing is not subject to any certain knowledge. Hence, whoever knows a contingent effect in its cause only, has merely a conjectural knowledge of it. Now God knows all contingent things not only as they are in their causes, but also as each one of them is actually in itself. And although contingent things become actual successively, nevertheless God knows contingent things not successively, as they are in their own being, as we do, but simultaneously. The reason is because His knowledge is measured by eternity, as is also His being; and eternity being simultaneously whole comprises all time, as said above (q. 10, a. 2). Hence all things that are in time are present to God from eternity, not only because He has the types of things present within Him, as some say, but because His glance is carried from eternity over all things as they are in their presentiality. Hence it is manifest that contingent things are infallibly known by God, inasmuch as they are subject to the divine sight in their presentiality. Yet they are future contingent things in relation to their own causes."

Does this mean, as the Molinists would have it, that God's knowledge which is the cause of all things is not the cause of future contingent things,

or at least of the conditionally free acts of the future, and that here we have an exception to the principles regulating the divine knowledge in general?

In this case we should have to say that the principle of causality admits of an exception, and we should have to maintain that the conditionally free acts of the future do not come from God, the First Being. Moreover, we should have to maintain that God's knowledge is passive with regard to the conditionally free acts of the future, and that it is determined by them instead of determining them. Now there is nothing more absurd than to admit a passivity in pure Act. Finally, we should have to admit, as we shall see, that these conditionally free acts of the future have been all along infallibly determined of themselves, and this is the denial of freedom to these acts.

Moreover, we shall show that St. Thomas in various passages teaches most emphatically that God knows the free acts of the future in the divine decree by which they are made present to Him from all eternity. In the article we have just quoted, St. Thomas presupposes that the divine decree is the cause of all things, past, present, or future; but as He is here concerned merely with God's knowledge of the free acts of the future, he defers, until treating the subject of the divine will (Ia, q. 19, a. 8, 9; q. 22, a. 4), the question of how this divine will is infallibly efficacious without doing any violence to our free will.

In the Contra Gentes (Bk. I, ch. lxviii), St. Thomas reunites these two aspects of the question so as to prove that God knows the secret movements of our will. His answer is as follows: "God knows them in Himself in so far as He is the universal principle of all beings and of all modes of being. . . . Since the divine Being is the first of all beings and the cause of all beings, so the divine intellect is the first of intellects and the cause of all created intellectual operations. In knowing His being, God knows, therefore, whatever there may be in being, and in knowing His intellect and His will, He knows all thought and all volition. . . . The control which our will has over its acts, and in virtue of which it can, as it chooses, will or not will, presupposes that it is not by its nature determined to a certain act, and excludes the violent effect of an external agency, but not the influence exerted upon it by the supreme cause from which both being and action proceed. Moreover, the universal causality of the First Cause extends to our free acts, so that in knowing Himself God knows them."

We find St. Thomas teaching the same about the divine will, His providence, His governance of the world, His knowledge of our secret thoughts.

How can God's eternal and infallibly efficacious decree leave the will free? St. Augustine (Liber de correptione et gratia, ch. xvi), in the explanation he gives of St. Paul's words (Philip. 2: 13), "For it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish," answers as follows: "Certainly we will, when we will; but He causes us to will what is good. . . . Certainly it is we who act when we act; but He causes us to act by enabling the will to act efficaciously. . . . When He says: I will cause you to act, what else does this mean than that He will take away the stony heart which was the cause of your inaction, and that He will give you a heart of flesh which will be the cause of your acting? And what does this mean but that He will take away from you that hard heart which was the cause of your not acting, and that He will give you a docile heart so that you will act?" In the fourteenth chapter of another work, St. Augustine again writes: "God has power over the heart, moving it from within, and He draws human beings to Himself by their wills influencing them; if, therefore, when God willed to establish kings on earth, the wills of human beings are more in His power than in their own, who else causes it that chastisement is wholesome and that the heart being contrite there should be amendment of life?"

St. Thomas likewise reconciles the infallibility of divine foreknowledge and the freedom of our acts by appealing to the transcendent efficacy of the divine will. He writes: "When a cause is efficacious to act, the effect follows upon the cause, not only as to the thing done, but also as to its manner of being done or of being. Thus from defect of active power in the seed it may happen that a child is born unlike its father in accidental points that belong to its manner of being. Since, then, the divine will is perfectly efficacious, it follows not only that things are done, which God wills to be done, but also that they are done in the way that He wills. Now God wills some things to be done necessarily, some contingently, to the right ordering of things, for the building up of the universe. Therefore to some effects He has attached necessary causes that cannot fail; but to others defectible and contingent causes from which arise contingent effects."

Under the leadership of a great general, the soldiers do not only what must be done, but as it must be done. "There is a way of doing things." And

the way of a great general passes on to his soldiers. Far more so is this, too, the case with God as regards those beings created by Him.

There is certainly a mystery in this; it is that of the divine action, between which and our own there is merely a similarity by way of analogy, it not being possible for us to know for certain the mode of the divine action. But who could demonstrate that there is any contradiction in maintaining that the Creator of the free will, who is more intimately associated with the will than freedom itself is, can infallibly move the will to determine itself freely to act? Infallibility is not necessity.

We often say: I will see you without fail tomorrow. And, without failing to do so, we accomplish freely what we previously decided upon doing. Why could not God make us do freely what He Himself from all eternity had decided upon our doing? Since our will has the unlimited range of universal good by which it is specified, why, under the influence of the divine movement, can it not retain a dominating and active indifference concerning particular good, this latter being deemed incapable of invincibly attracting it? The connection between our will and this finite good remains always something contingent. In willing this good, the will has the power not to will it. The will, by reason of its universality, goes beyond it. It is that which makes the act terminating our deliberation a free act."It would be absurd to say," as Bossuet remarks, "that our own decision takes away our liberty. It would be no less absurd to say that God has taken it away by His decree. And just as our will in determining itself to choose one thing rather than another, does not take from itself the power of choosing between two things, we must conclude likewise that this decree of God does not do so."

How could the divine motion destroy the contingency of the relationship existing between our will and a finite good, a contingency which arises from the will not being necessitated in making a decision? Not only does God safeguard the freedom of our act, but He brings it about with us when the deliberation has become a reality. The divine motion cannot do violence to our freedom, for it exerts its influence in conformity with the natural inclination of the will First of all it takes the will on to its adequate object, which is universal good; and only after that does it direct the will toward an inadequate object consisting of some particular good. Viewed in the first way, the divine motion effects the freedom of the act. It exerts its influence interiorly in the very depths of the will taken in the fullest capacity of its

willing. It carries it confusedly through all the degrees of good before inclining it to reach out for some particular good.

If there were any contradiction in maintaining that God can move our wills infallibly and freely, then the necessary application of the principle of causality is what would involve us hopelessly in absurdity. Let us not forget that what comes first in liberty is not human liberty. The idea of liberty is applied only analogically to God and human beings. There is merely a similarity of proportion between created liberty and the absolute liberty of God. It is a particular case of the mystery of the coexistence of finite beings with the infinite Being. How can the finite being exist apart from the infinite Being? It can exist only on condition that it is caused by Him and remains absolutely dependent upon Him. How can a secondary liberty exist apart from the primary liberty? It can exist only on condition that it is caused and moved by the latter, so that the faculty of willing passes from a state of passive indifference to one of active indifference contained in the very choice made by the faculty. Thus all the perfections of this secondary liberty pre-exist eminently from all eternity in the primary liberty.

Why would God not have the power to produce infallibly in us and with us the freedom of our acts? It is certain that God cannot produce a vital act in a stone, since such an act must proceed from a vital power; but He can produce such an act in a living being. It is certain that God cannot produce in us a free act unless it be determined freely on our part. But why could He not move the will fortiter et suaviter, “vigorously and gently,” to determine itself to act? “If the will were so moved by another, as in no way to be moved from within itself, the act of the will would not be imputed for reward or blame. But since its being moved by another does not prevent its being moved from within itself, it does not thereby forfeit the motive for merit or demerit” (Ia, q. 105, a. 4 ad 2um and 3um).

To maintain that God, as first cause, cannot produce with us and in us the free mode of our acts, is to maintain that a mode of being cannot be produced by the prime Being, who is the Creator of all the being there is outside Himself. Contrary to this, we must say with St. Thomas (Ia, q. 22, a. 4 ad 3um) that “necessary and contingent are consequent upon being as such. Hence the mode both of necessity and of contingency falls under the foresight of God, who provides universally for all being.” St. Thomas explains this point more clearly in his commentary on the Perihermenias of Aristotle (Bk. I, lect. 14), saying: “We must conceive of the divine will as

existing outside of the order of created beings, as a cause which produces the whole of being, and all the differences or modes of being. Now the necessary and contingent are precisely the primary modes into which being is divided." In his commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics (Bk. VI, lect. 3), St. Thomas uses the same formal expressions.

We may sum up all this teaching in the famous passage of the Summa (Ia, q. 83, a. 1): "Free will is the cause of its own movement, because by his free will man moves himself to act. But it does not of necessity belong to liberty that what is free should be the first cause of itself, as neither for one thing to be the cause of another need it be the first cause. God, therefore, is the first cause who moves causes both natural and voluntary. And just as by moving natural causes He does not prevent their acts being natural, so by moving voluntary causes He does not deprive their actions of being voluntary: but rather is He the cause of this very thing in them; for He operates in each thing according to its own nature." According to St. Thomas, intrinsically efficacious grace does not destroy the freedom of our acts, but is the cause of it.

When we come to speak of God's omnipotence (n. 52, c), we shall have to define more clearly the nature of the divine motion. We will also solve the objections made against Thomism on this point, when we discuss the antinomies with reference to freedom (nn. 64, 65).

This sublime teaching of St. Thomas finds its confirmation in the fact that, according to the Thomists, every other explanation of God's foreknowledge of the future inevitably ends in contradiction. We speak here of a contradiction and not of a mystery, because these theories, instead of descending from universal and necessary principles to explain a particular and obscure case, propose from the outset a gratuitous solution that involves the very denial of the absolute universality and necessity of the principles.

To explain God's foreknowledge of the free acts of the future, Molina proposed a theory that no one, so far as he knew, had ever taught. We would look in vain for such a theory in the writings of earlier theologians or of the Church Fathers. Molina says: "God has a very profound and unfathomable comprehension of each free will. He sees clearly what each free cause would do of its own accord in such and such circumstances, and even in an infinite number of circumstances. This view which God has, we call "middle knowledge."

This knowledge is called middle by reason of its proper object, which is the conditional future or the conditionally free act of the future. It is intermediate between the purely possible which is the object of God's knowledge of simple intelligence, and the contingent future which is the object of God's knowledge of vision. By this middle knowledge, according to Molina, God knows, previous to any predetermining decree, how a free will would act if placed in certain circumstances, and how in certain other cases it would decide otherwise. After that God decides, according to His benevolent designs, to render this free will effective by placing it in those circumstances more or less favorable or unfavorable to it.

So then, according to Molina, God by His "supercomprehensive knowledge of secondary causes," sees in the free cause itself, that in certain circumstances this cause will act in such a manner, and that it will determine itself to act in this way. This divine foresight is not the result of a more or less probable conjecture, but is an infallible knowledge of the conditional future.

To this the Thomists have always replied that the middle knowledge conceived to safeguard the freedom of the human will, virtually implies the denial of it. How can God see in a cause, which by its nature is undetermined as to whether it will act or not, that it will de facto act? The supercomprehensive knowledge of a cause cannot enable anyone to see in it a determination which is not there. And if, in reply, we are told that this determination is known through the circumstances in which the free will would be placed, the theory ends fatally in Determinism, which is the denial of free will. The foreseeing of the circumstances may enable one, indeed, to form conjectures, but not to have an infallible knowledge of the conditionally free acts of the future. Cardinal Mazella, S.J., admitted this to be so, in agreement with the Thomists.

With Suarez and many Molinists, Cardinal Mazella tries to defend the middle knowledge by saying that God sees the conditional futures neither in His will nor in ours nor in the motives or circumstances influencing the act, but that He sees them in their objective or formal truth.

But the Thomists reply by asking how, previous to any decree from God, a conditionally free act of the future is objectively true rather than false. Suarez and Mazella prove it in the following manner: "Of two conditional contradictory propositions, such as: If Peter were placed in these circumstances, he would sin and he would not sin; the one is definitely true

and the other is definitely false. It is impossible, indeed, for both to be true or both to be false. Therefore the infinite intelligence which penetrates all truth, sees certainly which of the two is true and which is false."

The Thomists reply that this is still the denial of freedom for the will. From it we should even be led to conclude that, previous to any divine decree, God can see which of the following contradictory propositions is true: The world will exist (come into existence), the world will not come into existence. From this it would follow that creation is no longer a free act, and the divine will would be subjected to the logical fatalism of the Stoics. As Cicero relates (De divin., I, 55), the Stoics really intended to prove Determinism precisely by the argument that, of two contradictory propositions, one is necessarily true. Therefore, between the two propositions, "A will be, A will not be," the necessity of one of them, at the very moment when I am uttering it, excludes the possibility of the other: "From all eternity is the flow of imperishable truth."

Suarez forgets that Aristotle, in his Perihermenias (Bk. I, ch. ix) has shown that of two contradictory propositions which are particular ones and which concern a contingent future event, neither is positively true or false. If it were otherwise, as Aristotle remarks, the truth would be in Determinism and our choice would not be a free one.

In vain some Molinists seek to avoid this difficulty by saying that God knows the truth of conditionally future things not in themselves but in His own essence, which contains eminently all truth.

It is clear that a contingent truth cannot be determined in the divine essence previous to any divine decree. It would be present there on the same grounds as absolutely necessary truths, and hence would be a necessary truth.

St. Thomas wrote concerning prophecy as follows: "The contingent free things of the future are not knowable in themselves, because their truth is not determined. Contingent things of the future, the truth of which is not determined, are not knowable in themselves" (IIa IIae, q. 171, a. 3).

Concerning the Molinists and in general those who defend the theory of middle knowledge, Leibniz remarks: "It is amusing to see how they torment themselves to find a way out of a labyrinth when there is absolutely no way out. . . . Therefore they will never get out of the difficulty unless they admit that there is a predetermination in the preceding state of the creature which inclines it to determine itself to act" (Théodicée, Part I, sec. 48). In these

words just quoted, Leibniz gives us his own solution, which is Psychological Determinism, in which there is nothing left of liberty except the name.

"It is sufficient," he says, "for the creature to be predetermined by its previous state, by which it is swayed more one way than the other. And all these closely associated actions of the creature and of all creatures were represented in the divine intellect and known to God by His knowledge of simple intelligence, before He had decreed to give them existence. From this we see that, to account for God's foreknowledge of things, we can dispense with both the middle knowledge of the Molinists, and predetermination such as it was taught by Bannez or Alvarez" (Théod., Part I, sec. 47). Leibniz is consistent, but he ends in Determinism. Does not the theory of middle knowledge also lead inevitably to this conclusion?

This is not the only inconvenience of this theory. It attacks God's universal causality and supreme dominion over all things, and consequently renders His knowledge passive with regard to our free determinations of which we alone are the cause. God ceases to be the universal cause of being, since the free determination on our part, which is some being, is not produced by Him in us and with us. He is no longer master of the will; His grace remains powerless, it loses its suavity of appeal because it has lost its power. There is also no more any need of praying to the Savior, of placing all our hope and trust in Him instead of in ourselves. The soul, in the grip of temptation, cannot say to Him: "Convert me, and I shall be converted; for Thou art the Lord my God" (Jer. 31: 18). God is no more the cause of our good than of our bad deeds, since it depends solely upon our free will whether divine grace is effective or ineffective.

Man alone is the cause of his freely determining himself to act and of the good use he makes of grace. Contrary to the words of St. Paul, it is man himself who does the distinguishing. "For who distinguisheth thee," says the Apostle, "or what hast thou that thou hast not received?" (I Cor. 4: 7).

Instead of viewing our will and the divine motion as two total causes, one of which is subordinate to the other in such a way that our act, so far as there is good in it, comes entirely from God as the primary cause, and entirely from man as the secondary cause, the Molinists view them as two partial causes, like two men hauling a boat. Hence God's external causality, as it affects us, proves to be rather mediocre and is like created causality. Our free will participates with God in the work of salvation and claims the

better part of it. Since God's knowledge is no longer the cause of our free acts, the result is that it must be passive with regard to them. Instead of determining them, it is determined by them. And what is there more inadmissible than to admit a state of passivity in the Being who is pure Act?

Certainly, Thomism has its obscurities. It does not take upon itself to show how the transcendent efficacy of the first cause, instead of clashing with our freedom, brings about in us and with us even that our acts are performed freely, in such a way that we still remain responsible. It is only by way of analogy that we can acquire a knowledge of the supreme efficacy of the first creative cause: what properly constitutes it as such remains necessarily a mystery for us.

Father Lepidi very truly says: "So long as each of the two systems, the Thomistic and the Molinistic, confines itself to a consideration of the strength of its position and attacks the other in its weak points, there will be no end to this controversy. The two systems must be compared, as regards their development and their conclusions, elucidated by the general and evident rules which are admitted by both sides. If we proceed in this manner, undoubtedly there will still remain many profound obscurities in the two systems, which the intellect will never succeed in clearing up. But at least it will be seen that the obscurity in the Thomistic system is due to the weakness of our poor intellect which, though it knows that between the divine and human causality there is harmony prevailing, is unable to know how this is so. On the other hand, the obscurity in the opposing system results in veritable impossibilities."

The controversy between Thomism and Molinism may be reduced to this: Does Thomism end in obscurity through the legitimate and necessary application of the most universal of first principles (identity, causality, and the universal causality of the prime agent)? It is difficult to deny this. In virtue of the principle of identity, God alone is His own existence. It follows that He alone is His actuating principle, for operation follows being; and as God alone is His own being, so He alone is His principle of action. No created being exists of itself. Consequently no created being acts of itself; it receives its existence from God and can act only if moved by God. A secondary cause acts only in so far as it is moved by the primary cause; a created intellect acts only as moved by the primary intellect; secondary freedom, viewed precisely as freedom, acts only in so far as it is moved by the primary freedom. All movement implying the participation of a pure

perfection (simpliciter simplex, of an absolutely simple one), evidently is dependent upon the corresponding divine perfection. It is absolutely impossible for anything which is contingent not to be caused by necessary Being, the source of all being. What is not self-existent, exists by reason of another which is self-existent. The principles of Thomism are such that it fears neither logic nor mystery. It is even logic which causes Thomism to end in obscurity. How does the supreme efficacy of God's creative power produce in us and with us, suaviter et fortiter, the freedom of our acts? A method of reasoning that is most rigorous cannot lead us into an obscurity in which a contradiction would be lurking. It is only a mystery we have here, a result of the mystery of creation (the co-existence of the finite and the Infinite), which is analogous to the mystery of how we are to reconcile God's liberty with His immutability. There could be no contradiction unless, as Hegel would have it, reality were fundamentally a realized contradiction.

Molinism also has its obscurity, which is middle knowledge. But how does it arrive at this latter? Is it by the necessary application of the most universal of first principles which dominate the whole science of theology even to its least details? Is it not rather that by this system a solution may be found for a special difficulty concerning the freedom of the human will? This method of procedure may be adopted in polemical arguments, but it is not the method of science. The Thomist synthesis has given proofs of its capacity regarding all points of theological knowledge. Molinism is merely an opinion in a particular controversy. In the solution of particular and obscure cases, we must start from evident and universal principles. In these cases we cannot propose, regardless of the principles, an apparently convenient solution, with uncertain advantages obtained by the denial of the very principles. It would be said that we are afraid to face both logic and the mysterious. In the obscurity to which this method would lead us, there would lie hidden, not a mystery, but a veritable contradiction or antinomy. By this faulty method, Molinism is induced, first of all, to admit that there is an exception to the principle of causality: that the entity of future free acts does not come from God, the first Being. In the second place, Molinism is induced to maintain that God's knowledge is passive with regard to the conditionally free acts of the future, which determine this knowledge instead of being determined by it. Thus middle knowledge, by positing a passivity in pure Act, could not be a pure perfection, one which is

simpliciter simplex (absolutely simple). It is an anthropomorphic idea which attributes to God a human perfection. Lastly, this theory, conceived to safeguard the freedom of the human will, must end logically in the determinism of the circumstances.

All these impossibilities are a confirmation of the teaching given us by St. Thomas, and before him by St. Augustine, a doctrine which faithfully reflects the Gospel narrative and the teaching of St. Paul, who says: “It is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will.” “Who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received?” “So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.” To depreciate the meaning and import of these texts is to rob the word of God and theology of its treasures, of its simplicity, and of its depth of meaning.

Divine Providence. Having fully developed, in the previous discussion, the Thomistic doctrine of God’s foreknowledge, there remains little to be said about divine Providence. Moreover, we discussed this by the a posteriori method in the study already made of the proof of God’s existence based upon design in the universe.

There is a resemblance, by way of analogy, between divine providence and human prudence. Providence is the extension of God’s wisdom, which “reacheth from end to end mightily and ordereth all things sweetly” (Wisdom 8: 3; and 14: 3). “As God,” says St. Thomas, “is the cause of things by His intellect, it is necessary that the type of the order of things toward their end should pre-exist in the divine mind; and the type of things ordered toward an end is, properly speaking, providence” (Ia, q. 22, a. 1).

Does this providence extend merely to the general laws of the universe and not to individual things and their smallest details, as the Deists have claimed? The Gospel says: “Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And not one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are numbered. Fear not therefore: better are you than many sparrows” (Matt. 10:29-31). The absolute universality of providence is deduced from the absolute universality of divine causality, which is that of an intelligent agent. “The causality of God extends to all being, both to things corruptible as to those incorruptible, and as to the constituent principle of their species as well as to their individualizing principles (for these also are included in the term `being’). Hence all things that exist in whatsoever manner are necessarily directed by God toward some end” (Ia,

q. 22, a. 2). The principle of finality necessarily demands that this be so. Every agent acts for an end, and the supreme Agent for an end known to Him, an end to which all things are subordinated. This end is the manifestation of His goodness, of His infinite perfection, and of His various attributes.

Thus evil, even moral evil, is permitted by divine providence, because God is powerful and good enough to bring good out of the very evil. It is natural for a creature to fail at times, since by its very nature it is defective. God permits this failure that He may show His mercy the more, or, when His mercy has been despised, that He may show His justice and the absolute rights of the sovereign Good to be loved above all things (Ia, q. 22, a. 2 ad 2um; q. 23, a. 5 ad 3um). This problem will again present itself when we come to the discussion of these two attributes.

Are all things immediately subject to providence, or must we admit certain providential intermediaries, appointed like ministers to attend to the details of things? There are intermediaries, says St. Thomas, only for the execution of the plan of divine providence, but not for the determination of this plan, which even in its smallest details is decreed immediately by God. If it were otherwise, God's practical knowledge would be imperfect and would not extend so far as His causality does, without which latter absolutely nothing comes into existence (Ia, q. 22, a. 3). Thus, so that all things may be immediately subject to it, providence does not divest certain things of their contingency but wonderfully preserves this intact in them. It disposes everything in the universe in such a way that certain things always take place, others frequently, and some very seldom. It moves our free wills in such a manner that in choosing some good we retain the power of not choosing it, or of preferring another to it (Ia, q. 22, a. 4).

Predestination is that part of providence which concerns our salvation. We shall discuss this briefly in the solution of the antinomies which concern God's benevolence. But the limits imposed upon us in this work do not allow us to follow St. Thomas in the study of this problem which is of the supernatural order. It will be seen, upon reading the Summa (Ia, q. 23), that St. Thomas applies the universal principles which we have previously examined in connection with God's foreknowledge.

It is particularly concerning this last mentioned attribute that divine wisdom remains for us, as St. Paul says, an unfathomable mystery, by reason of its sublimity and profundity. It is unfathomable also by reason of

its benevolence, of its free preferences which are their own raison d'être (Ia, q. 25, a. 5 ad 3um). Why is it that one sinner is converted just a few moments before death, whereas another is taken by surprise, dying in a state of sin? To this question there is only one answer for all theologians: "O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God. How incomprehensible are His judgments and how unsearchable His ways. For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been His counsellor? Or who hath first given to Him and recompense shall be made to him" (Rom. 11: 33-35). So also "the foolish things of the world hath God chosen, that He may confound the wise: and the weak things of the world hath God chosen, that He may confound the strong. And things that are not He hath chosen as instruments, that no flesh should glory in His sight" (I Cor. 1:27).

However unfathomable it may be, this divine wisdom is obscure for us only because of its too great brilliance. The sun must seem obscure to the eyes of an owl unable to endure such brightness. However limited our intellect may be, it is nevertheless certain that divine wisdom ordains absolutely all things for good and that under its direction even evil must contribute to the sum total of perfection. We are incomparably more certain of the rectitude and holiness of God's mysterious ways, than of the rectitude of our own conscience. This sublime wisdom, which is too bright for our weak eyes, directs us at every moment and in the most insignificant actions of our life. It is more intimate to us than we are to ourselves. With one ray of its light it illumines faithful and fervent souls. These souls become the recipients of a savory knowledge, for the word "sapientia" implies in the Latin "sapida scientia," or a savory knowledge. It is an experimental knowledge of divine things, and these souls come gradually by divine guidance a simple consideration of all things as they relate to God (IIa IIae, q.45).

Only this divine wisdom knows how to effect a practical reconciliation between the absolute rigor of the principles and necessary suavity of their infinitely various applications. God, beginning and end of all things, cannot for one moment forget the absolute necessity of the principles. He directs all things firmly. But He also knows in a wonderful way the thousand details of each life. Moreover, He loves His works and, above all, His children. Thus there is a suavity in His direction of things which in no way yields to force, and He protects the divine seeds which He has sown in the hearts of human beings. "He will not break the bruised reed, and He will

not quench the smoking flax." Wisdom "reacheth therefore from end to end mightily and ordereth all things sweetly" (Wisdom 8:1).

50) The free will and love of God.

We have just spoken of the divine intellect. The will follows the intellect, and the very first act of the will is love. "God is charity" (I John 4: 16). We will first consider God's love of Himself and then His love of creatures.

God's love of Himself. How could an intelligent being be deprived of the power of willing and of loving? There is a natural inclination in all things by which they tend to seek what is good for them and then, upon attaining it, to remain at rest. Thus the natural tendency of an acorn is to germinate; of an oak to develop itself, to keep itself alive, and reproduce its kind. An intelligent being possesses this particular trait, that it knows what is good for it. It must therefore go in quest thereof and in a special manner rest therein by an inclination regulated by the intellect. The name "will" has been given to this inclination. The divine intellect, knowing what is good, cannot exist apart from the divine will, that wills what is good (Ia, q. 19, a. 1).

This divine will cannot be a mere faculty capable of acting, of performing numerous acts in succession. It would be imperfect if it were not essentially and always in act. Now the very first act of every will is to love the good. This love is entirely spiritual, as the intellectual knowledge is by which it is directed. All the acts of the will proceed from love, which is the very awakening of the will as it comes in contact with the good. These acts are known as desiring, enjoying, hoping, willing, choosing or even hating. Desire or hope is the love of a future good, and sadness comes from the love of good which has passed. Hatred is the reverse of love, for nothing is hated except as it is opposed to the object of love (Ia, q. 20, a. 1). When love is the result of knowledge acquired from sense perception, it is merely a passion, an emotion. When it is the result of purely spiritual knowledge, it is itself entirely spiritual.

There is, then, necessarily in God an entirely spiritual and eternal act of the love of supreme Good. Now this supreme Good, loved from all eternity, is God Himself who is infinite perfection, the plenitude of being, who loves Himself as much as He is lovable, which is infinitely. This love is not a desire or a hope. God possesses the supreme Good from all eternity and necessarily delights in it without any possibility of being separated from it. God cannot cease loving Himself, for His will is goodness itself always

actually loved. Because of its depth and intensity, this love is rightly called zeal. It is like a burning and eternally subsistent flame. “God is a consuming fire” (Deut. 4:24). Love as well as joy belongs therefore to God in the strict sense of the terms. They are absolute and analogous perfections like the good by which they are specified. An utterly base interpretation may be given to the word “love”; but we know that it can express a perfection so sublime and so pure that we would look in vain for imperfection in it.

On the other hand, desire, sadness, and anger cannot be attributed to God except in a metaphorical sense. There is always an element of imperfection accompanying these sentiments. They presuppose either the absence of some good or the presence of some evil (Ia, q. 20, a. 2 ad 2um).

There is no trace of egoism in God’s love for Himself. Its essential trait is to be infinitely holy. Egoism consists in preferring oneself to the supreme Good. God is the supreme Good, and in loving Himself it is this supreme Good which He loves above all things with a holy love. What then is holiness? It is an unchangeable purity and is the opposite of the defilement of sin and imperfection. Being unchangeable, it is the contrary of inconstancy in the performance of good (IIa IIae, q. 81, a. 8). Let us give each of these expressions its due consideration.

God’s love is absolutely pure. How could it be stained by sin, which means a turning away from God? How could God turn from Himself, go against the law which identifies Himself with His very nature? Not only is God impeccable, but He must hate sin with a holy hatred, since it is the rigorous consequence of His love of the supreme Good. By reason of the depth and intensity of this love it merits the name of zeal. How could it consort with evil or seek to effect a compromise with it? With regard to obstinacy in evil-doing, love, which is sweetness itself, becomes as hard as hell, says the Canticle of Canticles: “Love is strong as death, jealousy as hard as hell” (8: 6). God is mighty and jealous, we read in Exodus 20:5. Viewed in this light, hell itself seems to be a manifestation of the purity and sanctity of God’s love. That love is attractive and formidable, sweet and terrible, like the house of God spoken of by Jacob (Gen. 28: 17).

Removed from all that is evil, the love of God is also without any trace of imperfection, there being nothing in Him which is opposed to infinite perfection. If this absolute purity is absolutely immutable, then it is sanctity in the highest degree. How could it be otherwise?

Can God's love of the supreme Good be something wavering and inconstant? Can God cease to be the supreme Good, can He cease to know and love Himself? Not only is there an irrevocable adherence of divine love to the sovereign Good, but it is absolutely identified with this Good which is always loved. God could not find any reason, even the least convincing, for not loving the supreme good or for preferring to it anything else whatever. Perfect holiness, like that of the blessed in heaven, is not free to fall away from this state, to do what is evil. It rises far above this wretched liberty, for it implies that it is under the necessity of loving the good (Ia, q. 19, a. 3, 7, 9).

God's love for created beings. If God's love of Himself is of such a nature, what is His attitude toward beings other than Himself?

May it not be that to love another being exposes oneself to the possibility of finding this love spurned? Can it be that God's love for His creatures meets with such opposition and contempt?

The love of another seems, then, to imply imperfections that cannot be found in God. So say the Deists. God, such as they conceive Him to be, loves only Himself, is not at all kindly disposed toward His creatures, has no love for His children, no consideration for our sufferings, pays no attention to our prayers.

On closer examination we see that these imperfections in the love of another, are imperfections of created love. The uncreated love of God for His creatures is in no way passive. It is essentially active and creative, entirely generous, absolutely free in the gift bestowed and yet perfectly regulated by divine wisdom.

Again, God's love for His creatures is an invincible power. There is no resisting it without God's permission, and everything, even evil, becomes conducive of good. Let us consider carefully each of these significant expressions.

First, God's love for us cannot be called passive. He who is the plenitude of all goodness cannot be attracted by created good, remain passive under the attraction of this lowest kind of good, and be captivated by it. God's love for us, says St. Thomas, does not presuppose lovableness in us, but, on the contrary, posits or creates it in us. "The love of God infuses and creates goodness" (Ia, q. 20, a. 2). It is not because God has found us lovable that He loves us, but it is because He has loved us that we are lovable in His sight. "What hast thou which thou hast not received?" says the Apostle St.

Paul; “and if thou hast received, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?” (I Cor. 4:7). Molinism partly forgets this profound truth, when it maintains that what is best in us—the good use of our free will and of grace—comes from ourselves alone, and not from God. Of ourselves we are only nothingness and sin. All the natural and supernatural good that we have, can come to us only from the source of all good, from a benevolent and generous love which nothing in us could call forth.

Why, then, has God loved us with that creative love, when there is nothing in us which could have attracted Him? (Ia, q. 19, a. 2.) Is it not a property of good for it to be diffusive, to give generously of itself? Goodness is essentially communicative; good is diffusive of itself. In the material order, we observe that the sun imparts its light and vivifying heat to all that comes in contact with it. In the intellectual order, when the intellect has arrived at the knowledge of truth, it spontaneously seeks to impart this to others. In the moral order, those with a holy ardor for goodness, like the Apostles, have no rest until these same aspirations, this same love, are aroused in others. God is sovereign Good, plenitude of being, eternal love of goodness, zeal for love, is it not, therefore, most fitting for Him to bestow on others these riches contained in Himself, just as a singer is happy making others enjoy the harmonies contained in his singing?

This appropriateness is so pronounced that many philosophers have thought that God, who is under the necessity of loving Himself, must also necessarily create. They say He would be neither good nor wise unless He created, and that He would be, as it were, sparing of the good which He possesses, as one who is barren and impotent. According to these philosophers, God loves us because of a necessity intrinsic to His nature or to His wisdom. It is morally necessary, they hold, for God to create, just as it is physically necessary for the sun to impart its light and heat to all that comes in contact with it. Hence the world appears to be a necessary emanation from God or a sort of prolongation of the divine nature. It comes from God somewhat after the manner that light comes from the sun. Thus this Determinism leads to Pantheism, which denies that there is an essential and infinite distinction between the created and the uncreated.

The Catholic Church rejects this doctrine which fails to recognize the absolute freedom of God’s creative love and the gratuitous nature of the gifts we have received. It is certainly in the highest degree fitting that God

should love us and create us, but it is merely a fittingness without the least trace of moral necessity. Cajetan, in his commentary on the Summa (Ia, q. 19, a. 2), explains it in this way. In beings that act according to the laws of nature, he says, reproduction of their kind is a natural and necessary perfection. In beings endowed with freedom of will, to give of themselves is a free perfection. Certainly a created spirit would be neither good nor wise if it chose to isolate itself in its interior life, without thinking of others and without loving them. In loving them it adds to its perfection. There can be no increase in God's perfection. Of itself it is infinite, the plenitude of being. All created perfections pre-exist in an eminent mode in it, in a light incomparably brighter than the obscure light that we have, in a life incomparably richer than our life associated as such with death. God, without creating, would none the less in His interior life be infinitely good and infinitely wise. It is not necessary for Him to love and create us. It is only fitting for Him to do so.

However, someone may say, this creative love is a perfection in God. How, then, could this perfection be wanting in Him? To this Cajetan replies that it is a free perfection, all the more perfect as it is the more free, and the absence of it would not be an imperfection. A free gift is the more precious according as it is more gratuitous and might as well not have been given. It demands the more gratitude in proportion as it is less due. Absolute optimism, which seeks to bind God to do always what is better, is oblivious of the fact that God's love for us is gratuitous.

Godoy says that Cajetan's answer must be understood as referring to a free perfection, to one which may be wanting, not inasmuch as it is a perfection, but by reason of the object wished. Also Thomists in general prefer to say that the free act of God is not an additional perfection for Him. It presupposes only the perfection of pure Act, and is only extrinsically defectible by reason of the object willed.

In fact, divine liberty is not the predominating indifference of a power or faculty. It is the predominating indifference of pure Act with regard to everything created. Thus we see that God's free act is not an accidental and contingent action which is superadded to the act by which He necessarily loves Himself. In God it is but one and the same act of love by which He necessarily delights in the divine goodness and maintains a predominating indifference with regard to everything created, calling or not calling them

into being according to His good pleasure (Ia, q. 19, a. 3, 4; Contra Gentes, Bk I, ch. lxxxii).

We shall have to return to this subject in the solution of the antinomies with regard to liberty (ch. iv, nn. 62, 63). If it were not for the fact that reason is liable to be misled, this latter apart from faith would suffice to tell us that the cause is such as has been stated. But revelation supplies what reason could never ascertain. In God there is a supreme and necessary outpouring of Himself. It is the impenetrable mystery of His intimate life and of His interior fecundity by which He communicates His whole nature, without either division or multiplicity of it, to His consubstantial Son, and together with His Son to the Spirit of love who unites them. (See infra, n. 53.)

God necessarily loves Himself. The Father necessarily begets the Son. The Father and the Son necessarily "spirate" the One who is Love (Ia, q. 41, a. 2). But it is in a free manner that God loves us, creates us, preserves us, moves us, and draws us to Himself. We are not a necessary emanation from the divine nature. The supreme Good does not communicate Himself outwardly by a sort of internal necessity, after the manner of the sun which illumines things. His loving goodness is absolutely free. He utters His fiat as He wills, according to His good pleasure. "Be light made. And light was made" (Gen. 1: 3).

Creation is therefore an absolutely free act, and the natural gifts we have received are, in this sense, gratuitous. But there is in God a still freer act of love. We are in possession of more gratuitous gifts which are in no way demanded by the primary natural gifts. In a sense God has gone to the limits of love. He has willed to associate us with His intimate life, to draw us into a participation of His nature, and the indwelling of this love in our souls has produced grace in them, making us lovable in His sight, not only as His creatures but as His children. This quality disposes us to see Him and to enjoy Him for all eternity (Ia IIae, q. 110).

Such essentially is God's love for His creatures; for it is not only His creative action that He loves, but created beings are also the object of His love.

What are the properties of this love? This love of God is universal, extending to all creatures (Ia, q. 20, a. 2). It has, however, its free preferences (ibid., a. 3). Yet these preferences in no way affect the wonderful order observed by charity (a. 4). Finally, God's love is invincible,

and without His permission nothing can resist it; finally all things by His power conspire for good (Ia, q. 19, a. 6).

This love is universal and includes the most insignificant of creatures. God loves them, as a husbandman loves his fields, his house, his implements of labor, the animals which are for his use. In a higher order, God's love embraces all human beings, and He gives them sufficient help for their salvation. God permits that man, liable by his nature to fail, may at times fail; and in consequence of this, certain persons lose their souls. Though hating sin, God seeks the conversion of the sinner, as a sinner's soul is the object of divine love. Moreover, this love extends to the spiritual nature of the devil, for that nature is the result of divine love, and still contributes in a certain way to the perfection of the universe and the glory of the Creator (Ia, q. 20, a. 2; IIa IIae, q. 25, a. 11).

However, this universal love has its free preferences. True, God grants to all the necessary and sufficient graces to be saved. Yet for certain ones He manifests His predilection by giving them special graces. Why is it that this particular person is better than a certain other? Is it not, in the final analysis, because this person has received more, and by grace has gained more merit? "What have we that we have not received ?" asks St. Paul (I Cor. 4: 7). "For it is God," he says, "who worketh in us both to will and to accomplish according to his good will" (Phil. 2: 13). A soul has received more graces because it has been the object of greater love. And if we ask why it has been loved more, the only answer is that it is God's good pleasure, His free preference being the only reason. Does not the singer reach higher notes, when and as it pleases him to do so? (Ia, q. 20, a. 3; q. 23, a. 5 ad 3um).

This sovereign freedom in its free preferences always preserves the admirable order of charity. "God loves more the better things," says St. Thomas, "and the reason why some things are better than others, is that God wills for them a greater good" (Ia, q. 20, a. 4). God prefers spiritual to corporeal beings; the latter have been created for the former. He prefers the Mother of the Word incarnate to all souls and all pure spirits created by Him. He prefers His only Son to the Blessed Virgin. It is true that Christ was sacrificed for us; it does not follow that God loves Him less than us, but it was done that by this Christ may become the glorious conqueror of the devil, sin, and death. God in His love subordinates everything to the glory of His elect and of Christ His Son, and ultimately to His own glory

which is the manifestation of His infinite goodness. “All things are yours, and you are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s” (I Cor. 3:22, 23).

The order of love has as its principle and end the glory of God. It is for His glory that God loves us, creates us, preserves us, draws us to Himself. This is the express teaching of Scripture and of the Church.

Philosophers such as Kant, Arhens, Guenther, and Hermes, have erred to such an extent as to see in this Catholic doctrine the glorification of what they call divine egoism. To avoid this so-called egoism, they declare that man was created for himself, and not for God. According to this, the rights of God would cease to be the foundation even of our religious obligations toward Him, since these obligations would have no other basis than our personal dignity and our natural tendency for happiness. These philosophers also say that if God loves us and creates us for His glory, then He loves us as things which He makes use of and not as His children and friends.

As a matter of fact, God does not love us as something which He makes use of, for He wishes our good. More than this, He gives us the same good which constitutes His beatitude. But, for our greater honor, He subordinates to His own glory all that it pleases Him to grant us. It is far more glorious for us to have been created for the glory of Him who is, than to have been created for ourselves. Thus we can exceed the limitations of our nature and glorify Him who is the source of all good. It is our greatest honor to say with the Psalmist: “Not to us, O Lord, not to us: but to thy name give glory” (Ps. 113). If the sun’s ray were aware of its brilliance, would it rejoice more in this than in the splendor of the source from which it comes?

To speak of divine egoism is to forget that the supreme Good is identified with God. In ordaining all things to Himself, it is for our greater happiness that He subordinates us to the supreme Good. If He were not to ordain us for Himself, it would be both “a disorder and a barbarity.” It would be a disorder, for the final end of the creative act would no longer be God Himself, but the creature. God in creating us would cease to love the supreme Good above all things. He would be preferring a finite good to Himself, just as the miser prefers his gold to his honor. It would be tantamount to a mortal sin in God or the extreme in absurdities.

This disorder would also be a barbarity. We should remain fatally prisoners of ourselves and could never aspire to our destined end, which is to know God and to praise Him, at the same time as loving Him. God’s glory consists in being known and praised (Ia IIae, q. 2, a. 3).

God’s love for us remains a love of beneficence and friendship. It is a friendship all the more generous as we are the more destitute and in no way can be said to deserve it. Such is the love of saints for the lepers. What egotism is there in this? It is benevolence of love in the highest degree, absolutely gratuitous, coming from the greatest wealth to extreme poverty.

The final perfection of God’s love consists in this, that its power is invincible, that nothing can resist it without God’s permission. Finally, by God’s power everything contributes to good (Ia, q. 19, a. 6).

God’s love is invincible because He is the Creator, the principle of being and of action for all creatures. There are no effects except by His causality. Sin itself, however grievous it may be, comes from God, not in so far as it is a deordination, but considered in its entity and physical force. The sinner turns against God the very gifts which he receives from Him, which is like the action of a drowning man who would insult the one who had saved his life. God’s love still preserves in being the soul of the sinner at the very moment when He could annihilate it by a complete cessation of His love for it.

God’s love is invincible not only because it is creative, but because it is the principle of omnipotent grace by which the will and the heart are drawn to Him. We see this in the case of the saints. “The ardor of this love,” as stated in the Canticle of Canticles (8: 6), “is a burning desire, a flame from Jehovah.” “Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ?” St. Paul asks. “Shall tribulation? or distress? or famine? . . . But in all these things we overcome, because of Him that hath loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, . . . nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 8:35-38). There is nothing that can triumph over God’s love for us. But does not evil, especially sin, which is the death of the soul, resist love, does it not despise God’s love? In truth there is never any evil unless God permits it, and “His only reason for permitting it,” says St. Augustine (Enchiridion, ch. xi), “is because He is powerful enough and good enough to bring good out of the very evil.” Says the Canticle of Canticles (8:6): “Love is strong as death.” It is stronger than natural death, and will raise us up at the last day to be admitted body and soul to share in God’s intimate life. “O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?” (I Cor. 15: 55.)

Divine love is stronger than spiritual death. Souls that are dead it raises to life not once but again and again in the course of a life on earth. And if it

permits pride to abuse the goodness of grace, even the obstinacy of this pride must result ultimately in the glorification of Love which ever remains the stronger. By reason of the eternal punishment it deserves, obstinate pride proclaims again the inalienable rights of the sovereign Good to be loved above all things. Hell cries out these rights of God, and the flames which torment the damned are but a faint reflection of this ever ardent flame, which is at the same time the eternal love of the Good and a holy hatred of evil. It was from the midst of the burning bush that Moses was addressed by Him who is. This love is a spiritual fire which is never consumed and which the elect contemplate throughout eternity.

This love appeared on earth in the person of Jesus Christ. The most perfect attestation of this love is the sacrifice on the Cross. And we find this love revealed to us in the open heart of the Crucified, the “fornax ardens charitatis: the burning furnace of charity.”

51) God’s justice and mercy.

We have been discussing the divine will. Its two great virtues are justice and mercy. They seem to be contrary virtues, but in reality they are reconciled in divine love, and are subordinated to each other in such a way that the gentleness of mercy offsets the rigor of justice.

We will treat first of justice, and after that we shall see why and how it is that mercy, as St. Thomas teaches, is superior to justice.

Justice. Justice is one of the first of moral notions conceived by the mind. In the broad sense of the term, justice implies the possession of all the virtues. In this sense we say of a man that he is just. In the strict sense of the term, justice is a special virtue which inclines the will to render to each one what is due.

We realize the worth of justice particularly from the pain we experience from injustice. And here on this earth we come across injustice at every turn. Moreover, of all rights, the noblest ones are those most misunderstood and most violated. Such are, for instance, the right we have to our reputation, freedom of action in doing good, in rendering to God the honor due to Him, the right of devoting our life to the salvation of souls. The propagation of vice and error is often admitted as a right. No less often people refuse to see that truth and virtue, inasmuch as they are of a far higher order, have this same right. Sometimes the wicked person is victorious, whereas a poor person, who would rather die than commit a base act, does not succeed in having his most natural rights recognized.

For the one who does not raise his heart to God, the injustice in the world is a disturbing element. And if this injustice, after falling drop by drop, pours down in torrents, as the psalmist expresses it, then this disturbing element may distress a soul to its very depths. Then something mysterious happens: “A man subjected to unjust treatment may wish to have others undergo the same experience, or the remembrance of this unjust treatment may excite in him a hunger and thirst for justice.” “Blessed are justice, which is infinitely superior to that found here on earth among human beings, and which regulates the distribution of good things, of rewards, and of punishments. God is just, not merely as a king is toward his subjects, but as a father is toward his children, and He is infinitely more just than the best of fathers on earth.

Let us consider this divine justice in the distribution of natural goods and graces; in the distribution of rewards; in the punishments inflicted by God upon the guilty.

1) The distribution of natural goods and of graces is perfectly just, notwithstanding the inequality of the natural and supernatural conditions accompanying it. God’s end in view in this distribution is to establish universal harmony among all creatures, without depriving any kind or any soul of what it needs to attain its end.

This universal harmony in created things proclaiming God’s glory is the end He has in view. As St. Thomas explains it (Ia, q. 47, a. 2), this harmony necessarily demands that it be such as to constitute a hierarchy and consequently that there be inequality between created things. Highest of all are the pure spirits called angels, and lower in the scale come inanimate beings. If there were only angels in existence, this would detract from the perfection prevailing in creation. What would an animal be like if each of its organs had the perfection belonging to the eye? What would be a tree be like if all its parts were flowers? That creation may be a glorious manifestation of the divine perfections, it is fitting that after the angels comes man, and after man the irrational animals, plants, and stones. So the harmony of the universe demands this hierarchy. But each creature receives from God what is necessary for it to attain its end. The herbivorous animal finds the grass it needs, the carnivorous animal finds the prey it needs for sustenance. The just God gives to each its food: “Behold the birds of the air, for they neither sow, nor do they reap; and your heavenly Father feedeth

them" (Matt. 6: 26). God distributes proportionately to created beings what is in keeping with their nature.

It is the same with the human race. The harmony and the hierarchy which call for a generally prevailing inequality among creatures, also call for a certain accidental inequality among men. First of all, there is inequality of condition, from the natural point of view. By his nature, man must live a social life; and society as an organism presupposes a hierarchy of duties to be performed, of superiors and of inferiors. Human society would not be a completely organized body if each of its members were king or lawmaker. What would our body be like if each of our members had the perfection of the head? This is what makes St. Thomas say (Ia, q. 96, a. 3, 4), that even in the state of innocence there would have been a certain inequality among human beings, and that society would have required that there be superiors and inferiors. "So that the beauty of order would the more shine forth among men." Selfishness has exaggerated the inequality of the conditions but has not created it.

Taken as a whole, the harmony between things not only demands certain inequality among men, but also requires a certain inequality in the distribution of graces. To one person our heavenly Father gives one talent, to another He gives two, and to a certain other He gives five. This one will be the founder of a religious order, that one will be a humble lay brother, and a certain other person will live a Christian life in the world. St. Paul tells us that the mystical body, consisting of souls united with Christ, is a spiritual organism, and every organism presupposes diversity and a certain inequality in the functions of the organism.

Although among men the conditions and graces are unequal, still no one is deprived of the graces necessary and sufficient for the attainment of his end, which is the salvation of his soul. As we find things in nature, the just God provides for irrational beings. How much the more does He provide for the needs of man and especially for the needs of the soul. "Behold the birds of the air, for they neither sow, nor do they reap . . . and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not you of much more value than they? . . . Be not solicitous therefore saying, what shall we eat: or what shall we drink? . . . For after all these things do the heathens seek. For your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things. Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God and His justice: and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:26-31). Each soul is an object of God's special concern, for each soul, as

St. Thomas says, is equivalent in value to any species or world, for each soul is truly immortal. God may permit, indeed, that in the animal kingdom some poor beast is no longer able to find the means necessary for its sustenance; but He cannot let a soul, except through its own fault, be without the help needed to escape damnation.

All persons, even those who have not had the Gospel preached to them, receive graces sufficient for them to save their souls. Certainly they are helped far less than those born in the Catholic Church, but they receive help sufficient for salvation. If they correspond to the graces received, if they act according to the dictates of conscience, as they are prompted to do by actual grace, then by a series of graces and by constant fidelity to inspirations, they finally receive the light of faith and acquire that life of charity, by means known to God, even if He has to send an angel or a preacher of the faith to them, as He sent the Apostle St. Peter to Cornelius the centurion (Acts, ch. x).

Grace is not given in proportion to one's natural qualities; natural good works do not merit grace, for it is of a higher order. The Pelagians and the Semi-Pelagians were condemned for not admitting this truth. But to the man who with the help of actual grace does what he can, God does not refuse habitual or sanctifying grace, by which he is justified. "Facienti quod in se est, Deus non denegat gratiam: God does not refuse His grace to him who does his best" (Ia IIae, q. 109, a. 6 ad 2um).

In spite of the inequality of conditions and of graces, the distribution of good things in both the natural and the supernatural order still remains a just one. Some have received merely one talent, but they have received it. God demands of them only that they make their talent productive.

2) God's justice is no less clearly illustrated in the distribution of rewards. Reward is proportioned to merit; and the degree of glory, to the degree of charity. The distribution of rewards and punishments commands our admiration. For the performance of good deeds that are purely of the natural order God gives a temporal reward; for supernaturally good deeds, a supernatural reward.

With regard to those who give alms solely that they may be seen by men, our Lord says: "Amen I say to you, they have received their reward," the praise of men. "And when thou dost alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doth; that thy alms may be in secret, and thy Father who

seeth in secret will repay thee," with an eternal reward, the glory not being that which comes from men but that which comes from God (Matt. 6:2-4).

In this supernatural order, there is a proportion between the supernatural reward and the supernatural merits; and the degree of merit is according to the degree of charity with which the act is performed. This is the teaching conveyed to us in the parable of the talents (Matt. 25: 14). To the one who received five talents and gained another five, it was said: "Enter thou into the joy of Thy Lord." He receives as reward a measure of the Master's own happiness. To the one who received two talents and gained other two, the same is said. He receives the same kind of reward but in a lesser degree. He who received but one talent and let it remain unproductive, hears himself condemned in the following words: "Take ye away therefore the talent from him and give it to him that hath ten talents. For to everyone that hath [a good will], shall be given, and he shall abound. But from him that hath not [a good will] that also which he seemeth to have shall be taken away" (Matt. 25: 20-23, 28, 29).

The laborers who came at the last hour had not worked, it is true, so long as the others; how is it, then, that they receive the same reward? (Matt. 20: 12.) The value of a meritorious act is not always measured by the time taken to perform it. The laborers who came at the last hour, who were the object of the master's special benevolence in that he deigned yet to call them, showed themselves no doubt particularly grateful. They worked more willingly, just as Magdalen in one moment loved so much. These laborers were able to gain as much merit in one hour as the others acquired by working all day. The householder was free to have mercy on them and still call them at the last moment. But he did not defraud the others, for he gave them in justice what was due them.

According to good deeds performed, each one is rewarded either with eternal life or with grace. Supernatural gifts are not in proportion to natural gifts. The Lord is pleased to bestow upon the poor and the humble an abundance of graces, unknown to the people of the world. The degree of glory will be in proportion to the degree of charity or of merit that we have at the hour of death.

Here on earth, if we are faithful, we receive the hundredfold. Here on earth is realized the parable of the wise virgins. Those who have managed to keep their lamps supplied with the oil of charity are called by the spouse.

They are admitted to the intimacy of spiritual union, which is a foretaste of that experienced in heaven.

God's justice which thus gives each one his reward urges the just one to hope with St. Paul. "I have fought a good fight: I have finished my course. . . . As to the rest, there is laid up for me a crown of justice which the Lord the just judge will render to me in that day: and not only to me, but to them also that love His coming" (II Tim. 4: 8).

3) Finally, we shall clearly see God's justice in the punishments which He inflicts upon the guilty. Punishment is according to the offence, as reward is according to merit.

First of all, it is proper that God should punish, so that there may be a restoration of the divine order when it has been violated. Remorse of conscience, says St. Thomas, because we have disturbed the order in things dictated by reason, punishes us. A magistrate, being the custodian of the social order, must punish those who upset this order. Thus God, the just judge, punishes those who rebel against the divine order. The human will in violating all three orders incurs a threefold punishment, since it is subjected to these three orders (IIa IIae, q. 87, a. 1). God punishes dispassionately, just as a judge who is completely master of himself, without being angry, condemns a criminal, his purpose being to uphold those very principles by which society is governed.

For a proper understanding of vindictive justice in God, how it is a virtue, and an absolute perfection, we must point out that God does not hate the sinner, but "He has an infinite hatred of sin, because it is an obstacle preventing Him from establishing that union with us which He so ardently desires, as also because it is directly opposed to His divine perfections. Being Himself infinite goodness, light of absolute purity, untarnished beauty, God cannot refrain from hating and detesting sin above all things, since it is but darkness, malice, and corruption. This hatred is so intense that in all God's operations as recorded in both the Old and the New Testament, especially His ardent attachment to His well-beloved Son, He has had in view only the destruction of sin. On this point, the most enlightened of God's servants assure us that, to blot out the least trace of sin from the soul, the Savior would be ready to suffer a thousand deaths."

Christian feeling is thus expressed in a book which the faithful love and which they all understand. Thus vindictive justice appears, as it were, to be a phase of God's love. However rigorous and inexorable its attitude may be

toward the obduracy of sin, why should it be impossible of reconciliation with the sweetness and mercy of God?

After Jesus Christ, is not the Blessed Virgin the most perfect personification of humility, sweetness, and mercy? Nevertheless, she is also called the "Mirror of Justice," because she detests evil as vehemently as she loves good. "You that love the Lord, hate evil" (Ps. 96: 10).

A famous Catholic author writes as follows: "Judith is one of the least known types of Mary. . . . In her the Blessed Virgin is revealed to us in one of her most unfamiliar aspects. The woman is represented to us in a forgotten aspect, that of horror. Where the feeling of horror is absent, there is neither love nor light. . . . Without doubt, the Blessed Virgin had at heart a holy and vehement horror of evil which is like a forgotten lamp left burning in the recesses of a sanctuary, and the discovery of this hatred will be, perhaps, one of the astonishments of eternity.

"Many booklets and little pictorial representations have attributed an insipid sweetness to the Blessed Virgin Mary. It is a silly kind of sweetness which does not seem to have deep down within itself the capacity of being horrified, which is that saintly faculty of holding certain things in detestation. This detestation of evil is the rarest of virtues and the most forgotten of glories. But the Blessed Virgin was not unmindful of God's words: . . . 'I will put enmities between thee and the woman. She shall crush thy head' (Gen. 3:15).

"It is difficult for us to know to what low level this sentiment of holiness has sunk in many men, because they look upon it as something soft, feeble, deprived as it is of that terrible energy inspired by detestation. Now, if hatred of evil has been the experience of all the saints, if not one of them has been without this light, how brilliant this light must have been in Mary. . . . Judith is the answer of Scripture to the forgetfulness of men who see in holiness the effacement of personality and the foolishness of accepting all things without hating their contraries."

Later on, St. John the apostle of love becomes also the prophet of God's vindictive justice. How can we fail to see in this virtue an absolute perfection? It is so closely associated with God's love of His own goodness as to be nothing else but the proclamation of His rights to be loved above all things. Therefore it is proper for God to punish creatures for violating the divine order. The punishment He inflicts is always proportioned to the

offence. When we come to treat of God’s mercy, we will even go so far as to say that the punishment is always less than the offence.

Venial sin receives a temporal punishment. In the case of a person dying impenitent in a state of mortal sin, the punishment is eternal. This is a dogma of our faith.

An irreligious person may object: How can eternal punishment be proportioned to an offence committed in a few moments? Says Hello: “Satan has always sought to move people to commiserate the damned. He whose malice is unspeakable, wishes to pass himself off here as being good. He presents the damned to us as unfortunate beings asking to be forgiven and unable to obtain forgiveness. He would have us bewail their misfortune and his own. Men, deceived by Satan’s false appeal to charity, have pity on him. He whispers gently to his friends, making himself as sweet as sugar and honey. He even mentions his mercy and accuses God of cruelty.” He is thus portrayed in Vigny’s Eloa. What proportion is there between an instantaneous offence and a punishment which is eternal?

Time is not here the question of paramount importance. The laborers who came at the last hour worked but a short time, nevertheless they received the reward of eternal life. According to the ways of God’s judgment, as also those of human justice, punishment is proportioned to the gravity of the offence, and not to the time required for committing it. It takes but a moment to kill someone; does it follow that the murderer deserves to be punished only for a moment? On the contrary, he is deserving either of hard labor for life or of the death penalty. The murderer is cut off forever from association with his fellow-beings. In a certain way, it is like the eternity of punishment which God inflicts.

We must also draw attention to the fact that there is even a proportion as to time, between eternal punishment and unrepented mortal sin, because this sin always remains. What we must not fail to notice is that mortal sin is truly moral suicide, depriving a soul of divine life. The sinner, in deliberately turning away from God and preferring a wretched created good, makes his final end consist in this created good. He deprives his soul of spiritual life and effects a sort of irreparable disturbance of the divine order within it. Thus blindness becomes an incurable malady when the principle of sight is destroyed, and for this a moment of time suffices. Mortal sin, once committed, persists therefore as an incurable blindness and thus deserves unending punishment. So long as the disorder lasts, so long

also does the punishment last. “For this reason alone,” says St. Gregory, “that the sinner makes his final end to consist. in created good which he prefers to God, he has the will to sin forever and thus deserves to be punished forever.”

A damned soul does not beg forgiveness, and its punishment is eternal, because its hatred is eternal. If it could leave hell, it would prefer to return there rather than go to heaven, for it finds in hell full scope for its fury. Here on earth certain persons prefer a hovel to a palace, and the atmosphere of a prison to that of a church. No longer can a damned soul be the object of pity or of mercy, and it no longer has the least wish to repent. Yet divine mercy alleviates its sufferings; they would be far greater if they were determined solely by God’s justice.

Such is this terrifying attribute of God, which manifests itself only when mercy has been frequently despised. How many times does the merciful God reach out to the sinner, rescue him from the precipice where he has fallen, and give him spiritual life again. He pardons seventy times seven times, which means always; and He chastises by means of medicinal punishments, that are intended to induce the guilty one to repent.

If, however, in spite of the graces offered, a sinner spurns divine love desirous of saving him, God allows him to be surprised by death, which leaves him merely time enough for a final decision. If he is obdurate, the punishment, like the offence, is eternal. As in this life a murderer is punished by exclusion from association with his fellow-men, so divine love which has been spurned, becomes implacable. Free from anger, it proclaims the inalienable rights of the sovereign Good to be loved above all things.

If we are able to observe about us the manifestations of divine justice, we shall have a clear insight into the harmony of the divine operations. If the most beloved have received the more, they should know how to suffer and atone for others, even to the extent of being a victim for them. The rigors of divine justice are here wonderfully reconciled with the most generous and benign justice of God.

The most beloved of all, beloved more than all human and angelic creatures combined, is Jesus Christ. It is He who offered Himself as victim for us, who was stricken for our sake, since we are too weak to pay our own debt. For one moment divine justice was for the heart of Jesus as hard as hell: “love is as strong as death, jealousy as hard as hell” (Cant. 8: 6). This moment was when the divine curse fell upon Christ laden with our sins, so

that it elicited from His heart the most heroic act of love for His Father and for us. It was an act of love which reconciled in that afflicted heart the supreme demands of justice with the highest manifestation of tenderest mercy. “Mercy and truth have met each other: justice and peace have kissed” (Ps. 84: 11). A most heartfelt suffering was the price of this reconciliation. “For God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son” (John 3: 16).

Such is the law of the supernatural world, and we see the application of it in the lives of Jesus, the Blessed Virgin, and the saints. Souls the most loved are also those who in this life must suffer the most. For their own salvation as well as that of others, they must share in the sufferings of Mary’s heart. “Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice, for they shall have their fill. . . . Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matt., ch. v). The sufferings of this life endured from a supernatural motive will, as St. Paul says, be worth “an eternal weight of glory” (II Cor. 4:17).

Divine Mercy. We said that God’s justice is the virtue by means of which He gives to all creatures what is necessary for the attainment of their end. It is also that virtue by which He rewards and punishes. There is another virtue of the divine will which, in certain respects, seems to be contrary to divine justice. This virtue is God’s infinite mercy, which the Scripture repeatedly praises: “The mercies of the Lord I will sing forever” (Ps. 88: 1).

The prophets often say, as Daniel does (3: 29-43): “Lord, we have sinned against Thee and we deserve the punishment which Thou dost inflict upon us; but give glory to Thy name, O Lord, and according to the abundance of Thy mercy deliver us.” In the Miserere, David exclaims: “Lord I know my iniquity, and my sin is always before me. To Thee only have I sinned. Cast me not away from Thy face. Cleanse me and I shall be made clean. Wash me and I shall be made whiter than snow. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation and my mouth shall declare Thy praise. O God, a contrite and humble heart, Thou wilt not despise” (Ps. 50). In the psalms we find three expressions that are nearly always used together. They are the misery of man who appeals to the divine mercy for the glory of God. “Help us O God, our Savior, for the glory of Thy name, and forgive us our sins” (Ps. 78:9). “Shew forth Thy wonderful mercies; Thou who savest them that trust in Thee” (Ps. 16:7). In the De profundis we find the same appeal: “Out of the depths I have cried to Thee, O Lord: hear my voice. If Thou wilt mark

iniquities, who shall stand it? For with Thee there is merciful forgiveness. My soul hath hoped in the Lord, because with the Lord there is mercy and with Him plentiful redemption" (Ps. 129).

The Gospel represents God as a Father who loves us as His children, who pardons the prodigal son despite his ingratitude and his repeated offences. The special message for us in the glad tidings is that God is our Savior, the good Shepherd, who seeks the lost sheep and brings it back on His shoulders. The whole Gospel is a history of God's mercies to souls, however far they may have strayed from Him, as was the case with the Samaritan woman, with Magdalen, Zaccheus, the good thief, with all of us, for whom the Father delivered up His Son as a victim of expiation.

In spite of these striking manifestations of infinite mercy, modern unbelief, known as Agnosticism, comes forward with the objection that mercy, as attributed to God, is merely a symbol, a manner of speech, a metaphor entirely of the human order, as when we say that God is angry. And just as anger, which is a passion, cannot be attributed to God who is pure spirit, so also the same must be said of mercy, which would make Him grieve over the miseries of this life of ours. Sadness cannot be reconciled with infinite happiness. If there is absolute justice in God, it is opposed also to any feeling of compassion, which would be a weakness, a restriction of the inalienable rights of the Creator, God cannot belie Himself.

Finally, the unbeliever goes on to say that, if we look around us, the sight of so much physical and moral unrelieved wretchedness makes us think there is not any real foundation for the idea of infinite mercy, which is merely a beautiful dream, the result of religious sentiment.

On the contrary, from the teaching of the Church we see: (1) that mercy is not a sadness and weakness in God, but a most glorious manifestation of His power and goodness; (2) that mercy, far from being a restriction upon justice, is allied with it, at the same time surpassing it. Let us explain this:

1) To see how mercy is a virtue and an absolute perfection, we must carefully distinguish it from that sensible feeling of pity, which God could not have. That sensible feeling of pity, as St. Thomas remarks (IIa IIae, q. 30, a. 1), is a special trait of the weak and timid, of those who are quick to realize they are threatened with some evil from which their neighbor is suffering. Thus they instinctively consider the sufferings of others as their own and feel compassion for them. The happy and powerful, on the contrary, have not much of this sensible feeling of pity in them.

How can God, who is infinitely happy and free from all sufferings, have compassion for us in our miseries? Let us not seek to find in Him a sensible feeling of pity, an emotion that would cause Him to suffer in the same way as we do concerning our miseries. There is nothing of the sensible order in God. He is pure spirit. There is no sadness in Him. He is sovereign Good. But the virtue of divine mercy does not consist in this pity which results from a consideration of some natural good, and which arises from the fear of some evil or from a feeling of sympathy. Mercy in God is a virtue of His benevolent and beneficent will; it does not arise from the fear of evil, but comes from His love of the supreme Good and from a generosity sufficiently strong and enduring to triumph over evil and wrest souls from the moral evil of sin. If it is a characteristic of the weak to be tender-hearted, a characteristic of the strong and the good, says St. Thomas, is to give generously, to let others share that wealth of life which they possess. The more good there is in a being, the more generously and intimately it gives of itself. If, then, God is infinitely good, and if He is happiness itself, He cannot grieve over our miseries, but is naturally inclined to help us.

Moreover, there is something in this life which has an inevitable claim upon divine mercy. It is misery which, instead of becoming bitter, angry, and rebellious, turns toward God, imploring Him in absolute confidence, because He is Goodness, Happiness, Glory, and Omnipotence. And the greater is our misery and the more we realize our need of help, the more we feel that God can remedy the defect, the stronger also we become, and the more irresistible is the appeal made to God's omnipotent goodness. The more power and goodness there is in a being, the more it gives of itself. The weaker and poorer we are, the stronger is our appeal to the gift of God's supreme goodness. "For when I am weak, then am I powerful," declares St. Paul (II Cor. 12: 10). Just before this the Lord had said to him: "Power is made perfect in infirmity." "Have mercy on me," says the Psalmist, "for I am weak" (Ps. 6). "Look Thou upon me, and have mercy on me; for I am alone and poor" (Ps. 24: 16). It is the cry of the woman of Chanaan: "The whelps also eat of the crumbs which fall from the tables of their masters" (Matt. 15: 27). You cannot despise her who is speaking to you, for she is really weak.

But far greater, beyond all comparison, is the appeal of misery, when it makes supplication to God not only to obtain help from Him, but also that the glory of God may be strikingly illustrated. It is the prayer of Daniel (3:

42): “Put us not to confusion, but deal with us according to Thy meekness and according to the multitude of Thy mercies.” “For the glory of Thy name, O Lord, deliver us,” says the Psalmist (Ps. 78: 9). A certain Christian of great faith often prayed as follows: “Lord, remember that You created all things out of nothing; that by the touch of Your hand the stars were illumined. Since You are magnificent and immense, be such in giving to us. By the immensity of Your gifts cause my desires to be overwhelmingly satisfied. Make me say: God is great, and I knew it not. God is God, and I was asleep. Act according to the difference of our two natures, for You are Being and I am nothingness. Since You are God, give Yourself without reserve, so that I may recognize You. I am one who does not exist and has need of everything. God, everything is Yours; give everything to him who is nothing and has need of everything. You were not ungenerous when you sprinkled the heavens with the stars. Since You are God, be not invincible. Father, You who are pleased to yield though omnipotent, to come down from Your high abode, to be conquered though You are glorious, as You have created me out of nothing, so hearken to me, worthless as I am.”

Such can be the sinner’s prayer, incapable though he is of meriting, when asking for sanctifying grace which is the principle of all merit. The least degree of this grace is of more value than the sum-total of created things. “May the abundance of Your gifts multiply my desires.”

Who would say that mercy taken in this sense is an imperfection in God? It is a glorious manifestation of His power and goodness. In creating, God draws being out of nothing, but when He is merciful He does something incomparably more sublime, for He brings good out of evil. Out of evil, which is even less than nothing, God is pleased to bring an entirely supernatural good, one which is greater than all created things combined. This prompts St. Augustine and St. Thomas to say that, to make of a sinner a just man is a greater and more glorious act for God than to create heaven and earth. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but the grace given to a sinner seeks to increase in him and to remain with him forever. St. Thomas even goes on to say that although glory, which is the consummation of grace, is the greater of the two, yet the justification of a sinner is proportionately greater than the glorification of a just person; for the gift of grace exceeds the state of the ungodly more than the gift of glory exceeds the state of the just. God is pleased at times, purely of His goodness, to effect from the

most grievous sin a more sincere repentance, so that the baser was the ingratitude, the greater should be the degree of charity.

As for the rest of us, the good that we can do is done only by means of good. It has been said that what belongs peculiarly to God is to bring good out of evil. In this we see the triumph of His glory. Therefore mercy is neither a sadness nor a weakness. Not only is it reconciled with God's supreme happiness and omnipotence, but it is the most striking manifestation thereof.

2) Why is it impossible for God's mercy to be reconciled with His infinite justice? On first consideration, it seems to be a weakening on the part of divine justice of inalienable rights which that justice cannot give up. God cannot be untrue to Himself. As a matter of fact, God's mercy, instead of restricting and opposing His justice, becomes one with it, at the same time surpassing it. "All the ways of the Lord are mercy and truth," says the Psalmist (Ps. 24: 10); but "mercy exalteth above judgment," says the Apostle St. James (2:13). According to St. Thomas, the reason for this is because "every work of divine justice presupposes a work of mercy or of entirely gratuitous goodness, and is founded thereon. If, indeed, there is something due to the creature from God, this must be on account of something that precedes. If He has to reward our meritorious acts, it is because He first of all gave us the grace so that we may merit; if it is due to Him to give us the grace necessary for salvation, it is because it was He who, in the first place and purely of His goodness, created us and destined us for a life which is supernatural. Divine mercy is thus, as it were, the root or the principle of all God's works, these being permeated and dominated by this virtue. Viewed as the primary source of all God's gifts, it is His mercy which exerts the greatest influence, and that is why it surpasses His justice, this latter being only secondary and subordinate to it. God always gives out of the superabundance of His goodness more than justice demands, more than the nature and the condition of creatures demand" (Ia, q. 21, a. 4).

This is easily accounted for by considering the three great acts of justice, namely: to give what is necessary, to reward, and to punish. Mercy surpasses justice and becomes one with it even in the act of punishing.

a) The first act of divine justice is to give to creatures what is necessary for the attainment of their end. But divine mercy gives more than is necessary. "The earth is full of the mercy of the Lord" (Ps. 32: 5)

God could have created us in a purely natural state and given us only an immortal soul. He has called us to participate supernaturally in His intimate life. He has given us grace which is the principle of our supernaturally meritorious acts. Justice does not lose its rights, but mercy prevails.

God could have left us in that state in which we were after the fall of our first parents. He could also have raised us up out of this state of sin by simply pardoning us. He has given us His only Son as victim for our redemption, and we can always appeal to the merits of the Savior. Justice does not lose its rights, but mercy prevails.

After the death of Christ, it was enough that our souls be kept alive and preserved from harm by means of interior graces. Divine mercy has given us the Holy Eucharist. On Pentecost and again for each one of us in Confirmation, the Holy Spirit came to dwell in us. After our repeated falls into sin, we receive absolution every time we sincerely wish to return to God. The whole Christian religion is a history of the mercies of the Lord.

God gives us exceedingly more than our nature demands. He gives us supernatural life, and in this supernatural order exceedingly more than is strictly necessary to enable us to attain our end. Justice loses none of its rights, but mercy prevails. This mercy is so great that pride finds it overwhelming. Pride was the sin of the fallen angels and it is the deep-seated vice of Naturalism, This Naturalism refuses to be ennobled, to be elevated by grace to the supernatural life, to the intimate life of God, content to remain in the purely natural state, being indebted for this only to itself. It is the characteristic of pride that it does not wish to be under obligations for anything to anyone except itself, and that it seeks to rid itself of that immense debt of gratitude which every creature owes to God. The astonishing thing is this, that it is not so much vindictive justice which strikes at pride; it is particularly infinite mercy that does so. In direct contrast to the greatest mystery of grace, there is the mystery of iniquity.

b) The second act of divine justice is to reward each one according to his merits. But divine mercy gives us more than we have merited. In this life, how many are the graces bestowed upon those who have fallen, beyond all their deserts, so that they may be promptly rescued from sin and spiritual death? While Paul was persecuting the infant Church, he was suddenly filled with consternation through the intervention of divine mercy and was crushed beneath the weight of grace which he could in no way have deserved. After conversion, a great many helps are freely granted to souls,

far beyond their deserts, so as to enable them to persevere in doing good and to grow in holiness. In the case of souls that have fallen again into sin, it often happens that they are converted a short time before their death, like the laborers who come at the last hour and yet receive the reward of eternal life. These souls performed some very simple act of charity, such as giving a glass of water to a poor person for the love of God, and divine mercy rewards them with an eternity of happiness.

c) The third act of justice consists in inflicting the penalty due to sin. Here again mercy prevails. “To punish in excess would be injustice; if, in this order, divine love wishes to exceed its strict right,” says St. Thomas, “there is only one thing to be done, and that is, either to remit the punishment or pardon one. To pardon means to give in excess; to remit an offence is freely to bestow a gift” (Ia, q. 21, a. 3 ad 2um).

And how is the right to pardon in conflict with the right to punish? The former right does not restrict the latter, but surpasses it. The right to pardon is one of the noblest privileges of sovereigns, of those at the head of the state. He who is lawfully invested with power to punish can also remit the penalty. That is not possible for a mere judge whose duty is to see that the law is observed. But it is possible for the lawgiver and the supreme judge. In remitting the penalty no wrong is done to anyone. The right to pardon is therefore the noblest prerogative of the supreme Judge, one that especially manifests His glory and goodness (IIIa, q. 46, a. 2 ad 3um).

When a murderer, justly sentenced to death by the highest earthly authorities, has been unable to obtain his pardon from them, when he is justly condemned also by the authority of the supreme Judge, recourse to Him is still possible. So long as the culprit is not confirmed in his evil ways, he can appeal from God’s justice to God’s glory. He can always offer up this prayer: Lord, I have sinned outrageously against Thee, and I deserve that the penalty of death be inflicted upon me by those who have received from Thee the authority to do so; but for the sake of Thy glory, O Lord, pardon me. As Thou hast created me out of nothing, graciously hear me, unworthy as I am. Grant that I may die in union with Thee and cause my shameful death to be like that of the good thief, a ray of glory for Thee. “Shew forth Thy wonderful mercies, O Lord, Thou who savest them that trust in Thee” (Ps. 16: 7).

How many, regardless of self, think in this sincere way of God’s glory? At times those do so who find it no longer possible to think of their own

glory. This is the case with a dethroned king such as Louis XVI at the foot of the scaffold, or with great sinners who have absolutely no other recourse left to them except to trust in God's mercy. Sometimes God is pleased to make saints of them. History has preserved the name of Carino, St. Peter Martyr's assassin. Carino, suddenly enlightened by grace and in a spirit of repentance, asked to be clothed in the habit of a lay-brother. After forty years of penance, he died the death of a saint. God's mercy toward sinners is manifested in this world by the numerous graces bestowed on them to bring them to repentance, by the medicinal punishments which the Lord sends them, and by accepting others as victims of expiation for them.

Finally, as St. Thomas says, the punishments of hell are medicinal for those still on earth by reason of the just fear these sufferings inspire in them. They cannot cause the damned to repent, as those souls remain always obdurate. But even in hell divine mercy operates, in the sense that by it there is an alleviation of the punishments, so that the obdurate sinner is punished less than he deserves. If God's justice alone came into operation, the sufferings of the damned would be greater than they are (Ia, q. 21, a. 4 ad 1um).

Therefore, God's mercy is always combined with His justice, this latter remaining subordinate. Both result from His love of the supreme Good. This supreme Good manifests itself primarily in the diffusion of itself, and in a secondary way by proclaiming its inalienable right to be loved above all things (Ia, q. 23, a. 5 ad 3um).

This divine mercy must excite in us feelings of hope, of love for God, and of love for those who have offended us: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy" (Matt. 5: 7).

52) Omnipotence.

Having considered the attributes relating to the divine and immanent operations, we must now speak of that attribute which is the immediate principle of God's external operations. The divine action from which they proceed cannot be a formally transitive one, for, of necessity, this would imply an imperfection. It would be an accident emanating from the divine agency and would be received in a created being. It is a formally immanent action and is identified with the very being of God; but it is virtually transitive in so far as it produces an effect outside of God. We shall consider: a) infinite power in general; b) the creation and conservation of beings; c) the divine motion; d) the possibility of miracles.

a) Infinite power (Ia, q. 25). “There could not be in God,” says St. Thomas, “passive power, or that aptitude to receive or to be made perfect; but He possesses active power in the highest degree. The more a being is in act and is perfect, the more it is the active principle of something; and vice versa, the more a being is imperfect and deficient, the more it is reduced to a state of passivity. Now God is pure Act, in all ways perfect, and all imperfection is to be excluded from Him. Therefore He is in the highest degree the active principle and in no way admits of passivity” (Ia, q. 25, a. 1).

Does this mean that the active power in God is like our will, a faculty which is the principle of an accidental operation? By no means, for there is nothing accidental in God. Pure Act cannot be determined any further; its operation is its very essence. We must, therefore, eliminate every created mode from the analogical notion of active power before we can apply it to God. “In creatures, power is the principle not only of action, but likewise of effect. Thus in God the idea of power is retained, inasmuch as it is the principle of an effect; not, however, as it is a principle of action, for this is the divine essence itself; except, perchance, after our manner of understanding, inasmuch as the divine essence contains in the highest degree all the perfections to be found in created things, it can be understood either under the notion of action, or under that of power” (Ia, q. 25, a. 1 ad 3um).

The divine power is infinite, for the mode of operation follows the mode of being, and the divine being is infinite. The hotter a body is, the greater its power of heating other bodies. The more enlightened a mind is, the greater power it has to enlighten the minds of others. God, who is Being itself, must therefore have the power to give being to everything capable of receiving it, to everything for which existence is not repugnant. “And if God cannot make the impossible become a reality, that is not because His power is limited; it is because the impossible is in itself incapable of existence, and cannot become a reality. Hence it is better to say that such things cannot be done, than that God cannot do them” (Ia, q. 25, a. 3). Ockham and Descartes failed to see this, when they claimed that God’s liberty and omnipotence would not be infinite if they could not make a square circle. From this it would follow that the truth of the principle of contradiction and of every essence would depend upon the divine liberty; but the divine liberty itself would vanish, for there would be no foundation for it. God

would not be of necessity the Being, the Good, the Intellect, or consequently the Liberty. He would be free to be free, as Secrétan maintained, free to be or not to be. This absolute libertinism, which is the destruction of all truth and of all being, is the height of absurdity and leads to radical nihilism.

On the other hand, to urge the claims of intellectualism, as much as Leibniz and the advocates of absolute optimism have wished to do, is to go to the other extreme. It unduly restricts God's liberty and omnipotence, in that it maintains that these divine attributes were limited in the creation of the present world, which would have to be the best of possible worlds. Undoubtedly God could not have created with greater wisdom than He has so done, nor could He dispose things better than as they are; but He could have created better things, says St. Thomas, for between a creature however perfect and the infinite goodness it represents, the distance is always infinite (Ia, q. 25, a. 5). The animal has not a better arrangement of parts than that of the plant, but it is a better and more perfect being. Man is still more perfect and of a still higher order. Above man we have the pure spirits with a greater or less degree of intellectual power. But the idea of the most perfect pure being that possibly could be created is as truly inconceivable and contradictory as is the idea of the swiftest movement. God can always create a pure spirit still more perfect. (On this point, see the solution of the antinomies relative to liberty, ch. iv, n. 62.)

b) The creation and preservation of beings (Ia, q. 45, 105). Omnipotence is creative. The dogma of creation may be summed up in these words: Everything which exists outside of God, of His own free will He created out of nothing, for His glory and purely of His goodness.

Of all things existing outside of God—things visible and invisible, the earth, the firmament, angels, those pure spirits as numerous as the stars, and finally man, composed as he is of soul and body—not one exists of itself, for each of them is not being itself, life itself, light itself, holiness itself, since all of them are finite. They have, therefore, of necessity received their existence from Him who is (Ia, q. 45, a. 2).

They were made out of nothing by God, which means that their whole being, absolutely their whole being, was produced by God. Before this production their being was entirely nonexistent. There is an infinite distance between creating and acting as we do every day. Modern philosophers who often misuse the word "create," when they speak, for instance, of creative

evolution, of creative imagination, or of a creative idea, have not stopped to think what these words mean: “to make from nothing.”This word “create” reveals to us our absolute dependence upon God, a dependence which is the foundation of all our obligations. To understand precisely what Christian humility must be, it would be necessary for us to penetrate into the mystery of the creative act and to grasp the meaning of these words: “to make from nothing.”

The sculptor makes a statue, but not from nothing. He takes the marble which he did not make, and merely gives it a certain form, fashioning and transforming it. He does not create the statue, he does not produce the whole of its being. The sculptor is a transformer, not a creator. The architect who constructs an edifice, does not create it. He merely brings together in orderly arrangement the materials which he did not produce. The father who generates a son, does not create him, does not give him the whole of his being. Something of the son’s substance, the matter, a germ that developed, was pre-existent; but the father did not create this out of nothing by the mere act of his will. The thinker who works out a system of some kind does not create it. He starts from certain known facts and evident principles, setting forth a certain number of ideas under these principles so as to render the facts intelligible. He does not create, he constructs with pre-existent materials. When he afterwards instructs a disciple, he only molds and informs the disciple’s intelligence, but does not create it.

Lastly, the will, when making a free act, does not produce it from nothing; the act is simply an accidental modification of the will, and presupposes a real power which it determines or informs.

A finite agent cannot create, but can only transform what already exists. The reason for this is that the most universal of effects comes from the most universal of causes. But being, as being, is the most universal of effects. The production of being as such or of the whole being of a thing, must be attributed to the most universal of causes, which is the supreme Cause. Just as fire gives out heat, and light illumines things, so also the One who is Being itself can produce being, the whole being of any given thing (Ia, q. 45, a. 5).

However insignificant this thing may be, even if it were only a grain of sand, it needs an infinite power to produce it out of nothing. The more impoverished, indeed, is the matter to be transformed, the more powerful must be the agent that works upon it. The poorer is the soil, the more it

must be cultivated, watered, warmed by the sun, the more also the seed sown in it must be good. When the matter is so poor that it practically amounts to nothing, an infinite power is needed to draw something, however little it may be, from this nothing. When passive power decreases, active power increases. We may go so far as to say that, when there is no longer any passive potentiality, the active power must be infinite (Ia, q. 45, a. 5 ad 3um). Only God, who is Being itself, can give to a thing the whole of its being instead of giving it a form or mode of being. Being thus suddenly originating from nothing, is the proper effect of God.

The creative act is not a formally transitive action, as if emanating from God after the manner of an accident and received in the created being. It is a formally immanent action not distinct from God's essence. But it is said to be virtually transitive in that it produces an external fact. Creation taken in the passive sense, as it affects the creature, is merely the real relation of dependence of the creature upon the Creator. There could be no question of a real relation of God to the created being; in this case there can be only a logical relation (Ia, q. 45, a. 3; and q. 13, a. 7).

To dispel the obscurity of the mystery of creation, there has been proposed in these latter days, not a mystery but a contradiction in the employment of the terms: "Creative evolution." The creative act requires One who is Being itself, whereas evolution is nothing else but inconsistent becoming. That which is becoming and as yet does not exist, cannot have within itself its own sufficient reason. How is it possible for becoming, which is incapable of explaining itself, to be the principle of all the rest?

Inasmuch as God made us from nothing, it follows, in the strictest sense of the term, that of ourselves we are nothing. If we take away from ourselves what we have received from God, literally speaking, nothing remains. And as action follows being, since we are not of ourselves independent of God, we do not act by ourselves independently of God. It would be a great illusion for us to think that we are the unique and all sufficient cause of the free determination of ourselves in what there is of good in this. "What hast thou that thou hast not received?" asks St. Paul, "By the grace of God," he says, "I am what I am" (I Cor. 4: 7; 15: 10).

What is the end which God has in view in thus creating everything from nothing? We have already said, when speaking of His love for creatures, that the end is His own glory or the free manifestation of His goodness. God in creating cannot seek an end inferior to the sovereign Good, which is

Himself. This would be unworthy of Him. It would be the subjecting of His power, of His wisdom, and of His love to a good inferior to Himself. Neither can He create for the purpose of increasing His happiness or adding to His perfection. Therefore, the end sought by God can be only His external glory, which is nothing else but the manifestation of His goodness. "He has given being to creatures in order that His goodness might be communicated to creatures, and be represented by them" (Ia, q. 47, a. 1).

As the sun emits its rays of light, so God, who is the sovereign Good, has willed to emit the rays of His light. He has been pleased to illumine, rekindle, render all things fecund, and draw them to Himself. As the star in sending forth its rays of light adorns the darkness of night, so God has been pleased to adorn the nothingness of His creatures. As the bird fills the air with its song, so God has been pleased to sound the praises of all His perfections. This radiance on the part of God, this prodigality of song external to Himself, are the expression of His internal glory. Such an end is worthy of Him. (See Vatican Council, Denzinger, n. 1783.)

In this quest of His external glory, how could we see the least trace of egotism, since this glory is but the radiation of infinite goodness, of the beneficent riches which God wishes us to share, just as the sun causes the earth to participate in its light and heat? God cannot will His external glory unless He also wills our good at the same time, and likewise we cannot will our true happiness without seeking God's glory. If we sought only the fulfillment of our aspirations, we should remain prisoners of ourselves. We should remain captive to a romantic sentimentalism, and should not realize the magnificence of the following prayer: "Give free rein, O Lord, to the Alleluia which seeks to ascend to Thee, for my heart is bursting with joy and can contain itself no longer. Gush forth, ye torrents of joy, upon the desires which are beyond the heart's control. Gush forth, ye torrents of glory. Alleluia!" Such is the cry of the Christian soul, and the answer to the philosophic pride that wishes God had created us only for ourselves and not for Himself. "Not to us, O Lord, not to us: but to Thy name give glory" (Ps. 113). It is humility most pronounced; compared with it pride is blind and limited. We need only compare the "non serviam" with the "Magnificat."

This external glory of God, a manifestation of His goodness, was freely willed by Him, without any moral necessity, for God is neither greater nor happier in having created the universe. Before creation He had in Himself infinite plenitude of being, of goodness, life, and happiness; creatures have

added nothing to this. After creation, there have been various beings, but there has not been more being. There have been more living beings but there has not been more life; there have been various intelligences but there has not been more wisdom or sanctity or love.

It is a dogma of our faith that God created in time and not from all eternity. According to St. Thomas (Ia, q. 46), that is dependent upon divine wisdom. Even reason cannot prove the impossibility of an eternal creation. (See supra, n. 10.)

On the first day, before sin was, the wonderful order in creation proclaimed God's glory, just as now the starry heavens continue to show it forth. It was the most sublime symphony without any discordant note, "from the depths of nothingness to the summit of being," from changeable matter susceptible of all passing forms even to the everlasting choirs of pure spirits, these were so many harmonious notes marvelously blended, like the melody of God the Creator. This harmony and hierarchy of beings necessarily imply inequality. The divine goodness, since it is one and simple in itself, cannot be expressed beneath itself except by a manifold variety, after the manner of coins of various value. This manifoldness cannot express the different perfections of God and the wealth of the divine ideas, unless it is itself hierarchically arranged. All the parts of a tree cannot consist of flowers; it must have roots, a trunk, branches, and leaves; all these are necessary for the beauty of the tree. So also in the universe from the stone up to the pure spirit there must be some creatures of the lower and others of a higher order (Ia, q. 47).

If the doctrine of creation is understood, then we see that the preservation of creatures follows as a consequence of this (Ia, q. 104). If, for one moment, God ceased to preserve creatures in their being, they would immediately fall into nothingness, just as the sun's ray disappears when it ceases to give light.

The imagination does not perceive this necessity for the preservation of beings. The imagination pictures many sensible effects which do not have to be preserved by the sensible cause which brought them into being. The father and mother of a child may die after it is born, and the child continues to live.

The imagination is unable to distinguish between agents which are directly the causes merely of the becoming of their effects, and those which are causes not only of the becoming but also of the being itself of their

effects. This distinction can be made only by the intellect, that faculty which is concerned with being. Some examples, however, will help to make this point clear.

The father is directly the cause of the passive generation of his son, and only indirectly of the being of his son. He may die, too,

[* SOME TEXT ARE MISSING *]

in being. But de facto nothing is annihilated by God, neither spirits nor matter. He does not do so, either according to the ordinary course of things in nature, or even by working a miracle, for He has no motive for doing so. Annihilation would not be a manifestation of any divine perfection (Ia, q. 104, a. 4).

Such is the Thomistic and classical teaching of the theologians concerning the preservation of creatures. With Descartes it lost its simplicity and its profundity.

c) The divine motion (Ia, q. 105). After treating of the preservation of beings, which is a consequence of creation, St. Thomas speaks of the divine motion. We shall see what are the essential points in his teaching without insisting much on it here, for we have already spoken of the relations between the divine motion and our freedom of action in connection with God's foreknowledge of free acts of the future (n. 49, b). We shall have to return to this subject when we give the solution of the antinomies relating to liberty (nn. 64, 65).

St. Thomas (Ia, q. 105, a. 1) begins by saying that God can immediately transform prime matter. He alone has this power, just as He alone has been able to produce matter, which can come into existence by creation only. Only the proper cause of a determinate effect can immediately transform it; for the immediate transformation of a thing is of the same order specifically as that of its immediate production. Only God, who is able to create or produce the whole being of a substance, can change the being, inasmuch as it is being, of this substance or transubstantiate it (IIIa, q. 75, a. 4). God, who alone can bring matter into existence, can transform it immediately, can change, for instance, in a moment, water into wine without any predisposing accidental alterations. On the contrary, a created agent can only mediately transform matter, by means of the accidental changes it is capable of producing in it (Ia, q. 110, a. 2, 3, 4). Thus only our intellect can

immediately modify its own judgment; the imagination can do so only mediately through the intermediary of images. This conclusion is of great importance for the discernibility of miracles. The immediate transformation of matter surpasses all created powers, both known and unknown. Now this transformation is verified in the resurrection of a dead person, in the multiplication of the loaves, in the instantaneous change of water into wine, and other such instances.

For the same reason, God, who alone was able to bring our intellects into existence by creation, can move them immediately not only by the presentation of an object, but also subjectively by enlightening them and reinforcing the intellectual faculty. Thus God alone is the cause of certitude in prophetic knowledge and in supernatural faith.

God alone can move a created will subjectively. He alone was able to create it and direct it to universal good and to the sovereign Good which is Himself. The order of agents must correspond to the order of ends. He moves the will interiorly without doing any violence to it; for He maintains it in its natural inclination for universal good, and awakens in it this natural inclination when He prompts it to determine itself for some particular good (Ia, q. 105, a. 4; q. 111, a. 2); “God alone can enter the soul” (IIIa, q. 64, a. 1).

Does God move all secondary causes in all their actions? (Ia, q. 105, a. 5.) Holy Scripture replies: “He worketh all in all” (I Cor. 12: 6). “For in Him we live and move and are” (Acts 17: 28). “Thou hast wrought all our works in us” (Is. 26: 12).

We must not understand this as the Occasionalists do, in the sense that God alone acts in all things, that it is not the fire that gives out heat but God in the fire or that the fire is the occasion of this. If it were so, remarks St. Thomas, secondary causes would not be causes and could not act, and their existence would be to no purpose. Their powerlessness would prove, moreover, that God was unable to communicate action and life to them, after the manner of an artist who can produce only lifeless works; and this would imply lack of power in the Creator. Occasionalism leads to Pantheism, for operation follows being; and the mode of operation, the mode of being. If there were only one operation, the divine operation, then there would be only one being; creatures are absorbed in God; abstract being becomes identified with the divine being, as required by Ontological

Realism, which is so dear to Malebranche and, according to his theory, is so closely connected with Occasionalism.

Molinism is, as we shall see, diametrically opposed to Occasionalism. It maintains that the secondary cause can act without divine premotion. Whereas Malebranche admits the theory of Ontological Realism, according to which we see all things in God, Molina, as we know, has much in common with the Nominalists.

The view taken by St. Thomas is more exalted than these extreme doctrines, which are true in what they affirm, but false in what they deny. The basic principles of the Thomistic thesis have been already stated. They are moderate realism and the analogy of being. Only God is Being itself; the creature is a composite of essence and existence. Now, operation follows being; and the mode of operation, the mode of being. Therefore only God is self-active; the creature really acts just as it really exists, but it acts only by God's help.

How are we to understand this? St. Thomas answers (Ia, q. 105, a. 5): "(1) God moves all secondary causes, first as an end. For every operation is for the sake of some good and every good participates in the likeness to the Supreme Good. (2) God moves every secondary cause in the right of first agent. Where there are several agents in order, the second always acts in virtue of the first: for the first agent always moves the second to act. And thus all agents act in virtue of God Himself; and therefore He is the cause of action in every created agent. (3) God not only moves all things to operate, as the workman applies the axe to cut, but He gives to each creature its nature and preserves this in each. He gives what is innermost to each, its very being, preserving this in each. Thus God works intimately in all things."

"God not only gives things their form (or nature), but He also preserves them in existence, and applies them to act (applicat eas ad agendum), and is the end of every action" (ibid., ad 3um). "One action does not proceed from two agents of the same order. But nothing hinders the same action from proceeding from a primary and a secondary agent" (ad 2um). "God works sufficiently in things as First Agent, but it does not follow from this that the operation of secondary agents is superfluous" (ad 1um).

St. Thomas develops the same doctrine in the Contra Gentes (Bk. III, ch. lxvii). In the De potentia (q. 3, a. 7) he shows that God is the cause of every created action and this in four ways: (1) because He has given to the

creature the power or the faculty to act; (a) because He preserves this in the creature; (3) because He applies this to action inasmuch as He moves it to act, by which is not meant a bestowal or preservation of the active power but the application of the faculty to action; (4) because He moves it, as the principal agent moves its instrument so as to produce in the effect what is beyond the proper power of the instrument to produce, which in this case is the being itself of the action. In fact, being is that which in all things is most profound and most universal; consequently it is the effect which belongs properly to God, just as the effect which belongs properly to the artist is that which he alone produces by the way in which he animates and ennobles his instrument. "Nor does anything act to produce being except by God's power. For it is precisely being that is the most common of all effects, the first effect and more intimate than all other effects; and therefore it befits only God in accordance with the proper power of such effect." Likewise every participated absolute perfection (simpliciter simplex, absolutely simple), such as liberty or intellect, requires for its actualization God's intervention, in the rôle, for instance, of the First Intelligent and of the First Free Being.

What then does the second cause do? St. Thomas answers in the article just referred to, that it is the cause of the action precisely inasmuch as this latter is this individual action. In like manner, he says (Ia, q. 104, a. 1): "Of two things in the same species one cannot directly cause the other's form as such (of such a species), since it would then be the cause of its own form which is essentially the same as the form of the other; but it can be the cause of this form for as much as it is in matter; in other words, it may be the cause that this matter receives this form. Thus it is the cause of the becoming of the effect and not directly of its being," as we have shown in the preceding section apropos of the preservation of creatures.

The second cause is therefore the instrumental cause of the being precisely as being of its effect, which under this aspect depends directly upon God. Does it follow, as maintained by Occasionalism, that it is not properly the cause of anything? Not at all, for it is the proper cause of the becoming and consequently of the individuality of its effect.

Must we say with Molina, whose view is the very reverse of Occasionalism, that the secondary cause exerts its own causality without the need of its being premoved by the first cause? That is impossible, for the secondary cause exerts its own causality only under the influence of the

first cause, which applies it to its act. Why is this? Since of itself the secondary cause cannot reduce itself from potentiality to act, it must be moved or applied to act. Besides, the individuality of its effect is still being, and for this reason it depends upon the first cause.

Just as being is common to all things and penetrates their most minute particularizations, so the transcendent cause of the being precisely as such of things, remains the first cause of everything that exists. But whoever speaks of a first cause does not speak of the sole and immediate cause of everything that exists. We cannot, says St. Thomas, distinguish in the reality of a given effect, between what would depend exclusively upon God and what would depend solely upon the secondary cause: “non est distinctum quad est ex causa secunda et ex causa prima, there is no distinction between what proceeds from a secondary cause and from a first cause” (Ia, q. 23, a. 5). Thus the resulting action is attributed entirely to the created agent which acts as a secondary cause, and it is attributed entirely to God who acts as primary cause. It is only evil which, since it is a deficiency, depends exclusively upon the created and defective cause.

Thus Thomism avoids the two opposite extremes of Occasionalism and of Molinism. It excels them, only their negations being rejected, by means of an affirmative of a higher order. The reason for this is because it contains every positive element found in them. Occasionalism suppresses created causality. Molinism views the first and secondary causes as two partial and co-ordinated causes of one effect, which may be likened, says Molina, to two men pulling a boat. This does away with the universal causality of the primary agent. Thomism looks upon the first cause and the secondary as two total causes, one of them being subordinate to the other. Both created causality and the universal causality of the First Cause are affirmed by it. It is neither dualism nor Monism nor Pantheism, but the perfect subordination of the created to the uncreated. There is an abundance of texts in which St. Thomas applies these principles to liberty.

But how are we to conceive of the divine action which produces in this way an effect that is external to God? This action, as was said in connection with creation, is formally immanent and virtually transitive. There is no real distinction between it and the being itself of God (Ia, q. 25, a. 1 ad 3um). It is not formally transitive as is the accidental action of a created agent which is received in the “patient” upon which it operates. But it is said to be virtually transitive since it possesses in an eminent degree all the perfection

of a transitive action to the exclusion of its imperfections, and since it can consequently produce an external effect.

Is there not, however, any created motion which is received in the secondary cause? Is operating or co-operating actual grace merely the uncreated action of God, or is it the salutary act of which this uncreated action is said to be the cause?

St. Thomas replies in the article in which he treats this question ex professo and more at length (De potentia, q. 3, a. 7 ad 7um). He says: "What is produced by God in the secondary cause and in virtue of which it actually acts, is in it in a way intentional and transitory, just as colors are in the air or artistic motion is in the instrument manipulated by the artist." Likewise, in connection with actual grace, he says that it is in the soul "a gratuitous effect on the part of God, a certain movement of the soul . . . inasmuch as man's soul is moved by God to know or will or do something" (Ia IIae, q. 110, a. 2). Finally we read in Contra Gentes (Bk. III, ch. cxlix): "By right of reason and causality the motion of the mover precedes the motion of the thing movable." And in Book III, ch. lxvi, we read: "For the secondary agent receives its complement of power from the primary agent."

Such is the teaching of St. Thomas upon divine motion. We are astonished that certain persons should have sought to see in this merely an extrinsic assistance on the part of God. The texts do not permit of such an interpretation.

Objections of the Molinists to the Thomistic doctrine. With regard to the divine motion, Molina and Suarez thought they must abandon the teaching of St. Thomas. Molina, after presenting this doctrine as given by St. Thomas (Ia, q. 105, a. 5), writes: "There are two difficulties in it for me: (1) I do not see what is in secondary causes, this application by which God moves and applies these causes to act. I think rather that the fire heats without the need of its being moved to act. And I frankly confess that it is very difficult for me to understand this motion and application which St. Thomas requires in secondary causes. (2) There is another difficulty. According to this doctrine, God does not concur immediately (immediatione suppositi) in the action and in the effect of secondary causes, but only through the intermediary of these causes."

Molina could have found the solution of these two difficulties in the passage of the De potentia (q. 3, a. 7 ad 7um) which we have just quoted, in which it is said that there is a direct influx from God upon the entity of the

action and of the effect. But what interests us in his objection is the way he avows that physical premotion is really to be found in the works of St. Thomas. Later on, indeed, many Molinists, in order to avoid being in direct opposition to St. Thomas, claimed that this doctrine had been devised by Bannez, and they called it Bannezianism. Even now several manuals thus designate it.

The Jesuits of Coimhra, like Molina, acknowledge that physical premotion was taught by St. Thomas and his earliest commentators, Capreolus and Ferrariensis. It is a previous motion, a certain influx and motion which is, as it were, an intentional entity of the divine power by which secondary causes are aroused to action. Bellarmine and also Toletus, S.J., speak in the same way. Suarez also admits it, although he gratuitously asserts and maintains that later on St. Thomas made a tacit retractation of it. (Cf. Dummermuth, op. cit., p. 216, note 1.)

Rejecting the divine premotion, Molina and Suarez acknowledge merely a simultaneous divine concurrence. “This general concurrence on God’s part,” says Molina, “is not an influx received in the secondary cause which premoves it to act and to produce its effect, but it is an influx immediately exerted upon the action and the effect along with the secondary cause.” If such be the case, it is no longer true to say that God moves secondary causes to act or applies them to their operations. Quite to the contrary, God and the secondary cause would be two partial and co-ordinated causes. Says Molina: “It is as when two men are pulling a boat. All the motion comes from each of them, although each one is not the total cause of the motion.” Moreover, Molina expressly says: “For us the divine concurrence does not determine the will to consent. On the contrary, it is the particular influx of the free will which determines the divine concurrence in the act, according as the will proceeds to will rather than not to will, willing this thing rather than that.” Secondary causes, far from being determined by God, by their action determine the very exercise of the divine causality, which of itself is indifferent.

But if it be so, then there is something which escapes the universal causality of the first agent; for, in fine, the influx exerted by the secondary cause is really something, this being a perfection for it to pass into act, How can it, of itself alone, give itself this perfection which it did not possess? The greater does not come from the less, this being contrary to the principle of causality and to the principle of the universal causality of the first agent.

Is it by going against the principle of causality that we can refute Determinism? Is it not rather by insisting upon the transcendent efficacy of the first cause that this is accomplished? The Molinists have a dread of the intrinsic efficacy of divine grace; they fear that it does away with liberty. On the contrary, St. Thomas says (Ia, q. 19, a. 8) that if liberty remains intact it is precisely because of the transcendent efficacy of the divine causality which is capable of realizing not only what it wills, but also as to the manner of its being done (either necessarily or freely), which has been willed from all eternity.

In the second place, in the transition to act independently of God, how can the secondary cause determine the divine concurrence both as to its functioning and as to its specification? To determine it in this manner is to perfect it, which would be a reversal of the role assigned to each. God cannot wait for the human being to arouse himself from a state of indifference and perfect his own concurrence. God would thus be under the influence of created causes and would be submitting to their direction.

It would be the same as if we were to admit an indifferent premotion, by which God would determine us merely to an in-deliberate act, in such a manner that the free will would determine itself and the divine motion to produce this or that particular act. Something real would escape God's universal causality. There would be a determination independent of God's supreme determination, which is that of pure Act. A secondary liberty would be found acting independently of the primary liberty. The main thing in the work of salvation, the determining of our salutary act, would not come from the Author of salvation.

They bring forward the objection that the will, already moved by God to will its happiness, is in act and consequently can of itself alone reduce itself to the act which consists in choosing the means. This interpretation claims to be based upon a passage of St. Thomas (Ia IIae, q. 9, a. 6 ad 3um). This passage cannot be understood in this sense. To the objection that, "if God alone moves the will, it can never commit sin," St. Thomas replies: "The will is not only mowed by God but it also moves itself; consequently it can fail." St. Thomas does not say that the will of itself alone reduces itself in act to choose the means.

This answer by no means excludes the divine motion necessary for the act to be a free one, a motion which is, as we have seen, always affirmed by St. Thomas, even for the physical act of sin (Ia IIae, q. 79, a. 2). Moreover,

concerning the manner in which the will is moved by God and moves itself under the influence of the divine motion, this point is clearly explained (Ia IIae, q. 111, a. 2): “There is a first kind of act in which the will is moved and does not move, but in which God is the sole mover; this is called operating grace. There is a second act in which the will both moves and is moved, then the operation is attributed not only to God, but also to the soul, and in this case the grace is said to be co-operating.” Likewise (Ia, q. 63, a. 5) it is stated that the angels could not have sinned in the first instant of their creation, but only in the second.

In its second act the will is not only mobile but also agent; we have here an application of the general principle enunciated by St. Thomas (Ia, q. 105, a. 5), when he discusses this question ex professo: “Where there are several agents in order, the second always acts [in this case the will which moves itself] in virtue of the first: for the first agent moves the second to act. And thus all agents act in virtue of God Himself: and therefore He is the cause of action in every agent.” The secondary cause acts only in virtue of the influence exerted upon it by the first cause. But God is not bound to prevent a naturally defectible agent from failing sometimes.

Neither can we say that premotion is merely required for the transition from the potentiality of choosing to the actual choice of a thing, and that it depends solely upon ourselves whether this choice is accepted or refused (volitio vel nolitio, volition or nolition). If such were the case, our act, inasmuch as it is an entity, would but imperfectly depend upon God, and inasmuch as it is determined, it would not depend upon Him. Now, liberty in us is, like being, the participation of an absolute perfection (perfectio simpliciter simplex, an absolutely simple perfection). Also, since every being as such depends upon the uncreated Being, every secondary liberty as such depends upon the primary liberty; and for the same reason, every created determination depends upon the supreme determination, which is that of pure Act. God would no longer be pure Act if there were a single determination or a single act not dependent upon Him for its existence. Moreover, if in these given circumstances the divine motion is indifferent, then it would be actually inclined to both good and evil; the determination of our salutary act would not come from the Author of salvation. Contrary to the testimony of St. Paul when he says: “Who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received?” (I Cor, 4: 7), it would be man himself who does the distinguishing.

Finally, if we reject premotion in the Thomistic sense, we are led to the theory of middle knowledge, which attributes a passivity to God and which, instead of safeguarding created liberty, implies determinism of the circumstances. (See n. 49, B.)

"Every being, whatever the mode of its being, must be derived from the First Being . . . God is the cause of every action, in so far as it is an action" (Ia IIae, q. 79, a. 2). "Every movement of the will must be caused by the first will which is God's will" (Contra Gentes, Bk. III, ch. lxxxix). "Thou hast wrought all our works for us" (Is. 26: 12).

Conclusion. From this we see that Thomism, which is at the terminus of descendent metaphysics, while explaining the starting-point of ascendent metaphysics, reunites itself to it. This starting-point was twofold: rational and experimental. On the rational side we have the first principles of reason, especially the principle of identity or of contradiction; on the experimental side we have the facts of experience, especially the movement of sensible things and that of our conscious life. From the closeness of approach of the principle of identity (affirmed by Parmenides) to that of movement (affirmed by Heraclitus), has originated the Aristotelian doctrine of potentiality and act, the only one capable of upholding the existence of becoming without denying the real validity of the first principle of reason. This doctrine contains what truth there is in the exaggerated realism of such Intellectualists as Parmenides and the more modern Spinoza, and in the Nominalism of such Empirics as Heraclitus and many modern philosophers. It serves as a guide for the distinction made in every Finite being between potentiality and act, between essence and existence. In virtue of the principles of identity and causality, it leads us necessarily to affirm the existence of a first cause, of a pure act, of one who is Being itself in whom essence and existence are identical. Such a concept of God makes Him essentially distinct from beings in the world, which are composed of essence and existence and which are subjects of motion. It is the terminus of ascendant metaphysics.

The descendent metaphysics is explained by the higher principles, by the supreme Cause and by those facts which served as starting-point for us and especially by the principle of movement. Operation follows being, and the mode of operation follows the mode of being. Therefore He alone who is Being itself can be self-active, and no other being can either exist or act except by reason of its dependence upon God. This doctrine is that of the

creation and the preservation of beings and of the divine motion. Thus we come back to motion and explain it without causing any detriment to the principles of identity and causality.

It has not been sufficiently pointed out how the systems opposed to Thomism in the descendent metaphysics are closely related with those opposed to the ascendant metaphysics of Aristotle. When Aristotle gave us his teaching on potentiality and act, in the first two books of his Physics, and in the ninth book of his Metaphysics, he had against him on the one hand the Megarians who were disciples of Parmenides and who denied potentiality, admitting only act; they were Determinists and the forerunners of Spinoza and Leibniz. On the other hand, Aristotle had against him the disciples of Heraclitus who denied all determination or all act. This sort of contingency has often reappeared among modern philosophers.

Thomism in its descendent metaphysics, when seeking to reconcile the divine with created causality, likewise encounters two opposing systems: on the one hand, Occasionalism, denying created potentiality and created causality; Leibnizian Dynamism, reducing potentiality to a prevented act, which it calls force; and Jansenism, maintaining there is no proximate power of doing good apart from the very performance of the good act. All these ways of viewing the subject recall what the Megarians said, namely, that there is no potentiality as distinct from act. (See Metaphysics, Bk. IX, ch. iii; St. Thomas, lect. 3.)

On the other hand, Thomism encounters Molinism, which is a sort of Indeterminism, in which the absolute exigencies of the principle of causality are no longer safeguarded. Determinism is not answered by imposing a restriction upon the principle of causality; rather the answer is to be found in the concept of potentiality (undetermined being), and in the transcendent efficacy of the first agent, a transcendence which, instead of clashing with created causality, is the cause of it and of the freedom of our acts.

Thomistic metaphysics, whether it reaches God by the ascendant order or the descendent order, is certainly not an Eclecticism, a middle system, favoring a sort of half-way position between the extremes. Its method has nothing in common with Opportunism. The very essence of Thomism is based upon a law which is peculiar to itself. It is therefore superior to the contrary systems which it attacks, and to the intermediate systems which it surpasses. Thus good is superior to evil, by way of excess in the former and

by way of defect in the latter, and it is also above the mediocre. From this point of view, the opposing systems appear true in what they affirm, and false in what they deny. In accordance with the findings of philosophy, Thomism effects a reconciliation between the demands of reason and those of experience, and it ultimately reconciles even divine with created causality, without taking anything away from either. (See infra, ch. iv.)

d) The possibility of miracles (Ia, q. 105, a. 6-8). For the completion of this question of God's omnipotence, it remains for us to say a few words about the possibility of miracles. A miracle, as the word implies, excites admiration and is an effect accomplished by God outside the order of nature. Rationalism aims to reduce a miracle to an extraordinary event that results from natural laws still unknown, but an event which religious feeling regards as a manifestation of divine benevolence toward us. Contrary to this, the Church considers a miracle to be a divine fact which manifestly displays the intervention of divine omnipotence: "factum divinum Dei omnipotentian luculenter commonstrans." St. Thomas explicitly defines "miracle" as an effect produced by God in the world, an effect which is beyond the sphere of action of all created natures. "In this anything is said to be miraculous, in that it is against the order of the whole created nature. But God alone can do this" (Ia, q. 110, a. 4). Thus defined, a miracle is not beyond the ordination of divine Providence, but is merely beyond the sphere of action of all created natures. At any rate, it would not be enough for a miracle to be beyond the causal laws of some particular nature, for otherwise to throw a stone upward would be a miracle, since according to the very law of its nature, the stone must fall. But if the miraculous effect must exceed all created forces, it does not have to exceed all created natures. The resurrection of the body restores supernaturally to the corpse a natural and not a supernatural life, as is that of grace. Only grace, which is a participation of the divine nature, exceeds all created natures. Therefore, in defining miracle, we must speak only of the order of action and not of the order of being or of essence in created natures.

Thus defined, there is an essential difference between a miracle and natural occurrences whether extraordinary or fortuitous; as also between a miracle and either diabolical manifestations or ordinary divine interventions such as the preservation of created things, the creation of souls, and the divine motion required for every agent that it may act. It is also distinct

from the infusion of grace as in the case of conversion (Ia IIae, q. 113, a. 9, 10).

Miracles are divided into three kinds according to the various ways in which they surpass all created powers (Ia, q. 105, a. 8). (1) A miracle may surpass these powers in the very essence of the effect produced, as in the case of the glorious resurrection from the dead. The glorification of the body, reflecting that of the soul, is an effect which by its nature exceeds the power of every created cause. (2) The miraculous effect may surpass all created powers as regards the subject in which it is produced, and not as regards its essence, as when these powers are able to produce it in another subject. Thus nature is able to produce life, but not in a corpse. The raising of a person to life and the cure of a person incurably blind, are miracles of this class. (3) The miraculous effect may surpass all created powers merely according to the mode in which it is produced. Of this kind are the instantaneous cure of a disease which cannot be cured by natural means except after some time, or again the immediate changing of water into wine.

The possibility of miracles when so defined, is denied by those who reject God's existence or His providence or His liberty or His omnipotence. To prove this possibility, it does not suffice to appeal to His omnipotence viewed apart from His liberty, for a miracle is the effect of an exceptional intervention of God's liberty in the world. And Spinoza who, though directly denying God's omnipotence, rejected His liberty, must deny the possibility of miracles. In fact, if God acted externally, always according to a necessity of nature, He could produce effects which surpass created powers (such as creation, preservation, concurrence, or ordinary motion), but He would always produce them in the same manner, just as the vital principle in plants always produce in the same way the vital phenomena which are superior to the physico-chemical phenomena. St. Thomas, too, has recourse formally to the divine liberty in proving the possibility of miracles (Ia, q. 105, a. 6).

His proof may be reduced to the following demonstration. A free cause, upon which depends the application of hypothetically necessary laws and which is not restricted to laws of a certain order, can act externally. Now, God is a free and omnipotent cause, upon which depends the application of all hypothetically necessary laws which constitute the natural order of action of created agents, and the divine liberty is not restricted to this order. Therefore this cause can act externally or perform miracles.

The major of this demonstration is made clear by examples and by an analysis of the concepts.

A current example is the following: a man is free to throw a stone up in the air, and this is a suspension of the hypothetically necessary law that the stone left to itself will fall to the surface of the earth, tending toward its center. Likewise the artist produces an artistic effect beyond the natural power of the instrument which he uses. The musician elevates and animates, so to speak, the harp which he holds in his hands; manipulated by another, whatever effect this instrument would produce, there would be nothing artistic about it. Moreover, if the musician is an artist of genius, he can act beyond and above the ordinary laws of his art; then he produces a work which is not only beautiful but sublime and, as it were, a miracle in the order of art. By this fortunate exception the ordinary laws of art are neither destroyed nor contested. The only thing is that their application has been suspended.

This is also made evident by an analysis of the concepts implied in the major of our proof. If, indeed, the application of the hypothetically necessary laws depends upon a free cause, this cause enjoys in this respect liberty of action. If, besides this, it is not restricted to this order of laws, it thus enjoys liberty of specification. Therefore it can, not only suspend the action of natural laws, but act positively outside of them.

The minor of our demonstration is comprised of two parts. Beginning with the second part, that referring to the world, which is the object of our sense experience, we shall arrive at the first, which relates to divine liberty.

The order of action of all created natures is established by hypothetically necessary laws. Hypothetical necessity is that which is based upon the extrinsic cause of a thing (efficient and final causes), in opposition to absolute necessity, which is based upon the intrinsic causes (formal and material causes). Now, the order of action of all created natures is established evidently by causal laws which have reference to efficient causality. Therefore the order of action of all created natures is established by laws which are hypothetically necessary.

For a complete understanding of this, it suffices to contrast absolute with hypothetical necessity. Absolute necessity is based upon the intrinsic causes or upon the very nature of a thing. Thus it is that a triangle of necessity has its three angles equal to two right angles by reason of its very nature. And whatever Descartes may have said, not even by performing a miracle can

God make a triangle the three angles of which would not equal two right angles; for in that case the triangle would be at the same time a triangle and not a triangle. Spinoza's error consisted in trying to reduce the physical laws to mathematical laws. This necessarily led him to deny the possibility of miracles. God cannot act outside of absolutely necessary laws, such as mathematical and metaphysical laws, which are based intrinsically upon the very natures of things. On the contrary, hypothetical necessity is based upon the extrinsic causes of things. Granted that a certain agent may act, according to the natural conditions it produces of necessity a certain effect. Thus it is that fire, if it acts, burns, and does not chill. But this hypothetical law does not prevent the action from being arrested or modified by a higher law. So in reference to the final cause, man must have two eyes in order to see well. However, he does not cease to be a man if he becomes blind in one eye or in both eyes. (See St. Thomas, Met. Arist., Bk. V, ch. 5, lect. 6; and Ia, q. 19, a. 3.)

Is the order of action of all created natures established by hypothetically necessary laws? The answer is evident: since it is an order of action, it is established by causal laws which have reference to efficient causality and which express the mode of action of created agents. Such a natural agent, if it acts, necessarily produces this effect, but that does not exclude the possibility of the intervention of a higher agent which arrests or modifies the action of the first. We may divide natural laws into positive and negative. The former express what created nature can do if left to itself. These hypothetical laws do not exclude the intervention of a higher agent. Negative laws express what created nature, if left to itself, cannot do; for instance, nature cannot raise a dead man to life; but this hypothetical law does not make the resurrection of one from the dead absolutely impossible. Why could not God do what created powers are unable to effect?

If God intervenes by working a miracle, these hypothetically necessary laws are not destroyed nor in any way impaired. It is only their application which is suspended by a fortunate exception which proves the rule. If only God can raise a dead person to life, this proves, moreover, that nature cannot do so; and it follows that a corpse naturally putrifies. Even if God prevents the action of fire, the fire retains its natural power to burn. It is only the exercise of the power that is suspended.

The second part of the minor of our proof has reference to divine liberty. God is a free and omnipotent cause upon which depends the application of

all the hypothetically necessary laws of the natural order and which is not restricted to this order.

We have already established the fact that God is free with regard to created good things, which cannot increase His infinite happiness. Therefore He is free to create and choose such or such a world rather than a certain other. He could not have created better, that is, with more wisdom, but He could have made a better world. Thus the animal has not its parts arranged better than those of the plant, but it is a better or more perfect being. There is always an infinite difference between a creature, however perfect it may be, and the infinite goodness that it reflects; it could not exhaust the divine omnipotence.

The application of all hypothetically necessary laws is evidently dependent upon the divine liberty. For the application of these laws presupposes the presence of the action of created agents. Now, the action of every created agent depends upon the free action of the first cause, as every natural end is subordinate to the ultimate end willed by God. As the action of our hand depends upon that of our liberty, so the action of created causes depends upon that of the divine liberty.

Therefore God can act outside of and above the order of action of all created nature; He can work miracles. In an unseen manner He can prevent a natural action, for instance, that of fire. He can also produce an effect which surpasses all created powers either as to its essence (the glorification of the body), or as to the subject in which it is realized (the non-glorious resurrection), or as to the mode in which it is produced (the sudden change of water into wine).

There must be, it is true, a sufficient motive for God thus to intervene outside the natural laws. But if He, the pure Spirit, wills to manifest Himself to our souls held captive by the senses, if He wills to reveal to us a truth of salvation or the sanctity of one of His servants who will be a model for us in the practice of virtues, is not this more than a sufficient motive? All bodies are subordinated to the spirit, and the created spirit has for its end to know God. If God wills to reveal Himself to us, why could He not suspend for a moment the course of things in the sensible order? In comparison with a soul, all bodies taken together count for nothing. (See Contra Gentes, Bk. III, ch. xcix, in fine.)

Such is the Thomistic and classical demonstration of the possibility of miracles. By means of the principles we have just stated, it would be easy to

solve the objections, which can readily be shown not to differ from those examined by St. Thomas in the Summa (Ia, q. 105, a. 6), and more at length in his De potentia (q. 6, a. 1).

As to the discernibility of miracles, the principles expounded in the beginning of the preceding chapter enable us to answer the current objection that, before we can affirm that an effect is by its nature miraculous or that it surpasses all created powers, we should have to know all these powers, whereas many of them remain unknown to us.

In order to discern the miraculous nature of an effect, it is not necessary for us to know all that nature can do; it suffices for us to know what it cannot do. And that we know, because we know the principal effects which belong properly to God.

It is metaphysically certain that God alone can produce, and consequently immediately modify, the very being of creatures: prime matter, the human soul, the intellect, and the will. Now these immediate modifications of being or of matter are necessarily found in such great miracles as the resurrection, the sudden change of water into wine, the multiplication of the loaves. Therefore only God can be the author of these extraordinary effects.

For a full understanding of this it suffices to apply these principles to each of these facts.

Only God, who can produce by way of creation both matter and the human soul, can reunite them substantially without the accidental dispositions which are the prerequisites of generation (De potentia, q. 6, a. 7 ad 4um).

Only God who can produce matter, can immediately transform it, instantaneously change, for instance, water into wine, without predisposing accidental alterations, or He alone can multiply loaves of bread by an instantaneous change of the same kind (IIIa, q. 44, a. 4 ad 4um). On the other hand, a created agent can only mediately transform matter, by means of the accidental modifications it is able to produce in matter (Ia, q. 110, a. 2, 3, 4).

If we consider not so much the nature of the extraordinary effects but their existence, this latter is an object of physical certitude, since these are effects of the sensible order. Experience enables us to discern a true from a fictitious resurrection. The examination of the moral and religious circumstances which precede, accompany, and follow these effects, affords a confirmation which at times is indispensable for certain miracles. For

instance, in the case of many cures, it would be difficult to prove metaphysically that God alone can produce them.

If a miracle, thus verified, has been given as a sign of a divine revelation, this revelation cannot be false, for God by an exceptional intervention of His liberty and omnipotence would then be confirming a lie, and He would be leading us invincibly into error. This is an absurdity, for He who is Truth itself would cease to be so.

Finally, omnipotence is not limited to miracles of the sensible order. Revelation teaches us that this omnipotence not only can in a supernatural manner restore the natural life to one who is dead, but that it can produce in our soul a life entirely supernatural, which is that of grace. The least degree of grace is of more value than all miracles and all created natures combined, because it is a participation of the intimate life of God. It remains for us to say a few words about this intimate life of God, so that we may see the harmony between what reason can find out about the First Cause and what revelation alone is able to teach us about it.

53) The Intimate Life of God: mystery of the Holy Trinity.

We can prove by reason that there is life in God; only revelation can make known to us the profound mystery of the divine life, the mystery of the Trinity. Aristotle has shown that, although God is absolutely immutable, it is fitting for Him to have life.

In fact, the higher life does not call for motion. Motion, which presupposes imperfection and potentiality, is but an imperfection of created life which does not possess all at once the plenitude that it must have; this is especially so of that material life which is incessantly changing because it is constantly dying (assimilated and disassimilated motion).

What is absolutely essential to a living being, says St. Thomas (Ia, q. 18, a. 1, 3), is for it to have in itself the principle of its action, which is immanence of action; and the nearer one approaches to God, the greater is the increase of this immanence. A stone is non-living, for it has not in itself the principle of its action. The plant lives because it moves itself inasmuch as it sustains, develops, and reproduces itself, but of itself it does not determine either the form or the end of these movements. This form and this end are assigned to it by the author of its nature. An animal has a higher form of life, because it perceives by the senses the various objects toward which it can tend; and the more perfect are the senses of an animal, the more vitality it has, because it can so much the better vary its action. Life in

man is of a still higher kind, because he knows not only the objects which can specify his various movements, but also the reason of the end and is able to consider an end and see in this end the raison d'être of certain means which he determines for himself. Thus he is master of his action in so far as he determines it as regards its form and end. However, the human intellect needs to be moved objectively by an external truth, for it is not the supreme Being. The human will has as its ultimate end one that is external, for it is not itself the supreme Good, and both faculties in the order of efficient causes need to be premoved by the First Cause. It is the self-subsisting Being who is in the highest degree living, because He possesses so completely in Himself all the principles (formal, final, and efficient) of His action, that this action is His own self. It is not a case of adherence to an external truth, it is Truth itself as Thought ever in act, ever living, the Good as eternal Love. Therefore God is not only living, He is Life.

Aristotle said of pure Act: "Life also belongs to God, for the actuality of thought is life, and God is that actuality. God's self-dependent actuality is life most good and eternal: ζώον ἀΐδιον ἄριστον. We say also that God is a living being, eternal, perfect. Life eternal, therefore, belongs to God, for this is God." (Met., Bk. XII, ch. vii.)

When we say that God is immutable, we do not mean that He is therefore inert. We affirm, on the contrary, that as He is plenitude of being or pure act, He is essentially activity itself and has no need of transition to act that He may act.

It is solely by revelation that the intimate life of God can be made known to us. Reason, indeed, attains to a knowledge of God only by means of His perfections reflected in creatures, and what these perfections can tell reason about God is only what He possesses in common with creatures. What properly constitutes Him is naturally knowable by us merely in a negative way, as when we say that He is the non-finite Being, or in a relative way, as when we say that He is the supreme Being or the sovereign Good. It is only divine revelation that can positively make known to us what properly constitutes the Deity.

It would be vain for us to try to define solely by physicochemical laws what properly belongs to the vital phenomena of plant life, or to reduce the sensation of animal life to these latter phenomena. It would also be impossible to explain the proper activity of the intellect solely by knowledge of sense perception. For the same reason it is useless to seek to

know definitely by means of creatures the intimate Life of the Deity. We must distinguish, as constituting so many irreducible orders, between the mineral, vegetable, animal, and human kingdoms, and between these and the kingdom of God or the essentially supernatural order which is infinitely above all the rest.

Only revelation can make known to us the mysteries of the supernatural order. First it presents them to us obscurely when it appeals to our faith; afterwards, it will show them more clearly to us when we are raised to the beatific vision. Here on earth God alone must be our master, and it is the rule that the disciple must believe what the master says before he arrives at the certainty of evidence.

Revelation has made known to us the mystery of the intimate life of God by means of a formula that Catholics repeat several times a day when making the sign of the cross. It is the formula of Baptism by which we are made Christians. Jesus said: “Going therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost” (Matt. 28: 19).

A superficial consideration of the mystery of the Holy Trinity makes us ask ourselves in what way this incomprehensible formula bears upon our life: only one God in three persons. What difference would it make in our life if there were but one person in God?

The mysteries of the Incarnation and the Redemption, however supernatural they may be, answer deep-felt needs in our nature. They reveal God’s infinite love for us, and we have much need of feeling that we are loved by God and of hoping in Him. But how can the mystery of the Trinity enrich our faith, arouse our hope, increase our charity?

Rationalism at times reduces this dogma to a mere symbol of a truth of the natural order. Hegel in his atheistic Evolutionism considers this dogma as the fundamental law of the evolution of the universal spirit: thesis, antithesis, synthesis, to which correspond subject, object, and their union. But as a general rule Rationalism does not deign even for one moment to consider the Trinity, claiming to find in it a manifest contradiction, in that it is a negation of the unity of God and a relic of Polytheism, as if God were under the same aspect both triune and one. On the contrary, faith affirms that He is absolutely one by nature, that the divine nature is neither multiplied nor divided, and that there exist three divine persons who

possess this indivisible nature. Thus the three angles of a triangle are really distinct and yet they are contained in the same plane.

A number of Protestants assign to the mystery of the Trinity but an indirect importance, by reason of its connection with the dogmas of the Incarnation in its redemptive aspect, and of the mission of the Holy Ghost, which presuppose three persons in God. It is only for guarding against any contradiction in the essential beliefs of Christianity, they say, that we must admit the mystery of the Trinity, which of itself is of no importance to us.

On the contrary, in the eyes of the Church, if this single mystery is a safeguard against contradiction in the other mysteries, this is so because it is their supreme principle, the very center of the whole faith, having for its primary object the intimate life of God. If this supreme mystery were to become evident for us, as it is for the blessed in heaven, then all the other mysteries would be illumined from this sublime source. This mystery is the one toward which all the truths of the faith converge, the one toward which, in this mortal life, the saints in their contemplation aspire with increasing ardor.

To make evident the importance of this mystery, we will show: (1) that the revelation of the Holy Trinity confirms our natural knowledge of God and raises it to a higher plane by manifesting the infinite fecundity of the divine nature; (2) that it proposes to us the highest object of faith and of supernatural contemplation, by manifesting the intimate life of God, or the highest degree of both the intellectual life and the life of charity.

1) Reason alone suffices to make known to us God’s existence and His principal attributes, such as goodness, life, wisdom, liberty, sanctity; but the intimate reconciliation of all these divine perfections remains very obscure for us.

How can there be life in unity and in absolute immutability, which seems to denote sterility? Does not life mean fecundity? If we answer that the divine fecundity is manifested by creation, a new difficulty arises. If the divine life is of necessity fecund, then creation cannot be a free act. How can the creative act be a free one? If God is infinitely good, He must of necessity be diffusive of Himself. No being which reaches perfection can be content to remain within itself in a sterile state. Fire gives out heat, the mind having come into possession of truth seeks to communicate this to others. If God were to remain shut up within Himself in a sterile state, He would be neither good nor wise, say the Pantheists. God is essentially diffusive of

Himself; the universe is, as it were, the very life of God communicated externally, and creation is therefore a necessary act. This doctrine, which excludes liberty, leads us to see something divine in the worst things and in the most perverse souls.

The Church proclaims emphatically that the creative act is absolutely free. God could have chosen not to create, precisely because He is already infinitely good in Himself, and because creation cannot increase His infinite perfection. Mortal beings feel the need of reproducing themselves, so as to perpetuate themselves and leave after them a new being that continues them. But God is eternal.

In this manner theology explains the freedom of the creative act. Yet it remains obscure. Fecundity is not merely a remedy for this transitory life of mortal beings; it is a perfection, and good naturally tends to communicate itself to others. If God had not created, how would this principle be verified in Him, namely, that it is the characteristic of good to be diffusive of itself and to give itself to others? It would seem that an infinite being must have infinite fecundity, which cannot be manifested by the creation of beings that are necessarily finite.

This obscurity is dispelled by the light thrown upon it from the dogma of the Trinity. This supreme diffusiveness of self, this infinite fecundity which must be the property of the sovereign Good, these God would possess even if He had not created. To explain the meaning of this mystery, without in any way claiming to demonstrate it, theology appropriates this principle which has been urged against it: that good is naturally diffusive of itself, that goodness essentially tends to communicate itself. Theology states the principle with exactness, develops it, and applies it to the Infinite Being.

A scientific exposition of revelation tells us in the words of St. Thomas that goodness is not only by nature diffusive of itself, but the more perfect it is, the more abundantly and intimately it communicates itself, and the more also what proceeds from it remains closely united to it. With the Angelic Doctor as our guide, let us contemplate the truth of this principle, going through the grades of beings, starting from the inanimate, until we reach God.

The sun gives out light and heat that is beneficent, and these separate from it. Plants or animals, having reached their full growth, generate a new being. This new being leaves them and takes their place when they die. In man there is a combination of both material and spiritual fecundity. The

artist who has become a master in his art, conceives in his mind a masterpiece such as a picture or a symphony. This masterpiece thus conceived and begotten is, as it were, the offspring of his mind; he cannot help loving it and he seeks his utmost to make it a reality. But this work of art is external to the thought which gave birth to it, and is not, like the thought, something vital. It is very inferior to it. The artist cannot completely realize his inmost inspiration. It is a spiritual fecundity of a very imperfect kind which does not deserve to be called generation.

A great scholar, too, through long labors of spiritual childbirth, succeeds in conceiving, in revealing the laws of nature, which sometimes are named after him. But once his thought is expressed in words, it is separated from him and the written formula is but a faint reminder of the intuitive genius that the thought seeks to express. If this scholar writes about the human soul, how cold and poor his pages are, as compared with the spiritual reality they seek to reveal. The master, it is true, can leave his writings after him, and he can also train disciples. He imparts his knowledge to them and endeavors to impart something more intimate, his spirit. Seldom does he attain this end completely. A day comes when the disciples, having learned all they can from the master, leave him and go their way. It is only great intellects that have the profound and intimate mode of operation which causes their disciples to remain attached to them. The more perfect a being is, the more it gives of its inmost self and the more closely united to it is that which proceeds from it.

This law is verified in the virtuous and especially in the apostolic man who gives to others the best that is in him, his love. It is his whole soul that he wishes to bestow on others. So, too, a friend places at his friend’s disposal all his property, all his faculties; it is the whole of his being that he wants to give, retaining nothing for himself, in order that he and his friend may become but one being, one mind, one will. The more perfect a being is, the more it gives of its inmost self. What must be the fecundity of the supremely perfect Being? He who is the sovereign Good, the plenitude of being, communicates Himself as fully and as intimately as it is possible for Him to do so, which means in an infinite way. He cannot generate in a material way since He is pure spirit. But is there not in Him a spiritual generation which more than anything else is entitled to be called generation?

In the spiritual order God is not content, after the manner of an artist, to reproduce His divine ideas in the world of corporeal beings. To make us His disciples, it is not enough for Him, as it is for the master, that He should communicate His ideas to us. It is not even enough for Him to have us share in His love. The sovereign Good must give fully something still more profound than His ideas and His love. For Him to be supremely diffusive of Himself He must give His intimate life, His very nature, in the ineffable mystery of His divine Paternity. “Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee” (Ps. 2: 7).

God gives His very nature. He generates not because of the need of substituting a new life for one which must end. He generates because of the superabundance of His infinite fecundity. It is the most absolute diffusiveness of Himself. It is also the most perfect intimacy. He does not generate, as man does, by producing a new being, external to Himself and separated from Him. In generating, He does not multiply His nature. He communicates the whole of His nature without either loss or division or multiplication of it, somewhat as we communicate an idea or a spiritual gift. It is truly the whole of Himself that He gives to His Son, reserving for Himself only His relation of Paternity. From the Father and the Son proceeds the Spirit of love who constitutes the bond of union between them. The three are one and the same God, since the divine nature is not multiplied. It is God communicating Himself in the most intimate manner, and with the most absolute diffusiveness of Himself.

The more perfect a being is, the more completely it communicates itself, and the more that which proceeds from it remains intimately united with it.

Even before God had created, it would have been true to say of Him, that the divine goodness is infinitely communicative. The sovereign Good has given Himself, and so completely and intimately that this other partial and external giving of Himself, which is creation, is infinitely inferior. This latter cannot add any necessary perfection to the divine goodness and remains therefore an absolutely free act.

It is thus that the dogma of the Trinity, in spite of its obscurity, confirms what we are already able to know in a natural way about God, His goodness, His life, and the liberty of the creative act.

2) The revelation of the mystery of the Trinity not only confirms our natural knowledge of God, but it proposes to us the highest object of faith

and contemplation, by manifesting to us the intimate life of God and the life both of the intellect and of charity, each in the highest degree.

Intellectual life in the case of us poor mortals, since our mind is united with the body, is something so imperfect, so deplorable at certain times, that many have despaired of reason. Great intellects remain for years in the quest of truth, and succeed passably in acquiring certain very imperfect ideas about the problems which interest us most, ideas partly erroneous, scarcely ever decisive, ideas which we must always reconsider. Our interior locution is slow in its formation; it is also fragmentary to an extraordinary degree. Our petty ideas are so numerous that sometimes they are an inextricable jumble in which we become lost. We do not succeed in classifying them, in grading them, so as to embrace them in one glance of the intellect. They are present to us as though not present; often we have eyes that we may not see, an intelligence that we may not understand. Truth, goodness, justice, charity, are words of very deep meaning, frequently uttered by us, but we have scarcely an idea of the infinite reality contained in them. We ourselves are possessed of intelligence, and we know so little as to what constitutes an intelligence.

On the other hand, revelation tells us that in God there is an eternal and unique Word, generated once and forever by the divine intellect of the Father. “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God” (John 1: 1). This Word is a perfect idea from the first and single instant of eternity, a definite idea, absolutely true, expressing adequately the reality of God and the infinite participations of which the Deity is capable. “The brightness of eternal light, and the unspotted mirror of God’s majesty” (Wisdom 7: 26). This Word, too, is “the brightness of His glory and the figure of His substance” (Heb. 1: 3).

This eternal Word is not divided; He is unique and absolutely simple. In Him the Father’s intelligence embraces, in one glance, His own intellect and all possible worlds, all natures and all supernatural gifts conceivable. The Father’s intellect sees in the Word the final answer to the problems that philosophy and theology do not even succeed in positing. In this unique Word the Father’s intelligence also actually knows the universe even in the least details, and our own selves even to the most delicate shades of our physical, intellectual, and moral temperament. This intellect beholds in the Word the ultimate mysteries as yet hidden from the blessed: our predestination and the exact number of the elect. The uncreated infinite

Being and the unlimited number of our acts which will be realized in eternity, all these truths this intellect embraces in a single glance.

But there is another and more profound difference between our word and that of God. Our word, our interior locution, does not suffice for our intellectual life. We cannot converse with it, for the word is but an accident of our intelligence, a mode of our mind. Our conception is very imperfect. It does not succeed in generating spiritually something like to ourselves. If we speak to our word, we get no response from it. We are alone with our thoughts. We also have need of communing with other intelligences, of associating the weakness of our intellect with that of another, for the purpose of endeavoring to throw more light, if possible, upon the infinite mystery of those things which interest us most. Here new difficulties arise. How are we to communicate to another person the inmost meaning of our thought which is often in itself somewhat obscure and does not reach the stage of full development? At times we are separated from those who, like us, are sincerely seeking the truth, from those we love, by a thick wall composed of all manner of misunderstanding.

Revelation, on the contrary, tells us that the divine Idea or the Word is not an accident, a simple mode of the divine intelligence. Like it, the Word must be substantial and consequently vital and intelligent as the divine intelligence is. Moreover, the Word is a person, because a person is an intellectual substance conscious of itself. Such is the perfect intellectual conception which is literally a spiritual generation, the Father generating spiritually one like to Himself in the absolutely indivisible unity of the divine nature.

We cannot converse with our thoughts. The Father can converse with His Word, receive an answer from Him, be comprehended by Him as He comprehends Him. Our thought leaves us isolated. God the Father is no longer alone, having His Word.

In order to get away from our sterile isolation we are forced to enter into relationship with other intelligences, and there are many obstacles separating us from them. The intelligence both of the Father and of the Word not only are interpenetrative in a most absolute manner, but they are the same indivisible intelligence, the same act of the mind vital with the same truth. Such is the supreme degree of the intellectual life. It consists of two completely spiritual persons who live by the same truth, by one and the same act of the mind. The two persons are fully accessible to each other,

and there is opposition between them only because they are mutually related to each other. The two persons essentially refer to each other, and their whole personality consists precisely in a subsistent and incommunicable relation of the one to the other. Their life is not at all one of solitude but of communicativeness in the highest degree.

But God is not only truth and intelligence, He is also goodness and love. The intimate life of God is the life of charity in its highest degree and the eminent exemplar of this life,

If we look at this life of charity in ourselves, we often find it arrested, deadened by selfishness; pride, which brings about a profound isolation in souls, separates them and at times is the cause of their spiritual death. The saints consoled themselves concerning these separations, by thinking of the intimate life of God. What do persecutions and hatreds amount to, said St. Hilary? They cannot disturb the intimacy of the divine persons, nor separate them.

The Father, indeed, does not merely contemplate in His Word the plenitude of truth contained in Him; He also loves the infinite goodness expressed by Him. Reciprocally, the substantial Word, living and intelligent, is not an intelligence which stops at the mere contemplation of the Father who generates Him. The Father is infinitely good, and the Word loves Him as He is loved by the Father. The intelligence which perceives the good and does not cause us to love it, is an accursed intelligence. “He who does not love,” that is St. Theresa’s definition of the devil. The Word, therefore, breathes forth love, “Verbum spirat amorem.” This love that the Word has for the Father is one and the same indivisible act with the love which the Father has for the Word. This love is not only mutual but identical. This ineffable friendship of the first two persons has a terminus, just as the thought has. This terminus of their love is substantial, like the Word which is the terminus of the Father’s conception. This terminus is living, intelligent, loving, like the Word, and is, therefore, like Him, a person, the spirit of the first two persons, the bond between them, and He is called the Holy Spirit.

As the Father can converse with His Word, so they both can converse with the Spirit of love. It is the supreme type of the life of charity. It consists of three totally spiritual persons who live by the same truth, by one and the same act of the mind; three persons who live by the same good, by one and the same act of love. Where do we find here the least trace of

egotism? The ego is no more than a subsistent relation in respect of the one loved; He appropriates nothing more to Himself. The Father gives the whole of His nature to His Son, and the Father and the Son communicate the same to the Holy Spirit. It is only by His relation of paternity that the Father differs from the Son, and the Son differs from the Father only by His relation of sonship; and what causes them to differ, unites them by referring them essentially the one to the other The Holy Ghost does not differ from the other two persons except in that He proceeds from them. Apart from the mutual relations of opposition between the persons, everything else is common and indivisible between them. The Father has nothing belonging peculiarly to Himself except His paternity which is a subsistent relation with regard to His Son. The Son has nothing belonging peculiarly to Himself except His filiation, and the Holy Spirit has only His procession which belongs properly to Him. Where do we find here the least trace of egotism? The whole egotism of the Father consists in His giving His infinitely perfect nature to His Son, and retaining nothing for Himself except His relationship of paternity by which He is still essentially related to His Son. The whole egotism of the Son and that of the Holy Ghost consist in being related to each other and to the Father from whom they proceed. These three divine persons essentially related to each other constitute the eminent exemplar of the life of charity. “All My things are Thine and Thine are Mine” (John 17: 10). We find vestiges of the Trinity even in sensible things. And there is in our soul, above all when it has been raised to the supernatural order, not only a vestige but an image of the Trinity.

Grace is a participation in us of the divine nature or of the intimate life of God. It follows that in the life of grace there is contained a reflection of the relations in the Trinity. By grace we are “born of God,” says St. John (1: 13), and this spiritual birth bears a faint resemblance to the eternal generation of the Son. Our adoptive sonship is in its supernatural reality a reflection of the sonship of the Word. God has not communicated to us the whole of His nature, but a participation of it. And as the Word reverts to His Father in order to love Him, so the main duty of all “those who are born of God” by grace, is to love God, and their charity bears a faint resemblance to the Spirit of love who unites the Father and the Son.

The more this life of grace increases in the soul, the more there appears in it the image of the Trinity. Our soul is an image of the Trinity by reason

of its being a spiritual substance, and because of the two faculties, intellect and will, which proceed from it. The image becomes the more distinct in proportion as our soul lives more in accordance with the thought and the love of God. The unitive life of a sanctified soul, that almost continuous union with God, constitutes in this world the most perfect image of the Trinity. It is supreme spiritual fecundity and perfect intimacy. In this soul God the Father is present together with the Word and the Spirit of love. In the obscurity of faith, the soul which has been supernaturalized is made conformable by the Holy Spirit, to the image of the Word who is the splendor of the Father. It is a child of God before being finally admitted to enjoy Him in the glory of the beatific vision. “And the glory which Thou hast given me, I have given to them: that they may be one, as we are one” (John 17: 22).

Such is the harmony prevailing between this incomprehensible mystery and the truths which our reason is able of itself to discover. We must not think, as the Semi-Rationalists and Rosmini did, that this harmony can attain the force of a demonstration. Rosmini was condemned for claiming that an indirect demonstration of the Trinity can be given, and for upholding that reality, ideality, and morality in God can be conceived only as persons (Denzinger, nn. 1915, 1916). The Vatican Council states precisely what reason can and cannot do (Denzinger, n. 1796). Illumined by faith, reason can, indeed, says the Council, acquire a certain and very beneficial knowledge of the supernatural mysteries; that is the province of theology. But it can never succeed in demonstrating these mysteries, nor in tracing them back to rational principles: for the mysteries of the intimate life of God are of another order, entirely supernatural.

We must now return to the divine perfections which can be known by the natural power of reason. We deduced them successively from the idea of the self-subsisting Being. It remains for us to consider them in their ensemble, so as to see how they can be reconciled. Agnosticism claims, indeed, that our conclusion is of no value, because it ends in positing perfections which are irreconcilable with one another. In other words it ends in antinomies. The rest of this book will be concerned with the presentation and solution of these antinomies.

CHAPTER III

RECONCILIATION OF THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES: THEIR FORMAL EXISTENCE AND THEIR IDENTIFICATION IN THE EMINENCE OF THE DEITY

ARTICLE I

THE APPARENT ANTINOMIES

Having determined (nn. 42-44) what finally constitutes the divine nature, and having deduced the divine attributes, we must solve the antinomies which Agnosticism brings against us, when it declares that the divine attributes cannot be reconciled with one another.

It does not seem possible that the absolute perfections can be predicated formally of God, so the Agnostics say, without at once causing contradictions to arise: first of all the contradiction of the general antinomy of the one and the multiple. The multiplicity of the absolute perfections predicated of God not only virtually, inasmuch as He can produce them, but formally, inasmuch as He possesses them, seems to destroy the divine simplicity, or stated inversely, seems to be destroyed by this multiplicity.

In other words, if God is absolutely simple, it cannot be said of Him that He is formally intelligent, formally free, for there would be in Him a plurality of formalities. We must be content to say that He is virtually intelligent, virtually free, that is, He is able to produce intelligence and freedom in us. But, as He can produce bodies, He is for the same reason corporeal. Thus the divine simplicity seems to lead to Agnosticism. We can no longer affirm anything formally of God; or, if we wish to avoid Agnosticism, we must deny, so it seems, the absolute simplicity of the Deity.

To this basic antinomy others are added, especially those refering to freedom. How can we reconcile: (1) freedom in God according to His good pleasure, which seems to be something quite arbitrary, with His infinite wisdom? (2) Does not God's free act conflict with His immutability, and how is it this act does not posit in God something contingent and subject to defect, which could not belong to Him? (3) How are we to reconcile human free will with God's universal causality? (4) This same causality and the presence of moral evil; the permission of evil in view of God's supreme goodness and omnipotence; His avenging justice and infinite mercy; how are these to be reconciled?

Finally, there are other antinomies not so apparent, such as that of the divine simplicity and the duality of subject and object which are essential for knowledge. Then there is the antinomy of God's absolute immutability and the divine life, which seem to imply a becoming.

We shall return only by way of brief comment to the solution of these last two antinomies, since we dealt fully with them when we were discussing the divine wisdom and life (nn. 49a, 53).

The special antinomies which concern liberty, we will treat at length in chapter four. But first it is expedient for us to examine the fundamental antinomy advanced against us. In the recent writings on this subject the doctrine of St. Thomas has been more or less misrepresented and made beyond measure to agree with that of Maimonides. We will show that the absolute perfections, instead of being mutually destructive in becoming identified in the eminence of the Deity, necessarily tend toward this identification; and it is the only way by which they can exist in their pure state. Thus infinite mercy and justice, far from destroying each other in becoming united in the Passion of our Lord, have found in this very union the realization of their supreme needs and the highest degree of their manifestation. Thus the most ardent charity and the most uncompromising doctrine, do not destroy each other by being united in the life of the Catholic Church; in fact, they can subsist only by means of this union. Separated from each other, they die and are no more than two corpses in a state of decomposition. On the one hand, we have humanitarian liberalism with its false serenity, and, on the other hand, fanaticism with its false zeal. The questions of life which cause the greatest divisions between persons would be clarified by a very pure and prominent light, if we gave more consideration to the fact that in God the absolute perfections, those between

which there seems to be the most opposition, far from destroying each other by becoming identified in the Deity, cannot exist in their pure state except by means of this identification. It is their formal distinction that would destroy them, leaving nothing else in their place but false absolutes, false divine attributes, false divine virtues which would become so many false gods. A cumulus of perfections cannot constitute perfection itself.

An eminent master of the spiritual life says: “Concerning God’s moral attributes, it is easy to be mistaken, especially concerning those which are, as it were, at the opposite poles of human morality: holiness and justice, on the one hand; goodness, love, and mercy, on the other. An error in this matter may have the most disastrous consequences as far as conduct and salvation are concerned.”

The solution of the general antinomy brought against us will cast a new light on the relations between the divine attributes, especially on the relations between intelligence and will, immutability and liberty, and between justice and mercy.

That we may proceed in an orderly manner in this first article, we will give our attention: (1) to the general antinomy which is one of the principal objections of the Agnostics; (2) to the indirect solution of this antinomy and to the direct cause of the mystery. In the second article we will give the explanation concerning the philosophical mystery that underlies the identification of the absolute perfections in God. Finally, in the next chapter we will take up the solution of the special antinomies concerning liberty.

54) The General Antinomy

This so-called antinomy which is brought up so much against us by modern Agnostics has been presented by St. Thomas in various ways under the form of objections. They are the objections of Maimonides and the Nominalists of the Middle Ages. For instance, in the Theological Summa (Ia, q. 13, a. 4), the first objection is as follows: “It seems that the divine names are synonymous and that there is only a nominal distinction between them, since they express absolutely the same reality.” Similarly the second objection reads: “If it be said these names signify one and the same thing in reality, but differ in idea, it can be objected that an idea to which no reality corresponds is a vain notion. Therefore, if these ideas attributed to God are many, and the divine reality is one absolutely, it seems also that all these ideas are vain notions,” or at least they do not signify a perfection which is formally in God. The third objection is still more insistent: “God is

supremely one. Now a thing which is one in reality and in idea (re et ratione), is more one than what is one in reality and many in idea (re et non ratione). Therefore the names applied to God do not signify different ideas."

To give greater prominence to this fundamental difficulty, let us examine the two solutions in opposition to the Thomist solution, one of them being that given by Maimonides and the Nominalists, the other being the solution by Scotus and the extreme realists. We shall thus bring out better the exact meaning and scope of the Thomistic solution which we wish to explain and defend.

Maimonides sacrificed the formal attribution of the absolute perfections in order to safeguard the absolute simplicity of God. Goodness and wisdom, he said, are only virtually (causally) in God, inasmuch as He can produce them. They are not contained formally in God. This is tantamount to saying, replies St. Thomas, that nothing applies analogically to God and to creatures, but merely in a purely equivocal way: "Some have said that nothing is predicated analogically of God and the creature, but purely in an equivocal sense. And this is the opinion of Rabbi Moyses, as is evident from his statements" (De potentia, q. 7, a. 7). This being so, adds St. Thomas, corporeity which is found virtually in God inasmuch as He can be the cause of it, is there on the same grounds as spirituality. Hence it ought to be equally right for us to say that God is absolutely unknowable (Ia, q. 13, a. 2). Is not this Agnosticism? The Nominalists have followed along the same lines and declared that all the divine names are synonymous. They maintain that, between divine justice and mercy, there is only a verbal distinction, as between Tullius and Cicero, or a distinctio rationis ratiocinantis, that is, a purely mental distinction, purely subjective, without any real foundation, as between Cicero the subject and Cicero the predicate in the sentence, "Cicero is Cicero." Why not say then: God pardons by means of His justice and punishes by means of His mercy? In Him contradictories are verified. This explains why the Nominalists were expelled, for this doctrine, from the University of Paris and from various other universities, as Billuart relates.

Duns Scotus thought it necessary, in order to avoid the Agnosticism of the Nominalists, to posit in God an actually formal multiplicity, by admitting between the divine attributes an actually formal distinction previous to any consideration of the mind (distinctio formalis ex natura rei, a formal distinction on the part of the thing). This, according to the

Thomists, is irreconcilable with God's absolute simplicity, and seems to be the beginning of anthropomorphism, reminding one of the exaggerated realism of Gilbert de la Porrée, which was condemned at the Council of Reims (1148). Whereas Maimonides reduces analogy to equivocation, Scotus, on the contrary, brings it so close to univocation as to say that "being," predicated commonly of God and creatures, is univocal.

The advocates of either of these extreme solutions do not admit the possibility of a third solution. The Agnostics say with Maimonides that, if in God there is only a virtual distinction between the absolute perfections, as the Thomists and we affirm, then these perfections are not contained formally in Him; there is only one eminent formality in Him, the Deity, which is unknowable. The Scotists concede this and in their turn say that, if the absolute perfections are contained formally in God and not merely virtually, as in the case of the mixed perfections, then we must say, of course, that there is an actually formal distinction between them previous to the mind's consideration of them. In other words, we must acknowledge the presence of an actually formal multiplicity in God.

The Thomists have replied that there is a third solution, superior to the other two. They have not always been understood, and their doctrine has sometimes been distorted.

In our days, certain writers have, at times, drawn so close a comparison between the Thomistic doctrine on analogy and the Agnosticism of Maimonides as to see between the two only a difference in the manner of presentation. In these statements of the mind of St. Thomas, the absolute perfections (simpliciter simplices) seem no longer to exist formally in God but only virtually, after the manner of mixed perfections. And, as it cannot be said of God that He is an animal or a body, because animality and coporeity are only virtually contained in Him, it seemed impossible to say truly of God that He is good, wise, etc., because these absolute perfections seemed to destroy one another by becoming identified in the eminence of the Deity. Even to the present day the Thomists have said, presenting again the teaching of their master (Ia, q. 13, a. 2, 3, 5), that "the absolute perfections are in God not merely virtually, but formally and eminently (formaliter eminenter)." These writers seem to have had in mind only the second part of the formula, the word "eminenter," which Agnosticism accepts without any difficulty.

On the other hand, some adversaries of this interpretation have at times defended the formal existence of the absolute perfections in God without sufficiently insisting upon the absolute and eminent simplicity of the divine essence. These latter, in their explanation of the ordinary formula of the Thomists, insisted by all means upon the word “formaliter” even to the point of seeming to posit a formally real multiplicity in God, as was the case with Duns Scotus. In order to avoid Agnosticism, this meant turning toward an anthropomorphism utterly irreconciliable with the perfect simplicity of the Deity.

We would like to show how the Thomist doctrine on analogy avoids Agnosticism without falling into the error of anthropomorphism, and how it constitutes the exact mean between the equivocation of Maimonides and the univocation of Scotus.

This solution, superior to the other two solutions, is the one given by moderate realism, which steers a middle course between Nominalism and extreme realism. It is expressed as follows: Absolute perfections are contained formally and eminently in God, and yet they are only virtually distinguished from each other. They are contained formally, which means according to their formal concept; they are contained eminently, which means according to a mode infinitely above the created mode. It is only in a negative and relative way that this mode can be known by us, and this allows of their being identified without destroying one another, in the formal concept of the Deity. Thus, the absolute perfections are contained formally in God and yet are only virtually distinguished from one another, or, in other words, according to a reasoned-out distinction for which there is a foundation, but consequent to the consideration of the mind. The foundation of this distinction is twofold. (1) The eminence of the Deity which can identify in itself perfections that are really distinct in creatures; (2) the imperfection of our mind which cannot attain to the absolute simplicity of God.

And again, as we pointed out (n. 42), this virtual distinction is less than the distinction in creatures between the genus and the specific difference, as we find in man, for instance, between animality and rationality. We have sound reasons for conceiving genus as potential and imperfect, and the difference as a perfection extrinsic to it, which is superadded to it and determines it. But in God there is no foundation for such a distinction. We have no right to conceive of a divine perfection as potential, imperfect,

determined by another perfection extrinsic to it. God is pure Act, and there is nothing potential in Him. Consequently, according to our imperfect mode of knowing the divine attributes, a mode, however, for which there is a real foundation, these attributes must be conceived not as extrinsic to one another but as actually and implicitly though not explicitly including one another. This would bring us back to the purely verbal distinction of the Nominalists.

It is the least conceivable of virtual distinctions: and yet it is true to say, according to the Thomists, that the absolute perfections thus really identified in the eminence of the Deity are contained formally in God, and not merely virtually like the mixed perfections.

This identification, they add, is not absurd but mysterious. It constitutes a philosophical mystery, the existence of which we can truly demonstrate independently of revelation, and in this it differs from a supernatural mystery like that of the Trinity; but by reason alone we cannot positively know in what this identification essentially consists. Apart from the beatific vision, the essence of this identification of the divine attributes can be known by us only negatively and relatively. This mystery, however, is explained inasmuch as it is shown that the absolute perfections, in proportion as they are purified from all imperfection, tend toward identification. This identification toward which they tend, far from destroying them, must constitute them in their pure state.

If this Thomistic solution seems inadmissible to our adversaries, the Agnostics and the Scotists, if the reunion of the two terms formaliter eminenter, according to the explanation just given, seems to them a contradiction and not a mystery, it is because the contrary tenets of these two latter schools proceed from an equal misunderstanding of the profound and even infinite difference separating analogy from univocation. In the main, although the Agnostics end in equivocation, they begin as the Scotists do, by considering the absolute perfections as being univocal. For both, the notions of being, goodness, intelligence, are endowed with absolute unity. The Agnostics conclude from this, therefore, that these perfections are not formally in God, for they would be distinct in Him as they are in creatures, and this is contrary to the divine simplicity. And since they fail to understand what causes analogy to differ from univocation, the Agnostics thus fall into equivocation, this being the charge made by St. Thomas against Maimonides (De potentia, q. 7, a. 7), and the result is that God is for

them unknowable. On the other hand, the Scotists conclude that for these perfections to be contained formally in God, they must be distinguished in Him even in an actually formal manner, and this previous to any consideration of the mind.

That we may show that the problem admits of a better solution and that it is not absurd for the absolute perfections to be identified in the formal concept of the Deity without destroying one another, we must above all set forth clearly how infinite is the difference separating the analogous perfection from one that is univocal, since it is this which our adversaries fail to grasp. This will be the relative and inadequate explanation of the philosophical mystery of the identification of the divine attributes. But first we must prove indirectly that there is in this identification a mystery and not a contradiction. This proof is the indirect solution of the general antinomy and the principle for the solution of the others.

55) The Indirect Solution of the Antinomies and the Affirmed Cause of the Mystery

The antinomies which the Agnostics bring up against us must be merely apparent ones. We prove this by the following syllogism, which has the force of an indirect demonstration, or one by the method of reduction to absurdity.

The necessary and strict application of ideas and first principles of reason, as explained by us when we were defending the ontological and transcendent validity of these ideas and principles, cannot result in confronting us with real antinomies, but only with obscurities or incomprehensible mysteries; moreover, it must finally bring us to mysteries.

Now the necessary and strict application of ideas and first principles of reason leads us to admit the existence of a first and absolutely simple cause, one possessing formally the various absolute perfections of being—intelligence, goodness, freedom, etc. —which have been communicated by it to created beings. Therefore, in the reconciliation and identification of these various perfections in God, there cannot be a real antinomy, but only a mystery.

The minor of this argument was established in the chapter on the demonstrability of God’s existence. It was afterwards confirmed by the proofs of His existence and in the deduction of the divine attributes. We have shown that each of these attributes is a perfection without any trace of

imperfection. But nothing except an imperfection is repugnant to the supremely perfect Being.

As for the major, the first part of it must be accepted, or else with Hegel we must declare that reality is thoroughly absurd, and that absurdity is at the root of all things. If, indeed, the object of reason and of experience brings us to a real antinomy, that is because the fundamental reality would itself be contradictory. Some Rationalists preferred to admit this on the authority of Hegel, rather than acknowledge, by submitting to the authority both of reason and of God, that it is a question of incomprehensible mysteries. One could not have a better proof of the unreasonableness of Rationalism. It is the crudest illustration of the vice which is opposed to wisdom and which is called spiritual folly, stultitia in the Scriptural and theological sense of the term. Wisdom judges of all things with reference to God; spiritual folly takes what is least in reality, what is becoming and as yet is not a reality, as its standard in judging of all things, even of God. To declare that what is becoming and as yet is not a reality is sufficient for itself and is none other than God, the Being par excellence, is to identify non-being with being, to avow that contradiction is the principle of all things, and it furnishes the most decisive proof by the method of absurdity of the existence of the true God, since His existence cannot be denied without ending in systematic absurdity.

If reality is not fundamentally contradictory, the necessary application of ideas and first principles cannot result in real antinomies, but must of necessity make us acknowledge that there are obscurities or mysteries. Thus reason must of necessity come to recognize that, in the compossibility and identification of the various attributes, there is involved a philosophical mystery. Reason is forced to conclude the fact of this identification, the essence (or mode) of which is mysterious, and is not naturally knowable except in a negative and relative way, contrasted with what we see in creatures. For a definite and clear knowledge of this mode of identification, we should have to know God precisely in what properly constitutes Him (Deus sub ratione Deitatis), and not merely in what He has analogically in common with creatures; we should have to see the divine essence such as it is in itself. To have intrinsic evidence of the intimate reconciliation of the divine attributes, we should have to see them identified in the essence which we conceive as their principle.

It is precisely because we wish to see all the obscurities cleared up which have been left by natural theology with regard to the compossibility of the various divine attributes, that we naturally desire, though conditionally and inefficaciously, to see the essence of God which is the principle of these attributes. We cannot desire naturally to see the divine essence according as it is the principle of the processions in the Trinity and of the order of grace, for a natural desire cannot have a formally supernatural object. But we can have a natural velleity of seeing the divine essence as the principle of the naturally knowable attributes, the reconciliation between which we would like to perceive clearly. The divine essence, since it is thus not considered in a formally supernatural manner, can be the object of an inefficacious natural desire, but not of an intuitive natural vision. We can know in a natural way that it is (quia est) and desire it, but we cannot positively know what it is, what properly constitutes it (quid est). Evidently it exceeds the natural means of knowing at the disposal of a created intelligence. That these means may be proportionate to this intelligence, they cannot themselves be other than created (Ia, q. 12, a. 4).

So long as we have not the supernatural intuitive vision of God, we cannot have intrinsic evidence of the philosophical mystery underlying the intimate reconciliation and identification of the divine attributes, but we can have extrinsic evidence of it, since we are necessarily led to admit the existence of this mystery by the legitimate and rigorous application of the first principles of reason. This indirect demonstration does not enable us to see how the divine simplicity and the formal existence of the diverse absolute perfections are reconciled in God, but it establishes the fact of this reconciliation without which reality itself would be absurd. On the one hand, it is certain that God is absolutely simple; on the other hand, that He possesses a plurality of attributes (being, goodness, intelligence). We arrived at these conclusions by legitimate and rigorous logical processes. They cannot, therefore, be in contradiction to one another. Let us hold the two ends of the chain.

The same holds good for the reconciliation of divine immutability with divine freedom, of justice with mercy, etc., or again for the reconciliation of the divine premotion, necessary that every created agent may act, with the fact of the freedom of our will.

But human reason is not reduced to this simple indirect demonstration and to this extrinsic evidence concerning the identification of the divine

attributes which the Agnostics reproach us with. It can achieve still more. Without arriving at intrinsic evidence it can, to a certain extent, explain the mystery, the existence of which we have just acknowledged.

ARTICLE II

EXPLANATION REGARDING THE PHILOSOPHICAL MYSTERY IN THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE ABSOLUTE PERFECTIONS OF GOD

This explanation will consist of two parts. Since our opponents, the Nominalistic Agnostics and the Scotists, reject our solution, because both fail to recognize the infinite difference there is between an analogous and a univocal perfection, it is this difference that we will point out first of all, by proving there is no repugnance for the same analogous perfection to be found formally in two analogates which infinitely differ from each other by their mode or manner of being. That is what our opponents fail to see, because they view the absolute perfections univocally.

Secondly, we will show that the different absolute and analogous perfections, in proportion as they are purified from all imperfection, tend to become identified and that they tend to this by their own properties (ex propriis), according to the peculiar exigencies of each and not merely by what they have in common (ex communibus), according to the common exigencies of the divine simplicity. Hence it follows that this mysterious identification to which they thus formally tend, far from destroying them, must constitute them in a pure state, a state which cannot be known by us in this life except in a negative and relative way.

Thirdly, we will point out the difficulties which the Scotist and Suarezian concepts of the divine names leave unsolved.

56) There is no repugnance for the same analogous perfection to be found formally in two analogates which differ infinitely from each other by their mode or manner of being.

This proposition is denied by Agnostics, such as Maimonides. According to them, one and the same perfection cannot be found formally in God and in creatures. If it is found formally in created beings, it can be only virtually in God. Scotus admits that one and the same absolute perfection can exist formally in God and creatures, but he fails to note the infinite diversity of the modes or manners of being, claiming that neither the divine nor the created mode allows of the real and formal identification of the attributes;

in God as in creatures, there is an actually formal distinction. The reason for this is because Scotus, as well as Maimonides, assigns to the primary ideas (of being, goodness, etc.) an absolute unity. Being which is common to God and creatures would be absolutely one.

For the Thomists, on the contrary, the mental and the objective concepts of an absolute and analogous perfection have but a unity of proportionality. Besides, since this perfection implies no imperfection, there is nothing repugnant in the idea of its existing according to an infinite and sovereignly perfect mode. It follows that this perfection, thanks to its unity of proportionality, can exist formally in two analogates which infinitely differ from each other by their mode of being.

We have proved at length (cf. supra, nn. 29, 45) that it is not repugnant for the absolute perfections to exist according to an infinite mode. What is of importance for us to prove here is that their unity is but a unity of proportionality.

We may symbolize schematically a concept which denotes absolute unity by the figure o, and one which denotes unity of proportion by the figure 8. The three confronting systems may then be represented as follows:

Nominalistic Agnosticism of Maimonides (equivocation)
Extreme formalism or realism of Scotus (univocation)

God absolutely simple but
unknowable God knowable, but in Him actually formal multiplicity
concept of being God concept of intelligence
concept of being God concept of intelligence

creature creature

Moderate realism of St. Thomas (analogy).

God absolutely simple and analogically
unknowable
concept of being God concept of intelligence

creature

To establish the truth of our proposition, we must show that the concept (either mental or objective) of an absolute and analogous perfection has but a unity of proportion, and this permits these perfections to exist formally according to infinitely diverse modes. We will show this: (a) indirectly, by

contrasting it with the unity demanded by univocal perfection; (b) directly for being and its transcendental properties; (c) for every absolute analogous perfection.

a) Under pain of identifying the nature of the analogous concept with that of univocal concept, we must recognize that the definition is not the same. The univocal concept is essentially that concept which expresses a perfection found in the same way in many beings, a perfection denoting absolute unity, which can be perfectly abstracted (praescindit perfecte) from the beings in which it is realized, such as genus (animality) or a species (humanity). Therefore the analogous concept cannot possess this same absolute unity.

The minor of this argument is self-evident if we consider that a genus (animality) designates absolutely the same thing in many species, because in each it is differentiated by specific differences extrinsic to it and it preserves its unity under these differences superadded to it. Animal denotes, in man as in the dog, a body endowed with sensitive life. It is the same with the species as regards the individualizing conditions; human nature is the same in all men. If the concept of an analogous perfection differs radically from the univocal concept, it could not have this absolute unity.

The Thomists, using the very terms of St. Thomas (Ia, q. 13, a. 5), express this doctrine as follows: Things that are univocal (συνώνυμα) are those which have the same name and the essence of which signified by this name is simply the same (simpliciter eadem). Thus animality is simply or absolutely the same in the horse and in the lion.

Things that are equivocal (ὁμώνυμα) are those which have the same name and the essence of which signified by this name is totally diverse in each of them (totaliter diversa). Thus the dog (a domestic animal), the dog-fish, and the constellation “canis” have only the name in common, this denoting in each of them something entirely different.

Things that are analogous are those which have the same name and the essence of which signified by this name is simply different in each of them, although there is some point of resemblance between them, according to a certain proportion, κατ᾽ ἀναλογίαν (simpliciter diversa, secundum quid tamen eadem, id est per aliquam proportionem).

But analogy admits of subdivisions, and we can classify the divisions as given by St. Thomas by the schema on page 208 (cf. De veritate, q. 2, a. 11).

The analogy of attribution, or of proportion, calls for merely a simple attribution or extrinsic denomination; one or several things receive this denomination according to a proportion which they bear to another which is the principal one. Thus the air is said to be healthy as regards the animal in that it can preserve it in health; one's complexion is said to be healthy in so far as it is a sign of health; but health itself is found really only in the animal. Maimonides would have conceded that God can be called good extrinsically and relatively to the goodness of the creature of which He is the cause.

Analogy of attribution never implies intrinsic denomination in the various analogates, but does not necessarily exclude it. Thus it is that quantity and quality belong to being, because of their dependence upon being which alone subsists in them. Quality and quantity are, however, intrinsically realities in that we find verified in them both the analogy of attribution and the analogy of proper proportionality which we shall now consider. We may say, likewise, that the creature is, because of its dependence upon God.

The analogy of proportionality, as its name indicates, is based

upon the proportionality existing between various things and not upon a denomination which would apply to them relatively to a principal analogate.

This analogy is of two kinds: metaphorical and proper. Metaphorically we say that the lion is the king of animals because he is to the wild animals what a king among men is to his subjects. So, too, metaphorically we say of God that He is angry, because when inflicting punishment His attitude is that of an angry man when chastising others. But since anger is a passion of the sensible order, we see quite well that it cannot belong properly to God who is pure spirit. Maimonides and the Agnostics concede that this metaphorical analogy of proportionality is found to prevail between God and creatures; but such analogy amounts to more than a mere symbolism, as St. Thomas points out (De veritate, q. 2, a. 11; De potentia, q. 7, a. 5).

The analogy of proper proportionality presupposes that the analogy is really found, and in its strict sense, in each of the analogates. However, it does not admit of any determinate distance or proportion between the two analogates. For we must carefully distinguish between proportion which denotes a relation (e.g., 2/4) and proportionality which denotes equality or similarity between two relations (e.g., 6/3 = 4/2).

If there is proportion, as, for instance, between created substance and its proportionate accident, that is not what is considered here, but merely the similarity of the two relations; created substance is to its existence, as proportionate accident is to its existence. Each exists in quite a different manner, since substance exists in itself, and accident exists in substance. But, after all, accident is still intrinsically being in the strict sense of the word.

Often this analogy of proper proportionality exists between terms which have no distance or determinate proportion between them as, for instance, between sensation and intellection. Analogically, intrinsically, and in the proper sense of the term, both may truly be called knowledge. This analogy is clearly expressed by means of the following proportionality: sensation is to the sensible what intellection is to the intelligible. Likewise, sensible love is to sensible good what rational love is to rational good; analogically and according to the proper sense of the term, both are entitled to be called love.

It is this latter kind of analogy which, as St. Thomas remarks (De veritate, q. 2, a. 11), characterizes what applies intrinsically and formally to God and creatures.

We will show that to attribute being to God is to say that the First Cause is to His existence what the creature is to its existence, just as intellection is to the intelligible what sensation is to the sensible. In this second case we can use the word knowledge in the proper sense, to designate what is common to both analogates; in the preceding case we can, on the same grounds, use the word being in the proper sense.

We see that, under pain of confusion with a univocal perfection, an analogous perfection, which applies intrinsically and formally to several analogates, can have only a unity of proportionality. It is one proportionally, not simply (est una proportionaliter, non simpliciter una). This point will be better understood by examining the unity of the concept of universal being.

b) Among the analogous perfections we must put in the first rank being and its transcendental properties: unity, truth, and goodness. These concepts have only unity of proportionality and cannot be abstracted perfectly from their analogates, because the former actually imply the latter.

In fact, a common perfection which is differentiated by non-extrinsic differences actually implies these differences, although it does not contain them explicitly. But being and its transcendental properties are differentiated by non-extrinsic differences. Therefore being and the

transcendentals actually imply their differences, although they do not contain them explicitly. This means that they imply multiplicity and not an absolute unity like univocal concepts (genera and species), but only a relative unity.

The major of this argument is evident. If the differences of a perfection common to several beings are not extrinsic to this perfection, they are intrinsic. There is no middle course. This perfection does not exclude them, but includes them confusedly, without, however, containing them explicitly or distinctly.

The explanation of the minor will make this clear. The differences of being which constitute substance and accident are not extrinsic to being, for they would be nothing (Ia, q. 3, a. 5; and Metaph., III, ch. iii, lect. 8). Substance as substance, said Aristotle, is still being, as it is one and true. It is the same with accident. But we cannot say that rationality in man is animality. Being contains, therefore, actually and implicitly the modes by which it is differentiated, and it is itself implied in them when they exist. Since it implies actually this multiplicity of modes of being, it has not, like a univocal concept, an absolute but only a relative unity, which must be, as we shall see, a unity of proportionality.

This is apparent in the very definition of being, in so far as it can be defined. Being is defined in two ways: (1) in what we may call a descriptive way: being is that which exists or at least can exist (nomine entis communiter intelligitur id quod existit aut saltem existere potest); (2) it can be defined in a more formal manner inasmuch as it is abstracted at least imperfectly from its analogates: being is that the act of which is existence (ens est id cujus actus est esse). Both of these definitions of being bring out clearly the multiplicity that it actually and implicitly contains, attributing to it but a relative unity.

In fact, in the first definition of being (“that which exists or at least can exist”), there is clearly seen a duality, that of real being, both actual and possible. If now we wish to conceive of actual real being, we perceive that its actuality is essentially varied, according as it exists by itself (God) or does not so exist (creature). The actuality exists formally in both cases but not at all in the same way. If, finally, we wish to conceive being which does not exist of itself but by reason of another, we perceive that this new mode of being also varies essentially, according as it exists in itself (substance) or in another (accident). The notion of being implies, therefore, a variation

which is essential to it. There are not several different ways of being man, but there are several essentially different ways of existing.

BEING is by itself (God) in itself (substance)
that which exists by reason of another (creature)
In another (accident)
or that which can exist.

It is manifest that there is a distinction between the members of this division not only by reason of their proper difference, but also inasmuch as they are being. Substance differs from accident not only as substance, but as being; it has not the same mode of existing, and this mode is not extrinsic to it. But it is only by reason of his specific difference (rationality) that man differs from the dog, and not by reason of his genus (animality). Animality designates in both the same mode of the same thing: a body endowed with sensitive life. From this we see that the unity concept of being is not an absolute but merely a relative unity, and the second definition of being shows clearly that this relative unity is one of proportionality.

Being, inasmuch as it is abstracted, at least imperfectly, from its analogates, is defined thus: that the act of which is existence (id cujus actus est esse). Why? Because all the analogates of being are entitled to be called being inasmuch as they express relation to existence (prout se habent ad esse), and they are all the more entitled to this as they express a more intimate relation to existence.

God = created substance = accident
His being its being its being.

This relation to existence is not univocal, as, for instance, are the relations the equality between which constitutes an arithmetical proportionality, as: 4/2 = 6/3. Four is twice two in the same way as six is twice three. The relative term “twice” is univocal. On the other hand, the relation to existence is not the same in that which exists of itself and that which exists by reason of another. We may, however, call it a proportionality not in an arithmetical but in a metaphysical sense; for that which exists of itself is related to its existence, as that which exists by reason of another is related to its existence. If, therefore, we wish to define being inasmuch as it abstracts at least imperfectly from its analogates, we must express above all in the definition this relation to existence which is found differently verified in the different analogates.

Let us point out, however, with Cajetan and John of St. Thomas, that the concept of analogous being is not the concept of a relation, as has sometimes been wrongly attributed to the Thomists; it is the concept of that which is the basis of this relation to existence. We do not say: “Ens est habitudo ad esse: being denotes relation to existence”; but: “ens est id cujus actus est esse: being is that whose act is existence.” And this id expresses in a confused way all the analogates, inasmuch as they are like one another because of the various ways in which they relate to existence. This relation is not accidental, like paternity; it is an essential or transcendental relation. In other words, it is the essence itself in so far as it refers to existence, just as intelligence refers to the intelligible.

The concept of being has truly a certain unity and thus we can think of being without thinking explicitly of its analogates: God and creatures, substance and accident. It is in this way, too, that metaphysics, which has pure being as its subject, can be one as a science. But the unity of this concept is not absolute, for actually and implicitly it includes multiplicity. In fact, it is impossible to conceive positively actual being, the actuality of which is essentially varied, without thinking confusedly or implicitly both of self-existing being and of being which is not self-existing. Moreover, that is only an inadequate concept of being. To have an adequate concept of being we must think explicitly of the manifoldness which is essential to it. Do we wish to abstract being from its analogates? We define it as that the act of which is to exist. But even then, this relation to existence, since it is essentially varied, cannot be conceived without at least confusedly thinking of the members of the proportionality in which it is realized. On the other hand, we can quite well think of animal without confusedly thinking of the different species of animals; animality, since it is realized in the same way in all these species, can be perfectly abstracted from the specific differences which are extrinsic to it (perfecte praescindit a differentiis specificis).

In order to safeguard the absolute unity of the concept of being, certain Scotists and Suarezians do not consider being positively in itself, but only in that it is opposed to nothingness, as nonnothingness. But it is clear that, since affirmation precedes negation, being is conceived before nothingness, which, too, cannot be thought of except as opposed to being. Moreover, the opposition of being to nothingness is itself essentially varied, according as it is necessary or contingent, and applies either to what is self-existing or is not so.

Cajetan is of the same mind when, in his treatises De analogia nominum (chs. iv and vi) and De conceptu entis, he keeps on repeating in different ways that “the concept of being, whether mental or objective, has not an absolute but only a secundum quid unity, that is, a unity according to proportionality.” Speaking of the resolution of all other concepts into that of being, he writes: “All things resolve themselves into the objective and mental concepts which are simple and one proportionally.” (De conceptu entis.) That is, too, what St. Thomas says many times. The principal passage is in De veritate, q. 2, a. 11.

Likewise in De veritate (q. 23, 2.7 ad 9um) St. Thomas says: “As God is to those things which are befitting to Him, so is the creature to its own properties.” The sensitive faculty knows sensible things, the human intelligence knows the reasons of things by a knowledge caused by the things, and the divine intelligence knows all created things by a knowledge which is the cause of things. In these three proportions it is clear that the word “knows” is not taken in the same sense or univocally, as, for instance, animality is attributed to man and dog. Also God exists by His very essence and creatures exist, but not by their essence. Clearly the word “exist” is not taken in the same sense or univocally, although in the two proportions, it is true, according to the proper meaning of the term. There is in this neither metaphor nor symbolism.

To maintain with the Agnostics that in this similarity of proportions there are always two unknowns, is to reduce knowledge to the univocal kind and declare that God is absolutely unknown, because between Him and us there is nothing univocal. In fact, there are not two unknowns, but two created terms directly known, a term expressing the uncreated analogate indirectly known, from which we infer the fourth term:

creature = First Cause or creature = First Cause

its being X its being His Being

This point becomes clear if we recall that we have: (1) the very confused concept of being in general, such as the child has in its first intellectual perception; (2) the concept of finite being —we have a positive knowledge of its finite mode, which is nothing else but the essence of things that we see, such as stones, plants, animals; (3) the concept of analogous being, imperfectly abstracted from the finite mode; and this is the concept we have just been discussing. It is a precision of the first very confused concept

which the child has, and the metaphysician acquires it in the process of explaining how the formal notion of being does not of itself admit of the first mode as found in creatures; (4) the concept of the divine Being, the cause of created beings. These, indeed, not having in themselves the reason for their existence, require a cause which is self-existing. In this concept of the divine Being, the divine mode is expressed only in a negative and relative way, for instance, by saying that He is the non-finite, the supreme Being. What positive element there is in this analogical knowledge of God is that which it has proportionally in common with the creature.

The Agnostics insist with the objection that, if the similarity of analogy is to be found only between the two relations

God = creature

His being its being

, then the concept of analogous being is no more than that of a relation, and how are we then to avoid the Agnostic schema 00/00 = a/b which means ?/? = a/b? Are there not always two unknowns in the proportionality? At least it seems we have but a purely negative and relative knowledge. Nominalism has to say the same. The answer of moderate realism is that the concept of being is not first of all one of relation like the concept of paternity. Paternity is the purely accidental relation of a man to his son. There are, on the contrary, non-accidental but essential relations which are implied in a determinate essence or in one of its faculties. The concept expressing this essence, expresses at the same time the relation that it contains. Thus being designates that which bears a relation to existence, and this relation is implied in the very nature of that which exists, and it is essentially varied according as it is necessary or contingent. Created essence in its inmost entity is entirely relative to its contingent existence, which it can lose; the uncreated essence is conceived only as relating to necessary existence with which it is identified. So also the concept of intelligence does not denote purely a relation; in us it signifies a faculty essentially related to intelligible being; in God it denotes the eternal and subsistent intellection of being always actually known.

These analogous perfections are not, therefore, pure relations. They are perfections which in created beings imply the compositions of two correlative elements: potentiality and act, which in God are pure act. Our intelligence conceives them as being all the more realized in proportion as

they are purified of all potentiality. In God, therefore, they exist in the pure state.

From this we see that there are not two unknowns in the proportionalities established by theological science. In these equations God is appropriately designated by the term First Cause, since it is by this concept relative to contingent beings that we attain to Him in the first place, and afterwards we write down the perfections in their necessary order, whether or not they relate to creatures:

contingent being = First Cause
its being His being
immaterial creature = First immaterial Cause
its intelligence His intelligence
intelligent creature = First intelligent Cause
its will His will
, etc.

In these equations there are two terms directly known, one uncreated term which is indirectly known by appealing to the principle of causality, and we infer the fourth term which is indirectly known in a positive way from what it has analogically in common with creatures in a negative and relative way as regards its proper divine mode.

Such is the radical difference between an absolute analogous perfection and one that is univocal. The former implies actually an essential variety. Being as such is in this sense essentially varied (actu implicite: implicitly in act). Scotus failed to perceive this radical difference. For him the concept of being has not only a proportional but an absolute unity, and is entitled to be called univocal, though it is not a genus. This univocation is defended by his disciples, at least from the logical point of view, in so far as being is conceived as non-nothingness. We have seen that there is no foundation for this distinction. Suarez does not go so far as to say that being is univocal, but with Scotus he maintains the absolute unity of the concept, and looks upon analogy as doubtful. Hence we do not see, according to the Thomist teaching, how being differs from a genus. If being as such is not essentially varied, the danger of falling into Pantheism is not at all imaginary. We shall have to return to this subject.

Unity of proportionality which we have just shown to apply to being, is found to exist on the same grounds in the transcendental properties of

being; these are unity, truth, and goodness, which accompany being in all the categories and, like it, are also expressed proportionally. Thus beings are more or less one or undivided, more or less true or in conformity with the First Intelligence, more or less good or perfect. For instance, a fruit is good in its way, physically so; a virtuous man is good in his way, morally so; these various ways are not extrinsic to goodness, they are in themselves good, just as the different ways of being one are not extrinsic to unity, each in itself being one. The transcendental properties of being are not differentiated by extrinsic differences, but they imply these differences, as Aristotle saw very clearly. The unity of their concept is therefore only a unity of proportionality. Hence there is only a similarity of proportion between the divine unity and that of our soul, for this latter is rich with a virtually infinite multiplicity. Divine truth is not only the conformity of intelligence with being or of being with intelligence, it is their identification. Divine goodness is not, like our virtues, a perfection superadded to and inhering in the essence, it is the very plenitude of divine Being.

c) What has just been said about abstract being and its properties is true of all the analogous perfections which common sense attributes to God, such as intelligence, wisdom, providence, free will, love, mercy, and justice.

It is manifestly an error for Agnostic symbolism to admit in these perfections only metaphorical analogies after the manner of that which enables us to say that God is angry. Anger is formally a passion of the sensible order which cannot be found formally in God, who is pure spirit. On the other hand, intelligence, will, and their virtues are absolute perfections without any trace of imperfection.

Agnostic symbolism is again mistaken when all that it cares to see in the expression “God is intelligent” is an analogy of simple extrinsic attribution which has reference to creatures. It is as if this proposition merely meant that God can produce intelligence in us and may rightly be called intelligent, just as the air which is favorable to health is called healthy. For this reason God, who can produce corporeal beings, could be said to be corporeal. Here, too, symbolism forgets to distinguish between the absolute and the mixed perfections.

On the other hand, to think that intelligence, liberty, love, and justice denote in God and in us a perfection which is absolutely one, would end in

anthropomorphism. In fact, these perfections, like being as such and its properties, have but a unity of proportionality.

The proof of this is, that they are immediately specified by being or by some property of being; they have, therefore, the same unity as it has.

This is easily explained for the intellect, the formal object of which is being; for the will, the formal object of which is goodness; for action, the formal object of which is realized being. The same is to be said of the perfections of the intellect: wisdom, providence (or prudence); and of the perfections of the will: love, mercy, and justice.

These notions, like that of being, have merely a unity of proportionality. just as being is that which exists or can exist, that which exists of itself (God) or by reason of another (creature), so intelligence is either the ever actual knowledge of the self-subsisting Being (the divine intelligence), or it is simply the faculty which can know being (created intelligence). The will is either the ever actual love of the supreme Good (the divine will), or it is simply the faculty capable of loving the good. Action is either the production and the preservation of being, precisely as being, of created things (creative action), or it is simply the production of a finite modality by the transformation of a pre-existing subject. Knowledge is caused in us by things; in God it is the cause of things. Love presupposes the amiability of the object loved; God's love causes this amiability in creatures. Human liberty is the dominating indifference of a power or faculty; in God it is the dominating indifference of pure act, etc. The analogy of proportionality, when fully understood, will enable us to solve the various antinomies relating to the divine perfections, antinomies which are the result of conceiving these perfections as univocal.

We may write, for instance:

intelligence divine; object : divine essence
BEING
angelic; " : angelic "
human; " : essence of
sensible things

If, then, the unity of concept (mental or objective) of absolute analogous perfections is only a unity of proportionality, it is not a contradiction for one and the same absolute analogous perfection to exist formally in two analogates, in spite of the infinite diversity of the modes according to which it is realized in each of them. This was really what Maimonides and Scotus

failed to see. They considered the unity of concept of these perfections as absolute; hence there were only two possible conclusions:

(1) If God is absolutely simple, these perfections are not contained in Him formally, for that would be to introduce into the divine reality a distinction as in created being; this is the conclusion of Maimonides. (2) If these perfections are contained formally in God, they introduce in Him a formal distinction actual on the part of the thing and previous to the consideration of our mind; this is the conclusion of the formalism of Scotus, from which Suarez escapes only by means of an inconsistency, having previously admitted the absolute unity of the concepts of the perfections common to God and creatures.

If, on the contrary, we properly understand unity of proportionality, as just explained, there is no contradiction in the same analogous perfection existing formally according to infinitely diverse modes. Indeed, even in the created order, knowledge is formally present both in sensation and intellection, although between the two there is no determinate distance. It is not a contradiction for the absolute perfections, which imply no imperfection, to exist in an infinite mode; in other words, they are not repugnant to the infinitely perfect Being. Therefore they can exist formally in the two analogates, infinitely different from each other by their mode of being.

It remains for us to show how the eminent mode in which the different absolute perfections apply to God, allows of their being formally identified in the Deity without being destructive of one another. We have to explain this, not in a positive manner, for that would be proving the mystery to be intrinsically evident, but in a negative and relative way.

57) It is no contradiction for the absolute perfections to become really identical in the Deity and to be present there, however, formally and in the pure state; for, in proportion as they are purified from all imperfection, they tend, each according to its proper exigencies, in some way to become identical.

In other words, if they are identified in the eminence of the formal notion of the Deity, it is not only in virtue of the general exigencies of the divine simplicity (ex communibus) that this is so, but also in virtue of the proper exigency of each of the perfections (ex propriis). Now nothing tends of itself to its own destruction, but on the contrary everything tends to its complete realization. Hence this identification, to which these perfections

thus formally tend, instead of destroying them, must be the means of constituting them in the pure state, a state which can be known only negatively and relatively by us here on earth.

To understand this fully, we must condense into a few pages what St. Thomas and his school teach concerning the mutual relations between the divine attributes and the distinction between them.

We know that, according to St. Thomas, the plurality of the notions we form of God are due both to the debility of our intellect, which is incapable of comprehending the simplicity of the Deity, and to the sovereign perfection of God, in whom all the absolute perfections are contained eminently.

But there are some distinctions which are solely the outcome of the imperfection of our knowledge. It is not between two specifically different attributes that we introduce distinctions in God, but between potentiality and act which have the same specification; for instance, between the divine intelligence and intellection, or between God's omnipotence and His act. This is what makes St. Thomas say that: "In God the idea of power is retained, inasmuch as it is the principle of an effect; not, however, as it is a principle of action, for this is the divine essence itself; except, perchance, after our manner of understanding . . ." (Ia, q. 25, a. 1 ad 3um). There is no potentiality in God, and therefore no foundation for a virtual distinction between potentiality and act. If we happen to make this distinction, the only basis for doing so is in creatures, which serve us as a means for knowing God, but not in God Himself.

Starting from this principle, it is easy for us to arrange the divine perfections in three groups. Those who have studied the treatise on God as given in the Theological Summa of St. Thomas, and in the commentaries which the great Thomists, such as Cajetan, Bannez, and John of St. Thomas, have left us and also in the summary of their writings by Billuart, will not be surprised at this classification which the schema on the next page, as previously explained (n. 45), will enable us the better to understand.

Three groups of divine perfections can easily be discerned:

a) The perfections which are not virtually distinct from one another, according to a distinction which has its basis in God. These are, on the one hand: being, essence, existence, operative power, intellection, and truth.

They are written on the same curve in the schema diagrammed below. On the other hand: being,

essence, existence, operative power, will, goodness, which are also written on the same curve.

b) The perfections which are virtually distinct from one another solely because of the diverse relations they bear to creatures either actual or possible. These are, for the divine intelligence: knowledge of simple intelligence or knowledge of possible things, knowledge of vision or knowledge of actual things, and providence which ordains and directs these things to the ultimate end of the whole universe. In the divine will, such perfections are: the free love of God for creatures whom He could have willed not to create; mercy or the will to come to the assistance of creatures in their misery; justice or the will to give creatures what is necessary for them to attain their end, and to reward them according to their merits or to punish them according to their demerits.

c) The perfections which are virtually distinct from one another independently of a relation to creatures either actual or possible. These are: intellection and volition, which would exist in God even if no creature were possible, much less realized. In the foregoing schema they are written on two distinct curves. For these last perfections it is more difficult to show how they can, without destroying each other, become really identical in the eminence of the Deity.

We single out here merely the positive attributes which are the only ones the identification of which in God presents a difficulty. Negative perfections are merely the negation of an imperfection (Ia, q. 13, a. 2). With regard to infinity and immutability, these are negatively expressed perfections which accompany the various attributes. Thus we say: infinite being, infinite goodness, infinite power, infinite intelligence, infinite mercy, etc. Also immutability is fittingly predicated of the being of God, of His knowledge, providence, will, justice, etc. This immutability, moreover, like eternity, has its origin in absolute simplicity with which it is our effort to conciliate all the attributes. As for life, this is implied in intellection and volition.

Let us see how the attributes of each of the three groups just distinguished are identified in God.

a) The perfections not virtually distinct from one another are easily identified, even according to our mode of knowing them. What are these perfections? They are those which in creatures are distinguished not

formally but only potentially; in other words they are those which have the same formal object and are in the same rank. For instance, essence is distinct from existence in the creature only because essence is potentiality with regard to existence. The same condition prevails between essence and operative power and equally so between this latter and operation, as also between intelligence and intellection, or again between will and volition. Clearly these perfections are not virtually distinct in God; they become identical in Him, even according to our way of knowing them. If they were virtually distinct in God, or, in other words, according to a distinction reasoned out by the mind which has its foundation in the divine reality, it would follow that there would be a foundation for conceiving in God something potential or imperfect; there would be, for instance, a foundation for conceiving. His essence as potentiality with regard to His existence, His intelligence as potentiality with regard to His intellection. Hence God would no longer be pure Act. As He is supreme Actuality, free from all potentiality, from all imperfection, there are no grounds in Him for our conceiving His essence as in potentiality for existence, operation, or anything else whatever.

Such is the doctrine of St. Thomas. It can be explained from his Theological Summa in which he devotes some special articles to the absolute identification, even according to our manner of knowing, of certain divine perfections, but not all of them. He proves that in God, who is pure Act, essence and existence are identical, and he also proves the identity of existing essence (subject) with intelligence, of intellection with essence which is the divine object of this intellection, and of existing essence also with will and volition. Essence and existence are the same (Ia, q. 3, a. 4). “Since God has no potentiality in Him, but is pure Act, His intellect and its object must be altogether the same” (Ia, q. 14, a. 2) and His act of understanding is His essence and His existence (subject-object). Ia, q. 14, a. 4; q. 54, a. 1, 2. And as His intellect is His own existence, so is His will (Ia, q. 19, a. 1). “In God the idea of power is retained, inasmuch as it is the principle of an effect; not, however, as it is a principle of action, for this is the divine essence itself” (Ia, q. 25, a. 1 ad 2um and ad 3um). Contrary to this, St. Thomas never wrote any article in order to identify the divine intellection and will. He acknowledges an intrinsic virtual distinction between them, which he does not admit between the above mentioned perfections.

Several Thomists have condensed this doctrine in the following proposition: “In God there is a virtual distinction between those perfections only which are distinguished in creatures not potentially (as essence and existence, or intelligence and intellection), but because of their formal concept or formal object, and which therefore belong to different orders (as intellect and will).”

It is upon the real and formal identification of the perfections of this first group that the attributes of the two following groups depend. But we now find the solution of the two so-called antinomies: (1) The duality of subject and object essential to all knowledge cannot be reconciled with the divine simplicity; (2) Absolute immutability is contrary to divine life which presupposes, like all life, a becoming.

1) The first of these two antinomies was formulated by Plotinus and taken up again by Fichte. Plotinus declared that the one is superior to intelligence, because intelligence implies duality of subject and object. For the same reason Fichte refused to admit the existence of a personal and conscious God. Spencer acknowledges that we must attribute knowledge to God, but at the same time refuse it to Him because it implies a duality which is contrary to the divine simplicity. St. Thomas considers this difficulty in Ia, q. 14, a. 2, obj. 1 and 2. He replies: “Let us not seek in God for a duality of intelligent subject and intelligible object, for this proceeds only from the potentiality of both. So also in us the sensible (or rather the object perceived) in act is sense in act, and the intelligible (or rather the object understood) in act is intellect in act. Our intellect is identified (intentionally or representatively) with its object in so far as it is actually known; if it is distinct from its object as an entity (entitative), this is because both are in potentiality and not pure act; because of this only, it follows that sense or intellect is distinct from the sensible or intelligible object, since both are in potentiality” (Ia, q. 14, a. 2).

In fact, man is intelligent in proportion as he is immaterial (Ia, q. 14, a. 1), in proportion as his form, his soul, dominates matter, space, and time, and enables him to know not only such being as is particular and contingent, existing here and now, but being as such. And as man is not being, intelligence in him is only a power or faculty in relation to being which is intentional, capable of representing it to itself. It is an accident belonging to the category of quality, and human intellection is merely an accidental act of this power.

Likewise, the object of the human intellect is intelligible only potentially in sensible things. We must also form for ourselves an idea, an intellectual image, which makes it actually intelligible. From this two-fold potentiality of our intellect and of the intelligible which is proportionate to it, arises the duality of subject and of being. Our intellect becomes identified in its act with its object in so far as it is known, but it is distinct from it in so far as it is being. And truth is the conformity of judgment with being which is judged, in so far precisely as it is distinct from judgment. “Truth is found in the intellect according as it apprehends a thing as it is” (Ia, q. 16, a. 5).

God, who is the self-subsisting Being, must also be intelligent, according to the degree of His immateriality (Ia, q. 14, a. 1); and as He is, according to His definition, independent not only of all material and spatial limitation, but also of all limitation on the part of essence and potentiality, He is supremely intelligent, and His intelligence cannot be a faculty or power in relation to being, but it is intellection itself (self-subsisting intelligence).

As, moreover, God is intelligible also according to the degree of His immateriality, He is being in a state of supreme intelligibility. He has no need of having recourse to an expressed concept of Himself so as to render Himself intelligible in act; He is of Himself and always has been, not only actually knowable but actually known, otherwise He would not be pure Act in the intelligible order. Hence the divine intellection is identical with the divine essence, not only in so far as it is known (intentionaliter), but in so far as it is being (entitative). Without the least antinomy, the divine intelligence becomes identical with the divine essence in an eternally subsisting intellectual luminousness. Consequently, there could not be a virtual distinction in God between being and truth, since the divine being is not only in conformity with the divine intelligence, but is simply one with it.

There is, therefore, absolute identity without virtual distinction between the existing divine essence (thinking subject) and intelligence (operative power), the idea (cognitive determinant), intellection (act of knowledge), and the divine essence known or first truth (object). To admit here a virtual distinction would mean that it is possible for one of these perfections to be conceived as potential, for which there is a real foundation in the divine reality itself.

Is there a virtual distinction between willing or the act of love by which God necessarily loves Himself, and the divine essence which is both subject

and object of this love? The answer is, no. The same holds good between willing and intellection. The divine will cannot be conceived as a power or faculty; it is identical with the divine essence (subject) and its act of love. Besides, the object of this act is the sovereign Good which is of itself and always has been, not only lovable but actually loved. If it were otherwise, then something would be wanting to Him as pure act in what pertains to goodness. Finally, this primary object of the divine love is not virtually distinct from the divine essence (subject), for this essence is of itself plenitude of being, and this plenitude is the very definition of goodness. We also say that God is good or essentially goodness. “Deus est bonus per suam essentiam, God is essentially good” (Ia, q. 6, a. 3).

2) The second antinomy, which can be solved by explaining this first group of perfections, relates to the divine life, which is declared to be contrary to absolute immutability. All life seems, indeed, to imply a becoming. St. Thomas did not fail to consider this objection in the question treating of the divine life (Ia, q. 18, a. 3, obj. 1 and 2). He replies as follows: “As God is His very own existence and understanding, so is He His own life; and therefore He so lives that He has no principle of life.” The act of intellection represents the highest degree of life, since we distinguish between the vegetative, sensitive, and intellectual in life. Intellectual life in creatures implies a certain becoming because their intelligence is only a faculty which is in relation to being, and which must seek its object outside itself, ab extrinseco. Nevertheless, it is an imperfect life, for what characterizes life is immanence (motus ab intrinseco). If, on the contrary, pure intellection is identical in God with pure being always known, it follows that the divine life is pre-eminently, absolutely immanent life on the part of both subject and object, and consequently is absolutely immobile and simple, measured by eternity and not by time, which is but the measure of motion. Becoming is in life only an imperfection, the imperfection of changeable being which is either tending toward that which as yet it has not become, or losing that which it had. Life which implies a becoming, is a life which is but a birth with a blending also of death. Life free from all imperfection is eternal, one, indivisible, immutable with an immutability that is not a privation of motion, like inertia, but which is the negation of motion or of instability. It is the absolute stability of a subsistent knowledge and love which are of themselves and from all eternity all that they can be, without any possibility of increase or decrease. On the contrary, it would be

truly an antinomy to posit in God an increase, for this essentially implies imperfection, the privation of that which one is seeking to acquire.

Our conclusion is established therefore without difficulty for the perfections of this first group. In proportion as they are purified of all potentiality or imperfection they tend to become really identical, not only according to the general exigencies of the divine simplicity (ex communibus), but also according to the proper exigencies of each of them (ex propriis). Hence this identification to which they thus formally tend, far from destroying them, must be the means of constituting them in the pure state. Being and intelligence, therefore, are contained formally in God, becoming absolutely identical in Him. It is this which most readily appeals to us in this mystery since for this first group, according to our manner of knowing, identification becomes peremptory because of the impossibility of admitting here an intrinsic virtual distinction, as this would involve potentiality in God.

b) The perfections of the second group are those between which there is a virtual distinction solely on account of the diverse relations they bear to creatures either actual or possible. These are the intellectual virtues, some of them with regard to the others, and likewise the virtues of the will.

In God there is only one act of intellection, unum intelligere subsistens (one subsistent act of understanding), which has for its primary object the divine essence, the first truth. In this unique act we cannot introduce any virtual distinction on the part of God; but according to His various relations with created things, we virtually distinguish between His knowledge of possible things (or that of simple intelligence), His knowledge of actual things, which in time have been, are, or will be (knowledge of vision which presupposes the free decree calling these creatures into existence), and His providence or divine prudence which ordains or directs all things to the final end of the universe.

It is clear that a virtual distinction of this kind, since it is based solely upon the various relations to creatures, could not be contrary to the absolute simplicity of God. As John of St. Thomas says: “Wisdom, knowledge, are sometimes taken to mean the act itself of the intellect in the universality of its extent, and thus wisdom is the same in God as His act of understanding and His existence. Sometimes they are taken to mean a special manner of understanding, and in this way wisdom denotes cognition by means of the highest causes, knowledge a cognition by means of inferior causes,

prudence a cognition in directing things; and thus they are distinguished after the manner of certain intellectual virtues and the divine attributes (D. Thom. in I dist. 39, q. 2, a. 1). Hence they are distinguished not because of the different formal grounds of knowledge, for the grounds are one and the same, in divine cognition; but because of a different connotation and reference to the objects ultimately known." Likewise Billuart, De Deo, dissert. V, art. 2, sec. 3.

It must be said that there are as many virtual distinctions in the divine volition or love between the necessary and free volition, as in this latter between mercy and justice. These virtual distinctions cannot be contrary to God's absolute simplicity since they are based solely upon the diverse relations which they bear to creatures.

In fact, as St. Thomas says (Contra Gentes, Bk. I, ch. lxxxii): "The divine will by one and the same act, wills Himself and other things. Now His relation to Himself is necessary and natural; whereas His relation to other things is by way of a kind of fittingness, not necessary and natural, not violent and unnatural, but free."

We shall later (n. 63) examine the antinomy which Agnosticism

[* SOME TEXT ARE MISSING *]

has been given to it out of pure kindness, by an act of absolutely gratuitous love. The influence of mercy is thus more intense than that of justice. It manifests itself toward the damned, mitigating their punishments; if justice alone were meted out to the reprobates according to their deserts, their sufferings would be far greater (Ia, q. 21, a. 4 and ad 1um).

In order that this mystery of the reconciliation of justice with mercy be not a scandal for us, of His own accord God has willed to show how these two perfections, far from destroying each other in being united, find only in this union the realization of their supreme demands. By the death on the cross of the Word made flesh, "mercy and truth have met each other; justice and peace have kissed" (Ps. 84: 12).

God the Father, in demanding of Jesus Christ, by reason of His justice, an infinite satisfaction, as the offence was infinite, required of Him the most heroic act of love. And in consigning Him thus for our salvation to the glorious ignominy of death on the cross, He showed His own infinite love for the sovereign Good, for Christ, and for us. What is the sublimity of the cross, if not the harmony of perfections seemingly in opposition, the union of the supreme demands of justice and love?

“The standard of our King comes forth,
Bright shines the mystery of the Cross,
Through which as man the Creator of man,
On the gibbet was suspended.”

Liberal Protestants who refuse to see anything more in the Passion of our Lord than a manifestation of God’s love for us and not a demand of His justice, outrage this love which they claim they want to safeguard. They do not understand that, in proportion as love is purified of all imperfection, it becomes identical with mercy and justice. It is as absolute, imperative, and strong as it is sweet and compassionate. This sweetness and merry would be false and would no longer have anything divine about them, if they were not identical in God with the holy demands expressed by justice, We are far from believing in that “good-natured God whom the world delights in creating for itself, and whom Bossuet, somewhere in his works, calls an idol.”

“Love is strong as death, jealousy as hard as hell. The lamps thereof are fire and flames. Many waters cannot quench charity, neither can the floods drown it” (Cant. 8: 6). Love is strong as death; its holy hatred of evil is as inflexible as hell, its intensity is that of fire, a flame of Jehovah. High floods could not extinguish love nor could rivers submerge it. St. Thomas, in his commentary on this passage, writes: “Love is strong as death, because it separates the soul from the body, as is the case with one who dies from love as Christ did. Excess of love is hard as hell, because the pains that it caused Christ to endure were like those of hell. The torrent of tribulations and afflictions cannot extinguish love.” In this eminent degree, as known by certain souls, victims of expiation, who are in union with the Crucified, mercy and justice are simply one; and in this life it is the highest degree of participation in the infinitely holy love that is in God.

As for the permission of evil, this could not be incompatible with sovereign Goodness and Omnipotence, for, as St. Augustine says: “God has permitted evil because He is good enough and powerful enough to draw good out of the very evil.” “This is the part of the infinite goodness of God,” says St. Thomas, “that He should allow evil to exist, and out of it produce good,” the heroism of the martyrs for instance (La, q. 2, a. 3 ad 1um). Besides, “creatures are by their nature, liable to fail, and it belongs to nature that what may fail should sometimes fail.” Among the good things for which the permission of evil is the condition we must include the

manifestation of justice, splendor justitiae, the triumph of truth over error, of wisdom over false science, and of good over evil. God is not bound to prevent, though He may, the perversity of false philosophers; He can even permit the willful hardening of their hearts, but even that must contribute to His glory. If the vengeance of mercy cannot be His, in souls that no longer have the least wish to be reinstated and that are confirmed in evil, there is still left to Him the vengeance of justice. However mysterious it may be, this permission of evil, far from being opposed to the love of the sovereign Good, is manifestly subordinate to it and to the glory of God.

Thus are solved the so-called antinomies which concern the attributes of this second group, between which there is a virtual distinction according to the various ways in which they are related to creatures. These perfections, in proportion as they are purified of all potentiality or imperfection, tend ex propriis, according to the proper exigencies of each of them, to become identical. Hence this identification does not destroy them or prevent them from existing formally in God, but constitutes them in a pure state.

c) The third group presents a greater difficulty. It includes the perfections between which there is a virtual distinction, independently of all relation to creatures. These are intellection and volition, which would exist in God even if no created being were possible.

In intellectual creatures, these perfections are distinguished not only by potentiality as, for instance, is the case between intelligence and its act which is intellection, but also because they belong formally to two distinct orders. We must therefore admit a virtual distinction between them. Moreover, this distinction is independent of any relation to creatures either actual or possible. God, by the very fact that He is immaterial, pure spirit, and at the same time the first Truth and the sovereign Good, necessarily knows and loves Himself before knowing and loving anything else. How, then, can these two perfections be formally in God and nevertheless become identical in the eminent formal concept of the Deity which is absolutely simple?

Particularly in this case the Agnostic will say that, if God is absolutely simple, intellection and volition can be said to belong to Him only virtually. On the contrary, Scotus insists that we should introduce into the divine reality his actual-formal distinction previous to the consideration of our mind, so as to be able to attribute formally to God intellection and volition.

Scotus claims that if his distinction is rejected, then it is right to say that God knows by His will, and wills by His intellect.

The Thomists reply that what is formally implied by Deity is so eminent that it can identify in itself intellection and love without destroying them. It is superior to these two perfections, yet it is still formally intellection and love, according to an all-divine eminent mode which only the blessed in heaven know in a positive way.

However mysterious the real identification of the perfections of this third group may be for us, we can explain them in a negative and relative way. Intellection and love, in proportion as they are purified of all potentiality or imperfection, likewise tend to become identical, not only according to the general exigencies of the divine simplicity (ex communibus), but also according to their proper exigencies (ex propriis). In fact, as was shown when speaking of the first group of perfections, divine intellection and love are not virtually distinct from the divine essence which is their common subject and object. The divine intellection is identical with its object, the divine essence or the first truth, without virtual distinction between them; the divine love is likewise identical with the divine essence taken in the sense of sovereign good. Besides, they are both identical with the divine essence as subject in thinking and loving. Are we not thus induced to say that two perfections which are virtually distinct from each other, but not from a third which is their common object and subject, tend to become really identical in this same third? And as they tend toward it according to their proper exigencies, objective and subjective, this identification cannot destroy them. They subsist in it, therefore, formally and explicitly in a mysterious way, the positive knowledge of which is unattainable for us in this world. Only an opposition of relation could prevent this identification of intellection and love; but this opposition exists only between the divine Persons, and it is only revelation that can make this known to us. “In God all things are one and the same where there is no opposition of relation.”-Council of Florence (Denzinger, n. 703).

In this life, however, supernatural contemplation which proceeds from the highest of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the gift of wisdom, is a savory knowledge (sapida sapientia) of God, vivified by charity, a simple glance filled with admiration and love (IIa IIae, q. 45). From this we surmise what may be the nature of this identification of thought and love in God. In thus uniting, they are not at all mutually destructive, but they reinforce each

other, and it is only there they are found in their pure state, free from all imperfection. In God intelligence is vital and loving; His love is always penetrated by wisdom, as free as He wishes it to be.

Thus is verified for the three groups of divine perfections the principle stated against the Agnosticism of Maimonides and the formalism of Scotus, namely, that there is no repugnance in the absolute perfections being really identical in the eminence of the formal notion of Deity and existing there, however, not only virtually but formally, and in a pure state. We have not the intrinsic evidence of this mystery which the blessed in heaven possess. Here on earth it is the object of a natural desire which is conditional and inefficacious, and also of a supernatural desire which is efficacious and absolute. But, although we do not have this intrinsic evidence, we have shown at least: (1) that there is in this identification of the divine attributes not an antinomy, but a mystery; (2) that we can explain this mystery in a negative and relative way. Thus we avoid Agnosticism without impairing, as the formalism of Scotus seems to do, the absolute simplicity of God. Our thesis is that of moderate realism (or of realistic conceptualism); the two others represent the old established opposition of Nominalism and extreme Realism.

Such is the solution of the fundamental antinomy brought against us, and it is the principle upon which the solution of the other antinomies rests. In conclusion, let us point out the difficulties (which the Thomists say cannot be solved) that are inherent in the formalism of Scotus and in the rather similar theory held by Suarez regarding the unity required for analogy.

58) The difficulties inherent in the Scotist and Suarezian conceptions of the divine names.

It is with regret that we here insist upon the differences between the theological schools. We are averse to entering into the theological controversies; they have been too long, too violent, at times too human. Have we not in these days enough common enemies against whom we must unite for the defence of the faith and the good of souls? We introduce this subject here because St. Thomas' sublime teaching on the divine names has sometimes been misunderstood and more or less confused with the formalism of Scotus who took the opposite view, or with the attempts proposed by Suarez. We must note these differences so as to set forth the true meaning and import of the mind of the Angelic Doctor.

With Scotus, there is a close connection between his two doctrines of the univocation of being and the actual-formal distinction between the divine attributes.

He contends that being is universal: (1) because we can be certain there is being, and yet doubt regarding the distinction between God and the world; in this case it is a determinate concept that we have of being, but not of God or creature. He thinks, therefore, that we abstract being perfectly from either the created or divine being, and that this concept thus abstracted is absolutely one; (2) the demonstrations of the existence of God and His attributes, so as not to admit of four terms, presuppose a middle term which is predicated univocally of God and creatures; (3) if it were not so, there would be no way of knowing God by means of a simple concept abstracted from sensible things. Maimonides would be right.

According to Scotus there is an actual-formal distinction, previous to the mind's consideration, between the metaphysical degrees of one and the same being; as, for instance, in Socrates, between being, substantiality, corporeity, animality, and rationality. We must, then, bear well in mind that univocation of being, thus distinguished from the other formalities, is not only a logical but also a metaphysical univocation, and not unjustly has it been generally criticized by Thomists, such as Capreolus, Cajetan, John of St. Thomas, and others.

Thus on the supposition that the concept of being is univocal, it must designate in God, as in creatures, a perfection formally distinct from the other absolute perfections, from wisdom for instance. The distinction in God, as in creatures, must be previous to the consideration of our mind. Hence, according to Scotus, the virtual distinction of the Thomists is insufficient, like the purely mental one of the Nominalists; for, in the divine reality, justice would be the same as mercy, and we should have to say that God punishes sinners by His mercy and pardons them by His justice. Contradictories would be verified in God. The Subtle Doctor does not accept, however, the real distinction admitted by the extreme realists and condemned by the Church. He maintains, therefore, the existence of an actual-formal distinction which is neither real nor formal (I, dist. 8, q. 4). Univocation of being seems, indeed, to require this conclusion.

This Scotist view has many difficulties to contend with. Vacant remarks: "When we study the controversies concerning this subject on a certain point, they seem in most cases to amount to a question of words of no

significance. But it is a different matter when these words are viewed in their philosophical setting." We will point out three principal difficulties.

1) The actual-formal distinction seems to be absolutely incompatible with the divine simplicity. This distinction is the one which, according to Scotus, exists between the soul and its faculties and between the faculties themselves. How are we to reconcile with the absolute simplicity of God a distinction of the same kind as that we find to exist between the faculties of the soul? What is, in fact, this actual-formal distinction? If it is not a logical distinction, it must be a real distinction. As Vacant says, along with all the Thomists, "a formal distinction which is neither real nor logical seems to be a contradiction. It must be that what our mind distinguishes formally, is distinguished or not distinguished really in the object which we are considering and which exists outside our mind. There is no other choice?' To avoid the real distinction, we should have to reduce to a mere question of words the arguments of Scotus against St. Thomas. Now, the real distinction of the divine attributes is manifestly incompatible with the absolute simplicity of the divine nature. It is only between the divine Persons that there can be a real distinction, and this because of the relations of opposition between them, which can be made known to us only by revelation. "In God all things are one and the same where there is no relation of opposition."—Council of Florence (Denzinger, n. 703).

2) Univocation of being paves the way for Pantheism. Equally with the actual-formal distinction between the divine attributes, with which it is closely connected, the doctrine of the univocation of being is of the essence of Scotism. Scotus claims to prove this fully, at the same time maintaining that being is not a genus. This, in the opinion of the Thomists, is an inconsistency; for, if being is univocal, the modes which differentiate it are necessarily extrinsic to it, just as the specific differences are to the genus.

Strange to say, Scotus, on certain occasions, without abandoning univocation, maintains analogy of being. He writes, for instance, in his De rerum principio (q. 1, a. 3, n. 20): "Concerning the nature of being it must be understood that unity of being, when the term 'being' is taken in its broad sense as including the Creator and the creature, this unity is not generic but analogical." Father Mariano Fernandez Garcia, in his recent edition of this work (1910), explains in a footnote that this analogy is quite compatible with Scotist univocation which implies only that unity necessary for the verification of the principle of contradiction which forbids one to

affirm and deny the same univocal predicate of the same subject. To that the Thomists have always replied, that contradiction consists in affirming and denying one and the same predicate of one and the same subject, and not one and the same univocal predicate of one and the same univocal subject. Identity includes identity of proportionality, as explained by Aristotle in his Post. Anal. Bk. II, chs. xiii and xiv (Comm. of St. Thomas, lect. 17 and 19).

Several Scotists, such as Belmond, maintain that the Scotist univocation is not in opposition to the analogy of St. Thomas. We ask for nothing more, and this effort to moderate this univocation is for us another indication of the truth of the Thomistic doctrine which we are defending. It is no less true that, even if the difference between the two were reduced to a question of words, the term univocation can only serve to bring about a great confusion of concepts, as Father Petazzi, S.J., has shown in his interesting articles on this subject.

However moderated it may be, univocation seems to us to be absolutely incompatible with analogy, as we have already shown. For, after all, once univocation is admitted, being as being is no longer essentially varied; it no longer implies essential variety. Hence how can we avoid the danger of confusing God's being with that of creatures? Concerning the absolute Monism of Parmenides, who declared all multiplicity to be an illusion, St. Thomas says: "Parmenides' mistake was in conceiving being to be univocal like a genus." The Eleatic philosopher started from this principle that being is one, and, observing that besides being there is nothing (praeter ens nihil est), he concluded that being can be diversified neither by itself nor by anything else. The modes by which it would be differentiated, since they are extrinsic to it, would be nothing. It is the most condemned form of extreme realism. The universal as such exists outside the mind; universal being and the divine being are identical. Spinoza, not to be illogical, ought to return to the theory of Parmenides and deny the existence of the world, or else declare its absorption in God.

Capreolus, having declared this Scotist doctrine to be false, "to wit, that being is predicated univocally of God and creatures," at once points out the conclusion which, in his opinion, follows from it, in these words: "It follows from this that if God creates or simply annihilates the ass, He creates or annihilates Himself or some formality which is God, to wit, the formality of being and of substance." Vacant likewise says: "If we seek to interpret the mind of Scotus, we find ourselves confronted with the

alternative either of looking upon the controversy as a question of words or else of accusing him of paving the way for Pantheism." Schwane expresses himself in the same way in his Histoire des dogmes, IV, 205 f. He sees in the theory of Scotus "a point of view diametrically opposed to that of St. Thomas."

That we may see the connection between univocation of being and Monism, it is enough for us to consider carefully the first sixteen propositions of Rosmini condemned in 1887 (cf. Denzinger, nn. 1891-1930). As a matter of fact, Rosmini, too, sought to discover at least a minimum of univocation between God and creatures. It is the basic error of these first sixteen propositions. We need only quote the sixth: "In being that prescinds from creatures and from God, which is indeterminate being, and in God which is not indeterminate but absolute being, the essence is the same." The fifth proposition is deduced from this: "Being which man acquires by intuition, must be something of the necessary and eternal being, of the creative, determining, and final cause of all contingent beings: and this is God." Moreover, if being is univocal, the modes by which it is differentiated (i.e., created essences) must be extrinsic to it as the specific difference is to the genus; hence these modes are no longer being but a simple negation. This brings us to the twelfth proposition of Rosmini; "Finite reality does not exist, but God causes it to exist by adding limitation to infinite reality. Being which actualizes finite natures, united with them, is an excision from God." According to the way Rosmini views things, it is as if creatures were to God as colors are to light, and even since their differentiating modes are nothing, the logical end of this must be the absolute Monism of Parmenides.

3) From this arises a third difficulty: univocation of being seems absolutely to comprise the essential and necessary distinction between the natural and the supernatural order, and Scotus is led to consider this to be a contingent distinction, dependent upon the free will of God.

In fact, if being is analogous, it is certain that a created intellect cannot know, by its natural powers alone, the divine essence such as it is in itself. The created intellect has created being which is proportionate to it, for its proper and natural object; and the human intellect united with a body has the essence of sensible things for its proper and natural object. Therefore the only natural knowledge of God that we can have is by means of the analogical likeness of Himself which God has imprinted upon creatures.

The immediate knowledge of the divine essence can be only supernatural; it exceeds our proper and natural object, and if there is no repugnance in this, that is because it does not exceed our adequate object which is universal being. This is proved by St. Thomas in Ia, q. 12, a. 4. God is God, the creature is a creature. For a creature to see God naturally as He sees Himself, it would need to have God's nature; it would be at the same time created and uncreated, which is absurd. Cf. III, Contra Gentes, ch. lii.

Scotus, we know, strives to invalidate this demonstration of St. Thomas (cf. Scotus on I, dist. 3, q. 3; IV, dist. 49, q. 11; and Cajetan on Ia, q. 12, a. 4). For the Subtle Doctor, the object of our intellect is simply being. Does he not consider being to be univocal? He refuses to assign to the human intellect a naturally proportionate object, which is the essence of sensible things. And if the Thomists object against him that we ought then to have immediate knowledge of all beings, God Himself included, Scotus replies: "In our present state it is true that our understanding has no conception of anything except by means of concepts derived from material things and with the help of sensible images; but that may be either a punishment of original sin, or the result of an agreement between the faculties which prevents our intellect from having any conception of anything, unless at the same moment there is formed in the imagination a sensible image of the object. But this agreement which persists in the present state has nothing to do with the nature of our understanding, either in so far as it is understanding, or in so far as it is united with a body, inasmuch as it will no longer be in existence when our body shall have risen again glorified. Consequently, whatever may be the cause of our present condition, whether it be purely the will of God or a just punishment or a mental infirmity . . . or something else, the object of our understanding as a faculty is not only the essence of sensible things, but also something which is common to all intelligible things."

Scotus is thus led to admit that there is in us a natural and innate desire (and not only elicited) of seeing God. This desire is the very tendency of our nature. Hence we can no more see how this desire is not efficacious and does not constitute an exigency.

We conceive that a natural and elicited desire which results from knowledge is inefficacious, if this knowledge is conditional: it would be good for us to see God, if it pleased Him to elevate us gratuitously to this vision. We thus avoid the heresy of Baius (Denzinger, n. 1021). How can a

natural and innate desire which precedes all knowledge be merely a velleity; why does it not constitute an exigency? It is the very tendency of our nature. If it was possible for God, as Author of our nature, to give us this desire, He ought, in so far as He is our final end in the natural order, to be able to satisfy it, for the order of agents corresponds to the order of ends. Consequently our natural end would have to be confused with the supernatural end. Thus we can explain why Scotus denied the necessity of the light of glory for the beatific vision and the necessity of the infused moral virtues, and why he reduces the supernatural nature of faith to that of a mode which exalts natural faith.

As Vacant observes (op. cit., p. 15), the distinction between the natural and the supernatural is therefore for Scotus contingent and free. “It depends upon God’s arbitrary determination.” This is tantamount to saying that it is not repugnant for a creature to know God naturally, as God naturally knows Himself. In other words, it is not repugnant for God to create a supernatural substance; but this substance would and would not have the same nature as God; it would thus be a created, a contingent God, which is an absurdity. God’s liberty cannot be extended to the realization of contradictories. God is God, the creature is a creature; this is one of the formulas by which the principle of identity or of non-contradiction is expressed. The theologians also generally maintain, against Ripalda, that a created supernatural substance is an evident contradiction. (Cf. Billuart, De Deo, diss. IV, sec. 4.)

From this contingency, which does away with the necessity of finite essences, Scotus concludes that only our duties toward God are necessary, but those toward ourselves and our neighbors are contingent. God could have willed them to be other than they are (III, d. 37). This necessity of the natural law is thus reduced to a religious morality. In virtue of the same contingent principle, Scotus declares that the immortality of the soul cannot be proved, for it may be, he says, that the soul is immortal not by its nature, but miraculously. (Idem., q. 2, n. 23.)

This doctrine of contingency is in perfect agreement with the voluntarism of Scotus and with many of his Nominalistic tendencies; but it seems to establish a trend of thought which is opposed to the realistic formalism of the univocation of being, for this latter view, if the truth were admitted, would lead rather to Pantheism and eventually to Determinism. It is difficult to say which of these two trends of thought predominates. We therefore think that Scotism is not really a system; it is not sufficiently connected,

coherent, unified, to be called a system. This should not surprise us, since Scotus declares that theology is not a speculative but only a practical science. From this it would follow that theology cannot claim organization into a system, into a Summa in the scientific sense of the term; it can be only a collection of sentences and maxims.

Whatever the dominant trend of thought with Scotus, as regards the question which here concerns us, we must conclude with Scheeben that: “Compared with the profound explanation of God’s invisibility given by St. Thomas, that of Scotus, who attacks it, seems to be very superficial and mechanical. Scotus merely says that God is naturally invisible to creatures, because His absolute independence requires that He should not distribute His light around Him except when He wills to do so out of condescension to creatures. To reason thus, is not only no explanation, but is a notable weakening of the essential point to be explained, which is that God, in consequence of His being naturally invisible, can make Himself visible not simply by an act of His will, but by a supernatural influence which transfigures the perception of the created mind.”

The danger of confounding the natural with the supernatural appears also in the case of Rosmini, as a consequence of his maintaining that being in univocal. See Rosminian propositions 36, 37, 38. The thirty-sixth reads: “The supernatural order consists in the manifestation of being in the plenitude of its real form.” The thirty-eighth is: “God is the object of the beatific vision inasmuch as He is the author of ad extra works.” (Denzinger, nn. 1926, 1928.) It is true that Rosmini, in order to safeguard the distinction between the two orders, does not have recourse to the divine liberty, as Scotus does.

But, as we have seen, this recourse is illogical. To distinguish, as the Subtle Doctor does, between natural and supernatural knowledge solely with reference to the agent upon whom they depend and not with reference to the object by which they are specified, does not sufficiently take into account the doctrine as formulated by the Vatican Council in the following words: “The Catholic Church, with one consent has also ever held and does hold that there is a twofold order of knowledge, distinct both in principle and also in object: in principle, because our knowledge in the one is by natural reason, and in the other by divine faith; in object, because, besides those things to which natural reason can attain, there are proposed to our

belief mysteries hidden in God, which unless divinely revealed cannot be known." (Denzinger, n. 1795.)

If it is thought that we have exaggerated the consequences of extreme Realism, let anyone read the twenty-eight propositions of Master Eckhard which were condemned after his death. It will be seen how he returned at certain times, at least in the form of his teaching, to a doctrine peculiarly like that of Parmenides, who said that either creatures are nothing or else they are God.

Such are the principal difficulties which remain in the Scotist concept of the divine names. The divine simplicity seems to be compromised, and with it the necessary distinction between the natural and the supernatural.

However, a slight falsification of the first notion of the mind upon which all others depend, is not without very serious consequences. As St. Thomas says, following Aristotle, at the end of his De ente et essentia, "a slight error in the beginning assumes considerable proportions toward the end." Now Scotus, as Cajetan says, takes the opposite view to St. Thomas on almost all the great questions of general metaphysics. Should we be surprised at the consequences which we have just pointed out?

One understands how Pope Pius X of saintly memory could have written in his encyclical Pascendi: "But we warn teachers to bear this well in mind, that great harm is done in deviating ever so little from Aquinas, especially in Metaphysics. A slight error in the beginning, to quote the words of Aquinas, is great in the end."

All this has been said without the least animosity and with the respect due to the venerable Duns Scotus. He would obviously be the first to reject the Pantheistic and Naturalistic consequences which seem to us to follow as a necessity from his doctrine of univocation if this univocation is not merely a question of words. Let us say with him, when without irreverence he departed from the teachings of St. Thomas, that, "in choosing or shunning an opinion one must not be influenced by love or hatred for the person holding such an opinion, but rather by the truth itself. Therefore we must love both, i.e., those whose opinion we follow and those whose opinion we shun, because both are of use in the search for truth. Therefore it is right to say: Thanks."

Contemporary Scotists avoid, moreover, the inconveniences we have just mentioned in proportion as they reconcile—and they are doing so more and more—the univocation of Scotus with the analogy of St. Thomas.

Suarez, as he does in most other instances, seeks a middle course between St. Thomas and Scotus. Like the good eclectic that he is, he applies in philosophy and theology the maxim that in medio stat virtus (virtue is the golden mean). He determines this mean, guided perhaps less by speculative principles than by the opposite opinions which practically are taught in the Schools. Is there not some element of truth in these two contrary opinions, since they are held and impressed upon us as facts? We must complete the one by the other and find an intermediate one, unless we are willing to risk displeasing all those whom we wish to conciliate. At times Suarezian wisdom seems less concerned with the rigor of metaphysics than with the flexibility of prudence, seeming to forget at certain moments that the mean of speculative intellectual virtues consists in conformity with objective reality and not in conformity with our intention, however upright this may be. Theological eclecticism takes its good where it finds it. It entails the vast labor of bringing together the diverse Scholastic doctrines and striking a sort of mean between the conflicting opinions. This made it possible for Bossuet to say of Suarez that “he voices the opinion of every School.” But, in wishing always to find the just mean between the rival systems, he seems to have gone to excess, by sometimes making this mean to be, as it were, the criterion of truth. For this reason, because error is constantly opposed to truth, we would have to seek for a just mean between the two; and because evil is the perpetual foe of good, we would be obliged, as a certain Liberalism wishes, to stick to the mediocre. There is nothing farther from the thought of the celebrated Jesuit. But is it disparaging for St. Thomas to have found in Scotus someone to contradict him, and is his doctrine false or incomplete because it was attacked by another system? Suarez was not less esteemed, as even his adversaries admit, for he, too, encountered a very penetrating theologian. If he did not find a via media, firm, secure, and certain, between Thomism and Scotism, that is because there is no such way.

In his Disputationes metaphysicae (disp. 2, sec. 2), Suarez treats of the unity of the notion of being; of the analogy between divine and created being (disp. 28, sec. 3); of being common to substance and accident (disp. 32, sec. 2). We cannot give here a full explanation of the opposition between the Suarezian and the Thomist notions of being. This has been well done by A. Martin (art. “Suarez métaphysicien et théologien” in Science catholique, July and September, 1898); finally, Del Prado devotes more than

fifty pages to this question in his fine work entitled, De veritate fundamentali philosophiae christianae.

In conclusion, Suarez strives to refute Scotism by Thomism, and Thomism by Scotism; then, when he himself seeks to find a middle way, he is continually buffeted between these two systems.

First of all, he rejects the Scotist univocation because, as the Thomists say, being would be a genus, and because God and creatures would not differ as beings (cf. disp. 2, sec. 5, nn. 5, 10; disp. 28, sec. 3, n. 7).

Besides, Suarez is not satisfied with the analogy of proportionality, for the reason that Scotus gives, in that the notion of being would not have sufficient unity (cf. disp. 28, sec. 3, nn. 9, 11). In his opinion, the objective concept of being cannot contain actually and implicitly the various modes of being (disp. 2, sec. 2, n. 20).

Are we not thus brought back to univocation which from the very first was rejected? How can being still be essentially varied? Suarez perceives the difficulty and goes so far as to write (disp. 2, sec. 2, n. 34) as follows: “What I have just said of the unity of the concept of being is far clearer and more certain than the analogy of being; in defending analogy one must not deny the unity of the concept; but if anything had to be denied, it would be rather analogy which is uncertain, than the unity of the concept which is a demonstrated fact.”

However, Suarez maintains an intrinsic analogy of attribution between the divine Being and created beings (disp. 28, sec. 3, n. 16); the creature is being by participation, and God is essentially being; the creature merely participates in being inasmuch as it is dependent upon God and is subordinate to Him. Very good; but how then can anyone maintain the absolute unity of the concept of being? It is clear that being by participation differs from what is essentially being, by reason of its very actuality, and therefore, in so far precisely as it is being and even in so far as it is opposed to nothingness, it is in a way contingent and not necessary. They do not both exist in the same way. The actuality of the two is essentially different. Can there be in this difference any other similarity than that of proportion, which is the only one admitted by St. Thomas? Cf. De veritate, q. 2, a. 11.

In order to safeguard the absolute unity of the notion of being, does Suarez admit with Scotus that in God being is formally and actually distinct from other absolute perfections? No; on this point he follows St. Thomas. But, although he does not posit in God a real distinction, he denies a real

distinction between essence and existence in creatures. Does not this in a way tend to destroy the distinction between the created and the uncreated? Scotus brings God nearer to the creature; Suarez, the creature nearer to God. Whatever he may say, we cannot but maintain that what primarily distinguishes created from uncreated being is the relation of dependence of the former upon the latter. This relation of dependence necessarily arises from the very nature of created being whose essence is not existence. Because it is not self-existent, it depends upon another. This relation of dependence does not constitute its nature, its entity. It is even impossible to conceive of being by participation, of which Suarez speaks, without distinguishing in it what participates and what is participated, what limits and what is limited, essence and existence. (See Del Prado, op. cit., pp. 170-178.) On all these fundamental points Suarez manifestly abandons St. Thomas, and is more on the side of Scotus. The identity of essence and existence in creatures always brings him back to univocation of being admitted by the Subtle Doctor, "and perhaps without suspecting, it, he reproduces his theories." (Cf. Martin, op. cit.) We have already pointed out the dangers of this univocation. It compromises the infinite distinction prevailing between the natural and the supernatural.

Suarez seems to escape these difficulties only by continually wavering between Scotus and St. Thomas. This movement to and fro does not seem to conform sufficiently to the rules of logic to permit us to look upon the Suarezian doctrine as a system.

Everything conspires, then, to make us say that there is here no possibility of a via media between Scotus and St. Thomas. Being as such either does or does not actually imply essential variety; in this it is (actu implicite) or is not essentially varied. If it is not, the differential modes of being are not being; they are nothing. Hence being cannot be diversified, and we must come logically to the absolute Monism of Parmenides and declare that all multiplicity is an illusion. This is what St. Thomas said with great depth of thought in refuting this primitive form of Pantheism. Cf. Metaphysica, I, ch. v, lect. 9: "In this Parmenides was deceived, in that he used the term 'being' as if it were ONE IN MEANING AND NATURE, as genus is. But this is impossible. For being is not a genus, but is predicated in various ways of diverse things." If, then, the notion of being were absolutely one, we should have to accept the conclusion of Parmenides, because, as St. Thomas says here, "We cannot conceive of anything which

accrues to the notion of being by which it would be diversified; for that which accrues to being is extraneous to it. But what is of this kind is nothing."

This solution of St. Thomas appears so necessary that it seems the disciples of Scotus and also those of Suarez are more and more inclined to accept it. So it is that several Suarezians, such as Father Frick, S.J. (Ontologia, nn. 6, 7), and Father Delmas, S.J. (Metaphysica generalis, n. 49), demand for the concept of being only an imperfect unity, and it is not impossible to find texts of Suarez in support of this interpretation.

There would no longer be any differences on this question if it were not necessarily connected with the problem of the real distinction between essence and existence in creatures.

Since Scotus and Suarez did not perceive the radical difference between the analogue and the univocal, and since they did not realize that the unity of the concept of being is only one of proportionality, they could admit only that essence still belongs to being if it is but a real potentiality which receives and limits existence. On the contrary, this presents no difficulty if we grasp well the fact that being is analogous and applies in quite a different way to potentiality and act.

Both Scotus and Suarez, since they do not admit a real distinction between essence and existence in creatures, deprived themselves of the most typical example of analogy of proportionality between God and creatures. It is clear, indeed, that there can be only similarity of proportions between the being of creatures composed of potentiality and act, and the being of God who is pure Act.

Thus is verified what we affirmed at the beginning of the second part of this work, when treating of what formally constitutes the divine nature (n. 44), which is that there is an intimate connection between the two fundamental theses of Thomistic ontology: (1) That being is analogous with reference to God and creatures, according to an analogy of proportionality; (2) That God alone is Being itself, and that in creatures there is a real distinction between essence and existence.

The unity of the primary notions common to God and creatures is therefore only a unity of proportionality. Hence the perfections expressed by them can exist formally in God and are identical in Him. Thus is safeguarded the knowability of God and also His ineffability which results from His transcendence and absolute simplicity.

By the light of this general doctrine of the identification of the divine attributes it will be possible for us to solve the special antinomies relative to liberty. The difficulties which they present oblige us to discuss them somewhat at length.

CHAPTER IV

THE SPECIAL ANTINOMIES RELATING TO FREEDOM

Of all the antinomies brought against us by Agnosticism, the most difficult to solve seem to be those relating to freedom. First of all, how are we to reconcile either divine or human free will with the principle of sufficient reason, which, as we have seen, is the foundation for the proofs of God's existence? If all that is, has its sufficient reason, a determining sufficient reason without which the determination of what comes into existence would remain unexplained and unintelligible, must we not admit that the free act itself must have a determining sufficient reason? And how is it free under this determination? If to avoid Determinism we maintain that the free act of itself has no determining sufficient reason, we conceive of it, it seems, as an absolute beginning. But this is practically a denial of the necessity and universality of the principle of sufficient reason, which is the foundation for the proofs of God's existence.

To safeguard the validity of reason and its first principles, some Intellectualists, such as Spinoza, thought they must deny both divine and human freedom.

To safeguard freedom and along with it morality, some Voluntarists, such as Renouvier and Secrétan, thought they must deny the necessity or objectivity of the first principles of reason.

There are other antinomies connected with this principal one: How can we reconcile the freedom of God with His wisdom and immutability? How can we reconcile human freedom with God's foreknowledge and movement of all things? Above all, how are we to reconcile moral evil or sin with the divine motion?

For a full realization of the importance of the problem, we will briefly explain the thesis of Absolute Intellectualism and also that of Libertism;

they correspond more or less to the two parts of the third antinomy of Kant.

59) Statement of the problem; absolute Intellectualism and Libertism, the third antinomy of Kant

Absolute Intellectualism is to be found especially in the works of Spinoza, who applies the mathematical method to all the sciences. As mathematics considers neither efficient nor final causes, nor sensible qualities, Spinoza denies the reality of efficiency properly so called, of finality, and of sensible qualities, and admits such a conformity of mathematical reason with being that it makes him completely deny contingency and free will. Everything exists because of the quite geometrical necessity of the divine nature, without any choice on the part of God.

Hegel in his Panlogism goes so far as to say that the real and the rational are identical, what is and what must be, the accomplished fact and right, success and morality. But thus to reduce every contingent fact to the necessity of rational laws, he is obliged to change the meaning of these laws. For him the principle of contradiction is nothing more than a law of minor logic, of the understanding occupied with abstractions. The law of major logic, of reason and reality, is the identification of contradictories in becoming. Absolute Intellectualism or Panlogism is thus itself identified with anti-Intellectualism which denies the necessity of rational principles.

The Intellectualism of Leibniz, though maintaining the necessity of the principles of contradiction and sufficient reason, strives to find a place for freedom. As a matter of fact, it allows only contingency to remain, and a necessary choice of a moral necessity. In God as in man, choice is infallibly determined by the principle of sufficient reason. Leibniz read St. Augustine, St. Thomas, Bannez, and Alvarez, as well as Molina and Fonseca; he admits with the Thomists that “intelligence is, as it were, the soul of freedom” (Théod. III, sec. 228); that freedom presupposes spontaneity, which means exemption from all external constraint (sec. 301) and also indifference; but he adds: provided we do not understand by indifference anything more than contingency. Contingency is the “exclusion of logical or metaphysical necessity” (sec. 288), but not the exclusion of moral necessity which belongs properly to understanding and which inclines infallibly though without necessity (sec. 310). According to Leibniz, the last practical judgment which terminates a deliberation is indifferent to what is meant by contingent. This is equivalent to saying that the contrary or at least the

contradictory judgment is possible, or does not imply a contradiction. But it is not indifferent in this sense, that the contrary or the contradictory judgment would be compatible with the external circumstances and the internal dispositions in which one finds oneself in the act of judging. To admit this compatibility, to admit that in the same circumstances a man can at one time act and at another time not act or act differently, is, according to Leibniz, a denial of the principle of sufficient reason, because that principle requires that nothing happen without a determining reason for it. He says further: “Without this great principle we should never be able to prove the existence of God and we should lose a vast number of very exact and very useful reasonings which ultimately rest upon this principle. It suffers no exception, otherwise its force would be weakened. There is also nothing so weak as those systems in which everything is unstable and replete with exceptions.” (Théod., I, sec. 84.)

The last practical judgment that terminates a deliberation is therefore not absolutely necessary, like a geometrical conclusion—in that Leibniz differs from Spinoza—but it is necessary, he says, with a moral necessity in virtue of the principle of sufficient reason or that of the better. In such determined circumstances it cannot at the same time be better to act and better not to act; in one and the same situation there can be only one better, not two. And if one judges that it is better to act, the circumstances being the same, one cannot effectively abandon this judgment and judge that it is better not to act. “Everything is certain and predetermined in man as in everything else, and the human soul is a kind of spiritual automaton” Théod., I, sec. 52. This is what is called Psychological Determinism.

If that is true, our activity seems to be no more than a series of acts or phenomena, the connection between them being governed by the laws of association of ideas when we do not reflect, but by the principle of sufficient reason when we do reflect. Can the rational automaton be called a person, is it really master of its acts, sui juris? Is it not rather a part of the universe, a group of phenomena lost in the immense series? Is it not rather limited to the transmission of the received activity? Is it really the source of its own activity, is it truly endowed with initiative? In spite of being endowed with reason, it is not so much acting as acted upon.

According to the author of Monadologie, God, too, finds Himself under the moral necessity of creating rather than not creating; He would be neither good nor wise if He did not create; and of all possible worlds, He is under

the moral necessity of choosing the best; therefore the best must exist. Leibniz sees no possible intermediate position between this thesis and that of the Nominalists, Ockham and Descartes, who make the truth of the principle of contradiction and the first principle of morality depend upon divine freedom. And it is "dishonoring" God, he says, to claim that He has established the distinction between good and evil by a purely arbitrary decree. . . . Why would it not, then, just as well be the Manichaean principle of evil as the orthodox principle of good? (Théod., II, secs. 176 f.)

Consequently Leibniz maintains that God knows future free acts "by the knowledge of simple intelligence before He has decreed to give them existence." "From this we see," he says, "that to account for God's foreknowledge, we can do without the scientia media of the Molinists and without Predetermination, as taught by Bannez and Alvarez, who were very profound writers" (Théod., I, sec. 47). "It is sufficient," says Leibniz, "for the creature to be by its preceding condition inclined more to one side than the other; and all these combinations of actions of the creature and of all creatures were represented in the divine intellect and known to God by the knowledge of simple intelligence before He decreed to give them existence." Such is Psychological Determinism, according to which the principle of sufficient reason imposes an infallibly determining moral necessity upon divine and human freedom.

This doctrine of moral necessity has been held, more or less distinctly, by a rather large number of philosophers both before and after Leibniz. It seemed to many to be the inevitable consequence of the principle of sufficient reason and of that of the subordination of the will to the intellect which directs it. In favor of this thesis Leibniz quotes Plato, and generally those in favor of absolute optimism. Afterwards, Rosmini was condemned by the Church for having taught the following proposition: "The love by which God loves Himself even in creatures, and which is the reason determining Him to create, constitutes a moral necessity, which in the most perfect being is always productive of an effect: for necessity of this kind only in the majority of imperfect beings leaves intact bilateral freedom" (Denzinger, n. 1908). Contrary to this, the Vatican Council said: "God, of His own goodness and almighty power, not for the increase or acquirement of His own happiness, but to manifest His perfection by the blessings which He bestows on creatures, and with absolute freedom of counsel, created out of nothing, from the very first beginning of time, both the spiritual and the

corporeal creature, to wit, the angelical and the mundane, and afterwards the human creature as partaking, in a sense, of both, consisting of spirit and of body" (Den-zinger, n. 1783). "If anyone shall say that God created, not by His will, free from all necessity, but by a necessity equal to the necessity whereby He loves Himself; let him be anathema" (Denzinger, n. 1805).

The Intellectualism and Psychological Determinism of Leibniz which the Church rejected, was followed by a no less excessive voluntarist and libertarian reaction. Between Lebniz and Kant the question at issue is, to know whether we must attribute the supremacy to the will or the intellect. The third Kantian antinomy presents the difficulty in sufficiently clear terms.

The thesis of this antinomy shows the necessity of admitting a free causality. According to the antithesis, a free causality is contrary to rational principles.

The thesis is formulated by Kant as follows: Causality in conformity with the laws of nature is not the only kind of causality which can explain all the phenomena in the world. To explain them a free causality must also be admitted. Let it be supposed, indeed, that everything happens in the world according to necessary laws; from this it results that a phenomenon can never be considered as fully determined, for its previous condition presupposes another, and so on indefinitely. We do not therefore arrive at that complete determination demanded by the natural law. To satisfy this law the series of causes must therefore be complete, final; it must start from a cause which has no need of being previously determined; it must start from a free cause.

The antithesis maintains, on the contrary, that there is no such thing as freedom and that everything in the world happens solely according to the laws of nature. Granted, indeed, that there is such a thing as free causality, capable of commencing of itself a whole series of connected actions, you thus introduce incoherence into nature and break the unity of experience which demands that all phenomena be interconnected, without any possible gap, by a relation of antecedents and consequents. We must therefore keep to natural necessity and exclude a freedom which introduces disorder into the world and knowledge which is contrary to the principle of sufficient reason and to that of causality.

We know that Kant solved this antinomy by distinguishing between the phenomenal and the intelligible. Certain human actions which, for our

senses, are embodied in the inflexible chain of physical causality, can at the same time proceed from a free causality situated in the world of things in themselves. There would thus be “a causality the effects of which (wirkung) are to be met with in the world of phenomena, although it is not itself a phenomenon.” Man can discover by his own reasoning a motive capable of determining his conduct independently of all sensuous impulses.

Kant himself avows that this conception “must appear in the highest degree subtle and obscure.” We do not see, indeed, how it solves the difficulty, if the principle of sufficient reason is applied both to the intelligible and the phenomenal world of things. Moreover, are not the things in themselves determined by the divine causality? And how can moral action be necessary in so far as it is a phenomenon, and free in so far as it is a transcendent determination?

Without succeeding in finding a place for freedom in the order of phenomena, Kant subordinated metaphysics to morality and thus admitted the principle of Voluntarism. This voluntarist idea prepared the way for him.

The system of Fichte may be called a philosophy of freedom. The absolute is not that which is, but that which must be; and that which must be is freedom. In the philosophy of his last years, quite in opposition to Hegel, Schelling puts the will above reason. Schopenhauer declares the living will to be superior to this Hegelian logic which he considers only a series of abstractions.

Lequier and Secrétan strive, each in his own way, to submit all philosophical problems to this mooted question. Both of them, after the manner of Kant, subordinate metaphysics to morality. The Intellectualist and Voluntarist theses are pushed to their ultimate or so-called ultimate consequences. Is it not true that Intellectualism, which posits as a principle the subordination of the will to the intellect, must admit that all the steps in willing are predetermined by the intellect? Must we not return to the old doctrine of Socrates and Plato, that virtue is a science: that when anybody does what is morally wrong, he does so through ignorance or, as Spinoza said, because of a failure to form clear ideas for himself? Does not Intellectualism normally end in the negation of free will?

According to these same philosophers, if we wish to bring back freedom we must in the end reject the absolute necessity of first principles as laws of being, subordinate in all cases intelligence to volition, at least in God, and

say with Descartes that if the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles and if there are no mountains without valleys, this is because God willed it to be so. According to Secrétan and Lequier, if we do not put freedom in the first place, it has no place anywhere; if it is not everything, it is nothing. Necessity is the result of abstractions of the mind. As Descartes said, God is absolute freedom. That being admitted, Secrétan does not hesitate to sacrifice divine foreknowledge to free will: God wills to be ignorant of future free acts. Lequier, though claiming to remain faithful to Catholicism and to infuse new life into theology, also denies divine foreknowledge. Do not certain contemporary apologists still cherish the ambition of the author of La recherche d'une premiére vérité to make "freedom the fundamental dogma of Catholicism"?

There are many philosophers who have declared themselves more or less completely in favor of this libertarian solution. Charles Renouvier and the neo-critics have brought up again in its defence all the arguments of the Pyrrhonists: that nothing is certain, and that every affirmation is a free belief. For a long time the neo-critics have led us back to the famous dilemma by which Lequier thought he could prove that we must choose freely between necessity and freedom, both of them impossible of demonstration. It is frequently said that freedom and necessity cannot rule with equal authority; we must choose between the two. Charles Renouvier decided freely in favor of freedom, because it makes the least demand upon truth and gives the greatest result: (1) It is the foundation of knowledge; for knowledge is the result of an act of free will; for, even considered in detail, no proposition claimed to be proved is absolutely certain; (2) It makes morality possible, since without it one cannot conceive of duty. It cannot be a question of proving the existence of this duty; but it is one's duty to believe freely in duty. "I refrain," Lequier said, "from the pursuit of a work of knowledge which would not be mine. I embrace the certitude of which I am the author. The formula of knowledge is doing. It is not becoming but doing, and in doing to become. . . . Freedom is the condition which renders possible the imperfect and admirable work of human knowledge, and the work of duty which results from it. This is enough perhaps to assure us that it is not a vain conception of our pride."

This thesis is nowadays pressed to its ultimate conclusions by the representatives of the "new philosophy," Bergson and his disciples Le Roy and Wilbois. Truth is essentially variable; it is freely realized and freely

accepted. “The mind is never confronted but by itself, its degrees and moments. The world is its work and it, too, in so far as it is realized, is still its work. In that way, Idealism is truth; I mean the Idealism of thought-action.” Thought-action “is founded upon itself and does not presuppose anything. . . . In fact, only thought-action is capable of being self-sufficient. Nothing is posited before it, since nothing is posited except by it. It is a positing of itself. If one takes it to be the fundamental reality, it becomes freedom, for there is nothing that conditions it; on the contrary, everything is connected with it. Hence it really seems like a starting-point, a first beginning.” You would think you were reading a translation from Fichte with this difference, however, that Fichte, far less paradoxical than Le Roy, thus defines the absolute and universal, and not the individual ego. According to the new philosophy, “axioms and categories, forms of the understanding or sense perception, all these are submitted to the process of becoming, of evolution. The human mind is plastic and can change its most intimate desires.”

The freedom which Bergson admits is nothing else, however, than absolute spontaneity. The free act is that “which emanates from the ego and only from the ego, to the exclusion of any external influence whatever.” This doctrine is, in certain respects, reminiscent of Hume who no more believes in freedom in the proper sense of the term than he does in necessity. According to Bergson, freedom is not the power to decide between two alternatives; there is no active indifference between two possible choices; but “if our action seemed free to us, it is because the relation of this action to the state from which it came could not be expressed by a law, this psychic state being unique of its kind and no more needing ever to reproduce itself.” “You do not bathe twice in the same river,” said Heraclitus, and from this point of view should we be surprised that freedom is everywhere? John Weber, who appeals to Bergson, himself admits: “They have criticized this theory, not without some show of reason, in that it escapes the difficulties (of free will) by an arbitrary definition. I call free every act that I accomplish; then I am free, since all my acts, according to the definition, are free.”

Weber also deduces the moral consequences of the Libertarian and anti-Intellectualist theory of Bergson. These consequences form the most radical kind of unmorality. This conclusion, previously quoted by us (supra, n. 21), will bear repetition here: “Morality, in planting itself on a terrain from

which invention grows in all its vigor, immediately and full of life, in manifesting itself as the most insolent encroachment of the realm of the intellect upon spontaneity, was fated to encounter the continual contradictions of that undeniable reality of dynamism and creation which is our activity. . . . Confronted with these morals of ideas, we outline morality, or, more correctly, the unmorality of the act. . . . We call ‘good’ whatever has triumphed. If the success is fierce and implacable, if the vanquished are completely defeated, destroyed, abolished beyond hope, then success justifies everything. . . . The man of genius is profoundly immoral; but for anyone to be immoral is not the proper thing. In this world of egoisms which are strangers to one another, ‘duty’ is nowhere in particular, yet it is everywhere, for all actions possess absolute value. . . . The act is a law unto itself, the whole law. . . . The repentant sinner deserves all the anguish of his contrite soul, because he was not strong enough to transgress the law, and unworthy to be a sinner. The criminal still at large, who is tortured by remorse of conscience and gives himself up and confesses his crime, deserves punishment, for he was not strong enough to bear with undisturbed mind the terrible weight of crime.”

The philosophers of freedom had to end in such radical nihilism. With Bergson and Le Roy, as Jacob remarked, not only have we no more truth and necessity in the Kantian sense, but neither truth nor necessity in the Spencerian sense: “Here every intellectual norm disappears or ceases to be anything else but an artifice, an unfaithful symbol which betrays what it symbolizes and which cannot be called a true lie, ἀληθινὸν ψεύδος.”

We see that the anti-Intellectualism of the champions of the New Philosophy” again unites with the absolute Intellectualism of Hegel. These extreme systems coincide and ought to, for both admit the formula of their common father, Heraclitus, that: “everything is and is not, nothing is, all is becoming.” From this point of view, necessity and freedom are identical. Hegel reduced the real to the rational, fact to right; the anti-Intellectualists reduce the rational to the real, right to “accomplished fact.” Both must grant that success is at the same time truth and goodness. There is no need of saying that might exceeds right; it is right. These two extreme doctrines are the ruination of all morality; absolute Intellectualism suppresses it, because it denies freedom; Libertism, devised to safeguard it, likewise suppresses it because it denies the absolute character of truth and declares itself powerless to establish duty on a solid basis.

Frankly, we do not believe that the problem of free will has made much progress in modern times. Too often people have delighted in dramatic antitheses which seduce the imagination and deceive one with an appearance of profundity; too often also, in claiming to define univocally what is of the very essence of being by one of these two terms: intelligence or will. Moreover, the modern philosophers have not always sufficiently profited by the researches of their predecessors concerning the relations between the will and the object by which it is specified. Occasion, too, will be afforded us of showing that the division of the faculties which has become classic since the time of Kant and the Eclectics (intellect, sense perception, and will), a division which implies the abandonment of the traditional definition of the will (that it is a rational appetite), has led modern philosophers to eliminate in the problem of free will the very principle of its solution, namely, this formal object of the will, goodness under this aspect, or its adequate object, universal goodness.

Contemporary philosophers still need, we think, to profit by the speculations of Aristotle and St. Thomas, by the synthesis realized by this "Christian philosophy," which Boutroux recently declared to be "so complete, so precise, so logical, so firmly established in its least details that it seemed for ever unchangeable." Could freedom be eliminated from such a synthesis constructed by theologians from the Intellectualist point of view? The Church affirms the existence of divine and human freedom as well as the absolute character of truth and the nature of God. Every Catholic theologian, even Scotus, must admit with Leibniz, against Ockham and Descartes, that it is "dishonoring" God to claim that He "established the distinction between good and evil by a purely arbitrary decree. . . . Why would it not then just as well be the Manichaean principle of evil as the orthodox principle of good?" (Théod., II, secs. 176, 177.) Besides, the Church affirms the absolute freedom of the creative act: "God, with absolute freedom of counsel, created out of nothing, from the very first beginning of time, both the spiritual and corporeal creature."—Vatican Council, Sess. III, ch. i. She likewise affirms the free will of man in her doctrine on merit and demerit and the just punishments of God. It has been defined, at least since the condemnation of Jansenism, that spontaneity alone (freedom from coercion) does not suffice for meriting.

Hence it is particularly interesting to study a speculative theologian on this question, since he cannot think of sacrificing either of these two terms:

truth and freedom; he is forced to reconcile them. It is a remarkable thing that, contrary to the majority of contemporary philosophers, St. Thomas not only claims to remain faithful to the principle of Intellectualism, but also claims to derive freedom in the true sense from reason itself. That is what we should like to explain. Thus we see the true character of Thomist Intellectualism and in what it differs from Absolute Intellectualism.

The difficulty of the problem of freedom was certainly realized by those who lived in the Middle Ages. St. Thomas gives an Intellectualistic solution, defending the principle that the will follows the direction of the intellect. That given by Duns Scotus was Voluntarist, implying the primacy of the will. Suarez, who in most cases seeks a middle course between Scotus and St. Thomas, claims to uphold the superiority of intellect over will, while maintaining with Molina that the will is not in all its acts directed by the intellect and that, confronted by two choices equally good, the will can, without any motive proposed to it by the intellect, choose one and leave the other. The freedom of indifference thus becomes for Suarez and Molina a freedom of equilibrium; there may be an unmotived preference.

To solve the principal antinomy relating to free will, we will examine in the first place how, according to St. Thomas, free will results from intelligence; after that we will consider how it is reconciled with the principle of sufficient reason and therefore with divine wisdom. It will then be easier to defend the reconciliation of the freedom of God with His immutability, and of human freedom with the divine motion. The problem of freedom, stated first on the part of man, is seen in all its force when stated as it concerns God. In spite of the irreparable imperfections of our analogical knowledge, we shall see that God’s freedom is incomparably more manifest than man’s, though it is not—as Secrétan and, in a certain sense, Descartes would have it to be—that which formally constitutes the divine nature.

60) Freedom results from intelligence. “Reason is the radical cause of all liberty.” St. Thomas, De veritate, q. 24, a. 2.

The philosophy of St. Thomas, considered in its fundamental aspects, shows itself to be a decisively intellectualistic doctrine. We are confronted by a philosophy which maintains the dependence of intellect on being, the ontological validity of the laws of thought, the subordination of practice to theory, of will to intellect; we will only what we know, apprehend as good

nihil volitum nisi praecognitum. In a general way, in a being endowed with knowledge, appetite follows upon knowledge of good (Summa Theol., Ia, q. 19, a. 1; q. 80, a. 1) and, according as this knowledge is sensible or intellectual, we must distinguish the sensitive appetite (irascible and concupiscible, principle of the passions) from the rational appetite or the will (Ia, q. 80, a. 2). The will appears thus to be rooted in the intellect. Voluntas consequitur intellectum (Ia, q. 19. a. 1).

The majority of modern philosophers since the time of Kant and the Eclectics, after adopting the classification of the faculties due to the influence of J. J. Rousseau (intellect, sense perception, will), refuse to identify the rational appetite with the will, and sharply reprove Plato, Aristotle, and Leibniz for having confused them. The principal reason they give in support of their view is that, if the will is confused with the rational appetite, this means the end of freedom, for every appetite is a necessary one. We shall see that, on the contrary, the modern notion of will suppresses the principle in the solution of the problem of free will and prevents us from seeing that liberty is a result of reason.

Reid, Kant, Cousin, and Renouvier, in striving to show that the will is not an appetite, have claimed that we can will without desiring. This is manifestly contrary to the facts, for every volition presupposes an end, and the notion of an end implies the notion of goodness. The goodness may be either virtuous, useful, or delectable, but it must always be desirable. The will is nothing else but a rational appetite; this is its definition.

Having thus defined the will, we now consider what is its formal and adequate object. It cannot be a certain and determinate good, such or such kind of delectable, useful, or virtuous good; if the will follows upon the intellect, it can tend toward everything in which the intellect will be able to discover the notion of goodness, toward every reality which the intellect will be able to present to the rational being as something good. The formal object of the will is therefore goodness as such: just as the formal object of the intellect is being or the notion of being, which is the foundation of every idea, the soul of every judgment, the connecting link in every process of reasoning: just as the formal object of sight is color, and the formal object of hearing is sound. The eye perceives nothing except in virtue of color, the intellect nothing but in virtue of being, and the will nothing but in virtue of good; it wills evil only in so far as it finds it to be an apparent good, just as the intellect can conceive nothingness only by comparing it to being. The

will can therefore desire or will all that pertains to good, just as the intellect can know all that pertains to being.

But what is of importance here for us clearly to see, is the infinite difference between the intellectual and the sensible knowledge of good, between the idea of good and the common image or sensible remembrance of pleasure, a remembrance which the animal has and which cannot be the basis of freedom.

The idea, as we have said (cf, supra, nn. 15—18), differs essentially from the common image because it contains the intrinsic raison d'être or the essence of what it represents, rendering it intelligible to us, whereas even the common image, which by its confusion can simulate the universality of the idea, contains only sensible phenomena in juxtaposition, revealing them to us. The common image of the triangle contains in juxtaposition the sensible phenomena of any triangle, without causing these phenomena to become intelligible to us, without bringing out clearly a dominant trait which would be the raison d'être of all the others. The idea of the triangle, on the contrary, reveals to us this essential trait by which all the properties which necessarily follow from it are made intelligible to us.

From this we see what difference there is between the idea of the good and the common or confused image simultaneously present in the imagination. This confused image recalls merely the sensation of pleasure associated with the presence of this or that pleasurable object. The idea of the good, on the contrary, tells us what good is; it connects all its notes with a fundamental element, and this element with being which is the first object of our intellect. For everyone, good is that which by its nature arouses in us, by our knowledge of it, desire, love, and hope; when it is present, it causes joy, when absent, sadness; in a general way, it arouses all the movements of the appetite. Just as all these movements of the appetite spring from love, so all the characteristics of good are derived from one of them; good is that which is capable of exciting love (bonum est id quod omnia appetunt: good is what all beings seek for). What is the raison d'être of this "appetibility," of this power which good possesses of attracting the appetite? Why does good attract us, why is it desirable? It is because good can increase our being, fill up a void in us, perfect us. But to perfect us it must itself be perfection, plenitude of being in which nothing is wanting, capable of diffusing itself. "A thing is desirable only in so far as it is perfect; for all desire their own perfection. But everything is perfect so far as it is actual"

(Ia, q. 5, a. 1). “The formal notion of good consists in perfection as constituting the basis of appetibility.” As we rise by the principle of raison d’être from the multiplicity of beings to the absolute Being, from the multiplicity of truths to the absolute Truth, so we also rise from the multiplicity of goods which are partial and limited, to the supreme Good in whom no absolute perfection can be wanting. He is plenitude of Being.

If, then, the intellect is directed by the will and not by the imagination, the adequate object by which it is specified can be only good in all its generality, universal good, to speak from the viewpoint of extension. This will enable the will to rise to the love of the supreme Good, the absolute, total, or infinite Good which alone is adequate to its vast capacity for loving, which alone, therefore, can give to it the perfect happiness that it seeks; every partial good will be incapable of fully satisfying it (Ia IIae. q. 10, a. 2). “That good alone which is perfect and lacking in nothing is such a good that the will cannot not-will it.”

From this definition of the will St. Thomas goes on to deduce liberty, just as a property is deduced from a nature. But as the will has its principle in reason and is directed by this in all acts, we cannot say that liberty is deduced from the definition of the will and not at the same time from reason. “Forasmuch is it necessary that man has a free will, as he is rational” (Ia, q. 83, a. 1). Freedom must manifest itself as a property of rational being. “The radical cause of all liberty is reason” (De veritate, XXIV, 2), or, according to a more precise formula: “The root of liberty is the will as the subject thereof, but it is the reason as its cause” (Ia IIae, q. 17, a. 1 ad 2). In distinguishing between the radical and the proximate principle either of liberty or of the free act, we shall see: (1) that the radical principle of liberty, as being the power of choosing (potentia ad utrumlibet), is in reason, in so far as this latter knows what causes the good to be so, and its proximate principle is in the vast range of the will which is specified by universal good; (2) that the radical principle of choice or the free act is in the indifference of the practical judgment with regard to such particular good, and its proximate principle is in the dominating indifference of the will with regard to this same good.

Too often the Thomist proof of liberty is presented without taking into account the radical principle or the immediate condition of choice: the indifference of the judgment. One is satisfied in considering the relation which the will, specified by universal good, bears toward a particular and

inadequate good, basing the argument on this major: An inadequate object which does not exhaust the capacity of a faculty leaves it in a state of indifference. Presenting the proof in this way, one forgets that the will tends toward an object only if this object is judged to be good, and not sufficient notice is taken of the fact that the modality of the voluntary act depends upon the modality of the judgment. Thus the formal mean in the demonstration of free will is overlooked, making it impossible for oneself to answer the objections of the Determinists who rely upon the presence in us of indeliberate and inevitable voluntary acts which tend toward particular goods. As a matter of fact, it is only through the absence of indifference in the judgment, as we shall see, that these acts are to be explained.

It is in Ia, q. 19, a. 3; q. 59, a. 3; q. 83, a. 1, that St. Thomas asks himself whether God, angels, and man are free, and deduces the reality of liberty from the presence of intelligence. The same doctrine is more fully developed in De veritate, XXIV, 1, 2. Elsewhere (Ia, q. 82, a. 1, 2; Ia IIae, q. 10, a. 2; De veritate, XXII, 5, 6), liberty is discussed, not in relation to its cause (the reason), but in relation to its subject (the will). The two aspects of the question are synthesized in the masterly article of the De malo, q. 6, a. 1.

The essential element in the argument by which the reality of liberty is deduced from the presence of intelligence, is contained in Ia, q. 83, a. 1. This argument resolves itself into the following syllogism: We are free in the same degree as the practico-practical judgment which regulates our choice is of itself indifferent. Now the judgment of reason is of itself indifferent with regard to particular goods which have no necessary connection, hic et nunc evident, with the attainment of complete good. Therefore man, a rational being, is free with regard to these particular goods.

The major of this proof offers no great difficulty. It contains the definition of liberty. A free act is that which the will accomplishes with a freedom or a dominating indifference such that it is able not to accomplish it; so that, although the circumstances remain exactly the same, the will is able on another occasion to suspend its act and not to act. This dominating indifference of the will is safeguarded if the immediate determining principle of volition is itself indifferent. This principle is the practico-practical judgment which precedes the voluntary choice, being the judgment by which we affirm that such an object hic et nunc is good for us

and that it is good to will it. This judgment is called practico-practical because it concerns an act viewed in such fully determined circumstances in which it will be accomplished, in opposition to speculativo-practical judgments (such as the precepts of the moral law), everywhere and always true in themselves, independently of circumstances; for example: that good must be done, that we must do what is right. The purely speculative judgment is that which in no way concerns action; for example, the principle of contradiction, of causality, any sort of judgment on existence.

The practico-practical judgment can be indifferent with an indifference either of specification or of exercise. Its indifference is that of specification when it can affirm the fittingness or unfittingness of a certain object loved under one aspect and hated under another (indifference of specification by way of contraries) or again when it can affirm the fittingness of certain means or others which can be preferred to them in view of one and the same end (indifference of specification by way of disparities). Judgment is said to be indifferent with a simple indifference of exercise when it can affirm or not affirm the fittingness or goodness of a certain object. Only this latter indifference is required for liberty. To be free with regard to an object, it is not necessary to be able to love or hate it, to be able to prefer it to another, or another to it; it suffices to be able to love it or not to love it. To be master of one’s act, it suffices to be able to act or not to act, to go into or refrain from action.

The minor of the argument also needs to be demonstrated. Why is the judgment of reason of itself indifferent with regard to particular goods which have no necessary connection, hic et nunc evident, with the attainment of complete good? To explain this St. Thomas compares man with the animal. The animal tends inevitably toward the object which by its instinct is necessarily and automatically presented to it as suitable. Sometimes it seems to be reasoning, but the acts are merely an experienced succession of images subject to the laws of association, the representation remaining concrete and individual and never rising to the abstract and the universal. The animal perceives in quite an empirical way that an object is suitable for it at a certain moment and not at a certain other, in proportion as this object does or does not correspond to the concrete and individual actual dispositions of its appetite. Thus it knows some things that are good, without knowing that any one of them is good, which means that it does not know their goodness. The intelligent being, on the other hand, compares

particular goods which are presented to it with the universal idea of good. This comparison takes place in the syllogism in which the middle term, that must reunite the extremes, is good without any restriction, without admixture of imperfection or of non-good, it being the only object capable of realizing in all its purity this notion of good which our intellect perceives and of making us perfectly happy. It is not necessary for a free act that we distinctly have in mind the complete and absolute good, which is God; it suffices if reason has the idea of good in general and if the will tends naturally to happiness without restriction.

The practical syllogism is formulated as follows in the first figure. The middle, major, and minor terms are indicated.

Good (Middle) is what suits me and what I will (Major).

Now, a certain particular object, e.g., a life of pleasure (Minor), hic et nunc is and is not a good, according to the aspect in which I view it (Middle).

Therefore this particular object (Minor) hic et nunc is what suits me and also what does not suit me, according to the aspect in which I view it (Major).

The conclusion, like the minor, is indifferent. A life of pleasure may be considered hic et nunc both from the point of view of its advantages and of its disadvantages. It is the same with duty, for it, too, has two sides, the one by which it appears to be in conformity with our higher faculties, the other which shows it to be in opposition with certain of our lower appetites or certain of our bad habits. God Himself, in this life, can be considered under two contrary aspects: as the sovereign Good, alone capable of filling the infinite void in our heart, and also as legislator imposing upon us precepts which are not fulfilled without effort and suffering, and as a judge punishing those who transgress his commands. We can have speculative certitude of the fact that there is no happiness without virtue and the love of God, and that virtue is a good which in itself is obligatory. This speculative certitude persists even in the case of the sinner and constitutes the element of advertence in sin. But if there is question of a hic et nunc practical judgment, that is to say, in certain circumstances and under certain conditions, virtue and the love of God can be considered under two contrary aspects: for we can love God or turn away from Him. Of the two paths of pleasure and of duty which present themselves to one seeking happiness, there is liberty of specification and a fortiori liberty of exercise, so much so

that none of these partial goods appears to be in a necessary connection, hic et nunc evident, with the attainment of complete good.

We see that the indifference of the practico-practical judgment is due to the vast disproportion that there is in the practical judgment, between the minor and middle terms; the minor term is finite, the middle term, like the major, is infinite. The basis of liberty is therefore in the intellect which perceives the idea of good, and its judgment of it is consequently indifferent as regards every object and act which is not exempt from every admixture of evil, reluctance, or imperfection.

This derivation of liberty has evidently no meaning unless one admits a natural distinction between the intellect and the senses, between the idea and the image, the universal and the particular. Empirical Nominalism, which denies the specific difference in man, must also deny the property which flows from it. “Forasmuch is it necessary that man has a free will, as he is rational” (Ia, q. 83, a. 1).

St. Thomas, in thus deriving liberty of intellect, assigns to it its limits. There is no liberty of specification except with regard to particular goods which have no necessary connection, hic et nunc evident, with the attainment of complete good. Thus it is that, as regards happiness, this liberty disappears; under no aspect can happiness displease us or appear insufficient; in this case there is only liberty of exercise, for we can judge that it is suitable or not suitable hic et nunc to think of happiness and seek it. Again this liberty of exercise is sufficiently relative, since we cannot desire and will anything whatever without virtually desiring to be happy (Ia IIae, q. 1, a. 6).

And there is not any liberty of specification, at least liberty of contrary specification, with regard to goods which appear evidently hic et nunc as an indispensable condition of happiness, namely: existence, life, use of our faculties, “being, living, sensation, understanding” (Ia, q. 82, a. 2; Ia IIae, q. 10, a. 1). Considered in themselves, these goods cannot displease us or seem useless. He who kills himself does not hate life, but only the evils which make it unbearable. We might say that he kills himself only because he wishes, too much so, to enjoy life. With regard to certain of these goods there is only liberty of specification by way of disparities. If the martyr prefers rather to die than to renounce the faith, this is not because life is displeasing; at the very moment in which he sacrifices it, he still loves it by a previous act of the will, just as in another order, says St. Thomas, a

merchant, to avoid shipwreck, throws his merchandise into the sea in spite of his desire to keep it.

Starting from this principle, that there is no liberty of specification with regard to goods which appear to be invincibly and necessarily connected with happiness, the majority of Thomists hold as probable that a pure spirit, an angel, cannot sin directly against the natural law of his being which he intuitively sees inscribed in his own essence. From every point of view duty must appear to him to be in conformity with his purely spiritual nature; here the occasions of practical error vanish, since there are no passions or sensitive appetite in the angel. The possibility of sinning presents itself only when the angel is raised to the supernatural order and must act according to the light of faith. The precepts of the supernatural order, the acts to be performed by grace, through the beneficence of another, may be displeasing to one who takes delight in the perfection of his own nature and in his own manner of acting (Ia, q. 63, a. 3). Thus Socrates and Plato were right in saying that the clearer one's intellect is, the more difficult it is to do what is wrong, to sin in any way, through ignorance. St. Thomas was able to retain a considerable part of Platonism in his treatise the angels. From this it does not follow that a pure spirit is not free; if an angel is not free in the natural order to do good or evil, in the moral order he is free with regard to the different means which have no necessary connection with the end in view. It is the same for the blessed who are supernaturally rooted in good, and for God who is absolutely impeccable by nature and is in possession of supreme liberty.

Such are the limits of a liberty derived from intelligence. There is no indifference in the presence of partial goods which evidently appear hic et nunc as an indispensable condition of happiness. But liberty of exercise, the only kind required for liberty, vanishes, according to St. Thomas, only when confronted by the divine essence intuitively known as the plenitude of all good (Ia, q. 82, a. 2). Not only can the absolute Good, viewed such as it is, not appear in any aspect as bad or insufficient, but in the act of love that it excites there is no trace of evil, reluctance, weariness, inconvenience, and to the eye of the intellect it is but one in a certain way with the possession of the absolute Good. There is, then, in this case no indifference of judgment concerning the exercise of the act. Consequently, there is no indifference in the will, strictly speaking, from the point of view of the exercise of the act which comes from the will. The absolute Good thus presented is adequate

to the infinite capacity of the will in loving. By its very nature, the will tends toward this Good to the utmost of its inclination and power; there is no available energy left for the suspension of its act; there is nothing else but spontaneity of act, as the liberty of exercise disappears. This faculty of loving, the extent of which is unlimited, cannot but surrender itself to the attraction of the infinite Good which is intuitively known.

With regard to every other object, there is, from the point of view of exercise, indifference of judgment and consequently indifference of the will. The will is mistress of itself in yielding or not to the attraction of a good, the actual possession of which is presented to it as advantageous, but only in certain respects. Man is free because the practical judgment that he forms about particular goods is of itself indifferent. “Particular works that can be done, are contingent and therefore in such matters the judgment of reason may follow opposite courses, and is not determinate to one. And forasmuch is it necessary that man has a free will, as he is rational” (Ia, q. 83, a. 1; q. 59, a. 3; II Contra Gentes, 48). Having started from this principle, that the appetite of a being endowed with knowledge is dependent on this knowledge, St. Thomas had to conclude that the free or independent appetite depends upon the indifference of the judgment. But is this indeterminate judgment which can be formulated either in the affirmative or the negative, sufficient on the part of the intellect so that the will may proceed to the act of election? Those who uphold the liberty of indifference in the sense of liberty of equilibrium, think so. The Molinists, and after them the Cartesians and Reid, maintain that the will can choose without having a motive for doing so, or when there are equal grounds for and against the choice. Suarez stated very clearly that it is not necessary for the intellect to have judged that the choice about to be made is the best hic et nunc. Liberty is defined by these theologians as the faculty which, for action, can either act or not act. This means to say that, even after the final judgment which terminates deliberation, it is possible for the will (in sensu composito) not to perform the act in question. The disciples of St. Thomas, appealing to the most formal texts of their master, teach, on the other hand, that there must always be a motive for the choice (“nothing is willed unless foreknown”), that there must be a determinate and positively final practico-practical judgment which is infallibly followed by the free act.

Let us illustrate this by an example. According to St. Thomas, the one who sins judges speculatively that virtue is a good which in itself is of

obligation; it is this speculative judgment which constitutes the element of advertence in sin. The sinner judges even practically that hic et nunc virtue may be considered from two points of view: under one aspect it is good, under the other it admits of a distinction, being partly good and partly not good. But precisely at the moment of sinning, the sinner judges practically that it is fitting to sin, saying to himself: this act is simply good hic et nunc. This is the way St. Thomas understood the words of St. Paul: “I see and approve of the better things, but I do what is worse.” “I see and approve of the better things” (with a speculative and even a practical judgment which as yet is undetermined); “I do what is worse” (with a practico-practical judgment and by choice). It remains for us to examine how the intellect from an indifferent judgment arrives at a determinate final judgment.

To say that the intellect is indifferent, is to say that it is not here, as it were, confronted by a first principle or a necessary conclusion from which it cannot withhold its consent. Here, as in faith, the object does not sufficiently determine it; and in this case there could be no intellectual determination, if the will did not intervene to make up for the insufficiency in the order of specification. St. Thomas employs exactly the same terms when it is a question of explaining the rôle of the will in faith and in the final practical judgment. Concerning faith he writes: “The intellect of the believer is determined to one object, not by the reason but by the will; wherefore assent is taken here for an act of the intellect as determined to one object by the will” (IIa IIae, q. 2, a. 1 ad 3). “The act of faith is an act of the intellect determinate to one object by the command of the will” (IIa IIae, q. 4, a. 1). In the question which treats especially of the command of the will (Ia IIae, q. 17, a. 6), he explains in what case “assent or dissent is in our power and is subject to our command.” This is so not only with faith, but in all cases in which the object does not sufficiently determine the intellect. If it is a question of adhering to a first principle, or a demonstrated conclusion, the will intervenes only in the order of exercise that it may apply the intellect to consider and judge; but if it is a question of formulating a definite judgment when the motive is objectively insufficient, the will must also intervene in order to make up for this objective insufficiency. “But some things are apprehended which do not convince the intellect so that one cannot assent or dissent, or at least suspend one’s assent or dissent, on account of some cause or other: and in such things assent or dissent is in our power, and is subject to our command” (Ia IIae, q. 17, a. 6).

That is what St. Thomas understands by being master of one's judgment. He affirms in many places that man is free, master of his choice, because he is master of his practico-practical judgment. "If the judgment of the cognitive faculty is not in one's power, but is determined by another, neither the appetite will be in one's power, and consequently neither motion nor operation in the strict sense" (De veritate, q. 24, a. 2). "Man is the cause not only of his own motion, but also of his judgment; and therefore he has free will; it is as if one said that in point of judgment he is free to act or not to act" (De veritate, q. 24, a. 1). Concerning the liberty of the angels, we read (Ia, q. 59, a. 3) : "There are some things which act, not from any previous judgment but, as it were, moved and made to act by others, just as the arrow is directed to the target by the archer. Others act from some kind of judgment, but not from free will, such as irrational animals; for the sheep flees from the wolf by the instinctive judgment whereby it esteems the latter to be hurtful to itself; such a judgment is not a free one, but implanted by nature. Only an agent endowed with an intellect can act with a judgment which is free, in so far as it apprehends the common note of goodness, from which it can judge this or the other thing to be good. Consequently, wherever there is intellect, there is free will." Therefore the will determines the practical judgment which without it would remain indifferent.

Besides, if the will intervenes here only as regards the exercise of the act, evidently we would not escape determinism of the circumstances. The circumstances being the same, man could not one time judge that it is suitable to act and another time that it is not (indifference of exercise). If in such circumstances the action was judged preferable, it will be of no use for the will to apply the intellect to consider the advantages of not acting; the intellect could never judge, the circumstances being the same, that it is better not to act. If the will intervenes only as regards the exercise of the act in the positively final judgment, the spontaneity of the Jansenists is safeguarded, but not liberty of exercise.

St. Thomas, too, following Aristotle, always affirms (Ia IIae, q. 58, a. 5) that the truth of the practico-practical judgment contrary to truth of the speculative and the speculativo-practical judgments depends "not on its conformity with the thing but with right appetite." The appetite is rectified by virtue, and the intervention of the will in the order of specification is then explained by its tendency, by reason of which the object enters into a relation of either fittingness or unfittingness with the subject. But to explain

this intervention of the will by appealing to its tendency, is merely to leave the question still unanswered. Tendency does not infallibly determine our free act, any more than the external circumstances do. Moreover, we cannot appeal to it to explain the first free act of the psychological life, as discussed by theologians with regard to the sin of the angels. How, then, are we to explain this intervention of the will? The answer to this question will be given in the following division (n. 61): How to reconcile free choice with the principle of sufficient reason. This will lead us to state more precisely the nature of this intervention on the part of the will, and we shall see, that it is nothing else but choice itself which must follow judgment as regards formal causality and which precedes it as regards efficient causality. This relation of mutual priority will present itself to us as one of the most interesting applications of the Aristotelian axiom, in which we have briefly summarized the whole theory about the four causes, namely, causae ad invicem sunt causae. For the present let it suffice to say that St. Thomas gives no other explanation of the voluntary inadvertence to the sense of obligation accompanying the sin of the angels. The angel willed not to consider; what is the cause of this? “But in an action of this kind, which consists in not following the rule of reason and the divine law, there is no need to seek for any cause because the liberty itself of the will is sufficient for this, by means of which it can act or not act” (De malo, q. 1, a. 3). “He would not understand that he might do well” (Ps. 35: 4).

This intervention on the part of the will, necessary for overcoming the indifference of the practical judgment, could not be itself infallibly determined by the intellect since it comes into action precisely for the purpose of determining the intellect. It remains for us to prove against Leibniz—and we are not unmindful of the fact—that the influence of the circumstances and the interior dispositions are not sufficient for determining judgment when it is a question of acting or not acting. We have deemed it sufficient here to examine the thesis of St. Thomas without concerning ourselves with the Intellectualist objection. We shall see that the answer to this objection is deduced from the very principle of our theory, namely, that there is an infinite distance between universal and particular good, between total and partial good; and we will conclude that the intelligent being is free because it is master of its final judgment, because, at the very moment when it judges, by a reflex act it judges that it could judge otherwise or at least not judge (a judgment on judgment).

This is how the most faithful disciples of St. Thomas have understood the doctrine of their master. Cajetan has explained with the greatest care that the truth of the practico-practical judgment depends “on its conformity with right appetite, not on its conformity with the object”; on this point he shows how the appetite may intervene as regards the specification of the object. Elsewhere he expressly teaches that it is the will that determines the intellect “to judge that one of two opposites is to be done. . . . It is the will done which, as it wishes, inclines the judgment.” The Salmanticenses speak in the same way: “The will freely applies the intellect to judge thus; and because the total efficacy of that judgment is the result of this free application, liberty leaves it intact.” This doctrine reappears in Billuart’s works.

John of St. Thomas formulates as accurately as possible the Thomist thesis when he writes: “Indifference of liberty consists in the dominating power which the will has not only over its act originating from it, but also over the judgment by which it is moved to act. And this is necessary so that the will may have complete dominion over its actions” (De anima, XII, 2).

Through want of sufficient consideration of this indifference of judgment which is the principle of the indifference of volition, objections have been raised against the Thomist doctrine, such as the following one: “There is nothing more open to question than the alleged postulate that inadequate objects, which do not exhaust the capacity of a psychological faculty, leave it in a state of indifference. I contemplate a masterpiece of art, for instance, the Moses of Michelangelo; it is a real but limited beauty which does not exhaust the ideal of the beautiful nor the capacity of my aesthetic faculties. In all the fine arts there are some works worthy of admiration, such as a Gothic cathedral, the picture of the Transfiguration, the Aeneid. . . . The statue of Moses does not realize in itself all the forms of beauty; it is but a partial expression of beauty, and yet I admire it of necessity; it is not in my power to refuse this admiration. Here we have a contradiction of the general principle.” The objector may just as well say of a certain rigorous conclusion in geometry that it does not realize all forms of truth, that it is but a partial expression of the same; and yet I must accept it. St. Thomas has already answered this objection as follows: “The intellect is moved of necessity by an object which is such as to be always and necessarily true: but not by that which may be either true or false, viz., by that which is contingent, as we have said of the good” (Ia IIae, q. 10, a. 2 ad 2um). It is a

general principle that a simple probable reason is not sufficient for determining the intellect; an object the beauty of which is open to question, does not necessarily call forth our admiration; also an object whose beauty, taking it hic et nunc and considering the dispositions of the will, is open to question, does not invincibly attract this will.

But the objection claims to be based on facts. “Is it true that partial goods leave our will in a state of indifference and do not determine that its act is one of necessity? To claim this would be to fail to recognize the existence of sensation. . . . Some partial goods of the suprasensible order arouse in us emotional feelings, indeliberate acts which precede the free determination, which begin as attractions and are transformed into desires, such as the attractions to perform an act of virtue, to visit a friend, to read something philosophical.” In addition to this it is said that, according to the Thomist division of the faculties, the only possible subject of these sensations is the will.

Every Thomist will answer that these are indeliberate and not free acts of the will, which are produced precisely when there is not sufficient reflection to assure indifference of judgment by a consideration of the two possible alternatives. “Hence we see that when there is no indifference in the judgment and it is solely restricted to one thing, the movement resulting in the will is indeliberate and not free.” John of St. Thomas, De anima, q. 12, a. 2. The indeliberate movements have never been overlooked by theologians; they occupy a rather important place in every theory on actual grace, both sufficient and efficacious.

Nominalists, since they cannot distinguish between sensible and intellectual knowledge of good, have sought to ridicule the metaphysical proof of human liberty by saying that, if this proof were of any value, we should have to conclude that a hungry dog, from the very fact that his hunger is insatiable, is free to eat or not to eat a morsel of bread which he may find is not enough. Nominalism, if it is of the radical kind, leads in fact to Sensualistic Empiricism and is unable to discern what is the foundation of liberty.

In the doctrine of St. Thomas, the basis or the radical principle of liberty is in the intellect which knows what good is; its judgment therefore remains indifferent as regards any object and any act which is not free from every admixture of evil or imperfection. The proximate principle of liberty is in the vast scope of the will by which man as master determines his own

judgment. A partial good can never be an invincible attraction for us so long as it does not appear to the intellect as a means absolutely necessary in view of an end which is absolutely imposed upon us.

In the final analysis, man is free only because he rises to the knowledge of the universal founded on the abstract; or better still (abstraction being a property of the human idea in so far as it is an idea), every intelligent being is free because it rises to the perception of the raison d'être and particularly of the raison d'être of good: because it knows what makes good to be such, the quod quid est or ratio boni: because it perceives this ratio boni which it finds again variously expressed in the delectable, the useful, and the upright. This ratio boni is the norm of its judgment when it is a question of affirming whether hic et nunc a certain thing is good; hence it is only in the presence of goodness that there must be an absence of all indifference, "a goodness not waxing and waning," as Diotima would have said in reply to Socrates, "not good in one point of view and bad in another, good in one place, bad in another, good for some, bad for others, . . . a goodness which is not to be found in any other being, as for example, in an animal or in earth or in heaven or in any other place, but which exists eternally and absolutely by itself and in itself; a goodness which is imparted to that of all other things, the appearance or disappearance of which does not bring about in it the least decrease or increase or change whatsoever."

This derivation of liberty is based, as we see, upon the very principle of the philosophy of being, which is opposed to the philosophy of the phenomenon. It ceases to have any meaning for the Empiric Nominalist who refers the abstract and universal concept to a common image which remains, for the purpose of consideration, concrete and singular. According to the Empiric, man has a common image of good, just as the grazing animal has an image of grass. This common image is but a medium between particular goods made known to us by experience; it is not of a higher order than these goods and does not at all represent this ratio boni which can be realized in all its purity only in the perfect and unlimited Good. Such a completely empiric representation cannot be the basis of liberty; it does not presuppose in the appetite which it specifies an unlimited range, and the practical syllogism in which it appears as a mean term is for the Empiric merely a tautology, since the universal is an illusion. With us as with the animal there is only a transition from the particular to the particular, subject to the laws of association. Empiricism, in point of liberty,

must rest satisfied with the clinamen of Epicurus, that is to say with chance, or with simple spontaneity as Hume conceived it, or as Bergson views it at the present day.

It remains for us to see whether this theory of liberty which we have just explained, enables us to solve the fundamental objection of Determinism, that derived from the principle of sufficient reason, without at the same time abandoning the Intellectualist axiom that "nothing is willed unless foreknown as suitable," as the defenders of the liberty of equilibrium do.

61) Liberty and the principle of sufficient reason (the sufficient motive).

"Not every cause produces its effect, although the cause be sufficient: for the cause can sometimes be prevented from attaining its effect." St. Thomas, De malo, q. 6, a. 1 ad 15.

We have deduced liberty of intellect. We have stated that the intelligent being is free because it possessses not only the intermediate image of sensible good, but also the idea of good; because it does not rest satisfied, like the animal, in perceiving things that are good, but because it knows of each of them that it is good, and why. Our intellect knows the reason for the good, that which makes goad to be so; from that it rises to the idea of the perfect Good. Then, as we have shown, its practico-practical judgment remains indifferent (at least with an indifference of exercise) as regards every object and every act which is not without some element of evil, pain, or imperfection. An intervention of the will is necessary for overcoming this indifference of judgment, and this intervention could not be itself infallibly determined by the intellect, since the only purpose of the intervention is precisely to determine the intellect. That is why a man, placed twice in the same circumstances, can one time act and the other time not act. Liberty is deduced from the relation which our will bears to the universal, i.e., to reason.

Does the theory of liberty enable us to solve the fundamental objection of Determinism, that derived from the principle of sufficient reason? The principle of Determinism which is also, in the physical order, the principle of induction, is stated as follows: The same cause in the same circumstances necessarily produces the same effect. This principle is one which is derived from the principle of sufficient reason that the change of effect would be absolutely without a sufficient reason if it were produced without there having been previously introduced into the cause or into the circumstances a change to determine it. Let the cause be A, and its effect B; if once from

A could result, not effect B, but effect B', this change from B to B' would be without a cause and without a reason. The principle of Determinism seems, then, like the principle of sufficient reason from which it is derived, to be certain a priori, i.e., the same cause in the same circumstances necessarily produces the same effect. But liberty, such as we have defined it, is a violation of this principle. Therefore liberty, such as we have defined it, is impossible.

We may answer this objection by a distinction as to the meaning of the word "cause." The same cause which by nature is determined to one thing, produces necessarily in the same circumstances the same effect, as for example, heat, electricity, magnetism. But the case is not the same with the will, which by nature is determined only to universal and not to some particular good. We are not called upon here to refute physiological Determinism: its refutation is included in that of Empiricism. St. Thomas merely says that physical or physiological influences cannot directly determine the act of the will; like our passions and our habits, they are previously submitted to the judgment of reason, which remains indifferent because its norm is universal good.

But then the objection narrows down to this: even if the will is not by nature determined to a certain particular good, the difficulty remains. The will in all its acts must follow the judgment of the intellect. But the will would be judging without sufficient reason, if, without any change of circumstances, it were to change its judgment. Hence, with the circumstances unaltered, the will cannot change its choice.

The usual answer to this objection is that the will in all its acts must follow the judgment as to the specification of the object; but it precedes judgment as to the exercise of the act. Consequently, in judging or not judging, the intellect is dependent on the will, and this suffices for liberty of exercise.

This answer is not final. The objection again presses the point more closely. Even if the will precedes the intellect as to the exercise of the act, liberty of exercise is not safeguarded, but merely the spontaneity of the Jansenists. It is indeed an evident fact that, if the mere exercise of the act takes place, it depends upon the will; but it does not depend upon the will whether there is or not an act which is exercised; that is precisely the object of our deliberation. That must depend upon the intellect, and the intellect

can in no case withdraw itself from the demands of the principle of sufficient reason.

This principle seems, indeed, to be derived from the principle of identity, which itself is based immediately on the notion of being. It states that "everything which exists has its sufficient reason," or "everything is intelligible." It is connected with the principle of identity by means of the principle of contradiction. (Cf. supra, n. 24.) From it are derived the principles of efficient and Final causality. (Cf. nn. 25, 26, 27.)

If such is the connection between the principle of sufficient reason and being, which is the formal object of our intellect, must we not affirm a priori that this principle, as well as that of identity, governs all the modes of being and that nothing escapes it; so that an absolute beginning without a sufficient reason is repugnant, and that liberty such as we have defined it is manifestly impossible?

Such is, we think, the full force of the objection. Nothing is intelligible except as a function of being, of the principles of identity and of sufficient reason. But the free act as we understand it, implying as it does the initiative of voluntary intervention, would be an act without a reason and therefore in itself unintelligible and absurd. If we admit the primacy of the intellect, we must forever give up the idea of again finding liberty. If, then, we wish to render morality possible, we must reject the absolute necessity of first principles as laws of the real, in all things subordinate the intellect to volition, in God at least, and say with Descartes that the truth of the principle of contradiction depends upon the caprice of the absolute Will. "If we do not put liberty in the first place, it has no place whatever; if it is not everything, it is nothing." Secrétan conferred on choice, either the formula of Parmenides which is the principle of identity, or the philosophy of liberty.

Does our explanation of the theory of liberty enable us to answer this objection? On first consideration it seems not. We have seen that Thomist liberty steers a middle course between liberty of indifference in the sense of liberty of equilibrium—as conceived by the Molinists, a few Cartesians and Reid who follow Scotus and certain Nominalists—and Psychological Determinism as conceived by Leibniz. Is this middle course possible? Is it possible to affirm against Scotus the prinicple of Intellectualism which is the subordination of the will to the intellect, without going so far as to admit Leibnizian Determinism? If the will by its definition is subordinate, must

we not say that all its acts are determined by the intellect? The possibility of an intermediate position is denied by the advocates of both extreme views in virtue of the same principle, that Determinism is the inevitable consequence of Intellectualism.

Fundamentally, a Leibnizian will say, you do not differ from those who advocate liberty of equilibrium. It is this very liberty of equilibrium which you place before the final judgment instead of placing it after the judgment. The will to appeal to, to entertain, or to set aside a certain motive, to consider what is one's duty under this or that aspect, cannot be itself without a motive. The middle course which you seek is illusive. An Intellectualist philosopher cannot admit a dominating indifference of the will which implies in the last analysis a free play of this faculty under the influence of the intellect. It is useless for us to limit these initiatives of the will; is it not an admission of these absolute beginnings, of these "victorious advances of the will" which Libertarians speak of?

The Molinists and Suarez likewise declare that there is no middle course between their view and the negation of liberty. Your solution, said Suarez to the Thomists, only defers the question at issue: that the act of the will preceding the final judgment must itself be preceded by another judgment in virtue of your alleged principle (that nothing is willed unless foreknown as suitable), and so on indefinitely. Hence we have Determinism, for if the will in all things is guided by the intellect, liberty is destroyed.

St. Thomas (De malo, q. 6, a. 1, obj. 15) brings out the full force of this objection. In replying to it, he merely recalls the principles of his thesis; indeed we shall see that in them we have a solution of the problem that Intellectualism prepares the way for true liberty.

First of all we will show that Thomist liberty is not at all liberty of equilibrium which immediately precedes practical judgment. True to the principle of Intellectualism, this theory admits of no act of the will which is not formally determined by the intellect.

A. Thomist liberty is not liberty of equilibrium; all its acts are formally determined by the intellect. In replying to Suarez, the Thomists say that the act of the will, by which the intellect is applied to judge in a certain way, is that very act which follows judgment. There is no contradiction if we properly understand Aristotle's axiom concerning the ways in which the different kinds of causes are interrelated. Causes mutually interact, though in a different order, καὶ ἀλλήλων αἰτία. Here we willingly acknowledge

that there is an element of truth in the analyses of Bergson and Le Roy when they affirm that everything is in everything. For us, too, in a sense, everything is in everything, but without confusion, and the real does not escape the intellect. It is solely due to these conceptual and real distinctions that this becomes possible of comprehension. These distinctions have been distorted by the "new philosophies" which always seek to view them, very incorrectly so, as quantitative and spatial distinctions. The Bergsonians are fond of speaking of those "reciprocal conditionings, those mutually prior relations, those discursively unsolvable riddles which characterize the march of life at every stage." There is nothing truer than the existence of these mutually prior relations; but must we regard them as so many unsolvable riddles for discursive reasoning, declare the real to be unintelligible, and take refuge in a philosophy of action? Aristotle and the defenders of the philosophy of the concept do not think so. Having rendered becoming intelligible as a function of being by means of the distinction of the four causes, Aristotle recognizes and explains how these causes are mutually related. Becoming presupposes an undetermined being (potency or matter) which acquires a determination (act or form). This progressive determination of potency presupposes a determining principle (efficient cause), and this active potency of the agent gives this determination rather than another only because it is ordained to such an act and not to a certain other. With Aristotle, that potency refers to act, is one of the simplest formulas of the principle of finality. From this it follows that causes mutually interact from different points of view, καὶ ἀλλήλων αἰτία. Matter receives and limits the form, the form determines and contains the matter. The efficient cause brings about that which makes it a finality. The desire of some good arouses the agent to action, and the action causes it to acquire the desired good.

These mutually prior relations must reappear wherever the four causes intervene, which means that "they characterize the march of life at every stage." The living being takes its food, but the food reacts upon it and reinvigorates it. The cognitive being assimilates to itself its object and yet allows itself to be assimilated by it. The intellect would have no knowledge of first principles if the object of first ideas were not materially presented to it by the senses, and yet the intellect, in virtue of the purely intellectual evidence of first principles, can judge formally of the validity of sensation and of sensible evidence. There is in this no vicious circle but a mutual

relation between different species of cause. In like manner we would not assent by an act of divine faith to the dogmas of revealed truth unless these were proposed to us by the Church. It is an indispensable condition. Yet by this same faith, in virtue of the authority of God revealing, which is the formal motive of faith, we can believe supernaturally in the infallibility of the Church. There is no vicious circle in this but a mutual relation between the formal motive and the indispensable condition. Thus, in the physical order, fire burns straw by reason of its combustible property, provided that the straw is near enough to it. But the progress itself of combustion causes the fire to draw nearer and nearer to it.

In the order of grace there are classical examples cited by theologians. In the justification of the sinner which takes place in one instant, the remission of sin is the result of the infusion of grace, although on the part of the sinner deliverance from sin precedes the reception of grace, according to priority of nature. Light dispels darkness, but darkness is no longer present when light makes its appearance. “You would not be seeking me if you had not already found me.” Our Lord said of Magdalen: “Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much. But to whom less is forgiven, he loveth less” (Luke 7: 47). As justification is the work of God in us, we must first of all consider the divine efficient cause and say purely and simply that the remission of sin is the result of the infusion of grace. We obtain from God the remission of sin, and it is not because we are freed from sin that we receive the grace of God. Pelagianism was an utterly material concept of justification.

In the reverse order, the moment that man sins mortally and loses habitual grace, his falling away from grace, in the order of material causality, precedes God’s refusal of efficacious actual grace and is the reason of this. In causality of another kind, however, this falling away presupposes the absence of efficient grace and would not happen without it. Final perserverance is also a free gift granted to the predestined (Council of Trent, Sess. VI, ch. xiii). But, contrary to justification, sin as such is the work of the creature who becomes deficient and is not the work of God; it is therefore true to say that purely and simply sin precedes the refusal of God’s efficacious grace. In other words, God does not abandon the just before He is abandoned by them. “God forsakes not those who have been once justified by His grace, unless He be first forsaken by them” (Council of Trent, Sess. VI, ch. xi). All receive sufficient grace and all have sufficient

grounds for doing what is right, and this gives them the power to do what is right, but not to do so effectively.

The same law of mutual relations between various kinds of cause must regulate the relations between the intellect and the will at the completion of deliberation. The answer of the Thomists is not a crafty device; it is based upon the very definition of becoming. In the case of the final practical judgment and the act of the will which precedes and follows it, there is no priority of time. At one and the same time the will applies the intellect to judge what it must choose, and is directed by the intellect in its choice. There is here only priority of nature and reciprocal priority according to the point of view that one takes of it. In the order of extrinsic formal causality (directive idea), there is priority of judgment, since the judgment actually directs the will that it may choose in a certain manner; but in the order of efficient causality there is priority of volition which applies the intellect to judge in such a way, priority of volition which can suspend the inquiry of the intellect or let it proceed. The will is thus the cause of the attraction itself that it experiences, in this sense, that it depends upon the will to cause the intellect to judge that a certain good is by nature disposed to move it; it is the cause of the direction that it receives, in so far as it moves the intellect to impress upon it this direction.

Kant says that empirical causality, which is realized in time, implies Determinism; but where we find intelligible causality in operation, there is neither before nor after; this causality is liberty itself. The Thomists do not believe that they get out of the difficulty so easily as this, and they do not think that the whole problem is solved after eliminating priority of time.

It remains to be seen whether efficient causality, though bearing a relation of dependence to extrinsic formal causality (idea), would not retain an absolute priority over the other causes when it is under the necessity of acting. It cannot be doubted. The formal causality of the idea actually exerts its influence only in virtue of an application which depends upon efficient causality. If the artist wishes to act, he has need of a directive idea; but this idea exerts its formal causality only if the artist by his action makes use of it as the director of his action. When it is question of an act to be performed, it is efficient causality that is positively the first, and it must take the initiative. It is, in truth, only by entering into a relation of dependence upon the idea that it comes into action; but to come into action or not to come into action, depends upon itself. The act of coming into action cannot be

commanded by the formal determination to do so. “Causes are to one another causes, though in a different order; but the efficient cause is absolutely prior to other causes in act.” When there is question of an act to be performed, it is the efficient cause that purely and simply has priority.

By this answer the Thomists distinctly separate from the advocates of the liberty of equilibrium. They affirm that there can be no efficient causality in action without a formal determination, that there can be no act of the will which is not formally determined by the intellect. The will in all its acts is guided by the intellect. But it is for the will to enter into this relation of dependence as regards the motive of its action, and the same act of volition which follows judgment, in a sense precedes it.

This Thomist thesis is but an application of the general theory of the subordination of the total causes of one effect. One single effect can be entirely the result of the First Cause and entirely that of the subordinate secondary cause. Thus our choice, in so far as it is good, is entirely from God and entirely from ourselves; it is equally the result both of our intellect and of our will.

Suarez in this question as in many other questions, substitutes for the subordinate total causes of which St. Thomas speaks, coordinate partial causes. According to him, God is only the partial cause of our acts; similarly, in the act of deliberation, the intellect and the will would also be co-ordinate partial causes, like two separate persons towing a boat.

B. In the principles of Thomist Intellectualism we have a refutation of Psychological Determinism. We avoid liberty of equilibrium, but do we avoid Psychological Determinism? It seems not. Too many psychologists think they have refuted Leibniz by saying: “The intellect is by its nature representative, contemplative, and not an active and motive power. It illumines the will, pointing out the end; but it is the will that tends to the end by its own motive power.” Leibniz would reply: “Priority of efficient causality admitted and understood, according to the principle that causes are to one another causes, safeguards only spontaneity, the mere exercise of the act, but not liberty in your sense of the term. I agree that the will is the first principle as regards the exercise of the act, and it is clear that if it did not apply the intellect to the act of consideration there would never be any volition. But you do not at all explain how, placed twice in the same circumstances, we could in one case judge that it is fitting to act and in the other that it is not. Priority of efficient causality does not imply this

initiative which would be a violation of the principle of sufficient reason." Let us recall that if the principle of sufficient reason is inseparable from the principle of identity which governs all the modes of being, it must itself govern all the modes of being. A thing without a sufficient reason is a contradiction; a thing is what it is either by reason of itself or of something else. An absolute beginning is something repugnant.

In De malo, q. 6, a. 1 ad 15, St. Thomas answers this objection as follows: The will always has a sufficient reason for acting, but it cannot have an infallibly determinative sufficient reason. "It must be said that not every cause necessarily produces an effect, even though it be a sufficient cause, for this reason, that the cause can be prevented sometimes from attaining its effect; such are natural causes which only in most cases necessarily produce their effects, because in a few cases they are prevented from so doing. Thus therefore, it need not necessarily be so that the cause makes the will wish something; for the will itself can put an obstacle in the way, either by discarding such consideration as induces it to will, or by considering the opposite: namely, that this which is proposed as good, in some aspect is not good." This answer would be meaningless unless it were interpreted in accordance with the fundamental principle of the Aristotelian and Thomist theory of liberty, namely: that there is essentially a lack of proportion between universal and particular good, between total and partial good, that there is an infinite distance between them. It has been said in the body of this article that liberty of exercise still holds good as regards happiness, "because anyone is able not to will then to think of happiness; because even the acts themselves of the intellect and of the will are particular ones." Does not Leibniz forget to take into consideration the fact that the indifference of our judgment has its final reason in the absolute universality of the will and in the infinite capacity we have for loving? The exterior circumstances and the interior dispositions are powerless to determine infallibly this final practical judgment, namely, that it is better to act than not to act. So long as "to act," as well as "not to act," has its advantages and disadvantages, we are concerned with two finite goods in which there is a mingling of non-good. But two finite goods, however unequal, are both at an infinite distance from the pure Good, in whom there is no admixture of imperfection.

If there are two unequal infinite distances, this will never be so except in so far as they are finite on one side, in ratione finiti. Hence there cannot be

an absolutely determining sufficient reason for the transition from the Infinite to a certain finite quantity or quality rather than to a certain other; or, what comes to the same thing, there cannot be an infallibly determining sufficient reason for the transition from the one to the multiple, from the universal to the particular. In this case there is an insurmountable obstacle which no principle of the intelligible order can overcome, neither the principle of sufficient reason nor that of contradiction. We shall see this disproportion to be far more pronounced when we come to consider the divine liberty, the sovereign independence of God who, with regard to everything created, is both Being itself and Good itself, and who, as regards everything created, infinitely transcends all possible worlds. But the same problem presents itself in man: the problem of the relation existing between the one and the multiple, the pure and the mixed, the universal and the particular, the infinite and the finite.

Two partial goods, however unequal they may be, are both compounded of potentiality and act, and hence both are infinitely removed from the perfect Good who alone is pure Act. There can be a relatively sufficient, but not an absolutely sufficient and actually determinative reason for preferring the one to the other. The reason is relatively sufficient as regards the inequality of the means; it is not absolutely so, that is to say, as regards the general end of all human activity, which is unlimited good or perfect happiness. Therefore, like sufficient grace, it gives the power to act, but not to act effectively.

In the Summa (Ia IIae, q. 10, a. 2), St. Thomas answers this objection as follows: “The sufficient mover of a power is none but that object that in every respect presents the aspect of the mover of that power, and as regards the will this is perfect good in which nothing is lacking. If, on the other hand, it is lacking in any respect, it will not move of necessity.” We see that St. Thomas sometimes says that the motive is sufficient and sometimes that it is not so. It is really sufficient in its order; it gives the power to act, though not to act effectively.

To grasp the meaning of this reply and see how psychological liberty is established without compromising the necessity of the principles and conclusions of the moral law, we must distinguish clearly, as we have done, between the speculative-practical judgment (we must do what is right) which dictates what is good in itself at all times and in all places, independently of circumstances, and the practico-practical judgment which

dictates what is good for us hic et nunc (it is good for me at this moment to perform this act of justice). The truth of the first judgment, says Aristotle, is an absolute truth, its truth depends upon its conformity with the thing; the second judgment is a relative truth dependent upon the actual rectitude of the appetite, veritas ejus accipitur per conformitatem ad appetitum rectum. The speculative-practical judgment is concerned with the order of specification, namely, that in itself the act of justice is a good in conformity with right reason, that the act of injustice can be only an apparent good. The practico-practical judgment, on the contrary, at least that one which is absolutely required for liberty, is concerned with the order of exercise; and this, we say, is an indifferent judgment, in spite of the urgent appeal made by interior dispositions and actual exterior circumstances. Thus, hic et nunc, for me the act of justice is and also is not a good: I can place the act and also refrain from so doing; is this not because I consider that it is good to try out my liberty, by refusing to respond to the motives which attract me? So long as “not to act” and “to act” each has its advantages and disadvantages, I am concerned with two finite goods compounded with non-good. However unequal the two parts may be, the practico-practical judgment which is concerned with the exercise of the act, inasmuch as it depends entirely on the intellect, remains in a sense indifferent. An intervention of the will is necessary to overcome this indifference. The will intervenes in this case not only for the pure and simple exercise of the act (it would only be spontaneity, freedom from coercion), but for the fittingness of the exercise, that there may or may not be an act performed. It is in this that the essence of liberty consists, and this alone is required for liberty.

There is evidently a great difference between these two judgments. We can accept the speculative-practical judgment of one who teaches us the moral law or who gives us advice; but the practico-practical judgment is exclusively our own and absolutely incommunicable. To confound the second with the first is equivalent to saying with Plato, that virtue is a science (Ia IIae, q. 58, a. 5); it is also claiming for science moral dispositions (σὺν ὅλῃ τῇ ψυχῇ) which it does not necessarily call for (ibid.).

Let us take as example a man who is on the point of yielding to temptation. Placed twice in the same circumstances, he can one time judge that it is right to sin, another time that it is right to do his duty or at least not to act. The practico-practical judgment remains undetermined, even under

the influence of the circumstances. By its speculative-practical judgment, the intellect affirms that virtuous good is superior in itself to delectable good; it can still see that, granted our habitually good dispositions, virtuous good is ever preferable not only in itself, but for us. But, if it is a question of deciding hic et nunc concerning the exercise of this particular act by which we are about to will effectively this virtuous good, then the intellect left to itself remains undetermined. Why? Because here it is no longer a question of considering this partial good, from the point of view of specification, as it is related to the principles of right reason, or as it is related to habits which are, so to speak, on the surface of our will. But, since it is a question of exercise, we must consider this partial good in its relation to the will itself and in what is basic to it, since the will has to concern itself entirely with the act to be performed. Now, this virtuous good, not being free from all admixture of evil or trouble, inadequately corresponds to the capacity of the will, and is just as much inadequate as delectable good would be; the difference is all on the finite side. The intellect cannot, therefore, have an absolutely determinate sufficient reason when it is a question of formulating a final practical judgment; for there is no absolutely determinate reason which allows of the transition from the Infinite to a certain finite quantity or quality rather than to a certain other.

Pascal would have it that “it is a sufficient reason which is not sufficient,” as in the case of grace. This expression, which he considered a criticism of the Thomists, affords, in its way, a ray of light. In all cases of mutual causes have we not the same fact of causes sufficient in their order, though not of themselves effective? Still more so is this the case when it concerns the transition from the Infinite to the finite. The question of the sufficiency of grace must be solved by the same principles as that of sufficiency of motive. Sufficient grace can make us truly act, but from the deficiency of our nature an obstacle may be placed in the way, by reason of which God will deprive us of efficient grace which would have caused us to act effectively. Thus the flower suffices for producing the fruit; to produce it effectively, it is necessary that it be not destroyed by hail, and that it receive the light of the sun.

This answer to the Determinist objection is taken from the very principle of our theory, namely, that the will, being specified by universal good, cannot be invincibly attracted by any good which is mingled with non-good, so long as this is presented to it as such. It is, so to speak, of infinite

profundity, an abyss which only the absolute Good can fill; it has a capacity for loving which only the attractions of God seen face to face can move to its very depths and invincibly hold captive. It can tend with all its ardor and all its being toward the object which obviously and practically presents itself as the plenitude of all being. Apart from the intuitive knowledge of the divine essence, there is no sufficient reason which infallibly determines the exercise of volition. Judgment which regulates this exercise remains indifferent in this sense, that the attraction of a finite good, whether virtuous, useful, or delectable, appeals to the will without being able to reach its depths. It belongs to the will to meet this attraction half-way, for the attraction itself is incapable of coming all the way to the will. It is thus the will determines the judgment which must in turn determine the will: causes are to one another causes. For the same reason it holds the intellect to the consideration pleasing to it, suspending the intellectual inquiry or allowing this to pursue its course. In the final analysis it depends upon the will that a certain judgment is the last. The free act is a gratuitous answer, drawn from the infinite depths of the will, to the impotent solicitation of a finite good.

Not enough attention is paid to the fact that the certitude, derived from the sensus communis which we have of our liberty and which is called the consciousness of our free will, is but the metaphysical proof of liberty in a confused state, just as the nominal definition of free will contains its real definition in a confused manner. Previous to all philosophical research, natural reason, which has universal being as its primary, formal, and adequate object, and which therefore has knowledge of universal good, is assured by reflection of the existence of our free will. This reflection is intellectual consciousness. And in what objective medium does natural reason thus come to know of our liberty, unless it be in that of universal good and the infinite disproportion between it and a particular good? We have thus a confused but absolutely certain knowledge of the infinite amplitude of our will and of its dominating indifference with regard to every finite good.

This consideration made Descartes say: “The will is infinite. . . . It is only the will or only the liberty of free will that I experience to be so great that I do not conceive the idea of one ampler or more extensive, so that it is mainly by this that I know I am made to the image and likeness of God” (Fourth Meditation). From our point of view an Intellectualist may say in a

sense with the Libertarian Lequier that, “by liberty not (only) becoming, but doing and in doing we realize ourselves. . . . Who has not felt with a mingling of pleasure and astonishment that this power is exerted within him and upon him . . . to establish his personality? Is there a man who has not been overwhelmed at catching a glimpse of the grandeur and majesty . . . of man when the true notion of liberty, which is the outburst of consciousness, suddenly made known to him the depths of his being? It is an illumination which reveals an abyss.”

Thus we recognize the element of truth hidden in the philosophy of liberty. We admit in a sense some initiatives of volition, and we affirm that if the human will is not creative, it is at least in the order of secondary causes the source of action. It is not only moved for the purpose of becoming what it was not, but does itself act and move and causes one to act. It brings into the world a series of facts which do not necessarily result from those previously posited. Such is the possible rôle for one who is not satisfied with knowing, but who at the same time knows how to will.

Here we come back to what constitutes the basis of our thesis, that the radical principle of liberty is the intellect in so far as it knows in what good truly consists; the proximate principle is the infinite amplitude of the will which is specified by universal good. The radical principle of choice or the free act is the indifference of judgment: the proximate principle is the dominating indifference of the will with regard to it as mingled with non-good.

But there is still another difficulty. If you admit, as we understand it, a sufficient and determinate reason which does not infallibly determine, are you not admitting a contradiction? Is not the principle of sufficient reason inseparably connected with the principle of identity and, like it, without exception or possible restriction?

Let us remark, first of all, that if our theory restricted the principle of sufficient reason, this restriction would not merely be imposed as the Libertarians say, because of the necessity of safeguarding the moral law, but also because of the disproportion between the finite and infinite, between the particular and the universal.

Besides, this restriction is only apparent. More than this, it is but a consequence of the apparent restriction which is placed upon the principle of identity when, with Plato and Aristotle, it is affirmed that a certain non-being in a certain way is. This non-being is potency which is not actual

being but undetermined being, an intermediary between actual being and pure nothingness. If we can speak of a sufficient and determinate reason which does not infallibly determine, this is because it was previously possible to affirm that a certain being in a sense is not. If there can be a reason for acting, which of itself does not actually and necessarily determine the action, this is because there can be, apart from nothingness, undetermined being, which of itself is not actual being, The nature of the action is according to the nature of the being. The principle of sufficient reason which is connected with the principle of identity is based, like this latter, on the notion of being; but this notion is analogous and not univocal; it applies both to undetermined and to determined being. There are, therefore, necessarily determinate sufficient reasons and others that are not so.

This reality of non-being or potency was perforce admitted as we have seen (n. 21), by Plato and Aristotle when they were under the necessity of rendering intelligible as a function of being the opposition between the one and the multiple, the pure and the mixed, the perfect and the imperfect, the universal and the particular, the infinite in perfection and the finite, i.e., opposition of terms between which liberty finds its exact place and also sufficient reason which gives us the power of determining but not of actually determining, just as sufficient grace, according to the Thomists, gives us the power to act, but not to act effectively.

Plato, in the Sophist, establishes the existence of non-being for the purpose of explaining the multiplicity of beings all of which are being and which, therefore, differ from one another by something else than being. Multiplicity, which is an established fact, obliges him to “lay hands on the formula of Parmenides and affirm that non-being is,” an intermediary between being and pure nothingness which is the limit of being. The opposition between pure being and that which is compounded of being and non-being also explains the opposition between the perfect and the imperfect, between the universal and the particular. Aristotle gives precision to this concept by his analysis of becoming; relative non-being becomes the potency which alone permits of rendering becoming intelligible as a function of being: being is not produced from being, because it is already being; out of nothing, nothing is made, and yet being is made. Whence does it come? From a certain medium between nothing and being, and we call this medium potency. From now on matter is conceived as a potency which

is both the subject of substantial becoming and the principle of individuation; a multiplicity of individuals of the same species cannot be explained except by admitting potency (matter) as the limit of the act which is common to them (the form). Later on we will say that the multiplicity of beings in general cannot be explained except by admitting potency (essence) as the limit of the act which is common to them (existence).

The concept of potency is a fundamental tenet of Aristotelianism. It constitutes the basis in the theory of the four causes, in the theory of the union of the soul with the body; it is the principle in the theory of the faculties, in the theory of knowledge (intellectual potency is by nature intentional, essentially related to being), and in the theory of the will which is essentially related to universal good and superior to particular good.

Potential being, which is intermediate between actual being and pure nothingness, is therefore of absolute necessity in order to render intelligible, as a function of being, both multiplicity and becoming, which seem at first sight to be a violation of the principle of identity. This multiple and changing world in a certain way is not, said Plato, and that is why it cannot exist of itself. The principle of identity and the principles derived from it oblige us to connect it with pure Being or with "the most dazzling part of being," pure Good without admixture of non-good. It is only in this "pure Good" that we find completely verified the formula of Parmenides that "Being is." God, revealing Himself to men, said: "I am who am."

Necessary for rendering intelligible both multiplicity and becoming, this intermediary between actual being and pure nothingness imposes a limit upon Intellectualism. Potency is not positively intelligible in itself but only in its relation to act: "Everything is knowable according as it is actual" (Ia, q. 12, a. 1). Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle held that the individual is ineffable, that the only science is that of the universal; this is because the principle of individuation is matter, that is to say, the undetermined. Wherever there is potency, that is to say in everything created, which is a compound of being and non-being, of good and non-good, there is also indetermination. This means that there is a relative absence of intelligibility.

We must also not be surprised if the determination of the free will, which is situated precisely between the universal and the particular, the one and the multiple, pure good and mixed good, is not positively intelligible as to all that it is. How could there be an infallibly determinate sufficient reason for performing the free act, for passing from the universal to a certain

particular, rather than to a certain other, from the infinite to a certain finite quantity or quality, rather than to a certain other?

There is indetermination in volition because there is indetermination in the intellect (indifference of judgment). There is determination in the intellect, because there is indetermination or potentiality in being, because being is divided into potentiality and act. The problem of liberty is thus brought back to the primary division of being.

To the indetermination in the wished-for good there must be a corresponding indetermination in the will which wishes it. Relatively to the created will, no possible being has a right to existence. If then a possible being, amongst many others, comes into existence, that is due to the ineffable and more than mysterious liberty which is analogous in the order of action to what is essence and matter in the order of being. Just as the finite essence limiting existence is a non-being which is, just as matter limiting the form is also a non-being which is, so also the motive of liberty is a sufficient reason which can determine, but does not determine infallibly. It is the inevitable mystery of the relations prevailing between right and fact. There is even in this more than a mystery. Why?

"A free action of the future," says St. Thomas (IIa IIae, q. 171, a. 3), "is, in a sense, more beyond human knowledge than is the mystery of the Trinity." This mystery, indeed, is perfectly knowable in itself, but it is not naturally so for us, on account of the weakness of our created intellect. The free actions of the future in themselves are not knowable, because the truth of them is not determined. "Certain things in themselves are not knowable, as future contingent things, the truth of which is not determined." Aristotle said the same thing in the Perihermenias, Bk. I, ch. ix, comment. of St. Thomas, lect. 14.

Liberty is more than mysterious, for we can say of it what St. Thomas said of prime matter, that God Himself cannot know matter in itself, independently of its composites. "For matter in itself can neither exist nor be known" (Ia, q. 15, a. 3 ad 3um). The supercomprehension of causes invoked by Molina could never enable God to foresee with certainty how a certain created liberty will decide in certain precise circumstances, unless He Himself decreed to premove it in a certain way rather than a certain other. There is in this something undetermined which is unintelligible even for God. To hold, with Molina and Suarez, that there is a foreknowledge without predetermining decrees, is to end fatally in determinism of

circumstances. Here only Leibniz is true to his principles, as he pointed out to the Molinists (Théod., I, sec. 48).

"It is above all peculiarly bold," wrote V. Brochard, "to admit the existence of an irreducible and, as the Germans say, an illogical element in the thought. However, this conception presents certain advantages . . . (it allows of the admission of) free will which exists at least on apparent grounds and for which Intellectualism can find no place."

This element, call it what you will, is nothing else but the non-being of Plato or, better still, the δύναμις of Aristotle. Brochard himself has shown several times that the existence of non-being is "one of the dominant ideas of the Platonic system. Only non-being makes possible the communication in the participation of ideas between them, and consequently the existence of the world, the possibility of affirmative judgment and that of error."

Aristotle, by his division of being into potency and act (Metaph., Bk. IX), fixed with marvelous precision what must be understood by this non-being which in a certain way is: potency or being as yet undetermined. Leibniz did not understand the possibility of this intermediary between pure nothingness and act; he substituted force for potency, and he considered it to be but a prevented act. All indetermination thus disappeared, and this should have led him to admit the determinism of absolute Intellectualism. Contrary to this, the affirmation of undetermined being contains implicitly the solution of the problem of liberty. Far from being excluded by Intellectualism, liberty is thus based upon it; whereas only spontaneity or chance will ever find a place in Empiricism.

This solution will appear in a somewhat clearer light when we state the problem in God, when we study the sovereign independence of the self-subsisting Being with regard to everything created, and the liberty of the creative act in the choice of the world and of the elect. By this we shall see more clearly that every compound of being and non-being, however perfect this may be, is infinitely far from pure being which receives no further perfection by its realization. We shall see that there can be no infallibly determinate sufficient reason which entails the realization of a certain finite thing rather than a certain other; everything finite is infinitely far from the Infinite. To endeavor, like Spinoza and even Leibniz, to give a perfectly intelligible and, as it were, geometrical explanation of the co-existence of the finite and the Infinite, is to posit the principle of Determinism and

consequently of Pantheism, which is the absurd identification of the finite with the Infinite.

But does not our solution now seem acceptable to all those who, with Plato, Aristotle, and St. Thomas, admit the priority of being over intellect? Secrétan believed he had safeguarded liberty by denying the objectivity of first principles. Quite to the contrary, there is no place for liberty in an Intellectualism which is not at the same time realistic. If there is priority of being, conceived as an absolute over intellect conceived as relative to being, it is not necessary that everything in the real be positively intelligible, that it be possible to deduce from the principle of reason the transition from the uncreated Being to the created, from the Infinite to the finite, from the One to the multiple, from the universal to the particular. Intellectualism limits itself by positing itself as a realism and by distinguishing in being, which it recognizes as having priority over thought, an element fully intelligible, namely, act and another element profoundly obscure for the intellect, but necessary for solving the arguments of Parmenides and explaining as a function of being both multiplicity and becoming.

Leibniz rejects this solution, because at bottom, as Boutroux remarks, “Leibniz does not, like Plato, make the intellect dependent on truth, but, having adopted the modern viewpoint of the glorification of personality, he sees an intellect and a will to be the indispensable support of truth (Erdm., 562).”

That can truly be said of logical truth which is to be found only in judgment, but not of ontological truth which is identical with knowable being. It is only in a cognitive being and in one that relates to knowable being that we can conceive of intellect. Being, on the contrary can be conceived without it. Leibniz failed to realize the priority of being over intellect just as he confounded potency with force which according to him is a prevented act; for him this must inevitably end in absolute Intellectualism and Determinism.

We may even ask ourselves if his dynamic philosophy does not logically lead to the evolutionist intellectualism of Hegel which refers being to thought, what is to what must be, the actual fact to right, success to morality. From this point of view, we must affirm that the fundamental reality is becoming, and we must necessarily exclude the principle of contradiction from reason and reality, in order to make a law of minor logic, of the understanding which is concerned with abstractions. To make of

becoming the fundamental reality is to deny the principle of identity as the fundamental law of the real, or, what amounts to the same thing, it is to affirm that the intrinsic nature of things is a realized contradiction. To deny the pure Act or the pure Good which is to being as A is to A, is to posit absurdity as the root of everything. On this point the absolute Libertarians, such as Bergson and Le Roy, join hands with Hegel in his absolute Intellectualism. These two extreme systems establish a point of contact in so far as both identify contradictories in becoming.

In maintaining the subordination of will to intellect St. Thomas escapes Psychological Determinism, because he affirms more vehemently than Leibniz the dependence of intellect on being. The only possible intermediary between the absolute Intellectualism of Hegel and the absolute Libertism of Secrétan and the followers of “the new philosophy” is not Leibnizian Intellectualism, but this philosophy of the concept first and foremost realistic, which was prepared by Socrates, developed by Plato, and systematized by Aristotle; it may be called the philosophy of being in opposition to the philosophy of the phenomenon or that of becoming. Theologians who affirm the existence of both divine and human liberty, appealing to revelation, claim to remain faithful to the principles of true Intellectualism, which is nothing else but this philosophy of being in which the order of specification and of essences pertains to the intellect, the order of exercise or of existences and individuals to the will. There is no antinomy between Intellectualism and Liberty, if Intellectualism is at the same time a realism, if the intellect consents to be measured by being and does not claim to be the measure of being, if it proves conclusively the infinite disproportion between the universal and the particular and does not claim to deduce the latter from the former, the multiple from the one, or the finite from the infinite.

This whole discussion against Determinism can be summed up as follows:

Objection: The principle of Determinism is that one and the same cause in the same circumstances always produces the same effect; a change in the effect without a predisposing change in the cause or circumstances would be an effect without a raison d’être, which is impossible. But liberty of indifference placed twice in the same circumstances could one time accept the proposed object and the other time refuse it. Therefore liberty of

indifference would be a violation of the principle of raison d'être, which cannot be violated.

Reply: The major must be distinguished. This principle is true of a cause determined to but one effect, such as a natural cause, although it must be actually operating in the two cases. This principle does not apply immediately to a cause which is undetermined, such as the will. This latter is determined, of course, as regards universal good, but not as regards particular goods.

1st instance: But the will cannot choose a particular good unless it be determined by the intellect. The intellect, however, having the same particular good presented to it twice in the same circumstances, cannot change its judgment; this would be contrary to the principle of raison d'être. Therefore the will, having the same particular good presented to it twice in the same circumstances, cannot change its choice.

Reply: The Major must be distinguished. The will is determined by the intellect in the order of specification or formal causality; but it determines the intellect in the order of efficient causality for this particular reason rather than for a certain other. And when it is a question of an act to be performed, priority is to be attributed purely and simply to efficient causality. It pertains therefore to the will to act or not to act.

2nd instance: But even in the order of exercise liberty does not differ from spontaneity and cannot prefer to act rather than to refrain from acting, unless it be determined formally by the intellect. The intellect, however, being confronted twice with the same action to be performed in the same circumstances, cannot judge one time that it is suitable to act and the other time that it is not so; the change in this judgment would be contrary to the principle of raison d'être. Therefore liberty of exercise, if it differs from mere spontaneity, is impossible. It can be only a spontaneity enlightened by reason or misled by the imagination.

Reply: The minor must be distinguished. I agree that this change of judgment would be contrary to the principle of raison d'être, if there were an infallibly determinate raison d'être for the transition from desiring universal good to willing a certain particular good rather than a certain other; on the other hand, this change is not repugnant if there is no infallibly determinate raison d'être for the transition from the infinite to a certain finite quantity or quality rather than to a certain other.

3rd instance: The principle of raison d'être which can be demonstrated by the method of reduction to absurdity, extends, like the principle of contradiction, to all modes of being and action. But it would not be so, if there were no determinate raison d'être for the choice. Hence there must be a determinate raison d'être for the transition from desiring universal good to willing a certain particular good rather than a certain other.

Reply: The major must be distinguished. This principle extends not univocally but analogically, to all modes of being and action; thus the notion itself of being, which is analogous, applies proportionately both to actual and potential being. A similar distinction is to be made in the minor. Choice presupposes a sufficient reason which of itself can determine it; it does not presuppose a sufficient reason which of itself determines it effectively. Thus being is either actual or potential.

62) The divine attributes of liberty and wisdom.

From what we know of the relations between the human intellect and the will in the free act, it is possible for us to solve the antinomies which, according to the Determinists and the Libertarians, would seem to exist between the necessity of the truths contemplated by divine wisdom and creative liberty.

Spinoza refuses to acknowledge liberty in God, his purpose being to have all things exist by the entirely geometrical necessity of the divine nature. Consequently, all possibles are realized; good and evil happen necessarily, and concern us alone, having nothing to do with God.

The Cartesians, on the contrary, under the pretext of freeing the divine will from the yoke of necessity, have made it completely indifferent, with an indifference of equilibrium. According to their view, God by an arbitrary decree, has established the distinction between good and evil, between eternal truths and the essences of things. The Nominalists with Ockham had upheld the same view. On the other hand, St. Thomas said: "To maintain that justice depends simply on the will of God (ex simplici voluntate), is to say that the divine will is not directed by wisdom; and this is a blasphemy."

Leibniz disapproves of the absolute Determinism of Spinoza, looking upon it as an absurd and ignoble system, in which neither understanding nor will is left to the author of nature. He has no difficulty in showing that everything is not geometrically necessary in creation. The geometrically necessary proposition is that one, the contrary of which implies a contradiction, e.g., 2 + 2 = 4. But no contradiction is implied for Spinoza to

have died somewhere else than at The Hague; the proposition, “Spinoza died at The Hague,” is not, therefore, geometrically necessary. Moreover, Leibniz declares, against the Cartesians, that it is dishonoring God to make Him indifferent to good and evil, to say, for instance, that if God had not positively forbidden murder, this act would not be sinful. This doctrine, he adds, plunges the just and the unjust into hopeless scepticism, for nothing would oblige God to keep His word. Between the true and the false, the just and the unjust, there is no choice for God. Leibniz claims to solve the antinomy caused by the doctrines of Spinoza and Descartes by his conception of moral necessity, the intermediary between absolute necessity and the liberty of equilibrium. This moral necessity is that proper to the sufficient reason in its application to existences; it consists in the choice of the better. It inclines the divine will infallibly without necessitating it. The divine choice is thus freed from geometrical necessity, but it would be an arbitrary selection of either the irrational or chance, and therefore as unworthy of God. Hence we must conclude, according to the author of Théodicée, that God would be neither good nor wise, if He had not created. And if He had not created the best of possible worlds. All the divine decrees are morally necessary, that of the Incarnation as well as that of Creation, and even that by which God has chosen and predestined a certain man, rather than a certain other (Théod, sec. 104).

In the philosophy of Leibniz this divine determinism is associated with his dynamist theory of possibles. Every possible, according to Leibniz, has pent up within it a tendency to existence which is proportionate to its perfection, its wealth of integrity, order, or compossibility. Existence, moreover, can be only the demand (exigentia) of the essence to develop and unfold itself. From this it follows that, of the infinity of possible combinations, that one exists necessarily by which the greatest quantity of essence or possibility is brought into existence. The divine fiat thus gives existence to the best of possible worlds. “If there had not been a world which was the best, God would not have created one,” since He does nothing without a reason (Théod., secs. 8, 201). Everything, even to the least detail, is necessarily ordained in the world, according to the principle of the best; nothing can change in the universe without everything being changed at the same time (Erdm., 506). It is the best that is possible of conception, because it realizes the highest degree of variety in unity, and of unity in variety. Evil is explained in the following manner: every creature is

by its essence necessarily imperfect, less perfect than God, and variety requires that all creatures should not have the same degree of perfection; to have a thousand well-bound copies of Virgil in one's library, would not be called reasonable. Pain and sin are the result of the imperfection of creatures and the condition of a greater good. The shadows set off the colors; a discord inserted where necessary makes the harmony more conspicuous; we want tragedies to move us to tears. In the intellectual order, divine grace has been given to us superabundantly where sin had abounded. God certainly can in no way be the cause of sin, but it is fitting for Him to permit it. Leibniz says (Théod., sec. 10): "On Holy Saturday, in the churches of the Roman rite, we sing:

O truly necessary sin of Adam,
Which the death of Christ has blotted out!
O blessed sin, that merited
Such and so great a Redeemer!"

"Thus," concludes Leibniz, "if the world were without the least of the evils which happen in it, the world would no longer be, all things taken into consideration, the one which was found to be the best, by the Creator who chose it" (Théod., sec. 9). Such are the exigencies of "universal mathematics"! But is divine wisdom merely mathematics?

Does this Leibnizian doctrine of moral necessity and absolute optimism leave God truly free? Does it not reduce His action to the influence of an impersonal reason? The Church, as we have seen in the previous pages, rejects this thesis of moral necessity and defines that God has created with absolute liberty free from all necessity. A Rosminian proposition affirming the moral necessity of creation was condemned, also one of Abelard's theses which states that God can do only what He has done and as He has done, and that in particular He must not and cannot prevent evil. It is only by sacrificing liberty that Leibniz solves the antinomy between wisdom and liberty.

The true solution is set forth by St. Thomas in Part I of the Theological Summa; it results from his general theory on liberty. We can sum up this teaching in four propositions. (1) God necessarily loves Himself; (2) He creates freely without moral necessity according to a real fittingness which does not urge Him infallibly, and which He could leave out of consideration, still remaining good and wise; (3) God could have chosen a better world, but He could not have arranged its elements better than those

of the actual world or shown greater wisdom in their arrangement; (4) there are in God free preferences which are their own raison d'être, and in which His supreme and absolute liberty shines forth.

It is easy to see how these conclusions are derived from the Thomist doctrine of liberty, and how they safeguard at once the divine wisdom and its free choice.

1) God necessarily loves Himself. "The divine will," says St. Thomas, "has a necessary relation to the divine goodness, since that is its proper object. Hence God wills or loves His own goodness necessarily, even as we will our own happiness necessarily, and as any other faculty has a necessary relation to its proper and principal object; for instance, the sight to color, since it is of the very essence of this faculty to tend toward the object which specifies it" (Ia, q. 19, a. 3). Moreover, if man can cease thinking of happiness and actually willing it, which constitutes the liberty of exercise of this act, God cannot cease knowing and loving Himself, all liberty hereby disappearing, both that of exercise and that of specification. It is the same with the blessed who unceasingly see God as He is in Himself and cannot cease loving Him.

2) God creates freely. In fact, St. Thomas goes on to say: "But God wills things apart from Himself in so far as they are ordered to His own goodness as their end. Now in willing an end, we do not necessarily will things that conduce to it, unless they are such that the end cannot be attained without them; as we will to take food to preserve life, or to take a ship in order to cross the sea. But we do not necessarily will things without which the end is attainable, such as a horse for a journey which we can make on foot, for we can make the journey without one. The same applies to other means. Hence, since the goodness of God is perfect, and can exist without other things inasmuch as no perfection can accrue to Him from them, it follows that His willing things apart from Himself is not absolutely necessary. Yet it can be necessary by supposition, for supposing that He wills a thing, then He is unable not to will it, as His will cannot change."

The creative act is free as regards liberty of exercise, and we may even add that it has liberty of specification. Does this mean that it is without either motive or sufficient reason? Not at all. It is most proper for God to create. St. Thomas explains this by means of the following comparison: "Natural things," he says, "have a natural inclination not only towards their proper good, to acquire it if not possessed, and, if possessed, to rest therein,

but also to spread abroad their own good among others so far as possible. Hence we see that every agent, in so far as it is perfect and in act, produces its like. It pertains therefore, to the nature of the will to communicate as far as possible to others the good possessed; and especially does this pertain to the divine will, from which all perfection is derived in some kind of likeness. Hence, if natural things, in so far as they are perfect, communicate their good to others, much more does it pertain to the divine will to communicate by likeness its own good to others as much as is possible. Thus then, He wills both Himself to be, and other things to be; but Himself as the end, and other things as ordained to that end, inasmuch as it befits the divine goodness that other things should be partakers therein" (Ia, q. 19, a. 2).

Is this fittingness so forceful as to constitute, according to Leibniz, a moral necessity? Does it follow that God would be neither good nor wise if He did not create, and that a necessary perfection would be wanting to Him? Not at all. Cajetan explains this as follows in his commentary on the article of St. Thomas just quoted. He shows how the principle: good is diffusive of itself, must be understood analogically or proportionately, like the notion itself of being on which it is based, and that of appetite or will. It is a natural and necessary perfection for natural beings to reproduce themselves. It is a free perfection for free beings to give of their plenitude. Truly a created spirit would be neither good nor wise, if it claimed to isolate itself in its interior life and love only itself, without thinking of others; its perfection increases when it loves them, and it must love them. On the other hand, there can be no increase of perfection in God; it is already of itself essentially infinite. All created perfections preexist eminently in it, in a light and a life which are incomparably more beautiful and richer than created life or light. If God had not created, He would be none the less infinitely good in His interior life. Revelation even adds that He would be none the less diffusive of Himself, through the communication of the whole of His nature both to His Son generated from all eternity and to the Spirit of love. It is not, therefore, morally necessary for God to create.

The real expediency of creation is such that it would not have been improper for God not to create. It is expedient at times for a rich man to give most liberally to a poor man, though he could have refrained from so doing, without any imperfection, and the gratitude of the poor man must respond to the gratuity of the gift. In this sense Cajetan (loc. cit.) says: "The

creative act is a free perfection, the absence of which would be no imperfection." But as this act (cf. infra, n. 63), is not superadded, by way of an accident, to the necessary act by which God loves Himself, the other Thomists prefer to say that the creative act does not add to God's perfection; it presupposes merely that of pure Act and is only extrinsically defectible on account of the object willed.

The action of God ad extra depends immediately upon His mysterious liberty, so much so that the divine knowledge itself cannot, without a divine decree, foresee whether or not creation will take place.

3) God could have chosen a better world, but He could not have arranged its elements better than those of the present world. Refuting in advance the theories of Leibniz and Malebranche, St. Thomas (Ia, q. 25, a. 5) wrote as follows: "Some think that the divine power is restricted to this present course of events through the order of the divine wisdom and justice, so that another world could not come into existence. But since the power of God, which is His essence, is nothing else but His wisdom, it can indeed be fittingly said that there is nothing in the divine power which is not in the order of divine wisdom; for the divine wisdom includes the whole potency of the divine power. Yet the order placed in creation by divine wisdom, in which order the notion of his justice consists, is not so adequate to the divine wisdom that the divine wisdom should be restricted to this present order of things. Now it is clear that the whole idea of order which a wise man puts into things made by him is taken from their end. So, when the end is proportionate to the things made for that end, the wisdom of the maker is restricted to some definite order. But the divine goodness is an end exceeding beyond all proportion things created. Hence the divine wisdom is not so restricted to any particular order that no other course of events could happen." Leibniz considered this problem too much as a problem of mathematics in which there is a fixed proportion between the different elements; he did not sufficiently take into account the end itself of the creative act, that is, the infinite goodness which manifests itself in the communication of its riches; he failed to understand the import of these words of St. Thomas: "The divine goodness is the end which exceeds beyond all proportion created things."

Leibniz says further: "Supreme wisdom could not fail to choose the best . . . and there would be something to correct in the actions of God if there were a better way of doing things" (Théod., 8).

St. Thomas (Ia, q. 25, a. 6 ad 1um.) provided an answer in advance for this objection, when he wrote: “The proposition: God can make a thing better than He makes it, can be understood in two ways. If the word ‘better’ is taken substantively, as meaning a better object, this proposition is true; for God can make better the things that exist and make better things than those which He has made. But if the word ‘better’ is taken as an adverb, implying in a more perfect manner, then we cannot say that God can make anything better than He makes it, for He cannot make it from greater wisdom and goodness.” His answer to the third objection is as follows: “The universe, the present creation being supposed, cannot be better, on account of the most beautiful order given to things by God, in which the good of the universe consists. For if any one thing were bettered, the proportion of order would be destroyed as, if one string were stretched more than it ought to be, the melody of a harp would be destroyed.”

This is tantamount to saying that the world is a masterpiece, but another divine masterpiece is possible. The organism of the plant is less perfect than that of the animal, and yet, granted its parts and the end that it must attain, there could not be a better arrangement of its parts. A certain symphony of Beethoven is a masterpiece without any fault in it; however, it does not exclude the possibility of a masterpiece of the same kind or of another order. The holiness of the Apostle Peter does not exclude that of St. Paul; both are infinitely far from the holiness of God. The Incarnation alone represents to us the highest possible union of the divine with a created nature, but the problem remains for the degree of grace and glory of the human soul of Christ; however high the degree, there is still an infinite difference between the intensity of the beatific vision which the soul of Jesus enjoyed and the comprehensive vision which cannot belong to any but the divine nature (IIIa, q. 7, a. 12 ad 2um).

4) Finally there are divine predilections which are their own raison d’être. Sovereign and absolute liberty shines forth from them without in the least detracting from divine wisdom. “Why He draws one, and another He draws not, seek not to judge,” says St. Augustine, “if thou dost not wish to err.” St. Thomas adds: “In the things of nature, a reason can be assigned, since primary matter is altogether uniform, why one part of it was fashioned by God from the beginning under the form of fire, another under the form of earth, that there might be a diversity of species in things of nature. Yet why this particular part of matter is under this particular form, and that

under another, depends upon the simple will of God; as from the simple will of the artificer it depends that this stone is in this part of the wall, and that in another; although the plan requires that some stones should be in this place, and some in that place." Thus there are in God free preferences, which are their own raison d'être; here divine liberty shows itself to be supreme. These are none the less made with infinite wisdom: the absolute dominating indifference of the divine volition with regard to both sides equally convincing, is based precisely upon the divine wisdom which manifests the equality of both sides and their infinite distance from the divine goodness which is the end of all things. Wisdom shows therefore that, in this case, the free determination can come only from liberty itself, and judges that it is fitting for it to be so. There is always self-determination in free acts, but here self-determination is as complete as can be.

What reconciles this all the more so with divine wisdom is that election in God presupposes love, whereas with us the reverse is the case. "In us," says St. Thomas (Ia, q. 23, a. 4), "the will in loving does not cause good, but we are incited to love by the good which already exists; and therefore we choose someone to love, and so election in us precedes love. In God, however, it is the reverse. For His will, by which in loving He wishes good to someone, is the cause of that good (of grace) possessed by some in preference to others. Thus in God love precedes election." A free predilection which is its own sufficient reason, is not, therefore, contrary to divine wisdom. Moreover, supreme wisdom judges that it is fitting for it to be so.

"The Spirit breatheth where He will" (John 3: 8); why does the Lord call this soul and not that other to the highest degree of sanctity? Why is it that this soul will not rest satisfied until it has become a victim of love like the Crucified? There is only one answer to this, the answer of St. Paul: "It is not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy" (Rom. 9: 16). The sovereign wisdom, far from preventing them, delights in these entirely gratuitous, absolutely free predilections for which nothing in us could be the impelling motive.

It would be blasphemous, says St. Thomas, to maintain that the order of justice or the distinction between good and evil depends solely upon the will of God. God would cease to be necessarily good. His essential glory depends upon His sovereign goodness which He necessarily loves above all things. In this supreme order He necessarily wills what is best in se, infinite

perfection which He Himself is. He is also the primary object of charity in us.

But there are other goods, which are external and secondary, upon which the goodness of God does not depend. The glory that He derives from them is external. And this glory is all the greater according as these freely willed goods manifest to a greater extent the liberty of His good pleasure. They are not always materially the best in themselves, but they are formally the best for God, precisely because they express His sovereign liberty, His absolute independence with regard to everything created. “By the grace of God I am what I am,” said St. Paul (I Cor. 15: 10). Why have I been chosen rather than another? “Because it pleased the Most High; according to His good pleasure” (Eph. 1: 9).

We should not seek mathematical exactness in the divine choice; it is of infinite suavity, being counterbalanced only by divine supremacy of which it is the expression. Thus a singer, although carefully observing the rules of singing, retains a spontaneity and freedom which prove the very command he has of his art. He is not a slave to his principles, but in his singing dominates them.

Sovereign wisdom plays in creating the world (“playing in the world,” Prov. 8: 31). In souls it plants divine seeds more or less beautiful according to its good pleasure.

The song of divine love is perfectly flawless and absolutely free. It is the profound unity of these diverse qualities which constitutes its sublime harmony.

Absolute Intellectualism and Voluntarism are narrow views; they ignore the beauty of God. We see that the spirit of their system is the destruction of all synthesis. Like heresy, which means a choosing, they choose only a part of the truth. The solution of the antinomy is to be found in a higher harmony which is the closest unity in a completeness of diversity.

63) The divine attributes of liberty and immutability.

There is another apparent antinomy mentioned at times by the modern philosophers; but they generally ignore the profound study made of it by the theologians who could furnish them with a series of objections logically arranged in Scholastic form. Spencer is often clumsy in the difficulties that he raises against the theology of the Schools. The classical objections examined by the Scholastics were deeper and more plausible.

The preceding difficulty had to do with the motive of the free act in God; this one concerns the exercise of this act. If this act is free, it is contingent, and could as well not be; there is therefore something defectible in God, something that might be wanting. Hence God is no longer pure Act, absolutely immutable and perfect. He is only in act as far as this is possible and retains potentialities which are actualized by the very determinations of His liberty. His will, objects St. Thomas, is of itself undetermined and consequently imperfect; it is capable of being further determined; and by what motion of a higher order could it be determined? That the divine free act is eternal and irrevocable is of little consequence; from all eternity it was possible for Him not to be; there is in God a contingent and super-added reality which is contrary to the immutability of pure Act. If in answer to this we say that the reality of this act in God is necessary, then this very act is no longer free.

St. Thomas (Ia, q. 19, a. 3 ad 4um) replies as follows: “Sometimes a necessary cause has a non-necessary relation to an effect, owing to a deficiency in the effect and not in the cause. Even so, the sun’s power has a non-necessary relation to some contingent events on this earth, owing to a defect not in the solar power, but in the effect that proceeds not necessarily from the cause. In the same way, that God does not necessarily will some of the things that He wills, does not result from defect in the divine will, but from a defect belonging to the nature of the thing willed; for all finite things cannot add anything to infinite perfection, and supreme goodness has no need of diffusing itself in them in order to be infinite goodness.”

“A naturally contingent cause,” adds St. Thomas, “must be determined to act by some external power. The divine will, which by its nature is necessary, determines itself to will things to which it has no necessary relation.”

Is there a plurality of voluntary acts in God; the necessary act by which He loves Himself and the creative free act? “The divine will,” replies St. Thomas, “by one and the same act, wills Himself and other things. Now his relation to Himself is necessary and natural; whereas His relation to other things is by way of a kind of fittingness, not necessary and natural, nor violent and unnatural, but free” (Contra Gentes, Bk. I, ch. lxxxii).

There is therefore nothing defectible in God; His free act is the necessary act of the love of Himself in so far as it terminates in an object which is able not to be loved and not to be willed. The defectibility is merely in this

object, not in God. It is useless to examine more at length the above-mentioned classical objections solved by the commentators of St. Thomas.

The apparent antinomy which is noted by the Agnostics is due to the fact that they consider the divine free act as a human free act, without rising to the analogous notion of liberty common to God and the intellectual creature. In us, since our will is only a power or faculty relative to good, the free act of election is added to it after the manner of a defectible accident, and it is really distinct from the first act of intention by which we necessarily will happiness. Our liberty is but the dominating indifference of a potency or faculty with regard to particular goods, and that because our will is not goodness itself but only a faculty which relates to goodness.

Divine liberty, on the contrary, is the dominating indifference not of a potency but of a pure act of subsistent love. It follows from this that defectibility is found only in the case of particular goods or creatures which can as well not be willed by God, since He already possesses, without them, the sovereign Good which is identical with His ever actual and eternally subsisting love.

Moreover, in God, the free act is eternal and is not subject to change. God does not begin to will what He did not will yesterday. It is without change of will that He wills and produces the change which is accomplished in things at the time fixed from all eternity (cf. n. 47). Mutability of the divine will is inconceivable. Says St. Thomas: “Since the will regards good, a man may in two ways begin to will a thing. In one way when that thing begins to be good for him, and this does not take place without a change in him. Thus when the cold weather begins, it becomes good to sit by the fire, though it was not so before. In another way, when he knows for the first time that a thing is good for him, though he did not know it before. Now it has already been shown that both the substance of God and His knowledge are entirely unchangeable” (Ia, q. 19, a. 7).

The angelic free will participates in the immutability of the divine free will on account of the perfection of knowledge in the pure spirit. He sees simultaneously and not successively, as we do, everything about a decision to be made. When he comes to a decision, he has seen everything, weighed all the motives for or against. The knowledge acquired from the fortunate or unfortunate events of the future can in no way cause him to alter his decision made with full deliberation. Whatever may be said to make him change his mind, he can answer: I knew it. Thus the angel, by his first

deliberate act concerning his last end is confirmed in either good or evil. There can be no question in the angel of the possibility of the forgiveness of either venial or mortal sin; he sees too clearly. Intrinsic sanctity or perversity, such is the alternative for him. Right away, he goes to the essence of things and determines his state for all eternity. The philosophy of becoming must seem to him to be a very trifling error, born of the human imagination, but unworthy of a pure spirit.

In the angel, however, as in man, free choice is still but the accidental act of a faculty or potency. If we conceive the pure act purified of all potentiality or imperfection, then only is it identical with the necessary act of the will, and that is to be found only in God. In this identification, liberty is not destroyed; rather it exists in a pure state, since it is the dominating indifference of pure Act itself with regard to everything created.

64) Human liberty and the divine universal causality.

As we have said, liberty in general is not incompatible with the principle of sufficient reason; the sufficient motive can determine (like sufficient grace), but does not determine effectively according to a moral necessity. Consequently the divine free will is compatible with sovereign wisdom, and is not contrary to the absolute immutability of pure Act. What shall we say now of human liberty, which is but an analogical resemblance of the divine free will, although it is still truly liberty? Is it compatible with the universal causality of God?

Let us remark first of all that human liberty, although more knowable for us (quoad nos) than the primary liberty, is in itself (quoad se) more obscure. The mystery of free will in general is here involved in the obscurity belonging properly to everything that is unstable, versatile, and inconsistent. The liberty of the angel, whose act is irrevocable, since the motive is higher than the motives drawn from the passions, once this has been performed with the full light of the intellect, is already less obscure in itself than our liberty, although it seems to us more difficult to conceive because it is removed from our experience (Ia, q. 64, a. 2).

What shall we think, as regards the method, of a theological system which would take for its primary idea, not that of God, the pure Act and first universal cause, but the “grossly formed notion of liberty furnished by the brute fact of psychological consciousness,” a notion which, according to its particular exigencies, would limit the universal principle of causality and

that of the universal causality of the primary Agent? Proceeding in this way, how can we avoid the reproach of anthropomorphism and of symbolism?

Such is not St. Thomas' method. He studies first the universal exigencies of first principles of reason and of being, then the essential exigencies of the divine nature known by reason and faith. The formal object of metaphysics is being and the first principles of being; the formal object of theology is God. It is therefore by the light of these principles that St. Thomas examines all the problems and must consider the problem of human liberty, and not in the reverse order.

We have already set forth at sufficient length (nn. 49, b, and 52, c), with regard to foreknowledge and the divine motion, the Thomist solution of this problem. It may be summed up in these three texts of St. Thomas: "Since the divine will is perfectly efficacious, it follows not only that things are done which God wills to be done, but also that they are done in the way that He wills" (Ia, q. 19, a. 8). "Our free will is the cause of its act, but it does not of necessity have to be the first cause of its act. God is the first cause, who moves both natural and voluntary causes. And just as by moving natural causes He does not prevent their acts from being natural, so by moving voluntary causes He does not deprive their actions of being voluntary; but rather is He the cause of this very thing in them; for He operates in each thing according to its own nature that He has given it" (Ia, q. 83, a. 1 ad 3um). Thus a great teacher communicates to his pupils not only his knowledge, but also his mentality and method. "God immutably (immutabiliter) moves our will, because of the sovereign efficacy of His power which cannot fail. But liberty remains, because of the nature (and amplitude) of our will which is indifferent with regard to what it chooses. Thus in all things Providence operates infallibly, and yet contingent causes produce their effects contingently, for God moves all things proportionately according to the very mode of the nature of each being: Deus omnia movet proportionabiliter, unumquodque secundum suum modum" (De malo, q. 6, a. 1 ad 3um).

Thus the free mode of our acts not only is safeguarded, but is produced by God in us and with us. The divine motion does not force the will, because it operates according to the natural inclination of the latter. First of all, it directs the will to its adequate object which is universal good, and only after that to an inadequate object which is some particular good. Under the first aspect the divine motion constitutes the free mode of the act; it

operates internally as we have already said, upon the very essence of the will taken in all the vastness of its range, and directs it, in a sense, to good in all its grades before inclining it to tend toward some particular good.

Thus God moves our free will suavely and firmly. If the divine motion were to lose its force, it would at once lose its suavity; being unable to reach what is especially delicate and intimate in us, it would remain outside us, as it were, overlaid upon our created activity; and this is unworthy of creative activity which is more intimate to us than we are to ourselves.

Our free act is therefore entirely our own as second cause, and entirely from God as first cause. When we perform the act, in virtue of the universal scope of our will and the indifference of our judgment we retain the power not to perform it (Ia IIae, q. 10, a. 4 ad 1um). It so indeed results at the end of deliberation, when all is in readiness for a free act, that our will thus prepared, demands, in a way, to be moved to determine itself exactly as God will move it. If the will could determine itself alone, our liberty would be the liberty of the primary liberty; the resemblance between the two would be univocal.

There still remains the mystery which underlies all the great theological questions, the mystery of God, of the creative act, of the co-existence of the finite and the Infinite, and in this case the co-existence of uncreated action and created activity, of primary and secondary liberty. It is the very absence of mystery that would be surprising in this case. The seeming clearness of a simplist explanation is obtained only at the cost of an error. There must be a mystery in this, for our knowledge of the divine causality is merely analogical, and it is only relatively and negatively (supreme cause, non-premoved cause) that we come to know what properly constitutes it. We cannot therefore see how God suavely and firmly moves our liberty to determine itself, but we see that if He could not move it He would cease to be the universal cause; there would be a reality produced, that of our free determination, which would not depend upon the first Being, and which would be in us an absolute beginning, which is contrary to the principle of causality.

The opponents of the Thomist thesis would have it that we say: “God determines our choice,” whereas we say: “God moves our will to determine itself freely in a certain manner?’ After thus misrepresenting our thesis, they find it easy to add that, like Calvinism, it destroys liberty because it leads to the conclusion that free will, moved and prompted by God, cannot

resist. This thesis of the pseudo-Reformers was condemned by the Council of Trent, which defined (Sess. VI, ch. iv) that “the free will, moved and prompted by God, can dissent if it wishes,” and that “God’s inspiration can be rejected” (ibid., ch. v).

This objection and others like it were made to St. Augustine by the Pelagians and Semi-Pelagians. St. Thomas often refers to them and solves them. Liberty remains because the divine causality produces in us and with us the free mode of our act, so that our will, under the influence of the divine motion and the indifference of our judgment, at the end of the deliberation, retains the power of not willing, for its scope extends beyond the finite good which it chooses. “The divine will extends not only to the doing of something by the thing which it moves, but also to its being done in a way which is fitting to the nature of that thing. And therefore it would be more repugnant to the divine motion for the will to be moved of necessity (i.e., without being in potentiality for its opposite), which is not fitting to its nature, than for it to be moved freely, which is becoming to its nature” (Ia IIae, q. 10, a. 4 ad 1um). In willing, we co-operate with the divine action and determine ourselves as secondary cause, although we are moved to determine ourselves by the primary Cause.

This thesis is entirely different from that of the pseudo-Reformers, which was condemned in the fourth canon of the Council of Trent. The mere reading of this canon is enough to convince anyone of this fact: “If anyone shall say that man’s free will, moved and excited by God, by assenting to God exciting and calling, nowise co-operates toward disposing and preparing itself for obtaining the grace of justification that it cannot refuse its consent if it would, but that, as something inanimate, it does nothing whatever and is merely passive: let him be anathema.”

That we may say the will can resist, it is sufficient, according to St. Thomas, that the will, under the efficacious motion of God, retain the real power of not acting. “But,” he adds, “the act of resisting is incompossible with the efficacy of the divine motion.” Otherwise God would cease to be omnipotent, as St. Augustine says in the Enchiridion (ch. xcvi). It is what St. Thomas and the Thomists continue to express by saying that the will, under the influence of grace, can resist in sensu diviso, but not in sensu composito.

St. Thomas explains this classical distinction. “The effect efficaciously willed by God is able not to be, but its non-existence is incompossible with

the divine will. It is not incompossible that God should efficaciously will the salvation of Peter, and yet that Peter can be damned; but it is incompossible that God should efficaciously will the salvation of Peter, and yet that Peter be damned."

Thus we say, remarks St. Thomas, that a white wall can be black, although white cannot be black and although the wall that is white cannot at the same time be black. A fortiori is this distinction verified when there is not only contingency, but liberty, on account of the predominating indifference of our will. It is this predominating indifference that Calvin denied.

In other words, there is necessity of consequence and not of consequent as in a rigorous syllogism, in which one premise is contingent, the conclusion is contingent although it follows necessarily from the premises. The following is an example: Every virtuous man is truthful; now the Apostles were models of virtue; therefore the Apostles were truthful. The minor is contingent, for the Apostles could fail in their duty, Judas being a traitor. The conclusion is contingent, although it follows necessarily from the premises. The Apostles, while speaking the truth, were able not to do so; they affirmed it freely at the peril of their lives. There is, on the contrary, necessity of consequent, if the two premises of a syllogism are necessary, for instance: God is sovereign perfection; now sin is absolutely contrary to perfection; therefore God is impeccable. He not only does not sin, but He cannot sin. He is free only when it is a question of goodness.

We see that this classical distinction of the sensus compositus and sensus divisus, like that of necessity of consequence and of consequent, is not a subterfuge devised for the purpose of getting out of a difficulty. "It is simply," as Father Gardeil says, "the verification of the non-contradiction of the system which pursues the logic of the exigencies of the absolutely first Being in all orders of things, causality included, in its application to the special terrain of liberty. It is the vigorous refusal to abandon a doctrine, approved in all branches of theological knowledge, because of a difficulty of detail. It is the affirmation of a mystery which is quite in order and which reappears every time there is question of reconciling the Infinite with the finite, as well in the order of existence as in that of operation. What would be strange is that the solution should be as simple as Molina naively claimed, and that the agreement between free will and divine omnipotence should be definitely accounted for by a simple explanation which is based

on the conception that goad people have of God instead of being based on the philosophy of an Aristotle, a Plato, a St. Augustine, or a St. Thomas, which Molina claims to be explaining."

Molinism insists that it is in our power to choose only if we are masters of whatever conditions our choice; in this way we are masters of the final practical judgment. Now we are not masters of the predetermining divine decree nor of the divine motion, which condition our choice. Therefore, if Thomism is true, it is not in our power to choose. St. Thomas states this objection in Ia, q. 19, a. 8, obj. 3: "What is necessary by its antecedent cause is necessary absolutely. Now created things depend necessarily upon the divine will as upon their antecedent cause. Therefore all that God wills is absolutely necessary."

St. Thomas answers it as follows: "Consequents have necessity from their antecedents according to the mode of the antecedents. Hence things effected by the divine will have that kind of necessity that God wills them to have, either absolute or conditional. Not all things, therefore, are absolute necessities," Item, Ia, q. 105, a. 4 ad 2um and 3um.

In other words, for choice to be in our power we must be masters of what conditions our choice in the order of secondary causes. It is not necessary for us to be masters of the divine decree or of the divine motion, if this latter causes in us and with us the free mode of our act. Divine causality contains our own causality eminently, and God is more intimate to us than we are to ourselves. We should not conceive His motion as a constraint exerted externally by a created agent; it is entirely the interior causality of Him who creates and preserves us in being. The mystery in this case is not greater than that of creation, and is but the result of it. A person whom we love makes us will freely what he desires. Why could not God do so in a nobler, more certain, and very intimate manner that belongs to Him alone?

Even the best people are distrustful of the divine action, either denying or limiting it. The Thomist in his moments of difficulty forgets his own doctrine. We fear that we are no longer free if God becomes the complete master of us. We fail to understand that we are really free only in proportion as God dwells and reigns in us. Nevertheless we say every day: "Our Father who art in heaven, Thy kingdom come." It is even metaphysically true to say: To serve God is to reign. God alone can grant us to be truly masters of ourselves, of our passions, of the attraction of the goods of this world. This latter phrase comes naturally to the lips of every preacher regardless of the

theological school to which he belongs. It is so simple that nobody would venture to deny it. It is the very doctrine of St. Thomas that gives this phrase its fullest meaning. This doctrine admits from the metaphysical point of view what the Christian admits from the moral point of view. Has not morality its foundation in metaphysics, just as action has in being?

In the fullest sense it is true that only the saint, who has made a complete surrender of all autonomy to God, is perfectly free, because he is always in the hands of God; he possesses the holy liberty of the children of God. Intrinsically efficient grace, instead of forcing us, makes us free in the sense in which St. Thomas understands it (Ia, q. 83, a. 1 ad 3um). What human liberty was more perfect than that of Christ? Because of the fact He could not sin, we are sometimes inclined to think that He was not so free as we are. What a wretched presumption. Never was there a human liberty that was more voluntary under the influence of grace, that was more master of itself in proportion as it was impeccable. The will was essentially upright because it was the will of the Word made flesh, and because it was directed by the beatific vision. It could in no way be captivated by apparent goods; it maintained toward them an attitude of most absolute dominating indifference (IIIa, q. 15, a. 1; q. 18, a. 4). Is there anything sweeter than the infallibly efficacious grace of God? It diffuses itself gently in the soul that begins to will; the more this soul wills, the more it thirsts for God, the more it is overwhelmed by Him. The day when the Lord becomes most urgent in His demands, when He prefers the pure crystal to what was before sin, then He will give His grace in abundance in order that the soul may comply with His demands. It will be able to say to Him with St. Augustine: “Lord, grant what Thou dost command, and command what Thou wilt.”

God is the first Being, and all modes of being depend upon Him. He is pure Act supremely determined, and therefore all determination depends upon Him. He is the first cause, and therefore all causality and all action depend upon Him. He is the first liberty, and therefore all determination of secondary liberty depends upon Him. He is omniscient, and His knowledge is the cause of everything external to Himself. He is omnipotent; how could He be powerless to convert a hardened sinner? Ought He then to await our choice so as to arrest the plan of His providence? In this case created liberties would be determining the definite order of the noblest part of creation. Liberalism may lend an ear to this doctrine. There is no teaching more opposed to that of St. Thomas, who completely defends the glorious

and supreme dominion of God over all created things. “Not to us, O Lord, not to us: but to Thy name give glory” (Ps. 113: 1).

65) Moral evil and the divine universal causality: (a) sufficient grace; (b) sin.

There remains, however, a final objection. If the divine motion is required for man to determine himself, and if it is infallibly although freely followed by its effect, the sinner who actually does not will what is good, does not seem to have received sufficient help to do so, and moreover seems to be determined by God Himself to will what is evil. Thomism seemingly leads to the admission of the Jansenist thesis, namely: “Some of God’s precepts are impossible of fulfillment for just men willing and attempting to fulfill them according to their present powers: they stand in need, too, of that grace by which they become possible” (Denzinger, n. 1092). The Council of Trent says, on the contrary, against the pseudo-Reformers: “God commands not impossibilities but, by commanding, both admonishes thee to do what thou art able, and to pray for what thou art not able to do” (Denzinger, n. 804). And it adds: “For God forsakes not those who have been once justified by His grace, unless He be first forsaken by them” (ibid.). God gives to all sufficient help to do the good that conscience dictates to us, and He forsakes the just man only if He has been forsaken by him. See also Denzinger, n. 1296.

This same difficulty is stated by St. Paul in the Epistle to the Romans, 9: 19-24. After asking: “Is there injustice with God?” he replies: “God forbid, for He saith to Moses: I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy. And I will show mercy to whom I will show mercy.” St. Paul adds: “Thou wilt say therefore to me: Why doth He then find fault? For who resisteth His will? O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it: Why hast thou made me thus? Or hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump, to make one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor? What if God, willing to shew His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction, that He might shew the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy which He hath prepared unto glory?” Where is the injustice?

St. Augustine in his De correptione et gratia (chs. v, vi, xi), in which he makes a special study of this question, answers likewise that God in His mercy gives to some the efficacious grace by means of which they are saved, and in justice refuses it to others, permitting them to be damned

because of their culpable neglect. His judgments are incomprehensible. Man has it within his power to fail; but how could he entirely by his own efforts cause God's grace to be efficacious?

If Molinism is right, St. Paul and St. Augustine should have replied that versatile grace is given indifferently to all, and each one at will makes it efficacious or inefficacious by the consent of the will, and this consent depends only on the will. God places only some persons in circumstances in which He foresees that they will will what is good, and others in circumstances in which He foresees that they will will what is evil. But then God is no longer the first universal Cause of all things in existence, and in the work of salvation the noblest part does not come from Him.

Let us not forget that man, who of himself alone is incapable of doing what is good, has it within his power to fail, to sin. Incapable of making divine grace efficacious, he can, through his own fault, make void the divine prevenient graces, and thus deserve that God refuse him the efficacious grace which would have saved him.

Evidently it was not God who urged Judas to betray Jesus. He merely permits the crime, though condemning it. He is not bound to prevent it. It is natural that what is defectible should sometimes fail, and the crime of Judas will be the means of bringing about a good which is greater than the salvation of the traitor. Can we say the wretched man did not receive sufficient help to avoid evil? Only the day before, Christ washed the traitor's feet; Judas, through his own fault, resisted the divine prevenient graces abundantly bestowed on him; the Lord was not the first to forsake him. At the last moment, Judas could have repented, if he had not doubted the divine mercy.

Neither did God urge Peter to deny Christ. St. Peter had received sufficient helps and warnings to avoid this fall. But he relied too much on his own strength; he learnt by experience that of himself alone he could do nothing but fall, and henceforth he placed all his trust in the grace of the Savior.

We see, according to St. Paul and St. Augustine, what must be the answer to the objection that the sinner who actually does what is evil, does not receive sufficient help. What can theology add to this?

In fact, there is a mystery in this incomparably more profound than Molinism admits. It is the mystery of grace, the mystery of iniquity. The rôle of the theologian is to show, not its possibility or intrinsic non-

repugnance, but only that we must admit its existence, and that it does not contain an evident contradiction. It will always remain obscure for us, because we have not an adequate knowledge of grace or of liberty. It is as though we were asked: “What exactly does a little more than 10 + 1 make?” Now let us see what St. Thomas teaches: (A) about the sufficiency of grace; (B) about the divine motion and sin.

A. Sufficient grace. The difficulty exists not only for the Thomists, but for all those who depart from Molinism and, like the Congruists, hold that, previous to the consent of our will, there is a difference between efficacious and sufficient grace. Six years after the appointment of the Congregations De Auxiliis, in December 1613, the General of the Jesuits, Father Aquaviva, in a decree which has become famous, ordered the theologians of the Society to teach Congruism, “which was explained and defended in the discussions of the Congregations De Auxiliis as being more in conformity with the teachings of St. Augustine and St. Thomas.”

This decree says: “Henceforth let our Fathers always teach that efficacious and sufficient grace do not differ merely in actu secundo, because the one obtains its effect by the co-operation of the free will and not the other; but that they differ also in actu primo, in this sense that, scientia media presupposed, God with the fixed intention of producing good in us chooses Himself designedly those determinate means and employs them in the manner and at the moment at which He knows that the effect will be infallibly produced; so that, if He had foreseen the inefficacy of these means, God would have made use of other means. That is why, morally speaking, and considering it as a favor, there is something more in efficacious than in sufficient grace, even in actu primo. It is in this way that God causes us to perform the act, instead of merely giving us the grace by which we can act. The same kind of reasoning applies to perserverance, which undoubtedly is a gift of God.”

Concerning this decree referred to by the Molinist, Father de Regnon, S.J., this latter remarks: “It is difficult to explain more precisely the opposition between Molinism and Congruism. . . . In Molinism God gives the grace which He knows to be efficacious; in Congruism God gives the grace because He knows it to be efficacious.”

But then the difficulty raised against Thomism reappears against Congruism. According to this system, how can we prove that souls who do not receive congruent grace, adapted to their character, have, nevertheless,

sufficient help to do good and avoid evil? Does not God ask more of them than He gives?

St. Thomas (IIa IIae, q. 2, a. 5 objection 1) states this objection in all its force: Why punish man for his sin, if he has not received the necessary divine help for conversion? He replies: “Man is bound to do many things which can be accomplished only by the aid of grace, such as to believe with divine faith and to love God and one’s neighbor in a supernatural way. Now the aid of grace is given to certain persons, and if it is not given to others that is because of a just judgment of previous sin or at least of original sin, as St. Augustine says (De correptione et gratia, chs. v, vi).”

But, they insist, this merely pushes the question further back and does not answer the question in respect to the first sin. To this St. Thomas replies that, if efficacious grace is not refused because of a previous sin, it is refused at least because of an accompanying defect. Apart from the first sin, the created liberty through its own defectibility resists sufficient graces, such as good inspirations or good advice, and thus puts an obstacle in the way of efficacious grace which was somehow offered in the sufficient help. Thus the fruit is promised in the flower, but if the hail falls upon a tree in bloom there will never be any fruit. This reply is developed by St. Thomas in the Contra Gentes, Bk. III, ch. clix. “But those alone are deprived of grace who place in themselves an obstacle to grace; thus he who shuts his eyes while the sun is shining is to be blamed if an accident occurs, although he is unable to see unless the light of the sun enable him to do so. . . . It is said of sinners (Job 21: 14): ‘They have said to God: Depart from us. We desire not the knowledge of Thy ways. . . . They have been rebellious to the light’ (Job 24: 13).” Contra Gentes, Bk. III, ch. clx.

The holy doctor states his mind more clearly in the following chapter: “He who has never sinned and still retains his state of innocence, has it in his power not to place an obstacle to grace. But the sinner is no longer free so that he can avoid placing every obstacle to grace; he can, indeed, by his own power, for a certain time avoid sin (for it is not necessary for him always to sin), but if he be left to himself for long, he will fall into sin, and he will thus place a new obstacle to grace.”

“The free will,” says St. Augustine, “is self-sufficient for evil, but it is effective of no good unless it be aided by omnipotent Goodness.” “Without me you can do nothing,” says the Lord (John 15: 5). “The first cause of the defect of grace and of the presence of sin, is on our part,” remarks St.

Thomas; “but the first cause of the bestowal of grace is on God’s, according to Osee (13: 9) : Destruction is thy own, O Israel, thy help is only in me.”

Molinism comes again with the objection: Why claim that efficacious grace is refused when the first sin is committed, because of an accompanying defect or resistance? Quite to the contrary, the reason of this resistance, it seems, is because efficacious grace is refused. Resistance, far from preceding the refusal of efficacious grace, follows it. Hence the sinner is not responsible.

According to St. Thomas, it is not necessary that man’s failure precede the refusal of grace according to a priority of time; a priority of nature suffices. It is an application of the general principle which, among other questions, throws light upon the question of the justification of the ungodly (Ia IIae, q. 113, a. 8, ad 1um). This principle is that of the mutual relation of causes to one another: “Causes mutually interact though in a different order.” It is enunciated by Aristotle in his Metaphysics (Bk. IV, ch. xi), and we have already explained (n. 61, A) how it enables us to understand that, at the end of deliberation, the choice of the will precedes the final practical judgment in the order of efficient causality, although following it in the order of formal causality. Thus the artist by his action makes use of his idea as directive of his action. Thus, too, the bird holds out its wings, and the wings hold up the bird.

St. Thomas appeals to this general principle in explaining how, in the justification of the ungodly, which takes place instantaneously, the remission of sin is the result of the infusion of grace, although on the part of the sinner the deliverance from sin precedes, according to a priority of nature, the reception of grace. “The subject moved loses the quality that it had before acquiring a new one, whereas the agent in giving it this new quality acts for the removal of the other, which disappears. Thus the sun by its light acts for the removal of darkness, and hence on the part of the sun, illumination is prior to the removal of darkness; but on the part of the atmosphere to be illuminated, to be freed from darkness is, in the order of nature, prior to being illuminated, although both are simultaneous in time. And since the infusion of grace and the remission of sin regard God who justifies, hence in the order of nature the infusion of grace is prior to the freeing from sin. But on the part of the man justified, the being freed from sin is prior to the obtaining of justifying grace.”

The Pelagian idea of justification was entirely a material one when it affirmed that it is because man prepares himself for grace that he receives it; he merits it by his naturally good works.

If justification is explained by the principle of the mutual relation of causes to one another, then it must be the same for the loss of grace which is the reverse process of conversion. Immediately that man falls into mortal sin and loses habitual grace, his failure, in the order of material causality, precedes the refusal that God extends to him of actual efficacious grace and is the reason for this failure. In another order of causality, however, this failure presupposes the divine permission of sin and the absence of efficacious grace, without which there would be no sin. Thus final perseverance is a gratuitous gift to the predestined (Council of Trent, Sess. VI, ch. xiii). But in opposition to justification, sin as such is the work of the deficient creature, and not the work of God. It is, then, true to say purely and simply that sin precedes the refusal of the efficacious grace which God offers us. In other words, God does not forsake the just unless He is forsaken by them, as the Council of Trent says (Sess. VI, ch. xi). “We are deprived of grace,” remarks St. Thomas, “only if we have been unwilling to receive it. God, in fact, can will only the good, and it is but right that, if anyone does not wish or neglects to prepare himself for grace, he should be deprived of it.”

Without God’s permission of sin and the absence of efficacious grace, there would be no sin; but this permission and this absence of grace are not the cause of sin; its cause is due solely to our own frailty. Action follows being; of ourselves we are nothing and return to nothing; consequently our action suffices in itself for us to fail; this failure is the result of our own frailty, which God is not bound to remedy. He often remedies the defect, but not always. That is a mystery.

What then is sufficient grace, according to the teaching of St. Thomas and the Thomists? It is a grace which, as being the motive of our choice, gives the proximate power to act; it does not give the action. Only efficacious grace moves us effectively to action.

Among sufficient graces we must include: (1) external helps, such as the preaching of the Gospel, good example and good advice, miracles, salutary humiliations, favors, the providential disposal of the circumstances in our life: (2) among interior graces: habitual grace, the infused supernatural virtues (such as faith, hope, and charity), which give us the habitual

proximate power to act in a supernatural way; (3) transitory actual graces, prevenient and inspiring, which produce in us indeliberate movements of the will, pious emotions, and good aspirations, which incline us to make a salutary choice. Remote sufficient grace disposes us at least to pray for the power to overcome temptation and do good. Proximate sufficient grace disposes us immediately to perform a deliberate salutary act, without, however, making us do it effectively.

Like the motive, it gives only the power to act. Now the motive which decides us to act seems to us so sufficient that Leibniz thought it caused us infallibly to act, according to a moral necessity. Why should sufficient grace not be really sufficient? (Cf. supra, n. 61, B.)

It is certain that inefficacious grace, such as conceived by the Jansenists, does not suffice; they called it a little grace. According to Jansenius, indeed, Molinism expresses the truth for the state of innocence. Before original sin man received only sufficient graces, and it depended only on his will to make them efficacious. But since original sin, the free will, which has been wounded and corrupted, can no longer accomplish the good without an efficacious grace. It is solely due to this weakness of our will that efficacious grace is required, according to Jansenius, and without it we have not the power to do good. It confers not only the act, but even the power to act. If celestial delectation is inferior to terrestrial, the scales necessarily incline toward evil. Man with little graces is incapable of overcoming his covetousness, just as the blind man is incapable of seeing the light of the sun. It is only by efficacious grace that the power to do good is given along with the action itself.

On the other hand, sufficient grace, in the Molinist sense, cannot be reconciled with the principle of the divine universal causality, since it would depend entirely upon ourselves to make this grace efficacious by our consent. Our will would not be moved by God to determine itself. Molinism, as a matter of fact, restricts the merciful action of God since, according to this system, God would be giving us only sufficient graces, leaving it to us to make them efficacious.

We must therefore admit sufficient grace in the Thomist sense. It is truly sufficient in itself; it gives us the power to act, although efficacious grace is required in another order, so that we may act effectively. Wherever we find several causes concurring in an effect, have we not this same fact of causes sufficient in themselves, which however do not result in becoming effective

each by itself? The good which attracts us is sufficient in the order of finality. We usually say that the flower suffices for producing the fruit, yet for the fruit to be produced, the flower must not be destroyed by hail and must not be deprived of sunlight. Bread suffices for my sustenance, yet it must be digested; intelligence suffices for knowing the principal natural virtues, yet there must be application of the intellect; the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ suffices for the salvation of all men, yet we must allow its merits to be applied to us.

The most rigid Thomists say that sufficient grace is so truly sufficient that, if the salutary act is not forthcoming, that is not due to the insufficiency of the divine help, but to the failure of the free will which in itself is sufficient for this failure. A failure requires but a defective cause. So speaks the Council of Trent (Sess. VI, ch. xiii): “God, unless men be themselves wanting to His grace, as He has begun the good work, so will He perfect it, working (in them) to will and to accomplish.” (Denzinger, n. 806.)

Sufficient grace in the Thomist sense is neither something useless and sterile nor, a fortiori, something harmful. The good grain committed to the earth is not sterile; it will bear its fruit if the impoverishment of the soil does not resist it. Thus sufficient grace is of itself very useful and becomes accidentally useless, on account of our failure which is not to be attributed to it. Habitual grace and all supernatural virtues are incomparably precious and supremely useful for salvation, although actual efficacious grace is also required so that we may make use of them.

To hold that merely sufficient grace is harmful because it makes man responsible for his sin, would oblige us to maintain that reason itself is harmful and that it would be better to be deprived of it, like the animals that cannot sin.

Just as it is in man’s power not to yield to the sufficient and reasonable motive for good behavior, so he can resist sufficient grace, and thus deprive himself of efficacious grace which would have been given him had he not resisted, and which was offered to him in sufficient grace, just as the act is included in the power, the fruit in the flower.

We see that this serious problem of the sufficiency of the divine help given to all men is solved by the general principle which is the dominating element in all Thomistic doctrine. It is the principle that being is divided into potency and act. All the great problems of being, of knowledge, of

action, are clarified by the light of this principle which constitutes the very essence of the whole philosophy of Aristotle and of the natural metaphysics of the human intellect.

Those who do not admit a real distinction of potency and act in the order of being between created essence and its existence, are naturally inclined not to admit it in the order of operation between the potency to act and the action itself, between sufficient and efficacious grace. If, on the contrary, the creature does not exist of itself, neither can it act of itself alone. It is dependent on God both in its being and in its action.

It has been said that the Thomist must abandon his doctrine when he enters his oratory. On the contrary, it is during his moments of insubordination and pride that he forgets his doctrine of the subordination of causes. Freed from all illusion, he must say that of himself he is nothing. The Apostle Peter who at first relied somewhat on his own strength, realized his weakness and he learned to put all his trust in God's grace. It would be a great illusion to think that what is better in us and of a salutary nature, the good use of our liberty and of grace, our free determination, is exclusively our work and does not come from God. How could St. Paul have said: By the grace of God I am what I am, that it is by God's grace and not my feeble powers that I am what I am? How could any Christian soul say sincerely, that of itself it is nothing?

This soul, questioned concerning the reconciliation of the efficacy of grace with free will, often will not know how to express itself. But if it happens to answer in the Molinist sense, this is because it is unable to find words to express its most profound thought. In truth, when the Molinist prays he thinks like us that it is an old and absurd dream to believe that we are or do something good of ourselves and independently of God. What is the prayer of the publican? Of ourselves we are nothing. If we deduct from ourselves what we have received from God and what He unceasingly preserves in us, in strictness of terminology, without any metaphor, there is nothing left. The sun's ray illumines only because of the light imparted to it by the sun; left to itself it returns to darkness. Thus of ourselves we return to nothingness. "What have you which you have not received?" asks St. Paul. How can our free determination be exclusively our act? How can it depend solely upon ourselves that the grace of God is made either efficacious or sterile? Of ourselves we are less than nothing, for our defectibility tends to make us fail, and sin is less than even nothing, like

error when there is no consideration: “Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God.” (II Cor. 3: 5.)

B) The divine motion and sin. Granted that all receive sufficient grace, there remains one more difficulty. How can we claim that God can move one to the sinful act itself, viewed as a physical entity? Would He not be the cause of sin, and then what would we have to say of God’s sanctity? God, who loves His divine goodness above all things, can in no way will sin, which turns us away from the sovereign Good. The sinner can will what is sinful, because of the pleasure he finds in it. God can in no way will that we should turn away from Him. In Himself He cannot will even physical evil or that of punishment, but only accidentally, as the result of a good to be preferred to that of which physical evil is the privation. He wills accidentally the death of the antelope that the lion may live, and the punishment inflicted on the sinner for his salutary correction and as a manifestation of His own justice. As for the evil of sin, He cannot will it at all; but He merely permits it, for it is natural that what is defectible should sometimes fail. God is not bound to remedy this failure; He permits it, on the contrary, for the purpose of manifesting His mercy and justice (Ia, q. 19, a. 9; q. 23, a. 3; Ia IIae, q. 79, a. 1).

It is no less true, as St. Thomas says (Ia IIae, q. 79, a. 2), that: “the act of sin is both a being and an act; and in both respects it is from God. Every being, whatever the mode of its being, must be derived from the First Being. Every action is caused by something existing in act, since nothing produces an action save in so far as it is in act: and every being in act is reduced to the First Act (God) as to its cause, who is act by His essence. Therefore God is the cause of every action in so far as it is an action. But sin denotes a being and an action with a defect. This defect is from a created defectible cause (free will), as falling away from the order of the First Agent (God). This defect is not attributed to God as its cause, but to free will: even as the defect of limping it attributed to a crooked leg as its cause, but not to the motive power which nevertheless causes whatever movement there is in the limping. Accordingly God is the cause of the act of sin, but He is not the cause of sin, because He does not cause the act to have a defect.” St. Augustine says the same in the City of God (Bk. XII, ch. vii).

St. Thomas brings forward this objection: There are acts which are essentially bad, such as blasphemy and hatred of God; and God cannot be the cause of their physical entity without being the cause of their moral deformity.

The holy Doctor replies as follows: “These acts do not take their species from the privation itself, wherein consists the nature of evil, but from some object to which that privation is united” (Ia IIae, q. 79, a. 2 ad 3um). In the De malo (q. 3, a. 2 ad 2um), he adds: “The deformity of sin is derived from the specification of this act, not in so far as the act is physical, for as such it is caused by God; but in so far as the act is moral, it is to be attributed solely to the free will.” The physical or intellectual energy which is expended in the act of sin is not itself bad.

But Molinism insists upon asking how God can move the will to this determinate act rather than to a certain other, without being the cause of its malice?

If it were entirely God’s action, as when He gives operating grace which produces the first movemnt of the will, the objection would be impossible of solution; but He moves the will to determine itself, and it is in this determination that the defect is realized. For a better understanding of this, we must call to mind that the divine motion inclines the will first of all toward its adequate object, which is universal good, and only after that toward an inadequate object, which is a certain particular good. In the first kind of good the divine motion constitutes the free mode of the act; it operates interiorly in the very depths of the will taken in its widest extent and, so to say, directs it through all the degrees of good, the proffered efficacious grace included. And it is only after a voluntary inadvertence to our duty that our will, through its defection, is inclined toward a certain particular good which is contrary to God’s law, and it is then that God moves it to the physical act of sin.

This voluntary inconsideration precedes the culpable choice according to a priority of nature, if not of time. The will, which is naturally inclined to good and not to evil, does not tend and is not straightway drawn to evil; it inclines to an apparent good only after turning away from true goods. Therefore when God moves it to the physical act of sin, it has already virtually refused the grace offered to it.

This is what the Thomists explain especially with regard to the sin of the angels, which was preceded by no other. They point out that for every act of

the will two motions are required. The one, which presents an object, is objective; the other, which inclines the will toward this object, is subjective. For the good act these two motions come from God. For the bad act, the objective motion, which proposes an apparent good mingled with evil, is not from God as to what there is defective about it; this comes either from bad advice given or from our own cupidity. The presence of this objective and defective motion produces in the soul of anybody about to sin a voluntary lack of consideration for his duty, and only then does the divine influence, which is the cause of the physical reality of the sinful act and not of its malice, make itself felt.

Hence the divine motion does not surprise the innocent man, who would find himself poised between good and evil, so as to incline him to evil. God never determines to the material act of sin unless the creature has already determined itself to what formally constitutes sin. He moves the wills according to their dispositions; consequently He moves to the physical act of sin only the will already badly disposed and demanding, so to speak, to be thus moved. Let us take a sin in which the responsibility is quite evident, a sin of malice, such as that of Judas. He disposes himself for it and takes pleasure in it beforehand. The Lord says to him afterwards: “That which thou dost, do quickly” (John 13: 27). The Lord neither ordains, nor advises, but permits the accomplishment of the premeditated crime, although He must permit this evil while disapproving of it. Before sinning, the sinner himself refuses the light and grace coming to him from God. “They have said to God: Depart from us. We desire not the knowledge of thy ways” (Job 21: 14). “They have been rebellious to the light” (Job 24: 13). It is also said of the sinner in the Psalms: “He would not understand that he might do well” (Ps. 35: 4).

Conclusion. Such is the solution of the principal difficulties presented by the doctrine of St. Thomas. If things still remain obscure and mysterious, we are inclined to think that in all this there is no contradiction, for it is by a rigorous process of reasoning that St. Thomas advances from the known to the unknown.

1) He starts from the fundamental truths in the order of invention, from the first principles of reason and of being: the principle of identity or of contradiction, the principle of causality; everything that passes from potentiality to act is set in motion by a being in act, and in the first place by the Being who is pure Act. It is on this principle that the proofs for the

existence of God are based. Why should human liberty be an exception to this fundamental law of being and of action?

2) In the order of the ultimate reasons of things (in via judicii), St. Thomas starts from this supreme truth, that God is His being and His action. From this are deduced the absolute exigencies of the divine nature, especially the principle of the universal causality of the first agent. Why should the determination of human liberty be an exception to this principle?

3) Finally, from the supernatural point of view of faith, St. Thomas as a theologian starts from this first of revealed principles, that God is the first cause of our salvation. "Without Me you can do nothing," said the Lord (John 15: 5). Hence the necessity of prayer to implore the help of Him who converts the wills and without whose grace they are not converted. What is of main importance in the work of salvation is our free choice of the good. How could this be exclusively our own and not come from God, the Author of salvation? "It is God," says St. Paul, "who worketh in you both to will and to accomplish" (Phil. 2: 13).

As an eminent theologian says: "The Church in her liturgy, the saints, mystical writers, all Christian people, do not ask merely to be enlightened as to their duties by illuminations of the intellect, to be aroused to action by good impressions and impulses of the will. What disturbs them more than anything else is the frailty, the inconstancy, the caprice, the sluggishness of their own free will; and they beg God to stabilize and direct the activity of their will. Can we believe that St. Paul was awaiting the outcome of the struggle with a determination springing from his free will alone, when he boldly proclaimed (Rom. 8: 35): 'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or the sword? . . . But in all these things we overcome, because of Him that hath loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities . . . nor any creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.' And let us recall these other words (II Cor. 12: 9): 'The Lord said to me: My grace is sufficient for thee, for power is made perfect in infirmity. Gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me. . . . For when I am weak then am I powerful.' Certainly he knew that he could lose this grace, resist it, and so doing even render it vain and useless. But when he enumerated the marvelous results which he hoped for with so much assurance, certainly he did not suppose their positive

realization depended ultimately on his own will, which would have to decide everything by itself, and not through the efficacy of grace."

Such are the first rational and revealed principles in the light of which St. Thomas examines the question of the relations of God to human action. There are and must be obscurities in his solution of them; but nothing justifies us in saying that it implies a contradiction, since it results from these very first principles and since it is by these principles that the Thomist synthesis has established its proofs on all points of theological knowledge.

Molinism is not a general synthesis and is not philosophical; nor is it a theological system, but merely an opinion in a particular controversy; and in its manner of development it is entirely opposed to the teaching of St. Thomas. Instead of starting with necessary and universal principles, so as to go from the known to the unknown, it starts with a difficulty which has to be solved: how to reconcile God's foreknowledge with human freedom. And the solution is based entirely on a definition of human freedom which cannot be proved, either by experience or a priori, and which is nothing else but a begging of the question. This definition must lead Molinism to deny the absolute universality and necessity of the first principles of reason and theology, without succeeding in safeguarding liberty, which is destroyed by the determinism of the circumstances implied in the scientia media. (Cf. supra, n. 49, b.)

"Certainly," writes Father Guillermin, "philosophic reason must not ignore the very many divergences and inequalities which distinguish the numerous degrees of created being. But it is absolutely imperative for reason to bring back all things to unity, to rediscover, synthesize, and unify all things in one infinitely simple and infinitely comprehensive first principle. Now Molinism goes right against this indestructible instinct of our reason. It brings into the relations between God and the world a sort of transcendental dualism which nothing justifies. . . . The Molinists affirm that it is of the essence of a free act that its immediate cause, the created will, does not depend on any higher influences as to the determination of its choice. That is an affirmation which, according to our opinion, rests upon a begging of the question, and we protest against it on the score of the universal and transcendental supereminence of divine causality."

Finally, how can we maintain that, as faith teaches us, God is the first cause, if He produces in us only good movements, good aspirations? "It is not he who has good aspirations who will enter into the kingdom of heaven,

but he who, by a free act, does the will of the heavenly Father." How is God still the first cause of our salvation, "If He only takes a part and not the most important part in the work . . . . if He remains a stranger to the determination of the free will, in which is completed and concentrated the whole work of salvation"? The conversion of St. Paul, of Magdalen, of the good thief, every true conversion is in the first place the work of God in the soul drawing it to Himself. Our faith, our reason, and our heart beseech God, the Author of all good, who began the work of our salvation, that He Himself complete it. "He who hath begun a good work in you, will perfect it" (Phil. 1: 6). "God, unless men be themselves wanting to His grace, as He has begun the good work, so will He perfect it, working in them to will and accomplish," says the Council of Trent (Denzinger, n. 806). Holy Scripture unceasingly proclaims it: "But the salvation of the just is from the Lord" (Ps. 36: 39). "By the grace of God I am what I am" (I Cor. 15: 10). "The grace of God life everlasting" (Rom. 6: 23). "For of Him and by Him and in Him are all things" (Rom. 11: 36). "What hast thou that thou hast not received?" (I Cor. 4: 7). "It is not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy" (Rom. 9: 16). "Who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish" (Phil. 2: 13). "Who worketh all in all" (I Cor. 12: 6). "For in Him we live and move and are" (Acts 17: 28).

The Council of Orange insists on these texts. And does not the Council of Trent define that the grace of final perseverance is a free gift, as predestination is? Why is it that one sinner is converted a few moments before death, whereas another dies suddenly in a state of sin? It is the mystery of the divine predilections for which there is no extrinsic reason.

How could this teaching of faith, such as St. Thomas interprets it, incline us to quietism, as some have claimed? Certainly it bids us not to disturb ourselves, to be recollected and attentive to the operation of grace in us, but it does not dispense us from endeavoring, under the influence of the grace given us, to struggle and be victorious. It does not tell us to wait for a sign of divine assistance; on the contrary, it incites us to pray that we may be ready to act as soon as our conscience bids us or obliges us to do so. God moves us, St. Augustine repeatedly says, not that we should do nothing, but precisely that we should act. And often, if we demand too little from ourselves, it is because we do not count sufficiently on the grace which God has promised and wishes to give us in order to have us fulfill His precepts. If the level of our spiritual life becomes lowered, and if we are satisfied

with leading an entirely human life, this is because we believe ourselves to be alone when acting; we forget that God is in us and with us. It is said at time, that the doctrine of St. Thomas could not be preached; on the contrary, the more sublime the preaching is, the more it resembles the very terminology employed by the holy doctor who follows St. Augustine and St. Paul.

Molinism criticizes Thomism for being a harsh doctrine which diminishes hope in us. “It is not true, as some suppose, that Molinism opens up more abundant sources of God’s mercy and grace and that it proposes to give us a more efficacious grace. On the contrary, it is because it asks less from God, that it leaves more to man. When God has stirred up in the soul indeliberate knowledge and impulses, His work is finished. It is now for man to complete the work by adding his consent, or, by not doing so, to make the grace become useless and barren.”

Thomism, far from entrusting our salvation to human frailty, places it in the hands of God our Savior. Far indeed from being opposed to the virtue of hope, it inclines us to put all our trust in God and not in ourselves. Hope is a theological virtue, and its formal motive is the help of God (Deus auxilians), and not our will power. Should we not have to despair of attaining our supernatural end if we had to rely upon our own strength? Although we are not certain that God will deign always to point out our faults to us and give us the grace of final perseverance, yet we are much less certain of our own will, which so often is indifferent to true good and seeks what is merely apparent good. The rectitude of God’s ways is of a different certainty from that of our own heart. On this point one may read Bossuet’s fine exposition of the doctrine of grace.

Immediately when great difficulties arise, let us have recourse to this expedient and say to ourselves: I must pray and watch out not to fall, and God in His good time, at the hour when duty calls upon me to act, will give me His supremely efficacious grace, and I shall act without fail. This will be the confirmation of our hope.

What must a priest do who is unsuccessful in converting a dying sinner? If the priest is persuaded that God is the master of this sinful will, above all things he will pray. If, on the other hand, he imagines that God exerts only an external influence on this will by means of circumstances, good thoughts, and good inspirations, external to the salutary consent of the will,

the priest may lose too much time in employing superficial means; his prayer may lack that holy boldness which we admire in the saints.

Scripture teaches us to place all our trust, not in ourselves, but in God: “Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy great mercy” (Ps. 50). “Into Thy hands I commend my spirit” (Ps. 30: 6). “Create a clean heart in me, O God; and renew a right spirit within my bowels” (Ps. 50: 12). “Convert us, O Lord, to Thee, and we shall be converted” (Lam. 5: 21; Jerem. 31: 18).

In concluding this chapter, it is of importance for us to connect the solution of the antinomies relating to liberty with that of the fundamental antinomy previously examined (nn. 54, 57).

The mystery of salvation brings us back to that of the reconciliation of God’s mercy with His justice. St. Augustine (De correptione et gratia, chs. v, vi, xi) says repeatedly that it is by reason of His mercy that God gives to some the efficacious grace of final perseverance by which they are saved; it is by reason of His justice that He refuses this to others on account of their culpable and frequent failures which He permits for very sublime reasons of which His wisdom is the judge. The predestined must none the less, following the example of the Crucified and by His power, pay their debt to divine justice; the others are the object of God’s mercy, since they receive the necessary and superabundant graces that their frequent failures finally render sterile. The least favored receive sufficient grace to pray, and if they did not resist it, by means of a series of graces they would arrive at justification.

Therefore this mystery of salvation brings us back then to that of the reconciliation of God’s mercy with His justice. We have seen that these two attributes are identical with divine love and that this identification does not destroy them, but reinforces them and enables them to exist in a pure state, freed from all imperfection. It is by the divine goodness that St. Thomas throws light upon the mystery of predestination. The sovereign Good has two subordinate aspects which demand their manifestation. It is above all essentially communicative, diffusive of itself: this is the principle of mercy. But it has also an absolute right to be loved above all things: this is the principle of avenging justice, proclaiming against those who deny it, this supreme and inalienable right which is the principle of all obligation. “The reason for the predestination of some, and reprobation of others,” says St. Thomas, “must be sought for in the goodness of God. Thus He is said to have made all things through His goodness, so that the divine goodness

might be represented in things. Now, it is necessary that God's goodness, which in itself is one and undivided, should be manifested in many ways in His creation, because creatures in themselves cannot attain to the simplicity of God. Thus it is that for the completion of the universe different grades of being are required, some of which hold a high and some a low place in the universe. That this multiformity of grades may be preserved in things, God allows certain evils, so as to give occasion for many good things to happen. Let us then consider the whole human race, as we consider the whole universe. God wills to manifest His goodness in men; in respect of those whom He predestines, by means of His mercy, in sparing them; and in respect of others, whom He reprobates, by means of His justice, in punishing them. This is the reason why God elects some and rejects others. To this the Apostle refers, saying (Rom. 9: 22): What if God, willing to show His wrath (that is, the vengeance of His justice), and to make His power known, endured (that is, permitted), with much patience, vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction, that He might show the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy which He hath prepared unto glory.' "

So speaks St. Thomas, following St. Paul. For a complete understanding of their statements, it must be said that the sinner is self-sufficient for the purpose of sinning and remaining in sin. It is God who inspires the saints; He does not, to be sure, urge the persecutors to attack Christ and His Church. Their willful malice, at times of a refined nature, comes only from themselves. God merely permits it, though He condemns it. It will contribute to the manifestation of His justice and consequently of His goodness.

Such is the final answer to the problem of evil. Far from opposing the existence of God, it presupposes that existence, and has its foundation in the two fundamental aspects of the sovereign Good. But it must be said that this is within the reach only of the perfect; as St. Paul declares (I Cor. 2: 6-14): "We speak wisdom among the perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, neither of the princes of this world that come to nought. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, a wisdom which is hidden, which God ordained before the world, unto our glory. . . . But the sensual man perceiveth not these things that are of the spirit of God. For it is foolishness to him, and he cannot understand because it is spiritually examined."

When in this life the wicked seem to triumph, when we contemplate this doctrine of salvation with simplicity and purity of heart, after praying, then,

as Pascal says concerning the Passion, “we shall find it so great, that we shall have no reason to be scandalized at a baseness that is not there. But there are some who can admire only carnal types of grandeur, as if there were none of the spiritual order; and there are others who admire only types that are spiritual, as if there were not infinitely loftier ones in wisdom.”

Many obscurities remain, because we do not know the intimate mode in which mercy and justice are identified in divine love. As our knowledge is of necessity incomplete, justice seems to us too rigid, and mercy arbitrary. It is a profound mystery which adds to the transcendent obscurity of divine Being, which is that of divine liberty and its most hidden predilections. In this life our analogical notions are peculiarly deficient, being too determinate. The more they determine the primary notion of being, the less they manifest the plenitude of the divine Being (Ia, q. 13, a. 11). In reality, divine mercy and justice never operate separately; the most sublime graces accompany the greatest of divine requirements, as we see in the life of Christ and of the saints. On the other hand, afflictions are always tempered by mercy (Ia, q. 21, a. 4).

Hence divine love cannot be the love of the sovereign Good without being at the same time a holy hatred of evil. Great contemplatives, like Blessed Angela of Foligno, have caught a glimpse in this life, of the intimate reconciliation which we fail to recognize. Raised to a higher degree of prayer than any she had previously known, Blessed Angela arrived at such a knowledge of God’s justice and of the rectitude of His judgments that she wrote: “I love all good things and all evil things, benefactions and malefactions. Nothing disrupts the harmony for me. I enjoy great peace and have great veneration for the divine judgments. . . . I do not see more clearly the goodness of God in a saint or in all the saints than in one of the damned or in all the damned. But this abyss of goodness was shown to me but once; it left in me a remembrance and a joy that are eternal. . . . The soul that, having gone down into the abyss, has caught a glimpse of the justice of God’s ways, will henceforth look upon creatures as the servants of His glory.” St. Thomas says that in the punishment of the damned is to be seen the order of divine justice, and the absolute right of the sovereign Goodness to be loved above all things.

“Love is strong as death, jealousy as hard as hell” (Cant. 8: 6). Love is strong as death, its holy hatred of evil unchangeable as hell, its ardor is as

the burning of fire, it is a flame of Jehovah. Torrents of iniquity cannot quench love. It will always have the last word.

CHAPTER V

GOD'S INEFFABILITY AND THE ABSURDITY OF THE UNKNOWABLE.

CONCLUSION AND CONFIRMATION

66) God's ineffability.

It comes from His absolute simplicity, which consists of all perfections eminently in harmony, and is at the same time sanctity and supreme beauty.

The solution of the antinomies brings us to the question of God's ineffability and the theoretical and practical consequences of the identification of the absolute attributes in God.

As we said (supra, n. 56), the unity of the primary notions common to God and creatures is only a unity of proportionality. Hence the perfections they express can be contained formally in God and are identical in Him. Therefore we maintain, on the one hand, God's knowableness and, on the other, His transcendence and ineffability which are the result of His absolute simplicity.

The divine essence thus appears as the highest realization of the principle of identity or non-contradiction, which is the fundamental law of thought. If our thought has objective validity (if it is the thought of something and not of nothing), its supreme law must be also the supreme law of being. Consequently the first reality, which is the principle of all things, cannot be this composite and changing world; it must be perfectly identical with itself and must of necessity be to being as A is to A. That is not the ontological argument which is an illegitimate transition from the abstract and analogical idea of God to His existence. It is the argument based on contingency in abbreviated form, for the contingency in the world is shown by the opposition presented between its perpetual change and composition, and the principle of identity which is the supreme law of our thought. For the divine

identity to be rich in its eminent possession of all absolute perfections participated in by creatures, necessarily being, thought, and love are identical, included as they are in the formal notion of Deity. The Deity is thus above being (super-being), and is still being in a pure state, as it is the Thought of Thought and the subsisting love of the supreme Good (formally and eminently). “The perfect unity of God requires that what are manifold and divided in others should exist in Him simply and unitedly.” (St. Thomas, Ia, q. 13, a. 4 ad 3um, and a. 5.)

From this it follows that the Deity as such is naturally unknowable and consequently ineffable. It is unknowable inasmuch as it infinitely surpasses the natural means of knowing possessed by a created intelligence; for these means, to be proportionate to this intelligence, must be merely creatures or abstract concepts of creatures, and between these latter and God there can be only a similarity by way of analogy (Ia, q. 12, a. 4, 11, 12; q. 13, a. 1). The Deity cannot be naturally known by a proper concept, but only by analogically common concepts which express what is proper to God merely in a negative and relative way. Consequently the Deity cannot be defined, and remains ineffable. “In this life we cannot see the essence of God; but we know God from creatures as their principle, and also by way of excellence and exclusion. In this way, therefore, He can be named by us from creatures, yet not so that the name signifying Him expresses the divine essence in itself” (Ia, q. 13, a. 1). And the names which most properly apply to the Deity are those which are less determined, more universal and absolute, as “He who is” (Ia, q. 13, a. 11). But such as the Deity is in itself remains inexpressible.

Only supernatural revelation can make the intimate life of God known to us by faith and afterwards by vision. “What eye hath not seen nor ear heard, what hath not entered into the heart of man . . . God hath revealed them by His Spirit. For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God” (I Cor. 2: 9). This revelation initiates us into the very knowledge of God; it teaches us the existence of the Holy Trinity, and gives us a glimpse of the relation of this supreme mystery to the other mysteries which originate from it and terminate in it. Far from impairing our autonomy by demanding an act of belief from us, it prepares us for the evidence enjoyed by the blessed in heaven: “It is for the disciple to believe,” said Aristotle. But in this life the supreme mystery that would illumine all the others, remains the most obscure for us. “We walk by faith and not by sight” (II Cor. 5: 7). True, St.

Paul “was caught up into paradise,” but there he heard “secret words which it is not granted to man to utter” (II Cor. 12: 4, and St. Thomas’ commentary).

Can the blessed who see God face to face express this, if not by human speech, at least by a word of the mind, by a purely interior locution? St. Thomas (Ia, q. 12, a. 2, and Commentary of John of St. Thomas) replies that it is impossible. A more sublime idea of God’s ineffability could not be given. The blessed, who contemplate intellectually and immediately this eternally subsisting and pure intellectual light which is identical with the love of the supreme Good, cannot express the object of their contemplation by a mental word. How could the ever actual intellection, which is Pure Act in the intelligible order, be contained within the limits of a created idea which is intelligible only by participation? In the finite there cannot be a homogeneous representation of the Deity that expresses and presents it such as it is in itself. As Scheeben very well says, “the intellect in the beatific vision is so sustained by God and immersed in Him that it could not grasp and impress on its mind the object of its vision. Thus a person confronted by an impressive scene loses the gift of speech; he cannot dominate, sufficiently master what he sees, so as to give it adequate expression in his thoughts” (Scheeben, Dogmatik, Vol. I, sec. 81, p. 574).

God, such as He is in Himself, can be expressed only by the consubstantial word which is the eternal Word, the “brightness of eternal light; and the unspotted mirror and image of His goodness” (Wisdom 7: 26), the “brightness of His glory and the figure of His substance” (Heb. 1: 3). Cf. Ia, q. 34, 35.

This ineffability is in no way opposed to the knowableness of God which we have already defended. We have positive knowledge of the analogous perfections that are common to creatures and to God, and it is He indeed whom we reach in this way, but not such as He is in Himself, for we perceive the divine mode of these absolute perfections only in a negative and relative way. Thus we truly know the heart of our friends, though we do not enter into their intimate feelings such as they are in themselves. “For what man knoweth the things of a man, but the spirit of a man that is in him? So the things also that are of God, no man knoweth, but the Spirit of God” (I Cor. 2: 11).

The doctrine of St. Thomas, as we have explained it, is clearly in agreement with that of the orthodox mystics who have strongly insisted on

God's ineffability, such as Dionysius or St. John of the Cross. Without retracting anything we have said against the Agnosticism of Maimonides and the far more radical Agnosticism of the moderns, we find it an easy matter to declare that we understand better the ways of negation and eminence. These ways, indeed, withdraw us from the created mode of the absolute perfections and remind us that the intimate life of God is infinitely superior to the manifold ideas we can form of it, ideas which would become idols if we took them for adequate representations of the Deity. Says Dionysius: "There is a more perfect knowledge of God which is the result of a sublime ignorance and which is acquired in an incomprehensible union; it is when the soul, forsaking all things and forgetting itself, is immersed in the ocean of divine glory and illumined by the abysmal splendors of the unfathomable wisdom" (De nom. div., VII, 3). "In this translucent obscurity, it sees and knows precisely by mystic ignorance Him who entirely escapes our vision and knowledge" (Mystical Theology, ch. ii).

St. John of the Cross (Ascent of Mt. Carmel, Bk. II, chs. vii, viii, ix) requires the sacrifice of the senses and reasoning for one to arrive at the higher degree of contemplation. "Nothing, absolutely nothing which the imagination can represent and the mind conceive in this world, can serve as proximate means of union with God." This union is effected in the night of faith by an experimental and indistinct knowledge which does not stop at the diverse attributes of God, but rises in a sense above every determinate idea; it is the perfection of the eminent and negative way.

St. Albert the Great (De adhaerendo Deo, and In lib. de myst. theol.) and St. Thomas speak in the same way. St. Thomas (IIa IIae, q. 180, a. 6), following Dionysius, distinguishes three degrees in contemplation. In the first we contemplate God in the mirror of sensible things or by means of comparisons; in the second, by reasoning, as theology does, we rise above sensible things to contemplate God in the mirror of intelligible truths and of the various mysteries of salvation; in the third, contemplation rises above the multiplicity of images and ideas and becomes a simple looking at God in the obscurity of faith. "At the end of discursive reasoning, the soul concentrates its attention upon the contemplation of one simple truth." "But in the soul, before it attains to this uniformity, a twofold difformity must of necessity be removed from it: first, that which arises from a diversity of external things, and secondly that which is the result of discursive reasoning." (IIa IIae, q. 180, a. 6.) Rich in the multiplicity of the lower

degrees, this very simple and uniform contemplation remains inevitably in obscurity in this life (IIa IIae, q. 8, a. 2); we may say in a sense that it is plunged in an ever more obscure night, for it is identified with the ever more profound conviction that God is above all ideas that we can form of Him. That does not prevent the contemplation from being ever more certain of the harmonious and ineffable union of all the absolute perfections in the Deity. God thus appears more and more like an infinite ocean of substance, pelagus substantiae infinitum. This phrase of St. John Damascene which St. Thomas is fond of quoting (Ia, q. 13, a. 11), is a way of expressing that we know of God rather how He is not, than how He is. “Concerning the divine essence we must consider the manner of its existence, or, rather, what is not the manner of its existence” (Ia, q. 2). This knowledge, however obscure, is not less savory (sapientia = sapida scientia) when it proceeds from the charity of the Holy Spirit which makes itself felt in us as the soul of our soul, the life of our life (cf. IIa IIae, q. 45, a. 2).

By this classical doctrine of contemplation, Thomism, adopting the philosophy of being, joins with the doctrine of St. Augustine which follows rather the philosophy of good. Through lack of systematization, unfortunately these two kindred concepts have at times been too much separated, as if they were irreconcilable. Considering St. Thomas too exclusively as a philosopher, as a Christian Aristotelian, was underestimating him and did not take sufficiently into account that he was also a theologian and a saint.

The aspects of being and goodness are already reconciled in philosophy; in itself, being precedes goodness because it is simpler, more absolute, more universal; in the order of causality, goodness precedes being as the end is superior to the formal cause. St. Thomas himself thus is in accord with Dionysius (Ia, q. 5, a. 2 ad 1um).

But the aspects of being and goodness are reconciled with far greater reason in theology, for the formal object of theology, like that of supernatural faith, is God, not precisely under the aspect of being by which He is accessible to metaphysics, but under the aspect of Deity. Now in the mysterious eminence of the Deity, being and goodness reappear formally and are identified. “Sacred doctrine,” says St. Thomas, “essentially treats of God . . . not only so far as He can be known through creatures, but also so far as He is known to Himself alone and revealed to others . . . and all things are treated of under the aspect of God, either because they are God

Himself, or because they refer to God as their beginning and end" (Ia, q. 1, a. 6, 7).

But it is especially in contemplation, to which faith and theology are directed, that St. Thomas and St. Augustine join hands without anything being able to separate them. We can have faith and theology without sanctifying grace and charity, but not contemplation, for this proceeds from the gift of wisdom (IIa IIae, q. 45, a. 4). Says St. Thomas: "This gift makes us judge rightly of divine things by a certain connaturalness and union with God which is effected by charity," and by sanctifying grace which is a participation of the divine nature, in so far precisely as it is divine.

In this absolutely simple eminent object, God as such, we have the divine attributes reconciled and identified with the theological conception which, to treat of realities as they are in themselves, derives its inspiration especially from the supreme Being, and the conception which, to lead us to Him, derives its inspiration from supreme Goodness which is our final end.

God's ineffability proceeds, therefore, from His absolute simplicity which is eminent harmony. It is unity most profound in diversity apparently the least reconcilable; it is the identification of absolute immutability and perfect liberty, of sovereign wisdom and good pleasure which is its own reason, of most inflexible justice, and most compassionate mercy. This harmony constitutes both the holiness and the beauty of God. Holiness is the indissoluble union of all absolute perfections, purified of all imperfection; it is Perfection itself, immutable and immaculate (IIa IIae, q. 81, a. 8). Divine beauty is the splendor of all perfections in harmonious agreement, as, in the created order, beauty is the splendor resulting from the combination of all the transcendentals, of being, unity, truth, and goodness; or, more particularly, it is the brightness of a harmonious unity of proportion in the integrity of the parts (splendor, proportio, integritas; cf. Ia, q. 39, a. 8).

As a recent critic remarks, "we cannot sufficiently admire how this doctrine of St. Thomas gives the fullest scope to the intellect and at the same time (but perhaps even on account of that) is most solicitous to safeguard the profundity of God's mysteries. It will not surprise anyone that such metaphysical speculations reach the heights of the most sublime poetry, the lyric beauty of sacred chant."

This mysterious identification of the absolute perfections in God is the principle from which an infinite number of speculative and practical

consequences are derived. We should like to point out some of them. After that we will compare this ineffability of the true God with the absurdity of "the Unknowable." All the great philosophical, social, and religious errors of our times arise from this absurdity and terminate in it.

67) Progressive harmony of the apparently conflicting perfections in the life of grace, which is sanctity.

To Agnosticism which declares that the divine attributes are irreconcilable, the life of the saints is a practical answer, because it is itself here on earth the reconciliation of perfections which seem the most opposed to one another. Sanctifying grace makes us participate in the Deity as such, whereas by nature we are like to God only according to the common perfections of being, life, intelligence, etc.

That is why our supernatural life, by a progressive purification (purgative way), must result not only in the constant exercise of different virtues under the light of faith (illuminative way), but also in the fusion of virtues apparently the least reconcilable, and must end in continual union with the very source of sanctity (unitive way). Moral purification which destroys every germ of disorder in us, corresponds to metaphysical purification which removes all imperfection from the absolute perfections. Just as it is impossible to conceive of the identification of the divine attributes when we forget to purify them of every kind of imperfection, so it is impossible, without mortification, to realize the true connection and harmony between the virtues, in the wisdom and love of God. Mortification in itself does not suffice; there must be also passive purifications which are the profound operation of the Holy Spirit in us.

Thus in our spiritual life there is and must be, more and more, a certain identification of knowledge and love, especially in the contemplation which unites us with God, which is a simple look utterly penetrated by supernatural love (IIa IIae, q. 180, a. 1, 6). To know God in this manner, we must love Him, and all those who love Him know Him in this manner, at least at certain times. Says the Apostle St. John: "Dearly beloved, let us love one another, for charity is of God. And everyone that loveth is born of God and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is charity" (I John 4: 7, 8). There is not here juxtaposition of light and life, there is light of life. "I am the light of the world; he that followeth Me walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8: 12). This

light of life proceeds from life essentially so, which is light: “In Him was life, and the life was the light of men” (John 1: 4).

As we see in the souls of the saints, from the progress made in this supernatural life, perfections seemingly the least reconcilable are united and in that way, far from being destructive of each other, they are constantly strengthened. Thus knowledge and love, speculation and practice, or rather, contemplation and action, interpenetrate each other in a more and more intimate way. St. Thomas also considers both the active and the purely contemplative life to be less perfect than the apostolic life which is a combination of both. Like Christ and His disciples, the apostle must be a contemplative, bestowing upon others the benefit of his contemplation for their salvation. Contemplation must be the culminating point of his endeavors in this life; instead of impeding his apostolic activity, it must be the source of that activity. If he has not in some measure at least arrived at this, his words are lifeless; he preaches divine things in too human a way; he conveys the letter of the sacred sciences, but not the spirit. Incapable of being fired with that holy enthusiasm for the things of eternity, he becomes enamored of the ideas of the day. Instead of bringing souls to God, he seeks a vain glory. Since unity has not been established from above through the harmony prevailing between nature and grace, it is established from below by confusing them. When, on the contrary, we consider the apostolate of St. Dominic or St. Vincent Ferrer, is there any more intimate unity of contemplation and of action?

As the spiritual life progresses, in contemplation itself the ineffability and certainty, as also the oneness of view and infinite variety of applications, grow more and more in accord.

These oppositions are particularly striking in faith. It is at the same time quite supernatural in its motive, and reasonable in the signs which confirm the word of God. It is obscure and yet absolutely certain; it is unchangeable and yet free, contemplative and very practical. It soars to the sublimest of God’s mysteries, and descends to the smallest details of our life.

The same is the case, in due proportions, with the science of faith. Dogmatic, moral, and mystical theology constitute but one and the same eminent science, “a participation in the science of God and the blessed” (Ia, q. 2, a. 2 and 4). In the obscurity of faith, sacred doctrine treats of the same object that the saints contemplate in heaven, namely, God, the operations proceeding from Him, and the return of creatures to Him. Hence the

progress of theology must be accomplished rather more by unification than by extension; the discovery of new documents or new applications, however useful, is of secondary importance; the main thing is to approach it in the spirit of the science of the saints, to grasp more and more the connection between the revealed mysteries, and especially their connection with the supreme mystery, the vision of which constitutes our final end. Theology tends essentially to contemplation or it ceases to be a "participation in the science of God and the blessed," and becomes a barren collection of texts in which there is no connection between the revealed mysteries, and in which the sacrament of Penance is of as much importance as the Holy Trinity. True progress is not adjusted to future time but to eternity, in which the unification of knowledge is completed. From this higher point of view, St. Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century was more advanced than we are today, if his theological insight was purer and nearer than ours in the science of God. (On theology, see Vatican Council, Denzinger, n. 1796: "Reason, indeed, enlightened by faith, when it seeks earnestly, piously, and calmly, attains by a gift from God some, and that a very fruitful, understanding of mysteries partly from the analogy of those things which it naturally knows, partly from the relations which the mysteries bear to one another and to the last end of man.")

Likewise progress in action must be made especially from the standpoint of quality and unity. It consists in an ever closer union of the love of God and one's neighbor and hatred of evil, of confident hope and filial fear, of firmness of justice and sweetness of mercy, "of the simplicity of the dove and the prudence of the serpent," of most profound humility and a completely supernatural dignity which forbids our stooping to the opinions of the world which are opposed to the spirit of God. Each moral virtue is an exact rational mean between the excesses and defects of passion. In fact all these spiritual harmonies have found their realization in eminent sanctity.

It is said of the most humble and sweet Virgin, that she is powerful, "terrible as a strong army in battle array." Between her and the spirit of evil, God established an "irreconcilable enmity" (Gen. 3:15). Personified pride suffers more in being thus conquered by humility than in being punished by divine omnipotence. This trait in the humility and charity of the Blessed Virgin is indispensable, that her most beautiful and glorious titles may appear in all their splendor. Such are: Mother of our Creator, Mother of

divine grace, Mirror of Justice, Refuge of sinners. It is a sublime and simple reconciliation of most diverse divine virtues.

To show us with what "wondrous magnificence" Jesus Christ came, Pascal merely says: "He was humble, patient, holy, holy to God, terrible to the evil spirits, and sinless" (Pensées). But it is only in the language of the Church that we find these admirable oppositions properly expressed. "Jesus meek and humble of heart; Jesus most powerful; Jesus God of might, of infinite majesty."

"Heart of Jesus filled with opprobrium; Heart of Jesus patient and most merciful, burning furnace of charity." Where in this world shall we find a more resplendent harmony of the divine perfections?

The aged Simeon said: "This child is set for the fall and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted" (Luke 2: 34). Did not Christ Himself, who brought "peace to men of good will," utter these strange words: "I came not to send peace but the sword"? (Matt. 10: 34.) St. Thomas understands this, according to the words of St. Paul, "of the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God" (Eph. 6: 17). Like a sword, this divine word separates those who believe from those who, through malice, refuse to believe.

In these oppositions, what always predominates is infinite mercy which is peace in truth, but in truth alone. "Peace I leave with you. . . . Not as the world giveth, do I give unto you" (John 14: 27). The divine light of the Word and the ardor of His charity shine forth conspicuously above all things. "I am come to cast fire on the earth. And what will I, but that it be kindled?" (Luke 12: 49.) "This is my commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15: 12).

In the Church we again meet with this same harmony between things most difficult to reconcile. In her, charity most compassionate and doctrine most firm and uncompromising are united in one love, which is zeal for God's glory and the salvation of souls. She knows she can do no good without combating evil, that she cannot preach the Gospel without fighting heresy. Mercy and firmness of doctrine can exist only when united; separated they die, and we have left but two corpses, namely, humanitarian Liberalism with its false serenity, and fanaticism with its false zeal. It has been said: "The Church is intolerant in principle because she believes; she is tolerant in practice because she loves. The enemies of the Church are

tolerant in principle, because they do not believe, and intolerant in practice, because they do not love." On the one hand, theory is opposed to practice; on the other, it penetrates and arranges all things with firmness and gentleness.

The Church here on earth is essentially "militant" and pacific; there is peace in the interior of the country, war at the frontier. Only the saints can express the entirely supernatural import of the strife which must be waged against the flesh, the spirit of the world, and the spirit of evil. Many times they have portrayed the Church "purified by the fire of great tribulations, having the gold of love in her heart, the incense of prayer in her soul, and the myrrh of mortification in her body. She is, as they say, the good odor of Jesus Christ to the poor and little ones, an odor of death to the great and proud ones of the world. Guided by the Holy Spirit, she is not attached to anything, is astonished at nothing, troubled about nothing. She rains upon us the word of God and eternal life. She teaches the straight way that leads to God in purity of truth, according to the, Gospel, and not according to the maxims of the world, without fear of any man, however powerful he may be. She wields the two-edged sword of the word of God." By this means she discerns the true from the false, good from evil, freeing souls from sin and saving them. Her most discerning enemies, like Proudhon, in their irreligious fanaticism, experience an evil joy in proclaiming it: "Revolution," he wrote, "believes in humanity; the Church believes in God. She believes in Him better than any sect does; she is the purest, the most complete, the most brilliant manifestation of the divine Essence, and she alone knows how to adore Him." The harmony of the divine perfections, which in themselves seem the least reconcilable, finds its fullest manifestation in the life of Christ as reproduced in His Church and in His saints. But there is a false harmony which, because of its absurdity, makes us the better appreciate the value of the true harmony. For the light to be brought out in more brilliant contrast, there must forever be shadows. We must not let a false tranquility of mind prevent us from seeing them.

68) The false harmony. The Unknowable-absurd, the confusion between being and nothingness.

Let us start from the most evident facts of the moral order so that we may arrive at the theory. We say that the life of the Church is the highest manifestation of the mysterious harmony which is in God. On the other hand, humanitarian Liberalism or indifference which, in the name of

charity, finds fault with the Church for her intolerance, bears the same resemblance to charity as a glass bead does to a diamond. There is precisely the same degree of resemblance in the case of the pharisaical zeal of the sectaries. However opposed these tendencies may be to each other, at times they unite in order the better to simulate justice and goodness. But the counterfeit is generally too crude for anyone to be deceived by it. It would be ridiculous and sacrilegious to compare the zeal of an inquisitor like St. Peter Martyr to that of Calvin terrorizing Geneva in his endeavor to reform it, or to that of Robespierre instituting the feast of the Supreme Being and declaiming on liberty, the day before he exempted the Revolutionary Tribunal from the obligation of observing legal procedure. Only perversity or sottishness can compare the mildness and force of the Apostle St. John with the sentimentality and egotistic harshness of Rousseau or the insipidity and cruelty of Saint-Just. Was there ever anything more ridiculous than the sect of Theophilanthropists to which, under the Directory, was entrusted the task of creating the sham of a new religion? For the Christian feasts, were substituted those of Youth, Old Age, Husband and Wife, Agriculture, the Sovereignty of the People. The liturgy of the celebration of the Decadi consisted of silly things in the Rousseau fashion which were quite naturally the sequel, as they were the prelude, to the Terror and the profanation of the altars. It is singularly mysterious that anybody can be so blinded as to confound the purest light with the densest darkness, the highest degree of holiness with sacrilege, the spirit of Christ, the Word of God, with that of the so-called Reformation or that of the French Revolution. “The Light is come into the world and men loved darkness rather than the light,” says the Gospel (John 3: 19), and it gives the reason for this.

On the eminent harmony which belongs properly to God and the saints, there is a more learned parody which at times is misleading and which is nothing else but a systematic organization of universal confusion. Harmony enhances and extols all forms of truth and goodness which converge in it. Confusion strives to destroy them though seeming to preserve them intact.

We must pause here a moment. This point will be a practical and theoretical confirmation of our thesis, obtained by the method of reductio ad absurdum. Since the adversaries of belief in the true God have resorted to this method, it will be enough for us to follow them to their ultimate conclusion. It has been said of hypocrisy that it is a homage rendered to virtue. The same may be said of the false reconciliation which strives to

reproduce the mystery hidden in the eminence of the Deity. It shows us, if we look at it closely, that the only possible choice is between the true God whose essence is ineffable, and the radically inconceivable absurdity which is posited as the principle of all things.

This fundamental alternative has been formulated theoretically by a philosopher who seems not to have perceived the gravity of the moral consequences of his thesis. William James categorically affirms what many contemporaries state only in veiled terms: “Human experience is radically irrational, or at least non-rational.” Says James: “Hegel was the first non-mystical writer to throw away the ordinary logic. . . . Fechner, Royce, and Hegel seem on the truer path. Fechner has never heard of logic’s veto, Royce hears the voice but cannily ignores the utterances, Hegel hears them but to spurn them—and all go on their way rejoicing. Shall we alone obey the veto? . . . For my own part, I have finally found myself compelled to give up the logic, fairly, squarely, and irrevocably. It has an imperishable use in human life, but that use is not to make us theoretically acquainted with the essential nature. If you like to employ words eulogistically, you may say that reality obeys a higher logic. . . . I prefer bluntly to call reality if not irrational, then at least non-rational in its constitution.” By logic, James means the “logic of identity” based on the principle of non-contradiction. He admits, therefore, with Hegel that an absolute absurdity is what constitutes the real. From this point of view he readily concludes that an “external Creator, . . . an intelligent and moral governor, sounds as odd to most of us as if it were some outlandish religion. The vaster vistas which scientific Evolutionism has opened, and the rising tide of social democratic ideals, have changed the type of our imagination, and the older monarchical theism is obsolete or obsolescent.” After affirming the non-rationality of the real, James adds: “Without the confidence which being able to lean on Bergson’s authority gives me, I should never have ventured to urge these particular views of mine upon this ultra critical audience.”

In fact, Bergson and Le Roy speak in the same way when they state that, “the principle of non-contradiction is not so universal and necessary as it was believed to be. . . . Being the supreme law of speech and not of thought in general, it has but static force. But there is contradiction in the world as well as identity. Such are these fleeting mobilities, becoming, duration, life.” If this life and this becoming are the supreme reality, as these philosophers declare, it follows that contradiction is at the root of all things.

Seriously minded men, sometimes Catholic writers, speak of this new philosophy, the radical absurdity of which is no longer a matter of astonishment for them. What is at the present day surprising, is the facility with which we accept the absurd built up into a system under the veil of the magic word, “Unknowable.”

69) The way which generally leads one to the absurdity of the unknowable: the confusion between good and evil in moral mediocrity.

How is it possible to arrive at this perversion of intellectual judgment, this violation of what constitutes the very essence of thought? By what way is one led to this unknowable absurd? It is reached in two ways. Many take this course after a life of habitual moral delinquency which they seek to justify from an intellectual standpoint—”one that doth evil hateth the light” (John 3: 20). Some philosophers become involved in it by resorting, with more or less conscious intellectual pride, to the use of paradoxes which are at the root of the Empirical or Idealist Agnosticism that we examined in the earlier part of this work.

Generally no one starts on the road which leads to radical absurdity, which is the confusion of being and nothingness, except by means of another confusion more or less conscious and voluntary, the confusion of good and evil. Here we must recognize the element of truth in a philosophy of action. It is worth our while to insist on this, that it is a practical confirmation of God’s existence and supreme perfection of God.

St. Augustine, in the City of God, often says: “The two cities are indistinguishable in this world and are, for the time being, a promiscuous gathering; at the end of the world they will be separated and are already so at heart.” In one of these two cities, says the saint, the love of God is emphasized even to contempt of self; in the other, the love of self, even to contempt of God. This latter is by its very nature divided; in it we find indolent cowardice and predominance of the passions. Between these two cities there is a blurred zone where white and black are intermingled, where all things get confused, and where we no longer really know whether we are concerned with consciences that are still good or with those already bad. What do they seek first of all: the good or the favors of public opinion? Whom do they serve: God or the world? And who can boast of having nothing to do with this blurred zone in which, under an appearance of good (bonum apparens), begins the confusion between being and nothingness?

Apparent good is all the more dangerous the more it looks like real good. Now, above the extreme forms of evil, such as thorough laziness and brutish commotion, there is room for two things apparently alike, but essentially different and opposed to each other; these are the good and the mediocre. Between excess and defect in evil, good rears its head like a mountain peak; it is the City of God. The mediocre is situated midway between this culminating point and the opposite forms of vice. It tries to pass itself off as the just mean in which everything is harmonized and, in fact, it is a sort of mean in which everything is confused. Let us suppose a triangular elevation the summit of which is good, the extremities of the base are excess and defect in evil, then the place of the mediocre will be exactly in the center of this triangle, halfway up. In fact, it is often called the center, situated between the party representative of order and that of anarchy which is alternately violent and powerless.

St. Thomas, in establishing the philosophy of the rational mean, says: “It could not apply essentially to the virtues of faith, hope, and charity which have God for their object; their measure is to be without measure and always to draw nearer to infinite perfection.” But it applies essentially to the moral virtues, and in them the mean is rational only when it takes the place of an extreme, a culminating point to which all our energies converge and in which they are counterpoised over and above the forms opposed to the irrational and evil. If we compare, says St. Thomas, moral virtue to reason which is its rule, its conformity to right reason is an extreme with reference to the deformity of the vices opposed to it by excess and defect. But if we consider the moral virtue according to the passion that it regulates, then it constitutes a mean between the excess and defect of this passion.

Moral mediocrity is, on the contrary, only a mean between good or the true mean and the opposite forms of evil. Of rational moderation it retains merely the matter without the form that animated it. It consists, moreover, in the wish to impose upon virtues, those which have God for their object, a measure of which according to their nature they are not susceptible. It makes men of little faith, restless hope, and lukewarm charity.

From the intellectual point of view, says St. Thomas, the true mean consists in being guided by first principles, in affirming exactly what a thing is. On the contrary, mediocrity consists in being guided either by current opinions true or false, taking something from each by a sort of

arbitrary selection, and in conveniently compromising between all things. It is the essence of opportunism.

But there are several ways of being mediocre. One may be so in a vulgar manner; it is also at times a maturely reflected and studied attitude which presupposes real talent, and under this second form the mediocre may become a most subtle and profound deceptive aspect of evil.

With the vulgar opportunist who prefers an advantageous situation to duty, and makes quite a simple application of utilitarian maxims, mediocrity is but a commonplace medley of good and evil. It is the enemy of sublimity and profundity; it is platitude and lukewarmness, ever dull, insipid, and, in spite of its instability which it honors with the name of life, it is a despairing monotony that it calls impassible serenity. “Let us not exaggerate in anything,” is its preferred formula. “I do not deny the necessity of religion, but Catholicism exaggerates; Protestantism is more moderate.” Truth and goodness, in thus commingling and being subordinated to error and evil, lose all their force and become something mawkish, soft, and fluid, the lukewarmness of which gives one a sense of nausea and recalls those words of the Apocalypse (3: 15): “I would thou wert cold or hot. But because thou art lukewarm, I will begin to vomit thee out of my mouth.” These are terrible words that God alone can utter before bringing one back to repentance.

In a higher degree, mediocrity is an adroit mingling of the true and the false, and, as it were, a science of good and evil. In this case, the mediocre claims to realize what God was never able to do. It wishes, so it says, to bring everything into harmonious agreement, and it prepares to confound everything, with the result that everything will be confused and destroyed. It begins by taking up its position in the center, equally distant from good and the opposite forms of manifest evil. In order to obtain the favor of all or of the majority, it declares itself the friend of everybody, poses modestly as the sage who can finally effect a reconciliation between the various aspects of truth and those of error. It extends its indulgent attitude to all varieties of evil in order to reunite them even in good. It identifies mercy and justice to the point of pardoning the impenitent and granting to error the same rights as to truth. Is not this the god which the world needs, the god who will finally establish the reign of peace and tranquil order here below, without the necessity of promising a future life? Is it not the principle of universal harmony? It will be able to declare itself infallible, for it will be the norm of

ever changing conciliatory truth. It will be able to call itself impeccable. “Which of you will accuse me of sin?” As it is naturally fugitive, no one can bring any particular accusation against it. Its apparent harshness is but its strength, its weakness is but its mildness and longanimity. If we find fault with it for not combating evil, it has an answer ready, namely, that to combat evil would be to disclose it; moreover, evil itself must be subservient, the best is often the enemy of the good. It quotes the Gospel: “Let the cockle alone, lest perhaps gathering up the cockle, you root up the wheat also together with it” (Matt. 13: 29). It speaks continually of moderation and prudence, but it can appreciate zeal as a rare thing which must remain so. Under this reign of universal peace and perfect courtesy, moral misery itself can make its way in the world, masked as correction. Good and evil have so coalesced that it has become impossible to distinguish between them.

If we look at it closely, we readily perceive that, in this commingling, good is found most often enlisted in the service of evil. Undoubtedly under the direction of divine Providence, everything concurs for a higher good, even the evil that is permitted. St. Thomas repeatedly says so and is fond of quoting the metaphysical formula of optimism given by Dionysius, that every evil is a weakness, but that if it is a question of number in the human species, he points out on several occasions that it is more frequently evil that is found present. “Evil appears as in the greater number in the human race.”

A holy sadness would bring us back to goodness, as one of the beatitudes recorded in the Gospel says. On the other hand, an optimism which is the result of light-mindedness leads the spiritual prodigal into dissipation and at times to degradation.

The refinement of evil is more pronounced in proportion as the goodness which is abused, is of a higher order. Continually on one’s lips are the words: the common good, fraternity, universal peace, justice, love and charity. “By the very fact,” says Hello, “that charity is pre-eminently the sublime thing, the bad use of its name must be particularly dangerous. The worst corruption is that of the best. The more beautiful this name, the more terrible it is, and if it turns against truth armed with all the power that it has received for life, what services will it not render to death? What will happen if we acquire the habit of calling charity universal accommodation to every kind of weakness? Evil does not always desire to expel the good; it asks for

the permission of cohabiting with it. A secret instinct warns it that in asking for something, it asks for everything." In consenting to let itself be converted in that way, it knows that everything will turn to its own advantage. From this point of view the toleration of evil, which ought to be fought against in order to save souls, becomes the perfection of charity; and just indignation, which De Maistre called the anger of love, is nothing else but pharisaism and pride.

To write the history of Lutheranism or even of Freemasonry, we must speak of them not only with justice, but even, if we may so say, with a willing sympathy. It is a question of method. To criticize a system, however false it may be, we must not judge it by the externals, by the essential principles of reason that it rejects, but approach it from its intrinsic principles courteously and with methodical sympathy.

In following this strange path, unknown to the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, the mind will quickly be brought to realize the philosophical basis of Liberalism that the Syllabus and more recently the encyclical Pascendi has shown. From this point of view the Church here on earth must cease to be militant, so as to become pacifist and understand finally that the spirit of the world could not be its enemy. As for the Church triumphant, it is nothing more than an emphatic and old-fashioned name, a myth; the more tangible and realizable city of the future replaces it in our hopes. We have faith in humanity. Charity in its conciliatory rôle and indifference to divine things, are but one and the same thing. The meaning of all the absolute perfections is perverted; there is nothing more that prevents us from confounding them with their contraries.

True charity is the love of God above all things and of our neighbor in God and for God. As a consequence, it implies a holy hatred of evil; it cannot love the sinner without hating the sin. False charity subordinates the love of God to a false love of our neighbor; it does not hate evil, rather it sympathizes secretly with it and, under the pretext of loving the sinner, it contributes to his ruin.

The triumph of God was shown especially in His mercy by which He drew good out of evil, and a good all the more perfect as the evil had been the more profound. One could say: "Felix culpa." There is another triumph which consists in doing what is evil by means of good, and an evil the more irreparable as the good is the more precious.

The desired mediocre obtains the striking success of number. It uses the expression that is only too true, namely: “Evil is in the majority in the human race.” It includes the bad, the lukewarm, and the good people that it has deceived. It very cleverly makes use of the latter. If we consider the moral world and its degrees in hierarchical order as an elevated terrain, at the summit of which is God, the mediocre will appropriate for itself a very large part of the base. Very often it has acquired popular acclaim in advance by a vast majority. Mediocrity prefers the authority of numbers to that of the best informed; in its eyes quantity makes up for quality. Thus it is naturally inclined to democracy, which it transforms into democratism. This régime, according to St. Thomas, suits the élite or little groups capable of self-government; among the common people we see it degenerating into Socialism or Sociolatry. Gradually the sovereignty of the people and its passions is substituted for God’s supreme dominion, and material progress is accompanied by a moral recoil back to Atheism. The rigorous logic of the Syllabus clearly demonstrates this long train of errors which originate from and end in Atheistic Agnosticism.

Moral mediocrity is in need of intellectual leaders; it chooses them itself and abandons them when change becomes fashionable. It is fond of calling itself the director of conscience, a philosopher pliant enough to remain a Pantheist, though declaring itself a believer in the spiritual and a Christian, but too scrupulous in its knowledge to go as far as Catholicism. This spirit, which dares not advance even to the living God who is the end of all knowledge, is called a bold spirit, a pioneer one that opens up the paths of the future. In fact the line that it has to follow is not of the ascendant order, for it does not rise to God; it is merely that of time, pointing to the future which as yet is nothing. Absolute Evolutionism, the philosophy of the “time that is passing,” is not far off. Throughout the changes of public opinion one no longer looks for the real truth which is declared to be non-existent or inaccessible; only questions are debated. Newspapers announce it with their suggestive headlines. All that, however sad it may be, is most instructive; it is a great motive of credibility in favor of the divine origin of Christianity which alone can rescue us from this mediocrity that is entirely worldly wisdom.

This practical Agnosticism, to justify itself, needs an intellectual foundation. Here one begins to make use of the great philosophical paradoxes which could never succeed in establishing their claims if one

were not secretly interested in admitting them. Many souls are thus led into speculative Agnosticism, and this latter, as the Encyclical Pascendi points out, paves the way for Atheistic Evolutionism.

70) How Agnosticism leads to Atheistic Evolutionism: identification of being and nothingness in becoming.

Agnosticism presents itself at first as a scrupulous love of truth, and the more surely to attain this end it undertakes to revise the methods of science. This word is constantly on its lips. Gradually, without people being aware of it, method is preferred to truth. It matters little what is affirmed, provided this be methodically affirmed. Heretofore method was merely the way leading to the knowledge of truth. The new criticism, for its greater assurance, begins by positively doubting all things; because of a scruple it imprisons itself in subjective phenomena; to test the natural range of the intellect concerning being, it takes away the essential relation that this latter bears to being, which is like one who would take the heart out of a sick person to see if he will live yet a long time. The new method is therefore agnostic and becomes essentially a way leading to the non-knowledge of the real, which in all cases never brings one to the supernatural nor to the true God. In order to see better, reason blinds itself. Of all the branches of knowledge, philosophy is the one that concerns us most to revive or rather methodize. So long as anyone has not reached an understanding concerning this preliminary question, he will have to reject as non-methodical, non-scientific, every assertion, no matter on what grounds, which claims to embrace an absolute truth.

It is in this sense that Descartes unknowingly sets to work. In his famous Discourse on Method he begins by doubting the real validity of the first principle of reason. Why could not God make square circles? Descartes fears that an evil genius makes him believe in the truth of the principle of contradiction and in the existence of an external world. In fact, an evil genius succeeded in making many philosophers believe that the principle of contradiction is false, and that the external world does not exist. Many of the intellectual sons of Descartes seriously maintain that the table on which they write their thoughts exists only in their mind. Did not Berkeley say: “Esse est percipi: existence is sense perception”? If they happened to crack their skull against a corner of the wall, it would be merely the quite subjective sensation of a shock which would do away with their sense of consciousness and put an end to their “well-connected” dream, their “real

hallucination." When Hegel denies the objective validity of the principle of contradiction, he congratulates Descartes for having opened up the approaches to modern philosophy, for having liberated the spirit from the thraldom of things, for having conceived of our reason as the legislator of the real and no longer as being measured by it.

Henceforth the followers of the separatist philosophy will cease to find their mental pabulum in truth, especially divine truth, in order to plunge themselves into false problems. "Men loved darkness rather than the light" (John 3: 19). If we would prove the existence of God to them, they ask us first to demonstrate the existence of the external world; and before positing the question of the spirituality and the immortality of the soul, we must prove that it is a substance, a real being, and not a collection of phenomena. The strangest thing is this, that Catholics will take seriously this raving of the Idealists and will seek to formulate this dogma as an evaluation of these extravagances. It is a capitulation which deceives itself to the extent of considering itself as a most scientific defence of the faith and a most charitable apostolate.

After being divorced from revealed religion, philosophy, in order to reconstruct a method for itself, is made to go repeatedly through three stages: Empirical Agnosticism, which was brought to its perfection by Hume; Idealistic Agnosticism, formulated by Kant or at least inspired by him; finally, the Evolutional Metaphysics of becoming, formulated by Hegel, which, by an empirical adaptation, has become, as it were, the structure of actual philosophic thought.

According to the new method of Bacon and the Empirics, we must begin by dividing the powers of the mind over all the objects of experience, and gradually we are persuaded that it would be useless to wish to raise ourselves to a higher plane. The poor human intellect is overwhelmed by a mass of material information in which there is nothing but obscurity for it. We are to cherish the notion that, to be philosophically convinced, we must first survey all the systems and experiment with them all; that to have a true notion of religion we must scrutinize all the psychologies and pathologies of the races, analyze the subconscious selves, the thousand varieties of religious sentiment.

This is far removed from that contemplation which we were just now discussing. Mechanism triumphs; the human intellect becomes a machine to register facts, without being able to arrange them in proper order. It does not

succeed in discovering their raison d’être, since, on the pretext of method, it has ceased considering being and its first principles, and sees nothing but phenomena. Concepts are merely impoverished remnants of sensations which are presented out of order. Hume’s Empiricism is followed slavishly. At the same time, to meet the requirements of morality and religion, sentimentalism of the Rousseau type is adapted alternately to Deism and to Atheistic Pantheism, which succeed each other in various forms.

In this public market of ideas, he wins who makes his wares fashionable by advertising them successfully. Intellectual wretchedness makes its way in science; all it has to do is to observe the rules of “a reputable science.” With the modesty of a teaching staff whose mission is to insist on the limits of our knowledge, it denies God and makes a god of itself, without being fully conscious of the insane pride it carries about with it. In its eyes, the principle of all things, even of our intellects, is nothing more than a sort of nothingness, a chaotic matter, an earthly, blind, stupid, and impotent God. There is in this a peculiar kind of silliness which recalls the words of Voltaire about Holbach’s Système de la nature: “Never perhaps has philosophy uttered a more stupid absurdity or a more notorious falsehood, although it may have been on many other occasions guilty of lying and absurdity.” (Letter to Frederick, February, 16, 1773.)

The learned world becomes a tower of Babel in which it is no longer possible for one person to understand another, especially in philosophy. A false meaning has been given to the fundamental notions of being, truth, goodness, knowledge, science, liberty, right, and charity. It is as impossible for them to refute one another as it is for them to come to an agreement.

If it is necessary, however, to meet the needs of intellects by a provisory systematization, at times a very exalted notion is seized upon. Spiritualism is admitted, but an Agnostic Spiritualism. The mind, believing that so far it has been dreaming, blinds itself that it may see more clearly. Kant, as he himself said, was awakened by Hume from his dogmatic sleep. No longer can he admit a real, but only a purely formal and subjective truth. Reason, instead of being measured by things, becomes the measure of things and absolutely autonomous. Contrary to Empiricism, which is incapable of rising above pleasure and personal interest, we are told to recognize the existence of duty, but a duty without either religious or metaphysical foundation. “Autonomy of the will is that property of it by which it is a law to itself (independently of any property of the objects of volition) . . . If the

will seeks the law which is to determine it . . . in the character of any of its objects, there always results a heteronomy." If the moral law were imposed on us externally by God, the will could submit to it only through fear, love, or self-interest; and this would be foreign or contrary to morality. Kant says we must admit for the moral world the view that Rousseau held for the social order, according to which man must prescribe for himself the law that he obeys.

Such a conception of morality leads to a sort of religion, but it is a non-revealed religion, "within the limits of reason," in which the love of humanity and respect for our personal dignity are more and more substituted for the love of God. Kant welcomes the French Revolution enthusiastically and, despite his austerity, sympathizes with Rousseau's sentimentalism, which is so often unmoral. The Savoy curate's profession of faith is susceptible of a new adaptation. Setting aside dogmas, Kant is able to admit a religion which consists in viewing the moral laws as if they were divine commandments and which thereby increases the efficacy of duty as if it were changeable. All the rest, he says, is absurd superstition and condemnable as tending to fraud and perfidy. Belief in revelation is the interior avowal of its unvarying certitude in our eyes. But it is a violation of conscience to declare as true "what cannot be asserted with unconditional assurance."

In his righteousness an unbeliever, Kant appropriates to himself all the respect due to God. This proud and foolish Kantian righteousness opens up the way to pure Rationalism for Protestantism which, like Jansenism, at first glance seems to be the most absolute antithesis of Rationalism.

In spite of its correctness and dignity, this Agnostic Spiritualism reminds one of "the carnal wisdom" mentioned by St. Paul, carnal because it is opposed pre-eminently to the Spirit which is that of God. By its very exaltation, this blind Spiritualism can be the cause, beyond all comparison, of more deep-seated trouble than Materialism, which is manifestly too absurd. Yet many are taken in by it, seeing in the doctrine proposed to them nothing but "the soul of truth," without perceiving that the principle of negation, which in reality animates it, places truth at the service of falsehood, sometimes in spite of the personal intentions of the philosophers who adopt it. One may seek to minimize Kant's incredulity, and insist upon his extreme politeness, his sincere and profound good-will, his trustworthy

devotedness, his horror of a lie. Finally, we will be told there is no great difference between Kant and a saint.

Someone has sown tares amongst the wheat and it will soon appear, says the Gospel. On this point St. Thomas remarks that, “He who sows cockle hides himself, saying good things at first; gradually he mixes it with evil and ends by exposing himself and his doctrine.” St. John continually recommends charity to us, warning us not to let ourselves be seduced: “Believe not every spirit” (I John 4: 1). After a certain time it becomes manifest that between truth and undeniable falsehood, between good and evident evil, there is a counterfeiting of the divine action, an operation which tends to identify in its way the various absolute perfections; but instead of uniting them and raising them to their highest degree, it neutralizes and destroys them, though appearing to preserve them intact.

All that is presently cleared up. As the encyclical Pascendi points out, Agnosticism soon leads to Pantheistic and finally to Atheistic Evolutionism. Since the principle of all things can no longer be found with certainty in God, it must be sought for in man.

In fact, after Hume and Kant, Fichte declares that a purely subjective truth is not enough; we must again find a real truth. But where? In ourselves. We must say of our intellect what the theologians said of God’s intellect, that it is the cause of things: “Scientia hominis causa rerum” But how is it that there continue to be so many mysteries for our reason which ought to be omniscient?

Hegelian Panlogism finally undertakes to dispel these mysteries and reconcile all things: the identity of being and non-being must be built up into a metaphysical system; it is the normal outcome of the separatist philosophy under the form of absolute Rationalism. “All that is real, however irrational it may seem to be, is rational,” with a rationality superior to that of the logic of identity or of non-contradiction. Hence everything is explained and justified. Falsehood is but an incomplete truth which seeks to complete itself, evil is but an imperfect good which tends to perfect itself, heresy is but a new dogma in the becoming. There is no absolute truth, and consequently no absolute error. What appears at first sight as a radical error, the negation of the principle of identity or of contradiction, is a form of highest truth. Nothing is identical with itself, everything is changing; the opposition between being and nothingness is but an opposition in words; in reality, nothing is, everything is becoming; becoming, which both is and is

not, is its own sufficient reason; it contains the solution of all the antitheses, and in it are identified being and non-being, and consequently truth and falsehood, good and evil.

It is impossible to go any farther. Such is the supreme law of universal confusion, an ironical reproduction of the harmony that is in God. It is the last word of science which teaches us to combine good and evil. For the principle of all things we have a bad goodness, a divine perversity, a god who is perpetually making and destroying himself. The devil, if he still exists, can say: “God and I are one.” They will persuade you that there is nothing subversive in this, that fundamentally this doctrine is conservative. In ancient times Heraclitus said: “Everything is changing, everything includes in itself the denial of itself, everything is both itself and its contrary. But this strife between contraries is not a disorder, it is the mother of all things.” The old Greek declared that the echo of his voice would resound throughout the ages, and indeed he is really the one whom we hear in the Hegelian philosophy which poses as the guardian, and that too, as Gomperz observes, in the revolutionary theories of a Proudhon.

Hegel, after relegating what formally constitutes the divine nature to becoming, can well enough attempt a new interpretation of the dogmas of Christianity. He finds again everywhere the Trinity and traces of it in the three stages of evolution: thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. The most mysterious of dogmas is demonstrated. We see God as He sees Himself. He is conscious of Himself in us. The Incarnation is thus renewed in each one who understands the law of universal evolution. God is realized in us, however perverse we may be. Perversity and charity have the same meaning.

If foolish words come to our lips, there will be found seriously minded men to answer: “Let us not exaggerate in anything; a very similar doctrine, one worthy of all respect, is to be found in the mystical theology of Dionysius or in that of St. John of the Cross.” This answer is but the banal application of the posited principles, the quintessence of that wisdom portrayed by Isaias: “Woe to you that call evil good, and good evil: that put darkness for light, and light for darkness: that put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter. Woe to you that are wise in your own eyes and prudent in your own conceits” (Isaias 5: 20-21).

Error cannot descend lower; the Separatist philosophy has nothing more to teach us; it has again found a doctrine the most radically opposed to

divine wisdom. It reproaches Catholicism with the antinomies, and is itself the avowed fundamental antinomy. It is the radical corruption of the mind and is incomparably more hateful than that of the flesh. It is as unbearable to a sound mind as a nauseous drink is to the palate, It is detested by God and the Church as a conscious contradiction which seeks to pass itself off for supreme wisdom and harmony. Instead of identifying the absolute perfections in the pure Act, it identifies, though destroying them, in an ever unstable becoming. Refusing to admit the absolute truth which is opposed too categorically to falsehood, and admit the absolute good which would be the enemy of evil, it reduces everything to a nameless absurdity, to a parody of the ineffable, to something which is neither being nor nothingness nor truth nor falsehood nor good nor evil, to something which as yet does not exist, but is becoming only to die even before it has lived. Liberalism or false charity, which defends the right of all opinions to exist, has at last found its philosophical foundation: the Unknowable, or rather the absurd itself posited as the principle of all things.

Once this idea is spread abroad, many repeat it without knowing all that is meant by it. And in spite of its author's intentions, what else does the new philosophy affirm? As we pointed out apropos of William James, it is merely an empirical transposition of Hegelian Evolutionism, a return to Heraclitus, to the puerility of philosophy which as yet had not risen to pure Act; more than this, it is a rejuvenation of the sophisms of Protagoras. Like Hegel, Le Roy writes: "The principle of non-contradiction is not as universal and necessary as has been believed. . . . Being the supreme law of speech, but not of thought in general, its influence extends merely to what is static. . . . But just as there is identity in the world, so also there is contradiction. Such are those fugitive fluxes, as becoming, duration, life." And as, according to the new philosophy, the fundamental reality is becoming, it follows rigorously that contradiction is at the root of everything. We have seen, as a result of Hegelianism, an idealistic Hegelian party of the right and a materialistic Hegelian party of the left, that of Feuerbach; thus, as a result of Bergsonism, we have seen a Christian party of the right in the modernist sense, and a revolutionary party of the left.

Both are the legitimate outcome of the system which identifies contraries; and for which everything vanishes in the fugitive duration of becoming, in the poorest of realities: the instant that is evanescent as soon as it has appeared. The instant which is the consummation of instability has

taken the place of God who is pre-eminently the immutable Being. The present which passes away, the fleeting now which Aristotle spoke of, has taken the place of the stable now of eternity.

It is not well enough understood that Bergsonism would give rise to far greater trouble than what it has already caused, if, without changing its fundamental principles, it claimed to safeguard the existence of God and provide us, like Hegelianism, with an interpretation of Christian dogmas.

To go to the root of things, and without being in the least concerned with the intentions of the philosophers so often unconscious of the consequences of their system, we might say that the evil genius, which Descartes distrusted, has made sport of modern thought. It alone seems to have been able to lead it to this magic sophistry which concludes that truth is false, that everything is confounded and destroyed in becoming. It alone, one would say, has been able to conceive the hidden meaning of this burlesque imitation of God and give to this sacrilegious irony just enough gravity for it to be taken seriously, enough dazzling falsehood and seduction so as to make a flower of evil, and of all flowers the most dangerous. He who wishes to pluck it will be overcome by dizziness at the brink of the abyss and hurled into doctrinal and moral nihilism of the most absolute type. “His eyes shall be opened, and he shall be like God, knowing good and evil.”

There is nothing strained about these reflections; on the contrary, they are very simple from the true point of view, which is that of the supernatural law. One may read the chapters of the Vatican Council referring to the progressive inroads made by Naturalism “which works with the utmost zeal (summo studio molitur) to deny the true God and His Christ, to exclude the same from the minds of men, and from the life and moral acts of nations, so that the reign of what they call pure reason or nature may be established.” Who is farther from God, the murderer misled by his passion or the cold and conscious defender of the negative philosophy attacked by the Council?

St. Thomas (IIa IIae, q. 154, a. 12) says: “In every genus, worst of all is the corruption of the principle on which the rest depend. . . . Wherefore, just as in speculative matters the most grievous and shameful error is that which is about things the knowledge of which is naturally bestowed on man, so in matters of action it is most grave and shameful to act against things as determined by nature.”

71) Conclusion: the true God or radical absurdity.

By a strange coincidence, the prodigious effort that the Separatist philosophy makes to deny God, ends merely in a reductio ad absurdum demonstration of His existence and of the mysterious harmony found in Him. We must choose one of the two: either the ineffable essence which identifies in itself all the absolute perfections and, far from destroying them, raises them to their highest degree, or else the universal confusion and destruction of all forms of truth and goodness in an absurd identification with error and evil.

Take the properties of being, expressed by the primary notions; you will find them all brought to their highest perfection in the Christian philosophy; on the contrary, it is the privation of these that characterizes the philosophy of becoming.

Christian philosophy is the philosophy of the one who is the Being, harmonious Unity, the very Truth, Goodness inspiring and commanding our love, Beauty which is the splendor of being, unity, truth, and goodness combined.

The philosophy of becoming is the nihilist philosophy of non-being (of that which is becoming and as yet does not exist), of the phenomenon, of confused multiplicity, of seeming falsehood or apparent truth, of the systematic mediocre which is the subtlest of evil, and therefore of ugliness, so we must say, in spite of the seductions with which it surrounds itself.

The philosophy of becoming must of necessity deny the first principles of reason and of being, in affirming that nothing exists and that everything is becoming. The principle of causality is violated: for the greater comes from the less, in the ascendant order of evolution; the conscious comes uncaused from the unconscious; morality rises above animality without any foundation for it. The principle of finality is destroyed; in the process of evolution it has been impossible to ordain the lower forms of life to the higher, since there has not been from all eternity a designing intelligence. The principle of change, that every change presupposes a subject, is itself rejected, since becoming conceived as an absolute exists without anything that is becoming, like a flux without a fluid, a river without water, a flight without a bird. The principle of substance vanishes; there is nothing left but phenomena, appearance without anything that can appear; there is no longer a formal principle of anything; all natures, whether lower or higher, are identified; the nature of God and that of the stone are but one in becoming. Of the stone it is true to say what the Church says of sanctifying grace, that

it is a participation of the divine nature, nay rather, that it is God who is becoming in the same. The four causes of becoming have disappeared; becoming remains, they tell us, without a subject, without a formal principle to specify it, without an agent to produce it, without an end for it to tend toward. What becomes of the more general principle of sufficient reason? It disappears: becoming, which is not of itself, has no raison d'être; the contingent is the absolute. The principle of identity or of contradiction resolves itself into universal mobility; no longer may we say: flesh is flesh, spirit is spirit; but we must say: spirit is flesh, or flesh is spirit. God is the creature, the creature is God. As being disappears in the flux of all things, there is no longer any distinction between truth and falsehood, between good and evil. By its evolution, absolute Rationalism has proved its own irrationalism. It is the destruction of reason.

Between the philosophy of being and that of becoming, there can be no remaining neutral as Agnosticism would have it. If Absolute Evolutionism denies the real validity of the principle of contradiction, Agnosticism must at least bring it in question; and this is what it does when it declares the existence of God to be uncertain. If the existence of the first uncaused cause is doubtful, the principle of causality becomes doubtful and consequently also that of contradiction. The Agnostic asks at times: What may be an uncaused cause? As if the union of these two terms implied a contradiction. An uncaused effect is what is manifestly repugnant. But if the existence of an uncaused cause is declared doubtful, it follows that the world has perhaps originated from nothingness without any cause, that at every moment, perhaps, the greater comes from the less. We have already seen that it is absurd to question the impossibility of the absurd. Consequently the Unknowable of Agnosticism is contradictory like the Inconceivable of absolute Evolutionism. It is perhaps both existent and nonexistent, body and spirit, good and bad, effect and first cause, the means and the ultimate end, etc.

From this Evolutionist or Agnostic point of view, what becomes of the love of truth? At the start it seemed urged on even to scrupulousness, in the determination of the method; at the end, the words "integrity" and "lying" no longer have any precise significance. There are no longer any lies, but merely successive opinions. Hence submission to the decisions of the Church takes on a new meaning. The submission is merely outward, and the same opinions continue to be held. If there are any things which must be

revised, these are the definitions of the Councils which, as Guenther said, could have only a provisory validity, relative to the state of knowledge at the moment when they were formulated.

What influence may such a philosophy have upon religion? The history of Liberal Protestantism and of Modernism shows us. Such a philosophy finally makes a living contradiction of religion, an Atheistic religion. Whereas within the fold of the Church there is peace, and without there is war against the enemies of the faith, Relativism establishes peace without, and there are no longer any enemies of the faith, and it introduces unrest and division within the Church. It destroys real fervor, which it sometimes replaces by a frigid correctness, always by indifference to divine truth, by the cult of public opinion from which favors are sought. The calm of contemplation is succeeded by anxiety and novelty, by a fever of the mind, "a clumsy and carnal curiosity" (the carnal wisdom that St. Paul has in mind). Religion becomes essentially a thing of time; it is unmindful of eternal life, the glory of God, souls and their deep needs, and is concerned with nothing but the contemporary movement which is made the criterion for the things of eternity. The most useful abettors of absolute Rationalism are misguided persons who allow themselves insensibly to be imbued by this spirit without always being clearly conscious of it, and they are the recipients of its praises. Deaf to all salutary warnings, they interpret the supernatural mysteries in a thoroughly natural manner; they falsify the formal object of the science of faith, labor to bring about the worst confusion—that between nature and grace, God and the world—and are already preaching that false mysticism the very essence of which is this confusion. Now the false mysticism of the present day no longer absorbs all things in God, but it absorbs God in the constantly evolving world, and in this way it leads to Atheism. This is clearly stated in the Encyclical of 1907 (Denzinger, nn. 2073 ff. and 2081). For the statement of this judgment, all the Encyclical needs to do is to consider things from the fundamental point of view of metaphysics and theology.

We should not be surprised at the severity of the Church against those who claim to reconcile the spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ with that of the Reformation and the French Revolution, in virtue of the principles of the philosophy of becoming. The burden of the refrain about the future city is merely the confusion of the two radically distinct cities of which St. Augustine said: "For the time being they are intermingled; at the end they

will be separated, and are already so at heart." A serious study of Pius IX's Syllabus and that of Pius X suffices to show how empty are all these dreams of universal peace which are oblivious to the fact of the absolute and eternal opposition between good and evil, and which end only in universal mediocrity and lethargic indifference.

The principle of identity or of contradiction tells us that there are things impossible of reconciliation, that of the absolute perfections and their contraries: good is good, evil is evil. "Est est; non non; yea, yea; no, no," said our Lord (Matt. 5: 37). But the principle obliges us to affirm the identification in God and in Him alone of all the absolute perfections, however different they may appear to be. Simplicity in the highest degree is rich with the multiplicity of pure perfections present there formally and eminently. The absolute immutable being is not inert, He is life itself, without either beginning or end. The absolutely simple Being knows Himself formally and knows everything in Himself, without this knowledge destroying His unity in the least. The infinitely wise Being has very wisely His own preferences and good pleasure, the reason for which is in Himself. The perfectly immutable Being was free to create or not to create, and by this free act there is no addition in Him of anything contingent and defectible; it is the dominating indifference of His love of pure Act with regard to created things. The infinitely good and powerful Being has permitted evil and from it He effects a greater good. Most compassionate mercy and most inflexible justice are identified in the same love of the sovereign Good, which communicates itself gratuitously with all the tenderness of charity and which proclaims also its inalienable right to be loved above all things.

Each of these attributes is implied in all the others and implies them. Far from being irreconcilable, they necessarily appeal to one another. In this there is no contradiction, but too much light for our feeble intelligence which remains dazzled. Truly we cannot find insoluble antinomies in God, but eminent harmony, the intimate secret of which is naturally known by Him alone.

This profound agreement between things most difficult to reconcile is realized gradually in us, by means of grace. It is one of the most characteristic signs of God's supernatural action in the soul, since it shows that in the soul there is the image of this absolute identification which is realized formally and eminently only by the Deity. But the image, like the

model, is mysterious. In the soul of our Lord, victim of love for our salvation, mercy and justice have met, and this meeting is a mystery to us, the mystery of our redemption. Thus in the life of the Church and in every Christian soul, this divine harmony keeps its secret, since it is entirely supernatural.

There is enough obscurity so that we are not tempted to bring God down to our level and imagine Him to be like us, as anthropomorphism does. The divine essence is ineffable; the saints, the more they advance in sanctity, vie with one another in repeating this name. But this name is not uttered by them in the same sense as by the Agnostics; for them and even for us there is enough light in the darkness of the mind for us to be able with absolute certainty to recognize the existence of the true God, His attributes, and His action.

Without perceiving Him as He is in Himself, we truly see God Himself by our mental act. We can truly say that we know our friends intimately, though we do not enter into their feelings as they are in themselves.

Moreover, in these days of Agnosticism we cannot too often repeat that, in a sense, we have a much more certain knowledge of God than of men with whom we live most intimately. The man who offers to shake hands with us perhaps decides at the same moment to betray us; perhaps his gesture is a lie; I may doubt his word, his virtue, his goodness. On the contrary, I know with absolute certainty, even by reason alone, that God cannot lie, that He is infinitely good, just, and holy. Of all beings it is He, in a sense, whom I know best when I recite the Our Father and meditate upon its words, just as I am known best by Him. We know God, in a sense, much better than we do our own heart; we are sure of the purity of his intentions, but we are not absolutely sure of ours.

Lastly, in a sense, we know the divine nature better than we do human nature, and especially better than we know the lower natures of the vegetable and animal kingdoms. After intensively studying St. Thomas' treatise on God and meditating on it, we see our way clear to connect all the divine attributes with the self-subsisting Being, and to show the solidarity of all the theses with this fundamental principle: "In God alone essence and existence are identical." It would certainly be more difficult to connect the whole treatise on man with the definition of reason. There is, indeed, the material element in man; and matter, in a sense, is repugnant to

intelligibility; it constitutes the outer fringe of being and consequently of the intelligible.

Thus we come back to a profound remark made by Aristotle (Met., Bk. I, ch. i): “The supreme Cause is more knowable and intelligible in itself than all other causes, although relatively to us it is more difficult to know, because it is more distant from our senses.” Matter of itself is obscure, God is light; time is more obscure than eternity; it is so of itself and not merely for us.

We have been created and placed in the world precisely to know, love, and serve this infinite God whose light dazzles our feeble sight. We must love Him more than ourselves and above all things because we are sure He is the sovereign Good, infinitely better than we are. In Him there is no trace of imperfection, instability, or impurity, because He is Being itself without any admixture of non-being. He is the beneficent source of all being, life, knowledge, of all reality and goodness there is in our desires and wills. He cannot be the principle of error or of evil. Our deficiencies require only a deficient cause, which is ourselves. God, who unceasingly raises us up and sanctifies us, is thus Sanctity itself; in Him all the absolute perfections are identical with His essence, without any trace of imperfection. Since He is the beginning and end of all things, all glory must be traced back to Him.

Every intellect and every will must turn toward God, submit humbly to Him, let themselves be enlightened and drawn by Him. “It is time to become humble, for it is time to become proud.” Let us ask God’s help that we may have the strength to raise ourselves toward Him. There is nothing greater than a saint kneeling and humbling himself. That we may never stoop to manifest evil and hypocrisy, we must form the habit of bowing profoundly before God and before whatever is divine in all souls. Respect for all opinions, however false or perverse they may be, is only the proud denial of respect due to the Truth. Sincerely to love the true and the good, we must have no sympathy with error and evil. Truly to love the sinner and further his salvation, we must detest the evil in him.

The obscurity of the mystery of God is dispelled in proportion as a sincere soul grows in charity. To understand somewhat and experience the mystery of the divine action in the world and in created liberties, we must let ourselves be directed by it, let the bandage of pride covering the eyes of the mind be removed by it; above all we must let ourselves be drawn and loved by God. Only valiant souls allow themselves to be influenced by

divine love in their labors, like marble in the hands of a sculptor, until God reproduces His own traits in them. The love of God for us does not presuppose lovableness in us; it gives us this in vivifying us. But it does not make us participate in the intimacy of the divine life except by purifying us, and this purification is the more painful as the soul, in following the Crucified, is predestined to mount higher. In the instability, obscurity, and death of the passing time, the divine action leads us lovingly toward the light of life of motionless eternity. Sweetly and firmly it inclines us to seek our eternal happiness and still more the glory of Him who is. 'Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to Thy name give glory" (Ps. 115: 1).

In conclusion, with the great St. Augustine whom we might well have quoted more abundantly in this work, let us contemplate the infinite perfection of God. We are reminded of the opening words of the Confessions (Bk. I, chs. i and iv): "Thou hast created us for Thyself, and our heart is restless until it repose in Thee. . . . What art Thou, then, my God? . . . For who is Lord but the Lord. Most high, most good, most potent, most omnipotent; most merciful, yet most just; most hidden, yet most present; most beautiful, yet most strong; stable, yet incomprehensible; unchangeable, yet all-changing; never new, never old; all-renewing, and bringing age upon the proud, and they know it not; ever working, ever at rest; still gathering, yet nothing lacking; supporting, filling, and overspreading: Thou hast created us anew in withdrawing us from the nothingness of our sin, nourishing us with Thy word and increasing in us Thy grace. It is Thou who dost seek us when we are lost, as if Thou hadst need of finding us again. Thou lovest, without passion; art jealous, without anxiety; we speak of Thy anger, but nothing is more serene than the decrees of Thy justice. Thou changest Thy works, Thy purpose unchanged. Thou receivest again what Thou findest, yet didst never lose; never in need, yet rejoicing in gains; never covetous, yet exacting usury. Thou receivest over and above, that Thou mayest owe; and who hath aught that is not thine? Thou payest debts, owing nothing; remittest debts, losing nothing. And what have I now said, my God, my life, my holy joy? or what saith any man when he speaks of Thee? Yet woe to him that speaketh not of Thee!"

The Confessions ends as it began: "We see things because they are; but they are, because Thou seest them . . . and Thou seest them in Thyself. . . . We oscillate between good and evil, whereas Thou art the sovereign goodness. . . . By Thy grace we perform some good works in our journey

through life and, at its end, we hope to enjoy perfect rest in Thy ineffable hallowing. But Thou, being the Good which needeth no good, art ever at rest, because Thy rest is Thou Thyself. And what man can teach man to understand this? or what angel, an angel? or what angel, a man? Let it be asked of Thee, sought in Thee, knocked for at Thee; so, so shall it be received, so shall it be found, so shall it be opened. Amen."

Blessed are the souls that have heard from God these three words which effect what they signify: "Come, enter, abide." "Blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it" (Luke 11: 28). "God is charity, and He that abideth in charity abideth in God, and God in him" (I John 4: 16). "To Him be glory both now and unto the day of eternity. Amen" (II Peter 3: 18).

APPENDIX I

NOTE ON THE VALIDITY OF THE PRINCIPLES OF INERTIA AND CONSERVATION OF ENERGY

We have spoken on several occasions (Vol. I, pp. 259-260; 270-278; 282) of these two principles and of the problem of their reconciliation with the principle of causality.

According to the principle of causality, there is no change without a cause; hence a cause is required as much for the change which takes place in the course of motion as for the transition from rest to motion itself. If it were otherwise, a finite and minimum impulsion could produce in the void a perpetual motion in which there would always be something new, a perpetual transition from potentiality to act; a finite power could forever be in motion, a snap of the finger ten thousand years ago would still produce its effect today, and would produce it always, eternally. This motion, which would have no need of being kept up, would have neither end nor beginning in the metaphysical sense of the terms. Would it not be contrary to the principles of causality and finality?

The principle of inertia is expressed as follows: of itself matter cannot set itself in motion or modify the motion that it has; a body in motion, if no external cause acts upon it, retains a rectilineal and uniform motion indefinitely.

If anyone objects that the facts seem to contradict the principle of inertia —v. g., that a billiard ball, shot on a very smooth plane, stops at the end of a certain time; that a train, after acquiring its normal speed, stops if the steam

is not made to act on the pistons—the physicist replies that this stopping is due to the friction of the billiard ball on the plane, or to that of the wheels on the rails, and also to the resistance of the air.

Is it a demonstrated fact that this friction and this resistance are the only causes of the stopping? Is it scientifically proved that the given motion does not slow down also of itself? “Has it ever been proved from experiments with bodies removed from the influence of all external force,” asks H. Poincaré “that these bodies are not influenced by any force?” How, without exceeding the limits of his science, can the physicist maintain that the divine motion is not necessary for a body hurled into a void to move eternally?

The principle of the conservation of energy is expressed as follows: “In a system of bodies removed from all external influence, the total energy (actual and potential) of this system remains constant.” This principle is necessarily connected with the preceding, and it is tantamount to saying that it is impossible for motion ever to cease; if it disappears under one form it reappears under another; thus the motion of a projectile ceases only in generating heat, and heat itself produces local motion. The equivalence is established by reason of the corrective administered to it by the law of the diminution of energy.

Does it follow that a given snap of the finger made a thousand years ago has still its effect today because of the transformations of energy, and that it will always be so, without any need for the energy to be renewed? Is it enough to admit that this energy is conserved by God, as Descartes says, and that the divine motion was only exerted in the past, in the beginning of the world? How, without exceeding the limits of his science, can the physicist declare that the divine motion is not necessary for the perpetual transformation of energy? It is clear that energy is not individually the same; it is not the same motion that passes from one body into another, for it is this motion, because it is the motion of this body. Likewise, human activity is relatively constant on the surface of the earth, and yet it is not individually the same; it is renewed, since human beings are born and die. Long ago Aristotle said: The corruption of one is the generation of another; matter loses one form only to receive another; and this can be expressed in modern terms with regard to energy by saying that a form of energy does not disappear without another appearing. Does it follow that the form which disappears is the first and all-sufficient cause of the one succeeding it? By

no means; experimental science, which studies only the constant relations between phenomena, cannot declare itself either for or against the necessity for the intervention of a first invisible Cause for the transformation of energy. But, from the metaphysical point of view, one motion does not give rise to another except with the invisible concurrence of the First Being, who is the cause of all being as such, of the Prime Mover who is the supreme cause of the activity of secondary causes. Likewise, from the metaphysical point of view, a local motion cannot be perpetuated in a void, cannot be a perpetual transition from potency to act, without the invisible intervention of the pure Act, the supreme cause of all actualization. To maintain with Descartes that for this, it is sufficient that God conserve the motion, we must understand by this expression that God continues to move.

Thus only can the mechanical principles of inertia and conservation of energy be reconciled with the metaphysical principle of causality. Every other reconciliation, which rejects the necessity of the intervention of the first cause, is illusive.

It is not for the physicist to solve this problem; he cannot pronounce finally on the validity of the solution given by the metaphysics of the Schools; he must merely recognize that this solution is in no way opposed to what physics has the right to affirm about the validity of its principles in the phenomenal order.

On this point it gives us pleasure to publish a letter from Pierre Duhem, of the Academy of Sciences, in which he gives us a summary of the main ideas of his fine work, La Théorie physique.

The letter reads as follows:

“Dear Father: I owe you some explanations for certain ambiguous terms in my previous letter and especially for the name ‘axiom’ or ‘so-called axiom’ which I gave to the principle of inertia.

“I begin by stating precisely that I shall take the words mathematics, physics, and metaphysics according to the meaning generally given them by our contemporaries, not according to the meaning given them by Aristotle and the Scholastics.

“In these circumstances, the law of inertia does not exist for the mathematician; the principles of the science of numbers and of geometry are the only ones that he has to admit; he is not concerned with the principles of mechanics and physics; if he happens to study the problems

presented to him by the mechanist and the physicist, he does so regardless of the way by which they have been led to formulate these problems.

“I consider, therefore, the principle of inertia only as it is for the physicist.

“One may say of it, then, what may be said of all principles of the mechanical and physical theories. These fundamental principles or hypotheses (in the etymological sense of the word) are not axioms, self-evident truths. Nor are they laws, that is, general propositions reached directly by induction from the teachings of experience.

“It may be that certain rational probabilities or certain facts of experience suggest them to us; but this suggestion is in no way a demonstration; it does not confer on them, of itself, any certitude. From the point of view of pure logic, the fundamental principles of the theories of mechanics and physics can be looked upon only as postulates freely posited by the mind.

“From the ensemble of these postulates, deductive reasoning deduces an ensemble of more or less remote consequences which agree with the perceived phenomena; this agreement is all that the physicist expects from his postulated principles.

“This agreement confers a certain probability upon the fundamental principles of the theory. But it can never confer certitude on them, for it can never be demonstrated that, if other postulates were taken as principles, consequences would not be deduced which would agree just as well with the facts.

“Besides, it can never be affirmed that some day new facts will not be discovered which no longer agree with the consequences of the postulates that had been posited as being at the basis of the theory: new facts compelling us to deduce a new theory from new postulates. This change of postulates has been effected many a time in the course of the development of science.

“From these considerations two consequences follow: (1) We shall never have the right to affirm categorically of any one of the principles of the mechanical and physical theory, that it is true. (2) We are not allowed to affirm of any one of the principles on which the mechanical and physical theory rests, that it is false, so long as there has been no discovery of phenomena that disagree with the consequences of the deduction of which this principle constitutes one of the premises.

“What I have just said applies particularly to the principle of inertia. The physicist has not the right to say it is certainly true; but still less has he the right to say it is false, since we have so far met with no phenomenon (if we leave out of consideration the circumstances in which the free will of man intervenes) that compels us to construe a physical theory from which this principle would be excluded.

“All this is said without going beyond the domain of the physicist, for whom the principles are not affirmations of real properties of the bodies, but premises of deductions the consequences of which must be in agreement with the phenomena every time that a free will does not intervene to disarrange the determinism of the latter.

“To these principles of physics, can we and must we make certain propositions correspond which would affirm certain real properties of bodies? To the law of inertia, for instance, must we make the affirmation correspond that there is, in every body in motion, a certain reality, an impetus, endowed with such or such characteristics? Do these propositions apply or not to other beings endowed with free will? These are problems that the method of the physicist is incapable of grappling with and it leaves them to the free discussion of the metaphysicians.

“There is only one case which would induce the physicist to be opposed to this liberty of the metaphysician. It is that in which the metaphysician would formulate a proposition directly contradicting the phenomena or a proposition which, introduced in virtue of a principle in the physical theory, would lead to consequences in contradiction to the phenomena. In this case, there would be just grounds for denying the metaphysician the right to formulate such a proposition.

“Now you have, Reverend Father, the summary of what I would say if I were ever to write, concerning the principle of inertia, the article that you so kindly wish me to write.

P. Duhem.”

N.B. Conclusions more or less like those of Duhem are expressed by E. Meyerson. In his Identité et réalité (1908), he examines, from the point of view of experience and of philosophic reason, the validity of the principles of inertia and of conservation of energy. The author goes so far as to say, what seems to us quite right, that “the principle of inertia demands that we view motion as a state; if motion is a state, it must maintain itself like every state. . . . The principle of inertia demands that we view speed as a

substance. Now this is an entirely paradoxical concept for the immediate understanding" (pp. 132, 134).

Professor Gustavo Pécsi, in his Crisi degli assiomi della Fisica Moderna, translated from the German (1910), goes further still and believes he can prove absolutely the falsity of the principle of inertia which would end in this contradiction: that motion is essentially motionless, that there is nothing new in it (p. 201).

APPENDIX II

NOTE ON THE SIMPLICITY OF THE ANALOGICAL NOTION OF BEING

We have shown on various occasions (especially supra, pp. 214-220) that the concept of being does not possess absolute unity, but only a unity of proportionality, because what it designates is not absolutely the same, but proportionately alike in the necessary being and the contingent substantial being and the diverse accidents of this latter. When we define being in general as "that which is or can be," or more precisely as "that the act of which is to exist, id cujus actus est esse," even then this relation to existence, being essentially varied, cannot be thought of without at least a confused thought of the members of the proportionality in which it is realized. God is to His necessary existence as created substance is to its contingent existence, as accident is to its existence which is dependent on a subject.

How then can we maintain what we have already said (Vol. I, p. 140, n. 19), namely, that the notion of being is the simplest of all notions, and therefore it cannot be a false expression of the real or be the reunion of incompossible elements?

The reconciliation of these two theses, already referred to (p. 214), is not so difficult as at first it appears to be.

We must first of all distinguish between two simplicities, the one positive, the other negative, which are in opposition to each other as perfect and imperfect. These are the simplicity of God, pure Act, and the simplicity of prime matter, which is not composed of distinct elements but which is susceptible of receiving every form and constituting all bodies. The simplicity of the general notion of being approaches this latter, because this notion is not composed of other ideas; but, since it has to be predicated of

the most diverse kinds of beings, it cannot denote in them something absolutely similar, but only proportionately so.

The idea of being is the simplest of all ideas, because it does not presuppose any other and is not composed of previous notions; on the contrary, it enters into the constitution or comprehension of all other ideas, into that of truth, goodness, beauty, substance, cause, humanity, etc. The idea of humanity, for instance, is composed of the ideas of animality and rationality; it is really and truly by this genus and specific difference that man is defined, whereas being in general cannot be defined in this way. It transcends (transcendit) all the genera and the differentiae, and that is why it is called a transcendental notion. The comprehension of this latter is all the more simple and restricted as it is the more universal in its extension. That it may be applied to all beings the most diverse, from the accidents of a grain of dust up to God, this idea must denote the minimum that they have in common.

Now, it is precisely this minimum, signified by the notion of being in general, that is not found in all of them in the same way, but according to modes which are proportionately alike. God is of Himself; the grain of dust is, not of itself but in itself; such of its qualities is, not of itself, nor in itself, but in it. Being as such is therefore essentially varied or analogical; it cannot be perfectly abstracted from its analogues; in other words, we cannot think of being without thinking confusedly of the diverse members of the proportionality, of necessary being, contingent being, the accidental modalities of the latter. On the contrary, an idea which is not analogical but univocal, like that of humanity, expresses a characteristic which is specifically the same in all men and which can be thought of entirely apart from them.

There is then no contradiction in saying that the idea of being is the simplest of all ideas and that it has, nevertheless, only a unity of proportionality; moreover, the second assertion is derived from the first.

To sum up: The simplest idea is that which is not composed of previous notions; there cannot, therefore, be any accidental error in its formation; it cannot be a false expression of the real.

Moreover, from the mere fact that the notion of being is the simplest and the least comprehensive, it must have the widest extension. Now it cannot be extended to beings the most different and infinitely diverse, denoting in

them an absolutely identical formality, but merely that in which they are proportionately alike.

We must say as much of the notion of unity. It, too, is analogical, and can denote only a similarity of proportion, as that which exists between such diverse unities as those of God, the human soul, the negative unity of matter, the accidental unity of a heap of stones, or, in the abstract sense, between the unities of a species, a genus, an analogical notion.

This is Cajetan's profound statement in the passages we have already quoted (p. 214), De analogia nominum, ch. vi: "The analogue, as previously stated, is predicated of the analogates, and is not only in name common to them, but is proportionally so in the uniqueness of

its concept . . . it is one not accidentally, or by aggregation, as a heap of stones, but it is directly evident that the analogue is also proportionally one." Likewise, in his De conceptu entis, he says: "That being is also the simplest of concepts agrees with what has been said, for since simplicity is opposed to composition, also that which is one by analogy is not one by any composition."

For a right understanding of this, we must remember that there are two kinds of simplicity: that of the idea of being in general is not the simplicity that belongs to God; they are opposed to each other as are the imperfect and sovereign perfection, as are the simplicity of the idiot and that of the divine intellect. The simplicity of the divine nature is the most absolute unity, so eminent that it subsists even in the Trinity of Persons. On the other hand, the simplicity of the general notion of being, though excluding all composition, denotes in the different beings but a unity of proportionality, and that is what is meant when we say that it is an analogical notion. It is the characteristic of Pantheism to confound these two unities that are so different, one of them representing the starting-point of our intellectual knowledge, and the other its culmination which is the object of the beatific vision.

APPENDIX III

THE VARIOUS FORMS OF PANTHEISM REFUTED BE ST. THOMAS

As previously stated by us (Vol. I, pp. 244-245), some Modernists have held that St. Thomas did not refute Pantheism. It would seem that he did not

know or chose to ignore it. Certain theologians, on the contrary, have maintained that Thomism exaggerates the divine universal causality to such an extent that it tends toward Occasionalism, that system according to which God alone acts. This ought to lead one to affirm that "God alone exists," for action follows being, operari sequitur esse.

In this appendix we will examine briefly: (1) What forms of Pantheism were known to St. Thomas; (2) Where and how he refuted them; (3) How the truth, that Pantheism distorts, is contained in the Thomist doctrine of the divine causality.

I. WHAT FORMS OF PANTHEISM WERE KNOWN TO ST. THOMAS

We have previously pointed out (I, 244 f.) that St. Thomas knew, through Aristotle, the two opposite types of ancient Pantheism: that of Parmenides which absorbs becoming and the multiple in the sole and motionless Being (Acosmism), and that of Heraclitus which absorbs being in becoming, and must end in Atheistic Evolutionism.

Besides, he knew, at least from St. Augustine and Dionysius, the Pantheism of the Stoics, according to which God is the soul of the world and like an intellectual fire in constant evolution. This doctrine was revived by Heraclitus. From the same source, St. Thomas knew the Emanatistic Pantheism of Plotinus and the Neoplatonists, which reminds one more of the doctrine of Parmenides about the One.

Finally St. Thomas could not have been ignorant of the different types of medieval Pantheism: that of Amalric of Bena, according to which God is the formal principle of all things: the materialistic Pantheism of David of Dinant; and the Averroistic doctrine of a single intellect for all men.

Moreover, St. Thomas has classified these different types of Pantheism, adopting the well-known Aristotelian terminology of the four causes. This classification is found in the Theological Summa, Ia, q. 3, a. 8: "Whether God enters into the composition of other things." It is completed in Ia, q. 19, a. 4: "Whether the will of God is the cause of things, or whether He acts by a necessity of His nature or knowledge." (See the references to the other works of St. Thomas, indicated in these two articles.)

The division amounts to this: (1) For certain Pantheists, God is the form or soul of the world, at the very least, of the highest heaven. Such is the teaching of the Stoics and of Amalric of Bena, according to whom God is

the formal principle of all things. (2) For others, God is the matter of the world; “so David of Dinant, who most absurdly taught that God was primary matter” (Ia, q. 3, a. 8). This is a return to the earliest period of philosophy, to the doctrine of the first Ionian philosophers, to Thales, Anaximenes, Anaximander. (3) For others, God is the efficient cause of the world, but He produces it by a necessity of His nature or intellect (necessitas scientiae), so that He would be neither good nor wise if He did not do so. Thus do all those speak who, like the Averroists, deny creation, especially an absolutely free creation, and who admit a certain emanation.

The Pantheistic doctrines known to St. Thomas conceive God, therefore, as the substantial form of the world or as its matter or as its necessary or non-free efficient cause.

We may point out that the modern types of Pantheism can easily be reduced to those of ancient times. In fact, according to the modern Pantheists, either God becomes the world (the doctrine of Spinoza and Schelling, which recalls that of the Neoplatonists and Parmenidies), or else the world becomes God, by an ascendant process of evolution, conceived either from the idealistic (Hegel), or the materialistic point of view (Haeckel), which reminds us of Heraclitus and the Stoics.

There is always a revival of the two opposite types of ancient Pantheism: (1) God absorbs the world, which is the Acosmism of Parmenides; (2) the world in evolution absorbs God, which is the Atheistic Evolutionism of Heraclitus. From this we see that Pantheism is so absurd that it cannot give us a definition of itself. It tends necessarily either to the denial of God or of the world; so evident is this, that God and the world cannot be one and the same reality.

II. WHERE AND HOW ST. THOMAS REFUTED THESE DIFFERENT TYPES OF PANTHEISM

It is found: (1) in his Commentaries on the Physics and Metaphysics of Aristotle, who himself refutes Heraclitus and Parmenides by the division of being into potentiality and act and by the principle of causality, that nothing can be reduced from potentiality to act except by a being already in act, and in the final analysis by the pure Act which, by its absolute simplicity and immutability, is essentially distinct from the world which itself is composite and changing. (See Physics, Bk. I, ch. viii, lect. 14; Met., Bk. IV, ch. iii ad

fin.; Bks. IX and XII.) (2) In his Theological Summa, Ia, q. 3, a. 8, in which it is shown that God is neither the form nor the matter of the world; in Ia, q. 19, a. 4, in which it is proved that Gad does not act externally by a necessity of His nature or of His knowledge, but by His sovereignly free will. This doctrine is especially developed when, in the Contra Gentes, he is refuting the Averroists. See Bk. II, ch. xxiii: "That God does not act of natural necessity;" ch. xxvi: "That the divine will is not confined to certain determined effects"; ch. xxx: "How there can be absolute necessity in created things"; ch. xxxi ff.: "That it is not necessary for creatures to have been always." See also, for the refutation of Emanatistic Pantheism, the Theological Summa, Ia, q. 90, a. 1: "Does the human soul come from the substance of God?" "Is there one intellect in all men?" Ia, q. 76, a. 2; and see also q. 79, a. 5, as well as the treatise entitled De unitate intellectus, for the refutation of Averroism.

This refutation is reduced to the following points:

1) God is not the matter of the world; for matter cannot be moved by itself, but only by a cause that brings it out of its inertia, and, in the final analysis, by a cause which is Being itself and Activity itself, the prime mover of bodies and spirits. (See the first three Thomistic proofs for the existence of God, Vol. I, pp. 261-293.)

2) God is not the substantial form of the world, for it would be something participated and less perfect than the composite of which it would be a part. Now everything composite requires a cause. Therefore God must be an absolutely simple cause, superior to everything composite. (See the fourth Thomistic proof for the existence of God, Vol. I, pp. 302-345.)

3) God does not act externally by a necessity of His nature. The fifth Thomistic proof of His existence has already shown this. St. Thomas proves it more clearly in Ia, q. 19 a. 4. He says that every natural agent acts for an end, and needs to be directed to the end by a first intelligent cause. Therefore the first cause acts by intellect and will, and not by a necessity of nature like the plant or the animal.

Moreover, if it acted by a necessity of its nature, it would produce an effect specifically like itself, as the ox generates the ox, and the lion generates the lion. This would not explain the variety of its effects, all of which are necessarily inferior to it since there cannot be two Gods, two Infinites. (There can be only generation ad intra that is without multiplication of the divine nature, as revelation teaches us.)

Neither does God act by a necessity of His intellect, for there is no necessitating motive for Him that would urge Him to create: “As He is already of Himself infinite perfection and happiness, by creation He can acquire no additional perfection” (Ia, q. 19, a. 3); and, however perfect the beings may be that He has created, He can always create others more perfect (Ia, q. 25, a. 6). We have already proved this is at length (supra pp. 341-350).

Neither can we claim, with Spinoza, that we are only modes or accidents of the divine substance; for, since God is required as pure Act, He cannot be further determined and there can be no accidents in Him (Ia, q. 3, a. 6).

Finally, Pantheistic Emanation is also inadmissible; for, if we proceeded from the substance of God, He would be the material cause, and something would be transmitted from Him to us. This would presuppose a divisibility and imperfection in Him which are irreconcilable with pure Act. (Cf. Ia, q. 90, a. 1; q. 2, a. 3, fourth proof.)

We see that all these refutations of Pantheism proceed from the five Thomistic proofs for the existence of God, and they can be reduced to this proposition defined by the Vatican Council (Denzinger, n. 1782): “God, as being one, sole, absolutely simple and immutable spiritual substance, is to be declared as really and essentially distinct from the world . . . and ineffably exalted above all things.”

God is really and essentially distinct from the world, for He is required as the absolutely immutable First Cause (first, second, and third proofs), and is absolutely simple (fourth and fifth proofs), whereas the world is essentially composite and changing.

Finally, if we wish to reduce this refutation of Pantheism to a still simpler proposition, we must say that God is really and essentially distinct from the world of bodies and spirits, because in Him alone are essence and existence identical, because He alone is the self-subsisting Being. Such is the a priori reason for saying that He is sovereignly simple and immutable.

The very first truth of philosophy is the principle of contradiction or identity: “Being is being, not-being is not-being; is means is, no means no.” The supreme truth of Christian philosophy is the identity in God of essence and existence. It is a truth which was revealed to Moses, when God said: “I am who am.”

This refutation of Pantheism finds its confirmation in the deduction of the attributes of the self-subsisting Being or of pure Act. His immutability, for

instance, merits the name of eternity which is “the simultaneously whole and perfect possession of interminable life, interminabilis vitae tota simul et perfecta possessio” (Ia, q. 10, a. 1). God possesses completely and all at once, both intellectual and volitional life which with us passes away in a succession of thoughts and volitions. He is Thought itself that is omniscient, the eternally subsisting intellectual Light and the substantial Love of the sovereign Good. All these proofs are deduced from the principle of identity which, since it is the fundamental law of being, must be verified in the most absolute and purest manner in the First Being.

III. THE TRUTH, THAT PANTHEISM DISTORTS, IS TO BE FOUND IN THE THOMIST DOCTRINE OF DIVINE CAUSALITY

This is first of all apparent in the natural order, from the following propositions which we have already demonstrated with the help of, St. Thomas:

1) There is nothing external to God that is not, as to the whole of its being, caused by Him (Ia, q. 45).

2) Nothing subsists external to God that is not preserved by Him; for being as such is the proper effect of God. Just as becoming ceases, if its cause ceases to act, just as the light in the air disappears when the sun ceases to give us its light, so everything would be annihilated if the divine preservative action were to cease (Ia, q. 104).

3) God is intimately present to all created beings by the divine action which keeps them in existence. Now this preservative action is identical with the very essence of God which is in closest contact with everything that is, with what is innermost in us, and that God knows infinitely better than we do ourselves (Ia, q. 8, a. 1).

4) God operates interiorly (ab intus) in every created agent, not so as to dispense it from acting, as the Occasionalists think, but to cause it to act, to apply it to action. “God works in every agent” (Ia, q. 105, a. 5).

5) God, as first Intellect, moves every created intellect (ibid., a. 3).

6) God moves the created will, “interius eam inclinando, by an interior inclination of the will” (ibid., a. 4). He does no violence to it; He does not force it, since He does not move it against its natural inclination, but He has given it this natural inclination for universal good; He preserves it in being and applies it to its act. Under this divine motion, the will wills the end,

then moves itself, determines itself to will the means. Still it moves itself, determines itself, only as a secondary cause can so do, which is premoved by the First Cause. Thus God moves the will to universal good, then to a particular good that it deliberately chooses; or even He permits sin, and then He is the cause only of the physical entity of this act, and not of its defect, for which only a deficient cause is needed. As Bossuet says, "to cause liberty of action in us, is to cause us to act freely; and to do so, is to will that it be so; for with God, to do is to will. . . . But He does not merely will us to have the power to be free, He wills us to be actually free; and He does not will that merely in a general way we should have the use of our freedom, but He wills that we should have the use of it in this or that particular act. . . . His knowledge and His will include always the least detail of things . . . that is to say what more peculiarly belongs to them, and all that is comprised in His decrees." God willed from all eternity that Paul be converted at such a time, in such circumstances, on his way to Damascus, and Paul was converted.

From all this doctrine, we see that God is Himself immediately present in all things (immediatione suppositi), by a virtual contact which is profound and hidden: "God, powerful sustainer of all things, Thou who dost remain permanently unmoved," are the words of the liturgical hymn. God, indeed, since He is a pure spirit, is not in a place by His own being, but merely by His action on bodies. He does not have to pass through space to come to us. Even when we say: "He acts externally (ad extra)," this expression, taken from the idea of space, is metaphorical, and signifies only that the effect produced by God is really distinct from Him, without being separated from Him by space. If God had created only the angels, there would be no location; reality as applied to pure spirits is superior to space.

Moreover, God operates immediately (immediatione virtutis: by His immediate power) in every created agent, for no active created power can pass over to act without the divine motion. This is what makes St. Thomas say (De potentia, q. 3, a. 7): "If we consider subsisting agencies, anyone whatsoever in particular is the immediate cause of its effect. But if we consider the power from which the action results, thus it is that the power of the higher cause will be more immediate to its effect than that of the lower; for the lower is not united with its effect except in virtue of higher; hence it is said (De causis, prop. 1) that the power of the first cause acts first upon the thing caused and more vehemently controls it."

In the same article of the De potentia, St. Thomas points out in conclusion what truth is distorted by Pantheism. He says: “Thus God is the cause of every action of created agents, in so far as He gives them the power to act, maintains it in them and applies it to its act, and by His divine power every other power to act is exercized. If we add to this the fact that God is His very power—for the divine essence, His omnipotence and His action are identical—and that He is in all things (intra quamlibet rem), not as forming part of their essence, but as preserving them in being, it follows that He Himself operates in every created agent, even to the performance of our natural and spontaneous acts as well as to that of our free acts.”

Such is the truth that Determinism and Pantheism distort. The latter conceives God as being either the material or the formal or the necessary efficient cause of the world. God is the sovereignly free and transcendent cause, but intimately present in all things by His preservative and motive action. Nothing, absolutely nothing, not even the free determination of our will, escapes God’s universal causality.

It is not in limiting the principle of causality that we refute Determinism, which is based on this principle. It is by insisting upon the transcendent efficacy of the divine causality which is inferior neither to His absolute universality nor to the profundity and suavity of His action in us.

Moreover, through our elevation to the supernatural order the intimacy of our union with God is exceedingly increased. Sanctifying grace is a participation of the divine nature, or of the intimate life of God. Already in the natural order, creatures are like to God in so far as they participate in being, life, and intelligence; by grace they are like to God, in so far as they participate in the Deity, or the intimate life of God, in that which makes God to be God (Ia IIae, q. 112, a. 1). Every soul in a state of grace is thus a spiritual temple which is the abode of the Holy Trinity, a temple that is still obscure on this earth, but one that is perfectly luminous in heaven (Ia, q. 43, a. 3).

Finally, in our Lord Jesus Christ, the union of the divine and human natures is as intimate as can be. They are united in one and the same Person, that of the Word made flesh, in such a manner that there is only one Ego, only one existence in Jesus Christ, although the two natures, the divine and the human, are, as natures, infinitely distant from each other. It is a doctrine which presupposes that there is a real distinction between created essence and existence (IIIa, q. 17, a. 2). Without any Pantheistic confusion between

the divine essence and a created essence, it is the most intimate of unions, a sublime harmony between two infinitely distant extremes, that God alone was able thus to unite.

There is no doctrine that brings out more clearly than does that of St. Thomas, the infinite distinction between God and the creature, the divine transcendence and, what at first sight is astonishing, there is no doctrine that insists more upon the intimacy of the divine presence in us and of the divine influx that penetrates even to the determination of our free will.

The first of these two theses is impaired by those who, like Scotus and Suarez, reconcile by univocation the analogy of being common to God and creatures. The second is impaired by Molinism and Congruism which fear that the divine motion will destroy human liberty, if this motion profoundly and most intimately penetrates it.

For St. Thomas, on the contrary, it is precisely because the divine causality is an absolutely transcendent efficacy that it can attain to the intimacy of our free will without disturbing it. The saints understand this. One of them, perceiving how incapable he was of giving himself fully to God, said to Him: “Lord, take me from myself and give me to Thyself.” We must say of the grace of God, what St. Paul said of His word: “The word of God is living and effectual and more piercing than any two-edged sword and reaching unto the division of the soul and the spirit, of the joints also and the marrow; and is a discerner of the thoughts and the intents of the heart” (Heb. 4: 12). God’s action in us is no less penetrating than His word and His sight, according to Isaias, 26: 12: “Thou hast wrought all our works for us.”

It is the purpose of the following study to demonstrate this clearly, by solving a few difficulties.

A SYNTHESIS OF THE DOCTRINE OF ST. THOMAS ON THESE QUESTIONS APROPOS OF A NEW PRESENTATION OF THE SCIENTIA MEDIA

It is very difficult to treat of the question of divine causality and foreknowledge, to set forth completely St. Thomas' solution and to answer the main objections raised against it, without provoking a controversy.

The criticism of Molinism contained in the first edition of the present work was examined at length by Father d'Alès, S.J., professor of dogmatic theology at the Catholic Institute of Paris, in an article written by him concerning the "Divine Knowledge and Decrees," which we cannot leave unanswered. This exchange of ideas is not altogether fruitless.

Father d'Alès is quite ready to approve the first part of our work almost without reserve, and it gives us pleasure to see what he has written on this subject at the beginning of his investigation. We also thank the Civiltà Cattolica for its flattering article which examines especially the first part of our work.

But we should appear to ignore the answers and objections made by Father d'Alès, and by Father Monaco, S.J., who writes almost in the same strain, if we took no notice of them.

In treating of divine foreknowledge and motion, we had expounded St. Thomas' teaching as it is found in the Theological Summa and as it has been understood by the Dominican commentators. Our criticism of Molinism was merely a summary of that given by theologians of the Thomist School. It may be stated briefly as follows: The scientia media conceived by Molina, according to which God knows infallibly, before any determining divine decree on His part, the conditional free acts of the future, (1) leads to the admission of an exception to the principle of causality and to the universal causality of the primary agent; being or the

determination of these free acts of the future would not then come from God the first being; (2) it leads to the conclusion that the divine knowledge is passive with regard to these conditional free acts of the future, which determine this knowledge instead of being determined by it. The scientia media, thus positing a passivity in the pure Act, cannot be a pure perfection; it is a notion which attributes a human imperfection to God; (3) lastly, this theory, conceived to safeguard human liberty, must logically end in determinism of the circumstances; previous to any divine decree, God can infallibly foresee what would be Peter's choice if placed in certain circumstances, only if these circumstances determine the choice.

Father d'Alès charges us with not knowing the Molinist doctrine we are criticizing: `The prosecution that we have just read rests solely on a complete ignoratio elenchi (ignoring of the point at issue)."

If this be true, then for more than three centuries all the Thomists whose views we have summarized failed to understand anything of the doctrine of Molina. May it not be rather that the Molinists have distorted the doctrine of St. Thomas?

Father d'Alès concedes that "the theory of the scientia media has often been proposed in a form by which the adversaries triumph" and which leads to fatalism. The third part of our criticism would then be decisive against many Molinists; but these disciples would have clumsily distorted the doctrine of their master. Father d'Alès proposes a new conception of the scientia media and invites us to a frank exchange of views, in the hope of effecting a reconciliation between the Molinists and their adversaries. A better understanding of St. Thomas would permit of this reconciliation. Let us examine then: the charges made against us; the proposed new theory; the relations between this theory and the solution of St. Thomas.

CHAPTER I

DOES THE JUDGMENT PASSED BY THE THOMISTS UPON THE SCIENTIA MEDIA REST UPON A COMPLETE IGNORATIO ELENCHI?

Have the Thomists for three centuries been ignorant of the true point at issue? Like the inexpert Molinists just mentioned, have they distorted the doctrine of Molina? Have they themselves ceased to be Thomists, and become Bannesians, as Father d'Alès keeps on saying, after the manner of many of his confrères? Has the Thomist tradition been lost by the Dominicans, and preserved by the Jesuit theologians, as Father Schneemann and his friends declare? Father del Prado, O.P., like many others before him, has made a thorough study of this question in his recent work De gratia et libero arbitrio, the third volume of which is occupied with the examination of the doctrine of Molina. Has he, then, been so blinded by Scholastic prejudices as not to recognize the essence of Molinism and the fundamental doctrine of St. Thomas on divine motion?

If the Dominican theologians for three centuries have ceased to be the true disciples of St. Thomas, and have become disciples of Bannez, how could Pope Benedict XV write, as so many of his predecessors had done, saying of the Order of St. Dominic that: "this Order must be praised not so much for having reared the Angelic Doctor, but for never afterwards departing in the least from his teaching"? If an illuminating grace is needed that one may properly understand St. Thomas, is it not above all to the religious family of the great Doctor that the Lord deigns to grant and preserve so precious a gift, although He grants it also to all those who ask it from the depth of their hearts?

What have we misunderstood in the essence of Molinism? We have repeatedly and attentively read Father d'Alès' view on this question. The

texts of Molina to which he draws our attention, were known to us; they are commonly quoted by such Thomists as John of St. Thomas, the Salmanticenses, Gonet, and others. We have again studied these texts with their context; there is always the same radical and manifest opposition, not only between Bannez and Molina—Bannez makes no innovations and glories in this fact—but between Molina and St. Thomas. As proof of this we need here only consult the very declarations of the author of the Concordia. He diligently sought, by a multiplicity of distinctions, to make his theory agree with the doctrine of the Angelic Doctor, but he had to confess that he separated from him at least on three essential points: the divine motion, the foreknowledge of conditional free acts of the future, and predestination. We know that Suarez is hardly more faithful to the holy Doctor on these and several other questions. The very texts of Molina will enable us to prove that the criticisms made by the Thomists do not rest upon an ignoratio elenchi.

ARTICLE I

MOLINISM RESTRICTS GOD'S UNIVERSAL CAUSALITY AND EVEN THE UNIVERSALITY OF THE PRINCIPLE OF CAUSALITY

With regard to what St. Thomas teaches (Ia, q. 105, a. 5) about the divine motion, Molina writes: "I am confronted by two difficulties: (1) I do not see what is this application, in secondary causes, by which God moves and applies these causes to act. . . . And I candidly confess that I have difficulty in understanding this motion and application which St. Thomas requires in secondary causes. . . . (2) According to this doctrine, God does not concur immediately (immediatione suppositi) in the action and effect of secondary causes, but only through the intervention of these causes." According to Molina, as he himself explains in the same chapter, the divine concurrence and the action of creatures are two partial and co-ordinated causes, "as when two men are pulling a boat"; according to St. Thomas they are two total and subordinated causes, such that the primary cause moves the secondary to act, which means that it applies the latter to its operation. There is, then, only a material likeness between Molina's texts (quoted by Father d'Alès) on the divine concurrence, and the texts of St. Thomas.

Thus our first criticism is verified; Molinism restricts God's universal causality and even the universality of the principle of causality. According

to this view, the transition to act of the secondary cause does not come from God; and as potency cannot, of itself alone, pass into act, this transition is without a cause. If this be so, with Molina and Suarez we must reject the validity of the Thomistic proof for God's existence based on the principle that whatever is in motion is set in motion by another.

To escape from the difficulty, Father d'Alès and some Molinists admit a divine indifferent premotion which is the cause of our free act as to the entity of it, but which does not grant that the mode of the act should obtain its initiative therefrom, so that the free determination depends solely on us and not on God. If such be the case, this premotion, given to free creatures, in certain determinate circumstances when a certain duty has to be performed, will incline them neither to a good consent nor to a dissent; it will be the cause neither of the good act nor of the physical act of sin; it will depend solely on us and not on God whether there is volition rather than nolition, acceptance, or refusal. And then, as Gonet says, "according to this way of explaining the divine concurrence, the betrayal by Judas is the work of God no less than is the conversion of St. Paul," or the conversion of St, Paul is no more the work of God than is the betrayal by Judas. God is the cause only of the being of these two acts, inasmuch as it is being. Consequently what is greater in the created order, the good consent, will as such be exclusively our work and not the work of God; because, apart from this indifferent motion, all that God would do is to urge us to do good by the good inspirations which He gives also to the wicked, "and with absolutely equal divine helps, one man would obey the good inspiration and another would resist it." God would thus remain a stranger to the determination of the free will in which the work of salvation is completed.

Is this an exaggeration on the part of Thomists anxious to deduce all the consequences of Molinism? Not at all. Molina himself wrote: "Certainly, that we perform our acts well or badly, which we can do by the faculty alone of our free will and God's general concurrence, must be referred not to God, but to ourselves as to a particular and free cause. . . . God is not, therefore, the cause of virtue and vice in us, but it is proposed and willed by us."

Molina takes this phrase from the Quaestiones et responsiones ad Christianos, erroneously attributed to St. Justin Martyr. The preface to the Migne edition rightly says of these Quaestiones that they are "notoriously tainted with Pelagianism." We are, indeed, far from the doctrine of canon

22 of the Council of Orange, which says: “No one has of his own anything but lying and sin,” and of canon 20, which states: “God works many good things in man that man does not work, but man works no good deeds that God does not give him the strength to do” (Denzinger, nn. 195, 193).

From the fact that God cannot be the cause of sin, how can anyone dare conclude that He is not the cause of our virtue, but only the indifferent cause of the being of the good or bad act in so far as it is being? If our virtue comes solely from us, why did our Lord say: “Without me you can do nothing”? Why did He condemn the prayer of the Pharisee? We ought not to give thanks to Him for what is paramount in the work of salvation, “for the determination to good which is from us and not from God.”

Certainly God cannot be the cause of sin; this as such is but a deficiency and requires merely a deficient cause, consequent upon a purely permissive decree of God. The divine motion thus concurs only in the physical act of sin.

On the contrary, by His efficacious grace God positively and infallibly moves us to good, according to St. Thomas, though without doing any violence to our liberty or imposing any necessity on it. St. Thomas, in fact, says not only that God moves us to universal good, but that He is the cause of the being of our free act in so far as it is being. He repeatedly says: “God moves us to know or will or do something; He moves us to meritorious good.” It is not a question here merely of good inspirations and sentiments that precede our free act and that are the result of operating grace; it is a question of a free act (under the influence of co-operating grace), for the performance of which the will is both moved and moves itself: “even the good movement of the free will, whereby anyone is prepared for receiving the gift of grace, is an act of the free will moved by God.” “Man needs the help of grace in order to be moved by God to act righteously.” Furthermore, according to the Angelic Doctor, manifestly this grace is efficacious of itself and not because of the previous consent of the free creature. Only in this way does he think it possible to retain the true meaning of the texts of St. Paul, who says: “It is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish. So, then, it is not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy”; “What hast thou that thou hast not received?” This efficacious grace is so far from being indifferent that St. Thomas wrote: “As the will can change its act for another, much more can God do so with the will.” “Only God can transfer the inclination, which He

gave the will, from one thing to another." Yet the infallible efficacy of this grace, far from destroying liberty in us, produces in us and with us the determination of the choice, and this even to the free mode of this act. "God, indeed, immutably moves the will on account of the efficacy of the power that moves it, which cannot fail; but on account of the nature of our will, which is indifferently disposed toward various things, it is not necessitated but remains free." God certainly does not impose upon our liberty a determination for some particular thing which would not come from us; in the performance of the good act, He moves us to determine ourselves freely (by deliberation) in one way rather than in another, and this motion is infallible on account of the efficacy of the power that moves us. As for sin, He permits the defect and concurs in the physical act of sin. We shall quote the principal texts of St. Thomas on this agreement between the divine motion and the human freedom in the third chapter of this appendix.

Molina, who refuses to admit this divine motion, sought to distinguish in our free act that which comes from God (the being as such of the act), and that which comes solely from us (its good or bad determination). The followers of indifferent motion side with him on this point. Contrary to this, St. Thomas writes as follows in one of his famous articles on Predestination, which is absolutely irreconcilable with Molinism: "There is no distinction between what is the result of free will and what is of Predestination; as there is no distinction between what is the result of a secondary cause and of a first cause."

Evidently Molina restricts God's universal causality, for he affirms that apart from it are realized the transition to act of the secondary cause and the determination of the free cause, so that our good consent depends solely upon us and not upon God. The Author of salvation is not the cause of that which is most important in the order of salvation. "God is not the cause of virtue and vice in us." On the contrary, we read in the Scripture: "Destruction is thy own, O Israel; thy help is only in me" (Osee 13: 9).

St. Thomas has summed up his teaching on this point by saying: "Because the first cause exerts more influence on the effect than the secondary cause, therefore whatever of perfection there is in the effect is to be attributed principally to the first cause; but what there is of defect is to be attributed to the secondary cause, which does not operate so efficaciously as the first cause" (De pot., q. 3, a. 7 ad 15).

ARTICLE II

DOES THE SCIENTIA MEDIA POSIT A PASSIVITY IN THE PURE ACT?

On the subject of God's foreknowledge, Molina declares not only that his theory of the scientia media is new, but that it appears to him to be contrary to the teaching of St. Thomas. After proposing it, imbued with the spirit of Origen, he adds: "Although, to tell the truth, St. Thomas seems to suggest the contrary in Ia, q. 14, a. 8 ad 1um, when he explains and attempts to interpret in the opposite sense the passage of Origen to which we shall immediately refer, in which he is clearly of the same opinion as we are. The passage of Origen quoted by Molina states that: "A thing will happen not because God knows it as future; but, because it is future, it is on that account known by God, before it exists." This text St. Thomas regards as an objection to his doctrine; Molina makes it the foundation of his own.

For St. Thomas what is present was from all eternity future, only because an eternal cause had to produce it, and only the first cause is eternal. Now, the first cause produces nothing external to itself by a necessity of nature but only "according to the determination of His will and intellect." Thus the thesis of St. Thomas is applied to future events: "The knowledge of God is the cause of things, in so far as His will is joined to it. Hence the knowledge of God as the cause of things is usually called the knowledge of approbation."

Molina strives of course to maintain the conclusion of St. Thomas, that "God's knowledge is the cause of things"; but instead of understanding it, as the text of the Angelic Doctor demands, of the knowledge of approbation (called also that of vision), he understands it of the knowledge of simple intelligence (or of possibles), which directs the divine liberty that is the cause of things. Then, between the knowledge of simple intelligence and the divine decree, he introduces the scientia media or knowledge of conditional free acts of the future. Now God, according to his view, is not at all the cause of the determination of these free conditionate futures (futuribilia). And so it is his contention that the divine knowledge is the cause of all things without exception, without being the cause, however, of the free determination of creatures. The link which connects article 8 with 13 of this question of St. Thomas is thus severed, as we have shown (supra, pp. 71-74).

It is clear, indeed, that in the system devised by Molina, God is the cause, neither by His knowledge nor by His liberty, of our free determination. By the scientia media God has simply foreseen that if Peter were placed in these circumstances he would choose freely such and such a thing; and the divine liberty has de facto placed Peter in these circumstances concurring indifferently with him, or, in other words, giving him a grace that he alone will cause to be either efficacious or sterile.

The scientia media is so far from being the cause of things that Molina wrote: “It was not in God’s power to know by this knowledge anything else than He actually knew.” Does this mean that this necessity depends on the divine essence which is the foundation of possible things? No, for Molina at once adds: “If the created free will were to do the opposite of what it did as it truly can do, God would have known this very act by the same knowledge, by which He really knows it, but not that He actually knows it.” Thus then the scientia media depends entirely on the creature. God, according to Molina, can only explore and ascertain what decision a certain man would make in certain circumstances. He is powerless to preserve Peter from every fall into sin during the night of the Passion. He foresees only that Peter placed in these circumstances would deny his Master, and that afterwards in other circumstances he would retrieve himself, and would render efficacious by his consent the sufficient grace which would be offered him. If it is so, says Del Prado, “this kind of knowledge on God’s part is dependent, as at its very source, upon creatures themselves. Hence God begs this scientia media from the determination itself of the created will.” Thus our second criticism is verified. “The scientia media is passive with regard to free conditional future acts, which determine it instead of being determined by it. The scientia media, positing a passivity in the pure Act, could not be a pure perfection; it is a notion which attributes a human imperfection to God.” This disadvantage is the necessary outcome of the first. If we restricted God’s universal causality and the passivity of the creature, we are obliged to put a passivity in God. This explains why Molina, after the exposition of his theory, had to write: “Although, to tell the truth, St. Thomas seems to suggest the contrary in Ia, q. 14, a. 8 ad 1um.” We fail to understand how Molinists of our times, however desirous to call themselves Thomists, can claim that the scientia media does not impair the thesis of St. Thomas that “God’s knowledge is the cause of things,” and all that he has written on the intrinsic efficacy of grace.

We discard the texts in which Molina affirms that he considers his opinion on predestination must be maintained, not only against St. Thomas, but against both St. Augustine and St. Thomas together. We are thus led to infer that his opinion was contrary to theirs. If he had thought he could clearly reconcile his point of view with that of the Angelic Doctor, he would have had no need to write as follows: “Although the authority of St. Thomas is of very great weight, yet on this account there must be no receding from our decision which has been corroborated by so many most convincing arguments.” Evidently the disciples of Molina would completely abandon their master and would cease to be called Molinists, if they truly followed the doctrine of the Angelic Doctor on predestination as set forth in Ia, q. 23, especially in article 5, and if they understood the axiom that “to anyone who does what he can, God does not deny grace,” as explained in Ia IIae, q. 112, a. 3.

We maintain, too, that many Molinists separate from St. Thomas in defending the proposition that “God not only knows creatures in Himself, but He also knows them immediately in themselves.” This proposition is taught, for instance, by the Wiceburgenses, who vainly strive to reconcile it with this other proposition of St. Thomas, that “God sees things other than Himself, not in themselves but in Himself” (Ia, q. 14, a. 5). And it is not without reason that, following Gonet, we have quoted Suarez as favorable to this opinion, for he declares it to be probable although St. Thomas saw an impossibility in it. For the Angelic Doctor the medium of God’s knowledge of creatures can be only His essence and power or His causality. On this point we have referred to Thomist commentators, not that it is sufficient to study the Molinist doctrine from their works, but because they point out clearly what it is that separates this doctrine from that of St. Thomas. Their judgment does not rest upon a complete ignoratio elenchi, but is pronounced upon the real point at issue, and has never been refuted.

Let us come to our third criticism.

ARTICLE III

DOES THE SCIENTIA MEDIA LEAD TO DETERMINATION OF CIRCUMSTANCES?

On this point, Father d’Alès (p. 30) makes the following admission: “The theory of the scientia media has often been proposed in a form by which its

opponents are victorious. It has been said that God knows a priori all the possible determinations of the rational creature, so much so that on such grounds He sees distinctly and without any possible alternative which of two opposites the rational creature would choose when placed in a certain combination of circumstances. To this assertion the opponents reply that the rational creature, confronted by two opposites, both of which appeal to the will, can choose the one just as well as the other, that in such an emergency indetermination is of the very essence of liberty, that the reality of the determination is the sine qua non condition of the knowledge that God can have of them, and therefore that it is metaphysically repugnant for God to see the creature determining itself one way or the other, if, in the actual state of affairs, it must not determine itself. We candidly confess that this answer seems to us to be conclusive and that we cannot defend the theory of the scientia media, proposed in these terms, as being a premature and universal judgment about that which must not be judged."

This manner of presenting the scientia media is found not only among the more or less inexperienced disciples, but among such masters as Suarez. It is rejected by Molina as implying Determinism, in a text quoted by Father d'Alès (p. 30) and well known to Thomists.

In truth, Molina proposes the scientia media in a slightly different way. According to him, God, before any divine determining decree, is able to know the conditionally free acts of the future by reason of supercomprehension of the causes. He says: "God has a very profound and unfathomable comprehension of each free will. He sees clearly what each free cause would do of its own accord in such and such circumstances, and even in an infinity of possible circumstances. We call this vision on God's part, scientia media." It is not a question here of conjecture, but a question of infallible foreknowledge.

The difficulty still remains; fatalism is not evaded. The supercomprehension of a free undetermined cause cannot cause one to see in it a determination which is not there. If anyone answers that this determination is known from the circumstances in which the created liberty would be placed, he ends in determinism of circumstances. This objection is raised against the theory of Molina, not only by the Thomists, but also by Suarez and Mazzella. Suarez declares, in fact, that the theory of the supercomprehension of free causes is contrary to the teaching of St. Thomas and that it destroys liberty. Molina and Suarez—though they do so

anonymously—thus indulge in mutual reproaches, in that their conception of the scientia media implies fatalism. Were they themselves ignorant of the real point at issue? If so, then no one has ever understood the problem as stated, which is, nevertheless, one of the clearest. It may be stated as follows: Between Thomists and Molinists it is not at all a question of knowing whether God infallibly knows conditional free acts of the future. The whole purpose of the controversy is to know the medium in which God sees that a certain free cause placed in certain circumstances would choose one particular thing and not a certain other. The Thomists say that God has seen it in his positive decrees (or merely permissive, if it is a question of a foreseen sin); for instance, He decided, for reasons of which He is judge, to permit Peter to fall into sin during the Passion of Jesus, and afterwards to give him an intrinsically efficacious grace in order sweetly and firmly to cause him to repent. According to our view, it is in this sense that this decree is determining.

No, reply the Molinists, God has not seen in his decrees these conditional free acts of the future, because God cannot give Peter an intrinsically efficacious grace which would cause him to retrieve himself freely and infallibly. It depends solely on Peter to will or not to use the sufficient grace which would be (or will be) given to him.

But, again the Thomists ask, what is the medium in which God has seen what Peter would do if placed in a certain combination of circumstances? Suarez' answer leads to fatalism, according to Molina; Molina's answer leads to fatalism, according to Suarez. The defenders of the scientia media fall from Charybdis into Scylla. Is there an avenue of escape?

Let us examine the new conception of the scientia media presented by Father d'Alès.

CHAPTER II

THE SCIENTIA MEDIA PRESENTED UNDER A NEW ASPECT

Father d'Alès gets his inspiration from Father de Régnon. To the Thomists' question: "In what medium does God see the conditional free acts of the future?" Father de Régnon replies: "It is a mystery, an unfathomable mystery. . . . Of all explanations that have been offered, not one is completely satisfactory. . . . We must give up explaining the how of this divine knowledge that we call the knowledge of conditional things. . . . To explain this knowledge is the work of philosophical dilletantism." One cannot avoid contradicting oneself with greater grace. But Father de Régnon maintained that God knows the conditional free acts of the future before any determining decree, and that in virtue of the principle of the virtual priority of truth over goodness. "The purest metaphysics," he said, "leads us to recognize in God Himself a virtual priority which sets in order Being, Truth, and Goodness. Hence it follows that, according to our way of forming our concepts, the divine intellect, having truth for its object, must be conceived in act before the will and independently of the will. Now, an infinite intellect cannot be conceived in act, without our conceiving, at the same time, its including all objects to which it can attain. Therefore the divine intellect extends of itself to all truth by a comprehension that is immediate and derived solely from itself. Hence I conclude that metaphysics avoids having recourse to the divine will to explain the divine knowledge and teaches us to rely on the essential relation between intellect and truth."

Father d'Alès (p. 23) says the same thing: "Order is the proper work of the intellect; therefore the intellect must here intervene to prepare the way for the operations of the will, to prevent it from encountering limits beyond which neither the will nor the intellect can go, those that involve the absurd.

In other words, the divine knowledge must represent, previous to the conclusion of the divine decree, what the essential order allows one to demand of the rational creature and what it does not allow one to demand of it. If the divine will always acts according to design, this is because it is always, first of all, regulated by knowledge. Knowledge which intervenes after the formation of the decree, is no longer an operative knowledge." Father d'Alès says further (p. 31): "We defend the scientia media as a province apart in the knowledge of simple intelligence and we claim as the signs of it merely the stability proper to this knowledge, the stability pertaining to the order of possible things, and it has its foundation in the very essence of God. It needs no more than this, and nothing less, to authorize the divine decree to call forth such a series of free determinations of rational creatures in the order of realities." Again (p. 9) he says: "Because the knowledge of simple intelligence has shown to God the possibility, for such a created liberty, to orientate itself by its own power in such circumstances and under the influence of such a motion, God takes His choice of these circumstances and this motion. The order of Providence to which these circumstances and this orientation of created liberty belong, is realized by God entirely in the concrete. Orientation remains, under the divine realization, what it was as God saw it: the property of created liberty. God has the initiative as to the entity of the act, in virtue of this transcendent causality which He cannot abdicate; but He forbids Himself the initiative as to the mode of the act." Again (p. 10) we read: "The divine decree has not the initiative of ideal determination; it presupposes it, and invests it only with the solidity of the divine choice. A priori the divine knowledge guarantees the act as realizable; a posteriori the divine decree brings about its realization; the act realized will be a free one, because every determination comes from the creature. It is a simple idea as well as the right one about this. I feel sure that St. Thomas never saw it otherwise. Cf. Ia, q. 14, a. 13." Father de Régnon (p. 32) writes: "The divine motion of which St. Thomas speaks and which he declares to be infallible, is a motion that is infallible a posteriori, and it presupposes the positive intimation of the divine knowledge of simple intelligence, as to the possibility of the created will to be moved freely in this way. To this conception of the divine decree we have no objection from the standpoint of liberty. What do the Bannesians think of it?"

It is our turn to say in reply to this, that it is a totalis ignoratio elenchi. In all the preceding exposé, the only thing proved has been the foreknowledge of free possible determinations (as emphasized by us). Now the problem to be solved is concerned not with possible things, but with conditional free acts of the future.

Father del Prado refuted this new conception of the scientia media which had been proposed by Cardinal Pecci, when he said: “The ratio futuribilis is one thing, and the ratio possibilis is another. Hence, that one may have actual knowledge of the conditional free acts of the future, a knowledge of each and every possible thing is not sufficient for this; . . . . this constitutes the main point of the controversy.” It is most certain for the Thomists that God by His knowledge of simple intelligence sees that Peter, if he were placed in the circumstances of the Passion, could remain faithful to His Master or deny Him; these are two possible opposites. But it is a question of the foreknowledge of a conditioned future: Which of these two possibles would Peter choose if placed in these circumstances?

Hence our answer presents no difficulty:

We say that, before any determining divine decree, God knows infallibly both the merely possible and the conditioned future. (a) If He knows only the possible, the scientia media admits of no infallible, even conditionally infallible, foreknowledge concerning free acts. (b) If He knows the conditioned future, then all the objections made against the scientia media return in full force.

a) Before any decree (positive or permissive), God can certainly know all possible things, even those that are free, v. g., that Peter, placed in the circumstances of the Passion could—I do not say would—deny his Master. But then, if the scientia media goes no further than this, it adds nothing to the knowledge of simple intelligence, and does not admit of the infallible foreknowledge which is what concerns us in the present case; for, in the circumstances of the Passion, there is, indeed, a possibility of two contradictory choices for Peter: either to be faithful or not. Therefore it will certainly be possible for God to decree to place the Apostle effectively in a certain situation of circumstances and give him an indifferent premotion, which is that admitted by Father d’Alès; but it will not be possible for God thus to foresee infallibly whether Peter will be faithful or not; He will be able only to conjecture this. Also this cannot be the idea of Father d’Alés. Like every Molinist, he has to admit that God, before any decree, knows not

only the two possible contradictories, but also the conditioned future, in other words, which of these two possible things would be chosen by the created liberty. What follows from this?

b) If it is maintained that before any determining divine decree (positive or permissive), God foresees infallibly such a conditional free act of the future by reason of the virtual priority of truth over goodness, one falls back into fatalism or determinism of circumstances. For, after all, according to the hypothesis, this free act of the future is determined neither by a divine decree nor in the created will which is free or indifferent. For it to be foreseen infallibly and not merely conjecturally, it must therefore be determined by the circumstances. The interpretation proposed to us by reason of the principle of the virtual priority of truth over goodness necessarily leads to this conclusion.

In fact, this principle is psychologically construed as meaning that a thing must be known before it is willed. From this Father de Régnon deduced that "the divine intellect extends of itself to all truth by an immediate comprehension which depends entirely on itself . . . regardless of the divine will."

It is easy to reply as Father Guillermin did, by saying: That anyone wills only what is known as possible or even as apt to be chosen by preference, I concede; that anyone wills only what is known as the determinate object to be willed, I deny. To maintain this would lead one to admit at least psychological determinism after the manner of Leibniz. He, too, wrote concerning the defenders of the scientia media as follows: "It is amusing to see how they torment themselves to get out of a labyrinth from which there is absolutely no escape. . . . They will never, therefore, get out of trouble unless they admit a predetermination in the preceding act of the free creature which inclines it to determine itself."

We certainly do not deny the virtual priority of truth over goodness, of knowledge over volition; we even defend this against Scotus and Suarez in explaining deliberation and the rôle of the practico-practical final judgment; but it by no means follows, although Father de Régnon may say so, that the divine intellect extends to all truth, even before any decree of the divine will. If it were so, God, from all eternity, would know infallibly before any decree, which of these two propositions expresses what will truly happen: there will be a creation, there will not be a creation. Creation would no longer be a free act. We should have to say with Leibniz: "God would be

neither good nor wise, if He had not created." We should have to admit that creation is a moral necessity in virtue of the principle that the best must be intended, understood in the sense of absolute intellectualism. Truth, indeed, precedes goodness, but it follows being, and previous to any divine decree the conditional free acts of the future have not any determinate being; their absolute contingency is opposed to this. We are always confronted, therefore, with the same difficulty: the scientia media, devised to safeguard liberty, destroys it.

Perhaps in answer to this, some may say: We give up explaining the how of the scientia media; not one of the proposed media is satisfactory; but it can well be that God in the depths of His infinite wisdom has some medium unknown to us. The Thomists do not prove that it is impossible for God to know the conditioned future in any other medium than that of His determining decrees.

Excuse me, that is what we are proving; for, previous to any determinating divine decree, the conditional free act of the future is undetermined, and cannot therefore be known: "nothing is intelligible except in so far as it is in act." To say that it is determined of itself or by the circumstances is to fall into Determinism (cf. Perihermeneias, Bk. I, lect. 13). The error is just the same if one claims that, before any determination on the part of the divine will, a certain free act rather than its contrary or the voluntary omission of every act, is infallibly represented in the divine essence, not only as possible but as conditionally future.

Therefore our three criticisms still hold good, and the first is the raison d'être of the other two. The scientia media, in whatever manner it is presented, (1) restricts God's universal causality, since the free determination of our good consent does not come entirely from God any more than the defect of the bad consent does; (a) the scientia media posits as a natural consequence a passivity in the divine knowledge which is determined by the conditioned futures according to the good pleasure of free creatures; (3) it leads, finally, as the Thomists commonly teach, to determinism of the circumstances, and it would avoid this only by sacrificing the infallibility of foreknowledge. All these disadvantages arise from the fact that Molina did not entertain a sufficiently exalted notion of the divine causality and its efficacy.

CHAPTER III

THE SOLUTION OF ST. THOMAS

It presents itself readily from what we have said. Here we can give only a summary of it together with the principal references. A compilation of the texts quoted in full, which we only point out here, was made by Father del Prado in his work, De gratia, Vol. II, ch. iii; Vol. III, ch. ii, and epilogue, to which we repeatedly refer the reader in the course of this article.

According to St. Thomas:

1) The first cause and the secondary cause are not two partial coordinated causes, “like two men pulling a boat,” but they are two total subordinated causes such that the first moves the second to its action. The whole effect depends thus on God as its first cause, and upon the creature as its secondary cause.

2) The divine motion which inclines us efficaciously to good (either natural or supernatural) is not indifferent; it is not made efficacious by our foreseen consent, but it moves us to determine ourselves to act in one particular way rather than in a certain other.

3) Sin happens only as the result of a permissive decree of God; it is formally a defect which, as such, demands only a deficient cause, God concurs only in the physical act of sin.

4) No one is deprived of the efficacious grace necessary for salvation except through a fault which is due to our own defectibility. God is not bound to remedy this defect; in fact He often does so, but not always. That is a mystery.

5) Under the influence of intrinsically efficacious grace the will determines itself freely, for it is moved by God as befitting to its nature; now by nature it enjoys a dominating indifference with regard to every particular good deemed good under one aspect, insufficient under another. The relation of our will to this object is contingent; moreover, our will

dominates the attraction that this good has for it. This dominating indifference (potential in the faculty; actual in the choice itself) constitutes the freedom of the act. The act is free because it proceeds, under the indifference of the judgment, from a will that has a universal amplitude which extends farther than the particular good to which it is inclined. God by His efficacious motion does not change, and even cannot change this relation of our voluntary act to this object, since the act is specified by this object. Therefore it is not contradictory to say that the will remains free, although there is a mystery in this which is analogous to that of the creative act.

6) That which now is, was from all eternity future only because an eternal cause had to bring it into existence, and only the first cause is eternal.

7) Now, the first cause brings nothing into existence that is external to itself by a necessity of its nature; but only "according to the determination of His will and intellect." Thus the knowledge of God is the cause of things "in so far as His will is joined to it," by a decree. And the decree or command, for St. Thomas, is an act of the intellect which presupposes the choice made by the will. It is not, therefore, because things will be that God knows them, but these things will be because God has decreed that they would be. Hence there is no infallible foreknowledge either of future free acts or of conditionally future free acts, except by a divine determining decree which is either positive or negative (a decree either objectively absolute or objectively conditional).

It follows that the doctrine of St. Thomas, in opposition to that of Molina:

1) Maintains the universal causality of God and His omnipotence. God is not powerless to keep Peter from all unfaithfulness in the very circumstances of the Passion; but He decides to permit this defect for very sublime reasons of which He is the judge. He also decides to raise Peter up again by a very strong and very mild movement of grace which will incline him infallibly and freely to repent. Peter's good consent will not be solely because he is free to act; he will not be able to pride himself on it. It will be caused in him by the Author of all good, by the Author of salvation, for it is He who saves us. To be saved, it is not enough to say: "Lord, Lord." We must do the will of our Father who is in heaven. The work of salvation consists, rightly so, in the good consent. God cannot be a stranger in the production of that which is nobler in this order. We also say to Him: "Thy

will be done on earth as it is in heaven”; give us, O Lord, the grace to do Thy holy will or, as St. Augustine expresses it: “give what Thou commandest, and command what Thou wilt.” It would be a blasphemy to claim that God is not more the author of the virtuous act than He is of sin, that He is the cause, by His indifferent concurrence, only of the entity as such of these two acts.

2) The doctrine of St. Thomas posits as a natural consequence no passivity in the divine knowledge which is truly the cause of things and is not measured by things. God is not, by His supercomprehension of causes, the explorer of created wills, obliged to ascertain how they will choose to act in certain given circumstances. God is infinitely superior to this anthropomorphic conception of Him.

3) The doctrine of St. Thomas safeguards human liberty by means of the transcendent efficacy of the divine causality which is able to incline us firmly and suavely (or infallibly and freely) to determine ourselves in the choice of what is good, and also to concur in the physical act of sin, the defect of which comes only from the deficient cause, and it presupposes a purely permissive decree of God.

The force and suavity of the efficacious grace are so intimately united that, to fail to recognize the first is to fail to see the second, and so become involved in theories which, in order the better to safeguard the free will, destroy it.

OBJECTIONS

1st obj. The Molinists refuse to admit this doctrine because it is evident for them, so they say, that God cannot incline us infallibly to determine ourselves in one particular way rather than in a certain other.

Are they quite sure of having this evidence, and of knowing enough about omnipotence so as to express themselves in this manner? St. Thomas, too, with a prudence and a boldness which are the mark of genius, wrote: “Every act of the will, inasmuch as it is an act, not only is from the will as the immediate agent, but is also from God as the first agent who more vehemently stamps it with His imprint; hence just as the will can change its act for another, much more can God.” “Only God can transfer the will’s inclination, which He gave it, from one thing to another, according as He wills.” “God alone therefore (who alone creates the soul) can move the will

as agent without violence. Hence it is said (Prov. 21: 1): ‘The heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord: whithersoever He will He shall turn it’; and (Phil. 2: 13): ‘For it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will.’. . . Some nevertheless, unable to understand how God can cause in us the movement of the will without prejudice to liberty, have endeavored to give a false exposition to the authorities quoted. They say, in fact, that God causes in us to will and to accomplish by causing in us the power to will, and not by causing us to will this or that. This is the exposition of Origen (III Periarchon). . . . But the authority of Scripture is in manifect opposition to all this. It is said (Is. 26: 12): ‘O Lord, Thou hast wrought all our works in us.’ Hence we receive from God not only the power to will, but also our very operations.”

2nd obj. But Father d’Alès (p. 23) insists that God’s power is limited by the absurd. And it is absurd to say that the world moves itself, if it is moved by God. St. Thomas (Ia. q. 105, a. 4, obj. 2) states this objection: “God cannot make two contradictories to be true at the same time. But this would follow if He moved the will; for to be voluntarily moved means to be moved from within, and not by another.”

He replies: “To be moved voluntarily, is to be moved from within, that is, by an interior principle: yet this interior principle may be caused by an exterior principle; and so to be moved from within is not repugnant to being moved by another.” Also, in his reply to the first objection, he says: “God, while moving the will, does not force it, because he gives the will its own natural inclination.”

3rd obj. We must safeguard not only spontaneity which is found, too, in the animal, but also liberty. “The determination of the secondary free cause remains something which does not belong to the first Cause”; for it cannot be that: “one and the same act of a rational creature be both free and necessary; free as getting its determination from the creature, and necessary with regard to the same creature, as getting its determination from the Creator” (Father d’Alès, p. 20). There would no longer be either merit or demerit. This objection is found in the Summa in the article just quoted (Ia, q. 105, a. 4, obj. 3): “Movement is attributed to the mover rather than to the one moved; wherefore homicide is not ascribed to the stone, but to the thrower. Therefore, if God moves the will, it follows that voluntary actions are not imputed to man for reward or blame.”

St. Thomas replies: “If the will were so moved by another as in no way to be moved from within itself, the act of the will would not be imputed for reward or blame. But since its being moved by another does not prevent its being moved from within itself, as we have stated, it does not thereby forfeit the motive for merit or demerit.”

The determination of the choice is not imposed upon us by God as a determination which in no way would come from us. God moves us to determine ourselves in a certain way, for what is good, or He permits our defect.

In Ia IIae, q. 9, a. 6, the objection is presented in this form: “If, therefore, man’s will were moved by God alone, it would never be moved to evil.” The holy Doctor replies to this third objection as follows: “God moves man’s will, as the universal mover, to the universal object of the will, which is good. And without this universal motion, man cannot will anything. But man determines himself by his reason, to will this or that, which is true or apparent good. Nevertheless, sometimes God moves some specially to the willing of something determinate, which is good; as in the case of those whom He moves by grace, as we shall state later on (q. 109, 112).”

In other words, if God alone moved the will, if under the influence of the divine motion the will did not move itself (as secondary cause), sin would be impossible. It does not occur in the act in which the will under the influence of operating grace is moved without moving itself. It can be found in the act in which the will is moved and moves itself; in that case, if God so permits, the will can be defective. St. Thomas distinguishes very clearly between these two movements when speaking of operating and co-operating grace. (Cf. Ia IIae, q. 111, a. 2.) For the same reason he teaches that it was not possible for the first act of the devil to be a sin, but only the second. (Cf. Ia, q. 63, a. 5, c and ad 3.)

4th obj. In the text just quoted (Ia IIae, q. 9, a. 6, ad 3), St. Thomas only says that God moves the will to universal good, and that it determines itself to particular good.

Reply: We have already shown (p. 80, n. 35, and p. 157, n. 98) that in vain one would seek to conclude from this text that God does not move our will to determine itself in the choice. Article 4 of the following question, the purpose of which is to state precisely the way in which God moves the free will, is strictly opposed to this interpretation. “Because the will is an active principle not determinate to one thing, but having an indifferent relation to

many things, God so moves it that He does not determine it of necessity to one thing, but its movement remains contingent and not necessary, except in those things to which it is moved naturally."

Moreover, as we have just said, the true interpretation of this passage (Ia IIae, q. 9, a. 6 ad 3) was given by St. Thomas in Ia IIae, q. 111, a. 2, where he distinguishes between operating and co-operating grace. (See also Dummermuth S. Thomas et doctrina praemotionis physicae, p. 358.) For our will, the fact that it moves itself in making the choice, does not exclude the divine motion for this same act. St. Thomas says, on the contrary: "When anything moves itself this does not exclude its being moved by another, from which it has even this, that it moves itself; and so it is not repugnant to liberty that God is the cause of the act of free will," De malo, q. 3, a. 2 ad 4. See also Contra Gentes, III, ch. lxxxix, and De veritate, q. 24, a. 14, where he says: "The will of man is not determined to one particular operation, but is indifferently disposed for many things; and so it is somewhat in potentia, unless moved by some active principle: either by what is externally represented to it, as in the case of apprehended good; or by what interiorly operates, as God Himself does." On these texts of St. Thomas, see Dummermuth, S. Thomas et doctrina praemotionis physicae, p. 358.

Instance: But the Molinists reply that St. Thomas says in his other works: "The first cause does not so act upon the will as to determine it necessarily for one thing as nature does; and therefore the determination of the act is left in the power of the reason and the will."

Reply: St. Thomas in these texts and others like them, says the divine motion does not necessitate our will, that is to say, does not destroy our will; but he does not say that the free determination of the act is solely our work. He positively affirms the contrary. He says that this determination is the work of the will which moves itself and is moved by God, without which the Author of salvation would no more be the cause of the good than of the bad consent. We cannot repeat this too often, that the first Cause certainly does not impose upon us a determination which would in no way come from us; it moves us to determine ourselves in one way rather than in a certain other, if it concerns a good act, or it permits our defect if it concerns a bad act. "The good movement of the free will, whereby anyone is prepared for receiving the gift of grace, is an act of the free will moved by God."

5th obj. The other instances formulated by the Molinists are plainly to be seen in the Summa, Ia IIae, q. 10, a. 4. God by His efficacious grace cannot incline us infallibly to determine ourselves in a certain way, without at the same time necessitating us, for we cannot resist this divine motion. St. Thomas likewise stated this objection: “Every agent that cannot be resisted moves of necessity. But God cannot be resisted, because His power is infinite; wherefore it is written (Rom. 9: 19): ‘Who resisteth His will?’ Therefore God moves the will of necessity.”

The holy Doctor does not reply that the divine motion is infallible because of the foreknowledge of our consent. He says: “The divine will not only extends so far that anything be done by that which moves it; but that it also be done in the same way as befits its nature. And therefore it would be more repugnant to the divine motion, if the will were moved of necessity, which is not befitting to its nature, than if it were moved freely, as befits its nature.” (Cf. Ia, q. 19, a. 8.) God by His infinite power produces in us and with us even to the free mode of our act, when He moves us to determine in a certain way rather than in a certain other.

6th obj. St. Thomas states an objection, the very one the Molinists always put to the Bannesians and is as follows: “It is possible and so granted nothing impossible follows from this; but something impossible follows, if it is granted that the will does not will this to which God moves it, because according to this, God’s operation would be inefficacious; it is not therefore possible for the will not to will this to which God moves it: therefore it must of necessity will it.” In other words: “If man’s will is first of all moved by God, it follows that man has not the free choice of his acts.”

The reply found in the Summa is no less categorical than the replies Bannez gave later on: “If God moves the will to anything, it is incompossible with this supposition, that the will be not moved thereto. But it is not impossible simply. Consequently it does not follow that the will is moved by God necessarily.” Likewise in Ia IIae, q. 112, a. 3, he says: “Man’s preparation for grace, as it is from God the mover, has a necessity—not indeed of coercion, but of infallibility—as regards what it is ordained to by God, since God’s intention cannot fail, according to the saying of Augustine that by God’s good gifts whoever is liberated is most certainly liberated.”

In De malo, q. 6, a. 1 ad 3, St. Thomas replies to the same objection, saying: “God moves indeed the will immutably on account of the efficacy

of the moving power which cannot fail; but on account of the nature of the will that is moved, which is indifferently disposed to various things, the will is not necessitated but it remains free, as also in all things divine Providence infallibly operates; and yet from contingent causes effects proceed contingently inasmuch as God moves all things proportionately, each one according to its way." See also IIa IIae, q. 24, a. 11. When the will is thus infallibly moved to do a certain act, it never does the contrary act, but it retains the power to do it (remanet potentia ad oppositum) on account of the dominating actual indifference which it possesses with regard to particular good to which it is inclined. Thus infallibly is not necessarily; we say: I shall see you tomorrow infallibly, that is to say, without fail, and we go freely to the place of meeting.

7th obj. Even if our will by reason of its universal scope goes beyond particular good to which it is inclined, if God infallibly moves it to tend toward Him, the act is no longer a free one. It is not necessitated on the part of the object which is incapable of invincibly attracting it, but it is so on the part of the First Agent. St. Thomas, moreover, states this objection in Ia, q. 83, a. 1, obj. 3: "What is free is cause of itself; therefore what is moved by another is not free." He replies: "Free will is the cause of its own movement, because by his free will man moves himself to act. But it does not of necessity belong to liberty that what is free should be the first cause of itself, as neither for one thing to be cause of another need it be the first cause. God, therefore, is the first cause, who moves causes both natural and voluntary. And just as by moving natural causes He does not prevent their acts being natural, so by moving voluntary causes He does not deprive their actions of being voluntary, BUT RATHER IS HE THE CAUSE OF THIS VERY THING IN THEM; for He operates in each thing according to its own nature." Thus only, according to St. Thomas, does one retain the meaning of St. Paul's words: "It is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish" (Phil. 2: 13).

8th obj. But, the Molinists insist, it is also said in the Scripture (Eccli. 15: 14): "God made man from the beginning, and left him in the hand of his own counsel."

To this objection St. Thomas replies in his treatise on Providence, Ia, q. 22, a. 2 ad 4, as follows: "When it is said that God left man to himself, this does not mean that man is exempt from divine providence, but merely that he has not a prefixed operating FORCE determined to only the one effect;

as in the case of natural things, which are only acted upon as though directed by another toward an end, and do not act of themselves, as if they directed themselves toward an end, like rational creatures, through the possession of free will, by which these are able to take counsel and make a choice. Hence it is significantly said: In the hand of his own counsel. But since the very ACT of free will is traced to God as to a cause, it necessarily follows that everything happening from the exercise of free will must be subject to divine providence.

It is impossible to bring out more clearly the distinction between the free faculty and its act. Our will is universal in its scope because it is specified by universal good; its attitude therefore is one of dominating indifference with regard to a particular good, and the intellect shows the disproportion between this and total good. This dominating indifference is not destroyed by the divine motion; on the contrary, this motion causes it to pass from the state of potential indifference to that of actual dominating indifference; for, at the very moment that it is inclined toward this good, the will dominates the attraction that this has for it. (Concerning the nature and the diverse characteristics of this motion, cf. Del Prado, op. cit., Vol. II, chs. iii-ix.)

We have already (p. 152, note 85) mentioned the interpretation of St. Thomas given by Cardinals Pecci and Satolli, according to which the divine co-operating motion would not have priority of causality over the activity of the secondary cause. It is, as we said (ibid.), manifestly a contradiction of the texts of St. Thomas and just as much so those of Cajetan. Moreover, this interpretation, as Del Prado points out, is a return to Molinism, and is incapable of explaining the following words of St. Paul: “Who is it that discerns thee? What hast thou which thou hast not received?”

9th obj. But he who does not receive an intrinsically efficacious grace cannot be saved. St. Thomas states this objection when discussing faith, in IIa IIae, q. 2, a. 5, obj. 1.

He replies that it is only through one’s own fault that one is deprived of this grace. The fault precedes at least by a priority of nature. It is the result of our defectibility which God is not bound to remedy; de facto, He often does, but not always. (See also Contra Gentes, III, ch. clviii.)

No one will fail to grasp the true meaning of these texts, unless he reads St. Thomas only through the eyes of Molina and forgets the passages in which Molina declares that he disagrees with the Angelic Doctor on these questions.

10th obj. “Is it true that the means to snatch souls from vice and encourage them to lead a good life and be saved consists in telling them that it is no use willing? The converters of souls, to whatever school they may belong, are unanimous in saying, no, The Fathers of the Church drew practical conclusions from this principle; and the spirit of their preaching, from Hermas to St. Bernard, and of their theoretical teaching, from Origen to St. John Damascene, St. Anselm, and St. Francis de Sales, has been clearly in favor of Molinism.” In the main it is very true to say with Father de Régnon that outside the confines of the schools “the firmest Thomists, in the pulpit, in the sacred tribunal, in their oratory, are . . . with the whole Christian populace, humble Molinists.”

We have already answered this objection (p. 378, note 126), by saying: “Were St. Augustine and St. Thomas, in their hours of prayer and adoration, humble Molinists? . . . Prayer, preaching, the direction of souls, the more elevated and supernatural they become, the more they use the very terms of the two great doctors of grace. . . . There is no sin committed by another that we could not commit on account of our own frailty; if we have not fallen, if we have persevered, it is undoubtedly because we have labored and struggled; but without God we should have done nothing; and when, with and by His grace, we have acted, we must still say in all truth: We are unprofitable servants. Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to Thy name give glory.” (Ps. 113: 1.)

The converters of souls, the saints, well know that, for their preaching to be effective, they must above all pray for those whom they are evangelizing, in order that God may transform their rebellious wills and strengthen the weak. They know that the Lord is not impotent to cause these wills to return to Him. If they believed in this impotence, their prayer would never have that holy boldness which we admire in it. The great converters of souls pray as the Church requires us to pray in the collects of her Missal, in which the intrinsic efficacy of grace is repeatedly affirmed in such expressions as the following: “That God may compel our rebellious wills. That He may cause the infidels from being unwilling to be willing to believe. That He may direct our heart to good works. That He may give us a good will. That He may convert and draw us to Himself. That He may take from us our heart of stone and give us a heart of flesh, or a docile one. That He may change our wills and incline them to good.” Quite an extensive study could be made of the Missal from this point of view.

The spirit of the preaching and the theoretical teaching of the Fathers of the Church could not be clearly in favor of Molinism which, by its doctrine of an indifferent divine concurrence, ends in this conclusion admitted by Molina: “God is therefore no more the cause of our virtue than He is of our vice, but both are proposed and willed by us.” What deep meaning would there be in the words of our Lord, who said: “Without me you can do nothing”? Why could not man boast of his virtue as the Pharisee did? Why must we all pray like the publican, and ask of God the grace which makes us will salutary good: “Convert me, O Lord, and I shall be converted to Thee. . . . Create a dean heart in me, O God; and renew a right spirit within my bowels (Ps. 50: 12). Gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me. . . . For when I am weak, then am I powerful” (II Cor. 12: 9, 10).

The higher the degree of Christian spirituality, the more it insists on the profound meaning of these truths. One may read again, for instance, in the Imitation of Christ, the chapter concerning the efficacy of divine grace and those other chapters that touch upon this subject. And let anyone read St. Bernard.

The Thomists, within the confines of their schools, do not say: It is no use willing; they repeat the words of the Gospel: “Not every one that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the will of my Father who is in heaven” (Matt. 7: 21). This good consent is a matter of utmost importance in the work of salvation; how then can it be exclusively our work? Why would not the Author of salvation then be the cause only of the bad choice? “It is God who worketh in us, both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will” (Phil. 2: 13). It is not in times of sincere prayer that we forget this truth, but at times of pride and insubordination, when we believe ourselves to be self-sufficient.

A whole book could be written on the difference between the spiritual direction based on the teaching of Saint Augustine and St. Thomas and that based on Molinism. The former is more divine, more supernatural, simpler, and also, whatever it may seem to be at first sight, more exacting. It recommends far more the need of prayer, abandonment to divine Providence, and says: See that you do not resist sufficient grace and good inspirations, and God will give you the efficacious grace which will incline you infallibly to good, to make generous sacrifices, to a more and more perfect charity. The latter is more human, more complicated, more external;

it inclines the soul rather to examine itself than to see God's action in us; it is consequently less exacting (probabilism), for one cannot ask much from a man who cannot rely upon God in coming to a firm resolution and keeping it. There is much that could be learned from Bossuet on this point, and one would see that authors of the spiritual life who had to receive their training in the Molinist or Congruist school, have been led, by reason of the sublime topics they were treating and the souls they were directing, to speak of fidelity to grace and abandonment to Providence like most convinced Thomists.

The objection against Thomism is that it is a discouraging doctrine. Instead of being opposed to the virtue of hope, it induces us to place all our trust in God and not in ourselves. On the other hand, what is there more discouraging than the doctrine which would have to result in maintaining that God is powerless in certain circumstances to keep us from falling into certain defects and cause us to will what is good? Interior tranquility and peace of mind depend upon the divine action in which we place our trust. How could we hope to reach heaven, if God could give us only an indifferent grace, and if we had to make it efficacious by the effort of our own poor and inconstant will: Is not our salvation incomparably more assured in God's hands than in our own?

We quote, as a footnote on this subject, the appropriate reflections made by a religious soul, after reading the questions of St. Thomas' Summa which refer to the divine will and predestination.

Final obj. Perhaps we must say that St. Thomas did not solve the problem as to how the infallibility of the divine motion is not contrary to our liberty, and this would justify, in case of necessity, the attempts that were made after the Council of Trent to supplement the teaching of Catholic theology on this point of such grave consequence.

Reply: In favor of this point of view, Father d'Alès quotes a text of Cajetan, which states practically what St. Thomas himself had written. It is that the solution of the problem is to be found in the transcendent efficacy of the divine causality which is essentially a mystery for us. Bossuet says the same thing: "We hold the two ends of the chain." This does not prevent him from expressing himself very plainly in his Traité du libre arbitre (chs. vi, viii) against the scientia media, and in favor of the divine predetermining decrees, "of physical premotion and predetermination. This perfectly vindicates," he says, "our liberty and dependence on God."

The fundamental difference between the two doctrines is that, for St. Thomas, in the created liberty there is certainly a dominating indifference with regard to all good which does not plainly appeal to it hic et nunc as infinite good: but it cannot produce its act or determine itself independently of God, who is the First Cause, the First Liberty, the Author of all good. Whereas for the Molinists, it is of the essence of the free act that its immediate cause, the created will, does not depend, as to the determination of its choice, on any influence of the divine action. But this definition of liberty cannot be proved either by experience or by reason. Moreover, it rests upon a begging of the question, and we protest against it by reason of the universal and transcendent supereminence of the divine causality.

Father d'Alès proposed to us a frank exchange of views. No advance has been made for the last three centuries concerning the present question. It is even painful to see Catholic theologians positing principles fruitful of errors so enormous as those of fatalism. The enemies of the faith could take advantage of these disagreements.

And yet in a debate on the truth of a doctrine we cannot treat it as if it were a discussion between business men who must, to come to an agreement, grant some favorable concessions. On the question of the fidelity to St. Thomas, the only thing that the Dominicans can admit is that their doctrine does not differ in the least degree from that of their master. The Molinists are not obliged to follow the Angelic Doctor on this point. Molina frankly avows that he separates from him. But how can the Molinists claim that we are the ones who depart from St. Thomas and that we are only followers of Bannez? Not only theologians, but Superiors General of the Order of Preachers, and the most patient of them, have replied: That is a calumny.

The only possible way of reconciling the two doctrines is to begin by examining them from the point of view of method, guided by general and evident rules which are accepted by both sides. We should have to see which of the two systems starts from the known in order to arrive at the unknown, from evident and absolutely universal first principles (like the principles of causality and the universal causality of the first agent), so as to solve an obscure question without a begging of the question. There would still be many profound obscurities in the two systems thus compared and it will always be so in this life. But among these obscurities one could distinguish between those which are the result of a want of method and in

which there is a contradiction, and those which result from the transcendence of the divine action which is too luminous for our feeble sight. This comparison of the two systems has been given by us (supra, pp. 87-90, 387).

St. Thomas starts from the first principles of reason about causality and the first principles of theology about God, the Author of salvation. He is thus led to this conclusion: Our free wills are moved infallibly and freely by God, and whatever good there is in their acts depends upon God. He sees in this one of the most sublime of mysteries, which is that God is by His causality more intimate to creatures than they are to themselves.

Molinism, on the contrary, starts out by affirming that there is in this conclusion a manifest absurdity, and not a sublime mystery. It is thus led to deny the absolute universality and necessity of the first principles of reason and theology, without succeeding, moreover, in safeguarding free will that is destroyed by the determinism of the circumstances implied in the theory of the scientia media.

Besides, there still remains, even for Molina, the profound obscurity of the mystery of predestination; for he is bound to teach that it depends solely upon God's good pleasure that Peter is placed in circumstances in which he will infallibly be saved, and Judas in another arrangement of circumstances in which he will infallibly be lost. The divine good pleasure could have made the choice in the reverse order. Apart from these circumstances, it is none the less true for Molina that this one is saved without having been more aided by grace than a certain other who is lost. From this point of view God does not help the elect more than He does the reprobates. And therefore what is greatest in the created order, the free determination of the good consent, comes solely from us and not from God. "Hence God is no more the cause of our virtue than of our vice, but it is proposed and willed by us." How does God remain truly the Author of our salvation? Why must we trust in Him and not in ourselves? After offending against this principle, Molinism does not save free will, but radically compromises it by determinism of circumstances which is implied in the scientia media. It procures very precarious advantages at a very dear price.

Generally in all the great philosophical and theological problems, above errors that are extreme and opposite in type (in this case Pelagianism on the one hand, and Predestinationism on the other), two doctrines meet: the one rises like a towering peak, being a superior synthesis of the diverse aspects

of the true, and is founded on principles and a very exalted notion of God; the other which is eclectic, remains midway between this summit and the divagations of error. Being less concerned with principles than with the solution of objections, it juxtaposes its theses instead of subordinating them, and often avoids contradiction only by literary processes and a series of fluctuations which are not sufficiently in keeping with the rules of logic.

This difference between Thomism and Eclecticism could easily enough be shown, as regards the problem of universals, those of analogy, of unity of the notion of being, of the distinction between

essence and existence, of the divine causality, of deliberation (the rôle of the final practical judgment), of the foundation for moral obligation (natural law), of questions that relate to conscience, of that of the essential supernaturalness (ratione objecti formalis) of infused faith, and other questions. These are the occasion of so many controversies that are interesting for those who would be of an argumentative turn of mind. But too often these controversies are fruitless. Preferable, so it seems, is a profound and methodical exposition of what appears to us to be the truth. This latter, once it is demonstrated, is its own defense.

In spite of the impossibility of reconciling the two doctrines of St. Thomas and Molina, we will not say to our adversaries: “Between us and you there is fixed a great chaos (Luke, 16: 26).” If God is truly the master of created free wills, if He is the First Cause of their determinations, the Author of all the good that they contain, if His motion is not indifferent to good and evil, to the good and bad consent, may He deign to give us the gift of expressing this truth without in any way offending against charity toward those who may fail to perceive it.

This controversy would, we believe, become more fruitful, if there were a more pronounced tendency to take a stand, not only on the terrain of theological speculation, but also on that of spirituality. Perhaps from this very exalted and entirely supernatural point of view, the two sides might succeed in coming to an agreement concerning the truly traditional answer which alone can satisfy the legitimate claims, not only of the mind, but also of the soul and conscience of everyone. The works of the most esteemed spiritual authors might facilitate this reconciliation.

We have written these pages with the sole purpose of stating clearly what St. Thomas really thought. Now, on this grave problem, as Father d’Alès (p. 2) very truly acknowledges, “The teaching of the Church posits for

Christians, the double fundamental equation: St. Paul = St. Augustine = St. Thomas.”

CHAPTER IV

THE RESULTS OF THIS CONTROVERSY

In the preceding pages we have endeavored to prove that the judgment passed upon Molina's doctrine by the Thomist theologians is based upon an exact knowledge of this doctrine, that it is directed to the formal point at issue, and that it has never been refuted.

Father d'Alès, in his reply to this tractate which we have just reprinted, wrote another article of sixty-three pages, entitled: Autour de Molina, in which he strives to maintain his views, but by insisting on the efficacy of grace, as much as he can, so as to solve the difficulties proposed to him.

Often these discussions are altogether futile. This one has not been entirely unprofitable. We hasten to say that our opponent has every appearance of being a Thomist when it is not a question of the auxilia divina. As he had already said (p. 503) and as we knew, he is hardly a Suarezian. He admits a real distinction between essence and existence in creatures, considers it as the corner-stone of the metaphysical edifice. He firmly accepts the twenty-four Thomist theses recently proposed by the Sacred Congregation of Studies. We believe most sincerely what he says in addition to this, that, "if God had made me a Dominican, I would probably be considered a good Thomist." As we shall see, he even makes three important concessions on the divine concurrence and foreknowledge. He seeks, however, to hold fast to what, in his eyes, is essential in the Molinist conceptions of efficacious grace and the scientia media, at the same time granting that our interpretation of St. Thomas is more literal. Father d'Alès is certainly a man of keen intellect and vast erudition, as his historical works prove. He is also an expert in handling the weapon of irony so as to get out of an argument when cornered. But these brilliant qualities only show the more clearly, so we think, the impossibility in which he finds himself of solving the objections formulated by the Thomists for more than

three centuries. He appears to us to be combating the evidence of the principle of causality. No wonder he is obliged to flee in every direction, forced to sway to and fro, without managing to hold himself down to the main point of the dispute.

Certainly we shall never be able to reconcile the two doctrines. What we can do for either side, is to insist less on their opposition. This consists in taking note of all that the Thomists attribute to human liberty in the work of salvation and of all that the Molinists finally concede concerning the efficacy of grace.

With this end in view, let us examine for the last time the answer given to the three fundamental criticisms formulated by the Thomists. It is indeed, "to the true Molina of history" that their words are addressed, and Father d'Alès has not been able to show that men like John of St. Thomas, the Salmanticenses, Gonet, Gotti, Dummermuth, Del Prado, did not know Molinism as it really is, or that they distorted it in order to gain the victory more easily.

Just a word about the particularly sharp tone and a certain attitude of our opponent. If Father d'Alès had had good reasons to give, he would not have departed from his usual calm and courtesy; he would not have said that we cannot understand Molinism because we do not like it. Above all, he would not have insinuated that we quote Molina according to Father del Prado, without having taken the trouble to study him in his own text. This is utterly contrary, to the truth. But let us return to the three objections raised against the Molinists.

ARTICLE I

THE UNIVERSAL CAUSALITY OF GOD

Does Molinism restrict the universality of the divine causality? We say that it does-restrict it, because Molina (Concordia, Paris ed., 1876, pp. 152 ff., 158) rejects the doctrine of St. Thomas (Ia, q. 105, a. 5) according to which, for the secondary cause to act it needs to be premoved, applied to its act by God who is the First Cause.

Father d'Alès (p. 452) makes this concession: "That Molina did not understand this beautiful doctrine of St. Thomas, is to be regretted, profoundly so; we have no idea of dissimulating on this point." But it is

from this, so the Thomists say, that the differences concerning the efficacy of grace and the foreknowledge of free acts originate.

Consequently we said that Molina, believing himself to have the authority of St. Justin Martyr on his side, approved the following proposition: “Therefore our virtuous acts as also our vicious acts are caused, not by God, but by our intent” (Concordia, p. 196). This proposition, of undoubted Pelagian origin, is a contradiction of canons 20 and 22 of the Council of Orange.

Father d’Alès avows (p. 456) that “the Quaestiones et responsiones ad orthodoxos have a rather bad name and it is generally agreed that they must be recognized to be of Pelagian origin.” But he believes that Molina has interpreted the above-mentioned proposition in a Catholic sense. We hope so indeed; the words, however, have a fixed meaning, and it is all the more difficult to interpret this phrase in an orthodox sense, since it is negative. It is difficult to see how anybody can find a parallel for it in the following words of the Savior, which are invoked for the purpose of evading a difficulty: “If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast . . . and come follow me. How often would I have gathered together thy children, as the hen doth gather her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldest not” (Matt. 19: 21; 23: 37). If the young man in the Gospel, if Jerusalem, had responded to our Lord’s appeal, who could maintain that it was not God, but only the created will that was the cause of these virtuous acts? The proposition, therefore, as it stands, has an absolutely unacceptable meaning. If, inadvertently, Molina approved of it, this is because he did not entertain a sufficiently high idea of the divine causality.

Father d’Alès then reproaches us for paying attention, in the Concordia, only to texts that refer to God’s general concurrence, and for neglecting those that affirm the special concurrence of prevenient and co-operating grace. He says we do this “because Father del Prado looks upon these texts as non-existent” (p. 461).

We have but to open Father del Prado’s book on Molina to find in it several chapters occupied with the examination of Molinistic texts concerning God’s special influx, which he compares at length with the texts of St. Thomas, then with those of the Congruists. In their classical treatises on efficacious actual grace, precisely in those places where they criticize Molina for restricting God’s universal causality, how could the Thomists, as a general rule, have neglected the Molinistic texts that refer to the question?

The Salmanticenses, for instance, like the Dominican theologians, begin their treatise De gratia efficaci by quoting texts from Molina; they remind us that according to him grace is not of itself intrinsically efficacious, but is so only because it is followed by the good consent foreseen by the scientia media in such a way that, if absolutely equal prevenient and excitant graces are given to two men, it happens that one is converted and the other not; for the first, the same grace was efficacious, for the other, it remained inefficacious. Such is indeed the doctrine of the true Molina of history, as Father d'Alès admits. The Salmanticenses, though careful not to inflict any theological censure on this doctrine, prove and conclude that this teaching is opposed to that of St. Augustine and St. Thomas, and that it detracts from the divine causality, so as to attribute solely to our free will that which distinguishes the just man from the sinner; "it would follow that the difference between the one consenting and the one not consenting is to be ascribed not to grace, but to the free will."

This is what we ourselves had said, and it is truly with the special concurrence that we were concerned, according to the very terminology of the Concordia (p. 526), when we wrote: "Apart from this indifferent motion, God would but entice us to good by good inspirations which He gives also to the wicked; with absolutely equal divine help, one man would follow the good inspirations and another would resist it." And we said further: "God would thus be a stranger to the determination of the free will which is the consummation of the work of salvation."

Father d'Alès mentions our text (pp. 453 f.), but he forgets to insert the inverted commas and the reference to Molina. He also finds our last phrase absolutely unjust. According to him, from the fact that, with absolutely equal prevenient and excitant actual graces, one is converted and another not, it does not follow that God remains a stranger to the determination of the good consent. "In the first case," he says (p. 459), "that of conversion, the free creature is moved and determines itself under the very influence of the positive motion of excitant grace; before even its act comes into being, its determination is called forth by God. In the second case, this determination belongs to it in its own right, in virtue of a purely permissive divine decree."

That is equivalent to saying with Lessius (De gratia efficaci, ch. xviii, n. 7), quoted here by the Salmanticenses, n. 18: "that of two persons called in a like manner, one of whom accepts, the other rejects the proffered grace,

this is rightly said to be due to free will alone; not that he who accepts does so of his own free will; but the difference that arises is solely the result of free will, so that it is not because of the diversity of prevenient grace. Here the word ‘alone’ does not exclude co-operation . . . but only the diversity of prevenient grace.”

But we shall always say with the Carmelites of Salamanca: This doctrine cannot be upheld; it is contrary to the spirit and words of St, Paul, for whom not only the divine attraction is what prompts the just man to act, but also the initial distinction which differentiates the just man from the sinner comes from grace: “For who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received?” (I Cor. 4: 7.) From this it would follow that something real and of supreme importance in the order of salvation, the difference between the just man and the sinner, depends on the created free will as its first cause. What would take place in the created will that is most intimate to it, at the precise moment of responding or not responding to the solicitation of grace, would come solely from the created free will. The first step in the acceptance or refusal of grace would come exclusively from us, since it would depend solely upon us that our action in the presence of such supernatural attractions be either obedience or revolt.

We never misunderstood this doctrine of Molina. It comes to this, as Father del Prado has shown, that such a conception of prevenient and adjuvant grace means that it does not apply the will to give its good consent, does not infallibly move the will to determine itself for good rather than evil; it merely solicits the consent of the will. The simultaneous general concurrence does not explain, furthermore, the transition of the free cause to act, a point which, as we have seen, was conceded to us; this transition to act as such, takes place, therefore, apart from the divine causality, and as the (undetermined) potency cannot of itself reduce itself to act, this transition is without a cause.

We had even discussed efficacious grace, such as it is conceived by the Congruists, and we have shown that it does not yet solve the objection, since it always remains in the determination of the good consent a first impulse which is to be attributed not to divine causality but solely to ourselves. Hence the necessity of the scientia media to enable God to foresee this free determination, which grace cannot infallibly produce in us and with us.

Finally, far from confounding Molinism with Semi-Pelagianism, concerning the problem of predestination, we were careful to point out what Father d'Alès seems not to have seen, for we said: "Moreover, there always remains, even for Molina, the profound obscurity of the mystery of predestination, for he must teach that it depends solely on God's good pleasure that Peter is placed in circumstances in which he will infallibly be saved and Judas in another arrangement of circumstances in which he will infallibly be lost; the divine good pleasure could have made the choice the other way about. Setting aside this choice of circumstances, it remains no less true for Molina that a certain one is saved without having been aided more by grace than a certain other who is lost. From this point of view, God no more helps the elect than He does the reprobate."

It is quite certain that if we had omitted the words "setting aside this choice of circumstances" and "aided more," we should have gravely misrepresented Molinism. Father d'Alès, in quoting us (p. 455), forgets to quote these words; this omission enables him to subjoin the following query: "How could one have believed for a moment that these things were taught freely in Catholic Schools fifty years after the Council of Trent?"

We maintain, therefore, that Molinism restricts the divine causality, not only because of its theory of a general simultaneous concurrence, but also because it considers grace to be efficacious a posteriori. According to Molinism, grace is efficacious only because God foresees that man will consent, whereas, for St. Thomas, "God indeed moves the will immutably, because of the efficacy of the moving power which cannot fail; but because of the nature of the will that is moved, which is indifferently disposed toward various things, it is not necessitated but remains free."

Father d'Alès seeing the difficulty, speaks in certain places about the efficacy of grace like a Thomist, e.g., p. 483, where he says: "All theologians admit that God is not limited in means at His disposal to induce the created will to determine itself freely in a certain way. It is for Him alone to strike Saul down to the ground when Saul was on the way to Damascus, and to break this rebellious will." And even without speaking of extraordinary graces, he adds (pp. 485 f.): "God knows how to attract the creature infallibly to perform a certain good work, by loving it by His grace." He quotes (p. 483, note 1) this text of Molina: "God by His omnipotence is able to move our free will in whatever way He wishes, but not to commit sin." Very good; that is what St. Thomas says; but in vain

does Molina seek to reconcile this proposition with that other found on the same page (Concordia, p. 318), which is as follows: “It was in God’s power to know by this scientia (media) only that which He actually knew.” God, supposing the Apostle Peter to be placed in the circumstances of the Passion, could foresee, according to Molina, only the Apostle’s denial. Must we not conclude from this that it was impossible for God to keep Peter from falling in such circumstances? That is why we wrote, not as Father d’Alès quotes us as saying, namely: “what is there more discouraging than the doctrine which claims . . .,” but “what is there more discouraging than the doctrine by which we would have to maintain that it is impossible for God in certain circumstances to keep us from falling into certain defects and cause us to do what is good?”

They criticize us for this, saying that our point of view is a poor explanation of how sin is committed. After writing many pages elsewhere on this subject, we summarized it all by saying: “God certainly cannot be the cause of sin; this, as such, is merely a deficiency; it requires only a deficient cause, preceded by a purely permissive decree of God. The divine motion thus concurs only in the physical act of sin.”

Father d’Alès’ reply (p. 458) is as follows: “But there remains the physical entity of this resolution (that Judas makes of betraying his Master), and that is a positive act which stands out in bold relief. To call that a deficiency seems to me rather to admit that you are defeated. So little do we call the physical entity of the sinful act a deficiency that we have just now precisely distinguished it from this very deficiency, according to the teaching of St. Augustine and St. Thomas. All the Thomists, even the strictest of them, have always admitted this “entity standing out in bold relief.” Cf. Ia IIae, q. 79, a. 2. Let us take up the two other criticisms.

ARTICLE II

HOW ARE WE TO AVOID POSITING A PASSIVITY IN THE PURE ACT AND ESCAPE DETERMINISM OF CIRCUMSTANCES?

We had asked ourselves if the theory of the scientia media can solve these two difficulties. We still say it cannot, because, according to Molina: “It has never been a part of God’s liberty to foresee by His scientia media other conditional free acts of the future than those that He has foreseen . . .

but if the created free will had to make another choice, as it could do, it is this other choice that God would have to know about."

They reply that this investigation does not posit a passivity in the pure Act, since God, according to Molina, derives all His knowledge from Himself and not from creatures. How can He derive from Himself the knowledge of a creature's free conditional determination, the initiative of which in no way comes from Himself? Does not Molina admit that, supposing two men to be placed in the same circumstances, with absolutely equal graces, it happens that one is converted, the other not? He says even that the one who is converted has received at times a less grace than the one who remains in sin (Concordia, p. 526).

On this point Father d'Alès (p. 472) confesses that "there is here a material contradiction between the language of Molina and that of St. Thomas who, on the contrary (Ia, q. 14, a. 13), says that 'the knowledge of God is the cause of things.'"

To our mind, the contradiction is formal, and we absolutely cannot admit that parity which they seek to establish between the doctrine of St. Thomas and that of Molina concerning the antecedent and consequent will of God. It is not enough to say: "As regards the divine intellect that devises an order of Providence, a conditionally future resolution of the creature is a possible like the others" (p. 473). It always comes back to this, that the possible is confused with the conditional future. It is however clear that in such given circumstances as those, for instance, of the Passion, there are for Peter two possibilities, either to be faithful to his Master, or to deny Him, and only one conditional future here. The question for us is to know how God foresees which of these two possibilities will be chosen by the created free will.

If God is reduced to the condition of verifying this conditional future for Himself, and if He is not free to foresee the contrary of this conditional future, He is passive in this prevision. Moreover, for this prevision to be not merely conjectural but infallible, it must be determined by the examination of the circumstances in which Peter would be (and will be) placed. And then how are we to avoid determinism of the circumstances for the created free will?

Father d'Alès, in his preceding article (p. 30), already conceded that "the theory of the scientia media has often been proposed in such a way as to cause his adversaries to triumph," making this determinism of

circumstances inevitable. On this point we have read Father d'Alès' last article attentively, and we fail to see how he can conceive the scientia media otherwise so as to avoid this difficulty. He says (p. 477): "The Author of nature and grace knows the potentialities with which He has endowed the very being of each creature; knowing them, He knows the means by which He can bring them into act." But the whole question consists in this: How is it that of contradictory possible choices, God knows before any divine decree, the one that the creature will choose in a certain combination of circumstances? Foreseeing the whole difficulty, Father d'Alès adds (p. 487): "To be sure, it is a rather bold conception to associate the casual determinations of the creature with the permanence of intelligible essences."

We confess truly on our part that there are obscurities in the Thomist doctrine; but it is of importance for us to distinguish between the obscurities which are the result of a want of method and which contain a contradiction, and those, on the contrary, which result from the transcendence of the divine action, too luminous for our feeble eyes. We persist in saying that, to judge of the two systems, we must compare them from the standpoint of method, guided by the light of evident general rules that are accepted by both sides. We must see which of the two, in order to solve an obscure question without a begging of the question, starts from the known to go to the unknown, from absolutely certain and universal first principles (such as the principles of causality and the universal causality of the first agent). Father d'Alès (p. Sox) replies: "More than one phase of the divine causality is to be seen here, and more than one divine attribute is the subject of inquiry. I think that both schools are equally desirous to proceed from the known to the unknown." It is a question of the divine causality in all its universality, for nothing must restrict it. To say that the free will of man cannot be infallibly moved by God to determine itself to act in one particular way rather than in a certain other, is not, to our mind, proceeding from the known to the unknown, and is a begging of the question. This definition of free will cannot be proved, as we have shown, either by experience or by reason.

We must indeed admit with the greatest theologians that the two doctrines which confront each other are irreconcilable. That God firmly and suavely moves our free wills, that His efficacious grace infallibly causes us

freely to will the good, is for St. Thomas a sublime mystery, for Molina a manifest absurdity.

We have striven to keep the debate within the domain of ideas; we have no wish to swerve from this course. We shall only quote a few lines from letters written to us on this controversial subject by two theologians who are not Dominicans.

“Father d’Alès strives not to understand that the concept of the scientia media is untenable. He confirms me in my opinion that philosophical analysis is a dissolvent of every Molinist explanation; the latter seeks fatally to set it aside, and to substitute for it psychological descriptions. That is what happens in Father d’Alès’ case. He gives two pages of descriptions; then he tries to confuse you with texts. Such discussions, far from being an incentive to study the question, cool one’s ardor. We must come back to the elementary things, and repeat the rudiments a hundred times.”

“Thus he still finds a way to read the texts of St. Thomas on the peculiar nature of the free faculty as proofs of Molinism.”

“The arguments of the Thomists are irrefutable, and we must truly admit that they represent the genuine teaching of St. Thomas. We shall be no less firm in attacking the theses of Molina, in confronting ourselves with the peculiar image of God who has need of the spectacles of the scientia media to discover future contingent things and of much diplomacy to adjust His government to them.”

There is always, we must confess, something painful about these discussions which, in spite of our efforts, are generally of too human a nature to grasp, as one should, in the calm of contemplation, the divine realities that are in question. Each one prejudices his cause in having the fixed purpose of defending it as his own doctrine, or that of his school. It is a question here, however, of misunderstanding as little as possible the very doctrine of God.

Among those who have taken this higher point of view and who have wonderfully succeeded in expressing this truth, we must quote Bossuet.

ARTICLE III

THE DIVINE PREDETERMINING DECREES ACCORDING TO BOSSUET

We cite a few extracts from the authoritative pages that he writes on this subject, in his Traité du libre arbitre, ch. viii.

“To reconcile the decree and the omnipotent action of God with our free will, we have no need to give it a concurrence which is ready for all things indifferently and which becomes what we please; still less do we have to make it wait for what our will is inclined to do, for it to formulate afterwards with no risk its decrees concerning our resolutions. For without this poor circumspection which gives us a confused notion of the First Cause, it suffices for us to bear in mind that the divine will, whose infinite power reaches everything, not only the essence, but all the modes of being, is of itself accountable for the complete effect, in which it puts everything that we conceive in it, ordaining that it will be accompanied by all the properties that are befitting it.

“Besides, the basic principle of this whole doctrine is so certain that every school agrees on it.” Somewhat previous to this passage we read: “In the creature, howsoever little of being it may possess, there is nothing which is not entirely owing to God. . . . And we must not bring forward the objection that the characteristic of the exercise of free will is for it to come from this very free will; that would be true if human liberty were a first and independent liberty and not a liberty coming to it from somewhere else. . . . God, as first cause, being the cause of all being, as the first agent He must be the cause of all action, so He causes in us the act itself, just as He gives us the power to act. And the action of the creature does not cease to be an act, even if it be from God; on the contrary, it is all the more an action as God gives it being. . . . Thus, far from anyone being able to say that the influence of God’s action upon ours takes away its liberty, on the contrary, we must conclude that our action is free a priori, because God causes it to be free. But to cause our action in us, if one were to attribute this to any other than our Author, one might think that He would be crippling our liberty and, so to speak, by tampering with so delicate a spring which He would not have made, that He would be breaking it; but it is not in God’s plan to deprive His work of anything by His action, since He is the cause, on the contrary, of everything that it is, even to the least detail; and He is consequently the cause not only of our choice, but also that we are even free in our choice. . . . To cause the freedom of our action is to cause that we act freely; and to do so is to will that it be so; for, with God, to do is to will. Thus, to understand that God is the cause of free will in us, we are to

understand only that He wills us to be free. But He does not will merely that we have the power to be free, He wills us to be free in the exercise of this power; and He does not will merely in a general way that we make use of our liberty, but He wills that we make use of it in this or that act. For He, whose knowledge and will always extents to the least detail of things, is not content to will that beings be in a general way; but He descends to what is called this or that, that is to say, to what is more particular, and all that is comprised in His decrees. Thus, God wills, from eternity, all the acts that will be performed by the free will of human beings, all the goodness and reality there is in them. What is more absurd than to say, that it is not because God wills, that a thing exists? Must we not say on the contrary that a thing exists because God wills it? And just as it happens that we are free in virtue of the decree that wills us to be free, so it happens that we act freely in this or that act, in virtue even of the decree which includes all this in detail. . . .

"We see from this doctrine, how all things depend on God. It is because He ordains in the first place, and then all things come about; free creatures are no exception to this law. That they are free, is not in them an exception to the law of common dependence, but it is a different mode of being compared with God. . . .

"Such is the view of those who are called Thomists. This is what the ablest of them mean by the terms premotion and physical predetermination, which seem so crude to some, but which, when understood, convey such good sense. For, lastly, these theologians preserve intact in human actions the entire notion of liberty that we gave in the beginning. But they wish that the use of free will, thus defined, should have God as its first cause, and that He should bring it about not only by the attractions that precede it, but also in what belongs to it mostly intimately; and this appears to them to be all the more necessary in that there are many free acts in the performance of which we experience no pleasure nor any sweetness, nor, in fine, is there any other reason that urges us to perform them except our own will. It would place these acts outside the pale of Providence and even of the divine foreknowledge, according to the principles that we have established, if one did not admit that God reaches, so to speak, deep down to the whole action of our wills, giving immediately and intimately to each all that it has of being."

Moreover, the same Bossuet has shown, against Richard Simon, how this doctrine of intrinsically efficacious grace is in conformity with the writings of the Fathers, and the prayers of the Church. In his Elévations (18th week, 15th elevation) he solves "the contradictions concerning the mystery of grace," by saying: "God wills that you should say: Heal me, for at every moment I am dying, and I can do nothing without Thee. God wills that you should ask His help in all the good actions you must do; when you have done them, God wills that you should thank Him for having done them. He does not will thereby that you should remain inactive, making no effort; but He wills that in the efforts you make as if you had to do everything alone, you should take no pride in yourself, as if you were doing nothing."

In the Méditations sur l'Evangile (Part II, seventy-second day), he gives us, finally, the best interpretation of the profound thought of St. Thomas on predestination: "Proud man fears to render his salvation too uncertain, if it does not rest solely with him; but he deceives himself. Can I be sure of myself? My God, I perceive that my will plays me tricks at every turn. If Thou didst will to make me sole master of my fate, I would refuse a power so dangerous to my weakness. Let not then anyone say to me that this doctrine of grace and preference causes good souls to despair. What? They think to give me greater reassurance by leaving me to my own resources, and delivering me over to my instability. No, my God, I do not consent to this. The only assurance I can have is in abandoning myself to Thee. I find this all the more to be so, because those to whom Thou dost give this confidence of abandoning themselves completely to Thee, have in this sweet impulse the best proof possible on this earth of Thy goodness. Increase, then, this desire in me; by this means cause this blessed hope to come into my heart, so that in the end I may find myself numbered among the elect."

St. Francis de Sales (On the Love of God, Bk. II, ch. xii) says: "Grace acts vigorously, but so sweetly that our will is not left helpless under so powerful an action. . . . When our will follows the attraction and consents to the divine motion, it also does so freely, just as it freely resists when it resists, although the consent to grace depends much more on grace than on the will, and resistance to grace depends on the will alone; so gentle is the divine touch in the treatment of our heart. . . . If thou didst know the gift of God" (John 4: 10).

St. John of the Cross, in one of his well-known prayers, also says: “O Lord, my God, if Thou art waiting for my good deeds to grant me what I ask, give them to me, O Lord, accomplish them in me, and add to them the difficulties which Thou desirest to accept from me.”

ARTICLE IV

THE DIVINE MOTION ACCORDING TO THE CATECHISM OF THE COUNCIL OF TRENT AND LEO XIII’S ENCYCLICAL LETTER ON LIBERTY

The Catechism of Me Council of Trent (Part I, art. 1, “Providence”; English translation by McHugh and Callan, p. 29) reads thus: “We are not, however, to understand that God is in such wise the Creator and Maker of all things that His works, when once created and finished, could thereafter continue to exist unsupported by His omnipotence. . . . Unless preserved continually by His Providence and by the same power that produced them, they would instantly return into their nothingness. Not only does God protect and govern all things by His Providence, but He also by an internal power impels to motion and action whatever moves and acts, and this in such a manner that, although He excludes not, He yet precedes the agency of secondary causes. For His invisible influence extends to all things, and, as the wise man says, reaches from end to end mightily, and ordereth all things sweetly (Wis. 8: 1). This is the reason why the Apostle, announcing to the Athenians the God whom not knowing, they adored, said: He is not far from every one of us: for in Him we live, and move, and are.”

The same catechism (Part. II; op. cit., p. 302) says of grace: “For Christ our Lord continually infuses His grace into the devout soul united to Him by charity as the head to the members, or as the vine through the branches. This grace always precedes, accompanies and follows our good works, and without it we can have no merit, nor can we at all satisfy God.” These are, moreover, the very words of the Council of Trent which in the sixth session (ch. xvi) says: “For, whereas Jesus Christ Himself continually infuses His virtue into the said justified—as the head into the members and the vine into the branches—and this virtue always precedes, and accompanies, and follows their good works, which without it could not in any wise be pleasing and meritorious before God.”

As for the canon of the same Council concerning the co-operation of the free will, we have shown (supra, p. 359) how it agrees with the teaching of

St. Thomas and is directed against the Protestant doctrine.

Finally, with respect to resistance of temptations from the devil, the same Catechism (Part IV; op. cit., p. 573) again says: “It will, then, be found most efficacious, remembering our weakness, that we distrust our own strength; and that, placing all our hopes of safety in the divine goodness and relying on the divine protection we en-counter the greatest dangers with undaunted courage, calling to mind particularly the many persons, animated with such hope and resolution, who were delivered by God from the very jaws of Satan. . . . Watch ye and pray, it is said, that ye enter not into temptation” (Matt. 26: 41).

Some theologians criticized these passages of the Council of Trent and many others. They objected to them, saying that they contained either a direct or indirect reference to a doctrine not commonly accepted, that of intrinsically efficacious grace.

The Dominican Anthony Reginald at that time wrote his work De Catechismi romani auctoritate to show that what the Council teaches in its Catechism, especially on the efficacy of grace, was perfectly in agreement with Tradition and the decrees of this same Council (see ch. xii of this work). Rising above the disputes of the schools, he recalled the teaching of St. Augustine as found in his De praedestinatione sanctorum, ch. viii, which is as follows: “Far removed from the carnal senses is this school in which God is heard and teaches. We see many coming to the Son, because we see many believing in Christ; but we do not see where and how they heard and learnt this of the Father. That grace is most occult.” In the same passage St. Augustine adds: “Secretly it is bestowed by the divine liberality upon human hearts, and it is spurned by none except the hard of heart; for this very purpose it is bestowed that the hardness of heart may first be taken away. . . . When the voice of the Father is heard interiorly and teaching us to come to the Son, He takes away the stony heart and gives a heart of flesh.”

We shall conclude by quoting an extract from Leo XIII’s Encyclical On Human Liberty, in which he sets forth his views on the reconciliation of grace and free will, using the same terminology as St. Thomas, without in the least alluding to the scientia media, devised by Molina to solve this problem.

“The first and most excellent of these aids is the power of His divine grace, whereby the mind can be enlightened and the will wholesomely

invigorated and moved to the constant pursuit of moral good, so that the use of our inborn liberty becomes at once less difficult and less dangerous. Not that the divine assistance hinders in any way the free movement of our will; just the contrary, for grace works inwardly in man and in harmony with his natural inclinations, since it flows from the very Creator of his mind and will, by whom all things are moved in conformity with their nature. As the Angelic Doctor points out, it is because divine grace comes from the Author of nature, that it is so admirably adapted to be the safeguard of all natures, and to maintain the character, efficiency, and operations of each."

Finally, is it not the doctrine of St. Thomas concerning the efficacy of the divine motion that Leo XIII makes his own when, in the Encyclical Providentissimus, he defines the inspiration of the Scripture. He says: "It is a supernatural power, by which God moved and impelled those to write whom He chose as His instruments, and He was so present to them that the things which He ordered, and those only, they first rightly understood, then willed faithfully to write down, and finally expressed in apt words and with infallible truth. Otherwise it could not be said that He was the Author of the entire Scripture." This divine motion thus described is intrinsically efficacious of itself without, however, destroying the liberty of the sacred writer. Instead of doing any violence to it, this divine motion infallibly directs it and preserves it from all error. And if it is so in the case of this special gift, why not admit with St. Thomas, for the ordinary course of the Christian life, that the divine motion which effectively inclines us to good, is as mighty as it is agreeable. These two qualities cannot exist in an eminent way except by being united; to detract from the first is to misunderstand the second and attack the intimacy of the divine action in us. If, as is true, a mother whom we intensely love has a great influence on our will to incline it from evil to good, what must we think of the infinitely more profound influence of God in us: "If thou didst know the gift of God."

One would like to be able to put oneself in a thoroughly supernatural atmosphere so as to meditate, far from the noise of disputes, upon the profound meaning of the divine words. The most sublime theological teachings truly have no effect upon us unless the Master interiorly operates in us, enlightening and instructing us. He alone can make us understand in all their depth of meaning the words He has inspired: "Without me you can do nothing (John 15:5). Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God (II Cor. 3: 5). It

is God who worketh in you, both to will and accomplish, according to His good will (Phil. 2: 13). For who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received?" (I Cor. 4: 7.)"

EPILOGUE

After the publication of the article on Predeterminism (appendix to the article on Providence) in the Dictionnaire Apologétique de la foi catholique, the controversy on grace contained in the preceding pages was resumed from 1925 to 1927 in the Revue thomiste and the Revue de philosophic; we here give only the conclusion.

GOD DETERMINING OR DETERMINED; NO OTHER ALTERNATIVE

It is with this dilemma of pure metaphysics that we will conclude our articles on this subject. Since for twelve years no one has come forward with the least semblance of an answer to this argument which, in our opinion, is absolutely insoluble, we will not answer our opponent further. Whoever has grasped the meaning and import of the preceding pages, will perceive that this dilemma (God determining or determined), as well as the principle that whatever is in motion is (efficaciously) set in motion by another, and the affirmation that the divine decrees and divine grace are intrinsically efficacious, pervade the whole doctrine of St. Thomas concerning God and His relations to us. To deny the alternative just stated in the title of this article would be to question the metaphysical validity of the five Thomistic proofs for the existence of God.

We have shown that St. Thomas admits, with regard to our free salutary acts, a non-necessitating predetermination which is included in the eternal decrees of God in relation to these acts. This follows as a necessary consequence from the principle thus formulated by him (Ia, q. 19, a. 4): "Determined effects proceed from His own infinite perfection according to the determination of His will and intellect." That is the eternal predetermining decree. A little farther on the holy Doctor states the following objection (Ia, q. 19, a. 8, objection 2): "But the will of God cannot be hindered. Therefore the will of God imposes necessity on the things willed." It is this objection that the Molinists are continually bringing up, even in our days, against the divine predetermining decrees. St. Thomas replies: "FROM THE VERY FACT THAT NOTHING RESISTS the divine will, it follows that not only those things happen that God wills to happen, but that they happen necessarily or contingently according to His will." The divine predetermining decree, far from destroying the liberty of our choice by its infallible efficacy, is the cause of it in us, in virtue of this

transcendent efficacy which appertains solely to the decree and which extends even to the free mode of our choice.

Likewise in Ia, q. 83, a. 1 ad 3, he says: “And just as by moving natural causes He does not prevent their acts being natural, so by moving voluntary causes He does not deprive their actions of being voluntary: but rather is He the cause of this very thing in them.” Let us survey St. Thomas’ terminology on this subject, and afterwards we will come back to the question of principles.

A QUESTION OF WORDS

In the Contra Gentes (Bk. III, ch. xcii) we read: “The operation of an angel merely disposes a man to choose, whereas the operation of God gives completion to his choice. . . . Man does not always choose what his guardian angel intends . . . ; whereas he always chooses in accord with God’s operation in his will. . . . Hence the guardianship of the angels is sometimes frustrated . . . , whereas divine providence never fails.” Again in Bk. I, ch. lxviii, he says: “Accordingly, by knowing His essence God knows all things to which His causality extends. Now this extends to the works of the intellect and will. . . . Therefore God knows both the thoughts and the affections of the mind.” Likewise in Bk. III, ch. xci, we read: “All movements of will and choice must be traced to the divine will, and not to any other cause, because God alone is the cause of our willing and choosing.” The end of ch. xc, Bk. III, reads: “What Damascene . . . says in the Second Book of his De orthod. fide, ch. xxx, that ‘God knows in advance but does not predetermine, the things that are in our power,’ is to be understood as meaning that the things which are in our power ARE NOT SUBJECT TO THE DIVINE PREDETERMINATION IN SUCH A WAY AS TO BE NECESSITATED THEREBY.” This is truly non-necessitating determination, as Silvester of Ferrara pointed out, long before Bannez.

Father Synave, O.P., has proved this point very well in two articles written a few years ago, from which we take the liberty of quoting the following passages. “What is beyond doubt,” he says, “is what St. Thomas really thought, for he wrote: ‘Those things which are in our power are not subject to the predetermination of divine providence, as if they were necessitated by it.’ St. Thomas admits therefore a non-necessitating divine predetermination: the will and choice of man are subject to the predetermination of divine providence, without this predetermination imposing a necessity on them. It is not fair to write that, ‘according to the constant practice of St. Thomas, the idea of necessity is inherent in the verb predetermine.’

“It is inexact to equate the two terms and say that to predetermine not from necessity = not to predetermine.

“May we at least assert that to predetermine from necessity in one way only is but a clearer and more emphatic expression which means the same as to predetermine in one way only? No more so. A second text, just as formal as the preceding, will prove that this equation is as false as the preceding, being merely a variant of it by the addition, in the two compared terms, of the expression ‘in one way only.’

“To St. John Damascene who affirms that ‘those things which are in our power, are not subject to Providence, but to our free-will,’ St. Thomas replies (De Veritate, q. 5, a. 5 ad 1um): The words of Damascene are not to be understood in this wise, that all things which are in our power, i.e., in our choice, are to be excluded from divine providence; BUT THEY ARE TO BE UNDERSTOOD AS MEANING THAT THOSE THINGS ARE NOT DETERMINED BY DIVINE PROVIDENCE IN ONE PARTICULAR WAY, AS THOSE THINGS ARE WHICH DO NOT HAVE FREE WILL.’

“Human acts, which depend upon our choice, are therefore truly determined in one way. If these acts were not determined in one way, St. Thomas would have expressed himself in this manner: Things are not so determined only by divine providence, as those are which do not have freedom of will. But someone may remark that the phrase contains an `ita,’ to which the negation at the beginning of the sentence applies: Non sunt per divinam providentiam ITA determinata ad unum, sicut ea quae libertatem arbitrii non habent: things are not so determined in one way by divine providence, as those are which do not have freedom of will.

“The determination in one way only of free acts does not take place in the same manner as the determination in one way only of acts which are not free. Now, we know what is the nature of the determination in one way of acts which do not depend upon free will; everyone agrees in saying that this is a necessitating determination. There are therefore grounds for admitting a twofold determination in one way: a non-necessitating and a necessitating determination; the first is that of free acts, the second of acts that are not free.”

Father Synave, moreover, in his second reply to Father d’Alès, confirms this critical comment in a manner that is quite apodictic

We must take in the same sense the famous text of the Ia IIae, q. 10, a. 4: “Since, therefore, the will is an active principle, not determinate to one

thing, but having an indifferent relation to many things, God so moves it, that He does NOT OF NECESSITY determine it to one thing, but its movement remains contingent and not necessary, except in those things to which it is moved naturally.”.

Non ex necessitate must be translated by not of necessity, as is the case throughout question 10. In article 2, sed contra, we read: “Therefore it is not moved, (the will), of necessity, to either of the opposites,” likewise, in corp.: “Not of necessity does the will tend to it (particular good).” Also in the ad 1um, and the ad 3um: “But other (means) without which the end can be gained, are not of necessity willed by one who wills the end”; not of necessity means freely.

Likewise in article 3 sed contra, we have: “Therefore man’s will is not of necessity moved by the lower appetite.” Also, in corp.: “Not of necessity does the will tend to that whereto the passion inclines it . . . , not of necessity does it follow the passion.”

In answer to this they say that the verb “to determine” is not affected by the words “not of necessity” in the same way as the verb “to move,” and that the phrase “it does not of necessity determine” is clearly “a redundant phrase, exclusive of all determination.” What would be the result of such principles of exegesis? The sober and formal language of St. Thomas is clearly “redundant”! It is the same as saying that, in the phrase “it does not of necessity determine,” the words “of necessity” are absolutely useless, when we have in them the formal answer. The immediate context of the proposition demands that we translate “non ex necessitate” by “not of necessity,” even in the case of the verb “to determine.” We see this to be so, not only from other parallel texts of St. Thomas which we have just quoted, but especially, and we must stress this point, from the question as stated as title of this article, which was made so clear at the start by two objections which do not differ from those always brought forward by the Molinists:

“Every agent that cannot be resisted moves OF NECESSITY; but God cannot be resisted, because His power is infinite” (Ia IIae, q. 10, a. 4, obj. 1a).

“Something IMPOSSIBLE follows from the supposition that the will does not will that to which God moves it: because in that case God’s operation would be ineffectual” (ibid., obj. 3a). To this St. Thomas replies without the least reference to the divine foreknowledge of our consent by means of a knowledge which would remind us in any way of the scientia

media, but he insists, on the contrary, upon the transcendent efficacy of the divine causality:

"In reply to the first objection it must be said that the divine will extends not only to the doing of something by the thing which He moves (choice as action), but also to its being done in a way which is fitting to the nature of that thing" (this being choice with its free mode of choice, caused by God Himself in us and with us, when He moves us infallibly to perform this salutary act, rather than that other, and this in virtue of the intrinsic efficacy of His motion which man does not in fact resist). "And therefore it would be more repugnant to the divine motion, for the will to be moved of necessity, which is not fitting to its nature, than for it to be moved freely, which is becoming to its nature."

Likewise in his answer to the third objection, St. Thomas again affirms the intrinsic efficacy of the divine motion spoken about in the objection, but he replies that under the influence of this motion which man does not in fact resist, he retains the power to resist; he could resist if he wished; but under the influence of this motion he never wishes to resist: "In reply to the third objection it must be said that, if God moves the will to anything it is INCOMPOSSIBLE with this supposition that the will be not moved thereto (otherwise God's operation would be ineffectual, as stated in the objection). But it is not impossible simply. Consequently it does not follow that the will is moved by God necessarily." To grasp fully the exact meaning of the replies made by St. Thomas, they must not be separated from the objections that he intends to solve.

There is no possible doubt that here it is truly a question of non-necessitating predetermination. To understand these texts in any other way would be to strip them of their metaphysical texture, as the Nominalists did who saw in first principles only solemn futilities. The terms employed by St. Thomas would have even no more meaning.

Moreover, why should he always have recourse, not to the divine foreknowledge of our consent, as Molina does, but to the TRANSCENDENT EFFICACY of the divine causality which extends even to our choices and to the free mode of these? If by the words choice and free mode, he did not mean the determination of our free will, what could he then mean by them?

"Since therefore God Himself is the cause of our choice and of our will, our choices and wills are subject to divine providence. . . . Those things

which are in our power are not subject to divine providence AS IF NECESSITATED BY IT" (Contra Gentes, Bk. III, ch. xc, beginning and end).

In the preceding articles we quoted other texts as explicit as those we have just referred to.

The passage in De veritate, q. 22, a. 6, which is quoted against us, speaks of the determination to one thing "by natural inclination," "by way of nature," which is necessitating, most certain, and therefore quite different from that with which we are concerned.

Finally, there is not, whatever one may say, a tremendous paralogism, or even any paralogism, in this reasoning, the two premises of which are provided by St. Thomas, and which are as follows: Almighty God can effect, operating within our will, to which He is more intimately present than it is to itself, what the will itself does. Now our will is determined to one thing, without being necessitated. Therefore Almighty God can determine it without necessitating it. In other words, He can, by His omnipotence, which extends even to the free mode of our choice—which mode is also being and is included in the adequate object of omnipotence—move it infallibly to determine itself to this free act rather than to that other. Certainly there are not two created determinations, one caused by God alone, which, like a little winch, would necessitate ours; there is only one free determination which is infallibly caused by God as First Cause and by us as secondary cause premoved to it by God: "There is no distinction between what comes from free will, and what is of predestination: as there is no distinction between what comes from a secondary cause and from a first cause" (Ia, q. 23, a. 5). If it were otherwise, there would no longer be any mystery in the so mysterious reconciliation, as St. Augustine says, of the divine causality with our liberty. The least intelligent of human beings can understand, indeed, that liberty remains, if the free determination is not infallibly caused by God. There is nothing easier to understand; but then we must reject by this simplism the text of St. Thomas just quoted: "There is no distinction between what comes from free will and what is of predestination: as there is no distinction between what comes from a secondary cause and from a first cause."

The doctrine of St. Thomas is the same as that expressed by Bossuet in these ever memorable terms: "Thus God eternally wills all the future exercise of man's liberty in all its goodness and reality. What, then, is more

absurd than to say that, because Gad wills it, therefore there is no such free exercise of the will? Must we not rather say that there is such a thing precisely because God wills it so; and that, as it happens that we are free by virtue of the decree which wills that we be free, so it also happens that we act freely in this or that act by virtue of the same decree which extends to every detail of the act?”

The study of the terminology thus brings us back to the great Thomist theses.

A QUESTION OF PRINCIPLES

As many Molinists maintain always and notwithstanding every thing, that St. Thomas never admitted, about the non-necessitating predetermination, that it is even a "strange" conception of it, contrary to all its principles, and that it admits only a non-necessitating motion, we have replied as follows: The divine motion which is INTRINSICALLY EFFICACIOUS and which inclines one infallibly to this free act rather than to that other, evidently deserves to be called a non-necessitating predetermination, in so far as it gives infallible assurance of the fulfillment of an eternal predeterminating and EFFICACIOUS decree, and this too of ITSELF, instead of being due to the foreknowledge of our consent, as the defenders of the scientia media will have it, and of which St. Thomas never spoke. The decree is entirely a question of principles; let us return to it for the last time, examining it with the greatest accuracy and from an objective point of view.

St. Thomas admirably pointed out what is the relation of God's foreknowledge to the predetermining decree of His will, when in Ia, q. 14, a. 8 ("Whether the knowledge of God is the cause of things.") he said: "Since the intelligible form has a relation to opposite things, inasmuch as the same knowledge relates to opposites, it would not produce a determinate effect unless it were determined to one thing by the appetite, as the Philosopher says (Metaph., IX, 5). . . . Hence His knowledge must be the cause of things, in so far as His will is joined to it." Behold the decree of the divine will; he says somewhat the same in Ia, q. 19, a. 4, corp. as ratio. This doctrine in no way ignores the rôle of foreknowledge, in affirming that of the divine will.

But one of the fundamental reasons, as we have said, why every Thomist will always reject the Molinist theory, is that this theory of necessity causes one to posit a passivity in the pure Act. If the divine causality is not predetermining with regard to our choice (conditionally future at first and then future), the divine knowledge is fatally determined by it. To wish to

limit the universal causality and absolute independence of God, necessarily brings one to place a passivity in Him, a passivity in the self-subsisting Being, in the self-subsisting intellect. If, in fact, the divine motion does not infallibly assure the execution of a divine intrinsically efficacious and predetermining decree, it follows, as Molina and his disciples maintain that, of two men equally tempted and EQUALLY HELPED by God, it happens that one consents to co-operate with the grace and the other does not. And then the difference, which distinguishes the good from the bad consent and this man from that other, does not come from God, but solely from man's free will. These are the very words of Lessius. In one case, man's free will has caused the divine grace to be efficacious in actu secundo, in the other it remained sterile. But then, as we said, one contradicts the texts of St. Paul (I Cor. 4: 7) who says: "For who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received?" It becomes consequently quite clear for one who speaks seriously and does not wish to trifle with words, that the foreknowledge is passive when one positively asserts that this difference does not at all come from God; just as I am a passive spectator when I see that this man, independently of me, is seated, whereas that other is standing; or again when I see that this one is killing someone and that other is being killed. Moreover, with regard to this difference, the divine will which consents to this too late, it, too, is not determining but determined. A new passivity has entered into the pure Act, who henceforth is no more like to God than is the false diamond like the true.

In the case of these two men as stated above, who, situated in the same external and internal circumstances, equally tempted and EQUALLY HELPED, grace in the former rather than in the latter and not vice versa, in Peter rather than in Judas, and not in Judas rather than in Peter, was EFFICACIOUS in actu secundo, not of itself, nor because God willed it, but because Peter willed it, and it is only afterwards that God, although He is Being itself, Intelligence itself, Goodness itself, saw and willed it determinately. There is a twofold passivity in pure Act. I quite understand, it is useless to recall it, that the scientia media has foreseen first of all this free consent of Peter as a conditional future (what Peter would choose if he were situated in such circumstances), but without this passive prevision, God, according to this theory, could not infallibly know what Peter really will choose when actually situated in such combination of circumstances.

Henceforth we must reject the doctrine of St. Augustine who says: “Why God draws this one and not that one, judge not, if thou wilt not err” (in Joann., tr. 26). One could easily answer St. Augustine and say: “Of two men equally tempted and equally helped, God draws the one who of his own accord determines himself to co-operate with the prevenient grace, and He does not draw the other who puts an obstacle in the way.” One has thus done away with the mystery, but one has put a passivity in the pure Act. One has “confused,” as Bossuet said, the whole idea of a First Cause. The metaphysical or absolute validity of the proofs for the existence of God has thus been attacked.

It is the same with every doctrine which maintains that man, by his consent, causes the grace of God to be efficacious in actu secundo. According to such a view, grace said to be efficacious gives indeed, in actu primo, of itself, the proximate power to act, but it is not actually followed by the consent of Peter rather than that of James, because Peter has added to it a DETERMINATION that God Himself, in spite of His omnipotence, cannot infallibly produce in us and with us. Now this determination IS WHAT IS OF GREATER IMPORTANCE IN THE WORK OF SALVATION, and that is what is withdrawn from the universal causality of God who is the Author of salvation. Moreover, if God does not predetermine our salutary choice suavely and firmly, without necessitating us, it is He Himself who is DETERMINED by us, and even NECESSITATED TO SEE something which IS INDEPENDENT of Him: to see what Peter WOULD CHOOSE if situated in such circumstances and what he will actually choose to do when so situated. Imagine, if you can, this PASSIVITY, this DEPENDENCE as regards a conditional future in the self-subsisting Intellect.

If the dependence, as regards this DETERMINATION, is not in us, it is in God; and if it is neither in Him nor in us, the relation between us and Him is impossible; He has no knowledge of our free acts.

This is one of the most tiresome of objections, for fundamentally this dilemma is insoluble. And then how are we going to get out of it Nothing simpler. They reply to us: “Father Garrigou-Lagrange speaks in his first page of a grace that man would cause to be efficacious by his consent and starts to make war upon us. Undoubtedly it is this that he calls a passivity in the pure Act. Is it necessary to point out once more that this foolish notion does not in the least interpret my thought and that I am not interested in the

chimera that he is combating? The monster of his creation prevents him from seeing the reality." Likewise, a little farther on, concerning the Thomists, we read: "They suppose that their adversaries base the efficacy of grace not upon the knowledge and will of God, but on man's free will, and have not words enough of sarcasm for so puerile an invention."

That is one of the most valuable of concessions for us. Now we know that the doctrine according to which "man by his consent causes the grace of God to be efficacious" is a monster, a chimera, or at least a puerile invention.

But who created this monster? Did we? Surely it was Molina himself who wrote in his Concordia (q. 14, a. 13, disp. 40; Paris ed., 1876, p. 230): "Hence we assert: under n. 5, the HELPS of prevenient and adjuvant grace which are granted by the ordinary law to wayfarers, that they be EFFICACIOUS or INEFFICACIOUS for conversion or justification, DEPEND UPON THE FREE CONSENT AND CO-OPERATION OF OUR WILL, and so it IS FREELY IN OUR POWER EITHER TO CAUSE THEM TO BE EFFICACIOUS by consenting and co-operating with them to the acts which dispose us for justification, or cause them to be inefficacious, by withholding our consent and co-operation, or even by eliciting the contrary act of dissent."

If that is a theological monster, it is not a creation of the Thomists. It is constantly to be met with in the Concordia of Molina, in which we read such as follows: "It is clearly defined (in the Council of Trent), that it DEPENDS UPON OUR WILL to cause the divine helps to be efficacious or inefficacious for our conversion and justification" (q. 23, disp. I, membr. 6, ed. cit., p. 459).

It is this doctrine, indeed, that the Thomists have unceasingly combated. They have not distorted it; they have quoted faithfully and loyally the texts in which Molina has given the least hint of it, particularly this one: "When you hear it said that it is our consent which causes the helps of grace to be efficacious, do not so understand it as if our free will gave some force or efficacy to the helps of grace . . . but it applies to it the condition without which such help will not have the force of efficacy in comparison with such effect" (Concordia, ibid., p. 462). The free will, according to this teaching, causes the grace to be efficacious not in actu primo (first movement), but in actu secundo (completed act), in bringing to it the free determination which is, however, what is more important in the work of salvation.

Hence it follows, according to Molina (Concordia, ed. cit., p. 51), that: "It can happen that one prevented and called by a far greater grace, of his own free will is not converted, and another, having received a far less grace, is converted." (Item, p. 565.) This is absolutely contrary to the doctrine of St. Thomas who, in Ia, q. 20, a. 2, says: THE LOVE OF GOD CREATES AND INFUSES GOODNESS IN THINGS"; and in a. 4 he says: "God's will is the cause of goodness in things; AND THE REASON WHY SOME THINGS ARE BETTER THAN OTHERS, IS THAT GOD WILLS FOR THEM A GREATER GOOD. Hence it follows that He loves more the better things." He who wills freely to be converted is in that case better than the other; and this presupposes that he has been loved more and helped more by God.

The contrary conclusion formulated by Molina is deduced directly from his definition of the scientia media: In the Concordia, (q. 14, a. 13, disp. 52, ed. cit., pp. 317-318), he says: "The scientia media, by which from a most profound and inscrutable comprehension of each free will by an intuition of His essence He has foreseen what, according to the native disposition of the will, it would do, if situated in this or that or even an untold combination of circumstances, since however it could, if it wished, do just the opposite. . . . We must say in answer to this that it (scientia media) on no account is to be called free, both because it precedes every free act of the divine will, and also because it was NOT IN GOD'S POWER TO KNOW BY THIS KNOWLEDGE ANYTHING ELSE THAN HE ACTUALLY KNEW. (There you have, indeed, passivity in the pure Act as regards what Peter of his own accord would choose to do rather than James equally tempted, and equally helped, if they were situated in the same circumstances.) Furthermore, not even is it natural in this sense, as if it were to such a degree innate to God that He could not know the OPPOSITE of that which He knows by this knowledge (whereby the scientia media differs from the knowledge of simple intelligence). For if the created free will were to do the opposite, as it truly can, He would have known even this by the same knowledge, but not that He actually knows it. . . . Likewise that a being endowed with free will, if situated in a certain combination of events and circumstances, is inclined one way or the other, this is not due to God's foreknowledge, NAY RATHER THE REASON WHY GOD FOREKNOWS IT IS, BECAUSE the being itself endowed with free will freely must do JUST WHAT IT DOES, NOR IS THIS DUE TO THE FACT

THAT GOD WILLS IT TO BE DONE, but because the being itself FREELY WILLS TO DO IT." We have here, indeed, a double passivity in the pure Act: (1) in the foreknowledge: "the reason why God foreknows it is because the being itself endowed with free will freely must do just what it does"; (2) in the divine will which consents too late to what would be the choice of Peter rather than James if they were both situated in the same circumstances.

Now this definition of the scientia media must be necessarily defended by all those who wish to preserve intact the intrinsic characteristic of this theory and who hold that God can infallibly know the free conditional futures previous to any determining divine decree. In that, the successors of Molina have been able to modify accidentally his teaching but it still remains substantially his after the changes they have made. It is a case of saying that they have embroidered upon a canvas which is stronger than their thread; the philosophical error is always there under the arabesques: "IT WAS NOT IN GOD'S POWER TO KNOW BY THIS SCIENTIA (media) ANYTHING ELSE THAN HE ACTUALLY KNEW . . . ; THE REASON WHY God foreknows it is BECAUSE the thing itself endowed with free will FREELY must DO JUST WHAT IT DOES." God, pure Act in the order of being, pure Act in the order of intelligence and love, God, THE SELF-SUBSISTING BEING, THE SELF-SUBSISTING INTELLECT, THE SELF-SUBSISTING WILL, God, sovereign actuality, supreme determination, who is not subsequently determinable, is, nevertheless, passive, DETERMINED, and even NECESSITATED, in His foreknowledge, to see what WOULD and WILL be the CHOICE of Peter rather than that of James equally tempted and equally helped in the same circumstances. Contrary to what St. Thomas always taught, God's knowledge is measured by things.

We may seek to divert the issue by a literary style and play on words. The fact remains that God is DETERMINED in seeing this choice rather than another; He is even NECESSITATED in this: "It was not in God's power to know by this scientia (media) anything else than he actually knew." As for Peter's liberty, how is this safeguarded? If God, by examining this created will and the circumstances in which it will be situated, foresees infallibly what will be its choice, how are we to avoid admitting determinism of circumstances? If that is a theological monster, it is not of our creation.

And that is the theory the germ of which they want to find in St. Augustine and St. Thomas!

But Molina is the first to tell us that one will seek for it there in vain. How can we forget what he wrote on this subject in one of the most precious pages of the Concordia (q. 23, a. 4, 5, disp. 1, membr. ult., ed. cit., pp. 546, 548)? Permit us to quote this somewhat forgotten text.

"But Augustine believed that, with what he had most correctly taught from the Scripture about grace against the Pelagian heresy, is connected the question of God's eternal predestination not being according to the merits and nature of the use of free will as foreseen by God, but only according to His election and good pleasure (and in this sense it is most true as was explained in Member XII); it was in this sense that he interpreted in many of his works the text of St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans (ch. ix); . . . But St. Thomas followed Augustine's opinion, and so did many Scholastics after him.

"In our humble opinion we declare that the whole question of reconciling the freedom of the will with the divine foreknowledge and predestination, which we have always taught throughout article 13 of question 14, and in article 6 of question 19, in question 22 and throughout this question, rests upon the following principles from which we have deduced it, and which we have given in various places. If these principles had always been given and explained, perhaps neither the Pelagian heresy would have sprung up, nor would the Lutherans have dared so impudently to deny the freedom of our will, objecting that divine grace is incompatible with foreknowledge and predetermination, nor would so many of the faithful have been disturbed in their mind because of Augustine's opinion and the controversies with the Pelagians."

The Salmanticenses in quoting this text of Molina cannot refrain from writing: "What a necessary man for those times (of Pelagianism)! What powerful antidote and opportune for such great blindness (of the Lutherans)! . . . Was there any man more learned than Augustine whose lot it was to be so envied by so great a disturbance! . . . As if God finally revealed to Molina alone, whatsoever to Augustine and the holy Fathers and the most learned of theologians for countless centuries even to our own times He has not at all made known."

Fonseca, S.J., Molina's teacher, declared in his Metaphysics (Vol. III, Bk. VI, ch. ii, q. 6, sec. 8) that he himself had thought of this theory of the

scientia media before his disciple, but that he had not made it known, “lest on these grounds he might perhaps be introducing an innovation which is not perfectly in agreement with the common teaching of the Fathers or with the careful consideration and accurate discussion of the Scholastics.”

Fonseca must have known, indeed, that this idea of the scientia media was current among the Semi-Pelagians, for they affirmed that God grants the grace of Baptism to this child who is about to die rather than to that other, because He foresaw what use it would have made freely of the grace if it had lived.

Now St. Augustine rejected this foreknowledge, viewed in this way, not only because of the abuse the Semi-Pelagians made of it, but also because it is essentially at fault, in so far as it posits a passivity in the divine intellect with regard to man’s free choice.

The necessity of the dilemma, “God DETERMINING or DETERMINED, no other alternative,” has its foundation in the first principles from which the five Thomistic proofs for the existence of God are derived. They are as follows: Every movement, whether pertaining to body or spirit, intellect or will, depends upon God the prime mover; every created causality depends upon the causality of the First Agent; every contingent determination depends upon the prime necessary Being; everything that participates in goodness depends upon the sovereign Good; every determination ordained to an end depends upon the supreme Ordainer. St. Thomas himself applies these principles to our choices so as to establish this conclusion, namely: “God alone is the cause of our wills and choices” (III Contra Gentes, ch. xci, n. 2; item, ch. xc). This dilemma is a basic issue of the teaching of St. Thomas concerning the divine knowledge, Ia, q. 14, a. 5, 8, 14; the divine will, Ia, q. 19, a. 4, 6, 8; God’s love for us. Ia, q. 20, a. 2, 4; providence and predestination, Ia, q. 22, a. 2 ad 4; a. 4 ad 1; q. 23, a. 4 ad 1; a. 5; divine grace, Ia IIae, q. 109, a. 1; q. 112, a. 3; IIa IIae, q. 24, a. 11.

The gist of the texts is, that what is of more importance in the work of salvation cannot escape the universal causality of God who is the author of salvation. Now, what is of more importance in the work of salvation is the salutary free determination, the good use of grace. Therefore this salutary free determination which is found in Peter and not in that other man, is the effect of the divine causality, the divine decrees and grace, which are

efficacious of themselves and not because of the foreseen consent of our will.

God is either determining or determined, there is no other alternative. His knowledge of free conditional futures is measured by things, or else it measures them by reason of the accompanying decree of the divine will. Our salutary choices, as such, in the intimacy of their free determination, depend upon God, or it is He, the sovereignly independent pure Act, who depends upon us. There is no other alternative.

Molina saw quite well that there is no possible middle course between the stand taken by St. Augustine and St. Thomas, and his own, and that is why he was forced to formulate the famous proposition which expresses the very essence of the scientia media: “IT WAS NOT IN GOD’S POWER TO KNOW by this scientia (media) ANYTHING ELSE than He actually knew . . .; THE REASON WHY God foreknows it is BECAUSE the being itself endowed with free will MUST DO FREELY JUST WHAT IS DONE; nor is this due to the fact that God wills it to be done, but because the being itself freely wills to do it.”

We know that Molina had written a little further on to this effect: “Although I admit it to be true that St. Thomas seems to suggest the contrary of this (Ia, q. 14, a. 8), in his reply to the first objection, when explaining the same he endeavors to wrest the statement of Origen just referred to, which is clearly the same teaching as ours, in the opposite sense.” Was Origen a master to follow on the subject of foreknowledge and predestination? (See St. Thomas, Ia, q. 23, a. 5.)

The knowledge of God is the CAUSE of our free determinations, or else it is CAUSED by them, because Peter would choose if he were situated in such circumstances and in fact will choose when so situated. The knowledge of God either measures things or is measured by them. Only anthropomorphism can admit the second term of the dilemma and therefore, from sheer necessity, we must keep to the first. There is no other solution. It has its obscurities, those of a profound mystery, but it avoids contradiction. Said a Dominican cardinal: “It is only by dint of fighting against this sublime doctrine that one can be deprived of the efficacious grace, necessary for willing to understand it properly and for actually understanding it properly.” There might be some truth in this remark.

At all events, the Thomist position is so strong that even its adversaries feel themselves obliged to concede to it the following propositions,

considering themselves free afterwards to stamp them with the note of relativity by reintroducing, through some adverb, a scientia media, shameful in itself, which unwarrantably makes its presence felt everywhere without giving its name.

These precious concessions are as follows:

"To find out the reason for this efficacy, we shall turn more naturally to God, the Author of every excellent gift; and this is the immediate answer of faith, to wit, that grace is efficacious, because God willed it so. . . . If you ask why such grace is efficacious, there is only one answer: God willed it, Complacuit."

Then why not admit that God, without necessitating, mightily and suavely determines Peter's choice, because, in fine, grace will be efficacious only if it is followed by Peter's salutary choice, and therefore, in the end, we must say that it is followed by this choice (which is at first a conditional future and then a simple future), because God, the Author of all good, willed it?

What we are fully agreed upon is this, that the doctrine according to which "man by his consent causes the grace of God to be efficacious, is truly a theological "monster." The word is not ours, but we fully endorse it. This discussion has therefore not been absolutely useless. It has shown once more that the dilemma, in the precise form as given here, is necessarily connected with the fundamental articles of St. Thomas concerning the divine knowledge and will in their relations to created liberty. God determines the free choice of the salutary acts of the will, or, if it is not so, then it is He Himself who is determined by them. This dilemma rests ultimately upon the distinction between potency and act, the foundation for which we shall again bring to the reader's notice. (See infra, p. 558 ff.)

FOUNDATION FOR THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN POTENCY AND ACT ACCORDING TO ST. THOMAS

In these closing pages, especially in answering the objections formulated by Louis Rougier in a recent book of his which he wrote against the Christian faith and Thomism, we should like briefly to recall how the doctrine of act and potency, when properly understood, is seen to be the soul of the whole philosophy of Aristotle and St. Thomas, and how, on the contrary, it would be the total destruction of this same doctrine to conceive of potency as an imperfect act, such as some Scholastics, and after them Leibniz, conceived it to be.

Many authors, taking more or less into account this difference of opinion, state truly, by way of a nominal definition, what is the nature of act and potency; they point out their mutual relations and the commonly admitted axioms in the Schools, but they do not sufficiently determine with Aristotle, why it is necessary to admit the reality of a potency between nothingness and determinate being, nor how potency is distinguished from privation, from the mere possible, or, on the contrary, from the imperfect act.

We must first give our attention to this, so that we may have a clearer conception of the validity of the applications of this doctrine either in the order of being or in that of operation. This article will be concerned with this point and the first of these applications, namely, those that refer to the order of being, and we will start from sensible beings and ascend to God.

DEFINITION OF POTENCY AND THE NECESSITY OF A REAL DISTINCTION BETWEEN IT AND ACT

According to Aristotle, as appears from the Physics, Bk. I and II, and the Metaphysics, Bk. I, chs. v and ix, the real distinction between potency and act is absolutely necessary, so that we may reconcile these two facts attested by experience, namely, the becoming and multiplicity of beings with the principle of contradiction or of identity; "being is being, non-being is non-being," or "being is not non-being," and "there can be no intermediate state between nothingness and being."

We see clearly what was Aristotle's teaching from the way he solves the arguments of Parmenides. In virtue of the principle of identity or of contradiction, Parmenides, contrary to Heraclitus, understood by this the denial of all change and all multiplicity in beings: (1) Being, he said, cannot come from being, ex ente non fit ens, for what becomes does not yet exist, and the being from which it should come already exists, is already determined and is not susceptible of further determination; being does not come from what is already being; a statue does not come from what is already a statue; an ox does not come from what is already an ox, and that which is becoming as yet does not exist. Besides, nothing can come from non-being, for non-being does not exist; it is pure nothing, and nothing can come from nothing: ex nihilo nihil fit. It absolutely follows from this that THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS BECOMING. (2) The limitation, diversity, and multiplicity in beings cannot evidently be explained by being itself, nor by a principle foreign to it, for apart from being there is only non-being, and non-being is nothingness. There is only one existing substance, and a second substance is absolutely impossible of realization; it could not be distinguished from the first, as Spinoza said in more modern times.

Plato, in order to solve these two arguments of Parmenides, distinguished between being and non-being which in a certain way exists, though not of

itself determined; thus, for him, matter is a non-being which is, as it were, the receptacle for the participation of ideas. So, in this way is explained and by it, multiplicity of beings in the same species and becoming.

With greater penetration and clearness of mind, Aristotle solved these arguments of Parmenides by distinguishing between act and potency.

Being, he said, cannot come from actual being, because it would exist before becoming so, and what is becoming does not yet exist; for instance, the statue does not come from the statue, but from this matter which was first a statue in potentiality, and then the actual statue comes from what was in potentiality to be a statue; it is made from wood that was capable of becoming a statue, by receiving a new determination.

What then is potency or potential being, from which the statue comes? It is the wood in so far as it is determinable. But the determinable as such, what is it?

1) It is not nothingness: ex nihilo, nihil fit (nothing is made from nothing), as Parmenides said.

2) It is not non-being, which is solely the negation or privation of the form called statue. This negation, of itself is nothing, and ex nihilo per se nihil fit; moreover, this negation is equally present in the air and the water as in the wood, and they cannot however become a statue.

3) It is not the essence of the wood—for according to this the wood is already in act—nor is it its actual form; nothing comes from a being that is already in act, for what is becoming, previous to this was not in existence.

4) Neither is the determinable as such the imperfect form of the statue, that is to say, the imperfect act, for this imperfect act already would be the external form of the statue that is in the process of becoming; one would thus be only deferring the question; it is the very beginning of becoming, the act as imperfect as possible, that we must explain.

The “determinable” which becomes the statue, is the real capacity of the wood to receive the form called statue, a capacity that is found neither in the air nor in the water; it is called a real potency for becoming a statue, or a statue in potentiality.

That is how Aristotle defined potency in his Physics, whereas Plato spoke of a non-being existing in some way, which he confounded sometimes with privation, sometimes with possibility, sometimes, on the contrary, with the imperfect act. That is why the Platonic conception of matter and non-being always remained very obscure.

St. Thomas perfects the Aristotelian notion of real passive potency, by distinguishing it more clearly from pure possibility. Only this latter is a prerequisite for creation ex nihilo (out of nothing), but it is not sufficient for becoming which demands a determinable or changeable subject. Moreover, creation, since it does not presuppose any real passive potency, requires an actively infinite power; it can therefore be attributed only to God, and not to the sculptor who is the cause of the statue.

Thus becoming or change is explained, contrary to Parmenides. Something comes not from actual, but from potential being.

In like manner is explained the multiplicity of forms or acts. When what was in potency is in act, there is still a real potency underlying the act that it receives; the wood, having already the form called statue, can lose it and receive another. But as long as the form called statue remains in the wood, it is received and limited by it. This same numerically one form is no longer susceptible of participation, although a form in every respect like it can be produced in other matter of this kind. Thus is explained the multiplication of Apollo's form, for instance, according as it can be received and is so, in fact, in the diverse kinds of second matter: wood, earth, marble, etc., and thus it is susceptible of unlimited participation.

From all this, it is evident, at least in the order of sensible beings, that the act, in so far as it is a perfection, IS NOT the potency or the capacity for perfection, but it is limited and multiplied by the potency. Now if the act is not the potency, if this latter is not identified with the imperfect act, if this judgment, which has its foundation both in the principle of contradiction and in the existence of becoming and multiplicity, has an objective validity, it follows that the potency which limits the act that it receives, is really distinct from it.

From this follow several conclusions either in the order of being or substance, or that of action. We will note only the first, adopting the method which starts from sensible things to arrive at God. We shall see that none of these consequences, deduced either by Aristotle or St. Thomas, is of any value unless one views potency as an imperfect act.

1) Matter is not form, and they are really distinct.

The principle as given above, that "act is limited by potency," becomes much more evident, if we consider the substantial changes, either, for instance, as to what remains after the death of a lion, the corruption of its corpse—which are remnants certainly deprived of all vegetative and

sensitive life—or again the power of assimilation of the nutritive faculty, in virtue of which non-living food undergoes a substantial transformation, so as to become living flesh, human flesh.

These substantial changes presuppose a pure potency, that is to say, a subject purely determinable and in no way determined. If it were otherwise, the subject of these changes would be already a substance, and these changes would, for the same reason, be accidental and not substantial.

But this pure potency or this pure capacity for a substantial form, is neither nothingness (ex nihilo, nihil fit) nor the simple privation of a form to be acquired nor something substantial that is already determined, “non est quid, nec quale, nec quantum, nec aliquid hujusmodi: it is not a quiddity, nor a quality, nor a quantity, nor anything of this kind,” neither is it the initial realization of the form nor the imperfect act, just as the wood as determinable subject, which will become a statue, is not the statue in the imperfect state, since this begins to take shape only as the result of the sculptor’s labor; the imperfect act here is the movement, but not the real potency required for this movement. This capacity for the substantial form is therefore a certain reality, a real potency which is not the form, but is opposed to it, as the determinable is opposed to the determining. Moreover, this real potency can lose such substantial form and receive another: corruptio unius est generatio alterius, the corruption of one thing is the generation of another. Thus it is evident that prime matter is really distinct from substantial form.

The real distinction between prime matter and the form is derived therefore from the distinction between potency and act. This distinction is necessary for the explanation of substantial change. The multiplicity of the substantial form is explained in the same way. Since matter endures under the form that it receives, which it can lose, it follows that, for instance, the form of the lion is susceptible of unlimited participation in the matter which limits it, so as to constitute with it a composite that is generated and corruptible.

All this is explained at length by Aristotle in the first two books of the Physics; the truth of this principle, that act is limited and multiplied by potency, is there most clearly demonstrated, at least as regards beings of the sensitive order. St. Thomas considered this principle from a higher plane, that is to say from the domain of metaphysical abstraction. It is to this that he appeals in solving the more universal question of the changeableness and

multitude found in finite beings, even those quite spiritual, and of God's infinity which is essentially and really distinct from everything created.

2) Created essence is not its existence. There is a real distinction between them.

St. Thomas considers this principle of Aristotle, that "the form is limited only by the matter," not only from the physical, but according to the highest degree of abstraction, from the metaphysical point of view.

He remarks that the form is limited not only, and precisely in so far as it is a form of the sensible order, but also as act or perfection. Every perfection, indeed, which is not limited by itself is so, in fact, by a certain capacity that it has for perfection or by the matter inasmuch as it is a potency. Hence the absolute universality of the principle, either in the sensible or suprasensible order, that "act as a perfection is limited only by the potency which is itself a certain capacity for perfection." Now, adds St. Thomas, existence is an act, and even what is most formal in all things, as it is ultimate actuality. "Being is the most formal of all things." Nothing has actuality except by existence, "It is that which actuates all things, even their forms; it is not compared to other things as the receiver is to the received, but rather as the received to the receiver. When I speak of the existence of this man, or this horse, or anything else, existence is considered a formal principle, and as something received, and not as that which is capable of existing. In itself existence is not a limited perfection; it is de facto limited only by the real potency in which it is received, that is to say, by an infinite essence which is capable of existing. On the other hand, as God's existence is not received in a capacity which limit, it, since God is the self-subsisting Being, it is manifest that God is infinite, that is to say, infinitely perfect, and consequently "distinct from all other beings."

For want of a proper understanding of this notion of potency which is a capacity for perfection, certain authors deny the principle that "the act is limited only by the potency in which it is received," or at least they do not admit its application in the metaphysical order. Act, they say, is perhaps limited by itself or by the agent who produces it. Louis Rougier in his recent book against Thomism, claims that St. Thomas, in admitting the aforesaid principle in the metaphysical order and affirming a real distinction between essence and existence, is absolutely unfaithful to Aristotle. For us, on the contrary, from this St. Thomas deduces one of the most sublime consequences of the Aristotelian principle, and thereby shows us, whatever

Rougier may say, how this principle admirably harmonizes with the dogma of creation and the divine utterance in Exodus: I am who am.

Can we demonstrate this principle? It is impossible to give a direct and strictly deductive proof of it. We have here not a conclusion, but a self-evident principle, per se notum, obtained solely by the explanation of the terms "act" and "potency." Nevertheless we can offer this explanation of the terms in a discursive form, which is at the same time an indirect demonstration, or one by the process of reductio ad absurdum.

It may be said: "The act, in so far as it is a perfection of itself unlimited in its order (like being, wisdom, love), cannot de facto be limited except by a principle that is intrinsically relative to this very limitation. Now this principle that is intrinsically relative to this limitation of act, can be only potency or a certain capacity for perfection. Therefore the act, in so far as it is a perfection, is limited only by potency, which is itself a capacity for perfection.

The major is evident. If the act is de facto limited, but not by itself, being of itself unlimited (as appears in the case of existence, wisdom, love), it follows then that the act is limited by a principle other than itself. Moreover, this principle must be intrinsically relative to this very limitation. If it were otherwise, beings could not exist that are intrinsically limited, as the plant and man.

The minor is equally evident. The principle that is intrinsically relative to the limitation, can be only potency or a capacity for perfection, as, for instance, the essence of the plant limits its existence which is more restricted than that of the animal, man, or angel. It is not enough, in order to explain this limitation, to have recourse to the agent which is the cause of the plant; since it is the extrinsic cause, it cannot constitute this limit intrinsically, that is, constitute a being that is intrinsically limited.

Moreover, the agent can effect only what can be caused. Now the essence of what can be caused is not existence, but is only capable of existing. As St. Thomas says (Ia, q. 7, a. 2, ad 1): "It is against the nature of a made thing for its essence to be its existence; because a subsisting being is not a created being."

If it were otherwise, the argument of Parmenides, revived by Spinoza, would remain unsolved, namely, that being cannot limit itself, nor multiply itself by itself, but only by a principle other than itself. Now, what is not being, is nothing.

We reply to this argument by saying that apart from existence there is the real capacity for receiving the act of existing and also of limiting it. This receptive capacity which limits the acts, is not nothing or privation or the imperfect act: it is real potency and is really distinct from the act of existing, just as is the capacity which the wood has for receiving the form of a statue and for losing it. Thus again, prime matter is really distinct from the substantial form that it can lose. Matter, previous to any consideration of our mind, IS NOT THE FORM. They are even opposed to each other as "perfectible" to that which perfects, determinable to that which determines. Likewise, created essence or the receptive capacity for existence IS NOT its existence; existence is not included in the formal concept of it (the essence of the plant does not include existence as an essential predicate); and neither does the essence itself of the plant belong to the formal concept of existence; this latter can indeed have such or such other limitations, or even be without limitations. Finite essence and its existence are in opposition therefore to each other as the perfectible is to that which perfects, the determinable to that which determines, or as the limit to that which limits. Therefore they are really distinct previous to consideration of the mind. We cannot deny it without rejecting either the objectivity of our intellectual faculty, or the truth of this proposition, that the essence of this plant IS NOT its existence. This real distinction cannot be perceived by the senses or by the imagination; but the intellect differs from sense perception and imagination, in that it sees or reads what underlies things, the intelligible hidden under the sensible; intus legit.

From this we see what a difference there is between the teaching of St. Thomas and of those who say: "Being is absolutely simple, and therefore all that which in some way exists, is actual being, although it can be potential as to something else." For them prime matter is already in act, at least imperfectly so; in like manner, created essence is actual being and is not really distinct from its existence. Being, the act of existing, in their view, is limited by itself or perhaps by the external agent that produces it, but not by the potency in which it is received.

This solution does not go beyond the physical order (that of the physical production of things in a material sense) and does not reach the metaphysical order to which the question however belongs. Consequently, the argument of Parmenides, taken up by Spinoza, against the multiplicity of beings, remains unsolved. It was quite otherwise for St. Thomas. He

refuted the argument of Parmenides by saying that it is of the very nature of a thing made or caused that its essence is not its being. Thus existence is limited by the essence which is intrinsically in proportion to limit it, whereas the agent is the extrinsic cause. Hence these words of St. Thomas: “Together with the being God produces that which the being receives” (De potentia, q. 3, a. 1 ad 17). In this way, far from abandoning Aristotle, as Rougier claims, the Angelic Doctor shows us how profound is the Aristotelian answer to the arguments of Parmenides.

According to the Thomists, the difference between these two views of potency is far more profound. It has to do with the very notion of being which comes in question at the very beginning of ontology, before the discussion of the divisions of being. For St. Thomas, indeed, being is not univocal, but analogous; otherwise being could not be diversified. The univocal, like the genus, is diversified by differences which are extrinsic to it. Now, apart from being there is nothing which can constitute a difference. That is why St. Thomas says in his Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle (Bk. I, ch. v, lect. 9): “In this Parmenides and his disciples were deceived, in that they employed the term being, as if it were one in meaning and nature, as the nature of any genus is. But this is impossible. For being is not a genus, but is predicated in many ways of diverse things.”

Scotus, in teaching the univocation of being, shows a tendency to return some way to the doctrine of Parmenides. Suarez, in seeking a via media between St. Thomas and Scotus, maintains that the objective concept of being is “simply one,” and consequently all that which is in some way, even prime matter, is actual being. In other words, we cannot, according to his view, conceive of pure potency; it would be other than being. Thus it is that the Aristotelian solution of Parmenides’ arguments is abandoned, and they remain incapable of solution.

This difference of opinion concerning the fundamental notion of being at the very outset of metaphysics, when we start out by arguing from sensible beings to God, brings us in the end to another difference. The supreme truth of Christian philosophy, a truth which very much confirms that of analogy of being, according to St. Thomas is this: “That only in God are essence and existence identical (Ia, q. 3, a. 4). In every creature they are distinct. Such is for St. Thomas, whom Suarez abandons on this point, the terminus of the via inventionis, way of finding, which, by means of the five classical proofs for God’s existence, starts from finite beings, their movements,

contingency, compositeness, finality detected in them, until it arrives at Being itself who subsists immaterial above all things. This supreme truth is also the starting-point of the via judicii, way of judgment, (Ia, q. 79, a. 9), which judges of things from a higher plane, by assigning the highest motive. It is from this source that we deduce the divine attributes and the relations of God the Creator and mover to the being and action of every creature whatsoever it may be.

It is because in God alone essence and existence are identical, because He alone is Being itself, that we must conclude that only in Him can there be no accident, that He alone is infinite, that nothing that is external to Him can exist unless it has been created and preserved in being by Him, that nothing external to Him can act without the divine motion. Action, in fact, presupposes being, and the mode of the action corresponds to the mode of the being that is in action. God alone, who is His existence, who is Being itself, is consequently action itself, intellection itself, love that is itself eternally subsisting. On the other hand, no creature, however perfect it may be, since it is not its existence, is not its own thought and will; but the most perfect angel, just as the least endowed human soul, always is in need of the divine motion in order to think and will anything whatever. Nothing, consequently, escapes the divine motion except evil, which, being a defect, presupposes only a deficient cause. It cannot come from God, but is permitted by Him, because He is powerful enough and good enough to draw from it a greater good that is known to Him, a glimpse of which is at times given to us.

Many of these consequences resulting from the distinction between potency and act have been definitely stated in the twenty-four theses approved by the Sacred Congregation of Studies, as being the authentic expression of the main points in the teaching of St. Thomas. It is to these twenty-four theses that we must, in fact, return for a true understanding of this synthesis, the parts of which are not only mechanically juxtaposed as happens in eclectic concepts, but which are also perfectly subordinated according to their close and necessary dependence upon the first truth which is the soul of this body of doctrine.

The last answer to the dilemma: “God determining or determined; there is no other alternative.”

This dilemma has been answered as follows: “God, the primary source of being, is thereby the primary source of all determination. Therefore, if it is

only a question of an influence more or less direct, more or less immediate, of a causality in the broad sense, it will be right to say that God is the universal determiner. . . . Rational beings, subject to the prevailing system of liberty . . . realize the divine plan only by a supplementary determination which they give to themselves. . . . The person's choice determines the act to be such as it is and not otherwise; the divine influence, without which nothing exists, determines the act simply to be."

What is this answer worth? It is equivalent to saying that, if Peter and Judas are supposedly situated in the same circumstances with the same duty to fulfill, with the same divine concurrence, receiving equal help (a simultaneous concurrence or even an indifferent, physical premotion), the person's choice determines the act to be such as it is and not otherwise; in other words, determines the act quite as much in the direction of good as in that of evil. Thus it does not depend upon God that the good consent is in Peter rather than Judas, and not vice versa. The difference between the two men is due solely to the created free will, not at all to God. Hence God, since He is not determining, has been determined to see which of these two, supposedly situated in the same circumstances and equally helped, would choose and will choose the good, when they are actually situated in these very circumstances. Therefore the dilemma remains in full force.

The proffered answer is perfectly in conformity with the teaching of Molina, who says: "It can happen that one prevented and called by a far greater grace, of his own free will is not converted, and another with a far less grace is converted" (Concordia, q. 14, a. 13, disp. XII, Paris ed., 1876, p. 51; also p. 565). On p. 196 we read: "That our acts are performed in a good or bad way, which we can accomplish by the faculty alone of our free will and the general concurrence of God, is due not to God, but to ourselves as an individual and free cause." The answer given is also equivalent to the well-known proposition of Lessius, who says: "Of two equally called, the one accepts and the other rejects the grace that is offered, this is truly said to be due to the free will alone; not that he who accepts, does so of his own accord, but because the DIFFERENCE COMES FROM THE FREE WILL ALONE, so that it is not due to the diversity of prevenient grace" (De gratia efficaci, ch. xviii, n. 7).

To this the Thomists have always replied, that this doctrine cannot be maintained without being in contradiction to the spirit and even the words of St. Paul who (I Cor. 4: 7) says: "Who distinguisheth thee? What hast

thou which thou hast not received?" It would follow indeed from this that what is of preference in the salutary act, its free determination to good rather than evil, does not come from God. It would be, as they tell us, "a supplementary determination that the creature gives itself." That which would come from the First Cause would be, not this good that is freely determined, but the being or existence of the act, and this equally so for the bad as for the good act.

On the contrary, St. Thomas says (Ia, q. 20, a. 2): "The love of God infuses and creates goodness in things"; a. 4: "God's will is the cause of goodness in things; and the reason why some things are better than others, is that God wills for them a greater good. Hence it follows that He loves more the better things." Also (on Matt. 25: 15), he says: "He who makes a greater effort, does so because of a greater grace; but that he makes a greater effort, he needs to be moved by a higher cause. Also, on Ephes. 4: 7, and Ia IIae, q. 112, a. 4. Cf. Salmanticenses, De gratia, disp. VII, De gratia efficaci, dub. I, sec. 4, nn. 17 ff.

They say that the person's choice is only the cause of "a purely negative determination." It would be a purely negative determination, if it were a question of the bad act as such, the determination of which is essentially deficient; but if it is a question of the good act, that is quite another thing. Here the free determination, far from being "purely negative," is what is noblest in the salutary act, that which distinguishes it from sin.

This free determination in the direction of good, though being a limiting potency with reference to the existence itself of the free act, is itself a positive perfection with reference to the free faculty that it actuates. In like manner, the soul is in potency with reference to its act of existing, but it is act and perfection with reference to the matter that it animates.

The doctrine that we here defend comes back to this simple proposition: The divine decrees that concern our salutary acts, are efficacious of themselves and not because our consent was foreseen. This doctrine is manifestly that of St. Augustine, St. Thomas, and almost all theologians who never admitted the scientia media.

We consider it a duty, a religious duty on our part, to defend this sublime doctrine; for if it is properly understood, it saves us from falling into many theoretical and practical errors. It prevents us from dealing with God as with a mere associate who would have merely his part to do, whilst we would be doing our part, at times in a very human way, and it would not be

the less important. On the contrary, St. Thomas has said: “There is no distinction between what comes from free will and what is of predestination; as there is no distinction between what comes from a secondary and from a first cause” (Ia, q. 23, a. 5).

This sublime doctrine teaches us how essentially necessary it is for us to pray according to the spirit of our Lord’s words: “Without me, you can do nothing” (John 15: 5), and those of St. Paul, who says: “It is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will” (Phil. 2: 13). If this Thomist doctrine is true, we fully understand why our Lord recommends that “we ought always to pray and not to faint” (Luke 18: 1), and precisely for this that we may ask for the grace that of itself is efficacious, and which we stand in need of every moment for the fulfillment of our duties.

Bossuet very well understood this when he wrote: “Here again is a terrible stumbling-block for human pride. Man says to himself: I have my free will; God has made me free and I wish to justify myself. I wish that the act which decides my eternal salvation, originate from me. . . . I wish to find something which I can cling to in my free will, which I cannot grant with this surrender to grace.

“Proud contradictor, do you wish to grant these things, or truly believe that God grants them? He grants them in such a way, that He wills, without dispensing you from doing your part, that you attribute finally to Him all that pertains to our salvation; for He is the Savior and He says: ‘There is no Savior besides me’ (Is. 43: 11). Believe indeed that Jesus Christ is the Savior, and there will be an end of all contradictions.” Theological researches which are not directed to this contemplation, are to no purpose. Let us be grateful to St. Augustine and St. Thomas for having shown us the true way that leads to it. They were not only dialecticians, they were true and great contemplatives. Let us truly believe with them that Jesus Christ is the Savior, and there will be an end of all contradictions.

GRACE

REVEREND REGINALD GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE O.P.

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PREFACE

We have already explained at length in the treatise on the one God the doctrine of St. Thomas about the knowledge and will of God, providence and predestination, and likewise in the treatise on God the Creator his doctrine on evil. Now it remains to apply the principles already expounded to the questions of grace, so that these may be considered in relation to man, and also in relation to God, the author of grace, who is the subject of sacred theology. Indeed this science considers all things in relation to God, as optics does in relation to color and light, mathematics in relation to quantity, metaphysics in relation to being as such.

Hence the present treatise On grace depends on the treatise about the divine will in which we have already set forth the will for universal salvation and the distinction between antecedent will and consequent will, which is the ultimate basis, as we shall see, of the distinction between sufficient grace and efficacious grace.

We presuppose, likewise, St. Thomas' doctrine on the intrinsic and infallible efficacy of the divine decrees, presented in Ia, q. 19, a. 8, which we have explained at length in the treatise on the one God, refuting the objections based on the violation of freedom, on insufficiency of help, and on affinity with Calvinism.

Our treatise on grace is especially connected with question 20, Part I, on the love of God: 1. whether love exists in God; 2. whether God loves all things; 3. whether God loves all things equally; 4. whether God always loves better things more. In explanation of this last article, we show the value of the principle of predilection: "Nothing would be better than anything else (as an act, easy or difficult, natural or supernatural, initial or final) unless it were more loved and sustained by God." "What hast thou that thou hast not received?" (I Cor. 4:7.) As we shall see, this principle throws a light from on high upon all questions of predestination and grace. It is likewise the basis of Christian humility and of our gratitude to God, "who hath first loved us."

At the same time, no less emphasis must be placed on another principle of St. Augustine, formulated and cited at the Council of Trent (Denz., no. 804): “God does not command the impossible, but by commanding He incites thee to do what thou canst and to ask what thou canst not, and He assists thee so that thou mayst be able.” These two principles taken together prevent opposing deviations; preserve balance of thought and the harmony of the divine word in regard to these most difficult questions.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Brief introductory remarks are necessary so as to avoid repetition:

1. On the various meanings of the word “grace” and presupposed notions from the treatise on God;

2. On the errors involved in this subject.

MEANINGS OF THE WORD “GRACE”

The various meanings are indicated by St. Thomas (Ia Iae, q. 110, a. 1), but it is fitting that we say something of them at the beginning so that the connection may be apparent between the present question and the questions relating to God’s love for us.

First, there are of course three acceptations of this word “grace” even used in human affairs. For grace (χάρις) originally refers to something, which is not due or is freely bestowed; this meaning is very common in both profane and biblical writings. Hence even in purely human matters the term “grace” has a threefold application, as follows:

1. The love of benevolence conferring a gift, which is not due; for example, we say: This soldier has the grace of the king.

2. The gift itself freely bestowed; thus we say: I grant you this grace.

3. Gratitude for a benefit received; thus: I render you thanks for your benefits.1

Moreover, these three significations may be transferred to the supernatural order, whereupon the word grace applies to the following.

1. The love of benevolence on the part of God, conferring supernatural, life. This love of God is uncreated grace.

2. The supernatural gift of grace itself freely bestowed and ordained to eternal life; this is created grace, of which we are now treating, whether it is

interior or exterior, such as the preaching of the gospel.

3. Our gratitude to God.

Between the human and the supernatural meanings of the word “grace” there lies a great difference which is principally based upon the fact that God’s love of benevolence for us, as stated in Ia, q. 20, a. 2, infuses and creates goodness in things, whereas the love of benevolence of one man for another presupposes something lovable in that other. But “God’s love for the creature is twofold, the common love whereby natural being is bestowed on created things, and the other special love by which God raises the rational creature above the state of nature unto a participation in the divine good. Thus grace is the effect of the love of God in us and signifies the supernatural gift freely granted by God to an intellectual creature ordained to eternal life (Ia IIae, q. 110, a. 1).

Thus the whole treatise on grace in the Summa theologica of St. Thomas depends upon the treatise on the love of God (Ia, q. 20), in which are expressed and explained two supreme principles which throw a light from above upon all the articles of the treatise on grace and virtually contain them.

Hence St. Thomas says: “It is demonstrated above (q. 19, a. 4) that the will of God is the cause of all things; so it must be that so far as a thing possesses being or any good whatever, to that extent it is willed by God. Therefore God wills some good to whatever exists. And since loving is nothing else but wishing well to someone, it is clear that God loves all things that are, not however in the same way as we do, our will is not the cause of the goodness of things. But the love of God infuses and creates goodness in things” (Ia, q. 20, a. 2). Accordingly the will of God is also the cause of the goodness of our acts, while preserving their liberty. As St. Thomas says: “If the will of God is most efficacious, it follows not only that those things will be done which God wills to be done, but that they will be done in the way God wills them to be done. Thus God wills certain things to be necessary, others to be contingent, that there may be order among things for the perfection of the universe” (Ia, q. 19, a. 8).

From this first principle thus understood the second follows: “Since the love of God is the cause of the goodness of things, nothing is in any respect better, if God does not will one thing to be better than another” (Ia, q. 20, a. 4, 5). This is the principle of predilection, which is valid for every created being and for the facility, or difficulty of each of its acts: No created being

is in any respect better if it is not preferred by God. St. Thomas deduces from this that "in God love precedes election . . . for His will, willing good to whatever it loves, is the cause of its possessing this good from Him beyond others" (ibid., q. 23, a. 4).

This principle of predilection presupposes that the divine decrees in regard to our future acts conducive to salvation are infallibly efficacious of themselves and not from a foreknowledge of our consent (Ia, q. 19, a. 8). Otherwise, of two men equally loved and assisted by God, one would be in some respect better. He would be better of himself and not so far as preferred by God; and therefore the free determination in him to be saved would be something good which would not proceed from the source of all good, contrary to the words of St. Paul: "For who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received?" (I Cor. 4:7.)

These are the principles already laid down and explained in the treatises on the will and on the love of God; they virtually contain what is now to be said concerning grace, both habitual grace and actual grace.

Finally, it must be remarked that the Pelagians, not wishing to recognize the love of God as being the first cause of all our good choices, were equally averse to distinguishing the natural from the supernatural meanings of this word "grace." They therefore misused it in a broad, incorrect sense and applied the word "grace" to any free gift of God whatever; thus creation, preservation, and even free will are called by them graces.

Likewise created grace properly so called is defined in a variety of ways:

1. As external grace, such as the preaching of the gospel, the example of Christ; and the Pelagians admitted this grace.

2. As internal grace, namely, that which is received in the interior of the soul, ennobling it. Moreover, this internal grace may be either that which makes one pleasing (gratum faciens), which is divided into habitual or sanctifying grace, and actual grace, or charismatic grace (gratia gratis data), which is principally or primarily for the benefit of others.

Since grace is indeed supernatural, and frequently in this treatise there will be question of the distinction between what is supernatural substantially and what is supernatural modally, it will be well to recall the definition and division of supernaturalness itself as it has already been set forth in fundamental theology. The supernatural, according to the Catholic Church, is that which is above all created nature; which, although it exceeds the powers and requirements of any nature created or capable of being

created, does not exceed the passive capacity of perfectibility and aptitude of our nature. (Cf. Denz, nos. 1790, 1795, 1808, 1816; Garrigou-Lagrange, De revelatione, I, 193, 197, 202.)

Moreover, according to the Church, supernaturalness is at least twofold, namely:

1. The supernaturalness of miracles, which surpasses the efficient powers and requirements of any created nature, but not, however, the cognitive powers of human nature. (Denz, nos. 1790, 1818.)

2. The supernaturalness of mysteries strictly speaking and of the life of grace and glory is that which surpasses not only the efficient powers and requirements of any created nature, but also the cognitive and appetitive powers (or natural merit) of any intellectual nature created or capable of being created.

Such is the declared doctrine of the Church as follows from the condemnation of naturalism, rationalism, semi-rationalism (which deviates in the matter of the powers), Baianism (an excess as to requirements), and agnosticism (denying that miracles are ascertainable). Cf. Denz., nos. 1795, 1808; cf. De Revelatione, I, 193.

This division of supernaturalness may be otherwise expressed according to the terminology rather generally accepted among theologians, thus:

This is found in John of St. Thomas, the Salmanticenses, and Suarez. Cf. De revelatione, I, 205, for the explanation of this division and its reduction to the division of the four causes. The miraculous substantially is not to be confused with the supernatural substantially.

ERRORS CONCERNING GRACE

In the introduction a brief reference must be made to the history of this doctrine of grace in relation to the mutually opposing errors on the subject: that is, Pelagianism and Semi-Pelagianism on the one hand, Baianism and Jansenism on the other. For at the appearance of these contrary errors, the Church solemnly defined its doctrine on grace. It is therefore advisable to determine at the start at least the principal opposing theses, which have been condemned; thus will be brought to light the problems still disputed among Catholic theologians. It will be easier in explaining the articles later to show how St. Thomas’ arguments prevail over such and such a heresy.

Since St. Thomas preceded Baius, he could not have before his eyes, as we have, several definitions of the Church which clearly determined how the excess contrary to Pelagianism was to be avoided; yet St. Thomas was acquainted with predestinationism from the Council of Lyons (475) and its subsequent condemnation at the Council of Quierzy against Gottschalk, who prepared the way for Lutheranism and thereby for Baianism and Jansenism.

Generally, it is true, when great problems must be solved, there arise almost from the beginning mutually opposing theses, and only by degrees, under the inspiration of God, does the mind attain to the summit of truth whereon diverse aspects of reality are reconciled. St. Thomas reached this summit and escaped the excess of future Jansenism no less than the defect of Pelagianism.

As we observed in De revelatione (I, 398), the two extremes that are to be avoided may be termed naturalism and pseudo-supernaturalism.

Naturalism denies that the Christian life is beyond natural powers; in other words, it declares that what is in reality achieved by it can be achieved without interior grace. Indeed it maintains that the human intellect in its natural development is capable of attaining to the possession of every truth and good, even to the intuition of God. (Denz.,no. 1808.)

Pseudo-supernaturalism denies that the Christian life is above the requirements of nature; in other words, human reason is so weak that it necessarily stands in need of revelation, which accordingly is not properly supernatural, and its exaltation to a participation in the divine nature was due to it for the integrity of its original state.

In both errors there is a confusion of the two orders, but the first confusion sins by exaggerated optimism in regard to the powers of human nature, and the second by exaggerated pessimism in regard to the destitution of nature.

Pelagian naturalism differs, as a matter of fact, from modern rationalism so far as it does not reject the external revelation of the Gospel confirmed by miracles, holding it to be divine, as did the Semi-rationalists (Froschammer, Gunther, and Hermes), who nevertheless wished to prove every mystery. But in all these doctrines the tendency is the same, namely, to deny the necessity of grace.

Particularly it should be noted that naturalism proceeds historically from the pagans or Gentiles; many of their philosophers thought that moral

powers came from man alone and not from God, and they besought God only for fortune or a happy outcome. Thus, in particular, Cicero and Seneca who agreed that “there is one good, which is the cause and foundation of a blessed life: to have faith in oneself” (Letter 31, 3). Such is the opinion of naturalists today, whether atheists or deists, who deny that providence extends to every individual thing, or theists, who admit providence in the natural order but not in the supernatural. Liberal Protestants adhere to this teaching in a greater or less degree.

On the other hand, Judaism inclined toward naturalism in another way, for Judaism, contrary to the evident testimony of Holy Scripture, made justice or justification dependent, not on the supernatural grace of God, but on the external observance of the law and the physical origin of the children of Abraham. Against this, cf. Council of Jerusalem, Acts of the Apostles, A.D. 50 (Acts, 15), and St. Paul (Rom. 2-4; Gal., 3-5).

Likewise the Origenists and Theodore of Mopsuestia did not recognize sufficiently the necessity of grace.

Pelagianism, the chief heresy of this kind, gathered together the preceding errors of like tendency into something of a system and spread it throughout the world in the fifth century. Historically speaking, there were three phases to the doctrine of the Pelagians.

1. It denied original sin, the necessity of baptism and interior grace for obtaining ordinary eternal life. It declared, however, that baptism and grace are necessary for entering the kingdom of God, which is something excelling ordinary eternal life. Hence, to attain to eternal life as commonly accepted, no grace was necessary, not even the grace of faith or the knowledge of external revelation. But, said Pelagius, God gave us a power or faculty, i.e., free will; moreover, willing and doing are eminently proper to us. Grace would be only an unnecessary adornment, just as some souls have visions and ecstasies, without which, however, a man can be saved.

2. Later, to refute the objections drawn from Holy Scripture, Pelagius admitted the term “grace” and the necessity of grace, but by this name he designated free will, and subsequently the external grace of revelation or the preaching of the gospel.

3. Finally, Pelagius, not knowing how to reply to the objections of Catholics, admitted internal grace, but first in the intellect alone, that is, as enlightenment; secondly, he recognized some habitual grace, but not as plainly gratuitous (he maintained that it was given according to the merits

of nature) nor strictly supernatural; thirdly, the Pelagians ultimately admitted as more probable actual grace in the will, not however plainly gratuitous (but granted according to natural merits) nor necessary for doing good, but only for working more easily and perfectly. Cf. Billuart (De gratia, diss. I), who cites many texts of St. Augustine on the subject.

Hence there are in Pelagianism two heresies in particular regarding internal grace.

1. If internal grace is given, it is not simply gratuitous, but is bestowed according to natural merit.

2. It is not necessary for merely acting as is needful for salvation, but for doing so with greater facility or for accomplishing some more excellent works.

Thus without the internal grace of faith we can arrive at the formal motive of Christian faith.

This is the teaching of Pelagius and of his principal disciples, Caelestius and Julian of Eclanum, against whom Augustine and Jerome wrote. Cf. Tixeront, Hist. des dogma.

This heresy was condemned by twenty-four separate councils, notably by the first and second councils of Carthage, that of Milevum, and finally by the ecumenical Council of Ephesus, 431; cf. Denz., nos. 101 ff., 126, 129, 142, 174 ff., 138.

The Semi-Pelagians admitted not only external revelation, but properly supernatural internal grace, although they erred in two respects, namely, in regard to initial grace and final grace.

They said: 1. The beginning of salvation depends on man’s petitioning for it, so far as man, without grace, by desiring through a pious disposition to believe, by knocking, by asking, can prepare himself for grace, which is bestowed on account of this natural preparation. Hence initial grace was not simply gratuitous. Likewise they all maintained that the consent to the initial grace offered is entirely yours. 3

2. The last grace, namely, of final perseverance, is not strictly gratuitous but may be obtained by our merits; nay rather, they said, “man perseveres to the end, so far as he abides in that consent to the grace offered him, bestowed at the moment of justification” (Billuart, loc. cit.).

From these two errors it followed that predestination, whether to grace or to glory, is not strictly gratuitous for, according to this teaching, the first grace is conferred on account of the merits of nature, broadly speaking, and

the term of salvation depends upon the preceding merits which have been foreseen. (See the canons of the Council of Orange; Denz., nos. 176 ff .)

It would be well to have a thorough knowledge of the history of Semi-Pelagianism so as to understand correctly what was condemned in it and in what respect Molinism differs from it.

It is clear, as Billuart demonstrates (ibid.), that the Semi-Pelagians taught that predestination, whether to grace or to glory, was not gratuitous, but that God accompanied all men, the reprobate as well as the predestinate, with equal love, and offered grace and glory to all equally; hence, according to the Semi-Pelagians, of two men to whom grace is offered equally by God, he possesses grace who consents to it of himself, he receives no greater help, and he receives glory who, of himself, perseveres in the grace received.

Consequently the Semi-Pelagians declared in respect to foreknowledge: “God, from eternity, predestined to grace those who He foresaw would consent and utilize it well, and He predestined to glory those who He foresaw would similarly persevere in grace, of themselves.” Thus the knowledge of God is not the cause of things; at least it is not the cause of our determination toward the good, which is first in the affair of salvation. Hence men rather save themselves than are saved by God; in other words, God would not bestow our consent to good, but would expect it of us. (Denz., no. 177; Summa theol., Ia, q.23, a. 5, 2nd error.)

Indeed the Semi-Pelagians hit upon mediate knowledge (scientia media) before Molina, as the Thomists in general clearly show, particularly, among the more recent, Father del Prado (De gratia et lib arb., III, 312). And this is also evident from the epistles of St. Prosperto St. Augustine and from the book on the Predestination of the Saints, (chaps. 14 and 17).

As a logical conclusion to their theory, the Semi-Pelagians necessarily arrived at mediate knowledge, at least in regard to the salvation of infants. They were therefore obliged to solve this objection: among infants, some, without any merit on their part, are predestined to baptism and eternal life. But not being willing to admit gratuitous predestination even in this case, the Semi-Pelagians replied: God knows even the conditional future, and predestined to baptism those infants who He foresaw would have consented to grace and persevered if they had reached the age of adults.

Similarly, they maintained, in regard to infidels: God foresaw what they would have done, of themselves, if the preaching of the gospel had been

proposed to them. Moreover, this foreknowledge of conditional future events or of events possible in the future, independent of divine decree, is the foreknowledge, which is now called scientia media. But Molina admitted, above and beyond this, prevenient grace.

From this theory they further deduced many corollaries, for instance: Christ died equally for all, and dispenses the price of His death equally to all, so that the vessels of mercy receive no more of benefit than the vessels of wrath, whatever St. Paul may say (Rom. 9:22). Otherwise, as they said, God would be an unjust respecter of persons if, without previous merit or disposition, He were to give grace to one and deny it to another. And, they added, this would lead to fatalism, would deprive reproof and prayer of their usefulness, and would lead to despair.

Moderate Semi-Pelagians, such as Cassian (13th Conference), although they admitted initial grace, whenever it was given gratuitously without any merits, allowed that it was more often bestowed on the basis of merit. Further, certain Semi-Pelagians openly declared that perhaps prevenient grace was truly gratuitous in respect to initial acts, and was indeed conferred by God, although He expects our consent. And, as Billuart remarks (loc. cit.): “This was the last stand of this heresy, so far as its concessions are concerned, namely: it depends upon us to accept or reject grace, so that in those who accept it their consent does not depend on the grace of God, but on themselves. In this sense they withdrew from grace the initial step toward salvation as well as perseverance, and attributed them to free will.”

The advocates of Semi-Pelagianism were certain monks of Hadrumetam, as well as Cassian, Gennadius of Marseilles, and Faustus of Riez.

The Semi-Pelagianism of Cassian is found particularly in his thirteenth Conference entitled: “Of God’s Protection,” in which he teaches: “Grace and free will certainly concur in the matter of salvation to the extent that the initial good will and pious disposition to believe, that is, the first step toward salvation, is ordinarily from man alone, and not from God, although in exceptional cases the beginning of salvation and good will comes from God, as in the vocations of St. Matthew and St. Paul.”

The adversaries of Semi-Pelagianism were the aged St. Augustine and St. Prosper, St. Fulgentius, Hilary, and Caesarius of Arles.

This heresy was condemned by Pope Celestine (432), Pope Gelasius (494), who denounced the books of Faustus and Cassian, and finally by the

Second Council of Orange (529), which had the special approbation of Boniface II. In regard to the condemnation of Semi-Pelagianism, Denzinger records the entire Second Council of Orange (529), that is, twenty-four canons; see especially 3-12, 18-22, 25.

Molinism differs from Semi-Pelagianism in three respects: 1. In regard to prevenient grace; 2. in regard to the covenant entered into between God and Christ the Redeemer; 3. in regard to the circumstances of the life of the predestinate. Cf. Molina, Concordia.

1. Molina admits prevenient grace inclining to the initial movement to salvation, or consent to good, but he says: the distinction between the will consenting to this grace offered and the will rejecting it depends on man's liberty alone. Cf. Molina, op. cit., pp. 230, 459.

The Thomists object that before this distinction, there is not yet any initial step toward salvation, because it is not found in those who resist first grace, as in Lessius, De gratia efficaci, chap. 18, no. 7.

2. Molina maintains that, if anyone does whatever he can by means of mere natural powers, God does not refuse grace; but he avoids Semi-Pelagianism by saying: God does not confer grace on account of this good natural disposition, but because of the covenant entered into between Himself and Christ the Redeemer. Cf. infra, q. 109, a. 6; q. 112, a. 3; Molina, op. cit., pp. 1543, 564; Index, "Faciens quod in se est."

Molina says (pp. 51, 565): help being equal, it is possible for one of those called to be converted and another not converted. With less assistance from grace it is possible for the one assisted to make progress, while another, with greater help, does not improve, and hardly perseveres. They are not aids established as efficacious in themselves which distinguish between the predestinate and the nonpredestinate.

However, according to Molina, the predestinate receives greater help than the reprobate from the standpoint of the situation in which he is placed by the divine good pleasure, for indeed he is placed in circumstances in which God foresees by mediate knowledge that he will consent to grace.

Hence, from the viewpoint of circumstances, the gift of final perseverance depends solely on the divine good pleasure; thus, to a certain extent at least, the gratuity of predestination, denied by the Semi-Pelagians, is preserved; but, as the Thomists declare, this is seen to be gratuity of predestination only in regard to the circumstances which are more or less appropriate or suitable.

This pseudo-supernaturalism is the error opposed to naturalism; it sins by excess, that is, it affirms the necessity of grace even for all natural good works, so that all the works of infidels are sins. But in reality, as we have said, it further confuses the order of grace with the order of nature, as it holds that grace is not above the exigencies of our nature, which it considers entirely impotent even in its own order. Whence it can be seen that it extols grace, while it proclaims its necessity beyond measure, but it actually destroys the supernaturalness of grace and depreciates nature. It is pessimistic in regard to nature as Pelagianism is optimistic in its estimate of nature.

This pseudo-supernaturalism appears in predestinationism (cf. Denz., nos. 316 ff., 320 ff.). The doctrine is attributed to Lucidus, a priest of the fifth century, who retracted his error. But the heresy is found especially in the writings of Gottschalk, in the ninth century (cf. Denz., nos. 316 ff .; Dict. théol, cath., “Predestination,” section on the Middle Ages, ninth century).

According to predestinationism, grace and predestination are necessary for doing good; whence those who are not predestined to eternal life sin necessarily, just as the predestinate are necessarily saved. Thus no real liberty remains after original sin.

According to predestinationism, there is not only predestination to eternal life, but also predestination to evil for the reprobate.

All these errors were condemned, in 853, at the Council of Quierzy at which the following was defined (Denz., no. 317): “There is no predestination to evil . . . We have a free will for good, aided by prevenient grace . . . We have a free will for evil, deprived of grace.” Likewise Denz., no. 318: “Almighty God wills that all men without exception should be saved (I Tim., 2:4) although all are not saved. That some are saved is due to the gift of salvation; that some are lost is due to the lack of merit in the reprobate.” Denz., no. 319: “There never was and never will be a man . . . for whom Christ did not suffer that all are not redeemed by the mystery of His passion pertains to the working of infidelity . . . , unless they drink, they cannot be cured.”

This error was revived by Luther and Calvin. Luther maintained that grace and integrity were due to nature in the state of innocence; whereas in

the state of fallen nature, free will is so corrupted that it is a mere name without a reality, and therefore requires grace, to such an extent that whatever is done without faith and grace is sin.

Whence it follows that all the works of infidels and sinners are sins. Sanctifying grace is, in fact, only an external imputation of the merits of Christ, and man is justified by faith alone without works; man is justified by a "fiduciary" faith by which he believes that his sins are forgiven.

Calvin agrees with Luther in this, and adds that God predestined some to hell, and the faithful who believe themselves predestined are saved by this very faith. Further, children born of predestinate parents are by that very fact children of God and can be saved without baptism.

Thus it is apparent how, in this pseudo-supernaturalism, nature is greatly depreciated and even grace is only apparently extolled, since it is due to nature and reduced to a mere extrinsic denomination or to an external imputation of the merits of Christ. The way was prepared for this teaching by Ockham and the Nominalists of whom Luther was a disciple at the University of Wittemberg, as Denifle shows in his Luther and Luthertum, 1904. For the Nominalists, habitual grace is not intrinsically supernatural, but only by extrinsic denomination, as a bank note is not gold. Baianism is again a somewhat attenuated Protestantism. It teaches in particular three doctrines:

1. The grace accorded to Adam was due to nature, and hence did not exceed the requirements of nature.

2. Faith is therefore necessary even for natural good, so that all the virtues of infidels are vices.

3. Sanctifying grace is so necessary that all the works of sinners are sins. (Denz., nos. 1001 ff.) Baianists almost identify grace and natural probity.

Jansenism retained these same errors in substance, as is evident from the five propositions of Jansen. (Denz., no. 1092.) It suffices to note the first of these to make it clear how widely Thomism differs from Jansenism, whatever else may be sometimes asserted. This first Jansenist proposition is, in fact, thus expressed: "Some precepts of God to just men who are willing and striving, are, in the present state of their powers, impossible; grace is wanting to them, also, by which such precepts may become possible." Augustine declared the contrary, as cited by the Council of Trent: "God does not command the impossible, but by commanding He incites

thee both to do what thou canst and to ask what thou canst not, and He assists thee that thou mayest be able" (Denz., no. 804).

Likewise, 101 propositions of Quesnel were condemned in the bull Unigenitus (1713) (Denz., nos. 1351, 1451); lastly the synod of Pistoia was condemned by Pius VI in the bull Auctorem fidei. (Denz., nos. 1516 ff .)

As can be seen, Baianists and Jansenists agree in some respects with Pelagianists, that is, in denying the gratuity and therefore the true supernaturalness of the state of innocence. Jansen also said that in the state of innocence efficacious grace in itself was not necessary. (He was a Molinist in this regard.) In line with the same tendency, the immanentism of the Modernists, for example, Laberthonniere, asserts that grace is demanded by nature, and thus they destroy its supernaturalness (cf. Denz., no. 2103, and Hugon, De gratia, p. 212).

Finally, it should be remarked that, just as Molinism withdraws from Semi-Pelagianism, so Thomism recedes from Calvinism and Jansenism, as the Sovereign Pontiffs, Clement XI, Benedict XIII, and Paul V have declared. (Denz., p. 342 note.) Benedict XIII forbade anyone to condemn the doctrine of St. Thomas and his school or traduce it as condemned by the bull Unigenitus. Subsequently Clement XII forbade "the branding of this doctrine by any note or theological censure by the schools holding diverse opinions . . . until the Holy See should pass judgment by some definition or pronouncement in regard to such controversies." Cf. Denz., no. 1097 note.

Thomism differs particularly from predestinationism and Jansenism in the following respects.

1. It denies predestination to evil and the opinion that God is the author of sin.

2. It teaches that predestination to glory does not destroy, through intrinsically efficacious grace, the freedom necessary for meriting, but rather brings it into play.

3. It admits that God wills the salvation of all men and gives to all adults truly suscient graces; but if a man resists them, he deserves to be deprived of the efficacious graces which he would otherwise receive. Hence God does not ask the impossible and wills the salvation of all men, but He does not will the salvation of all equally, contrary to what the Semi-Pelagians maintain.

And herein lies a great mystery, namely, that God often but not always gives to sinners the efficacious grace of conversion; indeed, He always

bestows it upon the predestinate to whom He has determined to grant the gift of final perseverance; often He even confers the grace of conversion upon others, but later denies them, for reasons of justice, on account of repeated sins, the grace of perseverance, which, absolutely speaking, He could grant them for reasons of mercy. Whence it becomes evident that in this treatise the following two principles are reconciled.

1. God does not ask the impossible, and sincerely wills the salvation of all, contrary to predestinationism, Protestantism, Baianism, and Jansenism.

2. “Without Me ye can do nothing” in the order of salvation. “What hast thou that thou hast not received?” (I Cor. 4:7); or, as St.Thomas says (Ia, q. 20, a. 3), “Since the love of God is the cause of the goodness of things, nothing is in any respect better if God does not will greater good to one than to another.”

These two principles are most certain, but their intimate reconciliation remains hidden, for it is the intimate reconciliation of infinite mercy, infinite justice, and supreme liberty in the sublime depth of the Deity. I have presented this matter in the volume entitled, La prèdestination des saints et la grâce, pp. 49-51, 132 ff.

The relative position of the various doctrines can thus be indicated.

Finally78, it must be observed that two contradictory propositions cannot be true at the same time or false at the same time; one is true, the other false. On the other hand, Pelagianism and predestinationism are doctrines simultaneously false; they are not contradictory in this, but in other respects. For instance, Pelagianism and Semi-Pelagianism erroneously maintain that “God wills equally the salvation of all men, namely, the elect and the reprobate.” The contradictory proposition: “God does not will equally the salvation of all men,” is true. This indeed is what the predestinationists, Calvinists, and Jansenists declare and in so doing they do not err, but they do err by denying the will of universal salvation, which is affirmed by Augustine when he says: “God does not demand the impossible.”

Likewise these contradictory propositions: “Grace is intrinsically efficacious,” and “Grace is not intrinsically efficacious,” cannot be true at the same time or false at the same time; one is true, the other is false. The first is maintained by Thomism, the second by Molinism and likewise by the congruism of Suarez. Which, then, is true remains to be discovered.

St. Thomas speaks particularly of two states of nature which are properly states of this nature considered formally as a nature, namely, the state of original nature in the innocent Adam and the state of corrupt nature after the sin of our first parents, before baptismal regeneration. Cf. Ia, q. 94, a. 2; Ia IIae, q. 109, a. 2.: "The nature of man may be considered in two ways, either in its integrity, as it existed in our first parents before sin, or as it exists in us, corrupted by the sin of our first parents," and q. 114, a. 2, where he speaks of "corrupt nature, as it exists in us before its reparation by grace." These last words show that St. Thomas further admits the state of repaired nature, which is called the state of grace and subsequently the state of glory or of grace consummated. As we shall see, he certainly speaks of the possibility of another state merely natural or of pure nature, and in the state of innocence he distinguishes the integrity of nature itself from the grace which elevated it. Cf. IIIa, q. 53, a. 2.

Theologians now, more or less generally, distinguish five states of nature.

State, as a general term, is the condition proper to man with a certain stability and permanence, (Cf. IIa IIae, q. 184, a. I.) That which human nature possesses of itself as ordained to its final end is here taken as a stable condition and mode. Five such states are differentiated: 1. the state of pure nature, 2. the state of incorrupt nature, 3. the state of original justice, 4. the state of fallen nature, 5. the state of restored nature. We might add the state of glory and the state of damnation, but we are not concerned with these, since we are now directing our attention to nature only so far as, with divine help, it tends toward its final end.

The state of pure nature or the merely natural state. St. Thomas speaks of it, II Sent., d. 31, q. I, a. 2 ad 3. "In the beginning when God created man, He could also have formed another man from the slime of the earth and have left him in the condition of his nature, that is, mortal and passable, and experiencing the struggle between concupiscence and reason; nothing of human nature would have been removed thereby, for this condition follows from the principles of nature. Nor would this defect in it be a reason for blame or punishment, since the defect would not be caused by its own will."

Again, St. Thomas alludes to this state of pure nature as being possible: "Humankind in general suffers diverse pains, corporal and spiritual . . . , (death, hunger, thirst . . . weakness of intellect . . . from which there results an inability to overcome animal appetites entirely). Nevertheless, one may

say of such defects, corporal as well as spiritual, that they are not punitive, but rather natural defects consequent upon the requirements of matter. For instance, the human body, since it is composed of unlike substances, must of necessity be corruptible . . . , and the intellect . . . , on account of the ease with which it may deviate from the truth through phantasms" (Contra Gentes, Bk. IV, chap. 52). St. Thomas adds, however, that, considering the sweet providence of God, it was fitting that man at his creation should be delivered from these defects by supernatural gifts.

How is the state of pure nature to be defined? The state of pure nature means precisely nature with its intrinsic constituent principles and such as follow from them or are due to them; in other words, it implies all those notes which are included in the definition of man, a rational animal, and further the properties of man and the natural aids due to human nature that it may attain its final natural end.

Aristotle thought that men are actually in this merely natural state.

Hence in this state man would have a body and a rational soul lower and higher faculties of the soul, would know the natural law, and would accept the helps of a natural order for arriving at his final natural end, which consists in the abstract knowledge of God and in the natural love of God above all things. However, since what is naturally deficient sometimes fails, in this state also God would permit sin against the natural law in one individual more than in another who received more assistance, and therefore, in this state, there would be given sufficient helps of the natural order to all, but efficacious helps to certain ones. These efficacious natural helps would be due, not to this individual in particular, in whom God could permit sin, but due to human nature as a whole; for God would be creating human nature incompetent for its final end if no individual of the species attained its end.

This state of pure nature may thus be considered in accordance with the four causes: 1. formal cause: the rational soul with its faculties; 2. material cause: the body; 3. efficient cause: God, the author of nature, from whom proceed the natural law and the helps of the natural order, whether sufficient or efficacious; 4. final cause: God, the author of nature, known abstractly and loved above all things. This is the order that philosophy speaks of when it abstracts from both original sin and grace.

First corollary. Neither habitual grace nor the infused virtues and gifts nor actual grace of the supernatural order belong to this state of pure nature.

Second corollary. Moreover, man, like any other animal, would be subject to pain, death, and so also to ignorance and concupiscence. Thus four unhappy natural consequences would follow. He would be subject to pain and death; for, as his body is composed of elements capable of suffering from exterior causes and often at war with one another, old age and death normally come upon man as upon other animals. Likewise man would be subject to ignorance because our intellectual knowledge, having its source in the senses, is very apt to deviate from the truth on account of its disordered phantasms, for example, by interpreting in an excessively material sense things which are spiritual and which are known only as through a glass in the natural manner of the senses. (Cf. ibid.) Similarly he would be subject to concupiscence, for the sensitive appetite naturally obeys right reason only as a subject, not as a slave; indeed, it can be carried toward its own proper object, that is, toward a delectable good or toward a sensible good difficult of attainment, according to the suggestion of the senses and imagination without any rational direction. (Cf. Ia IIae, 9. I77 a. 7.)

Hence the subject may be divided thus:

All theologians agree that this state of pure nature never existed. Baius and the Jansenists denied its possibility; we shall see later the refutation of this error.

The state of incorrupt nature consists in the perfect subjection of the body to the soul and of the sense appetites to the reason; therefore it implies exemption from the four unfortunate natural consequences, that is, from ignorance, concupiscence, pain, and death. If only the sense appetites are subject to reason without the subjection of the body to the soul, the perfection of nature is only partial, not total, since the defects of old age and death will appear.

In this integrity of nature Adam was created, according to revelation, which declares that “through sin death entered the world” (Rom. 5:12); and before sin, Adam and Eve, although naked, experienced no shame; but only after sin, as we read in Gen. 2:25, since before sin no inordinate passion of which they might be ashamed, could arise.

This gift of integrity, according to St. Thomas (Ia, q. 97, a. I c. and 3 ad 2; Ia IIae, q. 91, a. I), resided in a certain force of a natural order, just as we find even now that certain people possess greater health and sturdiness. In the beginning God made man perfect, for the works of God Himself are

perfect, and as every agent produces something like himself, a most perfect agent produces a perfect work; for example, when God wills to establish a new religious order, He sends to the Church a holy founder, in whom all the perfections of this new order are at least virtually present. Hence, with all the more reason, when He created the first man He created him perfect, with full natural perfection; in other words, He created him in the adult state, with those virtues capable of being acquired although sometimes accidentally infused. Thus is explained this force in which the gift of natural integrity consisted.

This gift of integrity in Adam sprang de facto from sanctifying grace, by which the higher reason was subjected to God. From this primary harmony there followed, as St. Augustine and St. Thomas maintain, two others, namely, between right reason and the sensitive appetite and between body and soul. Moreover, natural integrity belonged to the natural order (like the acquired virtues) and thus was differentiated from grace which elevated to the supernatural order. The gift of integrity did not constitute man an adopted son of God, a participant in the divine nature, an heir to the kingdom of heaven; all of these were bestowed by sanctifying grace. Hence nothing prevented God from being able to create man in the state of incorrupt nature without original grace; for, although these two states were combined in Adam, the Fathers and theologians often speak of them as if they were one.

The state of original justice or of innocence is described by St. Thomas (Ia, q. 95, a. I). It consists: 1. in the perfect subjection of the reason to God by grace and charity; 2. in the perfect subjection of the sense appetites to reason; 3. in the perfect subjection of the body to the soul.

As long as the soul adhered to God by grace, the rest were perfectly subject to it; however, it was capable of failing in this perfect subjection to God through sin, for the will was not yet confirmed in goodness.

Some say, Father Kors among them, that, according to St. Thomas, sanctifying grace in Adam was not an endowment of nature but only a personal gift, as it is in us; and accordingly grace would be the external root of original justice, which would be nothing else but integrity of nature.

Generally, in fact, Thomists hold that, according to St. Thomas, sanctifying grace was in Adam an endowment of nature: first, because it was to be transmitted with nature by way of generation; for if Adam had not sinned, his children would have been born with grace, receiving at the same

time the spiritual soul and grace, at the time the body is ultimately disposed to receive the soul (Ia, q. 100, a. 1 and 2). Thus sanctifying grace is the intrinsic root of original justice, as the root is an intrinsic part of a tree. Secondly, because original sin is, as declared by the councils (Denz., no. 175, Council of Orange), the death of the soul. But the death of the soul is the privation not only of the integrity of nature, but of sanctifying grace or spiritual life. Thirdly, thus is explained the remission of original sin by baptism, although this sacrament does not restore the integrity of nature.

Accordingly, to this state of original justice the following pertain: 1. sanctifying grace, the infused virtues whether theological or moral, the gifts of the Holy Ghost, actual graces; 2. exemption from the four lamentable consequences to nature, namely, ignorance, concupiscence, pain, and death. The first two consequences are also called wounds; two other wounds are malice and weakness. These are the six punishments of this life (Ia IIae, q. 85, a. 3).

Corollary. If original justice is understood adequately, it include several habits, such as habitual grace, infused virtues, and preternatural privileges, namely, exemption from ignorance, concupiscence, pain, and death. In fact the root of all these perfections was habitual grace, or the union of the soul with God, the author of grace.

Problem. Whether the sanctifying grace of the state of innocence was of the same kind as the sanctifying grace, which is granted to us now unto justification. We answer in the affirmative that it was the same kind as to substance, since its formal effect was the same, to make man pleasing to God, an adopted son, a friend, and an heir to the kingdom of heaven. However, in regard to the manner of its being communicated to the subject, there is a twofold difference between the two.

1. On the part of the principle: the grace of the state of innocence as an endowment of nature proceeded from God as Creator establishing nature in its natural as well as in its supernatural being. On the contrary, habitual grace now proceeds from God as Redeemer, not as establishing nature but as restoring persons to health.

2. On the part of the subject, the grace of the original state regarded nature directly as an endowment of nature, and persons by reason of their nature, in other words it was communicated at the same time with nature, and fully, entirely communicated itself to nature in respect to all its operations (Ia, q. 100, a. I; Ia IIae, q. 81, a. 1 and 2).

On the contrary, habitual grace now regards, primarily and directly, the person to be restored by means of humility and penance; it does not look primarily and directly to nature, and accordingly it is no longer communicated with nature. Thus the son of Christian, even saintly, parents is now born in original sin, and the punishments of this life remain after baptism, as opportunities for struggle and merit (IIIa, q. 69, a. 3 and 49, a. 5 ad I).

The state of fallen nature is described at length in the treatise on original sin. It is the state of nature despoiled of sanctifying grace, of the virtues attached to it, and of the gift of integrity, in other words, subject to pain and death as well as the four wounds of ignorance in the intellect, malice in the will, concupiscence in the concupiscible appetite, and weakness in the irascible (cf. Ia IIae, q. 85, a. 3, 5, 6, on the four wounds and also pain and death).

Thomists generally hold that man in the state of fallen nature not yet restored has less strength for moral good than he would have had in the state of pure nature. The principal reason is that in the state of fallen nature, man is born with his will directly opposed to his final supernatural end and indirectly opposed to his final natural end, because every sin against his supernatural end is indirectly against the natural law, according to which we ought always to obey God, whatever He commands us. On the contrary, in the state of pure nature, man would be born with his will directed neither toward nor away from his final natural end, but with a capacity for directing himself either toward or away from this end.

The state of restored nature. It belongs properly to the treatise on grace to deal with this state, and the whole of question 109 is a discussion of it, as well as of the state of fallen nature considered as its contrary.

At the outset, however, certain general observations should be made to avoid repetition. This expression, “the state of restored nature,” is not actually found in St. Thomas, who rather speaks of the state of grace after justification or of the healing grace, but not expressly of the state of restored nature. Perhaps the reason is that after sin, habitual grace regards primarily and directly the person to be cured and nature by reason of the person. Moreover, nature is not fully or perfectly restored; there remain the four wounds, which are only in process of being healed in the baptized; besides, pain and death remain. Therefore the state of restored nature will not be perfect except in heaven. Cf. IIIa, q. 49, a. 5 ad I, and 69, a. 3.

However, this expression may be accepted in treating of these different states of nature, as grace is the seed of glory and as grace is now considered as healing the person and, by reason of the person, the nature.

This state is expressed by various names in Holy Scripture; it is termed redemption, liberation, (spiritual) resuscitation, regeneration, vivification, reconciliation, renovation. Thus in I Tim. 2; Ephes. 2; II Cor. 5.

This state resembles the state of innocence inasmuch as sanctifying grace is present in both, identical as to substance and similarly ordered to the supernatural beatitude of heaven.

But there are several differences.

1. From the standpoint of their end: the remote end of the grace of the state of innocence was the manifestation of the divine liberality, whereas the end of the state of restored nature is the manifestation of mercy and now, certainly, the gift is greater, namely, the only-begotten Son of God: God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son. To be sure, God does not permit evil to be done except that He may bring good even out of evil, as St. Augustine says (Enchir., chap. 11), that is, except on account of a greater good. The Church sings: “O happy fault which merited to have such and so great a reparation!” And St. Paul also said (Rom. 5:20): “Where sin abounded, grace did more abound.” Hence, according to several Thomists (for example, the Salmanticenses): God permitted the sin of Adam and original sin for the sake of the redemptive Incarnation, as for a greater good; cf. IIIa, q. I, a. 3 ad 3. Likewise He permitted the threefold denial of Peter for the sake of the greater humility of the Apostle. Thus in the life of the predestinate the divine permission of sin is indirectly the working out of predestination, namely, that the elect may attain to greater humility.

Hence Billuart (De gratia) rightly says that in the state of restored nature the charity of God toward us is greater, for it is a greater charity to do good to enemies and especially the gift itself is greater, namely, the only-begotten Son of God. The new Adam is infinitely above the first Adam, and the Blessed Virgin Mary far surpasses Eve in excellence; the worship of the Eucharist is higher than the worship in the Garden of Eden.

Moreover, the proximate end of the grace of the state of innocence was the imprinting of the image of God the Creator upon man; now it is, above and beyond this, the imprinting of the image of the redeeming Christ as well, according to the words in Rom. 8:29: “whom . . . He predestinated to

be made conformable to the image of His Son"; and all things in the present state of restored nature are referred to the glory of Christ.

2. The second difference lies in the efficient cause, according as the order of action should correspond to the order of ends. God is the efficient cause of the state of innocence immediately, but of the state of restored nature through Christ, since Christ merited this restoration for us and is its efficient instrumental cause, as an instrument in dissolubly united to the divinity.

3. The third difference is on the part of the subject. The subject in the state of innocence was nature possessing no right to the gratuitous gifts of this state, but with nothing, on the other hand, that would resist them. The subject of the state of restored nature is nature which must be cured of sin or, preferably, already cured and adorned with virtue.

Problem. Whether in the state of restored nature man has less powers for doing good conducive to salvation than he had in the state of innocence.

It is not easy to reply because innocent nature, healthy and vigorous, was in itself more capable of doing good and persevering in it than nature restored but still weak and harassed by many temptations; therefore the sin of Adam was all the more grave inasmuch as it could more easily have been avoided. But on the other hand, "Where sin abounded, grace did more abound," "and with Him plentiful redemption." Besides, the Redeemer, head of the Church, substantially present in the Eucharist, is infinitely higher than Adam, head of elevated nature in the state of innocence. Eucharistic Communion, which offers sustaining grace is infinitely above the tree of life, the proper effect of which was to preserve the vegetative faculty against the infirmity of old age.

Hence, unless I am mistaken, the question must be solved by making a distinction, thus: in the state of restored nature, still weak and vexed by many temptations, man has less strength on the part of nature than in the state of innocence. But on the part of Christ the Redeemer, present in the Eucharist, good Christians who generously strive after intimacy with Christ and attain it seem, in spite of temptations, to receive greater graces, at least in the unitive life, than they would have had in the state of innocence, on account of their greater union with God through Christ the Redeemer. Nature, indeed, even in the unitive way is not yet fully restored; there remain pain, old age, death, a certain disorder in the feelings. But the life of the saints, after achieving the victory, is higher, most assuredly in the Blessed Virgin Mary and very probably, if not certainly, in St. Joseph, the

apostles, and the great saints. As a matter of fact, in every fervent Eucharistic Communion it seems that the union with God through Christ is greater than it was in the earthly paradise. And in the Sacrifice of the Mass the consecration is infinitely above the worship rendered in the state of innocence.

Objection. St. Thomas says (Ia, q. 95, a. 4): “The works of man would be more efficacious for meriting in the state of innocence than after sin, if the amount of merit is estimated from the standpoint of grace; for this latter would then have been more plentiful, finding no obstacle in human nature. Likewise, also, if the absolute quantity of his work be considered, for if man were possessed of greater powers, he would do greater works. But if the amount is considered proportionately, the reckoning of merit after sin is found to be greater, on account of the weakness of man, for a work of less magnitude done under difficulty greatly exceeds a work of greater magnitude performed without any difficulty.”

Reply. In this text St. Thomas seems to compare the merits of man in general in these two states. He is not really comparing the merits of Adam with the merits of any great saint of the New Testament; for, most certainly, the merits of the Blessed Virgin Mary are much higher than the merits of Adam. Moreover, when he says, “grace would be more plentiful, finding no obstacle in human nature,” he is speaking of grace in relation to incorrupt nature in general, not in relation to such and such a person.

Hence this article (Ia, q. 95, a. 4) is indeed true of men as a whole, and on the part of nature, but he does not compare Adam with the saints of the New Testament who, after the victory over all temptations, seem, by the power of Christ the Mediator, through the Sacrifice of the Mass and Communion, to attain a greater union with God.

Cf. on this subject St. Thomas’ Commentary on the words of St. Paul: “And where sin abounded, grace did more abound” (Rom. 5:20);”grace, which hath super abounded in us in all wisdom” (Ephes. 1:8); “Now the grace of our Lord hath abounded exceedingly with faith”(I Tim. 1:14); “I exceedingly abound with joy in all our tribulation”(II Cor. 7:4). These words could never be said of Adam.

Commenting on the Epistle to the Romans (5:20), St. Thomas says: “Sin abounded, that is, in the human race, and especially in the Jews (more enlightened and more ungrateful), but grace super abounded, that is, in Christ remitting sin. Hence it is said (II Cor. 9:23): ‘God is able to make all

grace abound in you."' But two reasons may be assigned to what is said here. "One from the operation of grace, . . . for it required abundant grace to cure an abundance of sins; 'many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much' (Luke 7:47)."The other reason is derived from the disposition of the sinner, for whenever through divine assistance he is rendered more humble by the consideration of his sins, he attains to greater grace, according to these words of Ps. 15:4: "Their infirmities were multiplied: afterward they made haste." Thus St. Peter after his conversion; thus, among mankind, the saints after the redemption of the human race by Christ. Besides, with God there is plentiful redemption, as has already been said regarding the Psalm De profoundis and, in truth, redemption through Christ was superabundant. Cf. also III a, q. I, a. 3 ad3: "Nothing prevents human nature from being advanced to something greater after sin, for God permits evil to be done that He may draw something better there from. Hence it is said in Romans (5:20): 'Where sin abounded, grace did more abound,' and in the blessing of the paschal candle we find the words: 'O happy fault, which deserved to have such and so great a Redeemer!'"

In the article on whether God would have become incarnate had man not sinned, St. Thomas uses the above words ("O happy fault," etc.) to refute the following objection: "Human nature did not, through sin, become more receptive of grace; therefore even if man had not sinned God would have become incarnate." Because of this reply of St. Thomas, I cannot doubt the proposition held by many Thomists, though not by all of them, namely, that according to St. Thomas and according to the true state of things, God permitted original sin that He might draw something better there from, the redemptive Incarnation. Thus there is mutual causality: merits dispose for the reception of glory, in the way of a disposing cause, but glory is the cause of merits, as a final cause (Ia, q. 23, a. 5).

Another difficult problem in regard to the various states is this: What is the order of these states according to the decrees of divine providence? There is not complete agreement even among Thomists on this problem (cf. Billuart, De incarnatione, d. 11, a.3), just as some (the Salmanticenses, Godoy, Gonet) admit that original sin was permitted by God for the sake of a greater good, that is, the redemptive Incarnation, whereas others do not (Biluart, John of St. Thomas).

For the solution of this question particular stress must be laid on the text of St. Thomas already quoted (III a, q. I, a. 3 ad 3): "Nothing prevents

human nature from being advanced to something greater after sin, for God permits evil to be done that He may draw something better there from. Hence it is said in Romans (5:20): ‘Where sin abounded, grace did more abound,’ and in the blessing of the paschal candle we find the words: ‘O happy fault, which deserved to have such and so great a Redeemer.’” Likewise III a, q. 46, a. I ad 3.

We consider the solution advanced by the Salmanticenses (Cursus theol., “De motivo incarnationis”) as well as by Goday and Gonet, to be true. They maintain the following views.

1. God, through the knowledge of simple intelligence, knows all things possible, among which is this possible world in which the order of nature, the order of grace with the permission of original sin, and the order of hypostatic union, or the redemptive Incarnation, are subordinate the one to the other.

2. God intends to manifest His goodness outside Himself.

3. God judges the aforesaid possible world to be a very suitable medium for manifesting the divine goodness.

4. God chooses this disposition of things (this is the determination of His will).

5. God commands the execution of these means to be set in action in time (this is, formally, providence).

6. For the operation of the aforesaid disposition of things God moves the universe by directing it. Thus by a single decree God simultaneously willed this possible world with all its parts; in the same way, a builder does not first design the foundation of the house and afterward the roof, but first he designs a suitable dwelling place and, with this in view, the whole house and all its parts in harmony. This interpretation seems profound because of its superior simplicity according as it answers the question: Why did God permit the sin of Adam? Hence it is more and more accepted by modern Thomists.

THE POSSIBILITY OF THE STATE OF PURE NATURE

To complete these preliminary observations in regard to the five states of nature, something must be said against Baius and the Jansenists and also against certain Modernists about the state of pure nature. Certainly this state never existed; and Augustine, writing against Pelagius, shows that Adam in

the state of innocence received more than natural gifts. But Jansen maintained that the state of pure nature is impossible. This thesis is well explained by Billuart, why should be read; here it suffices to present his principal arguments.

Augustine says (Retract., Bk. I, chap. 9.): “Ignorance and difficult belong to the wretchedness of just damnation . . . although, even if they were the natural beginnings of man, God is not to be blamed on this account, but rather praised.” Likewise (De dono perseverantiae, chap. II): “Even if it were true that ignorance and difficulty, without which no man is born, were not the original penalties of nature, still the Manichaeans would be refuted.” That is, not on this account is the Author of nature to be blamed.

St. Thomas is in agreement with this (II Sent., d. 31, q. I, a. 2 ad 3; text cited above on the definition of pure nature. Cf. p. 21).

Proof from reason. The state of pure nature is not contradictory either from the part of man or from the part of God; hence it is simply possible. On the part of man, neither sanctifying grace nor the gifts of integrity and immortality are due to human nature regarded in itself, but are merely gratuitous. Hence the state of pure nature without these gifts is not contradictory from the side or part of man.

The antecedent is evident from the very notion of grace; if it is due, it is no longer a grace; nor is the adoption of sonship due to us, for adoption is made by the free will of the one adopting; and neither to our nature nor to the angelic nature is due the elevation to a participation in the divine nature, as the Church declared against Baius

(Denz., nos. 1021, 1026, 1055, 1078, 1079) and against Quesnel (Denz.,nos. 1384 ff .), Thus Augustine (De civitate Dei, Bk. XII, chap. 9) says of the angels: “God created them, at the same time creating nature in them and bestowing grace upon them.”

Nor is the gift of integrity and immortality due to our nature; for ignorance, concupiscence, passibility, and mortality proceed from the elements of human nature, as St. Thomas teaches (Contra Gentes, Bk. IV, chap. 52).

Thus man, created in a purely natural condition, would possess all those things that coincide with his nature, in both his physical and his moral being; in other words, he would have a body and rational soul with their properties and powers, spiritual as well as sensitive, that is, with free will and the potentiality of achieving his natural end. The proximate end of man

in the state of pure nature would be an honorable good, and his final end God as the author of nature, known abstractly and loved above all things with a natural love. In this state all the sufficient aids of a natural order would be given to all, and to some certain efficacious helps which are indeed not due to any particular individual, but are necessary to human nature so that, in some individuals it may attain the end for which it was created by God.

Likewise this state of pure nature is not contradictory on God's part; for God could have denied gratuitous gifts to man without detriment to His justice, goodness, or wisdom, just as, without any injustice, He did not prevent the sin of Adam, which He most easily could have prevented. Hence even by His ordinary power God could have created man in the state of pure nature.

Against the possibility of the state of pure nature there is a particular objection, which deserves to be considered: man cannot have even perfect natural happiness without a body, that is, without resurrection after death. But resurrection is a miracle and therefore would not be possible in the state of pure nature. Therefore this state is impossible. As a solution of this objection theologians propose three opinions.

1. In this state of pure nature there would not be the resurrection of bodies; and yet at the end of their way the just would be essentially happy, just as now, in the supernatural order, the souls of the saints are essentially happy before the resurrection of the body, which imparts only an accidental happiness. This first opinion is probable.

2. In this state of pure nature there would be a resurrection; and this is not unlikely, for the resurrection of the body is supernatural only as to mode (or modally), not as to substance (or substantially) as grace is. Therefore this state of pure nature in its term, for the just would have a certain perfection of integral nature. Moreover, God could perform a miracle in the state of pure nature to confirm the natural truths of religion. This second opinion is also probable.

3. In this state the just man would not die to be beatified; God would transfer him, body and soul, to the place of beatitude. This third opinion seems least probable; perhaps the second opinion is the more probable. In order to defend the possibility of a state of pure nature, it is not necessary to prove conclusively by what means man would attain to beatitude, just as, to demonstrate the immortality of the soul, it is not necessary to determine

categorically the particular way by which the separated soul derives its knowledge. This will suffice, then, in regard to the possibility of the state of pure nature.

The other objections of the Jansenists are of less consequence and may easily be found in the writings of Thomists.

THE VARIOUS DEGREES OF DIVINE MOTION

This is the last preliminary note to the understanding of our treatise. It is to be interpreted in the light of what has been said above (Ia, q. 105, a. 5 and 6; Ia IIae, q. 9, a. 6; q. 10, a. 4; q. 79, a. 1 and 2). As explained by Father del Prado, O.P. (De gratia, II, 240, 253-57), according to the terminology of St. Thomas there are three degrees of divine motion in the natural order and three corresponding degrees in the supernatural; for in both the natural and the supernatural order divine motion is either before our deliberation or after it or above it.

Before our deliberation, as long as we naturally desire to be happy, we are moved to desire happiness in general. For, since this desire is the first act of our will, we are not moved to it by virtue of a previous act of deliberation. There is something similar in the supernatural order when we are moved to our final supernatural end, for we cannot be moved to it by virtue of a previous higher act by way of deliberation.

After deliberation, or at its end, we are moved toward some good (on which we have deliberated) by virtue of a previous act; for by intending the end we are moved to choose the means to the end under divine cooperating concursus; this, indeed, whether in the natural order or in the supernatural by the exercise of the infused virtues.

Above deliberation we are moved toward some object, which surpasses our powers, Thus, in the natural order, under special inspiration of God, the author of nature, great geniuses in the philosophic, poetic, or strategic sphere, as well as great heroes are moved. There is something similar and even more frequent in the supernatural order, when a just man is moved by special inspiration of the gifts of the Holy Ghost; this is properly above discursive deliberation and the human mode of operation. St. Thomas often refers to the matter. Whence the following may be drawn, reading from below in an ascending order.

(N.B. Father del Prado distinguishes only five degrees, since he does not mention our third degree separately, but reduces it to the sixth.)

The first mode is explained in Ia IIae, q. 9, a. 6 ad 3, q. 10, a.1, 2, 4.

The second mode is explained in Ia IIae, q.68, a. 1 and 2, and whether the will may move itself, Ia IIae, q. 9,a.3.

The third mode is explained in Ia IIae, q. 68, a. 1, where the Ethics attributed to Aristotle, is cited, Bk. VII, chap. 14: "On good fortune."

The fourth mode is explained in Ia IIae, q. III, a.2 c and as 2 operating grace before an interior act, especially when the will, which previously willed evil, begins to will the good. The will does not properly move itself, since the efficacious act is not given beforehand in respect to the final supernatural end, by virtue of which it could move itself toward that end. Further (IIa IIae, q. 24, a. I ad 3): "Charity, whose object is the ultimate end should rather be said to reside in the will that in free choice," for choice properly applies to the means to the end (Ia IIae, q. 13, a. 3).

The fifth mode is explained in Ia IIae, q. III, a.2, cooperating grace (cf. Cajetan); and Ia, 63, a. 1, 5, 6, concerning the second instant in the life of the angels when they were able to sin.

The sixth mode is explained in Ia IIae, q. 68, a. 1 ff.

GENERAL HELP AND SPECIAL HELP

St. Thomas and nearly all theologians employ this terminology, and commonly apply the term "general help" to that which is given for operations in accordance with the universal or common mode of acting. "Special help" is that which is given for operations above the aforesaid universal or common mode, and this in a variety of ways; for example, either because a particular difficulty is to be overcome, or because this mode is properly extraordinary or miraculous. Hence there are many more or less special degrees. At the outset the principal degrees should be noted (cf. John of St. Thomas, De gratia, index under "gratia specialis"; also the Salmanticenses, Gonet, and Lemos).

1. The most general help is that by which the will is moved toward the universal good, as described above in the synopsis (no. I); without this help the will can will nothing, nor, in fact, can it sin.

2. General help often signifies the motion indicated in no. 2, as when the will is moved in the natural order toward some real good, or instance,

honoring one's father. In fact this "general help" is sometimes called grace in a broad sense because, although it is due to human nature in general, it is not due to this individual whom God may permit to sin by his not honoring his father; so in a certain sense this help is special in relation to this individual who does not sin (cf. also De veritate, q. 24, a. 14); see also the Salmanticenses on q. 109, a. 2, as well as Gonet, d. I, a. 3, nos. 148, 170, Cajetan, Billuart, De gratia, diss. I, a. I, and Suarez.

Indeed, "general help," sometimes by many theologians of almost all schools, signifies the entirely common actual grace of the supernatural order, indicated in our synopsis as no. 5, provided that there is no special difficulty to be overcome. For example, it is said that, for overcoming slight temptations against supernatural precepts, general help of the supernatural order suffices, and that this help is due to elevated nature in general, but not to this just one in particular.

John of St. Thomas (De gratia, disp. 21, a. I, no. 11) thus distinguishes between general and special help and also uses the terms "ordinary" and "extraordinary help," but this extraordinary does not here signify miraculous.

3. The term "special help" is usually applied by theologians to that which is included under nos. 3, 4, and 6 of our synopsis, that is, to a special inspiration, particularly of the supernatural order, an operating grace either in the moment of justification or later in accordance with the exercise of the gifts. Sometimes "special help" signifies, although less properly, actual grace even cooperating necessarily in overcoming a great difficulty. Thus it is almost commonly said that to overcome grave temptations special help, or special grace, is required. (Billuart, diss. III, a. 6). Such help is not due to this just man, nor proximately due to elevated nature, but is particularly to be obtained by praying for it.

Corollary. In respect, not to nature, but to individual persons, all supernatural help is special, according to John of St. Thomas (Ia IIae, q. 109, disp. 21, a. I, no. 11), for aid given to one person and not to another is special to the person to whom it is given; yet that aid can be called general in relation to common elevated nature, e.g., in the overcoming of temptations.

The following speak in like manner: Billuart, De gratia, beginning;

the Salmanticenses, De gratia, Ia IIae, q. 109, disp. 11, dub. 11, nos. 27, 34, and disp. V, dub. VII, no. 171; Gonet, De gratia, disp. I, a. 3, & 5, nos.

157, 170, 172; Lemos, Panoplia, t. IV, p. Ia, q. 85, no. 162. Lemos here maintains that general help is twofold; one is sufficient, bestowing the power to conquer a slight temptation, and this is given to all, the other is efficacious, bestowing the conquest of this slight temptation, and this is not given to all; it is necessary to pray in order to receive it.

This division corresponds to the division of the divine will into antecedent and consequent as explained in Ia, q. 19, a. 6, where it is stated that "whatever God wills absolutely, happens; although what He antecedently wills may not happen. He wills absolutely or simply when He wills a thing considering all its particular circumstances, here and now, as a just judge wills absolutely that a murderer be hanged, although in a certain sense he wills him to live inasmuch as he is a man." Likewise in Ia, q. 20, a. 4, it is said that God always loves better men more, but they would not be better were they not loved more by God. (Cf. De veritate, q. 6, a. 2; Ia IIae, q. 109, a. 9, at the end of the body of the article.)

CHAPTER II

QUESTION 109

THE NECESSITY OF GRACE

In this question there are ten articles, methodically arranged in progressive order, beginning with the lesser actions for which grace is necessary (for example, knowing some truth) and ending with the last supreme good work, that is, final perseverance. (Cf. titles.) There are three parts, as Cajetan observes at the beginning of article 7:

ARTICLE I

WHETHER WITHOUT GRACE MAN CAN KNOW ANY TRUTH

Statement of the question. It seems that grace is required for knowing any truth whatever, for it is said in II Cor. 35: “Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves as of ourselves.” And St. Augustine maintained this answer in a certain prayer, but he himself retracted later (Retract., I, 4), as is said in the argument to the contrary and declared that it could be refuted thus: “Many who are not sinless know many truths,” for example, those of geometry.

The first conclusion is the following. To know any truth, man requires at least natural help from God, but he does not require a new supernatural illumination for it. The aforesaid natural help is due to human nature as a whole, but not to any individual.

Proof of the first part. Since every created agent requires divine premotion in order to pass from potency to act, “however perfect the nature of any corporal or spiritual being, it cannot proceed to act unless moved by God.”

Proof of the second part. Because many truths do not surpass the power proper to our intellect, they are easily knowable naturally (cf. ad 1, ad 2, ad 3).

It should be noted that the natural concurrence called here by St. Thomas "motion" (motio) is not mere simultaneous cooperation. Likewise, contrary to Suarez, the virtual act of the will cannot, without divine motion, be reduced to a secondary act, for St. Thomas said: "However . . . (cf. Suarez, Disp. met., disp. 29, sect. I, no. 7, on virtual act). We reply: there is more in the secondary act than in the virtual act, which in reality differs from the action, nor is it its own action. Already in this first article it is evident that St. Thomas withdraws nothing from divine motion.

The second conclusion is the following. For attaining a knowledge of supernatural truths, our intellect stands in need not only of the natural concurrence of God, but of a special illumination, namely, the light of faith or the light of prophecy and of a proportionate motion. The reason is that these truths surpass the power proper to our intellect.

OBJECTIONS

Objection to the first conclusion. Vasquez presents several objections in the first place, he says:

The intellect, indifferent to truth and falsehood, is determined by grace toward any truth.

But our intellect is indifferent to truth and falsehood.

Therefore our intellect is determined by grace toward any truth.

Reply. I distinguish the major: by grace, broadly speaking, granted; properly, denied. Let the minor pass, although the intellect is not so indifferent to truth and falsehood as not to incline naturally to truth. It is called grace broadly since, for example, it is given to Aristotle rather than to Epicurus.

I insist. Grace properly speaking, is required in this case, at least after original sin, according to the fideists, such as Bautin, Bonetti.

Grace, properly speaking, is required that the wounded intellect may be healed.

But when it knows any truth, our intellect is at least partially healed.

Therefore grace, properly speaking, is required for knowing any truth.

Reply. I distinguish the major: for knowing the whole body of natural truths, I concede; for any one truth, I deny. The intellect would thus be not merely darkened but extinct, were it incapable of knowing even the least truth without healing grace. Let the minor pass. I distinguish the conclusion in the same way as the major- I say transeat in regard to the minor but I do not concede since the intellect is not properly healed when it knows a truth of geometry but rather when it knows the truth of natural religion.

Instance: But the intellect is extinct or almost extinct, according to the Jansenists.

Ignorance is opposed to knowledge as being a total deprivation.

But the wound of ignorance is in the intellect, according to tradition.

Therefore.

Reply. I distinguish the major: total ignorance, granted; partial ignorance, denied. I contradistinguish the minor; explanation: the wound of ignorance affects principally the practical intellect wherein prudence resides; but there remains in the practical intellect a synderesis, and the speculative intellect is less wounded, since it does not presuppose rectitude of the appetites.

Objection to the second conclusion. Whatever does not surpass the object of our intellect can be known without grace. The mysteries of faith do not surpass the object of our intellect.

Therefore.

Reply. I distinguish the major: a proportionate object, granted; an adequate object, surpassing a proportionate object, denied. I contradistinguish the minor.

I insist. But the mysteries of faith do not surpass the proportionate object. That which is known habitually to the senses does not surpass the proportionate object.

But the mysteries of faith are known habitually to the senses.

Therefore.

Reply. I distinguish the major: whatever is so known without revelation, granted; after revelation, I distinguish further: they do not surpass the remotely proportionate object, granted; proximately proportionate, denied.

I insist. But at least, after external revelation, the mysteries of the faith do not surpass the proximately proportionate object.

That which is known by its species abstracted from the senses and through external signs does not surpass the proximately proportionate object.

But the mysteries of faith are thus known.

Therefore.

Reply. I distinguish the major: if this is known from a human motive, granted; and then it does not require supernatural grace; and contrariwise if it is known from a supernatural motive, that is, on the authority of God revealing in the order of grace (cf. below, Corollary 4).

I insist. But man is made in the image of the Trinity. And he is naturally capable of knowing this image.

Therefore.

Reply. I distinguish the minor: so far as man is the image of God, the author of nature, granted; so far as he is the image of the Trinity, denied, since the term of this relationship is of a higher order. Thus if someone is given an image of an entirely unknown man, he cannot say whose image it is. (For a correct treatment, cf. Salmanticenses, De gratia, disp. III, dub. IV, no. 40, and Billuart, De gratia, diss. III, a. 2). Thomists have drawn several corollaries from this article, using more modern terminology.

Corollary 1. Fallen man, without grace, with natural concurrence alone, is capable of knowing certain natural truths, namely, the first speculative and practical principles of reason and the conclusions which are easily drawn from them. This is contrary to some ancient writers who do not distinguish sufficiently between grace and natural concurrence; it is also contrary to Vasquez who, following the ways of the nominalists, disparaged the powers of reason excessively, as did Baius and the Jansenists, Quesnel and the nineteenth-century fideists, such as Bautin and Bonetty. With regard to this conclusion, cf. the following condemned propositions.

Denz., no. 1022. This one of Baius is condemned: “Those who consider, with Pelagius, the text of the Apostle to the Romans (2:14): ‘The Gentiles, who have not the (written) law, do by nature those things that are of the law,’ understand it to apply to the Gentiles who have not the grace of faith.” For it is certainly contrary to Baius that, without grace, man by natural reason can know the first precepts of the natural law: good ought to be done, thou shalt not kill.

Denz., no. 1391. This proposition of Quesnel is condemned: “All knowledge of God, even natural, even in pagan philosophy, can come only from God, and without grace it produces nothing but presumption, vanity, and opposition to God Himself, in place of sentiments of adoration, gratitude, and love.” Thus had spoken previously Luther and Calvin (I De

Inst., chaps. 1 and 2), as if peripatetic philosophy had come from diabolic inspiration. The natural reason of Aristotle was capable of discovering the theory of potency and act, of the four causes, and this without any opposition to God.

Denz., no. 1627. The following may probably be attributed to Bautin: Although reason is obscure and weak through original sin, there still remains in it enough lucidity and power to lead us with certainty to (the knowledge of) the existence of God, to the revelation made to the Jews by Moses and to the Christians by our adorable God-man."

The Vatican Council defined the following (Denz., no. 1806): "If anyone says that the one true God, our Creator and Lord, cannot certainly be known by the light of natural human reason, let him be anathema." This is contrary to the traditionalists, Kant, and the Positivists. Finally, in the oath against Modernism: "I acknowledge in the first place and of a truth, that, by the light of natural reason through the things which have been made, that is, through the visible works of creation, God, the beginning and end of all things, can be certainly known and even demonstrated." Likewise in regard to miracles confirming the Gospel it is similarly declared that they are "most certain signs that the Christian religion is of divine origin . . . and even in the present time especially adapted to the intelligence of all men."

Moreover, the reason for this conclusion is the one given in the article, that is:

Every power infused in created things is efficacious in respect to its own proper effect.

But our intellect is a power infused into us by God and, granted that it is darkened by sin, yet it is not extinct.

Therefore it can of itself, with natural concurrence, arrive at a knowledge of certain natural truths.

Otherwise intellectual power would be, in its own order, much more imperfect than are the powers of bodies, of plants and animals,in respect to their own objects, sight and hearing, for example.

As a matter of fact, the natural concurrence required for the knowledge of any truth may be called grace in the broad sense, inasmuch as it is not due to any individual but to human nature in general; (cf.Ia, q. 21, a. I ad 3): "It is due to any created thing that it should have that which is ordained to it, as to a man that he have hands and that the other animals serve him; and thus again God works justice when He gives to anything that which is due to it

by reason of its nature and condition." God owes it to Himself to give to the various kinds of plants and animals and to humankind the natural concurrence enabling them to reach their final end on account of which they were made. But, on the other hand, it is not to be wondered at that what is deficient should sometimes fail, and God is not bound to preventthese defects, since, if He prevented them all, greater goods would not come about, and it is on account of these many goods that He permits the defect. Hence, as our intellect is defective, there is due to it, according to the laws of ordinary providence, that it should atleast sometimes be moved toward the truth and not always fall into error. But the fact that Aristotle, for example, rather than another, let us say Epicurus, may be moved in the direction of truth, this is not due to him; it is by a special providence and benevolence, and in this sense such natural concurrence is called "grace" broadly speaking. And it is proper to pray that one may obtain this grace in the wide sense of the term.

Corollary 2. Fallen man, without a special added grace, cannot, at least with any moral power, know either collectively or even separately all natural truths, speculative or speculative-practical, or, for still greater reason, practical-practical; since for these last, as for prudence, rectitude of the appetite is required.

Many hold, not without probability, that without special grace man can know all natural speculative truths, by physical power, since these truths do not exceed the capacity of a man possessing a keen mind. But in the present corollary it is a question of moral power, that is, such as may be rendered active without very great difficulty. And it is certain that this moral power is not given in regard to all the aforesaid kinds of truth taken together. Rather, it was on this account that the Vatican Council declared (Denz., no. 1786) revelation to be morally necessary "so that those things concerning divine matters which are not of themselves impenetrable to human reason may nevertheless, in the present condition of the human race, be readily known by all with a firm certainty and no admixture of error." This is explained by St.Thomas (Ia, q. I, a. I; IIa IIae, q. 2, a. 3 and 4; Contra Gentes, Bk.I, chaps. 4 and 6; Bk. IV, Gentes, chap. 52). For the impediments are manifold: the shortness of life, the weakness of the body, domestic cares, the disorder of the passions, etc. It is clearly evident that, with all these impediments, fallen man without grace has not the moral power to attain to the knowledge of all natural truths together; nor even, as a matter of fact to

the separate knowledge of them: 1. Because the wound of ignorance is in the intellect, preventing especially thatease of understanding necessary to prudence, for prudence presupposes rectitude of the appetite; 2. because many speculative natural truths are very difficult, demanding long and rigorous study for a certain and complete knowledge of them and therefore a constantly good will, burning love of truth, a relish for contemplation, undisturbed passions, a good disposition of the senses, leisure uninterrupted by cares. All of this cannot be arrived at easily before regeneration by healing grace; indeed even afterward a special grace is required for it.

Among natural truths, according to Billuart, there are some so extremely difficult that no man has thus far been able to attain a certain knowledge of them, for example, the ebb and flow of the tides, the essence of light, electricity, magnetism, the inner development of the embryo; similarly, the inner nature of sensation, the active intellect and its functioning, the intimate relationship between the last practical judgment and choice, etc.; likewise the reconciling of the attributes of God as naturally knowable, although the knowledge of the existence of God, supreme Ruler, is easily arrived at by common sense from the order of the universe.

Doubt. Whether this special grace required for a knowledge of all these natural truths is properly supernatural.

Reply. It suffices that it is supernatural in respect to the manner of which is supernatural in respect to its substance, because the knowledge of which we are speaking is ontologically natural.

Corollary 3. Supposing the existence of an external revelation, fallen man, with natural, general concurrence alone and without a special added grace, is able to know and enlarge on supernatural truths, from some human or natural reason.

Thus the demons believe naturally, by a faith not infused but acquired, on the evidence of compelling miracles, as is demonstrated in IIa IIae, q. 5, a. 2. And formal heretics retain certain supernatural truths, not from the supernatural motive of divine revelation (otherwise they would believe all that is revealed), but from a human motive,

that is, on the bases of their own judgment and will; for example, because they consider this faith to be honorable or useful to themselves, or because it seems to them very foolish to deny certain things in the Gospel. The reason for this is that, although a true supernatural is in itself entitatively

supernatural, yet, as depending upon a human or natural motive, it is not formally supernatural.

Why? Because an object, not as a thing, but by reason of object, is formally constituted by the formal motive through which it is attained. Thus when a formal heretic from a human motive and by human faith believes in the Incarnation, while rejecting the Trinity; then the object believed, as a thing, is supernatural, but, as an object, it is not supernatural. Therefore it may thus be attained by the natural powers, and then the supernatural truth is attained only materially because it is not attained formally in its supernaturalness, as it is supernatural.

That a demon should naturally believe the mysteries of faith is analogical, all proportions being maintained, to a dog's materially hearing human speech as sound but not really hearing formally the intelligible meaning of this same speech. Similarly, "the sensual man (for example, a heretic retaining certain mysteries of faith) perceiveth not these things that are of the Spirit of God; for it is foolishness to him, and he cannot understand" (I Cor. 2:14); cf. also St. Thomas' Commentary on this Epistle. We might draw another comparison with the case of one who listens to a symphony of Beethoven or Bach, possessed of the sense of hearing but devoid of any musical sense; he

would not attain to the spirit of the symphony (cf. our De revelatione, I, 478, based on IIa IIae, q. 5, a. 3).

Corollary 4. Man cannot believe supernatural truths from the supernatural motive of divine revelation without a special interior grace, both in the intellect and in the will.

This is contrary, first, to the Pelagians, who say that external revelation is sufficient for the assent of faith (cf. Denz., nos. 129 ff.) and, secondly, to the Semi-Pelagians, who would have it that the beginning of faith comes from us (cf. Denz., nos. 174 ff.; Council of Orange, c. 5, 6, 7); therein it is declared that the inspiration and enlightenment of the Holy Spirit is required in this matter (Denz., nos. 178-80).

These definitions of the Church are based upon several texts of Sacred Scripture cited by the Council of Orange, for example, Ephes. 2:8: "for by grace you are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, for it is the gift of God; not of works, that no man may glory." This does not refer to external revelation, for it is further said in the same Epistle (1:17 f.): "That . . . God . . . may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and of revelation, in the

knowledge of Him: the eyes of your heart enlightened, that you may know what the hope is of his calling"; and (Acts 16:14): " . . . Lydia . . . whose heart the Lord opened to attend to those things which were said by Paul."

Again, this fourth corollary is opposed to Molina and many Molinists who declare that fallen man can, without supernatural grace, believe supernatural truths from a supernatural motive, but then he does not believe as is necessary for salvation, for which grace is required. And therefore Molina holds that the assent of faith is supernatural not in respect to substance by virtue of its formal motive, but only in respect to mode, by reason of the eliciting principle and by reason of its extrinsic end. (Cf. Concordia, q. 14, a. 13, disp. 38, pp. 213 ff., and our De revelatione, I, 489, where Molina and Father Ledochowski are quoted.)

This question has been treated at length and fully by the Salmanticenses in their Commentary on our article, De gratia, disp. III, dub. III, and I have quoted their principal texts in De revelatione, I, 494, 496, showing that therein they are in accord with all Thomists from Capreolus to the present day (pp. 458-514). Their conclusions, here cited, ought to be read. The argument put forth against Molina and his disciples is found in IIa IIae, q. 6, a. I, "Whether faith is infused in man by God": "For, since man, assenting to the things which are of faith, is raised above his nature, it is necessary that this be instilled into him by a supernatural principle impelling him interiorly through grace," for an act is specified by its formal object (objectum formale quo et quod); if, therefore, the latter is supernatural, the act specified by it is essentially supernatural and cannot be elicited without grace. Further, St. Thomas affirms this to be true even of faith lacking form (informus), that is, faith without charity (IIa IIae, q. 6, a. 2); even faith lacking form is a gift of God, since it is said to lack form on account of a defect of extrinsic form, and not on account of a defect in the specific nature of infused faith itself, for it has the same specifying formal object.

Thus Billuart comments on our article: "the formally supernatural object as such cannot be attained except by a supernatural act. This upsets the basic assertion of Molina, who maintains that the assent to faith from the motive of divine revelation is natural in respect to its substance, and supernatural in respect to its mode. . . . This opinion does not seem to us sufficiently removed from the error of the Semi-Pelagians." (Likewise, the Salmanticenses, loc. cit.)

Confirmation. The Council of Orange (c. 5,6,7; Denz., nos. 178-80) defined grace to be necessary for the initial step toward faith and for the belief necessary to salvation.

But to believe on account of the formal supernatural motive of infused faith itself is already to believe in the way necessary to salvation; what more formal belief can then be required?

Therefore, to believe on account of this supernatural motive is impossible without grace.

Many difficulties would arise from any other opinion.

1. An act cannot be specified by an eliciting principle, for this eliciting principle itself requires specifying, and it is specified by the act toward which it tends, as the act is specified by its object. Otherwise specification would come from the rear rather than from thefront, as if the way from the College “Angelicum” to the Vatican were specified by the terminus from which, and not by the terminus toward which.

2. An act of faith would be no more supernatural than an act of acquired temperance ordered by charity to a supernatural end; it would be less supernatural than an act of infused temperance, as referred to by St. Thomas (Ia IIae, q. 63, a. 4). This supernatural in respect to mode is the supernatural almost as applied from without, like gold applied over silver for those who cannot afford to buy pure gold jewelry: it is “plated,” “veneered.”

3. What Molina says of the act of theological faith, could equally be said of the act of hope, and even of the act of charity, for the substance of which natural good will would sufice, and the supernatural mode would be added to make it what is required for salvation. But then the charity of the viator thus specified by a formal object naturally attainable would not be the same as the charity of the blessed, which must be, like the beatific vision, essentially supernatural. Hence charity would be something different in heaven from what it is now, contrary to the words of St. Paul, “charity never falleth away” (I Cor. 13:8). Thus even Suarez vigorously opposes Molina in this matter. There would be innumerable other consequences as indicated in De revelatione, I, 511-14.

We cannot therefore admit the following two theses of Cardinal Billot on the subject as put forward in his book, De virtutibus infusis (71, 87, 88): “Supernatural formality, causing acts to be proportioned to the condition of objects conformable to themselves, does not proceed from the object in that it performs in respect to us the office of an object, nor, namely, either from

the material object which is believed, hoped, or loved, or from the formal object on account of which it is believed, hoped, or loved, but solely from the principle of grace by which the operative faculty is elevated." "Supernatural habits are not necessarily distinguished from natural habits according to their objects" (p. 84).

In opposition to our thesis, cf. the objections in De revelatione, I, 504-11. The principal one is the following.

The demons believe (Jas. 2), and they believe without grace. But they believe from the motive of divine revelation. Therefore grace is not necessary to believe from a motive of divine revelation.

Reply. I concede the major. I distinguish the minor: that the demons believe formally from the motive of divine revelation according as it is supernatural in respect to substance in itself and on that account, I deny; that they believe materially on the evidence of the signs of revelation, I grant; to this evidence their faith is ultimately reducible. (Cf. IIa IIae, q. 5, a. 2 ad I, 3.) They believe, says St.Thomas, as it were under constraint from the evidence of miracles, for it would be exceedingly stupid for them to reject this evidence. They therefore attain to God the author of nature and of miracles, but not really to God the author of grace, nor to revelation as it proceeds from God the author of grace. On the contrary, revelation as proceeding from God, the author of grace, specifies infused faith which is of a higher species than would be a faith, supernatural in respect to mode, based upon the revelation of God, author of nature. (Cf. Salmanticenses quoted in De revelatione, I, 496,471.)

ARTICLE II

WHETHER MAN CAN WILL TO DO ANY GOOD WITHOUT GRACE

State of the question. It seems that man can do some good without grace: 1. for his acts are in his power, since he is ruler of his acts; 2. for everyone can do better that which pertains to him by nature than that which is beyond him by nature; but man can sin by himself, which is acting beyond and even against nature; therefore with even greater reason can he do good of himself. This objection raises the question whether not sinning, or persevering in good, is itself a gift of God; whether of two men, equally tempted and equally assisted, it can happen that one sins and the other does

not. 3. Just as our intellect can, of itself, know truth, so our will can, of itself, will the good.

This question concerns: 1. a morally or ethically good work in the natural order (such as proceeds from the dictates of right reason and is not vitiated by any circumstances) so that it is not a sin; and 2. good works conducive to salvation, such as are ordained to a supernatural end, not indeed always as meritorious acts presupposing habitual grace, but as salutary acts disposing to justification and presupposing actual grace.

Reply. In respect to these two problems, certain truths are articles of faith. 1. It is of faith that not all the works of infidels or sinners are sins (against Wyclif, Denz., no. 606; John Hus, no. 642, Baius, nos. 1008, 1027 ff .; Quesnel, nos. 1351, 1372, 1388) Therefore without the grace of faith a man can do some morally or ethically good works. 2. It is of faith that supernatural good cannot be effected by fallen man without grace. Cf. Council of Orange (Denz., no. 174), can. 6, 7, 9, 11, 12-20, 22; and Council of Quierzy (Denz., no. 317), c. 2. These two articles of faith are based on many passages in Holy Scripture.

1. Holy Scripture does indeed praise certain works of infidels and testifies that they were rewarded by God; for example, it praises the kind-heartedness of the Egyptian midwives who did not wish to kill the children of the Hebrews in conformity with the iniquitous command of Pharaoh (Exod., chap. I); the hospitality of Rahab the harlot, who refused to betray the men sent by Josue (Josue, chap. 2), is also praised; likewise God gave the land of Egypt to King Nabuchodonosor, that he might wage a successful war against the inhabitants of Tyre, according to the command of God (Ezech. 29:20). St. Augustine says (De civ. Dei, Bk. V, chap. 15) that God granted a vast empire to the Romans as a temporal reward of their virtues and good works. But God neither praises nor rewards sins, but rather punishes. Therefore. Similarly it is said in Romans (2:14): “The Gentiles, who have not the law, do by nature those things that are of the law”; in other words, they do at least some good works, as St. Augustine shows (De spiritu et littera, chap. 27).

2. The other proposition of faith, that supernatural good works cannot be performed by fallen man without grace, is also based on many texts from Scripture cited by the Council of Orange: “A man cannot receive anything, unless it be given him from heaven” (John 3:27). “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He hath sent” (John 6:29). “Without Me you

can do nothing" (John 15:5). "I am the vine; you the branches" (ibid.). "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy" (Rom. 9:16). "It is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will" (Phil. 2:13). "What hast thou that thou hast not received?" (I Cor. 4:7.) "No man can say the Lord Jesus, but by the Holy Ghost" (I Cor. 12:3). "Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves: but our sufficiency is from God" (II Cor. 3 5). "Every best gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights" (Jas. 1:17). There are innumerable texts from St. Augustine; for example, the one quoted in the Sed contra. In the body of the article are found four conclusions, which should be consulted in the text itself.

1. To accomplish any good whatever, man, in any state, requires the general concurrence of God, whether in the state of incorrupt or of corrupt nature (or even in the state of pure nature of which St. Thomas does not speak here, but the possibility of which he admits, as stated in II Sent., d. 31, q. I, a. 2 ad 3, and Ia, q. 95, a. I). The reason for this is that every creature, since it neither exists nor acts of itself, is in potency regarding action, and needs to be moved from without that it may act, as said in article I. This efficacious concurrence toward a naturally virtuous good is due, as we have said, to human nature in general, not to any individual, in whom God may permit sin.

2. In the state of integral nature, man did not require special added grace, except for performing supernatural works, not, that is, for morally good works commensurate with nature. For nature was then in a perfect state and needed only general concurrence, which is, of course, to be understood in the sense of a concurrence which is prior and efficacious in itself, not in the sense accepted by Molina.

3. In the state of fallen nature man requires supernatural grace not only to perform a supernatural work, but to observe the whole natural law (as will be made more evident later in article 5).

4. Fallen man can do some morally good work in the natural order with general concurrence alone, for example, build houses, plant vineyards, and other things of this kind; and he can do this on account of a duly virtuous end, so that this act may be ethically good from the standpoint of its object, its end, and all its circumstances; for instance, that a man build a home for the good of his family, that is, in such a way that there is no sin involved.

This is particularly evident from the fact that, for St. Thomas, there are no indifferent acts in regard to an individual (Ia IIae, q. 18, a. 9; cf. above, Ia IIae, 65, a. 2): “Acquired virtues, according as they are operative of good ordained to an end which does not exceed the natural faculty of man, can be deprived of charity,” but they are so on the part of the subject in the circumstance of his disposition, not in the circumstance of a virtue difficult to set in motion, nor closely connected actually.

Thus not all the works of infidels and sinners are sins. The reason is that, since human nature “is not totally corrupted” by sin so as to be entirely deprived of natural good, therefore it can, through the power which remains, easily do some morally good works with general concurrence, just as a sick man may have some power of movement in himself, although he is not able to move perfectly unless he is cured.

REFUTATION OF OBJECTIONS (cf. De veritate, q. 24, a. 14)

First objection. That is in the power of a man of which he is master. But a man is master of his acts.

Therefore it is in the power of a man to do good.

Reply. I distinguish the major: without the concurrence of God, denied; with the concurrence of God, granted. I grant the minor. I distinguish the conclusion in the same way as the major. (Read St. Thomas’ answer.)

Second objection. Everyone can do better that which pertains to him by nature than that which is beyond his nature. But man can sin of himself, which is beyond nature. Therefore man can do good of himself. (See a similar objection in De veritate, q. 24, a. 14, objections 3 and 4, also objection 2 and the body of the article toward the end.) Likewise some say that of two men, tempted in the same way and equally assisted, it may be that one perseveres in attrition or in an easy, imperfect prayer, whereas the other, on the contrary, sins by not continuing this easy act.

St. Thomas’ reply to objection 2 is as follows: “Every created thing needs to be preserved in the goodness proper to its nature by something else (that is, by God), for of itself it can fall away from goodness. At least, he who does not sin is divinely preserved in the goodness proper to his nature, while God does not preserve the other, but, on the contrary, permits sin in him; therefore they are not equally assisted. However, nature is not completely corrupt; it is able to do some good but with the help of God, which is due to nature in general, but not indeed to this individual. Therefore, as Augustine says, we ought to thank God inasmuch as we avoid

sins which were possible to us, for the very fact of not sinning is a good coming from God; it is, in other words, being preserved in goodness.

In reply to the third objection it is noted that “human nature is more corrupted by sin in regard to its appetite for the good than in regard to its knowledge of the truth.” This is because original sin first causes an aversion of the will directly from the final supernatural end, and indirectly from the final natural end; and consequently a disorder in the sensitive appetite tending toward sensible goods, not according to the dictates of right reason.

Doubt. How is this general concurrence, necessary for fallen man to accomplish any moral good, to be understood?

Reply. The Molinists understand it as a natural, general, indifferent concurrence which the will, through its own volition, directs toward the good. But the Thomists reply that in that case God, by moving one as far as the exercise of the will is concerned, would be no more the author of a good work than of a bad one (contrary to the Council of Trent, Denz., no. 816). Therefore they insist upon a prevenient, determining, and effective concurrence enabling a man to do good rather than evil. The early Thomists called this a special concurrence, a since it is not due to this or that individual; but later Thomists call it a general concurrence, because it is, in a certain sense, due to human nature, even in its fallen state, for nature is not totally corrupt or confirmed in evil, but only weakened. However, it is not due to one individual rather than to another, and from this aspect it is special.

In the same way various texts from Scripture, the councils, the Fathers, and St. Thomas, which seem to be contradictory, are reconciled. For example: “No one has anything of himself but sin and lying,” says the Council of Orange (can. 22). That is to say, no one tells the truth with honest intent without at least the natural assistance of God, which is a grace, broadly speaking, with respect to this man on whom it is bestowed rather than on another; otherwise it would have the meaning which Baius gives to it when he says: “Man’s free will, without the grace and help of God, is of no use except to commit sin.” Baius means not only natural assistance, or grace broadly speaking, but grace in the proper sense, which comes from Christ, hence sanctifying grace and charity.

ARTICLE III

WHETHER MAN CAN LOVE GOD ABOVE ALL THINGS WITHOUT GRACE, BY HIS MERELY NATURAL POWER

We are especially concerned, in this article, with the love of God, author of nature, above all things, although there is still a reference in the reply to the first objection to the love of God, author of grace, which proceeds from infused charity. St. Thomas had already dealt with this subject (Ia, 4.60, a.5) in respect to the angels, and later (IIa IIae, q. 26, a. 3), where he distinguishes more explicitly between natural and supernatural love of God. (Likewise on I Cor., XIII, lect. 4; De virtutibus, q. 2, a. 2 ad 16; q. 4, a. I ad 9; Quodl. I, q. 4, a. 3.)

In the statement of the question he sets down the objections to the possibility of a natural love of God above all things. Later, Baius and Jansen again voice the same objections. This natural love of God above all things seems impossible: 1. because loving God above all things is proper to the act of infused charity; 2. since no creature can rise

above itself, it cannot naturally love God more than itself; 3. because, grace would be added to no purpose. Let us examine: 1. the doctrine of St. Thomas; 2. its confirmation by the condemnation of Baius and Quesnel; 3. the controversy of modern theologians on this subject.

I. THE TEACHING OF ST. THOMAS

This teaching can be reduced to three conclusions treating of

1. the love of God, author of nature, above all things in the state of integral nature.

2. the love of God, author of nature, above all things in the state of corrupt nature.

3. the supernatural love of God, author of grace, above all things.

We shall see later, in reference to a particular problem, whether man in the state of pure nature would be able to love God, author of nature, above all things. This question is not solved by the Sed contra, because in it the expression “by merely natural powers” does not refer to pure nature but to integral nature. The article itself should be read.

Conclusion 1. In the state of integral nature, man did not require an added gift of grace to love God, the author of nature, above all things efficaciously; he required only the help of God moving him to it, or natural

concurrence. This is proved as above, in regard to the angels, that is, in forms.

Loving God, the author of nature, above all things is natural to man and to every creature, even irrational, in its own way; for, as the good of the part is for the sake of the good of the whole, every particular thing naturally loves its own good on account of the common good of the whole universe, which is God.

But man in the state of integral nature could have performed, by virtue of his nature, the good which was natural to him.

Therefore man in the state of integral nature could, by virtue of his nature without any added grace, efficaciously love God the author of nature above all things.

The major is explained above (Ia, 60, a. 5) and later (IIa IIae, q. 26, a. 3). According to Ia, 60, a. 5: “The natural inclination in those things which are without reason throws some light upon the natural inclination in the will of the intellectual nature. But in natural things, everything which, as such, naturally belongs to another, is principally and more strongly inclined to that other to which it belongs than toward itself. For we observe that a (natural) part endangers itself naturally for the preservation of the whole, as the hand exposes itself without any deliberation to receive a blow for the safeguarding of the whole body. And since reason imitates nature, we find an imitation of this manner of acting in regard to political virtues. For it is the integral nature; corrupt nature; part of a virtuous citizen to expose himself to the danger of death for the safety of the whole nation. And if a man were a natural part of this state, this inclination would be natural to him. Since, therefore, the universal good is God Himself, and angels and men and all creatures are encompassed by this goodness, and since every creature naturally by its very being belongs to God, it follows that even by a natural love angels and men love God in greater measure and more fundamentally than they do themselves. Otherwise, if they naturally loved themselves more than God, it would follow that natural love was perverse and would not be perfected by charity but rather destroyed.” These last words imply that in the state of pure nature man would be able to love God naturally above all things, otherwise natural love would be perverse; but we shall see in the second conclusion that this is not so in the state of fallen nature on account of its wounds.

The major of the present argument is entirely fundamental and a most beautiful concept. It is thus explained (Ia, q. 60, a. 5 ad I): “Every (natural) part naturally loves the whole more than itself. And every individual member naturally loves the good of its species more than its own individual good.” Hence onanism, preventing fertility, is a crime against nature, against the good of the species. A good Thomist, then, loves and defends the doctrine of St. Thomas more than his personal opinions. However, in the exposition of this major the excess of pantheism must be avoided, for then the creature would love God more than self naturally in such a way that sin would be impossible. This impossibility of sinning only follows confirmation in goodness, and especially the beatific vision.

The contrary excess would be a pessimism arising from dualism, which would lead to Manichaeism, that is, the doctrine of two principles. As Father Rousselot demonstrates in his thesis, “Pour l’histoire du problème de l’amour au Moyen Age,” there are various theories between these two mutually opposing excesses. There is already, therefore, in our nature an inclination to love God, the author of nature, more than ourselves.

Conclusion 2. In the state of fallen nature, in order to love God, the author of nature, above all things efficaciously, man requires the help of grace restoring nature. (Cf. the end of the article’s conclusion.) The proof given in the words of St. Thomas is as follows: “because, on account of the corruption of nature, the will adheres to a private good, unless cured by the grace of God.” In other words, unless cured by grace, man does not refer to God, efficaciously loved as an end, his love of self and of all other things; thus, unless cured by grace, man does not love God more than himself with a natural love. And inasmuch as this disordered inclination is perverse, it is called an inordinate love of self, self-love, or egoism. By original sin, man’s will is directly averse to his final supernatural end and indirectly to his final natural end. For every sin against the supernatural law and end is indirectly against the natural law which prescribes that God is to be obeyed, whatever He commands. Hence fallen man is averse to God as his final end even naturally.

Conclusion 3. Man in any state requires the help of special grace to love God, the author of grace, with an infused, supernatural love (cf. ad I). This is of faith, contrary to Pelagianism and Semi-Pelagianism (Council of Orange, can. 17, 25; Denz., nos. 190, 198; Council of Trent, Sess. VI, can. 3; Denz. no. 813). It was declared that “if anyone should say that, without a

prevenient inspiration of the Holy Ghost and His assistance, man can believe, hope, love, or repent in such a way that the grace of justification would be conferred on him, let him be anathema." This definition of faith is based on the texts of Sacred Scripture quoted at the Council of Orange as follows: "The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us (Rom. 5:5). "No man can say the Lord Jesus, but by the Holy Ghost" (I Cor. 12:3). "The fruit of the Spirit is charity, joy, peace" (Gal. 5:22). "Peace be to the brethren and charity with faith, from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ" (Ephes. 6:23). "Dearly beloved, let us love one another, for charity is of God. And everyone that loveth, is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God: for God is charity" (I John 4:7 f.); that is, he does not know, as it were, experimentally, with an affective knowledge. Baius and Quesnel said that he does not know in any way.

In regard to the explanation of this third conclusion, see the reply to the first objection, which was quoted against Baius. St. Thomas says: "Nature loves God above all things since God is the beginning and end of natural good; charity, however, loves God since He is the object of (supernatural) beatitude and since man has a certain spiritual fellowship (by grace) with God." From which is to be intimated what man would be capable of even in the state of pure nature. Cf. IIa IIae, q. 26, a. 3, where it is declared that: "We can receive a two-fold good from God, the good of nature and the good of grace. Moreover, natural love is based upon the communication of natural goods made to us by God. . . . Hence this is much more truly evident in the friendship of charity, which is based upon the communication of the gifts of grace." Again in the reply to the second objection: "Any part loves the good of the whole according as it is becoming to itself, not however in such a way as to refer the good of the whole to itself, but rather so as to refer itself to the good of the whole." And in reply to the third objection: "We love God more with a love of friendship than with a love of concupiscence, for the good of God is in se greater than the good which we can share by enjoying Him." And thus, absolutely, man loves God more in charity than himself. And he loves the God who is to be seen more than the beatific vision or the created joy following upon this vision. Thus, it may be said (IIa IIae, q. 17, a. 6 ad 3): "Charity (inasmuch as it surpasses hope) properly causes a tending toward God, uniting the affections of a man with God, so that man does not live for himself but for God." This is pure love

properly understood, that is, above hope; but not excluding hope, as the Quietists would have it.

Doubt. Whether in the state of pure nature man would be able to love God the author of nature, above all things, with a natural love.

Reply. Thomists generally reply in the affirmative.

1. On account of the universality of the principle invoked by St. Thomas (Ia, q. 60, a. 5, and in the present article): “Every creature according to its being as such, is of God, and therefore it loves God with a natural love more than self.” This principle is valid for any natural state in which there is no disorder. But in the state of pure nature there would be no disorder.

2. In Quodl., I, a.8, St. Thomas enunciates the principle of our article in a very comprehensive way, so that it would be valid for any natural state in which there is no perversion.

3. Since it is said (Ia, q. 60, a. 5) that, “if (man) were to love himself naturally more than God, it would follow that natural love would be perverse, and that it would not be perfected by charity but destroyed.” But this natural love would not be perverse in the state of pure nature. Therefore.

4. Since man in the state of pure nature would not be born, as now, habitually averse to his final supernatural end directly and to his final natural end, but the possibility of conversion or aversion.

Corollary. Man has less powers in the state of fallen nature for naturally doing what is morally good than he would have in the state of pure nature. This is contested by several authors of the Society of Jesus.

II.CONFIRMATION OF THIS DOCTRINE OF ST. THOMAS FROM THE CONDEMNATION OF BAIUS (cf. Denz., nos.1034, 1036, 1038) AND QUESNEL (Denz.,nos. 1394-95)

The entire solution may be reduced to the following:

Hence it must be firmly maintained that the natural love of God above all things is the supreme precept of the natural law, and with still greater reason does this hold in the supernatural order, as it was already formulated in Deut. 6:5: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart”; but there it was proclaimed as a law of thesupernatural order as well, as also in Matt. 22:27, Mark 12:30, Luke 10:27. But the natural law is neither abolished by sin nor given by grace, since it is naturally stamped upon creatures.

III. CONTROVERSIES AMONG MODERN THEOLOGIANS ON THIS SUBJECT

The controversy is twofold, first on natural love and secondly on supernatural love. The first problem is whether fallen man can, without repairing grace, love God the author of nature above all things with a love that is affectively efficacious. (Cf. Billuart, De gratia, diss. III, a. 3.) The second problem is whether the act of the love of God, author of grace, considered substantially, is impossible without grace.

Molina denies this. First of all the terminology must be explained as follows:

1. It is certainly true that without grace there can be: a) an innate love or natural inclination to love God above all things; this is the faculty of the will itself; b) a necessary, elicited love of God vaguely loved in happiness in general, which all desire; in this case God is not loved above all things, since He is not considered as distinct from all other goods; c) a free inefficacious love, or simple complacency in the goodness of God, not going so far as to adopt means of pleasing God nor of withdrawing from mortal sin, for which natural concurrence would be adequate. Thus many poets have written beautiful poems on the goodness and wisdom of God, ruler of the world, but without the intention of reforming their voluptuous lives.

2. We shall see in the following article that effectively efficacious love, at least absolutely, or the practice of all the commands of the natural law which are gravely obligatory, cannot now be possessed without a special healing grace.

3. The controversy, therefore, concerns affectively efficacious love, by which God, author of nature, distinctly known, is loved with esteem above all things, with the intention of pleasing Him in all things and of withdrawing from mortal sins against the natural law.

Thomists maintain that this affectively efficacious love cannot exist in fallen man without healing grace. And in this regard they differ especially from Molina, who teaches that fallen man can, by his natural powers, thus love God, the author of nature, with an affectively efficacious love, and even, after having been instructed in the teaching of faith, can, likewise by his natural powers, love God as author of grace substantially, although not in respect to supernaturalness of mode, which is bestowed by charity. 7 Molina adds to this that the affectively efficacious natural love of God, author of nature, is not meritorious of grace (that would be Semi-

Pelagianism) but, on account of the covenant between God and Christ the Redeemer, if man thus does what in him lies through his natural powers, God will not refuse sanctifying grace. With still greater reason, for Molina, if anyone imbued with the doctrine of faith undertakes an act, natural substantially, of affectively efficacious love of God, author of grace, God infuses charity, and this love become supernatural in respect to mode and thus available for salvation. Scotus, Gabriel, and certain others are cited as holding the same opinion.

Against the first of these teachings of Molina on the possibility of an affectively efficacious love of God, author of nature, above all things without grace, Thomists declare that: 1. This doctrine does not seem to preserve sufficiently the sense of the words of the Council of Orange (can. 25; Denz., no. 199): “We must believe that by the sin of the first man free will was so inclined and weakened that no one subsequently is able either to love God as he ought, . . . or to do for the sake of God what is good, unless the grace of mercy anticipates him.” The Molinists reply that the Council says, “as he ought with regard to salvation,” and hence refers only to supernatural love. To this the

Thomists answer that the Council is not referring to supernatural love alone, since it repeats that the impotence to love God above all things arises not from the supernaturalness of the act but from the infirmity of fallen nature; therefore it refers to natural love as well, since the impotence arising from the supernaturalness of the act was

already present in the state of innocence. This also seems to be the meaning of the Council of Trent (Sess. VI, can. 3; Denz., no. 813): “If anyone should say that without the inspiration of the Holy Ghost and His assistance man can believe, hope, love, or repent as is required in order that the grace of justification should be granted to him, let him be anathema.”

Nevertheless, the Thomists add, it is not possible for the grace of justification not to be conferred upon one who loves God, the author of nature, above all things with an affectively efficacious love. (Cf. below, q. 109, a. 6, on whether man, without grace, can prepare himself for grace, and q. 112, a. 3.).

Moreover, the aforesaid teaching of Molina is contrary to the final proposition of the body of the present article of St. Thomas, where he contrasts the state of fallen nature with that of integral nature: “In the state of corrupt nature, man requires the help of grace healing nature, even for

loving God naturally above all things." There is no doubt but that St. Thomas is speaking also of affectively efficacious natural love, that is, with the intention of pleasing God in all things and of withdrawing from mortal sin. This is confirmed by what has been said above (Ia IIae, q. 89, a. 6): "When man begins to have the use of reason . . . (he should) deliberate concerning himself. And if anyone orders his life toward the proper end (that is, to God even as author of nature), he will obtain the remission of original sin by grace. In the present article St. Thomas is not yet speaking of effectively efficacious love, that is, of the fulfillment of every natural precept; but he refers to it in the following article.

Finally, the opinion of Molina is thus refuted by theological argument: A weak power, inclined to selfish good opposed to the divine, cannot produce the superior act of a healthy power with reference to God, unless it is healed. But man in the state of fallen nature has a weak will, inclined to a selfish good. Therefore he cannot produce a preeminent work with reference to God. This act is pre-eminently that of a healthy power, since it virtually contains the fulfillment of the whole natural law, for the actual accomplishment of the law follows from the efficacious will to fulfill it. Hence grace is necessary not only for the actual observance of the whole natural law, but also for the intention of fulfilling it. Nor is the eflicacious natural volition granted for accomplishing anything which is now naturally impossible.

This weakness of the will consists in its "following a selfish good unless healed by the grace of God," as stated in the article. In other words, it is turned away from God and even its natural final end; for sin offends God even as author of nature. Moreover, it is a disorder of the concupiscence which the demon augments and enkindles.

First doubt. What, then, of the natural love of God in the separated souls of children who die without baptism, of whom St. Thomas speaks (IIa, d. 33, q. 2, a. 2 ad 5)?

Reply. There is, first of all, an innate love and a necessary, elicited mlove of God, confusedly, as in happiness in general, for this love remains even in the demons (Ia, q. 60, a. 5 ad 5). Secondly, there is a free, imperfect, inefficacious love, or love of complacency, toward God as principle of all natural good, but not really an efficacious love. Otherwise we should have to deny the last proposition in the body of the present article.

In this connection it seems that, as stated in a.2 ad 3, “Nature is more corrupted in regard to the appetite for good than in regard to the knowledge of the truth.” For the mind of fallen man is able by its own powers to judge speculatively that God is the highest good, lovable and worthy of love above all things; but without healing grace, he is incapable of recognizing this with his practical judgment, impelling him to action. Hence the words of Medea spoken of by the poet: “I see what is better, and I approve it (speculatively), but I follow what is worse.” Man, then, is more deeply wounded in his will by which he sins than in his intellect. If, therefore, a child, reaching the full use of reason, loves God, the author of nature, above all things with an affectively efficacious love, this can only be by means of healing grace.

Objection. Fallen man can, without grace, love his country, or his friend, or his chastity more than his own life; therefore, with still greater reason can he so love God, the author of nature.

Reply. I reply by distinguishing the antecedent: fallen man does this without the special help of God, if it is done from a worldly motive, such as the desire for fame or glory, granted; but if from the pure motive of virtue, denied; for this requires the special help of God, as conceded to many pagans, according to Augustine. Moreover it is more difficult to love God, the author of nature, above all things in a manner that is affectively efficacious than to love the attractiveness of any particular virtue more than one’s life; for this is, at least virtually, to love all the virtues beyond all sensible feelings.This is more difficult; for instance that a soldier, ready to die for his country, is not willing to spare his enemy when he should.

Second doubt. What grace is required for this affectively efficacious love of God, author of nature above all things?

Reply. Of itself, by reason of its object, it requires only help of a natural order, but accidentally and indirectly, by reason of the elevation of the human race to the supernatural order, it requires supernatural help, that is, healing grace (as declared in the article). This is because the aversion to a final natural end cannot be cured without the aversion to a final supernatural end being cured; for this latter contains indirectly an aversion to the final natural end, for every sin against the supernatural law is indirectly against the natural law: God is to be obeyed, whatever He may command. Moreover, as we shall state in the following article, the love of

God virtually includes the fulfillment of the whole natural law, for which supernatural healing grace is required.

The Thomists also reject the other opinion of Molina, that man imbued with the teaching of faith can without grace love God, the author of grace, in respect to the substance of this act, although not in respect to its mode as proper to salvation. Contrary to this, the Thomists generally hold, as for the act of faith, that the act is specified by its formal object; but the formal object of the aforesaid act is God, the author of grace; therefore this act is essentially supernatural, or supernatural in respect to substance and not merely in respect to mode (cf. Salmanticenses, De Gratia, disp. III, dub. III; and our De revelatione, I, 498, 511). A natural act in respect to substance would be an act specified by a natural object, such as an act of acquired temperance, which might yet become supernatural in respect to mode, according as it is commanded by charity and ordered by it to the reward of eternal life.

ARTICLE IV

WHETHER MAN, WITHOUT GRACE, BY HIS NATURAL POWERS, CAN FULFILL THE PRECEPTS OF THE NATURAL LAW

State of the question. In this article, as is evident in the body, we are especially concerned with the precepts of the decalogue which already belong to the natural law and can substantially be fulfilled without charity; indeed, even the acts of faith and hope can be accomplished in the state of mortal sin. Let us examine:

1. St. Thomas' conclusions and arguments;
2. How they are based on Holy Scripture and tradition;
3. The refutation of the objections. (The article should be read.)

I. ST. THOMAS' CONCLUSION

His first conclusion is that in the state of corrupt nature, man cannot, without healing grace, fulfill all the precepts of the natural law with respect to the substance of the works, while on the contrary he would be able to do this without grace in the state of integral nature (supposing, however, natural concurrence). From these last words, which are found in St.

Thomas, it is evident that he is concerned in this instance with the precepts of the natural law in respect to the substance of the works, for the substance of a work correlative with a supernatural precept is supernatural and cannot, even in the state of integral nature, be produced without grace. In fact, precepts are called supernatural because they enjoin acts which surpass the powers of nature. In article two it is stated that “grace was necessary to man in the state of integral nature in order to perform or will a supernatural work.”

The argument supporting this conclusion is the same as in the preceding article for the impossibility of loving God, author of nature, with an affectively efficacious love; indeed the argument now holds with still greater reason, that is, in the case of effectively efficacious love or the fulfillment of all the precepts of the natural law.

In other words, a weak man cannot of himself perform the very superior work of a healthy man, unless he is first cured. Nor can a will turned away from even its natural final end be properly oriented in regard to all the means to that end. It would be rash to deny this first conclusion or to maintain that effectively efficacious love of God, author of nature, above all things can be attained without grace. This is conceded by the Molinists. It would be rash because the Council of Orange (Denz., nos. 181 ff., 199) refers not only to impotence arising from the supernaturalness of the work, but from the weakness of fallen nature.

The second conclusion is that in no state can man without grace fulfill the commands of the law with respect to the mode of acting, that is, performing them from charity. This is of faith. St. Thomas makes the assertion without proof, for he has already said, in article two, that man even in the state of incorrupt nature required “grace added to nature in order to perform or will supernatural good,” and particularly to elicit a supernatural act of charity. For acts are specified by their objects and therefore the act specified by a supernatural object is essentially supernatural.

II. THE BASES OF TRADITION

They are as indicated by Billuart, in addition to many texts of St. Augustine.

1. The Council of Milevum (Denz., no. 105), against the Pelagians who declared that without grace man can keep all the commandments of God,

but with difficulty; with grace, however, he can do so with facility; it is defined that “if anyone should say . . . that grace . . . is given to us that we may more easily fulfill the divine commands, and . . ., that, without it, we are able to fulfill them, although not easily, let him be anathema.” From this it is deduced that the commandments of God cannot be fulfilled as is necessary for salvation, that is, from charity, without grace.

St. Augustine always defends this truth against the Pelagians in his De spiritu et littera, De gratia Christi, De libero arbitrio; in the book De haeresibus (heresy 88), speaking of the Pelagians, he says: “They are such enemies of the grace of God that they believe a man can accomplish all the divine commands without it.” Likewise, St. Augustine on Ps. 118, conc. 5, and in Sermon 148 (de tempore), chap. 5, where he is concerned with the precepts of the decalogue.

The opposite error in Baius (Denz., nos. 1061,1062) was condemned because it rejects the distinction between fulfilling the commandments in respect to substance and in respect to mode, supernaturally.

2. The Council of Orange (II, c. 25; Denz., no. 199) declared: “We must believe that through the sin of the first man free will was so inclined and weakened, that no one has since . . . been able to perform what is good for the sake of God unless the grace of divine mercy precedes him.” Hence St. Thomas’ second conclusion is of faith; that is, without grace, men cannot fulfill the commandments with respect to supernaturalness of mode, namely, so as to be performed out of charity. And the Molinists admit this.

Doubt. Whether grace is necessary for the fulfilling of any supernatural precept, in respect to its substance. Herein lies the controversy with the Molinists. Scotus and the Molinists hold that without grace men imbued with the teaching of faith can fulfill, substantially, even interior works correlative to the supernatural precepts of faith, hope, and charity.

Reply. The Thomists reply that it is not possible, since precepts are called supernatural because they enjoin acts which, in themselves, essentially surpass the powers of nature, and these acts are such, in fact, because they are specified by a supernatural formal object. Thus, for example, an act of Christian faith differs from an act of acquired temperance.

Insistance by Molina, Lugo, and Billot, that diversity of the activating principles (that is, of habits) alone is sufficient to cause acts to differ in species, even when they attain the same formal object.

Reply 1. These very activating principles, that is, habits and powers, should be specified by the formal object. 2. The Salmanticenses reply (De gratia, disp. III, dub. III, no. 60): “I deny the antecedent, for if it were true, as our adversaries contend, nothing in true philosophy but would waver (or be overturned) in regard to species and the distinction of powers and habits; we should be compelled to establish new bases such as were not taught by Aristotle, Master Thomas, or the leaders of other schools. Although younger writers would easily grant this, we should have no leader from among the ancients. The result would indeed be to the highest detriment of true wisdom; wherefore it is essential in this respect to hinder their proclivity with all our powers.” Cf. other texts of the Salmanticenses quoted in our De revelatione, I, 495.

To the same effect Thomas de Lemos, O.P., replied in the celebrated discussions of the Congregatio de Auxiliis, on May 7 and 28, 1604, before Clement VIII (cf. De revelatione, I, 491). He challenged the opinion of Molina in the following words: “By which system he would overturn faith as well as philosophy; faith, certainly, because thus God is feared and loved by the powers of nature, as the end is supernatural; philosophy indeed since, in this way, the formal object of a superior habit is attained by the inferior powers.” And on May 28, 1604, session 54 settled a problem proposed according to the interpretation of the Thomists explained by Lemos. Lemos expresses the same opinion in his Panoplia gratiae at the beginning of Bk. IV, nos. 24f. (Cf. De revelatione, I, 491; Del Prado, De gratia, I, 48; Suarez expresses agreement with us in De gratia, Bk. II, c. II, nos. 22 f., quoted in De revelatione, ibid.) Thus Suarez, as well as Lemos and the Salmanticenses considers it rash to deny the aforesaid traditional teaching of theologians. In respect to this matter many Jesuits follow Suarez, including the Wirzburg school (De virtutibus theologicis, disp. II, c. III, a. 3); Bellarmine is also cited and, among more recent writers, Wilmers (De fide divina, 1902, pp. 352, 358, 375); Mazzella, in the first two editions of De virtutibus infusis, and Pesch (De gratia, nos. 69, 71, 410).

Objection. The Molinists object, referring to Ia IIae, q. 54, a. 2 where it is stated that “the species of habits are distinguished in three ways: 1. according to the activating principles of such dispositions, 2. according to nature, 3. according to objects.” Therefore, declare the Molinists, habits are not specified only by their objects.

Reply. All of these are to be taken together and not separately. An act cannot be essentially supernatural from the standpoint of its eliciting principle and according as it presupposes habitual grace unless it is at the same time supernatural from the standpoint of its object. Moreover, we contend in De revelatione, I, 506, in agreement with the Salmanticenses and other Thomists, that from St. Thomas'context it is clearly evident that, when he says habits are specified according to their active principles, he means according to their objective, regulating, specifying principles; for he says in the answer to the second objection of the same article: "The various means (of knowledge) are like various active principles according to which the habits of science are differentiated." And in answer to the third objection: "Diversity of ends differentiates virtues as diversity of active principles" or motives according as the end is the object of a prior act of the will, in other words, the intention.

Similarly in Ia IIae, q. 51, a. 3, St. Thomas shows that the regulating reason is the active principle of the moral virtues, and the understanding of principles is the principle of knowledge, that is, as proposing the formal object (objectum formale quo) or motive. Moreover, when he says that habits are specified according to nature, this is according as the habit is good or bad, suitable or not suitable to the nature; or according as it is suitable to human nature as such, or suitable to the divine nature in which man participates; but it cannot be of itself suitable to a higher nature, unless at the same time it has a formal object proportionate or of the same order; otherwise it would be an accidentally infused habit, such as infused geometry. Father Ledochowski, General of the Society of Jesus, further acknowledges that the teaching of Molina we are discussing is not that of St. Thomas (cf. De revelatione, I, 489).

III. REFUTATION OF THE PRINCIPAL OBJECTIONS AGAINST THE NECESSITY OF GRACE FOR OBSERVING SUBSTANTIALLY ALL THE PRECEPTS OF THE NATURAL LAW

The first classical difficulty is indicated by St. Thomas in the first objection, taken from the text of St. Paul to the Romans (2:14): "The Gentiles who have not the (written) law, do by nature those things which are of the law."

Reply. According to St. Augustine, followed by St. Prosper, St. Fulgentius, and by St. Thomas here in his refutation, these words are to be understood of the Gentiles acting from grace; and then "by nature" is not

interpreted according as it is opposed to grace, and according as it is equivalent to “the powers of nature,” but according as it is opposed to the Mosaic law, so that the meaning is: “The Gentiles who have not the written law, do naturally those things which are of the law,” in other words, without the law of Moses, but not without the spirit of grace. Thus Augustine in De spiritu et littera, Bk. I, c. 27, quoted here by St. Thomas; likewise St. Chrysostom.” But other interpreters understand this of the infidel Gentiles and hence “by nature” of the powers of nature; but this disposes of the objection just as well, for the meaning is that the Gentiles by their own natural powers perform certain works of the law, but not all.

The second difficulty is as follows: if the observance of the whole natural law, in respect to the substance of the works, is impossible to fallen nature, then the Jansenist heresy follows logically, that is, that certain of the precepts of God are impossible to fallen man. Luther and Calvin held the same opinion.

Reply. “What we can do with divine assistance is not altogether impossible for us”; and we avoid Jansenism by declaring that the grace necessary to accomplish the commandments is not wanting to anyone except by reason of his own fault. All adults receive graces at least remotely sufficient for salvation, and if they did not resist them, they would obtain further graces. The error of Luther and Calvin is apparent from this: according to them, Christ did not come to form observers of the law, but to redeem the faithful from the obligation of observing the law, in accordance with Luther’s words : “Sin strongly and believe more strongly,” in other words, believe firmly that you are freely elect, and you are saved, even if you persevere in crimes and the transgression of the law until death.

The Jansenists erred similarly by maintaining that certain commands of God are impossible not only to fallen man, but even to the just man. This is manifest from the first proposition of Jansen (Denz., no. 1092): “Other precepts of God are impossible to just, willing, zealous men with the powers which they now possess; they also lack the grace which would make them possible”; in 1653 this was condemned as heretical. The Council of Trent had previously defined (Denz., no. 804): “God does not command the impossible, but by commanding He urges you both to do what you can and to ask what you cannot, and He assists you that you may be able.” Also in the corresponding canon (Denz., no. 828). The foregoing words of the Council are taken from St. Augustine, and, according to them,

sufficient grace to pray is never wanting, and by it man has at least the remote power of observing the divine precepts, for “by commanding, God urges you to do what you can and to ask what you cannot, and He assists you that you may be able.”

I insist. God cannot demand that a blind man see, although he may see by a miracle; therefore, neither can He demand that fallen man observe the law, although he may do so by means of grace.

Reply. The disparity lies particularly in the fact that the blind man is not offered a miracle which would cure him; but fallen man is offered grace by which he may observe the law, and he would receive it if he did not voluntarily set obstacles in the way. Hence one must pray as did Augustine, saying: “Lord, grant what Thou commandest and command what Thou wilt,” that is, give us grace to fulfill Thy commands and command what Thou wilt.

First doubt. Which grace is required by fallen man for the keeping of the whole natural law?

Reply. As in the explanation of the preceding article: of itself, by reason of its object, help of the natural order would suffice, since the object is natural. Accidentally, however, and by reason of the elevation of the human race to a supernatural end, supernatural grace is required, which under this aspect is called healing grace. This is because in the present economy of salvation man cannot be converted to God, his final natural end, and remain estranged from God, his supernactural end, since this aversion is indirectly opposed to the natural law, according to which we ought to obey God, whatever He may command.

Second doubt. To observe the whole natural law for a long time is supernatural actual grace sufficient, or is habitual grace required?

Reply. According to ordinary providence, habitual grace is required, by which alone man is solidly well disposed toward his final end. And this firm disposition toward his final end is itself required that man may keep the whole natural law enduringly and perseveringly. Nevertheless, by an extraordinary providence, God can fortify a man’s will in regard to the observance of all the natural precepts by means of continuous actual graces; but if a man does what lies within his power by the help of actual grace, God will not withhold habitual grace from him. As we shall see below (a. 9), over and above habitual grace, actual grace is required for the just man to perform any supernatural good work, and even to persevere for long in

the observance of the whole natural law, in spite of the rebellion of the sense appetites against reason, and the temptations of the world and the devil.

Third doubt. Whether in the state of pure nature man would be able to observe enduringly the whole natural law without special help of the natural order.

Reply. I reply in the negative with Billuart: Since to do so demands constancy of the will in good against the ternmations that arise. A constancy which man established in the state of pure nature would not have had, of himself, with the aid of ordinary concurrence alone; hence, to persevere he would have had need of special natural help which God would have given to many, but not to those in whom He would have permitted the sin of impenitence of this natural order in punishment for preceding sins.

Cajetan's opinion. In his commentary on the present article, which preceded the disputes aroused by Molina, at a time when the terminology of this subject was not yet fully established, Cajetan spoke less accurately in explaining the answer to the third objection. He says, "man, by nature, can believe, hope, love God, with respect to the substance of the act," and he cites the example of a formal heretic who adheres to certain dogmas. He expresses himself similarly in regard to IIa IIae, q. 171, a. 2 ad 3. But it is evident from the context and from this example that Cajetan is referring to the generic substance of the acts, not to the specific substance, not to the formal object itself (objectum formale quod et quo); for a heretic believes formally, not by divine, but by human faith.

Later Cajetan corrects his terminology (commenting on IIa IIae, q. 6, a. I, no. 3), declaring that "it should be said, therefore, that the act of faith springs forth as a result of no natural knowledge, of no natural appetite, but from the appetite for eternal beatitude and from an adherence to God supernaturally revealing and preserving His Church." Cajetan likewise defends the common opinion of Thomists against Scotus and Durandus (Ia IIae, q. 51, a. 4): "Infused habits are of themselves essentially supernatural." Also, q. 62, a:3; q. 63, a. 6, and IIa IIae, q. 17, a. 5, no. I, where he defends the opinion that with out infused virtue there would be no act "proportionate to the supernatural object," nor to the supernatural end. (Cf. Del Prado, De gratia, I, 50 and our De revelatione, I, 484 f., note I.)

ARTICLE V

WHETHER MAN CAN MERIT ETERNAL LIFE WITHOUT GRACE

After considering the observance of the divine commands in themselves, St. Thomas considers it in relation to eternal life. The question is here posed generally and indefinitely; later, in q. I 14, a. 1 2,3, here he is dealing with merit properly speaking, the question will be more particularly treated as to whether man without grace can merit de condigno eternal life. The answer is negative and is of faith, against the Pelagians.

1. It is proved from authority in the argument Sed contra (Rom. 6:23): “the grace of God life eternal,” which is thus explained by Augustine, here quoted: “that it may be understood that God, in His compassion, leads us unto eternal life.” St. Augustine is also quoted in the answer to the second objection. (Cf. Council of Orange, II, can. 7, Denz., no. 180; and Trent, Sess. VI, can. 2, Denz., no. 812.)

2. It is thus proved by theological reasons: Acts leading to an end must be proportionate to the end. But eternal life is an end exceeding the proportion of human nature (cf. Ia IIae, q. 5, a. 5, on supernatural beatitude). Therefore man cannot by his natural powers produce works meritorious of eternal life. Read the answer to the third objection with respect to the distinction between final natural end and supernatural end (cf. Contra Gentes, Bk. III, chap. 147, and De veritate, q. 14, a. 2). These references are clear, and whatever is to be said on this subject is reserved for consideration in q. 114, a. 1 and 2, that is, whether man can merit anything de condigno, and so merit eternal life.

ARTICLE VI

WHETHER MAN CAN PREPARE HIMSELF FOR GRACE BY HIMSELF WITHOUT THE EXTERIOR HELP OF GRACE

State of the question. The external help of grace with which we are here concerned, is not only the preaching of the gospel itself, confirmed by miracles (the Pelagians admitted this), nor is it only the natural concurrence of God for the performance of a naturally good act, the necessity of which the Semi-Pelagians did not deny, but, as the body of the article explains, it refers to actual supernatural help.

That the difficulty of this question may be more manifest, St. Thomas considers the following. 1. The arguments maintained by the Pelagians or Semi-Pelagians, namely. it seems that without actual grace man can prepare himself for habitual grace, for, we read (Zach. 1:3): “Turn ye to Me . and I will turn to you.” 2. It is frequently said. “To him who does what he can, God does not deny grace”; and (Luke 11:13): “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father from heaven give the good Spirit to them that ask Him?” 3. It would be an infinite process, since to prepare himself for a prior grace, man would require another, and so on ad infinitum. 4. In the Book of Proverbs (16:1) it is said that “it is the part of man to prepare the soul,” according to the Vulgate; but in many codices this verse is lacking and in the Greek codices in which it occurs, the sense is: “It is the part of man to form a proposal in his heart,” as if to say: man proposes and God disposes.

On the other hand we find in the Gospel according to St. John (6:44): “No man can come to me, except the Father, who hath sent Me, draw him.” How are these quotations to be reconciled? Let us examine 1. The errors on this subject which have been condemned; 2. the disagreement among Catholic theologians; and 3. the opinion of St. Thomas.

I. The condemned errors. The Pelagians, denying original sin, maintained, at least at the beginning of their heresy, that man by his own powers, without grace, can prepare himself for grace so as to merit the first grace. This was condemned by the Councils of Neo-Caesaria and Milevum (Denz., nos. 104 ff., 133 ff .).

The Semi-Pelagians said that fallen man, without grace, can have of himself the beginning of salvation and can prepare himself for grace, by asking, desiring, knocking, seeking; thus he does not merit grace, but he disposes himself for it by himself alone, and God seizes upon this beginning of salvation as an occasion for conferring grace, otherwise He would be an acceptor of persons if He conferred grace upon one rather than another without any reason on the part of man.” This was condemned by the Council of Orange (II, can. 3 and 6, Denz., nos. 176,179). The same declaration was made by the Council of Trent (Sess. VI, can. 3, Denz., no. 813).

II. Among Catholic theologians, notwithstanding the condemnation of the Semi-Pelagians, Molina, following the lead of Durandus, Scotus, and Gabriel Biel, maintains in his Concordia (disp. 10), that if one does what

one can by merely natural powers, God never denies actual grace, and at last bestows sanctifying grace; not that man may prepare himself positively for grace, but he prepares himself negatively by not placing obstacles to it and by removing impediments. And in order to avoid Semi-Pelagianism, Molina declares It that God confers actual grace and subsequently habitual grace, not on account of the merit of a natural act, but on account of the covenant between God and Christ from the beginning. Christ indeed presented His merits to the Father, and the Father promises that He will bestow grace upon anyone who does what is possible to his natural powers or who uses well the goods of nature.

III. The doctrine of St. Thomas, as is clear from the last lines of the article and from the answer to the second objection, is that fallen man cannot prepare himself for habitual grace except by the help of prevenient actual grace, and "when it is said that man does what he can, the meaning is that this is within the power of man, as he is moved by God." These words in the answer to the second objection are contrary to the opinion proposed subsequently by Molina. Stated more briefly the thesis of St. Thomas is: Fallen man can in no way dispose himself either for habitual or for actual grace by his natural powers alone.

Scriptural proof. It is proved from the authority of Scripture in the argument Sed contra: "No man can come to Me, except the Father, who hath sent Me, draw him" (John 6:44). But if man could prepare himself, there would be no need of his being drawn by another. "Convert us, O Lord, to Thee, and we shall be converted" (Lam. 5:21). See also Jer. 31:18. "The will is prepared by the Lord" (Prov. 8:35, according to the Septuagint, but the Hebrew text is not so clear). St. Augustine here and there puts it forward against the Semi-Pelagians, and it is quoted by the Council of Orange, Denz., no. 177). "Without Me you can do nothing" (John 15:15); therefore neither can one prepare oneself for grace, since that is doing something ordained to salvation. "Who hath first given to Him, and recompense shall be made him? For of Him, and by Him, and in Him, are all things" (Rom. 11:35 f.). According to the contrary opinion a man could reply: I first gave him my effort and disposition. "Who distinguisheth thee?" (I Cor. 4:7.) Man may answer: my striving. "What hast thou that thou hast not received?" (ibid.) Man may reply: I have my effort and my disposition. "You have not chosen Me: but I have chosen you" (John 15:16). The Semi-Pelagians would say: I chose Thee first by disposing myself for grace. This text is

addressed to the apostles, of course, but in that they are the friends of God, and therefore it also applies to other friends of God.

The Council of Orange (can. 3, Denz., no. 176), according to the obvious meaning of the words, declares that all preparation for grace is of itself prevenient grace; there is no reference to a covenant entered into between God the Father and Christ. Read canons 3, 4, 5. Likewise the Council of Trent (Sess. VI, chap. 5, Denz. 797, and chap. 6).

St. Augustine (De peccatorum meritis, Bk. I, chap. 22), especially in the three arguments against the Semi-Pelagians, maintained the following.

1. In the affair of salvation nothing at all must be withdrawn from divine grace; but something would be withdrawn if the disposition for grace were not from grace.

2. The Church prays God not only to help those who will and strive after good, but also that those who will it not be made to will it.

3. It is said in II Cor. 3:5: “Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves.” But the slightest preparation for grace is a good thought. Therefore. Hence the words of Augustine on St. John, at the beginning of tract 26: “Why does God draw this man and not that man? Do not attempt to judge if you do not wish to err.”

Theological proof. By theological argument St. Thomas thus proves his thesis in the body of the article in form.

Since every agent acts on account of a proportionate end, the order of agents corresponds to the order of ends, and the disposition toward a supernatural end cannot be produced except by God, the supernatural agent.

But man prepares himself for grace according as he disposes himself for it as for a proximate supernatural end, and according as he turns to God as to his final supernatural end.

Therefore man cannot prepare himself for grace except by the supernatural help of God, moving him. St. Thomas does not fear to repeat this principle often; these repetitions are a kind of leitmotiv in theology, like St. John’s often repeated: “Beloved, let us love one another” (I John 4:7).

The major of this argument is based on the principle of finality, not that from this metaphysical principle the dogma may be rationally demonstrated, but that the dogma cannot be contrary to the principle of finality. For the corollary of this principle is: the order of agents corresponds to the order of ends; hence it is necessary that man be converted to his final end by the motion of the prime mover, just as the will

of the soldier is directed toward striving for victory by the motion of the leader of the army, and toward following the standard of some battle by the motion of the commander. Moreover, according to this principle, the disposition toward a supernatural end cannot be produced except by a supernatural agent, that is, except by God according as He moves toward something which exceeds all nature created or capable of being created.

The minor of this argument, however, is explained later in more detail, but it is already self-evident (cf. q. 112, a. 3). More briefly, the argument can be stated thus:

Every disposition, whether remote or proximate, should have a certain proportion to the form for which it disposes; otherwise it would not dispose for it.

But merely natural acts have no proportion with supernatural grace; they do not attain to the life of grace nor do they in any way require it.

Therefore man by his own natural powers cannot prepare himself even remotely for grace, without supernatural help; it is not only morally impossible, but physically and absolutely as well.

Confirmation. In order to dispose himself, man would at least need to have a good thought from himself.

But, according to II Cor. 3:5: “Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves,” in the order of salvation.

Hence, with still greater reason, to desire, ask, merit even de congruo, or dispose ourselves in any way. For merit de congruo already pertains to salvation; it is a right, based on friendship, to a supernatural reward. And if man without grace could pray and thus obtain grace, the first step to salvation would be attributable to nature. Hence this is condemned by the Council of Orange, c. 7.

The whole proof, therefore, is reducible to the infinite distance between the order of nature and the order of grace, since grace as essentially supernatural surpasses the powers and the requirements of any intellectual nature, created or capable of creation. God from all eternity might at any time create angels of greater and ever greater perfection so that they would have an ever loftier natural intelligence and an ever more steadfast will; but never could these superior angels naturally dispose themselves for grace, which is of a higher order.

Thus the imagination may become ever better endowed in its own order but it will never arrive at the dignity of the intellect; thus the sides of a

polygon inscribed in a circle may be ever multiplied but, however small each side, it will never be equivalent to a point. With still greater reason, when it is a question of the impossibility of disposing oneself naturally for the life of grace, natural good works can be ever increased, but they will never amount to a disposition proportionate to grace, which is essentially supernatural, whether for man or for any angel capable of being created, and they can always be created with greater perfection, since no limit of possibility can be named which would exhaust divine omnipotence.

How beautiful, how wonderful; how great a light there is in this doctrine! "All bodies, the firmament and the stars, the earth and its kingdoms, are not worth the least of spirits, for it is conscious of all that and of itself; and bodies are conscious of nothing. All bodies and all spirits together and all their productions are not worth the slightest movement of charity, for that is of an infinitely higher order" (Pascal, Thoughts).

Confirmation from the refutation of the objections.

First objection. But it is said in Zach. 1:3: "Turn ye to Me . . . and I will turn to you."

Reply. It is indeed prescribed for man that he turn to God freely, but the free will cannot turn to God unless God Himself converts it to Himself, according to the words of Jer. 31:18: "Convert me, and I shall be converted." Likewise Augustine and the Council of Trent (Sess. VI, chap. 6; Denz., no. 797).

Second objection. But it is generally said that to him who does what he can God does not deny grace.

Reply. Contrary to what Molina says, to him who does what he can, with God's help; and it is a question of supernatural help granted through Christ the Redeemer, since the following words of Christ are quoted: "Without Me ye can do nothing." Nor does natural help suflice to produce a disposition which is supernatural in form, since the order of agents should correspond to the order of ends. And God, as author of nature, cannot move one to a supernatural end.

Third objection. But this would be an infinite process, for man would need some grace to prepare himself for grace, and so on indefinitely.

Reply. A disposition is required only for habitual grace, for every form requires a disposition capable of receiving it. But for actual grace a disposition is not required, since a disposition is not necessary for yet another disposition.

Fourth objection. But in Prov. 16:1 it is written: “It is the part of man to prepare the soul and of the Lord to govern the tongue”; and further: “The heart of man disposes the way, but it is the Lord who directs his steps.”

Reply. Certainly, because man does this through his free will, but he does not therefore do it without the help of God moving and drawing him. The meaning of Holy Scripture here is that it does not suffice to consider what thou wilt say or do, unless God directs the tongue and the work so that thou mayest succeed. And this is also a very common saying: Man proposes and God disposes. St. Thomas teaches this doctrine in several other places as well. (Cf. Quodl., Ia, a. 7; in Ed. ad Rom., c. 10, lect. 3; III C. Gentes, chap. 150; De verit., q. 24, a. 15.)

Doubt. Whether according to St. Thomas, following the doctrine which he maintains in Ia IIae, q. 89, a. 6, to all who arrive at the use of reason sufficient help is given for fulfilling the precept, there and then urgent, of loving God efficaciously above all things.

Reply. The Salmanticenses reply in the affirmative (In lam llae, q. 89, a. 6, no. 65); God gives efficacious help only to those whom He at the same time decided to justify and with the aforesaid efficacious help He gives them sanctifying grace and explicit faith concerning the things which are necessary as means essential to salvation.

Whether this sufficient help which is then given to all is supernatural. It is at least supernatural modally through the merits of Christ; but it may also be said that it is supernatural substantially since it gives the proximate power of accomplishing an efficacious act of the love of God above all things, beyond the powers of fallen nature. This supernatural help should result in a certain supernatural enlightenment for the intellect and, if man would not resist this enlightenment, he would receive the grace of faith with respect to the things necessary to salvation. (Cf. below, what is said on justification and the salutary but not meritorious acts which precede it; also Billuart, De gratia, diss. VII, a. 4, nos. 2,3.)

It should be remarked that Quesnel’s proposition was condemned:

“No graces are given except through faith” (Denz., no. 1376); “Faith is the first grace and the source of all the others” (Denz., no. 1377); “The first grace which God grants to the sinner is the remission of sins” (Denz., no. 1378); likewise the Synod of Pistoia was condemned, denying grace preceding good will and faith.

Concerning the Molinist interpretation of the common axiom: “to him who does what he can, God does not refuse grace.” Cf. Concordia, disp. X, latest edition, Paris, pp. 43 and 564: “God always confers the helps of prevenient grace on him who strives with natural powers to accomplish what in him lies.” Molina, as we have said, maintained that: to him who does what he can by his natural powers alone, God never denies actual grace, and later He gives habitual grace. To avoid Semi-Pelagianism, he continues, 1. claiming that this is done not on account of the value of a natural good work, but for the sake of a convenant entered into between God and Christ the Redeemer, a covenant for thus certainly conferring grace; and 2. claiming that man thus naturally prepares himself negatively only, that is, by not raising obstacles, not sinning at least for some little time; but always, or as it were infallibly, actual grace is then conferred upon him.

What is to be thought of this covenant and of this natural, negative preparation? In regard to the covenant, we may say with the Thomists that it lacks a basis in tradition; on the contrary, it seems to be opposed to the testimony of tradition and to the principles of sound theology.

1. This pact has no basis either in Scripture or in the councils or in the Fathers, Hence it is clearly fictitious. Certainly the Council of Orange does not speak of it, although it would have been most useful for recalling the Semi-Pelagians to the faith, had this theory been true. The Semi-Pelagians would very easily have admitted it, since they did not deny Redemption through Christ nor did they deny that the primary grace was conferred on account of the merits of Christ upon those who prepared themselves naturally for it. The Semi-Pelagians did not contend that the primary grace was given on account of natural merit, but by the occasion of natural good works. Neither does Pius IX (Denz., nos. 1648,1677) refer to this covenant.

As a matter of fact, Valentia, S.J., attempted to demonstrate this pact at the Congregatio de Auxiliis from Augustine (The City of God, Bk. XIX, chap. 13) but to obtain this proof, in reading the text of Augustine he changed the particle scilicet to et. Immediately, however, Thomas de Lemos, recognizing the text of Augustine, replied: “The text is not being rendered correctly,” and taking up Augustine’s book he read the text as it was. (Cf. Billuart, d. III, a. 7, and Serry, Histoire de la Congregatio de Auxiliis, Bk. III, chap. 5.) It is said in Scripture and tradition only that God wills the salvation of all men, that Christ died for all, and that, accordingly,

graces suacient for salvation are conferred upon all adults. 2. Not only is this covenant not affirmed by tradition, but it seems to be contrary to the Council of Orange (can. 6, Denz., no. 179) which condemned anyone who should say that, “Without the grace of God, mercy is bestowed upon those who believe, will and desire it.” But supposing the aforesaid covenant, the mercy of Christ and of God would thus be conferred upon men naturally desiring it. (Likewise can. 4.).

3. This pact is opposed to the teaching of Augustine, who declared against the Pelagians (De peccatorum meritis, Bk. I, chap. 22) that there are among infidels and sinners some who observe many precepts of the law and are less wicked, more modest, temperate, and merciful, and yet grace passes them by and converts the most infamous; in other words, those who are converted are not always those who do more naturally good works.

Moreover, according to St. Augustine, the judgment of God is inscrutable, for He draws one and does not draw another; as he says in regard to St. John (at the beginning of tract 26): “Why does He draw this man and not that one? Do not attempt to judge if you do not wish to err.” St. Thomas refers to this in Ia, q. 23, a. 5 ad 3. But assuming the existence of the aforesaid covenant and the resulting law, God’s judgment would not be inscrutable, rather could it be easily explained, for indeed God draws this man and not another because this one does what he can by his own powers and the other does not.

4. This pact seems to be contrary to the principles of sound theology based on revelation. For, according to this hypothesis, man would have something of himself to distinguish him, in which he would glory, in other words, something ordained to salvation he would not receive from God, namely, a good work of nature which, according to the law established, would lead to salvation, and to which grace would infallibly be attached.

Hence it is incompatible that Christ should merit the establishment of this law on the part of God the father, by which the reason for grace would be destroyed. For if this pact were formed and this law established, grace would be given on account of works, and thus would no longer be grace, prevenient grace would be anticipated by the free will, the first place would be given to man, the last place to God, and thus the doctrine of grace defended by St. Augustine would be overthrown. With this law in effect, a natural good work possesses some proportion and some right to the help of grace. All these suppositions seem to be contrary to the words of St. Paul (I

Cor. 4:7): “Who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it ?”

Particularly opposed to these words is the teaching of Molina which holds that man thus naturally disposes himself for grace with the aid of simultaneous natural concurrence only determinable by human liberty alone. But this doctrine is not very much developed by admitting general, indifferent premotion, ultimately determinable by man alone, since one man would thus distinguish himself from another who was not converted. Moreover, as we have said, intrinsically efficacious, predetermining premotion of a natural order does not suflice as a preparation for grace; the supernatural help of grace is required, because the order of agents should correspond to the order of ends. Here indeed the end, whether proximate (grace) or remote (glory), is supernatural

It is therefore not to be wondered at that the French clergy, in a general assembly, in 1700, condemned this teaching in regard to a covenant, declaring that “it restores Semi-Pelagianism, merely changing its language . . . The pact which is held to exist between God and Christ, is an audacious, erroneous invention brought forth, not only under the silence of Holy Scripture and the tradition of the Holy Fathers, but even under their contradiction.” (Cf. Billuart, De gratia, diss. III, What, then, is to be said of the negative natural preparation, that is, not setting up obstacles to grace, which being accomplished, God infallibly confers grace, according to Molin?

Reply. 1. Not to set up any obstacles at all is to observe the whole natural law, avoiding every sin against it, and this cannot be done without healing grace, as we have already shown. 2. Not to set up obstacles in some respects, observing certain precepts, avoiding certain sins, with general natural help, does not infallibly dispose one for grace; since, as we asserted with Augustine and as experience demonstates, some men observe many commandments, and yet grace is denied them which, at one time or other, is granted to the most profligate, who have no regard for any law, according to the words of Isaias (65:1), as quoted in Rom. 10:20: “I was found by them that did not seek Me: I appeared openly to them that asked not after Me.”

3. Nowhere is there a basis for this principle: upon him who does not set up obstacles to grace through his powers of nature alone, God infallibly confers grace.

4. All the aforesaid objections reappear; thus it would no longer be inscrutable why God confers grace upon one and not upon another; one could distinguish himself and glory over another; the beginning of salvation would not be the compassion of God alone, but the willing of man as well; and other conclusions opposed to the words of St. Paul: “It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy” (Rom. 9:16).

How, then, are we to understand the common axiom: to him who does what he can, God does not deny grace? I answer as St. Thomas here interprets it (q.109, a. 6 ad 2), namely, “to him who does what he can, with the help of actual grace, God does not deny further grace.” We are concerned with supernatural help, which comes from Christ the Redeemer, for the words of Christ are quoted here: “Without Me you can do nothing.” And (q.112, a. 3) St. Thomas shows that a. 7.) this preparation, since it is from God moving supernaturally, has an infallible connection with the infusion of sanctifying grace. Hence, as Father Hugon indicates (De gratia, p. 267), this axiom is threefold: 1. the necessity of a certain preparation for justification on the part of an adult man, 2. the infallibility of its connection with sanctifying grace, 3. the gratuity of justification, which is accomplished by God alone. “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draw him.” Therefore the meaning is: to him who does what he can by the power of actual grace, God does not deny sanctifying grace. This opinion is also held by Cardinal Billot, but with indifferent concurrence.

The axiom thus explained is only the theological formula of the dogma of God’s will to save. For, once it is admitted that God wills the salvation of all, it follows that sufficient grace necessary for salvation is conferred upon all; and if man does not resist this grace, he will receive a higher grace and thus arrive at justification. Man indeed resists by himself, but not to resist is already a good and proceeds from God preserving him in good and helping him, for at that moment God can permit resistance, as happens in the case of many. (Cf. Council of Trent, Sess. VI, chap. 5, Denz., no. 797.) “Hence,” says the Council, “when it is written in Holy Scripture: ‘Turn ye to Me, . . . and I will turn to you’ (Zach. 1:3), we are reminded of our liberty; when we reply: ‘Convert us, O Lord, to Thee, and we shall be converted’(Lam. 5:21), we acknowledge that we are anticipated by the grace of God.”

Corollary. The real clarity of the principles of superior reasoning leads to a translucent obscurity of mysteries, while, on the contrary, the false clarity of the fiction of inferior reasoning, withdrawing from the principles of superior reasoning, shuns supernatural mysteries, denying their sublimity.

This is particularly evident in the present question; thus, the true clarity of the principle, that the order of agents corresponds to the order of ends, leads to the translucent obscurity of the mystery: “No one can come to Me, unless the Father, who sent Me, draw him.” This obscurity is fully preserved by the contemplation of Augustine, when he says: “Why does He draw this man and not that one? Do not attempt to judge if you do not wish to err.”

And the mysteries, which are the object of contemplation, are all the more obscure the higher they are, with this obscurity which is not incoherence or absurdity below the level of understanding, but light inacessible beyond understanding, with respect to us who are wayfarers. Therefore it is said that Thomism fears neither logic nor mystery, but, fearlessly following the logic of first principles, arrives at the highest and most profoundly inscrutable mysteries, which are the true object of infused contemplation.

On the other hand, the false clarity of the fictions of inferior reasoning is evident in these words: to him who does what he can by his natural powers alone, God does not refuse grace; in other words, man can naturally prepare himself for supernatural grace. But this assertion of inferior reasoning withdraws from the principle: the order of agents should correspond to the order of ends, and a supernatural agent to a supernatural end.

And thus withdrawing from this principle, this false clarity ignores the inscrutable mystery: “No one can come to Me, unless the Father, who sent Me, draw him.” Nor indeed is it true any longer to say: “Why does He draw one man and not another? Do not attempt to judge if you do not wish to err.” But on the contrary, all things are clearly explained by the fiction: “this man is drawn by God because he disposed himself naturally.” The mystery is removed, and with it is taken away the highest object of contemplation; we descend to an inferior order of reasoning by rational subtleties, and inordinately so, which leads not to the obscurity of a mystery, but to the absurd denial of a principle: that the order of agents should correspond to the order of ends, every agent acts on account of a proportionate end. Hence false clarity must not be confused with true clarity. The purification of the

spirit by the gift of understanding dispels such deceptive clearness and purifies “from phantasms and errors” (IIa IIae, q.8, a. 7).

REFUTATION OF THE PRINCIPAL OBJECTIONS OF THE MOLINISTS

1. In Holy Scripture many are mentioned who attained to grace by a natural good work, such as the Egyptian midwives moved by natural compassion for the Hebrew children, Rahab the harlot receiving and not exposing the scouts sent by God, Zachaeus welcoming Christ to his house, Cornelius practicing almsgiving and prayer before he believed in Christ.

Reply. These natural good works do not exclude the necessity of interior grace, but remain inadequate unless God disposes the heart interiorly by His grace; in other words, these naturally good works as such do not infallibly prepare for grace, and it is erroneous to declare that “to him who of himself does natural works, God does not deny grace.” Moreover, as Augustine says, among infidels and sinners, those who are converted are often not those who at first were less wicked. And at the Council of Orange (can. 25) it was stated that in the good thief, in Zachaeus and Cornelius, their pious disposition to believe was the result of a gift of God. But it is true that the occasions by which some seem to reach grace were procured for them by the special favor of providence disposing external matters in such a way that they would combine to lead these rather than others to grace. Thus in the cases of Zachaeus and Cornelius.

I insist. St. Paul says (I Tim. 1:13): “I obtained the mercy of God, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.” Therefore he disposed himself negatively infallibly.

Reply. Ignorance is alleged not as a negative and infallible disposition for grace, but as matter more appropriately calling forth mercy, since indigence as such is involuntary, such as ignorance, and for this reason induces mercy. On the other hand, sin, inasmuch as it is voluntary, does not call forth mercy, but avenging justice, and this all the more so in proportion to its gravity. Thus St. Augustine explains in his eighth, ninth, and tenth sermons on the words of the Apostle. The meaning is the same as when Christ says: “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.” Estius is also thus interpreted.

I insist, But at times Cyril of Jerusalem, Chrysostom, and Clement of Alexandria, quoted in this regard by Billuart, seem to teach that grace does

not anticipate our wills but awaits them.

Reply. I. In these quotations they are speaking either of habitual grace or of the increase of actual grace for more perfect works, but they are certainly not speaking of the first actual grace, through which a beginning of good will is attained. Hence their meaning is: God awaits not our bare will, but our will supported by grace. These Fathers also deny that this first grace is an imposition of necessity, in opposition to the Manichaeans who would deprive man of free will (cf. Ia, q. 23, a. I ad I). This interpretation is confirmed by the fact that the aforesaid Fathers teach in various places the Catholic dogma on prevenient grace, when they explain the words of St. Paul: “What hast thou that thou hast not received? What then distinguisheth thee?” Nor is it remarkable if they at times spoke less accurately on the need for prevenient grace, when the Pelagian heresy had not yet broken out flagrantly, particularly since they desired to defend free will against the Manichaeans. At that time no one was attacking grace. St. Augustine replied similarly in his De praedestinatione sanctorum (chap. 14).

I insist. But St. Thomas himself says (IIa, d. 5, q. I, a. I): “For the eliciting of an act of conversion free will suffices, which prepares and disposes itself for obtaining grace through this act.” Similarly (IIa, d. 28, q. I, a. 4) he declares: “Since the preparation made for grace is not by acts which are commensurate to grace itself with an equality of proportion, as merit is commensurate to its reward, therefore it is not necessary that the acts by which man prepares himself for grace should exceed human nature.”

Reply. I. If such were the meaning of these passages quoted, we should have to admit that St. Thomas had subsequently retracted his own words, changing the opinion which he had held when he was younger. He wrote on the Sentences at Paris when he was only twenty-five years of age. 2. But St. Thomas did not change his opinion, for in the Commentary on the Sentences he rejects the opinion of certain others who held that man, to prepare himself for habitual grace, requires a habitual supernatural light, preamble to sanctifying grace. (Cf. II, d. 28, q. I, a. 4.) St. Thomas denies this, maintaining that this would go on into infinity, but he docs not exclude actual grace which he clearly aflirms in the Summa and in Quodl., I, a. 7, even more clearly: “It pertains to the Pelagian error to say that man can prepare himself for grace without the help of divine grace.” (Likewise Ia, q. 23, a. 5, on the beginning of good works.) Indeed certain thus prepared the

way for Molina. Nor did St. Thomas say that a preparation is not required "proportionate to grace," but proportionate in the way in which merit is commensurate with reward. This is true since merit demands nature elevated by sanctifying grace; merit is a right to a supernatural reward. (Cf. Quodl., I, a.7 ad I.) The distance is greater between the sinner and the just man than between the just and the blessed, for grace is the seed of glory, but nature is not really the seed of grace.

I insist. But of what use, then, are natural good works performed at the dictate of reason alone without any grace?

Reply. They are meritorious de congruo of temporal good, to the extent that it is appropriate for divine liberality in consideration of them, to grant certain temporal benefits. Hence Christ says: "They have received their reward" (Matt. 6:2). And on the other hand, good works done outside of charity, but with the help of actual grace, are a disposition to habitual grace; St. Thomas refers to them in IV Sent., q. 14, a. 4, and also in De veritate, q. 14, a. II ad I, when he says: "If a person brought up in the wilderness follows the guidance of reason (with actual grace), it can be held for a certainty that God will either reveal to him by inspiration the things that are necessary to believe or will send some preacher of the faith to him, as he sent St. Peter to Cornelius."

I insist. Nevertheless, natural good works done without the help of actual grace seem to be at least a negative disposition to actual grace.

Reply. An infallible negative disposition, excluding every impediment to grace: denied. A fallible negative disposition, excluding some impediment: let it pass.

I insist. But man of himself can refrain from setting up an obstacle, at least at the moment when the grace is offered to him.

Reply. At that moment, of himself, with general concurrence which is in some way special for this individual, he can do so partially: granted. Completely: denied; that would be loving God the author of nature above all things.

I insist. St. Thomas (Contra Gentes, Bk. III, q. 159) declares: "Fallen man can hinder or not hinder the reception of grace."

Reply. Not hinder, in part (and this with the concurrence of God preserving Him in good whereas He could permit sin): granted; totally: denied, because of himself he cannot avoid every sin, observing every precept of the natural law (cf. ibid., c. 160).

Another objection. In Ia, q. 62, a. 6, it is taught that God conferred grace and glory upon the angels in proportion to their nature; hence there is no incompatibility in His conferring grace upon men who do what they can by natural powers alone.

Reply. St. Thomas himself replies to this objection (ibid., ad 2): “The acts of a rational creature are from itself; but the nature is immediately from God. Hence it seems rather that grace is given according to the rank of the (angelic) nature than according to its works.” For thus man would single out himself, and God would be moved objectively by another, which is not the case when He gives grace to the angels at the instant of their creation according to the quantity of their nature, which He alone created. To the same effect it is said that “it is reasonable for the angels, who have a better nature, to be converted to God even more powerfully and eflicaciously,” since in them nothing retarded the movement of the intellect and will. There is, moreover, an analogy between converted angels and men, for “according to the intensity of their conversion is greater grace given.”

I insist. But the disposition can be of an inferior order, as, for example, the disposition of the embryo to a spiritual soul.

Reply. But then they belong to the same nature, which is not true of grace.

Objection. God owes it to Himself to bestow His gifts upon those who are more worthy. But he is more worthy who does many natural good works of himself than he who does less. Therefore God should confer grace upon the former.

Reply. I deny the minor: he is not more worthy because natural works have no proportion with grace; they are of an inferior order.

I insist. Nevertheless he who sets up less impediments is less indisposed.

Reply. Let it pass. But he is not more disposed and worthy; thus a worm and a dog are certainly unequal; yet the dog is not more disposed to rationality. Therefore it is not unusual for God to draw to Himself those who are worse.

Thus we are back again at what we said at the end of the exposition of this thesis.

ARTICLE VII

WHETHER MAN CAN RISE FROM SIN WITHOUT THE HELP OF GRACE

State of the question. This article, following upon the preceding ones, may seem a useless repetition. Such is not the case, however, for, as Cajetan remarks: “thus far St. Thomas was dealing with the necessity of grace for doing good; now he is concerned with evil,” and in the last two articles with the necessity of grace for the man who is already just.

What is meant by rising from sin? It is not the same as ceasing from the act of sin, as Protestants claim, but it is man being restored to what, by sinning, he had forfeited. Now, by sinning, man incurs a threefold loss: the stain (habitual sin, privation of the ornament of grace), the incurring of punishment, and the decrease of the natural inclination to virtue, as stated previously (q.85-87). The reply to the question thus posed is negative; that is certain, so that Pelagius himself did not deny it but only insisted that grace should be bestowed on account of merits.

The answer is of faith, defined at the Council of Orange, can. 4, (Denz., no. 177) also can. 14 and 19; and at the Council of Trent, Sess. VI, can. 1 (Denz., no. 811), can. 3 (Denz., no. 813). The teaching of the Fathers is clear; cf. the words of Augustine quoted in the argument Sed contra; otherwise “Christ died for nothing,” if man can rise from sin without the help of grace.

This conclusion is proved by theological argument as follows:

To rise from sin is for man to be restored and liberated from the evils which he incurred by sin.

But by sin he incurred a threefold loss which cannot be repaired except by grace.

Therefore.

The minor is proved thus: 1. The stain is a privation of the ornament of grace, therefore it cannot be repaired except by grace itself. 2. The decrease in the inclination of the will toward virtue cannot be repaired unless God draws the will to Himself. 3. The incurring of punishment cannot be remitted except by God against whom the offense was committed. Nevertheless there can be an imperfect resurrection without habitual grace, by actual grace which is present in attrition when the sinner aspires after reconciliation. Cf. on this subject the sixty-fourth proposition of Baius (Denz., no. 1064).

ARTICLE VIII

State of the question. From the second article wherein it is said that fallen man can, with the natural concurrence of God, perform some good works, it is to be supposed likewise that with this natural concurrence he can, for a certain length of time, avoid sin and overcome slight temptations. For it is not necessary that he should continually sin by act, by a sin of commission, such as blasphemy, or of omission, such as never praying when he ought to pray, since the good of reason is not entirely extinct in him. As a matter of fact, this natural concurrence, although it is in a way due to human nature in general, may, as we have said, be called gratuitous in a certain sense with respect to\this man to whom it is given here and now rather than to another in whom God permits sin; from this standpoint it may be called grace, broadly speaking. This observation is necessary in order to reconcile various texts of the councils and of the Fathers on this question. Hence the problem, properly stated, is: whether man without grace, strictly speaking, can, over a long period of time, avoid mortal sins. Cf. above, Ia IIae, q. 109, a. z ad 2, and De veritate, q. 3, a. 14 ad 2 and 3.

That such is the proper statement of the question is evident from the objections or difficulties which are raised against the first article: it seems that man can, without grace, avoid sin: 1. because no one sins in that which is unavoidable; 2. because otherwise the sinner would be blamed without cause, if he could not avoid sin; 3. because a person who sins does not cease to be a man, and it is within his power to choose good or evil; for human nature after the fall is not totally corrupt.

However, as stated in the argument Sed contra, St. Augustine declared that: “Whoever denies that we ought to pray, lest we enter into temptation, ought to be removed from the ears of all and anathematized by the mouth of all, I have no doubt.”

In the body of the article there are two principal conclusions, which, all things considered, can and ought to be proposed thus: I. concerning fallen man avoiding mortal sin; 2. concerning the just man avoiding venial sins.

The first conclusion, which is proved in the second part of the article is as follows: Fallen man being in the state of mortal sin, cannot, without the addition of healing, habitual grace, continually avoid all mortal sin against the natural law and overcome all temptations. In this regard, St. Thomas seems to correct what he had said in II Sent., d. 28, q. I, a. 2.

1. This is proved first of all from Holy Scripture: “By Thee I shall be delivered from temptation” (Ps. 17:30). “Being pushed I was over turned that I might fall: but the Lord supported me” (Ps. 117:13). “Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? (And he replies): The grace of God, by Jesus Christ” (Rom. 7:24 f.). This is true with still greater reason of fallen man before justification. “And God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able: but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it” (I Cor. 10:13). Likewise the Council of Neocaesarea (chap. II) against the Pelagians condemned the following proposition of Pelagius: “Our victory is not by the help of God.” Similarly the Council of Milevum (Denz., nos.103 f.), Pope St. Celestine (Denz., no. 132), and the Council of Orange against the Semi-Pelagians (Denz., nos. 184, 186, 192, 194).

2. The conclusion is proved, secondly, from theological argument which is the corollary of articles 3 and 4 (explained here in the second part of the article): fallen man cannot, without healing grace, efficaciously love God the author of nature above all things nor observe all the precepts of the natural law; therefore neither can he avoid every mortal sin, for they are committed by transgression of the commandments.

The basis of this argument lies in the fact that man in the state of mortal sin has his will turned away from even his natural final end; therefore he is already inclined toward some mortal sins. In order, then, continually to avoid all mortal sins and overcome all temptations, he must have his will directed toward his final end, adhering to God so firmly that he will not be separated from Him for the sake of anything created; cf. the end of the body of the article. In short, an infirm nature cannot efficiently produce an act of healthy nature. St. Thomas says that this requires healing grace, that is, habitual grace; for without it man is not firmly established in good dispositions with regard to his final end.

Three principal objections are made to this first conclusion.

First objection. Some pagans have withstood very serious temptations for the sake of virtue.

Reply. As we have already said, perhaps they did so from a human motive of glory or pride, and, in that case, without the special help of God, or else they did so for love of virtue, in which case it was not without the special help of God. (See Augustine, Bk. IV against Julian, chap. 3.)

Second objection, which St. Thomas mentions first as follows: if man in the state of mortal sin cannot avoid sin, then by sinning he does not sin, for sin is always avoidable.

Reply (ad I): “Man (in the state of mortal sin) can avoid individual acts of (mortal) sin, but not all, except by means of grace. Nevertheless man is not excused, since the fault is his own that he does not prepare himself to possess grace . . .”; in other words, grace is offered to him and is not lacking except through his fault. (Cf. above, a. 4 ad 2.)

Third objection. But then it would follow that man in the state of mortal sin is bound to repent instantly, for otherwise he will always be in danger of committing sin again.

Reply. He is bound to repent instantly when the danger of sinning is certain and definite; otherwise there is no grave obligation to repent instantly.

Second conclusion. The just man, by the ordinary assistance of grace without any special privilege, can continually avoid all mortal sins, but not however, over a long period of time, all venial sins, although he can avoid individual venial sins.

The first part of this conclusion is that the just man can, without very special help, continually avoid all mortal sins (to avoid them actually and continually until death, however, requires the gift of final perseverance, as we shall explain in article 10). In support of this first part of the conclusion the following scriptural texts are quoted: “If anyone love Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him” (John 14:23). “My grace is sufficient for thee” (II Cor. 12:9). Also the Council of Trent (Denz., no. 804): “For God will not forsake those who are once justified by His grace, unless He is first abandoned by them”; cf. below, q. 112, a. 3.

The theological argument is the opposite of the reasoning in the preceding conclusion: since the just man firmly adheres to his final end, therefore he can avoid all mortal sin; he has even the proximate power to do so; whether he actually perseveres or not is another matter. Neither does the just man acfually avoid sins of omission unless he performs a good work, with the help of actual grace. And that he should actually persevere in the state of grace until death, is still another question (cf. a. 10, and q. 114, a. 9).

The second part of this conclusion is as follows: The just man cannot avoid all venial sins collectively. It is proven from Holy Scripture: “There is no man who sinneth not” (III Kings 8:46). “There is no just man upon earth, that doth good, and sinneth not” (Ecclus. 7:21). “In many things we all offend” (Jas. 3:2). “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” (I John 1:8). This second part of this conclusion is also declared by the Council of Milevum (can. 6 and 7, Denz., nos. 106, 107) and of Trent (Sess. VI, can. 23, Denz., no. 833), where it was stated that it was the special privilege of the Blessed Virgin Mary that she could avoid all venial sin. Likewise, against the Beghards and several propositions of Michael Molinos (from 55 to 63, Denz., nos. 471, 1275, 83)

The second theological argument for this conclusion is proved in the body of the argument as follows:

Although sanctifying grace heals a man with respect to his spirit, there still remains a disorder of the sensitive appetite, so that inordinate movements often arise.

But allowing that his reason can repress individual movements (thus they have an element of involuntary act) yet not all, because while he is endeavoring to resist one, perhaps another will arise and also because the reason cannot always be vigilant.

In other words, the reason itself can be watchful to avoid some inordinate movement, but not all. But in order that this movement be voluntary it is essential that the reason have the power and duty of considering this movement in individual cases. To continue in goodness without venial sin presents great difficulty the surmounting of which requires a very special grace, by which the instability of the will is stabilized, infirmity healed, weariness refreshed, and disgust overcome.

It is a disputed question in mystical theology whether the soul that arrives at transforming union can continually avoid all venial sins collectively. It is admitted that it can avoid all fully deliberate venial sins, but not all semi-deliberate ones, except while it is under the influence of the actual grace of union. But this actual union is not absolutely continuous, saving always the exception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. (Cf. St. Theresa, Interior Castle, Seventh Mansion, chap.

The fact remains that resisting sufficient grace is an evil, and man is sufficient unto himself to do so; but not resisting grace is a good, which proceeds from God, the source of every good. 4.)

ARTICLE IX

WHETHER THE JUST MAN CAN PERFORM GOOD WORKS (AVAILING TO SALVATION) AND AVOID SIN WITHOUT ACTUAL GRACE

The state of the question appears from the objections at the beginning of the article. Some hold with Molina that natural concurrence suffices (cf. Hugon, De gratia, p. 282).

St. Thomas' answer is: The just man needs the help of actual grace to act aright supernaturally.

1. This is proved from authority; Augustine is quoted in the argument Sed contra, which should be read.

a) Holy Scripture: "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abide in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me" (John 15:4); as the branch cannot bear fruit without a continual infusion from the vine, neither can the just man without a continual infusion of Christ. Therefore does He say: "Without Me ye can do nothing," and "You must pray always." (Cf. Council of Orange, can. 10, Denz., no. 183.)

b) Pope Zozimus (Epist. tractoria, PL, XX, 693, quoted by Denz., nos. 135 ff.) says: "Therefore our aid and our protector should be appealed to in all acts, causes, thoughts, and movements." Also Council of Orange (can. 10 and 25, Denz., nos. 183,200) and Pope Celestine I (Denz., no. 132).

c) Council of Trent (Denz., no. 809): "Since indeed this same Christ Jesus, as head in the members and as the vine in the branches, continually infuses power into justified souls, which power always precedes, accompanies, and follows their good works, and without which they cannot be pleasing to God or meritorious in any way." Also Trent, Sess. VI, can. 2.

2. The theological proof is twofold: by title of dependence and by title of infirmity.

a) The first proof is general, by title of dependence. St. Thomas states only the major, but the syllogism is easily completed from what has previously been said, thus:

No created thing can proceed to any act except by the power of divine motion (a. I).

But for any supernatural act in a just soul a proportionate motion is required, since the order of agents should correspond to the order of ends (as has been said in a. 6). Therefore the just man requires supernatural, actual grace for any supernatural act.

A certain law of metaphysics, namely, the principle of finality, requires that the introduction of the agent which is to make the transi- tion from potency to act must be of the same order as the act and the end toward which it moves. As stated in the reply to the first objection, even in the state of glory man requires commensurate actual help (cf. ad 2). Hence natural concurrence does not suflice, as Molina would have it (op. cit., p. 36), and as Cardinal Billot sometimes seems to imply (Virt. infusis, 1905, thes. VII, p. 176). Thus even Pesch declares (De gratia, no. 109): “Should it be denied that any supernatural help is required (for any work conducive to salvation), this doctrine is most generally and deservedly rejected by theologians.” Similarly Mazzella (De gratia, disp. II, a. 2, prop. 8,) declares: “The opinion maintaining the necessity of actual grace for individual acts conducive to salvation, even in a man trained to supernatural habits, seems altogether to be held more consistently, considering the authority of Holy Scripture, the constant teaching of the Fathers, and the decrees of the Church.”

b) The second proof from theology is somewhat special: “by reason of infirmity” applies to the condition of human nature, not as fallen, since we are concerned with a just man, but as not fully regenerated thus:

He who is not perfectly cured requires external assistance in order to act properly.

But, allowing that the just man is cured by sanctifying grace, he is still subject to inordinate concupiscence and the obscurity of ignorance. Therefore, for this special reason, the just man requires the help of God to direct and protect him; hence he should say daily: “and lead us not into temptation.”

First corollary. This second argument should be distinguished but not separated from the first as if it were interpreted thus: infallibly efficacious concurrence is required only for difficult acts conducive to salvation, but not for easy ones. This is false for, according to the first argument, in every state, general concurrence, at least, is required, but infallibly efficacious concurrence for any good act proposed here and now.

Second corollary. In connection with this article Billuart brings forward a new distinction which may be admitted but it is not necessary, that is: the just man requires the general help of God, as author of the supernatural, for any easy supernatural acts, and this general help, although, in a sense, due to nature raised to the supernatural, is yet not due to this individual rather than to another, since free will remains defectible and God is not always

bound to profer a remedy for this defectibility, even for the just. But the just man requires special help for more difficult acts and also for constant perseverance.

Thus, Billuart maintains, several texts of the Fathers are more concurrence is sufficient in the just man for individual supernatural acts (which are not difficult), seems to mean, in agreement with Bilhart, general supernatural concurrence or ordinary actual grace; this is admissible. But Billot is more probably referring to general supernatural concurrence with respect to mode, whereas we refer to it with respect to substance. Cf. above, p. 51, his theory on the supernaturalness of faith.

ARTICLE X

WHETHER MAN I N THE STATE OF GRACE REQUIRES THE HELP OF GRACE TO PERSEVERE

State of the question. We are not concerned here with perseverance taken as a virtue inclining one to elicit the intention of persevering lo I the consequent will. And the antecedent will never produces any good, even the (cf. IIa IIae, q. 137) nor with the intention of persevering itself, but with the actual exercise of perseverance in good conducive to salvation until the end of one’s life. That this is the sense in which it is used is evident from the body of the article, at the very beginning of which St. Thomas eliminates the consideration of the acquired virtue of perseverance, discussed by Aristotle, and of the infused virtue of temperance, annexed to fortitude, which are infused with sanctifying grace. Here it is rather a question “of the continuation in good until the end of life.”

Moreover, perseverance thus defined is capable of a twofold acceptation: 1. the enduring continuation in grace and good works until death, as attained to by many predestined adults; and 2. the coincidence of habitual grace and death, without prolonged continuation, as occurs in children who die after their baptism and also in adults who die shortly after obtaining justification, for example, the good thief; and thus it becomes the grace of a happy death.

Reply. To the question thus stated, the Church, as we shall presently see, replies that a special gift of perseverance is required. But in what does this special gift consist? Is it a habitual gift or an actual grace? This is the statement of the question which is quite complex. Let us examine: 1. the

errors involved, 2. the teaching of Holy Scripture and the Church, 3. St. Thomas' conclusion, and 4. the problems to be solved.

I. ERRORS ON THIS SUBJECT

The Pelagians, at least in the beginning, attributed perseverance to the powers of nature alone. The Semi-Pelagians maintained that grace was required for it, but not a special gift distinct from sanctifying grace, and, according to them, grace is given to those who possess the beginning of salvation through their natural effort. Hence the grace of final perseverance is always given to those who persevere in this natural effort. In opposition to them, St. Augustine proved that the gift of final perseverance is a special gift and not subject to merit. Certain theologians, such as Duval and Vega, hold that a special gift is required for perseverance which is active and protracted over a long period of time, but not for a brief perseverance during which no special difficulties occur

II. THE TEACHING OF SCRIPTURE AND THE CHURCH

In Scripture our perseverance in good until the end is attributed to God. "I set the Lord always in my sight: for He is at my right hand, that I be not moved" (Ps. 15:8). "Perfect Thou my goings in Thy paths: that my footsteps be not moved" (Ps. 165). "Be Thou my helper, forsake me not; do not Thou despise me" (Ps. 26:g). Likewise Ps. 37:22. "When my strength shall fail, do not Thou forsake me" (Ps. 70:g). "And unto old age and gray hairs: O God, forsake me not" (Ps. 70:18). Christ says to His disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane: "Watch ye, and pray that ye enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh weak" (Matt. 26:41). "And now I am not in the world, and these are in the world, and I come to Thee. Holy Father, keep them in Thy name whom Thou hast given Me; that they may be one, as We also are" (John 17:11). "He that thinketh himself to stand, let him take heed lest he fall" (I Cor. 10:12). "With fear and trembling work out your salvation. For it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will" (Phil. 2:12 f.).

The doctrine of the Church. It is of faith that final perseverance is something gratuitous, not due to the powers of nature, and more a gift distinct from the grace of justification. This was defined against the

Pelagians and Semi-Pelagians whom St. Augustine specifically refuted in his book on the gift of perseverance.

Cf. Denz., no. 132, the letter of Pope Celestine I: “No one, even among the baptized, is sufficiently restored by grace to triumph over the wiles of the devil and overcome the temptations of the flesh unlessby the daily help of God he receives perseverance in the frequent practice of good.”

Also the Council of Orange, can. 10 (Denz., no. 183): “The help of God, even for the redeemed and sanctified, is ever to be implored, that they may come to a good end or continue in good works.” (Likewise can. 25, Denz., no. 200.)

The Council of Trent (Sess. VI, can. 16, Denz., no. 826) declares: “If anyone should say with absolute and infallible certainty that he surely will have the great gift of perseverance to the end, unless he learns it from special revelation, let him be anathema.” Likewise (can. 22, Denz., no. 832): “If anyone should say either that a justified soul can persevere in the justice it has received without the special help of God, or that with it it cannot do so, let him be anathema.”

Father Hugon (De gratia, p. 286) asks whether this canon also includes perseverance for a short space of time (for instance, between justification shortly before death and death itself) and passive perseverance (of infants dying after baptism). The Council does not distinguish; several authorities consider that a real distinction is not to be excluded from the sense of the definition. At least, it is of faith that for the active perseverance of adults over a long period of time a special aid is required distinct from habitual grace.

Among the Fathers, Augustine in particular is cited (De dono perseverantiae, chap. 2); he refutes the objections of the Pelagians, to which may be added those which are presented by St. Thomas at the beginning of the article, as follows:

1. Perseverance in virtue is something less than the virtue of perseverance itself which can be acquired by repeated acts. 2. Christian perseverance is a certain moral virtue, annexed to fortitude, and infused at the same time as grace. 3. Adam in the state of innocence would have been able to persevere, but those who are justified by Christ are not in a less perfect state with respect to grace.

Against these difficulties, St. Thomas explains, in the body of the present article, that the term “perseverance” is used in a threefold sense:

1. Acquired perseverance, described by Aristotle (Ethics, Bk. VII, chap. 7). This is a moral virtue attached to fortitude which consists in a certain firmness of the reason and will, so that a man may nqt be dissuaded from the path of virtue by the onslaught of melancholy. This perseverance maintains itself against such an onslaught as continence does against the temptations of the flesh. Cf. IIa IIae, q. 137, a. 2 ad 2.

2. The infused virtue of perseverance. By this virtue man has the intention of persevering in good until the end. But many had this intention during their lives and yet, in fact, did not persevere to the end. This virtue gives the power of persisting in the first act in spite of the difficulty which arises from the long duration of the act itself. Cf. IIa IIae, q. 137, a. 3 and 4.

3. Perseverance in the sense of a continuation of a certain good work until the end of one's life. For this, the just man requires a special grace, not habitual but actual, directing and protecting him against the impelling force of temptation. This follows from the preceding article in which it was proved that the just man needs the help of actual grace to do good and avoid evil and therefore, with still greater reason, to do good and avoid evil until the end of his life. This is the perseverance of which we are now speaking.

Similarly, in IIa IIae, q. 137, a. 4, the question, whether perseverance requires the help of grace, is answered thus: 1. the infused virtue of perseverance presupposes habitual grace; 2. for the act of perseverance lasting until death "man requires not only habitual grace, but also the gratuitous help of God preserving a man in good unti the end of life." "Since, with free will, man himself is changeable, and this condition is not altered by habitual grace in the present life, it is not within the power of free will, even restored by grace, to remain fixed in the good, although it is in its power to choose to do so. For the most part, election falls within our power, but not execution" (ibid.) .

III. ST. THOMAS' CONCLUSION

The conclusion is thus proved. The just man requires the help of actual grace to do the good necessary for salvation and to avoid evil (preceding article).

But perseverance is the continuation of a certain good work until the end of life.

Therefore, for this perseverance until the end a special actual grace is required, distinct from habitual grace and even from the preceding actual graces, such, that is, as precede the moment of death. (Cf. ad 3.)

This argument thus proposed is metaphysical: no one is preserved in good works until death unless specially preserved by God. Some authors state this argument in a slightly different way, so that its metaphysical necessity is less evident. They say that for perseverance until the end there is a great threefold difficulty for the surmounting of which a special actual gift is required. Thus they rather proceed inductively.

It is a great threefold difficulty: 1. to shun evil, 2. to fulfill every commandment continually and enduringly, and 3. to have death coincide with grace, or to die at the opportune time. But all these taken together require a special favor from God, distinct from habitual grace. Since man cannot, without additional help, overcome temptations and elicit supernatural acts, for still greater reason does he require aid to practice these until the end. Moreover, only God, who is master of grace and of death, can cause grace to coincide with death; in doing so He manifests a special providence toward the elect. Therefore final perseverance (at least such as endures for a long time before death) requires a special favor distinct from habitual grace. This point, at least, in the question, is of faith and is confirmed by this argument based upon still higher principles of faith. This argument is good, but is better formulated by St. Thomas, inasmuch as he shows more clearly why an utterly special actual gift is required for surmounting this great difficulty in fact, that is, preservation in good.

IV. DOUBTS

First doubt. Whether a special grace, distinct from ordinary, actual helps, is required for long-continued, active final perseverance.

At present theologians generally reply in the affirmative, which is thus proved by the following arguments. a) From authority, since Christ prayed especially for the perseverance of His disciples, who were already just: “Holy Father, keep them” (John 17:11-15). Likewise the Church thus prays in particular: “Enable us always to obey Thy commandments” (Tuesday after the Second Sunday of Lent). “Never permit me to be separated from Thee” (prayer before Communion). The Council of Trent calls the gift of

perseverance, “that great, special gift.” b) From theological argument. (Cf. ad 3.) Long- continued, active final perseverance, that is, with our cooperation, demands not only sufficient grace, but efficacious grace, nay rather the most important of all efficacious graces which consummates the state of wayfarer and brings about an infallible coincidence between the state of grace and death. This efficacious grace confers the final act of the wayfarer connected with the attainment of the final end and therefore proceeds from a very special infusion by which God is the mover. And this, too, certainly depends upon the merits of Christ who merited for us all the graces, both sufficient and efficacious, which we receive and also all the effects of our predestination.

Second doubt. Whether a special gift distinct from the ordinary aids is required for final perseverance over a short space of time, either in adults or in infants who die soon after their justification. At present most theologians generally reply in the affirmative.

a) Since this seems to be the obvious meaning of the Councils of Orange and Trent (Denz., nos. 183, 200, 806, 826, 832, 805 ff.), although this was not expressly defined. The Council of Orange declared (no. 183). “The help of God is to be implored even by the redeemed and sanctified, that they may arrive at a good end or may continue long in good works.” In speaking thus, as Billuart remarks, the Council distinguishes perseverance taken as a continuation of good over a long period of time, and for both of these require a special help which is to be implored even by those who are living a holy life. Likewise the Council of Trent requires a special help for perseverance simply and without any limitations.

b) Theological argument. The very special effect of predestination, which has an infallible relationship to glory, is a very particular gift. But the coincidence of grace with death is an effect of this kind, conferred only on the prefestinate. Therefore it is a very special gift, surpassing ordinary aids, which are attributed to ordinary providence.

This is confirmed from the consideration of death. Death may come about, for those who persevere, in a twofold manner: 1. Beyond the natural course of events, according to divine decree, the time of death is hastened or delayed; then it is manifestly a special favor. 2. Or it occurs according to the natural order, but even then providence had this special gift does not require internal actual grace but consists in an external grace, that is, in a special providence by virtue of which the infant dies when in the state of

grace. And this indicates a special care on the part of providence had disposed natural events from all eternity so that they would bring about death at an opportune time, when a man is in the state of grace. And this indicates a special care on the part of providence, which extends to all things, ordains means to their end, and in particular to the glory of God and of the elect. Therefore the coincidence of the state of grace with death is a special favor from God, who alone can cause these two to coincide, since He is the master of grace and of death. At least, this disposition of circumstances is in some respects a special favor; this is admitted by Molina when he maintains that God foresees through mediate knowledge that, if a certain person at the moment of death were placed in such and such circumstances, he would elicit an act of contrition. (Cf. Concordia, ed. cit., p. 548)

Third doubt. In what does this special gift of final perseverance consist? A distinction must be made between adults and infants.

a) In baptized children who die before attaining the use of reason, this special gift does not require internal actual grace but consists in an external grace, that is, in a special providence by virture of which the infant dies when in the state of grace.

b) In adults, however, the gift of final perseverance does not consist in any one indivisible thing, but comprises a great many, thus: 1. on the part of God it is the special providence causing grace to coincide with death; 2. on the part of man it consists in a series of helps by which he is preserved from temptation, or overcomes temptations, or, if he falls, he rises again at the opportune time; finally, it includes the last efficacious grace, connecting the last meritorious act with the end, which, as it is an efficacious grace, is called by antonomasia “the great and signal gift of God.”

But whether this last grace is intrinsically efficacious, as the Thomists hold, or extrinsic through the prevision of the scientia media, Billuart (diss. III, a. 10) cites texts from Scripture and from St. Augustine in which it is attributed to the grace of final perseverance that man does persevere. “What hast thou that thou hast not received?” (I Cor. 4:7.) Therefore election “is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy” (Rom. 9:16). That is, divine election does not depend on the will or the effort of man, but on God who shows mercy. “For it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish” (Phil. 2:13).

St. Augustine’s references to the subject include the following: They receive “grace which is not rejected by any hard heart, since it is first granted to them to have their hardness of heart taken away” (De praedestinatione sanctorum, chap. 8). “God has the wills of men in His power to a greater extent than they themselves have” (De correptione et gratia, chap. 14). “We are speaking of that perseverance which perseveres until the end; if it is granted, one perseveres until the end; but if one does not persevere until the end, it is not granted” (De dono perseverantiae, chap. 6). “Therefore the weakness of the human will is assisted, so that it may be moved invariably and in- evitably by divine grace, and hence, although weak, it may not fail nor be overcome by any adversity” (De correptione et gratia, chap. 12). Cf. R. de Journel, Enchir. patr., no. 1958; read also the reply to the third objection of the present article.

The question is whether this grace is efficacious because God wills it to be so or because man wills to render it so. In the answer to the third objection St. Thomas says: “By the grace of Christ many receive the gift of grace by which they can persevere and also it is further granted to them that they do persevere.” Hence if, of two equally obdurate sinners, one is converted rather than the other, this is the effect of a special mercy toward him, With still greater reason, if anyone perseveres in good throughout the whole of his life, this is the effect of a special mercy of God toward him.

Fourth doubt. Whether perseverance was a very special gift for the angels. The Jansenists reply negatively, both for angels and for man in the state of innocence. The answer of St. Thomas and the generality of theologians is affirmative. Cf. III C. Gentes, chap. 155, and IIa IIae, q. 137, a. 4.

a) The foregoing arguments are also valid for the angels and for man in the state of innocence, in whom free will was capable of defection.

b) Moreover, for the angels, final perseverance is the proper effect of predestination, and not all the angels were predestined. Further, this is implied by the Council of Orange (Denz., no. 192) when it declares: “Human nature, even had it remained in that state of integrity in which it was created, would by no means have preserved itself without the aid of its Creator.” And St. Augustine, in The City of God (Bk. XIII, chap. 9) maintains: “If in both cases (the angels) were created equally good, some fell through bad will, while others, receiving more help, attained that

fullness of beatitude, whence they were made absolutely certain that they will never fall.”

Fifth doubt. Whether the gift of final perseverance is identical with the gift of confirmation in grace. Cf. Salmanticenses, De gratia, q. 110, disp. III, dub. XI, no. 259. The answer is in the negative, since the gift of final perseverance is common to all the predestinate, but not the gift of confirmation in grace, which was conferred upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost and upon souls that arrived at the intimate union with God which is called the transforming union. In what respects do they differ? In this: the gift of confirmation in grace preserves one from mortal sin and also generally from deliberate venial sin, according to the mode in which it is given, that is, by a certain participation in the impeccability of the blessed, and the intrinsic gift requires to be completed by the extrinsic protection of God. Hence this gift of confirmation in grace adds something over and above the gift of persererance, namely, something intrinsic and habitual which prevents sin, almost binding the power to preserve it from sin, on the other hand, the gift of final perseverance does not necessarily demand anything more than the conjunction of the state of grace with death.

REFUTATIONS OF OBJECTIONS

First objection. Final perseverance is the coincidence of grace with death. But shortly before death, the justified man with the ordinary helps can persever for a considerable time in goodness until his death. Therefore final perseverance is not a special help.

Reply. I distinguish the major: final perseverance is the coincidence of grace with death, willed in virture of itself by God for the efficacious purpose of glory: granted; a fortuitous and accidental coincidence: denied. I likewise distinguish the minor: for a moderately long time until the accidental conjunction of grace and death: granted; for a definite interval of time until the conjunction of habitual grace with death willed in virtue of itself by God: denied.

Second objection. To those who possess grace, glory is due. Therefore with still greater reason is the help due to them for the continuation of grace with glory.

Reply. I deny the conclusion, for, although glory is due to a man who possess grace, as long as he remains in grace, it is not however due to him

that he be invariably preserved in grace until death, since he is of an erratic, defectible nature.

Third objection. According to the Council of Trent, “God does not abandon a soul that is once justified unless He is first abandoned by it” (Denz., no. 804). But if, in order to persevere, the just man requires special help, which God denies to many of the just, He would desert him before being deserted by him. Therefore.

Reply. The sense of the major is: God does not abandon by with dreawing the efficacious actual grace, unless man first resists sufficient grace. But to ask why God does not give to all the just efficacious grace, by means of which they many not neglect sufficient grace. But to aks why God does not give to all the just efficacious grace, by means of which they may not neglect sufficient grace. But to ask why God does not give to all the just efficacious grace, by means of which they may not neglect sufficient grace, by means of which they may not neglect sufficient grace, is equivalent to asking why he permits sin in one defectible soul rather than in another, whereupon the answer, in the words of St. Augustine (de dono perseverantiae, chap. 9), is that “in this respect the judgment of God is inscrutable”; and further, in his commentary on St. John 6:44, “No man can come to Me, except the Father, who sent Me, draw him,” he adds: “Why does He draw one and not another? Do not judge if you do not wish to err; but accept and understand: if you are not yet drawn, pray that you may be drawn.” Cf. St. Thomas on John 6:44. Hence we should pray in the words of the Mass, before the Communion: “Grant me ever to adhere to Thy commandments and never permit me to be separated from Thee.”

Further, according to the Council of Trent (Denz., no. 806): “The gift of perseverance . . . can be possessed only by the one who is able to make him who stands, stand (Rom. 14:4), that he may persevere standing, and to raise up him who falls.” Cf. below (q.114, a. 9) on the gift of perseverance which cannot be the object of merit, but which can be obtained by virtue of humble, persevering, impetratory prayer in union with the prayer of Christ, the High Priest of the Sacrifice of the Mass. How advantageous it is, then, to celebrate or hear Mass in order to obtain the grace of a happy death, as Benedict XV declared!

This terminates the question of the necessity of grace for knowing natural and supernatural truth, for doing natural and supernatural good, for avoiding evil, and for persevering unto the end.

CHAPTER III

QUESTION 110

THE GRACE OF GOD WITH RESPECT TO ITS ESSENCE

After considering the necessity of grace for our final end, St. A Thomas passes to the treatment of its essence. This question is particularly concerned with habitual or sanctifying grace which, by antonomasia, is called “grace,” whereby man is made pleasing to God, His child and heir. Actual grace is reducible to this habitual grace in a certain sense, as a disposition to a form or a proportionate movement within the same order and species. This actual grace is considered by itself in question III on the divisions of grace.

The present question (110) is divided into four articles which are arranged progressively, proceeding from the general to the particular, from the genus to the specific differences, as follows:

1. Whether grace posits something in the soul, or whether it is something existing in God outside of us.
2. Whether grace is a quality.
3. Whether grace differs from infused virtue, especially from charity.
4. Whether it resides in the essence of the soul as in a subject; this question presupposes the solution of article three.

We are therefore dealing both with the formal cause and with the quasi-material cause or subject in which grace is received.

ARTICLE I

WHETHER GRACE POSITS ANYTHING IN THE SOUL

State of the question. In the first objections, St. Thomas already set forth the arguments which were later proposed by the Lutherans and Calvinists, who hold that sanctifying grace is not a gift intrinsic to the soul, but an extrinsic designation, thanks to the imputation of the justice of Christ, out of regard for whom God loves the sinner and dissimulates his sin, as long as the sinner, with trusting faith, firmly believes and hopes that God will condone his sins to the end of his life for the sake of the merits of Christ. Hence the words of Luther: “Sin strongly, but believe still more strongly.” These words are not a direct exhortation to sin, but an indirect one.

St. Thomas anticipated this pernicious doctrine to a certain extent by proposing three objections at the beginning of the article: 1) By the mere fact that a man is said to have the grace of the king, nothing is posited in him; it is only in the king that there resides an attitude of benevolence toward this man. 2) God vivifies the soul as the soul vivifies the body; but the soul vivifies the body immediately; therefore there is no medium between God who vivifies and the soul that is vivified. 3) Grace is the remission of sins; but this remission is effected according as God does not impute sin to us. Therefore grace does not posit anything in the soul. It is remarkable that the future doctrine of Protestants on grace should have been so explicitly formulated as early as the thirteenth century in such wise as to solve its difficulties.

In the same way, St. Thomas, treating of the Sacrifice of the Mass (IIIa, q. 83, a. I) under the title, “Whether in the celebration of this mystery Christ is immolated,” stated an objection (as did St. Albert also in his Sentences) in terms almost word for word as the Protestants would later express it: “The immolation of Christ was made on the cross. But in the celebration of the Mass, Christ is not crucified; therefore neither is He immolated”; consequently the Mass is not a true sacrifice, but only a memorial of the past sacrifice.

From these examples it should be evident how excellent is this method of proposing difficulties at the beginning of any particularly fundamental question, difficulties opposed to the solution which one accepts or which, at least, seems to be proved the best. By this means, theology can more easily foresee errors and avoid them. For if the question is correctly stated, there cannot be many possible answers, but there are generally two opposite ones, affirmative and negative. And before proving the affirmative, it is profitable

to examine the arguments which can be adduced in support of the negative. Thus the crux of the problem to be solved will be brought to light.

Reply. Habitual grace is a supernatural gift of God inhering in the soul.

1. Proof from Scripture. “I will pour upon you clean water” (Ezech. 36:25). (Grace is thus referred to metaphorically, in the New Testament as well: cf. John 4:13.) The following verse continues: “And I will give you a new heart, and put a new spirit within you” (Ezech. 36:26). “He hath given us most great and precious promises: that by these you may be made partakers of the divine nature” (II Pet. 1:4). “The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us” (Rom. 5:3). “Neglect not the grace that is in thee” (I Tim. 4:14). “I admonish thee, that thou stir up the grace of God which is in thee” (II Tim. 1:6). “Whosoever is born of God, committeth not sin: for His seed abideth in him” (I John 3:9). “Who also hath sealed us, and given the pledge of the Spirit in our hearts” (II Cor. 1:22). “Whosoever drinketh of this water, . . . the water . . . shall become in him a fountain of water, springing up into life everlasting” (John 4:13 f.).

As for the teaching of the Fathers, Rouet de Journel (Enchiridion patristicurn, theological index, nos. 354-65) sums up their testimony according to the writings of each of them: the abiding, supernatural gift of habitual grace is infused in justification; sins are really removed; man is interiorly renewed; the Holy Ghost dwells in him; he is made a partaker of the divine nature, an adopted son of God, an heir to the kingdom of heaven, a friend of God; habitual grace ejects mortal sin. Man can never be certain of being just or in the state of grace. The just can merit eternal life.

Hence the Council of Trent declares (Sess. VI, can. 11, Denz., no. 821): “If anyone should say that men are justified either by the imputation of Christ’s justice alone or by the remission of sins alone, exclusive of grace and charity, which are diffused in their hearts by the Holy Ghost, and that it inheres in them, or even that grace, by which we are justified, is only a favor from God: let him be anathema.” Cf. also Council of Trent (Denz., nos. 799 ff ., 809).

2. The theological proof is presented by St. Thomas in the article, which should be read attentively; in it he begins with the definition of the word “grace” which, by analogy, has several meanings, even in its merely human signification. 1. Thus it means that by which someone is pleasing or gratifying to others; and in this sense it may be the beauty of the person,

which is called grace of the countenance; or someone is said to be pleasing, for instance, to the king because of the king's benevolence toward him; thus it is said that a man is in the king's grace. 2. Grace means a gift gratuitously given to someone; for example: I grant you this grace. 3. It also signifies gratitude or the rendering of thanks.

In these human connotations the word "grace" is already applied analogically. With still greater reason is it used in an analogical sense of divine things, yet not metaphorically, but properly, as will presently appear. 1. It is applied to the love of God toward those who are pleasing to Him; 2. to the gift gratuitously bestowed upon the just; 3. to the thanksgiving for a benefit received. From God's benevolent love proceeds the gratuitous gift, and thereupon, gratitude.

On this basis St. Thomas establishes the most sublime theological argument, connecting the treatise on created grace with that on uncreated grace, or the uncreated love of God "which infuses and creates goodness in things," as explained in Ia, q. 20, a. 2. This line of reasoning can be reduced to the following.

What makes us pleasing to God is that which is really produced in us by the uncreated love of God for us. But grace is what makes us pleasing to God as children and heirs. Therefore grace is that which is really produced in us by the uncreated love of God for us.

The major is proved in Ia, q. 20, a. 2, according as the uncreated love of God for us does not presuppose any lovableness in us, but bestows it upon us. In this respect it differs from created benevolence. For it is briefly stated in this question of the First Part that, whereas our love is not the cause of the goodness of things, but rather presupposes it, the love of God is the cause of the goodness of things. And in the present article St. Thomas adds: "Hence it is clear that any degree whatever of God's love is followed by some good caused in the creature. But God's common love is commensurate with what is bestowed on all created things in the natural order; the other is a special love by which He draws the rational creature up above the condition of nature to a participation in the divine goodness."

The minor is the nominal definition of the word "grace" with respect to us. Thus in Holy Scripture grace is said to be that by which we are pleasing to God, "graced" (Ephes. 1:6), "justified freely by His grace" (Rom. 3:24), His "beloved" (Ps. 107:7), not merely with a natural love from which proceed natural benefits, such as being, life, but with a supernatural love

whereby we are called children of God, “born … of God” (John 1:13), “partakers of the divine nature” according to the expression of St. Peter: “He hath given us most great and precious promises: that by these you may be made partakers of the divine nature” (II Pet. 1:4). These texts are accepted by Protestants with respect to God’s uncreated love for us.

Hence, in accordance with the aforesaid major, it follows that grace is in us a supernatural gift of God inhering in the soul, by which we are truly children of God, born of God, and participators in the divine nature. Thus the love of God is effective in the supernatural as it is in the natural order. And grace generally signifies this gift habitually abiding in the soul, as often referred to by St. Paul.

Nevertheless, as St. Thomas observes in concluding the body of the article, grace sometimes denotes that very eternal, uncreated love of God, so that accordingly even predestination is called grace, “in that God predestined or elected some gratuitously and not because of merit, for it is said to the Ephesians (1:5): [He] ‘hath predestinated us unto the adoption of children . . . unto the praise of the glory of His grace, in which He hath graced us in His beloved Son’”; that is, unto the manifestation of the diffusion and splendor of His uncreated grace, by which we are made pleasing to God in His Son.

Thus “grace” is applied analogically both in the natural and in the supernatural orders, but analogically, in the strict sense, and not merely metaphorically.

In the first place, with respect to us, according to the application of the word, “grace” means that which is pleasing to others, for example, beauty of countenance or mental qualities; and to this grace, by which someone is pleasing to others, corresponds benevolence in others, which is present in a different mode in God and in men. Thereafter, from benevolence there arises some benefit and, thence, gratitude for the benefit received.

But in itself, grace means in the first place that uncreated grace from which all benefits proceed. Hence St. Thomas likewise declares (Ia, q. 13, a. 6): Paternity, from our standpoint, denotes primarily an earthly father; but in itself, it applies primarily to the heavenly Father, according to Ephes. 3:14f.: “I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom all paternity in heaven and earth is named.”

In all these acceptations, “grace” is applied not metaphorically (as when God is said to be angry) but properly. However, this proper meaning

remains analogical; the analogous significations are such as bear a common name, and the meaning signified by the name is absolutely diverse, but under a particular aspect it is the same (under the analogy of proportionality, it is proportionately the same). Thus the notion of grace is proportionately realized in both its human and its divine applications.

CONFIRMATION FROM THE REFUTATION OF OBJECTIONS

Reply to first objection. That which in us is pleasing to our friends is presupposed by their love, and is not in us as received from them, whereas that which in us is pleasing to God is caused by the divine love.

Reply to second objection. God does not vivify the soul as the soul does the body; for the soul is the form of the body and hence vivifies it immediately; on the contrary, God is not the form of the soul, but a separate agent; hence He vivifies the soul not immediately but by a form produced in the soul, that is, by grace, which is life in first act, while the vital operations are life in second act.

Reply to third objection. As St. Augustine says (I Retract., chap. 23), to grace pertains not only the remission of sins, but also reconciliation and peace; moreover, the very remission of sins is itself accomplished by sanctifying grace received into the soul, as will be clear from what follows below (q.113, a. 2).

Other objections. According to Isa. 43:4, God proclaims: “Since thou becomest honorable in My eyes, thou art glorious: I have loved thee.”

Reply. The word “since” does not here signify cause, but concomitance, for “what hast thou that thou hast not received?” Moreover, one person may be more pleasing to God inasmuch as, receiving grace with more fidelity, he performs greater works.

I insist. God loves the predestinate. But this love does not posit anything supernatural in them when they are in sin. Therefore not all the love of God posits something in the person loved.

Reply. God does not love the predestinate with a terminative efficacious love while he is in sin, but He decreed from all eternity to grant him efficacious graces at such and such a time toward his salvation.

I insist. Even if the love of God is eacacious, it suffices that it cause in man practical assistance.

Reply. This is true of the imperfect love whereby God disposes the sinner for justification, not of the perfect love whereby God loves man as a son and heir; hence man ought to participate in the divine nature, “made partaker of the divine nature.”

First corollary. A threefold love of God toward us wayfarers can be distinguished and designated by the effects of each.

1. Merely natural love, which causes natural goods such as being, life, intelligence.

2. Supernatural but imperfect love, which causes in the sinner supernatural faith, hope, and practical helps.

3. Supernatural and perfect love, which communicates habitual grace by which man is made absolutely pleasing to God, His friend, a partaker of the divine nature, and an heir to the kingdom of heaven. (Cf. below, what is said of justification in opposition to Protestantism.)

Second corollary. It is already vaguely apparent from the major premise (the love of God infuses and creates goodness in things), that grace is intrinsically efficacious, that is, because God wills, and not because man wills, to render it efficacious. “It is God who worketh in you both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will.” “What hast thou that thou hast not received?” (Cf. below, on efficacious grace.) From the foregoing it is evident that he who actually fulfills the commands of God is better than he who can fulfill them and, in fact, does not do so.

But no one would be in any respect better were he not more loved and assisted by God (Ia, q. 20, a. 3 f.). “What hast thou that thou hast not received?”

Therefore the grace whereby we actually fulfill the precepts of God contains more in itself than the sufficient grace whereby we can fulfill it, without however doing so in fact.

ARTICLE II

WHETHER GRACE IS A QUALITY OF THE SOUL

State of the question. Having established that habitual grace is something created inhering in the soul, we must discover to what category of created being it can be reduced, whether to the category of a quality rather than to a

substance, a quantity, a relation, an action, or a passion. It seems that it is not a quality, for the following rea-sons.

1.Grace acts in the soul, justifying it; but a quality does not act upon its subject.

2. Grace is nobler than the soul, therefore it should not be an accident or quality, but a substance.

3. If grace were an accident or quality, it would be corrupted upon the entrance of mortal sin; this is unbecoming, since grace is the beginning of eternal life.

Note. The Nominalists, before Luther, declared that habitual grace is something ontologically natural, but something which bestows a moral right to eternal life, just as a bank note is physically, ontologically only a slip of paper, although its possession gives one a moral right to the equivalent gold.

On the contrary, certain Cartesian and Ontologist theologians said that grace and charity are the Holy Ghost Himself dwelling in the soul, as the Master of the Sentences might say. The Cartesians in particular maintained this, for they did not admit of a real distinction between substance and accident; hence grace could not be a real, supernatural accident distinct from the soul, but must be a substance, that is, God inhabiting it and impelling it to meritorious works availing to salvation.

Reply. St. Thomas replies to the question with a twofold conclusion regarding 1. actual grace and 2. habitual grace.

First conclusion. Actual grace is not a quality but a certain motion of the soul.

Proof. Actual grace is a gratuitous effect of God by which the soul of man is impelled by God toward something which ought to be known or willed or done. But that by which the soul is thus moved is not a permanent quality, but something transient, that is, a certain motion of the soul quite distinct both from the uncreated action of God whence it proceeds and from our action thus produced.

It should be noted that certain Molinists, misinterpreting St. Thomas, understand him thus: actual grace is a certain motion of the soul, that is, an indeliberate operation on our part which inclines toward a deliberate act, determinable by man alone. On the contrary, when St. Thomas says that actual grace is a certain motion of the soul, he does not say it is an operation of the soul, but, as he himself wrote, it is a motion whereby “the soul is

moved by God toward something which is to be known or willed or done." In other words, it is the application of the faculties that they may pass from potency to act and may elicit their operation; for an operation, immediately by God alone; but under the infusion of actual grace, the soul elicits vitally even indeliberate operations. On the other hand, actual grace is not elicited by us.

Hence St. Thomas says: "The act of a mover in the moved is a motion" according to Aristotle (III Physics). For, as Aristotle declares, motion, inasmuch as it is produced by an agent, is called action or motion, and motion, as it is in the one moved, is "passion." But the action of a bodily agent is formally transitive and terminates in the "patient," whereas the uncreated external action of God is formally immanent and only virtually transitive. Therefore actual grace is something created, as an effect of God, according to St. Thomas (he does not say that actual grace is our action, our vital operation), and it is in us as a motion-passion received in the will, by which the will is moved to elicit its operation.

Zigliara explains this well (Theol. nat., Bk. III, art. 4, & 5, p. 498) by the example of heat.

1. Heat is an action in the fire, or by the fire (formally transitive action);

2. Heat is a passion in the wood, in that the wood is heated;

3. Heat is an operation, since the wood, once heated, gives heat.

Likewise, with respect to divine motion.

1. Motion is an action in God, uncreated, formally immanent and virtually transient action.

2. Motion-passion by which the will is moved, or is made to pass from the potency of willing into the act of willing, is the completion of causality, referred to by St. Thomas (Contra Gentes, Bk. III, chap. 66).

3. The operation elicited by the will, even if indeliberately, is yet vitally elicited.

St. Thomas says (Contra Gentes, Bk. III, chap. 66): "For the completion of the power of the secondary agent comes from the first agent." And again (De potentia, q. 3, a. 7 ad 7): "That which is made by God in the natural order, by which He may actually operate, is, as a mere intention He has, in a certain sense incomplete, in the way that colors exist in the air or the power of an art in the artist's instrument"; hence the power of an art is distinguished from the action which proceeds from this power. (Cf. our Dieu, 8th ed., p. 480, and the Salmanticenses, De gratia, disp. 5, dub. 1-6,

on actual grace as distinct from the uncreated action of God and from our indeliberate operation.)

Objection. An immanent action elicited by us is reduced, as immanent, to the category of quality, and consequently actual grace ordained toward this action may be reduced to a quality.

Reply. Certainly thus actual grace reductively belongs to the category of quality, but not as something habitual and permanent. What St. Thomas is particularly insistent upon is that actual grace is not something habitual and abiding, as a quality properly so called, but something passing in a transitory manner.

Second conclusion. Sanctifying grace is a certain supernatural quality abiding in the soul.

1. Scriptural proof. Proof from the passages of Sacred Scripture quoted in the explanation of the preceding article wherein grace is referred to as the seed of glory, a pledge, a seal, a fountain; likewise from St. Augustine, here quoted in the argument Sed contra, who calls it the luster of the soul. But all these expressions signify something permanent in the soul, by reason of which God abides in the soul, according to the words of John 14:23: “We will come to him, and will make Our abode with him.”

Similarly the Council of Trent (Denz., no. 821) speaks of grace as diffused and inhering in the soul; again (Denz., no. 809): “It is called our justice because by its inherence in us we are justified.” As Gonet observes in his commentary on this article (p. 87), the Council of Trent proscribes the error of the Master of the Sentences according to whom charity is the Holy Ghost Himself dwelling in us and moving us to the act of charity.

2. Theological proof. God does not provide less amply for our souls with respect to supernatural good than with respect to natural good.

But with respect to natural good He not only moves us actually, but gives us qualities or faculties, namely, principles, eliciting operations, so that these may be vital and connatural to us.

Therefore it is fitting that God should likewise not only move us to act, but should also give us a habitual principle of supernatural operation, that is, a certain quality, namely, grace itself.

Thus has He disposed all things sweetly. St. Thomas here differentiates between habitual and actual grace more decidedly than does St. Augustine, since he considers the matter more deeply from the ontological aspect, and not merely from the psychological and moral point of view.

Again in IIa IIae, q. 23, a. 2, he makes it clear that charity is something created in the soul and not, as the Master of the Sentences would have it, the Spirit Himself moving us to an act of charity. In the latter case, the soul would not produce the act of charity connaturally or meritoriously; to do so requires an infused habit elevating the will. Otherwise the supernatural order would be less perfect than the natural order. At the same time, an infused habit is, as it were, a second nature in us, so that our supernatural acts are also connatural.

Confirmation from the reply to the objections.

1. Grace, as a quality, acts in the soul not effectively but formally, justifying it or making it just, as whiteness makes a thing white and justice renders one just.

2. Grace cannot be the substance of God since it is the effect of the uncreated love of God (according to Article I); nor can it be the substance of the soul, since it would then be something natural, would be identified with nature, from which it is to be distinguished, according to revelation.

Therefore it can only be an accident and is thus inferior to the soul with respect to the mode of its being, that is, being in something else; but it is nobler than the soul according as it is a certain supernatural participation in the divine nature as it is divine, that is, in the intimate life of God. Deity is in a certain sense above being, above unity, above life, and above knowledge, for these are contained within it formally and eminently.

Corollary. The essentially supernatural cannot be in us or in the angels otherwise than as an accident; in God alone is it substance.

Reply to third objection. Since grace is an accident, it is not that which is made or corrupted, but that by which someone is made pleasing, who may subsequently become unpleasing; in other words, grace is drawn forth from the obediential power of the soul, and after its loss nothing but the obediential power remains, that is, no repug-nance to receiving a return of grace.

The present conclusion may be confirmed by showing that sanctifying grace cannot be classified under any other category of created being. 1. Not under quantity, for quantity results from the composite nature of matter. 2. It is not a relation, since relation demands a foundation, and sanctifying grace is itself the foundation of the relationship by which we are called children of God and it ordains us to glory, inasmuch as it is the seed of glory. It is likewise the foundation or root of the infused virtues, wherein there is a

transcendental relationship to our supernatural object. 3. It cannot be an action, not even an immanent action, but is the radical principle of immanent actions, such as acts of charity, faith, hope. 4. It is not a passion; in this it differs from actual grace, which is in us a motion of the soul, or a motion-passion. Finally, it is evident that habitual grace does not belong to any other categories which are found only in bodies, for instance, location, position, time, habit or adornment, although metaphorically it is called the adornment of the soul.

It should be remarked that theologians generally maintain, in opposition to Ripalda and, in a certain measure, to Scotus, not only that grace is not a substance but that God, even by His absolute power, cannot produce a created, supernatural substance to which the vision of the divine essence would be natural. (Cf. De revelatione, I, 364, and Billuart, De Deo, diss. 4, a. 54; Gonet, De gratia, disp. 11, a. 3.)

This would be incompatible from the standpoint of the object, since such a substance would have an intellect of the same nature as the divine intellect, for it would be specified by the same formal object; hence it would be a created divine nature, which is repugnant by its terms as is pantheism.

It would also be inconsistent on the part of the subject, for something created cannot be essentially supernatural without being essentially related to the Deity as such and specified by it, since only the essence of God is above all created nature. But no created substance can be essentially related to the Deity and specified by it, because substance is being in itself and for itself (in se et ad se), that is, it has within itself its own specification and cannot be defined with reference to anything else.

On the contrary, any accident, such as a power or habit, can be essentially related to something else; thus grace, which is the seed of glory, is specified by the essence of God, of which it is a participation and toward the vision of which it ordains us. But Scotus did not understand this well, for he held that grace and the light of glory are supernatural only in fact, because God so willed it, but that He could have willed them to be natural, so that there could be a creature to whom the beatific vision would be natural.

There are several problems to be examined in connection with this article on account of the errors of the Nominalists who came after St. Thomas and prepared the way for Lutheranism.

First doubt. Is it of faith that sanctifying grace is a quality and a habit?

Reply. It is not a defined article of faith, for the Council of Trent as well as the Council of Vienne, refrained from using the words “quality” and “habit” so as not to define a question disputed among theologians. Hence it seems that the demands of faith would be satisfied by holding that sanctifying grace is a habitual gift, permanently inhering in the soul.

Second doubt. Is it, nevertheless, a certain theological conclusion that sanctifying grace is a quality and a habit, entitatively?

Reply. Assuredly, on account of the argument given by St. Thomas and commonly accepted at present. For habitual grace cannot be conceived as belonging to any other category than that of a quality, as we have said; and within this category it is reducible to a habit. For a habit is a permanent quality, difficult to dislodge (at least by any internal cause), disposing the subject to a certain state, whether for good or evil, in regard to its being (an entitative habit, such as beauty, health) or in regard to its operation (an operative habit).

But sanctifying grace is a permanent quality, as has been shown; moreover it is difficult to dislodge, as far as itself and its principles are concerned, supported as it is by the divine infusion, and indeed being in the spiritual soul the very seed of glory, or life eternal already begun; it is therefore difficult to dislodge, although accidentally, by reason of the subject and of the aberrations and caprices of its free will, it can be lost. “For we carry this treasure in fragile vessels.” (Cf. De veritate, q. 27, a. 1-9.) Finally it disposes the subject in a good, or favorable, state toward God and for avoidance of sin. But in the following article, where habitual grace is distinguished from charity, we shall see that the former is an entitative and not an operative habit, except radically.

Third doubt. Is habitual grace a habit univocally or only by ananlogy, properly speaking?

Reply. It is called a habit not only metaphorically, but properly. However, in agreememt with several Thomists (Gardeil, Billot, De virt. Inf., pp. 30, 33) it seems to us that it does not correspond univocally with habits of the natural order, by the very fact that it belongs to a higher order which surpasses all nature, created or capable of creation. Hence St. Thomas often speaks of it as a certain quality or as reducible to the genus: quality (cf. Ia IIae, q. 63, last article).

That this solution is indeed St. Thomas’ teaching can be proved from four arguments.

1. He observes (Ia IIae, q. 61, a. I ad I) that “virtue” is applied analogically even to the moral and intellectual virtues; hence, with still greater reason, to the supernatural virtues, the notion of virtue belongs casually by priority to prudence as directing, rather than to the other moral virtues.

2. St. Thomas declares (De veritate, q. 14, a.9, 2) that “belief, as it exists in the demons, is not conformable to infused faith, except equivocally”; the demons believe by acquired faith based on the evidence of miracles, forced, as it were, to accept this evidence.

3. St. Thomas maintains in several places that the infused virtues differ from the acquired inasmuch as they not only bestow the power to act rightly, but bestow it absolutely, according as they give the first upward impetus to a higher order; therefore they partake in a certain sense of the nature of a power and in a certain sense of that of a habit.

4. St. Thomas states in various articles that “grace is reducible to the primary species of a quality” (habit); cf. Ia IIae, q. 110, a. 3 ad 3; De veritate, q. 27, a. 2 ad 7; 11, d. 26, q. I, a. 4 ad I.

However, John of St. Thomas, commenting on De virtutibus, Ia IIae, disp. 16, a. 6, fol. 152, seems to hold that grace and the infused virtues are in accord univocally with the acquired virtues as classified by predicates and analogically as classified by their causative motive or regulative force.

But John of St. Thomas states in his Cursus Phil., dealing with the four causes, that they conform univocally in the general notion of cause, which seems to be false.

The argument which impels John of St. Thomas is that acquired virtue is logically univocal in kind, that is, in the order of logic; yet, causally, virtue is predicated of prudence in a prior sense to that of the virtues which are directed by it.

Fourth doubt. Whether habitual grace is a gift entitatively (that is, intrinsically, essentially) and supernaturally.

This is denied by Scotus (q. I of the introduction and 4, dist. 10, q. 8), where he says that if God so willed, He could give us grace and the light of glory as natural properties; and he maintains that the supernatural differs from the natural only on the part of the efficient cause, as sight supernaturally given to a man born blind differs from natural sight. Hence grace would not be something intrinsically and essentially supernatural; it would not be supernatural substantially or essentially, but only with respect

to the mode of its production under present circumstances. Thus the distinction between the order of grace and the order of nature would not be necessary, in other words, not based upon its divine nature according to which it exceeds all nature, created or capable of creation, but would be a contingent distinction, founded upon the free will of God. This is "contingentism" and "libertism."

The Nominalists, such as Ockham, followed, maintaining that grace should be looked upon as a bank note (cf. Salmanticenses, dub. II, 3, no. 34). For as this note, of its nature, before being issued by the government, has no monetary value, but subsequently is equal to gold; so sanctifying grace intrinsically is a certain entity, lacking sufficient value to render man acceptable to God, but by the accession of an extrinsic disposition of God, or by the favor of God, without any intrinsic transformation, this entity receives a moral value, comparable to that of the bank note. Such, according to the Salmanticenses, was the teaching of Ockham, Gabriel, and a disciple of Ailly (probably Gerson), Durandus (I, d. 17, q. I, nos. 7 and 8) and Scotus (ibid., q. 2) seem to agree with them. To the same effect, Ockham declared that man can merit eternal life by a natural act, if this act is accepted by God. This is absolute contingentism. Molina retains something of this Nominalism when he says that the theological virtues are supernatural modally, but not by virtue of their formal object.

Thus the Nominalists denied the principles of traditional theology and prepared the way for Lutheranism, which holds that grace is only an extrinsic denomination; in other words, corruption remains in man, but sin is no longer imputed to him, as long as a man believes himself to be predestined. Therefore, "sin strongly, and believe even more strongly."

This is the Nominalist tendency. On the contrary, immoderate realism would tend to identify being in general with the divine being, and to identify grace with God dwelling in us, as the Master of the Sentences maintained. Toward this latter error the Cartesian and ontologistic theologians inclined, refusing to admit that habitual grace is an accident, since they denied any real distinction between substance and accident.

Against Scotus and the Nominalists what is to be said? Gonet (a. 3) states that this opinion is commonly rejected because it does not distinguish between what is intrinsically or substantially supernatural, and what is extrinsically or modally supernatural. However, this distinction is generally accepted by theologians, especially since the Council of Trent's

condemnation of Protestantism, as Lichetto himself acknowledges, referring to Scotus. (Cf. Scotus, Opera, ed. Vives, XV, 200; and our De revelatione, I, 216.) Lichetto maintains, after Trent, that there are habits which of themselves are necessarily infused, such as the theological virtues. Moreover, the Church has always distinguished between the supernaturalness of miracles naturally intelligible, and the supernaturalness of grace and of mysteries which are naturally unintelligible even for the angels (Council of the Vatican). Hence even the Molinists hold that, although the theological virtues are supernatural substantially, yet they are not supernatural by virtue of their formal object; and therein lies the inconsistency of their position.

At present theologians generally agree, in opposition to Scotus and Ripalda, that God, even by His absolute power, cannot create a supernatural substance or a substance to which the vision of the divine essence would be natural. (Cf. Council of Trent, Sess. VI, chap. 7, Denz., no. 800.) In regard to the justification of sinners: “By it we are renewed in spirit . . . ; we are indeed called just and so we are. Hence in this same justification, together with the remission of sins, man receives simultaneously the infusion of all these: faith, hope, and charity.” Thus the virtues are, by their very nature, infused, not accidentally infused, as infused geometry would be. But we shall give the complete refutation of the foregoing theory of the Nominalists in the solution of the next problem.

Fifth doubt. Whether sanctifying grace is a formal and physical participation in the divine nature.

State of the question. In articles 3 and 4 of the present question, as well as in q. 112, a. I, St. Thomas says that grace is a participation in the divine nature, and St. Thomas was speaking formally; but later, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, there were great discussions between Thomists and Nominalists over that word “participation.” All Catholic theologians have certainly always held that sanctifying grace is in some sense a participation in the divine nature, on account of the express testimony of Sacred Scripture and the Fathers, to be quoted below, particularly on account of the words of St. Peter’s Second Epistle (1:4): “that by these [gifts] you may be made partakers of the divine nature.”

In the first place, the Nominalist definition of “participation” should be noted. The expression “to participate” means to take part; thus are

distinguished the subject participating and the perfection participated. Cf. Tabula aurea of the works of St. Thomas, s.v. Participatio.

“Participate” means to take part; it is primarily applied to quantitative things which possess integral parts, for instance, to participate in this meal; subsequently it can be applied to qualities, for example, to participate in or partake of heat, light, whiteness, or to spiritual qualities, as a pupil participates in the knowledge of his master when he receives a share in it, or a soldier participates in the victory of his general.

Thus Plato often used this word in the philosophical order when, for instance, he stated that men participate in the idea of humanity, and bulls in the idea of bovinity; but he thought that these exemplary ideas had separate being. On the contrary, a separate man or bull cannot exist, since they would have to have bones and flesh, in other words, a common, not an individual material, and bones and flesh cannot exist without being these particular bones and flesh, as Aristotle maintained. But God is essential being, essential good, and essential truth.

It is commonly said that stones participate in being, plants and animals participate in life, men participate in intellect, and thus they are analogically like unto God with regard to being, life, and intellect respectively. Now it must be determined whether by habitual grace the just man participates in the divine nature, in the intimate life of God or in the Deity by which God is, properly speaking, God; in other words, whether he participates in the radical principle of operations which are properly divine, by which God knows and loves Himself immediately.

As the Salmanticenses here record (dub. III, no. 54), the Nominalists, consistently with their thesis, mentioned above, denied that sanctifying grace is a physical and formal participation in the divine nature. (Likewise Coninck, In Ilam Ilae, d. 21, no. 75, and Lessius Bk. II, Desummo bono.)

The Nominalists declare that sanctifying grace is a moral participation, consisting in a rectitude of the will and an imitation of the sanctity and justice of God, just as those who imitate the faith of Abraham are called sons of Abraham, and those who imitate the malice of the devil are called his sons, although physically they are not born of either. In accordance with this tendency, the Protestants held that man is by grace a son of God, since he believes his sins are externally removed or no longer imputed to him. And Baius, who was a moderate Protestant, denied the strict

supernaturalness of sanctifying grace, which he limited to natural, Christian virtue.

Other Catholic theologians maintained that sanctifying grace is a physical participation in the divine nature, not however formal, but virtual; that is, not formal, as the light of the air is a participation in the light of the sun, but virtual, as the seed is a participation in the procreator, by a power derived from it to produce a likeness of itself. (Cf. Gonet.)

Lastly, the Thomists hold that sanctifying grace is a physical and formal participation in the divine nature; but with respect to some secondary points they are not agreed. Cajetan, Ledesma, Martines, Gonet, and the Salmanticenses claim that it is even a physical, formal, analogical participation in the very infinity of God; others (Curiel, for example) declare that a participation in infinity is impossible. But this minor disagreement seems to be a mere matter of terminology, for John of St. Thomas and Billuart reconcile these two opinions of Thomists, as will presently be explained (cf. below: the dignity of sanctifying grace).

The more general conclusion is that sanctifying grace is a participation in the divine nature, not only moral but physical, not only virtual but formal, analogical however, imperfectly imitating as an accident what, in God, is substance.

1. This conclusion is based upon Sacred Scripture: “By whom [Christ] . . . hath given us most great and precious promises: that by these you may be made partakers of the divine nature” (II Pet. 1:4). Likewise in Sacred Scripture it is attested in various places that the just are, by grace, generated, born, reborn, of God and made sons of God; but by generation and birth, nature is communicated. “Of His own will hath He begotten us by the word of truth, that we might be some beginning of His creature” (Jas. 1:18). “He gave them power to be made sons of God, . . . who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, . . . but of God” (John 1:12 f.). What would remain of this text, according to Nominalism and Lutheranism? “Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:5). “Whosoever is born of God committeth not sin: for His seed abideth in him” (I John 3:9). And again (ibid., 5:1): “Whosoever . . . is born of God” does not sin, but the grace of God preserves him; that is, he who remains in the state of grace, as a child of God, does not sin mortally. Thus it is proved from Sacred Scripture that grace is a participation in the divine nature.

Similarly this is the obvious meaning of the Church's definitions which are thus brought together by Denzinger in his index (p. 598): "Habitual grace is distinct from actual grace (nos. 1064 ff.); it is an infused, inherent quality of the soul by which man is formally justified, made a partaker of the divine nature, regenerated, abides in Christ, puts on the new man, is made an heir to eternal life" (cf. references according to Denz., ibid.).

2. Theological proof. There are two arguments in particular: a) taken from the definition of nature; b) from the essential supernaturalness of grace itself.

The first argument is stated thus: By divine nature is meant the radical principle of the divine operations by which God sees Himself intuitively and loves Himself.

But sanctifying grace imitates physically and formally this radical principle of properly divine operations, for it radically disposes man to see God intuitively and to love Him with the beatific love.

Therefore sanctifying grace is a physical and formal participation in the divine nature.

The major is based on the very definition of nature, which is the root of the properties and the radical principle of operations in any being. Thus analogically but according to the strict and not the metaphorical sense, nature is in God that which is conceived in Him as the root of the divine perfections and the radical principle of properly divine operations, which are specified by the very essence of God, seen and loved; whereas, on the contrary, the creative act proceeds, not from the divine nature, but from the divine liberty, for God does not operate outside of Himself from any necessity of nature.

The minor is clear especially with regard to grace consummated, which is called glory, from which proceeds the light of glory in the intellect and the charity of beatitude in the will. Moreover, according to St. Paul, the charity of the wayfarer never falls away, but is the same as in heaven; and faith is the substance of things hoped for. Hence grace is spoken of, in tradition, as the seed of glory, a certain beginning of eternal life, according to the words of Christ: "He that believeth in the Son, hath life everlasting" (John 3:36); "He that believeth in Me, hath everlasting life" (ibid., 6:47, also 6:40 and 6:55); "Every one that . . . believeth in Me, shall not die forever" (ibid., 11:26).

It is a question of grace, which establishes the adoptive sonship, which is a certain participated likeness in the sonship of the Word, for in natural filiation the whole undivided nature is communicated, essence and substance, as it is in the Father; but to us is communicated a participation in the divine nature by accidental gift.

Objections. Adversaries of this conclusion raise the following objections.

First objection. It is said in the book of Job (38:28): “Who is the father of rain? or who begot the drops of dew?” That is, God; but the rain does not participate in the nature of God; therefore neither do the other texts quoted prove anything.

Reply. The language of the book of Job is frequently poetical in style, and in this text “the father of rain” is poetically used for the creator of rain. Likewise when it asks “who begot the drops of dew,” the word “begot” is taken in a broad and not a strict sense. But this is not so when it is declared of the just (II Pet. 1:4) that they are made “partakers of the divine nature.”

I insist. Sacred Scripture also calls “children of God” those who lead good lives and do the will of God; for example, “Do good to them that hate you . . . that you may be the children of your Father” (Matt. 5:44 f.). “But love ye your enemies . . . and you shall be the sons of the Highest” (Luke 6:35). In these texts only a moral relationship with God is meant, and we are made His sons morally, or by imitation of His ways.

Reply. To be sure, we are also made children of God, morally, by imitation of His ways, but this moral relationship does not exclude the other but rather, indeed, presupposes it. For God first infuses grace by which we are partakers of the divine nature and are made pleasing to God and His children, by a physical participation in His nature. Then man, by meritorious acts, also becomes a child of God morally, imitating the paternal manner of acting. Thus the child of any distinguished man, if he follows the practices of his father, is said to be made his son to that extent, and this is implied by the words of Christ: “Do good to them that hate you . . . that you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven.” These words presuppose that God is already a father on some other account than that of the love of enemies.

I insist. By grace we are made only adoptive sons of God. However, adoption does not communicate nature, but only a moral right to an inheritance. Therefore grace is only a moral participation in the divine nature by imitation of the divine ways.

Reply. Adoption communicates only a moral right to an inheritance in human affairs: granted; in divine things: denied. In human affairs this is true for two reasons: 1) because human adoption presupposes in the child adopted the same nature specifically as in the person adopting; it is otherwise in divine adoption; 2) because the love of the man adopting is only affective, and produces no physical effect in the child adopted, but only a moral right to an inheritance; on the contrary, "the love of God infuses and creates goodness in things."

First confirmation. Grace partakes of the divine nature as charity and the light of glory partake of the divine attributes. But charity participates strictly and physically in the divine love as divine, since it is specified by the same formal object; and the light of glory participates in the same way in the divine light as divine. Thus Christ says: "The glory which thou hast given Me, I have given to them" (John 17:22). Therefore habitual grace partakes of the divine nature as divine, that is, in the Deity itself, not only with reference to being, but to Deity as such.

Second confirmation. A cause the effects of which are real and physical is itself real and physical. But the effects of sanctifying grace, as a participation in the divine nature, are real and physical, namely, the supernatural virtues which follow upon it as properties. For, according to the Council of Trent, charity is something diffused and inhering in our hearts. The end of sanctifying grace is also something real and physical, that is, the beatific vision. Therefore sanctifying grace itself, as a participation in the divine nature, is something real and physical, not something merely moral as an imitation of the divine ways.

It must, however, be termed an analogical, not a univocal, participation, since it is something created; moreover it is an accident. The Fourth Lateran Council (Denz., no. 432), explaining the words, "Be ye perfect even as your heavenly Father is perfect," declares that it is "as if our Lord were to say: Be perfect, with the perfection of grace, as your heavenly Father is perfect, with the perfection of nature; manifestly, each in his own mode, since between the Creator and the creature such a similarity cannot be acknowledged, without acknowledging that the dissimilarity between them is even greater." Therefore it is only an analogy, not however a mere metaphor, but strictly speaking, according as grace properly ordains us to the operations of beatitude which are properly divine and have the same formal object as the uncreated operations of God Himself. Thus grace is

more than a virtual participation in Deity; it is participation as a permanent form and by reason of the specifying, connatural formal object. That which can be called a virtual participation in the divine nature is the instrumental power residing in the sacraments for the production of grace and likewise the actual grace which disposes one for habitual grace.

Second theological argument. Following this first argument with its confirmations, another can thus be proposed which is drawn from the essential supernaturalness of grace.

Sanctifying grace, in both men and angels, is, according to the Church, an essentially supernatural gift, exceeding any nature created or capable of being created.

But sanctifying grace cannot thus exceed any nature capable of creation unless it is a formal and physical participation in the divine nature.

Therefore sanctifying grace is a formal and physical participation in the divine nature.

It should be remarked that this argument can be inverted and proposed as a corollary of the preceding argument, to prove against the Nominalists that grace is intrinsically supernatural since it is a physical participation in the divine nature. This is done by Billuart.

But our major can be proved from the authority of the councils, for, according to the Vatican Council (Denz., 1796): “divine mysteries (among which is sanctification by grace) by their very nature so exceed the created intellect that even when transmitted by revelation and received by faith, they yet remain covered over by the veil of faith itself and enshrouded in a certain darkness, as long as we are making our way in this life toward God.” Similarly with respect to the essential supernaturalness of grace, according as it surpasses the powers and merits of nature (cf. the condemnation of Pelagianism and Semi-Pelagianism by the Second Council of Orange) and according as it exceeds the requirements of our nature (cf. the condemnation of Baius, especially Denz., nos. 1021, 1023, and the reference just quoted). Moreover, the Vatican Council (Denz., no. 1813),

teaching that “miracles can certainly be known” even naturally, distinguishes expressly between the supernaturalness of miracles, which exceeds our efficient created powers but not our cognoscitive powers, and the supernaturalness of mysteries and of grace, which exceed the powers of understanding of any intellect capable of being created. Thus without a special revelation no one is absolutely certain of being in the state of grace.

Our minor is thus proved: natures created or capable of being created have a participated likeness to God with respect to being, life, and intellect, but not with respect to Deity as such. For God exceeds all nature created or capable of being created by reason of the radical principle of properly divine operations which have God Himself for specifying object. This is the intimate life of God, belonging to God by the very strict, intimate reason of His Deity, which is in a certain sense above being, unity, life, and intellect, because it contains formally and eminently these absolutely simple perfections. Therefore grace, according as it exceeds all nature created or indeed capable of creation, is a formal and physical participation in the divine nature, or Deity as such.

Objection. But even a stone is a certain physical participation in the divine nature inasmuch as it is substantial, and so is a plant inasmuch as it has life in first act and second act; with still greater reason the intellectual soul is a physical participation in the divine nature with respect to intellectual life at least in first act and our understanding with respect to life in second act; cf. Gardeil, O.P., Structure de l'âme et experience mystique, 1927, I, 373.

Reply. The stone does not participate in the divine nature. It participates in being, being in general, not divine being; and thus it is an anological likeness of the divine being since it is being, not as being God. Likewise the plant participates in life in general, not divine life; and in the same way the rational soul participates in intellectual life in general and thus has a participated likeness of the divine intellect on the general analogical basis of intellection. In all of these there is present the common resemblance (being, life, intellect) which God and the creature share analogically.

On the other hand, sanctifying grace as such is not a participation in being in general, nor in life in general, nor in intellectuality in general, but a participation in Deity, which is found naturally only in God. Thus only grace is called a participation in the divine nature according as it is in us the radical principle of operations strictly divine, of which the formal object is (in heaven, at least) absolutely the same as the formal object of the uncreated operations of God.

All of this may be diagrammed as follows:

Thus the stone participates in being and has a likeness to God on the basis of being; grace, on the contrary, is directly and immediately a

participation in the divine nature, not in any perfection analogically shared by God and the creature.

Therefore Deity as such cannot be partaken of except by some essentially supernatural gift. And, conversely, grace cannot be essentially supernatural unless it is a formal and physical participation in the divine nature as divine, that is, in the intimate life of God, or Deity as Deity, ordaining us to the knowledge of God as He Himself knows Himself immediately and to the love of God as He loves Himself.

Furthermore, sanctifying grace is a participation in Deity as it is in itself and not merely as it is known to us. For it is produced in our soul by an immediate infusion altogether independently of our knowledge of the Deity; and just as Deity as such is communicated to the Son by eternal generation, so Deity as such is partaken of by the just, especially by the blessed, through divine adoption.

Hence, materially, grace is a finite accident, an entitative habit, but formally it is a formal participation in Deity as it is in itself, as it subsists in the three persons. Thus it is clearly evident that Deity as such in a certain sense surpasses being and intellection, since all absolutely simple perfections are identified in the eminence of Deity and can be naturally participated in, but Deity cannot be participated in naturally. (Cf. below, pp. 138 ff.: The dignity of sanctifying grace.)

First corollary. Our adoptive sonship is formally and physically a participated likeness of the eternal sonship of the Son of God. (Cf. St. Thomas on Rom. 8:29: “He . . . predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son”; the Tabula aurea, “Adoptio,” 21; Ia, 9.93, a. 4, 2; IIa IIae, q.45, a.6; IIIa, q.3, a. 8; q. 23, a. 1, 2, 3, 4.) The reason is that, just as the Father communicates to His only-begotten Son the whole of His nature, without multiplication or division of this nature, so He communicates to us physically and formally, by an accidental gift, a participation in this divine nature, or in His intimate life, that we may see Him as He sees Himself immediately, although in a finite manner; for to participate is to take a part and to leave a part; Deity is substance in God, its participation is an accident in us.

The principal texts of Holy Scripture on the divine adoption are the following: “For whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For you have not received the spirit of bondage again in fear; but you have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry: Abba

(Father). For the Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit, that we are the sons of God. And if sons, heirs also" (Rom. 8:14-17). "For whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son; that He might be the first-born among many brethren" (ibid., 8:29). "God hath predestinated us unto the adoption of children through Jesus Christ unto Himself, according to the purpose of His will" (Ephes. 1:5). "God sent His son . . . that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because you are sons, God hath sent the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying: Abba, Father. Therefore now he is not a servant, but a son; and if a son, an heir also through God" (Gal. 4:47).

St. Thomas treats of our adoptive sonship particularly in IIIa, q. 23, a. I, 2, 3, 4. He shows how divine adoption differs from human adoption (inasmuch as God by the gift of grace makes the man or angel whom He adopts fit for his inheritance). He shows especially how adoptive sonship through grace is a participated likeness of natural sonship: as the only-begotten Son of God receives eternally the whole divine nature from His Father, the adoptive son of God receives, in time, a participation of the divine nature, or grace, the seed of glory, the beginning of eternal life.

Adoption belongs to the whole Trinity, but is appropriated to the Father as its author, to the Son as its exemplar, to the Holy Ghost as engraving upon us the likeness of this exemplar.

Second corollary. The existence and actual possibility of grace cannot be strictly proved by reason alone, since the supernatural substantially, taken formally, is also supernatural with respect to intelligibility; truth and being are convertible. For that which is essentially supernatural has no necessary, evident connection with things of the natural order; otherwise it would be reduced to the philosophical order, as is the existence of God as author of nature.

Third corollary. Grace is nobler than all other created being, since it participates more perfectly in the divine good than any nature capable of being created. Hence St. Thomas says (below, Ia IIae, q. 113, a. 9 ad 2): "The goodness of the grace of one (man) is greater than the goodness of the nature of the whole universe." (Cf. Cajetan's Commentary on this, and Gonet.)

Confirmation. That is better which is loved more by God. But, as the Apostle says, God did all things for the sake of the elect (II Tim. 2:10), and therefore He loves the just more than all creatures of the natural order, as a

father loves his son more than his fields, his house, and his cattle. (Cf. Salmanticenses.)

Fourth corollary. For perfect knowledge of the value of grace we would need to know glory itself experimentally, just as the knowledge of the value of an infant's intelligence requires a knowledge of intellectual life in its full evolution. How great, then, is the evil of mortal sin! "If thou didst know the gift of God." Thus the three orders of sensitive life, natural life, intellectual life, and the life of grace were clearly distinguished long before Pascal.

Final doubt. Whether sanctifying grace of itself alone ensures one's being formally the adopted son of God. State of the question. Adoption is generally defined as "a gratuitous admission of a stranger into the inheritance of another." According to revelation, God adopts men as children, as is evident from the Epistle to the Romans (8:15): "You have received the spirit of adoption"; from Galatians (4:5): "that we might receive the adoption of sons"; and from Ephesians (1:5): "Who hath predestinated us unto the adoption of children through Jesus Christ." And this definition of adoption is, in fact, verified according as God gratuitously admits and elevates an alien into a beatitude which exceeds the natural requirements or rights of this person. This is generally accepted by the Fathers, especially Cyprian, Pope Leo, and Augustine.

Moreover, adoptive sonship is taken either formally, as it consists in a relationship, or fundamentally, as the foundation of the aforesaid relationship. We are now inquiring what this fundation is. In the natural order natural sonship is formally the relationship, and fundamentally it is passive generation or nature received through generation. Hence, proportionately, the primary formal effect of sanctifying grace is the deification of the soul; the secondary formal effect is adoptive sonship.

To the question thus stated the Nominalists replied, with Scotus and Durandus, that through sanctifying grace we are adopted sons of God, not on account of the very nature of grace, but because God wished to concede this by way of an extrinsic favor.

The Thomists maintain, on the contrary, that we are adoptive sons of God through sanctifying grace on account of its very nature, without looking for any extrinsic favor. To understand this teaching the difference between human and divine adoption must be kept well in mind. It is twofold: 1. Human adoption presupposes in the one adopted the same nature specifically as in the one adopting; it is otherwise in divine adoption. 2. The

love which the man adopting bears toward the one adopted produces no physical effect in the latter, but only something moral and civil, that is, the right of inheritance. On the contrary, the love of God whereby He adopts men through grace is effective and efficacious, and by it He effects a participation in the divine nature, or sanctifying grace. Therefore this sanctifying grace of itself is the foundation of the relationship of adoptive sonship; just as the communication of the whole divine nature, by eternal, quasi-passive generation of the Second Person of the Trinity, is the foundation of the relationship of natural sonship. Hence, as sanctifying grace is not merely a moral, but also a physical and formal, participation in the divine nature, it lays the foundation of adoptive sonship immediately, without the need of looking for any extrinsic favor.

Confirmation. Habitual grace is nature proportioned to the beatific vision, that is, to the eternal inheritance. Likewise, we maintain, in opposition to Lessius, that the divinity of the Holy Ghost intrinsically united to us or assisting and dwelling in us does not produce, by way of form, adoptive sonship, since the form terminating spiritual generation is that by which the generated term lives, spiritually. But God is our life not formally, but only effectively. (Cf. IIa IIae, q. 23, a. 2 ad 2, against the Master of the Sentences.)

We also hold, contrary to the opinion of Suarez, that to be the adopted son of God without habitual grace implies a contradiction. For there is required by this sonship at least an analogical conformity with God in His nature; but this is brought about only by habitual grace whereby man is spiritually begotten by God. Thus to live the divine life radically without grace implies a contradiction; without it man would have only natural justice, and not even that, since in the present state healing grace is required for the observance of the whole natural law.

RECAPITULATION: THE DIGNITY OF SANCTIFYING GRACE

Whether sanctifying grace is formally and physically a participation in infinite pure Act.

This is a disputed question among Thomists. Cajetan, Gonet, and the Salmanticenses answer in the affirmative, since it is a participation in Deity. Curiel and certain others deny it, since, as they say, the infinite as such cannot be participated in, for it is always received in a finite way. John of

St. Thomas, Billuart, and also the Salmanticenses reconcile these two opinions thus: Grace participates in the nature of infinite, pure Act not adequately and subjectively (since whoever receives it does so in a finite way) but objectively and inadequately, for he participates in what is proper to God, or Deity itself, as the root of strictly divine operations which terminate objectively in the Deity itself clearly seen and loved. The disagreement is rather a matter of terms than of ideas.

John of St. Thomas says that grace is a participation in infinity objectively, as it is the likeness and splendor of the divine intellect; elevating the rational creature so that he may receive, as specifying, connatural object, God in His infinity, or rather we should say, in that He is God, according to the most eminent and proper reason of Deity. Deity as such, of which grace is a participation, in a certain sense surpasses infinity, which is a mode, as it were, of the attributes of God which are identified in the eminence of the Deity.

As Gonet declares (De essentia gratiae, no. 52): “The beatific vision, which is the operation of consummated grace, corresponds to God as He is the infinite being and in His essence. Therefore consummated grace participates in the divine nature as it is an infinite being,” for it is the connatural principle of the beatific vision.

Sanctifying grace does not take unto itself the whole infinity of God, but infinity in a certain manner, or inadequately; that is, it has the divine essence for its connatural, immediate object; but it is not identified with this infinite object, nor does it comprehend it as God does. For this reason grace, like charity, can be increased infinitely (cf. IIa IIae, q. 24, a. 7; Gonet, op. cit., for the solution of objections).

First corollary. Habitual grace is a participation in the divine nature as a nature, just as charity is a participation in divine love as being its operation. But both are participations of the intimate life of God. In contrast to natural vegetative, sensitive, or intellectual life, it is said of grace that it is a participation in the divine nature or life as divine.

Second corollary. Sanctifying grace is, through itself, directly, but secondarily, a participation in the nature of God as it is in the three persons; for the nature of God as such subsists as such in three persons and has an infinite inward fecundity by way of the divine processions. Hence from grace rises charity, which is an inclination toward God as He subsists in

three persons, and also from grace, in heaven, rises the light of glory and the vision of the Trinity itself.

However, grace is not a participation in the personal divine fatherhood, since the adoptive sonship which follows from grace is a participated likeness in the eternal sonship of the Word; even by the eternal generation of the Word the divine nature is indeed communicated, but not the paternity. Therefore by divine adoption a participation of the divine nature is communicated, but not of the personal fatherhood. But from the infusion of grace there does follow the adoptive sonship which renders us like the Word, who is the image of the Father, and from grace flows that charity which produces in us a likeness to the Holy Ghost.

Third corollary. The infused virtues flow from sanctifying grace physically, as properties of the soul. (Cf. Salmanticenses.)

Fourth corollary. From the absolute power of God several kinds of sanctifying grace, essentially differing among themselves, cannot be bestowed, whatever some modern theologians may assert, for grace is a formal participation in the divine nature which is absolutely simple, nor can anything higher be conceived in which it would participate. Hence, whatever Father Billot may hold (De Verbo incarnato, thes. XVII, 6th ed., p. 208), not even in the most holy soul of Christ is habitual grace of a higher species than in any just man, although it is much more intense and extensive. Moreover, in Christ this habitual grace is derived from the uncreated grace of union or from the Word terminating the human nature; but considered intrinsically, habitual grace is not of a higher species in Christ than in us: it is always and everywhere a formal and physical participation of the divine nature; nor is it possible to conceive of anything higher in which it could participate than the Deity itself as such. If habitual grace in Christ were of a higher kind, so also would be His beatific vision, as Father Billot declares (ibid.), and then the following principle would not be observed: habit and act are specified by their formal object, for the formal object of the beatific vision of Christ is identical with that of the beatific vision of all the other blessed in heaven.

And on account of the absolute power, habitual grace, charity, and the light of glory, even in the most holy soul of Christ, could always be increased. We cannot conceive of the highest possible degree of this participation, for between any degree, even the highest, and the Deity itself, there is always an infinite distance, as there is between the incomprehensive

beatific vision on the one hand, and the uncreated, comprehensive vision on the other. (Cf. IIIa, q. 10, a. 4 ad 3, and q. 7, a.12 ad 2.)

Confirmation. If there were two graces of essentially different kinds, there would likewise be two charities of essentially different kinds and two lights of glory essentially distinct. But this is impossible, for the essential reason of charity is to tend supernaturally toward God as He is in Himself, to be loved with a love of esteem above all things, and the light of glory is terminated in God as He is. No higher specifying object can be conceived, and habits are specified by their formal object.

Fifth corollary. Hence in Adam before the fall and in Christ sanctifying grace was not of another kind than in us; but it did have other effects in them, however; in fact, even in the natural order the same human species has different effects in man and in woman. Thus grace causes repentance in us, but not in Christ since He was impeccable; in us it caused adoptive sonship, but not in Christ, for He was already the natural Son of God and therefore incapable of adoption. Likewise in the innocent Adam grace was the root of original justice which involves integrity of nature; this is not true in us. In the angels it does not produce the virtues of temperance and fortitude, since the angels have no passions.

By the same token, sanctifying grace remaining but one in species has nevertheless two states, that of the present life and that of heaven. In the former it requires faith and hope connaturally, but not in the latter, which, in turn, demands the light of glory and, after the resurrection, the glorification of the body. Nor is it to be wondered at, considering the diversity of these states, that the same grace is the root of different virtues.

Sixth corollary. Sanctifying grace is absolutely more perfect than charity, the light of glory, or the beatific vision, which have their source in it, as an essence is more perfect than any of its properties; for grace participates in the divine nature, under the concept of nature, not under the concept of intellectual power or intellection or love. However, the beatific vision is more perfect, under a certain aspect, than grace, as second act is more perfect than first act. Thus a tree is something more perfect than its fruit, but the tree is rendered still more perfect when it bears fruit.

Seventh corollary. Specifically, sanctifying grace is absolutely more noble than the substance of any soul, even the soul of Christ, more noble than any angelic substance created or capable of being created; accidentally, however, according to its mode of being, that is, under a particular aspect, it

may be less noble. With respect to the soul of Christ, cf. De verit., q. 27, a. 1 ad 6; and IIa IIae, q. 23, a. 3: “Charity is absolutely more perfect than the essence of the soul,” lust as the intellectual faculty, although an accident, is more noble than a stone. Grace is, then, more spiritual and incorruptible in itself than the human soul; “we have this treasure in fragile vessels.” However, sanctifying grace is absolutely less noble than the divine motherhood of the Word incarnate, for this motherhood by reason of its term belongs to the order of the hypostatic union, and this order surpasses not only the order of nature, but also the order of grace and glory.

St. Thomas says (Ia, q. 25, a. 6 ad 4): “The Blessed Virgin, because she is the Mother of God, has a certain infinite dignity deriving from the infinite good which is God; and because of this nothing better than this can be made.” On this account the cult of hyperdulia is due to her (cf. IIIa, q. 25, a. 5); for, as Cajetan declares, her “dignity borders upon the confines of divinity.”

Doubt. Whether actual grace disposing toward justification is a physical and formal participation of the divine nature. I reply that it is a physical, virtual, but not formal participation, as the seed is a participation in the generator as a power derived from it to produce a likeness of itself. It is not a formal participation, however, since it does not yet confer the power of eliciting connaturally supernatural operations of the order of grace. It is, as it were, a supernatural regeneration in process only, as we should say, referring to justification.

Second doubt. Whether sanctifying grace formally procures the adoptive sonship of God and whether it alone can bring about such an effect (cf. Gonet, loc. cit.). Adoption is usually defined as a gratuitous admission of a stranger into the inheritance of another. Thus an adopted son is distinguished from a son by nature in both human and divine applications. It is assumed as certain from faith that the just man is an adopted son of God: “That we might receive the adoption of sons” (Gal. 4:5); “You have received the spirit of adoption” (Rom. 8:15); “Who hath predestinated us unto the adoption of children through Jesus Christ” (Ephes. 1:5).

To the question as stated the reply is more commonly in the affirmative, since, just as natural sonship is a formally real relationship based on passive generation, or on nature received through generation, in like manner adoptive sonship is formally a real relationship based on a passive participation of the divine nature received through regeneration. This is true

even independently of the subsequent acceptation of God, in opposition to the Nominalists, Durandus, and Scotus. This is confirmed by the fact that no other reality can be the foundation of this real relationship: 1) not indeed the Holy Ghost, whatever Lessius may say, since He assists us as an extrinsic cause, and is not the form by which anyone is regenerated as a child of God; 2) nor charity, which presupposes habitual grace as its root, as will be more clearly demonstrated later.

First corollary. Hence, contrary to the followers of Suarez, Thomists hold that there is a contradiction implied in being the adoptive son of God without habitual grace. For this sonship requires an analogical conformity to God in the divine nature; and it implies a contradiction that the creature be conformed analogically to God in His nature without a participation of the divine nature by grace. Thus by the very fact that the just man possesses grace he is the adoptive son of God and has a right to be received into glory. (Cf. Gonet, op. cit., no. 136)

Second corollary. The adoption of man as a son is common to the three persons, in that the act of infusing grace, since it is a free, external operation, is common to the whole Trinity as omnipotence is.

However, as stated in IIIa, q. 23, a. 2, active adoption is appropriated to the Father, according as adoptive sonship is a certain participated likeness in the eternal sonship. Moreover, to the extent that this adoption is brought about through grace, which is the work of divine love, it is appropriated to the Holy Ghost, the sanctifier.

Third corollary. During the time that he is in the state of grace, the reprobate is an adopted son of God; and when the predestinate is not in the state of grace, he is not an adopted son of God. 136.)

ARTICLE III

WHETHER GRACE IS IDENTICAL WITH VIRTUE, PARTICULARLY WITH CHARITY

State of the question. We are not considering whether grace is identical with the acquired virtues, nor with faith or hope, for these can be possessed in the state of mortal sin, that is, without sanctifying grace. But since the state of grace is inseparable from charity, some were of the opinion that sanctifying grace was not really distinguished from charity. According to the Master of the Sentences, as quoted in the article, they seem to be

distinguished only as concepts, since, for him, both grace and charity are the Holy Ghost indwelling and moving to the act of love.

In the opinion of Durandus, they are distinguished in name only (Nominalism removes almost all real distinctions); Scotus declares them to be formally distinguished; according to certain others, they are distinguished virtually by reason of a diversity of functions. St. Thomas, those of his school, and many outside of it maintain that they are really distinct. (Cf. De veritate, q. 27, a. 2.)

St. Thomas' conclusion is that sanctifying grace is something beyond the infused virtues which are derived from it, just as the natural light of reason is something beyond the acquired virtues derived from that light.

1 . Scriptural proof. Holy Scripture speaks of grace and of charity as of two separate things. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the charity of God" (II Cor. 13:13). "The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us" (Rom. 5:5); but He is given to us through grace, by reason of which He dwells in us. "The grace of our Lord hath abounded exceedingly with faith and love" (I Tim.1:14).

Likewise the Council of Vienne (Denz., no. 483) speaks of the baptized as those to whom "grace and the virtues" were imparted. The Council of Trent (Sess. VI, can. 7, Denz., no. 799) declares that "the renewal of the inner man is brought about by the voluntary acceptance of grace and the gifts"; canon II (Denz., 821) defines "man as not justified without grace and charity." Moreover, in this sense the mind of the Council is interpreted by the Catechism of the Council (part 2, "Baptism," chap. 38) wherein sanctifying grace is described, while not yet speaking of charity, and then (chap. 39) it is declared: "To this is added the most noble train of all the virtues, which are infused in the soul together with grace."

St. Augustine speaks in the same strain as quoted in the argument Sed contra (De dono persever., chap. 16): "Grace precedes charity." But no reason can be adduced to explain why Holy Scripture, the Councils, and the Fathers, referring to a matter of dogma, should always understand one and the same thing under diverse names; it would be, at least, useless repetition; and since it occurs frequently, we may draw from these authorities, at least as more probable, the opinion that grace and charity are really distinct.

2. Theological proof, based on the definition of virtue and on a parallelism between the natural and supernatural orders.

Virtue is really distinct from the proportionate nature which it presupposes; as the acquired virtues from the nature of the soul.

But the supernatural virtues presuppose nature elevated by sanctifying grace.

Therefore the supernatural virtues, even charity, are really distinct from sanctifying grace.

The major is based on the Aristotelian definition of virtue, namely, “a disposition of a perfect thing is that which is best”; in other words, virtue presupposes a nature proportioned to itself, is a perfection of a power corresponding to that nature, and hence is really distinct from nature as already constituted. Thus the acquired virtues, such as wisdom and prudence, are really distinguished from the light of reason which they presuppose and which existed before the acquisition of these virtues.

Regarding the minor: As human virtue presupposes human nature which it disposes in the direction of its natural end, so does supernatural virtue presuppose nature elevated to supernatural being, which it disposes aptly toward its consequent supernatural end. Moreover, there is no doubt but that charity is a supernatural virtue and that it is supernaturally communicated by grace.

Therefore charity is really distinguished from sanctifying grace which it presupposes, as a habit which is immediately operative is differentiated from an entitative habit by which the essence of the soul is itself elevated, as will be made more evident in Article 4. But even here in the reply to the third objection it is declared: “Grace is reducible to the primary species of a quality [that is, of a habit]; nor is it indeed the same as a virtue, but rather a certain habit [entitative habit] which is presupposed by the infused virtues as their principle and root.”

Opponents object: But the same accidental form can simultaneously elevate a nature and dispose it to operate, as heat causes wood both to be hot and to give off heat.

Reply. 1. The same accidental form cannot be received by two really distinct subjects; but the elevation of a nature must be effected in the essence of the soul, while charity, as a virtue, must be in some faculty, that is, the will. Therefore.

2. By the same token one and the same accidental form would be capable of producing the effects of all the virtues and gifts. And hence there would be no distinction between the three theological virtues, the four infused

cardinal virtues, and the seven gifts, a distinction which is made by the whole of tradition on the basis of Holy Scripture itself.

3. In any order, operation follows being; especially does connatural operation presuppose a proportionate principle of being. The answer to the example of heat in the wood is: the disparity arises from the fact that heat is not a virtue in the wood, but a simple sensible quality.

Confirmation of the conclusion.

1. God hath first loved us (I John 4:10); but the effect of this love is grace; but charity is the proximate principle by which we love God.

2. Grace is a participation in the divine nature; charity is a participation in the divine will.

3. Every inclination follows upon form; but charity is an inclination of the supernatural order; therefore it presupposes the super-natural form upon which it follows.

4. God makes no less provision for the soul in the supernatural order than in the natural order; but in the natural order the faculties follow upon the essence of the soul; therefore in the supernatural order the infused virtues follow upon grace.

And what we have said applies also to the angels, since their essence is not immediately operative, and thus differs from the divine essence which alone is its own being and act.

Objection. But then faith and hope could not exist without habitual grace, as properties cannot exist without essence.

Reply. Faith and hope remain in the sinner as in a subject to which they are not connatural, but praeternatural. And they do not have the element of virtue except with grace. A sinner can indeed believe, but not so well as one ought to believe. Thus, in the natural order, heat is in fire as in a connatural subject, but in water as in a subject under compulsion, for heat is not a property of water, which is naturally cold.

However, the same effects are often attributed to both grace and charity, since they are inseparably connected. The proper effects of charity thus proceed from grace as from a root. (See Billuart for less important objections.)

ARTICLE IV

WHETHER HABITUAL GRACE IS IN THE ESSENCE OF THE SOUL AS I N A SUBJECT

State of the question. Those who say that grace is identical with charity hold grace to be attributable to the will and not immediately to the essence of the soul. Thus Scotus (II Sent., dist. 26), who adopted as his own doctrine St. Thomas' objections, as he frequently did.

St. Thomas' conclusion: Habitual grace, inasmuch as it is presupposed by the infused virtues, is in the essence of the soul as in a subject, and not in any faculty.

Proof 1. Commonly, as found in the argument Sed contra: grace we are regenerated as children of God, according to Holy Scripture." But generation has its term first in the essence and then in the powers. It is so in the natural order; why not in the supernatural order?

Proof 2. In particular, as a corollary of the preceding article, thus:

Every perfection of a rational faculty is a virtue or good operative habit.

But habitual grace is not a virtue, but is presupposed by the infused virtues (cf. preceding article).

Therefore habitual grace is not in the faculties of the soul but in the very essence of the soul presupposed by the faculties.

Hence it is a participation in the divine nature by a certain regeneration or recreation, whereas charity is a participation by the will in divine love, and faith a participation of divine knowledge in the intellect, although all these infused habits are formally participations in the intimate life of God. But we are now considering them rather under their material aspect, that is, on the part of the subject in which they reside.

Reply to third objection. The soul is the subject of grace, since it resides in a species of intellectual nature, or in the intelligent soul, although the infused virtue of chastity is in the sensitive appetite.

Confirmation. It would be unbecoming for the essence of the soul to be less perfected Supernaturally than its own faculties. The whole man would not be supernaturally complete, with respect both to being and to operation; and its radical vitality would not be elevated. Such would be the result if Scotus' teaching were true.

First corollary. Glory, taken as the root of the light of glory and of charity, is likewise in the essence of the soul; for it is grace consummated. It is also an entitative habit, for St. Thomas says in several places that habitual grace, the seed of glory, is a certain beginning of eternal life, for it is the same habit. On the contrary, infused faith, which is obscure, is not a certain beginning of the beatific vision.

Second corollary. Grace is the radical principle of merit, but charity is its proximate principle.

Third corollary. Mortal sin, being the privation of sanctifying grace, is death to the soul in the essence of the soul, and in that it is a vicious habit or act it is in the will, or in some other faculty under the command of the will.

As a complement to this question of the essence of grace, two articles in the treatise De lege nova (Ia IIae, q. 106, a. I) should be read on whether the new law is written or set in the heart. The reply is as follows: “That which is most powerful in the law of the New Testament, and in which all its virtue consists, is the grace of the Holy Ghost, which is given through the faith of Christ. Therefore the new law is principally that very grace of the Holy Ghost, which is given to the faithful of Christ . . . Hence St. Paul declares that ‘the law of the spirit of life, in Christ Jesus, hath delivered me from the law of sin and of death’ (Rom. 8:2). . . . Therefore it may be said that the new law is primarily a law set in the heart, but secondarily it is a written law.”

Likewise the Summa (Ia IIae, q. 106, a. 2) declares that “the law of the Gospel (by means of what is primary in it) justifies.” And in the answer to the second objection (ibid.), St. Thomas states: “On account of what it is of itself [as habitual grace] it gives sufficient help to avoid sin,” that is, of itself it bestows the power not to sin, although as long as we are wayfarers the power to do the opposite remains in us. Again (IIIa, q. 8, a. 1, 2, 5), Christ as man merited for us all the graces we receive and He communicates them to us now as instrumental, physical cause of our divinization. (Cf. IIIa, q. 62, a. 5; q. 43, a. 2; q.48, a. 6.)

According to IIIa, q.62, a.2: “Sacramental grace adds, over and above [habitual] grace generally so called and above the virtues and gifts, a certain divine help toward the attainment of the end of the sacrament.” In the reply to the first objection of the same article St. Thomas maintains that “the grace of the virtues and gifts perfects the essence and powers of the soul sufficiently with respect to the general ordering of the acts of the soul (so it was in Adam before the Fall and in the angels in whom did not reside Christian grace strictly speaking, which was conferred upon men by Christ the Redeemer). But with respect to certain special effects which are demanded by a Christian life, sacramental grace is required.” Thus it may also be said that in the angels and in Adam before the Fall there resided supernatural grace, as a participation of the divine nature, but not however

as Christian grace proceeding from Christ the Redeemer and forming souls in the image of Christ crucified.

Sacramental grace is not a new infused habit really distinct from habitual grace, but it adds over and above ordinary grace a certain right to actual graces to be received at the appropriate time and corresponding to the special end of the sacraments; for example, the grace of holy orders confers the right to the actual graces necessary to celebrate Mass. And this moral right is a relationship which requires a real basis; the real basis is sacramental grace, properly speaking, inasmuch as it is really permanent in the soul. And the more probable opinion, as Thomists assert, is that it is a special mode and a special force of sanctifying grace, which overflow into the acts of the virtue. (Cf. St. Thomas, De veritate, q. 27, a. 5 ad 12.) Thus we speak of priestly charity, of priestly prudence. John of St. Thomas, the Salmanticenses, Contenson, Hugon, Merkelbach, and several other Thomists accept this explanation.

Accordingly, as sanctifying grace is the principle of the sanctification of the just, whether men or angels, so is the sacramental grace of baptism the principle of Christian sanctification, and the sacramental grace of holy orders the principle of sanctification of priests, who are the ministers of Christ.

We must now compare habitual grace with the graces gratis datae and with actual graces.

CHAPTER IV

QUESTION 111

THE DIVISIONS OF GRACE

Having arrived at a definition of sanctifying grace, we must now consider the divisions of grace. As a matter of fact, at the beginning of this treatise, when we were establishing our terminology, we enumerated the various significations of created grace which may be reduced to the following outline.

In the present question St. Thomas examines the basis of these principal traditional divisions. He does so in five articles. The first and the last two deal with the graces gratis datae as compared with sanctifying grace; the second and third are concerned with the division into operative and cooperative grace, prevenient and subsequent grace, this latter division being the occasion for a discussion of efficacious and sufficient grace.

ARTICLE I

WHETHER GRACE IS PROPERLY DIVIDED INTO SANCTIFYING GRACE AND GRACE GRATIS DATA

State of the question. This article endeavors to explain the text of I Cor. 12:8-10, wherein St. Paul enumerates nine graces gratis datae:

"To one indeed, by the Spirit, is given the word of wisdom: and to another, the word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit; to another faith in the same spirit; to another the grace of healing in one Spirit: to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another the discerning of spirits; to another diverse kinds of tongues; to another interpretation of speeches"; and further (ibid., 12:31 and 13:1 f.): "I show

unto you yet a more excellent way. If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And if I should have prophecy and should know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I should have all faith so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing." (Cf. St. Thomas on this Epistle.) From this contrast has arisen the traditional division between the graces gratis datae, also called charismata, and sanctifying grace. The statement of the question will be more manifest from the problems raised at the beginning of the article.

Reply. St. Thomas shows the appropriateness of this traditional twofold division.

1. In the argument Sed contra, on the authority of St. Paul who attributes both characteristics to grace, namely, that of making us pleasing ("He hath graced us," Ephes. 1:6) and that of being a gratuitous gift (Rom. 11:6). Hence grace may be differentiated according to whether it possesses but one of these notes, that is, being a free gift (and every grace is gratuitous) or both notes, not only that of being given freely, but also that of making us pleasing.

This is explained more clearly in the answer to the third objection: "Sanctifying grace adds something beyond the reason of graces gratis datae, . . . that is, it makes man pleasing to God. And therefore grace gratis data, which does not have this effect, retains merely the generic name," just as brute beasts are called "animals"; the name of the genus is applied to the least distinguished member. Hence this division is between an affirmation and a negation. In other words, grace in general is defined as a supernatural gratuitous gift bestowed by God upon a rational creature; and grace thus defined is divided according to whether it renders him pleasing or does not. Thus grace gratis data is not opposed, strictly speaking, to the other, in the sense that it cannot be the object of merit, for neither can the first sanctifying grace be merited, nor the last, that is, final perseverance, nor eficacious actual grace to persevere in good acts throughout the course of life. Nevertheless, as stated in the body of the article, grace gratis data is granted over and above the merits of the person. (Cf. below, q. I 14.)

2. By a theological argument the appropriateness of the aforesaid divisions is proved from a consideration of the ends.

Since grace is ordained to the end that man may be restored to God, grace is twofold according to the twofold restoration to God.

But the restoration to God is twofold, thus: 1. uniting man himself to God immediately, and this is effected by sanctifying grace; 2. not of itself uniting man to God, but causing him to cooperate in the salvation of others, and this is brought about by grace gratis data.

Therefore this traditional division is correct. In other words, the union with God is either formal or only ministerial. This division is adequate since to render pleasing and not to render pleasing are contradictory opposites to one another and there can be no middle ground between them. Grace gratis data is per se primarily ordained to the salvation of others, or "unto profit." Sanctifying grace is per se primarily ordained to the salvation of the recipient, whom it justifies.

It should be noted that these two statements are qualified as "per se primarily," that is, essentially and immediately; however, grace gratis data may secondarily lead to the salvation of the recipient, provided, that is, it be employed by charity. Likewise, sanctifying grace may secondarily lead to the salvation of others through the example of virtue. But the primary end of each is the one assigned to it above.

Corollary. Unlike sanctifying grace, the graces gratis datae may sometimes be found in the wicked or sinners; for although sinners neglect their own salvation, they may procure the salvation of others and cooperate in it, after the manner of those who built Noah's ark and yet were submerged in the waters of the flood.

Thus Caiphas prophesied as one divinely inspired, saying "It is expedient . . . that one man die for the people" (John 11:50). Again, as narrated in the Book of Numbers (23:22 ff.), Balaam, although a soothsayer and idolater, received the gift of prophecy; likewise the sibyl, in spite of being a pagan. (Cf. IIa IIae, q. 172, a. 4); with respect to prophecy (q.178, a. 2), the wicked can perform miracles in order to confirm revealed truths; but if the gift of prophecy, which is the highest among the graces gratis datae, exists in the wicked, with still greater reason is this true of the others. Hence St. Paul himself says: "I chastise my body, . . . lest perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway" (I Cor. 9:27).

Doubt. Whether "sanctifying grace" can be taken in a twofold sense.

Reply. Undoubtedly. 1. Strictly, it refers to habitual grace, distinct from the infused virtues, by which we are justified or formally rendered pleasing to God. 2. Broadly, it includes that which is ordained to the justification of its subject, whether antecedently as stimulating grace which disposes us for

justification, or concomitantly, or consequently, as, for example, supernatural helps, the infused virtues, the gifts, the increase of grace, and glory, which is the consummation of grace. In the present question sanctifying grace is thus broadly taken in contrast to grace gratis data. And thus the aforesaid division is adequate. Vasquez did not take this extended use of the term into account when, in commenting on the article, he declared this division to be insufficient since faith, hope, and actual helps could not be found under either of its members. Hence sanctifying grace is identical here with the "grace of the virtues and gifts with their proportionate helps," which St. Thomas speaks of (IIIa, q. 62, a. I): whether sacramental grace adds something over and above the grace of the virtues and gifts. Indeed to sanctifying grace also belong the sacramental graces which are the proper effects of the sacraments; for example, baptismal grace, the grace of absolution, of confirmation, nutritive grace (cf.p. 148 above).

Corollary. It is of great importance to determine clearly whether infused or mystical contemplation, according as it is distinguished from private revelations, visions, and even from words of wisdom or knowledge, pertains to sanctifying grace and is in the normal way to sanctity, or to the graces gratis datae as something extraordinary. Theologians generally teach that infused contemplation belongs to sanctifying grace, or to the grace of the virtues and gifts; it is something not properly extraordinary but eminent, for its proceeds not from prophecy but from the gifts of wisdom and understanding as they exist in the perfect. Cf. IIa IIae, q. 180, on contemplative life, after he considered graces gratis datae in particular.

Let us pass immediately to articles four and five which deal with the same material, because afterwards there will be a longer consideration of articles 2 and 3 with reference to operative and cooperative grace, sufficient and efficacious grace.

ARTICLE IV

WHETHER GRACE GRATIS DATA IS ADEQUATELY SUBDIVIDED BY THE APOSTLE (I COR. 12:8-10)

State of the question. St. Paul here enumerates nine graces gratis datae. St. Thomas shows the appropriateness of this division. Many Thomists, Gonet among them, hold this division to be adequate; so also does Mazella.

On the other hand, Medina, Vasquez, Bellarmine, Suarez, and Ripalda do not consider this division all-embracing, but maintain that St. Paul was enumerating only the principal graces. Suarez would further add to them the priestly character, jurisdiction in the internal forum, and the special assistance conferred upon the Sovereign Pontiff.

St. Thomas seems to judge the enumeration given by St. Paul to be entirely sufficient and he defends it brilliantly in a remarkable discussion both here and in his commentary on I Cor. 12 (cf. De revelatione, I, 209).

It should be noted that St. Thomas, treating of these graces in particular (IIa IIae, q. 171-79) in that case divides them according as they pertain either to knowledge or to speech or to action; and under the heading "prophecy" he includes all those which refer to the knowledge of divine things, except words of wisdom and knowledge. For those which pertain to prophecy are knowable only by divine revelation, whereas whatever is included under words of wisdom and science and interpretation of speeches can be known by man through his natural reason, although they are manifested in a higher mode by the illumination of divine light.

Confirmation from the refutation of objections.

1. The graces gratis datae exceed the power of nature, as when a fisherman is fluent in words of wisdom and science; they are thus differentiated from the natural gifts of God which likewise do not make us pleasing to God.

2. The faith of which it is a question here is not the theological virtue present in all the faithful, but a supereminent certitude of faith by which a man is rendered capable of instructing others in the things that pertain to faith.

3. The grace of healing, the gift of tongues, and the interpretation of speeches possess a certain special motivation impelling faith, according as they excite admiration or gratitude. In the grace of healing the benignity of God toward the misery of man shines forth; in the performance of miracles, such as the opening of a passage through the sea or the stopping of the sun in its course, the omnipotence of God appears.

4. Wisdom and knowledge are included among the graces gratis datae not because they are gifts of the Holy Ghost, but because, by means of them, a man may instruct others and vanquish his opponents. Therefore they are purposely set down in the present enumeration as utterances of wisdom or knowledge. (Cf. St. Thomas, IIa IIae, q. 45, a. 5 and on I Cor. 12, lect. 2.)

According to Thomists, in opposition to Suarez, the sacramental character and jurisdiction in the internal forum, and the assistance of the Holy Ghost do not belong to the graces gratis datae, but to the ministries and operations which St. Paul himself distinguishes from the graces gratis datae.”There are diversities of graces, but the same Spirit; and there are diversities of ministries, but the same Lord; and there are diversities of operations, but the same God.” And they are indeed distinguished, as Billuart observes, inasmuch as grace gratis data concerns only an act which manifests faith, whereas ministration or the ministry refers to the authority to perform some act with respect to other men, such as the apostolate, the episcopate, the priesthood, or any other dignity. An operation, moreover, is the exercise of a ministry. Thus in the Old Testament priests and prophets were differentiated.

Doubt. Whether the aforesaid graces gratis datae reside in man after the manner of a habit or rather as a transient movement. (Cf. Gonet, De essentia gratiae.)

Reply. Gonet replies: Generally they are present as transient movements, such as the gift of prophecy, the grace of healing or of prodigies, the discerning of spirits. This is evident from the fact that a prophet or wonderworker does not prophesy or work miracles whenever he wills. (Cf. IIa IIae, q. 171, a. 2.)

However, according to the same authority, faith, words of wisdom and of knowledge do exist after the manner of habits, since one who receives them uses them when he so wills.

In Christ all these graces were present as habits for two reasons.

1. On account of the hypostatic union He was an instrument united to the divinity.

2. He had supreme power, by reason of which He disposed of all creatures and hence at will He could perform miracles or cast out demons, as explained in the treatise on the Incarnation, IIIa, q. 7, a. 7 ad I.

ARTICLE V

WHETHER GRACE GRATIS DATA IS SUPERIOR TO SANCTIFYING GRACE

This question is of great importance with respect to mystical theology; for example, which are higher among the works of St. Theresa, those which

pertain to sanctifying grace or those pertaining to graces gratis datae?

State of the question. It seems that grace gratis data is superior: 1. because the good of the Church in general, to which graces gratis datae are ordained, is higher than the good of one man, to which sanctifying grace is ordered; 2. because that which is capable of enlightening others is of greater value than that which only perfects oneself; it is better to enlighten than merely to shine; and 3. because the graces gratis datae are not given to all Christians, but to the more worthy members of the Church, especially to the saints. However, in spite of these arguments, St. Thomas' conclusion is in the negative; and so is that of theologians generally.

The reply is: Sanctifying grace is much more excellent than grace gratis data.

First proof, from the authority of St. Paul, who, after enumerating the graces gratis datae, continues: "And I show unto you yet a more excellent way. If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And if I should have prophecy and should know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I should have all faith so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing'' (I Cor. 12:31-13:2). But prophecy is the highest of all the graces gratis datae (cf. IIa IIae, q.171), and this is said to be below charity, which pertains to sanctifying grace. Therefore.

In his commentary on the first Epistle to the Corinthians (chap. 13), St. Thomas thus explains the words "I am nothing," that is, with respect to the being of grace, described in Ephesians (2:10): "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus in good works"; likewise II Cor. 5:17, and Gal. 6:15.

In the same place it is shown that charity surpasses all these charismata in three respects:

1. From necessity, since without charity, the other gratuitous gifts do not suffice.

2. From utility, since it is through charity that every evil is avoided and every good work performed. "Charity is patient, . . . beareth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

3. From its permanence, for "charity never falleth away," as St. Paul declares, whether prophecies shall be made void or tongues shall cease. Hence charity is said to be the bond of perfection uniting the soul to God

and gathering together all other virtues to ordain them toward God. Therefore can Augustine say: “Love and do what you will.”

Second proof from theological argument.

The excellence of any virtue is higher according as it is ordained to a higher end; and the end is superior to the means.

But sanctifying grace ordains men immediately to union with his final end; and the graces gratis datae ordain him toward something preparatory to his final end, since by miracles and prophecies men are led to conversion.

Therefore sanctifying grace is much more excellent than grace gratis data.

In a word, sanctifying grace unites man immediately to God, who dwells in him; on the other hand, grace gratis data serves only to dispose others for union with God. This argument appears even more profound when we observe that sanctifying grace, inasmuch as it unites man immediately to God, his final supernatural end, is supernatural substantially. It is indeed the root of the theological virtues which are immediately specified by their formal supernatural object (objectum formale quo et quod), and it is the seed of glory, the beginning of eternal life which is essentially supernatural.

On the contrary, the graces gratis datae are generally supernatural. only with respect to the mode of their production, in the same way as miracles. As a matter of fact, with respect to this supernaturalness, the division of the charismata corresponds to the division of miracles given by St. Thomas (Ia, q. 105, a. 8); the comparison may be made as follows:

Thus the great difference becomes evident between the supernatural substantially and the miraculous substantially; in the former “substantially” means formally, by virtue of its formal object; in the latter “substantially” means effectively, or concerning an effect the substance of which cannot be produced by a created cause in any manner or in any subject, such, for instance, as the glorification of the body.

Hence below intrinsically supernatural knowledge, such as the beatific vision or infused faith, there exist the following three kinds of effectively supernatural knowledge the object of which is intrinsically natural.

1. Effectively, with respect to the substance of cognition, such as the prophetic knowledge of future natural events taking place at a remote time. This exceeds every created intellect, not by reason of the essential supernaturalness of its object, as would be that of the Trinity, but by reason

of the uncertainty or indetermination of the future, for example, the date when some war would end.

2. Effectively, with respect to the subject in which it resides, such as the knowledge of a natural object already actually existing, but removed in regard to place or exceeding the faculty of vision of this particular man, although not of all men (IIa IIae, q. 171, a. 3). Likewise the knowledge of the secrets of hearts which are known nat-urally by the person whose secrets they are.

3. Effectively, modally, such as the instantaneous knowledge of some human science or unknown tongue without human study. Thus the supernaturalness of prophecy is of an inferior order to the supernaturalness of divine faith. Therefore St. Thomas says (III Sent., d. 24, a. 1 ad 3): "Although prophecy and faith treat of the same matter, such as the passion of Christ, they do not do so in the same way; for faith considers the Passion formally under the aspect of something which borders on the eternal, that is, according as it was God who suffered, although materially it considers a temporal event. This is not true of prophecy."

But what has been said of the supernaturalness of prophecy, the highest of all the graces gratis datae, can be said of all the charismata, as is very evident in the case of the gift of tongues, the grace of healing, the performing of prodigies, and the discernment of spirits. The same may be said of utterances of wisdom and knowledge and of the interpretation of speech, for these latter three supply in a supernatural way for what would be attained naturally by acquired theology or hermeneutics. Thus, in general, the charismata are supernatural modally only, and therefore sanctifying grace, which is supernatural substantially, as a participation in the divine nature, is "much more excellent,'' as St. Thomas declares.

Confirmation of the aforesaid conclusion from the refutation of objections.

First objection. The common good of the Church is better than the good of one man. But sanctifying grace is ordained only to the good of one, whereas grace gratis data is ordered to the common good of the Church. Therefore.

Reply. The major is to be distinguished: the common good which is in the Church is below the separated common good, that is, God: granted; otherwise, denied.

I distinguish the minor: sanctifying grace is ordained to the good of the individual and also to the separate common good, that is, to God to whom it unites us immediately: granted; otherwise, denied.

Hence, above the common good of the Church, which is the ecclesiastical order, there is the separate common good, which is God Himself, to whom sanctifying grace unites us immediately. Similarly, above the common good of an army, which is its order, there is the common good considered separately, namely, the good of the country.

On this account St. Thomas says later (IIa IIae, q. 182, a. 1-4) that contemplative life, which is immediately ordained to the love and praise of God, is, in an absolute sense, better, higher, and more meritorious than the active life, which is ordained toward the love of neighbor and to the common good of the Church not considered apart. Therefore did Christ say (Luke 10:42): “Mary hath chosen the best part, which shall not be taken away from her.” Many moderns would do well to read this response to the first objection.

Again St. Thomas declares (IIa IIae, q. 182, a. I ad I): “It not only pertains to prelates to lead the active life, but they should also excel in the contemplative life”; which St. Gregory had already expressed in the words: “Let the leader be eminent in action, and sustained in contemplation above all others.”

Second objection. It is better to enlighten others than merely to be enlightened; but by the graces gratis datae man enlightens others; by sanctifying grace he is only enlightened himself. Therefore.

Reply. I distinguish the major: it is better than merely to be enlightened to enlighten others formally: granted; to enlighten others merely by disposing them: denied.

I distinguish the minor: that man, by grace gratis data, enlightens others formally: denied; by disposing them, granted; on the contrary he is formally enlightened by sanctifying grace.

For, by the graces gratis datae man cannot produce sanctifying grace in another, but only offer him certain disposing or preparatory factors toward justification, such as preaching to him or performing miracles. God alone directly or through His sacraments infuses sanctifying grace. Similarly, in the natural order, St. Thomas maintains, the heat by which fire acts is not more estimable than the form of fire itself.

I insist. Then St. Thomas was wrong when he said later (IIa IIae, q. 188, a. 6) that the apostolic or mixed life "proceeding from the fullness of contemplation is to be preferred absolutely to contemplation, since it is a greater thing to enlighten than merely to shine."

Reply. The apostolic life is preferred to simple contemplation inasmuch as it includes this and something more; on the contrary, grace gratis data does not include sanctifying grace and something more.

Third objection. That which is proper to the more perfect is better than that which is common to all. But the graces gratis datae are gifts proper to the more perfect members of the Church. Therefore they are higher than the grace common to all the just, as reasoning power is superior to sensation.

Reply. There is a disparity, for sensation (which is common to all animals) is ordained to ratiocination. But on the contrary the graces gratis datae (which are proper) are ordained to the conversion of men, in other words, to sanctifying or justifying grace.

First corollary. Sanctifying grace or the grace of the virtues and gifts belongs to the normal supernatural. But it exists in three degrees, that of beginners, proficients, and perfect; in other words, the purgative, illuminative, and unitive ways, the last being the age of maturity of the spiritual life.

Second corollary. The graces gratis datae belong to the extraordinary supernatural, so called not so much in relation to the Church as to the individual, for example, private revelations, visions, and internal words pertaining to prophecy.

Third corollary. Infused contemplation, proceeding from the gifts of wisdom and understanding as they exist in the perfect, is therefore not something extraordinary, like prophetic revelation, but something normal and eminent, that is, in the normal way of sanctification.

Fourth corollary. Cajetan In llam llae, q. 178, a.2 (quoted by Father Del Prado, De gratia et libero arbitrio, p. 268): "It is a most pernicious error to consider the gift of God in the working of miracles to be greater than in the works of justice. And this, contrary to the popular idea and common error of humankind, which judges men who perform miracles to be saints and, as it were, gods, whereas these dullminded people have almost no esteem whatever for just men. The complete opposite ought to be considered of high value, as it truly is." Although the sanctity of the servants of God is

outwardly manifested by miracles, the saint who performs more miracles than another is not, on that account, a greater saint.

Fifth corollary. Del Prado (op. cit., p. 261): “The graces gratis datae may exist without sanctifying grace for the manifesting of divine truth; for of themselves they do not justify. Hence St. Thomas says, commenting on I Cor. (13, lect. 1): ‘It is obvious with regard to prophecy and faith, that they may be possessed without charity. But it is to be remarked here that firm faith, even without charity, produces miracles. Wherefore the apostle Matthew (7:22), in reply to those who will ask: ‘Have we not prophesied in Thy name . . . and done many miracles?’ declares that our Lord will reply: ‘I never knew you.’ For the Holy Ghost works prodigies even by the wicked, just as He speaks truth through them.”

Sixth corollary. However, the graces gratis datae are, in the saints, also a manifestation of their sanctity (Del Prado, ibid.); cf. St. Thomas on I Cor. (12, lect. 2); whence it is said in Acts (6:8) that “Stephen, full of grace and fortitude, did great wonders and signs among the people.”

ARTICLE II

WHETHER GRACE IS PROPERLY DIVIDED INTO OPERATIVE AND COOPERATIVE GRACE

State of the question. This article explains the division made by St. Augustine (De gratia et libero arbitrio, chap. 17); it should be carefully studied, for Molina maintains (Concordia, q. 14, a. 13, disp. 42, p. 242) that St. Thomas misinterprets Augustine. After giving his own interpretation, Molina says: “This is manifest in the clearest light, although Augustine has been understood otherwise by St. Thomas (Ia IIae, q. III, a. 2 and 3), by Soto and by certain others.” In fact, Molina attempts to demonstrate (ibid., p. 243) that Augustine cannot be interpreted in any other way, in the light of faith. Since this is a most serious charge, the question must be considered attentively.

The principal point at issue between Thomists and Molinists on this subject may be formulated thus: For Molina (Concordia, p. 565), Suarez and their disciples, operative actual grace urges only by moral, and not by physical, impulsion, and leads only to indeliberate acts, but never of itself alone to free choice or consent. But cooperative actual grace, according to Molina, produces, by moral impulsion, a free choice, with simultaneous

concurrence, in such a way that man is determined by himself alone. Thus man and God seem to be rather two causes acting coordinately, like two men rowing a boat, than two causes of which one is subordinate, acting under the impulsion of the superior cause.

For Thomists, on the other hand, operative actual grace does not merely urge by moral impulsion, but operates physically as well, with respect to the performance of an act and sometimes even leads to free choice; that is, when man cannot move himself to this choice deliberately by virtue of a previous higher act, such as the moment of conversion to God or the acts of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which proceed from a special inspiration. Cooperative actual grace, moreover, is also a physical impulsion under which man, by virtue of a previous act of willing the end, moves himself to will the means to the end.

Let us examine: 1. the text of St. Augustine, 2. the interpretation of Molina, 3. the article of St. Thomas referred to and also the reply to objections (Ia IIae, q. 9, a. 6 ad 3). The teaching of St. Thomas will be defended.

1. St. Augustine. The text of St. Augustine (De gratia et libero arbitrio, chap. 17) reads thus: “God Himself works so that we may will at the beginning what, once we are willing, He cooperates in perfecting; therefore does the Apostle say: ‘Being confident of this very thing, that He who hath begun a good work in you, will perfect it unto the day of Christ Jesus’ (Phil. 1:6). That we should will therefore, He accomplishes without us; but when we do will, and so will as to do, He cooperates with us.”

2. Molina’s opinion. For Molina, operative grace is nothing more than prevenient grace morally urging us; cooperative grace assists us. Hence, according to Molina, “a person assisted by the help of less grace may be converted, although another with greater help does not become converted and continues to be obdurate.” Cf. Concordia p.565.

As Father Del Prado observes (De gratia, I, 226): “Molina departs from the ways of St. Thomas in the explanation of the nature of divine grace, operative and cooperative, and refuses to admit that the grace of God alone transforms the wills of men or that only God opens the heart. Consequently, whether Molina will have it or not, although it is God who stands at the gate and knocks, it is man who begins to open and man alone who, in fact, does open it . . . Hence the beginning of consent, for Molina, resides in man, who alone determines himself to will, whereas God, who stands at the gate

knocking, awaits his will." Before this beginning of consent proceeding from us alone, Molina maintains, however, against the Semi-Pelagians, that there are moral divine impulsions drawing us as well as the indeliberate movement of our will, but that they are equal and even stronger in him who is not converted.

This is corroborated by some of his well-known propositions; for instance, in the Concordia under the heading "auxilium" in the index, we read: "It may happen that with equal assistance, one of those who are called may be converted and another not converted" (p. 51). Furthermore, "he who is helped by the aid of less grace may be con-verted, although another with more does not become converted and perseveres in his obstinacy" (p. 565). Hence, as Lessius declares, "not that he who accepts does so by his freedom alone (since there was grace attracting him), but that the turning point arose from his freedom alone and thus not from a diversity of prevenient helps." (Cf. Salmanticenses, De gratia, tr. XIV, disp. 7.)

St. Thomas, on the contrary, referring to the words of St. Matthew (25:15), "And to one he gave five talents, and to another two, and to another one," comments: "He who makes more effort has more grace, but the fact that he makes more effort requires a higher cause." Again, with reference to the Epistle to the Ephesians (4:7), "to everyone of us is given grace, according to the measure of the giving of Christ," he repeats this observation, and similarly in Ia IIae, q. 112, a. 4, on whether grace is equal in all men.

The root of the disagreement is manifold, but the principal point of contention is the one mentioned by Molina himself in the Concordia (q.14, a. 13, disp. 26, p. 152). "There are two difficulties, it seems to me, in the teaching of St. Thomas (Ia, q. 105, a. 5); the first is that I do not see what can be that impulse and its application to secondary causes, by which God moves and applies them to act . . . Wherefore I confess frankly that it is very difficult for me to understand this impulsion and application which St. Thomas requires in secondary causes.

But, as Father Del Prado observes (op. cit., p. 227): "In this article, such application and impulsion is clearly affirmed even in free secondary causes, and so, with respect to the interior act of the free will, 'the will is situated as moved only and not as moving, God alone being the Mover. Here, as we shall presently see, physical premotion conquers, rules, and triumphs. Thence proceed the anger and the unmentioned recriminations which

Molina gives vent to against the teaching of St. Thomas, under the pretense of vindicating St. Augustine."

For Molina holds (Concordia, disp. 42, p. 242) that according to St. Augustine (De gratia et libero arbitrio, chap. 17) "whatever God effects in us that is supernatural, until the moment when He leads us to the gift of justification, whether we cooperate in it by our free will or not, is called 'operative grace'; that, however, by which He henceforth assists us to fulfill the whole law and persevere . . . is called 'cooperative grace.'. . . And this is plainly the sense and intention of Augustine in this place when he draws a distinction between operative and cooperative grace, which will be obvious in the clearest light to anyone examining that chapter, notwithstanding the fact that St. Thomas understands Augustine otherwise in the two articles quoted (Ia IIae, q. III, a. 2 and 3), as well as Soto (De natura et gratia, Bk. I, chap. 16) and some others."

However, Molina is obliged to explain on the following page (p. 243) the words of St. Paul to the Philippians (2:13): "It is God who works in you, both to will and accomplish," with regard to which Augustine had said: "Therefore, that we will is brought about by God, without us; but when we will, and so will as to act, He cooperates with us." With regard to this text, Molina says: "But neither does Augustine mean to assert that we do not cooperate toward willing, by which we are justified, or that it is not effected by us, but by God alone. That certainly would be both contrary to faith and opposed to the teaching of Augustine himself in many other places."

Referring to these last words of Molina, Father Del Prado (op. cit. I, 226) declares: "Does St. Thomas teach something contrary to faith in drawing the distinction between operative and cooperative grace? . . . From the lofty and profound teaching of St. Thomas propounded in this article, wherein all is truth and brilliance, does something follow which is contrary to the Catholic faith and the teaching of Augustine himself? . . . Molina departs from the ways of St. Thomas (since he will not admit that God applies and moves the will beforehand, but). . . . He holds that, while God, drawing the soul morally, stands at the gate and knocks, it is man who begins to open, and man alone who actually does open." In the Apocalypse (3:20) we read: "I stand at the gate, and knock. If any man shall hear My voice, and open to Me the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." But man does not open it alone; he opens in fact according as God knocks efficaciously. Otherwise how would the words of St. Paul be verified:

“What hast thou that thou hast not received?” In the business of salvation, not everything would then be from God.

Conclusion with respect to Molina’s opinion. For Molina and Suarez and the Molinists in general, operative grace is nothing else but prevenient grace which urges morally, but does not really assist, and only cooperative grace assists the soul. Suarez himself admits this. For the beginning of consent, according to Molina, comes from man, who alone determines himself to will; while God almost waits for our consent. Indeed, for Molina, “he who is aided by the help of less grace may be converted, whereas another, with greater help, is not converted and persists in his obduracy” (op. cit., p. 365).

Thus the salient point at issue, as Father Del Prado says (op. cit., I, 223), is: “Whether the free will of man, when moved by the gratuitous impulsion of God to accept and receive the gift of the grace of justification, at that very instant of justification, in in a condition of being moved only, and not of moving, while God alone moves. When God stands at the gate of the heart and knocks, that we may open to Him, is it man who alone opens his heart, or God who begins to open and is the first to open and, having opened, confers upon us that we, too, may ourselves open to Him?” This is the question which St. Thomas solves in that celebrated article 2 and explains more fully below, in question 113. But Molina jumps from what precedes our justification to what follows it, and is not willing to examine the very moment when the free will of man is moved by God, through the love of charity, and from one who is averse to Him is made a convert to Him, and is intrinsically transformed by God who infuses sacnctifiying grace.” This is the crux of the present controversy.

3. St. Thomas’ opinion. St. Thomas rightly interprets St. Augustine (cf. Del Prado, op. cit. I, 224 and 202); for Augustine declares: “God, cooperating with us, perfects what He began by operating in us; because in beginning He works in us that we may have the will, and cooperates to perfect the work with us once we are willing. For this reason the Apostles say (Phil. 1:6): ‘Being confident of this very thing, that He, who hath begun a good work in you, will perfect it unto the day of Christ Jesus.’ That we should will is, therefore, accomplished without us; but once we are willing, and willing to such an extent that we act, He cooperates with us; however, without either His operation or His cooperation once we will, we are incapable of any good works of piety. With regard to His bringing it about

that we will, it is said in Philippians (2:13): ‘For it is God who worketh in you, . . . to will.’ But of His cooperation, when we already are willing and willingly act, it is said: ‘We know that to them that love God, all things work together unto good’ (Rom. 8:28).” St. Augustine reiterates this opinion in chapters 5 and 14 of the same book.

Again, writing to Boniface (Bk. II, chap. 9): “God accomplishes many good things in man which man does not accomplish (operative grace); but man does nothing good which God does not enable him to do (cooperative grace).” This is observed by the Council of Orange (c. 20, Denz., no. 193).

Moreover, according to Augustine, operative grace is not simply grace urging equally him who is converted and him who is not, for Augustine repeats in several places, with reference to predestination: “Why does He draw this man and not that? Do not judge if you do not wish to err” (Super Joan., tr. 26; cf. Ia, q. 23, a. 5). This teaching of Augustine is mentioned by St. Gregory (Moral., Bk. XVI, chap. 10) and by St. Bernard (De gratia et libero arbitrio, chap. 14); both are quoted by Del Prado (op. cit., I, 203).

In article 2 of the present question there are two conclusions, one concerning actual grace and the other habitual grace.

First conclusion. Actual grace is properly divided into operative and cooperative grace.

a) Council of Orange. Above and beyond the aforesaid authority of St. Augustine, this conclusion is supported by the Council of Orange (Denz., no. 177, can. 4): “It must be acknowledged that God does not wait upon our wills to cleanse us from sin, but also that we should wish to be cleansed by the infusion and operation of the Holy Ghost in us.” In canon 23 it is said that God prepares our wills that they may desire the good. Again (can. 25, Denz., no. 200): “In every good work, it is not we who begin . . . but He (God) first inspires us with faith and love of Him, through no preceding merit on our part.” All these texts pertain to operative grace, as does the beginning of canon 20 (Denz., no. 193), as follows: “God does many good works in man which man himself does not do.” But the second part of this canon applies to cooperative grace, thus: “But man does no good works which God does not enable him to do.”

b) Theological proof.

An operation is not attributed to the thing moved, but to the mover; for example, the fact that a cart is drawn is attributed to the horse.

But in the first interior act, the will is situated as moved only, whereas God is the mover; whereas in the exterior act, ordered by the will, the will is both moved and moves.

Therefore in the first act the operation is attributed to God, and therefore the grace is termed operative; in the second act the operation is attributed not only to God, but also to the soul, and the grace is termed cooperative.

The major is clear with regard to an inanimate thing that is moved, as the cart is moved by the horse, but if the thing moved is a living thing and the operation is a vital act, it is elicited, indeed, from it. Thus, the very first act of the will is elicited vitally from it; however, the will is not said to move itself to it, properly speaking, since, as explained above (Ia IIae, 9.9, a.3), "the will, by the very fact that it desires the end, moves itself to will those things which conduce to the end; just as the intellect, by the fact that it knows a principle, reduces itself from potency to act, with respect to the knowledge of the conclusion." To move oneself is, indeed, to reduce oneself from potency to act. Hence it is not to be wondered at that, in this act wherein the will cannot move itself by virtue of a previous effcacious act of the same order, it should be referred to as moved only, and the operation attributed to God.

The minor needs explanation. What is this interior act? It is manifold. It is that first of all by which we desire happiness in general, and for this, supernatural help is not required (cf. Ia IIae, q. 9, a. 4, c. 2); it is particularly, according to St. Thomas (ibid.), "that the will which previously desired evil now begins to will the good." This is explained (IIa, q. 86, a. 6 ad I): "The effect of operative grace is justification of the wicked, as stated in Ia IIae, q. 113, a. 1-3, which [justification] consists not only in the infusion of grace and the remission of sins, but also a movement of the free will toward God, which is the act of formed faith, and a movement of the free will in relation to sin, which is the act of penance. But these human acts are present as effects of operative grace, produced in the same way as the remission of sins. Hence the remission of sin is not accomplished without an act of the virtue of penance, even if it is the effect of operative grace." These acts are therefore vital, rather are they even free, but the will does not move itself toward them, strictly speaking, by virtue of a previous eflicacious act of the same order, since beforehand, a prior act of this kind did not exist.

The following synopsis, which we have already given in the introduction and which can now be explained, should be read in an ascending order, from the natural to the supernatural.

We explained this elsewhere (Christian Perfection and Contemplation, p. 285). From the same point of view Father Del Prado has made an excellent study of the present article (op. cit., I, 206, 235; II, 220); and before him, Cajetan, commenting on this article, as well as Soto, Lemos, and Billuart.

Wherefore St. Thomas declares in the reply to the second objection: "Through the movement of the free will, when we are justified, we consent to the justice of God." But man does not move himself, properly speaking, to justification; he is moved to it, freely of course, but moved nonetheless; hence it is the effect of operative, not cooperative grace.

This operative grace given at the instant of justification is, as Father Del Prado states (ibid., II, 220), a kind of introduction to all the free movements toward the good, meritorious for salvation, a quasi door into the supernatural order, and, as it were, the first step in the work of divine predestination. And this first act of charity is rather a simple willing of the final end than election, for election as such, properly so called, belongs to those things that are means to an end. Cf. IIa IIae, q. 24, a. I ad 3: "Charity, the object of which is the final end, should rather be said to reside in the will than in free choice." Hence operative grace includes not only vocation to the Christian life or the prompting by which God knocks at the gate (wherein our cooperation is non-existent; they precede our consent at any time whatever), but also the movement by which we are justified, freely consenting to it. Thus we read in Ezechiel (36:25f.): "I will pour upon you clean water, and you shall be cleansed from all your filthiness . . . . And I will give you a new heart, and put a new spirit within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and will give you a heart of flesh." Again in the Acts of the Apostles (16:14): "whose heart [Lydia's] the Lord opened to attend to those things which were said by Paul."

Hence, when God says (Apoc. 3:20): "Behold, I stand at the gate and knock," it is not man who begins to open and separates himself from sinners. Rather, as God opened the heart of Lydia, so does He open the heart of any of the just at the instant of justification. "God begins to open, He first opens, and in doing so, confers upon us that we, too, may open to Him," as Father Del Prado so well expresses it (op. cit., I, 223).

The third example of operative grace is the special inspiration we receive with docility by means of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to Cajetan (cf. Ia IIae, q. 68, a. 1-3), since "the gifts are certain habits by which man is perfected so as to obey the Holy Ghost promptly. . . . But man, thus acted upon by the Holy Ghost, also acts, according as it is by free choice," as stated in the same article 3, ad 2. Hence these operations proceeding from the gifts, for instance, from the gift of piety in the will, are vital, free, and meritorious, and yet the will does not, properly speaking, move itself to perform them, as it moves itself by deliberation to works of virtue in a human manner, but is specially moved by the Holy Ghost. This is well explained by St. Thomas in his Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans (8:14, lect. 3), a beautiful commentary on the present article. Regarding the words: "Whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God," he writes as follows: "They are said to be led who are moved by some superior instinct: thus we say of brutes, not that they act, but that they are led or impelled to act, since they are moved by natural instinct, and not by personal movement, to perform their actions. Likewise the spiritual man is inclined to perform some act, not, as it were, mainly by the movement of his own will, but by an instinct of the Holy Ghost." This does not, however, prevent spiritual men from using their will and free choice, since what the Holy Ghost causes in them is precisely the movement of their will and free choice, according to Phil. 2:13: "For it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish."

In the explanation of the minor, we now come to the question of cooperative grace. This is conferred for good works in which our will is not only moved, but moves itself, that is, when, already actually willing the final supernatural end, it converts itself to willing the means conducive to that end. This act is said to be external, although it may be only internal, since it is commanded by the will in virtue of a previous efficacious act of the same order. Thus it is in the use of the infused virtues, by deliberation properly so called, that the act is performed in the human mode, for example, when the will commands an act of justice or religion or fortitude or temperance, by virtue of a previous act of love of God. Not only are these acts vital, free, and meritorious, but the will properly moves toward them or "determines itself to will this or that," as is said in the well-known reply to the third objection, Ia IIae, q. 9, a. 6.

It is this cooperative grace that is referred to in Sacred Scripture; indeed there is even a comparison made with operative grace; for example, in Ezech. 36:27: “And I will put My spirit in the midst of you [operative grace]: and I will cause you to walk in My commandments, and to keep My judgments, and do them [cooperative grace].” Again in I Cor. 15:10: “But by the grace of God, I am what I am [operative grace]; and His grace in me hath not been void, but I have labored more abundantly than all they: yet not I, but the grace of God with me.” This latter is cooperative grace.

The Angelic Doctor always speaks in harmony with these texts. According to him, under operative grace, the will elicits its act vitally, in fact, it freely consents to the divine motion or inspiration, but it does not strictly move itself by its own proper activity in virtue of a previous efficacious act of the same order, for this previous efficacious act is wanting at that time; for example, in justification, in the acts of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, such as the gift of piety. With respect to justification, St. Thomas declares (Ia IIae, q. III, a. 2 ad 2): “God does not justify us without ourselves, since by the movement of free will when we are justified we consent to the justice of God. However, this movement is not the cause of grace, but its effect; hence the whole action pertains to grace.” Again, he states (IIIa, q. 86, a. 4 ad 2): It pertains to grace to operate in man, justifying him from sin, and to cooperate with man in right action. Therefore the remission of sins and of the guilt deserving of eternal punishment belongs to operative grace, but the remission of guilt which merits temporal punishment pertains to cooperative grace, that is, according as man, enduring sufferings patiently with the help of divine grace, is also absolved from the guilt of temporal punishment, . . . the first effect is from grace alone, the second from grace and free will.” (See also q. 86, a. 6 ad I.) It is previously declared (9.85, a. 5 c.): “Penance as a habit is immediately infused by God, without any principal operation on our part, but not however without our disposing ourselves to cooperate by some acts.”

Conclusion of Father Del Prado (op. cit., I, 21 I): By operative grace God operates in us without our acting or moving ourselves, but not without our consent. Cf. a. 2: Thus in the instant of justification and in the operation of the seven gifts. In fact, certain operative grace is even antecedent in time to our consent, such, for instance, as vocation and admonition when God stands at the gate and knocks before it is opened. Here, however, the free consent may, broadly speaking, be called cooperation on our part; but not in

the strict and formal sense in which the term is used by St. Thomas in this article. On the contrary, by cooperative grace, God works in us, not only with our consent, but with our action or motion. This is the Thomistic interpretation of St. Augustine's teaching; it is eminently profound and in full conformity with faith.

Corollary. Thus the opposition between St. Thomas' doctrine and that of heresy is manifest. Of the operative actual grace by which we are justified (cf. Del Prado, op. cit., I, 213): Calvin holds that free will is moved without any action on its own part, and is merely passive. Jansen holds that free will is moved necessarily, and cannot resist even if it wills to do so; Pelagius holds that free will begins to move itself to this first volition; Molina holds 1. that free will is moved by virtuous, indeliberate impulses which, willy-nilly, are supernatural. 2. Then it begins to deliberate within itself, freely accepting them. In his first contention, Molina borders on Jansenism; in the second he does not seem sufficiently removed from Pelagius. In both respects, the opinion of Molina deviates from the teaching of St. Thomas. As declared in the reply to the third objection, grace is not called "cooperative" in the sense that God here places Himself in the position of a secondary agent; He ever remains the principal agent. But the will also moves itself in this case "once the end is taken for granted" in the intended act, and God assists it in the pursuit of this intended end.

The second conclusion is that habitual grace can also be referred to as operative and cooperative (cf. end of article) since it has two effects:1. it justifies the soul; this is operative grace, not effectively but formally, that is, it makes pleasing, just as whiteness makes a thing white, as stated in the reply to the first objection; 2. it is the root principle of meritorious works, which proceed from the free will; in this sense it is cooperative.

First doubt, arising from the reply to the fourth objection (cf. Del Prado, op. cit., I, 228): Whether operative and cooperative grace may be the same grace.

Reply. Yes, if it is a question of habitual grace, which is at the same time justifying (formally) and the root principle of meritorious works. This is clearly stated here in the answer to the fourth objection and in article 3 ad 2, where it is clearly a question of habitual grace, which is said to remain numerically the same in glory, where it is consummated. Cf. also De veritate, q. 27, a. 5 ad I, and IIIa, q. 60, a. 2; q. 72, a. 7. Sacramental grace is a mode of habitual grace and is applied with various effects.

But if the question is about actual grace, then operative grace and cooperative grace are not one and the same numerically; for the reason is the same for actual grace and for the act of the will, of which it is the principle and beginning. But the act is twofold, interior wherein the will does not move itself, exterior wherein it does. Therefore there are likewise two actual graces, for actual grace passes and ceases with the very operation toward which it moves. John of St. Thomas and the Salmanticenses hold this opinion.

In fact sometimes, after an act proceeding from operative grace, there is not elicited an act for which cooperative grace is required, as is evident in the case of one who, immediately after absolution and justification, sins, by not performing the act of virtue which he ought to perform. In such a one, operative grace efficaciously produced justification freely accepted, but it did not produce the following act. To produce it a new actual grace is required, that is, cooperative grace, for there is a new passage from potency to act, and whatever is moved to a new supernatural act, is moved supernaturally by another.

Operative actual grace and cooperative actual grace are therefore distinct, since at times the first is given without the second or vice versa. But if the superior and inferior acts are simultaneous, as in infused contemplation which is prolonged by some discourse, or an inspiration of the gift of council which is simultaneous with an act of prudence, then perhaps it suffices that operative grace should be given, provided that, according to God’s decree, it contains cooperative grace eminently; it is then more perfect than if it did not contain it. Second doubt. Whether operative actual grace requires a twofold motion, namely, moral on the part of the object and physical on the part of the subject. (Cf. Del Prado, op. cit., I, 233.)

Reply. I reply in the affirmative, together with John of St. Thomas and Father Del Prado; for operative grace first enlightens the intellect, then touches the will and causes a sudden desire for the object proposed through the representation of the intellect; and this is the in-spiration that opens the heart, as the heart of Lydia was “opened to attend to those things which were said by Paul” (Acts 16:14). Hence operative grace not only excites by moral movement, but also operates physically, so that by it the heart of man is opened and led not only to indeliberate acts but sometimes to consent as well, for example, in justification or in acts of the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

Third doubt. What are the effects of operative grace in us? There are three. (Cf. Father Del Prado, op. cit., I, 234.)

1. The enlightenment of the intellect and the objective pulsation of the heart: this is a moral movement prior to any consent; thereupon the acts are indeliberate, and with respect to this stage operative grace is nothing but a grace which urges.

2. The application of the free will to the holy affection or action, that it may be converted to God; this application is the complement in the secondary cause of the power to operate.

3. The very act of willing, applied to the action, namely, the very act of believing, hoping, and loving: in these acts the will does not remain passive, but elicits the acts freely. However, the will does not properly move itself to such an act as a result of a preceding act, since this act is first in the order of grace and relates to the final end. Hence, contrary to the opinion of Molina, operative grace determinately moving toward these acts is more than a mere urging, and yet liberty is safeguarded, according to St. Thomas.

Fourth doubt. Whether cooperative grace produces in us three similar effects. Undoubtedly, for cooperative grace is also a previous movement according to a priority not of time but of causality. But these three effects are in another way, since with cooperative grace the will moves itself on account of some preceding act; thus it wills, presupposing the end already intended. On the contrary, with operative grace the will wills by tending toward the end, and the act of the will resembles that first act of the angels discussed in Ia, q. 63, a. 5, or that first act of the soul of Christ which is considered in IIIa, q. 34, a. 3. In the first instant of His conception, Christ merited not incarnation but the glory of immortality, just as an adult at the instant of justification acquires not the grace of justification but the subsequent grace.

Final corollary. We may now read again the well-known reply to the third objection of Ia IIae, q. 9, a. 6, and easily grasp its meaning: “Occasionally God moves some men especially toward willing something determinate which is good, as in those whom He moves by grace, as stated below,” that is, in our article 2. This is operative grace moving determinately, but with which liberty still remains.

SOME FALSE NOTIONS CONCERNING OPERATIVE AND COOPERATIVE GRACE (CF. SALMANTICENSES)

Operative grace does not consist in an indeliberate act, according as it depends upon God, as Ripalda would have it, since an indeliberate supernatural act presupposes operative help moving one to this act. Nor does it consist in an indeliberate act, with God's assistance, as Suarez holds, for God is not united to us in the manner of an operative power.

Again, in opposition to Alvarez and Gonet, operative grace is not a simple movement applying a previous one, for operative grace thus understood pertains to all operations of the will, indeliberate as well as deliberate, as these authors admit, whereas St. Thomas declares that operative grace, specifically so called, pertains only to the act of the will by which it is moved toward something freely, but does not move itself by discursive deliberation.

Cooperative grace is not the indeliberate act itself inclining toward deliberate consent, because cooperative grace, and not this indeliberate act, has an infallible connection with the deliberate operation to which it moves us and which, in fact, it produces, since by such grace God cooperates and influences the eliciting of the aforesaid act. But the indeliberate affection, left to itself, has no infallible connection with deliberate assent, since we often resist a sudden inspiration or inclination; therefore cooperative grace cannot consist in an indeliberate affection; but there must be added a motion which joins the indeliberate act with the deliberate act or which ensures that the deliberate act is effective. Cf. below, p. 230, the opinion of Gonzales, where it is a matter of the fundamental distinction between efficacious and sufficient grace.

ARTICLE III

WHETHER GRACE IS PROPERLY DIVIDED INTO PREVENIENT AND SUBSEQUENT GRACE

State of the question. This article is intended to explain the classical division of grace, according to Augustine, De natura et gratia, chap. 31, and ad Bonifacium, Bk. 11, chap. 9, as here cited at the end of the article. These terms should be carefully defined that it may be clear wherein lay the error of the Pelagians and Semi-Pelagians, who de-nied the necessity of prevenient grace. According to them, generally, every internal grace was subsequent with respect to free will; only external preaching of the word was antecedent, according as the beginning of salvation came from us and

not from God. Thus did they interpret the words of Apoc. 3:20: “I stand at the gate, and knock. If any man shall hear My voice, and open to Me the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.”

We shall presently see that grace can never be thus termed “subsequent” with respect to free will, but only in the sense that it follows another grace or another effect of grace; cf. below, Ia IIae, q. 112, a. 2: “Whatever preparation (for grace) may be present in man is derived from the help of God moving the soul to good”; and in IV Sent., d. 17, q. I, a. I, solut. 2 ad 2: “Our will is entirely attendant upon divine grace and in no way before hand.”

Conclusion. Grace, habitual as well as actual, is properly divided into prevenient and subsequent.

Scriptural proof, in the argument Sed contra; namely, that the grace of God proceeds from His mercy. But it is said (Ps. 58:11): “His mercy shall prevent me,” and again (Ps. 22:6): “Thy mercy will follow me.” Therefore.

Likewise in the prayers of the Church; the collect Pretiosa: “Anticipate, O Lord, we beseech thee, our actions by Thy inspiration, and continue them by Thine assistance; that every one of our works may begin always from Thee, and through Thee be ended.” The collect for the Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost: “O Lord, we pray Thee that Thy grace may always go before and follow us.” And the collect of Easter Sunday: “Grant that the vows Thou inspirest us to perform, Thou wouldst thyself help us to fulfill.”

Similarly on the authority of St. Augustine, here cited in the body of the article, from De natura et gratia, chap. 31: “(God) precedes us that we may be healed; He follows us that, even healed, we may yet be invigorated. He precedes us that we may be called; He follows us that we may be glorified. He precedes us that we may live piously;

He follows us that we may live with Him forever, since without Him we can do nothing.”

Theological proof.

Grace is properly classified according to its various effects.

But there are five effects appointed to grace: 1. that the soul may be healed; 2. that it may will the good; 3. that it may eficaciously perform the good it wills; 4. that it may persevere in the good; 5. that it may attain to glory.

Therefore the grace causing the first effect is properly termed “prevenient” with respect to the second effect, and as causing the second it

is called “subsequent” in relation to the first effect; and so with the rest. Thus the same act is at once prevenient and subsequent with respect to different effects.

Corollary. Thus grace is called prevenient with respect to some following act, although it is also prevenient with respect to the act toward which it moves immediately, according as it is previous to it with the priority of causality. And grace is not said to be subsequent in relation to free will, as Pelagius held, but relative to another grace or effect of grace.

As St. Thomas remarks (De veritate, q. 27, a. 5 ad 6): “Prevenient and subsequent grace may be understood in another way with respect to the man whom it moves; thus prevenient grace causes a man to will what is good, and subsequent grace causes him to perform the good which he has willed.” As Augustine declares in the Enchiridion, chap. 32: “He precedes the unwilling, that he may will, and follows the willing lest he will in vain.”

Reply to first objection. Since the uncreated love of God for us is eternal, it is always prevenient. (Cf. Del Prado, op. cit., I, 247.)

Corollary 2. Both operative and cooperative grace, since they move toward diverse acts, may be called prevenient and subsequent.

Doubt. Whether prevenient and subsequent grace may be the same grace numerically. The solution is found in the reply to the second objection, that is, in the case of habitual grace, yes; but in that of actual grace, no, for the same reason as for operative and cooperative grace. For it is evident that the same habitual grace, numerically, is called prevenient inasmuch as, justifying us, it precedes meritorious works; it is called subsequent inasmuch as it will be consummated, thus it is called glory.”

In fact, St. Thomas expressly states here in the reply to the second objection: “Subsequent grace pertaining to glory is not different numerically from prevenient grace by which we are justified now; for as the charity of the wayfarer is not made void but perfected in heaven, so also can this be said of the light of grace, for neither of them bears any imperfection in its principle.”

But if it is a question of actual grace, which ceases with the very act toward which it moves immediately and of which it is the beginning, then it is multiplied along with the acts enumerated above, as we said before of operative actual grace and cooperative actual grace.

To complete this Question III on the division of grace, two articles must be added since the Council of Trent and the condemnation of Jansenism: 1.

The distinction between exciting or stimulating grace and assisting grace, which was considered by the Council, Sess. VI, chap. 5; 2. The difference between sufficient and efficacious grace, in respect to which the Protestants and Jansenists erred.

THE DIVISION OF ACTUAL GRACE INTO STIMULATING AND ASSISTING GRACE (CF. DEL PRADO, OP. CIT., I, 243)

This division is explained at the Council of Trent, Sess. VI, chap. 5 (Denz., no. 797): “It is declared, moreover, that the beginning of this very justification in adults is received from God through Christ Jesus by prevenient grace (can. 3), that is, by His vocation, in that none are called on account of their own existing merits; that they who were turned away from God by sin, may be disposed by His stimulating and assisting grace to become converted to their own justification, freely (can. 4 and 5) assenting to and cooperating with the same grace.”

According to this text, grace rousing one from the sleep of sin by moral movement, that is, by enlightenment and attraction, and grace assisting one to will the good, by the application of the will to its exercise, are included under prevenient grace, which precedes the free consent of man’s will, whereby we consent to justification and may be prepared for it. Hence this prevenient grace to which the Council refers is the same as the operative grace considered by St. Thomas in article two, especially in the reply to the second objection: “God does not justify us without ourselves, since by the movement of free will, when we are justified, we consent to the justice of God. However, this movement is not the cause of grace [as the Semi-Pelagians held], but its effect; hence the whole operation belongs to grace.” (Cf. Del Prado, De gratia, I, 228.)

Thus is corroborated our interpretation of article two, that is: operative grace is not only stimulating but assisting. Under Sess. VI, chap. 5 of the Council the same doctrine is explained as in article two of the present question (III). The Council of Trent, Sess. VI, can. 4 (Denz., no. 814) uses the term “moving grace” for assisting grace. Doubt. Whether the prevenient grace which stimulates the intellect and assists in the application of the will is absolutely prior to our consent, or subsequent to it. How are we to understand the following text of the Apocalypse (3:20)? “Behold, I stand at

the gate and knock. If any man shall hear My voice, and open to Me the door, I will come in to him."

Reply. This grace is, with respect to its efficient cause, absolutely prior to our consent, according to St. Thomas (Ia IIae, q. III, a. 2 ad 2; q. 113, a. 8 c.). At the same instant: 1. there is an infusion of grace; 2. a movement of the free will with respect to God; 3. a movement of the free will in regard to sin; 4. the remission of sin. Similarly in the answers to the first and second objections. (Cf. Dominic Soto, De natura et gratia, Bk. I, chap. 16, and Del Prado, De gratia, I, 245.)

Corollary. Del Prado, op. cit. (I, 248): From the notion of operative and cooperative grace, propounded by St. Thomas in article two, it can easily be demonstrated that the gratuitous movement of God, whereby He impels us to meritorious good, is efficacious, not on account of the consent of the free will that has been moved, but on account of the will and intention of God who moves it, as St. Thomas expressly declares in the following question (112, a. 3).

Even in article two of the present question, the Angelic Doctor has already said with reference to operative grace, that "with it, our mens is moved and not the mover"; and, in the answer to the second objection, that the movement of the free will, when we are justified and consent to the justice of God, "is not the cause of grace, but its effect, so that the whole operation belongs to grace."

Again in the body of this second article it is declared of cooperative grace: "And since God also helps us in this (deliberate) act, both by interiorly strengthening the will that it may accomplish the act, and by exteriorly supplying the faculty to perform it, with respect to this kind of act it is called cooperative grace."

As a matter of fact, Molina would not have denied the interpretation of Augustine given by St. Thomas, were it not declared in this interpretation that grace is efficacious of itself.

CHAPTER V

THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

The question of sufficient grace and efficacious grace is here treated in four chapters according to the following summary.

CHAPTER V. PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS AND THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

I. Preliminary remarks: statement and difficulty of the question.
II. Doctrine of the Church on sufficient grace.
III. How did St. Augustine and St. Thomas understand this doctrine of the Church on sufficient grace?
IV. Doctrine of the Church on efficacious grace.

CHAPTER VI. SUFFICIENT GRACE

I. Various systems of Catholic theologians with regard to Sufficient and efficacious grace.
II. To what extent sufficient grace is to be admitted and how it is divided.
III. Refutation of the objections against the Thomistic doctrine of sufficient grace.
IV. What is to be thought of the opinion of J. Gonzales de Albeda, O.P.
V. The opinion of St. Alphonsus Liguori.

CHAPTER VII. EFFICACIOUS GRACE

Conclusion I. Its efficacy cannot be attacked from without. Corollary with respect to spirituality.
Conclusion II. Its internal efficacy is not sufficiently explained by moral motion.

Conclusion III. Its internal efficacy is properly and formally a pre determining physical premotion.

IV. Refutation of objections.

CHAPTER VIII. EXCURSUS ON EFFICACIOUS GRACE

I. Efficacious grace and easy acts conducive to salvation.

II. Efficacious grace in relation to spirituality.

III. Efficacious grace in holy wayfarers, particularly in martyrs.

IV. Efficacious grace in those burning with intense love of God.

V. Efficacious grace in the impeccable and freely obedient Christ.

I. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS: STATE OF THE QUESTION

Terminology used. It is evident from revelation that graces are conferred by God and that some of them miss their final effect, whereas others achieve their effect. The former are called “truly sufficient” and “merely sufficient” since they give the power for a good work, but they are resisted. The latter are called “efficacious” since they really produce their effect in us, they act indeed that we may act.

From this difference the question arises: How are sufficient grace and efficacious grace distinguished from each other? In other words, is efficacious grace efficacious of itself, intrinsically, because God so wills, or is it efficacious extrinsically, that is, on account of our consent foreseen by God’s knowledge?

Underlying principles from the treatise on God: statement and difficulty of the question.

After St. Thomas, in the early days of Protestantism and Jansenism, this question has been widely debated and at length; it may fittingly be explained here, for its solution is deducible from what St. Thomas has said. (Ia IIae, q. 110, a. I; q. III, a. 2; q. 112, a.3.)

However, the basic principles of the solution are first enunciated in the treatise on God, Ia, q. 14, a. 8: “The knowledge of God is the cause of things inasmuch as His will is joined to it.” And further, Ia, a. 19, a. 4: “The effects determined by the infinite perfection of God proceed in accordance with the determination of His will and intellect” (that is, by a decree of the divine will). Again, Ia, q. 19, a. 6 ad I: “Whatever God wills absolutely, is

done (otherwise He would not be omnipotent), although what He wills antecedently (or only conditionally) may not be done," for in this instance God permits the opposite evil for the sake of a greater good; thus He wills antecedently that all the fruits of the earth come to maturity, but He permits that many actually do not reach this maturity. It is similar in the matter of the salvation of men. St. Thomas goes on to explain this in the same article (ad I): On consequent or unconditional will. "The will is compared to things according as they are in themselves; but in themselves they are individual.

Hence we will something absolutely inasmuch as we will it considering all its individuating circumstances; this is to will consequently." Thus whatever God (omnipotent) wills absolutely is done; although what He wills antecedently may not be done.

Antecedently God wills a thing according as it is good in itself, for example, that all men be saved, that all His commands be ever fulfilled; but at the same time He permits to some extent the opposite evil for the sake of a greater good, and thus "what He wills only antecedently or conditionally is not done."

Hence it is said in psalm 134:6: "Whatsoever the Lord pleased He hath done, in heaven, in earth." And the Council of Toucy (PL, CXXVI, 123) adds: "For nothing is done in heaven or on earth, except what God either graciously does Himself or permits to be done, in His justice." That is to say, no good, here and now, in this man rather than in another, comes about unless God Himself graciously wills and accomplishes it, and no evil, here and now, in this man rather than another, comes about unless God Himself justly permits it to be done. Nevertheless God does not command the impossible, and grants even to those who do not actually observe His commandments the power of observing them.

But those who observe His commandments are better than others and would not keep them in fact, had not God from eternity efficaciously decreed that they should observe these precepts. Thus, these good servants of God are more beloved and assisted by Him than others, although God does not command the impossible of the others.

Furthermore, this very resistance to sufficient grace is an evil which would not occur, here and now, without the divine permission, and nonresistance itself is a good which would not come about here and now except for divine consequent will. Therefore, there is a real difference

between sufficient grace, to which is attached the divine permission of sin and by reason of which the fulfillment of the commandments is really possible, and efficacious grace, on the other hand, which is a greater help whence follows not only the real possibility of observing the commandments, but their effective fulfillment.

Moreover, in sufficient grace, efficacious grace is offered to us, as the fruit is in the flower; but if resistance is made on account of our defectibility, then we deserve not to receive efficacious grace. For this reason Bossuet declares: “Our intellect must be held captive before the obscurity of the divine mystery and admit two graces (sufficient and efficacious) of which the former leaves our will without any excuse before God, and the latter does not permit the will to glory in itself.” (Œuvres complètes, Paris, 1845, I, 644.)

St. Thomas states further (Ia, q. 19, a. 8): “Since the divine will is efficacious in the highest degree, it follows not only that those things are done which God wills to be done, but also that they are done in the way God wills them to be done. But God wills certain things to be done necessarily, others contingently, that there may be order among things for the completion of the universe.” This is the basis of grace efficacious in itself. Again (Ia, q. 20, a. 2): “The will of God is the cause of all things, and hence, necessarily, to the extent that a thing has being or any good whatever, it is willed by God. Therefore, since loving is nothing else but wishing well to someone, it is evident that God loves all things that are, but not in the way that we do. . . . Our will is not the cause of goodness in things,” including the goodness of our choices, as appears from Ia, q. 19, a. 8.

There follows from this the great principle of predilection, by which the whole treatise on grace is elucidated and which is formulated in Ia, q. 20, a. 3: “Since the love of God is the cause of the goodness of things, no one would be better than another if God did not will a greater good to one than to another.” Likewise, in article 4 of the same question and also in Ia, q. 23, a. 4: “In God, love precedes election.” Already it is evident that the man who, in fact, observes the commandments is better than the one who is able to do so but actually does not. Therefore he who keeps the commandments is more beloved and assisted. In short, God loves that man more to whom He grants that he keep the commandments than another in whom He permits sin.

This principle of predilection is valid for all created being, even free beings, and for all their acts, natural or supernatural, easy or difficult, initial or final; in other words, no created being would be in any respect better if it were not better loved by God. This truth is clear in the philosophical order, for it flows from the principle of causality and of the eminently universal causality of the will or love of God. In the order of grace, this principle is revealed by several scriptural texts, for instance: “I will have mercy on whom I will, and I will be merciful to whom it shall please Me” (Exod. 33:19); and “For who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received?” (I Cor. 4:7.)

This principle of predilection presupposes, according to St. Thomas, a decree of the divine will rendering our salutary acts intrinsically efficacious (Ia, q. 19, a. 8). For, if they were efficacious on account of our foreseen consent, of two men equally loved and helped by God, one would be better in some respect. He would be better of himself alone and not on account of divine predilection. But this principle must be reconciled with another which ought to be maintained with equal firmness: “God does not command the impossible, but He teaches thee by commanding to do what thou canst and to ask what thou canst not, and He helps thee that thou mayest be able” (St. Augustine, De natura et gratia, chap. 43, no. 50, and the Council of Trent, Denz., no. 804). Herein lies a great mystery of reconciliation between infinite mercy, infinite justice, and supreme liberty. They are indeed reconciled in the intimate life of the Deity, but of Deity as such we have no positive or proper conception: “Deity is above being, above unity, which are contained in it formally and eminently.” (Cf. Revue thomiste, May-June, 1937, the author’s article, “Le fondement suprême de la distinction des deux grâces suffisante et efficace.”) These conclusions from the treatise on God are, then, presupposed in the present discussion.

This question must now be divided into two sections. First the dogmas of faith must be sought out dealing with grace which is truly, yet merely, sufficient, and with efficacious grace which nevertheless does not take away man’s freedom. Secondly, we must consider the various notions of theologians with respect to the nature of sufficient grace and of efficacious grace, whether the latter is efficacious intrinsically or extrinsically, that is, on account of our foreseen consent.

With the object of better determining the status of the question, it will be well to consider the differences which exist in this matter between the

opposing heresies of Pelagianism and Jansenism, and between the theological notions of Molinists and Thomists.

For the Pelagians, actual grace (such as the preaching of the gospel) is either efficacious on account of man's consent to the good, or inefficacious on account of the evil will of man.

For the Jansenists, internal actual grace is twofold: one is efficacious of itself, the other inefficacious and insufficient as well.

For Thomists, internal actual grace is twofold: one is efficacious of itself, producing of itself the virtuous act; the other is inefficacious at least remote, of acting virtuously.

For the Molinists, sufficient actual grace itself is either efficacious from its effect, or from our consent foreseen by mediate knowledge, or else inefficacious and merely sufficient.

2. THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH ON SUFFICIENT GRACE

Grace is given which is truly yet merely sufficient: "truly" because it really confers the power; "merely" because, through the fault of the will, it fails in its effect, with respect to which it is said to be inefficacious, but sufficient. This doctrine of the Church is formulated against the Predestinationists and later, much more explicitly, against the Jansenists. (Cf. De praedestinianismo, Denz., nos. 316 ff., 320 ff.)

The Predestinationists, including Lucidus, a fifth-century priest, Gottschalk in the ninth century, and later revivers, taught predestination to evil, before the prevision of demerits, and consequently must have denied the existence of sufficient grace; for, according to them, those who are damned lack the power of doing good (Denz., no. 321, at the end); and those who are saved are so necessitated to the good that they cannot resist grace. "Therefore the wicked themselves are not lost because they could not be good, but because they would not," declares the Council of Valence (Denz., no. 321). Calvin followed the ways of Predestinationism (cf. Inst., Bk. III, chaps. 14-21).

At first, the Jansenists denied sufficient grace. Jansen himself (De gratia Christi, Bk. III, chap. I) admits no grace that is not efficacious. Quesnel (Denz., nos. 1359 ff.) and the Pistoians (Denz., no. 1521) adhere to this fully. Jansen's first proposition (Denz., no. 1092) should be cited in particular: "Some commands of God are impossible to just men who are

willing and striving, according to their present powers; moreover they lack grace which would make their observance possible to them." In other words, many just men of good will, who make an effort, are deprived of sufficient grace which gives a real power or faculty for good works commanded by God; it would follow that the wicked are punished unjustly, since they could not be good. This proposition is declared heretical.

The second proposition is closely related to the first: "In the state of fallen nature, interior graces are never resisted," that is to say, interior grace is always efficacious, which is heresy.

Likewise the third proposition of Jansen: "For meriting and demeriting in the state of fallen nature man does not require freedom from necessity; freedom from constraint is sufficient." This proposition pertains rather to efficacious grace which, according to the Jansenists, removes freedom from necessity and leaves only spontaneity. Their fourth proposition is that the Semi-Pelagian heresy consisted in maintaining that the human will can resist or obey grace. The fifth proposition declares that Christ did not die for all men.

Quesnel's propositions (Denz., nos. 1359-75) were also condemned for the same reason, that is, for denying sufficient grace and reducing all internal grace to efficacious, under which, for him, liberty from necessity would not remain. Similarly, the twenty-one propositions of the Synod of Pistoia (Denz., no. 1521) were condemned. The motive for their condemnation, as set down, is that, like the Jansenists, they hold "the interior grace of Christ is not given to him by whom it is resisted. . . . but only that is properly the grace of Christ which makes us act." Hence, according to the Pistoians, the only sufficient grace which is given is external, such as preaching or good example.

However, it should be remarked that, after the condemnation of the five propositions of Jansen, several of his followers, including Arnauld (dissertation in four parts: De gratia efficaci and Apologie pour les saints Pères, Bk. IV), to avoid being held as heretics, admitted a little interior grace which might be given to certain of the just. But what is this little grace of Arnauld's? According to him, it is grace which may be given in general, but not here and now in particular; or it is sufficient for acting generally, but not sufficient with respect to such and such a precept to be fulfilled or some particular temptation to be overcome. This little grace, according to Arnauld, is remiss charity; when charity is really intense and

predominant, it is truly sufficient even here and now in particular, to such an extent that man resists temptation, and hence it is efficacious. This is the famous theory of little grace which certain Jansenists hit upon to avoid the condemnation of the Church. (Cf. Guillermin, Revue thomiste, 1902, pp. 47 ff .; Paquier, Le Jansénisme; and Petitot, Revue thomiste, September, 1910, "Pascal et la grâce suffisante.") It should be observed that the Augustinians admitted little grace, but not in the sense of the Jansenists; for them it is really sufficient but remiss.

Does Arnauld's explanation preserve sufficient grace? I reply: not really, but only as a matter of verbiage, for actions to be accomplished are not general but concrete and individual. Hence, if grace does not suffice for each particular precept or each individual temptation, it is simply insufficient. Therefore Arnauld does not escape from Jan-sen's first proposition: "Some commands of God are impossible to just men who are willing and striving, according to their present powers; moreover, they lack grace which would make their observance possible to them" here and now.

Since this proposition is condemned as heretical, it is a dogma of faith that at least grace which is truly, yet merely, sufficient is not lacking to the just; truly, since it confers a real power of acting virtuously; merely, since it is resisted and fails of its final effect. This dogma of faith had already been equivalently expressed in several councils. The Council of Orange (Denz., no. 200) declared that "all the baptized, by the help and cooperation of Christ, can and ought to accomplish whatever pertains to salvation, if they are willing to work faithfully." The Second Council of Valence maintained against Scotus Erigenus (Denz., no. 321): "Therefore the wicked themselves are not lost because they could not be good, but because they would not." And the Council of Trent (Denz., no. 804) adopts the formula: "God does not command the impossible, but by commanding He teaches thee to do what thou canst and to ask what thou canst not, and He assists thee that thou mayest be able." Therefore God confers sufficient help to enable us, not only in general, but in individual cases, to observe His commandments.

What, then, is the scriptural basis for this dogma of sufficient grace? Especially worthy of citation are the words of the Lord in Isa. 5:4: "What is there that I ought to do more to My vineyard, that I have not done to it?" For if God ought not to do anything more, then His help is truly sufficient.

However, in this text it does not say: “What is there that I could do more,” and we shall see that God can do more, although not bound to do so.

Again, Scripture often bears witness to graces offered or conferred whereby God calls and urges, and which are nevertheless resisted, or received in vain. Thus we read: “I called, and you refused” (Prov. 1:24); “I have spread forth My hands all the day to an unbelieving people, who walk in a way that is not good after their own thoughts” (Isa. 65:2); “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered together thy children, as the hen doth gather her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldest not! Behold, your house shall be left to you, desolate” (Matt. 23:37).

Commenting on St. Matthew, St. Thomas says of the passage just quoted: “This is that Jerusalem of which Ezechiel (5:6) declares: ‘This is Jerusalem, I have set her in the midst of the nations, and the countries round about her. And she hath despised My judgments.’ They might excuse themselves saying: ‘We had no one to tell us’; therefore does Jesus add: ‘and stonest them that are sent unto thee,’ whereupon I sent prophets and many helps and thou didst not recognize them. ‘How often would I have gathered together thy children, as the hen doth gather her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldest not?’ The perpetuity of His divinity is here implied, as declared explicitly in His words: ‘Before Abraham was made, I am’ (John 8:58). Hence Christ Himself sent the prophets, patriarchs, and angels. As often as He sent, He wished to gather the Jews together. Those who were converted to the Lord were indeed gathered, for they are united in Him; whereas sinners, who are withdrawn from unity, are dispersed. Wherefore: I wish to gather as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings. It is said that no animal is so solicitous for its young as the hen. She defends them against the hawk and endangers her own life for them, gathering them under her wings. So is Christ solicitous for us; ‘surely He hath borne our infirmities’ (Isa. 53:4); and likewise exposed Himself to the hawk, that is, the devil.

“Sed contra: the Lord willed thus to protect them, but they refused; therefore their evil will prevailed over the will of God. Hence it could be said: As often as I willed, I acted; but I invite thee, acting as I did (for instance, sending the prophets); whereupon thy will prevented My action. Or again, the fact that He sent the prophets was a sign that He wished to gather thee in, and thou wouldst not. Then follows the punishment: behold, your house shall be left to you, desolate.” So speaks St. Thomas. This is the

great mystery of antecedent will and the simultaneous permission of sin, but the grace was really sufficient; had there not been resistance to it, the Lord would have given greater grace.

Similarly, we read in the Acts (7:51): “You stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Ghost”; and in II Corinthians (6:1): “We . . . do exhort you, that you receive not the grace of God in vain”; cf. St. Thomas on this text. This is the case often when habitual grace is lost by mortal sin; likewise prevenient grace is received in vain when man does not persevere in good. However, graces of this kind are really suffcient, for through them God truly invites, but they are merely sufficient since they fail in their effect. Whence many accusations are unjustifiably adduced against us by the Molinists on the basis of these texts, to show that grace is not intrinsically efficacious; but as a matter of fact, these texts are not concerned with efficacious grace, but with merely sufficient grace, since it fails in its effect.

The aforesaid dogma of faith regarding sufficient grace is also based on I Timothy (2:4-6) where it is written: “God will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth”; and “Christ Jesus . . . gave Himself a redemption for all.” For if God really wills the salvation of all, He offers truly sufficient helps to all; many, however, are not saved, and thus it is evident that these helps often remain actually inefficacious or merely sufficient. Cf. St. Thomas on I Tim. 2:9, and Ia, q. 19, a. 6: Whether the will of God is always accomplished. In this article, replying to the first objection, St. Thomas maintains that God wishes all men to be saved, not by His consequent or efficacious will, but by His antecedent will, “as a just judge antecedently desires all men to live, but wills consequently that a murderer should be hanged. In the same way, God wills antecedently the salvation of all men (for this is good absolutely), but He wills consequently that some should be damned according to the requirements of justice.” Further, He permits sin to happen, since it is not to be wondered at that what is defective should fail to a certain extent, that a greater good may issue from it, such as the manifestation of divine mercy and justice. With respect to this antecedent will, cf. the commentators on Ia, q. 19, a. 6 (Billuart); moreover, from this antecedent will for the salvation of all men proceeds the aggregate of sufficient graces to all adults.

It would be equally easy to find among patristic writings the aforesaid dogma of the faith on truly, yet merely, sufficient grace, in equivalent terms

at least, when they declare that we need divine aid and with it are able to do good, even if we do not, so that man remains inexcusable after sin, for he could have avoided it. Thus the wicked are justly to be punished. Cf. St. Irenaeus: “They did not do good when they could have done it” (Contra haereses, Bk. IV, chap. 37, no. 9.) Commenting on the Epistle to the Hebrews (12:13), St. John Chrysostom writes: “Unless you receive heavenly aid, all your actions are in vain; but it is evident that you will attain whatever you apply yourself to, with that help, provided you are also attentive and desirous of doing so.” This text affirms the existence of really suscient grace but does not deny the existence of grace which is efficacious of itself.

3. THE MIND OF ST. AUGUSTINE AND ST. THOMAS

How did they understand the aforesaid doctrine of the Church on suffcient grace?

St. Augustine, in particular, defends efficacious grace, as will be explained later; here it suffices to quote the classic words found in the book, De dono perseverantiae, chap. 14: “Those who are set free are most certainly set free by the help of God”; and again in the De praedestinatione sanctorum, chap. 8: “Grace which is not rejected by any hardheartedness, since it is bestowed, in the first place, to remove hardness of heart.” Likewise in the book, De gratia Christi, chap. 24, he described efficacious grace: “internal, hidden, wonderful, and ineffable power by which God effects in the hearts of men not only true revelations but even upright wills.”

Augustine also admitted the principle of predilectio: no created being would be better in any respect if it were not better loved and assisted more by God. This principle is affirmed in various terms; for example, in the City of God, Bk. XII, chap. 9, referring to good and bad angels, he says: “Thus, both were created equally good, these falling on account of their bad will, and those, receiving greater help, attaining their full beatitude, from which they most assuredly would never fall.” Similarly, in De dono perseverantiae, chap. 9, we find: “Of two adults leading lives of great wickedness, that one should be called in such a way as to follow the call, while the other is not called, or not called in that way, is in the inscrutable judgments of God.”

But this principle of predilection presupposes, as we have said, that grace is efficacious of itself. For if it were efficacious on account of our foreseen consent, then, of two angels or men equally loved and assisted by God, one would be better than the other; he would be better on his own account and not as a result of divine predilection. This is contrary to St. Paul's "For who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received?" These words of St. Paul are often quoted by Augustine.

2. Nevertheless, St. Augustine elsewhere maintains very definitely that "God does not command the impossible, but by commanding He instructs thee both to do what thou canst and to beg what thou canst not, and He assists thee that thou mayest be able" (De natura et gratia, chap. 43, no. 50, cited at the Council of Trent; Denz., no. 804). In this last text Augustine affirms sufficient grace without any ambiguity, and God's will that the fulfillment of His commands should be really possible to all, and, in this sense, His will that all should be saved. Hence St. Augustine admits that before efficacious grace, in the state of fallen nature, sufficient grace is given, without which the keeping of the commandments of God would be really impossible. And it is this grace which is called truly sufficient, in opposition to the Jansenists. Likewise in the book De correptione et gratia, chap. 7, discounting the excuse of those who say: we did not persevere because we did not have perseverance, he declares: "Man, thou mayest persevere in that which thou hearest and holdest, if thou willest." Again in De natura et gratia, chap. 67: "Since God…recalls the hostile, teaches the believing, consoles the hopeful, encourages the loving, assists him who strives, and hears him who prays, thou art not condemned to sin because thou art ignorant against thy will, but because thou dost neglect to seek after what thou knowest not; not because thou failest to bind up the wounded members, but because thou disdainest the will to be healed." And similarly, commenting on psalm 40:5: "Do not say: I am not able to restrain, endure, and bridle my flesh; for you are assisted that you may be able."

Furthermore, St. Augustine presented the best formulated distinction between that help without which we cannot act and that help by which we infallibly act, just as later Augustinians and Thomists distinguish between sufficient grace, which gives the power to act, and efficacious grace, which infallibly imparts that action itself. This Augustinian distinction is found in De correptione et gratia, chap. II, where he teaches that Adam in the state of innocence had received sufficient help with which he could persevere in

good, but not efficacious help whereby he would infallibly persevere; however, both helps are conferred on the predestinate.

St. Augustine's words are as follows: "The first grace is that which enables a man to have justice if he so wills; therefore more is possible with the second, whereby it is also brought about that he does will. . . . Nor was the former by any means small, through which the power of free will was demonstrated; for the help is such that without it he would not have continued to do good; but if he wills, he may forfeit this help. The latter, however, is so far superior, that it is not enough for man to recover his lost liberty through it …unless it is effected that he wills. . . . In fact, it lies within us, through this grace of God received with good dispositions and perseveringly maintained, not only to be able to will but also to will actually what we will. This was not so in the first man; for he possessed one of these but not the other." (Cf. Salmanticenses, Cursus theol., De gratia, q. III, disp. V, dub. VIII, no. 173.) After Augustine, the older theologians generally used the expression "help without which we cannot" for what, since the condemnation of Jansenism, has been commonly referred to as sufficient grace, and "help whereby" we do good for what is now called efficacious grace.

Objection. It seems that Augustine does not mean, by the difference between "help whereby" and "help without which," the same distinction which is now understood between efficacious help and sufficient help. For in many instances he excludes "help whereby" from the state of innocence. If therefore "help whereby" were admitted to represent grace efficacious in itself, it would follow that efficacious grace was not necessary for Adam and the angels to persevere.

Reply. This question was discussed at great length in the time of the Jansenist heresy, as can easily be seen from Billuart's Cursus theol., De gratia, diss. II, a.4. But from the many texts of St. Augustine quoted there it appears that the holy doctor excluded from the state of innocence the "help whereby" for being healed, but not for being assisted. And he holds that grace efficacious of itself was necessary for perseverance even in the innocent Adam and in the angels. To prove this it suffices to quote the very famous passage in the City of God, Bk. XII, chap. 9, regarding the good and bad angels: "Thus both were created equally good, these falling on account of their bad will, and those, receiving greater help, attaining their full beatitude, from which they most assuredly would never fall."

This is affirmed by Augustine in virtue of the principle of predilection: “For who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received?” In other words, no man or angel, in any state, would be better than another, if he were not more loved and assisted by God. The angels who fell had sufficient grace, which they resisted; the others, that is, the predestinate, were more loved and assisted. This is the doctrine of predestination itself.

Moreover, as Bossuet demonstrates (Défense de la tradition, Bks. X and XI, chaps. 19-27), Augustine, as well as many others of the Greek and Latin Fathers, maintains, when explaining the threefold denial of Peter during our Lord’s passion, that Peter could have avoided that sin, for he was not deprived of all grace; but on account of his previous movement of presumption, he lacked the efficacious help by which he later came even to martyrdom. Cf. Bossuet, ibid., where several texts from Origen, Chrysostom, Augustine, and Gregory the Great are quoted and also Book XII, De doctrina Augustini de praedestinatione, wherein Bossuet distinguishes very well between sufficient and efhcacious grace in accordance with tradition.

The whole question is briefly formulated in the proposition already quoted from the same authority: “Our intelligence must be held captive before the divine obscurity of this great mystery, confessing these two graces (sufficient and efficacious), the first of which leaves our will without an excuse before God, while the second does not allow it to glory in itself. In other words, “It must be admitted (in opposition to the Jansenists) that there are two interior graces, of which one (namely, sufficient grace) leaves our soul inexcusable before God after sin, and of which the other (that is, efficacious grace) does not permit our will to glory in itself after accomplishing good works.” “What hast thou that thou hast not received? For who distinguisheth thee?”

These two propositions, thus formulated, are as two very luminous semicircles surrounding the deepest obscurity of the mystery. Above these semicircles is the mystery of the divine good pleasure, combining infinite mercy, infinite justice, and supreme liberty, which are identified in the Deity. Below, however, is the abyss of our defectibility and the gravity of mortal sin.

Finally, this doctrine of really sufficient grace distinct from efficacious grace is expressed in several texts from St. Thomas.

Cf. IIIa, q. 79, a. 7 ad 2: “The passion of Christ does indeed benefit all men, with respect to its sufficiency, the remission of sin, and the attainment of grace and glory, but it produces its effect only in those who are united to the passion of Christ by faith and charity.” Likewise IIIa, dist. 13, q. 2, a. 2; qc., 2 ad 5: “Christ satisfied for all human na-ture sufficiently, but not efficiently, since not all become participants in His satisfaction; but this is the result of their unfitness, not of any insufficiency in His satisfaction.” Similarly in De veritate, q. 29, a. 7 ad 4.

Again on the First Epistle to Timothy (2:6), with reference to the words, “Christ gave Himself a redemption for all,” St. Thomas explains: “For some efficaciously, but for all sufficiently, since the price of His blood is sufficient for the salvation of all; but it is not efficacious except in the elect on account of impediments.” Therefore in like manner, according to St. Thomas, sufficient helps and efficacious helps are given, which may correspond for their effect to the aforesaid passion and the mode by which it benefits us. And in Ia IIae, q. 106, a. 2 ad 2: God “gives sufficient help to avoid sin”; and again on the Epistle to the Ephesians, chap. 3, lect. 2.

In certain texts of St. Thomas the term “sufficient” is not explicitly contrasted with “efficacious,” and his meaning is not always clear except from the context; but in many instances we really find this explicit contrast or distinction which was already common among theologians long before Jansenism and the discussions which it aroused. Moreover, in the Tabula aurea of St. Thomas’ works, under “satisfactio,” no. 36, are given eighteen quotations from the Angelic Doctor wherein he declares substantially that Christ satisfied for the whole of human nature sufficiently, but not efficaciously.

Lastly, St. Thomas evidently holds that all infused virtue gives the power to do good in the order of grace, but not the actual doing good, for which divine motion is necessary; and furthermore, the divine motion which inclines one effectively toward a good thought does not suffice to incline one efficaciously toward a pious desire nor toward agreeing to a good or proposing it, nor, for still greater reason, toward carrying out this proposal. The actual motion which inclines one to have a good thought does give the potentiality with respect to the pious desire, but not the actual desire itself, and so on through the series. The mind of St. Thomas is clear on this point and may be demonstrated by many texts quoted below.

Nor does St. Thomas merely distinguish between sufficient grace and efficacious grace; he indicates the supreme basis of this distinction when, in Ia, q. 19, a. 6 ad I, he establishes the difference between antecedent will (or the will for universal salvation) and consequent will. We explained this in our treatise, De Deo uno, 1937, p. 425. According to his argument, antecedent will is concerned with the good considered absolutely and not here and now, whereas consequent will has to do with the good considered here and now. But since the good which exists in things themselves is effected only here and now, it follows from this that the antecedent will of itself alone, without the addition of the consequent will, remains inefficacious. Hence the division into these two wills is the supreme basis of the distinction between sufficient grace which proceeds from the antecedent will and grace which is efficacious of itself proceeding from the consequent will. But man, on account of his resistance to sufficient grace, deserves to be deprived of efficacious grace.

Objection. This distinction between efficacious actual grace and sufficient grace is not found in the early Councils, not even Trent, which treated of grace and free will more accurately in order to counteract Lutheranism.

Reply. Granted that these identical terms are not encountered in the pronouncements of the councils, nevertheless terms in every respect equivalent are to be found; for instance, it is a question of efficacious grace when the Council of Orange declares (chap. 9, Denz., no. 182): “Whenever we do good, God operates in us and with us in order that we may act”; and again when the Council of Trent (Sess. VI, chap. 4, Denz., no. 814) defines “free will moved and stimulated by God, as that which assents to cooperate with God who stimulates and invites.” Likewise, the Council of Trent (Sess. VI, chap. II, Denz., no. 804) refers equivalently to sufficient grace when it states that “God does not command the impossible, but by commanding He teaches thee both to do what thou canst and to ask what thou canst not, and He assists thee that thou mayest be able.” It was fitting, moreover, for theologians in their disputations to avoid such complex terms as “sufficient grace and efficacious grace.”

Finally, the aforesaid dogma of faith regarding grace which is truly yet merely sufficient is confirmed by theological argument. God, even in the present economy of salvation, imposes the observance of the commandments upon all most rigorously, and the delinquents who die in

final impenitence will be punished by eternal torments. But God cannot impose a precept unless at the same time He supplies the necessary means for observing it, nor justly punish him who cannot avoid evil. Therefore God offers helps by which man may be sufficiently equipped to keep the commandments and avoid sin. He does not provide less in the order of grace than in the order of nature, in which latter there are truly sufficient principles, that is, faculties, which nevertheless require final application to the act. (Cf. the Salmanticenses.)

This, then, is the dogma of faith regarding truly and merely sufficient grace. Later we shall examine the various opinions of theologians on the nature of sufficient grace. Let us first consider the Church's teaching on efficacious grace.

4. THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH ON EFFICACIOUS GRACE

This doctrine contains two articles: 1. efficacious grace is conferred; 2. with efficacious grace, liberty remains.

First article. Efficacious, or effective, grace is conferred which causes us to act. This is maintained especially in the condemnation of Pelagianism and Semi-Pelagianism. For the Pelagians did not precisely deny that grace confers the power of doing good, but that it bestows the very willing and acting. Against them the Second Council of Orange (can. 9, Denz., no. 182) defined: "Whatever good we do, God operates in us and with us that we may operate." Hence a certain grace is given which is effective of an operation, although it does not exclude our cooperation but rather demands it.

This is the meaning of the words of Ezechiel (36:27): "I will cause you to walk in My commandments, and to keep My judgments, and do them." And the Council of Orange quotes in the same sense (no. 177): "It is God who works in us both to will and to do." But the grace which causes us to act, whatever it achieves of willing or completing, is efficacious, not only with the efficacy of powers, in the sense that it confers real and intrinsic powers in the supernatural order (this is already given by interior sufficient grace), but it is efficacious with an efficacy of operation, or effective, since it produces the very operation with us, whatever may be the mode whereby the will and grace concur in the act.

This is confirmed by the condemnation of the pseudosynod of Pistoia (Denz., no. 1521) where it is stated that this false synod is condemned "in that it maintains that alone to be properly the grace of Jesus Christ as creates holy love in the heart and causes us to act… and also that the grace whereby the heart of man is touched by the illumination of the Holy Ghost is not, strictly speaking, the grace of Christ, and that the interior grace of Christ is not really given to him who resists it." Thus the Church affirms the existence of efficacious grace while maintaining that it is not the only grace.

Moreover, this dogma of the existence of efficacious grace is confirmed by theological argument for it is de fide that no act conducive to salvation can be performed without grace, and no man can persevere without grace (Council of Orange; Denz., no. 182). But experience proves that many acts conducive to salvation are performed and many men persevere in the accomplishment of salutary acts. Therefore grace is given which achieves its effect and which is therefore rightly called efficacious. We shall consider below, in explaining the Thomistic doctrine of efficacious grace, the texts of Sacred Scripture which refer to this grace.

The second point of the Church's doctrine on efficacious grace is that, with it, liberty, not only from coercion but from necessity, remains, as required for merit. Cf. Hugon, De gratia, p. 339. This can be drawn from the condemnation of Predestinationism (Denz., no. 317): "We have a free will for good, anticipated and assisted by grace, and we have a free will for evil, devoid of grace." Likewise in the condemnation of Calvinism by the Council of Trent (Sess. VI, chap. 7, Denz., no. 797): "freely assenting to and cooperating with the same grace"; and again (ibid., can. 4, Denz., no. 814): "If anyone should say that the free will of man, moved and stimulated by God, in no wise cooperates by assenting to the encouragement and invitation of God, whereby he disposes himself and prepares to receive the grace of justification, and further, that he cannot refuse if he so wills, but, as if he were something lifeless, does not act at all, but merely keeps himself in a passive state, let him be anathema." Similarly, against the third proposition of Jansen (Denz., no. 1094) it is declared that "for meriting and demeriting, liberty is required both from constraint and from necessity."

This dogma is confirmed by the following theological argument. Faith teaches that glory is conferred upon merit. (Councils of Orange, Denz., no. 191; Trent, nos. 809, 842.) But merit is an act which proceeds from liberty and efficacious grace. Therefore the coexistence of liberty and eficacious

grace is a fundamental truth. Hence St. Augustine says: “He who made thee without thy help, does not justify thee without thy help” (Sermon 15 de Verb. Apost., chap. II, no. 13; PL, XXXVIII, 923).

These two dogmas on truly and merely suflicient grace and on efficacious grace are wonderfully coordinated in the proposition quoted above from Bossuet which expresses the Christian idea profoundly: “We must admit two graces of which the one leaves our will without any excuse before God, while the other does not permit it to glory in itself.”

CHAPTER VI

SUFFICIENT GRACE

In treating this question we should always keep before our eyes the following texts.

“God does not command the impossible, but by commanding He teaches thee both to do what thou canst and to ask what thou canst not, and He helps thee that thou mayest be able” (St. Augustine, quoted at the Council of Trent, Denz., no. 804).

“Christ is the propitiation for our sins, for some efficaciously, but for all sufficiently, since the price of His blood is sufficient for the salvation of all” (St. Thomas on I Tim. 23, and elsewhere).

“The help of grace is twofold: one, indeed, accompanies the power; the other, the act. But God gives the power, infusing the virtue and grace whereby man is made capable and apt for the operation; whereas He confers the operation itself according as He works in us interiorly, moving and urging us to good” (St. Thomas on Ephes. 3:7).

1. VARIOUS THEOLOGICAL SYSTEMS WITH REGARD TO SUFFICIENT AND EFFICACIOUS GRACE

Generally speaking, there are two systems. The first is held by those who declare efficacious grace to be intrinsically efficacious, that is, from the very intrinsic force of grace which of itself and with us infallibly produces consent saving free will. They consequently insist upon a real distinction, before consent, between efficacious and sufficient grace. The Thomists and Augustinians accept this view; but they are divided according as they explain “intrinsically efficacious” as signifying: by moral motion only, as pleasure is victorious, which the Augustinians hold, or as signifying also: by predetermining physical premotion, saving free will however; this is the

position of Thomists. Cf. the synopsis. Another general system is that of the theologians of the Society of Jesus, who deny that efficacious grace is intrinsically efficacious since, as they declare, intrinsically efficacious grace deprives man of his liberty. In this major, as Del Prado shows, they are in agreement with Protestants and Jansenists. For these heretics say that intrinsically efficacious grace takes away liberty; but grace efficaciously moving one toward the good is intrinsically efficacious; therefore freedom from necessity is not required in order to merit, but only freedom from force.

The theologians of the Society of Jesus agree with these in the major and distinguish the minor, thus: intrinsically efficacious grace takes away freedom; but freedom from necessity is required in order to merit; therefore grace is not intrinsically efficacious but only extrinsically so, that is, on account of our consent foreseen by mediate knowledge. We, on the other hand, disagree with the heretics in the major, that is, in the very basic principle by which the problem is solved: whether God can, gently and firmly, in other words, infallibly, move our will to this free act rather than to another. To this fundamental question we reply in the affirmative; the heretics, however, deny it, and with them the Molinists and Congruists. It is clear from this how greatly Thomism differs from Calvinism and Jansenism; the difference appears in our rejection of the five propositions of Jansen; cf. Billuart, De gratia, diss. V, a. 2, §2: seven differences between Thomism and Jansenism.

Two synopses are presented: the first for the systems which admit intrinsically efficacious grace, the second for those which hold grace to be extrinsically efficacious; in the third place will be added the middle ground of the eclectics.

The last opinion which practically seems to be good, theoretically has all the difficulties of both Molinism and Thomism; nor is it so easy for prayer to possess all the required conditions even for impetratory force. It should be remarked that, before Molina, almost all the traditional theologians taught that grace was intrinsically efficacious, except a few such as the very small perversely inclined minority among the Dominicans, among them Durandus and Catharinus, who invented Molinism before Molina. The true sense of St. Alphonsus' doctrine is a disputed question, but Father Jansen (Revue thomiste, 1903, p. 341) maintains that St. Alphonsus in no wise

favored Molinism but rather admitted intrinsically efficacious grace for all acts conducive to salvation.

The theologians of the Society of Jesus are divided among themselves, depending on whether they are pure Molinists or Congruists after the fashion of Suarez. Molina, at the end of the sixteenth century, taught (cf. Concordia, quaest. 14, a. 13; disp. 40, pp. 230, 459): “Whether sufficient help is efficacious or inefficacious depends on the will of him to whom it is given. That is, no graces are given except those sufficient in themselves, but they are made efficacious by the consent of the human will foreseen by mediate knowledge. (Cf. Concordia, index under “Auxilium,” and the text, pp. 230, 459, 462, 565.) Moreover, Molina holds that “One who is aided by less help from grace can rise, while another with greater help does not rise but may persevere in his obduracy” (p. 565). Therefore before our consent, sufficient grace and efficacious grace do not really differ, either physically or morally. But God predestined to glory those whom He foreknew, by mediate knowledge, would consent with their innate free will to the grace offered to all and would persevere therein, if placed in such and such circumstances.

Hence gratuitous predestination, being gratuitous, is not peculiar either to glory or to grace, but to favorable circumstances. For example, God decreed to place Peter in favorable circumstances where He foresaw Peter would consent to the grace offered, and

He decreed to place Judas in circumstances where He foresaw that Judas would not3 consent to the grace offered. But, according to this theory, the grace offered to Peter is4 not of itself greater than the grace offered to Judas, even if it is a question of the interior grace offered at the last moment of their careers. It is a moral motion with simultaneous indifferent concurrence. However, the gratuity of predestination is saved by the divine choice of circumstances. Lessius retains this teaching of Molina.

Molina holds (Concordia, pp. 546, 548) that if this doctrine had been known in the fifth century, “from the opinion of Augustine, so many of the faithful would not have been disturbed.” (Cf. Salmant., De gratia, disp. V, dub. VII, no. 173.) This doctrine seemed an innovation to many and was a cause of displeasure, as Billuart relates (De gratia, diss. V, a. 6); the Thomists disputed it before Clement VIII and Paul V, as bordering on Semi-Pelagianism, and their accusation was pursued for ten years in the famous debates de Auxiliis. Nor were the Thomists alone in attacking this doctrine

of Molina; so, even among Jesuit theologians, did St. Robert Bellarmine, De gratia et libero arbitrio, Bk. I, chap. 12 (cf. Del Prado, III, 373), Henry Henriquez in two judgments, dated 1594 and 1597 respectively, and Mariana, De regimine Societatis, chap. 4. Hence the Society of Jesus, which supported Molina's defense in the Congregationes de Auxiliis, after more mature deliberation on the matter, moderated the system of this author and abandoned it as it stood, taking up the advocacy of the Congruism of Suarez "as more conformable with the teaching of St. Augustine and St. Thomas."

It is expressly declared in these very terms by a decree of the Most Reverend Claude Aquaviva, General of the Society of Jesus, in 1613. This very celebrated decree is quoted by the Jesuits, Tanner, de Regnon (Banez and Molina), and by Billuart (op. cit.). The distinction between Molinism and Congruism appears clearly in the decree. Thus, Father Claude Aquaviva declares: "We ordain and command that in propounding the efficacy of divine grace . . . our fathers should in the future explicitly teach that between the grace which has an effect of itself, called "efficacious," and that which is termed "sufficient," the difference is not so much as regards second act, since it still obtains its effect by the use of free will possessed of cooperating grace, nor likewise the other, but in first act itself, which, assuming a knowledge of the conditionals, on account of God's disposition and intention of most certainly effecting good in us, by His own activity selects those means and confers them in the way and at the time when He sees the effect will be produced infallibly, whereas He would have foreseen these as inefficacious under other circumstances. Wherefore, something more is always contained, morally, in efficacious than in sufficient grace, both by reason of its benefit and with respect to first act; and thus God effects that we may act of ourselves, not so much because He gives grace by which we are able to act. The same may be said of perseverance which, without any doubt, is a gift of God."

So writes the Most Reverend General Aquaviva, whose decree was confirmed by the seventh general Congregation of the Society of Jesus, in the year 1616, at which Muzio Vitelleschi was elected presiding General. He declared that Father Aquaviva held efficacious grace to differ from sufficient grace in first act, not physically but morally, by reason of greater congruous benefits. This decree of Father Aquaviva was subsequently confirmed at the ninth general Congregation of the Society of Jesus, in

1651, under General Picolomini. At present, however, the theologians of the Society are actually free to choose either of the two opinions.

Otherwise all the theologians of the Society agree in this matter, that they should not return to the infallible, intrinsic efficacy of grace, that is, as coming from divine omnipotence. And Congruism is therefore only whitewashed Molinism, for even in the former, ultimately, grace is infallibly efficacious, not because God so wills, but because man wills it to be efficacious. Hence God is always regarded as a created cause, urging and attracting, as a friend persuades a friend to choose the good. Whereas God is in reality infinitely more powerful than my most beloved friend to persuade me, more so than the guardian angels, or the highest angels capable of being created, and God does not only move by attracting objectively, but interiorly by contact with the will from within, inasmuch as He is closer to it than it is to itself, as we shall see.

This suffices for an explanation of the system of these theologians. Let us now proceed to the proof of the Thomistic opinion: 1. with respect to sufficient grace, that is, in what sense it is to be accepted; 2. with respect to efficacious grace: whether it is efficacious intrinsically and by physical premotion not ultimately determinable by us. We shall examine the objections to both theses.

2. IN WHAT SENSE SUFFICIENT GRACE IS TO BE ACCEPTED AND HOW IT IS DIVIDED

Conclusion. Sufficient grace is that which confers upon man the power of doing good, beyond which he requires another grace, namely, efficacious, that he may do good. (Cf. Lemos, Panoplia, Vol. IV, Part 11, p. 36; Gonet, De voluntate Dei, disp. IV, no. 147; John of St. Thomas, De gratia, d. 24; the Salmanticenses, Gotti, Billuart.)

The first part is proved, since it must be admitted that grace which gives the power to do good is given even to those who do not do good. For this is a dogma of faith defined, as we have seen, in the condemnation of the first proposition of Jansen (Denz., no. 1092). The commandments would be impossible to those who, in fact, do not keep them. (Cf. St. Thomas on the Epistle to the Ephesians, 3:7.)

The second part of the conclusion is proved as follows:

God is the first cause of salvation and of that which is peculiar to the affair of salvation.

But the salutary action, as distinct from the potentiality of doing good, is that which is peculiar to the affair of salvation. Therefore, beyond sufficient grace, which gives the power of doing good, efficacious grace is required, which causes us to perform the good action. (Cf. Ia, q. 109, a. I.)

Otherwise, and this is the refutation of Molinism, the greatest activity of all, namely, the passage into a free, supernatural act, would belong exclusively to the free will and not to God. Thus, what is greatest in the affair of salvation would not derive from the author of salvation; from God would proceed only the unstable sufficient grace which effects nothing but an indeliberate motion. God would wait upon our will for our consent, which seems to be contrary to the Council of Orange (Denz., no. 177): "If anyone maintains that God waits upon our will to cleanse us from sin, and does not rather acknowledge that even our willingness to be cleansed is brought about in us through the infusion and operation of the Holy Ghost, he resists the you both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will" (Phil. 2:13).

The Molinists admit, of course, against the Semi-Pelagians, prevenient grace, but an unstable prevenient grace, no greater in one who is converted than in another who persevers in obduracy, and therefore it still remains that, according to this theory, God waits upon our consent and does not produce it. The foregoing argument is quite certain; but that its conclusiveness may appear even more clearly, let us examine the force of both the major and the minor.

The major is evident from reason according as God is the supreme, universal first cause of all being and act. Moreover it is contained in revelation: "The salvation of the just is from the Lord" (Ps. 36:39); "Salvation is of the Lord: and Thy blessing is upon Thy people" (Ps. 3:9); "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?" (Ps. 26:1); "My God is…my protector and the horn of my salvation" (Ps. 17:3); "Attend unto my help, O Lord, the God of my salvation" (Ps. 37:23); "O Lord, Lord, the strength of my salvation: Thou hast overshadowed my head in the day of battle" (Ps. 139:8); "The Lord . . . is become my salvation" (Ps. 117:14); "Neither is there salvation in any other" (Acts 4:12); "It is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth" (Rom. 1:16); "Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or

distress or famine or nakedness or danger or persecution or the sword? . . . But in all these things we overcome, because of Him that hath loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities nor powers nor things present nor things to come nor might nor height nor depth nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:35-39). Cf. St. Thomas' commentary on the words of our Lord, "Without Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5), and "Have confidence, I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

From all of these and many other texts of Sacred Scripture it is evident that God is the author of salvation. This is the very expression of St. Paul to the Hebrews (2:10): "For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, who had brought many children into glory, to perfect the author of their salvation, by His passion." Hence the title often occurs in the liturgy: "O Lord, the author of salvation"; for example, in the second prayer of the Office of the Dead: "O God, bestower of pardon and author of human salvation, we beseech Thy clemency" (at least, in the Dominican rite); and again: "O God, the Creator and Redeemer of all the faithful." Our major is therefore incontrovertible; that is: "That which is peculiar to the affair of salvation ought to proceed from God, the author of salvation."

The minor is equally certain: that which is peculiar to the affair of salvation is not the power to do good, but the actual consenting to the good and the good act itself. Thus our Lord says (Matt. 7:21): "Not everyone that saith to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doth the will of My Father in heaven." And in Ezechiel we read: "I will cause you to walk in My commandments, and to keep My judgments, and do them" (36:27). Therefore the conclusion follows: Beyond sufficient grace, which gives the power of doing good, is required efficacious grace, which actuates us to perform that good. And this is admitted by all theologians except the pure Molinists, even by the Congruists who hold that, beyond sufficient grace, congruous grace is required, differing not physically but morally in first act, that is, before consent. Moreover, Molina does not seem to observe canon g of the Council of Orange (Denz., no. 182): "Whatever good we do, God operates in us and with us that we may operate." Hence a certain grace is given which confers on us, not only the power to act, but the very act itself. Nor does Molinism seem to respect the words of the Council of Trent (Sess. VI, chap. 13, Denz., no. 806): "For, unless men themselves fall short of His grace, God as He began a good

work (by sufficient grace), so does He perfect it, working both the willing and the accomplishment" (Phil. 2:13). Likewise, Denz., no. 832. For Molina, God does not effect the willing and accomplishment except by simultaneous concurrence, and therefore what is peculiar to the business of salvation does not derive from God, namely, the good determination itself, and what may be in this man rather than in another who is equally tempted and equally assisted.

There are several confirmations of the Thomistic conclusion.

First confirmation. God provides proportionately in the same way for the supernatural as for the natural order. But in the natural order the power of acting and the impulsion to act are differentiated. Therefore in the supernatural order sufficient grace, which confers the power of doing good, and efficacious grace, which causes us to do it, are likewise distinct. (Cf. Ia IIae, q. 19, a. I.) Moreover, in the natural order, as stated in this article, however perfect a power may be, it never passes into act without the efficacy of divine motion. Therefore in the same way, grace which bestows a power, however completely sufficient it may be, never passes into act without efficacious grace.

Second confirmation. (Cf. Gotti's commentary, IX, 128.) Otherwise it would follow that those who have such sufficient grace should not pray to God for further grace, since it is supposed that for performing a good act, nothing more is required on the part of God beyond this sufficient grace.

Third confirmation. It would follow that efficacious grace would not be necessary for doing good and persevering in a good act for which sufficient grace gives the power; or else that man could render sufficient grace efficacious without any further help from God; and consequently not from grace would a doer of good be distinguished from a doer of evil, equally assisted, but rather from himself. For he would himself, without any further help on the part of God, have rendered sufficient grace efficacious, whereas another man would not have done so. This contradicts the words of St. Paul: "For who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received?" (I Cor. 4:7.)

Therefore St. Robert Bellarmine, when he examined the opinion of those who hold that it is within the power of man to make grace efficacious, which would otherwise of itself be only sufficient, writes as follows (De gratia et libero arbitrio, Bk. I, chap. 12): "This theory is entirely alien to the opinion of St. Augustine and, in my judgment, even to the meaning of Holy

Scripture.” For St. Augustine declares in his book on the predestination of the saints (chap. 8): “Grace (manifestly efficacious grace) is not rejected by a hard heart, since of itself it softens the heart.” Whenever efficacy is attributed to grace, not to the human will, Tanner expresses the same view of Molina’s opinion. Fourth confirmation. Otherwise the distinction between sufficient and efficacious grace would not be justified as given by Augustine (De correptione et gratia, chap. 12), between merely sufficient, inefficacious grace (“help without which we cannot,” conferring the power) and efficacious, not merely sufficient, grace (“help whereby,” conferring the act). This distinction, as we have seen, is based on Sacred Scripture: “For it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish according to His good will” (Phil. 2:13); “I will cause you to walk in My commandments, and to keep My judgments, and do them” (Ezech. 36:27); here it is a question of efficacious grace. On the contrary, sufficient grace is referred to when St. Stephen says: “You always resist the Holy Ghost” (Acts 7:51); and similarly: “I called, and you refused: I stretched out My hand, and there was none that regarded” (Prov. 1:24).

The division of sufficient grace

Sufficient grace is manifold and involves the following.

1. External helps, such as external revelation, the preaching of the faith, exhortation, example, miracles, salutary trials, benefits, and indeed a certain disposition of events ordained by a special providence toward salvation.

2. Internal helps, which are either permanent (such as infused habits, for instance, sanctifying grace, the virtues and gifts) or transient (such as supernatural movements which excite in us indeliberate acts, pious thoughts and aspirations). These helps are infallibly eflicacious for producing those indeliberate acts, and sufficient for the de-liberate act for which they give the proximate power. These various helps are extremely useful; it is obvious that they render our powers noble and elevated; they are truly sufficient in their order, just as the intellectual faculty is for understanding; and they really confer the proximate power. But they are called merely sufficient with respect to salutary acts which, on account of man’s culpable resistance, are not performed. Indeed, as has been said, grace which is termed sufficient with respect to a perfect act, for example, contrition, is infallibly efficacious with respect to an imperfect act, such as attrition.

Sufficient help is divided into remote and proximate. Proximate help is that by which a person can immediately perform a good work, such as the

infused habits with respect to their acts, and with still greater reason indeliberate devout thoughts and aspirations inspired by God and inclining toward consent to the good. Remote sufficient help is that by which a person is not yet capable of the act, but can do something easier, for instance, pray, which, if he does it well, will enable him to act, for example, to overcome temptation. The Council of Trent (Sess. VI, chap. II) indicates this difference drawn from St. Augustine: “God does not command the impossible, but by commanding He teaches thee to do what thou canst (proximately suffcient help) and to ask for what thou canst not (remotely sufficient help.)”

Furthermore, sufficient help is divided into conferred help and offered sufficient help, which we would certainly receive were there not an obstacle. Sufficient help is also either immediate and personal or mediate, for instance, conferred upon the parents for their children who are incapable of receiving personal sufficient help; thus the parents might receive from God the pious thought of the necessity of having their children baptized and not do so. Hence truly and merely sufficient help does not consist in some one, indivisible, definite thing, but in many helps, whether external or internal, permanent or transitory, whereby a man has the proximate power of doing good or at least of praying, and nevertheless resists it.

All of this is commonly taught by Thomists; but in addition reference should be made to the opinion of Gonzalez de Albeda, O.P., in his Commentary on Ia, q. 19, a. 8, disp. 58, sect. 2, Naples, 1637, 11, 85. Gonzalez holds that sufficient grace gives the ultimate completion to the power, or proximate power in readiness to consent when God calls (in fact, it impels toward second act, although it does not remove the impediments to this act); on the contrary, efficacious grace simultaneously moves toward second act and removes all impediments, and hence it is not resisted.

Thus Gonzalez still preserves a real distinction between sufficient grace, impelling toward second act, and efficacious grace, surmounting obstacles; and he explains this distinction, not as residing in our free will, but before our consent, on the part of God Himself assisting us. He says (ibid.): “I consider that it ought to be held without doubt that the created will, only sufficiently helped by God, possesses the ultimate fullness of active power and the prevenient concurrence of God. . . . It is otherwise, however, with the created will efficaciously assisted; for the ultimate fullness in this latter case (efficaciously assisted) establishing it finally in first act is more

particular and extrinsically efficacious with greater power to incline the will to consent here and now.”

Other texts of Father Gonzalez in the same connection should be consulted. We have examined this theory at length in another work. Gonzalez, then, maintains the principle of predilection, namely, no one would be better than another if he were not better loved by God. Cf. below, § 4, for the value of this opinion; and the excursus on efficacious grace, chap. I.

3. REFUTATION OF OBJECTIONS AGAINST THE THOMISTIC THESIS OF SUFFICIENT GRACE

Objection. Some have objected, declaring this grace to be useless; for that grace is useless which no one ever uses. But no one ever uses sufficient grace, as defined by Thomists. Therefore this grace is useless.

Reply. I distinguish the major: that it is useless of itself, denied, since of itself it confers a real power which is truly useful; that it is useless accidentally, on account of a defect in man, granted; in other words, if man does not use this sufficient grace, it is not the fault of grace, but of man.

I counterdistinguish the minor: no one ever uses sufficient grace by reduplication as merely sufficient, granted, and this is so by reason of our resistance permitted by God; that no one ever uses sufficient grace specifically, in that it confers the power of doing good, denied; for we often make good use of infused habits which are in themselves sufficient. Similarly in the natural order, although the power in plants of bearing fruit may often remain ineffectual, on account of accidental defects, it is not thereby rendered useless, since in other plants it does produce fruit.

I insist. But sufficient grace as defined by Thomists is even pernicious, as the following proves. Grace by which a man is made worse is pernicious. But man is made worse by sufficient grace in the Thomistic sense, for, if he lacked it, he would not sin, whereas, possessing it, he so many times sins. Therefore this grace is pernicious. Hence some used to say: From the sufficient grace of the Thomists, deliver us, O Lord.

First reply. This argument proves too much, for in the same way it can be proved that reason is pernicious, since he who lacks it does not sin, and he who possesses it sins.

Second reply. I distinguish the major: grace by which man is made worse on account of a defect in this grace is pernicious, granted; but on account of a perverse will, denied. I counterdistinguish the minor and deny the conclusion and its consequence. For it is utterly false to say that man is made worse by sufficient grace considered in itself, since through habitual grace which is sufficient he is made pleasing to God and capable of acting supernaturally.

I insist. No one, not even the Church itself, asks God for sufficient grace in the Thomistic sense. Therefore it is not a good.

Reply. I distinguish the antecedent: no one asks for it as merely sufficient, by reduplication, since that would be asking God to permit us to decline from grace, granted. That no one asks for it taken specifically and entitatively, denied; since we ask for the power of doing good, for instance, faith, hope, and charity.

Further objection is made to the novelty of this conception. The aforesaid real distinction between sufficient and efficacious grace is not derived from St. Thomas; it was invented by Bañez to avoid censure after the condemnation of Jansenism.

Reply. We have seen that the aforesaid division is also found long before Bañez and even before St. Thomas, in Augustine, De correptione et gratia, chap. 12, as “help without which” conferring power, and “help whereby” producing the good act.

With respect to the term “Bañezianism,” see Del Prado, De gratia et libero arbitrio, III, 427-59, for a discussion of whether Bañezianism is not really a farce invented by the Molinists. He replies in the afhrmative and proves that this little diversion was staged by the Molinists to avoid the appearance of any opposition between Molinism and St. Thomas himself, declaring that their teaching was contrary to Bañez, not to St. Thomas. Molina himself proceeded with more straightforwardness, stating expressly (Concordia, p. 152) that he rejected the divine application of secondary causes as laid down by St. Thomas. And again (pp. 546, 548) he admits that he is abandoning the teaching of St. Augustine and St. Thomas on predestination, which was a source of anxiety to so many of the faithful.

Hence Cardinal Gonzales, O.P., in his philosophical work, Theodicea, chap. 4, a. 3, writes as follows: “Some, who strive to cast a light on the darkness, are not afraid to declare that St. Thomas is considering only simultaneous concurrence and not really physical premotion. In which

matter, indeed, Molina and certain other of his disciples act more honorably and becomingly when they frankly acknowledge that, in this matter, they depart from St. Thomas." This admission is made, together with Molina, by the Coimbrian school, by Bellarmine, Tolet, and Suarez, whom I have quoted elsewhere (God, II,154).

Moreover, it is clear from many texts of St. Thomas that he admitted a twofold grace: first, grace which gives the power of doing good; second, grace which makes us do good. Cf. Ia IIae, q. 106, a. 2 ad 2: "The grace of the New Testament . . . to the extent that it is sufficient of itself gives help to avoid sin but it does not confirm a man in good so that he is not able to sin . . . and hence if, after receiving the grace of the New Testament, a man should sin, he is deserving of greater punishment for not using the help given to him." Again, in his commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians (chap. 3, lect. 2): "God gives the power by infusing virtue and grace through which man is made capable and apt for action. But He confers the action itself according as He works within us interiorly impelling and urging us toward the good…in the measure that His power effects in us both to will and to accomplish on account of His good will."

Likewise in Ia IIae, q. 109, a. I: "The act of the intellect and of any created being depends upon God in two respects: I. inasmuch as it has received from Him the form by which it operates; 2. according as it is moved to the action by Him"; and further in article two: "Man…requires a power superadded to his natural power on two accounts, namely, that he may be healed and, beyond this, that he may perform good works of supernatural virtue. See also ibid., a. 9 and 10; and IIa IIae, q. 137, a. 4; De peseverantia; Ia IIae, q. 113, a. 7 and 10. At least it may be said that St. Thomas always distinguishes the infused habits, which give the power of doing supernaturally good works, and actual grace which confers the working of good itself; indeed he distinguishes between good thoughts which come from God and consent to good which presupposes greater assistance."

A third objection is raised as follows. That grace is not sufficient beyond which another is required. But beyond sufficient grace in the Thomistic sense another is required. Therefore this sufficient grace of the Thomists does not suflice.

Reply. I distinguish the major: this grace is not sufficient in its own genus, denied; in every genus, granted.

I grant the minor, and distinguish the conclusion: does not suffice in its own order, denied; in every order, granted. This distinction was made long before Bañez by Ferrariensis.

Explanation. This is the specifically philosophical and theological sense of the term "sufficient"; a thing is really sufficient in its own order, even though another cause may be required in another order. Thus, of the four causes, any one of which is sufficient in its own order, but requires the concurrence of the others in order actually to operate; for example, we generally say with reference to the order of final cause: this motive is sufficient for free action, and yet there does not follow an infallible choice, for which the concurrence is required of both the intelligence proposing the motive as an object and will actually willing it. Indeed, the stronger motive at the end of the deliberation seems so sufficient that the Determinists after the fashion of Leibnitz deny the liberty of indifference. In fact, however, this sufficient motive gives, on the part of the object, only a proximate potentiality, and so likewise does sufficient grace, which is either a habit of charity or of some other virtue, or an indeliberate pious aspiration toward a good conducive to salvation. And just as this motive is truly sufficient, although it may not incline one infallibly to act, so it is with this grace. We have developed this at greater length elsewhere (God, II, 368-79). On the contrary, the Megarians held that power does not exist without act; consequently a teacher, not actually teaching, would lose the power of teaching.

We should say nowadays that heat is sufficient to cause burning, although it must first be applied to combustible matter; and bread, similarly, is sufficient for nourishment, although it must further be masticated, swallowed, and assimilated. The intellect is sufficient for understanding, but beyond this its object must be correctly presented to it; for instance, the doctrine of St. Thomas must be presented to it correctly, and not according to the interpretation of the Molinists; otherwise the student will not understand although he may have sufficient intelligence. The passion of Christ is sufficient to save us, but, in addition, its merits must be applied to us, for example, in the sacrament of baptism. Hence St. Thomas says (IIIa, q. 61, a. I ad 3): "The passion of Christ is a sufficient cause of man's salvation, but it does not therefore follow that the sacraments are not necessary for salvation, since they operate by virtue of the passion of Christ." Again, he declares (De malo, q. 6, a. I ad 15): "Not every cause

necessarily produces its effect, even if it is a sufficient cause, on account of the fact that a cause may be impeded." Thus, natural causes produce their effect only in the greater number of cases.

Therefore sufficient grace is really sufficient in its own order, since it confers the proximate power of doing good. Indeed it cannot be more sufficient; nor is the grace admitted by Molina any more sufficient, nor does it manifest the mercy of God any more. Rather, on the contrary, Molina minimizes the mercy and gifts of God by denying that efficacious is distinct from sufficient grace; for thus God is not the true author of salvation to that extent. (Cf. Bossuet, Elévations, eighteenth week, fifteenth elevation.)

I insist. For observing in act the divine commandments, that grace is insufficient which lacks something not in our power. But the sufficient grace of the Thomists is wanting in efficacious grace, which is not in our power. Therefore this sufficient grace of the Thomists is insufficient for the actual observance of the commandments, for which it ought to be sufficient, since God commands us not merely to be able to observe His precepts, but to observe them in fact. St. Thomas raised a similar objection to his own opinion (De veritate, q. 24, a. 14, objection 2).

First reply. I distinguish the major: lacks something on account of our negligence, denied; otherwise, granted.

Second reply. I distinguish the major: efficacious grace is not in our power, as our own effect, granted; as a cause offered to us in sufficient grace, denied. I counterdistinguish the minor in rhe same way and deny the logical sequence and the conclusion.

Explanation. God, to the extent that it lies with Him, is prepared to give efficacious grace to all who have sufficient grace, and does not deny it to any man except through his own fault, at least by a priority of nature, if not antecedent in time. Hence a defect in operation by no means proceeds from an insufficiency of help, but only from negligence or a defect of free will, which resists it and sets up obstacles. Even the more rigid Thomists agree to this, such as Lemos, (Panoplia gratiae, Vol. IV, Bk. IV, Part II, tr. 3, chap. 2); his very words are quoted by Billuart (De gratia sufficienti, diss. V, a. 4).

However, the reason for this is, as Lemos himself declares (ibid., chap. 6), that "God, by bestowing sufficient help, offers us, in it, efficacious grace; but since man resists sufficient grace, he is deprived of the efficacious grace which was offered to him." Likewise Alvarez, (De auxiliis, Bk. XI, disp. 113, no. 10, and disp. 80 ad 4); and this is entirely

conformed to the teaching of St. Thomas, who says expressly (III C. Gentes, chap. 159): “God, to the extent that it lies with Him, is ready to give grace to all, for He wills all to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (I Tim., 2); but they alone are deprived of grace who present some obstacle to grace within themselves. In the same way, since the sun illuminates the world, the blame is imputed to one who shuts his eyes if some evil results therefrom, although he cannot see unless preceded by the light of the sun.” St. Thomas explains this at greater length in Ia, d. 40, q. 4, a. 2, and Ia IIae, q. 112, a. 3 ad 2: “The first cause of a defect of grace lies in us, but the first cause of the bestowal of grace is in God, according to the words of Osee (139): ‘Destruction is thy own, O Israel: thy help is only in Me.’” And again, De veritate, q. 24, a. 14 ad 2: “From man arises the negligence which accounts for his not having grace whereby he can keep the commandments.”

Indeed, this reply is fully in accord with the Council of Trent, which declared (Sess. VI, chap. 13, Denz., no. 806): “If men did not fail His grace, God would perfect the good work, just as He began it, bringing about both the willing and the accomplishing”; also ibid., chap. II.

Therefore the sufficient grace of the Thomists is not, as their adversaries maintain, a power, sterile in itself, from which God, according to His good pleasure, withholds the outpouring necessary for reducing it to act, but rather, in sufficient grace God offers us efficacious grace.

Doubt. How is efficacious grace offered to us in sufficient grace?

Reply. As the fruit is offered to us in the flower, although, if a hailstorm occurs, the flower is destroyed and the fruit does not appear which would have developed from the flower, under the continued influence of the sun and of the moisture in the plant, so is efficacious grace offered to us in sufficient grace, although, if resistance or sin occurs, sufficient grace is rendered sterile and efficacious grace is not given.

I insist. But this is only a metaphor.

Reply. It is not a mere metaphor, but a strictly proportionate analogy; that is, so far as in both cases an act is contained in its correlative potency. For sufficient grace is indeed the principle of a good work, virtually containing it, and would in fact accomplish it (under the continuous influence of God, as the flower under the continuous influence of the sun), did not man, by his defective liberty, resist it. Thus a good seed, consigned to the earth, bears fruit unless it is prevented by some deficiency in the soil. And hence

sufficient grace is the seed of the gospel referred to by our Lord in the parable of the sower (Matt. 13:3-9): “Behold the sower went forth to sow. And while he soweth some fell by the wayside, and the birds of the air came and ate them up. And other some fell upon stony ground, where they had not much earth. . . . And others fell among thorns: and the thorns grew up and choked them. And others fell upon good ground: and they brought forth fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixtyfold, and some thirtyfold. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.” And again, in the same chapter (13:37): “He that soweth the good seed, is the Son (Denz., no. 806) and canon r6, that the singular gift of perseverance, necessary for the act of persevering, is not given to all the just, and this is not in the power of man but only in that of God. Hence the Council already presupposes that there is in all the just a potency for the act of perseverance, although not in all is the efficacious help present which is required on the part of God for the act of perseverance. The Congruists must say the same of congruous grace for persevering in act; indeed, Molina would have to declare something of the same kind with respect to the favorable circumstances in which God decrees to place those whom He has judged will persevere, according to scientiu media, if placed in these circumstances of man. And the field is the world, And the good seed are the children of the kingdom.” (Cf. St. Thomas’ Commentary on Matthew.) Similarly, the seed of glory is habitual grace itself which, as such, is sufficient, that is, as an infused habit. Nor should it be thought that after the supernatural sowing is received into the soul, the increase derives from us and not from God. On the contrary, St. Paul says (I Cor. 3:6-9): “I have planted, Apollo watered, but God gave the increase . . . you are God’s husbandry; you are God’s building.” And again (II Cor. 9:6-15): “He who soweth sparingly, shall also reap sparingly: and he who soweth in blessings, shall also reap blessings. . . . And God is able to make all grace abound in you; that ye always, having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work. As it is written: He hath dispersed abroad, He hath given to the poor; His justice remaineth forever. And He that ministereth seed to the sower, will both give you bread to eat, and will multiply your seed, and increase the growth of the fruits of your justice; that being enriched in all things, you may abound unto all simplicity, which worketh through us thanksgiving to God. . . . Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift.” (Cf. St. Thomas’ Commentary.)

I insist. Nevertheless it seems unjust that to some merely sufficient grace alone is given and to others efficacious grace besides, without which in fact the commandments are not observed.

Reply, from St. Thomas, IIa IIae, q. 2, a. 5 ad I: “Man is held to many things which he cannot do without grace. . . . That help is in fact given to some from on high is an effect of mercy, but that it is not in fact given to others is an effect of justice, as a punishment of preceding sins or at least of original sin, as Augustine says in his book De correptione et gratia.” It is the absolutely free external exercise of justice and mercy, with the mystery of the intimate reconciliation of these infinite perfections in the Deity.

Hence the denial of efficacious grace is an act of justice, inasmuch as it is the punishment for preceding sin, at least with the priority of nature, that is, sin at least in its incipiency. But sin itself presupposes, not indeed as a cause, but as a condition, divine permission. Therefore the divine refusal of grace thus inflicting punishment on account of sin means something more than a simple divine permission of sin or the beginning of sin; for the permission of the incipiency of the first sin has no reason of punishment with respect to any preceding sin, and this incipiency of sin could not occur without divine permission, since if God, at that instant, were to preserve a man in goodness, there would be no sin. But God is not bound to preserve in good forever a creature in itself deficient, and if He were held to this, no sin would ever take place. Cf. Ia IIae, q. 79, a. I, toward the end of the body of the article: “For it happens that God does not grant help to some men for avoiding sin which, if He granted it, they would not sin; but He does all this according to the order of His wisdom and justice since He is wisdom itself and justice itself; hence it is not to be imputed to Him that a person sins, as if He were the cause of sin. In the same way, a pilot is not said to be the cause of a ship’s sinking for the mere reason that he does not steer the ship, unless he relinquishes the steering of it when he can and ought to steer it.” Again, ibid. ad I, and also Ia IIae, q. 109, a. 2 ad 2: “Every created thing needs to be preserved in the good proper to its nature by another; but it can, by itself, fall away from that good.”

I insist. To neglect or resist sufficient grace is not to consent to it or to sin at least by a sin of omission. But in order that a man may not neglect or resist sufficient grace, efficacious grace is required. Therefore man sins because he is deprived of efficacious grace, in other words, from an insufficiency of help.

Reply. I grant the major, and the minor as well, but deny the conclusion, for the real conclusion is: “therefore, in order that a man may not sin, but consent to sufficient grace, efficacious grace is required,” and this is true. (Cf. De malo, q. 3, a. I ad g.) But it is false to say that man sins because he is deprived of efficacious grace; rather, on the contrary, it should be said that he is deprived of efficacious grace because by sinning he resists sufficient grace. For a man to sin, his own defective will suffices, and resistance to sufficient grace always cause, man) the divine denial of efficacious grace; in other words,

God refuses efficacious grace only to one who resists sufficient grace; otherwise there would be an injustice involved. And what on the part of God precedes this resistance is only the divine permission of sin. But this divine permission must not be confused with a denial of efficacious grace, which signifies something more; cf. Summa, Ia, d. 40, q. 4 a. 2: “Since God wills nothing but good, He does not will that man should lack grace (that would be a denial of efficacious grace), except to the extent that it is a good; but that he should lack grace is not a good absolutely. Hence, considered absolutely, this is precedes, at least by a priority of nature (on the part of the material not willed by God. However, it is a good for him to lack grace if he does not will to have it or if he prepares himself carelessly for receiving it, because this is just, and from this aspect it is willed by God.” But God can permit sin on account of a higher good and He is not bound always to preserve in goodness what is itself defective, for it is reasonable that a thing which is in itself deficient should sometimes evince a defection. Therefore the problem is solved according to the words of Osee (13:g) already quoted: “Destruction is thy own, O Israel: thy help is only in Me.” Consult the Thomists, especially on Ia, q. 19, a. 8, concerning the divine decrees, where the objections on the grounds of insufficient help are refuted; for example, Billuart and John of St. Thomas. Moreover, all the foregoing arguments, as well as that which follows, can be thrown back upon the Congruists, or against sufficient grace in the Congruist sense.

I insist. At least the permission of the first sin is formally a denial of the efficacious grace necessary to avoid it. But, according to Thomistic teaching, it depends upon the absolute will of God that He permits the first sin in any one man or angel rather than in another whom God preserves in good.

Therefore, according to this doctrine, the denial of efficacious grace to avoid the first sin would in like manner depend upon the divine will alone, and would not be a punishment presupposing a fault, which is exceedingly severe.

Reply. I deny the major, for the notion of a denial of grace, formally, signifies more than a simple permission of sin, since it includes, in addition, the. punishment due to sin which is at least incipient, which punishment is not implied in the concept of permission of sin, since this latter is entirely antecedent to the sin. Moreover, the beginning of the first sin, from the standpoint of its material cause, precedes the divine denial of efficacious grace, just as "in the order of nature, liberation from sin is prior to the consequence of justifying grace," as St. Thomas declares (Ia IIae, q. 113, a. 8). He there explains further that "on the part of the efficient cause the infusion of grace precedes the remission of sin"; indeed it precedes absolutely, since these two are effects of God and the consideration of the efficient cause prevails absolutely. Whereas, on the contrary, sin as such is a defect proceeding from a defective cause; consequently here the consideration of priority on the part of the material cause, man, prevails; hence, absolutely, the beginning of sin precedes the divine refusal to confer efficacious grace which, as a punishment, differs from the simple divine permission of sin. (Cf. above, the tract on sin, Ia IIae, q. 79, a. I: God is not the cause of sin.)

This whole question had already been very well expounded before the time of Molina and Bañez by Ferrariensis, in his commentary on Bk. III Contra Gentes, chap. 161, no. 4: "Since in the reprobate four elements are found, namely, the permission of the fall into sin, the sin itself, abandonment by God who does not raise him from sin, not pouring out His grace, and the punishment, or damnation. . . . With respect to the sin, reprobation means only foreknowledge, . . . but with respect to the permission, the abandonment to sin by God, and the damnation or punishment, it signifies not only foreknowledge but also causality." (But the punishment of damnation is on account of the foreseen demerits, whereas the permission of the first sin is not.) Ferrariensis declares in the same text: "Although sin is the demeritorious cause of abandonment by God and the disposing cause of eternal punishment, the permission, which exists first in the reprobate, is not the cause of sin, for it does not invest the reprobate

with anything whereby he falls into sin, since he sins with his free will, nor does it remove anything which would withhold him from sin."

Thus it appears that negative reprobation, according to Ferrariensis, precedes the foreseeing of demerits. Cf. Ia IIae, q. 79, a. I, the end of the conclusion: "It happens that God does not grant help to some men for avoiding sin which, if He granted it, they would not commit.

But He does all this according to the order of His wisdom and justice; . . . hence it is not to be imputed to Him that a person sins, as if He were the cause of sin." The universal foreseer permits for the sake of a greater good that a deficient cause should sometimes fall into defect. (Cf. Ia, q. 23, a. 3 and a. 5 ad 3.)

I insist. If an affirmation is the cause of an affirmation, a negation is the cause of negation. But the bestowal of efficacious grace is the cause of fulfilling the commandment and of nonresistance to it. Therefore the withdrawal of efficacious grace is the cause of not fulfilling the commandment, even in the beginning of the first sin.

Reply. I distinguish the major: if it is the only cause, granted; thus the presence of the pilot is the cause of the ship's safety, and his absence when he ought to be on duty is the cause of shipwreck. If there are two causes, of which the first is indefectible but not bound to prevent an evil, and the other is deficient: denied, for then this second cause alone is responsible for the defection.

St. Thomas proposed this objection to himself in De malo, 4.3, a. I, objection 8: "If grace is the cause of merit, then contrariwise the withdrawal of grace is the cause of sin. But it is God who withdraws grace. Therefore God is the cause of sin."

Reply (ad 8): "God as He is in Himself communicates Himself to all according to their capacity; hence if a thing is deficient in the participation of this goodness, this is because there is to be found in the thing itself some impediment to this divine participation . . . according as [a man] keeps his back turned to a light which itself does not turn away, as Denis Dionysius says in the Book of the Divine Names, chap. 4."

So that a man fails on his own account and he is sufficient unto himself when it comes to failing; but he requires the divine help preserving him in good in order to persevere in it. To be preserved in goodness is a good and proceeds from the source of all good; but to fall away from goodness presupposes only a deficient cause.

Thus, with regard to this objection: it is granted that if efficacious grace were given to a man he would not sin, but it does not follow that he sins for this reason or cause of not being given efficacious grace. The permission of sin is only a condition of sin, not its cause. We must beware of confusing a cause which exerts a positive influence with an indispensible condition which does not exert an influence; otherwise there would be a vicious circle, as when it is said: I believe the Church to be infallible because God revealed this; and I believe God revealed it because it is afirmed by the Church. In the second proposition "because" is not taken in the same sense as in the first, for it does not signify the formal motive of faith, but only the indispensable condition of faith, that is, the infallible proposition of the object of faith.

Similarly, in our present case, the permission of the first sin and not being preserved in good is an indispensable condition of this sin but not its cause, for sin as such requires only a deficient cause. But on the other hand, not sinning or being preserved in good is an effect of the preserving hand of God. Cf. De malo, q. 3, a. I ad 9: "Considering the state of fallen nature, St. Augustine attributes to divine grace the avoidance of any evil whatever that he did not commit," at least that he is preserved in good by God.

In fact, the foregoing objection is found in almost the same terms in St. Thomas, Ia, d. 40, q. 4, a. 2; the third objection: "He who by his presence is the cause of the ship's safety, that is, the pilot, is by his absence the cause of the ship's danger. But God is by His presence in the soul the cause of grace. Therefore by His absence He is the cause of its obduracy."

Reply. "An effect does not follow unless all its causes work together; whereas from the defection of one of them the negation of the effect results. Therefore I say that the cause of grace as agent, is God Himself, and as recipient is the soul by way of subject and matter. . . . Nor is it essential that every defect should arise on the part of the agent; it can occur on the part of the recipient, as it does in this proposition."

Hence the major of the preceding objection, (i.e., if an affirmation is the cause of an affirmation, a negation is the cause of a negation) is valid when there is but one cause, which is bound to act, as the pilot by his presence is the cause of the ship's safety and by his absence, when he is bound to be present, the cause of its danger. But this major is not true if there are two causes of which the first is indefectible and not bound to prevent every evil

and the second is deficient; for then this latter alone is the deficient cause of its own defection.

Billuart has well said: “These dialectic rules are valid to the extent that all the principles on both sides concur in the same way, not so if another principle is lacking. But in the reception of grace all the principles concur, not however in its negation. In order than an adult should receive grace, two causes must work together: God must will to infuse the grace, and man must will to receive it, since the infusion of grace is a good and a good is produced by the concurrence of all its causes; on the other hand, for man to be wanting in grace, it suffices for one cause to be in default, obviously the unwillingness of man.”

Thus many of Tournely’s objections are solved, as Billuart declares. Tournely held that, from the necessity of the decree and of grace efficacious in itself for individual acts of piety, the sufficient grace of the Thomists is insufficient and the commandments of God are impossible to some men. On the contrary, it is truly sufficient and in it efficacious grace is offered to us, but man himself so resists sufficient grace, by which he could observe the commandments, that he is thus deprived of efficacious grace whereby he would in fact observe them.

I insist. Franzelin thereupon makes an objection which has been recently revived; cf. Franzelin, De Deo uno, Rome, 1876, pp. 458 f., where he declares: “By no explanations can these two statements, affirmed by Gonet in the text cited with regard to God (tr. 4, disp. 8, no. 254), be reconciled: proposition I. ‘Unless a man or an angel previously by nature were to determine himself toward formal sin (which is foreseen by providence), he would not be predetermined by God to the material in sin.’ . . . But I ask, and Gonet himself asks: ‘In what medium God foresees this self-determination of the created will, by nature prior to the divine decree of predetermination (to the material in sin)?’” Gonet offers two answers of which Franzelin considers only the second, which he impugns.

Gonet’s reply is that God foresees the defective determination of the will toward formal sin “in the decree denying the efficacious help to avoid sin”; but this denial has its reason in punishment, which presupposes sin, whereas the divine permission of the fault precedes it. Hence it is better expressed by many Thomists, Billuart among them, who say that God foresees the sin and its beginning in His permissive decree (cf. Father Hugon, De Deo uno, p. 213): “The permissive decree is a sufficient, certain, infallible medium.

For if God wills to permit something, it most certainly will happen, not by causal necessity, but by logical necessity, just as, if God withholds efficacious concurrence, the good effect is not produced (however, the divine permission of sin implies the nonpreservation of the defective will in good, to which preservation God is not bound; otherwise a defective will would never fall into defect). Granting the divine permission of sin, anyone can become good, since man retains his real antecedent power; and he can avoid evil, since the omission of the decree or the permissive decree itself removes none of that real antecedent power; but as a matter of fact, if God wills to permit the evil which He is not bound to prevent, that real power will never be reduced to act. Hence, knowing His permissive decree, God infallibly recognized the deficiency, although He does not cause it. It remains true that the divine refusal of effcacious grace signifies more than the simple permission of sin, more than the nonpreservation in good. Similarly, nonelection, which is merely negative reprobation and is prior to the foreseen demerits, as a will permitting sin, is distinguished from positive reprobation, which inflicts punishment for sin (Ia, q. 23, a. 3). Of course, the divine permission of the first sin does not have the reason of penalty, but the divine permission of the second sin is already a punishment for the first. Gonet had said as much in substance (Clypeus, De scientia Dei, disp. IV, a. 6, no. 195) and indeed St. Thomas himself had enunciated the principle (Ia IIae, q. 79, a. I): “It happens that God (as universal foreseer) does not grant (efficacious) help to some men for avoiding sin which, if He granted it, they would not commit. But He does all this according to the order of His wisdom and justice.”

I insist. (Cf. Gonet, ibid., no. 192.) “The permissive decree cannot have an infallible connection with future sins by reason of non-preservation in good; for otherwise it would follow that the will, left to itself with only general concurrence, would be of itself determined toward evil, and this would be the heresy of the Manichaeans and Lutherans. It would also follow that the human will with general concurrence alone could not perform any morally good work, which is contrary to St. Thomas.” Thus Gonet presents the objection to his own opinion according to Tournely, and the objection has recently been raised again.

Gonet’s reply (ibid., no. 196): Although the permissive decree may thus have an infallible connection with future sin, a consequence not of causality but of logical sequence, “it does not follow, however, that the free will of

man is, of itself and by nature, determined toward evil and sin; not only because by reason of sufficient help it can do good and avoid sin (against the Jansenists), but also because it is one thing for free will to be deficient of itself and by nature and not capable of preserving itself in good according to right reason, on account of God's not preserving it by special means, and another thing for it to be of itself and by nature determined toward evil (as if it were destroyed altogether and not merely weakened).

"In the first case is signified only the deficiency and potentiality for sinning which belong to the rational creature by the very fact that he is made from nothing and is not the rule of his own operations. The second case implies further in the free will a natural determination toward evil, arising from the sin of our first parents. This is the heresy of the Lutherans."

If God were indeed bound to preserve in goodness every will which is deficient in itself, no sin would ever occur, the will of every wayfarer would already be confirmed in good, as was the will of the Blessed Virgin Mary. And since general concurrence is due to nature, but not to any particular individual, man is capable of performing certain natural good works, such as caring for his parents, governing the state. (Cf. Gonet, ibid., and what precedes.)

I insist. But even if God, in this permissive decree, infallibly foresees future sin, He does not infallibly recognize which particular sin it will be.

Reply. I deny that this follows, for by the knowledge of vision God knows that at that particular time such a man so disposed will be in these circumstances, for instance, Peter in the circumstances attending the Passion; and He sees that for this man in these circumstances there are two alternatives: either to confess the faith or to commit the opposite sin. Cf. p. 236 below on the last difficulty with respect to sufficient grace and the profundity of this mystery.

4. THE OPINION OF J. GONZALEZ DE ALBEDA O.P

J. Gonzalez de Albeda maintains that sufficient grace not only gives the proximate power for a good work, but also an impulse to second act, although it does not remove the impediments to this act and, in fact, is resisted; thus it is a physical premotion, even a predetermination, but impedible, not infallible. It thus differs from efficacious grace. This opinion

was accepted by Nicolai, Bancel, Massoulié, Reginaldus, and more recently by Father Guillermin.

Nevertheless J. Gonzalez and these other theologians reject mediate knowledge entirely and hold that no one is better than another even through easy acts conducive to salvation unless he is more beloved and helped by God. They teach that no salutary act, even the easiest, would happen here and now unless it were willed on the part of God by consequent will and unless man were helped by infallibly efficacious grace.

Recently, in fact, Father Marin Sola not only admitted the opinion of J. Gonzalez, but so extended it as to maintain that infallibly efficacious grace is not necessary for easy salutary acts, at least for their continuation. This very extended opinion of Father Marin Sola, in our judgment, can in no wise be reconciled with the principles of Thomism, as we have demonstrated elsewhere. For St. Thomas expressly says (Ia, q. 19, a. 6 ad I), referring to the distinction between antecedent divine will and consequent will: “Whatever God wills absolutely is done; although what He wills antecedently may not be done.” Cf. below: Excursus on efficacious grace (chap. 8).

But if the opinion of J. Gonzalez, without its being thus unduly extended, remains within the bounds proposed by its author, what judgment is to be passed on it? We reply with Lemos the Salmanticenses, Billuart, Hugon, and others: We cannot conceive what this physical premotion, even predetermination, is, which influences second act although the effect is not obtained but remains impedible, and not only impedible, but always impeded, while on the contrary efficacious grace is never impeded by temptation. The thing is inconceivable.

For there is no mean to be found between proximately complete power and the passage to second act accomplished in effect; nor is motion toward second act but failing in its effect comprehensible. These are the fundamental principles of the distinction between potency and act. It is likewise certain, according to St. Thomas, that no salutary act, even the easiest, would take place here and now unless it were willed by God absolutely as the object of an infallibly efficacious decree (Ia, q. 19, a. 6 ad I). Hence sufficient grace gives a certain power, as proximate as you please, for good work, but it does not give the very act itself; this latter requires infallibly efficacious grace.

However, all Thomists admit that grace which is efficacious for an imperfect act, attrition, for instance, is sufficient for a perfect act, such as contrition. Thus the efficacious grace for a pious thought is sufficient for a pious desire, and the efficacious grace for a pious desire is sufficient for consenting to good. Indeed, if a man resists sufficient grace, he deserves to be deprived of efficacious grace which is offered to him in sufficient grace as the fruit within the flower.

5. THE OPINION OF ST. ALPHONSUS LIGUORI

See his dogmatic works, Disp. IV: The manner in which grace operates. 1. The Thomistic system and the difficulties of this system. 2. The system of Molina and the difficulties of this system. 3. Congruism, the opinion of Thomassin, of the Augustinians. 4. Our opinion set forth, that is, the opinion of Tournely, whose system I follow.

St. Alphonsus, proceeding according to the method of Tournely, sets forth correctly the doctrine of Thomists on sufficient and efficacious grace, quoting Cajetan, Alvarez, and Lemos, and rightly declares that it is based upon God's supreme dominion over created wills. Then he presents the difficulty which, as he says, the Thomistic system incurs, and says he has no intention of "examining the individual systems thoroughly, but only of touching upon them briefly and bringing out the particular difficulties into which they fall.

"The greatest difficulty of all," he says, "which the Thomistic system encounters is that, once this system is admitted, it seems unexplainable how the perfect liberty of the human will can be reconciled with the physical predetermination of efficacious grace," and he adduces in proof of this two arguments of Tournely which we have already examined: that predetermination seems to destroy liberty (Father Marin Sola does not grant this to St. Alphonsus) and that if efficacious grace is necessary for reducing potency to act, how is it to be explained that sufficient grace is really sufficient and that the fulfilling of the commandments is possible? Billuart, in his De Deo, d. 8, a. 4, no. 11, presents and examines at length these objections of Tournely.

We have already replied: I. Divine motion extends even to the mode of our free choice, which it produces in us, for this mode is a modality of being and is included with the object of divine omnipotence. Ia, q. 19, a. 8:

“Since the divine will is eminently efficacious, it follows not only that those things are done which God wills to be done, but also that they are done in the manner in which God wills them to be done . . . that is, either necessarily or freely.” Thus St. Thomas, and again in Ia IIae, q. 10, a. 4 ad 3.

2. Sufficient grace is really sufficient, in which efficacious grace is offered to us as the fruit in the flower; hence, as the Council of Trent declares: “Unless men themselves neglect His grace, God perfects a good work, as He began it, producing in them both the will and the accomplishment” (Denz., no. 806). This is indeed the obscurity of a mystery; but it is not the obscurity of an absurdity.

However, St. Alphonsus presents another difficulty with regard to hope. Cf. ibid., p. 518, nos. 108 f., which should be read. The objection reduces itself to the following: My hope should rest, according to the Thomists, on God’s help and on His promise of efficacious grace through prayer. But there is no promise on the part of God with reference to the efficacious grace necessary for me to pray and pray perseveringly. Therefore my hope is unfounded, and I cannot hope for my eternal salvation, except conditionally: provided that God grants me the efficacious grace necessary for prayer. This objection is almost reducible to the objection which St. Thomas put to himself, IIa IIae, q. 18, a. 4, third objection: “There can be no certainty of that which may fail. But many wayfarers, possessed of hope, fail to attain beatitude. Therefore the hope of wayfarers has no certainty.”

Reply. I distinguish the major: my hope inasmuch as it is certain, should rest upon the help of God and on His promise to me of efficacious grace through prayer. His promise to me, if I do not resist antecedent sufficient grace, granted; but, His promise to me absolutely, denied. For if efficacious grace were promised to me absolutely for praying well and perseveringly, by that very fact, absolutely, by way of a consequence, the grace of final perseverance would be promised to me as obtainable by this prayer. But this grace of final perseverance is not promised absolutely to any man in this life, unless by extraordinary revelation, and nevertheless all wayfarers must expect eternal life with a firm hope.

I distinguish the minor: that there is no absolute promise on the part of God assuring me of the necessary efficacious grace for prayer, granted; no conditional promise, provided I do not resist sufficient grace, denied. And I deny the logical sequence and the conclusion.

I insist. But my hope is then only conditional; yet a conditional hope is not certain. Therefore the difficulty still remains. Cf. treatise on hope, against those who place the certainty of hope in a conditioning act.

Reply. I distinguish the major. That my hope is conditional on the part of God's assistance on account of a probable insufficiency of help, denied; conditional on the part of my deficient free will, on account of my probable resistance, granted. (Cf. IIa IIae, q. 18, a. 4

I distinguish the minor: conditional hope on the part of God's help is not certain, granted; on the part of deficient man, denied. Moreover, the certitude of hope is not, like the certitude of faith, a speculative certitude, but is of the practical order, and, in this order, the certitude of tending toward salvation, not really a certitude of salvation itself, of final perseverance. The act of hope proceeding from the theological virtue of hope, under the guidance of faith in God's assistance, tends certainly toward salvation, but does not know whether in fact it will actually attain salvation. Thus St. Thomas, in IIa IIae, q. 18, a. 4: "Hope tends certainly toward its end, as if participating in the certitude of faith." And the Angelic Doctor adds (ibid., ad 3): "That some men possessed of hope fail to attain beatitude results from a defect of free will setting up the obstacle of sin, not from any defect in the divine power or mercy on which hope depends. Hence this does not impair the certitude of hope."

St. Alphonsus, as likewise Tournely, thinks infallibly efficacious grace is not necessary for actual prayer. But in that case, we are again confronted with all the difficulties raised by Thomists against mediate knowledge. Hence, of two men, equally tempted and equally aided by sufficient grace, it may happen that one prays and the other does not; thus one man distinguishes himself in this respect from the other who does not pray; and God would remain passive in His prevision of this. Hence passivity is attributed to pure Act for the sake of dispelling the mystery of sufficient grace.

Moreover, Tournely's opinion, whether he wills it or not, sets up in the formal motive of hope not only God's help, but our effort, by which the sufficient grace for prayer is rendered efficacious. For, according to this theory, it would follow that I hope the efficacious grace of prayer will be given to me rather than to those who, with equal grace, do not pray or persevere in prayer. But the formal motive of a theological virtue can only

be God or an uncreated being, and it is on this account that the virtue is called theological. (Cf. Ia IIae, q. 62, a. I and 2.)

Moreover, it is better to trust in God than in ourselves; our salvation is much more secure in the hands of God than in our own. Similarly, what the Church proposes for our belief does not pertain to the formal motive of faith, but only uncreated revelation; the proposal by the Church is only an indispensable condition. The principles of St. Thomas regarding foreknowledge, divine motion, and the formal motive of hope must be safeguarded.

Confirmation of this answer is to be found in several texts of St. Paul, St. Augustine, and St. Thomas. St. Paul writes (Rom. 9:12-20): “Not of works, but of Him that calleth it was said to her [Rebecca]: The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written: Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated [or loved less]. What shall we say? Is there injustice with God? God forbid. For He saith to Moses: I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy; and I will show mercy to whom I will show mercy. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. . . .Therefore He hath mercy on whom He will; and whom He will, He hardeneth. Thou wilt say therefore to me: Why doth He then find fault? for who resisteth His will? O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it: Why hast thou made me thus?” And in Rom. 8:30 f.: “Whom He predestinated, them He also called. And whom He called, them He also justified. And whom He justified, them He also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who is against us” (Cf. St. Thomas’ Commentary on Rom. g:14.) St. Augustine likewise declares in his De dono perseverantiae, chap. 6: “We live more securely if we give ourselves wholly to God. Moreover, we do not entrust ourselves partly to Him and partly to ourselves.” We have dealt with this problem at greater length in treating of our gratuitous predestination in the treatise The One God.

Thereupon, in the same text, St. Alphonsus shows, as do the Thomists, that Molinism is not compatible with Scripture nor with St. Augustine nor with St. Thomas. His analysis deserves to be read.

Conclusion. The principles enunciated by St. Alphonsus in opposition to Molinism with regard to the divine decree as efficacious in itself, and to grace which man cannot render efficacious, are supremely universal, and therefore valid even for easy acts conducive to salvation. They are true of

any salutary act, indeed of any act at all since it is an entity and since it is an act, for nothing moves unless efficaciously moved by God. Moreover the principle of predilection enunciated by St. Thomas is absolutely universal (Ia, q. 20, a. 3): “Since the love of God is the cause of the goodness of things, no one would be better than another if God did not will greater good to one than to another.” No one is better than another even to the extent of an easy act, unless better loved and more assisted by God. Hence when one of two sinners is converted, good Christians realize that this is a special effect of God’s mercy toward him.

6. FINAL DIFFICULTY WITH REGARD TO SUFFICIENT GRACE AND THE DEPTH OF THIS MYSTERY

This final difficulty may be expressed thus: But no mean is offered between resistance, which proceeds from our deficiency, and non-resistance, which is already something good, proceeding from the source of every good and from efficacious grace itself. Therefore he who does not receive efficacious grace cannot help resisting sufficient grace.

Reply. I concede the antecedent but deny the consequence and the consequent. For the real consequent is as follows: Therefore he who does not receive efficacious, but only sufficient grace, although he can avoid resisting, yet does in fact resist, but freely and culpably. The divine permission of this sin is only its indispensable condition but not its cause; and the subsequent divine refusal of efficacious grace, offered within sufficient grace, is the punishment for this free resistance.

But herein lies the great mystery which is expressed in Holy Scripture in various texts: “Destruction is thy own, O Israel: thy help is only in Me” (Osee 9:9); nor is any mean between the two expressed. Again, our Lord says, speaking of the Pharisees, “He that is not with Me, is against Me,” without any middle ground; and, on the contrary, “He that is not against you, is for you” (Mark 9:39), as the Savior said to His apostles. In the same way, the angels are either very holy or very perverse; there is no mediocrity permitted them. There is a parallel in regard to men, even in the case of a single, free, voluntary act, since no free, indifferent act is conceded to an individual (Ia IIae, q. 18, a. 9), for either the act is ordained to the proper virtuous end or it is not ordained toward it, just as, on the summit of a

mountain where the waters divide, every drop falls either to the right or to the left of that dividing line.

Many men, however, such as the liberals, often err by confusing the summit of the Christian life with some extreme to be avoided under pretext of moderation. Thus they tend toward a mediocre tepidity, which is a certain unstable median between the best and the worst. Accordingly they do not wish to arrive at any conclusion either for or against Christianity. They think that the salvation of this temporal world is accomplished by those who remain in this ambiguous neutrality. But this does not suffice for action, since no decision is reached. Consequently, when there is a question of acting, if men refuse to go back to Christian principles, they descend to radicalism by way of negation, thence to socialism, and finally to materialistic, atheistic communism. Christ said: “He that is not with Me, is against Me”; no middle ground is allowed, nor any neutrality with respect to God the supreme principle and final end. Thus there is no possible midway between resistance proceeding from our deficiency and nonresistance proceeding from the source of every good, since nonresistance to grace is already a certain good. Nevertheless, sufficient grace is given whereby we may avoid resisting, and therefore this resistance re-mains free and culpable.

This mystery is expressed by St. Prosper in replying to the second Objectiones Vincentianae, and his words were cited at the Council of Quierzy (Denz., no. 318) as follows: “Almighty God wills to save all men without exception (I Tim. 2:4), although not all are saved. That some are saved is, however, a gift of the Savior; whereas, that some should be lost is the just desert of those who are lost,” and no median is given: “Destruction is thy own, O Israel: they help is only in Me” (Osee 13:9).

In this Council of Quierzy either proposition taken separately is clear, namely, “that some are saved is a gift of the Savior” and “that some should be lost is the just desert of those who are lost,” and no middle ground is offered. But the intimate reconciliation of these two propositions is a most profound mystery; to grasp it clearly one would have to see immediately the divine essence itself and see how in the eminence of Deity are found harmonized infinite justice, infinite mercy, and supreme liberty. These three perfections are formally and eminently present in the Deity, but their intimate reconciliation will not appear clearly except in heaven. It remains for us wayfarers a very lofty chiaroscuro, for we walk in an imperfect light,

above the inferior darkness of error and sin, and beneath the translucent obscurity which proceeds from a brightness too dazzling for our feeble intellects, so that “we walk by faith, and not by sight” (II Cor. 5:6).

CHAPTER VII

EFFICACIOUS GRACE

With respect to efficacious grace, the following texts must always be kept in mind: “Without Me you can do nothing” (John 15:5); “It is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will” (Phil. 2:13); “What hast thou that thou hast not received?” (I Cor. 4:7), and “No one would be better than another if he were not loved and helped more by God” (St. Thomas, Ia, q. 20, a. 3).

State of the question. As we have already said in Part One of this section, referring to the doctrine of the Church on efficacious grace: that grace is called efficacious which makes us act, according to the words of Ezechiel (36:27): “I will cause you to walk in My commandments, and to keep My judgments and do them.” This manner of speaking is used by the Second Council of Orange (can. 9, Denz., no. 182): “Whatever good we do, God acts in us and with us that we may act.”

It is therefore not merely a question of efficacious grace with the efficacy of power in first act, in the sense of conferring real and intrinsic powers of the supernatural order (this is true even of interior sufficient grace); but the term is applied to efficacious grace with the efficacy of operation in second act, since it produces the operation itself effectively with us. And now we must investigate whence its efficacy is derived: whether it is efficacious of itself, intrinsically, or extrinsically, that is, on account of our consent foreseen through mediate knowledge.

First conclusion. The efficacity of grace cannot be derived extrinsically, according to Catholic theologians generally, with the exception of the Molinists and Congruists.

I. Proof from Holy Scripture, whence it is certain that grace is given which causes us to act, which operates in us both to will and to accomplish, in a certain insuperable and inscrutable manner. Cf. Ezech. 36:26 f.: “And I

will give you a new heart, and put a new spirit within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My spirit in the midst of you: and I will cause you to walk in My commandments, and to keep My judgments and do them." Again in Ezech.11:19.

In the Book of Esther (13:9-11) Mardochai, praying God to convert the heart of King Assuerus who was hostile to the Jews, expresses himself thus: "O Lord, Lord, almighty king, for all things are in Thy power, and there is none that can resist Thy will, if Thou determine to save Israel. . . . Thou art Lord of all, and there is none that can resist Thy majesty." And in chapter fourteen, Queen Esther makes her prayer as follows: "Remember, O Lord, and show Thyself to us in the time of our tribulation, and give me boldness, O Lord, king of gods and of all power . . . and turn his [Assuerus'] heart to the hatred of our enemy. . . . O God, who art mighty above all, hear the voice of them that have no other hope, and deliver us from the hand of the wicked, and deliver me from my fear" (vv. 12-19), "And God changed the king's spirit into mildness" (ibid., 15:11). By these words the efficacy of the divine decree and grace is evidently attributed to divine omnipotence and not to the foreseen consent of Assuerus. Hence St. Augustine, in I ad Bonit., chap. 20, says in analyzing these words: "By a very hidden and efficacious power, He converted and transformed the King's heart from wrath to leniency." Similarly, in the Book of Proverbs (21:1): "As the divisions of waters, so the heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord: whitersoever He will He shall turn it," that is, the heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord as the dispersion of water in the hand of the gardener. "The souls of the just are in the hand of God" (Wisd. 3:2); "She [wisdom] gave him [Jacob] a strong conflict, that he might overcome" (ibid., 10:12). Again, man in the hand of God is compared to clay in the hand of the potter: "As the potter's clay is in his hand, to fashion and order it: . . . so man is in the hand of Him that made him" (Ecclus. 33:13 f.); this entire passage, from verse ten to sixteen, should be attentively studied. The same figure is used in Isa. 29:16; 45:9; 64:8; Jer. 18:6, and Rom. 9:21. Isaias, in chapter ten, speaks of man in the hand of God as a rod, a staff, or an axe in the hand of man, wielding it as he wills. Therefore almighty God disposes of the wills of men and neither waits upon them nor subjects Himself to their desires. Again, in chapter fourteen, Isaias predicts many events to be accomplished through men, such as that the Israelites will return to their own land, and he adds:

“For the Lord of hosts hath decreed, and who can disannul it? And His hand is stretched out: and who shall turn it away?” (14q.) By the hand of God is meant His omnipotence, as in psalm 94: “In His hand are all the ends of the earth” (v. 4).

In the New Testament, too, we find: “Without Me you can do nothing” (John 15:5). Therefore grace is not rendered efficacious through our consent; rather, on the contrary, without the grace of Christ we do not consent to the good conducive to salvation. “My sheep hear My voice . . . and I give them life everlasting and they shall not perish forever, and no man shall pluck them out of My hand. That which My Father hath given Me, is greater than all; and no one can snatch them out of the hand of My Father” (ibid., 10:27-29). That is to say, the souls of the just are in the hand of God, nor can the world with all its temptations nor the demon snatch the elect from the hand of God. Cf. St. Thomas’ commentary on this passage. It reiterates the words of St. Paul: “Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress or famine . . . or the sword?. . . But in all these things we overcome, because of [or through] Him that hath loved us. . . . For I am sure that neither death nor life . . . nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 8:35-39). St. Thomas comments here that either St. Paul is speaking in the person of the predestinate or, if of himself personally, then it was thanks to a special revelation. Elsewhere St. Paul writes: “Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves: but our sufficiency is from God” (II Cor. 3:5). If we are not sufficient to think anything conducive to salvation of ourselves, with still greater reason is this true of giving our consent, which is primary in the role of salvation. Again, “For the word of God is living and effectual, and more piercing than any two-edged sword; and reaching unto the division of the soul and the spirit, of the joints also and the marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. . . . All things are naked and open to His eyes” (Heb. 4:12 f.). Cf. St. Thomas’ commentary: “The word of God is said to be effectual on account of the very great power and infinite effective force which it possesses. For by it are all things made: ‘By the word of the Lord the heavens were established’ (Ps. 32:6). . . . It effects in the innermost being of things . . . all our works . . . In the order of causes it is to be observed that a prior cause always acts more intimately than a subsequent cause.”

In Rom. 9:14-16 we read: “What shall we say then? Is there injustice in God? God forbid. For He saith to Moses: I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy; and I will show mercy to whom I will show mercy. So then it is not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy” (cf. Exod. 33:19) To the Philippians, St. Paul writes: “With fear and trembling work out your salvation. For it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will” (2:13); hence the soul should fear sin or separation from God, the author of salvation; cf. St. Thomas’ commentary.

Lastly, “Who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received? And . . . why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?” (I Cor. 4:7.) Cf. St. Thomas. According to this text, the distinction in the work of salvation between those who are converted and those who are not, between the just who persevere and those who do not, is to be sought from the part of God and not from the part of man. On the contrary, according to the system of mediate knowledge, in the work of salvation one man distinguishes himself from another, while God awaits his consent and does not determine to give grace efficacious in itself so as to produce this consent freely. In other words, if grace is not efficacious of itself, but is made efficacious by our consent upon which God waits, then man possesses something which he does not receive from God and in which he may glory, as the Pharisee did in his prayer; man has something. whereby he ma distinguish himself from another, equally tempted, who, anticipate by an equal grace, does not consent to it; that is, he possesses the difference between his own consent to good conducive to salvation and the consent to evil, whereas the consent to good could, in fact, exist in the other.

2. The Council of Orange (Denz., no. 189): “Let no one glory in what he seems to have as if he had not received it from God” (can. 16). This is the formula of the principle of predilection, that is, no one would be better than another if he were not better loved by God. “No one has anything of his own but sin and lying” (can. 22); “Man does nothing good which God does not enable him to do” (can. 20). Cf. also the Council of Trent (Sess. VI, chap. 13, Denz., no. 806): “For unless they [men] neglect His grace, God perfects a good work as He began it, operating both to will and to accomplish” (Phil. 2:13). Likewise canon 22 (Denz., no. 832): “If anyone should say either that it is possible to persevere, without the special help of God in accepted justice, or that with it, this is impossible, let him be

anathema.” Concerning the mind of the Council of Trent, cf. Father del Prado, De gratia et libero arbitrio, II ,83-91.

3. The Fathers, especially St. Augustine. Thomists quote many texts of St. Augustine dealing with mediate knowledge; cf. also Del Prado, op. cit., II, 67-259. It is sufficient to quote here the words of Augustine (De gratia et libero arbitrio, chap. 16, 32): “It is certain that we will when we will, but God causes us to will; it is certain that we act when we act, but God causes us to act, supplying most efficacious forces to the will.” Therefore God confers grace, efficacious of itself, by which the hard heart is overcome and made obedient, yielding consent.

Similarly, in the De correptione et gratia, chap. 14: “It is not to be doubted that human wills cannot hinder the will of God, which did whatever it willed in heaven and on earth, from doing what it wills, when as a matter of fact it does what it wills, when it wills, with these very wills of men. . . . Having, beyond any doubt, the most omnipotent power of inclining human hearts to what it pleases.” But this would be false if grace were rendered efficacious by our consent. Indeed, Augustine declares (ibid.) that “God acts within, takes hold of hearts, moves hearts, and draws men by their wills which He Himself operates within them; if, therefore, when God wills to establish rulers on earth, He has the wills of men in His power more than they have themselves, who else acts that the reproof may be beneficial and may produce amendment in the heart that receives it?”

Moreover, for Augustine, it is an inscrutable judgment of God that one man should will efficaciously and be converted, while another is not. Cf. De dono perseuerantiae, chap. 9. But it is not inscrutable according to Molinism. Furthermore, for Augustine, it is difficult to reconcile liberty and grace; cf. De gratia Christi, chap. 47. But it is an easy matter for Molinism, for who, even if he is very stupid, does not understand that liberty remains with grace which depends on a command from that very liberty?

This doctrine of Augustine remains intact in his disciples, St. Prosper and Fulgentius. In fact St. Prosper, at the end of his letter to Augustine concerning the teaching of the Semi-Pelagians, beseeches St. Augustine to explain the argument against them: “I beg you to deign to reveal how free will is not impeded by this preoperative and operative grace, and whether foreknowledge is supported by a divine intention,” that is, by a decree. However, St. Augustine replies that foreknowledge is dependent upon a decree. Cf. De dono persev., chap. 17; De praedest. sanctorum, chap. 10.

4. St. Thomas. We shall first cite the texts from the Summa in proper sequence so that it may appear how this doctrine of intrinsically efficacious grace is necessarily connected with all the principles of St. Thomas' doctrine with regard to the relations between God and creatures.

Ia, q.2, a.3: All movement is derived from the prime mover; all created causality depends on the supreme cause, all contingent being on the first necessary being, all being on participation in essential being; and whatever is ordained toward another is from the first ordainer. These are the five ways of proving the existence of God. It is already evident that God determines and cannot be determined by another, neither in His knowledge nor in any other attribute. Whatever is outside of God, even the determination of our free will, must have a relationship of causality or dependence with respect to God. Hence our question in its entirety is reducible to this dilemma: "God either determines or is determined by another; no halfway measure is possible." This is established by the following texts of St. Thomas.

Ia, q. 6, a. 4: "Everything is said to be good from the divine goodness as from the first exemplary, effective, and final principle of all goodness"; but the choice of salvation is a good; therefore.

Question 14, On the knowledge of God, a.5: "Since the divine power is extended to other things, inasmuch as it is itself the first effective cause of all being, it must be that God knows other things than Himself. He sees other things not in themselves, but in Himself." But if, of two men equally tempted and equally assisted, one should be converted and not the other, this difference would not be from God. Therefore God could not know it in Himself, in His own power, contrary to the principle of St. Thomas.

Article 8: "The knowledge of God is the cause of things according as His will is joined with it," behold the decree or proposition of the divine will. Therefore the knowledge of God is the cause of the choice of salvation on our part. (Cf. ad I.)

Article 11: "In the measure that God's knowledge is extended, His causality is extended"; so that God's knowledge extends even to individual cases.

Article 13: His knowledge is measured by eternity, which encompasses all time; thus it is applied to future things inasmuch as they are present things in eternity, but this future is not the present in eternity rather than the opposite, unless by a divine decree; otherwise God's knowledge would not

be the cause of all things according as His will is joined to it, nor would God know future things in Himself, but in themselves.

Question 16, on truth, a. 7 ad 3: “That which now is, by that very fact was future before it came to be, since it existed in its cause in order that it might come to be. Hence if the cause were removed, that future thing would not come to be; for only the first cause is eternal. Wherefore it does not follow from this that it would always have been true that those things which now are, were to be future, unless in an eternal cause it was determined in the eternal that they would be future, which eternal cause indeed is God alone.”

Question 19, on the will of God, a. 4: Whether the will of God is the cause of things. “God does not act (outside Himself) through any necessity of nature, but determined effects proceed from His infinite perfection according to the determination of His will and intellect.” Behold the decree of the divine will.

Article 6 ad I: “Whatever God wills absolutely is done, although what He wills antecedently may not be done.”

Article 8: “Since the divine will is most efficacious, not only does it follow that those things are done which God wills should be done, but that they are done in the manner in which God wills them to be done . . . that is, either by necessity or contingency.” ibid., ad I: “If God wills this, it must necessarily be, by conditional necessity.” ibid., ad 2: “From the very fact that nothing resists the will of God, it follows not only that those things which God wills are done, but that they are effected contingently or necessarily, as He so wills.” Ia, q. 20, a. 2: “The love of God infuses and creates goodness in things.” ibid., a. 3: “Since the love of God is the cause of the goodness of things, nothing would be better than something else if God did not will greater good to one than to another.” ibid., a. 4: “The will of God is the cause of goodness in things and so, on this account, some things are better, because God wills greater good to them. Hence it follows that He loves better things more.” But of two men, equally tempted, if one does not resist grace and the other does, the first is better. Therefore he is better because God wills greater good to Him. In other words, the principle of predilection (nobody is better than another unless he is better loved by God) presupposes grace to be efficacious of itself and not from our consent. Likewise, De providentia, Ia, q. 22, a. 2 ad 4; a. 4.

Ia, q. 23 on predestination, a. 4, Election: “In God, love precedes election.” ibid., ad I: “If the divine communication of this or that good is considered, it is not bestowed without election, for God gives certain good things to some which He does not give to others. And thus election is looked to in the conferring of grace and glory.”

Article 5. Predestination is not on account of foreseen merits, since “there is no discrepancy between what pertains to free will and what to predestination, just as there is no discrepancy between what pertains to second cause and what to first cause. Hence whatever is from free will is also by predestination.” “Whatever is in man ordering him toward salvation is all included under the effect of predestination, even his own preparation for grace.” Similarly the well-known reply to the third objection.

Article 6. “Predestination most certainly and infallibly attains its effect, and yet it does not impose any necessity.” But this presupposes that a divine decree is intrinsically efficacious and that grace is likewise efficacious of itself.

Ia, q. 83, a. I ad 3: “In moving voluntary causes, God does not prevent their actions from being voluntary, but rather produces this effect in them.”

Ia IIae, q. 109, a. I: “All movements, both corporal and spiritual, are reducible absolutely to the prime mover that is God, and therefore, however perfect any corporal or spiritual nature is assumed to be, it cannot proceed to its act unless moved by God.”

Ia IIae, q. 112, a. 3: “If it is in the intention of God who moves that the man whose heart He is moving should receive grace, he will receive it infallibly.”

IIa IIae, q. 24, a. 11: “It is impossible that these two statements should be true at the same time: that the Holy Ghost should will to move a person to an act of charity and that that person should lose charity by sinning.”

Moreover, neither St. Augustine nor St. Thomas ever admitted mediate knowledge, which was proposed by the Semi-Pelagians, on account of the conditional future merits of infants. Billuart presents further texts of St. Thomas from his other works to prove that, according to the Angelic Doctor, the use of grace itself belongs to God.

5. Theological proof. This argument brings together all the above-mentioned arguments of St. Thomas and is connected with the principle of predilection: “Since the love of God is the cause of goodness in things, no

one would be better than another if he were not more loved by God." (Cf. Ia, q. 20, a. 3.) The argument is proposed in the following terms.

That which is greatest in the whole created order and in the supernatural in wayfarers cannot escape divine causality, otherwise God would not be the first and universal cause nor the author of salvation.

But that which is greatest in the whole created order and in the supernatural in wayfarers is the good use of grace by free determination, for this is merit or the right to eternal life. There is nothing higher in wayfaring saints than charity freely fructifying through merits.

Therefore the good use of grace by free consent is an effect of the grace of God, and it is contradictory to assert that grace is rendered efficacious extrinsically, that is, by our consent, which would thus escape divine causality. This argument is valid against the Molinists, although some admit indifferent premotion, such as L. Billot, and against the Congruists who likewise accept scientia media. (Cf. Bossuet, Tr. de libre arbitre, chap. 8, and Del Prado, De gratia, the whole of Book III.)

They reply that nothing escapes divine causality, since God produces an indeliberate supernatural act, but the free act is not a new entity, but a mode of the act, which the created will is capable of imposing upon it.

However, this is a vain subterfuge, for the free use of grace differs vastly from this indeliberate, nonfree act. It is really a new act, this choice itself, an act strictly meritorious, establishing the most profound separation between the bad and the good; indeed, it is the ultimate actuality of our liberty while on earth. But it is inconceivable that the very element by reason of which the saints are differentiated from the wicked should not be a real entity. In fact, for the Molinists themselves, it is something so precious that not even God can touch it; but in that case the thing which is most precious in the role of salvation is withdrawn from the causality of God. It should be evident that, just as all being depends on first being, all good on the first good, so all free determination toward good depends upon the supreme, free determination of God.

Confirmation. In the matter of salvation, two principles must be firmly maintained: all good comes from God; every defect arises from human liberty. "Destruction is thy own, O Israel: thy help is only in Me" (Osee 13:9). But these are correctly explained by the doctrine of intrinsically efficacious grace; on the contrary, the first principle is not adequately

safeguarded by the opposite theory. Therefore grace is intrinsically efficacious.

Explanation. These two principles are proof for the argument, since a will which is not its own act, cannot proceed to the act by itself alone, but needs to be moved by the grace of God, and grace, by its intrinsic force, causes the good use of grace or consent. Thus the good in its entirety is from God. So the help of God is sought in the words of the Psalms: “Blessed is the man whose help is from Thee. . . . I have lifted up my eyes to the hills, to the hills whence cometh my help. . . . My help is from the Lord who made heaven and earth . . . May He send thee help from His holy place. . . . Lord, withdraw not Thy help from me . . . Give us help in tribulation . . . Give glory to the Lord for He is good.” Consult a Bible Concordance under “help” and “grace.”

But on the other hand, the will is capable by itself alone of defection, obviously on account of its condition of creature produced out of nothingness. Therefore it fails by itself alone, but it does not perform any good by itself unaided. Hence whatever merit there may be is attributable to God as first cause, and to the will as under the premotion of God. They are two total causes, not coordinated as two men rowing a boat, but subordinated, not only in being but in causality.

Hence Molinism is a kind of dream in which the creature forgets that he is a creature. But, to be deeply aware of our creaturehood, and therefore not to consider ourselves as having being and acting except by God’s help, is the fundamental basis of the virtue of humility, which is founded upon the dogmas of creation and of the necessity of grace, either habitual or actual and efficacious. It is the easiest thing in the world, however, for an intellectual creature to forget that he is a creature.

Spiritual corollaries. Many corollaries may be deduced from this principle applicable to spirituality. The more important are briefly indicated here, that this doctrine may appear alive, founded as it is in Sacred Scripture and not only in scholastic theory.

1. This doctrine leads to profound humility. For by it the following texts take on a deep significance: “Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves: but our sufficiency is from God” (II Cor. 3:5); “No one has anything of his own but sin and lying” (Council of Orange, can. 22); “And lead us not into temptation”; “We are unprofitable servants” (Luke 17:10); “Not to us, O Lord, not to us; but to Thy name give glory”

(Ps. 113:1); “As the potter’s clay is in his hand, . . . so man is in the hand of Him that made him” (Ecclus. 33:13f.); “The mercies of the Lord that we are not consumed” (Lam. 3:22); “Thy hands have made me and formed me” (Ps. 118:73); “Thou . . . hast redeemed us to God, in Thy blood” (Apoc. 5:9); “The mercy of the Lord is above all His works.” “Into Thy hands I commend My spirit” (Ps. 30:6); “What hast thou that thou hast not received?” “You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you.” (Cf. Del Prado, op. cit., III, 151.) This is the basis of true mysticism, and especially of true humility. According to St. Augustine, as Del Prado notes (Ad .), there is no sin which another man commits, which I could not also commit, through the weakness of free will and my own frailty, and if I do not do so, not to us, Lord, not to us, but to Thy name be the glory! This ought to destroy the entire root of pharisaism in us; and hence in replying to the Pharisees, Christ often proclaimed the necessity of grace: “No man cometh to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him . . . My sheep hear My voice.”

2. This doctrine instils a profound sense of the necessity of prayer, of continual, interior prayer, full of confidence. For hidden, interior, most e6cacious grace, which leads up to consent, to the overcoming of temptation and drawing near to God must be sought. Thus the Sacred Scripture teaches us to pray: “Have mercy on me, O Lord, according to Thy great mercy. . . .God, be merciful to me, a sinner. . . . I am not worthy to be called Thy son . . . Father, I have sinned against heaven and before Thee. . . . Help Thou my unbelief. Create a clean heart in me, O God: and renew a right spirit within my bowels . . . Convert me, Lord, to Thee, and I shall be converted.” Again, it is written: “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,” that is, give me Thy grace to perform in my actions what Thou commandest, and this perseveringly until death. Hence St. Augustine used to say: “Lord, give what You command, and command what You will.”

The Church prays in the same way in her Missal, as St. Augustine shows (Epist. ad Vital., 217) and Bossuet in his Défense de la tradition, Bk. X, chap. 10: “That God may compel our rebellious wills; that of infidels refusing to believe He may make believers. That He may apply our hearts to good works. That He may give us a good will. That He may convert and draw us to Himself. That He may remove our hearts of stone and give us hearts of flesh, or docile hearts. That He may transform our wills and

incline them toward good. That He may not permit us to be separated from Him." Cf. the prayers of the Mass before the priest's Communion.

Prayer must be continual, at least in the sense of a perpetual desire for necessary grace, according to the admonition of Christ "that we ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18:1); so that prayer, the Fathers declare, should be as the breath of the soul which ceases not any more than the respiration of the body, inhaling grace by holy desire and exhaling the love of God, meritorious for eternal life.

Moreover this prayer should be made with complete trust like the prayer of Queen Esther (Esther, 14), that is, with confidence that almighty God can convert even the hardened sinner; thus holy priests have prayed, for example, in the case of criminals being led to execution, refusing to confess and blaspheming. Such great trust in prayer has obtained wonderful conversions.

3. This doctrine likewise recommends the necessity of giving thanks for every good action performed by the help of God. Therefore does St. Paul say to the Thessalonians (5:17 f.): "Pray without ceasing. In all things give thanks"; and to the Ephesians (5:20): "Giving thanks always for all things." In fact, this teaching leads almost normally to the prayer of contemplation wherein is considered the very profound action of God within us, mortifying and vivifying, that the soul may arrive at the perfect love of God, responding by its fiat to the entire will of God. In such contemplation, whether painful and obscure or joyful and luminous, the truth of those words of Tobias (13:1 f.) becomes apparent: "Thou art great, O Lord, forever, and Thy kingdom is unto all ages. For Thou scourgest, and Thou savest: Thou leadest down to hell, and bringest up again: and there is none that can escape Thy hand." Likewise I Kings 2:6: "The Lord killeth and maketh alive, He bringeth down to hell and bringeth back again."

The prayer of Christ in Gethsemane and the prayer of the Blessed Virgin Mary on Calvary were this very deep contemplation of the two principles enunciated by the prophet Osee (139): "Destruction is thy own, O Israel; thy help is only in Me." Such profound prayer is drawl1 from efficacious grace, according to the text of St. Paul (Rom. 8:26-28): "The Spirit also helpeth our infirmity. For we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit Himself asketh for us with unspeakable groanings. And He that searcheth the hearts, knoweth what the Spirit desireth; because He asketh for the saints according to God." Whereupon he adds: "And we

know that to them that love God, all things work together unto good, to such as, according to His purpose, are called to be saints." Souls that pray thus under the special inspiration of the Holy Ghost obtain whatever they ask, according to St. John of the Cross (Dark Night, Bk. II, chap. 20), since they ask only what the Holy Ghost inspires them to ask.

Particularly in contemplative prayer which accompanies the passive purification of the spirit does the soul derive almost an experiential knowledge of what the efficacious grace of God means. And to this grace applies what St. Paul says of the word of God (Heb. 4:12f.): "The word of God is living and effectual, and more piercing than any two-edged sword; and reaching unto th division of the soul and the spirit, of the joints also and the marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. . . . All things are naked and open to His eyes." But the knowledge of God founded in His causality (for the knowledge of God is the cause of things) extends even to our interior consent, since His hidden causality, at once gentle and strong, extends to this very consent. These two modalities of the divine action (sweetness and strength) are so closely connected that to minimize one of them, strength, for instance, is by that very fact to minimize the other, that is, sweetness. The grace of God is not gentle, penetrating into the very interior of free will, unless on account of its great effcacy, according to that principle of St. Thomas (Ia, q. 19, a. 8): "Since the will of God is most efficacious, not only does it follow that those things are done which God wills should be done, but also that they are done in the manner in which He wills them to be done."

4. The doctrine of intrinsically efficacious grace also leads to a high degree of the practice of the theological virtues, for it is closely identified with the sublime mystery of predestination maintained in all its loftiness, in accordance with the teaching of St. Paul (Rom. 8:28; Eph. 1:5); St. Augustine (De praedestinatione sanctorum, De dono perseverantiae), and St. Thomas (Ia, q. 23, a. 5). This doctrine is founded upon the word of God according to St. John (6:39): "Now this is the will of the Father who sent Me: that of all that He hath given Me, I should lose nothing; but should raise it up again in the last day."

Hence, by the foregoing principle faith in the wisdom of God is preserved in all its sublimity. "O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are His judgments, and how unsearchable His ways! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or

who hath been His counsellor? Or who hath first given to Him, and recompense shall be made him? For of Him and by Him and in Him are all things: to Him be glory forever" (Rom. 11:33-36). Likewise, faith in the holiness of the divine good pleasure is maintained, according to the words of St. Matthew (11:25): "I confess to Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones. Yea, Father, for so hath it seemed good in Thy sight." And again in St. John's Gospel (6:44), Christ I says to the Pharisees.: "No man can come to Me, except the Father, who hath sent Me, draw Him."

Similarly faith in divine omnipotence is observed in a high degree, He works in us both to will and to accomplish; and faith in God's supreme dominion over our wills, which are in the hand of God as clay in the hand of the potter. Again, faith is maintained in the infinite value of the prayer and merits of Christ, who merited for His elect graces which are efficacious of themselves. "The Father loveth the Son: and He hath given all things into His hands" (John 3:35); "He that believeth in Me hath everlasting life" (ibid., 6:47); "I have manifested Thy name to the men whom Thou hast given me out of the world. Thine they were, and to Me Thou gavest them; and they have kept Thy word. . . . Holy Father, keep them in Thy name whom Thou hast given Me; that they may be one, as We also are. . . . Sanctify them in truth. . . . And for them do I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth" (ibid., 17:6 ff.).

This doctrine also strengthens hope, for the formal motive of hope is not our effort, but the help of God, as is often expressed in the psalms: "In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped, let me not be confounded forever"; "But the salvation of the just is from the Lord"; "Give praise to the Lord, for He is good"; and in Proverbs (28:26): "He that trusteth in his own heart, is a fool."

Finally, charity toward God is greatly stimulated by this teaching for it is based upon the text from St. John's First Epistle (4:10): "He hath first loved us"; and He hath loved not only by conferring sufficient grace, but efficacious grace as well, reaching into our innermost being. Therefore does St. Paul write: "Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ?" (Rom. 8:35.) And Christ Himself had said: "I am come that they may have life and have it more abundantly."

Thus the doctrine of grace efficacious in itself is not merely a scholastic theory, but a living principle, founded upon Sacred Scripture. It was on this account that Benedict XIII, in his letter of November 6, 1724, to the Master General of the Order of Preachers, lauded and approved the opinions "on grace efficacious of itself and intrinsically, and on gratuitous predestination to glory, without any foreseeing of merits, which," he says, "you have taught so laudably until now, and of which your school with commendable zeal glories that they have been drawn from the holy doctors Augustine Thomas themselves and are in harmony with the word of God, the decrees of the Supreme Pontiffs and of the Councils and the writings of the Fathers." The Imitation of Christ, Bk. III, chap. 4, no. 3; chap, 55, no. 5; and chap. 58, no. 4, expresses the same opinion. And even among the theologians of the Society of Jesus, the same doctrine is accepted by Father Grou, Spiritual Maxims (second maxim, on grace and freedom), and by Father Billot, De consensu B.V.M. Mysterio Incarnationis and De inspiratione praedeterminante secundum dona S. Sancti; cf. also his De virtutibus infusis, 1905, p. 181, and De Verbo incarnat., 5th ed., Th. XLI, p. 399.

Finally, the foregoing opinion is confirmed by the incongruity of scientia media according to which God would know our future merits before His determining decree.

Therefore our first conclusion remains firm, that grace is intrinsically efficacious. This truth is closely related to the principle of predilection, namely: "Since the love of God is the cause of the goodness of things, nothing would be better than another if God did not will greater good to one than to the other" (St. Thomas, Ia, q. 20, a. 3). No one would be better than another if he were not loved and assisted to a greater extent by God. The whole problem can be reduced to the unsolvable dilemma: "God either determines or is determined by another; no mean is possible." If God does not determine, then He is determined by our consent through foreseen scientia media; He is not entirely independent, but depends in some respect upon His creature.

Second conclusion. The intrinsic efficacious grace is not adequately explained by moral or objective or attracting motion, however it may be termed, that is, by a delight which takes the ascendancy or by an accumulation of moral helps.With respect to the ascendant delight, which, saving free will, the Augustinians, such as Berti and Bellelli admitted

(thereby dissenting from the Jansenists), it should be said that it is not necessary, frequently is not present, and does not move infallibly toward free choice. For truly it is often lacking; many men are converted not by the attraction of heavenly joys which surpass those of the flesh, but rather from the fear of hell. (Cf. Council of Trent, Sess. VI, chap. 6.) Besides, the saints performed many good works without any pleasure, indeed with great aridity and suffering attached to them. Hence man does not always pursue the greatest indeliberate pleasure; he chooses what seems to him better here and now, even if it is better only from the motive of obligation, without any antecedent delight. However, a superior delight follows, namely, that of having accomplished his duty, of conformity to the divine will.

Moreover, by intrinsically efficacious grace God moves us to choice, directly and infallibly. But by merely moral motion God cannot move us directly and infallibly to choice. Therefore intrinsically efficacious grace cannot be placed in moral motion alone. The minor is proved by the argument that moral motion does not affect the will internally, but only from without, by means of the intellect, attracting it, nor is its attraction infallible. It is true that God, clearly seen everywhere as good, infallibly draws our will, according as He is perfectly adequate to its capacity, which He conquers (Ia IIae, q. 10, a. 2), but this is not true regarding moral motion which is not adequate to the capacity of our will.

The same reason holds for other conceptions of moral motion: by itself it does not satisfy or explain that the will should be moved infallibly; even should there be an accumulation of moral movements, free will would not be attracted infallibly. Thus every good in this world was held out to the martyrs, and at the same time every alternative torment; their liberty remained inflexible, but it so remained in God not clearly seen, fixed on account of the physical motion of God.

Third conclusion. Intrinsic efficacious grace dispositively can be claimed, in moral motion, but strictly and formally in predetermining physical premotion. Dispositively, moral motion is required to present the good, pleasing object, but efficacious grace infallibly moving toward a choice must be the actual application of the will as to the exercise of the act which it produces in the physical order, in its own very reality. Moreover, this physical motion is previous with a priority, not of time, but of causality, since the causality of God who moves thus precedes the causality of the will which is moved. (Cf. Contra Gentes, Bk. III, chap. 140.)

Nor does indifferent physical premotion suffice, or toward good in general, as C. Pecci, Satolli, and Paquet maintain. There must be physical premotion in the pursuit of the divine decree. But an intrinsically efficacious divine decree extends even to the free choice of the good, for example, even to the consent of St. Paul at the moment of his conversion. Therefore divine premotion accompanying this decree is called "predetermining." (Cf. Bossuet, Traité du libre arbitre, chap. 8.) Furthermore, indifferent premotion does not preserve the universality of divine causality, for that which is greatest in the matter of salvation, namely, the particular meritorious choice here and now, would escape divine causality.

Pure act, the supreme determination, must be the cause of any determination. Therefore, if physical predetermination with regard to individual acts is not admitted, that which is paramount in the role of salvation and in the whole created and supernatural order, is withdrawn from God. Indeed, if God does not determine, then He is determined by another in His knowledge; this is the highest incongruity in the theory of scientia media. The dilemma is insoluble.

Such premotion is called "predetermining" because, just as God's motion precedes our action in intention and causality, so does the determination of first cause, by a priority of nature, precede the determination of second cause. If the transition from potency to the final actuality of free will is not from God, who predetermines, then what is greatest in the whole supernatural order is withdrawn from God.

Hence the doctrine of grace efficacious in itself, of premotion which is not indifferent, like the doctrine of the intrinsic efficacy of divine decrees with regard to our salutary acts, is intimately connected with the principle of predilection formdated by St. Thomas, Ia, q. 20, a. 3: "Since the love of God is the cause of the goodness of things, no one would be better than another if God did not will greater good to one than to the other." In short, no one would be better than another (either by a natural or by a supernatural act, whether easy or difficult, initial or final) unless he were better loved by God. This principle allows of no exception.

In opposition to Satolli and Paquet, whose theory is unwarrantably styled "Cajetan-Thomistic," cf. Del Prado, De gratia, III, 496 ff. On page 501 he says: "They go astray at the very door (at the moment of arriving at the end of the journey) and part from Cajetan right at the corner of the street, that is,

on cooperative motion itself." For Cajetan rejects motion which precedes by a priority of time (whereby, for instance, my will moves my arm and then the stick to send a stone flying), but he does not exclude physical premotion which precedes by a priority of nature only. Thus, with regard to time, before our free determination, nothing moves determinately and infallibly toward it; the predetermination is of a higher order, the order of eternity, in an eternal decree whose very premotion is its execution.(Cf. Cajetan on Ia, q. 14, a. 13, no. 17; q. 19, a. 8, no. 10; q. 20, a. 3, etc.; q. 23, a. 4; q. 105, a. 4 and 5.)

Divine motion is not a mechanical action, like the action of a man rowing a boat; it is of a higher order, to be compared rather to the influx of life-giving sap by which a plant nourishes and renders itself fruitful. In fact, this infusion is proper to the eternal cause, existing beyond time, which is much closer to our will than our will is to itself; and the divine cause, moving our will from within, inclines it to self determination through deliberation toward this particular salutary, meritorious act rather than to its contrary. Thus God actualizes our liberty, causing together with us the free mode of our choice.

As in the natural order divine motion arouses in plants the vital processes by which they spontaneously flower and fructify, so in the supernatural order efficacious grace arouses in us, not only a spontaneous love of happiness, but the love of God; and this love is free, since God is not yet clearly seen and does not yet attract us invincibly. Efficacious grace thus properly moves toward this act specified by a good which does not attract irresistibly, and in so moving toward this act it does not change its nature, which depends on its own objective specification. Thus it does not destroy, but actualizes our liberty and free mode, a mode which is real beyond question, which can be produced in us and with us by the supreme creative cause, which from on high "pours forth all being and every modality of being," excepting only evil-doing. If, on the other hand, God did not predetermine, He would be determined in His knowledge by our consent through foreseen mediate knowledge.

Thus it is through efficacious grace that the prayers of the saints are heard: "Create a clean heart in me, O God: and renew a right spirit within my bowels" (Ps. 50:12). This is best understood by the mystics, and all the more in proportion to the intimacy of their union with God. Molina admits that such is the doctrine of St. Thomas; cf. Concordia, q. 14, a. 13, dis. 26;

likewise Suarez and the Coimbran School quoted by Billuart, De gratia, diss. 5, a. 7, § III.

REFUTATION OF OBJECTIONS

The objections to the Thomistic teaching have been examined at length by Thomists in reference to the treatise on God, where the divine decrees are examined. They are objections either from Scripture, or from the freedom of the will, from the insufficiency of grace or from affinity with Calvinism. We have examined them in our treatise on the one God (De Deo uno, 1938, pp. 446-57). Attention should be drawn to the three principal objections.

From the authority of Scripture, the following texts are brought forward: “What is there that I ought to do more to My vineyard, that I have not done to it?” (Isa. 5:4); “I called, and you refused: I stretched out My hand, and there was none that regarded” (Prov. 1:24); “You always resist the Holy Ghost” (Acts 7:51). Therefore the grace of God is not efficacious intrinsically but by reason of our consent.

Reply. These texts must be reconciled with others we have cited: “As the divisions of waters, so the heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord” (Prov. 21:1); “As clay is in the hand of the potter, so are you in My hand” (Jer. 18 :6); “It is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish” (Phil. 2:13); “Who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received?” (I Cor. 4:7.)

But these texts can be reconciled only by the distinction between sufficient grace which is resisted (contrary to the Jansenists, however, the existence of merely sufficient grace is defined) and efficacious grace which in fact is not resisted. Hence the foregoing texts alleged in objection refer to sufficient grace. Thus, in Isa. 5:4 it is written: “What is there that I ought to do more to My vineyard, that I have not done to it?” It does not say: “What is there that I could do more?” Hence the meaning is that God most assuredly gave the Jews sufficient graces by which they might be saved and, had they not resisted, they should have received efficacious graces.

Similarly, when we read in Matt.11:21: “Woe to thee, Corozain, woe to thee, Bethsaida: for if in Tyre and Sidon had been wrought the miracles that have been wrought in you, they had long ago done penance in sackcloth and ashes.” This objection is refuted in the same way by the Congruists. But the

meaning of this text is that the Jews of Corozain and Bethsaida hindered the course of sufficient grace by greater obduracy and malice and set up a greater obstacle to the efficacious grace offered in sufficient grace. For a miracle or sign is an external sufficient grace, not efficacious as ordained toward conversion.

In fact, the will lacks efficacious grace because it resists sufficient grace; but if its resists sufficient grace, this is not because it lacks efficacious grace; its own deficiency suffices as a cause of such resistance. Cf. Ia IIae, q. 112, a. 3 ad 2: “The first cause of this deficiency of grace is on our part, but the first cause of the conferring of grace is on the part of God, according to the words: ‘Destruction is thy own, O Israel: thy help is only in Me.”‘ There would indeed be a vicious circle in Thomism if of the two following propositions the second were true: Man is deprived of efficacious grace because he resists sufficient grace, and man resists sufficient grace because he lacks efficacious grace. Of course, the second statement is false; if it were true, man would sin from the insufficiency of divine help, sin would then be inevitable and would therefore no longer be sin. In truth, man does not sin on account of insufficient help or of any divine neglect, but because of his own deficiency.

Similarly, as Protestants hold, there would be a vicious circle in our faith if these two propositions were true with the same acceptation of the conjunction “because”: I believe the Church to be infallible because God has revealed this; and, I believe that God has revealed this because it is infallibly proposed to me by the Church. The fact is that in these two statements the word “because” is not used in the same sense: in the first it signifies the formal motive of faith; in the second it expresses only the indispensable condition.

Likewise in our present problem, the first proposition contains the formal motive why man is deprived of efficacious grace, namely, because he resists sufficient grace. The second does not; that is, it would be erroneous to say that the motive of his resistance is because he lacks efficacious grace; he would thus be sinning on account of an insufficiency of divine help, so that God would be a defective and deficient cause. The first cause of the defect is our will so far as it is defective and deficient. God, however, is the unfailing cause, not bound to prevent the defect of sin, whereas He can, for higher reasons, permit it on account of a greater good.

Second objection. This draws from the Council of Trent (Sess.VI, can. 4, Denz., no. 814), which declares. “If anyone should say that free will, moved and stimulated by God, does nothing to cooperate by assenting to God’s encouragement and invitation…or that it cannot dissent if it so wills but, like something inanimate, does not act at all and merely keeps itself passive, let him be anathema.

Reply. In this decree the doctrine of intrinsically efficacious grace is not condemned.

1. This is apparent from the subsequent declarations of Benedict XIV and Clement XII (Denz., no. 1090).

2. Among the fathers of the Council many were Thomists; in fact, Dominic Soto collaborated in the formulation of these decrees.

3. Indeed, more probably than not, the fathers of the Council referred in this canon not only to efficacious grace, but to intrinsically efficacious grace and motion, for Luther had spoken of it, declaring that: “Intrinsically efficacious grace takes away liberty.” The Council anathematizes those who speak thus, so that the Council must be defining the contradictory proposition. Its intention is to declare that even intrinsically effcacious grace does not deprive man of liberty, for he can resist if he so wills. The Council does not maintain that man does, in fact, sometimes dissent, but that “he can dissent if he so wills.” In other words, the contrary power remains, but under efficacious grace man never wills to resist, nor does he; otherwise the grace would not be efficacious or there would be a contradiction in terms; that is, otherwise grace would not cause us to act.

4. Had the fathers of the Council wished to condemn intrinsically efficacious grace, they ought to have said so, but they did not. Therefore it is more probable that they condemned only this conclusion of Luther’s: if grace is intrinsically efficacious, it takes away free will. And in this respect the Molinists agree with him. Hence from this canon the condemnation of Molinism would follow with much more likelihood than that of Thomism. Luther held that intrinsically efficacious grace takes away free will. But grace is intrinsically efficacious.

Therefore free will is taken away. Molina maintained that intrinsically efficacious grace takes away free will. But free will remains. Therefore grace is not intrinsically efficacious.

Moreover, the Council of Trent (Sess. VI, chap. 13, Denz., no. 806) states: “Unless men themselves neglect His grace, God will complete the

good work as He began it, effecting in us both to will and to accomplish." How can this declaration be reconciled with the following one of Molina: "With equal, and even less assistance, it may yet happen that one of those who are called is converted and another is not"? (Concordia, index under "Auxilium," pp. 51-56.) God would thus begin a good work equally in these two men, and one man, distinguishing himself, would perfect the work begun. This would be contrary to the principle of predilection: "For who distinguisheth thee?" And the Council of Orange, c. 22, corroborates: "No man has anything of his own but sin and lying." The remaining objections may be reduced to the following: If grace is intrinsically efficacious, liberty is destroyed, since consent follows infallibly and man cannot resist. This objection is found in St. Thomas, Ia, q. 19, a. 8, objection 2. His own answer is: "From the very fact that nothing resists the divine will, it follows not only that those things which God wills to be done are done but that they are done contingently or necessarily according to how He wills them to be done."

Hence precisely because grace is most efficacious it is at the same time most gentle and respects liberty by virtue of the principle enunciated by St. Thomas, Ia, q. 19, a. 8: "For when any cause is efficacious in producing its effect, it proceeds from its cause, not only according to what it does, but also according to its manner of doing it or of being. Thus on account of a weakness in the active power of the seed it happens that a son is born unlike his father in accidental qualities which pertain to the mode of being. Since, therefore, the divine will is most efficacious, it not only follows that those things are done which God wills should be done, but also that they are done in the manner in which He wills them to be done. Now God wills that certain things be done necessarily and certain others contingently" (and freely) according as they proceed from proximate causes not determined to one end, and He moves them infallibly according to what befits their nature.

This is the basis of the Thomistic distinctions, for example, between consequential necessity and logical necessity, or between the divided sense and the composite sense. According to Aristotle, there is consequential, but not consequent, necessity in a strict syllogism of which the major is necessary and the minor contingent. For instance, there is the example from Boetius: It is necessary that what I see should really exist. But I see Peter walking. Therefore it is necessary that Peter should be walking, although contingently and freely. Likewise it is necessary that whatever God wills

absolutely should be done. But God wills absolutely that the conversion of Paul should take consequent necessity, Paul will be converted at that moment and his conversion will be free.

In the same way, a man who is seated may stand up, in the divided sense, but not in the composite sense; that is, while seated he has a real power of standing, but he cannot sit and stand simultaneously. These two alternatives are both possible but not concurrently; cf. Ia IIae, q. 10, a. 4 ad 3. Calvin refers to the divided sense with another meaning; according to him, under the efficacious motion of God, the real power of doing the opposite does not remain, but once this motion has been removed, the power of the opposite appears again. The Jansenists hold the same opinion. It is the like error with respect to real power as that of the Megarians who declare that a teacher does not have the power to teach except when he is actually teaching; in which case, should he be sleeping and therefore not actually seeing, he would be blind.

Objection is also contained in the condemned propositions of Quesnel: “The grace of Christ is a supreme grace without which we can in no wise confess Christ, and with which we can never deny Him” (Denz., no. 1359); “Grace is the operation of the hand of the omnipotent God, which nothing can impede or delay” (Denz., no. 1360); “When God wills to save a soul, whatever the time and place, the immutable effect will follow upon the will of God” (Denz., no. 1362.)

Reply. These propositions are condemned, as all historians grant, in the Jansenist sense as explained by the preceding propositions, that is, inasmuch as they deny the antecedent will for salvation, really yet merely sufficient grace, and freedom from necessity.

But some would retort that the Thomist doctrine of grace leads to quietism, for it would wait upon efficacious grace.

Reply. In opposition to the quietists, the Thomists firmly hold that in practice we should strive to act, when it is a question of a precept which actually obliges, and assuredly at that moment efficacious grace is offered to us at least in su6cient grace; but if by our own deficiency we resist this sufficient grace, we deserve to be deprived of efficacious grace.

Hence this doctrine does not lead to quietism, but on the contrary shows the necessity of the prayer of petition, which the quietists neglected, and recalls to mind the word of our Lord: You must pray always. Prayer is, as it were, the “breath of the soul,” for at the very moment of prayer the actual

grace to pray is undoubtedly received, and through prayer the soul is opened to accept new actual grace, and so on, as the lungs must ever inhale and exhale. It is evident that this Thomistic doctrine of non-necessitating predetermination is not conducive to quietism, since Bossuet, the principal adversary of Quietism, always defended it valiantly, as witnessed by his Traité du libre arbitre, chap. 8. Augustine had already refuted this objection with the formula: “God moves the will that it may do, not that it may do nothing,” and it should act when given a precept which obliges here and now. Moreover, we should not expect a sign of the conferring of efficacious grace; we receive it without such a sign. Nor does it always remove the difficulty; in fact, the difficulty is very great in the passive state of the night of the soul. Then the soul does not operate by its own diligence alone, but under the special inspiration of God, it believes, hopes, and loves to a heroic degree.

This doctrine of grace efficacious in itself is connected with the principle of predilection: no one would be better than another were he not loved more by God. “What hast thou that thou hast not received?” We must always thank God for every good: “Not to us, O Lord, not to us; but to Thy name give glory.”

CHAPTER VIII

EXCURSUS ON EFFICACIOUS GRACE

To complete the teaching on grace efficacious in itself we must consider in this excursus: 1. efficacious grace and facile acts conducive to salvation; 2. efficacious grace in its relation to spirituality; 3. efficacious grace in wayfaring saints, especially in the martyrs;

4. the efficacious grace of most ardent love, according to St. Theresa; 5. efficacious grace in Christ, impeccable and freely obedient, for He is the highest example of the reconciliation between grace, efficacious in itself, and free obedience in a soul confirmed in good.

1. EFFICACIOUS GRACE AND FACILE ACTS CONDUCIVE TO SALVATION

Recent opinion. Within the past few years a new opinion has been expressed, to which we referred in the Revue Thomiste of November, 1925, and March, 1926, and which is alleged as conforming to the teaching of certain Thomists, especially Gonzilez de Albeda, Massoulit, Bancel, and Reginaldus. It is, in fact, an unwarranted extension of their opinion.

They maintained that sufficient grace confers not only the power to do good, but also the impulse toward a good act; further, according to them, sufficient actual grace is a predetermining physical premotion, although capable of failure since it does not overcome infallibly such impediments as may arise from temptation or from the free will itself; in this respect it differs from efficacious grace. This opinion of Gonzilez, Massoulit, Bancel, and Reginaldus differs from the general theory of Thomists only in this respect, that it offers a better explanation of the culpability of sinners and their real power of doing good and avoiding evil. Their opinion is presented at length in the Revue Thomiste, 1902, p. 654, and 1903, p. 20, by Father Guillermin, O.P., who defended it, but understood it correctly and not as it

has recently been proposed. We have already discussed this theory of Gonzilez de Albeda.

According to the recent exposition, sufficient actual grace would be a fallible, predetermining, physical premotion which would incline one toward a good act, but would differ from infallible efficacious grace inasmuch as it would not always overcome the impediments which might arise. Indeed, it is held (whereas the above cited Thomists did not go so far) that frequently this impelling sufficient grace actually moves us to perform facile acts conducive to salvation, for example, to attrition or to imperfect prayer. Hence, infallibly efficacious grace is not necessary for such facile salutary acts, but only for difficult salutary acts, such as perfect contrition as distinguished from attrition. In other words, facile salutary acts presuppose only fallible divine motion and a fallible divine decree.

Critical analysis. To the mind of Thomists reading this new presentation, there immediately arises the objection: How can God know infallibly from all eternity, by a fallible decree, a free act of attrition that will occur here and now in time in the mind of this sinner? It should be remarked that this problem affects not only the predestinate, but also other men who sometimes elicit an act of attrition. The answer is that God knows infallibly this future act of attrition so far as it is already present in eternity, which encompasses all time.

However, this future act of attrition is not present in eternity, rather than the opposite act of resistance, unless by virtue of a divine decree; otherwise it would be present in eternity in the same manner as necessary truths, and we should run into fatalism. Therefore, if the divine decree regarding a future act of attrition is fallible, God can know it only fallibly. This objection is generally made to the Molinist theory of scientia media, and there is no escape other than by positing passivity or dependence in divine knowledge with respect to a conditioned, free future act; but no passivity can exist in Pure Act.

According to this recent opinion, with the same impelling sufficient grace, one sinner elicits an act of attrition, while another perseveres in his obduracy; hence the former receives no greater help than the latter. And so we have reverted to Molina’s opinion, according to which, “equal help can cause one of those called to be converted and another not” (Concordia, pp. 51, 617).

But this is contrary to St. Paul (I Cor. 4:7): “For who distinguisheth thee? or what hast thou that thou hast not received?” St. Thomas declares, (Ia IIae, q. 112, a. 4): “The first cause of this diversity is to be attributed to God Himself, who dispenses the gifts of His grace in diverse ways.” Again, St. Thomas comments on Matt. 25:15: “He who strives more has more grace, but the fact that he makes a greater effort demands a higher cause.” The principle of predilection is thus formulated by St. Thomas (Ia, q. 20, a. 4): “Since the love of God is the cause of the goodness of things, no one would be better than another unless God willed greater good to one than to another.” In other words, no one would be better than another were he not loved and helped more by God. This is the dogmatic basis of Christian humility. And as a matter of fact, when one of two hardened sinners is converted rather than the other, the faithful are accustomed to say that this was done as a special dispensation of God’s mercy toward him.

If, of two sinners placed in the same circumstances and equally helped by God, one attains to an act of attrition and the other does not, the first has singled himself out. And so we are faced with an opinion in which, with regard to facile acts, we encounter all the difficulties of Molinism, as observed by Father Del Prado in his De gratia, III, 423.

Against this opinion there remains especially the irrefutable objection: How can God, in a fallible decree, foresee infallibly that one of two sinners, both equally assisted, will attain to attrition and the other not? At least there must be admitted for the second case a permissive decree of that resistance or defection. And therefore in the first case an infallibly efficacious positive decree (of future attrition) must be which will not take place.

Thus we return to the general doctrine of Thomists, which in fact was safeguarded by González, Massoulié, Bancel, and Reginaldus, since it is explicitly affirmed by St. Thomas when he distinguishes between antecedent and consequent will in God. Cf. Ia, q. 19, a. 6 ad I: “The will is related to things according to what they are in themselves (inasmuch as goodness resides in things themselves); but in when we will it with all the particular circumstances, here and now; that is willing consequently. (And on the other hand, antecedent will is concerned with the good taken categorically, and not here and now.) Thus it is manifest that whatever God wills absolutely is done, although what He wills antecedently may not be done.” Hence even the least and most facile good does not come about here

and now unless God wills it absolutely with consequent and infallibly efficacious will.

But while resistance to sufficient grace is an evil coming, not from God, but from the defective creature, nonresistance to grace is a good existing here and now, which comes from God efficaciously willing it. This is what was affirmed at the conclusion of the controversies that arose over the writings of Gottschalk at the Council of Toucy, A.D. 860 (PL, CXXVI, 123): "'Whatsoever the Lord pleased He hath done, in heaven, in earth' (Ps. 134). For nothing is done in heaven or, on earth except what He Himself graciously accomplishes or justly permits to befall." But God graciously causes attrition in one sinner and justly permits resistance in another. Thus the words of St. Paul are fully safeguarded: "For who distinguisheth thee? or what hast thou that thou hast not received?"

These metaphysical principles which are therefore absolutely universal, allowing of no exception, are not observed in the new opinion that has been proposed, although on the contrary González, Massoulié, Reginaldus, Bancel, and Guillermin retained them, as can easily be seen from their works.1

2. EFFICACIOUS GRACE IN RELATION TO SPIRITUALITY

The teaching of St. Thomas on efficacious grace is generally not well understood except by speculative theologians who judge everything in relation to God, the universal first cause and author of salvation, or by souls that are advancing along the ways of passive purgation. These souls, as it were, experience within themselves that in the affair of salvation everything comes from God; that is, in a salutary, meritorious act, its free determination cannot derive exclusively from us. This is so because man has nothing which is exclusively his own except sin and lying, as declared by the Second Council of Orange (Denz., no. 195).

As we have seen, according to St. Thomas efficacious grace is not rendered efficacious by our consent foreseen by God in such a way that the free, meritorious determination would be, as determination, exclusively our own work. Rather is efficacious grace intrinsically efficacious; that is, it moves us gently and forcibly to consent to the good, so that this consent is entirely from God's premotion, as first cause, and entirely ours as

secondary, premoved cause. In other words, God produces in us and with us even the free mode of our choices.

Herein lies no contradiction, but a sublime mystery, namely, that God is more intimately present to our liberty than it is to itself. And in this it appears that "the will of God is eminently efficacious, since it follows not only that those things are done which God wills should be done, but also that they are done in the manner in which He wills them to be done. But He wills that certain things should be necessary and others contingent (and free, as well) that there may be order among things for the completion of the universe." (Ia, q. 19, a. 8). "It is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will" (Phil. 2:13). The only thing that cannot derive from God is moral evil, which, however, He permits that from it greater good may proceed by the manifestation of His mercy and justice. Moral evil does not require an efficient cause, but rather a deficient cause. Every good thing is from God.

That it may be evident, then, how this doctrine of St. Thomas raises the mind to lofty contemplation of the action of God in the depths of our hearts, it suffices to show that this doctrine should lead to profound humility, to continual interior prayer, to the perfection of the theological virtues, and that, in point of fact, illustrious spiritual writers have accepted it. In the present excursus we shall develop by way of synthesis what we have already presented in the form of spiritual corollaries.

I. This doctrine leads to profound humility, since it follows that man has nothing exclusively his own except sin. He does no natural good without the natural help of God, no supernatural good without supernatural grace, which not only urges and attracts but also moves him efficaciously to the performance of good. Thus the word of God is given a profound significance: "Without Me you can do nothing"; and likewise St. Paul's: "Not that we are sufficient to do anything ourselves as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God." And this is true even of the just who have already attained a high degree of charity, for they still require actual help in order to do good. And after they have done many and great things, they must say in all truth: "We are unprofitable servants" (Luke 17:10). That is to say, according to the thought of St. Augustine: there is no sin which another man commits of which I am not capable from the weakness of free will and my own frailty, and for the fact that I do not commit it, not to us, O Lord, but to Thy name give glory. The words of St. Paul must ever be kept in

mind: “What hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received?” St. Francis of Assisi used to repeat this to himself whenever he saw a criminal being led to execution. All these considerations profoundly understood according to St. Thomas’ teaching incline the soul strongly toward true humility, “that all may be attributed to God.”

2. This doctrine leads to continual interior prayer, to a profound spirit of gratitude and, in fact, to contemplative prayer. To interior prayer, for that prayer of petition is more interior which asks of God the greater interior grace. But according to the opinion of St. Thomas, we should ask of God not only grace which will urge us to do good, but also that grace which actually moves us efficaciously toward right action and perseverance in good. We must ask for grace which will reach even unto the depths of our heart and free will, moving us, so that we may really be freed from perverse inclinations, from the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; for only God our Savior can deliver our souls from all of these. Nor does He injure our liberty in so acting, but rather causes it, actualizes it, and raises it above the thralldom of lower creatures. Whatever actualizes our freedom cannot injure or destroy it.

Thus only can the petitions found in Holy Scripture be understood: “Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy . . . O God, be merciful to me a sinner . . . Help Thou my unbelief . . .Create a clean heart in me, O God, and renew a right spirit in my bowels . . . Convert me, O Lord, unto Thee, and I shall be converted . . . Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,” that is, give me effcacious grace that I may really do Thy will, or in the words of St. Augustine: “Give, O Lord, what You command, and command what You will.” Only thus can the prayers of the Church contained in the Missal be profoundly understood. For the Church prays “that God may force our rebellious wills; . . . that He may transform unbelievers who refuse to believe into men willing to believe; . . . that He may incline our hearts to good works; . . . that He may give us a good will; . . . that He may convert and draw us to Himself; . . . that He may take away our hearts of stone and give us hearts of flesh, that is, docile hearts; . . . that He may change our wills and incline them to good.”

Hence, also, the priest who attends the dying must pray for them with great confidence, in the name of Christ, for God is not powerless to convert even hardened sinners. For the formal motive of hope is the merciful

assistance of God. Therefore, at that moment, the priest should bear in mind the words of Christ: “Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in My name, that will I do: that the Father may be glorified in the Son” (John 14:13); “Amen, amen I say to you: if you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it you” (John 16:23).

Moreover, this prayer must be continual for our soul is in continual need of efficacious actual grace in order to perform any new work conducive to salvation. This is the deep meaning of the word of God: “Pray always,” and of the expression used by the Fathers: “Prayer is, as it were, the breath of the soul.” For, by means of prayer, the soul inhales grace, and thereupon exhales, or elicits, a meritorious act.

Likewise, according to this doctrine, thanksgiving should be rendered for every good without exception: “in all things giving thanks” (I Thess. 5:18). We should say with all our hearts: “It is the mercy of God that we have not been destroyed. Thy hands have made me and formed me; and Thou hast redeemed us by Thy blood. The mercy of God is above all His works.” Furthermore, this teaching of itself leads properly to contemplative prayer which, considering especially the profound action of God within us, whether mortifying or vivifying us, responds: “Thy will be done.” “The Lord killeth and maketh alive, He bringeth down to hell and bringeth back again” (I Kings 2:6). Such passivity expressed by the word “fiat” is the most profound cooperation with the highest works of God. Thus did Christ pray in the Garden of Gethsemane, thus did the Blessed Virgin utter: “Be it done unto me according to thy word” in joy on the day of the Annunciation, in suffering on Calvary.

Finally, the significance of St. Paul’s words with reference to the grace necessary for prayer is fully manifest from this doctrine (Rom. 8:26 f.): “The Spirit also helpeth our infirmity. For we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit Himself asketh for us with unspeakable groanings. And He that searcheth the hearts, knoweth what the Spirit desireth; because He asketh for the saints according to God.” This is verified particularly in mystical contemplation, which is often painful and obscure, so that the soul therein recognizes how necessary grace is for praying well, just as it is for right action.

3. This teaching of St. Thomas on grace raises the theological virtues to a higher level, because it is closely connected with the very sublime mystery of predestination, in the words of St. Paul (Rom. 8:28-30): “And we know

that to them that love God, all things work together unto good, to such as, according to His purpose, are called to be saints. For whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son; that He might be the first-born among many brethren. [St. Thomas understands this as referring to gratuitous predestination unto glory.] And whom He predestinated, them He also called. And whom He called, them He also justified. And whom He justified, them He also glorified." Such is the process of predestination.

This demands great faith in the wisdom of God, in the sanctity of the divine good pleasure, in His omnipotence, His supreme dominion, in the exceedingly great efficacy of the merits of Christ. Faith in the wisdom of God is thus acclaimed in the words of St. Paul (Rom.11:33-35): "O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are His judgments, and how unsearchable His ways! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been His counsellor? Or who hath first given to Him, and recompense shall be made him?" Faith in the sanctity of the divine good pleasure is magnified in accordance with the text: "Nor are your ways My ways, saith the Lord," and the words of Christ: "I confess to Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones. Yea, Father; for so hath it seemed good in Thy sight" (Matt. 11:25 f.); and again, Jesus said to the Pharisees: "Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to Me, except the Father, who hath sent Me, draw him" (John 6:43 f.).

So, too, in the spirit of this teaching, faith in the divine omnipotence is extolled, whereby God can convert even the most hardened sinners to good, according to Prov. 21:1: "The heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord: whithersoever He will He shall turn it"; and Phil. 2:13: "It is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will." Faith in the supreme dominion of God is expressed Jer. 18:6: "As clay is in the hand of the potter, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel." And St. Paul develops the same figure (Rom. 9:21-23): "Or hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump, to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor? What if God, willing to show His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction [persecutors, for example], that He might show the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He hath prepared

unto glory?" So, finally, is faith in the exceedingly great merits of Christ demonstrated, in accordance with the words of St. John: "The Father loveth the Son: and He hath given all things into His hand" (3:35); "Now this is the will of the Father who sent Me: that of all that He hath given Me, I should lose nothing; but should raise it up again in the last day" (6:39); "Thine they were, and to Me Thou gavest them . . . Those whom Thou gavest Me have I kept; and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition, that the scripture may be fulfilled" (17:6-12).

Likewise, according to this doctrine of grace a truly supernatural hope is required, that is, one founded uniquely upon this formal motive: the help of God. For we should not rely upon our own powers or free will to attain to a supernatural end, as it is written: "He that trusteth in his own heart, is a fool" (Prov. 28:26). Rather, considering our weakness, we should "with fear and trembling work out our salvation" (Phil. 2:12); and "he that thinketh himself to stand, let him take heed lest he fall" (I Cor. 10:12).

On the other hand, contemplating God, we should say to Him: "In Thee, O my God, I put my trust; let me not be ashamed" (Ps. 24:2); "Into Thy hands I commend my spirit" (Ps. 30:6). Further, we are assured, "he that trusteth in Him, shall fare never the worse" (Ec-clus. 32:28); "The Lord is sweet: blessed is the man that hopeth in Him" (Ps. 33:9); "Behold, God is my savior, I will deal confidently and will not fear" (Isa. 12:2); "Preserve me, O Lord, for I have put my trust in Thee" (Ps. 15:1); "In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped, let me never be confounded" (Ps. 30:2; 70:1); and in St. Paul's epistles:

"To them that love God, all things work together unto good, to such as, according to His purpose, are called to be saints . . . What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who is against Us?" (Rom. 8:28-31); "I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13).

In the passive purifications, the soul is frequently tempted against hope, and when all created aids fail, must hope against hope, or beyond all human hope, because of the one formal motive, the help of God. "When I am weakest then am I strong." But God helps us most efficaciously when He confers upon us, not only the grace which urges and stimulates, but grace which is efficacious in itself. Thus does the soul attain to holy abandonment in the hands of God.

Similarly, by means of this teaching on grace, charity toward God is strengthened. "In this is charity: not as though we had loved God, but

because He hath first loved us, and sent His Son to be a propitiation for our sins" (I John 4:10). For our charity is based upon the divine communication of the life of grace, and the more intimately and efficaciously grace is bestowed upon us, the more we ought to love God, or to return His love. Hence, after enunciating the mystery of predestination, St. Paul adds (Rom. 8:35-39): "Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress or famine . . . or persecution or the sword? . . . But in all these things we overcome, because of Him that hath loved us [that is, by the grace of Christ]. For I am sure that neither death nor life nor angels… nor depth nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." For Christ declares: "Those whom Thou gavest Me have I kept," and Christ can always keep our souls efficaciously: "And I give them life everlasting . . . and no man shall pluck them out of My hand" (John 10:28).

But these truths are not fully grasped except in the mystical life. Therefore it must be said that St. Thomas' sublime doctrine of grace is rejected by many precisely on account of its exceeding sublimity, but because, by really preserving the deep sense of Holy Scripture, it leads us to the highest contemplation of God, the author of salvation.

Confirmation. This doctrine of efficacious grace is accepted by great mystics and eminent spiritual writers. It is found in St. Paul, as we have already shown, and in St. Augustine, whose teaching abides in the decrees of the Second Council of Orange which defined that "no man has anything of his own but sin and lying" (chaps. 20, 22; Denz., nos. 193, 195). St. Augustine says (De praedestin. sanct., chap. 5): "A haughty man may indeed say to another: 'My faith, my justice, or some other thing distinguishes me.'" To one to whom such thoughts occur, the good Doctor puts the question: "What hast thou that thou hast not received? And from whom, unless it be from Him who distinguishes thee from another, to whom He did not give what He gave to thee? But if thou hast received, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received? Can that be glorying in the Lord? But nothing is so contrary to this disposition as to glory in one's own merits as if in something which one was responsible for effecting, rather than the grace of God; for it is grace which distinguishes the good from the bad, not what is common to the good and the bad." "Therefore, although it might be believed that Cornelius has done something well, the whole must be attributed to God, lest anyone should be exalted" (ibid., chap. 6). "This

grace is exceedingly hidden; but who doubts that grace really exists? And so it is this grace, which is secretly imparted by the divine bounty to human hearts, that it may remove their hardness of heart for the first time" (ibid., chap. 8). "God, in fact, does what He wills in the hearts of men" (ibid., chap. 20). "We therefore assert that perseverance is a gift of God whereby one perseveres in Christ unto the end" (De dono. persever., chap. I). "Hence we ask that we may not be lead into temptation, that this may not occur. For nothing is done except what He Himself does or permits to be done. He is therefore powerful both to bend wills from evil unto good and to convert those inclined to fall, as well as to direct toward Himself an agreeable course" (ibid., chap. 6).

St. Prosper and St. Fulgentius spoke in terms similar to those quoted above. With respect to the Fathers who wrote before St. Augustine on grace and predestination, consult Bossuet's Défense de la tradition et des saints Pères, Bk. XII, chap. 39. Pelagianism and Semi-Pelagianism had not yet arisen, and consequently the question had not yet been explicitly posed.

Together with Augustine, St. Bernard demonstrates (De grat. et lib. arbitr., c. I, no. 2) that grace saves while free will is safeguarded: "Free will enables us to will, grace enables us to will well" (ibid.,chap. 6, no. 16). How do grace and free will operate? "Together, not singly; simultaneously, not in turn; not partly grace and partly free will, but they perform the whole by a single, undivided act" (ibid., chap. 14, nos. 46 f.). Consequently, when God crowns our merits in heaven, He crowns His own gifts: "His gifts, which He gave to men, He divided unto merits and rewards" (ibid., chap. 13, no. 43). Cf. Dict. de théol. cath., article "St. Bernard" by Vacandard, col. 776 ff. St. Bonaventure speaks in similar terms (II Sent., dist. 26, q. 2): "This is also the disposition of the pious, that they attribute nothing to themselves, but all to the grace of God."

In the Following of Christ, Bk. III, chap. 4, no. 2, we read: "Never esteem thyself to be anything on account of thy good works . . . Of thyself thou always tendest to nothing, speedily dost thou fail, speedily art thou overcome, speedily disturbed, speedily dissolved. Thou hast not anything in which thou canst glory, but many things for which thou oughtest to abase thyself; for thou art much weaker than thou canst comprehend." Ibid., chap. 8, no. I: "I am nothing, and I knew it not. If I am left to myself, behold, I am nothing, and all weakness; but if Thou suddenly look upon me, I presently become strong, and am replenished with new joy. And truly wonderful it is

that I am so quickly raised up and so graciously embraced by Thee; I who, by my own weight, am always sinking down to the lowest depths." Ibid., chap. 9, nos. 2-3: "Out of Me both little and great, poor and rich, as out of a living fountain, draw living water . . .Therefore thou must not ascribe any good to thyself, nor attribute virtue to any man; but give all to God, without whom man has nothing. I have given all, I will also have all again; and with great strictness do I require a return of thanks. This is that truth by which all vainglory is put to flight. And if heavenly grace and true charity come in, there shall be no envy nor narrowness of heart, nor shall self-love keep possession. For divine charity overcometh all, and enlargeth all the powers of the soul, If thou art truly wise, thou wilt rejoice in Me alone, thou wilt hope in Me alone; for none is good but God alone, who is to be praised above all, and to be blessed in all." Ibid., chap. 55, nos. 4-5: "Without it [grace] I can do nothing; but I can do all things . . . come, descend upon me, replenish me early with thy consolation, lest my soul faint through weariness and dryness of mind. . . . in Thee, when grace strengtheneth me. . . . Oh, most blessed grace, This alone is my strength, this alone giveth counsel and help. This is more mighty than all my enemies, and wiser than all the wise." Ibid., chap. 58: "I am to be praised in all My saints; I am to be blessed above all and to be honored in each, whom I have so gloriously magnified and predestinated, without any foregoing merits of their own."

St. John of the Cross, Spiritual Canticle, stanza 38, no. 10: "In that day of eternity, that is, before the creation and according to His good pleasure God predestined the soul unto glory and determined the degree of glory that He would give it. From that moment this glory became a property of the soul and this in a manner so absolute that no event or accident, temporal or spiritual, can ever take it away radically, for what God has given it gratuitously will always remain its property." Ascent of Mount Carmel, Bk. II, chap. 5: "God determines the degree of union freely as He determines the degree of the beatific vision to each one."

St. John of the Cross declares that it depends on the good pleasure of God alone that this particular soul should be predestined to such and such a degree of glory; in other words, predestination to glory is prior to any foreseen merits. Prière de l'âme embrasée (Carmelite ed., I, 475): "If Thou awaitest my works, O Lord, to grant me what I ask, give them to me, effect them in me, and join thereto the sufferings Thou deignest to accept from me."

Although St. Francis de Sales does not always follow St. Thomas in this matter, he holds in the Treatise on the Love of God, Bk. II, chap. 12; that "Grace . . . touches powerfully but yet so delicately the springs of our spirit that our free will suffers no violence from it. . . . She acts strongly, yet so sweetly that our will is not overwhelmed by so powerful an action. . . . The consent to grace depends much more on grace than on the will, while the resistance to grace depends upon the will only. . . . If thou didst know the gift of God."

Indeed, almost all spiritual writers, dealing with souls that are being led along the passive ways are in accord with the Thomistic doctrine. (Cf. J. Grou, S.J., Spiritual Maxims, second maxim; L. Lallemant, S . J., Spiritual Doctrine, fourth principle: "Docility to the Holy Ghost," chaps. I and 2; J. P. de Caussade, S.J., Self-Abandonment to Divine Providence, Bk. III, chaps. I and 2.)

Let us conclude this application of the Thomist doctrine to spirituality with a quotation from Bossuet, Elévations sur les mystères (eighteenth week, fifteenth elevation, "Practical humility solves difficulties"): "Contradictions against Jesus Christ regarding the mystery of grace. Behold another terrible stumbling block for human pride. Man says in his heart: I have my free will; God has made me free, and I will to become a just man; I will that the stroke which decides my eternal salvation should come originally from me. Thus does he seek, on some pretext, to glorify himself. Whither are you bound, O fragile craft? You are about to strike against a reef and deprive yourself of the help of God, who assists only the humble, making them humble that He may help them. . . .

"I can. I wish to find something to cling to in my free will, that I cannot reconcile with this abandonment to grace. Proud contradictor, do you wish to reconcile these things yourself or are you willing to believe that God reconciles them? He reconciles them to such an extent that He wills, without releasing you from your action, that you should attribute the whole achievement of your salvation to Him. For He is the Savior who declares: 'there is no Savior beside Me' (Isa. 43:11). Believe firmly that Jesus Christ is the Savior, and all difficulties will vanish."

This great doctrine of grace is wonderfully presented to the modern world by St. Theresa of the Child Jesus, in her way of spiritual childhood, which is suitable to all Christians, even the perfect, since they are all adopted children of God; see the last chapter of this book on the spirit of

adoption of sons of God. Among the children of God, they are more truly His children who place greater trust, not in themselves, but in God and His help.3

3. EFFICACIOUS GRACE IN THE SAINTS, ESPECIALLY THE MARTYRS

We shall now present eminent examples which confirm the Thomistic teaching. Our adversaries say: Efficacious grace is not efficacious of itself, nor is it a predetermining motion. To be sure, it is not the formal determination of this free act toward which it moves us, for it precedes this formal determination by a priority not of time but of nature and causality. Nevertheless, inasmuch as this efficacious motion depends on a positive, predetermining divine decree, it moves us infallibly to determine ourselves freely (often by discursive deliberation) in the same sense as this divine decree, for example, to obey here and now rather than not to obey.

Thus efficacious grace infallibly moved the Blessed Virgin Mary freely to say on the day of the Annunciation: “Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done unto me according to thy word.” Hence the Blessed Virgin infallibly and freely uttered her fiat ordained toward the incarnation of the Word, which was the object of an eternal decree to be fulfilled infallibly. And again the Mother of God repeated her fiat on Calvary, infallibly and freely, with the highest degree of merit.

Likewise and with still greater reason, grace efficacious in itself moved the most holy soul of Christ to will freely and meritoriously to offer the sacrifice of the cross for us, as had been announced by the prophets according to an eternal decree of consequent will, to be accomplished infallibly. But if in a single case, in the soul of the Blessed Virgin Mary or in the most holy soul of Christ, grace efficacious in itself did not destroy liberty, but rather actualized it, no one can maintain that of itself it destroys or injures liberty.

In wayfaring saints, especially during the exceedingly painful passive purification or dark night of the soul, described by St. John of the Cross, temptations against faith, hope, and charity are often so vehement that a heroic act is required to resist them; hence the souls thus tried earnestly beg for the most efficacious help of God. St. John of the Cross (Dark Night, Bk. II, chap. 23) writes: “There is in the soul thus tried a struggle or contest between the spirit of God and the spirit of evil.” Therefore does this soul

then pray thus: “If Thou awaitest my works, O Lord, to grant me what I ask, give them to me, deign to effect in me both to will and to accomplish, together with the trials which I offer Thee according to Thy good pleasure.”

Thus in particular did St. Paul of the Cross pray, he who was to walk this road of suffering for forty years, that he might become an example of the life of reparation. He wrote to a certain religious of his Order whom he directed: “In your case there will be a different sort of blade; in fact it is there already; love will be the executioner, let him do what he wills, for he is a master craftsman. When he inflicts the martyrdom, one has need of extraordinarily great assistance and strength coming from God; without that, one will not endure the thrust.” (Letters, III,158.)

The efficacy of grace is especially evident in the martyrs, since they must traverse the path to sanctity in a short space of time by acts which are entirely heroic. In them are verified the words of St. Paul (Rom. 8:35-39): “Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress or famine or nakedness or danger or persecution or the sword? (As it is written: For Thy sake we are put to death all the day long. We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.) But in all these things we overcome, because of Him that hath loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities nor powers . . . nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

In regard to this text, St. Thomas says in his Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans: “Every benefit is conferred upon us by divine Providence, and so efficaciously that nothing can withstand it. . . .In all these things we overcome, not by our own strength, but through the help of Christ. Hence it is said: ‘because of Him that hath loved us,’ that is, on account of His help. . . .The Apostle is speaking in the person of all the predestinate, concerning whom he declares that, in view of the certainty of their predestination, nothing can separate them from charity.”

Truly, then, does the effect of grace become marvelously evident in the martyrs. It suffices to call to mind their heroic fortitude which manifests the exceedingly efficacious help of God in the midst of unendurable adversities. For the virtue of fortitude differs greatly from the pertinacity or stubbornness of pride. Fortitude is not a virtue with the status of a virtue which is reserved for the dispositions difficult of attainment unless it is connected with other virtues, such as humility, meekness, piety; for it must come under the direction of prudence really to confirm a man in the

goodness of virtue and not in the ob-stinacy of pride. (Cf. Ia IIae, q. 65, a. 1, 2,3.) Moreover, in order to be heroic, fortitude must perform works exceeding the ordinary powers of men promptly, with alacrity, whenever the occasion presents itself, frequently, if need be, and constantly (Benedict XIV, De canoni. sanct., Bk. III, chap. 21).

Thus did the martyrs endure the most atrocious torments. They were certainly not insensible to fear before the moment of trial; Jesus Himself began to fear and to be heavy; but they prayed and overcame their fear. They were not moved by rash impetuosity, but in tranquillity of soul and meekness of spirit, praying for their persecutors, they fulfilled their martyrdom with eagerness and constancy "rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation" (Rom. 12:12).

However, this heroic fortitude, witnessed by all, can be explained only by grace which is efficacious of itself; indeed, it is a miracle of the moral order. For such fortitude, with the other related virtues, demands heroic acts of the principal virtues frequently repeated on the part of countless men, women, and young girls of every condition, eagerly and perseveringly carrying on amid the most intense physical and moral sufferings without the least hope of earthly reward, nay rather in spite of all worldly promises and allurements.

But heroic acts of the principal virtues cannot be performed so often nor with such alacrity and constancy, in the midst of frightful torments, by a multitude of human beings of every condition, sex, and age, without any natural motive, unless the most efficacious and, in fact, extraordinary intervention of God accompanies them. For sanctity, or a very steadfast union with God, cannot exist without efficacious help from on high, nor extraordinary sanctity without extraordinary help from God; for the order of agents must correspond to the order of ends, and only the supreme agent can move efficaciously toward the supreme end.

Lastly, the martyrs themselves declared that they were aided by efficacious divine help without which they could not have endured their torments. St. Polycarp: "Leave me as I am; for He who enabled me to endure the fire will also enable me to remain motionless on the pyre, without your precaution of lock and key." St. Felicitas while in prison experienced the severe pains of childbirth, so that one of the guards said to her: "If you suffer so much now, what will you do when you are thrown to the beasts?" But she replied confidently: "Now it is I who suffer what I

suffer, but then another will be in me who will suffer for me, since I am to suffer for His sake." In the same way Andronicus said to his judge: "Armed by my God I stand before thee in the faith and power of the Lord God almighty."

The Levite, Vincent, amid the most severe tortures of the rack, exclaimed: "Bestir yourself, and let loose all the intensity of your malice. You will see me able, by the power of God, to endure more torments than you yourself can inflict." As we read in the Martyrology for January 19: "In Smyrna, blessed Germanicus…put away by the grace of the might of God the fears of bodily weakness, and…provoked the wild beast prepared for him and, being devoured by the teeth of the beast, merited to be made one with the true bread, the Lord Jesus Christ, by dying for His sake."

It is enough, too, merely to recall the Office of St. Agnes martyr, in which is marvelously combined the natural weakness of this holy girl and the efficacious grace of God: "In the midst of the flames, Blessed Agnes extended her hands and prayed: 'I entreat Thee, O Father, worthy of all adoration, worship and fear, since by Thy holy Son I have escaped the threats of the sacriligeous tyrant and by an unspotted path have avoided the defilements of the flesh: behold now I come to Thee whom I have loved, whom I have sought, and for whom I have always longed.'"

Lastly, Christ had predicted this victory on the part of the martyrs: "It shall be given you in that hour what to speak" (Matt. 10:19). In their victory is likewise manifested in a wonderful manner both the free will of the martyrs who said in full liberty: "Rather to be tortured and put to death than to deny faith in God," and the efficacy of divine grace, which for three centuries continued to be the cause of this triumph. Their memory abides in Rome through the Colosseum, and no higher tribute can be paid "unto the praise of the glory of His grace" (Ephes. 1:6).

Thus are verified the words of St. Paul to the Ephesians (I :4-6): "As He chose us in Him [Christ] before the foundation of the world. that we should be holy and unspotted in His sight in charity. Who hath predestinated us unto the adoption of children through Jesus Christ unto Himself: according to the purpose of His will: unto the praise of the glory of His grace." With regard to these words St. Thomas says in his Commentary on the Epistle: "He chose us not because we should be holy nor because we were, but He chose us for this reason: that we might be holy in virtues and unspotted from vices. For He makes His choice according to both elements of justice:

the withdrawal from evil and the doing of good. . . . The twofold cause of this immense benefit is indicated. One is efficient, that is, the absolute will of God: “according to the purpose of His will,” and further (Rom. 9:18): “He hath mercy on whom He will; and whom He will, He hardeneth.” The other cause is final, namely, that we should praise and know the goodness of God, as expressed in the words: “unto the praise of the glory of His grace.”

4. THE EFFICACIOUS GRACE OF MOST ARDENT LOVE, ACCORDING TO ST. THERESA (SIXTH MANSION, CHAP. 2)

In chapter two of the sixth mansion and in her autobiography as well (chap. 29), St. Theresa speaks of the prayer of impulse in which the soul receives certain impulses from our Lord, under the stimulation of which it tends toward Him with a great vehemence of spirit. I present briefly what the mystical theologians hold in this regard.

These impulses are the effect of efficacious actual grace anticipating the soul. The soul experiences them in its innermost center as at once strong and gentle. They are so delicate and subtle that they can scarcely be described by any comparison, as the mystical writers declare. They differ markedly from any sensible movement that we may induce by our own effort. For it sometimes, even frequently, happens that the soul, while thinking of nothing of the sort, suddenly feels inflamed as if by a dart from the hand of God or a thunderbolt, and although it does not perceive any audible sound, it is conscious that the wound has been made by the divine Spouse, and hears Him calling by so evident an interior sign that it cannot doubt His being present to it. It feels plainly that it is with God and nevertheless experiences pain. But this pain is sweet to it so that it wishes the pain would never cease. This delightful pain is not always equally intense; sometimes it lasts a long while, at other times it passes quickly, depending upon the good pleasure of God.

A person who is not familiar with such movements cannot recognize them. They do not resemble those vehement impulsions caused by sensible devotion, for in these latter nature has a part and, if they are not modified, they destroy health. However, these movements of which we are speaking are very different; we do not cooperate in them naturally, rather do they proceed from God. The soul feels a dart thrust into the depths of its heart

and is impelled to the most ardent love of God, in obedience to whom it would gladly lose its life. It is the effect of actual grace at once exceedingly efficacious and most profound. Words are incapable of expressing the manner in which God thus wounds the soul. This pain is so exquisite that there is no delight in this life that satisfies to such an extent. The soul would wish to be forever dying of such a malady. This pain blended with joy keeps the soul beside itself, nor does it understand how such a thing can be.

Sometimes this wound is merely spiritual; sometimes it extends even to the body, to the organ of the heart. When the wound of love is not inflicted so intensely, the soul may apply a remedy to it by certain mortifications, which however are scarcely felt even when carried to the extent of shedding blood. That is, the first spiritual pain is so oppressive and penetrating that it cannot be driven out but only somewhat mitigated. Only God can apply the remedy which appears to be nothing less than death, by means of which the transpierced soul attains to immediate vision and perfect fulfillment.

When the afore-mentioned wound of love is vehemently inflicted in the interior of the heart or penetrates the very depths of the will, no remedy is of any avail to assuage that delightful pain; it racks and weakens the body to such an extent that complete ecstasy follows. However, the soul is by no means weakened, but on the contrary its vigor is greatly augmented. A sign of the divine origin of this favor is the great humility which a person experiences after the ecstasy. The soul receiving such a favor should not fear deception on the part of the demon, but rather ingratitude on its own part. Hence, rendering thanks to God, the soul should strive to submit to Him faithfully.

The value of this most efficacious profound grace is apparent from its effects. Thus the first effect of the prayer of impulse is the most complete contempt for the world, a much deeper understanding of the words of Ecclesiastes: “vanity of vanities, and all is vanity,” except to love God and serve Him alone. The second effect is an intense desire for eternal things; the soul continually sighs after God. The third effect is a love of trials for the sake of God. So strong was this impulse in St. Theresa that she used to say: “Lord, either let me suffer or let me die”; nor did she ask this only on account of its merit but also because of the solace which she found in enduring pains.

There results a most ardent thirst for the living God and the almost continual exercise of heroic virtues, of the perfect imitation of Jesus Christ,

and of a life of reparation for the conversion of sinners. The soul so disposes itself finally for eternal life that it has no need after death of passing through purgatory.

These effects produced in the lives of the saints render apparent the supreme efficacy of grace, arousing that which is best in them, namely, the free determination of their meritorious acts, which proceed from the infused virtues with the help of the gifts. Thus do they penetrate much more deeply the sense of our Lord's words: "Without Me you can do nothing" in the order of salvation, and those words of St. Paul: "For who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received?" "I know both how to be brought low, and I know how to abound…. I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me." That is, as St. Thomas observes in his Commentary on the Epistle to the Philippians (4:13): "I should not be able to endure these offenses unless the hand of God sustained me, according to Ezechiel (3:14): 'The hand of the Lord was with me,' and Isaias (40:31): 'They that hope in the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall take wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.'"

All this evidence confirms the doctrine according to which the grace of God is efficacious not extrinsically, on account of our foreseen consent, but of itself, intrinsically, because God wills it to be efficacious and, by it, to lead us, even through the greatest persecutions, unto life eternal.

Further confirmation from the inspiration of the Bible. Leo XIII, in his encyclical Providentissimus Deus, 1893 (Denz., no. 1952), thus explains the inspiration of the Bible through a movement which infallibly impels the intellect and will of the sacred writer to write freely what God wills and nothing else: "God by His supernatural power so stirred and moved them to write and so assisted them while they wrote that they might rightly conceive, will to set down faithfully, and aptly express with infallible truth all and only that which He should commend; otherwise He Himself would not be the author of the whole of Sacred Scripture." But if in this case infallibly efficacious divine motion does not destroy liberty, neither does it do so in other cases.8

5. EFFICACIOUS GRACE IN CHRIST, IMPECCABLE AND FREELY OBEDIENT

The question of the eflicacy of grace is illustrated by what is said on the part of St. Thomas and his school by way of reconciling the free obedience

of Christ with His impeccability; cf. IIIa, q. 18, a. 4. Christ was freely obedient unto the death of the cross, thus meriting our salvation, and yet He obeyed infallibly, through efficacious grace, so that He could not have sinned by disobedience; for He was not only sinless, but absolutely impeccable. Nowhere else does it appear so clearly that the predetermining divine decree with grace infallibly efficacious of itself (in respect to the heroic acts of Christ suffering for us on the cross) was simultaneous with the free will requisite for strictly meritorious acts (otherwise Christ would not have merited for us, properly speaking).

But if in one single instance grace efficacious in itself does not destroy free will, but rather actualizes and perfects it, no one can say that this grace, when given, of itself destroys our liberty. Hence this question should be carefully studied with reference to Christ Himself.

It is always advisable to have recourse to the great theological problems which are often not correctly propounded and the profundity of which always demands greater penetration. In these lofty matters, positive theology does not suffice; it gathers up certain documents of Holy Scripture and tradition, but does not furnish a deep understanding of them. Thus frequently various opinions of theologians are set forth and discussed from the historical aspect, and thereupon many writers choose from among these opinions by the eclectic system whatever subjectively appeals to them, without any objective reason. Indeed, it is said over and over again that one should proceed historically and critically; but this eclectic method does not produce a scientific theological work. It would be necessary, to begin with, to state the difficulty of the problem accurately so that its depth and significance may appear; and then, for its solution, it does not suffice to have recourse to whatever appeals to one subjectively, but rather to very certain objective principles. Otherwise the sublimity of faith is minimized, and theology is not directed toward the fruitful understanding of revealed mysteries nor toward their contemplation.

An example of this defect in method is to be found in the great problem of reconciling the free obedience of Christ with His impeccability. In the question of harmonizing two extremes difficult to reconcile, the first rule of method is this: not to deny one of the two extremes to be reconciled. Such an attempt would not solve the problem, but only do away with it. Nor have many authors been sufficiently aware of this with reference to the present question.

If Christians are asked: “Did not Christ obey the commands of His Father in perfect liberty and with real merit?” all, or almost all, reply in the affirmative. Likewise, their answer is an assent when questioned: “Was not Christ impeccable?” But frequently they do not concern themselves with the difficulty involved in reconciling these two statements which they accept as certain and utterly tenable.

The crux of the problem. However, the difficulty in such a harmonization is made manifest by the following classical objection: He who obeys freely is capable of not obeying. Hence if Christ obeyed the commands of His Father freely, He was capable of not obeying, that is, able to sin; therefore He was thoroughly sinless but not absolutely impeccable, as is generally held. On the other hand, if Christ was absolutely impeccable, He did not obey freely, with freedom from necessity or free will, but only with freedom from coercion, or spontaneity, which exists even in brute beasts. So did the Jansenists declare. According to them, “in order to merit, man does not require freedom from necessity; freedom from coercion suffices,” that is, spontaneity (Denz., no. 1094). For the Jansenists and, with still greater reason, for the Calvinists, efficacious grace united with a precept does not permit of any power to do the contrary; in their opinion this power appears only at the expense of efficacious grace. This is the divided sense of Calvin which is confused in several, even recent, manuals with the divided sense of Thomists whose doctrine would thereby become heretical. Such confusion denotes an ignorance of the question, as will be made evident below.

Briefly stated, the present difficulty now to be examined is: either Christ could refrain from a commanded act and thus could sin, even if He did not in fact sin; that is, in that case He would not be impeccable although He would be sinless; or He could not refrain from a commanded act and thus would not be free in obeying with freedom from necessity, nor consequently would He merit. Hence it seems that impeccability and free obedience exclude one another in Christ. This is the antinomy to be solved.

That the difficulty may appear in a clearer light, it should be remarked that, just as Christ was not only unerring, but infallible, so was He not only sinless in fact, but absolutely impeccable de jure, by right, i.e., He could not sin. Christ was actually sinless i.e., de facto, according as efficacious grace was always given to Him. Thus those who preserve their innocence until death are saved at least from mortal sin by efficacious grace. But under this

efficacious grace they never resist, although they are capable of resisting, so far as there remains in them the wretched power of sinning, which did not exist in Christ. Not only was efficacious grace always given to Him in fact, but it was due to Him de jure, i.e., by right, and thus not only was Jesus actually sinless, but absolutely impeccable de jure, by right of law of His nature, and this for three reasons.

1. By reason of the divine person of the Word, or the hypostatic union, He absolutely could not sin, either by bringing sin into contact with this union or by sin destroying the hypostatic union. For the sin would recoil upon the very person of the Word, inasmuch as actions are imputed to the person. Furthermore, all the actions of the human will of Christ were not only eminently righteous but theandric, and of infinite meritorious value by reason of the divine person of the Word.

2. Christ was absolutely impeccable by reason of the inamissible fullness of grace and charity which was, in Him, the sequel to the hypostatic union.

3. Christ was absolutely impeccable by reason of the beatific vision which He received at the instant of His conception and of the creation of His soul. Like the blessed spirits, He could not turn away from the clear vision of God nor could He love any the less God thus clearly seen.

How, then, could Christ, who was not only sinless but absolutely impeccable on three scores, freely obey the commands of His Father? It seems that He could not, since He could not disobey. In form the difficulty is thus stated formally: He who obeys freely is capable of disobeying. But Christ, who was absolutely impeccable, could not disobey. Therefore Christ did not obey freely the divine precepts whether positive or of the natural law.

At first sight, this objection appears to be thoroughly scientific, critical, and irrefutable. But, after the fashion of nominalism or empiricism, it considers only the facts and not the nature of things. It does not grasp the nature of the specifying object of free choice, which is an object not good in every respect; nor does it fathom the nature of the command and the grace which are given for the fulfillment of a free act and not for the destruction of liberty. Thus, under the appearance of keen intelligence, this beautiful sophism masks an utter misapprehension of the problem, just as in present-day existentialism, which is merely a new form of radical nominalism and absolute empiricism, there is a complete lack of understanding with regard to human life as such and its end. This failure to comprehend the higher

realms of theology is known as spiritual dullness and blindness of soul, which are opposed to the gifts of wisdom and understanding. St. Thomas expressly refers to them when he treats of these gifts.

I am dwelling on this fundamental objection, which is stronger than all others that may be proposed. And it should be remarked that this objection is easier to understand than the reply to it, since the former proceeds by the inferior method of our knowledge which scarcely goes beyond sensible objects, while, on the contrary, the real reply is drawn from the sublimity of the mystery to be safe-guarded, and requires great penetration and intellectual maturity.

It is indeed easy enough to see vaguely what is erroneous in this objection, but it is most difficult to set down precisely in what this ment of a clock or of a diseased heart or in the voice of a great singer, but often most difficult to discover precisely the cause of the disturbance and the effective remedy to be applied.

St. Thomas' solution. The Angelic Doctor recognized this difficulty and thus expressed it in III Sent., d. 18, a. 2, objection 5: "By natural (operations, such as breathing) we do not merit because of the fact that they are determined to one end. But in Christ, free will was determined to the good (since He was impeccable); therefore He could not merit by His free will, and accordingly by no means at all, since all merit depends upon free will." Hence it seems that two fundamental truths of Christian religion are contrary one to the other; error consists, just as it is easy to detect some disturbance in the move namely, that Christ was impeccable, and that, by obeying, He freely merited our salvation. But our whole Christian life is based on the infinite value of the merits of Christ, and in particular on His heroic obedience.

St. Thomas states the same objection more succinctly and boldly in the Summa theologica, IIIa, q. 18, a. 4: Whether there was free will in Christ. In the third objection he says: "Free will possesses the alternative (of willing or not willing). But the will of Christ was determined to the good, since He could not sin, as declared above. Therefore in Christ there was no free will." Consequently He did not obey freely, nor did He merit, strictly speaking. It is clear from this that our adversaries did not discover this objection; it is already admirably formulated in the works of St. Thomas.

The holy doctor answers in the Summa theologica, as in the Commentary on the Sentences: "The will of Christ, although determined to the good, is

not however determined to this or that good (for instance, to choosing Peter rather than John as His vicar). And therefore it pertained to Christ to choose, by His free will confirmed in good, as in the case of the blessed."

This was the lofty solution which many theologians subsequently failed to consider as they should have done. St. Thomas also declared in Sent., loc. cit.: "To be capable of sin is neither freedom of will nor a part of liberty, as St. Anselm says. And in fact this determination (that is, to moral good) is identified with the perfection of free will whereby, through the habit of grace and glory, it terminates in that to which it is naturally ordained, namely, the good."

Hence St. Thomas' solution is that Christ freely obeyed the precepts of His Father by His free will confirmed in good, in the same way as pertains to the blessed in heaven. Further, the holy doctor shows (IIIa, q. 47 ad 2) in the course of the article that Christ died through obedience, according to the words of St. John (10:18): "I have power to lay it [My life] down….This commandment have I received of My Father."

Many later theologians have failed to consider these golden words attentively. In St. Thomas, however, they were highly characteristic and are verified in his opinion wherever confirmation in grace is involved. Thus after Pentecost the apostles were confirmed in grace and henceforth could not sin, at least gravely; but they obeyed the commands of God freely when something not good in every respect was commanded them, since the indifference of free will remained with regard to such an object. Likewise the Blessed Virgin Mary, confirmed in grace, freely obeyed the precepts of the Lord. In the same way the souls in purgatory, confirmed in good, can no longer sin and freely adore God whom they do not yet clearly see. And similarly, as already remarked by St. Thomas (Sent., loc. cit.), although the blessed in heaven do not freely love God clearly seen (since God clearly seen is an object in every respect good), they nevertheless freely obey God in the accomplishment of any particular good; and they freely pray for such and such a wayfarer rather than for another. In sum, God Himself is at the same time absolutely impeccable and utterly free to create, and to create this world rather than another. And likewise, at the opposite extreme, the demon hates God freely, not of necessity, but through his freedom confirmed in evil, as St. Thomas observes in several places.

In the mind of the Angelic Doctor, confirmation in grace, which excludes sin, in no wise excludes free obedience to the divine commands which

involve an object that is not, in every respect, good, Wherefore? Because, as explained in Ia IIae, q. 10, a. 2: “If some object is proposed to the will which is universally good and is so from every aspect (such as the clear vision of God), the will tends to it of necessity (although spontaneously) if it wills anything at all; for it cannot will the opposite. But if some object is proposed to it which is not good from every possible aspect, the will does not incline to it necessarily,” but freely. In short, the will retains a dominating indifference with regard to any object which is not in every respect good, for example, regarding the acceptance of the painful death of the cross for our sake. Furthermore, neither the divine command nor efficacious grace deprives the soul of this psychological liberty, since they are given precisely to actualize free will, and that which actualizes free will does not destroy it.

This was the magnificent, sublime solution offered by St. Thomas. He did not deny the impeccability of Christ nor His free obedience to commands properly so called, but found their harmonization in the lofty concept of the confirmation of free will in good. Thus did he offer a fertile understanding of the mystery and disposed it for St. Thomas’ solution may be stated briefly as follows: an object which is not in every respect good, such as a painful death for our contemplation.

St. Thomas’ solution may be stated briefly as follows: an object which is not in every respect good, such as a painful death for our salvation, is chosen freely; moreover, the confirmation of free will in good does not take away free will with regard to things commanded, but rather perfects it. Such is the case with the blessed. And so, in Christ, while He was both a wayfarer and a comprehensor, there was the freedom necessary for merit when He obeyed, in the strict sense, unto the death of the cross. This most painful death was not an object in every respect good; it did not draw the will of Christ irresistibly, as a work of God clearly seen would do. Further, the command and the efficacious grace were conferred for freely accomplishing this holocaust; they therefore did not take away the liberty of this infinitely meritorious act. Hence Christ was the supreme exemplar of obedience. Thus the elements of the problem are perfectly reconciled, in spite of the obscurity of the mystery.

Nevertheless many subsequent theologians have failed to under-stand this sublime solution, taking another direction wherein the problem became insoluble and therefore was left unsolved; rather, by negation, did it deprive

Christ of obedience in the strict sense, so that He would not have been free with respect to things commanded but only in other matters. Thus there was no longer a question of reconciliation, since one of the two extremes to be reconciled was denied.

What, then, is the source of these other solutions? Many theologians since the time of St. Thomas, notably the Molinists, began with this assumption: To preserve psychological liberty, or free will under precept and efficacious grace, it does not suffice that power to do the opposite should remain, but it is required that the will be able to unite the opposite act with the divine command and efficacious grace, or at least the omission of the command, that is, by sinning at least through omission.

The answer to this is: If this is so, that Socrates may freely sit down, it does not suffice that he be capable of standing up or of remaining seated at the same time, but it is required that he unite the very act of standing with sitting, or that he has the power to sit and to stand at the same time, which is impossible. Efficacious grace united to actual resistance would no longer be efficacious.

But even if we admit this presupposition, the problem originally proposed becomes insoluble. There could not be agreement between Christ's free obedience to the commands of His Father and His absolute impeccability. Hence, if they were commands in the strict sense, an impeccable Christ did not obey them freely, and consequently did not merit by the merit of obedience properly so called. The problem is not solved, but declared unsolvable and dismissed. Anyone who is willing to accept such a verdict while at the same time holding to the principles of St. Thomas injects the most acute dissonance into Thomism, comparable to the striking of a false note in a Beethoven symphony.

The difficulty is evidently connected intimately with the subject of efficacious grace. For it poses the question, whether under divine precept and grace efficacious of itself, in the impeccable Christ, His obedience remained free and meritorious. Does the confirming of free will in good take away free will regarding precepts? This is precisely the question to be solved.

Besides the opinion of St. Thomas and Thomists, there are two other opinions. Some authors maintain that Christ did not receive by Lorca, who quotes Paludanus, and later by Petau, Franzelin, L. Billot, in his De incarnatione, these 29 and 30, and with some modification, by Father M. de

la Taille: Mysterium fidei, elucid. 7 and 8. According to this opinion, Christ was not free in things of precept, either of natural or of positive law, because it is physically impossible for a comprehensor to will not to obey. And Christ would not have been free unless He could combine disobedience with the precept. Thence arises a great disadvantage in this opinion; namely, Christ would not be the supreme exemplar of obedience "unto death, even the death of the cross."

Others, after an eclectic fashion, declare that Christ received from His Father a precept determining only the substantial element of death, but not the circumstances of time, manner, the cross, etc. This opinion is maintained by Vasquez, Disp. 74, c. 5; De Lugo, Disp. 26, sect. 7, no. 82; sect. 8, no. 102; Lessius, De summo bono, Bk. II, no. 185. Tournely holds that Christ could obtain a dispensation from the precept. This eclectic viewpoint agrees with the preceding one that Christ was not free with respect to things of precept, for example, He did not freely accept the precept of dying for our sakes, but only the circumstances of His death which were not of precept. This solution does not penetrate the intellectual problem to be solved, but is only a material transposition of the elements of the problem. Moreover, the Church has always affirmed that Christ merited our salvation by His death and passion, and not merely by the circumstances of His death. Cf. Council of Trent (Denz., nos. 799 ff.).

Thomists hold, on the other hand, that Christ received from His Father a true precept, in the strict sense, to accept death for our sake, a precept determining both His death and the circumstances of His death, which Christ nevertheless freely offered on the cross; that is, He was properly free also in things strictly of precept, by a perfect liberty confirmed in good. (Cf. among Thomists, John of St. Thomas, Gonet, the Salmanticenses, Billuart, etc. ; see also Dictionnaire de Théologie catholique, article "Jésus Christ" by A. Michel, col. 1304.) I have dealt with this question at length in a recent work, De Christo salvatore, Turin, 1946, pp. 324-44. To a certain extent, St. Robert Bellarmine agrees with Thomists in this matter (De justific., Bk. V, chap. II), but, together with Suarez, he explains it by scientia media, which Thomists do not admit. Long before, St. Bernard had beautifully said of Christ: "He lost His life, lest He should lose obedience" (Sermon on the Temple soldiery, chap. 13).

Nevertheless this is a question of grave significance. For if Christ's liberty in things of precept is denied, He is no longer the exemplar of every

virtue and of conformity with the divine will which issues precept. But to maintain such an opinion seems entirely thoughtless and injurious to Christ. Nor should the highest mysteries of faith be minimized for the sake of reaching an apparent clarity, which rather withdraws one from divine contemplation than disposes for it. The first thing to be considered is that faith deals with things unseen and likewise contemplation proceeding from a lively faith, illuminated by the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Hence the theological method in such matters, as it should be remarked, must not deny or minimize truths that are most certain in the present question: Christ's impeccability and His free obedience.

In these great questions some neglect the best commentators on St. Thomas, even when they are in agreement. Nevertheless they understood his teaching much more perfectly than we do. On the contrary; Leo XIII, in his encyclical Aeterni Patris warns: "And, lest it happen that the counterfeit supplant the genuine, and the impure instead of the pure waters be drunken down, see to it that the wisdom of Thomas be drawn from its own fountains, or from streamlets running directly from the fountain itself, which are adjudged fresh and pure by the positive and unanimous verdict of learned men." Therefore Leo XIII desired the commentaries of Cajetan and Ferrariensis to be reprinted in the Leonine edition. To attempt to reach a deep grasp of the doctrine of St. Thomas while neglecting the best commentators is like undertaking the ascent of a lofty mountain without an experienced guide, with the danger of wandering from the right path and falling into a precipice.

Proof of the Thomistic opinion. The opinion of Thomists, however, is thus proved. 1. Christ received a precept in the strict sense of the word to accept the death of the cross for our salvation. 2. Nevertheless Christ's liberty remained, as a perfect image of the impeccable liberty of God; the precept was given for the free accomplishment of the act and hence did not deprive Him of psychological liberty.

1. Christ had a real obligation of accepting death for our sake on account of the Father's precept. For we read in John 10:17 f.: "Therefore doth the Father love Me: because I lay down My life, that I may take it again. No man taketh it away from Me: but I lay it down Myself, and I have power to lay it down; and I have power to take it up again. This commandment have I received of My Father." There is no reason for saying that this is a command in the broad sense of the term. Indeed somewhat further on in St.

John's Gospel (14:30 f.) after the account of the Last Supper, occur the words of our Lord: "For the prince of this world cometh, and in Me he hath not anything. But that the world may know that I love the Father: and as the Father hath given Me the commandment, so do I." It is strictly a question of a precept to die for our salvation, for the word: έγτλλω, εντολη used to express the command of the Father in these two places is always, in the New Testament, a technical term signifying a divine command in the strict sense; cf. Matt. 5:19 and 22:36: "He therefore that shall break one of these least commandments,…shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven"; "Master, which is the great commandment in the law?"

Moreover, we find in St. John (15:10): "If you keep My commandments, you shall abide in My love; as I also have kept My Father's commandments, and do abide in His love." In this text, Christ uses the same word for the precepts imposed upon Him by His Father and those which He imposed upon His apostles; but the latter were precepts strictly speaking. Thus Christ was an exemplar of perfect obedience. Furthermore, this last text is concerned not only with the precept of dying, but with all the precepts of the Father which Christ observed and in fact observed freely and meritoriously for our sake. The thesis which affirms that Christ was not free regarding things of precept appears to be irreconcilable with the text just quoted. But many of these precepts, those, for instance, of the natural law, are antecedent to Christ's spontaneous oblation and therefore do not have their force from it, as Father de la Taille thought.

There are other texts which express Christ's free obedience to the divine precepts: "Father, if Thou wilt, remove this chalice from Me: but yet not My will, but Thine be done" (Luke 22:42). The purport of the words is almost identical in Heb. 10:7: "Behold I come: in the head of the book it is written of Me: that I should do Thy will, O God." And again in Phil. 2:8: "He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross"; and Rom. 5:1g: "For as by the disobedience of one man, many were made sinners; so also by the obedience of one, many shall be made just." Here it is a question of obedience properly speaking, as it is of Adam's disobedience in the strict sense. But obedience properly so called has as its formal object the command of a superior in the strict sense, not his mere counsel. It should be added that having recourse to a counsel does not help in saving Christ's liberty, for it is inconsistent with our Lord's consummate sanctity that He should be capable of omitting or neglecting

the counsels of God the Father, especially counsels supported by an eternal decree and ordained for the salvation of men as well as to the greater glory of God. In fact, regardless of any precept, the death of Christ with all its circumstances remains predetermined by the absolute will of God; cf. Luke 22:22: “The Son of man indeed goeth, according to that which is determined: but yet, woe to that man by whom He shall be betrayed”; and Acts 2:23: “This same [Jesus] being delivered up, by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, you by the hands of wicked men have crucified and slain.” Since Christ knew this divine will, it would have been no less inconsistent for Him not to conform to it than to sin. Nor may it be held, therefore, with Tournely, that Christ could have obtained a dispensation from the precept; for thus the merit of obedience would disappear, and the argument would not hold in the case of the precepts of the natural law, which did not depend upon Christ’s acceptance of them.

2. How, then, under the precept to die and under efficacious grace, did the impeccable Christ remain freely obedient? In the first place, it is certain that the human liberty of Christ is the purest image of impeccable, uncreated freedom. But God is at the same time absolutely impeccable and perfectly free, for instance, to create or not to create, or to create this world rather than another. Hence Christ, likewise, as man, has a will which was at once impeccable and free with regard to every object which is not good in every respect. Christ as God possessed liberty only in the order of good, not indeed in the order of evil; since the power of sinning or peccability, like fallibility, is a form of our defectibility, which cannot exist in perfect liberty. For liberty is defined as “the faculty of choosing the means properly ordained to the end” (Ia, q. 62, a. 8 ad 3). Hence the choice of something which deviates from the order of the end is a defect of liberty, just as it is a defect of reason to proceed while overlooking the order of principles. This is quite obvious.

In order that it may be evident that Christ’s liberty is the purest image of the liberty of God, it must be emphasized that, whereas God does indeed love Himself of necessity, yet He loves His creatures freely, that His goodness may be manifested, as it is the reason for loving creatures. Similarly, Christ as man, at once a wayfarer and a comprehensor, loved God clearly seen with a necessary, although spontaneous, love; but He loved the divine goodness freely as it is the reason for loving creatures, that is, an object not in every respect good.

It is true, of course, that uncreated, impeccable liberty is not subordinate to any precept, while, on the contrary, Christ as man was obliged to obey the precepts of His Father, as has been said; and it seems that a precept deprives one of liberty.

Reply. A precept indeed morally binds, that is, it takes away moral freedom with respect to the evil forbidden by it; in other words, it renders illicit the contrary act or even the contrary omission. But a precept does not deprive one of psychological liberty with respect to the thing commanded, since it is given precisely that the act may be accomplished freely and meritoriously. Hence, if the precept took away psychological liberty, it would destroy itself. St. Thomas speaks in equivalent terms, IIIa, q. 47, a. 2 ad 2. The fact remains that free choice is specified by the object of the precept itself; and this object, for example, a painful death accepted for our sake, is something not good under every aspect, and hence not attracting the human will infallibly.

A precept extrinsic to the will and superimposed upon it neither changes the will psychologically nor the nature of the eligible object by which free choice is specified. Rather, as has been said, the precept is given that the act of obedience may be fulfilled freely and also meritoriously, in the same way as efficacious grace itself is given. Therefore neither the precept nor the grace destroys liberty, since indifference of judgment remains regarding the aforsaid specifying object which is not in every respect good.

Refutation of the objection in form. There still remains, however, as we are told, the problem of solving the objection proposed in form as follows: He who obeys freely is capable of not obeying. But Christ who was absolutely impeccable could not disobey, that is, He did not even have the power of disobeying which we possess even when we actually do obey. Therefore Christ did not obey freely.

It is easier, as we have already observed, to understand this objection drawn from the inferior mode of our cognition, scarcely rising above sensible objects, than the solution which derives from the sublimity of the mystery to be safeguarded. The answer of Thomists is subtle, but at the same time profound, if carefully considered.

They answer: I distinguish the major; He who obeys freely is capable of disobeying either privatively, that is, by sinning at least through omission, or negatively only as, while obeying, he retains the power of not willing the object of choice commanded in some other way: granted. I

counterdistinguish the minor: But the impeccable Christ could not disobey privatively, that is, by sinning: granted. That he could not disobey negatively I deny, since, while obeying, He retained the power of not willing the object of choice commanded in some other way.

This subtle distinction appears to some mere verbiage. On the contrary its significance becomes evident psychologically, for instance, when an excellent religious is obliged by obedience to accept a very difficult sacrifice. Often he is not even tempted to disobey privatively by sinning; but he sees perfectly well that the sacrifice asked of him is an object not good from every aspect and at the same time freely eligible. And so it was with Abraham in his sacrifice and with the Blessed Virgin Mary on Calvary.

However, that the profundity of the foregoing answer may be manifest, it should be recalled that there is a great difference between a simple negation and the privation of a good which is due, that is, an evil. Thus nescience, which is a mere negation, is commonly distinguished from ignorance, which is a privation, and with still greater reason from error. The Blessed Virgin Mary was nescient of many things, but not ignorant of them, strictly speaking, nor in error, since she knew all that she should know. To be ignorant, in the strict sense, is not to know that which we ought to know. I am nescient of the Chinese language, but not strictly ignorant of it.

There is another example of the distinction between negation and privation. If God had not created the world, there would not be the privation of any perfections in Him, but only their negation. For God is not better or wiser because He freely created the universe. “God is no greater for having created the universe,” as Bossuet remarked, in opposition to Leibnitz. Free creation is indeed befitting, but it would not be less fitting not to create. God would not thereby have remained sterile, nor was He sterile from all eternity before He created.

What then is meant precisely by being capable of not obeying negatively as it is distinguished from the privation of obedience, or from the sin of disobedience? It is the power not to choose the object in some other way commanded according as this specifying object of choice is not good in every respect, but rather good under one aspect and not good under another.

Such, for Christ, was the death of the cross: most painful from one standpoint, and most fruitful from another. Thus Christ, so generously obedient, was capable of not obeying negatively, in the divided sense; that is, under this command and under efficacious grace, there remained in Him

a power for the opposite, which was not the wretched power of sinning. Thus, He was not only sinless in fact but absolutely impeccable de jure, that is, by the very law of His nature, and nevertheless still free in things of precept.

In other words, there remained in Christ indifference of judgment and of will toward this eligible object; and in order that a choice should be made in fact, the liberty of Christ had to intervene; but this never failed to choose aright since, as St. Thomas said, it was "con-firmed in good." That is, the freedom of Christ always intervened in favor of perfect righteousness: 1. because Christ was an impeccable divine person; 2. because He possessed an inamissible fullness of grace and charity; and 3. because He had the beatific vision, and, moreover, always received efficacious grace to obey freely and meritoriously, nor was there in His soul even the slightest inclination to privative disobedience, or sin. If Abraham, preparing to immolate his son, had not the least inclination to disobey privatively, if the same is true of the Blessed Virgin Mary on Calvary, with still greater reason is it true of Christ Himself. Thus, psychologically, there is a great difference between being capable of disobeying privatively, or sinning, and being capable of not obeying negatively, that is, of not choosing the eligible object in some other way commanded.

Hence Christ had the power of refusing death as such and as in some other respect commanded, but not death as a command. In other words, Christ obeyed freely, not in the sense that He could have done anything contrary to the precept, but in the sense that He was capable of not doing that which was in some other respect commanded. Thus freedom of exercise remained to Him. Christ was not able to divide positively, that is, as it were, He could not separate the negation of death from the command; but He could have divided the negation of death and the command precisively. Similarly, in an object which is at once true and good, the intelligence, on attaining the true, does not separate it from the good, but it does prescind from the good. Likewise the essence of an angel or of an immortal soul cannot be separated from its existence, and yet it is in reality distinct from the latter, since, as our mind considers them, the angel is not its own essence, nor is the immortal soul its own essence, in which respect they differ from God.

Again, under efficacious grace, our will can resist if it wills, but under this grace it never wills to do so. But this is unintelligible to the nominalists

who consider only the fact, which in the present case is the concrete act of the will, and not its nature specified by an object not in every respect good.

Furthermore, it should be remarked that liberty of equal choice or balance is rare, that is, with regard to two equally good and eligible objects, as when a mason builds a wall of identical stones, and freely chooses any stone for the upper part of the wall and any other for the lower part. Generally liberty is present without this perfect balance; for example, when a man chooses the virtuous good in preference to a delectable but vicious good. Hence liberty is defined by St. Thomas (la IIae, q. 10, a. 2) as the dominating indifference of the will with regard to an object not in every respect good; he does not say, with regard to an object equally good from one aspect and not good from another. Even if the goodness of the object in one respect seems far to exceed its deficiency in another (for instance, God not yet clearly seen), liberty still remains.

Moreover, our mind does not pass from a speculative-practical judgment (I see what is better and approve) to a practico-practical judgment (I pursue the worse, judging here and now that it should be chosen), unless our will is already incipiently and actually attracted to the object which, in fact, it chooses. Thus an adulterer never abstains from his sin unless his attachment to this sin is actually removed; nevertheless as long as this attachment remains, he freely commits sin.

Likewise in the present case, Christ would never have refrained from the act of obeying unless the precept had been removed, but as long as this precept remained He obeyed freely. The eligible object specifying His choice was not in every respect good, and the superimposed precept given for the free accomplishment of the act did not destroy liberty. Similarly, confirmation in good, conferred for the perfecting of His liberty, did not destroy it, obviously. Therefore freedom from necessity remained with regard to an object not in every respect good, and hence not infallibly drawing the will.

Herein appears the vast difference between our adherence to the ontological value of the first principles of reason and Christ’s adherence to the precept of dying for our sake. I have never retracted what I said against the philosophy of action: it erroneously maintains that our adherence to the ontological value of the first principles of reason is free. As St. Thomas declares (Ia IIae, q. 17, a. 6), speaking of the real value of first principles: “Assent or dissent to these is not within our power, but in the order of

nature; and therefore strictly speaking, is subject to the command of nature." On the contrary, Christ freely chose to accept the death of the cross for our salvation; this object, from one aspect, was most painful, from another exceedingly noble and fruitful. Thus it was freely willed, not with a diminished liberty, but with perfect liberty, since the precept given for the free accomplishment of the act directed but did not destroy liberty. Likewise confirmation in good did not injure it, but brought it to the highest perfection.

This sublime doctrine is wonderfully expressed by St. Thomas in the classic text we have already quoted at the beginning of this discussion, IIIa, q. 18, a. 4 ad 3: I. "The will of Christ, although determined toward the good, is not however determined toward this or that particular good. And therefore it pertains to Christ to choose by means of His free will confirmed in good, as in the case of the blessed." If this were so, Christ would not be the supreme exemplar of obedience in the strict sense of the word.

The absolute impeccability of Christ is therefore not irreconcilable with His liberty with regard to things of precept. Consequently neither His freedom nor His merit should be set within limits. It suffices to consider: 1. that the will of Christ is the purest image of the divine will, at once utterly impeccable and perfectly free with regard to creatures; and 2. that a precept, although it withdraws moral freedom regarding the object forbidden, does not remove psychological liberty with respect to means not necessarily and intrinsically connected, here and now, with beatitude. Indeed, every precept presupposes and affirms this psychological liberty, so far as it is ordained to the accomplishment of a free act and, were it to take away such liberty, it would destroy its own nature as a precept.

This illuminating doctrine yields a fruitful understanding of the mystery of Redemption and disposes one for the contemplation of divine things, inasmuch as this opinion, and it alone, presents Christ as the supreme exemplar of obedience to the divine commands, in the strict sense of the term. Thus, the sublimity of His words suffers no diminution: "Therefore doth the Father love Me, because I lay down My life…for My sheep….This commandment have I received of My Father." "As the Father hath given Me command-ment, so do I." "If you keep My commandments, you shall abide in My love; as I also have kept My Father's commandments, and do abide in His love." "Behold I come: …that I should do Thy will, O God.'' Thus truly and strictly "Christ was obedient unto death, even the death of

the cross.” May those who do not accept this opinion St. Thomas himself so taught.

Corollary. But if Christ’s liberty remains under grace efficacious in itself, notwithstanding the triple cause of His impeccability (the hypostatic union, His inamissible fullness of grace, and the beatific vision), with still greater reason does our liberty remain under grace efficacious of itself; with it we indeed never sin, but we possess the mournful power of sinning, which Christ did not have; under grace which is efficacious in itself our free will is capable of dissenting if it so wills, but with this grace it never does so will. That is, we cannot, of course, unite actual resistance with grace that is efficacious of itself; it would no longer be efficacious. In the same way Socrates cannot unite the act of sitting with that of standing; he cannot do both at the same time fact that unite the act of sitting with that of standing; he cannot do both at the same time. This would be absolutely impossible and contradictory.

But for Socrates to be free to seat himself it suffices that, at one and the same time, he be capable of rising and standing erect. Similarly, that we be at liberty to follow the impulse of grace efficacious in itself, it suffices that the power to do the opposite remain in us. In other words, under efficacious grace the free will is capable of dissenting, in the divided sense. This is the meaning of the divided sense for St. Thomas and Thomists, entirely different from the divided sense of Calvin, who maintained that under efficacious grace the power to do the opposite did not remain, but that, once this grace had been removed, the power to do the opposite was restored to us. Hence it must be concluded: If in Christ, infallibly and freely obedient, grace, efficacious in itself, did not destroy His liberty, there is no basis for the statement that this grace of itself destroys our liberty. On the contrary, far from injuring it in any way, it actualizes and perfects it, causing together with us our free choice; cf. Ia, q. 19, a. 8.

So ends this excursus on efficacious grace as related to the spiritual life, in the saints, more especially the martyrs, and in the impeccable and freely obedient Christ. Let us now return to the explanation of the text of St. Thomas treating of the cause of grace.

CHAPTER IX

QUESTION 112

THE CAUSE OF GRACE

After considering the end of grace, or its necessity for our final end, the essence and divisions of grace, St. Thomas next examines its cause, particularly its efficient cause (article 1) , and at the same time the disposition for grace on the part of the recipient (articles 2 and 3); this leads him to ask whether grace is equal in all men (article 4) and whether a person may know that he possesses grace (article 5).

ARTICLE I

WHETHER GOD ALONE IS THE CAUSE OF GRACE

State of the question. It refers directly to habitual grace and indirectly to actual grace, according as it is a motion toward habitual grace to which it disposes. Furthermore the question concerns only the principal efficient physical cause; because the humanity of Christ and the sacraments are instrumental causes of grace; cf. IIIa, q.62, a. 5. The principal meritorious cause is, of course, Christ, as will be explained later, q. 114, a. 6.

The reply is: God alone can be the principal efficient cause of grace.

1. Proof from Sacred Scripture. “Who can make him clean that is conceived of unclean seed, is it not Thou who only art ?” (Job 14:4); “The Lord will give grace and glory” (Ps. 83:12); cf. Isa. 43:25; Jer. 31:18; Lam. 5:21; Rom. 3:30; 8:33; II Cor. 3:5; Phil. 2:13, John 14:16. In all these texts it is declared that God alone can remit sin by justification. Cf. also the Council of Orange, can. 7, 9, 10, 14, 15, 20, 25; the Council of Trent, Sess. VI, chap. 7, on the justification of sinners.

2. Proof by apodictical theological argument. Nothing can, by its proper power, effectively produce anything of a higher order than its own. (Briefly: more is not produced by less.) But grace is of a higher order than any created agent since it is a participation in the divine nature. Therefore no created agent, but only God Himself, can be the principal, efficient, physical cause of grace.

Observe as to the minor that St. Thomas says: “grace surpasses every created nature,” and not only, as in the case of miracles, all the powers and requirements of created nature. Grace transcends the miraculous; by the miracle of resurrection, natural life is restored supernaturally to a corpse whereas, on the other hand, grace is essentially supernatural life.

Confirmation. Just as fire alone can ignite, so God alone can deify, or bestow a participation in His intimate nature and in like manner a right to eternal life.

Objection. But a just man who already possesses grace can produce it in another.

Reply. If he possesses divine nature as he does human nature; granted; but he has only a participation in the divine nature, and thus, although he can enjoy it himself, he cannot communicate it to others, just as an adopted son cannot adopt. Nor can we produce intelligence in another unless, positing the ultimately apt disposition in the embryo for the reception of the intellectual soul, God creates it.

An angel cannot generate another angel, since an angel can be produced only by creation, that is, by God. And grace, as we shall presently see, cannot be drawn forth except from the obediential power of either a soul or an angel; but God alone can draw anything forth from the obediential power.

Reply to first objection. The humanity of Christ is the instrumental cause of the production of grace, acting, that is, by the power of God, the principal agent. Thus Christ, the head of the Church, infuses into us the grace which He obtained for us by His infinite merits. (IIIa, q. 8, a. I.)

Reply to second objection. Likewise the sacraments cause grace only as instruments. This answer should be read; it is not limited in its application to the intentional power alone, in the sense of practically significant power.

Reply to third objection. An angel purifies, enlightens, and perfects a man by means of instruction, as does a spiritual director, not by infusing grace.

Doubt. With reference to this article Thomists ask whether grace is created or drawn forth from the obediential power of the soul. The answer generally given is that grace is neither created nor concreated but is educed from the obediential power of the soul.

I. This answer is based on many texts of St. Thomas, especially Ia IIae, q. 110, a. 2 ad 3, and q. 113, a. 9, where it is stated that "creation from the mode of operation, that is, out of nothing, is a greater work than justification; although on the part of the thing produced, justification is greater than the creation of heaven and earth." Again, in De veritate, q. 27, a. 3 ad 9, and the question on the virtues in general, a. 10 ad 2 and ad 13, St. Thomas teaches that supernatural habits are brought forth from the obediential power of the subject.

3. Theological proof. To be created is to be produced from no presupposed subject, whereas to be brought forth from the obediential power of some subject is to be produced dependently from this subject through a supernatural cause. But grace as an accident inhering in the soul is produced dependently from the substance of the soul through God, the supernatural cause. Therefore grace is not created but is brought forth from the obediential power of the soul.

The major contains its own definition both of creation and of education, but for a clear understanding of what is meant by eduction from the obediential power, it would be well to recall just what the obediential power is; we have treated the subject at length in De revelatione, I, 377. There is in any subject a passive power which is not natural, since it does not affirm an order to a natural agent, but is a passive power that affirms an order to a supernatural agent which it obeys so as to receive from it whatever it may wish to confer. Cf. IIIa, q. II, a. I; q. I, a. 3 ad 3; De virtutibus in communi, a. 10 ad 2 and ad 13; Compendium theol., chap. 104; De potentia, q. 6, a. I, ad 18, and Tabula aurea, under "Potentia," no. 10. Thus even in the natural order the form of a statue is educed from the potentiality of the wood, inasmuch as the wood obeys the carver, or the clay the potter.

Minor. Grace is an accident inherent in the soul; therefore it depends on the substance of the soul in being, and hence likewise in becoming, inasmuch as becoming is a step toward being. Whence to be created is proper to a subsistent thing which possesses being independently of any subject. Therefore the conclusion follows.

It is conceded, however, that God, by His absolute power, could create grace independently of any subject, just as He can cause the Eucharistic accidents to exist independently of the subject; but this mode would be miraculous, and neither connatural nor according to His ordinary power in the supernatural order, of which we are now speaking.

It cannot be said that grace is concreated as we say that the soul of the first man was concreated with his body; for in fact, as has been said, grace as an accident of the soul is made dependently upon it, whereas the intellectual soul is not educed from the potentiality of matter, like the souls in brute beasts, but is independent of matter in its becoming, just as it is intrinsically independent of it in its being and operation, whence it follows that it is immortal.

REFUTATION OF OBJECTIONS

First objection: In Sacred Scripture grace is said to be created: "Create a clean heart in me, O God" (Ps. 50:12); "…in Christ Jesus…a new creature" (Gal. 6:15); "…created in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:10).

Reply. Here is meant: created morally, not physically: morally, because it presupposes no merit; not physically because it presupposes a subject.

Second objection. It is concerned with the difficulty of rightly defining obediential power so as to safeguard at the same time both the absolute gratuitousness of grace and its conformity to the nature of the human soul.

For that which is eminently fitting to human nature cannot be absolutely gratuitous. But elevation to the vision of God is eminently fitting. Therefore it cannot be absolutely gratuitous. In other words, if grace is in conformity with, or becoming to, our nature and perfects it, it seems that the obediential power must be more than a mere non-aversion to accepting from God whatever He may will. But if this obediential power is more than a non-aversion, it is a slight entity distinct from the essence of the soul and its faculties, and hence is a positive ordination toward the life of grace and accordingly is at once something essentially natural as a property of nature, and something essentially supernatural specified by a supernatural object to be known and loved. And thus we are led to a confusion of the two orders.

Reply. We have examined this difficulty at length in our De revelatione, I, 399-402. The Salmanticenses also discuss it in connection with the present article.

There is certainly given to the human soul an obediential power to receive ever higher supernatural gifts, indeed, for the very hypostatic union, and even, in the most holy soul of Christ, for the greatest degree of the light of glory which God, by His absolute power, can produce. Wherefore St. Thomas declares in several places that the obediential power cannot be satisfied perfectly; for it is a capacity for receiving from God whatever He may will, and God can will and produce anything that is not contradictory. Therefore the obediential power, by its formal reason, is not a positive ordination of the nature of the human soul or its faculties toward a supernatural object, and signifies nothing more than a simple non-aversion, or capacity, to receive whatever God may will. However, by reason of its subject and materially, it is completely identified with the essence of the soul and its faculties, whether passive or active, which can be elevated to the order of grace. Hence the obediential power or capacity for being elevated regards immediately, not the supernatural object known and loved, but the supernatural agent which it obeys, that is, God who can elevate us, gratuitously and with perfect freedom.

Thus by its formal reason the obediential power signifies nothing but a non-aversion. However, God, by conferring His supernatural gifts does indeed perfect thereby the nature of the soul, raising it to a superior order. Thus these gifts of grace are, at one and the same time, completely gratuitous, in no sense due to us, and perfectly becoming to our nature, with a fitness which is not, however, natural but supernatural, at once most sublime, most profound, and gratuitous. Wherefore, with regard to the objection: that which is eminently fitting with a natural fitness cannot be gratuitous, granted; but with a supernatural fitness, denied. And this is the very mystery of the essence of grace, which is simultaneously something freely given and something which renders us pleasing.

ARTICLE II

WHETHER ANY PREPARATION OR DISPOSITION FOR GRACE IS REQUIRED ON THE PART OF MAN

State of the question. We are here concerned with the disposition toward habitual grace, for it is certain that no preparation on the part of man anticipating, so to speak, divine help, is demanded for actual grace; rather any preparation that may be found in man is produced by prevenient actual

grace; cf. question 109, a. 6, above, and what is repeated here in the body of the article. With respect to the disposition for habitual grace, theologians generally agree that it is required on the part of man, but some insist that this disposition is only moral and of divine institution, not physical.

The conclusion of St. Thomas is: for habitual grace the preparation of another grace is prerequisite on the part of an adult in possession of his mental faculties. And this disposition is a motion or act of the free will in God.

First proof. By the authority of the Council of Trent, Sess. VI, chap. 6, (Denz., no. 798) and can. g (Denz., no. 819): "If anyone should say that by faith alone the wicked man is justified so as to mean that nothing else is required for cooperation with the grace of justification and that it is in no wise necessary to prepare or dispose himself by a movement of his will, let him be anathema." This definition is based on Holy Scripture: "Prepare your hearts unto the Lord" (I Kings 7:3) and "Turn ye to Me…and I will turn to you" (Zach. 1:3).

Second proof, from theological argument. A perfect and permanent form is not introduced into a subject, under ordinary providence, unless that subject is predisposed. But habitual grace is a perfect, permanent form. Therefore it is not introduced into a soul unless the soul is predisposed by the preparation which becomes its nature, that is, by a free act toward God, for man is free by nature. (This refers to adults.)

The major is always verified in the natural order, whether it is a question of substantial or of accidental form. Proportionately, and for the same reason, however, this must be true in the supernatural order. Thus the beatific vision requires that the intellect be disposed by the light of glory for union with the divine essence. Right order demands that from one extreme to the other, that is, from an utter privation to a form, the transition should only be made through certain means; hence, according to St. Thomas, no form can exist except in predisposed matter. Otherwise a monstrosity would result. And so some professors produce a monstrosity, proposing the loftiest doctrine without preliminary dispositions, so that then it is not understood and results in dangerous theory, for example, predestination as interpreted by Calvin.

Reply to first objection. St. Thomas observes that the imperfect preparation, which frequently precedes, in time, the infusion of habitual grace, is not meritorious, for habitual grace is the principle of merit. On the

other hand, the preparation which is simultaneous with the infusion of habitual grace proceeds from it, and is therefore meritorious not of grace but of glory. Cf. q. 113, a. 8: The infusion of grace precedes, by nature, but not in time, this preparation, in which resides the primary act of charity and living faith.

Reply to second objection. The preparation which immediately precedes, in time, the infusion of grace, is generally made gradually, under the influence of actual grace, but it may be effected suddenly.

Reply to third objection. God, as an agent of infinite power, "requires no preparation which He does not Himself produce." And according to the usual order of providence, He produces this preparation in adults by actual grace, although He can, by His absolute power, confer habitual grace upon one who is not disposed for it, for instance, a person who is asleep, but then the sleeper does not receive it as a man, that is, not as possessed of the use of reason and free will.

Doubt. Whether acts of the free will, thus supernaturally moved by God, only dispose a man for grace morally, by divine institution, or physically, by nature, and furthermore, whether physically in the efficient or only in the predisposing sense.

The reply generally made by Thomists is that these acts dispose a man for grace, not morally only, but physically, in a predisposing way, not however an efficient way. The proof is divided into parts.

1. Not morally only, since an act of free will supernaturally moved by God is a certain beginning of the order of grace, for its relationship to habitual grace is that of motion toward its term. But a beginning is not merely a moral disposition by divine institution, but it is physical by its nature to the perfecting of motion in its term. Therefore these acts dispose not morally only, but physically toward grace.

2. Not, however, physically in an efficient sense, but only as a predisposition. First proof: from the Council of Trent, Sess. VI, chap. 7, where, in describing the causes of justification, no other efficient cause is recognized but God as principal cause and the sacraments as instrumental cause. And in the preceding chapter, the Council, referring to the act of free will, ascribes it to the disposing cause which it distinguishes from the efficient cause. Second proof: St. Thomas also makes the same differentiation in De veritate, q. 28, a. 8 ad 2 and ad 7: "The motion of free will is not the efficient cause of the infusion of grace; thus contrition is not

the efficient cause of the remission of sins, but the power of the keys, or baptism." Thirdly, the theological argument is: Habitual grace is not an acquired but an infused habit "which God operates in us without us," according to the words of St. Augustine in his definition of infused virtue. If, on the contrary, our acts concurred efficiently in the production of habitual grace, this grace would be called an acquired rather than an infused habit. Moreover, it is contradictory that an act should cause an active power of which it is properly and connaturally the effect; for instance, it is contradictory that the act of intellection should produce the power of intellect. But supernatural habits have the reason not only of pure habits but also of powers, that is, they confer the first connatural power in the supernatural order.

Corollary. In the same way it may be said of the increase of grace and of the infused virtues: our supernatural acts dispose for this increase not morally only (that is, meritoriously) but physically, not efficiently, however, but as predisposing; for the reason of the increase of infused habits is the same as of their original production. (Cf. IIa IIae, q. 24, a. 4, 5, 6: On the increase of charity.)

ARTICLE III

WHETHER HABITUAL GRACE IS NECESSARILY GIVEN TO A PERSON WHO PREPARES HIMSELF FOR GRACE OR DOES WHAT LIES WITHIN HIS POWER

State of the question. St. Thomas has already shown in question 109, a. 6, that man cannot prepare himself for habitual grace without actual grace, without the supernatural help of God, for the order of agents must correspond to the order of ends, and he thus generally explained the axiom: "If one does what lies in one's power (with the help of actual grace), God does not deny (habitual) grace." No preparation is required for actual grace which itself, by anticipating us, prepares us for justification. But now St. Thomas shows the infallible connection which justification has with this preparation. As we shall presently see, he does not, like Molina, have recourse to any pact entered into between Christ and the Father, by reason of which God would never refuse grace to anyone who does what in him lies by his natural powers.

The conclusion of St. Thomas is: Man's preparation for grace infallibly leads to justification, not as it proceeds from free will, but as it proceeds

from God moving him efficaciously.

1. Proof from Sacred Scripture. “As clay is in the hand of the potter, so are you in My hand” (Jer. 18:6). But clay, however much it may be prepared, does not of necessity receive a form from the potter. Likewise the twenty-third and twenty-fifth canons of the Council of Orange may be cited, which declare that the will is prepared for grace by God, and the Council of Trent, Sess. VI, chap. 6 (Denz., no. 798) as follows: “Adults are disposed for justice when, excited by divine grace and assisted, receiving faith by hearing, they are freely moved toward God, believing… trusting...and they begin to love God.”

2. Theological proof, each of the two parts being treated separately. First part: that is, such preparation, according as it is from free will, does not infallibly dispose one for grace, since the gift of God exceeds any preparation within human power, for it is of a superior order, and the order of agents corresponds to the order of ends. Moreover, as said in answer to the third objection: “Even in natural things the predisposition of the material does not of necessity obtain the form, except by virtue of the agent who causes the disposition.” But, as stated in the answer to the second objection, if we cannot of our-selves prepare ourselves infallibly for grace, nevertheless “the first cause of a deficiency of grace comes from ourselves,” since it is only through our own defect that we resist prevenient sufficient grace and are therefore deprived of efficacious grace.

Second part: that is, man’s preparation, as it comes from God moving him efficaciously, infallibly leads to justification. This is not proved from scientia media or the foreknowledge of our consent if our will is placed in certain circumstances, but from the intrinsic, infallible efficacy of divine decrees and of the actual grace by which the execution of these decrees is effected.

The reason for this is that “God’s intention (efficacious or a decree of justification for this man) cannot fail.” And this is the teaching of St. Augustine when he says (De dono persev., chap. 14): “Whoever are liberated are most certainly liberated by the beneficence of God.” Cf. above, Ia, q. 19, a. 6: Whether the will of God is always accomplished: “Whatever God wills absolutely is done, although what He wills antecedently may not be done”; ibid., ad I. Hence neither St. Augustine nor St. Thomas speaks of mediate knowledge; the inventors of mediate knowledge were the Semi-Pelagians who declared:

God, from all eternity, foresaw that in certain circumstances these particular men would be apt to have a beginning of faith or salvation, and He therefore decreed to give them grace on account of this natural beginning of good will. The Molinists hold some of this doctrine, but avoid heresy by having recourse to a pact between Christ and God.

Doubt. Whether it is possible to reconcile with this teaching of St. Thomas the opinion of those who maintain that "of two sinners equally tempted and equally assisted toward the continuation of attrition, at some time or other, one sets up an obstacle which the other does not, and consequently the latter receives by the mercy of God on account of the merits of Christ grace which is now efficacious for an act of perfect contrition and of justification."

Reply. Reconciliation is not possible for, according to this theory, the distinction between the two men, equally assisted, would arise not from any difference in help received, but from their free will alone; hence the man who did not himself set up an impediment would be disposing himself negatively but infallibly for justification and would thus be distinguishing himself. Infallible preparation would proceed from man, and in foreseeing this distinction God would remain passive, as a spectator, not an actor. But there cannot be passivity in pure act. Again, the divine will would be willing this difference, not before the man's faithfulness, but after it (further passivity in pure act). With respect to the foregoing distinction, God would not be predetermining but determined. Moreover, it would not be explained how, without an infallible decree, this future contingency rather than the opposite would be present in divine eternity, and would be there as a necessary, not a contingent, truth; nor would the transition be explained from a state of possibility to a state of futurition.

Finally, grace is efficacious only with regard to what it effects here and now. But with respect to what it effects here and now, it is infallibly efficacious as the consequent will of God (Ia, q. 19, a. 6 ad I). Therefore grace is not efficacious unless it is infallibly efficacious, otherwise it would be possible for it to be efficacious sometimes with respect to something which it would not effect.

It only remains to say that grace which is termed sufficient with regard to a perfect act, for example, contrition, may be efficacious and infallibly so with regard to another act, imperfect to be sure, such as attrition. Grace which is efficacious for attrition is sufficient for contrition.

ARTICLE IV

WHETHER GRACE IS GREATER IN ONE MAN THAN IN ANOTHER

Reply. Sanctifying grace may be greater in one man than in another, not from the standpoint of its end, but with relation to the . subject participating to a greater or less degree in this gift of God; and the first reason for the diversity is on the part of God, who distributes His graces in a variety of ways.

I. Proof from Scripture. “To everyone of us is given grace, according to the measure of the giving of Christ” (Eph. 4:7); cf. St. Thomas’ Commentary. Then there is the parable of the talents: “And to one he gave five talents, and to another two, and to another one, to every one according to his proper ability” (Matt. 25:15), concerning which St. Thomas writes in his Commentary: “He who makes the greater effort obtains more grace; but the fact that he makes a greater effort demands a higher cause.” He says as much again in the body of the present article. And this principle is contrary to the theory of Molina as we shall presently explain. Cf. also the Council of Trent, Sess. VI, chap. 7: “We are truly called just and so we are, receiving justice into ourselves, each according to his measure, which the Holy Ghost distributes to each according as He wills (I Cor. 12:11), and according to the proper disposition and cooperation of each.”

2. Theological proof, treated in parts. First part: Grace cannot be greater or less from its end, since it could not be ordained to a greater good, for it ordains us to the supernatural intuitive vision and love of God. Second part: With regard to the subject, grace is greater or less according to the subject’s degree of participation in this gift of God. See the answers to the second and third objections. Third part: The primary reason for diversity is on the part of God who distributes grace in various degrees. To be sure, the proximate reason is on the part of man preparing himself, so far as he makes greater or less prepa-ration. But since this very preparation proceeds from the motion of God, the primary reason for diversity is on the part of God, distributing His gifts variously, that the Church may be adorned with that beauty which variety produces in the universe.

Cf. ad I and Ia, q. 23, a. 5: “What proceeds from free will is not distinct from what proceeds from predestination, any more than what proceeds from a secondary cause is distinct from what proceeds from a primary cause.” This is a reiteration of what St. Paul says in the text here quoted, and is

demanded by the principle of predilection: “No one would be better than another were he not better loved by God. Cf. Ia, q. 20, a. 3 and 4. “The will of God is the cause of the goodness in things, and hence they are in some respect better because God wills greater good to them. Thus it follows that He loves better things more.”

First corollary. This doctrine is contrary to what Molina writes in his Concordia (p. 565): “One who is aided by the help of less grace and perseveres in his obduracy.” Moreover, it would be opposed to St. Thomas’ teaching to hold that sometimes one person, with the same amount of help, persists in an easy act conducive to salvation, whereas another, equally tempted, does not persist. If this were true, man would distinguish himself, and the lie would be given to St. Paul’s words quoted here: “To every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the giving of Christ.” We should have to say: according to the effort made by man. It is therefore not to be won-dered at that the Congruists were always eager to dissent from Molinism in this respect, by admitting a distinction between congruous and other grace.

Second corollary. Since it is true that “God resisteth the proud and giveth His grace to the humble,” an inequality of natural conditions is frequently compensated for by an inequality of supernatural conditions, according to those words of our Lord: “I confess to Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones.” And “blessed are the poor…blessed are the meek…blessed are they that mourn…blessed are they that suffer persecution.” Herein appears the wonderful but deeply mysterious harmony in the divine distribution of natural and supernatural gifts with which the parable of the talents is concerned. Hence it sometimes happens in a religious community that it is the humblest lay brother who has the greatest degree of charity in his heart and is loved most by God — a St. Alphonsus Rodriguez, S.J., or a Blessed Martin de Porres, O.P.

ARTICLE V

WHETHER MAN CAN KNOW THAT HE POSSESSES GRACE

The state of the question appears from St. Thomas’ objections: It seems to be so, since: 1. the soul knows experimentally the things which are

present in it; 2. the believer is certain that he has the faith; 3. a person can know certainly that he sins, therefore, with still greater reason that he is in the state of grace, for light is more perceptible than darkness; 4. the Apostle says: “But we have the mind of Christ” (I Cor. 2:16). On the other hand: “Man knoweth not whether he be worthy of love or hatred” (Eccles. 9:1); and there are many similar texts quoted below from the New Testament.

It should be observed that, with reference to the preceding texts, the Lutherans and Calvinists taught: 1. that man could know, by certain and indubitable faith, that he is in grace; 2. that the faithful, or the just man is bound to believe this of himself, otherwise he is neither just nor faithful; 3. that by this faith alone men are justified.

Reply. Except by special revelation, no one can be certain that he is in grace, with an absolute certainty which excludes all fear of error, but the just man can know this only conjecturally, although indeed with very marked conjectural knowledge.

I . Proof from authority. The Council of Trent (Sess. VI, chap. 9, Denz., no. 802) declares: “No one is able to know with the certainty of faith, in which falsehood cannot be concealed, that he has obtained grace.” Again (can. 13 and 14, Denz., nos. 823 f.): “If anyone should say…that man is bound to believe this of himself,…and that no one is really justified unless he believes himself to be so, let him be anathema.” This definition is against the Protestants; it does not condemn the opinion of Catharinus as heretical. But as we shall see from what follows, the latter is dangerous and contrary to the general opinion of theologians. This is also true of the theory proposed by Vega.

The doctrine of the Church, however, is based upon several texts of Sacred Scripture: “There are just men and wise men, and their works are in the hand of God: and yet man knoweth not whether he be worthy of love or hatred” (Eccles. 9:1). This does not refer to the wicked, for a vicious murderer can indeed know that he is worthy of hatred; it is a question of the just and wise, and hence the meaning is: no one even of the just knows whether he is worthy of love or of hatred. Again, “Be not without fear about sin forgiven” (Ecclus. 5:5); “With fear and trembling work out your salvation” (Phil. 2:12); “Neither do I judge my own self. For I am not conscious to myself of anything, yet am I not hereby justified; but He that judgeth me is the Lord. Therefore judge not before the time; until the Lord

come who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness…. (I Cor. 4:3-5). (Cf. St. Thomas' Commentary on I Corinthians, chap. 4.)

In his book De perfectione justorum (chap. 15), St. Augustine thus explains the foregoing words of St. Paul: "However much justice a man may be endowed with, he should not consider anything in himself which he does not see may be found to be blameworthy." This is especially on account of indirectly voluntary acts by reason of which a man may be a sinner because of culpable ignorance, that is, when he acts in ignorance of what he ought and is bound to know; for example, a doctor who kills his patient because of culpable ignorance arising from his own sloth. (Cf. St. Thomas on ignorance as a cause of sin, Ia IIae, q. 76.)

It is particularly by reason of indirectly voluntary acts that Holy Scripture declares the human heart to be "unsearchable" (Jer. 17:9 and Prov. 25:3); for instance, on account of the subtlety of intellectual or spiritual pride. Therefore do we read in Job 9:21: "Although I should be simple, even this my soul shall be ignorant of," and in Ps. 18:13: "Who can understand sins?"

This is confirmed by the testimony of the saints. There is the reply of St. Joan of Arc to her judges, who asked her if she was in the state of grace: "If I am not, may God place my soul in that state!" Regarding souls that have almost attained perfection and are in the passive purification of the spirit, that is, in the sixth mansion, St. Theresa writes: "They know not whether they are worthy of love or of hate, for they see more and more clearly, in the darkness of faith, the sublimity of the sanctity of God and their own misery." This was true of the holy Curé of Ars, and of St. Thomas as well, at a time when he was almost in doubt and received from the Blessed Virgin Mary the assurance that he was in God's grace.

2. Theological proof, treated in its several parts.

First part: except by special revelation; for God sometimes does reveal this as He did to St. Paul, assuring him: "My grace is sufficient for thee" (II Cor. 12:9). Such was the certainty possessed by the Blessed Virgin Mary to whom the angel declared that she was "full of grace" (Luke 1:28); likewise, in the case of the paralytic and of the woman who was a sinner, to both of whom Christ said that their sins were forgiven (Matt. 9:2-7; Luke 7:37-50). But we are now dealing with the ordinary way.

Second part: Ordinarily, no just man possesses absolute certainty in this matter. The proof is as follows:

Absolute certainty is that in which no falsehood can be concealed, excluding all fear of error, such certainty as is obtained by revelation or theological reasoning or by the self-evidence of the matter. But in the ordinary way, no just man can be thus certain that he is in grace, that is, neither by general revelation, nor by theological reasoning, nor by self-evidence of the matter or experience. Therefore there can be no absolute certainty in this regard.

The major is itself a definition of absolute certainty.

The minor is proved in parts; merely natural knowledge is excluded since it cannot know supernatural grace.

a) Not by general revelation, which does not concern itself with my justification so far as it is mine.

b) Not by theological argument for the reason which is thus proved by St. Thomas in the body of the article:

To arrive at this knowledge by discursive theology one would have to know the principle of grace. But the principle of grace is God (in His intimate life), unknown because of His surpassing excellence, and the presence or absence of whom within us cannot be known with certainty, according to the words of Job 9:11: “If He come to me, I shall not see Him: if He depart I shall not understand.” Therefore man cannot with certainty judge whether or not he is in the state of grace.

It should be remarked that this lack of certainty proceeds from the supernatural excellence of God and His grace and from His dwelling in inaccessible light which seems to us to be darkness, as the sun seems to the owl. Cf. ad 3: “The object or end of grace is unknown to us on account of the immensity of its light.” Some may immediately object: But it is established by faith that grace will be given to one who sincerely loves God and is truly penitent. This is true, but in the ordinary way no one possesses absolute certainty that he sincerely loves God, not merely naturally but supernaturally, above all things, and that he is truly penitent. It must always be feared that some hidden sins may lie concealed in the soul, pride, for example, or presumption. “Who can understand sins?” (Ps. 18:13.)

c) Nor by the experience of grace itself or of charity (cf. ad I); for we cannot know supernatural grace by any natural experience. And if it is a question of supernatural experience, other than a special revelation, it does not confer absolute certainty in this matter, that is, certainty excluding all fear that one’s interior peace or joy may not proceed from a merely natural

cause, as will presently be explained in the third part. “For the acts of the infused virtues have a very great similarity to the acts of the acquired virtues,” as St. Thomas declares, De veritate, q. 6, a. 5 ad 3; q. 10, a. 10 ad I and 2.

Third part: the conclusion. This may, however, be known conjecturally and with marked conjectural knowledge. The proof is as follows:

Conjectural knowledge is that which rests upon very weighty signs and indications, yet not so solid but that, even morally speaking, it may be false.

But man has three signs of the state of grace so far as “he perceives 1. that he takes delight in God, 2. that he despises earthly things, and 3. that he is not conscious within himself of any sin.”

Hence we read in the Apocalypse (2:17): “To him that overcometh, I will give the hidden manna …which no man knoweth, but he that receiveth it,” that is, by a certain experience of sweetness. And this suffices for a man to approach the sacraments of the living.

Thus it is written in Rom. 8:16: “The Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit, that we are the sons of God” by the filial affection which He inspires in us. Moreover, these signs are increased if a man is ready to die rather than offend God, and if he is humble, for “God…giveth grace to the humble” (Jas. 4:6). Cf. IV Sent., d. 9, q. I, a. 3; qc. 2; Contra Gentes, Bk. IV, chaps. 21, 22. But these signs are not absolutely certain, as St. Paul admits: “For I am not conscious to myself of anything, yet am I not hereby justified” (I Cor. 4:4).

The experience of sweetness can sometimes proceed from a natural cause or from the devil, and no one can be sure that he is truly humble; in fact, he has not begun to be humble until he fears that he is proud. Confirmation of the conclusion. Herein appears the gentle disposition of divine providence, excluding both presumption which might arise from absolute certitude of our justice and anxiety of soul which would result from lack of a weighty conjecture which may be called certainty under a particular aspect. There is produced, on the contrary, a synchronizing of firm hope and filial fear, hope founded on the help of God who forsakes no one unless He is first forsaken, and a fear of sin or separation from God. “Permit me not to be separated from Thee!”

SOLUTION OF THE PRINCIPAL OBJECTIONS

First objection. We read in I Cor.2:12: “Now we have received not the spirit of this world, but the Spirit that is of God; that we may know the things that are given us from God”; and again in I John 4:13: “In this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us: because He hath given us of His spirit.”

Reply. The foregoing criteria do not apply to individual members of the faithful taken singly, but to the congregation of the Church, in which it is certain, with the certainty of divine faith that some members are in grace. Moreover, everyone is assured of these gifts on the part of God who promises them, although he does not know certainly that he possesses the conditions by which such gifts are merited. This is the explanation given by the Salmanticenses.

I insist. On the contrary, every just man can be certain of this, for the testimony of the Holy Ghost cannot be false. But it is written in Rom. 8:16: “The Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit, that we are the sons of God”; and this especially through the gift of wisdom whereby we have an almost experimental knowledge of the presence of God in us. Therefore.

Reply. The testimony of the Holy Ghost cannot be false, but we can err by mistaking for the testimony of the Holy Ghost what is really not so. This knowledge is called “quasi-experimental,” since it does not attain immediately to God Himself present within us, but to His effects, such as a filial affection for Him and works of virtue, nor can we distinguish with absolute certainty between supernatural acts and their natural counterparts. Hence, as the Salmanticenses de Clare: “The Holy Spirit renders testimony to our spirit, not indeed by revelation, but by producing the effects already mentioned, from which a certain moral certainty and security arise.” Likewise St. Thomas comments on the Epistle to the Romans, chapter 8: “He renders testimony, not by revelation but by the effect of filial love which He produces in us.” And this knowledge is not infallible.

I insist. But St. John writes (13:35): “By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love one for another.”

Reply. But we cannot be absolutely certain that we love our neighbor with true charity and not from cupidity or natural affection.

Final objection. But a person may possess absolute certainty of his attrition and of the validity of the absolution by which he is subsequently justified. Therefore.

Reply. Of supernatural attrition we can have and do have a valid and more probable confidence from the testimony of a good conscience, from application to good works and a prompt will to obey God. However, the heart of man is inscrutable and there is always reason for him to fear lest hiddm sins lie concealed therein (on account of the indirect voluntary) or his sorrow for sin be insufficient, or some disposition be lacking for the reception of the sacrament. So Billuart maintains.

First doubt. Whether one of the faithful can have absolute certainty of at least having the faith.

Reply (ad 2). Yes, since this is not comparable to grace and charity; for "It belongs to the reason of faith that a man should be certain of those things which he believes; and this because certainty pertains to the perfection of the intellect in which knowledge and faith reside. Therefore anyone who possesses knowledge or faith is sure that he does. But the reason is not the same for grace and charity and other gifts of this sort which perfect the appetitive power." In other words, charity, first of all, does not include certainty in its reason, as faith and knowledge do, and, secondly, charity resides in the will, which is not a faculty of cognition or reflection. Many theologians, Billuart among them, admit that a man can be certain of his hope, since he is certain of his faith, and hope follows upon faith; nor is it destroyed except by an act of despair; but a man can be certain that he has never fallen into an act of despair.

Objection is raised, however, to the absolute certainty of the existence of supernatural faith in us on the grounds that this faith might be acquired faith, such as the demons possess. supernatural quality of the act or habit whereby he believes. But he I

Reply. Cf. Salmanticenses, no. 17, on the present article. It is probable that one of the faithful cannot have absolute certainty of the has twofold certainty of his faith: 1. of the object believed, at least so far as it is materially possessed, and 2. of the act of believing, abstracting however from the question of whether or not it is supernatural. For it is nowhere revealed that I have infused faith, although there is a very strong conjecture and practical certainty of it. Moreover, for a supernatural act of faith there is required in the will a pious disposition to believe, which pertains to the affective side of man.

Second doubt. Whether in the mystical state there is absolute certainty of the state of grace.

Reply. This does not belong to the essence of the mystical state, or infused contemplation, which persists even in the passive night of the soul wherein the soul thinks itself to be far from God, and feels that God is, as it were, absent from it. But, as we observed in Christian Perfection and Contemplation, p. 450, no. 2, according to many theologians, the altogether supreme grace conferred in the state of transforming union, in St. Theresa's seventh mansion, is equivalent to a special revelation of one's own state of grace and even of predestination. This opinion is held by Philip of the Holy Trinity and by Scaramelli. St. John of the Cross thinks that the transforming union is not bestowed without confirmation in grace and some certainty of this confirmation.

Third doubt. Whether we can have a moral certainty of the state of grace which excludes prudent doubt, or only a marked conjectural knowledge.

The reply is twofold.

I. The Salmanticenses answer (no. 8): "Except by the privilege of a special revelation, man cannot have moral certainty in the first degree but only in the second." Cf. no. 2: Moral certainty in the first degree is that which excludes all fear of error since, for example, it is founded upon the testimony of a great number of men, such as the certainty of the existence of Rome for those who have not been to Rome. Moral certainty in the second degree does not exclude all fear of error, but does exclude prudent doubt; for instance, the certainty which we have of being baptized, or that Peter, whom we see celebrating Mass, is a priest. And there are also differences of degree within this division.

2. Gonet and some other Thomists deny that a just man can have moral certainty properly so called, of his state of grace, but hold that he can have only a marked conjectural knowledge, since moral certitude properly so called excludes all fear of error. Now a man can swear to what he knows with moral certainty, for instance, to being a priest; whereas he cannot swear that he is in the state of grace. Perhaps, as the Salmanticenses declare, the discrepancy is not so much in the matter itself as in the terminology. I agree with Gonet's opinion.

CHAPTER X

QUESTION 113

THE EFFECTS OF GRACE

Up to this point we have considered the necessity, essence, divisions, and cause of grace; now we are to examine its effects, of which the two principal ones are: I. the justification of the wicked, “which is the effect of operative grace,” and merit, which is the effect of cooperative grace.

PART ONE: THE JUSTIFICATION OF THE WICKED, OR SINNERS

There are three parts to this question:

1. What justification is and whether an infusion of grace is necessary for it (a. 1 and 2).

2. The acts required for the justification of adult sinners (a. 3-6), that is, whether it requires a movement of the free will, or of faith or of contrition and the remission of sins.

3. The properties of justification (a.7-10); that is, whether it is brought about instantaneously or whether there is a priority and posteriority of nature in the acts which concur toward it; whether justification is the greatest work of God; whether it is a miracle.

ARTICLE I

WHETHER THE JUSTIFICATION OF THE WICKED IS THE REMISSION OF SINS

The reply is in the affirmative; it is of faith and opposed to Protestant teaching. For Protestants contended that by justification, the sins of the

sinner were not really effaced or removed, but remained in their entirety in man, being merely covered over or no longer imputed to him.

Proof from the Council of Trent, Sess. V, can. 5, (Denz., no. 792): “If anyone denies that through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, conferred in baptism, the guilt of original sin is remitted, or even asserts that all that is included in the true and proper reason of sin is not removed, but is only said to be erased or not imputed, let him be anathema.”

This definition of the Church’s faith is based on many texts of Sacred Scripture: “Blot out my iniquity…blot out all my iniquities….Thou shalt wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow” (Ps. 50); “I am he that blot out thy iniquities for My own sake” (Isa. 43:25); “And I will pour upon you clean water, and you shall be cleansed from all your filthiness” (Ezech. 36:25); “Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him who taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29); “The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin” (I John 1:7); “The unjust shall not possess the kingdom of God. Do not err; neither fornicators…nor adulterers, nor the effeminate… nor extortioners, shall possess the kingdom of God. And such some of you were; but you are washed, but you are sanctified, but you are justified” (I Cor. 6:9-11). Again, St. Augustine writes, refuting two letters of Pelagius (Ad Bonifacium, Bk. I, chap. 12): “We hold that baptism bestows remission of sins and removes our crimes, not merely erasing them.”

Theological proof. Since justification is derived from justice, taken passively, it implies a motion toward justice, as calefaction imparts a motion toward heat. But the justice with which we are here concerned requires of a man not merely rectitude toward another man, but toward God, inasmuch as reason is subject to God and lower powers to reason, which rectitude excludes injustice or mortal sin. Therefore the justification of a sinner is a transmutation to the state of justice demanding the remission of sins.

This reasoning is based on the definition of motion which is from a contrary to a contrary, that is, from the terminus a quo, namely, the state of sin or injustice, to the terminus ad quem, which is the state of justice. However, justification may also be, as in Adam before the fall and in the angels, a simple generation, that is, from privation to a form. This mode of justification is appropriate to one who is not in sin, as stated in the body of the article.

Reply to second objection. It is noted that this transmutation is named from justice rather than from charity since justice demands the complete rectitude of order in general and is thus distinguished as a special virtue.

Reply to third objection. According to the words of St. Paul: “Whom He called, them He also justified” (Rom. 8:30), vocation precedes justification as it excites one to give up sin.

Confirmation of the reply by reduction ad absurdum. If in the justification of the wicked, sins remain and are merely covered over but not effaced, it follows:

1. that man is simultaneously just and unjust: just because justified, and unjust because he remains in habitual mortal sin, which is essentially injustice;

2. that God loves sinners as His friends;

3. that Christ is not the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world

4. that He spoke a falsehood when He said: “Now you are clean” (John 15:3);

5. that God’s evaluation, reputing him to be just who is in sin, must be false. These are the arguments generally proposed by theologians against the so-called Reformers.

ARTICLE II

WHETHER AN INFUSION OF GRACE IS NECESSARY FOR THE REMISSION OF GUILT, WHICH IS THE JUSTIFICATION OF THE WICKED

State of the question. In the second objection St. Thomas had already formulated the Protestant opinion according to which justification does not require an infusion of grace. The Protestants declared that man was rendered just, not by an intrinsically justifying form, but either by the justice whereby God is just or by the justice of Christ imputed extrinsically. Therefore the justification of the wicked would be an extrinsic denomination.

The reply of St. Thomas is: “The remission of guilt is inconceivable without an infusion of grace.” This reply contains two elements: 1. the remission of guilt is in fact produced by an infusion of grace, and 2. it cannot be effected otherwise, even by the absolute power of God.

The first of these is of faith; the second is opposed to Scotus, the Scotists, and Saurez.

Definition of faith by the Council of Trent (Sess. VI, can. 10 and 11; Denz., nos. 820, 821):

"If anyone should say that men are just without the justice of Christ whereby He merited our justification or by that justice itself formally, let him be anathema." "If anyone should say that men are justified either by the sole imputation of the justice of Christ or by the remission of sins alone, excluding grace and charity which is poured forth into their hearts by the Holy Ghost and abides in them, or even that the grace whereby we are justified is only a favor from God, let him be anathema.

This article of the Church's faith is clearly based on Sacred Scripture: "Of his fullness we all have received, and grace for grace" (John 1:16); "The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us" (Rom. 5:5); "To every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the giving of Christ" (Eph. 4:7).

Theological proof. St. Thomas shows the very impossibility of the remission of sin without the infusion of grace, thus admirably founding his argument on God's love for us.

The remission of sin is effected according as God is pacified in our regard, loving us with special benevolence. But God cannot love the sinner with a special love except by infusing grace whereby the sinner is intrinsically transformed and made pleasing to God. Therefore the remission of sin cannot be effected without an infusion of grace.

The major is self-evident, for God cannot remit the offense of the sinner unless He makes peace with him, and God makes peace with us inasmuch as He loves us with a special love. Thus nothing else can be designated wherein our peace with God consists; in other words, God makes peace with us in the matter of our offense on account of His special benevolence toward us.

The minor is based on St. Thomas' principle enunciated in Ia IIae, q. 110, a. I, and Ia, q. 20, a. 2, to the effect that "the love of God does not presuppose goodness in us but produces it"; "the love of God infuses and creates goodness in things," since He is the author of all good. Nor are we here concerned with the general love whereby God loves and preserves the very nature of the sinner while he is in the state of sin, but rather with the special love whereby He remits or pardons the offense. This special love

cannot but produce some effect in us, that is, it cannot help but make man pleasing; otherwise God's created love for us would be no more effective than the love of our friends, who cannot change the interior state of our souls. Now habitual grace excludes mortal sin absolutely, which is precisely the privation of the life of grace, or the death of the soul. (Cf. ad I.)

Reply to second objection. "God's not imputing sin to man" proceeds "from the divine love for US," and this divine love "produces an effect in us."

Reply to third objection. The cessation of actual sin does not suffice for the remission of sin, since, as has already been said, habitual sin and the liability to punishment remain.

Objection of Scotus. God can be pacified by a negative love by which He wills only not to be offended any more, just as may be done among men.

Reply. Cf. IIIa, q. 85, a. 2. The case is not parallel, for man can pardon the offense of another through a change in himself, without any change in the offender; God, however, is changeless but works a change in others. Hence the transformation is here confined to man, who at first was not pleasing to God and was then made pleasing through the effect of God's love for him.

A second theological proof may be adduced, as many theologians propose, on the basis of created grace itself.

A privation can only be removed by the opposite form, blindness, for instance, only by sight, darkness by light. But habitual sin con-sists essentially in the privation of sanctifying grace. Therefore, habitual sin can be removed only by the form of sanctifying grace.

Objection. The major is true of physical privation, but not of moral privation, which is the absence of a form the subject ought to have, not by the nature of things, but by divine ordination. This moral privation can be removed, not only by the introduction of the op-posite form, but precisely by the fact that God's ordination is changed, determining that this form is no longer due to this subject. God would thus act if He were to withdraw man's ordination toward a supernatural end.

Reply. Although God can withdraw man's ordination toward a supernatural end, He cannot bring it about that at the time when man sinned he was not ordained to a supernatural end, for power does not extend to the past. Moreover, the voluntary privation of grace does not cease to exist in the sinner except by a retractation of his previous will.

A third theological proof on the part of man. Man does not cease to be turned away from God unless he is converted to Him by an interior transformation. But habitual mortal sin implies a habitual aversion to God. Therefore habitual mortal sin does not cease unless man is converted to God by an interior transformation.

Corollary. It follows from this that, even by absolute power, mortal sin whether actual or habitual cannot coexist with habitual grace in the same subject. This is commonly held by theologians against the Nominalists, Scotus, and Suarez. The reason is that man would be at one and the same time actually, or at least habitually, turned away from God, his last end, and habitually converted to God. For the primary formal effect of sanctifying grace is to sanctify man, to justify or "rectify" him (that is, to confer rectitude with regard to God, his last end), and thereby to make man a child of God. Whereas on the other hand, mortal sin is essentially iniquity and departure from rectitude with relation to our last end, and therefore destroys divine filiation or participation in the divine nature. But even by absolute power justice cannot be made to coexist with injustice, sanctity with iniquity and impurity, or rectitude with a turning aside from rectitude.

This would be the denial of the principle of contradiction or of identity: being is being, nonbeing is nonbeing, good is good, evil is evil, spirit is spirit, flesh is flesh. But once this supreme principle should be denied, it would give way to absolute, atheistic evolutionism the formula of which is found in the first proposition of the syllabus of Pius IX (Denz., no. 1701): "No supreme, all-wise, all-provident divine power exists distinct from the universe of things; God is the same as the nature of things and therefore subject to change, God is actually made in man,…and God is one and the same thing with the world and, therefore, spirit with matter, necessity with liberty, truth with falsehood, good with evil, and the just with the unjust." It is to this that the opinion of the Nominalists, Scotus, and Suarez leads.

Suarez objects: The sanctification or deification of the soul is not a primary but a secondary effect of grace. But by absolute power secondary effects may be separated from a form, as risibility from rationality. Therefore by absolute power habitual grace may exist without sanctification.

Thomists answer: I deny the major. This effect, namely, sanctification, is the primary effect of sanctifying grace, for grace is essentially a participation in the divine nature and supernatural substantially; it is not, as

the Nominalists claimed, something entitatively natural conferring, by divine institution, a right to glory, as a bank note confers a right to receive money. Cf. above on the essence of sanctifying grace the primary formal effect of which is to sanctify. Thus the Nominalist conception of grace would be destructive of the whole supernatural order in us since this order would become entitatively natural. This debased form of theology held by the Nominalists is indeed wretched and worthy of contempt.3 Molina, although he taught that the act of infused faith is not specified by a higher formal object than that of acquired faith such as exists in the demons, nevertheless elsewhere deplored deep-rooted and unconscious Nominalism.

I insist. An act can coexist with the contrary habit, for instance, an act of intemperance with the habit of temperance. But habitual grace is a habit, whereas mortal sin is an act. Therefore they can co-exist in the same man.

Reply. 1. This proves too much, for then even by ordinary power habitual grace might coexist with mortal sin, just as the habit of temperance may coexist in corrupt human nature with the sin of intemperance by ordinary power. But all theologians deny such a possibility by ordinary power.

2. There is a distinction to be made between acquired habits which are acquired by repeated acts and not destroyed by one sin, and the infused habits of grace and charity which are not acquired and are taken away in an instant by mortal sin which essentially includes the opposite matter of injustice and deviation from rectitude with regard to the final end.

I insist. But habitual grace resides in the essence of the soul, whereas sin lies in the will.

Reply. By the very fact that there is mortal sin, it follows that injustice and iniquity are present in the whole man; for sin destroys in the will the last disposition for habitual grace which resides in the essence of the soul and destroys as well the necessary properties of grace.

I insist. But sin does not expel grace physically, but only demeritoriously.

Reply. It does not expel grace physically, by a positive form, acting physically: granted; by its nature: denied. For iniquity, injustice, withdrawal from God, the death of the soul by its nature physically expels sanctity, approach to God, the life of the soul.

I insist. God is not necessitated to withdraw grace from a sinner. Therefore.

Reply. God is not necessitated absolutely to do so: granted; but He is necessitated on the supposition that He permits man to fall into mortal sin,

for God cannot will two contradictories simultaneously.

I insist. God does not remove His grace from those once justified, unless He is first abandoned by them, according to the Council of Trent, Sess. VI, chap. II. Therefore sin precedes the withdrawal of grace and hence coexists with grace.

Reply. That mortal sin precedes the withdrawal of grace by a priority of time: denied; by a priority of nature on the part of the material cause: granted, as will be explained below (a. 8), just as darkness ceases in the atmosphere before the latter is illuminated, by a priority of nature but not of time.

PART TWO: THE ACTS WHICH CONCUR IN THE JUSTIFICATION OF A N ADULT SINNER

State of the question. We have already seen (q.112, a. 2) that a certain disposition is required for the justification of an adult which is effected under the influence of prevenient actual grace. Now we are concerned with the free acts required for justification. Let us first examine the Church's definition of faith according to the Council of Trent, in opposition to the Protestants who held that only confident faith in the remission of our sins was required for justification, The Council of Trent (Sess. VI, chap. 6; Denz., no. 798) assigns six acts required for the justification of an Bdult sinner: I. faith, 2. fear, 3. hope, 4. love of God, 5. repentance or contrition, and 6. the intention of receiving the sacrament instituted for the remission of sins, of beginning a new life and of keeping the divine commands, which intention is included in contrition itself. We shall see how this doctrine of the Church had already been admirably explained in the present article by St. Thomas long before the Protestant heresy.

ARTICLE III

WHETHER A MOVEMENT OF THE FREE WILL IS REQUIRED FOR THE JUSTIFICATION OF A N ADULT GUILTY OF SIN

It seems not to be, since: I. it is not required in infants, 2. a man may be justified while asleep, and 3. grace is preserved in us without any

movement of free will, so that it should also be capable of being produced in the same way.

The reply, however, is that a movement of the free will to accept the gift of grace is required for the justification of an adult guilty of sin.

1 . Proof from authority. According to the Council of Trent (Sess. VI, chap. 6, can. 9; Denz., nos. 798, 819): “If anyone should say…that for justification…it is not necessary for a man to prepare and dispose himself by a movement of his will, let him be anathema.” This definition is based on Sacred Scripture (I Kings 7:3): “Prepare your hearts unto the Lord,” and (Zach. 1:3): “Turn ye to Me…and I will turn to you.”

2. Theological proof. In justifying man, God moves him to justice according to the condition of his nature. But it is in accordance with the proper nature of man that he should possess free will. Therefore in one who has the use of free will, God does not produce a motion toward justice without a movement of the free will, or without the free acceptance of the gift of grace.

Reply to first objection. This is not required in infants since they do not yet have the use of free will; thus without personal consent they are freed from original sin, the guilt of which they contracted without personal consent. The same reason applies to the insane or mentally deranged who have never had the use of free will. But if a person has had the use of free will for some time and later loses it either by some infirmity or merely by sleep, he does not obtain justifying grace through baptism, in the ordinary dispensation of providence, unless he first has at least the implicit desire for the necessary sacrament; cf. treatise on baptism. By absolute power, however, a sleeping man can be justified without a previous desire for baptism.

Reply to second objection. St. Thomas makes note of two possibilities: 1. In a prophetic sleep a person may retain the use of free will; 2. without a complete movement of free will the intellect may be enlightened by the gift of wisdom, “since wisdom perfects the intellect which precedes the will.” (Cf. Job 33:15.)

Reply to third objection. The preservation of grace in the soul involves no transformation of the soul from the state of injustice to the state of justice; therefore it does not require a movement of free will but “only a continuation of the divine influx.” Thus the Trinity dwelling in the just soul

preserves grace in it merely by the continua-tion of the divine presence or influx.

ARTICLE IV

WHETHER A MOVEMENT OF FAITH IS REQUIRED FOR THE JUSTIFICATION OF AN ADULT GUILTY OF SIN

It seems not to be so, for: 1. an act of humility or of love of God suffices: 2. natural knowledge of God on the part of the intellect is sufficient; 3. at the moment of justification a man cannot think of all the articles of faith.

The reply, however, is that an act of supernatural faith is required for the justification of an adult sinner. This is of faith.

1. Proof from authority. The Council of Trent (Sess. VI, can. 12; Denz., nos. 822, 799, 802) in opposition to the Protestants who held that confident faith alone in the remission of our sins is required, whereby we trust that our sins are remitted for the sake of Christ. According to the Council (Sess. VI, chap. 6; Denz., no. 798) faith by hearing is required of which St. Paul speaks in Rom. 10:17: “They are disposed for justice when, aroused by divine grace and aided, receiving faith by hearing (Rom. 10:17), they are freely moved unto God, believing those things to be true which are divinely revealed and promised, and this primarily: that the wicked are justified by His grace ‘through the redemption, which is in Christ Jesus’ (Rom. 3:24).” Again the same Council, referring to the vain confidence of heretics, declares (Sess. VI, chap. 9; Denz., no. 802): “No one is capable of knowing with the certainty of faith, in which no falsehood lies concealed, that he has obtained the grace of God.” (Cf. also Denz., nos. 822 ff., 851, 922.)

Protestants, in fact, distinguished a threefold faith as follows:

They called this last form of faith “confidence,” confusing faith, which resides in the intellect, with confidence, which pertains to hope and to the will; for confidence is a firm hope (cf. IIa IIae, q. 129, a. 6). The Protestants held that only this confident hope is required for justification. Some of them, however, maintained that love, contrition, and good works were necessary, not as conducing to justification but as a sign of justifying confidence.

Furthermore, many laxist propositions have been condemned; cf. Denz., no. 1173: “Faith broadly speaking, on the testimony of creatures or some similar motive, suffices for justification”; ibid., no. 1172: “Only faith in one

God seems to be necessary by mediate necessity, but not explicit faith in a Rewarder." Hence there is required supernatural faith at least that God exists and is a rewarder; otherwise man cannot tend toward his final supernatural end. Further condemnation follows (ibid., no. 1207): "It is probable that natural attrition of an honorable kind suffices."

Supernatural contrition is necessary. It is thereupon declared that for sacramental justification, in other words, absolution, "a knowledge of the mysteries of the Trinity and the Incarnation" is required. That is, such knowledge is necessary at least with a necessity of precept; but more probably also with mediate necessity, at least directly, but not indirectly or accidentally, if these are not known on account of insufficient preaching of the gospel in some particular region. This is the opinion of the Salmanticenses, in the treatise on faith (IIa IIae, q 4 a .7).

The Church's belief in this matter, thus defined, is based clearly on many scriptural texts: "Preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth [the gospel]…shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be condemned" (Mark 16:15 f.); "But my just man liveth by faith" (Heb. 10:38); "But without faith it is impossible to please God. For he that cometh to God, must believe that He is, and is a rewarder to them that seek Him" (ibid., 11:6). And St. Paul demonstrates this truth by Old Testament history, citing the faith of Abel, Henoch, Noe, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and the prophets.

However, this faith of which St. Paul speaks is faith in the revealed mysteries, for it is defined in the same Epistle (Heb. 11:1): "Now faith is the substance of things to be hoped for, the evidence of things that appear not," and one must at least believe, as he says, "that God is, and is a rewarder," that is, believe in God as author of salvation and not merely in God as author of nature, known by natural means; such belief was necessary even before Christ. This is confirmed in our Lord's words to Martha (John 11 q-27): "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in Me . . . shall not die forever," and her reply: "Yea, Lord, I have believed that Thou art Christ the Son of the living God, who art come into this world." Again, St. John tells us in his Gospel (20:31): "But these signs are written, that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God: and that believing, you may have life in His name." That faith is justifying which Christ and His apostles preached; but they preached faith in the mysteries, not that

individual, fiduciary faith whereby each one believes that his own sins are remitted.

Confirmation from tradition. From the beginning the Church, when faith is required of candidates for baptism, demanded no other faith but that by which we believe the articles of faith contained in the Creed, and not the faith by which we trust that our sins are forgiven. (Cf. on this subject with respect to the Fathers, St. Robert Bellarmine, De justif., Bk. I, chap. 9.)

Objection. But it is written in St. Matthew's Gospel: "And Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the man sick of the palsy: Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee" (9:2), and further: "Be of good heart, daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole" (9:22).

Reply. Before the paralytic and the woman obtained the remission of their sins they already had faith and nevertheless they did not yet believe that their sins were forgiven. Hence when Christ said: "Thy faith hath made thee whole," He was referring to dogmatic faith, the same of which St. Paul speaks to the Romans (10:9): "If thou . . . believe . . . that God hath raised Him [the Lord Jesus] up from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

The second theological argument in the body of the article is as follows:

For the justification of adults who are in sin a movement of the soul is required freely turning toward God. But the first conversion toward God is through faith. Therefore an act of faith is required for the justification of an adult in sin.

The major is proved by what has already been said and is confirmed by Ps. 84:7: "Thou wilt turn, O God, and bring us to life."

The minor is according to St. Paul (Heb. 11:16): "For he that cometh to God, must believe that He is, and is a rewarder to them that seek Him." It is confirmed by the principle that nothing is willed without being previously known; but a supernatural end cannot first be known by wayfarers except through faith.

Reply to second objection. Natural knowledge of God does not suffice for justification, since by it a man is not converted to God as object of (supernatural) beatitude and cause of justification. The distinction is clearly affirmed here between the two orders. Lamennais and the liberals fell into error by holding (Denz., no. 1613) that: "The eternal salvation of souls may be purchased by any profession of faith whatsoever, if their morals are required to conform to a right and honorable standard." Lammenais maintained that common sense was enough, since it was founded originally

on the first revelation made to Adam. This was a confusion of the two orders, as in the case of the traditionalists. Nor does there consequently appear to have been any progress made in theology on this subject since St. Thomas, although, in founding his periodical, l'Avenir, Lammenais thought he was opening a new era. He passed from one extreme to the other, that is, from traditionalism to liberalism, declaring that the common traditions of all the people are sufficient.

Reply to third objection. St. Thomas determines which kind of faith is required according to St. Paul: "But to him that . . . believeth in Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reputed to justice, according to the purpose of the grace of God" (Rom. 4:5). "From which it appears," as St. Thomas adds, "that for justification an act of faith is required to this extent: that a man believe God to be the justifier of men through the mystery of Christ." This text may be cited in favor of the opinion which holds that, after Christ, faith in the redemptive Incarnation is necessary even by a necessity of means for salvation, since the promulgation of the gospel. (Cf. treatise on faith, IIa IIae, q. 2, a. 7.)

The answer to the first objection will be explained below in the refutation of the error of Protestantism.

The Protestant error: faith alone suffices for the justification of an adult.

It was declared at the Council of Trent (Sess. VI, can. 9 and 19; Denz., nos. 819, 829) that neither the confident faith referred to by Protestants, nor true Christian faith alone suffices for justification.

In this respect Protestants revived an ancient heresy. Simon the Magician and, later, Eunomius misunderstood St. Paul's words concerning the merely natural or legal works of the Jews, and maintained that Christian faith alone, that is, in the articles of the Creed, sufficed for salvation, without works of charity. It was against this error of Simon the Magician, as St. Irenaeus and St. Augustine tell us, that Peter, John, James, and Jude wrote in their epistles. However, in reviving this heresy, the Lutherans and Calvinists modified it by declaring that fiduciary faith suffices for justification, whereas the older heretics had reference to the faith by which we believe all the articles of faith. The innovators insisted that their doctrine was based on certain texts of St. Paul.

But the definition of the Council of Trent is clearly based on many scriptural texts. St. James asks (2:14-26): "What shall it profit, my brethren, if a man says he hath faith, but hath not works? Shall faith be able to save

him? . . . So faith also, if it have not works, is dead in itself. . . . Do you see that by works a man is justified; and not by faith only? . . . Faith without works is dead." And in St. Peter's Second Epistle we read (1:10): "Labor the more, that by good works you may make sure your calling and election." St. Jude exhorts the faithful: "Keep yourselves in the love of God" (verse 21). Again St. John declares: "Little children, let no man deceive you. He that doth justice is just" (I John 3:7). And St. Paul writes: "If I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing" (I Cor. 13:2); "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but faith that worketh by charity" (Gal. 5:6); "For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified" (Rom. 2:13).

Christ Himself everywhere recommends good works as necessary for justification and salvation: "So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven. . . . Unless your justice abound more than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:16, 20); "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be cut down, and shall be cast into the fire" (ibid., 7:19); "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments" (ibid., 19:18).

Thus it becomes evident that Luther perverted Christ's doctrine radically under the pretext of a deeper understanding of it. In his sermon on the words, "God so loved the world," Luther teaches that, once justified by faith, although a man becomes a thief, murderer, adulterer, or sodomite, he still remains just; hence faith justifies without good works, indeed, even when accompanied by the worst possible works. Luther reiterates this opinion with reference to the second chapter of Galatians. Therefore he said: "Sin strongly and believe more strongly." And Protestant historians, such as Harnack, would have us believe that this represents progress in the development of dogma. (Cf. Denifle, Luther und Luthertum.)

The principal objection of the heretics is based upon the text of St. Paul to the Romans (4:2): "If Abraham was justified by works, he hath whereof to glory, but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was reputed to him unto justice [Gen. 15:6]. Now to him that worketh, the reward is not reckoned according to grace, but according to debt. But to him that worketh not, yet believeth in Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reputed to justice, according to the

purpose of the grace of God. . . . Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered [Ps. 31:1]. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord hath not imputed sin."

Reply. This text of St. Paul is explained in the light of other texts of the Apostle by the Council of Trent (Sess. VI, chap. 8; Denz., no. 801). The meaning here is the same as in the preceding chapter of Romans (3:21 ff.): "But now without the law the justice of God is made manifest, being witnessed by the law and the prophets. Even the justice of God, by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe in Him. . . . Being justified freely [that is, not by works] by His grace, through the redemption, that is in Christ Jesus"; and again later (ibid., 11:16): "If by grace, it is not now by works: other-wise grace is no more grace." Such texts are often quoted against the Pelagians and Semi-Pelagians.

Hence the reply is: St. Paul (Rom 4:5) denies only that the natural good works of pagans or the legal works of the Old Law can obtain justification for us, since justification is gratuitous, proceeding from faith in Christ the Redeemer and from grace. Therefore he declares: "To him that worketh not [that is, the natural works of the pagans or the works of the Mosaic law] yet believeth in Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reputed to justice, according to the purpose of the grace of God." This text should be cited against the Pelagians and Semi-Pelagians who hold that "if one does what in one lies by natural power alone, God infallibly confers grace." (Cf. Council of Trent, Denz. no. 801, and with respect to the Fathers, cf. St. Robert Bellarmine, De justificatione, Bk. I, chaps. 20-25.)

St. Thomas' doctrine on this subject, however, is perfectly clear, both from his answer to the first objection of the present article and from subsequent articles. Thus he maintains in his answer to the first objection of article 4: "The movement of faith is not perfect unless it is informed by charity, hence in the justification of adults guilty of sin there is a movement of charity simultaneous with the movement of faith." Therefore justification is attributed to faith as its beginning and root, not however excluding other works which dispose for it; consequently the faith which justifies is a living faith which operates through charity. The Council of Trent (Sess. VI, chap. 6; Denz., no. 798) indicates an act of love of God following acts of faith, fear, and hope.

In the reply to the first objection St. Thomas had likewise noted an act of fear; indeed he specified a kind of fear when he wrote: "However the free

will is moved toward God so far as it subjects itself to Him; hence there also concurs an act of filial fear [that is, fear of sin] and an act of humility" (to the extent that man understands himself to be a sinner, as the Council of Trent declares, ibid.). In fact, St. Thomas mentions "an act of mercy or of love toward one's neighbor" according as it either follows justification, or disposes one for it, or is concomitant with it at the very moment of justification itself. Finally, the Angelic Doctor remarks that one and the same act of free will participates in several virtues so far as one imperates and the others are imperated." In article 8 he indicates the order of these acts.

A difficult problem: On the justification of a pagan child who, when he arrives at the full use of reason, does what lies in his power, with the help of actual grace, to love God above all things.

St. Thomas writes, Ia IIae, q. 89, a. 6: "When a child begins to have the use of reason, he should order his acts toward a proper end, to the extent that he is capable of discretion at that age." And again in the answer to the third objection: "The end is first in the intention. Hence this is the time when the child is obliged by the affirmative command: 'Turn ye to Me. . . .' But if the child does this, he obtains the remission of original sin." It is an excellent form of baptism of desire. St. Thomas and Thomists reconcile this doctrine with the legitimate interpretation of the axiom: "To one who does what in him lies (with the help of actual grace), God does not deny habitual grace," and in the present case God does not deny what is necessary for justification, that is, the supernatural presentation of the truths of faith which are necessary by a necessity of means, at least that God "is, and is a rewarder" in the order of grace.

However, since this thesis is extremely difficult and very complex, demanding the refutation of numerous objections, it will be well to offer here a recapitulation of its proof while at the same time solving the principal difficulties. (Cf. especially on this subject John of St. Thomas, De praedestinatione, disp. 10, a. 3, nos. 40-41, and the thesis of Father Paul Angelo, O.P., La possibilità di salute nel primo atto morale per il fanciullo infedele, Rome, the Angelicum, 1946.)

I. Why does it not suffice, when a child begins to have the use of reason, that he wills, for example, not to lie, when the occasion arises?

Reply. Because the end is first in the intention; and the end in question is not only happiness in general, but at least some honorable good to be

accomplished, as expressed in the first precept of the natural law (to live according to right reason); cf. Ia IIae, q. 94, a. 2.

2. At that moment is not the moral obligation properly so called, of loving an honorable good (living according to right reason), more than a pleasurable or useful good, and more than sensitive life, made evident explicitly to the child?

Reply. Yes.

3. Does not the explicit knowledge of this moral obligation demand that, the next moment at least, the child know explicitly, although confusedly, that this moral obligation proceeds from the author of his nature?

Reply. Yes; at least according to St. Thomas, since right reason does not bind except as a second cause dependent upon the first and since passive ordering of the child's will toward loving an honorable good efficaciously, even at great cost, supposes the active ordination of the author of nature. Otherwise there could be a philosophical sin against right reason which would not be a sin against God. However, this has been condemned as an error (Denz., no. 1290).7 But yet, in this instant the honorable good is known before the ultimate honorable good known confusedly, and before the ultimate basis of moral obligation, namely, the ordination proceeding from the author of nature.

4. Does the child, by loving an honorable good efficaciously and explicitly more than himself, love God, the author of nature, efficaciously but implicitly?

Reply. Yes.

5. Why in the present state cannot the child love God, the author of nature, efficaciously and implicitly more than himself, without grace which is at once healing and elevating?

Reply. Because by original sin "man follows his own exclusive good unless he is healed by the grace of God" (Ia IIae, q. 109, a. 3). And this healing grace is at the same time elevating.

6. Does it not suffice for the child to be justified that in a brief moment of time he elicits a single act of efficacious love of God, the author of nature?

Reply. Yes; but in fact this single act cannot be produced unless he is already healed by grace. He will thus be instantly justified, as St. Thomas remarked, De veritate, q. 24, a. 12 ad 2: "he will have grace immediately," or will be justified.

7. Why cannot this child be at the same time converted to God, the author of nature, and in the state of original sin?

Reply. Because original sin brings about directly aversion from the final supernatural end, and indirectly from the final natural end; for the natural law decrees that God is to be obeyed whatever He may command. Accordingly in the present state habitual grace cannot heal, without at the same time elevating, and being the root of infused charity.

8. But the difficulty remains with respect to the revelation of the first articles of belief. Is not a revelation, strictly speaking, required?

Reply. Yes, a revelation, strictly speaking, is required, either immediately, or mediately through the guardian angel, since there can be no justification of an adult without an act of faith based on the authority of God who reveals. But at the moment of the moral beginning of the use of reason two physical instants can be distinguished, and this revelation is given in the second of them, if the child does not set up an obstacle but, with the help of actual grace, does whatever is in his power.

9. In this second physical instant of the first use of reason, can the act of faith coexist with merely implicit knowledge of God?

Reply. No, the knowledge of God must be explicit, and at least vague and obscure, such as that possessed by many Christians of long standing but very poorly instructed.

10. But what are the motives of belief for this child who is unacquainted with either miracles or prophecies?

Reply. The internal motives of belief then supply for the others under divine inspiration, for instance, an experience of great peace which manifests itself as proceeding from on high.

11. Is not this divine intervention miraculous?

Reply. No, for it is produced according to the law: “To him who does what in him lies, God does not refuse grace.”

But is it not extraordinary?

Reply. Yes, indeed.

Is it frequent among pagans?

Reply. It is difficult to say; probably the number of these baptisms of desire has increased since the consecration of the human race to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus was made by Leo XIII at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Does God really give to pagan children at that moment sufficient grace for ordering their lives toward the proper end?

Reply. Yes.

13. Why do not the desire for faith and implicit faith in the primary objects of belief suffice?

Reply. Because implicit faith must be contained in a principle which is more universal, not of an inferior order. Thus implicit faith in the Trinity is contained in supernatural, explicit faith in God, the rewarder, but not in knowledge of an inferior order.

14. But if a child does not resist the first prevenient grace inclining him to a pious disposition to believe, will he not receive the enlighten-ment necessary for an act of faith?

Reply. Yes.

15. The final objection of the Nominalists is as follows: This doctrine of St. Thomas seems to be true in the abstract but not in the concrete. In the abstract, the major, the minor, and even the consequence are valid, hence the conclusion is logically arrived at, but the mind is not convinced that the theory is true in the concrete. Many young students admit of this reaction.

Reply. This is the objection of the Nominalists or subjective conceptualists, according to whom our concepts have no certain objective value. They argue that a perfect circle does not exist in the concrete, though it may be conceived as perfect in the abstract. The answer is that, although it may be difficult to form a perfectly accurate circle, the nature of a circle truly exists so far as it corresponds to its definition. With still greater reason, according to moderate realism, the nature of intelligence and will exists in the concrete here and now in this child, and therefore the properties of deliberating intelligence and of will directed toward the final end are strictly verified in him; while a wayfarer he begins to walk rationally in the path of good or of evil. There is no doubt of these two truths: the end is first in the intention, and, if a person does what he can (with divine assistance), God does not refuse grace.

Furthermore, the Nominalists hold that the proof of free will given by St. Thomas is valid only in the abstract, since in practice the stronger motive here and now draws one, and the opposite motive is not sufficient. This is Kant’s idea, at least in the phenomenal order.

Likewise the Jansenists held that sufficient grace is sufficient in the abstract, but not here and now in practice. The fact remains that our will, by

its nature, is free with regard to any object “not in every respect good,” and that sufficient grace confers, in the concrete, here and now, the power of doing good, since potency is distinguished from act, just as the faculty of sight is distinguished from vision itself; otherwise a person who is asleep and not actually seeing would be blind. Matters must be judged according to the very nature of things, despite what may be held by Nominalism or Positivism, which is the negation of all philosophy and theology.

ARTICLE V

WHETHER THE JUSTIFICATION OF THE WICKED REQUIRES A MOVEMENT OF THE FREE WILL IN RELATION TO SIN

State of the question. It seems that charity toward God should suffice, without hatred for sin, since I. charity covers a multitude of sins; 2. he who stretches out toward what is before should not look back upon what is behind, according to St. Paul; and 3. man cannot remember all his sins.

The reply, however, is that an act of contrition or hatred of sin is required for the justification of an adult in sin.

Proof from the declaration of the Church, particularly in view of the quotation previously cited from the Council of Trent (Sess. VI, chap. 6; Denz., no. 798): “They are disposed for justice when, aroused by divine grace and assisted . . . they are moved against sin by a certain hatred and detestation”; also canon 9. This definition is based on several scriptural texts. In the argument Sed contra, St. Thomas quotes Ps. 31:5: “I said I will confess against myself my injustice to the Lord: and Thou hast forgiven the wickedness of my sin.”

Theological proof. The justification of sinners is a movement of the mind from the state of sin to the state of justice. But the mind cannot freely approach justice without freely withdrawing from sin by detestation of it. Therefore the justification of sinners requires not only the desire of tending toward God and justice, but the hatred of sin or injustice. Hence faith alone does not justify.

In other words, there can be no free approach to the terminus toward which one is moving without a free departure from the terminus away from which one is moving; or, there is no desire for good without flight from evil or aversion for evil, according to the words of the Psalmist: “You that love the Lord, hate evil” (96:10). Cajetan observes that from the motion of

hatred for evil and the motion of affection for good there is formed, as it were, a single, complete motion of the will from evil to good. (Cf. a. 7 ad 2.)

Reply to first objection. It pertains to charity to love God and, consequently, to hate sin or offense against God; hence charity controls penitence. Cf. the treatise on penance and article 8 of the present question on the order of these acts and also of attrition and contri-tion.

Reply to second objection. Man ought not to look back on past sins to love them but rather to detest them.

Reply to third objection. Man should detest all the sins he has committed, including those he has forgotten, for he would hate these also if they were present to his memory.

ARTICLE VI

WHETHER THE REMISSION OF SIN SHOULD BE NUMBERED AMONG THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE JUSTIFICATION OF SINNERS

State of the question. This seems not to be true, since I. this remis-sion is justification itself and not merely a part of it; 2. since the same thing should not be enumerated together with itself, and the infusion of grace is the same as the remission of sin.

The reply is, nevertheless, in the affirmative.

1 . Proof in general. Since the remission of sin is the effect and end of justification; contrary to what Luther declared, sins are not merely covered over but forgiven. But the end toward which justification is ordained should not be omitted.

2. Specific proof. Justification is a motion of the mind from the state of sin to the state of justice. But in any motion, three elements are necessary: 1. the motion of the mover, this is the infusion of grace; 2. the movement of the moved, that is, a motion of living faith and contrition; and 3. the attainment of the end, which is the remission of sin. Therefore.

Later, in his treatise on penance (IIIa, q. 85, a. 5 c.), St. Thomas states that “Penance as a habit is immediately infused by God, without any principal operation on our part; not, however, without our cooperation in disposing ourselves by certain acts.

“From another standpoint, we may speak of penance as it consists of acts in which we cooperate toward the penance which God produces; the first

and principal of these acts is the operation of God converting our hearts, according to Lam. 5:21: “Convert us, O Lord, to Thee, and we shall be converted.” The second act is the movement of faith; the third is the movement of servile fear, whereby a person is drawn away from his sins through fear of punishment. The fourth act is a movement of hope, by which he resolves to amend in the hope of obtaining pardon. The fifth is a movement of charity whereby sin becomes displeasing on its own account and no longer for fear of punishment. The sixth is a movement of filial fear which voluntarily offers some amendment to God out of reverence for Him.”

Reply to first objection. The justification of sinners is said to be identical with the remission of sins so far as all movement is specified by the terminus toward which it tends.

Reply to second objection. The infusion of grace and the remission of sins are the same with regard to the substance of the act, for God, by the same act, bestows grace and remits guilt; but they differ in relation to their objects, according to the distinction between guilt which is removed and grace which is infused. Thus, in natural processes, generation and corruption are differentiated, although the generation of one thing is the corruption of another. In the same way, the infusion of grace is the remission of sin.

Thus terminates this second part of question 113, that is, the consideration of the acts requisite for the justification of an adult. They are found to be: an act of living faith, that is, of faith and charity, together with acts of filial fear and hope (a. 4 c and ad I) and an act of contrition (a.5). All of these were subsequently defined by the Council of Trent (Sess. VI, chap. 6; Denz., no. 798) when six acts were indicated as concurring in justification: I. faith, 2. fear of both punishment and guilt (Denz., no. 818), 3. hope, 4. love of God, 5. contrition, 6. the intention of receiving the sacraments, of beginning a new life, and of keeping the commandments, which intention is included in contrition. The fourth act is thus designated by the Council: “They begin to love God as source of all justice and, consequently, they are moved to withdraw from sin” (Denz., no. 798).

Concerning the necessity of at least a beginning of this love for justification through the sacrament, there is a well-known controversy, which is analyzed in the treatise on penance with reference to attrition and contrition. Contrition is said to be perfect if sin is displeasing principally as

an offense against God; it is said to be imperfect if sin displeases principally as harmful to the sinner. Attrition is imperfect contrition (cf. Denz., nos. 898, 915). The controversy arises over the attrition necessary for justification with the sacrament, since attrition for sin committed may proceed from various motives, either natural or supernatural: 1. whether from the fact that sin is ugly in itself and revolting to right reason, 2. or because it is the cause of temporal evils, 3. or because it leads to damnation, 4. or because it deprives one of eternal glory, or 5. because it is evil and an offense against God. According to the Church, in opposition to the laxists, a natural motive does not suffice even for sacramental justification (Denz., no. 1207) ; attrition must be supernatural in its motivation (Denz., nos. 699, 751, 897, 1536). Perfect contrition arising from charity with the desire for the sacrament justifies even before the reception of the latter, and that not merely in case of necessity or martyrdom. The Church likewise declared that attrition without charity is not evil and may be supernatural, and that, if it is supernatural, it suffices with the sacrament of penance for justification. But it is a disputed point among theologians just what is required to make attrition supernatural, from which supernatural motive it should proceed, and whether it includes an incipient love of God, distinct from charity. According to many Thomists, it includes a love of benevolence toward God, distinct from charity, just as in faith there is a devout will to believe with reference to divine truth. We have discussed this subject at length in the treatise De poenitentia appended to the De Eucharistia (1943, pp. 360-79).

Doubt. Whether all six acts enumerated by the Council of Trent must be explicit.

Reply. The acts of faith and of love must be formal or explicit since neither in the intellect nor in the will are any more excellent or higher acts produced wherein they might be virtually contained. It seems that hope would be virtually contained in the more eminent act of charity, should a person be suddenly moved to conversion. The act of contrition, so it seems, must be explicit at least essentially, since man should regret his sin not only because it is contrary to divine goodness but also as a violation of the divine law, and this pertains formally not to charity but to penance; but accidentally a person may not think explicitly of his sins but only of loving God, and he is then justified. It suffices for the purpose of amendment to be virtual in the contrition.

The third part of the present question deals with the properties of justification, according as it takes place in an instant, including however the priority and posteriority of nature (a. 7 and 8), according as it is the greatest work of God with regard to the effect produced (a. 9) , although it is not a miracle, at least ordinarily (a. 10).

ARTICLE VII

WHETHER THE JUSTIFICATION OF SINNERS TAKES PLACE I N AN INSTANT OR SUCCESSIVELY

State of the question. It seems not to be instantaneous, since: 1. it requires an act of free will which entails previous deliberation; 2. it requires two acts, the love of God and the hatred of sin, which do not seem to be simultaneous; 3. habitual grace itself is susceptible of greater or less measure, and therefore is not received in an instant, but little by little according to its various degrees; 4. the movement of free will concurring toward justification is meritorious; therefore it cannot take place until after the infusion of grace, which is the principle of merit; 5. the same instant cannot be at once the first instant of the life of grace and the last instant of the state of sin, since these two opposites cannot coexist; but between two instants there must be an intermediate time; otherwise they would be identical.

The conclusion is, nevertheless, that the justification of sinners is effected by God instantaneously, at least so far as it signifies the infusion of habitual grace and the remission of sins, although the previous dispositions by which the sinner is prepared are ordinarily produced successively. However, these dispositions, as explained in the reply to the first objection, are the path to justification, but not the real substance of justification.

Proof from Scripture, according to which the Holy Ghost comes into the souls of men suddenly: “And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind coming” (Acts 2:2).

Nevertheless the Council of Trent (Sess. VI, chaps. 5 and 6) refers not only to the infusion of grace, but also to the antecedent dispositions by which the sinner is prepared, and, in this sense, justification is ordinarily effected successively, as St. Thomas himself here declares in the body of the article, in the answer to the first objection, in the preceding article 5 ad 3, and in q. 112, a. 2 ad I and 2. His teaching may be summarized as

follows: Ordinarily justification including also the preceding dispositions is produced successively, for it is only under extraordinary circumstances that God sometimes bestows at the same moment of time the complete disposition and the infusion of grace, as in miraculous conversions which are utterly instantaneous, even in regard to their preparation; cf. a. 10.

Theological proof. A form is impressed upon a previously disposed subject in an instant when the agent does not require time to overcome the resistance of the subject. But justification is the impressing of habitual grace upon a previously disposed subject by God who requires no time. Therefore justification, inasmuch as it is the infusion of grace, is effected in an instant.

We are here supposing the disposition to be primary in time, not final, since justification is understood as signifying only the infusion of grace, and God almighty requires no other disposition than that which He produces and which He can also effect at the very instant when He produces grace itself, as He did in St. Paul, or gradually and successively; but this does not pertain to justification taken in sense of the infusion of grace. What does pertain to it, as we shall see in the following article, is the final disposition through an act of living faith and contrition at the very instant of justification. Therefore justification, taken in this sense, is effected in an instant.

The major is verifiable even in the natural order, inasmuch as, once the disposition for the substantial form is present in the matter, this form, of which the specific difference is indivisible, is produced in an instant; for example, an animal either is a lion; and again, transparency which is predisposed can be suddenly illuminated.

The minor is clear with reference to the infusion of grace in its precise acceptation. Indeed God sometimes produces in an instant, under extraordinary circumstances, the preliminary dispositions for grace, since acts of free will can be made instantaneously.

Confirmation. (De veritate, q. 8, a. 9.) When there is no mean between the extremes of a change, just as there is no mean in the substantial change between being and nonbeing (for example, between the being of form of a lion and not being), then the transition is made instantaneously. But between the extremes involved in justification, habitual grace on the one hand and deprivation of habitual grace on the other, there can be no mean;

for man either possesses habitual grace or he does not; if he does, even in the least degree, he is already justified. Therefore.

Further confirmation is found in the refutation of the objections.

Reply to first objection. The deliberation which precedes by a priority of time is the way to justification but not the substance of justification, for which there is required the final, instantaneous consent of the deliberation to detest sin and be united to God.

Reply to the second objection. These two acts of hatred for sin and love and love of God can be simultaneous inasmuch as one is ordained to the other, for man detests sin for the reason that it is against God to whom he wishes to adhere.

Reply to the third objection. Some forms can be received to a greater or less degree, such as light or grace; yet they are produced instantaneously, for even if possessed in the least degree their essence is already present. The slightest degree of habitual grace is already a participation in the divine nature.

Reply to the fourth objection. The movements of living faith and of contrition are meritorious inasmuch as they proceed from habitual grace itself at the very moment of infusion. For grace begins to operate at once, just as fire immediately forces itself upward or produces light. This is a remarkable fact: life is infused simultaneously in first act and in second act.

Reply to fifth objection. There is no last instant in which guilt was present in the soul, but there is a last time; whereas there is a first instant in which habitual grace is present therein; however, throughout the preceding time, guilt was present. Hence the first nonexistence of guilt is the first existence of grace, which presents no contradiction. The text should be consulted in this regard. This question of the final instant is of great importance in the matter of the end of life.

It should be remarked that Cajetan (Ia, q. 64, a. I, no. 18), wishing to explain the obstinacy of a damned soul by comparison with the obstinacy of the demon, declares: “I say that the soul is settled in obstinacy by the first act which it elicits in the state of separation, and that the soul then demerits, not as in life, but as having arrived at its term; as appears from what has been said above (q. 63, a. 6, no.3) , the instant of death belongs intrinsically to the state of wayfarer.”

The Salmanticenses remark (De gratia, “de merito,” disp. I, dub. IV, no. 36): “This manner of speaking of Cajetan is generally not admitted because

of the testimony of several scriptural texts according to when men can merit or lose merit before death but not in death." Hence the same thing should be said of the state of wayfarer as has been said here of the state of sin: there is not the last instant of the life of the wayfarer, but the last moment of time; on the other hand, there is the first instant of life of the separated soul; and throughout the preceding time, infinitely divisible, the life of the wayfarer ex-isted.

Hence the first nonexistence of the wayfarer's state is the first existence of the state of separated soul; and, as it seems, merit is then no longer possible, but only immediately before, since it is man who must merit and not a separated soul, for his body is given to him that he may tend toward his end, and after separation from the body his choice is rendered permanent. Thus is confirmed by revelation the Aristotelian thesis of the soul as the form of the body.

This problem is extremely difficult; cf. St. Thomas, Contra Gentes, Bk. IV, chaps. 92, 93, and the Commentary of Francis Silvester (Ferrariensis) who does not follow Cajetan. We have dealt with this question in the treatise De Deo creatore, pp. 408-12.

ARTICLE VIII

WHETHER THE INFUSION OF GRACE IS FIRST IN ORDER OF NATURE AMONG THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE JUSTIFICATION OF SINNERS

State of the question. This question is attractive and, on the other hand, it illustrates the problem of the culpability of the sinner, according as the resistance to sufficient grace precedes, at least by a priority of nature, the refusal of divine efficacious grace. It seems that the infusion of grace is not first in order of nature, since: 1. withdrawal from evil precedes the approach to good; therefore the remission of guilt is prior to the infusion of grace; 2. the movement of free will is a disposition for the reception of grace and therefore precedes it; 3. indeed the remission of guilt takes place before the movement of free will, for that which prevents the movement is removed before the movement can follow. Such objections are often proposed in similar questions. Many argue on the basis of priority in the order of material cause, as if the material cause were absolutely prior to any other. This would lead to materialism, and, in the present problem, to Pelagianism,

which is a materialistic explanation of justification, to the extent that at least the beginning of salvation would proceed from nature.

The conclusion of St. Thomas is twofold; he explains the profound meaning of our Lord's words of Mary Magdalen (Luke 7:47): "Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much. But to whom less is forgiven, he loveth less." These words seem to be opposed to each other.

First conclusion. 1. On the part of God, the agent, and absolutely, the infusion of grace is prior not by a priority of time but of nature:

2. a movement of free will toward God is produced, namely, of living faith and charity; detestation for sin; and

3. detestation of sin; and

4. the remission of guilt.

It is assumed from the preceding article that justification with respect to its essence, in the strict sense, is effected in an instant, so that the same instant is the first nonexistence of sin and the first existence of habitual grace. But there may be preceding dispositions beforehand, although not the final disposition which is produced at the very instant of justification.

Proof from common principles, from the argument Sed contra. Because a cause is prior to its effect; but the infusion of grace is the cause of the movement of free will toward God, of contrition, and of the remission of sin.

Proof, in particular; the body of the article should be read. In any movement there is: 1. the motion of the mover, 2. the movement of the object set in motion, and 3. the terminus toward which it is moved. But the justification of a sinner is the transmutation effected by God from the state of sin to the state of grace. Therefore it involves: 1. the motion of God infusing grace, 2. a twofold movement of free will, and 3. the end of the movement, that is, the remission of guilt.

Why does the movement of free will toward God precede contrition? Because we detest sin inasmuch as it is against God; our love of God is the cause of our contrition, which is the cause of the remission of guilt. Hence our Lord says of Mary Magdalen: "Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much" (Luke 7:47); but He adds: "To whom less is forgiven, he loveth less." This is explained by St. Thomas' second conclusion which concerns the movable element or material cause.

The second conclusion refutes the first objection as follows: With regard to the movable element or the justified man, freedom from guilt is prior in

order of nature to the acquisition of grace. Observe well that St. Thomas uses the terms liberation from guilt rather than remission of guilt, and acquisition of grace rather than infusion of grace, since he is here considering the matter from the standpoint of the man justified and not of God who justifies. (Consult the answer to the first objection.)

Proof. On the part of the object moved, withdrawal from the terminus a quo it precedes the approach to the terminus ad quem. For instance, with regard to the lighting up of the atmosphere, the dispelling of darkness precedes the arrival of the light, not by a priority of time but of nature, whereas on the other hand, in relation to the sun, illumination is prior by nature to the removal of darkness. Therefore, from the standpoint of man, liberation from guilt precedes the acquisition of grace, whereas, from the standpoint of God, the infusion of grace precedes the remission of guilt.

Again, St. Thomas says in answer to the second objection: “The movement of free will precedes in the order of nature the acquisition of grace for which it disposes one, but it follows the infusion of grace.”

He is here referring to the final disposition which is present in the same instant as justification itself, in the strict sense; but there may be previous dispositions preceding in time, as remarked in the foregoing article (ad I, and a. 5 ad 3; q. 112, a. 2 ad I and 2).

Finally in reply to the third objection: Since the end is first in the intention, free will is moved toward God as to its end before the motion to remove the impediment of sin. Thus, in the present article, St. Thomas applies with remarkable aptness the principle of Aristotle (Met., Bk. V, chap. 2): “Causes are causes to each other but under different aspects”; thus there is a mutual relationship of priority without a vicious circle, since the mutual causes are not such under the same aspect, but under different aspects. Absolute evolutionism, however, perverts this principle and falls into contradiction by claiming that evolution is, of itself, creative and that God is the world or is made in the world. God makes all that are made in the world, but He several of which I have indicated in God: His Existence and His Nature, II, 313 ff. The efficient cause is attracted by or from the end and obtains or produces the end; the matter is determined by the form and limits it; a bird bears its wings, but is borne by them; the intellect receives its object from the senses, but it passes judgment upon them; it directs the will, but is applied by the will; the final practical judgment precedes choice and is confirmed by it. Revelation is proposed by the Church and is a

motive for believing in the infallibility of the Church. Again, the Word would not have become incarnate if man had not sinned, but God permitted the sin of the first man for the greater good of the Incarnation itself.

First corollary. The passive purifications of the spirit are often made according to the same order, inasmuch as God, through the illumination of the gifts of intellect, purifies from all imperfection faith, hope, and charity, that the formal motive of these virtues may appear in all its purity and move the soul; and on the part of God, the purification of these virtues precedes, at least by a priority of nature, the more intense contrition.

But on the part of the purified soul the order is reversed; thus there first appears the purification of humility by a profound realization of I was not made. There are many other applications of this principle, our misery and a hatred for sin; there follows the purification of faith, amid the overcoming of temptations against faith; then the purification of hope, surmounting the temptation to despair; and finally the purification of love or charity, described by St. Theresa in the seventh mansion.

Hence the passive purification of the spirit renews once more and much more profoundly what takes place in the justification of sinners; both of them are sanctifying, the first imperfectly, the second perfectly. God is the author of both, just as a farmer first plows a shallow furrow and then a much deeper one to extirpate stubborn weeds and roots and prepare the soil, so that the grain of wheat falling into it may bear much fruit.

Second corollary. The argument is the same in the opposite direction. To explain the culpability of the sinner it must be said conversely that in the first sin the resistance to sufficient grace absolutely precedes by a priority of nature the divine refusal of efficacious grace. St. Thomas had said in the reply to the first objection of our present article: “And since the infusion of grace and the remission of guilt are said to be on the part of God who justifies, therefore in the order of nature the infusion of grace is prior to the remission of guilt.” On the other hand it must be said: “And since sin as such is a defect which of itself is reducible, not to God who is indefectible, but to the defective and deficient free will, therefore in the order of nature, at the same instant, the initial defect or voluntary heedlessness in fulfilling an obligation or resistance to sufficient grace is prior absolutely to the divine refusal of efficacious grace, which is a punishment presupposing a fault, and to the divine motion concurring in the matter of the sin. Thus the divine denial of efficacious grace, so far as it is a punishment presupposing

a fault, signifies something more than the simple divine permission of the initial sin, which is the condition without which there could be no sin, but not its cause. Cf. Council of Trent, Sess. VI, chap. II: “God by His grace does not abandon souls once justified (by the refusal of efficacious grace) unless He is first abandoned by them”; but man would not abandon God if God did not permit it; hence we must pray: “Permit me not to be separated from Thee!” We have explained this elsewhere: God: His Existence and His Nature, 11,371 ff ., and De Deo creatore, pp. 346-52.

The point to be emphasized is that abandoning God is a defect pertaining to man and therefore this priority on the part of the material cause is absolute; while on the contrary, in the infusion of grace, which is the work of God, the priority on the part of the agent is absolute. (Cf. Ia IIae, q. 79, a. 1 and 2: whether God is the cause of sin and the cause of the act of sin.)

Doubt. Whether the acts of charity and contrition, which dispose finally for habitual grace, proceed from it effectively or only from the actual help communicated in a transitory way; cf. Salmanticenses, dub. 3 and 4. Billuart (De gratia, d. 7, a. 4, § 4) remarks that there are the three following opinions on this subject.

1. The old school of Thomists, Cajetan, Francis Silvester (Ferrariensis), Soto, Bañez, Alvarez, Godoy, the Salmanticenses, Gonet, and Serra declare that these acts proceed effectively from habitual grace by charity and penance, and they hold this answer to be more conformable to the principles of St. Thomas.

2. More recent theologians, such as Suarez, Molina, Bellarmine, and, among Thomists, John of St. Thomas, Contenson, and Philip of the Holy Trinity, maintain that they proceed from actual help distinct from habitual grace. St. Bonaventure and Scotus are quoted in support of this opinion.

3. Goudin, wishing to reconcile the two foregoing opinions, proposed that the acts proceed from grace by charity and penance, not permanently in the manner of a habit, but transiently, communicated in the same way as habitual grace in the process of being conferred. It seems to us that the first opinion is correct as very well explained by the Salmanticenses and Gonet, Clypeus, with reference to the present article.

Proof from the authority of St. Thomas in this article, the argument Sed contra and the reply to the second objection: “The final disposition of the subject precedes the reception of a form, in the order of nature, but it follows the action of the agent whereby the subject itself is disposed.

Therefore the movement of free will precedes in the order of nature [on the part of the subject] the acquisition of grace, but it follows the infusion of grace." Cf. also Ia IIae, q. 113, a. 6,7 ad I, and later a. 10, nonmiraculous conversion; likewise, Ia IIae, q. 112, a. 2 ad I, where this disposition is said to be meritorious, and therefore proceeds from habitual grace which is the principle of merit; IIIa, q. 7, a. 13 ad 2; q. 9, a. 3 ad 2. In the same way, the body is organized finally only by the soul, and this organization is the disposition for receiving the soul, Ia, q. 76, a. 4 ad I. Thus great teachers have their own peculiar language, terminology, and characteristic mannerism which finally prepare the student to receive and understand their teaching.

Theological proof. Since these acts are vitalized by supernatural life, and at the same time connatural and meritorious, as St. Thomas declares, they should therefore proceed from a faculty elevated by infused habits. Nor is there any impossibility in this; rather is it the application of the principle: causes are a cause to each other in different orders. Thus habitual grace precedes these acts under the aspect of formal cause, and follows them under the aspect of material, disposing cause. Absolutely, however, the infusion of grace and the movement (as efficient cause) precede the acts to which we refer. Cf. below, note 10.

In the same way, air will not enter a room unless a window is opened, nor can the window be opened without the air entering. So does God knock at the door of the heart and it opens, and at the same time, we open it by consenting. Actual grace suffices for a disposition which is not final, but the final disposition is effected at the very instant when the form is produced and, although as a disposition it precedes it in the genus or order of material cause, it nevertheless follows it in the genus or order of formal, efficient, and final cause. Likewise the final disposition toward a spiritual soul precedes it under the genus of material cause, and follows it under the genus of formal cause, as the property of form which inheres in a compound; when it is destroyed, death ensues, or the separation of soul from body.

ARTICLE IX

WHETHER THE JUSTIFICATION OF SINNERS IS THE GREATEST WORK OF GOD

State of the question. It seems not to be so, since: 1. the glorification of the just is higher than the justification of sinners; 2. even the creation of heaven and earth is a higher thing inasmuch as the good of the universe is greater than the good of one justified man; and 3. creation was made from nothing.

The first conclusion, however, is that from the standpoint of the thing produced, or absolutely, justification is a greater work than creation, although not so great as glorification, since creation terminates in a good of a mutable nature in the natural order; whereas justification terminates in the eternal good of participation in the divine nature, the beginning of eternal life; and glorification terminates in the gift of glory which is greater than the gift of grace. This conclusion is based on Holy Scripture as cited in the argument Sed contra: "His . . . mercies are over all His works" (Ps. 144:9). And the Church prays in her Collect: "O God who, more than in all things else, showest forth Thine almighty power by sparing and by having mercy . . .."; and Augustine comments on St. John's Gospel (chap. 14): "It is a greater work to make a just man of a sinner than to create heaven and earth."

Corollary from the answer to the second objection: "The good of grace in one man is greater than the natural good of the whole universe," greater even than all the angelic natures capable of being created taken together. For grace is of a superior order; likewise the tiniest plant or blade of grass, so far as it is living, is something more perfect than mountains of gold or silver. (Cf. Salmanticenses.)

Second conclusion. From the standpoint of the mode of action, creation is a greater work than justification, since it is a more excellent mode of operation to make something out of nothing. But this superiority with regard to the mode of operation is limited to a par-ticular aspect, for, as St. Augustine says, absolutely "it is a greater thing to make a just man out of a sinner than to create heaven and earth. . . . Heaven and earth shall pass away, but the salvation and justification of the predestinate will remain."

Third conclusion. The justification of sinners is a greater work than glorification with respect to proportionate quantity, but not to absolute quantity. For the gift of grace exceeds the deserts of a sinner, who was worthy of punishment, more than the gift of glory does those of the just man, who is worthy of glory. Furthermore, the gift of grace exceeds human or angelic nature more than the gift of glory exceeds grace; for grace is the

seed of glory, but even angelic nature is not the seed of grace. Such is the doctrine that ought to be preached; it is the basis of true mysticism. The Incarnation is a more perfect work than justification ; likewise the divine maternity is immeasur-ably above the order of grace and glory because, by reason of its term, it belongs to the hypostatic order.

ARTICLE X

WHETHER THE JUSTIFICATIONOF SINNERS IS MIRACULOUS

State of the question. It seems to be so, since: 1. it is a greater work than other miraculous works; it is, as it were, the resurrection of the soul, surpassing that of the body; 2. the will of the sinner tends toward evil as a corpse toward corruption; 3. it is miraculous for a person to obtain wisdom from God suddenly, without any study; therefore it is equally so to attain to grace in an instant.

The first conclusion, nevertheless, is that the justification of a sinner, so far as it is ordinarily accomplished, cannot be termed miraculous, although it is a very wonderful thing.

Proof. It is said to be wonderful since it can be effected only by God. However, for a miracle, strictly speaking, it does not suffice that God alone be able to accomplish it; it must be out of the ordinary course of divine providence, such as raising of the dead or giving sight to one born blind. But justification, inasmuch as it commonly comes to pass, is within the ordinary course of supernatural providence; that is, imperfect conversion takes place first, which is the disposition for perfect conversion. The soul is naturally, by reason of its obediential power, “capable of grace,” and is made “capable of God by grace.” Certain immanentists misunderstood these words of St. Thomas: “the soul is naturally capable of grace”; it does not possess within itself the germ of grace but only an obediential power, as St. Thomas declares in several places; cf. ad 3.

Second conclusion. Sometimes, however, justification or conversion is miraculous, according as God, operating outside the usual order of His providence, suddenly moves a sinner to perfect conversion, without any preceding disposition in priority of time. This occurred in the conversion of St. Paul which is commemorated by the Church as a miracle for two reasons: I. because, as St. Thomas says, St. Paul “suddenly attained to a

certain perfection of justice”; 2. and because a miraculous external prostration was also added to it. The sudden conversion of Mary Magdalen is also cited by many theologians, such as Billuart, as miraculous. And in the nineteenth century such was the conversion of Father Ratisbonne in Rome.

Reply to first objection. Very many miracles, such as the resurrection of the body, are inferior to justification, with respect to the good they produce, although they possess more of the nature of a miracle. In the same way, the grace of the virtues and the gifts is higher than the graces gratis datae, for example, than prophecy, Ia IIae, q. III, a. 4; cf. Salmanticenses.

THE INDWELLING OF THE MOST BLESSED TRINITY TO WHICH JUSTIFICATION TERMINATES

We have dealt with this question at length in the treatise De Deo Trino, explaining St. Thomas’ article, Ia, q. 43, a. 3: Whether the invisible mission of a divine person is only according to the gift of sanctifying grace. Only the principal points will be outlined here.

God is already present in all things according as He preserves them in being (Ia, q. 8, a. 3) ; but He is especially present in the just, according as He is in them as an object quasi-experimentally knowable and lovable, and sometimes actually known and loved. Thus Christ promises (John 14:23): “If anyone love Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and will make Our abode with him.” And again, St. Paul writes (Rom. 5:5): “The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us.” Cf. the encyclical of Leo XIII, Divinum illud munus, May 9, 1897. It is a question of the special presence of the most Blessed Trinity according as, through living faith illuminated by the gift of wisdom, God is known quasi-experientially and loved, and we take delight in Him, as St. Thomas explains (Ia, q. 43, a. 3; IIa IIae, q.45, a.2)

But there are three different interpretations of this doctrine, the first proposed by Vasquez, the second by Suarez, and the third by the most eminent Thomists.

Vasquez holds that this special presence is not of itself real, but only affective, like the presence of a friend who is physically at a distance; God is, nevertheless, really present in us by His ordinary presence as preserving

us in being. But Vasquez does not sufficiently safeguard the words of Holy Scripture on this special presence.

Suarez maintains that the most Blessed Trinity is really present in the just as object of charity, even independently of its ordinary presence; for the charity of a wayfarer demands and constitutes a presence not merely affective but real of the object which we enjoy.

The foremost Thomists, notably John of St. Thomas, declare that the charity of a wayfarer demands the affective presence and craves the real presence of the God it loves, but does not constitute that presence. Thus we love the humanity of Christ and the Blessed Virgin Mary, although they do not dwell in us. Hence a special presence of the most Blessed Trinity presupposes the ordinary presence of God preserving us in being, but it is nevertheless a real presence by a reason of its own in the sense that it is the presence of an object known and loved quasi-experientially; for a quasi-experiential knowledge has its term in a thing present, not at a distance. (Similarly accident pre-supposes substance but is itself a reality.) We know God quasi-experientially by the filial affection He excites in us; thus “the Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit that we are the sons of God” (Rom. 8:16).

CHAPTER XI

QUESTION 114

MERIT

After considering justification, which is the effect of operative A grace, we must treat of merit, which is the effect of (sanctifying) cooperative grace. Merit is related to sanctifying grace in the same way as operation follows being. (Cf. above Ia IIae, q. III, a. 2 c.)

There are two parts to this question.

What merit is, how divided, and what conditions it demands (a. 1-4); that is, whether man can merit anything from God, whether without grace he can merit eternal life, whether he can merit it de condigno, whether sanctifying grace is the principle of merit, principally by means of charity.

2. What is included under merit (a. 5-10); that is, whether man can merit the first grace for himself, or for another, whether he can merit reconversion for himself after a fall, whether he can merit an increase of grace for himself, final perseverance, and temporal goods.

ARTICLE I

WHETHER MAN CAN MERIT ANYTHING FROM GOD

State of the question. By merit is meant a good work to which a recompense is attached and constituting a right to a reward. It seems that man cannot merit anything from God: 1. because we can never repay Him adequately for what we already owe Him; “We are unprofitable servants,” hence we cannot merit further gifts or reward; 2. because a man who does good profits himself, not God, and therefore God owes us no reward; 3. because God is debtor to no man; “who hath first given to Him, and

recompense shall be made him?" Therefore He does not owe us a reward; consequently no man can properly merit anything from God, but only in an inaccurate sense, for merit is a right to a reward.

It should be remarked that the Lutherans and Calvinists denied that man could merit anything from God, and denied in particular that he could merit eternal life. This conclusion follows from their principles, namely, that fallen man is not intrinsically justified but only extrinsically by denomination, through imputation of the justice of Christ, and thus all his works are evil; therefore he can merit nothing from God, and faith alone without the works of charity justifies.

Against these heresies, it is of faith that a justified man can really and properly merit something from God, even eternal life itself, "and the attainment of eternal life itself provided he gives place to grace." (Council of Trent, Denz., no. 842; cf. II Council of Orange, can. 18, Denz., no. 191; Council of Florence, Denz., no. 714; Council of Trent, Sess. VI, chap. 16, Denz., no. 809; can. 32, Denz., no. 842.)

From all these declarations of the Church can be drawn the following proposition which is of faith: "The good works of the just truly and properly merit eternal life as well as the increase of grace and glory." Indeed the Council of Trent (Sess. XIV, chap. 8; Denz., no. 904) defined the value not only of merit, but of the satisfaction resulting from the good works of the just; that is, the just, by good works and by patiently enduring, at the same time, the sufferings inflicted by God, satisfy for their temporal punishment; and this meritorious, satisfactory power is derived from grace, whereby man is a son of God and a member of Christ, by the cooperation of faith; nevertheless, these merits and satisfactions are, to a certain extent, really ours. This last proposition is derived from the condemnation of Baius who declared (Denz., no. 1008): "In those redeemed by the grace of Christ, no good merit can be found which is not gratuitously conferred upon the undeserving"; and (Denz., no. 1010): "The release from temporal punishment, which often remains when the sin is forgiven, and the resurrection of the body are properly to be ascribed only to the merits of Christ." Likewise Quesnel (Denz., no. 1419): "Faith, the practice, increase, and reward of faith, all is a gift of the sheer liberality of God." The teaching of the Church on merit is based upon many scriptural texts which set before us even eternal life as the reward to be conferred upon the good works of the just.

The conclusion of St. Thomas is that man can merit something from God, not according to absolute equality, but according to the presupposition of a divine ordination.

The first, or negative, part of the proposition is thus proved by theological argument.

Since merit is a right to a reward, it cannot be in accordance with absolute equality of justice unless there is equality of justice between the parties. But between God and man there is great inequality, for they are infinitely removed from each other, and all the good in man comes from God: “Who hath first given to Him?” Therefore man cannot merit anything from God according to absolute equality of justice, that is, according to strictest justice. (This is found only in Christ for, by reason of the divine person, He was equal to the Father.) Such merit can exist only between equals. In fact, this merit according to absolute equality of justice does not exist among men between a son and his father, according as the son receives from his father that whence he merits.

This is the element of truth contained in the error of the Protestants, of Baius, and of the Jansenists; it had already been affirmed by Augustine when he declared that our merits are “the gift of God” inasmuch as they proceed from His grace.

The second, affirmative, part of St. Thomas’ conclusion is proved from theological argument, supposing revelation of the fact as follows:

God deputed the power to man to do supernaturally good works for something in the way of a reward, as Sacred Scripture avers. But man can freely use this power by doing good supernaturally. Therefore man can merit something from God in accordance with the presupposition of a divine ordination. There is thus a certain parallel between the natural order and the order of grace.

Reply to first objection. Liberty is necessary for merit; that is, a meritorious act must be free, in that man gives to God what is within the range of possibility for him.

Reply to second objection. God does not seek utility from our good works, but glory, that is, the manifestation of His goodness. Rather, from our devotion to Him, the profit is ours and not His. Hence it is necessary for merit that we act with the motive of God’s glory, which proceeds from our love for Him, in other words, from charity, as will be shown more explicitly below.

Reply to third objection, which should be consulted: “Since our action has no justification for merit except on the presupposition of a divine ordination, it does not follow that God is made our debtor absolutely, but His own, so far as it is due to Him that His ordination should be fulfilled.” Cf. Ia, q. 21, a. 4: “A work of divine justice always presupposes a work of mercy and is based upon it. . . . And thus in any work of God whatever, mercy appears as its primary root . . . , the power of which operates more forcibly.” Therefore, to avoid vainglory we should recognize that we are “unprofitable servants”; nor should we attribute our good works to ourselves or think that God is obligated to us on their account, when, as a matter of fact, He owes nothing to us but only to Himself, according to the gratuity of His ordination.

I insist. Even our action, inasmuch as it is free and prompt, comes from God and we owe it to Him; therefore neither can we merit by it.

Reply. We cannot merit by it in strict justice, as will presently be explained, I grant; but by real, proper justice, presupposing, however, the divine ordination, I deny.

OBSERVATION

From this article it is already possible to draw a definition of merit in general and the basis of its subdivisions. Merit can be defined either in the concrete or in the abstract; cf. Salmanticenses, no. 53. In the concrete, it is an action to which recompense is due in justice (cf. body of the article), or a good work which confers a right to a reward. In the abstract, it is a right to a reward (Cajetan). This is the formal reason of merit, to which is opposed the guilt demanding punishment, demerit in the abstract, or the reason on account of which sin is deserving of punishment. Thence is derived the basis for the division of merit according as this division is based on the definition of the whole to be divided according to its formal reason, so that the division may be essential rather than accidental, and through members contradictorily or contrarily opposed; cf. the laws of division in logic.

This division of merit is partly contained in our first article and partly in the sixth, which deals expressly with merit de congruo. But it might be well to anticipate the explanation so that the conclusion of article three may be more evident, treating as it does of merit de condigno. It will appear from this that merit is denominated (named), not univocally, but analogically, and

first from the merits of Christ, just as demerit is denominated analogically, and first from mortal sin rather than from venial sin; cf. Ia IIae, q. 88, a. I ad Many writers do not consider this, but seem to apply the notion of merit as if it were univocal, whereupon many difficulties arise.

According to St. Thomas and his adherents merit is divided as follows:

This demands explanation, and subsequently we shall find its basis in the articles.

Merit de condigno is merit based on justice according to the definition of merit: the right to a reward.

1. Merit de condigno in strict justice carries within it a value absolutely equal to the reward. Such was the merit of Christ alone, inasmuch as its value proceeded from the divine person by reason of which Christ is equal to the Father. Thus any act of charity on the part of Christ while still a wayfarer was of a value absolutely equal to the eternal life of all the elect. It was worth more than all the merits of men and angels taken together. Therein appears the victory of Christ, according to His own words: “I have overcome the world.”

Hence Thomists commonly teach, contrary to Scotus, that the acts of Christ were of absolutely infinite intrinsic value both for merit and for satisfaction, and that His merit was de condigno in strictest justice, even commutative, at the very pinnacle of right, and even superabounding, cf. IIIa, 9.46, a.6 ad 6; q.48, a. 1 and 2; for the charity of Christ dying on the cross was more pleasing to God than all the sins of men taken together were displeasing.

2. But merit de condigno which is merely condign is not defined in the same way by Thomists and by Scotus; cf. Billuart. Scotus says that the act of charity of a wayfarer is not properly and intrinsically meritorious de condigno for eternal life; but only so extrinsically, by divine ordination and acceptation. In fact, he accordingly holds that God can accept merely natural good works as meritorious for eternal life; in this the Nominalists agree. Herein appears the contingentism and libertism of Scotus, the root of whose theory is that, for him, habitual grace is not substantially supernatural but only extrinsically so, in the same way as the restoration of natural sight to a blind man by supernatural means.

Thomists maintain that the act of charity of a wayfarer is properly and intrinsically meritorious de condigno for eternal life from the very nature of charity and of grace, the seed of glory, presupposing, however, the divine

ordination and promise, without which there would be no strict right to eternal life, but only a relation to it. This is a corollary of the definition of grace essentially supernatural as a physical and formal participation in the divine nature, which is opposed to Scotist and Nominalist theory. (Cf. Salmanticenses, De gratia, “de merito,” disp. II; John of St. Thomas; Billuart.)

Merit de congruo is that which is not founded on justice; it is twofold:

1. Merit de congruo, strictly speaking, is based on friendship or on a friendly right to a reward; it is found in works done out of charity, inasmuch as charity is analogically but properly a certain friendship between God and the just man. Thus a just man can merit the first grace for another man; a Christian mother can likewise merit de congruo even the very conversion of her son, as did St. Monica and as the blessed Virgin Mary merited for us de congruo what Christ merited for us de condigno, so Pius X declares in his encyclical Ad diem illum, February 2, 1904 (Denz., no. 3034). This merit de congruo and presupposes the state of grace. (Cf. below, art. 6 c and ad 1, 2, 3.)

2. However, merit de congruo, broadly speaking, does not presuppose the state of grace but only a certain disposition for sanctifying grace or prayer, just as prayer may be present in a sinner in the state of mortal sin. It is therefore not based on any friendly right but only on the bounty or mercy of God who rewards it. (Cf. St. Thomas, a. 3, body of the article; IV Sent., dist. 15, q. I, a. 3, qc. 4.) Thus, by good works done outside of charity we merit something de congruo, in a broad sense; cf. Salmanticenses and Billuart. We shall presently find the basis of this division in St. Thomas’ next article.

N.B. From the foregoing can be deduced a conclusion which is of the greatest moment and to which insufficient attention is paid by some writers: the term “merit” is not applied univocally but analogically, and that not only as it refers either to human affairs (such as the merit of a soldier) or to divine, but it is even applied analogically with regard to the divine referring both to merit de condigno and to merit de congruo and also to their subdivisions. It is evident from this that analogous concepts share the same name in common but the reason signified by the name is not absolutely the same in both (as in univocal concepts), but different absolutely and the same under a certain aspect (that is, either comparatively or proportionally the same). Manifestly, with respect to dignity, merit is denominated in the

first place from the merits of Christ, and with respect to application of the name, it is denominated in the first place from merit in the human order, for instance, the merit of a soldier. Merit thus refers analogically (by an analogy of proportion) but nevertheless properly and intrinsically, that is, more than metaphorically, to merit de condigno and also to merit de congruo strictly speaking. But it does not refer properly but metaphorically, or according to an analogy of extrinsic attribution, to merit de congruo broadly speaking; cf. Salmanticenses.

ARTICLE II

WHETHER A PERSON WITHOUT GRACE CAN MERIT ETERNAL LIFE

The reply is that neither in the state of integral nature nor in the state of fallen nature can a man by purely natural powers, or without grace, merit eternal life. This is of faith.

Proof from authority. “The grace of God life everlasting” (Rom. 6:23); “If I . . . have not charity, I am nothing . . . it profiteth me nothing” (I Cor. 13:2-3). Furthermore this was defined against the Pelagians and Semi-Pelagians at the Council of Orange (Denz., no. 178), which afirmed that there can be no beginning of salvation without grace. Again, the Council of Trent (Sess. VI, chap. 8; Denz., no. 801) declared “none of those things which precede justification, whether faith or works, to merit the grace of justification itself”; therefore, much less glory which is eternal life. In the same way theologians commonly distinguish salutary but not meritorious works, which precede justification, from meritorious works which presuppose it. There are also the condemned propositions of Baius (Denz., 1013, 1015), who held that the works of the just are meritorious” not from the fact that they are accomplished through grace, but because they are conformed to the law.” There is a confusion of the two orders in Baius as well as in Pelagius, but by an inverse mode; for Pelagius, the optimist, the works of Christian life are not beyond the powers of nature; for Baius, the pessimist, they do not surpass the requirements of nature, hence they are not strictly supernatural; and grace, according to Baius, is reducible to integrity of nature.

Theological proof. Although the answer is revealed elsewhere, it can also be proved from more universal principles of faith. Eternal life, as essentially

supernatural, exceeds the proportion of created nature and of its natural operations. But merit is a work conferring a right to a proportionate reward, on account of divine preordination (preceding article). Therefore man cannot by purely natural powers merit eternal life.

In a word, it is out of proportion with either merit de condigno or merit de congruo, properly speaking. This is true of the state of integral nature and, with still greater reason, of the state of pure nature or of fallen nature.

Confirmation for the state of corrupt or fallen nature. No one living in the state of sin can merit eternal life, unless he is first reconciled to God by the forgiveness of sin, as will be made clearer below. But sin is not forgiven except by grace, as has been said. Therefore.

REFUTATION OF OBJECTIONS

First objection. But a sinner can observe several commandments of the Decalogue and also hear Mass.

Reply. I distinguish: he can observe them in substance, granted; but as to mode, that is, by charity, denied.

Second objection. An evil deed merits punishment without the habit of malice; therefore a good deed merits a reward without the habit of grace.

Reply. I deny the consequence, since proportionately more is required for good and meritorious action than for doing evil; for good proceeds from an integral cause, whereas evil arises from any defect and mortal sin from any grave defect. On the other hand, a mortal sin of itself leads to the status of eternal punishment, while a good work without grace does not possess any condignity to eternal life, since the dignity of the worker is lacking.

Third objection. Man in the state of sin can satisfy by self-imposed penance; therefore he can also merit.

Reply. Admitting the premise, which is disputed, there is still a disparity in that satisfaction is estimated according to an equality between the punishment and the guilt, but merit according to the condignity of the work as well as the worker compared with the reward.

Fourth objection. Then the naturally good works which are per-formed before justification are useless.

Reply. They are not meritorious (cf. above, q. 109, a. I and 6), but in a measure they prepare the way for grace if they are performed under actual grace by a will which has begun to be converted; cf. Billuart. But works

that are merely natural although ethically good neither prepare the way for grace (q. 109, a. I and 6), nor for still greater reason do they merit it de congruo, nor, accordingly, de condigno. However, they are not utterly useless; for they serve the purpose of preventing further sins and oppose less obstacles to grace.

ARTICLE III

WHETHER A JUST MAN CAN MERIT ETERNAL LIFE EX CONDIGNO

State of the question. It seems not to be so for: 1. the Apostle says (Rom. 8:18): “The sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us”; 2. no act of the present life can be equal to eternal life.

The reply, nevertheless, is that the works of the just according as they proceed from habitual grace are properly meritorious of eternal life de condigno. This is a theological certainty.

1. Proof from Scripture: “Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven” (Matt. 5:12); “As to the rest, there is laid up for me a crown of justice, which the Lord the just judge will render to me in that day” (II Tim. 4:8); the terms “justice . . . just judge . . . render” express merit based on justice; “Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5:10); in reply to Peter’s question as to what reward he shall have who leaves all to follow Christ, our Lord answers that he “shall receive a hundredfold, and shall possess life everlasting” (Matt. 19:29). Again St. Matthew (20:1-16) explains this by the example of the householder who renders the daily wage of a penny to those who worked but an hour. And St. Paul affirms: “That which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory” (II Cor. 4:17); “God will render to every man according to his works. To them indeed, who according to patience in good work, seek . . . incorruption, eternal life” (Rom. 2:6f.); “For God is not unjust, that He should forget your work” (Heb. 6:10); “And do not forget to do good, and to impart; for by such sacrifices God’s favor is obtained” (ibid., 13:16); “all your . . . tribulations, which you endure, . . . that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God” (I1 Thess. 1:4 f.).

Finally the Book of Wisdom had declared of the just: “God hath tried them, and found them worthy of Himself” (Wisd. 3:5).

2. Proof from the Council of Trent (Denz., no. 842). It is of faith that the just man can “truly merit eternal life and an increase of glory.” From this it can be deduced as a theological certainty (cf. argument Sed contra) that the just man can merit eternal life, not merely in the true sense but also de condigno. In fact all theologians judge by the words quoted from Sacred Scripture by the Council of Trent, that it is here referring to merit de condigno, although this term is not explicitly employed. Cf. also the Councils of Orange (Denz., no. 191) and of Trent (Denz., nos. 803, 809 f.). But if the just man sins mortally before his death and perseveres in sin, he forfeits his merit.

3. Theological proof. Article 3 should first be read.

Merit de condigno is merit of which the value in justice is proportionate to the excellence of the reward, according to divine preordination. But the works of the just, inasmuch as they proceed from sanctifying grace and the movement of the Holy Ghost, are proportionate in justice to the excellence of eternal life. Therefore.

Thus the words of St. Paul cited by the Council of Trent assume a more explicit meaning: “God will render to every man according to his works” (Rom. 2:6) and “As to the rest, there is laid up for me a crown of justice, which the Lord, the just judge will render to me in that day” (II Tim. 4:8).

The major is explained above.

The minor is proved by the fact that these works are supernatural, that is, of the same order as glory; and an equality of worth is observable both from the dignity of habitual grace whereby man is made a participator in the divine nature, and accordingly can perform works worthy of God as His son and heir, and from the power of the Holy Ghost moving him, which is termed “a fountain of water, springing up into life everlasting” (John 4:14). In opposition to Scotus, it should be added that the proportion is intrinsic, based on the very essence of sanctifying grace which is essentially supernatural, intrinsically ordained toward glory, as the seed of the tree is to the tree.

Reply to first objection. Pain is not meritorious of eternal life un-less it is borne from charity.

Reply to second objection. Every work of justice presupposes a work of mercy.

Reply to third objection. Habitual grace is equal to glory, not actually but virtually, as the seed of the tree, wherein is contained the whole tree in potency. Likewise dwells in man by grace the Holy Ghost, who is the sufficient cause of eternal life, wherefore He is called the pledge of our inheritance. Thus condignity remains, not according to absolute equality with the reward, but according to intrinsic proportion.

Doubt. The body of the article presents a difficulty, for St. Thomas says that the works of the just according to their substance and so far as they derive from free will (not from grace) merit glory as it were de congruo. This is a problem because above in q. 109, a. I and 6, he teaches expressly that man cannot prepare himself for grace by his merely natural powers, and therefore, with still greater reason, he cannot merit it de congruo. There are two interpretations (cf. Billuart).

1. According to Sylvius, by the works of the just according to substance St. Thomas does not mean works of the merely natural powers (since many surpass the powers of nature entirely as, for example, the acts of informed faith and hope); but he is referring to works proceeding from free will moved by actual grace without the infusion of sanctifying grace and charity. But these can merit glory de congruo.

2. The solution of John of St. Thomas is better since it distinguishes between the two kinds of merit de congruo, that is, merit de congruo strictly speaking, based on the right of friendship, and merit de congruo broadly speaking, based on the liberality or magnanimity of God. He affirms that merely natural works, which do not proceed from either sanctifying or actual grace, are not meritorious of eternal life by merit de congruo in the strict sense but only in the broad sense; not strictly because they are of an inferior order and have no proportion to glory, but broadly, that is, out of the bounty of God. Hence St. Thomas does not say “these works merit de congruo,” but, “There is congruity because of a certain equality of proportion. For it seems congruous that if man works according to his power, God will reward him according to the excellence of His power,” or according to His magnanimity. There is here a proportion of workers, not of works. This is the opinion of John of St. Thomas; cf. a. 5 below for additional explanation.

Refutation of the objections raised by Scotus; cf. Cajetan and Billuart.

First objection. God rewards the just beyond their just deserts, as is commonly said. Therefore the works of the just are not intrinsically

meritorious of eternal life de condigno.

Reply. I grant the premise but deny the conclusion. From the fact that God rewards the works of the just beyond their due, it does not follow that the just do not merit eternal life de condigno, but rather that God in His liberality and mercy, which is always united to justice, adds a further degree in the perfection of vision. Thus it is also said that the punishment of the damned is short of what is due because even in their case mercy tempers somewhat the rigor of justice.

Second objection. If the works of the just were intrinsically meritorious of eternal life de condigno, God could not refuse them glory by His absolute power without injustice.

Reply. 1. This proves too much, for merely by His absolute power God could even annihilate the humanity of Christ and all the blessed, since there is nothing intrinsically contradictory in this. Absolute power is thus distinguished from power ordered by wisdom, whether ordinary or extraordinary. 2. As Cajetan writes: “God, who is debtor to Himself, Himself ordained [to glory] not by an additional ordination, as Scotus thought, but by grace itself, the act being meritorious from the mere fact that it proceeds from grace, . . . as He cannot act against Himself, so neither can He withdraw His reward.” Cf. below, the conditions of merit. Cajetan possibly exaggerates here in the opposite direction. For a divine promise would be necessary in order that the just man should have not only an intrinsic relationship to eternal life but a strict right to it. Thomists generally hold that beyond the intrinsic worth which meritorious acts possess by reason of sanctifying grace, a promise of rendering recompense is necessary for the existence of a strict right to a reward and for God to be obliged to make a return; but it still remains true that an act proceeding from habitual grace is intrinsically worthy of eternal life.

ARTICLE IV

WHETHER GRACE IS THE PRINCIPLE OF MERIT PRINCIPALLY BY CHARITY

State of the question. It seems that some power especially infused should be the principle of any merit and labor; but charity rather diminishes the labor. Acts of faith because of their obscurity and of patience because of their difficulty seem to be far more meritorious.

Reply. Grace is the principle of merit more particularly by charity.

Proof from Scripture from the argument Sed contra. “He that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father: and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him” (John 14:21); “Whosoever shall give to drink to one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple (out of fraternal charity), amen I say to you, he shall not lose his reward” (Matt. 10:42); “In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision: but faith that worketh by charity” (Gal. 5:6); “And if I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing . . . and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing” (I Cor. 13:2 f.).

Theological proof.

1. An act is meritorious by divine ordination according as it tends toward a final supernatural end. But all acts of the other virtues tend toward a final supernatural end, that is, to God loved for His own sake efficaciously above all things, through charity; for God loved for His own sake is the proper object of charity. Therefore. Cf. the answers to objections 1 and 3.

Even if charity imperates the natural act of an acquired virtue, this act is meritorious of eternal life and supernatural as to mode.

2. What we do out of love, we do with the greatest willingness. But man merits inasmuch as he acts willingly and freely. Therefore. If a person in the state of mortal sin elicits an act of theological hope, the final end of this act is God loved above all things ineficaciously by a love of concupiscence, and by charity alone is He loved efficaciously above all things with a love of friendship.

Objection. But charity diminishes the difficulty, and the more difficult a work is the more meritorious it is.

Reply to second objection. Charity diminishes the subjective difficulty which arises from a defect in the worker, but not the objective difficulty which proceeds from the magnitude of the work. On the contrary, charity impels us to undertake arduous labors. But the objective difficulty on account of the magnitude of the work pertains to the increase of merit; on the other hand, the subjective difficulty proceeding from a defect in the worker diminishes merit.

Reply to third objection. An act of faith is not meritorious unless faith acts through love.

Corollary. The Blessed Virgin Mary merited more by even the easiest acts of charity than all the martyrs together in their sufferings, because of the greater intensity of her charity.

Doubt. Whether at least the virtual influence of charity is necessary to merit eternal life. It is a question of merit de condigno of eternal life.

The generality of Thomists and many other theologians answer in the affirmative, against Vasquez, who holds that this virtual influence is not necessary for acts of the other virtues, even acquired, and against Suarez who maintains that this virtual influence is not necessary for acts of the infused virtues.

Proof of the general opinion.

1. From St. Thomas in the present article, 4 c ad I and 3; Ia, q. 95, 4; De malo, q. 6, a. 5 ad 7. In fact, he affirms in II, d. 40, q. I, a. 5 ad 6: "Habitual ordination of an act toward God does not suffice, since it merits nothing by being a habit but by performing an act." It is the case of a candidate who knows his subject but is mute or unable to speak.

2. The opinion is based on many texts from Sacred Scripture where, with reference to the principle of merit, this is not assigned to habitual charity alone but to its act. For example: "He that shall receive one such little child in My name, receiveth Me" (Matt. 18:5); "And every one that hath left house . . . or father or mother . . . for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall possess life everlasting" (ibid., 19:29).

3. The principal theological argument is the one already given in the present article, 4 c and ad I. "Charity, so far as it has the final end for its object, moves the other virtues to act, for the habit to which the end belongs always imperates the habits to which belong the means to the end." In other words, we merit to attain the final end by that whereby we tend toward it, that is, by charity at least virtually influencing us.

First confirmation. For an act to be meritorious of eternal life it must be rendered in obedience to God the rewarder. But this is done by charity virtually influencing it and not by the other virtues. Therefore there must be the love of God at least virtually influencing the act.

Second confirmation. The essential reward in heaven corresponds to the essential perfection of the way. But the Christian perfection of a wayfarer consists essentially and especially in charity, according to the words of St. Paul: "Above all these things have charity, which is the bond of perfection" (Col. 3:14). (Cf. IIa IIae, q. 184, a. I.) Therefore the essential reward in

heaven corresponds to the charity of the wayfarer. Thus the degree of merit is the degree of charity.

Objection. St. Thomas says, De malo, q. 2, a. 5 ad 7: “To those who possess charity, every act is either meritorious or demeritorious,” since there are no indifferent acts in the individual. But according to the preceding opinion there may exist in the just man an act which is neither meritorious nor demeritorious, since there may be an act good in itself, for instance, ethically good, but without the virtual influence of charity—such as paying a debt.

Reply. In a just man all acts of virtue are under the virtual influence of charity according as the just man, not merely at the instant of justification, but often, elicits and is bound to elicit acts of charity by virtue of which all things are referred to God, as St. Thomas teaches, De virtutibus, q. 2, a. II ad 2. Therefore all the good works of the just are meritorious but not without the virtual influence of charity. charity is not required. Therefore neither is it required for merit.

Reply. Let the premise pass (cf. treatise on penance); I deny the consequence, since more is required for merit than for satisfaction, which depends upon an equality between the punishment and the guilt, not upon an equality or proportion between the good work and the excellence of the reward.

Third objection. For prayer to possess impetratory force the influence of charity is not required, for a sinner is able to pray; therefore neither is it required for merit.

Reply. There is a disparity, for impetration of itself refers only to the order of divine mercy, but merit refers to justice. Thus a sinner in the state of mortal sin can pray and does so at times, which is a salutary act, but he cannot merit, except de congruo in the broad sense. (Cf. IIa IIae, q. 83, a. 15 and 16.) Therefore the conclusion stands: without the virtual influence of charity, no act of virtue, either acquired or infused, in the just man, is meritorious de condigno of eternal life, since charity imperates all the virtues as the will does all the faculties.

First corollary. Merit is greater or less according to whether charity influences the act more or less, proximately or remotely. Cf. treatise on charity under acts remiss in charity.

Second corollary. Subjectively at least, an easy act proceeding from greater charity is more meritorious than a very difficult act proceeding from

less charity. Thus, as has been said, the Blessed Virgin Mary merited more by easy acts than all the martyrs together by their tortures.

Third corollary. All the meritorious works of Christ were of the same infinite personal value (inasmuch as they proceeded from the same divine person and from the plenitude of His charity, which did not increase) but not all were of the same objective value. Thus, objectively, His passion was of greater value than, for example, His preaching, on account of the magnitude of the work. In the same way, teaching theology for God's sake is more meritorious, objectively, than cooking for God's sake, but if the cook does his work with greater charity than the master in theology, subjectively the cook merits more than the theologian.

From the preceding four articles of St. Thomas can now be drawn the conditions necessary for merit. There are six here enumerated proceeding in order from the more general to the more particular. Thus we may construct a very clear and complete definition of a meritorious work according to remote and proximate genus and specific difference. But it is attained only at the end of the hunt or inquisition which was pursued through the foregoing articles.

A meritorious work must be: 1. free; 2. good; 3. in submission or obedience to the rewarder (this is true even for merit in the human order, such as a soldier's merit) ; 4. the work of a wayfarer, 5. proceeding from sanctifying grace and charity; 6. ordained by God to a promised reward. We shall explain each of these conditions briefly. They are all necessary for merit de condigno; in the course of the explanation it will be indicated which are not absolutely necessary for merit de congruo.

1. The work must be free. This is of faith against Jansenius (Denz., no. 1094), whose third proposition is condemned: "For meriting and demeriting in the state of fallen nature, freedom from necessity is not required in man; freedom from coercion suffices." The reason for this condition is that a person merits or is deserving of reward so far as he injects something of his own, and is the author of his act. But man has dominion only over free acts, which are within his power; cf. the present a. 4 and De malo, q. 6, a. I, also the Salmanticenses. However, free consent to the inspiration of the Holy Ghost moving one to acts of the gifts suffices without any deliberation strictly speaking; for example, the gift of piety over and above discursive reasoning. Hence Christ would not have merited for us had He not been free in fulfilling the command of His Father; as impec-cable He could not

disobey privatively and yet He freely obeyed with a liberty confirmed in good.5

2. It must be a good work, for an evil work is deserving of punishment and an indifferent work would not sufice; it would be without relation to a reward. Moreover, there is no such thing with regard to the individual. In fact, a meritorious work must possess supernatural goodness proportioned to the supernatural reward; a work which is only ethically good does not suffice, as will be shown more explicitly in the fifth condition.

3. It must be a work done under submission or obedience to the rewarder, that is, in subordination and obedience to God; cf. Ia IIae, q. 21, a. 3; IIa IIae, q. 104, a. 3. Otherwise there would be no reason for expecting a reward from God; moreover, if our works are not referred to God they are not of the supernatural order. But an act of real charity cannot be performed except for the sake of God and, accordingly, except in subjection and reverence toward God.

4. It must be the act of a wayfarer; cf. Ia, q. 62, a.9 ad 3. This is manifest from revelation: “In what place soever it [the tree] shall fall, there shall it be” (Eccles. 11:13) ; “The night cometh [that is, death] when no man can work,” not meritoriously, of course (John 9:4); “Whilst we have time, let us work good” (Gal. 6:10); “For we must all be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the proper things of the body, according as he hath done, whether it be good or evil” (II Cor. 5:10); “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment” (Heb. 9:27).

A reason of suitability is put forth; that is, merit is a motion and a way to a reward; therefore once the reward is obtained, the merit ceases. But this argument proves only that the blessed cannot merit the essential reward which they already possess; it does not really prove that they cannot merit an accidental reward or increase of glory; nor does it prove that the souls detained in purgatory can no longer merit.

It is admitted, however, that the term of man’s pathway is death for, as St. Thomas explains (Contra Gentes, Bk. IV, chaps. 92-95), since man is naturally composed of soul and body, the body by its nature is united to the soul for the benefit of the soul; because matter exists for the sake of form, that is, so that the soul may tend toward and attain to its perfection. Therefore, after the separation from the body, the soul is no longer strictly

wayfaring. But this is only an argument from suitability. There would be no certainty on the subject without a revelation manifesting God's will.

The difficulty regards the term of our way. Cajetan, with reference to Ia, q. 64, a. I, no. 18, declares: "The soul is rendered inflexible by the first act which it elicits in the state of separation from the body and then demerits, not as in life, but as arrived at its term." But this opinion is generally not accepted, as the Salmanticenses remark, De gratia, "de merito," disp. I, dub. IV, no. 36; for, according to the testimony of Holy Scripture, men can merit and demerit before death, but not in death; and it would not be a man who merited but a separated soul. Therefore the state of wayfarer ceases with the state of union between soul and body, and before the first instant of separation between the soul and the body the time was divisible to an infinite degree, but at that instant there is no longer either wayfaring or merit. For as in matters which are measured by time, the first nonexistence of the way coincides with the first instant of the new state, that is, with the first existence of separation from the body. Otherwise, moreover, a person dying in the state of mortal sin might be saved and one dying in the state of grace might be damned; furthermore, an infant dying without baptism could be saved by an act elicited at the first instant of separation from the body. Baptism would then not be necessary for the salvation of infants nor would a limbo exist for such souls.

Vasquez teaches that the blessed can merit accidental reward, and the souls in purgatory as well; but he brings forward a text of St. Thomas in support unwarrantedly, as the Salmanticenses demonstrate. These latter hold that Elias and Enoch are in the state for meriting since they are still wayfarers.

5. It must proceed from sanctifying grace under the virtual influence of charity; cf, q. 114, a. 2. As we have said, it is of faith that the act must proceed from sanctifying grace and charity. (Council of Trent, Sess. VI, chap. 8.) "If I . . . have not charity, I am nothing . . . it profiteth me nothing" (I Cor. 13:2 f.), in the order of eternal life. This is because otherwise there would be no intrinsic proportion between a meritorious work and a supernatural reward and hence no right to the reward; in fact, man would remain in the state of mortal sin, deserving of punishment, not reward. However, merit de congruo broadly speaking, based on the mercy of God, may exist without this condition, in the same way as the impetrative value of the prayer of a sinner; cf. a. 3.

6. It must be a work ordained by God toward a promised reward; cf. q. 114, a. I ad 3: “Our action has no reason for merit except on the presupposition of a divine ordination; [wherefore] it does not follow that God becomes our debtor absolutely [who hath first given to Him?], but rather His own, so far as it is due to Him that His ordination should be fulfilled.” Again in article 2 c: “The merit of man depends on divine preordination” since “all the good in man comes from God” and man has no right before God unless he receives such a right from God. Hence without this divine ordination and promise, our good works would give us no right to a reward, since they are already due to God by several other titles, such as creation, supreme dominion, final end. Therefore, even if God had not promised us a reward, man ought to love God above all things.

This doctrine is based on Holy Scripture: “The man that endureth temptation . . . when he hath been proved, . . . shall receive the crown of life, which God hath promised to them that love Him” (Jas. 1:12); “He that cometh to God, must believe that He is, and is a rewarder to them that seek Him” (Heb. 11:6). The Council of Trent (Sess. VI, chap. 16; Denz., no. 809) defines: “To those who work well unto the end, hoping in God, eternal life is offered both as the grace mercifully promised to the sons of God through Christ Jesus and as the reward faithfully rendered to their good works by the promise of the same God.”‘

Confirmation. The good works of the blessed and of the souls in purgatory are not meritorious, because God has not ordained them to a reward. For God does not order good works to a reward outside of the state of wayfarer, although He could do so if He so willed.

This sixth condition which is required for merit de condigno but not really for merit de congruo was misinterpreted by Scotus and the Nominalists. They understood that a meritorious act possesses its condignity extrinsically and solely on account of this promise; therefore they held that God could accept a merely natural good act as meri-torious de condigno of eternal life.

The true sense of this sixth condition, as we have already observed in agreement with the majority of Thomists, is that, beyond the intrinsic worth which every meritorious act possesses on account of sanctifying grace and charity, the promise of a reward to be rendered is necessary that there may be a strict right to the reward obliging God to render it. Thus, in the souls

detained in purgatory, acts of charity are no longer meritorious, although free, good, supernatural, and performed in obedience to God.

Cajetan, in refuting Scotus on article 4, did not perhaps advert to the possibility of the error contrary to Scotism in this matter which would be the negation of the sixth condition. Billuart examines the objections denying this condition.

Objection. Just as an evil work is of itself deserving of punishment independently of the ordination of the judge, so a work of charity possesses of itself something of worth commensurate to a reward, and that not by any divine ordination or promise. But merit is nothing other than a work of worth equal to a reward. Therefore this sixth condition is not necessary.

Reply. I deny the major: there is no comparison between a good work and an evil work; for the latter, in offending, injures the right of another by its very offense, wherefore, without any ordination of the judge, there arises an obligation to repair the injured right. On the contrary, the good work of charity is already due to God the Creator and Lord; and, for man to possess the right of exacting a recompense requires a special ordination of God; because God has no obligation except to Himself, and this by reason of His promise. Hence, if God had commanded us to do good without promise of a reward, He would not be bound to grant it to us.

Doubt. Whether God grants a reward to merits only in faithfulness to His promise, or in justice.

Reply. Not only out of faithfulness but in distributive justice, which however has something of the mode of commutative justice. For St. Paul declares: “As to the rest, there is laid up for me a crown of justice, which the Lord the just judge will render to me in that day” (II Tim. 4:8). This is because, although a simple promise produces only the obligation of faithfulness, a promise to be fulfilled by the promiser on condition of some laborious work, carries an obligation of justice. Thus “to pay the reward of labor is an act of justice” (Ia IIae, q. 21, a. 3). This is not the commutative justice which exists between equals, for man can give nothing to God which is not already His and under His dominion. But it is distributive justice whereby a superior gives to his inferiors, not equally but proportionately, each according to his worth and merit. Nevertheless it is a certain kind of commutative justice, according as God gives commensurately, and so also in imposing punishment for demerit.

WHAT IS INCLUDED UNDER MERIT (A. 6-10)

Beside eternal life, which is the essential object of merit (cf. a. 2), the question is raised in articles 5-10, which of several other objects fall under merit. The two principles that elucidate this second part of the question may be formulated thus: The just man can merit that to which his merit is ordained by God; but the principle of merit itself does not fall under merit.

By virtue of the first principle, the just man can merit for himself de condigno: eternal life, increase of grace and charity, and the degree of glory proportionate to this increase. This is of faith. It is explained theologically according as the merits of the just man are ordained by God to eternal life and to the spiritual progress which leads to it (a. 8). The just man can likewise merit de congruo, in the strict sense, the grace of conversion for another, as St. Monica did for St. Augustine (a. 6) The just man can also merit temporal goods, not for their own sake, but so far as they are useful for salvation (a. 10).

However, since the principle of merit itself does not fall under merit, man cannot merit for himself, either de condigno or de congruo in the strict sense, the first grace, whether actual or habitual. This is a truth of faith which can be explained theologically by the foregoing principle (a. 5). Moreover, the just man cannot, before he falls, merit for himself the grace of conversion, should he subsequently fall into sin; for his merits are taken away by mortal sin which follows them. In other words, the restoration of the principle of merit does not fall under merit (a. 7).

Nor can the just man merit for himself de condigno nor strictly de congruo the grace of final perseverance. This is almost of faith; it is explained theologically according as the grace of final perseverance is no other than the state of grace (or principle of merit) preserved by God at the very moment of death (a. 9).

ARTICLE V

WHETHER MAN CAN MERIT THE FIRST GRACE FOR HIMSELF

A difficulty arises: 1. because Augustine says: “Faith merits justification,” commenting on psalm 31; 2. because God does not bestow grace except on the deserving; and 3. because the first grace may perhaps be merited by subsequent works.

Reply. It is evident that no one can merit the first grace for himself, that is, neither de coildigno nor de congruo properly, but only improperly speaking. This applies to the first grace, whether actual or habitual.

Proof from the definitions of the Church. This truth is of faith; cf. against the Pelagians, the Council of Orange (Denz., no. 176), can. 3-7, 9, 14-25; the definition is renewed by the Council of Trent, Sess. VI, chap. 6 (Denz., no. 798): “Therefore are we said to be justified gratuitously, since none of those things which precede justification, whether faith or works, deserves the grace of justification itself.” It also appears clearly enough from these declarations that man cannot merit even the first grace for himself de congruo properly speaking ; for it is defined against the Pelagians and Semi-Pelagians that no one can by merely natural powers dispose himself for grace. (Cf. Council of Orange, can. 3-7, 14-25.)

This doctrine of the Church is manifestly based upon many scriptural texts; especially are cited: “Being justified freely by His grace” (Rom. 3:24; 4:4); “And if by grace, it is not now by works” (ibid., 11:6); in fact, almost the entire dogmatic portion of this Epistle; also I Cor. 12:13; II Cor. 3:5; Eph. 25-10; Phil. 2:13; II Tim. 1:9; John 15:16; I John 4:10-19.

Theological proof with respect to merit de condigno.

Grace of itself exceeds the proportion of nature. But merit de condigno is a good work proportionate to a reward and conferring a right to the reward in justice. Therefore natural good works cannot merit de condigno the first grace, either actual or habitual.

Confirmation. Before justification man is in the state of mortal sin, which is an impediment to meriting grace. And after justification he cannot merit the first grace which is the principle of merit, whereas the recompense is the term of the work. The principle of merit cannot fall under merit.

This reason would also be valid for the angels since the whole argument is based on the distinction between the orders of nature and grace. This distinction is eminently clear for St. Thomas. In fact, he himself declares, Contra Gentes, Bk. I, chap. 3: “That there are some divine ideas which completely exceed the capacities of human reason, appears most evident”; that is, because neither the human nor the angelic mind can know naturally the divine essence according to its reason of Deity, or in its intimate life, nor, accordingly, love it. Hence we have demonstrated that the existence in God of the order of truth and supernatural life can be firmly established; indeed St. Thomas says that it appears most evident. Therefore this

supernatural order surpasses not only the powers but the requirements of both our nature and that of angels, and, consequently, natural merits as well. In a word, the formal object of the divine intelligence cannot be attained naturally by any intellect created or capable of creation. But supernatural mysteries pertain by their nature primarily to this formal object. Therefore they are something in God naturally inaccessible to us and to the angels.

REFUTATION OF OBJECTIONS

Reply to first objection. In the instant of justification the very act of living faith follows the infusion of grace. This act of living faith is thus meritorious of eternal life, in the same way as an act of contrition; but it does not merit the first grace from which it proceeds. Furthermore, an act of dead faith is salutary but not meritorious.

Reply to second objection. “God does not confer grace except upon the deserving, not however that they were deserving beforehand, but because He Himself makes them worthy by grace”; and this supernatural disposition cannot be meritorious with respect to the first grace.

Reply to third objection. Grace itself imparts its own good use; hence the principle of merit is such that it cannot fall under subsequent merit; whereas, on the contrary, a soldier can merit his arms before they are given to him, in view of subsequent merits, for arms do not confer but rather await their own good use by the activity of the soldier. (Cf. Ia, q. 23, a. 5.)

Corollary. Not even de congruo properly can a man merit the first grace for himself.

Proof. Before justification man in the state of sin is not a friend of God but His enemy. But merit de congruo properly is based upon a right of friendship, that is, the worker must be pleasing to the rewarder and just; in other words, there is required a fitness in the worker, not merely in the work. Therefore.

This statement seems more conformable to Sacred Scripture and the Council of Trent according to which the sinner is justified gratuitously. However, man can merit de congruo the first grace broadly speaking, by good works preceding justification and by prayers. Thus, says Augustine, the publican was heard after his humble prayer. For merit de congruo in the broad sense does not demand fitness in the worker, but only in the work; it

is founded on God's liberality or, like the impetratory power of prayer, upon the divine mercy. (Cf. Salmanticenses, De merito, disp. II, no. 9.)

ARTICLE VI

WHETHER THE JUST MAN CAN MERIT THE FIRST GRACE FOR ANOTHER

It seems so, for St. James writes in his Epistle (5:16): "Pray for one another, that you may be saved. For the continual prayer of a just man availeth much."

The precise answer of St. Thomas is: not de condigno; but he can well do so de congruo even properly speaking.

The first part of his reply is based on the scriptural text: "If Moses and Samuel shall stand before Me, my soul is not toward this people" (Jer. 15:1); and yet Moses and Samuel were of the greatest merit before God.

The theological argument is the following. Grace conferred on a mere man is especially ordained to his own sanctification, but not to the sanctification of others. It differs in this respect from the capital grace which existed in Christ, the Redeemer of all (IIIa, q. 8, a. 2). But our work has the reason of merit de condigno on account of the moving force of divine grace, according to the ordination and extention of this grace in justice. Therefore no one but Christ, not even the Blessed Virgin Mary, can merit de condigno the first grace for another. The text should be consulted.

The second part of St. Thomas' answer, that is, regarding merit de congruo properly speaking is in the affirmative. It is based on several scriptural texts: "The continual prayer of a just man availeth much" (Jas. 5:16); and the reference to prayer for the brethren which obtains their conversion (I John 5:16). Thus the prayer of St. Stephen, the first martyr, obtained the conversion of Paul. Likewise St. Monica procured the conversion of Augustine by her prayers and good works. In these texts it is not a question of the prayer of the sinner, but of the prayer of the just man which is at once impetratory and meritorious, meritorious of itself de condigno and for others de congruo, inasmuch as the just man is a friend of God. Similarly, the Blessed Virgin Mary merited for us de congruo what Christ merited de condigno; cf. Denz., no. 3034, encycl. of Pius X.

The argument is formulated as follows: Merit de congruo properly speaking is based on the right of friendship. But between the just man and

God there exists the friendship of charity. Therefore it is properly fitting that God should fulfill the desire and prayer of the just man for the salvation of another, as long as there is no impediment of excessive obstinacy on the part of that other; and this merit de congruo is higher in proportion to the degree of charity which the just man possesses. It reaches its climax in the Blessed Virgin Mary. The text of St. Thomas should be read.

REFUTATION OF THE OBJECTIONS

First objection. Thus the living faith of one is availing for others, according to merit de congruo even properly speaking.

Second objection. “The impetration of prayer rests on mercy; but merit de condigno rests on justice. Wherefore by praying much man impetrates from the divine mercy what he does not in fact merit according to justice.” These words are deserving of particular attention. Cf. Daniel here quoted. (On the other hand, whatever Christ obtains He also merits de condigno.)

Cf. reply to the third objection which applies this to alms given to the poor. St. Thomas’ beautiful interpretation deserves to be read: “The poor receiving alms are said to receive others into eternal dwellings.” Thereby is also explained the true devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary as advocated by St. Grignon de Montfort, according to which we offer to her whatever of our works is communicable to others. Thus we also offer to Mary our incommunicable merits de condigno for the purpose of having them safeguarded by her and augmented by her prayers, and also, in the case of mortal sin, that she may obtain the grace for us, not of any sort of attrition whatever, but of fervent contrition, so as to recover these merits in the same degree and proportionately to the fervor of our contrition; cf. IIIa, q. 89, a. 2.

Moreover, we offer to the Blessed Virgin whatever is communicable to other souls, on earth or in purgatory, of our good works, such as merit de congruo, prayers and satisfactions, so that she may distribute these communicable goods to the souls who need them most and especially to those for whom we ought to pray on account of a relationship of blood or vocation or in gratitude, and of whose present necessities we are often ignorant at the moment. Thus do we enter more profoundly into the mystery of the Communion of Saints.

ARTICLE VII

WHETHER THE JUST MAN CAN MERIT HIS OWN RESTORATION AFTER A FALL

State of the question. The problem is not whether a man who has already fallen can merit his own restoration; it is already established by article 5 that he cannot, since fallen man cannot merit the first grace or justification. The meaning of the present article is: whether, at the time when a man is just, he can merit from God that, should he happen to fall into mortal sin, the grace of contrition would be given to him.

The question is disputed among theologians. Some, including Bellarmine, De justificatione, Bk. V, answer affirmatively, according to Ps. 70:9: “When my strength shall fail, do not Thou forsake me.” Many others, St. Thomas among them, deny it; cf. Gonet. The three objections in the statement of the question show that the Angelic Doctor was not unaware of what could be said in favor of the contrary opinion.

The arguments in behalf of the affirmative are as follows:

1. The just man seems to be able to merit what can be justly asked of God, namely, to be restored after a fall.

2. The just man can merit for others de congruo properly speaking restoration after a fall; with still greater reason can he do so for himself.

3. A man who was once in grace merits eternal life for himself by perhaps heroic good works which he has done; but he cannot attain to it unless he is restored after a fall.

These arguments do not distinguish adequately between merit properly speaking, whether de condigno or de congruo, and merit improperly or broadly speaking.

The reply is in the negative, neither de condigno nor de congruo properly.

Proof from Scripture: “If the just man turn himself away from his justice, and do iniquity . . . all his justices which he hath done, shall nor be remembered” (Ezech. 18:24).

Theological proof with respect to merit de condigno. Merit de condigno depends on the motion of divine grace. But this motion is interrupted by mortal sin. Therefore merit de condigno does not extend to benefits following sin, for the mortal sin would take away the merit.

Confirmation. Since all the merits of the just are suspended by subsequent mortal sin, the just man could not merit a reward to be conferred upon one who was unworthy; but a fallen man is unworthy. Accordingly, if

the just man merited this restoration for himself de condigno, after sinning he would obtain it infallibly, and so all the just would be predestined, as it were, finally to be restored to grace.

Proof of the second part, that is, of merit de congruo properly speaking. Merit de congruo properly speaking is based on a right of friendship and demands fitness not only in the work but in the worker. But the just man has no right in friendship to restoration after a fall, since by mortal sin the friendship of God is withdrawn and so also are merits de congruo in the proper sense. Therefore.

Reply to first objection. Nevertheless he may well merit to obtain this by prayer, or by merit de congruo in the broad sense, founded not on justice but on mercy. A man may thus very profitably pray that, should he fall, he may rise again. So does the Psalmist pray (70:9): “When my strength shall fail, do not Thou forsake me.”

Reply to second objection. The just man remaining in grace can merit properly de congruo the restoration of another, since he himself remains in grace. Cf. the last part of the body of the article. But if he falls into mortal sin, he deprives himself of his merits de condigno and de congruo.

Reply to third objection. “By an act of charity the just man merits absolutely eternal life, but by a subsequent mortal sin he sets up an impediment against the preceding merit so that he does not receive its effect.” This answer should be read. St. Thomas’ opinion was sustained by the Council of Trent (Denz., no. 842), which declared that the just man “merits eternal life and the attainment of eternal life itself, provided, however, that he dies in grace,” that is, if he does not lose his merits by mortal sin.

ARTICLE VIII

WHETHER MAN CAN MERIT AN INCREASE OF GRACE OR CHARITY

State of the question. There are three difficulties: If the just man merits an increase of grace, after receiving it he can expect no other reward. Nothing acts beyond its species; hence grace and charity, which are the principle of merit, cannot merit greater grace. In consequence, an increase of charity would be obtained by any act of charity, even remiss, which would be remarkable.

The reply is in the affirmative even for merit de condigno; and this is of faith.

Proof from the Council of Trent (Sess. VI, can. 32; Denz., no. 842): “If anyone should say . . . he who is justified by good works, which are done by him through the grace of God and the merit of Jesus Christ (of whom he is a living member), does not really merit an increase of grace, eternal life, and the attainment of eternal life itself (provided, however, that he dies in grace), and also an increase of glory: let him be anathema.” This definition is based upon many scriptural texts, for example: “By doing the truth in charity, we may in all things grow up in Him who is the head, even Christ” (Eph. 4:15); also Phil. 1:9 and Rom. 6:19; Augustine, commenting on chapter 5 of St. John’s Gospel, writes: “Charity merits increase, that being increased, it may also merit to be perfected.”

Theological proof. Whatever the motion of grace extends to falls under merit de condigno. But the motion of grace extends, not only to the term, which is eternal life, but to the entire progress by means of increasing grace and charity. Therefore. Thus is explained the text of Prov. 4:18: “The path of the just, as a shining light, goeth forward and increaseth even to perfect day,” that is, to glory.

Reply to first and second objections. This increase does not exceed the power of the pre-existing grace.

Reply to third objection. “By any act of charity, even remiss, a man merits an increase of grace and eternal life; but just as eternal life is not bestowed immediately, so the increase of grace is not given forth-with (if the meritorious act was remiss) but when man becomes sufficiently disposed for this increase of grace.” Suarez holds that even remiss acts obtain an increase of grace at once, and this for the reason that he does not give adequate consideration to the necessity for the prerequisite disposition; cf. supra, q. 112, a. 2; also Billuart, ibid., and the treatise on charity (its increase), IIa IIae, q. 24, a. 6.

Just as a certain disposition (without merit, however) is prerequisite in an adult for justification, such that sanctifying grace is bestowed in greater or less degree according to the fervor of this disposition, so likewise is a disposition required for an increase of sanctifying grace. Should the meritorious act not be remiss, but more intense than the habit from which it proceeds, then, at the same time, there is moral merit and, as it were, a physical disposition for an increase to be obtained at once. For instance, if a

person who possesses the virtue of charity in the measure of three talents should, under actual grace, elicit a fervent, meritorious act at the level of four talents, he would immediately obtain an increase of the virtue of charity in that measure. But if, possessing the virtue of charity in the measure of three talents, he performs a remiss, meritorious act at the level of two, there is, thus far, moral merit de condigno, but not the physical disposition, so to speak, for immediately obtaining an increase of charity. It will be forthcoming when he performs a more fervent act, or even perhaps, as Cajetan somewhere indicates, at the time of Eucharistic Communion, according as it is the disposition for receiving the proper effect of the Sacrament, according to the disposition, whether final or prior, of even remiss acts of charity.

Suarez disagrees with St. Thomas, inasmuch as he holds that every act of charity, even remiss, immediately obtains an increase which is the object of merit. St. Thomas' doctrine seems to be true, however, since a disposition is required for the increase of grace in the same way as for its infusion in an adult. But at the moment of infusion the disposition was without merit, whereas at the moment of the increase there must be a disposition with merit or with the Sacrament. By a similar analogy in the order of nature, an acquired friendship is increased only by more intense acts; remiss acts maintain but do not increase it.

Corollary. In the path of virtue, not to progress is to retrogress, as is commonly said; but on the other hand, not to retrogress is to progress. If a man does not commit a mortal sin in the course of a year, he has assuredly made progress thereby during that year. However, there is not much encouragement in remarking that "not to reuogress is to progress," so that the saints spoke quite otherwise.

ARTICLE IX

WHETHER A MAN CAN MERIT THE GIFT OF FINAL PERSEVERANCE FOR HIMSELF

State of the question. Final perseverance, as has been said (q. 109, a. 10), signifies continuance in grace until death, or the conjunction of the state of grace with death. It is the grace of a happy death. The Pelagians attributed it to the powers of nature alone. The Semi-Pelagians held that it could fall under merit.

In the three objections which are presented at the beginning of the article, St. Thomas brings out the difficulty of the question: 1. We can obtain this gift by prayer; why not by merit? 2. We can merit eternal life, the reason of which is impeccability; why cannot the just man merit for himself not sinning before death? 3. We can merit an increase of grace; why not simple perseverance in grace, which is less than an increase?

The reply, nevertheless, is in the negative. St. Thomas' conclusion is: The perseverance of glory falls under merit but not perseverance during life. This is at least theologically quite certain, according to all theologians, with respect to merit de condigno, as Hervt rightly declares in his Manuale, p. 217 This is proved from Sacred Scripture, which indicates clearly enough that none of the just has a right in justice to final perseverance, but that anyone is capable of falling. "Then shall many be scandalized . . . and many false prophets shall rise, and shall seduce many. And because iniquity hath abounded, the charity of many shall grow cold. But he that shall persevere to the end, he shall be saved (Matt. 24:10-13); "There shall arise false Christs . . . and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch as to deceive (if possible) even the elect" (ibid., 24:24); the gift of final perseverance is, then, the special gift of the elect. Again, "many are called, but few chosen" (ibid., 20:16; 22:14); "Wherefore he that thinketh himself to stand, let him take heed lest he fall" (I Cor. 10:12); "Wherefore, my dearly beloved, . . . with fear and trembling work out your salvation. For it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will" (Phil. 2:12); it is not written: "according to our merits," but, "according to His good will." These last two texts are quoted by the Council of Trent in relation to the gift of final perseverance (Denz., no. 806).

Furthermore, texts can be cited to prove the gratuity of predestination to glory. And conversely, from the fact that the grace of final perseverance conferred only upon the elect does not proceed from foreseen merits, it follows that predestination to glory does not proceed from foreseen merits, any more than the first grace, the beginning of salvation. "Whom He predestinated, them He also called. And whom He called, them He also justified. And whom He justified, them He also glorified" (Rom. 8:30); in this text vocation, justification, and glorification are effects of predestination. "In whom [Christ] we also are called by lot, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things according to the counsel of His will" (Eph. 1:11); "I will have mercy on

whom I will have mercy; and I will show mercy to whom I will show mercy" (Rom. 9x5; cf. Exod. 33:19); "So then it [divine election] is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy" (Rom. 9:16); "Who hath first given to Him, and recompense shall be made him?" (ibid., 11:35); "What hast thou that thou hast not received?" (I Cor. 4:7)

The Councils likewise affirm the gratuity of the gift of final perseverance. Several of the preceding scriptural texts are quoted by the Second Council of Orange, which declared against the Semi-Pelagian contention that this gift fell under merit (can. 10; Denz., no. 183): "Even those reborn and restored to health must always implore the help of God that they may attain to a good end and may persevere in good works." If this must always be implored, it is not a thing the attainment of which is assured by previous merits.

Again, the Council of Trent (Sess. VI, chap. 13; Denz., no. 806) declares with reference to perseverance, "that a certain gift cannot be had from anyone, unless it be from Him who is able to make him who stands stand, that he may stand perseveringly, and to raise him who falls"; cf. Rom. 14:4 ff. Nevertheless the fact that a man merits, although it derives principally from God, is not said to proceed from God alone, but also from man by his merits. It is likewise defined by the Council of Trent (Denz., no. 826): "If anyone should say with absolute and infallible certainty that he will receive that great gift of perseverance to the end, unless he learns this by special revelation, let him be anathema." (Also Denz., no. 832.)

Among the Fathers, Augustine in his De dono perseverantiae sums up the patristic tradition and shows by many arguments that final perseverance is not bestowed on merits as a reward in justice, but may only "be obtained by supplicating prayers."

St. Thomas presents two arguments. The first is indirect, in the argument Sed contra, which should be read. If the gift of final perseverance fell under merit, every just adult, according as he has meritorious works, would obtain it infallibly; that is, he would obtain preservation from sin. But not all the just obtain this gift; "the charity of many grows cold." Hence the supposition is false. As Billuart explains, this indirect argument is based on the truth that whatever a person merits, especially de condigno, he obtains from God infallibly, unless the merit itself is taken away by sin. Wherefore if anyone were to merit perseverance de condigno, he would obtain it

infallibly, since he would thus merit not to have his merits taken away, and God would not permit him to fall into sin.

Someone might raise the further objection against this: perhaps this great gift of final perseverance cannot be merited de condigno by ordinary merits, but only by very excellent merits or by an accumulation of a great number of merits, and so it is not obtained by all the just.

Reply. If man merited eternal life and increase of grace by any meritorious work, there would be no reason why he should not likewise merit perseverance if it fell under merit.

The second argument is direct and specific, in the body of the article, which should be read. The principle of merit does not fall under merit; it would be its own effect. But the gift of final perseverance, according as it is the continuous production of the state of grace, is the principle of merit; in other words, the gift of final perseverance is nothing but the state of grace (that is, the principle of merit) preserved by God at the moment of death. Therefore it cannot fall under merit, especially de condigno.

The major is self-evident. The minor is proved as follows: the gift of final perseverance consists in a divine motion preserving the state of grace first bestowed. But this preservative motion is the principle of merit, since it is the same entitatively as the first production of grace. Cf. Ia, q. 104, a. I ad 4: “The preservation of a thing by God is not effected by any new action, but by a continuation of the action which confers being . . . in the same way, the preservation of light in the atmosphere is by the continuous influence of the sun.” Therefore, just as no one can merit his own preservation, for preservation is not an act distinct from creation, which does not fall under merit; so neither can anyone merit perseverance in the state of grace, since it is nothing but the preservation of grace, not distinguished from its first production, which does not fall under merit. Hence Augustine demonstrates, against the Semi-Pelagians, that like the beginning of salvation, so final perseverance cannot fall under merit, since it is the principle of merit.

Confirmation. For merit de condigno, which is a strict right, the promise of God to render a reward for a work is required. But no where does God promise perseverance to those who do good works; on the contrary, the Scriptures often declare that even the just must work out their salvation in fear and trembling and that he who stands should take heed lest he fall. Therefore.

God often raises certain sinners after repeated falls; often, but not always; and this is the mystery of predestination.

REFUTATION OF OBJECTIONS

The twofold objection involved in the second and third is reducible to the following. He who can merit what is greater, can also merit what is less. But the just man can merit de condigno eternal life and the increase of grace, which are greater than final perseverance. Therefore the just man can merit de condigno final perseverance.

Reply. I distinguish the major; he who can merit what is greater, can also merit what is less, other things being equal: granted; other things not being equal, denied. But there is a disparity since, whereas both eternal life and perseverance in it and increase of grace are the terms of meritorious acts, the gift of perseverance is not; it is the continuation of the production of the state of grace. The principle of merit does not fall under merit.

I insist. He who can merit the end can merit the means necessary to attain it. But final perseverance is the necessary means for attaining to eternal life. Therefore.

Reply. I deny the major in its universal application; it suffices that the means are obtainable in another way than by merit. Or else, I distinguish the major as before: the just man can merit the means which are the term of merit: granted; those which are the principle of merit: denied.

I insist. Then the just man cannot merit de condigno eternal life either.

Reply. The just man merits eternal life absolutely, but before the end of life he can deprive himself of merit by mortal sin. Thus he merits “the attainment of eternal life, provided that he dies in grace,” as the Council of Trent declares (Sess. VI, chap. 16, and can. 32; Denz., no. 842); but he cannot merit perseverance in the state of grace.

Three problems remain.

1.Whether efficacious grace can be merited de condigno. Thomists answer in the negative, at least according as efficacious grace preserves us in the state of grace and prevents us from sinning mortally, for the principle of merit does not fall under merit. (Cf. Salmanticenses and John of St. Thomas.)

Confirmation. If anyone were to merit efficacious grace de condigno or infallibly, he would likewise thereby merit further efficacious graces and so

on to the grace of final perseverance, which would thus fall under merit de condigno, contrary to what has been proved. Billuart writes: “Even if [that is, assuming, not granting] the just man should merit by the present good work efficacious help for the next work, he will still not obtain it infallibly except so far as he perseveres in grace; but he cannot merit persevering in grace, since this gift derives from the principle of merit, as has been said. . . . Moreover, nowhere is it established or revealed that efficacious help is presented as the reward of merit; it is to this help that St. Augustine refers when he says: ‘to whom it is given, it is given in mercy; to whom it is not given, it is withheld in justice.’”

2. Whether final perseverance falls under merit de congruo properly speaking. This is a disputed question; cf. Hugon, De gratia, pp. 423 ff., and Billuart. It is answered negatively as being the more probable opinion, contrary to that of St. Robert Bellarmine, Suarez, and Ripalda; cf. Zubizarreta, Syn., no. 1052. Final perseverance does not fall under merit de congruo properly speaking: 1. for this merit is based upon the right of friendship, that is, the friendship of charity, and thus the principle of merit de congruo, in the proper sense, (namely, perseverance in the state of grace, or charity) would fall under merit, which is impossible; 2. since merit de congruo strictly speaking infallibly obtains a reward for the man himself, according as God does not refuse a man what is due to him according to the laws of friendship, and thus it would follow that nearly all the just would persevere, as stated in the argument Sed contra.

3. Whether the gift of perseverance falls under merit de congruo broadly speaking, as based on the liberality of mercy of God.

Reply to first objection, which should be read: in the affirmative; thus it can be obtained by humble, devout, confident, persevering prayer. Hence Benedict XV used to say that the celebration of Mass for the intention of obtaining this supreme gift was eminently proper, inasmuch as the celebration of Mass is the most sublime prayer of Christ Himself ever living to make intercession for us. True devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary is likewise a sign of predestination since it inclines us to say frequently: “Holy Mary . . . pray for us . . . now and at the hour of our death. Amen”; and thus, many times a day we ask for the grace of a happy death.

ARTICLE X

The reply is in the affrmative, to the extent that they are useful to salvation. If, however, they are considered in themselves, they do not fall absolutely under merit, which aims only at eternal life and those things which are conducive to it. But they do fall under a sort of merit from a particular aspect, according to a certain fitness based on the benignity of God. Thus, in the City of God, Bk. V, chap. 15, St. Augustine remarks that a temporal reward was rendered to the Romans on account of certain good customs which they observed. So terminates the treatise on grace, intimately bound up with St. Thomas' principle (Ia, q. 20, a. 3) that "the love of God is the cause of goodness in things; nor does it presuppose, but rather imposes goodness in us." Therefore grace is a living manifestation of this uncreated love which demands a return of love and of gratitude, according to the words of St. John's First Epistle (4:19): "Let us therefore love God, because God first loved us."

CHAPTER XII

RECAPITULATION AND SUPPLEMENT

I. WHETHER SANCTIFYING GRACE IS A FORMAL PARTICIPATION IN DEITY AS IT IS IN ITSELF

(We here reprint an article which appeared in the Revue Thomiste, 1936.)

"Grace, which is an accident, is a certain participated likeness of the divinity in man" (St. Thomas, IIIa, q. 2, a. 10 ad I).

This question has been put to us in connection with recent debates and with reference to what we recently wrote in the Revue Thomiste on the subject of Deity. More precisely, the question was formulated as follows: Is grace a participation in Deity as it is in itself and as seen by the blessed, or only in Deity as imperfectly known by us? This latter aspect could be further differentiated: Is it a question of Deity as imperfectly known by the philosopher, or as known by the theologian-wayfarer?

State of the question. In order to grasp better the sense of the terms, let us recall what we have discussed elsewhere at greater length. The Deity as it is in itself remains naturally unknowable, and even cannot be known except by the immediate vision of the blessed. But among the divine perfections which it contains formally in its eminence, which we know by natural means, is there not one which has priority over the others, from which the others can be deduced, as the properties of man are deduced from his rationality?

The controversy on this subject, relative to the formal constituent of the divine nature according to our imperfect mode of knowledge, is well known. Even the Thomists themselves are not in complete accord on this point. Some maintain that this formal constituent is subsistent being itself, according to the words of Exod. 3:14: "I am who am," because all the divine attributes are deducible therefrom. Others hold that it is subsistent intellection (intelligere subsistens). We have explained elsewhere why we

accept the first solution, on account of the text from Exodus, of the radical distinction between subsistent being andcreated being, and because all the divine attributes are deducible from it. Does not St. Thomas accordingly delay treating of the divine intelligence until question fourteen of the First Part, after he has deduced several attributes from subsistent being itself?5

Whatever may be the issue of this discussion, it remains true for all Thomists that Deity as it exists in itself is superior to all the absolute perfections which it contains in its eminence (formaliter eminenter).

This is evident from the fact that these perfections, which are naturally capable of participation by creatures, such as being, life, intelligence, are naturally knowable in a positive way, whereas Deity is not: it is the great darkness which the mystics speak of. It designates the very essence of God, that which is proper to Him, His intimate life. It is the object of the beatific vision itself, and, before that vision, it is the "obscurity from above" which proceeds from a light too intense for the weak eyes of our souls.

From this it can be inferred that subsistent being itself contains only in implicit act the attributes which are progressively deducible from it, but Deity as such contains them in explicit act, since, when it is seen, there is no longer any need of deducing these attributes. Deity can thus be represented as the apex of a pyramid the sides of which would represent subsistent being, subsistent intellection, subsistent love, mercy, justice, omnipotence, that is, all the attributes formally contained in the eminence of Deity. To adopt a less far-fetched symbolism, Deity in relation to the perfections inhering in its eminence is somewhat like whiteness in relation to the seven colors of the rainbow, with this difference: the seven colors are only virtually present in the whiteness, whereas the absolute perfections (being, intelligence, love, etc.) are in Deity formally and eminently.

Thereupon the question presents itself: Is grace a participation in the divine nature (or in Deity), the intimate life of God as it is in itself, or only in the divine nature as it is imperfectly conceived by us as subsistent being or subsistent intellection?

The theologians who have written on this subject generally concede that grace is a participation in Deity as it is in itself, objectively (inasmuch as it disposes us radically to see it). But some add that it is not so intrinsically or subjectively, for Deity is infinite and hence, as such, cannot be participated in subjectively. Furthermore, they declare that Deity is the intimate life of God, none other than the Trinity of the divine persons. Now grace cannot be

a subjective participation in the Fatherhood, the Sonship, the Spiration which constitute the intimate life of God. These theologians deduce therefrom that grace is subjectively a participation in the divine nature as imperfectly conceived by us, as one (not as triune) and as subsistent intellection.

It is at once evident that this viewpoint can be interpreted in two ways, according to whether it refers to the divine nature imperfectly known by the philosopher or to the divine nature imperfectly known beneath the light of essentially supernatural revelation by the theologian, who knows God, not only under the nature of being and first being, but also under the nature of Deity, already known obscurely by the attributes of God, author of grace (as supernatural Providence) and, above all, by the mystery of the Trinity. (Before the revelation of this mystery of the Trinity, under the Old Testament, the super-natural providence of God, author of salvation, was known.)

Basis of a solution. To the question thus stated, we reply that, according to traditional teaching, sanctifying grace in itself is intrinsically (and not merely in an objective, extrinsic manner) a formal, analogical (and, of course, inadequate) participation in the Deity as it is in itself, superior to being, intelligence, and love, which it contains in its eminence or formally and eminently. As Cajetan says, Ia, q. 39, a. I, no. 7: “The Deity is prior to being and all its differences; for it is above being and beyond unity, etc.” The reasons which we are about to indicate are presented in progressive order, beginning with the most general.

I. There can be no question of a participation in the divine nature merely as conceived by the philosopher. He does, in fact, know God as first being and first intelligence, inasmuch as He is author of nature, but not as God, author of grace. This is the basis of the dis-tinction between the proper object of natural theology or theodicy (a branch of metaphysics): God under the reason of being and as author of nature, and the proper object of sacred theology: God under the nature of Deity (at least obscurely known) and as author of grace. This is the classical terminology employed by the great commentators on St. Thomas, Ia, q. I, a. 3, 7; cf. Cajetan, Bañez, John of St. Thomas, the Salmanticenses, Gonet, Gotti, Billuart, etc. Nowadays several writers make use of this classical terminology from force of habit, without apparently having pondered very deeply the difference between the proper object of theodicy, or natural theology, and that of theology properly so

called. Nevertheless St. Thomas has expressed this difference in very precise terms, Ia, q. I, a. 6: “Sacred doctrine properly treats of God under the aspect of highest cause, for it considers Him not only to the extent that He is knowable through creatures (as the philosophers knew Him) but also with respect to what He alone knows of Himself which is communicated to others by revelation.” This is what later theologians referred to as “God, not under the general reason of being, but under the essential, intimate reason of Deity, or according to His intimate life.” Hence in the question which engages our attention, we are not concerned with the divine nature only as it is imperfectly conceived by the philosopher.

2. Moreover, only God can produce grace in an angel or in the very essence of the soul, and He does so independently of the conception which the philosopher or theologian holds regarding the divine nature, and independently of any natural effect which might be the source of these imperfect conceptions. Grace thus assimilates us immediately to God as such in His intimate life; it is therefore a formal, analogical participation in the Deity as it is in itself. In the natural order, a stone has an analogical likeness to God inasmuch as He is being, the plant inasmuch as He is living, man and angel inasmuch as He is intelligence. Sanctifying grace, which is far superior to the angelic nature, is an analogical likeness to God inasmuch as He is God, or to His Deity, to His intimate life, which is not naturally knowable in a positive way. This is why, above the kingdoms of nature (mineral, vegetable, animal, human, angelic), there is the kingdom of God: the intimate life of God and its formal participation by the angels and the souls of the just.

Therefore to know perfectly the essence or quiddity of grace, one would have to know the light of glory of which it is the seed, just as one must know what an oak is to know the essence of the germ contained in an acorn. But it is impossible to know perfectly the essence of the light of glory, essentially ordered to the vision of God, without knowing the divine essence immediately by intuition. Hence St. Thomas declares, in demonstrating that only God can produce grace, Ia IIae, q. 112, a. 2: “It must be that God alone should deify, communicating a fellowship in the divine nature by a certain participated likeness, just as it is impossible for anything but fire to ignite.” The word “deify” shows that grace is a participation in the divine nature, not according to the reason of being or intelligence merely, but by the essential, intimate reason of Deity.

3. But in that case, it will be objected, grace would have to be intrinsically a (subjective) participation in the intimate life of God. Now this is none other than the Trinity of the divine persons. There would therefore be in grace a participation in the fatherhood, the sonship and the spiration, which theory is a departure from traditional teaching.

The answer to this objection is that, according to traditional teaching, and particularly that of St. Thomas, the adoptive sonship of the children of God, ex Deo nati, is a certain likeness to the eternal sonship of the Word. In fact we find explicitly in IIIa, q. 3, a. 5 ad 2: "Just as by the act of creation divine goodness is communicated to all creatures by way of a certain similitude, so by the act of adoption a similitude of natural sonship is communicated to men, according to the words of Rom. 8:29: 'Whom He foreknew . . . to be made conformable to the image of His Son.'" And further (ibid., a. 2 ad 3):

"Adoptive sonship is a certain likeness of eternal sonship; just as all the things that were made in time are, as it were, likenesses of those which were from all eternity. Man however is likened to the eternal splendor of the Son by the brightness of grace, which is attributed to the Holy Ghost. And hence adoption, although common to the whole Trinity, is appropriated to the Father as its author, to the Son as its exemplar, to the Holy Ghost as imprinting this likeness of the exemplar upon us."

Likewise St. Thomas again in his commentary on Rom. 8:29 thus explains the words "to be made conformable to the image of His Son": "He who is adopted as son of God is truly conformed to His Son, first, indeed, by a right to participate in His inheritance . . . ; secondly, by sharing His glory (Heb. 1:3). Hence by the fact that He enlightens the saints with the light of wisdom and grace, He makes them conformable to Himself. . . . Thus did the Son of God will to communicate to others a conformity with His sonship, that He might not only be the Son, Himself but also the first-born of sons. And so He who is the only-begotten by eternal generation (John 1:18), . . . is, by the conferring of grace, the first-born of many brethren. . . . Therefore we are the brothers of Christ because He has communicated a likeness of sonship to us, as is here said, and because He assumed the likeness of our nature."

St. Thomas speaks similarly in his commentary on St. John's Gospel (1:13), explaining the words, "who are born of God." "And this is fitting, that all who are sons of God by being assimilated to the Son, should be

transformed through the Son. . . . Accordingly the words, ‘not of blood, etc.,’ show how such a magnificent benefit is conferred upon men. . . . The Evangelist uses the preposition ‘ex’ speaking of others, that is, of the just: ‘Ex Deo nati sunt’; but of the natural Son, he says ‘De Patre est natus.’ “ Why? Because, as explained in the same commentary, the Latin preposition ‘de’ indicates either the material, efficient, or consubstantial cause (The smith makes a little knife of [de] steel); the Latin preposition ‘a’ always refers to the efficient cause, and the preposition ‘ex’ is general, indicating either the material or efficient cause, but never the consubstantial cause.

Now the objection raised was that grace cannot be intrinsically a (subjective) participation in the Deity or the intimate life of God, for that is none other than the Trinity of persons in which there is no participating. The participation is in the divine nature as one.

From what has just been explained, the reply may be made as follows: True, the participation is in the divine nature as one, however not merely such as conceived by the philosopher, but such as it is in itself, in the bosom of the Trinity. It is not only a question of the unity of God, author of nature, but of that absolutely eminent, naturally unknowable unity which is capable of subsisting in spite of the Trinity of persons. We are concerned with the unity and identity of the nature communicated by the Father to the Son and by Them to the Holy Ghost. Therein lies the meaning of the traditional proposition which we have just read in St. Thomas: “Adoptive sonship is a certain likeness of eternal sonship.” So has it always been understood.

From all eternity God the Father has a Son to whom He communicates His whole nature, without dividing or multiplying it; He necessarily engenders a Son equal to Himself, and gives to Him to be God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God. And from sheer bounty, gratuitously, He has willed to have in time other sons, adopted sons, by a filiation which is not only moral (by external declaration) but real and intimate (by the production of sanctifying grace, the effect of God’s active love for us). He has loved us with a love that is not only creative and preserving, but vivifying, which causes us to participate in the very principle of His intimate life, in the principle of the immediate vision which He has of Himself and which He communicates to His Son and to the Holy Ghost. It is thus that He has predestinated us to be conformable to the image of His only Son, that this Son might be the first-born of many brethren (Rom. 8:29). The just are accordingly of the family of God and enter into the cycle

of the Holy Trinity. Infused charity gives us a likeness to the Holy Ghost (personal love) ; the beatific vision will render us like the Word, who will make us like unto the Father whose image He is. Then the Trinity which already dwells in us as in a darkened sanctuary, will abide in us as in an illuminated, living sanctuary, where It will be seen unveiled and loved with an inamissible love.

The only Son of God receives the divine nature eternally, not merely as it is conceived by the philosopher (as being itself or even as subsistent intellection), but as it is in itself (under the reason of the Deity clearly perceived). Consequently He received the unity of that nature, not only as conceived by the philosopher, but as it is capable of subsisting in spite of the Trinity of persons really distinct one from another. He receives with Deity the essential intellection common to the three persons, which has for its primary object the Deity itself known comprehensively. He also receives essential love, not only as known by the philosopher, but that essential love which, remaining numerically the same, belongs to the three persons, since they love one another by one sole, identical act, just as they know one another by the same, identical intellection.

Now according to traditional teaching, as we have just seen, sanctifying grace makes us children of God by an analogical, participated likeness to the eternal sonship of the Word. Hence, in us, it is a participation in Deity as it is in itself, not only under the nature of being or under the nature of intellection, but under the nature of Deity, and not only a participation in Deity as known obscurely by the theologian through created concepts, but as it is in itself and seen as it is by the blessed.

Such is the true sense of these assertions, admitted by all theologians. But their profundity does not always receive sufficient attention. The mineral already resembles God analogically as being, the plant and animal as living, man and angel as intelligent; but the just man by grace resembles God precisely inasmuch as He is God, according to His very Deity or His intimate life as it is in itself. Thus the just man penetrates, beyond the human kingdom of reason, beyond the angelic kingdom, into the kingdom of God; his life is not merely intellectual but deiform, divine, theological: “it is deified,” according to St. Thomas, Ia IIae, q. 112, a. I.

That is truly the formal aspect of the life of grace, what is proper to it, unique, significant, and interesting. Thereby it is a formal, although inadequate and analogical, participation in the divine nature as it is in itself,

or of Deity as such. This is found above all in con-summate, inamissible grace received into the essence of the soul, and also in the light of glory received into the intellect by the beatified soul, and in the charity received into its will.

4. It is, then, materially (in the theological sense of the term) that grace is a finite accident (an entitative habit received into the essence of the soul), that infused faith is an operative habit received into our intellect, and charity an operative habit received into our will. All of this is true by reaTon of the receptive subject. But these habits are a formal participation in the intimate life of God; otherwise they would not dispose us to see it as it is in itself by an immediate vision that will have the same formal object (objectum formale quod et quo) as the uncreated vision which God, one in three persons, has of Himself.

This distinction of what grace is either materially or formally, is similar to the one that is generally made in the natural order between intelligence and the created mode whereby it exists in us and in the angels, as a faculty (accident) distinct from the substance of the soul or of the angel, distinct also from the act of intellection. This is quite true and does not prevent intelligence as such from being an analogical perfection, the formal notion of which does not imply any imperfection, and which, consequently, is to be found properly and formally in God as subsistent intellection. In the same way, the perfection of wisdom is distinguished from its created mode whereby, in us, wisdom is measured by things, whereas in God it is the measure and cause of things.

From the same more or less material standpoint, when sanctifying grace is compared to faith and charity, it may be said that grace is a participation in the Deity as a nature, faith a participation in the Deity or intimate life of God as knowledge, and charity a participation in that intimate life as love. But it is always a question of formal participa-tion in the intimate life of God or in the Deity in its eminent unity, not such as it is known by the philosopher, but as it is in itself in the Trinity.

Moreover, sanctifying grace cannot be an objective participation in the Deity as it is in itself (and dispose us radically to immediate vision) without being intrinsically specified by it, that it, without having an essential (or transcendant) relationship to the Deity as it is in itself. Hence, in his reply to Father Menéndez Rigada, Father Gardeil recognizes, with reference to the passage from the Salmanticenses which we have just indicated in a note,

that “it does not seem possible for the intuition of the divine persons to originate in sanctifying grace, if the latter is not a kind of exemplary participation in the divine nature inasmuch as it subsists in the divine persons. For, as the Salmanticenses declare (loc. cit.), the inclination toward an object should originate in some participation in the object aimed at.” Yes, for there is here, not an accidental, but an essential (or transcendant) relationship between grace and Deity seen immediately. This argument clarifies the last problem which we are about to propose.

6. In the light of what immediately precedes, it is apparent that subsistent intellection (intelligere subsistens), even considered subjectively, is no less infinite than subsistent being, or than Deity as it is in itself. Granted that sanctifying grace can be a participation in the divine nature as intellection, one should admit that it can be a participation in Deity as it is in itself.

If it is objected: but Deity as it is in itself is, like subsistent being, infinite and therefore cannot be participated in subjectively or intrinsically, the reply in the words of Father Gardeil is as follows: “That would be true if a participation could be adequate, but it could be only imitative and analogical.” The Salmanticenses (o.p. cit., no. 64) are in accord: “Therefore in the mind of St. Thomas it is perfectly consistent for grace to participate, that is, to imitate, the whole being as to its essence and infinity, although it does not correspond to it adequately in all its predicables but only partially.

Deity is thus identified with subsistent being itself (inasmuch as it contains being and the other absolute perfections formally and eminently), whereas in us the formal, analogical participation in Deity takes the form of an accident. This is the more or less material, not formal, aspect of sanctifying grace, just as in the natural order there is a difference between the perfection of intelligence and the created mode whereby it is in us a faculty distinct from the substance of the soul and the act of intellection.

Conclusion. For these various reasons, of which the first are more general and are presupposed according to our mode of cognition, we consider sanctifying grace to be a formal, analogical participation in Deity as it is in itself. Two important corollaries follow from this:

1. It can be seen manifestly, as we have established elsewhere, that reason alone is incapable (for instance, by the natural, conditional, inefficacious desire to see God) of demonstrating precisely the possibility of grace, the possibility of a formal, analogical participation in the Deity or intimate life of God which would be, materially, a finite accident of our

souls. Of this possibility reason can give a proof of suitability, but not an apodictic proof, for, of itself, reason cannot know the Deity or intimate life of God positively. “This possibility of grace,” as is commonly taught, “is neither proved nor disproved apodictically, but it is urged by reason, defended against those who deny it, and held with a firm faith.”

2. With regard to the problem of the formal constituent of the divine nature, according to our imperfect mode of understanding, the solution which identifies it with subsistent intellection rather than with being itself is not confirmed by the sequence: grace would be a participated likeness, not of subsistent being but of subsistent intellection. This question of the philosophically formal constituent is of no importance here for the definition of grace, which is in reality a participated likeness in Deity, superior to both being and intellection which are contained in its eminence, that is, formally and eminently.

The doctrine we have just presented is found in St. Thomas, Ia, q. 13, a. 9: “This name of God is not communicable to any man according to the fullness of its meaning, but something of it is so by a kind of likeness, so that they may be called ‘gods’ who participate by such a likeness in something of the divinity, according to the words

of psalm 81: ‘I have said: You are gods.’ “ And the answer to the first objection: “The divine nature is not communicable except by the participation of likeness.” Likewise IIIa, q.2, a.6 ad I. Cf. Salmanticenses, De gratia, disp. IV, the quiddity and perfection of habitual grace, dub. IV, nos. 62, 63, 7072, where the participation by formal, analogical imitation is very well defined; also John of St. Thomas and Gonet, quoted in the same place.

NOTE

SUPERNATURAL AND NATURAL BEATITUDE

In his volume entitled Surnaturel (Etudes historiques, 1946), p. 254, Father H. de Lubac, having examined certain texts of St. Thomas on the distinction between the natural and the supernatural, writes as follows: “At any rate, nothing in his works declares the distinction which a certain number of Thomistic theologians would later concoct between ‘God the author of the natural order’ and ‘God the object of supernatural beatitude.’ .

. . Nowhere, explicitly or implicitly, does St. Thomas refer to a ‘natural beatitude.’” It is evident that Father de Lubac has never explained the Summa theologica article by article.

St. Thomas says, Ia, q. 23, a. I, Whether men are predestined by God: “It pertains to providence to ordain a thing to its end. But the end toward which created things are ordained by God is twofold. One, which exceeds the proportion and faculty of created nature, is eternal life, which consists of the divine vision and which is beyond the nature of any creature as is shown above (Ia, q. 12, a. 4). The other end, however, is proportioned to created nature, such, that is, as a creature can attain to by the power of its nature.

Again in the De veritate, q. 14, a. 2: “The final good of man, which first moves the will as to its final end, is twofold. One good is proportioned to human nature, since natural powers are sufficient to attain it; this is the happiness of which the philosophers have spoken. It is either contemplative, consisting in the act of wisdom, or active, consisting first in the act of prudence and accordingly in the acts of the other moral virtues. The other good of man exceeds the proportion of human nature, since natural powers do not suffice to attain it, nor even to conceive or desire it; but it is promised to man by the divine bounty alone.” The whole article should be read; it affirms that “in human nature itself there is a certain beginning of this good which is proportioned to nature,” and further that infused “faith is a certain beginning of eternal life.”

St. Thomas also declares, Ia IIae, q. 62, a. I: “The beatitude or happiness of man is twofold. One sort is proportioned to human nature, that which man can attain by the principle of his nature. But the other is a beatitude surpassing human nature, to which man can attain only by divine power, by means of a certain participation in divinity, according to the words of St. Peter’s Second Epistle (1:4): ‘By these [the promises of Christ] . . . you may be made partakers of the divine nature.’ “ St. Thomas speaks similarly with reference to angels, Ia, q. 62, a. 2.

He even affirms, II Sent., dist. 31, q. I, a. I ad 3: “In the beginning when God created man, He could also have formed another man of the slime of the earth and have left him in his natural condition; that is, he would have been mortal, passible, and have experienced the struggle of concupiscence against reason; this would not have been derogatory to human nature, since it follows from the principles of nature. Nor would any reason of guilt or punishment be attached to this defect, since it would not be caused

voluntarily.” This is indeed evident for, if sanctifying grace and likewise the gift of integrity and immortality are gratuitous or not due (as defined against Baius), it follows that the merely natural state (that is, without these gratuitous gifts) is possible both from the part of man and from that of God.

Is sanctifying grace a permanent gift in the just, like the infused virtues? Of recent years an opinion has been expressed according to which sanctifying grace is not a form or a permanent, radical principle of supernatural operations, but rather a motion. It is nevertheless certain that the infused virtues, especially the three theological virtues, are, within us, permanent principles of supernatural operations and meritorious as well; and it is no less certain that sanctifying or habitual grace is the permanent root of these infused virtues. It is not therefore merely a transitory motion, nor even a motion unceasingly renewed in the just man as long as he preserves friendship with God. The Fathers always referred to the theological virtues and to sanctifying grace which they presuppose as their radical principle.

The Council of Trent leaves no room for doubt on this point. Denzinger in his Enchiridion sums up the definitions and declarations of the Church very correctly in the formula: “Habitual or sanctifying grace is distinct from actual grace (nos. 1064 ff .); it is an infused, inherent quality of the soul, by which man is formally justified (nos. 483, 792, 795, 799 ff., 809, 821, 898, 1042, 1063 ff.), is regenerated (nos. 102, 186), abides in Christ (nos. 197, 698), puts on a new man (no. 792), and becomes an heir to eternal life (nos. 792,799 ff .).

II. THE PRINCIPLE OF PREDILECTION AND EFFICACIOUS GRACE”

Since the love of God is the cause of the goodness of things, nothing would be better than another were it not better loved by God” (St. Thomas, Ia, q. 20, a. 3).

One of the greatest joys experienced by the theologian who, for long years, has read and explained each day the Summa theologica of St. Thomas, is to glimpse the sublime value of one of those principles, often invoked but not sufficiently contemplated, which by their simplicity and elevation form, as it were, the great leitmotivs of theological thought, containing in themselves virtually entire treatises. The great St. Thomas formulated them especially toward the end of his comparatively short life,

when his contemplation had reached that height and simplicity which one associates with the intellectual vision of the higher angels, who encompass within a very few ideas vast regions of the intelligible world, metaphysical landscapes, so to speak, composed not of colors but of principles, and illumined from above by the very light of God.

Among these very lofty, very simple principles upon which the contemplation of the Angelic Doctor paused with delight, there is one to which sufficient attention is not generally paid and yet which contains in its virtuality several of the most important treatises. It is the principle which we find thus formulated, Ia, q. 20, a. 3: “Since the love of God is the cause of the goodness of things, none would be better thari another, were it not better loved by God.” In article 4 of the same question, the same principle is thus stated: “If some beings are better than others it is because they are better loved by God.” In short: no creature is better than another unless it is better loved by God. This may be called the principle of predilection, for principles derive their names from their predicates.

This is the principle against which all human pride ought to dash itself. Let us examine: 1. its bases, necessity, universality, 2. its principal consequences according to St. Thomas himself, and 3. by what other principle it should be balanced so as to maintain in all their purity and elevation the great mysteries of faith, particularly those of predestination and the will for universal salvation.

THE BASIS, NECESSITY, AND UNIVERSALITY OF THE PRINCIPLE OF PREDILECTION

This principle, “no creature is better than another unless better loved by God,” seems at the outset to be manifestly necessary in the philosophical order. If the love of God is, in fact, the cause of the goodness of creatures, as St. Thomas affirms in the first text quoted, no one can be better than another except for the reason that it has received more from God; this greater goodness in it, rather than in another, obviously comes from God.

As will be seen, this principle of predilection is a corollary of the principle of effcient causality: “Every contingent being or good requires an efficient cause and, in the final analysis, depends upon God the first cause.” It is also a corollary of the principle of finality: “Every agent acts for an end”; consequently the order of agents corresponds to the order of ends, the first agent produces every good in view of the supreme end, which is the

manifestation of His goodness, and hence it is not independently of Him or of His love, that one being is better than another, the plant superior to the mineral, the animal to the plant, man to the animal, one man to another, either in the natural order or in the order of grace.

It is also apparent from reason alone that this principle is absolutely universal, valid for every created being from a stone to the hightest angel, and not merely applicable to their substance, but to their accidents, qualities, actions, passions, relations, etc., for whatever is good in them and better in one than another, whether it is a question of physical, intellectual, moral, or strictly spiritual values.

The principle of predilection is also supported by revelation under various aspects in both the Old and New Testaments; it is even applied therein to our free, salutary acts. Our Lord tells us: “Without Me you can do nothing” in the order of salvation. St. Paul explains this by saying: “It is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will”; “Who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?” The principle in question is contained in many other texts cited by the Council of Orange: “Unto you it is given for Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for Him”; “Being confident of this very thing, that He, who hath begun a good work in you, will perfect it unto the day of Christ Jesus”; “By grace you are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, for it is the gift of God”; Now concerning virgins . . . I give counsel, as having obtained mercy of the Lord, to be faithful.” Again we find: “Do not therefore, my dearest brethren. Every best gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no change, nor shadow of alteration”; “No man can say the Lord Jesus, but by the Holy Ghost”; “Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves: but our sufficiency is from God.”

That is clearly the principle of predilection or of the source of what is better. St. Augustine often expresses it in commenting on the scriptural texts which we have just quoted together with several others from the Epistle to the Romans (chapters 8, 9, and 11). He applies it not only to men but to angels, regarding whom there is no question of the fact of original sin (by title of infirmity, titulus infirmitatis) but only of right, of the dependence (titulus dependentiae) of the creature upon the Creator, both in the natural

order and in the order of grace. He observes that those angels who attained supreme beatitude received greater aid than the others, “amplius adjuti.”

St. Thomans discerned an equivalent formula of the principle of the origin of superiority in the Council of Orange and the scriptural texts cited by it. He writes, in fact, with reference to predestination, in rendering an account of the condemnation of the Semi-Pelagians who attributed the beginning of salvation to man and not to God: “But opposed to this is what the Apostle says (II Cor. 3:5), that we are not sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves. However no principle can be found anterior to thought. Hence it cannot be said that any beginning exists in us which is the cause of the effect of predestination.” The reader is no doubt acquainted with the texts of the Council of Orange (can. 4; cf. Denz., nos. 177-85): “If anyone holds that God waits upon our will to cleanse us from sin, and does not admit that even our willing to be cleansed is brought about by the infusion and operation of the Holy Ghost, he resists the Holy Ghost Himself . . . and the salutary preaching of the Apostle: ‘It is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will’ (Phil. 2:13).” Canon 9 on the help of God asserts: “It pertains to the category of the divine when we both think rightly and restrain our steps from falsehood and injustice; for whatever good we may do, God operates in us and with us to enable us to operate”; and canon 12 on the quality in which God loves us: “God so loves us according to the quality we shall have by His gift, and not as we are by our own merit.” This text taken from the fifty-sixth Sentence of St. Prosper summarizes the one preserved in the Indiculus de gratia Dei, a collection of anterior statements by the Holy See wherein we read (Denz., nos. 133-4): “No one uses his free will well except through Christ”; “All the desires and all the works and merits of the saints should be referred to the glory and praise of God, for no one pleases Him otherwise than by what He Himself has bestowed.” This is essentially the principle of the origin of superiority in a formula almost identical with the one which St. Thomas was to give later (Ia, q. 20, a. 4). The same Indiculus preserves the following (Denz., nos. 135, 137, 139, 141, 142): “God so works in the hearts of men and in the free will itself, that a devout thought, holy counsel and every movement of good will is from God, since we can do some good through Him without whom we can do nothing (John 15:5)”; and likewise, no. 139: “The most devout Fathers taught the beginnings of good will, the

growth of commendable desires, and perseverance in them to the end is to be referred to the grace of Christ . . .";

"Hearkening to the prayers of His Church, God deigns to draw many souls from every kind of error, and once they are rescued from the power of darkness He transports them into the kingdom of the Son of His love (Col. 1:13), that from vessels of wrath He might fashion vessels of mercy (Rom. 9:22). All this is regarded as of divine operation to such an extent that gratitude may always be referred to God as effecting it."

The end of this famous Indiculus is well-known: "Let us acknowledge God to be the author of all good dispositions and works . . . Indeed, free will is not taken away but rather liberated by this help and gift of God . . . He acts in us, to be sure, in such wise that nothing interior is to be withdrawn from His work and regard; this we believe to satisfy adequately, whatever the writings taught us according to the aforesaid rules of the Apostolic See" (Denz., no. 142). Is this not equivalent to saying: "In the affair of salvation everything comes from God"? "Nothing interior is to be withdrawn," as the last text quoted declares. If, then, one man is better than another, especially in the order of salvation, it is because he has been loved more by God and has received more. This is the meaning of: "What hast thou that thou hast not received?" quoted by the Council of Orange (Denz., nos. 179, 199). The sense in which the same Council speaks of God the author of every good, whether natural or supernatural, is explained by the definition contained in canon 20: "Nothing of good can exist in man without God. God does many good things in man which are not done by man; but man does nothing good which God does not grant it to him to do" (Denz., no. 193); and canon 22: "No one has anything of his own but lying and sin. But if a man possesses anything of truth and justice it comes from that fountain for which we should thirst in this desert, so that, refreshed, as it were, by a few drops from it, we may not faint on the way." Cf. in the Histoire des Conciles of C. J. Héflè, translated, corrected, and augmented with critical notes by Dom. H. Lecleroq, Vol. II, Part II, pp. 1085-1110, the passages from St. Augustine and St. Prosper from which these canons of the Council of Orange are drawn, as confirmed by Boniface II; the most interesting, of course, are those concerning the beginning of salvation and final perseverance ("persevering in good works") for both of which they affirm the necessity of a special, gratuitous grace (Denz., nos. 177f., 183). But the grace of final perseverance is that The Semi-Pelagians, reducing

predestination to a foreknowledge of merits, held that from the height of His eternity God desires equally the salvation of all men and that He is therefore rather the spectator than the author of the fact that one man is saved rather than another. Is this true or not? Such was the profound question which confronted thinkers at the time of the Semi-Pelagian heresy, as anyone will recognize who reads St. Augustine and St. Prosper.

But did the Council of Orange leave it unanswered? It asserted the principle of predilection, affirming, as everyone admits, the necessity and gratuity of grace which is not granted to all in the same manner, and demonstrating that in the work of salvation everything, from beginning to end, is from God, who anticipates our free will, supports it, causes it to act without doing it any violence, lifts it up often, but not always; and therein lies the very mystery of predestination. So true is this that, heneceforth, to avoid Semi-Pelagianism it will always be necessary to admit a certain gratuity in predestination.

Is not the incontrovertible principle of all this teaching that all good without exception comes from God, and that if there is more good in one man than in another, it cannot be so independently of God? ‘“For who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received ?” This text, according to St. Augustine, should cause us to admit that there is no sin committed by any other man that I am not capable of committing under the same circumstances, as a result of the weakness of my free will or of my own frailty (the apostle Peter denied his Master thrice); and if, in fact, I have not fallen, if I have persevered, it is no doubt because I have labored and struggled; but without divine grace I should have accomplished nothing. Such was the thought of St. Francis of Assisi at the sight of a criminal condemned to death. St. Cyprian had said (Ad Querin., Bk. III, chap. 4, PL, IV, 734): “We should glory in nothing, when nothing is our own.” St. Basil asserts (Hom. 22 De humitate): “Nothing is left to thee, O man, in which thou canst glory . . . for we live entirely by the grace and gift of God.” And St.’ John Chrysostom adds (Serm. 2, in Ep. ad Coloss., PG, LXII, 312): “In the affair of salvation everything is a gift of God.”

THE PRINCIPAL APPLICATIONS OF THE PRINCIPLE OF PREDILECTION, ACCORDING TO ST. THOMAS

St. Thomas deduces therefrom, in the first place, the reason for the inequality of creatures, Ia, q. 47, a. I: “The distinction and multitude of things is from the design of the first agent who is God; for He brought creatures into existence in order to communicate His goodness to them and be represented by them. And since He cannot be adequately represented by one creature, He produced a multitude of diverse creatures”; and article 2: “And unequal . . . because a formal distinction [which is paramount] always requires inequality.” By creation God willed to manifest His goodness, but it could not be sufficiently represented by one creature, which would be too deficient and limited for that. Hence He desired many and these unequal and subordinate one to another, for the mere material multiplication of individuals of the same species is much less representative of the richness of divine goodness than a multiplicity of species, hierarchically arranged as are numbers. Leibnitz remarked that there would be no satisfaction in having a thousand copies of the same edition of Virgil in one’s library. But among these unequal creatures, one is better than another only because it has received more from God.

St. Thomas draws from the same principle the reason why grace is not equal in all men, Ia IIae, q. 112, a. 4: “It cannot be said,” he remarks, “that the primary reason for this inequality arises from the fact that one man has prepared himself better than another to receive grace, for this preparation does not pertain to man except so far as his free will is moved by God. Hence the primary reason for this difference must be found in God who dispenses the gifts of His grace in diverse ways, so that the beauty and perfection of the Church may come forth from these different degrees.” God sows a more or less choice divine seed in souls according to His good pleasure with the beauty of His Church in view.

St. Thomas also deduces from this principle of the origin of superiority that if one man prepares himself better than another for justification it is because, in the last analysis, he received more help from a stronger actual grace. In fact the holy doctor states in his commentary on St. Matthew (25:15) with reference to the parable of the talents: “He who strives harder receives more grace, but the fact that he does strive requires a higher cause.” Again on the Epistle to the Ephesians (4:7), with respect to the words, “To every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the giving of Christ,” St. Thomas comments: “This difference is not owing to fate or chance or merit, but to the giving of Christ, that is, to the extent to

which Christ measured it out to us. . . . For, as it is in the power of Christ to give or not to give, so also is it to give more or less."

The principle of the origin of superiority is so evident that all theologians would accept it, did it not imply as a consequence that grace, which is followed by its effect, is infallibly efficacious of itself and not on account of our consent. Yet this consequence is manifest, as many texts of St. Thomas show. If, in fact, actual grace followed by consent to the good were not infallibly efficacious of itself but only through the consent which follows it, there would be the possibility that of two men equally aided by grace one would become better than the other by his consent; he would become better without having been loved and aided more by God.

This reason is put forth by all Thomists. It rests on the principle of which we are speaking and is a6rmed equivalently in several texts of St. Thomas. It is found clearly stated particularly in the distinction which he establishes between consequent divine will (which bears upon every good, easy or difficult, which will come to pass here and now) and antecedent divine will (bearing on the good separated from the particular circumstances without which nothing comes to pass); cf. Ia, q. 19, a. 6 ad I : "What we will antecedently we do not will absolutely but under a particular aspect; for the will is applied to things as they are in themselves, and in themselves they are individual. Hence we will a thing absolutely to the extent that we will it taking into account all the particular circumstances, which means willing it consequently. . . . And thus it is evident that whatever God wills absolutely comes to pass, although what He wills antecedently may not." If it happens, then, that Peter becomes here and now better than another man, whether by a facile or a difficult act, this is because from all eternity God has so willed by consequent will.

St. Thomas adds that this consequent will is expressed in time by a grace which is efficacious of itself; cf. Ia IIae, q. 112, a. 3: "The intention of God cannot fail, according to the affirmation of Augustine in the book De dono perseverantiae, chap. 14, that those who are liberated are most certainly liberated by the beneficence of God. Hence if it is in the designs of God who moves, that the man whose heart He moves should obtain grace, he will infallibly obtain it, according to the words of John 6:45: 'Everyone that hath heard of the Father, and hath learned, cometh to Me.'"

This proposition of St. Thomas is manifestly very different from an apparently similar one of Quesnell, for the latter denies freedom from

necessity and admits only freedom from coercion; moreover, he denies sufficient grace and considers every actual grace intrinsically efficacious.

Many other texts of St. Thomas on the intrinsic efficacy of grace might be cited. They are well known, quoted and explained in all the treatises on grace written by Thomists. This conception of the intrinsic efficacy of grace is in no way contradictory of the traditional definition of free will, which recent historical works have set in increasingly clear relief: “the faculty of choosing the means in view of an end to be attained,” so that to deviate from the true end is an abuse of liberty.

Intrinsically efficacious grace is opposed only to a new definition of free will which disregards the specifying object of the free act (an object not good in every respect), a definition which will not withstand metaphysical analysis and which is unmindful of the truth that free will is applied not univocally but analogically to God and to man, according to a reason not absolutely but proportionately the same, so that the free will of man, not only as an entity but also as such under the idea of free entity (sub ratione liberi arbitrii) depends on God, who is not merely first being, but first intelligence and first liberty. Freedom is a perfection in God, and we can participate in it only analogically.

As a matter of fact, the human will can resist efficacious grace if it so wills, as the Council of Trent declares, but as long as the will is under efficacious grace, it never wills to resist. Under efficacious actual grace it never sins, for the grace which is termed efficacious is that which is followed by its effect: consent to good. As St. Thomas ex-plains, in the same way, a man who is seated can stand up, he has the real, proximate power to do so; but as long as he remains seated he never does stand up, since by virtue of the principle of contradiction, he cannot be both seated and standing.

The new definition of liberty: “a faculty which, assuming all the prerequisites for acting, can either act or not act,”-if understood in the sense: under efficacious divine motion and after the final salutary, practical judgment, the free will not only can resist but at times actually does-such a definition is contrary to the principle of predilection which is a corollary of the principles of causality and finality.

By what other principle should that of predilection be balanced? By the following: God never commands the impossible. St. Thomas, great contemplative even more than able dialectician, recognizes that the

Christian doctrine of predestination and grace rises like a summit above the two opposing chasms of Pelagianism and predestinationism. He understands that, on undertaking the ascent of that peak, one must deviate neither to right nor to left, neither toward a rigid doctrine which restricts the will for universal salvation and limits sufficient grace nor toward a contrary doctrine which denies the intrinsic efficacy of grace. He perceives, too, that one must not come to a halt halfway up the slope at one of those eclectic combinations which would admit grace to be intrinsically efficacious for difficult acts conducive to salvation and not intrinsically efficacious for facile acts conducive to salvation. Such a solution may appear simple in practice, but speculatively it disregards the necessity and universality of principles with relation to divine causality, principles which there upon lose all their value; and it adds to the obscurity of the doctrine admitted for difficult acts the insoluble difficulties of that which is admitted for facile acts. St. Thomas sees in such eclectic combinations nothing but a quite human clarity, merely apparent and without basis, substituted for the higher obscurity of the mystery, the loftiness of which is thus minimized. Assuredly he does not look upon this as an insoluble question which it is useless to fathom, but rather as an object of loving contemplation, "the terrible but sweet mystery of the love of predilection in God: 'Who is like to Thee, among the strong, O Lord? who is like to Thee, glorious in holiness, terrible and praiseworthy, doing wonders?' (Exod. 15:11) ."

Incapable of stopping halfway as does eclecticism, St. Thomas aspires to climb straight toward the summit. But at a certain height the trail ends, the path has not yet been blazed, as St. John of the Cross indicates on the illustration representing the Ascent of Carmel. St. Thomas perceives clearly that here on earth no one can attain to that culminating point where it will be granted him to see the intimate reconciliation of the will for universal salvation with gratuitous predestination. Thus he preserves all the loftiness of the mystery and does not seek to substitute for its sublime obscurity any vain human clarity. But without seeing the summit (faith regards what is not seen), he succeeds in determining where it is to be found by means of higher principles which mutually balance one another. He formulates these very lofty, very simple principles with such great lucidity that they only bring out in clearer relief the superior obscurity of the inaccessible mystery located in its true site, there where it must be contemplated in the cloud of faith, and not elsewhere. It is one of those most beautiful chiaroscuros

which have ever attracted and riveted the contemplation of great theologians. The masters of former times delighted in such vistas, painted not with pigments but with principles, wherein the luminous circle surrounding the mystery expresses so powerfully the grandeur of faith; vistas so manifestly surpassing those of the greatest painters or the most beautiful musical conceptions of Beethoven or Bach. And just as these great artists understood that har-mony is destroyed by a discordant commingling of sharps and flats, so did those great masters of theology strive no less to avoid the jarring dissonance produced in such difficult questions by a sharp which would tend toward predestinationism or a flat which would incline toward the opposite error.

The principles which produce equilibrium here are, on the one hand, that of predilection: “no creature is better than another unless it is better loved by God,” a simple interpretation of the words of Christ: “Without Me, you can do nothing,” and of those of St. Paul: “It is God who worketh in you, both to will and accomplish, according to His good will”; “Who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received?” This principle is immutable, and together with it that other: “All that God wills by consequent will comes to pass, without liberty being thereby destroyed.”

On the opposite slope of the invisible, inaccessible peak, so as to determine the point where it rises and where the blessed contemplate it in heaven, must be recalled the principle of St. Augustine quoted by the Council of Trent (Denz., no. 804): “God does not command the impossible, but by commanding He teaches thee both to do what thou canst and to ask what thou canst not.” This formula is sacrosanct.

Invoking several passages of St. Paul, St. Augustine, St. Prosper, and St. John Damascene, the Angelic Doctor gives us the principle of the will for universal salvation (“God . . . will have all men to be saved,” I Tim. 2:4) in an admirable and very profound formula which echoes the most beautiful psalms in praise of the mercy of God. He writes (Ia, q. 21, a. 4): “Every work of divine justice presupposes a work of mercy or of sheer bounty, and finds therein its basis. If, in fact, God owes something to His creature, it is by virtue of a preceding gift. If He owes a reward to our merits, it is because He has first given us the grace to merit; if He owes it to Himself to give us the grace necessary for salvation, it is because, from pure liberality in the first place, He has created us and called us to the supernatural life. . . . Divine mercy is thus the root, as it were, or the principle of all the divine

works; it penetrates them with its virtue and governs them. In the capacity of primary source of all gifts, it is mercy which has the strongest influence, and it is for this reason that it surpasses justice, which takes second place. This is why, even with regard to things due to the creature, God in His superabundant liberality gives more than justice requires, “et propter hoc etiam ea, quae alicui creaturae debentur, Deus ex abundantia suae bonitatis largius dispensat quam exigat propitio rei.” (See also Ia, q. 21, a. 2 ad 3.) St. Thomas also affirms in the very question dealing with predestination: “God does not deprive anyone of what is his due.” “He gives help sufficient to avoid sin”; “Those to whom efficacious help is not given are denied it in justice, as punishment for a previous sin, . . . those to whom it is granted receive it in mercy.” This is the echo of the psalms relating to divine mercy, particularly Ps. 135: “Praise the Lord, for He is good: for His mercy endureth forever. Praise ye the God of gods: for His mercy endureth forever.” Likewise Ps. 117: “Give praise to the Lord, for He is good.”

How is this mercy, principle of all the works of God, reconcilable with the divine permission of evil and of the final impenitence of many? Why does it sometimes raise up the sinner, but not always? Therein lies a mystery surpassing the natural powers of any intelligence created or capable of being created, and beyond them not only because of its essential supernaturalness, as in the case of the Trinity, but also by the contingency resulting from dependence on the sovereign liberty of God: “If efficacious grace is refused to many,” says St. Thomas following St. Augustine, “it is in justice, as the result of a sin [permitted, of course, by God, but of which He was in no sense the cause]; if this same grace is granted to others, it is out of mercy.” It is fitting that these two divine perfections should be manifested, as St. Paul declares; there is consequently involved here the cooperation of infinite justice, infinite mercy, and also of supreme liberty, eminently wise in its good pleasure, which is in no way a caprice. Obviously each of these divine perfections herein involved exceeds the natural powers of any intelligence created or capable of being created. None among them may be limited, just as in the mystery of the Cross and Passion of the Savior neither infinite justice nor infinite mercy may be restricted; they are reconciled in the uncreated love of God and in the love of Christ delivered up for our sake. The apparently contradictory aspects of a mystery must not be restricted for the sake of a better understanding of them. Rather must one, as it were, soar above this apparent contradiction by the

contemplation of faith. This is why St. Paul exclaims: “O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are His judgments, and how unsearchable His ways!” (Rom. 11:33.)

To acknowledge this mystery which is at the topmost point of the peak we have just been describing, of that summit which can never be seen from here below, one must cling to it in pure faith, as Holy Scripture frequently urges us to do. Let us recall, for example, the hymn of thanksgiving uttered by the elder Tobias (Tob 13): “Thou art great, O Lord, forever, and Thy kingdom is unto all ages. For Thou scourgest and Thou savest: Thou leadest down to hell, and bringest up again: and there is none that can escape Thy hand. . . . There is no other almighty God besides Him. He hath chastised us for our iniquities: and He will save us for His own mercy. See then what He hath done with us, and with fear and trembling give ye glory to Him: and extol the eternal King of worlds in your works.”

Theology, as the Council of the Vatican asserts, is essentially ordained to the contemplation of revealed mysteries; infused faith, entirely divine and essentially supernatural, is, in spite of its obscurity, eminently superior to it, especially faith which is enlightened by the gifts of wisdom and understanding. It becomes increasingly evident, then, that this obscurity does not derive from absurdity or incoherence, but from a light too intense for our feeble gaze. We begin to realize that, with reference to these great mysteries of predestination, of grace, and also of the will for universal salvation, we should read above all the great theologians who were at the same time great contemplative. We come to understand better and better why, in the passive purification of the soul described by the great spiritual writers, St. John of the Cross in particular, the light of the gift of understanding removes little by little the false lucidity of eclectic combinations which stop halfway, and set the soul in the presence of the real mystery without diminishing its sublimity. We finally grasp the reason for St. Theresa’s remark: “The more obscure a mystery is the more devotion I have to it,” obscure, that is, with the translucent darkness which gives us a presentiment of the very object of the contemplation of the blessed. Above all, we attain to a growing realization of the fact that what is most obscure in these mysteries is what is most divine, most elevated, most lovable; and if we cannot yet cling to them in vision, we do so by faith and by love.

The mystery involved here, whence proceeds the principle of the origin of superiority to which this principle leads, is the incomprehensible mystery

of the love of predilection in God. “No created being would be better than another were it not better loved by God” (Ia, q. 20, a. 3); “What hast thou that thou hast not received?” (I Cor. 4:7); “He [God] chose us in Him [Christ] before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and unspotted in His sight in charity. Who hath predestinated us unto the adoption of children through Jesus Christ unto Himself: according to the purpose of His will: unto the praise of the glory of His grace, in which He hath graced us in His beloved Son” (Eph. 1:4-6). We can understand that these words, “unto the praise of the glory of His grace,” ought to become the delight of contemplatives, expressing as they do with extraordinary splendor the principle of predilection which manifestly dominates all the problems of sanctifying and actual grace in every degree.

III. THE ULTIMATE BASIS OF THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN SUFFICIENT AND EFFICACIOUS GRACE

(By way of recapitulation, we here reprint this article which appeared in French in the Revue Thomiste, May, 1937.)

“Whatsoever the Lord pleased He hath done” (Ps. 134:6). “God does not command the impossible” (St. Augustine and Council of Trent, Sess. VI, chap. II).

We dealt with this subject in a book which appeared in 1936: La prédestination des saints et la grâce; cf. especially pp. 257-64; 341-50; 141-44. In the present article we wish to stress a higher principle admitted by all theologians wherein the Thomists find the ultimate basis of the distinction between sufficient and efficacious grace.

The problem. It is certain from revelation that many actual graces bestowed by God do not produce the effect (or at least the entire effect) toward which they are ordered, whereas others do. The former are called sufficient and purely sufficient; they confer the power of doing good without carrying over efficaciously to the act itself. Man resists their attraction; but their existence is absolutely certain, regardless of what the Jansenists maintain. Otherwise God would command the impossible, which would be contrary to His mercy and His justice. Sin, moreover, would be inevitable; hence it would no longer really be sin and consequently could not be justly punished by God. In this sense we say that Judas, before sinning, could really, at the time and place, have avoided the crime he

committed; the same is also true of the unrepentant thief before he expired beside our Lord.

The other actual graces which are termed efficacious not only convey the real power of observing the commandments; they cause us to observe them in fact, as in the case of the good thief in contrast with the other. The existence of efficacious actual grace is affirmed in numerous passages of Scripture, such as: “I will give you a new heart, and put a new spirit within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My spirit in the midst of you: and I will cause you to walk in My commandments, and to keep My judgments, and do them” (Ezech. 36:26 f.); “Whatsoever the Lord pleased He hath done” (Ps. 134:6), that is, all that He wills, not conditionally but absolutely, He accomplishes even the free conversion of man, as in the case of King Assuerus at the prayer of Esther (Esther 13:9; 14:13); “And God changed the king’s spirit into mildness” (ibid., 15:11). The infallibility and efficacy of a decree of God’s will are obviously based in these texts upon His omnipotence and not upon the foreseen consent of King Assuerus. In the same sense the Book of Proverbs declares (21:1): “As the divisions of waters, so the heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord: whithersoever He will He shall turn it”; likewise Ecclus. 33:24-27. Jesus Himself declares: “My sheep hear My voice: and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them life everlasting: and they shall not perish forever, and no man shall pluck them out of My hand” (John 10:27); and again: “Those whom Thou gavest Me have I kept; and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition, that the scripture may be fulfilled’’ (ibid., 17:12). St. Paul writes with the same purport to the Philippians (2:13): “For it is God who works in you, both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will.”

The Second Council of Orange, opposing the Semi-Pelagians, quotes several of these scriptural texts and refers to the efficacy of grace in the following terms (Denz., no. 182): “Whatever good we do, God works in us and with us so that we may work.” There is therefore a grace which not only gives the real power of doing good (which exists in one who sins), but which is effectual in the act, although it does not exclude our free cooperation but arouses and induces it in us. St. Augustine explains these same scriptural texts when he says: “God converts and transforms the heart of the king . . . from wrath into mildness by His most secret and efficacious power” (I ad Bonifatium, chap. 20).

Hence a great majority of the ancient theologians, Augustinians, Thomists, Scotists, have allowed that the grace termed efficacious is so of itself, because God wills it and not because we will it by a consent foreseen in the divine prevision. God is not merely the spectator of what distinguishes the just man from the sinner; He is the author of salvation. It is true that these ancient theologians are divided on the secondary question of explaining how grace is efficacious of itself; some have recourse to the divine motion known as physical premotion, others to a predominating delight or some similar attraction. But all admit that the grace called efficacious is so of itself.

Molina, on the contrary, maintained that it is extrinsically efficacious on account of our consent which was foreseen by God through mediate knowledge. This mediate knowledge has always been rejected by Thomists who accuse it of attributing passivity to God with respect to our free determinations (possible in the future, and then future) and of leading to determinism regarding circumstances (so far as, by examining these, God would foresee infallibly what a man would choose). Thus the very being and the goodness of man's free and salutary choice would derive from him and not from God, at least in the sense in which Molina writes: "It may happen that, with equal help, one of those called will be converted and not the other. Indeed, even with less help one man may rise while another with greater help does not, but perseveres in his obduracy."

The opponents of Molinism reply that there would thus be a good, that of salutary free choice, which would not proceed from God, the source of all good. How then can the words of Jesus be sustained (John 15:5): "Without Me you can do nothing" in the order of salvation, and those words of St. Paul: "For who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" (I Cor. 4:7.) It would in fact come to pass that of two sinners placed in the same circumstances and equally aided by God, one would be converted and not the other; man would distinguish himself and become better than another without greater assistance from God, without having received more, contrary to the text of St. Paul.

The Molinists do not fail to press the question further: If in order to act effectually one requires, in addition to sufficient grace, a grace which is efficacious of itself, does the former truly convey a real power of acting? It does so, the Thomists reply, if it is true that a real power of acting is distinct

from the action itself; if it is true, as Aristotle maintained against the Megarians, that an architect who is not actually building still has the real power to do so; if it is true that a man who is asleep still has a real power of seeing: from the fact that he is not exercising his sight at the moment it does not follow that he is blind, Moreover, if a sinner did not resist sufficient grace, he would receive the efficacious grace proferred in the former, as the fruit is in the flower. If he refuses, he deserves to be deprived of this further help.

Our adversaries insist that St. Thomas himself did not distinguish explicitly between grace efficacious of itself and grace which merely conveys the power of doing good. It is an easy matter to cite many texts of the Angelic Doctor wherein he makes this distinction; for instance: “The help of God is twofold: God gives a faculty by infusing power and grace through which man is made able and apt to operate. But He confers the very operation itself inasmuch as He works in us interiorly moving and urging us to good, . . . according as His power works in us both to will and to accomplish according to His good will” (In Ep. ad Ephes., chap. 3, lect. 2); likewise, Ia IIae, q. 109, a. I, a. 2, a. g, 10; q. 113, a. 7, 10, and elsewhere. He also writes: “Christ is the propitiation for our sins, for some efficaciously, for all sufficiently, since the price of His blood is sufficient for the sal-vation of all, but possesses efficacy only in the elect, on account of an impediment” (In Ep. ad Tim., 2:6). God often removes this impediment, but not always. Therein lies the mystery. “God deprives no one of what is his due” (Ia, q. 23, a. 5 ad 3); “He gives sufficient help to avoid sin” (Ia IIae, q. 106, a. 2 ad 2). As for efficacious grace, “if it is given to one sinner, that is through mercy; if it is denied to another, that is in justice” (IIa IIae, q. 2, a. 5 ad I) .

Thomists analyze these texts as follows: Every actual grace which is efficacious of itself with regard to an imperfect salutary act such as attrition, is sufficient with regard to a more perfect salutary act such as contrition. This is manifestly the sense of St. Thomas’ doctrine, and, according to him, if a man actually resists the grace which confers the power of doing good, he deserves to be deprived of that which would effectually cause him to do good. But St. Thomas not only distinguished between these two graces; he indicated the ultimate basis of the distinction.

Thomists generally affirm that the distinction between efficacious and sufficient grace is based, according to St. Thomas, on, the distinction between consequent will and antecedent will, as explained by him (Ia, q. 19, a. 6 ad I). From the will known as consequent proceeds efficacious grace, and from the antecedent will, sufficient grace.

In this connection, St. Thomas writes: “The will is applied to things in accordance with what they are in themselves; but in themselves they are individual. Hence we will a thing absolutely inasmuch as we will it taking into consideration all the particular circumstances; this is willing consequently. . . . And thus it is evident that whatever God wills absolutely comes to pass.” As the psalms tell us, “Whatsoever the Lord pleased He hath done” (Ps. 1346).

The object of the will is the good. But goodness, unlike truth, resides formally not in the intellect but in the thing itself, which exists only here and now. Therefore we will absolutely, purely and simply, whatever we will as it must be realized here and now. This is consequent will, which is always efficacious in God, for all that God wills (unconditionally) He accomplishes.

If, on the contrary, the will regards what is good in itself independent of circumstances, not here and now, it is the antecedent (or conditional) will, which in itself and as such is not efficacious, since the good, natural or supernatural, facile or difficult, is realized only here and now. That is why St. Thomas says in the same place a few lines before: “In its primary signification and considered absolutely, a thing may be good or evil, which, however, when considered in connection with something else that effects the consequent estimate of it, may become quite the contrary; just as it is a good thing for a man to live,. . . but if it is added with regard to a particular man that he is a murderer, . . . it is a good thing for him to be executed.”

Thus during a storm at sea, a merchant would wish (conditionally) to save his merchandise, but he is willing in fact to cast the merchandise into the sea to save his life (Ia IIae, q. 6, a. 6). Thus likewise does God will antecedently that all the fruits of the earth come to maturity, although for the sake of a higher good He permits that all do not do so. Again, in the same way, God wills antecedently the salvation of all men, although He permits sin and the loss of many in view of a higher good of which He alone is judge. Hence St. Thomas concludes in the text quoted: “It is thus evident that whatever God wills absolutely comes to pass, although what

He wills antecedently may not." It nevertheless remains true that God never commands the impossible, and that by His will and love He renders the keeping of the commandments possible to all, in the measure in which they are known and can be known. "He gives sufficient help to avoid sin" (Ia IIae, q. 106, a. 2 ad 2). In fact, He gives to each even more than strict justice demands (Ia, q. 21, a. 4). So does St. Thomas reconcile the antecedent divine will which St. John Damascene speaks of, with omnipotence which must not be lost sight of.

THE ULTIMATE PRINCIPLES ON WHICH THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE TWO WILLS AND THE TWO GRACES RESTS

But is there not a higher, simpler principle from which the distinction may be derived between the two divine wills, one of them always efficacious, the other conditional and the source of sufficent grace? Is there not a universally accepted principle whence proceeds the notion of consequent and antecedent will, which we have just reviewed, and which would justify them in a higher light before the eyes of those who might remain unconvinced?

The principle we are seeking is precisely the one upon which this entire article of St. Thomas is based (Ia, q. 19, a. 6). It is expressed in the psalms in the words (134:6): "Whatsoever the Lord pleased He hath done." That is, God brings to pass all that He wills purely and simply, with an unconditional will. This is the will known as consequent, the principle of grace efficacious in itself. The enunciation of this principle is completed by the formula: "For nothing is done in heaven or on earth unless God either graciously brings it about or permits it to happen in His justice." In other words, nothing happens without God's willing it if it is a good or permitting it if it is an evil. So does the Church teach universally, and accordingly it is acknowledged that there is in God a conditional will, termed antecedent, which regards a good the privation of which is permitted by God for the sake of a higher good. Thus He permits that in certain cases His commandments are not kept, and He does so for the sake of that higher good, the manifestation of His mercy or of His justice.

To this principle must be added another which is also universally received, was frequently invoked by St. Augustine, and was quoted by the Council of Trent, Sess. VI, chap. II: God never commands the impossible.

The fulfillment of His commands is really possible, in the measure in which they can be known. Hence it is evident that the antecedent divine will is the source of a sufficient grace which renders the accomplishment of the precepts really possible, without causing them to be fulfilled here and now.

From these two revealed principles is derived, as can be seen, the distinction between the two divine wills, the one always efficacious, called consequent, the other conditional and the source of sufficient grace. Herein lies the ultimate basis, then, of the distinction between the two kinds of grace which we are considering.

There is no exception to the universal principle: All that God wills (purely, simply, and unconditionally) comes to pass, without thereby violating our liberty, for God moves it strongly and sweetly, actualizing rather than destroying it. He wills efficaciously our free consent, and we do consent freely. The sovereign efficacy of divine causality extends even to the free mode of our acts (Ia, q. 19, a. 8). This supreme maxim is thus explained by St. Thomas (ibid., a. 6): “Since the divine will is the most universal cause of all things, it is impossible for it not to be fulfilled,” when it is a question of unconditional will. The reason for this is that no created agent can act without the concurrence of God, or fail without His permission. Hence this principle amounts to a declaration of what is generally taught by the Church: No good is brought about here and now (in one man rather than in another) unless God has willed it positively and efficaciously from all eternity; and no evil, no sin, takes place here and now (in one man rather than in another) unless God has permitted it. The simpler formula is frequently used: Nothing takes place without the will of God if it is a good, or the permission of God if it is an evil. Equivalent definitions are found in the Councils, for example, that of Trent (Denz., no. 816).

This very sublime and absolutely universal principle is repeated by many writers without any perception of what it implies. But it implies precisely, as we have just seen, the basis of the distinction between the two kinds of grace we are discussing, grace efficacious in itself and grace which is merely sufficient, which man resists, but which he would not resist without divine permission.

Hence in the ninth century, in order to terminate the discussions with regard to Gottschalk’s opinion and to grant to the Augustinian bishops what they were asking, and at the same time maintaining the divine will for universal salvation and the responsibility of the sinner, the synodal letter

approved by the Council of Toucy in 860 began in the following terms": "God did all that He willed in heaven and on earth. For nothing is done in heaven or on earth unless He either graciously accomplishes it or permits it to happen in His justice." That is to say that every good, natural or supernatural, easy or difficult, initial or final, comes from God, and that no sin takes place, nor does it take place in one man rather than in another, without divine permission. This extremely general principle very evidently contains innumerable consequences. St. Thomas saw in it the equivalent of the principle of predilection which he thus formulated (Ia, q. 20, a. 3): "Since the love of God is the cause of the goodness of things, nothing would be better than something else did not God will a greater good to one than to another." No one would be better than another were he not more loved and helped by God. This is the equivalent of St. Paul's: "For who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received?" (I Cor. 4:7.)

CONSEQUENCES OF THIS PRINCIPLE

This truth is one of the foundations of Christian humility, resting on the dogmas of creation out of nothing and of the necessity of grace for every salutary act. The same principle of predilection contains virtually the doctrine of gratuitous predestination, for, as St. Thomas shows so clearly (Ia, q. 23, a. 5), since the merits of the elect are the effect of their predestination, they cannot be its cause. This great truth leads the saints, when they see a criminal mounting the scaffold, to say within themselves: "If that man had received all the graces I have received, he would perhaps have been less unfaithful than I; and had God permitted in my life all the faults He permitted in his, I should be in his place and he in mine." Such humility in the saints is manifestly the consequence of the principle: "Nothing happens unless God wills it, if it is a good, or permits it, if it is an evil."

In fact, whatever there is of being and of action in the sin, apart from the moral disorder it contains, all proceeds from God, first cause of all being and all action, as St. Thomas demonstrates so well (Ia IIae, 9.79, a.2). The divine will cannot will, either directly or indirectly, the disorder which sin contains (ibid., a. I), nor can divine causality produce it. That disorder is outside the adequate object of God to much greater extent than sound is

outside the object of the sense of sight. Just as we cannot see a sound, so God cannot be the cause of the disorder which lies in sin; but He is the cause of the being and action which it contains. There is nothing more precise and more “precisive,” if we may so speak, than the formal object of a faculty. Thus, although goodness and truth are not actually distinct in any reality, the intelligence attains to it only as true and the will only as good. In the same way, the effect of gravity in our bodily organism must not be confused with that of electricity or of heat; each of these causes produces its own effect in us, not that of any other. Likewise God is the cause of being and action in sin, but not of its moral disorder. Thus is verified once more the principle: nothing real is effected without God’s will, nor any evil without His permission.

It is apparent, therefore, that theology should not only labor to deduce new conclusions following from its principles, but should also return to the first principles of faith so as to clarify conclusions which do not seem certain to those who do not recognize their connection with the prime verities.

To revert to the distinction between grace efficacious in itself and sufficient grace, it must be said, according to the generally accepted same circumstances, as were the two thieves who died with our Lord, eternity for his salvation, and if the other continues in his impenitence, this does not happen without the just permission of God.

It is clear that if one of these two sinners should be converted, it will be as a result of a special mercy which causes him to merit before death and subsequently will crown its own gifts by rewarding him. But if a just man never sins mortally from the time of his first justification in baptism, that is the result of an even greater bounty on the part of God, who has preserved him thus efficaciously in good when He could have permitted his fall. This simple observation demonstrates the gratuity of predestination.

Such manifestly are the ultimate principles of the distinction between grace efficacious of itself which causes one to do good and sufficient grace which gives the power to do good. If a man resists the latter, as we have said, he deserves to be deprived of the former, which is offered to him in sufficient grace, as the fruit in the flower. Resistance or sin falls upon sufficient grace like hail upon a tree in blossom, which gave promise of a rich yield of fruit. The Lord in His mercy often lifts up the sinner; but He does not always do so, and therein lies the mystery.

Molina, refusing to admit that efficacious grace is so intrinsically, or of itself, maintained that it is efficacious only on account of our consent foreseen from all eternity through mediate knowledge. Thus there is a good, namely, that of our free, salutary determination, which comes about without God's having willed it efficaciously, contrary to the principle: "Whatsoever the Lord pleased He hath done; nothing is done unless He either graciously does it or permits it to happen in His justice."

Molina, nevertheless, attempts to preserve this universally accepted principle. But he succeeds only in retaining it in an indirect, extrinsic way by asserting that God from all eternity has seen, through mediate knowledge, that if Peter were placed in given circumstances with such and such sufficient grace, he would in fact be converted; and thereupon, since He had the intention of saving him, He willed to place him in these favorable circumstances rather than in others wherein he should have been lost. Thus the supreme principle which we have invoked, as well as that of predilection, would be degraded to a condition of relativity. It is no longer intrinsically true of itself but only on account of circumstances extrinsic to the salutary determination.

In fact, for Molina it remains true, contrary to the principle of predilection, that of two sinners placed in the same circumstances and equally aided by God, one may be converted and not the other. "A person who is aided by the same or even less help can rise from sin, while another with greater help does not rise but remains in his obduracy. One of the two is converted without having received any more, contrary, so it seems, to the words of St. Paul: "Who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received?" (I Cor. 4:7.)

THE PROBLEM

One objection remains, which St. Paul himself poses: "Thou wilt say therefore to me: Why doth He then find fault? for who resisteth His will?" (Rom. 9:19.) We know the Apostle's answer: God can prefer whom He wills without thereby being unjust (ibid., 14-24), and the hymn to divine wisdom whose designs are impenetrable: "O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are His judgments, and how unsearchable His ways! . . . Who hath been His counsellor? Or who hath first given to Him, and recompense shall be made

him?" (ibid. 11:33-35.) St. Augustine makes the same reply: "Why does He draw this man and not that one? Do not attempt to judge if you do not wish to err." St. Thomas adds that predestination cannot have as its cause the merits of the elect since these are the effect of predestination, which consequently is gratuitous or dependent upon the divine good pleasure (Ia, q. 23, a. 5).

Not infrequently an effort is made to answer the foregoing problem more specifically than either St. Paul, St. Augustine, or St. Thomas did. But is not the significance of the mystery sacrificed to an inferior sort of clarity which it does not contain? From this standpoint one comes back, in spite of oneself, to the position of Molina, for instance, by the statement which recently appeared as follows: "Herein lies the mystery of predestination: Since from all eternity God knew that Judas would not profit by the sufficient graces which He willed to give him, why did He not will to give him, as he did to the good thief, graces with which He knew that he would correspond?" That is indeed the language of the Molinists and, willy-nilly, it presupposes the theory of mediate knowledge, which posits a passivity in the foreknowledge regarding the free determination a man would take, were he placed in given circumstances, and which he will take if he is in fact so placed. There is the dilemma: God either determines or is determined; there is no middle ground.

If, on the contrary, one attempts to safeguard the generally accepted principle: "Nothing happens which God has not either efficaciously willed if it is a good, or permitted if it is an evil," it does not suffice to affirm, as in the formula quoted above, that God knew what would happen, that the good thief would consent to the sufficient grace and that Judas would resist it. It must be held that: in one case, God permitted the final impenitence of Judas (had He not permitted it, it would not have happened, and God would not have been able to foresee it infallibly) and He would not have permitted it if he had willed efficaciously to save Judas. In other case, God willed efficaciously the conversion of the good thief because He willed efficaciously to save him (gratuitous predestination to glory). This is the conclusion which proceeds from the generally accepted principles.

If a good which ought to happen does not happen (such as the conversion of Judas), it must be concluded that God had not efficaciously willed it to happen actually although He may have willed the possibility of its happening (antecedent will) and that Judas should hav eth real power to be

converted, without being so in fact. (Thus a man who is asleep and not actually seeing still has the real power of sight.) If, on the contrary, a good actually comes to pass (such as the conversion of Peter), it must be concluded that from all eternity God had efficaciously willed (by consequent will) that it should in fact take place, and in Peter rather than in Judas.58

It follows, therefore, that no one would be better than another (all other things being equal), were he not better loved efficaciously and aided more by God (consequent will); although the other (less loved) could, of course, have received and often may, under other circumstances, have received greater graces. Thus Judas received the grace of the apostolate which many of the elect have never received. Hence no one would be better than another were he not loved more by God through consequent will. This is the meaning of the divine predilection upon which predestination is based (cf. St. Thomas, Ia, q. 23, a. 4). Bariez says no more than St. Thomas on the subject, and it is quite apparent that the epithet of "Bañezianism" to designate classical Thomism is only a poor attempt at humor, as Father N. Del Prado demonstrates (De gratia, 1907, III, 427-67: Whether Bañezianism is not really a farce invented by the Molinists). Molina spoke more frankly and admitted that his doctrine did not coincide with that of St. Thomas.

As for negative reprobation, according to the Angelic Doctor, it consists precisely in the divine permission of sins which in fact will not be remitted and especially of the sin of final impenitence. To this one cannot make answer, as has recently been done, that the permission of sin is general with regard to elect and reprobates alike; it is clear that we are here dealing with the will to permit sin which will not be forgiven.

CONCLUSION

Hence it is apparent that the ultimate bases of the distinction between grace efficacious in itself and sufficient grace, as well as between consequent divine will and antecedent will, is to be found in these two principles: "Nothing happens which God has not either willed efficaciously if it is a good, or permitted if it is an evil"; and "God never commands the impossible, but renders the fulfillment of His commands really possible

when He imposes them and to the extent to which He imposes them and to which they can be known."

If the true meaning of each of the terms of these two principles is well weighed, especially the opposition that exists between "efficaciously willed" and "permitted," it can be seen that there is a real difference between efficacious grace, the result of the intrinsically efficacious will of God, and merely sufficient grace, the result of His antecedent will accompanied by the divine permission of sin. In the first case, God confers the free, salutary action. In the second, He gives the real power to act, but not to act efficaciously. In sufficient grace, we cannot repeat too often, efficacious grace is offered, as the fruit in the flower, as act in potency. But if anyone resists sufficient grace, he deserves to be deprived of the efficacious help which he would have received had it not been for this resistance.

Therein lies a great mystery, as St. Paul acknowledges (Rom. 9:14-24; 11:33-36). He reminds us that, without being unjust, God can show preference for whom He will. No one has first given unto Him that he should receive a recompense in return. "O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! . . . who hath been His counsellor? Or who hath first given to Him, and recompense shall be made him?

What does appear manifestly in the midst of this chiaroscuro is that the question here posed involves the reconciling of infinite justice, infinite mercy, and supreme liberty within the eminence of Deity. If the grace of perseverance is granted to one, it is out of infinite mercy; if it is not granted to another, that is in just punishment for his faults. Each of these divine perfections is infinite, and their intimate reconciliation in the eminence of Deity or in the inner life of God can be seen only in the immediate vision of the divine essence.

The principles which we have just enunciated and which balance one another give us an inkling about the location of the summit toward which they converge, but the peak remains hidden from our sight. Only in heaven shall we behold the intimate reconciliation of these two truths: "Whatsoever the Lord pleased He hath done" (Ps. 134:6), and "God does not command the impossible." He who receives from God the real power to observe the commandments does not always do so in fact. If he observes them, he is obviously better in that respect. And this is a sign that he has received more.

We must therefore conclude with Bossuet: “Let us learn to control our intelligence so as to admit these two graces [sufficient and efficacious] of which the one leaves the will without any excuse before God and the other does not allow it to glory in itself.” Sufficient grace leaves us without any excuse before God because, as we have said, in it efficacious grace is offered to us; but by the very fact that a man resists this divine attention, he deserves to be deprived of the efficacious help which was virtually offered to him. Resistance to grace is an evil which derives from us alone; nonresistance is a good which would not come to pass here and now, had not God willed it from all eternity with a consequent or efficacious will.

But to arrive at a clear understanding of this doctrine, one must avoid several confusing misconceptions that are frequent among those who read the explanation of it for the first time. It would be an error to think that some receive only efficacious graces and others only sufficient graces. We all receive both of these helps. Even those who are in the state of mortal sin occasionally receive an efficacious grace to make an act of faith or of hope; but they often also resist the sufficient grace which inclines them toward conversion. Faithful servants of God frequently receive sufficient graces which they do not resist and which are followed by efficacious graces. The various degrees of sufficient grace must also be carefully considered. First of all, sufficient grace is far from always being sterile or merely sufficient; it is rendered sterile by our resistance. But if this is not forthcoming, sufficient grace, followed by efficacious help, fructifies like a flower which produces, under the action of the sun, the fruit which it is intended to yield.

Moreover, sufficient graces are most varied in kind. There are, in the first place, the exterior graces such as the preaching of the gospel, good example, wise direction. Then there is the interior habitual or sanctifying grace received in baptism which confers the radical power of acting meritoriously. There are the infused virtues and the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which are so many principles bestowing the proximate power of supernatural action. There are interior actual graces, graces of light which produce good thoughts, graces of attraction which cause an impulse toward the good, inclining us to a salutary consent to good without causing us as yet to produce it. Thus it is that, as we have said above, the grace which produces attrition in us efficaciously is sufficient with regard to contrition.

Sufficient grace, which renders possible the fulfillment of duty, may therefore go very far in the order of this real possibility. But however far it

may go in this order of proximate power to produce a given salutary act, for instance, contrition, it remains distinct from the efficacious grace which will cause us to produce freely, here and now, this particular act of contrition. The latter would not in fact have been produced had it not been willed eternally by the consequent will of God.

A cursory reading of this doctrine may leave one unaware of how far sufficient grace can go within us. Sometimes it urges us with insistence not to resist God's will in a certain respect, manifested repeatedly by a superior or a spiritual director. It may happen that for a year or two or even more all the circumstances continue to confirm what is being asked of us in God's name. And yet the soul continues to allow itself to be deceived by self-love and by the enemy of all good; it resists the light over a period of months, in spite of all the prayers that are said for it and all the Masses offered for its intention. The prayers and Masses obtain for it graces of light which produce good thoughts in it, graces of attraction which elicit transitory impulses toward the good. But these sufficient graces are blocked by a resistance which may even go so far as obduracy of the heart. Then is fulfilled the text of the Apocalypse (3:19): "Such as I love, I rebuke and chastise. Be zealous therefore, and do penance. Behold, I stand at the gate, and knock. If any man shall hear My voice, and open to Me the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me."

"Behold, I stand at the gate, and knock," says the Lord. The soul often resists; it does so by itself; the evil comes only from the soul. When it ceases to resist and at least hearkens to Him who knocks, it is already He, the Lord, who gives it to the soul to listen with docility. And if it really stops resisting, it will be led from grace to grace even to divine intimacy.

If the soul ceases its resistance, efficacious grace ever sweeter and stronger will be given it; sweetly and strongly will this grace gradually penetrate its will, as the beneficial warmth penetrates little by little a cold body which has been frozen stiff. Then the soul becomes more and more aware that all the resistance came from itself alone; that the nonresistance is itself a good proceeding from the author of all good; and that the soul must ask it of Him in that prayer which the priest repeats every day at Mass before the Communion, a prayer by which he begs for the efficacious grace which leads one to the good: "Lord, make me always adhere to Thy commandments and never suffer me to be separated from Thee." Grant, Lord, not only that I may have the power of observing Thy commandments,

but that I may in fact observe them; and never permit me to be separated from Thee.

Undoubtedly, he who keeps the commandments is better than he who, although really able to keep them, does not do so. He who is thus rendered better should thank the sovereign goodness for it. The distinction between the two helps, sufficient and efficacious, which we have been speaking of, is a basis for the act of thinksgiving which De praedestinatione sanctortum, the elect will sing forever the mercy of God and will see how this infinite mercy is perfectly reconciled with infinite justice and sovereign liberty.

IV. THE BAÑEZIAN COMEDY AND CONTEMPORARY SYNCRETISM

Any consideration of the renewal of Thomistic studies in the past hundred years must take into account the great names of the eminent Jesuits Kleutgen, Cornoldi, Liberatore, and more recently, Louis Billot and G. Mattiussi, who labored so admirably throughout their lives to lead minds back to an understanding of the works of St. Thomas. They were great admirers and often penetrating interpreters of the Angelic Doctor. Only in heaven will it be known what great friends he has had among the sons of St. Ignatius. We experience a particular joy in sincerely rendering this testimony.

It is to be regretted that the same elevation of mind is not found in several authors who in the past few years have taken to applying the epithet of “Bañezian’’ to real Thomists. It is an ill-natured witticism to which the best theologians of the Society of Jesus would never stoop. This designation of “Bañezian” referring to genuine Thomists is even adopted by certain authors as if it were an accepted term. We are thereby reminded of the chapter, “De Comoedia banneziana,” which is to be found in a work by Father N. Del Prado, O.P., De gratia et libero arbitrio (Fribourg, 1907, III, 427-66).

This latter work, out of print for several years, brought the sum of 6,000 lire before the last war, so we are informed, and must be even more valuable today. In the chapter referred to, pp. 457 ff., the author recalls that Dr. John Ude of Graz, who had received from his professors in Rome the conviction that classical Thomism was an invention of Bañez, undertook to write a book entitled: Doctrina Capreoli de influxu Dei in actus voluntatis humanae (Graz, Istria, 1904). He professed to show that the doctrine

defended by Bañez was nowhere to be found in the early commentators on St. Thomas. But what was his surprise when, in Capreolus himself, he came upon the doctrine of predetermining divine decrees and causally predetermining premotion! In the first part of his book he still speaks in behalf of Molinism, but subsequently (op. cit., pp. 162, 182, 197-203, 215, 216, 259) he is obliged to conclude that Capreolus 66 had certainly taught what Bañez declared and that this doctrine is St. Thomas' own, as has been demonstrated by Fathers Dummermuth and Del Prado. We have proved the point at great length elsewhere, and shall quote in the present article several texts of St. Thomas. It suffices to recall for the moment the two following: "If God moves the will toward anything, it is incompatible with this position that the will should not be moved toward it. However, it is not absolutely impossible. Hence it does not follow that the will is moved by God of necessity" (Ia IIae, q. 10, a. 4 ad 3). God actualizes liberty in the will and even the free mode itself whereby it directs itself toward any good conducive to salvation, safeguarding under this very movement the power (not the act) of choosing a contrary object. Likewise, "The intention of God cannot fail. . . . Hence if it is in the intention of God who moves that the man whose heart He moves should receive [sanctifying] grace, he will infallibly receive it" (Ia IIae, q. 112, a. 3 c; cf. also IIa IIae, q. 24, a. II, and Contra Gentes, Bk. III, chaps. 91, 92, 94).

It is absolutely certain that, according to St. Thomas, God knows in a comprehensive manner all that He is, all that He can do, all that He wills and accomplishes, all that He permits, and that thus, without any passivity or dependence with regard to our free determinations, He knows all that is knowable. "The knowledge of God is the cause of things and is in no way caused by them" (Ia, q. 14, a. 5,8). Without any doubt the Molinist theory of scientia media has no foundation in St. Thomas. It is quite certain, according to him, Ia, q. 19, a. 8, that God willed efficaciously from all eternity the free acts of Christ the Redeemer, Mary's fiat, the conversion of Mary Magdalen, of the good thief, and of Saul. And it is for this reason that these acts rather than their contraries are present to Him from all eternity (Ia, q. 14, a. 3), and that they took place infallibly in time, in a free manner, because He had efficaciously willed that they should happen freely (Ia, q. 19, a. 8). "God," says Bossuet, "wills from eternity all the future exercise of human liberty so far as it is good and real. What can be more absurd than to say that it does not exist for the reason that God wills it to exist" (Traité du

libre arbitre, chap. 8)? Texts from St. Thomas abound proving that this is indeed his teaching; they are well known. Not to take into account these texts, often quoted by Thomists, is to proceed unscientifically. The only opposition offered is to dismiss the case. This is done by that well-known theologian of distinction who adheres, in spite of every argument, to the Molinist theory of scientia media. His answer to us was:"Even if the doctrine of predetermining decrees is in St. Thomas, we will have none of it." At least he had the merit of being outspoken. He would have been greatly surprised had he been told that he was indulging in pragmatism which could easily lead to a revision of the traditional definition of truth so as to define it, not as that which is, but as that which pleases us and which we wish to say and to hear others say.

But the subject deserves a more forthright discussion. It is objected: for a man to be free under efficacious grace, it is not enough for him to retain, under that grace, the power of resisting; he must be able to accommodate the grace with actual resistance. If that is the case, genuine Thomists have always replied with St. Thomas himself, then, for Socrates to be sitting down freely, it does not suffice that he meanwhile retains the power to rise, but he must be able to accommodate those two contrary positions and be at the same time seated and standing, which is impossible. In the same way, efficacious grace to which resistance was made in fact would no longer be efficacious.

But our adversaries have no wish to hear such an answer. And so they continue in certain of their works to call real Thomists "Bañezians." In order to hold on to the title of Thomists themselves without being challenged they deprive the true intellectual sons of St. Thomas of that right. And readers who lack keenness of perception or who are misinformed allow themselves to be taken in. Suppose someone tried to deprive the true descendants of the Bourbon line of their name: would not the cry of injustice be raised? The case is a parallel one.

Bañezianism is then described after a fashion which no real Thomist would accept, and this description finds its way subsequently into the works of authors who attempt to advance matters by a reconciliation of the two contradictorily opposed doctrines, and who express themselves in a way of which Msgr. P. Parente is typical. In his De creatione universali (1943, p. 139), in the belief that he is accurately reporting the doctrine of the Thomists, labeled "Bañezians," he writes:

“When the will acts under the impulse of God, it cannot deviate toward anything else in the composite sense; but it can do so in the divided sense. Evidently, as long a the divine motion continues, the will is not free, that is, it cannot fail to desire that to which it is determined by God (composite sense); but it could if it prescinded from that motion (divided sense). Similarly a person who sits down, while he is seated, cannot stand, but he does not relinquish the power of standing, in the divided sense, that is, after he has been seated.” The same author expresses himself in similar terms in his Antropologia supernaturalis, 1943, p. 194.

This is the divided sense as Calvin understood it, and it is easy to understand that it should be rejected. But why not seek the correct meaning of this term from the Thomists themselves? We affirm that God actualizes liberty in us, so that there no longer remains a passive or potential indifference, but rather an actual, dominating indifference with which our will, specified by the universal good, directs itself toward such and such a particular good which is commanded (toward an object not in every respect good), while preserving under this divine motion the power (not the act) of choosing the contrary. Thus Socrates, while seated, is able to stand, but he cannot be at the same time seated and standing. In the same way, a person with his eyes closed does not see at that moment, but he retains the real faculty of sight; he is not blind. Potency is really distinct from act and can exist without it. Likewise under grace which is infallibly efficacious of itself, the will is able to resist (the opposite power remains); but under that grace it never does resist in fact, just as it never happens that while Socrates is seated he is standing. Efficacious grace which a man would resist in fact would no longer be efficacious.

The composed sense of Calvin, declared by him to be unattainable, is our divided sense, which we maintain is real. As for the divided sense of Calvin, it is heretical. According to him, freedom and the power to resist do not remain under efficacious grace, but only reappear later. Thomists have never sustained such a theory; if they had, they would have completely misunderstood the teaching of their Idaster. They understand the divided sense in exactly the same way as St. Thomas.

Another doctrine which they do not hold is attributed to Thomists when it is said: “Thomists add that God bestows sufficient grace in such wise that to those who make good use of it He may grant efficacious grace; but according to their opinion, the good use of sufficient grace depends upon

efficacious grace. Therefore the matter is left unexplained." What Thomists maintain is this: If a man resists sufficient grace, then he deserves to be deprived of efficacious grace, and it is clear that the latter is not necessary to resist the former. Culpable resistance falls upon sufficient grace (in which efficacious grace is offered) like hail upon a tree in blossom, which promised much fruit; but the fruit will certainly not develop.

As for the disorder of sin, God who condemns it, permits it without being its cause. This divine permission is only a condition sine qua non. The disorder proceeds solely from the defective and deficient created will and in no sense from God, who absolutely cannot produce it; for this disorder is outside the adequate object of His will and omnipotence, just as sound is beyond the range of the sense of sight, or truth outside the adequate object of the will. "Nothing is more precise than the formal object of any power." Hence the divine motion toward the physical act of the sin (as being and as action) prescinds from its malice. Again with regard to this last point, the authentic Thomistic teaching is often rendered utterly unrecognizable in the unscientific presentations that are made of it. All that would be necessary would be to cite the two articles of St. Thomas (Ia IIae, q. 79, a. I, 2); Thomists hold no other view.

THE NEW SYNCRETISM

What is the substance of the new syncretism proposed by Msgr. P. Parente? He rejects Thomism and the Molinist theory of scientia media, as well as that of simultaneous concurrence, while admitting a non-predetermining premotion. He is seeking an intermediate position. The question is whether such a position is possible between two contradictory propositions. God knows certainly all future contingencies either before or not before His predetermining decree; is any middle ground possible?

I. The new syncretism rejects what it refers to as rigid Thomism or Bañezianism, that is, the doctrine of predetermining divine decrees and the divine motion derived from them. What is its objection to this teaching? We are told in the De creatione universali, p. 144: "It does not seem possible to preserve human liberty if the will of man is said to be and is determined by God toward one object. Nor will it help to have recourse to composite and divided sense, since the question concerns freedom, not before or after divine motion (in the divided sense), but during that motion (in the

composite sense). Therefore if in this latter sense the will, inasmuch as it is determined to one object, is not free, it never will be free, since without this motion it never has the power to act."

We have just seen that this interpretation of divided sense, attributed to Thomists, is by no means their own; more than that, it is heretical. Under efficacious grace a man can resist, but he does not do so in fact; grace would then no longer be efficacious. Moreover, we hold that by grace efficacious in itself God infallibly moves the will to determine itself freely in the direction of the commandment; this motion is thus a causal predetermination distinct from the formal determination of the act to which it is ordained. God determines to one object in the sense that He determines us to obey rather than not to obey.

2. The new syncretism also rejects Molinism; cf. Msgr. Parente, De creatione universali, p. 144: "If a creature is said to be moved primarily by itself to its operation, a twofold absurdity follows, namely, the creature determines God and its passes from potency to act independently of God. . . . Moreover, reasoning, both theological and philosophical, here demands not coordination but subordination." Furthermore, Msgr. Parente writes with respect to mediate knowledge (De Deo uno, 1938, p. 247): "Again this whole Molinistic theory simply abounds in obscurity as not a few Molinists acknowledge. For it is dificult to see how anything may be regarded as real (in the future) to the divine mind while withdrawn from the divine will. However it may be explained, this is imputing a certain determinism to God Himself. But if the futurity of free acts as dependent with respect to circumstances is urged overmuch, then we fall into determinism of circumstances. . . . In recent times no theologians have made any advance in the direction of reconciliation. Thus L. Janssens, De Deo uno, Vol. II, declares that the medium of knowledge of all future contingencies is the divine essence to the extent that it is eternal, or the eternity of God itself, to whom all things are present. But this opinion, if it prescinds from the divine volition, either does not explain enough, or reverts to the theory of those who hold that God draws His knowledge from His own creatures."

Mediate knowledge is then rejected by the new syncretism because God would be determined in His foreknowledge by a free determination (future contingency) which would not derive from Him. Thus far, this is a refutation of misinterpreted Thomism by means of Molinism, and of Molinism by means of Thomism.

But at this point, if the new theory refuses to come back to predetermining decrees, which it has discarded, how will it solve the inevitable dilemma: God either determines or is determined; there is no midway between the two? If He does not determine, then He is determined by a determination which does not come from Him but is imposed upon Him, since He knows it infallibly without its being derived from Him; for example, if the good thief, crucified on Calvary beside Jesus, had the help of sufficient grace, he would be converted, while the other in the same circumstances and with equal grace would not.

The new syncretism considers that it has solved the difficulty by declaring that our free, salutary determination comes from God mediately by way of our deliberation. Cf. Parente, De creatione universali, p. 158. “In a free act a twofold element must be distinguished, that of its exercise and that of its specification. The first in the actuating of the will is in the line of efficient causality which is to be ascribed to God immediately; the other is the determination of the act from the standpoint of the object, in the line of formal causality which is immediately from the intellect, and mediately from God.” The same author writes (De gratia, p. 208): “Physical predetermination is rejected; and premotion is admitted even in the supernatural order. Likewise the motion of exercise is distinguished from the motion of specification; the former is attributed immediately to God, the latter mediately to God and immediately to the intellect proposing the object under a favorable light.” Again, (ibid., p. 204): “Then the will, of which the adequate object is the Highest Good, is directed spontaneously and infallibly toward a particular object in which a certain nature of the Highest Good is reflected.” How could the word “infallibly,” which we have italicized, ever be justified?75

CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THIS SYNCRETISM

To anyone who has spent a lifetime in the study of these problems under their various aspects, it is easily apparent that this new syncretism, like its predecessor, seeks an impossible mean between two contradictory propositions, between the predetermining decrees of genuine Thomists and the scientia media of the Molinists: God knows future contingencies infallibly, either before or not before His predetermining decree. If the new syncretism does not return to predetermining decrees, which it has

discarded, it is led perforce to scientia media presented under another name and must reply to all the difficulties it raises. The exigencies of the principle of contradiction must not be forgotten.

We shall here formulate the objections which we have already presented in the Acta Academiae romanae S. Thomae, 193-40, pp. 35-37. They seem to us absolutely irrefutable. The only reply they have ever received was a dismissal of the case; this is hardly scientific.

I. This syncretism maintains that God is the cause of our free determination mediately only through the judgment of our intelligence which deliberates. Assuredly there will never be a free choice without a foregoing judgment; but at the end of the deliberation it depends on our free will (which accepts or rejects the right direction of the intelligence) that such and such a practical judgment should be the final one. (See no. 21 of the twenty-four Thomistic theses approved by the Sacred Congregation of studies.) Thereupon, since the new syncretism admits that God moves the will, as to exercise, toward this choice, in the case of a salutary choice does God will eflicaciously that it should be a salutary volition rather than a nolition, an impious refusal or a culpable omission? If so, then God by moving the will toward this choice efficaciously and infallibly as to exercise, brings it about, together with the will, that such and such a salutary practical judgment should be the final one. In that case we are dealing with genuine Thomism and are presupposing the predetermining divine decrees from which this motion as to exercise derives.

2. Otherwise, by this motion in respect to exercise required for a salutary choice as well as for the contrary refusal, God would not cause the good act to any greater extent than the evil act, and He would not be even the mediate nor, above all, the infallible cause of the salutary choice as to specification; for the precept which comes from Him does not draw the will infallibly; even under the aspect of a good it did not infallibly attract the good thief who obeyed, while the other disobeyed.

3. Accordingly, God would not be the cause of what is bast in the merits of the saints nor of what was best in the merits of Christ and His holy Mother. This is contrary to the words of St. Paul: “For who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?” Therefore does St. Thomas often repeat: “Whatever of reality and perfection there is in our salutary acts derives from God, the source of every good.” In other

words, as stated in Ia, q. 20, a. 3 and 4: “Since the love of God is the cause of the goodness of things, one thing would not be better than another if God did not will greater good to one than to the other.” “Thus some things are better for the reason that God loves them better.” This is the principle of predilection which clarifies the whole doctrine of predestination: No one would be better than another were he not loved and helped more by God. “What hast thou that thou hast not received?”

4. Finally, God in His foreknowledge would be passive or dependent with respect to our free salutary determination which would not derive from Him and which, at least as possible in the future, would impose itself upon Him infallibly since He would know it infallibly. Thus we are back again, whether we will or not, at mediate knowledge under another name, with all the difficulties which flow from it. The dilemma that cannot be solved ever reappears: God either determines or is determined; there is no middle course. Every theory that denies the predetermining divine decrees — call it mediate knowledge or not — comes to grief when it strikes against this dilemma.

We must therefore return to certain and revealed principles. Even in the psalms we find, as Hincmar observed at the Council of Toucy in 860, terminating the controversy raised by the writings of Gottschalk: “Whatsoever the Lord pleased He hath done, in heaven, in earth” (Ps. 134:6). Hincmar added: “For nothing is done in heaven or on earth except what He graciously does or permits to be done in His justice.” This means that every good, whether easy or difficult, natural or supernatural, comes from God, and that no sin takes place, or takes place in one man rather than in another, without a divine permission. This extremely general principle obviously implies a multitude of consequences. Thomists see in it the equivalent of the principle of predilection: “No one would be better than another were he not loved and aided more by God.” This last principle must be balanced by that other formulated by St. Augustine and cited by the Council of Trent (Denz., no. 804): “God does not command the impossible, but by commanding He teaches thee both to do what thou canst and to ask what thou canst not”; this is the Augustinian affirmation of the will for universal salvation.

According to these principles, what answer does the Christian mind offer to the following questions: Did God from all eternity efficaciously will the free acts of Christ the Redeemer, Mary’s fiat consenting to her motherhood

of the Savior, the conversions of Mary Magdalen, of the good thief, of Saul? Did God will efficaciously all that is good in each of these acts, especially what is best in them: their free determination which distinguishes them from evil acts and whereby the just man is distinguished from the sinner?

The Christian mind replies to these questions in the affirmative: Yes, God from all eternity efficaciously willed these salutary acts which took place in time; He efficaciously willed their free determination wherein a good act is distinguished from sin. Otherwise God would not be the source of all good, and what is best in the merits of the saints would not derive from Him; "in the affair of salvation, not everything would come from God, that is, not the origin of the free, salutary determination." St. Augustine repeatedly affirms this doctrine, basing it upon the words of Jesus: "Without Me you can do nothing" in the order of salvation, and on those of St. Paul: "What hast thou that thou hast not received?"

Did St. Thomas preserve this teaching, so simple in its sublimity, which becomes more and more the object of the contemplation of the saints above and beyond all controversy? To be convinced of the Angelic Doctor's adherence to this doctrine, it suffices to read in order the articles of the Summa relating to these questions.

According to St. Thomas, God is omniscient because He knows in a comprehensive manner all that He is, all that He can do (all possibilities), all that He wills and does (all that has been, is, and will be, as far as it is real and good), and all that He permits (all sins, their kind, number, and the exact moment when they occur); this includes all that is knowable. Nothing positive, nothing good, can in fact exist outside of God, without a relationship of causality or of dependence with respect to Him; and sin would not happen if God did not permit it — that is a condition sine qua non — and if He did not permit it to happen under a given form and at a given time. Thus the Pharisees were powerless to put our Lord to death before "His hour" had come, the hour predetermined by God with an infallible predetermination, but not necessitating the free acts of the Savior or of His persecutors, and moreover predicted by the prophets. This is traditional teaching in all its lofty simplicity and all its strength. Does St. Thomas retain it? Assuredly he does. Otherwise, as Bossuet says with reference to Molina's mediate knowledge, "all idea of a first cause is thrown into confusion."

St. Thomas writes (Ia, q. 14, a. 8): “The knowledge of God is the cause of things inasmuch as His will is united to it.” He has just observed: “Since the intelligible form confronts two opposite alternatives (whether to produce it or not) and since the same knowledge relates to opposites, it would not produce a determined effect unless it were determined in one direction by the will.”

Again (ibid., a. 13): “But the knowledge of God is measured by eternity which encompasses the whole of time”; hence it attains intuitively to all futurities as presents, without any dependence in relation to them; nor does it know them any better when they take place in time. But the conversion of St. Paul would not be infallibly present to God from all eternity had He not willed it efficaciously. Otherwise it would be present to Him not as a contingent truth but as a necessary truth. This is manifest, provided one is willing to understand it. And the presence of future contingencies in eternity is not the medium of foreknowledge but the condition of its being intuitive and not subsequently perfected when the future comes to pass in time, as in the case of a prophet who sees his prediction accomplished.

Ia, q. 19, a. 4: “The will of God is the cause of things, and determined effects proceed from His infinite perfection according to the determination of His will and intellect.” And in God, as in man, “the free will, accepting the direction of the intellect, does whatever is final in the practical judgment,” provision being made for virtually distinguishing several decrees in God; cf. ibid., ad 4. That is the decree of the divine will. In the same question, St. Thomas concludes the answer to the first objection of article 6: “Whatever God wills absolutely is done, although what He wills antecedently may not be done.” Thus from all eternity God willed antecedently Peter’s fidelity during the Passion, at the same time permitting his denial; but He willed absolutely that Peter should be converted, and infallibly he is converted. In the same way from all eternity God willed absolutely and efficaciously to save the good thief (predestination to glory), and for this reason He also willed to grant him the efficacious grace of a happy death, and the good thief was converted.

Ibid., a. 8: “The divine will imposes necessity on some things willed but not on all. . . . This depends on the efficacy of the divine will. For when any cause would be efficacious in acting, the effect follows the cause, not only with respect to what is done but even according to the mode of doing or being. . . . To certain effects God adapted contingent causes.” God moves

creatures according to their condition; His motion is not passively determined by us, but He moves our will to determine itself by deliberation in the direction of the commandments. Ibid. ad 2: “From the very fact that nothing resists the divine will, it follows not only that those things are done which God wills should be done, but also that they are done contingently or necessarily as He so wills.” He actualizes human liberty. He willed efficaciously that the good thief should be converted freely. What could be more absurd than to say that it cannot happen because God willed it?

Ia, q. 20, a. 3, 4: “No one would be better than another were he not better loved by God.” Ia, q. 23, a. 5: “Whatever there is in man ordaining him to salvation is wholly included under the effect of predestination, even the preparation for grace. And likewise, Ia, q. 105, a. 4: “It is proper to God to move the created will, but most of all by inclining it interiorly.”

Ia IIae, q. 10, a. 4 ad 3: “If God moves the will toward anything, it is incompatible with this position that the will should not be moved thereto. But it is not absolutely impossible. Hence it does not follow that the will is moved by God of necessity. Ia IIae, q. 112, a. 3: “Since the intention of God cannot fail, according to Augustine, those who are rendered free by the beneficence of God are most certainly rendered free. Hence if it is in the intention of God who moves that the man whose heart He moves should receive [sanctifying] grace, he will infallibly receive it.” Bañez has said no more than this. Many other texts might be cited, particularly Contra Gentes, Bk. III, chaps. 91, 92, 94; De veritate, 4.22, a.8, 9; De malo, q.6, a. I ad 3; Comment. in Perihermenias, Bk. I, lect. 14, etc. To the mind of St. Thomas what could have appeared more absurd than the claim that by actualizing liberty in us God destroys it?

REFUTATION OF THE OBJECTIONS

The new syncretism holds that in St. Thomas the determination to one always necessitates. This is true of a faculty which by its very nature is determined to one. In that case it is necessitated to act only in that direction; man cannot use his sight for hearing but only for seeing. But it is not true of the motion, efficacious in itself, whereby God actualizes our liberty, infallibly leading our will, specified by the universal good, to determine itself toward some particular good, toward obeying some commandment rather than disobeying it.

St. Thomas says in fact, Ia IIae, q. 10, a. 4: “Since the will, then, is an active principle not determined to one but applying itself indifferently to many objects, God so moves it that He does not determine it to one of necessity, but that its motion remain contingent, not necessary, except in those things to which it is moved naturally.” In this sentence the expression “not . . . of necessity” should be emphasized, for the negative refers to “of necessity” and not to “He . . . determines it to one.” Throughout this question in fact, in the preceding articles, St. Thomas writes: “God does not move of necessity” in the sense of: “God moves, but not of necessity.” Obviously, efficacious, salutary divine motion infallibly leads the will to determine itself to obey a given command rather than to disobey it. The proof is that in this very article 4 (ad 3) we read: “If God moves the will toward anything, it is incompatible with this position that the will should not be moved thereto.” The text is clear to anyone who reads it without any preconceived idea. Moreover it is certain that efficacious grace which was resisted in fact would no longer be efficacious.

Msgr. Parente has attempted to show by several texts of St. Thomas that the determination to one always necessitates. But the texts presented refer to determination to one of a faculty which, like that of seeing, is determined by its very nature to one act; they do not refer to the divine motion which actualizes freedom and produces in it even the free mode (which is of its essence), leading the will infallibly to determine itself to obey a given precept rather than to disobey.

To make this evident it suffices to quote in full the texts presented. De malo, q. 6, a. I ad 3: “God moves a certain will immutably [or infallibly] on account of the efficacy of His moving power which cannot fail; but because of the nature of our will which applies it-self indifferently to various objects, necessity is not introduced and liberty remains. So also in all things divine providence operates infallibly, and yet from contingent causes effects proceed contingently inasmuch as God moves things proportionately, each according to its mode.” He actualizes freedom by leading it infallibly to meritorious obedience as He causes the tree to blossom; and just as the tree spontaneously produces its natural flowers, the just man freely obeys in a meritorious way under the grace which causes him to obey.

Without any more justification, we are confronted with the text De potentia, q. 3, a. 7 ad 13: “The will is said to have dominion over its act, not to the exclusion of the first cause, but since the first cause does not so act in

the will as to determine it of necessity, as it determines nature. And therefore the determination of the act is left in the power of the reason and the will." Assuredly, since God by His efficacious, infallible motion leads us to free self-determination through deliberation to obey a given commandment rather than to disobey it; and when the just man obeys thus, it can be said that God had willed it so, efficaciously, from all eternity, even if it is a question of a facile act. It remains true, as St. Thomas says, De veritate, q. 22, a.8, that "just as the will can change its act into another, so, to a much greater extent, can God," and Contra Gentes, Bk. III, chap. 91, no. 3: "A man always chooses what God operates in his will." Do we not read in Prov. 21:1: "The heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord: whithersoever He will He shall turn it"?

The testimony of Father Congar O.P., in the Revue des sciences Phil. et théol., 1934, pp. 369 ff ., is also invoked. But it must not be forgotten that he concludes as we do: "Nothing can free us from the unavoidable dilemma: God either determines or is determined. God 'determines all things and is not determined by any' (St. Thomas, III Sent., dist. 27, q. I, a. 2 ad I)."

Finally it is objected that St. Thomas has never spoken of non-necessitating divine predetermination. It suffices to reply that he spoke of it clearly with reference to the divine decree by which Providence determined the hour of Christ's passion: "The Son of man indeed goeth, according to that which is determined" (Luke 22:22); cf. Acts 3:18. St. Thomas in his Commentary on St. John's Gospel (2:4), "My hour is not yet come," says in fact: "The hour of His passion is here meant, not as of necessity, but as determined by divine providence." Likewise (ibid., 7:30): " 'They sought to apprehend Him and no man laid hands on Him, because His hour was not yet come,' not of fatal necessity but as prescribed by the whole Trinity." And again (ibid., 13:1; 17:1): "Not the hour of fatal necessity but of His ordination and good pleasure . . . determined by providence."

All these texts are manifestly concerned with a predetermining, infallible divine decree bearing upon the hour of Jesus and thereby even upon the free act which He was to perform infallibly by willing to die for our salvation. Herein is also concerned the permissive decree referring to the sin of Judas, of Caiphas, of Herod, of Pilate, of all those who, until that hour, were powerless to do any harm to our Lord.

Not to admit this teaching, especially with respect to the positive predetermining decrees relating to salutary acts, is to affirm that what is best in the merits of the just, the free determination which distinguishes them from sinful acts, does not derive from God. And thus, of two men in the state of grace one of whom performs a meritorious act and the other sins mortally, that which comes from God in both cases would be only their faculties, habitual grace, the infused virtues, the commandment, actual grace which draws them morally (but not infallibly) after the manner of an object, and the motion as to exer-cise, from which the sinful refusal can proceed just as well as the meritorious volition. Then, what is best in the merits of the just, even in those of Christ and His holy Mother, — their meritorious, free determination in its first beginning — would not derive from God, contrary to the words of St. Paul: “What hast thou that thou hast not received?”

St. Thomas’ teaching is quite otherwise. As Scheeben has justly remarked, the efficacious divine motion which the Angelic Doctor speaks of, is not to be compared to the influence of a mechanical order whereby one man assists another to row a boat, nor to that of a qualitative order by which heat revives life, but to the vital influence in a plant, for example, of the parent stem upon the branches causing them to blossom and fructify, and even more to the influence of the human will, enlightened by the intelligence, upon the hand, directing it as it writes. Moreover the handwriting varies in excellence; sometimes it becomes scarcely legible on account of the tremor brought on by old age. Then the will of the writer is not responsible for the defective result; no more is God for the disorder of sin which proceeds from the evil disposition of the defective and deficient will. Excluding the faults in the penmanship, all that is written proceeds from the hand as proximate cause and all, at the same time, from the writer as higher cause. This, however, is only an analogy to sustain the imagination and aid the intelligence. Thus our will, with the infused virtues, is secondary cause of whatever in the effect does not exceed its powers when set in operation, and it is instrumental cause of whatever exceeds its powers, as would be the case under a special inspiration of the Holy Ghost received through the gifts, as inspiration to which the just man freely consents. Let us also remark the teaching of Leo XIII that liberty remains under the motion which constitutes biblical inspiration.

Once the Thomistic doctrine has been accepted, the more faithful the soul is the more it grasps, as Scheeben says, “its mystical profundity.” It has less confidence in itself, more in the efficacy of grace; and this increases its generosity and docility to the Holy Ghost. Thus the saints even enter upon the ways known as passive, wherein merit certainly does not diminish, when God acts more and more in them, substituting, through inspiration received with docility, His own very sublime, very simple thought for their complicated ratiocination, His strength for their weakness. The saints realize then that God must be-come for them another self, as it were, more intimate than their own; and they finally reach the point of declaring with St. Paul: “I live now, not I, but Christ liveth in me.” The influence of efficacious grace thus actualizes their liberty more and more; far from destroying it, grace vitalizes, transforms, and establishes it in good.

If the objection is raised: “But I wish to find something to cling to in my free will, and I cannot reconcile it with that abandonment to grace.” Bossuet replies: “Proud contradictor, do you wish to reconcile these things or rather to believe that God reconciles them? He reconciles them in such a way that He wills, without releasing you from your action, that you attribute to Him ultimately the entire work of your salvation. For He is the Savior who has said: ‘There is no savior besides Me’ (Isa. 43:11). Believe firmly that Jesus Christ is the Savior, and all the contradictions will vanish. This confidence in God, the author of grace, produces peace in abandonment. It goes so far as to declare with St. Paul: “When I am weak, then am I strong”; for then I no longer put my trust in self, but in God the author of salvation.

Such has been the teaching of the greatest Thomists. To indulge the liberty of disdaining them they must first have been understood; involves; one must not confuse the divided sense of St. Thomas and his true disciples with that of Calvin, which is manifestly heretical. It is a source of regret for us to have been obliged to call attention to this confusion. 86

The important thing is to hold firmly to the principle that the best part of our salutary, meritorious actions (their free determination) comes from God, that the just man does not distinguish himself by himself from the sinner: “For who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received?” (I Cor. 4:7.) We must ever return to the principle set forth by the Council already quoted which put an end to the discussions aroused by the writings of Gottschalk:”‘Whatsoever the Lord pleased He hath done, in heaven, in earth’(Ps. 134:6). For nothing is done in heaven or on earth

unless He either graciously does it (that is, a good) or permits it to be done in justice (that is, an evil permitted for the sake of a greater good).” At such heights as these we find peace. The best spiritual writers have always spoken thus, particularly when dealing with the free act of love of God which the Lord Himself causes to spring forth from our hearts. This efficacy of grace was especially manifest in the martyrs, giving them the fortitude to resist the most frightful torment. one cannot afford to remain in ignorance of all that the question in confusion.87

CONCLUSION

The essence of Molinism and of the theories related to it is to be found in a definition of created liberty which implies the denial of the intrinsic efficacy of the divine decrees and of grace and which requires the admission of mediate knowledge in spite of its manifest disadvantages. The opponents of Molinism refuse to accept this definition of free will which, in their estimation, is begging the question.

The definition referred to as formulated by Molina, Concordia, p. 10, is as follows: “Free will is the faculty which, given all the requirements for acting, can either act or not.” According to Molina this definition does not mean that, under efficacious grace, liberty preserves the power to resist without ever willing, under this grace, to resist actually; it means that grace is not efficacious of itself but only through our consent foreseen by mediate knowledge. As Molina says, ibid., p. 318: “It was not in the power of God to foresee anything else by His mediate knowledge; however the divine foresight would have been otherwise had the choice of the created liberty been different.” Thus the divine foresight depends on the choice which a man would make and will make, supposing him to be placed in given circumstances. Hence there is passivity or dependence in God, according to the unsolvable dilemma: God either determines or is determined; there is no middle ground. Moreover man distinguishes himself; it is hard to see how the words of St. Paul are safeguarded: “What hast thou that thou hast not received?”

On the contrary it must be affirmed that every good comes from God, and especially what is best in our salutary, meritorious acts, the free determination which distinguishes an act of obedience from one of disobedience, by which our love of God is distinguished from indifference

or hatred. “Convert us to Thee, O Lord, and we shall be converted.” Such should be our prayer.

V. HABIT AND ACT ARE SPECIFIED BY THEIR FORMAL OBJECT: THE UNIVERSALITY OF THIS PRINCIPLE

State of the question. All Scholastics recognize this teaching of Aristotle which St. Thomas expresses in the following terms: “Just as every natural thing has its species from its form, so every action has its species from its object, just as motion from its term” (Ia IIae, q. 18, a. 2). The reason for this, as explained in Ia Ilae, q. 54, a. 2, is that “whatever is said to be ordained toward something is distinguished according to the distinguishing marks of that toward which it is ordained.” But operative powers, operative habits, and operations themselves, or acts, are said to be ordered (by a transcendental relationship) to an object. Therefore they are specifically distinguished according to the distinguishing marks of their objects; in other words, they derive their species and unity essentially from an object. This principle is invoked very frequently in the treatises on grace and on the virtues. Hence special attention should be given to it.

The foregoing principle, which Thomists have always upheld, was nevertheless assailed by Scotus, Durandus, the Nominalists, Molina, Lugo, and many others, In fact, its universality has but recently been denied. Some writers have held that “the generally admitted principle, ‘an act is specified by its formal object,’ is not generally valid.” It is indeed valid, so they maintain, “where the formal object differs specifically; then, the corresponding act differs specifically. For instance, the mode of operation with respect to the same material object varies according as it is visible (seeing), true (understanding), or good (willing). . . . Likewise the formal object of human intellection (the intelligible in sensible objects) differs from the formal object of angelic intellection (the created intelligible in itself), and these from the formal object of divine intellection (the uncreated intelligible); further human, angelic, and divine intellection are essentially diverse in their ontological perfection. . . .

“Therefore in this example a difference in mode of operation can be concluded from a difference of formal object, and ultimately a difference of ontological perfection.

“If it were generally valid that any difference of ontological perfection was based on a difierence in mode of operation with respect to the material object, it would follow that a different ontological perfection would necessarily require a different formal object. But this is not true. For the act of seeing in an irrational animal and that in a man (supposing the man not to have attained the use of reason yet) differ essentially in their ontological perfection; but their mode of operation or of reaching their object does not so differ and hence their formal object is also held to be the same. The statement is therefore not generally valid, that wherever there is diversity of ontological perfection there is also diversity of operation and of formal object.” In the same way, the formal object of infused faith would not be distinct from the object of acquired faith in the truth of the Gospel confirmed by miracles.

Having read this explanation of the foregoing principle, many Thomists conclude: then, if the commonly admitted principle, “acts are specified by their formal object,” is not generally valid, it must be incorrectly formulated. It should not be stated generally that acts are specified by their formal object, but only that certain acts, not all, are specified by their formal object. In other words, if a difference of formal objects is given, then there is indeed a specific difference in the acts; but the converse is not true, that is, not every specific difference in acts corresponds to a difference in formal objects. It must therefore be discovered whether the aforesaid principle is universal for Aristotle, St. Thomas, and their disciples, or whether “it is not generally valid.”

Most assuredly a person would not preserve the sense of the proposition, men are rational animals, were he to say: all rational animals are indeed men, but not all men are rational animals. Similarly it may be asked whether it is true to say: all acts formally, as they are acts, are specified by their formal object, for instance, sight as sight, hearing as hearing; although from another aspect, that is, not as acts but as properties of such and such a nature, they may have another specification, for example, sight, not as sight, but as leonine, equine, or aquiline, or even sight as it is in a man rather than in a child or in a woman.

Cajetan had already said when explaining this principle, In Iam, q. 77, a. 3, no. 6: “Keep in mind here that we can speak of the powers of the soul from two standpoints; from one aspect inasmuch as they are powers (ordained to an act and an object), and it is with this that we are entirely

concerned at present; from the other aspect inasmuch as they are properties of such and such a nature; to this we are not referring. For from this standpoint they differ according to the diverse natures in which they reside, as Averroes remarks, I De anima, comment. 53: The members of a man are different specifically from those of a lion." Herein perhaps lies the solution of the problem. Let us first consider whether the foregoing principle is universal for Aristotle and St. Thomas, in other words, whether it is really a principle.

THE UNIVERSALITY OF THIS PRINCIPLE ACCORDING TO ARISTOTLE AND ST. THOMAS

In his De anima Aristotle had already thus distinguished sensation from intellection: sensation is ordered to perceiving sensible qualities, sight to visible color, hearing to sound; whereas intellection is ordered to intelligible being. And it is utterly impossible for even the highest sense faculty to attain to intelligible being or to the reasons of the essence of things. This is the basis of the demonstration of the spirituality and immortality of the rational soul. Again, Aristotle distinguished intellect ordained to the true from appetite ordained to the appetible, and rational appetite specified by the universal good from sense appetite ordained toward a sensible good which is not universal.

By the same principle, Aristotle distinguished various sciences, as can easily be observed in the sixth book of the Metaphysics, chap. I, so far as speculative science is ordered only to cognition of truth, practical science to works. Likewise there are three principal speculative sciences (physics, mathematics, and metaphysics) , each specified by its object. Physics by mobile being according to the first degree of abstraction, that is, from singular matter; mathematics by quantity according to the second degree of abstraction, that is, from sensible matter; and metaphysics by being as being according to the third degree of abstraction, that is, from all matter. Similarly, in the Ethics Aristotle distinguishes four cardinal virtues, and likewise the virtues annexed to them and their acts, according to their objects; for example, prudence as right reason applied to practice.

Hence this principle is given by Aristotle as entirely universal: acts are specified by their objects; not indeed by their material object around which many acts converge, just as the various senses round about the same

sensible body, but by their formal objects. Nowhere has Aristotle set any limit to the universality of this principle rightly formulated regarding an act not materially but formally as it is an act, a habit as a habit, or a power as a power.

St. Thomas recognized the universality of this principle no less than Aristotle. In fact, he penetrated its doctrine even more deeply, and more clearly saw its extension and universal application to supernatural acts. From this principle, that "powers, habits, and acts are specified by their formal object," St. Thomas deduces that, both in angels and in the human soul, essence is really distinct from operative power inasmuch as essence is ordained to being, operative power to an act and its object, Ia, q. 54, a. 3; q. 77, a. I. He likewise deduces from this that there are several faculties in the soul specified by diverse objects. Thus, enunciating the universality of our principle, he says, Ia, q. 77, a. 3: "A power inasmuch as it is a power is ordained to an act. Hence the reason or nature of a power must be drawn from the act to which it is ordained, and consequently the nature of a power is diversified as the nature of the act is diversified. But the nature of an act is diversified according to the diverse nature of the object. For every act is that of either an active or a passive power. However, the object is related to the act of a passive power as principle and moving cause; thus color is the principle of vision inasmuch as it moves the organ of sight. But the object is related to the act of an active power as term and end; thus the object of an augmentative virtue is perfect measure which is the end of the increase. And from these two, that is, from the principle and from the term or end, the act receives its species. For calefaction differs from refrigeration according as the former proceeds from something hot, that is actively so, to the production of heat, but the latter from something cold to the production of cold. Hence necessarily powers are diversified according to their acts and objects." It is therefore universally true to declare that every act, formally as an act, is specified by its formal object.

St. Thomas also applies this principle to the specific differentiation of operative habits; cf. Ia IIae, q. 54, a. 2: "Habits must be ordained to something. But whatever is said to be ordained to something is differentiated according to the differences in the thing to which it is so ordained. Now a habit is a certain disposition ordained to two objects, namely to the nature and the operation following upon that nature." Operation is then specified by its object.

St. Thomas again insists upon the universality of this principle when he declares, with reference to infused faith and the loss of it by the denial of one single article of the creed, IIa IIae, q. 5, a. 3: “The species of any habit depends on the formal reason of the object; which being withdrawn, the species of the habit cannot survive.” He does not say that certain operative habits and certain acts are specified by their object, but all of them; the principle is entirely universal, otherwise it would not be a principle.

Thereupon St. Thomas demonstrates from this universal principle that the infused moral virtues are distinct in species from the correlative acquired moral virtues. For he says, Ia IIae, q. 63, a. 4: “It is manifest that the mode which is imposed upon such desires by the rule of human reason has a different reason from that which is imposed by a divine rule. Consider the matter of taking food. . . . Thus it is evident that infused and acquired temperance differ in kind,” according to the “specific, and formal reasons of the objects,” as declared in the same article.

Again, St. Thomas distinguishes between infused faith and acquired faith as it exists in the demons, of whom it is said that they “believe and tremble” (Jas. 2:19). For he writes in De veritate, q. 14, a. 9 ad 4: “The demons do not assent with their wills to the things which they are said to believe, but impelled by the evidence of signs by which they are convinced of the truth of what the faithful believe; although these signs do not cause what is believed to appear in such wise that they could thence be said to have a vision of what is believed. Hence the term ‘belief’ is used equivocally of the faithful and of demons; nor does faith in the latter proceed from any infused light of grace as in the faithful.” It is a question of “believing” as it is an act, and of faith as it is a habit.

It is evident that for St. Thomas infused faith and this acquired faith of the demons are differentiated in kind even formally as habit and as act and, consequently, on the part of their formal object. For he says, IIa IIae, q. 5, a. 3: “The species of any habit [or act] depends on the reason of its formal object; which being withdrawn, the species of the habit cannot survive.” But as has been said: “the term ‘belief’ is used equivocally of the faithful and of demons”; therefore these two acts have not the same formal object, but only the same material object. The faithful believe revealed mysteries on account of the authority of God who reveals them, that is, of God the author of grace; whereas the demons know naturally God the author of nature and believe in revelation on account of the evidence of signs, as said

previously. Thus they attain to revealed mysteries materially, that is to say, not formally according as they are essentially supernatural mysteries of the intimate life of God, but to the extent that they are utterances of God confirmed by evident miracles, in the same way that God reveals even the natural truths of religion or future contingencies of the natural order, such as the end of a war, for example.

Likewise, explaining the words of St. Paul (I Cor. 2:14): “The sensual man perceiveth not these things that are of the Spirit of God; for it is foolishness to him, and he cannot understand,” the Angelic Doctor likewise declares: “Just as sense perception cannot estimate the things which pertain to the intellect and similarly neither sense ‘ nor human reason can judge of those things which pertain to the Spirit of God, so it remains that such things are estimated only by the Holy Ghost” (Commentary on I Cor. 2:14, lect. 3). And further, on Matt. 13:14, concerning the words: “By hearing you shall hear, and shall not understand: and seeing you shall see, and shall not perceive,” St. Thomas says: “From the withdrawal of grace it follows that the mind is not enlightened from on high to see rightly.” We have quoted elsewhere innumerable analagous texts of St. Thomas.

Moreover, St. Thomas thus shows that, on the part of the formal object, prophecy itself is inferior to infused faith, for he writes (III Sent., dist. 24, q. I, a. I ad 3): “Although prophecy and faith deal with the same matter, such as the passion of Christ, they do not do so under the same aspect; for faith considers the Passion formally with respect to its underlying eternal truth, inasmuch as it was God who suffered, although it nevertheless considers the temporal aspect materially. But prophecy does just the opposite”; that is, prophecy considers the temporal aspect formally and what is eternal materially.

In the same way acquired faith in the truth of the Gospel, confirmed by miracles, attains only materially to that which is formally attained by infused faith. All the commentators of St. Thomas’ school agree on this principle. Just as a dog hears human speech materially, that is with regard to what is sensibly perceptible in it, so the demon hears the word of God materially, that is, with regard to what is naturally knowable in it.

This interpretation receives strong confirmation by reason of the end toward which infused faith is ordered. For infused faith would be useless if its formal object (quo et quod) were already attained by acquired faith. Moreover, if acquired faith could attain to the formal object of infused faith,

then, contrary to what St. Thomas affirms, Ia IIae, q. 63, a. 4, acquired temperance could also attain to the formal object of infused temperance, at least since the external presentation of Christian revelation; again, the natural good will to which the Pelagians referred could, under the same conditions, attain to the formal object of infused charity. But in that case, of what good would be infused faith, infused temperance, infused charity, or any of the infused virtues? They would be useless de jure, although, in a measure, useful de facto, since it is declared by the Councils: "for believing and hoping, etc. as is necessary to salvation." But why should they be necessary for believing "as is necessary for salvation" if the formal object of infused faith and likewise of charity can be attained without these infused virtues? As Lemos, the Salmanticenses, John of St. Thomas, and, indeed, Suarez declare, once the foregoing principle is withdrawn, the whole structure of philosophy and theology falls into ruins.

Hence neither Aristotle nor St. Thomas nor the Thomists have set any limits to the universality of our principle. Never have they asserted that "it was not generally valid," but on the contrary they have taught that it extended to all acts. Since St. Thomas, however, many theologians (such as Durandus, Scotus, the Nominalists, Molina, Lugo and several others) have held that infused faith does not have a formal object which is inaccessible to acquired faith; and yet it differs specifically from acquired faith. They are thus led to deny the universality of our principle, "habit and act are specified by their formal object," although, according to St. Thomas, this principle clarifies all the problems of faculties, habits, and acts, as can easily be seen from innumerable texts of his, or by consulting those at least which are cited in the Tabula aurea of his works under the heading: "Objectum," nos. 2-6.

WHETHER THE UNIVERSALITY OF THE PRECEDING PRINCIPLE CAN BE DENIED OR DEMANDS LIMITATION

The reply is in the negative, since this principle deals with power, habit, and act according as they are formally power, habit, and act and according as they are essentially ordained to their object by a transcendental relationship. This fundamental reason is admirably expressed by St. Thomas, Ia, q. 77, a. 3, when he says: "Power, inasmuch as it is a power, is ordained to an act. . . . But the nature or reason of an act is diversified

according to the diverse reason or nature of the object"; and again toward the end of the body of the article: "It is not simply any difference in the objects which diversifies the powers of the soul, but that particular difference to which the power directly relates and therefore the sensitive power of color, that is, sight, is one thing and the sensitive power of sound, that is, hearing, is quite another."

Commenting on this article, Cajetan (no. 4) offers the following profound explanation: "The basis of this is what has previously been accepted in the text, that is, power, according to that which is, is to or for this act and is the act; in other words, power according to its entity is not an absolute thing, separated from its act and object. . . . But powers and habits by their essences are essentially ordained toward acts in such wise that they are unintelligible without them. . . . Their differences are derived from ordination to their acts, an ordination which, I say, is not that of a predicamental but of a transcendental relationship. And this is the primary and ultimate root of the solution, both in the present matter and in similar matters, such as motion, prime matter, action and passion, habit, etc. Once this is established, the whole text is clear."

But if act, formally taken as act, is specified by its formal object, this is universally true of every act ordained toward an object; just as, if man, formally as he is man, is a rational animal, then this is universally true of all men without exception, although the exercise of reason may be impeded in certain cases. A universal is a single note capable of inhering in many things, and the nature of the universal is prior in conception to its universality. In the same way, the necessity of any principle is prior in conception to its universal extension.

Thus the sense of sight in a lion, formally taken as an act, does not differ specifically from the sense of sight in a child, for both are essentially ordained toward sensible light and color visible in act by that light, and by these are they specified. If there are certain differences in these two senses of sight, so far as they are acts, such differences are accidental and material on the part of the disposition of the organ, somewhat as there are accidental differences in the sense of sight among men, so that some are nearsighted, others farsighted, etc. There is also a certain material difference between the eyesight of men and of women.

How, then, are we to solve the objection cited above: "The act of seeing of an irrational animal and that of a man (supposing him not yet possessed

of the use of reason) differ essentially in their ontological perfection; but their mode of operation or of attaining their object does not so differ, and hence the formal object is also held to be the same. . . . Therefore the principle is not generally valid which asserts that wherever there is a difference of ontological perfection, there is also a difference of operation and of formal object."

Cajetan had already answered this objection, In Iam, q. 77, a. 3, no. 5, as follows: "Keep in mind that the powers of the soul may be considered from two aspects; from one standpoint, inasmuch as they are powers, and the present discussion refers to this alone; from another, inasmuch as they are properties of a given nature, and we do not refer to this aspect here [this would not be speaking formally but materially]. For they are thus distinguished according to the diversity of the natures in which they inhere, as Averroes remarks (De anima, comm. 53): 'The members of a man are different in kind from the members of a lion.'"

St. Thomas speaks in similar terms, Ia IIae, q. 63, a. 4 c: "Soundness of body in a man is not of the same kind as in a horse because of the diverse natures to which they are ordained." Thus, as a property of such and such a nature the faculty of vision in a lion is different from that of a horse or an eagle, just as their members are; the shoulder, for instance, or the leg. But from that standpoint the faculty is no longer being considered formally as an operative power, act, and habit. Similarly, in man the two superior faculties are termed human inasmuch as they are properties of his soul; but as faculties they are distinguished on the basis of their objects and are therefore two and not one. St. Thomas himself made this distinction in classifying habits, Ia IIae, q. 54, a. 2. His classification may thus be presented:

Does it not follow that infused virtues are specifically distinguished from acquired only on the part of the radical principle from which they proceed, and not on the part of their object? In other words, are not these principles of specification more than merely distinct, separable in fact?

By no means; for virtues, as they are operative habits essentially ordered toward operation, are specifically differentiated, in the same way as the operations themselves, by their formal object. Therefore St. Thomas says (Ia IIae, q. 63, a. 4), of acquired and infused temperance that they differ "according to the specific, formal reasons of their respective objects" according as the former is directed by a human, the latter by a divine rule.

And the Angelic Doctor's meaning is that, athough a man may know the gospel historically, as confirmed by miracles, and the rule of temperance it contains, he nevertheless cannot attain to this superior rule merely by acquired temperance. For if this were possible, infused temperance would be usless except for acting with greater facility, as the Pelagians contended.

However, if acquired and infused temperance are specifically distinguished on the part of their formal object, in like manner acquired faith in the truth of the gospel confirmed by miracles is distinguished from infused faith formally as a habit and as an act by reason of its object. Otherwise infused faith would be useless, were its formal object already accessible to acquired faith. Finally, the formal object of charity, presupposing external revelation, would be accessible to natural good will, as the Pelagians maintained. As we have seen, these untenable consequences have been recognized by Thomists and even by Suarez.

Thus, even by reading the Gospel, "the sensual man perceiveth not these things that are of the Spirit of God; for it is foolishness to him, and he cannot understand" (I Cor. 2:14). On the other hand, as St. Thomas shows, IIa IIae, q. 2, a. 2, c and ad I, the believer, by means of infused faith, with one and the same act believes God revealing and in God revealed. That is, through infused faith he adheres to God revealing as formal motive, and by the same act, on account of this motive he believes in God revealed, for example, in the triune God and in God incarnate. Nor is this a vicious circle. Its opponents declare it to be so: "If the authority of God revealing is believed, it is believed either on account of another revelation and thus ad infiniturn, or on its own account, whence results a vicious circle and reasonable credibility is lacking."

We answer (De revelatione, I, 507)~ with Cajetan, the Salman-ticenses, and many other Thomists: The authority of God revealing is believed on its own account without any vicious circle resulting, just as light is visible of itself, just as evidence is self-evident, just as human speech manifests itself and what it affirms simultaneously.

For divine revelation in revealing the Trinity reveals itself. And although divine revelation thus believed is obscure, it does not lack rational credibility from signs confirming the revelation. Our opponents insist: If infused faith had a specific formal object, it would fall under experience.

We reply (ibid., p. 509): It does in fact fall under experience in a certain sense, but not clearly, just as the spirituality of our intelligence and its

specific distinctness from the imaginatibn are not clearly manifest experientially, or again the specific difference between the will and the sensitive appetite. Thus, as St. Thomas shows, Ia, q. 87, a. I, and De veritate, q. 10, a. 8, every man "perceives that he has a soul according as he observes that he feels and knows," but from this experiential knowledge the spirituality of the soul is not clearly evident, so that some men are materialists. Metaphysical analysis is required to prove the spirituality of the soul.

With still greater reason, experience does not render clearly manifest the essential supernaturalness of the formal motive of faith, nor differentiate distinctly between the supernatural act of faith and concomitant natural acts. As St. Augustine says, "The school in which God is heard and teaches is far removed from the senses. We see many coming to the Son, for we see many believing in Christ; but where and how they heard this from the Father and learned it, we did not see. This grace is exceedingly hidden." Hence the believer cannot discern clearly whether he is acting from a purely supernatural motive, so that he is not entirely certain of the supernaturalness of his faith, although he may have grounds for strong conjecture. Furthermore St. Thomas says of prophets: "Sometimes the prophet's attitude before that which he knows by prophetic instinct [and not by perfect prophecy] is such that he cannot fully discern whether he thought of it with some divine instinct or with his own mind." Therefore the essential supernaturalness of an act of infused faith and its motive, like the spirituality of the soul, is not known with certainty except through metaphysical analysis by virtue of the principle, that acts are specified by their formal object.

If infused faith did in fact make use of infused species, its distinctness from acquired faith would be clearly evident experientially; and some seem to consider that infused faith which would make use of infused species would be specifically different from infused faith which uses species abstracted from sensible objects.

However, speaking formally, our infused faith is certainly not specifically distinct from the infused faith which wayfaring angels had with infused species. This difference of species with respect to the thing present is only a material difference, and the infused faith of wayfaring angels was specified by the same formal object (quo et quod) as our faith. They believed God to

be triune on the authority of God revealing; God the author of grace, of course, not merely of nature.

Therefore the commonly admitted principle, “powers, habits, and acts are specified by their formal object,” is generally, indeed universally, valid; otherwise it would not be a metaphysical principle. Moreover, if it were not valid generally or universally, it would have no validity at all but would have to be rejected, since it would not be true of potency formally as it is potency, nor of habit formally as it is habit, nor of act formally as it is act. If, on the contrary, this commonly admitted principle is precisely formulated by Aristotle and St. Thomas, it is true of potency formally as such, and likewise of habit and act, and is accordingly universal with metaphysical universality, without any exception, just as the principle, that “an act is multiplied and limited by the power into which it is received.” More concisely, St. Thomas writes: “Just as a natural thing derives its species from its form, so does an act from its object, as a movement from its term.” “For whatever is said to be ordained toward something is distinguished according to the distinction of that to which it is ordained.”9

Observations. P. C. Boyer, S. J., proposed the following objection to me: “I certainly agree with the thesis expounded. However, I should like to propose a problem which occurs among the writings of Cajetan on Ia IIae, q.54, a.2, where the great commentator concedes that habits as forms are distinguished according to the diversity of their active principles; from which it follows that two habits having the same formal object could differ specifically.

It may be said, if you will, that this difference is material, not formal. But with this difference, whatever it may be, how can the argument be safeguarded by which the thesis is demonstrated: an act is specified by its formal object? For the argument is based on the proportion between a power and its own act; but here we have two powers (two habits) with the same act and yet they difier specifically. If they so differ, do they not have a difference of proportion to their own act? And why, then, can it not be concluded that a natural act and a supernatural act of love are distinct in species only because they proceed from principles differing in species?”

Reply. Cajetan concedes that habits as forms are distinguished according to the diversity of their active principles; for example, infused prudence inasmuch as it is infused by God and acquired prudence inasmuch as it is acquired by a repetition of acts. But it does not follow from this that two

habits with the same formal object can differ specifically. If infused prudence had the same formal object as acquired prudence, it would only be accidentally infused, but not necessarily infused (like infused geometry). The specification of a habit as a form is essentially connected with its specification by its object; they cannot be separated in an operative habit. By no means do we have two habits with the same act, unless it were a question of a habit accidentally infused; and when infusion is accidental it does not specify, as is obvious in the case of geometry accidentally infused.

The natural and supernatural acts of love differ therefore specifically, both on the part of their eliciting principles and on the part of their formal objects toward which the eliciting principles are ordered (cf. Ia IIae, q. 63, a. 4). Cajetan affirms this positively with reference to Ia IIae, q. 54, a. 2: "Since habits are both forms and habits, and each may share the differences of the other, that is, their own respective forms and habits, and there may not remain with distinction of the former a lack of distinction in the latter; wherefore in the proposition the distinctions of both concur, that is, of the acts and of the formal objects. . . . Nor is it necessary in adducing the one always to adduce the other." We do not say that the formal difference is material; whatever would be a material distinction would hold only with respect to the subject, as, for instance, the difference between in-fused faith in men and in angels who make use of infused species.

P. M. Brown, O.P., professor at the Angelicum, has made this excellent observation: With entire approval of what has been said, there may perhaps present itself here a certain application (not new but rarely called to mind) of this doctrine in sacred theology, which may be helpful in solving a problem frequently discussed among theologians. For it is known that in the theology of the sacraments there is great dispute over the matter and form of certain of the sacraments. Some theologians assert that in this matter the only criterion for the solution should be liturgical history which teaches us what the usage was at the beginning with regard to matter and to form; otherwise they think there would be an admission that the specific nature or substance of the sacrament was subject to change, which is impossible. Whatever of great moment may be said of liturgical history with re-gard to the elucidation of the question, it seems worthy of remark that, in the case of at least some of the sacraments, their specification or constitution in their own specific nature should be considered in the same way as the specification of other intentionals as act, habit, and faculty. Accordingly the

specific nature (which is given by the final formative actuality) is constituted by its ordination toward that grace (and, in some, toward that character) for the conferring of which the sacrament is ordained. This specific nature can be conceived as remaining the same, even presupposing the power conferred upon the Church of determining the so-called form or matter of the sacrament.

VI. THE SUPERNATURALNESS OF FAITH AND ITS INFALLIBLE CERTAINTY

In recent times there has been a re-examination of the problem of the supernaturalness and infallible certainty of infused faith. In particular, the question is asked: Whether, according to St. Thomas, believers adhere supernaturally and infallibly to the formal motive of faith, that is, to the authority of God revealing and, thereupon, to the mysteries revealed, by an adherence which vastly surpasses the rational knowledge of the motives of credibility, or the conclusion of all apologetic arguments, whence arises at least a moral certainty of revelation ipso facto.

The question is not one of minor importance; it concerns that faith which is “the gift of God,” that strong certitude of faith for which the martyrs suffered indomitably. Christ frequently spoke of this faith, declaring: “He that believeth in Me, hath everlasting life,” that is, incipiently, so far as “faith is the substance of things to be hoped for” and a certain beginning of eternal life. Concerning it, St. John says in his First Epistle (5:4): “This is the victory which overcometh the world, our faith”; it should therefore be strong against all errors, seductions, sophistries, temptations, persecutions. This must be stressed particularly today, for nothing can resist the exceedingly pernicious errors of materialism and atheism which are disseminated among all nations today unless it be the Christian, Catholic faith. It is obvious that Protestantism, succumbing under its own errors, is inadequate to the task. But in order to resist effectively, the faith of Catholics must be strong and deep. St. Paul thus characterizes it: “When you had received of us the word of the hearing of God, you received it not as the word of men, but (as it is indeed) the word of God, who worketh in you that have believed.” And therefore he gives warning elsewhere: “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach a gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema.”

State of the question. We shall present briefly the two contrary opinions. Although all theologians admit that Christian faith, in spite of its obscurity, is firmly established in certainty, not all of them explain this certainty in the same way. There are two schools of thought in particular: the one does not hold that the believer knows infallibly, by this very infused faith itself, the formal motive of faith; the other has affirmed and defended this opinion for centuries as the apple of its eye.

First opinion. In the Middle Ages numerous theologians, especially the Nominalists and their satellites, maintained that infused faith resolves itself into acquired faith whereby we believe the Church to be ruled by the Holy Ghost and that the motives of this faith are the signs of revelation, particularly miracles which are naturally recognizable. Thus Durandus, III Sent., dist. 24, q. I, qc. 3; Gabriel Biel, III Sent., dist. 23, q. 2, and thereafter several others. In fact, the same opinion is now held by many apologists and even theologians who rather consider the act of faith externally without investigating the inner nature of infused faith. They assert that the believer naturally knows the fact of revelation from the manifest signs by which it is confirmed, especially miracles and prophecies fulfilled, and they even know naturally that God does not err nor can He err. And this suflices for the certainty of Christian faith based on divine testimony thus confirmed.

Criticism. The great commentators on St. Thomas, such as Capreolus, Cajetan, Ferrariensis, Bañez, Lemos, Alvarez, John of St. Thomas, the Salmanticenses, Gonet, Billuart, Gotti, and more recent Thomists have always rejected this opinion. They recognize that the certainty of infused faith does indeed resolve itself materially and intrinsically into the evidence of miracles and other signs, but its formal, intrinsic resolution should be reducible to something higher. In the same way, metaphysical certainty of first principles does indeed resolve itself materially and extrinsically into sensible evidence, but formally and intrinsically it is resolved into something higher of the intellectual order. Otherwise the supernatural certainty of essentially infused faith would be greatly diminished, for it would be reduced to an inferior certainty of the natural order.

This difficulty presents itself at once: Few indeed are the faithful who saw the miracles with their own eyes or who could have examined them with sufficient care to enable them to judge of their supernatural origin. Hence the majority of the faithful have naturally only a moral certainty of

the signs of Christian revelation through the medium of human testimony often known in an uncritical way.

Therefore, as many other theologians declare, if the certainty of Christian faith were ultimately based upon this moral certitude of the fact of revelation confirmed by various signs, such certitude of faith would not be solid and infallible, but only hypothetical; that is, supposing it to be certain, in another way, on the word of another, that God Himself revealed the Trinity, the redemptive Incarnation, and the infallibility of the Church in propounding these mysteries; supposing, of course, that the preaching of these mysteries does not proceed from any natural evolution of the religious sense in the subconscious mind of the prophets and of Christ, as affirmed by the Modernists, according to whom the assent of faith ultimately depends upon a mass of probabilities (Denz., no. 2079). Thus the certainty of faith would not be absolutely infallible since it would be resolved into a moral certainty of the fact of revelation.

To this the aforementioned theologians reply that natural knowledge, morally certain of the fact of revelation and of the motive of Christian faith, is not the cause but only an indispensable condition of the certainty of faith, which therefore can still be something higher and more solid. Moreover, the moral certainty of the fact of revela-tion already referred to is confirmed by grace whence the will to believe is derived, assuming that there are sufficient signs of divine revelation.

This answer is judged inadequate by many theologians, especially by Thomists, since the knowledge of the formal motive of faith is more than an indispensable condition of the infallible certainty of faith; it pertains to its cause, for the formal motive of faith does not move one to believe infallibly in the redemptive Incarnation or the Trinity, for example, except as it is known and infallibly certain. That is, unless the mind of the believer adheres infallibly to this motive, as St. Thomas repeats often in the texts to be cited below. Similarly in metaphysics, if the principles of causality and of finality were not certain metaphysically, but only physically or morally, the conclusion deduced from these principles would not be metaphysically certain. Hence moral certainty of the fact of revelation does not suffice even when confirmed by grace and the will to believe. Further, in this case infused faith would not be an essentially supernatural virtue, since its formal, specifying motive could be known and be attained naturally. In other words, infused faith would then be no more supernatural than

prudence naturally acquired and thereafter confirmed by grace. It would be no more supernatural than a rational judgment of credibility confirmed by grace.

Second opinion. Therefore Thomists, and Suarez as well to a certain extent, hold a distinctly opposite opinion, namely, that infused faith is essentially supernatural and is specified by the essentially supernatural formal motive of the authority of God revealing, to which believers adhere supernaturally and infallibly with an adherence that is not discursive but quite absolute and firm and which greatly surpasses the already at least morally certain conclusion of apologetics, that is, the conclusion regarding the evident credibility of the mysteries of faith or the fact of revelation confirmed by certain signs. This opinion is defended by St. Thomas, St. Bonaventure, and by Thomists, classical as well as contemporary, such as Capreolus, Cajetan, Cano, Bañez, Lemos, Alvarez, John of St. Thomas, the Salmanticenses, Gonet, Gotti, Billuart, Lepidi, Zigliara, Gardeil, Del Prado, Szabo, Scheeben, and recently even by several theologians of the Society of Jesus, including Fathers Mattiussi,.Petazzi, De la Taille, Rozwadowski, and Boyer.

Explanation and proof of the Thomistic opinion. Two points must first be considered. 1.What precisely is the formal motive of infused faith in its essence? 2. How does the mind of the believer adhere to this motive, according to the opinion we are discussing? To begin with, it should be observed that Thomists aim at considering the act of faith not merely as it is a fact of interior experience, but its nature and the nature of the infused virtue of faith; whereas, on the contrary, the Nominalists never consider the nature of things in themselves, for they consider it to be unknowable and base their reasoning only on facts. Thus in the present case, they never consider the very nature of the infused virtue of faith nor the principle which would elucidate the whole question, to wit, habit and act are specified by their respective formal objects quo et quod, that is, by the formal object toward which they are essentially and immediately ordained or primarily and per se.

I. What precisely is the motive of faith per se as directly infused?

a. We are not here concerned with the motives of credibility as found particularly in miracles which are knowable naturally and which, if true, most certainly confirm the fact of revelation and thereby establish the evident credibility of the mysteries of faith.

b. Nor are we concerned with the formal motive of faith whereby only the natural truths of religion would be believed as revealed by God, such as the existence of Providence in the natural order descending even to particulars or the immortality of the soul. God could indeed thus have revealed only the natural truths of religion, confirming this revelation by miracles. Such a revelation would be supernatural only with respect to the mode of its production, not with respect to its substance or essence, that is, not on the part of its specifying object. Accordingly God would then intervene only as author and ruler of nature, for as such, God can perform miracles (raise the dead, for instance) to confirm the revelation of any religious truths of the natural order. In that case, revelation would be ordained merely to the attainment of natural beatitude, that is, not to the beatific or im-mediate vision of the divine essence but to the mediate knowledge of God reflected in His creatures and the rational love of God above all things. And for those who were capable of arriving at a philosophical demonstration of these natural truths of religion, faith, as thus conceived, would not be necessary for salvation. In other men, not grasping such a demonstration, faith would be infused accidentally, as we speak of infused geometry or the infused gift of tongues.

c. We are concerned with the formal motive of faith per se or essentially infused by which we believe the essentially supernatural mysteries of the most holy Trinity, the redemptive Incarnation, the Eucharist, the life of grace, and eternal life. This faith, essentially infused, was present in the wayfaring angels and in them, as in us, it was essentially supernatural.

But what is this formal motive? According to the Vatican Council (Denz., no. 1789), it is the authority of God revealing, or as St. Thomas says, IIa IIae, q. I, a. I, it is “first truth,” namely, first truth revealing or in speaking according as it presupposes the first truth in understanding, which is itself ontologically based on first truth in essence. Briefly, this formal motive is the authority of God revealing, who can neither deceive nor be deceived.

But it is not only a question of God the author of nature, for instance, of the nature of the human soul, nor merely a word about God the author of miracles, since He can perform these inasmuch as He is author and ruler of nature. It is strictly a question of God author of grace and glory, for we are now speaking of God who revealed the essentially supernatural mysteries of the most holy Trinity, the redemptive Incarnation, and eternal life; and the order of agents should correspond to the order of ends. God as author of

nature cannot reveal the essentially supernatural mysteries of His intimate life. In short, we are here concerned with supernatural revelation not only with respect to its mode of production but with respect to its substance, that is, by virtue of its speculative object. For, when God reveals the supernatural mysteries of the life of grace and glory, He intervenes not only as Creator and Lord, but properly as adoptive Father of angels and men, calling them to a participation in His own inner life. Hence the formal motive of essentially infused faith is the authority of God the heavenly Father revealing the mysteries of the kingdom of God.

Such revelation is involved in the words of Christ: “I confess to Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones” (Matt. 11:25); “Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona: because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but My Father who is in heaven” (Matt. 16:17); “Although I give testimony of Myself, (John 8:14). Again, St. Paul says: “But to us God hath revealed them, by His Spirit. For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God” (I Cor. 2:10), that is, even the essentially supernatural mysteries of the intimate life of God, which vastly exceed the natural knowledge of all men and angels, not merely created but capable of being created.

2. How, according to the Thomistic opinion, does the mind of the believer adhere to this formal motive of infused faith?

Reply. Essentially supernatural divine revelation as proceeding from God the author of grace is that by which and what (quo et quod) we believe supernaturally or infallibly believed with the mysteries, although under a lower aspect, the fact of revelation, together with the miracles by which it is confirmed, is known naturally with at least moral certitude so far as it is supernatural with respect to mode.

Bases of the Thomistic opinion. Let us see whether this answer is based on principles enunciated by St. Thomas and in his own words.

There are three particular arguments, as follows:

1. by reason of the absolute infallibility of faith;

2. by reason of the essential supernaturalness of the motive of faith;

3. by reason of the essential supernaturalness of infused faith per se.

The first argument by reason of the absolute infallibility of faith is reducible to this: The fact of revelation is not merely proposed with moral certitude by history recounting the preaching and miracles of Christ; it is

proposed infallibly by the Church, which has defined this revelation to be strictly supernatural, not proceeding naturally from the subconscious minds of the prophets, and confirmed, not by deceitful tricks drawn from myths, but by miracles in the strict sense, concerning which the Church pronounces final judgment with a certainty superior to any natural certainty (Denz., nos.1785, 1813, 2078). But whatever is thus infallibly transmitted by the Church is to be supernaturally believed by all. Therefore the faithful should believe revelation supernaturally at the same time as the revealed mysteries; that is, they must believe simultaneously in God revealing and God revealed; otherwise they would not possess, with regard to the mysteries revealed, absolutely infallible certainty essentially superior to all natural certainty, as the certainty of infused faith is, according to St. Thomas (IIa IIae, q. 4, a. 8). In spite of the obscurity of mysteries, the certitude of faith should exclude all deliberate doubt, even amid violent temptations or the tortures of martyrdom, and it does so since it proceeds from the infused virtue of faith which, under efficacious actual grace, perfects the intellect so that, as St. Thomas declares, “the intellect tends infallibly toward its object” (ibid., a. 5). If the formal motive of faith were known merely naturally, through the medium of human testimony, the certainty of faith would be infallible only hypothetically but not absolutely; that is, on the supposition that it is really God Himself who revealed these mysteries, or more specifically, supposing it to be certain from some other way that the revelation of the mysteries proceeded from God and not naturally from the subconscious of the prophets or of Christ, in accordance with the evolution of the religious sense, as the Modernists declared. Then the words of St. Paul would not be infallibly verified:

“When you had received of us the word of the hearing of God, you received it not as the word of men, but (as it is indeed) the word of God, who worketh in you that have believed” (I Thess. 2:13).

Then the formal motive of faith does not move us unless it is known and it does not move us infallibly unless it is infallibly united to our intellect, producing its formal effect therein. Just as the musical sense responds to the beauty of a symphony that is heard, so does infused faith respond to the word of God contained in the Gospel according as it utterly surpasses human speech. Hence we read in St. John’s First Epistle (5:10): “He that believeth in the Son of God, hath the testimony of God in himself.”

Confirmation. Human reason can err, not in natural cognition of first principles, but in forming conclusions, and is all the more apt to do so the more remote the conclusions are from the principles. For it is not always easy to distinguish a true miracle from a diaboli-cal fraud: “There shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch as to deceive (if possible) even the elect” (Matt. 24:24). Nor is it always easy to verify the historical authenticity of the narrative in which the miracles are reported. In fact such investigation is not possible to great numbers of the faithful who know the signs of revelation only from the testimony of their pastors or parents. On the other hand, the Church, like the prophets of former times, judges infallibly of the existence of revelation and proposes it as doctrine, just as she proposes her own in-fallibility, otherwise confirmed by miracles and manifestly worthy of belief.

According to St. Thomas there is no incompatibility between knowing naturally a fact of revelation as it is supernatural modally, and simultaneously believing supernaturally in revelation under a higher aspect, as it is supernatural substantially or essentially, in the same way as the supernatural mysteries themselves. For the supernaturalness of the mysteries exceeds natural cognition and transcends the supernaturalness of naturally knowable miracles. Thus for St. Thomas (IIIa, q. 55, a. 2 ad I and 2, and a. 5 c, ad 2 and 3), the apostles, at the same time, knew naturally the resurrection of Christ as man, visibly restored to life as miraculous, just as they recognized the resurrection of Lazarus, and supernaturally believed in it as the mystery of the self-resurrection of the Word incarnate.

This first argument from the absolute infallibility of faith is confirmed by many texts of St. Thomas especially where he speaks of the certainty of infused faith which cannot be subjected to falsehood. Cf. IIa IIae, q. I, a. 3: “Nothing comes under any power or habit or even act except by means of the formal reason or aspect of the object. Thus, color can be seen only through light, nor can a conclusion be known except through the medium of demonstration. But it has already been said that the formal reason of the object of faith is the First Truth (revealing); hence nothing can come under faith except as it comes under first truth, under which no falsehood can stand.” Ibid., q. 4, a. 8: “As to the cause of certainty, faith is more certain than any cognition of natural wisdom, knowledge or understanding of first principles, since faith rests on divine truth, whereas the three forms of cognition just mentioned depend upon human reason. . . . Thus faith is

absolutely more certain than they are [in us], but under a certain aspect it is less certain, that is, in relation to us [on account of the obscurity of the object which we do not attain to so completely as to an evident object].” Cf. De revelatione, I, 469-81, for several other texts from St. Thomas.

The second argument is taken from the essential supernaturalness of the motive of faith as follows: That which is essentially supernatural cannot formally as such be known naturally, not even by the highest angels created or capable of being created, since it pertains to the order of God’s intimate life which surpasses any natural cognition, even that of angels, just as the proper object of the divine intellect exceeds the proper object of any created intellect. Otherwise the pantheistic confusion of the nature of divine and created intellects would result; by its nature the created intellect would already be a formal participation in the divine nature or Deity in the same way as sanctifying grace; there would be a confusion of the two orders. Wherefore whatever is supernatural essentially is supernatural cognoscitively; for truth and being are convertible.

But the formal motive of per se infused faith is essentially supernatural, as has been said; for it is the authority of God revealing and indeed of God the author of grace and glory, since only as such can God reveal the essentially supernatural mysteries of the Trinity, the redemptive Incarnation, and eternal life, which utterly transcend the natural truths of religion knowable by natural means. Therefore this formal motive of infused faith, formally as such, cannot be known naturally even by the angels but supernaturally only. Hence the faithful adhere to it supernaturally and most firmly at the same time as to the mysteries. This formal motive of faith is no less supernatural and inaccessible to nature than the formal motive of infused hope or charity.

This is affirmed in many texts from St. Thomas which I have quoted elsewhere; only the principal ones will be indicated here. IIa IIae, q. 5, a. I: Whether the angel in his first state had faith. Reply: “In the object of faith there is something formal, as it were, that is first truth existing above all natural cognition, and something material, namely, that to which we assent by adhering to first truth. With respect therefore to the first of these, faith generally resides in all who have a knowledge of God, not yet attaining to future beatitude, by adhering to first truth. But with respect to those things which are proposed materially for belief, some are believed by one person

which are manifestly known by another. Hence the wayfaring angels possessed infused faith.

Likewise IIa IIae, q. 6, a. I: Whether faith is infused in man by God [or acquired after learning about revelation confirmed by miracles, as the Pelagians held; and further whether the beginning of faith is infused, contrary to the Semi-Pelagians]. The answer to the doctrine of both Pelagians and Semi-Pelagians is as follows: “It is false because, when a man is raised above his nature by assenting to the truths of faith, this must needs be in him from a supernatural principle moving him interiorly, which principle is God”; similarly in the answer to the third objection. Again, commenting on the First Epistle to the Corinthians with reference to the words, “The sensual man perceiveth not these things that are of the Spirit of God; for it is foolishness to him, and he cannot understand” (2:14), St. Thomas declares: “Just as sense perception cannot examine into matters which pertain to the intellect, and neither sense nor human reason can judge of those things which are of the Spirit of God, so there remain some things of a kind which are examined only by the Holy Ghost. . . . Therefore a man is said to be spiritual: in one sense with respect to his intellect, illuminated by the Spirit of God . . . , in another sense with respect to the will, inflamed by the Spirit of God.” In the same way, the beauty of a Beethoven symphony is not perceived by a person lacking in musical sense, even if he learns in some other way that this particular symphony is very beautiful in the judgment of ex-perts. For there must be a proportion between the object known and the cognitive faculty. Hence anything essentially supernatural, such as the formal motive of infused faith which is the revelation of the heavenly Father, formally as such cannot be known naturally; just as the formal motive of infused hope or charity cannot be attained without these infused virtues.

The third argument is drawn from the essential supernaturalness of per se infused faith. It is revealed that faith is “the gift of God” (Eph. 2:6) so far as it is “the substance of things to be hoped for” (Heb. 11:1), as it were, a certain beginning of eternal life; Christ frequently said: “He that believeth in Me, hath everlasting life” (John 6:47; cf. ibid., 40,55); and the Vatican Council defined as follows (Denz., no. 1789): “The Catholic Church professes this faith, which is the beginning of human salvation (cf. no. 801), to be indeed a supernatural virtue by which, under the inspiration and help of God’s grace, we believe whatever is revealed by Him to be true, not on

account of the intrinsic truth of the matter perceived by the light of natural reason, but on account of the authority of God Him-self revealing, who can neither deceive nor be deceived"; and canon 2: "For according to the testimony of the Apostle, faith is the substance of things to be hoped for, the evidence of things that appear not" (Heb. 11:1). Hence per se infused faith is an essentially supernatural virtue.

But habit and act are specified by their respective formal objects (quod et quo) of the same order. Therefore the formal object (quo) or formal motive by which per se infused faith is specified is of the same essentially supernatural order. Accordingly this formal motive can be attained only by faith, as light whereby colors are seen is known only by sight; for light is that by which we see and what we see. Analogously, revelation is that by which one believes and what one believes, or is believed with the revealed mysteries, when the believer "by one and the same supernatural act believes God [revealing] and in God [revealed]" according to the very words of St. Thomas, IIa IIae, q.2, a.2.

Otherwise, if the formal motive of faith could be attained without grace, infused faith would be unnecessary except for believing more easily and firmly, as the Pelagians held. Moreover, faith would then be no more supernatural than acquired prudence or temperance, which in the just man are under the dominion of charity and are ordained by it to a supernatural end; but they remain acquired virtues, essentially natural and not infused.

Lastly, if the formal motive of infused faith could actually be attained without grace, without the infused light of faith, the formal motive of hope and even charity could likewise be attained by natural good will; and thus infused faith and charity would not be necessary for salvation, as the Pelagians declared, and they would be of no higher order than the natural and ineffectual desire of seeing God in His essence, referred to by St. Thomas, Ia, q. 12, a. 1. The true doctrine of tradition is far superior to the foregoing. It is thus expressed in the language of apologetics by Father Lacordaire who was speaking, as it were, from experience about converts to the faith: "What takes place within us when we believe is a phenomenon of superhuman, interior light. I do not say that exterior things (such as miracles) do not act upon us as rational motives of certitude; but the act itself of this supreme certitude of which I am speaking affects us directly as a luminous phenomenon, nay more as a translucent phenomenon (above rational evidence). . . . We are affected by a light . . . which is translucent

(the infused light of faith). . . . Otherwise what proportion would there be between our adherence, which would be natural, rational, and an object which surpasses nature and reason? . . .

"A convert will tell you: 'I read, I reasoned, I desired, but I did not attain to it. Then one day — I cannot explain how — I was no longer the same: I believed; and what happened at the moment of final conviction was totally different in nature from what preceded. . . .' Recall the episode of the two disciples on the way to Emmaus." "Thus a sympathetic intuition sets up a bond between two men in a single moment which logic would not have produced in the course of many years. So at times does a sudden illumination enlighten the genius." "There may be a scholar who studies Catholic teaching without rejecting it bitterly; he may even say frequently: 'You are fortunate to have the faith; I wish I had your faith, but I just cannot believe.' But some day this scholar gets down on his knees; conscious of man's wretchedness, he raises his hands to heaven, saying: 'From the depths of my misery, O my God, I have cried unto Thee.' At that moment something takes place within him, the scales fall from his eyes, a mystery is accomplished, and he is a changed man. He has become meek and humble of heart; now he can die, for he is master of truth." A mystery has indeed been accomplished: the infusion of the light of faith which is "the gift of God." "There is at the same time an inarticulate certitude which does not come from reasoning, nor from history or literature or science, the certitude which a poor laborer or a child may possess more and better than a scholar." I confess to Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast revealed these things to little ones.

As a matter of fact, this Thomistic opinion is admitted at least implicitly by all theologians inasmuch as they hold infused faith to be not only hypothetically but absolutely infallible and essentially supernatural. Assuredly whatever is proposed infallibly by the Church as revealed by God should be infallibly and supernaturally believed by the faithful. But the Church proposes not only the mysteries revealed but also the fact that they are truly revealed by God and not the result of any natural evolution of the religious sense in the subconscious of the prophets. Therefore revelation itself is infallibly believed together with the mysteries in one and the same act, although from a lower aspect these may be known naturally from miracles but in a manner that is not infallible, since it demands a long,

complicated process of reasoning wherein our intellect is subject to error and which not all believers are capable of.

Finally it ought to be carefully observed that, should there be an admixture of error in the presentation of revealed doctrine, for example, on account of the ignorance of a preacher, then, by virtue of the infused light of faith, the mind of the believer adheres only to the divine word and does so infallibly. But to the errors mingled with it the imagination and intellect of the believer adhere in no sense by the infused light of faith but in a merely natural, human erroneous way, correcting it thereafter as much as possible. Wherefore the infused light of faith and the divine word are intimately and infallibly connected. Just as a magnet attracts iron but not wood even if the dust of iron and wood are mingled together, so does the virtue of infused faith adhere to the divine word alone, not to the errors acci-dentally mixed with it.

First objection. Then one must admit with Suarez that belief is first in the veracity of God, secondly in revelation, thirdly in the Trinity or the Incarnation. But it is impossible to believe with divine faith in the veracity of God before believing in revelation.

Reply. All Thomists, from the time of Capreolus, reply: Revelation is believed together with the mysteries in one and the same act. St. Thomas himself says, IIa IIae, q. 2, a. 2 ad I: “By these three: believing God, believing in a God, and believing in God, different acts are not signified.” Thus by one and the same supernatural, infallible act we believe God revealing and in the triune God revealed, and this in an order which vastly surpasses the rational conclusion of apologetic argument.

Second objection. But the demons also believe in the supernatural mysteries of the Trinity and the redemptive Incarnation without in-fused faith, which they lost, but only by acquired faith. The latter therefore, although not essentially supernatural, can attain to these supernatural mysteries.

Reply. Thomists generally reply: The demons attain to supernatural mysteries and the formal motive of infused faith only materially, not formally so far as they are supernatural. They attain to them as something declared by God (like the natural truths of religion) and confirmed by miracles; wherefore “they believe and tremble” as if compelled by the evidence of miracles and not formally on account of the authority of the heavenly Father. Consequently St. Thomas says of them: “They see many

manifest indications whence they perceive the doctrine of the Church to be from God. . . . Their faith is, so to speak, forced upon them by the evidence of signs. . . . Hence the faith residing in the demons is not a gift of grace, but they are all the more constrained to believe on account of the perspicacity of their natural intellects" (IIa IIae, q. 5, a. 2 ad I and 2). In the same way a person who lacks musical sense hears a Beethoven symphony materially as far as the sounds are concerned, but does not perceive its beauty.

Third objection. One who believes may occasionally undergo a prompting to doubt, but not one who understands the first principles of reason or a conclusion clearly demonstrated. Therefore infused faith is not more certain than any natural certitude.

Reply. St. Thomas answers, IIa IIae, q. 4, a. 8: "Faith is absolutely more certain than clear, natural knowledge, but relatively it is less certain. Thus certitude may be regarded in two ways: in one way on the part of the cause of certainty, wherefore that which has a more certain cause is said to be more certain. And in this respect faith is more certain than the three preceding, since it rests upon divine truth, whereas these three (that is, the understanding of principled, knowledge, and wisdom) depend upon human reason.

"In another sense certitude may be regarded from the standpoint of the subject, and thus that is said to be more certain which is more fully grasped by man's intellect. In this respect, because the articles of faith are beyond the mind of man, whereas the objects of the aforementioned three are not, faith is, from this standpoint, less certain. But since anything is judged absolutely by its cause, but relatively according to a disposition on the part of the subject, it follows that faith is more certain absolutely but the others are more certain relatively, that is, with respect to us." At one and the same time the infused vir-tue of faith and its formal motive produce their formal effect in our mind. Hence faith is more certain in itself and in us, but not to us, according as an obscure object is not grasped so completely as a clear object. Thus any certain metaphysical principle, such as the principle of causality, may be less certain relatively for some men who are not inclined toward metaphysics than the formal existence of colors outside the mind; and yet the former is more certain absolutely as to itself, for the extra-mental existence of colors is proved by this principle.

Conclusion. Our conclusion can be expressed in these words of St. Thomas, which are generally admitted by Catholic theologians: “The believer holds the articles of faith absolutely by his adherence to first truth, for which man stands in need of being assisted by the [infused] habit of faith,” IIa IIae, q. 2, a. 2. “We believe God [revealing] and in God [revealed] in one and the same act,” just as we see light and colors with the same sight, the light as that by which we see and that which we see simultaneously with the colors.

The Church proposes infallibly not only the revealed mysteries, but the truth that they are revealed by God and did not proceed from the subconscious minds of the prophets. Therefore the faithful infallibly believe in both simultaneously with a certitude which sur-passes the natural certitude of a conclusion in apologetic argument, This is generally expressed by Thomists briefly as follows: “First truth revealing is at the same time that by which we believe and what we believe, that is, infallibly believe together with the mysteries.” Thus revelation is revealed by itself just as light manifests itself while showing forth colors. Therefore the certitude of our faith resolves itself formally and intrinsically into uncreated revelation as infallibly believed, and only materially and extrinsically into the evidence of the signs of revelation, particularly miracles. Similarly in the natural order metaphysical certitude of the real validity of first principles does indeed resolve itself materially and extrinsically into sensible evidence or sensation, but formally and intrinsically into the intellectual evidence of the truth of those principles as laws governing extra-mental being. Otherwise superior certitude would be reducible to the inferior as in sensationalism or empiricism for which the Nominalists of the Middle Ages, such as Ockham and Nicholas of Utrecht, prepared the way.

In this question as in others the profound investigations of sacred theology find their way back to the higher certainties of the teaching of faith expressed in Sacred Scripture, which in its eminent simplicity surpasses all the ratiocination with regard to the nature of faith itself and the manner in which it attains to its formal object (objectum formale quo) or motive. This very intimate, sublime, and highly simplified manner whereby infused faith attains to its formal motive is gradually purified more and more of every imperfect element in the passive purification of the spirit, called by St. John of the Cross the dark night of the soul. In this dolorous darkness the formal motive of faith, that is, first truth revealing, is more and more detached

from every other secondary and inferior motive which is then dolorously carried away, for instance, from the harmony of the supernatural mysteries with truths about God naturally known or our own aspirations. This harmony is no longer amply apparent in the course of such purification, but it still remains certain that even the very obscure mysteries of eternal punishment and gratuitous predestination are revealed by God, and that it would be a grave sin of infidelity deliberately to entertain a doubt about them.

Then the formal motive of infused faith, the authority of God revealing, shines forth in this dark night in all its loftiness, above every secondary motive accessible to natural reason and at that time enshrouded by a mist. In other words, first truth revealing appears as a star of the first magnitude in this night of the spirit; and therefore infused faith is purified of every imperfection and, soaring above all temptations and indeliberate vacillations, the human intellect finds an immutable stronghold in this authority of God revealing, to which it adheres infallibly beyond all discursive reasoning, always entreating the bestowal of actual grace for a still firmer salutary and meritorious adherence. Then, as the best directors of souls thus purified affirm, is not the time for rereading one's apologetics, but for the most humble, confiding prayer.

There is a similar passive purification of hope and charity, the formal motives of which are likewise increasingly detached from every inferior motive in which sentimentality or unconsciously inordinate self-love were mingled. The formal motives of the three theological virtues : first truth revealing, omnipotence assisting, and infinite goodness lovable above all things for its own sake, are thus, as it were, the three highest stars in the dark night of the spirit, when these three theological virtues reach the heroic degree, as perfecting virtues or in perfected souls, to which St. Thomas refers in Ia IIae, q. 61, a. 5.

Thus the mystical experience of the saints confirms the assertion of theologians as follows: The formal motive of any theological virtue cannot be anything created; it cannot be a miracle or any truth naturally known. It is a perfection of the uncreated God belonging to His intimate life which accordingly surpasses all the natural cog-nitive faculties of any intellect created or capable of being created.

VII. THE SPIRIT OF ADOPTION OF SONS OF GOD

At the end of this tract on grace, by way of recapitulation, it is fitting that we should examine from the point of view of spirituality what is meant by the spirit of adoption of sons of God, inasmuch as this adoption is accomplished by sanctifying grace which is “the grace of the virtues and gifts.” “The Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit, that we are the sons of God” (Rom. 8:16). This is especially apparent in the liturgy of Pentecost.

The time of false peace in which we are living shows by contrast the magnitude and necessity of these graces. It is a difficult, sorry time, yet one which teaches many practical lessons if we meditate in our hearts before God. This false and merely external peace finds no place in minds or hearts or wills. It is full of deceptions and thus provokes a lively desire for true peace both interior and exterior such as only God can give.

The present state of things contains the proof by reductio ad absurdum of the existence of God and the truth of Christianity. The Lord is allowing men to see what they arc capable of doing alone when they try to work without divine assistance: “Without Me you can do nothing.” This sad situation manifestly arises from the fact that many nations have repudiated Christian principles. They descended first to liberalism which refuses to come to any conclusion either for or against Christian truth, so that it is inadequate to effect any action and merely indulges in protracted discussions ad infiniturn.

When action became necessary, many nations then plunged from liberalism into radicalism by way of negation. Subsequently several peoples arrived at socialism and finally at materialistic, atheistic communism. The downward course was accelerated, as in the gravitation of a falling body, and it is not to be wondered at that this descent should lead to increasingly complex, insoluble problems, since minds no longer recognize true principles.

Amid the general confusion, God safeguards and directs His Church, offering and bestowing upon us graces for a meritorious reaction against error and evil. How are we to rise once more after such a decline? How recover unity of thought and life amid the diversity and complexity of insoluble problems? It is clear that for such a restoration we must return more and more to Christian principles; especially must priests and religious live their lives in accordance with them. The Holy Ghost and His seven gifts are given to us for this end. St. Thomas afirms that under difficult

circumstances we stand in need of these seven gifts that we may be docile to the inspirations of the Holy Ghost, conferred to aid the virtues, which are too human in their mode of operation and lack sufficient promptitude in the service and love of God.

In difficult circumstances such as present-day conditions, Christian faith must not only be a firm supernatural adherence to revealed supernatural truths, not only must it be rendered living by charity informing it, but it must be illuminated by the gift of knowledge so as to recognize more keenly the vanity of earthly things and the in-effectualness of human expedients. Our faith should also be enlightened by the gift of understanding so as to penetrate through dogmatic formulas into the mysteries themselves of the Incarnation and Redemption, by which the just man should live, in such a way that these mysteries may be in us the very truths of life inspiring all our actions.

Our hope, in avoiding presumption, should become an increasingly certain tendency toward salvation. Toward this end, “the Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit, that we are the sons of God.” Our charity likewise should grow under the light of the gift of wisdom whereby we judge of all things connaturally with respect to God as our last end and as loved efficaciously above all things. Especially in more difficult situations is it essential that Christian prudence should be perfected by the gift of counsel, religion by piety, fortitude by the gift of fortitude, and chastity by that of filial love.

What great spiritual treasures, what sources of energy! But how are we to draw from these seven gifts the power to live in that unity demanded by the interior life amid such diversity of virtues to be practiced and complexity of faults to be avoided? There are more than thirty virtues which must be cultivated; and almost any one of them is either between or above two opposing vices. With the infused virtues we also possess these seven gifts. They are present in us as long as we are in the state of grace, since they are connected with charity in accordance with which the Holy Ghost is given to us. These seven gifts are for us as the seven sails of a ship, capable of receiving the impulsion of a favorable wind.

But in us the gifts are often like furled sails so that they cannot spread or yield to the force of the wind. The seven gifts are tied and knotted by a host of venial sins, scarcely conscious, which fasten our souls to external things and to our own egotism. Then our course is not directed by the Holy Ghost,

but by ourselves, by our reason which clings to its own judgment unconformed to the judgment of God; it is directed by our will, tenacious of self-will, inordinate self-love and caprice. Hence, although in the state of grace, we hardly live under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Thus we confuse merely natural simplicity, which depends on our tetnperament, with supernatural simplicity which is completely different, and we likewise confuse our impulsiveness with the inspirations of the gift of counsel. And this procedure assuredly does not suffice to resist the profound errors of the present day nor to re-ascend after such a descent, nor to discover the unity of life amid the multiplicity and complexity of insoluble questions, without the grace of God.

To this end it is essential that we live deeply according to some very simple, sublime, and fruitful truth such as that we are the adopted sons of God. This is the spirit of Pentecost. St. Paul says to the Romans (8:14-16): “Whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they6 are the sons of God. For you have not received die spirit of bondage again in fear; but you have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry: Abba (Father). For the Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit, that we are the sons of God.” And, as St. Thomas remarks, He gives this testimony by the filial affection toward God which He awakens in us through special inspiration, for “not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” are we born, by the grace of adoption. This is the spirit of adoption of all the seven gifts whereby the unity of life is preserved amid the complexity of problems in the upward return to God. But this fundamental truth must be a vital truth in us, not merely preserved in the memory but directing all our activity.

A certain excellent missioner from Mesopotamia recently described to me how he had arrived at this conviction. “I happened one day,” he said, “to enter an Arab village which had been destroyed by some enemy tribe, and from one of the almost ruined houses a little boy of six emerged and said to me: ‘They killed my father and mother and all my brothers and sisters: I am all alone. But I am a Christian; be so kind as to take me with you, Father, to the mission.’” The missioner interrogated the boy to see if he was really a Christian. The boy replied correctly to the first questions in the catechism. So the missioner was moved to pity and adopted him, taking him to the mission where he was educated and became a splendid Christian. But whenever he saw the boy going about, he would say to himself: “I adopted

this boy and must fulfill my obligations toward him as adoptive father. Now I understand better that I, too, am an adoptive son of God who, when I was destitute, bestowed upon me grace, a participation in the divine nature, and the seed of glory or eternal life. I should therefore ever live more and more as an adopted son of God."

This is the simple, sublime, practical, and most fruitful truth whereby we can and ought to live profoundly through faith illuminated by the gifts with great spontaneity and unity of life. This is the truth which Christ desired to impress upon the minds of His apostles when they were disputing among themselves, which of them was greatest. He warned them: "Amen I say to you, unless you be converted and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:3). Pride, ambition, detraction can impede our entrance therein forever.

To live as a son of God according to the spirit of adoption, the Christian's attitude toward God must be that of a child toward his parents; indeed the distance between God and us is immeasurably greater than between parents and their children. Now a child usually possesses certain native qualities: simplicity devoid of duplicity, a consciousness of his weakness disposing him to humility; moreover he firmly believes whatever his mother tells him, especially when she speaks to him of God; he also has absolute confidence in her and loves her with all his heart more than all her flattering caresses. The true adoptive son of God possesses these qualities with respect to God and through them lives willingly by the seven gifts in great unity of thought and love, in spite of the multiplicity of virtues to be practiced, and vices to be avoided.

The child of God is simple, devoid of duplicity. Why? Because his glance turns directly to God. Thus are verified the words of Scripture: "If thy eye be single, thy whole body shall be lightsome" (Matt. 6:22). If your intention is simple, pure, and straightforward, without any duplicity, your entire life will be luminous, like the candid face of a child. Thus the simple soul always loo!rs toward God and tends to see God in all persons and events. Whatever may occur, that soul recognizes that it is willed by God or at least permitted for the sake of a greater good. In this simplicity, which is eminently superior to simplicity of nature or temperament, there is frequent exercise of the gift of wisdom, the highest of all the gifts.

Like the child, an adoptive son of God is also conscious of his weakness. He feels that of himself he is nothing. Through the gift of knowledge he

clearly understands the words of our Lord: “Without Me you can do nothing” in the order of sanctification and salvation. He is so inclined toward humility that he does not indulge in unnecessary self examination, does not speak of himself, nor seek the esteem of others in his regard. Moreover, since he feels his weakness, he is inclined to seek continually the help and direction of God his Father, as a little child looks to his mother for help. Thus is the spirit of prayer rendered more perfect.

Faith, too, is greatly increased. As the child firmly believes what his mother tells him, the son of God relies completely on divine revelation. Jesus has declared this to be true, whether immediately in the Gospel or through His Church: that suffices; there is no room for doubt. And what is the result? How blessed a one for the soul! Just as a mother delights in instructing her little one more and more as she finds him more eager to learn, so does Christ our Lord gladly manifest the deep simplicity of the mysteries of faith to the humble who hear them with great faith. Therefore He said: “I confess to Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones.” Thus faith becomes penetrating, delectable, contemplative, radiant, practical, the source of manifold excellent counsel. So does the spirit of faith grow with the frequent exercise of the gifts of understanding, wisdom, and counsel.

Even if God permits the dark night to overtake him, the child of God traverses it, his hand in that of his Father, as a little one holds his mother’s, knowing that she will take care of him. As a consequence, hope increases and becomes firm confidence, since it rests upon God’s love for us, His promises, His omnipotence, and the infinite merits of the Redeemer. Hope is therefore ever more certain in accordance with the certainty of the tendency toward eternal life. As the little child trusts his mother with the greatest assurance, knowing her love for him, so does the son of God entrust himself most securely to God, never doubting the fidelity of Him who said: “Ask and you shall receive.”

Nor should our frailty discourage us. As the little one assures himself: “Because of my weakness my mother always watches over me,” so the child of God recognizes that Christ ever watches over the poor and weak who invoke Him. The Holy Ghost, too, willed to be called “the father of the poor.” Confidence thus remains intact even in the gravest hours, when the Son of God says to His heavenly Father in the words of St. Theresa: “Lord,

Thou knowest all things, Thou canst do all things, and Thou lovest me." I recently met a certain lady of the Polish aristocracy who was deported to the northernmost part of Siberia. As she entered the prison she felt the sustaining presence of God, which never ceased as long as she remained in that prison. When she was liberated, however, the presence of God was no longer sensible, although she retained the memory of this exceptional assistance of God.

Finally, charity increases greatly if we live as true children of God. This way is not a special one for certain souls only; it is the ordinary way which all the sons of God should follow. Each one should ask himself: "Which dominates in me: the man of self-love, the egotist, or the son of God?" The little child loves his mother with all his heart and lives by her. Likewise the true son of God loves God more and more for His own sake, because of the infinity of His perfections in which we participate. The real child of God is not self-seeking, but loves God Himself more than his own personal perfection, more than the consolations of prayer. His is a generous love which asks itself: "What can I do to please God and help my neighbor on the way of eternal salvation ?"

Then the adoptive son of God, seeking Him in all things, often receives the inspirations of the gifts of counsel and of fortitude amid great difficulties. All seven gifts operate freely in him; they are no longer bound but completely unfurled under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. This supernatural life of the child of God, in its simplicity and humility, and in the exercise of the theological virtues, vastly surpasses the natural activity of the most intelligent, efficient people who depend on their own powers and disregard the words of our Lord: "Without Me you can do nothing" in the order of sanctification and salvation.

We should therefore ask for this spirit of adoption, this simplicity, humility, faith, confidence, and radiating charity. So will the Holy Spirit give more and more testimony to our spirit that we are sons of God. He renders this testimony by the filial affection toward God the Father which He arouses in us. He will also bestow that peace which the world cannot give, that interior peace which is the tranquility of order, elevating the soul and restoring unity of thought and contemplation even amid the diversity of extremely complex questions which present themselves at the present day, questions that remain insoluble without this light from above. This supernatural peace is the fruit of the gift of wisdom: "Blessed are the

peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.” This is a beginning in us of eternal beatitude.

May the Blessed Virgin Mary, deign to make use of these imperfect pages to lead many souls to such sanctity, that our life may be unto the praise of the glory of the grace of God!

APPENDIX

WHETHER AVERSION FROM THE SUPERNATURAL END CANNOT EXIST WITHOUT AVERSION FROM THE NATURAL END

In classical Thomism as understood by Capreolus, Cajetan, Ferrariensis, Bañez, Alvarez, Lemos, John of St. Thomas, Gonet, Godoy, the Salmanticenses, Billuart, Gotti, Del Prado, and others, it is generally admitted that fallen man cannot be directly averted from his final supernatural end without at the same time being at least indirectly averted from God, his final natural end and the author of nature. Why? Because even the natural law prescribes that God is to be obeyed whatever He commands whether in the natural or in a higher order. From this principle Thomists generally deduce the following conclusions which are rejected by many only because of insufficient grasp of the foregoing principle.

1. Fallen man cannot by his natural powers alone, without restorative grace, love God the author of nature above all things with an effectively efficacious love. This is the express opinion of St. Thomas, Ia IIae, q. 109, a. 3, where he says that, in contrast to the state of incorrupt nature, “man in the state of fallen nature requires for this the help of grace which heals nature,” since, “on account of the corruption of nature, the rational appetite of the will seeks an individual good unless it is healed by grace.” A weakened power cannot exercise toward God the very efficient act of a healthy power unless it is healed. With still greater reason, fallen man cannot observe the whole of the natural law without healing grace. (Cf. Ia IIae, q. 109, 2. 4.)

2. In the state of fallen nature not yet restored, man has less strength to perform a moral good than he would have had in the state of pure nature.

Why? Because now man is born with original sin, that is, directly averted from his supernatural end and indirectly averted from his final natural end; whereas, on the contrary, in the state of pure nature he would not have been born directly turned away from his final natural end, but capable of either conversion or aversion in regard to it. St. Thomas affirms this explicitly enough in treating of the "wounds inflicted upon the whole of human nature by the sin of our first parents," especially the wound of malice in the will whereby the natural inclination to virtue is diminished. (Cf. Ia IIae, q.85, a.3; q.82, a. I ad I.)

3. As the Angelic Doctor asserts, Ia IIae, q. 89, a. 6, with regard to an unbaptized child: "When he begins to have the use of reason . . . the first thing that occurs to a man as subject for thought is to deliberate about himself. And if he directs himself to the proper end, he obtains through grace the remission of original sin. Again, ad 3: "For the first thing that occurs to a man who attains to discretion is to consider himself as that toward which he should order other things as to an end. For the end is first in intention. And therefore this is the time when he becomes obligated by the positive command of God, who says: 'Turn ye to Me . . . and I will turn to you' (Zach. 1:3)." In the De veritate, q. 24, a. 12 ad I, St. Thomas also writes: "As soon as an adult receives the use of free will, if he prepares himself for grace he will have grace"; that is, if he does what in him lies with the help of actual grace, God does not refuse habitual grace nor, accordingly, faith and charity; and He therefore manifests the revealed truths which are entirely necessary for salvation, at least that God is and is a rewarder. This is an admirable form of baptism of desire, without miracle but with the very special help of God and the guardian angle. Then the child should efficaciously love God the author of nature above all things, and this cannot be done without healing grace. But if he does what he can under actual grace, according to St. Thomas, he is justified. Many theologians, however, deny this last conclusion of St. Thomas and Thomists regarding the justification of an unbaptized child. Yet it is not easy to reject it or destroy the principles upon which this conclusion is based. (Cf. above, pp. 197ff.)

4. The fourth consequence of the principle enunciated above is that in the limbo of children the souls of infants who died before receiving baptism, although they do not strictly suffer from the loss of supernatural happiness, yet do not have absolute, perfect natural happiness since they remain

indirectly averted from their final natural end on account of unforgiven original sin. But they have “a certain natural beatitude”; cf. De malo, q. 5, a. 3; and they are exempt from any pain of the senses which is inflicted in punishment for a personal conversion to a transitory good; cf. De malo, q. 5, a. 2.

In the supplement to the Summa, q. 89, a. 5 ad 3, we read: “Even children who die before attaining maturity will appear at the last general judgment, not to be judged but to witness the glory of the Judge.” Cf. Hugon, De novissimis, 1927, p. 813. There are other consequences of the foregoing priniples.

Is it certain that this basic principle is found in the works of St. Thomas? Beyond any doubt, if the texts cited are carefully studied, especially Ia IIae, q. 109, a. 3: “In the state of fallen nature man requires the help of grace healing nature in order that he may love God naturally [as author of nature] above all things.” And again, IIa IIae, q. 10, a. I ad I: “It is not proper to human nature to have infused faith. But it is proper to human nature for the mind of man not to reject the interior instinct and exterior preaching of truth. Hence unbelief is accordingly contrary to nature.” All sin which is directly opposed to the supernatural end is at least indirectly against God as natural end and author of nature, since the natural law already prescribes that God is to be obeyed whatever He commands, whether in the natural order or in a higher order.

The conclusion is therefore contrary to naturalism and laicism: He who withdraws from his supernatural end most assuredly cannot perfectly attain to his natural end. In the present economy of salvation there is a necessary connection between the two orders. As a matter of fact, every man is either in the state of grace or in the state of sin, and if he is in sin, he is directly averted from his final supernatural end and indirectly from his final natural end. St. Thomas comments on Matt. 12:30: “God is the natural end toward which all things tend; therefore he who is not with God must be separated from Him.” Naturalism is, after all, contrary to nature, since it is against God toward whom all nature tends.

Hence Christ declared: “He that is not with Me, is against Me: and he that gathereth not with Me, scattereth” (Matt. 12:30). But on the other hand He assured the apostles: “He that is not against you, is for you” (Mark 9:39). Accordingly, those who are already sincerely seeking God do so by the help of grace, as if God were to say to them:

“You would not be seeking me sincerely if in some measure you had not already found Me.” “Not that we are sufficient to think anything [salutary] of ourselves, as of ourselves: but our sufficiency is from God” (II Cor. 3:5).

LIFE EVERLASTING

REVEREND REGINALD GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE O.P.

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LIFE EVERLASTING

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LIFE EVERLASTING

PREFACE

WE propose in this book to speak of life everlasting, to show what light falls on our life here below from the life there beyond. Our chief concern will be the immensity of the human soul, first in our present life, then in the particular judgment at the moment when the soul is separated from the body. Thus we shall attain a better understanding, first of what hell is: that boundless void which can never be filled; the unmeasured depths of the soul forever deprived of that sovereign good which alone could fill those depths. Secondly of what purgatory is: the state of the soul which cannot as yet possess God, which is deprived for a period short or long of the vision of God, because by its own fault it was not ready for its appointed meeting. Thirdly of what the moment of entering heaven is, an instantaneous moment which will never pass away: the unchanging possession of life everlasting, of God who alone can fill the boundless depths of the human will. This soul-depth, as we shall see, is explained by the truth that already in the natural order our will is illumined not merely by sense and imagination but by the intellect which, grasping universal reality, grasps likewise universal and boundless good, a good which, speaking concretely, is found in God alone, the infinite good.

Life everlasting then throws great light on our life here below. It draws us up out of our superficiality and drowsiness. It reveals the immensity of our soul, which either must remain eternally in a desert waste or then be completely filled with the eternal possession of God, Truth supreme and Sovereign Good.

The mystics, Tauler above all and Louis de Blois, often use the term soul-depth in a metaphorical sense, in contrast to the exterior sense world. Similarly they use the term soulheight, in contrast to the same sense world as inferior. Less known is the teaching of St. Thomas, who in language less metaphorical explains the immeasurable depths of the will. His doctrine on this point illumines the solution of many great problems and prevents us from resting in a superficial attitude of mind.

We endeavor in the following pages to maintain theological preciseness in the use of terms. In the rare cases where we have recourse to metaphors we note explicitly that we do so of necessity, when proper terms are lacking. Our book is to be a theological treatise on the last things (de novissimis).

Our purpose is to enlighten souls, to arouse conscience and responsibility. Our book would recall those who may be on the road to perdition, would instruct those who often commit deliberate venial sins, who take no pains to expiate mortal sins already remitted in the tribunal of confession. Above all we would give the reader a high idea of heaven, of eternal happiness, in its opposition to hell, in its retardation by purgatory, in its infinite elevation. To attain heaven is to reach our ultimate and supernatural goal, to see God as He sees Himself, to love Him as He loves Himself, to possess Him unfailingly forever.

A handmaid of God once heard these words: “I gave you a religion of life, and you have made it a religion of formulas. I am the Creator of good, and you have made me a tyrant, since in my precepts you see only what displeases you.”

We pray our Lord Jesus and His Blessed Mother to bless these pages that they may bring to many, many souls a benefit that will last for all eternity.

TRANSLATOR’S NOTE

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PART 1

SOUL IMMENSITY IN OUR PRESENT LIFE

1. SENSIBILITY

ORDER demands that we study first the depths of our emotional life as illumined by sense cognition and then those of our voluntary life as illumined by our intellect. Progress in acquired virtue and, still more, progress in infused virtue will reveal immense depths and will clarify in particular the growth of charity in the souls of the saints, both in their hours of trial and in the joy of their apostolic triumphs.

Sensibility, the source of passion and emotion, is, like sense knowledge and imagination, common to animals and men. This sensibility we call sense appetite to distinguish it from the will, which is a spiritual faculty, common to man, angel, and God. Passions, emotions, the movements of sense appetite arise when sense knowledge or imagination puts before us a sense object, attractive or repellent. Thus we note that the desire for food appears under a peaceful form in the dove and the lamb, but under a violent form in the wolf, the tiger, and the lion.

The first among all passions, the source of all others, is sense love, the love, for example, of the animal for the food it needs. From this love rises a series of passions: desire, joy, hope, audacity, hate, aversion, sadness, despair, fear, and anger.

Passion is not always, but may become, keen, vehement, dominating. In man the passions are meant to be ruled and disciplined by reason and will. Thus ruled, they are weapons which defend a great cause. On the contrary, if they remain unruly and undisciplined, they become vices: love becomes gluttony and lust, aversion becomes jealousy and envy, audacity becomes foolhardiness, fear becomes faintheartedness and cowardice.

These wide contrasts, both in good and in evil, show how deep and immense is the world of passion. Even in the animal kingdom what heights are scaled by love and hate: in the lion, for example, attacking his prey, in the lioness defending her young!

But this width and depth of passion is still more immense in man, because man’s intellect grasps universal good and man’s will desires that

boundless good which is found in God alone. Hence when man's will does not follow the straight road to God, when man seeks supreme happiness not in God but in creatures, then his concupiscence becomes insatiable, because he has unlimited desires for a good that is limited. Man's will was created to love supreme good and the irradiations of that supreme good. Hence when the will turns aside, its tendency to universal good continues under that deviation, and this tendency of man's highest faculty now becomes foolish, exercises a lamentable influence on man's lower faculties. This truth is a proof, a sad proof indeed, but still a proof, of the spirituality of the soul. The ruins of decay are a souvenir of grandeur.

Passion, says St. Thomas, when it is truly natural, that is, founded on man's nature, cannot be boundless, because it desires only what nature demands, and the sense good which nature demands is limited, in food, for instance, and drink. Unnatural desire, on the contrary, can be unlimited, because it arises from reason gone astray, which sees unlimited good in a good which is in reality limited. Thus a man who desires wealth can desire it in limitless measure, can see in wealth the ultimate purpose of his life.

Natural desire, then, in animal and man is limited. The animal (e.g., wolf, tiger, lion) when it is sated no longer seeks prey. But intelligent man when depraved conceives and pursues ever more wealth and pleasure. Hence quarrels among neighbors and endless wars among nations. The miser is insatiable, likewise the man of pleasure and the man of power. Love when thwarted begets hate, and that hate becomes boundless. Hate, says Baudelaire, is the cask of the pale Danaides. These Danaides, says mythology, slew their husbands on their wedding night, hence were condemned to fill a cask without bottom: endless punishment of boundless depravity.

If passions which man shares with beast be so deep and wide, what must be the depth and breadth of the will which is a spiritual faculty common to man and angels?

2. WILL AND INTELLECT

FEW people reflect deeply on the superiority of the intellect over the imagination, of the concept over the accompanying sense image.

The mind, intellect, differs from all sense powers, external and internal, because it has as primary object not mere accidental facts, external or internal, color, for example, or sound, or tactile resistance, but rather intelligible and universal reality. By reason of this object the mind knows the raison d'etre of things, the causes of events, and their purpose or goal.

The concept of being, of reality, underlies all other concepts. The verb "to be" underlies every sentence. "Peter runs" means "Peter is running." In a priori judgments this "is" expresses essence. In a posteriori judgments the "is" expresses existence. Thus the infant's mind grows on a series of whys: Why does the bird fly? Because it is looking for food (its goal and purpose). To fly it needs wings (instrumental cause). Its nature requires wings (formal cause). It dies because it is composed of matter and hence is corruptible.

NOW these raisons d'etre, these sources and causes (final, efficient, formal, material) are accessible to reason only, not to sense and imagination. Reason alone knows purpose as purpose. Imagination grasps the thing which is purpose, but it does not grasp the principle of finality.

Here we see the immeasurable distance between image and concept. The image, say, of a clock is a composite of sense qualities, color, sound, and so forth. A concept of the clock makes this sense-composite intelligible: a clock is a machine which by maintaining uniform movements indicates solar time. This concept, this raison d'etre, inaccessible to the animal, is easily grasped by the child.

Whereas sense and imagination are restricted to sense objects as individual, as limited in space and time, the intellect grasps these same objects as universal, as realizable in whatever part of space and time. Thus it grasps what the clock must necessarily be, everywhere and always, in order to indicate solar time. In like fashion the intellect rises from the

limited and particular sense good to the good that is universal and unlimited.

Thus we conceive also what we need in order to become what we should be. We need an object that is always and everywhere good. Further we see that this object must be unlimited reality, a supreme being wherein unlimited good is completely realized.

The intellect conceiving supreme being, unlimited good, sees likewise, at least confusedly, that this being must exist. The mind sees things which begin and end, corruptible things. Hence they must derive existence from something that is self-existent and able to give existence to other things. Otherwise the more would arise from the less: effect without cause. Similarly this truth holds universally: no motion without a first mover, no living thing without a first life, no mundane order without a supreme ruler, no intelligent being without a first mind. Shall we trace St. Augustine's genius back to a blind, material fatality?

Now in the world of the will, in the moral world, we meet this same truth: no morality, no law, without a supreme legislator, no holiness without a supreme holiness. Reason more or less confusedly grasps these necessary truths.

How unmeasured, then, must be the immensity of man's will, which is illumined, not by sense and imagination, but by reason and intelligence! Imagination, sense perception, leads animals, herbivorous or carnivorous, each to the food it needs. Intelligence leads man to an unlimited good, a good which is to be found only in that unlimited reality which is God, because He alone is unlimited and essential good. Hence if sense has such an inexhaustible reach in the daily life of the animal world, how boundless must be the reach of man's will in the pursuit of an unmeasured world of good!

3. SOUL IMMENSITY AND BEATIFIC VISION

IF, AS St. Thomas says, the miser has the desire of riches in an infinite degree, what must we then say of the spiritual desire of the will? The higher knowledge rises, the higher also, the deeper also, is our spiritual desire. And Christian faith tells us that God alone, seen face to face, can satisfy this immeasurable desire. Hence we may say, in a true sense, that our will has a depth without measure.

Hence beatitude, that true happiness which man desires naturally and inevitably, cannot be found in any limited good, but only in God, seen at least in natural fashion and loved efficaciously above all things. St. Thomas thesis rests on the very nature of our intelligence and our will. When we try to find happiness in the knowledge of a science or in a friendship however noble, we are not slow in recognizing that we are dealing with a limited good, such as made St. Catherine of Siena express herself as follows: “If you wish any friendship to endure, if you wish to quench your thirst for a long time, you must always refill your cup at the source of living water, otherwise it cannot continue to reply to your thirst.”

It is impossible, in fact, for man to find true happiness which he desires naturally in any limited good, because his intelligence at once seizes on this limit, and thus conceives a higher good, and thus his will naturally desires that higher good.

Even if it were to be granted to us to see an angel, to behold without medium his suprasensible and purely spiritual beauty, we would indeed at first be amazed. But our intelligence, knowing universal good, would not be slow in telling us that even this great good is a finite good, and would find this finite good very poor in comparison with good itself, without limits and without any imperfection.

Even the simultaneous collection of all finite good would not constitute goodness itself, no more than an innumerable multitude of idiots can equal a man of genius.

Following St. Gregory the Great, St. Thomas writes: Temporal goods appear desirable when we do not have them; but when we do have them, we see their poverty, which cannot meet our desire and which therefore produces disillusion, lassitude, and often repugnance. In spiritual goods the inverse is true. They do not seem desirable to those who do not have them and who desire especially sensible good. But the more we possess them the more we know their value and the more we love them. This is especially true of the sovereign good.

Of necessity, then, there exists an infinite good which alone is capable of answering our aspirations. Otherwise the universal amplitude of our will would be a psychological absurdity, a thing radically unintelligible, without raison d'etre.

Had God created us in a state purely natural without grace, our last end would have been to know Him naturally, by the reflection of His perfection in creatures, and to love Him efficaciously above all things.

But gratuitously God has called us to know Him in supernatural fashion by the immediate vision of His divine essence, to know Him as He knows himself, to love Him as He loves Himself and this for all eternity. There, above all, we will understand that God, seen face to face, can fill the immense void of our heart, that He alone is able to fill the depth of our will.

In what sense, then, is this depth of soul without measure? One may object: Our soul like every creature is finite and limited. Hence the soul-faculties are also limited. Without doubt, the creature, even the most elevated, is finite. Not only is our body limited, but our soul also. Consequently the faculties of our soul, as being characteristics of the soul, are finite. Nevertheless our intelligence, however finite, is created to know the universal truth, even the infinite truth, which is God. Similarly our will, although finite, is made to love a good that has no limits. Without doubt, even in heaven, our act of the beatific vision, considered from the side of the subject which knows, will be finite, but it is addressed to an infinite object. It attains that object, though it attains that object in a finite manner. It does not comprehend God, but it understands Him, it sees Him without medium, sees His infinite essence, His infinite perfection. Thus, to illustrate, the open eye, however small it may be, sees the immensity of the ocean, sees into the night, even as far as the stars, though they are millions of leagues away. Thus, in heaven also, our act of seeing the divine essence, though it has not the penetration of the uncreated vision, attains

immediately the divine essence. Our love of God, though it remains finite subjectively considered, rests immediately on the infinite good, which we love indeed in our own finite manner, but which makes it impossible for us to rest except in Him. No other object can satisfy all our aspirations. Then alone, says the Psalmist, I shall be satisfied when Thy glory shall appear. Our heart can never find a durable rest except in the love of God.

In this sense, seen from the objective side, our will has an infinite depth. Our will is indeed finite as being, just as our intelligence, but it opens upon the infinite. As the Thomists express themselves: Our faculties are infinite intentionally, from the side of the object, i.e., our superior faculties are finite in their entity, as characteristics of the soul, but they have an object which is without limit. Thus even in the sensible order our eye, however small, reaches out to grasp the nebulae in the immensity of the firmament.

4. THE SOURCE OF LIBERTY

IT FOLLOWS from what has been said that God alone, seen face to face, can draw our will irresistibly. In the presence of every finite object the will is free. St. Thomas writes: “If we have as our object of sight a thing actually colored, luminous from every viewpoint, the eye cannot but see this object. But if we propose to it an object which is colored or luminous only on one side, whereas it is obscure on the other (as during the night when we use a lantern), the sight will not see this object if it is presented to it on the side where it is not colored or luminous. Now just as the colored object is presented to the eye, so good is the object presented through the will. If therefore we propose to the will an object which is good, good from every point of view, the will must necessarily desire that object and cannot wish for its opposite. On the contrary, if the object presented is not altogether good from every point of view, the will can refuse to will it. Now, as the absence of any good can be called non-good, only the sovereign good, which lacks nothing, is such that the will must necessarily will it. This good is beatitude.” We cannot but wish happiness, we cannot but wish to be beatified, but we often forget that the true and perfect happiness cannot be found in any object except God loved for Himself alone. And here below we love freely; because we do not see Him immediately as He is, we can turn away from Him when we consider that what He commands is displeasing to our pride or to our sensuality.

But if God Himself, who is the infinite good, were immediately and clearly presented to us face to face, we could not but love Him. He would fill perfectly our affective capacity, which would be drawn irresistibly toward Him. It would not keep any energy to withdraw itself from this attraction. It could not find any motive to turn away from Him, or even to suspend its act of love. This is the reason why one who sees God face to face cannot sin. As St. Thomas says: “The will of him who sees the essence of God without medium, necessarily also loves that essence and cannot love

anything else except in its relation to God, just as here below we wish everything in virtue of our desire for happiness."

By opposition, our will remains free to love or not to love any object which is good under one aspect and not good or insufficiently good under another. The very definition of liberty is that of the dominating indifference of the will in regard to any object which is good from one viewpoint and not good from another. This definition of liberty is to be found, not only in human liberty, but also in angelic liberty, and, analogically, in divine liberty. Hence we see that God was free to create or not to create, to elevate us to the life of grace or not to elevate us.

Our will, then, has an infinite profundity, in the sense that God alone, seen face to face, can fill it and irresistibly draw it. Created goods cannot, for this reason, exercise on the will an invincible attraction. They attract it only superficially; the will remains free to love or not to love. Hence, here below, our will itself must go to meet this attraction, which in itself is incapable altogether of overcoming the will. Here lies the reason why the will must determine the judgment before it determines itself. For the same reason the will keeps the intelligence suspended in consideration as long as it pleases, suspends the intellectual search, or ceases to pursue it. This is the reason why it depends in last analysis on the will, whether such and such a practical judgment shall or shall not be the last. Hence the free act is a gratuitous response, proceeding from the depth of the will, to the weak solicitation of a finite good.

Only God, seen face to face, draws our will infallibly and makes it captive even to the very source of its energy. Even an angel seen immediately as he is, however beautiful he may be, cannot draw our will irresistibly. The angel is only a finite good, and two finite goods, however unequal, are equally distant from the infinite. In this sense the angel and the grain of sand, in comparison with God's supreme good, are equally low.

The depth of our will, considered from the viewpoint of the object which can fill it, is without limit. Why does it come that a particular truth (not a good), for example, the existence of Marseilles or Messina, necessitates our intellect, whereas only God, the universal good, seen face to face, can necessitate our will? St. Thomas replies: "Our intelligence is necessitated by an object which is true from every point of view, but it is not necessitated by an object which can be true or false, which is only probable, as, for example, the existence of a distant town which may have meanwhile

been destroyed by an earthquake. Our will, similarly, is not necessitated except by an object which is good from all viewpoints. Such an object is our own happiness, the source of all our acts. Such an object is, above all, God seen face to face. Here below we can cease to think on His goodness, whereas those who see God face to face cannot cease to see Him, and can never find the least pretense for suspending their action of love."

This doctrine explains several problems which are very difficult, in particular that of the liberty of Christ. For three reasons Christ here on earth was impeccable: His divine personality, the beatific vision, His plenitude of grace. Consequently He could not disobey. But, if so, how could He obey freely? Free obedience is a condition of merit. In particular, how could He freely obey the precept of dying for us on the cross, the precept which He Himself spoke of when He said, "I lay (My life) down of Myself.... This commandment have I received of My Father."

The reply of St. Thomas runs thus: Christ, although He was incapable of disobedience, since He was absolutely impeccable, could still feel that attractiveness of non-obedience. To illustrate: a good religious who receives an order that is very severe does not even have the thought of disobeying. But he does have the consciousness that he is accomplishing freely this act, difficult as it may be, and that even while he does the act he has the power of not doing it. Disobedience is a privation, non-obedience is a negation.

How then did freedom remain in the presence of death on the cross? This death was an object, good under one aspect, namely, for our salvation, and frightful under the other. Hence this object could not attract the human will of Christ irresistibly, as would the view of the divine essence seen immediately. On the other hand the precept, since it demands free and meritorious obedience, could not destroy the liberty of the will, since it would thus destroy itself.

Certainly we are here in the presence of a great mystery, a chiaroscuro of the most amazing kind. The solution lies in the universal amplitude of the will, created in such fashion that God alone seen face to face can fill its capacity, and consequently free in the presence of any good mingled with non-good.

What we have now said of the free will shows that each soul is a universe, unum versus alia omnia because each soul is opened by reason of its intelligence to universal truth, and by its will to universal good. Each

soul therefore is a spiritual universe which gravitates toward God, the sovereign good.

But each of these spiritual universes, since each has free will, can deviate from its orb, can leave the straight road, can take the road to perdition. Further, each of our deliberate acts must be performed for an end, hence each must be directed, either toward moral good or toward evil. In illustration, take a watershed, where each drop falls either to the right or to the left. In Switzerland, for example, on St. Gotthard, one drop goes to the Rhine and on to the foggy seas of the north, the other goes to the Rhone and on to the shining shores of the Mediterranean.

Similarly, in the spiritual order, each of our deliberate acts should be done for a good end and thus be directed virtually to God. If not, it is wicked and takes the opposite direction. Even the act of walking. in itself an indifferent thing, if it is done for a good end, say for proper recreation, is a good act, whereas, by a bad intention, it becomes a bad act.

This is a serious consideration, but it is also very consoling, because in the just man each deliberate act is good and meritorious. It goes toward God and brings us near Him.

We see from this point of view that it is never by chance that two immortal souls meet, be it that they are each in the state of grace or that one only has the divine life and can by its prayers, its attitude, its example, bring back the other to the right road which leads to eternity. It was not by chance that Joseph was sold by his brethren to the Ismaelite merchants. God had determined from all eternity that these merchants would pass at such and such an hour, not earlier, not later. It was not by chance that Jesus met Magdalen or Zacheus, or that the centurion found himself on Calvary.

This depth of the human will illumines, as we shall see, the teaching of divine revelation on the subject of heaven, purgatory, and hell. The just man, were he to live on the earth fifty thousand years, could still, before dying, say to God: “Father, Thy kingdom come. Let Thy will be found ever more profoundly in the depth of my will. Let Thy infused charity be rooted in my will ever more deeply.” May it please God to grant us experience of the profound depths of our soul which He alone can fill.

5. THE ROOTS OF VICE AND VIRTUE

THAT we may understand better the immensity of the soul, in particular of the will, we must now speak of vices and virtues, those roots which penetrate into the soul, either for our loss or for our salvation.

Virtue makes man perfect, inclines him to a good end, makes of him not only a good painter, a good sculptor, a good mathematician, but a good man. Vice is an evil habitude, that of acting contrary to right reason. It deforms man entire in the conduct of his life, because it taints the will and inclines it to an evil end. Vice makes of a man not a bad painter, a bad sculptor, but a bad man, a criminal. This condition begins at times even in children of fourteen or fifteen years. All vices have one root in common, namely, the disordered love of self, opposed to the love of good, and especially of the sovereign good which is God. This evil root tends to sink itself ever more deeply into the will, and from this root there is born an evil tree. The trunk of this tree is egoism, of which the central and principal branch, the continuation of the trunk, is pride, of which the lateral branches are the concupiscence of the flesh and concupiscence of the eyes. Thus St. John.

The branches of this wicked tree have numerous sub- branches which are called capital sins.

From concupiscence of the flesh is born gluttony and luxury. From concupiscence of the eyes, that is, immoderate desire of external goods, is born avarice, and then perfidy, fraud, cheating, and hardening of the heart. From the pride of life are born vainglory and ambition, disgust for spiritual things, forgetfulness of God, envy, anger, injuries to neighbor.

The capital sins conduct man to others that are still more grave, to sins against the theological virtues. They lead to blasphemy, opposed to confession of the faith, to despair, opposed to hope, to the hate of God and neighbor, opposed to charity.

Some of these vices in the most wicked men have roots that are very deep, which manifest in their own sad manner the immensity of the soul.

We know those words of St. Augustine: “Two loves have built two cities: the love of self extending to the scorn of God has made the city of Babylon, that is, the city of the world, the city of immorality, whereas the love of God even to the scorn of self has made the city of God.” Thus they forbade Peter and John to speak further in this name to anyone. To which these two replied: “If it be just in the sight of God, to hear you rather than God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.” The measureless depths of the human soul reveal themselves in this unregulated love of self, which rises at times to the scorn and hate of God. This malice is accompanied by a hate which is inveterate and incomprehensible, even against their greatest benefactors. Certain frightening perversities, as, for instance, those of Nero and other persecutors, would not yield even to the constancy and goodness that radiated from the suffering martyrs.

Now this unbelievable degree of malice manifests by contrast the grandeur of God and of the saints. The Lord permits malice and persecution in order to let the sanctity of the martyrs shine forth the more brightly. In Spain, in I 936, during the Communist persecution, the faithful would come to their priest and say: “How is it that God permits such atrocities?” And the priest would reply: “Without persecution there can be no martyrs, and martyrs are the glory of the Church.” The faithful understood and were comforted.

The immensity of the human soul appears still more in those great virtues which are rooted in it, and which could grow still greater if the time of temptation and merit were not a mere prelude to eternal life.

In virtues we distinguish the acquired virtues, which arise by repetition of natural acts, from infused virtues, which are supernatural virtues that are received at baptism, and that grow in us by means of the sacraments, by Holy Communion, and by our merits.

But even acquired virtues manifest the depths of the soul. Temperance and courage send the light of right reason down into our sensibility, there to resist temptations, at times very vivid, of impurity and laxity. Similarly the acquired virtue of justice reveals the grandeur of the human soul, particularly when, for the common good of society, it establishes and observes laws demanding great sacrifices, even those of life. We need only recall the unjustly accused Socrates, whose reverence for the laws of his land made him refuse to escape from prison.

But the infused virtues manifest still more clearly the grandeur of the soul. They proceed from sanctifying grace, which is received in the very essence of the soul as a divine root. Grace communicates to us a participation in the intimate life of God, the very vitality of God. Sanctifying grace is in truth the seed of everlasting life, semen gloriae; when it is widely expanded and developed, it enables us to see immediately God as He sees Himself, and to love Him as He loves Himself. Thus it becomes in us a germination of eternal life. If the germination of grain gives thirty or sixty or even a hundred per cent, what will be in the supernatural order the germination of eternal life?

From this divine root, which is sanctifying grace, there flows into our intelligence infused faith, and into our will infused hope and infused charity. And from these virtues derive the infused virtues of Christian prudence, of justice, of religion, of courage, of chastity, of humility, of sweetness, of patience, and the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit.

The infused virtues, flowing from sanctifying grace, give to our faculties the power of acting supernaturally in order to merit eternal life. The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, which accompany these infused virtues, render us docile to the inspirations of the inner master. He alone draws forth from our faculties, even from our sense faculties, harmonies that are not only natural, but supernatural, harmonies that we hear especially in the lives of the saints. Sanctifying grace gives us an entirely new spiritual organism.

Infused faith, resting on divine revelation, extends very widely the frontiers of our intelligence, because it lets us know God as the author of nature, and also as the author of grace—a share in His own intimate life. Faith makes us adhere infallibly and supernaturally to truths which surpass the natural forces of any created intelligence, even of the highest angel. It enables us to adhere to the mysteries of the Blessed Trinity, the elevation of the human race to the supernatural order, to the mysteries of the Fall and of the redemptive Incarnation, and of the means of salvation. And the gift of intelligence renders this infused faith more and more penetrating.

Infused hope makes us tend toward God, toward the life of eternity. Although it does not give us certitude of salvation, which would require a special revelation, it has a certitude of tendency toward that goal. By infused hope we tend surely to our last end, just as the swallow tends to its home. This certitude is augmented by the inspirations of the Holy Spirit, who, in the midst of the greatest difficulties, consoles the just man and lets

him feel that he is approaching heaven. The gift of filial fear preserves us from presumption. The gift of knowledge shows us the emptiness of terrestrial things, and the gift of piety increases our confidence in God our Father. In all these ways we see the height and the depth of the soul. We see it still better when we treat of charity.

Charity is a true friendship, a supernatural friendship, which unites us to God. Already in the Old Testament These words were spoken to the apostles, but also to us. This truth leads us far onward if we are faithful to it.

This virtue makes us love our neighbor, since he is loved by God, our common Father, inasmuch as he is a child of God or is called to be a child of God.

This charity should become ever more rooted in the depths of our soul and thus drive out the unregulated love of self. Charity widens our heart, gives it something of the grandeur of divine goodness, and makes us love, as God does, all men without exception. Yea, more, if a just man were to live on earth for an indefinite time, for millions of years, he could throughout all that time advance in merit, and charity would not cease to grow greater in the depths of his will.

St. Thomas expresses this truth in these words: “Charity can always grow greater in itself, because it is a participation in uncreated love and unlimited love. Further it can also always grow as a gift of God, its author, who can always make it grow greater. Lastly it can grow greater by our own cooperation, because the more charity grows the more the soul becomes capable of receiving its augmentation.” This love grows only in order to grow still greater. At times we are capable of experiencing this truth when we are in prayer.

This page of St. Thomas clarifies the unmeasured depths of our will. Infused charity is rooted ever more deeply, excludes more decisively the unregulated love of self. It drives us on to love ourselves and our neighbor, to glorify God in time and in eternity, on earth, in purgatory, and in heaven. It lets us grow into the immensity of the heart of God.

Length corresponds to depth and height. Listen to St. Paul: “Charity never falleth away.” He who believes in Me with a living faith not only will have eternal life, but already has it in germ.

The infused cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, courage, temperance, are far superior to the acquired virtues of the same name. These infused virtues are the virtues, not only of the perfect man, but of the child of God.

Between acquired prudence and infused prudence there is a greater distance than that between two musical notes of the same name separated by an entire octave. Infused prudence is of another order than acquired prudence, to such a degree that this latter could grow continually greater without ever attaining the least degree of the other. And the same truth holds-good for the other acquired moral virtues in relation to the infused virtues of the same name. If acquired virtue is silver, infused virtue is gold, and the gift of counsel, still higher, is a diamond. But acquired virtue does facilitate the exercise of the infused virtue and of the gift which accompanies it, just as manual agility facilitates the exercise of the musician's art, which is in his intellect.

Certain Christian virtues have a very special elevation by reason of their affinity with the theological virtues.

Humility, comparable to an excavation made for the construction of an edifice, recalls our Savior's word: "Without Me you can do nothing," and St. Paul's word: "What hast thou that thou hast not received?" We are not capable of drawing for ourselves, as coming from ourselves, the least thought profitable for salvation. Grace is required even for the least supernatural act.

Humility recalls to us also these words ascribed to St. Augustine: "There is no fault committed by another man of which we ourselves are not capable if we were placed in the same circumstances and surrounded by the same evil examples from the time of our youth." Hence we read that St. Francis of Assisi, when he saw a criminal led to execution, spoke to himself: "If this man had received the same grace as I have received, he would have been less faithless than I. If the Lord had permitted in my life the faults which he has permitted in this man's life, I would be in his place today." We must thank God for all the good He has enabled us to accomplish, and for avoidance of all the faults we could have committed. We are dealing here with the great depths of Christian life.

Infused magnanimity perfects acquired magnanimity. It completes humility and preserves us in spiritual equilibrium. It enables us to undertake great deeds for God, even in the most humble conditions, for instance, that of a good servant faithful to his master throughout his life. It enables us to avoid ambition as well as pusillanimity, reminds us that no great deeds are done without humility, without the succor of God which we ask for in

prayer daily: “Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.”

Patience, that Christian sweetness which shines so gloriously in the martyrs, enables us to support the evils of the present life with equanimity, without worry. Patience supports inevitable evils, remains on the right road, continues the ascent to God. Martyrs are in the highest degree masters of themselves. They exercise the principal act of courage, which consists, not in attacking, but in enduring. They do not yield to persecutors, but pray for them.

The virtue of religion, aided by the gift of piety, carries us on to offer to God the worship which is His due, with that filial affection which the Holy Spirit inspires, with boundless confidence in the efficaciousness of prayer, in the goodness of God, even when all seems lost.

Penance carries us forward, in union with the Sacrifice of the Altar, to repair offenses against God. It kindles zeal for the glory of God, for the salvation of our neighbor. It goes on to make reparation for sinners. A little Roman child, Antonetto Meo, who died in the odor of sanctity (July 3, 1937), had, at the age of less than six, to undergo amputation of a leg because of cancer. When his mother said to him: “If the Lord asked you for this leg, would you give it to him?” he answered, “Yes, Mama.” Then after a moment of reflection he added: “There are so many sinners in the world, someone must make reparation for them.” During the course of the second operation, not less painful, his father asked: “Is your suffering very great?” His answer was: “Yes, Papa, but suffering is like cloth. The stronger it is, the more value it has.” This spirit of reparation, which characterizes the great saints, leads into the high things of God. All infused virtues grow simultaneously. The saints reach “unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the age of the fullness of Christ.”

The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit are to the soul what seven sails are to a ship, or rather as seven spiritual antennas to the inspirations of a harmony of which God is the author.

If perversities show in sad fashion the depths of the soul, virtues reveal that depth still better, above all infused virtues, especially charity. Its roots sink ever more deeply into our will, where they chase away all egoism, all unregulated love of ourselves. Charity grows by Holy Communion. Let each Communion be substantially, if not more emotionally, more fervent, more fruitful, than the preceding Communion. A good Communion today

disposes us for a better Communion tomorrow. Thus it is in the lives of the saints, since they put no obstacle in the road of this progress. Saints exemplify the parable of the sower: grains fall upon good ground, and they bring forth fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixty-fold, and some thirty-fold. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. Seen from this viewpoint, old age, with all its drawbacks, is yet man’s most beautiful age, since it is the age where merit reaches its full development, wherein we are most near to the eternal youth of heaven.

The depths of the soul, thus manifested by growth in virtue, are manifested still more clearly by those purifications of the spirit which enable us to have our purgatory before we die to the earth.

6. PURGATORY BEFORE DEATH - THE NIGHT OF THE SOUL

THESE deep purifications of the soul have often been treated, for example, by Tauler, by Louis de Blois, and by St. John of the Cross.

Louis de Blois, that the essence of the soul has latent acts of knowledge and of love, acts which would not proceed from our faculties.

But it is true that our most profound acts, roused into activity by God, differ strikingly from the superficial judgments of daily life. These acts are so deep, so profound in the depths of our superior faculties, that they seem rooted in the very substance of the soul. In this sense, excellent authors like John of the Cross speak of substantial touches of the Holy Spirit in the depth of the soul, touches that bring forth a mystic knowledge, very elevated and intense acts of infused love.

Since God is more intimate to the soul than itself, since He preserves it in existence, He can touch and move it ab intus, from within. He touches the very bottom of our faculties by a contact, not spatial but spiritual, dynamic, divine.

Comparison has often been made between our superficial consciousness and the shell which envelops the body of a mollusk. Man, too, has his shell, that is, routine habitudes of thinking, willing, acting, attitudes which are the result of his egoism, of his illusion, of his errors. Nothing of all this is in harmony with God, hidden in the depth of our soul. This shell, this superficial consciousness, must be broken before the soul can know what lies in its most profound depths.

That which breaks the shell is the trials, especially the trial which is called purgatory before death. A poor woman, mother of many children, suddenly loses her husband, on whom the family depended. The soul of this poor woman suddenly reveals a great Christian. The father of a family is captured and kept in a war prison for many years. If he is faithful, God

bends toward him, reveals to him the grandeur of the Christian family for which he suffers.

We can see the same truth in a king robbed of his crown: in Louis XVI, say, the king of France, condemned to death and executed during the Terror. Having lost his own kingdom, he came to see before death the grandeur of the kingdom of God.

All Europe at this moment is passing through this purifying trial. Please God that we may understand. Pain is, in appearance, the most useless of things, but it becomes fruitful by the grace of Christ, whose love rendered His sufferings on Calvary infinitely fruitful. The Holy Father in Rome recently recalled in a congress of Catholic physicians these words of a French poet:

Man is an apprentice, pain is his master: Nothing can be known, except so far as man has suffered.

Thus pain, suffered in a Christian manner, is most useful. Already in the physical order it is useful, in admonishing us, for instance, of the beginning of a cancer. Similarly moral pain is useful, since it makes us desire a life superior to that of sense. Pain makes us desire God, who alone can heal certain wounds of the heart, and who alone can fortify and remake the soul. Pain invites us to have recourse to Him who alone can restore peace and give Himself to us.

Listen to St. John Chrysostom: “Suffering in the present life is the remedy against pride, which would turn us astray, against vainglory and ambition. Through suffering the power of God shines forth in weak men, who without His grace would not be able to bear their afflictions. Suffering, patience, manifests the goodness of him who is persecuted. By this road he is led to desire eternal life. Memory of the great sufferings of the saints leads us to support our own, by imitating the saints. Finally, pain teaches us to distinguish false goods which pass away from true goods which last eternally.”

Listen to Holy Scripture: “My son, reject not the correction of the Lord, and do not faint when thou art chastised by Him. For whom the Lord loveth He chastiseth, and He scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.”

We must purify the depths of the soul. Our Lord says often: “If any man will follow Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.” Again: “I am the true vine (you the branches) and My Father is the

husbandman. Every branch in Me . . . that beareth fruit, He will purge it, that it may bring forth more fruit."

This lesson is particularly necessary for those who by vocation must work, not only for their own personal sanctification, but also for that of others. Hence St. Paul says: "We are reviled, and we bless; we are persecuted, and we suffer it; we are blasphemed, and we entreat."

The purifying action of God on the depths of the soul appears above all in what is called purgatory before death, that purgatory which generally souls must traverse in order to arrive at divine union here below. During this purgatory charity is rooted more and more in the depths of the souls and ends by destroying all unregulated love of self. This unregulated love is like a blade of dogs-tail grass, which grows again and again. This bad root receives its deathblow when charity reigns entirely in the depth of the soul.

Purgatory before death means passive purification, both of sense and of spirit. Its goal is to purify the very depths of our faculties, to extirpate, with iron and fire, all germs of death. During this anticipated purgatory the soul merits, whereas after death the soul cannot merit. St. John of the Cross says: "In spite of its generosity the soul cannot arrive at complete purification of itself, cannot render itself entirely suited for the world of divine union and the perfection of love. God Himself must set His hand to the work and purify the soul in His own dark fire."

Purification of sense comes first. We are deprived of consolations which may have been useful for the moment, but which become an obstacle when we seek them for their own sake with a sort of spiritual gluttony. The ensuing sense-aridity leads us into a life much more disengaged from the senses, from the imagination, from reasoning. We begin to live by the gift of knowledge, which gives us an experimental and intuitive knowledge, first of earthly vanity, then of God's grandeur. Temptations, which become very frequent, lead us to make meritorious acts, even heroic acts, of chastity and patience. We are purified by losing certain friendships, by losing fortune, by undergoing sickness, by family trials, for example, in the case of a person unsuitably married.

This purification of sense has as its goal to subject our superior faculties entirely to God. But these superior faculties too have need of purification. The stains of the old man, says St. John of the Cross, persist in the spirit though the soul itself may not be conscious of them. They yield and disappear only under the soap and lye of purification.

Even those far advanced often seek themselves unconsciously. They are much attached to their own judgment, to their particular manner of doing good. They are too sure of themselves. They may be seduced by the demon, who carries them on to presumption. Their faults can become incurable, being taken for perfections. Selfishness prevents them from seeing these faults.

Hence purification of the spirit is also indispensable. It is a purgatory before death, meant to purify humility and the three theological virtues. This purification proceeds under an infused light, an illumination from the gift of knowledge, a light which seems obscure because it is too strong for the feeble eyes of our spirit, just as the light of the sun is too strong for nocturnal birds. This light manifests more and more the infinite grandeur of God, superior to all the ideas we ourselves can make. On the other hand, it shows us also our own defectiveness, reveals in us deficiencies that of ourselves we would never find. Humility becomes genuine humility. The soul wishes to be nothing, wishes God to be all-in-all, wishes to be unknown and reputed as nothing. Temptations against the theological virtues, common at this stage, lead to the highest heroism.

Purification sets in strong relief the formal motive of the three theological virtues. Secondary motives seem to disappear. We believe, in the absence of every other reason, for this sole and unique motive: God has said it. We adhere more and more strongly to Primal Truth, in an order immensely beyond miracles and human reasonings. We hope against hope, resting solely on God’s omnipotence and goodness. We are to love, not consolations, sensible or spiritual, but God for His own sake, because of His infinite goodness. And this pure love of God leads us to a pure love of our neighbor, whatever be our neighbor.

The three formal motives of the theological virtues, namely, Primal Truth, aiding Omnipotence, Infinite Goodness, are three stars of the first magnitude shining in this night of the spirit. St. Theresa of the Infant Jesus passed through this night in the last years of her life. St. Vincent de Paul, suffering for another priest tormented in his faith, was himself assailed for four years with temptations against the faith, so strong that he wrote the creed on a parchment, which he pressed against his heart every time the temptation became vehement. These four years in the dark night of faith multiplied his heroic acts a hundredfold. St. Paul of the Cross, the founder of the Passionists, endured a similar trial for forty-five years. This trial was

meant chiefly to repair the sins of the world. Further, since he himself was already deeply purified and had arrived at the transforming union, he was thus prepared to be the founder of an order devoted to reparation.

This passive purification of the spirit leads to mystic death, to the death of irregulated self-love, of spiritual pride, often subtle and little recognized, to the death of egoism, the principle of every sin. It cleanses the depth of the will from all wicked roots. Love of God and of neighbor now reigns without rival, according to the supreme command: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with all thy strength and with all thy mind.”

Thus the soul has passed through purgatory before physical death, and it has passed through in the state of merit, whereas in the other purgatory after death merit is not possible. Thus even here on earth the soul is spiritualized, supernaturalized, down to its very depths, where all spiritual life begins and ends. The soul aspires more and more to reach its source, to re- enter the bosom of the Father, that is, the depths of God. It aspires more and more to see Him without medium. It experiences ever more keenly that only God can satisfy it.

Great saints exemplify St. Augustine’s word: “The love of God has reached the scorn of self.” Thus we read that the apostles, after their imprisonment, came forth rejoicing because they had been judged worthy to suffer opprobrium for the name of Jesus. “And every day they ceased not, in the temple and from house to house, to teach and preach Christ Jesus.” Their blood, shed with that of thousands of other martyrs, was the seed of Christianity. The love of God even to the scorn of self triumphed over selfishness reaching to the scorn of God. Unselfish love of God converted the world, Roman and barbarian.

What will reconvert the world of today? Only a constellation of saints can lead the masses back to Christ and the Church. Mere democratic aspirations, as conceived by Lamennais and many others, are not sufficient. There is need of the love of a Vincent de Paul if we would reach the depths of the modern soul. Everlasting life must again become, not a mere word, but an experienced reality.

PART 2

DEATH AND JUDGEMENT

7. FINAL IMPENITENCE

IN THIS second part we shall consider: first, final impenitence; secondly, good death; thirdly, the unchangeableness of the soul, whether in good or in evil, after death; fourthly, the knowledge which the separated soul has; and fifthly, the particular judgment.

Since our life in eternity depends on the state of the soul at the moment of death, we must here speak of final impenitence. By contrast, we speak of deathbed conversion.

Impenitence is the absence, the privation, of that contrition which alone can destroy in the sinner the moral consequences of his revolt against God. These consequences are destroyed by satisfactory reparation, that is, first, by sorrow for having offended God, secondly, by an expiatory compensation. As St. Thomas explains, these acts of the virtue of penance are demanded by justice and charity toward God, and also by charity toward ourselves.

Impenitence is the absence of contrition or of satisfaction. This impenitence can be either temporal, lasting throughout the course of our present life, or final, existing at the moment of death.

Dispositions toward Final Impenitence

Temporal impenitence is the cause of final impenitence. Final impenitence presents itself under two different forms: impenitence of fact, the simple absence of repenting, and impenitence of will, namely, the positive resolution not to repent. In this last case we have the special sin of impenitence, which, in its final development, becomes a sin of malice. In illustration, think of a man who signs an agreement to have no religious funeral.

There is certainly a great difference between these two forms. But, if a man is seized in death in the simple state of impenitence of fact, this state is for him one of final impenitence, even though it has not been directly prepared by a special sin of hardening of heart.

Temporal impenitence of will leads directly to final impenitence, even though at times the Lord, by special mercy, preserves the soul from final impenitence. The soul on this road perseveres in sin, deliberately and coldly. It repels all thought of penance which might deliver it. Thus, as St. Augustine says, it is not only a sin of malice, it is also a sin against the Holy Spirit, that is to say, a sin which contradicts directly that which would save the sinner.

The sinner, therefore, must do penance at the proper time, for example, at the time of Easter Communion, otherwise he falls from impenitence of fact into impenitence of will, at least by a deliberate omission. One cannot stay long in mortal sin without committing new mortal sins which accelerate his downfall.

Hence we must not put off the time of repentance. Scripture urges us to do penance without delay. “Humble thyself

before thou art sick.” This is the visit of divine justice, if one has not paid attention to mercy.

The degrees of temporal impenitence are numerous. Passing from forms of impenitence which are least grave, but which for that reason are already very dangerous, we find those who are hardened by culpable ignorance, who are fixed in mortal sin, in a blindness that makes them continually prefer the goods of today to those of eternity. They drink iniquity like water. Their conscience is asleep because they have gravely neglected to instruct themselves in their numerous duties. Further, we have those who are hardened by neglect, who, though they are more enlightened than the preceding and more culpable, do not have the energy to break the bonds which they themselves have forged, bonds of luxury, of avarice, of pride, of ambition. They do not pray to obtain the energy they lack. Finally we have those who are hardened by malice, those, for example, who never pray, who are in revolt against providence, on account of, say, some misfortune. Further, free livers, who are sunk in their disorders, who blaspheme, who become materialistic, who speak of God only to insult Him. Lastly, sectaries who have a satanic hatred of the Christian religion and cease not to write against it.

There is a great difference between these classes, but we cannot affirm that, to arrive at final impenitence, we must start with the hardening of malice, or at least with the hardening that comes from neglect or voluntary ignorance. We cannot affirm that God does mercy to all other sinners who

are less culpable. Neither must we say that all those who are hardened by malice will be condemned, because divine mercy at times has converted great sectarians who seemed to be obstinate in the way of perdition.

The Church Fathers and the great preachers have often threatened with final impenitence those who put off their conversion from day to day. After such long- continued abuse of God's grace, will they ever have the efficacious grace necessary for conversion?

Return Difficult but Possible

Return is difficult. Hardening of heart supposes blindness of mind, and a will carried on to evil, with feeble movements toward good. The soul no longer derives profit from good advice, from sermons, it no longer reads the Gospel, no longer frequents the church. It resists even the warnings of genuine friends. It falls under the indictment of Isaias: "Woe to you that call evil good and good evil, that put darkness for light, and light for darkness, that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe to you that are wise in your own eyes, and prudent in your own conceits! " This condition is the consequence of sins often reiterated, of vicious habitudes, of criminal entanglements, of erroneous reading. After such abuse of grace, the Lord may refuse a sinner, not only the efficacious succor of which every sinner is deprived at the moment when he falls, but also the grace, proximately sufficient, to make obedience possible.

But return to God is still possible. The sinner, even though hardened, receives remotely sufficient graces, for example, during a mission or during a trial. He can begin to pray. If he does not resist, he receives efficacious grace to begin praying effectively. This is certain, because salvation is still possible, and, against the Pelagian heresy, conversion is not possible except by grace. If the sinner does not resist this last appeal, he will be led from grace to grace, even to that of conversion. The Lord has said: "I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live."

Return is always possible. Calvinism indeed says that God destines certain souls to eternal damnation and that consequently He refuses them all grace. The truth, on the contrary, says with St. Augustine and the Council of Trent: "God never commands the impossible, but He warns us to do what we can, and to ask of Him the grace to accomplish that which we of ourselves are unable to do." Now there lies on the hardened sinner a grave obligation to do penance, and this is impossible without grace. Hence we

must conclude that he receives from time to time sufficient graces that he may begin to pray. Salvation is still possible.

But if the sinner resists these graces, he steps into quicksand, where his feet sink down when he attempts to emerge. Sufficient grace blows from time to time, like a fresh breeze, to renew his forces. But if he continues to resist, he deprives himself of the efficacious grace which is offered in sufficient grace as fruit is offered in the blossom. Hence when, later on he wishes for that efficacious grace, will he have that succor which touches the heart and converts him in truth? Difficulties grow greater, the will grows weaker, graces diminish.

Temporal impenitence, if it is voluntary, manifestly disposes the soul for final impenitence, although divine mercy at times saves the sinner, even on his deathbed.

Impenitent Death

It is possible to die in the state of mortal sin, even though the thought of such a death has not presented itself to the spirit. Many die suddenly, and we say, looking at their abuses of graces, that they have been surprised by death. They did not pay attention to warnings received beforehand. They have not had contrition, or even attrition, which with the sacrament of penance would have justified them. Such souls are lost for eternity. Here we find final impenitence, without any special previous refusal of the last grace.

If, on the contrary, death is foreseen, we are met with an impenitence that is final. This last rejection of grace, offered before death by infinite mercy, is a sin against the Holy Spirit, which takes on different forms. The sinner shrinks back from the humiliation involved in acknowledgment of his sins, and chooses consequently his own personal evil. At times he even scorns the duty of justice and reparation before God, scorns the love which he owes to God by the supreme precept: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with all thy strength and with all thy mind.”

It is terribly dangerous to put off conversion. Father Monsabre dwells on this subject: “First, in order to profit by our last hour, we must foresee it. Everything conspires to hide this moment when it arrives: the sinner’s own illusions

his negligence, the lack of sincerity on the part of those who surround him. Secondly, to profit by this last hour, if he foresees it, he must wish to

be converted. But it is greatly to be feared that the sinner does not wish this. The tyranny of habit gives to his last acts a character of irresolution. Calculated delays have weakened his faith, have blinded him to his own state. Hence even the last hour does not move him, and he dies impenitent. Thirdly, to profit by this last hour, even if he wishes for conversion, the conversion must be sincere, and for this the soul needs efficacious grace. Yet the delaying sinner counts rather on his own will than on grace. If he does count on grace, he does so with a cowardly look toward the mercy of God. Will he thus reach a true regret for the offense done against God, to a genuine and generous act of repentance? The sinner who delays may forget what penitence is, and runs great risk of dying in his sin. Hence the conclusion: Seize the grace of repentance now, lest you lack it then when you must have it to decide your eternity."

Deathbed Conversion

Deathbed conversion, however difficult, is still possible. Even when we see no sign of contrition, we can still not affirm that, at the last moment, just before the separation of soul from body, the soul is definitively obstinate. A sinner may be converted at that last minute in such fashion that God alone can know it. The holy Cure of Ars, divinely enlightened, said to a weeping widow: "Your prayer, Madame, has been heard. Your husband is saved. When he threw himself into the Rhone, the Blessed Virgin obtained for him the grace of conversion just before he died. Recall how, a month before, in your garden, he plucked the most beautiful rose and said to you, 'Carry this to the altar of the Blessed Virgin.' She has not forgotten."

Other souls, too, have been converted in extremis, souls that could barely recall a few religious acts in the course of their life. A sailor, for example, preserved the practice of uncovering his head when he passed before a church. He did not know even the Our Father or the Hail Mary, but the lifting of his hat kept him from departing definitively from God.

In the life of the saintly Bishop Bertau of Tulle, friend of Louis Veuillot, a poor girl in that city, who had once been chanter in the cathedral, fell first into misery, then into misconduct, and finally became a public sinner. She was assassinated at night, in one of the streets of Tulle. Police found her dying and carried her to a hospital. While she was dying, she cried out: "Jesus, Jesus." Could she be granted Church burial? The Bishop answered: "Yes, because she died pronouncing the name of Jesus. But bury her early in the morning without incense." In the room of this poor woman was found

a portrait of the holy Bishop on the back of which was written: “The best of fathers.” Fallen though she was, she still recognized the holiness of her bishop and preserved in her heart the memory of the goodness of our Lord.

A certain licentious writer, Armand Sylvestre, promised his mother when she was dying to say a Hail Mary every day. He kept his promise. Out of the swamp in which he lived, he daily lifted up to God this one little flower. Pneumonia brought him to a hospital, served by religious, who said to him: “Do you wish a priest?” “Certainly,” he answered. And he received absolution, probably with sufficient attrition, through a special grace obtained for him by the Blessed Mother, though we can hardly doubt he underwent a long and heavy purgatory.

Another French writer, Adolphe Rette, shortly after his conversion, which was sincere and profound, was struck by a sentence he read in the visitors’ book of the Carmelite Convent: “Pray for those who will die during the Mass at which you are going to assist.” He did so. Some days later he fell grievously ill, and was confined to bed in the hospital at Beaune, for many years, up to his death. Each morning he offered all his sufferings for those who would die during the day. Thus he obtained many deathbed conversions. We shall see in heaven how many conversions there are in the world, owing to such prayers.

In the life of St. Catherine of Siena we read of the conversion of two great criminals. The saint had gone to visit one of her friends. As they heard, in the street below, a loud noise, her friend looked through the window. Two condemned men were being led to execution. Their jailers were tormenting them with nails heated red-hot, while the condemned men blasphemed and cried. St. Catherine, inside the house, fell to prayer, with her arms extended in the form of a cross. At once the wicked men ceased to blaspheme and asked for a confessor. People in the street could not understand this sudden change. They did not know that a near-by saint had obtained this double conversion.

Several years ago the chaplain in a prison in Nancy had the reputation of converting all criminals whom he had accompanied to the guillotine. On one occasion he found himself alone, shut up with an assassin who refused to go to confession before death. The cart, with the condemned man, passed before the sanctuary of Our Lady of Refuge. The old chaplain prayed: “Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who had recourse to thy intercession was abandoned. Convert this

criminal of mine: otherwise I will say that it has been heard that you have not heard." At once the criminal was converted.

Return to God is always possible, up to the time of death, but it becomes more and more difficult as hardheartedness grows. Let us not put off our conversion. Let us say every day a Hail Mary for the grace of a happy death.

8. THE GRACE OF A HAPPY DEATH - THE GIFT OF PERSEVERANCE

PERSEVERANCE is defined: that gift which makes the moment of death coincide with the state of grace, either continued or restored. Let us see, first, what Scripture and tradition say of this grace. Then we shall listen to the explanation furnished by the theology of St. Thomas. Scripture attributes to God the grace of death in the state of grace.

In the Book of Wisdom, on the subject of the death of the just as opposed to the death of the wicked, we read: “His soul pleased God, therefore the Lord hastened to bring him out of the midst of iniquities.” This mercy of final perseverance is given to all the elect.

St. Augustine

St. Thomas Aquinas explains this doctrine. His teaching, generally admitted by theologians, may be reduced to this: The principle of merit, namely, the state of grace, cannot be merited, since a cause cannot be the effect of itself. But final perseverance is nothing but grace, preserved by God up to the moment of death. Hence it cannot be merited. It depends on God alone, who alone can preserve the state of grace or restore to the state of grace. Yet this final perseverance can be obtained by humble and confident prayer, which we address, not to divine justice as in the case of merit, but to divine mercy.

Whence comes it, then, that we can merit eternal life, if we cannot merit final perseverance? The reason runs thus: Eternal life, far from being the principle of merit, is the terminus and the goal of merit. We shall obtain it on condition that we do not lose our merits. St. Thomas adds: “Since free will is of itself changeable, even after it has been healed by habitual grace, it is not in its power to fix itself immutably in good. It can choose this good, but it cannot realize it.”

The Council of Trent can sustain him who stands and lift up him who falls.” The Council adds that, without special revelation, we cannot in

advance be certain of receiving this gift, but we can and should hope firmly for it, battling against temptation, and working out our salvation by the practice of good works.

As regards the grace given for this last meritorious act, Thomists hold that this grace is intrinsically efficacious, that is, efficacious of its own self, though without violating in any way the liberty which it actualizes. Molinists say, on the contrary, that it is efficacious extrinsically, namely, by our consent which God had foreseen by scientia media. According to Thomists, such prevision would put a passivity in God, who would thereby become dependent in His foreknowledge on a created determination which would not come from God Himself.

If we cannot be certain in advance of the grace of a good death, we can nevertheless exercise the signs of predestination, particularly those that follow: care to preserve ourselves from mortal sin, the spirit of prayer, humility which draws down grace, patience in adversity, love of neighbor, assistance to those who are afflicted, a sincere devotion to our Lord and His Holy Mother. In this sense, according to the promise made to St. Margaret Mary, those who have received Communion in honor of the Sacred Heart on the first Friday of nine successive months can have the confidence of obtaining from God the grace of a good death. A condition is here understood, namely, that the nine Communions have been made well. The grace of receiving them well is a grace given to the elect by the Sacred Heart.

The Death of the Just

In the Old Testament the death of the just is painted in that of Tobias: At the hour of his death he calls to him his son and the seven sons of his son and says to them: “Hearken, my children, to your father: Serve the Lord in truth, and seek to do the things that please Him. And command your children that they do justice and almsdeeds, and that they be mindful of God and bless Him at all times in truth and with all their power.”

In the Book of Ecclesiasticus we read that the just man is not scandalized by the inequality of human conditions, and that it is especially at the time of his death that he judges wisely. Why are there poor and rich? Why are there those who are unfortunate and those who are fortunate? Ecclesiasticus replies: Why does one day excel another and one light another, and one year another year, when all come from the sun? By the knowledge of the Lord they were distinguished . . . and He ordered the seasons and holidays of

them; . . . some of them God made high and great days, and some of them He put in the number of ordinary days. And all men are from the ground and out of the earth, from whence Adam was created. With much knowledge the Lord hath divided them and diversified their ways. Some of them hath He blessed and exalted, . . . and some of them hath He cursed and brought low." God gives to every man according to his works. The just man sees this above all at the moment of his death.

In the same Book of Ecclesiasticus we read that God hears the prayer of the poor man, especially at the time when this man has to die, and that He punishes hearts that are without pity. "The Lord is judge, and there is not with Him respect of person; the Lord will not accept any person against a poor man; He will hear the prayer of him that is wronged . . . (and of) the widow.... The prayer of him that humbleth himself shall pierce the clouds, and he will not depart till the most High beholds." This doctrine is verified particularly at the hour of death. God will be with him in that last hour. These high thoughts occur repeatedly in the Old Testament, and still more in the New, which sees clearly in the death of the just man the prelude of eternal life.

It was the writer's privilege to see the death of a just man, a poor man, Joseph d'Estengo, who lived with his family in the eighth story of a house near the Campo Santo in Rome. He was gangrened in his four limbs, suffered much from the cold, especially when his nerves began to writhe before death. Nevertheless he never complained. He offered all his sufferings to the Lord for the salvation of his soul, for his own people, for the conversion of sinners. Then he was struck by rapid consumption, and had to be carried to the other extremity of Rome, to the hospital of the Littorio, where three weeks later he died, in a perfect state of abandonment to God in the middle of the night.

At the precise instant when he died, his elderly father, a very good Christian, who was at the other extremity of the city, heard the voice of his son saying: "Father, I am going to heaven." And his excellent mother dreamed that her son mounted up to heaven with healed hands and feet, just as he will be in fact after the resurrection of the dead.

I count it one of the great graces of my life that I knew this poor man, who was pointed out to me by a Vincentian helper who said: "You will be happy to know him." She spoke truly. He was a friend of God. His death

confirmed this. Blessed are they who die in the Lord. He was one of those "who taste death" as the prelude of eternal life.

Preparation for Death

The just man awaits death, prepares himself for it by vigilance, above all by a reverent fear, recalling his past sins and considering the expiations that are to come. He has a vivid faith in everlasting life, the goal of his journey, the inamissible possession of God in the beatific vision, union with Christ the Redeemer, union with His holy Mother, with the saints, with those whom he has known, who have died or who will die in a Christian manner.

To this faith the just man joins a confidence ever more firm in the help of God, who enables him to arrive at his goal. And as his charity grows greater day by day, the Holy Spirit gives testimony to his spirit that he is a child of God. Hence arises the certitude of tendency, which strengthens hope in him more and more. The just man also urges friends to warn him of approaching death. It is a lack of faith when friends do not dare warn a sick person that he is going to die. It is a sin. They deceive him and prevent him from preparing himself. It is good to have an understanding with one special friend that each may warn the other.

Finally it is appropriate that, as man nears the goal of his life, he often make the sacrifice of his life in union with the sacrifice of the Mass, which perpetuates on the altar the sacrifice of the cross. Let him unite his own life and death with the four ends of all sacrifice: adoration, to recognize the sovereign excellence of the Creator; secondly, reparation, to expiate past sins; thirdly, supplication, to gain the grace of final perseverance; fourthly, thanksgiving, for innumerable benefits which God prepared for us from all eternity, which we have received daily from the time of our birth.

Daily offering of our life is counseled by His Holiness, Pius X: "Lord, my God, whatever be the kind of death which it pleases Thee to reserve for me, I from this moment on receive that death with all my heart and with all my soul. I accept that death from Thy hands, with all its anguish, pains, and sorrows."

Thus prepared, we may hope to sacrifice our life at the last moment in union with the Masses that will be celebrated then, far or near, in union with the oblation, always living, of the heart of Christ, who ceases not to intercede for us. A last act of love for God obtains the remission of a great part of the temporal punishment due to sin, and thus shortens purgatory. A very good practice is to have Mass celebrated for obtaining the grace of

graces, which is that of a good death. The Christian is fortified by the grace of extreme unction against the natural horror of death, and against the temptations of the enemy of salvation. In sorrow at leaving those whom he loves, a Christian is consoled by the Holy Viaticum, by the prayers for the dying. These prayers are extraordinarily beautiful, especially the following: “Go forth, Christian soul, go forth in the name of the almighty Father who created thee, in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, who has suffered for thee, in the name of the Holy Spirit, who has been given to thee, in the name of the glorious and holy mother of God, the Virgin Mary, in the name of blessed Joseph, her spouse, in the name of the angels and archangels, the thrones and dominations, the principalities and powers, the cherubim and seraphim, in the name of the patriarchs and prophets, in the name of the apostles, the evangelists, the martyrs, the confessors, the virgins, and of all holy men and women of God. May thy dwelling today be in peace, in the heavenly Jerusalem, with Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.”

Thus the blessed come down to surround the Christian soul, to carry it from the Church on earth into the Church in heaven.

Bossuet has a little work called Preparation for Death. Faith, hope, and charity are founded on an act of perfect abandonment: “O my God, I abandon myself to Thee. My fear is that I may not abandon myself completely to Thee through Jesus Christ. I put the cross of Thy Son between my sins and Thy justice. My soul, why art thou sad, why dost thou trouble me? Hope in Him, say to Him with all your power: ‘O my God, Thou art my salvation. The time is approaching when faith is to turn into vision. My Savior, I believe. Help Thou my unbelief. Sustain my feebleness. I have nothing to hope in from myself, but Thou hast commanded me to hope in Thee. I rejoice when I hear them say that I shall go into the house of the Lord. When shall I see Thee, my one and only God? My God, my strength, my life, I love Thee. I rejoice in Thy power, in Thy eternity, in Thy goodness. Soon, in a moment, I shall be able to embrace Thee. Take me to Thyself.”‘

“Our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ, who will reform the body of our lowliness made like the body of His glory, according to the operation whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself.... And the peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.”

After these words of St. Paul, Bossuet continues: “My Savior, I run to Thy feet in the Garden of Olives. I lie prostrate with Thee on the ground. I draw near, as near as possible, to Thine own holy body, to receive on my body the precious blood which flows from Thy veins. I take in my two hands the chalice which Thy Father gives me. Come, consoling angel of Jesus Christ, who is now suffering and agonizing in my members. Flee away, ye powers of hell. O my Savior, let me say with Thee: ‘All is consummated. I commend my soul into Thy hands. Amen.’ My soul, let us commence the eternal Amen, the eternal Alleluia, the joy and the song of the blessed for all eternity. Adieu, my mortal brethren. Adieu, holy Catholic Church. Thou hast borne me in thy bosom, hast nourished me with thy milk. Continue to purify me by thy sacrifices, because I die in unity with thee and in thy faith. And yet, O holy Church, I do not leave thee. I go to find thee in heaven, thy own home, where I shall find thy apostles, thy martyrs, thy confessors, thy virgins, with whom I shall sing forever the mercies of the Lord.” Let us conclude with St. John of the Cross: “In the evening of our life, we shall be judged by love, namely, by the sincerity of our love for God, for our own soul, for our neighbor.”

9. IMMUTABILITY AFTER DEATH

WHY does the soul become immutably fixed, in good or in evil, immediately after death? This mystery might be studied after that of the particular judgment, because it becomes more clear by what revelation tells us of this judgment. Nevertheless, since the time of merit is finished, we must study this immutability first.

Let us see what Scripture and tradition tell us of the nature and immutability of the soul. Then we will examine what theologians say in explanation and will distinguish three different explanations of this immutability.

Immutability in Itself

We do not speak here of the question, studied by physiologists and physicians: When does real death, not merely apparent death, take place? It seems certain in many cases, particularly in accidental and sudden death, that latent life can remain many hours in the organism which a moment before was perfectly sound. It can last, it seems, at least a half-hour when death was brought on by a malady which for a long time has undermined the organism. We consider here only real death, the moment when the soul is separated from the body.

The ordinary magisterium of the Church teaches that the human soul, immediately after death, undergoes judgment on all the actions, good or bad, of its earthly existence. This judgment supposes that the time of merit has passed. This common doctrine has not been solemnly defined, but it is based on Scripture and tradition. There are no merits after death, contrary to what many Protestants teach.

Already in the Old Testament there is question of particular judgment. The rich man and Lazarus are judged, each on the acts of his life, and are judged irrevocably. Abraham replies to the rich man: “Between us and you there is fixed a great chaos.”

Jesus said to the good thief: “This day thou shalt be with Me in paradise.” The following verse makes allusion to the last judgment, but this last

judgment also deals exclusively with the acts of the present life.

In the Gospel of St. John, Jesus says: “I must work the work of Him that sent Me whilst it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work.” have often explained this text of St. John in this sense, particularly Saints Cyprian, Hilary, John Chrysostom, Cyril of Alexandria, Augustine, and Gregory the Great. These Fathers teach that after death no one can longer either merit or demerit.

This, too, is manifestly the doctrine of the ordinary universal magistracy of the Church. Although there is no solemn definition on this point, there are declarations of the Church which are to be understood in this sense. The Second Council of Lyons says: “The souls of those who die in the state of mortal sin or with original sin go down at once into hell, there to suffer, though not all with equal pains.”

Immutability in Its Cause

Some theologians, notably Scotus and Suarez,

In this explanation we find a difficulty. A great Thomistic theologian, Cardinal Cajetan, sought to explain the obstinacy of man in the same manner as St. Thomas explains the obstinacy of the demon. The Cardinal says in substance: The human soul, in the first instant of its separation from the body, commences to judge in the same manner as do pure spirits. But a pure spirit has a judgment that is immutable, a judgment that resembles the judgment of God. And why? For God the reason is clear: because from all eternity God sees all that can happen, all that will happen. God can learn nothing, nothing that could change His eternal decrees. Now there is a proportional truth for the pure spirit, the pure created spirit. We on earth, living in time, see only successively the different aspects of an object. Hence, after having chosen, we can learn something new and thereby modify our choice. The pure spirit, on the contrary, has a knowledge entirely intuitive, sees simultaneously all aspects, sees simultaneously what is for it and what is against it, sees all that is to be considered. Having thus freely chosen, it can learn nothing new, nothing that could change its choice. From this moment its choice remains immutable, and resembles God’s decrees, free but immutable. This follows from the perfection of the intelligence which characterizes pure spirits.

Hence, according to the Cardinal, the soul separated from its body, at the very instant when it begins its life as a separated soul, chooses immutably that which it wills by a last instantaneous act, meritorious or demeritorious.

At that moment it fixes itself in its choice, and therefore understands why God, infinitely good, no longer offers the grace of conversion to the soul fixed in obstinacy.

This opinion of Cardinal Cajetan, however ingenious it is, has not been accepted, at least not entirely, by later Thomists or by other theologians. They have replied: If it were so, then a sinner, dying in the state of mortal sin, could reconcile himself at once after death. Conversely, a just man, dying in the state of grace, would lose himself by a sin committed immediately after death, after the separation. But this position seems contrary to the testimony of Scripture. Thus these theologians admit, as a common teaching, that one of the conditions of merit is that man be still in the state of life, a viator, a voyager, a traveler. Consequently it is man who merits, not the soul separated from the body.

What, then, is the solution? It lies between the two preceding solutions and above them. It is the golden mean, and at the same time the summit which best expresses the thought of St. Thomas. This view is thus explained by the great theologian, Sylvester of Ferrara: “Although the soul in the first instant of separation from the body has a view, an apprehension, intellectually immutable, and although it commences at that moment to be obstinate either in evil or in good, nevertheless at this same time it no longer has a possibility of merit or demerit, whatever others say on the matter, because merit or demerit belongs not to the soul alone, but to the man, the viator, the traveler, the man who still lives. But in the first instant of separation man no longer exists, hence he can no longer merit. Whence then comes obstinacy in evil? It is caused, initially by the changeable apprehension of such and such an end, during the time when the soul is still united to the body. It is caused definitively by the unchangeable apprehension of the soul from that moment on when it is separated from the body. The same truth holds good for immutable fixation in good.”

This notion, we say, seems to contain in a higher synthesis what is true in the two preceding views. First, obstinacy in evil or fixation in good are caused initially by the last merit or demerit of the soul united to the body. Secondly, they are caused in a definitive fashion by the immovable apprehension or intuition by the separated soul which adheres henceforth immutably to that which it has chosen before death. Briefly to repeat, the soul begins to determine itself by the last free act of the present life, and it attains this fixation immutably, in regard to its knowledge and its will, in

the first instant after death. Thus it immobilizes itself in its own choice. Hence it is not a lack of God's mercy which fixes the soul in obstinacy.

But, then, says an objector, the liberty of this second act, at the precise instant following death, is diminished by its conformity with the act which preceded it in life. We must reply that the liberty of the second act is indeed diminished, in the case of the sinner who has not repented before death, because "whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." But in the case of the just man who has died in the state of grace, the liberty of the act which he makes immediately after death is greater, because liberty, which is a consequence of intelligence, grows greater with the lucidity of that intelligence. Thus the liberty of the angel, and consequently much more that of God, is much greater than our liberty. Nevertheless the choice of God, though it be sovereignly free, is posited in an immutable fashion and does not change. It will be the same with our free act posited immediately after our death. It will no longer change.

When, at the last judgment, the soul again receives its body, it will not change, because it is immobilized in its own choice. Repossession of its body will not change its choice of its last end.

This truth is easier to grasp for immutability in good, but it holds good likewise for obstinacy in evil. Only we must note that the mysteries of iniquity are more obscure than the mysteries of grace, because the mysteries of grace are in themselves sovereignly luminous, whereas the others are darkness itself.

Entrance into the state of separation from the body fixes forever the freely determined choice before death, just as in winter frost fixes moisture on the window in varied figures. But the best image is that of Scripture: "If a tree fall to the south or to the north, in what place soever it shall fall, there it shall be."

We can complete this doctrine by what St. Thomas

Let us listen to a second objection: Cannot the damned, learning from their own suffering, change their mind, and make a new choice?

Theology replies with St. Thomas: but only as the cause of their sufferings. They do not have the repentance which would lead them to ask forgiveness. They have only remorse. And between penance and remorse there is an abyss.

A third objection: But it is incredible that the demon can prefer his proud isolation to supernatural beatitude, to the vision of God, to a good infinitely

superior to the bitter joys of pride. Theology, resting on revelation, replies that the demon once for all chose his own intellectual life, his own natural beatitude, proud isolation rather than the other road of tending toward God, rather than humility and obedience. Supernatural beatitude he cannot receive except by God's grace, which he would share in common with men, so far inferior to himself. The characteristic of the proud is to please themselves in their own excellence, to the point of rejecting everything that could restrain them in this complacence.

Even among men, we find those whose pride in mathematics, say, or rationalist philosophy, leads them to reject the gospel, even to the point of denying all the miracles which confirm the gospel and the Church. Some persevere all their life in this negation. Others, like Lamennais, abandon the Church, because they wish to defend her in their own manner, not in her manner. They think their own wisdom higher than hers. Exalted, they fall by pride, as did the demon, whom they imitate.

What shall be our practical conclusion? It is this: that it is sovereignly important not to delay conversion. We can be surprised by death, and our last free act decides our eternity, happy or unhappy.

Likewise, we must pray for those who seem to be departing from God. Benedict XV urges us to have Masses celebrated for them for the grace of a good death.

I knew a man who had been reared as a good Christian, but who had wandered away from God. After having lost his wife and his only son, the son being an angel of piety, he was assailed by a terrible temptation to despair, a temptation which lasted many months. He determined to kill himself. On the day when he went to do so, at the instant when, in Tulle, he was about to throw himself into a ravine, his sister and the Carmelite nuns were praying ardently for him. At the very moment our Lord appeared to him, sad and sorrowful, and called him by his baptismal name: "Joseph." After this view of the mercy of God, Joseph Maisonneuve, that was his name, understood that the redemption was meant also for him. He was converted completely. He became sweet and humble of heart. He expiated his sins by severe penance up to his last hour, dying in the odor of sanctity. He is called the holy man of Tulle. Many wonderful cures were wrought by his intercession. Even during life his prayer worked wonders. In his own village he had a friend who led a bad life. The saint prayed nightly, his arms in the form of a cross, and he performed severe penances to obtain this

grace. One day he learned that his friend had shot himself, but that he was not yet dead. The saint at once went to him. The dying man had twenty-four hours to live. Joseph Maisonneuve exhorted him so well that he repented and died a most Christian death.

The important thing is to die well. For this end we must remember our Savior's words: "He that is not with Me is against Me." Those who seek sincerely for religious truth are already replying to the actual grace which carries them on to good. In these souls we see the beginning of that interior word, understood by St. Bernard and repeated by Pascal: "Thou wouldst not search for Me if thou hadst not already found Me." Let us recall again the word of St. John of the Cross: "In the evening of our life we will be judged by love, by the sincerity of our love for God."

An Addition

Do all men perceive before death a sweeping view of their past life? And would this view serve as sufficient grace for conversion? People who have been on the point of drowning declare that they have received this intuition.

To this question we must answer that the manner of death varies widely, from the death of saints where possibly a revelation at times announces the day and the hour, to the death of the Pharisees to whom our Lord said: "You will die in your sin."

The immobility of the soul, whether in good or in evil, commences freely in the present life, and is completed by a free act comformable to the preceding act at the first instant of separation from the body. This truth clarifies the question which occupies us now.

Obstinacy can begin long before death. Hardened sinners can be surprised by a sudden death, in which case they certainly do not have a global view of their past life, nor time to be converted. Such is the punishment of this special sin, which consists in continual delay of conversion, or, possibly, in the will not to be converted at all.

Sinners who are not hardened receive actual graces more frequently, and among these graces there may be that of a full view of their past life. If so, it is a special effect of divine mercy, to hinder them from becoming obstinate.

Others live indeed in the state of grace, but they are feeble. God, in mercy, often grants them a global view of their past life. to encourage them to persevere.

God wills not the death of the sinner, but that he be converted. Here we might cite those texts of Scripture which express the universality of God's salvific will, whereby His Son gave Himself for all on the cross. This reply is in harmony with many private revelations, and with the experience of many who barely escaped sudden death.

Nevertheless, to put off conversion would be presumption. We must not forget that God, infinitely merciful, is also sovereignly just. He must render to each according to his works. Most certainly, God's providence is irreproachable, and no sinner was ever lost because he lacked divine succor. The judgments of God are always right, perfectly just, and justice does not manifest severity except where souls have abused mercy.

10. THE PARTICULAR JUDGMENT

THE existence of the particular judgment, affirmed by the ordinary teaching of the Church, is founded on Scripture and tradition. Theological reasoning confirms this truth. It is appropriate that there be a definitive sanction as soon as the soul is capable of being judged on all its merits and demerits, that is, at the moment when the time of merit is finished, and this moment arrives at once after death. Were the case otherwise, the soul would remain in uncertainty about the general judgment, and this uncertainty would be contrary to the wisdom of God, as well as to His mercy and His Justice.

The Nature of This Particular Judgment

The analogy between divine judgment and that of human justice brings with it resemblances, but also differences. Judgment before a human tribunal involves three steps: examination of the case, pronouncement of the sentence, and the execution of that sentence.

In the divine judgment the examination of the case is instantaneous, because it needs neither the testimony of witnesses, for or against, nor the least discussion. God knows by immediate intuition, and at the moment of separation the soul knows itself without medium. It is enlightened, decisively and inevitably, on all its merits and demerits. It sees its state without possibility of error, sees all that it has thought, desired, said, and done, both in good and in evil. It sees all the good it has omitted. Memory and conscience penetrate its entire moral and spiritual life, even to the minutest details. Only then can it see clearly all that was involved in its particular vocation, for instance, that of a mother, of a father, of an apostle.

Secondly, the pronouncement of the sentence is also instantaneous. It does not come by a voice to be heard by the ear, but in a manner entirely spiritual. Intellectual illumination awakes all acquired ideas, gives additional infused ideas, whereby the soul sees its entire past in a glance. The soul sees how God judges, and conscience makes this judgment

definitive. All this takes place at the first instant of separation. When it is true to say of a person that he is dead, it is also true to say that he is judged.

Thirdly, the execution of the sentence is also immediate There is nothing to retard it. On the part of God, omnipotence accomplishes at once the order of divine justice, and on the part of the soul merit and demerit are, as St. Thomas says like lightness and heaviness in bodies. Where there are no obstacles, heavy bodies fall, light bodies rise. Thus separated souls go without delay, either to the recompense due to their merit (unless perhaps they have to undergo a temporary punishment in purgatory), or to the eternal punishment due to their demerits. Charity, like a living flame, ascends on high, whereas hate always descends.

Particular judgment, then, takes place at that first instant when it is true to say that the soul is separated.

Thus terminates the time of merit and demerit. Otherwise a soul in purgatory could still be lost, and a soul condemned could still be saved. But the souls in purgatory have arrived at the goal of their merit, though not yet at eternal beatitude. These souls are still free, but this freedom is not sufficient for merit, because one of the conditions for merit is that the person meriting be still in via, be still a viator, traveler.

At the moment of the particular judgment the soul does not see God intuitively, otherwise it would already be beatified. Neither does it, except in occasional cases, see the humanity of Christ. Rather, by an infused light, it knows God as sovereign judge, knows the Redeemer as judge of the living and the dead. Preachers, following the example of the Fathers, illustrate this doctrine by image and example. But the doctrine itself is reduced to the points we have mentioned.

Blessed are those who take their purgatory on earth, by generous acceptance of daily trials. The multiple sacrifices of daily life purify and perfect their love, and by this love they will be judged.

Love itself has many degrees. St. Peter seemed to make an act of perfect love when he protested to Jesus his readiness to die. But mingled with his act was presumption. To purify him from this presumption, Providence permitted the threefold denial, whence he came forth more humble, less trustful in himself, more trustful in God, until pure love led him to martyrdom and answered his prayer to be crucified head downward.

How do we attain pure love? Saudreau answers: “Love is not an effect of headwork, not a pushing forward of will to give to it greater force. It is the

result of accepting generously all sacrifices, in accepting with a loving heart all trials.”

The Lord augments the infused virtue of charity, the accepting soul prepares itself for the particular judgment, where it will find in Jesus rather a friend than a judge.

While the particular judgment, then, settles for each soul its place in eternity, the general judgment still remains necessary. Man is not a mere individual person, but also a member of human society, on which he has had an influence, good or bad, of longer or shorter duration. Let us see what revelation teaches us on this matter.

11. THE LAST JUDGMENT

CHRISTIAN faith thus expresses this truth: “I believe in Jesus Christ who will come to judge the living and the dead.” The symbol of St. Athanasius makes this doctrine more precise: At the coming of the Savior all men will rise with their bodies and will render an account of all their acts. Councils teach a general resurrection, after which Christ will judge all men, on what they have thought, desired, said, done, and omitted, and will then give to each according to his works. Let us see what Scripture says on this point, and how theology explains this doctrine.

Scripture

Many peoples have transmitted to us their belief in a supreme justice, which will manifest itself by sanctions beyond the tomb. This conviction shows the necessity of an individual retribution, and prescribes the individual judgment which must determine this retribution. But, besides this individual judgment we find, even in pagan religions, the conviction of a judgment that is to be final and universal.

The first books of the Old Testament, although they manifest profound faith in the justice of God, nevertheless speak only obscurely of sanctions beyond the grave.

The prophets offer us a more precise announcement of this last and eternal judgment. Isaias, speaking of the eternal restoration of Israel, with “the new heavens and the new earth,” says in the name of the Lord: “All flesh shall come to adore before My face.” and I will plead with them there.”

The Book of Wisdom

In the New Testament the universal judgment is often announced by Jesus.

This universal judgment is presented as the work of Christ, above all in the great discourse on the end of the world, as preserved by the three Evangelists.

In the Acts of the Apostles St. Peter says: “Jesus commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that it is He who was appointed by God to be judge of the living and of the dead.”

The Fathers, both Latin and Greek, not only teach this dogma explicitly, but most vividly describe the last judgment. Let it suffice to cite St. Augustine: “No one denies, or puts in doubt, that Jesus Christ, as the Scriptures have announced, will pronounce the last judgment.”

The circumstances of this universal judgment are the following: the judge will be Jesus in His humanity, because His merits have opened the gates of heaven for us. The subject matter of this judgment will be the life of each one, his thoughts, his words, his deeds, his omissions, the good and the evil which he has done. The time of this judgment is certain, but only God knows it,

St. Peter

Reasons for the Last Judgment

St. Thomas explains these reasons. First, dead men live in the memory of men on earth and are often judged contrary to truth. Spirits, strong and false, like Spinoza, Kant, and Hegel, are judged as if they were great philosophers. False prophets and heresiarchs, such as Luther and Calvin, are considered by many to be masters of religious thought, whereas great saints and doctors are profoundly ignored.

Judgment Day will show how much value is to be assigned to certain histories of philosophies, to many studies on the origins of Christianity, written in a spirit absolutely rationalistic. It will show how their perpetual variations and contradictions come from their fundamental error, the negation of the supernatural. It will manifest all lying propaganda. It will unmask hypocrites who enslaved religion instead of serving religion. Universal history will no longer be seen as a mere horizontal line of time, passing from the past to the future, but as a vertical line which attaches each event to the unique moment of an immovable eternity. The secrets of the hearts will be revealed. The Pharisees, Caiphas, Pilate, will be judged definitively. Truth will conquer all these lies. It is clear that, if God exists, truth must be the absolutely last word.

Further, the dead have had imitators, in good or in evil. Evil is easier to imitate. Truth and justice must be vindicated. “Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after justice, for they shall have their fill.”

Lastly, the effects of men’s actions last long after their death. Arius and other heresiarchs troubled souls for some centuries, whereas, on the contrary, the teaching of the apostles will exercise its influence to the end of the world. Only a final and infallible judgment of God is here sufficient, and this cannot take place until the end of time.

The Catechism of the Council of Trent says in substance: Divine justice wills that the good recover their reputation, often attacked by the wicked who triumph. Further, the body, as well as the soul, must receive the punishment or the reward which it merits. Hence the general judgment must follow the general resurrection. This judgment will oblige all men to render homage to the justice of God and to His providence. Finally, it is fitting that this judgment be carried on by Jesus Christ, because He is the Son of man, because men are to be judged, and because He Himself was unjustly judged by wicked judges.

The day of judgment is known by God alone, because the end of the world depends simply on the free will of God. But it will not come until the number of the elect is complete, and this number cannot be known except by Him who predestines.

The apostles will judge with Christ, as Jesus announced; also those who are voluntarily poor, who have left everything to follow Christ. “He that shall humble himself shall be exalted.... He hath put down the mighty from their seat and hath exalted the humble.”

The Proud and the Humble

The author of The Imitation writes: “By what strange forgetfulness do you go forward without looking ahead to the day of judgment? Earth can be a grand and salutary purgatory. Look at the patient man who, more afflicted by the malice of others than by his own injury, prays sincerely for them who sadden him and pardons them from the bottom of his heart.... Better to purify oneself than to wait unto the next world.... Then every vice will have its own proper torment. Then the humble will have great confidence, and the proud man will be surprised. Then we shall see how wise was he in this world who learned to be despised for Jesus Christ. Then there will be applause for tribulation suffered with patience. Then the scorn of riches will have greater weight than all the treasures of the earth. Good works will outweigh beautiful words. All is vanity except to love God and to serve Him. He who loves God with all his heart fears neither death nor judgment nor hell, because perfect love gives us secure access to God.”

The Imitation continues: “We must consider the secret judgments of God, lest we be proud of what we have done. Let your peace not depend on the judgments of men. Humbly commend everything to God, who alone knows all. Reverence the secret judgments of God. Ye that are humble, rejoice; ye that are poor, dance with joy, because the kingdom of God is for you.”

Blessed those who, like Bernadette of Lourdes, hear this word: “I promise you happiness, not in this life, but in the next.” This was a special revelation. She was predestined, but she would have great crosses on earth. All genuine Christian lives are marked with the cross. Crosses well borne are a sign of predestination, says St. Thomas. A rain of afflictions is better than a rain of diamonds. This truth we shall see clearly after death. Providence will then appear absolutely irreproachable in all its ways.

12. KNOWLEDGE IN THE SEPARATED SOUL

SO FAR we have spoken, first, of soul depths in the present life, then of death, lastly of judgment. We must consider the future life, first in general, then in particular, as found in hell or in purgatory or in heaven.

To have a just idea of the future life in general we must first see what theology teaches on the knowledge possessed by the soul separated from its body, the soul which no longer has the use of its senses, not even of imagination. Next, we study the state of the will, illumined by this new knowledge beyond the tomb.

We have said above that the soul begins to be fixed either in good or evil by the last voluntary act, meritorious or demeritorious, which it makes at the very moment when it separates from the body. We have said further, that it completes this fixation by the act of the will which it produces at that precise instant where the state of separation begins. Then, since everyone judges according to his inclination, the humble soul continues to judge and will conformably to humility during its state of separation, whereas the proud man who has died in final impenitence continues to judge and to will according to his pride.

This fixity, either in good or in evil, is mysterious. But this mysteriousness is not without an analogue in facts which we meet with in the present life. The disposition wherewith we enter upon a permanent state often lasts throughout the entire duration of that state. The infant born into good surroundings has promise of lasting good health, whereas the child born into poor surroundings may anticipate feeble health. Again, he who with Christian motives enters marriage has good hopes of perseverance, whereas he who enters with an evil intention will not be blessed by God in this state, unless he is converted. He who enters religion for a good purpose ordinarily perseveres, whereas he who enters for an evil motive does not persevere, and has no profit from the religious life. These examples, in a way, illustrate the fixity of the soul after death, a fixation which is affirmed by revelation.

The topic we now turn to, namely, the knowledge in the separated soul, will confirm this doctrine. It is immutability in knowledge that is the source of the immutability which is characteristic of the state of separation.

The central principle is this: Human intelligence, though it is the lowest of all intelligences, is nevertheless a genuine intelligence, an immaterial and spiritual power.

Preternatural Knowledge

The separated soul, since it no longer has its body, no longer has sense operations, internal or external, because all these are operations of an animated organ. The separated soul retains the sensitive faculties, but only radically, since they do not exist actually anywhere except in the human composite. The human imagination, like the animal imagination, does not exist actually after the corruption of its material organ. The same holds good for the habitudes of the sense faculties. Remembrances of the sensitive memory do not exist actually in the separated soul. The separated soul can no longer see in the sense order, no longer imagine in the sense order.

But the separated soul does retain actually its higher faculties, its purely spiritual faculties, namely, intellect and will and the habits which are found in these faculties. But here we must draw a distinction. Reprobated souls can retain certain acquired sciences, but do not have virtues, either acquired or infused. They have lost infused faith and infused hope. But the souls in purgatory preserve their knowledge and their virtues, acquired or infused: faith, hope, charity, prudence, religion, patience, justice, humility. This truth is very important.

Similarly the separated soul preserves the habits which have remained in these faculties. Nevertheless the exercise of these acts is in part impeded, because these faculties have no longer the aid of the imagination or sense memory, an aid which is most helpful. What, for instance, would be a preacher who would no longer have the use of imagination in the service of his intelligence?

Theologians, generally, teach that the mode of being of the separated soul is preternatural, because the soul is made to animate its body. Hence it has also a preternatural mode of action, which it receives from God at the moment of separation, a mode consisting in infused ideas, similar to those of the angels, ideas which can serve it without the aid of the imagination. Thus, to illustrate, a theologian who has become blind, and is no longer able

to read, becomes a man of prayer and receives higher inspirations. It may be that formerly he worked too much and prayed too little. Now he consecrates himself to interior prayer and thereby becomes a better theologian.

But from this notion of infused ideas received by the separated soul there arises another difficulty, quite different from the preceding. Whereas the use of abstract and acquired ideas is difficult without the imagination, the use of infused ideas is difficult because they are too high for the natural intelligence, which is the lowest of intelligences and has as its proportioned object the lowest intelligible object, namely, sense objects. These infused ideas are too elevated, just as metaphysical conceptions are too high for an unprepared spirit, or as a giant's armor is too heavy for a young fighter. David preferred his sling to the armor of Goliath.

These deficiencies are balanced by perfections. First, the soul sees itself intuitively, as does the angel. Consequently it clearly sees its spirituality, its immortality, its liberty. Further it sees in itself, as in a mirror, with perfect certitude, God, its Author and Creator. It answers the great philosophical problems with perfect clarity. St. Thomas says: "The soul in a certain real sense is thus more free to understand." Thus separated souls naturally know one another, although less perfectly than do the angels.

Can the separated soul know, not only universal truths, but also concrete facts? Yes, where it has special ties of family, friendship, and grace. Local distance is no impediment in this kind of knowledge, since it does not arise from sense but from infused ideas. Thus a good Christian mother may recall in purgatory the children whom she has left on earth.

Do these souls know what is happening on earth? St. Thomas replies: "In the natural order they do not know, because they are separated from the society of those who are still on the road to eternity. Nevertheless, if we restrict the question to the souls of the blessed, it is more probable to say that they, like the angels, do know what happens on earth, particularly what happens to those who are dear to them. This is a part of their accidental beatitude." Those in purgatory too can have love of us, even though they do not know our actual state, just as we pray for them, although we do not know their actual state, their nearness, for example, to deliverance.

Eviternity and Time

What measures the duration of separated souls? We must distinguish three kinds of duration: time, eternity, and an intermediate kind of duration, which is called eviternity.

On earth our duration is measured by continuous time, which is itself the measure of continuous movement, especially of the apparent movement of the sun. It is thus that we distinguish hours, days, years, and centuries. When the soul is separated from the body and is not yet beatified, it has a double kind of duration: eviternity and discontinuous time. Eviternity measures what is immutable in angels and separated souls. It is the measure of their substance, of their natural knowledge of self and God. Eviternity excludes succession. It is a perpetual present. Yet it differs from eternity, because it has had a beginning, and because it is united to discontinuous time which presupposes past and future.

Discontinuous time, then, is opposed to continuous or solar time. It is found in angels and separated souls, as the measure of successive thoughts and affections. One thought lasts for one spiritual instant. The following thought has its own spiritual instant. To illustrate: here on earth a person in ecstasy can remain two solar hours, or many hours, in one sole thought which represents to it one sole spiritual instant. Similarly, history characterizes different centuries, for example, the thirteenth or the seventeenth, by the ideas which predominate in each of these centuries. Thus we speak of the century of St. Louis, of the century of Louis XIV. Hence a spiritual instant, in the lives of angels and separated souls, can last many days, even many years, measured by our solar time, just as a person in ecstasy can remain thirty successive hours absorbed in one single thought.

In beatified souls there is added to this double duration (eviternity and discontinuous time) also that of participated eternity, which measures their beatific vision of the divine essence and the love which results from this vision. This is one unique instant, an immovable eternity, entirely without succession. Yet this participated eternity differs from that of essential eternity which is proper to God, just as effect differs from cause. Participated eternity had a beginning. Further, the essential eternity of God measures everything that is in God, His essence, and all His operations, whereas participated eternity measures only the beatific vision and the love which follows. Eternity is like the invisible point at the summit of a cone, whereas continuous time is pictured by the base of this cone. Eviternity and discontinuous time are between these two, the one like a circular conic section, and the other like a polygon inscribed in this circular section.

Continuous time flows without cessation. Its present flows continually from past to future. Our present life involves a succession of hours, in work, prayer, sleep. Eternity, on the contrary, is a continual present, without past or future, a unique instant of life which is possessed entirely and simultaneously. Eviternity approaches eternity. It permits us to conceive better the immutability of the life of the separated soul, not beatified, or not yet beatified: the immutability of knowledge which it has of itself, the immutability of the will fixed on its last end, good or evil.

Let us recall here the words of St. Augustine: “Unite thyself to the eternity of God, and thou thyself wilt be eternal. Unite thyself to the eternity of God. Watch with Him the events which come to pass below you.” Let us watch the successive moments of our terrestrial life, not only along the horizontal line of time which runs between the past and the future, but also on the vertical line which binds them at each instant to immovable eternity. Thus our acts will be more and more meritorious, more and more filled with love of God, and thus will pass from time into eternity, where they remain forever written in the book of life.

These different kinds of time, on earth, in purgatory, and in heaven, permit us to distinguish also in the present life two kinds of time: one corporeal, one spiritual. Corporeal time, solar time, measures the duration of our organism. Thus measured, one is eighty years of age, an old man; but, measured by spiritual time, his soul may remain very young. Thus, as we distinguish three ages of corporeal life, infancy, adult age, and old age, so in the life of the soul, we distinguish three ages, namely, the purgative life of beginners, the illuminative life of those who are progressing, the unitive way of those who are perfect.

This spiritual kind of time may explain salvation in unexpected quarters. Some great act, never retracted, has borne fruit.

I knew a young Jew, the son of an Austrian banker, in Vienna. He had decided on a lawsuit against the greatest adversary of his family, a lawsuit that would have enriched him. He suddenly recalled this word of the Pater Noster, which he had sometimes heard: “Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.” He said to himself: “How would it be if, instead of carrying on this lawsuit, I would pardon him?” He followed the inspiration, forgave completely, renounced the lawsuit. At that same moment he received the full gift of faith. This one word of the Our Father became his pathway up the mountain of life. He became a priest, a

Dominican, and died at the age of fifty years. Though nothing particularly important appeared in the remainder of his life, his soul remained at the height where it had been elevated at the moment of his conversion. Step by step he mounted to the eternal youth which is the life of heaven. The moral runs thus: One great act of self- sacrifice may decide not only our whole spiritual life on earth but also our eternity. We judge a chain of mountains by its highest peak.

PART 3

HELL

13. THE SCRIPTURES CONCERNING HELL

THREE reasons lead us to speak at length concerning hell. First, there is today an unwillingness to preach on this subject, and therefore people often forget revealed truth that is very salutary. They do not give attention to the truth that the fear of hell is the beginning of wisdom and the beginning of conversion. They forget that, in this sense, hell has saved many souls.

Secondly, there are in the world many superficial objections to this teaching, objections that seem to some believers more true than the traditional answers. Why? Because they have never entered deeply into these answers. It is easy to fasten on some superficial objection, and it is difficult to see clearly a reply involving the depths of soul-life or the immeasurable height of God's justice. To understand these answers we need more maturity and penetration.

An illustration. A priest one day asked one of his friends, a lawyer, to aid in a dialogue conference, by offering objections against the teaching of the Church on hell. The lawyer presented the common objections in a brilliant fashion under a popular point of view which captured the imagination. Since the priest was not sufficiently prepared, the objections seemed to be stronger than the answers, and the answers themselves seemed to be merely verbal. They did not capture the imagination, nor did they lead sufficiently to the notions of mortal sin without repentance, of obstinacy, of the state of termination, so different from the state of the way. Neither did they lead sufficiently to the notion of God's infinite justice. Hence we must insist on all these points, since the dogma about hell helps us to appreciate by contrast the value of salvation. Similarly we do not know the value of justice unless we examine what is meant by a great injustice, actual or threatened. Our Lord illumined St. Theresa on the beauty of heaven, but only after He had shown her the place which she would have had in hell had she continued on the road whereon she had already made some steps.

Hell signifies properly the state of the damned souls, of demons first, then of men who die in the state of mortal sin and are consequently

condemned to suffer eternally. Secondly, it signifies also the place where condemned souls are detained.

The existence of hell was denied in the third century by Arnobius who, following the Gnostics, held that those who are reprobated are also annihilated. This error was renewed by the Socinians of the sixteenth century. In ancient times, further, the Origenists, especially in the fourth century, denied the eternity of punishment in hell, because they held that all the reprobate, angels and men, would finally be converted. This error was taken up again by liberal spirits, particularly among the Protestants. The rationalists say the eternity of suffering is in contradiction to the wisdom of God, to His mercy, and to His justice. They imagine that suffering must be proportioned to the time necessary for committing the fault, and not to the gravity of the perpetual state wherein the soul finds itself after it has left the world with grievous and unrepented sin.

The Athanasian Creed and many councils affirm as a dogma of faith the existence of heaven, the eternity of punishment, both of loss and of pain, and likewise the inequality of suffering proportioned to the gravity of the faults committed and left unrepented.

Let us first see what Holy Scripture itself teaches on this point. Its teaching prepares us to understand better the doctrine of purgatory, where there is certitude of salvation, and further the doctrine of eternal beatitude. Darkness and evil show in their own manner the value of eternal light, of the sanctity that cannot be lost.

The Latin word infernum (helI) comes from infernus and signifies dark places beneath the earth. In the Old Testament the corresponding term, sheol, signifies the place of the dead in general, good or bad. which signifies the Valley of Hinnom, a ravine to the south of Jerusalem where people were accustomed to dump refuse, and even corpses. Fires burned there almost continually, to consume trash. Hence the word, after Isaias, came to express the real hell: hell which lasts forever, a worm which will not die, a fire which cannot be quenched.

Hell in the Old Testament

In a learned article on hell, M. Richard,

To the great prophets God began to show clear perspectives of the future life. We have already cited some of these texts when speaking of the Last Judgment. Isaias by St. John the Baptist.

Daniel says more clearly: “Many of those that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some unto life everlasting, and others unto reproach, to see it always.” Thus the Old Testament, for the first time, declares the resurrection of sinners to meet a judgment of condemnation.

The Book of Wisdom, after describing the sufferings reserved to the wicked after death, continues: “The just shall live for evermore.”

Ecclesiasticus speaks in the same sense: “Humble thy spirit very much, for the vengeance on the flesh of the ungodly is fire and worms.” we read that the seven brothers, martyrs, were sustained in their sufferings by the thought of eternal life. They say to their judge: “The King of the world will raise us up . . . in the resurrection of eternal life; . . . but thou by the judgment of God shalt receive just punishment for thy pride.”

All these texts of the Old Testament speak of hell in the proper sense. Many of them affirm the inequality of punishments proportioned to the gravity of the faults committed and unrepented.

Hell in the New Testament

The Precursor said to those who were guilty: “Ye brood of vipers, who hath showed you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruit worthy of penance.”

Jesus announces simultaneously the eternal salvation for the good and Gehenna for the wicked. He begins by exhorting to penance. The scribes say of Him: “By the prince of devils He casteth out devils.” His reply is: “All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and the blasphemies wherewith they shall blaspheme. But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost shall never have forgiveness, but shall be guilty of an everlasting sin.”

Jesus warns the apostles against the fear of martyrdom, saying: “Fear ye not them that kill the body and are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear Him that can destroy both soul and body in hell.” The doctrine is taught also in the parables, that of the cockle, that of the royal marriage, that of the wise and foolish virgins, that of the talents.

The same doctrine we find in the maledictions

The Gospel of St. John speaks repeatedly of the opposition between eternal life and eternal loss. “He that believeth not the Son shall not see life.”

The epistles of St. Paul,

Lastly, the Apocalypse

This is the doctrine already announced by the great prophets and in particular by Isaias. From the time of these prophets to the Apocalypse the revelation about eternal hellfire never ceased to become more precise, just as the doctrine of eternal life became more precise. Among these punishments we find those of loss, of fire, of inequality in pain, of eternal duration. Mortal sin unrepented has left the soul in a habitual state of rebellion against an infinite good.

We must be brief on the testimony of tradition. Before the third century, before the controversy with the Origenists, the Fathers teach the existence and the eternity of the pains of hell. The martyrs often say they do not fear temporal fire, but only the eternal fire.

From the third century to the fifth most of the Fathers combat the error of the Origenists on the non-eternity of the pains of hell. Among them we may cite particularly St. Methodius, St. Cyril of Jerusalem, St. Epiphanius, St. Basil, St. Chrysostom, St. Ephrem, St. Cyprian, St. Jerome, and especially St. Augustine. in particular shows that the word “eternal” is not to be taken here in a wide sense, because of its opposition to “eternal life” where the word “eternal” is used in the proper sense of the word.

14. THEOLOGICAL REASONS 230

WE HAVE seen the progress in revelation on the doctrine of the sufferings in hell. According to many theologians it is very probable that only the souls of obstinate and inveterate sinners go into hell. “The Lord,” says St. Peter, “dealeth patiently for your sake.”

We must first consider the reasons for sufferings after death, then those for an eternity of pain in hell.

First of all, the justice of God demands that sins which have not been expiated in this life be punished in the other. As sovereign Judge of the living and the dead, God owes it to Himself to render to each one according to his works. This is often affirmed in Scripture. Further, as sovereign Legislator, Ruler, and Remunerator of human society, God must add to His laws an efficacious sanction.

St. Thomas argues thus: One who rises up unjustly against justly established order must be repressed by the ruler, by the same prince, who has given the order, since he also must watch over its maintenance. Here we find extended to the moral and social order the natural law of action and reaction which repairs the damage caused. He who freely acts against conscience merits the remorse from that conscience. He who acts against the social order merits sufferings at the hand of the magistrate who is guardian of that order. He who acts against the divine law must be punished by the divine Legislator. One and the same principle runs through all these orders.

Plato in one of his most beautiful dialogues, the Gorgias, says that the greatest evil which could befall a criminal would be to go unpunished. If he knew his own happiness he would say to the judges: “I have committed this crime: inflict on me the punishment I have merited: only by voluntary acceptance of this pain can I re-enter into the order of justice which I have violated.” This sublime view is perfectly realized in the supernatural order, both in the tribunal of penance and in purgatory, in which souls are happy to

pay their debt to divine justice, to expiate in fullest measure the wrong they have done.

Thus we explain suffering in the world. But why should these pains be eternal?

First of all, we admit that this eternity of suffering cannot be demonstrated apodictically. Why? Because it is a revealed mystery, a mystery of justice which is the consequence of a mystery of iniquity, namely, of mortal sin that remains without repentance. Now the mysteries of iniquity and wickedness, and their consequences, are more obscure than the mysteries of grace. They are obscure, not only to us, but even in themselves. The mysteries of grace in themselves are very luminous. They are obscure only by reason of our feebleness of spirit, which resembles the eye of the owl in the presence of the sun. On the contrary, the mysteries of iniquity are obscure in themselves, not only for us. And final impenitence, of which hell is a consequence, is the darkest of all mysteries. Just as we cannot demonstrate apodictically either the possibility or the existence of the Holy Trinity, of the redemptive Incarnation, of eternal life, so similarly we are unable to demonstrate apodictically the eternity of the sufferings in hell.

Nevertheless, though we cannot give apodictic reasons for this truth, we can still find reasons of appropriateness, reasons which are deep and fertile. To illustrate: the sides of a polygon inscribed in a circle may be multiplied indefinitely though they never coalesce with the circumference.

The chief reasons of appropriateness for the eternity of these sufferings are thus given by St. Thomas. Mortal sin without repentance is an irreparable disorder, an offense with an immeasurable gravity. Sin merits punishment because it upsets an order justly established. As long as this disorder lasts, the sinner merits the punishment due to the sin which caused the disorder. Disorder is irreparable if the vital principle of order has been violated. The eye cannot be cured if the principle of sight has been destroyed. No organism is curable if it has been mortally wounded. But mortal sin turns man from God, his last end, and robs him of grace, the principle and germ of eternal life. Hence the disorder in this case is irreparable, and must therefore of its nature last forever. By special mercy God sometimes converts the sinner before death, but if the sinner resists and dies in final impenitence, mortal sin remains as a habitual disorder which can have no end. Hence it merits punishments which have no end.

A second reason is founded on the nature of mortal sin. Mortal sin, as offense against God, has a gravity that is unmeasured, since it denies to God the infinite dignity of being our last end and our sovereign good, to whom the sinner prefers a finite good. He loves himself more than he loves God, though the Most High is infinitely better than he.

Offense is more grave as the dignity of the offended person is higher. It is more grave to insult a magistrate, or a bishop, than to offend the first man we meet in the street. But the dignity of the sovereign good is infinite. Mortal sin, which denies to God this supreme dignity, has therefore a gravity without limits, which can be repaired only by the love of the Son of God, the theandric act of a divine incarnate person. But if the immense benefit, the redemptive Incarnation, is unrecognized and scorned, as happens in mortal sin without repentance, then the sinner merits, for offense of a gravity without measure, also punishment without measure. This punishment is the privation of God, of infinite good, a suffering, a pain, which is itself infinite in its duration. Anyone with such sin on his soul has definitively turned away from God, has deprived himself of God eternally.

As regards the disordered love of finite good preferred to God, it merits the pain of sense, a pain which is finite, being the privation of finite good. But, according to revelation, this pain too will last eternally, because the sinner is fixed and settled on this wretched good. He remains captive to his sin, and judges always according to his evil inclination. He is like a man who jumps into a well. His act, as foreseen, is eternal, leaving no hope of escape.

We must add a third reason. We said above that God, sovereign Legislator, and judge of the living and the dead, owes it to Himself to give to His laws an efficacious sanction. God cannot allow Himself to be scorned with impunity. Now if the pains of hell were not eternal, the obstinate sinner could persevere in his revolt, since no adequate sanction would repress his pride. His rebellion, we may say, would have the last word, would be the triumph of iniquity. To quote Father Monsabre: “If we deny to the moral order an eternity of suffering, we obscure the notion of good and evil, which becomes clear only under the light of this dogma.”

Finally, if beatitude, the recompense of the just, is eternal, it is surely right that the suffering due to obstinate malice should also be eternal. One is the recompense for merit, the other the punishment for demerit. As eternal mercy shines forth on one side, so the splendor of eternal justice shines on

the other. St. Paul says: “What if God willing to show His wrath (or to avenge His justice) and to make His power known, endured (or permitted) with much patience vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction, that He might show the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He has prepared unto glory?” Since justice, like mercy, is infinite, each demands to be manifested in a duration without limit.

Such, then, are the principal reasons of congruity for this revealed dogma. These arguments differ from an ordinary argument of probability, which may be false. Reasons of congruity for a revealed mystery are true, but they are not apodictic or demonstrative. They tend toward the truth, which they incline us to admit, but they do not show it absolutely. Thus a polygon inscribed in a circle, when its sides are multiplied, tends continually to identify itself with the circumference, but never becomes completely identified. Thus also, sufficient grace, which gives the proximate power to perform a salutary act, approaches efficacious grace which makes us do this act, but it is never identified with it. Thus, too, the certitude of hope is a certitude of tendency. It approaches the certitude of salvation, but is never perfectly identified with it, apart from a special revelation, and apart from the assurance given by particular judgment to souls in purgatory. We see by the precision of these terms that theology is a true branch of knowledge.

Theology reaches sure conclusions, but does not reach the evidence whereon these conclusions rest. Why? Because the theologian does not have here on earth evidence of his principles, that is, of the articles of faith. His theology is a subalternated branch of knowledge, subordinated to the knowledge which God has, just as optics is subalternated to geometry. Only the theologian who sees God face to face will have evidence of the principles of theology, and consequently also evidence on certain conclusions of his science. Thus, to illustrate, a man who knows optics practically, may in studying geometry see the evidence for his conclusions, which were heretofore obscure. Theology is thus a true science, a true branch of knowledge, but here below it remains in an imperfect state.

15. ETERNAL HELL AND DIVINE PERFECTIONS

OBJECTION has often been made that perpetuity of suffering, perpetuity of divine punishments, is opposed to the perfection of divine justice, because suffering should be proportioned to faults. If sin lasts only a moment, how shall it merit eternal punishment? Further, punishments, which should vary with the sins punished, would be equal, because all would be eternal. Finally, all punishment would be much greater than the joy found in the sin.

St. Thomas

Secondly, inequality in punishment remains. Though equal in duration, pains are eternally proportioned to their gravity.

Thirdly, punishment is proportioned, not to the false joy found in sin, but to the offense against God.

The objection continues: But, if what religion tells us is true, then divine justice demands the annihilation of the sinner, whose ingratitude cancels the benefit of existence.

Divine revelation alone can enlighten us here. Revelation says, not that the damned are to be annihilated, but that they are to be punished eternally. God could of course annihilate, but He does not. What He created, He also preserves. He raises the body to life. Further, if every mortal sin were punished by annihilation, all sins would be equally punished. St. Thomas says: “He that sins against God who gives him existence merits indeed to lose that existence. Nevertheless, if we consider the disorder, more or less grave, of the fault committed, and then the affliction due to it, we find that the proper punishment is not the loss of existence, because this is presupposed for merit or demerit, and therefore is not to be corrupted by the disorder of sin.”

Let us listen to these admirable words of Father Lacordaire: “The obstinate sinner wishes his own annihilation, because annihilation would

deliver him from God, the just judge. God would be thus constrained to undo what He has done, and that which He has made to last forever. The universe is not meant to perish. Shall, then, a soul perish simply because it does not wish to acknowledge God? No. A soul, the most precious work of the Creator, will live on forever. You can soil that soul, but you cannot destroy it. God, whose justice you have challenged, turns even lost souls into images of His law, into heralds of His justice."

The Origenists maintained that the eternity of suffering is opposed to infinite mercy, always ready to pardon.

Let us listen to St. Thomas' reply. "God in Himself is mercy without bounds, but this mercy is regulated by wisdom, which forbids mercy to demons and to demonized men. Yet even on these mercy is still exercised, not to put an end to their sufferings, but to punish them less than their merits demand."

Again: "If mercy were not mingled with justice, the damned would suffer still more. All God's ways are mercy and justice. Certain souls exalt God's mercy, others manifest His justice. And justice enters in the second place, when divine mercy has been scorned. Even then it intervenes, not to remove the suffering, but to render it less heavy and painful.

Further, this objection supposes that the damned implore the mercy of God and cannot obtain it. The truth is that the condemned soul does not ask pardon, judges always according to its culpable inclination. The only road to God is that of humility and obedience, and such a soul, proud and obstinate, refuses this road.

But, insists the unbeliever, God cannot will suffering for its own sake, because it is an evil. And if He wills it as correction, the pain inflicted should not be eternal, it should have an end. And suffering, since it is not founded on the nature of things, is accidental, and hence should not be eternal.

The Angelic Doctor

An objection: Pain, being contrary to nature, cannot be eternal. St. Thomas answers: "Pain is contrary to the soul's nature, but it is in harmony with the soul as soiled by unrepented mortal sin. As this sin, being a permanent disorder, lasts forever, the pain due to the sin will also last forever."

St. Thomas

Infinite goodness is the source both of mercy and of justice: of mercy, because it is essentially self- communicative, of justice, because it has an inalienable right to be loved by all creatures.

What created hell? God's justice, God's power, God's wisdom, God's love. Such is Dante's inscription on the gate of hell:

Through me the way into the doleful City, through me the way into the pain eternal, through me the way to people lost to pity. Justice did move Creator mine supernal, made me that power divine by evil hated, wisdom supreme and first love sempiternal.

Let Lacordaire conclude: "Had justice alone created the abyss, there might be remedy. But it is love, the first love sempiternal, which made hell. This it is which banishes hope. Were I condemned by justice, I might flee to love. But if I am condemned by love, whither can I turn?

"Such is the fate of the damned. Love, that gave His blood for them—this Love, this same Love, must now curse them.

"Just think! 'Tis God who came down to you, who took on your own nature, who spoke your language, healed your wounds, raised your dead to life. 'Tis God who died for you on a cross. And shall you still be permitted to blaspheme and mock, to enjoy to the full your voluptuousness? No. Deceive not yourselves: love is not a farce. It is God's love which punishes, God's crucified love. It is not justice that is without mercy it is love. Love is life or death. And if that love is God's love, then love is either eternal life or eternal death."

16. THE PAIN OF LOSS

THE dogma of hell shows us the immense depths of the human soul, absolute distinction between evil and good, against all the lies invented to suppress this distinction. It shows us also, by contrast, the joys of conversion and eternal beatitude.

The Latin word, damnum, which we translate by “loss,” signifies damage. The pain of loss means the essential and principal suffering due to unrepented sin. This pain of loss is the privation of the possession of God, whereas that of sense is the effect of the afflictive action of God. The first corresponds to guilt as turning away from God, whereas the second corresponds to guilt as turning toward something created.

We note, in passing, that infants who die without baptism do not feel the absence of the beatific vision as a loss, because they do not know that they were supernaturally destined to the immediate possession of God. We speak here only of that pain of loss which is conscious, which is inflicted on adults condemned for personal sin, for mortal sin unrepented. Let us see in what it consists, and what is its rigor.

The Nature of Loss

It consists essentially, as we have said, in the privation of the beatific vision and of all good that flows therefrom. Man supernaturally destined to see God face to face, to possess Him eternally, loses that right when he turns from God by mortal sin unrepented. He remains eternally separated from God, not only as his last supernatural end, but also as his natural end, because each mortal sin is indirectly against the natural law, which obliges us to obey every command which God lays on us.

The pain of loss brings with it the privation of all good which arises from the beatific vision: that is, the privation of charity, of the love of God, of the immeasurable joys of heaven, of the company of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the Blessed Virgin Mary, of the angels and the saints, of souls that live in God, of all virtues, and of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit which remain in heaven.

The Council of Florence calls them a generation of vipers, and threatens them with hell where the obstinate sinner is separated eternally from God.

Theological reasoning, as we have seen, explains these assertions of Scripture by the very nature of mortal sin followed by final impenitence. A man who dies in this state is turned away from God. After death, such a sin cannot be remitted. The soul of the sinner who freely and definitively has turned away from God stays eternally in that state. Refusal fixed by obstinacy, refusal of sovereign good which contains eminently all other goods, is punished by the loss of all good.

The Severity of This Pain

The pain of loss, the consequence of final impenitence, consists in an immense void which will never be filled, in an eternal contradiction which is the fruit of the hatred of God, in despair, in perpetual remorse without repentance, in hate of one's neighbor, in envy, in a grudge against God which is expressed by blasphemy.

First, an immense void which will never be filled. Eternal privation of God is hard for us to conceive here on earth. Why? Because the soul here on earth has not a sufficient consciousness of its own immeasurable depth, a depth which only God can fill. Sense goods, on the contrary, captivate us successively, one after the other. Gluttony and pride hinder us from understanding, practically and really, that God is our last end, that He is sovereign good. Our inclination to truth, goodness, and beauty supreme is often offset by inferior attractions. We do not as yet have a burning hunger for the only bread that can sate the soul.

But when the soul is separated from the body. it loses all these inferior goods which hindered it from understanding its own spirituality and destiny. It sees itself now as the angel does, as a spiritual substance, incorruptible and immortal. It sees that its intelligence was made for truth, above all for the supreme truth, that its will was made to love and will the good, especially the sovereign good which is God, source of all beatitude, foundation of all duty.

The obstinate soul now attains full consciousness of its own immeasurable depth, realizes that God alone, seen face to face, can fill it, sees also that this void will never be filled. Father Monsabre vividly expresses this awful truth: "The damned soul, arrived at the term of its road, should repose in the harmonious plenitude of its being, but it is turned away from God, is fixed upon creatures. It refused the supreme good, even in the

last moment of its state of trial. Hence supreme good says to it: ‘Begone’ at the very moment when, having no other good, its nature springs up to seize this supreme good. Hence it departs from its light, from infinite love, from the Father, from the divine Spouse of souls. The sinner, having denied all this on earth, is now in the night, in the void. He is in exile, repudiated, condemned. And justice can but approve.”

Interior Contradiction

The obstinate soul is still, by its very nature, inclined to love God more than itself, just as the hand loves the body more than itself, and hence exposes itself naturally to preserve that body. This natural inclination has indeed been weakened by sin, but it continues to exist in the condemned soul. Father Monsabre says: “The condemned soul loves God, has hunger for God. It loves Him in order to satisfy itself.”

On the other hand, the soul has a horror of God, an aversion which comes from unrepented sin which still holds it captive. Continuing to judge according to its unregulated inclination, it has not only lost charity, but it has acquired a hatred of God. Thus it is lacerated by an interior contradiction. It is carried toward the source of its natural life, but it detests the just judge, and expresses its rage by blasphemy. Often the Gospel repeats: “There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

The damned, knowing by a continual experience the effects of divine justice, as a consequence have hatred of God. St. Theresa defines the demon “he who does not love.” We can say the same of those obstinate Pharisees, to whom Jesus says: “You shall die in your sin.” This hatred of God manifests the total depravity of the will. The damned are continually in the act of sin, though these acts are no longer demeritorious, because the end of merit and demerit has come.

Utter despair is the terrible consequence of the eternal loss of all good. And the damned fully understand they have lost all these goods, and that by their own fault. In the Book of Wisdom we read: “Then shall the just stand with great constancy against those that have afflicted them.... (The wicked) seeing it shall be troubled with terrible fear and shall be amazed . . . saying within themselves . . .: ‘These are they whom we had some time in derision and for a parable of reproach.... Behold how they are numbered among the children of God and their lot is among the saints. Therefore we have erred from the way of truth, and the light of justice hath not shined unto us.... We wearied ourselves in the way of destruction.... What hath pride profited us?”

The extent of despair in the damned souls arises from their full knowledge of a good which can never be realized. If they could but hope to see the end of their evils! But this end will never come. If a mountain lost daily one tiny stone, a day would come when the mountain would no longer exist, since its size is limited. But the succession of centuries has no limit.

Perpetual remorse comes from the voice of conscience, which repeats that they refused to listen while there was yet time. They cannot indeed erase from their mind the first principles of the moral order, a distinction between good and evil.

But the soul is incapable of changing its remorse into penance, its tortures into expiation. St. Thomas explains: It regrets its sin, not as guilt, but only as the cause of its suffering. It remains captive to its sin and judges practically according to an inclination which is forever distorted.

Hence the condemned soul is incapable of contrition, even attrition, because even attrition supposes hope, and enters upon the road of obedience and humility. The blood of Christ no longer descends into the condemned soul to make his heart contrite and humble. As the liturgy of the office of the dead says: “In hell there is no redemption.” Repentance rises above remorse, as the repentant thief rises above Judas. Remorse tortures, penance delivers. “The obstinate soul,” says Father Lacordaire,

Hatred of God involves hatred of neighbor. As the blessed love one another, the damned hate one another. In hell there is no love, only envy and isolation. Condemned souls wish their own condemnation to be universal.

Eternally rebellious against everything, they long for annihilation, not in itself, but as cessation of suffering. In this sense Jesus says of Judas: “It were better for him if that man had not been born.”

Buried in boundless misery, the condemned soul has no desire of relief. Inexpressible anger finds vent in blasphemy. “He shall gnash with his teeth and pine away, the desire of the wicked shall perish.” because it is forever far away from God, the author of life.

The condemned, says St. Thomas, suffer unchangeably the highest possible evil. They cannot in hell even demerit, much less merit. They are no longer voyagers. They sin indeed, but they do not demerit, just as the blessed perform acts of virtue, but no longer merit. Their state, if we consider only the pain of loss, is an abyss of misery, just as inexpressible as the glory of which it is the privation, as great as the possession of God which they have lost forever.

This condition, by its abysmal contrast, illumines the measureless value of the beatific vision and of all benefits that follow therefrom. But on earth we do not understand perfectly what the damned have lost. This perfect understanding is reserved to those who have unmediated vision of the divine essence, and the measureless joy which follows that vision. Yet faith too furnishes a parallel. Those who have a firm faith, and are continually faithful to it—they, and they alone, realize what measureless good is lost when faith is lost.

17. THE PAIN OF SENSE

BESIDES the pain of loss hell inflicts also a pain of sense. We shall speak here of the existence of this pain, of what it is according to Scripture, of the nature of the fire in hell, and of its mode of action.

The Testimony of Scripture

The pain of loss is clearly affirmed in the Gospel: “Rather fear Him that can destroy both soul and body in hell.” says, from the truth that mortal sin not only turns man away from God, but turns him also to a created good preferred to God. Mortal sin, therefore, deserves a double suffering, first, the privation of God, secondly, the affliction which comes from creatures. The body, too, which has taken part in sin and has found in sin a forbidden joy, must share the suffering of the soul.

In what does the pain of sense consist? Scripture

In these descriptions two connected ideas always recur; that of imprisonment, and the pain of fire. Theologians insist as much on the one as on the other, because each explains the other. We read:

The Fire of Hell: Real or Metaphorical?

The common doctrine is that the fire of hell is a real fire. This view is based on the accepted position in the interpreting of Scripture, that is, we are to admit metaphorical language only when comparison with other passages excludes the literal sense, or when literal sense involves an impossibility. takes as type of punishment in hell that fire which fell from heaven on Sodom and Gomorrah. The metaphorical interpretation, wherein the fire is a figure of chagrin or remorse, is contrary to the obvious sense of Scripture and tradition.

The Fathers generally, with the exception of Origen and his disciples, speak of a real fire, which they compare to terrestrial fire, or even to corporeal fire. Thus St. Basil, St. Chrysostom, St. Augustine, St. Gregory the Great. after a long examination of these texts, concludes: “When the Fathers simply affirm traditional belief, they speak without hesitation of a

hell of fire. But when they discuss the difficult question of this fire's mode of action, we can notice some hesitation in their thought."

This fire, says St. Thomas,

Its Mode of Action

How can corporeal fire cause pain in a soul separated from its body, or in pure spirits like the demons? Theologians answer in general: "It can do this as an instrument of divine justice, just as the sacraments, for example, the water of baptism, produce in the soul that spiritual effect which is grace. Those who have scorned the sacraments, instruments of God's mercy, suffer the instruments of divine justice.

Theologians here divide into two camps, as they do for the sacraments, some maintaining a physical causality, others only a moral causality. A moral cause, like prayer, which we address to someone to persuade him to act, does not produce directly the effect desired, it only inclines the agent capable of producing the act to realize it. If it be thus with the fire of hell, it would not produce effectively that which is attributed to it. The effect would be simply and solely produced by God.

Thomists, on the other hand, and with them many other theologians, maintain here, as in the case of the sacraments, a physical, instrumental causality, exercised by the fire of hell on the souls of the condemned. It is difficult indeed to explain its mode of action. St. Thomas which describe hell as a prison where the damned are retained against their will.

But how can this fire, after the general resurrection, burn the bodies of the damned without consuming them? That it does so is affirmed by tradition and Scripture.

Difficulty in explaining how this fire acts, is not a reason for denying the reality of that action. Even in the natural order it is difficult to explain how exterior objects produce in our senses an impression, a representation in the psychological order, which surpasses brute matter. Hence it is not surprising that preternatural effects should be still more difficult to explain.

The pain of sense, as all tradition affirms, is not the principal pain. That which is essential in the state of damnation is the privation of God Himself, and the immense void which this privation causes in the soul, a void which manifests by contrast the plenitude of life everlasting, of which the present meritorious life is the prelude.

18. DEGREES OF PAIN

THE pains of the damned are equal as far as duration is concerned, since they are eternal, but they differ very much in degrees of rigor. God will render to each one according to his works.

We read in the Apocalypse: “As much as she hath glorified herself and lived in delicacies, so much torment and sorrow give ye to her.”

Further, it is clear that punishment must be proportioned to the gravity of the fault. Faults differ in gravity and in number, hence the sufferings of hell must be unequal in their rigor. The avaricious will not be punished in the same manner as the voluptuous. We may say that the most guilty are at the bottom of hell, though we can but conjecture the place of hell.

Can there be mitigation of the accidental pain due to venial sins, and of that due to the mortal sins, forgiven but not expiated? Many theologians admit this position as probable, because this accidental pain is in itself temporary. Thus St. Thomas says: “It is not improper to say that the pains of hell, so far as they are accidental, may diminish up to the day of the last judgment.”

We saw above that, by divine mercy, the damned suffer less than they merit. Nevertheless, the pain of loss, even the smallest, surpasses immensely all the sufferings of this world. Theologians commonly admit this also for the pain of sense, since it is eternal, without consolation, and in a soul which has already the pain of loss.

A very probable position, upheld by many theologians, is that God will not let die in sin those who have committed only one mortal sin, especially if there is a question of a sin of frailty. Final impenitence would thus be restricted to inveterate sinners. As St. Peter says: “God dealeth patiently for your sake, not willing that anyone should perish, but that all should return to penance.”

Here we may dwell on the great promise of the Sacred Heart to St. Margaret Mary. We quote Father T. J. Bainvel, S.J.,

Father Bainvel adds these words: “The promise is absolute, supposing only that the Communions have been made and have been well made. The grace promised is not the grace of perseverance in good throughout life, nor the reception of the last sacraments under every hypothesis, but that perseverance which brings with it penance, and the last sacraments so far as they are necessary.” This promise is addressed to sinners more directly than to pious souls. The promise supposes that the grace of making good Communions on nine successive First Fridays is a gift reserved to the elect. If they are in sin, they will repent before they die.

19. HELL AND OUR OWN AGE

CERTAIN authors, attempting to propose a modern conception of hell, have departed from traditional doctrine. They hold that the damned are not all absolutely perverted, that not all are guilty of hating God. In these cases, then, pain of loss and of sense would not be as severe as theologians generally affirm.

Such authors have not reflected sufficiently on the distinction between the road and the goal. They do not reflect that these separated souls undergo a total privation of God, of all goods which flow from the beatific vision, and also of those created goods given as means to reach God.

These authors, further, have not reflected sufficiently on the nature of obstinacy, and its relation to infinite justice. They lose sight of what the greatest doctors have said on the finality of hell. They ignore the imprescriptible rights of the sovereign good to be loved above all things: rights which are emphasized in the visions granted to saints.

Question: Is it proper in our own age to preach on hell? We answer thus: first, it is certainly better to go to God by the way of love than that of fear. The redemptive Incarnation invites us continually to the way of love. But fear is today a necessary element of salvation, just as surely as it was when the Fathers preached the gospel. We conclude, with the author of the article on hell in the Dictionnaire de theologique “Preachers must indeed omit all purely imaginary descriptions. The simple truth is sufficient. But to keep systematic silence on any portion of Christian teaching, particularly on forethought for our last end, is to ignore radically the spirit of Christianity. This life is a road, which ends inevitably either in hell or in heaven.”

Further, our Lord deigns frequently to give privileged souls a higher knowledge of hell, by contemplation, or by vision, imaginary or intellectual, in order to carry them on to greater hatred of sin, to growth in charity, to more burning zeal for the salvation of souls. It is sufficient here to recall the visions. Like St. Theresa, many saints were thus illumined by contrast, on the infinite greatness of God and the value of eternal life.

St. Theresa speaks thus: “I often ask myself how it came that pictures of hell did not lead me to fear these pains as they deserve. Now I feel a killing pain at sight of the multitudes who are lost. This vision was one of the greatest graces the Lord has given me. From it arise also these vehement desires to be useful to souls. Yes, I say it with all truth: to deliver one soul from these terrible torments, I would gladly, it seems to me, endure death a thousand times.”

Our Lord said to St. Catherine of Siena: if it were possible, they would choose to endure fire and torments, if they could in the meantime enjoy My vision, rather than to be delivered from other sufferings without being able to see Me. This pain is increased by a second, that of the worm of conscience, which torments them without cessation. Thirdly, the view of the demon redoubles their sufferings, because, seeing him in all his ugliness, they see what they themselves are, and thus see clearly that they themselves have merited these chastisements. The fourth torment which the damned endure is that of fire, a fire which burns but does not consume. Further, so great is the hate which possesses them that they cannot will anything good. Continually they blaspheme Me. They can no longer merit. Those who die in hate, guilty of mortal sin, enter a state which lasts forever.”

These vivid descriptions confirm the traditional doctrines. They show by contrast the value of eternal life, and the value of the time of merit, which is given to us to attain that life.

Fear of God’s chastisements is salutary, though it diminishes with the growth of charity. The more the saints love God, the more they fear to be separated from Him. This filial fear is a gift of the Holy Spirit. It makes hope perfect. It spurs us on to desire God still more strongly, and at the same time it bridles presumption.

A good theologian, Father Gardeil, O.P., in his book, The Gifts of the Holy Spirit among the Dominican Saints, speaks as follows: “Christianity has the honor of transfiguring human passions. Now is there any passion more difficult to rehabilitate than fear? Who dares to defend it? Who would undertake this task in our own time, ruled by a moral code which is founded on human respect? Mere human philosophy has but one fear, not to elevate itself enough.”

For these moralists, nothing will do except a doctrine completely filled with disinterestedness. Disinterestedness is the watchword. What! Admit that man sometimes suffers fear? That with this passion he spurns himself

to good? Oh what shame! No! Let us conceal this misery. Let it not soil our serene ordinances. Let us suppress its very name.

“Only the divine Spirit will rehabilitate fear. The fear adopted by the Holy Spirit has nothing in common with mundane fear. It is not a fear of man; it is the fear of God. ‘The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.’ And the Council of Trent, underlining a long tradition of Christian centuries, declares that even the fear of divine punishments is good and salutary.” But filial fear, the fear of sin, the fear of being separated from God, is evidently still higher in nature. It is a gift of the Holy Spirit. It grows with charity. The saints, who know not how to tremble before men, have this holy fear of God. As Father Gardeil says: “The Stoic, fearing nothing, is but an infant beside the saint who fears God alone. The saint represents human morality made divine by God’s revelation.” St. Louis Bertrand, missionary, who defied the stones and arrows, who ardently desired martyrdom, still feared God: “Lord, burn me here, cut me here, spare me not here, that Thou mayest spare me in eternity.”

God speaks by the prophet: “Turn to Me, . . . and I will turn to you.” The soul answers him with Jeremias: “Convert us, O Lord, to thee, and we shall be converted.” We can find no better words to express the sweetness of conversion. The response of the soul is more beautiful than the divine exhortation, because the divine voice was heard in order to obtain this response, just as the word of Jesus to the Cananean woman was meant to inspire her answer. The sweetness of conversion balances the rigor of the dogma.

The Three Species of Fear

Before we begin the treatise on purgatory, we must dwell briefly on the three kinds of fear. One kind is bad. The two others are good, but so distinct, one from the other, that growth in charity reduces the one and augments the other.

Fear, in general, is a shrinking of the soul faced by grave danger. When fear is a mere emotion, it must be dominated by the virtue of fortitude. But fear can exist also in the spiritual will, and can be either good or evil.

Hence theologians distinguish three kinds of fear. First, there is mundane fear, which fears the opposition of the world and turns the soul away from God. Secondly, servile fear, fear of the punishments which God many inflict. This fear is useful for salvation. Thirdly, there is filial fear, a fear of sin, which grows with love of God, and which continues to exist in heaven

under the form of reverential fear. Let us see what St. Thomas teaches us on these three kinds of fear.

In mundane fear, the fear of temporal evils which the world may bring upon us, the soul is ready to offend God in order to escape these evils. This fear appears in many forms: human respect, culpable timidity, slavery to the judgments of the world. Under this fear the soul may neglect Mass on Sunday, Communion at Easter, the duty of confession. Loss of situation may follow faithfulness. Under the form of cowardice, it can lead a man to deny his faith, to avoid the loss of exterior good or of personal liberty or of life itself. Jesus says: “Fear ye not them that kill the body and are not able to kill the soul. But rather fear Him that can destroy both soul and body in hell.”

Mundane fear, then, is always bad. We must pray God to deliver us from it. Those who regard the fear of God as an ignoble sentiment are ruled by mundane fear. Fear which shrinks from Holy Mass reverses all values, because the Mass perpetuates sacramentally the sacrifice of the cross, which has infinite value. Assistance at Mass is great honor and great profit, both for time and for eternity.

Servile fear differs very much from mundane fear. It is not fear of persecution by the world, but the fear of punishment by God. This fear is good, since it leads the soul to fulfill the divine commandments. This fear is meant when the Old Testament is called the Law of Fear, whereas the New Testament is called the Law of Love. But this fear, in itself good, can still become bad, if the soul avoids sin only to escape punishment. Such a soul would sin, if it did not fear eternal punishment. In this last case fear is servilely servile. It has mere fear of God, no love. It is evil. It cannot exist with charity, the love of God above all things.

But when this fear is not servilely servile, it is good, it aids the sinner to approach God. But even thus it is not a virtue, not a gift of the Holy Spirit. It is, says St. Catherine of Siena, like a storm which strikes the sinner down. It is insufficient for salvation, but it can lead to virtue. Thus, during a tempest at sea, the sailor may remember to pray. Even if he is in mortal sin, he prays as well as he can, moved by the actual grace, which is given under all such circumstances.

In the just man, servile fear can continue throughout life, but it grows less with the progress of charity. The more we love God, the more does selfishness diminish. The more we love God, the more do we hope to be

recompensed by God. But servile fear, fear of divine punishment, can certainly not exist in heaven.

Filial fear differs very much from the two preceding kinds. It is the fear of a son, not that of a hireling or a servant. It is a fear, not of the punishments of God, but of sin which separates us from God. It differs therefore essentially from servile fear, and still more from mundane fear.

This filial fear is not only good, like servile fear: rather it is a gift of the Holy Spirit. “Pierce Thou my flesh,” says the Psalmist, “with Thy fear, O Lord.” This filial fear, though it is the least elevated of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, is nevertheless the beginning of wisdom. It is true wisdom to fear sin, which drives us far from God. Filial fear corresponds to the beatitude of the poor in spirit, of those who fear the Lord and therefore already possess Him.

Whereas servile fear diminishes with progress in charity, filial fear grows continually, because the more we love God, the more we fear sin and separation from Him. The seven gifts are connected with charity and all other infused virtues. These gifts are the varied functions of our spiritual organism. Hence they all grow simultaneously just as “the five fingers of the hand develop simultaneously.”

St. Catherine of Siena says that, with progress in charity, filial fear grows until mundane fear disappears completely. The apostles, after Pentecost, began to glory in their tribulations. They rejoiced in being judged worthy to suffer for our Lord. Before the Ascension, feeling acutely their own impotency, they feared the persecutions our Lord had foretold. On Pentecost they were clarified, fortified, confirmed in grace.

Filial fear in heaven is called reverential fear. “The fear of the Lord is holy, enduring forever and ever.” Thus the psalm. It will no longer be fear of sin, fear of being separated from God, but deep reverence. Seeing the infinite grandeur of the Most High, the soul sees its own nothingness and fragility. God is reality itself. “Ego sum qui sum.” In this sense, as we sing in the preface, even the Powers tremble. This gift of reverential fear exists even in the holy soul of our Savior, just as do the other gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Reverential fear appears in the saints even in the present life. When St. Peter, after the first miraculous catch of fishes, came to Jesus, he said: “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.” It is then that Jesus said

to him: “Fear not, from henceforth thou shall catch men.” And Peter, James, and John left everything to follow Him.

We see how different these three kinds of fear are one from the other. Mundane fear is always bad. The fear of suffering is good, if it does not become servilely servile, if it does not dispose us to sin. Filial fear is always good. It grows with charity as do the other gifts of the Holy Spirit and continues to exist in heaven as reverential fear. Lord, deliver us from mundane fear, diminish in us servile fear, augment in us filial fear.

This distinction is not owing to human psychology. To arrive at these distinctions we need revelation, expression of divine wisdom.

Certain authors, as we have seen, teach a moral system based completely on disinterestedness, which neither fears divine punishment nor desires recompense. They blush to admit that at times they suffer this passion of fear, for such admission would upset their doctrine.

It belongs to the Holy Spirit to rehabilitate fear.

PART 4

PURGATORY

20. TEACHING OF THE CHURCH

ACCORDING to the doctrine of the Church, purgatory is the place of those souls that have died under obligation to suffer still some temporary pain, due to venial sins not yet forgiven, or to sins already forgiven but not yet expiated. They remain in purgatory until the debt which they owe to divine justice has been fully paid. They pay this debt progressively, not by merit and satisfaction, for the time of merit is gone by, but by satispassion, that is, by enduring voluntarily the satisfactory suffering inflicted on them. Their sufferings may be shortened by suffrages made for them and especially by Masses in their favor.

We find this doctrine of the Church in the Second Council of Lyons, in that of Florence,

The Protestant Error

The doctrine of purgatory was denied by the Albigenses, the Hussites, and the Protestants. Then he went on to maintain that purgatory cannot be proved by Holy Scripture; that the souls in purgatory are not sure of their salvation; that we cannot prove the impossibility of merit in purgatory; that the souls in purgatory may sin by attempting to escape the sufferings they are undergoing.

Later on, Luther reached the doctrinal root of all his negations, namely, justification by faith alone. Then he affirmed the uselessness of good works and hence the uselessness of purgatory. Supported by popular favor, he became more and more audacious. In 1524 he published his book on the abrogation of Mass. In this work he says that the denial of purgatory is not an error.

Finally, in 1530, he denied absolutely any necessity of satisfaction for our sins. To uphold this, he said, would be an injury to Christ, who has satisfied superabundantly for all sin. For the same reason he denied that the Mass is a true sacrifice, particularly a propitiatory sacrifice. We have here the radical denial of a life of reparation, as if the sufferings of the saints for the expiation of sin would be an injury to the Redeemer.

Now the first and universal cause does not exclude second causes, but grants them the dignity of causality, somewhat like a sculptor who should make statues which live. Thus the satisfactory merits of Christ do not exclude our own, but rather create them. Christ causes us to work with Him and in Him. St. Paul said: “Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so you shall fulfill the law of Christ.” Again: “I now rejoice in my sufferings for you and fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, in my flesh, for His body, which is the Church.” Certainly nothing was lacking to the sufferings of Christ in themselves, but they lacked fulfillment in our own flesh.

Calvin followed Luther in denying indulgences, in denying the sacrifice of the Mass, and purgatory.

Protestants of the present day have separated from their masters on this subject. Many of them admit an intermediate state between hell and heaven. They will not call it purgatory, but do say that the souls there can still merit and satisfy. Some hold that the sufferings of hell are not eternal. Now this temporary hell does not at all resemble the purgatory taught by the Catholic Church, according to which all souls in purgatory are in the state of grace and can no longer sin.

This is but one more example of the variations and contradictions to be found among Protestant Churches.

The chief Catholic theologians who wrote against this Protestant error are Cajetan, Sylvester Ferrariensis, St. John Fisher, John Eck, and St. Robert Bellarmine. St. John Fisher speaks thus to the Lutherans: “In suppressing the sacrifice of the Mass you have excluded the sun which illumines and warms each day of our life, and makes its influence felt even in purgatory.”

The Church condemned this Protestant error. The Council of Trent declares: “If anyone says that the man who has repented and received the grace of justification is forgiven and released from obligation to eternal punishment, in such fashion that he no longer has any obligation to temporal punishment, whether in this world or in purgatory, before he can be given entrance into heaven: let him be anathema.”

In the fourteenth chapter, which corresponds to this cannon, the Council affirms the necessity of satisfaction for sins committed after baptism: satisfaction in the form of fasting, of almsgiving, of prayer, and of other exercises of the spiritual life. These satisfactions are not meant for the eternal punishment, which was remitted by the sacrament of penance or by

the desire of the sacrament, but for the remission of temporal punishment, which is not always remitted entirely, as it is in baptism. And if this reparation, this satisfaction, has not been paid in this world, the soul will have to undergo the satisfactorial punishment of purgatory.

Purgatory in Scripture

In the Old Testament we read that Judas Machabeus “making a gathering sent twelve thousand drachmas of silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice to be offered for the . . . dead, . . . who had fallen asleep with godliness, . . . that they may be loosed from sins.” This passage shows that according to the faith of Israel the just, after death, could be aided by the sacrifices offered on earth. In that same passage we read: “It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead.”

St. Thomas remarks: “We are not taught to pray for the souls of the dead who are in heaven, nor for those who are in hell, hence there must be a purgatory after death, where the souls of the just pay the debts which they did not pay on earth.”

In the New Testament we read: “He that shall speak against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in the world to come.” Now these words presuppose, according to tradition, that certain sins can be forgiven after death, but certainly these are not mortal sins. Hence these words deal with venial sin, or with suffering due to mortal sins, remitted but not entirely expiated.

The text becomes clearer when we read in St. Paul: “You are God’s building.... The foundation ... is Christ Jesus. Now, if any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, every man’s work shall be manifest.” “And the fire shall try every man’s work.” If the work which each one added to the building subsists, he will receive recompense (for this part of his work) yet he will be saved, but only as through fire. This means that if upon this foundation he has built with wood or hay or stubble, his work will be devoured by the fire. These works which will be devoured are, for example, good works done in vanity, good accomplished in order to advance oneself, or by a spirit of opposition to adversaries, rather than by love of truth and of God.

Many Fathers have seen in this text the doctrine of purgatory: Origen, Basil, Cyril of Jerusalem, Jerome, Ambrose, Augustine, Gregory the Great. These last two understand the text to speak also of the fire of persecution and of the last judgment.

St. Thomas,

This unifying interpretation, which admits diverse purifications, is held today, both by exegetes like Father Allo, Father Prat, and by theologians like Father Pesch. Father Allo defends the same conclusion.

Purgatory in Tradition

On this subject we must distinguish two periods. During the first four centuries the existence of purgatory is affirmed, at least implicitly, by the universal practice of prayer and sacrifice offered for the dead. Tertullian speaks thus: “We make oblations for the dead one year after their death.”

This view is confirmed by inscriptions in the catacombs, as early as the third century. These inscriptions, which pray that God may refresh the soul of the dead, contain manifest allusions to the sufferings which the souls in purgatory must undergo.

This universal practice, found in the Orient and the Occident, proves that there was general belief in the existence of a place and state where souls, not yet entirely purified, undergo punishment due to their sins. The Church never prays for the damned, and does not offer for them the Eucharistic Sacrifice. Thus we see the faith of the early Church in purgatory, just as her faith in the existence of original sin is expressed by the practice of baptizing infants.

Further, during these first four centuries, we have explicit testimonies regarding the sufferings of purgatory. Tertullian

During the second period, beginning with St. Augustine, we find texts which speak explicitly of purgatory, of the fiery punishments undergone by the just who have not sufficiently expiated their sins during life. The Fathers, St. Augustine, St. Caesarius of Arles, St. Gregory the Great, affirm four truths which contain the entire doctrine of purgatory. First, after death there is no longer a possibility of merit or demerit.

During the following centuries the liturgy for the dead was gradually developed. The doctrine of the Church on purgatory was defined in the Second Council of Lyons, in that of Florence, and that of Trent.

This retrospect shows that the faith of the Church passes from a less distinct concept to a concept which is distinct. This development is seen in the doctrine on baptism, on the sacrament of penance, on the Sacrifice of the Mass, and in many other revealed truths. Let us recall here that good Christians, particularly the saints, even when they do not have a distinct

theoretical concept of a mystery, as do theologians, can still have a very deep and living concept.

Many saints, although they cannot explain theologically the difference between venial sin and mortal sin, have the virtue of contrition much more profoundly than many theologians. Unable to tell you what is formally the essence of the Sacrifice of the Mass, they are penetrated with its grandeur and fruitfulness. Thus Christians in the catacombs, preparing for martyrdom, sacrificing for their dead, had a deep and living concept of purgatory, though they could not speak of it as did theologians after the Council of Trent. Uneducated saints have a living concept of sin, of the punishment due to sin, of repentance, of satisfaction, of judgment, of hell, of purgatory, and of heaven. This science of the saints, in last analysis, is the most real, the one that counts for eternity.

This living concept is expressed by The Imitation of Christ. We must be willing to suffer everything for eternal life, even what is most painful.

21. ARGUMENTS OF APPROPRIATENESS

HERE we meet, first of all, a reason of appropriateness open even to non-believers. The order of justice, if violated, demands reparation. Now this reparation, if not made before death, must be undergone after death, and payment by him who has died without repentance must differ by far from payment by him who has repented.

This argument differs from strict theological reasoning because it rests on the principles of natural reason which can be known without revelation.

This argument is confirmed by the religious convictions of many peoples, Egyptians, Babylonians, Persians, who speak of various sanctions after death. Plato

Believers, too, can find special reasons of appropriateness. The doctrine of purgatory is one of wisdom and consolation.

It emphasizes the sanctity and majesty of God, since nothing soiled can appear before Him. It fortifies our sense of justice. It manifests the disorder, often unperceived, of venial faults. Faith in purgatory purifies us here on earth.

Further, faith shows us the relations between ourselves and the dead. It urges us to aid them. It gives us a special viewpoint on the mysterious communion of saints, the unity between the Church militant and the Church suffering. It consoles us when death bereaves us.

These reasons of appropriateness become still stronger when united with the theological reasons which make the existence of purgatory certain. Revelation is like a luminous window, which can be seen in two fashions. First, from without, and under this view we can scarcely discern the figures. Or from within, and then we distinguish details, behold the very features of the persons there depicted. The prophecies of the Old Testament are such windows, seen first by the mere light of reason, seen secondly in the full light of revelation.

22. Demonstrative Arguments

THE dogma of purgatory, founded in Scripture and tradition, can be deduced with certitude from revealed truths wherein it is implicitly contained. We must not confound these arguments with the reasons of appropriateness, which we have just spoken of and which are open even to non-believers. We are now to speak of reasons which arise from revealed principles.

St. Thomas

The first question is posed as follows: Is there a purgatory after death? St. Thomas gives two arguments of authority: the classic text from the Second Book of Machabees, and a text of St. Gregory of Nyssa. Then he expounds the theological reason for the existence of purgatory.

According to divine justice he who dies a contrite death, but has not undergone the temporal punishment due to his sins, must endure this punishment in the other life. But at the moment of death, even when contrition has forgiven mortal sins and destroyed eternal punishment, it often happens that the temporary punishment due to these sins remains to be endured. It happens also that there remain in the soul venial sins. Divine justice therefore must insist on a temporal punishment in the other life. St. Thomas adds: “Those who deny purgatory speak therefore against divine justice and fall into heresy, as St. Gregory of Nyssa has said.”

This theological reason, founded on the necessity of satisfaction, is demonstrative. It destroys the foundation of the Protestant negation. is true only of those sins forgiven by baptism. But it is not true of sins committed, with still greater ingratitude, after baptism, even when these sins were forgiven by contrition and the sacrament of penance.” That baptism brings with it remission of all punishment due to sin is the reason why, in ancient times, some people put off their baptism as long as possible.

This theological reason is founded on what Scripture says concerning penance. In the natural order it is not sufficient that one who has, for instance, kidnapped the daughter of a king simply restores her to her father. To repair the injury he must undergo a proportionate punishment.

It is not sufficient to cease sinning, not even to repent. The order of justice, if violated, must be re- established by voluntary acceptance of a compensating punishment. The created will which has arisen against the divine order is bound, even after repentance, to undergo punishment. Because it has turned away from God, it is deprived of His possession for a

time. Because it has preferred to Him a created good, it has to undergo a punishment called pain of sense.

But, says the Protestant objection, Christ the Redeemer has already satisfied superabundantly for all our sins. Tradition has always replied: The satisfactory merits of Christ are certainly sufficient to redeem all men, and yet they must be applied to each individual in order to be efficacious.

To deny the necessity of satisfaction in this world and of satispassion in purgatory amounts to denying the value of a life of reparation. Such denial involves the Lutheran negation of the necessity of good works, as if faith without works could suffice for justification and salvation.

At the end of a conference which I gave in Geneva, a Protestant, intelligent and well-instructed, came to see me. I said to him: “How could Luther come to the conclusion that faith alone and the merits of Christ suffice for salvation: that it is not necessary to observe the precepts, not even the precepts of the love of God and neighbor? “ He answered me: “It is very simple.” “How very simple?” “Yes,” he said, “it is diabolical.” “I would not dare to say that to you,” I answered, “but how is it that you are a Lutheran?” “My family,” he answered, “has been Lutheran for generations, but in the near future I shall enter the Catholic Church.”

Father Monsabre wrote the following words : “Its principles regarding justification led Protestantism to deny the dogma of purgatory. Man, saved by faith alone, by the merits of Christ, without relation to his own deeds, need fear nothing from divine justice. Divine justice must acknowledge his audacious and imperturbable conscience in the redemptive virtue of Him whose merits he exploits, even though he himself may have violated all the commandments. The negation which follows from these principles, invented to shield the wicked, is as odious as it is absurd. It is unintelligent and barbarous, for nothing is more conformable to reason than the doctrine of the Church on purgatory, and nothing is more consoling for the heart. Protestantism, at the last hour, faces the terrible perspective: everything or nothing. How count on heaven when a man looks back on a life of sin, sees that he is offering to God only a late repentance, without reparation for so many offenses? Hence there remains only the perspective of malediction.”

The chief reason for the existence of purgatory is the one we have now expounded, namely, the necessity of satisfaction for sins, mortal or venial, already forgiven. Purgatory is a place of satispassion, which applies what was lacking on earth in the line of satisfaction.

But there are two other theological reasons for the necessity of purgatory. First, the just soul, separating from the body, often has venial sins. Secondly, sins already remitted have consequences which are called the remains of sin. Since nothing soiled can enter heaven, the soul must be purified before it can see God face to face.

That venial sins do remain is not doubtful. St. Thomas says: “A man lies in sleep, in the state of grace indeed, but with venial sin, which will not be remitted without contrition.

Many souls in the state of grace retain numerous venial sins at the moment of death.”

On the “remains of sin” St. Thomas speaks as follows: “Mortal guilt is forgiven when grace turns the soul to God, the soul which had been turned away from Him. But there may remain an inclination toward created good. This inclination, this disposition caused by preceding acts, is called the remains of sin. These dispositions grow weaker in a soul that lives in the state of grace. They do not have the upper hand. But they do solicit the soul to fall back into sin.

Take a man who has sinned by drunkenness, and who has confessed at Easter with sufficient attrition. He has received absolution, sanctifying grace, and the infused virtue of temperance. But, not having as yet the acquired virtue of temperance, he retains the inclination to sin again. Or take the case of antipathy. If we confess with sufficient attrition, the sin is remitted, but we retain its consequences in the form of an inclination to sin again in the same way. Purgatory must erase these consequences if they are found in the soul at death.

But does not extreme unction remove these consequences? We answer: first, some die without this sacrament; secondly, some do not receive it with full dispositions. Extreme unction, fortifying the soul for the last struggle, hinders disordered habitudes from harming us at the supreme moment. But these habitudes still remain, like rust. And nothing soiled can enter into glory.

Such are the theological reasons for the necessity and the existence of purgatory. First, sins already forgiven often demand a temporal suffering. Secondly, venial sins may still remain. Thirdly, defective dispositions, although their corporeal element disappears, remain as inordinate dispositions of the will. Of these three reasons, the chief is the first. It is, we think, demonstrative, because of the revealed principles on which it rests.

23. PURGATORY’S CHIEF PAIN

ACCORDING to common doctrine, the chief pain is the delay of the beatific vision. This delay is sometimes called temporary pain of loss. But, in the proper sense, the pain of loss is eternal, and hence found only in hell.

These two pains of loss differ immensely in rigor, in duration, and in consequences. The damned have lost hope and charity; they blaspheme without ceasing; they have a will obstinate in evil; they never repent; they desire universal damnation. The souls in purgatory have assured hope and inamissible charity; they love God; they adore divine justice; they are confirmed in good; they repent profoundly; they love all God’s children.

This delay of the beatific vision differs notably from that which existed in limbo before the death of our Lord. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, and the prophets, saw in this delay a punishment inflicted, not, properly speaking, on their person, but on human nature not yet perfectly regenerated. The time for deliverance by Christ the Redeemer had not yet arrived. This time has now arrived. Hence the delay in purgatory is truly a suffering, the chief of purgatorial sufferings.

Suffering in Purgatory and Suffering on Earth

Suffering in purgatory is greater than all suffering on earth. Such is the doctrine of tradition, supported by theological reasoning.

Tradition is expressed by St. Augustine: “That fire will be more painful than anything man can suffer in the present life.” speaks in the same sense. According to these testimonies and others similar to them, the least pain in purgatory surpasses the greatest sufferings of the present life.

St. Bonaventure speaks somewhat differently: “In the next life, by reason of the state of the souls there retained, the purifying purgatorial suffering will be, in its kind, more severe than the greatest trials on earth.”

Many theologians, notably Suarez, She continues: “No peace is comparable to that of the souls in purgatory, except that of the saints in heaven. On the other hand, the souls in purgatory endure torments which no tongue can describe and no intelligence comprehend, without special

revelation." This saint, we recall, experienced on earth the pains of purgatory.

This testimony of tradition is illustrated by the character of great saints. While they are more severe than ordinary preachers, they also have much greater love of God and souls. They show forth, not only the justice of God, but also His boundless love. A good Christian illustrates the same truth. A Christian mother, for instance, is severe in order to correct her children, but the element that predominates is sweetness and maternal goodness. Today, on the contrary, it often happens that many parents lack both severity and love. Those persons who do not undergo purgatory on earth will have it later on. Nor must we make too sharp a distinction between sanctification and salvation. If we neglect sanctification, we may miss salvation itself.

Privation of the beatific vision is painful in the same degree as the desire of that vision is vivid. Two reasons, one negative, the other positive, show the vividness of this desire.

Negatively, its desire for God is no longer retarded by the weight of the body, by the distractions and occupations of this terrestrial life. Created goods cannot distract it from the suffering it has in the privation of God.

Positively, its desire of God is very intense, because the hour has arrived when it would be in the enjoyment of God if it had not placed thereunto an obstacle by the faults which it must expiate.

The souls in purgatory grasp much more clearly than we do, by reason of their infused ideas, the measureless value of the immediate vision of God, of His inamissible possession. Further, they have intuition of themselves. Sure of their own salvation, they know with absolute certainty that they are predestined to see God, face to face. Without this delay for expiation, the moment of separation from the body would coincide with that of entrance into heaven.

In the radical order of spiritual life, then, the separated soul ought already to enjoy the beatific vision. Hence it has a hunger for God which it cannot experience here on earth. It has failed to prepare for its rendezvous with God. Since it failed to search for Him, He now hides Himself.

Analogies may be helpful. We are awaiting, with great anxiety, a friend with whom to discuss an important matter at a determined hour. If our friend is delayed, inquietude supervenes. The longer the delay, the more does inquietude grow. In the physical order, if our meal is retarded, say six

hours or more, hunger grows ever more painful. If we have not eaten for three days, hunger becomes very severe.

Thus, in the spiritual domain, the separated soul has an insatiable hunger for God. It understands much better than

it did on earth that its will has a depth without measure, that only God seen face to face can fill this will and draw it irresistibly. This immense void renders it more avid to see the sovereign good.

This desire surpasses by far the natural desire, conditional and inefficacious, to see God. The desire of which we speak now is a supernatural desire, which proceeds from infused hope and infused charity. It is an efficacious desire, which will be infallibly fulfilled, but later. For the moment God refuses to fulfill this desire. The soul, having sought itself instead of God, cannot now find Him.

Joy follows perfect activity. The greatest joy, then, follows the act of seeing God. The absence of this vision, when its hour has arrived, causes the greatest pain. Souls in purgatory feel most vividly their impotence and poverty. A parallel on earth appears in the saints. Like St. Paul, saints desire to die and to be with Christ.

We often hear it said that in the souls in purgatory there is an ebb and flood. Strongly drawn toward God, they are held back by the “remains of sin,” which they have to expiate. They cannot rush to the goal which they so ardently desire. Love of God does not diminish their pain, but increases it. And this love is no longer meritorious. How eloquent is their title: the suffering Church!

St. Catherine of Genoa speaks as follows: “Let us suppose in the entire world only one loaf of bread. Further, even the sight of this one loaf would satisfy the hunger of every creature. Now man, in good health, has by nature the instinct of nourishment and hence the pain of hunger. If he could abstain from eating without losing health and life, his hunger would cause an ever more intolerable pain. If therefore man were certain he would never see this unique loaf of which we have spoken, his hell would be something like that of the damned. Now the souls in purgatory have the certain hope of seeing this unique loaf and of being entirely sated by it. But they endure an ever increasing pain of hunger until they enter into the eternal possession of this bread of life, which is Jesus Christ, our Lord.”

This analogy of hunger is developed by Father Faber.

Scripture is eloquent on this. “I will send forth famine into the land, not a famine of bread . . . but of hearing the word of the Lord, . . . they shall go about seeking the word of the Lord and shall not find it.”

If purgatory is less severe for souls who have sinned only by feebleness, it must be more rigorous for those who have for a long time failed in confession and Communion. “Child of nothing, what hast thou to lament? Sinner covered with ignominy, what canst thou reply? What reproaches must one address to thee, who hast so often offended God and so often merited hell ? My goodness has spared thee, that thou mightest know My love.”

Two Difficulties

Many souls are in purgatory who have sinned only venially. Can punishment so severe be proportioned to venial sins? St. Thomas replies: “Pain corresponds less to the gravity of the sin than to the disposition of the suffering soul. One and the same sin is punished more severely in purgatory than it is on earth. To illustrate. A man of delicate constitution suffers more than does another from a legal scourging.

Why is one and the same sin punished more rigorously in purgatory than on earth? Because in the absence of merit, reparation becomes satispassion. Further, the separated soul knows much better than it did before that God is the one thing necessary.

These souls can no longer do anything for themselves. They can only suffer. Hence we, who can still merit and satisfy, should offer our merits and satisfactions for them. Such offerings will never be lost. These souls incapable of sin can lose nothing of what we obtain for them.

A second difficulty appears. The more saintly a soul is, the more it desires to see God. And pain corresponds to desire. Is this just?

Our reply follows Suarez and St. Catherine of Genoa. Souls in purgatory, desiring the beatific vision, suffer from its delay, just as on earth the saints desire to die and to be with God. This normal consequence of intense love is a very noble suffering, pleasing to God who tries us. But this great pain is compensated by their greater abandonment to Providence and their greater love of divine justice. And less perfect souls suffer more from another point of view. They have lost for eternity a higher degree of glory, which would have been theirs had they been more perfect.

Think of the sufferings of Jesus and of His Mother. These sufferings were undoubtedly proportioned to reparation for our sins, but also to the intensity

of their love. Suffering for sin grows with love of God.

24. THE PAIN OF SENSE

PRIVATION of God punishes man for having turned away from Him. The pain of sense, on the contrary, punishes the soul for having turned toward creatures without reference to God. In venial sin this second disorder exists without the first.

Both the Greeks and the Latins maintain this pain of sense: a positive affliction, sorrow, chagrin, shame of conscience. And most theologians admit that all souls in purgatory suffer this pain to the end.

But the schismatic Greeks, although they admit the existence of this punishment of sense, deny the existence of fire in purgatory, whereas they recognize that fire exists in hell. The Council of Florence did not condemn this opinion of the Greeks. The Latins, on the contrary, hold that the pain of sense is nothing else but the purgatorial fire.

This view rests on seven reasons: first, the consent of scholastic theologians. Second, the authority of St. Gregory the Great. Seventh, particular revelations, for example, those of St. Catherine of Ricci. She suffered forty days to deliver a soul from purgatory. A novice, touching her hand, said: “But, my mother, you are burning.” “Yes, my daughter,” she replied, “this fire is not seen, but it consumes like a burning fever.”

How can fire cause suffering in souls separated from their bodies? As we said above, fire is an instrument of justice, as baptismal water is an instrument of grace. A soul which has refused the instruments of mercy must suffer from the instruments of justice.

The mode of this action remains mysterious. This fire has the power to bind the soul, that is, to hinder it from acting as it would and where it would. It inflicts on the soul the humiliation of depending on a material creature. An analogy is seen in paralyzed persons who cannot act as they would.

Are These Pains Voluntary?

St. Thomas replies: “Yes, in the sense that the soul wills to bear them, as benefits imposed upon it by divine justice. It realizes the suitableness of this

vivid pain, to purify the depths of the soul, to erase all egoism and self-seeking. The soul, though it had not courage during life to impose upon itself this deep interior suffering, now accepts that suffering voluntarily."

Do souls in purgatory suffer also from the demons? St. Thomas gives a profound answer. They suffer only from divine justice. They do not suffer from the demons, because they have carried away the victory over these demons. And God does not use good angels as instruments for this purification. The suffering is inflicted by divine justice, which is always united with divine mercy.

Where is purgatory? The place cannot be determined with certitude. As revelation is not explicit, we can only make conjectures. What we know is that the poor souls, separated from their bodies, no longer deal with those on earth, though exceptionally they may appear to instruct us or to ask our prayers.

Do the sufferings of purgatory diminish progressively?

How Long Must Souls Remain in Purgatory?

Purgatory itself will last until the last judgment. The end of the world will come when the number of the elect is complete. Then purgatory will have an end.

But if the question regards the duration of purgatory for a particular soul, we can but answer that the punishment will be longer and more intense according to the expiation required. Suffering corresponds to guilt, and its duration corresponds to the rootedness of sin. Thus one soul may suffer long, but with less affliction than another, whose more intense affliction brings earlier deliverance.

Let us illustrate by an analogy. Punishment on earth, say scourging, may be severe and brief, whereas imprisonment may be long and less severe. In the spiritual order, too, penance for a grave sin may be brief and severe, while for faults less grave but more deeply rooted, it may be long and mild.

Dominic Soto Private revelations mention three or four centuries, or even more, especially for those who have had high office and great responsibility.

To escape false imagining, let us again recall that purgatory is not measured by solar time, but by eviternity and discontinuous time. Discontinuous time, we have seen is composed of successive spiritual instants, and each of these instants may correspond to ten, twenty, thirty, sixty hours of our solar time, just as a person can remain thirty hours in

ecstasy absorbed by one sole thought. Hence there is no proportion between our solar time and the discontinuous time of purgatory. But if it be revealed that a soul has been delivered from purgatory at a definite instant of our time, it means that this instant corresponds to the spiritual instant of its deliverance.

25. THEIR STATE OF SOUL

WE MUST now recall briefly, first what we have said above on the nature of knowledge in the separated soul; secondly, on particular judgment.

These souls, since they have their bodies no longer, cannot exercise the operations of sense-life. But they do retain and can exercise the superior faculties of intellect and will. They carry with them all their knowledge and all their virtues, theological and moral, but they must exercise these possessions without the support of the imagination.

This preternatural mode of being is accompanied by a preternatural mode of acting. Infused ideas enable them to know the singular in the universal, in particular to know persons remaining on earth with whom they have a special relation.

Further, they see themselves intuitively, as the angels do. Hence they know very clearly their own spirituality, immortality, liberty. In themselves, as in a mirror, they have perfect natural knowledge of God, the author of their nature. And they know one another.

The particular judgment, we have said, comes at the very instant of separation from the body. This instant terminates merit and demerit. The sentence of judgment, in the form of an intellectual illumination, covers their entire terrestrial life, and is therefore definitive. The state of the souls in purgatory follows from these principles.

Certitude of Salvation and Confirmation in Grace

Particular judgment gives to the souls in purgatory assurance of salvation. Their hope is no longer, like ours, the certitude of tendency. The particular judgment contains this special revelation. The soul is certain of its predestination. Further, it knows that it is not in heaven, where one sees God, nor in hell, where one blasphemes God. It lives in a transitory state of purification, where it loves God above all things.

Further, these souls are confirmed in grace. This, too, is a consequence of the particular judgment. Theologians teach this truth generally, recalling

that the Church has condemned the following proposition of Luther: “The souls in purgatory sin continually and endeavor to escape their sufferings.” Confirmation in grace is our reason for calling them the holy souls.

But how can they be confirmed in grace before they have received the beatific vision, which has as a consequence impeccability? Suarez explains this by a special protection of God, which preserves the souls from sin, mortal or venial, in order that their entrance into heaven shall not be delayed longer than necessary. Thomists add an intrinsic reason. These souls, being pure spirits, judge in immovable fashion concerning their last end, and adhere to that last end immovably. They are fixed in good. This is the teaching of St. Thomas. We find something similar on earth in saints who are confirmed in grace. Their turning toward God is immutable, but below this they have a succession of thoughts and sentiments, subordinated to God loved above all things.

All that we are now saying follows clearly from principles enunciated above. But difficulties still face us. First, these souls, confirmed in grace, may still have died in venial sins. When are these venial sins forgiven? Further, those converted just before death, after a life of grave disorder, have carried with them very defective dispositions. Are these dispositions taken away at once upon entrance into purgatory, or only gradually? Theology explains.

The Remission of Venial Sins

Just souls surprised by death, for example, during sleep, or at a moment when they do not have sufficient control of reason, were not able at the last moment to make an act of contrition, a meritorious act which would have obtained the remission of venial sins. Such sins are remitted to them by the act of charity and contrition which they make immediately

after death, at the moment of the particular judgment. This act indeed is no longer meritorious. But it is an act of charity and contrition which suffices to remit venial sins, though the soul must still endure the suffering due to these faults. Such is the teaching of St. Thomas,

This doctrine is very probable. Nothing prevents the separated soul from making at once an act of repentance. It is no longer hindered by the passions. General contrition would suffice for the remission of these sins. But, under the light of the particular judgment, the soul sees all its sins singly and consequently repents of each singly. This is a wonderful complement of the act of contrition made on earth, although that

complement is not meritorious. Certainly it is better to make this act of contrition before death. To sacrifice life in union with the Masses celebrated at the moment of death would have been meritorious. But, while it is not now meritorious, it obtains the remission of venial sins. Such a soul is a saint, because all its venial sins are at once remitted, and it can no longer sin. This is truly a beautiful doctrine.

The Defective Dispositions

When sin is remitted by grace, the soul is no longer turned away from God, but it can retain a defective disposition which carries it toward created good. These defective dispositions, while they no longer have predominance, remain as the fuel of concupiscence. The drunkard or the backbiter, even after absolution, retains a disposition to fall back into his old sin.

Do these dispositions remain in the separated soul? Yes. They are like rust, penetrating at times to the depths of the intelligence and the will. Does this rust disappear suddenly upon entrance into purgatory? Some theologians thinks so, because an intense act of charity can immediately take away these evil dispositions.

Now we do not find this answer in St. Thomas, but rather its contrary. He says, as we have seen. “The rigor of suffering corresponds properly speaking to the gravity of the fault, and the duration of the suffering corresponds to the rootedness which the sin has in the subject.” Now uprooting is generally a long process, demanding a long affliction or a long penance.

St. Catherine of Genoa

Hence we are inclined to think that, although venial sins are immediately remitted on entrance into purgatory, evil dispositions, as a rule, disappear progressively. We say, as a rule. Exceptions may occur, as on earth, so in purgatory.

Voluntary Satispassion

We are here in the heart of our subject. Sin merits suffering. The divine order, like the social order, must be re-established by a penal compensation. If the soul accepts this penalty, it re-enters the order which it has violated.

This thought, adumbrated by Plato, is developed by St. Thomas.

Purgatorial satispassion is not only accepted by the will, but it is offered, with ardent charity, as an act of adoration. Here we have one of the most beautiful views of purgatory. The soul clearly recognizes the imprescriptible

rights of God, author of nature and grace. It now sees the infinite value of redemption, of the sacrifice of the cross, of Mass, of the sacraments, which on earth it treated with negligence. It also sees much more profoundly, without possible distraction, the value of eternal life, of the possession of God. What joy in purgatory when Mass is celebrated on anniversary days !

These souls love their suffering. On earth they were not generous enough to impose on themselves a condign punishment. Now that punishment becomes an expiatory sacrifice. And the more this suffering penetrates the depth of their will, the more lovingly they accept it. Egoism, selfishness, the rust of sin, is burned away, and charity reigns without rival in the depths, rooted there forever.

We on earth see events along the horizontal line, where it is hard to distinguish good from evil, since great criminals often have statues in public places. The souls in purgatory, on the contrary, have rather the vertical view, where God's infinite holiness penetrates the most profound depths of perversity. Adoration of this holiness constitutes the purgatorial liturgy.

"Joy from pain, how can it come?" Purgatorial pain is accepted and offered, not only with peace, but with the joy which comes from the certitude of grace and salvation. Joy does not diminish pain, because both proceed from thirst for God.

Of this ebb and flow, the ebb and flow of the sea is a feeble image. On the one side, attraction toward God; on the other, a soul held back by the vestiges of sin.

Purgatorial love of God, far from diminishing pain, rather augments it. Purgatorial purification makes us think of the dark night described by St. John of the Cross. The poor souls are spiritually crucified. They may say: "I am crucified in this flame." But the sense of the word is contrary to the sense it has for the damned. Here it means the living flame of love, which ceases not to mount up to God.

Mutual love governs purgatory. All have perfect peace, perfect abandonment into the hands of the Lord. They find sweetness in their sufferings. In the book called De paenitentia, attributed to St. Augustine, we read: "Let the penitent always feel pain for-his sin, and always feel joy for his pain." Such is the liturgy of the Church suffering.

Freedom Regained

Can the poor souls suffer anxiety? No. It is excluded by their certainty of salvation. Terror is excluded by adoration of divine justice. And perfect union with the divine will excludes impatience, and includes gratitude. Absence of sense faculties excludes all emotional disturbance. And their spiritual sadness is completely subject to God.

St. Francis de Sales

St. Catherine of Genoa speaks in similar fashion: “They choose to remain where they are, since God has justly arranged it so. They have no envy. They do not say, ‘This soul will be delivered before me’; or ‘I will be delivered before it.’ They are so satisfied with the divine dispositions that they love everything that pleases God.”

Thus the soul, as many mystics have said, in purgatory regains full personal liberty, full mastery of self. It truly possesses itself, in the order willed by God, in that peace which is the tranquility of order.

This full liberty is incapable of evil, capable only of good, and in this it is the image of the liberty of God, who is simultaneously sovereignly free and absolutely impeccable. Liberty harmonized with immutability is the fruit of confirmation in grace. From this point of view the life of the suffering souls is very noble, very beautiful, although it is not yet the life of heaven.

Growth of Virtue in Purgatory

If we restrict the question to acquired virtues, the answer cannot be doubtful. Souls in purgatory can grow in virtue by repetition of natural acts. On earth these virtues, justice, say, or fortitude, grow even in the state of mortal sin, wherein man cannot merit. Further, defective habitudes, the “remains of sin,” disappear step by step. They are replaced by acquired virtues. This seems reasonable, above all for such souls as have entered purgatory only by absolution at the moment of death, souls which before, we may say, had acquired no virtue. Acquired virtue, we have seen, prepares for infused virtue, as finger agility subserves the art of the musician. Hence acquired virtues can grow in purgatory, at least those which are in the faculties purely spiritual, as, for instance, prudence and justice. But virtues which involve sense powers, chastity, say, cannot thus grow.

What of the infused virtues and the seven gifts? An answer is difficult. There are serious arguments for both sides.

First, the negative view. If infused virtues grow in purgatory, then charity too would grow, and thus the final degree of glory would be proportioned,

not to the degree of charity at the moment of death, but to the degree of charity at the end of purgatorial punishment. Now this conclusion seems contrary to the general belief, that the degree of glory is proportioned to the merits which the soul has at the instant of death.

Now the positive view. The souls in purgatory do perform intense acts of faith, hope, charity, religion, and hence it seems that infused virtues, too, would increase, not indeed by repetition of acts, because these virtues are infused and not acquired, but because God, in mercy, would grant this growth without any new merit. This opinion has been defended by Palmieri, According to Lessius, growth in infused virtue does not absolutely require new merit. What suffices is a good disposition. Thus a Christian in mortal sin, who from time to time makes acts of faith and hope, could, by divine mercy, grow in these virtues.

But this view, too, makes the degree of glory correspond, not to the degree of charity at the moment of death, but to the degree of charity at the end of purgatory. This is not in harmony with the traditional doctrine. St. Thomas says: “After death there is no way to acquire grace or to increase it “

Many Thomists nevertheless defend an increase of charity in purgatory, an increase based on imperfectly meritorious acts, acts which on earth would not have obtained an increase of charity. They quote St. Thomas: “On earth, each act of charity merits increase of this virtue, but it does not always obtain this augmentation at once. This augmentation is obtained only when the soul makes an act of charity intense enough to dispose it to receive this augmentation.” May this increase in virtue not be granted to them in purgatory? We see here a serious probability, but no more.

Under this view, it would still be true that the degree of charity is proportioned to the degree of merits gathered on earth. But it would not be proportioned to the degree of charity at the moment of death. It would correspond to the degree of charity at the end of purgatory.

Souls that have entered purgatory by death-bed absolution, not preceded even by feeble merits, would naturally have glory corresponding to the degree of charity at the moment of death. But, solve this mysterious question as we may, the principle remains: the degree of glory is proportioned to that of the merit acquired on earth. Hence the importance of learning to love God while we are still on earth. Life everlasting is the standard whereby to judge of life here below.

Ultimate Disposition for Heaven

Ultimate disposition, in its strictest sense, is realized only at the instant of the soul's entrance into glory, just as the last disposition for the creation of the human soul is not produced except at the very instant of the creation of this soul, or as the last disposition for justification does not exist except at the moment when sanctifying grace is infused. The reason is that the disposition properly called ultimate precedes the form only in the order of material dispositive causality, but follows the form in all other orders of causality: formal, efficient, and final.

This ultimate disposition to the beatific vision, then, is realized only in the instant when the soul is glorified, and this instant is the one unique instant of participated eternity.

But may we find in the poor souls a disposition quasi- ultimate? In what would it consist? We may characterize it negatively and positively.

Negatively, this disposition excludes all sin, all defective disposition, all "remains of sin." The soul is completely purified, approaches definitive sanctity.

Positively this disposition is realized in different degrees: "In my Father's house there are many mansions." It includes firm faith and assured hope and, above all, ardent charity, an intense desire of God. The sublime gift of the beatific vision cannot be granted to one who does not have this burning desire. Without this desire the soul would be still unprepared for the vision. In illustration, think of the teacher who reserves a sublime doctrine for those who appreciate its value, and thus are disposed to profit by it.

This intense desire is proportioned to charity. Some have twenty talents, others ten, others five, others still less, but each has an intense desire, "according to the measure of the gift of Christ."

This quasi-ultimate disposition to glory supposes high perfection in infused virtue, and in the gifts of the Holy Spirit, in particular a vivid faith which is penetrating and savorous, the infused contemplation of the mysteries of salvation. We find here then a confirmation of the doctrine we have often expounded. Infused contemplation belongs to the normal road of sanctity. If not learned on earth, it must be learned in purgatory. Better learn it now with merit, than wait to learn it, in pain and without merit, after death.

Doctrine of St. Catherine of Genoa

St. Catherine's treatise, We give here an outline of her teachings.

Chapter I. The souls in purgatory willingly remain where they are because God so wills it. They cannot sin. But neither do they merit by abstaining from sin.

Chapter 2. No peace can be compared to the peace of purgatory, unless it be the peace of heaven. Purgatorial peace grows continually as obstacles disappear. These obstacles are like rust. Excellence grows as the rust diminishes.

Chapter 3. God increases in them the desire to see Him. He enkindles in their heart a fire so strong that obstacles become insupportable.

Chapter 4. After life on earth the soul remains confirmed, either in good or in evil. Hence the souls in purgatory are confirmed in grace.

Chapter 5. God punishes the reprobate less than they merit.

Chapter 6. The souls in purgatory have perfect conformity with the will of God.

Chapter 7. Comparisons are weak. Yet we may think of one loaf of bread, capable, merely by being seen, of satisfying the hunger of all human creatures.

Chapter 8. Hell and purgatory manifest the wonderful wisdom of God. The separated soul goes naturally to its own place. The soul in the state of sin, finding no place more suitable, throws itself of its own accord into hell. And the soul which is not yet ready for divine union, casts itself voluntarily into purgatory.

Chapter 9. Heaven has no gates. Whoever will can enter there, because God is all goodness. But the divine essence is so pure that the soul, finding in itself obstacles, prefers to enter purgatory, and there to find in mercy the removal of the impediment.

Chapter 10. Their greatest suffering is that of having sinned against divine goodness, still finding those rusty “remains of sin.”

Chapter 11. The soul feels God’s loving attraction. But it feels also its own inability to follow this attraction. If it could find a purgatory still more excruciating, where it could more quickly be purified, it would at once plunge into it.

Chapter 12. I see the rays of faith which purify the soul, as fire in a crucible cleanses gold from dregs. When the soul is entirely purified, the fire can no longer cause pain.

Chapter 13. The soul’s desire of God is itself a torment. God’s mercy hides certain consequences of sin until they are destroyed, that the soul may

understand the divine action which has restored its purity.

Chapter 14. These souls enjoy inexpressible peace, compounded of joy and pain, neither diminishing the other.

Chapter 15. If these souls could still merit, one single act of repentance would pay their debt, by reason of the intensity of this act. But they know that not one penny will be remitted. Such is the decree of divine justice. If prayers are offered for them by the living, they rejoice therein only according to the will of God, without any selfishness.

Chapter 16. As long as the process of purification lasts, these souls understand that the beatific vision is not for them. They would suffer more from that vision than they suffer in purgatory.

Chapter 17. Illumined on the necessity of reparation, they would cry out to men on earth: “O wretched creatures, why so blindly attached to things that pass? Why not make provision for the future? You say perhaps: ‘I will go to confession, I will gain a plenary indulgence, I will be saved.’ But remember that the adequate confession and the perfect contrition, required for gaining a plenary indulgence, are not easily attained.”

Chapter 18. These souls would not in any way lessen their sufferings they have merited.

Chapter 19. These purgatorial pains, the saint adds, I have myself experienced these last two years. All consolation, corporal and spiritual, has gradually been taken from me. To conclude, only God’s omnipotent mercy can cure human deficiency. This transformation is the work of purgatory.

Another mystic, Mother Mary of St. Austin, compares the souls in purgatory with Mary Magdalen at the foot of the cross. She writes as follows: “Mary Magdalen, the penitent, at the foot of the cross: was she not penetrated by that light which reveals to souls in purgatory the malice of sin? She stood before the cross like a living mirror, without movement, her eyes lifted to Him. The sublimity of the revelation she received there surpasses all word, all thought, all sentiment. Christ’s unspeakable holiness, His measureless pain, His radiating peace, wrapped her round. These three hours on Calvary were her purgatory. But she would not have given one moment of this pain for all the joys of Thabor. In our Lord and through Him she expiated her own faults, while all thought of herself disappeared. She was immersed in the contemplation of the Word made flesh, suffering for the sins of the world. In Him rather than in herself, she understood what sin means for God and for man. Surely here we have an image of the souls in

purgatory. Calvary shows how divine light penetrates purgatorial darkness. It shows divine light radiating these silent souls with all the pains of Jesus crucified. Purgatorial pain and peace are found also on earth, beneath the holiness of Him who takes away the sins of the world."

These reflections lead us to think that passive purification, described by St. John of the Cross, should be undergone as far as possible during the present life, by generous acceptance of all contrarieties. Reparation is thus made with merit, and with growth in charity, and hence with a claim for a vision of God more penetrating, and a love of God more strong and intense. But souls that completely escape all purgatory are probably rather rare. Among the good religious whom St. Theresa knew, only three had completed their purgatory on earth.

The Purgatory of Perfect Souls

Monsignor A. Saudreau speaks thus of perfect souls: "The Lord leads even His friends through purifying pains, but He seems to regret that He must do so. He cannot refrain from consolations which sweeten their sufferings."

"The Lord, for example, shows to generous souls how agreeable their generosity has been to Him, how fruitful it has been for others, how eternally profitable to themselves. These consolations enable them to suffer with great love. St. Lawrence on his gridiron suffered awful pains, but the ardor of his love let him find them very light. This truth illumines purgatory. Purification reveals God's ineffable goodness, His wisdom, His holiness, a holiness opposed even to the least spot. These souls, like the saints on earth, exercise submission, profound adoration. They accept with a courageous heart the sufferings which His holy will imposes on them, and which they deserve."

Divine providence is irreproachable. It permits evils, which it might prevent, in view of a greater good, the manifestation of divine mercy and justice. This greater good becomes more and more clear to the soul as it approaches heaven. It understands the words of St. Paul: "All things work together unto good for those who love God."

26. CHARITY FOR THE POOR SOULS

LET us consider the foundation of this charity, then how it can be exercised, and thirdly, what are its fruits. What is the foundation of this charity? St. Thomas announces the principle: “All the faithful in the state of grace are united with one another by charity. They are all members of one sole body, that is, of the Church. Now in an organism each member is aided by all others. Thus every Christian is aided by the merits of all other Christians.” Hence we can aid the souls in purgatory, since they also belong to the body of Christ.

Charity loves God, loves all who are now children of God, and all who are called to be His children. But the suffering souls are children of God and will be His children forever. The Blessed Trinity dwells in them, Jesus lives in them intimately. And whereas we love them all, we have special duties to the souls of our dead relatives.

The poor souls can do nothing for themselves. They can no longer merit or give satisfaction or receive the sacraments or gain indulgences. They can only accept and offer their own suffering of satispassion. Hence they have a special right to be aided by others. The foundress of the Helpers of the Poor Souls, while still a child, said to her friends: “If one of us were in a fiery prison and we could deliver him by a word, would we not say that word quickly? The poor souls are in a fiery prison, and our good God, to open that prison, asks only a prayer from us. Can we refuse this prayer?”

Little by little this same child reached the following intuition: “Deliverance from purgatory means the greater glory of God. We must give Him these souls whom He is calling.” Some years later the Cure of Ars said of this young girl: “She will found an order for the souls in purgatory. It is God who has given her the idea of such sublime devotion. This order will have rapid extension in the Church.”

Father Faber remarks that work for the suffering souls is sure of success. As they cannot be lost, our work for them must bear fruit. To obtain for these souls the greatest of all gifts, God seen face to face, will, at the same

time, increase the accidental joy of our Lord, of His blessed Mother, and of the saints.

How Shall We Exercise This Charity

We exercise this charity by praying for the dead, that is, by offering our merits, our prayers, our satisfactions, our deeds of almsgiving, by gaining indulgences, and above all by offering Holy Mass for their repose.

The Church herself gives us the example. During each Mass she prays for them in the Memento of the Dead. Further, she opens her treasures, the merits of Christ and of the saints, in the form of indulgences applicable to the poor souls.

Indulgences, says St. Thomas, offer chief value to him who accomplishes the good work. But they have a secondary value, for those for whom this work is done. Nothing hinders the Church from applying indulgences to the souls in purgatory.

Can suffrages offered for one soul be profitable also for others? The answer runs thus: By intention, they have a special value for the one. But, by reason of charity which cannot exclude anyone, they are more profitable to those who have the greater charity and are thus better disposed to receive greater consolation. Thus, as regards Holy Mass, we distinguish the special fruit, granted to the soul for whom the Mass is said, from the general fruit, in which all the faithful, however numerous, participate, each in the measure of his own disposition.

St. Thomas asks a second question: Are suffrages offered for many souls together more profitable than if they were offered for one? His answer runs thus: By reason of the charity which inspires them, these suffrages are just as profitable for many as if they were offered for one. One Mass gives joy to ten thousand souls in purgatory as if they were but one. Nevertheless these same suffrages, considered as satisfaction, are more useful to those to whom they are applied singly.

This at least was the thought of St. Thomas, when, as a young priest, he wrote his commentary on the Fourth Book of Sentences. he says regarding the sacrifice of the Mass: “Although one sacrifice of Mass is in itself sufficient to satisfy for all suffering, nevertheless its value, both for those for whom it is offered and for those who offer, is measured by their devotion. This measure of devotion depends, in the case of the poor souls, on the dispositions they had at the moment of death.”

Here the only limit assigned to the satisfactory power of the Mass is the devotion of those who offer and of those for whom it is offered. Thus it is generally admitted that the parochial Mass in a large parish is just as profitable to each member, according to his devotion, as it would be for each member of a small parish.

The great Thomistic commentators, Cajetan, John of St. Thomas, Gonet, the Carmelites of Salamanca, insist on the infinite value of the Mass, by reason of the victim offered, of the chief priest who offers. One Mass said for many persons can be just as profitable to each, according to the measure of his devotion, as if it were offered for one alone. The sun illuminates ten thousand people as easily as if they were but one person.

The effect of a universal cause is limited only by the capacity of its subjects to receive the influence of that cause.

Thus that Mass on All Souls Day, which is said for all the souls in purgatory, has special value for forgotten souls, for whom no one now offers a special Mass.

Fruits of This Charity

Each soul in purgatory is, as it were, a spiritual universe gravitating toward God. We can accelerate the process. Mass celebrated for these dear ones, indulgences gained for them, increase likewise our own store of merit. Perseverance, too, is necessary. Many believe too easily in the prompt deliverance of their dear ones, and after a period, say of a month, no longer pray for them.

We can aid the poor souls, not only by offering prayers, but by other acts of virtue: by almsgiving, by accepting a cross. Let us remember particularly the souls most abandoned, who are sometimes the most holy.

God is pleased to reward our least service. And these souls, too, will not fail to aid us by their own gratitude in heaven. Even before their deliverance they pray for all benefactors. They have charity, which indeed excludes no one but which imposes on them a special duty toward those friends. Their prayers are efficacious even if they do not know in detail our condition, just as our prayers for them are efficacious though we do not know their condition.

May we also pray to the poor souls? The liturgy does not pray to them. But we are not forbidden to pray to them, though we must give preference to prayer for them. Here is a sentence from St. Thomas: “The souls in

purgatory are not in the state of praying, but in the state of being prayed for."

Certain fervent Christians offer, in favor of the souls in purgatory, all their acts of satisfaction, including those to be made for them after death. This act is called the heroic act. It should not be made lightly, but only after serious reflection. St. Louis Marie de Montfort urges this act as devotion to the Blessed Virgin. Her wisdom will perform this task much better than we can. This act is not a vow. But it may better be made first for a year or so, before it is made for life. Charity to the suffering souls leads us into the mystery of the communion of saints: Christ, the head of men and of angels, head of the Church militant, suffering, and triumphant. Each member shares in the merits of Christ and of all His members. The Church is not a mere visible, hierarchical society, but also the mystical body of the Savior.

The Church is the kingdom of God announced in the Gospel, the kingdom where charity reigns as queen, which makes of all the faithful and of all the blessed one true family of which God is the Father. Thus are realized the words of the Savior: "I am the vine; you are the branches." Thus is realized His desire "that they be one, as Thou, Father, and I are one." The mystical body is a favorite doctrine of St. Paul, who is followed by early Fathers, by St. Augustine, and by the medieval doctors.

From the triune God, through Christ, the life of grace descends, like a spiritual river, upon the souls on earth, in purgatory, and in heaven, and then returns to God under the form of adoration, supplication, reparation, thanksgiving.

The parable of the Good Samaritan may serve as summary. He is moved by the misery of his neighbor, and reacts in the most efficacious manner. Hence he, too, merits the mercy of God. "Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy."

Genuine compassion will never cease to pour in oil and wine: prayer, patience, Holy Mass, the Way of the Cross. Mercy on the poor souls will bring us also the crowning mercy of a holy death.

PART 5

HEAVEN

27. THE EXISTENCE OF HEAVEN

HEAVEN means the place, and especially the condition, of supreme beatitude. Had God created no bodies, but only pure spirits, heaven would not need to be a place; it would signify merely the state of the angels who rejoice in the possession of God. But in fact heaven is also a place. There we find the humanity of Jesus, the Blessed Virgin Mary, the angels, and the souls of the saints. Though we cannot say with certitude where this place is to be found, or what its relation is to the whole universe, revelation does not allow us to doubt of its existence. (A pure spirit can be in place only so far as it exercises an action on a body in that place, but of itself the spirit lives in an order higher than that of space.)

We shall speak first of the existence of heaven, then we shall see what is the nature of this beatitude: beatific vision, beatific love, and accidental beatitude.

The Church teaches as a doctrine of faith, defined by Benedict XII: “The souls of all the saints are in heaven before the resurrection of the body and the general judgment. They see the divine essence by a vision which is intuitive and facial, without the intermediation of any creature in that view. By this vision they enjoy the divine essence, they are truly blessed, they have eternal life and repose.” says that souls in the state of grace, after being purified, enter into heaven, see God the triune as He is in Himself, but with a degree more or less perfect, according to the diversity of their merits.

The Testimony of Scripture

In the Old Testament we find a progressive revelation regarding the remuneration of the just after death. This revelation is still obscure in the first books of the Old Testament, because the Old Testament itself was given, not immediately as preparation for eternal life, but as preparation for the coming of the promised Savior, who after His death would open to the just the gates of heaven. Here lies a very great difference between the Old Testament and the New. In the New Testament the expression “eternal life” is frequent, whereas it is rare in the Old Testament.

Before the time of the prophets Scripture speaks of the souls of the dead which descend into Sheol, where they can no longer merit. But the recompense reserved for the good becomes in time more precise in opposition to the suffering of the wicked. Thus we read in Genesis after death, “was gathered to his people.”

The prophets speak more clearly of the recompense reserved for the just after death. Isaias speaks thus: “The new heavens and the new earth . . ., a rejoicing, and the people thereof, joy.”

In the psalms we read: “The Lord is just and hath loved justice; His countenance hath beheld righteousness.”

In the New Testament

St. Paul speaks as follows: “Charity never falleth away.. . . We see now through a glass in a dark manner, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know even as I am known.” .

Thus we see that, from Genesis to the Apocalypse, from the first book of Scripture to the last, there is a continuity of revelation. Revelation is like a river. At its source we cannot see what it will be in the future. But, little by little, it becomes wider, more majestic, more powerful. The sense of the divine words manifests itself more and more to the contemplation of interior souls, but will not appear in its fullness until the moment of entrance into heaven.

Witness of Tradition

The existence of the beatific vision is affirmed in clear and explicit fashion by the Fathers of the apostolic age. He writes: “That which God gives to those who love Him is the gift of seeing Him, as the prophets have announced. Man of himself cannot see God, but God wills to be seen by us and He grants to us what He wills, when He wills and as He wills.” St. Hippolytus speaks in the same manner.

Clement of Alexandria affirms that they have a clear vision of God.

St. John Chrysostom is less clear, but he repeats the words of St. Paul: “We see now through a glass in a dark manner, but then face to face.”

St. Cyprian writes: “What glory and what joy to be admitted to see God, to be honored with Christ our Lord! This is the joy of salvation, this is eternal life: to live with the just, with all the friends of God in the kingdom of immortality. When God shall shine upon us we will rejoice with inexpressible gladness, sharing forever the kingdom of Christ.”

St. Augustine often emphasizes the thought that all the saints in heaven, like the angels, rejoice with Christ in the vision of God.

Reasons of Appropriateness

In the Middle Ages, certain heretics, Amaury de Bene, for instance, held that no created intelligence, even when aided by supernatural light, can ever see God without medium. Created intelligence, they say, can see only the created radiance of the divine essence, just as the eye of the owl is too feeble to see the sun. Others, on the contrary, like the Beguards, said that the beatific vision is due our nature and needs no supernatural light. What does this mean for the question which now occupies us?

Reason, left to itself, cannot demonstrate even the existence of the beatific vision, because this vision is a gratuitous gift, which depends upon the free will of God. It is a gift, not due to our nature, not even to that of the angels. This truth is affirmed by the Church against Baius. The object of the beatific vision is nothing less than the object of the uncreated vision of God. Hence it surpasses the natural object of every created or creatable intelligence, since every created intelligence is infinitely inferior to God.

Reason, left to itself, according to the greater number of theologians, especially Thomistic theologians, cannot prove positively and apodictically the possibility of the beatific vision, because this vision is not only gratuitous, as are miracles but it is essentially supernatural just as is the grace which it presupposes. It is a mystery, as are the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Redemption. A miracle is naturally knowable, since it is supernatural only in the mode of its production, for example, in the restoration of life to a corpse. But the beatific vision, just like grace and the light of glory, is supernatural in its very essence.

Nevertheless theologians, and in particular St. Thomas have given reasons of appropriateness for the possibility and the existence of the beatific vision. We shall dwell on one reason which constitutes a very serious probability, and which can ever be scrutinized anew with advantage, though it can never furnish a rigorous demonstration, just as the sides of a polygon inscribed in the circumference can never be identified with that circumference.

The argument runs thus: There is in man a natural desire to know the cause when he sees an effect. From this natural desire arises wonderment, which lasts as long as the cause is not known. If therefore man’s

intelligence cannot arrive at a knowledge of the first cause of all things, his natural desire would be in vain.

St. Thomas

This natural desire cannot be an efficacious desire, a necessitating desire, because the beatific vision is a gratuitous gift, as the Church has defined against Baius. [] But it is a conditional and inefficacious desire: If it pleases God to grant us this gratuitous gift. Thus, in illustration, the farmer desires rain if Providence wills to give it to him. Now this desire supports a serious argument of appropriateness in favor of the existence of the beatific vision. But it does not prove positively and apodictically even the simple possibility of such a vision. This vision is essentially supernatural, as is grace and the light of glory which it presupposes and requires. To prove its possibility would be the same thing as proving apodictically the possibility of grace and the light of glory, and these two truths are beyond the sphere of demonstration. But at least our argument shows that it is not possible to prove the impossibility of the beatific vision. Further, it enables us to refute the contrary reasons, and this is a great gain.

We may understand this argument better if we note that philosophy, reason alone, can prove with certitude the existence of God and of His chief attributes. But there remains for reason a great obscurity in the intimate harmonizing of these attributes, in particular in the harmonizing of absolute immutability and sovereign liberty, of infinite justice and infinite mercy, especially of omnipotent goodness and the divine permission of the greatest evils, physical and moral. Hence arises the natural desire, conditional and inefficacious, to see the very existence of the first cause, because this vision, without medium, would show the intimate reconciliation between these attributes, which flow from the essence of God.

This natural desire to see God is admirably expressed by Plato. He says that we must rise from the love of sensible beauty to the love of intellectual and moral beauty, to the love of the supreme beauty existing eternally in itself. He concludes: “What would we think of a mortal to whom it would be given to contemplate pure beauty, simple, without any mixture, and not garbed in flesh and human colors and other perishable vanities, but the very divine beauty itself ? Do you not think that this man, being the only one who sees the beautiful by the faculty to which beauty is perceptible, could bring forth, not mere images of virtues, but veritable virtues, since he is attached and united to truth ? Now man who brings forth and nourishes true

virtue is deserving of being cherished by God. If any man can be immortal, it is this man."

These words of Plato are confirmed by the aspirations of the human soul, which are found, even though in an enfeebled state, in many religions.

This argument of appropriateness in favor of the possibility and existence of the beatific vision can be proposed independently of divine revelation, without supposing that we have been called to the life of grace. Further, this argument shows the suitableness of our elevation to supernatural life.

But, supposing this elevation, we can also say that we now have a connatural desire to see God, a desire which proceeds from grace, as from a second nature. Grace is indeed the seed of glory, and this seed tends of its own accord to its final development. From this viewpoint our desire is not now a conditional and inefficacious desire, but a desire which is intended to reach its goal, and does in fact reach it, even if many refuse to respond to the divine appeal.

This reason becomes stronger if we recall what Jesus Himself has said in the Gospel of St. John: "He that believeth in Me hath everlasting life."

This desire, connatural and supernatural, proceeding from grace, which is the second nature of the soul, is continually renovated in us by the word of the Savior: "Ask and it shall be given to you, seek and you shall find."

This is what revelation says to the believer. This view confirms greatly the argument of appropriateness which we have developed above. Hence we understand how decisively the Church condemns those who say that immediate vision of God is impossible, just as it is impossible for the owl to endure the splendor of the sun. This position is true of every created or creatable intelligence, left to its own natural forces, but it is not true of the created intelligence when it is supernaturalized by consummated grace and the light of glory, which are a participation in the intimate life of God Himself.

28. THE NATURE OF ETERNAL BEATITUDE

WE MUST consider the beatifying object and the beatified subject.

The Beatifying Object

St. Thomas defines the object of beatitude as follows: “It is that perfect good which completely satiates the desire of the rational being.”

It is impossible for man to find that true happiness, which he desires naturally, in any limited good: pleasures, riches, honor, glory, power, knowledge. Our mind, noticing at once the limits of these goods, conceives a higher good and carries us on to desire that higher good. We must repeat: Our will, illumined by our intelligence, has a depth without measure, a depth which only God can fill.

This truth it is which made St. Augustine say: “Unhappy he who knows all things without knowing Thee, my God: blessed he who knows Thee, even though he be ignorant of all else. If he knows Thee and knows also other things, he is happy, not by knowing them, but by knowing Thee, provided that, knowing Thee, he also glorifies Thee by thanking Thee for Thy gifts.”

We must distinguish natural beatitude from supernaturaI beatitude. Natural beatitude consists in that knowledge and love of God which we can attain by our natural faculties. If man had been created in a state purely natural, by his fidelity to duty he would have merited this beatitude, namely, first, a natural knowledge of God’s perfections reflected in His creatures, a knowledge without any mixture of error; secondly, a rational love of God, the Creator, love composed of reverent submission, fidelity, recognition, the love, not indeed of a son, but of a good servant in relation to the best of masters.

But supernatural beatitude, which we are now speaking of, surpasses immeasurably the natural exigencies of every created nature, even the highest angelic natures. This supernatural beatitude consists in sharing the very beatitude of God, that beatitude whereby He rejoices in knowing

Himself and loving Himself for all eternity. Notice the expression in the parable of the talents: “Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

Subjective Beatitude

If such is the object of eternal beatitude, what subjective element is it that formally constitutes beatitude? All theologians admit that subjective beatitude consists in a vital union with God through the higher faculties, intelligence and will, that is, in the beatific vision and love which follows it.

St. Thomas On the contrary, the intelligence receives the object into itself, becomes the object known, whereas the will remains, we may say, outside the object, which is received into the intelligence. To illustrate, to enjoy a scene we must first contemplate it, to enjoy a symphony of Beethoven we must first hear it. Knowledge takes possession of beauty, and joy follows knowledge.

Essential beatitude, therefore, consists in the immediate vision of God, and is consummated in the love which follows the vision. Love, a characteristic of vision, follows that vision as liberty, morality, sociability follow man’s rational nature.

This doctrine is in conformity with many texts of Holy Scripture. “Blessed are the clean of heart for they shall see God.”

The teaching of St. Thomas

Scotus and his followers, on the contrary, since they hold that the will is superior to the intelligence, maintain that essential beatitude consists formally in love, to which vision is subordinated.

To this position, Thomists reply: Scotus is considering beatitude as a concrete whole, without noticing that it has several elements. It is true that beatitude is consummated in love; but we must still ask: What is the nature of this beatitude, what is it formally, what is the principle whence its characteristics derive? Thomists maintain, with right, that the mind is higher than the will, since it directs the will. Formal beatitude, then, is the act of the mind, is the immediate vision of God, as we have seen in the texts of Scripture just cited. Thomists add: Here below indeed it is more perfect to love God than to know Him, because our knowledge is measured by our limited ideas, whereas our love, free and meritorious, goes out toward Him. But in heaven our knowledge will no longer be imperfect: it will be purely intuitive, higher than any created idea. Beatific love will flow necessarily from the vision. This beatific love is not free. It is something higher than liberty.

Suarez, having examined the position of St. Thomas and of Scotus, says that essential beatitude consists formally both in vision and in love.

Thomists reply: If it were thus, the intellect and will would not be related by subordination of one to the other, but would be coordinated, equal each to the other, just as would be two individuals of one and the same species who resemble each other very strikingly. But the truth is not thus. Intelligence and will are two faculties, specifically distinct, and therefore unequal. The will is subordinated to the intelligence which directs it. The will is carried on to a true real good, but only on condition that it follows the right judgment of the intellect, a judgment conformable to reality. We desire only what we know, and we do not rejoice except in a good which we possess. Joy does not constitute the possession, but presupposes the possession. Hence intelligence and will are not equal in the possession of God. They arise in order, one after the other. By vision the soul possesses God. By love it enjoys Him, rests in Him, prefers Him to itself.

St. Augustine speaks as follows, repeating his conversation with his mother at Ostia: “All within us cries out: ‘We made not ourselves, but the Eternal One made us.’ If, after this word, all things were silent, and He Himself alone would speak to us, no longer through them, but by Himself: if then our soul, lifting itself on the wings of thought up to eternal wisdom, could retain unbroken this sublime contemplation: if all other thoughts of the spirit had ceased and this alone had absorbed the soul, and filled it with joy, the most intimate and the most divine: if eternal life resembled this ravishment in God which we experience for a moment: would this not be the consummation of that word: ‘Enter thou into the joy of Thy Lord’?”

In truth, celestial beatitude is the consummation of that transforming union, spoken of by St. Theresa and St. John of the Cross, the consummation of that vision wherein the just soul is deified in its very depths. In heaven this fusion will take place by immediate vision and consequent love. The soul, it is true, remains inferior to God, because only God is existent reality, He who is. Compared with Him, we are always as nothing. God preserves eternally in just souls all that they have by nature and by grace. He is eternally in them, or, to speak still more truly, they are eternally in Him.

29. THE SUBLIMITY OF THE BEATIFIC VISION

TO HAVE a just idea of this vision, we must see its immediacy, its source, and its object, primary and secondary.

This Vision Is Intuitive and Immediate

According to the definition of Benedict XII, this act of the blessed intellect is a vision, clear, intuitive, immediate, of the divine essence. Without being comprehensive, it still enables us to know God as He is.

By its clarity this vision is distinguished from the obscure knowledge which we have of God, either by reason or by faith. By its intuitive and immediate character it is immeasurably superior to all knowledge that is discursive and analogical, which does not reach God except by using His effects as principle. This intuitive vision is higher than all abstraction, all reasoning, and all analogy. It is immediate intuition of the supreme reality of the living God. Hence it surpasses by far all vision, even the intellectual visions which the great mystics receive here on earth, because these visions remain within the order of faith and do not give intrinsic evidence of the Trinity. The beatific vision, on the contrary, does give this evidence, showing that God, if He were not triune, would not be God.

Hence we are called to see God, not only in the mirror of creatures, however perfect, not only by His highest radiations in the world of angels. We are called to see Him without the medium of any creature, to see Him better than we see those to whom we speak on earth, because God, being spiritual, will be most intimately present in our intelligence, which He fortifies with power to see Him.

Between God and ourselves there will be not even an intermediary idea,

Further, we cannot express our contemplation in one word, even in an interior word, in a mental word, because this word, being created and finite, cannot express the Infinite as He is in Himself. This contemplation without medium absorbs us in some sense in God, leaving us without a word to

express it, because only one word can express perfectly the divine essence, namely, the Word begotten from all eternity from the Father. The divine essence itself, sovereignly intelligible, more intimate to us than we ourselves are, will take the place of all created ideas, impressed and expressed. In the order of knowledge we cannot conceive one more intimate than this, even though it be distinguished by different degrees.

Here on earth, when at some sublime spectacle, we cannot find words to describe it, we say that it is ineffable. With far higher reason is this true when we see God face to face.

This vision, though it is intuitive and without medium, is still not comprehensive. God alone can know Himself to the full extent of His knowableness. This limitation involves no contradiction. Here on earth many persons may see the same scene in different degrees, according as their vision is more or less good. Many intellects see one and the same truth more or less profoundly. Each grasps the proposition, subject, verb, and attribute, but more or less perfectly. Thus in heaven all the blessed see God without medium, but with a penetration that varies in proportion to their merits, but none as profoundly as God knows Himself, all that He is, all that He can do, all that He will do.

The Light of Glory

This vision, intuitive and immediate, reaches the object of that uncreated vision whereby God knows Himself. It reaches Him less perfectly than He does Himself, but it reaches Him.

How is this possible? It would be absolutely impossible for any created or creatable intelligence left to its own natural forces, because these forces are proportioned to their own natural object, which is infinitely inferior to the object proper to the divine intellect. Any created intelligence therefore needs a supernatural light to elevate it, to fortify it, that it may be able to see God as He is in Himself. Otherwise it would be before Him as the owl before the sun; it would not see Him.

This light, received in a permanent fashion in the intellects of the blessed, is called the light of glory. The Council of Vienne condemns those who “maintain that the human soul does not have to be elevated by the light of glory in order to see God and to have holy joy in Him.”

Thus the beatific vision arises from the intellectual faculty as its radical principle, and secondly from the light of glory as its proximate principle.

This light supernaturalizes the vitality of our intelligence, as the infused virtue of charity supernaturalizes the vitality of our will.

The light of glory and infused charity, thus received into our two higher faculties, themselves arise from the consummation of sanctifying grace, which is received, like a divine graft, into the essence of the soul. How well sanctifying grace merits the appellation, participation in the divine nature! Grace is a nature, a radical principle of operations, a principle which, fully developed, makes us able to see God as He sees Himself. In God the divine nature is the principle of operations strictly divine, the principle of His own uncreated vision of Himself. In the just soul in heaven, sanctifying grace is the radical principle of the intuitive vision of the divine essence, a vision which has the same object as the uncreated vision.

The Object of the Beatific Vision

The first and essential object is God Himself. The secondary object is creatures known in God.

The blessed see clearly and intuitively God Himself as He is in Himself, that is, they see His essence, His attributes, and the three divine persons. The Council of Florence says: “They see clearly God Himself, one and three, as He is.” Hence the beatific vision surpasses immeasurably, not only the most sublime human philosophy, but even the natural knowledge of the most elevated angels, even of any creatable angel. The blessed see the divine perfections, concentrated and harmonized in their common source, in the divine essence which contains them all, eminently and formally, in a far higher way than white light contains the colors of the rainbow. Thus the blessed see how mercy the most tender, and justice the most inflexible, proceed from one and the same love, infinitely generous and infinitely holy. They see how this same love identifies in itself attributes apparently the most opposed. They see how mercy and justice are united in each and every work of God. They see how uncreated love, even in decisions the most free, is identified with wisdom. They see how this love is identified with sovereign good, loved from all eternity. They see how wisdom is identified with the first truth, always known. They see how all these perfections are one in the essence of Him who is. They contemplate this pre- eminent simplicity, this purity and absolute sanctity, this quintessence of all perfection.

In this intellectual vision, never interrupted, they see also how the infinite fecundity of the divine nature blossoms into three persons. They see the

eternal generation of the Word, who is the splendor of the Father, figure of His substance. They see the ineffable spiration of the Holy Spirit, who is the terminus of the mutual love of the Father and the Son, who unites the Father and Son in the most intimate and mutual self-communication. Such is the primary object of the beatific vision.

Here below we can but enumerate the divine perfections, one after the other. We do not see in what intimate manner they are in harmony. We do not see how infinite goodness harmonizes with the permission of evil, even of unspeakable malice. We know indeed that God does not permit evil except for a greater good, but we do not clearly see this greater good. But in heaven everything becomes clear, particularly the value of the trials we ourselves have suffered. We shall see how divine goodness, essentially self-diffusive, becomes the principle of mercy. On the other hand, we shall see how this same infinite goodness, having the right to be loved above all things, becomes the principle of justice. Here on earth we are like a man who has seen each color of the rainbow, but who has not yet seen white light. In heaven, seeing the uncreated Light, we shall see how the divine perfections, even the most widely different, are harmonized in Him and become one.

The blessed see in God, in the Word, also the holy humanity which the Son assumed for our salvation. They contemplate the hypostatic union, the plenitude of grace, of glory, and of charity in the holy soul of Jesus. They see the infinite value of His theandric acts, of the mystery of the Redemption. They see the radiations of that Redemption: the infinite value of each Mass, the supernatural vitality of the mystical body, of the Church, triumphant, suffering, and militant. They see with admiration what belongs to Christ, as priest for all eternity, as judge of the living and the dead, as universal king of all creatures, as father of the poor.

In this same vision, the saints contemplate the eminent dignity of the Mother of God, her plenitude of grace, her virtues, her gifts, her universal mediation as co- redemptrix.

Further, since beatitude is a perfect state which satisfies all legitimate desires, each saint knows all others who are blessed, particularly those whom he has known and loved on earth. He knows their state, be they on earth or in purgatory.

The beatific vision is one unique, unbroken act, measured by the one unique instant of an unchangeable eternity. It is an act that cannot be lost. It

is the source of the happiness of the elect and, as we shall see later, of their absolute impeccability.

In this supernatural knowledge everything is harmonized. There is no longer danger of being too intent on secondary goods or of losing the chief good. The soul in heaven sees the corporeal world from on high, in perfect subordination to the spiritual world. The events of time are seen in their relation to the plenitude of eternity. God’s deeds, natural or supernatural, are seen as radiations of God’s action. The line of view is no longer horizontal, stretched out between past and future. It is the vertical view, which judges of everything from on high, in the light of supreme Truth.

This entire beatific world of knowledge leads the blessed soul to love God above all things, immovably, and to love creatures in Him only as manifestations of His infinite goodness.

30. BEATIFIC JOY

THE saints in heaven, seeing God face to face, love Him above all things, because they see with the most perfect evidence that God is better than all creatures combined. This love will never pass away. Faith will give place to vision; hope will be replaced by possession: but “charity never falleth away.

By charity, already on earth we love God, not only as a good supremely desirable, the object of hope, but because of His infinite goodness in itself, a goodness far higher than any of His gifts. Charity wills He should be known, loved, and glorified; that His imprescriptible rights be recognized, His name be sanctified, His will be done. This is the love of friendship, whereby we will unto God all that belongs to Him, wishing His happiness as He wills our happiness. Thus, even here on earth, we share in God’s intimate life, have our life in common with Him, have spiritual communion between Him and ourselves.

This charity will last forever. It would be an error, even a heresy, to think that our love of God in heaven is merely the consummation of our hope, which makes us desire God as our supreme Good. Even here on earth, the act of hope, which can exist in a soul in the state of mortal sin, is notably inferior to the act of charity, and love of God in heaven is nothing but the perfect act of charity, whereby the soul transcends itself, whereby without cessation it loves God more than itself, whereby it passes out beyond itself, and enters into a state of uninterrupted ecstasy.

This love implies admiration, reverence, recognition. It implies, above all, friendship, with all its simplicity and intimacy. It is love with all its tenderness and all its power, the love of a child that throws itself into the tenderness of its Father, and wills unto that Father all that belongs to Him, just as the Father takes the soul into His own beatitude. God says to us: “Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.” We shall not indeed love God as He loves us, but the Holy Spirit will inspire a love worthy of Him.

This transforming union, now in a state of consummation, fuses our life with the intimate life of the Most High. We rejoice that God is God, infinitely holy, just, and merciful. We adore all the decrees of His providence, all manifestations of His glorious goodness. We subordinate ourselves completely to Him, saying to Him: “Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to Thy name give glory.”

The Satiety of the Blessed

This state of satiety is always new and never passes away. St. Augustine writes: “All our life will be one Amen, one Alleluia. Sadden not yourselves by considering this truth in a carnal manner, as if in heaven, just as on earth, we could become weary by repeating the words: Amen, Alleluia. This heavenly Amen, this Alleluia, will not be expressed by sound which passes away, but by the emotions of love, the emotions of the soul embraced by love. “Amen” means “It is true.” “Alleluia” means “praise God.” God is the immovable truth, who knows neither defect nor progress, neither decline nor growth. He is truth, eternal and stable: truth forever incorruptible.

“We shall sing our Amen forever but with a satiety that is insatiable. With satiety, because we live in perfect abundance, but with an insatiable satiety, because this good, while it satisfies completely, produces also a pleasure ever new. Insatiably satiated by this truth, we shall repeat forever: Amen. Rest and gaze: that is our eternal Sabbath.”

Greek philosophers discussed the question whether pleasure in movement is superior to pleasure in repose. Aristotle shows clearly that the highest joy is that which completes achievement, is the terminus of perfect, normal activity, which is no longer in motion toward the end, but possesses the end and rests therein. This truth is realized in the highest way in celestial beatitude.

Heavenly joy has a newness which cannot pass away. The first instant of the beatific vision lasts forever, like eternal morning, eternal spring, eternal youth. It resembles the eternal beatitude of God. God’s life is one unique instant of immutable eternity. He cannot grow old. He is not past or future, but eternally present. He contains eminently all successive events, as the summit of a pyramid contains all points at its base, as the view of a man placed on a mountain embraces the entire valley. Simultaneous totality: that is the definition of eternity.

As illustration, we may point to Mozart, who heard instantaneously and completely the melody he set out to compose. Similarly, great minds

embrace their entire science with one sole glance.

The beatific vision of the saints is measured by the unique instant of immovable eternity. The joy of that instant will never pass away. Its newness, its freshness, will be eternally present. As the vision will be always new, so likewise the joy which flows from the vision.

We can get some ideas of this truth by the joy we experience when we begin to relish the word of God. This joy, far from passing away, grows ceaselessly. The contrary is seen in sense goods. Avidly desired at first, they give us an ever decreasing joy.

Continuance of friendship, ten years, twenty years, and more, is a sign that this friendship has a divine origin. Divine friendship, relish for God's word, is a lasting joy, which lifts us above embarrassed affairs, domestic needs, and useless pastimes. That which nourishes the soul is divine truth and the supreme goodness revealed therein. Bossuet says: "If this divine truth pleases us when it is expressed by sounds that pass away, how will it ravish us when it speaks in its own proper voice which never passes away! God does not use many words: He speaks one eternal word, His Word, His Verbum, and thereby says everything. In this Word we, too, see everything."

"Taste and see that the Lord is sweet." This sweetness is the prelude of heaven's joy: repose in an action which never ceases, in an unmediated vision which floods the soul with a joy forever new.

St. Thomas, following St. Augustine, speaks thus: "We grow weary of sense goods when we possess them. Not so of spiritual goods. They do not diminish, they cannot be harmed, they give us a joy that is ever new." This joy we sometimes have in prayer. "My Lord and my God, take from me all that impedes me on the road to Thee, give to me all that leads to Thee. Take me from myself and give me to Thee, that I may belong entirely to Thee." God penetrates the depths of our will. God seizes and wounds the soul, that it may possess Him fully.

This doctrine finds admirable expression in The Imitation of Christ: "Repose in God, O my soul. He is the eternal repose of the saints. Beloved Jesus, let me find repose in Thee, not in creatures: not in health, in beauty, in honors, in glory. Not in power and dignity. Not in riches, honors, and knowledge. Not in merit and aspiration. Not even in Thy own gifts and rewards. Not even in the transports of spiritual gladness; not in the angels and archangels and the whole host of heaven: not in anything visible or invisible, not in anything which is not Thyself, O my God. All Thou canst

give me outside of Thyself, all that Thou dost discover of Thyself to me, is too little. It does not suffice me if I do not see Thee, if I do not possess Thee fully, if I do not rest in Thee alone." Such is the joy of heaven, always new. We speak of heaven as the future life. A better term is "everlasting."

Love beyond Liberty

In heaven charity takes on new modalities. It becomes a love higher than liberty itself, a love we can never lose.

Here on earth our love of God is free because we do not see God face to face. God is seen by us as good under one aspect and severe under another aspect. His commandments can displease that which is still to be found in us of egoism and pride. Hence our love for Him remains free and therefore meritorious.

In the fatherland, on the contrary, we shall see infinite Goodness as He is in Himself. We cannot find in Him the least aspect which can displease, nothing to drive us away, not the least pretext for preferring to Him anything whatsoever. Our eternal act of love will never suffer the least shadow of weariness. Infinite Goodness, seen without medium, fills so perfectly our capacity of love that it attracts us irresistibly more than any ecstasy that can be had on earth, where love is still free and meritorious. In heaven there will be a happy necessity of love.

Here especially we see the measureless depth of the soul, in particular of our will, of our capacity for spiritual love, which God alone, seen face to face, can satisfy.

But this love, though it is not free, is still not forced and compelled. Nor is this something lower than liberty and merit, as are the involuntary acts of our sense nature here below. Rather, it is something higher than liberty and merit, like that spontaneous love which God has for Himself, that love which is common to all three divine persons. As God necessarily loves His own infinite goodness, so our love, arising from the beatific vision, can never be interrupted or lose aught of its fervor.

In a manuscript written by one who lacked human culture but who was far advanced in the ways of prayer, I recently read these words: "In heaven the soul receives God into itself. Received thus by Him and in Him, it loses in Him its liberty. Entirely drawn to God, it surrenders to joy in God. It possesses God, and is possessed by Him. It knows and feels that this joy is its eternal state." Heaven's joy is an everlasting morning.

Impeccability

The blessed in heaven cannot sin. Their state is a state of sinlessness, not only because God preserves them from sin, as here below He preserves from sin saints who are confirmed in grace, but because one who has the beatific vision cannot turn away from it by sin, cannot feel the least pretext to love Him less for a single moment.

Here on earth no one ceases to will happiness, although he may often search for happiness there where it is not, even perhaps in suicide. The saints in heaven, too, cannot cease to love God, seen face to face, but they cannot be tempted to turn elsewhere. They are indeed free to love this or that finite good, this or that soul, to prefer one soul to another, to pray for it, to follow the commands of God to assist us. But this liberty never deviates toward evil. It resembles the liberty of God Himself, which is at the same time free and impeccable. Again it resembles the human liberty of Christ, who enjoyed the beatific vision from the first instant of His conception. But in Jesus these free acts were still meritorious, because He was still a viator, a traveler, whereas the free acts of the blessed are no longer meritorious, because they have arrived at the terminus of their meritorious voyage. The soul confirmed in grace has no longer need to merit.

Beatitude That Cannot Be Lost

It follows from all we have been saying that the saints in heaven cannot lose their beatitude. Scripture calls this beatitude “eternal life.” As the wicked go into eternal punishment, so the just go into eternal life.

The expression “eternal life,” everlasting life, means much more than future life. Future is only a part of time, which passes, which bears within itself a succession of moments. But eternal life is not measured by time, neither by solar time nor by spiritual time. Eternal life is measured by the unique instant of immovable eternity, an instant which cannot pass, which is like an eternal sunrise.

Theologians say that the eternal life of the blessed is measured by participated eternity. This participated eternity differs, without doubt, from that essential eternity which is proper to God. It differs, because it had a commencement at the moment of entry into heaven. But it will not end, and has not within itself any succession. It is truly the unique instant of immovable eternity. This instant is not dead, but sovereignly alive, because it fuses perfect intelligence and perfect love.

This vision and this love exist at the topmost point of the beatified soul. But, beneath this topmost point, there will be a region less high of

intelligence and will, a succession of thoughts, of emotions, of desires, in the form of prayers addressed to God in regard to this or that soul still on earth.

The inamissibility of beatitude follows from the essence of that beatitude. Heavenly bliss, by its very nature, satisfies all aspirations of the just soul. But this satisfaction could not exist if the blessed could say to themselves: "Possibly a time will come when I shall cease to see God." Such cessation of beatitude, after it has been possessed, would be the greatest suffering, and a suffering inflicted without guilt. If we cling so closely to the present life, in spite of all its sadness, how much more will we cling to the life of heaven? Hence nothing can bring the beatific vision to an end, neither God who has promised it as recompense, nor the soul which has reached it.

The Catechism of the Council of Trent says: "He who is happy, must he not desire ardently to enjoy without end that which makes him happy? And without the assurance of a stable and certain felicity, would he not be the prey of fear?"

The blessed souls live above the reach of our hours and days and years. They live in one unique instant which does not pass. This instant, when we enter heaven, when we receive the light of glory and begin to see God forever, must be prepared for. In this preparation three other instants of life have pre-eminent importance: that of receiving justification by baptism, that of reconciliation with God if we have offended Him gravely, that of a happy death, that is, final perseverance. Beatific love, we know, corresponds to the intensity of our merits. Not in heaven do we learn to love God, but here on earth. The degree of our life in eternity depends on the degree of our merits at the moment of death. There are many mansions in the Father's house, corresponding to varied merits.

Christian life on earth is eternal life already begun. Sanctifying grace and charity endure eternally. St. John of the Cross speaks thus: "In the evening of our life we shall be judged by our love for God and neighbor."

Eternal joy, beatific love, is ineffable. If here on earth we are enchanted by the reflection of divine perfection in creatures, by the enchantments of the visible world, by the harmony of colors and sounds, by the immensity of the ocean, by the splendor of the starry heavens, and still more by the spiritual splendors revealed in the lives of the saints, what joy shall we feel when we see God, this creative center of life and of love, this infinite plenitude, eternally self-existent, from whom proceeds the life of creation!

Each soul will rejoice, not only in the reward it has received, but also in the reward given to other elect souls, and still more in the glory of God, in the manifestation of His infinite goodness. This joy will be an act of the virtue of charity, the normal consequence of love of God and of creatures for the sake of God.

Such is the essential glory which God has reserved for those who love Him. “The eye hath not seen,” says St. Paul, “nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him.”

Then, too, we shall see the immense distance between goods that are spiritual and goods that are material. The same material good, the same house, the same field, the same territory, cannot belong simultaneously to many persons. Possession by one hinders possession by another. On the contrary, spiritual goods, the same truth, the same virtue, the same God seen face to face, can belong simultaneously to all. Nay, we possess these spiritual goods the more, the more others possess them. Their joy multiplies our joy.

Similarly we shall see clearly that goodness is essentially self-communicative. God the Father communicates His entire nature to His Son and through His Son to the Holy Spirit. The person of the Word communicates itself to the humanity of Jesus, and through this humanity He communicates to us a participation in divine life.

The elect in heaven belong to the family of God. The Blessed Trinity, seen clearly and loved sovereignly, dwells in them as in a living tabernacle, as in a temple of glory, endowed with knowledge and love. The Father engenders in them the Word. The Father and the Son breathe forth the personal love of the Holy Spirit. Charity renders them in a measure similar to the Holy Spirit; vision assimilates them to the Word, who Himself assimilates them to the Father of whom He is the image. They enter therefore in a sense into the cycle of the Blessed Trinity. The Trinity is in them, rather, they are in the Trinity, as the summit of reality, thought, and love.

Love of the Saints for Our Lord and His Holy Mother

Beholding the three divine persons, the saints understand likewise the personal union of the Word with the humanity of Jesus, His plenitude of grace and glory, His charity, the treasures of His heart, the infinite value of His theandric acts, of His merits, the value of His passion, of His least drop

of blood, the unmeasured value of each Mass, the fruit of absolution. They also see the glory which overflows from the soul of our Savior upon His body, and they see how He is at the summit of all creation, material and spiritual. In Him they see also Mary co-redemptrix, the infinite dignity of her divine maternity, her position in the hypostatic order, superior to the orders of nature and of grace. They see the greatness of her love at the foot of the cross, her elevation above the angelic hierarchies, the radiation of her universal mediation. This vision of Jesus and Mary belongs to essential beatitude as its most elevated secondary object.

Hence the saints love our Lord as the Savior to whom they owe everything. They see that without Him they could have done nothing in the order of salvation. They see, down to the least detail, all the graces they received from Him: all the effects of their predestination, namely, their vocation, justification, glorification. They live by Him. Each sees in Him the Bridegroom, the Bridegroom of the Church militant, suffering, and triumphant. What love they must have for the mystical body, of which Jesus is the head! What bliss in being loved by God in Jesus Christ, whose members they are!

Such is the vision described in the Apocalypse: “I heard the voice of many angels saying with a loud voice: The Lamb that was slain is worthy to receive power and divinity and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and benediction. The Lamb was slain and has redeemed us . . . in His own blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation.”

Bossuet writes as follows: “Let us here below begin to contemplate the glory of Jesus Christ, to become like unto Him by imitating Him. The day will come when we shall be like unto Him in glory, when we shall be inebriated with His love. Thus will be consummated the work for which Jesus Christ came on earth.”

Again They are My living members, they are Myself. The eternal Father sees in them nothing but Jesus Christ, loves them by pouring forth on them the love He has for His Son. Let us, then, remain in silence with our Savior. In wonder at the grandeurs given us in Him, can we have any other desire than to render ourselves worthy of His grace?”

Here we find the true meaning of the term, “spiritual gospel.” This is written by the Spirit, not with ink on parchment but with grace on our minds and wills. This spiritual gospel is the complement of the one we read in daily Mass. It is being printed day by day, century by century, and will be

finished on the last day. It is the spiritual history of the mystical body. God knows it from all eternity. The blessed read it in God.

Mary is loved by all as the worthy Mother of God, mother of divine grace, the powerful virgin, mother of mercy, refuge of sinners, consoler of the afflicted, help of Christians, queen of patriarchs, of prophets, of apostles, of martyrs, of confessors, of virgins, of all the saints. The love of the saints for Jesus and Mary belongs to essential beatitude. It is the highest among the secondary objects of the beatific vision.

Love of the Saints for One Another

Seeing one another in God, the saints love one another. The degree of this love is measured by nearness to God. Each rejoices at the degree of beatitude which others have received. Yet each loves with special affection those to whom he has been united on earth.

What an immense throng! Here we find, not only patriarchs, prophets, the precursor, St. Joseph, the apostles, but the souls of children who died after their baptism. And in this immense assembly we find harmonized the greatest variety with intimate unity, the highest intensity with the deepest repose. The saints whom we call dead, because they have left the earth, are in reality overflowing with life.

Each of the saints has his personal distinction. Each is himself, with all his natural gifts and supernatural privileges, all of them perfectly developed. St. Paul differs from St. John, St. Augustine from St. Francis of Assisi, St. Theresa from St. Catherine of Siena. Yet they resemble one another since each contemplates one and the same divine truth, each is on fire with one and the same love of God. Hence the masters of the spiritual life tell us: Be supernaturally yourself. That means, eliminate your faults, that the image of the Father and the Son may be formed in you. Let each reproduce that image in his own fashion. Unity in diversity is the definition of beauty. And spiritual beauty is deathless beauty.

Lastly, the blessed love us. They pray, in particular and without ceasing, for those whom they have known here below. So near the source of all good, they heap benefits upon us. They draw from God’s treasury the gifts which His goodness wishes to bestow. Further, all the saints in heaven love us, even those whose very existence we know not, because we with them are members of that mystical body of which Jesus is the head.

Hence we, too, must love the saints. This love is a sure and abundant source of spiritual progress. Who can tell the fruits of that intimacy of grace

which exists between us and this or that saint in heaven whom we are moved to imitate? In each of them we find our Lord, the supreme model.

This love of the saints for one another belongs to essential beatitude, because they see and love one another in the Word. What joy flows from the contemplation of uncreated good in all its radiation!

We read in The Imitation: O ye humble souls, rejoice! Ye poor, leap with gladness! The kingdom of God belongs to you if you walk in the truth.”

31. ACCIDENTAL BEATITUDE

WE HAVE spoken of essential beatitude, which consists in the immediate vision of God and in the love which flows from this vision. But the Lord, so rich in mercy for His elect, adds to essential beatitude a joy in created good, a joy which corresponds to their aspirations. This is what we call accidental beatitude.

This accidental beatitude is found in the society of friends: in general joy at the good deeds done on earth: in the special recompense given to certain classes, the halo of virgins, for example, of doctors, and of martyrs: in the resurrection and in the qualities of the glorious body.

Accidental Beatitude in the Soul

In regard to those whom they have known and loved on earth, the saints receive, besides the beatific vision in Verbo, also new knowledge extra Verbum. It is an accidental joy to learn, for example, of the spiritual progress, of their friends on earth, to see them entering heaven. This knowledge extra Verbum, is inferior to the beatific vision. Hence some call it the evening vision, contrasted with the morning vision which sees created things in God.

Further, each soul is happy to be honored by God, by the friends of God, especially by those who shine by wisdom. Each has a special joy in seeing his own good recognized and appreciated, good which he accomplished on earth in the midst of great difficulties.

Special recompense will be given for victories gained against the flesh, the world, and the devil: the halo of virgins, for victory against the concupiscence of the flesh: the halo of the martyrs for victory over persecutors: the halo of doctors for victory over ignorance, errors, infidelity, heresy, over the spirit of division and negation. This halo belongs, not only to those who have publicly taught sacred science, by word or by pen, but also to those who have taught in private fashion when occasion presented itself. This halo belongs, first to the spirit, then, after the resurrection, to the

body, just as the essential glory of the soul is reflected in the body raised from the dead.

Resurrection of the Flesh

To accidental beatitude belongs also the resurrection of the body and the characteristics of the glorified body. The resurrection is a dogma of faith. It was denied by the Sadducees, the Manicheans, the Albigensians, the Socinians, and is denied today by rationalists.

We must say first: If a good number of those who died (e.g., Lazarus and the son of the widow of Naim) were recalled to life by our Lord, and later by the apostles and other saints, what can hinder our immortal soul, made by nature to inform and vivify its body, from being reunited forever to that body, though in different degrees of merit and demerit?

This revealed truth, defined by the Church, is supported by numerous Scripture texts. The Fourth Council of the Lateran gave this definition: All will arise, each with his own body which he had upon earth, to receive what each has merited, according as his works were good or bad.

The universal resurrection, then, is of faith. This resurrection requires at least that there be essential identity between the risen body and the body which the soul had while it was still in union with the body. According to certain writers This is the uniform testimony both of Scripture and of tradition.

In the book of Job we read: “I shall be clothed again with my skin, and in my flesh I shall see my God; whom I myself shall see, and my eyes shall behold, and not another.”

Jesus defends the resurrection against the Sadducees. “Fear ye not them that kill the body and are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear Him that can destroy both soul and body in hell.”

In the Gospel of St. John our Lord is still more explicit: “The hour cometh wherein all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God. And they that have done good things shall come forth unto the resurrection of life; but they that have done evil unto the resurrection of judgment.”

St. Paul

The Fathers of the second century speak explicitly of this dogma.

Reason cannot give a demonstrative proof of this truth, but it can give high reasons of appropriateness. These reasons are thus expressed by the Catechism of the Council of Trent: “The first is that our souls, which are

only a part of ourselves, are immortal, and retain forever their natural inclination to union with the body.”

A second reason is found in the infinite justice of God, who has established punishments for the wicked and rewards for the good. Hence it is appropriate that the souls be reunited to their bodies in order that these bodies, which have been instruments, whether of good or of evil, partake with the soul in the awards and punishments deserved. This thought was developed by St. John Chrysostom in a homily to the people of Antioch.

In the case of the wicked the body has taken part in deeds of iniquity, in criminal voluptuousness. In the case of the good the body has been in the service of the soul in the accomplishment of good works, sometimes heroic works, in devotion, in the apostolate, in martyrdom. Further, the bodies of the just are temples of the Holy Spirit, as St. Paul says. Hence the resurrection of the body is highly appropriate, that the soul may lack nothing in its state of felicity. Here we see, together with the justice of God, also His wisdom and His goodness.

A third reason is drawn from the victory of Christ over sin and the devil, which victory consequently triumphs over death which is a consequence of sin. He won this victory over death by His own resurrection and by that of His Blessed Mother. Hence it is appropriate, since He is to be the Savior of humanity, body and soul, that He win also the definitive victory over death by universal resurrection.

The Catechism of the Council of Trent speaks thus: “O wonderful restoration of our nature, for which we are indebted to the victory of our Lord Jesus Christ over death ! “

We read in St. John: “Death shall be no more.”

The Qualities of the Glorious Body

St. Paul speaks thus: “One is the glory of the celestial bodies and another of the terrestrial: one is the glory of the sun, another the glory of the moon, and another the glory of the stars, for star differs from star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it shall rise in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor, it shall rise in glory; it is sown in weakness, it shall rise in power; it is sown a natural body, it shall rise a spiritual body.”

Following this doctrine, theologians distinguish four chief qualities in the glorified body: impassibility, subtility, agility, and clarity.

Impassibility is the gift which preserves not only from death, but also from pain.

Agility delivers bodies from the heaviness which weighs down the present life. The risen body can go where the soul pleases, with a swiftness and ease which St. Jerome compares to that of the eagle.

Subtility renders the body capable of penetrating other bodies without difficulty. Thus the glorious body of the risen Christ entered the Cenacle though the doors were closed.

Clarity gives to the body of the saints that brightness, that splendor, which is the very essence of the beautiful. Our Lord saw an image of this glory on the forehead of Moses, after He had seen God and received God's words. He was so luminous that their eyes could not endure the splendor.

This clarity is but a reflection, an overflowing, of the glory of the soul on that of the body.

Lastly, our senses will find a pure and ineffable joy in the humanity of Jesus, the Blessed Virgin, the choir of the saints, the beauties of the renovated world, the chants of adoration and thanksgiving in the city of God. Such will be the accidental beatitude of heaven after the renovation of the world.

What fruits follow on the knowledge of this mystery to which nature gives us no right to aspire? The Lord has deigned to reveal these things to the little ones, whereas He has hidden them from the wise and prudent.

32. THE NUMBER OF THE ELECT

ANY works have been written on the number of the elect. We may refer particularly to the article in the Dictionnaire de theologie catholique. Here we restrict ourselves to that which is certain, or at least very probable, in agreement with the great majority of theologians.

The Mystery of This Number

The number of the elect is known only by God. “The Lord knoweth who are His.” The end of the world will come when the number of the elect is complete, when the succession of human generations has reached its goal.

This number in itself is very great: “I heard the number of them that were signed (of the servants of God), a hundred forty-four thousand were signed, of every tribe of the children of Israel.... After this, I saw a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and in the sight of the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands.”

If we count both angels and men, the number of the elect seems to be higher than that of the reprobate. Thus St. Thomas, evil happens only in the minority of cases, because, since the angel has neither sense power nor passions, he does not run the risk of remaining satisfied with an inferior form of life.

When we speak of men exclusively, we do not know, first of all, if among the worlds scattered in space the earth is the only one that is habitable. But if we restrict our question to men on our planet, the number of the elect remains a matter of controversy.

Many Fathers and theologians incline to the smaller number of the elect, because it is said in Scripture: “Many are called, but few are chosen.”

Monsabre continues: “Remark that He does not tell us definitely the number of the good and of the wicked. To those who demanded a clear pronouncement, He was content to reply: ‘Strive to enter by the narrow gate; for many . . . shall seek to enter and shall not be able.’ The rigorists will tell me possibly that Jesus here hides the mystery of His justice, in

order not to frighten timorous souls. As for myself, I prefer to think that He hides here the mystery of His mercy, that we may avoid presumption."

The common opinion of the Fathers and ancient theologians is without doubt that those who are saved do not represent the greater number. We may cite in favor of this view the following saints: Basil, John Chrysostom, Gregory Nazianzen, Hilary, Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, Leo the Great, Bernard, Thomas Aquinas. Then, nearer to our own times: Molina, St. Robert Bellarmine, Suarez, Vasquez, Lessius, and St. Alphonsus. But they give this view as opinion, not as revealed truth, not as certain conclusion.

In the last century the contrary opinion, namely, of the greater number of the elect, was defended by Father Faber in England, by Monsignor Bougaud in France, by Father Castelein, S.J., in Belgium.

To conclude: some insist on the mercy of God, others on the justice of God. Neither one side nor the other gives us certitude. And the reasons of appropriateness which each invokes differ very much from the reasons of appropriateness invoked in favor of a dogma which is already certain by revelation, whereas here we are treating of a truth that is not certain.

Theologians in general are inclined to fill out what Scripture and tradition tell us by distinguishing the means of salvation given to Catholics from those that are given men of good will beyond the borders of the Church.

Restricting the question to Catholics, we find the doctrine, generally held especially since Suarez, that, if we consider merely adults, the number of the elect surpasses that of the reprobate. If adult Catholics do at one time or another sin mortally, nevertheless they can arise in the tribunal of penance, and there are relatively few who at the end of life do not repent, or even refuse to receive the sacraments.

But if we are treating of all Christians, of all who have been baptized, Catholic, schismatic, Protestant, it is more probable, theologians generally say, that the great number is saved. First, the number of infants who die in the state of grace before reaching the age of reason is very great. Secondly, many Protestants, being today in good faith, can be reconciled to God by an act of contrition, particularly in danger of death. Thirdly, schismatics can receive a valid absolution.

If the question is of the entire human race, the answer must remain uncertain, for the reasons given above. But even if, absolutely, the number of the elect is less great, the glory of God's government cannot suffer. Quality prevails over quantity. One elect soul is a spiritual universe;

Further, no evil happens that is not permitted for a higher good. Further, among non- Christians (Jews, Mohammedans, pagans) there are souls which are elect. Jews and Mohammedans not only admit monotheism, but retain fragments of primitive revelation and of Mosaic revelation. They believe in a God who is a supernatural rewarder, and can thus, with the aid of grace, make an act of contrition. And even to pagans, who live in invincible, involuntary ignorance of the true religion, and who still attempt to observe the natural law, supernatural aids are offered, by means known to God. These, as Pius IX says,

We cannot arrive at certitude in this question. It is better to acknowledge our ignorance than to discourage the faithful by a doctrine which is too rigid, to expose them to danger by a doctrine which is too superficial.

The important thing is to observe the commandments of God. St. Augustine “God never commands the impossible. But He warns us to do what we can, and to ask of Him the grace to accomplish what we of ourselves cannot do, and He aids us to fulfill what He commands.”

Let us put our confidence in Jesus Christ,

The Signs of Predestination

The Council of Trent has declared that we cannot have on earth certitude of our predestination without a special revelation. Aside from this special revelation no man can know if he will persevere in good works to the end. Nevertheless there are signs of predestination which give a kind of moral certitude that one will persevere. The Fathers, especially St. Chrysostom, St. Gregory the Great, St. Bernard, St. Anselm, have enumerated certain of these signs, following the directions of Scripture.

Theologians enumerate eight signs of predestination. First, a good life; secondly, the testimony of a good conscience; thirdly, patience in adversities for love of God; fourthly, relish for the light and the word of God; fifthly, mercy toward those who suffer; sixthly, love of enemies; seventhly, humility; eighthly, special devotion to the Blessed Virgin.

Patience in adversity shows how inequality of natural conditions is compensated for by divine grace. This is the truth expressed in the beatitudes: Blessed the poor in spirit, blessed the meek, blessed those who weep, blessed those who hunger and thirst for justice, blessed the merciful, blessed the pure of heart, blessed the peacemakers, blessed those who suffer persecution for justice. These possess the kingdom of God. To bear patiently and perseveringly a heavy cross is a great sign of predestination.

Theologians sometimes add these special signs: first, a great intimacy with God in prayer; secondly, perfect mortification of the passions; thirdly, the ardent desire to suffer much for the glory of Christ Jesus; fourthly, an indefatigable zeal for souls.

We may here remind the reader of the great promise of the Sacred Heart, to those who receive Communion well on nine successive first Fridays. This promise, we have said, is absolute though it supposes that Communion has been well made for these nine times. This would be, therefore, a grace given only to the elect.

The mystery of predestination reminds us that we can do nothing without the grace of Christ.

EPILOGUE

REVEALED doctrine on death, judgment, hell, purgatory, and heaven, shows us what the next life is, manifests to us the depth of the human soul, which God alone can fill. The power which brings us to heaven, our destination, is sanctifying grace, the seed of eternal life, the source of the infused virtues, especially of faith, hope, and charity, with the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Let us note as we approach conclusion, that these great theological virtues are today often completely disfigured. Faith in God, hope in God, love of God and souls, have been replaced in many thousands of moderns by faith and hope in humanity, by the love of humanity. Subjective smartness has taken the place of sacred doctrine. Everything is irremediably false.

In certain Masonic lodges, in the first hall, we read upon the walls: “Faith, Hope, Charity.” Chesterton has written on this subject under the heading: “Grand Ideas Gone Mad.”

Properly speaking, persons are astray, not ideas. Under physiological and psychical disturbance men become fools. And the higher their intelligence, the more this folly grows, its proportions corresponding to their faculties and their culture. Religious folly is the most difficult folly to cure, because there is no appeal to a more elevated motive. Intelligence has gone astray in its highest reaches, deceives itself habitually, particularly in its ideas on God, God’s infinite justice, and God’s mercy.

Grand ideas gone mad: religious ideas without center and equilibrium. This results when men substitute for faith in God faith in humanity, so full of aberrations. Faith, illumined by the Holy Spirit, by the gifts of intelligence and wisdom, becomes the principle of mystical contemplation. But faith, where it degenerates, becomes the principle of a false mysticism, whose devotees are impassioned for the progress of humanity, as if this progress were never to suffer reverse, rather as if this progress were God Himself, who becomes Himself in us. Renan was asked the question: Does

God exist? His answer was: Not yet. He did not see that this answer was a blasphemy.

Classic antiquity was not afflicted with such complete lack of equilibrium. After antiquity came Christianity, came the supernatural elevation of the Gospel. Then, when men abandoned Christian truth, their fall was accelerated by the height from which they fell.

This departure begins with Luther, who denied the Sacrifice of the Mass, the validity of sacramental absolution and confession, the necessity of observing the commands of God in order to be saved. Descent was hastened by the Encyclopaedists and the philosophers of the eighteenth century, by the corrupted Christianity of J. J. Rousseau, who robs the Gospel of its supernatural character and reduces religion to a natural sentiment which can be found, more or less altered, in all religions. These ideas were propagated everywhere by the French Revolution. Further, Kant maintained that speculative reason cannot prove the existence of God. There followed Fichte and Hegel, who teach that God does not exist outside and above humanity, but that He becomes God in us and by us, that God is nothing but the progress of humanity, just as if this progress were not accompanied from time to time by a terrible recoil into barbarism.

Between Christianity and these monstrous errors arose the system called liberalism, a halfway station, which concludes nothing, gives no sufficient motives for action. Liberalism is replaced by radicalism, then by socialism, finally by materialistic and atheistic communism. The negation of God and religion, of family, of property, of the fatherland; all follow close on hand. Communism ends in universal servitude beneath the most terrible of dictatorships. Acceleration holds good in mental procedures as it does in corporeal.

Let us turn back and re-climb the mountain of holiness. Holiness, as St. Thomas shows, has two essential characteristics, the absence of all stain of soilure and sin, and a firm union with God.

Holiness is perfect in heaven, but it begins on earth. It manifests itself concretely in three fashions, upon which we would here insist. We have three great duties toward God: we must know Him, we must love Him, and we must serve Him. Thus we obtain eternal life. Now there are souls which have especially the mission of loving God and of making Him loved. These are souls of strong will, who receive from God the grace of a burning love. There are others whose mission is to make God known. In such souls the

intellect is manifestly the dominating character, and these souls receive above all the graces of enlightenment. And there are souls whose chief mission is to serve God by fidelity in daily duty. This class contains the majority of good Christians. These three forms of sanctity seem to be represented in the three privileged apostles, Peter, John, and James.

Those of the first class, wherein will is dominant, receive graces of ardent love. They ask themselves: What can I do for God? What work shall I undertake for His glory? They thirst for suffering, for mortification, in order to prove to God their love and to repair offenses of which He is the object. They desire to save sinners. Only secondarily do they apply themselves to the task of making God better known.

To this group belong the following: Elias, so remarkable for his zeal, St. Peter, so profoundly devoted to our Lord that he wills to be crucified head-downwards; then the great martyrs, St. Ignatius of Antioch, St. Lawrence. Nearer to our own times we find St. Francis of Assisi, St. Clare, the daughters of St. Clare. Later still we find St. Charles Borromeo; St. Vincent de Paul, overflowing with charity for neighbor; St. Margaret Mary, St. Benedict Joseph Labre, and the holy Cure of Ars.

The danger for these souls lies in the energy of their will, which can degenerate into rigidity, tenacity, obstinacy. In those who are less fervent, such rigidity is their dominant fault. They have a zeal not sufficiently illumined, not sufficiently patient and amiable. Sometimes they give themselves too much to active work, neglecting prayer.

The trials which the Lord sends them tend especially to make them supple, to break their will when it has become too rigid, to make it perfectly docile to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Under these trials their burning zeal becomes more and more illumined, more patient and bending and sweet. Thus they climb the mountain to the summit of perfection.

The second class, that is, souls dominated by intellect, climb the mountain by another path. They receive graces of light, which carry them on to contemplation, to those immense and all-embracing views which are the reward of wisdom. Their loves grow by the road of intellective deduction. Compared with the preceding class, they have less need of activity or of reparation, but if they are faithful they come to a heroic love of the God who ravishes them.

To this group of souls belong the great doctors: St. Augustine, St. Thomas of Aquin, St. Francis de Sales. We may note that the latter often

laments his slowness in following the lights he has received. And this is a common danger for these souls. They do not proceed to conform their conduct to the light God gives them. Their intelligence is highly illumined, but their will lacks zeal.

These souls may suffer particularly from error, from false directions which turn aside their intellect. These trials purify them and, if they meet them well, they too reach a great love of God. An enlightened soul, if it is faithful, will be more united to God than a soul that is ardent but unfaithful.

The third class of souls is dominated by memory and practical activity. Their chief mission is to serve God by fidelity to duty. Their memory brings before them particular facts. They are struck by a trait in the life of a saint, or a word of the liturgy. Divine inspiration renders them attentive to various forms of perfection. If they are faithful, they rise to the highest levels of sanctity.

To this class would belong, it seems, the apostle St. James, the great shepherds of the primitive Church, all devoted even to martyrdom to a right ruling of their dioceses. In this class, too, in modern times, we find St. Ignatius, attentive to the most practical means of sanctification, careful to consider men as they are and not only as they should be: St. Alphonsus Liguori, entirely preoccupied with morality, with the practical apostolate, so necessary in his time against Jansenism and infidelity.

The danger for these souls is that of attaching themselves to works which are good in themselves, but which lead only indirectly to God. Some find their entire perfection in austerities, others in devotion, others in their habitual labors, others in the recitation of interminable prayers. The danger here is that of falling into trifles and scruples, which retard their entrance into contemplation, which hinder them from the intimacy of union with God. The methods and means which served them for the moment become in time hindrances to loving and simple contemplation of God.

The trials for these souls are to be found chiefly in the practice of charity. They suffer much from the faults of their brethren. But if they are faithful in the midst of these difficulties, they too reach a very intimate union with our Lord.

Such are the three principal forms of holiness, corresponding to our three great duties toward God, to know Him, to love Him, to serve Him.

In Jesus Himself we may see the excellence of these three forms of sanctity. First, in His hidden life, in the solitude of Nazareth, in the house of

the carpenter, He is the example of fidelity to daily duty: acts which are lowly and humble, but which become great by the love which inspires them.

In His apostolic life, secondly, Jesus was the light of the world. “He that followeth Me walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”

In His life of suffering, thirdly, Jesus manifests the full zeal of His love for His Father and for us. This love leads Him to die for us on the cross, thus to make reparation to God and to save souls.

Jesus therefore possesses, in pre-eminent manner, these three forms of sanctity. And He likewise shows how to meet the dangers which other souls encounter. He had burning zeal without rigidity, without obstinacy. His love was never more burning than on the cross, and never did He manifest a more patient sweetness. “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

Enjoying contemplation, the most luminous and elevated, He is never lost in this contemplation. He is not abstracted from the world, not drawn out of the world like a saint in ecstasy. He is above ecstasy, without ceasing to contemplate. He speaks to His apostles on the least details of their apostolic life.

Finally, attentive to most minute details in the service of God, He ever keeps in view the more important questions. He sees everything in God, the things of time in the things of eternity.

Jesus is higher than any saint, as white light is superior to the colors of the rainbow. Proportionately, we may apply this truth to the pre-eminent sanctity of Mary, Mother of God, full of grace. These two are in a special sense our mediators, whom God has given to us by reason of our feebleness. Let us be guided by them. They will lead us infallibly to eternal life. The life of grace is everlasting life already begun.

OUR SAVIOUR AND HIS LOVE FOR US

REVEREND REGINALD GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE O.P.

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OUR SAVIOUR AND HIS LOVE FOR US

PREFACE

IN an earlier work, Providence, we sought to explain, according to

revelation and theology, the nature of divine Providence, its ex-tension and infallibility, and the way we must confidently abandon ourselves to it by fulfilling our duties a little better each day. We have also shown in that work how conformity with God's signified will permit us to abandon ourselves to His will of good pleasure even before it has been manifested to us. Thus, "fidelity and abandonment" is a maxim that preserves the equilibrium of the interior life in the face of two opposing deviations, namely, restless, sterile agitation, and lazy, quietistic indifference.

This book on the Savior is in a sense the sequel to the one men-tioned above. Who, indeed, if not the Savior has made the correct notion of Providence, so often expressed in the Old Testament, prevail over the notion of destiny or of an unknown and irresistible linkage of events and causes? Who has liberated men from the clutches of blind fate, spoken of by the Greek poets? Who has enabled us to free ourselves from the bonds of fatality, of chance or ill fortune, of life's countless worries, of slavery to the passions? Who, if not He whom we call the Savior?

The greatest Greek philosophers sought deliverance in contempla-tion of the Sovereign Good, which they conceived variously, depend-ing on whether they were more or less idealistic. But they admitted that this contemplation of the Sovereign Good was accessible to only a very few men. They themselves attained to it only for a few fleeting moments; and if they spoke of the life to come, it was in terms of a beautiful possibility. Even Plato expressed himself thus in the Phaedo, as did Seneca in one of his Letters to Lucilius (102).

The problem of men's individual destinies remained obscure, and the necessity resulting from the very nature of things weighed heavily on men's souls. There was nothing to do but to be resigned to it. "The philosophers do not free us from it. Quite the contrary, they buttress by their doctrines the stern necessity of universal laws." According to the Stoics, fate leads those

who submit to her, but carries along in spite of themselves those who resist. The determinist doctrines from the Orient added still more to the weight of destiny.

The Savior came not only to deliver us from the stranglehold of fate, from the irresistible chain of known and unknown causes, and from the blows of misfortune; He came also to deliver us from sin, from injustice with respect to God and men. He came to justify us and to promise us, no longer as a beautiful possibility but as an absolute certainty, not only future life in the natural order, but eternal life in the supernatural order, participation in the intimate life of God: a life in which we shall see Him as He sees Himself and love Him as He loves Himself.

Belief in destiny has been superseded by faith in God's love for us and faith in Providence: "God so loved the world, as to give His only-begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in Him, may not perish, but may have life everlasting." The weight of destiny has been lifted, and our individual destinies are brighter. The Savior brings deliverance to all who do not through lust or pride resist the light and the grace of God. It is from this point of view that we shall consider the mystery of the redemptive Incarnation.

On several occasions we have explained to theological students St. Thomas' treatise on the Incarnation, making use of his principal commentators. We judge it useful for our present purpose to extract certain portions of this treatise that bear directly on the personality of the Savior, His interior life, and His love for us, and to present this material in a form accessible to all interior souls. In our presentation we shall go back as much as possible from theology to faith itself, since the latter is far superior to the former.

Theology helps us to discover the innermost meaning of the Gospel. The farther it advances the more, in a sense, it must hide itself. For, like St. John the Baptist, it must somehow disappear after announcing the coming of our Lord. It makes known the structure of the body of doctrine, but as is fitting it must express itself as much as possible in the terms of Scripture, that is, in God's own words. Thus theology tends upward toward faith, its source.

We frequently speak of the intimate life of God, which is espe-cially the mystery of the Blessed Trinity. Likewise the interior life of the sacred soul of the Savior derives from the mystery of the In-carnation. We shall

therefore consider the Savior’s interior life first with relation to the mystery of the Incarnation, and then with relation to the mystery of the Redemption.

In Part One we shall seek to explain Christ’s personality according to His own testimony and that of the apostles, His intimate life as it was and is eternally with relation to the fittingness and motives for the Incarnation. We shall consider Christ’s sanctity, the fullness of grace that enriched His sacred soul from the first moment of His conception, and that radiates through all His faculties: His intelligence, His will, and His passions.

In Part Two we shall deal with the mystery of the Redemption and of the Savior’s love for us, dwelling on His humility, His prayer, His merits, His priesthood, the sacrifice of the Cross and that of the Mass. By thus contemplating at close range the intimate life of Jesus on earth, in heaven, and in the Eucharist, we shall learn how we must go about entering into His close friendship and how the mystery of Christ is bound up with the mystery of our own individual destinies.

We have set out to write neither a treatise on technical theology nor a popularization. Our purpose is to invite interior souls to the con-templation of the mystery of Christ.

To this end, two different pitfalls are to be avoided. Often, even on this subject, the spirit of technical research, when it succeeds in avoiding pedantry, turns the mind to minutiae, and this result is al-ways detrimental to contemplation. Even apart from any defect in theological exposition, a good manual of theology on the solution of the difficulties concerning the communication of idioms, transubstan-tiation, or the Eucharistic accidents will be of less help in preparing us for contemplation than Bossuet’s Elévations sur les mystères or his Méditations sur l’Evangile. The majority of interior souls do not need to undertake much of the research which is indispensable to theologians. In fact, to understand these matters they would require a philosophical background that they do not possess and that in a sense would encumber them. For, even at the start—in a different way, of course—these theologically untrained souls are on a higher level. This truth was well understood by the great classical theologians who must ever be our models.

On the other hand, many popularizations, and many pious books as well, lack a solid doctrinal foundation. Yet, far from being separated or merely juxtaposed, sacred doctrine and piety ought to be closely united, the latter springing spontaneously from the former.

Inasmuch as popularizations are characterized by excessive simplification, they often fail to examine certain fundamental and difficult problems from which, however, light would burst forth, perhaps even the light of life.

On the contrary, we have purposely laid emphasis on several of these problems, notably the personality of Christ (wherein it is formally constituted), the motive for the Incarnation, considered in terms of the predestination of Christ, the first of the predestined souls. We have also dealt at considerable length with the mystery of the reconciliation of Christ's liberty with His absolute impeccability, as well as several other difficult questions of this nature. These ques-tions, which because of their difficulty are neglected in many works, are none the less important not only for the theologian but for the contemplative who wishes to live by his faith.

That is why at the end of this work we shall discuss Jesus in His relation to different forms of sanctity. In this regard we have made a special study of a problem much under discussion at the present time: the grace of Christ and the non-Christian mystics.

In an effort to enlighten interior souls desirous of becoming more closely united to the Savior, we have sought to explain the doctrine of the Church on the Word made flesh, according to St. Thomas Aquinas, not in the often technical language of his commentators but in words that can be understood by all. We have tried to do this with-out succumbing to a superficial oversimplification, but in order to attain the superior simplicity of divine revelation as it is expressed inthe Gospels, above all in the Gospel of St. John and in the Epistles.

St. Thomas, who was never a popularizer but will remain the great classic of theology, progressed from the learned complexity of the disputed questions to the superior simplicity of the beautiful articles of the Summa theologica, a simplicity that possesses a high value which often escapes those who are unaware of the learned complexity that prepared the way for it. This simplicity lights our way even if we do not always know at what price it was achieved.

The Common Doctor of the Church shows us the path to follow, and he followed it so well himself that at the end of his life he was unable to dictate the conclusion of the Summa. He could no longer descend to the complexity of the questions and articles that he still wished to compose,

because he had risen to a contemplative state that touched the things of the kingdom of God in a much simpler way, above the letter and in the spirit.

Superficial oversimplification and finicky concern with minutiae are two enemies of contemplation very different in nature. Contem-plation rises between and above these two opposing deviations like a summit which is the goal of prayerful souls.

If we follow closely the doctrine of St. Thomas on all that relates to the intimate life of the Savior we shall see, as if enlightened from above, that our own spiritual life—allowing for inevitable differ-ences—must be an imitation of our divine Model. Indeed, this is well shown in the masterpiece known to all, the Imitation of Jesus Christ. May the Lord bless these pages and make them fruitful for the ex-tension of His kingdom and for the salvation of souls!

PART ONE

THE MYSTERY OF THE INCARNATION AND THE PERSONALITY OF THE SAVIOR

THE INTERIOR LIFE AND THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST

> “For to me, to live is Christ.”
>
> Phil. 1:21

IN ORDER first of all to understand the importance of the mystery of Christ for each one of us at every stage of our interior life, even the lowest, let us inquire what is meant by the interior life in the more general meaning of the term, and then in the more specific and deeper sense.

THE INTIMATE CONVERSATION OF EVERY MAN WITH HIMSELF AND THE BASIC TENDENCIES OF THE WILL

The words “interior life” at once call forth a mental picture of a state of relatively profound recollection that may seem inaccessible to most of us who live in the world, engrossed in our affairs from which at times we seek recreation in amusements of one sort or another. This commonplace impression contains both truth and error. The interior life, as its name indicates, presupposes a certain recollection in God, but this recollection is not as out of reach as may at first appear.

Every man, whether good or evil, holds a more or less serious conversation with himself at certain hours of the day whenever he is alone and often enough even amid the throngs of a bustling city. On his way home from work in the streetcar a laborer, when he is not joking or talking with his fellow workers, may appear pensive: he is holding an interior conversation with himself. What is he thinking of? Perhaps that within a week he will be out of a job. How, then, will he provide for his wife and his children? The tenor of his interior conversation varies with his age. When he is young, he thinks of the future. When he is old, he carries within himself the accumulated experience of some sixty years which tends to be translated into an over-all judgment on life; and this judgment will vary

widely, depending on whether a man’s life has been good or bad and on whether he is or is not a Christian.

The interior life is an elevated form of the interior conversation of every man, when this conversation becomes or tends to become a conversation with God.

In this intimate discourse which each man has with himself, the life of the senses, of the imagination, of the sense memory, and of the emotions all take part, as is the case with animals. In addition, there is participation by the mind, the intelligence, which passes judgment on life. There is also a more or less latent act of the will, which is created to love and to desire what is good. In this interior state there is a fundamental love, a basic tendency of the will, that differs widely among men.

A man will judge differently about the ultimate goal to be pursued, according as the basic tendency of his will is or is not rectified, good or evi1. All men seek happiness. Some seek it where it is to be found, in the true good; others seek it where it is not, in satisfying their sensuality or their pride.

Many persons, without being willing to admit it, love themselves above all else, and more or less consciously make everything con-verge upon themselves as if they were the center of the universe. Along with this self-love, and as it were on the side, they also have a somewhat ineffectual love for their family or their country. Such men do not have an interior life, for their interior conversation with themselves is of death rather than of life. Instead of elevating them, it lowers them.

According to the Gospel, these souls are in a state of spiritual death or of mortal sin. The basic tendency of their will is turned away from the true good, away from the Sovereign Good which is the principle of all others. What they are really seeking is not truth and the true good of man, of their family, of their children, of their country. On the contrary, they are seeking perpetual pleasure and the money needed to procure it. According to Christian philosophy they live by the quest of pleasurable good and of the useful, without rising to really desire moral good conceived by right reason as the object of virtue.

Their fundamental will is directed toward death, not toward life. They have no interior life. What they discover deep within themselves is death; and hence they seek to escape from themselves, to externalize themselves in study, in science, in art, or in social and political activity, or to live by their

imagination and their senses and thus forget their sad evaluation of life which would lead them to discouragement and pessimism.

In this regard Pascal says that the man who would escape from himself by taking up hunting, for instance, prefers the pursuit of the hare to the hare, and in a more elevated order of activity prefers the search for truth to truth itself. He is ever in need of something new. This is the reverse of changeless contemplation of attained truth. Such a man seeks to escape from himself to avoid boredom, empti-ness, discouragement. But sometimes the hour of discouragement can become by the grace of God the moment of conversion. This has happened many times: a despairing man about to seek death remem-bers the name of God, invokes it, and, perceiving the grandeur of the mystery of Christ and of our Redemption, is converted and thence-forth gives himself wholly to the service of God and to the salvation of souls.

On a lower level and without going that far, souls in the state of mortal sin may at moments entertain some such noble thoughts as these: “Honor is the poetry of duty”; “a beautiful life is a thought of youth realized in maturity.” Sometimes an actual grace may illuminate one of these noble maxims and lead souls to seek higher things.

When the basic tendencies of a man’s will are directed toward the moral good, the object of virtue, when this man desires the good itself or duty, efficaciously and not merely as a fancy, more than he desires pleasure and what is useful to obtain it, then it can be said of him that he already has an interior life. If such are the basic tenden-cies of his will, then the interior conversation that he holds with himself in hours of solitude or in crowded streets is a conversation that is directed toward life. In reality this man who genuinely and efficaciously loves the good more than himself is beginning to con-verse interiorly with God and no longer with himself.

St. Thomas says that when a child, even one who has not been baptized, attains to the full age of reason, he must choose the path of goodness and duty in preference to the path of pleasure. He must efficaciously desire the true good and from that instant on orient his entire life toward it. For one wishes the end, even if it is only dimly understood, before wishing the means. But to desire efficaciously the true good more than self is already to love more than oneself the Sovereign Good, God, the Author of our nature. Fallen man is not capable of such an efficacious love without being regenerated through grace, which cures him of original sin. That is why St.

Thomas does not hesitate to teach that a child—even one who has not been baptized—who after he has reached the full age of reason efficaciously loves the good more than self, is justified by the baptism of desire, because this love, which is already the efficacious love of God, is not possible to man in his present state without regenerative grace.

Doubtless if this child is not in a Christian environment he will find it most difficult to persevere; but if he does persevere, he will receive ever richer graces and will be saved. In a Christian environment he will naturally receive much more help. That is why it is such a great grace to have been born in the Church.

We cannot overemphasize this point: the moment the fundamental will of a man is efficaciously directed toward the true good, the man is justified, he is in the state of grace, he possesses within himself the seed of eternal life. He already has a certain interior life which is truly alive, even if it is not yet as recollected as might be desirable.

The man who has persevered in the state of grace for a considerable time comes to have especially in moments of solitude, in the silence of

a church, or in the midst of a crowd, an interior conversation with himself which is no longer one of egoism and self-love, but which is already in its own way a conversation with God.

As we ride in a crowded bus of an evening we can sometimes, even without having the gift of the discernment of spirits, recognize those men and women who have gone astray in misconduct and are the despair of their families—if they have any—and those who on the contrary live by the thought of the good and gropingly by the thought of God, by a faith that may indeed need to be enlightened but that is nevertheless the pupil of their mind’s eye. These persons offer up a short prayer from time to time; and when they are not praying, their interior conversation does not separate them from God. They are the living proofs of the truth of Christ’s consoling words to His apostles: “For he that is not against you, is for you.” Often they seem happy to meet a priest and sometimes ask him to pray for them and for their families.

They are good at heart. God is hidden in the depth of their hearts, and He draws them to Himself by lights and graces proportioned to their condition. In their own way these men are treading the path to-ward eternal life. Are there many of them of an evening in a crowded bus? God knows who they are. In any case we should remember that it is never by chance that two

spiritual and immortal souls meet, wherever it may be, in a train or elsewhere, especially if one of them is in the state of grace, even more so if one is very closely united to God and can through prayer call down on the other the light of life.

What has just been said gives us a distant glimpse of the interior life, what it must become in a truly Christian soul that is destined to tend ever more rapidly toward God. As a stone falls faster when ap-proaching the earth that attracts it, so must souls tend more rapidly toward God in the measure that they come closer to Him and that He draws them to Himself with increasing force. Their fundamental will must tend with ever-increasing efficacy toward God. They must therefore, especially in moments of solitude whether in a church or in a crowded street, converse ever more intimately, not in a selfish manner with themselves, but generously with God who dwells within them.

Their fundamental will thus rectified and supernaturalized must be more and more victorious over selfishness in all its forms. They must reach out beyond themselves, and instead of seeking to relate everything to themselves they must try to relate everything to God. Their fundamental will must become zeal for the glory of God and for the salvation of souls. Then they will have an interior life that is truly fruitful for themselves and for their neighbor.

Clearly, the interior life is all that really matters for each one of us. It is much more indispensable than what we speak of as the intel-lectual life. For without a true interior life man is the prey to selfish-ness and pride and can have no wholesome, lasting, and profound influence on society.

This true interior life is realized in its fullness by the saints, but especially by the Saint par excellence, our Lord Jesus Christ. Hence the necessity of reflecting, and reflecting with love, upon the interior life of Jesus and of not being contented with knowing Him from the outside in a purely historical manner, as the speculative theologian may do when he does not strive hard enough to live what he teaches.

WHAT CHRIST MUST BE TO US

The need of reflecting on the interior life of the Savior is particularly great in the present period of general confusion, when individuals and entire peoples misunderstand the ultimate end of human life and forget the

profound difference between perishable, material goods and immutable, spiritual goods. Material goods divide us in the measure that we eagerly seek them; for they cannot belong at one and the same time to everyone as a whole and to each one in particular. A given house and lot cannot belong integrally and simultaneously to several men any more than the same territory can belong to several nations.

On the other hand, as St. Thomas, following St. Augustine, has often remarked: spiritual goods can belong at the same time and in plenitude to all and to each; and they unite us the more in the measure that we seek them. Thus, each one of us can live by the same truth, by the same virtue, by the same God, by the same Christ our Savior.

Every Christian should ultimately be able to say, as did St. Paul: “To me, to live is Christ.”

As St. Thomas remarks in explaining these words, a man’s life is what interests him most. It is by living that his faculties reach fulfill-ment. It is to life that his existence is dedicated. For example, the Angelic Doctor adds, for some, to live is to hunt; for others, it is study, intellectual activity; for others still, to live consists in exterior activity. For a soldier, to live is to engage in military service. Finally, to the Christian, to live—once he has become fully conscious of the grandeur of his destiny—is Christ. This is particularly true of the priest, the apostle, whose mission it is to reveal to others the mystery of Christ.

Indeed, it is not enough for us to understand Christ’s message. We must also put it into practice. Jesus Himself has told us in the conclu-sion of His Sermon on the Mount: “Everyone therefore that heareth these My words and doth them, shall be likened to a wise man that built his house upon a rock. And the rain fell and the floods came and the winds blew, and they beat upon that house, and it fell not for it was founded on a rock. And everyone that heareth these My words and doth them not, shall be like a foolish man that built his house upon the sand. And the rain fell and the floods came and the winds blew, and they beat upon that house, and it fell, and great was the fall thereof.”

In his commentary on St. Matthew, St. Thomas remarks: The rock on which we must build signifies Christ Himself: as St. Paul tells us, the spiritual rock is Christ. . . . But there are those who listen to Christ’s message only in order to know it (without putting it into practice); they build on the intelligence only, and that is to build upon the sand. . . . Others

listen to His message in order to put it into practice and to love God and their neighbor; these build on rock . . . and they can ask with St. Paul: `Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ?' "

These words, written by a man of learning like St. Thomas, are significant. For to St. Thomas, to live was not only to study. To live was Christ, to whom he had consecrated all his labors and his entire life.

Certainly, both intellectual and exterior activity are necessary. But the Christian must love his work not only for the natural satisfaction and the profit he derives from it, but for Christ who must be known and loved, "that a man may live not to himself, but to God." In this way his powers are increased tenfold, even a hundredfold. He is no longer giving only himself, he is giving Christ for the salvation of souls.

To live more and more by Christ we must die to ourselves, that is, to the life of egoism, sensuality, and pride. "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain." We must stop making ourselves the center of existence, and unconsciously relating everything to ourselves. On the contrary, we must relate everything to God. This is the precious fruit of the spirit of sacrifice, which progressively causes to die within us all that is disorderly. The spirit of sacrifice gives us peace and the tranquillity of order by making us give first place in our souls to charity, to the love of God and of souls, a love that is ultimately victorious over all egoism and all disorderly love of self.

As we mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, man since his fall is inclined consciously or unconsciously to relate everything to himself, to think continually of himself, and to love himself in preference to all else. If, however, he listens to Christ's message and puts it into practice, the day will come when, instead of thinking continually of himself and of relating everything to himself, he will live by Christ, and through Him he will think almost always of God, the Supreme Truth and Goodness, and he will relate everything to Him. Then will the fundamental will of his soul be truly rectified and supernaturalized; his interior life will be founded in the image of God's, in whom the Word, the expression of the thought of the Fa-ther, produces Love by spiration and makes all things converge to-ward the Supreme Good.

It is from this point of view that we must meditate upon St. Thomas' treatise on the Incarnation. When, during the last days of his life, the saintly doctor was so absorbed in superior contemplation that he could no longer dictate the last pages of his Summa, he thought that the mysteries hidden in

Christ are inexhaustible and that the doctors had discovered only a minute portion of them.

St. John of the Cross tells us the same thing in the Spiritual Can-ticle, in which he calls these mysteries “caverns” to symbolize their unfathomable depth. May the Lord deign to give us a deep and keen understanding of these mysteries so that we may the better see the radiation of His goodness.

II

JESUS, THE SON OF GOD ACCORDING TO THE FIRST THREE GOSPELS

IF WE would fathom the interior life of our Lord, we must first hear the testimony He has given of Himself, of His divine son-ship, and of His mission as Redeemer.

We shall begin by examining this testimony as it is presented in the first three Gospels, written between A.D. 50 and A.D. 70. Next we shall observe in the Acts of the Apostles, composed around A.D. 63-64, how St. Peter in his first sermons proclaimed Jesus to be the Son of God. In the third place we shall note St. Paul's testimony on the divinity of Christ as expressed in the first epistles, written between 48 and 59. Finally we shall study on this point the Gospel of St. John, written between A.D. 8o and A.D. 100 precisely to defend Christ's divinity against the denials of the first heretics.

The historical study of the Gospels has its use, especially from the point of view of apologetics, as a means of enlightening unbelievers and of answering their objections. However, such a study is not altogether indispensable. For, even if primitive documents were lost, the living tradition and the living magisterium of the Church would suffice. This oral tradition preceded Scripture, and through it in the first place the word of God was transmitted by our Lord and by the apostles.

We know that many liberal Protestants, and after them the modernists, have maintained that the divinity of Jesus is not expressed in the Gospels, but that it is a dogma deduced by Christian thought from the notion of the Messiah. They further hold that in all the Gospel texts the name "Son of God" is equivalent only to "Messiah" and does not signify that Jesus is in reality and by nature the Son of God.

Several rationalists, among them Renan, B. Weiss, H. Wendt, and A. Harnack, have recognized in Christ a certain divine sonship superior to

Messiahship. Yet they deny that by reason of this sonship Jesus is truly God. Renan, concluding his Life of Jesus, writes: “Rest now in thy glory, noble pioneer! Thy work is done; thy divinity founded. . . . Henceforth, beyond frailty, thou shalt behold from the heights of divine peace the infinite results of thy acts. . . . Between thee and God men will no longer distinguish.”

A little further on, Renan adds: “In order to make himself adored to this degree, he must have been adorable. . . . The faith, the enthusiasm, the constancy of the first Christian generation is not explicable, except by supposing, at the origin of the whole movement, a man of surpassing greatness. . . . This sublime person, who each day still presides over the destiny of the world, we may call divine, not in the sense that Jesus has absorbed all the divine, or has been adequate to it (to employ the expression of the schoolmen), but in the sense that Jesus is the one who caused his fellow-men to make the greatest step toward the divine.”

Among conservative Protestants, F. Godet in Switzerland, Stevens, Gore, Ottley, and Sanday in England have in recent years defended the divinity of Jesus as expressed not only in the Fourth Gospel and in the epistles of St. Paul but in the Synoptics as well.

To rightly understand the testimony of the Gospels, we must re-member that they contain over fifty passages in which Jesus is called the “Son of God.” It is important also that we grasp the sense in which these words, “Son of God,” must be taken.

In Scripture the word “son” is used with reference to another man either in the strict sense to denote one who is born of another, or in the broader sense to designate a disciple or an adopted heir. Likewise the word “son” is used with respect to God, either in the broad sense that Christians are the children of God and live by His Spirit, or in the strict and exact sense reserved to the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, who in the Prologue of St. John’s Gospel, is called “the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father.” We shall see that even in the Synoptic Gospels Jesus is called the Son of God in the strict and exact and most elevated sense, inasmuch as He has declared that He not only participates in the divine nature through grace, as we do, but that He possesses the divine nature with all its properties and rights.

JESUS’ RESERVE IN MANIFESTING HIS DIVINITY

It should be noted that Jesus manifested His divine sonship only by degrees. More important still, when in Caesarea St. Peter said to our Lord in the name of the apostles: “Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God,” St. Matthew reports: “Then He commanded His disciples that they should tell no one that He was Jesus the Christ.” Likewise one day when He was casting out unclean spirits, the latter cried out: “Thou art the Son of God,” and St. Mark tells us: “He strictly charged them that they should not make Him known.”

Again, after the Transfiguration, our Lord said to the three apostles whom He had taken with Him to Thabor: “Tell the vision to no man.”

Why this reserve? Because men’s souls were not yet prepared to receive such an exalted revelation and they could not have borne it. In fact, Jesus saw that many Jews understood the prophecies only in a material sense, that they were awaiting a temporal Messiah who would restore the kingdom of Israel and set them over the other peoples. Thus, if from the start of His ministry Jesus had declared Himself to be the Messiah, the Son of God, He would have aroused a wholly exterior enthusiasm in this throng which craved wonders and earthly prosperity, and the true meaning of His words would have been lost. Even at the end of His ministry Jesus said to the apostles: “I have yet many things to say to you: but you cannot bear them now.” The sublime truth of the mystery of the Incarnation had to be unveiled slowly in the subdued light of the parables, so that little by little souls might grow and become capable of hearing the divine message.

We have here an example of Christ’s humility: although He had infinite treasures of light, love, and power, He remained hidden, never seeking to astonish or arouse admiration. He wished to save souls by working secretly deep within men’s hearts. Far from declaring His divine sonship, as He did at the end of His ministry before His death, He at first tended to conceal it so that those whom He wished to enlighten and mold would not be dazzled or blinded by a light that was too powerful. He disposed them progressively to receive greater light. How totally differently are His ways from those of false wonder-workers who would astound and deceive! There is a great lesson here for us: souls must be taught the truth gradually, as much of it as they can bear at a time.

But Christ’s testimony, very reserved at first, became more and more articulate until, during the last days of His ministry, it became clear and luminous to all who had ears to hear.

As recorded in the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus first manifested His divinity by claiming certain privileges, and He then affirmed with ever-increasing clarity that He was the Son of God. Let us follow this ascending progression, for it is the accomplishment of all the Old Testament prophecies, the fullness of revelation bearing the authentic mark of God's works, fortiter et suaviter, power and gentleness.

THE DIVINE RIGHTS CLAIMED BY JESUS

Jesus has claimed seven major privileges that can belong to God alone.

According to St. Matthew and St. Mark, Jesus proclaimed Himself to be greater than the prophet Jonas, greater than Solomon, greater than David, who called Him his Lord in Psalm 109: "The Lord said to my Lord: Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thy enemies Thy foolstool." With respect to this prophecy Jesus said to the Pharisees: "If David then call Him Lord, how is He his son?" St. Matthew adds: "And no man was able to answer Him a word."

Jesus has also shown Himself to be greater than Moses and Elias, who appeared at His side at the Transfiguration. He is greater than John the Baptist, as we see by His answer to the precursor's disciples who had been sent to ask Him: "Art Thou He that art to come, or look we for another?"

He stands forth even greater than the angels, for we find in St. Mark and in St. Matthew that, after His victory over Satan, "the angels ministered to Him." And He Himself said: "The Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels: and then will He render to every man according to his works." "And He shall send His angels . . . and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest parts of the heavens to the utmost bounds of them." Neither Isaias nor any other prophet ever spoke of sending his angels.

NOW, HE WHO IS SUPERIOR TO ALL THE PROPHETS AND TO THE ANGELS IS SUPERIOR TO ALL CREATURES.

Moreover, Jesus demands with regard to Himself faith, obedience, and love, even to the abnegation of all contrary affections and to the sacrifice of one's life. In foretelling the persecutions of the first three centuries, He said: "A man's enemies shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father

or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me, is not worthy of Me. And he that taketh not up his cross, and followeth Me, is not worthy of Me. He that findeth his life, shall lose it: and he that shall lose his life for Me, shall find it."

Jesus knew, when He spoke thus to His apostles, that they would suffer martyrdom. These words, which were to be fulfilled especially during the persecutions, would bespeak intolerable arrogance if Jesus were not God. What prophet ever dared to say: "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me"? As for the saints, the higher they rise the less they speak of themselves; their ego tends to be obliterated before God. How is it, then, that Jesus spoke with such majesty of Himself, He who was so humble that He accepted the deepest humiliations for our salvation? Again, after the rich young man had refused His call to perfection, He said: "Amen I say to you, there is no man who hath left house or brethren or sisters or father or mother or children or lands for My sake and for the gospel, who shall not receive a hundred times as much now in this time . . . with persecutions: and in the world to come life everlasting." "He that is not with Me, is against Me: and he that gathereth not with Me, scattereth."

St. Thomas Aquinas, in his Commentary on St. Matthew, 12:30, sees in these last words a manifestation of Christ's divinity. God alone, he remarks, is the final end toward which every man must tend, and that is why he who is not with God (who does not tend toward Him) is separated (or turned away) from Him. That is why Elias said: "How long do you halt between two sides? If the Lord be God, follow Him." But, St. Thomas continues, a mere man could not say: "He that is not with Me is against Me." While it is permissible to remain neutral or indifferent with regard to a man who is a man and no more, one cannot remain neutral or indifferent with respect to God, our final end. Therefore, since Jesus has spoken these words, it must mean that He is superior to all creatures.

About the very beginning of His ministry, Christ also declared in His Sermon on the Mount: "Blessed are ye when they shall revile you and persecute you and speak all that is evil against you, untruly, for My sake." "For My sake" means to suffer persecution for justice' sake and for the noblest of all causes, an act that will be richly rewarded in heaven.

Jesus calls for obedience and perfect abnegation. He also speaks as the supreme Lawgiver, equal to the Lawgiver of Sinai who gave

Moses the ancient law for the chosen people. Since Christ came to

complete this divine law and to purge from it the false interpretations of the rabbis, He expressed Himself several times in the following manner: “You have heard it was said to them of old. . . . But I say to you. . . .” Thus He forbade divorce, which Moses had permitted only because of the hardness of the Israelites’ hearts. He also proclaimed Himself “Lord of the Sabbath.”

In addition, He performed miracles in His own name, using the form of a command. To the paralytic He said: “Arise, . . . and go into thy house.” He raised Jairus’ daughter by saying to her: “Talitha cumi,” that is to say: “Damsel (I say to thee), arise.” He also brought back to life the son of the widow of Naim, saying to him: “Young man, I say to thee, arise.” He commanded the sea swollen by the storm: “Peace, be still.” And St. Mark tells us, “the wind ceased; and there was made a great calm.” And they feared exceedingly: and they said to one another: “Who is this (thinkest thou) that both wind and sea obey Him?”

The apostles, on the contrary, performed miracles in the name of Jesus. Peter said: “In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, arise, and walk. ... By the name of our Lord Jesus Christ of Nazareth ... this man standeth here before you whole.”

In addition, Jesus claims the power to remit sins, to make souls over, to fill them once again with divine life, a power which, the Pharisees recognized, can belong only to God. This calls to mind the scene described in St. Matthew: “And behold they brought to Him one sick of the palsy lying in a bed. And Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the man sick of the palsy: Be of good heart, son, thy sins are for-given thee. And behold some of the scribes said within themselves:

He blasphemeth. And Jesus seeing their thoughts, said: Why do you think evil in your hearts? Whether is easier, to say, thy sins are for-given thee: or to say, Arise, and walk? But that you may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins (then said He to the man sick of the palsy), Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thy house.” St. Matthew adds, “And the multitude seeing it, feared, and glorified God that gave such power to men.”

Likewise He said: “Come to Me, all you that labor, and are bur-dened, and I will refresh you.” Beyond this, He claimed the right to communicate to others the power to remit sins: He said to His apostles: “Amen I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven.”

Jesus has claimed not only the power to remit sins, but also the power of judging the living and the dead. He answered Caiphas:

"And you shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of God, and coming with the clouds of heaven." "And He shall send His angels with a trumpet, and a great voice: and they shall gather together His elect. . . "

He also promised to send the Holy Ghost, saying to the disciples before the Ascension: "And I send the promise of My Father upon you: but stay you in the city, till you be endued with power from on high." Therefore He is not inferior to the Holy Ghost whom He promised to send.

Finally, Jesus accepted adoration of which Peter, Paul, and Barnabas—and even the angels, in the Apocalypse—declared them-selves unworthy.

Thus it is clear that Jesus, according to the Synoptic Gospels, claimed for Himself seven major privileges which can belong to God alone, namely:

1. He is superior to all creatures: greater than Jonas, than Solomon, than David, than Moses, than Elias, than John the Baptist; and He is superior to the angels, who are "His angels."

2. He demands with regard to Himself, faith, obedience, and love, even to the abnegation of any contrary affection and to the sacrifice of one's life.

3. He spoke as the supreme Lawgiver, in the Sermon on the Mount.

4. He performed miracles in His own name.

5. He claimed the power to remit sins and has conferred this power on others.

6. He claimed the power to judge the living and the dead of all human generations.

7. He promised to send the Holy Ghost, and His promise was accomplished on Pentecost.

Jesus can claim these rights and powers only if He is not merely God's envoy, the Messiah, but God Himself. He affirmed His God-head only in a veiled manner in order to prepare souls little by little to receive a more explicit affirmation, which was to become increasingly clear and powerful up to the moment of His condemnation to death.

In the first three Gospels our Lord not only claims privileges and rights that belong to God alone, but on several occasions He declared that He is the Son of God in the strict and proper sense, which is totally different from the meaning of the term applicable to the souls of the just as a whole.

First of all He declared Himself to be the Son of God when speak-ing of the happiness in store for the humble who answer the divine call. In St. Matthew we read: “I confess to Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and the prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones. Yea, Father, for so hath it seemed good in Thy sight. All things are delivered to Me by My Father. [He does not say merely `our Father,’ as we do, but `My Father.’] And no one knoweth the Son, but the Father: neither doth anyone know the Father, but the Son, and he to whom it shall please the Son to reveal Him.”

These words are also recorded in St. Luke, and the authenticity of this text is admitted not only by Catholic exegetes but by the ma-jority of Protestant critics as well. What is here affirmed is the equality of the Father and the Son with regard to knowledge and cognoscibility: “No one knoweth the Son but the Father: neither doth anyone know the Father, but the Son.” The Father is by nature unknowable, for He is beyond the reach of natural knowledge. The same is true of the Son. Yet they know each other perfectly. This equality in knowledge, as St. Thomas remarks presupposes consubstantiality, or the possession of the same divine substance. In other words, it is the common substance of the Father and of the Son which is said to be unknowable inasmuch as it is beyond natural cognition. If no one knoweth the Son but the Father, it is because, like the Father, the Son is inaccessible to any created natural knowledge; therefore, it is because He is God.

Loisy, among the Modernists, has conceded this traditional ex-planation of the text. He even goes on to remark that its meaning is substantially the same as the following words of St. John: “No man hath seen God at any time: the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.” That these texts of St. John and St. Matthew are equal in sublimity, Loisy recognizes. Yet he adds without any basis whatever, and against almost all other critics including the liberal Protestants, that, while this affirmation is contained in St. Matthew and St. Luke, Jesus did not make it Himself, it having merely been attributed to Him by Christian tradition.

Jesus made a similar declaration in His response to Peter's con-rcssion at Caesarea: "Simon Peter answered and said: Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answering, said to him: Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona: because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but My Father who is in heaven.

Some critics say that it cannot be proved historically that in this confession Peter affirmed anything more than the Messiahship. For Peter's words are reported by St. Mark (8:29) as: "Thou art the Christ"; and by St. Luke (9:20) as: "The Christ of God." It is only St. Matthew who records the words: "Thou art Christ the Son of the living God." As a matter of fact, on the basis of Peter's words alone it would be difficult to prove that they affirm anything beyond the Messiahship. But we also have Jesus' answer: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jana: because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, hot My Father who is in heaven." By these words Jesus showed that Peter had affirmed more than the Messiahship, for the signs of the Messiahship had already been manifest since the beginning of the Savior's ministry, and several of the apostles had already recognized Him to be the Messiah. Thus Andrew, Philip, and Nathaniel had already recognized Jesus as the Messiah, and for this reason followed Him.

Jesus had already clearly enumerated the signs of His Messiahship to the disciples of St. John the Baptist. Thus the Messiahship in itself did not require any such revelation as that spoken of by our Lord in His answer to Peter: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona: because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but My Father who is in heaven." These words are equivalent in meaning to the preceding text of St. Matthew: "And no one knoweth the Son, but the Father." Therefore it can be said: If Peter could know only through the Father what he affirmed concerning Jesus, he must have affirmed His divine sonship. It does not, however, follow that Peter was given to know through faith at that moment the nature of this divine sonship as explicitly as it would later be defined by the Church.

In the parable of the vineyard and the wicked husbandmen, there is a third affirmation of Christ's divine sonship. It is recorded by all Synoptics. The authenticity of these texts is conceded by most critics, even by many liberal Protestants. St. Mark tells us: "And He [Jesus in the presence of the scribes and chief priests] began to speak to them in parables: A certain man planted a vineyard . . . and let it to husbandmen; and went into a far country. And at the season he sent to the husbandmen a servant to receive of the

husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard. Who having laid hands on him, beat him, and sent him away empty. And again he sent them another servant; and him they wounded in the head, and used him reproachfully. And again he sent another, and him they killed: and many others, of whom some they beat, and others they killed. Therefore having yet one son, most dear to him; he also sent him unto them last of all, saying: They will reverence my son. But the husbandmen said one to another: This is the heir; come let us kill him; and the inheritance shall be ours. And laying hold on him, they killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard. What therefore will the lord of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy those husbandmen; and will give the vineyard to others."

At the conclusion of this parable, Jesus at once added: "And have you not read this Scripture: 'The stone which the builders rejected, the same is made the head of the corner. By the Lord has this been done, and it is wonderful in our eyes.' " St. Mark reports that thereupon Jesus' enemies "sought to lay hands on Him, but they feared the people. For they knew that He spoke this parable to them. And leaving Him, they went their way."

The application of this parable of the wicked husbandmen is in fact evident. The servants of the lord of the vineyard, whom he sent to the husbandmen, were the prophets. A little later, Jesus tells the Pharisees unequivocally: "You are the sons of them that killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. You serpents, generation of vipers, how will you flee from the judgment of hell? Therefore behold I send to you prophets and wise men and scribes: and some of them you will put to death and crucify, and some you will scourge. . . . That upon you may come all the just blood that hath been shed upon the earth. . . . Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered together thy children . . . and thou wouldest not?"

Therefore, if the servants of the Lord of the vineyard are the prophets, His dearly beloved Son is more than a prophet and Messiah, He is truly His Son.

This parable describes exactly the same mystery as that spoken of at the beginning of the Epistle to the Hebrews: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners, spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, last of all, in these days hath spoken to us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the world. Who being the

brightness of His glory, and the figure of His substance, and upholding all things by the word of His power, making purgation of sins, sitteth on the right hand of the majesty on high."

What is more striking about the application of the parable of the wicked husbandmen is that the priests of the synagogue who heard and understood it were the men who by very reason of their function were supposed to know the Scriptures and the signs of the Messiah-ship best. Therefore they should have been the first to welcome the Messiah. Yet it was they who resisted Him most obstinately. God offered them the fullness of revelation and great glory: participation in Christ's work and entrance with Him into eternal life. They preferred a merely human glory to one that was wholly divine: "to sit in the first chairs in the synagogues" and to remain there. It follows that in trying to resist the majesty of God they were overwhelmed by His glory, which was to have become theirs. As they were too deeply attached to things of least value—their human traditions and their status, to which they clung jealously—their souls did not open up to receive the great gift of salvation that God wished to give them. Thus the apostate priest was crushed beneath the grandeur of his priesthood because he did not receive with humility the immense grace it bestowed on him. "He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble." Zaccheus' eyes were opened, whereas the priests of the synagogue were blinded.

There is a fourth affirmation of Jesus' divine sonship in His ques-tion to the Pharisees: "What think you of Christ; whose son is He? They say to Him: David's. He saith to them: How then doth David in spirit call Him Lord, saying: The Lord said to my Lord, Sit on My right hand, until I make Thy enemies Thy footstool? If David then call Him Lord, how is He his son?" St. Matthew adds, "And no man was able to answer Him a word: neither durst any man from that day forth ask Him any more questions."

The authenticity of this text is admitted by the principal liberal critics. The Lord referred to in the psalm which Jesus quotes is superior to David, and equal to the highest Lord, God the Father.

A fifth affirmation of the divinity of Jesus is to be found in His answer to Caiphas during the Passion. In St. Matthew we read: "And the high priest said to Him: I adjure Thee by the living God, that Thou tell us if Thou be the Christ the Son of God. Jesus saith to him: Thou hast said it. Nevertheless I say to you, hereafter you shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

Then the high priest rent his garments, saying: He hath blasphemed; what further need have we of witnesses? Behold now you have heard the blasphemy."

It was not merely His Messiahship that Jesus affirmed in His answer to the high priest. For divine sonship and the privilege of being seated at the right hand of the Almighty as well as of exercising sovereign power are not attributes of the Messiah as such. That is why Caiphas tore his garments and cried out "He hath blasphemed," as is recorded in the first three Gospels. The Gospel of St. John throws light on the other three. In St. John we find that after the paralytic's cure ". . . the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He did not only break the Sabbath, but also said God was His Father, making Himself equal to God." Again in St. John, after Jesus had said "I and the Father are one," we read: "The Jews then took up stones to stone Him." This is the explanation of Caiphas' question to Jesus, for the high priest was aware of Christ's earlier declarations: "I adjure Thee by the living God, that Thou tell us if Thou be the Christ the Son of God." Finally, in St. John there is another text that throws light on the Synoptics: "The Jews answered him: We have a law; and according to the law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God." Certainly it would not have been considered a Crime for our Lord to affirm His Messiahship, for everybody was at that time expecting the Messiah, the anointed one, God's envoy. Thus He must have affirmed that He was superior to the Messiah.

In St. Matthew there is a sixth affirmation of Jesus' divinity. It nppcars after the recital of the Savior's resurrection in the formula of baptism: "And Jesus coming, spoke to them, saying: All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth. Going therefore, teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." Thus ends the Gospel of St. Matthew.

Loisy denies without valid reason the authenticity of the baptismal formula, as having been pronounced by Jesus Himself. But he at least recognizes that the use of this formula is attested to in Didache 7:1, and it is probable that it was universally accepted by the Churches at the beginning of the second century.

Now in this formula of baptism the Son is equal to the Father and to the Holy Ghost. But if He were not God He would be infinitely inferior to

Them. As to the closing words, “I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world,” they give promise of divine assistance which is a fulfillment of Isaias’ prophecy: “And they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is God with us.”

What are we to infer from these six affirmations? We must con-clude, in opposition to the Modernists, that in the Synoptic Gospels the declarations of Jesus regarding His eminent dignity proclaim far more than His Messiahship and announce the divine sonship which is His alone.

Moreover, this divine sonship is superior to Messiahship, not only in the sense conceded by such rationalists as Harnack, but in the sense that it places Christ above all creatures, equal to God and Him-self God, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity.

That is the meaning of the words quoted above: “No one knoweth the Son, but the Father: neither doth any one know the Father, but the Son.” Equality of knowledge. “Going therefore teach ye all nations: baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.” And according to the Synoptics as according to St. John, Jesus was crucified because He had declared He was the Son of God, equal to His Father. It should be added that in St. Luke the angel Gabriel declared to Mary: “The Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.” Also, in St. Matthew it is recorded that when Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist, the Precursor “saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon Him. And behold a voice from heaven, saying: This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

What is truly remarkable is that those who should have been the first to recognize Christ’s mission failed to do so. This throws a searching light on the meaning of a divine mission. Father Clerissac tells us that “The Incarnation is a mission of the Son of God in the world and is propagated through the multiplicity of ecclesiastical ministries in all epochs.” Thus the Church carries on Christ’s mission. She has been sent by Him, and she preserves His spirit. Our task is to be docile to her voice, which transmits God’s word to us and which leads us, sometimes amid many snares and errors and ruins, toward eternity.

III

OUR SAVIOR, THE AUTHOR OF LIFE, ACCORDING TO THE FIRST SERMONS OF ST. PETER AND OF THE APOSTLES

WE HAVE seen that according to the Synoptic Gospels Jesus affirmed not only His Messiahship but also His divine sonship, by claiming privileges that belong to God alone, such as perfecting the Mosaic law, remitting sins, judging the living and the dead, and declaring that “no one knoweth the Son, but the Father: neither doth anyone know the Father, but the Son.” Besides, it was because He proclaimed Himself to be the Son of God that He was accused of blasphemy by the high priest and that He was afterward crucified.

Certain rationalists, like Welhausen and Loisy, have maintained that these declarations in the Synoptics resulted from a progressive idealization after Jesus’ death and were attributed to Him although He Himself never really pronounced them.

To defend such an interpretation, these rationalists would have to prove that after Jesus’ death there was time for the progressive ideal-ization of His preaching to take place. Yet it is historically certain that the opposite was the case. For, according to the Acts of the Apostles and the epistles of St. Paul whose authenticity is not open to doubt, the apostles began teaching even as early as Pentecost that Jesus had proclaimed Himself to be not only the Messiah but also the Son of God.

ST. PETER’S DISCOURSES IN THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

The authenticity of the Acts of the Apostles is historically certain. It has been accepted not only by all Catholic critics and conservative Protestants,

but by many rationalists like Renan, Reuss, Harnack, etc., who attribute the entire book to St. Luke, the companion of St. Paul. Very probably the Acts, which close abruptly with the recital of St. Paul's arrival in Rome in A.D. 62, were written around the year A.D. 63-64, and at least before A.D. 70, the year of the destruction of Jerusalem. The rationalist Harnack declared in 1908 that this opinion should be considered plausible.

The Acts of the Apostles record the sermons delivered by St. Peter on Pentecost and the days following. In these sermons Peter, speaking to the Jews, laid particular emphasis on the Messianic character of Jesus, calling to their attention that He was approved of God, for He performed miracles, He rose from the dead, and the prophecies were fulfilled in Him and through Him. But in addition Peter attributed to Jesus a sanctifying role that far surpasses the Messiahship, and ascribed to Him privileges that can belong only to God.

In his Pentecost sermon, St. Peter said: "Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by Him, in the midst of you, as you also know: this same being delivered up, by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, you by the hands of wicked men have crucified and slain. Whom God hath raised up, hav-ing loosed the sorrows of hell, as it was impossible that He should be holden by it. For David saith concerning Him: . . . Thou wilt not . . suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption. . . . Ye men, brethren, let me freely speak to you of the patriarch David; that he died, and was buried; and his sepulcher is with us to this present day. Whereas therefore he was a prophet, . . . foreseeing this, he spoke of the resurrection of Christ. For neither was He left in hell, neither did His flesh see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised again, whereof all we are witnesses. Being exalted therefore by the right hand of God, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath poured forth this which you see and hear. . . . Therefore let all the house of Israel know most certainly that God hath made both Lord and Christ this same Jesus, whom you have crucified."

The apostles often called Jesus "Lord," a term which the Jews, when they spoke Greek, reserved for Yahweh.

In his second sermon, after he had cured in Jesus' name the man born lame, St. Peter said: "Ye men of Israel, why wonder you at this, or why look you upon us, as if by our strength or power we had made this man to walk?

The God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified His Son Jesus, whom you indeed delivered up and denied before the face of Pilate, when he judged He should be released. But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you. But the Author of life you killed, whom God hath raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses. . . . And the faith which is by Him, hath given this perfect soundness in the sight of you all."

The expression "Author of life" can be applied to Jesus only if He is the Son of God in the true sense, and Himself God. For God alone, who is life by essence, can by participation produce the life which pulses in every living creature. Only God can bring a corpse back to life; and above all God alone can give the life of the soul, grace, which is a participation in His intimate life. Therefore, when St. Peter said, "You killed the Author of life," it is the same as if he had said, "Jesus is God." The thought of Jesus especially as the Author and the dispenser of supernatural life, and his words are equal in sublimity to those of St. John: "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men"; "I am come that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly"; "I am the way and the truth and the life."

There is testimony also in St. Peter's beautiful answer to the high priest, when he and St. John were arrested and brought before the Sanhedrin. The high priest of the synagogue, surrounded by the ancients and scribes, asked the two prisoners: "By what power, or by what name, have you done this?" They were referring to the cure of the man born lame. "Then," it is reported, "Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said to them: Ye princes of the people, and ancients, hear: If we this day are examined concerning the good deed done to the infirm man, by what means he hath been made whole: be it known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God hath raised from the dead, even by Him this man standeth here before you whole. This is the stone which was rejected by you the builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other. For there is no other name under heaven given to men whereby we must be saved." The record adds that the members of the Sanhedrin "could say nothing against it. . . . And calling them, they charged them not to speak at all, nor teach in the name of Jesus."

In this testimony Peter made three major affirmations. First, he said that the miracle was performed in the name of Jesus. Miracles, however, are not

accomplished in the name of a mere prophet, but in the name of God, for He alone can produce a genuine miracle, that goes beyond all natural forces. Secondly, he called attention to psalm 117, as Jesus Himself had done in the parable of the wicked husbandmen: “The stone which was rejected by you the builders, . . . is become the head of the corner.” Thirdly, Peter affirmed that Jesus is the Savior of the world, as did the converted Samaritans according to St. John: “Neither is there salvation in any other.” This was equivalent to saying that Jesus is the Author of salvation; and, according to the psalms the Author of salvation is God Himself, the Author of grace. This is to say once again that Jesus is the Author of life.

Peter continued to give the same testimony when, after he had been delivered from prison by an angel, the high priest questioned him again. He and the other apostles answered: “We ought to obey God, rather than men. The God of our fathers hath raised up Jesus, whom you put to death, hanging Him upon a tree. Him hath God exalted with His right hand, to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins. And we are witnesses of these things and the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to all that obey Him”

Exasperated by what they had just heard, the members of the council wished to have the apostles put to death, but a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law revered by the entire people, took up their defense, showed the drawbacks to putting them to death, and added: “Refrain from these men, and let them alone; for if this council or this work be of men, it will come to naught: but if it be of God, you cannot overthrow it, lest perhaps you be found even to fight against God.” The members of the Sanhedrin followed his advice and were content to scourge the apostles. Then, forbidding them to speak in the name of Jesus, they released them. “And they indeed went from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus. And every day they ceased not in the temple, and from house to house, to teach and preach Christ Jesus.”

At the first Council of Jerusalem, Peter, in order to show that the converted Gentiles were not to be obliged to observe the law of Moses but only the gospel, rose and said: “Men, brethren, you know that in former days God made choice among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And God, who knoweth the hearts, gave testimony, giving unto them the Holy Ghost, as well as to us; and put

no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore, why tempt you God to put a yoke upon the necks of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? But by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we believe to be saved, in like manner as they also." Again this is as much as to say that Jesus is the Author of salvation or of the supernatural life.

Several times during his sermons Peter called Jesus "Lord," "Lord of all." To Cornelius the centurion he said: "He commanded

us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ap-pointed by God, to be judge of the living and of the dead. To Him all the prophets give testimony, that by His name all receive remission of sins, who believe in Him." The author of the Acts tells us that as Peter was still talking, "the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word," and they began to speak with tongues and to glorify God.

It was also in the name of Jesus that the apostles performed miracles and conferred baptism.

Lastly, there is a twofold testimony in the martyrdom of St. Stephen and in the conversion of St. Paul, both recorded in the Acts.

THE MARTYRDOM OF ST. STEPHEN AND THE CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL, SIGNS OF THE DIVINITY OF JESUS

The account of the martyrdom of St. Stephen says in part: "But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looking up steadfastly to heaven, saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. And he said: Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." The Jews then "crying out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and with one accord ran violently upon him. And casting him forth without the city, they stoned him; and the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man, whose name was Saul." And as they stoned him, Stephen prayed saying: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." "And falling on his knees, he cried with a loud voice, saying: Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep in the Lord."

As he was dying, Stephen, the saintly deacon, said: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," just as Jesus had said to His Father: "Into Thy hands, I commend My spirit." It seems, therefore, that St. Stephen, seeing the Son of man standing on the right hand of God, recognized Him as the Son of God. And

it was from Jesus that he received the grace of dying like Him, praying for his executioners. The prayer of the dying Stephen, said in Jesus' name, had extraordinary efficacy. We read in the Acts: "And Saul [the young man guarding the garments of those who were stoning the holy deacon] was consenting to his death. And at that time there was raised a great persecution against the Church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all dispersed through the countries of Judea and Samaria. . . . But Saul made havoc of the Church, entering in from house to house, and dragging away men and women, committed them to prison."

A few days later, Stephen's prayer was answered. As recorded in the Acts, Saul was converted on the road to Damascus: "Suddenly a light from heaven shined round about him. And falling on the ground, he heard a voice saying to him: Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? Who said: Who art Thou, Lord? And He: I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. It is hard for thee to kick against the goad. And he trembling and astonished, said: Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do? And the Lord said to him: Arise, and go into the city, and there it shall be told thee what thou must do." And in fact, Ananias, one of the Lord's disciples, heard the following words with regard to Saul: "Go thy way; for this man is to me a vessel of election, to carry My name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. For I will show him how great things he must suffer for My name's sake."

Then Ananias went to Saul and said: "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus hath sent me, He that appeared to thee in the way as thou camest; that thou mayest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it were scales, and he received his sight; and rising up, he was baptized. . . ." Paul then spent several days with the disciples who were at Damascus, and "immediately he preached Jesus in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God." The Jews then began to persecute Paul and plotted to kill him. But he went to Jerusalem to contact the apostles. Since they were afraid of him, he had Barnabas tell them how on the road to Damascus "he had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken to him." Thus Saul saw the Lord in His glorified humanity. He bore testimony to it in the recital of his conversion and added certain new details to convince his listeners that he had not been the victim of an illusion: "And they that were with me, saw indeed the light, but they heard not the voice of Him that spoke with me." He also recorded the words of Ananias, and the

warning that he received from Jesus Himself. He retold the story of his conversion before King Agrippa, who recognized his innocence.

Finally, in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, he wrote: “Am I not an apostle? Have not I seen Christ Jesus our Lord?” And again, a little farther: “. . . He rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures: And that He was seen by Cephas [Peter] ; and after that by the eleven. Then was He seen by more than five hundred brethren at once: of whom many remain until this present. . . . After that, He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. And last of all, He was seen also by me, as by one born out of due time. . . . If Christ be not risen again, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.” That is to say, we have no guaranty that God has accepted His death for our redemption. If, on the contrary, Jesus is victorious over death by His resurrection, it is because on the cross He conquered sin, the consequence of which is death, and therefore He is the Savior of the human race.

What are we to conclude from the testimony contained in the Acts of the Apostles concerning the divinity of Jesus? We must conclude that immediately after Pentecost the apostles declared Jesus to be the Son of God, the Author of life, the Savior of the human race, the Judge of the living and the dead.

How could the apostles, who had been, as it were, morally crushed during the Passion, give such steadfast testimony even at the price of martyrdom, had they not been sustained by the One who gave aid to St. Stephen during his martyrdom and who converted Saul on the road to Damascus?

What is particularly evident is that, contrary to the rationalists J. Weiss, Holtzmann, and Loisy, sufficient time did not elapse for a progressive idealization of Jesus’ teaching to take place. Jesus was proclaimed the Son of God, the Author of life, and the Savior on Pentecost and consistently thereafter. This was the belief of the first Churches from their very foundation. And when between A.D. 50 and 59 St. Paul wrote his first epistles to the Romans, to the Corinthians, and to the Thessalonians—he affirmed the divinity of Jesus as a dogma already held by these Churches, which were composed in part of converted Jews who were firm believers in monotheism and there-fore scarcely inclined to accept the divinity of the Savior without in-contestable divine revelation. Sufficient time did not elapse to permit a gradual idealization of Jesus’ teaching. When, a little later on, the Ebionites denied the divinity of Jesus they were unanimously

re-proved by the Church; and St. John wrote the Fourth Gospel in refutation of their heresy.

IV

THE MYSTERY OF THE INCARNATION ACCORDING TO ST. PAUL

THE epistles of St. Paul corroborate the testimony concerning the divinity of Jesus contained in the Synoptic Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles. St. Paul expressly affirmed the divinity of Jesus, and he spoke of it not as of a belief unknown until then but as of a dogma already accepted by the Churches to which he was writing.

We must not forget that the principal epistles, the two to the Thessalonians, the two to the Corinthians, and those to the Galatians, the Romans, the Ephesians, the Colossians, and the Philippians, were written between 48 and 59, or between 50 and 64, as is recognized by several rationalists, among them Harnack and Julicher.

Let us first view St. Paul's Christology in broad outline, and after-ward stress what he said concerning the divinity of Jesus.

ST. PAUL'S HABITUAL CONTEMPLATION AND HIS CHRISTOLOGY

The Apostle of the Gentiles did not come to know the Savior in the same manner as the other apostles, by accompanying Him in His ministry, listening to His sermons, witnessing His miracles, and ob-serving His actions. St. Paul was converted after the death of Jesus, on the road to Damascus, and he saw Him only in His glory after His resurrection. He attained this knowledge in a single instant by an extraordinary grace at the moment of his miraculous conversion. The divine words that he heard then were to remain engraved in his soul forever: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? . . . I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." And the Lord had said to Ananias: " . . . this man is to Me a vessel of election, to carry My name

before the Gentiles; . . . I will show him how great things he must suffer for My name's sake."

It follows that the object of St. Paul's habitual contemplation was not what Jesus accomplished during His ministry, but His infinite greatness, His divine character as Creator, His action upon redeemed mankind, His mind, His reign in souls. St. Paul almost always contemplated Jesus in His glory. That is why he wrote to the Ephesians: "He . . . ascended above all the heavens, that He might fill all things. And He gave some apostles and some prophets and other some evangelists and other some pastors and doctors, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: until we all meet . . . unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the age of the fullness of Christ."

Indeed St. Paul thought of Jesus as truly man, born of woman and of the posterity of David, but a man who has never known sin, and who by His love, His humiliations, and His sufferings on the cross, has won for us the eternal life which He Himself enjoys in heaven: "He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross. For which cause God also hath exalted Him, and hath given Him a name which is above all names: that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth: and that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father."

St. Paul proved by Scripture that the Messiah was to suffer and die for us, and then rise from the dead, and that Jesus is the Messiah thus defined. He habitually designated Jesus as "the Lord." In the Septuagint the term "Lord" is the usual translation of the word Yahweh (or Jehovah). Thus, to call Jesus "Lord" is to say that He is God. Like the Latin Dominus, the term kúpios implies absolute sovereignty not only in the natural order over the world, but in the order of grace over the Church and over consciences. It is in this vein that St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "I give thanks to my God always for you, for the grace of God that is given you in Christ Jesus, that in all things you are made rich in Him, . . . so that nothing is wanting to you in any grace, waiting for the manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Who also will confirm you unto the end without crime, in the day of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." In his epistles St. Paul calls Jesus "Lord" more than 230 times. But in many passages he affirms more explicitly that Jesus is the Son of God not by adoption but by nature.

The epistles of St. Paul proclaim the divine sonship of Christ Jesus by attributing to our Lord three great privileges that could belong to no creature, however exalted it might be: First, He is the first-born and the head of all the just, even of the angels. Secondly, everything subsists through Him and for Him. Thirdly, at the end of the world all things will be finally placed under His dominion.

Jesus is the first-born and the head of all the just according to the testimony of the Epistle to the Romans: “For whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son; that He might be the first-born amongst many brethren. And whom He predestinated, them He also called. And whom He called, them He also justified. And whom He justified, them He also glori-fied.”

This doctrine is often developed in the other epistles: “But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ.” “In whom we have redemption . . . according to the riches of His grace, which hath superabounded in us . . . that He might make known unto us the mystery of His will . . . in the dispensation of the fullness of times, to re-establish all things in Christ, that are in heaven and on earth, in Him.” “The exceeding greatness of His power . . . He wrought in Christ, raising Him up from the dead, and setting Him on His right hand in the heavenly places, above all principality and power and virtue and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.”

“He is the head of the body, the Church, who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things He may hold the primacy.” “Who is the head of all principality and power,” that is, the head of the angelic powers. In fact, Christ has said: “The Son of man shall send His angels” on judgment day to gather together the elect. And during His life on earth He had the power to cast out devils and gave this power to His apostles. Christ’s superiority over the angels is explained in its every aspect in the Epistle to the Hebrews, 1:5-2:18.

The second privilege of Jesus Christ, according to St. Paul, is that everything subsists through Him and for Him. To the Colossians, he wrote: “Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature [according to eternal generation]. For in Him were all things created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominations or principalities or powers: all things were created by Him and in Him. And

He is before all, and by Him all things consist." ". . . the body of His glory, . . . whereby also He is able to subdue all things unto Himself."

The third privilege attributed to Christ Jesus by St. Paul is that all things will finally be placed under His dominion at the end of the world. In the First Epistle to the Corinthians he writes: "And as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all [the just] shall be made alive. . . . Afterward the end, . . . when He shall have brought to nought all [rebellious] principality and power and virtue. For He must reign, until He hath put all His enemies under His feet. And the enemy death shall be destroyed last: For He hath put all things under His feet. . . . And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then the Son also Himself shall be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all."

To the Colossians St. Paul likewise wrote: "For I would have you know, what manner of care I have for you and for them that are at Laodicea. . . . That their hearts may be comforted, being instructed in charity, and unto all riches of fullness of understanding, unto the knowledge of the mystery of God the Father and of Christ Jesus: in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." By reason of these treasures Jesus surpasses the highest choirs of angels.

These three privileges cannot belong to any creature whatsoever. Of no creature, not even the angels, can it be said: "He is the firstborn, head of all the just"; "all things subsist through Him and in Him"; "all things will be finally subject to Him at the end of the world."

Moreover, many texts of St. Paul explicitly speak of Jesus as the Son of God in a particular sense that is fulfilled in Him alone.

In the Epistle to the Romans, St. Paul declares he is the apostle of Christ Jesus, to announce "the Gospel of God, which He had promised before by His prophets, in the Holy Scriptures, concerning His Son, who was made to Him of the seed of David, according to the flesh, who was predestinated the Son of God in power, according to the spirit of sanctification, by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead." In other words, Jesus, true man, born of the race of David, was proven to be the Son of God by the miracle of His resurrection.

Likewise, in Romans: "God sending His own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh and of sin, hath condemned sin in the flesh; that the justification of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not ac-cording to the flesh, but according to the spirit."

To the Galatians: “But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent His Son, made of a woman, under the law: that He might redeem them who were under the law: that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because you are sons, God hath sent the Spirit of His Son [that is, the Holy Ghost, promised by His Son], into your hearts, crying: Abba, Father.” This text shows more clearly the difference between the just who are the sons of God by adoption, and He who is truly the Son of God by nature.

St. Paul affirmed this natural divine sonship even more explicitly when he spoke of the eternal pre-existence of the Son of God, or of the divine person of Christ before the Incarnation. In fact, he wrote to the Colossians: “Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature [born before all creatures, and not created] : for in Him were all things created in heaven and on earth, visible and in-visible, whether thrones, or dominations, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him and in Him. And He is before all, and by Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the Church, . . . Because in Him, it hath well pleased the Father, that all fullness should dwell; and through Him to reconcile all things unto Himself. . . .”

In the above text the Son of God is manifestly called “Creator” in the same sense that God Himself is so called in the Epistle to the Romans: “For of Him, and by Him, and in Him are all things.”

St. Paul often liked to contrast the annihilation of the crucified Jesus with His glory, His power, and His sovereign wisdom as Son of God. In the First Epistle to the Corinthians he wrote: “But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews indeed a stumbling block, and unto the Gentiles foolishness: but unto them that are called both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. . . . But of Him are you in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and justice, and sanctification, and redemption.”

We find the same antithesis in the Epistle to the Philippians: “For let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man. He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the Cross. For which cause God also hath exalted Him. . . “

It would be impossible to express more forcefully the annihilation, the crushing of the humanity of the crucified Jesus, and at the same time the

eternal pre-existence of His divine personality as Son of God, equal with God.

Likewise, Paul said to the Colossians: “For in Him [Christ] dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead corporeally [really].” And to the Romans: “For I wished myself to be anathema from Christ, for my brethren . . . who are Israelites . . . and of whom is Christ, according to the flesh, who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen.” This text is similar to the one in the Epistle to the Colossians, cited above, in which it is said that the Son of God created all things and “by Him they consist.”

In the New Testament there are several analogous doxologies in honor of Christ, whence comes the “Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancto” at the conclusion of the psalms in the Office, affirming the equality of the three persons of the Blessed Trinity, and offering to all three equally the cult of adoration reserved for God alone.

All of St. Paul’s testimony concerning the divine sonship of Jesus is summarized at the beginning of the Epistle to the Hebrews, 1:1 ff., which calls to mind the parable of the wicked husbandmen: “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners, spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, last of all, in these days hath spoken to us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the world: Who being the brightness of His glory, and the figure of His substance, and upholding all things by the word of His power, making purgation of sins, sitteth on the right hand of the majesty on high. Being made so much better than the angels, as He hath inherited a more excellent name than they.”

The remainder of chapter 1 of the Epistle to the Hebrews explains clearly that Jesus Christ is the Son of God by nature, the Creator and Master of all things, the head of the kingdom of God, whereas the angels are only servants of God and His sons by adoption. Thus, if men were required to obey the commands of the angels of the Old Testament, how much more must they obey the word of Jesus Christ who, after having been humbled and humiliated during His passion for our salvation, is now crowned with glory.

This adheres to the general principles of St. Paul’s Christology, which derives from the fact that Paul was converted on the road to Damacus after Jesus’ death, and thought of Him especially in His glory, risen from the dead. Paul saw Christ in His infinite grandeur, as God’s only Son, as Creator and preserver of all things, as the head of the kingdom of God. Let

us bear in mind that St. Paul was “caught up to the third heaven . . . and heard secret words, which it is not granted to man to utter.”

It was Paul also who wrote: “And lest the greatness of the revela-tions should exalt me, there was given me a sting of my flesh, an angel of Satan, to buffet me.” Paul’s enjoyment of very elevated revelations did not prevent his being afflicted by one of those humiliating crosses that all men must drag after them as ceaseless reminders of their nothingness.

Now, in speaking so magnificently about the divinity of Jesus in his Epistles written between A.D. 48 and 59 (or between 50 and 64), St. Paul wrote not as of a dogma hitherto unknown but as of a dogma already accepted by the Churches which he was addressing. We must therefore conclude, contrary to the rationalists J. Weiss, Holtzmann, and Loisy, that this dogma of the divinity of Jesus did not result from a progressive idealization which might little by little have transformed and transfigured the original teaching of Jesus and of the apostles. Sufficient time did not elapse for such a progressive idealization, since about the year 48 or 59 St. Paul already spoke in his Epistles of the divinity of Jesus as of a dogma accepted by the Christian world. This acceptance was the result of the apostles’ teaching from Pentecost onward. Had not St. Peter preached on Pentecost and con-sistently thereafter that Jesus is the Author of life, the Savior of all, the Judge of the living and the dead?

St. Paul’s affirmations on the eternal pre-existence of the divine person of Jesus are equal in sublimity to those in St. John’s Gospel, of which we shall speak last.

V

THE WORD MADE FLESH ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN

OF RECENT years Catholic exegetes have proved at great length that there is no valid argument against the authenticity and the historicity of the Fourth Gospel, unanimously attributed by tradition to the apostle St. John. It has been demonstrated that by reason of both the language and the style in which it is written, this Gospel was composed by a Jew, an eyewitness and a disciple of Jesus. Moreover it has been shown that the author was he who is called “the disciple whom Jesus loved” in this book where the apostle St. John is never mentioned by name. St. John wished to supplement what was lacking in the Synoptics in the matter of factual description especially of events that occurred in Judea, and also in the matter of our Lord’s sermons which the first three Gospels often recorded only in substance.

The Fourth Gospel was written between the years 80 and 100, as the rationalist Harnack admits. Its chief purpose is unquestionably dogmatic. It was written in particular to prove, in opposition to the Cerinthians and the Ebionites, that Jesus is really the Son of God, as proclaimed in 20:31. The events recorded are never presented as allegories or parables. They are set forth as facts that really occurred. Nor can it be said that in reporting Jesus’ sermons St. John tended to present his own personal views. In several places he has clearly differentiated between the words of Christ and the private reflections he was making about them.

THE PROLOGUE

The prologue of the Fourth Gospel provides the dogmatic founda-tion and presents the point of view of the entire work. It explains the meaning of

the expression “Word made flesh,” and the nature of the relationship between the Word and God (1:1 f.): “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God; the same was in the beginning with God.” That is to say: before the world and before time, the Word was from all eternity. He was with God, as His interior thought. He was in substantial and active communion with God the Father, but distinct from Him, and He was sent by Him. Although He is distinct from the Father, the Word is none the less consubstantial with the Father, for it is said: “. . . and the Word was God.” The Word was eternally united to His Father by nature and by His will. In these first verses of the prologue, St. John raises his mind’s eye from the Savior’s humanity to His divine personality and to His divinity. It is as if someone stood on the shore gazing out over the ocean and became lost in its immensity, though actually seeing but a tiny portion of it. Yet the ocean is finite and limited, whereas the perfection of the Word is infinite.

The relationship of the Word to creatures in general is expressed in the following verse (1:3): “All things were made by Him: and without Him was made nothing that was made.”

All things without exception, even matter, were made by Him. The Father possesses the creative power, but nothing comes into existence unless the Word gives it form. The world, before it was created, existed ideally in the Word; for it was eternally present to the divine intelligence wherein all is life.

Finally, the relationship of the Word with men is expressed in verses 4 and 5: “In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.” The natural light of the intelligence and the supernatural light of revelation and faith that the Word pours upon the earth shine among men in the darkness of ignorance and sin; and many men have remained hardened in spite of the miracles performed by the Word made flesh and they have not received the light He brought them.

A little further on, the Evangelist says: “He came unto His own, and His own received Him not” (1:11); and “. . . the light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than the light: for their works were evil” (3:19).

By contrast, what did He give to those who received Him? “But as many as received Him, He gave them power to be made the sons of God, to them

that believe in His name" (1:12-13); that is, to all those who received Him as the Creator and as the Author of eternal salvation, whether they were Jews or pagans, He gave the power to become, in the supernatural order, adopted sons of God. This sonship is not the result of natural generation. It is not born "of blood nor of the will of the flesh [the blind instinct of the senses] nor of the will of man [enlightened by reason] ." It comes directly from God.

It can be said that the adopted sons of God are "born of God" (1:13) in the sense that Jesus used when He spoke to Nicodemus: "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit." Likewise St. Peter says that by the grace that sanctifies us we become "partakers of the divine nature," and we participate in the intimate life of God.

This is the nature of the relationship of the Word with God the Father and with men. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." "Flesh" in this case means "man," as it often does in biblical language; it was chosen in order to emphasize the reality of Christ's human nature and the supreme self-abasement of the Word. All the heresies concerning Christ Jesus have been shattered by this word "flesh," whether they denied His divinity or His humanity, or the unity of the two natures in the person of the Word.

What are the sources of this doctrine? They are to be found in our Lord's own teachings, preserved in the apostolic tradition and com-pared with what the Old Testament tells us of the eternal wisdom of the word of God."

After the prologue, the Fourth Gospel divides naturally into two parts. First, Jesus manifests His mission and His divinity during His public life (1:19 through chap. 12). Secondly, Jesus manifests His mission and His divinity during His passion and after His resurrection (chapters 13 to 20).

JESUS MANIFESTS HIS MISSION AND HIS DIVINITY DURING HIS PUBLIC LIFE

First of all, men of good will acknowledge Jesus as God. Then the unbelief and opposition of many Jews break forth and increase. Finally, Jesus is glorified in His triumphal entrance into Jerusalem. There are the three sections of the first part of the Gospel of St. John.

It was John the Baptist who first designated Jesus as the Messiah and the Son of God (1:29 f.): "Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him who taketh

away the sin of the world. . . . I saw the Spirit coming down, as a dove from heaven, and He remained upon Him. And I knew Him not; but He who sent me to baptize with water, said to me: He upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining upon Him, He it is that baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and I gave testimony, that this is the Son of God."

On the two succeeding days the first disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter, Philip, and Nathanael, accepted Jesus as the Messiah and even as the Son of God, according to the testimony of John the Baptist (1 :35, 41, 45, 49). Then Jesus performed His first miracle at Cana (2:11), and manifested Himself at Jerusalem by driving the traders out of the temple, saying: "Make not the house of My Father a house of traffic" (2:16). Many, seeing the miracles He performed, believed in Him (2:23).

Then He said to Nicodemus (3:13 ff.) : "And no man hath as-cended into heaven, but He that descended from heaven, the Son of man who is in heaven. . . . So must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting. For God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting."

John the Baptist gave further testimony (3:31-36): "He that cometh from above, is above all. . . . He that cometh from heaven, is above all. And what He hath seen and heard, that He testifieth: . . . for God doth not give the Spirit by measure. The Father loveth the Son: and He hath given all things into His hand. He that believeth in the Son, hath life everlasting."

Jesus then manifested Himself in Samaria, and the Samaritans recognized Him: "We . . . know that this is indeed the Savior of the world" (4:42). In Galilee Jesus cured the son of an officer, and the latter together with his entire household believed in Him (4:53).

Yet scarcely had the men of good will acknowledged the divine sonship of Jesus when the Jews' unbelief burst forth and became in-creasingly bitter. This opposition found its first outlet when the Savior cured a paralytic on the Sabbath (5:16 ff.). "But Jesus an-swered them: My Father worketh until now; and I work. Hereupon therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He did not only break the Sabbath, but also said God was His Father, making Himself equal to God. Then Jesus answered and said to them: Amen, amen, I say unto you, the Son cannot do anything of Himself, but what He seeth the Father doing: for what things soever He doth, these the Son also doth in like manner. . . . For as the Father raiseth up

the dead, and giveth life: so the Son also giveth life to whom He will. For neither doth the Father judge any man, but hath given all judgment to the Son; that all men may honor the Son, as they honor the Father. . . . Amen, amen I say unto you, that he who heareth My word, and believeth Him that sent Me, hath life everlasting. . . . For as the Father hath life in Himself, so He hath given to the Son also to have life in Himself."

The Galileans, too, were incredulous when Jesus said that He was the bread of life on which they must feed through faith and that later He would give Himself to them as food (6:48-52).

The opposition in Judea increased at the feast of the tabernacles (chapters 7 to 9). Then Jesus said to the Pharisees: "I am the light of the world. . . . Neither Me do you know, nor My Father: if you did know Me, perhaps you would know My Father also" (8:12, 19). And He added (8:42, 56, 59): "If God were your Father you would indeed love Me. . . . Abraham your father rejoiced that he might see My day: he saw it, and was glad." The Jews answered Him: "Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast Thou seen Abraham? Jesus said to them: Amen, amen I say to you, before Abraham was made, I am. They took up stones therefore to cast at Him. But Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the Temple." The words "Before Abraham was made, I am," imply that Jesus' life had no beginning and therefore express the eternal and immutable pre-existence of the person of the Word before the Incarnation.

The same opposition was intensified on the occasion of one of Jesus' sermons given at the time of the feast of the dedication. As He walked in the Temple, Jesus said (10:27 ff.): "My sheep hear My voice: and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them life everlasting; and they shall not perish forever, and no man shall pluck them out of My hand. That which My Father hath given Me is greater than all: and no one can snatch them out of the hand of My Father. I and the Father are one."

The Jews again took up stones to stone Him as a blasphemer "be-cause," they told Him, "that Thou, being a man makest Thyself God" (10:33). Jesus had indeed affirmed His divinity when He said: "I and the Father are one," and by claiming to be almighty like the Father and therefore able to preserve souls in the path of goodness so that no one could snatch them from His hand. The Jews understood so well that He had affirmed not only His Messiahship but also His divinity that they treated Him as a blasphemer and decided to stone Him. They were awaiting a Messiah, but a conquering

Messiah who would answer their nationalistic aspirations. A short while later Jesus, after saying “I am the resurrection and the life” (11:25), brought Lazarus back to life. The Jews who witnessed the miracle believed in Him. It was then that the Sanhedrists decided to put Him to death (11:53).

At the end of His ministry, Jesus made a triumphal entry into Jerusalem. There were Gentiles who wished to see Him. A voice from heaven uttered these words: “I have both glorified it [My name], and will glorify it again. . . . Jesus answered, and said: . . . I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself” (12:28-32). Nevertheless the Savior’s enemies persisted in their unbelief.

JESUS MANIFESTS HIS DIVINITY DURING HIS SUFFERING AND IN HIS GLORY

At the Last Supper our Lord said to His disciples: “You call Me Master, and Lord; and you say well, for so I am” (13:13). In the discourse after the Last Supper, Jesus said: “I am the way and the truth and the life. No man cometh to the Father, but by Me” (14:6). God alone can say not merely “I have the truth and the life,” but “I am the truth and the life.” For God alone is the eternally subsistent Being. Later, when Philip asked: “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us,” Jesus answered him: “Have I been so long a time with you, and have you not known Me? . . . Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? . . . The Father who abideth in Me, He doth the works,” the miracles that I perform (14:9 ff.).

When He promised the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, Jesus added: “He shall glorify Me; because He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it to you. All things whatsoever the Father hath, are Mine. Therefore I said that He [the Holy Ghost] shall receive of Mine, and show it to you” (16:14 ff.; cf. 16:28, 32).

In His prayer for His disciples (John 17:1-5, 9 f.), Jesus said again: “Father, the hour is come, glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son may glorify Thee . . . that He may give eternal life to all whom Thou hast given Him. . . . I have finished the work which Thou gayest Me to do. And now glorify Thou Me, O Father, with Thyself, with the glory which I had, before the world was, with Thee. . . . I pray . . . for them whom Thou hast given Me: because they are Thine: And all My things are Thine, and Thine are Mine; and I am glorified in them.”

The divine glory of Jesus was also manifested in His passion, in spite of the hatred of His enemies and the humiliations they inflicted on Him. The soldiers who had come with Judas fell back when Jesus said to them: “Whom seek ye?” “Jesus of Nazareth.” “I am He” (18:4-6). And He proclaimed to Pilate: “My kingdom is not of this world. . . . Everyone that is of the truth, heareth My voice” (18: 36 ff.). And when Pilate sought to save Him and said: “I find no cause in Him,” the Jews answered: “We have a law; and according to the law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God” (19:6 f.).

Finally, to those who had eyes to see, the glory of Jesus was made manifest in His last words: “It is consummated” (19:30); as well as by the heroism of His death, by His magnanimity toward His executioners, and last of all by His resurrection. His glory was mani-fested again after the Resurrection in His last commands to His apostles: “Peace be to you. As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you. . . . Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained” (20:21 ff.). Thomas the apostle, at long last convinced of the reality of the Resurrection, cried out to Him: “My Lord and My God” (20:28).

Later, after the miraculous catch of fish, Jesus fulfilled the promise He had made to Peter and conferred upon him the office of governing the entire Church: “Feed My lambs. . . . Feed My sheep” (21:16 f.). Thus He stood forth ever more clearly as the head of the kingdom of God.

What are we to conclude as to the testimony of the Fourth Gospel concerning the divinity of Jesus? As recorded in that Gospel, Jesus’ declarations state explicitly that He is the Son of God by nature and not by adoption: and it is for this very reason that the Jews demanded His death. For they said: “He said God was His Father, making Himself equal to God” (5:18; 10:33; 19:7).

Now, this testimony is the same as that in Matthew 11:27 and Luke 10:22: “All things are delivered to Me by My Father. And no one knoweth the Son, but the Father: neither doth anyone know the Father, but the Son, and he to whom it shall please the Son to reveal Him.”

Finally, the affirmations contained in St. Matthew and St. Luke are equal in sublimity to the magnificent prologue of St. John: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . And the

Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we saw His glory, the glory as it were of the only-

begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. . . . No man hath seen God at any time: the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (1:1, 14, 18).

St. John also says in his First Epistle, 1:1: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the word of life. . . . That which we have seen and have heard, we declare unto you, that you also may have fellowship with us, and our fellowship may be with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." This is the tenor of St. John's contemplation, and it is very similar to St. Paul's.

The persecutor converted on the road to Damascus met the disciple that Jesus loved. What St. John tells us in his Gospel around A.D. 80 is what St. Paul wrote in his Epistles around A.D. 53. It is also what St. Peter preached on Pentecost and thereafter when he said that Jesus is the Author of life and the head of the kingdom of God which was announced by the prophets.

VI

THE PROPHETIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE SAVIOR

WE KNOW that taken as a whole the prophecies of the Old Testament all contain three fundamental assertions: There is but one God; His spiritual kingdom is to encompass all nations; the Messiah to be sent by Him is to be the head of this kingdom. This general view is clarified and abundantly confirmed by the study of the principal prophecies taken individually, especially if we consider the progressive development of the divine revelations from the promises made to the first man and to the patriarchs, to the prophecies of David and Isaias which describe in detail even the circumstances of the life and passion of the Savior.

It is also well to remember that these patriarchs and prophets included several that prefigure the Christ who was to come. For example, Abraham the Father of believers, Isaac who carried the wood of his sacrifice and allowed himself to be bound in preparation for his immolation, and Joseph who was sold by his brothers and became the savior of his people. Then there were Moses, the liberator, the head and lawgiver of the Hebrews; Job, the figure of the suffering Christ; David, who typified the Messiah by his trials, his kingship, his prayer, and his psalms; and Jeremias who loved and suffered for his people; and then there was Jonas. It was our Lord Himself who pointed out Jonas as the figure of His preaching and His burial.

THE PROPHECIES OF THE PATRIARCHAL PERIOD

The prophetic revelations of the patriarchal period up to and including Moses announced the Savior of the world who was to be of the family of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Juda the son of Jacob, who gave His name to

one of the twelve tribes of Israel and who was the father of the royal race of David.

Immediately after the sin of the first man, God, at the same moment that He decreed punishment for sin, announced the future Savior who was to be of the race of the woman, and by whom this race would crush the head of the serpent Lamech announced that the future benediction would pass through Noe, who was in fact saved from the flood together with his family and with whom God renewed His alliance, giving him the rainbow for a sign.

Noe in his turn announced that God would choose the tents of Sem in which to dwell. In fact, it was Abraham, the son of Sem, whom God chose to make the father of His people. He said to him: “Go forth out of thy country . . . and come into the land which I shall show thee. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and magnify thy name, and thou shalt be blessed.” God renewed this promise to Abraham several times, particularly when He told him of the birth of Isaac from whom would come his posterity.

Finally, Abraham was put to the test when the Lord asked him to sacrifice Isaac, the son of the promise. But the angel of the Lord stopped him: “Lay not thy hand upon the boy; . . . now I know that thou fearest God, and hast not spared thy only-begotten son for My sake. . . . Because thou hast done this thing, . . . I will bless thee, and I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven. . . . And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.”

Then Isaac, by virtue of his father’s merits, received the same divine blessing: “Because Abraham obeyed My voice.” When Jacob won his brother Esau’s birthright away from him, he heard from his father Isaac’s lips these words of blessing: `God almighty bless thee, and make thee to increase, and multiply thee: that thou mayst be a multitude of people. And give the blessings of Abraham to thee, and to thy seed after thee.” Jacob even heard the Lord tell him: “And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth: . . . and in thee and thy seed all the tribes of the earth shall be blessed.” It was then that he saw a ladder that touched heaven; on the ladder the angels of God were ascending and descending and above it was the Lord Himself. It was the same Jacob who, on the verge of death, blessed his sons and said in particular to Juda: “The scepter shall not be taken away from Juda, nor a

ruler from his thigh, till he come that is to be sent, and he shall be the expectation of nations."

To summarize the prophecies of Genesis: Salvation was to come from the posterity of the woman, from the race of Seth, from the branch of Sem, from the family of Abraham, from the family of Isaac, and of Jacob, and from the tribe of Juda.

Later, Balaam announced: "A star shall rise out of Jacob and a scepter shall spring up from Israel." Finally Moses, the legislator and liberator of Israel, announced: "The Lord thy God will raise up to thee [Israel] a Prophet of thy nation and of thy brethren like unto me: Him thou shalt hear." This promise in its fullest sense clearly includes the Messiah, the prophet par excellence, the uni-versal mediator between God and men, the author of the second alliance as Moses was the mediator of the first alliance. That is why the New Testament relates this promise to Christ and declares that it was fulfilled in Him. Jesus Himself says to the Pharisees: "For if you did believe Moses, you would perhaps believe Me also; for he wrote of Me."

After Pentecost St. Peter said to the Jews: "Moses said: A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me: him you shall hear according to all things whatsoever he shall speak to you. And it shall be, that every soul which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people. . . . [For] to you first God, raising up His Son, hath sent Him to bless you; that every one may convert himself from his wickedness." St. Stephen, the first martyr, also repeated this prophecy of Moses before he was stoned by the Jews.

THE PERIOD OF THE KINGS

During this period, which was primarily David's, the Messiah was announced as king, Son of God, priest par excellence, and there were even descriptions of His passion and sacrifice.

First of all Anna, Samuel's mother, saluted from afar in her canticle the king and the Christ that God would send: "The Lord shall judge the ends of the earth, and He shall give empire to His king, and shall exalt the horn of His Christ."

Through the lips of the prophet Nathan God promised to David as a reward for building the Temple: "And when thy days shall be fulfilled and

thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will raise up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house to My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. . . . My mercy I will not take away from him. . . . And thy house . . . and thy throne shall be firm forever."

The title "son of David" given to the Messiah in rabbinical writings presupposes the universal acceptance by the Jews of the Messianic significance of the passage just quoted.

David himself in the psalms announced the universal dominion of God, and he described the glories and sorrows of the Messiah, who was to be the King of all peoples: "And all kings of the earth shall adore Him: all nations shall serve Him. For He shall deliver the poor from the mighty: and the needy that had no helper."

How pregnant with meaning are these words, especially when ap-plied to the feasts of Epiphany and of Christ the King! David called this King "the Anointed of the Lord," "Christ," and even "Son of God," as, for instance, in psalm 2: "The kings of the earth stood up, and the princes met together, against the Lord, and against His Christ," that is, against the One who had received the royal anointing, the Anointed One par excellence, the Messiah-King. The psalm continues: "He that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh at them: and the Lord shall deride them. . . But I am appointed king by Him over Sion, His holy mountain, preaching His commandment. The Lord hath said to Me: Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee. Ask of me, and I will give Thee the Gentiles for Thy inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for Thy possession." This prophecy has been fulfilled in the catholicity of the Church.

Psalm 109 describes the kingship and the priesthood of the Mes-siah: "The Lord said to my Lord: Sit Thou at My right hand: until I make Thy enemies Thy footstool. The Lord will send forth the scepter of Thy power out of Sion. . . . The Lord hath sworn, and He will not repent: Thou art a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech. The Lord at Thy right hand . . . shall judge among nations." St. Paul enlarged on this prophecy in his Epistle to the Hebrews.

Yet David also foretold in psalm 39, verses 7-9, that the Messiah would offer Himself up voluntarily as a victim for sin; "Sacrifice and oblation Thou didst not desire. . . . Burnt offering and sin offering Thou didst not

require. Then said I, Behold I come. In the head of the book it is written of Me that I should do Thy will: O My God, I have desired it, and Thy law in the midst of My heart." In the Epistle to the Hebrews, St. Paul says that Christ uttered these words upon coming into the world and offered Himself as a voluntary victim because the sacrifices of the Old Law were powerless to wipe out sin.

Psalm 21 contains the words Jesus pronounced on the cross: "O God, My God, . . . why hast Thou forsaken Me? . . . O My God, I shall cry by day, and Thou wilt not hear: and by night. . . . But Thou dwellest in the holy place. . . . In Thee have our fathers hoped: they have hoped, and Thou hast delivered them. They cried to Thee, and they were saved. . . . But I am a worm, and no man: the reproach of men, and the outcast of the people. All they that saw Me have laughed Me to scorn: they have spoken with the lips, and wagged the head. He hoped in the Lord, let Him deliver Him: let Him save Him, seeing He delighteth in Him. For Thou art He that hast drawn Me out of the womb: . . . depart not from Me. For tribulation is very near: for there is none to help Me. . . . Fat bulls have besieged Me. . . . I am poured out like water; and all My bones are scattered. . . . My tongue hath cleaved to My jaws. . . . For many dogs have encompassed Me: the council of the malignant hath besieged Me. They have dug My hands and feet. They have numbered all My bones. And they have looked and stared upon Me. They parted My garments amongst them; and upon My vesture they cast lots. But Thou, O Lord, remove not Thy help to a distance from Me; look toward My defense. ... Save Me from the lion's mouth."

Finally, in psalm 15, verse 10, David announced the fruits of the Messiah's sacrifice and His resurrection: "Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell; nor wilt Thou give Thy Holy One to see corruption."

As Father Lagrange, O.P., shows, the only literal explanation of psalm 16 (15), verse 10, especially according to the Greek, is that made in the Acts of the Apostles: the person who speaks in this psalm hopes to rise from the dead. The apostles, who testified to the resurrection of Christ, quite naturally saw in it the fulfillment of the verse.

Even in psalm 21, which begins with the words "O God, My God, . . . why hast Thou forsaken Me?" David described the glory of the Messiah as being the fruit of His passion: "I will declare Thy name to My brethren: in the midst of the church will I praise Thee. Ye that fear the Lord, praise Him: all ye, the seed of Jacob, glorify Him. Let all the seed of Israel fear Him:

because He hath not slighted nor despised the supplication of the poor man. Neither hath He turned away His face from Me: and when I cried to Him, He heard Me. . . . All the ends of the earth shall remember, and shall be converted to the Lord [to the God of Israel] : and all the kindreds of the Gentiles shall adore in His sight."

Summing up, David announced the sufferings and the glories of the Messiah. The Messiah was to be the Son of God, He was to be the mighty king, merciful to the humble but dreaded by the wicked, the priest par excellence. At the same time He was to be the volun-tary victim for sin; He was to be overwhelmed with anguish and suffer a terrible death; but He would rise glorious from the grave.

After David there was Solomon, who sang of the eternal Wisdom that was to be manifested to the world: "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His ways. . . . I was set up from eternity. . . . Wisdom hath built herself a house. . . . She hath slain her victims, mingled her wine, and set forth her table. . . . And to the unwise she said: Come, eat my bread, and drink the wine which I have mingled for you, . . . and walk by the ways of prudence." Today we have the Eucharist, the Eucharistic bread, and the precious blood.

Then too, the Canticle of Canticles, according to tradition, sings of the union of Christ with His Church, mention of which is also made in psalm 44:7.

It is clear that the prophecies of the period of the Kings, as well as the earlier ones, always refer to a Messiah who was to be of the race of Israel, but who was also the Son of God, and Himself God: "The Lord said to my Lord." It was by referring to this psalm 109, that our Lord silenced the Pharisees with the words: "What think you of Christ; whose Son is He? They say to Him: David's. He saith to them: How then doth David in spirit call Him Lord, saying: The Lord said to my Lord, Sit on My right hand, until I make Thy enemies Thy footstool? If David then call Him Lord, how is He his son? And no man was able to answer Him a word: neither durst any man from that day forth ask Him any more questions." Thus the prophecies of this period are clear and explicit.

The predictions of the period of the prophets, particularly those of Isaias, shed still more light on the Savior and on the work He was to accomplish.

At this period in the history of Israel, it is the origin of the Savior, His qualities, His functions, and His sacrifice that were brought into relief.

Abdias (chap. 21) made the general prophecy that saviors were to come on Mount Sion. Joel predicted the pouring forth of the Spirit of God on all flesh, and he added: “And it shall come to pass, that everyone that shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved: for in Mount Sion and in Jerusalem shall be salvation, as the Lord hath said, and in the residue whom the Lord shall call.” Osee announced the conversion of Israel and the kingship of the future Messiah. Micheas portrayed the peoples flocking toward Jerusalem the city of salvation, and the Messiah’s birth at Bethlehem: “And thou, Bethlehem Ephrata, art a little one among the thousands of Juda: out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be the ruler in Israel: and His going forth is from the beginning, from the days of eternity. . . . Now shall He be magnified even to the ends of the earth.” We can see the fulfillment of this oracle in our own time in the progress of the missions or of evangelization.

It was Isaias especially who in his great prophecy described the birth of the Messiah, His divine attributes, His universal kingdom, His sacrifice which was to bring salvation to all peoples, and His triumph.

First, the nativity: “Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign: Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and His name shall be called Emmanuel.” This isolated text is indeed remarkable, but it is somewhat obscure. Who is this virgin? The answer is made clearer further on, for the name “Emmanuel” is more explicitly defined in the following chapter, in which Emmanuel means “Lord,” “Messiah,” “God is with us.” St. Matthew, and after him Catholic tradition, interpret the “virgin” of Isaias’ text to mean the Virgin Mary, and “Emmanuel” to mean the Word incarnate, the Son of God made man, truly God with us. In St. Matthew 1:20 f., we see how the revelation made to Joseph before the birth of Jesus is the consummation of the one made earlier to Isaias: “Behold the angel of the Lord appeared to him in his sleep, saying: Joseph, son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her, is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son: and thou shalt call His name Jesus. For He shall save His people from their sins.” Now all this was to happen, St. Matthew tells us, “that it might be fulfilled which the Lord spoke by the prophet, saying: Behold a virgin shall be with child, and bring

forth a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us."

The functions of the Messiah are described in chapter 9 and those following: "For a child is born to us, and a son is given to us, and the government is upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, God the Mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of Peace." The coming of no greater person could be prophesied. The words "God the Mighty" clearly mean that in this child who was to come into the world would rest the fullness of divine power. Very few grasped the meaning of these words when they were written. They have the sublimity of the prologue to St. John's Gospel: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us."

In chapter 11 we read: "And there shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse [David's father], and a flower shall rise out of his root. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him: the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and of godliness. And He shall be filled with the spirit of the fear of the Lord. . . . He shall judge the poor with justice, and shall reprove with equity for the meek of the earth." These are the gifts of the Holy Ghost that the Messiah was to receive in an eminent degree and the just were to receive also by participation.

The Messiah's universal kingdom is proclaimed in 16:5; 18:7; and in chapters 24 to 27. His character as cornerstone is spoken of in 28:16: "Therefore thus saith the Lord God: Behold I will lay a stone in the foundations of Sion, a tried stone, a cornerstone, a precious stone, founded in the foundation. He that believeth, let him not hasten." After Pentecost St. Peter tells the members of the Sanhedrin: "This [Jesus, in whose name the lame man had been cured] is the stone which was rejected by you the builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other. For there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved." Isaias had said that this cornerstone would be "a stone of stumbling. . . . And very many . . . shall stumble and fall, and shall be broken in pieces [against it]." St. Paul also mentions it in the Epistle to the Romans, and he adds: "whosoever believeth in Him shall not be confounded." Similar references are to be found in Ephesians 2:20 and in I Peter 2:4.

Isaias announced that God Himself would come: “God Himself will come and will save you. Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall be free. . . . And a path and a way shall be there, and it shall be called the holy way: the unclean shall not pass over it, and this shall be unto you a straight way, so that fools shall not err therein. . . . They shall walk there that shall be delivered. And the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and shall come into Sion with praise, and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads.” Usually the prophets associated the Messianic deliverance with the supreme apparition of God upon earth.

The virtues and works of the servant of God are clearly foretold: “Behold My servant, I will uphold Him: My elect, My soul delighteth in Him: I have given My spirit upon Him, He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor have respect to person, neither shall His voice be heard abroad. The bruised reed He shall not break, and smoking flax He shall not quench: He shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not be sad nor troublesome, till He set judgment in the earth. . . . Thus saith the Lord God that created the heavens and stretched them out. . . . I the Lord have called Thee in justice. . . . And I have given Thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles: that Thou mightest open the eyes of the blind, and bring forth the prisoner out of prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house. I the Lord [the One who is], this is My name: I will not give My glory to another, nor My praise to graven things.”

According to some rationalists, “servant of God” signifies the people of Israel as a whole. However, most present-day critics and all Catholic exegetes point out that in this prophecy the “servant of God” is clearly differentiated from the people of Israel. The words “The bruised reed He shall not break, and smoking flax He shall not quench: He shall bring forth judgment unto truth,” refer to a real person, distinct from the mass of the people. In fact, as St. Matthew tells us, Jesus commanded His apostles not to speak of His miracles so as not to arouse in the populace a craving for marvels, thereby applying the prophecy to Himself.

Isaias placed great stress on the Savior’s sacrifice. He described it, even specifying certain details that were accomplished to the letter in the passion of Jesus: “I have given My body to the strikers, and My cheeks to them that plucked them: I have not turned away My face from them that rebuked Me. The Lord God is My helper, therefore am I not confounded: therefore have I

set My face as a most hard rock, and I know that I shall not be confounded."

"Behold My servant shall understand, He shall be exalted, and extolled, and shall be exceeding high. As many have been astonished at thee, so shall His visage be inglorious among men, and His form among the sons of men. . . . And there was no sightliness, that we should be desirous of Him. Despised, and the most abject of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with infirmity: and His look was as it were hidden and despised, whereupon we esteemed Him not. Surely He bath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows.' . . But He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His bruises we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray, every one hath turned aside into his own way: and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Here we have the mystery of the Redemption in its entirety, both in its essential aspects and in some of its details.

"He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and shall be dumb as a lamb before His shearer, and He shall not open His mouth. He was taken away [put to death] from distress, and from judgment: who shall declare His generation? because He is cut off out of the land of the living: for the wickedness of My people have I struck Him."

Not even the apostles, with the exception of John, realized at the moment of the passion and death of our Savior that it was for our salvation that He was thus offering Himself and dying on the cross.

This prophecy is so extraordinary that it has been called "the Passion according to Isaias." For it is the redemptive Passion in the most profound sense, in its supreme motive of mercy and justice. It is the Passion glimpsed in advance in its most inward aspects, as it was in a measure understood by Mary at the foot of the cross, by St. John, the holy women, the good thief, and the centurion. It is the Passion, infinite wellspring of grace, whose true nature was to remain hidden to the great majority of those who saw Jesus die on the cross.

Finally, after describing the humiliations and sufferings of the Messiah, the prophet told of His triumph and the conversion of many: "And the Lord was pleased to bruise Him in infirmity: if He shall lay down His life for sin, He shall see a long-lived seed, and the will of the Lord shall be prosperous in His hand [that is to say, the conversion of all peoples and the coming of the kingdom of God throughout the world]. . . . Because He hath delivered

His soul unto death, and was reputed with the wicked: and He hath borne the sins of many, and hath prayed for the transgressors." After the Resurrection and the Ascension St. Paul writes to the Hebrews: "He [Christ] continueth forever. . . . Whereby . . . always living, to make intercession for us."

Isaias' prophecy comes to a close with a description of the glory of the New Jerusalem that attracts all nations by its light, its holiness, and its splendor: "All you that thirst, come to the waters. . . . And the nations that knew not thee shall run to thee, because of the Lord thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel, for He hath glorified thee. Seek ye the Lord, while He may be found: call upon Him, while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way . . . for He is bountiful to forgive. For My thoughts are not your thoughts: nor your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are exalted above the earth, so are My ways exalted above your ways, and My thoughts above your thoughts."

"Arise, be enlightened, O Jerusalem: for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For behold darkness shall cover the earth, and a mist the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall walk in thy light, and kings in the brightness of thy rising."

Isaias even gives us a glimpse of the celestial Jerusalem: "Thou shalt no more have the sun for thy light by day; . . . but the Lord shall be unto thee for an everlasting light, and thy God for thy glory. Thy sun shall go down no more, and thy moon shall not decrease: for the Lord shall be unto thee for an everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended." These texts anticipate what our Lord was so often to speak of as "eternal life."

As Father Condamin, S.J., says in Le livre d'Isaie: "In this mag-nificent poem Jerusalem is represented as the center of the universal kingdom, extending over all nations, a religious kingdom where everything converges toward the cult of Jehovah composed of the just and the saints, an eternal kingdom (55:3; 60:15, 19, 20; 61:8). The theologians are correct in seeing the realization of these promises in the Church founded by Jesus Christ, since the Servant of Jehovah is Jesus Christ and since the numerous posterity of the Servant, the multitudes of men given to Him at the price of His sufferings and death, are to people the New Jerusalem (53:10-12; 54:1-3)."

Isaias is unquestionably the greatest of the prophets because of the importance of his revelations and the majesty of his style. He lived during one of the most troubled periods in the history of Israel, which at that time suffered much at the hands of the Assyrians. As Ec-clesiasticus (48:25-28) tells us: “Isaias . . . comforted the mourners in Sion. He showed what would come to pass forever, and secret things before they came.” Isaias’ style is both simple and sublime, perfectly natural, majestic and powerful. His judgments are concise, penetrating, and stress the salient points, dissipating illusions and emphatically drawing attention to the kingdom of God, giving a presage of the Messiah’s greatness and of the majesty of divine glory.

Isaias also had true poetic genius. His vigor and imagination were equal to the great ideas he was called on to express. His poetic genius is particularly evident in the contrasts, the antitheses of his predictions. In his work, the prophecies themselves are always in poetry, some of it in verse; and very beautiful verse it is. His writing is the product of the noblest inspiration, in the truly supernatural sense of the word.

After Isaias, there was Jeremias who foretold the coming of the true pastor whom God would raise from the dead: “Behold the days come, saith the Lord, and I will raise up to David a just branch: and a king shall reign, and shall be wise: and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.” Ezechiel also said in the name of the Lord: “And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them; . . . there shall be showers of blessing. . . . And they shall know that I the Lord their God am with them.” After the vision of the restoration of life to the dried bones, Ezechiel said: “And My servant David shall be king over them, and they shall have one shepherd.”

Later Jesus would say: “I am the good shepherd. The good shep-herd giveth His life for His sheep. . . . I am the good shepherd; and I know Mine and Mine know Me. As the Father knoweth Me, and I know the Father: and I lay down My life for My sheep. And other sheep I have that are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd.” The universal kingdom of God announced by the prophets is realized in the Church militant, suffering, and triumphant.

Daniel saw the little stone flung down from on high that was to overthrow the colossus with clay feet, the symbol of idolatry. He saw, too, that “the stone that struck the statue became a great moun-tain, and filled the whole earth.” Then he explained the symbol by saying: “The God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, and His

kingdom shall not be delivered up to another people, and it shall break in pieces and shall consume all these king-doms, and itself shall stand forever." This was the announcement of the indefectibility of the Church.

Daniel also foresaw the power that would be given to the Son of man: "And He gave Him power and glory and a kingdom: and all peoples, tribes, and tongues shall serve Him: His power is an ever-lasting power that shall not be taken away: and His kingdom that shall not be destroyed. . . . The saints of the most high God shall take the kingdom: and they shall possess the kingdom forever and ever."

Finally, Daniel announced in a very mysterious manner in the prophecy of the seventy weeks the time of the coming of the Mes-siah (9:24): "Seventy weeks are shortened upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, that transgression may be finished, and sin may have an end, and iniquity may be abolished: and everlasting justice may be brought; and vision and prophecy may be fulfilled; and the saint of saints may be anointed." The tradition of the Church has understood this verse to refer to the work accomplished in the world by the coming of Jesus Christ. The seventy weeks are seventy periods of seven years, like those in Leviticus, until the advent of Him who was to wash away the sins of the world.

Among the last prophets, Aggeus promised his contemporaries that the Messiah would enter the new temple they were then building. Zacharias saluted the Messiah on Sion (2:8—13), the "Orient," who will raise up the true temple of the Lord, the king on his humble mount, on an ass, the Savior, the source of grace to Jerusalem.

Malachias, the last of the prophets, announced the forerunner who was to follow him four centuries later; he spoke of the sacrifice that would replace all others: "From the rising of the sun even to the going down, My name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to My name a clean oblation: for My name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord of hosts." Catholic tradition applies this verse to the sacrifice of the New Law, that is, the Eucharistic Sacrifice which perpetuated in substance the sacrifice of the Cross until the end of the world among all evangelized peoples.

Such was the progressive development of the divine revelations on the Messiah. From the very beginning of the period of the prophets this development was characterized by wonderful unity. All these prophecies announce the establishment of the monotheistic religion, the universal reign

of the true God, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, who was to become the God of all the nations of the earth. The prophecies all announce the Messiah, the head of the kingdom of God, Savior of the world, who was to be of the family of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, of the tribe of Juda, the son of David according to the flesh and yet the Son of God and the priest par excellence whose painful sacrifice would wash away the sins of the world and would be an infinite source of grace to all souls of good will.

THE POWER OF THE PROPHECIES

Once we understand the true meaning of the divine testimony con-tained in the Old Testament, telling of the coming of the Savior, we can grasp some of the power of these predictions.

God alone by His foreknowledge could know long before the event (at least 400 years) and even in detail many free acts of the future involving the free will of a number of persons, the free will of the Messiah and that of His disciples and persecutors.

Jesus was born in Bethlehem of the family of Juda and of David, to preach the gospel to the poor and the meek; He opened the eyes of the blind, restored the infirm to health, and led to the light those that languished in darkness. He showed the perfect way and was a teacher to the Gentiles. He was a victim for the sins of the world. He was both the stone of stumbling and the cornerstone. He was also like the little stone which Daniel spoke of that was to grow into a mountain and fill the earth.

He was rejected, misunderstood, betrayed, sold, struck in the face, mocked, covered with spittle, given gall for drink. He was pierced, His hands and His feet were nailed; He died as a result of this brutal treatment, and upon His vesture men cast lots.

He rose from the dead the third day. He ascended into heaven to take His place at the right hand of the Almighty. Kings took up arms against Him. But afterward the kings of many peoples throughout the earth adored Him. And the calling of the Gentiles, through Jesus Christ, foretold by the prophets, was accomplished.

Considering all these prophecies from our vantage point, after they have been abundantly fulfilled, we are aware of something truly remarkable about them.

Only God could foresee all these free acts by men, many of whom were in opposition to one another. Above all, only God could foresee the unquestionably extraordinary facts which depend on His liberty alone and are beyond the natural expectations of men, such as the birth of the Messiah at Bethlehem rather than elsewhere, or His triumph after the annihilation of His passion, or again the evan-gelization of the entire world, as known to the ancients, by a few poor Galilean fishermen.

Such numerous, confident, and extraordinary predictions cannot be natural phenomena. They surpassed human sagacity, and the natural aspirations of the Jews as well. For the Jews were much inclined to view even religious matters in a materialistic light, and they were little disposed to allow other peoples to participate in their religious privileges.

Nor can these predictions be fortuitous in nature. For blind chance, being accidental, cannot be the first cause of order in the world or of the great events which give history its noblest meaning. If it were, then order would spring from the absence of order, the harmony and beauty of great human lives would derive from an unintelligent cause, and what is more perfect would come from what is less perfect, without any reason whatever.

Lastly, the extraordinary holiness of Jesus which everyone—even Renan and the other rationalists—recognize, can come only from an intelligent and holy cause, and this cause must be God Himself by whom Jesus was sent forth.

Thus Pascal was able to write: “The greatest proofs of Jesus Christ are the prophecies. And God Himself furnished them most liberally. . . . For sixteen hundred years (that is, since Abraham) He raised up prophets; and for the next four hundred years He spread these prophecies, together with the entire Jewish people which held them in custody, throughout the world: it was necessary not only that there be prophecies to make people believe, but that these prophecies be diffused over the face of the earth so that everyone would accept the Gospel.”

Pascal, to show more clearly the power of these predictions, em-phasizes the multiplicity of prophets who came at different epochs, in various conditions, and yet who were all in agreement with regard to what they were announcing.

“Had even one man written a book of prophecies about Jesus Christ, as to the time and the manner [in which He was to be born, live, and die], and had Jesus Christ come in fulfillment of these prophecies, this would have

been evidence of infinite power. But we have much more here: we have a succession of men over four thousand years [that is, since the beginning of the world] who came one after the other and constantly and without variation foretold the same advent. It was an entire people that announced it and that subsisted for four thousand years in order to bear witness as a body to the assurances they had of it, from which neither threats nor persecutions could deter them: this fact has a far greater significance."

The time foretold by Daniel in particular could not have been humanly foreseen because of the complexity of the events involved. Pascal says: "It takes courage to predict one thing in so many ways: the four idolatrous or pagan monarchies (spoken of by Daniel), the end of the kingdom of Juda and the seventy weeks (or seven years) had to be simultaneous and to come before the destruction of the second temple [of Jerusalem] ." In fact, Daniel had said: "And after sixty-two weeks [to follow immediately upon the other seven] Christ shall be slain. . . . And a people with their leader that shall come, shall destroy the city and the sanctuary." As it actually happened, a few years after the death of our Lord, in the year 70, the Roman army led by Titus captured and destroyed Jerusalem.

It was also predicted that during this period, before the destruction of Jerusalem, many pagans would be taught and brought to a knowledge of the true God adored by the Jews, and that many would be converted. Pascal adds: "During the fourth monarchy, before the destruction of the second temple, large numbers of pagans adored God and led an angelic life: young girls consecrated their virginity and their lives to God; men gave up their pleasures. What Plato was unable to persuade a few chosen and learned men to do, a secret power could succeed in urging upon a hundred million ignorant men by virtue of a few words."

In fact, between the time of Jesus' death and the year 70, the date of the destruction of Jerusalem, many notable events occurred including Pentecost, the conversion of St. Paul, his three apostolic voyages, the first council of Jerusalem, the foundation of the different Churches to which St. Paul addressed his letters, his own martyrdom and that of St. Peter.

Indeed, what was the cause of all this? Pascal continues: "The rich give up their possessions, children leave the comforts of their parents' homes for the austerity of the desert. What does all this mean? It is what was foretold long before. For two thousand years (that is, since Abraham) no pagan had adored the God of the Jews; and at the time predicted throngs of pagans

turned to adore this one and only God. Temples were destroyed, kings bowed before the Cross. What does all this mean? It is the Spirit of God which has been poured out over the earth."

The prophet Joel, speaking in the name of the Lord, had an-nounced: "I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy. . . . Moreover upon My servants and handmaids in those days I will pour forth My Spirit."

And this is what really happened. As Pascal also tells us: "All the peoples of the world lived in infidelity and in concupiscence; the whole earth was aflame with charity. Princes left their honors; girls suffered martyrdom. Whence comes this power? It is that the Mes-siah has come. These are the effect and the signs of His coming."

Despite persecutions and passions in revolt, this all came to pass: "All the great of the earth unite [against Christ and the apostles], the scholars, the wise men, the kings. The former write, the latter condemn, still others kill [during three centuries]. And, notwith-standing all this opposition these simple and helpless people resist all these powers and conquer even these kings, these scholars, and these wise men, and wipe idolatry from the earth. And all this is accomplished by virtue of the force that had foretold it."

Through the lips of Ezechiel the Lord had announced the kingdom of the Messiah: "I the Lord have brought down the high tree [idolatry], and exalted the low tree. . . . I the Lord have spoken and have done it."

Pascal did not fail to note an objection that comes naturally to mind with respect to these prophecies: "If all this was so clearly foretold to the Jews, why did they not believe it? And why were they not exterminated for resisting something so evident?"

"I answer," he says: "First of all, it was predicted that they would not believe something so clear and that they would not be extermi-nated. Secondly, nothing brings greater glory to the Messiah; for it was not enough that prophets should exist; it was necessary that their prophecies be preserved without suspicion." That is how everything came to pass. "The Jews, by killing Jesus in order not to accept Him as the Messiah, gave Him the crowning mark of the Messiah. And by continuing to misjudge Him they became the irreproachable witnesses [speaking against themselves though not wishing to be conscious of it]; and by killing Him and continuing to deny Him, they accomplished the prophecies."

In fact, both David and Isaias had announced the Servant of God would be “despised, and the most abject of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with infirmity. . . . And we have thought Him as it were a leper, and as one struck by God and afflicted.”

Yet the prophets announced not only His sufferings and His death of expiation, but also His elevation and the establishment by Him of a spiritual kingdom of God over all peoples. This has been accom-plished by the evangelization of the whole world.

Thus, from all eternity God foresaw the sin of the Jews, but He did not will it in any way. He merely permitted it for the sake of a greater good, for the sake of the heroic patience of the Savior. This divine foresight suppressed neither the free will of Jesus nor that of His persecutors.

Two conclusions come forth from all this. The expectation for the Messiah was distorted, given a materialistic turn by the national prejudices of the Jews. But let us not give a materialistic interpretation to the Gospel, let us not lower it to our level; but by our fidelity let us rise toward its level, let us allow divine grace to raise us toward the Gospel, and let us truly put it into practice.

The penetrating force of the prophecies must produce its effects not only upon our minds, but also upon our hearts and souls. We must show by our own lives that Christ has really come into the world, that He is the Savior, that His regenerative action is ever at work in the world and must continue until the end of time, just as in the early days of Christianity.

VII

THE DIVINE PERSONALITY OF JESUS

IF WE would glimpse at the intimate life of our Lord as it has been from all eternity, we must pause and contemplate the mystery of His divine personality.

We have seen with what reserve He at first manifested Himself so as not to arouse a wholly external enthusiasm in a crowd craving for marvels and for earthly prosperity. Now we can understand a little better why in the beginning He showed Himself under the veil of the parables as the Sower of divine truth, as the Good Shepherd who gives His life for His sheep, as the only son of the master of the vineyard who was sent after the servants had been ill-treated and killed by the husbandmen. In the last-mentioned parable He announced that He would be put to death.

In the course of His ministry He gradually showed Himself to be equal to the divine Lawgiver of Sinai, since He came to perfect the divine law. When He cured the paralytic He claimed the power to remit sins, to remake or regenerate men's souls: "Come to Me, all you that labor, and are burdened, and I will refresh you."

Finally, as His passion approached, He declared more openly the fact of His divine sonship. He affirmed it before the Pharisees with an authority that can belong only to God. He who was meek and humble of heart did not fear to tell them: "Amen, amen I say to you, before Abraham was made, I am." He declared: "I and the Father are one." "I am the way and the truth and the life." He did not merely say, as had the prophets, "I have received the truth that I might transmit it to you." He said: "I am the truth and the life," words that God alone can rightfully use.

Such was Jesus' teaching with respect to His divinity and it was so understood by the apostles. St. Peter saw in Him "the Author of life." St. Paul spoke of Him as "the Son of His [God's] love, . . . who is the image of

the invisible God, the first-born of every creature," in whom "were all things created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible"; the Son who being equal with God the Father "humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross." St. John the Baptist looked upon Him as "the Lamb of God . . . who taketh away the sin of the world." And St. John the Evangelist called Him the Word made flesh: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1).

Thus the Church merely repeats the testimony that Jesus gave of Himself when she professes in the Creed that He is "the only-begotten Son of God, light of light, true God of true God, . . . being of one substance with the Father," and that by Him "all things were made" (Nicene Creed).

Such in brief is our Lord's testimony about His divine sonship. With the help of theology, let us meditate on the meaning and scope of this testimony. Let us also ask God to give us the grace of contemplating this mystery. For in this contemplation our souls must find their daily nourishment and they must live by it more and more with each passing day.

In order to penetrate even a little into the mystery of the divine personality of Jesus, we must understand the fittingness of the In-carnation with respect to both God and man. This will give us much light.

Jesus has claimed for Himself the properties of divine nature and those of human nature as well. He has shown Himself to us as truly a man, who was born in time at Bethlehem and died on the cross. At the same time He had told us: "I am the way and the truth and the life." I am the truth and the life in their fullness.

How can one and the same person have two natures that are infi-nitely apart, divine nature and human nature? We have perhaps ceased to look upon this with astonishment, the holy astonishment of contemplation. There is, of course, another form of astonishment that leads to negation.

Incredulity objects: A God made flesh would be no longer God or man, but a fabulous being, a myth, half-God, half-man. He would have a hybrid nature, neither divine nor human (this was Eutyches' error).

The incredulous ask: How could the infinite God who governs the world be in person in the body of a helpless little child? An infinite God in the womb of a virgin! Thus does human wisdom speak, seeing only darkness in supernatural truths that are far too lofty and too mighty for it.

Indeed, the union of humanity and divinity in the person of Jesus remains an incomprehensible mystery for the believer, and it will be definitely explained only in heaven. Yet the light of faith shows us even here below that on the one hand God tends to communicate Himself as much as possible to man and that, on the other hand, man tends to be united as much as possible to God. When we place these two truths side by side, we begin to glimpse from afar the union of humanity and divinity in the person of the Savior. We shall strive to develop these two points in what follows.

GOD HAS GIVEN HIMSELF IN PERSON TO HUMANITY

God, on the one hand, tends to communicate Himself as much as possible to man. Why? Because God is the Sovereign Good, and goodness is essentially communicative. The good naturally tends to pour itself out, to share the riches within it. And the more perfect a good is, the more it tends to communicate itself fully and intimately. The sun sheds about it light and heat. Plants and animals having reached adulthood give life to other plants and animals. At a higher level, the artist and the scholar, who have conceived ideas, strive to make them known. The apostle who loves goodness passionately, desires to communicate it to others. Goodness is fundamentally communicative; the higher its level the more abundantly and intimately it gives itself. Whereas the friendship of a superficial soul remains totally external and a matter of the affections, the friendship of a noble soul is the generous gift of its innermost self.

Thus, since God is the Sovereign Good, it is highly fitting that He communicate Himself in the highest degree possible to His creatures, both intimately and fully. But this divine communication, fitting as it is, remains free—something that the Neo-Platonists did not under-stand. It is in no way necessary to the infinite beatitude of God. For He finds His beatitude in the possession of His own sovereign good-ness, which is infinitely superior to all created goods and cannot be increased by them. God created all things freely. At the dawn of creation it was through His goodness that He gave His creatures being, life, intelligence. Through a wholly gratuitous love He raised men and angels to the supernatural life of grace, to a participation in His own intimate life. Is this the limit of what God can do?

Why could He not give Himself in person? Is it not the peculiar quality of friendship to inspire us to give our innermost selves? Why could not the

Word of God give Himself in person to a privileged soul, in such a manner that the Word, this soul and its body would form only one person, a single self, that of the Word made flesh, in whom would dwell divine perfections and human properties, a person who could truthfully say: “I who speak to you am the way, the truth, and the life.”

Thus in a marvelous manner would be realized the principle that God, the Sovereign Good, tends to communicate Himself to man in the highest degree possible. Goodness is essentially communicative, and the nobler it is the more abundantly and intimately it gives itself. This is the most elevated aspect of the mystery of which we are speaking.

THE FULL DEVELOPMENT OF THE HUMAN PERSONALITY AND UNION WITH GOD

The unbeliever objects: But then, since Jesus would possess no human personality, He would not be truly a man. This was the objection once raised by Nestorius and his disciples. Some modern rationalists expand this view by saying that human personality consists primarily in the consciousness a man has of himself and in the liberty by reason of which he is his own master. Thus, if Jesus did not have a human personality,—and this is what the Church teaches—then He had no human consciousness of Himself nor any human liberty, but only a divine consciousness and a divine liberty. Hence, they claim, He was not truly a man, and having no human liberty He was powerless either to merit or to obey. If on the other hand, these rationalists add, it is held that He had both a human consciousness and human liberty coexistent with a divine consciousness and a divine liberty, then it must be said that there were in Him two personalities, two persons, doubtless very intimately united by knowledge and love, but none the less two persons and not a single person. Therefore, the rationalists conclude, Jesus is only the greatest of the saints who was intimately united to God in a truly extraordinary degree; but He cannot be called God. In short, if personality is formally constituted by consciousness or liberty, in order for Jesus to be only one person, He could have only one consciousness and one liberty. Thus He could not be at one and the same time truly God and truly a man.

This objection is based on a superficial and false conception of personality, and it leaves out of consideration the very intimate relationship between the full development of a human personality and union with God.

We have to lay very much stress on this matter, for it is the second aspect of the mystery of Christ's divine personality.

To understand how Jesus, without having a human personality, a human ego, can be truly a man, and how His humanity is glorified and not lessened by the divine personality of the Word, we must consider for a moment the nature of personality in general. This would be an easy enough task had not so many errors piled up regarding this matter. We must therefore clear them away so as to preserve the true meaning of the words "I" and "me" which everybody uses.

With St. Thomas we must ask ourselves what is personality, and rise progressively from the lowest degrees of human personality up to the most perfect. We shall then be able to glimpse through the twilight of faith at the personality of the Savior, far above that of a St. Paul, a St. Peter, or a St. John.

Personality is a positive thing. It is that which makes every being endowed with reason an independent subject who can say "I," "me"; and which makes him a being who belongs to himself, his own master sui juris; and by reason of which are attributed to him a reasonable nature, being, and ability to carry on the operations in which his activity consists. In this sense it is ordinarily said that Peter and Paul are persons, two distinct persons. Each of them is an independent subject and a totality to which we attribute human nature, existence, activity. Each of them says "I," "me." This fact differentiates the person as a primary subject of attribution from all that is fitting to him, and the person cannot be attributed to another subject. We say: "Peter is a man, Peter exists, Peter speaks well." But we cannot attribute Peter to another subject. He himself is the primary subject of attribution existing and functioning as a separate entity.

It follows that our personality, or that by which every being endowed with reason is an independent subject, an entity to which its nature, its existence, and its operations are attributed, cannot be formally constituted by anything which is attributed to it as a part. Our basic personality can therefore not be formally constituted either by our body, or even by our soul, that is, by either of the two parts of the nature which is attributed to us, nor by any one of our faculties or of our acts.

It is therefore clear that our basic personality, from the ontological point of view, cannot be formally constituted by our consciousness. Consciousness of the ego, the "me," is not the ego, the "me." The former

presupposes and knows the latter, but does not constitute it. Nor does our liberty formally constitute our personality. It is merely a psychological and moral manifestation of our basic personality, the latter belonging to the ontological order, or the order of being. For the act presupposes being: in order to act, one must first be.

Thus our personality is more fundamental than consciousness and liberty. Personality is what makes each one of us an independent subject to which is attributed all that is fitting to him. And if we can attribute to Jesus as to a single independent subject two intelligences (one divine and the other human) and two liberties, it will follow that there are not in Him two persons, but only one.

All this contains a great mystery which we cannot understand. But it is not unintelligible or absurd. On the contrary, we can progressively rise to it, starting from the lowest degrees of the human personality. It is easy enough to see that from the psychological and moral point of view a human personality grows in the measure that it tends to become more intimately united to God, obliterating itself before Him. This union in self-effacement, far from being servitude, is a glorification. If we study this fact carefully, we shall get a glimpse of what is realized in Christ, not only from the psychological and moral points of view, but from the point of view of being or of the basic personality.

Whereas God, as we were saying earlier, tends to give Himself as much as possible to man, the perfect man tends to become as closely united as possible to God.

Some have thought that personality develops in the measure that man becomes more and more independent in his existence and in his action from all that is not himself, and in the measure that others de-pend upon him. In this sense, the personalities of Napoleon and Goethe have been glorified.

Such a concept leaves out of account the fact that our personality consists especially in independence with regard not to all things, but to those which are inferior to us and which we dominate by our rea-son and our liberty, such as the independence of the soul which can subsist after the dissolution of the body.

When we glorify certain human personalities that have disregarded the rights of God, we are forgetting that our special independence with regard to inferior things is based on the very strict dependence of our souls with regard to the superior things, that is, Truth and Goodness, and in the last

analysis with regard to God. If our reason rules space and time, the things of the senses, it is because it was created to know God, the supreme Truth. If our liberty conquers the attraction of the things of the senses, it is because it was created to prefer God to them, and to love Him, the universal and total Good above all else.

From these facts derives a noble and neglected law, namely, that the full development of the personality consists in becoming more and more independent of inferior things, but also in becoming ever more closely dependent upon Truth, Goodness, that is, upon God Himself.

False personality, on the contrary, consists in a so-called inde-pendence with regard to everything, including God Himself, to whom obedience is refused. This false personality scorns the so-called passive virtues of humility, patience, and gentleness. It is nothing but insubordination and pride, and reaches its fullest development in the devil whose motto is: Non serviam ("I will not obey"). As a matter of fact, it leads to the worst of all servitudes. True personality, on the other hand, is realized in the saints, but particularly in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Many false ideas arise about the development of personality be-cause the mystery of the Incarnation is no longer contemplated and because it is forgotten that the full development of the human per-sonality consists in being effaced before that of God, by becoming as united as possible to Him. We must consider this fact most carefully that we may begin to understand how it is that the humanity of Jesus is in no sense diminished because in Him human personality has made way for the divine personality of the Word. This is the culminating point of the lofty law: Human personality grows by effacing itself be-fore that of God.

Indeed, wherein lies the superiority of the good man over the libertine? It is that the good man conforms his will to God's. Whereas

the libertine is crushed by adversity, the good man grows with it, ever conforming his will more closely to God's. Whence comes the superiority of the man of genius over the ordinary worker? He is inspired by Gods he is closely dependent upon a superior inspiration.

Nobler than the man of genius, a higher and more powerful per-sonality has manifested itself through the ages: that of the saints. Personality is measured by the profound and lasting influence it can exert. Now, the influence of a saint is not limited to his own country or his own time. In a sense it extends to the whole Church in a sphere superior to space and time.

For almost two thousand years millions of souls have been living by the epistles of St. Paul, as if these pages had been written yesterday, whereas almost nobody, except for a few scholars, reads the letters of Seneca. For the past seven centuries thousands of religious have lived by the thought of a St. Bernard, a St. Dominic, a St. Francis of Assisi, of a St. Catherine of Siena and a St. Claire. How is it that these saints have exerted such a tremendous influence on souls? Whence comes their prodigious personality that raises them above the limits of their country and their time?

The secret is that in a sense they were one with God. They had died to themselves in order to live for God. No one but the saints has fully understood that human personality can truly grow only by dying to itself so that God may reign and live ever increasingly within it. That is why the saints, and only the saints,—as St. Cather-ine of Siena tells us—declared war on their own egos, the ego com-posed of self-love and pride. They have sought to live more and more not for themselves but for God, and consequently to die to their own judgment and to their own will, in order to live solely by the thought and the will of God. They have willed that God should be their alter ego, more intimate than their own ego. They have willed to become the servants of God, just as the hand is the servant of the will. They have willed to become genuinely adopted sons and friends of God, to the point of living continually for Him and of orienting the basic tendencies of their thought and of their will always toward Him. At certain moments of union they were able to say with St. Paul: “I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me.” The full development of human personality consists in losing itself in that of God.

And yet even the greatest saint remains a being distinct from God, a creature. He has indeed substituted divine ideas for his human ideas, and the divine will for his own will, but he is none the less a being distinct from God. Even our Blessed Lady during moments of most intimate contemplation remains a creature.

At the summit of holiness we find our Lord Jesus Christ. In Him God has given Himself in person to the greatest extent possible to humanity, and humanity has been personally united to God to the greatest extent possible, to the point of forming a single ego with the Word of God. In Jesus Christ, God’s ideas have been substituted for human ideas, and the divine will has fully subordinated the human will. But that is not all. Something far more fundamental has taken place. At the root of the intelligence and of the will,

at the root of the soul itself, in the order of being, the divine person of the Word has assumed the humanity of Jesus. That is why He could say: “I who speak to you, I am the way, the truth, and the life.” “The Father and I are one.”

That is why Jesus has a unique manner of pronouncing the word “I,” a word that the saints rarely use except to accuse themselves of their faults. They know that all the good we do is accomplished through the power of the Lord, whereas evil comes only from our-selves. They know that our egos, composed of self-love, are, as Pascal has said, hateful, whereas the ego of Jesus is adorable: It is the ego of the Word made flesh. He alone has been able to say: “He who loves his father and his mother more than Me is not worthy of Me.” No one but God can speak thus.

How is it that Jesus infinitely surpasses all the saints whose model, light, strength, and life He is? It is because in Him, in the strictest meaning of the words, human personality, the human ego, has been replaced from the first moment of His conception and for all eternity by the divine personality of the Word.

In Jesus Christ there is no human personality, no human ego, and yet He is truly a man. His humanity, far from being lessened by per-sonal union with the Word, is glorified by this union. From its union with the Word, Christ’s humanity receives, as we shall see, an innate, substantial, uncreated holiness. Similarly, our imagination is nobler than that of the animals because it is united to our intelligence. In us imagination serves a superior faculty, and it is elevated by this subordination, as is strikingly clear in artists of genius. It is the glory of the inferior to “serve” and thus to contribute to the realization of an end superior to itself. This has been understood by those who have associated the words “servitude” and “greatness.” “To serve God is to reign,” and no creature ever served Him so well as did the holy humanity of our Savior.

Innumerable corollaries could be deduced from this doctrine. Let us merely mention the more important ones.

THE HYPOSTATIC UNION

The Most Intimate Union after That of the Trinity

We can see that this personal or hypostatic union (that is to say, the union in a single person or in a single subject of divinity and humanity) is not

merely a moral union born of the conformity of the human will with the will of God through grace and charity. Indeed, this moral union with God, which exists especially among the saints, can become most intimate. In the Old Testament, Abraham was called the friend of God, but he remained infinitely removed from God. The same holds for the apostles and for the greatest saints.

Nor is this personal or hypostatic union a natural and essential union, for it does not constitute a single nature or essence. The two natures remain completely distinct, although intimately united. As a matter of fact, divine nature is absolutely immutable and cannot convert or change itself into a created nature; and if it could, then Jesus would no longer be truly God. On the other hand, human nature cannot be converted or changed into divine nature; and if it could, Jesus would then not be truly a man. Nor can the two natures enter into the composition of a third nature, for this would presuppose a modification or alteration of divine nature, which is absolutely immutable, and which cannot be the incomplete part of a whole that is more perfect than itself.

The personal or hypostatic union of divinity and humanity in Jesus does not in any sense involve the confounding of the two natures. 1ikcwisc, in ourselves the union of body and soul does not involve any confusion of the two. Within limits we might make the following comparison and say that, just as our body is dominated, vivified by our soul, and will be reanimated by it on the day of resurrection, thus in Jesus human nature is completely dominated by God, possessed by the Word. Christ is not a fabulous being, demi-god and half-man. He is true God and true man, without any pantheistic confusion of the two natures united in His divine person.

Thus are supernaturally realized in this sublime mystery God’s desire to give Himself as much as possible to man, and man’s yearning to be united as much as possible to God.

This is the strongest and most intimate union possible, after the union of the Blessed Trinity. In the Blessed Trinity the three persons are necessarily one and the same divine nature. In Jesus it is a fact that the two natures belong to the same person. This personal or hypostatic union, which constitutes the God-man, is incomparably more intimate than that of our soul with our body. Whereas the body and the soul are separated at death, the Word is never separated either from the soul or from the body which He has assumed. The union is immutable and indissoluble for all eternity.

We do not contemplate enough this ineffable mystery of merciful Love. The sublimity of the mystery derives from the very fact that two natures infinitely remote from each other, one supreme and the other lowly, are so intimately united. Beauty results from unity shining through variety. When the diverse elements are infinitely removed from each other and yet intimately united, we have not merely beauty but the truly sublime. Only divine love is strong enough thus to associate supreme riches and human nature, with all the sufferings which can overwhelm it.

When we make the way of the cross and contemplate Jesus on His painful journey, bowed beneath the weight of our sins, let us remember that He is the way, the truth, and the life, and through Him we shall go toward this ocean of divine life where He alone can lead us, by giving us the grace of perseverance.

We love to contemplate the sea and the mountains, and to gaze long at them in admiration. Why do we not contemplate more often this immense mystery of the Incarnation, which brings us salvation? Very simple souls, molded by the Gospel and the liturgy, attain this contemplation, as has happened quite often in the countryside of France, Spain, and Italy.

When we enter a church we often do no more than ask for a special favor for ourselves and for our dear ones. Should we not remember sometimes to thank God for having given us our Lord? The Incarna-tion surely merits a special act of thanksgiving. This thanksgiving which must begin here below will be continued by the saints for all eternity. This will be the canticle of the elect about which we read in the Apocalypse: “To Him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb, benediction, and honor, and glory, and power, forever and ever.”

A soul that thanks God daily, in the intimacy of meditation, for having given us His Son, is certain to attain to a high degree of union with God. Any humble soul, even one lacking in human culture, can thank God for the infinite gift He has given us.

NOTE

PERSONALITY

IN WHAT IT IS FORMALLY CONSTITUTED

EVERY theologian knows that personality cannot be formally constituted either by consciousness or by liberty. Consciousness of self presupposes the existence of the self of which one is conscious, but it does not constitute the self. Liberty is also a psychological and moral manifestation of the fundamental personality, to which it is attributed and which it therefore presupposes. Persons are free, but it is not liberty that constitutes them formally. Therefore it is possible for Jesus to be a single person, even though there are in Him two consciousnesses and two liberties, one divine and the other human.

Basic personality is not of the order of the act, as we have said, but of the order of being, for action presupposes being. In order to act, one must first of all be.

This basic personality is, according to natural reason or common sense, that by which every reasonable being is a primary subject of attribution who can say “I,” “me,” and to whom is attributed all that belongs to him, whereas he himself is attributable to no other person. Thus, Peter and Paul are persons. It is commonly said: Peter is a man, Peter exists, Peter is good, and so on. In each of these affirmative judgments the verb “to be” expresses the real identity of the subject of the proposition and of the attribute. When we say “Peter is a man,” we are in fact saying that Peter is the same being who is a man, who exists, and so on.

How can the real identity of the subject and the attribute of each of these propositions be safeguarded? This requires that there exist in Peter, beneath the diversity of the qualities which are attributed to him, something that is “one,” that is identical and real, something that formally constitutes him as

the primary subject of attribution of all that is fitting to him. That is his basic personality in the ontological order, or the order of being.

According to some, this personality is something negative: Peter would, according to them, be a person because his humanity would not depend either radically or actually upon a divine person, or because it had not been assumed, as was the humanity of Jesus, by a divine person.

Many theologians have rejected this opinion for a number of rea-sons: 1. What formally constitutes that by which each of us is a primary subject of attribution cannot be something negative. If de-pendence is a positive thing, independence is all the more a positive perfection, even though we express it in negative terms. In fact, the independence of God in the realm of being is the supreme perfection, positive in the highest degree.

2. The natural personality of each one of us cannot be defined by the absence of a wholly supernatural and exceptional grace, that is, by the absence of the grace of hypostatic union. It is not the absence of a supernatural gift which constitutes the realities of the natural order. If this were so, it would follow that the realities of the natural order are not naturally knowable and definable.

3. In the Blessed Trinity there are three personalities which are not negative but positive realities, and which must have an analogical similarity with created personality; otherwise we could not know them.

4. The real identity affirmed by such judgments as “Peter is a man, Peter exists, Peter is good” cannot be constituted and explained by something negative. There must be something positive that constitutes the subject as such, fundamentally identical in itself, under the diversity of qualities which are attributed to it.

This identity is not assured, either, by the portion of matter which exists in each of us. For, if this were the case my body, inasmuch as it is this individual body constituted by this particular portion of matter, or my hand, inasmuch as it is this individual hand, would each be primary subjects of attribution. Now this is not true at all, for both my body and my hand are attributed to me as parts of myself. And with respect to Christ, the individuation of His humanity by matter is infinitely removed from His uncreated personality.

5. Moreover, those who maintain that personality is a negative thing usually refuse to admit that there is, prior to the consideration of our mind, a distinction between every created essence and its existence,

between every created person and its existence. Now it is true, prior to the consideration of our mind, that the humanity in us is not its existence and the person of Peter is not his existence, for God alone is His existence. God alone has been able to say: “I am who am.” And it is because He is God that Jesus was able to say: “I am the truth and the life.” No created person is existence; it merely has existence, which it has received. Of themselves a created essence and a created person are merely susceptible of receiving existence.

6. Those who hold that personality is something negative generally also refuse to admit that in Jesus there is only one existence. Now, as St. Thomas has well shown, the unity of existence follows from the unity of the person. If the humanity of Jesus had its own existence, then it would have in the order of being its ultimate actuality or per-fection independently of the Word, and the hypostatic union would be merely an accidental union, so it seems. There is in this view the danger of unconsciously returning to Nestorianism, which held that there were in Christ two accidentally united persons.

For these various reasons most theologians admit that personality consists in something positive. But there remains some divergence of opinion among them.

Some theologians hold that personality is a substantial mode which presupposes existence. The reason for this view is that they, like those mentioned above, make no real distinction (that is, no distinc-tion prior to the consideration of our mind) between created essence and existence. As a result, the substantial mode which constitutes hu-man personality presupposes not only human essence or nature, but the existence which is identified with the essence.

The Thomists answer this objection as they did the preceding opinion: Before the consideration of our mind the humanity in us is not existence, for God alone is His existence. Hence the distinction between the created essence and existence does not follow the con-sideration of our mind, but on the contrary precedes it. That is to say, it is a real distinction. Indeed it is not a spatial distinction of things which can be separated one from the other. Yet it is a distinction which is real, infinitesimal as it may appear, for it is anterior to the consideration of our mind. The so-called distinction of reason follows the consideration of our mind. And there is no middle

ground between the real distinction and the distinction of reason, for a distinction either does or does not precede the consideration of our mind.

Thus personality does not presuppose existence, but the opposite is true, as St. Thomas says: “Being is consequent upon person, . . . as upon that which has being.” Existence is attributed to it as to a primary subject of attribution, which is itself not attributable to any other.

In addition, since existence is in all things the ultimate actuality or perfection in the order of being, all that happens to a substance already endowed with its own existence happens to it accidentally. Hence, if Jesus’ humanity were to have its own existence, the sub-stantial mode subsequent to existence (spoken of by the second group of theologians) would be only accidentally fitting to it. Thereupon the hypostatic union would become accidental, bringing us unwittingly back toward Nestorianism.

A third opinion holds, in opposition to the two preceding ones, that personality is indeed something positive that does not presuppose existence but is identified with existence, which in turn is distinct from the created essence. Thus Peter’s personality would be identified with his created existence, and the personality of Jesus with the uncreated existence of the Word.

Although this opinion is very similar to the doctrine of St. Thomas, it still differs from it on a significant point. St. Thomas wrote: “Esse non est de ratione suppositi.” On the contrary, personality is what formally constitutes the person.

He also wrote: “Being is consequent upon nature, not as upon that which has being, but as upon that whereby a thing is: whereas it is consequent upon person or hypostasis, as upon that which has being.” Being is consequent upon nature, by reason of which Peter is a man; and it is consequent upon the person of Peter, which exists.

Thus if, according to St. Thomas, existence follows the person, it does not formally constitute the person.

It is even absolutely impossible for existence, which is a contingent attribute of every created person, to formally constitute the latter as a primary subject of attribution. That would amount to saying that the personality of Peter is his existence. Now, God alone is His existence. As the Thomists say: “Persona Petri (imo personalitas Petri, qua formaliter constituitur ejus persona) non est suum esse.”

Prior to the consideration of our mind, this proposition is true: “Peter is not his own existence.” “Only God is His own existence.” St. Thomas says: “An angel is composed of esse and quod est.” “Quod est” is the person who exists. There is a real distinction not only between created essence and existence, but between the created person (understood to be fully constituted by its personality) and existence.

Likewise the identification of created personality with existence leads to the denial of the real distinction between created essence and existence, a distinction which is none the less maintained by the parti-sans of this opinion and which is also a fundamental doctrine of Thomism.

It may be objected: But Peter is not his humanity either, and yet he is not really distinct from it. Why then, since he is not his existence, would he be really distinct from his humanity?

We answer: Peter is really distinct from his humanity, just as the whole is distinct from its essential part, and he is all the more distinct from his existence, which is in him not an essential part but a con-tingent attribute.

Prior to any consideration of our mind, the following propositions are true: Peter is not his human nature. Peter is not his existence. In fact, Peter is not his human nature, for it is only the essential part of all that he is. The part, even the essential part, is not the whole. Therefore it is false to say: Peter is his nature. The verb “to be” expresses the real identity of the subject and the attribute, and even the essential part is not really identical with the whole.

Furthermore, Peter is not his existence either, for his existence is for him only a contingent attribute. In fact, Peter could very well not exist. Existence is in him neither an essential attribute nor what formally constitutes his person, since his person is merely susceptible of existing. In all created persons existence is a contingent attribute which, because it is a contingent attribute, cannot formally constitute the person as a primary subject of attribution.

In addition, as St. Thomas says, in God there are three personalities and only one existence: “The three persons have merely one being.” Thus the divine persons are not formally constituted by existence; hence they would not be analogically similar to human personality if the latter were formally constituted by existence.

If then personality is (1) something positive, (2) which does not presuppose existence, and (3) is not identical with existence, what is it?

The answer is, as the Thomists teach in general and as Cajetan teaches in particular: Personality, according to natural reason or to common sense, is in every reasonable being that by which he is the primary subject of attribution of individuated reasonable nature, of existence, of accidents.

In other words, personality is required in him to safeguard the real identity affirmed by all of the following propositions: Peter is a man, Peter is existent, Peter is good, that is, Peter is the same being or subject who is a man, who is existent, who is good. Beneath the variety of essential and contingent qualities that are attributed to him, there must be in him something real, positive, identical, which is not any of the parts attributed to him and which formally constitutes him as the primary subject of attribution or as the whole. Thus what formally constitutes personality cannot be either individuated nature or existence or consciousness or liberty. It is what constitutes the primary subject of attribution as subject (suppositum). In Latin it is called “subsistentia,” and with respect to beings endowed with reason, “personalitas.”

This conception which seems too abstract and too subtle for some minds is merely, as Cajetan remarks, the simple explanation of what natural and common sense tell us. This is of major importance.

That by which every reasonable being is the primary subject of attribution is manifestly of the substantial order and not of the ac-cidental order. It is the term in which are united individuated nature, existence, the operations attributed to the person, as parts of the same entity. Thus, by analogy, the top of a pyramid is the term and the culminating point of the lines which converge toward it. This is in reality quite mysterious for us, for we do not have an immediate intel-lectual intuition of it, as do the angels. Our knowledge rises only with difficulty from the sensible to the intelligible. Yet what is here af-firmed is not any more mysterious than what is commonly affirmed with regard to continuity. As St. Thomas remarks: “If the humanity of Christ were separated from the Word, it would become a distinct person, just as when one separates two parts of a continuous line, each of the two becomes a whole.” What is here affirmed is not any more surprising than the commonly accepted fact that the division of a ringed animal like the worm produces two animals instead of one. The division creates a term that did not previously exist. Thus, any continuum is divisible ad infinitum, without ever being infinitely divided; for it is

composed of infinitely divisible parts. (Cf. Aristotle, Physica, Bk. III, chap. 1.)

It follows from this that the humanity of Christ, which is completed by the untreated personality of the Word, is not a human person. For it is not a primary subject of attribution. When Jesus says, “I am the way, the truth, and the life,” He attributes to Himself, to the same self, the properties of human nature (I who speak to you) and those of divine nature (I am the truth and the life). That is why St. Thomas says in substance: “Temporal nativity would cause a real temporal filiation in Christ if there were in Him a subject capable of such filiation.” He also writes: “If the human nature had not been assumed by a divine person, the human nature would have had its own personality; . . . the divine person by His union hindered the human nature from having its personality.” “Si praeestitisset (personalitas humana) . . . , desiisset per corruptionem.”

Thus, according to St. Thomas, the humanity of Christ does not have its own personality as it would have had if it had not been personally united to the Word. But it does not follow at all that there is something lacking to Christ’s humanity, for, as St. Thomas says, it is much nobler to exist in the Word than to exist in oneself.

On the basis of this notion of personality, the truth of the follow-ing propositions is proved: Peter is a man, but he is not his humanity, which is the essential part of him; Peter exists, but he is not his existence, which is in him only a contingent attribute.

From this we can also see why there is in Jesus only one personality, only one primary subject of attribution, to which both human nature and divine nature are fitting, as well as both human liberty and divine liberty. There is in Him therefore only one existence, for existence follows the person, which is the subject that exists. The unity of the person thus entails unity of existence.

Finally, the hypostatic union is not accidental, it is substantial, in-asmuch as the two natures belong to the same person and exist by the same existence. In this manner is maintained the profound meaning of Jesus’ affirmation: “I am the way, the truth, and the life.”

VIII

THE FITTINGNESS OF THE INCARNATION AND OUR INTERIOR LIFE

"Come to Me, all you that labor, and are burdened, and I will refresh you." Matt. 11:28

HAVING considered the fittingness of the Incarnation from the point of view of God, who is inclined to give Himself as much as possible to man, and from the point of view of man, who is disposed to become as united as possible to God, we must now consider this mystery with reference to the loftiest virtues which are, as it were, the soul of our interior life.

These loftiest of virtues are called the "theological virtues," because they have God as their immediate object and because they unite us to Him. Through faith we adhere to what God has revealed of Himself and of His works. Through hope we tend toward God, sustained by His help, in order some day to possess Him and to see Him face to face. Through charity we supernaturally love God more than ourselves, above all things, because He is infinitely lovable, infinitely better than we are, and because He first loved us as a Father.

Undoubtedly these three virtues are the noblest of all; from above they inspire the moral virtues which bear not on our final end but on the means to attain it. Thus faith must inspire prudence; and our charity, our love of God and of souls, must inspire and also quicken from above the virtues of justice, fortitude, and temperance, by mak-ing them meritorious with respect to eternal life.

If these are the three most exalted virtues that can dwell in a human soul, what is their relationship to the mystery of the Incarnation? For no other divine intervention could more successfully have snatched us away from evil and more powerfully dispose us toward goodness.

Following the thought of St. Augustine, St. Thomas tells us that after man's fall God could have redeemed us by other means than that of the Incarnation. For example, He might have sent a prophet to explain to us the conditions of forgiveness. But then there would not have been perfect reparation for the offense against God caused by mortal sin, which by turning us away from God actually denies or refuses to God the infinite dignity of final end or Sovereign Good. In order to make perfect reparation for this offense, which has a gravity immeasurable as is the person offended, it was necessary that a human soul offer to God an act of love of infinite value. This could be accomplished only by a human soul which belonged to a divine person, who alone is capable of performing acts of truly infinite value.

Thus the Word made flesh can offer to His Father in reparation an act of love of unlimited value, which can please God more than all the combined sins of men displease Him.

That is why the Incarnation was the most fruitful source of grace to redeem us, and at the same time necessary for perfect reparation to God for the offense committed against Him. No divine intervention could so successfully tear us away from evil. Nothing could have cured us so completely of our three wounds—concupiscence of the flesh, concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life—as the sufferings, the poverty, and the humility of our Savior.

At the same time, the mystery has a second aspect which we must insist on particularly because of its bearing on the interior life: The Incarnation, by extricating us from the forces of evil, disposes us powerfully toward goodness. For it offers us the perfect model of all virtues and it increases tenfold, so to speak, our most exalted virtues: faith, hope, and charity.

FAITH INCREASED TENFOLD

First of all, faith is given much greater certainty by the Incarna-tion because of the fact that we believe in God who has come to us in sensible form to speak to us.

The formal motive of faith, as a theological virtue, is the authority of God who reveals the truths we are to believe.

It is because God is infallible and cannot err or lead us into error that the first man after his fall believed the divine promise of a Redeemer, that

Abraham believed that the Messiah would be born of his race, and that the prophets believed that He would come not only for the salvation of Israel but for the salvation of mankind. The au-thority of God, who makes revelations and seals His revelations by miracles, is a motive in itself very firm and infallible. Yet God re-mains hidden, and dwells in an inaccessible light. He remains in-visible even when He speaks through prophets like Moses, Elias, or Isaias, even when He confirms their preaching by extraordinary mir-acles.

Very much more certain does our faith become when God comes to us and, taking a body and human lips like our own, speaks to us Himself through the medium of the senses yet in a tone and with an authority which can belong only to God! How much is our faith reinforced when the Word of God is made flesh and comes to tell us: “Amen, amen I say unto you: He that believeth in Me, hath ever-lasting life”; or again: “I am one that give testimony of Myself,” for I am light itself, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.”

None of the prophets could speak in these terms. They were able to say: “I have received the truth,” but not one of them could affirm: “I am the truth and the life.”

Jesus Christ, our Savior, is Himself the prime truth, both revealing and revealed. That is why, as St. Augustine says, He can bear witness to Himself and to the other mysteries, just as light manifests itself by manifesting colors and all that it illuminates.

Primary revealing truth, the formal motive of our faith, in other words, the authority of God the Revealer, is manifested palpably, so to speak, in Christ and in His sublime manner of teaching.

True, we do not see Christ’s divinity here below, either with the eyes of our body or with those of the mind, but Jesus speaks with such great authority when He says: “Amen, amen I say to you, before Abraham was made, I am,” that there can be no doubt He is the living God become palpable who now speaks to us in order to increase our faith tenfold. In fact, the messengers of the Pharisees could not help saying: “Never did man speak like this man.” The Samaritans also said to the woman whom our Lord had converted and who had called them to hear the Messiah: “Now we believe not because of what you have told us but because we have heard Him ourselves and we know that He is really the Savior of the world.”

If the tone of the Curé of Ars' voice betrayed his holiness when he preached, how much more must the tone, the authority, and the magnetism of our Lord Jesus Christ have bespoken His holiness! That is why from the time of His first Sermon on the Mount, "the people were in admiration at His doctrine. For He was teaching them as one having power, and not as the scribes and Pharisees," who commented on the scriptural texts without making them live. The simple in heart have an understanding of the greatness of things. They recognized our Lord's greatness from the moment of His first sermon. The fact that the populace afterward condemned Him resulted from their having been misled by perverse men.

What a privilege to have heard even for an instant the Word made flesh preach and to have received directly from His lips His doctrine in all its vigor, simplicity, and grandeur!

St. John has written in his Gospel: "No man hath seen God at any time: the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." Again, in his First Epistle he said: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life: . . . that which we have seen and have heard, we declare unto you."

Our faith is thus supremely confirmed by this highest testimony, which has been made palpable, so to speak, by the Incarnation. Thus St. Paul could write to the Hebrews the following words in order to confirm them in their faith: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, last of all, in these days hath spoken to us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the world."

Let us suppose for a moment that the Incarnation had not taken place and that the loftiest teaching was that of the prophets, of Elias or Isaias. How much diminished would our faith be, how meager the history of humanity, by comparison with what they are in reality! The very greatness of the prophets would vanish, for they were great only inasmuch as they were the precursors of our Lord Jesus Christ. "Those who have ears to hear" cannot be mistaken as to the tone of the Savior's voice nor as to the sublimity of His doctrine. Despite trials, obscurity, temptations, let us believe in the word of Jesus, let us keep it in our hearts, and let us live by it in the spirit of faith. "The just man liveth by faith."

The Incarnation not only confirms our faith; it also greatly arouses our hope.

Through this theological virtue we desire and await the Supreme Good, and we tend toward it supported by the divine assistance prom-ised by God to those who believe. The prime object of hope is a future good and one that is difficult to attain, the Supreme Good which we are to enjoy for all eternity. The formal motive of hope is divine assistance, or, better still, it is God Himself infinitely willing to help us, Deus auxilians. He is infinitely willing to help because He is infinitely merciful and all-powerful, and because He has promised to help us to achieve the summit of our destiny. God is true to His promises. This is one of His most beautiful titles: “The Lord is faithful in all His words.”

St. Paul was fond of repeating this thought. Anyone who despairs doubts the infinite mercy of the One who is Goodness itself. Judas’ greatest sin, after he had been unfaithful, was to doubt the fidelity of God, who has promised His help to the greatest sinners if they asked it of Him.

Yet, although hope is entirely consonant with the deepest aspirations of our hearts, there is in us, alas, an inclination toward discour-agement, especially after we have for many years been bruised by the battles and hardships of life.

Now the mystery of the Incarnation is calculated to revive our confidence, for it brings us not only the divine assistance of grace, but the Author of grace Himself. It is God infinitely willing to help us who was given to us at Bethlehem, Deus auxilians. He is the formal motive or the reason for our hope, and He remains with us in the Eucharist.

Our confidence is increased because God, by coming to us in per-son, gives a palpable manifestation of His infinite goodness. We tend to have greatest confidence in our friends and in the measure that they prove to us that they have a genuine and deep affection for us. But Jesus is God infinitely willing to help, Deus auxiliator, who never tires of telling us of His merciful love.

He says to all men: “Come to Me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you” (Matt. 11:28). The One who speaks thus is the Author of salvation, as the liturgy tells us: “God, the bestower of pardon and the author of human salvation, we im-plore Thy clemency. . . .”

To the paralytic who thought only of his bodily cure, Jesus said: “Thy sins are forgiven thee”; that is to say, I am curing your spirit-ual and immortal soul, which is much more precious than your body that is destined to return to dust. And as a sign of the spiritual cure of the soul, Jesus cured this poor man of his paralysis. This miracle was but a sign of something incomparably more wonderful: the resurrection of the soul to the essentially supernatural life of grace.

St. Paul wrote to the Romans in order to confirm their hope: “If God be for us, who is against us? He that spared not even His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how hath He not also, with Him, given us all things?” These words must have strengthened the Christians in the catacombs during the three centuries of persecution. St. Paul added: “Who shall accuse against the elect of God? God that justifieth. Who is he that shall condemn? Christ Jesus that died, yea that is risen also again; who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation? or distress? or famine? or nakedness? or danger? or persecution? or the sword? (As it is written: For Thy sake we are put to death all the day long. We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.)”

All these things were fulfilled to the letter in Rome during the ten general persecutions which the Roman emperors inflicted upon the Christians from the days of Nero to those of Diocletian. And the following words of St. Paul were also fulfilled in their entirety: “But in all these things we overcome, because of Him that hath loved us.” We overcome in the sense of making the life of grace shine upon and illumine even our adversaries through our love for them. “For I am sure,” St. Paul went on to say, “that neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities nor powers nor things present nor things to come nor might nor height nor depth nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

That is to say, no created power whatever can separate us from the love that Christ has for us and that enkindles in us a reciprocating love. No created or creatable power can cause God to abandon the just, those who have been justified by the blood of His Son, unless they themselves abandon Him first. The Colosseum of Rome is a reminder to each succeeding generation of the victory of Christ’s love over the blind fury of His persecutors. The imposing ruins of this amphitheater built by Vespasian

and Titus bear enduring witness to the hope and the fortitude of the martyrs who were sustained by the promises and the love of the Word made flesh.

Through all their tortures they remained faithful by the efficacy of the grace of Christ. As St. Paul says, they overcame “because of Him that hath loved us.” The formal motive of our hope is not our own personal effort, by which we cooperate with divine assistance. The formal motive of our hope is God Himself, infinitely willing to help, Deus auxilians, God Himself who through the Incarnation is with us and remains with us in the Eucharist as the daily nourishment of our souls. It is thus that our confidence in God is greatly strengthened by the Incarnation. The Word did not become incarnate without good reason. It was not for material progress or the advancement of science, but for the sanctification of our souls, and we, too, should ardently yearn for this sanctification.

MORE ARDENT CHARITY

Finally, this mystery of our faith should enflame to the highest pitch our charity, our love of God and of souls. As St. Augustine says in words that theologians will repeat until the end of time: “For what principal reason did the Word become Incarnate, if not to manifest His love for us? . . . Since we cannot love Him [first], let us at least learn to give Him love for love.”

Through infused charity which we receive in baptism we are called on to love God supernaturally more than ourselves. We are called on to love Him as our great friend who loved us first and who is infinitely better in Himself than all His blessings taken together. To love Him thus is to desire efficaciously the accomplishment of His holy will as expressed in His commandments; that is, we must desire that He should truly and completely reign in our souls and that He be glorified by us eternally in the words of psalm 112:1 : “Praise the Lord, ye children: praise ye the name of the Lord.”

Thus charity is superior to hope. Through hope we desire to possess God, ultimately for God who is the final end of our hope as of all the virtues. Through charity we efficaciously love God, our best friend, formally for Himself alone; and we love Him more than ourselves, desiring for Him all the blessings that are fitting for Him; that His kingdom come and that His goodness be manifested in what we call divine glory. To love God is to conform our entire life to these words of the Our Father: “Thy will be

done”: Thy will, as expressed in Thy commandments, be done on earth as it is in heaven. To love God is also to say to Him with trusting abandonment: “Into Thy hands I commend my spirit,” I offer Thee the marrow of my will, do with it whatever Thou please.

Through charity, by efficaciously loving God more than ourselves, we generally love all His eternal decrees, ordered toward the mani-festation of His goodness. So God, the infinitely Good, becomes for us another self, who is in a sense more truly we than we are ourselves. For He possesses within Himself all the good that can exist in each one of us. In this sense God contains more of me than I do, for He is what I am in an eminent degree.

This divine goodness, the formal object of charity, has been mani-fested to us by the supreme love through which God has given us His only Son: “God so loved the world, as to give His only-begotten Son.” We can even say that this is the fundamental truth of Chris-tianity, for it was this act of God’s love for us which gave us our Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior.

St. John tells us this in his First Epistle: “By this hath the charity of God appeared toward us, because God hath sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we may live by Him. In this is charity: not as though we had loved God, but because He hath first loved us, and sent His Son to be a propitiation for our sins. My dearest, if God hath so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”

St. Paul writes in the same vein to Titus: “For the grace of God our Savior hath appeared to all men; instructing us, that, denying ungodliness and worldly desires, we should live soberly and justly and godly in this world, looking for the blessed hope and coming of the glory of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.”

The incarnation of the Word thus greatly strengthens our faith, our hope, and our charity. It gives us the example of all the virtues, and particularly it is the principle of an act of love infinite in value rising upward within the soul of Jesus, a redemptive act of love which is more pleasing to God than all the sins in the world can displease Him.

Let us give thanks to God for this blessing of the redemptive In-carnation which to some extent makes palpable for us primary revealing Truth, merciful Omnipotence, and supreme Goodness; and which never ceases to pour out to us, especially through the Eucharist, all the graces that we need in our indigence. These three divine perfections, which are the formal

motive of the three theological virtues, are for us like three stars of the first magnitude, three lamps of fire, St. John of the Cross tells us, which guide us through the night on our pilgrimage toward the light of eternity.

We can indeed say with St. Paul in profound gratitude: “God (who is rich in mercy) for His exceeding charity wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together in Christ (by whose grace you are saved).” This grace is the seed of glory. Let us pray that we may persevere in it and through it, so that it may truly be within us “the beginning of eternal life.”

IX

THE MOTIVE OF THE INCARNATION AND THE INTIMATE LIFE OF JESUS

> "I believe in God . . . the Son . . . who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven."
>
> Nicene Creed

ONE of the considerations which can help us penetrate deeply into the intimate life of Jesus is the motive of the Incarnation, the motive of His coming into the world, which must always have been present in His mind as the purpose of His earthly life. We should like to call attention, as St. Thomas himself has done, to the three following points: 1. The motive of the Incarnation was a motive of mercy. 2. The Word, in becoming incarnate to redeem us, did not in any sense subordinate Himself to us but on the contrary re-established the primitive order on an infinitely loftier level. 3. In His intimate life Jesus is first of all Savior, priest, and victim.

THE MOTIVE OF THE INCARNATION, A MOTIVE OF MERCY

The opinion is held by some that in the actual plan of Providence, the Word would have become incarnate even if man had not sinned. Christ would then have come not as a Savior and victim, but as the head of the kingdom of God and as the supreme doctor, in order to give greater glory to God and thus to crown creation. He would have come with an immortal body, not subject to pain. But, champions of this opinion maintain, sin having supervened, Christ came in mortal flesh, in carne passibili, as Savior and victim for our salvation.

According to this opinion, it is accidentally, so to speak, that in the actual plan of Providence Jesus is Savior and victim. He is first of all the King of

kings, the head of the kingdom of God.

St. Thomas has weighed the value of this opinion, which had already been expressed in his own time, and he writes with regard to this subject: “There are different opinions about this question. For some say that even if man had not sinned, the Son of man would have become incarnate. Others assert the contrary, and seemingly our assent ought rather to be given to this opinion. For such things as spring from God’s will, and beyond the creature’s due, can be made known to us only through being revealed in the Sacred Scripture, in which the divine will is made known to us. Hence, since everywhere in the Sacred Scripture the sin of the first man is assigned as the reason of the Incarnation, it is more in accordance with this to say that the work of the Incarnation was ordained by God as a remedy for sin; so that, had sin not existed, the Incarnation would not have been. And yet the power of God is not limited to this; even had sin not existed, God could have become incarnate.”

In other words, according to St. Thomas, Thomists in general, and many other ancient and modern theologians, the motive of the In-carnation was above all a motive of mercy, to liberate fallen humanity from its misery. From this point of view Jesus is first of all Savior and Victim rather than King, and therein lies the primordial trait of His spiritual physiognomy.

This interpretation is based on many passages of Scripture and on some very weighty testimony of tradition. Both Daniel and Zacharias declared that the Messiah would come “that sin may have an end, and iniquity may be abolished.” Jesus Himself said: “The Son of man is come is seek and to save that which was lost.” Likewise, in St. John He said: “God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting. For God sent not His Son into the world, to judge the world, but that the world may be saved by Him.”

St. Paul wrote: “Christ Jesus came into this world to save sinners.” To this St. John added in his First Epistle: “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.” And “If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the just: and He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.” Finally, “God . . . hath first loved us, and sent His Son to be a propitiation for our sins.”

Moreover, the name “Jesus” does not mean King or Doctor, but Savior, and the names God gives always express the primordial trait of the spiritual

physiognomy of those who receive these names. The angel Gabriel, sent by God, said to Mary: “Behold thou . . . shalt bring forth a son; and thou shalt call His name Jesus.” To Joseph the angel said: “Thou shalt call His name Jesus. For He shall save His people from their sins.” Thus the motive of the Incarnation is that reason for which it was necessary: to save us through perfect reparation for offense against God by means of an act of reparative love which would be more pleasing to God than He is displeased by all the sins of the world, and which would be an infinite source of grace for us.

Tradition is no less affirmative than is Scripture, as we can see in the Nicene Creed: “I believe . . . in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God. . . . Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven.” This is the meaning of the entire liturgy of Advent and of the Nativity, which for many centuries has prepared the faithful for the celebration of the birth of the Savior.

The Fathers of the Church also teach in general that according to the actual plan of Providence the Word would not have become incarnate if men had not been in need of redemption. This is the doctrine in particular of St. Irenaeus, St. Athanasius, St. Gregory Nazianzen, St. John Chrysostom who was the greatest of the Greek Fathers, and St. Augustine, the most illustrious of the Fathers of the Latin Church.

St. John Chrysostom says explicitly: “There is no other cause for the Incarnation than this: God saw us fallen, abject, oppressed by the tyranny of death, and He had mercy.” St. Augustine likewise says: “If man had not fallen, the Son of man would not have come.” The motive of the Incarnation was a motive of mercy. This is repeated by St. Thomas, all the Thomists, and many other theologians.

The Thomists in particular add this reason: Once God has deter-mined the plan of Providence, He does not modify it because of some unforeseen accident. He has foreseen all things. No good can occur unless He has willed it, and no evil unless He has permitted it for a greater good. Therefore, it cannot be said that God modified His actual plan as the result of the sin of the first man. The efficacious divine decree on the world extended from the start to everything that was to happen, in a positive manner with respect to the good and in a permissive manner with respect to evil. Now, in actuality the Word came in flesh that was mortal and subject to suffering, which fact, as universally admitted, presupposes sin. Therefore, by virtue of the primitive decree, the Word would not have

become incarnate if man had not sinned. This is, as we have seen, what the Scriptures and tradition tell us dearly. In other words, the motive of the Incarnation has been a motive of mercy. As our Lord told us Himself: “The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” There is much consolation for us in this fact. For even the greatest sinners who cry out to the Savior are saved.

GOD HAS PERMITTED EVIL, MAN’S SIN, ONLY IN VIEW OF A GREATER GOOD

There is another aspect of this mystery which makes it possible to answer the sometimes agonizing question that is called the problem of evil. Why did God permit evil, especially moral evil, the sin of the first man, foreseeing as He did that it would spread to all men, who would because of it be deprived of grace and of the privileges of the state of innocence?

St. Thomas presents very well this second aspect of the mystery, which some of his commentators have neglected but which happily others have emphasized. He says: “There is nothing to prevent human nature from having been raised after sin to a level above its original state. For God permits evil only in view of a greater good. This is why St. Paul wrote to the Romans, 5:20: ‘Where sin abounded, grace did more abound.’ And the Church sings during the benediction of the paschal candle: `O happy fault, that merited so great a Redeemer!’ “

It is indeed clear that God cannot permit evil, especially sin, except in view of a greater good. Otherwise the divine permission which allows sin to occur would not be holy. It would be impossible to say a priori for what great good God permitted the sin of the first man. But after the fact of the Incarnation we can and we must say with St. Paul: God has permitted sin to abound only so that grace might more abound in the person of our Savior and through Him in us.

Thus, when the Word became incarnate to redeem us He did not subordinate Himself to us in any way whatever (He remains infinitely superior to us, and the Incarnation is of greater value than our redemption); but He stooped down toward us to raise us up to Him-self. For it is the nature of mercy to incline the superior person toward the inferior one, not to subordinate the former to the latter but to elevate the inferior person. In this way, when the Word became incarnate He bent down in order to restore the primitive order, the original harmony, and even to raise this primitive order

far above its original level by uniting Himself personally to human nature and thus manifesting to us in the most perfect manner possible His omnipotence and His goodness.

God permits evil only for a greater good, and He would not have permitted the immense evil which is original sin if He did not have in view the greater good which is the redemptive Incarnation. Thus it is that divine mercy, far from subordinating to us the Word made incarnate for us, is the highest manifestation of the power and good-ness of God. It sings the glory of God more loudly than all the stars in the firmament.

The Word made flesh, our Savior, is infinitely greater than the first innocent man. Making necessary allowances, Mary is also in-comparably superior to Eve. And when Mass is celebrated in the poorest village church, a worship is offered to God which is infinitely superior to that offered to Him by the first innocent man in the Garden of Eden.

THE PRIMORDIAL TRAIT OF THE SPIRITUAL: PHYSIOGNOMY OF JESUS

It follows that it was not accidentally that Christ is Savior, priest, and victim. This is the chief aspect of His life. He is not first of all a king and a sublime doctor who became accidentally, because of man's sin, a victim and the savior of humanity. As His name "Jesus" signifies, He is first of all the Savior, and His entire life was ordered to His heroic death on the Cross, through which He accomplished His mission and His destiny as Redeemer. The motive of the Incarnation was our redemption by the heroic act of love on Calvary. The stigmatics like St. Francis must have penetrated very deeply into this truth.

As a result, Christ appears greater and the unity of His life much more profound. His life was ordered completely toward the act of love by which, in offering Himself up on the cross, He conquered sin, Satan, and death, an act of love which is more pleasing to God than He is displeased by all the sins of men.

This is what St. Thomas says: "God loves Jesus Christ not only more than the entire human race but also more than all creatures taken as a whole. For He willed for Him a greater good by giving Him a name above all other names. He willed that He be truly God. This supreme excellence of Christ has not been diminished by the fact that His Father delivered Him up to death for our salvation. On the contrary, Christ thus became the glorious

victor (over sin, Satan, and death), ‘the government is upon His shoulder’ “ (Isa. 9:6).

Now we can understand why the thought of the redemption by the Cross, together with the thought of the glory of God, were uppermost in the mind of our Lord when He came into the world and remained so throughout His life. As St. Paul says: “Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith: Sacrifice and oblation Thou wouldest not: but a body Thou hast fitted to Me. . . . Then said I: Behold I come . . . that I should do Thy will, O God.”

This oblation was ever living in His heart. It was the soul, as it were, of His preaching and of His sacrifice. The first three Gospels report that Jesus said: “The Son of man is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a redemption for many.”

In one of His most beautiful parables, the parable of the Good Shepherd, He said: “I am the Good Shepherd. The good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep. . . . Therefore doth the Father love Me: because I lay down My life, that I may take it again. No man taketh it away from Me. But I lay it down of Myself.”

Again He said: “I am come to cast fire on the earth: and what will I, but that it be kindled? And I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptized: and how am I straitened until it be accomplished?” He was speaking of the baptism of blood, the most perfect of all.

He expressed the purpose of His mission in still different words: “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself. (Now this He said, signifying what death He should die.)”

This thought was continually in our Savior’s mind when He was training the apostles, when, for instance, He told Peter that he could not bear to hear of the coming Passion: “Thou savorest not the things that are of God, but the things that are of men.” Likewise, when He said to the sons of Zebedee: “Can you drink of the chalice that I drink of: or be baptized with the baptism wherewith I am baptized?” This was His underlying thought also at the Last Supper, at the moment when He instituted the Eucharist: “This is My body, which is given for you. . . . This is the chalice, the new testament in My blood, which shall be shed for you.” “Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”

Finally, Jesus on several occasions spoke of the hour of His passion as “His hour,” for it is the hour above all others to which His whole earthly life was dedicated.

Jesus is above all else Savior, priest, and victim. This is the primor-dial trait of His spiritual physiognomy, the fundamental character of His interior life. What are the consequences of this for us?

It follows that in the actual plan of Providence, it is not by accident that souls must, in order to be sanctified, carry their crosses in union with the Savior. He Himself has told us so: “And He said to all: If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. . . . For he that shall lose his life for My sake, shall save it.” This was magnificently fulfilled by the martyrs who, by uniting their sufferings to those of the Savior, in turn saved souls, sometimes even the souls of their persecutors.

It follows also that in order to be a saint, and even a great saint, it is not necessary to be a doctor or a man of action. It is enough to be genuinely configured to the crucified Christ, as was St. Benedict Joseph Labre who could call his own only his poverty and his heroi-cally supported pain, and who appeared to be the living image of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Finally, it follows (as St. Thomas explains with great profundity in speaking of the effects of baptism) that while the sanctifying grace which the first man in the state of innocence possessed is a participation in divine nature and makes us children of God, the specifically Christian grace which was communicated to us after the fall by Christ the Redeemer makes us “living members of Christ.” That is why Christian grace as such inspires us to suffer following the example of Jesus in order to expiate, to make reparation for the out-rages committed against God, in order to collaborate for our salvation and that of our neighbors, just as the members of a single body must help one another.

That is why no Christian idea can win acceptance, and no Christian work can persevere, until it has passed through trials and tribulations. “Unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, itself remaineth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.”

This is how Christians are profoundly configured to their head, who said concerning Himself to His disciples of Emmaus, although they did not yet understand it: “Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into His glory?” Isaias had announced it in his prophecy of the Passion. It is required every day in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and it will be repeated until the end of the world.

X

THE PREDESTINATION OF CHRIST

THE light that illumines from above the whole life of a saint is his predestination, that is, the act of intelligence and love by which God has from all eternity ordered or destined him to a given degree of glory and has decided to grant him for the attainment of this glory all the graces he will need, from the very first to that of final perseverance. Through many bitter trials perhaps, the servant of God will with the help of these graces merit the beatitude of eternal life, to which he has been predestined from all eternity.

As for children who die after baptism without having had time to merit, they have been predestined to glory without having to strive for its attainment.

What is true of all the elect, angels and men, adults and children, is that they have been predestined to glory, i.e., eternal life.

THE EXCEPTIONAL NATURE OF CHRIST'S PREDESTINATION

The predestination of Christ, the first among predestined souls, is absolutely exceptional. His is not only the predestination to glory or eternal life. His is predestination to the unique grace of personal union with the Word, a grace that is incomparably superior to that possessed in heaven by all the angels and saints.

As man, Christ was predestined to become not the son of God by adoption but the Son of God by nature.

St. Paul wrote to the Romans: "For whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son; that He might be the first-born among many brethren." Jesus is thus the first of the predestined souls. From all eternity God has willed Him to be His Son by

nature, and He has desired to make of the elect, angels and men, His sons by adoption. The first-mentioned sonship vastly surpasses the latter.

In the Epistle to the Colossians, we read: “Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature: for in Him were all things created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible. . . . He is before all, and by Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the Church, who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things He may hold the primacy.”

It was first of all to divine sonship by nature that Jesus as man was predestined, and all the gifts that He received derived from this first one, which is the noblest of all. It is from this sonship by nature that springs the beatitude of His saintly soul, the light of glory that permits Him to see the divine essence with a penetration which is superior to that of all the blessed. Not only does Jesus see God face to face as do all the saints in heaven, but He Himself is God. And it is certainly much greater to be God than to see Him.

CHRIST’S PREDESTINATION, THE CAUSE OF OUR OWN

It follows that Christ’s predestination is the supreme model of our own, as our divine sonship by adoption is a participating likeness of the divine sonship by nature. In this sense, as St. Paul says, we have been “predestinated to be made conformable to the image of” God’s only-begotten Son. But we receive only a participation in the divine nature, sanctifying grace, whereas the only-begotten Son of the Father has received from Him divine nature in its entirety by eternal generation. He is “God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God,” as is said in the Nicene Creed. He is the Word of God made flesh, and, being the Son of God by nature, He cannot become His son by adoption and by participation. For a father does not adopt someone who is already his own child.

Lastly, in predestining the elect from all eternity, God decided that Christ the Redeemer would be the cause of their salvation, and that He would merit for them all the effects of predestination: grace, final perseverance, and eternal life. This is brought out in all the texts of Scripture in which Jesus is called “Savior,” “author of salvation.” For instance: “He that believeth in the Son, hath life everlasting”; “I am come that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly”; “My sheep hear My voice: and I

know them, and they follow Me. And I give them life everlasting; and they shall not perish forever, and no man shall pluck them out of My hand. That which My Father hath given Me, is greater than all: and no one can snatch them out of the hand of My Father. I and the Father are one."

As God, Jesus predestines the elect. As man, He has merited for the elect all the effects of predestination: habitual grace, actual graces, final perseverance, and glory. Thus all the elect are subordinated to Him, according to the words of St. Paul: "All are yours; and you are Christ's; and Christ is God's."

This gives us an insight into the grandeur of the prologue to the Epistle to the Ephesians: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with spiritual blessings in heavenly places, in Christ: as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and unspotted in His sight in charity. Who hath predestinated us unto the adoption of children through Jesus Christ unto Himself: according to the purpose of His will: unto the praise of the glory of His grace, in which He hath graced us in His beloved Son. In whom we have redemption through His blood, the remission of sins, according to the riches of His grace, which hath superabounded in us in all wisdom and prudence. . . . In whom [Jesus Christ] we also are called by lot, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things according to the counsel of His will; that we may be unto the praise of His glory, we who before hoped in Christ."

This lofty doctrine of the predestination of Christ throws light on the predestination of Mary to be the Mother of God. The predestina-tion of Christ, as man, to be the Son of God by nature is in fact identical with the eternal decree of the Incarnation. Now this decree bears upon this fact as it was to be realized hic et nunc, in certain given circumstances. And therefore it includes not only Jesus, but Mary as well. From all eternity it had been decided that the Word of God made flesh would be born miraculously of Mary ever virgin, united to Joseph the just by the bonds of a genuine marriage. The execution of this providential decree was expressed thus by St. Luke: "The angel Gabriel was sent from God into a city of Galilee, called Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel being come in, said unto her: . . . the Most High shall overshadow

thee. And therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."

We see therefore that Mary's predestination is intimately bound up with that of Jesus, and since our Lord is not the adopted son of the Most High, since He is His Son by nature, Mary is, in the order of dignity, the first adopted daughter of God, far higher than the angels through the degree of grace she received at the moment of the Immaculate Conception, in view of her unique mission as Mother of God and Mother of men. Her predestination is all of a piece, so to speak, with that of her Son, as are their lives here on earth and in heaven.

XI

THE SANCTITY OF JESUS

Innate, Substantial, Uncreated Sanctity

and the Fullness of Created Grace

"And we saw His glory, the glory as it were of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

John 1:14.

HAVING considered the motive of the Incarnation, which is our salvation, we must, in order to penetrate deeper into the intimate life of our Savior, consider His sanctity. This will help us to understand ever better the meaning of these words of St. Paul: "Where sin abounded, grace did more abound." Jesus is infinitely more perfect that Adam was in his innocence; and while there are obstacles to grace since the fall which did not exist in man's innocent state, yet the grace which comes to us from Jesus is more abundant, if we do not resist it, than that which the innocent Adam would have transmitted to us. The grace we receive through Jesus introduces saints into a more profound intimacy with God, the intimacy of the Eucharistic Communion, which did not exist in the earthly paradise.

Let us therefore consider the radical perfection of Jesus which permeates His entire soul and which shines forth in all His faculties and virtues. We refer to His sanctity and to the fullness of grace that He has received.

As St. Thomas shows holiness in general has two essential characteristics: first, absence of all stain, of all sin, and of all directly or indirectly voluntary imperfection; and second, a firm union with God, The latter is, in fact, the principal trait of sanctity, from which the former derives. For it is in the measure that one is firmly united to God that one avoids directly or indirectly voluntary sin, sins of commission as well as sins of omission or negligence. These two aspects of supernatural perfection

have often been expressed as follows: Sanctity is separation from all that is impure, from all that is earthly in the pejorative sense of the word, and it is also the immutable and fundamental consecration of the soul to God. This separation and this consecration are perfected in heaven, but they exist to a lesser degree here below, sometimes even in children who have the sanctity of their age, such as St. Tarcisius and Blessed Imelda.

But where shall we find here below perfect sanctity? A Greek philosopher once asked: “Where shall we find the ideal man?” We have the answer in the life and death of Jesus.

Let us contemplate these two aspects of sanctity as they exist in Jesus. Whereas in us, who come from below, a progressive separation from the world leads to union with God, in Jesus, who comes from above, it is the personal union of His humanity to the Word which leads to a separation of all that is impure or even merely less perfect.

The better to understand this radical perfection of the Savior, let us progressively rise from our earthy regions toward those where He dwells. Let us first inquire what the absence of sin and of imperfection means with relation to Him. We shall then be better able to grasp the most positive characteristic of His sanctity and its uniqueness.

JESUS WAS WITHOUT SIN

Unbelievers are forced to admit on the basis of the history of Christ’s life that no man as perfect as He ever walked the earth. Even those who, like Renan, spent their lives denying the divinity of Jesus—something terrible in its consequences—even they have been obliged to concede that He is incomparably superior to all the pagan sages, that the virtue of Socrates pales before His goodness, His patience in tribulation, His gentleness toward His tormentors. Several rationalists have gone so far as to say: There will never be any higher moral perfection on earth Jesus will always remain the unequaled model, the ideal man of wisdom.

In actual fact, no one was able to discover any sin or imperfection in Jesus. Certain mealymouthed humanitarians have reproached Him with His anger against the Pharisees and the money-changers in the Temple, but it is clear that this anger was the holy indignation of zeal. Only those can disapprove who through their egoism have become totally indifferent to the rights of God and to the salvation of souls.

Not only has it been impossible to discover any fault in Jesus, but even before His birth heaven was gathering testimony in favor of His absolute innocence.

Isaias announced: “And His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, God the Mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of Peace.” And: “Behold My servant, I will uphold Him: My elect, My soul delighteth in Him: I have given My spirit upon Him, He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor have respect to person, neither shall His voice be heard abroad. The bruised reed He shall not break, and smoking flax He shall not quench: He shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not be sad, nor troublesome, till He set judgment in the earth.”

Later, on the day of the Annunciation, the archangel Gabriel said to Mary: “The Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.”

An angel said to Joseph: “Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her, is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son: and thou shalt call His name Jesus. For He shall save His people from their sins.” Jesus, virginally conceived in the womb of Mary, was thus exempt from original sin; and it was in prevision of His merits that His Mother was preserved from this stain.

The aged Simeon, divinely enlightened, saw in the child Jesus “the salvation . . . of all peoples: a light to the revelation of the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel.”

St. John the Baptist at first refused to baptize our Lord, and said to Him: “I ought to be baptized by Thee, and comest Thou to me?” Jesus answered him: “Suffer it to be so now. For so it becometh us to fulfill all justice.” And that day the Holy Ghost descended upon Jesus in the form of a dove, and a voice from heaven was heard to say: “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

Later on, the Pharisees spied upon our Lord, seeking some excuse to make an accusation against Him. Jesus, with supreme dignity which equaled His humility, answered them: “Which of you shall convince Me of sin? . . . He that is of God heareth the words of God. Therefore you hear them not, because you are not of God.” In defense of the woman taken in adultery, who was about to be pitilessly stoned, Jesus said: “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.” But no one felt

himself pure enough to cast that first stone, and so they “went out one by one.”

During the Passion, Pilate declared: “I find no cause in Him.” He washed his hands before the crowd, saying: “I am innocent of the blood of this just man: look you to it.” The Jews could say only one thing: “We have a law; and according to the law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.”

The centurion, seeing Jesus’ gentleness toward His persecutors during the crucifixion and the signs which accompanied His death, cried out: “Indeed this was the Son of God.”

Finally, Christ’s resurrection is the glorious manifestation of His sanctity, as the apostles never tire of proclaiming. St. Peter, calling attention to one of Isaias’s prophecies, wrote in his First Epistle: “Christ . . . suffered for us, . . . who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth, . . . who His own self bore our sins in His body upon the tree: that we . . . should live to justice: by whose stripes you were healed.”

The Epistle to the Hebrews tells us: “For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily (as the other priests) to offer sacrifices first for His own sins, and then for the people’s: for this He did once, in offering Himself.”

All these testimonials from heaven and earth attest that Jesus is without sin. He was never grazed by original sin, and He never com-mitted even the slightest personal sin.

Far more, not only did our Savior never actually commit sin, but He was absolutely impeccable. As is commonly taught by the Fathers and by theology, our Lord was impeccable on three grounds: by reason of His divine personality, by reason of the inamissible plenitude of grace that is His, and by reason of the immediate vision He had of Supreme Goodness, from which He could not turn away. Just as a mass of red-hot iron which is kept in the fire cannot grow cool, so it was that Jesus’ soul, personally and indissolubly united to the Word and thereby enriched with the fullness of grace, and always illumined by the light of glory, could not sin.

It is absolutely impossible to attribute sin to the Word made flesh. That would amount to saying: God has sinned. He could die for our salvation, but not sin. God cannot turn away from Himself, outrage Himself. This is crystal clear.

Likewise, a soul which has received the fullness of grace in an in-amissible manner cannot sin; for this would involve losing this pleni-tude, or at least diminishing it.

Finally, a soul which sees God immediately, as do the saints in heaven, cannot turn away from Him or cease for a single moment to love Him.

JESUS FREE FROM ALL IMPERFECTIONS

Apart from sin, there was never in Jesus the slightest involuntary disorder of the emotions, nor any moral imperfection. There was never in Him a focus of covetousness and lust such as exists in us as one of the consequences of original sin. Indeed, He was not exempt from the attacks of the world and the devil. He even allowed tempta-tion to rise up against Him, in order to teach us how to conquer it. “[Jesus] was led by the Spirit into the desert, for a space of forty days; and was tempted by the devil.” These were temptations of vainglory and pride, to which He made answer with words from Scripture and acts of humility.

There was no moral imperfection in our Savior which might have diminished His sanctity. He was never unfaithful or slow to respond to the slightest inspiration from His Father. “He that sent Me, is with Me, and He hath not left Me alone: for I do always the things that please Him.” He never had any other purpose than to “glorify God” by saving souls, in accordance with the fullness of His mission.

Such is what is sometimes called the negative aspect of Christ’s sanctity: the absence of all sin. But since sin is itself a privation, a disorder, this aspect—that is, the absence of disorder—is already very positive and it manifests to us to a certain extent the intimate union with God which formally constitutes the sanctity of Jesus.

Before entering upon this great subject of the holiness of Jesus, with particular emphasis on the aspect of separation from the spirit of the world, from the spirit of covetousness and pride, let us come back to what we mentioned at the beginning of this chapter: namely, the difference between the Savior who comes from heaven and ourselves who come from below.

The sacred soul of Jesus is separated from the spirit of the world by His very elevation, because He comes from above, because He is the Word made flesh, come down from heaven to save us. It is His inward greatness that separates Him from all that is inferior. He cannot become attached to

these things. By reason of His very elevation He is detached from earthly pleasures, from honors, from worldly affairs. He is a perfect model of poverty: He “hath not where to lay His head.” For the same reason He was detached from the pleasures of the world, and He was free from family responsibilities because He came to found a universal family, the Church. Hence He is the perfect model of religious chastity. His elevation also separates Him from any spirit of willfulness. When He was twelve years old He declared that He had come to tend to His Father’s business, and He obeyed even unto death, and to the death of the cross. St. Thomas tells us that He had no need to make the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience because from the first moment of His conception His will was strengthened and immutably fixed not only upon the good, but upon the best.

Since our Lord comes from above, it is His greatness which sepa-rates Him from all that is inferior, not to isolate Him but so that He may act upon the world from a great height, and so that in conse-quence His action may be more universal and more profound. Such is the action of the sun upon the earth when it is at its zenith, at the highest point above the horizon. Because our Lord was by His very elevation free from the bonds that attach men to earthly goods, to their family, to their own little ideas, to their own will, He was able to act not only on the men of one nation or of one era, but upon the whole human race, to whom He has brought eternal life. It is because of the greatness of the Savior that the Gospel is accessible to all, even the most humble, while at the same time surpassing the understanding of the greatest geniuses. It is for the same reason that the Gospel has never grown old and that it will always be timely with an immutable timeliness, superior to that of the fleeting moment.

Jesus was not of the world, but He was given to the world by God’s infinite mercy that He might redeem it. This is brought out by the first aspect of His sanctity, freedom from all sin and imperfection.

There is a vast difference between our Lord and ourselves in this respect. Since He comes from above, He is separated by His very elevation from all that is inferior, evil, or less good. As for us, we come from below, from the world of sin, of lies, of covetousness and pride. So we have to separate ourselves progressively from the spirit of the world, from all that is disorderly in it, and progressively rise toward God. This is the meaning of the Commandments and of the three evangelical counsels.

At this point some may at times be tempted to think that in this work which is so hard for us we have more merit than our Savior. This is an aberration, for our merits would not exist without the grace which comes from Him. Besides, this would be forgetting that by reason of His very elevation our Lord suffered more acutely from sin than we shall ever suffer from it. The fullness of grace increased considerably in His soul the capacity of suffering from the greatest of evils, namely, mortal sin, about which we are not sufficiently grieved because the disorder which it involves is too deep-seated for us to perceive. Our Lord suffered because of sin in the measure of His love for His Father whom sin offends, and in the measure of His love for our souls which sin ravages and kills.

Thus, whereas we must struggle and suffer in order to free our-selves from sin, our Lord has suffered from it infinitely more than we, in the measure of His purity and of His love.

To understand better this most consoling aspect of the sanctity of Jesus, let us repeat the beautiful prayer recommended as a thanks-giving after Holy Communion: “Soul of Christ, sanctify me. Body of Christ, save me. Blood of Christ, inebriate me. Passion of Christ, fortify me. O good Jesus, hear me. Hide me in Thy sacred wounds. Never permit me to be separated from Thee. Defend me from the evil spirit. At the hour of death, call me and command me to come to Thee, so that in the company of Thy saints I may praise Thee for all eternity. Amen.”

Let us now enter the sanctuary of the Savior’s soul and contemplate the most positive aspect of His sanctity, which constitutes it formally.

THE INNATE, SUBSTANTIAL, UNCREATED AND INAMISSIBLE SANCTITY OF JESUS

Through its personal union with the Word, the soul of Jesus has an innate, substantial, uncreated sanctity which is in consequence ab-solutely perfect and inamissible. This sanctity is constituted especially by the grace of union with the Word and it infinitely surpasses the sanctity of even the greatest servants of God.

No doubt, when we read the lives of these privileged beings, the saints, we are struck by the splendor of their virtues, of their good-ness, of their generosity, of their ardor in sacrifice. Next to them, the most radiant integrity is dull, and the lives of pagan heroes seem external and without depth.

The outstanding trait of the saints is that they have given them-selves not merely to an earthly ideal of the intellectual or moral order, but they have given themselves fully to God, they are taken and possessed by Him, and they live only for Him and for the sake of saving souls. They interpret the counsels of God's love as commands, and they allow themselves to be guided by divine inspiration, even when it leads to the greatest sacrifices. And, the more they abandon themselves to God, the more the Lord showers His gifts upon them; and the more they receive, the more they give, bringing life to their fellow men.

Withal, this sanctity of the greatest of God's servants is infinitely inferior to that of the Savior. The sanctity of the saints gradually frees itself from many imperfections; it is not an innate perfection; it is the crowning of a long and painful effort, the fruit of the workings of grace and of their merits. It is the end of a slow ascent during which even the guides sometimes stumble, as did Peter during the passion of his Master. It is easier of course to walk in the plain on the beaten paths than to make this ascent, especially where there is no trail to follow and no firm footing. Sometimes one turns back. It seems as if one is lost and will be caught without shelter in the darkness and cold. As St. John of the Cross remarks, there are ups and downs in this as-cent. For three steps forward one makes two backward, but one ad-vances none the less; and after long periods of tribulation during which the servant of God is not free from committing sin, he progres-sively arrives under the illumination of faith to union with God. His sanctity, alloyed now with impetuosity and again with cowardice, is a slow and laborious task, the work of grace and of personal cooperation, and it has still many signs of human fragility, as we see in the lives of the greatest saints, namely, the apostles.

Besides, the holiness of the servants of God is in their case an ac-cidental perfection, in the sense that it is superadded to their being. It consists in the higher degree of sanctifying grace which they have received and in the charity that has blossomed in them. This perfec-tion is also accidental in the sense that while still here below they can lose it, as Adam lost it for himself and for us. Finally, it is a perfec-tion which always leaves room for a greater perfection, for a deeper understanding of the mysteries of God, and for a more burning char-ity, the fruit of greater graces and greater efforts.

The sanctity of Jesus, on the other hand, did not progressively free itself from manifold imperfections: it is innate in Him. Jesus was born holy. He

was holy even from the first moment of His conception, by the personal union of His humanity with the Word. Thus His soul was from the start sanctified by the divinity of the Word, by the grace of personal union with the only-begotten Son of the Father. It is therefore incomparably better consecrated than a chalice, than the soul of a priest marked with the sign of priesthood. Jesus is above all others the "Anointed of God." He is given exclusively to His Father's "business," as He said at the age of twelve when He was found among the doctors. His sacred soul was supremely pleasing to the Father from the first moment; within it the kingdom of God is realized in its absolute fullness.

The sanctity of Jesus is thus innate and anterior even to His birth. And, by reason of His merits, His mother, the Virgin Mary, received the grace of innate sanctity through the grace of the Immaculate Con-ception.

But what belongs to Christ alone and what is not to be found in any other human soul or in any angel is the fact that His sanctity is not merely innate, but substantial and uncreated. This is not an accidental perfection, superadded to His being. It is the sanctity of the eternal Word that substantially sanctifies the soul of Jesus in giving it subsistence. The sanctity of the Word thus penetrates His soul in the highest degree possible. If the saints are beings taken by God, pos-sessed by Him, how much more so is "the Anointed of God," who has received the fullness of the divine unction and who subsists by it? For, as we have seen, there is in Jesus only one subject of attribution, a single person, and thus a single subsistence or personality, that of the Word, and a single existence, by reason of which He said: "Be-fore Abraham was made, I am."

That is the same as saying that the sanctity of Jesus, like the grace of union with the Word, is not only substantial, but it is uncreated. For it is formally constituted by the uncreated personality of the Word, which has united itself for all eternity with the soul of the Savior, so that in Jesus the two natures exist through the uncreated existence. This is what makes it possible for Him to say: "I am the truth and the life" or "I am who am."

Isaias spoke of Jesus when he said: "I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and elevated. . . . Upon it stood the seraphims: the one had six wings, and the other had six wings: with two they covered His face, and with two they covered His feet, and with two they flew. And they cried one to another, and said: Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God of hosts, all the earth is full of His glory."

St. John likewise records these words in the Apocalypse: “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was, and who is, and who is to come.”

This substantial and uncreated sanctity of Christ is therefore the most perfect sanctity conceivable, the most intimate, and the most steadfast. Because of it He is the Saint of saints. Can a divine person be more intimately and indissolubly united to a soul, to a created nature, than by communicating to it Its own subsistence, or personal-ity, and Its existence? A greater sanctity than this cannot be conceived. In fact, we can say that while the apostles Peter and Paul are saints, Jesus is sanctity itself, just as He is God Himself and the Deity. This sanctity is therefore inamissible, for Christ cannot cease being Christ, the Anointed of God. This He will always be, in aeternum. By the same token He is a priest for all eternity.

In a word: the sanctity of Jesus is constituted above all by the grace of uncreated union, which consists in the possession forever of the Savior’s humanity by the person of the Word.

Jesus continually lives, therefore, in an order superior to that of nature, and to that of grace, that is, of supernatural created sanctity. His soul lives in a special order, the order of the hypostatic union, the order of the personal and substantial life of God, wherein He is placed by the grace of His union with the Word.

The saints, especially those who are in heaven, enjoy the ecstasy of knowledge and of love. Their intelligence and their will are, as it were, lost in God, taken away by the divine object. The blessed soul of Jesus, on the other hand, enjoyed from the first moment of its creation an ecstasy superior to that of contemplation and of love. It enjoyed, as we have said, the ecstasy of being or of existence, an habitual, tranquil, permanent ecstasy. For the soul of the Savior sub-sists only by the personality and by the uncreated existence of the Word.

Such is the innate, substantial, and uncreated sanctity of Jesus, for-mally constituted by the personal union of His humanity to the Word. Taking up this affirmation by the Church that the sanctity of Christ is innate, some unbelievers have said that in consequence His sanctity is without difficulties and without merit. Though Jesus’ sanctity is not the fruit of merit, it is the source of all His merits and of ours as well. Besides, if anyone has faced here on earth hardship, contradiction, combat, it was our Savior. Shall we say that the saints, endowed with special graces from their childhood, have less merit than we? The principle of merit is charity or love of God.

Therefore he who has a greater love of God has more merits, and he also suffers much more than others from the greatest of all evils, namely, sin. We can see, therefore, that we cannot even surmise how much our Savior suffered. His innate, substantial, and uncreated sanctity considerably increased the capacity of His soul to suffer here on earth from sin, which is an offense against God and which brings us death by turning us away from Him.

THE FULLNESS OF CREATED GRACE

From His substantial and uncreated sanctity our Lord derived created sanctifying grace, and this He received in its fullness. And from grace derive the supernatural virtues and the gifts of charity, wisdom, piety, humility, patience, meekness in a proportionate de-gree, which is far superior to that of the saints and to that which was realized within the soul of Mary.

Was it possible that the soul of the Savior, which was united in the highest degree possible to God, the source of all grace, should not have been full of grace? Was it possible that His soul, which was to make us participants of all the supernatural gifts, should not itself have been adorned with all of them?

Created grace is a participation in divine nature which, like a second nature, increases the stature of our souls to produce connaturally supernatural and meritorious acts. It is like a divine graft in us which elevates us to a superior life. The soul of Jesus received this grace in its absolute plenitude. That is what St. John meant when he wrote: “And we saw His glory, . . . full of grace and truth.” A few great saints, such as St. Stephen the first martyr, and above all Mary, received a relative plenitude of grace, proportioned to their mission in the Church. Thus the archangel Gabriel said to Mary: “Hail, full of grace.” Jesus, however, received grace in its absolute fullness, that is to say, in its supreme degree.

According to the actual plan of Providence, this grace cannot be any loftier, for it is morally proportioned to the highest dignity, that of the person of the Word made flesh. Furthermore, in the soul of Jesus this grace cooperates in supernatural and meritorious acts which are, by reason of the personality of the Word, of infinite value.

Finally, this grace possesses the maximum of extension, for it corresponds to the most universal of all missions, that of the Savior of all men.

It extends to all supernatural effects, and it contains within itself in an eminent degree, as a superior well-spring, all the graces necessary to the apostles, the martyrs, the confessors, and the virgins of all lands and of all times. As St. Thomas tells us, the soul of Jesus received habitual grace just as the sun receives light, with the greatest intensity and radiance. And since there is probably in the physical world a center of light of even greater intensity and radiance than the sun, let us use it as a feeble symbol of the fullness of created grace within the soul of our Savior. This is to say that the habitual grace within the soul of Jesus surpasses in intensity and splendor that of all the saints and angels together, as the light of the sun excels that of the planets and their satellites.

Christ received this fullness of grace from the first moment of His conception, for it is an immediate consequence of the personal union with the Word. And even in this first instant He received it freely; for His holy soul was created as were those of the angels not in a state of sleep but in a waking and freely acting state.

This plenitude was so perfect even from the first moment that it could not increase during the course of the earthly life of our Lord. But with the same degree of grace, He accomplished works that were ever more perfect as He grew in years, until the consummation of His mission on the cross. Thus we might say that the sun's light, while maintaining an unchanging degree of intensity, lights and warms the earth more as it approaches the zenith, the highest point in the sky.

This plenitude of grace was from the first moment of Jesus' life the source of the virtues and gifts which are reconcilable with the beatific vision and with personal union to the Word. And these virtues and gifts proceed from it in a proportionate degree, that is, the supreme degree. This fact gives us an insight into the charity of Christ, even from the first moment, and into His love for His Father and for souls, His wisdom, His prudence, His piety, His justice, His fortitude, His patience, His humility, His meekness.

From the first moment of His earthly life, He possessed in the supreme degree all the virtues excepting those which fundamentally admit of an imperfection that cannot be reconciled with the beatific vision. For He received the beatific vision from that first instant. Thus it was that He had neither faith nor hope, both of which will disappear in us to make way for

the vision of God. Nor did He have contrition, which presupposes personal sin, but He took upon Himself the punishment which our sins demanded.

This shows us the falsity of saying that Christ, having received so much, could not suffer. Quite the contrary. As we have already re-marked, the fullness of grace in Christ's soul greatly increased His capacity for suffering here on earth from the worst of all evils, namely, sin. The nobler and purer a soul is here on earth, the more it suffers from mortal sin, the radical disorder that turns souls away from God, their final end.

This spiritual suffering began in our Lord's soul from the instant He knew of His mission as Savior. It was then that He offered His first act of love, in union with those which were to follow until His death. From the start He offered up His whole life in an incomparably more perfect manner than does the religious when at his profession he promises obedience until death.

This fullness of grace is manifested in the marvelous harmonizing of apparently opposed virtues. Harmony, which is unity in diversity, is all the more beautiful in the measure that there is a more profound unity in a vaster diversity, and that there is a deeper intimacy between widely separated elements.

In Jesus are admirably reconciled the loftiest supernaturality and the simplest and most spontaneous naturalness. But when we try to be natural, we often forget the exigences of grace and fall into the practical naturalism of indifference. If, on the other hand, we try to attain supernatural perfection without passing through the indispen-sable intermediaries, we fall into a state of arrogant rigidity, reminis-cent of the Jansenists, or into a false supernatural exaltation which borders on eccentricity. In Jesus, nature and grace are wonderfully harmonized because He possesses the fullness of grace and because His nature is completely docile.

In Jesus also the most sublime wisdom and the most astute practical sense are also harmonized. As for us, we are usually either too abstract, lost in vague generalities, or, on the contrary, we put undue emphasis on details, without viewing things from a sufficient height.

Within Jesus are also united perfect justice and boundless mercy, whereas in us justice often turns to severity, and mercy to weakness. Let us call to mind our Savior's forgiveness of the adulterous woman: what firmness and yet what generosity!

Likewise in Him are harmonized a supreme dignity and the deepest humility. Among men, however, magnanimity is frequently ac-companied by haughtiness, and souls that are naturally modest often remain pusillanimous and without energy.

Finally in Jesus are reconciled the most heroic strength and the greatest meekness, as witnessed by the smile of the Crucified praying for His executioners: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

Nowhere else can we find a loftier or deeper moral harmony, more far-reaching in its scope, or of greater splendor, couched in terms of such noble sobriety.

THE CONSEQUENCES FOR US

Jesus is the sun of sanctity, eager to shower His splendors upon us. He received holiness as the universal principle of all graces, graces of light, of attraction, of power. He is not a vessel, a brook, or even a river of sanctity: He is its living source.

St. John tells us: “And of His fullness we all have received, and grace for grace.” Let us contemplate the radiation of this sanctity in the lives of the saints, of the apostles, martyrs, confessors, and virgins of all times, including our own.

Let us remember that when we were baptized we received from the Savior the same emanation of supernatural life. If we have fallen back into the death of sin, we have been spiritually revivified by absolution, Christ’s own pardon, and our souls have been placed once again beneath the living waters of grace, beneath the torrent of divine mercies. If we face tribulation, let us remember that the grace offered to us is proportionate to the sacrifices demanded of us. Let us allow ourselves to be drawn to the Savior, to be illumined, warmed, and vivified by Him. Let us allow ourselves to be loved by His pure and powerful love, which will purify us more and more. If He makes us suffer, it is to make us like Himself, and to associate us with the mystery of the Redemption through suffering. Let us ever ask Him for new graces, including the grace of final perseverance. And, without resisting, let us allow these graces to inspire us to ever greater acts of generosity, for our own salvation, for that of our neighbor, and for the glory of Christ. Let us also pray for saints who will tell the men of our time what they most need to hear, saints who by their lives will reveal to them Christ’s love for us.

Even in the Old Testament the Lord said to His ministers: “Be holy because I am holy.” Now that we have received the One who is the Saint of saints, let us say to Him: “Lord, sanctify us, so that we may sanctify Thy name, that we may bear witness to Thy mercy, and that Thy kingdom may become more firmly established within us.” This is the first prayer that children learn from their mothers, for these are the first words of the Our Father: “Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name,” that is, may His name be glorified, may its holiness be recognized, not only by our words but by our acts, by our whole life, which should be a song of glory for the Creator in recognition of His goodness.

XII

THE HUMAN INTELLIGENCE OF THE SAVIOR AND HIS CONTEMPLATION

> "Never did man speak like this man."
>
> John 7:46

WE HAVE inquired into the nature of the innate, substantial, uncreated sanctity of our Lord and into the absolute fullness of grace which derives from this sanctity and radiates upon the souls of all men.

We must now consider the supernatural riches of the Savior's intelligence, will, and heart. We shall speak first of His human intelligence, for there can be no doubt that Jesus has a human intelligence, the property of His human nature, as well as a divine intelligence, the property of His divine nature. This point has been defined by the Church in opposition to Apollinarianism. To maintain that He has only a divine intelligence is to claim that He has no soul and that the Word takes its place. If this were the case, Jesus would not be truly a man, since He would possess only the least important part of human nature, namely, the body.

To gain some insight into the spiritual riches of Jesus' human intelligence, let us first of all consider Him in His actual role as teacher, and then inquire into the nature of His contemplation of the truths which He taught.

WHAT KIND OF TEACHER WAS JESUS?

Modern rationalists are willing to see in Him a profound moralist of great delicacy and charm, who translated into figurative and highly popular language the maxims of ancient Judaic wisdom, "giving them a new life by filtering them through His impressionable soul," as one of these rationalists

puts it. But they are generally agreed that Jesus never had any doctrine; that He never taught a body of truths or of dogmas that no one could knowingly and willfully reject without turning away from God and losing his soul. According to them, it was only much later, by a slow process of elaboration, by the union of the Christian religion with Greek philosophy, that Catholic dogma was constituted.

To make Jesus seem more like one of us, liberal Protestants and modernists have held that He was ignorant of many matters relative to the kingdom of God and that He did not have from the beginning of His life the consciousness of His Messiahship. Both groups admit that He bore within Himself a ferment that brought forth a new religious movement, but they hold that He did not teach a doctrine and a truth which no one can refuse to believe without turning away from the way of salvation.

What on the other hand do we see in the Gospel? In St. Luke (2:46-49), we read that when Jesus was twelve years old He was found by Mary and Joseph “in the Temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, hearing them and asking them questions. And all that heard Him were astonished at His wisdom and His answers. . . . And He said to them [Mary and Joseph] : How is it that you sought Me? Did you not know, that I must be about My Father’s business?”

Thus, long before His public ministry, Jesus knew His mission. During this ministry He spoke repeatedly of His doctrine, of the truths to which He came to bear witness, of the light He was bringing into the world, of the faith to be given to His words. As St. Mark reports, He began His ministry by preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God and saying: “The time is accomplished, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent, and believe the gospel.” St. Matthew says that “when Jesus had fully ended these words [the Sermon on the Mount], the people were in admiration at His doctrine. For He was teaching them as one having power, and not as the scribes and Pharisees.” St. Matthew also reports that Jesus said to His apostles before leaving them: “All power is given Me in heaven and in earth. Going therefore teach ye all nations: baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.” St. Mark reports these words even more fully: “Go ye into the whole world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved: but he that

believeth not shall be condemned." This is indeed the doctrine necessary for salvation.

In the Gospel, Jesus continually appears as the Master and con-tinually speaks of His doctrine. On Holy Thursday, having washed His apostles' feet, He said to them: "Know you what I have done to you? You call Me Master and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If then I, being your Lord and Master, have washed your feet. . . . I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you do also. . . . If you know these things, you shall be blessed if you do them."

Jesus often said: "My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me. If any man will do the will of Him, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself." In the Gospel of St. John, Jesus says as many as six times: "He that believeth in Me [with a faith quickened with love], hath everlasting life." And to the Pharisees, He said: "If I do [the works of My Father], though you will not believe Me, believe the works: that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father." And: "Whilst you have the light, believe in the light."

The apostles also preached everywhere that Jesus' word was divine. St. Paul declared that he had received his doctrine from Jesus Himself, when he wrote to the Galatians: "I give you to understand, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For neither did I receive it of man, nor did I learn it; but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." At this point St. Paul calls to mind his conversion and the fact that his doctrine conforms with that of the other apostles, and that it was approved in a conference with them at Jerusalem. It is by this evangelical doctrine that the entire primitive Chuch lived, without any concern at all about reconciling it with Greek philosophy. We see, therefore, that Jesus presented a unified doctrine, whatever the rationalists may say to the contrary.

Far more than this, the sublimity of Jesus' doctrine is apparent the moment one hears it preached, especially when one compares what it tells us of God and of human life with what the philosophers or even Moses and the prophets have said. A person easily finds in Jesus' teaching the loftiest dogmas and the purest morality. And the more it is put into practice, the more does its grandeur impress itself upon us. The more anyone lives by it the more he loves it, the more he sees its eternal timeliness, whereas the works of even the greatest geniuses always grow old in some particular.

The most eminent philosophers of antiquity, Plato and Aristotle, had certainly risen above the materialism and skepticism of their predecessors. Indeed, they had affirmed the existence of God, the Supreme Intelligence and the Sovereign Good. But they had not been able to attain the explicit idea of creation ex nihilo, which presupposed no pre-existing subject to be transformed. Especially they had not been able to grasp the idea of a free creation, the idea of the creative Fiat expressed in the first lines of Genesis. They could not arrive at an understanding of the extent to which this world's beings depend upon God. In consequence their idea of Providence remained very timid. They dared not affirm that divine Providence can extend to the smallest details of the lives of each of us. They spoke with even greater timidity of the life to come, of its rewards and punishments. When they did affirm it, their affirmation, as they said, was in terms of a beautiful possibility. Their moral teaching, beautiful in certain respects, remained marred by some rather gross errors. They did not even think it was possible to abolish slavery, and their personal lives were far below the level of their teaching; in fact, their lives some-times were the negation of their teaching.

How different is the Gospel, in which Jesus speaks with absolute certainty of God, His Father and ours, of Providence, and of eternal life! Did He train Himself naturally, as has been claimed, by the simple meditative reading of the Old Testament, of Moses and the Prophets?

Moses and the Prophets certainly far surpassed the ancient phi-losophers inasmuch as they affirmed, through the light of revelation and with absolute certainty, that God is the One who is, that everything has been created from nothing, that God made man holy and good in the beginning, and that after our fall He labored mercifully for the restoration of His people, to whom He had promised a Savior.

Yet, in the teaching of Moses and the Prophets the intimate life of God, the Blessed Trinity, remained hidden, and the omnipotence of the Creator inspired especially fear, the beginning of wisdom. The Lord's commandments had taken into account the imperfection of men's souls, which were going through the hard experience of being in need of redemption, and which had to be slowly guided toward the new era of the promised Savior.

Jesus, on the other hand, taught with the most absolute certitude, without any timidity whatever, not only the truths of creation and of the soul's

immortality, but the dogma of eternal life which was far beyond any conception of the life to come that the philosophers talked about. And He made eternal life known not merely by symbols like that of the promised land, which were used in the Old Testament; but even in His first words on the beatitudes, He declared: “Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice: for they shall have their fill. . . . Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God. . . . Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. . . . Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven.” In the parable of the talents the faithful servant was told: “Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.” That is to say: See God as He sees Himself, and love Him as He loves Himself.

From the start of His ministry, in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus did not merely tell us, as Moses did, that God is the Creator and Master of all things, but that He is our Father. Accordingly Jesus taught us to pray thus: “Our Father who are in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done.” What loftier idea of God can be given to men, and what more sanctifying power for their lives? This is the essence of the whole of Christian dogma and morality.

This eternal Father, Jesus continued, has an only Son, begotten from all eternity, and “God so loved the world, as to give His only-begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in Him, may not perish, but may have life everlasting.” Jesus increasingly manifested Himself to be this only-begotten Son, come to save us, to redeem us by His mission and by His death: “The Son of man is not come to be min-istered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a redemption for many” (Matt. 20:28).

He declared that He would rise from the dead, ascend into heaven, but that He would still be present in the Church until the end of time in the form of the Eucharist, and through the Holy Ghost whom He would send and who would dwell in us in order to make us grasp the meaning of the gospel and thus lead other souls to eternal life. Thenceforth eternal life is seen to be indissoluble union with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost in the radiance of the beatific vision: “Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God.”

Can we fail to endure patiently anything that is said untruly about us when we remember that it has been said of Him who is the Teacher of teachers, who is “the truth and the life,” that He never had a doctrine?

His teaching includes not only the dogma of creation which had been so clearly enunciated in the Old Testament, but also those of the Blessed Trinity, the Incarnation, the Redemption, the Eucharist, and eternal life. These are all, of course, unfathomable supernatural mysteries, but mysteries which answer our most deep-seated natural aspirations and which arouse in us nobler ones. They are mysteries which harmonize admirably with one another, and it is in vain that the incredulous seek to find any contradiction in them. How superior is this doctrine to the timid affirmations of the philosophers and to the often obscure predictions of the prophets!

In its simplicity this doctrine is sublime in the true sense of the word. The sublime is indeed what is most elevated, most extraordinary in the order of the beautiful. And as the beautiful is a splendid harmony, the splendor of unity in diversity, so the sublime is the loftiest and most intimate harmony of most diverse and separated elements, in appearance irreconcilable. The sublime is particularly the intimate union of supreme goodness and the deepest wretchedness. When divine mercy bows to this extent, gratitude must find expression not merely in words but in tears: the sign of a relationship that is so profound that it is beyond expression in human terms. Now the mysteries of the Incarnation, the Redemption, the Eucharist, are the union of the infinite riches of divine mercy with the universal wretchedness of man, the union of man’s poverty with the infinite grandeur of God.

THIS SUBLIMITY IS NO LESS APPARENT IN THE MORAL TEACHING OF JESUS THAN IN THE MYSTERIES HE REVEALED.

How petty the maxims of the pagan sages seem, compared to the Gospel! They say, as Socrates did: “Know thyself”; “be manly”; “The measure of goodness is the good man,” who lives by right reason. Jesus came to say: “Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect.” Be you perfect, not merely as the angels are, but as the heavenly Father is perfect. For you have been made participants not only of the angelic life, but of the intimate life of God, the seed of eternal life, which will consist in seeing God as He sees Himself, and in loving Him as He loves Himself. “Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God.”

The wise men of antiquity said with pride: “The strong man grappling with adversity is a divine spectacle.” Jesus said with humil-ity, simplicity,

and depth: “Blessed are they that mourn [their sins], Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven,” it is already realized within them. Such words had never been heard. So lofty are they that even believers are often slow to understand when persecution comes to them. They are astonishing words, and yet so simple when spoken by our Savior.

There is no affinity between the highest moral teaching of the pagans and that of Jesus. The philosophers spoke of acquired virtues, which are often unstable. The virtues our Savior spoke of are the infused virtues which must grow with merit until the supernatural life of eternity.

The new law of the Gospel, which is a law of love, is likewise far superior to the law of fear promulgated by Moses: “You have heard that it was said to them of old: Thou shalt not kill. . . . But I say to you, that whosoever is angry with his brother, shall be in danger of the judgment.” “You have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thy enemy. But I say to you, Love your enemies: do good to them that hate you: and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you: that you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven, who maketh His sun to rise upon the good and bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust. For if you love [only] them that love you, . . . do not even the publicans this? . . . Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect.” These words summarize the entire Sermon on the Mount, spoken at the beginning of our Savior’s ministry.

As we have said before, Jesus substituted for the petty nobility of the human virtues the highest nobility of sanctity. He preached hunger and thirst for the justice of God, that is, for union with God.

It is difficult to know what in this doctrine is most to be admired: its loftiness, its depth, its scope, its intimate understanding of the heart’s secrets, its infallible views on the future. All these supernatural splendors harmonize wonderfully with the most complete naturalness in expression and with the most astute practical sense. Nowhere can there be found a more perfect harmony between nature and grace. Here natural aspirations are not merely filled but surpassed, and the word of Christ inspires far superior aspirations which are united in the efficacious and powerful desire for the supernatural life of eternity, for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. These were words completely ignored by the pagan sages, and the Old Testament prophets could only lisp them.

Here indeed the plenitude of divine revelation is given to us here on earth in a still obscure manner, in order to lead us to the definitive and dazzling revelation of eternity.

By its sublimity and its conformity with our highest aspirations, the doctrine of Jesus so far surpasses all other doctrines, even that which the chosen people rightly gloried in having received from God, that we cannot fail to recognize in it a powerful and superhuman originality. But this is not the originality of an innovator who is breaking with the past. Jesus said: “Do not think that I am come to destroy the law, or the Prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.”

We can well understand that the astonished Jews asked: “How doth this man know letters, having never learned?” And the messengers of the Pharisees, daring not to lay hands on Him, admitted: “Never did man speak like this man.”

It cannot be maintained, therefore, that Jesus merely bore within Himself a ferment which became the principle of a new religious movement, but that He did not have a doctrine. The entire Credo is to be found in His teaching and can be expressed in His own words, not only in the words reported by St. John, but in those of the first three Gospels, words which are bound up with the whole fabric of the story, with all the facts of His life, His passion and death.

HOW JESUS TAUGHT

The manner in which Jesus taught is no less sublime in its simplicity than the object of His doctrine. It has been said that “A man’s style is the man.” Christ Jesus has indeed His own style. In order to have even a vague notion of His ascendancy over souls, it would be necessary to have heard the sermons of great saints like St. Bernard, St. Dominic, and the holy Curé of Ars.

St. Thomas tells us that the apostle must express himself in such a manner that the word of God may enlighten the intelligence, stir the heart, and arouse the will to the accomplishment of the Command-ments. The apostle, therefore, must speak with authority, in the name of God, with simplicity so as to be understood by every soul, with supernatural unction to stir hearts, and with power to turn wills toward God.

Jesus' method of teaching reveals a sovereign authority which is equaled only by the simplicity and unction with which He communi-cates the loftiest truths; whence the power of the Gospel and the pro-found influence it has exerted for almost two thousand years, in spite of its austerity and its demands.

The incomparable authority of Jesus is manifested through His power in affirmation and through the influence of His sanctity. How did He affirm? He did not make use of the procedures of human eloquence which flatter the hearer, seeking to please him and to gain his admiration rather than enlighten him. There is not the least bit of oratorical artificiality in the sermons of the Master. He also avoided the abstract considerations of the philosophers and the scriptural dis-cussions of the scribes, who scrutinized the sacred texts without bring-ing out their true meaning. Jesus did not argue. He spoke in brief, clear, penetrating formulas: "If thy right eye scandalize thee, pluck it out . . . and if thy right hand scandalize thee, cut it off." "Love your enemies: . . . and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you." These are formulas that jostle unruly passions, amaze the reason, but that address themselves directly to souls of good will, and arouse this good will in those who are seeking the truth. As for unreasonable and rebellious spirits, these formulas sink deep into them like streaks of light and condemnations.

"All things therefore whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you also to them." "If one strike thee on thy right cheek, turn to him also the other. And if a man will contend with thee in judgment, and take away thy coat, let go thy cloak also unto him." For in this manner you will win the soul of your brother, you will enlighten and save him. These maxims are so new and so beautiful that they are not easily forgotten. They remain within us like the light of conscience which inspires us toward goodness and chides us for our selfishness.

Jesus affirms with the authority of the supreme Master: "You call Me Master and Lord; and you say well, for so I am." He considers Himself above any human judgment, above any cross-examination, any criticism, any contradiction. No one else has ever used His formulas: "For this was I born, and for this came I into the world; that I should give testimony to the truth. Everyone that is of the truth, heareth My voice." "Amen, amen I say unto you: . . . I speak that which I have seen with My Father." "You believe in God, believe also in Me." "I am the light of the world: he that followeth

Me, walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life. . . . Although I give testimony of Myself, My testimony is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go." "I am the way and the truth, and the life." There is no loftier doctrinal authority.

The authority of His life confirmed that of His intelligence. As for the philosophers, their conduct was often in contradiction to their moral teaching. Even Moses was not as perfect as the Lord demanded of him, and because of this he did not enter the Promised Land. Jesus, on the other hand, began by practicing in all perfection everything that He taught: "Jesus began to do and to teach." Because He had accomplished perfectly all the commandments and counsels, without the slightest flaw, He was able to say: "Which of you shall convince Me of sin?" "For I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you do also." "If you keep My commandments, you shall abide in My love; as I also have kept My Father's commandments, and do abide in His love." His teaching was but the reflection of His conduct, and He asks incomparably less from us than what He Himself has done for us: "He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross." The authority of a man's life has never so well confirmed the authority of his doctrine.

What is no less remarkable is the fact that this sovereign authority was coupled with the greatest simplicity. Among many human teachers simplicity is destroyed by pompousness born of pride, which is in reality foolishness. Jesus is too great to feel the least pride in His in-telligence and in His life. In His greatness, He is the model of humility: "My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me." He cares neither for titles nor honors, nor for the role of learned doctor. Of the scribes and Pharisees He said: "They love the first places at feasts, and the first chairs in the synagogues, and salutations in the marketplace, and to be called by men, Rabbi. But be not you called Rabbi. For one is your master; and all you are brethren."

And while the Pharisees loved to sit in the chair of Moses, to whom did He choose to preach the Gospel? The poor, the poor who were so despised by the pagan sages. This, together with the miracles, is actually a sign of His Messiahship: "The poor have the gospel preached to them." Isaias had declared that He would "preach to the meek" and "heal the contrite of heart." Thus it was that Jesus preached throughout the countryside, on the shores of Lake Genesareth, in Solomon's portico, always in a simple unstudied manner. There was nothing about Him that bespoke artistic or

human effort. As He told His listeners, “the words that I have spoken to you, are spirit and life.”

One of the most extraordinary things about our Lord’s preaching is that the more sublime the object He spoke of, the calmer was His language. There was never the slightest tinge of exaltation in His words. As Bossuet has well said: “Who can fail to admire the con-descension with which He tempered the loftiness of His doctrine? It is at once milk for infants and bread for the strong. One can see that He is filled with God’s secrets, but it is evident that He is not astonished by them as are other mortals to whom God reveals Himself: He speaks about them naturally, as one being born into these secrets and into this glory. And what He possesses beyond measure, He pours forth by measure, so that our weakness may be able to bear it.”

After the Last Supper, He said to the apostles: “I have yet many things to say to you: but you cannot bear them now. But when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will teach you all truth.” Finally, it was with the utmost simplicity that He recommended humility to His apostles: “. . . calling unto Him a little child, [He] set him in the midst of them. And said: Amen I say to you, unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, he is the greater in the kingdom of heaven.” For such a man enters into intimacy with God through mental prayer and through love. Thus are admirably reconciled in Jesus’s manner of teaching the highest authority, along with simplicity and humility. How complicated does the abstract doctrine of the philosophers seem beside this eminent simplicity!

Lastly, Jesus spoke with an unction that was truly divine, despite the austerity of His counsels. His own words were realized within Himself: “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” He preached continually of the love with which God first loved us, when we were still sinners. One could feel that He Himself was overflowing with charity and wished ardently for our salvation. He said: “I am come that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly.” His preaching was one of glad tidings: “Come to Me, all you that labor, and are burdened, and I will refresh you.”

This unction, the expression of His mercy, was particularly palpable in His conversation with the Samaritan woman: “If thou didst know the gift of

God, and who He is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink; thou perhaps wouldst have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water." This unction was also noticeable in His preaching of the beatitudes and in His last conversation with the disciples before the Passion. During His last discourses it was as if sheets of light, luminous waves, descended from heaven to become diffused in ever wider circles upon the generations to come.

This divine unction, which was the effect of grace, gave foreknowledge of the Holy Ghost of whom it has been said: "His unction teacheth you of all things." There is no romantic sentimentalism about it. It is accompanied by renunciation, it fights against sin, against the spirit of the world and the spirit of evil: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." While Jesus tells us often that He brings us peace, union with God, He also says that in order to attain this peace we must know how to fight against all within us that would lead us to evil. It is with this in mind that He said: "I came not to send peace, but the sword." Those most beloved of God have been called on to suffer most cruelly from the persecution of those who would not hear the joyful tidings of the Gospel.

In St. Luke we read: "The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against his father, the mother against the daughter." And in St. Matthew: "And a man's enemies shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me." These family rifts were frequent during the three centuries of the persecutions. One can sense here the exigencies of the divine law.

It is this saintly austerity united to humility which demonstrates the wholly supernatural origin of the Savior's unction. He has sometimes told His saints: "Do not lay too much store on the favorable judgments of men, for I love thee with a perfect love. I spent My earthly existence in humiliations and scorn and in a hidden life. It was thus that I glorified My Father, laid the foundations of My Church, and remedied the evils of pride. This is the path that thou must follow." This is truly Christ's own style, His own manner.

As Father Grou, S.J., says very well: "A humble teacher can teach great things, but he will teach them with humility. . . . If he speaks with emphasis and authority, it will not be for his own glory but to extol the one in whose name he speaks and to make a deeper impression on the minds of his

listeners. This is how Jesus Christ taught. . . . It is impossible to say such lofty and divine things in a simpler manner. . . . This is how those who have an interior spirit teach. . . . They speak with assurance and at the same time with humility, because they are not speaking of themselves. . . . Their discourses exert upon well-prepared hearts a persuasion, an efficacy that can come only from the grace which prompted their words."

These are the reasons why the Gospel has such power and such a profound attraction upon our souls. It both jostles and captivates them. It jostles our unruly passions and captivates our good will. And yet this book was not written directly by our Lord. As St. Thomas says: "It was fitting that Christ as the most excellent of teachers should adopt that manner of teaching whereby His doctrine is imprinted on the hearts of His hearers," by the grace of light and strength which He granted them. This is the highest magisterium, the living magisterium. And this is why, as St. Thomas also remarks, the new law of the Gospel is first of all written spiritually in the hearts of the faithful by the grace of the Holy Ghost, before being materially written on stone or parchment. Jesus was content to write in the souls of His apostles a living letter that they have made known to the world: "Going therefore teach ye all nations." And in actual fact, His doctrine spread, in spite of innumerable obstacles, to the limits of the world known to the ancient peoples.

Today, after twenty centuries, this power of communication con-tinues to exert its influence, thus verifying the affirmation: "Heaven and earth shall pass, but My words shall not pass." As St. Peter said, these are "the words of eternal life." Until the end of the world our Savior will raise up new priestly vocations so that the gospel may ever be preached for the salvation of souls.

While the books of the Greek philosophers stay on library shelves, consulted by a handful of scholars, the Gospel has been for twenty centuries the spiritual food of millions of souls. Even the modern societies which reject the Gospel are none the less impregnated with it in spite of themselves. Whereas the more sincere among the philosophers admit that they are powerless to change the interior dispositions of men, Jesus, with but a few poor Galilean fishermen and in spite of three centuries of persecutions succeeded in changing the moral ideas of humanity. Through His grace He gave to multitudes of souls the love of goodness, to many He gave a supernatural ardor for sacrifice, and He dispersed among all peoples

marvelous flowers of sanctity. The Christian martyrology which is read daily in the Office after Lauds is a great motive of credibility, a notable sign of the divine origin of Jesus' doctrine.

No one else has been able to keep a doctrine ever living down the centuries through an immortal race of disciples, so that after two thousand years we still accept it as "the words of eternal life."

When we read the Gospel in a recollected manner we wonder how our Savior was able to unite in His teaching and in His manner of preaching such diverse qualities: the supreme authority of His doc-trine and of His life together with such perfect simplicity and humil-ity, an unction which moves men's hearts together with an austerity which makes heavy demands on human nature. The intimate union of such different qualities cannot be explained naturally. Our tem-peraments are in a sense determined by nature, and must be completed by virtue. The profound union in Jesus of such diverse qualities can be the effect only of very high virtue and of very lofty contemplation, in other words, the effect of the most extraordinary grace.

OUR SAVIOR'S CONTEMPLATION SUPERIOR TO ALL OTHERS ACCORDING TO THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN

In what light did Jesus contemplate the things He taught? In an effort to understand this, let us raise our minds progressively toward Him, starting with a less sublime teaching. Then we shall see what Jesus has Himself told us in the Gospel of St. John concerning his vision of divine things.

The greatest geniuses of the pagan world, such as Plato and Aris-totle, contemplated their doctrine in the natural light of the intelligence, in the light of first principles abstracted from sensible things, and in the mirror of these things the power of their vision discovered a reflection of divine perfections. Thus they taught that God is the primary Being, the supreme Intelligence who ordained all things and who is the sovereign Good. Yet there remained in their affirmations much obscurity and uncertainty.

The prophets of the Old Testament contemplated the doctrine that they announced in the light of prophecy united to the supernatural light of faith. This light was incomparably superior to the natural light of the intelligence with which the greatest Greek philosophers were endowed. Thus Isaias foresaw the promised Savior: "A child is born to us, and a son is given to us, and the government is upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called,

Wonderful, Counselor, God the Mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of Peace."

However, the light of prophecy and that of infused faith are still obscure in the sense that they do not give us the evidence of the super-natural mysteries. They merely lead us to adhere to the infallible testimony of God. Just as the most distant stars cannot manifest to us the outermost limits of the firmament, so the infused light of prophecy and that of faith do not suffice to shed light on what St. Paul calls "the deep things of God," namely, His intimate life which we shall clearly understand only in heaven. Beyond doubt the gifts of the Holy Ghost, gifts of knowledge and wisdom, give us a living, quasi-experimental knowledge of the supernatural mysteries, helping us to penetrate and enjoy them. Yet these gifts do not bring us out of the obscurity of faith.

The apostles, as had the prophets before them, received the light of prophecy and that of infused faith in a high degree. One of them, St. Paul, in view of his exceptional ministry, received even a special and extraordinary grace of light which he described as follows: "I know a man in Christ above fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I know not, or out of the body, I know not; God knoweth), such a one caught up to the third heaven. And I know . . . that he was caught up into paradise, and heard secret words, which it is not granted to man to utter." In this passage St. Paul seems to be recalling the ravishment mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, where these words of the great convert are recorded: "And it came to pass, when I was come again to Jerusalem, and was praying in the Temple, that I was in a trance, and saw Him saying unto me: Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem; because they will not receive thy testimony concerning Me."

When St. Paul says that he was ravished to the third heaven he meant, as did the Hebrews, the spiritual heaven where God dwells, the empyrean above the heaven of the air (the atmosphere) and even above the heaven of the stars (the ether). It is therefore probable that, in accordance with the thought of St. Augustine and of St. Thomas, St. Paul means that for a short moment he was raised up to the beatific vision of the divine essence. These great doctors, who had themselves received extraordinary graces of contemplation, say it seems that in that brief moment Paul contemplated what "eye bath not seen, nor ear heard . . . what things God hath prepared for them that love Him."

After this ravishment the great Apostle was so profoundly con-vinced of the truth of the divine doctrine which he was preaching that his conviction was always far beyond even the loftiest words that came to his lips. Sublime words flowed from his pen, sometimes pouring forth like a torrent rushing down a mountainside, and yet they cannot express what he saw. His noblest words are but the inadequate means of expressing, in terms suited to our intelligence, an intuition far above us. Sometimes, alas, a preacher may have more on his lips than exists in the faith of his own heart, and then his preaching becomes theatrical, affected, and bombastic. St. Paul, on the contrary, knew far more than he could tell. There was always much more within his soul than on his lips; the spirit dominated the letter and vivified it.

St. Paul spoke of what he had contemplated in God. St. Thomas says that "preaching must derive from the fullness of contemplation" if it is to be living and sanctifying and in any way resemble the words of fire that are referred to in the psalms (118:140). We cannot hope to describe the magnificence of a mountain view unless we have actually been up there ourselves. It will not suffice merely to page through a travel guide. That Paul might speak with the greatest possible light and vigor concerning God and the redemptive Incarnation, he had been raised at least for an instant to the summit of divine contemplation. That is why he was the great Doctor of the Gentiles, charged with transmitting to them for the first time the teaching of the Master.

But if Paul was raised for at least one moment to the contemplation of the divine essence, what are we to say of Jesus Himself?

It is true of course that through His divine intelligence Jesus never ceased seeing God. Far more than this, His divine intelligence which is common to the three persons, is identical without any real distinction whatever with the divine essence known from all eternity; and the person of the Word is "the brightness of eternal light," "the brightness of His [the Father's] glory."

However, with respect to His human intelligence, was it only in the obscurity of faith that Jesus ordinarily attained the supernatural mysteries of which He spoke, the deep things of God which He teaches us to know dimly? Did Jesus have but a few moments of ecstasy, as St. Paul did, remaining ignorant of many things relating to the kingdom of God?

The infallible magisterium of the Church has given a partial answer to this question. It has been defined, in refutation of the heresy of the

Agnoetes, that Jesus as man was not ignorant of anything whatever relating to the kingdom of God, that will be consummated in heaven and that includes all the elect, both angels and men. Can He who even as man is the head of the kingdom of God be ignorant of anything that relates to His function? Can He be ignorant of the day of judgment and the number of the elect for whom He is meriting salvation? The Church tells us that such ignorance could not have been in Him.

But in what light did Christ's human intelligence know here below everything concerning the kingdom of God? Was it only in the light of prophecy united to the light of faith? Or was it in a higher light? Was the sacred soul of our Savior deprived during His life on earth of the light of glory by which the saints in heaven see God face to face? If it is probable that St. Paul while here on earth received this light for at least one instant, what are we to say of the sacred soul of Christ?

The theologians answer in unison: Jesus saw what He taught in the light of the beatific vision. Jesus possessed throughout His earthly life and in a far higher degree the contemplation which St. Paul seems to have attained for an instant during an ecstasy. The contemplation of Jesus even here on earth was not inferior to that which the saints enjoy in heaven. This has been the common teaching of theologians particularly since the twelfth century, and the Church has declared that it would be rash to deny it.

What is the foundation for this doctrine which is commonly ac-cepted in the Church? It is founded first of all on several of Jesus' statements. In St. John He said to Nicodemus with regard to spiritual regeneration: "Amen, amen I say to thee, that we speak what we know, and we testify what we have seen, and you receive not our testimony. If I have spoken to you earthly things, and you believe not; how will you believe, if I shall speak to you heavenly things? And no man hath ascended into heaven, but He that descended from heaven, the Son of man who is in heaven."

The words "what we know" in this passage are synonymous with "what we have seen," as is said immediately afterward. Now, Jesus spoke as a man. It was therefore as a man that He saw God and the things of heaven. Must not testimony correspond to the knowledge from which it derives?

And as at the particular moment when Jesus was saying these words the souls of the deceased just were awaiting their entry into heaven, He said as we have just seen: "No man hath ascended into heaven but He that descended from heaven, the Son of man who is in heaven." Thus Jesus was

already in heaven not only as the Son of God, by rea-son of His divinity and of His divine intelligence, but as the Son of man, by reason of His human intelligence. Not only was He to be in heaven after His death, resurrection, and ascension, but He was there already at that moment. This was the same as saying that as of that instant through His human intelligence He already saw God face to face, without any intermediary whatever. For what is heaven if not the spiritual homeland where the blessed enjoy the immediate vision of God or of eternal life, which consists in seeing God as He sees Him-self and in loving Him as He loves Himself?

Tradition commonly holds, therefore, that Jesus even while here on earth was at once viator et comprehensor, that is, He was a wayfarer toward eternity and a comprehensor or blessed, already in possession of eternal life.

Jesus also said in St. John: “Every one that hath heard of the Father, and hath learned, cometh to Me. Not that any man hath seen the Father; but He who is of God, He hath seen the Father. Amen, amen I say unto you: He that believeth in Me, hath everlasting life.” Jesus was here saying that the believers have heard the Father, His word, but have not seen Him; whereas He, Jesus, “who is of God, He bath seen the Father.” Therefore this can mean only that He was more than a believer, that He was not reduced to believing in God, to believing in His own divinity and in His own divine personality. For He had more than faith; He had the vision that the blessed possess in heaven. There is an immense difference between believing and seeing.

Likewise, in His priestly prayer, Jesus in praying for His disciples said again: “Father, I will that where I am, they also whom Thou hast given Me may be with Me; that they may see My glory which Thou hast given Me, because Thou hast loved Me before the creation of the world.”

These last words are singularly expressive: “I will that where I am [that is to say, in heaven], they also whom Thou hast given Me may be with Me.” The apostles already had supernatural faith. Jesus was asking for them the beatific vision, the vision of the divine essence and of the glory which had been given to Him as man, and which derives from the uncreated glory or essential beatitude which He enjoys as God. He asked for His apostles the perfect grace which He Himself already had, that is, eternal life, which consists in seeing God and Him whom God has sent.

This is how St. John the Baptist and after him St. John the Evan-gelist understood the testimony of the Master. St. John the Baptist said to Jesus’

disciples: “I am not Christ, but . . . I am sent before Him. . . . He must increase, but I must decrease. He that cometh from above, is above all. He that is of the earth, of the earth he is, and of the earth he speaketh. He that cometh from heaven, is above all. And what He hath seen and heard, is above all. And what He hath seen and heard, that He testifieth: and no man receiveth His testimony. . . . For He whom God hath sent, speaketh the words of God: for God doth not give the Spirit by measure. The Father loveth the Son: and He hath given all things into His hand. He that believeth in the Son, hath life everlasting,” that is, he has entered upon eternal life.

The testimony of St. John the Baptist given above is as lofty as that of St. John the Evangelist in the prologue of the Fourth Gospel: “No man hath seen God at any time: the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.” Is this not saying that in contrast to the prophets who had not seen God, the only-begotten Son had seen Him, and that He had seen Him as man, for it was as man that Jesus made God known? This vision is the source of His testimony, infinitely superior to all those that preceded.

In his First Epistle St. John also says: “Dearly beloved, we are now the sons of God; and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like to Him: because we shall see Him as He is.” Then will Jesus’ priestly prayer be answered: “Father, I will that where I am, they also whom Thou hast given Me may be with Me; that they may see My glory which Thou hast given Me.”

The more deeply one contemplates in the real sense of the expres-sion these words of Christ, the more one grasps in the obscurity of faith the truth that our Savior possessed even here on earth the light of glory. It was this light that He manifested to three of His disciples on Mount Thabor when for a few moments His body was transfigured.

Finally, is this not what St. Paul tells us: “In Him, it hath well pleased the Father, that all fullness should dwell; . . . in whom [Jesus] are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” “That . . . you may be able to comprehend, . . . what is the breadth and length and height and depth . . . also the charity of Christ.” “God, who, at sundry times and in divers manners, spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, last of all in these days hath spoken to us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the world. Who being the brightness of His glory, and the figure of His substance, . . . being made so much better

than the angels, as He hath inherited a more excellent name than they." Since Jesus was "appointed heir of all things" even here on earth, He also enjoyed here below the eternal heritage. Otherwise His human intelligence would have been less enlightened than that of the angels whom He already called "His angels" or His ministers in the kingdom of God. Lastly, if Jesus did not already possess the beatific vision here on earth He would have been made more perfect when He received it after His death, His charity would have increased with His knowledge of God. But this is contrary to the teaching of the whole Catholic tradition, according to which Christ did not become better or more perfect. Therefore He did not make the transition from faith to the vision of the divine essence. For, if that had been the case His charity or love of God at the moment of transition would have increased as would habitual created grace, and this is contrary to all traditional teaching concerning the absolute plenitude of grace that Jesus received from the very first instant of His conception.

THE SAVIOR'S CONTEMPLATION ACCORDING TO THEOLOGY

Can theology make even more explicit the meaning of the scriptural passages that we have just quoted? It can and does indeed by means of highly fitting arguments which St. Thomas has admirably presented.

St. Thomas says that Jesus must have possessed even here on earth the vision which thousands of blessed souls have in heaven. Every intelligent being must have the knowledge fitting to his state. This is true of the physician, the magistrate, and the priest. Too often incapable and improvident persons occupy high posts, to the detriment of those whom they are guiding. However, this cannot be the case of those directly chosen by God to be His extraordinary ministers in the transmission of revelation. Thus Providence owed it to itself to give Jesus the science or knowledge proportionate to His mission.

Jesus' mission is that of the Teacher of humanity, charged with leading it to eternal life. He was constituted for all time as the Teacher of teachers, the Master of the apostles, the doctors, the greatest contemplatives. After Him no one will come who is more enlightened or who will teach us better the way that leads to eternal blessedness. Must not the perfect Master, then, possess the evidence of what He is teaching, especially if He is Himself "the way, the truth, and the life"?

The great Sower of truth, charged with telling all human genera-tions until the end of time “the words of eternal life,” must have known this eternal life even while He was still on earth. He knew the divine essence not “through a glass in a dark manner” but “face to face” according to St. Paul’s words.

The divine essence that St. Paul probably saw for a brief moment in an ecstasy, Jesus saw continually here on earth through His human intelligence, without needing to interrupt His conversation with His apostles. He was above ecstasy, and His words were so luminous precisely because His intelligence was perpetually illumined by this spiritual sun which never suffered eclipse even while He slept, even during the dark hour of His passion.

Millions of souls in heaven enjoy this contemplation, and they have attained it only through the merits of Jesus Christ. Could He, then, have been deprived of that which He gave to others through His merits? The Master of all humanity must have had the vision of the goal toward which He was leading it. This is the principal reason given by St. Thomas.

There is a second reason. It was fitting that He should have this vision so that He might possess a clear knowledge of His own divinity and not merely believe in it obscurely. We do not yet fully grasp the immense difference between believing and seeing. We shall have a clear knowledge of this difference the moment we enter heaven.

Finally, the third reason is that Jesus is the natural heir of God, as St. Paul tells us. Even as man, Jesus is the Son of God by nature, and not by adoption as we are. But the natural heir enjoys his heritage from the start. Jesus has therefore had eternal life as a birthright. The fullness of grace which He received at the moment of His conception must have blossomed forth at that very instant, otherwise Jesus would have become more perfect afterward. This, as we have seen, is contrary to the Second Council of Constantinople. For had this been the case, His charity, His love of God, would have increased later on when He emerged from the obscurity of faith and received the light of glory.

The fact that the upper reaches of Christ’s soul enjoyed the beatific vision even here on earth is not irreconcilable with the fact that Jesus was still in a sense a wayfarer toward eternity. He was proceeding toward eternal life in His mortal body which was still subject to suffering and in His soul as well, inasmuch as it too was still capable of suffering and like ourselves knew

through acquired knowledge, which is the fruit of experience and reflection. Thus Jesus was at once wayfarer and comprehensor. He enjoyed beatitude in the highest reaches of His soul, and He was a voyager in its less elevated parts which were in contact with the hardships of His life as Savior and victim.

Even during His passion He did not lose the beatific vision, but He freely prevented the irradiation of the light of glory upon His lower reason and sense faculties. He did not wish this light and the joy that proceeds from it to lessen in any way by their radiance the sorrow which was invading Him from all sides. He completely yielded Him-self up to suffering, so that the holocaust might be perfect. Thus, although in a much less perfect manner, did the martyrs in the midst of their sufferings rejoice, as they gave their blood in testimony of their faith in Christ.

What did Jesus' human intelligence contemplate under the light of glory? The divine essence, the Blessed Trinity, which He already knew in a more perfect manner than did the angels inasmuch as His sacred soul through its personal union with the Word was nearer to God than they. He also contemplated in the divine essence everything that related to His universal mission as head of the kingdom of God, as leader of men and of angels, as judge of the living and of the dead. This is to say that in God He already knew all creatures, all souls, all that they have done, are doing, and will do. He knew the number of the elect, on what day and at what hour this number will be complete: in other words, at what hour the world will come to an end. Nor is there anything about the angelic world that He did not know, for the angels are His ministers in the kingdom of His Father, and He has said that they are "His angels" whom He will send on judgment day to gather the elect.

We can now understand what St. John of the Cross wrote for contemplatives in his Ascent of Mount Carmel (Bk. II, chap. 22) : "In the law of Scripture the inquiries that were made of God were lawful. . . . But now that the faith is founded in Christ, and, in this era of grace, the evangelical law has been made manifest, there is no reason to inquire of Him in that manner. . . . For, in giving us, as He did, His Son, which is His Word—and He has no other—He spoke to us all together, once and for all. . . . And this is the sense of that passage with which St. Paul begins . . . `God, who, at sundry times and in divers manners, spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, last of all, in these days hath spoken to us by His Son [Heb. 1:1]. .

. ‘ Wherefore he that would now inquire of God, or seek any vision or revelation, would not only be acting foolishly, but would be committing an offense against God, by not setting his eyes altogether upon Christ, and seeking no new thing or aught beside. . . . Set thine eyes on Him alone, for in Him I have spoken and revealed to thee all things, and in Him thou shalt find yet more than that which thou askest and desirest. For thou askest locutions and revelations, which are the part; but if thou set thine eyes upon Him, thou shalt find the whole for He is My complete locution and answer, and He is all My vision and all My revelation; so that I have spoken to thee, answered thee, declared to thee and revealed to thee, in giving Him to thee as thy brother, companion and master, as ransom and as reward. For since that day when I descended upon Him with My Spirit on Mount Thabor, saying: ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye Him [Matt. 17:5],’ I have left off all these manners of teaching and answering, and I have entrusted this to Him. Hear Him; for I have no more faith to reveal, neither have I any more things to declare.”

Jesus is the Master of teachers, the Master of the greatest contemplatives. He saw immediately in the divine essence what He taught. That is why the more souls advance the more they forsake all other books and seek nourishment only in the Gospel or in the words of our Savior.

In an order inferior to the beatific vision, Jesus also had the infused knowledge which is possessed by the angels and which is sometimes granted in a measure to the saints, as when, for example, the apostles after Pentecost preached in foreign languages without having learned them. Jesus also knew the various dialects better than did the apostles through the grace of Pentecost.

Finally, Christ Jesus, like all other men, had the knowledge of experience which He rapidly gained through the exercise of His senses and of His intelligence. This was one more of His perfections, which was not made useless by reason of His superior knowledge, for even though experience taught Him the same things He already knew by other means, it taught Him to know them in a different way. He foresaw far in advance and infallibly that He would be crucified at a given hour on a certain day. Yet when the moment of the crucifixion came, the experience of pain taught Him in a way something new that no prevision could reveal to Him in the same degree. Thus, St. Paul tells us: “And whereas indeed He [Jesus] was the Son of God, He learned obedience by the things which He suffered: and being

consummated, He became, to all that obey Him, the cause of eternal salvation."

Thus did Christ's human intelligence contemplate even here on earth, under the illumination of His divine intelligence. Let us meditate on the light of His sacred soul, and the supernatural riches which it possessed from the very first moment of His life. He knew us be-forehand and He knows our entire existence as it is in the book of life. He knew then and He knows now all the hereditary influences that have contributed to form our temperaments. He knows all our natural aptitudes, all the supernatural graces we have received and those we have refused. He sees all our acts, past, present, and future. He sees the state of our souls thirty years from now, three hundred years and three thousand years from now. He knows our faults much better than we do; and what deep humility this should inspire in us! He knows the exact moment and the circumstances of our death, and what will follow for each one of us.

Lord Jesus, give us Thy light when we pray, lead us from reasoned meditation on Thy perfections to the prayer of the heart which will unite us more intimately to Thyself. Thou art the Good Shepherd who leads His sheep into eternal pastures. Make Thy words come to realization within us: "The sheep hear his [the shepherd's] voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. . . . I am the Good Shepherd; and I known Mine, and Mine know Me. . . . My sheep hear My voice: and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them life everlasting; and they shall not perish forever, and no man shall pluck them out of My hand. That which My Father hath given Me, is greater than all: and no one can snatch them out of the hand of My Father. I and the Father are one."

XIII

THE HUMAN WILL OF OUR SAVIOR

> “As the Father hath given Me commandment, so do I.”
>
> John 14:31

NOW that we have spoken of the human intelligence and of the contemplation of Jesus, we must consider His human will and the eminent perfection of His liberty.

The Church has defined that Jesus has two wills, as He has two intelligences: a divine and untreated will, the property of His divine nature, and a human will, the property of His human nature. If our Savior did not indeed have a human will beneath His divine will, He would not be truly a man, and He would not have been able to obey or to merit. For obedience and merit presuppose the submission of a will inferior to another that is more elevated.

THE MYSTERY

The human will of Jesus possesses a very high perfection and a great mystery: His will was even here on earth impeccable, and yet it was perfectly free in obeying and in meriting.

Not only did Jesus never disobey His Father in actual fact, but He could not disobey Him. He was impeccable by reason of His divine personality, by reason of the inamissible plentitude of grace and of the beatific vision which were His. For these three reasons He was absolutely impeccable. Yet He obeyed freely, with perfect liberty, which is not merely spontaneity but the absence of necessity in making a choice (libertas non sawn a coactione, sed a necessitate).

How can obedience be free and meritorious when disobedience is not possible? This mystery is so great in the eyes of some theologians who have been unable to avoid contradiction, that they have claimed that Jesus had not received from His Father the commandment, the obligation to die for us. His Father, according to their reasoning, merely suggested or counseled this sacrifice, without requiring it of Him, and Jesus accepted it freely.

This manner of thinking, which is foreign to the doctrine of the great masters, has no foundation whatever in Scripture. On the con-trary, Jesus in the Gospel speaks several times of the commandment He received from His Father, the commandment to die for us: “I lay down My life, that I may take it again. No man taketh it away from Me: but I lay it down of Myself, and I have power to lay it down: and I have power to take it up again. This commandment have I received of My Father.”

Likewise, after the Last Supper and just before the Passion Jesus said again: “I will not now speak many things with you. For the prince of this world cometh, and in Me he hath not anything. But that the world may know, that I love the Father: and as the Father hath given Me commandment, so do I. Arise, let us go hence” (John 14:30 f.). When St. Paul told the Philippians (2:8) that “Christ Jesus . . . humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross,” he was speaking of this commandment and not of a mere counsel.

Besides, Jesus spoke of other divine commands that constituted an obligation for His human liberty: “If you keep My commandments, you shall abide in My love; as I also have kept My Father’s commandments, and do abide in His love.”

How, then, are we to reconcile this free and meritorious obedience of Jesus with His absolute impeccability? This will always remain a mystery for us here on earth, but it appears impossible only to those who conceive of liberty after the manner of the world and not after the manner of saints. Liberty, in the eyes of the world, is freedom to disobey as well as to obey, freedom to do evil as well as to do good. True liberty, according to the saints, is not freedom to disobey but only to obey, it is not freedom to do evil, but only freedom to do good. Now this liberty of goodness is supreme in Jesus.

Liberty in the eyes of the world is the power to choose between good and evil, between duty and selfish whims, between obedience and revolt. It is

the power to say with Satan: “I will not obey.” One might as well claim that reason is the faculty for knowing what is false as well as what is true.

If liberty is thus understood, clearly it is impossible to see how Jesus was free, He who never rebelled against divine authority or the commandments of His Father, and who could not rebel against them.

But as reason is the faculty for knowing the true and not the false (although it can be put to bad use by incorrect thinking), so true liberty, according to God and the saints, is the power to choose not between good and evil but between several goods whose attraction does not necessitate the will. It is this free will that exists in God, in the sacred soul of our Savior, and among the blessed in heaven. In order to understand it, let us rise for a moment to the contemplation of God’s impeccable liberty. We will then realize that the human liberty of Jesus is the purest image in the created order of God’s own liberty.

GOD’S IMPECCABLE LIBERTY

It is clear that God is both sovereignly free and absolutely impec-cable. He is in no sense free to sin, that is, to turn away from Himself, from His divine goodness that he necessarily loves. Yet He enjoys sovereign liberty in the order of goodness, inasmuch as His divine goodness leads Him to love the creatures which He can create or fail to create as He wills. It is with perfect liberty that He created us to manifest His goodness. This is the dogma of divine liberty.

There is indeed a mystery in all this, but there is no contradiction: whereas it was truly fitting that God should create, yet He did so with perfect liberty, so that there would have been no disadvantage to Him had He not created. The theologians say with great exactness: “Creatio ita conveniens est ut non creatio non sit inconveniens.” Contrary to Leibnitz’ view, God would not have been less good and less wise if He had not created, for as Boussuet says, “God is no greater for having created the universe.” Before creation, God was already infinite, so that after creation there is not any more being but only several beings, there is not more life but only many living beings. As St. Thomas says, “since the goodness of God is perfect, and can exist without other things inasmuch as no perfection can accrue to Him from them, it follows that His willing things apart from Himself is not absolutely necessary.”

Likewise God has freely raised angels and men to the life of grace, and He could without any disadvantage to Himself not have so raised them. Furthermore, God has freely willed the Incarnation, and He might well not have willed it and have remitted sin in some other way.

So, too, God sows the divine seed in men's souls in greater or less abundance, according to His good pleasure. "The Spirit breathes where He will." It is with perfect liberty, of course, that God has chosen one race of people rather than another which by its patriarchs and prophets would prepare the way for the mystery of Redemption. It is with perfect liberty that He chose within this people Mary rather than some other virgin to become the Mother of the Savior, and Joseph rather than any other just man to be the foster father of Jesus. It is with complete liberty also that God chose one century rather than another for the coming of the Messiah, just as He freely chose a given hour for the creation or beginning of the universe and another hour for the end of the world when the number of the elect will be com-plete.

This is the sovereign liberty which is admirably reconciled with absolute impeccability. God cannot turn away from Himself. He is absolutely impeccable, but He is perfectly free with regard to all created things. He does not have the liberty of evil, which is a form of our defectiveness, but He has the liberty of goodness in its absolute fullness.

CHRIST'S IMPECCABLE LIBERTY, THE PERFECT IMAGE OF GOD'S LIBERTY

The sacred soul of our Savior enjoys now and enjoyed while on earth through grace a human liberty superior to that of the angels. No created liberty ever was or ever will be more conformable to divine liberty. Our Savior's human liberty was from the first moment the living image of God's liberty.

As we have just said, God is free, not to love His own divine goodness, but to desire to manifest His goodness by creating us who had no right whatever to existence. And as God is infinitely good and wise from all eternity He did not become any better by freely creating the universe. Thus God enjoys both absolute impeccability and the sovereign liberty which can be exercised only in the order of goodness.

Now, Christ's human will is the pure image of the uncreated will, since it is the human will of the Word of God made flesh, superior to the angels and

to all the blessed in heaven.

We must conclude, therefore, that Christ's human will is like God's, of which it is the image, at once absolutely impeccable and perfectly free, possessing a liberty which can be exercised only in the order of goodness.

Like God, the sacred soul of Christ while here on earth was free, not to love divine goodness in itself, which He clearly saw in the light of the beatific vision, but to love the manifestation of divine goodness in creatures.

Christ's sacred soul while here on earth loved God seen face to face with a love superior to liberty, just as God loves Himself necessarily; but Christ loved creatures freely, as finite manifestations of God's infinite goodness.

So it was that Jesus was free to call to the apostolate His first twelve disciples rather than other Galilean fishermen. He was free to choose Peter rather than another of His apostles to become His vicar, the head of His Church. He was free to call John to a friendship of predilection. He was free to convert Saul on the road to Damascus on a given day and at a given hour, and to make him or not to make him the Apostle of the Gentiles. He was free to choose among several goods within the order of goodness itself, but He was not free to will evil. His impeccable liberty could not deviate, just as His human intelligence, always enlightened by divine light, could not err.

Can a Command Requiring a Free Act

Destroy the Liberty of That Act?

A precept or commandment in the true sense certainly takes away the moral liberty to act otherwise, since it constitutes a moral obligation. For the contrary act is illicit and forbidden. But no commandment takes away the psychological liberty to act in conformity with its demands. On the contrary, a free act of obedience is required, and if the precept destroyed the psychological liberty of this act, it would destroy itself as a precept. For example, the commandment to love our neighbor makes the contrary act of hatred illicit or forbidden, but far from destroying the liberty of our act of love for our neighbor, it demands a free and meritorious act.

Our Savior had during His life and still has an impeccable psy-chological liberty, the pure image of God, with regard to all goodness whose attraction did not necessitate His will. We must conclude, therefore, that this impeccable psychological liberty was not destroyed by the divine command to die for us. Otherwise this precept which demanded a free act of love and obedience would have destroyed it-self.

Faced with the command to die for us, Jesus was free in the accomplishment of this inevitable duty. His freedom with respect to this duty was the freedom of goodness and not the freedom of evil. He could not disobey, but as St. Paul tells us, He freely obeyed “unto death, even to the death of the cross.” He had given expression to this liberty Himself when He said: “I lay down My life. . . . No man taketh it away from Me: but I lay it down of Myself. . . . This commandment have I received of My Father.”

Precisely wherein lies the liberty of this heroic obedience? In order to truly grasp it, we must consider two things. First, this death on the cross, under one aspect is terrible. Secondly, under another aspect it is eminently salutary for us, for the deliverance of souls. This death does not invincibly attract the human will of our Savior, as the goodness of His Father whom He sees face to face attracts Him. On the one hand, this horrible death is repugnant to Christ’s sensibility and to every fiber of His human nature. On the other hand, it attracts our Savior as being the consummation of His mission. The commandment that is also related to it does not change the nature of this death, at once dreadful and salutary. Nor can this commandment destroy the liberty of the free act which it demands.

Under these conditions, what will be the deciding factor causing one or the other of these contrary aspects of a death at once horrible and attractive to prevail? The will of Jesus intervenes here freely, giving the preference to the good, to heroic sacrifice; but as this will is fundamentally righteous, it always intervenes in the correct manner. It intervenes freely because death on the cross is not in itself a good that invincibly attracts. Quite the contrary. Still, the human will of Jesus intervenes infallibly and impeccably because it is the will of the Word made flesh, because it is enlightened by the beatific vision, because it is full of grace and continually receives a very powerful and very gentle actual grace which, far from doing violence to liberty, actualizes it or puts it into action as is fitting.

Thus Jesus obeyed freely, although He could not have disobeyed. One catches a glimpse of this mystery when, for example, an act of painful obedience is required of a good religious. He obeys freely, without even thinking that he could, if he chose, disobey. He might be forbidden, for instance, to go to the bedside of a loved one who is dying, since the trip would be too long and another priest could just as well perform the last rites. This may be a most painful act of obedience required of him, but he accomplishes it freely. The idea does not even occur to him that he might

disobey. As the virtue of obedience develops, it leads a soul further and further from the con-trary act. It takes away the liberty of evil, but certainly not the liberty of goodness. In Jesus' soul this virtue, like the virtue of charity, is absolutely eminent and inamissible.

In heaven Jesus retains this liberty of goodness, even though He can no longer merit, since the hour for merit has passed. He has reached the end of His journey, He is no longer a wayfarer. Yet He retains the liberty of goodness, if not in the act of loving God seen face to face, at least in His love for creatures. The same is true of the saints. St. Dominic in his heavenly abode loves God whom he clearly knows with a love superior to liberty, but it is freely that he prays for one or another of his sons to obtain certain graces for them. If this is true of each of the blessed in heaven, it is much more true of our Savior.

In addition, our Lord's sensibility while He was on earth was per-fectly obedient to His infallible intelligence and to His impeccable will. His emotions or passions, such as melancholy, fear, sensible joy, never went beyond the bounds of moderation. These emotions never took precedence over reasoned judgment and the consent of the will, as happens with us, but always followed them. When Jesus became angry with the merchants in the Temple, it was because it was His considered judgment that He must manifest to them His holy anger, the zeal for the glory of God. And if He was "sorrowful even unto death" at Gethsemane, it was because He willed to know this over-whelming misery so that the holocaust might be complete.

What a great lesson there is for us in this doctrine of the impeccable liberty of Christ! It teaches us that true liberty consists in being able to choose the good, not evil, just as reason is the faculty of knowing the true, not the false, though it may at times go astray. When the Church has condemned some error such as Jansenism or Modernism, there have been persons who have said: "We must either submit or depart." On the contrary, there is absolutely one thing only to do: obey and not disobey.

This doctrine also teaches us that the more we love God, as our Lord and the saints do, the freer we shall be with respect to all created goods to dominate the attraction of worldly goods and not to fear the threats of the impious. The martyrs have demonstrated the power of Christian liberty, which endures all kinds of torture rather than be unfaithful to God, and which is more concerned with union to God than with union to the body.

Let us ask our Lord that He continually decrease our inclination toward evil by making virtue thrive in us, and by confirming our will in the direction of goodness, so that it may one day be definitely con-firmed in goodness in heaven, when sin will no longer be possible and when we shall have become through the power of Christ impeccable and truly free, enjoying the liberty of the children of God.

PART TWO

OUR SAVIOR'S LOVE FOR US AND THE MYSTERY OF REDEMPTION

XIV

THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS ON THE MYSTERY OF THE REDEMPTION

IN THE preceding pages we have dealt with the mystery of the Incarnation, with the personality of Jesus, His sanctity, the con-templation of His human intelligence, His human will that is at once free and impeccable. We are now about to consider the mystery of the Redemption according to the testimony of the Gospel and of the Epistles, in order to determine the relation to this mystery of our Savior's interior life as priest and victim.

In our Lord's teaching, the mystery of the Incarnation is intimately bound up with the mystery of the Redemption. For the name "Jesus" means Savior or Redeemer, and, as the Creed proclaims, it was to re-deem us that the Word was made flesh. "I believe in one God, the Father almighty . . . and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God . . . who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate . . . and was made man" (Nicene Creed).

We know, of course, that the Modernists have claimed that the doctrine concerning the expiatory character of Christ's death is not evangelical, but merely Pauline, that is, the fruit of St. Paul's personal reflections on the death of Jesus.

How were the Modernists led to entertain such a notion? Because, following in the footsteps of the liberal Protestants who had almost become rationalists, they sought to suppress all supernatural elements in the mystery of the Redemption and to reduce it to the level of a truth of the natural order. Following this trend of thought, they have claimed that the Redemption as the Catholic Church has always un-derstood it, is contrary to God's mercy and justice.

The Catholic concept of the Redemption is contrary to God's mercy, they have held, because an infinitely merciful God cannot demand as reparation for sin such rigorous satisfaction as is far superior to anything man can offer Him. The answer to the objection is that this view leaves out of consideration the fact that, while God had de-manded such a reparation, He has in His infinite mercy given us His own Son to redeem us. He has loved the world so much as to deign to give to it not only grace and pardon but the Author of grace Himself.

The Modernists further hold that the Redemption as conceived by the Catholic Church, is contrary to divine justice, for it is unjust and cruel to strike an innocent person in place of those who are guilty. Is this not to forget that our Savior is a voluntary victim, who generously offered Himself up for us?

By thus deviating from the fundamental truths of Christianity the Modernists and the liberal Protestants have entirely removed from the death of Jesus on the cross its supernatural character. In their eyes Jesus is only a wise man, a saint who was not understood by His contemporaries, and who courageously died rather than renounce His ideas. He did not die to make reparation in our place, to redeem us, to give us supernatural grace, to merit eternal life for us. His death, as they see it, has value only as an example, such as had the death of Socrates or Leonidas. His death is the greatest example of strength and greatness of soul amid the most terrible trials.

This is what becomes of a supernatural mystery when viewed with the eyes of human wisdom, which in seeking to explain everything naturally finds only darkness in the faith of the Church, the faith of all the martyrs, and of all the saints.

We shall see that contrary to these naturalistic views this doctrine of the Church has been clearly expressed in the words of our Lord preserved in the four Gospels. We shall then see that this doctrine is also to be found in the Acts of the Apostles and in St. Paul's writings.

THE MYSTERY OF THE REDEMPTION IN THE FIRST THREE GOSPELS

First of all, let us bear in mind that Jesus manifested the mystery of the Incarnation only by slow degrees, because men's souls would not have been able to bear all at once such a lofty revelation. The same is true of His announcement of His painful passion, for it was even more difficult to bear

the revelation of this mystery, especially for the Jews who, because of their national prejudices, were awaiting a temporal and conquering Messiah who would have made them dominant over other peoples.

Let us bear in mind also that Jesus began to announce His painful passion to His disciples only after He had brought them to believe in His divine sonship, in His divinity. Only after Peter's confession at Caesarea, in which he professed his belief that Jesus was "the Son of the living God," did our Lord begin "to show to His disciples, that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things . . . and be put to death." This mystery which had been announced repeatedly by the prophets, especially in certain Messianic psalms and by Isaias, was difficult to accept. It required a great spirit of faith.

Let us see how our Lord manifested this mystery progressively, according to the first three Gospels and also according to St. John. It is like a leitmotif, at first soft but powerful, which gradually grows louder and finally bursts forth and is dominant.

At the start of His ministry, in the synagogue at Nazareth Jesus read in the book of the prophet Isaias: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, wherefore He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor, He hath sent Me to heal the contrite of heart: to preach deliverance to the captives, and sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of reward." This is more than an example of high virtue. The announcement is general, but it is certainly clear, and it was to become progressively clearer.

A little later, as we read in St. Matthew, after Matthew the publican is called to the apostleship, as Jesus was at table in Matthew's house together with many publicans and sinners who had joined Him and His disciples for the feast, the Pharisees said to the disciples: "Why doth your master eat with publicans and sinners? But Jesus hearing it, said: They that are in health need not a physician, but they that are ill. Go then and learn what this meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice. For I am not come to call the just, but sinners." But mention was not made of the cruel passion He was to suffer. It was too early for that.

It was only after Peter had confessed at Caesarea that Jesus was "Christ the Son of the living God," that "Jesus began to show to His disciples, that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the ancients and scribes and chief priests, and be put to death, and the third day rise again."

Peter, drawing Him aside, began to rebuke Him, saying: “Lord, be it far from Thee, this shall not be unto Thee.” But Jesus, turning to Peter, said: “Go behind Me, Satan, thou art a scandal unto Me: because thou savorest not the things that are of God, but the things that are of men.”

Peter indeed had so little understanding of the things of God when he said these words that he was speaking without knowing it against all of God’s plans for the salvation of mankind, against the motive of the Incarnation or of the coming of the Word made flesh into the world. And he spoke thus because his natural affection for Jesus was so great that he could not bear the announcement of His cruel passion. By contrast, the words of the Stabat Mater are: “Grant that I may bear the death of Christ, following Mary’s example who remained standing at the foot of the cross.”

We should note that it was after the first prediction of His passion that Jesus said: “If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.” This expression, “take up one’s cross,” was then still obscure to His hearers, but it would become increasingly clear.

Again alluding to His sacrifice and to its fruits, Jesus said: “I am come to cast fire on the earth: and what will I, but that it be kindled? And I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptized: and how am I straitened until it be accomplished?”

He announced His passion again even more precisely as He was going up to Jerusalem, before His triumphal entry. It is recorded in St. Matthew: “And Jesus . . . took the twelve disciples apart, and said to them: Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of man shall be betrayed to the chief priests and the scribes, and they shall condemn Him to death, and shall deliver Him to the Gentiles to be mocked and scourged and crucified, and the third day He shall rise again.” The apostles must have been struck by these words, and yet they forgot them during the Passion.

It was then that the mother of the sons of Zebedee approached Jesus with her sons and asked that they might sit, the one on His right and the other on His left in His kingdom. Jesus, alluding to His passion which He had just announced, answered: “Can you drink the chalice that I shall drink?” He then added that, whereas the princes of the Gentiles lord it over them, “the Son of man is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a redemption for many.” Here we have the mystery of the Redemption enunciated by Jesus Himself. It would therefore be difficult to claim, as the Modernists do, that this was the personal notion of St. Paul,

born of his reflection on the life and death of Jesus. Our Lord has told us Himself that He came “to give His life a redemption for many.”

Likewise, in St. Mark we read: “The Son of man . . . is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a redemption for many.” This certainly bespeaks the expiatory character of Jesus’ death.

The Passion was also foretold in the parable of the wicked hus-bandmen: “And last of all he sent to them his son. . . . But the husbandmen seeing the son, said among themselves: This is the heir: come, let us kill him, and we shall have his inheritance. And taking him, they cast him forth out of the vineyard, and killed him.”

Finally the Passion was foretold for the last time during the Last Supper, as recorded in St. Matthew, in St. Mark, and in St. Luke. In St. Matthew we read: “And whilst they were at supper, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke: and gave to His disciples, and said: Take ye and eat: This is My body. And taking the chalice, He gave thanks, and gave to them, saying: Drink ye all of this. For this is My blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many unto remission of sins.”

This was very clear, especially after the preceding predictions of the Passion, and inasmuch as Jesus had already said during the Last Supper: “The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of Him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man shall be betrayed.”

In order to give further warning to His apostles, He added as they proceeded to the Garden of Olives: “All of you shall be scandalized in Me this night. For it is written: I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be dispersed. But after I shall be risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.” And St. Luke adds that our Lord said to Peter: “Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and thou, being once converted, confirm thy brethren.”

This last announcement of the Passion was singularly clear, and by the words of the consecration at the Last Supper, especially those referring to “My blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many unto remission of sins,” it was manifest that during His passion and crucifixion which He had foretold, Jesus would offer His blood as a sacrifice of reparation or of redemption.

None the less, in spite of all these predictions which confirmed those of the Messianic psalms and those of Isaias about the suffering Messiah, the

man of sorrows—in spite of all this light, when the sacrifice began at Gethsemane the apostles fell asleep, and as soon as the Passion started they fearfully forsook our Lord. At the moment when the mystery of the Redemption was accomplished on the cross, at the moment of the Consummatum est, they did not understand that this was the realization of Christ's promises. Many of them even thought that all was lost. And if the apostles behaved in this manner during the dark night of the Passion, how might we expect to react if we were placed in comparable circumstances?

The mystery of the Redemption was clearly announced in the Synoptic Gospels, as we have seen. In one of these Gospels it is also reported that after His resurrection Jesus said to His disciples of Emmaus: "O foolish, and slow of heart to believe in all things which the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and so to enter into His glory?"

THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL

The mystery of the Redemption has been expressed even more perfectly in the Gospel of St. John. In this Gospel, Jesus repeats insistently that He is sent by the Father to do His will and to perfect His work: But this work consists in bearing witness to the truth, and in saving men's souls and giving them eternal life. According to this Gospel, Jesus said to Nicodemus: "So must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting. For God so loved the world, as to give His only begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in Him, may not perish, but may have life everlasting."

To this end, Jesus, the Good Shepherd, gave His life for His sheep. There is no simpler or greater expression of the mystery of the Redemption than the parable of the Good Shepherd: "I am come that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly. I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd giveth His life for His sheep. . . . I am the Good Shepherd; and I know mine, and mine know Me. . . . I lay down My life for My sheep. And other sheep I have, that are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice, and there shall be one fold and one Shepherd. Therefore doth the Father love Me: because I lay down My life, that I may take it again. No man taketh it away from Me: but I lay it down of Myself, and I

have power to lay it down: and I have power to take it up again. This commandment have I received of My Father."

This is indeed the spontaneous oblation of the voluntary victim, and this victim is the Good Shepherd Himself, the Priest above all others, who was to pronounce the priestly prayer before He died. Jesus did not die as the result of unforeseen circumstances, as did Socrates, rather than renounce His ideas. Jesus was sent by God to offer Himself up for us.

At the time of His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, Jesus announced to His disciples that His death would be a triumph, but that before the triumph He would have to be immolated. He told them in fact: "The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. Amen, amen I say to you, unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, itself remaineth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. . . . Now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself." St. John adds: "Now this He said, signifying what death He should die."

A little later, Jesus said: "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Then, during His priestly prayer, He added: "And for them do I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth."

Through the fruits of our Savior's death, Satan was defeated, he lost the rights and the power he had over a sinful humanity, and grace was given back to men. Jesus is the vine, we are the branches: "He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit." St. John speaks in the same vein in his First Epistle: "We have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanseth us from all sin. . . . He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world. . . . By this hath the charity of God appeared toward us, because God hath sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we may live by Him."

St. John develops this doctrine of the precious blood in an admi-rable manner in the Apocalypse, in the canticle sung to the Lamb: "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God, in Thy blood, out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation. And hast made us to our God a kingdom and priests, and we shall reign on the earth."

This is the same teaching that we find in St. Peter's first discourses after Pentecost, as reported in the Acts of the Apostles: "This [Jesus] is the stone which was rejected by you the builders, which is become the head of the

corner. Neither is there salvation in any other. For there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved." "Him hath God exalted with His right hand, to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins."

Finally, St. Peter says in his First Epistle: "You were not redeemed with corruptible things as gold and silver, . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled." "Who His own self bore our sins in His body upon the tree: that we, being dead to sins, should live to justice: by whose stripes you were healed."

Such is the testimony of the Gospels, of the Acts of the Apostles, and of St. Peter's Epistles on the mystery of the Redemption. Hence it cannot be held that the expiatory character of Christ's death is not evangelical, that it is merely the result of St. Paul's personal reflections on the death of Jesus, which he compared with the sacrifices of the Old Law. Our Savior's own words as recorded by St. Matthew and St. Mark tell us that He gave His life "a redemption for many." And St. John the Baptist, before St. Paul, saluted Jesus as "the Lamb of God, . . . who taketh away the sin of the world." Even if we did not have St. Paul's epistles, this testimony would suffice to make us know in the obscurity of faith the very essence of the mystery of the Redemption.

XV

THE REDEMPTION ACCORDING TO ST. PAUL

THE MEANING OF THIS DOGMA AND THE CONTRARY ERRORS

THE testimony of the Gospel, completed by that of the Acts of the Apostles, shows us clearly, as we have already seen, that Jesus “gave His life a redemption for many,” that His blood was shed “for many unto remission of sins,” and that He is “the Lamb of God, . . . who taketh away the sin of the world.” Let us now consider what St. Paul tells us with regard to this dogma of our faith, and seek to grasp its true meaning.

THE TESTIMONY OF ST. PAUL ON THE REDEMPTION

It is false, of course, to pretend that the expiatory character of Christ’s death is not evangelical, but merely the fruit of St. Paul’s personal reflections. The truth of the matter is that the great apostle has made known the full glory of this doctrine. Innumerable passages in his epistles show that the Redemption and sanctification of men were accomplished by the death of Jesus. In fact, he tells us that God delivered His Son up for us, for our sins, for all men, even for the ungodly. This death was an act of obedience, a voluntary gift of Jesus’ love. In the Epistle to the Ephesians we read: “Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath delivered Himself for us, an oblation and a sacrifice to God for an odor of sweetness.” “Christ . . . loved the Church, and delivered Himself up for it; that He might sanctify it, cleansing it by the laver of water in the word of life: that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish.” “Christ our pasch is sacrificed”; in other words, Jesus is the paschal Lamb whose immolation has taken away the sins of the world, as John the Baptist had announced He would.

St. Paul specifies that he is speaking of a sacrifice of expiation. In fact, he wrote to the Romans: “For all have sinned, and do need the glory of God. Being justified freely by His grace, through the Redemption, that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath proposed to be a propitiation, through faith in His blood, to the showing of His justice, for the remission of former sins.”

St. Paul also shows that the death of Jesus on the cross was a redemption by substitution: “You are bought with a great price.” “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.” This is the same idea that Jesus expressed in St. Mark: “The Son of man . . . is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a redemption for many.”

St. Paul again affirms this doctrine: “For there is . . . one mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus: who gave Himself a redemption for all,” that is, who delivered us for a ransom, at the price of His own blood, the supreme expression of His love.

Contrary to the opinion of a number of Protestant liberals, St. Paul holds that the dying Christ substituted Himself for sinful mankind, since he says: “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us” on the cross. “Him, who knew no sin, He hath made sin for us, that we might be made the justice of God in Him.” That is to say, God treated Him like sin for us, and Jesus had in actual fact taken all our sins upon Himself in order to expiate them. “Jesus Christ, our Lord . . . was delivered up [to death] for our sins, and rose again for our justification.”

Thus by His death Christ delivered us from sin, from the snares of the devil. He freed us from the Mosaic Law which was an occasion of sin. The result of all this is the attainment of true liberty by all Christians, “so that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.”

Moreover, Christians are reconciled with God: by Christ’s blood they are cleansed, sanctified, justified, accepted as adopted sons of God, and heirs of heaven. The victory will be complete at the end of the world, when death will be thoroughly vanquished by resurrection. Then, too, will the Redemption be fully accomplished, “when this mortal hath put on immortality. . . . Thanks be to God, who hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The doctrine of the expiatory nature of Jesus’ death on the cross is not the fruit of St. Paul’s personal reflections. It is an evangelical doctrine which was clearly formulated on several occasions by Jesus Himself. But it

was St. Paul's mission to bring out all its glory, not only through the texts which we have just quoted but also through his teaching on the sacraments, especially baptism and the Holy Eucharist, inasmuch as the Mass perpetuates in substance in an unbloody manner the Sacrifice of the Cross, so that its fruits may be applied to each succeeding generation until the end of the world.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE REDEMPTION AND ITS THEOLOGICAL EXPLANATION

From St. Paul's testimony, which completes and clarifies that of the Gospel, the real meaning of the Redemption is clearly revealed.

In the general sense of the word, redemption or repurchase is the act by which a person acquires again by paying the required price what he formerly possessed but no longer possesses. Thus we speak of the repurchase of a house or of a piece of property, as captives and prisoners of war are ransomed.

The redemption of the human race can therefore be defined as fol-lows: It is the act by which our Savior, at the price of His own blood (an expression of His love), snatched the human race from slavery to sin and to the devil, and reconciled it with God. In other words, to use the terms dear to both St. Anselm and to St. Thomas: He made satisfaction for our sins, He payed the debt to divine justice, and He merited our salvation. The Council of Trent defines this dogma as follows: "The meritorious cause of our justification is the only-begotten Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, who when we were enemies of God, because of His great love for us, has by His very holy passion on the wood of the cross merited our justification and has made satisfaction for us to God the Father."

The Redemption thus conceived was necessary after the fall of man, if God wished to raise us up again and exact reparation equiva-lent to the gravity of the offense which is mortal sin. It was fitting, of course, that after the fall God should wish to raise us up again. For man's sin, being less grave than that of Satan, is not irremissible, and moreover original sin was voluntary only in the first man.

Yet God could very well have raised us up again by forgiving us and exacting only an imperfect reparation He might have been content to send us a prophet who would have made known to us the conditions of pardon.

God has done infinitely more for us. In exacting a reparation equivalent to the gravity of the offense, He has given us His own Son as Redeemer. If His justice has exacted this reparation, His mercy has given us the Savior who alone was capable of making full reparation for the offense or disorder of mortal sin.

The injury is all the more grave in proportion to the greater dignity of the person offended. It is more serious to insult a magistrate than to insult a passer-by on the street. Mortal sin, by which man with full knowledge and consent scorns divine law on a serious matter by dis-obeying that law, mortal sin by which man turns away from God, thus has infinite gravity. For mortal sin practically denies God the infinite dignity of being our final end, and falsely sets a wretched created good as our final end. If an offense increases in gravity with the dignity of the person offended, the injury done to God by mortal sin is limitless in gravity; it denies Him the infinite dignity of Sovereign Good. In order to understand in full the gravity of this injury, it would be necessary to have seen God. The angels and saints understand this far better than the devils and even the most perverse beings.

To repair this disorder, an act of love of God of infinite value was necessary. But no creature that is a creature and no more can give infinite value to its acts of love. Even if such an act is supernatural, the fruit of grace and of infused charity, it remains finite, like the creature from which it proceeds, like created grace and charity, even though this act has an infinite object, namely, God Himself. We can love God who is infinite, but we cannot love Him infinitely. He alone is capable of loving Himself in this manner.

Therefore, for a human soul to make an act of love of God infinite in value, that human soul had to belong to a divine person. Such was the soul of the Word made flesh. Our Lord’s soul drew from the divine personality of the Word infinite capacity for satisfying and meriting. It was the act of love of a human soul, but also that of a divine person. For this reason, it is called a theandric act, both divine and human.

This is the essence of the mystery of the Redemption, which St. Thomas expresses in these terms: “He properly atones for an offense who offers something which the offended one loves equally, or even more than he detested the offense. But by suffering out of love and obedience, Christ gave more to God than was required to compensate for the offense of the whole human race. First of all, because of the exceeding charity from which

He suffered; secondly, on account of the dignity of His life which He laid down in atonement, for it was the life of one who was God and man; thirdly, on account of the extent of the Passion, and the greatness of the grief endured, as stated above. And therefore Christ's passion was not only a sufficient but a superabundant atonement for the sins of the human race; according to I John 2:2: `He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.' "

In short, the love of Christ dying on the cross for our sakes was more pleasing to God than the totality of all men's sins can displease Him. It is on this point above all others that we should pause in contemplation. Everything else converges toward the contrast expressed in the two words: Sin and redemptive love.

THE DEPTH OF THIS MYSTERY AND THE ERRORS OPPOSED TO IT

Here indeed is a great mystery. As the Catechism of the Council of Trent tells us: "If the human mind finds difficulties elsewhere, it is incontestably in the mystery of the Redemption that it meets the greatest difficulties of all. It is hard for us to conceive that our salva-tion depends upon the Cross and upon Him who let Himself be nailed to it for love of us. But it is in this very fact that, according to the teaching of the Apostle, we must admire the sovereign providence of God. For, `seeing that in the wisdom of God the world, by wisdom, knew not God, it pleased God, by the foolishness of our preaching, to save them that believe. . . . We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews indeed a stumbling block, and unto the Gentiles foolishness: but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.' "

The Catechism of the Council of Trent continues: "It can be said that the mystery of the Cross, humanly speaking, is more than any other outside the conceptions of reason. That is why, since Adam's sin, God has never ceased announcing the death of His Son, at times through figures of speech, and again through the oracles of the prophets."

There is a most powerful chiaroscuro in this mystery, especially when we also consider the application of our Savior's merits.

On the one hand, it is clear that God's mercy bends down toward us to raise us up. But what is obscure is the intimate reconciliation of this most tender mercy with the exigencies of infinite justice. We firmly believe both

are united in God and in the bruised heart of Jesus, a voluntary victim dying through love of us. We believe this, but we do not see it; and to our superficial gaze it seems that such rigorous justice places limits upon infinite mercy. We do not yet see how they are two forms or two virtues of uncreated love, which are identified in it without any real distinction. Still we can perceive that avenging justice is itself a proclamation of the rights of the Sovereign Good to be loved above all else.

If we stray from the straight path that leads toward these heights, we deviate toward two errors each opposed to the other: either the error of the first Protestants, or the error of their successors who reacted against them.

The first Protestants, Luther, Calvin, and their disciples, falsified the mystery of the Redemption by saying: Christ took our sins upon Himself to the point of becoming odious to His Father, and both on the cross and in His descent to hell, He suffered the torments of the damned. Thenceforth they have added, there remains nothing for us to do and to suffer for salvation, but only to believe in the merits of Christ.

This interpretation of the Redemption makes of it a mystery not superior but contrary to right reason. How could the Word of God made flesh have become odious to His Father? How could He who is God Himself, who is the truth and the life, have endured in the uppermost regions of His soul the torment of the damned, the priva-tion of God? Luther and Calvin have sought to find in the Redemption a penal compensation, a physical torment, rather than a work of spiritual love, and they also suppressed the necessity of love in our life, by saying that all that is necessary is to believe. How could faith without love, without obedience to the precepts, suffice for salvation?

These manifestly inadmissible excesses of the first Protestants pro-voked the reaction of present-day liberal Protestants, who fall into the contrary error when they say: Christ did not die to expiate our sins and to obtain for us grace and eternal life; but He saved us solely through His doctrine and His example, like the prophets and the martyrs, though His heroism did surpass theirs.

The Catholic doctrine rises like a mountain peak above these two contrary errors. It tells us that Jesus has redeemed us not merely by

His example and His doctrine, but by making satisfaction for our sins and by meriting for us grace and eternal life. He offered Himself up for us, especially on the cross, like a veritable host.

There is certainly a profound mystery in all this. Yet this dogma, in affirming the exigencies of divine justice, is in no respect contrary to God's mercy, as the liberal Protestants claim. Conversely, we shall see that God the Father in asking His Son to die for us as a victim has loved Him with a supremely great love, since He has wished thereby to make Him the victor over sin, the devil, and death. Those who have accepted suffering for the salvation of souls enter into the depths of this mystery. At the same time God has wished to proclaim the rights of the Sovereign Good to be loved above all else and to forgive us our sins because of the love of His Son, who was a voluntary victim for us.

Far from destroying each other in being thus united on the cross, divine mercy and justice rest in a way upon each other, like the two arcs of a circle that form a pointed arch, and the exigencies of justice are revealed to be the consequences of love's own exigencies. Love of the good requires that evil be atoned for, and it gives us the Redeemer, so that this reparation may be offered up and that we may regain eternal life.

The full grandeur of this mystery is manifest in St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians: "God (who is rich in mercy) for His exceeding charity wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together in Christ (by whose grace you are saved) and hath raised us up together, and hath made us sit together in the heavenly places, through Christ Jesus, that He might show in the ages to come the abundant riches of His grace, in His bounty toward us in Christ Jesus."

XVI

GOD’S LOVE FOR HIS SON IN THE MYSTERY OF THE REDEMPTION

> “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself.”
>
> John 12:32

WE HAVE seen what the exact meaning of the dogma is according to St. Thomas: The love of Christ dying for us on the cross pleased God more than the totality of all men’s sins can displease Him.

In order to delve more deeply into this mystery, we must consider how it is the manifestation of the untreated love of God for His Son and for us.

At first blush it might seem that God the Father appears to be cruel to His Son by striking down an innocent person in place of the guilty. This is what the liberal Protestants hold, in their reaction against the thought of Luther and Calvin. It might also seem that God the Father loves us more than He loves His Son, since He has delivered up His Son for us.

This is not so at all, but is but a very inferior view of the matter. This mystery is incomparably superior to any such contentions.

GOD HAS WISHED FOR HIS SON THE GLORY OF THE REDEMPTION

St. Thomas Aquinas has written these profound words: “God’s loving one thing more than another is nothing else than His willing for that thing a greater good: because God’s will is the cause of goodness in things; and the reason why some things are better than others, is that God wills for them a greater good. Hence it follows that He loves more the better things. God loves Christ not only more than He loves the whole human race, but more than He loves the entire created universe: because He willed for Him the greater good in giving Him a name that is above all names, so far as He was

true God. Nor did anything of His excellence diminish when God delivered Him up to death for the salvation of the human race; rather did He become thereby a glorious conqueror: the government was placed upon His shoulder, according to Isa. 9:6."

In his treatise on the Incarnation, St. Thomas develops this lofty idea when he inquires: Did God the Father Himself deliver up His Son to His passion and death? He answers by explaining St. Paul's words: "He that spared not even His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all."

In his explanation St. Thomas says: "In three respects God the Father did deliver up Christ to the Passion. In the first way, because by His eternal will He preordained Christ's passion for the deliverance of the human race, according to the words of Isaias: 'The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquities of us all'; and again: `The Lord was pleased to bruise Him in infirmity.' Secondly, inasmuch as, by the infusion of charity [so that it might pour out upon us], He inspired Him with the will to suffer for us; hence we read in the same passage: 'He was offered because it was His own will.' [This was in order that He might accomplish His redemptive mission.] Thirdly, by not shielding Him from the Passion, but abandoning Him to His persecutors: thus we read (Matt. 27:46) that Christ while hanging upon the cross, cried out: 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?' Because, to wit, He left Him to the power of His persecutors, as Augustine says."

What we must consider here is the love of God the Father for His Son, even at the moment that He delivered Him up for us. In this there is a very lofty truth that often passes unnoticed because of its elevation and that must be the object of contemplation for souls whose vocation is one of atonement.

Despite appearances to the contrary, the cross on which Jesus seemed to be vanquished is the trophy of His victory. Jesus said: "If I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all things to Myself." God the Father, through love of His Son, has from all eternity willed for Him this painful triumph, this victory over sin and the spirit of evil. But this far surpasses our human ideas, and we can scarcely find here upon earth even a symbol of this sublime divine love.

Yet, during wartime when a general must sacrifice a handful of men to save his country, who are those that he chooses? He chooses the bravest and those he loves most. He sends for his best lieutenant and tells him categorically: You must be killed to save our country and our army. He

embraces the young man and sends him to his death, a death that is all the more glorious because the peril is greater and because there is no escape from it. The young officer leaves, happy that he has been chosen. His general could not have given him a greater proof of his esteem. He accomplishes his destiny as a soldier.

The story is told that under similar circumstances a Japanese general chose his own son among his lieutenants and asked him to go to his death to save the army. The young man understood how great was his father's love for him and immediately sacrificed himself.

Similarly, what officer is chosen to carry the flag into battle? One of the bravest, for he is the chief target of the enemy and he cannot defend himself. He cannot return blow for blow, because he is holding the flag.

These examples of human heroism give us a faint glimpse of our Savior's heroism and of His Father's love for Him when He delivered Him up for our salvation.

After sending His prophets, of whom several were put to death, God sent His only-begotten Son, as the parable of the wicked husbandmen tells us. God the Father sent His Son to the glorious death of the cross for the salvation of mankind. And, as St. Paul says: When Christ came into the world He said, "Behold I come. . . . Sacrifices and oblations and holocausts for sin Thou wouldest not. . . . Behold I come to do Thy will, O God."

THROUGH LOVE OF HIS SON, GOD ASKED OF HIM THE MOST HEROIC LOVE

It is easy to love one's country when such love costs nothing. It is heroic to love it when under fire. It is easy to love God when every-thing is going our way. It is heroic to love Him when everything goes against us, when friends abandon us, and when heaven itself seems to be closed to us. Let us now consider what was demanded of our Savior?

Love of the good demands the reparation of evil. The stronger the love, the more it demands. God's love of the good demands the repa-ration of sin which ravages souls, which turns them away from their final end, and plunges them into the concupiscence of the flesh, and of the eyes, into the pride of life, and ultimately into eternal death.

When God the Father gave us His Son to redeem us, He could have been content with the smallest act of charity by the Word made flesh. For the least of Jesus' acts derived from the divine personality of the Word an

infinite value to satisfy and to merit. But then we would not have understood the abysmal chaos which is sin. Even now we understand it so little, after all the sufferings which our Savior endured for our sakes.

God the Father did not retreat before the prospect of the painful death of His own Son, and He asked His Son to expiate our sins by terrible sufferings, and by enduring these sufferings through love to make reparation for all criminal sensuality. He called upon His Son to show us by His own absolute denudation all the shame of the concupiscence of the eyes and pleasure-seeking egoism, to make us realize through His own humiliations the utter folly of pride, and to blot out by His heroic love the disorder of hatreds which divide per-sons, families, classes, and peoples.

By thus making the utmost demands of His justice, God was not taking pleasure in punishing. On the contrary, He showed how great is His love of the good and His holy hatred of evil, which is merely the reverse of love. No one can sincerely love the good without hating evil. No one can love truth without hating lies. God cannot love the good with infinite love without hating evil with holy hatred. That is why the exigencies of justice are identified with those of love: “Love is strong as death, jealousy as hard as hell,” says the Canticle of Canticles.

It is this uncreated love of the good united to holy hatred of evil which required of our Savior the most heroic of all acts and sent Him to the glorious death of the cross.

This brings us once again to the very essence of the mystery of the Redemption: God the Father asked of His Son an act of love which would please Him more than the totality of all men’s sins can displease Him, an act of redemptive love, of infinite and superabundant value.

This was to be the Consummatum est, the crowning glory of Christ’s life, victory over sin and over the spirit of evil. This victory of Good Friday is far superior to the victory of Easter, for the Resurrection or victory over death is merely the sign of Christ’s triumph over sin.

Thus it was indeed through love for His Son that God the Father asked Him to die for us. He predestined His Son through love to the glory of the Redemption. What would Jesus’ life have been without Calvary? Similarly but on a far humbler level, what would the life of St. Joan of Arc have been without her martyrdom? And for that matter, what would have been the life of all the others who have been called to shed their blood in testimony of the truth of the Gospel? Without this consummation, their lives would now

seem to us merely mutilated. And we can understand without too great difficulty that it was a predestination of love that sent them to their martyrdom.

The liturgy sings eloquently of this victory of Christ on Good Friday:

Sing, my tongue, the Savior's glory;
Tell His triumph far and wide;
Tell aloud the famous story
Of His Body crucified;
How upon the Cross a Victim,
Vanquishing in death, He died.
Thus did Christ to perfect manhood
In our mortal flesh attain:
Then of His free choice He goeth
To a death of bitter pain;
And as a lamb, upon the altar
Of the Cross for us is slain.
Faithful Cross, O tree all beauteous,
Tree all peerless and divine: . . .
Tree which solely wast found worthy
Earth's great victim to sustain,
Harbor from the raging tempest,
Ark, that saved the world again,
Tree with sacred blood anointed
Of the Lamb for sinners slain.

The depths of the mystery of the Redemption help us to understand why God through love sends such great sufferings to certain souls, to make them labor in union with our Lord, and in a small way like Him, for the salvation of sinners. This is the loftiest of all vocations, superior to the vocation of teaching, just as Jesus was greater on the cross than when He was preaching the Sermon on the Mount.

What greater proof of His love can God give a soul than to make of it a victim of love, in union with the crucified Savior? As the first cause does not obviate the secondary cause, but communicates to it the dignity of causality, so our Savior's sufferings do not render ours useless but raise them up and make us participate in His life.

Let us call to mind, among many others, the example of St. Catherine de Ricci. From 1542 to 1554, a period of twelve years, she ex-perienced each

week an ecstasy of suffering lasting twenty-eight hours, from Thursday at noon until Friday at four in the afternoon, an ecstasy in which she relived every moment of our Savior's passion. Motionless, her face either pale or radiant, her eyes and arms reaching out toward the Beloved, who remained invisible to others present, she followed Him step by step and heart to heart, in each of the stations of this long sacrifice. The witnesses of this fact were aware of the saint's sufferings because her whole being quivered and trembled during this painful way of the cross. When these sufferings began again on the following Thursday, nature must have begged for respite, but our Lord gave this great soul to understand that she must thus unite herself to His passion for the salvation of a certain sinner who was dear to Him or the deliverance of a particular soul in purgatory. It is in this manner that Jesus initiates the souls He loves most into the depths of the mystery of the Redemption.

One of these beloved souls who had offered herself up and who after her oblation saw everything go against her, so to speak, cried out one day when she had been overwhelmed by a new misfortune: "But Lord, what have I done to Thee?" In answer she heard these interior words: "Thou hast loved Me." She then thought of Calvary and un-derstood with greater clearness that the seed must die in order to bear abundant fruit.

Divine Providence calls forth these extraordinary occurrences not for us to consider with curiosity but to make us understand better the grandeur of Jesus' passion. Indeed we should meditate upon it every day. These occurrences also remind us that, if the saints have accepted such sufferings in union with our Savior, we in turn should each day learn to accept better life's daily ups and downs in atonement for our sins, for our sanctification, and so that we too may labor in a measure for the salvation of souls. These extraordinary occurrences are meant to help us understand how much depth there is in the ordinary course of a genuinely Christian life, from early morning Mass and Com-munion throughout the day until night prayers are said at the close of the day.

We should grasp a little better each day the splendors of the liturgy of the Passion, those sublime verses which express lofty contempla-tion and great love:

Forth comes the Standard of the King.
All hail, thou Mystery ador'd!
Hail, Cross! on which the Life Himself

Died, and by death our life restored!

This is the habitual object of contemplation of the saints.

We can see, therefore, that the demands of justice are ultimately identified with those of love, and mercy wins out because it is the most immediate and deepest expression of God's love toward sinners. The terrible justice of God which first holds our attention is but the secondary aspect of the Redemption, the latter being above all a work of love and mercy.

Divine justice has been appeased by the Just One who bore the burden of human sin in its totality, by the Victim of love who was struck down in our place, by the Word made flesh who died for us.

But mercy also triumphs: God the Father is reconciled through Jesus with sinners, and restores grace to them. He offers eternal life to all, even to the most perverted, and He glorifies the Redeemer by giving Him victory over sin, over the devil, and over death. It is with this in mind that St. Paul says: "All is yours; and you are Christ's; and Christ is God's."

This idea has been beautifully rendered by a great painter in the Oratory of the Dominican Superior General at Rome. Above the altar Jesus is represented dying on the cross and offering His life to His Father for our salvation. The Father appears directly above the Savior, receiving His last sigh. In this painting the artist sought to show the harmony between the wills of the Father and of the Son on Calvary. He desired to bring out the fact that on the cross our Lord not only accomplished the will of His Father, but also continued to express His love for the Father. Conversely, it was out of love for His Son and for us that the Father sent Jesus to the heroic death of the cross, in order to make Him the glorious victor over sin, the devil, and death, the Savior of all men.

That is why in this beautiful painting there is only one gesture: the Father has His arms outstretched to sustain and accept the sacrifice of His Son, and it is on His Father's heart and in His arms that our crucified Lord expires: "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." The expression of the Father is full of mercy and nobility, the Son's expression manifests the full heroism of His love for the Father and for us. This is the very essence, so far as it can be expressed in human terms, of the mystery of the Redemption.

XVII

CHRIST'S REDEMPTIVE LOVE

> "Love is strong as death."
>
> Cant. 8:6

WE HAVE spoken of the mystery of the Redemption in terms of the love of God the Father for His Son, whom He sent to the glorious death of the cross, in order to make Him our Savior and the victor over death. It is fitting now to delve deeper into this mystery and to consider Christ's redemptive love, as expressed by His pierced heart whose last drop of blood was shed for us.

What is perhaps most striking in Jesus' love, whether directed to-ward His Father or toward our souls, is that it intimately unites the greatest tenderness and the most heroic strength in suffering and death. These two qualities of love are too often separated in men's hearts, and yet they are completely interdependent. Tenderness without strength becomes merely languor and affectation. Strength without mercy becomes severity and bitterness. Unlike men, God orders all things with might and sweetness.

THE TENDERNESS AND STRENGTH

of Jesus' Love for His Father

Jesus' love for His Father began at the instant of His conception, in all the fullness of its tenderness and strength. For the rest of us, on the other hand, spiritual love of God usually awakens only very slowly. The life of the senses and of the imagination develops in us before spiritual life, and too often our first tendency is to enjoy the pleasures of the senses which surround us. It sometimes takes many years for generous love to blossom even between members of the same family. This is the love that desires the

welfare of another, which gives itself, lavishes itself, forgets itself, the love that consummates the perfect union of hearts. The progress of our love for God, beyond the reach of the senses, is even more gradual as a rule. The human will is, of course, naturally inclined to love the Author of human nature more than itself, and to love the true and the good. Little by little, we also learn that God is the supreme and wholly supernatural beauty. Yet the efficacious love of God, the desire for His kingdom and His glory, wins out only with great difficulty over our selfishness, and our more or less unruly love of creatures. It succeeds only by slow degrees in inspiring all our affections, vivifying and ennobling them. Our poor hearts are slow to give themselves to God for all eternity.

Christ's heart, on the other hand, did not hesitate a moment to give itself entirely to His Father. From the first instant of His existence, His heart possessed the fullest generosity. As St. Paul says: "When He [Christ] cometh into the world, He saith: Sacrifice and oblation Thou wouldest not: but a body Thou hast fitted to Me. . . . Behold, I come to do Thy will, O God."

No one knows how tender was the filial love of the child Jesus for His Father. Indeed, He loved His Holy Mother and St. Joseph deeply, and from the first moments of His life He loved souls ardently. But how much more did He love His Father in heaven, His one and only Father!

This powerful love derived from the start from the supernatural love that always enlightened His sacred soul. This light revealed to Him without any obscurity the infinite splendor and the infinite good-ness of the heavenly Father. This light guided His preferences, and so He could not err in His choices of affection.

This tender and enlightened love of Jesus for His Father inspired and continues to inspire in Him adoration and thanksgiving. As He Himself told us: "God is a spirit; and they that adore Him, must adore Him in spirit and in truth."

Adoration springs spontaneously from His heart. He is happy to acknowledge that God is infinitely good in Himself, that He is our Creator and our Father. He acknowledges this in practice by bowing with love before His infinite majesty. Jesus even rejoices in His own abasement, in His hidden life, ignored by men. He annihilates Him-self, to some extent, in terms of His human nature, so that He may better recognize God's infinite sanctity. Thus we bow and fall to our knees upon entering a church, to

acknowledge our own nothingness before the infinite greatness of the Most High. But this is only a mo-mentary attitude on our part. We have hours of adoration and hours of forgetfulness and indifference. Christ, for His part, never for a moment ceased adoring His Father, from the first instant of His life until His death on the cross. And this adoration continues now and will continue forever within His sacred soul, in acknowledgment of His Father's infinite goodness and as a song of praise to Him. Christ the Savior is the praise of God.

This tender love also ceaselessly inspires Christ to acts of thanks-giving; for God is not merely good in Himself, He is our benefactor, and no one will ever receive more from Him than did Christ. What manner of thanksgiving has Christ made? He thanks God for Himself and for all creation, for the treasure of supernatural life given to souls: "I confess to Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and the prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones. Yea, Father; for so hath it seemed good in Thy sight."

The strength and generosity of Jesus' love are as great as its tender-ness. From the first moment, this love inspired in Him not only adora-tion and thanksgiving, but reparation as well. In fact, while God is a benefactor, He is also a Father who has been outraged by His children. He is the Creator and Master that thousands of souls refuse to acknowledge, even though they have been created to sing His praises more perfectly than do the stars in the firmament.

Besides, in saying to His Father, "Behold, I come," Jesus from the first moment of His life offered Himself up as a victim of reparation in the place of the guilty, in the place of entire people who through pride and error are unwilling even to pronounce God's name when they need His help most.

Many saints have been enlightened from their childhood with regard to their providential mission, whether apostolic or reparative. Why, then, should not Jesus not have been enlightened regarding His own mission? And from the first moment Jesus, foreseeing Calvary, loved His Father and offered Him in advance His entire life and His death on the cross. This is the strongest and most generous love. It is the love of the Word made flesh which pleases God more than all of men's sins displease Him.

Heart of Jesus, burning furnace of charity, have mercy on us! What is sweeter or more tender than divine charity? What is stronger than the fire in a furnace which burns and consumes all? Hell makes furious efforts against

the Savior, but its rage merely arouses His love to even more heroic acts which change the opprobrium that envelops Him into an incense of adoration. Heart of Jesus, loaded down with opprobrium, have mercy on us! This is strength in the highest degree united to the most profound humility and the greatest tenderness. “Love is strong as death, jealousy as hard as hell.” Jesus, most powerful, have mercy on us! Jesus, meek and humble of heart, have mercy on us! This love is the source of all virtues, of all energy. Heart of Jesus, abyss of all virtues, have mercy on us! Whether the Savior’s heart is touched by an angel or a man, even when the devil strikes it, it always answers with love of God. This created love within Christ’s sacred soul is the highest manifestation of the uncreated love of God.

THE STRENGTH AND TENDERNESS

of Our Savior’s Love for Us

Christ’s love descends upon our souls from the summit of the beatific vision, and in Jesus’ love for us we find the same two qualities which are so different: the deepest tenderness and the most heroic strength. Our Lord’s tender mercy for souls did not lessen for a moment, in spite of all the ingratitude, the opposition, and the hatred that He met on His path.

We human beings find it easy to love with tender affection a few persons in our family or among our friends, but often this tenderness is entirely a matter of superficial feelings. Such affection does not often reach the soul of those whom we love. Do we pray much for them? Do we earnestly desire that they attain eternal life? Moreover, often this affection is as narrow as it is superficial: we save it for a few intimates. Feeble as it is, it would lose much of its purely relative intensity by being diffused. Our hearts are poor, miserly with their affection: the indifferent remain outside, and all the more so those who have offended or wounded us. Toward the latter we are even hard and sometimes pitiless.

The supernatural tenderness of Christ for souls is deep, because its primary object is the soul and the desire for its eternal happiness. At the same time, it is universal, immense, and extends to everyone.

Jesus is, as He Himself says, the Shepherd of souls; all can be-come the sheep of His fold, and He knows each of them by name. He is concerned about those that are absent, He rushes forth to seek them and takes them up on His shoulders.

One of the greatest signs of His coming is this: “The poor have the gospel preached to them.” The poor, as well as children, have a chosen spot in His heart. He does not fear to compromise His dignity by admitting them to His side. He explains to them with kindness the doctrine of salvation, and He even waits upon them. He chooses His apostles among the poor and the humble. On Holy Thursday He humbled Himself before them: He washes and kisses their feet, to make them better understand the precept of fraternal love. Heart of Jesus, delight of all the saints, have mercy on us!

What does He say to sinners? “Come to me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you” (Matt. 11:28). He has pity for the terrible wretchedness to which sin has brought them, and He inspires them to repent without judging them severely. He is the father of the prodigal son, He embraces the child who is unhappy through his own fault. He forgives the adulterous woman who was about to be stoned. He receives repentant Mary Magdalen, and at once opens to her the mystery of His intimate life. He speaks of eternal life to the Samaritan woman in spite of her unsavory past. He promises prompt entry into heaven to the good thief. The words of Isaias the prophet are truly accomplished in Jesus: “The bruised reed He shall not break, and smoking flax He shall not quench.”

Indeed He sharply rebukes the Pharisees who are obstinately rooted in their pride, but it is only because He desires to preserve souls from error, remove them from Pharisaical influences. He also wishes to give the Pharisees a last warning which would still save them if they were not hardened in their pride. In thus warning them, Jesus still loves them. He even gives them grace which makes it possible for them to accomplish their duty.

Christ’s love loses none of its tenderness in embracing all souls. It encompasses all nations and all eras. While He certainly has His preferences, for example, for St. John, for Zacheus, for the good thief, He remains accessible to all. “Christ died for all,” says St. Paul. Many turn from Him, but He drives no one away. And even when many have turned away from Him, He intercedes for the ingrates, as when He prayed for His executioners. This is the supreme degree of mercy, sweetness, and humility. He tells Peter that he must forgive “seventy times seven,” that is, always, and He is the first to do it.

At the same time Jesus’ love for us has such power that His is the greatest of all hearts. Heart of Jesus, king and center of all hearts, have

mercy on us! It is not only for the glory of His Father but also for our salvation that He has chosen to be a victim in our stead. Heart of Jesus, victim of sin, have mercy on us!

The strength and generosity of His love for us is manifested with increasing force from Bethlehem to the cross. As St. Paul tells us, “The Son of God . . . loved me, and delivered Himself for me.” Each of us can repeat these words. The unbelievers wish to see in the dying Christ only a great man crushed by jealous mediocrities. He is infinitely more than that. He is the voluntary victim who offered Himself up to save us. “Greater love than this no man hath,” Jesus Himself has told us, “that a man lay down his life for his friends.”

Generous souls sometimes offer themselves as victims to obtain the conversion of a sinner or to shorten the torments of purgatory for a loved one. Jesus offered Himself as a victim for millions of souls, for all without exception and for each one in particular; and no adult is shut out from the benefits of the Redemption unless he refuses them through pride or to satisfy his passions. Jesus bore the punishment that each of us should have borne. He suffered because of sin in the measure of His love for God whom sin offends, and in the measure of His love for our souls which sin ravages and kills. Heart of Jesus, bruised for our offenses, have mercy on us! The sorrowful and immaculate heart of Mary was intimately associated with this heroic oblation, and helps us to fathom this mystery.

No one has ever loved us or ever will love us as Christ does. That is why, when the faithful of Corinth were divided among themselves, —some of them saying they belonged to Paul, or to Apollo, or to Cephas, or to Christ —St. Paul wrote to them: “Was Paul then crucified for you?”

Jesus has consented to take for Himself the loathsome chalice of Gethsemane, so that He might give us the chalice of His precious blood which is raised up every morning on the altar. These two chalices represent the whole history of the world of souls. They are as it were the two pans of the scales of good and evil, and it is good that prevails. The precious blood of Christ can obliterate all crimes if their perpetrators beg forgiveness.

Jesus, by His victory over sin on the cross, is the source of life and of holiness, the source of all consolation, the salvation of those who hope in Him, the hope of the dying, the delight of the saints, as the Litany of the Sacred Heart reminds us. Finally, He has left us the Eucharist so that He

might remain with us until the end of the world and give Himself as food to each and every one of us.

To His privileged friends who follow His example, He says: “It is My love which keeps open the wound of My heart. I desire to prove to souls that My heart is never closed. On the contrary, My greatest wish is that souls may enter through My wounded heart, which is an abyss of charity and mercy. It is only in the heart of God that they will find solace for their sufferings and strength for their weakness. If they will but hold out their hands to Me, I will lead them to it Myself.”

We remain selfish because our love is too weak, too poor, too narrow, and because it is pitifully engrossed with our own selves. The heart of Jesus will dilate our hearts by teaching us to love above all else the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

Why do we let ourselves fall prey to jealousy or passion? Because our love does not reach high enough, to the Supreme Being whom we may all possess together and still possess individually. Instead of giving in to jealousy, let us rather thank the Lord for having given to our neighbors qualities that we do not have, and let us rejoice, just as the hand profits by what the eye sees.

Why are we cowards? Because we do not love enough, because our hearts are cold, because we rely far too much on our own strength when our helplessness is obvious, and because we do not depend enough on the heart of Jesus, on His love for us.

The heart of Jesus is able and desires to give us the saintly powers we need, confidence and love, which inspire adoration, thanksgiving, and atonement, by placing the glory of God above all else.

Heart of Jesus, of whose fullness we have all received, have mercy on us! Let us go to the Father, by Him, with Him, and in Him.

XVIII

JESUS' HUMILITY AND HIS MAGNANIMITY

> "Learn of Me, because I am meek, and humble of heart."
>
> Matt. 11:29

THE mystery of the Redemption, as we have said, is especially the manifestation of our Lord's love for us. Supernatural love or charity contains virtually all of the virtues which rank below it. Charity vivifies the other virtues, inspires them and orders their action to the supreme end, which is its own object: to the love of God above all else. Among these other virtues of our Lord, humility is one that merits special attention because through it in particular Jesus cures us of pride, which according to Scripture is "the beginning of all sin."

The ancient philosophers who have described at length nearly all the moral virtues, have never spoken of humility because they ignored its twofold foundation: namely, the dogma of creation ex nihilo (we have been created out of nothingness), and the dogma of the necessity of actual grace for even the smallest salutary act.

Worldly wisdom often maintains also that humility is nothing but an air of virtuousness that is affected by the weak, the cowardly, the discouraged. In its eyes, humility hides a lack of intelligence, ability, and energy. According to the world, the prudent and determined man must know what he is worth in order to assert himself and command respect. He can have no use for a humble attitude that would denote a lack of vigor and dignity. Thus are humility and cowardice confused.

Our Savior, He who was the strongest of the strong and who could say to His disciples, "Have confidence, I have overcome the world," Jesus, true God, the Word made flesh, who could awe everyone by the power of His intelligence and of His character, by the splendor of His miracles, Jesus, the

greatest man in mind and heart that ever walked the earth, tells us: “Learn of Me, because I am meek, and humble of heart; and you shall find rest to your souls.” God wishes that we learn this virtue of self-effacement through Him whose greatness surpasses anything here below.

The reason for this is that our Lord’s humility, far from being an indication of a lack of intelligence or of energy, derives from a very elevated knowledge of God and is united to a very high dignity. Pascal, wishing to show how infinitely superior Jesus is to all human heroes and geniuses, was content to write: “He gave us no invention, He did not reign; but He was humble, patient, holy, holy to God, terrible to demons, without any sin whatever! Oh! in what magnifi-cence was He clothed to the eyes of the heart which see Wisdom!”

Let us inquire into the principle of Jesus’ humility, how He practiced this virtue, and how it was united in Him to magnanimity or greatness of soul.

THE PRINCIPLE OF CHRIST’S HUMILITY

True humility does not arise from any lack of clear-sightedness or ability; it springs from a profound understanding of God’s infinite greatness and of the nothingness of creatures which cannot exist by themselves. This twofold knowledge becomes ever more unified, for God’s infinite majesty manifests the frailty of creatures, and inversely our helplessness reveals to us by contrast God’s immense power. St. Catherine of Siena tells us that these two truths are, as it were, the highest and lowest points on the circumference of a circle which grows continually in size. When anyone knows where the lowest point is, he can see by contrast where is the diametrically opposite point. The ever-growing circle is the symbol of contemplation.

Humility is born of the realization of the abyss which separates God from creatures. God the Father, desiring to instill this thought into the soul of St. Catherine of Siena, said to her: “I am who am, thou art who art not.” This is what He had said to Moses.

God is Being. He cannot not be, having existed from all eternity, without beginning and without any limitation whatever, the infinite ocean of being. God is also sovereign wisdom, who knows everything that is to happen in the most remote future, and for whom there is no mystery. He is love, never-failing and impeccable. He is power, before whom nothing can resist without His permission.

On the other hand, no matter how gifted a creature may be, by itself it is not, that is, it is not self-existent. If a creature has received its existence from God it is gratuitously on His part, because He has most freely loved it, by creating it out of nothingness. The ancient philosophers never rose in their thinking to the explicit idea of creation ex nihilo. The thought of the absolute liberty of the creative act never occurred to them. God might very well not have created us. He had no need of us, He who is infinite goodness and beatitude.

Creatures by themselves are nothing, and once they exist they are still nothing in comparison to God. The glow of a candle is something, minute as it may be, in comparison to the blazing sun. However, even the noblest creature is nothing compared to God's infinity, compared to the infinite perfection of His wisdom and His love. Since creation, there have been more beings, but there is no more being, no more life or wisdom or love. Likewise, in relation to the Most High, angels, men, and grains of dust are equally infinitesimal, for between all creatures and God there is always an infinite distance.

Moreover, intelligent creatures depend upon God for the direction of their lives, for He assigns to them their final end, eternal life. "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?" And what is the best path to attain eternal life? The path that divine Providence has mapped out for us from all eternity. It is incumbent on us humbly to recognize this path. It is not for us to determine it ourselves. It may be a hidden way, to preserve us from pride and from forgetting God. Perhaps it is a path of suffering, one that is richer than any other in the fruits of life. The apostolate of prayer and of suffering is no less fruitful than the apostolate of teaching, and it even fecundates the latter by inspiring the search of doctrine not only in books but from the source of life. We must humbly accept the path, which may be hidden and painful, that our Lord has chosen for us in His mercy, the path that is indicated to us by circumstances and by those that our Lord has given us as guides.

Finally, in order to advance in this path which leads to eternal life, what can a creature accomplish of itself? Nothing. Even if a creature has received an abundance of sanctifying grace, it cannot accomplish the slightest salutary act or make the smallest step forward without God's actual help. This help is offered to each creature, but it cannot benefit by this help if it falls prey to the attraction of pleasure or to the temptation of pride. Those

who best understand the sublimity of the goal to be attained, are also best aware of their own frailty. Who knew this better than the saints? They mistrusted themselves and placed their confidence in God.

This is the principle of humility: the realization of God's infinite greatness and of our own nothingness. What then, was the nature of Jesus' humility?

In order to understand Christ's humility, we would need to fathom as He did the mystery of the creative act and the mystery of grace. Both here on earth and in heaven Jesus is even humbler than Mary and than all the saints, for He understands better than they the infinite distance that separates every creature from its Creator and He knows better than anyone else the greatness of God and the frailty of every human soul and of every created spirit.

As we said earlier, Jesus enjoyed the beatific vision while He was still here on earth. He saw God face to face through His human in-telligence, enlightened by the splendor of the Word. Instead of having to use His reason, as we do, and to use human words to express the idea that God is Being, Wisdom, and Love, Jesus saw the divine essence, the Deity, directly. The most elevated portion of His sacred soul was as in a perpetual ecstasy, captivated by the splendor of God. And with the same vision, which is superior to reason and to faith, He saw the nothingness of all creatures and of His own humanity. Like a painter of genius who can at once tell a masterpiece from a paltry reproduction, Jesus could see continually, even while here on earth, the infinite distance separating time from eternity.

Whereas men who undertake difficult human tasks on their own initiative often take on a determined and dominating attitude, Jesus thought only of humbly accomplishing under His Father's guidance the divine mission He had received: "Father, . . . not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

Jesus was also perpetually aware that by His human powers alone He could accomplish absolutely nothing toward the divine goal He was seeking: namely, to lead souls to eternal life. He rejoiced in this powerlessness, for it glorified God and demonstrated how lofty is the supernatural end to which Providence has destined us: "My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me." "The Father who abideth in Me, He doth the works," that is, the miracles that Jesus worked in His name.

There is a particular act of humility which consists in recognizing not only our nothingness but our wretchedness as the result of sin. This act is

necessary for contrition, for sorrow at having offended God, and naturally our Lord, who is impeccable, never made such an act of humility. But He who was innocence itself wished to take upon Himself all our sins. He understood the gravity of mortal sin better than anyone else, and He suffered from it more than anyone else in the measure of His love for God who has been offended and of His love for our souls. He more than anyone else felt inexpressible disgust before such an accumulation of defilement, before so many acts of cowardice and injustice, so much treachery and sacrilege. At Geth-semane this disgust almost overwhelmed Him with nausea: “My Fa-ther, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me.”

THE UNION OF HUMILITY AND MAGNANIMITY IN JESUS

Jesus understood better than any creature, even while He was still on earth, the greatness of God, man’s weakness, and the gravity of the sin He came to wipe out. That is why He was the humblest person that ever lived. This humility, far from being a cloak for a lack of intelligence and energy, was the sign of the loftiest contemplation and the condition of a unique spiritual power. Moreover, it was united to the most perfect dignity, to the noblest supernatural magnanimity which inspires to great things, regardless of the sufferings and hu-miliations that must be encountered.

These two virtues, humility and magnanimity, in appearance so opposed, are reality related and mutually support each other like the two sides of a pointed arch. They rise together. No one is deeply humble unless he is magnanimous, and it is impossible to be truly magnanimous without great humility. In the spiritual physiognomy of our Savior these two virtues are wonderfully united.

Let us call to mind St. Thomas’ description of magnanimity, en-larging upon Aristotle’s. Magnanimity seeks only great things worthy of honor, but places little value on honors in themselves. It does not dread scorn if it must be borne for a great cause. It is not elated by success or discouraged by failure. Material goods mean little to it, and it is not greatly disturbed at losing them. The magnanimous man gives freely what he can to all. He is truthful and takes no stock in any opinion that is opposed to truth, no matter how formidable it may become. He is ready to die for the truth.

This greatness of soul is to be found in all the saints, intimately united to their profound humility. It was, of course, present in an eminent degree in

Jesus. And He was never greater than during His passion, in the hour of His last humiliations. Let us call to mind His answer to Pilate who had asked Him if he was a king: “My kingdom is not of this world. . . . Thou sayest, that I am a king. For this was I born, and for this came I into the world; that I should give testimony to the truth. Everyone that is of the truth, heareth My voice.”

These two virtues of humility and magnanimity are always united in the life of our Savior. He willed to be born in the humblest condi-tion, although He belonged to a royal race. He was the son of a virgin, but He was thought by men to be the son of a carpenter. He who was the Word of God and could awe everyone, chose to live for thirty years a hidden life working at the most commonplace trade, in order to show us that nothing is accomplished without recollection and humility. Yet we often tend to complain because we are given work beneath our abilities.

After He had emerged from His hidden life, Jesus—innocence itself—sought out John the Baptist to ask him for the baptism of penance, just as if He had been a sinner. But John at first refused, saying: “I ought to be baptized by Thee, and comest Thou to Me?” Jesus’ answer was: “Suffer it to be so now. For so it becometh us to fulfill all justice.” By this he meant that it was fitting that the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world should voluntarily place Himself in the ranks of the sinners. When John heard this, he resisted no more, and when Jesus had been baptized the Spirit of God descended upon Him in the form of a dove, and a voice from heaven was heard, saying: “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

After His baptism, Jesus willed to be tempted in the desert so that He might be more like us. This was still another proof of His humility, and it also taught us to conquer the spirit of evil and to answer his seductive offers with the word of God.

At the very outset of His ministry, what were His first words? “Blessed are the poor in spirit,” the humble. To them He promised great things: the kingdom of heaven.

Whom did He choose as His apostles? Unlettered fishermen, a publican like Matthew, and He made of them “fishers of men,” than which there is nothing greater.

How did He teach them, when they were wondering among them-selves who was the greatest? He called a little child to Him and, placing him in

their midst, He said: “Amen I say to you, unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this little child, he is the greater in the kingdom of heaven.” Here indeed is the union of humility and supernatural magnanimity which reached up for the great things which are obtained only through the grace of God humbly prayed for each day. As a great Catholic writer, E. Hello, once said, “It is time to become humble, for it is time to become proud,” or magnanimous in the sense God wished us to be.

These two virtues are also united in the words Jesus spoke to His apostles on Holy Thursday when He was washing their feet as a supreme mark of humility: “You call Me Master and Lord; and you say well, for so I am. If then I being your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; you also ought to wash one another’s feet. . . . The servant is not greater than his lord; neither is the apostle greater than He that sent him.”

His glory and one of the signs of His mission is to preach the gospel to the poor. He allowed the publicans to approach Him, and also Magdalen the sinner, and He made of her a great saint.

Although He did indeed enter Jerusalem in triumph, He came mounted on an ass and opposed by the Pharisees. He permitted this opposition. Let us, then, not be irritated when we meet with contra-dictions.

The Passion was the hour of supreme humiliations accepted for our salvation, to cure us of our pride. Barabbas, the outcast of his people, was preferred to the Word of God made flesh. Men sneered at our Savior, they struck Him and spat in His face, they insulted Him until He breathed His last upon the cross. Yet His greatness shone forth to the centurion, who could not help crying out: “Indeed this was the Son of God.”

Never was deeper humility united so closely to a loftier magna-nimity. It is in recognition of this fact that St. Paul said to the Philip-pians: “For let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men. . . . He humbled Himself becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross. For this cause God also hath exalted Him, and hath given Him a name which is above all names: that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth: and that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of

God the Father." Humility and magnanimity, self-abasement and a wholly supernatural greatness, these two virtues are to be found, in an attenuated form in all the saints.

Likewise the Church is unceasingly humiliated, and she seems to be vanquished although she is always victorious. It is necessary that certain interior souls should be particularly united to these humiliations of the Church and should work for the salvation of sinners, always seeming to fail. This is the path of pure love.

There are certain works that will always be a source of humiliation and of graces for those who undertake them. These souls must not complain if things go well in the eyes of the Lord, although they do not seem to succeed. For the Lord Himself has placed His hand on these works and accepts the oblation of reparation which through these works is offered up to Him each day. St. Philip Neri used to say: "I thank Thee, O my God, that things are not going as I should like them to."

These humiliations and sufferings are good, and were all the consolations of earth to come at such moments, they would not console. The Lord does not will it. For there is a certain dose of suffering that we must bear, and if it were taken away from us, we should have lost the better part.

We sometimes complain at the lowliness of our state in life and we desire the appearances of greatness. God loves us much more than we dream. He has already given us great things through baptism, absolution, and Holy Communion. These blessings are infinitely superior to those which we are foolish enough to desire. And even greater blessings have been promised to us: to see Him for all eternity as He sees Himself, and to love Him as He loves Himself.

XIX

OUR SAVIOR'S PRAYER

LET us now speak of the way Christ prayed, so that we may penetrate even deeper into His sacred soul and into the mystery of the Redemption. We feel a need of praying, especially when we are in trouble, because it has been said to us: "Ask and you shall receive, knock and it shall be opened unto you." Yet we also feel that our prayers are too often unworthy of being answered, as it is written in the Dies irae:

Worthless are my prayers and sighing;
Yet, good Lord, in grace complying,
Rescue me from fires undying.

Our prayers often lack the necessary humility, trust, and persever-ance. They remain superficial and do not cry out from the depths of our souls. That is why we often feel the need of relying on a deeper and stronger prayer than our own, and we ask the Blessed Virgin and the saints to intercede for us. Especially we feel the need of depending on Christ's great prayer, as does the Church at the end of each of the prayers at Mass: per Christum Dominum nostrum. And in reality, it is Christ's own prayer that is continued in the Church until the end of time, each morning at Mass and in the Divine Office.

Let us inquire how Jesus prayed while He was on earth, and whether He continues to pray in heaven.

HOW JESUS PRAYED WHILE ON EARTH

St. Luke tells us that before Jesus chose the Twelve, He "went out into a mountain to pray, and He passed the whole night in the prayer of God." A little earlier in the same Gospel, we read that He retired into the desert for the same purpose. We all know His priestly prayer after the Last Supper, as

recorded by St. John, and also His prayer in the Garden of Olives: “My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me. Nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt. A little later on, He implored His Father’s mercy for His executioners. And His last breath was a prayer of adoration, of supplication for us, of reparation and of thanksgiving.

It is certain that Jesus prayed not as God but as man, for prayer is the lifting up of the soul toward God and the expression of a desire that we ask Him to grant us. As man Jesus knew divine Providence had ordered from all eternity that certain graces would be obtained only through His prayer. He knew that it was through His prayer that He would obtain the conversion of Mary Magdalen, of the good thief, and of the centurion. It was fitting also that He should pray in order to give us an example of humble, filial, trusting, and confident prayer. For He told us: “We ought always to pray, and not to faint.” He wished us to pray unceasingly, as we breathe. When He taught us to say the Our Father, He said it with us and for us, thus reminding us that God is the author of all good.

For what great intentions did Jesus pray? Did He pray for Himself? He certainly did at Gethsemane, when He cried out as He lay prostrate on the earth: “My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me. Nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt.” That is, not as My emotions and the inclination of My nature desire, for death—and particularly such a terrible death—is repugnant to them; but as Thou desirest. It is a prayer of supplication which expresses a conditional desire, “if it be possible,” a desire dominated by full con-formity of the free will with the will of God. “My Father, if this chalice may not pass away, but I must drink it, Thy will be done.”

Since our Lord had already announced several times that He would be put to death and that He would rise again, He knew very well that this conditional prayer would not be answered. Yet He said this prayer to show that He was truly human and that we are permitted to express the suffering which our nature feels, while con-forming our will to that of God.

But whatever Jesus asked in an absolute and not a conditional manner, He always obtained. Whenever His prayer was the expres-sion of His deliberate and absolute human will, it was always an-swered. In this prayer He asked what He saw was manifestly within the intentions of God and what He was inspired to ask for earnestly: namely, the graces which according to the plan of Providence were to be obtained through His

intercession. For instance, we all believe in the infallible efficacy of His prayer for Peter, of which He spoke to him before His passion: “Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and thou, being once converted, confirm thy brethren.” And after his defection which Jesus then foretold, Peter was indeed converted by a very powerful grace which Christ’s prayer obtained for him and which led him to martyrdom. No one in the Church doubts that it is in virtue of this same prayer which Christ said for Peter that each of Peter’s successors confirms his brethren in the faith.

The disciples knew the power of the Savior’s prayer. After Lazarus’ death, Martha said to Jesus: “Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But now also I know that whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee.” Jesus answered her: “Thy brother shall rise again. . . . I am the resurrection and the life.” At the moment of Lazarus’ resurrection, Jesus raised His eyes to heaven and said: “Father, I give Thee thanks that Thou hast heard Me. And I knew that Thou hearest Me always.” St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, wrote that Jesus “was heard for His reverence. . . . And being consummated, He became, to all that obey Him, the cause of eternal salvation.” In this respect His prayer is answered every day and will continue to be answered until the end of the world.

How did Jesus while here on earth pray for His apostles and for the Church? We have an example of it in His priestly prayer after the Last Supper and just before the Passion. As recorded by St. John, this prayer begins with these words: “Father, the hour is come, glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son may glorify Thee.” Why did the meek and humble of heart ask to be glorified? He asked this at the moment of His last humiliations, so that He might glorify His Father by His death, by His very humiliations which, because He accepted them with love, were to make Him victorious over sin and Satan.

This prayer asked for the spreading of God’s glory, and it was answered during the Passion, for never was Jesus greater than at this supreme hour. His prayer was answered by the conversion of the good thief and of the centurion, by His own glorious resurrection, and later by the conversion of the world to the Gospel.

Jesus continued His priestly prayer by beseeching His Father to keep His apostles: “Holy Father, keep them in Thy name whom Thou hast given Me;

that they may be one, as We also are. While I was with them, I kept them in Thy name. Those whom Thou gavest Me have I kept and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition, that the Scripture may be fulfilled. And now I come to Thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy filled in themselves. . . . I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from evil. . . . Sanctify them in truth. . . . And for them do I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth."

Jesus foresaw the profound dejection of His disciples a few hours later, during His passion. Yet His prayer would sustain them. It would be answered and it would win for them the strength to remain faithful until their martyrdom.

Jesus also foresaw the great persecutions that would come. Indeed, He had already announced them: "And you shall be betrayed by your parents and brethren, and kinsmen and friends; and some of you they will put to death. And you shall be hated by all men for My name's sake. But a hair of your head shall not perish. In your patience you shall possess your souls."

In His priestly prayer Jesus also besought His Father for all those who would believe in Him through the preaching of the apostles and of their successors, "that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee; that they also may be one in Us; . . . that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast also loved Me." Thus Jesus asked two things for His Church: unity here on earth and the vision of glory in heaven.

He asked the multitude of believers should become but a single heart and soul. This was to be accomplished in the new-born Church, as we learn from the Acts of the Apostles. He asked that the Church, despite the diversity of races, languages, customs, and human institu-tions, should appear as a permanent moral miracle, through the unity of faith, worship, hope, charity, and hierarchy. This is being accom-plished in the Church, especially in the most saintly souls of each generation, whatever their nation or race. Human weaknesses do exist in the Church, but she always has within her holy souls whose great spirit of faith, of trust, and of love is in each generation the realization of our Lord's expressed desire.

Finally, He asked for His Church the glory of heaven: "Father, I will that where I am, they also whom Thou hast given Me may be with Me; that they

may see My glory which Thou hast given Me, . . . that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me, may be in them, and I in them."

Jesus wishes us to be the members of His mystical body and, after we have participated here on earth in His hidden life and in a measure in His life of sorrow, to participate in His glorious life for all eternity.

OUR SAVIOR'S PRAYER FOR US IN HEAVEN

St. Paul wrote to the Romans: "Christ Jesus . . . that is risen also again . . . is at the right hand of God, . . . also maketh intercession for us. Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ?" That is to say, who will separate us from the love which Christ has for us and which arouses in us a reciprocating love?

In the Epistle to the Hebrews, the great Apostle also says: "For that He [Jesus] continueth forever, hath an everlasting priesthood, whereby He is able also to save forever them that come to God by Him; always living to make intercession for us."

Before leaving us, Jesus Himself assured us that He would pray for us: "If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you forever."

Some theologians have said Jesus in heaven no longer prays for us in the real sense of the word, but that He simply shows to His Father His humanity and His glorious wounds, signs of His past merits.

In the eyes of many other theologians, followers of St. Augustine and St. Thomas, this interpretation attenuates without reason the in-spired words that we have just called to mind. When St. Paul says that Christ always living continues to make intercession for us, there is no reason to say that this is no longer a prayer in the true sense of the word. If our Lord continues to ask that His past merits be applied to certain specified souls, there is no imperfection in this. On the con-trary, it is a new expression of His love for us.

We are certain that the Blessed Virgin and the saints in heaven pray for us. When we say litanies we ask them to intercede on our behalf, and St. Thomas remarks on this subject: "Since prayers offered for others proceed from charity, . . . the greater the charity of the saints in heaven, the more they pray for wayfarers, since the latter can be helped by prayers: and the more closely they are united to God, the more are their prayers efficacious: .

. . Wherefore it is said of Christ (Heb. 7:25): `Going to God by His own power . . . to make intercession for us.' "

St. Ambrose also says: "He is ever pleading our cause before His Father, and His prayer cannot go unheeded."

St. Augustine speaks in the same vein: "He still prays for us now inasmuch as He is our priest and our head; and inasmuch as He is God, He is prayed to for us." St. Gregory the Great expresses the same view: "Quotidie orat Christus pro Ecclesia." He remains ever our advocate and our mediator.

There is no doubt, of course, that Jesus does not pray in heaven as He did in the Garden of Olives, prostrate and overwhelmed with sadness. The perfect holocaust has been offered up. But He continues to ask that its fruits be applied to us at the opportune moment, espe-cially at the hour of death.

If when we recite litanies we do not say "Christ, pray for us," but "Christ, have mercy on us; Christ, hear us," it is to remind us that Jesus is not man only but that He is also God, and when we address ourselves to His divine person, it is God Himself whom we are ad-dressing, begging Him to grant our requests.

Besides, it is absolutely certain that in the heart of the glorious Christ, adoration and thanksgiving are ever alive. These prayers are, as it were, the soul of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Far more, this prayer of adoration and of thanksgiving will continue for all eternity, even after the last Mass has been said. This is what is said every day in the Preface: "It is truly meet and just . . . that we should at all times and in all places give thanks unto Thee, O holy Lord, Father almighty and everlasting God, through Christ our Lord. Through whom the angels praise Thy majesty, the dominions worship it, the powers stand in awe." This worship of adoration and of thanksgiving will continue eternally, even after the prayer of petition has ceased with the last Mass at the end of the world.

What a consolation to think that Christ "always living" never ceases "to make intercession for us," that this prayer and this oblation is, as it were, the soul of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and that we can always unite our own prayer to it! Our prayer often lacks the necessary humility, trust, and perseverance. Let us rest it upon Christ's prayer. Let us ask Him to inspire us to pray as is fitting, in accordance with God's intentions, to make prayer spring from our hearts and to present it to His Father, so that we may be one with Him for all eternity. Let us thus ask Him for ourselves and for the

dying the grace of graces, the grace of a happy death, or of final perseverance, which is the prelude to eternal life.

XX

THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST

THE Savior's sacerdotal prayer which we have just spoken of can be understood only in relation to the priesthood of Christ. We must first of all call to mind St. Paul's teaching on this point in the Epistle to the Hebrews, then what the Church says about it in its Councils, and finally what theology adds in order to help us to penetrate the meaning and the scope of this teaching which is so spiritually fruitful.

ST. PAUL'S TESTIMONY

The Epistle to the Hebrews shows us the full splendor of Christ's priesthood in the light of ideas expressed by St. Paul in the Epistles to the Romans, to the Corinthians, and to Timothy on Christ the Redeemer, the universal mediator, and the head of the Church, and on the necessity of believing in Christ in order to be saved: "For there is one God, and one mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus: who gave Himself a redemption for all."

The first part of the Epistle to the Hebrews sets out to show the superiority of the priesthood of Jesus Christ, the mediator of the new alliance, over all the organs used by God in the Old Testament to manifest Himself to men. Jesus, as Son of God, is declared to be superior to all the priests of the Old Law, superior to all the prophets who announced Him, superior to Moses, superior even to the angels who are only God's servants whereas Jesus is the Son of God by origin and by nature, the Creator and Master of all things.

St. Paul says: "For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily (as the other priests) to offer sacrifices first

for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this He did once in offering Himself." He did this by offering Himself up not for His own sake but for all sinners, for all men.

To enlighten the recently converted Jews who were at times tempted to return to the rites of the Levitical priesthood, St. Paul showed them that, while the sacrifices of the Mosaic worship were many and varied and at times of great exterior magnificence, yet they remained of themselves without efficacy. These sacrifices, he explained, were but the figure of the great sacrifice to come which was to be accomplished not in exterior magnificence but in the perfect denudation of Golgotha. .

In St. Paul's words, "Christ, being come a high priest of the good things to come, . . . neither by the blood of goats or of calves, but by His own blood, entered once into the holies, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and of oxen, . . . [offered up to God] sanctify such as are defiled, to the cleansing of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who by the Holy Ghost offered Himself unspotted unto God, cleanse our conscience from dead works, to serve the living God?" Such is the efficacy and the infinite value of Christ's sacrifice.

Finally, whereas the priests of the Old Law succeeded one another as death struck them one after the other, Christ "continueth forever, hath an everlasting priesthood; whereby He is able also to save forever them that come to God by Him; always living to make intercession for us." It is Christ who remains the chief priest of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, the commemoration of the Passion which will be offered up until the end of the world.

This lofty doctrine on Christ's priesthood has been clearly formu-lated by the Church at the Council of Trent: "Since the work of the Redemption could not be accomplished under the Old Testament, because of the weakness of the Levitical priesthood, it was necessary, according to the mercy of God the Father, that another priest . . . arise, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who could lead to salvation and perfection all who were to be sanctified. Our God and our Lord Himself was to offer Himself up once and for all to His Father on the altar of the cross for our redemption, . . . and at the Last Supper He left to His spouse, the Church, a visible sacrifice which until the end of time will commemorate the bloody sacrifice of the cross and apply its fruits to us."

CHRIST’S PRIESTHOOD, THE MOST PERFECT CONCEIVABLE

On the basis of St. Paul’s testimony, St. Augustine and theologians as a whole, especially St. Albert the Great and St. Thomas, have demonstrated that Christ’s priesthood is the most perfect that can be conceived. The reason they give is as simple as it is profound. It de-rives from St. Paul’s own definition of the priesthood: “For every high priest taken from among men, is ordained for men in the things that appertain to God, that he may offer up gifts and sacrifices for sins.” As St. Thomas explains, the function of the priest is to be a mediator between God and men, to offer up to God the prayers of the people, particularly sacrifice, which is the most perfect act of the virtue of religion, and also to give to the people the things of God (sacerdos means sacra dans): through preaching, the light of truth, and through the sacraments, the grace necessary for the accomplishment of God’s law.

This twofold ascending and descending mediation is accomplished especially through sacrifice, the supreme sacred act. Ascending mediation is accomplished by the oblation of the sacrifice of a victim. Descending mediation is accomplished by giving to the faithful a part of the victim offered up, so that they may thus communicate with our Lord.

The external oblation and immolation of the victim must be a visible expression of the interior oblation of the priest, of his adoration, his supplication, the sentiments of his “contrite and humbled” heart, as well as of his thanksgiving. Thus through the sacrifice, which is an exterior and public act of the virtue of religion, the adoration, the supplication, the reparation, and the thanksgiving of the entire people rise up to God. For the prayer of the people is united to that of the priest and to a certain extent is one with his.

What follows from this with regard to the perfection of the priest-hood, and particularly the priesthood of Christ? As St. Augustine has shown, it follows that the priesthood is all the more perfect in the measure that the priest, the mediator between God and men, is more united to God, more united through interior oblation and immolation to the victim offered up, and more united to the men for whom the victim is offered up.

It is clear, of course, that the more closely united to God the priest is, that is, the holier he is, the more perfect will be the sacrifice he offers up as the principal act of his priesthood. For the priest, in his role as mediator, must

make up by his own sanctity for the imperfec-tion of the adoration, the gratitude, the reparation, and the supplica-tion of the people.

Likewise the more closely the priest and the victim are united, the more perfect will the sacrifice be. For the external oblation and im-molation of the victim are but the symbol of the inward oblation and immolation of the priest who is accomplishing the greatest act of the virtue of religion. Also the more the victim is pure, precious, and en-tirely consumed in God's honor, the more perfect will be the sacrifice. That is why the holocaust was the most perfect sacrifice of the Old Law: the entire victim was consumed in God's honor, to signify that man must offer all of himself up to God.

Finally, the more the priest and the people are united, the more perfect is the sacrifice. For the priest must bring together all the adora-tions, petitions, reparations, and thanksgivings of the faithful in one elevation toward God, rising up as the soul of the whole people. Con-sequently the more people are thus united to the priest, the greater will be the homage, the worship of adoration given to God, and the more universal or widespread will be the effects of the sacrifice.

It is enough for us to consider the priesthood of our Savior in the light of these principles in order to see at once that no greater priest-hood can be conceived.

Christ Jesus is a priest not as God but as man. For the mediator must be an intermediary between God and men, and in that capacity inferior to God. Yet no soul can be more closely united to God than the sacred soul of Christ. We have seen that His sanctity was innate, substantial, and uncreated. Jesus is not only absolutely free from any original and personal sin and from any imperfection whatever; He is sanctity itself. He is the Word of God made flesh. His humanity is sanctified first of all by its personal union with the Word, by the Word Himself who possesses it intimately and for all eternity. That is why Jesus' priestly actions, which proceed from His human intellect and will, had while He was here on earth an infinite value in terms of merit and reparation. This infinite value derived, of course, from the divine personality of the Son of God. And even now it is the Word made flesh who through His human soul makes "intercession for us."

It is impossible to conceive of a priest more intimately and indis-solubly united to God, or holier than Jesus. Moreover, our Lord, as head of the Church, has received the fullness of created grace which must overflow

upon us, and a power of excellence to institute the sacraments, to give them the power to produce and augment divine life, and also to institue a priesthood that will be indefectible until the end of the world, a priesthood that is a participation in His own.

“Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him who taketh away the sin of the world” by His perfect sacrifice. If sin continues, it is not because the virtue of this sacrifice is insufficient, as was that of the sacrifices of the Old Law, but because men often refuse to receive its fruits. We cannot conceive of a holier priest than Jesus.

In addition, Christ’s priesthood cannot be more perfect by reason of the union of the priest and the victim, and of the dignity of the lat-ter. Jesus could not offer to His Father for us any victim but Himself. The boy Isaac, a figure of Christ, had consented to let himself be offered up as a sacrifice. Jesus offered Himself up when He was crucified. As He said: “Therefore doth the Father love Me: because I lay down My life, that I may take it again. No man taketh it away from Me: but I lay it down of Myself, and I have power to lay it down: and I have power to take it up again. This commandment have I received of My Father.”

We have become so accustomed to this idea that we cannot picture to ourselves our Lord immolating merely a lamb distinct from Him-self, or a dove. He Himself is the victim.

This purest of victims is of infinite value, for it is the body of the Word of God, which, torn and nailed to the cross, sheds all its blood. The union of priest and victim cannot be more perfect, since Jesus is a victim to the depths of His soul, plunged in sorrow and in universal abandonment: “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” It is complete immolation, a perfect holocaust in reparation for the pride of life, the concupiscence of the flesh, and that of the eyes. Priest and victim cannot be more perfectly united than in our Lord, immolated for us.

Finally, the union of priest and faithful cannot be closer. Jesus is the head of the mystical body of which we are the members. The fruits of the sacrifice of the Cross, the life of grace, pour down incessantly from Him to us. At the same time, through Him, our prayers rise up to God united to His at the moment of the Mass which perpetuates in substance the sacrifice of the Cross.

It is particularly at Mass, at the moment of the Consecration and Communion, that the words of St. Paul are verified: “Christ is the head of

the Church. He is the Savior of His body." "Now you are the body of Christ, and members of member." "That . . . we may in all things grow up in Him who is the head, even Christ." Our Savior is, therefore, the priest of the entire human race, for He "died for all," for the men of all times and places. And all men can become progressively incorporated in Him through the succession of human generations, and remain members of His mystical body for all eternity.

Thus Christ has made satisfaction and merited for all men. He continues to pray for us; and His humanity, as an instrument ever united to His divinity, communicates to us all the graces we receive. The vital influx of grace thus passes continually from Him to us.

We are unable to conceive of a more perfect priesthood, of a priest more closely united to God, more united to the most pure victim that is offered up every day on the altar, and lastly more united to the body of the Christian faithful which is ever renewing itself until the end of time and whose living members are to remain incorporated to Him forever. Our Savior is a priest for all eternity. His adoration and His thanksgiving will never cease, and the glory of the elect will be the consummation of His sacrifice.

WHAT FORMALLY CONSTITUTES CHRIST'S PRIESTHOOD

What is there in Christ which corresponds to the priestly character which is indelibly stamped on the souls of His ministers? Some theo-logians, among them the Carmelites of Salamanca, have thought that Christ's priesthood is formally constituted by habitual created grace (through which He is the head of the mystical body), so far as this grace presupposes personal union to the Word. Thus Christ would be a priest by the very grace which constitutes Him head of the Church and through which He exerts direct influence upon us.

Other theologians in increasing numbers, including several Tho-mists, think—and, it seems, on solid grounds—that what formally constitutes the priesthood of Jesus Christ is the substantial grace of union with the Word by reason of which He is holy, as well as a sanctifier and mediator able to offer up a sacrifice of infinite value.

The latter approach is being increasingly accepted by theologians at the present time, and was in a way approved by Pope Pius XI in an allocution given on December 28, 1925. It derives from the doctrine which has

prevailed on the substantial and uncreated as well as innate sanctity of Jesus.

Indeed it is the substantial grace of union to the Word that first of all sanctifies the humanity of our Savior. This grace does not merely give Him an accidental sanctity as does the grace which in us—and in the greatest saints including Mary—proceeds from habitual created grace, an accident of our nature, a divine graft upon our souls. Per-sonal union with the Word gives to Jesus' humanity a substantial and uncreated sanctity which is the source of the infinite value of His human meritorious and propitiatory acts. This uncreated sanctity sub-sists in heaven, now that the hour of merit and of painful expiation has passed.

In His formal role as universal priest and mediator, Jesus must offer up not a sacrifice of limited value such as those of the Old Law, but a sacrifice of infinite value. The priestly acts of His sacred soul must have a theandric value. And a priest capable of offering up a sacrifice of such value must be more than "the head of humanity." Adam, in his innocent state, was the head of humanity (caput naturae elevatae). Yet he was not able, as priest and mediator, to offer up a sacrifice of infinite value.

Therefore what formally constitutes Christ's priesthood seems to be the grace of substantial union to the Word which makes of Him the Lord's Anointed One. This grace of union which is uncreated, for it is the Word Himself who completes and possesses the humanity of our Savior, implies a unique priestly vocation and is the source of the habitual created grace by which Christ, the head of the Church, has immediate influence upon its members or communicates supernatural life to them. All these gifts are necessary to His priesthood, but the first-mentioned is its formal constituent.

This is what St. Thomas seems to think of the matter. In discussing Jesus as priest and victim, he says that His humanity was sanctified by the grace of union. The same is true when he speaks of the predestination of Jesus not only to glory, as in the predestination of the saints, but of His predestination to natural divine sonship, which is infinitely superior to adopted divine sonship. Lastly, according to St. Thomas, Jesus as man is the mediator between God and all men through the grace of the hypostatic unions. For, by reason of this hypostatic union, He touches the two extremes to be reunited and reconciled: God and humanity.

This is what Bossuet tells us in his Elevations sur les mystères (13th week, 1st and 6th elevations), in which he expounds the priesthood of Jesus Christ: “O Christ! O Messiah, who art awaited and given under this sacred name which signifies the Anointed of the Lord! Teach me, in the excellence of Thy unction, the origin and foundations of Christianity. . . . It is a matter of explaining the unction which makes Thee Christ.” “Come, Jesus, eternal Son of God. . . . Thou dost receive the powers of the priesthood from Him alone who has said to Thee: `Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee.’ For this divine priesthood, one must be born only of God, and Thou hast Thy vocation `according to the power of an indissoluble life.’ . . . The law of this priesthood is eternal and inviolable. Thou art alone: yet Thou hast left after Thee priests who are only Thy vicars who can offer up no other victim than the one Thou hast Thyself offered up on the cross and that Thou offerest eternally at the right hand of Thy Father.”

Thus Jesus is priest by reason of the Incarnation. His priesthood is substantial as is His sanctity, and it is from His priesthood that derives the priestly character of His ministers, impressed indelibly in their souls. And in these priestly souls He will raise up vocations until the end of time.

XXI

THE INFINITE MERITS OF CHRIST

> "And of His failure we all have received, and grace for grace."
>
> John 1:16

NOW that we have discussed the priesthood of Christ, it is fitting that we consider the source in Him of the infinite value of the meritorious and satisfactory acts that He accomplished for our salva-tion. This brings us to the very essence of the mystery of the Redemp-tion, that is, to the source of all the graces we have ever received or ever will receive.

We shall consider Christ's merit rather than His satisfaction. This difference is to be noted between the two: satisfaction relates to the right of the offended person who demands reparation, whereas merit relates to the reward to be obtained and therefore to the good of the one who merits or of those for whom he merits. Thus we can dis-tinguish between merit and satisfaction, although both are intimately united in Christ's acts of love, and in Him the infinite value of His merit and of His satisfaction derives from the same principle.

Let us first inquire what revelation tells us of the value of Christ's merits. We shall then discuss the explanation generally given by the theologians.

THE TESTIMONY OF ST. PAUL

St. Paul wrote to the Romans: "God commendeth His charity to-ward us; because when as yet we were sinners, according to the time, Christ died for us; much more therefore, being now justified by His blood, shall we be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son; much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by His life. . . . Wherefore as by one man sin entered into

this world, and by sin death; . . . if by the offense of one, many died; much more the grace of God, and the gift, by the grace of one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. . . . For as by the disobedience of one man, many were made sinners; so also by the obedience of one, many shall be made just."

The Apostle then shows that the Christian who is united to Christ by baptism is dead to sin and has risen to a new life, in the measure that he believes in Christ's merits with a lively faith united to charity. "But now . . . the justice of God is made manifest, . . . by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe in Him."

In the Epistle to the Ephesians, St. Paul develops the same idea in a sublime manner: "We all conversed in time past, in the desires of our flesh, fulfilling the will of the flesh and of our thoughts, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. But God (who is rich in mercy), for His exceeding charity wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together in Christ (by whose grace you are saved) and hath raised us up together, and hath made us sit together in the heavenly places, through Christ Jesus. That He might show in the ages to come the abundant riches of His grace, in His bounty toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, for it is the gift of God; . . . For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus in good works, which God hath prepared that we should walk in them."

It is this doctrine that the Church sums up as follows: Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, through the great love He had for us, when we were enemies or sinners, has merited our justification by His sacred passion on the cross.

Pope Clement VI said that "the merits of Christ are infinite, and that a single drop of His blood, because of the [personal] union with the Word, would have sufficed for the redemption of the human race." This is what St. Thomas proclaims in the Adoro Te:

O loving Pelican! O Jesu Lord!
Unclean I am, but cleanse me in Thy
blood!
Of which a single drop for sinners
spilt,
Can purge the entire world from
all its guilt.

This amounts to saying, as the Church generally teaches, that the least act of love that Jesus performed while still a child had infinite meritorious value to obtain for all men of the past, the present, and the future, sanctifying grace, eternal life, and all the assistance necessary to attain them. That is all the more reason why the most heroic act of charity which Jesus accomplished in dying for us on the cross, has merited for us justification and salvation. “Where sin abounded, grace did more abound.” “And of His fullness we all have received, and grace for grace.”

It should give us great strength and consolation to contemplate these infinite merits of our Savior, which are the source of our entire spiritual life. There is no better way than this to revive our confidence in periods of lassitude and depression, or when we see souls we love adrift and feel the need of praying for them with greater ardor.

To understand revealed doctrine on this point, as proposed by the Church, let us lift our gaze progressively from the most ordinary things, from our imperfect merits, to the infinite merits of Christ. We shall then begin to grasp the influence of Christ’s merits on our whole lives.

MERIT IN GENERAL. ITS CONDITIONS

Merit in general, or meritorious action, consists in any act worthy of a reward. Merit in the exact sense of the word—condign merit—is that for which a recompense is due in justice or at the very least in virtue of a promise. Thus, in the natural order, the officer merits his pay. As to congruous merit, this is an act for which a reward is due not in justice or because of a promise, but for reasons of fittingness such as friendship, esteem, liberality. So in the natural order the valiant soldier deserves to be decorated.

In the supernatural order there is an incomparably superior form of merit. It is an act that gives one the right to a supernatural reward, which is far more precious than all the world can offer us in the way of honor and glory. This reward is even far superior to the natural life of the most gifted minds, even to the intellectual life of the angels, that is, to the life they possess by reason of their nature, which is very inferior to grace.

Supernatural merit is a supernatural act accomplished through love of God, an act which, according to a divine ordination, gives one the right to a supernatural reward. Thus it is that every Christian in the state of grace

merits by his acts of love of God and of his neighbor, and by the exercise of all the virtues duly inspired by charity, an in-crease in sanctifying grace and eternal life. This is condign merit properly so-called. It is in this sense that St. Paul says: “For that which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory.” And so it was that Jesus, when He preached the beatitudes, proclaimed the merits of the just and their reward: “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. . . . Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice: for they shall have their fill. . . . Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God. . . . Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. . . . Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven.”

Such is the grandeur of supernatural merit correctly understood. In addition to this, from congruous merit, based not on justice or on a promise but on God’s friendship, a just man can obtain the conversion of a friend, a holy Christian mother like Monica can win the conversion of her son.

What is the source of the immense value of supernatural merit? Let us delve into the secret recesses of our souls where our acts of love of God and of our neighbor are formed. Then by degrees we shall be able to rise to the contemplation of Christ’s merits, the eminent source of our own.

What are the conditions necessary to make an act supernaturally meritorious, so that it will give us a right to a supernatural reward? The conditions of supernatural merit in the true sense of the word are generally considered to be as follows: It must be a free act, proceeding from charity, performed during one’s earthly life, for which God has promised a reward. The meritorious act must be free, proceeding from free choice. The soul must freely give of its own and offer it up to God.

The second condition of a supernaturally meritorious act is that it proceed from charity, which presupposes the state of grace. The merit and the reward must be proportionate. Merit of the natural order can obtain a reward of the same order, but not a supernatural reward. Nor would faith and hope suffice. There must be charity too, as St. Paul tells us: “And if I should have prophecy . . . and if I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.” Indeed, without charity our will remains the slave of sin and is turned away from God’s will and toward sensuality or pride. When our souls are deprived of sanctifying grace and charity, they do not live the supernatural life. How then can they

produce supernatural fruit? On the contrary, charity calls forth, inspires, and vivifies all the other virtues; and the more charity increases the more merit grows.

The supernatural value of meritorious acts, whether produced immediately by charity or by the virtues which charity inspires, increases with the love of God of which these acts are a sign. It is like offering twice the price of something that is offered for sale. Thus the Blessed Virgin merited more by easy little acts than we do by difficult ones, for there was more love of God and of souls in one of her smiles to a poor old man than there is in our most generous efforts. The meri-torious act must, therefore, proceed from charity, that is, it must possess supernatural goodness or be accomplished through love of God.

The third condition of a meritorious act is that it be accomplished during one's earthly life or in the state of passage toward eternity. In heaven we shall no longer merit, but shall enjoy our reward. Nor do we merit in purgatory, for there we are merely purified.

Finally, the fourth condition of merit is that God should have promised a reward for the act which we offer up to Him. Thus He has promised that the just who perform acts of charity will be given an increase of this virtue as well as of the other infused virtues, the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and also eternal life if they die in the state of grace.

These are the conditions of merit: It must derive from a free act, proceeding from charity, performed during one's earthly life, and it must be an act for which God has promised a reward. This being so, what is the value of Christ's merits?

Do Christ's Merits Have Infinite Value
in Themselves, Intrinsically, or Solely through
God's Acceptance of Them?

Christ's free acts, performed during His Iife on earth and proceed-ing from His love of God and of souls, had immense value by the very reason of His eminent charity, which surpassed that of all the angels and saints taken together, since He had received the plenitude of created grace. Yet this eminent charity of Jesus' soul remained a created thing which could not give to His meritorious acts a truly infinite value.

Christ's merits derive their absolutely exceptional value especially from the fact that they were the human acts of a divine person, of infinite dignity. "The blood of Jesus Christ His [God's] Son cleanseth us from all sin," St.

John tells us, because it is the blood of the Son of God shed through love of us, for which God has promised this reward, namely, the justification and salvation of all who believe in Christ and who follow Him.

However, one group of theologians, the Scotists, has maintained that Christ's acts of love did not possess in themselves intrinsically an infinite meritorious and satisfactory value, by reason of the divine person of the Word. They held that, on the contrary, it was fitting that these acts be extrinsically accepted by God for our salvation.

Nearly all theologians, on the other hand, admit that the smallest of our Savior's acts of love possesses in itself, or intrinsically, an infinite value by reason of the divine person of the Word made flesh. These acts are called theandric or divine-human, because they are the human acts of a soul personally united to the Word, the human acts of the person of the Son of God. Now, the value of a meritorious or satisfactory act depends not only on the nobility of its object but even more upon the dignity of the person who produces it. In this case, the person of the Word is of infinite dignity. It is the Son of God Himself who is offering Himself up for us.

If the gravity of the offense increases in proportion to the dignity of the person offended, the value of the satisfaction and of the merit increases with the dignity of the person who makes satisfaction and who merits. Our Savior's human actions are united to a divine person by an indissoluble bond, as strong as eternity, in a personal union so close that we can truly say: It is God, the Son, who acts, suffers, merits, and makes satisfaction in the human nature that He has taken on to save us. These reparative acts are most intimately united to God. In consequence their infinite value outweighs the infinite gravity of all mortal sins of all men, which can offend God only morally but cannot touch Him in His substantial and intimate reality.

Hence it is clear that the least of Jesus' merits was more pleasing to God than all the sins of mankind taken together displease Him. Simi-larly but on the much lower, human level, the expressions of love that are most precious to us are those given to us by the persons to whom we are closest. The smallest act of thoughtfulness by one we love dearly is sometimes enough to make us forget great injustices. This doctrine, without any exaggeration, teaches us to value beyond measure the least of our Savior's actions.

The following objection has at times been raised with regard to this teaching: If all our Savior's acts are of infinite value, it seems that they are

absolutely equal and hence Jesus' death on the cross was of no greater merit than His childhood acts. Therefore, the reasoning goes, His death adds nothing to His earlier acts since they were already infinite in value. The Cross would thus appear to be superfluous.

This conclusion, which is so contrary to the Christian approach, re-sults from confused thinking. It can easily be refuted by saying: All Jesus' acts, the least as well as the most heroic, have the same personal value deriving from the union of His humanity with the Words how-ever, these acts do not have the same objective value, which relates to the object and to the circumstances of these acts. In fact, there is a subordination in the different objects of the virtues. Thus the supreme acts of the Passion which had such a lofty object, such exceptional and painful circumstances, surpassed His preceding acts in objective value, added to the treasure already amassed, filled to overflowing Christ's merits and satisfactions, because these acts represented the ultimate in sacrifice, suffering, and love.

Nothing is superfluous to the love seeking to glorify God to the highest possible degree and to manifest itself to souls in an irresistible manner. Finally, Jesus offered His first acts of love up to His Father not separately but as the beginning of His sacrifice which was to be accomplished in its plenitude on the cross. From the first moment He entered the world He offered up His life usque ad mortem, martem autem crucis. This is what each Christian must do after Christ's ex-ample, and especially every religious who professes to live in obedi-ence, chastity, and poverty until death.

Such was the value of Christ's merit. It is a spiritual wellspring from which every human soul can slake its thirst, without ever exhausting its flow. "Where sin abounded, grace did more abound."

WHAT DID OUR LORD MERIT FOR HIMSELF AND FOR US?

He merited for Himself neither the Incarnation nor habitual grace nor the essential glory of His soul, for these gifts are anterior to His merit. These gifts precede His merit and are, as it were, its root. Meritorious acts presuppose grace, charity, and a supernatural knowl-edge, which in Christ was not faith but the vision of God.

Are we to infer, then, that Jesus merited nothing for Himself? Not at all. He merited His glorious resurrection, His ascension, the exaltation of His

name, the expansion of the Church, and the gratitude and love of the faithful. He could have claimed all these things by right of birth, but He chose to obtain them by right of conquest. That is why He said to the disciples of Emmaus: “Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into His glory?” And St. Paul added: “He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross. For which cause God also hath exalted Him, and hath given Him a name which is above all names: that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth: and that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father.” Jesus was crowned king of glory only after He had been crowned with thorns. Satan’s pride is far more deeply hurt to have been thus vanquished by the humility of our Savior and of the Virgin Mary than to have been immediately crushed by divine Omnipotence, as St. Louis-Marie de Montfort tells us. Our Savior has merited that the power of His name and of the sign of the cross should rout the evil one and deliver souls.

For us Jesus has merited the life of grace and that of eternity, that is, all the supernatural aids which lead souls to be converted, to per-severe, and to attain their ultimate destiny. “Of His fullness we all have received,” St. John tells us. Jesus Himself said: “I am the way, . . . and the life.” “If any man thirst, let him come to Me and drink. He that believeth in Me, as the Scripture saith, `Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.’ “ “He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up in the last day.” Our Savior has merited for us all the effects of predestination, and He could thus say: “My sheep hear My voice: and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them life everlasting; and they shall not perish forever, and no man shall pluck them out of My hand. That which My Father hath given Me, is greater than all: and no one can snatch them out of the hand of My Father. I and the Father are one.”

Jesus merited these great graces for us not merely through a merit of fittingness, as did our Blessed Lady, but in strict justice inasmuch as He was the Word made flesh and therefore the head of humanity. By reason of His divine personality His merits were of infinite value, and because He was head of humanity He could communicate these merits to us just as the head of the human body transmits nervous impulses to the limbs. Thus Jesus merited for every one of us in the same manner as each just man merits for himself. And as St. Peter, enlightened by the grace of Pentecost, told the

Jews: “This is the stone which was rejected by you the builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other. For there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved.”

The Passion, which merited the salvation of all men, does in fact save all who do not resist Christ’s grace. It makes available even to the most debased pagans graces of light, of attraction, and strength. If these men do not resist these graces, they will be led from grace to grace until they attain faith, justification, and salvation. The entire human race was consecrated to the Sacred Heart by Leo XIII at the opening of the twentieth century, so that it might be made more docile to these graces of light and attraction. The infidel child who after reaching the full age of reason chooses the path of goodness and turns away from evil does so only through Christ’s grace.

In evangelized society, in the Church, the Passion makes grace continually available to us through the sacraments—baptism, confirma-tion, absolution, the Eucharist, extreme unction; it sanctifies the home by the grace of the sacrament of matrimony; it molds the priestly soul by the grace of the sacrament of holy orders. Apart from the sacraments, our Savior sustains us by countless interior inspirations and other helps which inspire us to make good resolutions and confirm us in them. Having once merited these graces for us on the cross, the sacred humanity of our Lord, being the instrument ever united to His divinity, communicates these graces to us with each passing day.

Unbelievers sometimes object: Well, if Christ’s merits were infinite, then our own would be superfluous. The reply to this is clear. As the First Cause, far from making secondary causes superfluous, communicates to them the dignity of causality, as God the Author of life creates living beings whereas a sculptor can produce only lifeless works, so does our Savior by His own merits call ours into being and make us work at our own salvation and that of our neighbor. He does not save free beings against their will. We must allow ourselves to be saved by our Savior and we must not resist Him. And precisely because His merits are infinite, He has the power to make us merit with Him and to participate in His redemptive action and to save other souls with Him, through Him, and in Him. Thus it is that He lives again to a certain extent in the saints, and through them proves to the world that He is eternal.

Let us always—and particularly in hours of sadness and tempta-tion—place our trust in the infinite merits of Christ, as does the Church in closing all her prayers with the words, “Through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Like the prodigal son and the repentant good thief, even the souls that have gone farthest astray must remember to rely upon Christ’s merits. A case in point is that of the penitent who, after confessing his sins for the first time in forty years, heard the priest ask: “Well, what good have you done?” He answered: “I have kept my faith in the infinite value of Christ’s merits, and that is why I have come to confess my sins.” Through his faith in Christ this man had touched the depths of God.

Likewise a sorely troubled soul of our acquaintance at times heard our Lord say to her in moments of great darkness from which others seemed to find rays of light: “Your poverty is extreme. But fear not: though you are poor, I am rich, and My riches suffice for you. What could you give Me? Do I not place within you the good I wish to see there? For your part, walk in My presence, for I never leave you.” This shows us how closely the mystery of Christ is bound up with the mystery of our own destinies.

XXII

THE LAST SUPPER AND THE EUCHARISTIC HEART OF JESUS

IN REPORTING the events of the Last Supper so as to complete it the record presented in the first three Gospels, St. John wrote as follows: “Jesus knowing that His hour was come, that He should pass out of this world to the Father: having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them unto the end.” A father who is about to die wishes to leave to his children a supreme proof of his love for them. Often such a father cannot find words to express his love and he remains silent with a silence that is more eloquent than speech. When Jesus was about to die He found not only the words to express His meaning but also the words which would make His meaning a reality, the words of transubstantiation. He gave us the Eucharist as a testament, and in this sacrament He left to us His own divine Person.

THE GIFT OF SELF, AN EXPRESSION OF LOVE

The greatest proof of love is the perfect gift of self. Generosity is essentially communicative, goodness is naturally self-diffusive. St. Thomas goes so far as to say: “It belongs to the essence of goodness to communicate itself to others. . . . Hence it belongs to the essence of the highest good to communicate itself in the highest manner to the creature.”

Thus does the sun shed forth light and warmth, thus do adult animals and plants give life to others each after their kind. So too does a great artist conceive and produce his masterpieces, so do the scientist and the scholar communicate their intuitions and discoveries, and share their spirit with their disciples. In the same manner the virtuous man inspires others to virtue, and the apostle, passionately in love with goodness, gives the best of himself to the souls of his fel-low men, to lead them to God. Goodness

tends essentially to com-municate itself to others, and the more perfect a being is the more intimately and abundantly he gives himself.

He who is the sovereign Good, the fullness of being, communicates Himself as fully and intimately as possible by the eternal generation of the Word and by the spiration of the Spirit of love, as revelation teaches us. The Father, in begetting the Son, not only communicates to Him a participation in His nature, His intelligence, and His love, but He communicates to the Son the totality of His indivisible nature, without multiplying it in any respect. The Father gives to the Son to be "God of God, light of light, true God of true God," and the Father and the Son together communicate to the Spirit of love who proceeds from them this same indivisible divine nature and these infinite perfections. Goodness is naturally self-diffusive, and the more perfect it is the more fully and intimately it gives itself.

By virtue of this principle, we have seen that it was fitting that God should not be content merely to create us, and to give us existence, life, intelligence, sanctifying grace, and a participation in His nature. Indeed, it was fitting that God should give Himself to us in person through the incarnation of the Word.

Even after the fall of the first man, God could have willed to re-deem us in some other manner, for example, by sending us a prophet who would have made known to us the conditions of forgiveness. But He has done infinitely more; He has willed to give us His own Son in person as our Redeemer. "God so loved the world, as to give His only-begotten Son."

Jesus, priest for all eternity and the Savior of humanity, has also for His part willed to give Himself to us perfectly throughout His life on earth, particularly at the Last Supper and on Calvary. He continues to give Himself to us each day through the Mass and Holy Communion. There can be no greater example of the perfect gift of self than these riches of the priestly and Eucharistic heart of our Lord Jesus Christ. Nor can anything do more to inspire the particular act of thanksgiving which is due to our Lord for having instituted the Eucharist and the priesthood.

The Eucharist should produce in each of us the same effect as the Incarnation produced with regard to humanity in general. For it is through the Eucharist that Jesus gives Himself to each of us.

As God gives His entire nature in the eternal generation of the Word and the spiration of the Holy Ghost, as God willed to give Himself in person in the incarnation of the Word, so Jesus has wished to give Himself in person in the Eucharist. And His priestly heart is a Eucharistic heart for the very reason that it gave us the Eucharist, just as pure air is said to be healthful because it is health-giving.

Our Lord might well have been content to institute a sacrament which was a sign of grace like baptism and confirmation. He has chosen to give us a sacrament which contains not only grace but the Author of grace Himself.

The Eucharist is thus the most perfect of the sacraments, superior even to holy orders. And it is with a view to the Eucharistic conse-cration that Jesus instituted the priesthood simultaneously with the Eucharist.

True and generous love, by which we wish others well and do them good, leads us to bend down toward them if they are below us. It inspires us to unite ourselves to them in a perfect union of thought, desire, and will, to devote ourselves to them, to sacrifice ourselves if necessary to make them better, and to encourage them to reach out beyond themselves and attain their destiny.

When our Lord was about to deprive us of His sensible presence, He wished to leave Himself to us in person under the Eucharistic veils. Loving us as He did, He could not bend down any lower toward us, toward the lowliest, the poorest and most wretched. There was no way by which He could unite Himself or give Himself more completely to each of us.

There are times when we yearn for the real presence of loved ones who are no more. The Eucharistic heart of the Savior has given us the real presence of His body, His blood, His soul, and His divinity. Everywhere on earth wherever there is a consecrated host in a taber-nacle, even in the most far-flung missions, He remains with us, the sweet companion of our exile. He is in each tabernacle, “patiently waiting for us, eager to grant us favors, yearning for our prayers.” He is brought even to repentant criminals about to meet their end.

The Eucharistic heart of Jesus has given us the Eucharist as a sacrifice, in order to perpetuate in substance the sacrifice of the Cross on our altars until the end of the world and to apply its fruits to us. And at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, our Lord who is the principal Priest continues to offer Himself up for us.

Christ “hath an everlasting priesthood, whereby He is able . . . always living to make intercession for us.” He does so particularly at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass where, according to the Council of Trent, it is the same Priest who continues to offer Himself up through His ministers in an unbloody manner, having once offered Himself up in bloody sacrifice on the cross.

This interior oblation, ever alive in the heart of Christ, is as it were the soul of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and gives it its infinite value. Jesus Christ also continues to offer up to His Father our supplications, our reparations, and our thanksgivings. But especially it is always the same infinitely pure victim which is offered up, the body of the crucified Savior, and His precious blood sacramentally shed on the altar so that it may continue to wipe away the sins of the world.

The Eucharistic heart of Jesus in giving us the Eucharistic sacrifice has also given us the priesthood. Early in His ministry He said to His apostles: “Come after Me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.” On the night of the Last Supper He told them: “You have not chosen Me: but I have chosen you; and have appointed you, that you should go, and should bring forth fruit; and your fruit should remain.” Then He gave them the power to offer up the Eucharistic sacrifice when He said: “This is My body, which is given for you. Do this for a commemoration of Me.” With these words He gave them the power of the holy consecration which continually renews the sacrament of love. The Eucharist, sacrament and sacrifice, cannot in truth be perpetuated without the priesthood. That is why for nearly two thousand years the grace of the Savior has brought into being and to fruition generation after generation of priestly vocations. And this will continue until the end of the world.

Finally, the Eucharistic heart of Jesus has given itself to us in Holy Communion. Our Savior gives Himself to us as food not so that we will assimilate Him to ourselves, but so that we may become more and more like Him, ever more vivified and sanctified by Him, in-corporated into Him. One day He said to St. Catherine of Siena: “I take thy heart from thee and give thee Mine.” This is a sensible symbol of what occurs spiritually in a fervent Communion. Our hearts die to their narrowness and selfishness and self-love, dilating and becoming like the heart of Jesus in purity, strength, and generosity. On another occasion, our Lord granted to this saint the grace of drinking deeply from the wound in His heart. This, too, is a symbol

of a fervent Communion in which the soul drinks spiritually, so to speak, from the heart of Jesus, from this “source of new graces,” “the sweet refuge of the hidden life,” “the master of the secrets of divine union,” “the heart of Him who sleeps but is ever watchful.”

St. Paul had said: “The chalice of benediction, which we bless, is it not the Communion of the blood of Christ? And the bread, which we break, is it not the partaking of the body of the Lord?” And as St. Thomas remarked, when the priest receives the precious blood in Communion he does so for himself and for the faithful also.

THE EUCHARISTIC HEART OF JESUS AND THE DAILY AND CEASELESS GIFT OF HIMSELF

Lastly, Jesus again and again, day after day, gives us the Eucharist as sacrament and sacrifice. He could have willed that the Mass be celebrated only once or twice a year in certain sanctuaries to which men would travel from afar. Yet the Holy Sacrifice is celebrated per-petually every minute of the day, over the whole surface of the earth, wherever the sun rises. It is the unceasing manifestation of Christ’s merciful love, answering the spiritual needs of each era and of each soul. “Christ . . . loved the Church, and delivered Himself up for it: that He might sanctify it, cleansing it by the laver of water in the word of life: that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”

This being so, He grants to His Church, especially through the Mass and Holy Communion, the graces she needs at the various moments of her history. In the catacombs the Mass was a source of ever new graces, and so it was during the great barbarian invasions and during the Middle Ages. And so it is today, giving us the strength to resist the great perils that threaten us, above all the atheistic phalanxes which Communism is pouring out over the world to destroy all religion. Despite the sorrows of the present, the interior life of the Church in our time in its highest aspects is indeed beautiful when viewed from above as God and the angels see it.

All these graces come to us from the Eucharistic heart of Jesus who has given us the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and Holy Communion, and who is ever giving us His blood sacramentally shed on the altar.

Father Charles de Foucauld had a deep understanding of this truth, as he prayed and died for the conversion of Islam and of Moslem lands. This truth is also understood by those who pray with all their souls and have Masses said for lands ravaged by materialism and Communism. A single drop of our Savior's precious blood can regenerate thousands of souls that have gone astray and have dragged others along with them.

Indeed, it is a truth that we too often forget. This cult of the precious blood of the Savior and deep suffering at the sight of it flowing in vain over rebellious souls can do much to turn the Eucharistic heart of Jesus toward His poor sinners—yes, His poor sinners. They are His, and apostles like St. Paul, St. Francis, St. Dominic, St. Catherine of Siena, and so many others loved our Savior enough to strive by His side for the salvation of these souls.

When we think of Christ's love for us, we should suffer agonies at the sight of souls turning away from His heart, from the source of His precious blood. He shed His blood for them all, far removed as they might be from Him, even for the Communist who blasphemes and wishes to extirpate His name from the earth. May our Lord, who does not will the death of the sinner, grant through the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass a new effusion of His heart's blood, as it were, and of the blood from His sacred wounds.

There have been saints who at the moment of the elevation during Mass have seen the precious blood overflow the chalice, spill over the arms of the priest as if it would flow into the sanctuary, and be caught up in gold cups by angels who then carried it over the whole world, particularly to lands where the Gospel was little known. This was a symbol of the graces flowing from the heart of Christ upon the souls of unfortunate pagans. It is for them, too, that He died on the cross.

The practical consequence of this truth is that the Eucharistic heart of Jesus is by no means the object of an affected devotion. It is the supreme model of the perfect gift of self, a gift which in our own lives should become more generous with each passing day. Each new con-secration should mark for the celebrant progress in his faith, trust, and love of God and of souls. For the faithful, each Communion should be substantially more fervent than the preceding one, since each Communion should increase the charity in our hearts and make them resemble our Lord's more closely and thus dispose us to receive Him more fervently on the morrow. As a stone gathers momentum in its fall toward the earth which attracts it,

so should souls tend toward God with increasing speed as they come closer to Him and are more powerfully attracted to Him.

The Eucharistic heart of Jesus yearns to attract our souls to itself. This heart is often humiliated, abandoned, forgotten, scorned, out-raged, and yet it is the heart that loves our hearts, the silent heart that would talk to souls to teach them the value of the hidden life and the value of the ever more generous gift of self.

The Word made flesh came among His own, and “His own received Him not.” Blessed are those who receive all that His merciful love deigns to give them and who do not by their resistance reject the graces which should radiate through them upon other less favored souls. Blessed are they who after they have received follow the ex-ample of our Lord and give themselves ever more generously by Him, with Him, and in Him.

If there is in the midst of even the most benighted pagans a single soul in the state of grace, a truly fervent and renounced soul such as that of Father Charles de Foucauld, a soul which receives everything that the Eucharistic heart of Christ wishes to give to it, sooner or later the radiation of that soul will inevitably transmit to straying souls something of what it has itself received. It is impossible that the precious blood should not in some measure overflow the chalice at Mass and some day—at least at the moment of death purify those straying souls who do not resist divine attentions or the actual pre-venient graces that inspire their conversion. Let us think now and then of the death of the Moslem, or of the Buddhist, or the Communist in our own town who may have been baptized as a child. Each of them has an immortal soul for which the heart of our Lord gave all its blood.

XXIII

THE PEACE OF JESUS DURING HIS PASSION

> “My peace I give unto you.”
>
> John 14:27

IF WE would delve even deeper into the mystery of the Redemp-tion, we must consider how during the Passion Christ’s love united within itself two distinct elements. In His love were united the greatest suffering that any human being ever endured during his life on earth and the most perfect peace that can exist even among the blessed in heaven.

These are two apparently contrary effects of the fullness of grace that our Lord received from the first instant of His life: two effects which are, as it were, the two poles of His interior life upon earth.

THE FULLNESS OF GRACE AND REDEMPTIVE SUFFERING

As we have seen above, this fullness of grace derives from the un-created personality of the Word made flesh. It is morally proportioned to His dignity as Son of God and also to His mission as universal Mediator. It is absolute plentitude, both intensive and extensive. And there is every evidence that this fullness of grace inclined our Lord to wish to accomplish as perfectly as possible His mission as Savior, Priest, and Victim. Every servant of God, as can be seen in the lives of the founders of religious orders, is inspired by a special grace to accomplish as perfectly as possible the mission which he has received. This grace gives him the spirit of his mission, that is, the manner of seeing, judging, feeling, willing, and acting to accomplish it properly. If this was so with the founders of religious orders such as St. Benedict, St. Dominic, and St. Francis, how much more must it have been true of the Savior!

The fullness of grace that our Lord received from the first moment of His human life awakened in Him an ardent thirst for our salvation and a yearning to offer Himself up as a victim to redeem us. “Amor meus, pondus meum,” were the words St. Augustine used: My love is like a weight which pulls me toward the beloved object. Christ’s love impelled Him to offer Himself up as a sacrifice to save our souls.

This desire found continual expression in our Savior’s sermons, and even before that in His first words: “Did you not know, that I must be about My Father’s business?”

“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to My-self.” “I am come to cast fire on the earth: and what will I, but that it be kindled?” “With desire I have desired to eat this pasch with you, before I suffer. . . . This is My body, which is given for you. . . . This is the chalice, the new testament of My blood, which shall be shed for you.”

This hunger of our Lord for our salvation, this yearning for the cross, correspond to the very motive of the Incarnation: “Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven,” as we repeat each day at the Credo of the Mass.

This desire found ever more powerful expression as the moment of the Passion approached, which Jesus had called “His hour,” the hour that had been set by Providence from all eternity and yet interfered in no respect with His own liberty or that of His executioners.

As the hour of the Passion approached, our Lord’s will to die for us found ever more forceful expression. In His discourse after the Last Supper, He said: “That the world may know, that I love the Father: and as the Father hath given Me commandment, so do I: Arise, let us go hence.”

At Gethsemane His soul was indeed “sorrowful even unto death,” but He chose to experience this sorrow to show that He was truly a man and that we, too, may be allowed to cry out in our hours of sad-ness. He chose to experience this anguish also so that the holocaust might be perfect; and He said to His Father: “Not as I will, but as Thou wilt.” Soon afterward, when Peter sought to defend Him with his sword, He answered: “The chalice which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?” This calls to mind His words before entering Gethsemane: “Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” Here was the effect of the fullness of grace which impelled our Savior to desire to accomplish as perfectly as possible His mission as priest and as victim.

In actual fact, as St. Thomas explains, His suffering was the most intense that can be suffered during man's earthly life. He did not of course endure all possible sufferings, for some torments are the antithesis of others. Death on the cross differs from the sufferings caused by weapons or fire. Yet Jesus experienced every form of physical and mental suffering. He suffered in every part of His body, which was but one great wound after the scourging, and which was made to bleed anew when His clothing was torn off before the cruci-fixion. All these sufferings were made more intense by the delicacy of His constitution, for His was a body miraculously conceived in the womb of a virgin.

Jesus also experienced all the moral sufferings caused by the stray-ing of His people from the path of salvation, by the priests of the Synagogue who were embittered against Him, by the fact that divine justice was striking Him in our stead. This was the most terrible of His sufferings because it was caused by the greatest of all evils, sin, whose gravity and extent Jesus understood better than anyone else. This suffering was as intense as His love of goodness. It was a suffering from which He sought no alleviation but to which He freely offered Himself up, so that He might feel in our stead that hatred of evil which is the essence of contrition.

It has been objected that the desolation of a sinner who has lost grace, such as Peter's after the denials, seem to be greater than that which Christ suffered. For Jesus at least preserved the joy of His innocence. St. Thomas answers as follows: "Christ grieved . . . over the sins of all others. And this grief in Christ surpassed all grief of every contrite heart, both because it flowed from a greater wisdom [by which He knew better than anyone else the infinite gravity of the offense against God and the multiplicity of men's crimes] and charity, by which the pang of contrition is intensified, and because He grieved at the one time for all sins."

We cannot begin to imagine the suffering Jesus must have experi-enced at the exact and penetrating view of men's crimes. If St. Cath-erine of Siena was nauseated at the sight of the state of certain souls, how much must our Lord have suffered! For He saw the concupis-cence of the flesh and of the eyes and the pride of life just as we see purulent sores on a diseased body.

He suffered from the sight of sin in proportion to His love for God whom sin offends and in proportion to His love for our souls which sin ravages and kills. And He was not content to look upon these sins with profound sadness. He had taken them upon Himself: "Surely He hath borne our

infirmities and carried our sorrows." If Mary standing at the foot of the cross suffered because of sin in proportion to her love for God, for her Son, and for us, what then must Christ's suffering have been! The fullness of grace and charity greatly in-creased in Him the capacity for suffering from the greatest of all evils, an evil which our selfishness prevents us from grieving over.

PEACE IN SUFFERING

In spite of His most intense suffering, Jesus maintained a deep peace during His entire passion.

This is evident from the seven last words that He spoke. One of them, it is true, does appear to be a cry of anguish: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Calvin chose to see in it a cry of despair. But such was not the case at all, as shown by the words of trust and thanksgiving which followed: "It is consummated."

These words, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" are the first verse of a Messianic psalm which fittingly rose to Christ's lips, for it is a psalm in which Jesus spoke in the name of the sinners whose sins He had taken upon Himself.

Here is what psalm 21 says:

O God, my God, . . . why hast Thou forsaken me? . . .

I shall cry by day, and Thou wilt not hear: and by night. . .

But Thou dwellest in the holy place, the praise of Israel.

In Thee have our fathers hoped: they have hoped, and Thou hast delivered them.

They cried to Thee, and they were saved: they trusted in Thee, and were not

confounded.

But I am a worm, and no man: the reproach of men, and the outcast of the people.

All they that saw me have laughed me to scorn: they have spoken with the lips,

and wagged the head.

He hoped in the Lord, let Him deliver him: let Him save him, seeing He

delighteth in him.

For Thou art He that hast drawn me out of the womb: . . .

From my mother’s womb Thou art my God, depart not from me.

For tribulation is very near: for there is none to help me. . . .

For many dogs have encompassed me: the council of the malignant hath be-

sieged me.

They have dug my hands and feet. They have numbered all my bones. . . .

And upon my vesture they cast lots.

But Thou, O Lord, remove not Thy help to a distance from me; look toward My

defense. . . .

I will declare Thy name to my brethren: in the midst of the church will I praise

Thee.

Ye that fear the Lord, praise Him: all ye seed of Jacob, glorify Him, . .

Because He hath not slighted nor despised the supplication of the poor man.

Neither hath He turned away His face from me: and when I cried to Him He

heard me.

The poor shall eat and shall be filled: and they shall praise the Lord that seek

Him: their hearts shall live forever and ever.

All the ends of the earth shall remember, and shall be converted to the Lord.

And all the kindreds of the Gentiles shall adore in His sight.

Thus does the psalm which began with a cry of pain: “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?” end in words of trust and praise. Jesus in His dying moments lived this psalm in its entirety with a depth of experience which we cannot begin to fathom.

As for the remainder of Christ’s last words, they are all manifestly words of peace, the most beautiful that a martyr-priest can say. Not only do these words prove that the heart of Jesus was full of profound peace. They also show that His was a radiant peace which He communicated to those around Him, to those whom He strengthened at the very moment He was being crucified for them.

“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” This was said for His executioners when they were nailing Him to the cross. The martyrs would repeat these words, and first among them St. Stephen obtained through his prayer the conversion of Saul who was keeping the garments of Stephen’s murderers.

There is peace also in the words spoken to the good thief, for they promise him heavenly peace: “This day thou shalt be with Me in paradise.” After these words, the good thief’s cross was no longer merely a punishment, as was the other thief’s. It became a reparation which opened the portals of heaven to him. These words were to be repeated again and again by Christ’s ministers entrusted with the duty of preparing condemned men to meet their God.

The words addressed to Mary and to John were also words of peace, pouring a gentle balm on their aching hearts: “Woman, behold thy son.” By these words Mary became more than ever the Mother of all men personified by John, and mediator and distributer of all graces. “Behold thy mother.” These words of mercy produced in John’s soul the most respectful and filial affection for Mary, from whom he would receive so many graces for his apostolic ministry.

After saying the first words of psalm 21, Jesus cried out: “I thirst; . . . it is consummated.” He thirsted for souls, but He Himself was bringing to them at that moment the living waters of grace. He had the immense joy of consummating the work of the Redemption. There is more joy in giving than in receiving, and Jesus was giving reconciliation with God, profound peace of soul to all men who would accept it, to all who would place no obstacle in its way.

The last word, “Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit,” is, as it were, the consecration of the sacrifice of the Cross which restores all things and brings upon all souls the outpouring of divine mercy.

How did Jesus preserve this profound and radiant peace in the midst of His torments and intense sufferings? Theologians admit that this is a miracle and a supernatural mystery of the order of grace, resulting from the fact that Jesus was at once viator et comprehensor, a wayfarer toward eternity and a comprehensor enjoying the vision of the divine essence. This mysterious union of most profound suffering with the most sublime peace has been explained diversely by various theologians.

St. Thomas gives us the truest explanation, one which in spite of its obscurities is very luminous. “If we take the whole soul as comprising all its faculties, . . . His entire soul did not enjoy fruition. . . by any overflow of glory, because, since Christ was still upon earth, there was no overflowing of glory from the higher part into the lower.”

Only the summit of our Savior’s human intellect and will were beatified. Jesus willed very freely to abandon to suffering the less elevated regions of His superior faculties and of His sensibility. In other words, He freely prevented the irradiation of the light of glory on His lower reason and on His sensitive faculties. He did not wish that this light and the joy which derives from it should by their ir-radiance lessen in any way the moral and physical suffering which He had chosen to bear for our salvation. He who was on several oc-casions to preserve His martyrs from suffering in the midst of their torments, by granting them abundant graces, chose to yield Himself up completely to suffering, so that He might save us by the most perfect of holocausts.

Christ’s peace amid suffering reminds us of a high mountain peak whose summit is bathed in sunlight, while its lower reaches are in the grips of a terrible storm. Thus only the uppermost portion of Christ’s superior faculties was free from suffering, because He freely yielded Himself up to suffering without seeking any relief in the vision of the divine essence.

There is undoubtedly a mystery in all this. Yet we can at least get a faint idea of it in the case of a penitent. St. Augustine tells us that the truly contrite penitent rejoices because he grieves over his sins, and the more he grieves the more he rejoices.

Christ’s suffering and peace, far from being opposed, harmonize very well. His love of God gave Him peace and made Him suffer at the sight of sin. Love of souls also made Him suffer because of our transgressions and gave Him joy in our salvation. This thought never left Him. Even on Thabor, He spoke of His passion to Moses and Elias, and immediately after His transfiguration He announced to His disciples what manner of death He would die.

The great lesson to be learned from this mystery is that, following in the Savior’s footsteps, each of us must carry his own cross if we would participate in the fruits of His cross. There are many crosses that accomplish nothing for the suffering souls that endure them. Such was the cross of the bad thief. By contrast, in union with our Lord, we must carry

our cross with patience and even with gratitude and love. Thus shall we gain little by little a deeper understanding of the mystery of the Redemption, and from it we shall receive the fruits of life that endure for all eternity.

XXIV

JESUS, PRIEST AND VICTIM ON THE CROSS

> "Christ . . . hath loved us, and hath delivered Himself for us, an oblation and a sacrifice to God for an odor of sweetness."
>
> Eph. 5:2

WE HAVE spoken of the peace of Christ during His passion. In this sublime contrast we are given a glimpse of the depth of His love. There is another contrast that is quite as remarkable: that of divine strength in weakness. During His passion and on the cross Jesus was at once a broken victim, annihilated as it were for our salvation, and the most powerful of priests by reason of His merit and His intercession.

DIVINE STRENGTH IN WEAKNESS

In the Old Testament we find several examples of this strength in weakness in the most beautiful figures of the Christ to come, par-ticularly in the person of Isaac who carried the wood of his sacrifice and allowed himself to be bound on an altar by his father Abrahams in preparation for the immolation. At that moment a voice from heaven was heard saying to Abraham: "Because thou hast . . . not spared thy only-begotten son for My sake: I will bless thee, and I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand that is by the seashore . . . because thou hast obeyed My voice." Isaac's greatness lies in the fact that he obeyed with his father and that he allowed himself to be bound on the altar of sacrifice as a victim to be immolated.

Divine strength in weakness is also apparent in another figure of Christ, indeed one of the most touching: Joseph, sold by his brothers, sold out of jealousy because he had prophetic dreams and because he was especially loved of his father Jacob. Joseph, sold for a few pieces of silver, became the

salvation of his brothers when he made himself known to them and said: “I am Joseph. Is my father yet living?” Thus was the Savior persecuted through jealousy, because He had a divine message, and was hated by the priests of the Levitical priesthood which was the figure of His eternal priesthood. Thus was He sold for thirty denarii and became the salvation of us all, of all who believe and hope in Him.

The Lord said to St. Paul: “Power is made perfect in infirmity.” And the Apostle himself writes: “We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews indeed a stumbling block, and unto the Gentiles foolishness: but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God [Christ crowned with thorns] is wiser than men; and the weakness of God [the crucified Savior] is stronger than men.”

This remarkable contrast between the power of Jesus and the op-pression He endured constitutes the austere and sublime beauty of His spiritual physiognomy. It is something that escapes the eyes of the world and unfolds itself to the saints as they progress in the path of contemplation. If beauty, which is harmony, derives from unity in diversity, the sublime, which is the extraordinarily beautiful, derives from the most intimate unity in the greatest diversity. It is the reconciliation of two extremes which God alone can harmonize.

This mystery has been completely disfigured by two opposing heresies. In the second century the Docetae were scandalized by the passion of the Savior which they considered unworthy of a God, and they declared that Jesus’ sufferings had been only apparent. According to them, Jesus had not really suffered at Gethsemane and on the cross, nor had He been a victim. The painful Passion, they said, had been only a sham. To support this senseless contention, which is contrary to the most soundly established facts, the Docetae maintained that the Word had not taken a real body in Jesus, but only the appearances of a body like a ghost. What errors we are led into when we are scandalized by the Cross!

In contrast to this error, there were other heretics later on, like Calvin, who held that Jesus had suffered so very much on Calvary that He had yielded for a moment to despair, and that He had endured the pains of hell at the moment when He cried out: “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” Calvin seemed to think that Jesus redeemed us more through the intensity of His sufferings than through the infinite value of the love with which He endured them.

Thus error swings from one extreme to the other, because men do not know or choose to ignore the culminating point where apparently contrary truths are reconciled. The doctrine of the Church remains on the lofty levels where the diverse aspects of truth are harmonized. It maintains that Jesus on the cross was the most powerful priest by His oblation and the most annihilated voluntary victim. Far more, it holds that divine power has never manifested itself in such a sublime manner as in the passion of the Savior, for this was the greatest action of His life, the consummation of His mission. There is here an admirable law of the spiritual world, which is continually fulfilled in men's souls. "Power is made perfect in infirmity," saith the Lord.

Let us first consider Jesus as victim: the extent of His immolation. We shall then consider the power of the Savior in the midst of this immolation.

Jesus, Victim.

The Extent of His Immolation

Our Lord willed to experience all the sufferings of body and soul which were fitting to His mission as Redeemer and victim. He chose to go through all our trials, to go to the utmost limits of sacrifice in order to expiate our sins and merit eternal life for us by leaving us the example of the loftiest virtues amid the greatest adversity.

He was a victim in His body: His garments were torn off Him, He was mocked, struck, scourged, until His body was one vast wound, He was crowned with thorns and was spit upon. He was treated like a vile wretch, a murderer was given preference over Him; He was nailed to a cross between two thieves. He was given gall to drink, and He was sneered at as He hung dying.

He was a victim in His heart. The affection of His people was taken from Him, this people who eight days earlier when He triumphantly entered Jerusalem acclaimed Him with shouts of "Hosanna, Son of David!" How His heart must have suffered when He cried out in lament: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered together thy children, as the hen doth gather her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldest not!" The world in its wisdom refuses the exceptional gifts that the Lord sends to it. And in giving expression to this suffering Jesus foresaw all the acts of ingratitude that were to come in the future, some even from souls upon whom He would heap the greatest favors.

He was a victim in His innermost soul, for He suffered most in-tensely from the sight of sin, from the numberless sins He was to expiate, from the deicide that was to be committed through pride and voluntary blindness. Our Lord's soul was crushed by this spiritual and moral suffering inasmuch as it wounded to the quick His charity, His love of God and of souls. He suffered from sin to a degree that we cannot begin to understand: in the measure of His love for God whom sin offends, in the measure of His love for our souls that sin kills. Stigmatists, such as St. Francis of Assisi and St. Catherine of Siena, who participated in these spiritual sufferings, have told us that they are inexpressible.

Our Savior suffered from the sins of all men not only because He understood their limitless gravity, but also because He had taken them upon Himself to expiate them and because He wished Himself to bear the weight of the divine curse due to sin.

Jesus could not have been more completely a victim. There could be no more absolute immolation. We read in Isaias 53:

Despised, and the most abject of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with infirmity: and His look was as it were hidden and despised, whereupon we esteemed Him not.

Surely He hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows: and we have thought Him as it were a leper, and as one struck by God and afflicted.

But He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His bruises we are healed.

All we like sheep have gone astray, every one hath turned aside into his own way: and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

Jesus as victim understood to what degree God loves goodness and detests evil. "Love is strong as death, jealousy as hard as hell," says the Canticle of Canticles (8:6). The heart of Jesus, victim for sin, endured these rigorous demands of the love of God. Indeed, as St. Paul says, "Christ Jesus . . . emptied Himself, . . . becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross."

THE FORTITUDE OF THE SAVIOR IN HIS IMMOLATION

It is in this weakness and this annihilation that the power of the Lord is manifest in its fullness. Jesus was indeed a victim. But He was also a priest, and the oblation of Himself which He offered up was of infinite value. As

St. Paul says, “The weakness of God [Christ cruci-fied] is stronger than men. . . . But the foolish things of the world hath God chosen, that He may confound the wise; and the weak things of the world hath God chosen, that He may confound the strong, . . . that no flesh should glory in His sight.”

David among the prophets, after announcing, “They have dug My hands and feet,” added: “All the ends of the earth shall remember, and shall be converted to the Lord.” Likewise in Isaias we read: “And the Lord was pleased to bruise Him in infirmity: if He shall lay down His life for sin, He shall see a long-lived seed, and the will of the Lord shall be prosperous in His hand. . . . He hath borne the sins of many, and hath prayed for the transgressors.”

The Savior’s teaching had progressively brought to light this great law of the supernatural world. From the start, in the Sermon on the Mount, He had announced: “Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

In the parable of the good shepherd He clearly announced His sacrifice: “I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd giveth His life for His sheep. . . . There shall be one fold and one Shepherd. Therefore doth the Father love Me: because I lay down My life, that I may take it again. No man taketh it away from Me: but I lay it down of Myself, and I have power to take it up again. This commandment have I received of My Father.” Again He said: “The Son of man is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a redemption for many.” Also: “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself. (Now this He said, signifying what death He should die.)” Of the sons of Zebedee He asked: “Can you drink of the chalice that I drink of?”

When He instituted the Holy Eucharist, He said: “This is My body, which is given for you. . . . This is the chalice, the new testament in My blood, which shall be shed for you.” “Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” Lastly, the priestly prayer which St. John records in his seventeenth chapter is, as it were, the introit of the bloody Mass of the Cross.

We would expect that the apostles, enlightened by all these words, should have understood that the hour of oppression would be the hour of supreme victory. Yet when armed men led by Judas seized Jesus, the apostles, unable to endure this mystery of the Savior’s cruel death, abandoned their Master at the very moment when He was about to consummate His work. At that

moment they saw only the human side of things and not what God accomplishes in them.

Yet at the very moment when abuse was heaped upon Him and when He was crushed by the weight of our sins, our Lord displayed supreme dignity and invincible fortitude. It was He who determined the course of events, by making even His enemies and the blind fury of the spirit of evil serve the glory of God, and by making of the cross with which He was burdened the great means of salvation. He transformed the greatest obstacles into means.

At the time of His arrest, St. John tells us, He asked the soldiers who were with Judas: “Whom seek ye?” “Jesus of Nazareth.” “I am He.” And at these words they went backward and fell to the ground, as if struck by an invisible force. A few minutes later He said to Peter, who wished to defend Him with his sword: “Put up thy sword into the scabbard. The chalice which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?”

Before Caiphas, He confessed that He was the Son of God and that He would come to judge the living and the dead. Before Herod, He did not answer the questions of the voluptuous monarch who was eager to witness some prodigy. Before Pilate, when asked if He was king of the Jews, He answered: “My kingdom is not of this world. . . . For this was I born, and for this came I into the world that I should give testimony to the truth. Every one that is of the truth, heareth My voice.”

On Calvary He showed His fortitude by His patience and by His heroic constancy. St. Thomas tells us that the principal act of the virtue of fortitude is to endure tribulation, to stand firm under blows, not to be crushed by adversity. Heroic fortitude, St. Thomas says, is con-nected with the other virtues and must be accompanied by virtues which may seem the most completely opposite, humility and gentle-ness. This is what the false martyrs lack. This is the fortitude and gentleness that we see in Jesus when they pierced His hands and His feet and when He prayed for His executioners, saying: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

Christ’s gentleness at such a moment is a manifestation of the most complete mastery of self, utter forgetfulness of self for the salvation of souls. Truly Jesus gave up His life as He had foretold in the parable of the good shepherd: “I lay down My life for My sheep. . . . No man taketh it away from Me: but I lay it down of Myself, and I have power to lay it down: and . . . to take it up again.”

This interior oblation is the soul of the sacrifice of the Cross. The sovereign power of the dying Jesus is also apparent in His words to the good thief: “Amen I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with Me in paradise.” The oblation also finds expression in these words: “It is consummated.” Finally, as St. Luke reports, “the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst. And Jesus crying with a loud voice, said: Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit. And saying this, He gave up the ghost.” These last words were the words of the consecration of the sacrifice of the Cross, the supreme expression of oblation.

At that very moment, St. Matthew tells us, “the earth quaked, and the rocks were rent. And the graves were opened: and many bodies of the saints that had slept arose. . . . Now the centurion and they that were with him watching Jesus, having seen the earthquake, and the things that were done, were sore afraid, saying: Indeed this was the Son of God.”

To our limited human reason, Jesus on the cross may appear van-quished. On the contrary He is the all-powerful conqueror over sin and Satan. He is the “Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world,” as His resurrection was to demonstrate in a visible and striking manner: victory over death, which is the consequence of sin, is the sign of victory over sin.

This admirable contrast of power in immolation is to be found in all souls in whom the image of the Crucified is profoundly imprinted: in Mary, Mother of Sorrows, in the persecuted apostles, who were considered “the refuse of this world.”

This should teach us the marvelous fruitfulness of suffering when supernaturally endured in union with the Savior. The apostolate of prayer and suffering fructifies far more than we imagine the apostolate of preaching, teaching, and exterior works. As St. Paul exhorts us, let us be “followers of God, . . . and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath delivered Himself for us, an oblation and a sacri-fice to God for an odor of sweetness.”

It is clear that our Savior’s passion was a true sacrifice, the greatest of all sacrifices, as St. Paul explains at length in his Epistle to the Hebrews (chapters 9 and to). On the cross, Jesus was at once priest and victim, for He was offering Himself up voluntarily. From the time He prayed at Gethsemane until He expired, all His words and acts were expressions of this voluntary oblation which is, as it were, the soul of this sacrifice of adoration, supplication, reparation, and thanksgiving: “Consummatum est.”

All the sacrifices of the Old Law, from that of Abraham preparing to immolate his son Isaac until the sacrifice of the paschal lamb, were figures of the sacrifice on Calvary, which alone could wipe out sin, for it alone has an infinite value through the person of the priest who offers it up and through the worth of the victim that is offered up.

Jesus on the cross is the victim for sin, by which sin is remitted, the victim of peace which preserves grace, the perfect holocaust which raises us up toward God. This is the holocaust of which all past sacri-fices were but the prefigurations. This is the holocaust which will be commemorated and perpetuated in substance until the end of the world in every Mass, at which the Savior will always be the principal priest and the victim truly present on the altar and sacramentally im-molated.

St. Paul tells us: “Christ, being come a high priest of the good things to come, . . . neither by the blood of goats or of calves, but by His own blood, entered once into the holies, having obtained eternal redemption.” “For Jesus is not entered into the holies made with hands, the patterns of the true: but into heaven itself, that He may appear now in the presence of God for us.” The sacrifice of the Cross thus appears as the most perfect of all sacrifices. It is excellent in itself and through itself quite apart from the other sacrifices, and the latter derive their worth wholly from the sacrifice of the Cross.

Each day as we assist at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass let us learn to live by the sacrifice of the Cross which is perpetuated in substance on the altar. Let us especially ask for an understanding of the Cross and for a love of those crosses which Providence has reserved for us from all eternity until we enter heaven. Let us remember this law of Christian life: “Unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, itself remaineth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.”

Let us often repeat the seven last words of Christ, which are, so to speak, His testament, and let us ask Mary to enable us to understand them: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.—This day thou shalt be with Me in paradise.—Woman, behold thy son. Behold thy mother.—My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me? —I thirst.—It is consummated.—Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit.”

XXV

CHRIST'S VICTORY OVER DEATH

> "And if Christ be not risen again, your faith is vain, for you are yet in your sins."
>
> I Cor. 15:17

ON PENTECOST, as the Acts of the Apostles record, Peter, en-lightened and strengthened by the Holy Ghost, said to the Jews: "Jesus of Nazareth . . . being delivered up, by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, you by the hands of wicked men have crucified and slain. Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the sorrows of hell, as it was impossible that He should be holden by it." On the following days Peter repeated it: "The Author of life you killed, whom God hath raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses." "Neither is there salvation in any other."

Thus the Resurrection appears to Peter and to the other apostles as the definitive confirmation of our faith in Christ. And remarkably enough, the great adversaries of our Lord had anticipated this. Without knowing it, they served the designs of Providence in a most as-tounding manner. Just as Caiphas the high priest had said during the Passion: "It is expedient that one man should die for the people," so, as St. Matthew reports, the chief priests and the Pharisees remembered that Jesus had said: "After three days I will rise again." Thereupon they "made the sepulcher sure, sealing the stone, and setting guards." It was these guards, the soldiers, who were struck with terror at the moment of the Resurrection, at the sight of the angel from heaven, and it was they who told the priests and Pharisees what had happened.

The resurrection of the Savior was the decisive sign of His divine mission. Peter and the apostles never tired of affirming it. St. Paul said the same thing in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, about the year 55: "For I delivered unto you first of all, which I also received: how that Christ died

for our sins, according to the Scriptures: and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures: and that He was seen by Cephas; and after that by the eleven. Then was He seen by more than five hundred brethren at once: of whom many remain until this present, and some are fallen asleep. After that, He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. And last of all, He was seen also by me, as by one born out of due time. . . . For whether I, or they, so we preach, and so you have believed." Then Paul adds: "If Christ be not risen again, your faith is vain, . . . for you are yet in your sins."

What does Paul mean by these last words? He means that if this is the case, our faith in the risen Christ, which faith is the basis of justifi-cation, is vain and false and consequently our sins have not been for-given.

He also means, as St. John Chrysostom remarks: If Christ is not risen, we have no guaranty that God has accepted His death as redemption. Thus nothing has been accomplished, and the work of salvation is yet to be done.

To help us grasp the inner meaning of these words of St. Paul, as understood by St. John Chrysostom and many other interpreters after him, let us first bear in mind what our faith in Christ must be if we are to be saved. We shall then understand how His victory over death is the great sign of His victory over sin and over the spirit of evil.

WHAT WE MUST BELIEVE ABOUT: CHRIST'S VICTORY OVER SIN

We must first of all believe in the existence of God, the author of grace and supreme rewarder. Next we must believe that Jesus, the Son of God, is the Savior, the "Lamb of God, . . . who taketh away the sin of the world." We must fervently believe in the truth of His words: "Come to Me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you." I will refresh your souls by extricating them from sin, by giving them the life of grace, the seed of eternal life.

This act of lively faith should be not only a speculative certainty without influence on our lives, but a deep and perpetual conviction which transforms all we have to do or to suffer each day. This act of faith often remains too feeble within us. If in the midst of our troubles we remain depressed, introverted, it is because we do not have enough faith and confidence in Jesus Christ, our Savior.

The apostles were the first to feel on certain days before Pentecost the weakness of their faith. One day during a storm on Lake Genesa-reth our Lord said to them: “Why are you fearful, O ye of little faith?” They became even more conscious of their frailty during the Passion. Indeed, they had been enraptured by the sublime teaching of the Master, they had seen Him perform miracles, raise Lazarus from the dead, cast out devils, walk on the water. Three of the apostles had even been present at His transfiguration on Mount Thabor. But they also saw Him sad unto death at Gethsemane, and later they saw Him insulted, scourged, spit upon, and even Peter went astray for a moment to the point of denying three times that he knew Him.

What we must believe and what those at the foot of the cross were called on to believe was that the agonizing Jesus was the Savior of souls precisely because of His agony, far more than He had been through His sermons and His miracles. Agony means combat, and Christ’s agony was the great combat against the spirit of evil, a combat in which Jesus was completely victorious.

He had said to His disciples after the Last Supper: “Have confi-dence, I have overcome the world.” It was on the cross that He won His definitive victory over the gravest of all evils, the most profound evil in the world, namely, sin and Satan.

At the moment of the “Consummatum est,” Mary made the greatest act of faith that was ever made on earth. She did not cease for an instant to believe that her crucified Son was the Savior of all men. Participating in the Virgin’s great faith were the holy women near her, also St. John, the good thief, and the centurion. In varying degrees they all believed that the work of salvation was consummated in this annihilation of the Victim chosen from all eternity to carry the burden of our sins in our stead.

But few were those who believed it in that supreme hour. The great majority could not bear the death of Christ: “Fac ut portem Christi mortem,” are the words of the Stabat Mater.

What it was necessary to believe then and what we must still be-lieve is that the object of derision, regarded as the offscouring of humanity, before whom men wagged their heads mocking, is in reality the strength and the life of souls, the one who has overcome the world. What we must believe is that the hour of darkness and shame, when viewed from above, is also the glorious hour of salvation, the most fruitful of all for souls.

At that hour many disciples—as we can see from the words of the disciples of Emmaus—felt themselves weakening, and this can happen to anyone in the face of persecution and hatred. Yet we must believe that the crucified Christ, who seemed totally defeated, was victorious over sin, that He is the one "who taketh away the sin of the world." This mysterious and hidden victory needed to be confirmed by a tangible and overpowering proof that would rekindle the confidence of the disciples. Divine Providence had decided from all eternity that this would be not merely another miracle, but the resurrection of the Lord. What is the reason for this? Because of the very close relation between sin and death. This is one of the great truths of revelation.

CHRIST'S VICTORY OVER DEATH, THE SIGN OF HIS VICTORY OVER SIN

In the Epistle to the Romans, St. Paul reminds us that death entered the world as the consequence of sin and that, as Adam was the representative of the human race for its perdition, so Christ is the representative and head of humanity for its salvation and He is the inexhaustible wellspring of grace: "By one man sin entered into this world and by sin death. . . . If by the offense of one, many died, . . , if by one man's offense death reigned through one: much more they who receive abundance of grace and of the gift and of justice shall reign in life through one, Jesus Christ. . . . Where sin abounded, grace did more abound. St. Paul adds: "The wages of sin is death. But the grace of God, life everlasting in Christ Jesus our Lord."

In the actual plan of Providence if Adam had not sinned, if there had not been this disorder, this ruin, this moral corruption which con-sists in the separation of the soul from God, then there would not have been this ruin, this physical corruption which consists in the separation of the body from the soul. Death is the consequence and the punish-ment of sin.

Doubtless man is mortal by nature, as the animals are. Yet, through grace the first man had received for himself and his descendants the privilege of immortality, provided he should remain faithful to God. As Genesis records it, when the Lord placed him in the Garden of Eden to cultivate and preserve it, He said: "Of every tree of paradise thou shalt eat. But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat. For in what day soever thou shalt eat of it, thou shalt die the death."

This was but a gentle testing of man's submission, as Boussuet says, a light brake on the exercise of his free will, to make him realize that he had a master, though a most merciful one.

The devil, on the other hand, told him: "No, you shall not die the death. For God doth know that in what day soever you shall eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened: and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." That is to say: you will be able to rule yourselves, with no need to obey. The devil himself had said: "I will not obey."

What happened immediately after the sin of disobedience and pride? As Scripture records it, "the eyes of them both were opened." They acquired the knowledge of good and evil: not the knowledge that enables one to conduct oneself wisely, but the knowledge that is nothing but the bitter experience of evil committed and of its profound difference from goodness and from the holiness they had just lost for themselves and for their descendants. They realized how true had been the Lord's warning to them and how the devil had lied.

Their souls seemed dead within them. For in tasting evil through their pride, they had lost divine life and God's friendship. Their souls had withdrawn from God who gave them life, and God had withdrawn from them. In consequence they lost mastery over their passions. The emotions, until then subject to right reason and to the will, revolted, just as the will had revolted against God. Finally, inasmuch as the soul had ceased to be under God's dominion, the body ceased to be under the soul's governance. Once the soul had withdrawn from God who vivified it, the body separated from the soul, the source of its life. The soul had been untrue to its divine friendship, and God withdrew from the body its wholly gratuitous privileges of impassibility and immortality. Man had preferred nature to grace, and nature's threadbareness was apparent. The human body, thenceforth subject to natural laws, was exposed to winds and inclement weather, to pain, sickness, and death. Until then man had dominated death. The Lord now said to Adam: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return to the earth, out of which thou was taken: for dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt return." The Church reminds us of this every Ash Wednesday.

Death of the body, the consequence and punishment of sin, was also the symbol of sin. For mortal sin is, as it were, the death of the soul. Loss of the life of grace was followed by the loss of physical life. Horror of death

should inspire in us a horror of sin, through which death came into the world.

Immediately after the fall of man the Lord promised a redeemer, when He said to the serpent: “I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head.”

As all the prophecies specify, Jesus eminently represents the pos-terity of the woman. On Good Friday He conquered both sin and the devil. But this hidden victory, won by the One who might have seemed to be vanquished but who was really a victim for us, was to be manifested by an overwhelming sign. Here we can see the super-natural logic of these mysteries according to the plan of Providence. It was highly fitting that this great sign should be the resurrection of the Savior. If death is the consequence of sin, it was altogether fitting that Christ’s victory over death should be the sign of His victory over sin. In other words, Christ’s victory over death, proved by His resurrection, means that He was victorious over sin on the cross.

That is why St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians: “And if Christ be not risen again, your faith is vain: for you are yet in your sins.” That is to say: we have no guaranty that God has accepted His death as redemption. And St. Paul added that the Savior’s resurrection is the guaranty of our own future resurrection: “For by a man came death: and by a man the resurrection of the dead. And as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive.” Jesus had said at Lazarus’ tomb: “I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in Me, although he be dead, shall live.” He had also said three times when He promised the Eucharist: “Now this is the will of the Father who sent Me: that of all that He hath given Me, I should lose nothing; but should raise it up again in the last day.” This formula recurs several times in this discourse by our Lord, who was called to save both our bodies and our souls and to make us participate in His glorious life.

That is why St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians: “And the enemy, death, shall be destroyed last.” “And when this mortal hath put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written [Osee 13:14]: Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting? Now the sting of death is sin. . . . But thanks be to God, who hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Likewise the Apocalypse (1:17) tells us that Jesus appeared to St. John and said to him: “Fear not. I am the First and the Last, and alive, and was dead. And behold

I am living forever and ever and have the keys of death and of hell." "Write: These things saith the Holy One. . . . He that openeth and no man shutteth, shutteth and no man openeth."

This is the triumph that the liturgy proclaims on Easter Day in the Sequence Victimae paschali laudes:

The Lamb redeems the sheep;
And Christ the sinless one,
Hath to the Father sinners reconciled.
Together, death and life
In a strange conflict strove.
The Prince of life, who died,
Now lives and reigns.
We know that Christ indeed
Has risen from the grave:
Hail, thou King of Victory,
Have mercy, Lord, and save. Amen.

Let each of us consider how different the history of humanity would be and how different our own lives would be if there had been no Redemption and no Resurrection.

There is every evidence that the victory of Christ over sin is far superior to His victory over death. The former is the very essence of the mystery of the Redemption. The latter is but a sensible sign of the inward and invisible supernatural mystery. The symbol derives its value from the grandeur of the thing symbolized. The moment of the "Consummatum est" was the greatest and most glorious in the whole history of mankind. But this victory was so mysterious, so hidden, that it escaped even the majority of the apostles themselves, and so it needed to be made manifest by an incontestable sensible sign. This was provided by Christ's triumph over death, the consequence of sin. And that is why we celebrate Easter with great magnificence, to honor the great victory won by our Savior on Good Friday. The act of love of Good Friday, which is commemorated at every Mass, far surpasses the corporeal resurrection which is its manifestation.

The apostles were made to see the light. The Savior's death had left them broken, crushed. They were going to return to their earthly occupations and forget the kingdom of God. From the day they knew of the Resurrection, their faith faltered no more. Given still new light through the grace of Pentecost, they scattered over the earth to preach the good tidings; and

following their Master’s example, they preached His gospel until they were martyred. In the midst of their torments they put all their trust in the glorious Christ, as St. Stephen had done before them, and they trod the same path as he to eternal happiness.

This mystery of resurrection continues in the Church in a certain sense. Jesus made the Church in His own image, and if He allows her to pass through terrible tribulations, He enables her to rise up again and to be more glorious after the mortal blows of her enemies have been struck. This is what happened during the persecutions of Nero, Diocletian, and Julian the Apostate. From the blood of thousands of martyrs sprang up thousands of Christian Churches.

The Church likewise triumphed over the great Arian and Pelagian heresies, which were the occasion of immortal works by the Greek Fa-thers and by St. Augustine.

During the early Middle Ages the barbarians spread desolation everywhere, but the Church was able to conquer and convert them. In the thirteenth century the Albigensians tried to revive Manichaeism, but great new religious orders arose, and this thirteenth century became the golden age of theology.

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries it might have seemed to some people that the Church would perish under the blows of the pagan Renaissance and of Protestantism. Large areas of Germany and England were lost to Catholicism. However, at that very moment there arose in Europe a galaxy of saintly founders or reformers. The Church was established in India, where St. Francis Xavier renewed the prodigies of the apostolic era. In America, Louis Bertrand and Las Casas proclaimed the charity of Christ, and the true reform was being organized at the Council of Trent.

The French Revolution set out to destroy the Church once more. Priests were massacred, religious orders were suppressed, altars were profaned, and the foundations of a new life and a new religion were laid down. But in 1801 the Concordat was signed, the Catholic wor-ship reappeared in the churches. Little by little the dispersed religious orders were re-established, saints like the Curé of Ars called back into being all the vitality of Christianity, and the missions of the Orient, Asia, Africa, and America made astonishing progress.

Thus will it be until the end of time. The mystery of the Savior's resurrection is in a sense reproduced in the Church. The life of the Church is a life that has experienced death and amid the most terrible tribulations finds once again an ever-blossoming youth. This is particularly true of the saints who can say with St. Paul: "I die daily," and who, after experiencing martyrdom of the heart in order to labor for the salvation of souls in union with our Lord, appear more vital than ever and live on in their works that bear fruit for eternity.

Thus is the truth of the Master's words, manifested: "I am the resurrection and the life." "If any man thirst, let him come to Me and drink. . . . Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water," and "I will raise him up in the last day."

XXVI

THE PRINCIPAL PRIEST OF THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

> “Christ . . . always living to make intercession for us.”
>
> Heb. 7:25

AFTER His resurrection and ascension, our Savior, who is a priest forever, did not cease to exercise the principal act of His priesthood, and He does this especially through the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The Mass is a sacramental sacrifice substantially perpetuating in an unbloody manner the sacrifice of the Cross, of which it is a memorial; and it applies to us the fruits of the sacrifice of the Cross. Such is the doctrine of faith clearly formulated by the Council of Trent.

As the Council explains, the Sacrifice of the Mass is in substance the same as that of the Cross, because it is the same victim, really present on our altars, that is offered up and because it is offered up by the same principal priest. This victim, once nailed to the cross, is now offered under the appearances of bread and wine, and is sacra-mentally immolated by the separate consecration of the body and blood of our Savior, who is present on the altar in the state of death, as it were. Of course His precious blood is no longer physically separated from His body, but we can say that it is sacramentally shed. For, by virtue of the words of the first consecration, only the body of the Savior is present under the species of bread, and formally by the words of the second consecration it is only the precious blood that is under the species of wine.

The Mass is therefore a real sacrifice, but an unbloody one. It is not merely a symbolic sacrifice or the simple re-enactment of a past sacrifice, for the victim is really present and not merely the image of this victim. There is also the real oblation of the victim and not merely a symbol of this

oblation. But in this unbloody sacrifice, the real and bloody immolation of Calvary is merely symbolized and commem-orated, and its fruits are applied to us. As the theologians say: the Mass is a true, unbloody sacrifice which represents the bloody immolation of the sacrifice of the Cross. Hence the Mass is far superior to the sacrifices of the Old Testament, for even the sacramental immolation of the Word of God made flesh is a far more eloquent expression of reparative adoration due to God than was the bloody immolation of the paschal lamb and of all the victims of the Old Law. Moreover, this sacramental immolation is far more efficacious than all the ancient sacrifices.

The Mass is the great memorial of the Passion. Without it, the sacrifice of the Cross would be forgotten and would be lost in the night of passing time. The Holy Eucharist makes it possible for each succeeding generation to preserve a living, daily, and fruitful memory of the sacrifice of Calvary. It makes each of us participate in this sacrifice, if we so desire, through Holy Communion. Thus the source of all graces remains open until the end of the world, and everyone can come to it to quench his thirst.

IN WHAT SENSE JESUS IS THE PRINCIPAL PRIEST OF THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

The Council of Trent says: “Una eademque est hostia, idem nunc offerens sacerdotum ministerio, qui seipsum tunc in cruce obtulit, sola offerendi ratione diversa.” It is the same victim as on Calvary, it is the same priest who offered Himself on the cross and who now offers Himself through His ministers. The only difference lies in the exterior mode of the oblation: on Calvary it was bloody, and here it is sacramental and unbloody.

Is it enough to say with certain theologians that Christ offers up the Mass virtually and not actually, inasmuch as He originally instituted it by commanding that this sacrifice be offered up until the end of the world? Let us not underrate the actual influence of Christ, our Redeemer.

In fact, if during the Mass we pay attention to the words of the double consecration, we see that the priest pronounces them not in the name of the Church but in the name of Christ Himself, whose minister, instrument, and mouthpiece the priest is. When the priest consecrates the bread he does not say “This is the body of Christ,” but “This is My body.” It is Christ who speaks through the mouth of His minister. Moreover, it is our Lord Himself who now, just as He did originally, gives the words of the consecration their

transubstantiative value, capable of converting hic et nunc the substance of the bread into that of His body, and the substance of the wine into His blood. The Savior's sacred humanity, St. Thomas tells us, remains the conscious instrument, perpetually united to God, to produce the transubstantiation, the real presence, and all the graces that derive from the Eucharist.

At the same time—and this is the point to stress here—Christ, priest for all eternity, continues to offer Himself up sacramentally in order to apply to us the satisfaction and the merits of His passion. In His human capacity, He is the principal cause of this continuing oblation, which is the chief act of His priesthood, the act to which His ministers ought to unite themselves as instruments, becoming each day more conscious of the grandeur of this sacrifice.

The teaching that Christ continues even now to wish to offer Him-self up in each Mass is held by theologians in general. What is more, in his encyclical on Christ the King, His Holiness Pope Pius XI has written: "Christus sacerdos se pro peccatis hostiam obtulit, perpe-tuoque se offert." The words of the Council of Trent, quoted above, are thereby clarified: "Idem nunc offerens sacerdotum ministerio, qui seipsum tunc in cruce obtulit. . . ." Having once offered Himself up in a bloody manner on the cross, Christ continues to offer Himself up in a sacramental and unbloody manner through the ministry of His priests.

It follows that even if the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is celebrated by a bad priest, the consecration is still pronounced in the name of Christ who thereby converts the substance of the bread into that of His body, and the sacrifice thus retains its infinite value. Even if the minister were in the state of mortal sin, he would still be the instrument of Christ, provided he intended to perform the act instituted by our Lord.

Our Savior is therefore the principal priest at the Sacrifice of the Mass, not only because He participates in it in a remote manner inas-much as He instituted the Eucharist both as sacrament and as sacrifice; nor merely inasmuch as He once commanded that this sacrifice be offered up in His name until the end of the world. He is the principal priest because He actually participates in it at the present time in two ways. He continues actually to wish to offer Himself up through the ministry of His priests, as the Council of Trent says. In the second place, in His human capacity He is the conscious and intentional instrument, always united to God, that truly

produces the transubstantiation and the graces that derive from the Sacrifice of the Mass.

There is no doubt whatever that when the priest at the altar pro-nounces in the name of the Savior the words of the double consecra-tion, Jesus actually intends them to be pronounced hic et nunc, and He Himself gives them their transubstantiative power. If an act of will on the part of the minister is necessary, this is far truer of the principal priest. Moreover, though the minister may at times be a little distracted at the moment of the consecration, our Savior never is. Our Lord continues to intend to offer Himself up in this manner in order to apply to each passing human generation and to the souls in purgatory the merits of His passion and of His death.

There have been saints who have been privileged to see our Savior Himself, and not merely the celebrant, perform the Holy Sacrifice. This is a special grace that reminded them of something that we must all believe: that Jesus is the principal priest of the sacrifice offered up on the altar. In thus continuing to offer Himself up, Christ does not cease to intercede for us, as we read in the Epistle to the Hebrews, which is entirely devoted to the grandeur of His priesthood. We cannot insist too much on this point.

CHRIST'S INTERIOR OBLATION ALWAYS ALIVE IN HIS HEART

It is certain and an article of faith that the sacred soul of the glorious Christ never ceases to see God immediately, to love Him above all else, to love us, and to desire our salvation. It is equally certain that Christ in heaven does not cease to adore God and to offer up to Him a thanksgiving that will never end. This is what the Preface of the Mass declares: "It is truly meet and just, right and availing unto salvation, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks unto Thee, O holy Lord, Father almighty and everlasting God, through Christ our Lord. Through whom the angels praise Thy majesty, the dominions worship it, the powers stand in awe. . . . With whom we pray Thee join our voices also, while we say with lowly praise: Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory. Hosanna in the highest."

This worship of adoration and of thanksgiving will continue for all eternity. It will always be offered up by Christ and by His mystical body. Likewise, it is said of Christ during the Mass, just before the Pater Noster:

“Through Him, and with Him, and in Him, be unto Thee, O God the Father almighty, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, all honor and glory, world without end.”

Let us call to mind what St. Thomas said concerning Christ’s prayer. Does the Savior, now that He is in heaven, continue not only to adore and give thanks but also to pray for us, as He did on earth? In time of need we recommend ourselves to the prayers of the saints. Can we also recommend ourselves to Christ’s prayers? It is certain that He no longer merits or makes satisfaction for us, for He has reached the end of His course. He is no longer viator, a wayfarer toward eternity. But does He not continue to pray so that the merits of His passion may be applied to us? It is certain that the Blessed Virgin, who no longer merits for us, continues to pray that her Son’s merits may be applied to us. That is what we ask of her each day in the Hail Mary and in the Litany. Why would not Christ continue to pray for us in this same sense?

In explaining St. Paul’s words, “Christ . . . always living to make intercession for us,” St. Thomas says: “Christ intercedes for us as our advocate, and He does so in two ways: first, by offering up to His Father His manhood which He took on for us and in which He suffered for us. He also intercedes by expressing to His Father His desire for our salvation.” St. Thomas presents the same views in his Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans 8:33-35, in explaining the words: “Who shall accuse against the elect of God? . . . Who is he that shall condemn? Christ Jesus that died: yea that is risen also again, who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ?” With the same thought in mind St. John says, “If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the just.”

In the Summa theologica, St. Thomas also says: “Since prayers offered for others proceed from charity, . . . the greater the charity of the saints in heaven, the more they pray for wayfarers; . . . and the more closely they are united to God, the more are their prayers efficacious. For the divine order is such that lower beings receive an overflow of the excellence of the higher, even as the air receives the brightness of the sun. Wherefore it is said of Christ: `Going to God by His own power . . . to make intercession for us.’ “

Among the Thomists, Gonet and the Carmelites of Salamanca have shown particularly well in their treatment of Christ’s prayer, that Christ even now that He is in heaven and even in the Eucharist truly prays for us,

so that the merits of His passion may be applied to this or that sinner at the most opportune moment, such as the moment of a happy death. In this sense, when He adores and gives thanks He prays not because of any indigence but through His superabundance and filial piety, in order to render to His Father the worship that is due Him.

St. Ambrose has said: “The risen Christ always defends our cause before the Father.” St. Gregory the Great declared: “Christ prays for the Church every day.” The interior oblation, that never ceases in Christ’s sacred soul, is thus an oblation of adoration, of impetration, and of thanksgiving.

Is this interior oblation, which is ever ablaze in Christ’s heart, numerically the same as the oblation by which He offered Himself up in accepting to die for us, from the moment of His coming into the world and especially on the Cross? Some theologians have denied this because, as they see it, the interior act of oblation on the cross was meritorious, whereas the one by which the glorious Christ offers Him-self up at Mass as its principal priest is no longer meritorious. Con-sequently some have thought that Christ offers Himself up at each Mass by a new act.

This view, which would multiply the successive acts of oblation of the glorious Christ, is foreign to the teaching of the great masters and does not seem acceptable for several reasons.

First of all, it is not in conformity with the life of union of the Savior’s sacred soul. This is an eminently simple life, through which He attains divine eternity, and in it there is no succession or innovation but solely the immutable continuation of what already exists.

Moreover, this opinion that would multiply the acts of oblation in the Savior’s soul does not agree with the words of St. Paul: “Christ was offered once to exhaust the sins of many,” and: “For by one oblation He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.” Christ does not offer up a new sacrifice, and His minister acts only in His name. It is therefore fitting to state that this unique interior oblation, which was the soul of the sacrifice of Calvary, continues forever in Christ’s sacred heart. Moreover, to concede a second act of oblation is to say that the first was inadequate. Lastly, He who is the priest forever must perform a priestly act that lasts forever, with neither interruption nor innovation.

Doubtless this oblation is no longer meritorious, but there is no reason why an act that was once meritorious should cease to be mer-itorious afterward. For example, when a dying man makes a final act of love of

God, this act is meritorious. Why, then, cannot this act continue after death in purgatory where there is no longer any op-portunity to merit? This spiritual act does not cease because of the simple fact of the separation of the soul from the body. Likewise, when Christ was on earth His act of love of men was meritorious. Why should it not continue, without this modality of merit, after His death? Even here on earth this act of Christ's sacred soul was performed in the light of glory, and He never ceased to enjoy the beatific vision.

This beatific vision, which He always enjoyed on earth, was al-ready measured not in terms of time but in terms of His participation in eternity, as many theologians agree. Why would not the same hold true of the act of love by which Christ's sacred soul loved God and men? Christ's act of love for us was meritorious here on earth. It is no longer meritorious but it can continue without this modality of merit, just as the act of charity of a human soul can continue after this soul has left its body. It is certain that the glorious Christ does not cease to love us, to adore His Father and give thanks and offer Himself up to Him. This interior act of oblation, ever alive in His heart, is the soul of the Sacrifice of the Mass. This sacrifice is in substance the same as that of the Cross, just as the Savior's humanity remains the same, although it is no longer subject to suffering and death.

This truth, superior to theology, belongs to the realm of divine faith. The doctrine that the essence of the Sacrifice of the Mass is in the sacramental immolation actually offered up by Christ, the principal priest, appears susceptible of definition as a dogma of faith.

Let us recollect ourselves under the wings of Christ's great prayer, so that He may present our prayers to His Father and thus increase the value of our adorations, our supplications, our reparation, and our thanksgiving. Let us remember that when Christ offers Himself up in the Masses said all over the world He also offers up His entire mystical body, symbolized by the drop of water poured into the chalice at the beginning of the Mass, to be converted with the wine into His precious blood.

As we become each day more conscious of the human misery within us and around us, let us ask Christ Jesus, priest for all eternity, to save us, to have pity on so many misguided souls, the victims of the education they have received. Let us beg our Savior to hold in His hand all the children who are in danger of being snatched away from Him in Russia, Eastern Europe, and many other lands. And though the evil be great, let us look

upon it not with pessimism and discour-agement but with the thought that the Savior is stronger than all His enemies taken together, and that His act of love pleases God more than all the sins of the world displease Him.

Made strong by this conviction, let us recall the words of St. Paul: “When I am weak, then am I powerful.” “I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me.”

XXVII

THE INFINITE VALUE OF EACH MASS OFFERED UP BY OUR LORD

WE HAVE seen that the Savior is the principal priest at the Sacrifice of the Mass, and that the interior oblation which was the soul of the sacrifice of the Cross continues in the heart of Christ, who desires our salvation and who thus Himself offers up all the Masses that are celebrated each day. What is the value of each of these Masses? A correct idea of this value will help us to unite ourselves more intimately each day to the Holy Sacrifice and to receive its fruits in greater abundance.

It is commonly taught in the Church that the Sacrifice of the Mass, considered in itself, has infinite value, but that the effect it produces within us is always finite, however exalted it may be, and that this effect is proportioned to our interior dispositions. These two points of doctrine merit further elucidation.

THE INFINITE VALUE OF THE MASS

The reason for the doctrine that the Mass, considered in itself, has infinite value, is that it is the same in substance as the sacrifice of the Cross, which has infinite value because of the dignity of the victim offered and of the priest who offered it up, inasmuch as on the Cross the Word made flesh was at once priest and victim. At Mass the Word made flesh continues to be the principal priest and the victim truly present, truly offered up and sacramentally immolated.

But whereas the effects of the Mass that relate immediately to God, such as reparative adoration and thanksgiving, always occur infallibly in their infinite plentitude even without our cooperation, its effects that relate to us are poured forth only in proportion to our interior dispositions.

At each Mass, adoration, reparation, and thanksgiving of limitless value are infallibly offered up to God. This is true because of the nature of the victim offered and of the principal priest, independently even of the prayers of the Universal Church and of the fervor of the celebrant.

It is impossible to adore God more perfectly, to better acknowledge His sovereign domain over all things and all souls, than by the sacra-mental immolation of the Savior who died for us on the cross. This adoration is given expression in the words of the Gloria: “Glory to God in the highest. And on earth peace to men of good will. We praise Thee. We bless Thee. We adore Thee. We glorify Thee.” This adoration is again expressed in the Sanctus, and still more perfectly in the double consecration.

It is the most perfect fulfillment of the commandment: “Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and shalt serve Him only.” These are the words our Lord used in answering Satan’s taunts: “The kingdoms of the world and the glory of them . . . will I give Thee, if falling down Thou wilt adore me.” Only God’s infinite grandeur merits this worship of latria. At the Mass, the adoration that is offered up to Him is in spirit and in truth of immeasurable value.

Likewise it is impossible to offer up to God more perfect reparation for the sins that are committed each day than by the Sacrifice of the Mass, as the Council of Trent maintains. It is not a new reparation distinct from that of Calvary. True, the risen Christ no longer suffers or dies. But, according to the same Council, the sacrifice of the altar, being substantially the same as that of Calvary, pleases God more than all the sins of the world displease Him. Just as the Savior’s humanity, now no longer subject to death or suffering, remains substantially the same, thus is the sacrifice of Christ perpetuated in substance. The inalienable right of God, the Sovereign Good, to be loved above all else is most perfectly acknowledged by the oblation of the Lamb who takes away the sins of the world.

Finally, it is impossible to give Him more perfect thanksgiving for benefits received: “What shall I render to the Lord for all the things that He hath rendered to me? I will take the chalice of salvation, and I will call upon the name of the Lord.” Often we forget to thank God for His blessings, as did the lepers whom Jesus had cured. Only one of the ten came back to thank Him. It is fitting often to offer up Masses of thanksgiving. A pious custom that is gaining favor at the present time is the celebration of a Mass

of thanksgiving the second Friday of each month, in reparation for our ingratitude.

Adoration, reparation, and thanksgiving are effects of the Sacrifice of the Mass that relate to God Himself and are infallible. Through each Mass, through the oblation and sacramental immolation of the Savior on the altar, God infallibly obtains adoration, reparation, and thanksgiving of infinite value. This is so because of the dignity of the victim and of the principal priest. The interior oblation that continues ceaselessly in Christ's heart is a theandric act, a human act of His human will, that derives from the person of the Word a value that is truly infinite.

At the moment of the consecration in the peace of the sanctuary, a great surge of adoration rises up toward God. Its prelude is the Gloria and the Sanctus, whose beauty is enhanced on certain days by Gregorian chant, the most exalted, simplest, and purest of all religious chants, or sometimes by magnificent polyphonic music. But when the moment of the double consecration arrives, all is silent. This silence tells in its own way what music cannot express.

It is a silence that mirrors the silence which, according to the Apocalypse (8:1) occurred in heaven when the Lamb opened the book of the seven seals, the book of God's decrees concerning His kingdom. May this silence of the consecration be our solace and our strength.

Thus are the adoration, the reparation, and the "Consummatum est" of the sacrifice of the Cross perpetuated in substance. And this adoration that rises up toward God with each daily Mass falls again like a life-giving dew upon our poor earth to fertilize it spiritually. We should never forget that the highest end of the Holy Sacrifice is the glory of God, the manifestation of His goodness, which is the very purpose of the universe. Thus, by one Mass the whole of creation surges up toward its Creator in a prayer of reparative adoration and thanksgiving. If these effects relate to God Himself, there are others that relate to us. The Mass can obtain for us all the graces necessary for salvation. Christ "always living makes intercession for us," and His intercession has as great value as His adoration.

WHAT EFFECTS CAN THE MASS PRODUCE IN US?

The Eucharistic Sacrifice has infinite value in itself by reason of the dignity of the victim offered up and of the principal priest. Yet the effects it

produces in us are always finite because of the limitations of creatures as such and those of our particular interior dispositions as well. There is no disagreement among theologians on this point.

The only disputed question is this: Is the effect of the Sacrifice of the Mass limited not only by our own fervor but also by the will of Christ, so that a Mass that is applied to several persons obtains less graces for them than if it were said for only one of them?

Some theologians answer affirmatively: The effect of each Mass, they say, is limited by the will of our Lord, and consequently a Mass offered for ten of the faithful is less profitable to them than if it were said for one of these faithful. If this were not the case, they add, it would be superfluous to say more than one Mass for the same inten-tion of one particular person.

This reason is really weak, for the person in question may not have all the dispositions required to receive all the desired graces through the first Mass said for him. Moreover, this person must desire eternal life above all else, and cannot ask for it with too much insistence. As for souls in purgatory, the Mass is applied to them by way of suffrage, according to God's good pleasure, the measure of which remains unknown to us, and we do not know when these souls are delivered. It is therefore desirable to have several Masses said for them.

Other theologians, among them many Thomists, follow the in-spiration of St. Thomas in saying: The effect of each Mass is not limited by the will of Christ, but only by the devotion of those for whom it is offered up. Thus, a single Mass offered up for a hundred persons can be as profitable to each of them as if it were offered up solely for each individual.

The reason for this is that the influence of a universal cause is limited only by the capacity of the subjects who receive it. Thus, the sun lights up and warms a thousand persons as well as one in a given area. Now, inasmuch as the Sacrifice of the Mass is substantially the same as that of the Cross, it is in terms of reparation and prayer a universal cause of graces, of light, of inspiration, and of strength. Its influence on us is therefore limited only by the dispositions or the fervor of those who receive it. Like the sacrifice of the Cross, it can thus be as profitable for a large number of persons as if it were offered for a single one of them. The sacrifice of Calvary, which was offered up for all men, was no less profitable to the good thief than if it had been offered up for him alone.

In other words, as the sacrifice of the Cross had infinite value in terms of merit and satisfaction because of the theandric act of love that inspired it, now the Sacrifice of the Mass which perpetuates in substance that of the Cross is of infinite value to apply to us the merits and satisfactions of the Savior's passion.

This explains the Church's practice of offering up Masses for the salvation of the entire world, for all the faithful living and dead, for the Sovereign Pontiff, for national leaders, bishops, without limiting its intentions. In so doing, the Church does not expect to render the Mass less profitable to the one for whom it is specifically applied.

This manner of thinking appears much sounder than the former. It even seems to be a corollary of the accepted doctrine that the Sacrifice of the Mass is numerically the same in substance as that of the Cross, inasmuch as the victim and the principal priest are the same in each of them. There is nothing to justify our limiting the intention of Christ, as He continues to offer Himself up by a theandric act of infinite value, in order to apply to us the fruits of His passion. The limitation is not His doing, but ours. It stems from our own dispositions and fervor. As St. Thomas says, just as we receive more heat from a fireplace the closer we approach it, so we derive more benefit from the fruits of the Mass in the measure that we attend with a spirit of faith, trust in God, love, and piety.

What, specifically, are the effects that the Mass produces in us? The Mass remits our sins, inasmuch as it obtains for us the grace of repentance. If we do not resist this grace, our sins are forgiven. Just as the sacrifice of the Cross obtained this grace for the good thief, the Sacrifice of the Mass obtains it for those who desire it. It is not in vain that the words, "Lamb of God who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us," are said before Holy Communion. Who can count the sinners who have gone to Mass and there received the grace of repentance and the inspiration to make a good confession of their entire past life?

Inasmuch as the Mass remits our sins, it follows that it can be offered up even for hardened and impenitent sinners, who would not be permitted to receive Holy Communion. The Holy Sacrifice can obtain for them at least sufficient graces of light and inclination. It can even be offered up, as was the sacrifice of the Cross, for all the living, even for infidels, schismatics, heretics, the excommunicated, provided it is not offered up for them as for members of the Church. Thus St. Paul called for public prayers for all men.

And since we can pray for all men, the Holy Sacrifice can be offered up for all men. It is with this in mind that Father Charles de Foucauld, the hermit of the Sahara, often celebrated Mass for the Moslems in order to prepare their souls for the subsequent teaching of the Gospel. Likewise many Masses are now being celebrated for the conversion of Russia.

The spirit of evil fears nothing so much as a Mass, especially one that is celebrated with great fervor and in which many souls participate with a spirit of faith. When the enemy of goodness meets some insurmountable obstacle, it is because in some church there was a priest, conscious of his own weakness and poverty, who with faith of-fered up the very powerful host and the blood of our Redemption. It is fitting here to mention that there have been saints who, at the moment of the elevation of the chalice at Mass, have seen the precious blood overflow and trickle down the arms of the priest, whereupon angels gathered it up in golden cups to carry it to distant places and to the souls in greatest need of participating in the mystery of the Re-demption.

The Sacrifice of the Mass remits not only our sins but the punish-ment due to sins that have already been forgiven. This applies to both the living and the dead for whom the Sacrifice is offered up. We can go so far as to say that this effect is infallible. However, the punishment is not always remitted in full, but according to the dis-position of Providence and the degree of our fervor. Thus the words “Lamb of God who takest away the sins of the world, grant us peace,” are accomplished.

It does not follow that rich men who have left much money for Masses are delivered from purgatory more quickly than certain poor men who could leave nothing or almost nothing, for it may well have been that the latter had smaller debts to pay divine justice, had been better Christians, and therefore participated more fully in the fruit of the Masses said for all the dead as well as in the general fruit of each Mass.

Finally, the Sacrifice of the Mass obtains for us the spiritual and temporal blessings necessary or useful for our salvation. Christ’s prayer, as He continues to offer Himself up on our altars, has infinite value. Therefore it is fitting, as Pope Benedict XV has recommended, to have Masses said in order to obtain the grace of a happy death, for this is the grace of graces, the one on which our eternal salvation depends.

This being so, it is fitting when we attend Mass to unite ourselves with a great spirit of faith, trust, and love to the interior act of oblation that

continues forever in Christ's heart. He invites us to do so, as the author of the Imitation of Christ tells us: "As I willingly offered My-self to God the Father for thy sins, with My hands stretched out upon the Cross . . . even so oughtest thou willingly to offer thyself to Me daily in the Mass, . . . for a pure and holy oblation. . . . Whatsoever thou givest except thyself, I regard not; for I seek not thy gift, but thyself. . . . But if thou wilt depend upon self, and not offer thyself freely to My will, thy offering is not complete, nor will there be an entire union between us." The more closely we unite ourselves to our Lord at the moment of the consecration, which is the essence of the Sacrifice of the Mass, the better will be our Communion, which is a participation in this Sacrifice.

We must answer this call, as the Imitation also advises: "Lord, I offer to Thee all my sins and offenses, . . . that Thou mayest . . . blot out all the stains of my sins, . . . fully pardoning me. . . . I offer also to Thee all my good works, though few and imperfect; that Thou mayest amend and sanctify them, . . . and make them acceptable to Thee. . . . I offer to Thee also all the pious desires of devout persons; the necessities of . . . all those that are dear to me. . . . I offer up also to Thee prayers, and this sacrifice of propitiation, for them in particular who have in any way injured me or grieved me. . . . And for all those likewise whom I have at any time grieved, troubled, oppressed, or scandalized, . . . knowingly or unknowingly; that it may please Thee to forgive us all our sins and mutual offenses . . . and grant us so to live that we may be worthy to enjoy Thy grace, and that we may attain unto life everlasting." Let us also offer up our daily difficulties. This is the best way of carrying our crosses, as our Lord asked us to.

Please God that we may have the capacity and strength to renew this oblation at the moment of our death, and to unite ourselves with great love to the Masses that are being celebrated, to unite ourselves to the sacrifice of Christ perpetuated at the altar! May we thus make of the sacrifice of our life an oblation of adoration, reparation, sup-plication, and thanksgiving, the prelude for us to eternal life!

When we realize that in some places certain priests must serve three or four parishes, we are forced to conclude that the number of Masses has diminished and it has become much more difficult for many of the rural faithful to attend Sunday Mass. Now, when the faithful gradually cease to attend Mass they progressively lose the meaning of Christianity, the meaning of the things of the spirit and of eternity.

There was a lay saint who, seeing the state of these churches where Sunday Mass was celebrated only rarely, entrusted these parishes to the care of certain saints who had been priests while on earth, in par-ticular the Curé of Ars, so that from heaven they might watch over these shepherdless flocks, intercede for them, and obtain the grace of a happy death for those who died without the sacraments. We should often remember this when we attend the Holy Sacrifice, and inasmuch as every Mass is of infinite value we should pray that the Mass we attend may radiate its graces to those places where the Holy Sacrifice is no longer celebrated, and where the faithful are gradually losing the habit of going to Mass. Let us implore our Lord to call priestly vocations into being in such places. Let us beg Him for priests, holy priests, who become each day more aware of the grandeur of Christ's priesthood, so that they may be its zealous ministers, living only for the salvation of souls. Providence always sends us galaxies of saints in our most troubled times. We must beseech our Lord to send saints into the world who have the faith and trust of the apostles, as in the early days of the Church.

XXVIII

SOVEREIGN REDEMPTION AND ITS FRUITS IN MARY

> “He that is mighty hath done great things to me.”
>
> Luke 1:49

THE special manner in which the mystery of the Redemption was accomplished with relation to Mary, the Mother of God, contains such profound harmonies that they long remained hidden even from great theologians and great saints like St. Bernard, St. Bonaventure, and perhaps St. Thomas Aquinas. Now that the Church has made an infallible pronouncement by defining the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, all the faithful can see in this privilege the most eminent form of the mystery of the Redemption. Let us first consider it in the light of the privilege itself, and secondly in the light of its consequences.

THE PRESERVATIVE REDEMPTION

The harmony of a mystery is all the more beautiful when it inti-mately reconciles things that are apparently most contradictory and that God alone can bring together. Thus the mystery of the Redemp-tion, considered in terms of the Savior Himself, reconciles in the sufferings endured through love the most rigorous justice and the tenderest mercy. Therein lies the sublimity of the Cross.

The Immaculate Conception presents a reconciliation of the same order. On the one hand the Virgin Mary, by reason of her birth as a daughter of Adam, was destined to contract original sin. The first man, through his sin, lost original justice for himself and for us. That is to say, he lost sanctifying grace and the privileges that accompanied it. Had he remained innocent, he

would have transmitted this original justice to us, together with his human nature. The law that weighs on our fallen nature is universal: human nature is transmitted to all of us by way of generation, but it is transmitted deprived of grace and of the privileges of the state of innocence. Every child is born not merely deprived of sanctifying grace but moreover inclined to covetousness, to disorders of the passions, to error, and subject to suffering and death. “By one man sin entered into this world,” St. Paul tells us. Mary, therefore, by reason of her birth as a daughter of Adam, was destined to contract original sin. How could she, caught in the current of generation, escape the current of sin? And, as St. Peter declares, “there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved” [except that of Jesus Christ]. St. Paul also says: “There is . . . one mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus who gave Himself a redemption for all.” There is no salvation for anyone except through the blood of the Savior, who is the Redeemer of all men without any exception. In this sense Mary needs redemption, just like the other children of men.

St. Thomas lays great stress on this point, for this is a capital dogma of our faith. There is no salvation except through Christ who died for us.

Mary, on the other hand, has been called from all eternity to be the mother of the Savior. The heavenly Father chose her through a love of predilection from among all women, so that in time she should give a body to the Son, only begotten from all eternity. No one but the heavenly Father and Mary can call Jesus, “My Son.” The Holy Ghost was to overshadow her and, without sullying her virginity in any way, was to make it possible for her to conceive the Savior. The Word of God, who exists eternally and therefore existed before creation, was to be truly Mary’s son, and He was to love her among all creatures as His true Mother.

Could it be that Mary, called to this glorious maternity, should have come into the world bearing the stain of original sin? Was it possible that she who was to be the Mother of the Author of grace should be born deprived of grace? Could she who was to be the Mother of the Word made flesh have been born inclined toward covetousness, disorders of the emotions, and error?

These reasons are so compelling that even the theologians who once doubted the privilege of the Immaculate Conception declared unequivocally that Mary was sanctified before her birth in the womb of her mother, St. Anne. But the Church goes still further and has solemnly affirmed the

privilege of the Immaculate Conception, ac-corded at the very instant when Mary's soul was created and united to her body.

How then can we reconcile these two things that are apparently so irreconcilable: Mary, being the daughter of Adam, must contract original sin; but, being called to be the Mother of God, she must be exempt from any stain whatever, she must escape the universal con-tagion?

HOW CAN THESE THINGS BE RECONCILED?

We can understand an exception to the law of man's fall, in view of a mission that is unique in the world, a mission that is superior to that of the prophets and apostles. But how was this exception to be accomplished? Was Mary preserved from the common stain inde-pendently of the future merits of her Son? Is it possible that Christ, the sole Mediator and Savior of all souls, is not Mary's Savior? Can it be that she does not owe her holiness to Him? St. Thomas rightly placed great emphasis on this point, for he was deeply concerned with safeguarding the dogma of universal redemption.

The Church, in defining the Immaculate Conception, answers: Mary was the beneficiary of a unique mode of redemption, a preservative redemption, and not merely a liberating and reparative redemption. Mary was preserved from original sin because of the future merits of her Son, and this truth reveals to us the deep harmony of the mystery, which long remained hidden even from great saints.

What kept St. Thomas from stoutly affirming the privilege of the Immaculate Conception, not yet defined by the Church at that time, was his fear of contradicting the dogma of the universal redemption of souls by Jesus Christ. He feared he might detract from the Redeemer's glory. And divine Providence seems to have permitted the great doctor to remain in darkness on this point, and with him St. Bonaventure and St. Bernard, because the proclamation of this privilege was reserved for much later, for our era of unbelief and naturalism which denies original sin and the necessity of redemption.

Preservative redemption is one of the marvels of Catholic dogma. To truly understand it we must realize that not only is Jesus Christ Mary's Savior, but that she benefited more than anyone else from His redemptive mission. Herein lies all the grandeur of the mystery. Let us consider it in some detail. Indeed it is fitting that the absolutely perfect Savior should

exercise sovereign redemption for at least one soul, the soul called to be most intimately united to Him in His work of salvation. But perfect redemption consists not only in rescuing a soul from sin, but also in preserving it from this sin even before sin has had a chance to sully it. He who preserves us from a mortal blow saves our life even better than if he healed the wound caused by this blow. It is therefore highly fitting that Christ Jesus, the perfect Redeemer, should bestow upon His Mother redemption in all its plenitude: a redemption that is not merely reparative and liberating, but a preservative redemption. It is highly fitting that Mary should not be liberated, purified, cured of original sin, but that she should be totally preserved from it by the future merits of her Son.

Christ's love for His immaculate Mother is immense. At the thought of it our souls should rejoice and soar upward. Only the Mother of the Son of God could have this unique prerogative. How fitting that she should have it!

Inasmuch as she had been called to become the Mother of God and the Coredemptrix, the Mother of all men, it was necessary that she be redeemed as perfectly as possible. Being closer than anyone to the stream of grace that pours from the Word made flesh, she received His blessings in their plenitude.

At a time when all truths were being depreciated, when many re-fused to believe either in original sin or in the necessity of baptismal regeneration, it was fitting that the Church should solemnly define this dogma and that Mary should remind us of all these truths by telling us at Lourdes: "I am the Immaculate Conception." This privilege, far from detracting from the dogma of the universal redemption of souls by Jesus Christ, discloses to us in the person of Mary sovereign redemption in its most perfect form conceivable.

In preserving His Mother from original sin, the Savior gave her an initial plenitude of grace greater than that of all the saints and angels taken together, just as a single diamond may have greater value than a great pile of lesser stones. From this initial plenitude of sanctifying grace sprang forth in the same eminent degree faith, hope, charity, the infused moral virtues, and the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost. Moreover, this initial plenitude did not cease growing until Mary's death, for no venial sin or imperfection impeded its progress. Because of Mary's unceasing fidelity, the initial treasure increased in a marvelous progression. Just as bodies fall with increasing speed as they approach the earth by virtue of the law of

acceleration which is a corollary of universal gravitation, so do souls progress more quickly toward God as they come closer to Him and are increasingly attracted by Him.

This law of acceleration of the progress of souls toward God, which is approximately verified in the lives of the saints especially by frequent Holy Communion, was fully verified in Mary. Whereas Jesus never increased in goodness, since He had been conceived in the absolute plenitude of grace, Mary continued to increase in perfection until her death, until the moment of the final plenitude of grace when her soul entered glory.

It is a consolation to think that there has been one soul that received in its plenitude everything that God desired to give her and that never impeded the pouring of grace upon other souls. There is one absolutely perfect soul which allowed the divine life-giving torrent to flow through her without obstacle. There is at least one soul that never for a single instant failed to measure up to what God desired of her. This is the soul of the Mother of God, the Mother of all men, who watches over them to lead them to eternal life.

This is what we mean by sovereign Redemption, a redemption that is not merely liberating and reparative but also preservative. This is what motivated the words of the archangel Gabriel when he said to Mary: “Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.”

THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE PRESERVATIVE REDEMPTION

Did the privilege we have just discussed remove from Mary even here on earth all the consequences of original sin? What happens to us even after baptism which remits original sin and restores us to sanctifying grace with all its accompanying infused virtues and gifts of the Holy Ghost? Even after baptism, there remain in us as a con-sequence of original sin concupiscence or the roots of covetousness that enkindle our evil passions, inclination toward error or weak judgment that easily goes astray, as well as suffering and death.

None of these evils existed in the state of original justice in which human nature was ennobled by grace and endowed with privileges. The body was perfectly submissive to the soul, the passions to right reason and to the will, and the will was submissive to God. Baptism, while it cleanses us of

original sin, leaves the consequences of original sin in us as so many occasions for struggle and merit.

What is so striking about Mary is that the privilege of the Im-maculate Conception exempts her from two of the consequences of original sin that are blighting and incompatible with her mission as Mother of God, but her privilege does not exempt her from suffering and death. This is most illuminating.

From the first moment of her life Mary was exempt from every form of concupiscence. The embers of covetousness never existed in her. No movement of her emotions could be disorderly or circumvent her judgment and her consent. Hers was perfect subordination of the emotions to the intellect and the will, and of the will to God as was the case of man in the state of innocence. Thus Mary is the most pure Virgin of virgins, “inviolata, intemerata,” the tower of ivory, the most perfect mirror of God.

Likewise Mary was never subject to error or illusion. Her judgment was always enlightened, always clearsighted. In the words of the Litany, she is the Seat of Wisdom, the Virgin most prudent, the Mother of good counsel. All theologians agree that even here on earth she possessed an eminently superior and simple understanding of the Scriptures on the subject of the Messiah, the Incarnation, and the Redemption. She was more intimately initiated into the secrets of the kingdom of heaven than were the apostles. Then too, everything in nature spoke to her of the Creator more poignantly than to the greatest poets. In its simplicity her contemplation was superior to that of the greatest saints, to that of even St. John, St. Paul, or St. Augustine. Mary was above ecstasy. She had no need to lose the use of her senses to become very intimately united to God. Her union with Him was continual. She was thus perfectly exempt from covetousness and error.

Why then did not the privilege of the Immaculate Conception exempt Mary from suffering and death, which are also consequences of original sin? The truth of the matter is that suffering and death, as Mary and Jesus experienced them, were not consequences of original sin, as they are for us. For original sin had not touched them. Suffering and death were for them the consequences of human nature which by its very nature is subject to suffering and to corporeal death just as is the nature of the animal. It was only through a supernatural privilege that Adam in his innocence was exempt from all suffering and from the necessity of dying.

That He might become our Redeemer by His death on the cross, Jesus was virginally conceived in mortal flesh, and He willingly ac-cepted suffering and dying for our salvation. Following His example, Mary willingly accepted suffering and death also, so that she might be united to her Son's sacrifice, make expiation with Him in our stead, and thus redeem us.

And, astonishingly enough, the privilege of the Immaculate Con-ception and the plenitude of grace she enjoyed, instead of exempting Mary from pain, considerably increased her capacity for suffering. This truth never ceases to arouse the admiration and wonder of the contemplatives. Mary suffered extraordinarily from the gravest evils precisely because she was absolutely pure, because her heart was aflame with divine charity. Yet we in our flightiness are not much troubled by these evils. We suffer because of things that wound our susceptibility, our self-love, our pride. Mary suffered because of sin in the measure of her love for God whom sin offends, in the measure of her love for her Son whom sin crucified, in the measure of her love for our souls that sin ravages and kills. Just as the Blessed Virgin's love for God was superior even here on earth to that of all the saints taken together, the same is true of her suffering. Here on earth, the closer a soul is to God—that is, the more it loves—the more it is destined to suffer. Mary loved the Savior, not only as her beloved Son but also as her Son the legitimate object of adoration, with her most tender virginal heart. The depth of her love made of her the queen of martyrs. As the aged Simeon had prophesied, a sword pierced her soul. The privilege of the Immaculate Conception, far from exempting Mary from sufferings, thus increased them and disposed her so well to endure them that she wasted none of them.

Finally, although this privilege did not save Mary from being subject to death, the Assumption was one of its consequences. Mary, conceived without sin, preserved from all sin, was not to know the corruption of the grave. The Savior was thus to associate her to the glories of the Ascension and to hasten for her the moment of the resurrection of the body.

Such were the consequences of the sovereign redemption which was accomplished in her. Not only was Mary redeemed by the most perfect redemption conceivable, but she has been intimately associated with the work of the salvation of mankind through her love and suffering.

This preservative redemption reminds us of the value of a less ex-alted grace, but one that is so necessary to us: baptism. Although we are born

sinners, we are cleansed of original sin by baptismal grace, which is the seed of eternal life. There is an immense difference be-tween an unbaptized child and one who has received the sacrament of regeneration. And as Mary's initial plenitude of grace never stopped growing within her during her lifetime, so the seed of eternal life should never cease growing in us until the moment of our death. God loves us much more than we realize. In order to grasp the full value of the sanctifying grace received in baptism, we should have to see God. For grace is nothing but a true and formal participation in God's intimate life.

Lastly, the sovereign redemption, that we have just contemplated in Mary reminds us of the value of sanctity, and inspires us to pray earnestly, especially at the thought of the spiritual wretchedness of present-day Russia and other vast areas of the world. As the con-templatives tell us, the actual state of the world is at once much sadder and more beautiful than we know. The world desires no more saints, and expels them from persecuted lands. But God for His part wishes to give the world saints of every age and station in life. God wishes to give the world saints, but we must ask Him for them and secure them from His mercy. For a number of years now, Rome has been multiplying its beatifications and canonizations. In moments of great confusion like that of the Albigensian heresy and that of Protestantism, God sent galaxies of saints to carry on His Son's work and to lift up afflicted and tempted souls.

Although the world's plight is grave, let us not view it with dis-couragement and thereby depress those around us. Let us look at the other pan of the scales with a holy realism, and see in it the infinite merits of the Savior, those of Mary Coredemptrix and Mediatrix, and those of all the saints. This is the supernatural contemplation superior to all science, the contemplation that awakens in us not merely momentary enthusiasm but "the hunger and thirst for God's justice." It tells us that the only genuinely and profoundly interesting thing for us is sanctity and whatever leads us toward it. When this sanctity is incontestable, as in Mary, it becomes manifest to all as the profound reign of God in souls, and it permits us to glimpse even here on earth the grandeur of the mystery of Redemption, that is, the mystery of eternal life given back to souls that are willing to receive it.

XXIX

THE INTIMACY OF CHRIST

> “Can you drink the chalice that I shall drink?”
>
> Man. 20:22

TO ENTER truly into the depths of the mystery of the Redemption, we must consider the intimacy of Christ, that is, the friendship of predilection He had for certain particularly faithful and generous souls. Among these souls there is one described in the Gospel by these simple words: “the disciple whom Jesus loved.” If we would understand the greatness of the Savior’s friendship, its wellsprings, its pattern, its tenderness and its strength, as well as its inestimable gifts, we can do nothing better than contemplate His friendship for St. John.

The most beloved of all the apostles must have been perfect for our Lord to love him so much. John’s purity delighted Him. Yet it was not John’s perfection that attracted the love of Jesus. On the contrary, John’s perfection was the effect of Jesus’ love for him, Bossuet tells us, just as a fine work of art reflects its author’s joy in creation. The love that God the Father and the Son have for our souls does not presuppose that we are lovable. Rather, their love for us implants and increases our lovable qualities by assimilating us to itself. When divine love pours into us, it produces the life of grace in our souls, and it continues to increase this grace in us if we do not set up any obstacles.

Let us see how our Lord, through His friendship, made John resemble Him ever more closely. Bossuet has remarked that the Savior gave His beloved disciple three gifts: His cross, His Mother, and His heart. But it seems preferable to follow the chronological order in which He bestowed these gifts, for it gives us a better understanding of St. John’s progress in grace, and how the beloved disciple gradually entered ever deeper into

Christ’s intimacy. At the Last Supper Jesus gave John His heart. Soon afterward, when He was dying, He gave him His Mother. And then, to make John’s ministry fruitful, Jesus gave him His cross.

At the Last Supper, Jesus Gave John His Heart

At that moment, all the apostles were ordained priests, received the priestly character, and also received Holy Communion. But St. John came closer to the Master’s heart, and laid his head on the sacred heart of the Savior.

When our Lord instituted the sacrament whose purpose is to in-crease our love of God, He willed that one of His privileged apostles should be more aware than the others of the beat of His heart, that would thereafter continue to live in the Eucharist for the consolation and perfect regeneration of souls.

What interior grace did St. John receive at that moment? We can get some idea of it when we remember that Jesus’ body emitted a virtue capable of healing the sick. How much more must His heart have poured forth vivifying grace! Beyond any doubt John received in that instant a grace of light and love. He learned experimentally that the Savior’s heart lives only for love of God and of souls. He understood how the Eucharist is the great manifestation of this love on earth, and that even under its humble appearances it is the very life of God always present among us. Predestined from all eternity to be the great doctor of charity, John drank in charity at its very source and was inspired by the words that were to inspire a holy tenderness in the faithful until the end of time. So that he might speak more eloquently of the Savior’s love for us, he came very close to the spiritual fire that burns without destroying and that would transform us into itself.

As St. Paul recalled in his writings that he had been caught up to the third heaven, so St. John remembered that he had rested on the Master’s heart. And how the eagle of the Evangelists wrote! He pro-claimed the fundamental principles of Christian doctrine to be as follows: God is light and love. It was He who first loved us gratui-tously. Our love for Him must be a response to the love He has shown for us, and fraternal charity must be the great sign of our love of God. He summed up his views in his First Epistle: “Dearly beloved, let us love one another: for charity is of God. And everyone that loveth is born of God and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God: for God is charity. By this hath the charity of God appeared toward us, because God hath sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we may live by Him. In this is charity: not as though we had

loved God, but because He hath first loved us, and sent His Son to be a propitiation for our sins. My dearest, if God hath so loved us, we also ought to love one another. . . . God is charity: and he that abideth in charity abideth in God, and God in him."

This is an abstract of the whole of Christian dogma and morality, reduced to its essentials: love of God and of neighbor, the charity that must inspire and animate all the virtues. "We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren." This is the great sign of the love of God.

We also have received what John received: the Master's heart. We can receive the Eucharistic heart of Jesus each day at Holy Com-munion. And if we receive it, if we truly believe in it, we must imitate it. The Savior's heart is open to all the faithful. In His heart we are all united, to be consummated into one. He turns no one away.

If we would enter into Christ's intimacy, our hearts must exclude no one, they must forget the wrongs our neighbors have done us, and be compassionate for the sufferings of others; our hearts must be generous, keeping nothing for themselves, giving their lives for others and thereby possessing life all the more securely. Let us remember that God will multiply His blessings to us in the measure that we desire to share them with our brothers. We do not lose truth or goodness when we give them to others. Rather we possess them more securely and in a holy manner.

We should rejoice also in seeing in our neighbor what is lacking in ourselves. Instead of falling prey to jealousy, we ought to rejoice in his qualities, which are ours too in a sense, inasmuch as we are all one in the mystical body of Christ. The hand can rejoice in what the eye sees. Charity thus enriches our poverty. It makes all our goods the common property of all. It appropriates for us in a sense all the gifts of the mystical body of the Savior, and makes us participate in a measure in all the blessings of the City of God.

But to enter even more deeply into Christ's intimacy we must be taught by Mary, for she more than any other creature was privileged to enter into the heart of this sanctuary. That is why, when He was about to die, Jesus confided His Mother to St. John.

John was the only apostle at the foot of the cross. He was there, a heartbroken witness of all the Master's physical and moral suffering. Jesus

had invisibly drawn him there to let him hear His last words and to give him a final proof of His love.

Those who are about to die leave to their dearest ones the most expressive testimony of affection. What did Jesus leave St. John, as He was dying? He had nothing left. He had been stripped of everything, abandoned by all. It even seemed that His Father had rejected Him when, as a victim in our stead, He cried out the first words of the psalm: “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” In this state of utter destitution, what did Jesus leave to St. John?

He left him a living memory, the very holy soul whom He cher-ished more than all other creatures taken together. He left Mary to him. “Behold thy mother,” He said to John. And to Mary: “Woman, behold thy son.” “And from that hour, the disciple took her to his own.”

Contact with Jesus’ heart at the Last Supper spiritually vivified John’s soul. The Savior’s words spoken from the cross also had sacra-mental power, as it were. Although He spoke these words on the point of death, He was still strong enough to touch men’s hearts and to enrich them as He pleased.

These words created between Mary and John a most intimate bond, analogous to the bond that unites Jesus to His Blessed Mother. They gave Mary a most maternal and deep love that would thenceforth enfold John’s soul, and they awakened in John a most filial and re-spectful love that made him a true spiritual son of Mary.

In this moment of anguish the words of the dying Christ touched their souls to their depths like a gentle balm, soothing their sufferings and their broken hearts. They brought immense consolation to John and to Mary too, for she could see into human souls and, looking into the soul of the beloved disciple, she could see what he himself could not: the living image of the Savior, the image that Mary would make perfect, to render it ever more like its divine model.

And so it happens often in the history of souls. When Jesus seems to draw away to test the confidence of His friends, He leaves His Blessed Mother to them, and He entrusts them to her care. Who can describe all the blessings St. John received from Mary? If St. Augustine and St. Monica had conversations on such an exalted plane, what are we to think of the talks between Mary and St. John?

Through the plenitude of grace she had received, the Mother of God was superior to the angels. The charity ablaze in her heart sur-passed that of all the saints taken together. Its lively flame ever aspired toward God, even while she slept, in the words of the Canticle of Canticles: “I sleep, and my heart watcheth.”

Blessed with such a supernatural intimacy, how greatly St. John’s charity must have grown, especially when he celebrated the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in Mary’s presence for her intentions, and when he gave her Holy Communion! Did he not know that the Blessed Virgin understood immeasurably better than he the sacrifice of the altar which perpetuates in substance the sacrifice of the Cross? Mary did not have the official capacity of the priesthood and she could not consecrate, but “she had received the plenitude of the spirit of the priesthood, which is the spirit of Christ our Redeemer.” As universal Mediatrix and Coredemptrix, Mary never ceased lifting the soul of the apostle up toward God. Thus did He develop great love for the hidden life and become the model of contemplatives.

It was St. John’s purity that had prepared him to live in Christ’s intimacy. It was his purity, too, that disposed him to inherit Christ’s love for Mary, who thus became his spiritual mother in the deepest and truest sense.

Following St. John’s example, let us place ourselves under the immediate direction of the Virgin, as St. Louis Marie de Montfort urges. She is our mediatrix before Christ, as He is our mediator before His Father. She will be our counsel and our strength, our defense against the devil. She will increase the worth of our merits by offering them herself to her Son. Let us abandon into her hands the reparative and impetratory value of our actions, our struggles, our prayers, so that she may make them available, according to her good pleasure, to the souls that need them most. Thus to strip ourselves is in reality to enrich ourselves. Under Mary’s direction we shall with a much surer step follow the path blazed by the Word, who Himself obeyed her on earth. Then we shall run swiftly on the path of God’s commandments, because we shall receive the grace that dilates the heart, in the words of the psalm: “I have run the way of Thy commandments, when Thou didst enlarge my heart.” The Blessed Virgin will teach us countless things through her inspirations, as a good mother yields up to her child by a simple look, without need of words, the treasure of her interior life. With her and in her intimacy, we shall make more progress in a few days than

during years of personal effort made without her. Thus speaks St. Louis Marie de Montfort, a true spiritual son of Mary as was St. John.

Our Lord gave St. John His heart, He gave him His Mother. What else did He give him to make his apostolic ministry fruitful? He gave him His cross, and progressively made him understand its inestimable value.

Jesus' friendship does not consist wholly in sweetness and joy. It is as strong as it is tender. It tends to purify through tribulations, and through suffering to associate souls with itself in the mystery of Re-demption.

The apostles did not understand this at first. When Jesus spoke of the foundation of the kingdom of God, the apostles wondered which of them would be first in this kingdom. Then, as St. Matthew records, "Jesus calling unto Him a little child, set him in the midst of them, and said: 'Amen I say to you, unless you be converted and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, he is the greater in the kingdom of heaven.'" The Master had also said on several occasions: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me." But the apostles did not yet understand the full meaning of the word "cross." They could not accept the idea that Jesus would be crucified. Yet several times He had told them that this would happen.

One day, as He was going up to Jerusalem with them, our Lord again predicted His passion, crucifixion, and resurrection. He wished to implant it more deeply into the mind of John and that of his brother. At that moment the mother of the two apostles approached Jesus and bowed down as if to ask something. As St. Matthew records it, Jesus said to her: "What wilt thou?" She answered: "Say that these my two sons may sit, the one on Thy right hand, and the other on Thy left, in Thy kingdom." Jesus then said: "You know not what you ask. Can you drink the chalice that I shall drink?" Quickly they declared: "We can." He answered: "My chalice indeed you shall drink; but to sit on My right or left hand is not Mine to give you, but to them for whom it is prepared by My Father." That was the day Jesus gave His cross to His beloved disciple.

These words spoken by the Savior, like those spoken on the two other occasions, produced their effects in the disciple's soul. From that moment John no longer sought to be the first. He began to love suf-fering and humiliation, and this love continued to grow in his heart through the influence of grace.

Jesus was to make John more and more like Himself. He came to suffer as a victim of salvation, to save us by His agony more than by His sermons. So He united John more and more to His toilsome and crucified life. Bossuet says, “Whenever Jesus comes, He brings with Him His cross and His thorns, and He shares them with those who love Him.” As John was His beloved apostle, He gave him the im-mense grace of loving the cross.

John had at first thought that in order to have an honored place in the kingdom of the Son of God it was necessary to be seated at His right hand and to be clothed in His glory. He was to learn that we penetrate far into this kingdom even here on earth through suffering. He was to learn also how tribulation makes one clairvoyant in contemplating Jesus in the souls of men. Affliction was to open his eyes. He was to understand the profound meaning of the noblest of the beatitudes, the one that is most astonishing to human reason: “Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” This kingdom is already theirs here on earth even in the midst of persecution, because of the profound peace that Jesus gives them.

What was John’s cross? If we look at things outwardly, it may seem that his was the lightest of all the apostles’ crosses. He alone among them did not die in the throes of martyrdom. He did of course suffer persecution. In Rome under Domitian he was plunged into a cauldron of boiling oil. But this oil changed into dew, and he emerged refreshed and purified. He was then exiled on Patmos, where our Lord appeared to him in His glory and revealed His secrets to him, commanding him to write them down in the most mysterious of all the sacred books, the Apocalypse.

Viewed externally, St. John’s cross may seem to have been lighter than those of the other apostles. But as Bossuet says, “St. John’s cross was inwardly the greatest of all. Learn the mystery and consider the two crosses of our Savior. The one was seen on Calvary, and it seemed the more painful. The other is the one He carried all through His life, and it caused Him far more suffering.” Jesus explained to St. Catherine of Siena several times that this interior cross is the desire for the salvation of souls, a desire that was combated by the spirit of evil, by the spirit of the world, and by covetousness that sweeps millions of souls to perdition. In Jesus’ life we can follow the progress of the malice of those who hated Him, thus increasing His thirst for the salvation of souls that was burning and consuming Him. The mar-tyrdom of the heart is often more painful than

outward martyrdom, and it can last for years and not merely for a few hours.

It was particularly this interior cross of desire for the glory of God and for the salvation of souls that Jesus gave to St. John. It did not strike at the senses, but it was implanted by God in the depths of his soul together with a very strong desire for the salvation of sinners. To make His apostle capable of carrying this interior cross, Jesus inspired in him the love of suffering which at once quickened the desire to a calm, steady flame, and prevented the soul from finding solace in anything outside of God. Likewise, when certain souls called to holiness find too much natural satisfaction in creatures, our Lord will quickly pour a little bitterness on this satisfaction, and this bitterness far exceeds the pleasure formerly enjoyed. This is a crucifying and purifying grace.

Finally, St. John's interior cross consisted most of all in the heresies that were mutilating Holy Mother Church by denying the divinity of Jesus. How these denials must have tortured the heart of the author of the Fourth Gospel which was written to make known the Word made flesh in all His glory! This interior cross derived from the divisions arising in the new-born Church to the detriment of charity. When the apostle was eighty years old, he had his disciples carry him to the church of Ephesus, and since he could no longer preach long sermons, he merely said: "My little children, love one another." He who in his youth had been called "son of thunder" by our Lord because of his ardor, could now speak only of fraternal charity, the great sign of love of God. He had lost none of his ardor, of his hunger for justice, but it had become more spiritual and gentle. And when his listeners asked him why he always repeated the same thing, he answered: "That is the Lord's command. If you accomplish it, that is sufficient." Such was John's cross; above all an interior cross.

The Lord gives us interior crosses, too. There are three kinds of crosses: those that remain useless, like that of the bad thief; those we carry to make reparation for our own sins and to merit salvation, like that of the good thief; and those that make us think of the Savior's cross, and that we bear in order to labor with Him for the salvation of souls. When we carry a cross well, it in turn carries us. It unseals our eyes and leads us toward contemplation, and helps us to see God hidden in the souls of men. If such a cross sometimes seems very heavy, let us ask our Savior to give us a love of suffering, or at least orient us in the path of suffering.

That is what He desires, since He has given us His heart, a wounded heart. He has also given us His Mother, and one of the greatest graces that our Lady of Sorrows can obtain for us is the grace of delighting in the crosses that the Lord places on our shoulders to purify us and to enable us to labor for the salvation of souls. This is truly to enter into Christ's intimacy and to participate in His hidden and sorrowful life before having a part in His glorious life in heaven.

XXX

OUR PARTICIPATION IN THE MYSTERIES OF OUR LORD'S LIFE

> "In My Father's house there are many mansions."
>
> John 14:2

CHRIST'S intimacy takes on different forms that contribute to the harmony of His mystical body, that is, to its variety within its profound unity. In the Church the union of these two factors, unity and catholicity, in the face of so many causes for division, constitutes a permanent moral miracle. For in the Church unity of faith, hope, charity, worship, and government exists despite the diversity of place, time, race, language, customs, and institutions. This is indeed the accomplishment of one of Christ's prophecies, that His Church was to extend to all peoples, and that it would nevertheless remain one in order to lead the souls of every land and every century to eternal life.

It is important to understand the reason for this variety in unity. Diversity of temperament, character, or spiritual cast, is often an occasion for salutary suffering but also for failures in charity, for irritation, impatience, and for arbitrary judgments. In our narrow-view we may sometimes wish that all souls were absolutely alike, and had the same dominant inclinations as we do. Fortunately that is not the case. The harmony of the Church, as well as that of the religious orders and of religious communities, requires a certain diversity. In the vast fertile plain that is the Church there are a number of hills from which one can look out with the eyes of a St. Benedict, as it were, or of a St. Dominic, or a St. Francis, a St. Ignatius, or a St. Theresa. Our Lord has told us: "In My Father's house there are many mansions."

To gain light on this point we may consider the different forms of holiness that correspond to various dominant inclinations and to dif-ferent

types of trials. Each of these spiritual physiognomies has its own grandeur and beauty. Holiness takes three rather distinct forms, that correspond to the three predominant graces and tend to converge, as trails on different slopes of a mountain all lead to the summit. These three forms of holiness, as we shall see, are eminently present in the sacred souls of Jesus and Mary.

Holiness takes three rather distinct forms that correspond to the three great duties toward God: the duty to know Him, the duty to love Him, and the duty to serve Him. Every Christian must of course fulfill each of these three duties. Yet in the mystical body one must excel in one function and another in some other function.

There are holy souls whose special mission is to love God ardently, and thus to make reparation for the offenses made against Him. They receive early in life graces of love that transform their will and make of it a living power that never ceases spending itself for the glory of God and the salvation of their neighbor.

Other souls are called upon to excel in the contemplation of God, to make Him known, and show us the way that leads to Him. From the start they receive graces of light that increasingly enlighten their intelligence and make of it a beacon to guide the faithful in their progress toward eternity.

Finally, there are holy souls whose mission is essentially to serve God by their fidelity to daily duties in various works of charity. Their memory and their entirely practical activity, under the influx of the theological virtues, are placed continually at the service of God and of their neighbor.

Let us consider each in turn these three forms of holiness that are personified in the three privileged apostles whom our Lord led first to Thabor and then to Gethsemane: Peter, John, and James.

Each of these souls excels naturally in the exercise of one faculty. And as grace perfects nature’s good points, it takes hold of this faculty more directly and powerfully, afterward reaching the other, less developed faculties. Grace thus makes use of the resources of our na-ture for our own perfection and salvation, and constitutes our special supernatural inclination that we must always follow, since it is inspired by God. On the other hand, each of these souls has its dominant fault to conquer, a special pitfall to avoid, and that is why the Lord sends appropriate trials to each one.

Enlightened directors recognize in souls the special supernatural inclination that God has given them and also the dominant fault to be combated. We need to know both of them, the white and the black, in order

to understand the trials that God sends us, to derive greater benefit from them, and to avoid making arbitrary judgments of other souls that are going toward the same summit but up another slope. Those who are naturally gentle must become strong, and those who are naturally strong must become gentle. “Alius sic, alius sic ibat,” in the words of St. Augustine. There are different paths that lead to the same goal, and even among those traveling in the same direction one may progress more slowly than another and still not be retrogressing.

In the molding of souls the Lord finds a way to make use of every-thing. He does not deal in the same way with a man of action who is devoured by zeal, a missioner, as He would with a theologian, a St. Thomas, or with a painter like Angelico, a poet like Dante, or a musi-cian like Beethoven. But He makes everything serve for the expres-sion of faith, hope, and charity. He puts Aristotle’s logic to work in the mind of a theologian, and the learned harmonies of colors and sounds in an artist. And in the last analysis nothing in the intellectual and sensible order has value except as an expression of God’s perfections. Leading to this summit are several slopes, and only what leads to it can have any deep and lasting interest for us. The Office of All Saints admirably takes into account all these variations in holiness as found in the apostles, martyrs, doctors, confessors, and virgins.

The souls in whom the exercise of the will and the ardor of love dominate resemble the seraphim. According to revelation, these superior angels are inflamed with the love that the Holy Ghost com-municates to them. It is this love that leads them to contemplate God’s sublime beauties. Their spiritual flame generates more heat than light. They sing the canticle: “Holy, Holy, Holy, the Lord God of hosts!” They constitute the supreme order of the first hierarchy of angels. For the highest virtue of those who strive toward God is charity or divine love, which in contrast to knowledge is incompatible with mortal sin.

Likewise, ardent souls are first of all ravished by graces of love. They strive toward the good with zeal and determination, and often ask themselves: “What shall I do for God?” They have a burning thirst to suffer, to mortify themselves, in order to prove their love for God; they yearn to make reparation for the offenses committed against Him and to save sinners. Their desire to know God better is secondary.

This group of souls would, it seems, include the prophet Elias, full of zeal for the Lord, the apostle Peter who chose to be crucified head

downward through humility and love for his Master, the great martyrs St. Ignatius of Antioch and St. Lawrence, the seraphic St. Francis of Assisi, St. Margaret Mary who from her youth wished to suffer through love and in a spirit of reparation, St. Benedict Joseph Labre the impassioned lover of the cross. Also there were St. Charles Borromeo, St. Vincent de Paul, and countless other apostles and servants of mankind.

All these souls are more outstanding because of their charity, the surge of their hearts toward God, than because of their understanding.

The pitfall of those among them not sufficiently docile to the Holy Ghost would lie in the very energy of their will, which might degen-erate into rigidity, tenacity, and obstinacy. This is a dominant fault that is quite visible among the less fervent of these souls. Their zeal is not sufficiently enlightened, nor patient and gentle enough. Some of them may turn too much to active works at the expense of prayer.

The Lord sends these souls trials designed in particular to make their will more malleable, sometimes even to break their will when it has become too rigid. He permits grave setbacks so that their natural ardor may develop into a truly supernatural, disinterested, patient, and gentle zeal. He teaches them to put their trust not in the natural enthusiasm of the heart but in divine mercy that is always ready to help. The Lord humiliates these ardent souls sometimes by permitting them to endure violent temptations, even temptations of despair. This was the case of Elias when he lay down in the desert under the juniper tree. God even permits serious falls, as when Peter denied his Master.

The Lord also sends great aridity to these souls and allows their contemplation to be painful even when it is full of love and merit. Their ardent love burns them, consumes them, and makes them suffer keenly from all the offenses committed against God. He inspires them to expiate or to make reparation.

Thus does God mold these souls that are more ardent than luminous, dominated by the burning zeal of charity, the highest of the theological virtues.

A second group of souls is made of those in whom the exercise of the intellect dominates, rather than of the will. The grace that impels them directly and powerfully toward God is the grace of light. They resemble the cherubim who, the prophets tell us, cluster around the throne of God. These angels, wonderfully enlightened by the eternal Word, are first of all

overwhelmed with awe as they contemplate God's beauty, and they are thereby inspired to love Him and to make others know Him. Their spiritual flame produces more light than heat.

Likewise these souls are first enlightened by graces of illumination. They are inclined to rejoice in the contemplation of God, in the great over-all views that are born of wisdom. Their love increases only as a consequence of their enlightenment. They experience in a lesser degree than the first group the need to act, to mortify themselves, to suffer in reparation. But if they are faithful, they attain heroic love for the God who enchants them. The great doctors of the Church belong to this family of souls: among them, St. Augustine, St. Anselm, St. Albert the Great, St. Thomas Aquinas, and many others who through the centuries have been beacons showing humanity the path that leads to God.

The pitfall of the less perfect among these souls is to be content with the lights they receive and not conform their lives to the truths they know. Whereas their intelligence is highly enlightened, their will often lacks ardor. St. Francis de Sales bemoaned this condition in himself, and prayed for the grace of fortitude.

It is not rare for these souls to be given grave interior trials. The night of the senses and of the spirit described by St. John of the Cross leads them progressively to complete selflessness and generous love. The interior trials these souls endure are usually less painful than those of the first-mentioned group of souls. They find consolation in the lights they receive, and they are more strongly attracted toward contemplative prayer. But they must bemoan their lack of energy for quite a while. Their love of truth makes them suffer especially from error, false doctrines that lead men's minds astray. This is at once their cross and a stimulus to labor in making God known.

When these luminous souls have been purified by suffering and remain faithful to the lights that God sends them, they aspire ever more to be united to Him, to lose themselves in Him without falling into self-absorption. A faithful luminous soul will become more closely united to God than an ardent soul that is unfaithful.

There have been great saints like St. Paul, St. John, St. Benedict, St. Dominic, St. Gertrude, St. Catherine of Siena, St. Theresa of Avila, St. John of the Cross, who were both very contemplative and very ardent even from the start. They early combined within themselves the qualities of the first two groups of souls. For that matter, these two types of souls tend to

resemble each other more closely as they approach the summit toward which all of them aspire.

Lastly, there are the souls whose particular mission is to serve God through fidelity to daily duty. The faculty they use most is memory combined with activity of a wholly practical order. This group in-cludes the great majority of Christians. Their memory makes them attentive to specific facts. They are enraptured by the history of God's generosity toward man, as recorded in the Old Testament, the Gospels, and the life of the Church. These souls are easily touched by the words of the liturgy and by the outstanding virtues of various saints. Grace adapts itself to their nature and shows them clearly through the maze of their multiple occupations the duty to be accomplished, the neighbor to be helped, and the glory to be given to God.

Only rarely does divine inspiration send them broad over-all views, but it does make them attentive to the various means of perfection. In this way these souls, when they are faithful and generous, attain a practical and personal understanding of the things of God as well as a great love of God and of their neighbor. They are thus able to reach the loftiest levels of holiness.

Their pitfall would lie in becoming too attached to practices that are good in themselves but do not lead directly to God: for instance, certain exterior austerities or vocal prayers. They would then run the risk of becoming excessively anxious about details, scruples, and be-coming unduly attached to methods that are useful at the start but somewhat too mechanical. These things can prevent the attainment of intimate union with the Lord.

The trials of these souls generally have less to do with the interior life and more with the practice of fraternal charity and the exercise of their generosity. They suffer much from the faults of their neighbors and from the obstacles they encounter in their labors. The great interior purifications come to them much later than to the souls in the aforementioned categories. Yet if these practical souls are generous, they also attain an intimate union with God.

These are the three forms of holiness that seem personified in the three privileged apostles, Peter, John, and James, whom our Lord took with Him to Thabor and afterward to Gethsemane. All these souls are called in various ways to the contemplation of the mysteries of faith and to intimate union with God. The closer they come to the summit toward which they are

striving the more closely they resemble one another, the more deeply they resemble Christ, without losing their own individualities.

These three forms of sanctity are to be found in their most eminent degree in Christ's soul, without any of the imperfections that subsist in the saints. It reminds us somewhat of the way white light contains the seven colors of the rainbow. Indeed, no one ever knew God better, loved Him more, or served Him more perfectly than did Jesus Christ.

Jesus has shown us the excellence of these three forms of holiness in the three periods of His life on earth: His hidden life, His apostolic life, His sorrowful life.

During His hidden life in the obscurity of Nazareth, in the car-penter's house, He was the perfect model of fidelity to daily duty in the performance of acts that were outwardly very modest but inwardly of immeasurable greatness because of the love that inspired them.

In His apostolic life He shone forth as the light of the world and told us that those who follow Him do not walk in darkness but shall receive the light of life He not merely believed but actually saw immediately in the divine essence the things that He taught about eternal life and the means to attain it. He founded the Church, en-trusted it to Peter, and said to His apostles: "You are the light of the world." Then He sent them out to teach all nations and to bring the peoples of the earth baptism and the Eucharist.

Finally, in His sorrowful life Jesus manifested all the ardor of His love for His Father and for us. This love was so great as to inspire Him to die for us on the cross. He thirsted to suffer in reparation for the outrages done to God, to save souls, and to consummate the work of Redemption. His thirst for suffering was incomparably greater than that of St. Andrew, St. Ignatius of Antioch, St. Lawrence, St. Theresa, or St. Benedict Joseph Labre. For Jesus' heart is a fiery furnace of charity. No one ever suffered more because of sin, and from His wounded heart come all the graces received by reparative souls, those associated with the great mystery of the Redemption.

Jesus possessed all three forms of holiness without any shadow of imperfection. He was attentive to even the smallest details of God's service, ever fulfilling them with prompt exactitude. He enjoyed the most exalted contemplation, but was never lost in it, as are saints in ecstasy. Jesus was above ecstasy. He could simultaneously see the depths of the divine essence and converse with His apostles concern-ing the smallest details of their apostolic life. His ardent love and fiery zeal were united to the greatest

patience, gentleness, and compassion that inspired Him to pray for His executioners: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

The holiness of Christ’s soul is manifested by its reflection in the souls of His saints, as white light is manifested by the seven colors. The same holds true of Mary, making all due allowances, for she too possesses in an eminent degree all the forms of holiness.

Let us not underevaluate our Lord’s life by trying to explain it too much in terms of our own personal psychology. This is how a Jansen-ist Christ was invented, and then, as a reaction against this view, a liberal Christ. Let us lift our souls up toward Him instead of bringing Him down to our own level. He is infinitely above even our most generous sentiments, and He has no illusions. Though He is far superior to the greatest saints, He is still our perfect model and ceaselessly offers us the grace and strength to follow Him.

The mysteries of Christ’s life must in a sense be reproduced in us in the measure that the Savior wishes to assimilate us to Himself and make us participate in His hidden life, in His apostolic life, in His sorrowful life, and finally in His glorious life in heaven. This progressive assimilation is noticeable in the life of a number of saints. Daily meditation on the mysteries of the Rosary can help us to ad-vance ever more securely in this path if we really desire to do so.

The joyous mysteries of Christ’s childhood, the sorrowful mysteries of His passion, and the glorious mysteries of the Resurrection and Ascension correspond to the three great acts in the life of a soul: 1. the act of desiring the ultimate end: holiness and eternal beatitude, the thought of which causes happiness and inspires the soul to make its first steps toward God; 2. the act of desiring the means that can enable us to attain this end: fulfillment of the commandments to carry our cross after the Master’s example and to follow in His footsteps; 3. the act of finding rest with Him once the goal has been won.

These mysteries of Christ’s life must become more and more the food of our souls, the object of our contemplation, so that we can penetrate their depths and rejoice in them. This will be a foretaste, as it were, of eternal happiness. We shall grasp ever better the fact that sanctifying grace is the seed of glory, that a profoundly Christian life is the beginning of eternal life, according to the Savior’s own words recorded several times by St.

John: “Amen, amen, I say unto you: He that believeth in Me hath everlasting life . . . and I will raise Him up in the last day.”

THE MEANING OF THE INCARNATION FOR CERTAIN CONTEMPLATIVES

Contemplative souls that are being tested by suffering may find help in the following reflections. After reading a commentary on St. Thomas’ thought concerning Providence, one such soul wrote: “When I read the first chapters dealing with God’s attributes, a black veil descended over all that I read. Only the Deity stood out in relief. It also was wrapped in darkness, but darkness of a different nature from that to be found in the lights of theology. For to me all light is darkness. . . . My soul lives apart, divorced from the sensible portion of me, and does not participate in any way, so to speak, in the celebration of feasts and commemoration of mysteries. The soul gives life to the body, and that is all. The body remains alone, always alone in the presence of these things that are made for the soul and that consequently encounter this human obstacle, inert as a corpse. . . . Then from time to time, but only rarely, a sudden certainty fills my mind, accompanied by an embrace that touches the depths of my soul. At such moments I am sure that I love God with a true love. . . . My walled-up soul (separated from the sensible) thus becomes conscious at times of an abyss and a life of unfathomable depth. It is, as it were, the experimental knowledge of immense but unknown riches; of an incandescent furnace, which neither lights nor warms me; of an overflowing but half-perceived plenitude, for which I hunger but which does not nourish me.”

As a matter of fact, the prayer of certain souls that are being sub-jected to grave trials is almost totally devoid of the intellectual and effective elements normal to prayer. Yet there is in their prayer a consent and abandonment which amounts to saying: “My God, I trust Thee,” and which contains faith, trust, love, and true prayer.

Souls in this state may have the same reaction to the preceding pages on the mystery of the redemptive Incarnation. For such souls “all light is darkness” compared to the inaccessible light which they dimly glimpse from afar, especially through the words of the Savior. In fact, the sun is but a shadow by comparison with the intellectual light of the first rational principles. These latter are themselves shadows compared to the supernatural mysteries, as it will some day be given us to see them. And

among these mysteries, the redemptive Incarnation is a shadow compared to the Deity which, as it exists in itself, contains eminently, formally, and explicitly all the divine attributes and the three divine persons. The Deity as we know it here on earth contains only implicitly the divine attributes deduced from it. But when we shall see it as it is in itself there will no longer be any need for deduction. We shall see explicitly in the eminence of the Deity, superior to being, to unity, to goodness, all the infinite perfections and the three divine persons. Certain souls have an ex-perimental foretaste of this, as it were, and that is why the superior portion of their souls is never satisfied with anything that can be said about the divine attributes or the personality of the Word, who became man to save us.

The words of St. Thomas are appropriate in this connection: “Mat-ters that concern the Godhead are, in themselves, the strongest incentive to love and consequently to devotion, because God is supremely lovable. Yet such is the weakness of man’s mind that it needs a guiding hand, not only to the knowledge, but also to the love of divine things by means of certain sensible objects known to us. Chief among these is the humanity of Christ, according to the words of the Preface, that through knowing God visibly, we may be caught up to the love of things invisible. Wherefore matters relating to Christ’s humanity are the chief incentive to devotion, leading us thither as a guiding hand, although devotion itself has for its object matters concerning the Godhead.” In other words, it is the Deity particularly that attracts love and devotion; but inasmuch as it is invisible we need to be progressively lifted toward it, starting with things of the senses. Thus the Savior appeared to us first in His humanity, as the way. Later He appeared in His divinity, as the truth and the life. This is what the Preface of the Nativity proclaims: “Because by the mystery of the Word made flesh the light of Thy glory hath shone anew upon the eyes of our mind: that while we acknowledge Him to be God seen by men, we may be drawn by Him to the love of things unseen.” This is the perfect way to eternal life.

The state of the contemplative souls we have just spoken of is not solely one of aridity or absence of consolation. It is a state of impotence, quite different from the natural tendency to sleep. When souls are in this helpless state they can still read a few verses of the Gospel, but they cannot return for the moment to active prayer, that is, discursive meditation.

Active prayer is something like a child’s effort to spell and then to read little poems. If the poems were taken away from him and he had to return to

his alphabet, he could not do it. He would have no interest or incentive to relearn the alphabet since he knows it already. If the little poems that he loves to read are taken from him, he is helpless to find what he needs.

We have another example of impotence in the preacher who looks at the text of a sermon on the Passion that he preached several years earlier with special fervor. He no longer possesses the grace that would enkindle his notes. He understands the text quite well, he remembers it, but grace does not gleam through. He is like a poet who has lost his inspiration. His soul is like the becalmed water of a lake, or like the leaves of a poplar when there is no breath of wind. It is a dead calm. Whence comes his impression of impotence to preach the Passion as it should be preached. And yet beneath this impression of impotence, or perhaps above it, exists a real thirst to do good to souls and a deep prayer that will be answered in the end. This preacher, who is so thoroughly dissatisfied with his notes, already dominates them. The awareness of his impotence is a sign that he is docile in God's hand. The same holds true for the tested contemplative souls of whom we speak. They feel empty of God, but they are thirsting for Him more than ever.

Father de Caussade, S.J., in his beautiful book, Abandonment to Divine Providence, has described this state very well: "Souls who walk in light sing canticles of joy; those who walk amid shadows sing anthems of woe. Let one and the other sing to the end the portion and anthem God assigns them. We must add nothing to what He has completed. There must flow every drop of this gall of divine bitterness with which He wills to inebriate them. Behold Jeremias and Ezechiel: theirs was the language of sighs and lamentations, and their only consolation was in the continuation of their lament. He who would have dried their tears would have deprived us of the most beautiful portions of the Holy Scriptures. The spirit that afflicts is the only one that can console. The streams of sorrow and consolation flow from the same source.

"When God astonishes a soul she must needs tremble; when He menaces, she cannot but fear. We have but to leave the divine opera-tion to its own development; it bears within itself the remedy as well as the trial. . . . Make no effort to escape these divine terrors. . . . Receive into the depth of your being the waters of that sea of bitterness which inundated the soul of Christ."

If the contemplatives of whom we have just spoken no longer seem to understand what they read concerning the mysteries of salvation, it is because they are so eager to pass beyond narrow formulas and enter into the infinite depths of the mystery of God, in His unfathomable love. “O Liebe, O unendliche Liebe Gottes!” The truth is that they are the ones who understand best. While their Holy Communions may seem arid to them, and their poverty extreme, they understand incomparably better than others the sublime words:

Panis angelicus fit panis hominum.

O res mirabilis, manducat Dominum Pauper, servus, et humilis.

XXXI

THE GRACE OF CHRIST AND THE MYSTICS OUTSIDE THE CHURCH

NATURAL PRE-MYSTICISM AND SUPERNATURAL MYSTICISM

THERE is much talk these days of certain mystics outside the Church who, without visibly belonging to the true Church of Christ, seem to have lived the life of grace and charity in the superior degree that characterizes the mystical life.

The studies of Louis Massignon and of Asin Palacios on Islam are written from this point of view. These works which contribute mostly documents should be examined with care, and their authors would probably not accept the general conclusions that have been drawn from their works by certain critics.

Emile Dermenghem goes much farther than they in one of his works. In 1930, with regard to several Moslem mystics whom he had studied, he wrote: “All these coufis, thinkers, poets, or saints, have given expression to the great mystical experience: to die to the world in order to live in God, in compelling formulas analogous to those of the Christian Fathers, doctors, and mystics, and often also of the Hindu Vedantists. This would confirm the thesis of R. Guénon on the universality of tradition: quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus, according to the Catholic formula. They repeat incessantly with the Scholastics that creatures have no being except that which they receive from God, and with St. Paul that it is in Him that we have our life, our movement, and our being.”

Father Eliseus of the Nativity, O.C.D., commented aptly on this subject: “We do not know what Dermenghem means by `great mystical experience’; at any rate, the Church will never take this universality of tradition as the sole criterion of truth.”

On the other hand certain rationalists and surviving Modernists have been trying to explain even the supernatural mysticism of St. John of the Cross in terms of the natural mysticism which is to be found in varying degrees in all religions and which from their point of view is superior to any single creed. According to this approach, the revelation of the mysteries of salvation as proposed by the Church, the person of our Lord, His example, the sacraments instituted by Him, bring nothing essential to the Catholic but merely a greater security. The essential, they say, lies elsewhere and on a higher level: in a mystical experience that is to be found in the more interior souls of every religion and that is nothing but the natural blossoming of the religious sentiment.

To the theologian, this is one of the most delicate aspects of the very difficult problem of the salvation of unbelievers, and it is be-coming more and more acute.

1. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Errors of Extremism to be Avoided

Everybody knows the two radically opposed positions that the Church has rejected as grave errors. One of them is worse than heresy. It does not choose from revelation what it will retain. It denies all supernatural revelation.

On the other hand, naturalism, as it is formulated, for example, by Spinoza and his successors, absolutely denies the supernatural order as well as miracles and the life of grace. It sees in the various religions nothing more than the natural evolution of religious sentiment. Modernism reached this same conclusion by renewing and aggravating the Pelagian error. From this point of view Catholicism is at best the most exalted form of the evolution of religious sentiment; the mysticism described by St. John of the Cross is an interesting form of natural mysticism which is expressed in pantheistic terms by the Buddhists in the Orient, for instance, and in the West by the theos-ophists who find their inspiration in Jacob Boehme or in Schelling’s second philosophy.

The extreme opposite of naturalism is none other than the pseudo-supernaturalism that appeared under various forms among the pre-destinarians such as Wyclif, the Protestants, and the Jansenists. They have all maintained that as a result of original sin human nature is so corrupt that

every act of the infidel is a sin, and his apparent virtues are but splendid vices deriving from self-love and pride.

In opposition to these last-mentioned errors, Catholic doctrine holds that predestination is not necessary for the performance of even excellent actions, nor are sanctifying grace and infused faith required for an action that is morally good, such as paying one's debts or teach-ing sound principles to one's children. Fallen man can, without grace, even have a certain ineffectual love of God, the Author of nature, a love consisting of admiration and slight desire, capable of inspiring a naturally poetic soul to describe God's perfections in lyrical terms. Thus the pagans can, without grace, accomplish certain morally good acts. They are also endowed with actual grace by the help of which they can accomplish certain salutary acts that will dispose them to re-ceive habitual grace, the radical principle not only of salutary acts but also of meritorious acts. "To anyone doing what in him lies (with the help of actual grace), God does not deny (habitual) grace."

Pope Pius IX said in effect that those who invincibly or through no fault of their own ignore the true religion but who do what is in their power to observe the natural law can, through an illumination and a grace from God, attain the supernatural acts of faith and charity necessary for salvation. In other words, such persons can receive the life of grace, the seed of glory, and be saved. These men "of good will," in the theological sense of the term, belong to the soul of the Church, as is generally agreed by theologians.

We can see how Catholic doctrine rises above the diametrically opposed errors: 1. the error of naturalism, which denies the order of grace; 2. the error of narrow pseudo-supernaturalism, which denies that God wishes to offer to all adults the sufficient grace for the ac-complishment of the commandments necessary for salvation. Yet a great mystery remains: the mystery of predestination. It is a great grace to belong visibly to the Church, to benefit by its infallible teaching, by the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and by the sacraments. Hence the necessity of the missions.

Two Tendencies Relating to the Mystics Outside the Church
and the Importance of the Problem

As we have seen, there have been and still are diametrically op-posed errors relating to the salvation of unbelievers. Within the limits of

orthodoxy one can also distinguish two rather contrary tendencies with regard to those who have been called the “mystics outside the Church.”

There are those who are inclined to think that, inasmuch as sanctifying grace, infused faith, and charity can exist in souls that do not belong visibly to the Church, we can also find the mystical life in them more often than has been heretofore admitted, especially when we recognize that this mystical life is the normal blossoming of the life of grace.

This tendency leads to the rather easy admission that certain mystics outside the Church are “authentic” mystics, and even to speak of Moslem, Hindu, Jewish, and other forms of mysticism as if they were, despite their errors, true mysticism. This leads to specific statements that this or that mystic outside the Church has had authentic supernatural graces, and even very exalted graces, which might be compared to the transforming union, that is, the stage called by St. Theresa of Avila “Seventh Mansion,” or at least the stages immediately preceding it. There are at times striking analogies to be sure, as L. Massignon and Miguel Asin Palacios have noted.

But beneath these analogies, the questions of nature and origin re-main obscure. And in such a delicate matter, exaggeration, which is contrary to all scientific prudence, would quickly become dangerous as well as easy. On these frontiers of the nature of grace we touch upon the most difficult problems of theology, and scholars who have studied them all their lives may often hesitate to formulate an opinion on them. On the questions about the limits of the two spheres, final judgment can only be the result of a profound knowledge of each of the two domains.

Several thinkers who have formulated reservations that help state the problem with greater penetration and also bring out its importance.

First of all, even admitting that the mystical life is the full normal culmination of the life of grace, this normal summit is still a summit. And because of negligence, spiritual laziness, lack of generosity in trials, and insufficient docility to the Holy Ghost, this summit is rarely attained even in the Catholic Church, even in religious orders. And yet here are available so many supernatural lights, examples, graces, particularly through the sacraments and through daily Holy Com-munion most of all. How much more difficult it must be to reach this summit when one is deprived of these many aids!

Moreover, as a missioner who is well versed in these matters has recently stated, it is easy when a person chooses wisely—and is it not on choices of

this kind that we are depending—to group a large number of texts describing these mystics outside the Church that seem to use terms strikingly similar to those used by St. John of the Cross with regard to the essence of the mystical life. This will lead us to the following conclusions:

a) For all of them the essence of contemplation is indeed the loving, obscure, indistinct, general knowledge with neither form nor image that the Doctor of Carmel teaches.

b) For all of them the practical behavior to be followed during contemplation is a kind of universal nada, and consists in abstracting the understanding from any particular notion (Ascent of Mount Carmel, Bk. II, chap. 12), and to be occupied with a loving attention in God, without wishing to specify anything (Living Flame of Love, III,3,6).

c) For all of them (and this is perhaps the most remarkable fact) the summit and the perfection of the mystical life exist when the soul totally transformed into its Beloved has become God by participation (Spiritual Canticle, Stanza 22).

It seems, therefore, that all these souls meet at the summit re-gardless of the path they have chosen, whether or not they have en-joyed the help of the infallible doctrine and the sacraments of the visible Church. Do they really meet? This, of course, is a most im-portant question:

If, as we admit, the same sanctifying grace is presupposed in these diverse souls, it follows that, according to the view presented above, everything seems to happen as if this grace sufficed to reach even the highest degrees of supernatural union with God, with no need of having an explicit knowledge of the mystery of the redemptive In-carnation or of receiving the sacraments. (This also presupposes, of course, faith in the two primary truths of the supernatural order, namely, that God, the author of salvation, exists, and that He rewards good works. It also presupposes charity.) This explicit faith in the divine person of the Savior, His example, the sacraments, the teach-ings and regulations of the Church, would then seem to give the Catholic no more than secondary, not to say accidental, assistance and greater security. The essential, however, would lie elsewhere and on a higher level.

Far more important, it would appear that St. John of the Cross himself defined and described contemplation in a manner that is not specifically Christian and Catholic by notes and definitions that are actually used to “recognize” and “authenticate” the mystics outside the Church. (In reality

of course, he founds his mysticism on the fullness of revelation received from our Lord, on the explicit understanding of the mystery of the Cross perpetuated on the altar during the Mass, and on the sacraments, especially on the union with the Savior through spiritual and sacramental communion.) Would this provide adequate safeguard for Jesus' words: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life"?

Thus presented, the question is serious. Following the first-men-tioned trend of thought which takes on more or less definite forms, would we not, under the influence of present-day syncretism, gradu-ally lose the meaning of true contemplation, which St. Paul calls "the mind of Christ"? This is the question brought up by the missioner we quoted earlier.

The answer will no doubt be given: The doctrine of implicit faith is definitely opposed to this syncretism and does not signify at all that explicit faith and the sacraments have only an accidental value. Father Eliseus of the Nativity has made some apt remarks on this point: "The difficulty originates with regard to faith in the Mediator. The adult can be justified only by believing in one way or another in the redemption that Christ has won for humanity. This faith in Christ the Redeemer has three states or degrees: the explicit knowledge of the mysteries of the Incarnation and Redemption, as we Christians know it; the idea of a mediator between God and man; lastly, the conviction that God in His mercy has provided in some undefined way for the salvation of the human race. This last degree of knowledge of the Redeemer is called implicit faith in Christ and is to a certain extent indistinguishable from supernatural faith in Providence and belief in a God who rewards. . . . To believe that God saves men by whatever means He pleases is to possess an implicit faith in Christ the Redeemer [and according to St. Thomas this was sufficient before Christ's coming]. . . . It is difficult to maintain that conditions have changed for those who lived after Christ's coming but never heard of Him."

A serious difficulty remains even for those who accept the view that explicit faith in Christ the Redeemer is not a necessary means since the promulgation of the Gospel. Indeed, there is a vast differ-ence between what is strictly necessary for salvation or in order to avoid damnation and what is required for mystical union with God, especially the loftiest stages of this union.

We are led to ask ourselves if two most important matters are not being left out of consideration.

1. Do we find among these mystics outside the Church the com-bination of conditions, especially profound purification, requisite for true mysticism, that is, supernatural contemplation and the intimate union with God that results from it?

2. When they are in the state of grace is not theirs a natural mysti-cism or pre-mysticism, that is, a natural contemplation of God similar to that of Plato and Plotinus, or even of certain Christian Platonists like Malebranche and the most recent ontologists?

If we failed to consider these two points carefully, we should be led, precisely as were the ontologists, to a more or less latent identification of nature and grace, and we should finish by speaking of a universal mysticism which expresses itself in a rather halting manner. Our Catholic mysticism would merely be the most correct form. Not only would this confusion be deplorable for us. It would also be profitless to the souls of good will who even outside the visible Church might seek the true interior life and profound, intimate converse with God. This is clearly a serious question. It is important not to state one's views lightly. Undue haste in reaching conclusions would be particularly dangerous.

As Father Allo says: "At the present time among those given to the study and admiration of mysticism, a perilous syncretism is beginning to take shape. And believers endowed with knowledge and zeal should not close their eyes to this menace. It should be told."

THE DIFFICULTIES OF THE PROBLEM

First of all there are the two great inherent difficulties of mystical theology: 1. The object is transcendent, inasmuch as it concerns union with God considered in terms of His intimate life, and not merely known naturally from the outside through the reflection of His perfections in the mirror of sensible things. 2. The subject under consideration is the human individual, of whom the ancients said: the individual is ineffable. Certainly man is not ineffable the way God is, whose intimate life is above the frontiers of intelligibility accessible to us by natural means. Man is ineffable because the human individual is a mysterious composite of spirit and matter, matter that is not very intelligible in itself and that is, so to speak, beneath the frontiers of intelligibility. There can be science only of the general, of the uni-versal, for science is the result of abstraction from

individual matter, which is thus in a manner repugnant to intelligibility. From this fact comes the mystery of the individual human composite wherein are perpetually intertwined the acts of the superior faculties, the will and the intelligence, and those of the imagination, the memory, the external senses, and all the emotions or passions that are more or less uncontrolled and either healthy or diseased.

As a result there are "dark nights," fundamentally different but resembling one another on the surface. Some are the product of the deep-seated workings of divine grace, the others are not. Some of these states are mainly neurasthenic and the result of human frailty.

These are the difficulties of mystical theology in general and of its application even in fervent Christian and Catholic circles. But these difficulties are greatly magnified with regard to the mystics outside the Church.

We must not forget that there can and does exist a certain natural mysticism or pre-mysticism, midway between true supernatural mys-ticism and the false mysticism that is evidently diabolical. The indis-tinct "experiences" of this natural pre-mysticism become the obscure and sometimes poisoned source of the most contradictory systems. It had been said that certain non-Christian philosophies are nothing more than formulations of the mysticism of the savages which has always existed. There are methods of ecstasy that are prehistoric.

Can we be sure that these "experiences" are "ordered toward the truth"? Have we the right to conceive of them in terms of authentic Christian mysticism, rather than in pantheistic terms?

Much has been said about false charity that, sometimes without even being aware of it, has not at all the same formal object as infused charity, yet parades its name. At bottom such false charity is nothing but liberalism or vain sentimentalism. The principle, corruptio optimi pessima, is applicable here to an extent which is often unrealized. Though nothing on earth is greater than true charity, which is essen-tially supernatural, nothing is worse than false charity. Likewise, al-though nothing is greater than true mysticism, which is the eminent exercise of the three theological virtues and of the gifts of the Holy Ghost that accompany them, nothing is worse than false mysticism. This false mysticism is all the more dangerous to the extent that it takes on the external aspects of true mysticism. One might be tempted to speak of the "soul of truth" within this false mysticism. Yet there

may be in it only a “grain of truth” which, far from being its soul, is at the service of the voluntary or involuntary error at the root of this deviation. In what is false simpliciter and not merely secundum quid, the true is deviated from its goal. These remarks, in direct opposition to theosophy, should not be forgotten.

Insufficient realization that a natural pre-mysticism exists, leads to a falsification, not to say caricature, of the contemplative life. This might be the favorite work of the spirit of lies, which hides as much as possible under the appearances of truth.

A certain modernistic syncretism is inclined to proclaim: “Christ is here” or “He is there.” The Gospel tells us: “Do not believe him.” From this point of view, Christ would be everywhere except perhaps where He really is.

This gives us an idea of the difficulty of the problem. How can we distinguish a supernatural mysticism which, because of the ignorance of several revealed mysteries, is rather amorphous, from a natural mysticism or pre-mysticism which can exist even in souls in the state of grace? The latter form of mysticism, of course, was that of the Christian Platonists, of whom it was at times hard to say whether they were Platonistic Christians or Platonists with a taste for Christianity. The difficulty is increased by the fact that the mystical vocabulary comes in part from Dionysius and from the Neo-Platonists and there-fore does not strictly belong to the Church. Plotinus often speaks of “purification,” but in an entirely different sense from that in which St. John of the Cross uses it.

Moreover, this vocabulary is often more one of practical psycho-logical description than is the case with theological descriptions, that is, those written by the light of speculative reason based on revealed principles. It is human language, expressing itself in terms of the “experience” of the contemplative soul. Therefore we should not be surprised that pseudo-mystics use it just as the true mystics do.

In our opinion, these are the chief difficulties of the problem. Some of these difficulties derive from the nature of this mysterious subject. For in it there is the darkness from above, coming from God whose light is inaccessible, and also the darkness from below, which comes from matter, one of the essential parts of the human composite. Be-tween these two darknesses it is no easy task to distinguish true super-natural mysticism from its natural analogies. The difficulty is in-creased by the fact that the true and the false mystics often use a vocabulary that is rather common to

both. It is further increased by the impossibility of seeing and of watching the lives of the mystics outside the Church, who are known to us only by documents that are for the most part incomplete. Spiritual directors have difficulty in judging those under their direction on the basis of a few conversations and letters. They often reach conclusions quite different from the ones of those who have lived in close contact with these persons over a long period of time. How much more difficult, then, to pass an exact judgment on the mystics outside the Church under discussion here! But since this question has been presented to theologians and missioners, let us inquire what guiding principles can help solve it.

II. ELEMENTS OF THE SOLUTION

Two theologians who have lived among the Moslems, the late lamented Father Lemonnyer and Father Allo, have indicated several of these elements, as has also Jacques Maritain in his remarkable work, The Degrees of Knowledge.

Let us raise our thoughts progressively from the highest degrees of the natural order to the loftiest degrees in the order of grace. We would first consider the work of the imagination and of the rather disorderly emotions on the first ideas on which religious sentiment lives, whether these come from natural reason rising toward God or from religious traditions that have been more or less distorted. This field is unlimited. We have but to think of the sometimes improbable fantasies written even by Christian and Catholic poets, without mentioning the decadents. We shall limit ourselves to the formulation of principles concerning our superior faculties: the intellect and the will.

These principles concern first of all natural contemplation and natural love of God to the extent that they are possible in the present state, and then the different forms of superior inspiration that man can receive. It is easy to reduce the guiding principles to these two cate-gories.

NATURAL KNOWLEDGE AND NATURAL LOVE OF GOD

We must remember that, according to Catholic theological teaching as formulated by St. Thomas (Ia, q. 60, a. 5; Ia IIae, q. 109, a. 1, 2, 3; IIa IIae, q. 26, a. 3), man since his fall can still, without grace, by his natural powers

know the existence of God, the author of our nature, he can know the more manifest divine attributes, and he can love God the author of our nature with a natural, inefficacious love. Although this love does not make us renounce mortal sin, that is, does not fundamentally rectify our will and our life, it prompts us to admire God's perfections that are naturally knowable, His infinite wisdom and His goodness. This admiration leads to flights of the imagination which in poetic souls, especially in great artists, find lyrical expression reminiscent of true mysticism. Yet this might really be nothing but a sentimentalism full of deceiving fluctuations, one whose fires soon flicker out.

This natural and inefficacious love of God, the author of our nature, appears more powerful in souls naturally endowed with a vigorous intelligence or a strong will. This is particularly true when natural love of God is united, as in the case of Plotinus, to a love of philosophy, or perhaps to a love of art, or to love of country as in the case of an oppressed people.

In such cases we can easily find a natural prefiguration of the mystical life that may mislead us if we forget the words of Jesus: "Not every one that saith to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doth the will of My Father." Nor let us forget that in the actual plan of Providence every man is either in the state of grace or in the state of mortal sin; he is turned either toward God or away from Him. There is no middle ground. Absolute indifference is not possible with regard to God.

Consequently, on the matter of natural analogies to true mysticism we must note what Father Lemonnyer says: "What difference is it to us and what principles can we be expected to present in opposition to the fact that there have been actually observed outside the Church such phenomena as catalepsy, levitation, or luminous radiation materially resembling mystical ecstasy, as well as psychic states more or less analogous to mystical sufferings? Whether these phenomena are normal or pathological, natural or diabolical, they do not necessarily require a divine cause.

"We do not even claim that their appearance is impossible in con-nection with natural contemplation of a religious object, as Neo-Platonic contemplation could have been, and as can also be Buddhist or theosophical contemplation or any other contemplation that has Christian affinities. This natural contemplation, prepared and sustained by appropriate asceticism, developed through the use of a method and through well-conceived exercises to an exceptional degree of intensity, can have psychic

consequences. When temperamental factors are favorable, especially when the imagination and the emotions come into play, there can even be corporeal consequences materially resembling various accessory mystical phenomena, with the exception of levitation. Hallucinations, susceptible of evoking the idea of prophetic visions, can easily be an additional factor." Much could be said on this subject as it concerns the temperament of certain racial groups predisposed to passiveness and fatalism.

Can the natural love of God, which we have just mentioned, attain to what has been called an "immediate seizure of God" which would allow us to speak not merely of a natural pre-mysticism but of a genuine natural mysticism?

Pantheism, particularly that of Plotinus and Spinoza, gives an affirmative answer. We have explained elsewhere why Catholic theology must answer in the negative. This would be the confusion of nature and grace.

There is a difference in formal object between the dim natural intuition of God known from the outside in the mirror of sensible things without the grace of faith and, on the other hand, the supernatural and quasi-experimental knowledge of God founded on divine revelation and infused faith united to charity and enlightened by the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Only supernatural knowledge can ultimately attain "the deep things of God," as St. Paul says. In other words, it alone attains the intimate life of God, the Deity. First it succeeds in doing this dimly through faith and then it does so clearly through the beatific vision.

Maritain rightly insists on this point:

To admit in any degree, even in the simplest imaginable form, an authentic experience of the depths of God upon the natural plane would necessarily imply:

1. Either confounding our natural intellectuality, which is made specific by being in general, with our intellectuality in grace, which is made specific by the divine essence itself;

2. Or confounding the presence of immensity, whereby God is present in all His creatures by the power of His creative might, with the special and holy indwelling of God, that special presence in the soul in a state of grace;

3. Or again muddling up in the same hybrid concept the wisdom of the natural order (metaphysical wisdom) and the infused gift of wisdom;

4. Or finally attributing to the natural love of God what exclusively belongs to supernatural charity.

In one way or another this would be to confound what is absolutely proper to grace with what is natural and of the order of nature.

If vegetative life, the life of the senses, and the life of reason con-stitute three distinct orders, how much more must we recognize as existing above them the order of truly divine life, superior to the rational life of man and to angelic life!

Thus only can we safeguard the meaning of St. Paul's words: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him. But to us God hath revealed them by His Spirit. For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, but the spirit of a man that is in him? So the things also that are of God [His intimate life] no man knoweth, but the Spirit of God." What a vast difference there is between knowing the Vicar of Jesus Christ from the outside by what everybody says of him and knowing his intimate life! How much vaster, then, is the difference between knowing God from the outside through the reflections of His perfections in the created order and knowing His intimate life at least dimly through divine revelation!

That is why it has always been necessary for salvation to have ex-plicit infused faith in at least two primary truths of the supernatural order: God, the author of salvation, exists and He is a rewarder. Without this explicit faith we cannot have implicit faith in the other supernatural mysteries.

Natural love of God might be efficacious even without grace, if man had not fallen but had remained in a state of pure nature, pref-erably integral nature. Yet man would not in such a state attain to the "immediate seizure of God." Even the angels would not attain to it by this natural love of God, for, like us, they had to be raised to the supernatural order of grace in order to know dimly at first and then clearly the intimate life of God or the mystery of the Deity. There is an immeasurable distance between knowing God as God, in His intimate life, even in an obscure manner, and knowing God from the outside as the First Being and First Intelligence through the reflection of His perfections in creatures. It is because our natural love of God cannot arrive at this experience of the intimate life of God that we do not speak of a "natural mysticism," but only of a "natural pre-mysticism."

But if natural love of God cannot arrive at the intimate experience that is to be found only in the mystical life by reason of the gift of wisdom, it is none the less often difficult in concrete reality to distin-guish this natural love from a love born of superior inspiration. This difficulty is greatest in the case of philosophers or vigorous souls in whom the natural love of God is united to another powerful love which is not without grandeur, and when these are accompanied by a certain purifying asceticism such as the catharsis of Plotinus.

It is in such cases especially that a natural pre-mysticism can exist. This pre-mysticism is all the more difficult to distinguish concretely from true mysticism inasmuch as the superior inspiration which we have just mentioned is not always of the same nature.

We shall find, if we read the works of St. Thomas attentively, that he distinguishes at least four kinds of superior inspirations, two of the natural order and two of the supernatural order of grace. They can be reduced to the following table, reading from the bottom up.

mystical inspiration properly so-called,
leading, for instance, to passive recollection
and other degrees of infused prayer.
mystical inspiration improperly so-called,
given especially because of the indigence of
proceeding from God, the author of nature,
for example, for the temporal welfare of a people.
proceeding from created spirits, whether good
or evil, such as poetic inspiration.

We know there can be inspirations that come not directly and im-mediately from God but from created spirits, whether good or evil. And sometimes mystics outside the Church have sought contact with spirits.

As Maritain remarks: “The care which St. Thomas took to refute the theories of Avempace, Averroes, and others on the possibility for man of an immediate achievement of the world of pure spirits by in-tellectual intuition, shows to what point this temptation may prove seductive to philosophers.”

It is often forgotten that there can be divine inspiration of the natural order, such as that received by a great philosopher, a great poet, an artist of genius, a lawmaker, or a strategist. St. Thomas speaks of this several times, particularly in Ia IIae, q. 68, a. 1, where he cites chapter fourteen, “On

Good Fortune," from Ethic. Eudem. 7, 8, written by a Platonist disciple of Aristotle who wrote of the exceptional men who, moved by a divine instinct, do not need to deliberate before doing great things. The end of Plato's Banquet and a part of Gorgias seem to have been written under the influence of an inspiration of this kind. Whence the expression: divine Plato.

We need only call to mind certain leitmotivs of Wagnerian works or certain symphonies of Beethoven to realize that natural poetic or musical inspiration, united to the natural and inefficacious love of God which is possible without grace, can sometimes give the illusion of true mysticism. This illusion will be even more pronounced when the inspiration is received by a soul in the state of grace.

Divine inspirations of the order of grace also occur often enough, but only rarely do they belong to the truly mystical order. First, we must note in souls seeking religious truth the inspiration that leads them to believe supernaturally in the truths that are necessary means of salvation, especially the first two truths: that God (the author of salvation and not only of nature) "is and is a rewarder to them that seek Him." Explicit faith in these two primary supernatural truths contains implicit faith in the others.

St. Thomas even tells us that when a child, even one who has not been baptized, fully reaches the age of reason he must order his life to a good end, and if he does this he receives through grace the remission of original sin. That is to say, he is justified by baptism of desire. In other words, even a non-baptized child who has fully reached the age of reason must choose not only to suit his fancy but efficaciously the path of goodness and he must deliberately turn away from evil. Now, to choose the right path in this way is already to love efficaciously the good more than self, and therefore it amounts to loving efficaciously and above all else the Sovereign Good, God, the author of our nature, known at least in a confused manner.

We have seen that fallen man cannot do this without grace. That the accomplishment of this precept be hic et nunc really possible, the child then receives a sufficient grace, and if he does not resist it he receives greater assistance. According to St. Thomas, he is actually justified and his original sin is remitted. The text of Ia IIae, q. 89, a. 6, should be compared with the well-known passage De veritate, q. 14, a. 11 ad 1, which the Jansenists forgot. Pope Pius IX speaks in similar terms in the text quoted at the

beginning of this chapter (cf. Denzinger, no. 1677). God never commands the impossible and He makes it possible for all adults to fulfill His precepts.

Supernatural love of God is more easily distinguishable in this case by its efficacy and by the good behavior that it inspires from the inefficacious natural love that in some respects resembles it. If the child we have spoken of perseveres in the path of goodness in spite of all the obstacles that surround him, he will be saved.

Finally, as Father Lemonnyer has remarked, it is important to remember a distinction that theologians, notably the Thomists, often make concerning the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which because they are related to charity are present in every soul in the state of grace.

Among the special inspirations of the Holy Ghost which the gifts dispose us to receive, some are given us especially because of our weakness or because of the indigence of our environment, in order that we may accomplish certain salutary and meritorious acts that stronger souls or souls in less unfavorable environments might ac-complish by the simple exercise of the infused virtues aided by com-mon actual grace. These special inspirations of the Holy Ghost have been called minor or improperly so-called mystical graces. It is not unusual for converts to receive them at the moment of their conver-sion and afterward for a more or less prolonged period of time, to make up for their lack of preparation.

Other special inspirations of the Holy Ghost that the gifts dispose us to receive are given to us especially because of the perfection of the act to be performed. If we do not resist these inspirations, they dispose us soon to enter the initial mystical stage described by St. Theresa in the fourth mansion and even in the ones above it. These inspirations can be called major mystical graces properly so called. John of St. Thomas, among the Thomists, has made this distinction quite clearly.

The superior inspiration which we have been speaking of occurs in a number of different forms. It can belong to the natural order and proceed from either good or evil created spirits, or from God the author of our nature, as several Greek philosophers have noted, especially the author of Ethic. Eudem.

Superior inspiration can also belong to the supernatural order of grace. Apart from prophetic inspiration or other extraordinary graces, it can be mystical in the broad sense or mystical properly so called. Mystical inspiration improperly so called generally follows justifica-tion and then

becomes the principle of acts that are both salutary and meritorious. But it can precede justification and dispose one toward justification by acts that are salutary but not yet meritorious, inasmuch as the principle of merit is the state of grace and charity.

Above natural acts that may contain a certain prefiguration of mysticism, there is a great diversity of supernatural acts, starting with the first salutary acts and going on to acts that are highly meritorious but still do not properly belong to the mystical order. We believe these are the principal elements of the solution.

THE ORDER OF POSSIBILITY AND THE ORDER OF EXISTENCE

It is easier to reach conclusions in the order of possibility.

1. True mysticism, which implies or at the very least provides proximate preparation for the quasi-experimental knowledge of God present within us, is possible only for souls in the state of grace. Out-side the state of grace there can be a natural pre-mysticism and also diabolic influences. This natural pre-mysticism can exist simultane-ously with actual graces that dispose toward salutary but not yet meritorious acts. It can even exist in souls in the state of grace who perform meritorious acts, as we have seen in particular among Chris-tian philosophers with a Platonist turn of mind.

2. In the actual plan of Providence in which the state of pure nature does not exist, every man is either in the state of grace or in the state of mortal sin. There is no middle ground. Every man is either turned toward God or turned away from Him. In the state of pure nature man would be born with a will not yet converted to God nor turned away from Him, but capable of being converted or of turning away from Him. In the actual state of things, man is born a sinner, turned from his last supernatural end and indirectly from his final natural end, for every sin against supernatural law transgresses natural law at least indirectly. Therefore it is man’s duty to obey God in whatever He may command. This means that every man is either turned toward God or turned away from Him. More precisely: every man either loves God efficaciously above all things with a love of esteem (an appreciative love), which presupposes sanctifying grace and charity, or else he does not attain to this efficacious love of God either because of original sin if he does not have the full use of reason, or because of a personal mortal sin. That is why our Lord has said: “He that is not with Me

is against Me," and also to the apostles these consoling words: "He that is not against you is for you." Indifference properly so called or absolute neutrality is not possible with regard to the ultimate end. Therefore in the actual economy of salvation every man is either in the state of grace or in the state of mortal sin.

3. The state of grace is possible outside of the visible Church. It is realized by men who, with the help of actual grace, do what is in their power and thus come to love God efficaciously more than themselves with a love of esteem if not a love of sentiment. "To anyone doing what in him lies (with the help of actual grace), God does not refuse (habitual) grace."

4. Mystical graces improperly so called or minor mystical graces not only are possible outside the visible Church, but they can occur rather frequently in the holiest souls in the state of grace, as a means of making up for the indigence of the environments where God's children find so little help. In this way souls really endowed with good faith and good will in the theological sense can attain a true spirit of prayer, as missioners have often noticed. In consequence these souls may make more or less permanent attempts at attaining God's intimacy, especially if there remain traces of the Gospel in their religious teachings, as in the doctrine of Islam and in some of its tra-ditions. These graces are to be found all the more in environments where, in spite of the errors of the Protestant heresy and of schism, the Gospel is preached and where Christ is loved by souls of good faith.

5. As for mystical graces properly so called or major mystical graces, by which the soul reaches mystical states properly so called as described by St. Theresa of Avila from the fourth mansion on (passive recollection and quietude), they are possible outside the visible Church. For the "grace of the virtues and the gifts" can develop outside the Church, even though this is much more difficult. Yet everything leads us to believe a priori that these mystical graces properly so called, already rare in the visible Church, are exceedingly rare in these less favorable environments. Here and there we may find a few instances of what St. Theresa of Avila calls the fourth mansion, but it is doubtful that there is anything more elevated than that.

When we pass from the order of possibility to the order of actual-ity, it is much more difficult to reach final conclusions.

1. We almost always lack the elements of appreciation necessary to judge the essentially supernatural character of the experiences of the mystics

outside the Church. Only the Church could speak with authority on these cases.

2. In order to have even a serious probability, we would be obliged to include among the texts of these mystics outside the Church not only those that have the ring of Christian mysticism but also those that are clearly pantheistic in character, or quietistic, or even erotic, as is the case of many such mystics.

If we were that exacting, the seriously probable cases of true mysti-cism in these environments would in all likelihood be far fewer and would perhaps be reduced for the most part to short-lived attempts. Let us not forget what St. John of the Cross says even of the most restricted Catholic circles. “God does not raise up to contemplation properly so-called all who desire to attain it by following the way of the spirit. He does not take even half of them.” “Why do they not reach this lofty state? . . . [Many souls], as soon as God tests them, flee suffering and refuse to bear the slightest dryness and mor-tification.” If this is true within the visible Church, how much truer must it be on the outside!

3. We should exercise the greatest restraint in judging the numerous supposed mystics who are at least tainted by pantheistic monism. No doubt, for the good of souls “of good will” in the scriptural sense, God can make use of natural pre-mysticism, just as He can make use of poetry. St. Paul did this in his discourse before the Areopagus: “In Him we live, and move, and are; as some also of your own poets said: For we are also His offspring.” But we do not know to what extent God makes use of these natural flowers for the good of souls.

4. Among the supposed mystics to be excluded would be particu-larly those who, like the theosophists, wish to possess final beatitude through their natural powers only. For this calls to mind the sin of the angel as described by St. Thomas far more than true mysticism.

5. All things considered, it seems very probable that the natural contemplation so dear to Plotinus and Proclus occurred rather fre-quently.

Plotinus speaks several times of ecstasy, and says that in order to be united to the first principle we must come to absolute simplicity, and go beyond all reasoning and all multiplicity: “We must wait in silence for the divine light to appear to us, just as the eye turned toward the horizon awaits the rising of the sun over the ocean. . . Thought can only raise us little by little to the height from which it is possible to discover God. It is like the

wave that carries us and lifts us up as it swells, so that suddenly from its crest we are able to see." Lofty as this contemplation may be, Plotinus considers it natural, for our nature proceeds from the One through emanation. It is in the One that we exist and subsist. In this form of pantheism as in the others, we can truthfully say of our nature what Christian doctrine says of grace: it is already a participation in divine nature.

Proclus also says: "The soul that makes an act of intelligence knows itself as well as all contingent beings. But when it rises above intelligence, it is ignorant of itself and also of the contingents. Uniting itself with the One, it finds joy in rest, closed to all knowledge, wordless and intrinsically silent."

We should remember what Ruysbroeck and Tauler say concerning this natural contemplation. The latter says: "If one were to look upon this way [of high contemplation] with abusive liberty and false light, this would be . . . most regrettable. . . . The way that leads to this end must pass by the adorable life and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . We must pass through this beautiful door by doing violence to nature, by practicing virtue with humility, gentleness, and patience. Know this in truth: he who does not follow this path will lose his way." Of course these words were addressed to Christians, but they show the immense difference between supernatural contemplation and that of Plotinus and Proclus.

In conclusion, let us call to mind the reasons why true mysticism, although it is the normal blossoming of the life of grace, is, like perfect docility to the Holy Ghost, rare even in the visible Church. It is rare even in the religious orders, in spite of the assistance of the sacraments and in particular of daily Holy Communion. The mystical life is a normal development of the life of grace; but it is a lofty summit. Rarely do souls go beyond the fourth mansion, or prayer of quietude. The reason for this is that the mystical life ordinarily requires purity of heart, simplicity of mind, true humility, love of recollection, perseverance in prayer, fervent charity, all of which are attainable when one makes the best use possible of the great means the Church provides; the sacraments, Holy Communion, and when one allows oneself to be molded by the liturgy and the supernatural study of sacred doctrine. This combination of conditions is not often realized even among Catholics, and therefore it is even less frequent among those who do not belong visibly to the Church.

We do not deny in the least that a pagan can receive sufficient graces that permit him, if he does not resist them, to arrive at an infused faith in the truths absolutely necessary for salvation and for charity. Yet it may be that the “experience of the divine” which we may think we notice in several mystics outside the Church is more often than not a sort of natural pre-mysticism that is profoundly dif-ferent from the true, essentially supernatural mysticism. If there are certain attempts to attain the latter, these seem to be of short duration or fail to go beyond the lower degrees of quasi-experimental knowledge of God.

This truth can be more clearly understood when these attempts at reaching God are compared with the spirit and the life of the saints, for instance, with what St. Paul says of the life of the apostles: “In all things let us exhibit ourselves as the ministers of God, . . . as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet known; as dying, and behold we live; . . . as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as needy, yet enriching many; as having nothing, and possessing all things.” This is true mysticism and the signs that accompany it.

We believe this solution is at once sound enough to fulfill the requirements of the principles and yet flexible enough to respect the different modes by which divine grace acts on men’s souls. It avoids the two errors we pointed out at the beginning of this chapter: natu-ralism and narrow pseudo-supernaturalism like that of the Jansenists. On the one hand it maintains that it is a great grace to be born into the Catholic Church. On the other, it strongly affirms that God never commands the impossible and that He makes it possible for all adults to accomplish the precepts they are called on to obey.

An understanding of the deficiencies of the mystics outside the Church should help those who, according to the expression of St. Paul, are groping for God to find the true life and who can through the grace of Christ, but only through His grace, persevere in it until death.

Let us not forget that at the outset of the twentieth century Leo XIII consecrated the entire human race to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The effects of this grace should continue to increase with each passing year.

XXXII

EPILOGUE

The Three Births of the Word

THE synthesis of the revelation relating to the Word made flesh is to be found in the Prologue of St. John's Gospel. It is concerned with the three births of the Word which are celebrated each year by the three Masses on Christmas day: His eternal birth, His temporal birth according to the flesh at Bethlehem, and His spiritual birth in the souls of men.

The eternal birth of the Word is clearly expressed in the first and last verses of the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . No man hath seen God at any time: The only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.

These words unequivocally affirm the distinction between the Word (the Son of God) and the Father, and also the divinity of the Word, consubstantial with the Father.

The distinction between these two divine persons is unmistakable from the declaration that "the Word was with God." No one is with himself or in himself. And if there were any doubt whether the expression "the Word" designates a person, this doubt would be re-moved by verse 18 at the end of the Prologue: "No man hath seen God at any time: the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." The entire Prologue makes it clear that the only-begotten Son is the Word of God made flesh. The expression "who is in the bosom of the Father" explains the words of the first verse, "the Word was with God."

It is evident also that the only-begotten Son is not the name of a divine attribute but the name of a person, as is the name "Father." Finally, these two persons are really distinct: The Father is not the Son, for he who begets is not he who is begotten. No one begets himself.

On the other hand, we cannot say: God is not His intelligence, His wisdom, His love. For He is indeed His intelligence, He is wisdom itself, love itself. These essential attributes are absolutely identified with His essence. Yet the Father is not the Son. There is between them a polarity of relationship that does not exist between each of them and the divine essence.

However, the Prologue makes it perfectly clear that the Word is consubstantial with the Father, since it says: “The Word was God” In the Greek “the Word” is clearly the subject of this proposition, as well as of the preceding and following ones. And it is certain that the word “God” is used there in the same full sense as in the preceding proposition, “the Word was with God,” and as in the following one, “the same was in the beginning with God.”

Moreover, the following verses show that the Word, together with the Father, is the Creator, the author of natural and supernatural life: “All things were made by Him: and without Him was made nothing that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.”

These last words refer especially to the supernatural light needed for believing the truths of faith essential to salvation.

The first and last verses of this Prologue thus show us the profound meaning of the words of psalm 2:7: “The Lord hath said to Me: Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee,” and of psalm 109:1-3: “The Lord said to my Lord: Sit thou at My right hand: . . . in the brightness of the saints: from the womb before the day star I begot Thee.” We can also grasp a little better what the Holy Ghost wished to express when He inspired the author of the Book of Wisdom: “[Wisdom] is a vapor of the power of God, and a certain pure emanation of the glory of the almighty God:. . . for she is the brightness of eternal light: and the unspotted mirror of God’s majesty, and the image of His goodness.”

This prologue, in verse 14, speaks with equal clearness of the temporal birth of the Word: “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we saw His glory, the glory as it were of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth.”

This temporal birth according to the flesh was announced by the prophet Micheas: “And thou, Bethlehem Ephrata, art a little one among the thousands of Juda: out of thee shall He come forth unto me that is to be the

ruler in Israel: and His going forth is from the beginning, from the days of eternity . . . for now shall He be magnified even to the ends of the earth."

It is the fulfillment of Isaias' prophecy: "For a child is born to us, and a Son is given to us, and the government is upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, God the Mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of Peace. . . . And there shall be no end of peace"

Finally, this prologue speaks to us of the spiritual birth of the Word, living in the Church which is His mystical body, in souls of good will: "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, He gave them power to be made the sons of God, to them that believe in His name. Who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

He gave them power to be sons of God by adoption, as He is the Son of God by nature. Our sonship is an image of His, as verse 16 makes clear: "And of His fullness we all have received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses; grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

Jesus Himself has said: "If anyone love Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and will make Our abode with him." He also said: "If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you forever."

The Word, the Son of God, together with the Father and the Holy Ghost, dwells in every soul in the state of grace on earth, in purgatory, and in heaven. That is, He dwells in the souls of all the just. However, His sacred humanity does not dwell within the souls of the just, but it exerts a continual influence on them, for it is the instrument always united to Divinity that communicates to us all the sacramental and extra-sacramental graces that Jesus merited for us during His life on earth and particularly on the cross. Therefore we can speak of a spiritual birth of the Word in men's souls, or of a silent coming of the Word into souls, as He came into the souls of the shepherds at Bethlehem. It is this silent coming that is honored by one of the three Christmas Masses. In this sense also St. Paul writes: "For in Christ Jesus, by the gospel, I have begotten you," in order to incorporate you into Him, so that you may be in Him and He in you.

We can never thank God enough for the realization of the mystery of the redemptive Incarnation. Often, when we enter a church, we ask for a spiritual or temporal grace for ourselves or for those we love, and

sometimes we thank God for this or that particular blessing. Let us not fail to thank Him for the gift of gifts, the blessing which since the fall of man is the source of all other blessings, namely, the coming of the Savior. As St. Paul says to the Colossians: “All whatever you do in word or in work, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him” for all the blessings that have come to us and that continue to come to us daily through His Son. “To Him in glory forever and ever.”

The purpose of these pages is to invite souls to the contemplation of the mystery of Christ, who has deigned to become our spiritual food in the Eucharist. It would be difficult to express this contempla-tion more beautifully than in the words of the great doxology, the Gloria, which is sometimes recited mechanically at Mass, but which delights the souls of contemplatives by the fullness of its meaning. The Liber Pontificalis says that Pope Telesphorus at the beginning of the second century (A.D. 128-139) commanded that this Gloria in excelsis be recited on the day of Christ’s Nativity. When God inspired its author He knew that this song of praise would be sung at Mass through the centuries and would be the joy of the greatest believers.

GLORY TO GOD

Glory to God in the highest. And on earth peace to men of good will.

THE FATHER

We praise Thee. We bless Thee. We adore Thee. We glorify Thee. We give thanks to Thee for Thy great glory. O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father almighty.

THE SON

O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ. O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father. Thou who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. Thou who takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayer. Thou who sittest at the right hand of the Father, have mercy upon us. For Thou only art holy. Thou only art the Lord. Thou only, O Jesus Christ, art most high,

With the Holy Ghost, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Let us often contemplate in this Gloria the immense love that God has for us. God speaks. We must answer Him. Let us bear in mind, as St. John of the Cross recommends, that in the evening of our lives we shall be judged by love.

PREDESTINATION

REVEREND REGINALD GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE O.P.

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PREDESTINATION

PREFACE

IN two works published some years ago, we discussed the fundamentals of the teaching on predestination, but we did not come directly to grips with this famous question, and a separate study of it was felt necessary. The opportunity presented itself when we had to write on Predestination, Providence, and Premotion for the Dictionnaire de théologie, several articles that had previously been published on these problems in different, reviews. The purpose of the present work is to give substantially and in compact form the result of those labors. St. Augustine's phrase, "The predestination of the saints," reminds us that predestination to grace alone, which does not in fact bring us to eternal life, is not in the true sense predestination, since this latter includes the gift of final perseverance.

In the first part of this book our studies will be concerned with the meaning of predestination according to Scripture and the teaching of the Church. Then we shall consider the principal difficulties of the problem, the method to be followed, the classification of the theological systems, and the stand taken by St. Augustine.

In the second part we shall give the history of the various solutions of the great problem, insisting upon the teaching of St. Thomas, which we shall compare with the tentative solutions proposed by theologians of later date, and especially with the solutions proposed by the post-Tridentine theologians.

In the third part we shall treat of grace, especially of efficacious grace, by which the effects of predestination are realized in this life. These are vocation, justification, and merit. We shall make a special study of efficacious grace in its relation to sufficient grace that is offered and even given to all.

The scope of this book from beginning to end is the reconciliation of the two principles of divine predilection and possible salvation for all. On the one hand, "no one thing would be better than another, if God did not will greater good for one than for another." On the other hand, God never

commands what is impossible, but makes it possible for all who have come to the use of reason to fulfill the precepts that are of obligation, at the time they are of obligation, when and as these are known by them.

The intimate reconciliation of these two principles is beyond our power of perception. Before our admission to the beatific vision, this would be impossible for any created intellect, either angelic or human. But we must attach equal importance to both principles. They counteract each other, and the history of theology as well as a thorough knowledge of the teaching of St. Thomas, enables us to estimate each principle at its true value, so that we vaguely foresee how infinite mercy, justice, and sovereign liberty are intimately reconciled in the eminence of the Deity, or of the intimate life of God.

It will serve a useful purpose to study these great questions again at the present time, all the more so as people today very often are not aware of the reality and value of divine grace; for without it we can do nothing in the way of saving our souls. The eternal reality of the problem studied in these pages becomes more strikingly evident from the light thrown on it by the following reflections taken from the fine book recently published by a friend of ours. “The mystery of the incarnation,” says St. Thomas, “is considered as a condescension of the fullness of the Godhead into human nature rather than as the promotion of human nature already existing, as it were, to the Godhead.”

“There are thus two movements in the Christian world. The movement by which it ascends to God is but the result of the movement by which God descends into it, and this is the first movement. And the more it yields to this movement by which God gives Himself to it, the more the movement is awakened in it by which it gives itself to God. For grace has a vivifying effect, and is not, as Luther thought, a mantle cast over a dead person. The creature, profoundly stirred to act, arises from sleep and becomes all vigilance and activity. In its final stage this activity is one of pre-eminence, of loving contemplation, and of superabundance. But at the same time it is also a moral, ascetic, practical, and militant activity. . . .

“A time came when man took this second movement for the first. In the age of anthropocentric humanism, which is Pelagianism in action, man forgot that God is the first Mover in the act of love, as He is the first Cause of being. Man acted as if the creature owed its advancement to itself and not to the operation of the divine plenitude in it. When these conditions

prevailed, the Christian world, laboring under the triple ferment of the Renaissance, of rationalism, and of its contrary Jansenist or Protestant tendency (which, as it seeks to nullify man's efforts as regards the supernatural, in the same degree seeks to exalt them in the natural order), was inevitably doomed to disintegration.

"Even though as Christians we remain truly loyal and obedient to all that has been revealed, since grace is something hidden the movement by which we ascend to God, that is, our indispensable effort to attain spiritual perfection, may veil from our eyes the descending movement and the gift of uncreated love in us. Then is struck a discordant note, increasing in volume, between life as we Christians should live it and our consciousness and interpretation of it. Religion tends to become less and less existential; it is swept away by appearances, and we live but a superficial life. We shall always believe in grace, but we shall act as if it were but the pediment of an edifice, and as if, even without it, on the chance supposition that it did not operate, things would still be the same, because of precautions taken by human aids and conditions deemed to be sufficient. When such periods occur, which act as counter currents to grace, should we be astonished at their anemia?

"To be sure, the Middle Ages were not such a period. The enormous activity manifested during that period, though it may deceive the historian, did not deceive the period itself. The Middle Ages knew that this great and constructive work was but the mask cloaking an invisible mystery of love and humility. Those ages obeyed the law of the incarnation, which continued to accomplish its effects in them. . . . Medieval Christianity knew in a practical way that the Word came down and was made flesh, that the Holy Spirit, following this movement, also comes down. Medieval Christianity opened the world of knowledge to the stream which coursed through it gradually. Thus the world was enabled to know the order of wisdom, and for a time it experienced in itself the realization of the peaceful encounter and harmony of the three wisdoms: the infused, the theological, and the metaphysical."

We should like to set forth here the nature of the union of these three wisdoms, as described by St. Thomas apropos of one of the greatest problems, of this most exalted part of divine providence—predestination.

When we consider the disorder in Europe at the present time, and when we think of what has been happening in Russia and in Mexico for the past

several years and of what has happened in Spain, it is good to recall our Lord's words about predestination, words that will infallibly be fulfilled in spite of all difficulties: "My sheep hear My voice. . . . I give them life everlasting, and they shall not perish for ever. . . . No one can snatch them out of the hand of My Father." It occurs also at an appropriate time for us to remember that St. Paul sees in predestination a great motive for hope, when he writes: "We know that to them that love God all things work together unto good, to such as according to His purpose are called to be saints. For whom He foreknew He also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son. . . . And whom He predestinated, them He also called . . . justified . . . and glorified." St. Paul also says: "Blessed be God . . . who hath blessed us in heavenly places. As He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and unspotted in His sight . . . unto the praise of the glory of His grace, in which He hath graced us in His beloved Son."

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

WITH his accustomed keenness of penetration and precision of thought, Father Garrigou-Lagrange has discussed this engrossing problem of predestination. It is more, of course, than a problem; it is one of the mysteries of revelation. For this reason there must ever remain points about it that are obscure.

It would be absurd for anyone to expect that in this work all difficulties are removed, and that everything is explained or proved by reason. As Father Garrigou-Lagrange so wisely points out, it is only when, by God's grace, we shall be admitted to the beatific vision, that we shall see how infinite justice, mercy, and goodness are intimately reconciled in the eminence of the Deity. Predestination is a subject that closely concerns these divine attributes.

The author wrote this work primarily for students of theology. Gradually and carefully he has traced for us the development of thought on this subject. Beginning with the decisions of the Church in the earliest councils, continuing with the statements of the Church Fathers, and ending with the views of the leading theologians, especially of St. Thomas Aquinas, we have presented to us in this work a body of doctrine that is a guide for every student and diligent inquirer in the search for truth. In this book a sincere and, I believe, successful effort has been made to give the true and unadulterated doctrine of St. Thomas. To interpret aright the mind of the Angelic Doctor is not always an easy matter, as is evident from the history of the conflicting opinions even among the Thomists. The various errors and heresies on this subject of predestination have been clearly set forth and condemned on the authority of the Church without the slightest hesitation.

In conclusion I wish to express my thanks and deep appreciation to the Reverend Newton Thompson, S.T.D., for his careful revision of the manuscript and his valuable suggestions.

Predestination is a translation of La predestination des saints et la grace, by Rev. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, published by Desclee, De Brouwer &

Cie, Bruges, Belgium.

PART I

THE TEACHING OF THE CHURCH AND THE THEOLOGICAL SYSTEMS

In the first part we shall direct attention first to the idea of predestination as presented to us in the Scripture. Then we shall inspect the declarations of the Church formulated on the occasion of conflicting heresies. Thus we shall perceive more clearly the point at issue and what precisely constitutes the chief difficulty of the problem. Then there will be a classification of the various theological opinions to be explained in the course of this work. At the end of this first part we shall remind our readers of the stand taken by St. Augustine and his first disciples, since this exerted a very profound influence on the whole of medieval theology.

CHAPTER I

THE SIGNIFICANCE AND REALITY OF PREDESTINATION ACCORDING TO SCRIPTURE

THE Gospel is the good tidings of the redemption of the human race which must be preached to all, for our Savior said: “Going therefore, teach ye all nations: baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world.” St. Paul says in like manner: “God will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowl-edge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a redemption for all.”

God never commands what is impossible and He makes the fulfillment of His precepts really possible for all, both when they are of obligation and according as they are known. However, there are souls that through their own fault are lost; and souls, at times, that have enjoyed a close intimacy with the Savior, as was the case with the “son of perdition.” There are others, the elect, who will infallibly be saved. Among these are children who die shortly after being baptized, and adults who, by divine grace, not only can observe the commandments, but actually do so and obtain the gift of final perseverance. Jesus in His sacerdotal prayer said to His Father: “Those whom Thou gavest Me have I kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition, that the Scripture may be fulfilled.” Speaking in more general terms, Jesus says again: “My sheep hear My voice. And I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them life everlasting: and they shall not perish for ever. And no man shall pluck them out of My hand. That which My Father hath given Me is greater than all, and no one can snatch

them out of the hand of My Father. I and the Father are one." There are elect chosen by God from all eternity. Jesus spoke of them on several occasions. Once He said: "Many are called, but few are chosen." He announced the destruction of Jerusalem, the distress of those times of trial, and He added: "Unless those days had been shortened, no flesh should be saved; but for the sake of the elect those days shall be shortened."

The precise meaning of these utterances of our Savior are made known to us by what St. Paul tells us about predestination, by which God directs and brings the elect infallibly to eternal life. In one of his epistles we read: "What hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?" It is but the comment on the words of the Master, who said: "Without Me you can do nothing." St. Paul also says: "For it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will." When writing to the Ephesians, he speaks explicitly about predestination. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," he says, "who hath blessed us with spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. As He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and unspotted in His sight in charity. Who hath predestinated us unto the adoption of children through Jesus Christ unto Himself, according to the purpose of His will. Unto the praise and glory of His grace, in which He hath graced us in His beloved Son." Again, with more clarity of precision, he writes: "We know that to them that love God all things work together unto good: to such as according to His purpose are called to be saints, For whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn amongst many brethren. And whom He predestinated, them He also called. And whom He called, them He also justified. And whom He justified, them He also glorified."

With St. Augustine, St. Thomas, and St. Bellarmine, we must remark that in this last text the words, "whom He foreknew, He also predestinated," do not refer to the divine foreknowledge of meritorious acts. Nowhere in St. Paul do we find any foundation for this interpretation, and it would contradict several of his texts, especially this one and the ones we are about to cite. The meaning is: "those whom God foreknew, looking favorably upon them," which is a frequent acceptation of the verb "to know" in the Bible, as in the text: "God has not cast away His people which He foreknew." This exegesis of St. Augustine, St. Thomas, and St. Robert

Bellarmine is upheld at the present day by Lagrange, Allo, Zahn, Julicher, and others."

In the Epistle to the Romans (chaps. 9-12), St. Paul in plain terms also sets forth God's sovereign independence in the dispensation of His graces. The Jews, who were the chosen people, are rejected because of their unbelief, and salvation is announced to the Gentiles as a result of Israel's obduracy. The Apostle prophesies, however, the final conversion and salvation of the Jews, and he formulates the principle of predilection, which is applied to nations and individuals: "What shall we say then? Is there injustice with God? God forbid! For He saith to Moses: I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy. And I will show mercy to whom I will show mercy. So then it is not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy."

Hence the Apostle's conclusion: "O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are His judgments, and how unsearchable His ways! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been His counsellor? Or who hath first given to Him, and recompense shall be made him? For of Him and by Him and in Him are all things. To Him be glory for ever. Amen."

We shall return later on to a discussion of the literal meaning and scope of these texts, when we present the scriptural background for the teaching of St. Thomas. It suffices for the present to point out with the Thomists and St. Robert Bellarmine, what Scripture has to say about the gratuitousness of predestination to eternal life. Such is the teaching of Scripture, which declares three indisputable things on this point, namely: (1) God has chosen certain persons to constitute the elect. (2) He has caused this election to be efficacious so that they will infallibly get to heaven: "My sheep shall not perish for ever. And no man shall pluck them out of My hand." "Whom He predestinated, them He also called. And whom He called, them He also justified. And whom He justified, them He also glorified." (3) God's choice of the elect was entirely gratuitous and previous to any consideration of foreseen merits: "Fear not little flock, for it hath pleased your Father to give you a kingdom." "You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you; and have appointed you, that you should go and should bring forth fruit and your fruit should remain." "Even so then, at this present time also, there is a remnant saved according to the election of grace. And if by grace, it is not now by works, otherwise grace is no more grace." "As He chose us in Him

before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy," and not because we were so, or because He foresaw that we would be so by our own efforts. "For whom He foreknew (in His benevolence), He also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son."

From all these passages of Scripture, St. Augustine formulated this classical definition: "Predestination is the foreknowledge and preparedness on God's part to bestow the favors by which all those are saved who are to be saved." St. Augustine is still more explicit on this point when he writes: "God already knew, when He predestined, what He must do to bring His elect infallibly to eternal life."

CHAPTER II

THE TEACHING OF THE CHURCH

THE teaching of the Church on this subject was formulated on the one hand against Pelagianism, and on the other against predestinarianism, Protestantism, and Jansenism.

DECLARATIONS OF THE CHURCH AGAINST PELAGIANISM AND SEMIPELAGIANISM

The meaning and scope of the declarations of the Church against Pelagianism and Semipelagianism are evident, if we bear in mind the principles of these condemned doctrines and the bearing they have on predestination.

1) The Pelagians held that grace is not necessary for the observance of the precepts of the Christian law, but merely for greater facility in their observance, and that by our naturally good works we may merit the first grace. Hence they said the foreknowledge of good works, whether natural or supernatural, is the cause of predestination. Pelagianism was first condemned in the two councils of Carthage and Milevi (416). It was afterward condemned in the Council of Carthage held in 418, but the canons of this council have been assigned by mistake to the Second Council of Milevi. Canon 6 especially has in mind this false teaching, that "without grace we can keep the commandments . . . and that grace is not necessary except for making it easier to keep them."

2) The Semipelagians, as we see from the letters of SS. Prosper and Hilary to St. Augustine, admitted: (1) that man does not need grace for that beginning of faith and good will spoken of as the "beginning of salvation," and that he can persevere until death without any special help; (2) that God wills equally the salvation of all, although special graces are granted to some privileged souls; (3) consequently predes-tination is identical with the

foreknowledge of the beginning of salvation and of merits by which man perseveres in doing good without any special help; negative reprobation is identical with the foreknowledge of demerits. Thus predestination and negative reprobation follow human election, whether this be good or bad.

Such an interpretation eliminates the element of mystery in predestination spoken of by St. Paul. God is not the author but merely the spectator of that which distinguishes the elect from the rest of mankind. The elect are not loved and helped more by God.

Concerning children who die before the age of reason, the Semipelagians said that God predestines or reprobates them, foreseeing the good or bad acts they would have performed if they had lived longer. That means a foreknowledge of the conditionally free acts of the future or of the futuribilia, previous to any divine decree. This reminds us of the theory of the scientia media, which was proposed later by Molina. The opponents of this doctrine reply that such an interpretation would mean that children are marked for reprobation on account of sins they did not commit.

Against these principles, St. Augustine, especially in his writings toward the end of his life, shows from the testimony of Holy Scripture that: (1) man cannot, without a special and gratuitous grace, have the "beginning of salvation," and that he cannot persevere until the end without a special and gratuitous grace; (2) that the elect, as their name indicates, are loved more and helped more, and that the divine election is therefore previous to foreseen merits, which are the result of grace; (3) that God does not will equally the salvation of all.

The Council of Orange (529), in condemning Semipelagianism, took many of its formulas from the writings of St. Augustine and St. Prosper. All historians agree that it disapproved of the Semipelagian denials of the gratuitousness of grace and of its necessity for the beginning of salvation and for final perseverance.

That is the minimum and it is admitted by all. But many historians and theologians, among whom are the Thomists and Augustinians, considering the obvious sense of the terms employed by the Second Council of Orange and of the various statements of St. Paul, see therein an additional affirmation of the intrinsic efficacy of grace, presupposed by the principle of predilection.

We shall return to this point. But in any case, from this minimum admitted by all we get three propositions to which all Catholic theologians

subscribe. They are: (l) Predestination to the first grace is not because God foresaw our naturally good works, nor is the beginning of salutary acts due to natural causes; (2) predestination to glory is not because God foresaw we would continue in the performance of supernaturally meritorious acts apart from the special gift of final perseverance; (3) complete predestination, in so far as it comprises the whole series of graces from the first up to glorification, is gratuitous or previous to foreseen merits. These three propositions are admitted by all Catholic theologians. But Thomists and Augustinians on the one hand, and Molinists and congruists on the other, differ in their interpretation of them.

a) The first proposition which concerns the beginning of salvation is understood by Molina, in accordance with his

principle, as meaning that "whenever the free will by its own natural powers attempts to do what it can, God bestows the prevenient grace, on account of Christ's merits." The Thomists and Augustinians understand this proposition in a different sense, so that it reads: To the man who does what he can with the help of actual grace, God does not refuse habitual grace. This safeguards much better the gratuity of both actual and habitual graces, as defined by the Council of Orange.

(b) The second proposition, which concerns final perseverance, is understood by Molinists and congruists as meaning that the actual grace of final perseverance is extrinsically efficacious inasmuch as our consent is foreseen by means of the scientia media. On the contrary, Thomists and Augustinians understand this grace to be intrinsically efficacious; and this seems to be far more in agreement with the tenor of canon ten of the Council of Orange which reads: "God's help is always to be sought even for the regenerated and holy, that they may come to a happy end, or that they may continue in the performance of good works." This canon summarizes the teaching of St. Prosper. Now St. Prosper follows St. Augustine, who considers the great grace of final perseverance as belonging properly to the elect, and as efficacious of itself. "It is a grace," he says, "that is spurned by no one whose heart is hardened, and it is therefore given that the hardness of heart may first be eliminated." Molina, admitting his departure from the teaching of St. Augustine, in opposition to him says: "It may happen that two persons receive in an equal degree the interior grace of vocation; one of them of his own free will is converted, and the other remains an infidel. It may even happen that one who receives a far greater prevenient grace when

called, of his own free will is not con-verted, and another, who receives a far less grace, is converted." It seems difficult to reconcile this with what the Council of Trent affirms of the great gift of final perseverance, stating that it is a "gift which cannot be obtained from any other than from Him who is able to establish him who standeth that he stand perseveringly, and to restore him who falleth." All these expressions seem to denote a grace that is efficacious of itself and not because of our foreseen consent. The Council of Trent, too, calls this grace "that great and special gift of final perseverance." It is hard to see how this can finally be construed as a case of being placed in favorable circumstances in which God foresaw that of two persons who receive equal help from Him, one would persevere, and the other would not. Is not any devaluation of God's gift a corresponding devaluation of the mystery?

The Council of Trent also says: "No one, moreover, so long as he is in this mortal life, ought so far to presume as regards the secret mystery of divine predestination as to determine for certain that he is assuredly among the number of the predestined; as if it were true that he who is justified either cannot sin any more, or, if he do sin, that he ought to promise himself an assured repentance. For except by special revelation it cannot be known whom God hath chosen unto Himself."

In favor of the Augustinian and Thomist doctrine, the following argument has also in all fairness been brought forward that, according to the Council of Trent, the grace of final perseverance cannot be merited, at least de condigno; for the council states that the just man can merit eternal life, "provided he die in the state of grace." Now this latter cannot be merited, for the state of grace and continuation in the same, since these are the principle of merit, cannot be merited. From this it follows that predestination to the grace of final perseverance, by which one is ultimately disposed for heavenly glory, is not because of foreseen merits. Therefore predestination to heavenly glory, which is included in the former, is also gratuitous.

If then we wish to affirm that predestination to heavenly glory is the result of foreseen merits, we must add what would seem to nullify this affirmation and say: provided that God gratuitously maintains us in the possession of these merits until death. As a matter of fact, Molina says, true to his principle -and it is the indispensable minimum—provided that God, according to His entirely gratuitous good pleasure, wills to place man in

those circumstances in which He foresees by His scientia media that this man will persevere. From this and from his pact theory concerning the beginning of salvation, Molinism avoids Semipelagianism; the Thomists, however, think it seems to depreciate the first grace and that great and special gift of final perseverance.

c) The third proposition. In this last case we are concerned with complete predestination, which includes the whole series of graces. All theologians are unanimous in saying against the Semipelagians, that this is gratuitous or previous to foreseen merits. Molina admits it, but he adds: “To the foreknowledge which is included in predestination on the part of the intellect there is attached the condition of the use of free will without which there would have been no preordaining by God.” Contrary to this, Augustinians and Thomists understand complete predestination as it is explained by St. Thomas: “It is impossible that the whole of the effect of predestination in general should have any cause as coming from us; because whatsoever is in man disposing him toward salvation, is all included under the effect of predestination; even the preparation for grace.” Thus even the free determination disposing one toward salvation is entirely included in the effect of predestination. “There is no distinction,” says St. Thomas, “between what flows from free will, and what is of predestination; as there is no distinction between what flows from a secondary cause and from a first cause.”

It is clear that this way of interpreting complete predestination presupposes the intrinsic efficacy of the divine decrees and of grace. It also includes, as a natural consequence, the absolute validity of the principle of predilection; whereas these are not presupposed in the interpretation given by Molinists and congruists. Now St. Thomas is apparently persuaded that the proposition “whatsoever is in man disposing him toward salvation, is all included under the effect of pre-destination,” as well as the intrinsic efficacy of grace and the principle of predilection express the teaching of St. Augustine and of the Second Council of Orange. We shall leave this for the reader to judge, and all that we shall do is to quote the principal canons of this council.

The whole process of salvation and each of its salutary acts, with all the goodness in them, is attributed to God by the council. Canon 9 reads: “It is God’s gift when we think aright and restrain ourselves from walking in the path of error and corruption. As often as we do good, it is God who works

in us and with us enabling us to act." This canon is a recapitulation of Prosper's twenty-second sentence, which repeats the teaching of St. Augustine.

It concerns efficacious grace by which we not only can but actually do what is right. The fact that God operates in us, enabling us to act, is verified in every free act disposing us to salvation. We cannot at all see how this free determination disposing us to salvation, as a free determination, should escape the divine causality. The obvious sense of the text is, that God works in us and with us, as St. Paul says: "It is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish." There is a grace that is efficacious in this sense that it is effective of the act, although it does not exclude our co-operation, but in a mysterious way starts it. Canon twelve formulates the principle of predilection: "God so loves us, as we shall be by the gift of His grace, not as we are by our own merit." Taken from Prosper's fifty-sixth sentence, it follows immediately from this that God so much the more loves us, as we shall be better by the gift of His grace. In other words, no one would be better than another, if he were not loved more by God. In the quotation of this canon, there is reference in the margin to the "Indiculus," on the Grace of God, where it is said: "There is no other way by which anyone is pleasing to God except by what He Himself has bestowed." Therefore, one is not more pleasing to God than another, without having received more from Him. If, on the contrary, grace became efficacious in actu secundo by our consent, then it would follow that of two men who received equal help, one would become better, and this without having been loved more, helped more, or having received more from God. This is not what the Council of Orange declares, or the "Indiculus" on grace, which latter is a collection of the declarations of the Roman Church, compiled in all probability by the future pope St. Leo I. This collection of declarations by the Church met with universal reception about the year 500. If it be so, how is it possible for the salutary act, in so far as it is a free determination, not to depend upon the efficacy of grace, but to be the cause of this efficacy?

There are still other ways in which the Council of Orange has expressed the principle of predilection. Canon sixteen reads: "Let no one glory in what he may seem to have, as if he had not received it." And canon twenty states: "God does many good things in man, which man does not accomplish; but there is no good work done by man which God has not assisted him to do."

Taken from St. Augustine and the three hundred and twelfth of Prosper's sentences, these canons point out that all good comes from God either as the author of nature or of grace; hence it is only through having received more from God that one is better than another. This is also the meaning of canon twenty-two, which reads: "No man can claim as his own anything except lying and sin. If a man hath anything of truth and righteousness it is from that fountain which it behoves us to thirst after in this desert that being, so to speak, refreshed with some of its drops we may not faint by the way." This canon which is taken from the writings of St. Augustine, speaks of God as the author of good things both in the order of nature and of grace; and this is more clearly expressed in canon nineteen. Hence it does not follow that all the works of infidels are sins. Some of them are morally good in the natural order, such as paying one's debts and providing for the support of one's children. But even this natural goodness comes from God, who is the author of all good; and it is not independently of Him that such a naturally good act is performed by this particular man and not by that other, who is permitted to act contrariwise and sin.

All these canons of the Council of Orange, which are taken from the writings of St. Augustine or of St. Prosper show that the least we may say is what H. Leclercq affirms in his French translation of Hefele's work. He writes: "What seems to be an undeniable fact is, that the Church adopted (in the Second Council of Orange) the Augustinian theory in its defense of the fundamental principles against the Pelagians and Semipeiagians, of original sin, of the necessity and gratuitousness of grace, and of our absolute dependence upon God for every salutary act." There is no reason therefore to be astonished that Augustinians and Thomists detected from the obvious sense of the terms of this council the principle of predilection, this principle which presupposes the intrinsic efficacy of grace. They also detect this principle in the epistles of St. Paul, for he says: "It is God who worketh in you, according to His good will. For who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received?

Is it not this that the Semipelagians denied in saying that God wills to save equally all men and that He is not the author but the onlooker of what distinguishes the just from the impious, and the elect from the rest of mankind?

The declarations of the Church in the Council of Orange express one aspect of the great mystery with which we are concerned; the other is presented to us by what the Church taught first of all against predestinarianism, and then against Calvinism, Bajanism, and Jansenism.

1) In the fifth century. Lucidus, a priest of the Catholic Church who was accused of having taught predestinarianism or predestination to evil, made a retractation of his teaching in the Council of Arles, which was held in the year 473. His opinion, as formulated by the council, reads as follows: “That Christ the Lord, our Savior, did not die for the salvation of all mankind; . . . that God’s foreknowledge forcibly impels man to everlasting death, or that those who are lost, are lost by God’s will. . . . Likewise I reject the opinion of one who says that some are destined to everlasting death and others are predestined to everlasting life.” In his retraction, Lucidus affirmed that he who is lost could have been saved. We must beware of attaching too much importance to the decisions made against Lucidus. They are the result, it has been said, of an anti-Augustinian environment.

2) In the ninth century. As for the controversies of the ninth century in connection with predestination, we must by all means quote the decisions of the councils of Quierzy (853), Valence (855), Langres, Toul, and finally Thuzey. From these divers texts it follows: (1) that God wills in a certain way to save all men; (2) that there is no such thing as predestination to evil, but that God decreed from all eternity to inflict the penalty of damnation for the sin of final impenitence, a sin which He foresaw and in no way caused but merely permitted.

From the canons of the above-mentioned councils we see the meaning and scope of these two propositions. Predestination to evil is clearly excluded in the first canon of Quierzy. As for predestination to eternal life, it is viewed as a grace, a special mercy as regards the elect whom God by His grace has predestined to life, and to eternal life. The second canon reads: “Our will, aided by prevenient grace and concomitant is free to do what is good; and our will, forsaken by grace, is free to do what is evil.” These latter words indicate that sin does not happen without God’s permission, who justly allows it to happen in one, while mercifully preserving another from it. This truth is brought out more clearly in the following canon, and what is of essential significance is that portion of it which states: “Almighty God wills without exception, all men to be saved, though not all are saved. That some are saved, however, is the gift of Him

who saves; if some perish, it is the fault of them that perish." This canon is taken from the writings of St. Prosper. From this third canon of Quierzy we see that, if the will to save is universal, it is not equally so for all, as the Pelagians wanted it to be. It is efficacious only as regards the elect, and that in virtue of a special gift; but there is no predestination to evil. The two aspects of the mystery are affirmed in plain language, but we fail to perceive the mode of their intimate reconciliation. The fourth canon of Quierzy affirms that Christ died for all men.

The third Council of Valence (855) insisted more strongly on the gratuity of predestination to eternal life in so far as it is distinct from simple foreknowledge, for this latter also extends to evil. According to the declarations of this council, the least good and the least punishment that is justly inflicted, never occur without a positive and infallible decree from God, and no sin is committed, and nowhere by preference, without His foreknowledge and permission.

We know that after the Council of Langres (859), the discussions concerning predestination between Hincmar, the great opponent of Gottschalk, and the Church of Lyons, were terminated at Thuzey in the year 860. The synodal letter, approved in this council, contains the following affirmations. (1) Whatsoever the Lord pleased He hath done in heaven and on earth. For nothing is done in heaven or on earth, except what He Himself is pleased to do, or justly permits to be done. This means that all good things, whether easy or difficult to accomplish, whether natural or supernatural, come from God, and that sin does not occur, nor in this one rather than in the other, without His divine permission. Countless consequences evidently are included in this absolutely general principle. The Thomists see in it the equivalent of the principle of predilection. The other assertions of this synodal letter are derived from this general principle. They are as follows: (2) God wills all men to be saved and no one to perish . . . nor after the fall of the first man is it His will forcibly to deprive man of free will. (3) That those, however, who are walking in the path of righteousness, may continue to do so and persevere in their innocence, He heals and aids their free will by grace. (4) They who go far from God, who is de-sirous of gathering the children of Jerusalem that wills it not, will perish. (5) Hence it is because of God's grace that the world is saved; and it is because man has free will that the world be judged. (6) Adam, through willing what is evil, lost the power to do what is good. . . .

Wherefore the whole human race became a mass of perdition. If no one had been rescued from it, God's justice would not have been to blame. That many are saved, however, is due to God's ineffable grace. This last statement repeats what St. Augustine and Prosper said. Thus at the end of these conferences of the ninth century, the bishops, assembled in council at Thuzey, rejected absolutely the theory of predestination to evil and affirmed God's universal will to save, as Prosper had done. God never commands the impossible, but He wills to make it possible for all to fulfill His precepts and obtain salvation. That is what all the bishops assembled in this last mentioned council affirmed with St. Augustine and Prosper. But they do not deny, on that account, the other aspect of the mystery, to wit: the absolute gratuity of predestination, of true predestination as opposed to reprobation.

3) In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This teaching of the Church was confirmed both by the decisions of the Council of Trent against the errors of Protestantism and by the condemnation of Jansenism. The Church again declares that man, though having contracted the stain of original sin, is free to do good by the aid of grace, consenting to co-operate with it, though at the same time he can resist it. From this it follows that God predestines no one to evil; but He wills, on the contrary, the salvation of all men; and Christ dies for all, although all do not receive the benefit that is the fruit of His death, "but only those to whom the merit of His passion is communicated." In the case of adults good works are necessary for salvation, and, in the order of execution, heavenly glory is the reward granted at the end of their probation for meritorious acts.

It is likewise declared against Jansenism that Christ did not die only for the predestined, or only for the faithful; that there is a grace which is truly sufficient, and which makes the fulfillment of God's precepts possible for all those on whom these precepts are imposed. The Church, quoting the words of St. Augustine, says again in refuting the Protestants and Jansenists: "God commands not impossibilities, but, by commanding, both admonishes thee to do what thou art able, and to pray for what thou art not able to do." She also says that "God does not abandon the just without previously having been abandoned by them." It is only mortal sin that deprives them of sanctifying grace, and they are deprived of certain actual graces necessary for salvation only be-cause they resisted sufficient graces. God does not permit us to be tempted beyond our powers of resistance; the grace of conversion is offered to sinners, and only those are deprived of it

who, failing in their duty, refuse it, this being something which God permits, but of which He is by no means the cause. The Church, however, though affirming that God by a sufficient grace makes the fulfillment of His precepts possible for all, none the less affirms the efficacy of grace that actually is productive of good works. The Council of Trent declares that "God, unless men be themselves wanting to His grace, as He has begun the good work, so will He perfect it, working in them to will and to accomplish."

What are we to conclude then from the teaching of the Church against the conflicting heresies of Semipelagianism and predestinarianism, heresies that were renewed by Calvinism and Jansenism?

To sum up: Against Semipelagianism, we must say that the Church affirms particularly three things: (a) The cause of predestination to grace is not the foreknowledge of naturally good works performed, nor is it due to any preliminary acts of the natural order that are supposed to prepare for salvation. (b) Predestination to glory is not due to foreseen supernatural merits that would continue to be effective apart from the special gift of final perseverance. (c) Complete predestina-tion, which comprises the whole series of graces, is gratuitous or previous to foreseen merits. And St. Thomas understands this to mean that "whatsoever is in man disposing him towards salvation, is all included under the effect of predestination." In a word: "that some are saved is the gift of Him who saves."

4) Against predestinarianism and the doctrines of Protestantism and Jansenism that revive it, the Church teaches: (a) God wills in a certain way to save all men and He makes the fulfillment of His precepts possible for all; (b) There is no predestination to evil, but God has decreed from all eternity to inflict eternal punishment for the sin of final impenitence which He foresaw, He being by no means the cause of it but merely permitting it.

We see that the teaching of the Church against these conflicting heresies may be summed up in these profound words of St. Prosper, which the Council of Quierzy makes its own. Against Pelagianism and Semipelagianism the council says: 'That some are saved, is the gift of Him who saves." Against predestinarianism it says: "That some perish, is the fault of those who perish." Holy Scripture expressed the same thought in these words: "Destruction is thy own, O Israel; thy help is only in Me."

There is no difference of degree between the assent of the Christian mind unhesitatingly given to these two great and indisputable truths, and the

mysterious mode of the intimate reconciliation.

CHAPTER III

THE PRINCIPAL DIFFICULTIES OF THE PROBLEM AND THE METHOD OF PROCEDURE

THE DIFFICULTIES

FROM what has just been said we see that the first difficulty was always how to reconcile predestination with God's will to save all mankind. On the one hand Scripture declares that God wills all men to be saved; on the other hand, it says that all are not predestined, but that "whom He predestined, them He also called . . . and also justified . . . and glorified." It even says that "He hath mercy on whom He will. And whom He will, He hardeneth." Therefore the predestined will infallibly be saved, and the others not. Hence arises the difficulty. How can predestination, which is infallible in its effect, be reconciled with the will to save all mankind, since the salvation of many will not be realized?

Is it human effort that makes God's help efficacious, or is it the intrinsic efficacy of God's help that prompts human effort? And if grace is of itself efficacious, how is it that God mercifully grants it to the elect and justly refuses it to the rest? We see that this mystery concerns the intimate reconciliation of God's infinite mercy and justice, and the free manifestation of these divine perfections. Philosophy, confronted with a difficulty of the same kind, has to explain how the presence of evil, especially moral evil, can be reconciled with God's infinite goodness and omnipotence.

A second difficulty of this problem is that it is no longer a question of the two groups of human beings, the elect and those not among the elect, but of individuals. The question is this. Why has God placed in the number of the elect this person and not that other? Why has He chosen Peter rather than

Judas, and not vice versa? Seemingly unjust is this unequal distribution of such gifts to human beings who are equal both by nature and by reason of original sin.

This is the difficulty that St. Paul expresses when he writes: “What shall we say then? Is there injustice with God? God forbid. For He saith to Moses: I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy. And I will shew mercy to whom I will shew mercy.” St. Paul thus answers the difficulty by affirming the principle of predilection, or of the gratuity of grace to which we can have no claim. Further on he states: “O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are His judgments, and how unsearchable His ways!” St. Augustine expresses the mystery in these words: “Why He draweth one and not another, seek not to judge if thou dost not wish to err.”

St. Thomas called special attention to these two great difficulties in the mystery of predestination; one difficulty is general in scope, the other of particular interest. He says: “The reason for the predestination of some, and the reprobation of others, must be sought for in the goodness of God. . . . God wills to manifest His goodness in men; in respect to those whom He predestines, by means of His mercy, in sparing them; and in respect of others, whom He reprobates, by means of His justice in punishing them. . . . Yet why He chooses some for glory and reprobates others, has no reason except the divine will. . . . Neither on this account can there be said to be injustice in God, if He prepares unequal lots for not unequal things. . . . In things which are given gratuitously a person can give more or less, just as he pleases (provided he deprives nobody of his due), without any infringement of justice.”

The answers given by St. Paul, St. Augustine and St. Thomas show there is no contradiction. But underlying these two aspects there is an inscrutable mystery because it is essentially supernatural and also because the divine intervention is supremely free. This mystery is supernatural not only modally like a miracle that can be known by natural means, but it is supernatural because by its very nature it belongs to that class of mysteries which concerns the intimate life of God, such as the Trinity, and it thus transcends the natural powers of every intellect whether human or angelic, of every created and creatable intellect. Moreover, in this mystery there is the intervention of God’s supremely free good pleasure, the divinum beneplacitum which St. Paul speaks of. This good pleasure, which is not at

all a caprice—for it is the very essence of wisdom and holiness—is for us, as every-thing is which concerns God's sovereign liberty, a profound mystery. By this good pleasure God mercifully grants His grace to one of the two thieves crucified with the Savior, whereas in justice He permits the other to resist to the very end, and so lets him remain in sin.

Hence we see in this mystery an intervention of infinite mercy and justice and of sovereign liberty, all of which absolutely transcend the powers of every created and creatable intellect. St. Thomas calls attention to this obscurity, which comes either from the essentially supernatural nature of the object, or from the fact that the truth pertains to the contingent order and as yet is undetermined. He says that there are things far removed from our knowledge, either spatially or because of their supernatural transcendence, such as the mystery of the Trinity, which is absolutely determined and knowable in itself, but not to us. Then there are things which, since they are not of themselves determined, are not knowable in themselves, such as future contingent things, the truth of which can be determined and known by God in His supremely free decree.

Such is the difficulty of the problem, or rather the great obscurity of the mystery and dogma which claims our attention. The theologian, seeking the method to be followed, must bear in mind what St. Thomas said: "In questions of sacred doctrine we may have recourse to philosophy in order to refute what is said against the faith, either by showing it to be false, or of no consequence." Theology thus averts the evident contradiction; but it is not its province to prove philosophically the intrinsic possibility of mysteries. Just as the reality of the mysteries of the Trinity, incarnation, and predestination remains obscure to us in this life, so does their intrinsic possibility. (Cf. Vatican Council; Denz., no. 1795 f.)

Thus we see the whole difficulty of the problem, and consequently how easily we may be deceived unless we follow faithfully the teaching of Holy Scripture, the councils, and the great doctors of the Church. It is easy to favor one or other of the contrary heresies, for instance, by speaking of the will to save mankind in a manner that savors of Semipelagianism, which denies the dogma of predestination; or, on the other hand, we may speak of predestination in a manner and tone that savors of predestinarianism, which denies the will to save mankind. A slight exaggeration, by the addition of some adverb, suffices to incline one toward either of the opposing heresies, just as the introduction of a single note suffices to modify one of

Beethoven’s symphonies, so as to destroy its harmony. How is the theologian to proceed in the midst of these difficulties?

THE METHOD TO BE FOLLOWED

On this point the theologian must bear in mind what the Vatican Council says: “Reason, indeed, enlightened by faith, when it seeks earnestly, piously, and calmly, attains by a gift from God some, and that a very fruitful, understanding of mysteries; partly from the analogy of those things which it naturally knows, partly from the relations which the mysteries bear to one another and to the last end of man. But reason never becomes capable of apprehending mysteries as it does those truths which constitute its proper object.”

The theologian must also bear in mind that just as God permits evil only for the sake of a greater good, so He permits conflicting heresies for the sole reason that thus the sublimity and value of truth may, by way of contrast, stand out more prominently. We must then profit by these opposing heresies, but never at the expense of detracting from the sublimity of the mystery about which we are seeking to acquire some understanding.

A watchful theologian will observe that in this difficult question, as in all the great problems of philosophy and theology, the human mind, inclined to systematize and forgetting that the tendency to synthesize is superior to the tendency to systematize, is at first inclined to posit an extreme thesis, which at times seems to express a profundity of thought, but which in reality is superficial, as in the cases of Pelagian-ism and Semipelagianism. Then, by way of reaction, the mind inclines to an antithesis just as extreme and superficial, as in the case of predestinarianism and the errors revived by it.

Furthermore, the theologian must take note of the attempts at reconciliation proposed by eclecticism, which, without any guiding principle, selects what appears to it to be the truth from the two opposing camps. By this means it gets the impression that the solution is to be found not only midway between the extreme errors, but that it is far above them, and also above all eclectic reconciliations, and in this respect it is like the culminating point reached by the great doctors of the Church, who derived their spiritual sustenance from the substantial nourishment of Scripture and tradition.

Whereas eclecticism does not go more than halfway, these great doctors reached that higher synthesis in which the various aspects of the real are reconciled by the light of the sublimest and most universal of principles. Was this not what St. Augustine did? St. Thomas did so, too, though with greater precision, when he brought out the full sublimity and universality contained in the principle that the love of God is the cause of all good. Hence it follows that God wills to save all men, by making it really possible for all to keep His commandments, and hence it follows that one would not be better than another, unless he were loved more by God.

We shall insist on these principles when we come to classify the various theological systems, and from this classification the culminating point of the mystery will be more clearly seen. Here we merely say that often, after we have discovered a synthesis of a truly higher order that safeguards in its entirety God's revealed word, the human mind, like one tired out, descends from its halfway post to consider the more or less arbitrary combinations and fluctuations of eclecticism, which substitutes for the divine obscurity of the mystery an apparent clarity that is without any real foundation. Hence the necessity of returning to the teaching of the great doctors of the Church, who were not merely learned historians and capable reasoners, but by the gifts of the Holy Ghost were great contemplatives, with a profound knowledge of God's revelation.

Certainly we would not form a true idea of the mystery of predestination by depreciating God's infinite mercy, either as regards all human beings (the will to save mankind) or as regards the elect (gratuity of election). Nor would we do so by depreciating His justice which gives to all what they absolutely need and which cannot punish anyone for doing what could not be helped, since such acts would not be sins.

In the course of his investigation the theologian must not forget that several great contemplatives, such as St. Theresa, have declared that the greater the obscurity in the mysteries, the greater was their attachment to them, because faith is of things unseen and because this obscurity results not from the absurdity or incoherence of the mysteries, but from the presence of a light too great for our feeble vision. Lastly, the theologian must bear in mind what the great masters of the spiritual life, such as St. John of the Cross, have said about the passive purifications of the soul in which, as a rule, the mystery of predestination appears in all its transcendent obscurity, so that the soul which has gone through this ordeal

may feel the necessity of rising above all human conceptions with their apparent clarity, and thus abandon itself completely to God in sentiments of pure faith, filial confidence, and love.

St. Thomas, too, says that the gift of understanding purifies the mind of the believer—and therefore of the theologian —of that too great attachment to sensible images and to those things that tend to lead them into error, thus enabling them to penetrate beyond the meaning of Holy Scripture and enter into the spirit of the mysteries, perceiving them in their supernatural sublimity. Such is the method of procedure not only in speculative theology, but also in contemplation, in which no aspect of the mystery is unduly limited by the restrictions of reasoning. This goes to show, especially in the case of these sublime and difficult questions, the necessity of reading first of all the works of the great theologians who were also great contemplatives. These excelled in both kinds of wisdom spoken of by St. Thomas: acquired wisdom, which is according to the perfect use of reason, and the gift of wisdom, which is the principle of a quasi-experimental knowledge that has its foundation in the special inspiration of the Holy Ghost and in the connatural disposition of charity for the things that pertain to God. Is not this what the Vatican Council alludes to in the words already quoted, when it says: “Reason, indeed, enlightened by faith, when it seeks earnestly, piously, and calmly, attains by a gift from God some, and that a very fruitful, understanding of mysteries”?

In such an atmosphere we no longer feel inclined to say that thinking about these inscrutable mysteries is useless. On the contrary, we see that they constitute the final goal of all things spiritual and that they are increasingly the object of contemplation in proportion as the Lord purifies the soul.

CHAPTER IV

THE CLASSIFICATION OF THE THEOLOGICAL SYSTEMS

THE revealed doctrine of predestination and of the will to save mankind is like a mountain peak towering above the two precipices of Pelagianism and Semipelagianism on the one hand, and predestinarianism on the other.

This representation makes it easier to see how the different theological systems are at variance with one another. There seems to be nothing wrong in saying that on one side of this mountain, halfway up, we find Molinism, and a little farther up the congruism of Suarez. On the other side we have the rigid systems of Augustinianism and Thomism, which modify, so it seems, God's universal will to save by making negative reprobation consist in the positive exclusion from heavenly glory as from a favor to which one is not entitled. Still midway between the two sides we find the eclecticism of the congruists of the Sorbonne, who admitted the efficacy of grace for difficult salutary acts and not for those easy of accomplishment.

The mountain peak, which is above the various systems, seems inaccessible to the pilgrim here on earth, to any created intellect, even enlightened by supernatural faith and the gifts of the Holy Ghost. To see this culminating point, the light of glory would be indispensable, that light by which the blessed in heaven see directly the divine essence, the Deity, which contains eminently and formally the attributes of infinite mercy, justice, and sovereign liberty, without any real distinction between them.

This peak is inaccessible to earthly pilgrims. Before it is reached, there is a doctrine which directs us unfailingly to it, and which, though we do not see the peak, enables us to determine its exact location. It is the doctrine that rests upon the most sublime and universal of principles which mutually adjust one another. It is a doctrine that deducts nothing from these principles and that by means of them surmises where the culminating point

is to be found from which these principles are derived and toward which all things converge.

Is not this the doctrine whose major principle is that “the love of God is the source of all good”? Subordinate to it and offsetting each other are two other principles: God by His love makes it possible for all to obey His precepts and attain salvation; one person would not be better than another, unless he were loved more by God.

We are thus led to a methodical classification of the systems. It is not from the defense of any Scholastic doctrine that this classification must receive its inspiration, but this must come from the two great principles of our faith. The first is the omnipotence of God, who in His sovereign goodness predestines and who is the author of all salvation. The second principle is His will to save all men.

The theological systems relative to predestination have been classified in three ways. The first classification, which is the one more commonly proposed, considers not so much the principles as the conclusions of the theologians. The second, proposed by Father Billot, S.J., is from the Molinist point of view and considers rather the principles adopted by the theologians. The third, proposed by Father del Prado, O.P., is From the Thomist point of view and likewise considers not so much the conclusions as the principles of the theologians.

1) According to the commonly proposed classification, there are two tendencies. Some say the predestination of adults to glory is the result of foreseen merits; these are sponsors of the purely Molinist view, such as Vasquez, Lessius. Others say that the predestination of adults to glory is previous to foreseen merits, and that negative reprobation or non-election is previous to foreseen demerits. This view is upheld by the Thomists, the Augustinians, the Scotists, and even those congruists who are of the Bellarminian and Suarezian type.

But of these theologians who admit the absolute gratuity of the predestination of adults to glory, almost all of the old school, i. e., the Thomists, the Augustinians, and the Scotists, hold that this predestination has its foundation in the divine predetermining decrees, whereas the congruism of Bellarmine and Suarez rejects these decrees and retains the theory of the scientia media to explain the distribution of the grace that is called “congruent,” and God’s certain knowledge of the consent given by the elect.

2) A second mode of classification was proposed by Father Billot. Whereas for some, he says, the foundation of foreknowledge, which implies predestination, is in the divine predetermining decrees, for others it is in the scientia media. Among these latter Father Billot distinguishes between those who, like Vasquez and Lessius, admit the predestination of adults after foreseen future merits, and the non-election of certain ones after foreseen future demerits. He also distin-guishes between those who, like Suarez, say that the predestination of adults to glory is even before conditionally future foreseen merits, and that negative reprobation or non-election is even before future foreseen demerits. Lastly, he distinguishes between those who hold that the predestination of adults to glory is after foreseen merits as conditionally future, but not as simply future. Father Billot admits the last opinion, maintaining that it is the one Molina taught. In other words, for Father Billot, what is absolutely gratuitous is the divine choice of circumstances in which God places a certain person, after having foreseen by the scientia media that in these circumstances the consent would be freely given. As for individual cases of negative reprobation or non-election, Father Billot's view does not differ much from that of Vasquez, which latter is very difficult to establish.

3) A third classification has been proposed by Father del Prado, O.P. He also takes especially into consideration the principles of the two leading schools, according as they admit either the divine predetermining decrees or the scientia media. But he insists that only the theologians admitting the divine predetermining decrees are faithful followers of St. Thomas, who wrote: "Whatsoever is in man disposing him toward salvation, is all included under the effect of predestination, even the preparation for grace." This includes, therefore, even the free determination of the salutary act in so far as it is in this one rather than the other, and not vice versa. This is truly what St. Thomas meant, who previously in the article just quoted had written: "Now there is no dis-tinction between what flows from free will, and what is of pre-destination; as there is no distinction between what flows from a secondary cause and from a first cause."

Let us add to this what Father del Prado elsewhere points out, that only the theologians who admit the intrinsic efficacy of the divine decrees and of grace recognize the absolute and universal validity of the principle of predilection formulated by St. Thomas in these words: "Since God's love is the cause of goodness in things, no one thing would be better than another,

if God did not will greater good for one than for another." Further on in the same work St. Thomas likewise wrote: "He who is better prepared for grace, receives more grace. Yet it is not man who prepares himself for grace, except inasmuch as his free will is prepared by God. Hence the first cause of this diversity is to be sought on the part of God, who dispenses His gifts of grace variously." Similarly St. Thomas says: "He who make a greater effort does so because of a greater grace; but to do so, he needs to be moved by a higher cause." This principle of predilection, as we shall see, presupposes that the divine decrees concerning our future salutary acts are intrinsically and infallibly efficacious. Otherwise the case might arise in which of two persons who are loved and helped to the same extent by God and who are placed in the same circumstances, one would correspond with the grace received and the other would not. Thus without having been loved and helped more by God, one would prove to be better than the other by doing something either easy or difficult to perform, whether this be the first or final act. This is what, in opposition to St. Thomas, Molina maintained. He thus reduced the principle of predilection to the choice of favorable circumstances in which God places those whom He foresaw by His scientia media will of necessity make good use of the grace in these circumstances.

THE SYSTEMS COMPARED

This comparison, after what has just been said, brings us back to the question of the value of the principle of predilection, namely, "that one thing would not be better than another, if God did not will greater good for one than for the other." Is this principle of absolute and universal validity, as the early theologians maintained, or has it merely a relative and restricted value, as the Molinists and the congruists think?

As we shall see when we come to explain the doctrine of St. Thomas, in the philosophical order this principle seems to be a corollary from the principle of causality applied to God's love which is the cause of all good: "Since God's love is the cause of goodness in things," says St. Thomas. In the supernatural order this principle of predilection has been revealed. St. Paul expresses it in these terms: "For who distinguisheth thee? Or what has thou that thou hast not received?" He finds the answer in the Old Testament, saying: "For He saith to Moses: I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy. And I will show mercy to whom I will show mercy." It is to this

principle of predilection that St. Augustine appeals in support of all his opinions. When the occasion arises he applies the principle even to the angels, remarking that, if the good and bad angels were created equally good, the former were more lore abundantly assisted and attained eternal happiness, whereas the latter, through their own defectibility, fell from grace. Hence St. Augustine's famous saying: "Why He draweth one and not another, seek not to judge, if thou dost not wish to err."

Moreover, this principle of predilection is absolutely universal. That is why St. Thomas formulates it in the neuter: "One thing would not be better than another, if God did not will greater good for one than for another." This principle is true in every order. It is true of plants with reference to minerals, of animals, of human beings, of angels and their acts, of things in which there is less of perfection or of goodness. It is also true of every man who, from whatever point of view, is better than another, whether this is because of a naturally or supernaturally good act performed, of an act easy or difficult to perform, of an act begun or sustained, of a first or final act.

We shall see that the attempts at synthesis proposed by the Molinists and the congruists after the time of St. Thomas, far from rising to the loftiness of these higher principles formulated by him, failed to realize the sublimity and universality of these principles as well as their philosophical and theological validity. The principle dominating the whole question is this: "God's love is the cause of all goodness." It follows first of all from this that God, by reason of His love, wills to make it possible for all to obey His commandments and be saved. This real possibility is a good that is the result of God's love or of His universal will to save mankind. It is not effective, however, in all cases, and sometimes God permits the presence of evil in view of a greater good, which often eludes us, and the reason for which we shall see clearly only in heaven. There is in this a very great mystery.

Since God's love is the cause of all goodness, it follows that one thing would not be better than another if God did not will greater good for one than for another. From this principle of predilection St. Thomas deduces all his conclusions about predestination. For them it is like the keystone of an arch, the principle upon which they depend for their preservation and unity.

CHAPTER V

THE STANDPOINT OF ST. AUGUSTINE AND HIS FIRST DISCIPLES

ST. AUGUSTINE pointed out repeatedly that the fathers who wrote before the rise of the Pelagian heresy touched only incidentally upon the problem of predestination. This circumstance was noted also by St. Robert Bellarmine, who quotes, however, St. John Chrysostom. The latter, commenting on St. Paul's words, "For who distinguisheth thee?" says: "Therefore thou hast what thou hast received, and not only this or that, but whatever thou hast. These are not thy merits, but God's gifts."

We must also observe that the fathers previous to the time of St. Augustine, especially the Greek fathers, often interpreted predestination as meaning the will to give glory after this life. They scarcely spoke of it except by way of exhortation, and then they had in mind the preconceived order of execution in which merits precede glory, whereas as intended by God it happens in the inverse order. In the order of intention God wills the end before the means; that is why He wills to save the good thief to whom He grants the grace of final perseverance. But in the order of execution He gives eternal life as the reward of meritorious acts.

This distinction between the two orders of intention and execution, is a distinction which, taken in general or as regards human affairs, appeals to common sense. What the mason has in mind is the end of his labor, which is the house to be built, although this end is attained after the completion of the work. We cannot conceive of this plan of divine providence apart from this elementary condition. God from all eternity wills first the final end of the universe, which is the manifestation of His goodness, and He ordains the means which concur in this end. This will be fully realized at the end of time, when the elect, who were chosen from all eternity, have reached the end of their course.

As it always happens in such a case, this distinction between intention and execution was only gradually applied to the problem of predestination. At first it was applied obscurely by St. Augustine, and then more and more explicitly by the Scholastic theologians. Only with the rise of the Pelagian heresy did an understanding gradually develop of the necessity of considering predestination, not only in the order of execution, by way of exhortation, but also in the order of intention, so that everything pertaining to our salvation should be attributed to God. This explanatory formula we find in the writings of the earlier fathers, especially in St. John Chrysostom's commentary on the words of St. Paul: "For who is it that distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received?" The principle of predilection was already obscurely expressed in these words. It thus became increasingly certain that our Lord's granting of the grace of final perseverance to the good thief in preference to the other was because He willed efficaciously to save him, and this efficacious will was from all eternity.

THE GRATUITY OF PREDESTINATION ACCORDING TO ST. AUGUSTINE

Among the theologians who in recent times have made a study of St. Augustine's teaching about predestination, Father Cayre and Father J. St. Martin, both of them Augustinian Assumptionists, confirmed the traditional interpretation of St. Augustine's writings. We endorse their conclusions.

This doctrine was more fully discussed in the treatises that St. Augustine wrote toward the end of his life. It was implicitly contained in the following formula: "Lord, give what Thou commandest, and command what Thou wilt."

We remarked above, at the close of the first chapter, that St. Augustine deduced from the New Testament texts referring to this problem, the following definition: "Predestination is the foreknowledge and the preparation of those gifts of God whereby they who are delivered are most certainly delivered." In this definition the word "foreknowledge" is not taken as meaning that God foresees the merits of the elect, but that He foreknows and prepares the gifts by which the elect will actually be saved in the order of execution. St. Augustine clearly says the same: "By His predestination God foreknew what He had to do," so as to direct His elect infallibly to eternal life. Our Lord's words are equivalent to this, for He

said: “My sheep . . . shall not perish for ever. And no man shall pluck them out of My hand.”

For St. Augustine, predestination presupposes a decisive and definite will on God’s part to sanctify and save freely all the elect. God knows them individually and He wills to have them perform meritoriously acts that are required for entering heaven. He wills to give them the grace to persevere until the end, this being what St. Paul means when he says: “For it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish according to His good will.” The fact that God foresees our salutary and meritorious acts presupposes, according to the teaching of St. Augustine, the decree of the divine will as regards these acts. Father Portalié considers that St. Augustine favors the theory of the scientia media because of the following sentence: “Far be it that man should have the power to frustrate the intention of the omnipotent Being who has foreknowledge of all things.” We know, on the contrary, that for St. Augustine the foreknowledge of our salutary acts refers to what God has decreed that created wills should do. The words that immediately follow the text quoted by Father Portalié prove this to be so, for we read: “These have but a faint conception of so great a question, or what they have does not suffice, who think that the omnipotent God wills something and is powerless to effect it because of weak man preventing Him.” Father Portalié should have remarked that Molina, on the other hand, reproved St. Augustine for not having known of the scientia media.

To what cause must we assign, according to the great doctor’s opinion, the efficacy of grace that is granted to the elect? The principles laid down by him reveal his mind on this point. God’s will, he says, is omnipotent and efficacious (most efficacious). We read in one of his treatises as follows: “There is no doubt that human wills cannot resist (in sensu composito) the will of God, who hath done whatsoever He willed in heaven and on earth, in that He does what He wills and when He wills. Undoubtedly He has the power to move the human heart to submit, as it pleases Him, to His omnipotent will.” From this we see that, in St. Augustine’s view, the decrees of the divine will are infallible not because God foreknows that we will give our consent, but because He is omnipotent. He also says: “The wills of men are more in God’s power than in their own.” In another of his works he says: “There is no doubt that we will whenever we will, but He is the cause of our willing what is good; . . . there is no doubt that we act

whenever we act, but He is the cause of our acting, by most efficaciously strengthening our will." Still more clearly when speaking professedly on this subject of predestination, he says that "no one who is hardened in heart rejects grace, because it is primarily given to remove this hardness of heart."

Lastly, St. Augustine repeatedly teaches that predestination is gratuitous. And he means predestination as he defined it, which is not only to grace but also to glory; for predestination to grace alone does not lead one effectively to eternal life. It has but the name of predestination, since it belongs equally to those who, after being justified, do not persevere.

This gratuity of predestination is peculiarly stressed by him. In discussing the gift of perseverance, he says: "Of two children equally held captive by original sin, why is one taken and the other left? And of two wicked persons already advanced in years, why is one called and the other not? All this pertains to the inscrutable judgments of God." He also says: "Why God draws this one and not that other, seek not to judge, if thou wilt not err."

What precisely constitutes the crux of the mystery, according to St. Augustine's opinion, is man's inability to find out the reasons for the divine choice. He is continually harking back to this impossibility, and his opponents find no avenue of escape from it. This impossibility is a pledge of his fidelity to the teaching of St. Paul. It is, so to speak, the theme of his teaching.

Tixeront wrote; "St. Augustine's views, considered as a whole, direct us toward the doctrine of predestination to glory before foreseen merits. . . . Were it a question of the full predestination to efficacious grace, final perseverance, and glory, and not of predestination to glory alone, there would be no room for doubt: the Bishop of Hippo insists again and again upon its absolute gratuitousness.

ST. AUGUSTINE'S FIRST DISCIPLES

1) St. Prosper of Aquitaine. After St. Augustine's death an anonymous pamphlet appeared that distorted his doctrine of predestination. St. Prosper thereupon defended the teaching of his master. St. Prosper went to Rome and obtained from Pope St. Celestine in 431 a letter in which the Pontiff boldly affirmed the orthodoxy of the Bishop of Hippo, at the same time requesting the French bishops to put an end to this calumniation of St.

Augustine. But St. Prosper, upon returning to France, had to refute another pamphlet that seems to have been written by St. Vincent of Lerins. This saint thought the Augustinian doctrine denied God's will to save all men and that it implied that God is the author of sin. St. Prosper refuted these conclusions; about 433 he wrote a book against Cassian, in which he discusses anew the problem of grace and free will.

Some Pelagians put a wrong construction upon St. Paul's text that "God will have all men to be saved," and claimed that God wills equally the salvation of all. In reply to these heretics St. Augustine, arguing from the fact that all men are not saved and from the principle of the infallible efficacy of the divine will, had repeatedly spoken of a restricted will to save. By this he meant the infallibly efficacious will that leads the elect to eternal life. St. Prosper, replying to the objections made against the teaching of his master, insists upon another aspect of this doctrine. St. Augustine had clearly affirmed that "God does not command what is impossible, but in commanding admonishes thee to do what thou canst and to ask for what thou canst not do." God never commands what is impossible, otherwise no one could avoid committing actual sin, which in this case would no longer be a sin, and the divine chastisements inflicted for such would be a manifest injustice. To say that God never commands the impossible means that He wills to make it really possible for all to comply with the precepts imposed upon them and to do so when they are imposed. Thus He wills to make their salvation really possible, though He does not lead them all efficaciously to eternal life. Moreover, St. Augustine again and again, without adding any restrictions, explained St. Paul's text that "Christ dies for all."

True to the teaching of his master, St. Prosper wrote as follows: "We must most sincerely believe and profess that God wills all men to be saved. For this, indeed, is the mind of the Apostle, who most urgently commands, what is a most devout custom in all the churches, that suppliant prayers be offered to God for all men. That many of these perish is the fault of those who perish: that many are saved is the gift of Him who saves."

In these words of St. Prosper we have formulated the two extreme aspects of the mystery. On the one hand we have God's will to save all men, and on the other hand we have the mystery of predestination, namely, that many are saved is the gift of Him who saves. Concerning predestination in the strict sense of the term, St. Prosper is equally firm in his defense of St. Augustine's opinion, and he refuses to identify predestination with

foreknowledge, because God foresees the bad no less than the good acts, but He positively wills and is the cause of only the latter. He is the author of all good, and it cannot be said that, irrespective of His divine will, one particular person is better than another. Predestination implies, therefore, along with foreknowledge a love of predilection or the will to effect in a particular person and by means of him in preference to a certain other, this salutary good by which such a person will actually merit and attain eternal life. Therefore predestination of the elect is gratuitous, as St. Augustine had said.

If St. Prosper mitigated his master's teaching on any point, it was on the question of reprobation. He is not satisfied with merely speaking of souls left by God in the mass of perdition, for he considers that reprobation is the result of personal sins foreseen by God. This way of viewing it cannot be maintained as the reason for the non-election of children who die without being baptized. As for the reprobate adults, it leaves the question still shrouded in obscurity: their personal sins, which are foreseen by God, could not happen without His divine permission. Again, why has God permitted certain individuals to commit sins without efficaciously intending that their sins should be actually forgiven, whereas He permits sins in the case of the elect only to bring them to a truer humility, by which their love becomes purer?

We shall see farther on that many of St. Augustine's disciples who, considering themselves to be interpreting the mind of their master more faithfully, distinguish between negative reprobation (non-election and the will to permit sins that will not be forgiven), and positive reprobation (eternal decree to inflict the punishment of damnation for sins foreseen). Negative reprobation, so they say, cannot be the result of personal sins foreseen by God as not calling for His forgiveness; for it means nothing else but God's permission of these sins which, unless He permitted them, could not be foreseen by Him. This proved, later on, to be the teaching of St. Thomas, and it seems to be fully in agreement with what St. Augustine taught.

2) The author of a certain treatise written between 430 and 460—which was about the period in which St. Prosper lived—like a true disciple of St. Augustine, admits God's will to save all men, at the same time maintaining the gratuity of predestination. To explain this will to save all men, he insists upon a general grace for salvation that is offered to all, and he distinguishes

between this and a special and entirely gratuitous grace that is given to those who are actually saved. In addition to these general gifts . . . there is the liberal bestowal of a special grace. This special grace is the effect of a divine predilection.

3) St. Fulgentius. At the end of the sixth century the controversies on grace and predestination were resumed after the death of the Semipelagian bishop Faustus of Riez. St. Fulgentius of Ruspe then wrote a little treatise on this subject. He followed this up with an important letter on the question of grace and wrote a work comprising seven books in direct refutation of the teachings of Faustus. Of this work only one treatise remains. Last of all he wrote a work in vindication of the truth of predestination and grace. St. Fulgentius, who is called "Augustine in miniature," adopts as his own the whole of St. Augustine's teaching on grace and its gratuity. He accepts, too, everything his master teaches about predestination. Complete predestination, which means to glory and to grace, is considered by him to be absolutely free, certain, and restricted. It is absolutely free because grace, without which man is incapable of performing any salutary good work, is purely a gift of God's mercy. Predestination is a certainty in virtue of God's omnipotent and unchangeable will. Finally, it is restricted to the elect, who are called in manifestation of God's merciful goodness in their behalf.

Concerning God's will to save, in those texts in which St. Fulgentius speaks of the divine and infallibly efficacious will to save, he limits it, as St. Augustine did. He does not deny, however, this other point of Augustinian teaching, that "God does not command what is impossible." He really wills to make it possible for all to fulfill His precepts, for this is the way by which one attains eternal life. St. Fulgentius positively rejects predestination to sin, and he explains that those whom God has not elected are justly abandoned by Him either because of original sin, or because of pride which is the result of this sin.

4) St. Caesarius of Arles (470-543). His sermons are also a faithful reflection of St. Augustine's teaching on predestination. Father Lejay says: "The problem of both salvation and damnation is solved in the same way as St. Augustine solved it. If the wickedness of sinners induces to hardness of heart, it is God who removes this by His grace. If we ask why God gives grace to some and refuses it to others, Caesarius answers by saying with St. Augustine: As a rule God's judgments are hidden from the knowledge of men, but they are not unjust. Like St. Augustine, he counterattacks by

quoting the well-known Pauline texts: O the depths of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! O man who art thou that repliest against God?"

From this we see, however, that St. Caesarius, like his master, distinguishes between God's permission of sin, without which this would not happen, and the withdrawal of His grace which, as a just punishment, presupposes on the contrary that God foresees the sin. With this in mind he writes: "Pharao is hardened in heart by the withdrawal of grace, but also because of his wickedness." In this there is a mystery, that God permits sins that will not be forgiven. God often remits sins which He has permitted, often enough, but not always. This, too, is a mystery.

5) The Second Council of Orange (529), in which the influence of St. Caesarius of Arles preponderated, put an end to the heated discussions between the Augustinians and the anti-Augustinians in France, by approving the fundamental points maintained by St. Augustine. The first eight canons of the council were taken by St. Caesarius from St. Augustine's works. Another proposition was added by the Bishop of Arles (c. 10), and then there are sixteen propositions (c, 9 and 11-25) compiled by St. Prosper from St. Augustine's works and sent by Pope Felix IV. Pope Boniface II, his successor, confirmed (January 25, 531) these decisions in which Rome had already played an important part, and he declared the profession of faith formulated by the synod to be in agreement with the Catholic principles of the fathers.

These canons of the Council of Orange clearly affirm not only the necessity of grace for every supernaturally good work, but also its gratuity. By this ruling the council definitely steered clear of Semipelagianism. On the question whether the efficacy of grace, of which the council speaks, is intrinsic or extrinsic, in other words, whether or not it depends upon the fact that God foresees our consent, modern theologians are not in agreement. Those who, like the Augustinians and the Thomists, admit the intrinsic efficacy of grace, quote especially the following canons: (3) "If anyone says that God's grace can be conferred by the invocation of man, and that this, however, is not caused by grace itself, such a person contradicts the prophet Isaias or the Apostle who says: I was found by them that did not seek Me: I appeared openly to them that asked not after Me." (4) "If anyone says that God waits for us to will that we may be cleansed from sin, and who does not confess that even our wish to be cleansed from sin is the effect of the

infusion and operation of the Holy Spirit who by the mouth of Solomon says: The will is prepared by the Lord, and also the Apostle proclaiming for our benefit that: it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish according to His good will." (6) "If anyone . . . does not consent to believe it to be the gift of grace itself, that we be obedient and humble, resists the Apostle who says: What hast thou that thou hast not received? and By the grace of God I am what I am." (9) "For as often as we do what is good, God works in and with us that we may do it." (10) "We must always implore God's help even for those who have been baptized and cured of their spiritual infirmities, whether this be that they may persevere in the performance of good works or that they may die a happy death." (12) "God loves us because of what we will be by the gift of His grace, not because of what we are by our own merit." (20) "There is no good act done by man which God does not help man to do." (22) "No one has for one's own anything but lying and sin." Later on theology stated more precisely that man can perform no supernaturally good act except by God's supernatural help, and no morally good deed without a help in the natural order.

The Council of Orange makes no positive affirmation about predestination to glory and grace; but we see that this is the logical result of the canons just quoted, especially of canons twelve and twenty. The latter canon reads: "There is no good act done by man which God does not help man to do." Canon twelve declares that "God loves us because of what we will be by the gift of His grace, not because of what we are by our own merit." These two statements along with the Pauline text: "What has thou that thou hast not received?" are tantamount to saying that one would not be better than another if one were not loved more and helped more by God, and that in the work of salvation everything comes from God, in this sense that we cannot detect therein the least good which could be said to be exclusively from ourselves and not from Him.

The Indiculus de Gratia Dei, appended to Pope Celestine's twenty-first letter, said the same: "For the acknowledgment of God's grace, the operative power and dignity of which must not in the least be undervalued, we believe that whatever the canons have taught us in accordance with the aforesaid rules laid down by the Holy See is amply sufficient: so that we absolutely do not think is Catholic what has clearly been seen to be contrary to the foregoing decisions."

Finally, the Council of Orange distinctly disapproves of predestination to evil. On this point it says: “That some are predestined by divine power to evil, not only we do not believe this, but also, if there are any willing to believe so great an evil, in all detestation we anathematize them.” In the same paragraph the council affirms that all the baptized can be saved if they will keep the commandments, for we read: “This also we believe according to Catholic faith, that all those who have received grace by being baptized, Christ helping and co-operating with them, if they have willed to labor faithfully, can and ought to put into effect those things that pertain to the salvation of their souls.” This is what St. Augustine said, whom the Council of Trent quoted against the Protestants as follows: “God does not command what is impossible, but in commanding advises you to do what you can and to ask for what you cannot do,” and again when he said: “God does not abandon those whom He has once justified by His grace, unless He is first abandoned by them.”

Thus the two extreme aspects of the mystery were affirmed: on the one hand, the gratuity and necessity of grace; and on the other, the real possibility of salvation, at least for all the baptized.

6) After the Council of Orange. St. Gregory the Great is also distinctly of the Augustinian school. He teaches the necessity of a prevenient grace for the beginning of good works and faith, and that predestination to grace and eternal life is absolutely gratuitous, as in the case of the good thief. In the seventh century, St. Isidore of Seville also taught that the elect are gratuitously predestined to heaven, and that God has prepared for the reprobates the punishments they have deserved for their sins which have been permitted by Him. To the question why God has freely chosen some and not others, St. Isidore answers by saying: “In an obscurity so great as this it is of no avail for man to investigate the divine dispensation and examine the secret arrangements of predestination.”

Such is the teaching of St. Augustine’s disciples. They affirm the two extreme aspects of the mystery: the gratuity of predestination and the real possibility of salvation for at least all baptized adults. Moreover all agree in saying that no one in this life can see how these two truths are intimately reconciled, for that would be to see how God’s infinite justice, infinite mercy, and sovereign independence or liberty are intimately reconciled. The just mean was found in the affirmation of these two extreme aspects of the mystery and in the higher contemplation of God’s infinite goodness, which

is equally the principle of His mercy and that of His justice. On the one hand, God's sovereign goodness is diffusive of itself, it being the principle of His mercy; on the other hand, it has the right to be loved above all things, it being the principle of His justice.

St. Augustine's disciples steered a middle course by a loving contemplation of these truths in the obscurity of faith. This middle course was compromised in the ninth century by the assertions of Gottschalk, which necessitated many a struggle for its restoration.

PART II

THE PRINCIPAL SOLUTIONS OF THE PROBLEM OF PREDESTINATION

SECTION I

THE VIEWS OF PREDESTINATION HELD BY THE SCHOLARS OF THE MIDDLE AGES

THE question of predestination was studied by the scholars of the Middle Ages. They were guided by the principles which St. Augustine formulated in defense of the teachings of the Gospel and of St. Paul against the Pelagians and Semipelagians. After the time of St. Anselm several theologians, like Peter Lombard, were satisfied with a compilation of the principal teachings of St. Augustine, explaining some of them by others and reviving the memory of predestinarianism, a heresy in direct opposition to that of Pelagianism. Not a few theologians sought also to reconcile St. Augustine's doctrine with what St. John Damascene wrote concerning God's will to save all men, which he calls His antecedent will.

To see more clearly the meaning and scope of these works of the Middle Ages, we should recall that St. John Damascene and St. Augustine held different views on this subject of predestination. The former almost always considered the question from the moral point of view, in its relation to God's goodness and men's sins. If God is supremely good, he asks, how does it happen that not all are saved? He answers this question by saying that some sin and remain in sin. Con-sequently God punishes them; but previous to the sin, God wills the salvation of all, because He is supremely good. If He punishes after the sin, it is because He is also supremely just.

This answer given by St. John Damascene, which is according to common sense and is Christian in sentiment such as to be naturally understood by the faithful, somehow did not take into consideration God's omnipotence and the efficacy of grace. It also failed to solve from the speculative point of view many difficulties, even those to which St. Augustine replied in his contest against the Pelagians. These heretics,

denying the mystery of predestination, claimed that God wills equally the salvation of all, and thus they misconstrued St. Paul's text on this point.

Certainly St. John Damascene had clearly affirmed in the same passage that "every good comes from God" and that no evil can happen unless it is permitted by Him. But many persons, after they read his distinction between the antecedent and consequent wills in God, asked this question: If God is omnipotent, how are we to explain that His antecedent will for the salvation for all is only partly realized? Does the divine will meet with an insurmountable obstacle in the malice of some? Looking at it in this way, what becomes of the revealed mystery of predestination, which does not allow of our affirming with the Pelagians that God wills equally or in the same way the salvation of all?

Whereas St. John Damascene insisted on God's will to save all mankind, St. Augustine, to correct the Pelagian and Semipelagian interpretations of St. Paul's text, which states that "God will have all men to be saved," stressed the mystery of predestination. At the same time he maintained that God never commands what is impossible, and thus He wills and actually makes it really possible for all who are bound to observe the precepts to be saved.

Thus the two extreme aspects of the mystery were affirmed. It was for the theologians to endeavor to formulate them so well that one should not exclude the other. They all agreed that the mode of their intimate reconciliation is just as much beyond our powers of perception as is that of God's infinite mercy and justice.

CHAPTER I

THE THEOLOGIANS PRIOR TO ST. THOMAS

ST. ANSELM

IN his treatise De concordia praescientiae et praedestinationis nec non gratiae Dei cum libero arbitrio. St. Anselm examines the question of predestination. We know from Eadmer that St. Anselm wrote this work toward the end of his life. The title indicates that the treatise is divided into three questions. We shall give a summary of the tenor and contents of the second question, De concordia praedestinationis cum libero arbitrio, which unfortunately is the shortest question in the treatise.

Chapter I. It is concerned with the problem arising from the agreement between predestination and human liberty. After giving the commonly accepted definition of predestination, the author stresses the difficulty of perceiving how this latter does not conflict with our free will. If God predestines both the good and the bad, then nothing is left to free will, and everything happens from necessity. If He predestines only the good, then free will would have for its scope everything that is bad. The two alternatives seem to exclude each other.

Chapter II. St. Anselm then investigates in what sense we may speak of the predestination not only of the good, but also of the bad. “God predestines the bad and their bad deeds,” he says, “when He does not correct them and their bad deeds. But more especially He predestines in the case of those who perform good deeds . . . because in these He is the cause not only of their entity but also of their goodness; but in the case of bad deeds He is the cause of their entity, not of their badness.”

Chapter III. The author finally comes to the crucial point: in the accomplishment or in the effects of predestination, how is it that the divine action does not intervene alone, but is accompanied by man’s co-operation, without one of the factors eliminating the other? In replying to this, St.

Anselm has recourse especially to affirmative statements. He says: “There is no justice in one who does not adhere to it freely.” Then he adds that “certain things . . . which are predestined, do not happen by reason of that necessity which precedes and is the cause of the occurrence, but by reason of that which follows it.” After this comes the distinguishing feature of the author’s doctrine. He remarks that God, when He predestines, does not do so by forcing the human will or resisting it, but He leaves it master of itself. And although our will makes use of its power, in the case of the good, however, nothing is done by it except as the result of God’s grace; so that in the case of the bad, sin must be imputed solely to their will.

We understand the method of procedure adopted by St. Anselm. It is a very just but perhaps too restricted application of his previous exposition of the divine foreknowledge. God foresees infallibly the free acts of the future, at the same time leaving their contingency intact. Therefore He can predestine a person to perform these acts. It is possible that the effects of this predestination will or will not be realized in time, if we consider their cause, which is our free will. They are foreseen and ordained by God from all eternity, being irrevocable and necessary in virtue of a necessity of consequence. In this third and most important chapter of his treatise, the author shows clearly the necessity of our free co-operation with grace.

So we see that St. Anselm seeks the solution of the problem from the teaching of St. Augustine. Previous to this, however, Scotus Eriugena and Gottschalk had interpreted the mind of the Bishop of Hippo. Something more definite might have been expected concerning the difficulties raised by them. But the texts already quoted show how tenaciously and unequivocally St. Anselm adheres to certain great principles. These principles he maintains along with almost all his predecessors and contemporaries. He holds that every good comes from God, that the free determination of a salutary act in all that constitutes it as such, is a good that comes entirely from God, just as it comes entirely from us as a secondary cause. Another principle enunciated in the same passage is, that it does not happen independently of God’s action that this free determination of a salutary act comes or will come from this man rather than from a certain other, whom God will permit to fall into sin, the cause of which, however, will be solely because this other willed it.

The Master of the Sentences has the same view as St. Augustine about predestination and reprobation, for he says: “By predestination God foreknew those things which He Himself would do; but He foreknew also those things which He will not do, that is all evil things. He predestined those whom He chose, but the rest He rejected as reprobates, that is He foreknew they would sin and be condemned to eternal death.” God predestined those whom He chose, and this suggests no passivity or dependence upon foreknowledge on the part of any determination of the created order. He did not choose the others, but foresaw and permitted their obduracy in sin, and for this they are deservedly condemned to eternal punishment. In like manner, he says: “Since predestination is preparation by God’s grace, or divine election, by which He chose those whom he willed before the foundation of the world, as the Apostle says (Eph. 1: 4): on the other hand, by reprobation is to be understood the foreknowledge of the wickedness of certain persons and eternal punishment prepared for them . . . and the former, that is their wickedness, He knows and does not prepare; the latter, that is, eternal punishment, He foreknows and prepares.”

Predestination does not presuppose, therefore, the foreseeing of the merits. On this point Peter Lombard writes: “But if we ask why some deserve to be left in their obduracy and others to obtain mercy (or to be predestined), we find the reason for the former, but not for the latter; for there is no question of mercy being merited, for grace would cease to be grace if it were not freely given, but were bestowed on account of merits.” Peter Lombard then puts an objection which has its foundation in an opinion St. Augustine held shortly after his conversion. According to this opinion the reason for the election of some and the non-election of others would be because of certain merits very difficult to detect. But he replies that St. Augustine later on gave up this opinion. Peter Lombard insists especially on this: That reprobation is not likewise the cause of evil, as predestination is the cause of good.

As for God’s will to save all mankind, he considered it not only as St. John Damascene does, in its relation to God’s sovereign goodness, but also, with St. Augustine, in its relation to the divine omnipotence and the efficacy of prayer. On this point Peter Lombard writes as follows: “For who is so irreverent and foolish as to say that God cannot turn men away from willing what is evil to will what is good, if, when, and where He has so willed it.” And therefore, he adds, when we read that “God wills to save all men,” we

must not take this to mean that His omnipotence meets with an insurmountable obstacle in the malice of some persons; but with St. Augustine we must interpret this as meaning that no one is saved unless God willed it.

In addition to this, Peter Lombard firmly maintains that God never commands what is impossible, but makes it possible for all to observe His commandments; hence this includes the possibility for them to save their souls. In this sense he recognizes with St. Augustine that God wills the salvation of all those who are bound to observe the precepts, although there may be some difficulty in the case of children who die without being baptized. Thus we see that the two aspects of the mysteries are clearly affirmed by Peter Lombard.

ALEXANDER OF HALES

This theologian quotes the current definition of predestination among the Augustinians, and these presuppose no passivity or dependence on God's part. A little farther on, asking whether merits are the cause of predestination, he replies: "By the term predestination is meant the preparation of the divine helps, united to foreknowledge and its effects, namely, grace and glory, which latter will be given to the elect. Now merits are only the cause of the conferring of glory, and not of God's eternal choice, or of the conferring of grace."

If Alexander says that "foreknowledge of the merits may be the reason for the conferring of grace and glory," he certainly does not mean this in the Pelagian sense, in that the sinner can merit justification, but he merely means that he can dispose himself for it under the influence of actual grace. This was the comment of the editors of St. Bonaventure's works, and they point out that Alexander of Hales, St. Bonaventure, and St. Albert the Great are in agreement on this point. The difficulties presented by this doctrine are cleared up by what Alexander says farther on in his theological treatise.

ST. BONAVENTURE

He retains the Augustinian definition of predestination. In that it is the preordainment of the elect to glory, together with those helps that most certainly will enable them to attain it, preordainment presupposes election.

This very election presupposes a gratuitous and special dilection, and this applies not only to God's antecedent will but also to His consequent will to save. Concerning election, St. Bonaventure writes: "There are two kinds of election. One is caused by the diversity and pre-eminence of the eligibles, and this is a consequence of the eligibles, as in the case of human election; the other accounts for the diversity in choosing, and this is divine election, which is concerned with different natures, not as they are but as they will be. Such election precedes and is eternal. Very numerous texts in St. Bonaventure's works refer to the principle of predestination. There is therefore no passivity or dependence in God's foreknowledge concerning a free and salutary determination of the created order.

Guided by the light of this principle, what answer does he give to the question whether foreseen merits are the cause of predestination? He answers that predestination implies three things: an eternal design, and then its effects: justification and glorification. Now the merits of the elect are the cause of the subsequent glorification, but not of the eternal design which precedes them. As for justification this cannot be merited ex condigno, but only ex congruo, that is, by a merit improperly so called, in so far as God does not refuse sanctifying grace to the sinner who does what he can to obtain it. But in virtue of the principle of predilection previously enunciated by him, St. Bonaventure holds that of two sinners, one does not become better than another by disposing himself for conversion, unless he has been loved more by God and helped more by actual grace. This is the constant teaching of St. Augustine and, as we shall see, St. Thomas adopted it, so St. Bonaventure writes concerning salutary acts that the total effect is from the created cause and likewise from the untreated will.

However, St. Bonaventure seeks to discover some motive for this choice on God's part. If this particular man has been chosen in preference to a certain other, Peter in preference to Judas, is not this because of some suitable quality in him unknown to us, and not because of any merit on his part? He replies in the affirmative: "If coming to particular cases, we ask why He wills more to justify one than another, when evidently the two are equally eligible, we must say that there can be many reasons of congruence for this, so that there is no objective certainty. Therefore, since our knowledge is dependent upon objective certainty, we can discover no certain reason for this, unless it be revealed by Him in whom there are no doubts but only certainties. St. Albert the Great says practically the same.

Contrary to this, in virtue of the principle of predilection, St. Thomas said: “Why He chooses some for glory, and reprobates others, has no reason except the divine will . . . as from the simple will of the artificer it depends that this stone is in this part of the wall, and that in another.” Scotus held the same view as St. Thomas on this point, and affirmed God’s sovereign liberty in the choice of the elect.

Is the reason given by St. Bonaventure to be taken as applying to the future merits of the elect, when he says that the choice is one of fittingness and not of merit? He says it would be rash to affirm this. In any case, he maintains the principle of predilection, which we have seen so emphatically affirmed by him. It is that one would not be better than another unless one were loved more by God (for divine love is not caused by the diversity of eligibles, but is the cause of them).

All these theologians, moreover, agree on this, that just as God would have suffered no inconvenience if He had not created, so there would have been no inconvenience to Him if He had placed Judas in preference to Peter among the elect, and granted him the graces that would have infallibly led him to merit freely eternal life and persevere unto the end. As St. Bonaventure says: “Although there can be others and more than are predestined, yet there never will be; and if there were, then they were from all eternity predestined. And therefore in this there can be no change.” His conclusion is that God wills to save all men in so far as He has given all the human nature, and offers to all by Christ the grace necessary for salvation.

ST. ALBERT THE GREAT

This doctor has discussed predestination and God’s will to save all mankind in two of his works, and his teaching on this subject is substantially the same as St. Bonaventure’s.

He states positively that divine knowledge is the cause of things, and is not measured by them. It does not, however, prescribe the characteristic trait of necessity for all things; for there may be, as Aristotle says, a necessity of consequence without a necessity of consequent, according to the following example given by Boethius: What I see must be; now I see Peter walking; therefore he must be walking, although he is doing this freely. Thus God has infallibly foreseen contingent events. In like manner,

God willed efficaciously from all eternity the conversion of the good thief, and he was infallibly converted without being in the least way compelled.

He says, too, with St. Bonaventure, that predestination to glory presupposes election, and this latter presupposes divine predilection: “Love tends to show a preference between persons, and to love the one preferred in view of eternal life. Therefore love precedes election, and election precedes predestination on the part of Him who loves, elects, and predestines. This doctrine affirms the principle of predilection, that no created being would be better than another unless it were loved more by God.

What conclusion do we come to when we ask whether anything we do contributes as a meritorious cause of predestination? St. Albert answers this question. Subsequently he gives a clearer solution to this problem in his theological treatise. In this latter work he says: “It is of Catholic faith that the only cause of or good reason for predestination is the will and love of Him who predestines. . . . Furthermore, it is of Catholic faith that merit does not come before grace. . . . However, St. Albert affirms that “What is added to grace, is an act that takes place in time and is measured by time, and cannot be caused; there can, however, be a reason that may make it appear reasonable: and this reason is not antecedent but concomitant. Hence the reason for this may be the knowledge of merits, because, to be sure, He gives grace to the one whom He well knows will make good use of it.”

These concluding words remind us of one of Henry of Ghent’s opinions quoted and discussed by Cajetan. But St. Albert attaches much less importance to them, saying: “Sometimes God gave grace to one whom He knew would make a bad use of it, as in the case of Judas.” Similarly he says: “Sometimes God gives grace to one whom He knows will make a bad use of it, on account of some useful purpose it will serve; thus He made use of the betrayal by Judas so as to accomplish the redemption of the human race. But He would not be a good dispenser if, without any thought of the advantage to be gained therefrom, He gave grace to one who will make a bad use of it.”

From these formulas enunciated in the foregoing texts we see that God gives grace either because of future merits, or for some other useful purpose. Thus St. Albert prepares the way for the much simpler formula which we read in the Summa of St. Thomas, which is: “God preordained to give grace to merit glory.”

St. Albert remains faithful to the principle of predilection, and he has given us a sufficiently clear formula of it. He says: “That is loved more which receives a greater good.” And again he says: “In all things God loves the good that is from Him.” No created being therefore would be better than another unless it were loved more by God. “What hast thou that thou hast not received?” But, in any case, God never commands what is impossible and He makes it possible for all to keep His commandments.

CHAPTER II

THE DOCTRINAL PRINCIPLES OF ST. THOMAS

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS developed a higher, simpler, and more comprehensive theory concerning the great problem of the reconciliation of God's universal will to save with the mystery of predestination. The limits of this book do not permit us to trace St. Thomas' thought in his different works, examining them in chronological order. We have his interpretation of St. Paul's text on this subject. He has also discussed this question from the speculative point of view. In his theological treatise which he wrote toward the end of his life, he gave us his final decision on this question.

We shall present his point of view in these pages, stressing the principle of this synthesis and how it applies, by way of inference, to God's universal will to save and to the principle of predilection. As for the scriptural foundation for this teaching, so as to avoid repetitions, we shall examine this point in connection with the leading article of this treatise. The point at issue is whether predestination depends upon the foreseeing of our merits. We shall see that St. Thomas, like St. Augustine, is of the opinion that the absolute gratuity of predestination to glory is affirmed by St. Paul. Later we shall see this exegesis adopted by St. Robert Bellarmine and Suarez.

We shall assign here a considerable number of pages to the teaching of St. Thomas on this subject which concerns us, and this for three reasons: (1) because he himself proposes it in explanation of the revealed doctrine transmitted to us by St. Paul, and such as St. Augustine understood it; (2) because, the authority of St. Thomas being admitted, almost all the theologians since his time, even the Molinists of our day, claim to follow him; (3) because, by so doing, we shall need to comment but briefly on it in the theoretical part of this work. It will suffice for us to recapitulate the principles of this teaching of St. Thomas, showing how superior they are to the proposed attempts at synthesis as recorded in later chapters.

THE PRINCIPLE OF THE THOMIST SYNTHESIS

St. Thomas had a grander conception than St. Albert the Great and preceding theologians ever had, of the sublimity and unlimited scope of the principle that God's love is the cause of goodness in things. He expressed this very forcibly in the following passage: "It has been shown above (q. 19, a. 4) that God's will is the cause of all things. It must needs be, therefore, that a thing has existence, or any kind of good, only inasmuch as it is willed by God. To every existing thing, then, God wills some good. Hence, since to love anything is nothing else than to will good to that thing, it is manifest that God loves everything that exists. Yet not as we love. Because since our will is not the cause of the goodness of things, but is moved by it as its object, our love, whereby we will good to anything, is not the cause of its goodness. . . . On the contrary, God's love infuses and creates goodness in things." In substance St. Thomas had already said as much in two fundamental articles of preceding questions.

THE UNIVERSAL WILL TO SAVE

By the light of this principle, that God's love is the cause of goodness in things, St. Thomas clears up the two extreme and apparently contradictory aspects of the mystery that confronts us. On the one hand, we have the universal will to save, which St. John Damascene so strenuously defended, and on the other, we have the dogma of predestination, which was stressed by St. Augustine.

First of all, the universal will to save is conceived not only as a sign of God's will, like some oral or written precept, but it is also viewed as a will of good pleasure that really exists in God. If, in truth, God's love is the cause of the goodness in things, then it is by reason of His will of good pleasure and His love that He gives to all men not only a human nature by which they can know and love Him in a natural way, but that He also makes it possible for them to observe the precepts of the natural law, and in this very way salvation is possible. God can never command what is impossible, for that indeed would be an injustice. Sin would then become inevitable, which, in such a case, would no longer be sin, and could not be justly punished either in this life or in the next. God, by reason of His love, therefore, makes it possible for all to ob-serve His precepts, avoid sin, and thus be saved. St. Thomas also says that even in those things that are due to

one, God gives more than strict justice demands; for mercy or entirely gratuitous and superabundant kindness is at the root of all divine works of justice, which presuppose that intellectual creatures from purely gratuitous love were created and destined for the supernatural life of eternity.

This was the point St. John Damascene insisted upon; but he scarcely considered it but from the moral point of view, in its relation to the divine goodness and the malice of men. God, he said, by an act of His antecedent will, of His goodness wills to save all men; but, as some sin and remain in sin, by an act of His consequent will He punishes them eternally because He is just.

It remained for future theologians to probe this distinction more deeply, considering it not only from the moral point of view but also from the metaphysical, in its relation either to God's omnipotence or to the efficacy of His will and love. This is what St. Thomas did by the light of that principle which, in his opinion, completely dominates the problem, and from which a whole series of corollaries is deduced.

If God's will and love are the cause of the goodness of creatures, this will, in so far as it is that of the omnipotent Being, produces infallibly the good that it wills unconditionally to be realized right at the moment, even that good that has to be realized by our free act, and this without forcing the will. He is also powerful enough to produce in and with the will that its acts are freely performed. "Since the divine will is perfectly efficacious," says St. Thomas, "it follows not only that things are done which God wills to be done, but also that they are done in the way that He wills. Now God wills some things to be done necessarily, some contingently, to the right ordering of things, for the building up of the universe." This free mode of our acts is still an entity and therefore is included in the adequate object of the omnipotence and love of God, the Creator. Only evil is excluded from this adequate object, and therefore God cannot be the cause of sin either directly or indirectly because of insufficient help given.

What metaphysical definition shall we give, then, of the consequent and antecedent wills? St. Thomas gives us in substance the answer to this question. He points out that good is the object of the will; now goodness, unlike truth, is formally not in the mind but in things as they actually are. Hence we will, truly and simply, what we will as having to be at once realized, and this is called the consequent will, which in God is always efficacious. As St. Thomas says: "The will is directed to things as they are

in themselves, and in themselves they exist under particular qualifications. Hence we will a thing simply, inasmuch as we will it when all particular circumstances are considered; and this is what is meant by willing consequently. . . . Thus it is clear that whatever God simply wills, takes place." As we shall see later on, this principle concerning the will is of supreme importance for St. Thomas as constituting the foundation for the distinction between efficacious and sufficient graces.

If, on the other hand, the will is drawn to what is good in itself regardless of the circumstances, not to a thing as it actually is, then this is called the antecedent will, which of itself and as such is not efficacious, since good, whether natural or supernatural, easy or difficult to acquire, is realized only with its accompanying circumstances. As St. Thomas says: "A thing taken in its primary sense, and absolutely considered, may be good or evil, and yet when some additional circumstances are taken into account, by a consequent consideration may be changed into the contrary. Thus that a man should live is good, . . . but if in a particular case we add that a man is a murderer . . . to kill him is a good." Thus the merchant during a storm would will (conditionally) to retain his merchandise, but he wills to cast it into the sea so as to save his life. Thus again, God wills antecedently that all the fruits of the earth become ripe, although for the sake of a greater good He permits this not to happen in all cases. He also wills antecedently that all men should be saved, although, in view of a greater good, of which He alone is the judge, He permits that some commit sin and are lost.

The conclusion, then, is that God never commands what is impossible, that by His will and His love He makes it possible for all to keep His commandments: "It (New Law) gives sufficient help to avoid sin." God gives to each person even more than strict justice demands. Thus St. Thomas explains metaphysically the notion of antecedent will by appealing to the definition of omnipotence, which should never be overlooked, and in virtue of which all that God wills simply is fulfilled.

THE PRINCIPLE OF PREDILECTION AND WHAT IT PRESUPPOSES

On the other hand, as regards the consequent will, St. Thomas affirms, more clearly than anyone had done before his time, the principle of predilection, which is that one would not be better than another unless one

were loved more by God. As he says: “Since God’s love is the cause of goodness in things, as has been said, no one thing would be better than another if God did not will greater good for one than for another. . .. And the reason why some things are better than others, is that God wills them a greater good. Hence it follows that He loves more the better things.”

This principle of predilection is the corollary of the preceding one, that God’s love is the cause of the goodness of created beings. It seems to follow in the philosophical order as a necessary consequence of the principle of causality, that what comes in addition to a thing in existence has an efficient and supreme cause in Him who is Being itself, the source of all being and all good. It follows also, as a consequence of the principle of finality, that every agent acts for an end, and the purpose of the action of the supreme agent is to manifest His goodness, by reproducing a likeness of Himself, which is a more or less perfect participation of His nature.

Not only is this principle of predilection a manifest truth of the philosophical order, but it is also a revealed principle, for it finds its special application in the order of grace which, by its very nature, is gratuitous and makes us pleasing in God’s sight. This principle was enunciated by God to Moses, when He said: “I will have mercy on whom I will, and I will be merciful to whom it shall please Me.” St. Paul refers to this revealed truth when he writes concerning the divine election as follows: “Is there injustice with God? God forbid! For He saith to Moses: I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy. And I will show mercy to whom I will show mercy.” With this same principle always in mind, St. Paul also writes: “For who distinguisheth thee? or what hast thou that thou didst not receive?” St. Thomas thus explains these words in his commentary on this epistle: “Who is it that distinguisheth thee from the mass of those who are lost? This is more than thou canst do. Who is it that makes thee superior to another? Thou thyself canst not do this, and therefore why art thou proud of thyself?” He says the same in commenting on the parable of the talents: “He who makes a greater effort, has more grace; but to make a greater effort, he needs to be moved by a higher cause.” Likewise, in asking whether grace is greater in one than in another, he replies: “We must not seek the first cause of this diversity in the subject (or in man), for man prepares himself, only inasmuch as his free will is prepared by God. Hence the first cause of this diversity is to be sought on the part of God, who disposes His gifts of grace variously, in order that the beauty and perfection of the Church may result

from these various degrees; even as He instituted the various conditions of things, that the universe might be perfect. Hence after the Apostle had said (Eph. 4: 7): To every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the giving of Christ, having enumerated the various graces (v. 12), he adds: For the perfecting of the saints. . . for the edifying of the body of Christ.

St. Thomas had come across this principle of predilection formulated in different ways in the writings of St. Augustine who, concerning the good and bad angels, says: “If both were created equally good, then, while some fell by their evil will, the others were more abundantly assisted, and reached that high degree of blessedness from which they became certain they would never fall.” The good angels would not be better than the rest unless they had been loved and helped more by God. This same thought, variously expressed, is constantly recurring in St. Augustine’s writings on predestination against the Pelagians and Semipelagians. This is also the meaning he gives to the famous Gospel text which St. Thomas often quotes: “Why He draws this one and not that other, seek not to judge, if thou dost not wish to err.”

Having formulated this principle of predilection, that no created being would be better than another unless it were loved more by God, St. Thomas makes it the keystone of his treatise on predestination. To realize fully the importance of this principle, we must in the first place note more precisely what it presupposes as regards the efficacy of divine love, which is the cause of all kinds of created good. The principle of predilection presupposes, according to St. Thomas, that the decrees of the divine will with regard to our future salutary acts, are of themselves infallibly efficacious, and not because God foresees our consent. The same must be said of actual grace, by which we freely perform these salutary acts; it is of itself efficacious. St. Thomas spoke of these decrees as follows: “Determined effects proceed from His own infinite perfection, according to the determination of His will and intellect.” And again he says: “Even in us the cause of one and the same effect is knowledge as directing it, whereby the form of the work is conceived, and will as commanding it, since the form as it is in the intellect only is not determined to exist or not to exist in the effect, except by the will.” Similarly he remarks that: “God’s knowledge is the cause of things, in so far as His will is joined to it.”

That these decrees of the divine will concerning our salutary acts are of themselves infallibly efficacious and not because God foresees our consent,

is evidently the meaning of the famous eighth article of St. Thomas which we have already quoted. In it he says: “Since the divine will is perfectly efficacious, it follows not only that things are done which God wills to be done, but also that they are done in the way that He wills. Now God wills some things to be done necessarily, some contingently, to the right ordering of things, for the building up of the universe.” In this same article St. Thomas proposes this objection: “But the will of God cannot be hindered. Therefore the will of God imposes necessity on things willed.” He replies as follows: “From the very fact that nothing resists the divine will, it follows that not only those things happen which God wills to happen, but that they happen necessarily or contingently according to His will.”

If, as all the Thomists without exception remark, these decrees and the grace that assures their execution were not of themselves efficacious, but only because our consent was foreseen by God, contrary to the principle of predilection, the result of this would be that of two men or two angels equally loved and helped by God, one would become better than another. He would become better either because of a first or final act, or of one easy or difficult to perform, without having been loved and helped more by God; and then it would follow, exclusive of God’s intention, first as to conditionally free acts of the future, and then as to future acts, that of these two men equally loved and helped, and placed in the same circumstances, one of them would be more virtuous than the other.

St. Augustine, when writing about the efficacy of grace, had stated what is the foundation for the principle of predilection. He says: “And so this grace, which by divine liberality is secretly bestowed upon human beings, is spurned by no one hard of heart, for it is given for this very purpose that the hardness of heart may be taken away.”

THE ANTECEDENT AND CONSEQUENT WILLS

In no less clear terms than St. Augustine, St. Thomas expresses what is the foundation for the principle of predilection, in the fine distinction he draws between the antecedent will, which is the principle of sufficient grace, and the consequent will, which is the principle of efficacious grace. On this point he says: “Whatever God simply wills takes place; although what He wills antecedently may not take place.” God wills simply the good that must be accomplished right at the moment, as in the example of the

good thief's conversion, who was loved and helped more than the other. However, God made the observance of the precepts really possible for this latter; if he was lost, it was truly his own fault, in that he resisted the sufficient grace which was offered and even given by Christ who was dying for him.

St. Thomas often distinguished between these two graces. He did so, for instance, in one of his commentaries in which he said concerning Christ as redeemer: "He is the propitiation for our sins, efficaciously for some, but sufficiently for all, because the price of His blood is sufficient for the salvation of all; but it has its effect only in the elect, because of the obstacle to it." God often removes this obstacle, but not always. There is the mystery. "God deprives nobody of his due." He also "gives man sufficient help to avoid sin." As for efficacious grace, if it is given to this particular sinner, that is because of God's mercy; if it is refused to a certain other, that is because of His justice.

A considerable number of texts could be quoted from St. Thomas in which he clearly shows that, in his opinion, grace is of itself efficacious, like the divine decrees, the execution of which is assured by it. Thus, for instance, he writes: "The salutary work we perform is conferred upon us by God inasmuch as He operates in us, interiorly moving and urging us to good . . . inasmuch as His power operates in us to will and accomplish according to His good will." Elsewhere he says: "No matter how perfect a corporeal or spiritual nature is supposed to be, it cannot proceed to its act unless it be moved by God." "God's intention cannot fail, according to the saying of St. Augustine in his book on the Predestination of the Saints (De dono persever, XIV), that by God's gifts whoever is liberated, is most certainly liberated. Hence if God intends, while moving, that the one whose heart He moves should attain to grace, He will infallibly attain to it, according to John 6: 45: Everyone that hath heard of the Father and hath learned cometh to Me." "If God moves the will to anything, it is incompossible with this supposition, that the will be not moved thereto. But it is not impossible simply. Consequently it does not follow that the will is moved by God necessarily."

The necessity mentioned here is one of consequence, not of consequent. A good explanation of it had already been given by St. Albert the Great, and St. Thomas improved upon it when he showed that the divine will, by the very reason of its sovereign efficacy, reaches out mightily and sweetly,

even to the free mode of our acts; it wills them to be performed freely, and so they are infallibly. Bossuet admirably expresses the mind of St. Thomas, writing as follows: “Thus God wills from eternity all the acts that will be performed by the free will of human beings, all the goodness and reality there is in them. What is more absurd than to say, that it is not because God wills, that a thing exists? Must we not say, on the contrary, that a thing exists because God wills it? And just as it happens that we are free in virtue of the decree that wills us to be free, so it happens that we act freely in this or that act, in virtue even of the decree which includes all this in detail” St. Thomas had said the same: “God changes the will without forcing it. But He can change the will from the fact that He Himself operates in the will as He does in nature. . . . Hence as the will can change its act for another, much more so can God.” Farther on he says: “Only God can change the inclination of the will, which He gave it, according as He wills, from one thing to another.” Again St. Thomas says: “God moves the will immutably on account of the efficacy of the moving power which cannot fail; but on account of the nature of the will that is moved, which is indifferently disposed to various things, the will is not necessitated but remains free.” We shall see that the Thomists say just this and no more. This intrinsic efficacy of the divine decrees as regards our salutary acts is considered by St. Thomas as even a revealed truth. He quotes, in fact, well known scriptural texts in this sense. “Lord, Thou hast wrought all our works for us.” “As the divisions of waters, so the heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord; whithersoever He will He shall turn it.” “For it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will.” In his theological treatise he quotes the following passage: “O Lord, Lord almighty King, all things are in Thy power and there is none that can resist Thy will, if Thou determine to save Israel.” Another text quoted is as follows: “And I will give you a new heart, and put a new spirit within you. And I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My spirit in the midst of you; and I will cause you to walk in My commandments and to keep My judgments and do them.” St. Thomas sees the intrinsic efficacy of grace in these scriptural texts as well as in several canons of the Second Council of Orange. Most of these texts of the Council of Orange are taken from the works of St. Augustine and St. Prosper. Now St. Augus-tine, as we have seen, held that grace is efficacious of itself. The five canons of the Council of Orange cited

in the footnote express in different ways this truth that every good, whether natural or supernatural, comes from God. Now this is the very foundation of the principle of predilection.

Thus God willed efficaciously from all eternity that the Virgin Mary should give her free consent to the mystery of the incarnation. This had infallibly to be fulfilled; moved powerfully though very gently by a special grace, Mary infallibly uttered her fiat with complete freedom of will. Thus, too, Christ willed to die for us on the Cross at the hour irrevocably decreed. So also the good thief and the centurion were converted as God efficaciously willed. St. Thomas considers this the normal consequence of God's omnipotent will and love. The great mystery in this begins especially with sin. What is manifest for both St. Thomas and St. Augustine is this, that every good, even the free determination to perform a salutary act, comes from God, and entirely from Him as first cause, even though this determination comes entirely from us as secondary cause. As St. Thomas says: "There is no distinction between what flows from free will and what is of predestination; as there is no distinction between what flows from a secondary cause and from a first cause."

Now if the divine decrees concerning our salutary acts, and if the actual grace which assures the execution of these decrees, were not of themselves efficacious, but only because our consent was foreseen, then God's knowledge and will would no longer be the cause in the free determinations of our salutary acts of the more intimate and better part. In that case there would be some good, and even the best part of our merits, which did not come from the source of all good. Moreover, with regard to this free determination of the salutary act, since God's knowledge and will are no longer the causes, these would be passive and dependent. We should have to admit a passivity in the pure Act. His knowledge with regard to certain determinations of the created order and even to the best of them, would be passive, measured by this created reality instead of measuring it. This would mean the final rejection of the principle that no being would be better than another, unless it had been loved more by God.

CHAPTER III

THE NATURE AND REASON OF PREDESTINATION ACCORDING TO ST. THOMAS

WITH this principle of predilection as his guiding star, St. Thomas wrote the whole question concerning predestination in which he gives us the mature reflection of his thought on this point. We may say that all the articles of this question are so many corollaries of this principle. Let us note carefully the conclusion and proof of each article. We shall again take up the discussion of these articles in the theoretical or syn-thetic part of this work.

1) The first article defines predestination as: “The plan of the direction of a rational creature towards the end, i.e., life eternal; for to destine is to direct or send.” It is therefore the plan in God’s mind of directing this particular man or that particular angel to the ultimate and supernatural end. It is this plan, once ordained and willed which, from all eternity, determines the efficacious means that will lead this particular man or that particular angel to his final end. In so defining predestination St. Thomas is faithful to the very letter to St. Augustine’s definition, who states that it is: “the foreknowledge and preparation of the benefits by which most certainly are liberated whoever are liberated.” “By predestination God knew what He Himself will do.” The point at issue here is not a foreknowledge of our merits; for this would presuppose a passivity or dependence in God with regard to our conditionally future free determinations, and then to our future ones. The foreknowledge in question concerns what God will do, what graces He will grant so as to lead this particular man or that particular angel to his final end. Thus predestination, by reason of its object, is to be considered as a part of providence. Note well that predestination so defined

is predestination to glory; the formal wording of the text is: “towards the end, i.e., life eternal.” Moreover, predestination merely to grace is not predestination in the true sense, since it is not the contrary of reprobation. This is admitted not only by Thomists but also by congruists of the Bellarminian and Suarezian type, and even by such Molinists as Father Billot.

2) The second article proves that predestination is in God who predestines and not in the one predestined; but its effects in the one predestined are calling, justification, and glorification.

3) The third article defines its contrary, which is reprobation. It is a part of Providence to permit certain ones to fall into and remain in sin (negative reprobation), and for this defection it inflicts upon them the penalty of damnation (positive reprobation). But whereas predestination is the cause of grace and of our salutary acts, reprobation is by no means the cause of sin. Nowhere do we find in this article that negative reprobation consists, as some later Thomists thought, in a positive exclusion from glory on the grounds of an undue benefit. It is merely the non-election and the will to permit certain ones to fall into and remain in sin. We shall see that the motive for this reprobation is indicated by St. Thomas.

4) The fourth article proves that the predestined are elected by God, so that predestination presupposes election, and this latter presupposes love. As St. Thomas says: “Predestination presupposes election in the order of reason; and election presupposes love.”

Here we see the application of two principles ignored by some later theologians. First of all we have this principle that God, in this case as always, wills the end before the means, and therefore He wills the predestined glory before willing them grace by which they will merit it. Duns Scotus is not, therefore, as some recently maintained, the first one to apply this principle here. St. Thomas writes on this point as follows: “But nothing is directed towards an end unless the will for that end already exists. Whence the predestination of some to eternal salvation presupposes in the order of reason, that God wills their salvation, and to this belong both election and love—love inasmuch as He wills them this particular good of eternal salvation—since to love is to wish well to anyone, as stated above (q. 20, a. 2, 3); election inasmuch as He wills this good to some in preference to others, since He reprobates some, as stated above (a. 3).”

The second principle applied here is that of predilection: no thing would be better than another, unless it were loved more by God. St. Thomas, without alluding at all to the foreseeing of our merits, whether conditionally future or future, excludes any idea of passivity or dependence from the divine knowledge. He writes as follows: “Election and love, however, are differently ordered in God and in ourselves: because in us the will in loving does not cause good, but we are incited to love by the good which already exists; and therefore we choose someone to love, and so election in us precedes love. In God, however, it is the reverse. For His will, by which in loving He wishes good to someone, is the cause of that good possessed by some in preference to others. Thus it is clear that love precedes election in the order of reason, and election precedes predestination. Whence all the predestinate are objects of election and love.” The Pelagians looked upon God as merely the spectator and not the author of the good and salutary consent which distinguishes the just person from the sinner. Both St. Thomas and St. Augustine maintain that the better and more intimate part in the free determination of this good consent must come from the source of all good. No one has asserted this more positively than the Angelic Doctor.

We shall see that Molina departs from the teaching of St. Thomas in this fundamental article. In accordance with a definition of liberty which, in the opinion of the Thomists, cannot be reconciled with the principle of predilection, he affirms that: “Of two persons who receive an equal interior grace when called by God, it may happen that one of them, because of the freedom of his will, is converted and the other remains an infidel.” He even affirms that of two sinners, the one who is converted is sometimes the one who received less help from God. Contrary to the principle of predilection formulated by St. Thomas and enunciated in various forms by many of his predecessors, this person thus becomes better than the other without having been loved more by God. This explains why Molina, in contradiction to St. Thomas, said that “election did not precede predestination.” He recognizes that St. Thomas seems to have held the contrary opinion; but he adds: “I never approved, however, of this opinion.” He speaks in the same manner of the divine motion, regretting that St. Thomas and the majority of the Scholastics admitted with St. Augustine a predestination that did not have its foundation in the foreknowledge of merits. Here we detect the point about which, as we shall see, Thomists and Molinists differ. What they seek

to know is this: whether the principle of predilection, which presupposes the intrinsic efficacy of the divine decrees and of grace, is true or false.

5) In the fifth article, St. Thomas deduces other consequences from the principle of predilection, asking whether the foreknowledge of merits is the cause of predestination. He gives a negative answer to this question and explains it by a series of definite conclusions in the body of the article and in the reply to the third objection.

It is especially in connection with this principal point at issue that St. Thomas gives us his interpretation of the principal texts of St. Paul concerning predestination. It is of importance for us to insist on them.

CHAPTER IV

THE SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND FOR THE TEACHING OF ST. THOMAS

EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS

LET us consider his exegesis on the two passages to the Ephesians. They are as follows: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with spiritual blessings in heavenly places, in Christ. As He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and unspotted in His sight in charity. Who hath predestinated us unto the adoption of children through Jesus Christ unto Himself, according to the purpose of His will, unto the praise of the glory of His grace. . . . In whom we are also called by lot, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things according to the counsel of His will that we may be unto the praise of His glory.”

In his commentary on this epistle, St. Thomas makes three important remarks, afterwards referred to by all the Thomists.

1) He notes that when the Apostle writes: “Who hath predestinated us unto the adoption of the children,” though we may understand these words as referring to adoptive sonship realized here on earth by sanctifying grace, yet it is far better to say they refer to the perfect likeness to God that will be realized in our heavenly home, in accordance with what St. Paul himself said: “We who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption of the sons of God.” Grace, indeed, is given in view of future glory and, according to the teaching of St. Thomas, God, all-wise as He is, wills the end before the means. Moreover, predestination only to the life of grace and not to glory, would be no more than predestination in name, since many of the reprobates are so predestined.

This remark of St. Thomas is retained in substance by several modern exegetes who see in this text of St. Paul an immediate reference to the general election of Christians to a life of holiness, but in such a way that the principles declared on this subject apply as a consequence to the special election of this particular person rather than to a certain other. St. Thomas insists on these principles proclaimed by St. Paul.

2) He remarks that God has chosen us, not because we were saints but that we might become saints. His words are: “He chose us, not because we were saints, for we were not; but He chose us that we might become saints by leading a virtuous life and one free from vices.”

3) St. Thomas observes that, for St. Paul, God’s plan or His eternal decree is the reason why we are predestined, and not because He has foreseen our merits. Says St. Paul: “He predestinated us . . . according to the purpose of His will.” A beneficent design is this, which is the result of His most pure love. St. Thomas particularly stresses this in his commentary, for he says: “That anyone, however, is predestined

to life eternal . . . this is a grace given that is purely gratuitous . . . for no merits preceded it.” It is not a question merely of predestination to grace, but also of predestination to glory, which is the only kind that cannot be shared in common between the elect and the reprobates.

The holy Doctor again insists on this in connection with verse eleven of this chapter: “In whom we are also called . . . being predestinated according to the purpose of Him.” “Therefore the reason why we are predestined,” says St. Thomas, “is not because our merits were foreseen, but the pure will of God is the reason for this; wherefore St. Paul adds that it is according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things according to the counsel of His will.” These final words, moreover, indicate that everything which happens depends upon God’s will. There is nothing, therefore, in this text of St. Paul that points to the foreseeing of our merits as the reason for predestination.

EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

St. Paul still more clearly expresses his mind, as St. Thomas views it, in the Epistle to the Romans, which directly and explicitly treats of predestination with glorification as its effect: “We know that to them that love God all things work together unto good, to such as, according to His purpose, are called to be saints. For whom He foreknew, He also

predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn amongst many brethren. And whom He predestinated, them He also glorified."

In explaining this text St. Thomas insists upon this, that everything in this life contributes to the good of those who persevere unto the end in God's love. This means in the life of those predestined according to God's purpose. He refuses to see in the words "whom He foreknew," any reference to foreknowledge of merits, for, according to St. Paul, the merits of the predestined are the effects of predestination. He re-calls the texts so often quoted on this subject: "For who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received? It is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will." St. Thomas holds, therefore, that according to this text of St. Paul quoted in the previous paragraph, everything that directs the predestined to eternal salvation is the effect of predestination. It is defi-nitely formulated by him as follows: "Whatsoever is in man disposing him towards salvation is all included under the effect of predestination," even the free determination to perform a salutary act.

In addition to this, St. Thomas holds that Christ's predestination to divine sonship is prior to our Savior's foreseen merits, since these merits presuppose the Person of the Word made flesh and therefore His divine sonship. Now Christ's predestination, as St. Augustine said, is the eminent exemplar of ours.

Concerning the ninth chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, St. Thomas recognizes that he treats in the beginning of this chapter of the call of the Gentiles to the grace of the Christian faith. In contrast to this, he treats of the unbelief of the Jews; but St. Thomas recognizes that this chapter also contains principles applicable to individual cases. Father Lagrange is in perfect agreement on this point, and says: "It is beyond dispute that this call of the Gentiles is at the same time a call to salvation. We cannot help thinking of the fate of each; we transpose the terms of the proposition, we apply St. Paul's principles to individual cases of salvation. It is purely a favor on God's part when He calls one to justification. . . . But God does not proceed in the same way toward those whom He calls and those who are not called. . . . According to St. Paul, man is truly the cause of his (positive) reprobation by reason of his sins: 'For they stumbled at the stumbling-stone.' "

This brings St. Thomas to explain verse thirteen. Giving a general scope to the words, “Jacob I loved,” he formulates the principle of predilection in these terms: “Election and love are differently ordered in God and in man. In man election precedes love, for man is incited to love from a consideration of good in the object loved; for this reason he chooses in preference this thing to the other and makes it the object of his love.” But whatever the Pelagians and Semipelagians may have said about it, there can be no such dependence or passivity in God. St. Thomas continues in the same strain: “But God’s will is the cause of all good that is in the creature, and therefore the good by reason of which one thing is preferred to another by way of election is consequent to God’s will, which is concerned with His own good, and which has love as its province.” Therefore the conclusion of St. Thomas is: “Foreknowledge of merits cannot be the reason of predestination, since foreseen merits are the effects of predestination.” On the contrary, demerits, of which God can by no means be the cause, are the reason of damnation. St. Thomas finds this thought expressed in the famous scriptural text: “Destruction is thy own, O Israel: thy help is only in Me.”

Such is the mystery as St. Thomas, following St. Augustine, finds it expressed in the epistles of St. Paul. He does not seek to make it less obscure, for that would be to detract from its sublimity. But he brings forward the objection raised by human reason, as foreseen by St. Paul, and he stresses the more distinctive parts of the Apostle’s reply.

The objection raised by the Pelagian and Semipelagians against St. Augustine is not original, for it was already proposed by St. Paul when he asked: “What shall we say then? Is there injustice with God?” Is there injustice on God’s part in distributing so unequally His gifts to men who are equal by nature?

St. Thomas remarks that St. Paul did not reply to this objection by having recourse to the foreknowledge of merits as regards the elect, as if this were the reason for their predestination. He replied, maintaining it to be a mystery of revealed truth instead of representing it in an inferior light: “Is there injustice with God? God forbid! For He saith to Moses: I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy. And I will show mercy to whom I will show mercy. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth but of God that showeth mercy. . . . Therefore He hath mercy on whom He will, and whom He will He hardeneth.” St. Thomas remarks that St. Paul affirms the principle of predilection by presenting it in a new form, finding

it revealed in these words of God to Moses: “I will have mercy on whom I will; and I will be merciful to whom it shall please Me.” Thus our election depends neither upon our will nor upon our efforts, but upon God who shows mercy.

Concerning verses fifteen and sixteen, St. Thomas says again that the effect of predestination cannot be the reason for this latter. Now the good use of grace or merit is the effect of predestination. Therefore foreseen merit cannot be the reason for predestination. There is no other reason for this but the will of God. Now, he goes on to say, we cannot speak of justice or injustice in cases of pure mercy; such as, for instance, on meeting two persons, if we give to one and not to the other; or, if two persons have equally offended us, we pardon one and demand reparation from the other. The same is to be said with regard to sinners. God is merciful toward the one whom He restores to grace, and just toward the one whom He leaves in sin. He is unjust to nobody. The conclusion therefore of St. Thomas is that, according to St. Paul, foreknowledge of merits cannot be the cause of predestination, and by this he understands predestination to glory, which is the only kind worthy of this name; for predestination only to grace is common to the elect and many of the reprobates. Moreover, the merits that follow justification, since they are the effects of predestination that is peculiar to the elect, cannot be the cause of this latter. St. Thomas is among the clearest on this point, and we shall find him expressing himself still more clearly in that article of the Summa, the scriptural proofs of which we give in this chapter.

St. Thomas completes his commentary on the ninth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans by examining the last objection St. Paul proposes. “Thou wilt say therefore to me,” he says, “Why doth He then find fault? For who resisteth His will?” This is how St. Thomas understands the objection: Why reprove the sinner for not having done what he was incapable of doing? To quote his own words: “It is useless to ask anyone to do that which is not in one’s power to do.” This is the well-known objection of the insufficiency of divine assistance.

The way to reply to this difficulty is by saying that God never commands what is impossible, and that He makes the attainment of salvation really possible for all who have to observe His commandments. Taken in this sense, we may say that He wills to save all; but, on the other hand, no one would be better than another, unless one were loved more by God.

Affirming the principle of predilection and presenting it in a new form, St. Paul says: “O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it: Why hast thou made me thus? Or hath not the potter power over the clay of the same lump, to make one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor? What if God, willing to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction, that He might show the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy which He hath prepared unto glory . . . where is the injustice?”

St. Paul’s reply to this objection confirms all that precedes, as also does what he adds farther on when he asks: “Hath God cast away His people? God forbid! . . . As in the time of Elias. . . . There is a remnant saved according to the election of grace. And if by grace, it is not by works; otherwise grace is no more grace.”

In his commentary on the concluding portion of this ninth chapter in the Epistle to the Romans, St. Thomas remarks once more as follows: “Whatever good a man has, must be ascribed to the divine goodness as principal agent. For we read in Isaias: ‘And now, O Lord, Thou art our Father, and we are clay; and Thou art our maker and we are all the works of Thy hands.’ If God does not promote man to better things, but leaving him in his weakness, makes the meanest use of him, He does him no wrong, so that he can justly complain about it.” Where is the injustice, if God permits the bad thief to die unrepentant, and if He pardons the other so as to declare in him the riches of His glory?

THE GRATUITY OF PREDESTINATION IN THE THEOLOGICAL SUMMA

In the Theological Summa, St. Thomas only summarizes and systematically arranges what he said in his commentary on the ninth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. The title of the article is: “Whether the foreknowledge of merits is the cause of predestination?” This means, as explained at the beginning of the argument in the article: Whether God preordained that He would give the effect of predestination to anyone on account of any merits? We find the same doctrine as set forth in this article in other works of St. Thomas, but it is expressed here in a simpler, sublimer, and more precise manner.

According to his accustomed way of procedure in the statement of the question, St. Thomas posits three difficulties, the principal one being the very same as that formulated by St. Paul when he asks: “Is there injustice in God?” He gives at first, in the argument on the contrary, a general and negative answer. The Apostle wrote to Titus: “Not by the works of justice which we have done, but according to His mercy, He saved us.” Now, as it is a fact that He saves us, so He has predestined us to salvation. Foreknowledge of merits is therefore not the cause or reason of predestination which, as St. Thomas defined it in the first article, means predestination to glory. After having formulated this negative and general response on the authority of St. Paul, St. Thomas explains it, recalling and refuting Origen’s error, the Pelagian and Semipelagian heresies, and an opinion held by some Scholastics. He formulates the following conclusions: (1) Pre-existing merits in a former life cannot be the reason for predestination; (2) nor can it be because of merits acquired prior to justification; (3) nor can it be because of merits acquired after justification.

To prove this third conclusion, St. Thomas has recourse to a principle, the force of which was not realized by many of the later theologians. Of those who held the contrary opinion he says: “But these seem to have drawn a distinction between that which flows from grace, and that which flows from free will, as if the same thing cannot come from both. It is, however, manifest that what is of grace in the life of the predestined is the effect of predestination; and this cannot be considered as the reason of predestination, since it is contained in the notion of predestination. Therefore, if anything else in us be the reason of predestination, it will be outside the effect of predestination. Now there is no distinction between what flows from a secondary cause and from a first cause. For the providence of God produces effects through the operation of secondary causes, as was shown above (q. 19, a. 8). Wherefore, that which flows from free will is also of predestination.” In other words, in the life of the predestined neither the good use of free will nor of grace can be given as the reason for predestination, for they are its effects. Why so? The reason is because we cannot distinguish between what is produced by the secondary cause and what is produced by the first cause; these are two total causes, not co-ordinated but subordinated. Not only does the whole effect come from both, as in the case of two horses drawing a heavy vehicle which one of them would not succeed in drawing alone; but, whereas one of these horses

is not moved by the other, the secondary cause does not act except it be moved by the first Cause. On this point Molina very plainly separates from St. Thomas. From this text just quoted we see that the Angelic Doctor considers even the free determination to perform a salutary act as coming entirely from us as a secondary cause, and entirely from God as first Cause, without which we would not determine ourselves to act. This is but the application of principles that have already been explained by him. St. Thomas also writes farther on: “Whatsoever is in man disposing him towards salvation, is all included under the effect of predestination.”

In the continuation of this fifth article St. Thomas formulates a conclusion that to us seems accurately to express and clinch several assertions of St. Albert and St. Bonaventure. He writes: “There is no reason why one effect of predestination should not be the reason or cause of another, a subsequent effect being the reason of a previous effect, as its final cause; and the previous effect being the reason of the subsequent as its meritorious cause, which is reduced to the disposition of the matter. Thus we might say that God preordained to give glory on account of merit, and that He preordained to give grace to merit glory.” How are we to understand this last statement? According to all that has been quoted so far, and taking especially into consideration the refutation of the third error recorded in the preceding paragraph, we must understand this statement to mean that God decided to give to a certain person, for instance, to the good thief in preference to the other, that grace which is of itself efficacious, so that he may merit eternal glory to which He predestined him. By this St. Thomas does not mean that God decided to give the good thief a grace that will become efficacious by reason of the good consent of this latter. This interpretation is excluded by what is said in the preceding paragraph: “there is no distinction between what flows from a secondary cause and from a first cause.” It is also excluded by the final conclusion in the argumentative part of the article, which is as follows: “In another way, the effect of predestination may be considered in general. Thus, it is impossible that the whole of the effect of predestination in general should have any cause as coming from us; because whatever is in man disposing him towards salvation is all included under the effect of predestination, even the preparation for grace.”

Various theologians of a later date, contrary to this, said that the free determination of the salutary act is neither the effect of the divine causality

nor of predestination. Undoubtedly they granted that complete predestination does not depend on foreseen merits, understood in this sense, that it includes the first grace which we cannot merit; but they do not accept the interpretation of St. Thomas, who declares that everything in man which directs him to salvation, even the free determination of the salutary act, is the effect of the divine causality and of predestination. Their opinion is about the same as the one held by those to whom St. Thomas replied when He said that "there is no distinction between what flows from free will and what is of predestination; as there is no distinction between what flows from a second cause and from a first cause."

We see that these different conclusions from the argument of the fifth article, explain the general and negative reply of the argument on the contrary, which states that the foreknowledge of merits is not the cause or reason of predetermination. This applies to predestination to glory, which is the only predestination that answers the definition of it given in the first article; on the other hand, predestination to grace is set up in opposition to reprobation. We also see that this general answer and the conclusions explaining it are just so many corollaries of the principle of predilection, that one would not be better than another, unless one were loved more by God.

THE PRINCIPAL DIFFICULTY

In the reply to the third objection of this same fifth article there are two final conclusions that present still more prominently the scope of this great principle. The conclusion before the last is: "God willed to manifest His goodness in men, in respect to those whom He predestines, by means of His mercy, in sparing them; and with regard to others, whom He reprobates, by means of His justice, in punishing them. This is the reason why God elects some and rejects others." This general reason has its foundation, says St. Thomas, in the words of revelation as expressed in the Epistle to the Romans: "What if God willing to show His wrath (that is the vengeance of His justice) and to make His power known, endured (that is permitted), with much patience, vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction, and that He might show the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy which He hath prepared unto glory (where is the injustice?)." Divine goodness, on the one hand, tends to communicate itself, and thus it is the principle of mercy; on

the other hand, it has an inalienable right to be loved above all things, and is thus the principle of justice. It is fitting that this supreme Goodness be manifested in its two aspects, and that the splendor of infinite justice appear as the refulgence of infinite mercy. Evil is thus permitted by God only for a greater good, of which infinite justice is the judge, and which the elect are destined to contemplate in heaven.

Finally, in the last conclusion, St. Thomas visualizes no longer the good and bad in general, but each one in particular. He says: “Yet why He chooses some for glory and reprobates others, has no reason except the divine will.” St. Augustine had said: “Why He draws one, and another He draws not, seek not to judge, if thou dost not wish to err.” He has even shown how the foreknowledge of either future or conditionally future merits could not be the cause of predestination. This last conclusion, which is common to St. Augustine and St. Thomas, is a rigorous consequence of the principle of predilection. “Since God’s love is the cause of the goodness of created things, no one thing would be better than another unless it were loved more by God.” The last conclusion of the synthesis is reunited to the principle of this latter. St. Thomas confirms it by an analogy taken from things in nature or from those made by human skill. It depends solely upon God’s will that this particular part of matter should receive one of the lowest forms, and that other one of the noblest. It likewise depends solely upon the artist’s will that, among several equal stones, this particular stone should be put in this part of the wall, and that in another. In the choice of the elect the sovereignty of the divine liberty is made manifest. If God, without any inconvenience to Himself, could have not created, not willed to raise us up to the supernatural order, not willed the incarnation, with far greater reason He could have not chosen Peter in preference to Judas. If He chose him, He did so most freely and because He loved him more. All this doctrine is included in the principle that one thing would not be better than another, unless it were loved more by God.

There remains the other aspect of the mystery, which St. Thomas most emphatically affirms in terminating his argument: “Neither on this account can there be said to be injustice in God, if He prepares unequal lots for not unequal things. . . . In things which are given gratuitously a person can give more or less, just as he pleases—provided he deprives nobody of his due—without any infringement of justice.” God does not take away what is due to anyone, for He never commands what is impossible; on the contrary,

however, by reason of His love He makes it really possible for all to observe His commandments, and He even grants out of His goodness more than strict justice would demand; for He often raises men many a time from the grave of sin, when He could leave them therein.

CONCLUSION

We will conclude this exposition of the Angelic Doctor's doctrine by saying that St. Thomas, better than any of his predecessors, has set forth clearly the principles underlying the true extreme and apparently contradictory aspects of this great mystery. He perceives only the more clearly the sublimity of the mystery. He has brought out into very bold relief the contrast between this light and shade in theological matters. On the one hand, we have the shining light of the two principles enunciated by him, one of which declares against predestinarianism, God's infinite justice, that He never commands what is impossible and makes it possible for all to be saved. The other principle, directed against Pelagianism, declares the free intervention of God's mercy, that one thing would not be better than another unless it were loved more by God. But just as these two principles, viewed separately, are certain and clear, so is their reconciliation an impenetrable obscurity. Why is this? It is because infinite justice, infinite mercy, and sovereign liberty are reconciled only in the eminence of the Deity, in the intimate life of God, in which they are identified without destroying one another. Now St. Thomas has shown that we cannot have in this life any positive concept of the Deity as such. We can know God only by what He has analogically in common with creatures; but what belongs properly to Him is known by us only negatively (as not finite being), or relatively (as supreme being). In this sense we say that the Deity is above being and above the one; Likewise, the divine paternity, filiation, and spiration are manifested to us only analogically by revelation. Hence the mystery, and especially the obscurity of the problem that confronts us. The intimate reconciliation of infinite justice, infinite mercy, and sovereign liberty is beyond the scope of speculative theology and its discursive method of procedure. By reason of its obscurity, it is the very object of faith (faith is of things unseen) and of contemplation, which is the result of faith enlightened by the gifts of understanding and wisdom: "O the depth of the riches of the knowledge and the wisdom of God!"

Bossuet admirably expresses the Angelic Doctor's thought. Writing on this subject, he says: "I do not deny that God in His goodness is moved to compassion for all men, nor do I say that He does not provide the means for their eternal salvation in the general dispensation of His providence. . . . But however great may be His plans for all mankind, He shows a certain peculiar regard and preference for a number of them known to Him. All those whom He regards in this manner bewail their sins and are converted in due time. . . . This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all that He hath given Me, I should lose nothing. And why does He introduce us to these sublime truths? Does He do this to trouble and alarm us? . . . Our Savior's plan is this, that by contemplating this glance He casts in secrecy upon those whom He knows, and whom His Father has given Him by a certain choice, and recognizing that He can lead them to their haven of eternal salvation by unfailing means, we should learn, first of all, to ask for these means, and uniting our prayer with His, say with Him: Deliver us from evil, or else say with the Church: Permit us not to be separated from Thee; when our will seeks to be its own master, permit it not; hold it in Thy hand, change it and bring it back to Thee. . . . There is another thing which our Savior wishes to teach us, and it is this; that we abandon ourselves to His loving kindness; not that there is no more need of action and toil on our part. . . ; but in doing everything to the best of our ability, we must above all give ourselves up completely to God alone, now and forever. . . . Let no one say to me that this doctrine of grace and of preference is the despair of good souls. What! For my greater assurance, they think of throwing me upon my own resources, and thus rid me of my inconstancy? No, my God, I do not consent to this. My only assurance is in abandoning myself to Thee. . . . Help me, and I shall be saved. Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed. Convert me, and I shall be converted." All this is quite in agreement with the teaching of St. Thomas on the formal motive of hope, which relies not on our efforts, but upon God's power to help.

CHAPTER V

PREDESTINATION AND THE VIEWS OF THE FIRST THOMISTS

THE first Thomists who wrote on predestination follow faithfully the teaching of St. Thomas as just presented by us. Especially is this the case with Capreolus, Cajetan, and Sylvester of Ferrara.

Before considering these authors we would point out that Aegidius Romanus of the Augustinian Hermits and a pupil of St. Thomas in Paris (1269-71), wrote on this subject as follows: “God wills all men to be saved by His antecedent will, when we consider the order as established, its nature and the common helps afforded; but He does not will all to be saved by His consequent will, when we consider the execution of the order, the individual and the special helps afforded.” Among the common helps he includes the precepts and the counsels; special helps are the conferring of grace, justification and conversion, and perseverance in doing good. In the same passage he makes the following observation: “The conferring of grace requires the movement of free will . . . although such willing on God’s part is effected by Him in us through the intermediary of our free will.

1) Capreolus emphasizes the seven conclusions quoted by us from the works of St. Thomas, and he is unmistakably clear in his defense of predestination to glory previous to foreseen merits, as Dr. John Ude points out. In this same work he proves (pp. 149-217) that Capreolus taught the intrinsic efficacy of the divine decrees as regards our salutary acts, and also the intrinsic efficacy of grace which is explained as a physical but non-necessitating predetermination. His words are: “Although God’s consequent will is always fulfilled, yet it does not generally impose a necessity upon the things willed.” Capreolus proves this conclusion from many texts of St. Thomas, especially from the following one: “The divine will does not exclude contingency nor impose absolute necessity on things. For God wills

all that is requisite for the thing which He wills, as already stated. Now it is befitting some things, according to the mode of their nature, that they be contingent, and not necessary. . . . Therefore He wills certain things to be contingent. Now the efficacy of the divine will requires not only that what God wills to be should be, but also that it should be in the mode that God wills it to be. . . . Therefore the efficacy of the divine will does not remove contingency." The divine consequent will is therefore always of itself efficacious. Capreolus also says: "No effect proceeds from the divine knowledge without the will as intermediary, and this latter determines the knowledge to realize the effect." This means the decree without which the divine intellect cannot know infallibly the free acts of the future, whether these be conditional or absolute.

2) Cajetan defends, against Henry of Ghent, the teaching of St. Thomas such as we have presented it. Moreover, previous to this, in commenting on the divine will he had positively affirmed the transcendent efficacy of the divine causality as follows: "Because that willing is most efficacious, the effects follow not only as to the things willed, but also as to the mode of their being willed." Far from destroying the freedom of our acts, the divine causality, which is supremely efficacious, produces this effect in us and with us. Cajetan, moreover, admits also the principle of predilection. On this he says: "For this reason some things are better, because God wills for them a greater good." And again he says: "The reason why God chose us is because He loved us." Similarly, in his commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Cajetan wrote on the transcendency of the mystery of predestination a page that commands our admiration; a page in which certain assertions of his, for which he had been criticized by Sylvester of Ferrara, receive their finishing touch.

3) Sylvester of Ferrara, a contemporary of Cajetan, writes in defense of this same doctrine in his commentary as follows: "According as God preordained from eternity to direct some to their ultimate end, He is said to have predestined them. . . . But He is said to have reprobated those to whom He decided from eternity not to give the final grace. . . . Whatever there is in man ordaining him to salvation is included in this total effect of predestination." Predestination to glory cannot therefore be because of foreseen merits.

Sylvester, like Cajetan, refutes here Henry of Ghent; like him, he also admits that the decrees of the divine will with regard to our salutary acts are

of themselves efficacious. From this he concludes the principle of predilection. St. Thomas had affirmed this principle too clearly for it to be denied by any of his commentators. Now it presupposes, as we have seen, that the divine decrees with regard to our salutary acts are of themselves efficacious, and not because our free consent was foreseen.

Almost all the old theologians, whether they are Augustinians, Thomists, or Scotists, agree on this principal point and on the intrinsic efficacy of grace; although they differ on a secondary issue, which concerns the divine motion that gives assurance of the execution of the divine decrees. The Thomists, following the teaching of their master, maintain that this motion is not merely of the moral or objective order, by way of attraction, but that it is also physical or as regards the exercise of the act. They also maintain that it is not merely a general and indifferent premotion, but one which, without necessitating us, inclines us infallibly, though firmly and sweetly, to determine ourselves to perform this particular act rather than its contrary.

The Augustinians explain the intrinsic efficacy of the divine decrees and of grace by means of a motion of a moral or objective order, which they often called a victorious delectation. To this the Thomists reply that there is no such delectation in the case of salutary acts performed in a state of great aridity and with much difficulty. Moreover, they add, of moral motions by way of attraction, seeing God face to face is the only one that infallibly attracts.

Scotus, as we shall see, agrees with St. Thomas and the Thomists on the absolute gratuity of predestination to glory and on the intrinsic efficacy of the divine decrees and of grace; but for the physical predetermining and non-necessitating premotion, he substitutes a sort of sympathy that prevails between created and uncreated liberty, a sympathy that amounts to a moral motion by way of victorious attraction.

In the great problem that confronts us, these differences of opinion, as the Thomists have frequently pointed out, are of secondary importance. If, in fact, we agree in admitting that the divine decrees and grace are of themselves efficacious, and not because our consent to them was foreseen, it is of much less importance for us to know by what kind of motion the execution of these decrees is assured. Likewise, if we agree that our will moves of its own accord our two arms, it is of much less importance for us to know by the intervention of what nerve centers the will does so.

CHAPTER VI

PREDESTINATION ACCORDING TO THE TEACHING OF DUNS SCOTUS

THE Subtle Doctor most clearly affirms the absolute gratuity of predestination to glory, as well as the intrinsic efficacy of the divine decrees and of grace. He writes: “It is only because God wills or preordains that one shall make good use of free will that He foresees this person will make good use of it; for, as stated in the thirty-ninth distinction (no. 1129), the certain foreseeing of future contingent things is due to the determination of these by the divine will. If, therefore, the occasion presents itself to the divine will of two persons equal in natural endowments, why, I ask, does He preordain that this one shall make good use of free will and the other not? There seems to be no reason to assign for this except the divine will.” Scotus writes this against Henry of Ghent, and on this point he is in agreement with St. Thomas.

In addition to this, he says: “In another way this can be expressed, by saying that there is no reason for predestination even on the part of the one predestined, such that it is in any way prior to this predestination. But there is some cause for (positive) reprobation.

a) This is proved first from the fact that one who wills methodically the end and those things which are means for attaining the end, first wills the end before willing any of those things which are means for attaining the end, because one wills other things in view of such end. Therefore, since the whole of this process by which the creature capable of eternal happiness is brought to the perfection of its end, the ultimate end of which is perfect happiness, God who wills to give anything in this order, first wills the end to this creature capable of eternal happiness, and afterwards, as it were, wills to it those things which are in the order of means pertaining to that end. But grace, faith, merits, and the good use of free will, all of these are

directed to this end, although some refer more remotely and others more closely to it. Therefore God wills eternal happiness to the creature before any of these means; and He wills whatsoever of these means before He foresees that it will have any of them. Therefore He does not will eternal happiness to it because He foresaw any of these means.

b) In the second place this is proved from the fact that it is only because damnation is just that it is seen to be good. As St. Augustine says: “God is not the avenger before one is a sinner.”

In all this Scotus agrees with St. Thomas. Someone wrote recently that Scotus is the one who first injected into this question the principle that the one who wills methodically the end and those things which are the means for attaining the end, first wills the end. St. Thomas had written equivalently in the following words: “Nothing is directed towards an end unless the will for that end already exists: Whence the predestination of some to eternal salvation presupposes in the order of reason that God wills their salvation; and to this belong both election and love.”

It is on the notion of merit and on the nature of the divine motion assuring the execution of the divine decrees that Scotus differs from St. Thomas. Instead of admitting a physical and non-indifferent premotion, he speaks, as we have seen, of a mysterious influx, called “sympathy” by several of his disciples. In virtue of this sympathy, created liberty inclines infallibly and freely to accept the decree of divine liberty, which virtually includes it.

The Thomists reply to this, saying that this sympathy which subordinates the created will to God, either follows as a natural consequence of the necessary subordination of the creature to God, and in this case liberty is out of the question; or else it is a moral motion, of the objective order by way of attraction, and then only the vision of God face to face can so captivate the will as to attract it infallibly.

But, let us repeat, this difference is of secondary importance in the question which confronts us, since Scotus admits, as St. Thomas and his disciples do, the absolute gratuity of predestination to glory as well as the intrinsic efficacy of the divine decrees with regard to our salutary acts and the grace by which we are enabled to put them into effect.

On these essential points, almost all the old theologians, whether Augustinians, Thomists, or Scotists, are in agreement. Almost all admit the principle of predilection, namely, that one man would not be better than another (by reason of an act either easy or difficult to perform, whether the first or final act), unless he were loved more and helped more by God. Now this principle, as we have seen, presupposes that the divine decrees with regard to our salutary acts are of themselves efficacious, and not because of our foreseen consent. At the same time this principle virtually includes the doctrine of the absolute gratuity of predestination to glory previous to foreseen merits. So speaks the Augustinian author of the Imitation of Christ, in the following extract: “I am to be praised in all My saints; I am to be blessed above all things and to be honored in all whom I have thus gloriously exalted and predestined without any merit of their own. . . . They glory not in their own merits, inasmuch as they ascribe no goodness to themselves but attribute all to Me who of Mine own infinite love have given them all things. . . . In Thee, therefore, O Lord God, I place my whole hope and refuge.” St. Thomas said the same when he wrote: “Since God’s love is the cause of goodness in things, no one thing would be better than another, unless it were loved more by God.”

To this principle we must add one no less certain, which is that God never commands what is impossible, and wills to make it possible for all to be saved. We already stated that it is impossible for us, according to our present knowledge, to see how these two principles are perfectly reconciled. As long as we have not the light of the blessed in heaven, vivid faith enlightened by the gifts of the Holy Ghost must preserve the equilibrium between these two principles, and by their means it senses the direction of the summit toward which it tends and which cannot be seen by anyone here on earth. Thus the two extreme aspects of the mystery are preserved intact, without compromising this latter.

This admirable harmony was unknown to Protestantism, which, in denying one of the two aspects of the mystery, gave an entirely false interpretation of the data of revelation.

SECTION II

PREDESTINATION ACCORDING TO THE TENETS OF PROTESTANTISM AND JANSENISM

Protestantism has given us a conception of predestination that is absolutely irreconcilable with God's universal will to save. On this point Jansenism differs but little from it. In the two chapters of this section, we will consider: (1) Protestantism; (2) Baianism and Jansenism.

CHAPTER I

PROTESTANTISM

1) LUTHER. Protestantism derived its notion of predestination from its preconceived theory of the consequences of original sin. According to its theory, man in a state of fallen nature no longer has the strength, even after justification, to resist temptation. We know that Luther was thus ensnared into the path of error. The observance of the divine law and resistance against unruly passions necessitated his making great efforts; as humble prayer was something unknown to him, he con-cluded that concupiscence, since the fall of man, cannot be overcome, and that the command, “thou shalt not covet,” is impracticable, and that God has commanded what is impossible. Thus it is that, through lack of an interior justice, which seemed impossible to him, Luther set out in quest of an exterior justice; not recognizing the necessity of contrition and a firm purpose of amendment, he appealed from these to Christ and said in conclusion that man of himself is always weak, always in a state of sin; but that Christ’s justice covers the sins of sinners. Christ’s justice covers them and is imputed to them.

Continuing on this path of error, Luther rejected free will. Free will is dead, so he said. In consequence of this, the Christian’s faith is solely God’s work. “He operates in us without our co-operation,” and this faith is formal justification. “Faith is the formal justice, by reason of which we are justified. Faith is already the grace of justification.” The nuptial robe is faith without good works. For salvation nothing more than faith is required. This is how Luther came to conclude one of the fundamental principles of his doctrine, so that he taught not only that eternal predestination is previous to foreseen merits, but also that good works performed or merits acquired in this life are not necessary for salvation. In proof of this he appealed to St. Paul’s epistles, falsely interpreting them, and to the teaching of St. Augustine, which he understood in a wrong sense. It would be a mistake,

however, for one to believe that all Lutherans preserved intact Luther's teaching on this point. Already in 1535, Melanchthon declared good works to be necessary for salvation. Something similar to this was taught by the Interim of Augsburg, and by that of Leipzig.

2) Zwingli. A sort of pantheism and fatalism is what Zwingli concludes from this teaching, as Bauer points out. According to his theory, creatures come from God by way of emanation. Man is not free, but is to God as the instrument is to the artist. God is the cause of everything, even of evil and of sin. Sin is truly a transgression of the law, but man commits it of necessity. Even God does not sin in forcing man to sin, because there is no law for God. Original sin is the in-clination to evil, to self-love; it is a natural malady not removed by baptism, as Luther had said. Instead of the Church, we have a democratic organization which includes only the elect.

3) Calvin. He surpasses Luther and Zwingli in the force of his logical conclusions. The fundamental thesis of his doctrine is that some are freely predestined, and the rest are freely and positively damned. According to his theory, God urges man to sin, which is, however, freely committed, in the sense that there is no exterior influence compelling man to commit sin. There is no fatalism in this, says Calvin, but a mysterious and just will of God, although this is beyond man's comprehension. On this point he writes: "We say, therefore, as evidently attested by the Scripture, that once for all God has decreed by His eternal and immutable plan, whom He willed to accept for eternal salvation and whom He willed to consign to eternal perdition. We say that this counsel, as regards the elect, has its foundation in God's mercy, without any consideration of man's dignity. On the contrary, admittance to eternal life is foreclosed to all those whom He wills to deliver up to eternal damnation; and this is the result of His secret and incomprehensible judgment, although it is according to strict justice." The corresponding Latin text does not differ from this except by the addition of "gratuitous" to the word "mercy." It reads as follows: "The plan, as regards the elect, has its foundation in His gratuitous mercy." This doctrine admits, of course, a certain necessity of good works for the salvation of adults; but it does not acknowledge them to be meritorious.

The antilapsarians, who were disciples of Calvin, said that even before Adam's sin was foreseen, God did not will to save all mankind. On the contrary, the infralapsarians said that, as a consequence of this foreseen sin, God does not will to save all mankind. Calvin, following up the stand taken

by Wyclif, added that those who come under the sentence of reprobation are purified only externally by baptism, not receiving the grace of this sacrament. In the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, the predestined do not receive the body of Christ, but merely a divine power that emanates from Christ's body present in heaven. The Church is invisible, consisting of the assembly of the predestined.

This Calvinist doctrine on predestination was not accepted by those of moderate views. One of their distinguished leaders since 1588 was James Harmensz, who was called Arminius. He was appointed in 1602 a professor in the University of Leyden, where the stern Gomar already held the same position. Arminius attacked Calvin's and Beza's system, on certain points attracting the attention of several Catholic theologians. Arminius' theory of liberty aroused the anger of some, and he had to engage in a very spirited argument with Gomar, who defended the following thesis: God's free good pleasure alone is the impelling antecedent cause of reprobation from grace and glory to a just damnation. This doctrine left no trace of the distinction between negative reprobation which permits sin, and positive reprobation which punishes it. This doctrine was imposed, however, by the Synod of Dordrecht. It maintained with the infralapsarians that at least after original sin God no longer wills the salvation of all mankind, and that Christ died only for the elect. This doctrine, which at first was optional among the Calvinists of the Low Countries, was later on made obligatory.

CONDEMNATION OF THE PROTESTANT THESES

In opposition to this, the Council of Trent had been more explicit on these questions in formulating the revealed doctrine such as always taught by the Church. The principal definitions relative to the point at issue are found in the following canons of the sixth session.

Can. 4: "If anyone saith that man's free will moved and excited by God, by assenting to God exciting and calling, no wise co-operates toward disposing and preparing itself for obtaining the grace of justification; that it cannot refuse its consent, if it would, but that, as something inanimate, it does nothing whatever and is merely passive, let him be anathema."

Can. 5: "If anyone saith that, since Adam's sin, the free will of man is lost and is extinguished; or that it is a thing with only a name, yea, a name

without a reality, a figment in fine, introduced into the Church by Satan, let him be anathema."

Can. 6: "If anyone saith that it is not in man's power to make his ways evil, but that the works that are evil God worketh as well as those that are good, not permissibly only, but properly and of Himself, in such a wise that the treason of Judas is no less His own proper work than the vocation of Paul, let him be anathema."

Can. 17: "If anyone saith that the grace of justification is attained only by those who are predestined unto life; but that all others who are called, are called, indeed, but receive not grace, as being by the divine power predestined unto evil; let him be anathema."

Can. 18: "If anyone saith that the commandments of God are, even for one that is justified and constituted in grace, impossible to keep; let him be anathema."

In the eleventh canon, which is the counterpart of this last quoted canon, the Council of Trent has in mind two propositions of St. Augustine, whose doctrine the Protestants appealed to in the following passages, though interpreting him in a wrong sense: "God does not command what is impossible, but in commanding advises you to do what you can, and to ask for what you cannot do." "God does not abandon those whom He has once justified by His grace, unless He is first abandoned by them." In saying that God never commands what is impossible, St. Augustine had equivalently affirmed that in a certain way He wills all men to be saved, in this sense that He wills to make it really possible for all to keep the commandments, and that no one is lost except through his own fault.

CHAPTER II

BAIANISM AND JANSENISM

THREE years before the end of the Council of Trent, in 1560, the Sorbonne condemned eighteen propositions of Baius in which there were traces of the Protestant principles relative to grace and original sin. In 1567, a bull of St. Pius V condemned seventy-nine propositions of Baius, among which the following that more or less directly concern our subject must be noted: “Without the aid of God’s grace, free will has power only to sin. All the actions of unbelievers are sins, and the virtues of philosophers vices. Only violence is repugnant to man’s natural liberty. Man sins even meriting damnation, in what is done out of necessity. It is a Pelagian error to say that there is in free will the power to avoid any sin. The integrity in which man was created was not an exaltation of human nature to which it had no claim, but its natural condition. The elevation and exaltation of human nature to a participation in the divine nature was due to it because of its original state of integrity; hence it must be declared natural and not super-natural.”

We perceive the trend of thought since Luther’s error and how this pseudosupernaturalism, which confounds the two orders of nature and grace, resulted from it. Viewed from this angle, it approaches Pelagian naturalism, although it differs very much from this latter in its notion of original sin and the consequences of the same.

Luther begins by saying that concupiscence is invincible, and that certain commands, as a consequence of original sin, are impracticable. Moreover, without the help of divine grace, free will can do nothing but sin. Grace of itself efficacious, though it was not necessary for perseverance in good in the state of innocence, became so by reason of our infirmity, and man is powerless to resist it when it is offered to him. The subsequent outcome of this pessimistic conception of human nature, such as it is in the present state, was that original integrity came to be viewed as something due to

human nature, and grace, which is a participation in the divine nature, as due to the state of natural integrity. This pessimistic view led to the confusion of the order of nature with that of grace, a confusion which the Pelagians reached by the inverse method. Pelagianism is a phase of naturalism which attached no im-portance to original sin. Baianism is another phase of naturalism which attached very much importance to the fall of the first man.

Finally, Jansenius on the subject of original justice revived the errors of Baius. This explains his false doctrine concerning original sin, grace, predestination, and reprobation. According to his theory, by the sin of the first man human nature became entirely corrupt, so that it was no longer capable of doing anything good. At the same time he denied the freedom of the human will, declaring it to be completely passive and determined by the victorious delectation. If this delectation is terrestrial, it begets sin; if it is celestial, it results in virtue and merit; and for this, freedom from external constraint suffices, but not necessarily freedom from interior compulsion.

The five propositions taken from his Augustinus and condemned by Rome, show that this doctrine differs from that of St. Augustine and St. Thomas, though it has been at times confused with their teaching. Whereas St. Augustine and St. Thomas always steadfastly maintained that God never commands what is impossible, but makes it really possible for all to keep His commandments, the following Jansenist propositions deny this; they say: (1) “For the justified, willing and trying to do what they can, according to the present powers they possess, some of God’s commandments are impossible to keep. (2) In the state of fallen nature no one ever resists interior grace. (3) For meriting and demeriting in the state of fallen nature, freedom from internal compulsion is not required; it is sufficient to be free from external constraint. (4) It is a Semipelagian heresy to say that Christ died or shed His blood for all men without exception.” Moreover, to understand exactly in what sense this last proposition is condemned, it is absolutely necessary to give in addition the text of this condemnation, which reads as follows: “It is declared and condemned as false, temerarious, scandalous, and, understood in this sense that Christ died only for the salvation of the predestined, it is impious, blasphemous, contumelious, contrary to the divine compassion, and heretical.”

Jansenism was thus led to adopt a teaching on grace and predestination that excludes God’s universal will to save. In order to preserve intact one of

the aspects of the mystery with which we are concerned, the other was completely rejected. Instead of a mystery of revealed truth, we have thus a cruel and absurd doctrine, for in this case sin is inevitable, which is no longer then a sin, and which cannot be punished, at least with eternal punishment, without manifest cruelty. God commanding what is impossible ceases to be God, and in vain would we seek to discover in Him not only mercy, but even justice.

SECTION III

PREDESTINATION ACCORDING TO THE TEACHING OF THE POST-TRIDENTINE THEOLOGIANS

After the Council of Trent, whose especial concern was to counteract Protestantism, L. Molina proposed a theory of foreknowledge and predestination which was the occasion of long controversies on these subjects, which are keenly enough disputed even at the present day. We shall proceed to examine the following theories, taking them in this order: (1) Molinism; (2) the congruism of Bellarmine and Suarez; (3) the congruism of the Sorbonne; (4) the Augustinian doctrine subsequent to the Council of Trent; (5) the Thomist doctrine subsequent to the Council of Trent. In giving an account of the doctrines of these schools, we shall at the same time point out the difficulties presented by each.

CHAPTER I

PREDESTINATION ACCORDING TO THE THEORY ADVOCATED BY MOLINA AND THE MOLINISTS

THAT we may bring out clearly the essential points of this theory, we shall summarize it in Molina's own words. We shall stress the principles on which it rests and compare his teaching with that of St. Augustine and St. Thomas.

WHAT MOLINISM AFFIRMS

Molina states that St. Augustine satisfactorily proved against the Pelagians and Semipelagians that the beginning of salvation is the result of prevenient and excitant graces, which are given to us by Christ, according to God's good pleasure, and not according to the effort made by our free will. Then he adds: "But Augustine believed that, connected with what he had most correctly taught from the Scripture about grace against the Pelagian heresy, is the question of God's eternal predestination, which is not according to the merits and nature of the use of free will as foreseen by God, but only according to His election and good pleasure (and in this sense it is most true, as was explained in Member XII); and it was in this sense that he interpreted in many of his works the text of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans (chap. 9), and he restricted to this meaning the text: 'He will have all men to be saved'; so that this is not understood to refer absolutely to all men, but only to the predestined; (in fact St. Augustine says so, if it be a question of the efficacious will to save). This doctrine alarmingly disturbed the minds of many of the faithful, especially of those living in France, not only of the uneducated but even of the learned, and it was even the occa-

sion that their eternal salvation was placed in jeopardy. . . . The divine-like Thomas, and subsequently many of the Scholastics, followed Augustine's opinion."

On the question of true predestination, and this means pre-destination to glory, which alone can be said to apply both to the elect and the reprobates, Molina thus recognizes, precisely when summing up all his teaching on this subject, that St. Augustine, St. Thomas, and the majority of the Scholastics taught this proposition, that God's eternal predestination was not according to the merits and nature of the use of free will as foreseen by God, but solely according to God's election and good pleasure. In other words, he recognizes that St. Au-gustine, St. Thomas, and the majority of the Scholastics taught the absolute gratuity of predestination to glory, not because of foreseen merits, and Molina finds this very difficult to reconcile with the freedom of our will.

Then he adds: "In our humble opinion we declare that the whole question of reconciling the freedom of the will with divine grace, foreknowledge, and predestination, which we have taught throughout article thirteen of question fourteen, and in article six of question nineteen, and throughout question twenty-two, rests upon the following principles . . . ; and if these principles had always been given and explained, perhaps neither the Pelagian heresy would have sprung up, nor would the Lutherans have dared so impudently to deny the freedom of our will . . . , nor would so many of the faithful have been disturbed in their mind because of Aug-ustine's opinion."

This page from Molina's work has often been quoted in course of time by the Thomists as evidence that the author of the Concordia had it well in mind to propose a new theory, and one which he esteemed far superior to the teachings of St. Augustine, St. Thomas, and the majority of the Scholastics. According to this theory, predestination to glory is not absolutely gratuitous, but is on account of foreseen merits. What are the underlying principles of this theory?

PRINCIPLES OF MOLINISM

Molina enunciates four that refer: (1) to the divine concurrence; (2) to final perseverance; (3) to foreknowledge (scientia media); (4) to the

disposition of circumstances in the life of the predestined. For greater accuracy, let us give a close translation of the words of the Latin text.

1) The first and fundamental principle is the mode of the divine influence, both by the general concurrence in the natural acts of our free will and by the particular helps given for supernatural acts, as already explained. In these passages Molina strove, in fact, to establish the sufficiency of a divine simultaneous concurrence and of a grace which is not of itself infallibly efficacious, but which moves one morally by way of attraction. It becomes efficacious in actu secundo (completed act) by means of our free consent. Thus it is that Molina af-firmed: “The helps of prevenient and adjuvant graces, which in the ordinary course are given to people here below, and which may be either efficacious or inefficacious for conversion or justification, depend upon the free co-operation of our will with them, and so it is freely within our power either to make them efficacious by our consent . . . or inefficacious by withholding this consent.” In like manner, he says: “Predestination was not the result of foreordaining to confer helps of themselves efficacious.” Hence we have the following affirmation by Molina: “Wherefore it can happen that of two persons who are called by God, each receiving an equal interior grace, one of them of his own free will is converted, and the other remains an unbeliever. . . . It can even happen that one prevented and called by a far greater grace, of his own free will is not converted, and another with a far less grace is converted.” St. Thomas had written the contrary of this in formulating the principle of predilection, which is the keystone of his doctrine on predestination. He says: “Since God’s love is the cause of the goodness of things, no one thing would be better than another, unless God willed a greater good for this than for the other.” We at once see that Molina starts out with a conception of the created will which at least does not seem able to be reconciled with the principle of predilection, namely, that no one thing would be better than another, unless it were loved more and helped more by God. This principle is for St. Thomas the equivalent of the text: “For who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received?” It presupposes, as we have seen, that the decrees of divine love and grace are of themselves efficacious, and not because of our foreseen consent. We at once perceive that these two doctrines are in opposition and we see why Molina separated from St. Thomas concerning the divine concurrence and predilection. He wrote, indeed, in the above quoted question, as follows: “I am confronted by two

difficulties with regard to what St. Thomas teaches (Ia, q. 105, a. 5) about the divine motion. I do not see what is this motion and application, in secondary causes, by which God moves and applies these causes to act. . . . And I candidly confess that I have difficulty in understanding this motion and application which St. Thomas requires in secondary causes."

Farther on, too, after stating the doctrine according to which divine election precedes predestination and the foreseeing of the merits of the elect, he writes: "And this seems to be the opinion of St. Thomas (Ia, q. 23, a. 4). . . . But I never found it acceptable."

2) Second principle. No less striking is the difference between these two teachings when we consider Molina's second principle:

"The second principle is a lawful or rather orthodox one, which explains the way in which the gift of perseverance operates. We have, indeed, clearly shown that no adult at all can persevere long in the state of grace without God's help, and for this reason perseverance in grace is God's gift; but God denies no one the help sufficient for perseverance. Hence two things are necessary for the gift of perseverance. One is that God has decided to confer those helps by means of which He foresaw that the adult freely will persevere. The other is that the adult's free will is required as an indispensable con-dition; for without it the will to confer such helps would not imply the will to confer the gift of perseverance, which is such that the adult will, of course, freely co-operate with these helps so as to persevere; and it is in his power for him to do so."

In other words, the actual grace of final perseverance for adults is not of itself efficacious, but only by reason of our foreseen consent, so that, as Molina says, of two dying persons who are helped by equal graces, one dies a good death, and the other does not; sometimes even the one who dies a Christian death received a lesser grace. St. Thomas had written the contrary of this in formulating the principle of predi-lection: "He who makes a greater effort, has received a greater grace; but that he makes a greater effort, he needs to be moved by a higher cause, according to the text: `Convert us, O Lord, to Thee, and we shall be converted. Lam. 5: 21.' "

According to the Thomist opinion, this Molinist conception depreciates this grace which is reserved for the elect and which the Council of Trent calls the great and special gift of perseverance. How can we possibly imagine this gift to be equal or even inferior to the assistance given to one who does not persevere?

3) The third principle to which Molina appeals as foundation for this theory on predestination concerns the scientia media:

“The third principle is that foreknowledge mediate between God’s free knowledge and that which is merely natural. By this mediate foreknowledge, as explained (q. 14, a. 13, disp. 50 ff.), God knew, before any free act of His will, what in each particular case the created free will would do, if God decided to arrange the circumstances for these men or angels. If the created free will should decide upon an opposite course of action, as it can do, He would, nevertheless, know it by this same foreknowledge.”

This theory of the scientia media, which, together with the Molonist definition of created liberty, constitutes the keystone of Molinism, is proposed by Molina as a new way of viewing the question. He writes: “I do not know of anyone who has ever advanced this theory of ours for reconciling the freedom of the will with divine predestination.”

What this new theory states is this: Before any free decree of His will, God foresaw what a certain man would freely choose, if he were situated in certain circumstances and prompted by a certain grace. It is not in God’s power to foresee by the scientia media any other thing, but He could do so if the created free will were to choose something different. This divine foresight depends upon the choice a person would make in these given circumstances.

This new way of viewing the question, rejected by all Thomists, Augustinians, Scotists, and other theologians as contrary to God’s sovereign independence with regard to every determination of the created order, was thus formulated by Molina: “It was not in God’s power to know by this knowledge (mediate) anything else than He actually knew. Then again it must not be called natural even in this sense, as if it were so innate in God that He could not know the contrary of what He knows by it. For, if the created free will had chosen to do the opposite, as it truly can do, this very same thing He would have known by the same knowledge, but not that He actually knows it.”

According to this theory, God no longer determines what choice the creature would make in certain circumstances. His knowledge, said to be mediate in this case, is dependent upon this choice and is determined by it. Is not this a positing of passivity in pure Act, who is incapable of passivity

or dependence upon anything whatsoever? The dilemma still remains to be solved, to wit: God determining or determined; there is no other alternative.

Molina, it is true, not only declares that his theory is a new one, but also that it seems to be contrary to the teaching of St. Thomas. After explaining it, deriving his inspiration from Origen, he adds: “Although, to tell the truth, St. Thomas seems to suggest the contrary (Ia, q. 14, a. 8 ad 1um), when he explains and attempts to interpret in the opposite sense the passage of Origen to which we shall immediately refer, in which he is clearly of the same opinion as we are.”

Origen, whose views on predestination are known to be very erroneous, had written: “A thing will happen not because God knows it as future; but, because it is future, it is on that account known by God before it exists.” If we were to interpret literally these words of Origen, God’s knowledge, far from being like the artist’s knowledge, the cause of things, would be caused, measured by the things, dependent upon them, and passive with regard to them. It would follow that creatures do not depend upon the divine knowledge and will, but that God’s foreknowledge depends upon them. That is why St. Thomas strove to give a more benign interpretation to these words of Origen. In this he was not followed by Molina.

4) The fourth principle to which Molina has recourse shows us clearly how predestination, according to his view of it, depends upon foreseen merits, and how the principle of predilection (that no one thing would be better than another, unless it were loved more by God) has thus charged against it, according to this theory, the note of relativity. We read, in fact, concerning this “The fourth principle is that God willed to create this order of things preferably to any other, and in this order to confer these particular helps preferably to certain others, by means of which He foresaw these particular persons, and not certain others, will attain to eternal life, there being no cause or reason for this on the part of the adults, both predestined and reprobates. And so on this account we said that the use of free will on the part of the predestined and the reprobates is not the cause or reason of predestina-tion; but this must be attributed to the free will of God.”

This means that God’s good pleasure alone is the cause that this particular man is placed in these particular circumstances, in which He foresees that the man will save his soul. God could have placed him in certain different circumstances, in which by means of the scientia media He foresees that He would be lost. In other words, it is perfectly gratuitous that

this particular man is predestined to live in these particular circumstances and with these particular helps in which God foresaw that he would be saved.

Molina also remarks: “That the divine will to place a certain man in a certain order of things and circumstances with certain helps, can be called predestination, is due solely to the fact that it is dependent upon merits foreseen by the scientia media. In this sense there is a reason for the predestination of the adults, in that Gad foresees their merits. And for this reason we said that there is a reason for the predestination of adults, in that the use of their free will was foreseen.”

As Father F. Cayré, A.A., says: “Without going so far as to make out almost the same case for the elect and the reprobates, as Vasquez does (in Iam, q. 23, disp. 89), Molina so stresses the part played by the intellect that Suarez feels obliged, by a discreet counterstroke, to modify his teaching and insist much more on the role of the will, thus coming nearer, in this delicate question, to the stand taken by Bannez.”

Father Billot, S.J., holds that Molina, like Suarez and Bellarmine, admitted predestination to glory apart from foreseen merits. Certain texts of the Concordia seem to say that it is not because of future foreseen merits; but those we have quoted and many others show that it is at least subsequent to conditionally future foreseen merits, or else that it presupposes the foreseeing by means of the scientia media the merits which a certain man would acquire, if he were placed in certain circumstances.

Moreover, the majority of Molinists, like Vasquez and Lessius, hold that for Molina predestination to glory is not only because of conditionally but also of absolutely future foreseen merits; so that it presupposes the foreseeing of the merits that will actually be acquired by a certain man placed in certain circumstances; for the divine will to place him in such circumstances can be called predestination, so said Molina, only because of its dependence upon the foreseeing of his future merits. Thus Lessius wrote: “The absolute and immediate election to glory does not take place before it is foreseen that one will persevere or die in a state of grace, just as absolute reprobation does not take place before it is foreseen that one will die in a state of sin.” Vasquez, Valentia, and the majority of the Molinists made similar statements.

Such in substance is Molina’s view of predestination. It has undergone slight variations of relative unimportance. Some, as we have just said,

interpret it in the sense that predestination is the result of future foreseen merits; others that it is the result of conditionally future foreseen merits. These latter, like Father Billot, strive to make their teaching on this point differ but little from that of St. Augustine and St. Thomas. St. Robert Bellarmine and Suarez almost succeed in accomplishing this, when they say that for God, as for every wise person, the choice of the means or of the graces follows logically the appointment of the end, or, in other words, predestination to glory, which, in this case, is conceived as previous to foreseen merits. Some Molinists also rejected Molina's theory of simultaneous concurrence, preferring to admit a divine premotion that is indifferent or non-determining. We shall return to a discussion of these variations, but let us first state precisely their common ground of support.

WHAT IS THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENT IN MOLINISM?

We can answer this question by stating what the Molinists are agreed upon in their defense of this doctrine. First of all, the essence of Molinism consists in a definition of created liberty which includes the denial of the intrinsic efficacy of the divine decrees and of grace, obliging one to admit the theory of the scientia media. All those theologians whose views are either closely or remotely connected with Molinism, are agreed on this point. Their opponents recognize also that such is the starting-point of the Molinist system, and they refuse to admit this definition which, in their opinion, is not at all the traditional teaching.

It is thus formulated by Molina at the beginning of his work: "That agent is said to be free, which, granted all the requisites for action, can either act or not act." This definition, which is quoted eventually by all Molinists, does not seem at first sight to establish a precedent. But when we see that it is the underlying principle of all Molina's theses, and that it necessarily implies the theory of the scientia media unknown to all theologians previous to his time, we conclude that it is just as new as the theory which Molina told us had never been proposed before him.

What exactly do the terms of this definition of free will mean for Molina and the Molinists, when it is declared to be "a faculty which, granted all that is required for action, can either act or not act?" These words, "granted all that is required, "denote not only what is a prerequisite for the act to be free according to a priority of time, but also what is a prerequisite for it to

be so according to a simple priority of nature and causality, like actual grace which is received at the very moment when the salutary act is performed. Moreover, according to its author, this definition does not mean that, under the influence of efficacious grace, the free will retains the power to resist, though it never does actually will to resist under the influence of this efficacious grace. It means that grace is not of itself efficacious, but only because of our foreseen consent. The nature of this grace is such that God could have foreseen not the good consent, but the actual resistance. This definition of free will is connected indeed with the two previously quoted propositions that concern the scientia media. They state: (1) That it was not in God's power to know by this knowledge anything else than He actually knew; (2) But if the created will were to do the opposite, as it truly can, God would have known even this by the same knowledge, but not that He actually knows it. It was not in God's power to foresee anything else; but He would have foreseen something else, if the choice of the created free will had been different. The divine foreseeing thus depends upon the choice man would and will make on the supposition that he is placed in certain circumstances.

This gave rise to all the controversies on this point since the Council of Trent. But we cannot really grasp the meaning of this definition and see all that it implies, unless we compare it with its opposite. In this way, by going back to what is the very point at issue in the controversy, it becomes clarified and simplified.

In the opinion of the Thomists, the Molinist definition of liberty is not formulated according to the true method of logical procedure, because it abstracts from the object that specifies the free act. It neglects the fundamental principle that faculties, habits, and acts are specified by their object. If, on the contrary, we consider the object to be the specifying principle, then we shall say with the Thomists: Liberty is the dominating indifference of the will as regards an object proposed by the reason as not being good in every respect. The essence of liberty consists in the dominating indifference of the will as regards every object proposed by the reason at the moment of consideration as good in one aspect, and not good in another; rightly so it is the indifference as to willing or not willing the object, an indifference that is potential on the part of the faculty, and actual on the part of the free act. For even when the will actually wills this object, when it is already determined to will the same, it still tends toward this

object with an indifference that is no longer potential but actual. Liberty, therefore, results from the disproportion prevailing between the will that is specified by universal good and a certain finite good, this latter object being considered good in one aspect and not so in another. This is what St. Thomas says, for he remarks as follows: “If the will is offered an object that is not good from every point of view, it will not tend to this of necessity.” And in opposition to Suarez, the Thomists add: “Even by His absolute power, God cannot, by moving the will, necessitate it to will a certain object, when the indifference of judgment remains unchanged.” Why so? Because it implies a contradiction for the will to wish necessarily the object proposed to it as indifferent by the intellect, or one that is absolutely out of proportion to the universality of its scope. What are we to conclude about the subject in question that concerns us?

It was pointed out earlier in this work that the theologians of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries always use the same formula, stating that if God wills efficaciously a certain salutary act to be performed, such as the conversion of the good thief or of St. Paul, this act infallibly though freely is accomplished, according to a necessity not of consequent but of consequence “just as it is necessary for Socrates to sit whilst he is seated, though it is optional for him to be seated.” We have drawn particular attention to the following important text of St. Thomas: “If God moves the will to anything, it is incompossible with this suggestion, that the will be not moved thereto. But it is not impossible simply. Consequently it does not follow that the will is moved by God necessarily.” Similarly, St. Thomas says: “It is incompossible for anyone to sit and stand at the same time, but whilst one sits, one has the power to stand.” To deny this is to say that he who sleeps is blind; he does not see, but he has the power to see.

In other words, according to the teaching of St. Thomas, under the influence of efficacious grace, the free will never wills in fact to resist and posit the contrary act (for then grace would cease to be efficacious), but it retains the power to do so. Does it follow then that efficacious grace is necessitating, as the Protestants and Jansenists thought, and that liberty strictly so called is destroyed, which consists in an indifference as regards the two opposites, and which is free not only from compulsion but also from necessity? By no means. For St. Thomas, efficacious grace affects liberty by a sort of virginal contact, without violating it. Under the influence of efficacious grace, at the indivisible instant in which the salutary act is

performed, in our will which already determines itself and is determined (for becoming and done are simultaneous in those things that are done instantaneously), there is undoubtedly no more any question of a passive or potential indifference on the part of the will in determining itself to either of two contraries; but there is an actual and active dominating indifference in the free act itself already determined which, proceeding from a faculty, the scope of which is universal, tends not from necessity but freely toward the chosen good, having really within itself the power not to will it. Certainly one cannot, in willing this thing, actually not will it, for that would be a contradiction; but in willing it, one has really the power not to will it, just as, according to the classical example, one cannot at the same time be standing and seated, but, when one is seated, it is really within one's power to rise. St. Thomas added that potential indifference is not of the essence of liberty, for it does not exist in God, who is simply pure Act, in no way potential, and sovereignly free, not only before but in choosing, and after having determined from eternity His choice, whom nothing created could infallibly attract or determine. Under the influence of the divine and efficacious mo-tion, according to the teaching of St. Thomas, we still retain this dominating indifference, which is not potential but actual, and which is an image of the divine actuality. For Molina, on the contrary, it must of necessity be that, under the influence of this so-called efficacious grace (not taking into consideration the divine foreseeing of our consent), the free will retains not only the actual dominating indifference, which properly belongs to the free act that is already determined and that still tends freely toward its object; but he also will have it retain under the influence of this grace the potential indifference, and that it be within its power actually to resist.

To this the Thomists reply that when the will actually resists, the grace is no longer efficacious but merely sufficient. Now most assuredly, he who actually fulfils a precept is certainly better, other things being equal, than he who can and does not do so. Therefore, in virtue of the principle of predilection, he who fulfils a precept is loved more and helped more by God than he who does not do so. He receives from God not only the power to fulfill the precept, but actually and freely to do so. "What hast thou that thou hast not re-ceived?"

Certainly Molina could not ignore this last mentioned principle. But did his theory finally lead him to respect its truth? St. Thomas wrote: "If God moves the will to anything, it is incompossible with this supposition, that

the will be not moved thereto." Molina, however, declared it to be at the same time possible, at least abstracting from the fact of the divine foreseeing of our consent, a foreseeing which St. Thomas does not mention. For St. Thomas, it is a case of two total and subordinated causes, the secondary determining itself for good only under the influence of the primary cause. For Molina, even without taking too seriously here the famous comparison of the barge drawn by two horses, it seems truly to be a case of two partial and co-ordinated causes. The free will induced to act by grace has a causality that is exclusively its own; it is not applied to its act by God. We see that the two rival doctrines start from very different principles.

St. Thomas and the great theologians who preceded him start from this supreme principle: the love of God is the cause of the goodness in things. From this they conclude that divine love is the cause of the better part in our salutary act, its free determination, and this cannot be withdrawn from its dependence upon the divine causality. They say that this free determination is not exclusively ours, but that it is totally from God as primary cause, and totally from us as premoved secondary cause. "There is no distinction between what flows from a secondary cause and from a first cause," says St. Thomas. Taken in this sense we have here the case of two total subordinated causes and not of two partial co-ordinated causes.

St. Thomas adds that God's transcendent causality "produces in us and with us even the free mode of our acts," for this mode is still a being that is dependent upon the first Being. This free mode is the actual dominating indifference of our will, which tends actually toward some particular good that is incapable of irresistibly attracting it; for the will is specified by universal good, and it could not be irresistibly held captive except by the attraction of seeing God face to face. This dominating indifference of willing, which constitutes for the will its free mode, is a participation in one of God's absolute perfections, this being His liberty; but it is merely an analogical participation, for no perfection can be attributed univocally, that is, in the same sense, to God and to us. From this St. Thomas concludes that no thing would be better than another unless it were loved more by God. Thus his entire doctrine on predestination is derived from this principle: "Since God's love is the cause of the goodness in things, no one thing would be better than another, if God did not will greater good for one than for another." It is a corollary of the principles of causality and of the universal causality of the first Agent. Not for one moment does St. Thomas

doubt that the laws governing free action are in harmony with those more general laws governing being and acting, and that they cannot contradict them.

Molina, contrary to this, starts off with a definition of free will that excludes the intrinsic efficacy of the divine decrees and of grace. Consequently the better part in our salutary acts, their free determination, which makes them efficacious, seems to be withdrawn from its dependence upon God's universal causality. Hence his denial of the principle of predilection as formulated by St. Thomas. In fact we read in the index to Molina's work, under the heading "free will," the following statement: "Free will is sufficient, so that in the case of two called and helped by an equal interior grace, one is converted and the other not." Of two men equally helped by God, one occasionally becomes better than the other, better without having received more than the other. We shall see that the principal objections of the Thomists bear upon this point, and that at the end of the controversy we are confronted by the dilemma of either God determining or de-termined. There is no other alternative; for the divine foreknowledge, united to the divine will, is either the cause of our free determination or else is passive in their regard. God is either the author or merely the spectator of that which begins to distinguish the just from the impious. In other words, what does St. Paul mean when he says: "For who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received?"

The essence of Molinism is to be found in the aforesaid definition of free will and in the consequences it entails, which are the denial of the intrinsic efficacy of the divine decrees and of grace, for which are substituted the theory of the scientia media and of grace extrinsically efficacious by reason of our foreseen consent. On these points, notwithstanding their incidental differences, all Molinists are agreed.

It must be noted that in the Molinist system this definition of free will ought to be applicable to the impeccable free will of Christ, who, for all that, freely obeyed in such manner that He not only never did disobey, but that He never could do so. It is a most perfect image of God's sovereign and impeccable free will, in which there is no trace of any potential dominating indifference, but only an actual dominating indifference as regards all created things. This, the Thomists say, shows us that our free will persists even when, under the influence of efficacious grace, there remains no longer the potential but only the actual dominating indifference, understood

in this sense that God, far from forcing us, causes in us and with us that our acts be performed freely.

THE PRINCIPAL OBJECTIONS RAISED AGAINST MOLINISM

It is easy to account for the objections raised against Molina's work after its publication by referring to those mentioned in the appendix of that work. They are directed principally against the three theses of Molinism, which are: (1) its definition of free will; (2) its theory of the scientia media and of efficacious grace, especially in its relation to the principle of predilection; (3) its theory of predestination after foreseen merits.

1) Its definition of free will. The first opponents of Molinism, as can be seen from the writings of the Thomists of this period, affirmed that it rests entirely upon a definition of human liberty which cannot be proved either by experience or a priori, and which is nothing but a begging of the question. It cannot be shown from experience, they say, that the free determination of our salutary acts is independent as such of the divine causality, and that God does not cause this in us and with us, even to the extent that our actions are performed freely. This mysterious divine causality, which is more intimate to the free will than this latter is to itself, no more comes within the scope of our experience than does the divine conservation which keeps us in existence.

No more could reason, so these theologians teach, prove the validity of this definition. On the contrary, it is manifest to reason that the potential indifference between two decisions is not of the essence of liberty, since it could not exist in God, who is sovereignly free, and no more is it present in our free act that is already determined. As for the actual or active indifference, which is included in the free act already determined, this cannot be attributed univocally to God and to us, but only analogically or as of things proportionately alike, according to a participation which makes what is more intimate and better in the choice of our salutary free act depend upon God's choice. It would be, so the Thomists said, a begging of the question to deny this dependence, thus discarding one of the elements of the problem to be solved; and in the name of the principle of causality, and of the universal and transcendent pre-eminence of the divine causality, they protest against this.

Revelation, they went on to remark, could not be invoked in favor of this definition, since it speaks to us in the following terms: “Lord almighty King . . . there is none that can resist Thy will”; “As the divisions of waters, so the heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord”; “for it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will.”

The Council of Trent does not impose this definition when it declares against the Protestants who maintained that grace efficacious of itself destroyed free will: “If anyone saith that man’s free will moved and excited by God, by assenting to God exciting and calling does in no wise co-operate towards disposing and preparing itself for obtaining the grace of justification; that it cannot refuse its consent, if it would, but that, as something inanimate, it does nothing whatever and is merely passive; let him be anathema.” By this definition, in the preparation of which several Augustinians and Thomists took part, is excluded, so Molina’s opponents say, the Protestant thesis according to which grace of itself efficacious is necessitating or irreconcilable with the principle of freedom from necessity. By this declaration of the council, it is affirmed that, under the influence of this grace, our will co-operates vitally and freely with the salutary act, and that it is within its power to resist, if it so wishes; but it does not say that under the influence of this efficacious grace, it happens that the will actually resists this grace and, if it were so, grace could no longer be said to be truly efficacious, but, on the contrary, it would be inefficacious, and through our own fault would be sterile.

As these Thomists point out, the Protestants said that grace of itself efficacious is irreconcilable with freedom from necessity. Now, grace is of itself efficacious. Therefore there is no freedom from necessity. Molinism concedes the major of this syllogism and denies the minor. The Thomists, the Augustinians, and the Scotists deny the major, concede the minor, and deny the conclusion.

2) The scientia media. The difficulties encountered in this theory were as great as those presented by the Molinist definition of liberty which it presupposes. These objections of the Thomists and the Augustinians are fully discussed in their treatises on God.

a) They say that the theory of the scientia media supposes that, if Peter and Judas were placed in the same circumstances and given equal graces, it could happen that one is converted and the other not, or that entirely of his own accord the one distinguishes himself from the other. In fact, Molina

said: “Given equal help, it can happen that of two persons called, one is converted and the other not.” And Lessius added: “Not that he who accepts, does so by his free will alone, but because the difference is the result of free will alone, so as not to be due to the diversity of prevenient grace.” Now, the Thomists, the Augustinians, and the Scotists say that, contrary to this, St. Paul wrote in one of his epistles as follows: “For what distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received?” This text is explained by St. Augustine and St. Thomas in a sense quite the opposite of that which the theory of the scientia media claims it to have.

b) Moreover, the opponents of Molinism remark that this so-called scientia media cannot have any object; for, previous to any divine decree, there cannot be any conditionate future or any conditionate future that is determined. Previous to any decree, God can well foresee, as we too can, that if Peter is placed in certain circumstances and helped by a grace not necessarily efficacious, there are two possibilities: for he can be either faithful to his Master or betray Him; but He cannot foresee infallibly which of these two possibilities Peter will choose; for neither the scrutiny of Peter’s will, which is of itself undetermined, nor a survey of the circumstances or of the grace not necessarily efficacious, admit of God infallibly foreseeing this, but merely of conjecturing it. The conditionate future, in fact, is more than a mere possible; it denotes a new determination in answer to the question: Which of these two possible alternatives would happen? To say that the conditionate future is infallibly known because of God’s super-comprehension in knowledge of the created will and circumstances, is, instead of saving free will, to fall into the error of determinism of circumstances, which is the denial of free will; and so we cannot assign any object to the scientia media, if we wish to avoid determinism.

St. Thomas had written: “Contingent futures, the truth of which is not determined, are not in themselves knowable.” In his opinion, that is true of conditionally free acts of the future as well as of absolutely free acts of the future. God cannot see them in His essence previous to any decree; for He would see them there on the same grounds as absolutely necessary truths, and this would thus be a reverting to the logical fatalism of the Stoics.

The Molinists tried hard to answer this objection, which is considered by their opponents to be incapable of solution. On this point Leibniz remarked:

“It is amusing to see how they torment themselves to find a way out of a labyrinth when there is absolutely no way out.”

c) Again the Thomists object to the theory of the scientia media, stating that it leads to the denial of God’s universal causality since it takes away from the latter the better part in our salutary acts, which is their free determination. Hence it is derogatory to God’s omnipotence and supreme dominion, since it claims that God cannot be the cause in us and with us that we determine ourselves to act, and that we do so freely. It leads also to the admission of a passivity or a dependence of God’s foreknowledge upon this free determination of the created order, which at first is a conditional future, and then a simple future. God is no longer the cause but the passive spectator of that which distinguishes the just from the impious, who are equally helped by Him in the same circumstances. God, no longer being the first who determines by His free determination or election, is Himself determined; His knowledge is passive with regard to one thing, a determination that does not come from Him. Now there is nothing more inadmissible than the positing of a passivity in the pure Act, or of a dependence in Him who is sovereignly independent and the cause of all good. The Thomists pointed out several other inconveniences that arise from the theory of the scientia media. It suffices to note here the principal ones.

All of them have said that the theory of the scientia media violates the principle of predilection as formulated by St. Thomas, which is: “Since God’s love is the source of all good, no one thing would be better than another unless it were loved more by God.” In fact, among the most criticized of Molina’s propositions, as the appendix to his work shows, there is one that must be quoted here. It is as follows: “Of two that are called and equally aided by an interior grace, it can happen that one of them of his own free will is converted and the other remains an unbeliever.” It was objected that this was contrary to the principle of predilection as formulated even before St. Thomas, by St. Paul and St. Augustine. The principle of predilection, as we have seen, presupposes that the divine decrees and grace are efficacious of themselves and not because of our foreseen consent. For this reason Molina is incapable of recognizing this principle to be of universal and absolute validity, and he reduces it to this: It is because God loved Peter more than Judas that He decided to place him in a certain situation of circumstances in which He foresaw that Peter would be saved;

and this is due solely to God's good pleasure. But nevertheless it remains true that such a one elected is saved, without having been helped more than a certain person who is lost. Molina even said: "That those who received more help were not predestined and saved, but that those who received less were predestined and saved, was due to no other reason than that the latter refused to make use of their native free will, so that of their own accord they might attain salvation; but the former most assuredly did so." This proposition was one of those most criticized from the outset of the controversies.

3) Predestination "because of foreseen merits." Finally, the opponents of Molinism raised a serious objection against the theory of predestination "because of foreseen merits." Regardless of St. Paul's texts to which they appealed in refutation of this theory, they brought up against it the principle that God, like every intelligent being, wills the end before the means, since the latter are willed only in view of the end, and hence He wills glory to His elect before He wills the grace by which they will merit this glory. This is what St. Thomas had said.

Such are the principal objections that were raised against the Molinist theory of predestination, especially in the Congregation appointed in Rome by Clement VIII and known as De Auxiliis. The conferences lasted from January 2, 1598 until August 20, 1607. Beginning with the year 1602, the sovereign pontiffs themselves took charge of the debates. Eighty-five papal congregations were held, sixty-eight under Clement VIII, and seventeen under Paul V. Under Clement VIII what particularly came up for examination was the Molinist doctrine concerning the natural power of free will, the scientia media, predestination, and the good use of the divine assistance. Especially so was Molina's doctrine compared with that of St. Augustine. The principal defenders of Thomism were Didacus Alvarez, Thomas de Lemos, and Michael a Ripa; the leading theologians in the Society of Jesus were Michael Vasquez, Gregory of Valentia, Peter Arrubal, and de Bastida, who in general recognized that the congruism proposed by St. Bellarmine and Suarez was more in conformity with the teachings of St. Augustine and St. Thomas than Molinism was. On the whole, under Clement VIII, the opinions were unfavorable to the author of the Concordia. However, no sentence of condemnation was issued by Clement VIII, who died in 1605. At the end of that year Paul V resumed the discussions and authorized even an examination of the question of physical

predetermination; but most of the censors declared themselves to be in favor of Thomism. The commission upheld its censures against forty-two of Molina's propositions. Neither Molina (†1600), nor Bannez (†1604) saw the end of this strife. On August 28, 1607, Paul V consulted for the last time the cardinals then present, who were very divided in their opinions. The Pope then adjourned the congregation, and ordered both parties not to indulge in mutual condemnations.

It is of particular importance here to quote the conclusion given by Paul V on August 28, 1607, after consulting various cardinals. This is to be found in the work of P. G. Schneeman, S.J. It reads as follows: "By the grace of God the council defined it to be necessary for the free will to be moved by God. The difficulty consists in this, as to whether it is moved physically or morally; and although it would be desirable that there should be no strife of this kind in the Church, for dis-agreements often are the cause of the sudden rise of errors, it therefore is a good thing for these disputes to be finally settled. Nevertheless, we do not see the necessity for this at present, in that the opinion of the Dominican fathers differs very much from Calvin's; for the Dominicans say that grace does not destroy but perfects free will, and its power is such that man acts in his own way, which is freely. But the Jesuits differ from the Pelagians, who declared the beginning of sal-vation originated from us, whereas the former hold quite the contrary. Since there is therefore no urgent need of a definition on our part, the question can be deferred until in course of time we are better informed about it."

This decision was afterward confirmed by a decree of Benedict XIV, issued on July 13, 1748.

CHAPTER II

PREDESTINATION AS EXPLAINED BY THE CONGRUISM OF ST. ROBERT BELLARMINE AND SUAREZ

THESE theologians admit, as the Molinists do, the scientia media, and deny, as they do, the intrinsic efficacy of the divine decrees and of grace; but they agree with the Thomists, the Augustinians, and the Scotists in this sense, that they recognize the absolute gratuity of predestination to glory, which they declare to be previous to foreseen merits not only as they are future, but even as they are conditionally future. In accordance with this congruism, God makes use of the scientia media only after He has predestined one to glory, for a dis-tribution of the so-called congruous grace and so as to assure Himself that it will be efficacious in certain determined circumstances. In this way the principle is saved that God wills the end before the means, and a greater effort is made in this system than in Molina's to recognize the validity and universality of the principle of predilection.

EXPOSITION OF THIS DOCTRINE

Let us see just what congruism teaches: (1) on the absolute gratuity of predestination to glory; (2) on congruent grace; (3) on the scientia media.

1) The absolute gratuity of predestination to glory is distinctly the teaching of St. Bellarmine. His purpose is to prove, like the Thomists and Augustinians, by means of Scripture, tradition, and theological reasoning, the proposition that no reason can be assigned on our part for divine predestination, which means that predestination to glory is absolutely gratuitous, or previous to any foreseen merits. St. Bellarmine excludes as a

reason for predestination to glory, not only all merit in the strict sense, but also all congruous merit, whatsoever use of free will or of grace, and every indispensable condition.

He proves this doctrine from Scripture, which teaches that God has elected certain persons, and efficaciously so, that they may infallibly get to heaven. Texts in proof of this are: “This is the will of the Father . . . that of all that He hath given Me, I should lose nothing”; “No man shall pluck them out of My hand . . . no one can snatch them out of the hand of My Father”; “Whom He predestined, them He also called . . . and justified . . . and glorified.” He also proves that God’s choice of the elect was entirely gratuitous and previous to any foreseeing of their merits. Texts in support of this are: “It hath pleased your Father to give you a kingdom”; “You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, that you should go, and should bring forth fruit”; “There is a remnant saved according to the election of grace. And if by grace, it is not now by works: otherwise grace is no more grace.”

St. Bellarmine also interprets like St. Thomas and the Thomists the following text of St. Paul: “As He chose us . . . that we should be holy, . . . according to the purpose of His will.” “In whom we also are called by lot, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things according to the counsel of His will.” Finally he adds that the elect were chosen gratuitously but independently of any foreseeing of their good works, according to the teaching of St. Paul, who says: “For when the children were not yet born, nor had done any good or evil, that the purpose of God, according to election might stand . . . there is a remnant saved according to the election of grace.” St. Bellarmine shows that these principles of St. Paul apply not only to the election of nations, but also to individuals chosen for eternal life. To those who object that in St. Paul’s text foreknowledge precedes predestination, for he says: “Whom He foreknew, He also predestinated,” St. Bellarmine replies that it is not a question here of the foreknowledge of merits, for which there would be no foundation in St. Paul’s epistles, and which would be in contradiction to several of his texts, but the meaning is: “whom He foreknew by the knowledge of approbation, whom He loved, whom He willed, those He predestined. . . . For to know and to foreknow in the Scripture are frequently taken to mean the knowledge of approbation, as is evident from the following text: ‘God hath not cast away His people, which He foreknew’ “ (Rom. 11: 2). This is the exegesis of St. Augustine and St.

Thomas, and is retained at the present day by Fathers Lagrange, Allo, Zahn, Julicher, and others.

Finally, St. Bellarmine proves that, according to the teaching of St. Augustine, St. Prosper, and St. Fulgentius, no reason can be assigned on our part for predestination to glory. He writes: “No reason can be assigned on our part that God should predestine us to glory. . . . Not only do these holy Fathers (Augustine, Prosper, and Fulgentius) affirm this, but also the more learned of their predecessors, whom the rest subsequently followed, record this opinion as pertaining to the Catholic faith, and they reject the contrary opinion held by the Pelagians. I shall mention some of their works, so that if any perchance are of the opposite opinion, they may realize, from the judgment of these most holy Fathers, how manifestly they err on this point.” He mentions in particular two works, one by St. Augustine, and the other by St. Prosper. In addition to this he remarks, as St. Augustine does, that the Fathers who lived previous to the rise of the Pelagian heresy touched but incidentally upon this question of predestination. He quotes, however, St. John Chrysostom who, on the words: “For who distinguisheth thee?” comments as follows: “Therefore thou hast received what thou hast, neither this only or that, but whatever thou hast. For these are not thy merits, but God’s gifts.” Finally, he points out that the fathers previous to the time of St. Augustine, especially the Greek Fathers, often took predestination as meaning the will to give glory after this life, and that they scarcely spoke of it except by way of exhortation, and therefore they had in mind the order of execution, in which merits precede glorification; whereas in the order of intention the case is the reverse. God, in the order of intention, wills the end before the means, glory before grace and merits; but in the order of execution He wills glory as the reward of merits. God wills to give glory gratuitously in the order of intention; but in the order of execution He does not will to give it gratuitously, and this is contrary to what the Protestants say. In this Bellarmine speaks exactly as the Thomists do, and like them he remarks that after the rise of the Pelagian heresy it was necessary to consider predestination no longer merely in the order of execution, but also in that of intention, so that everything in the affair of salvation may be attributed to God, as the Fathers previous to the time of Bellarmine had said when commenting on St. Paul’s words: “For who distinguisheth thee?”

Thus St. Robert Bellarmine saw in the absolute gratuity of predestination the very teaching of Scripture and its great interpreters. This accounts for the fact of his admitting St. Augustine's definition of predestination, which states that it is "the foreknowledge and preparation of those gifts of God whereby they who are liberated are most certainly liberated." In support of this definition, in which the foreknowledge refers not to merits but to the divine gifts, Bellarmine appeals to the scriptural text: "No man shall pluck them out of My hand."

Suarez says the same. He writes as follows: "I say first: On the part of the one predestined, there is no cause for predestination inasmuch as this refers to eternal predestination to glory or to perseverance or to sanctifying grace or to supernaturally good acts, although for such effects, in that they are bestowed in time, in the order of execution, some cause or reason can be assigned on man's part, as in the case of glory which, in the order of execution, is given on account of merits. This is the opinion of St. Thomas, (Ia, q. 23, a. 5), with which Cajetan and other modern Thomists agree. Undoubtedly it is Augustine's opinion." Since election to glory is previous to foreseen merits, it follows for Suarez as for the Thomists, that non-election, or negative reprobation, is also previous to foreseen demerits.

We see that on this point of the absolute gratuity of predestination to glory there is a considerable difference between the congruism of Suarez and of Bellarmine, and the Molinism such as especially Vasquez, Lessius, and the majority of Molinists understood it to mean. The Thomists always took care to note this difference. Billuart adds that among the theologians of the Society of Jesus, several agree with Bellarmine and Suarez on this point, such as Toletus, Henriquez, Ruiz, Typhanus.

In recent times Father Billot, although he disagrees with Suarez on the question of negative reprobation, also admits the absolute gratuity of predestination to glory, this being the only kind—and he says so with good reason—that merits the name of predestination; for predestination to grace is common to the elect and to many reprobates.

The difference between congruism and Molinism is less, as we shall see, when it is a question of congruous grace; and still less is this difference when it is a question of the scientia media.

2) Congruous grace. The nature of this grace is well explained in a decree made famous by the general of the Jesuits, Father Aquaviva. By it, six years after the meetings of the Congregatio de Auxiliis, in December, 1613, he

ordered the theologians of the Society to teach congruism, “an exposition and defense of which was given,” he said, “in the controversy entered into by the Congregatio de Auxiliis, as being more in agreement with the teachings of St. Augustine and St. Thomas.” “Henceforth let our fathers,” says this decree, “always teach that efficacious and sufficient graces do not differ merely in actu secundo (completed act), because the one obtains its effect by the co-operation of the free will and not the other; but they differ also in actu primo (first movement), in this sense, that, the scientia media presupposed, God Himself, with the fixed intention of producing good, designedly chooses those determinate means and employs them in the manner and at the moment when he knows that the effect will be in-fallibly produced; so that, if He had foreseen the inefficacy of these means, God would have made use of other means. That is why, morally speaking, and considering it as a favor, there is something more in efficacious than in sufficient grace even in actu primo. It is in this way that God causes us to perform the act instead of giving us the grace which enables us to act. The same kind of reasoning applies to perseverance, which undoubtedly is God’s gift.”

From this we see the difference between Molinism and this type of congruism. In Molinism, God gives the grace which He knows to be efficacious; in this type of congruism, God gives the grace because He knows it will be efficacious. Hence even congruous grace becomes infallibly efficacious only by the consent of the human will, and this is foreseen by means of the scientia media. Therefore the Thomists asked whether the principle of predilection is truly safeguarded.

3) The scientia media as viewed by Suarez. Whereas Bellarmine explains the scientia media as Molina does, by having recourse to the supercomprehension of causes, Suarez in opposition to Molina writes as follows: “That God knows our future free acts in their proximate causes because of His perfect comprehension of our free will . . . this we must reject . . . for this simply means the end of freedom . . . and is repugnant to it.” In other words, the scientia media explained as Molina wants it to be, by the theory of the supercomprehension of our free will if placed in certain circumstances, makes Suarez say, as the Thomists do, that it leads to determinism of the circumstances.

But does Suarez have better success in explaining this scientia media, which he wishes to retain in substance? God, he says, previous to any

decree, infallibly foresees conditionate futures in their objective or formal truth. Of two conditional contradictory propositions, such as: “If Peter were placed in these circumstances, he would sin and he would not sin,” the one is definitely true and the other is definitely false. It is impossible, indeed, for both to be true or both to be false. Therefore the infinite intelligence that penetrates all truth, sees certainly which of the two is true and which is false.

Suarez, the Thomists reply, forgets that Aristotle has shown that of two contradictory propositions which are particular ones and which concern a contingent future event, neither is positively true or false. If it were otherwise, as Aristotle remarks, the truth would be in determinism or fatalism, and our choice would not be a free one. The Stoics, as Cicero relates, intended to prove determinism precisely by the argument that, of two contradictory propositions, one is necessarily true. Therefore, between the two propositions, A will be, A will not be, the necessity of one of them, at the moment I am uttering it, excludes the possibility of the other. From all eternity is the flow of imperishable truth. From this it would follow that creation is no longer a free act, and the divine will would be subjected to the logical fatalism of the Stoics.

THE INHERENT DIFFICULTIES OF THE CONGRUISM OF BELLARMINE AND OF SUAREZ

In this theory the principle of predilection is certainly much better safeguarded than in Molinism. Concerning the question of the absolute gratuity of predestination to glory, it follows faithfully St. Paul’s interpretation given by St. Augustine and St. Thomas. But, in the opinion of the Thomists, this theory still limits the universal validity of the principle of predilection and stamps it with the seal of relativity, in that it retains the main structure of Molinism, which is the scientia media or the denial of the intrinsic efficacy of the divine decrees and of grace. It remains true, then, according to this conception of the scientia media, that human effort makes grace efficacious instead of being the result of the efficacy of this grace; so that if two men or two angels are equally helped by God, it may happen that one of them becomes better than the other, though this one was not helped more, and did not receive more than the other. Undoubtedly congruism is right in saying that congruous grace is from the moral point of view a

greater gift than the other, but it is none the less true that its actual efficacy is due solely to the subsequent consent of the human will, as foreseen by the scientia media. And then we have a recrudescence of all the difficulties of Molinism, which seems to posit a dependence in the divine foreknowledge as regards the creature, a passivity in pure Act, and leads on our part to determinism of circumstances. Neither can it be said that previous to any decree God foresees a certain conditionate future, for instance, Peter's infidelity, in so far as this conditionate future is present to Him from all eternity; for it is not independently of God's decree that this conditionate future rather than its contrary is present to Him from all eternity; otherwise it would be present to Him as a necessary truth, and thus we have again determinism.

As for what directly concerns predestination, the Thomists as a rule point out that congruous grace, since it is not infallibly efficacious of itself, is not an infallible means of leading the elect to glory, as St. Augustine's definition would demand, which states that it is "the foreknowledge and preparation of those gifts of God, whereby they who are liberated are most certainly liberated." Congruous grace, since it is infallibly efficacious, not because God wilts it but because man wills it, does not express adequately —as Bellarmine himself admits—the meaning of the scriptural text: "No one can snatch them out of the hand of My Father." No more does congruous grace, since it is not infallibly efficacious of itself, seem to express adequately the meaning of St. Augustine in the following text: "God effects with the very wills of men what He wills and when He wills. Undoubtedly the human heart is inclined as it pleases His omnipotent will. . . . The wills of human beings are more in God's power than in their own." And again when he says that efficacious "grace is not spurned by the hard of heart; for this very purpose it is bestowed, that the hardness of heart may first be taken away."

Certainly St. Augustine called efficacious grace congruous; but his later works just quoted by us, show that at least he came finally to the conclusion that it is a question here not of extrinsic but of intrinsic congruousness, and this latter is grace infallibly efficacious of itself.

These difficulties in the congruism of St. Robert Bellarmine and of Suarez made other congruists admit the necessity of grace intrinsically efficacious at least for difficult acts. This was the stand taken in the eighteenth century by the congruists of the Sorbonne.

CHAPTER III

THE CONGRUISM OF THE SORBONNE

WE come across this theory, though expressed with slight differences of meaning, in the works of several theologians of the eighteenth century, such as those of Tournely, Habert, Ysambert, Frassen, Thomassinus, and Duhamel. St. Alphonse is inclined to accept it. In the nineteenth century we find Father John Hermann, C.SS.R., still admitting it, though the way he sums it up is according to its essential principles, which are: (1) “Grace is intrinsically efficacious, and in this we follow the Thomists and the Augustinians as against the Molinists. (2) Contrary to the Thomists, we say this intrinsically efficacious grace is not physical but merely a moral motion. (3) Intrinsically efficacious grace is required only for difficult salutary acts; for the easy acts, especially for prayer, sufficient grace, which is commonly granted to all, is the only grace that is required.”

Thus a middle system is established, which is in opposition to the others, and which adopts the good points of the others. It is an eclectic system, which lays claim to the general rejection of the scientia media of the Molinists, and to the admission of a grace not extrinsically congruous, as Suarez does, but to one that is intrinsically congruous.

Father John Hermann writes: “According to the congruists of the Suarezian and Bellarminian type, the infallible effect of grace depends not upon its intrinsic power, but upon the consent of the will or the circumstances in which a man is placed. God cannot infallibly know what effect grace will have, unless He has first found out by means of the scientia media whether the will, situated in these or those particular circumstances is or is not going to accept the grace. We, however, say that it is a case of intrinsic congruousness, which is given by God Himself to the grace, and it consists not in any absolute entity that is superadded to the grace (and thus we reject physical premotion), but it consists in the special mode of the

divine call, in its perfect adjustment, namely, to the will of the one called. . . . Wherefore, in our opinion, the congruousness of the grace reacts upon the will, and God has no need at all of the scientia media so that He may know what effect the grace will have."

We see the consequence of this as regards predestination and the relations of this latter to salutary acts easy to perform, especially to the case of prayer. This same author adds: "Whereas Molinism and Thomism have their foundations in indemonstrable philosophical arguments (the former in the scientia media, the latter in physical premotion), our congruism has no special philosophic foundation, but rests solely on the truths of faith." Yet this same Father Hermann said elsewhere: "The Thomist system has for its foundation the metaphysical principle that God is the first Cause and universal Mover from whom all being and action must originate." Does not this principle transcend the limits of opinion and belong to the preambles of the faith? From this point of view, even eclecticism cannot afford to overlook it. We may ask ourselves whether this congruism does not violate this principle, by denying to salutary acts easy to perform the necessity of grace that is infallibly efficacious of itself.

THE DIFFICULTIES IN THE CONGRUISM OF THE SORBONNE

This new theory may seem more acceptable than Thomism and also than Molinism to those who scarcely consider things otherwise than from the practical point of view. It tells us, indeed, that intrinsically efficacious grace is required only for salutary acts difficult to perform, but not for easier ones, such as for prayer to obtain the efficacious help. By this theory the obscurity in the mystery seems to a great extent to be eliminated. But if things are regarded from the speculative point of view, this new theory has, in the opinion of the Thomists, all the difficulties of Molinism for easy acts, and, in the opinion of the Molinists, all the obscurities of Thomism for difficult acts. In other words, from the theoretical point of view, this congruism accumulates to itself all the difficulties of the other systems, and, furthermore, the principles it admits for difficult acts have not the least metaphysical validity, since they no longer apply to other acts.

In their criticism of this theory, the Thomists and Molinists are agreed in saying that this congruism cannot help having recourse to the scientia media so that salutary acts easy to perform may be foreseen. Among Thomists of

modern times, Father del Prado writes: “The congruism of the Sorbonne rejects the scientia media in name, but retains it in fact. Knowledge of simple intelligence is the name it gives to its knowledge, but in reality it is the same as the scientia media, because it precedes the decree of the divine will.” The essence of the scientia media consists, as a matter of fact, in the foreseeing of free conditionate futures previous to any divine determining decree. Now such is exactly the stand taken by the Sorbonne congruism in the case of salutary acts easy to perform, since in this theory these acts do not demand either divine determining decrees or grace that is infallibly efficacious of itself. Of two persons equally helped by God, it would happen, then, that one of them prays and the other does not, and the former would become better without having been loved more by God. Once more this is a violation, so the Thomists say, of the principle of predilection, that no one thing would be better than another, unless it were loved more by God.

It will be said that at least man without a help that is efficacious of itself sometimes avoids resisting grace. Father del Prado replies to this, pointing out that for St. Thomas, “the very fact that one does not place an obstacle to grace, is due to grace.” Not to resist grace is a good thing which must originate from the source of all good things, that is, from God’s love. Therefore he who does not resist is loved more by God than he who, situated in the same circumstances, does resist. God mercifully preserves him in the state of goodness, whereas he justly permits the other to commit sin, often as a punishment for previous sin. Thus we find ourselves confronted by two mysteries, the one of grace and the other of iniquity. This congruist theory of salutary acts easy to perform forgets this saying of St. Augustine: “Because all good things, great, mediocre, and least, come from God, it follows that even the good use of free will comes from God.” In every salutary act, however trifling, there is to be found the mystery of grace.

In the criticism of this congruism, Thomists and Molinists agree in saying with Schiffini: “The intrinsic and infallible efficacy of the divine decrees and of grace either is or is not in harmony with our liberty. If it is, why restrict it to difficult acts? If it is not, why admit it for them? The question here is one of salutary acts, considered as acts and as supernaturally free acts, whether they are easy or difficult to perform; because the greater or less difficulty in performing these acts does not

change their species. Finally, prayer is not always an easy act, especially perseverance in prayer."

We might speak here of a congruism of later date, that of cardinals Satolli, Pecci, and Lorenzelli and of bishops Paquet and Janssens, O.S.B., who, rejecting outright the scientia media and predetermining decrees, endeavor to take an intermediate stand. They hold that God knows conditionally free acts of the future by means of His knowledge of simple intelligence, before any decree of His divine will.

To this the Thomists reply that it is a confounding of the possible with the conditionate future. This latter, even if it will never become a reality, is more than a mere possibility. It implies a new determination in answer to the question as to which of two possible contradictories Peter would choose if placed in certain circumstances. Would he or would he not be faithful to his Master? One does not have to be omniscient to see that there would be two possible choices here for Peter. But previous to any determining decree, God, by His knowledge of simple intelligence, cannot foresee what decision Peter would make, which of the two possibles he would choose. In the third part of this book and in the second appendix we shall resume the discussion of the view on the divine motion held by cardinals Satolli, Pecci, Lorenzelli, and also by Father Billot, S.J.

We see that the outstanding difficulty of these different forms of congruism, whether that of Suarez or of Tournely or of Satolli, is the difficulty that is raised against the theory of the scientia media, which truly seems to posit a dependence or passivity in God's foreknowledge toward a determination that is independent of His action. Chiefly on this account the Augustinians and Thomists who wrote subsequent to the Council of Trent attack the scientia media. It remains for us now to give an account of their teaching.

CHAPTER IV

PREDESTINATION ACCORDING TO THE TEACHING OF THE POST-TRIDENTINE AUGUSTINIANS

AUGUSTINIANISM is the name given in particular to the doctrine proposed in the seventeenth century by Cardinal Noris (1631-1704) and defended later on by the theologian Lawrence Berti (1696-1766), both of them being Augustinians. They were accused of Jansenism, though they were never condemned. Far from this being the case, their doctrine, as a matter of fact, differs essentially from Jansenism, in that it sincerely affirms liberty (freedom from necessity) and sufficient grace.

Though fully admitting for the present state of man intrinsically and infallibly efficacious grace, they differ from Thomism in their manner of conceiving the influence of the divine action on free will. For them it is a determining influence that is not physical, but merely moral. Grace acts on the soul by way of delectation. Man in his present state is determined to act either by reason of an evil delectation (con-cupiscence) or by reason of a good and spiritual delectation (charity). This latter is a sufficient grace when it gives the power to overcome concupiscence; it is an efficacious grace when it actually gains the victory over concupiscence, not necessitating but infallibly moving the will.

This explains the conclusions relative to predestination enunciated by L. Berti. In these conclusions they draw a much finer distinction than the Thomists do, between the present state and that of original justice, and these conclusions presuppose that grace intrinsically and infallibly efficacious is required in the present condition of man, not because the created free will, whether of angel or man, depends upon God, but because of the weakness of our free will since the fall. These conclusions appear at the beginning of

Berti's work, and are enunciated as follows: "Prop. LXXXVIII: God does not predetermine naturally free actions, and consequently He does not foresee them in the efficacious preordination of His will (p. 175). Prop. XCII: The creature in the state of innocence did not need the help of predetermining grace, and consequently God in the efficacious decree of His will had not the least knowledge of the perseverance of the angels (p. 186). Prop. XCVIII: God sees future free acts of the supernatural order, which acts refer to the state of fallen nature, and His seeing them is dependent upon the decree of His efficacious will (p. 197). Prop. XCIX: Human liberty is in no way affected by the divine preordinations (p. 208). Prop. C: By His antecedent will God wills all men to be saved, without a single exception (p. 215). Prop. CVI: In the dogma of predestination and grace there must be no departure from the teaching of St. Augustine (p. 228). Prop. CXIII: Morally virtuous acts, which are foreseen by God, by no means are the cause of our predestination (p. 235). Prop. CXIV: Predestination to glory precedes predestination to grace (p. 237). Prop. CXV: It is proved from Sacred Scripture that in the state of fallen nature predestination to glory is gratuitous (p. 239). Prop. CXVI: Our Holy Father Augustine most plainly taught that this same predestination to glory is gratuitous (p. 242). Prop. CXXXIII: On the part of the reprobate, original sin, of course, is partly the cause of negative reprobation (p. 289)."

The principal objection raised by the Thomists against these theses of seventeenth and eighteenth century Augustinianism is that the principle of predilection formulated by St. Augustine and St. Thomas is of absolute universality, and that it applies therefore not only to man in the present state, but also to man in the state of innocence and even to the angels. In speaking of the angels and their predestination, St. Augustine said that if the good and the bad were created equally good, the former, since they received more help, attained eternal happiness, whereas the latter fell through their own fault, and this, moreover, was permitted by God for a greater good. St. Thomas gave a most universal scope to the principle of predilection, so that it applies not only to fallen man, but to every created being, and this not only because of the infirmity of their nature, but also because of their dependence upon God: "Since God's love is the cause of the goodness of things, no one thing would be better than another, unless God willed a greater good for this thing than for the other." No one angel or man, in

whatever state he may be, would be better than another, unless he were loved more by God. The principle is of absolute universality.

Moreover, in addition to this, the Thomists say that every salutary act, particularly if it is performed in a state of aridity, is not due to the victorious delectation. Finally, when this latter is present, since it is only a moral motion, operating by way of an objective attraction, and is not a physical motion, emanating from it and moving the will to act, it cannot be intrinsically and infallibly efficacious. God seen face to face certainly would infallibly attract our will; but the case is not the same with the pleasure we experience at the thought of God known in the obscurity of faith.

CHAPTER V

PREDESTINATION ACCORDING TO THE TEACHING OF THE POST-TRIDENTINE THOMISTS

PRINCIPLES ON WHICH THEY AGREE

ABSOLUTELY all the Thomists who wrote after Molina's time are opposed to his theory of the scientia media. In their opinion it posits a dependence or passivity in God's foreknowledge with regard to a determination that is independent of His action. The whole controversy brings us back to the dilemma: "God determining or determined, there is no other alternative." We cannot admit, say the Thomists, any dependence or passivity in pure Act. Hence they maintain that the only way in which God can know conditionally free acts of the future is in an objectively conditionate decree, and free acts of the future only in a conditionate decree that is positive in the case of good acts, and permissive in the case of sin. They add that the determining decree with regard to our salutary acts is intrinsically and infallibly efficacious, but that it is not necessitating, for it extends even to the free mode of our acts which God wills and produces in us and with us. God willed efficaciously from all eternity that the good thief should be converted of his own free will on Calvary, and this divine efficacious will, far from destroying the freedom of this act of conversion, produces this in him because God, who preserves our will in existence, is more intimate to it than it is to itself.

Thus all Thomists defend the intrinsic and infallible efficacy of the divine decrees. It is a question of the decrees that concern our salutary acts and of the grace by which these acts are performed, whether these salutary acts are easy or difficult to perform. There is no exception to the absolute universality of these principles, since they are indeed of the metaphysical

order. They concern the creature's act considered as a free act, and not as a difficult act. From this point of view, intrinsically and infallibly efficacious grace was required for the salutary act as well in the state of innocence for men and angels, as in the present state. In other words, it is required not only on the ground of infirmity, but also on the ground of dependence, by reason of the creature's dependence in each of its acts upon God, who is the most universal cause of all things that come into existence, as to whatever reality and goodness is in them.

St. Thomas had affirmed this intrinsic efficacy of the divine decrees when he said that the divine consequent or efficacious will concerns the good that happens or will happen at the present moment, and that everything that God wills by this will happens infallibly, whether it is a question of acts easy or difficult to perform: "Whatever God simply wills takes place; although what He wills antecedently may not take place."

This intrinsic and infallible efficacy of grace is to be understood, according to the teaching of the Thomists, not as a moral motion that influences the will by way of objective attraction (for only God seen face to face could infallibly attract our will), but it is to be understood as a motion that applies our will to posit its act vitally and freely, and for this reason in opposition to moral motion, it is called physical premotion. The Thomists even say that this motion is predetermining, in so far as it infallibly guarantees the execution of the predetermining eternal decree. It is not a formal but a causal determination, which means that it infallibly moves the will to determine itself in such a way that the result of the deliberation is a salutary act. Then the determination of the will is no longer causal, but formal and completed. What would be a contradiction, would be to say that the will is formally determined before it is formally determined.

On these points all the Thomists are agreed, from the strictest, such as Bannez, Lemos, and Alvarez, to the mildest among them, such as Gonzalez of Albeda, who defended a special theory about sufficient grace. We can inform ourselves of their views by reading their commentaries on St. Thomas. Of more recent date are the articles on sufficient grace by Father Guillermin, O.P., who, with Gonzalez de Albeda and Massoulié, goes as far as he can in eliminating the difference between sufficient grace and efficient grace, maintaining, however, that only this latter infallibly removes the obstacles to the good consent of the will.

THE PRINCIPLE OF PREDILECTION

All the Thomists, even Gonzalez, Massoulié, and Father Guillermin, defend most firmly and as a necessary consequence the principle of predilection, that “no one thing would be better than another unless it were loved more and helped more by God.” All admit the absolute universality of this principle both for the state of innocence and for the present state, and this whether it be a question of acts easy or difficult to perform, of the initial or final act, or whether it be for the beginning or continuation of the act. We cannot dwell longer here on this point, which we have discussed at length elsewhere.

THE GRATUITY OF PREDESTINATION

It is by the light of the foregoing principles that the Thomists who wrote after the Council of Trent explain the articles of St. Thomas on predestination. They defend the interpretation given by St. Augustine and St. Thomas of St. Paul’s teaching on this question, as St. Robert Bellarmine did in his works, but they insist more than he does on the words of St. Paul, who says: “It is God who worketh in you both to will and to accomplish.” And again when he says: “For who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received?” Thus they consider the doctrine of the absolute gratuity of predestination to glory as directly founded on the Scripture.

In the explanation of this doctrine they all agree in admitting that predestination to glory is prior to the foreseeing of merits, as the willing of the end is prior to the choice of the means; but that in the order of execution God gives glory as the reward of merits, and in this they combat the opinion of the Protestants and the Jansenists. God freely wills to give glory to His elect, but He does not will to give it gratuitously. They all hold, too, that negative reprobation, by which God wills to permit sin that deprives one of glory, is prior to the foreseeing of demerits. Furthermore, several of them say that original sin fails to explain it in the case of those in whom this sin is remitted. On the contrary, positive reprobation, which inflicts the penalty of damnation, is subsequent to the foreseeing of sin, which the penalty presupposes.

The Thomists therefore generally arrange the divine decrees in the following order: (1) God wills by His antecedent will to save all men, even after original sin was committed; and He puts at their disposal graces that

are truly sufficient, so that they may keep the commandments; for He never commands what is impossible. (2) God has a special love for and chooses a certain number of angels and men whom He wills efficaciously to save. Predestination to glory thus precedes in the order of intention the foreseeing of merits. (3) God puts at the disposal of the elect intrinsically and infallibly efficacious graces whereby infallibly, although freely, they will merit eternal life and attain it. (4) God, foreseeing in His decrees that His elect will persevere until the end, decides in the order of execution preconceived by Him to grant them glory as a reward of their merits. (5) But as He also foresees in His permissive decrees that others will complete their time of probation in a state of mortal sin, He positively casts them off as reprobates on account of their sins. This order of decrees is founded on the following principles that are admitted not only by the Thomists, but also by Scotus, Bellarmine, and Suarez: that the wise person wills the end before the means, and that if the end is first in the order of intention, it is last in the order of execution.

POINT ON WHICH THE THOMISTS DIFFER

The Thomists agree on these principal theses, and it is only on the notion of negative reprobation that there is a slight difference between them.

Alvarez, the Carmelites of Salamanca, John of St. Thomas, Gonet, and Contenson admitted that negative reprobation, which applies both to angels and to men and which is prior to the foreseeing of merits, consists in the positive exclusion from glory, in this sense that God would have refused them glory as a gift not due to them; then He would have permitted their sins and decided finally to inflict on them the penalty of damnation on account of their sins, which is positive reprobation. We still have in this, in contradistinction to the Protestants, a certain difference between positive and negative reprobation, in that the former is a penalty and the latter is not, but merely the refusal of a pure gift.

However, many Thomists, such as Goudin, Graveson, Billuart, and nearly all at the present day, reject this interpretation of it, and they give three principal reasons for this: (1) because it is too harsh a view and can only with difficulty be reconciled with the divine antecedent will to save all men; (2) because it establishes an extreme parallelism between the two orders of good and evil: God first wills glory to the elect as a pure gift; then,

in the order of execution preconceived by Him, He wills it as a reward of their merits; but He cannot will to exclude the others from glory before He foresaw their demerits; for this exclusion cannot be in itself a good and can be willed by God only as a punishment after He foresaw their demerits; (3) this theory of the positive exclusion from glory as being a gift not due, is not to be found in the works of St. Thomas or in those of Capreolus, Cajetan, and Sylvester of Ferrara, who were his first commentators. St. Thomas wrote: “It is part of that providence to permit some to fall away from the end (glory), and this is called reprobation.” Toward the end of the argument in this article he says: “Reprobation includes the will to permit a person to fall into sin (negative reprobation), and to impose the punishment of damnation on account of that sin (positive reproba-bation).”

Also these last mentioned Thomists and nearly all at the present day make negative reprobation to consist in the divine will to permit sin, which merits exclusion from the glory of heaven. God is not bound, indeed, to conduct effectively all angels and men to the glory of heaven and to prevent a creature, of itself defectible, from sometimes failing. He can permit this evil of which He is by no means the cause, and He permits it in view of a greater good, as being a manifestation of His infinite justice.

THE CLEAR AND OBSCURE POINTS IN THOMISM

The Thomists deduce their doctrine on predestination entirely from the principle of predilection: “Since God’s love is the cause of all good, no one thing would be better than another unless it were loved more by God.” This principle seems in the philosophical order to be an evident corollary from the principles of causality and of the universal causality of God who is the author of all good. This same principle is found variously expressed in the revelation of both the Old and New Testaments, as for instance: “I will have mercy on whom I will, and I will be merciful to whom it shall please Me. . . . For who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received?”

Thus Thomism remains absolutely faithful to St. Augustine’s interpretation of St. Paul’s texts. It represents the luminous side of this doctrine, which fully safeguards the truth, and the absolute universality of the principle of causality in its relations to the transcendent causality of God who is the author of nature, grace, and salvation. Thomism absolutely

refuses to violate these principles by a conception of human liberty that cannot be proved either by experience or a priori. It vigorously refuses to deny or limit the universal laws of being and action which clarify the whole doctrinal synthesis of philosophy and theology, inasmuch as the proper object of theology is God Himself, and it must therefore consider all things, our liberty included, guided by the true concept of God and not by one the reverse of this.

The obscurity in this doctrine is to be found when we consider the mystery from the other angle. This presents itself when it is a question of explaining God's universal will to save, the real possibility for those not elected to keep the commandments, and God's permission of sin, especially of the sin of final impenitence.

To this the Thomists reply that God most certainly wills to save all men, in the sense that He wills to make it really possible for them to fulfill His precepts; but this real possibility or this real power remains obscure for two reasons:

1) Everything is knowable according as it is actual. In every doctrine that admits the principle of potency and act, the act or determination is knowable in itself, although it may not always be easily knowable for us, because of its elevation or spirituality, which escapes our sense perception. On the contrary, undetermined potency, like an undeveloped germ, is not knowable in itself, but only in its relation to act. That is true of prime matter in its relation to form, of the essence of things in its relation to existence, of the intellect not yet informed by the knowable object, of the created free will that can choose this or that, of the real power of doing good which, however real it may be, does not pass over into act. We have fully discussed elsewhere the reason for the obscurity in everything that remains potential.

2) This real power of doing good, which does not pass over into act, remains obscure because it includes the divine permission to sin, and sin is a mystery of iniquity more obscure in itself than the mysteries of grace. Whereas these latter are in themselves light, truth, and goodness, the evil of sin is a privation of being, truth, and good.

Nevertheless we see that God, who is the sovereign Good and omnipotent, is by no means the cause of moral evil. As St. Thomas shows, God cannot directly incite us to it without this being a denial of Himself, and neither can it be said that He is indirectly responsible for not having given us sufficient help. He does give this help, but the sinner resists it, and

so merits to be deprived of efficacious help, as implied by the prophet Osee speaking in God's name, when he says: "Destruction is thy own, O Israel: thy help is only in Me." Even if, by supposing an impossibility, God willed to be the direct or indirect cause of sin, He could not do so, for deficiency and disorder are not included in the adequate object of His omnipotence. As the eye cannot see sounds, nor the ear hear colors, still more so sovereign Goodness and Omnipotence cannot be the direct or indirect cause of moral evil. God can only permit it, let it happen, and this for a greater good, which we often fail to perceive.

Undoubtedly there is a very great obscurity in the mystery of God permitting the sin of final impenitence. But no one can prove that God by reason of His universal providence is bound to prevent the failure and the irrevocable failure of a creature that is by its nature defectible. God in His justice gives the very real power to avoid this irrevocable failure, but He does not give to all the power to avoid it de facto. It is not impossible for Him to permit, especially after many previous sins, that one should resist the final sufficient grace, a resistance whereby the sinner merits to be deprived of the last efficacious help. This is the great mystery in which is involved the whole obscurity of non-actuated real potency, of free potency, and the whole obscurity of the evil of sin, which is by its nature darkness, privation of light, truth, and goodness.

The solution to the problem of evil is to be found in the following words of St. Augustine: "Since God is supremely good, by no means would He permit any evil in His works unless He were powerful enough and good enough to bring good out of evil." God can permit evil only for a greater good. The manifestation of the splendor of God's infinite justice and mercy is such a greater good that in many respects is beyond our power of comprehension. This is certainly an obscurity, but it is the very one of Christian faith, the obscurity that results from the light being too strong for our weak eyes, "the light inaccessible which God inhabits."

The objections raised against the Thomist doctrine of predestination state in equivalent words that this doctrine destroys human liberty, that it is discouraging, and that it makes God out to be an accepter of persons, which is a kind of injustice. These objections were raised by the Semipelagians against St. Augustine. St. Paul puts the same question in one of his epistles, when he says: "Is there injustice with God? . . . O man, who art thou that

repliest against God? . . . Hath not the potter power to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?”

Contrary to what the Protestants and the Dansenists say, the Thomists reply that the transcendent efficacy of the divine decrees and grace, far from destroying our liberty or our dominating indifference, actualizes it by causing in us and with us that our acts be performed freely; for this latter is an entity and a good, which comes as a necessary consequence from the source of all reality and good.

To the second objection the Thomists reply that the doctrine of St. Thomas, far from being discouraging, brings out into bold relief the formal motive of hope, which is not human effort but God’s infinite power to help, The formal motive of a theological virtue cannot indeed be something created; and the supernatural effort we make, aroused to this by the efficacy of grace, cannot make this latter efficacious. It is better, therefore, as St. Augustine said, to trust in God, who is sovereignly good and omnipotent, rather than in ourselves, and in our inconstancy and weakness; for, notwithstanding the obscurity in the mystery, we are far surer of the rectitude of the omnipotent God’s intentions than of our own. Bossuet laid special stress on this point.

Let no one, therefore, say: If I am predestined, whatever I do I shall be saved; if not, whatever I do I shall be damned. To speak thus is as false and absurd as it is for a farmer to say: If the time for harvest is bound to come, whether I work and sow the seed or not, it will come. The reason for this is that predestination, like providence, concerns not only the end but also the means that will enable us to obtain the end. The Augustinian and Thomist doctrines, far from turning us away from good works, as the Protestant doctrine does, urges us to labor and strive so as to merit eternal life, telling us to put our trust above all things in God, who alone can give us the grace to persevere until the end, as the Council of Trent says.

There would be acceptation of persons and therefore injustice on God’s part, if He gave to one more help than to the other, and refused what is due to the latter. But it is not so. Grace is a gratuitous gift and God grants sufficient grace to all those who have the obligation to keep His commandments. If they resist it, they merit thus to be deprived of the efficacious help which was virtually offered to them in the preceding grace. Thus, as St. Augustine said, if efficacious grace is granted to a certain one,

it is because of God’s mercy; if it is refused to a certain other, it is because of His justice.

It remains for us to consider the impenetrable mystery of the intimate reconciliation of the two principles that clarify all these problems. On the one hand, we have the principle of predilection: no one thing would be better than another, unless it were loved more by God; on the other hand, is the principle that God never commands what is impossible, but wills to make it possible for all to keep His commandments.

How are these two principles intimately reconciled? This is beyond the natural powers of either the human or the angelic intellect. It would be necessary for the intellect to have received the light of glory so as to see how infinite justice, mercy: and sovereign liberty are really identified, without being destructive of one another, in the eminence of the Deity, or in the intimate life of God.

The exposition we gave in the beginning of this work of the different theological opinions and their difficulties will enable us the better to understand their classification and comparison. It remains for us to combine the results of those researches, and in this we shall be guided by the light of revelation and the definitions of the Church.

SYNTHESIS

By way of synthesis we shall combine here the notions, principles, and leading conclusions relative to predestination. In formulating them we shall follow the terminology of St. Thomas and consider as he did: (1) the definition of predestination; (2) its cause; (3) its certainty.

For reprobation we shall also follow his example. With great insight he discusses it not in a question apart, as often was done since his time, but in the very question on predestination. One would destroy the harmonious blend of colors in a picture, and the picture itself, by seeking to separate the black from the white, the light from the shade.

CHAPTER I

HOW SHALL WE DEFINE PREDESTINATION?

To destine means to ordain a thing or a person to something determinate. In this sense we say that a certain object is destined for the service of the altar and that soldiers about to give up their lives for the safety of an army are destined for death. In this sense the Third Council of Valencia (855), in its third canon, spoke of the predestination of the wicked to death in the following terms: “We unhesitatingly admit the predestination of the elect to life and of the wicked to death.” Then it immediately adds: “But God foreknew the malice of the wicked, and because it was their own and He was not the cause of it, He did not predestine it. The punishment, of course, following their demerit, this He foreknew and predestined.” This means that God decided from all eternity to inflict the penalty of damnation upon the wicked for their sins, of which He is by no means the cause.

But the Scripture, the Church Fathers, and the theologians generally understand by predestination: the divine preordination of the elect to glory and the means by which they will infallibly obtain it. It is thus St. Augustine defined predestination, when he declared it to be: “The foreknowledge and preparation of those gifts whereby whoever are liberated are most certainly liberated.” The first word of this definition, “foreknowledge,” was previously explained by St. Augustine in a work of his written about the same time, when he said that: “By predestination God foreknew those things which He was going to do.” It is not a question of a purely speculative knowledge that is previous to the divine decree, but of a practical knowledge that is subsequent to this decree.

Hence it follows that the certainty of which St. Augustine speaks is a certainty not only of foreknowledge but also of causality: “He foreknew those things which He was going to do.” St. Augustine had already said on this point: “Therefore aid was brought to the infirmity of the human will, so

that it might be unchangeably and invincibly influenced by divine grace." And he applied this definition to the pre-destination of the good angels who received more help than the others.

St. Thomas in like manner defines predestination thus: "The type of the ordering of some persons towards eternal salvation, existing in the divine mind." And he states precisely that the certainty of this preordination is a certainty not only of foreknowledge but also of causality; he says: "The number of the predestined is certain to God, not only by way of knowledge, but also by way of principal preordina-tion." St. Thomas develops this point in another of his works.

From this it follows that predestination, since it is the efficacious ordination of the means of salvation to the end, is an act of the divine intellect which presupposes an act of the will. According to St. Thomas and the Thomists, it is a command that presupposes divine love and election. God, indeed, ordains for Peter in preference to Judas the efficacious means of salvation, because He wills efficaciously to save him, because He loved him with a love of predilection and chose him. St. Thomas expressly says: "Predestination presupposes election in the order of reason; and election presupposes love. The reason of this is that predestination, as stated above (a. 1), is a part of providence. Now providence, as also prudence, is the plan existing in the intellect directing the ordering of some things towards an end. But nothing is directed towards an end unless the will for that end already exists. Whence the predestination of some to eternal salvation presupposes, in the order of reason, that God wills their salvation; and to this belong both election and love: love, inasmuch as He wills them this particular good of eternal salvation . . . ; election, inasmuch as He wills this good to some in preference to others, since He reprobates some, as stated above (a. 3). Election and love, however, are differently ordained in God and in ourselves: because in us the will in loving does not cause good, but we are incited to love by the good that already exists; and therefore we choose someone to love, and so election in us precedes love. In God, however, it is the reverse. For His will, by which in loving He wishes good to someone, is the cause of that good possessed by some in preference to others. Thus it is clear that love precedes election in the order of reason, and election precedes predestination. Whence all the predestinate are objects of election and love."

This text, which ranks among the most important ones of St. Thomas, proves especially three things: (1) That a predestination only to grace has but the name of true predestination, for it is common both to the elect and to many reprobates who, having once been justified, were afterwards estranged forever from God. (2) To speak of a predestination to grace that would not presuppose predestination to glory, is to forget that God wills the means only for the end, although on His part there are not two successive acts, the one referring to the end, and the other to the means. (3) If in us love follows election, in the sense that we cherish those whom we choose as lovable, which quality we did not cause but found in them; in God, on the contrary, election, since it is prior to predestination, follows love; for His creative and conservative love, far from presupposing lovableness in us, posits this in us, when He grants and preserves in us His natural and supernatural gifts.

This is an application in the highest degree of the principle of predilection: “Since God’s love is the cause of goodness in things, no one thing would be better than another, if God did not will greater good for one than for another.” That is why in the Scripture and Church Fathers, the predestined are often called the elect and beloved. The following text is worthy of notice: “Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess you the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world.”

It follows, in fine, from the definition of predestination, as St. Thomas says, that it is, “as regards its object, a part of providence.” Providence, indeed, concerns the three orders of grace, nature, and the hypostatic union, all of which are ordained to the same supreme end, which is the manifestation of God’s goodness. But, whereas God’s general providence does not always attain certain particular ends, for these are not always efficaciously but only antecedently and inef-ficaciously willed by Him, predestination, to be sure, always and infallibly leads the elect to eternal life, which God efficaciously wills for them.

IS THIS CONCEPTION OF PREDESTINATION THE KIND WHICH SCRIPTURE SPEAKS OF?

This predestination by which God directs infallibly certain persons rather than others to eternal life is affirmed by revelation, whatever the Pelagians and Semipelagians may say about it. Our Lord Jesus Christ said to those

who murmured at what He was saying to them, that “no man can come to Me, except the Father, who hath sent Me, draw him; and I will raise him up in the last day.” On several occasions He speaks of the elect, and He says that no one will be able to snatch them out of His Father’s hand. “My sheep hear My voice. . . . And I give them life everlasting; and they shall not perish for ever, and no man shall pluck them out of My hand. That which My Father hath given Me is greater than all: and no one can snatch them out of the hand of My Father.” This shows that God not only knows beforehand who are the elect, but that He also loved them, chose them in preference to others, and that He keeps them infallibly in His hand, which means that they are protected by His omnipotence.

This is precisely St. Paul’s point of view, for he says: “And we know that to them that love God, all things work together unto good, to such as, according to His purpose, are called to be saints. For whom He foreknew, He also predestinated. . . . And whom He predestinated, them He also called. And whom He called, them He also justified. And whom He justified, them He also glorified.” These are the infallible effects of eternal predestination. Let us note concerning the words “whom He foreknew” in the text just quoted that it is not said: at least those whose conditional merits He foreknew, and that this same expression, “whom He foreknew,” means “whom He knew beforehand with a look of benevolence,” and it applies not only to adults but also to the children who will die soon after baptism, so as to be unable to merit their reward. St. Augustine said on this subject: “By predestination God foreknew those things which He was going to do.” Later on St. Thomas understood this text to mean: “Those whom He benevolently foresaw, He chose and predestined,” and he saw the normal sequence in these acts, in which the final practical judgment is first; then comes election, and afterward command followed by its execution: in other words, vocation, justification, glorification. These acts, in St. Paul’s judgment, presuppose a divine intention expressed by him in the passage just quoted, for he says: “Whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son; that He might be the firstborn amongst many brethren.”

Such is the divine intention that inspires all these acts; it is in conjunction with that of God’s glory and the manifestation of His goodness as stated by St. Paul: “That He might show the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He hath prepared unto glory.” Just as plainly did St. Paul refer

to election, for he writes: “He (God) chose us in Him (Christ) before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy. . . .” He insisted on the sovereignly free character of this election, saying: “In whom we also are called by lot, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things according to the counsel of His will.” St. Augustine, too, was able to write against the Semipelagians as follows: “No one who sought to avoid falling into error, could argue against this predestination which we defend in accordance with Holy Scripture.”

Moreover, evidently there is not anything done by God in time which was not preordained by Him from all eternity; otherwise He would begin to will something in time, or something would happen by chance apart from any intention or permission on His part, which is absurd. Now, it is God who, in time, brings certain persons to eternal happiness, which is beyond the natural powers of any created being to attain. He therefore preordained from all eternity to bring them to it, and this is predestination. It is therefore an established fact that predestination is beyond the possibility of any doubt. Furthermore, without predestination no one would attain eternal happiness; because every good comes from God, especially salvation and the culmination of this, which is eternal happiness; for this is of the supernatural order, and is absolutely beyond the natural powers of any created or creatable being.

The Semipelagians raised the following objection: if there is an infallible predestination, then I am either predestined or not. If I am, whatever I do I shall infallibly be saved; if I am not, whatever I do I shall infallibly be damned. I can therefore do whatever I please. St. Augustine replied at once to the Semipelagians, pointing out that if this reasoning were of any value, it would prevent us from admitting not only the fact of predestination, but also that of God’s foreknowledge, which is admitted, however, by the Semipelagians. The Thomists replied in the same way to a similar objection raised against them by the Molinists.

Several saints went on further to remark that if there were any foundation for this Semipelagian dilemma, the demons by the natural vigor of their intellect would grasp the truth of this far better than we do and would no longer take the trouble to tempt us. There are even some saints who replied to the demon by turning against him this sophism, whereby he intended to plunge them into despair, and saying: “If I am not predestined, even without

your efforts to have me lose my soul, I shall be lost; and if I am predestined, whatever you do, I shall be saved."

The decisive reply to this objection is given by St. Thomas. He states that providence, of which predestination is a part; does not suppress the secondary causes and concerns not only the final effect, but also the means or the secondary causes that must produce this effect. God does not predestine, therefore, the adults to the end, that is, to glory, without predestining them to the means, that is, to salutary and meritorious good works whereby this end can and must be obtained by them.

The Semipelagian sophism is as false as that of the plowman who would say: If God has foreseen that next summer I shall have wheat, whether I sow the seed or not, I shall have it. "Let us not deny what is very clear," says St. Augustine, "because we do not understand what is hidden." In truth, according to the dispensation of Providence that con-cerns the end and the means, without violating liberty, as wheat is obtained only by the sowing of the seed, so adults obtain eternal life only by the performance of good works. It is in this sense that Peter says: "Labor the more, that by good works you may make sure your calling and election." Although election is eternal on God's part, yet in the order of execution, it is in time and by means of good works that this is effected in us. We must not confuse the two vistas of time and eternity. By God's eternal predestination grace is given to the elect, not that they may let themselves get into a state of spiritual torpor, but it is given precisely for the purpose that they may work out their salvation. As St. Augustine says, it is given for them to act, not for them to remain inactive. Such are the principal consequences deduced from the definition and existence of predestination.

HOW SHALL WE DEFINE REPROBATION?

The term reprobation is commonly used in reference to our rejection of an error of judgment by the intellect, and in reference to the moral disorder which we reject by a judgment of the intellect and by an aversion of the will. In this sense the Scripture speaks of those whom God reprobated from all eternity. Thus St. Paul writes: "I chastise my body . . . lest perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway." The Scripture also makes use of equivalent words and expressions, such as: "cursed," "vessels of wrath and dishonor," "child of hell," "son of

perdition.” The fact that certain persons are reprobated has therefore the certainty of faith.

St. Thomas explains it by remarking that it belongs to God’s universal providence to permit for the general good of the universe the failure or deficiency of certain defectible creatures, otherwise spoken of as physical and moral evil. Thus Providence permits the death of the gazelle for the life of the lion, and the crime of persecutors for the heroic patience of the martyrs. Now intellectual creatures, since they are by nature defectible, are ordained to eternal life by divine providence. It pertains, therefore, to this latter to permit, for a greater good, that certain persons fail and do not attain this end. This is called negative reprobation, quite distinct from positive reprobation that inflicts the penalty of damnation for the sin of final impenitence.

Nothing, however, happens that God from all eternity has not either willed, if it is a good, or has not permitted, if it is an evil. Now, according to revelation, certain persons are lost through their own fault and are eternally punished.’’ This would not happen, therefore, unless God from all eternity had permitted their failure to do their duty—of which, moreover, He is by no means the cause—and if He had not decided to punish them for it.

Is reprobation simply the denial of predestination? It implies the divine permission of the sin of final impenitence (negative reprobation), and the divine will to inflict the penalty of damnation for this sin (positive reprobation). If reprobation were simply the denial of predestination, it would not be an act of providence, and the penalty of damnation would not be inflicted by God. St. Thomas says: “As predestination includes the will to confer grace and glory; so also reprobation includes the will to permit a person to fall into sin, and to impose the punishment of damnation on account of that sin.”

Having defined predestination and reprobation, we must now seek their cause.

CHAPTER II

THE CAUSE OF PREDESTINATION

WHAT is the cause of the predestination and of the election whereby God chose certain persons in preference to others for the purpose of bringing them to eternal life?

The liberty of the divine election in the Old Testament comes to our mind. Seth was elected, and not Cain; then Noe, also Sem in preference to his two brothers; after this, Abraham, Isaac in preference to Ismael, and finally Jacob (Israel) was chosen. How does the case stand now as regards each of the elect?

We saw from the definitions of the Church in the councils of Carthage (418) and Orange (529), directed against the Pelagians and Semipelagians, that the cause of predestination cannot be the naturally good works of certain persons which are foreseen by God, or the naturally good beginning of the will in performing a salutary act (initium salutis), or the perseverance in good works until death without a special grace.

According to the same definitions of the councils of Orange and Trent, which refer to the special grace of final perseverance, it is also beyond doubt that the cause of predestination to glory cannot be because God foresees that certain persons without a special grace would retain their supernatural merits until death: “If anyone saith that one justified is able to persevere without the special help of God in the justice received; or that with this help is not able; let him be anathema.” St. Thomas, moreover, proves inadmissible the opinion of those who say that God chose these particular persons in preference to others because He foreknew that they would make good use of the grace received (at least at the moment of death), just as the king gives a fine horse to a rider because he foresees the good use he will make of it. St. Thomas points out that this opinion cannot be admitted; for we cannot eliminate from our salutary acts a part of the

good as not coming from the primary cause that is the source of all good; therefore the good use of grace in the elect is itself an effect of predestination, and cannot therefore be its cause or motive. Furthermore, St. Thomas even says: “Whatsoever is in man disposing him towards salvation, is all included under the effect of predestination,” and therefore this includes even the free determination of his salutary acts.

Is this reply of St. Thomas a cogent reply to the Molinist opinion that maintains the cause of our predestination to glory to be because God foresaw our merits? We leave this for our readers to judge.

Let us recall that, according to the principle of predilection, the cause of predestination and election whereby God chose certain persons in preference to others so as to bring them to eternal life, is not the fact of their foreseen merits but pure mercy, as all the Thomists, Augustinians, Scotists, Bellarmine, too, and Suarez say, who on this point are in agreement with St. Augustine and St. Thomas.

The foundation of the principle of predilection is not only an established fact of the natural order, but it is also a revealed truth. The Old and New Testaments make use of most varying expressions to tell us that without exception all good comes from God, from God’s love: that there is no good which God by His love has not efficaciously willed: that everything which God wills effectively comes to pass: that no evil, either physical or moral, happens and happens in this particular place rather than that without God’s permission. These are the most universal of principles, and they dominate the whole question. Reference was made to them at the opening of the Council of Thuzey (860) in the following terms: “Whatsoever the Lord pleased He hath done, in heaven and in earth, the final perseverance of Peter, for in-stance, in preference to that of Judas. For nothing is done in heaven or in earth, except what it has pleased Him to do if it is a good or what He has justly permitted to happen if it is an evil.”

We find this fundamental truth expressed in very many texts both of the Old and New Testaments. Thus we have: “Lord, Thou hast wrought all our works for us”; “Thou art Lord of all and there is none that can resist Thy majesty”; “O Lord, king of gods, and of all power . . . turn his (king’s) heart to the hatred of our enemy”; “And God changed the king’s spirit into mildness”; “As the division of waters, so the heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord: whithersoever He will He shall turn it”; “As the potter’s clay is in his hand . . . so man is in the hand of Him that made him”; “I will cause

you to walk in My commandments"; "For it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish." Several of these texts and similar ones are quoted by the Council of Orange to show that every good comes from God and that nothing good happens without His having efficaciously willed it.

This foundation for the principle of predilection, to which the Council of Thuzey refers, is not only often expressed in Scripture, but the very principle itself is formulated in equivalent words by St. Paul, when he says: "For what distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received?" "Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves: but our sufficiency is from God." St. Paul even finds that the principle of predilection is expressed in the Book of Exodus, for he writes: "What shall we say then? Is there injustice with God? God forbid! For He saith to Moses: I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy. And I will show mercy, to whom I will show mercy. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." We read, too, in the Book of Psalms: "He saved me because He was well pleased with me"; "The salvation of the just is from the Lord"; "The mercies of the Lord that we are not consumed." Temporal salvation is the image of eternal salvation. We read, too, in the Book of Tobias these admirable words announcing what will be explicitly made known to us in the fullness of revelation: "He hath chastised us for our iniquities, and He shall save us for His own mercy."

Our Lord Himself spoke in the same sense: "I confess to Thee, O Father . . . because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them to little ones. Yea, Father: for so hath it seemed good in Thy sight." According to this text, the little ones received more light and help because such was God's good pleasure, who loved them more. In like manner, our Lord said to His disciples: "Fear not, little flock, for it hath pleased your Father to give you a kingdom." Of the elect our Lord said again that no one can snatch them from His Father's hand, which means, without reference to the foreseen merits of the elect, the Father's special love for them and the infallibly efficacious help which He will grant them, so as to have them merit until death and save them. "None of them is lost but the son of perdition."

Finally, in St. Paul's epistles the notions of election and predestination are more clearly defined, and this throws new light on the motive of predestination, as in the following text: "Blessed be the God and Father of

our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with spiritual blessings in heavenly places, in Christ. As He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and un-spotted in His sight in charity. Who hath predestinated us unto the adoption of children through Jesus Christ unto Himself, according to the purpose of His will, unto the praise of the glory of His grace. . . . In whom we also are called by lot, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things according to the counsel of His will."

This text, as many theologians, like Bellarmine and Suarez, have remarked along with the Thomists, contains three principal assertions: (1) God chose us, not because He foresaw that, if we were placed in certain circumstances, with a certain sufficient grace, we would become holy rather than others who were equally helped; but He chose us that we may be holy. (2) God thus chose us and consequently predestined us, according to the purpose or decree of His will, according to His good pleasure, which is again pointed out in verse eleven. That denotes the order of intention, in which the end precedes the means. (3) Unto the praise and glory of His grace, so as to bring into prominence in the order of execution, not the power of the created free will but the glory of His divine grace, in accordance with the following text: "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy."

Moreover, it cannot be merely predestination to grace that is implied in these texts, since this latter is common both to the elect and to the reprobates. It is a question of true predestination that includes the decree to grant not only the grace of justification, but the special gift of final perseverance, which, strictly speaking, cannot be merited by us. On this point the Council of Trent, quoting St. Paul, says: "God is able to establish him who standeth that he stand perseveringly, and to restore him who falleth." It also recalls to mind these words of the Apostle: "Wherefore, my dearly beloved . . . with fear and trembling work out your salvation. For it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will."

Finally, almost all theologians who admitted the absolute gratuity of predestination to salvation appealed in support of this doctrine to St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans in which, speaking of the predestination of the Gentiles and the reprobation of the Jews, he formulates general principles that are evidently applicable, as Father Lagrange remarks, to individuals, in

accordance with the principle that “God works in us [in each of us] both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will.” Moreover, St. Paul even says: “That He might show the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy which He hath prepared unto glory. Whom also He hath called, not only of the Jews but also of the Gentiles.” From this we see that he has in mind not only nations but also individuals who will become, as he expressed it, vessels of glory or of ignominy. In like manner, when he says: “Whom He predestined, them He also called . . . justified . . . and glorified,” this refers to individuals.

We saw that in the words of the preceding verse, “Whom He foreknew and predestined to be made conformable to the image of His Son,” the expression “whom He foreknew” refers to those whom He previously looked upon with benevolence, which is applicable even to children who died so soon after baptism so as not to have had time for meriting. The expression “whom He foreknew” does not mean therefore “whose merits He foreknew.”

What then are the general principles formulated here by St. Paul on the question of predestination? He defined it as “purpose of God,” “Purpose of God according to election,” “according to the election of grace,” which means a purpose or resolution according to a gratuitous election, for he adds: “And if by grace, it is not now by works, other-wise grace is no more grace.”

St. Paul explains, too, in this epistle the properties and effects of predestination, for he says: “All things work together unto good, to such as according to His purpose, are called to be saints.” And immediately afterward he enumerates the three effects of predestination: vocation, justification, and glorification, which, strictly speaking, apply to individuals. Finally, he points out its infallible efficacy, which he attributes not to the effort made by our will, but to God’s omnipotence, saying: “If God be for us who is against us?” As for the cause of predestination, he does not ascribe this to the foreknowledge of our merits, but to God’s special mercy, saying with Moses: “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy. And I will show mercy, to whom I will show mercy.” Hence it follows that “it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.”

Finally, he proves this last assertion by an irrefutable principle which is the principle of predilection in a new form, for he writes: “Who hath first

given to Him, and recompense shall be made Him. For of Him and by Him and in Him, are all things." It is always to this supreme principle that he appeals, as when he asks: "For who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received?"

What St. Paul means in all these texts, finds its confirmation in his answer to the objections which he puts to himself, and which were taken up later on by the Pelagians and Semipelagians: "Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump, to make one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor? What if God, willing to show His wrath, His avenging justice, and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction, that He might show the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy which He hath prepared unto glory, where is the injustice?"

St. Augustine and St. Thomas saw in all these texts of St. Paul the gratuity of predestination to eternal life. In other words, they perceived the motive of this to be a special mercy. St. Augustine often said that if God grants final perseverance to this particular person, it is by reason of His mercy; if He does not grant it to that other person, it is because of just punishment of sins, in the generality of cases repeated, and which have estranged the soul from God. St. Thomas and St. Prosper declared the same in these words retained by the Council of Quierzy: "That certain persons are saved, is the gift of Him who saves; but that certain persons are lost, is the fault of those who are lost."

This explains the attitude of theologians such as Tanquerey who, after giving us an analysis of what St. Paul said on predestination, writes as follows: "Moreover, all these utterances are nothing else but the very thesis of the Thomists; for they presuppose that God of His good pleasure elects us to glory, and that all good things are the result of this election, even our merits."

In addition to these reasons which are taken from Holy Scripture and which constitute the foundation of St. Thomas' doctrine on the cause of predestination, we have the argument of theological reasoning which the holy Doctor gives as follows: "Predestination is a part of providence. Now providence, as also prudence, is the plan existing in the intellect directing the ordering of some things towards an end. But nothing is directed towards an end unless the will for that end already exists. Whence the predestination

of some to eternal salvation presupposes, in the order of reason, that God wills their salvation; and to this belong both election and love."

In other words, whoever acts wisely, wills the end before the means. Now God acts with sovereign wisdom, and grace is the means with reference to glory or salvation. Therefore God first wills glory to His elect, and then the grace so as to have them attain it. St. Thomas, as we see, was in advance of Scotus in the presentation of this theological argument, and on this point Bellarmine and Suarez are in agreement with him.

This is one of the points that illustrate most clearly how St. Thomas and the greatest theologians along with him fear neither logic nor mystery. It is logic itself that leads them to the transcendence of the mystery, which is an object of contemplation far above reasoning.

Thus the motive of predestination becomes clear and, at the same time, that of negative reprobation as explained by St. Thomas in the following words: "The reason for the predestination of some, and reprobation of others, must be sought for in the goodness of God. Thus He is said to have made all things through His goodness, so that the divine goodness might be represented in things. Now it is necessary that God's goodness, which in itself is one and undivided, should be manifested in many ways in His creation; because creatures in themselves cannot attain to the simplicity of God. Thus it is that for the completion of the universe, there are required different grades of being; some of which hold a high and some a low place in the universe. That this multiformity of grades may be preserved in things, God allows some evils, lest many good things should never happen. Let us then consider the whole of the human race, as we consider the whole universe. God wills to manifest His goodness in men; in respect to those whom He predestines, by means of His mercy, in sparing them; and in respect of others, whom He reprobates, by means of His justice, in punishing them. This is the reason why God elects some and rejects others. To this the Apostle refers, saying (Rom. 9: 22-23): 'What if God, willing to show His wrath, that is, the vengeance of His justice, and to make His power known, endured, that is, permitted with much patience vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction; that He might show the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He hath prepared unto glory.' And elsewhere the same Apostle wrote (II Tim. 2: 20): `But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and earth; and some, indeed, unto honour, but some unto dishonour.' Yet why He chooses some

for glory, and reprobates others has no reason except the divine will. Whence Augustine says (Tract. XXVI in Joan.): `Why He draws one, and another He draws not, seek not to judge if thou dost not wish to err.' Thus, too, in the things of nature, a reason can be assigned, since primary matter is altogether uniform, why one part of it was fashioned by God from the beginning under the form of fire, another under the form of earth, that there might be a diversity of species in things of nature. Yet why this particular part of matter is under this particular form, and that under another, depends upon the simple will of God; as from the simple will of the artificer it depends that this stone is in this part of the wall and that in another; although the plan requires that some stones should be in this place and some in that place. Neither on this account can there be said to be injustice in God, if He prepares unequal lots for not unequal things. This would be altogether contrary to the notion of justice, if the effect of predestination were granted as a debt, and not gratuitously. In things which are given gratuitously a person can give more or less, just as he pleases provided he deprives nobody of his due, without any infringement of justice. This is what the master of the house said: 'Take what is thine and go thy way. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will?' " (Matt. 20: 14-15.)

What is due to each one, what God refuses to nobody, is sufficient grace for salvation, which makes it really possible to keep the commandments, for God never commands what is impossible. As for efficacious grace, especially the grace of final perseverance, this He grants by reason of His mercy. But of the adults, only those are deprived of it who through their own fault refuse to accept it. The doctors of the Church often pointed this out in the comparison they drew between the death of the good thief and that of Judas who resisted the final appeal of grace.

The general motive for predestination is, therefore, the manifestation of God's goodness that assumes the form of mercy in pardoning; and the motive for the predestination of this particular person rather than a certain other, is God's good pleasure. If it be so, how shall we formulate in exact terms the motive for either positive or negative reprobation?

CHAPTER III

THE MOTIVE FOR REPROBATION

FIRST of all it is clear that the positive reprobation of angels and men presupposes that their demerits were foreseen; for God can will to inflict the penalty of damnation only for failure in doing one's duty. In this all Catholics agree that God wills not the death of the sinner, but that he be converted and live. The theologians often quote these words of God uttered by the prophet: "Destruction is thy own, O Israel: thy help is only in Me."

Moreover, it is evident that God can will a thing only in so far as it is good; and for punishment to be good and just, this presupposes a sin. In this it differs from reward, which is good in itself, regardless of merits. Reward, in virtue of its being an excellent gift, can be willed in the order of intention before foreseen merits, although in the order of execution and in virtue of its being a reward, it depends upon them. We cannot say as much about punishment, nor look for an absolute parallelism between good and evil.

The motive for negative reprobation, taken absolutely or in a general way, is not the foreseen demerits of the reprobates; for this negative reprobation is nothing else but the divine permission of these demerits, and therefore it logically precedes instead of following the foreseeing of them. Without this divine permission, these demerits would not happen in time, and from all eternity they would remain unforeseen. We must say, in accordance with the text just quoted from St. Thomas, that the motive for negative reprobation is that God willed to manifest His goodness not only by means of His mercy, but also by means of His justice, and that it belongs to Providence to permit certain defectible beings to fail and certain evils to happen, without which there would be no good things of a higher order.

If we ask why God chose this person and not that other, there is, as we have seen from St. Thomas, no reason for this but simply the divine will which is thus the motive both for individual predestination and the negative

reprobation of this particular person rather than that other. In other words, among equally defectible rational creatures, why the defection of this particular person is permitted rather than of a certain other, there is no reason for this but the divine will. And somehow all Catholic theologians admit it, for all of them must admit at least that God could have preserved intact those who are lost, and permitted the fall of those who are saved.

The principal difficulty that confronts us here is this: the will to manifest the splendor of avenging justice before having foreseen the defection, is to will the punishment before the defection, and this is an injustice. Now, such would be the case according to the preceding explanation. Therefore it is inadmissible.

The Thomists reply by denying the major, because it confounds infinite justice with the punishment that is a manifestation of this justice. As a matter of fact, God does not will to permit the defection because of His love to chastise, for that would be repugnant to justice. But He permits it as a manifestation of His infinite justice and of the right of sovereign Good to be loved above all things, and He afterward inflicts the punishment on account of the defection.

In this way the punishment is but a finite means of manifesting infinite justice, and it is a means that is not an intermediate end willed before the permission of the defection, for it is good and just to punish only for a defection. Therefore, most certainly God wills to permit sin, not from love of imposing a finite chastisement, but from love of His infinite justice, or from love of His sovereign goodness that has a right to be loved above all things. Finally, when God wills to manifest His avenging justice, this truly presupposes the possibility of sin, but not as yet that He permits or foresees it. The case is quite different when He wills to inflict the punishment of damnation.

Still the objection is raised that “God forsakes not those who have been justified, unless He be first forsaken by them,” as the Council of Trent says. Now this would be so if He willed to permit the defection or the sin before He foresaw it.

To this we must reply: (1) This text of the Council is taken from St. Augustine, who admitted, however, that negative reprobation or the permission of sin is logically prior to the foreseeing of the same; (2) this text refers not to all men, but to the just, and it means that God does not deprive them of habitual or sanctifying grace except for mor-tal sin; (3) it

means again in a more general way that nobody is deprived of an efficacious grace that is necessary for salvation except through his own fault, for God never commands what is impossible; (4) but this defect, on account of which God refuses efficacious grace, would not happen without God's permission, which is certainly not its cause but its indispensable condition. We must therefore distinguish between God's mere permission of sin, which is evidently prior to the sin permitted, and His refusal of efficacious grace on account of this sin. This refusal is a punishment that presupposes the defect, whereas the defect presupposes the divine permission.

God's permission of sin, which is good in view of the end (for a greater good), implies certainly the non-continuance of the created will in the performance of good at that particular time. This non-continuance, not being something real, is not a good; but neither is it an evil, for it is not the privation of a good that is due to one; it is merely the negation of a good that is not due to one. Undoubtedly God is bound to maintain in existence a spiritual and created will, but He is not bound to maintain in the performance of good this will which by its nature is defectible. If God were bound to do so, sin would never happen, and the sinlessness of Mary would not be a privilege. The non-continuance of our will in the performance of good is not an evil, either of sin or of punishment; it is a non-good: just as nescience is not ignorance, but a negation and not a privation. On the contrary, God's withdrawal of efficacious grace is a punishment, and it is a punishment that presupposes at least a first defection.

We may still say with St. Thomas that, after a first sin, the divine permission of a second and a third sin is already a punishment for the first. But we could not say this for God's permission of the first sin, and the Council of Trent just quoted cannot be applied to it.

It is certain that God's permission of the first sin is not subsequent to the foreseeing of it; for He can foresee a defect only in so far as He permits it; and without His permission it would never happen.

As a final objection, we may say that we understand, moreover, God permitting any sin whatever, especially in the life of the elect; for this sin is permitted only for a greater good that concerns them personally, which is to make them more truly humble. But how are we to explain God permitting the sin of final impenitence?

In reply to this we must say that as a rule the sin of final impenitence is permitted by God only as a punishment for many other defects and for finally resisting His last appeal. St. Thomas writes: “The cause of grace being withheld is not only the man who raises an obstacle to grace; but God who, of His own accord, withholds His grace.”

Certainly there is a very great mystery in this, the most obscure of all those that concern us here; for the mysteries of iniquity are obscure in themselves, whereas the mysteries of grace are supremely luminous in themselves and obscure only for us. There is something that surpasses understanding in this, that God permits the final impenitence of some, for instance, of the bad thief rather than of the other, as a punishment for previous grave defects and for a greater good, which includes the manifestation of the splendor of infinite justice.

We must acknowledge that this proposition is the most obscure of all those formulated by us. But to show that no believer can deny it, we must take into direct consideration the contradictory proposition, and we shall see that no intellect can succeed in proving it. No one can establish the truth of this assertion, namely: God cannot permit the final impenitence of a sinner, of the bad thief, for instance, as a punishment for his preceding defects and in manifestation of the divine infinite justice. This assertion cannot be proved. Moreover, to deny the possibility of God’s permission of sin, would be to deny the possibility of sin: contra factum non valet ratio.

On the splendor of divine justice, it is worth noting what St. Thomas says, when asking whether angels grieve for the ills of those whom they guard. He replies in the negative, and the reason He gives is: “because their will cleaves entirely to the ordering of divine justice; while nothing happens in the world save what is effected or permitted by divine justice.” The author of the Imitation sets forth this splendor of divine justice when he says: “Be now solicitous and sorrowful because of thy sins, that at the day of judgment thou mayest be secure with the blessed. . . . Then shall he stand to judge them, who doth now humbly submit himself to the censures of men. Then shall the poor and humble have great confidence, but the proud man shall be compassed with fear on every side.”

The question has been raised whether original sin is a sufficient motive for reprobation. Evidently not so, if it is a question of reprobates who have been freed from original sin, although the effects of this sin remain in them, such as concupiscence that inclines one to evil. But the case is not the same

for unbaptized children who die before the age of reason. Because of original sin they are deprived of the beatific vision, though they do not have to suffer the punishment of the senses.

Included among the effects of reprobation are: (1) The permission of sins that will not be forgiven; (2) God's refusal of grace; (3) blinding of the intellect; (4) hardening of the heart; (5) the punishment of damnation. Sin itself is not the effect of reprobation, for God is in no way the cause of sin, either directly or indirectly, through lack of help. This lack of help would be neglect on God's part, and this is an ab-surdity.

As for moral defection that is permitted by God, this serves to show by way of contrast the value and power of divine grace that makes one faithful. It is in this sense that St. Paul said: "God . . . endured with much patience vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction, that He might show the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy which He hath prepared unto glory." And again, when he says: "Who hath predestinated us . . . according to the purpose of His will, unto the praise of the glory of His grace."

Having discussed the motives for predestination and reprobation, it remains for us to consider the certainty of these.

CHAPTER IV

ON THE CERTAINTY OF PREDESTINATION

THIS question can be viewed in two ways: (1) Is predestination a certainty so that its effect will infallibly come to pass? (2) Can we be certain in this life of being predestined?

THE INFALLIBILITY OF PREDESTINATION

Predestination is absolutely certain as regards the infallible positing of its effects, which are vocation, justification, and glorification. Revelation affirms this by the words of our Lord in the texts already quoted, which are: “Now this is the will of the Father who sent Me: that of all that He hath given Me, I should lose nothing. . . . My sheep hear My voice . . . and they shall not perish for ever. And no man shall, pluck them out of My hand.”

This infallible certainty of predestination is indicated in the definition given by St. Augustine, who says that it is “the foreknowledge and the preparation of those gifts of God whereby they who are liberated are most certainly liberated.” This infallibility has on various occasions been affirmed by the councils.

But the question is whether this certainty of predestination is merely a certainty of foreknowledge or also one of causality. There is no doubt that the certainty of God’s foreknowledge of sin is merely a certainty of foreknowledge and not of causality, since God cannot be either directly or indirectly the cause of sin, and so the foreknown are distinguished from the predestined. The Council of Valencia held in 855 said: “God foreknew the malice of the wicked because it was their own doing; He did not predestinate it, because He was not the cause of it.” What is the certainty of predestination as regards the free determination of the salutary acts of the elect? If we take the view that God does not cause in us and with us this

determination and the free mode of the same, we shall see in this but a certainty of fore-knowledge. If we are of the opinion, on the contrary, that God causes infallibly, powerfully, and suavely, this salutary determination and its free mode, we shall see in this not only a certainty of foreknowledge but also of casuality.

Is not this last point expressly stated by our Lord when He says: “No man shall pluck them out of My hand”? We have the confirmation of this, too, in St. Augustine’s definition just quoted. St. Augustine has even clearly affirmed both these certainties in the following words: “If any of these [the elect] perishes, God is deceived; but none of them perishes because God is not deceived. If any of these perishes, God is conquered by human vice; but none of them perishes, because God is invincible.”

St. Thomas speaks in still clearer terms: “Since predestination includes the divine will as stated above [q. 19, a. 3, 8], the fact that God wills any created thing is necessary on the supposition that He so wills, on account of the immutability of the divine will, but it is not necessary absolutely; so the same must be said of predestination.” Predestination includes the consequent or efficacious will of saving the elect, and St. Thomas pointed out that “whatever God simply wills takes place; although what He wills antecedently may not take place.”

In another of his works, St. Thomas states the case still more clearly: “It cannot be said that certainty of knowledge is the only thing superadded to providence by predestination; this is tantamount to saying that God ordains the one predestined to salvation as He does anyone else, but that in the case of the one predestined He knows that he will not fail to be saved. In such a case, to be sure, there would be no difference between the one predestined and the one not predestined as regards the order of cause to effect, but only as regards the foreknowledge of the event. Thus foreknowledge would be the cause of predestination, and predestination would not be because of the choice of the one predestinating, which is contrary to the authority of the Scripture and the sayings of the saints. Hence in addition to the certainty of foreknowledge, there is infallible certainty in this order of predestination as regards the effect. Yet the proximate cause of salvation, namely, the free will, is not necessarily but contingently directed to this end.”

The above passage is a commentary on the following words of Jesus: “This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He hath given Me, I should lose nothing.” But just as the divine causality, far from suppressing

the activity of secondary causes, applies them to their act, so the prayers of the saints help the elect to advance on the way to eternity; and our good works merit for us eternal life and we shall in fact obtain it, if we do not lose our merits, and die in the state of grace. It is in this sense that St. Peter says: “By good works make sure your calling and election.”

Is the number of the elect certain? God knows infallibly the number of those who will be saved and of those who will be lost. If it were not so, there would be no certainty about predestination. Jesus said: “I know whom I have chosen”; and St. Paul wrote: “The Lord knoweth who are His.”

SIGNS OF PREDESTINATION

Can we be certain in this life that we are predestined? In answer to this question the Council of Trent says: “No one, so long as he is in this mortal life, ought so far to presume as regards the secret mystery of divine predestination as to determine for certain that he is assuredly in the number of the predestinate; as if it were true that he who is justified either cannot sin any more, or, if he do sin, that he ought to promise himself an assured repentance. For, except by special revelation, it cannot be known whom God hath chosen unto Himself.” The reason for this is because, without a special revelation, we cannot know for certain what depends solely upon God’s free will. Not one of the just, unless it is specially revealed, knows whether he will persevere in the performance of good works and in prayer. We shall be, says St. Paul, “heirs indeed of God and joint heirs with Christ; yet so, if we suffer [perseveringly] with Him, that we may be also glorified with Him.”

Are there, however, any signs of predestination such as to give one a sort of moral certainty of perseverance? The Fathers, especially John Chrysostom, Augustine, Gregory the Great, Bernard, and Anselm, according to certain statements of Holy Scripture, pointed out several signs of predestination often enumerated by the theologians as follows: (1) a good life; (2) the testimony of a conscience that is free from serious sins and prepared rather to die than offend God grievously; (3) patience in adversities endured for the love of God; (4) readiness to hear the word of God; (5) compassion for the poor; (6) love of one’s enemies; (7) humility; (8) a special devotion to the Blessed Virgin whom we ask every day to pray for us at the hour of our death.

Among these signs, certain ones, such as Christian patience in adversity, are proof that the inequality of natural conditions is at times more than compensated by divine grace. This is borne out by the beatitudes as recorded in the Gospel: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, the meek, they that mourn, they that hunger and thirst after justice, the merciful, the clean of heart, the peacemakers, they that suffer persecution for justice’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” These are the predestined. St. Thomas points out especially in his teaching that to bear patiently a heavy cross and for a long time is a sign of predestination.

IS THERE A GREAT NUMBER OF PREDESTINED?

From the Apocalypse we gather that the number of the elect is very great, for we read: “And I heard the number of them that were signed, an hundred forty-four thousand were signed of every tribe of the children of Israel. . . . After this, I saw a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and in sight of the lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands.”

Are there not so many elect as reprobates? St. Augustine and St. Thomas think so, especially on account of what our Lord said, that “many are called but few chosen.” And again when He said: “Enter ye in at the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction and many there are who go in thereat. How narrow is the gate and strait is the way that leadeth to life, and few there are that find it!” St. Thomas remarked on several occasions that although everything is ordered for good in the universe as a whole, and in the different species, yet if we consider the human race from the time of original sin, evil is more prevalent in this sense, that those who follow the senses and their passions are greater in number than those who follow right reason; “in man alone does evil appear as in the greater number.” The elect are an elite class. St. Thomas maintains, however, that the number of the angels who were saved exceeds the number of devils, and he wrote the same about the angels in another of his treatises, pointing out that “evil is found as in the smaller number in the angels, because many more remained faithful than fell, and perhaps even more than all the devils and men to be condemned. But in man good appears as in the smaller number . . . because of the corruption of man due to original sin, and the very nature of human conditions . . . in which the secondary

perfections that direct human actions are not innate, but either acquired or infused."

In his theological treatise we read: "The good that is proportionate to the common state of nature is to be found in the majority; and is wanting in the minority. The good that exceeds the common state of nature is to be found in the minority, and is wanting in the majority. . . . Since eternal happiness, consisting in the vision of God, exceeds the common state of nature, and in so far as this is deprived of grace through the corruption of original sin, those who are saved are in the minority."

Let us bear in mind that, according to the passage of the commentary on the Sentences just quoted, which this last quotation does not contradict, if we include among the elect both angels and men, then the number of the elect is perhaps greater than that of the reprobates.

It is the common opinion of the Fathers and early theologians that the majority of human beings are not saved. They mention in favor of this opinion Basil, John Chrysostom, Gregory of Nazianzus, Hilary, Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, Leo the Great, Bernard, and Thomas Aquinas. In more recent times we have Molina, Bellarmine, Suarez, Vasquez, Lessius, and St. Alphonse. In the last century, of those who depart from this common opinion, we have Father Faber in England, Bishop Bougaud in France, and Father Castelein, S.J., in Belgium.

Especially in the case of all those who lived before the coming of our Lord, and of those who have not had the gospel preached to them, it would seem that the formula of St. Thomas is verified that "in man evil appears as in the greater number," although God never commands what is impossible, and He gives to all sufficient graces to keep the commandments as made known to them by conscience. On the contrary, it seems well enough established that the greater number of the baptized, both children and adults, is saved. There are many children who die in the state of grace before attaining the use of reason.

We cannot say whether the greater number of non-Catholic baptized adults are saved. On the contrary, it is probable that the majority of adult Catholics attain eternal life, and this because of the efficacy of redemption and the sacraments.

Throughout this question that is so mysterious, it is well for us to recall here what Pius IX said about this subject in his encyclical to the bishops of Italy on Indifferentism, which is as follows: "It is known to us and to you

that those who labor under invincible ignorance concerning our most holy religion and who, diligently observing the natural law and its precepts that are engraved in the hearts of all by God, and being ready to obey Him, lead an honest and upright life, can, through the operative power of divine light and grace, attain eternal life, since God, who clearly intues, scrutinizes, and knows the minds, impulses, thoughts, and habits of all, because of His supreme goodness and clemency, by no means will allow anyone to be punished eternally who was not guilty of any willful offense. But very well known also is the Catholic dogma, namely, that no one outside the Catholic Church can be saved, and those contumaciously resisting the authority of this Church, pertinacious in their dissension, cannot obtain eternal salvation."

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

THE TRANSCENDENCE OF THE MYSTERY OF PREDESTINATION

IT remains for us to say a few words about the transcendence of this supernatural mystery and about the mode of knowledge by which in this life we are better able to reach it in the obscurity of faith. It is one of the most striking examples of what may be termed light and shade in theology.

In the study of God's mysteries, especially the reconciliation of the mystery of predestination with God's universal will to save, we are struck by the ever increasing evidence of certain principles which, however, can be intimately reconciled only in the impenetrable obscurity of the Deity. There we have one of the most striking illustrations of light and shade. The principles to be reconciled are like the two quadrants of an intensely luminous semicircle enveloping a deeper and inaccessible obscurity. The more luminous the two quad-rants of the semicircle become, the more this increases in a way the obscurity of the mystery that dominates them. On the one hand, we see, indeed, the more clearly that God cannot command what is impossible, and that He wills consequently the salvation of all men; on the other hand, we realize that no one thing is better than another unless it is loved more by God, and the more, too, we see that these two principles, so certain when viewed separately, although they appear to be contrary, can be reconciled only in the eminence of the Deity that is supremely obscure for us.

This mystery is far more obscure than is the reconciliation of God's foreknowledge, decrees, and grace with our freedom of will. If God is God, it follows that He is omnipotent and must be able to move our free will suavely and strongly, especially to the performance of salutary and meritorious acts. Otherwise, how can we explain the free and meritorious acts which our Lord Jesus Christ's human will had infallibly to accomplish

here below for our salvation; or again how can we account for Mary's "fiat" which she had freely and infallibly to give on the day of the Annunciation, so that the Savior might be given to us?

Certainly there is a mystery in the reconciliation of the freedom of our meritorious acts with God's infallibly efficacious decrees. Yet far more obscure is the mystery of evil permitted by God. Whereas the mysteries of grace, which for us are obscure, are as clear as can be in themselves, the mysteries of iniquity are obscure in themselves, evil being a privation of light and goodness. From this it follows that the solution of the great mystery with which we are confronted, that of the reconciliation of predestination, connected as it is with God's universal will to save, is to be found, as St. Augustine and St. Thomas viewed it, in the incomprehensible and ineffable union of infinite mercy, justice, and supreme liberty. This was often formulated by these two great doctors who said that, if God grants the grace of final perseverance to this particular person, He does so because of His mercy; if He does not grant it to a certain other, as to Judas, it is through just punishment for previous sins and for having finally resisted the last call of grace.

It is a profound mystery which is the result of the intimate union of the three infinite perfections of mercy, justice, and sovereign liberty. The obscurity is great, but we see that it is not the outcome of absurdity or incoherence. Two absolutely certain principles lead us to it, the first being that "God never commands what is impossible," and the other that "no one thing would be better than another, unless it were loved more by God."

In this case, particularly, we grasp the truth of what St. Thomas said about faith, that "it is of things not seen." The object of faith is essentially obscure; it is neither seen nor known. But living faith that is united with charity is, as a rule, accompanied by the gift of understanding which in the literal sense of Holy Scripture penetrates the meaning or spirit of the mysteries. It is also accompanied by the gift of wisdom, which gives one a relish for them. Then the great believers realize that in the mysteries of faith, what is more obscure about this translucid obscurity is what is more divine, the Deity itself, in the inaccessible eminence of which are reconciled mercy, justice, and liberty. What is more obscure in the mysteries then appears as supremely good, and whereas the intellect is incapable of assenting to them as evident by the light of reason, the will, actuated by the

very pure love of charity, gives its supernatural and immediate adherence to them.

This explains, then, why interior souls who have to undergo the passive purifications of the spirit, are generally very much tempted against hope when they think of predestination. These temptations are permitted by God so as to make these souls feel the necessity of rising above human arguments by prayer, a purer faith, and a most loving confidence and abandonment. This is then infused contemplation, the fruit of the gifts of understanding and wisdom, by means of which one begins to reach in a truly higher way, in the obscurity of faith, the culminating point of the mystery which we are discussing. Then it is that we begin to have a foretaste of the fruits of this exalted doctrine and, to quote the words of the Vatican Council, that we attain "a certain very fruitful understanding of the mystery."

The spiritual fruits of this mystery which concerns us here could not be better expressed than by quoting in conclusion two of Bossuet's letters on this subject. In his reply to a certain person who was tormented in mind, how to reconcile the fact of God's willing the salvation of all men with the mystery of predestination, he said: "There are many called and few chosen, said Jesus Christ. All of those who are called can come if they wish to; free will is given to them for this reason, and the purpose of grace is to conquer their resistance and help them in their weakness. If they do not come, they have only themselves to blame; but if they come, that is because they received a certain divine touch urging them to make good use of their free will. They owe their fidelity, therefore, to God's special goodness, for which they must be extremely grateful, and this teaches them to humble themselves and say: 'What hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received, why dost thou glory?'

"All that God does in time, He foresees and predestines from all eternity. He foresaw and predestined in detail all the means by which He had to inspire His followers with fidelity, obedience, and perseverance. That is what predestination means.

"The benefit of this doctrine is to have us place our will and liberty in God's hands, asking him to direct this will so that it may never stray from the right path, and thanking Him for all the good that it does and believing that He operates in it without weakening or destroying it, but, on the contrary, elevating, strengthening, and granting it to make good use of

itself, which is the most desirable of all good things. . . . We must not, therefore, attribute the cause of salvation to him who wills or to him who runs, but to God who shows mercy. This means that neither their running nor their willing are the primary cause, and still less the only cause of their salvation; but this cause is the accompanying and preventing grace that gives them strength to continue until the end, and this grace does not act alone; for we must be faithful to it; and to ac-complish this effect, it gives us the power to co-operate with it, so that we can say with St. Paul: 'Yet not I, but the grace of God with me.'

"God is the author of all the good we do. It is He who brings it to completion, just as it is He who begins it. His Holy Spirit forms in our hearts the petitions He wishes to grant. He foresaw and predestined all that; for predestination is nothing else. In all this we must believe that no one perishes, no one is cast off as a reprobate, except through his own fault. If human reasoning finds a difficulty in this, and cannot reconcile all phases of this holy and inviolable doctrine, faith must continue to reconcile all things, at the same time waiting until God causes us to see everything in Him, the fountain-head.

"The whole doctrine of predestination and grace may be summed up briefly in these words of the prophet: 'Destruction is thy own, O Israel; thy help is only in Me.' So it is. If we do not see the consistency in all this, it suffices for us that God knows, and we must humbly believe Him. God's secret is His own."

In this the soul finds peace, not in descending by means of reasoning below faith, but, on the contrary, by aspiring to the contemplation of God's intimate life, a contemplation which, since it is above human reasoning, proceeds from faith enlightened by the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

It is fitting to recall here that the formal motive of Christian hope, like that of the other two theological virtues, must be the uncreated Being. It is, therefore, not our personal effort but God helping. Moreover, the certainty of hope differs from that of faith in this, that it is a certainty in which the will participates; it is also a certainty of tendency, not exactly the certainty of salvation (for this would require a special revelation), but it is the certainty of tending toward salvation, relying upon God's promises and help, so that "thus hope tends with certainty toward its end, sharing, as it were, in the certainty of faith." There is security in this.

This peace is established, if the soul trustfully abandons itself to God, not as the quietists do, but by doing its best every day to accomplish God's will as made known by the commandments, the spirit of the counsels, and daily occurrences, and in all else abandoning itself to the divine will of good pleasure; for we are certain beforehand that this Will can will and permit nothing except what is for the manifestation of divine goodness, for the glory of Christ the Redeemer, and for the spiritual and eternal welfare of those who love God and persevere in this love.

To another person who wrote him, saying: "My reasonings on predestination, in spite of myself, disturbed me very much in mind," Bossuet replied again as follows: "When these thoughts come to the mind, and only useless efforts are made to dispel them, they must end in causing us to abandon ourselves completely to God, assured that it is infinitely better to leave our salvation in His hands than to rely on our own strength. Only by thus doing shall we find peace. The whole doctrine of the divine Master's secret is that we must adore Him and not claim to fathom Him. We must lose ourselves in this impenetrable height and depth of divine wisdom and plunge ourselves as if lost in His immense goodness, though expecting everything from Him, without however relaxing our efforts, which He demands from us for our salvation."

It is Christian contemplation which, above the reasoning of theological arguments, penetrates beyond the literal meaning of the Gospel, so as to reach the spirit of the mysteries and taste their sweetness. It soars not only far above the errors that are contrary to Semipelagianism and predestinationism, but also above the conflict of theological systems. It finds its refuge in the Immutable, in the very spirit of God's word. It is this by all means that makes us understand what a doctor of the Church, St. John of the Cross, wrote to show that, if the soul makes too much of what seems clear, this alone accounts for the far distant recoil from the abyss of faith.

"The understanding must remain in darkness, and must journey in darkness, by love and in faith, and not by much reasoning. You must be careful not to misunderstand me. . . . The Holy Spirit illumines the understanding which is recollected, and illumines it according to the manner of its recollection. The understanding cannot find any other and greater recollection than in faith. For the purer and more refined the soul is in faith, the more it has of the infused charity of God; and the more charity

it has, the more it is illuminated and the more gifts of the Holy Spirit are communicated to it, for charity is the cause and the means whereby they are communicated to it. And although it is true that, in this illumination of truths, the Holy Spirit communicates a certain light to the soul, this is nevertheless as different in quality from that which is in faith, wherein is no clear understanding, as is the most precious gold from the basest metal; and, with regard to its quantity, the one is as much greater than the other as the sea is greater than a drop of water. For in the one manner there is communicated to the soul wisdom concerning one or two or three truths, etc., but in the other there is communicated to it the sum total of divine wisdom, which is the Son of God, who communicates Himself to the soul in faith.

"And if you tell me that this is all good, and that the one impedes not the other, I reply that this impedes it greatly if the soul sets store by it; for to do this is to busy itself with things which are quite clear and of little importance, yet which are quite sufficient to hinder the communication of the abyss of faith, wherein God supernaturally and secretly instructs the soul, and exalts it in virtues and gifts."

In other words, grace by a secret instinct sets us at peace concerning our salvation and the intimate reconciliation in God of infinite justice, mercy, and sovereign liberty. Grace, by this secret instinct, sets us thus at peace, because it is itself a real and formal participation in the divine nature, in God's intimate life in the very Deity, in which all the divine perfections are absolutely identified.

If we stress too much our analogical concepts of the divine attributes, we set up an obstacle to the contemplation of the revealed mysteries. The fact that these concepts are distinct from one another, like small squares of mosaic reproducing a human likeness, is why they harden the spiritual aspect of God for us. Wisdom, absolute liberty, mercy, and justice seem in some way to be distinct in God, and then His sovereignly free good pleasure appears in an arbitrary light, and not entirely penetrated by wisdom; mercy seems too restricted, and justice too rigid. But by faith illumined by the gifts of understanding and wisdom, we go beyond the literal meaning of the Gospel and imbibe the very spirit of God's word. We instinctively feel, without seeing it, how all the divine perfections are identified in the Deity, that is superior to being, the one, the true, the intellect, and love. The Deity is superior to all perfections that are naturally

susceptible of participation, these being contained in it formally and eminently without any admixture of imperfection. The Deity is not naturally susceptible of participation, either by angel or man. It is only by grace, which is essentially supernatural, that we are permitted to participate in the Deity, in God's intimate life, inasmuch as this latter is strictly divine. This it is that grace is instrumental in causing us mysteriously to reach, in the obscurity of faith, the summit where the divine attributes are identified. The spiritual aspect of God for us is no longer hardened. We do not see His countenance, but we instinctively feel it, and this secret instinctive feeling, in the supernatural abandonment of ourselves, gives us peace.

PART III

GRACE AND ITS EFFICACY

In this third part we shall treat of grace, especially of actual efficacious grace by which the effects of predestination are realized in time, namely: vocation, justification, and merits. Our chief purpose will be to study the relations between efficacious grace and sufficient grace that is offered and even given to us. We shall also see that the foundation for the distinction between these two graces is, according to the teaching of St. Thomas, the consequent will of God (which concerns the infallible realization of good at the present moment), and the antecedent will (which concerns good absolutely considered and not as determined by certain circumstances). By His antecedent will, God wills to save all men (for it is good that all be saved); by His consequent will, He wills efficaciously, all things taken into consideration, to save the elect.

That we may proceed in an orderly manner in this third part, we shall first treat of efficacious grace and sufficient grace according to the Scripture and the declarations of the Church; then we shall discuss the divine motion in general, and pre-motion such as St. Thomas and the Thomists understood it.

CHAPTER I

EFFICACIOUS GRACE AND SUFFICIENT GRACE ACCORDING TO SCRIPTURE AND THE DECLARATIONS OF THE CHURCH

THE PROBLEM

WE know it to be certain according to revelation, which is contained in Scripture and tradition, that there are many actual graces granted by God which do not produce the effect (at least the complete effect) intended, whereas others do. The former are called sufficient and merely sufficient. They give the power (proximate or remote) to perform a good act, though they do not effectively bring one to perform this very act. Man resists their appeal. The latter graces are called efficacious, because they cause us to act, so that we may perform the salutary act.

Hence arises the question: What is the principle in distinguishing between these two kinds of graces? In other words: The grace that is called efficacious, is it so of itself, intrinsically, because God efficaciously wills it so, or is it only extrinsically so, by reason of our consent foreseen by God?

The errors of the Reformers and the Jansenists gave rise to animated discussions on this question. It was at that time that the term sufficient was technically determined in meaning in opposition to the term efficacious.

The importance of the problem is evident because of the very opposition raised against it by the contrary heresies and the teachings of the Catholic theologians. We may say that for the Pelagians actual grace (for instance, the preaching of the gospel) is made efficacious by our good consent, and inefficacious by the perversity of the human will. For the Reformers and the Jansenists, there are two kinds of actual interior graces. One kind is efficacious of itself, the other is inefficacious and even is not truly sufficient.

For the Thomists, there are two kinds of actual interior graces; one kind is intrinsically efficacious of itself; for it causes us to perform the good act; the other is inefficacious but truly sufficient; for it gives us either the proximate or remote power to perform the good act. For the Molinists, actual sufficient grace is itself either extrinsically efficacious, by reason of our consent that is foreseen by God by means of the scientia media, or else it is inefficacious and merely sufficient.

DECLARATIONS OF THE CHURCH

The Church declared against Jansenism that there are graces truly and merely sufficient. They are truly sufficient because they really give the power to perform a good act; and they are merely sufficient because, through our own fault, they do not produce their effect, or at least the complete effect intended.

This teaching of the Church is clearly seen in the condemnation as heretical of the first proposition of Jansenius, which reads as follows: “Some of God’s commandments are impossible of fulfillment for the just according to their present powers, though they desire and strive to observe them; they stand in need, too, of the grace that would make them possible of fulfillment.” Quesnel and the pseudo-synod of Pistoia were also condemned for having denied the existence of truly sufficient grace. The second proposition of Jansenius is very much like the first. It reads: “In the state of fallen nature interior grace is never resisted.” This was tantamount to saying that the only actual interior grace is efficacious grace.

After the condemnation of the five propositions of Jansenius, the great Arnauld admitted a little grace, which gives the power to act in general, though it does not really give this power at the moment when needed. The Catholic theologians showed that this little grace, for which the great Arnauld contended, does not safeguard the traditional teaching; for it must really be possible to keep the commandments not only in general, but in each particular case when occasion arises.

Besides this, the Church teaches that there is an actual efficacious grace and that this latter does not restrain liberty. That there is such a grace follows from the condemnation of Pelagianism and Semipelagianism, which did not, strictly speaking, deny that grace gives the power to act, but they denied that it causes one to will and to act. Against these heresies the

Second Council of Orange defined: “As often as we perform good acts, God works in us and with us, that we may act.” There is therefore a grace that effectively operates, although it does not exclude our co-operation, but requires and elicits it.

As for the fact that efficacious grace does not restrain our liberty, this is clearly affirmed by the Council of Trent. The constant teaching of the Church affirms this, according to which the meritorious act is the result of both human freedom and efficacious grace. According to this teaching, sufficient grace leaves us with no excuse before God for hav-ing sinned, and efficacious grace does not permit us to glory in ourselves when we have performed a good act.

WHAT IS THE FOUNDATION IN SCRIPTURE FOR THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN SUFFICIENT GRACE AND EFFICACIOUS GRACE?

The Scripture often speaks of the grace that does not produce its effect, and this because of man’s resistance. In the Old Testament we read: “I called and you refused. I have spread forth My hands all the day to an unbelieving people, who walk in a way that is not good after their own thoughts.” In the Gospel, Jesus says: “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent thee, how often would I have gathered together thy children, as the hen doth gather her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldest not?” St. Stephen, the first martyr, said to the Jews before he died: “You stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Ghost.” St. Paul wrote: “And we helping do exhort you that you receive not the grace of God in vain.”

All these quotations show that there are truly sufficient graces, which however, are fruitless because of our resistance. This doctrine is proved also from what St. Paul says to Timothy: “God will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth . . . for Jesus gave Himself a redemption for all, a testimony in due times.” This means that God wills to make it really possible for all to keep His commandments.

On the other hand the Scripture often affirms the existence of efficacious grace that produces its effect, the salutary act. This point is made particularly clear in the texts from the Scripture quoted by the Second Council of Orange against the Semipelagians, such as: “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My

spirit in the midst of you, and I will cause you to walk in My commandments and to keep My judgments and do them." St. Paul also wrote: "It is God who worketh in you both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will." And Jesus said: "My sheep shall not perish for ever. And no man shall pluck them out of My hand." Hence these words of the Second Council of Orange: "As often as we perform a good act, God works with us that we may act." Farther on we shall quote scriptural texts similar to these, such as: "As the divisions of waters, so the heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord; whithersoever He will He shall turn it." "As the potter's clay is in his hand, to fashion and to order it; so man is in the hand of Him that made him, and He will render to him according to His judgment."

It seems, indeed, according to the language of Scripture, that the efficacious grace of which it speaks is efficacious of itself, and not merely because God foresaw we would consent to it without offering any resistance.

Hence we see that for St. Thomas and his school, the distinction between efficacious grace and sufficient grace has its ultimate foundation in the distinction between God's consequent will (which concerns good infallibly to be realized at the present moment) and his antecedent will (which concerns good taken in the absolute sense and not as considered in certain determined circumstances), such as, for instance, the salvation of all men in so far as it is good for all to be saved. From this antecedent or universal will to save come the suffi-cient graces that make it really possible for us to keep the com-mandments, without causing anyone, however, effectively to do so. God's consequent will in its relation to our salutary acts is the cause, on the contrary, of our effectively fulfilling our duty.

This doctrine appears to have the solid support of Holy Scripture. The same must be said of the Thomist teaching that actual grace, which is of itself efficacious as regards an imperfect act, such as attrition, is truly sufficient as regards a more perfect act, such as contrition.

Hence this is the question at issue: Is the grace that is said to be efficacious, truly so of itself intrinsically, or is it merely extrinsically efficacious by reason of our consent that is foreseen by God? In other words, how are we to conceive the divine motion that inclines our will and causes it to perform the salutary act? The relations between sufficient grace and efficacious grace are evidently connected with this question. Is

efficacious grace included in the sufficient help that is granted to all, just as the fruit is included in the flower?

All Thomists agree in saying that, if a man did not resist sufficient grace, he would receive the efficacious grace required to enable him to do his duty. But here again is the mystery: for to resist sufficient grace is an evil that can come only from us; whereas not to resist sufficient grace is a good that cannot be solely the result of our action, but one which must come from God who is the source of all good. How then shall we conceive the divine motion, the various modes of this, and its efficacy?

CHAPTER II

THE DIVINE MOTION IN GENERAL

FOR a proper understanding of what the Thomists mean by the expression “physical premotion,” we must recall what led them to adopt it.

They understand this to be the answer to the question clearly put by St. Thomas, when he asks whether God moves all secondary causes to act. They answer first that the Scripture does not leave room for any doubt about this, since it says that “God worketh all in all. For in Him we live and move and are.” Even if it is a question of our free acts, the Scripture is no less positive in affirming that He is the prime Mover, for we read: “Lord . . . Thou hast wrought all our works for us. For it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will.” These scriptural texts are so clear, they state so plainly that the action of the creature depends upon God’s influx or upon the divine causality, that even Suarez, although opposed to the theory of physical premotion, wrote that it would be an error against the faith to deny the dependence of the creature in its actions upon the first Cause.

Equally clear stands the case from the philosophical point of view; for just as the participated and limited being of creatures depends upon the causality of the first Being, who is the self-subsisting Being, so also does their action: for there is no reality that can be excluded from His controlling influence. It is not a question, therefore, in this case of the necessity or existence of the divine influx, without which no creature would act, but rather of the nature of this influx and of the way in which it operates.

In the first place we shall see, in pointing out the manifest errors to be avoided, what physical premotion is not, so as to enable us to state more precisely afterward what it is. We say then: (1) It is not a motion such as to render the action of the secondary cause superfluous. This is directed against occasionalism. (2) It is not a motion that would interiorly compel

our will to choose this particular thing rather than a certain other. This is directed against determinism. (3) Neither is it, at the opposite extreme of both occasionalism and determinism, simply a simultaneous concurrence. (4) Nor is it an indifferent and indeterminate motion. (5) It is not a purely extrinsic assistance given by God.

We shall see more clearly further on that physical premotion is: (1) A motion and not an ex nihilo creation, without which our acts, created in us ex nihilo, would not be the result of the vital action of our faculties and would no longer be ours. It is a passive motion that is received in the creature and that is consequently something distinct either from the divine action which it presupposes, or from our action which follows it. It is (2) a physical and not a moral motion or one that is the result of an object proposed to it that attracts it. (3) It is, as regards our freedom of action, not necessitating but predetermining, or it is not a formal but a causal predetermination, in the sense that it guarantees the intrinsic infallibility of the divine decrees and moves our will to determine itself to a certain determinate good act (the deter-mination to a bad act, since it is itself bad and defective, comes on these grounds from a defective cause and not from God). Finally, we shall see that the predetermination, since it is both formal and causal, is prior to the motion. It is identical, according to the teaching of St. Thomas, with the divine predetermining decrees that have reference to our salutary acts; whereas the formal and no longer causal determination is the very one of our already determined free act, which still remains free even after its determination, just as God’s act is fee. The careful study of these different aspects of the problem is necessary so as to avoid any confusion of thought, and it is expedient for us to begin with the negative phase of this problem, for the expression “predetermining physical pre-motion” is used precisely to exclude a simultaneous concurrence and an indifferent premotion.

CHAPTER III

WHAT DOES NOT CONSTITUTE PHYSICAL PREMOTION

1) THE divine motion must not be understood in the sense held by the occasionalists in that God alone would act in all things, so that it is not the fire that gives heat, but God in the fire, the latter being the occasion of this. If such were the case, remarks St. Thomas, secondary causes would not be causes, and, not being able to act, their presence would be to no purpose. Moreover, their impotence would prove that God was incapable of communicating to them the dignity of causality, action, and life, being like an artist who can produce only lifeless works (and this would imply lack of power in the Creator). Moreover, occasionalism leads to pantheism. This is clear, because action follows being, and the mode of action the mode of being. If there is but one action, which is God's action, then there is but one being; creatures are absorbed in God; universal being is identical with the divine being, as ontologist realism postulates, a fond theory of Malebranche and one that is closely associated, according to his notion, with occasionalism.

St. Thomas, having thus refuted the occasionalism of his time, adds that God, who created and maintains secondary causes in being, applies them to act. He says: "God not only gives things their form, but He also preserves them in existence, and applies them to act, and is moreover the end of every action."

2) The divine motion, since it does not render the action of secondary causes superfluous but gives rise to it, cannot be necessitating, in the sense that it would suppress all contingency and liberty. But, under the divine influx, secondary causes act as befitting their nature, either necessarily, as the sun gives light and heat, or contingently, as fruits become more or less ripe in time; or else freely, as in the case of man who chooses. St. Thomas

connects even this property of divine motion with the sovereign efficacy of God's causality, who does not only what He wills but as He wills it; who brings it about not only that we will but that we freely will. On this point he writes: "Since, then, the divine will is perfectly efficacious, it follows not only that things are done which God wills to be done, but also that they are done in the way that He wills. Now God wills some things to be done necessarily, some contingently, to the right ordering of things, for the building up of the universe."

The divine motion does not therefore suppress freedom of action, but actualizes it. It eliminates only potential indifference, and in return gives it the actual dominating indifference of the free act, an indifference that persists after it is already determined. This is the only indifference there is in God, and it persists in the unchangeable free act by which He preserves the world in existence. It is of this actual in-difference that St. Thomas speaks when he says: "And just as by moving natural causes He does not prevent their acts being natural, so by moving voluntary causes He does not deprive their actions of being voluntary: but rather is He the cause of this very thing in them; for He operates in each according to its own nature."

3) In opposition to occasionalism and determinism, would the divine motion be merely a simultaneous concurrence as Molina will have it to be? Molina considers the primary and secondary causes as two partial and co-ordinated causes producing one and the same effect, similar, he says, to two men pulling a boat: "The total effect, indeed, comes both from God and from the secondary causes; but it comes neither from God nor from secondary causes as total but as partial causes, each at the same time requiring the concurrence and influx of the other cause, just as when two men are pulling a boat." From this point of view, even if the total effect is produced by each of the two causes, in this sense that one without the other would produce no effect, in such a case the secondary cause is not premoved by the first. The concurrence of this latter is merely simultaneous, as when two men are pulling a boat, the first exerting no influence upon the second to cause it to act. "God's universal concurrence." says Molina, "does not immediately exert an influence on the secondary cause, so as to premove it to act and produce its effect, but it immediately exerts an influence on the action and the effect, along with the secondary cause."

Apart from this simultaneous concurrence, which is necessary for every act, Molina admits, indeed, a particular grace for salutary acts; but this latter is not a physical motion, attracting the will by reason of the object proposed to it.

The author of the Concordia acknowledges, moreover, that this conception of the simultaneous concurrence, which is necessarily connected, in his opinion, with his definition of liberty and his theory of the scientia media, is not the view held by St. Thomas. After setting forth what the Angelic Doctor said on the subject of the divine motion, he writes: "I am confronted by two difficulties: (1) I do not see what is this application in secondary causes, by which God moves and applies these causes to act. I think rather that the fire heats without any need of its being moved to act. And I candidly confess that I have difficulty in understanding this motion and application which St. Thomas requires in secondary causes. . . . (2) There is another difficulty: according to this doctrine, God does not concur immediately (immediatione suppositi) in the action and effect of secondary causes, but only through the intervention of these causes."

Molina could have found the solution of these two difficulties in a well-known passage of St. Thomas, in which it is stated that God's immediate influence is also exercised on the being of the action or effect of the secondary cause, for this latter cannot be the proper cause of its act in so far as it is being, but only in so far as it is this individual act, its own. In this effect, what is more universal, as being, depends upon the more universal cause, and the more particular depends upon the particular cause. St. Thomas remarks: "The more universal effects must be reduced to the more universal and prior causes. Now among all effects the most universal is being itself." Being, in so far as the being of things is concerned, is an effect that belongs properly to God, by way of creation ex nihilo and of conservation in being, or by way of motion, which is the case of the being itself of our acts, for these were at first in our faculties as potential acts.

But what is of greatest interest for us now in Molina's objection, is the way in which he avows that St. Thomas admitted that the divine motion applies secondary causes to act, which means that St. Thomas admitted not merely a simultaneous concurrence, but a premotion. This word "premodon" may seem to be a pleonasm, because every true motion has a priority, if not of time at least of causality over its effect, and in this particular case it has, for St. Thomas, a priority over the action of the

secondary cause thus applied to act. The Thomists use the word "premotion" solely for the purpose of showing that the motion of which they speak is truly a motion that applies the secondary cause to act, and that it is not merely a simultaneous concurrence.

Is not this latter absolutely the very opposite of occasionalism and determinism or fatalism? If, in truth, the divine concurrence is merely simultaneous, it is no longer true to say that God moves secondary causes to act, since He does not apply them to their operations. We have in this case merely two partial and co-ordinated causes, not two total causes which, in their very causality, are subordinated the one to the other, as St. Thomas had said. Moreover, Molina expressly stated: "For us, the divine concurrence does not determine the will to give its consent. On the contrary, it is the particular influx of the free will that determines the divine concurrence to act, according as the will is inclined to will rather than not to will, and to will this particular thing rather than a certain other." The secondary causes, far from being determined by God to act, by their action determine the very functioning of the divine causality which, of itself, is indifferent.

But, if this is so, then there is something that is beyond the scope of the universal causality of the first agent; for, in fine, the influence exerted by the secondary cause is truly something; it is a perfection for it to pass into act, even a perfection so precious that Molinism is totally concerned in safeguarding it, and it is so delicate that even God, they say, cannot contact it.

The great difficulty is this: How could the will, which was only in the state of potency, give itself this perfection which it did not possess? This means that the greater comes from the less, and this is contrary to the principles of causality and of the universal causality of the first agent. St. Thomas was of the opinion that to refute determinism, instead of attacking the principle of causality, we must insist on the transcendent efficacy of the first Cause, the only one capable of causing in us and with us that our acts be performed freely, since it is more intimate to us than we are to ourselves, and since this free mode of our acts is still being and for this reason depends upon Him who is the cause of all reality and good.

Furthermore, the Thomists say that if the divine concurrence, far from inclining the will infallibly to determine itself to perform this particular act rather than a certain other, is itself determined by the particular influx of the free will to function in this particular way rather than in a certain other, then

the tables are turned: God by reason of His foreknowledge and causality, instead of determining is determined. This means that by His scientia media He foresees what choice a certain person would make, if placed in certain circumstances. Instead of being the cause of this foreseen determination, He is determined and therefore perfected by this determination which, as such, in no way comes from Him. Now there is nothing more inadmissible than to posit a passivity or dependence in the pure Act, who is sovereignly independent and incapable of receiving any perfection whatsoever.

This stands out as the great objection against the Molinist theories of the scientia media and simultaneous concurrence, as we have elsewhere shown.

4) May we say that the divine motion is an indifferent motion by which God would determine us only to an indeliberate act, so that the free will alone would determine itself and the divine motion, to perform this or that particular act? Some theologians thought so, especially Father Pignataro.

The Thomists reply, that this theory and the scientia media mutually support each other, and that it has to contend with several of the difficulties pointed out against the preceding. Something real would still be excluded from God's universal causality. There would be a determination that is independent of the sovereign determination of pure Act, a finite good independent of the supreme Good, a second liberty that would be acting independently of the first Liberty. That which is better in the work of salvation, the determination of our salutary act, would not come from the Author of salvation. Contrary to this, St. Paul said: "It is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will. For who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received?" St. Thomas said the same in formulating the principle of predilection: "Since God's love is the cause of goodness in things, no one thing would be better than another, if God did not will greater good for one than for another."

This doctrine of indifferent premotion, like that of simultaneous concurrence, cannot solve the dilemma: "God determining or determined: there is no other alternative." Willingly or unwillingly, it leads to the positing of a passivity or dependence in Him who is pure Act, especially in His foreknowledge (scientia media) as regards our free determinations, even the noblest which, as free determinations, would not come from Him. Concerning these God would not be the cause of them, but merely a passive onlooker.

For these reasons, the Thomists admit that since God is the first Cause of all existing things, with the exception of sin, even as regards our salutary free acts, the divine decrees are of themselves infallibly efficacious or predetermining, and the divine motion that gives infallible assurance of their execution is not indifferent and undetermined, but brings us infallibly to perform a certain salutary act that is efficaciously willed by God, by causing in us and with us even that this act is performed freely. Later on we shall see that this teaching is completely in agreement with what St. Thomas says.

Therefore the Thomists use the expression "predetermining physical premotion" only for the purpose of excluding the theories of simultaneous concurrence and indifferent pre-motion. If these theories had not been proposed, as Thomas de Lemos remarked on several occasions, the Thomists would have been satisfied to speak about divine motion as St. Thomas did, for every motion as such is a premotion, and every divine motion, as divine, cannot receive a determination or perfection that is not virtually included in the divine causality. We always come back to the same inevitable dilemma: "God determining or determined."

5) Is the divine motion purely an extrinsic help given by God, or is His action identical with His essence, without which nothing created is received in the operative potency of the creature, so as to make it pass into act, for instance, so as to cause our will to perform a vital and free act?

Some theologians thought so, as cardinals Pecci and Satolli in the time of Leo XIII; as also did bishops Paquet and Janssens, O.S.B., in more recent times. These theologians teach, of course, against the Molinists and Suarezians, that the scientia media is inconceivable and that the divine influx necessary for the free act is an intrinsically efficacious motion. But they add—and in this they think that they have Cajetan's authority on their side—that the divine decree and concur-rence are not predetermining and that there is no created motion received in the operative potency of the creature so as to cause it to pass into act. As far as they can see, God's help is merely extrinsic.

Father del Prado shows that there is no via media between the doctrine of the predetermining decrees and the theory of the scientia media; for the divine knowledge of conditionally free acts of the future presupposes indeed a divine decree or it does not. If we reject the scientia media and say that it does, then the decree is predetermining, for otherwise it could not

infallibly make known the conditionally free act of the future or the conditionate future. Undoubtedly, this decree does not precede our acts by a priority of time but of nature and causality, and it is measured by the sole instant of motionless eternity. Does it follow, as Cardinal Satolli says, that by the determination of this divine decree there is no longer any mystery? Not at all, say the Thomists, for the mystery remains in this sense, that this predetermining divine decree reaches even to what is more obscure for us, even to the free mode of our acts, and to the physical act of sin without it being at all the cause, however, of the disorder that is in this act. The same must be said for the divine motion, for it, too, has a priority not of time but of causality over our acts, and this kind of priority was admitted by Cajetan, as well as by the other Thomists.

Is there no created motion that is received in the secondary cause? Some thought that by the words "physical pre-motion" the Thomists meant to qualify God's uncreated action, conceiving it as being in relation to ours. In that case there would be no created motion.

The doctrine of St. Thomas and his disciples is very clear on this point. They teach in common that even God's action ad extra is formally immanent and virtually transitive, and that there is no real relation on God's part toward us; there is only a relation of dependence of the creature on God, and this is not reciprocated. Thus the creative action is formally immanent and eternal, although it produces, at the time willed in advance by God, an effect in time. Whereas the formally transitive action, such as the heating of water by the coal fire, is an accident that proceeds from the agent and terminates in the patient, the divine action ad extra cannot be an accident; it is really identical with God's very essence. It is therefore formally immanent, and, though not having the imperfections of the formally transitive action, it resembles this latter in so far as it produces either a spiritual or corporeal effect that is really distinct from it. It is in this sense that it is said to be virtually transitive, for it contains eminently within itself all the perfection of a formally transitive action, without any of the imperfections that essentially belong to this latter.

From this we see that God's uncreated motion bears only an analogical resemblance to the motion of a created agent that is incapable of interiorly and infallibly moving our will to choose this or that. The greater number of the objections against the divine premotion are due to the fact that the

divine action is conceived as being univocal with created action, which latter does not go so far as to cause our acts to be performed freely.

But from the fact that the secondary cause cannot be independent of the divine action, does it follow that there is no created motion received in the secondary cause, and one that is prior to the operation of this latter according to a priority not of time but of causality? Does it follow that actual grace, whether it is operating or co-operating, is iden-tical either with God's uncreated action or with the salutary act of which it is said to be the cause?

St. Thomas replies in an article in which he has treated this question ex profess and at very great length. He writes as follows: "What God effects in the natural thing by which it actually acts, is solely of the intentional order, since it has a certain incomplete being, just as colors are in the air and artistic power in the artificer's instrument. . . . A power peculiarly its own could have been conferred on the natural thing, as a form permanently inhering in it; but power could not have been given for it to act in the production of being as the instrument of the first Cause, unless it were given the power to be the universal principle of being. Neither could it be given the natural power to move itself, or to preserve itself in being. Hence just as it is evidently unreasonable to expect that the instrument be given the power to act apart from the artificer's artistic movement, so also the natural thing could not have the power conferred upon it to act apart from the divine action."

In like manner, when speaking of actual grace, St. Thomas distinguishes the divine motion received in us both from God and from our acts of knowing and loving, saying of actual grace that "it is an effect of God's gratuitous will . . . inasmuch as man's soul is moved by God to know or will or do something." In another of his works he expresses himself still more clearly: "The motion of the mover precedes the motion of the mobile object, both intellectually and caus-ally." And again he says: "The secondary agent receives the complement of its power from the primary Agent."

The objection has been raised that this received divine motion would limit the scope of the divine causality, which would stand in need of this determined disposition so as to bring about the action of the secondary cause. And, moreover, it is a contradiction to maintain that the secondary cause is determined to act by an ultimate formality and that, notwithstanding, it determines itself.

Father del Prado replies to this by remarking that it is not the first Cause that stands in need of this determination received in the secondary cause, but it is this latter that needs to be moved or applied to its act by the first Cause. The scope of the divine causality is in no way limited by this, for God needs only to will efficaciously so as to realize what He wills.

To the second difficulty the Thomists reply that there would certainly be a contradiction in maintaining that the secondary free cause is determined to act by an ultimate formality that is peculiarly its own act, and that it determines itself to this act. But we must not confound the motion that causes the secondary cause to act, with the action of this latter. Motion, for instance, efficacious grace, is given for the purpose of action, and is not identical with it. Likewise, the heating of water by the fire is not identical with the warmth of this water upon surrounding objects. Moreover, as we shall see more clearly in the following chapters, the expression "predeterminating premotion" does not mean a formal, but a causal, predetermination.

We have just seen what, according to classic Thomism, is meant by divine motion. By it we see, as the Thomists say, how removed is the true doctrine of St. Thomas from these two extremes, in that it rises above and beyond them.

On the one hand, the divine motion does not render the activity of the secondary cause superfluous, as occasionalism concluded, nor does it suppress freedom of action but actualizes it. On the other hand, the divine motion is not merely a simultaneous concurrence, or an indifferent and undetermined premotion that would be under the necessity of receiving from us a perfection and a new determination not contained in its causality. Nor is it a purely extrinsic help given by God.

CHAPTER IV

WHAT PHYSICAL PREMOTION ACTUALLY IS ACCORDING TO CLASSIC THOMISM

FOR a proper understanding of this expression, we need merely make use of the very words of St. Thomas in explaining the terms: motion, premotion, physical, and predeterminating.

1) It is a motion that is passively received in the secondary cause so as to induce it to act, and, if the secondary cause is vital and free, so as to induce it to act vitally and freely, as we have seen St. Thomas said. This motion which, in the supernatural order is called actual grace, is really distinct both from God's uncreated action upon which it depends, and from the salutary act to which it is directed. On this point all the Thornists are agreed. They say, as for instance John of St. Thomas does: "This motion cannot be the very action of the created cause, since this motion is prior to such action and brings it about; it is not, therefore, the action of the created cause, for it cannot move the cause as agent but as patient."

We can explain this divine motion that is received in the secondary cause by comparing it with creation in the passive sense, about which St. Thomas spoke at considerable length. By this we do not mean, as at times it has been said, that the motion in question here is creation, for our acts are not created in us ex nihilo, as is the case with the spiritual soul when it is united with the body. They are vital acts, produced by our faculties or operative powers, and these powers, created and preserved in being by God, need to be moved so as to receive the complement of causality of which St. Thomas speaks. Neither indeed is grace, whether habitual or actual, created ex nihilo; but it is drawn from the obediential potentiality of the soul, upon which it depends as an accident.

But if the divine motion in question here is not creation, in the strict sense of the term, then it can come only from the creative cause, for only

this latter is capable of producing the whole being of a given effect and all its modes, whether the effect be necessary or free. On this point St. Thomas, commenting on Aristotle, says: “The divine will is to be understood as existing outside the order of beings, like a cause that profoundly pervades all being and all its differentiae; and since the possible and the necessary are differentiae of being, therefore necessity and contingency in things originate from this same divine will.”

Furthermore, although the motion that applies us to act is not creation, yet for several reasons it is not unlike it. Active creation and active motion are analogous, as also are passively considered creation and passive motion by which the secondary cause, as St. Thomas says, is applied to its act. Let us see in what this twofold analogy consists.

If creation in the active sense is a divine and eternal action, which is formally immanent and virtually transitive, creation in the passive sense is the real relation of dependence upon God on the part of the creature that comes into existence; for “creation imports a relation of the creature to the Creator, with a certain newness or beginning.” In like manner, preservation in the active sense is continued creative action and, in the passive sense, it is the real relation of constant dependence of the being of the creature upon God.

Now just as the being of the creature is really dependent upon the divine creative and conservative action, so also is the action of the creature really dependent upon the divine action that is called motion. We do not say that God creates our acts of knowing and willing; He does not produce them ex nihilo; for, in such event, these acts would no longer be either vital or free. Nor do we say that God merely sustains these acts which begin at a precise moment, though before they did not exist. We say that God moves us to perform them ourselves vitally and freely.

To avoid all equivocation, just as we distinguish between active and passive creation, so we must distinguish here between two similar acceptations of the word “motion.” We have: (1) the active motion that in God, as we have said, is a formally immanent and virtually transitive action; (2) the passive motion by which the creature, though it had only the power to act, is passively moved by God to become actually in act; then there is: (3) the action itself of the creature, which in us is the vital and free act of the will.

This distinction is commonly made to explain the influence of one created agent over another, of fire, for instance, over water. In this case we have: (1) the action of the fire: actual heating of water; (2) the effect of this action upon the water: it is heated; (3) the action of the heated water upon surrounding objects.

In like manner, external objects and light exert an influence on the eye that is aroused to action, then the eye receives an impression, a likeness of the object, and finally it reacts by the vital act of vision. Again, in like manner, our immaterial will, by an immaterial action that is formally immanent and virtually transitive, exerts an influence upon our sensitive faculties and bodily organs so as to cause them to act. This is what St. Thomas calls the active use of the will, which is followed by the passive use of the faculties moved to act, and finally we have the act of these faculties, an act that is immediately produced, elicited by them, and commanded by the will.

We must not, therefore, confuse the divine motion that is passively received in the secondary cause, either with the divine active motion which is God Himself, or with the action produced by the secondary cause. Now this confusion is made by those who say, as Satolli does, that the will cannot be determined by God to act and yet determine itself to this act. It would be a contradiction, if the will received from God its voluntary act complete in itself, as if it had been created ex nihilo; then it would no longer be possible for the will to produce this act. But what the will receives is merely a passive motion by which it is applied to act according to its nature, which means that it acts vitally and freely. This motion, however, cannot be given to it by any created or creatable spirit, however powerful it may be, but only by God, the Author of its nature and inclination to universal good, by God who preserves it in existence, and who is more intimate to it than it is to itself. As Zigliara points out, when persons object to physical premotion, they generally take in an active sense what Thomists take in a passive sense; they confound physical premotion either with the divine uncreated action, which we are incapable of receiving, or else with our own action that supposes premotion instead of being identical with it.

The Thomists commonly define the motion received by our will as “a divine motion by which our will is reduced from the potency of willing to the act of willing.” These last words do not mean that God produces in us and without us the act of willing, but that our will is moved by Him to

perform itself, and vitally, this act which is called volition. And therefore, as Zigliara remarks, the act which the will is passively brought to perform is not its own vital and free operation, as the opponents of this doctrine suppose. It is a supernatural movement or impulse, an actual efficacious grace by which it performs its act, whether this be its first vital though indeliberate act, or successive acts that terminate a discursive deliberation. Thus it is that the actual efficacious grace, which inclines our will to perform the salutary act, is called "the first proximate act," and the salutary act itself is called "the second act," even if it be a question of the first salutary act.

Just as water does not heat unless it is heated, so every secondary cause, our will, for instance, acts only if it is pre-moved by God, the very first cause. If it were otherwise, then this something of reality in the transition to act, which is required for the performance of vital and free actions, would be withdrawn from God's universal causality that includes everything of reality and goodness external to Himself.

Only by confusing physical premotion with our voluntary act can anyone conclude that our will under the influence of this motion, which is said to be in conformity with its nature, is no longer mistress of its act.

2) In what sense is the divine motion called premotion? To move and to be moved are correlative and synchronous terms. There is no priority of time of active over passive motion; they are coincident, for it is the same thing that is produced by the mover and that is received in the movable object, namely, the movement that proceeds from the mover into the movable object.

We must get away, therefore, from imaginations which picture physical premotion as an entity which, like a small winch placed by God in our will, would precede in time our voluntary act: "The motion of the mover precedes the movement of the movable object both intellectually and causally." We have here only a priority of causality, as in the case of the eternal decree, which transcends time, and the divine motion of this decree assures its execution. But with regard to this decree, we must say that it is measured by the unique instant of immobile eternity, which corresponds unchangeably to every successive instant of time, as the apex of a pyramid corresponds to all the points of its base and to each of its sides. With regard to the motion received in the created will, it is received at the very moment of time in which the voluntary act is produced. In the case of the angels, it

is discrete time that is measured by its successive acts, and this has nothing to do with the sun's movement. In the case of human beings, it is the continuous time of day and hours, because of the sensible movement of our imagination and organism, and this is inseparable from our intellectual and volitional acts.

From this we see that physical premotion and the free act following it instantaneously, do not depend infallibly upon what precedes them in time —that is, in the past—but only upon what precedes them in the ever unchangeable present (nunc stans) of eternity, which is the measure of the divine decrees.

The Thomists, too, cannot admit without a distinction the Molinist definition of liberty, that it is a faculty which, if we presuppose all that is required for the will to act, it can still act or not act. If, by the words "presupposed all that is required for it to act" is meant only what is required as a prerequisite by a priority of time, then this definition is absolutely true; but if, by these words, is meant what is required as a prerequisite by a simple priority of causality—namely, the divine motion and the final practical judgment that precedes the voluntary election—then the definition is no longer true except by the aid of a distinction. Under the influence of the divine efficacious motion that extends even to the free mode of our acts, our will, in performing the act efficaciously willed by God, by reason of its unlimited scope, in that it is specified by universal good, retains the real power not to perform the act and to perform even the contrary act (remanet potentia ad oppositum); but it is impossible for the will, under the influence of the divine efficacious motion, actually to omit the performance of the act efficaciously willed by God, or actually to perform the contrary act. St. Thomas is explicit on this point. Of various texts it suffices to quote the following: "If God moves the will to anything, it is incompossible with this supposition, that the will be not moved thereto. But it is not impossible simply. Consequently it does not follow that the will is moved by God necessarily." Bannez did not say anything more forcible than this.

The potential indifference which the faculty had before performing its act has been replaced by the actual indifference of the act itself that is already determined, and it tends with a dominating indifference toward a particular good that is absolutely out of all proportion to the universal scope of the will that is specified by universal good. The act does not cease to be free because it is determined; otherwise no act of the divine will would be free,

since these acts are determined from all eternity and are unchangeable. Potential indifference is not essential to liberty, and is not to be found in divine liberty, in which there is no actual indifference of pure Act with regard to any finite good; it is not to be found in the freest of our acts that still remain free after their determination.

The word “premotion” indicates therefore a priority not of time but merely of reason and causality, and, if this priority did not exist, there would no longer be motion but merely simultaneous concurrence, such, says Molina, as of two men drawing a boat, the first exerting no influence over the second, but each acting independently on the boat. That is not the way God concurs in the action of the secondary cause; for He applies this latter to perform its act without which this reality, which is the transition from the state of inactive potency to the performance of the act, would be excluded from the divine universal causality.

3) The premotion is called physical not by reason of its opposition to the metaphysical or spiritual, but to distinguish it from moral motion, which moves the will by way of an objective attraction, by proposing a good to it.

St. Thomas often distinguished between these two motions: the movement of the will as to the specification of its act being called thus since it is derived from the object or end, and the other as to the exercise of its act which is derived from the agent. He pointed this out particularly in another passage where it is stated that God moves every secondary cause: (1) as final end, for every operation is for the sake of some good, real or apparent, which participates in a likeness to the supreme Good; (2) as first Agent from whom every subordinated agent receives its power to act. Applying this to the will, he had just said: “Wherefore in both ways it belongs to God to move the will; but especially in the second way by an interior inclination of the will.”

In this preceding article St. Thomas explains these two kinds of motion with reference to the intellect and the will, saying that these two faculties are moved both by the object proposed to them and, as to the exercise of their act, by God. St. Thomas adds that God alone seen face to face can irresistibly attract our will, because it is only He who can adequately satisfy our capacity for loving. As for the motion that concerns the exercise of the act, this can be received only from the will itself, and this by a prior act from God, who alone is capable of creating from nothing the spiritual soul

and directing it to universal good. The order of agents must correspond to the order of ends.

This explains, then, how God, in thus moving our will, by interiorly inclining it, does not force it; for He moves it in accordance with its inclination to universal good; He actualizes this general inclination and causes it powerfully and suavely to confine itself with a dominating indifference to a certain particular good, thus freely willed with a view to happiness, since man naturally wills to be happy and seeks happiness in everything he wills.

St. Thomas observes that our acts would be neither free nor meritorious, if the will were moved by God in such manner that it nowise would move itself; but it is not so. He says: “But since its being moved by another does not prevent its being moved from within itself, as we have stated (ad 2um), it does not therefore forfeit the motive for merit or demerit.”

This last point is explained in another article, in which it is stated that the will, in so far as it wills the end, moves itself to will the means. St. Thomas remarks that, if the will could not move itself, if it were only moved by God, then it would never will what is sinful. The complete reply, which has been so much discussed, is as follows: “God moves man’s will, as the universal Mover to the universal object of the will which is good. And without this universal motion man cannot will anything. But man determines himself by his reason to will this or that, which is true or apparent good. Nevertheless, sometimes God moves some specially to the willing of something determinate, which is good; as in the case of those whom He moves by grace, as we shall see later on (q. 109, a. 2).”

Some Molinists claimed, according to this text, that for St. Thomas the divine motion is not predetermining, and that by the same motion which incites a person to will happiness, one would perform a good act (at least naturally good), whereas another would commit sin.

This interpretation contradicts many texts of St. Thomas, and in the first place it is against the principle of predilection on several occasions formulated by him, according to which, “since God’s love is the cause of goodness in things, no one thing would be better than another, if God did not will greater good for one than for another.” Now in the Molinist interpretation of the text with which we are concerned, it would happen that of two men equally helped and loved by God, one would become better than the other by this naturally good act, for instance, which consists in

paying one's debts. He would become better without having received more from God. It would not depend on the free Cause of all good that there is more of good in this man rather than in that other.

Moreover, this Molinist interpretation is contrary to what St. Thomas explicitly states in many texts, and to the concluding words of the text we are discussing, which are: "Nevertheless, sometimes God moves some specially to the act of willing something determinate, which is good: as in the case of those whom He moves by grace, as we shall see later on."

The commentators of St. Thomas generally admit that it is a question of operating grace, which St. Thomas discusses later on. We shall see that it is so when we come to explain the three propositions of this text just quoted. In doing so we shall appeal to the three principal modes by which God moves us: (1) before we deliberate: to will hap-piness in general; (2) after we deliberate: to will a certain particular good about which we deliberated; if the act is supernatural it is in this case performed under the influence of co-operating grace; (3) above and independent of our deliberation: by the special inspiration of the Holy Spirit, which is an operating grace; of such a nature are the acts which are performed by means of the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

Several Molinists recognize that, according to St. Thomas, in this last case there is a predetermining premotion, but they add: then the act is neither free nor meritorious. Contrary to this, St. Thomas holds that the acts performed by means of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, by the gift of piety, for instance, are free and meritorious. The purpose of the gifts is precisely to dispose us to receive in a docile manner the special inspiration of the Holy Ghost, that it may be a means of merit for us. Thus the Blessed Virgin was moved powerfully and suavely to utter infallibly and freely her "fiat" on the day of the annunciation in view of the redemptive purpose of the incarnation, which was destined most certainly to come to pass.

4) In what sense is premotion said to be predetermining, although not necessitating, that is, although in conformity with the nature of our free will which must remain mistress of its act? It is a question here not of a formal but of a causal predetermination. The MoIinists generally say that if God by His motion determines the will to will this rather than that, then it can no more determine itself. This confounds causal predetermination, which inclines us strongly and suavely to determine ourselves, with formal determination, which is that of the voluntary act already determined, and

which follows the other according to a posteriority not of time but of causality.

Some authors admit physical premotion, but by no means predetermination. And yet, as Cardinal Zigliara said, premotion and predetermination mean the same thing; but premotion refers to omnipotence, and predetermination to the predetermining decree of the divine will. The divine will predetermines that a certain salutary act, for instance, Mary's fiat, St. Paul's conversion, Magdalene's or the good thief's, shall be accomplished in time, on a certain day, at a certain hour, and that it shall be accomplished freely; then Omnipotence interiorly moves the human will without in the least forcing it, so as to assure the execution of the decree.

St. Augustine wrote on this as follows: "Certainly we observe His commandments, if we will. . . . Certainly we will, when we will; but He causes us to will what is good, of this it being said that it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish (Phil. 2: 13). Certainly it is we who act when we act; but He causes us to act by enabling the will to act efficaciously, who says `I will cause you to walk in My commandments and to keep My judgments, and do them' (Ezech. 36: 27). . . . For it is He who operates first that we may will, and who co-operates with us when we will, bringing what we will to completion."

The divine motion received in the secondary cause is pre-determining in so far as it gives infallible assurance of the execution of a divine decree. It is not a formal but a causal predetermination; whereas that of the decree is both formal and causal. Finally, the determination of our voluntary act already performed is formal and not causal; but, as we said, far from excluding the actual dominating indifference, it implies this; for the free act already determined remains free; even the immutable act of divine liberty remains free in spite of its immutability. This is what St. Thomas says: "God alone can move the will, as an agent, without violence. Hence it is said: `The heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord: whithersoever He will He shall turn it' (Prov. 21: 1). And: 'It is God who worketh in you both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will' (Phil. 2: 13).

"Some, nevertheless, unable to understand how God can cause in us the movement of the will without prejudice to liberty, have endeavoured to give a false exposition to the authorities quoted. They say, in fact, that God causes in us the power to will, and not by causing us to will this or that.

This is the exposition of Origen (3 Peri Archon) who defended free will in a sense contrary to the aforesaid authorities. . . . But the authority of Scripture is in manifest opposition to all this; for it is said: `O Lord, Thou hast wrought all our works in us' (Is. 26: 12). Hence we receive from God not only the power to will, but also our very operations. Further, the very words of Solomon: `Whithersoever He will He shall turn it' (Prov. 21: 1) show that the divine causality extends not only to the will, but also to its act. . . . Therefore in spiritual things every movement of the will must be caused by the first will.

"The saying of Damascene in the Second Book (De orthod. fide, c. 30), that God foreknows but does not predetermine the things which are in our power, is to be understood as meaning that the things which are in our power are not subject to the divine predetermination in such a way as to be necessitated thereby."

In this interpretation given by St. Thomas of this text of St. John Damascene we have non-necessitating predetermination declared to be the very teaching of St. Thomas; otherwise he would have purely and simply admitted the words of Damascene: "He does not predetermine." In the construction of the phrase by St. Thomas, "non" refers directly to "quasi," which means that our elections or free acts are submitted to the determination of Providence, but not as though imposing necessity on them. In other words, this predetermination is non-necessitating, for it extends even to the free mode of our acts which, pertaining to being, comes under the adequate object of Omnipotence; and what is not so included is only evil, since it comes from the deficient cause.

On this subject St. Thomas writes: "Acts of choice and will are under the immediate governance of God (that is, not through angelic intermediaries). . . . God alone is the cause of our willing and choosing." "Although God's action alone has a direct bearing on man's choice, nevertheless the angel's action has a certain bearing on man's choice by way of persuasion." "The operation of an angel and of a heavenly body disposes a man to choose; whereas the operation of God gives completion to his choice. . . . Man does not always choose what his guardian angel intends, nor that to which the heavenly body inclines him: whereas he always chooses in accord with God's operation in his will. Hence the guardianship of the angels is sometimes frustrated . . . whereas divine providence never fails." "Man can

be directed to all things by the one divine disposition (that is what happens in the case of the predestined)."

"Among the parts of the whole universe the first distinction to be observed is between the contingent and the necessary. . . . Therefore it belongs to the order of divine providence not only that such and such an effect be produced, but that it be caused necessarily, and that some other effect be produced contingently." "The divine providence is the per se cause that this particular effect will happen contingently. And this cannot fail." "God foresaw that it would happen contingently. It follows then infallibly that it will be, contingently and not of necessity." "For all things are foreseen by God so as to be freely done by us. . . . It belongs to His providence sometimes to allow defectible causes to fail, and sometimes to preserve them from failing." "Accordingly, by knowing His essence, God knows all the things to which His causality extends. Now this extends to the works of the intellect and will. . . . Therefore God knows both the thoughts and the affections of the mind."

All these quotations from the Contra Gentes show that for St. Thomas the divine motion, which directs us to perform salutary acts, is a motion that concerns the exercise of the act or a physical motion which, of itself and infallibly, inclines us, without compulsion, to perform this particular act rather than a certain other, and this because the divine causality extends even to the free mode of our acts; for this latter still pertains to being. This means that for St. Thomas the divine motion is predetermining although not necessitating.

We find the same doctrine expounded in the following passage: "God can change the will from the fact that He Himself operates in the will as He does in nature; hence, as every natural action of the will, inasmuch as it is an action, not only is from the will as immediate agent, but is also from God as first Agent who operates more vigorously; hence, as the will can change its act for another, much more so can God." The text is clear. The human will as secondary cause determines itself to perform a certain free act; therefore much more so can God as the first Cause, who operates more vigorously, incline the will infallibly to determine itself to perform this particular act rather than a certain other. Thus He is the cause of St. Paul's conversion, of Magdalene's or of the good thief's.

In all these texts we see that for St. Thomas the divine causality extends even to the free mode of our determinations, so that everything real and

good in them depends upon God as the first Cause, and upon us as secondary cause. In this sense the divine motion is predetermining and not necessitating.

The peculiar nature of predetermination is especially affirmed by St. Thomas, when commenting on our Lord's words: "My hour has not yet come." "By this is meant," says St. Thomas, "the hour of His passion, which is determined for Him not of necessity, but according to divine providence." It is evidently here a question of a determining and infallible but not necessitating decree of the divine will. In like manner, commenting on the verse, "They sought therefore to apprehend Him: and no man laid hands on Him, because His hour was not yet come," he says: "By this is meant His hour predetermined not from fatal neces-sity but by the three divine Persons." Again, commenting on St. John's words, "Jesus knowing that His hour had come, that He should pass out of this world to the Father," he says: "Neither are we to understand by this that fatal hour, as if subjected to the course and disposition of the stars, but the hour determined by the disposition of divine providence." And concerning the words of our Lord, "Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son," he remarks: "Neither is it the hour of fatal necessity, but of His Father's ordination and good pleasure."

All these texts evidently point to a predetermining and infallible divine decree that refers to the hour Jesus speaks of as His own, and hence even to the free act which He had infallibly to perform in willing to die for our salvation. These texts also refer to the permissive decree as regards the sin of Judas, who before this hour could do no harm to our Lord.

It has been claimed that the expression, "God does not determine from necessity," is not found in the writings of St. Thomas. His commentary on the passages of St. John, which we have just quoted, show, on the contrary, that the hour of Jesus in which He freely offered Himself in the garden of Gethsemane and in which Judas betrayed Him, was not from necessity determined and fixed by God.

Finally, we find the same teaching in the Theological Summa of St. Thomas, where he gave it its definite shape. We shall quote only the principal texts. St. Thomas begins by saying: "Determined effects proceed from His own infinite perfection according to the determination of His will and intellect." There we have the eternal predetermining decree. How does it safeguard our liberty? St. Thomas explains this in the fundamental text to which he always has recourse: "Since, then, the divine will is perfectly

efficacious, it follows not only that things are done which God wills to be done, but also that they are done in the way that He wills. Now God wills some things to be done necessarily, some contingently." St. Thomas states this objection: "Every cause that cannot be hindered, produces its effect necessarily. But the will of God cannot be hindered. For the Apostle says: `Who resisteth His will?' (Rom. 9: 19.) Therefore the will of God imposes necessity on the things willed." Instead of replying to this by stating, as the defenders of the scienlia media do, that God foresees what we shall freely decide upon doing, he says: "From the very fact that nothing resists the divine will, it follows that not only those things happen that God wills to happen, but that they happen necessarily or contingently according to His will." We have already seen the reply to this objection. This text also expresses with all possible clarity, that the intrinsic and infallible efficacy of the decrees and the divine motion, far from destroying the liberty of our acts, causes it; for this efficacy extends even to the free mode of these acts, and this still pertains to being.

St. Thomas said the same in the following passage: "God, therefore, is the first cause, who moves causes both natural and voluntary. And just as by moving natural causes He does not deprive their actions of being voluntary: but rather is He the cause of this very thing in them; for He operates in each thing according to its own nature."

Elsewhere St. Thomas explains, as he did when commenting on Damascene's statement that "God foreknows our intentions, but does not predetermine them." Briefly St. Thomas replies as follows: "Damascene calls predestination an imposition of necessity, after the manner of natural things which are predetermined towards one end. This is clear from his adding: He does not will malice, nor does He compel virtue. Whence predestination is not excluded by Him." This text shows that St. Thomas, in excluding necessitating admits non-necessitating predetermination that implies, in his opinion, predestination. On this point he says: "Predestination most certainly and infallibly takes effect, yet it does not impose any necessity."

All these texts enable us to see clearly the meaning of passages occurring further on in the Theological Summa of St. Thomas on this subject. Thus we read: "Since, therefore, the will is an active principle, not determinate to one thing, but having an indifferent relation to many things, God so moves it that He does not determine it of necessity to one thing." Throughout this

question St. Thomas used the expression “not to move of necessity” as meaning, to move without necessitating. It is in this same sense that he says here “He does not determine of necessity to one thing,” he said in the passages just quoted from his commentary on St. John’s Gospel that have reference to the “hour” of Jesus appointed by Providence. In all cases it is a question of a non-necessitating predetermination, which extends even to the free mode of our acts.

St. Thomas repeats even here that “the divine will extends not only to the doing of something by the thing which He moves, but also to its being done in a way which is fitting to the nature of that thing. And therefore it would be more repugnant to the divine motion, for the will to be moved of necessity, which is not fitting to its nature, than for it to be moved freely, which is becoming to its nature.” This means that God cannot by His motion necessitate the will to will a particular good that is presented to it as good under one aspect, and that is not good under another. Such an object, which is absolutely inadequate to the universal scope of the will, specifies the free act, in virtue of the principle that acts are specified by their object; therefore the act of the will that concerns a particular good thus proposed by the intellect under the form of an indifferent judgment, cannot be other than free. This constitutes, for St. Thomas, the very definition of a free act; whereas the Molinist definition of liberty abstracts from the specifying object, saying: “Liberty is the faculty which, granted all that is required as a prerequisite for the will to act, it can either act or not act.” The Thomists, considering that the free act, like every act, is specified by its object, say with the Council of Trent that, “under the influence of the divine efficacious motion, the will still has the power to resist. It can resist if it so wills, but under the influence of efficacious grace it never so wills, just as Socrates when seated can rise, but he is never at the same time both seated and standing. “It is even commonly accepted doctrine among them that “it implies a contradiction for the will, when the judgment is indifferent, to be necessitated by the divine motion, which is itself efficacious.” Just as the will cannot will an unknown good, one that is not proposed to it by the intellect, so also it cannot will any other good than that which is proposed to it; it cannot necessarily will what is proposed to it as not necessarily desirable. The act specified by this object cannot but be free, and the divine efficacious motion cannot change its nature; therefore it is not necessitating.

However, when it is efficacious, it causes the will infallibly to will freely this particular good rather than that other; it is in this sense that it is predeterminating. Such is, indeed, the mind of St. Thomas. There can be no doubt about this if we read the reply to the third objection of this article from which we have just quoted.

The objection which St. Thomas states is the one that will always be brought up by the Molinists. It is as follows: “A thing is possible, if nothing impossible follows from its being supposed. But something impossible follows from the supposition that the will does not will that to which God moves it; because in that case God’s operation would be ineffectual. Therefore it is not possible for the will not to will that to which God moves it.” Therefore it wills of necessity. St. Thomas far from saying that God foresees our consent, replies as follows: “If God moves the will to anything, it is incompossible with this supposition that the will be not moved thereto. But it is not impossible simply. Consequently it does not follow that the will is moved by God neces-sarily.” The will truly has the power to perform the contrary act, but this act, which is really possible, is never really present under the influence of efficacious grace, for this latter would no longer be efficacious. That is why actual resistance is said to be incompatible with efficacious grace. So Socrates when sitting has it in his power to stand, but he cannot at the same time stand and sit; he must sit, while he is seated.

This is one of the clearest texts on this point. It evidently affirms an infallible, but not necessitating predetermination. It is another way of expressing what, as we have just seen, St. Thomas said: “From the very fact that nothing resists the divine will, it follows that not only those things happen that God wills to happen, but that they happen necessarily or contingently, according to His will.” In another of his works he wrote: “God foresaw that it would happen contingently. It follows then infallibly that it will be, contingently and not of necessity.”

The distinction between the possible and the compossible is tantamount to the distinction between the divided and composite senses, as St. Thomas points out when he says: “The fact that God wills any created thing is necessary on the supposition that He so wills, on account of the immutability of the divine will, but is not necessary absolutely.” In other words, there is necessity of consequence or a conditional necessity, but not of consequent, as in the case of a strict syllogism, the minor of which is contingent. Then he goes on to say: “So the same must be said of

predestination. Wherefore one ought not to say that God is able not to predestinate one whom He has predestined, taking it in a composite sense, though absolutely speaking, God can predestinate or not. But in this way the certainty of predestina-tion is not destroyed."

St. Thomas speaks just as clearly in his treatise on grace, saying: "God's intention cannot fail. . . . Hence if God intends, while moving, that the one whose heart He moves should attain to grace, he will infallibly attain to it, according to John 6: 45: `Everyone that hath heard of the Father and hath learned cometh to Me.' " Similarly he says: "The Holy Spirit infallibly effects whatsoever He wills. Hence it is impossible for these two things to be at the same time true: that the Holy Spirit will to move anyone to perform an act of charity, and that this person lose the virtue of charity by committing sin. For the gift of perseverance is included among God's benefits, whereby most certainly are liberated whoever are liberated, as Augustine says (De dono persever., chap. 14)."

So we see that for St. Thomas the foreseeing of a free determination that would depend solely upon ourselves, is not the foundation for this divine certainty. It has its foundation in a decree of the divine will, the execution of which is assured by the divine motion.

All these texts presuppose a divine predetermining but not necessitating decree, which extends even to the free mode of our acts; and they affirm the presence of a divine motion that assures the infallible execution of this decree. In this sense, too, it is justly said to be predeterminating and non-necessitating. It causes the will infallibly to determine itself, to perform this particular act rather than a certain other, and it causes in us and with us all that there is of reality and goodness in this act. Only evil, which is a disorder, is not included within the scope of its causality; it is excluded from the adequate object of Omnipotence, and far more so than sound is from the object of sight.

Of late years people have written: "For God to have infallible knowledge of our free acts He does not need to inject the element of a free determination into the drama of our liberty, and that such a process of knowledge would be truly anthropomorphism; it would be the knowledge of effects in their proximate cause, which is not a divine process."

The Thomists never claimed for God the necessity of a created motion, so that He may have infallible and eternal knowledge of our acts; for this motion, as such, since it is received in the created will, exists only in time.

They always said God knows our free acts in His eternal decree, and that His motion assures its execution in time. As a matter of fact, without this eternal decree, such a future free act would not be present in eternity as the object of divine intuition rather than its contrary act. God foresaw from all eternity that Paul would freely be converted on his way to Damascus on a certain day and at a certain hour, because He had decided to convert him efficaciously in this manner. Without this decree, Paul's conversion would pertain only to the order of possible things and not to that of contingent futures.

The Molinists never proved that God cannot infallibly move our will to determine itself freely to perform a certain act; for it cannot be proved that God's universal and sovereignly efficacious causality cannot extend even to the free mode of our acts. This mode is still being, and is therefore possible of realization; it is included consequently in the adequate object of Omnipotence, and beyond this there is only evil, which is a privation and a disorder.

This sublime doctrine makes all the more its demand upon us when we consider what influence God has upon the most heroic acts of the saints, upon the "fiat" of Mary on the day of the annunciation, and upon the meritorious acts of Jesus, whose human will here on earth, an image of the divine will, was both most free and impeccable.

How does the divine motion adapt itself to the very nature of the secondary cause? We must take this to mean, say the Thomists, that the divine motion is actively modified by our will which receives it, for the will, in so far as it receives, is passive. But God adapts Himself in His motion to the nature of secondary causes, which means that He moves them according to their nature. Thus a great artist adapts his motion to the various instruments which he uses. Thus St. Thomas, commenting on St. Paul's words on this point: "May He fit you in all goodness that you may do His will, doing in you that which is well pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ," writes: "When God incites a person to be of good will, He applies him, that is He makes him apt. . . Interiorly . . . only God makes the will apt, who alone can change the will: `The heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord; whithersoever He will He shall turn it' (Prov. 21: 1). Hence it is said: Doing in you: `For it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish' (Phil. 2: 13). But what will He do? What is pleasing in His sight, that is, He will cause you to will what is pleasing to Him."

Finally, the Thomists admit that physical premotion is entitled to be called simultaneous concurrence, when the created will is already in act; but it is a simultaneous concurrence that differs from Molina's in this, that it is primarily a premotion to apply the secondary cause to act. Under the influence of this concurrence, the secondary cause becomes the instrumental cause of what is more universal in the effect produced, namely, of its very being in so far as it is being; whereas it is the proper cause of this effect in so far as it is this individual effect. Thus my will is the proper cause of my voluntary act and the instrumental cause of the very being of this act, in virtue of the principle: "The more universal effects must be reduced to the more universal and prior causes." St. Thomas also says: "Furthermore, we find that according to the order of causes is the order of effects, which must be so because of the similarity between effect and cause. Neither can the secondary cause exert its effect on the primary cause by its own power, although it is the instrument of the primary cause as regards the effect of this latter. . . . And for this reason nothing acts to produce being except by God's power. For being itself is the most com-mon and first of effects, and therefore it belongs to God alone to produce such an effect by His own power." The created will is therefore the proper cause of its act in so far as it is this individual act; but it is the instrumental cause of being as regards the being of its act, vital and instrumental being, of course, as St. Thomas remarks. In like manner this apple tree is the proper cause of this particular fruit, although God is the proper cause of the being of this same fruit.

To sum up what we have just said as to what physical premotion is, and to dispel the false notions that have often been entertained about it, let us say:

1) It is a motion received in the created operative potency in order to apply it to act. It is therefore a motion distinct both from the uncreated action that it presupposes, and from our action that follows it at the same moment. Efficacious grace is neither God nor the salutary act to which it is ordained. Thus our action remains truly our own; it is not created in us from nothing, but proceeds vitally from our faculty that is applied to its act by the divine premotion.

2) It is a physical motion, as regards the exercise of the act, and not a moral motion, or as regards the specification of the act, a motion that results from the attraction of a proposed object. Of all the agents that are distinct

from our will, God is the only one, moreover, who can so move it interiorly according to its natural inclination to seek universal good, which He alone was able to give it. Under the influence of this motion, it moves itself.

3) It is a premotion according to a priority not of time, but of reason and causality.

4) It is predetermining, according to a causal predetermination distinct from the formal determination of the act that follows it. This means that it moves our will by an intrinsic and infallible efficacy to determine itself to perform this determinate good act rather than a certain other. The determination to perform a bad act, since it is itself bad and deficient, for this reason does not come from God, but from a defectible and deficient liberty. The divine predetermining motion is therefore not necessitating, for, like the divine predetermining decrees, the execution of which it assures, it extends even to the production in us and with us of the free mode of our acts, which is still being, and thus it is included in the adequate object of Omnipotence, and besides this there is only evil.

CHAPTER V

CONFORMITY OF THIS DOCTRINE WITH THE MIND OF ST. THOMAS

ALL the holy Doctor's texts just quoted in explanation of what this motion is and what it is not, sufficiently prove that this doctrine which we have just set forth is truly his own. By way of synthesis, and to save the reader the trouble of summarizing these texts, we shall draw attention here to the leading ones and certain others that are of importance. The necessity of giving a precise answer to certain objections obliges us to repeat ourselves to some extent.

"Determined effects proceed from God's own infinite perfection according to the determination of His will and intellect." There we have the eternal predetermining decree, which is an elective act of the divine will, and this is followed up by the command of the divine intellect. Now the divine motion assures the execution of this decree in time. It is in this sense that it is said to be predetermining.

A little further on St. Thomas states this objection: "But the will of God cannot be hindered. Therefore the will of God imposes necessity on the things willed." This is the ever recurring objection against the divine predetermining decrees. St. Thomas replies: "From the very fact that nothing resists the divine will it follows that not only those things happen that God wills to happen, but that they happen necessarily or contingently according to His will." The divine predetermining decree, far from destroying the liberty of our choice because of its ineffable efficacy, causes it in us by reason of this transcendent efficacy which belongs only to God and which extends even to the free mode of our choice; for this mode, which is the dominating indifference of willing as regards a good with an admixture of non-good, is still being, and it is thus included in the adequate object of divine power; whereas the disorder of sin cannot be included. As

St. Thomas remarks: “And just as by moving natural causes God does not prevent their acts being natural, so by moving voluntary causes He does not deprive their actions of being voluntary, but rather is He the cause of this very thing in them.”

On the infallible efficacy of the predetermining decrees and of the divine motion St. Thomas writes as follows: “The operation of an angel merely disposes a man to choose; whereas the operation of God gives completion to his choice. . . . Man does not always choose what his guardian angel intends. . . . Hence the guardianship of the angels is sometimes frustrated . . . whereas divine providence never fails.” And again he writes: “Accordingly, by knowing His essence God knows all things to which His causality extends. Now this extends to the works of the intellect and will. . . . Therefore God knows both the thoughts and affections of the mind.” He does not know our affections independently of His causality, but in His causality that extends even to our most intimate affections. Does this include even our free choices? Undoubtedly. Concerning this St. Thomas writes: “Therefore all movements of will and choice must be traced to the divine will: and not to any other cause, because God alone is the cause of our willing and choosing.” It is a question of our elections or free choices as elections and not merely as actions; for it concerns their free determination which God knows in so far as He causes it in and with us, as was said in the preceding text.

Let us again refer to the objection St. Thomas states about Damascene, who wrote: “God foreknows all that is in us, but does not predetermine it all.” He replies: “Damascene calls predestination an imposition of necessity, after the manner of natural things which are predetermined towards one end. This is clear from his adding: He does not will malice, nor does He compel virtue. Whence predestination is not excluded by him.” St. Thomas says the same in another of his works: “The saying of Damascene (second book of De orthod. fide, c. 30), that God foreknows but does not predetermine the things which are in our power, is to be understood as meaning that the things which are in our power are not subject to the divine predetermination in such a way as to be necessitated thereby.”

Sylvester of Ferrara had pointed out, long before Bannez, that “Gregory of Nyssa in his book (De homine) and Damascene (second book of De orthod. fide) seem to say that what is within us is not subject to divine

providence. But St. Thomas replies that this means nothing else than that the divine determination does not impose necessity upon what is within us."

Father Synave, O.P., wrote not long ago: "What St. Thomas thought, indeed, about this question is beyond doubt, for he said that `what is within us is not subject to divine providence as if necessitated by it.' St. Thomas admits, therefore, a divine non-necessitating determination: the wills and choices of man are submitted to the determination of divine providence, though this determination does not impose necessity on them. It is not right to say that, according to the constant usage of St. Thomas, the idea of necessity is necessarily implied in the verb `to determine.' It is not correct to say that the expression `not of necessity determining' is equivalent to 'not determining.' . . . May we at least as-sert that 'to determine of necessity to one thing' is but a clearer and more forcible way of saying `to determine to one thing'? No more so. Another text, as precise as the preceding, will show us that this equation of the two expressions is as false as the preceding, it being but a variant of the former by the addition, in the two terms compared, of the expression `to one thing.' Replying to St. John Damascene who affirms that `what is within us is not predetermined by God but comes from our free will,' St. Thomas says: `Damascene's statement is not to be understood as meaning that all which is within us, that what is subject to our choice, is excluded from the scope of divine providence; but it means that all these things are not so determined to one thing, as in the case of those beings that are not endowed with free will.'

"Human acts, in that they depend upon our choice, are therefore truly determined to one thing. If these acts were not so determined, St. Thomas would have said that they are not determined by divine providence to one thing, as those beings that are not endowed with free will. But one will have noticed that the phrase contains the word 'so' to which the negative particle at the beginning of the sentence belongs, so that it reads: `they are not so determined to one thing by divine providence, as those beings are that are not endowed with free will.' The determination to one thing of free acts is not accomplished in the same way as the determination to one thing of acts that are not free. Now we know the nature of the determination to one thing of acts that do not depend upon free will. Everyone agrees that it is a necessitating determination. It is therefore a case of recognizing a twofold determination to one thing: a non-necessitating and a necessitating

determination. The former pertains to free acts, and the latter to those that are not free."

In another article Father Synave confirmed this interpretation with an argument that is quite conclusive. "If the word 'determine' implies necessity," he says, "why does not St. Thomas accept St. John Damascene's formula? . . . The result of that would be to make St. Thomas speak to no purpose. Lest it make no sense, the negative phrase of St. Thomas: `What is within us is not submitted to the deter-mination of divine providence as if it received from it a necessitating trait,' is to be taken as meaning that what is within us is submitted to the determination of divine providence, although this determination does not impose necessity upon it. There is no need of copious gloss, or even of any gloss, so as to reach this obvious meaning. . . . Words are words. It seems to me, in accordance with the most elementary laws of criticism, that we must accept this expression, 'determination of divine providence' as clearly established; if it conflicts with a system or a preconceived view of determination, we should either reform the one or abandon the other."

We have proved this at length elsewhere, and we must likewise take note of the following famous text of St. Thomas: "Since, therefore, the will is an active principle, not determinate to one thing, but having an indifferent relation to many things, God so moves it that He does not determine it of necessity to one thing, but its movement remains con-tingent and not necessary, except in those things to which it is moved naturally."

Non ex necessitate must be translated here by not of necessity, as it must throughout this tenth question. The non does not belong to determinat, but to ex necessitate. To understand it otherwise would result in a faulty translation throughout this question. Thus, in another place we read: "Therefore the will is not moved of necessity to either of the opposites." And again: "It will not of necessity tend to this particular good." Also the following replies to objections: "If it (the object) is lacking in any respect, it will not move of necessity. . . . But other things without which the end can be gained, are not necessarily willed by one who wills the end."

All these texts prove that there is no doubt about the mind of St. Thomas. For him there is no necessitating predetermination; he admits, as regards our free acts, a non-necessitating divine predetermination. This is made still clearer from the state of the question in the famous article just quoted, in which it is determined with marvelous precision in two of the opening

objections, these being the same as those always brought forward by the opponents of Thomism. They are as follows: “Every agent that cannot be resisted moves of necessity. But God cannot be resisted, because His power is infinite. But something impossible follows from the supposition that the will does not will that to which God moves it; because in that case God’s operation would be ineffectual.”

St. Thomas replies to these objections, without referring in the least to the divine foreknowledge of our consent by means of a knowledge that would make us think it approaches either proximately or remotely to the scientia media of Molina. On the contrary, he insists upon the transcendent efficacy of the divine causality, for he writes: “In reply to the first objection we must say that the divine will extends not only to the doing of something by the thing which He moves (and here we have election as a voluntary act), but also to its being done in a way which is fitting to the nature of that thing (and here we have the free mode of this election, which is produced by God in and with us, when He moves us to a particular salutary act in preference to a certain other, and this in virtue of the intrinsic efficacy of His motion, which man positively does not resist). And therefore it would be more repugnant to the divine motion, for the will to be moved of necessity, which is not fitting to its nature, than for it to be moved freely, which is becoming to its nature.”

In like manner, St. Thomas again affirms the intrinsic efficacy of the divine motion against which the objection was raised; but he replies that under the influence of this motion which man positively does not resist, he retains the power to resist. He could resist if he so wills; but under the influence of this most powerful and gentle motion he never wills to resist. In reply to this objection, he says: “We must say that if God moves the will to anything, it is incompossible with this supposition that the will be not moved thereto, because in that case God’s operation would be ineffectual (as stated in the objection). But it is not impossible simply. Consequently it does not follow that the will is moved by God necessarily.” In order to grasp the exact meaning of St. Thomas’ replies, we must not separate them, as is so often done in this case, from the objections he is seeking to solve.

There is no possibility of doubt. It is a case here of non-necessitating predetermination. Under the influence of this most powerful and gentle motion the Virgin Mary infallibly and freely uttered her “fiat” for the fulfillment of the mystery of the incarnation, which had infallibly to be

fulfilled. Under the influence of this motion St. Paul was freely converted when on his way to Damascus, and the martyrs remained firm in the faith and in their love for God in the midst of their torments. At least this is the way St. Thomas understood it. To put a different construction upon these texts would be to drain them of their metaphysical contents. The terms would cease to have any meaning.

The expression “non-necessitating predetermination” is found even several times in his works, as we have pointed out, especially in his commentary on St. John’s Gospel. apropos of the hour of the passion, which is pre-eminently Christ’s hour. All these expressions signify a decree of the divine will that is non-necessitating but predetermining premotion assuring the infallible execution of this decree, and this in a different way both for good and bad acts, for God is the cause of only the reality and goodness of our acts. As for moral disorder, whenever it occurs, He permits it, though in no way causing it, either directly or indirectly. This disorder comes solely from the deficient cause and is not included in the adequate object of indefectible Omnipotence, just as sound is not included in the object of sight. The expression, predetermining and non-necessitating “physical premotion,” is therefore quite in conformity with the mind and even the terminology of St. Thomas.

It has been alleged at times that certain texts of the holy Doctor can be interpreted in the opposite sense. Goudin, O.P., pointed out: (1) that when St. Thomas denies predetermination, the context shows that he then has in mind necessitating predetermination as Damascene understands it. (2) When St. Thomas says that the will determines itself, he is speaking of secondary causes; and it is clear that the deliberation is ordained to the determination of choice, which is a free act of the will. This is affirmed by St. Thomas in the famous text which we shall examine in the next chapter, it reads as follows: “God moves man’s will, as the universal Mover to the universal object of the will, which is good. And, without this universal motion, man cannot will anything. But man determines himself by his reason to will this or that which is true or apparent good. (Certainly it is so in the order of secondary causes. That is why man deliberates, and thus sin is possible, which answers the objection put by St. Thomas.) Nevertheless, sometimes God moves some specially to the willing of something determinate, which is good; as in the case of those whom He moves by grace, as we shall state later on.” In the following question it is stated that

this divine motion to will something determinate is not necessitating, because this infallibly efficacious influx extends even to the free mode of our choice: “It is incompossible with this supposition, that the will be not moved thereto. But it is not impossible simply.”

3) When St. Thomas says that God at times moves the will without implanting anything in it, he means, without producing in it an infused habit.

4) Finally, St. Thomas has drawn a distinction between a general motion to universal good and a particular motion for this particular act, an act, for instance, of contrition. It remains true as he said: “that no matter how perfect a corporeal or spiritual nature is supposed to be, it cannot proceed to its act unless it be moved by God.” The notion of physical, predetermining, and non-necessitating premotion is therefore quite in agreement with the teaching of St. Thomas. We can assure ourselves of this by reading his earliest commentators, those who wrote long before Bannez. A compilation of their texts was made by Father Dummermuth, O.P.

CHAPTER VI

THE DIFFERENT WAYS IN WHICH PHYSICAL PREMOTION OPERATES

FATHER del Prado has discussed this question at length. He shows it to be the opinion of St. Thomas, by numerous texts taken from his works, that God moves our intellect and will in three ways: (1) before the act of deliberation; (2) after this act; (3) by a movement of a higher order. St. Thomas noted these three ways in which the divine motion operates both in the order of nature and of grace.

In the natural order God moves our will: (1) to will happiness in general (or to wish to be happy); (2) to determine itself to choose this particular good by an act of discursive deliberation; (3) He moves it by a special inspiration that excels any deliberation, such as happens with the man of genius and with heroes, as Aristotle remarked and also one of his disciples who argued as Plato would have done.

Likewise, in a proportionate manner, in the order of grace, God moves our will: (1) to direct itself to its supernatural end; (2) to determine itself to the use or practice of the infused virtues by means of a discursive deliberation; (3) He moves it in a manner that excels any deliberation by a special inspiration, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost render us docile to this movement.

Whether it be in the natural or in the supernatural order, the first manner of movement precedes the deliberation of the will as regards the means; the second follows or accompanies it; the third mode excels it. St. Thomas has enumerated these three ways. It suffices here to give in English the first of these texts which, though several seem to be ignorant of this, is explained by the following texts, especially by those that treat of grace, to which St. Thomas refers them.

“God moves man’s will as the universal Mover to the universal object of the will, which is good. (Thus man wills to be happy.) And without this universal motion, man cannot will anything. But man determines himself by his reason, to will this or that, which is true or apparent good. Nevertheless, sometimes God moves some specially to the willing of something determinate which is good; as in the case of those whom He moves by grace, as we shall see later on.”

Having seen in what physical premotion does and does not consist, and what are its different modes, we must speak of the reasons why the Thomists affirm the necessity of its being admitted.

CHAPTER VII

REASONS FOR AFFIRMING PHYSICAL PREMOTION

WE shall here consider these reasons in the following order: (1) in general; (2) with reference to the divine decrees concerning our salutary acts; (3) so as to explain the efficacy of grace.

GENERAL REASONS FOR ADMITTING PHYSICAL PREMOTION

1) The Thomists ultimately give two general reasons for affirming physical premotion; one of these is to be sought in God, the other in the secondary cause. Fundamentally the reason is the same, though viewed under two aspects.

First reason. God is the first Mover and first cause to whom are subordinated, even in their action, all secondary causes. Now, without physical premotion we cannot safeguard in God the primacy of causality or the subordination of secondary causes in their very action. Therefore physical premotion is the reason why all secondary causes are subordinated to God as first Mover and first Cause.

The major is certain both in philosophy and in theology. It would be rash to deny it. As, indeed, it is certain that God is the supreme Being, upon whom all beings as such immediately depend, it is equally certain that God is the supreme efficient cause to whom all secondary causes are subordinated even in their action. Subordination in action follows subordination in being, just as action follows being. To deny this major would be to deny the first two classical proofs for the existence of God as set forth by St. Thomas.

The minor becomes evident to us, if we take note of the fact that subordination of causes in their action consists in this, that the first cause

moves or applies secondary causes to act, and that secondary causes act only because they are moved by the primary cause. St. Thomas states this clearly as follows: “Where there are several agents in order, the second always acts in virtue of the first: for the first agent moves the second to act. And thus all agents act in virtue of God Him-self.” Now this is the very definition of physical premotion, which has a priority not of time but of causality over the action of the created agent. The Thomists confirm this argument by pointing out that neither simultaneous concurrence nor moral motion suffices to safeguard the subordination of causes.

2) Second reason. It finds its explanation in the indigence of the secondary cause. Every cause that is not of itself actually in act, but only in potentiality to act, needs to be physically premoved to act. Now such is the case with every created cause, even the free cause. Therefore every created cause needs to be physically premoved to act.

The major is certain. The classical proofs for God’s existence, such as St. Thomas understands them, have their foundation in this principle, and to refuse to admit this major is to say that the greater comes from the less, the more perfect from the less perfect; for actually to act is a greater perfection than being able to act. If, therefore, the faculty to act were not moved, it would always remain in a state of potency and would never act. St. Thomas, too, said: “Everything that is at one time an agent actually and at another time an agent in potentiality, needs to be moved by a mover.”

The minor is no less evident. If a created cause were of itself actually in act, it would always be in act and never in potentiality. Our intellect would always actually know all the intelligible things it can know, and our will would always actually will all the good things that will be willed by it. Moreover, this created cause, instead of being moved to act would be its own action; but, for that, it would have to be its very being, to exist of itself; for action follows being, and the mode of action the mode of being, as St. Thomas often says. Therefore every created cause, that it may act, needs to be physically premoved by God.

The free cause is no exception; for its action, as being, depends upon the first Being; its action as action, upon the first Agent; and as a free action, upon the first Free. Furthermore, the free cause is particularly indifferent of itself or undetermined whether to act or not to act, to will this or that, and for this reason it stands particularly in need of a divine motion to cause it to determine itself. The stars obey God without knowing Him and they are

powerless to disobey; that the human will may freely obey Him it needs a special divine motion or a grace that, without forcing it, will cause it actually and freely to make its choice.

The special laws that govern human liberty cannot be contrary to the universal laws of the real that govern the relations between created being and God. They cannot be an exception to these most universal laws, but are subordinate to them.

Such are the two reasons why Thomists generally affirm physical premotion. We say that they are two aspects of one and the same fundamental reason: on God’s part, the primacy of His causality, and as regards the created cause, the indigence of this latter.

3) Insufficiency of the other explanations. These two reasons are confirmed by the insufficiency of the other explanations. The primacy of the divine causality and the subordination of causes are not indeed safeguarded, so the Thomists say, either by simultaneous concurrence or by the fact that God gave secondary causes the faculty to act.

a) Simultaneous concurrence does not move the secondary cause to act; and exerts no direct influence upon it, causing it to act; but this concurrence has only a simultaneous influence with it upon its effect, just as two men pulling a boat or two horses drawing a carriage. If it were otherwise, then this concurrence would not be merely a simultaneous but also a previous motion. It would have a priority of causality over the action of the secondary cause. By simultaneous con-currence God would be only the co-principle of our acts, but not the first Cause. There would be two partial and coordinated causes (at least of causality, if not of effect) and not two total and subordinated causes. Whereas for the Thomists the whole of the created action comes from God as the primary cause and from the created agent as the secondary cause.

b) Moral motion also fails to explain it. This can, of course, constitute the subordination of causes in the order of final causality, for the end morally or objectively moves by way of attraction; but it does not do so in the physical order of efficient causality, and it is with this that we are concerned. God, indeed, is first Mover and first Cause in this physical order of efficient causality, and not merely in the order of moral causality by way of attraction or end. If it were not so, then He would be the first Mover only as regards agents endowed with intellect, since only these are capable of being moved morally by having an object proposed to them which attracts them.

c) Finally, it is not enough to say with Durandus of St. Pourçain that God gave to secondary causes and preserves in them the faculty of action. St. Thomas excludes this opinion as erroneous. It was admitted by Pelagius and was not enough to declare him orthodox. Finally, it does not establish the subordination of causes in action but merely in being. Now action follows being, and the mode of action the mode of being. Dependence in action follows therefore dependence in being.

Furthermore, it is only God who can interiorly move our will to the exercise of its act, for He alone created and preserves it, and can move it according to the natural inclination He gave it for universal good. The order of agents corresponds to the order of ends, and therefore the most universal efficient cause can move to universal good which, as such, is realized in God alone. Every other cause would necessitate, which means that it could not cause in us and with us that our acts should be performed freely.

Suarez objected to this, saying that our will is of itself, if not formally at least virtually, in act, and that thus it can pass into act without a divine motion. It is easy to reply to this objection by saying that the virtual act is distinct from the action resulting from it. Is there, or is there not, a becoming in this? Is its action eternal, or, on the contrary, did it appear in time? This appearance is something new, and this becoming presupposes an active power which was not its own activity, which did not even act but was only able to act. And then, how does the virtual act reduce itself to the second act which it did not have? To say that it did so by itself, is to posit an absolute beginning, which is repugnant to reason; for the greater does not come from the less, being from nothing. The virtual act was therefore reduced to its second act by an eternal mover which, in the last analysis, must be its own activity and which cannot be the subject of becoming.

The reply to Suarez has often been that before the created will acts, its act is contained in it not virtually and eminently, as God contains creatures and as the divine intuition contains human reasoning; but it is contained virtually and potentially, which means that it can produce its act as a secondary cause acting under the influence of the primary Cause.

Moreover, it is not enough to say that God moves man to will to be happy, or to will good in general; for when our will afterwards wills some particular good, there is then a new actuality, which must depend as being upon the first Being, as free act upon the first Free, as ultimate actuality upon the supreme Actuality who is pure Act, and, if this free act is good and

salutary, it must depend as such, not only by reason of its object, but also as to the exercise of its act, upon the source of all good and the Author of salvation. St. Thomas, too, said: “No matter how perfect a corporeal or spiritual nature is supposed to be, it cannot proceed to its act unless it be moved by God.”

Such are the general reasons for affirming physical premotion. They become clear if we consider them with reference to what revelation teaches us concerning the divine decrees and efficacious grace.

PHYSICAL PREMOTION AND THE DIVINE DECREES AS THEY RELATE TO OUR SALUTARY ACTS

Physical premotion presupposes these decrees and the infallible execution of them. These decrees are admitted by almost all the theologians who do not accept the Molinist theory of the scientia media. This means that they are admitted by the Thomists, the Augustinians, and the Scotists, who in a general way grant the case of the dilemma: God determining or determined, no other alternative. In other words, if God has not from all eternity determined our salutary free acts, then He is passive or dependent upon His knowledge as regards the free determination made by a certain man if placed in certain circumstances (and it is only for God to place him or not in these circumstances). As regards this free determination which, as a free determination, does not come from God, He is not the author but merely the spectator of it. Now we can admit no passivity or dependence in the pure Act, who is sovereignly independent as regards everything created, as to contingent things, whether absolute or conditional.

In the opinion of the theologians just referred to, the existence of these divine predetermining decrees concerning our salutary free acts has its foundation not only in the notion which the philosopher perforce must have of God and His independence, but also in divine revelation as contained in Scripture and tradition.

1) Scriptural texts. We have the following prayer of Mardochai: “O Lord, Lord, almighty King, for all things are in Thy power, and there is none that can resist Thy will. . . . Thou art the Lord of all and there is none that can resist Thy majesty. . . . Hear my supplication and turn our mourning into joy.” In the same book Queen Esther prays as follows: “Give me a well ordered speech in my mouth, in the presence of the lion (the king), and turn

his heart to the hatred of our enemy; that both he himself may perish and the rest that consent to him." Further on we read: "And God changed the king's heart into mildness," and he issued an edict in favor of the Jews. From these words we see that the infallibility and efficacy of the decree of God's will have their foundation evidently in His omnipotence and not in the foreseen consent of King Assuerus. This makes St. Augustine say, when explaining these words: "By a most secret and most efficacious power He converts and transforms the king's heart from indignation to lenity."

In the Book of Psalms we read: "He hath done all things whatsoever He would." Everything He wills not conditionally, but absolutely, He does, even man's free conversion, as in the case of King Assuerus. Hence the "heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord; whithersoever He will He shall turn it." The same thought is expressed somewhat differently as follows: "As the potter's clay is in his hand, to fashion and order it . . . so man is in the hand of Him that made him." Isaias announces various events that will happen against the pagan nations by means of human intervention, especially the ruin of Babylon, and he concludes as follows: "The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying: Surely as I have thought, so shall it be. And as I have purposed, so shall it fall out. . . . For the Lord of hosts hath decreed, and who can disannul it? And His hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it away." The hand of God signifies His omnipotence; here again the infallibility and efficacy of the divine decree do not at all have their foundation in the foreseeing of human consent.

It is even declared that God gives the good consent: "And I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and will give you a heart of flesh . . . and I will cause you to walk in My commandments and to keep My judgments and do them . . . and you shall be My people and I will be your God."

Jesus also said: "Without Me you can do nothing," in the order of salvation. Speaking of deceivers, He said: "There shall arise false Christs . . . and shall show great signs and wonders." Of His followers He said: "My sheep hear My voice. And I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them life everlasting, and they shall not perish for ever. And no one shall pluck them out of My hand. That which My Father hath given Me is greater than all; and no one shall snatch them out of the hand of My Father."

Again, in like manner, every time Jesus speaks of the "hour" of His passion, He says that it has from all eternity been determined by a divine

decree, and that before this hour no one will be able to lay hands on Him. God is therefore the master of the human will to such an extent that it cannot sin except at the time permitted by God from all eternity; also the kind of sin has been permitted without God being directly or indirectly the cause of it. Thus we read in the Gospel: “They sought therefore to apprehend Him; and no man laid hands on Him, because His hour had not yet come.” Of this hour the Evangelist writes: “Jesus knowing that His hour was come . . . having loved His own . . . He loved them unto the end.” “Father the hour is come.” We have observed that the hour appointed by Providence is not of necessity determined. Now this is the hour of Christ’s greatest free act. The act is one that had therefore been from all eternity the object of a divine positive predetermining decree. It is also the hour of the greatest sin, that of deicide. This act had been from all eternity the object of a divine decree that was not positive but permissive, so that this sin was not due to happen before this hour, or in any other way except that permitted by God.

Likewise, St. Peter on the day of Pentecost said to the Jews: “This same being delivered up, by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, you by the hands of wicked men have crucified and slain. Whom God hath raised up.” It is also to be noticed that in this text “the determinate counsel, ϰή ώρισμένη Βουλή,” precedes foreknowledge: προγνώσει ϰούΘεού. As St. Thomas says: “God by His eternal will preordained Christ’s passion for the deliverance of the human race.”

In like manner, St. Paul says of the resurrection: “Him God raised up the third day; and gave Him to be made manifest, not to all the people, but to witnesses preordained by God.” He points out the effect of this upon the Gentiles as follows: “And the Gentiles hearing of it were glad . . . and as many as were ordained to life everlasting believed.” He refers to the divine predetermination in these words: “God hath determined for all mankind the appointed time and the limits of their habitation.” St. Paul relates that after his conversion, Ananias said to him: “Brother Saul, look up. And I the same hour looked upon him. But he said: The God of our fathers hath preordained thee that thou shouldst know His will and see the Just One and shouldst hear the voice from His mouth. For thou shalt be His witness.” And freely but infallibly St. Paul testified concerning our Lord.

Finally, it was St. Paul himself who said: “To them that love God all things work together unto good: to such as according to His purpose are

called. For whom He foreknew, He also predestinated. . . . But when Rebecca had conceived . . . when the children were not yet born . . . that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works of Him that calleth, it was said to her: the elder shall serve the younger. . . . What shall we say then? Is there injustice with God? God forbid! For He saith to Moses: I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy. And I will show mercy to whom I will show mercy. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." In this text it is clear that the election, the eternal decree of the divine will, does not depend upon the foreseen consent of the human will. God's sovereign independence cannot be more clearly affirmed.

Other passages are equally to the point: "If God, willing . . . to show the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy which He hath prepared unto glory," where is the injustice? "But in all these things we overcome, because of Him that hath loved us." "Hath God cast away His people? God forbid! . . . Of old He said to Elias: I have left Me seven thousand men that have not bowed their knee to Baal. Even so then, at the present time also, there is a remnant saved according to the election of grace. And if by grace, it is not now by works: otherwise grace is no more grace. What then? That which Israel sought, he hath not obtained; but the election hath obtained it. And the rest have been blinded."

Similarly, St. Paul said: "For who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received?" According to St. Paul what distinguishes the just person from the impious one, what even begins to distinguish him, when the just person begins to be converted, that also he received. Long afterward St. Thomas said: "Since God's love is the cause of goodness in things, no one thing would be better than another, if God did not will greater good for one than for another." It is the principle of predilection, which applies both in the natural and supernatural orders, and this for salutary acts either difficult or easy to perform. This principle is of absolute universality, and it supposes that God's love for us is efficacious of itself and not because of our foreseen good consent, since God, the source of all good, is the primary cause of this good consent. This principle of predilection, so clearly formulated by St. Paul and so boldly affirming God's sovereign independence, is balanced by this other principle, that "God never commands what is impossible, and makes it really possible for

all adults to obey the commandments when these are binding on them," as explained by St. Paul who says: "God will have all men to be saved."

How is this second principle reconciled with the principle of predilection? That is an inscrutable mystery. For this we should have to see the Deity and thus realize how infinite mercy, justice, and sovereign liberty, or God's independence, are there reconciled.

We read the same in St. Paul's epistles: "As He chose us in Him [Jesus Christ] before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and unspotted in His sight . . . [and not because He foresaw our holiness]. Who hath predestinated us unto the adoption of children through Jesus Christ unto Himself, according to the purpose of His will, unto the praise of the glory of His grace [and not that of man's free will], in which He hath graced us in His beloved Son. . . . In whom we are also called by lot, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things according to the counsel of His will. That we may be unto the praise of His glory, we who before hoped in Christ." It is not a question here merely of the general election of Christians, for it is stated that one particular Christian is better than a certain other: "For who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received?" If God's love is the source of all good, no one thing would be better than another, unless it were loved more by God. Again St. Paul says: "For it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will." Therefore, so the Thomists think, the free determination of the salutary act comes, as from its primary source, from God, who is the first Free and the first Goodness, from God, who is the Author of salvation.

2) Theological argument. The same doctrine is set forth by St. Thomas when he speaks of the divine consequent or non-conditional will: "The will is directed to things as they are in themselves, and in themselves they exist under particular qualifications. Hence we will a thing simply inasmuch as we will it when all particular circumstances are considered; and this is what is meant by willing consequently. Thus it may be said that a just judge wills simply the hanging of a murderer, but in a qualified manner or antecedently he would will him to live, to wit, inasmuch as he is a man. Thus it is clear that whatever God simply wills takes place; although what He wills antecedently may not take place."

In this passage St. Thomas gives us the principle of the distinction between intrinsically efficacious grace (which infallibly assures the

execution of the divine consequent will for salutary acts, whether these be easy or difficult), and sufficient grace (which corresponds to the divine antecedent will by which God wills to make it possible for all to keep the commandments and obtain salvation).

Why does St. Thomas think that everything which God wills by His consequent or unconditional will is infallibly fulfilled? The reason given by St. Thomas is not because God foresees our consent, but because “nothing may fall outside the order of the universal cause; under which all particular causes are included.” Only the good which God willed or the evil which He permitted can happen; for no secondary cause can act without His concurring in the act.

The Council of Orange had said: “Let no one glory in what he may seem to have, as if he did not receive it from God.” The Council of Trent also said: “For God, unless men be themselves wanting to His grace, as He began the good work, so will He perfect it [working in them to will and to accomplish].”

In the opinion of the Thomists, not to admit predetermining decrees in God with regard to our salutary acts, is to make it impossible for one to solve the dilemma: God determining or determined, no other alternative. Thus we must admit a certain passivity or dependence in God as regards the free decision that a certain man would make if placed in certain circumstances, and that he will make if actually placed in such circumstances. Is not God’s dependence upon man’s decision admitted by Molina in the following passage? “The scientia media on no account is to be called free, both because it precedes every free act of the divine will, and also because it was not in God’s power to know by this knowledge anything else than He actually knew. Furthermore, not even is it natural in this sense, as if it were to such a degree innate to God that He could not know the opposite of that which He knows by this knowledge. For if the created will were to do the opposite, as it truly can, He would have known even this by the same knowledge, but not that He actually knows it.” This means that it is not in God’s power to foresee by the scientia media something else than what He knows by it; but He would have known something else by it if the created will, on the supposition that it were placed in certain circumstances, had made a different choice. Now, then, can we avoid saying that God’s foreknowledge depends upon the choice which the created free will would make if it were placed in certain circumstances, and which it will make if

actually placed in such circumstances? Evidently it follows as a logical conclusion for Molina that actual grace, which results in the salutary act, is not intrinsically efficacious, and that with an equal or even a less grace a particular sinner is converted, whereas a certain other with greater help is not converted. In the opinion of the Thomists, this cannot be reconciled with what St. Paul says: “For who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received?”

On the contrary, if we admit the divine predetermining decrees with regard to our salutary acts, namely, intrinsically and infallibly efficacious decrees, which cause even our acts to be performed freely, actuating our liberty, then it follows that actual grace, which is followed by the salutary act, must also be intrinsically efficacious, so as to assure the infallible execution of the decree which it presupposes. In the opinion of the Thomists, actual grace can be intrinsically efficacious only on condition that it is a predetermining physical but non-necessitating premotion, in the sense explained at the beginning of this third part. It remains for us to prove this.

PREDETERMINING PHYSICAL PREMOTION AND THE EFFICACY OF GRACE

It is of faith that God grants us efficacious graces which are not only followed by the good consent of free will, but which in a certain manner produce it: for efficacious or effective grace makes us act. The Pelagians and Semipelagians denied this. They did not refuse to admit that grace gives us the power to perform a good act, but they denied that it causes us to will and do the act. The second Council of Orange explaining the words of St. Paul, “It is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish,” declares against the Semipelagians: “If anyone, that we may be cleansed from sin, contends that God awaits the consent of our will, and does not confess, however, that even our wish to be cleansed is effected in us by the infusion and operation of the Holy Ghost, such a one resists this same Holy Spirit . . . and the Apostle proclaiming for our benefit that it is God who worketh in you both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will.”

Now grace, which causes us to perform a good act, which works in us both to will and to accomplish, makes us do the good deed, is not merely virtually efficacious (in actu primo) in the sense that it gives us really the

power to act in a salutary manner, for this power is already given by sufficient grace even when the salutary effect does not follow; but it is actually efficacious or effective, for, as the Council of Orange says: “As often as we do any good act, God works in us and with us that we may act.” In these words we have the expression of Christian faith, and it is also of faith that under the influence of efficacious grace so conceived, man retains his liberty of action.

In addition to this the Thomists and many other theologians interpreting these texts of the Scripture and the councils as implying divine independence, which they consider is compromised by the scientia media, see in this the affirmation that grace is efficacious of itself, and not because of our foreseen consent.

It is of importance to note here that the doctrine of intrinsically efficacious grace, which is admitted by almost all theologians who reject the theory of the scientia media, means far more for the Thomists than their explanation of predetermining physical premotion. Likewise, provided it is within the power of our will to move our hand as it pleases, it is of little consequence for us to know by means of what nerve centers it does so. Among the Thomists, Billuart pointed this out. He said in substance that the theologians explain in various ways the efficacy of grace; some by means of delectation and moral influence, others by physical predetermination, though they do not apply this to natural acts, or to the material element in sin. But, strictly speaking, these are philosophical questions, whereas grace efficacious of itself in virtue of God’s omnipotent will, independently of the creature’s consent and the scientia media, this we defend as a theological conclusion that is connected with the principles of the faith and proximate to the faith (proximately definable). If we exclude the Molinists, this opinion is held by almost all the schools. The Thomists perceive, indeed, that this statement of intrinsically efficacious grace is implied in the scriptural texts previously quoted concerning the intrinsic efficacy of the divine decrees. Similarly, they connect this doctrine with the principle of predilection, namely: “No one thing would be better than another, if God did not will greater good for one than for another.”

Now if we admit the fact of intrinsically and infallibly efficacious grace, how can we account for it except by saying that it is so by reason of the predetermining physical premotion in the sense just explained? It has been proposed, of course, to explain this efficacy by means of a moral causality

in that the object attracts the will, and so some have spoken, such as Berti and Bellelius, of a victorious delectation, others of a multiplicity of graces that attract the will, or of a series of indeliberate and inefficacious good movements that incline the will to make the salutary choice, and it has even been proposed to assign to this moral motion, in one or the other of the above mentioned modes, a physical but non-predetermining pre-motion.

It is the common teaching of the Thomists in the tractate on grace, that the explanations are insufficient. The fundamental reason they give is that God cannot infallibly move the will by means of a moral or objective motion. Now intrinsically efficacious grace is that by which God infallibly moves the will to make the salutary choice. Therefore intrinsically efficacious grace cannot be explained by simply a moral or objective motion.

The major of this premise rests upon the principle that by a moral or objective motion the will is reached only through the medium of the intellect by way of objective attraction, and is not infallibly drawn by this motion. Undoubtedly, God seen face to face would infallibly attract our will because He adequately satisfies its capacity for love. But every attraction, however exalted it may be, is unable fully to satisfy this capacity and is fallible; it leaves the will undetermined whether to consent or not, especially so with a weak will, with one that is hard and indocile to the divine call, so long as it is not intrinsically changed.

It does not solve the difficulty to say that this moral motion is accompanied by a celestial and victorious delectation. This latter, which is admitted by several Augustinians, such as Berti, cannot make the grace intrinsically and infallibly efficacious; for, often enough, it does not even accompany the motion, and when present does not infallibly produce its effect. Often enough it is ineffective, for some are converted who were not disposed precisely because they were drawn by a celestial delectation that is superior to earthly things; for they were drawn by reason of an inclination to good that is not always a victorious delectation, but is inspired by the fear of divine chastisements and other motives. Even saints perform many good works without experiencing this victorious delectation; and they are, at times, in a state of very great aridity, as for instance, is the case with those who are undergoing the dark night or passive purification of the soul. When this celestial delectation is present, it solicits undoubtedly our free will to act, but it does not infallibly attract the will; for it does not fully satisfy the

capacity of the will for love, as would be the case of God seen face to face; for the will can incline us to think of something else. As a matter of fact, in his choice man is not always influenced by the greatest delectation that suddenly presents itself; he chooses what appears to him to be the best right at the moment, even for the sole motive that it is of obligation, without any previous delectation, and the superior delectation then follows the choice, just as joy follows the fulfillment of one's duty.

The multiplicity of the graces of attraction would not give the salutary acts an infallible efficacy; for the will still remains undecided whether to consent or not, although it is ardently solicited or inclined to give its salutary consent. Thus the persecutors promised all the goods of this world to the holy martyrs, at the same time attempting to frighten them by the threat of all the torments; but neither these promises nor threats of torments could infallibly influence their liberty of action. In like manner, inefficacious good movements incline the will to make the salutary choice, but they cannot infallibly cause this act; for they, too, leave our free will undecided. They do not effect the free choice, to say nothing of the fact that they often have to contend with great temptations and the fickleness of our free will in the performance of good.

Finally, an indifferent physical premotion that moves man to will to be happy, without inclining him infallibly to will this particular good, it, too, leaves our free will undecided. It does not effect the free choice of a certain good.

The Thomists, too, conclude that moral motion is certainly required to dispose our will to make the choice, by proposing to it an object, a good that solicits or attracts it. But intrinsically efficacious grace that infallibly moves the will to make the free choice, must be the application of the will to the exercise of this act. Now this is not a moral motion, or one by way of objective attraction, but it is a physical motion. It must exert its effect immediately from within; on the will itself, and not through the intervention of the intellect. It must have a priority not of time but of nature or causality over the free act. It must, finally, bring the will infallibly to perform this particular free act rather than a certain other, and cause even this act to be performed freely. This means that it must be a predetermining physical and non-necessitating premotion, which can come from God alone, and from no created agent however superior; for only God can interiorly move the free will which He has ordained to universal good and which He maintains in

existence. He alone by His unsullied contact can so move the will as not to destroy its liberty, and can reconcile His infallible motion with the free mode of our acts.

Theologians always granted the Thomists that it is because of this divine motion of itself efficacious, that the Virgin Mary freely and infallibly uttered her “fiat” on the day of the annunciation, that St. Paul was freely and infallibly converted on his way to Damascus, that the martyrs remained freely and infallibly faithful in the midst of most dreadful torments. But that is to concede the metaphysical principles of the doctrine, and, if they are metaphysical, they are applicable without exception to all salutary acts, whether these be easy or difficult to perform. The foregoing principles that have been formulated do not take into consideration the greater or less degree of difficulty.

On the other hand, the infallibility of the divine motion which is affirmed by the Jansenists and Quesnel in terms practically the same as those of St. Thomas, is the denial of liberty, as well as of sufficient grace and responsibility on the sinner’s part. The Jansenists consider grace of itself efficacious to be necessary by reason of the weakness of human nature and not because of the creature’s dependence upon God. They hold that in the state of innocence intrinsically efficacious grace was not necessary for the performance of a good act. It is necessary only since the fall because of the consequences of original sin, in that only freedom from coercion remains to us and not free will (freedom from necessity).

To sum up, intrinsically and infallibly efficacious grace, which in more precise language means predetermining and non-necessitating premotion, is required not only for salutary acts difficult to perform, but also for those that are easy; and this holds good either for the commencement or continuance in the performance of good works. “Since, indeed, God’s love is the cause of goodness in things, no one thing would be better than another [by reason of an initial or final salutary act, by one that is easy or difficult to perform, in the beginning or for its continuance], if God did not will greater good for one than for another.”

CHAPTER VIII

THE DIVINE MOTION AND THE FREEDOM OF OUR SALUTARY ACTS

THE question has been raised against the Thomist thesis that it destroys liberty, as Calvinism does, in that it makes us maintain that the free will cannot resist. This is the thesis of the Reformers that was condemned by the Council of Trent defining: “If anyone shall say that man’s free will, moved and aroused by God, by assenting to God arousing and calling, cannot refuse to consent, if it would, but that, as something inanimate, it does nothing whatever and is merely passive; let him be anathema.” This and other similar objections were made to St. Augustine by the Pelagians and Semipelagians. St. Thomas often referred to them and solved them.

The Thomists reply that the Council of Trent did not wish to condemn either the doctrine of intrinsically efficacious grace or that of physical premotion, as clearly expressed by Benedict XIV and Clement XII. At the end of the sessions Paul V also had declared: “The opinion of the Friars Preachers differs very much from that of Calvin. For the Dominicans say that grace does not destroy but perfects free will, and such is its power that it leaves man to act as befits his nature, which is freely. The Jesuits, however, differ from the Pelagians who declared the beginning of salvation to be from ourselves, whereas the former teach quite the contrary.”

Evidently the Thomist doctrine differs entirely from that condemned by the Council of Trent. According to this condemned doctrine, the free will does not co-operate with the divine action. Furthermore, there were many Thomists among the fathers of the council. One of them, Dominic Soto, was even engaged in the drawing up of these canons. It is even very probable that the fathers of the Council in the above-mentioned canon speak of an intrinsically efficacious divine motion; for it is this motion that Luther had in mind when he said it could not be reconciled with free will. Therefore the

mind of the fathers is rather that the intrinsically and infallibly efficacious divine motion does not destroy free will; for, although man does not actually resist it, yet he retains the power to do so; remanet potentia ad oppositum, as the Thomists commonly say.

Moreover, the council had said previous to this: “For God, unless men be themselves wanting to His grace, as He has begun the good work so will He perfect it, working in them to will and accomplish.” These last words were generally understood by the pre-Tridentine theologians as meaning that grace is of itself efficacious, and not because God foresaw our consent.

Finally, the Thomists retort by saying that it is the scientia media which destroys liberty; for it supposes that God previous to any divine decree sees infallibly what a particular man freely would choose if placed in certain circumstances. How, indeed, can one then avoid determinism of circumstances? In what medium can God see infallibly the determination that would arrest the appetite of the created free will, if not in the scrutiny of the circumstances that thence become infallibly determining? And not having decided in favor of a divine and non-necessitating predetermination that makes its influence felt strongly and suavely in the very depths of the free will, is not one led to admit a very inferior sort of determinism that results from the influence exerted by external things on our spiritual will?

The canon of the Council of Trent just quoted was but the occasion of reviving an old objection. We saw that St. Thomas had already formulated it as clearly as possible, when he said: “It seems that the will is moved of necessity by God. For every agent that cannot be resisted moves of necessity. But God cannot be resisted, because His power is infinite; wherefore it is written: Who resisteth His will? (Rom. 9: 19.) Therefore God moves the will of necessity.” We know that St. Thomas replied to this by saying: “The divine will extends not only to the doing of something by the thing which He moves, but also to its being done in a way which is fitting to the nature of that thing. And therefore it would be more repugnant to the divine motion, for the will to be moved of necessity, which is not fitting to its nature, than for it to be moved freely, which is becoming to its nature.” From this reply, what remains of the major of this objection: Every agent that cannot be resisted, moves of necessity? St. Thomas distinguishes as follows: If this agent causes the movement, without causing the being to move freely, I deny the major; if it causes the being to move and to move freely, then I concede the major. Thus man under the influence of

efficacious grace remains free, although he never resists it; for it causes in him and with him even that he act freely; it actualizes his liberty in the order of good, and if he no longer is in a state of potential or passive indifference, he still has an actual and active indifference, a dominating indifference with regard to the particular good which he chooses. This good is incapable of invincibly attracting him like the vision of God face to face. He is inclined freely toward this good, God actualizing this free movement; and since its free mode still is being, it is included in the adequate object of divine omnipotence. Such is manifestly the doctrine of St. Thomas. The texts just quoted clearly prove this to be the case.

Such is also the traditional teaching of classic Thomism. Molina concedes this at the same time that he declares his departure not only from the teaching of the Thomists, but even from that of St. Thomas. Several Molinists made the same admission.

This same doctrine of St. Thomas was later on expounded by Bossuet, who wrote: “Is there anything more absurd than to say that the will is not free in its act because God wills it to be free.” In other words: Is there anything more absurd than to say that the actualization of the free will destroys it?

This freedom in our acts is not only safeguarded, but is also produced by God in and with us. The divine motion does not force the will, because it operates according to the natural inclination of this latter. It inclines the will first toward its adequate object, which is universal good, and only after this toward an inadequate object, which is some particular good. In the first case the divine motion causes the act to be free. It operates interiorly, as was just said, in the very depths of the will, as to the universality of the same, and in a sense inclines the will toward every degree of good, before giving it the inclination to tend toward some particular good.

Thus God moves us suavely and powerfully to act freely. If the divine motion were to lose its power, it would also lose its suavity. Incapable of reaching what is more delicate and intimate to us, it would remain external to us, affixed, as it were, to our created activity, something unworthy of the creative, conservative, and motive activity, which is more intimate to us than we are to ourselves. Our free act therefore proceeds entirely from us as secondary cause, and entirely from God as primary cause. When, after deliberation, we perform the act, in virtue of the universal scope of our will and our independence of judgment that is not necessitated by the object, we

retain the power not to perform the act. If our free will were able of itself alone to determine itself, then it would have the dignity of the first Will and would be like to it not only analogically but also univocally. It would be purely and simply an image of the divine liberty, instead of there being a similarity of proportion between it and this latter. Between the two there is similarity and dissimilarity. If we consider the similarity, we must say that it is just as easy to reconcile created liberty with the intrinsically efficacious divine motion, as it is to reconcile God's free act with His immutability. In God freedom of action is not the dominating potential indifference of a faculty that is capable of acting or of not acting. With Him it is the dominating indifference of pure Act with regard to everything created. Likewise, in due proportion, under the influence of the efficacious divine motion, our liberty is no longer the potential but actual indifference of the faculty, and its actualization does not destroy this liberty.

If Molinism rejects this doctrine, the reason is because it seeks to define human liberty without any reference to the object that specifies the free act, Human liberty is a faculty that, presupposed all that is requisite for it to act, it still can either act or not act, and among these prerequisites it places the divine motion, which is compatible, according to this theory, not only with the power of resisting but also with the actual fact of resisting.

In virtue of the fundamental principle that the faculties, habits, and acts are specified by their object, in the definition of free will we must consider its specifying object, and say with the Thomists that liberty is the dominating indifference of the will with regard to good proposed to it by the reason as not in every respect good. The essence of liberty consists in the dominating indifference of the will with regard to every object proposed by the reason as at the moment good in one aspect, and not good in another, according to the formula of St. Thomas: "If the will is offered an object that is not good from every point of view, it will not tend to this of necessity." There is then indifference in willing or not willing this object, a potential indifference in the faculty and an actual indifference in the free act which is not necessarily in-clined toward it. Even when, in fact, the will actually wills this object, when it is already determined to will this, it is still inclined freely toward this with a dominating indifference that is no longer potential but actual. In like manner, the divine liberty that is already determined maintains us in existence. Liberty therefore arises from the infinite disproportion prevailing between the will that is specified by universal

good, and a particular good which is good in one aspect, not good or insufficient in another. The Thomists also say in opposition to Suarez, that not even by His absolute power can God move our will of necessity to will a certain object, the indifference of judgment remaining as it is, so long as we judge the object to be good in one aspect and not so in another. The reason is that it implies a contradiction for the will to will of necessity the object proposed to it by the intellect as indifferent or as absolutely out of proportion to its scope.

That we may better grasp how the divine motion is the cause of our free act, we must point out that this latter depends upon three different finite causalities that are mutually related: (1) the objective attraction of particular good; (2) the direction of the intellect in forming a practical judgment; (3) the efficiency or production of the free choice by the will. The divine motion transcends these three causalities and actualizes them, without violating free will. The attraction of the end thus remains the first of the causes, and it implies a contradiction that our will be necessitated by the divine motion, when the judgment is indifferent or non-necessitating; for it implies a contradiction that our will should wish an object different from that which is proposed to it.

To sum up, as Bossuet said: “Is there anything more absurd than to say that the will is not free in its act, because God efficaciously wills it to be free?” Is there anything more inconsistent than to say that the actualization of free will destroys it?

The great mystery, too, according to St. Augustine and St. Thomas, is not how to reconcile God’s foreknowledge and His decrees with created liberty; for, if God is God, His efficacious will must extend even to the free mode of our acts. From the fact of His willing efficaciously that Paul be freely converted on a certain day at a certain time, on his way to Damascus, it must follow that Paul is freely converted; and, if in this case the effect of the divine motion on the human will does not destroy its liberty, why would it do so in other cases?

We must seek elsewhere for the reason of this great mystery. It is to be found in God’s permission of moral evil or sin in this particular man or angel rather than in a certain other. St. Augustine and St. Thomas say that if the grace of final perseverance is granted, as it was to the good thief, that is because of God’s mercy; if it is not granted, that is in just punishment as a rule for repeated sins, and for having resisted the final appeal, a final

resistance that God permits in this one rather than in a certain other. This makes St. Augustine say: “Why God draws this one and not that one, judge not, if thou wilt not err.” St. Thomas says in like manner: “No one thing would be better than another, if God did not will greater good for one than for the other.”

On the other hand, God never commands what is impossible. Even when Judas fell from grace, though so near to Christ His redeemer, it was still truly possible for him to comply with the divine law.

There is still one difficulty to be discussed, and this concerns the act of sin.

CHAPTER IX

THE DIVINE MOTION AND THE PHYSICAL ACT OF SIN

PRINCIPLE

IT is certain that Gad is in no way the cause of sin, either directly or indirectly. He cannot be the direct cause of sin by inclining His will or a created will to it, for sin is the result of the rational creature turning away from God, its ordained end. Neither can He be the indirect cause of sin by neglecting to keep us from it, as the captain of a ship who, by his negligence, is the cause of the shipwreck, when he is not at his post watching, as he can and should be doing. Undoubtedly it happens that God does not grant certain persons the help that would keep them from sin; but that is in accordance with the established order of His wisdom and justice. He is not bound to do so. He does not owe it to Himself to keep creatures that are by nature detectible from ever failing to do their duty, and He can permit them to fail in view of a higher good. Thus He permits the sin of persecutors that the constancy of the martyrs may be made manifest.

This divine permission of sin is in no way its cause, either directly or indirectly; it allows this to happen. It is but the indispensable condition. If God did not permit it, did not allow it to happen, there would be no sin. This divine permission of sin, especially in the case of the first movement by which the first sin is committed and by which the just person separates from God, is not a punishment, as the withdrawal of divine grace is the result of a transgression. Every punishment presupposes a transgression, and this latter would not be unless it were permitted by God. This divine permission of sin, which implies the non-conservation of a certain created liberty in good, is not a good; but it is not an evil, for it is not the privation of a good due to us; it is only the negation of a good not due to us.

Philosophy teaches that privation means more than negation. God did not owe it to Himself to preserve Lucifer or Adam in a state of innocence from every transgression. He permitted Lucifer rather than a certain other angel to consent to a movement of pride in the will, and in punishment for this transgression He withdrew His grace. It is important to note here against Calvin that the withdrawal of God's grace means more than His simple permission of sin; for this withdrawal is a punishment, as St. Thomas points out. Now every punishment presupposes a transgression, and every transgression presupposes a divine permission as the indispensable condition for its existence. However, the permission of a second sin is a punishment for the first.

THE DIVINE CAUSALITY AND THE PHYSICAL ACT OF SIN

This granted, it is not so difficult to understand the relation of the divine causality or physical premotion to the physical act of sin. St. Thomas writes clearly on this subject as follows: "The act of sin is both a being and an act; and in both respects it is from God. Because every being, whatever the mode of its being, must be derived from the first Being, as Dionysius declares (De div. nom., c. V). Again every action is caused by something existing in act, since nothing produces an action save in so far as it is in act: and every being in act is reduced to the first Act, God, as to its cause, who is Act by His essence. Therefore, God is the cause of every action, in so far as it is an action. But sin denotes a being and an action with a defect: and this defect is from a created cause, the free will, as falling away from the order of the first Agent, God. Consequently this defect is not reduced to God as its cause, but to the free will: even as the defect of limping is reduced to a crooked leg as its cause, but not to the motive power, which nevertheless causes whatever movement there is in the limping. Accordingly, God is the cause of the act of sin: and yet He is not the cause of sin, because He does not cause the act to have a defect."

The divine concurrence in the physical act of sin of which St. Thomas speaks here is not merely a simultaneous concurrence, as later on Molina contended, like that of two men drawing a boat. It is a case, indeed, of two partial causes (the partialness being of cause and not of effect, as Molina says), which means that the two causes are co-ordinated rather than subordinated in their causality. For St. Thomas, the secondary cause acts

only when premoved by the first; whereas neither of the two men drawing the boat moves the other. If it were merely a simultaneous concurrence, God would not be the cause of the physical act of sin as an action; for the cause does not merely accompany the effect, but precedes it at least by a priority of nature and causality. If therefore this divine concurrence is not merely simultaneous, it is a premotion, so say the Thomists, and even, since we must be precise in meaning on this point, it is a predetermining though not necessitating premotion. But the predetermination is not to be applied here in the same way as in a case of a good and salutary act.

For a proper understanding of this, we must remark that this divine motion presupposes in God an eternal decree, which is positive and effective as regards the physical entity of sin, and permissive as regards the deficiency. This deficiency, as we have seen, is the result of a defectible and deficient cause. Independently of this twofold eternal decree on God's part, sin was merely possible, but it was not either a conditional or absolute future. For instance, if from all eternity God had not permitted it, the sin of Judas would not have happened; it would have been merely possible. But God having permitted it from all eternity to happen in this particular manner, place, and time, it had to happen freely and infallibly at this particular time and not before, with its particular kind of malice and not any other. Therefore the sin of Judas presupposed an eternal decree, positive as regards the physical entity of the act, permissive as regards its deficiency. It is the same with every sin that happens in time.

To this eternal decree there corresponds a divine motion by which God is the first Cause of the physical act of sin as a being and an action. This divine motion can be predetermining but in a different manner from that which concerns the good and salutary act; for it depends upon an eternal decree that is not only positive and effective, but also permissive.

This can be better explained by pointing out that the divine motion as regards the exercise of the act presupposes the objective motion or the object as proposed. If this latter is defective, in so far as it does not come from God, but is the result of an evil instigation or of concupiscence, then God cannot even counsel the physical act of sin, for this objective advice could not exclude the malice of the act. In the case of a good act, on the contrary, the objective motion prerequired is good and always comes from God, at least as first Cause.

The objectivity of the defective motion having been established, there intervenes a certain lack of consideration of his obligation on the part of the one who is about to sin, a lack of consideration permitted by God but by no means caused by Him; and the lack of consideration is at least virtually voluntary, for it is the deed of one who could and ought to consider the divine law, if not always, at least before acting. It is only after this, according to a priority of nature if not of time, that the divine influence intervenes to incline the will to the physical act of sin, an influence which, as in the case of a good act, causes the will to choose freely and in no way compels it.

It is the common teaching, too, of the Thomists that God does not determine anyone to the material or physical act of sin before the created will, by reason of its weakness, has determined itself in a certain way to the formal element in sin. The objective motion precedes by a priority of nature the efficient motion. We cannot will a nothingness, but only a proposed object; and as regards the act of sin, the defective objective motion, which is accompanied by the lack of consideration of one's duty, precedes the divine motion that inclines the will to the physical act of sin. In other words, God moves the will to the physical act of sin only when it is already badly disposed by reason of its weakness. Thus Jesus said to Judas, who was disposed to commit sin and took pleasure in it: "That which thou dost, do quickly." The Lord neither ordains nor counsels, but permits the accomplishment of the premeditated crime. Unless he permitted this evil, though disapproving of it, it would not happen.

The lack of consideration of one's duty just mentioned by us, to which St. Thomas especially refers apropos of the sin in the angels, is it truly voluntary and culpable? It certainly is; for, as St. Thomas again explains, the fault arises from the fact that we begin to will and to act without taking the law into consideration, which we could and ought then to consider. Moreover, as the will is by nature inclined to what is truly good, it could not be inclined toward apparent good which is an evil, without being previously turned away, at least virtually, from true good, causing us not to consider this latter when the need of doing so presents itself. There is in this a resistance to sufficient grace which virtually contained the offer of efficacious grace, as the fruit is contained in the flower. On account of this resistance, God can freely deprive us of efficacious grace, a privation that is a punishment and that follows by a priority of nature the lack of voluntary

consideration which is the commencement of sin, whereas the simple divine permission preceded it. We discussed this point of doctrine at length elsewhere.

Such is the common teaching of the Thomists, as can be gathered from their commentaries on St. Thomas.

Finally, we must note that predetermination to the physical act of sin as explained, is not something of primary importance in the Thomist doctrine relative to the divine decrees and motion; it is merely of secondary importance and a philosophical conclusion. What is of primary importance in this doctrine is that the divine decrees relative to our salutary acts are efficacious of themselves and not because of our consent foreseen by God. Of primary importance is the principle of predilection, which may be stated thus: “Since God’s love is the cause of goodness in things, no one thing would be better than another, if God did not will greater good for one than for another.” Everything else is of secondary importance. Besides, this truth is related closely to the interior life. Along with the dogma of creation from nothing, it is the foundation of Christian humility. If we but reflect upon this truth and its scope in the interior life, then it becomes the means of dispelling all pride.

OBJECTIONS

Let us examine merely the principal objections raised against premotion with regard to the physical act of sin.

1) It has been said that he who moves efficaciously and de-terminately to the act of sin, is the cause of sin. Now, according to the Thomists, God moves in this manner. Therefore He is the cause of sin.

The major would be true if this efficacious motion could not account for the being of the action without at the same time accounting for its malice. In fact, as the Thomists say, the divine motion excludes all malice. This is what St. Thomas himself says.

2) But it is insisted that God moves one to the act, as it proceeds from the will. Now the act of sin, as it proceeds from the will, is bad, for malice is not excluded. Therefore, according to this teaching, God moves one to the bad act as such.

The Thomists reply: God moves one to the act as it proceeds effectively from the will, but not as it proceeds defectively from it; for the deficiency

depends solely upon a defectible and deficient cause.

Little does it matter that the physical reality of the sinful act and its moral disorder or its malice be inseparable; for this malice cannot be included in the adequate object of divine omnipotence. There is nothing more precise and more precisive, if we may so say, than the adequate and formal object of a faculty. It is that which puts within the reach of the faculty solely what concerns this latter to the exclusion of the rest. Thus, in a fruit, only color is the object of sight, and not the smell or sweetness of the fruit; and as the smell of a fruit is not included in the object of sight, so moral disorder or malice is not included in the adequate object of the divine indefectible power. Even if by an impossibility God were to will it, He could not be either the direct or the indirect cause of sin, which means the moral disorder to be found in the act. Again, in like manner, in all that is true and good, the intellect attains truth and not good, although these are not really distinct; far more so then, the divine causality is able to attain the physical entity of sin without extending to its malice, which is of another order.

3) Again, it is objected that in Thomism the sinner is not responsible for his defection; for the sufficient grace which he receives gives him only the power to keep the commandments but not actually to do so, as God demands. Certainly, sufficient grace of itself does not enable us to keep the commandments, but it is sufficient in its own way, just as one says: bread is sufficient for one's sustenance, yet it must be digested. The natural power of the intellect is sufficient for acquiring a knowledge of certain truths, yet it must institute a methodical inquiry into them so as to acquire this knowledge. Christ's passion was sufficient for our salvation, yet its merits had to be applied by the sacraments or in some other way.

Moreover, sufficient grace virtually contains the efficient grace that is offered to us in it, as the flower contains the fruit. Even the most rigid Thomists, such as Lemos and Alvarez, say that God in giving sufficient help offers us in it that which is efficacious. The fruit is offered in the flower, yet it must not be destroyed by the hail, if the fruit is to develop. Likewise, efficient grace is offered to us in the sufficient; but we must be careful not to resist this latter, a resistance that would come solely from us, not from God, and that could deprive us of the proffered efficacious grace. It is also the common teaching of the Thomists that every actual grace which is efficacious as regards an imperfect salutary act, such as attrition, is sufficient as regards a more perfect act, such as contrition. If it is not

followed by culpable resistance on our part, the efficacious grace of contrition will be given to us.

This efficacious grace is thus within our power, though certainly not as something that can be produced by us, but as a gift that would be granted to us if our will did not resist sufficient grace. Thus the Council of Trent teaches that "God, unless men be themselves wanting to His grace, as He began the good work, so will He perfect it, working in them to will and to accomplish." Sufficient grace that solicits our con-version may well go further than this. We have good reason for saying so, if we think of what our Lord did to prevent Judas from being lost. This was evidently Judas' own fault. The greatest outrage that can be committed against God is to think that He is not good enough to forgive. God never commands what is impossible, and He tells us to do what we can, and to ask of Him the grace to accomplish what of our-selves we are unable to effect.

4) There is just one more objection. It is contended that for man not to resist sufficient grace, but consent to it, efficacious grace is required, according to the Thomists' teaching. Therefore, if man resists, it is because he did not receive the efficacious grace necessary for consent. If, in fact, the bestowal of efficacious grace is the cause of one's not resisting, which is a good, then its non-bestowal is the cause of one's resisting, which is an evil. This is an application of the axiom: if affirmation is the cause of affirmation, negation is the cause of negation. Sunrise is the cause of day, and sunset is the cause of night.

The Thomists say that the reply to this must be that this axiom holds good in the case of a unique cause, such as the sun, which is either present or absent, but it does not hold good in the case of two causes, one of which is absolutely indefectible and the other defectible. Thus the bestowal of efficacious grace is the cause of the salutary act, even of the non-resistance to grace which, since it is a good, must come from the Author of all good; whereas the fact that grace is not bestowed is not the cause of the omission of the salutary act. This omission is a defect that proceeds solely from our defectibility and by no means from God. It would proceed from Him only if He were bound, if He owed it to Himself, to keep us always in the performance of good, and not permit a defectible creature sometimes to fail. Now He can permit this for a greater good, such as the manifestation of His mercy and justice. Thus it is true to say that man is deprived of effica-cious grace because he resisted sufficient grace, whereas it is not true to say that

man resists or sins because he is deprived of efficacious grace. He resists by reason of his own defectibility, which God is not bound to remedy. God is not bound to cause a defectible creature never to fail. “Destruction is thy own, O Israel: thy help is only in Me.” Man who is powerless of himself alone to perform the salutary act, finds his sufficiency in himself for failure.

5) Some still insisted asking how we can claim that at the moment the first sin is committed, by which a just person separates from God, efficacious grace is refused because of a previous defection or an accompanying resistance? This resistance, far from preceding the divine refusal of efficacious help, follows it. Hence the sinner is not to blame.

According to the teaching of St. Thomas, it is not necessary that the first human defection precede the divine refusal of efficacious grace by a priority of time; a priority of nature suffices. In this we have an application of the principle of the mutual relation between causes, which is verified in all cases where there is the intervention of the four causes; for causes mutually interact, though in a different order. St. Thomas invokes this general principle to prove that in the justification of the sinner, which takes place in an indivisible instant, the remission of sin follows the infusion of grace in the formal and efficient order, whereas liberation from sin precedes the reception of sanctifying grace in the order of material causality. As St. Thomas says: “The sun by its light acts for the removal of darkness, and hence on the part of the sun, illumination is prior to the removal of darkness; but on the part of the atmosphere to be illuminated, to be freed from darkness is, in the order of nature, prior to being illuminated, although both are simultaneous in time. And since the infusion of grace and the remission of sin regard God who justifies, hence in the order of nature the infusion of grace is prior to the freeing from sin. But if we look at what is on the part of man justified, it is the other way about, since in the order of nature the being freed from sin is prior to the obtaining of justifying grace.”

Now if justification is thus explained by the mutual relation between causes, then it must be the same for the loss of grace, which is the reverse process; for the rule is the same for contraries. As John of St. Thomas shows, the moment man sins mortally and loses habitual grace, his deficiency, in the order of material causality, precedes the refusal of God’s actual efficacious grace and is the reason for this. From an-other point of view, however, even the first deficiency presupposes God’s permission of sin, and would not result without it. But, in opposition to justification, sin as

such is the work of the deficient creature and not of God. Therefore it is true to say that purely and simply (simpliciter in the Scholastic sense is the opposite of secundum quid), sin precedes God's refusal of efficacious grace. In other words, "God forsakes not those who have been justified, unless He be first forsaken by them." He withdraws habitual grace only because of mor-tal sin, and actual efficacious grace only because of a resistance, at least initial, to sufficient grace.

It concerns us here to note carefully against Calvin, as we did at the beginning of this chapter, that the withdrawal of divine grace spoken of by St. Thomas, means far more than merely God's permission of sin; for this divine withdrawal is a penalty. Every penalty presupposes at least a first defection. This defection could not happen without God's permission, which is not at all its cause, but only its indispensable condition. The Thomists say that we thus avoid the contradiction and, instead of doing away with the mystery, we thus safeguard it.

CONCLUSION

The chiaroscuro effects of this sublime doctrine are incomparably greater than those we admire in the works of the greatest artists. On the other hand, it is absolutely clear that God cannot will evil, that He cannot be in any way either directly or indirectly the cause of sin. We are even far more certain of the absolute rectitude of the divine intentions than we are of the rectitude of our own best intentions. Consequently it is equally certain that God never commands the impossible, for that would be contrary to His justice and goodness. He wills, therefore, to make it really possible for all to keep His commandments and be saved.

On the other hand, it is absolutely beyond doubt that God is the author of all good, that His love is the cause of all created good, even of our good and salutary consent, for otherwise, what is of preference in created things would fall outside the scope of the divine causality. It follows, as St. Thomas says, in accordance with St. Augustine, that "no one thing would be better than another, if God did not will greater good for one than for another." This law applies equally to the state of innocence as to the present state, and to every act, either natural or supernatural, easy or difficult, merely begun or continued. This principle of predilection that dominates all these problems, virtually contains the whole doctrine of predestination and

the efficacy of grace to which our Lord refers when He says: “No one can snatch them out of the hand of My Father.”

How are these two great principles intimately to be reconciled, which taken separately are so certain: namely, the principle of the possibility of salvation for all mankind, and that of divine predilection? The answer is to be found in St. Paul’s words: “O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God.” We must always come back to this answer, for there is no created intellect, either human or angelic, that can perceive the intimate reconciliation of these two principles before being admitted to the beatific vision. To perceive this intimate reconciliation, in fact, would be to perceive how infinite justice, mercy, and sovereign liberty are identified, without being destructive of one another in the eminence of the Deity, in God’s intimate life, in that which is absolutely inaccessible and ineffable in Him.

Likewise, the more these two principles to be reconciled become evident to us, the more, by way of contrast, they appear to be obscure, with a light-transcending obscurity, the eminence of the Deity in which they are united. In this chiaroscuro of a higher order, it is of importance for us not to deny the clarity because of the obscurity, for that would be to disturb the arrangement of light and shade, for thus they are displayed to admirable effect. Let us leave the mystery where it truly belongs, and we shall increasingly realize that it must be, above all reasoning, above all speculative theology, the object of supernatural contemplation, of this contemplation that proceeds from faith enlightened by the gifts of wisdom and understanding. Thus it will begin to dawn upon us that what is more sublime in God is precisely what remains more obscure for us, or inaccessible on account of the feebleness of our sight. In this contemplation, grace, by a secret instinct, tranquilizes us concerning the intimate reconciliation of infinite mercy, justice, and sovereign liberty, and it does so precisely because it is itself a participation of God’s intimate life. What speculative theology has to say about the divine motion must lead us to this contemplation, the purpose of which otherwise in great measure will be lost. Then all becomes clear and we understand that the resulting obscurity is not that of incoherence or absurdity, but the ob-scurity that is the result of too great a light for our feeble vision.

Coming back to predestination, let us recall in conclusion that the gratuity of predestination in the order of intention in which the end is willed

before the means, is no hindrance, in the order of execution, to the means being realized before the attainment of the end. In this case merits are necessary in the adult as preceding eternal life by which they are crowned. In this order of execution, too, the Lord says to docile and generous souls: “Refuse me nothing, and thus My graces will be able freely to pursue their course. I will that thou refusest Me nothing, so that I may have nothing to refuse thee. Thou art mine forever.”

As we began this work by setting forth the stand taken by St. Augustine and his interpretation of Holy Scripture, so let us conclude with this beautiful and sublime passage that is found at the end of one of his works:

“But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. . . . Let us not therefore be eager in our disputes and sluggish in our prayers. Let us pray, my beloved, let us pray that God give the grace even to our enemies and especially to our brethren and loved ones, to understand and confess that after the vast and ineffable ruin in which through one man we were all included, no one is freed from this except by God’s grace: and this is not rendered to those who receive it as being due to them on account of any merits on their part, but it is freely given to them as a pure grace regardless of preceding merits. There is no more illustrious example of predestination than Jesus Himself. . . . He who made Him of the seed of David a just man, who never would be unjust without a previous consent of His will, makes just those who are unjust, without any previous merit on their part, so that He may be the head and these His members. . . . He who made Him such that He never had nor will have His will turned to evil, makes in His members their good from being evil. And therefore He predestined Him and us, because, both for Him to be our head and for us to be His members, He foreknew not our previous merits but our future works. Those who read these things, if they understand the same, let them give thanks to God. But those who do not understand, let them pray that He may be their interior teacher from whose countenance shine forth knowledge and understanding.”

Jesus was predestined to be the natural Son of God before the foreseeing of His merits; for these presuppose His divine person and therefore His divine filiation. Now He is the eminent exemplar of our predestination. Let us thank Him for belonging to His Church, for having received life from Him. In Him, with Him, and by Him, the elect will thank God eternally for the gratuitous gift of their predestination, which is the source of all their

divine benefits, which will have been the means of leading them to eternal life. They will understand that when the Lord rewards their merits, He crowns His own gifts. They will fully understand what St. Paul meant when he said: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with spiritual blessings in heavenly places, in Christ. As He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and unspotted in His sight, in charity. Who hath predestinated us unto the adoption of children through Jesus Christ unto Himself, according to the purpose of His will. Unto the praise of the glory of His grace, in which He hath graced us in His beloved Son.” This is practically the same as what our Lord said: “My sheep hear My voice. . . . And I give them life everlasting, and they shall not perish for ever. . . . And no one can snatch them out of the hand of My Father. I and the Father are one.” “Father I will that where I am, they also whom Thou hast given Me may be with Me. . . . And I have made known Thy name to them and will make it known, that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them.” “And not for them only do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall believe in Me. That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee. . . . And the glory which Thou hast given Me, I have given to them, that they may be one, as we also are one . . . and that the world may know that Thou hast also loved Me.”

In conclusion let us repeat again what we said in the preface to this book. Cardinal Newman remarked that in the Middle Ages the mysteries of the faith were considered in the liturgy primarily from the point of view of infused contemplation and were given a poetic setting; later on they were viewed in the light of theological wisdom, and afterwards, from the sixteenth century, there has been at times a little too much of a tendency to view them in the inferior light of a prudence that forgets the sublimity of the divine plan and the depth of God’s love, for it is only He who can thoroughly actuate our will and move it suavely and firmly.

The final effect of predestination is expressed by the liturgy in the hymn of vespers for the feast of the dedication of a church in verses of unsurpassed splendor of diction. In this hymn the heavenly Jerusalem is described as being constructed of living stones, chiseled into shape by the Author of salvation, polished by bruises and blows, and fittingly arranged by the hands of Christ to remain for ever in the sacred edifice.

Jerusalem, blessed city,

Called the vision of peace,
That art built up in heaven,
Of living stones,
And with angel cohorts circled,
As a bride with thy attendants.
Many a blow and biting sculpture
Polished well those stones elect,
In their places now compacted
By the heavenly Architect,
Who therewith hath willed forever
That His palace should be decked.
Everywhere be glory and honor
To God most high,
Equally to Father and Son
And the glorious Paraclete,
To whom praise and power
Through everlasting ages.

APPENDIX I

INFALLIBLY EFFICACIOUS GRACE AND SALUTARY ACTS EASY TO PERFORM

WE reproduce here in substance a series of articles that appeared in the Revue Thomiste from November, 1925 to March, 1926, relative to a new opinion which was then proposed as being in agreement with that of the Thomists, Gonzalez and Massoulié. For a more detailed knowledge of this new opinion one may consult the two articles in the Revue Thomiste, only the substance of these being given here.

A NEW OPINION

We are asked to give our opinion of an interpretation that has recently been proposed of the Thomist doctrine on grace. This theory proposes to be a development of the opinion held by Gonzalez, Bancel, Massoulié, and Reginald concerning sufficient grace. Whereas the majority of the Thomists say that sufficient grace gives merely the power to perform the good act, the proximate power, the above-mentioned theologians maintain that it also gives an impulse to perform the good act. In their opinion, it is even a physical predetermining premotion, but a fallible one; for it does not infallibly overcome, like efficacious grace, the obstacles that may arise from temptation or free will itself. It is said that this opinion differs from that commonly held by the Thomists only for the purpose of explaining better the sinner's responsibility and real power to do good and avoid evil.

Perhaps it will complete the Thomist theory as far as culpability is concerned, but if we wish to extend its application to the order of good, to salutary acts easy to perform, it seems to us that it has serious difficulties to contend with. We should like merely to remind our readers here that this opinion of Gonzalez has already been explained at length and defended by

the lamented Father Guillermin, O.P., who weighs its advantages and disadvantages, and who understood it in a far different sense from that proposed to us at the present day. We should like to insist on this difference, in that it perhaps will enable us the better to discern between what truth there may be in this new interpretation and what is still very debatable.

They readily admit that a slight modification of the doctrine commonly admitted by the Thomists on the distinction between efficacious grace and sufficient grace will necessitate modifications in other points of doctrine, such as foreknowledge, providence, predestination, and reprobation. They seek, however, to persuade us that the proposed modifications cannot change, indeed, the substance of the Thomist doctrine, but are merely concerned with some unimportant details that would seem to be the result of a too rigid interpretation of the doctrine, and this seems particularly to have been verified in the case of Lemos and Alvarez. The tree would be the same, but the leaves different.

It is suggested that we return to the opinion held by Gonzalez, Bancel, Massoulié, and Reginald, according to which sufficient grace gives not only the proximate power to perform a good act, but also an impulse that actually inclines one to the performance of the good act. We said that this sufficient grace, according to these authors, is a fallibly physical pre-determining motion that inclines one to the performance of the good act, but it differs from the infallibly efficacious grace in that it does not overcome the obstacles that may present themselves.

There would seem to be a tendency to go so far with this theory as to say it often happens that this sufficient grace (impulsive) is actually the cause of salutary acts easy to perform, such as attrition or a prayer that is still imperfect. Consequently, infallibly efficacious grace would not be necessary for these salutary acts easy to perform, but only for the difficult ones such as contrition, which is entirely distinct from attrition.

These salutary acts easy to perform necessarily presuppose, so they say, only a fallibly divine motion, and anterior to this a fallibly divine decree, too. As soon as the majority of the Thomists read this objection, there arises in their minds this thought: But how can God know infallibly from all eternity in a fallible decree the free act of attrition that will be performed in time by a certain sinner in certain determined circumstances? Let us observe that the question concerns not only the predestined, but also those not predestined, who in the course of their lives will make acts of attrition.

Shall we say that God infallibly knows this free act of attrition in so far as it is present in His eternity that embraces all time? But this free act is present in His eternity rather than its contrary only because of a divine decree; otherwise it would be there on the same grounds as necessary truths and thus we fall into the error of fatalism. The foreknowledge of the act either does or does not precede the decree; there is no other alternative. Hence if the divine decree concerning the future act of attrition is fallible, God cannot have infallible knowledge of this free act except by having recourse to the Molinist theory of the scientia media. Now the new opinion absolutely sets aside the scientia media because of the implied contradictions. The divine knowledge, since it is the cause of things, cannot be passive with regard to conditionally free acts of the future.

It truly seems, according to this proposed new interpretation, that it may happen that with the same sufficient (impulsive) grace, that this particular sinner may perform an act of attrition and that a certain other may not, so that he who does so would not receive more help than the other. How can this conclusion be reconciled with the teaching of St. Thomas, who says: “He who makes a greater effort does so because of a greater grace; but to do so, he needs to be moved by a higher cause”? Likewise St. Paul says: For who distinguisheth thee? What hast thou that thou hast not received? St. Thomas also says: “The first cause of this diversity is to be sought on the part of God, who dispenses His gifts of grace variously.” If two sinners are placed in the same circumstances, and one of them without being helped more than the other refrains from placing an obstacle to grace, which the other places, and performs the act of attrition, which the other fails to perform, does not the former by this act distinguish himself from the latter? And if he performs the act of attrition without the infallibly efficacious grace, why would he not, without this grace, perform the more difficult act of contrition? Greater and less do not diversify the species. Who can say when the more difficult act arises that would demand the efficacious grace? Are we not thus led to the acceptance of a teaching which would have to contend with the principal difficulties of Molinism for salutary acts easy to perform, and with all the obscurities of Thomism for the difficult ones?

To one reading this new theory the following objection immediately presents itself: For the acceptance of this theory it suffices, so they say, to admit that infallibly efficacious grace is not necessary so that one avoid for some time putting any obstacles in the way of that grace sufficient for

salutary acts easy of performance. But the fact of not putting any obstacle in the way at the moment when the act of attrition is of obligation, would mean that this act is performed without effi-cacious grace.

Besides, the objection raised against foreknowledge would always be applicable. How can God in a fallible decree foresee infallibly that a particular person will not put an obstacle in the way of grace, without receiving greater help than a certain other who will do so? At least we must admit that in the latter case there is a permissive decree permitting the resistance or failure. And then in the former case in which there is no resistance, is not the divine decree infallibly efficacious, if God decides to grant a physically predetermining motion that inclines the will to act, and this without a concomitant permission of any actual failure? This would bring us back to the common teaching of the Thomists.

It will serve a useful purpose to recall how differently Father Guillermin understood this theory of Gonzalez, which he also defended, though disclosing its weak points.

THE TRUE THEORY OF GONZALEZ, THE THOMIST

The proposition that infallibly efficacious grace is not necessary for salutary free acts easy to perform, far from being upheld by Father Guillermin in his exposition and defense of the theory of Gonzalez, was attacked by him, and, in his opinion, by Gonzalez and his successors.

Assuming by way of objection the teaching in support of this new theory nowadays proposed, Father Guillerrnin wrote:

“There is another objection: The created free will in this life is always defectible. But they say that it does not always have to fail, not always place an obstacle to the motion of sufficient grace that inclines the will actively to good. Why, then, at least sometimes would not the will perform the good act with the help only of sufficient grace that supplies all that is necessary for a good action? Thus it will happen, if not always, at least sometimes, that sufficient grace, according to the teaching of the Molinists, becomes efficacious without having undergone any intrinsic modification, and this for the sole reason that the free will has determined of itself to give its consent or at least not to put any obstacle in the way of the sufficient motion.”

Father Guillermin's reply is as follows: "Evidently from the fact that the free will always has the power to fail, we cannot conclude, therefore, it will always fail, always put an obstacle to the motion of grace. But in this case the following conclusion can be legitimately drawn. Since the defectible free will can always and in all things fail, if it so wishes, and put an obstacle, it will never, in any given circumstance, be absolutely and infallibly certain that it will not actually put an obstacle in the way of good, unless a preservative power certainly prevents this obstacle from being placed. Without this preservative or victorious grace over obstacles, it will be quite possible, even probable, that in a certain case no obstacle to the motion of sufficient grace will freely be placed; it will even be morally certain that, in a long series of acts, it will once or so happen that the free will puts no obstacle in the way. But in any particular case, for it to be infallibly certain that the free will, notwithstanding its defectibility, will perform a good act, again I say that it is indispensable for the will to receive a help from God that prevents or efficaciously removes every obstacle and every defection. Now God's plans cannot be the subject of uncertainty, and His knowledge is such that He knows eternally all things, even free acts of the future, and knowing them, as the Thomists say, in His divine causality, this knowledge cannot be purely conjectural. Sufficient grace which, in moving the will to good, does not eliminate all danger of hindrance or resistance, will not then be such as to afford a certain foundation for God's infallible foreknowledge. Only efficacious grace that causes the will to perform the free act without hindrance assures this foundation.

"But it is not only to safeguard the infallible certainty of the divine knowledge that we conclude the intervention of grace efficacious of itself is of necessity for the effective performance of every good act; there is still another more direct and more immediate reason.

"It seems to us of necessity to grant that God's action reaches all beings including all their modes, and according to all the conditions of their existence. St. Augustine pays this homage to God's grace: 'It is owing to Thy grace, and to Thy mercy that Thou hast dissolved like ice the sins which I committed. I impute it also to Thy grace, whatever other sins I have not committed; for what evil was there which I was not capable of doing. I confess that all have been forgiven me as well the evils I committed by my own will, as those which by Thy providence I committed not.'

“Likewise we can say,” continues Father Guillermin, “that with sufficient grace, and without efficacious grace which removes indeed possible resistance, it is not necessary for the free will to resist, and it is not impossible for the same effectively to perform the good act; but, when the resistance, which is always possible for a defective will, does not oppose the motion of grace, this does not happen without a special intervention of divine mercy whose action directs and penetrates everything that takes place in the order of good. . . .

“God’s decrees do not presuppose our choice. They precede it, and when there is question of performing a good act conducive to salvation these divine decrees are positively and actively the cause of the same. Moreover, an intervention, a divine protection that is entirely external, one that removes the occasions or diminishes the intensity of the temptations would not suffice; for, even with a more powerful sufficient grace and a weaker temptation, it can still happen that the will, since it remains free and liable to fail, resists grace and yields to the temptation. Only an interior action, efficaciously determining the free will, will infallibly remove the resistance and the choice of the contrary act. . . . Only efficacious grace has the power to overcome the obstacles.”

This is how Father Guillermin, in explaining and defending this theory of Gonzalez, proves that he escapes incurring the contradictions implied by the scientia media of Molina.

Not only Father Guillermin is of this opinion, but even Gonzalez. He replies to the same difficulty by saying: “Efficacious grace is necessary to make sure of the actual consent of our will, but it is not necessary so as to make sure that our will have the power to be free and unimpeded from eliciting the act if it so wishes. . . . That is said to be necessary for our consent without which in fact our consent is never given, although without it this can freely and without hindrance be given, if we so willed.” Now the free consent in this case is verified not only in acts said to be difficult, such as an act of contrition, but also in free salutary acts that are said to be easy, such as an act of attrition or of imperfect prayer, and this applies to the continuation of these acts.

Bancel, too, maintains that efficacious grace is necessary for every free salutary act, although this latter is not repugnant to sufficient grace. Bancel writes: “Although, of course, if the grace is merely sufficient, it is absolutely certain that with this grace man will not act, yet that he act is not

repugnant to the nature of this grace." Massoulié says the same when, defending the theory of Gonzalez de Albeda, he shows that it manages to avoid the inconveniences of the scientia media. Gonzalez, too, explicitly says: "Fourthly, I say that of two persons equally tempted, in the case of one who consents to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, his will is always prepared for this by a greater intrinsic prevenient grace than the one who consents to the devil's suggestions." It is the principle of predilection, that no one thing would be better than another unless it were loved more by God. "What hast thou that thou hast not received? For who discerneth thee?"

They appeal to certain texts of Gonet, which would contradict, so they say, what Lemos and Alvarez affirm about the necessity of infallibly efficacious grace for every salutary act easy of performance. But when we read the whole of these texts in Gonet, we see that he speaks exactly as Alvarez does, and that he maintains that sufficient grace, which is the subject of dispute, is called sufficient not in reference to the imperfect act of attrition but to the perfect act of contrition. Then every difficulty is dispelled, for grace, said to be suf-ficient as regards contrition, is infallibly efficacious as regards attrition. And we find this to be the teaching of Lemos, Alvarez, del Prado, also Gonet, even of Massoulié and all the Thomists whom we consulted, verifying from their context the incomplete quotations appealed to from the writings of these authors.

For instance Gonet says: "Both kinds of help, sufficient and efficacious, are included in the expression auxilii Dei moventis; because each consists in a certain supernatural motion that applies the faculties of the soul to their supernatural acts; yet with this difference, that the sufficient help merely moves and applies the will to the performance of imperfect acts, thereby disposing and preparing the soul for more perfect acts. But the efficacious help moves and applies the will to the performance of perfect acts of contrition and charity that finally prepare and dispose the soul for sanctifying grace, which is the ultimate and most perfect form of the supernatural order. Hence it is the common teaching of the Thomists in agreement with Alvarez (De auxiliis, Bk. III, disp. 80) that every help that is sufficient for one particular act, is also at the same time efficacious for the performance of another to which by an absolute decree of divine providence it is or-dained, so that it is unconditionally sufficient and conditionally efficacious."

The last sentence of this quotation shows that this opinion does not belong peculiarly to Lemos and Alvarez. All Thomists speak as they do.

Thus everything becomes perfectly clear. Grace said to be sufficient as regards contrition, is infallibly efficacious as regards attrition. It is therefore wrong to say that Gonet and other Thomists declare that imperfect salutary free acts do not demand for their actual performance an infallibly efficacious grace.

But even Massoulié is of the same mind as Gonet, for precisely when explaining and defending the theory of Gonzalez and showing that this same theory does not contradict the one held by Alvarez, he writes: “So grace is said to be efficacious as regards the imperfect effect which it effects, but inefficacious or sufficient as regards the ultimate and more perfect to which it disposes, since, of course, as we explained, it has less efficacy and power than is required for the eliciting of the more perfect act.”

If, then, we inspect the contexts from which the quotations of the various Thomists are taken, we do not find in them this doctrine, that infallibly efficacious grace is not necessary for the actual performance of easy salutary acts. They teach the very contrary of this.

The new interpretation cannot be reconciled with the general principles of St. Thomas. It goes against the principle of predilection: “For since God’s love is the cause of goodness in things, no one thing would be better than another, if God did not will greater good for one than for another.”

If the fact of resisting sufficient grace is an evil that can come only from us, then the fact of not resisting is a good that cannot be attributed solely to us, but which must come from the source of all good. According to the teaching of St. Thomas, if one of two persons rather than the other actually makes an act of attrition, then the reason for this is that God from all eternity willed it by His infallibly efficacious and consequent will.

From the very fact that these principles are of the metaphysical order, they are without exception. For anyone to say that they do not apply to easy acts, is to say that they no longer are absolutely universal principles. Hence they lose all validity and “are fit to be trodden upon by men.” Principles are principles; to deny their universal validity is to compromise everything.

The principle of predilection clarifies all these problems, and the subsequent obscurity pertains not to this life but to the next, in that it is the result of a light too great for our feeble vision. Thus we keep the sense of the mystery without seeking to explain it in too human a way.

APPENDIX II

THE OPINION OF FATHER BILLOT, S.J., ON THE DIVINE MOTION

A THEOLOGIAN who was a disciple of Father Billot, S.J., in reviewing the articles on predestination and premotion written by us, which have been reproduced and recast in this work, wrote as follows:

"Father Garrigou-Lagrange has taken a very objective attitude in the exposition of the systems, quoting texts in support of his statements. Undoubtedly one or other of his conclusions will trouble a theologian who, adopting the theories of Molina or Suarez, claims nevertheless to be a follower of St. Thomas. Is not the repetition of the phrase appropriate here: A friend of Plato, but more a friend of truth? . . .

"When he reminds us of the teaching of the Church in recording the various opinions, evidently he assumes an objective attitude in doing so, but he also shows undisguised sympathy for the Thomism of the Dominican school. We cannot blame him for his preferences. We owe him a deep debt of gratitude for his splendid articles which, notwithstanding a certain long discursiveness of style and repetitions, constitute the finest historical and doctrinal synthesis which we have ever read on this grave problem of predestination. . . .

"The limitations of this article prevent us from vindicating Billot's true point of view, which Father Garrigou-Lagrange seems to have completely misunderstood in making out that the famous Jesuit believed in an indifferent premotion, as a result of which the free will would determine itself to act and would determine the divine motion to produce this or that particular free act. Such an opinion would have been repudiated (we say that it was expressly repudiated) by the cardinal, and we find no trace of it in his works. In spite of the seemingly contrary statements, Billot's stand,

even in the question of physical premotion, differs perhaps less than one might imagine from the thesis defended by Father Garrigou-Lagrange."

At our request, L'Ami du Clergé, in one of its later issues (June 20, 1935, pp. 392-94), thus replied to this objection of ours:

Objection. In reviewing the article on physical premotion, the Ami of February 21 affirms that Cardinal Billot expressly repudiated the theory of an indifferent premotion attributed to him by the author of the reviewed article.

"I would be thankful to your collaborator if he would justify his assertion, which at first sight seems strange enough."

Reply. In expressing our appreciation in writing of Cardinal Billot, we felt certain of arousing in the minds of some of our readers at least a sense of curiosity. Let us recall first of all what Father Garrigou-Lagrange wrote:

"Would the divine motion by which God would determine us to the performance of an indeliberate act, be an indifferent premotion, so that the free will of itself would determine itself and also the divine motion to this or that particular act? Certain theologians thought so, especially L. Billot.

"This theory and the scientia media mutually support each other. There would still be some reality that eludes God's universal causality. There would be a determination that is independent of the sovereign causality. The nobler part in the work of salvation, the determination of our salutary act, would not come from the Author of salvation."

We said and we again say that Billot's view, notwithstanding appearances, does not differ so much as one would think from that held by Father Garrigou-Lagrange.

1) Undoubtedly Billot defends the theory of the scientia media. But for anyone who reads without prejudice the thesis he dedicated to this subject, this theory is viewed, in accordance with the very sound Thomism of the author of this thesis, as a means of rejecting what he believes to be the Dominican theory which consists in a predetermination that takes away from the will the possibility of determining itself. Moreover, as Father Garrigou-Lagrange candidly admits, there is a similar sentiment in the opposite direction on the part of the Dominicans to use the term predetermination so as to discard the untenable theory of simultaneous concurrence or of an indifferent premotion.

2) The scientia media of Billot, in its final analysis, closely ap-proaches the Dominican "knowledge of vision." Billot, indeed, never taught that

either a simple or a conditional future is known by God independently of the decree of His will.

Concerning conditional futures he writes as follows: “But, in fact, because we assert that conditional futures are known by God before any actual decree of His will, we do not exclude hypothetical decrees which God would have of moving the created will, and of bestowing all that is required on its part.” Let us see now what a Dominican says. Father Hugon writes: “Manifestly . . . God knows nothing as certainly and determinately future, except in the decree of His will. And conditional futures are in some way future, not indeed absolutely, but conditionally. Therefore they are known not in God’s absolute decree, for then they would be simple futures; but they are known in His decree that is conditioned by the object. But a decree of this kind extends both to the object and to the free or necessary mode of the same, so that a conditional future would not be posited by man unless he freely determined himself to do so under the influence of the divine motion.”

We should indeed like to know what difference there is, however slight it may be, between the Jesuit and the Dominican texts, both as to the doctrine and also, very much so, as to the way it is expressed.

3) Let us add that Billot always taught that everything of a positive nature in the determination of our free will depends upon the divine will and the divine motion. This is clearly seen in his argument in proof of the first Mover:

“That which is lacking in some perfection cannot be adequately sufficient to give to itself such perfection, because nothing is ade-quately sufficient to give to itself what it does not have. But what is mobile lacks the act of perfection to which it is brought. Nor can it be said that although it may be formally lacking in that perfection, yet it still has the same equivalently or virtually. For there is only one of two possibilities. Either it has equivalently as pre-contained in it whatever reality there is in the perfection formally as such, and then there can be no movement to acquire such perfection, because a positive movement by which nothing positive is acquired is repugnant to reason. Or else it virtually has the perfection, that is, only in the first actuality, and then it is not of itself adequately sufficient for the second actuality, which by fax exceeds the first; but it needs to receive this, and the need of re-ceiving excludes the perfect sufficiency of giving, as the terms evi-dently denote.”

Can there be a clearer declaration of principles? Indifferent premotion would be implied in this "virtually," this application of the will only in the first actuality. Now this is what Billot never admitted. Such an indifferent motion is a contradiction in terms. Billot was faithful to the Thomist conception of the divine motion to the second actuality of the will in his other treatises, most especially in those that closely concern the question of physical premotion.

Right away we have evidence of this in his treatise On Sin. The question at issue is to explain how, notwithstanding the dependence of whatever positiveness there is in our free acts upon the divine causality, God nevertheless is not the cause of sin. He writes: "Immediately a difficulty presents itself; for if the substance of the evil act even as a moral entity is something positive, and if it is bound up with the very notion of sin, then one of two alternatives follows: either sin is from God or else not everything that actually exists depends upon the first Cause." Now Billot was absolutely against admitting the hypothesis of this latter alternative.

We find the same doctrine in his tractate on grace: "In theology the question comes up for examination concerning that motion by which the will passes from the first actuality of the salutary act to the second and deliberate actuality, and it posits the presence of that which for the will to act freely presupposes what has already been proved." The eminent theologian gives us a brief summary of his opinion on this question in the following passage: "We propose to declare with certainty how every being and every mode of being comes from Him whose essence is His existence; likewise how nothing brings anything into existence except in so far as it acts by divine power; likewise how God is the cause of operation in all beings, at the same time for each secondary cause retaining intact its specific and proper activity, and, in fine, we shall declare whatever pertains to the universal dependence of creatures upon God and their community of relativity toward Him." When Billot speaks of secondary causes determining God's general motion, he speaks as St. Thomas did. It is not a question of determining an indifferent motion, but of explaining how in the secondary cause the divine motion, which is capable, because of its universality, of adapting itself to all created activities, is particularized and determined by reason of certain effects that are proper to certain secondary causes. "Existence is the proper effect of the first Agent," says St. Thomas, too, "and all other agents act inasmuch as they act in virtue of the first

Agent; but secondary agents, which are, as it were, particular ones and which determine the action of the first Agent, produce as their proper effects other perfections that determine existence."

Father Garrigou-Lagrange could have quoted an author who formally taught an indifferent motion in the secondary act. This was the case with Pignataro, who wrote: "This motion constitutes the will proximately disposed to make the choice." The explanation follows, and is thus formulated: "That the divine motion is determined to one movement in those things which by nature are determined to one thing, I concede; that it is so in contingent things, I deny." There we have the motion that is undetermined as to its effect. But in that he would have been but a far echo of Billot who did not hesitate to declare the opinion of his confrère when it appeared in print as absolutely unintelligible. Undoubtedly Father Billot truly considered himself to be the opponent of the Dominican thesis; in truth, he had a wrong conception of it. But expressing himself in different terms, though retaining the mental attitude which his Jesuit training imposed upon him, he was in truth quite in agreement with the best of Thomists.

So writes the learned reviewer of the Ami du Clergé.

I shall reply here as I did in this same periodical. I am happy in coming to a better understanding from the texts just quoted that Cardinal Billot, "though retaining the mental attitude imposed upon him by his Jesuit training," was more like a Dominican Thomist in his doctrine than at first sight he appeared to be. My conversations with him induced me to see considerable differences of meaning in the terms he employed and not sufficiently to perceive certain profound similarities in doctrine, which I am very happy to note. I noticed especially that he defends the theory of the scientia media, but it must be admitted that in his explanation of it, he seeks to approach as near as possible the teaching of Dominican theologians.

However, in the leading text quoted in the preceding pages, which is taken from his dogmatic treatise, instead of reading: "We do not exclude hypothetical decrees which God would have of moving the created will, and of bestowing all that is required on its part," a Thomist would say: "which God has," and not "which God would have." Particularly so a Thomist would not add what we read nine lines further on: "Therefore God sees those (conditional futures) dependent upon the condition of His hypothetical motion which, however, cannot at all be predetermining,

because thus the proper and specific mode by which free acts participate in the divine essence would be destroyed."

You will say to me: "that is due to the mental attitude imposed by the Jesuit training" upon Cardinal Billot, who was preoccupied in rejecting, as you say, what he believed to be the Dominican theory. On this point he had a wrong conception of their teaching. And, this admitted, as for the rest it can truly be said that we are substantially in agreement.

That is why in this work, when speaking of the indifferent motion, I quoted Father Pignataro, S.J., in preference to Cardinal Billot, as exponent of this opinion.

APPENDIX III

A REPLY TO SOME WELL-KNOWN OBJECTIONS AGAINST PREMOTION

WE here insert a manuscript bearing no date, which came into our hands some years ago, and which appears to be the work of a sound Thomist. He succeeds well enough in replying to some very well-known objections raised against the teaching of St. Thomas regarding the divine motion.

A BRIEF EXPOSITION OF THE TEACHING OF ST. THOMAS ON DIVINE MOTION

St. Thomas says: “But if we hold that a sacrament is an instrumental cause of grace, we must needs allow that there is in the sacraments a certain instrumental power of bringing about the sacramental effects. . . . But the instrumental power has a being that passes from one thing into another, and is incomplete; just as motion is an imperfect act passing from agent to patient.”

Farther on in the same article he says: “A spiritual power cannot be in a corporeal subject after the manner of a permanent and complete power. But there is nothing to hinder an instrumental spiritual power from being in a body, in so far as a body can be moved by a particular spiritual substance so as to produce a particular spiritual effect.”

But now it must be pointed out that this spiritual power is something transient in a material subject, for instance, in baptismal water, which remains material. This instrumental power (which is a motion) is of such a nature that it in no way intrinsically modifies the nature of the subject in which it is found: in the present case indeed it is spiritual, and yet the water does not become spiritual, but is elevated for the time being to produce a spiritual effect.

There is something similar to this, as St. Thomas says, in the very voice perceived by the senses “in which there is a certain spiritual power,

inasmuch as it proceeds from a mental concept, of arousing the mind of the hearer." The same is the case with the pen of the author in writing something intelligible.

It seems now possible in a general way to understand that it is not the function of motion to modify in any way the nature of the subject in which it is found, but leaving the nature or faculty absolutely unchanged physically, all that the motion does is to actuate the same for its own operation. The motion will be either for a necessary or free operation, according as the agent is either necessary or free. For just as water when moved remains material, so the will when moved remains free; and the action of the will when moved is free and not necessary, because such is the nature of the will.

By this, however, we assert the fact, but we have not as yet the reason for the fact. Moreover, it seems that the reason for this is to be sought in the very nature of this peculiar entity called motion; for it is not properly being, but a becoming. Why indeed is water not spiritual, although it has a spiritual quality? It is because this quality is fluid, is in the process of becoming spiritual. Why does the will remain free and determinating, although it receives a determinated quality? It is because that quality is not determined to a mode of being, but is essentially fluid, or a becoming, in process of being determined. For it is nothing else but a plenitude of action or power or an activity by which the faculty that previously was not actually eliciting its act is actually doing so. And just as the power in the pen causes it actually to produce its own action, namely, the writing, so this plenitude of action causes the will actually to produce its own action, which is this particular action rather than a certain other, or it chooses, because its proper action is election. And here we already have a vague idea how motion does not prevent but rather causes the freedom of the act.

It is very difficult to see how under the influence of this motion there is truly freedom of action, while on the one hand the motion is a requisite for action, and on the other that the will is not free to have it or not.

As for this it must absolutely be said that certainly the will has no choice concerning the motion; but this is not contrary to liberty. For this it suffices that the act be under the control of the will, but not the principle of the act. It is indeed absurd and a contradiction in terms for that which constitutes a principle to depend upon this principle. Therefore, just as it is absurd for what constitutes the will as such to depend upon this same will, so it is

absurd for what constitutes the will in act as such to depend upon this same will. Now it is motion that constitutes the will in act, or as having power and active indifference in act. Therefore it is absurd for motion to depend upon the will and be under the control of the will.

In other words, so long as the will is considered without the motion, it has not this active indifference actually but merely potentially. Therefore it is absurd to think that previous to the motion it can exercise its active indifference, namely, by accepting or refusing this motion.

Actual liberty is to be sought only where the will is in act. Now the will is in act by means of motion. Therefore the will when moved, and not before it is moved, must be actually actively indifferent, and it must have its terminus, namely, its act, in its power.

But you will say: The motion itself is already determined to one thing; therefore the will when moved is already determined to one thing, and therefore is not actively indifferent.

Reply: I distinguish. The motion is determined as an incomplete being, or as determining, or as that by which the will determines itself, or as producing the determination, this I concede; that the motion is determined as a complete being, as a form, as ens quod, this I deny. I distinguish the consequent: That the will when moved determines itself to one thing, this I concede; that it is determined to one thing by a determination independent of itself, this I deny.

You will insist: How can the will receive from something external to itself a determination that must come essentially from itself?

Reply: I distinguish. It cannot receive from something external to itself a determination, namely, the act that must come essentially from itself; this I concede. It cannot receive from something external to itself that by which it effects its determination, that by which it determines itself; this I again distinguish. If this something external to itself is not the first Cause, then I concede this; if it is, then I deny this. On the contrary, this is of necessity required so that the will may be the principle of its act.

Still you insist: He who has the end within his grasp, has the means also. Now motion is the means required for the act. Therefore this must be within the reach of the will.

Reply. I distinguish the major. He must have within his grasp the means that pertain to the principle of operative power; this I concede. That he must have within his grasp the principle by which the agent is constituted as

actually having power; this I deny. For one actually to have the power presupposes that one is already constituted as the principle. I contradistinguish the minor, and deny the consequence. For just as, when we say that the will has dominion over itself, this means that it has dominion over its act and not over its faculty, so when we say that it actually has dominion over itself, this must be understood as meaning that it has dominion over its act, but not over that by which it is actually constituted as having dominion over its act, namely, over motion.

It therefore seems right to conclude that just as, when we speak of matter and form, of essence and existence, we must always correct by means of the intellect that imagination we have of specific being, which is the reason for all the difficulties presenting themselves against a real distinction in each case, so we must always correct the imagination that represents motion to us as being that is complete, determined, and predetermined; and once the imagination is given admittance, immediately inextricable difficulties arise. For what is determined cannot any more be determined; what is chosen cannot any more be the object of choice. But if we take note of the fact that St. Thomas always speaks of motion as a fluid being, as a being that is essentially in the process of becoming (not however as a relation), then all difficulties are easily solved, or rather, of their own accord disappear. These principles established, we may briefly sum up the teaching of St. Thomas as follows:

CATECHISM OF MOTION

1) Can God be the cause of free being?

R. Most certainly: for otherwise He would not be Being.

2) Can God be the cause of the created free action?

R. Most certainly: for otherwise there would not be either action or free action.

3) How can God be the cause of created free action, so that the action of the creature, however, is truly elicited by it?

R. By motion.

4) What is motion?

R. Motion is that activity by which I freely determine myself.

5) Can it be called premotion?

R. Certainly: because that by which I determine myself, that by which I actually exercise my liberty, is by nature prior to the exercise of my liberty; and yet it does not prevent my being free, but even causes me to be free.

6) Is that activity or premotion something that is caused by God?

R. I distinguish: as ens quo, I concede; as ens quod, I deny. For it is the subjection of the creature to God as regards action.

7) Does God determine the will by causing this activity?

R. I distinguish: He determines the will by taking away passive indifference, this I concede; by taking away active indifference, this I deny. This latter is even actually caused by this motion.

8) Is this activity or premotion something determined?

R. I distinguish: That it is determined as the principle of determination, as that by which I determine myself, this I concede; that it is determined, as the form which is the principle of action, as the impression received in the eye is the principle of vision, this I deny.

9) Can this activity be said to be indifferent?

R. I distinguish: That it is indifferent as the principle of indifference, or inasmuch as it causes this active indifference, this I concede; that it is indifferent as though needing a further determination, or as though the will under its influence is able not to act or to do something else, this again I subdistinguish: if this activity were not precisely that by which the will determinately chooses one particular thing, this I concede; if it is so, then I deny this or subdistinguish: in sensu diviso, I concede; in sensu composito, I deny.

10) Under the influence of that activity or motion the will can act only in one way. Therefore active indifference is taken away from this motion.

R. That the will when moved acts only in one way, this I concede; that it can act only in one way, I subdistinguish: because it is supposed by this activity already to have chosen freely one particular thing, this I concede; as though it does not always have the power of choosing something else, this I deny.

11) It is a contradiction in terms for God to determine the will to determine itself; for free determination must by its very nature originate from an intrinsic principle.

R. I distinguish: It is a contradiction for God to determine by introducing into the will some determination, namely, a determinate form, this I concede; by introducing that by which the will determines itself, this I deny.

Nay rather, it is a contradiction in terms for the will to be able to be determined without a determination.

As for the reason adduced, I distinguish: that the determination, namely, the free act, must originate from an intrinsic principle, I concede; that by which the will determines itself, must so originate, this I deny. For just as that by which the will is constituted as such cannot originate from an intrinsic principle, so neither can that by which the will is constituted in act: it is absurd for the will to be able to produce some activity before it is constituted in act.

12) That by which the will determines itself must be within its power.

R. I distinguish: It must be within its power terminatively (the act, namely, to which the will determines itself), this I concede; it must be so formally, this I deny.

13) It follows therefore that the will stands in need of something which is not within its power, so that it may choose freely.

R. Certainly: since for the will freely to act it itself needs to be a free faculty; and for it to be freely the principle of its act, it needs to be the principle of its act; and for it freely to exercise its active indifference, it needs to be actively indifferent. All these things are not within its power, and yet no one says that for this reason the will is not free.

14) What is the cause of the determination cannot be said to be formally the previous determination. Therefore physical predetermination must be rejected.

R. I distinguish: The cause of the determination cannot be said to be determination as a form determining or determined, this I concede; it cannot be said to be determination or motion determining, this I deny. I distinguish the consequent: Physical predetermination must be rejected if the term means that a determinate form is introduced by God into the faculty, this I concede; if the term means a motion determining and predetermining, then I deny it must be rejected. It is not a question of a name but of a thing. If one does not care for the name, give it up. Nevertheless a false meaning must not be attributed to those asserting such a doctrine, even granted that the name may be the occasion of false interpretation.

15) Does the motion determine the will, or does it make the will determine itself?

R. It is in any case both. For God determines the will by giving it that by which it determines itself.

16) Can the will under the influence of this motion determine itself otherwise than God wills?

R. Yes: in just the same way as the will, when it wills, can determine itself otherwise than it wills.

17) It is contrary to the notion of liberty for any external agent to make me will what it may please this agent to will.

R. I distinguish: Unless such be the power of such an agent that it gives the will that by which it wills freely, then I concede the assertion; if the agent gives the will that by which the will chooses freely, namely, the motion, then I deny the assertion. Certainly there can be no conception of liberty without motion. Hence the argument is reversed.

18) That God should decide my choice is unintelligible.

R. That God should decide my choice without giving me the principle of choosing, namely, motion, this I concede; if He does so, then I deny the assertion. We confess, however, that this is beyond the power of imagination; wherefore he who, as St. Thomas says, wishes to reduce intelligible things to sense perception, never will be able to understand motion.

19) What is meant by saying that God eternally predetermined my act?

R. It does not mean that God predestined or preformed the act that must be mine, so that afterwards somehow He imitates it in me; but it means that God, as the cause of free being, eternally decided to imbue me with that activity by which I am able to actuate or exercise my liberty, as He decided to move a necessary being to perform necessary acts. In such predefining or predetermining He most certainly knew that my act would be elicited freely by me.

20) Can God foresee my free act before He foresees the motion?

R. It is absolutely impossible. To foresee my act before foreseeing the motion would be like foreseeing the act of my will before the will itself is foreseen: which is absurd. The will is in act only by being moved.

21) If God were to foresee my act before He foresees the motion, would my act be free?

R. Not at all. Before God foresees the motion, He can foresee my act only as possible; because, before being moved, the will is not at all determined to one thing rather than another; and if it is determined, it is no longer free but necessary, for evidently the determination in which liberty has no part is necessary by natural necessity.

22) Can free will be retained by not admitting motion?

R. Not at all, philosophically speaking. For if, before the exercise of my liberty or of that which implies such exercise (which is motion) my act is supposed to be determined to one thing rather than another, evidently my act is one of necessity. Therefore, motion not admitted, the logical outcome is fatalism.

In conclusion we must say that the whole explanation of the difficulty in reconciling the divine motion with free will seems to proceed from a false notion of divine motion. For the divine action is conceived as being like created action. God, however, and the free will are conceived as two coordinated causes operating to produce the one effect. Once this view is taken, there is no possibility of any rational solution of the problem. Either free will is denied or else the divine action. It follows as a consequence of this that both are denied.

But, on the contrary, in the doctrine of St. Thomas, God and the free will are simply subordinated causes. The entire action is from God and also from the free will; and it is entirely from the free will because it is entirely from God. To withdraw the free will from the influence of the divine action is the same as to withdraw it from its own activity, and this is therefore the same as to destroy it. The divine motion, however, is precisely that by which the free will is subjected to the divine action that it may be constituted in act.

But no created intellect can by its own power acquire a knowledge of the divine action as it is in itself. Wherefore the obscurity in this doctrine is an argument in favor of its truth. Whereas in the other opinions the difficulty is fundamentally removed—for God would be acting only in a human and created way—yet those of the opposing camp have to contend with inexplicable difficulties and even absurdities in explaining, namely, how the free will and the divine foreknowledge are to be reconciled. And these difficulties or absurdities strike at faith itself when from the divine the transfer is made in a natural way to supernatural motion, or to grace.

So ends this manuscript.

All the preceding discussion is tantamount to saying with Bossuet that “God eternally wills all the future use of free will as to all the goodness and reality there is in it. Nothing is more absurd than to say a thing does not exist because God does not will it. Must we not say, on the contrary, that it exists because God wills it? And just as it happens that we are free in virtue

of the decree which wills us to be free, so it happens that we act freely in this or that act, even in virtue of the de-cree which extends to all this in detail.”

Briefly then, what is more absurd than to claim that the actualization of liberty destroys it?

APPENDIX IV

THE THOMIST ORIGIN OF THE DOCTRINE OF PREDETER- MINING DECREES AND DR. H. SCHWAMM'S RECENT WORK

WE take the opportunity here to thank our former pupil, Julien Groblicki, for having written the following note, and it gives us pleasure to publish it. It concerns Dr. Schwamm's recent work already mentioned in this book.

In this present work the author sets out to prove what he unhesitatingly asserted in his two previous works, after what Father Pelster, S. J., had written. It is that the doctrine of the present-day Thomists concerning the divine predetermining decrees, as the medium in which God knows contingent futures, is not to be attributed to St. Thomas but to the Subtle Doctor, and that he is the author of the same. Although, to be sure, Scotus did not explicitly speak of the pre-determining decrees, yet by his having presented the state of the question in a new light, and by his inquiry into the root cause of the contingency of things (contingency of the divine will) he necessarily and proximately prepared the way for this explanation. The author endeavors to prove three things concerning this thesis:

I. John Scotus is the originator of this doctrine. Scotus presented the problem in a new light (kernel of the problem) inasmuch as he showed the connection between God's will and His knowledge. Just as God in all His operations ad extra brings things into being by an act of His will, so also He knows all that actually exists by and in the determination of His will, or, according to modern terminology, in the decrees of His will. The decrees are what make contingent futures determinately true for God. The system of predetermining decrees had as a necessary and logical consequence to be evolved from this explanation of the Scotist solution. The disciples were not always in agreement in interpreting their master's doctrine. Some indeed

asserted that Scotus spoke not explicitly but virtually of concomitant or condetermining decrees, so that Mastrius and many saw that the freedom of the human will is jeopardized by the theory of predetermining decrees, which were admitted by others and attributed to the Subtle Doctor.

II. Schwamm asserts that this doctrine is not to be found in the works of St. Thomas, nor can it be deduced from his assertions, nor can it be reconciled with his view of the eternal presentiality of all things before God.

III. The Scotist doctrine of predetermining decrees was adopted by the Thomists from Bannez. That he will prove this last point in his next work is clearly enough foretold by him at the end of the book.

As for the first question, whatever may be said about it (concerning Scotus and his disciples) and the first disciples of St. Thomas—and this will be taken up by him in the work which he has in preparation—it is certain that the author entirely misunderstood the Angelic Doctor. Now I am not speaking of his method of procedure, in that he selected only one article for discussion, giving but a passing mention to the other passages; nor do I say anything of the way in which he treats the problem. For when he comes to explain the opinion of St. Thomas which, as he sees it, "is irreconcilably in opposition" to that of Scotus, he says:

"But perhaps the first objection that presents itself, in seeking for the teaching of St. Thomas, is that these passages must be accepted as a starting point, in which he speaks more in favor of later Thomists. Is it necessary so as to justify oneself, as to the meaning of any author, concerning any question we wish to know, that we seek the explanation in those passages in which the author expressly wishes to answer the question?"

I pass this over, therefore, without comment, but I assert and prove that the author, in the single text from St. Thomas which he accepted, has still misunderstood the Angelic Doctor and explained him contrary to what he meant.

For he says that not only it cannot be affirmed that St. Thomas presupposes predetermining decrees, but that he "positively excludes them." St. Thomas rejected, so Schwamm contends, even every explanation of this problem by referring to the divine causality as insufficient and impossible. And he deduces this conclusion from the Doctor's words. He writes: "But there still remains a greater doubt concerning the secondary cause, because the first and necessary cause can coexist with the defect of

the secondary cause, just as the action of the sun can co-exist with the barrenness of the tree. But God's knowledge cannot co-exist with the defect of the secondary cause; for God cannot at the same time know that this particular person will run, and that he fails to run. To have certain knowledge of this, we must find, indeed, some certainty in the thing known."

And this, adds Schwamm, is St. Thomas' "foundation" for his further inquiry by which he seeks for the determination in contingent things that actually exist, but not in God. Hence there can be no question of explaining the divine knowledge by an appeal to the infallibly efficient causality of the divine will. The statements of St. Thomas are evidently in opposition to any explanation of this kind.

CRITICISM

Dr. Schwamm's interpretation is false. For what St. Thomas posited in his objection, which he explained three times in this article, Dr. Schwamm accepted and proposed as the opinion of St. Thomas. This method of procedure is contrary to sound exegesis.

Moreover, Schwamm overlooks the conclusion in the first article of this same question, which is as follows: "the knowledge of good pleasure is the cause of things."

The whole article is but a solution of two objections which St. Thomas stated at the beginning of the body of the article. The first of these difficulties arises from the consideration of the divine knowledge, which is the cause of things. Therefore, it seems to impose necessity on things foreknown, and consequently it takes away contingency from things. In his reply to this, the Angelic Doctor does not deny that the divine knowledge is the cause of things and even the necessarily required cause. He fully admits the major of the argument. But he adds that God's knowledge is not the sole cause, but that it includes secondary causes, on account of which the effects can be either contingent or necessary, dependent upon the nature of the proximate secondary causes.

For an understanding of the second difficulty, it is important to notice that it is one thing to inquire about knowledge in general as such, about the notion and definition of the same; and it is another thing to inquire about some particular knowledge, for instance, the divine knowledge. Knowledge

as such, which, as the Angelic Doctor says in this article, is “certain cognition,” pertains to the notion of whatsoever knowledge. It does not pertain to the notion of knowledge as such, that it be the cause of the things known. This applies to divine knowledge precisely as such and according as it is joined to the divine will. Hence after having considered in the previous objection knowledge as the cause of things, which applies to it inasmuch as it is divine, in this objection he considers knowledge in general, according as it is “certain cognition,” abstracting from the fact of its being the cause of things. That this is the intention of the Angelic Doctor is evident from his explanation of this difficulty which, as I said, he explains three times in this article. To conclude from this that St. Thomas denies the divine knowledge to be the cause of things, or that he thinks the previous explanation insufficient, is the same as asserting that abstraction is the same as negation. But who can say so? In considering universals, such as the nature of a lion or any animal, shall we deny these exist in the concrete with their individualizing principles?

Hence whatever opinion one may have of the solution of the arguments and difficulties, whether they please one or not, whether one consents to them or not, it cannot be concluded from what St. Thomas said, as Dr. Schwamm did, that the Angelic Doctor rejects the explanation of the knowledge of contingent futures as being the cause of the same.

I think this is the meaning of the article, and it will appeal to anyone who “reads it with an upright mind,” as actually the immediate disciples of St. Thomas said.

What I say concerns this text alone. There are, of course, very many others that Schwamm interprets in the wrong sense, and which are known to all.

We have quoted many texts from St. Thomas which show that for him it was evident that, if God from all eternity knew with infallible certainty St. Paul’s conversion, it is because He willed it by “the determination of His will and intellect.” If He had not positively willed it, there would be no reason for this contingent future rather than its contrary to be eternally present to the divine vision. Nor would He know future sins without a permissive decree. Dr. Schwamm’s thesis is a challenge that can make an impression only on those who never read St. Thomas, or those who never seriously considered the dilemma: God determining or determined; there is no other alternative.

PROVIDENCE

REVEREND REGINALD GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE O.P.

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PROVIDENCE

Foreword

Having treated elsewhere of God and of providence from a purely speculative point of view, we here resume the consideration of these great questions in their relation to the spiritual life. The primary object of contemplation is, in fact, God Himself and His infinite perfections, especially His goodness, His wisdom, and His providence. Our activity and our progress toward eternity must be directed from the higher plane of this contemplation. From this point of view we shall treat here: (1) of the existence of God and of His providence; (2) of those perfections of God which His providence presupposes; (3) of providence itself according to the Old and New Testaments; (4) of a trusting self-abandonment to God's providence; (5) of providence in its relation to justice and mercy.

May these pages instill in the minds of those who read them a better understanding of God's infinite majesty and the absolute value of the one thing necessary, our last end and sanctification. Their chief aim will be to insist on the absolute and supremely life-giving character of the truth revealed by our Lord Jesus Christ and infallibly proposed to us by the Church. Souls are perishing in the ever-shifting sands of the relative; it is the absolute they need. Nowhere will they find it but in the Gospel entrusted by Jesus Christ to His Church, which has preserved, taught, and expounded it. It has been exemplified in the lives of the best of her children.

Translator’s Preface

In these days of positive unbelief, agnosticism, and general indifference concerning the supernatural, it is to be hoped that this English translation of the Reverend Father Garrigou-Lagrange’s La Providence et la confiance en Dieu will serve a useful purpose. In this book the author has proved conclusively to anyone of upright mind that there is an all-wise and designing Providence, who has created all things with an end in view, and this especially as regards human beings. The whole of creation confirms this view. Long ago the psalmist declared that “the heavens show forth the glory of God: and the firmament declareth the work of His hands” (Ps. 18:2). If we believe in the existence of God—and no reasonable being can deny this—then we must say with the bard of Avon that “there’s a divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will” (Hamlet, V, ii, 10).

The first part of this book is a brief summary of a previous work by the same author, entitled: God, His Existence and His Nature. The proofs for the existence of God and a discussion of the divine attributes constitute the basis of Providence. This French work was well received. Within a short time after publication six thousand copies were sold. It has also been translated into German, Italian, and Polish.

In conclusion I wish to express my indebtedness to the Reverend Dr. Newton Thompson for his painstaking care in preparing the manuscript for publication. This indebtedness also applies to the second volume of God, His Existence and His Nature, which due to an oversight was not mentioned at the time of its publication

I also wish to thank the Reverend Dr. Bernard Wall, late of Wonersh seminary, England, for his courtesy in allowing me the use of his manuscript, which I consulted on various occasions. The verification of many quoted passages was thereby much simplified and this enabled me to proceed more rapidly.

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PART I

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD AND OF PROVIDENCE

1. God The Prime Mover Of Corporeal And Spiritual Beings

Before we proceed to consider the meaning and import of the proofs for the existence of God and His providence, it will be well to point out one general proof that virtually contains them all. It may be summed up in this way: The greater does not come from the less, the more perfect does not come from the less perfect, since the latter is incapable of producing this effect.

There are in the world living, intelligent beings that come into existence and disappear again; they are therefore not self-existent. And what we say of the present applies equally to the past.

Consequently they require a cause, one that is self-existent. Hence there must exist from all eternity a first Being who owes His being to none but Himself and is able to confer being on others: a first living being, a first intelligence, a first goodness and holiness. If it were not so, the life, intelligence, goodness, and holiness of which we have experience could never have made their appearance in this world of ours.

Already open to common sense, this proof may be further scrutinized by philosophical reason, but no fault can be found with it.

The greater cannot come from the less as from its wholly adequate, efficacious cause, for the additional perfection would itself then be without a cause, without a reason for its existence, and hence absolutely unintelligible. It is utterly absurd to maintain that the intelligence or the goodness of Jesus, of the great saints—of St. John, St. Paul, St. Augustine—are the result of unintelligent matter, of a material and blind fatality.

This general proof is at once more convincing when we consider the motion of bodies and spirits—motions from which it is shown that God is the first mover of every being, both corporeal and spiritual.

Already advanced by Aristotle, this proof from motion is set out as follows by St. Thomas in his Summa Theologica, Ia, q. 2, a. 3:

THERE IS MOTION IN THE WORLD, FROM THE LOWEST ORDER OF BEINGS TO THE HIGHEST.

St. Thomas takes as his starting-point a fact of evident experience, that there is motion in the world: the local motion of inanimate bodies displacing and attracting one another; the qualitative motion of heat increasing or diminishing in intensity; the motion of development in the growing plant; the motion of the animal desiring food and going in quest of it; the motion of the human intellect passing from ignorance to a knowledge at first confused, then distinct; the motion of our spiritual will, which from not desiring a certain object comes to desire it more keenly; the motion of our will which after desiring the end desires also the means to attain it.

Here, then, is a universal fact: there is motion in the world, from the motion of the stone that is thrown into the air, to the motion of our minds and wills. And we may say that everything in this world is subject to motion or change—nations and peoples and institutions as well as individuals. When a motion has reached its peak it gives place to another, as one wave of the sea is followed by another, one generation by another, a phenomenon that the ancients represented by the wheel of fortune on which the more successful were lifted up, only to descend once more and give place to others. Is it a fact, then, that everything passes, that nothing endures? Is there nothing constant, nothing stable and absolutely permanent?

ALL MOTION REQUIRES A MOVER

How are we to explain this universal fact of motion, be it either corporeal or spiritual? Is the explanation to be found in motion itself? Is it its own reason, its own cause? To answer this question, we must begin by pointing out two facts. First, in motion there is something new that requires explanation. Where does this new element come from, which previously had no existence? The question applies to past as well as to present forms of motion. Secondly, motion exists only in a movable object: it is this individual motion for the sole reason that it is the motion of this mobile object. There is no displacement without a body that is displaced, no flowing without a fluid, no current without a liquid, no flight without a bird that flies, no dream without a dreamer, no motion or volition apart from an intelligent being that wills.

But if there is no motion apart from a mobile object, is it possible for that object to move itself by its own power and without a cause of any kind? Can the stone of itself set itself in motion without someone to throw it into the air, or without some other body to attract it? Can the cold metal become hot of itself, without a source of heat?

But, you may say, a living thing moves itself. True, but is there not in the living thing a part that is moved and another that moves? If the blood circulates through the arteries of an animal, is it not because the heart by its contraction makes it circulate?

So also in man. If the hand moves, is it not because the will moves it? And if in its turn the will is moved, passing from a state of indetermination to one of determination, must it not be moved by some object attracting it, by some good? And is it sufficient merely for the good to be presented to it? Must not the will direct itself or be directed to it? It does in fact direct itself to the means because it first of all desires the end; but in the case of the first desire of an end, as when we come to the age of reason or when on waking in the morning we begin to exercise our will, is not an impulse from some higher source necessary to start our volitional activity, so as to make our will pass from the state of repose, of inactivity, to that first act which is to be the cause of all the acts that follow? That act contains something new which demands a cause; and the will, not yet in possession of this new perfection, cannot give it to itself. (Cf. St. Thomas, Ia IIae, q. 9, a. 4; q. 10, a. 4.)

Shall we say that this particular motion, whether corporeal or spiritual, has as it cause another motion anterior to it? But, if we consider motion as such, whether realized in this present motion or in the motions that precede, we shall see that it is a transition from potency to act. Now potency is less perfect than act; potency, therefore, cannot confer act upon itself. Once again, if there were not a mover for every motion, the greater would come from the less.

The stone was capable of displacement; now it changes its position, it does not do so without a mover that projects or attracts it.

The plant in its growth passes from potency to act, but not without the action of the sun, air, and moisture from the earth. The animal passes from potency to act when it pursues the prey that attracts it, but only in virtue of that higher activity which has endowed it with the instinct to feed upon this object rather than upon some other.

Man himself passes from potency to act, from ignorance to knowledge; for him it is an intellectual acquisition. But the intellect does not give itself these acquisitions which hitherto it did not possess.

Our will, too, passes from potency to act, to which at times it clings heroically. Where does this new perfection come from? The will could not confer this upon itself, since it did not possess this before.

All motion, then, whether corporeal or spiritual, requires a cause: without a mover the mobile thing is not moved. The mover may be within, as the heart is within the living animal; but if this mover is itself moved, it demands another mover superior to itself. The heart that at the moment of death stops beating cannot set itself going again; in this case it would require the intervention of the Author of life Himself, by whom that life was given and who maintained its motion until the organism finally spent itself.

Every motion demands a mover: such is the principle by which St. Thomas throws light upon this great universal fact of motion. The irrational animals perceive, indeed, that there are motions of the sensible order; but, that every motion demands a mover, is beyond their comprehension. They have no grasp of intelligible being or of the raison d'etre of things, but only of sensible phenomena—color, sound, heat, and the like. On the other hand, being and the raison d'etre of things constitute the very object of our intellect; hence we are able to grasp the truth, that without a mover all motion is impossible.

EVERY MOTION REQUIRES A SUPREME MOVER

But we must go a step farther. If for every motion either corporeal or spiritual a mover is required, does this necessitate a supreme mover?

A number of philosophers, including Aristotle, thought it possible to have an infinite series of movers accidentally subordinated to one another in past time. For such as these the series of animal generations, for instance, never had a beginning. There was never a first hen or a first egg, but always, without beginning, there were hens that laid eggs; the motion of the sun revolving in the heavens had no beginning and will have no end; the evaporation of water from the rivers and seas has always been producing rain, but there was no first rainfall.

We Christians hold it to be a fact known from revelation, that the world had a beginning: that it was created not from all eternity (non ab aeterno), but in time. This is an article of faith defined by the councils.

But precisely because it is an article of faith and not merely one of the preambles to the faith, is why St. Thomas holds that reason alone can never demonstrate that the world had a beginning (Ia, q. 46, a. 2). And why does this truth transcend the natural powers of our intellect? Because that beginning depended on the free will of God. Had He so willed, He might have created the world ten thousand years, a hundred thousand years, millions of years before, or at a time even more remote, without there having been a first day for the world, but simply a dependence of the world on its Creator, just as a footprint in the sand is due to the foot that makes it, so that, had the foot always been there the footprint would have had no beginning.

Although revelation teaches that the world did in fact have a beginning, it does not seem impossible, says St. Thomas, for the world always to have existed in its dependence on God the Creator.

But, if a series of movers accidentally subordinated in the past may be infinite and does not of necessity require a first in time, it is not so with a series of movers necessarily and actually subordinated at the present moment. Here we must eventually arrive at a supreme mover actually existent, one that has not merely given an impulse at the beginning of the world, but that is moving all things now.

For example: the boat carries the fisherman, the sea enables the boat to float, the earth holds the sea in check, the sun keeps the earth fixed in its course, and some unknown center of attraction holds the sun in its place. But after that? We cannot go on in this manner ad infinitum in a series of causes that are actually subordinate. There must be a first and supreme efficient cause existing not merely in the past but in the present, and this supreme cause must act, must exert its influence now; otherwise the subordinate causes, that act only when moved by another, would not act at all.

Trying to dispense with the necessity of a source is the same as saying that a watch can run without a spring, provided it has an infinite number of wheels. The watch may have been wound up a thousand times, a hundred thousand times, or times without number, in the past—it matters little; what is necessary is for it to have a spring. Likewise it matters little whether the

earth had a beginning in its revolution around the sun; what is necessary is for the sun to attract it now, and for the sun itself to be attracted by a more remote and actually existing center of attraction. In the end we must come to a first mover that acts of itself and not through another of a higher order. We must come to a first mover able to give a full and adequate account of the very being or reality of its action.

Now that alone can account for the being of its action which possesses it in its own right, and that not only potentially but actually; a being which, as a consequence, is its very act, its activity, and which, instead of having received its life, is life itself. Such a mover is absolutely immobile in the sense that it already possesses of itself what others acquire by motion. It is in consequence essentially distinct from all mobile things, whether corporeal or spiritual. And here we have a refutation of pantheism. God cannot be confounded with the world, for He is immovable, whereas the world is in a state of perpetual change. It is this very change that demands an immobile first mover, who, instead of passing from the potential to the actual, is His act from all eternity; who is consequently being itself, since action presupposes being and since the mode of action follows upon the mode of being." I am the Lord and I change not" (Malachias 3: 6). It is false to say that everything passes and nothing endures, that nothing is constant, nothing stable. There must be a first mover who is Himself absolutely immovable.

To deny the necessity of a supreme cause is to maintain that the explanation of motion lies in itself, that a mobile thing can of itself and without a mover pass from potency to act, can confer on itself the act, the new perfection it does not yet possess. To do away with a supreme cause is to claim that, as someone has said, "a brush will paint by itself provided it has a very long handle." This is maintaining always the same thing, that the greater comes from the less.

As evidence of this necessity for a supreme mover in the present and not merely in the past, we may take another example, this time from motion of the spiritual order.

Our will begins to will a certain thing: a sick person, for instance, wishes to call in a doctor. And why? Because first of all he desires to be cured, and to be cured is a good thing. He began to will this good thing, and this act of willing is an act distinct from the volitional faculty; for with us this faculty is not of itself an eternal act of love for the good; it contains its first act only

potentially, so that when the act makes its appearance it is in the will as something new, a new perfection. In order to find the ultimate raison d'etre of this becoming, of the very reality of this first act of willing, we must go back to a first mover of mind and will, one that has not received the impulse to act, who acts without its being given Him to act, to whom it can never be said: "What hast thou that thou hast not received?" We must eventually arrive at a first mover who is His own activity, who acts solely through Himself, since action presupposes being and since the mode of action follows upon the mode of being.

Only being itself, which alone exists of itself, can in the last analysis account for the being or reality of a becoming, which is not self-existent.

Are we not forced to recognize the existence of this first mover when we are confronted with an important duty to be performed at all costs and without delay, such as the defense of family or country; are we not too aware of our weakness, our powerlessness to proceed to action? What is then needed is action, not words. Who, then, will effect the transition from potency to act, if not He and He alone who has given us the faculty to will and is able to move the will, seeing that He is more intimately present to it than it is to itself?

Similarly, the first act of our intellect, whether it be when we come to the age of reason or when we wake in the morning, presupposes a first impulse given to it by the supreme intellect, without whose concurrence we could not think at all. This impulse, by many unperceived, becomes at times strikingly apparent on those occasions known as flashes of genius. Even the man of genius merely participates in intellectual life. He has a part in it, and everything that is by participation is dependent on that which exists of itself and not through another.

Is not the existence of the first mover of intellects forcibly brought home to us when, after failing to see where our duty lies, we retire within ourselves and there eventually get enlightenment? How have we passed from potency to act if not by the assistance of Him who has given us intelligence and who alone can enrich it with new light?

The first mover, therefore, is not in potentiality for further perfection. He is pure act without any admixture of imperfection. Consequently, He is really and essentially distinct from every limited mind, whether angelic or human, these passing from potency to act, from ignorance to knowledge. Here again we have a refutation of pantheism.

IS THE FIRST MOVER OF CORPOREAL AND SPIRITUAL BEINGS NECESSARILY SPIRITUAL?

To move intellects and wills without doing violence to them, evidently the mover must be spiritual. The greater does not come from the less.

But even the first mover of corporeal beings must be spiritual, for, as we have seen, It must be immobile in the sense that It is its own action, its own being. This cannot be true of anything corporeal; all bodies are mobile; matter is in perpetual motion.

Even if prime matter is supposed to be endowed with primitive essential energies, still it cannot as an agent account for the being of its own action; for such an agent must not only possess action and existence, it must be its very action, existence, and consequently must be absolutely immobile, possessing of itself all perfection and not a tendency to it. Now matter is forever in motion, constantly acquiring new perfections or forms and losing others.

The first mover, therefore, of corporeal and spiritual beings must evidently be spiritual. It is of Him the liturgy speaks when it says: Rerum Deus tenax vigor, Immotus in Te permanens. (God powerful sustainer of all things, Thou who dost remain permanently unmoved.)

In what then does the immobility of the supreme mover of corporeal and spiritual beings consist? Not in the immobility of inertia, of an inert body, for that is inferior to motion. It is the immobility of supreme activity, which has nothing to gain, because of itself and from the first it possesses all that it is possible for it to possess and is able to communicate that abundance externally. On board ship the sailors pass to and fro at their duties, but is it not the captain who directs them to action by the spiritual activity of his intellect and will, standing immovable on the bridge? There is far more vitality in the steadfast contemplation of truth than in mere commotion.

The immobility of the first mover is not the immobility of the stone, but the immobility that characterizes the contemplation and love of the supreme good.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SUPREME MOVER

Since the first mover is pure act with no admixture of the imperfection of potentiality, it follows that He is in no way perfectible. He is infinitely

perfect, pure being, the pure and ever actual intellection of supreme truth, the pure and ever actual love of the fullness of being ever actually loved.

He is omnipresent, because to move all beings whether spiritual or corporeal, He must be present, since these beings do not move themselves, but are moved by Him.

He is eternal, for He has always by and of Himself all His being and all His action of thought and love. In one immobile instant transcending time, He possesses His life simultaneously in all its completeness. When the world was created, the creative act did not commence in God, for it is eternal; but it produced its effect in time at the desired moment fixed from all eternity.

The first mover is unique: for pure act does not receive existence, it is existence; it is being itself, which cannot be multiplied. Were there two first movers, since one would not be the other, each would be limited and imperfect and would no longer be pure act and being itself.

Moreover the capacity of a second pure act could be nothing more than the first, and would be superfluous: Could there be anything more absurd than a superfluous God?

If such be the case, if there is an actually existing first mover of corporeal and spiritual beings, what practical conclusions are to be drawn from it?

In the first place we must learn to distinguish in life between the immobility of inertia and the immobility of higher activities. The immobility of inertia or of death is inferior to motion. The immobility that characterizes the contemplation and love of God is superior to the movement it may produce by directing and vivifying it.

Instead of dissipating our life in mere commotion, let us endeavor to recollect it so that our activity may be more profound, more consistent and lasting, and directed to eternity.

Secondly, let us frequently establish a contact in the summit of our soul with the first mover of corporeal and spiritual beings, who is none other than the living God, author not only of the soul and its natural acts, but of grace also and salvation.

Let us make this contact on waking in the morning, for then we receive within us that impulse from God that stirs us to action. Instead of going astray at the beginning of the day, let us welcome this first impulse by responding to it.

Let us in the course of the day resume this contact with Him who is the author of life, who was not content merely to urge us in the past, or merely to set us in motion at the beginning of the day, but is ever sustaining us and actualizing our voluntary actions—even the freest of them—in all their reality and goodness, evil only excepted.

Before lying down to rest, let us renew this contact, and all that sound philosophy has just told us about the first mover of corporeal and spiritual beings will appear transfigured, transported to a higher plane, in the Our Father.

“Thy kingdom come”: the kingdom of the supreme intellect, by whom all other intellects are directed.” Thy will be done”: that will to which every other will must be subjected if it is to attain to its true end.

“Lead us not into temptation, “ but sustain us by Thy strength; maintain our intellect in truth and our will in the good. Then we shall have an even deeper insight into the meaning of those words of St. Paul spoken in the Areopagus (Acts 17:24) : “God, who made the world and all things therein... hath made of one all mankind... that they should seek God, if happily they may feel after Him or find Him, although He be not far from every one of us. For in Him we live and move and are.” In Him we have our being—not natural being only, but the supernatural being of grace which is the beginning of eternal life. Of this supreme mover, the source from which the life of creation proceeds we have been able to speak only in an abstract and very imperfect manner. It is He whom we must see face to face when we come to the end of our journey and reach eternity.

2. The Order In The Universe, And Providence

The general proof for the existence of God—that the greater cannot come from the less—we have made more precise by an examination of motion. We have seen how all motion, corporeal or spiritual, requires a mover, and in the last resort a supreme mover; for in a series of actually subordinated causes (for instance, in the series: the earth attracted by the sun, the sun by a more distant center), we must eventually arrive at a supreme mover who does not require to be previously moved, who must therefore possess activity of Himself if He is to confer it upon others. That is, He must be His action instead of merely receiving it. He acts without its being given Him to act. And as action presupposes being, and the mode of action follows upon the mode of being, the supreme mover of corporeal and spiritual beings, to be His action, must also be being itself, according to the Scriptural expression: “I am who am.”

We must now speak of a proof that establishes at once the existence of God and His providence—that based on the order prevailing in the world. Of all the proofs for God’s existence, it is the most popular. Easily accessible to commonsense reason, it is susceptible of greater penetration by philosophical reason; and when it is applied from the physical to the moral order it may lead to the most sublime contemplation. We find it expressed in Psalm 18: 2: “The heavens show forth the glory of God: and the firmament declareth the work of His hands.”

THE FACT: THE ORDER PREVAILING IN THE UNIVERSE

The fact is this, that in nature, in those things that lack intelligence, we have an admirable ordering of means to ends.” This is evident, “ says St. Thomas, “since those things which lack intelligence—the heavenly bodies, plants and animals—act always, or at least nearly always, in such a way as to produce what is best” (Ia, q. 2, a. 3).

Finality and order are apparent in the universal attraction between bodies. The purpose of this attraction is the cohesion of the universe. It is seen in the translational motion of the sun through space, carrying with it its entire system. It is again seen in the twofold motion of the earth—the rotation about its axis every twenty-four hours, which is the cause of day and night, and its revolution round the sun in three hundred and sixty-five days, which is the cause of the seasons. In this constant regularity of the heavenly bodies in their courses, we have an obvious instance of means directed to an end, as the greatest astronomers declared, rapt as they were in admiration for the laws that they discovered. And many good things in this world would not be realized without the difference of day and night and the distinction of seasons, so necessary for the germination of plants and their development.

If we ascend a little higher and consider the plant organism, we see how admirably its arrangement enables it to use the moisture and transform it into sap, in a word, to nourish and reproduce itself in a regular and constant manner. If we but consider a grain of wheat put into the ground, we see that its purpose is to produce an ear of wheat, not of barley or rice.

We have only to consider an oak to see the utility of its roots and sap for the life of its branches and foliage. We have only to examine the collective organs of a flower to see that they all concur in the formation of the fruit which the flower is intended to produce—a cherry, for instance, or an orange. A particular flower is intended to produce a particular fruit and no other. How is it possible not to see in this formation a designing idea?

If we ascend still higher and consider the animal organism, whether in its lower or higher forms, we see that as a whole it is adapted for the animal’s nourishment, respiration, and reproduction. The heart makes the red blood circulate throughout the organism for its nourishment; then the dark blood charged with carbonic acid is again transformed into red by contact in the lungs with the oxygen of the air. Obviously the heart and lungs are for the preservation of animals and men.

Certain parts of the animal organism are truly marvelous. The joints of the foot are so made as to adapt themselves to every position in walking, and those of the hand are suited to a great variety of movements. A bird’s wings are adapted for flight far better than is the best airplane. The smallest cell, which is related to thousands of others, is a masterpiece in itself. Of particular beauty is the harmonious arrangement of the many parts of the ear, for the perception of sound; and again, the very complex structure of

the eye, in which the act of vision presupposes thirteen conditions, each of these again presupposing very many more, all of them adapted to this simple act of vision. In the eye we have an instance of an amazing number of means adapted to one and the same end, and this organ is formed in such a way as to produce always, or usually at any rate, what is best.

If now we consider the instinctive activity of animals, especially such as bees, we meet with fresh marvels. It would require the genius of a mathematician to invent and construct a bee-hive; and no chemist has yet succeeded in making honey from the nectar of a flower. Yet the bee is obviously not itself intelligent: it never varies its work or makes any improvement. From the very beginning its natural instinct has determined it to perform its task in the same way, and it will continue to do so forever, without in any way bringing it to perfection. On the contrary, man is continually perfecting the implements of his invention because, through his intelligence, he recognizes their purpose. The bee, too, works with an end in view, but unconsciously; yet it works in a way that excites our admiration.

Shall it be said that this wonderful order in the heavenly bodies, in vegetable and animal organisms, in the instinct of animals, is the effect of a happy chance? What happens fortunately by chance is not of regular or even frequent occurrence, but extremely rare. It is by chance that a tripod, when thrown into the air, falls on its three feet; but this rarely happens. It is by chance that a man digging a grave finds a treasure; but it is an unusual thing. On the contrary, the wonderful order we have been considering as prevailing in nature is an order of fixed unchangeable laws, which are always applicable. It is a constant harmony and, as it were, the perpetual symphony of the universe for those who can hear it, that is, for great artists and thinkers and for the simple, to whom nature speaks of God.

Shall it be said that, amid a large number of useless organisms, a fortunate chance has formed a select few capable of receiving life, with the result that these have been preserved while the useless ones have disappeared? Such is the evolutionist theory of the survival of the fittest. But this would be tantamount to saying that chance is the first cause of the harmony prevailing in the universe and all its parts, and that, surely, is impossible. To be convinced of this, we need only reflect on what is meant by chance. Chance and its effect are something accidental; it is accidental for the tripod, when thrown into the air, to fall on its three feet; it is accidental for the gravedigger to find a treasure. Now the accidental

presupposes the non-accidental, the essential, the natural, as the accessory presupposes the principal.

Were there no natural law of gravitation, the tripod would not, when thrown into the air, fall accidentally on its three feet. If the man who accidentally finds a treasure had not had the intention of digging the grave at that particular spot, this accidental effect would not have come about.

Chance is simply the accidental concurrence of two actions that are themselves not accidental but intentional, intentional at least in the sense that they have an unconscious natural tendency.

To say, therefore, that chance is the first cause of order in the world is to explain the essential by the accidental, the primary by the accessory; it implies as a consequence the destruction of the essential and the natural, the destruction of all nature and of all natural law. There would no longer be anything but fortuitous encounters, with nothing to encounter or be encountered—which is absurd. It is equivalent to saying that the wonderful order in the universe is the outcome of disorder, of the absence of order, of chaos, without cause of any kind: that the intelligible is the outcome of the unintelligible: that brain and intelligence are the result of a material, blind fatality. Once again it is to assert that the greater comes from the less, the more perfect from the less perfect. That is the substitution, indeed, of absurdity for the mystery of creation, a mystery that has its obscurities, but that is plainly in conformity with right reason.

The fact, then, that constitutes the starting-point of our proof holds good: namely, there is order and finality in the world, that is, means ordered to certain ends; for beings without intelligence, such as plants and animals, always or nearly always act so as to produce what is best. Universal attraction is for the cohesion of the universe, the seed of a grain of wheat for the production of the ear, a flower for the fruit, the foot of an animal for walking, the wings of a bird for flying, the lungs for breathing, the ear for hearing, the eye for seeing. The existence of finality is an undeniable fact, as even the positivist Stuart Mill admits.

More than this: not only is it a fact that every natural agent acts for some end, but it cannot be otherwise. Every agent must act for some purpose since, for the agent, to act is to tend to something determinate and appropriate to itself, that is, to an end. If the agent did not act for some determinate end, neither would it produce anything determinate, one thing rather than another; there would be no reason why the eye should see rather

than hear, why the ear should hear rather than see. (Cf. St. Thomas, Ia IIae, q. 1, a. 2.)

Perhaps the objection may be raised, that we do not see for what useful purpose the viper and other harmful animals exist. True, the external finality of certain beings does frequently escape us, but their internal finality is plain enough. We are quite able to see that the viper's organs serve for its nutrition and preservation. Its poisonous effect upon us induces us to be on our guard, and reminds us that we are not invulnerable, that we are not gods. Faith tells us that, had man not sinned, the serpent would not have become harmful to him. In spite of obscurities and shadows, there is light enough for those who are willing to see.

The materialists say there is as much heat or motion or calorific energy in a kettle as in a gier-eagle. Ruskin retorts:

Very good; that is so, but for us painters, the primary cognizable facts, in the two things, are, that the kettle has a spout, and the eagle a beak; the one a lid on its back, the other a pair of wings;... the kettle chooses to sit still on the hob; the eagle to recline on the air. It is the fact of the choice, not the equal degree of temperature in the fulfilment of it, which appears to us the more interesting circumstance (The Ethics of the Dust, Lect. X).

The materialist does not perceive that wings are for flying, the eye for seeing; he will not recognize the value of finality of the eye. Yet, if he feels that he is losing his sight, he goes to the oculist like the rest of men, and that is at any rate a practical recognition of the fact that eyes were made to see with.

For those who are willing to see, there is light enough in spite of obscurities and shadows. The finality of nature is an evident fact, not for our senses of course,—for these get no farther than the sensible phenomena —but for our intellect, which is made to grasp the raison d'être of things. For the intellect, obviously the eye is for seeing, the ear for hearing.

A MEANS CANNOT BE DIRECTED TO AN END EXCEPT BY AN INTELLIGENT DESIGNER

From the fact that there is order in the world, how are we to ascend to the certain truth of God's existence? By means of the principle that beings without intelligence can tend to an end only when directed to it by an

intelligent cause, as the arrow is directed by the archer. More simply, a means cannot be directed to an end except by an intelligent designer.

Why is this? Because the end, which determines the tendency and the means, is none other than the effect to be realized in the future. But a future effect, which as yet has no actual existence, must, to determine the tendency, be in some way already present, and this is possible only in a cognitive being.

If nobody has ever known the purpose of the eye, we cannot say that it is made to see with. If nobody has ever known the purpose of the bee's activity, we cannot say that it is for making honey. If nobody has ever known the purpose of the lung's action, we cannot say that it is for the renewal of the blood by contact with the oxygen of the air.

But why must there be an intelligent designer? Why does not the imagination suffice? Because only the intellect knows the raison d'être of things and consequently the purpose, which is the raison d'être of the means. Only an intellect can see that the wings of a bird are made for flying and the foot for walking; only an intellect could have designed wings for flying, the foot for walking, the ear for hearing, etc.

The swallow collecting straws to make its nest does so without perceiving that the building of the nest is the raison d'être of the action it performs. The bee, as it gathers the nectar from the flower, does not know that the honey is the raison d'être of its gathering. It is the intellect alone that reaches beyond mere color or sound down to the being and the raison d'être of things.

Only an intelligent designer can have directed means to an end; otherwise we would have to say that the greater comes from the less, order from disorder.

But why is an infinite intellect necessary, one strictly divine? Why, asks Kant, should not a limited intellect, like that of the angels, be sufficient to explain the order in the universe?

It is because a finite or limited intellect would not be thought itself, intellection itself, truth itself. Now an intellect that is not truth itself always known is merely directed to the knowledge of the truth; and this passive presupposes an active direction, which can come only from the supreme intellect, who is thought and truth itself. It is in this sense that our Lord declares Himself to be God, when He says: "I am the way, the truth and the

life.” He does not say merely, ““I have received truth, “ but, “I am the truth and the life” (John 14: 6).

This, therefore, is the conclusion to which our proof leads us: a transcendently perfect intelligent designer, who is truth itself and consequently being itself, since the true is being that is known. It is the God of the Scriptures: I am who am. It is providence or the supreme reason of the order in things, by which every creature has been directed to its own particular end and finally to the ultimate end of the universe, which is the manifestation of the divine goodness. This is the way St. Thomas puts it (Ia, q. 22, a. 1) :

We must necessarily suppose a providence in God; for, as was pointed out above, whatever goodness there is in things has been created by Him. Now in created things not only in their substance is goodness to be found, but also in their order to some end, and in particular to the ultimate end, which, as we concluded above, is the divine goodness. Hence this goodness in order apparent in created things has also been created by God. Now since God is the cause of all things through His intellect, in which therefore the conception of everyone of His effects must pre-exist, there must also pre-exist in the divine mind the conception of this ordering of things to an end. But the conception of the order of things to an end is strictly providence.

Providence is the conception in the divine intellect of the order of all things to their end; and the divine governance, as St. Thomas observes (ibid., ad 2um), is the execution of that order.

We now understand more fully the significance of those words of the psalm: “The heavens show forth the glory of God” (Ps. 18:2). The wonderful order of the starry skies proclaims and extols the glory of God, and reveals to us His infinite intelligence. The harmony of the universe is like a marvelous symphony, the sweetest and most effective chant of the Creator. Blessed are they who listen to it.

Is there not a great moral lesson in this proof for the existence of God from the order prevailing in the world? Yes, an important one that is taught us in the Book of Job and more clearly later on in the Sermon on the Mount.

It is this lesson that, if there is such order in the physical world, much more must it be so in the moral world, in spite of all the wickedness human justice allows to go unpunished, as it also leaves unrewarded many a heroic act giving proof of God’s intervention in the world.

It is the Lord’s answer to Job and his friends. As we shall insist later on, the purpose of the Book of Job is to answer this question: Why so often in this world are the just made to suffer more than the wicked? Is it always in expiation of their sins, their secret sins at any rate?

Job’s friends declare that it is, and they blame this poor stricken soul for complaining. Job denies that the trials and tribulations of the just are in every case the result of their sins, even their secret sins, and he wonders why so much suffering should have befallen him.

In the latter part of the book (chaps. 32-42), the Lord replies by pointing out the wonderful order prevailing in the physical world with all its splendors, from the life of the insect to the eagle’s flight, as if to say: If there exists such order as this in the things of sense, much more so must there be order in the dispositions of my providence concerning the just, even in their most terrible afflictions. There is in this a secret and a mystery which it is not given to men to fathom in this world.

Later on, in the Sermon on the Mount, our Lord speaks more plainly (Matt. 6: 25) : “Therefore I say to you, be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat.... Behold the birds of the air, for they neither sow, nor do they reap... and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not you of much more value than they?... Consider the lilies of the field:... they labor not, neither do they spin. But I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these. And if the grass of the field... God doth so clothe: how much more you, O ye of little faith.” If there is order in the world of sense, a providence for the birds of the air, much more so will there be order in the spiritual world and a providence for the immortal souls of men.

And lastly, to the question put in the Book of Job, our Lord gives the final answer when He says (John 15: I-2) : ‘“I am the true vine: and My Father is the husbandman... and everyone that beareth fruit, He will purge it, that it may bring forth more fruit.” God proves a man as He proved Job, that the man may bring forth the splendid fruits of patience, humility, self-abandonment, love of God and one’s neighbor—the splendid fruits of charity, which is the beginning of eternal life.

This, then, is the important moral lesson taught us in this sublime proof for the existence of God: If in the world of sense such wonderful order exists, much more must it be so in the moral and spiritual world, in spite of trials and tribulations. There is light enough for those who are willing to see and march on accordingly to the true light of eternity.

3. God, The Supreme Being And Supreme Truth

The proof for the existence of a first mover of corporeal and spiritual beings, and of a supreme intelligence, the author of the harmony prevailing in the universe, will prepare the way for a better understanding of three other traditional proofs for the existence of God. They are those of (1) God, the supreme being and supreme truth, (2) the sovereign good who is the source of all happiness, and (3) the ultimate foundation of our obligations. These we must touch upon if we would have a right idea of providence.

Following in the steps of Plato, Aristotle, and St. Augustine, St. Thomas develops the first of these proofs, called the proof from the degrees of perfection, in the Summa Theologica, Ia, q. 2, a. 3, 4a via. Its point of departure lies in the more or less of perfection to be found in the beings that compose the universe, a perfection always limited, from which our minds are led on to affirm the existence of a supreme perfection, a supreme truth, a supreme beauty.

Let us closely examine the starting-point of the proof, the fact upon which the proof is based, and then the principle by which the proof rises from the fact to the existence of God.

THE FACT: THE DEGREES OF PERFECTION

The proof starts with the fact that there are in the universe beings more or less good, more or less true, more or less noble. In other words, in the universe of corporeal and spiritual beings, goodness, truth, nobility exist in varying degrees, from the lowest mineral such as iron with its strength and resistance up to the higher degrees of the intellectual and moral life apparent in the great geniuses and the great saints.

Of these degrees of goodness in things we have daily experience. We say that a stone is good when it has solidity and does not crumble away; a fruit is good if it provides nourishment and refreshment; a horse is good if with it

we can go on a long journey. In a higher way a teacher is good if he has knowledge and knows how to impart it; the virtuous man is good because he wills and does what is good; far more so is the saint, in whom the desire for good has become an ardent passion. And yet, however great a saint may be, he has his limitations; no matter how much good he has accomplished, like the Cure of Ars he will experience hours of intense sadness coupled with a sense of his own helplessness at the thought of all the good that remains to be done. Indeed, the saints realize most of all their own nothingness.

It is an established fact, then, that goodness is realized in varying degrees. It is the same with nobility: the vegetable is nobler than the mineral, the animal is nobler than the vegetable, man is nobler than the animal. One man is nobler in mind and heart than a certain other; yet he too has his limitations, his temptations, his weaknesses, his very imperfections. Nobility has its degrees, but even the most exalted in our experience are still very imperfect.

Similarly, truth has degrees, for that which is richer in being, as a reality, is richer also in truth. True gold is superior to spurious gold alloyed with copper, the true diamond is superior to the artificial, the upright mind is superior to the false. Surpassing the mind that possesses a knowledge of but one science, physics for example, is the mind that ascends to the sciences of the spiritual world, to psychology and the moral and political sciences. Yet how very limited is the truth of even these higher sciences!

The more we know, say the great thinkers, the more we realize all that still remains to be known, and how little we do know. So, too, with the great saints: the more good they do, the more keenly they realize the amount of good that still remains to be done.

What, then, is the explanation of these various degrees of goodness, nobility, and truth, or of beauty? Does this ascending gradation remain stunted, incomplete, without a culminating point, a summit? Must the progressive ascent of our minds toward the true halt at a limited and impoverished truth, as in the case of our psychology and our moral and political sciences? Must the progressive ascent of our will to the good halt at one that is imperfect, mingled always with some defect, some impotence? Must our enthusiasm at the sight of the ideal be forever followed by a certain disillusionment and, if there is no summit, by a disillusionment for which there is no remedy?

THE PRINCIPLE: THE MORE AND THE LESS PERFECT PRESUPPOSE PERFECTION ITSELF

Following in the steps of Plato, Aristotle, and St. Augustine, St. Thomas explains the fact of the various degrees of the good and the true by means of the following principle: “Different beings are said to be more or less perfect in the measure of their approach to that being which is perfection itself.”

By this sovereign perfection does St. Thomas mean ideal sovereign perfection, one existing solely in the mind, or one that is real? He means a real perfection, for that alone can be the cause of the various degrees of perfection which, as we have seen, do exist and which demand a cause.

The meaning of the principle invoked by St. Thomas is that, when a perfection (such as goodness, truth, or beauty), the conception of which does not imply any imperfection, is found in various degrees in different beings, none of those which possess it imperfectly contains a sufficient explanation for it, and hence its cause must be sought in a being of a higher order, which is this very perfection.

For a clearer understanding of this principle let us pause to consider its terms. When an absolute perfection is found in various degrees in different beings, none of those possessing it as yet imperfectly contains a sufficient explanation for it. Here we must consider (1) the multiple and (2) the imperfect.

1) The multiple presupposes the one. In fact, as Plato says in the Phaedo, his disciple Phaedo is handsome; yet beauty is not peculiar to Phaedo, for Phaedrus, too, is handsome.” The beauty found in some finite being is sister to the beauty found in similar beings. None of them is beauty; each merely participates, has a part in or is a reflection of beauty.” (Cf. Phaedo, 101, A.)

It is not in Phaedo, then, any more than in Phaedrus, that we are to find the raison d’être of the principle of their beauty. If neither can account for the limited beauty that is his, he must have received it from some higher principle, namely, from Beauty itself. In a word, every multiplicity of beings more or less alike presupposes a higher unity. The multiple presupposes the one.

2) The imperfect presupposes the perfect. The principle we are explaining is brought home to us even more forcibly when we consider that the perfection of the beings we see around us is always mingled with its contrary, imperfection. A man’s nobility and goodness cannot be said to be unlimited, mingled as it is with so much infirmity, with its trouble and

errors. So also ignorance and even error constitute a great part of human knowledge; this merely participates in truth, has no more than a part and that a humble part in it. And if it is not truth, that is because it has received truth from some higher source.

Briefly, an imperfect being is a compound, and every compound requires a cause uniting its constituent elements. The diverse presupposes the identical, the compound presupposes the simple. (Cf. St. Thomas, Ia, q. 3, a. 7.)

The truth of our principle will impress itself more forcibly upon us if we observe that a perfection such as goodness, truth, or beauty, which of itself implies no imperfection, is not in fact limited except by the restricted capacity of its recipient. Thus knowledge in us is limited by our restricted capacity for it, goodness by our restricted capacity for doing good.

Hence it is clear that, when a perfection of this kind, that as yet is in an imperfect state, is found in some being, such a being merely participates or has a part in it, and has therefore received it from a higher cause, which must be the unlimited perfection itself, being itself, truth itself, goodness itself, if this cause is to be capable of imparting to others a certain reflection of that truth and goodness.

Among the philosophers of antiquity Plato has emphasized this truth in one of the finest pages to be found in the writings of the Greek thinkers. (Cf. Symposium, 211, C) We must learn, he says in substance, to love beautiful colors, the beauty of a sunrise or sunset, of the mountains, seas, and skies, the beauty of a noble countenance. But we must rise above mere material beauty to beauty of soul as displayed in its actions; thence from the beauty of these actions to the principles that govern them—to the beauty of the sciences, and from science to science ascending even to wisdom, the most exalted of them all: the science of being, of the true and the beautiful. Afterward there will arise in us the desire to have knowledge of the beautiful itself and as it is in itself—the desire to contemplate, says Plato, that beauty which grows not nor decays; is not fair in one part, uncomely in another; fair at one time, uncomely at another; fair in one place and not in another; fair to some, uncomely to others... a beauty residing in no being other than itself, in an animal, in the earth or skies or elsewhere, but existing eternally and absolutely, of itself and in itself; in which all other beauties participate, without inducing in it by their birth or destruction the least diminution or increase, or any change whatsoever.

The disillusionments that we meet with here on earth are permitted precisely in order to direct our thoughts more and more to this supreme beauty and impel us to love it.

What Plato says of beauty applies equally to truth. Transcending particular, contingent truths, which possibly might not be so (as that my body exists at this moment, to die perhaps tomorrow), there are the universal, necessary truths (as that man is by nature a rational being, with the capacity to reason, without which he would be undistinguishable from the brute beast) ; or again the truth, that it is impossible for something at once to exist and not exist. These truths never began to be true and will continue to be true always.

Where have these eternal, necessary truths their foundation? Not in perishable realities, for the latter are governed by these truths as by absolute laws, from which nothing can escape. Nor is their foundation in our finite intellects, for these eternal, necessary truths govern and regulate our intellect as higher principles.

Where, then, are we to look for the foundation of these eternal, necessary truths, governing all finite reality and every finite intellect? Where is that foundation if not in the supreme being, the supreme truth always known by the first intellect, which, far from having received truth, is the truth, pure truth, without any admixture of error or ignorance, without any limitation or imperfection whatever?

In a word, the truths which govern all perishable reality and every finite intellect, like necessary and eternal laws, must have their foundation in a supreme truth which is being and wisdom itself. But it is God who is being itself, truth itself, wisdom itself.

Such is this further proof for the existence of God proposed by Plato, St. Augustine, and St. Thomas.

We now see more clearly the significance and scope of the principle on which this proof is based: “Different beings are said to be more or less perfect according to the measure of their approach to that being which is perfection itself.” In other words, when a perfection such as goodness, truth, or beauty, the concept of which implies no imperfection, is found in varying degrees in different beings, this cannot be accounted for by any of those beings in which it is found in as yet an imperfect degree; the being merely participates in it, and has received it according to the measure of its

capacity—has received it, too, from a higher being who is this very perfection.

What practical conclusion are we to draw from this ascent? It is expressed in that saying of our Lord: “None is good but God alone”—good, that is, with goodness unalloyed. God alone is true, with a truth and wisdom untrammeled by ignorance; God alone is beautiful with that infinite beauty which we are called upon to contemplate some day face to face, that beauty which even here on earth the human intellect of Jesus contemplated as He conversed with His disciples.” God alone is great”: that was St. Michael’s answer to Satan’s pride. The thought of this makes us humble.

Ours is but a borrowed existence, freely given us by God, and He keeps us in existence because indeed He wills it so. Ours is but a goodness in which there is so much infirmity and even degradation; there is so much error in our knowledge. This thought, while serving to make us humble, brings home to us by contrast the infinite majesty of God.

And then if it is a question of others and no longer of ourselves, if we have suffered disillusionment about our neighbor whom we had believed to be better and wiser, let us remember that he too has suffered disillusionment about us; let us remember that he too is perhaps better than we are, and that whatever is our own as coming from ourselves-our deficiencies and failings—is inferior to everything our neighbor has from God. This is the foundation of humility in our relations with others.

Lastly, we must admit that the disillusionments we ourselves experience, or which others experience through us, in view of the radical imperfection of the creature, are permitted that we may aspire more ardently to a knowledge and love of Him who is the truth and the life, whom we shall some day see as He sees Himself. We shall then understand the meaning of those words of St. Catherine of Siena: “The living, practical knowledge of our own wretchedness and the knowledge of God’s majesty are inseparable in their increase. They are like the lowest and highest points on a circle that is ever expanding.” And the more we realize our own imperfections and limitations, the more we realize, too, that God has a right to be loved above all things by reason of His infinite wisdom and His infinite goodness.

Our final observation is this: the supreme truth has Himself spoken to us: He has revealed Himself to us, as yet in an obscure manner, but it is the foundation of our Christian faith. It is in the name of this supreme truth that Jesus speaks, when He says: “In truth, in truth, I say to you.” He is Himself

the truth and the life, and by His help from day to day we must gradually live a better life. This far surpasses Plato’s ideal; no longer is it an abstract, philosophic ascent to the supreme truth, but the supreme truth which condescends to reach down to us in order to raise us up to Himself.

4. God The Sovereign Good And The Desire For Happiness

When speaking of God as supreme being and supreme truth we saw that a multiplicity of beings resembling one another in one and the same perfection, such as goodness, is insufficient to account for the unity of likeness thus existing in that multiplicity; as Plato said, the multiple cannot account for the one. Moreover, none of the beings possessing the perfection in an imperfect degree is sufficient to account for it; for each is a compound of the perfection and the restricted capacity limiting it, and like all compounds it demands a cause: “Things in themselves different cannot possess an element in common except through a cause uniting them.” This compound participates or has a part in the perfection; it has therefore received the perfection, and can have received it only from Him who is perfection itself, which in its notion implies no imperfection.

From the moral point of view this doctrine becomes of vital importance in reminding us that the more we realize our limitations in wisdom and goodness, the more our minds should dwell on Him who is wisdom and goodness itself. The multiple finds its explanation only in the one, the diverse in the identical, the compound in the simple, the imperfect mingled with imperfection only in the perfect that is free from all imperfection.

This proof for the existence of God contains implicitly another which St. Thomas develops elsewhere, Ia IIae, q. 2, a. 8. He shows that beatitude or true happiness, the desire for which is natural to man, cannot be found in any limited or restricted good, but only in God who is known at least with a natural knowledge and loved with an efficacious love above all things. He proves that man’s beatitude cannot consist in wealth, honors, or glory, or in any bodily good; nor does it consist in some good of the soul, such as virtue, nor in any limited good. His argument for this last is based on the very nature of our intellect and will.

Let us consider (1) the fact which is the starting-point of the proof, (2) the principle on which the proof rests, (3) the culminating point of the proof, and (4) what the proof cannot extend to.

1) THE FACT OF EXPERIENCE: TRUE, SUBSTANTIAL, AND ENDURING HAPPINESS CANNOT BE FOUND IN ANY PASSING GOOD

We can ascend to the sovereign good, the source of perfect and unalloyed happiness, by starting either from the notion of imperfect subordinate goods or from the natural desire which such goods never succeed in satisfying.

If we begin with those finite limited goods which man is naturally inclined to desire, we very soon realize their imperfection. Whether it be health or the pleasures of the body, riches or honors, glory or power, or a knowledge of the sciences, we are forced to acknowledge that these are but transitory goods, extremely limited and imperfect. But, as we have said repeatedly, the imperfect, or the good mingled with imperfection, is no more than a good participated in by the restricted capacity of the recipient, and it presupposes the pure good completely excluding its contrary. Thus a wisdom associated with ignorance and error is no more than a participated wisdom, presupposing wisdom itself. This is the metaphysical aspect of the argument, the dialectic of the intellect proceeding by way of both exemplary and efficient causality.

But the proof we are here speaking of becomes more vital, more convincing, more telling, if we begin with that natural desire for happiness which everyone feels so keenly within him. This is the psychological and moral aspect of the argument, the dialectic of love founded on that of the intellect and proceeding by way of efficient (productive, regulative) causality or final causality. These, the efficient and final, are the two extrinsic causes, each as necessary as the other. Indeed the final is the first of the causes, so that Aristotle (Metaphysics, Bk. XII, chap. 7) saw more clearly the final causality of God the pure act than His efficient causality, whether productive or regulative.

Following in the wake of Aristotle and St. Augustine, St. Thomas (Ia IIae, q. 2, a. 7, 8) insists on the fact that man by his very nature desires to be happy. Now man’s intellect, transcending as it does the sense and the imagination of the brute, has knowledge not merely of this or that particular good, whether delectable or useful—a particular food or a particular

medicine, for instance—but of good in general (universal in predication), constituting it as such, as the desirable wherever it is to be found. Since this is so, and since man's inclination is directed to the real good to be found in things, and not simply to the abstract idea of the good, it follows that he cannot find his true happiness in any finite limited good, but in the sovereign good alone (universal in being and causation).

It is impossible for man to find in any limited good that true happiness which by his very nature he desires, for his intellect, becoming immediately aware of the limitation, conceives forthwith the idea of a higher good, and the will naturally desires it.

This fact is expressed in the profound sentence of St. Augustine's Confessions (Bk. I, chap. 1): "Our heart, O Lord, is restless, until it finds its rest in Thee" (irrequietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in Te, Domine).

Who of us has not experienced this fact in his intimate life? In sickness we have the natural desire to recover our health as a great good. But, however happy we are in our recovery, no sooner are we cured than we realize that health alone cannot bring happiness: a man may be in perfect health and yet be overwhelmed with sadness. It is the same with the pleasures of the senses: far from being sufficient to give us happiness, let them be abused ever so little and they bring only disillusion and disgust; for our intellect, with its conception of a universal unlimited good, straightway tells us: "Now that you have obtained this sensible enjoyment which just now had such an attraction for you, you see that it is sheer emptiness incapable of filling the deep void in your heart, of satisfying your desire for happiness."

It is the same with wealth and honors, which many desire eagerly. We no sooner possess them than we realize how ephemeral and superficial is the satisfaction they give, how inadequate they, too, are to fill the void in our hearts. And intellect tells us that all these riches and honors are still but a poor finite good that is dissipated by a breath of wind.

The same must be said of power and glory. One who is lifted up on the wheel of fortune has scarcely reached the top when he begins to descend; he must give place to others, and soon he will be as a star whose light is extinguished. Even if the more fortunate retain their power and glory for a time, they never find real happiness in it; often they experience such anxiety and weariness of mind that they long to withdraw from it all.

The same applies to the knowledge of the sciences. Here it is a case of only an extremely limited good; for the true, even when complete and without admixture of error, is still the good of the intellect, not of man as a whole. Besides the intellect, the heart and will have also their profound spiritual needs, and so long as these remain unsatisfied there can be no true happiness.

Shall we find it in a most pure and exalted form of friend ship? Such a friendship will doubtless bring us intense joy, sometimes affecting our inmost being. But we have an intellect that conceives universal and unlimited good, and here again it will not be long in perceiving that this most pure and exalted form of friendship is still but a finite good. This reminds us of those words of St. Catherine of Siena: “Would you continue long to slake your thirst with the cup of true friendship? Leave it, then, beneath the fountain of living water; otherwise it will speedily be drained and no longer satisfy your thirst.” If the thirst is satisfied, it is because the person loved is made better, and in order to be made better he needs to receive a new goodness from a higher source.

Suppose we could look upon an angel and see his suprasensible, purely spiritual beauty. Once. the first sense of wondering amazement had passed, our intellect, with its conception of the universal, unlimited good, would immediately remind us that even this was no more than a finite good and thereby exceedingly poor in comparison with the unlimited and perfect good itself. Two finite goods, however unequal they may be, are equally remote from the infinite; in this respect the angel is as insignificant as the grain of sand.

2) THE PRINCIPLE BY WHICH WE ASCEND TO GOD

Can it be that this natural desire for happiness, which we all have within us, must forever remain unsatisfied? Is it possible for a natural desire to be of no effect, chimerical, without meaning or purpose?

That a desire born of a fantasy of the imagination or of an error of reason, such as the desire to have wings, may be chimerical, can well be understood. But surely it could not be so with a desire which has its immediate foundation in nature without the intervention of any conditional judgment. The desire for happiness is not a mere hypothetical wish; it is innate, with its immediate foundation in nature itself; and nature again is

stable and constant, being found in all men, in all places, and at all times. Furthermore, this desire is of the very nature of the will, which, prior to any act, is an appetitive faculty having universal good as its object. The nature of our will can no more be the result of chance, of a fortuitous encounter, than can the nature of our intellect; because, like the intellect, the will is a principle of operation wholly simple, in no way compounded of different elements that chance might have brought together. Can this natural desire of the will be chimerical?

In answer to this question we say, first, that natural desire in beings inferior to ourselves is not ineffectual, as the naturalists have shown from the experimental point of view. In herbiverous animals the natural desire is for herbaceous food, and this they find; in carnivores the desire is to find flesh to eat, and they find it. Man's natural desire is for happiness, and with him true happiness is not and cannot be found in any limited good. Is this true happiness nowhere to be found? Is man's natural desire, then, to remain a deception and without finality when the natural desire of inferior beings is not in vain?

And this is not purely a naturalist's argument based on experience and the analogy of our own natural desire with that of inferior beings. It is a metaphysical argument based on the certitude of the absolute validity of the principle of finality.

If the natural desire for true happiness is chimerical, then all human activity, inspired as it is by that desire, is without finality, without a raison d'être, and thus contrary to the necessary and evident principle that every agent acts for an end. To grasp the truth of this principle, thus formulated by Aristotle, it is enough to understand the terms of the proposition. Any agent whatsoever, conscious or unconscious, has an inclination to something determinate which is appropriate to it. Now the end is precisely that determinate good to which the act of the agent or the motion of the mobile object is directed.

This principle, self-evident to one who understands the meaning of the words agent and end, may be further demonstrated by a reductio ad absurdum; for otherwise, says St. Thomas (Ia IIae, q. 1, a. 2), "there would be no reason why the agent should act rather than not act, no reason why it should act in this way rather than in another, " why it should desire this object rather than some other.

If there were no finality in nature, if no natural agent acted for some end, there would be no reason why the eye should see and not hear or taste, no reason why the wings of the bird should be for flying and not for walking or swimming, no reason for the intellect to know rather than desire. Everything would then be for no purpose, and be unintelligible. There would be no reason why the stone should fall instead of rising, no reason why bodies should attract rather than repel one another and be dispersed, thus destroying the harmony of the universe.

The principle of finality has an absolute necessity and value. It is no less certain than the principle of efficient causality, that everything that happens and every contingent being demands an efficient cause, and that in the last analysis everything that happens demands an efficient cause itself uncaused, a cause that is its own activity, its own action, and is therefore its existence, since action follows being and the mode of action the mode of being.

These two principles of efficient and final causality are equally certain, the certitude being metaphysical and not merely physical, antecedent to a demonstration of the existence of God. Indeed, without finality, efficient causality is inconceivable: as we have just seen, it would be without a purpose and consequently unintelligible.

3) THE TERM OF THIS ASCENT

There is, then, a purpose in our natural desire for happiness; its Inclination is for some good. But is this inclination for a good that is wholly unreal, or, though real, yet unattainable?

In the first place, the good to which our natural desire tends is not simply an idea in the mind, for, as Aristotle more than once pointed out, whereas truth is formally in the mind enunciating a judgment, the good is formally in things. When we desire food, it is not enough for us to have the idea: it is not the idea of bread that nourishes, but the bread itself. Hence the natural desire of the will, founded as it is in the very nature of the intellect and the will and not merely in the imagination or the vagaries of reason, tends to a real good, not merely to the idea of the good; otherwise it is no longer a desire and certainly not a natural one.

It will perhaps be said that our universal idea of good leads us to seek happiness in the simultaneous or successive enjoyment of all those finite goods that have an attraction for us, such as health and bodily pleasures,

riches and honors, the delight in scientific knowledge, art and friendship. Those who in their mad career wish to enjoy every finite good, one after another, if not all at once, seem for the moment to think that herein lies true happiness.

But experience and reason undeceive us. That empty void in the heart always remains, making itself felt in weariness of spirit; and intelligence tells us that not even the simultaneous possession of all these goods, finite and imperfect as they are, can constitute the good itself which is conceived and desired by us, any more than an innumerable multitude of idiots can equal a man of genius.

Quantity has nothing to say in the matter; it is quality of good that counts here. Even if the whole sum of created goods were multiplied to infinity they would not constitute that pure and perfect good which the intellect conceives and the will desires. Here is the profound reason for that weariness of spirit which the worldly experience and which they take with them wherever they go. They pursue one thing after another, yet never find any real satisfaction or true happiness.

Now if our intellect is able to conceive a universal, unlimited good, the will also, awakened as it is by the intellect, has a range and depth that is limitless. Is it possible, therefore, for its natural desire—which calls for a real good and not merely the idea of good—to be chimerical and of no effect?

This natural desire, which has its foundation not in the imagination but in our very nature, is, like that nature, something fixed and unchangeable. It can no more be ineffectual than the desire of the herbivora or that of the carnivora; it can no more be ineffective than is the natural ordering of the eye for seeing, the ear for hearing, the intellect for knowing. If therefore this natural desire for happiness cannot be ineffective, if it cannot find its satisfaction in any finite goods or in the sum total of them, we are necessarily compelled to affirm the existence of a pure and perfect good. That is, the good itself or the sovereign good, which alone is capable of responding to our aspirations. Otherwise the universal range of our will would be a psychological absurdity, something radically unintelligible and without a purpose.

4) WHAT DOES NOT COME WITHIN THE EXIGENCIES OF OUR NATURE

Does it follow that this natural desire for happiness in us demands that we attain to the intuitive vision of God, the sovereign good?

By no means; for the intuitive vision of the divine essence is essentially supernatural and therefore gratuitous, in no way due to our nature or to the nature of angels.

This is the meaning of St. Paul's words: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard; neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him. But to us God hath revealed them by His Spirit. For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (I Cor. 2: 9).

But far inferior to the intuitive vision of the divine essence and to Christian faith, is a natural knowledge of God as the author of nature, which is the knowledge given us by the proofs of His existence.

If original sin had not enfeebled our moral strength, this natural knowledge would have enabled us to attain to a naturally efficacious love for God as the author of nature, who is the sovereign good known in a natural way.

Now had man been created in a purely natural state, he would have found in this natural knowledge and naturally efficacious love for God his true happiness. Of course it would not have been that absolutely perfect and supernatural beatitude, which is the immediate vision of God, but a true happiness, nevertheless, one solid and lasting; for in the natural order, at any rate, the order embracing everything our nature demands, this natural love for God, if efficacious, does really direct our life to Him and in a true sense enables us to find our rest in Him. Such in the state of pure nature would have been the destiny of the immortal souls of the just after the probation of this life. The soul naturally desires to live forever, and a natural desire of this kind cannot be ineffective. (Cf. St. Thomas, Ia, q. 75, a. 6, c, end.)

But gratuitously we have received far more than this: we have received grace which is the seed of glory, and with it t supernatural faith and a supernatural love for God, who is no longer the author merely of nature but also of grace.

And so, for us Christians, the proof we have been discussing receives strong confirmation in the happiness and peace to be found even here on earth through union with God.

In a realm far beyond any glimpse that philosophical reason might obtain, though not yet the attainment of the perfect beatitude of heaven, true happiness is ours to the extent that we love the sovereign good with a sincere, efficacious, generous love, and above all things, more than ourselves or any creature, and to the extent that we direct our whole life daily more and more to Him.

In spite of the occasional overwhelming sorrows of this present life, we shall have found true happiness and peace, at least in the summit of the soul, if we love God above all things; for peace is the tranquillity that comes with order, and here we are united to the very principle of all order and of all life.

Our proof thus receives strong confirmation from the profound experiences of the spiritual life, in which are realized the words of our Lord: “Peace I leave with you: My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, do I give unto you” (John 14:27). It is not in the accumulation of pleasures, riches, honors, glory, and power, but in union with God, that the Savior has given us peace. So solid and enduring is the peace He has given us that He can and actually does preserve it within us, as He predicted that He would, even in the midst of persecutions: “Blessed are the poor.... Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice.... Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5: 10). Already the kingdom of heaven is theirs in the sense that in union with God they possess through charity the beginnings of eternal life, inchoatio vitae aeternae (IIa IIae, q. 24, a. 3 ad 2um).

Epicurus boasted that his teaching would bring happiness to his disciples even in the red-hot brazen bull of Phalaris in which men were roasted to death. Jesus alone has been able to accomplish such a thing by giving to the martyrs in the very midst of their torments peace and true happiness through union with God.

According to the degree of this union with God, the proof we have been discussing is thereby very much confirmed by reason of the profound spiritual experience; for, through the gift of wisdom, God makes Himself felt within us as the life of our life: “For the Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit that we are the sons of God” (Rom. 8: 16). God makes Himself felt within us as the principle of that filial love for Him which He Himself inspires in us.

5. God, The Ultimate Foundation Of Duty

We have been considering the proof for the existence of the sovereign good based on our natural desire for happiness. It may be summed up, we said, in this way: A natural desire, one that has its foundation not in the imagination or the vagaries of reason but in our very nature, which we have in common with all men, cannot possibly be ineffective, chimerical, deceptive; this means that it cannot be for a good that is either unreal or unattainable.

Now every man has a natural desire for happiness, and true happiness is not to be found in any finite or limited good, for our intellect, with its conception of universal, unlimited good, naturally constrains us to desire it.

There must, then, be an unlimited good, pure and simple, without any admixture of non-good or imperfection; without it the universal range of our will would be a psychological absurdity and without any meaning whatever.

If the herbivora find the grass they need and the carnivora the prey necessary for their sustenance, then the natural desire in man cannot be to no purpose. The natural desire for true happiness must be possible of attainment and, since it is to be found only in the knowledge and love of the sovereign good, and this is God, then God must exist.

There is another proof for God’s existence, the starting point of which is not in our desire for happiness but in moral obligation or the direction of our will to moral good. This proof leads up to the sovereign good, not considered as simply the supreme desirable but as possessing the right to be loved, as having a claim on our love, and as the foundation of duty.

1) THE ORDERING OF OUR WILL TO MORAL GOOD

This proof has its starting-point in human conscience. All men, including even those who doubt the existence of God, realize, at least vaguely, that

one must do good and avoid evil. To recognize this truth it is enough to have a notion of “good” and to distinguish, as common sense does, between (1) sensible or purely delectable goods, (2) good that is useful in view of some end, and (3) honorable or moral good (bonum honestum), which is good in itself independently of the enjoyment or utility it may afford. The animal finds its complete satisfaction in delectable good of the senses; by instinct it makes use of sensible good that it finds to be useful, but without perceiving that the raison d’être of the useful lies in the end for which it is employed. The swallow picks up a piece of straw with which to make its nest without knowing that the straw is of use in building it. Man alone, through his reason, recognizes that the utility or raison d’être of the means lies in the end they subserve.

Again, he alone recognizes and can love the honorable good; he alone can understand this moral truth: that one must do good and avoid evil. The imagination of the brute may be trained and continually perfected in its own order, but never will it succeed in grasping this truth.

But, on the other hand, every man, however uncultured he may be, will grasp this truth as soon as he comes to the age of reason. Everyone who has come to the full use of reason will recognize this threefold distinction in the good, even though he may not always be able to put it into words. It is obvious to anyone that a tasty fruit is a delectable good of the sensible order, a physical good having nothing to do with moral good, since the use it is put to may be either morally good or morally bad: the delectable is not therefore in itself moral.

Again, all are aware that a bitter medicine is not a delectable good, but one that is useful in view of some end, as a possible means of recovering their health. In this way money is useful and, from the moral point of view, the use it is put to may be either good or bad. Here is one of the most elementary principles of common sense.

Lastly, everyone who has come to the age of reason sees that transcending the delectable and the useful there is the honorable good, the rational or moral good, which is good in itself independently of any pleasure or advantage or convenience resulting from it.

In this sense virtue is a good, such as patience, courage, justice. That justice is a spiritual good and not a sensible one is obvious to everybody. Though it may bring joy to the person practicing it, it is good regardless of this enjoyment; it is good because it is reasonable or in conformity with

right reason. We are fully aware that justice must be practiced for its own sake and not merely for the advantage to be gained, let us say, in avoiding the evil consequences of injustice. Thus, even though it should mean certain death to us, we are bound to do justice and avoid injustice, especially where the injustice is grave.

This is a perfection belonging to man as man, to man as a rational being, and not as an animal.

To know truth, to love it above all things, to act in all things in accordance with right reason, is likewise good in itself apart from the pleasure we may find in it or the advantages to be gained thereby.

Furthermore, this honorable or rational good is presented to us as the necessary end of our activity and hence as of obligation. Everyone is aware that a rational being must behave in conformity with right reason, even as reason itself is in conformity with the absolute principles of being or reality: “That which is, is, and cannot at the same time be and not be.” The honest man who is beaten unmercifully by some scamp proves to him the superiority of the intelligible world over that of sense when he exclaims: “You may be the stronger, but that does not prove that you are right.” Justice is justice.

“Do your duty, come what may, “ “one must do good and avoid evil.” In these or equivalent formulas the idea of duty finds expression among all peoples. Pleasure and self-interest must be subordinated to duty, the delectable and the useful to the moral. Here we have an eternal truth, which has always been true and will ever be so.

What is the proximate basis of duty or moral obligation? As St. Thomas (Ia IIae, q. 94, a. 2) says, this basis is the principle of finality, evident to our intellect, according to which every being acts in view of some end and must tend to that end which is proportionate to it. Whence it follows that in rational beings the will must tend to the honorable or rational good, to which it has been ordered. The faculty to will and act rationally is for the rational act as the eye is for seeing, the ear for hearing, the foot for walking, the wings of the bird for flying, the cognitive faculty for knowing. A potency is for its correlative act; if it fails to tend to that act it ceases to have a raison d’être. It is not merely better for the faculty to tend to its act, it is its intrinsic primordial law.

Since over and above the sensible, the delectable, and the useful good, the will from its very nature is capable of desiring the honorable or rational

good (and this is equivalent to saying that it is essentially ordered to that good), it cannot refuse to desire that good without ceasing to have a raison d'être. The will is for the purpose of loving and desiring rational good; this good must therefore be realized by it—by man, that is, who is capable of realizing this good and who exists for such purpose. This is the proximate basis of moral obligation. But is there not also a far nobler and ultimate basis?

The voice of conscience is peculiarly insistent at times in commanding or forbidding the performance of certain acts—in forbidding perjury or treason, for instance—or again in rebuking and condemning when a grave offense has been committed. Is not the murderer tormented by his conscience after his crime, even when the deed is perpetrated in complete secrecy? The crime is unknown to men, yet conscience never ceases to upbraid him even though he chooses to doubt God's existence.

Where does this voice of conscience come from? Is it simply the result of a logical process? Does it come simply from our own reason? No, for it makes itself heard in each and every human being; it dominates them all.

Is it the result of human legislation? No, for it is above human legislation, above the legislation of any one nation, of every nation and of the League of Nations. It is this voice which tells us that an unjust law is not binding in conscience; those who enact unjust laws are themselves rebuked in the secrecy of their hearts by the persistent voice of right reason.

2) THE ORDERING OF OUR WILL TO MORAL GOOD PRESUPPOSES A DIVINE INTELLIGENT DESIGNER

Whence, then, comes this voice of conscience, so insistent at times? We take for granted that a means cannot be ordered to an end except by an intelligent designer, who alone can recognize in the end to be attained the raison d'être of the means, and therefore can alone determine the means to the end. We take for granted also, as was seen above (chap. 2), that the order in the physical universe presupposes a divine intelligent designer. Then with much greater reason must such an intellect be presupposed in the ordering of our will to moral good. There is no passive direction without a corresponding active direction, which in this case must be from the very Author of our nature.

Again, if from the eternal speculative truths (such as, that the same thing cannot at the same time be and not be), we pass by a necessary transition to the existence of a supreme Truth, the fountain of all other truths, why should we not ascend from the first principle of the moral law (it is necessary to do good and avoid evil) up to the eternal law?

Here we begin with the practical instead of the speculative principles; the obligatory character of the good merely gives a new aspect to the proof, and this characteristic, evident already in the proximate basis of moral obligation, leads us on to seek its ultimate basis.

If honorable good, to which our rational nature is ordered, must be desired apart from the satisfaction or advantages we derive from it; if that being which is capable of desiring it must do so under pain of ceasing to have a raison d'être; if our conscience loudly proclaims this duty and thereafter approves or condemns without our being able to stifle remorse of conscience; if, in a word, the right to be loved and practiced inherent in the good dominates the whole of our moral activity and that of every society, actual or possible, as the principle of contradiction dominates all reality, actual or possible: then of necessity there must exist from all eternity some basis on which these absolute rights inherent in the good are founded.

These claims inherent in justice dominate our individual, family, social, and political lives, and dominate the international life of nations, past, present, and to come. These necessary and predominating rights cannot have their raison d'être in the contingent, transient realities which they dominate, nor even in those manifold and subordinate goods or duties which are imposed upon us as rational beings. Transcending as they do everything that is not the Good itself, the rights of justice can have none but that Good as their foundation, their ultimate reason.

If, then, the proximate basis of moral obligation lies in the essential order of things, or, to be more precise, in the rational good to which our nature and activity are essentially ordered, its ultimate basis is to be found in the sovereign good, our objective last end. This moral obligation could only have been established by a law of the same order as the sovereign good—by the divine wisdom, whose eternal law orders and directs all creatures to their end. Agent and end are in corresponding orders. The passive direction on the part of our will to the good presupposes an active direction on the part of Him who created it for the good. In other words, in rational beings the will must tend to the honorable or rational good, since this is the

purpose for which it was created by a higher efficient cause, who Himself had in view the realization of this good.

This is why, according to common sense or natural reason, duty is in the last resort founded on the being, intelligence, and will of God, who has created us to know, love, and serve Him and thereby obtain eternal bliss.

And so, common sense has respect for duty, while at the same time it regards as legitimate our search after happiness. It rejects utilitarian morality on the one hand, and on the other Kantian morality, which consists in pure duty to the exclusion of all objective good. To common sense this latter is like an arid waste where the sun never shines.

Against this demonstration of God's existence, the objection is sometimes advanced that it is a begging of the question, that it involves a vicious circle. Strictly speaking, there is no moral obligation, so it is said, without a supreme lawgiver, and it is impossible to regard ourselves as subject to a categorical moral obligation unless this supreme lawgiver is first recognized. Hence the proof put forward presupposes what it seeks to prove; at the most it brings out more explicitly what is presumed to be already implicitly admitted.

To this we may reply, and rightly so, that it is sufficient first of all to show the passive direction of our will to moral good and then go on to prove the further truth that, since there can be no passive direction without an active direction, there must exist a first cause who has so given this tendency to the will. Thus we have seen that the order in the world presupposes a supreme intelligent designer, and that the eternal truths governing all contingent reality and every finite intelligence themselves require an eternal foundation.

Moreover, this passive direction of our will to moral good is not the only starting-point from which we may argue. We may also begin with moral obligation as evidenced in its effects, in the remorse felt by the murderer, for instance. Whence comes this terrible voice of remorse of conscience which the criminal never succeeds in silencing in the depths of his soul?

Right reason within us commands us to do good, that rational good to which our rational nature is directed. Nevertheless it does not command as a first and eternal cause; for in each of us reason first of all begins to command, then it slumbers, and is awakened again; it has many imperfections, many limitations. It is not the principle of all order, but is

itself ordered. We must therefore ascend higher to that divine wisdom by which everything is directed to the supreme good.

There alone do we find the ultimate basis of moral obligation or duty. There is no vicious circle; from the feeling of remorse or from its contrary, peace of mind, we ascend to conscience. In the approval or disapproval of conscience lies the explanation of these feelings. We then look for the source of this voice of conscience. The ultimate source is not in our imperfect reason, for reason in its commanding had a beginning. It commands only as secondary cause, presupposing a first cause that is eternal, simple, and perfect—wisdom itself, by which everything is directed to the good.

The sovereign good is now no longer presented simply as the supreme desirable, wherein alone we may find true happiness, if we love it above all things; it is further presented as the sovereign good which must be loved above all things, which demands our love and is the foundation of duty.

From all this it is plain that, if the primary duty toward God the last end of man is denied, then every other duty is deprived of its ultimate foundation. If we deny that we are morally bound to love before all else the good as such and God the sovereign good, what proof have we that we are bound to love that far less compelling good, the general welfare of humanity, which is the main object of the League of Nations? What proof have we that we are bound to love our country and family more than our life; or that we are bound to go on living and avoid suicide, even in the most overwhelming afflictions? If the sovereign good has not an inalienable right to be loved above all things, then a fortiori inferior goods have no such right. If we are not morally bound by a last end, then no end or means whatever is morally binding. If the foundation for moral obligation is not in a supreme lawgiver, then every human law is deprived of its ultimate foundation.

Such is the proof for the existence of God as supreme lawgiver and the sovereign good, who is the foundation of duty. Such is the eminent origin of the imperious voice of conscience, that voice which torments the criminal after his crime and gives to the conscientious who have done their utmost, that peace which comes from duty accomplished.

In conclusion we shall say a few words about another proof for the existence of God, a proof closely related to the preceding: that based on moral sanction.

The consideration of heroic acts unrequited here on earth and of crimes that go unpunished shows us the necessity of a sovereign judge, a rewarder and vindicator.

The existence of this sovereign judge and of an eternal sanction may be proved from the insufficiency of all other sanctions. Kant himself chose to attach some importance to this argument, but in itself it is far more convincing than he made it out to be. It may be summed up in this way:

By perseverance in virtue the just man merits happiness since he has persevered in doing good. Now the harmony prevailing between virtue and happiness, in another and better life, is accomplished by God alone. Therefore God and that other life exist.

The more exalted a man's moral life is, the firmer and livelier is his conviction resulting from this proof. In reality it presupposes the preceding proof and is a confirmation of it. If, in fact, the voice of conscience comes from the supreme lawgiver, then He must also be the sovereign judge who rewards and vindicates. Because He is intelligent and good, He owes it to Himself to give to every being what is necessary for it to attain the end for which He has destined it, and hence to give to the just that knowledge of truth and that beatitude which they deserve. (Cf. St. Thomas, Ia, q. 21, a. 1.) Furthermore, since the supreme lawgiver must of necessity love the good above all things, He owes it to Himself also to compel respect for its absolute rights and repress their violation (Ia IIae, q. 87, a. 1, 3).

In other words, if there is order in the physical world and if that order demands an intelligent designer, much more must there be order in the moral world, which is on an infinitely higher plane.

Herein is the answer to the complaints of the just who are persecuted and unjustly condemned by men. How often in this world do the wicked and indifferent triumph, while upright and high-minded souls, like Joan of Are, are condemned? Barabbas was even preferred to Jesus; Barabbas was set free and Jesus was crucified. Injustice cannot have the last word, especially when it is so flagrant as this. There is a higher justice; its voice makes itself heard in our conscience and it will one day restore all things to the true order. Then will be clearly made manifest the two aspects of the Sovereign Good: His right to be loved above all things, which is the principle of

justice, and His being essentially self-diffusive, which is the principle of mercy.

These moral proofs for the existence of God are of a nature to convince any mind that does not try to stifle the interior voice of conscience. Such a mind will have little difficulty in discovering the deeper source of this voice directing us to the good, because it comes from Him who is the good itself.

6. On The Nature Of God

We have seen how the classical proofs for the existence of God as presented by St. Thomas demonstrate the existence of a first mover of spiritual and corporeal beings, of a first cause of everything that comes into existence, of a necessary being on which all contingent and perishable things depend, of a supreme being, the first truth and sovereign good, and of an intelligent designer, the cause of order in the universe, to which we rightly give the name providence.

Now it is through these five attributes (first mover, first cause, etc.) that we have our conception of God. We have thus proved His existence. We must now go on to state what He is, what formally constitutes His nature. We cannot otherwise form a right idea of providence.

THE PROBLEM

Here on earth, of course, we can have no knowledge of the divine essence as it is really in itself; for this we must have an intuitive vision of it as the blessed see it in heaven. Our knowledge of God here on earth is obtained solely through the reflection of His perfections in the mirror of created things. Since these are on a plane far inferior to His, they do not enable us to know Him as He is in Himself. As Plato tells us in his allegory of the cave, where God is concerned we are to some extent like men who have never seen the sun but simply a reflection of its rays in the things it illuminates; or like men who have never seen white light but only the seven colors of the rainbow: violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange, and red. For such men a right conception of white light would be impossible; they could have only a negative or relative conception of it as an inaccessible source of light. It is the same with the divine nature: we cannot form a proper and positive conception of it through creatures, for the perfections which in God form an absolute unity are in creatures multiple and divided.

Here on earth, therefore, it is impossible for us to know the divine nature as it is in itself. If this were possible, we should see how all the divine perfections contained in it-such as infinite being, wisdom, love, justice, mercy—are really identified, yet without destroying one another. As it is, we are reduced to spelling out, as it were, and enumerating these divine perfections one after another, always with the reservation that they are identified in one transcendent simplicity, in the higher unity of the Deity or Divinity. But the Deity or the very essence of God—that which makes God to be God—we do not see, nor shall we ever be able to do so until we reach heaven. It is as though we were gazing at the sides of a pyramid the summit of which remains ever invisible.

But, without knowing the divine nature as it is in itself, can we not determine, so far as our imperfect mode of knowing permits, what it is that formally constitutes that nature? In other words, among all the perfections we attribute to God is there not one that is fundamental, the source as it were of all the divine attributes and likewise the principle distinguishing God from the world?

Is there not in God some radical perfection having the same function in Him as rationality in man? Man is defined as a rational being; this, distinguishing him from inferior beings, is the principle of his distinctive human characteristics. Because man is rational, he is free, he is morally responsible for his actions, he is social and religious, he has the faculty of speech and intelligent laughter. These characteristics do not exist in the brute beast. We deduce man’s characteristics as we deduce the properties of the triangle or the circle.

Is there in God some radical perfection also that allows of our defining Him, according to our imperfect mode of knowledge, in some such way as we define man, or again as we define a circle or a pyramid? In other words, is there not a certain order in the divine perfections, so that from one primary perfection all the rest may be deduced? This is the statement of the problem.

THE VARIOUS SOLUTIONS

To the question thus stated various solutions have been given. Beginning with the least satisfactory, we shall proceed by degrees to the most profound.

1) Some (Nominalists) have held that in God there is no fundamental perfection from which the rest may be logically deduced. According to their view, the divine essence is merely the sum of all the perfections; there can be no question of seeking a logical order among them, since they are simply different names for the same transcendent reality.

This doctrine of Nominalism leads to the conclusion that God is unknowable, because His attributes cannot be deduced from one fundamental divine perfection; and, since we can give no reason why He must be wise or just or merciful, we should simply be asserting the fact without knowing why.

2) Others, inspired by Descartes, have held that what constitutes the divine nature is liberty: God is pre-eminently a will transcendently free. Descartes claimed that, if God so willed, He could make the circle square, mountains without valleys, or beings that at one and the same time would exist and not exist, or effects without a cause. Ockham in the Middle Ages declared that, had God so willed, He could have commanded us not to love but to hate both ourselves and Him. That is, the principle of contradiction and the distinction between moral good and evil are dependent for their truth on the free will of God. First and foremost God is said to be absolute liberty.

In the opinion of some modern philosophers (Secretan in Switzerland, for instance), the correct definition of God is I am what I will, I am what I would freely be.

In reply to this view, it has been pointed out that liberty cannot be conceived as anterior to intellect. Liberty without intellect is impossible; it would be confounded with mere chance. Liberty is inconceivable without an intellect to direct it; it would be liberty without standard of any kind, without truth, without true goodness. As Leibniz remarked, to say that God, if He had wished, could have commanded us to hate Him, is to deny that He is of necessity the sovereign good; in that case, had He wished, He might well have been the Manichean principle of evil. A man would have be out of his senses to maintain such a position. To claim that God has established the distinction between good and evil by a purely arbitrary decree, to claim that He is absolute liberty without standard of any kind, is, as Leibniz again says, “to dishonor God.”

Clearly, then, liberty cannot be conceived without an intellect and wisdom to direct it, and conversely intellect is conceived as anterior to the

liberty it directs. The knowledge of true good, indeed, is anterior to the love of that good, which would not be so loved were it not already known.

Intellect, therefore, is prior to and the cause of liberty. Shall we say, then, that what formally constitutes the divine nature is intellect, the ever actual thought or eternal knowledge of the true in all its fullness? This, of course, is a divine perfection, but is it the fundamental perfection?

A number of philosophers and theologians thought so. They conceived of God as pre-eminently a pure intellectual flash subsisting eternally. During a storm at night, an immense streak of lightning may sometimes be seen, flashing from one extremity of the sky to the other; this, they would say, is a faint image of God. We also speak of "flashes of genius, " as in the case of Newton's discovery of the great laws of nature. These are transitory and very confined flashes, revealing what after all is only a partial truth, like the law of universal gravitation. God, on the other hand, is a pure intellectual flash subsisting eternally, who is infinite truth and sees in one glance all actual and possible worlds, with all their laws. God is, indeed, eternally subsistent thought itself, truth itself ever actually known. And why is this? Because intellectual life is the highest form of life, transcending vegetative plant life and sensitive animal life; because, too, intellect is anterior to will and liberty, which it directs by pointing out the good to be desired and loved.

This is all quite true. But is subsistent thought or intellection the absolutely primary perfection in God? However lofty this way of conceiving the divine nature may be, it does not seem to be the highest.

Holy Scripture provides us with a more profound conception of the divine nature. It tells us that God is being itself; He Himself has revealed His name to us as "He who is."

GOD IS THE ETERNALLY SUBSISTING BEING

In the Book of Exodus (3: 14), we are told how God, speaking to Moses from the burning bush, revealed His name. He did not say, "I am absolute liberty, I am what I will"; nor did He say, "I am intellect itself, thought eternally subsistent." He said, "I am who am, " that is, the eternally subsistent being

Let us call to mind this passage from Exodus: "Moses said to God: Lo, I shall go to the children of Israel, and say to them: The God of your fathers

hath sent me to you. If they should say to me: What is His name? what shall I say to them? God said to Moses: I am who am. He said: Thus shalt thou say to the children of Israel: He who is hath sent me to you." He who is: in Hebrew, Yahweh, from which the word Jehovah has been formed." This is my name forever, and this is my memorial unto all generations" (ibid., 15).

Again, in the last book of the New Testament (Apocalypse, 1:8), we read: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, saith the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty." (Cf. 1: 4.)

Under this title God has frequently revealed Himself to His saints, to St. Catherine of Siena, for instance: "I am He who is, thou art that which is not."

God, then, is not only pure spirit, He is being itself subsisting immaterial at the summit of all things and transcending any limits imposed by either space or matter or a finite spiritual essence.

In our imperfect mode of knowledge, must we not say that subsistent being is the formal constituent of the divine nature?

It would not seem a difficult matter to establish the truth of this. In fact, what formally constitutes the divine nature is that which in God we conceive to be the fundamental perfection distinguishing Him from creatures and the source from which His attributes are deduced.

Now, because God is the self-subsisting being, the infinite ocean of spiritual being, unlimited, unmaterialized, He is distinguished from every material or spiritual creature. The divine essence alone is existence itself, it alone of necessity exists. No creature is self-existent; none can say: I am being, truth, life, etc. Jesus alone among men said, "I am the truth and the life, " which was equivalent to saying, "I am God."

Upon this culminating point, namely, the self-subsisting being, converge the five proofs for the existence of God, as developed by St. Thomas: the first mover, the first cause, the necessary being, the supreme being, the intelligent designer of order in the universe. All these attributes must be predicated of the self-subsisting and immaterial being who is at the summit of all things. Again, from this culminating point are deduced all the divine attributes, as the characteristics of man are deduced from his rationality.

As will be seen more clearly in what follows, the self-subsisting and immaterial being who is at the summit of all things must be absolutely one and simple, must be truth itself ever actually known, the good itself ever actually loved. By reason of His perfect and unique immateriality He must

be intelligence itself, thought itself eternally subsistent, wisdom itself; subsistent will and love; hence justice and mercy.

Conversely, we see that justice and mercy presuppose the love of the good; that love presupposes an intellect which enlightens it; that intellect presupposes an intelligent being and at the same time an intelligible being which it contemplates.

It remains true, therefore, that of all the names of God, the primary and most distinctive is “He who is, “ Yahweh. It is pre-eminently His name, says St. Thomas (Ia, q. 13 a. 11), and that for three reasons:

1) Because it expresses not one form of being or one particular essence, but being itself; and God alone is being itself, He alone is self-existent.

2) It is the most universal name, embracing being in all its fullness, with all its perfections—the boundless, shoreless, ocean, as it were, of omnipotent, omniscient, spiritual substance.

3) This name, “He who is, “ signifies not only being, but the ever-present being, for whom there is neither past nor future.

Here, then, is what formally constitutes the divine nature according to our imperfect manner of understanding, which consists in deducing from this formal constituent the divine attributes, enumerating them one after another: unity, wisdom, love, justice, mercy and the rest, yet without ever perceiving how they are fused together and identified in the intimate life of God, which is the Deity.

THE DEITY

In this life we can have no knowledge of the Deity, of the divine nature, such as it really is; for this we should need to have an intuitive vision of it as the blessed have in heaven, without the intervention of any created image. Only in heaven shall we see how wisdom is identical with God’s utterly free good pleasure; how, for all its freedom, this good pleasure is by no means a caprice, since it is penetrated through and through by wisdom. Then only shall we see how infinite justice and mercy are identified in the love of the sovereign good, which has the right to be loved above all else and which tends to communicate itself to us for our happiness.

The Deity, as it really is, remains for us a secret, a profound mystery. Indeed, the mystics have called it the Great Darkness, a light-transcending darkness; it is the “light inaccessible” spoken of in Scripture.

Although we cannot have knowledge of the Deity as it really is, we are permitted to participate in it through sanctifying grace, which is in very truth a participation in the divine nature as it really is, preparing us in this present life to see and love God some day as He sees and loves Himself. From this we see the value of sanctifying grace, which far surpasses the natural life of the intellect, whether in us or even in the angels. This truth leads St. Thomas to remark that the least degree of sanctifying grace in the soul of a little child just baptized is of more value than all corporeal and spiritual natures taken together: “The good of grace in one is greater than the good of nature in the whole universe” (Ia IIae, q. 113, a. 9 ad 2um).

Pascal expresses this well in one of the finest pages of his Pensees: “The least of minds is greater than all material objects, the firmament, the stars, the earth and its kingdoms; for the mind has knowledge of all these things and of itself; whereas things material have no knowledge at all. Bodies and minds, all these taken together and the effects produced by them, do not equal the least act of charity. This latter is of an infinitely higher order. From the sum total of material things there could not possibly issue one little thought, because thought is of another order. From bodies and minds we cannot possibly have an act of true charity, for the latter, too, is of another order, pertaining to the supernatural. The saints have their realm, their glory, their luster, and have no need of temporal or spiritual aggrandizement, which in no way affects them, neither increasing nor decreasing their greatness. The saints are seen by God and the angels, not by bodies or by curious minds. God suffices for them.” This sums up the value of the hidden life.

In the present life this holiness reveals most clearly, though in the obscurity of faith, what constitutes the intimate life of God, the Deity. This it does because holiness, which is the life of grace in its perfection, is a real, living participation in this same intimate life of God, preparing us to behold it some future day. Hence those words of the psalmist (Ps. 67: 36) : “God is wonderful in His saints.”

PART II

THE PERFECTIONS OF GOD WHICH HIS PROVIDENCE PRESUPPOSES

7. The Divine Simplicity

We have seen that the formal constituent of the divine nature according to our imperfect mode of knowledge is subsistent being, for this distinguishes Him from every other being and is the source from which all His attributes may be deduced, as man's characteristics are deduced from the fact that he is a rational being. And now, in order to have a right idea of providence, we must consider those divine perfections which it presupposes. A full consideration of these perfections helps us to a true notion of providence and gradually leads us to a more exact understanding of it.

We distinguish between the attributes relative to God's being (His simplicity, infinity, eternity, incomprehensibility) and those relating to the divine operations (in the intellect, wisdom and providence; in the will, love with its two great virtues, mercy and justice; and finally omnipotence).

All these attributes are absolute perfections, implying no imperfection, and they may be deduced from what we conceive to be the formal constituent of the divine nature.

Our Lord said: "Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect." Perfect, not merely like the angels, but as our heavenly Father is perfect; because we have received sanctifying grace, which should be constantly increasing in us and which is a participation, not in the angelic nature, but in the divine nature itself. Since, then, every passing day ought to see in our lives a gradually increasing participation in these infinite perfections of God, we should frequently make them the subject of contemplation in our prayer, by slowly meditating, for instance, on the Our Father.

We shall speak first of God's simplicity, which is so marked a feature in the ways of divine providence.

What is simplicity in general? As unity is the non-division of being, so simplicity is the opposite of composition, complexity, and complication. The simple is opposed to what is compounded of different parts, opposed therefore to what is complicated, pretentious, or tainted with affectation. From the moral point of view simplicity or integrity is opposed to duplicity.

We speak of a child's outlook as simple because it goes straight to the point; it has no concealed motives; its inclination is not in several directions at once. When a child says a thing, it is not thinking of something else; when it says "yes, " it does not mean "no"; it is not two-faced or deceitful. Our Lord tells us: "If thy eye be single [simple], thy whole body will be lightsome." That is, if our intention is straightforward and simple, then there will be a unity, truth, and transparency in our whole life, instead of its being divided as it is with those who seek to serve two masters, God and wealth. And when we consider the complexity of motive, the insincerity we find in the world and the complications arising from lying and deceit, we cannot help feeling that the moral virtue of simplicity, of candor and uprightness, is the reflection of a divine perfection. As St. Thomas says, "Simplicity makes the intention right by excluding duplicity" (IIa IIae, q. 109, a. 2 ad 4um).

But what is divine simplicity? It is the absence of all compounding of different parts, the absence of all division.

1) There cannot be in God a distinction of quantitative parts as in matter. Every material thing has extended parts that are contiguous, whether these parts are similar as in the diamond, or different, like the members and the organs of a living being: the eyes, ears, and the rest.

The simplicity of God, on the contrary, is the simplicity of pure spirit, incomparably superior to that of the purest diamond, or to the unity of the most perfect organism. In God we do not find a distinction of two parts as soul and body, the one giving life to the other: the latter would be less perfect; it would not be life itself, but would merely participate in life; it would not be the principle of all order, but would itself be ordered. No imperfection or composition of any kind exists in God. Every compound requires a cause uniting the elements composing it, whereas God is the supreme cause uncaused. His simplicity therefore is absolute.

2) The simplicity of God far surpasses that of the angels. Of course an angel is pure spirit, but his essence is not self-existent: it is merely susceptible or capable of existence; it is not existence itself. An angel is a

compound of finite essence and limited existence, whereas, as we have seen, God is self-subsisting, purely immaterial being.

An angel can acquire knowledge only by means of an intellectual faculty; he can desire only through another faculty, the will. These two faculties with their successive acts of thought and desire are accidents distinct from the angel's substance; his substance remains always the same while his thoughts succeed one another. In God, on the other hand, there can be no question of composition of substance and accidents, because the divine substance is the fullness of being, the fullness also of truth ever apprehended and of goodness ever loved. In Him no succession of thoughts takes place: there is but one unchanging, subsistent thought, embracing all truth. In Him no successive acts of will occur; there is but one subsistent, unchanging act of will, which is directed to all that He wills.

Therefore divine simplicity or divine unity, is the absence of all composition and division in being, thought, and volition.

3) The simplicity of God's intellect is that of the intuitive glance, excluding all error and ignorance, and directed from above and unchangingly upon all knowable truth.

The simplicity of His will or intention is that of a transcendently pure intention, disposing all things admirably and permitting evil only in view of a greater good.

But the most beautiful feature of God's simplicity is that it unites within itself perfections that are apparently at opposite extremes: absolute immutability and absolute liberty, infinite wisdom and a good pleasure so free as to seem at times to be arbitrariness; or again, infinite justice inexorable toward unrepented sin, and infinite mercy. All these infinite perfections are fused together and identified in God's simplicity, yet without destroying one another. In this especially consists the transcendence and splendor of this divine attribute.

We have a reflection of this exalted simplicity in a child's simplicity of outlook, and to a greater degree in that of the saints, rising above the frequently deceitful entanglements of the world and all sorts of duplicity.

Let us now come down once more to creatures. We find a vast difference between the simplicity of God, with the holiness it reflects, and the seeming simplicity which consists in giving vent to everything that comes into our heart and mind at the risk of contradicting ourselves from one day to the next when impressions have altered and people with whom we live have

ceased to please us. This seeming simplicity is sheer fickleness and contradiction, a complication therefore and a more or less conscious lie. God's simplicity, on the other hand, is an unalterable unity, the simplicity of unchanging supreme wisdom and of the purest and strongest love of the good, remaining ever the same and infinitely surpassing our susceptibility and unstable opinions.

We have a glimpse of this divine simplicity when we consider the soul that has acquired a simple outlook, so that it is now able to judge of all things wisely in the light of God and to desire nothing but for His sake. The complex soul, on the other hand, is one that bases all its judgments on the varying impressions caused by the emotions and that desires things from motives of self-interest with its changing caprices, now clinging to them obstinately, now changing with every mood or with time and circumstances. And whereas the complex soul is agitated by mere trifles, the soul that has acquired simplicity of purpose, by reason of its wisdom and unselfish love, is always at rest. The gift of wisdom brings peace, that tranquillity which comes from order, together with that unity and harmony which characterize the simplified life united with God.

The souls of such men as St. Joseph, St. John, St. Francis, St. Dominic, the Cure of Ars give us some idea of this simplicity of God; but still more the soul of Mary, and especially the holy soul of Jesus, who said: "If thy eye be single, thy whole body shall be lightsome." That is, if your soul is simple in its outlook, it will be in all things enlightened, steadfast, loyal, sincere, and free from all duplicity." Be ye wise as serpents [so as not to be seduced by the world], and simple as doves, " so as to remain always in God's truth." I confess to Thee, O Father,... because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones." "Let your speech be yea, yea: no, no" (Matt. 10: 16; 11: 25; 5: 37)

In the Old Testament we read: "Seek the Lord in simplicity of heart" (Wis. 1: 1) ; "Better is the poor man that walketh in his simplicity, than a rich man that is perverse in his lips and unwise" (Prov. 19:1). "Let us all die in our innocency," cried the Machabees amid the injustices that oppressed them (I Mach. 2:37). "Obey... in simplicity of heart," said St. Paul (Col. 3: 22) ; and he admonishes the Corinthians not to lose "the simplicity that is in Christ" (II Cor. 11: 3).

This simplicity, says Bossuet, enables an introverted soul to comprehend even the heights of God, the ways of Providence, the unfathomable

mysteries which to a complex soul are a scandal, the mysteries of infinite justice and mercy, and the supreme liberty of the divine good pleasure. All these mysteries, in spite of their transcendence and obscurity, are simple for those of simple vision.

The reason is that, in divine matters, the simplest things, such as the Our Father, are also the most profound. On the other hand, in the things of this world, containing both good and evil closely intermingled and thereby exceedingly complex, anybody who is simple is lacking in penetration and will remain naive, unsuspecting, and shallow. In the things of God simplicity is combined with depth and loftiness; for the sublimest of divine things as also the deepest things of our heart, are simplicity itself.

THE PERFECT IMAGE OF GOD'S SIMPLICITY

The purest and most exalted image that has been given us of the divine simplicity is the holiness of Jesus, which embraces, as it were fused together, virtues to all appearances at opposite extremes. Let us call to mind the simplicity He displayed in His relations with His adversaries, with His heavenly Father, and with souls.

To the Pharisees, wishing to put Him to death, He says without fear of contradiction: "Which of you shall convince me of sin?" (John 8:46.) Their duplicity aroused His holy indignation: "Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; because you shut the kingdom of heaven against men, for you yourselves do not enter in; and those that are going in, you suffer not to enter.... Woe to you, blind guides... you are like to whited sepulchers, which outwardly appear to men beautiful, but within are full of dead men's bones, and of all filthiness" (Matt. 23: 13, 25, 27).

Referring to His heavenly Father, He says: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me.... I do always the things that please Him.... I honor my Father.... I seek not my own glory" (John 4: 34; 8: 29, 49, 50)." My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me. Nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt." "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." "It is consummated" (Matt. 26:39; Luke 23: 46; John 19: 30).

And lastly, with regard to the faithful, He says: "Learn of Me, because I am meek, and humble of heart; and you shall find rest to your souls" (Matt. 11: 29). Such is this simplicity of His that He alone can speak of His own humility without losing it.

He is the good shepherd of souls, who prefers the company of the poor and the weak, the afflicted and little children, and of sinners too, in order to win them back. He is the good shepherd, who in all simplicity gives His life for His sheep, praying for His executioners and saying to the good thief: “This day thou shalt be with Me in paradise” (Luke 23: 43).

But the most astonishing feature of our Lord’s simplicity is that it unites in itself virtues that to all appearances are at opposite extremes, and each virtue carried to its highest degree of perfection.

In Him are reconciled in a simple unity that holy severity of justice He metes out to the hypocritical Pharisees and the abounding mercy He displays toward all those souls whose shepherd He is; and the rigor of His justice is always subordinate to the love of the good from which it proceeds.

In Him are reconciled in the greatest simplicity the most profound humility and the loftiest dignity, magnanimity or grandeur of soul. He lived for thirty years the hidden life of a poor artisan, saying that He came not to be ministered unto but to minister. He fled to the mountain when they would have made Him king, washed the feet of His disciples on Holy Thursday, and for our sake accepted the final humiliations of the passion. On the other hand, during the same passion with lofty dignity He proclaimed the universality of His kingdom.” Pilate said to Him: Art Thou the king of the Jews?... What hast Thou done?... Jesus answered: Thou sayest that I am a king. For this was I born, and for this came I into the world; that I should give testimony to the truth. Everyone that is of the truth, heareth My voice” (John 18: 33 ff.). With simplicity and noble majesty He answered Caiphas, who adjured Him to declare whether He was the son of God: “Thou hast said it. Nevertheless I say to you, hereafter you shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven” (Matt. 26: 64).

This profound humility and lofty dignity are found reconciled in Jesus’ simplicity. Yet He, the humblest of men, was condemned for an alleged crime of blasphemy and pride.

In Him likewise are reconciled the most perfect gentleness, which constrained Him to pray for His executioners, and the most heroic fortitude in martyrdom, abandoned as He was by His own people and by all but a few of His disciples in the saddest hours of the passion and crucifixion. This simplicity of His had such nobility about it that the centurion,

witnessing His death, could not help but glorify God, saying that “indeed this was a just man” (Luke 23: 47).

Great and wondrously sublime is simplicity when it thus reconciles in itself these apparently opposite virtues. It is the highest expression of the beautiful. For the beautiful is harmony, the splendor arising out of unity and diversity; and the greater the diversity, the more profound is the unity, the more extraordinary is the beauty. It then is rightly called sublime. In very truth it is the image of that divine simplicity which reconciles within itself infinite wisdom and the freest good pleasure, infinite justice, inexorable at times, and infinite mercy, all the energy of love combined with all its tenderness.

For this reason God alone can produce in the soul this surpassing simplicity, which is the image of His own. In us temperament is determined in one particular direction, inclining us either to indulgence or to severity, to a broad and comprehensive view of things, or to practical details, but not both ways at once. If, then, a soul with perfect simplicity practices at one and the same time virtues that are apparently extreme opposites, it is because almighty God is very intimately present in the soul, impressing His likeness upon it.

Bossuet (discours sur l’histoire universelle, Part II, chap. 19) expresses this thought beautifully when he says: “Who would not admire the condescension with which Jesus tempers His doctrine? It is milk for babes and, taken as a whole, is bread also for the strong. We see Him abounding in the secrets of God, yet He is not astonished thereby, as other mortals are with whom God holds communion. He speaks of these things as one born to these secrets and to this glory. And what He possesses without measure (John 3:34), He dispenses with moderation so as to adapt it to our infirmities.”

Pascal in his Pensees gives similar expression to our Lord’s simplicity, the purest image of the simplicity of God:

Jesus Christ, without wealth or fortune or display of scientific knowledge, is in an order of holiness all His own. He was neither an inventor nor a monarch; but He was humble, patient, holy, holy to God, free from all sin. To those loving eyes that perceive the wisdom in Him, with what stupendous magnificence He came!... Never had man such repute, never did man incur greater ignominy.... From whom did the Evangelists learn the qualities of a supremely heroic soul, that they picture it so

perfectly in Jesus Christ? Why did they make Him weak in His agony? Did they not know how to picture a death borne with constancy? Yes indeed, for the same St. Luke pictures the death of St. Stephen as more bravely born than that of Jesus Christ. They make Him susceptible of fear before the necessity of dying arose, but full of fortitude thereafter. When therefore they portray Him as being so sorrowful, it is because in that hour His sorrow is self-inflicted (desiring to experience the crushing burden of anguish in order to suffer even that for us) ; but, when He is afflicted by men, it is then His fortitude is supreme, with that strength which is their salvation.

This simplicity of Jesus, purest image of God's simplicity, is apparent in every detail of His life. Pere Grou remarks: "It is impossible to speak of things so exalted, so divine, in a simpler way. The prophets appear to be struck with amazement at the great truths they proclaim.... Jesus is self-possessed in all that He says, because He is drawing on His own resources... the treasury of His knowledge is within Him and in communicating it He does not exhaust it" (L'interieur de Jesus, chap. 29).

Thus we are able to form some faint idea of the simplicity of God, the simplicity of His being, thought, and love. It is a simplicity uniting in its transcendence such apparently opposite attributes as justice and mercy, uniting without destroying them, but, on the other hand, containing them in their pure state without any imperfection or diminution. It will be granted us to behold this simplicity in eternal life, if gradually each day we draw nigh to it in simplicity of heart, without which there can be no contemplation of God and no true love.

8. The Infinity Of God

We have seen how the simplicity of God, the simplicity of pure spirit, of being itself, unites within itself, to the exclusion of all real distinction, such apparently opposite perfections as justice and mercy. We have seen, too, how this divine simplicity is reflected in the outlook of a child, in that of the saints. But it is seen especially in the exalted simplicity of our Lord's holy soul, which, like the divine simplicity, unites within itself such seemingly opposite virtues as the most profound humility and the most grandiose magnanimity, the most compassionate gentleness and the most heroic fortitude, a rigorous justice and a most tender mercy.

We must now consider another attribute of the divine Being, His infinity: without it we can have no conception of divine wisdom or providence.

This attribute at first sight appears to be opposed to the preceding; for our intellect, always more or less a slave to the imagination, represents the divine simplicity as a point like the apex of a pyramid. Now a point is indivisible and without extension, and hence is not infinite. How can God be both supremely simple and infinite?

The reason is that the divine simplicity is not that of a point in space; it is a spiritual simplicity, far transcending space and the point. Again, the infinity of God is an infinity of perfection, far transcending what might be the material infinity of a world that would have no limits.

Many errors about the divine infinity are the result of confusing the quantitative infinity of unlimited extension or of time without beginning, with the qualitative infinity of, say, infinite wisdom and infinite love. But the difference between them is enormous; it is the same as the difference between corporeal beings and the infinitely perfect pure Spirit.

Nor must we confuse this infinity of perfection, in the highest degree determinate and so complete as to admit of no increase, with the indetermination of matter, which is capable of receiving forms of every kind. These are at opposite poles: on the one hand, we have the absolutely

imperfect indetermination of matter, and on the other, the supremely perfect infinity of the pure Spirit, who is being itself.

THE A PRIORI PROOF OF THE DIVINE INFINITY

How do we prove the divine infinity thus conceived as an infinity of perfection?

A beautiful proof is given us by St. Thomas (Ia, q. 7, a. 1). It is a proof that will appeal to the artist. St. Thomas notes that the artistic ideal, the ideal form as conceived by the artist—the form, for instance, of the statue of Moses in the mind of Michelangelo—possesses a certain infinity of perfection before it is materialized or limited to a particular portion of matter and localized in space. For in the mind of Michelangelo this ideal form of the Moses is independent of any material limitation, and may be produced indefinitely in marble, clay, or bronze. The same applies to any ideal form whatever, even the specific form of things in nature: the specific form of a lily, for instance, or of a rose, a lion, or an eagle.

Before being materialized or limited to a particular portion of matter and localized in space, these specific forms have a certain formal infinity or infinity of perfection, which consists in their being independent of all material limitation. Thus the idea of a lily transcends all particular lilies, the idea of an eagle transcends all those eagles whose essence it expresses. It is a principle that "every form, before being received into matter, possesses a certain infinity of perfection."

Now, as St. Thomas notes, it is a simple matter to apply this principle to God; for of all formal perfections the most perfect is not that of a lily or an eagle or the ideal man, but that of being or existence, which is the ultimate actuality of all things. Every perfection in the universe is something susceptible of existence, but none is existence itself; it can receive existence as matter receives the form of a lily or a rose.

If, therefore, God is self-existent, St. Thomas concludes, if He is being, existence itself, He is also infinite, not in quantity but in quality or perfection. If the ideal lily is independent of every individual material limitation, the self-subsisting being will transcend every limitation whatsoever, not only of space and matter but of essence also. Even the most perfect angel has no more than a finite existence conditioned by the limitations of his spiritual essence; whereas in God existence is not received

into an essence susceptible of existence: He is the unreceived and eternally subsistent existence.

God is thus in the highest degree determinate, perfect, complete: He is absolutely incapable of receiving additions. He is at the same time infinite with an unlimited perfection, and incomprehensible, “the infinite ocean of being, “ says St. John Damascene, but a spiritual ocean, boundless, shoreless, far transcending space and the point and infinitely surpassing a material world supposedly infinite or limitless in quantity.

It is at once the infinity of being, of pure spirit, of wisdom, goodness, love and power; for infinity is a mode of all the attributes.

Such is the a priori proof as given by St. Thomas. It proceeds from the principle that every form, like that of a lily, before being received into matter, possesses a certain infinity of perfection. Now the most formal element, the ultimate actuality in all things is existence. Therefore God, who is being, existence itself, is infinite with an infinity of perfection transcending every limitation, whether of space or of matter or even of essence. He thus infinitely surpasses every material thing and every created pure spirit.

THE A POSTERIORI PROOF OF THE DIVINE INFINITY

There is another, an a posteriori proof of the divine infinity, which shows that the production of finite things ex nihilo, their creation from nothing, presupposes an infinitely active power which can belong only to an infinitely perfect cause. (Cf. St. Thomas, Ia, q. 45, a. 5.)

In fact the only way a finite cause can produce its effect is by transforming an already existing object capable of such transformation. Thus a sculptor, in order to carve his statue, requires a material; so also a teacher gradually forms the intelligence of his pupil, but he did not give him intelligence.

The greater the poverty of the object to be transformed, the greater must be the wealth and fecundity of the transforming active power. The poorer the soil, the more it must be cultivated, good seed sown in it and fertilized. But what if the soil is so poor as to be altogether worthless? It would then require an active power, not only exceedingly rich and fruitful, but infinitely perfect; and this is creative power.

Created agents are transformative, not creative. To produce the entire being of any finite thing whatever, no matter how minute—to produce the total entity of a grain of sand, for instance, to produce it from nothing—an infinite power is required, a power that can belong only to infinitely perfect Being. It follows, therefore, that the first cause of everything that comes into existence must be infinitely perfect.

Not only was it impossible for even the most exalted angel to create the physical universe, but he cannot create so much as a speck of dust; and it will ever be so. To create anything out of nothing—that is, without any pre-existing subject whatever—an infinite power is required.

Against this traditional and revealed teaching, pantheism urges a somewhat trivial objection. To the infinite, it says, nothing can be added; if therefore the universe is added to the being of God, as a new reality, the being of God is not infinite.

It is easy to answer this. There can be no addition made to the infinite in the same order: that is, no addition can be made to its being, its wisdom, its goodness, its power. But there is no repugnance whatever in something being added in a lower order, as an effect is added to the transcendent cause producing it. To deny this would be to refuse to the infinite Being the power of producing an effect distinct from Himself; He would then no longer be infinite.

But if this is so, the pantheist insists, more being and perfection will exist after the production of created things than before, which is equivalent to saying that the greater comes from the less.

The traditional answer given in theology is, that after creation many beings exist, but there is not more being or more perfection than before. Similarly, when a great teacher like St. Thomas has trained several pupils, there are many that are learned, but there is no more learning than before unless the pupils excel their master in knowledge. This being so, we can with even greater truth say that after creation the world has many beings but not more being, many living beings but not more life, many intellects but not more wisdom. He who is infinite being, infinite life, infinite wisdom, already existed before creation, containing in Himself in an eminent degree the limited perfections of created beings.

Such is the infinity of God, an infinity of perfection which is the plenitude not of quantity or extension, but of being, life, wisdom, holiness, and love.

In this mystery of the divine infinity we find the practical and important lesson that we are made for the Infinite; to know infinite truth and to love the infinite good, which is God.

The proof of this truth lies in the fact that the two higher faculties in us, intellect and will, have an infinite range.

Whereas our senses apprehend only a sensible mode of being, whereas the eye apprehends only color and our ear perceives only sound, the intellect grasps the being or reality of things, their existence. It perceives that being, subject to varying degrees of limitation, in the stone, the plant, the brute, and in man, does not of itself involve limitations. And so our intellect, far surpassing sense and imagination, aspires to a knowledge of finite beings and also of the infinite being, so far, at any rate, as such a knowledge is possible for us. Our intellect aspires to a knowledge not merely of the multiple and restricted truths of physics, mathematics, or psychology, but of the supreme and infinite truth, the transcendent source of all other truths. What we tell children in the catechism is this: “Why did God make you? God made me to know Him.” And we add: “To love Him, and to serve Him in this world, and to be happy with Him forever in the next.”

As our intellect has an unlimited range, and is able to have knowledge of being in all its universality and hence of the supreme Being, so also our will has an unlimited range. The will is directed by the intellect, which conceives not merely a particular sensible good that is delectable or useful, such as a fruit or a tool, but it conceives good as such, moral good, virtues such as justice and courage. It even reaches out beyond some special moral good, such as the object of justice or temperance, and apprehends universal good, good of whatever kind, everything in fact that is capable of perfecting us. Lastly, our intellect, far superior to the senses, ascends to a knowledge of the supreme and infinite good, in which every other good has its source; then the will, illumined by the intellect, desires this supreme and infinite good. The will has a range and unlimited capacity, which can be satisfied in God alone, as we explained at some length in Part I, chapter 4, where we spoke of the sovereign good and the natural desire for happiness.

Nevertheless our intellect and will are not destined naturally to know and love God in His intimate life. In that God is the author of nature, they can

attain to Him in the natural order only because His perfections are reflected in created things.

In baptism a supernatural life and inclination were given to us, far surpassing our natural faculties of intellect and will. We received sanctifying grace, which is a participation in the divine nature and the intimate life of God; and with grace we received faith, hope, and charity, which give a vaster and more exalted range to our higher faculties.

We now gradually obtain a better grasp of the meaning and import of those words of the catechism: “Why did God make you? God made me to know Him, to love Him, and to serve Him in this world, and to be happy with Him forever in the next.”

The purpose of our existence, therefore, is to acquire not a merely natural knowledge and love of the infinite God as the author of nature, but a supernatural knowledge and love, the beginning of that eternal life in which we shall see and love God even as He sees and loves Himself.

We shall then have an intuitive vision of that spiritual infinite, which is God, a light infinitely strong and soft. Its brightness we shall be able to bear because our intellect will be elevated and fortified by the light of glory. We shall have an intuitive vision of that God who is infinite goodness, combining all the strength of justice with all the tenderness of mercy. And this supernatural elevation to the immediate vision and love of infinite truth and goodness will be ours forever; it will be a continuous vision and love that nothing henceforth will interrupt or diminish.

Yet in one sense the infinite will still surpass us; because our vision of the divine essence will never be the same as the vision God has of Himself, which is completely comprehensive. In heaven each one of the blessed has this intuitive vision of God, but with a power of penetration in proportion to their merits and the intensity of their charity. Similarly here on earth we all have direct vision of a landscape stretching out before us, but we see it better if our sight is keener. In heaven our vision of the infinite God will be immediate, but proportionate to the intensity of our charity and the light of glory. Great saints like the Apostles will see Him better, and their vision will be more penetrating than ours; but they, too, will be surpassed by St. Joseph, and St. Joseph by the Blessed Virgin; and surpassing her, the holy soul of Christ united to the person of the Word. It is pleasant to think that the Blessed Virgin, whose intellect is naturally inferior to that of the angels, has nevertheless a better vision of the divine essence than even the most

exalted of them. Since her charity surpasses theirs, she has received the light of glory in a higher degree, inferior only to that of the human intellect of Jesus.

Such is the spiritual lesson we receive in this mystery of the divine infinity. We are made for the Infinite: to know God in His intimate life and to love Him above all things. That is why nothing in this world can really satisfy us and why we are free to respond or not to the attraction offered by finite good. Each time we experience within ourselves the limitations and the poverty of these perishable things, we should give thanks to God; for it gives us the opportunity, amounting sometimes to an urgent necessity, of pondering on the infinite riches, the infinite fullness of truth and goodness that are in Him.

9. The Immensity Of God

God, we have said, is infinite: not in quantity, as though He were an unlimited material body, but in quality or perfection, the only kind of infinity possible with Him who is purest spirit, who is being itself subsisting in His immateriality at the summit of all things. This infinity is a mode of all His attributes, and thus we speak of His infinite wisdom, His infinite goodness, His infinite power.

And now, if we are to have a right idea of providence and its universal scope including every age and every place, we must consider the divine immensity and eternity in their relation to space and time, which are on an infinitely lower plane.

If we consider the perfect being of God as related to space, we attribute to Him immensity and ubiquity. When we say He is immense, we mean that He is immeasurable and able to be in every place. In attributing ubiquity to Him, we affirm that He is actually present everywhere. Before creation God was immense, but He was not actually present in all things, since things as yet did not exist.

It would be a gross error to picture the divine immensity as unlimited space, and it is equally false to conceive the divine eternity as unlimited time, as we shall see later on.

God is pure spirit: there cannot be parts in Him as there are in what is extended; we cannot distinguish in Him the three spatial dimensions, length, breadth, and height or depth. When we apply these terms occasionally to the divine intellect, we do so purely by way of metaphor. In reality, God infinitely transcends space, even unlimited space, as the divine eternity infinitely transcends time, even unlimited time.

It was in attributing this spatial immensity to God that Spinoza erred. Were it so, God would no longer be pure spirit but would have a body, and thus one part of Him would be less perfect than another; He would not be perfection itself. Hence the divine immensity is not something material, but spiritual, and in an order infinitely transcending space.

If we would have some idea of the majesty of this divine perfection, three quite distinct modes of divine presence must be considered:

1) The general presence of God in all things by His immensity.

2) The special presence of God in the souls of the just.

3) The unique presence of the Word in the humanity of our Savior, and the reflection of this presence in the Church and in the vicar of Christ.

THE GENERAL PRESENCE OF GOD BY HIS IMMENSITY

God is everywhere. What meaning are we to give to this phrase which so often occurs in Holy Scripture? First, God is everywhere by His power, to which all things are subjected, through which also He sets every being in motion, and directs it to action. Secondly, God is everywhere by His presence, in that all things are known to Him. All things are laid bare to His sight, even to the minutest detail, to the most profound secrets of our hearts and the innermost recesses of conscience. Lastly, God is present by His essence, in that by His preservative action, which is identical with His very being, He maintains every creature in existence.

Moreover, as in creation God’s action is immediate without any creature or instrument intervening, so too His preservative action, which is the continuation of His creative act, is exercized immediately in every creature and upon what is most intimate in them, their very being. He is thus present even to those far distant nebulae which our telescopes barely succeed in bringing to view.

Therefore God, though not corporeal, is everywhere, not as a material body is in place, but by a simple virtual contact of His creative and preservative power, wherever in fact there are bodies to be maintained in existence. Besides this, in a sphere of being transcending space, He is present to every spirit, whom He maintains in being as He does the rest of creatures.

And so God as pure spirit is in every being, in every soul, of which He is the transcendent center as the apex of the pyramid contains in a transcendent manner all its sides. God is that spiritual force which maintains everything in existence. As the liturgy has it: Rerum Deus tenax vigor Immotus in te permanens. (God powerful sustainer of all things Thou who dost remain permanently unmoved.)

There is another presence of God, which is peculiar to the soul in the state of grace whether on earth, in purgatory, or in heaven. God is no longer present simply as conserving cause—as such He is within even inanimate bodies—but He dwells in the souls of the just as in a temple, the object of a quasi-experimental knowledge and love.

Our Lord said: “If any man love me, he will keep my word. And my Father will love him: and we will come to him and will make our abode with him” (John 14: 23). What is meant by “We will come”? Who will come? Is it simply created grace? No, in the souls of the just the three divine Persons come to take up their abode: the Father and the Son, and with them the Holy Ghost, whom the Son has promised.

This is what the Apostle St. John understood it to mean when he said: “God is charity: and he that abideth in charity, abideth in God, and God in him” (I John 4: 16).

However great the earthly distance separating souls that are in the state of grace, be it from Rome to Japan, it is the same God who dwells in them all, enlightening, strengthening, and drawing them to Himself.

The same is brought out by St. Paul (I Cor. 3: 16) : “Know you not that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” “Know you not that your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost, who is in you, whom you have from God: and you are not your own? For you are bought with a great price. Glorify and bear God in your body” (ibid., 6: 19-20), that is, by comporting yourselves in a manner worthy of Him. And St. Paul says to the Romans (5:5) : “The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us.”

This sublime doctrine was a commonplace in the early Church: the martyrs proclaimed it openly before their judges. Thus St. Lucy of Syracuse answers the judge Paschasius: “Words can never be wanting to those who bear within them the Holy Ghost.” “Is the Holy Ghost within thee, then?” “Yes, all who lead a chaste and upright life are the temples of the Holy Ghost.”

The creeds and councils of the Church, the Council of Trent, for instance, affirm that the Blessed Trinity dwells in the souls of the just as in a temple and from time to time makes its presence felt by a more luminous inspiration, a more profound peace, like that which the disciples experienced as they conversed with our Lord on the way to Emmaus (Luke

24: 42) : “Was not our heart burning within us, whilst He spoke in the way, and opened to us the Scripture?” In fine, as St. Paul says to the Romans (8: 16), “the Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit that we are the sons of God.”

God makes this special presence of His felt in us by that filial love for Him with which He himself inspires us and which, like the peace it brings us, can come only from Him. (Cf. St. Thomas, Comment. in Ep. ad Rom., 8: 16.)

THE UNIQUE PRESENCE OF GOD IN THE HUMANITY OF JESUS

Surpassing the general presence of God in all things, even His special presence in the souls of the just, is that unique and quite exceptional presence of the Word in the humanity of Jesus.

This presence of the Word in the sacred humanity of Jesus is not, as in the saints, a purely accidental union of knowledge and love. It is a union that is substantial in the sense that the Word assumed and made His own forever the humanity of Jesus which consisted of His holy soul and His body virginally conceived. There is thus in Jesus Christ but one Person, possessing both the divine nature and a human nature without mutual confusion, in some such way as each one of us possesses his soul and body unconfused.

Obviously this substantial union of Christ’s humanity with the Word of God immeasurably surpasses both the general presence of God in all things by immensity and even that special presence of His in the souls of the just on earth, in purgatory, or in heaven.

Moreover, in the sacred humanity of Jesus there is a wonderful participation in the divine immensity, since by Eucharistic consecration His body is made present throughout the world on every altar where the consecrated host is reserved. His body is present there not as localized in space, but after the manner of substance. Substance is not of itself extended; in certain respects it transcends extension and space; and this helps us to understand how the selfsame body of Christ remaining present in heaven can, without being multiplied, become really present throughout the world in every tabernacle where there are consecrated hosts. We have here a remote likeness to that presence by which God Himself is in every material being, maintaining it in existence; it is a reflection of the divine immensity.

A further reflection of this divine perfection is seen in that universal sway exerted by the Church simultaneously in every quarter of the globe. In a certain sense we can say that the Church is everywhere present upon the face of the earth, for the soul of the Church includes all who are in the state of grace. Moreover, the Church, being both one and catholic, exercises the same supernatural influence wherever the Gospel is preached.

In spite of the diversity of nations, races, manners, customs, and institutions, the Church, wheresoever her influence extends, effects a unity of faith and hierarchical obedience; unity of worship, especially in the Mass; one common nourishment in communion; unity of life, since all must find their nourishment in Jesus Christ; unity of Christian dispositions, of hope and charity. Since grace here on earth and glory hereafter are the principle of life for all, they have in the merits of Christ the same resources and a common inheritance in eternal life.

Now the Church thus present among the nations for nearly two thousand years would not be able to exercise this influence of hers without the supreme pastor appointed by our lord to be His vicar. The exercise of papal and episcopal jurisdiction preserves intact the doctrines of the Gospel in the bosom of the Church through an infallible teaching office, and safeguards Christian morality and Christian perfection by maintaining the divine law and imposing ecclesiastical laws, and safeguards Christian worship also through the various forms of the liturgy.

Christ Jesus promised to St. Peter and his successors and conferred on them the primacy of jurisdiction over the universal Church (Matt. 16: 16; John 21: 15). He also said to them: “I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.”

To sum up, then: God, pure spirit, is immense and everywhere present inasmuch as through His creative power He maintains in existence and sets in motion every creature, corporeal and spiritual, and all things are laid bare to His sight, even the most intimate secrets of the heart, secrets that not even the angels can discern by their natural knowledge.

Besides this universal presence in every creature, there is that special presence of God in the souls of the just, who are in the state of grace. He is within them as in a temple, to be known and loved by them, and He makes His presence felt there from time to time in that filial love for Him which He alone can inspire.

In a manner still more distinctive the Word of God is present in the humanity of Christ, with which He is united not merely in an accidental way through knowledge and love, but substantially, forming with it but one Person, one being, yet without confusion of the two natures.

As a wonderful reflection of the divine immensity, our Savior's sacred humanity is really and substantially present throughout the world in every tabernacle where the consecrated host is reserved. Everywhere it is the same body of the Savior, unmultiplied yet really present, after the manner of substance—a remote resemblance to that presence by which God is within all creatures as pure spirit and unmultiplied, maintaining them in existence.

And lastly, there is that other reflection of the divine immensity in the vicar of Christ. As visible head of the Church, through the influence of his teaching and jurisdiction he is present to the entire Church. In a certain sense he reaches out to each one of the faithful in every clime and nation, preserving them all in the unity of faith, obedience, and worship, of hope and charity, and as supreme shepherd leading them on to the eternal pastures.

As in God this space-transcending immensity is united with an eternity that transcends time, so is it with the power of the pastoral office in the Church. It extends to all the faithful in space, and also extends to them all as they succeed one another in time, from the foundation of the Church until the end of the world.

The majesty of the Church is most clearly seen when viewed in the higher light of the divine perfections reflected in her: the divine immensity in her catholicity, the divine eternity in her indefectibility, the divine unity and holiness in her own unity and holiness.

Dominating the various dioceses and religious orders, the majesty of the Church is already a participation in the majesty of Christ and of God Himself. In spite of human shortcomings, which creep in wherever men are to be found, this supernatural beauty of the Church is clearly the beauty of God's own kingdom.

We should rid ourselves of the habit of viewing things horizontally and superficially, as if all had the same value and importance. This is a materialist point of view, a leveling conception that blots out all elevation and depth. We should accustom ourselves rather to look down upon things vertically, so to speak, or in their depth. Above all is God, pure spirit,

unchangeable, eternal, immense, conserving and giving life to all things. Then comes the humanity of our Savior, the channel through which every grace is transmitted to us and which is present in all the tabernacles of the world. Lower still is our Lady, the mediatrix and coredemptrix; and after her the saints; then come the supreme pastor of the Church and the bishops. After them the faithful who are in the state of grace and those Christians also who, though not in the state of grace, yet as Catholics, keep the faith as revealed by God. And last of all are those souls who are seeking for the truth and those, too, who are still wandering astray, who yet at certain moments receive from God and our Lord graces of illumination and inspiration.

This way of looking at things as it were perpendicularly or, if you will, in their height and depth rather than superficially, is precisely that contemplation which proceeds from faith illumined by the gifts of understanding and wisdom. It should normally be accompanied by a prayer that is catholic, or universal—a prayer ascending to the eternity and immensity of God through the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the intercession of Mary. Such a prayer begs God to pour out the abundance of His mercy upon the supreme pastor of the Church, upon the bishops and generals of orders, and upon all the faithful, that they may be loyal to the vocation to which they have been called, responding to whatever God demands of them, and so walk in the path of holiness that leads to Him.

10. The Eternity Of God

Having discussed the divine immensity in its relation to space, we must now consider God's eternity in relation to time. Without it we can have no conception of Providence, whose decrees are eternal.

Let us examine the wrong notion people sometimes have of this divine eternity, and then we shall better understand the true definition of it, which is likewise a very beautiful.

WHAT IS ETERNITY?

There is a partially erroneous conception of the divine eternity current among those who are content to define it as a duration without beginning and without end, thinking of it vaguely as time without limit either in the past or in the future.

Such a notion of eternity is inadequate: because a time that had no beginning, no first day, would always be, nevertheless, a succession of days and years and centuries, a succession embracing a past, a present, and a future. That is not eternity at all. We might go back in the past and number the centuries without ever coming to an end, just as in thinking of the time to come we picture to ourselves the future acts of immortal souls as an endless series. Even if time had no beginning, there would still have been a succession of varying moments.

The present instant, which constitutes the reality of time, is an instant fleeting between the past and the future ("nunc fluens, " says St. Thomas), an instant fleeting like the waters of a river, or like the apparent movement of the sun by which we count the days and the hours. What, then, is time? As Aristotle says, it is the measure of motion, more especially of the sun's motion, or rather that of the earth around the sun, the rotation of the earth on its axis constituting one day as its revolution around the sun constitutes one year. If the earth and the sun had been created by God from all eternity

and the regular motion of the earth around the sun had been without beginning, there would not have been a first day or a first year, but there would always have been a succession of years and centuries. Such a succession would then have been a duration without either beginning or end, but a duration, nevertheless, infinitely inferior to eternity; for there would always have been the distinction between past, present, and future. In other words, multiply the centuries by thousands and thousands, and it will always be time; however long drawn out, it will never be eternity.

If, then, to define the divine eternity as a duration without either beginning or end is inadequate, what is it? The answer of theology is that it is a duration without either beginning or end, but with this very distinctive characteristic, that in it there is no succession either past or future, but an everlasting present. It is not a fleeting instant, like the passing of time, but an immobile instant which never passes, an unchanging instant. It is “the now that stands, not that flows away, “ says St. Thomas (Ia, q. 10, a. 2, obj. Ia), like a perpetual morning that had no dawn and will know no evening.

How are we to conceive this unique instant of an unchanging eternity? Whereas time, this succession of days and years, is the measure of the apparent motion of the sun or the real motion of the earth, eternity is the measure or duration of the being, thought, and love of God. Now these are absolutely immutable, without either change or variation or vicissitude. Since God is of necessity the infinite fullness of being, there is nothing for Him to gain or to lose. God can never increase or diminish in perfection; He is perfection itself unchangeable.

This absolute fixity of the divine being necessarily extends to His wisdom and His will; any change or progress in the divine knowledge and love would argue imperfection.

The unchangeableness, however, is not the unchangeableness of inertia or death; it is that of supreme life, possessing once and for all everything it is possible and right that it should possess, neither having to acquire it nor being able to lose it.

Thus we come to the true definition of eternity: an exceedingly profound and beautiful definition, one full of spiritual instruction for us.

Boethius, in his Consolations of Philosophy, formulated what has continued to be the classical definition: Aeternitas est interminabilis vitae tota simul et perfecta possessio (“eternity is the simultaneous possession in all its perfection of endless life”). It is the uniformity of changeless life,

without either beginning or end, and possessed wholly at once. The principal phrase in the definition is tota simul (“wholly at once”). The unique distinction of the divine eternity is not that it is without beginning or end, but that it is without change, so that God possesses His infinite life wholly at once.

Plato says that time is the mobile image of an immobile eternity, so far, at any rate, as it is possible for a passing instant to be the image of an instant that does not pass.

Time, too, with its succession of moments has often been compared to the foot of a lofty mountain the summit of which represents the unique instant of eternity. From the summit of this eternity of His, God sees in a single glance the whole series of generations succeeding one another in time, as a man from the top of a mountain can see in one glance all who pass on their way in the valley below. Thus the unique, unvarying instant of eternity corresponds to each successive moment of time, the moments of our birth and death included. Time is thus, as it were, the small change in the currency of eternity.

What characterizes time is change or motion, which is measured by time. The distinctive characteristic of eternity is that unchangeable instant in which God possesses His infinite, endless life wholly at once.

Here on earth we have not, when born, the fullness of life. In childhood we have not yet the vigor of youth or the experience that comes with age; and then, when we reach maturity, we no longer possess the freshness of childhood or the readiness of youth. Not only is this true of our life as a whole, but we do not possess one year of it all at once. The year has its changing seasons, so that what summer brings, winter denies. The same must be said of the weeks and the days. Our life is distributed: hours of prayer are distinct from hours of work, and these again from hours of rest and recreation. Just as we do not hear the whole of a melody at once, so it is with our life: its events happen in succession.

On the other hand, it is said of Mozart that he was eventually able to hear a melody not as something continuous, in the way other listeners do, but all at once, in the law that gave it birth. In composing the opening bars of a melody, he foresaw and in some way heard its finale. To hear a melody all at once is a faint image of that divine eternity in which God possesses His infinite life of thought and love simultaneously and without any succession. In the life and thought of God it is impossible for Him to distinguish

between a before and an after, a past and a future, a childhood, youth, and maturer age.

We have another faint image of the divine eternity in a great scholar who spends long years in studying successively all the branches of a particular science, and eventually is able to view them all in the general principles governing the science, in the master idea from which the other ideas are successive developments. Thus Newton must have seen the various laws of physics as consequences of one supreme law; and at the end of his life St. Thomas saw somewhat at a glance the whole of theology as contained in a few general principles.

Another and closer image of the divine eternity is to be found in the soul of a saint who has reached a life of almost continuous union with God; he has now risen beyond the vicissitudes and flight of time. The saint, too, has his hours of work as well as of prayer, but even his work is a prayer; and because in the summit of his soul he remains in almost continuous union with God, he possesses his life in a manner “all at once”; instead of dividing and dissipating his life, he unifies it.

The eternity of God, then, is the duration of a life that not only had no beginning and will have no end, but that is absolutely unchangeable and consequently wholly present to itself in an instant that never passes. In one absolute unfleeting “now” it condenses in a transcendent manner all the varying moments that succeed one another in time.

With men, captivated as they are by sense, an unchangeable eternity has the appearance of death; for their idea of immobility is that of inertia and nothing more; it does not extend to that immobility which comes from a fullness of life so perfect that any progress in it is unthinkable.

It follows that the divine thought, since its measure is eternity, embraces in a single glance all time, every succeeding generation, every age. In a single glance it sees the centuries preparing for the coming of Christ and thereafter reaping the benefits of that coming. In that same unique glance, the divine thought sees where our souls will be in a hundred, two hundred, a thousand years to come, and forever. If only this truth were kept in mind, many objections against providence would vanish. The true notion of providence is, as it were, the resultant of the contemplation of those divine perfections which it presupposes.

As the thought of God is unchangeable, so also is His love. With no shadow of change in itself, it summons souls into existence at the moment it

has fixed from all eternity. From all eternity love pronounces a free fiat to be freely realized in time. At the appointed time the soul is created, justified in baptism or by conversion, receives a multitude of graces and in the end, if no resistance is offered, that grace of a happy death by which it is saved. The created effect is new, not so the divine act producing it: Est novitas effectus absque novitate actionis, says St. Thomas. The divine action is eternal, but produces its effect in time and when it wills.

On the heights of eternity God remains unchanging; but beneath Him all is change, save only those souls who cleave unalterably to Him and so share in His eternity.

ETERNITY AND THE VALUE OF TIME

What is the spiritual lesson for us in this divine perfection of eternity? The great lesson to be learnt is that union with God on earth brings us near to eternity. It also makes clearer to us the full value of the time allotted us for our journey: a bare sixty or eighty years, an exceedingly short span on which depends an eternity, the briefest of prefaces to an endless volume.

The thought of eternity brings home to us especially the high value we should place on the grace of the present moment. For the proper performance of our duty at any given instant we require a particular grace, the grace we ask for in the Hail Mary: “Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.” Pray for us sinners now. Here we beg for those special graces, varying with each moment, which enable us to cope with our duties in the course of the day and reveal to us the importance of all those trivial things that bear some relation to eternity. Although, as we utter the word “now, “ we are often full of distractions, Mary as she listens is all attention. She receives our prayer gladly, and forthwith the grace we need at the moment to persevere in our prayer, in suffering, in whatever we are doing, comes down to us, even as the air we breathe enters our breast. As the present minute is passing, let us remember that the body and its sensibilities, alternating between joy and sadness, are not the only realities; there is also our spiritual soul, with the influence Christ has upon it, and the indwelling of the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity. Whereas the superficial and light-minded have a horizontal view of things, seeing material things and the life of the soul from the same plane of every fleeting time, the saints have unceasingly a perpendicular

view of things; they see them from above and penetrate their depths, contemplating God at the summit of them all. The thought of eternity is the standard by which they estimate the value of time, past, present, and to come, and thus their judgments are gradually brought to the true focus.

Following their example, let us abandon to infinite mercy the whole of our life, both past and future. In a very practical way, inspired by faith, let us live the life of the present moment. In this fleeting now, be it dull or joyful or fraught with pain, let us see a faint image of the unique instant of changeless eternity; and because of the actual grace it brings us, let us see in it also a living proof of the fatherly kindness of God.

In this spirit let us go forward in the power of our Lord who in the sacrifice of the mass never ceases to offer Himself for us by an ever-living interior oblation in His heart, an oblation that transcends time as does the vision that hallows His holy soul.

Walking thus, we draw close to that eternity which we are some day to enter. In what will this entry into glory consist? We shall receive eternal life, which will consist in seeing God as He sees Himself. It will be an intuitive vision, never interrupted by either slumber or distraction, an unchanging vision of the self-same infinite object, which will be of inexhaustible profundity for us. This vision will be succeeded by a love for God equally changeless, which nothing can ever destroy or diminish. This vision and love will no longer be measured by time, but by a participated eternity. Although they are to have a beginning, they will henceforth be without end, without change of any kind, without before or after; the instant which is to be the measure of our beatific vision will be the unique instant of changeless eternity.

We are given an inkling of what this means, when, in the contemplation of some lofty truth or at prayer, we are so absorbed at times that we no longer take account of the passing hours. If such is our occasional experience, what will it be in the future life, which is not only future but is rightly called eternal, since it will no longer be measured by time but by eternity, which is the measure of the simultaneous being and life of God? Then we, too, shall possess all our love at once instead of seeing it languish, wavering between luke-warmness and a passing fervor, all our knowledge at once and no longer piecemeal.

Let us end with this thought from St. Augustine: “Unite thy heart to God’s eternity and thou, too, shalt be eternal; be thou united to God’s

eternity and there await with Him the things that pass beneath thee" (Comm. in Psalm. 91).

It is only to us that eternity is obscure; in itself it is far more luminous than fleeting time, for it is the unchangeableness of the supremely luminous knowledge and love of God.

11. The Divine Incomprehensibility

The light and shade in the mysteries of God’s life

As we have seen, the attributes of God relative to His being are simplicity, infinity, immensity, and eternity. Before passing on to treat of those which, like wisdom and providence, relate to His operations, it will be well to say something of the divine incomprehensibility, which is so marked a feature of the divine governance in certain of its ways.

Therein will be found an important lesson for our own spiritual life. The point we shall particularly stress is that, although from certain angles God is presented to us in the clearest light, in other respects He remains in the deepest shadow. As in paintings we have light and shade, so also in the teachings of revelation we find lights and shadows, which are incomparably more beautiful than those we admire in the great masters. And the same lights and shadows in which God is represented to us will be found reproduced to some extent in our own spiritual life; for grace is a participation in the divine nature, or in the intimate life of God.

THE HIGH LIGHTS IN THE DIVINITY

Let us speak first of God’s features that are quite clear to us. By the natural exercise of our reason, apart even from faith, we are able here on earth to demonstrate the existence of God, the first mover of spiritual and corporeal beings, the first cause of everything that exists, the necessary being, the sovereign good, and the source of order in the world.

In the mirror of created things we discover a reflection of God’s absolute perfections and thus acquire a positive knowledge of whatever is similar or analogically common in God and His works: His reality, His actuality, His goodness, wisdom, and power.

When we wish to point out His distinctive characteristics, we do so by way of negation or by relating Him to the object of our experience. Thus we

speak of God as the infinite or non-finite Being, as unchangeable, or again as the supreme good.

These rational convictions, already of themselves firmly established, receive further confirmation from divine revelation accepted through faith. These convictions are adamantine and unassailable. To us it is quite clear that God cannot exist without being infinitely perfect, that He can neither be deceived Himself nor deceive us, that He cannot will what is evil or be in any way the cause of sin. Indeed we are incomparably more certain of the rectitude of God's intentions than we are of even the best of our own. From this angle God stands out before our minds in a light almost dazzlingly clear. Again, it is quite evident to us that on the one hand God is the author of all good, including also the good contained in our meritorious consent, and that on the other hand He never demands the impossible. Nothing can prevail against these supremely evident truths, which have the force of conviction for every right mind that is open to truth. Obviously God cannot exist without being at once supremely just and supremely merciful, supremely wise and at the same time supremely free.

And yet, with all this dazzling clarity, there is in God that which for us is very obscure. What is the cause of this?

THE LIGHT-TRANSCENDING DARKNESS IN GOD

The obscurity confronting us in God is owing to the fact that He is far too luminous for the feeble sight of our intellect, which is unable to endure His infinite splendor.

To us God is invisible and incomprehensible for the reason that, as Scripture says, "He inhabiteth light inaccessible" (I Tim. 6:16), which has for us the same effect as darkness. To the owl, in the order of sense perception, darkness appears to begin at sunrise, because its feeble sight can perceive only the faint glimmer that comes with the twilight or just before the dawn, and is dazzled by the excessive brilliance of the sun. Where God, the Sun of the spirit world, is concerned, our intellect is in much the same condition. Its intellectuality is of the lowest degree, being inferior to that of the angel; it sees intelligible truths only dimly and in a half-light, as it were, as reflected in a mirror of a lower order, the things of sense.

As St. Thomas notes (Ia, q. 76, a. 5), our intellect requires to be united with the senses so as to be presented with its proper object. This lowest

degree of intellectuality attains first of all in cognition its proper object, the being of sensible things, which is the lowest degree of the intelligible; and in that object it acquires a very imperfect knowledge of God's existence, and sees the reflection of His divine perfections.

Whereas, then, many things are invisible through not being sufficiently luminous or not sufficiently illuminating, God is invisible because for us He is far too luminous.

That God, who is pure spirit, cannot be seen by bodily eyes, is quite evident, since these perceive only what is sensible. But neither can He be seen by a created intellect when this is left to its purely natural resources. Not even the highest among the angels can directly see God through the purely natural power of their intellect; for them, too, God is a light overpowering in its intensity, a naturally inaccessible light. For the angels, the sole natural means of knowing God is in the mirror of spiritual creatures which are their proper object, this mirror being their own essence or that of other angels. They have a natural knowledge of God as the author of their nature, but they cannot have a natural knowledge of Him in His intimate life or see Him face to face.

To see God, the angels, like human souls, must have received the light of glory, that supernatural light to which their nature has no claim whatever, but which is infused in order to fortify their intellects and enable them to endure the brightness of Him who is light itself. God Himself cannot give us a created idea capable of representing His divine essence as it is in itself. Such an idea must always be imperfect, intelligible only by participation, and hence wholly inadequate to represent, as it really is, that eternally subsistent, purely intellectual flash, the essence of God with its infinite truth.

If God wishes to reveal Himself as He really is, this can be only by direct vision with no created idea intervening, unfolding to our gaze the divine essence in all its splendor, and at the same time sustaining and fortifying our intellect, which when left to itself is too feeble to behold it.

It is in this way the blessed in heaven see God. We, too, desire to attain to this same vision, in which our everlasting happiness will consist.

God is therefore invisible to our mental as well as to our bodily sight because of the exceeding intensity of His radiance.

But how is it that in this invisible God there is so much that is transparently clear to us and at the same time so much that is profoundly

obscure? What is the source of this fascinating, mysterious light and shade?

Evidently God cannot exist without being supremely wise, supremely good, and supremely just; He is the author of all good and never commands what is impossible. Then how is it that side by side with this dazzling radiance there is so much obscurity?

It is due to the fact that our knowledge of the divine perfections is obtained solely from their reflection in creatures. Although we can enumerate them one after another, we are unable naturally to perceive how they are united in the intimate life of God, in the eminence of the Deity. This intimate mode of their union is entirely hidden from us; its radiance is too overpowering, it is too exalted to be reflected in any created mirror. As we said above, where the Deity is concerned, we are like men who have never seen white light but only the seven colors of the rainbow in the clear waters of a lake.

Doubtless in the divine rainbow we see its various colors: that God, for example, is infinitely wise and supremely free. But we cannot see how infinite wisdom is intimately reconciled with a good pleasure so free as to appear to us at certain times sheer caprice. And yet, however surprising it may seem, this good pleasure is still supremely wise. We accept it in the obscurity of faith, but only in heaven will it be clearly seen.

Again, we are certain that God is infinitely merciful, that He is also infinitely just, and that He exercises both His mercy and His justice with a sovereign freedom in which wisdom is never wanting. If, says St. Augustine, to the good thief was granted the grace of a happy death, it was through mercy; if it was denied to the other, it was through justice. Here we have a mystery: we cannot see how infinite mercy, infinite justice, and a sovereign liberty are intimately reconciled. For this we must have a direct intuition of the divine essence, of the Deity, in the eminence of which these perfections are reconciled, and that far more profoundly, more perfectly, than the seven colors are contained in white light.

In God truths that relate to each attribute considered apart are quite clear. But so soon as we consider their intimate reconciliation, there descends a darkness that transcends the light.

Once again, we see quite distinctly that in His exceeding goodness and power God cannot permit evil unless for some greater good, as He permits persecution for the glory of the martyrs. But for us this greater good is often very obscure, to be seen clearly only in heaven. This truth is eloquently

brought out in the Book of Job. There is enough light for our Lord to have said: “He that followeth me walketh not in darkness.” Thus, however obscure in itself our cross may be, we are able to bear it, all being made clear to us when we reflect that it is ordained for the good of our souls and the glory of God.

Our life is frequently cast in this mysterious light and shade, which appears in our very existence when this is viewed in its relations with Him who, without fully revealing Himself as yet, is ever drawing us to Him.

Hence arises that ardent desire to see God, that supernatural, efficacious desire proceeding from infused hope and charity. Hence, too, in every man arises a natural and inefficacious desire, a natural velleity, to behold God face to face, if only to solve the enigma how attributes so apparently opposed as infinite justice and infinite mercy are reconciled in Him.

From this it follows that what is obscure and incomprehensible for us in God transcends what is clearly seen. Here, in fact, the darkness is light-transcending. What the mystics call the great darkness is the Deity, the intimate life of God, the “light inaccessible” mentioned by St. Paul (I Tim. 6: 6).

We now understand what St. Teresa means when she says: “The more obscure the mysteries of God, the greater is my devotion to them.” She indeed realized that this obscurity is not that of absurdity or incoherence, but the obscurity of a light that is too intense for our feeble vision.

In this divine light and shade, then, the shadows transcend the light. Faith tells us that this impenetrable obscurity is the sovereign good in its more intimate characteristics, so that it is to this absolutely eminent Goodness, though still a mystery incomprehensible to the intellect, that our charity cleaves; the food of love in this life is mystery, which it adores. Here on earth love is superior to the intellect. As St. Thomas says, so long as we have not attained to the beatific vision of the divine essence, our intellect, with its very imperfect conception of God, brings Him down in some sort to our level, imposing upon Him as it were the limitations of our own restricted ideas; whereas love does not bring God down to our level, but uplifts us and unites us to Him (Ia, q. 82, a. 3; IIa IIae, q. 23, a. 5; q. 27, a. 4).

Therefore in this divine light and shade the shadows transcend the light and, for the saints here on earth, this light-transcending darkness exerts such an attraction on the love uniting them to God.” The just man lives by faith”

(Rom. 1:17) and finds his support not only in its light but also in the divine darkness which corresponds to all that is most intimate in God. It is upon the incomprehensibility of the divine life that the contemplative is reared; he grasps the full meaning of that phrase of St. Thomas: “Faith is of things unseen” (IIa IIae, q. 1, a. 4, 5).

Finally, even for the blessed in heaven God remains in a certain sense incomprehensible, although they see Him face to face. No creature, no idea intervenes between Him and them in their vision of Him, and yet that vision can never be comprehensive like the vision God alone naturally has of Himself. Why is this?

St. Thomas provides a simple explanation: To comprehend a thing in the true sense of the word, is to know it as far as it can be known. A person can know a proposition of geometry without comprehending it, as is the case with anyone who accepts it on the word of the learned; he knows all the elements in the proposition (subject, verb, predicate) but he does not grasp the proof, and hence does not know it as far as it can be known (cf. Ia, q. 12, a. 7). Thus the pupil who knows his master’s teaching in all its parts does not penetrate so deeply as his master, for he has only a confused grasp of the radical connection of each part with the fundamental principles. Or again, a shortsighted person will see the whole of a landscape, but not so distinctly as one whose eyesight is good.

So also in heaven each one of the blessed sees the whole of the divine essence, for it is indivisible. But, since it is the infinite truth, infinitely knowable, they cannot penetrate it so deeply as God. The degree of penetration is according to the intensity of the light of glory they have received, and this again is in proportion to their merits and their love for God acquired here on earth. Consequently they cannot take in at a glance, as God does, the countless possible beings His divine essence virtually contains, and which He could create if He chose.

The divine light and shade of which we have just been speaking contain much that will enlighten our own spiritual life. Our Lord thus expresses it: “He that followeth me walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (John 8: 12).

Since the life of grace within us is a participation in the intimate life of God, it, too, will be for us a mysterious light and shade, which we must be careful not to distort or confuse. Grace brings us enlightenment, consolation, and peace, that tranquillity which comes from order. These are

the high lights; we are no longer in the “shadow of death.” On the other hand, it is on a plane so exalted that it is beyond the reach of reason; we can never have absolute certitude that we are in the state of grace, though we may have sufficient indications of its presence to permit our approaching the holy table.

Moreover, along the path we have to pursue through life are lights and shadows of another sort. The precepts of God and His Church, the orders of superiors, the advice of spiritual directors—these are rays of light. But we find shadows, too, lurking in the depths of conscience. Not always can we easily distinguish true humility from false, dignity from pride, confidence from presumption, fortitude from temerity. Lastly—and it is here especially that the interior drama lies—in this obscurity characteristic of our life there is the darkness descending from above, the obscurity of grace with its overpowering radiance, and that other darkness from below, arising from the lower elements in our disordered nature.

Let us often ask the good God to enlighten us through the gifts of the Holy Spirit, that we may walk aright amid this interior light and shadow. To deny the light because of the shadows and thus substitute the absurd for the mystery, would result in error and discouragement. Let us leave the mystery its rightful place. Let us ask of God the grace to distinguish between the light-transcending darkness from above and that lower darkness which is the darkness of death. And, that we may the more surely obtain this grace, let us often repeat this prayer: “Grant me, O Lord, to know the obstacles that I am more or less conscious of placing in the way of grace and its working in me, and give me the strength to remove them, no matter what it may cost me.” In this way we shall discover the true light, and if darkness persists it will be the darkness from on high, that which enables the just man to live; for to our poor intellect it is but an aspect of the light of life and of the sovereign good. This is what is meant by these words: “He that followeth me walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life.” He who follows me walks neither in the darkness of religious ignorance nor in the darkness of sin and condemnation, but in the light, for “I am the way, the truth, and the life”; therefore “he shall have the light of life, “ which shall never be extinguished.

12. The Wisdom Of God

Hitherto we have been considering the attributes relative to God's being itself: such as His simplicity, eternity, incomprehensibility. We must now treat of those relating to the divine operations.

God, the self-subsisting Being, is by definition immaterial and therefore intelligent. The two great attributes of His intellect are wisdom and providence.

On the other hand, free will is an absolute perfection resulting from intellect. The act of the divine will is love, and its two great virtues are justice and mercy. As for the external works of God, they have their source in omnipotence.

And so by degrees what may be called the spiritual features of God stand out more clearly. Just as with us, wisdom and prudence are found in the intellect, and in the will are found justice and the other virtues regarding our neighbor, so also in God's intellect are wisdom and providence, and in His will are justice and mercy. These are the divine virtues, as it were, but with this difference, that obviously in God there can be no virtue regarding one who is superior to Him.

First of all we shall speak of the divine wisdom. All that revelation and theology tell us about it, illumines their teaching on providence.

WHAT ARE WE TO UNDERSTAND BY WISDOM?

Before we can attribute wisdom to God, we must know the meaning of the word, or what people usually understand by it. This will help us further to distinguish between two very different kinds of wisdom: the wisdom of the world and the wisdom of God. That they know what wisdom is, is the boastful claim of all, even the skeptic, who would have it consist in universal doubt.

That wisdom is a comprehensive view embracing all things, everyone is agreed. But after that, what divergences there are! We may view things from above, believing that they all proceed from a holy love, or at least are permitted by it, and that all things converge upon one supreme good. Or we may view things from below, considering them the result of a material, blind fatality without any ultimate purpose. Another divergence is that there is a wisdom characterized by a false optimism, shutting its eyes to the existence of evil, and there is a pessimistic, depressing wisdom that sees no good in anything.

St. Paul often speaks of the wisdom of this world, which, he says, is stupidity or foolishness in the eyes of God (I Cor. 3:19). Its peculiarity is that it views all things from below, estimating the whole of human life by the earthly pleasures it brings, or by the material interests to be safeguarded, or again by the satisfaction our ambition and pride may derive from it.

To adopt this attitude in our estimation of things, is to make of self the center of all things, unwittingly to adore self. Practically it amounts to a denial of God and a looking upon others as, so to speak, non-existent.

If the worldling feels himself incapable of playing such a part, he takes as his standard of judgment the opinion of the world, and sometimes becomes its very slave that he may obtain its favors. In the opinion of the world wisdom in the conduct of life usually consists not in the golden mean between two extreme vices, but in an easy-going mediocrity lying midway between the true good and an excessive crudeness or perversity in evildoing. In the eyes of the world Christian perfection is as much an excess in one direction as downright wickedness is in the other. We must avoid extremes in everything, we are told. And so the mediocre comes to be called good, whereas it is nothing but an unstable, confused state lying between the good and the bad. People forget the meaning of the school marks given to children on their reports: very good, good, fair, mediocre, bad, very bad. The difference between the mediocre and the good is lost sight of, the one is confused with the other; instead of rising higher, a man will remain permanently halfway. Hence the word charity is sometimes applied to a reprehensible toleration of the worst evils. Calling itself tolerance and prudent moderation, this “wisdom of the flesh” is equally indulgent to vice and indifferent to virtue.

It is particularly severe toward anything of a higher standard and thus seems to rebuke it. Sometimes it even hates heroic virtue, which is holiness.

We have an instance of this in the age of persecutions, which continued even under Marcus Aurelius. This emperor, though wise according to this world's standards, was never able to perceive the sublimity of Christianity, in spite of the blood of so many martyrs.

As St. Paul says, this self-complacent wisdom is simply "foolishness with God" (I Cor. 3:19). Because of its self-complacency it goes so far as to base all its estimations concerning even the most sublime things, even salvation, upon what is sheer mediocrity and emptiness. It completely overturns the scales of values and well deserves to be called stupidity.

It is clear, therefore, that true wisdom views things from a higher standpoint, considering them as dependent on God their supreme cause and directed to God their last end; whereas stupidity, the opposite of wisdom, is the outlook of the fool, who considers all things from the lowest standpoint, reducing them to the basest possible level, a material, blind fatality or the transitory pleasures of this present life. It was this that made our Lord say: "What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?" And St. Paul says: "If any man among you seem to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written: I will catch the wise in their own craftiness. And again: The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain. Let no man therefore glory in men" (I Cor. 3:18-21).

In contrast to this let us see what the wisdom of God is, considering it first in itself and then in relation to ourselves.

THE DIVINE WISDOM IN ITSELF

In itself the divine wisdom is the knowledge God has of Himself and of all things, in so far as He is their supreme cause and last end: the divine knowledge of all things through their highest causes.

In other words, it is an uncreated luminous knowledge, penetrating God's entire being and from these heights extending eternally in all its purity and without contamination of any kind to everything possible as well as to everything that is or has been or will be, however lowly, however evil, and all this in a single glance and from the loftiest standpoint conceivable.

Let us pause to consider each of these terms and so obtain a glimpse of the wonders they seek to express.

a) Divine wisdom is an uncreated luminous knowledge. The Book of Wisdom tells us: “She is more beautiful than the sun... being compared with the light, she is found before it. For after this cometh night, but no evil can overcome wisdom.... She is a certain pure emanation of the glory of the almighty God: and therefore no defiled thing cometh into her. For she is the brightness of eternal light” (Wis. 7: 25, 26, 29).

b) This uncreated luminous knowledge penetrates God’s entire being. To His intelligence there is nothing in Him that is hidden, obscure, mysterious. We, on the other hand, are a mystery to ourselves, by reason of the thousand and one more or less unconscious movements of our sensibility influencing our judgments and our will; by reason, too, of the mysterious graces offered us and often perhaps indirectly rejected. Not even the most introverted souls can boast of a complete knowledge of self.” Neither do I judge my own self, “ says St. Paul.” For I am not conscious to myself of anything. Yet am I not hereby justified: but He that judgeth me, is the Lord” (I Cor. 4: 3, 4).

God’s self-knowledge is absolutely complete, extending to all that is knowable in Him. Our knowledge of God is through creatures, as He is reflected in them; the knowledge God has of Himself is immediate.

The blessed in heaven see Him face to face, but this does not thereby exhaust the infinite fullness of His being and truth. God’s vision of Himself is both immediate and comprehensive. His infinite knowledge exhausts the infinite depths of truth in Him.

What is more, so completely does this luminous thought of His penetrate His wholly immaterial being, that it is absolutely identified with it. There is no slumber here to interrupt the spiritual life, no progress from an imperfect to a more perfect knowledge. He is essentially and from all eternity perfection itself, a pure intellectual flash subsisting eternally, the uncreated spiritual light transcending all things. (Cf. St. Thomas, Ia, q. 14, a. 1-4.)

c) From these heights God’s knowledge extends instantaneously, in the unique instant of eternity, to every possible mode of existence, as well as to everything that exists now or has existed or will exist, however lowly, however evil.

In what way does God know every possible mode of existence, the innumerable, infinite multitude of beings that might exist? Through the exhaustive knowledge He has of His own omnipotence, which is able to produce them. He is like the artist who delights in contemplating the

exquisite works of art he has conceived and might execute, though they will never see the light of day.

And how does God know from His high abode the things that exist now, and all that has been or will be? Whence does He get this knowledge? Does He acquire it as we do from the things themselves as one after another they come into existence? We ourselves thus learn from events as they happen, and our knowledge, imperfect to begin with, becomes more perfect. But can God have anything to learn from facts as they occur? Obviously not; for His knowledge cannot pass from a less to a more perfect state: He is perfection itself. What then, must our answer be?

We must say, St. Thomas remarks (Ia, q. 14, a. 8), that whereas with us knowledge is gauged by the objects on which it depends, the wisdom of God is the cause of things; wisdom is their measure, they are not the measure of wisdom. Divine wisdom is the cause of things as the art of the sculptor is the cause of the statue, as Beethoven's art produced his immortal symphonies, as Dante's art produced the Divine Comedy.

But the sculptor's work is no more than a lifeless statue; the great musician or the great poet can only weave a harmony of sounds or words to express his thought. God, however, through His wisdom can create beings that are living, conscious, intelligent: human souls and myriads of angels." God's knowledge in conjunction with His will is the cause of things as the artist's art is the cause of the work of art" (Ia, q. 14, a. 8).

God, in fact, can no more go a begging to created things for His wisdom than Beethoven could learn anything new from his own score: that is quite clear. God can have nothing to learn from events as they occur; on the contrary, it is from the fecundity of His knowledge that He confers existence upon them. The reason is that His knowledge extends not only to all that He is Himself, but also to all that He can do, to all that He actually realizes, whether by His own power exclusively as when He created in the beginning, or with and through our co-operation as when He directs us to the free performance of our everyday actions. In the unique instant of eternity, God already knows all that will come to pass—all the prayers, for instance, that under His direction we shall freely offer Him later on in order to obtain the graces we need. We will return to this point when we come to speak of providence.

Obviously, then, God's knowledge, far from being caused by things as it is with us, is itself their cause; they are the works of the divine art, of God's

genius.

But are these created things known to God only in a general, vague way, or distinctly and to the last detail? Revelation tells us that “all the ways of men are open to His eyes” (Prov. 16: 2), that the very hairs of our head are all numbered, that even the least of our actions are known to Him.

Why is this? Because in the production of every least thing God concurs, as to whatever reality and goodness are in it. Only one thing God cannot produce, and that is sin; for sin as such is a disorder, and disorder has no being but is simply the absence of what ought to be. Since, then, the divine causality embraces all things, down to the least detail, so also must the divine knowledge; for obviously God knows all that He does Himself and all that He concurs in producing. As for sin, He merely permits it, tolerates it in view of some greater good. It is through this permission that He has knowledge of it; and He sees it in its final overthrow, which in its own way will once more contribute to the manifestation of the good. We shall see this truth more clearly when we come to speak of God’s providence.

Therefore, God’s knowledge of whatever reality and goodness there is in the universe is from Himself; the source upon which He draws for that knowledge is Himself.

THE DIVINE WISDOM COMPARED WITH THE HIGHEST HUMAN WISDOM

With us, the knowledge of spiritual and divine things is obtained from below, in the mirror of sensible things. God, on the other hand, views all things from on high, in Himself and His own eminent causality.

Do what we may, we here on earth see the spiritual and the divine only through their reflection in material things. It is owing to this that we attach immense importance to material happenings, such as the loss of an eye, whereas events of the spiritual world, with consequences that are incalculable, are allowed to pass almost unnoticed, such as an act of charity in the order of goodness, or in the sphere of evil a mortal sin. In other words, we see the spiritual and the divine as in the twilight, in the shadow of the sensible; to use the expression of St. Augustine, ours is an evening vision.

With God it is quite the contrary. In the light of an eternal morning His knowledge is first of all directed to Himself, and in His own very pure essence He sees from above all possible creatures, and those that now exist

or have existed or will exist. It is from on high and in spiritual things that He sees the material. To hear a symphony, He has no need of senses as we have; His knowledge of it is from a higher source, in the musical law that gave it birth, and thus it far surpasses the knowledge of the genius who composed it.

It is not through the body that God views the soul of the just; it is rather through the soul that He views the body as a sort of radiation of the soul. Hence His sight is not dazzled by outward show, by wealth and its trappings; what counts with God is charity. A beggar in rags but with the heart of a saint, is of incomparably greater worth in the sight of God than a Caesar in all the splendor of his human glory. Again, to Him there is an immense difference between a little child before it is baptized and the same child after baptism.

Looked at in the light of this world our Savior's passion appears to us enshrouded in gloom, but how radiant it must be when seen from on high, as the culminating point of history, that point to which everything in the Old Testament led up and from which everything in the New descends!

God does not see created things immediately in themselves, in the dim glimmer of their created illumination, as though descending to their level and made dependent on them; He sees them in Himself and His own radiant light. God cannot see created things except from above: any other mode of knowledge would argue imperfection and would cease to be divine contemplation. Whatever reality and goodness there is in creatures is seen by the divine wisdom as a radiation of the glory of "Him who is."

Whereas we can hardly conceive of eternity except by relating it to the particular time period in which we live, God sees the whole succession of time periods in the light of an unchanging eternity. As a man standing on the summit of a mountain takes in at a single glance all who follow one another in the plain below, so also in one eternal instant God sees the entire succession of time periods; our birth simultaneously with our death, our trials with the glory they merit, the sufferings of the just with the endless spiritual profit resulting from them. He sees the effects in their causes, and the means in the ends they subserve.

The lives of the saints are very beautiful even in their external aspect as history records them; but they are incomparably more beautiful in the mind of God, who sees everything in its true inwardness and from above, who sees directly the grace in the souls of the just with their actual degree of

charity and the degree they will have reached at the end of their journey. He sees our lives in the light of the divine idea directing them, an idea that will be fully realized only in heaven. Between God's wisdom and ours there is all the difference we observe between a stained-glass window as seen from within the church and as seen from without.

This infinite wisdom of God has been revealed to us in the person of our Lord the incarnate Word, in His life and preaching, His death, resurrection, and ascension. Our Lord has bestowed upon us a participation in this selfsame divine wisdom through living faith illumined by the gifts of the Holy Ghost, the gifts of wisdom and understanding, enabling us to penetrate and experience the sweetness of the mysteries of salvation. Let our practical conclusion be to accustom ourselves by degrees to see all things from God's higher point of view, considering them not as something that may give us pleasure or satisfy our self-love and pride, but in their relation to God the first cause and last end. In the spirit of faith and by the dim light it sheds let us accustom ourselves gradually to see all things in God. Let us see in the pleasant events of our life the tokens of God's goodness, and also in the painful and unexpected afflictions a call to a higher life, as being so many graces sent for our purification, and therefore often more to be prized than consolations. St. Peter crucified was nearer to God than on Thabor.

By thus accustoming ourselves to live by faith and the gift of wisdom we shall become every day better fitted to enter into that knowledge which is to be ours at the end of our journey through life. We shall then see God face to face, and in Him all that emanates from Him, especially those things we have loved on earth with a supernatural love. St. Francis and St. Dominic thus behold in God the destinies of their orders, and a Christian mother on entering heaven sees in Him the spiritual needs of the son she has left on earth and the prayers she must offer for him.

This wisdom corresponds to the beatitude promised to peacemakers. In heaven, of course, it will be the source of unchanging peace as well as perfect joy; here on earth, even when the joy is absent, it brings us peace, that tranquillity which comes from order through union with God.

13. The Will And Holy Love Of God

Now that we have spoken of God's intellect and wisdom, a right conception of providence requires further that we consider the nature of His holy will and the love He has both for Himself and for us. Providence in God, like prudence in us, presupposes the love of the supreme good, to which it directs all things.

No word is so much profaned as love. There is a carnal wisdom which St. Paul calls stupidity and foolishness, and there is also a baser sort of love which is simply the grossest egoism and which often through jealousy is instantly transformed into a raging hatred. But however low a soul may sink, it can never quite forget that in true love we have a perfection so exalted and so pure that we should look in vain for any trace of imperfection in it.

If we were asked whether God can be sad, we at once see that this cannot be. If we were asked whether He can be angry, we promptly understand that the term can be attributed to Him only by way of metaphor to express His justice. If we were asked whether love is to be found formally in Him, without the least hesitation we say that He loves us in the strict and fullest sense of the term.

Let us see, then, (1) in what way love is in God, in what way He loves Himself, and (2) the nature of His love for us. We will follow St. Thomas throughout (Ia, q. 19, 20), and while we are speaking of God's love for us we shall see with him what is meant by the will of expression in God and the will of His good pleasure. This distinction is of the first importance for a right understanding of what self-abandonment to Providence must be.

THE LOVE OF GOD FOR HIMSELF

Love as it is in God cannot consist in a sensible passion or emotion, however well regulated. There can be no sensibility in God, because He is

pure spirit.

But there can be no divine intellect, with its knowledge of the good, unless there is a divine will to will that good. This will cannot be a simple faculty of willing. It would be imperfect, were it not of itself always in act. The first act of the will is love for the good, a love entirely spiritual as is the intellect which directs it. The other acts of the will (desiring, willing, consenting, choosing, utilizing, and even hating) all proceed from love, that is the very awakening of the will in its contact with the good which is its object (Ia, q. 20, a. 1).

In God, then, a wholly spiritual and eternal act of love for the good necessarily exists, and this good loved from all eternity is God Himself, His infinite perfection, which is the fullness of being. God loves Himself as much as He is capable of being loved, that is, infinitely. This necessary act is not inferior to liberty but transcends it. Indeed this love is identified with the sovereign good, the supreme object of love. From its ardor it is rightly termed a zealous love; it is like an eternally subsisting burning flame, ignis ardens. As the Scripture says, “God is a consuming fire” (Deut. 4: 24).

We do well to contemplate this burning love for the good which exists from all eternity in God, especially when we consider the amount of injustice and jealousy that is in the world and feel in our hearts how feeble at times is our own love for the good, how lacking in constancy and perseverance.

We read in the Gospel: “Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice: for they shall have their fill” (Matt. 5: 6). This is that burning love for the good which is mightier than all contradictions, than all weariness and temptations to discouragement we may meet with, a love mighty as death, even mightier than death, as seen in our Lord and the martyrs. Yet this mighty, ardent love for the good, which must eventually dominate everything in our hearts, is but a spark springing from that spiritual furnace in God, the uncreated love for the sovereign good.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THIS LOVE

In the first place, it is supremely holy, or rather it is holiness itself; that is to say, it is absolutely pure, and in its purity unchangeable. Absolutely pure, for obviously it cannot in any way be sullied or debased by sin or

imperfection, since sin consists in turning one's back on God and His commands, and imperfection is a refusal to follow His counsels.

And in its purity it is unchangeable. God can never cease to be the sovereign good. He can never cease to know and hence to love Himself. He necessarily loves Himself, and His love not only cleaves unalterably to the sovereign good, but is identified with it, loving it above all things. (Cf. St. Thomas, Ia, q. 19, a. 3, 7.)

Certain philosophers, such as Kant, have gone so far astray as to see in this love of God preferring Himself to all else, not the absolute holiness it is, but the very height of egoism. They have also maintained that God cannot love Himself above all things, that He could not have created us for His own glory, but for ourselves alone, and that consequently it is not He but our own personal dignity that should hold the supreme place in our love.

On the plea of absolving God of egoism, this novel aberration places egoism before us as the ideal we should aim at. It confounds the two extremes, holiness and egoism, because it neglects to define what egoism is.

Egoism is an inordinate self-love in which self is preferred to God the sovereign good, or to one's family or country. But how can God prefer Himself to the sovereign good, since He is identified with it?

Hence God in preferring Himself to all things is preferring the sovereign good. For Him to do otherwise would be an intolerable disorder; He would be like the miser who prefers his gold to his own personal dignity. For God to prefer any creature to Himself would amount to a mortal sin in Him, and that is the final absurdity.

When God creates, therefore, it is not out of egoism at all; on the contrary, it is to manifest His goodness externally. In subordinating everything to Himself He is subordinating us to the sovereign good, and this He does for our greater happiness. Our beatitude is incomparably greater in the possession and love of God through praise than if it were a mere complacency in our own personal dignity. The more we give glory to God, the greater will be our own glory." Not to us, O Lord, not to us: but to Thy name give glory" (Ps. 113: 1). Our greatest glory, O Lord, is to give glory to Thee.

God's love for Himself has no taint of egoism; rather it is holiness itself. And not only is it absolutely pure and incapable of sin, but it has as its inevitable sequel a holy hatred of everything that is evil. In fact, no true

love of the good can exist without a detestation of evil; we cannot love the sovereign good above all things without a sovereign detestation of sin. God cannot have that holy zeal for His own glory, which is the manifestation of His goodness, without an equally ardent detestation of sin. This is quite evident. With Him there can be no bargaining or compromising with evil. This, in the divine light and shade, stands out in clear relief. Nevertheless—and here is the shadow—sin does occur. Where sin is willfully persisted in, the love of God, which is gentleness itself, becomes a thing of terror." Love is as strong as death, jealousy as hard as hell" (Cant. 8: 6). God detests sin with a burning hatred, which is simply the obverse of His ardent love for the good.

God's love for Himself is at once an alluring holiness and a thing of dread, gentle yet terrible, like the house of God which Jacob speaks of (Gen. 28: 17).

This holiness implies all perfections, even those so apparently opposed as infinite justice and infinite mercy, the two great virtues of divine love.

In this holy love of God for Himself is contained a twofold lesson. In the first place, since God is infinitely better than we are, we must love Him more than ourselves, at least in preference to ourselves with a love based on a right estimation of values, with a love, too, that is efficacious and orients our whole life to Him. Secondly, as God loves Himself with a holy love, so ought we to love with a holy love our own soul and its destiny, for it has been created to give glory to God eternally. Let us love ourselves with this holy love, in God and for His sake; this is the way to overcome that inordinate love of self in which egoism consists. With the egoist, self-love is in one sense excessive, since he devotes too much love to the lower element in him; but in another sense it falls short of what it should be: he does not love sufficiently the spiritual element in his soul, that element which was created to hymn the glories of God. (Cf. St. Thomas, Ia IIae, q. 29, a. 4; IIa IIae, q. 25, a. 7.)

GOD'S LOVE FOR US

Such being the love God has for Himself, how can it be directed to anything else besides? Some unbelievers, as also the deists, hold that God cannot possibly love us in the true sense of the term: the use of the word "love" in this connection is purely metaphorical. To love some other being,

they say, is to be attracted by it. But God, the plenitude of all good, can find nothing in us to attract Him; He cannot be passive to an attraction exerted by so paltry a good as we are.

The answer to this deist objection is that in the love God has for us there is no passivity whatever; it is essentially active, creative, life-giving: it is sheer generosity and is supremely free. It is true love in the strictest and highest sense of the word.

No passivity is possible in the love God has for us. Obviously He cannot be attracted by a created good, or be passive under the attraction of a good so paltry, or be captivated by it. He loves us, not because He found us worthy of love; on the contrary, in His sight we are made worthy of His love because He has first loved us." What hast thou that thou hast not received?" says St. Paul (I Cor. 4: 7) ; and St. Thomas says: "The love of God is the cause infusing and creating goodness in things" (Ia, q. 20, a. 2).

Any good in us, whether natural or supernatural, can come only from God, the source of all good, can come only from His creative, life-giving love. This love of His does not presuppose anything worthy of love in us, but is the very source of that worthiness, creating, conserving, increasing it in us, yet without violence to our liberty.

For what reason, then, has God loved us with this creative love? Why has He given us existence, life, intellect, and will? Out of sheer generosity. Is it not characteristic of goodness to be diffusive of itself and to give itself in generous abundance? Since goodness tends naturally to communicate itself, it is essentially diffusive of itself. In the physical order the sun gives out light and genial heat; plants and animals, upon reaching maturity, tend to reproduce themselves. In the moral and spiritual order a person who, like the saints, has a passion for goodness will know no rest until he has aroused in others the same aspirations, the same love. Since God is the sovereign good and the fullness of all being, the eternal love of the good having all the zeal and ardor of love, it is most fitting that He should give of the riches that are in Him, even as a singer delights in re-echoing abroad the rich melodies of his song. It is in the highest degree fitting, therefore, that God should love us with this creative love by giving us existence and life.

But does it follow that creation is not a free act; that, unless He created, God would be neither good nor wise? By no means. Scripture tells us that "God worketh all things according to the counsel of His will" (Ephes. 1: 11), and the Church proclaims the absolute liberty of creative love. It is

indeed highly appropriate that God should create, but also that He should be altogether free in creating, so that there would have been nothing derogatory to Him in not creating: in His own intimate life God would have none the less been infinitely good and infinitely wise. As Bossuet says, God is no greater for having created the universe. The fact of His conferring existence on us cannot bring the smallest increase to His infinite perfection. Creation is an absolutely free act of love. In this sense even the natural gifts we have received are gratuitous.

But in God there is a still greater and freer act of love, by which He has bestowed on us the even more gratuitous gift of grace, that participation in His intimate life, a gift to which our nature has no claim whatever. By this life-saving love He has made us worthy to be loved in His sight, and that not merely as creatures but as His children, thus fitting us to behold Him and love Him for eternity.

We are loved by God far more than we think. To realize the extent of His love for us, we should have to know fully the value of grace when it has reached its final development in the glory of heaven; we would have to see God, if only for an instant.

In the incarnation, the redemption, and the Eucharist, God’s love for us reaches its consummation. To realize how intense is this love, we should have to appreciate to the full the infinite value of the redemptive part of the incarnation and the merits our Lord gained for us, and hence the value of all the spiritual graces that flow from them. In giving birth to Mary, St. Anne was far more loved by God than she knew, for she could not have foreseen that the child God had given her would be the mother of the Savior and of all mankind. So, too, is it with us, though with due reserves: God loves us far more than we think, especially in times of trial when He appears to desert us; for it is then He bestows upon us His most precious, most profound, most life-giving graces. At such times as these, let us say with St. Teresa: “Lord, Thou knowest all things, canst do all things, and Thou dost love me.”

Such in essence is the love God has for us, a creative and life-giving love; supremely generous and supremely free.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THIS LOVE

They are principally four: It is universal; yet it has its free preferences; and these are wholly actuated by wisdom; and it is invincible.

It is universal, extending to the very least of creatures. God loves them as a farm owner loves his fields, his house, and the animals that serve his needs. But first and foremost this love is directed to the souls of human beings: to the soul of a sinner that it may be converted, to the soul of a just man that it may persevere, to the soul tried by temptation that it may not faint, and to the soul in its last hour on earth before it comes before God's judgment seat (Ia, q. 20, a. 2, 3).

Nevertheless, for all its universality, this love has its free preferences. If to every soul it gives the graces sufficient and necessary for salvation, upon some—St. Joseph, for instance, St. Peter, St. John, St. Paul, the founders of religious orders-it confers graces of predilection. And every one of these saints will confess with St. Paul (I Cor. 4:7), "What hast thou that thou hast not received?" and again, "It is God who worketh in us both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will" (Phil. 2: 13). As the singer imparts at will a greater resonance to certain notes, so also God in the bestowal of His graces shows His predilection for some over others. The divine seed that God casts into souls depends for its degree of beauty entirely upon His good pleasure.

Yet this supreme liberty in His preferences preserves always that admirable order which wisdom and charity demand." It is always the best that God prefers, " says St. Thomas, "for, since He is the source of all goodness, one thing would not be better than another, did He not love it with a greater love" (Ia, q. 20, a. 3).

God prefers spiritual to corporeal beings, the latter being created for the former. The Mother of the incarnate Word is preferred before every other created being; and God's only Son is preferred before His Virgin Mother. Christ was delivered up on our behalf, not because He was loved less by God than we are, but that by saving us He might emerge gloriously triumphant over the devil, sin, and death (Ia, q. 20, a. 4 ad Ium).

In the love of God everything is subordinated to the manifestation of His goodness. This is the constant refrain of the psalm: "Praise the Lord for He is good; for His mercy endureth forever" (Ps. 135).

One last perfection of divine love: in its strength it is invincible, in the sense that without its divine permission nothing can resist it and that by its power everything is made to conspire to the eventual fulfilment of the good.

In this sense the love of God is mightier than death: mightier than physical death, since it raised up Christ Jesus and will raise us up at the last day; mightier than spiritual death, for it is able to convert the most hardened sinner, raising to life again the soul that is dead, and that not once, but many times, in the course of its earthly existence.

THE WILL OF EXPRESSION AND THE WILL OF GOOD PLEASURE IN GOD

That our will should be made to conform to the divine will and its holy love is of course obvious; for, as St. Thomas says, any goodness in our voluntary acts and in the will itself depends on the end to which they are directed. Now the ultimate end of the human will is the sovereign good, which is also the primary object of the divine will, that object in view of which all other things are willed by it.

Here, however, we must distinguish with the whole of tradition between the divine will of good pleasure and the divine will of expression. By the divine will of expression we mean all those external signs that reveal God's will-commands, prohibitions, the spirit underlying the counsels, and everything that happens by His will or permission. The divine will thus expressed, especially in commands, comes within the domain of obedience, and, as St. Thomas remarks, is what we refer to when we say in the Our Father, "Thy will be done."

The divine will of good pleasure is the interior act of God's will, which often is not yet revealed or expressed externally. Upon it depends our still uncertain future—future events, future joys and trials, whether of long or short duration, the hour and circumstances of our death, and so on. As St. Francis of Sales remarks and Bossuet after him, whereas the expressed will of God is the domain of obedience, the will of His good pleasure is the domain of trusting surrender. As we will explain at some length later on, in making our will conform daily to the divine will as expressed, we must for the rest abandon ourselves in all confidence to the divine will of good pleasure, for we are certain beforehand that it wills nothing, permits nothing, unless for the spiritual and eternal welfare of those who love God and persevere in that love.

Such is God's holy will and His love for us. It is this love that has been revealed to us in our Lord, whose heart is a glowing furnace of charity.

Christ’s love for us, like that of His heavenly Father, is absolutely holy and inspired by sheer generosity: He has not been drawn to us, but we to Him: “You have not chosen me, “ He says, “but I have chosen you” (John 15: 16). Again, the love of Jesus for His Father and for us has ever been invincible: it constrained Him to submit to death, and by His death he raises up souls to a new life, once again directing upon them the stream of the divine mercies.

As a practical conclusion, we must allow ourselves to be loved by this exceedingly holy, purifying, life-giving love, and submit to its purifications, however painful they may be at times. And it should be met with a generous response, according to these words of St. John: “Let us love God: because He hath first loved us” (I John 4: 10). We must love the Lord for His own sake, with a purity of intention rising above the promptings of vainglory and pride and that self-seeking which is induced by jealousy and the desire for the esteem of men.

The beginning in us of a pure love for God will then be some participation in that love which God has for Himself, a spark from that divine furnace of His own self-love. And as our love grows purer daily, it will increase in holiness, generosity, and strength. Indeed it will make us invincible, according to the phrase of St. Paul (Rom. 8: 1), “If God be with us, who is against us?” And finally, our love thus gradually purified will enable us to triumph over death itself and will open the gates of paradise to us. When we enter into glory, we shall be established forever in a supernatural love for God that can nevermore be lost or lessened.

PART III

PROVIDENCE ACCORDING TO REVELATION

14. The Notion Of Providence

Having spoken of those divine perfections which the notion of providence presupposes, we must go on to consider in what this providence consists. What revelation has told us about God's wisdom and His love will give us a clearer insight into its teaching concerning the divine governance. This teaching far surpasses that of the philosophers, many of whom maintain that providence does not extend beyond the general laws governing the universe; that it does not reach down to individuals and the details of their existence, to future free actions and the secrets of the heart. On the other hand, certain heretics have held that since providence extends infallibly to the least of our actions, there can be no such thing as liberty. The revealed teaching is the golden mean lying between these two extreme positions and transcending them.

Providence, as we shall see, is a sort of extension of God's wisdom, which "reacheth from end to end mightily and ordereth all things sweetly" (Wis. 8: I; 14: 3)." Since, " says St. Thomas, "God is the cause of all things by His intellect (in conjunction with His will), it is necessary that the type of the order of things toward their end should pre-exist in the divine mind; and the type of things ordered toward an end is, properly speaking, providence" (Ia, q. 22, a. 1). As for the divine governance, though the expression is generally used as synonymous with providence, it is, strictly speaking, the execution of the providential plan (ibid., ad 2um).

St. Thomas (ibid.) also points out that providence in God corresponds to the virtue of prudence in us, which regulates the means with a view to the attainment of some end, which exercises foresight in anticipation of the future. We have, besides a purely personal prudence, that higher prudence which a father must exercise to provide for his family's needs, and higher still, the prudence demanded in the head of the state that should be found in our law makers and other government officials for the promotion of the common interests of the nation. Likewise in God there is a providence directing all things to the good of the universe, the manifestation of the

divine goodness in every order, from the inanimate creation even to the angels and saints in heaven.

And so by a comparison with the virtue of prudence is formed the analogical notion of providence, a notion accessible to commonsense reason and abundantly confirmed by revelation. A prudent person will first desire the end and then, having decided on the means to be employed, will begin using them; thus the end, which held first place in his desire, is the last in actual attainment. So we look upon God as intending from all eternity first the end and purpose of the universe and then the means necessary for the realization or attainment of that end. This commonsense view is expressed by the philosophers when they say that the end is first in the order of intention but last in order of execution. This point is of paramount importance when we are considering the end and purpose of the universe of material and spiritual beings.

From this general notion of providence we deduce its characteristics. We will briefly indicate them here before looking for a more vivid and detailed account of them in Scripture.

1) The absolute universality of providence is deduced from the absolute universality of divine causality, which in this case is the causality of an intellectual agent." The causality of God, " says St. Thomas, "extends to all beings, not only as to the constituent principles of species, but also as to the individualizing principles (for these also belong to the realm of being) ; it extends not only to things incorruptible but also to those corruptible. Hence all things that exist in whatsoever manner are necessarily directed by God toward some end" (Ia, q. 22, a. 2). This is demanded by the principle of finality, which states that every agent acts for some end and the supreme agent for the supreme end known to Him, to which He subordinates all else. That end, as we saw when speaking of the love of God, is the manifestation of His goodness, His infinite perfection, and His various attributes.

As we shall see, it is constantly asserted in the Old and New Testaments that the plan of providence has been fixed immediately by God Himself down to the last detail. His practical knowledge would be imperfect, were it not as far reaching as His causality, and without that causality nothing comes into existence. Obviously, therefore, as was stated above, any reality or goodness in creatures and their actions is caused by God. This means that with the exception of evil (that privation and disorder in which sin consists), all things have God as their first if not exclusive cause. As for physical evil

and suffering, God wills them only in an accidental way, in view of a higher good. From the absolute universality of providence we deduce a second characteristic.

2) This universal and immediate sway exerted by providence, does not destroy, but safeguards the freedom of our actions. Not only does it safeguard liberty, but actuates it, for the precise reason that providence extends even to the free mode of our actions, which it produces in us with our co-operation; for this free mode in our choice, this indifference dominating our desire, is still within the realm of being, and nothing exists unless it be from God. The slightest idiosyncrasy of temperament and character, the consequences of heredity, the influence exerted on our actions by the emotions —all are known to providence; it penetrates into the innermost recesses of conscience, and has at its disposal every sort of grace to enlighten, attract, and strengthen us. There is thus a gentleness in its control that yields nothing to strength. Suaviter et fortiter it produces and preserves the divine seed in the heart and watches over its development (Ia, q. 22, a. 4).

3) Although providence, as the divine ordinance, extends immediately to all reality and goodness, to the last and least fiber of every being, nevertheless in the execution of the plan of providence, God governs the lower creation through the higher, to which He thus communicates the dignity of causality (Ia, q. 22, a. 3).

These various characteristics of providence we will now consider as they are presented to us in the Old and New Testaments. No better way can be found to make our knowledge of them not merely abstract and theoretical, but living and spiritually fruitful.

15. The Characteristics Of Providence According To The Old Testament

In many passages of the Old Testament (e. g., Wis. 6: 8; 8: I; 11: 21; 12: 13; 17: 2), the doctrine about providence is expressed in terms that are formal and explicit, and implicitly it is indicated in a multitude of other texts. Indeed the Book of Job is devoted entirely to the consideration of providence in relation to the trials the just endure; and wherever we find mention of prayer, we have an equivalent affirmation of providence, for prayer presupposes it.

The Old Testament teaching on this subject may be summed up in these two fundamental points:

1) A universal and infallible providence directs all things to a good purpose.

2) For us providence is an evident fact, sometimes even a startling fact, though in certain of its ways it remains absolutely unfathomable.

We have chosen an abundant array of Scriptural texts, and grouped them in such a way that they explain one another. The words of the texts are more beautiful than any commentary can make them.

A UNIVERSAL AND INFALLIBLE PROVIDENCE DIRECTS ALL THINGS TO A GOOD PURPOSE

1) The universality of providence, reaching down to the minutest things, is clearly taught in the Old Testament. The Book of Wisdom declares it repeatedly: “God made the little and the great, and He hath equally care of all” (6: 8) ; “Wisdom reacheth from end to end mightily and ordereth all things sweetly” (8: 1) ; “Thou hast ordered all things in number, measure, and weight” (11: 21) ; “There is no other God but Thou, who hast care of all, that Thou shouldst show that Thou dost not give judgment unjustly” (12: 13). The author then gives this striking example:

Again, another, designing to sail, and beginning to make his voyage through the raging waves.... The wood that carrieth him the desire of gain devised, and the workman built it by his skill. But Thy providence, O Father, governeth it: for Thou hast made a way even in the sea, and a most sure path even among the waves, showing that Thou art able to save out of all things.... Therefore men also trust their lives even to a little wood, and passing over the sea by ship are saved (14: 1-5).

This simple description of the confidence shown by those who sail the seas on a "little wood" proclaims more clearly than all the writings of Plato and Aristotle the existence of a providence extending to the minutest things. We find the same explicit declarations in certain beautiful prayers of the Old Testament: for instance, in Judith's prayer before she set out for the camp of Holofernes:

Assist, I beseech Thee, O Lord God, me a widow. For Thou hast done the things of old, and hast devised one thing after another: and what Thou hast designed hath been done. For all Thy ways are prepared, and in Thy providence Thou hast placed Thy judgments. Look upon the camp of the Assyrians now, as Thou wast pleased to look upon the camp of the Egyptians... and the waters overwhelmed them. So may it be with these also, O Lord, who trust in their multitude, and in their chariots, and in their pikes, and in their shields, and in their arrows, and glory in their spears: and know not that Thou art our God, who destroyest wars from the beginning. And the Lord is Thy name.... The prayer of the humble and the meek have always pleased Thee. O God of the heavens, Creator of the waters, and Lord of the whole creation, hear me a poor wretch, making supplication to Thee, and presuming of Thy mercy (Judith 9: 3-17).

Here, besides the existence of an all-embracing providence and the rectitude of its ways, there is also brought out the freedom of the divine election regarding the nation from which the Savior was to be born.

But what is the manner of this divine ordinance?

2) The infallibility of providence touching everything that happens, including even our present and future free actions, is stressed in the Old Testament no less clearly than its universal extent. In this connection we must cite especially the prayer of Mardochai (Esther 13: 9-17), in which he implores God's help against Aman and the enemies of the chosen people:

O Lord, Lord almighty King, for all things are in Thy power, and there is none that can resist Thy will, if Thou determine to save Israel. Thou hast

made heaven and earth, and all things that are under the cope of heaven. Thou art the Lord of all, and there is none that can resist Thy majesty. Thou knowest all things, and Thou knowest that it was not out of pride and contempt or any desire of glory that I refused to worship the proud Aman.... But I feared lest I should transfer the honor of my God to a man.... And now, O Lord, O King, O God of Abraham, have mercy on Thy people, because our enemies resolve to destroy us.... Hear my supplication.... And turn our mourning into joy, that we may live and praise Thy name.

Not less touching is Queen Esther's prayer in those same circumstances (14: 12-19), bringing out even more clearly the infallibility of providence regarding even the free acts of men; for she asks that the heart of King Assuerus be changed, and her prayer is answered: "Remember, O Lord, and show Thyself to us in the time of our tribulation, and give me boldness, O Lord, King of gods, and of all power. Give me a well ordered speech in my mouth in the presence of the lion: and turn his heart to the hatred of our enemy; that both he himself may perish, and the rest that consent to him. But deliver us by Thy hand: and help me who hath no helper, but Thee, O Lord, who hast the knowledge of all things. And Thou knowest that I hate the glory of the wicked.... Deliver us from the hand of the wicked. And deliver me from my fear." In fact, as we read a little later on (15: 11), "God changed the king's spirit into mildness; and all in haste and in fear [seeing Esther faint before him], he leaped from his throne and held her in his arms till she came to herself." Thereupon, after speedily assuring himself of Aman's treachery, he sent him to his punishment, and leant all the weight of his power to the Jews in defending themselves against their enemies.

From this it is plain that divine providence extends infallibly not only to the least external happening but also to the most intimate secrets of the heart and every free action; for, in answer to the prayer of the just, it brings about a change in the interior dispositions of the will of kings. Socrates and Plato never rose to such lofty conceptions, to such firm convictions on this matter of the divine governance.

Many other texts in the Bible to the same effect are repeatedly insisted upon by both St. Augustine and St. Thomas.

In Proverbs, for instance, we read (21: 1) : "As the division of the waters, so the heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord: whithersoever He will He shall turn it. Every way of man seemeth right to himself: but the Lord weigheth the hearts." Again, in Ecclesiasticus (33: 13) we read: "As the

potter’s clay is in his hand, to fashion and order it: all his ways are according to his ordering. So man is in the hand of Him who made Him: and He will render to him according to His judgment.” Again, Isaias in his prophecies against the heathen (14:24) says: “The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saving: Surely as I have thought, so shall it be. And as I have purposed, so shall it fall out: that I will destroy the Assyrian in My land... and his yoke shall be taken away from them.” “This is the hand, “ the prophet adds, “that is stretched out upon all nations. For the Lord of hosts hath decreed, and who can disannul it? And His hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it away?” Always there is the same insistence on the liberty of the divine election, on a universal and infallible providence reaching down to the minutest detail and to the free actions of men.

3) For what end has this universal and infallible providence directed all things? Though the psalms do not bring that full light to bear which comes with the Gospel, they frequently answer this question when they declare that God directs all things to good, for the manifestation of His goodness, His mercy, and His justice, and that He is in no way the cause of sin, but permits it in view of a greater good Providence is thus presented as a divine virtue inseparably united with mercy and justice, just as true prudence in the man of virtue can never be at variance with the moral virtues of justice, fortitude, and moderation which are intimately connected with it. Only in God, however, can this connection of the virtues reach its supreme perfection.

Again and again we find in the psalms such expressions as these: “All the ways of the Lord are mercy and truth” (24:10) ; “All His works are done with faithfulness. He loveth mercy and judgment [Heb., justice and right] ; the earth is full of the mercy of the Lord” (32: 4-5) ; “Show, O Lord, Thy ways to me, and teach me Thy paths. Direct me in Thy truth, and teach me; for Thou art God my Savior, and on Thee I have waited all the day long. Remember, O Lord, Thy bowels of compassion; and Thy mercies that are from the beginning of the world. The sins of my youth and my ignorances do not remember. According to Thy mercy remember me: for Thy goodness’ sake, O Lord” (24: 4-7).” The Lord ruleth me: and I shall want nothing. He hath set me in a place of pasture. He hath brought me up on the water of refreshment: He hath converted my soul. He hath led me on the paths of justice, for His name’s sake. For though I should walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I will fear no evils, for Thou art with me. Thy rod

and Thy staff: they have comforted me" (22: 1-5)." In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped, let me never be confounded.... My lots are in Thy hands. Deliver me out of the hands of my enemies, and from them that persecute me. Make Thy face to shine on Thy servant: save me in Thy mercy.... O how great is the multitude of Thy sweetness, O Lord, which Thou has hidden from them that fear Thee! Which Thou has wrought for them that hope in Thee, in the sight of the sons of men. Thou shalt hide them in the secret of Thy face from the disturbance of men. Thou shalt protect them in Thy tabernacle from the contradiction of tongues" (30: I, 16, 17, 20).

Here we have the twofold foundation of our hope and trust in God: His providence, with its individual care for each one of the just, and His omnipotence. All these passages in the psalms may be summed up in St. Teresa's words already quoted: "Lord, Thou knowest all things, canst do all things, and Thou lovest me."

Since providence is of such absolute universality, extending to the minutest details, and since at the same time it is infallible and directs all things to good, surely it ought to be quite evident to those who are willing to see it. How, then, in its ways is it so often impenetrable even to the just? The Old Testament more than once touches on this great problem.

Providence is for us an evident fact, yet in certain of its ways it remains absolutely unfathomable

According to the Bible, the evidence that providence in general exists, is obtained either from the order apparent in the world or from the history of the chosen people or again from the main features of the lives of the just and of the wicked.

The order apparent in the world, declare the psalms, proclaims the existence of an intelligent designer: "The heavens show forth the glory of God: and the firmament declareth the work of His hands" (18: 2) ; "Sing ye to the Lord with praise: sing to our God upon the harp; who covereth the heavens with clouds, and prepareth rain for the earth; who maketh grass to grow on the mountains, and herbs for the service of men, who giveth to beasts their food, and to the young ravens that call upon Him" (146: 7; cf. Job 38: 41) ; "All men are vain, in whom there is not the knowledge of God: and who by these good things that are seen could not understand Him that He is. Neither by attending to the works have acknowledged who was the workman.... They are not to be pardoned. For if they were able to know

so much as to make a judgment of the world, how did not they more easily find out the Lord thereof?" (Wis. 13: I, 4, 8.)

Providence is no less clearly seen in the history of the chosen people, as the psalms again remind us, especially PS. 113, In exitu Israel de Aegypto:

When Israel went out of Egypt... the sea saw and fled: Jordan was turned back.... What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou didst flee? and thou, O Jordan, that thou wast turned back? Ye mountains that skipped like rams, and ye hills like lambs of the flock? At the presence of the God of Jacob: who turned the rock into pools of water, and the stony hill into fountains of waters. Not to us, O Lord, not to us: but to Thy name give glory. For Thy mercy and for Thy truth's sake.... The Lord hath been mindful of us and hath blessed us. He hath blessed the house of Israel.... He hath blessed all that fear the Lord, both little and great.... But we that live bless the Lord: from this time now and forever.

Lastly, providence is clearly shown in the general life of the just, in the often perceptible happiness with which it rewards them. As we read in psalm 111:

Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord: he shall delight exceedingly in His commandments. His seed shall be mighty on the earth: the generation of the righteous shall be blessed. Glory and wealth shall be in his house: and his justice remaineth forever and ever. To the righteous a light hath risen up in darkness: He is merciful, compassionate and just.... His heart is ready to hope in the Lord, his heart is strengthened: he shall not be moved until he look over his enemies. He hath given to the poor: His justice remaineth forever and ever.

The providence of God is especially to be seen in the case of those in tribulation, "raising up the needy from the earth and lifting up the poor out of the dunghill. That He may place him with the princes of His people" (Ps. 112: 7).

On the other hand, the malice of the wicked receives its chastisement even in this world, often in a most striking way, another sign of the divine governance: "Be not delighted in the paths of the wicked.... Flee from it, pass not by it.... They eat the bread of wickedness.... But the path of the just, as a shining light, goeth forward and increaseth even to a perfect day. The way of the wicked is darksome: they know not where they fall" (Prov., chap. 4). God withdraws His blessing from the wicked and delivers them up to their own blindness; but to His servants He lends His aid, sometimes in

marvelous ways, as when He said to Elias (III Kings 17: 3) : “Get thee hence and go towards the east and hide thyself by the torrent Carith.... I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.” In obedience to the word of the Lord he departed and took up his abode by the torrent of Carith; and the ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and eventide, and he drank water from the torrent.

Although providence is thus evident in the life of the just taken as a whole, nevertheless in some of its ways it remains inscrutable. Especially is this so in its more advanced stages, where the obscurity is due solely to an overpowering radiance dazzling our feeble sight. An outstanding example is that passage from Isaias which predicts the sufferings of the Servant of Yahweh, or the Savior.

Again in psalm 33: 20, we read: “Many are the tribulations of the just; but out of them all will the Lord deliver them.” Judith says:

Our fathers were tempted that they might be proved, whether they worshiped their God truly.... Abraham was tempted and, being proved by many tribulations, was made the friend of God. So Isaac, so Jacob, so Moses, and all that have pleased God, have passed through many tribulations, remaining faithful.... Let us not revenge ourselves for these things which we suffer. But esteeming these very punishments to be less than our sins deserve, let us believe that these scourges of the Lord, with which like servants we are chastised, have happened for our amendment, and not for our destruction (Judith 8: 21-27).

The prophets often spoke of the mysterious character of certain ways of providence, especially when, like Jeremias, they realized the comparative futility of their efforts. Isaias (55:6) writes:

Seek ye the Lord while He may be found: call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unjust man his thoughts, and let him return to the Lord; and He will have mercy on him: and to our God; for He is bountiful to forgive. For my thoughts are not your thoughts: nor your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are exalted above the earth, so are my ways exalted above your ways, and my thoughts above your thoughts.

We find the same expressed in psalm 35: 7: “Thy justice, O Lord, is as the mountains of God: Thy judgments are a great deep.”

Nevertheless, in this higher darkness, so different from the lower darkness of sin and death, the just man discovers which way his true path

lies: he learns to distinguish more and more clearly these two kinds of darkness, which are at opposite extremes. Let us say with the just Tobias (13: 1) after the trials he had endured:

Thou art great, O Lord, forever, and Thy kingdom is unto all ages. For Thou scourgest and Thou savest: Thou leadest down to hell, and bringest up again: and there is none that can escape Thy hand. Give glory to the Lord, ye children of Israel: and praise Him in the sight of the Gentiles. Because He has therefore scattered you among the Gentiles, who know not Him, that you may declare His wonderful works: and make them know that there is no other almighty God besides Him. He hath chastised us for our iniquities: and He will save us for His own mercy. Be converted, therefore, ye sinners: and do justice before God, believing that He will show His mercy to you.

These, then, are the principal statements in the Old Testament concerning providence. It is universal, extending to the minutest detail, to the secrets of the heart. It is infallible, regarding everything that happens, even our free actions. It directs all things to good, and at the prayer of the just will change the heart of the sinner. For those who will but see, it is an evident fact, yet in certain of its ways it remains inscrutable. This teaching shows us what confidence we should have in God and with what wholehearted abandonment we should surrender ourselves to Him in times of trial by perfect conformity to His divine will; then will He direct all things to our sanctification and salvation. And so the Gospel proclaims: “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His justice: and all these things shall be added unto you” (Luke 12: 31).

16. The Hidden Ways Of Providence And The Book Of Job

We cannot speak of the Old Testament witness to providence without pausing to consider the Book of Job. It will be well to pass in review the general ideas it contains, with particular stress on the meaning and significance of the conclusion to which they lead.

The book treats of the mystery of suffering or the distribution of happiness and misfortune in this present life. Why is it that here on earth even the just must at times endure so many evils? What is the purpose of this in the plan of divine providence? We shall see that the general answer to this question is made more precise in numerous other passages of the Bible which point out that these trials of God's servants are ordained for a greater good.

There is now practically unanimous agreement with the Church Fathers that Job was a real person. The conversation between Job and his friends must have been substantially that attributed to them by the inspired writer, who then gave to the book the form of a didactic poem, its main purpose being to instruct. From the literary point of view it is unusually rich in style. Its purpose is to give the reason for the ills of this present life. Let us see first of all how the problem is presented, and then what solution is given to it.

A review of the more important of these texts will be of particular profit to those souls who find themselves unable to look upon the question of pure love as just a theoretical problem, but who view it as a question in which they are deeply and passionately interested. God's love is concerned more with their griefs than with their words or their writings; it is because, as with Job, their words are the fruit of their griefs that they are the source at times of so much good.

Let us obtain light on this point by consulting St. Thomas' commentary on the Book of Job, which anticipates some of the most sublime pages of

St. John of the Cross in The Dark Night of the Soul, concerning the passive purifications that distinguish the night of the spirit.

Is it always on account of sin that misfortune befalls us in this life?

Is even the innocent man struck down, and if so, why? This is the question Job asks himself, afflicted as he is by the loathsome disease. The very beginning of the book (1: 1) says of him that he was “simple and upright, and fearing God, and avoiding evil, “ that he had great possessions, and that he frequently reminded his sons of their duties toward God, offering holocausts for each one of them.

The Most High God Himself declares of him: “There is none like him in the earth, a simple and upright man, and fearing God, and avoiding evil” (1:8) ; to which Satan replies: “Doth Job fear God in vain?... His possession hath increased on the earth.... But stretch forth Thy hand a little, and touch all that he hath: and see if he blesseth Thee not to Thy face (1:9-11).

“Then the Lord said to Satan: Behold, all that he hath is in thy hand.... And Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord.” These words recall those our Lord addressed to St. Peter before His passion: “Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not” (Luke 22: 31).

The best always are the ones who must undergo this winnowing. This first and most important chapter of the whole book throws light on all that follows, the conclusion especially. But Job is not himself aware of what the Lord has said to Satan or of what he has permitted him to do. Such are, indeed, the hidden ways of providence, whose secret is here revealed to us in the opening chapter of the book, while for the one afflicted they remain a profound mystery.

In point of fact, Job is deprived of all his possessions, and his sons and daughters meet their death in a tempest. Yet the patriarch is resigned to God’s will, saying: “The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away.... Blessed be the name of the Lord” (1: 21). Then Satan obtains leave from God to afflict the holy man “with a very grievous ulcer, from the sole of the foot even to the top of the head” (2: 7). But still, in spite of the insults of his wife, who bids him “bless God and die, “ Job continues faithful to God.

At this point three of his friends arrive to console him: the aged Eliphaz, the middle-aged Baldad, and a young man named Sophar. They remain for a long time weeping, unable to utter a word at the sight of the intense affliction of their unfortunate friend.

After the coming of his friends, for seven days and nights of suffering, Job himself remains silent. Then, having reached the limit of endurance, he opens his lips and says: “Let the day perish wherein I was born. Why is light given to him that is in misery, and life to them that are in bitterness of soul?... That look for death, and it cometh not, as they that dig for a treasure.... I am not at ease, neither am I quiet, neither have I rest” (3:3, 20, 21, 26).

Thereupon Job’s friends address him thus: “Behold thou hast taught many.... Thy words have confirmed many that were staggering.... But now the scourge is come upon thee, and thou faintest” (4: I-5). Eliphaz, the eldest, anxious to preserve his reputation for wisdom, is astonished that Job should let himself be so deeply discouraged: the innocent, he says, cannot perish: it is only the wicked who are consumed by the divine wrath. Then he relates how it was revealed to him one night that no man is just in the sight of God. Job, therefore, must cease complaining so bitterly unless he wishes to share the fate of the wicked; let him confess his guilt and implore God’s mercy, for God chastises as a father, and the wounds He inflicts He will also heal (chaps. 4, 5)

Job replies that his complaints fall far short of the sufferings he endures: death itself would be more welcome. He hoped to receive some consolation from his friends, but he was deceived in his expectations; and yet, all that his friends can reproach him with is, that he spoke somewhat hastily (6:24-30). Then, turning to God, he lays before Him his misfortune, imploring Him to put an end to it by death (7: I-21).” I have had empty months, and have numbered to myself wearisome nights.... So that my soul rather chooseth hanging, and my bones death.... How long wilt Thou not spare me?... I have sinned. What shall I do to Thee, O Keeper of men? Why dost Thou not remove my sin?”

It is Baldad, middle-aged, opulent, self-confident, who, instead of consoling his friend, replies by insisting that God is not unjust; such misfortunes as these He inflicts only on those who have sinned grievously. He then exhorts Job to return to God (chap. 8). Job acknowledges that God is wise and just; but, he adds, “if any man is innocent, surely it is I.” And he continues to give free vent to his complaining (chaps. 9, 10).

Sophar, the third and youngest of his friends, a passionate, hot-headed youth, takes the theme from the other two: in his opinion Job’s wickedness

far outweighs the severity of his chastisement, and he, too, exhorts him to return to God.

In chapters 12, 13, and 14, Job acknowledges once again the infinite wisdom of God, His justice, and His power, sounding the praises of the divine perfections even more loudly than his friends. Then, in chapter 13, he continues: “Although He should kill me, I will trust in Him. But yet I will prove my ways in His sight: and He shall be my savior.... I shall be found just. How many are my iniquities and sins? Make me know my crimes and offenses.” Finally he becomes less vehement, excuses himself, and implores His judge to have pity on him.

But he does not succeed in convincing his friends. In the harshest terms Eliphaz continues to maintain that Job does wrong to complain, seeing that before God all men are guilty (chap. 15).

Job answers (chap. 16) : “I have often heard such things as these: you are all troublesome comforters.... I also could speak like you: and would God your soul were for my soul.” Once again he testifies to his innocence, calling upon God Himself to judge between him and his friends.” Behold my witness is in heaven: and He that knoweth my conscience is on high. My friends are full of words: my eye poureth out tears to God.”

As St. Thomas says in his commentary, Job’s friends have no thought for the future life; they believe that the just must be rewarded and the wicked punished even in this world.

Baldad repeats what he has already said, that here on earth misfortune is always the lot of the wicked. But this time he adds neither consolation nor promise: to him Job is now a hardened sinner, and he treats him accordingly. We see, therefore, that of all the trials Job had to endure, one of the severest comes from his own friends. Losing sight of the future life, they repeat insistently that all accounts must be settled here on earth, and thus they oppress him with their arguments.

It is then that Job, who is a figure of the Christ to come, is uplifted by an inspiration from on high to that mystery of the after-life which was hinted at in the prologue. He answers (chap. 19) :

Behold these ten times you confound me, and are not ashamed to oppress me. For I have been ignorant, my ignorance shall be with me. But you set yourselves up against me, and reprove me with my reproaches. At least now understand that God hath not afflicted me with an equal judgment.... He hath hedged in my path round about, and I cannot pass: and in my way He

hath set darkness.... He hath taken away my hope, as from a tree that is plucked up.... He hath counted me as His enemy.... He hath put my brethren far from me: and my acquaintance like strangers have departed from me.... Even fools despised me.... Have pity on me, have pity on me, at least you my friends, because the hand of the Lord hath touched me.... Who will grant that my words may be written... graven with an instrument in flint stone? For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and in the last day I shall rise out of the earth. And I shall be clothed again with my skin: and in my flesh I shall see God. Whom I myself shall see, and my eyes behold: and not another. This my hope is laid up in my bosom. Why then do you say now: Let us persecute him. Know ye that there is judgment.

In spite of this sublime cry of hope, the young Sophar returns to his original theme, insisting that the misfortunes of this present life can be explained only as a chastisement of sin.

Job, on the contrary, proves from experience that this is a false principle (chap. 21). Doubtless, in many cases the wicked do receive signal punishment, but there are cases also in which outwardly they are successful up to the very moment of their death, whereas occasionally the just have much to suffer.

Eliphaz comes back persistently to his point; he even goes so far as to give a long list of the sins Job must have committed: “Thou hast withdrawn bread from the hungry.... Thou hast sent widows away empty” (chap. 22).

In chapters 28-31 Job maintains that misfortune in this world is not always a chastisement for a sinful life. He does not know, he confesses, why he should suffer, but this God knows in His great wisdom, which to man is unfathomable. Chapter 31 concludes the first Part of the book. and with it the colloquies of Job, “who ends by reducing his opponents to silence, but without himself discovering the clue to the enigma.”

With the second part there enters a young man, Eliu by name, who gives proof of some degree of intelligence, “but apparently is not altogether free from over-confidence.” He maintains that Job is being punished not for any serious crime, but for not having been sufficiently humble before God; the bitter complaints to which he gave way are themselves an indication of his interior feelings. Let him repent, therefore, and God will reinstate him in his former happiness (chaps. 32-37). To this Job has no answer, for what Eliu has said is quite possible and is to a great extent true. Thus every aspect of

the problem of suffering has now been presented; yet still there is something lacking.

THE MEANING AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LORD'S REPLY

Finally, in the third part, the Lord Himself intervenes in response to Job's petition to plead his cause before Him (13:22).

It is contrary to God's dignity to enter into discussion with men. He answers by unrolling before the eyes of Job a magnificent panorama of the wonders of creation, from the stars in the heavens to the wondrous effects of animal instinct (chaps 38, 39).

Shalt thou be able to join the shining stars, the Pleiades, or canst thou stop the turning about of Arcturus? Can'st thou bring forth the day star in its time?... Dost thou know the order of heaven? And canst thou set down the reason thereof on the earth?... Wilt thou take the prey for the lioness, and satisfy the appetite of her whelps?... Wilt thou give strength to the horse?... Will the eagle mount up at thy command, and make her nest in high places?

All these works reveal a wisdom, a providence, a perfect adaptation of means to ends that bear witness to the absolute goodness of their author, and they should teach men to accept humbly and without murmuring whatever the Almighty may direct or permit. As we read these words uttered by "Him who is, " we realize intuitively almost that He is the author and conserver of our being, that He has knit together, as it were, our essence and existence, which He continues to conserve, and that He is the cause of all that is real and good in creation. It has been said that this divine answer does not touch the philosophical aspect of the question under discussion. As a matter of fact, it shows that God does nothing but for a good purpose, and that if already in the things of sense there is this wonderful order, much more sublime must be the order in the spiritual world, even though it must at times be obscure to us on account of its transcendence. Later on we shall see our Lord making use of a more striking similitude: "Behold the birds of the air, for they neither sow, nor do they reap... and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not you of much more value than they?" (Matt. 6: 26.) And so the divine answer arouses in the heart of Job sentiments of humility and resignation.

In conclusion, God ironically invites Job to take over the government of the world and maintain there the reign of order and of justice (41: 1-9).

Would he be able to do so, powerless and unarmed as he was, in face of the two monsters He names? Yet these are no more than a plaything in the hands of God. In His description (chap. 40) of the mighty strength with which He has endowed Behemoth and Leviathan (the hippopotamus and the crocodile), the Lord suggests the parallel that if, like these monsters, the devil has sometimes extraordinary power in afflicting men, nevertheless he cannot exercise that power without the permission of God, who can make its very fury subserve His own good purpose.

And so in the end (chap. 42) Job makes his humble confession: “I know that Thou canst do all things.... I have spoken unwisely, and things that above measure exceed my knowledge.” He thus acknowledges that his complaining was excessive and his words sometimes unconsidered. Nevertheless the Lord tells Eliphaz: “My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends, because you have not spoken the thing that is right before Me, as My servant Job hath.... Offer for yourselves a holocaust. And My servant Job shall pray for you. His face I will accept, that folly may not be imputed to you.” And the Lord blessed the latter days of Job with even greater blessings than before, and he died in peace very advanced in years.

The clue to the whole book is to be found in the first chapter, where we are told how the Lord permitted the devil to try His servant Job. The conclusion, then, is obvious: If men are visited by God with tribulation, He does so not exclusively as a chastisement for their sins, but to prove them as gold is proved in the furnace and make them advance in virtue. It is the purification of love, as the great Christian mystics call it. In the prologue Satan asked (1:9) : “Doth Job fear God in vain?... His possessions have increased on the earth.” Now we see how even in the greatest adversity Job still remained faithful to God. That this is the meaning of the trials sent upon the just is shown in many other passages of the Old Testament.

THE TRIALS OF THE JUST SERVE A HIGHER PURPOSE

This teaching receives its confirmation in the two great trials recorded in Genesis: Abraham preparing, at God’s command, to sacrifice his son Isaac (Gen., chap. 22) and Joseph sold in captivity by his brethren (Gen., chap. 37).

God tried Abraham by commanding him to offer as a holocaust his son Isaac, the son of promise. As St. Paul tells the Hebrews (11: 17) : “By faith

Abraham, when he was tried, offered Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son (to whom it was said: In Isaac shall thy seed be called), accounting that God is able to raise up even from the dead. Whereupon also He received him for a parable." The angel of the Lord stayed the hand of the patriarch, who heard a voice from heaven saying: "Because thou hast done this thing, and hast not spared thy only begotten son for My sake: I will bless thee, and I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven.... And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed: because thou has t obeyed My voice" (Gen. 22: 16).

Joseph was tried when, through envy of him, and his dreams and inspirations, his brethren sold him into captivity. Calumniated by his master's wife, the innocent Joseph was cast into prison, subsequently to be raised to the first rank by Pharaoh, who recognized in him the spirit of the Lord (Gen. 41: 38). Later still, when under the stress of famine his brethren came seeking corn in Egypt, he said to them:

I am Joseph. Is my father yet living?... I am Joseph, your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. Be not afraid, and let it not seem to you a hard case that you sold me into these countries: for God sent me before you into Egypt for your preservation.... Not by your counsel was I sent hither, but by the will of God: who hath made me... lord of his [Pharaoh's] whole house, and governor in all the land of Egypt.... And falling upon the neck of his brother Benjamin, he embraced him and wept" (Gen. 45: 3-14).

What more eloquent declaration than this of providence, of the divine governance, which turns to good account the trials of the just, sometimes even to the welfare of their persecutors, when their eyes at last are opened?

The same is repeatedly brought out by the psalms, notably 90:11-16, from which the gradual and tract for the first Sunday in Lent are taken:

He hath given His angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways. In their hands they shall bear thee up, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. Thou shalt walk upon the asp and the basilisk: and thou shalt tramp under foot the lion and the dragon.... He that dwelleth in the aid of the most High shall abide under the protection of heaven. He shall say to the Lord: Thou art my protector and my refuge: my God in whom I trust. For He hath delivered me from the snare of the hunters: and from the sharp word. He will overshadow thee with his shoulders: and under his wings thou shalt trust. His truth shall compass thee with a shield: thou shalt not be afraid of the terror of the night, of the arrow that flieth in the day.... A thousand shall

fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand: but it shall not come nigh thee.... For He [the Lord] hath given His angels charge over Thee, to keep Thee in all Thy ways.... [He will say] : Because he hoped in me I will deliver him: I will protect him because he hath known my name. He shall cry to me and I will hear him: I am with him in tribulation, I will deliver him, and I will glorify him. I will fill him with length of days: and I will show him my salvation.

In these admirable verses, full of a sublime poetry and a forceful spiritual realism, we are given a glimpse of the future life.

It is true, doubtless, that the Old Testament rarely mentions this future life except in a veiled way and usually in symbols. Yet Isaias (60: 19), describing the glories of the New Jerusalem, wrote: “The Lord shall be unto thee for an everlasting light, and thy God for thy glory. The sun shall go down no more.... For the Lord shall be unto thee for an everlasting light: and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.” And again (65: 19) : “I will rejoice in Jerusalem and joy in My people, saith the Lord, and the voice of weeping shall no more be heard in her, nor the voice of crying.”

Still more clearly in the Book of Wisdom (3: 1) we read:

The souls of the just are in the hands of God: and the torment of death shall not touch them. In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die: and their departure was taken for misery, and their going away from us, for utter destruction: but they are in peace....

Their hope is full of immortality. Afflicted in few things, in many they shall be rewarded: because God hath tried them, and found them worthy of Himself. As gold is tried in the furnace He hath proved them, and as a victim of a holocaust He hath received them: and in time there shall be respect had to them. The just shall shine, and shall run to and fro like sparks among the reeds. They shall judge nations, and rule over people: and their Lord shall reign forever... for grace and peace is to His elect.... Then shall the just stand with great constancy against those that have afflicted them and taken away their labors.... [These shall say] within themselves:... These are they whom we had some time in derision and for a parable of reproach. We fools esteemed their lives madness and their end without honor. Behold how they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the saints. Therefore we have erred from the way of truth.... What hath pride profited us? But the just shall live for evermore: and their reward is with the Lord, and the care of them with the Most High. Therefore they

shall receive a kingdom of glory and a crown of beauty, at the hand of the Lord: for with His right hand He will cover them (5: 1).

These words, “But the just shall live for evermore: and their reward is with the Lord, “ can refer only to eternal life. The psalmist had already declared: “But as for me, I will appear before Thy sight in justice: I shall be satisfied when Thy glory shall appear” (Ps. 16:15). Daniel declares (12:13) : “They that are learned [in the things of God, and keep His law] shall shine as the stars for all eternity.” Finally, in his martyrdom, one of the seven Machabees thus addresses his executioner: “Thou indeed, O most wicked man, destroyest us out of this present life: but the King of the world will raise us up, who die for His laws, in the resurrection of eternal life” (II Mach. 7: 9). Tobias had declared: “Thou art great, O Lord, forever, and Thy kingdom is unto all ages. For Thou scourgest, and Thou savest: Thou leadest down to hell, and bringest up again.... He hath chastised us for our iniquities: and He will save us for His own mercy” (Tob. 13: 1-2, 5)

Many other texts of the Old Testament give us an insight into the meaning of the trials sent by God and hint clearly at the higher purpose He has in view. Judith exhorts the ancients of Israel to wait patiently for help from the Lord:

They must remember how our father Abraham was tempted, and being proved by many tribulations, was made the friend of God. So Isaac, so Jacob, so Moses, and all that have pleased God, passed through many tribulations, remaining faithful.... As for us... let us believe that these scourges of the Lord, with which like servants we are chastised, have happened for our amendment, and not for our destruction (Judith 8: 22-23, 26-27).

The advantages to be gained by suffering are thus declared by Ecclesiasticus (2: I-10) :

Son, when thou comest to the service of God... prepare thy soul for temptation. Humble thy heart, and endure: incline thy ear, and receive the words of understanding: and make not haste in the time of clouds. Wait on God with patience: join thyself to God and endure, that thy life may be increased in the latter end. Take all that shall be brought upon thee: and in thy sorrow endure, and in thy humiliation keep patience. For gold and silver are tried in the fire, but acceptable men in the furnace of tribulation. Believe God, and He will recover thee and direct thy way.... Ye that fear the Lord, hope in Him: and mercy shall come to you for your delight.

The Book of Wisdom (chaps. 15-17) contrasts the trials of the good with those of the wicked, and shows their gradation. The Egyptians are scourged with extraordinary plagues, but the Israelites by looking upon the brazen serpent are healed of the serpents' bite; they are fed with manna from heaven, are led forward by the pillar of fire, and find a passage through the Red Sea, in which the Egyptians are swallowed up. And in Isaias we read: "I have blotted out thy iniquities as a cloud and thy sins as a mist: return to Me, for I have redeemed thee" (45:22; cf. 46:2-6).

Micheas foretells how God will have mercy on His people (7: 14-20) : "He will send His fury in no more, because He delighteth in mercy. He will turn again and have mercy on us: He will put away our iniquities and He will cast all our sins into the bottom of the sea. Thou wilt perform... the mercy to Abraham: which Thou hast sworn to our fathers from the days of old."

All these Old Testament texts setting forth the reason why trials are sent upon the just throw light on the final conclusion of the Book of Job. But it is the Gospel that brings full light to bear upon the last things; only Christianity can provide the final solution. That solution, however, is foreshadowed in the Book of Wisdom (245-250 B. C.). What the Book of Job declares is that the justice of God, which, as Job himself recognizes, must some day have effect, is infinitely beyond our restricted view, and again that in this world virtue, instead of having as its inseparable accompaniment what men commonly call happiness, is often seen to be subjected to the severest trials.

With the Christian saints, in fact, the love of the cross is seen to increase as they grow in the love of God and likeness to Christ crucified, of whom holy Job was a figure. When misfortune overtakes us, whether the affliction is a trial or a chastisement, this remains obscure for each of us. Usually it is both, but then what is the measure of each? Only God knows. St. Paul, writing to the Hebrews, gives the solution when he speaks of perseverance in the midst of trial after the example of Christ (chap. 12) :

Let us run by patience to the fight proposed to us: looking on Jesus, the author and finisher of faith, who, having joy set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and now sitteth on the right hand of the throne of God. For think diligently upon Him that endured such opposition from sinners against Himself: that you be not wearied, fainting in your minds. For you have not resisted unto blood, striving against sin.... Whom the Lord

loveth, He chastiseth: and He scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.... For what son is there, whom the father doth not correct?... [God chastises us] for our profit, that we might receive His sanctification.

It remains true, therefore, that, as Job says (chap. 7), “the life of man upon earth is a warfare and his days are like the days of a hireling.” But upon His servants the Lord bestows His grace; although, as St. Paul says (Rom. 8: 38), “to them that love God all things work together unto good, “ to the very end. All things—graces, natural qualities, contradictions, sickness, and, as St. Augustine says, even sin. For God permits sin in the lives of His servants, as He permitted Peter’s denial, that He may lead them to a deeper humility and thereby to a purer love.

17. Providence According To The Gospel

The existence of providence, its absolute universality extending to the smallest detail, and its infallibility regarding everything that comes to pass, not excepting our future free actions—all this the New Testament again brings out, even more clearly than the Old. Much more explicit, too, than in the Old Testament is the conception given us here of that higher good to which all things have been directed by providence, though in certain of its more advanced ways it still remains unfathomable. These fundamental points we shall examine one by one, giving prominence to the Gospel texts that most clearly express them.

THE HIGHER GOOD TO WHICH ALL THINGS ARE DIRECTED BY PROVIDENCE

Our Lord in the Gospels raises our minds to the contemplation of the divine governance by directing our attention to the admirable order prevailing in the things of sense, and giving us some idea of how much more so this order of providence is to be found in spiritual things, an order more sublime, more bountiful, more salutary, and imperishable. We have seen that a similar order is to be found, though less clearly, in God's answer at the end of the Book of Job; if there are such extraordinary marvels to be met with in the world of sense, what wonderful order ought we not to expect in the spiritual world.

In the Gospel of St. Matthew we read (6: 25-34) :

Be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body, what you shall put on. Is not the life more than the meat and the body more than the raiment? Behold the birds of the air, for they neither sow, nor do they reap nor gather into barns: and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not you of more value than they? And which of you by taking thought can add to his stature one cubit? And for your raiment why are you solicitous? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they labor not, neither do

they spin. But I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these. And if the grass of the field, which is today and tomorrow is cast into the oven, God doth so clothe: how much more you, O ye of little faith? Be not solicitous therefore, saying: What shall we eat: or, what shall we drink: or, wherewith shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the heathens seek. For your heavenly Father knoweth that you have need of all these things. Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God and His justice: and all these things shall be added unto you. Be not therefore solicitous for tomorrow: for the morrow will be solicitous for itself. Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.

These examples serve to show that providence extends to all things, and gives to all beings what is suitable to their nature. God provides the birds of the air with their food and also has endowed them with instinct which directs them to seek out what is necessary and no more. If this is His way of dealing with the lower creation, surely He will have a care for us.

If providence provides what is needful for the birds of the air, how much more attentive will it be to the needs of such as we, who have a spiritual, immortal soul, with a destiny incomparably more sublime than that of the animal creation. The heavenly Father knows what we stand in need of. What, then, must our attitude be? First of all we must seek the kingdom of God and His justice, and then whatever is necessary for our bodily subsistence will be given us over and above. Those who make it their principal aim to pursue their final destiny (God the sovereign good who should be loved above all things), will be given whatever is necessary to attain that end, not only what is necessary for the life of the body, but also the graces to obtain life eternal.

Our Lord refers to providence again in St. Matthew (10: 28) : “Fear ye not them that kill the body and are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him that can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And not one of them shall fall to the ground with. out your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: better are you than many; sparrows.” So again in St. Luke (12: 6-7).

Always it is the same a fortiori argument from the care the Lord has for the lower creation and thence leading us to form some idea of what the divine governance must be in the order of spiritual things.

As St. Thomas points out in his commentary on St. Matthew, what our Lord wishes to convey is this: It is not the persecutor we should fear; he can

do no more than hurt our bodies, and what little harm he is capable of he cannot actually inflict without the permission of providence, which only allows these evils to befall us in view of a greater good. If it is true that not a single sparrow falls to the ground without our heavenly Father's permission, surely we shall not fall without His permission, no, nor one single hair of our head. This is equivalent to saying that providence extends to the smallest detail, to the least of our actions, every one of which may and indeed must be directed to our final end.

Besides the universality of providence, the New Testament brings out in terms no less clear its infallibility regarding everything that comes to pass. It is pointed out in the text just mentioned: "The very hairs of your head are all numbered." This infallibility extends even to the secrets of the heart and to our future free actions. In St. John (6: 64) we read: "The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But there are some of you that believe not"; and the Evangelist adds: "For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that did not believe and who he was that would betray Him." Again (13: 11) during the last supper Jesus told those who were present: "You are clean, but not all"; for, continues St. John, "He knew who he was who would betray Him; and therefore He said: You are not all clean." St. Matthew also records the words, "One of you is about to betray me." Now if Jesus thus has certain knowledge of the secrets of hearts and, as His prediction of persecutions shows, of future free actions, they must surely be infallibly known to the eternal Father.

In St. Matthew (6: 4-6), we are told: "When thou shalt pray, enter into thy chamber and, having shut the door, pray to thy Father in secret: and thy Father who seeth in secret will repay thee." And later we find St. Paul saying to the Hebrews (4:13) : "Neither is there any creature invisible in His sight: but all things are naked and open to His eyes, to whom our speech is."

The teaching on the necessity of prayer, to which the Gospel is constantly returning, obviously presupposes a providence extending to the very least of our actions. In St. Matthew (7: 7-11) our Lord tells us: "If you then being evil, know how to give good things to your children: how much more will your heavenly Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?" Here is another and stronger argument for divine providence based on the attentive care shown by a human father for his children. If he watches over them, much more will our heavenly Father watch over us.

Likewise, the parable of the wicked judge and the widow in St. Luke (18: I-8) is an incentive to us to pray with perseverance. Annoyed by the persistent entreaties of the widow, the judge finally yields to her just demands so that she may cease to be troublesome to him." And the Lord said: Hear what the unjust judge saith. And will not God revenge his elect who cry to him day and night: and will he have patience in their regard?"

Our Lord proclaims the same truth in St. John (10:27) : "My sheep hear My voice. And I know them: and they follow Me. And I give them life everlasting: and they shall not perish forever. And no man shall pluck them out of My hand. That which My Father hath given Me is greater than all: and no one can snatch them out of the hand of My Father. I and the Father are one." These words point out emphatically the infallibility of providence concerning everything that comes to pass, including even our future free actions.

But what the Gospel message declares even more clearly is whether there is not after all some higher, some eternal purpose to which the divine governance directs all things, and further, that if it permits evil and sin—it cannot in any way be its cause—it does so only in view of some greater good.

In St. Matthew we read (5: 44) : "Love your enemies: do good to them that hate you: and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you: that you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven, who maketh His sun to rise upon the good and bad and raineth upon the just and the unjust." And again in St. Luke (6: 36) : "Be ye therefore merciful, as your heavenly Father is merciful." Persecution itself is turned to the good of those who endure it for the love of God: "Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when they shall revile you and persecute you and speak all that is evil against you, untruly, for My name's sake: be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven. For so they persecuted the prophets that were before you" (Matt. 5: 10).

Here is the full light heralded from afar in the Book of Job and more distinctly in this passage from the Book of Wisdom (3: I-8) : "The souls of the just are in the hand of God... in time they shall shine... they shall judge nations: and their Lord shall reign forever."

Here is the full light of which we were given a glimpse in the Book of Machabees (11: 7-9), where, as we have seen, one of the martyrs, on the

point of expiring, thus addresses his persecutor: “Thou, O most wicked man, destroyest us out of this present life: but the King of the world will raise us up, who die for His laws, in the resurrection of eternal life.”

In the light of this revealed teaching, St. Paul writes to the Romans (5: 3) : “We glory also in tribulations, knowing that tribulation worketh patience: and patience trial; and trial hope; and hope confoundeth not; because the charity of God is poured forth in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost who is given to us.” And again (8: 28) : “We know that to them that love God all things work unto good: to such as according to His purpose are called to be saints.” This last text sums up all the rest, revealing how this universal and infallible providence directs all things to a good purpose, not excluding evil, which it permits without in any way causing it. And now there remains the question as to the sort of knowledge we can have of the plan pursued by the divine governance.

THE LIGHT AND SHADE IN THE PROVIDENTIAL PLAN

We have found clearly expressed in the Old Testament the truth that for us divine providence is an evident fact, yet that certain of its ways are unfathomable. This truth is brought out in still greater relief in the New Testament in connection with sanctification and eternal life.

Providence is an evident fact from the order prevailing in the universe, from the general working of the Church’s life, and again from the life of the just taken as a whole. This is affirmed in the words of our Lord just quoted: “Behold the birds of the air, for they neither sow, nor do they reap, nor gather into barns: and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not you of much more value than they?” (Matt. 6: 26.) So again St. Paul (Rom. 1: 20) : “The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, His eternal power and divinity.”

In the parables of the prodigal son, the lost sheep, the good shepherd, and the talents, our Lord also illustrates how providence is concerned with the souls of men. All that tenderness of heart shown by the father of the prodigal is already in an infinitely more perfect way possessed by God, whose providence watches over the souls of men more than any other earthly creature, in the lives of the just especially, in which everything is made to concur in their final end.

Jesus also proclaims how with His Father He will watch over the Church, and we now find verified these words of His: “Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church. And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt. 16: 18) ; “Going therefore, teach ye all nations: baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world” (Matt. 28: 1920). We are now witnessing in the spread of the Gospel in the nations throughout the five continents the realization of this providential plan, which in its general lines stands out quite distinctly.

In this plan of providence, however, there are also elements of profound mystery, and our Lord will have us to understand that to the humble and childlike, however, these mysterious elements will appear quite simple; their humility will enable them to penetrate even to the heights of God. First and foremost there is the mystery of the redemption, of the sorrowful passion and all that followed, a mystery which Jesus only reveals to His disciples little by little as they are able to bear it, a mystery that at the moment of its accomplishment will be a cause of confusion to them.

There is also the whole mystery of salvation: “I confess to Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them to little ones. Yea, Father: for so hath it seemed good in Thy sight” (Matt. 11: 25) ; “My sheep hear my voice. And I know them: and they follow me. And I give them life everlasting: and they shall not perish forever” (John 10: 27).

“There shall arise false christs and false prophets and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch as to deceive (if possible) even the elect” (Matt. 24:24) ; “Of that day and hour [the last] no one knoweth: no, not the angels in heaven, but the Father alone. [And the same must be said of the hour of our death.] Watch ye therefore, because you know not what hour your Lord will come” (Matt. 24: 36, 42). The Apocalypse, which foretells these events in obscure and symbolic language, remains still a book sealed with seven seals (Apoc. 5: 1).

Later on St. Paul lays stress on these mysterious ways of Providence.” The foolish things of the world hath God chosen, that He may confound the wise: and the weak things of the world and the things that are contemptible, hath God chosen, and things that are not, that He might bring to nought the things that are; that no flesh should glory in His sight” (I Cor. 1: 27). It was

through the Apostles, some of whom were chosen from the poor fisherfolk of Galilee, that Jesus triumphed over paganism and converted the world to the Gospel, at the very moment when Israel in great part proved itself unfaithful. God can choose whomsoever He will without injustice to anyone.

Freely He made choice in former times of the people of Israel, one among the various nations; from the sons of Adam He chose Seth in preference to Cain, then Noe and afterwards Sem He preferred to his brothers, then Abraham; He preferred Isaac to Ismael, and last of all Jacob. And now, freely He calls the Gentiles and permits Israel in great part to fall away. Here is one of the most striking examples of the light and shade in the plan of providence; it may be summed up in this way. On the one hand God never commands the impossible, but, to use St. Paul's words, will have all men to be saved (I Tim. 2: 4). On the other hand, as St. Paul says again, "What hast thou that thou hast not received?" (I Cor. 4: 7.) One person would not be better than another, were he not loved by God more than the other, since His love for us is the source of all our good. These two truths are as luminous and certain when considered apart as their intimate reconciliation is obscure, for it is no less than the intimate reconciliation of infinite justice, infinite mercy, and supreme liberty. They are reconciled in the Deity, the intimate life of God; but for us this is an inaccessible mystery, as white light would be to someone who had never perceived it, but had seen only the seven colors of the rainbow.

This profound mystery prompts St. Paul's words to the Romans (11: 25-34) :

Blindness in part has happened in Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles shall come in.... But as touching the election, they [the children of Israel] are most dear for the sake of their fathers... that they also may obtain mercy.... O the depths of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are His judgments, and how unsearchable His ways! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been His counsellor?... Of Him, and by Him, and in Him, are all things: to Him be glory forever.

But the only reason why these unfathomable ways of providence are obscure to us is that they are too luminous for the feeble eyes of our minds. Simple and humble souls easily recognize that, for all their obscurity and austerity, these exalted ways are ways of goodness and love. St. Paul points

this out when he writes to the Ephesians (3: 18) : “I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom all paternity in heaven and earth is named... that you may be able to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, to know also the charity of Christ, which surpasseth all knowledge: that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God.”

Amplitude in the ways of providence consists in their reaching to every part of the universe, to all the souls of men, to every secret of the heart. In their length they extend through every period of time, from the creation down to the end of time and on to the eternal life of the elect. Their depth lies in the permission of evil, sometimes terrible evil, and in view of some higher purpose which will be seen clearly only in heaven. Their height is measured by the sublimity of God’s glory and the glory of the elect, the splendor of God’s reign finally and completely established in the souls of men.

Thus providence is made manifest in the general outlines of the plan it pursues, but its more exalted ways remain for us a mystery. Nevertheless, little by little “to the righteous a light rises in the darkness” (Ps. 111: 4). Every day we can get a clearer insight into these words of Isaias (9: 2) : “The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: to them that dwelt in the region of the shadow of death, light is risen.” And gradually, if we are faithful, we learn more and more each day to abandon ourselves to that divine providence. which, as the canticle Benedictus says, “directs our steps into the way of peace” (Luke 1: 79).

Abandonment to the divine will is thus one of the fairest expressions of hope combined with charity or love of God. Indeed, it involves the exercise to an eminent degree of all the theological virtues, because perfect self-abandonment to providence is pervaded by a deep spirit of faith, of confidence, and love for God. And when this self-abandonment, far from inducing us to fold our arms and do nothing as is the case with the Quietists, is accompanied by a humble, generous fulfilment of our daily duties, it is one of the surest ways of arriving at union with God and of preserving it unbroken even in the severest trials. Once we have done our utmost to accomplish the will of God day after day, we can and we must abandon ourselves to Him in all else. In this way we shall find peace even in tribulation. We shall see how God takes upon Himself the guidance of souls that, while continuing to perform their daily duties, abandon

themselves completely to Him; and the more He seems to blind their eyes, the saints tell us, the more surely does He lead them, urging them on in their upward course into a land where, as St. John of the Cross says, the beaten track has disappeared, where the Holy Ghost alone can direct them by His divine inspirations.

18. Providence And Prayer

When we reflect on the infallibility of God's foreknowledge and the unchangeableness of the decrees of providence, not infrequently a difficulty occurs to the mind. If this infallible providence embraces in its universality every period of time and has foreseen all things, what can be the use of prayer? How is it possible for us to enlighten God by our petitions, to make Him alter His designs, who has said: "I am the Lord and I change not"? (Mal. 3: 6.) Must we conclude that prayer is of no avail, that it comes too late, that whether we pray or not, what is to be will be?

On the contrary, the Gospel tells us: "Ask, and it shall be given you" (Matt. 7: 7). A commonplace with unbelievers and especially with the deists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, this objection in reality arises from an erroneous view as to the primary source of efficacy in prayer and the purpose for which it is intended. The solution of the objection will show the intimate connection between prayer and providence, since (1) it is founded upon providence, (2) it is a practical recognition of providence, and (3) it co-operates in the workings of providence.

PROVIDENCE, THE PRIMARY CAUSE OF EFFICACY IN PRAYER

We sometimes speak as though prayer were a force having the primary cause of its efficacy in ourselves, seeking by way of persuasion to bend God's will to our own; and forthwith the mind is confronted with the difficulty just mentioned, that no one can enlighten God or prevail upon Him to alter His designs.

As clearly shown by St. Augustine and St. Thomas (IIa IIae, q. 83, a. 2), the truth is that prayer is not a force having its primary source in ourselves; it is not an effort of the human soul to bring violence to bear upon God and compel Him to alter the dispositions of His providence. If we do occasionally make use of these expressions, it is by way of metaphor, just a

human way of expressing ourselves. In reality, the will of God is absolutely unchangeable, as unchangeable as it is merciful; yet in this very unchangeableness the efficacy of prayer, rightly said, has its source, even as the source of a stream is to be found on the topmost heights of the mountains.

In point of fact, before ever we ourselves decided to have recourse to prayer, it was willed by God. From all eternity God willed it to be one of the most fruitful factors in our spiritual life, a means of obtaining the graces necessary to reach the goal of our life's journey. To conceive of God as not foreseeing and intending from all eternity the prayers we address to Him in time is just as childish as the notion of a God subjecting His will to ours and so altering His designs.

Prayer is not our invention. Those first members of our race, who, like Abel, addressed their supplications to Him, were inspired to do so by God Himself. It was He who caused it to spring from the hearts of patriarchs and prophets; it is He who continues to inspire it in souls that engage in prayer. He it is who through His Son bids us, "Ask, and it shall be given you: seek and you shall find: knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (Matt. 7: 7).

The answer to the objection we have mentioned is in the main quite simple in spite of the mystery of grace it involves. True prayer, prayer offered with the requisite conditions, is infallibly efficacious because God has decreed that it shall be so, and God cannot revoke what He has once decreed.

It is not only what comes to pass that has been foreseen and intended (or at any rate permitted) by a providential decree, but the manner also in which it comes to pass, the causes that bring about the event, the means by which the end is attained.

Providence, for instance, has determined from all eternity that there shall be no harvest without the sowing of seed, no family life without certain virtues, no social life without authority and obedience, no knowledge without mental effort, no interior life without prayer, no redemption without a Redeemer, no salvation without the application of His merits and, in the adult, a sincere desire to obtain that salvation.

In every order, from the lowest to the highest, God has had in view the production of certain effects and has prepared the necessary causes; with certain ends in view He has prepared the means adequate to attain them. For

the material harvest He has prepared a material seed, and for the spiritual harvest a spiritual seed, among which must be included prayer.

Prayer, in the spiritual order, is as much a cause destined from all eternity by providence to produce a certain effect, the attainment of the gifts of God necessary for salvation, as heat and electricity in the physical order are causes that from all eternity are destined to produce the effects of our everyday experience.

Hence, far from being opposed to the efficacy of prayer, the unchangeableness of God is the ultimate guaranty of that efficacy. But more than this, prayer must be the act by which we continually acknowledge that we are subject to the divine governance.

PRAYER, AN ACT OF WORSHIP PAID TO PROVIDENCE

The lives of all creatures are but a gift of God, yet only men and angels can be aware of the fact. Plants and animals receive without knowing that they are receiving. It is the heavenly Father, the Gospel tells us, who feeds the birds of the air, but they are unaware of it. Man, too, lives by the gifts of God and is able to recognize the fact. If the sensual lose sight of it, that is because in them reason is smothered by passion. If the proud refuse to acknowledge it, the reason is that they are spiritually blinded by pride causing them to judge all things not from the highest of motives but from what is often sheer mediocrity and paltriness.

If we are of sound mind, we are bound to acknowledge with St. Paul that we possess nothing but what we have received: “What hast thou that thou hast not received?” (I Cor. 4:7.) Existence, health and strength, the light of intelligence, any sustained moral energy we may have, success in our undertakings, where the least trifle might mean failure —all these are the gifts of Providence. And, transcending reason, faith tells us that the grace necessary for salvation and still more the Holy Ghost whom our Lord promised are pre-eminently the gift of God, the gift that Jesus refers to in these words of His to the Samaritan woman, “If thou didst know the gift of God” (John 4: 10).

Thus when we ask of God in the spirit of faith to give health to the sick, to enlighten our minds so that we may see our way clearly in difficulties, to give us His grace to resist temptation and persevere in doing good, this prayer of ours is an act of worship paid to Providence.

Mark how our Lord invites us to render this daily homage to Providence, morning and evening, and frequently in the course of the day. Recall to mind how He, after bidding us, “Ask and it shall be given you” (Matt. 7: 7), goes on to bring out the goodness of Providence in our regard: “What man is there among you, of whom if his son shall ask bread, will he reach him a stone? Or if he shall ask him a fish, will he reach him a serpent? If you then being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children: how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?” (Matt. 7: 7, 9-11.) Our Lord’s statement carries its own proof. If there is any kindness in a father’s heart, does it not come to him from the heart of God or from His love?

Sometimes indeed God might be said to reverse the parts, when through His prevenient actual graces He urges us to pray, to render due homage to His providence and obtain from it what we stand most in need of. Recall, for instance, how our Lord led on the Samaritan woman to pray: “If thou didst know the gift of God and who He is that saith to thee: Give me to drink: thou perhaps wouldst have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water... springing up into life everlasting” (John 4: 10, 14). The Lord entreats us to come to Him; He waits for us patiently, always eager to listen to us.

The Lord is like a father who has already decided to grant some favor to His children, yet prompts them to ask it of Him. Jesus first willed that the Samaritan woman should be converted and then gradually caused her to burst forth in heartfelt prayer; for sanctifying grace is not like a liquid that is poured into an inert vessel; it is a new life, which the adult will receive only if he desires it.

Sometimes God seems to turn a deaf ear to our prayer, especially when it is not sufficiently free from self-interest, seeking temporal blessings for their own sake rather than as useful for salvation. Then gradually grace invites us to pray better, reminding us of the Gospel words: “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His justice: and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matt. 6: 33).

Indeed at times it seems that God repulses us as if to see whether we shall persevere in our prayer. He did so to the Canaanite woman. The harshness of His words to her seemed like a refusal: “I was not sent but to the sheep that are lost of the house of Israel... It is not good to take the bread of the children and to cast it to the dogs.” Inspired undoubtedly by grace that came

to her from Christ, the woman replied: “Yea, Lord: for the whelps also eat of the crumbs that fall from the table of their masters.” “O woman, “ Jesus said, “great is thy faith. Be it done to thee as thou wilt” (Matt. 15: 23, 26-28). And her daughter was delivered from the demon that was tormenting her.

When we really pray, it is an acknowledgment, a practical and not merely abstract or theoretical acknowledgment, that we are under the divine governance, which infinitely transcends the governance of men. Whether our prayer takes the form of adoration or supplication or thanksgiving or reparation, it should thus unceasingly render to providence that homage which is its due.

PRAYER CO-OPERATES IN THE DIVINE GOVERNANCE

Prayer is not in opposition to the designs of Providence and does not seek to alter them, but actually co-operates in the divine governance, for when we pray we begin to wish in time what God wills for us from all eternity.

When we pray, it may seem that the divine will submits to our own, whereas in reality it is our will that is uplifted and made to harmonize with the divine will. All prayer, so the Fathers say, is an uplifting of the soul to God, whether it; be prayer of petition, of adoration, of praise, or of thanksgiving, or the prayer of reparation which makes honorable amends.

One who prays properly, with humility, confidence, and perseverance, asking for the things necessary for salvation, does undoubtedly co-operate in the divine governance. In stead of one, there are now two who desire these things. It is God of course who converted the sinner for whom we have so long been praying; nevertheless we have been God’s partners in the conversion. It is God who gave to the soul in tribulation that light and strength for which we have so long besought Him; yet from all eternity He decided to produce this salutary effect only with our co-operation and as the result of our intercession.

The consequences of this principle are numerous. First, the more prayer is in conformity with the divine intentions, the more closely does it co-operate in the divine governance. That there may be ever more of this conformity in our prayer, let us every day say the Our Father slowly and with great attention; let us meditate upon it, with love accompanying our faith. This loving meditation will become contemplation, which will ensure

for us the hallowing and glorifying of God's name both in ourselves and in those about us, the coming of His kingdom and the fulfilment of His will here on earth as in heaven. It will obtain for us also the forgiveness of our sins and deliverance from evil, as well as our sanctification and salvation.

From this it follows that our prayer will be the purer and more efficacious when we pray in Christ's name and offer to God, in compensation for the imperfections of our own love and adoration, those acts of love and adoration that spring from His holy soul.

A Christian who says the Our Father day by day with gradually increasing fervor, who says it from the bottom of his heart, for others as well as for himself, undoubtedly cooperates very much in the divine governance. He co-operates far more than the scientists who have discovered the laws governing the stars in their courses or the great physicians who have found cures for some terrible diseases. The prayer of St. Francis, St. Dominic, or, to come nearer to our own times, St. Teresa of the Child Jesus, had an influence certainly not less powerful than that of a Newton or a Pasteur. One who really prays as the saints have prayed, co-operates in the saving not only of bodies but of souls. Every soul, through its higher faculties, opens upon the infinite, and is, as it were, a universe gravitating toward God.

Close attention to these intimate relations between prayer and providence will show that prayer is undoubtedly a more potent force than either wealth or science. No doubt science accomplishes marvelous things; but it is acquired by human means, and its effects are confined within human limits. Prayer, indeed, is a supernatural energy with an efficacy coming from God and the infinite merits of Christ, and from actual grace that leads us on to pray. It is a spiritual energy more potent than all the forces of nature together. It can obtain for us what God alone can bestow, the grace of contrition and of perfect charity, the grace also of eternal life, the very end and purpose of the divine governance, the final manifestation of its goodness.

At a time when so many perils threaten the whole world, we need more to reflect on the necessity and sublimity of true prayer, especially when it is united with the prayer of our Lord and of our Lady. The present widespread disorder must by contrast stimulate us constantly to reflect that we are subject not only to the often unreasoning, imprudent government of men, but also to God's infinitely wise governance. God never permits evil except

in view of some greater good. He wills that we co-operate in this good by a prayer that becomes daily more sincere, more humble, more profound, more confident, more persevering, by a prayer united with action, in order that each succeeding day shall see more perfectly realized in us and in those about us that petition of the Our Father: “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” At a time when Bolshevism is putting forth every effort against God, it behooves us to repeat it again and again with ever deepening sincerity, in action as well as in word, so that as time goes on God’s reign may supersede the reign of greed and pride. Thus in a concrete, practical way we shall at once see that God permits these present evils only because He has some higher purpose in view, which it will be granted us to see, if not in this world. at any rate after our death

PART IV

SELF-ABANDONMENT TO PROVIDENCE

19. Why And In What Matters We Should Abandon Ourselves To Providence

The doctrine of self-abandonment to divine providence is a doctrine obviously founded on the Gospel, but it has been falsely construed by the Quietists, who gave themselves up to a spiritual sloth, more or less renounced the struggle necessary for the attainment of perfection, and seriously depreciated the value and necessity of hope or confidence in God, of which true self-abandonment is a higher form.

But it is possible also to depart from the Gospel teaching on this point in a sense entirely opposite to that of the Quietists with their idle repose, by going to the other extreme of a useless disquiet and agitation.

Here as elsewhere the truth is the culminating point lying between and transcending these two extreme conflicting errors. It behooves us therefore to determine exactly the meaning and import of the true doctrine of self-abandonment to the will of God if we are to be saved from these sophistries, which have no more than a false appearance of Christian perfection.

We shall first see why it is we should practice this self-abandonment to Providence, and then in what matters. After that we shall see what form it should take and what is the attitude of Providence toward those who abandon themselves completely to it.

We shall get our inspiration from the teaching of St. Francis de Sales, Bossuet, Pere Piny, O.P., and Pere de Caussade, S.J.

WHY WE SHOULD ABANDON OURSELVES TO DIVINE PROVIDENCE

The answer of every Christian will be that the reason lies in the wisdom and goodness of Providence. This is very true; nevertheless, if we are to have a proper understanding of the subject, if we are to avoid the error of the Quietists in renouncing more or less the virtue of hope and the struggle necessary for salvation, if we are to avoid also the other extreme of disquiet,

precipitation, and a feverish, fruitless agitation, it is expedient for us to lay down four principles already somewhat accessible to natural reason and clearly set forth in revelation as found in Scripture. These principles underlying the true doctrine of self-abandonment, also bring out the motive inspiring it.

The first of these principles is that everything which comes to pass has been foreseen by God from all eternity, and has been willed or at least permitted by Him.

Nothing comes to pass either in the material or in the spiritual world, but God has foreseen it from all eternity; because with Him there ii no passing from ignorance to knowledge as with us, and He has nothing to learn from events as they occur. Not only has God foreseen everything that is happening now or will happen in the future, but whatever reality and goodness there is in these things He has willed; and whatever evil or moral disorder is in them, He has merely permitted. Holy Scripture is explicit on this point, and, as the councils have declared, no room is left for doubt in the matter.

The second principle is that nothing can be willed or permitted by God that does not contribute to the end He purposed in creating, which is the manifestation of His goodness and infinite perfections, and the glory of the God-man Jesus Christ, His only Son. As St. Paul says (I Cor. 2: 23), “All are yours. And you are Christ’s. And Christ is God’s.”

In addition to these two principles, there is a third, which St. Paul states thus (Rom. 8:28) : “We know that to them that love God all things work together unto good: to such as, according to His purpose, are called to be saints” and persevere in His love. God sees to it that everything contributes to their spiritual welfare, not only the grace He bestows on them, not only those natural qualities He endows them with, but sickness too, and contradictions and reverses; as St. Augustine tells us, even their very sins, which God only permits in order to lead them on to a truer humility and thereby to a purer love. It was thus He permitted the threefold denial of St. Peter, to make the great Apostle more humble, more mistrustful of self, and by this very means become stronger and trust more in the divine mercy.

These first three principles may therefore be summed up in this way: Nothing comes to pass but God has foreseen it, willed it or at least permitted it. He wills nothing, permits nothing, unless for the manifestation of His goodness and infinite perfections, for the glory of His Son, and the

welfare of those that love Him. In view of these three principles, it is evident that our trust in Providence cannot be too childlike, too steadfast. Indeed, we may go further and say that this trust in Providence should be blind as is our faith, the object of which is those mysteries that are non-evident and unseen (fides est de non visis) for we are certain beforehand that Providence is directing all things infallibly to a good purpose, and we are more convinced of the rectitude of His designs than we are of the best of our own intentions. Therefore, in abandoning ourselves to God, all we have to fear is that our submission will not be wholehearted enough.

In view of Quietism, however, this last sentence obliges us to lay down a fourth principle no less certain than the principles that have preceded. The principle is, that obviously self-abandonment does not dispense us from doing everything in our power to fulfil God's will as made known in the commandments and counsels, and in the events of life; but so long as we have the sincere desire to carry out His will thus made known from day to day, we can and indeed we must abandon ourselves for the rest to the divine will of good pleasure, no matter how mysterious it may be, and thus avoid a useless disquiet and mere agitation.

This fourth principle is expressed in equivalent terms by the Council of Trent (Sess. VI, cap. 13), when it declares that we must all have firm hope in God's assistance and put our trust in Him, being careful at the same time to keep His commandments. As the well-known proverb has it: "Do what you ought, come what may."

All theologians explain what is meant by the divine will as expressed: expressed, that is, in the commandments, in the spirit underlying the counsels, and in the events of life. They add that, while conforming ourselves to His expressed will, we must abandon ourselves to His divine will of good pleasure, however mysterious it may be, for we are certain beforehand that in its holiness it wills nothing, permits nothing, unless for a good purpose.

We must take special note here of these words in the Gospel of St. Luke (16: 10) : "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in that which is greater." If every day we do what we can to be faithful to God in the ordinary routine of life, we may be confident that He will give us grace to remain faithful in whatever extremity we may find ourselves through His permission; and if we have to suffer for Him, He will give us the grace to die a heroic death rather than be ashamed of Him and betray Him.

These are the principles underlying the doctrine of trusting self-abandonment. Accepted as they are by all theologians, they express what is of Christian faith in this matter. The golden mean is thus above and between the two errors mentioned at the beginning of this section. By constant fidelity to duty, we avoid the false and idle repose of the Quietist, and on the other hand by a trustful self-abandonment we are saved from a useless disquiet and a fruitless agitation. Self-abandonment would be sloth did it not presuppose this daily fidelity, which indeed is a sort of springboard from which we may safely launch ourselves into the unknown. Daily fidelity to the divine will as expressed gives us a sort of right to abandon ourselves completely to the divine will of good pleasure as yet not made known to us.

A faithful soul will often recall to mind these words of our Lord: “My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me” (John 4: 34). The soul finds its constant nourishment in the divine will as expressed, abandoning itself to the divine will as yet not made known, much as a swimmer supports himself on the passing wave and surrenders himself to the oncoming wave, to that ocean that might engulf him but that actually sustains, him. So the soul must strike out toward the open sea, into the infinite ocean of being, says St. John Damascene, borne up by the divine will as made known there and then and abandoning itself to that divine will upon which all successive moments of the future depend. The future is with God, future events are in His hands. If the merchants to whom Joseph was sold by his brethren had passed by one hour sooner, he would not have gone into Egypt, and the whole course of his life would have been changed. Our lives also are dependent on events controlled by God. Daily fidelity and trusting self-abandonment thus give the spiritual life its balance, its stability and harmony. In this way we live our lives in almost continuous recollection, in an ever-increasing self-abnegation, and these are the conditions normally required for contemplation and union with God. This, then, is the reason why our life should be one of self-abandonment to the divine will as yet unknown to us and at the same time supported every moment by that will as already made known to us.

In this union of fidelity and self-abandonment we have some idea of the way in which asceticism, insisting on fidelity or conformity to the divine will, should be united with mysticism, which emphasizes self-abandonment.

IN WHAT MATTERS WE SHOULD ABANDON OURSELVES TO DIVINE PROVIDENCE

Once we have complied with the principles just laid down, when we have done all that the law of God and Christian prudence demand, our self-abandonment should then embrace everything. What does this involve? In the first place, our whole future, what our circumstances will be tomorrow, in twenty years and more. We must also abandon ourselves to God in all that concerns the present, in the midst of the difficulties we may be experiencing right now; even our past life, our past actions with all their consequences should be abandoned to the divine mercy.

We must likewise abandon ourselves to God in all that affects the body, in health and sickness, as well as in all that affects the soul, whether it be joy or tribulation, of long or brief duration. We must abandon ourselves to God in all that concerns the good will or malice of men. Says St. Paul:

If God be for us, who is against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how hath He not also, with Him, given us all things?... Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulations? Or distress? Or famine? Or nakedness? Or danger? Or persecutions? Or the sword?... I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things to come, nor might, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Could there be a more perfect self-abandonment in the spirit ; of faith, hope, and love? This is an abandonment embracing all the vicissitudes of this world, all the upheavals that may convulse it, embracing life and death, the hour of death, and the circumstances, peaceful or violent, in which we breathe forth our last sigh.

The same thought has been expressed in the psalms: “Fear the Lord... for there is no want to them that fear Him. The rich have wanted, and have suffered hunger: but they that seek the Lord shall not be deprived of any good (Ps. 33: 10) ; “0 how great is the multitude of Thy sweetness, O Lord, which Thou hast hidden for them that fear Thee! Which Thou hast wrought for them that hope in Thee.... Thou shalt hide them in the secret of Thy face from the disturbance of men. Thou shalt protect them in Thy tabernacle from the contradiction of tongues” (Ps. 30:20-21).

And again Job: “I have not sinned: and my eye abideth in bitterness. Deliver me, O Lord, and set me beside Thee and let any man’s hand fight against me” (17:3).

Thus, as recorded in the Book of Daniel (13:42), the daughter of Helcias, the worthy Susanna, abandoned herself to God under the vile calumnies of the two ancients." O eternal God, " she cries, "who knowest hidden things, who knowest all things before they come to pass, Thou knowest that they have borne false witness against me: and behold I must die, whereas I have done none of these things which these men have maliciously forged against me." It is recorded in the prophecy how the Lord heard the prayer of this noble woman: "And when she was led to be put to death, the Lord raised up the holy spirit of a young boy whose name was Daniel. And he cried out with a loud voice: I am clear of the blood of this woman. Then all the people, turning themselves toward him, said: What meaneth this word that thou hast spoken?" Inspired by God, the young Daniel then showed how her two accusers had borne false witness. Separating them one from the other, he questioned them apart in the presence of the people, and thus all unintentionally they showed by their contradictory statements that they had lied.

What is our practical conclusion to be? It is this, that in doing our utmost to carry out our daily duties we must for the rest abandon ourselves to divine providence, and that with the most childlike confidence. And if we are really striving to be faithful in little things, in the practice of humility, gentleness, and patience, in the daily routine of our lives, God on His part will give us grace to be faithful in greater and more difficult things, should He perchance ask them of us; then, in those exceptional circumstances, He will give to those that seek Him exceptional graces.

In psalm 54: 23 we are told: "Cast thy care upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee: He shall not suffer the just to waver forever.... But I will trust Thee, O Lord."

Imbued with these same sentiments, St. Paul writes to the Philippians (4: 4) : "Rejoice in the Lord always: again, I say, rejoice. Let your modesty be known to all men. The Lord is nigh. Be nothing solicitous: but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your petitions be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."

Again, in order to exhort us to have confidence, St. Peter tells us in his First Epistle (5: 5): Be ye humbled therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in the time of visitation: casting all your care upon Him, for He hath care of you. Be sober and watch: because your adversary

the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour. Whom resist ye, strong in faith: knowing that the same affliction befalls your brethren who are in the world. But the God of all grace, who hath called us into His eternal glory in Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a little, will Himself perfect you and confirm you and establish you.

“Blessed are they that trust in Him” (Ps. 2: 13).” They that hope in the Lord, “ says Isaias, “shall renew their strength.... They shall walk and not faint” (40: 31).

We have a perfect model of this abandonment to divine providence in St. Joseph, in the many difficulties that beset him at the moment of our Lord’s birth at Bethlehem, and again when he heard the mournful prophecy of the aged Simeon, and during all the time that elapsed from the flight away from Herod into Egypt until the return to Nazareth.

Following his example, let us live our lives in that same spirit, fulfilling our daily duties, and the grace of God will never be wanting. By His grace we shall be equal to anything He asks of us, no matter how difficult it may sometimes be.

20. The Manner In Which We Must Abandon Ourselves To Providence

We have said that it is because of the wisdom and goodness of providence that we should put our trust in it and abandon ourselves completely to it; and further, that, provided we fulfil our daily duties, this self-surrender should then embrace everything, all that concerns both soul and body, remembering that if we are faithful in small things grace will be given us to be faithful in what is greater.

Now let us see what forms this confidence and self-abandonment must take according to the nature of events as these do or do not depend on the will of man; let us see what spirit should animate it, what virtues should inspire it.

ON THE VARIOUS WAYS OF ABANDONING ONESELF TO PROVIDENCE ACCORDING TO THE NATURE OF THE EVENT

In order to have a proper understanding of the doctrine of holy indifference, it is well to point out, as spiritual writers frequently do, that our self-abandonment must be in different ways in so far as events independent of the human will call for a type of self-abandonment different from that required by the injustice done to us by men, or our personal sins and their consequences.

Where it concerns events independent of the human will (such as accidents impossible to foresee, incurable diseases), our self-abandonment cannot be too absolute. Resistance here would be useless and would only serve to make us more unhappy; whereas, by accepting them in the spirit of faith, confidence and love, these unavoidable sufferings will become very meritorious. In times of affliction, as often as we say, “Thy will be done, “ we acquire new merit, and thus what is a real trial becomes a means of great sanctification. Moreover, even in trials that may come upon us, but which

perhaps will never materialize, self-abandonment is still of great profit. In preparing to sacrifice his son with perfect self-abandonment, Abraham gained much merit, even though in the event God ceased to demand it of him. By the practice of self-abandonment trials present and to come thus become means of sanctification, the more so as it is inspired by a more intense love for God.

Where it concerns sufferings brought upon us through the injustice of men, their ill will, their unfairness in their dealings with us, their calumnies, what must our attitude be?

St. Thomas, speaking of the injuries and undeserved reproaches, the insults and slanders that affect only our person, declares we must be ready to bear them with patience in compliance with our Lord's words: "If one strike thee on thy right cheek, turn to him also the other" (Matt. 5: 39). But, he continues, there are occasions when some answer is called for, either for the good of the person who injures us, to put a stop to his insolence, or to avoid the scandal such slanders and calumnies may cause. If we do feel bound to retaliate and offer some sort of resistance, let us put ourselves unreservedly in God's hands for the success of the steps we take. In other words, we must deplore and reprove these acts of injustice not because they are wounding to our self-love and pride, but because they are an offense against God, endangering the salvation of the guilty parties and of those who may be led astray by them.

So far as we are concerned, we should see in the injustice men do to us the action of divine justice permitting this evil in order to give us an opportunity of expiating other and very real failings, failings with which no one reproaches us. It is well also to see in this sort of trial the action of divine mercy, which would make of it a means to detach us from creatures, to rid us of our inordinate affections, our pride and luke-warmness, and thus oblige us to have immediate recourse to a fervent prayer of supplication. Spiritually these acts of injustice are like the surgeon's knife, very painful at times but a great corrective. The suffering they cause must bring home to us the value of true justice; not only must it lead us to be just in our dealings with our neighbor, but it must give birth in us to the beatitude of those who, as the Gospel says, hunger and thirst after justice and who shall indeed have their fill.

And so, instead of upsetting and embittering us, men's contempt for us may have a very salutary effect, by impressing us with the utter vanity of all

human glory and with the sublimity of the glory of God as the saints have understood it. It is the way leading to that true humility which causes us to accept contempt and to love to be treated as objects worthy of contempt.

Lastly, what is to be our attitude regarding all those vexations of every kind that are the result not of the injustice of others, but of our own failings, our own indiscretions and weaknesses?

In these failings of ours and their consequences, we must distinguish the element of disorder and guilt from the salutary humiliations resulting from them. Whatever our self-love may have to say, we can never regret too keenly any inordinateness there may have been in our actions, on account of the wrong it has done to God, and the harm it has done to our own soul and, as an almost invariable consequence, to the soul of our neighbor. As for the salutary humiliation resulting from it, we must accept it with complete self-abandonment according to the words of the psalm (118: 71-77) : “It is good for me that Thou hast humbled me: that I may learn Thy justifications. The law of my mouth is good to me, above thousands of gold and silver.... I know, O Lord, that Thy judgments are equity: and in Thy truth Thou has humbled me. O let Thy mercy be for my comfort.... Let Thy tender mercies come unto me, and I shall live: for Thy law is my meditation.”

These humiliations resulting from our personal failings are the true remedy for that exaggerated estimate of ourselves to which we so often cling in spite of the disapproval and contempt others show for us. It even happens that pride hardens us to humiliations from a purely external source, and causes us to offer to ourselves the incense others refuse us. This is one of the most subtle and dangerous forms of self-love and pride, and, to correct it, the divine mercy makes use of those humiliations which are the result of our own failings; in its loving kindness it makes those very failings contribute to our progress. Hence, while laboring to correct ourselves, we should accept these humiliations with perfect self-abandonment.” It is good for me that Thou hast humbled me, O Lord.” It is the way leading to a practical realization of those profound words of the Imitation, so fruitful to one who has really understood them: “Love to be unknown and accounted as nought.” By this doctrine we must live according as the occurrences do or do not depend on ourselves.

Is it a spirit that depreciates our hope of salvation on the plea of advanced perfection, as the Quietists claimed? Quite the contrary: it must be a spirit of deep faith, confidence, and love.

The will of God, as expressed by His commandments, is that we should hope in Him and labor confidently in the work of our salvation in the face of every obstacle. This expressed will of God pertains to the domain of obedience, not of self-abandonment. This latter concerns the will of His good pleasure on which depends our still uncertain future, the daily occurrences in the course of our life, such as health and sickness, success and misfortune.

To sacrifice our salvation, our eternal happiness, on the plea of perfection, would be absolutely contrary to that natural inclination for happiness which, with our nature, we have from God. It would be contrary to Christian hope, not only to that possessed by the common run of the faithful, but also to that of the saints, who in the severest trials have hoped on “against all human hope, “ to use St. Paul’s phrase (Rom. 4: 18), even when all seemed lost. Nay, to sacrifice our eternal beatitude in this way would be contrary to charity itself, by which indeed we love God for His own sake and desire to possess Him that we may eternally proclaim His glory.

The natural inclination we have from God which leads us to desire happiness is not a disorder, for it already contains the initial tendency to love God the sovereign good more than ourselves. As St. Thomas has pointed out, in our own organism the hand naturally tends to prefer the interests of the body to its own and to sacrifice itself, if necessary, for the safety of the body. And our Lord Himself says that the hen instinctively gathers her little ones under her wing, ready to sacrifice herself if necessary to save them from the hawk, the reason being that, all unconsciously, she prefers the welfare of the species to her own. In a higher form this same natural tendency is to be found in man: in loving what is highest in himself He loves his Creator even more; to cease to desire our perfection and salvation would be to turn our back upon God. There can be no question, therefore, of our sacrificing the desire for salvation and eternal happiness, as the Quietists imagined, on the plea of advanced perfection.

Far from it: self-abandonment involves the exercise in an eminent degree of the three theological virtues, faith, hope, and charity, as it were fused into one.

It is nevertheless true to say that God purifies our desire from the self-love with which it may be tinged by leaving us in some uncertainty about it and so inducing us to love Him more exclusively for His own sake.

We should abandon ourselves to God in the spirit of faith, believing with St. Paul (Rom. 8: 28) that “all things work together unto good” in the lives of those who love God and persevere in His love. Such an act of faith was that made by holy Job who, when deprived of his wealth and his children, remained submissive to God, saying: “The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away.... Blessed be the name of the Lord” (Job 1:21).

In the same spirit Abraham prepared to sacrifice his son in obedience to God’s command, abandoning himself in the deepest faith to the divine will of good pleasure in all that concerned the future of his race. We are reminded of this by St. Paul when he tells us in the Epistle to the Hebrews (11:17) : “By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son (to whom it was said: in Isaac shall thy seed be called), accounting that God is able to raise up even from the dead.” Far less exacting are the trials we have to endure, though on account of our weakness they sometimes seem to weigh heavily upon us.

At any rate, let us believe with the saints that whatever the Lord does He does well, when He sends us humiliations and spiritual dryness as when He heaps honors and consolations upon us. As Father Piny remarks, nowhere is there a deeper or more lively faith than in the conviction that God arranges everything for our welfare, even when He appears to destroy us and overthrow our most cherished plans, when He allows us to be calumniated, to suffer permanent ill-health, and other afflictions still more painful. This is great faith indeed, for it is to believe the apparently incredible: that God will raise us up by casting us down; and it is to believe this in a practical and living way, not merely an abstract and theoretical way. We find verified in our lives these words of the Gospel: “Every one that exalteth himself [like the Pharisee] shall be humbled: and he that humbleth himself [like the publican] shall be exalted” (Luke 18: 14). Also we find verified these words of the Magnificat: “He hath put down the mighty from their seat and hath exalted the humble. He hath filled the hungry with good things: and the rich He hath sent empty away” (Luke 1: 52). Every one of us must by humility be numbered among these little ones, among those that hunger for divine truth which is the true bread of the soul.

While fulfilling our daily duties, then, we must abandon ourselves to almighty God in a spirit of deep faith, which must also be accompanied by an absolutely childlike confidence in His fatherly kindness. Confidence (fiducia or confidentia), says St. Thomas, is a steadfast or intensified hope arising from a deep faith in the goodness of God, who, according to His promises, is ever at hand to help us—Deus auxilians.

As the psalms declare: “Blessed are they that trust in the Lord” (2: 12) ; “They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Sion: he shall not be moved forever that dwelleth in Jerusalem” (124: 1) ; “Preserve me, O Lord, for I have put my trust in Thee” (15: 1) ; “In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped, let me not be confounded” (30: 1).

St. Paul (Rom. 4: 18) reminds us how Abraham, in spite of his advanced years, believed in the divine promise that he would be the father of many nations, and adds: “Against hope, he believed in hope.... In the promise also of God he staggered not by distrust: but was strengthened in faith,, giving glory to God: most fully knowing that whatsoever He has promised, He is able to perform.”

We, too, while fulfilling our daily duties, should look to our Lord for the realization of these words of His: “My sheep hear My voice: and I know them, and they follow Me... and no man shall pluck them out of My hand” (John 10: 27). As Father Piny notes, to do one’s duty in all earnestness and then to resign oneself with entire confidence into our Lord’s hands is the true mark of a member of His flock. What better way can there be of hearkening to the voice of the good Shepherd than by constantly acquiescing in all that He demands of us, lovingly beseeching Him to have pity on us, throwing ourselves confidently into the arms of His mercy with all our failings and regrets? By so doing, we are at the same time placing in His hands all our fears for both the past and the future. This holy self-abandonment is not at all opposed to hope, but is childlike confidence in its holiest form united with a love becoming ever more and more purified.

Love in its purest form, in fact, depends for its support upon the will of God, after the example of our Lord who said: “My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, that I may perfect His work” (John 4:34) ; “Because I came down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me” (John 5: 30). Thus no more perfect or nobler or purer way of loving God can be found than to make the divine will our own, fulfilling God’s will as expressed to us and then abandoning ourselves entirely to His

good pleasure. For souls that follow this road, God is everything: eventually, they can say in very truth: “My God and my all.” God is their center; they find no peace but in Him, by submitting all their aspirations to His good pleasure and accepting tranquilly all that He does. At times of greatest difficulty St. Catherine of Siena would remember the Master’s words to her: “Think of Me and I will think of thee.”

Rare indeed are the souls that attain to such perfection as this. And yet it is the goal at which we all must aim. St. Francis de Sales says:

Our Lord loves with a most tender love those who are so happy as to abandon themselves wholly to His fatherly care, letting themselves be governed by His divine providence, without any idle speculations as to whether the workings of this providence will be useful to them, to their profit, or painful to their loss, and this because they are well assured that nothing can be sent, nothing permitted by this paternal and most loving heart, which will not be a source of good and profit to them. All that is required is that they should place all their confidence in Him. ... When, in fulfilling our daily duties, we abandon everything, our Lord takes care of everything and orders everything.... The soul has nothing else to do but to rest in the arms of our Lord like a child on its mother’s breast. When she puts it down to walk, it walks until she takes it up again, and when she wishes to carry it, she is allowed to do so. It neither knows nor thinks where it is going, but allows itself to be carried or led wherever its mother pleases. So this soul lets itself be carried when it lovingly accepts God’s good pleasure in all things that happen, and walks when it carefully effects all that the known (expressed) will of God demands.

Then it can truly say with our Lord: “My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me” (John 4: 34). Therein it finds its peace, which even now is in some sort the beginning of eternal life within us—inchoatio vitae aeternae.

21. Providence And The Duty Of The Present Moment

“All whatsoever you do in word or in work, all things do ye in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him” (Col. 3: 17). To understand more clearly how we should live from day to day trusting in God, and in a spirit of self-abandonment, it is well to pay close attention to the duty of the present moment and the graces offered us to fulfil it.

We will speak first of the duty which presents itself at every moment, as the saints have understood it, and then we will clarify their attitude from the teaching of Scripture and theology, which is applicable to us all.

THE DUTY OF THE PRESENT MOMENT AS THE SAINTS UNDERSTOOD IT

The duty at any given moment conveys, frequently under a modest exterior, the expression of God’s will regarding ourselves and our individual lives. Thus it was our Lady lived her life of union with God, by accomplishing His will in the daily routine of duties of her simple life, a life outwardly commonplace like that of any other person in her lowly rank. Thus, too, did the saints live, doing the will of God as it was revealed to them from one moment to the other, without allowing themselves to be upset by unforeseen reverses. Their secret consisted in submitting constantly to the divine action in the shaping of their lives. In that action they recognized all they had to do and suffer, duties to be accomplished, crosses to be borne. They were persuaded that what is happening at the moment is a sign that either God wills or permits it for the good of those seeking Him. Even the evil they experienced taught them something: by taxing their patience it showed them by contrast what must be done to avoid sin and its disastrous consequences. Thus the saints see in the sequence of events a sort of providential schooling. Moreover, they are convinced that

behind the succession of external happenings runs a parallel series of actual graces which are continually being offered to enable us to draw great spiritual profit from these events, whether painful or pleasing. The sequence of events, if looked at in the right perspective, is an instructive course on the things of God, a sort of extension of revelation or application of the Gospel truths continuing down to the end of time.

A distinction is made in almost every sphere between theoretical, abstract teaching and practical or applied teaching. The same holds good in the spiritual order, where, in His own way, almighty God imparts these two kinds of instruction, the one in the Gospel and the other in the course of our lives.

This important truth about life is often completely disregarded. As a rule, no sooner do we meet with contradictions and reverses than we utter nothing but complaints and murmurings. We find that this illness has come upon us just when there is so much to be done; that something indispensable is denied us; that someone is depriving us of the necessary means, or placing insurmountable obstacles in our way as regards the good we must accomplish or the apostolate to which we have devoted ourselves.

In these or even more painful circumstances the saints would confess that fundamentally the one thing necessary is to do the will of God from day to day. God never commands the impossible. Each moment has a duty which God makes really possible for every one of us and in the fulfilment of which He appeals to our love and generosity.

If, then, as a result of our failings, something happens to distress us, it is a providential lesson which we must accept in all humility and thus derive some profit from it. If, through no fault of our own, God permits us to be deprived of certain help, this is because that help is not really necessary for our sanctification and salvation. The saints find that in a sense nothing is wanting to them unless it be a greater love for God. If only we knew the inner meaning of those incidents we call hindrances, contradictions, reverses, disappointments, misfortunes, and failures, we should of course deplore any disorder they might involve (and the saints deplored it, were pained by it far more than we), but we should also reproach ourselves for complaining and give more consideration to the higher purpose God is pursuing in all that He wills and even in His divine permission of evil.

Should we wonder that the ways of providence are some times mysterious and that reason is disconcerted at the mystery? “The just man

liveth by faith" (Rom. 1: 17), says the Scripture, and in particular he lives by the mystery of providence and its ways. Eventually he realizes that, far from being contradictory, the mystery cannot be rejected without every phase of our life becoming a contradiction.

More than once the Scripture declares: "The Lord killeth and maketh alive; He bringeth down to hell and bringeth back again."

The more the divine action makes us die to sin and its consequences, the more it detaches us from all that is not God Himself, and the more it vivifies us. It has been said that sometimes grace is a destroyer; yet, in its workings within us, it does not destroy, but perfects any good there is in nature, restoring and sublimating it. We may say of grace as was said of God: "It killeth and maketh alive" (I Kings 2: 6).

As Pere de Caussade remarks, when explaining these ways of Providence, "The more obscure the mystery is to us, the more light it contains in itself"; for its obscurity is due to a radiance too intense for our feeble vision.

Moreover, what happens to each of us personally from one moment to the other by the will and permission of Providence, is of greater instruction for us. Therein we may see the expression of the divine will in our regard at the present moment. In this way, too, within us is formed that experimental knowledge of God's dealings with us, a knowledge without which we can hardly direct our course aright in spiritual things or do any lasting good to others. In the spiritual order more than anywhere else real knowledge can be acquired only by suffering and action. Though our Lord's holy soul from the moment of His coming into the world enjoyed the beatific vision and an infused knowledge, yet He willed also to have an experimental knowledge, that knowledge which is acquired from day to day and enables us to view things under that special aspect which contact with reality gives when they have been infallibly foreseen. We foresee that a very dear friend who is sick has not long to live, yet when death does come and if our eyes are open to see, it will provide a new lesson in which God will speak to us as time goes on. This is the school of the Holy Ghost, in which His lessons have nothing academic about them, but are drawn from concrete things. And He varies them for each soul, since what is useful for one is not always so for another. Although we must not be superstitious and think we see a deep meaning in what is merely accidental and of no significance, let us in all simplicity listen to what Providence has to say to each one of us personally in these

concrete lessons it gives. We must not treat this doctrine in a purely material and mechanical way; it is a question of being supernaturally-minded in everything, in all simplicity and without disputings or foolish questionings.

The author just quoted says:

The will of God in the present moment is an ever bubbling source of sanctity.... All you who thirst, learn that you have not far to go to find the fountain of living waters; it gushes forth quite close to you right now; therefore hasten to find it. Why, with the fountain so near, do you tire yourselves with running about after every little rill?... O unknown Love! It seems as though Your wonders were finished and nothing remained but to copy Your ancient works, and to quote Your past discourses. And no one sees that Your inexhaustible activity is a source of new thoughts, of fresh sufferings and further actions... of new saints.

THE HEART OF JESUS IS A "SOURCE OF GRACES EVER NEW."

As age succeeds age the saints have no need to copy the lives or writings of those who have gone before; they need only to live their lives in continuous self-abandonment to God's secret inspirations. In this they and their predecessors are alike, in spite of differences peculiar to the age and the individual. Could we but see the divine light it contains, the present moment would remind us that everything may contribute to our spiritual advancement in the love of God, as means or instrument, or at least as occasion, by way of trial or by way of contrast. In the order intended by Providence this present moment is in some way related to our last end, to the one thing necessary; and thus each instant of fleeting time has some sort of relation with the unique instant of unchanging eternity.

Could we but grasp this truth, then not only the time of mass or our hours of prayer and visits to the Blessed Sacrament would be a source of sanctification to us, but every hour of the day would take on a supernatural significance and remind us that we are on our way to eternity. Hence the pious practice of blessing each hour as it begins, calling down the divine benediction upon it. At every moment we should be at God's service; there is no moment of the day that has not some duty for us to fulfil, some duty toward God or our neighbor, the duty at least of patiently waiting when external action is no longer possible. Every minute must find us hallowing

the name of God as though there were nothing more to keep us here in time, as though the next moment must see our entry into eternity.

In the World War this was the attitude of the more spiritually-minded when under gunfire. In those three-minute intervals before firing recommenced, they would say to themselves: “One moment, perhaps, and then death, “ and they would live the present moment as though it were the prelude to eternity.

This, too, was the attitude of the saints, not only in exceptional circumstances, but in the ordinary routine of their lives: they never lost the sense of God’s presence. Now light is thrown on this attitude of theirs by the Gospel principles we mentioned and which are as applicable to us as to them.

THE TEACHING OF SCRIPTURE AND THEOLOGY ON THE DUTY OF THE PRESENT MOMENT

In his First Epistle to the Corinthians, St. Paul wrote (10: 31) : “Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all for the glory of God”; and to the Colossians he said (3: 17) : “All whatsoever you do in word or in work, all things do ye in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.”

Our Lord Himself said (Matt. 12:34-36) : “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of a good treasure bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of an evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say to you, that every idle word that men speak, they shall render an account of it in the day of judgment.”

The full significance of this doctrine is elucidated by St. Thomas (Ia IIae, q. 18, a. 9), who teaches that in the concrete, hic et nunc, no deliberate act is morally indifferent; every one of our deliberate acts is either good or bad. The reason is that every deliberate act in a rational being should itself be rational or directed to a morally good end, and in the Christian every deliberate act should be directed at least virtually to God. If this is done, then the act is good, otherwise it is bad; no other alternative is possible. Our very recreations and amusements, the walks we take, all must have some morally good purpose. To take a walk is of course indifferent when considered in the abstract; to walk in one direction rather than in another may also be indifferent. But our walk must have in view a rational purpose:

for example, to repair or renew our strength so as to apply ourselves once again to our appointed task. And thus our very amusements assume a moral significance and value in our lives as rational beings.

To adopt the metaphor of a well-known preacher, our deliberate acts are like drops of rain falling on a mountain peak at the watershed. Some water flows to the right into one river and so eventually to the ocean; the rest flows to the left to join another river flowing down to another sea far off in the opposite direction. So also it is with our deliberate acts: they are either directed to what is good and so eventually to God, or they are directed to evil. Not one of these acts, when presented in the concrete reality of life, is indifferent.

This teaching may at first sight appear severe. That is not so: a virtual or implicit intention is all that is needed, renewed each morning at prayer-time and as often as the Holy Ghost inspires us to lift up our hearts to God.

Nay more, it is a consoling doctrine, for it follows that in the lives of the just every deliberate act that is not sinful is at once morally good and meritorious, whether it be easy or difficult, trivial or heroic.

Again, when rightly understood and really lived, this doctrine is a source of sanctification. It leads to the reflection that what God does at any particular moment is well done and is a sign of His will. Thus Job, deprived of all things, saw in this the will of God trying Him for his sanctification; thus instead of cursing this most painful episode of his, he blessed the name of the Lord. Let us, then, learn to recognize in what is happening every moment something positively intended by God, or at any rate divinely permitted, and always directed to some higher good purpose. In this way, no matter what happens, we shall always be at peace.

The whole doctrine is summed up by St. Francis de Sales in these few words: “Every moment comes to us pregnant with a command from God, only to pass on and plunge into eternity, there to remain forever what we have made it.”

To see thus constantly in the duty of the present moment the expression of the divine will comes principally from the gift of wisdom, which enables us in a manner to see in God, the first cause and last end, every event whether painful or pleasing. That is why, as St. Augustine says, this gift corresponds to the beatitude of the peacemakers: that is, the beatitude of those who preserve their peace where many an other will be troubled and who will often restore to those who are in deep trouble the peace they have

lost.” Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God”. (Matt. 5: 9).

22. The Grace Of The Present Moment And Fidelity In Little Things

We were saying that the duty we must accomplish with every succeeding hour is the expression of God’s will for each one of us individually hic et nunc and thus conveys a certain practical instruction very valuable for sanctification. It is the Gospel teaching as applied to the various circumstances of our lives, a real object-lesson imparted by almighty God Himself.

If we could only look on each moment from this point of view, as the saints did, we should see that to each moment there is attached not only a duty to be performed, but also a grace to be faithful in accomplishing that duty.

THE SPIRITUAL RICHES CONTAINED IN THE PRESENT MOMENT

As fresh circumstances arise, with their attendant obligations, fresh actual graces are offered us in order that we may derive the greatest spiritual profit from-them. Above the succession of external events that go to make up our life, there runs a parallel series of actual graces offered for our acceptance, just as the air comes in successive waves to enter our lungs and so make breathing possible.

This succession of actual graces which we either agree to make use of for our spiritual benefit, or, on the other hand, neglect to do so, constitutes the history of each individual soul as it is written down in the book of life, in God, to be laid open some day for our inspection. It is thus that our Lord continues to live in His mystical body, and especially in His saints, in whom He continues a life that will know no end, a life that at every moment requires new graces and new activities.

Our Lord has said:

I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you forever, the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, nor knoweth Him: but you shall know Him; because He shall abide with you, and shall be in you.... He will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you (John 14:16, 26).

To those who will listen, the Holy Ghost is in all things their guide from day to day, and by His grace He engraves the law of God upon the soul, doing this either directly Himself or through the preaching of the Gospel. St. Paul tells the Corinthians: “Do we need (as some do) epistles of commendation to you or from you? You are our epistle... being manifested, that you are the epistle of Christ, ministered by us, and written not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God: not in tables of stone, but in the fleshy tablets of the heart” (II Cor. 3: I-3). And thus in the souls of men is being written the interior history of the Church, to be continued down to the end of time. It is this history which is set out symbolically in the Apocalypse, and only at the last day will it be read with clarity of perception.

This is how Pere de Caussade puts it in the following remarkable passages:

Oh, glorious history! grand book written by the Holy Spirit in this present time! It is still in the press to turn out holy souls. There is never a day when the type is not arranged, when the ink is not applied, when the pages are not printed. We are still in the dark night of faith. The paper is blacker than the ink.... It is written in characters of another world, and there is no understanding it except in heaven.... If the transposition of twenty-five letters is incomprehensible as sufficing for the composition of an almost infinite number of different volumes, each admirable of its kind, who can explain the works of God in the universe?... Teach me, divine Spirit, to read in this book of life. I desire to become Thy disciple and, like a little child, to believe what I cannot understand and cannot see.

What great truths are hidden even from Christians who imagine themselves most enlightened!... To effect this union with Him, God makes use of the worst of His creatures as well as of the best, and of the most distressing events as well as of those which are pleasant and agreeable. Our union with Him is even the more meritorious as the means enabling us to maintain it are the more repugnant to nature.

The present moment is ever filled with infinite treasures; it contains more than you have capacity to hold. Faith is the measure. Believe, and it will be done to you accordingly. Love also is the measure. The more the heart loves, the more it desires; and the more it desires, so much the more will it receive. The will of God presents itself to us at each moment as an immense ocean that no human heart can fathom; but what the heart can receive from this ocean is equal to the measure of our faith, confidence and love. The whole creation cannot fill the human heart, for the heart's capacity surpasses all that is not God. The mountains that are terrifying to look at, are but atoms for the heart. The divine will is an abyss of which the present moment is the entrance. Plunge into this abyss and you will always find it infinitely more vast than your desires. Do not flatter anyone, nor worship your own illusions; they can neither give you anything nor take anything from you. You will receive your fullness from the will of God alone, which will not leave you empty. Adore it, put it first, before all other things.... Destroy the idols of the senses.... When the senses are terrified, or famished, despoiled, crushed, then it is that faith is nourished, enriched, and enlivened. Faith laughs at these calamities as the governor of an impregnable fortress laughs at the futile attacks of an impotent foe.

When the will of God is made known to a soul, and has made the soul realize His willingness to give Himself to it—provided that the soul, too, gives itself to God—then under all circumstances the soul experiences a great happiness in this coming of God, and enjoys it the more, the more it has learnt to abandon itself at every moment to His most adorable will.

God is like the ocean, sustaining those who in all confidence surrender themselves to Him and do everything in their power to follow His inspirations as a ship will respond to a favorable breeze. This is what our Lord meant when He said: "The spirit breatheth where he will and thou hearest his voice: but thou knowest not whence he cometh and whither he goeth. So is everyone that is born of the Spirit (John 3: 8).

How sublime is this doctrine! As the present minute is passing, let us likewise bear in mind that what exists is not merely our body with its sensibility, its varying emotions of pain and pleasure; but also our spiritual and immortal soul, and the actual grace we receive, and Christ who exerts His influence upon us, and the Blessed Trinity dwelling within us. We shall then have some idea of the infinite riches contained in the present moment and the connection it has with the unchanging instant of eternity into which

we are some day to enter. We should not be satisfied with viewing the present moment along the horizontal line of time, as the connecting link between a vanished past and an uncertain temporal future; we ought rather to view it along that vertical line of time which links it up with the unique instant of unchanging eternity. Whatever happens, let us say to ourselves: At this moment God is present and desires to draw me to Himself. In one of the most painful moments of St. Alphonsus' life, when the beloved congregation he had just founded seemed all but lost, he heard these words from the lips of a lay friend of his: "God is always present, Father Alphonsus." Not only did he renew his courage, but that hour of pain became one of the most fruitful of his life.

Let us in all reverses give heed to the actual graces offered us with each passing minute for the fulfilment of present duty. We shall thus realize more and more how great must be our fidelity in little things as well as in great.

FIDELITY IN LITTLE THINGS

Our Lord tells us (Luke 16: 10) : "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in that which is greater." Again, in the parable of the talents He says to each of the faithful servants: "Well done, good and faithful servant, because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Matt. 25: 21). We have here a most important lesson on the value of trivial things, one very often ignored by those who are naturally high-minded, who take the first step on the wrong path when their sense of dignity degenerates into pride. We cannot lay too much stress on this point in considering the fidelity we ought to show to the grace of the present moment.

As often noted, in many cases where souls have given themselves to God in all sincerity and have made generous, even heroic efforts to prove their love for Him, a critical moment comes when they must abandon a too personal way of judging and acting—though it may be of a high order—so as to enter upon the path of true humility, that "little humility" which loses sight of self and looks henceforward on God alone.

At that moment two widely different courses are possible: either the soul seeks for itself the course to take and pursues it, or it fails to do so, sometimes going so far astray in its upward path as to go back again without being altogether aware of it.

To see this path of true humility is to discover in our everyday life, from morning to night, opportunities of performing seemingly trivial acts for the love of God. But the frequent repetition of these acts is of immense value and leads to a delicacy of attitude to God and our neighbor which, if constant and truly sincere, is the mark of perfect charity.

The acts then demanded of the soul are very simple and pass by unnoticed. There is nothing in them for self-love to take hold of. God alone sees them, and the soul thinks it is offering Him, so to speak, nothing at all. And yet these acts, St. Thomas says, are like drops of water continually falling on the same spot: eventually they bore a hole in the rock. The same real effect is gradually produced by the assimilation of the graces we receive. They penetrate the soul and its faculties, at the same time sublimating them and gradually bringing everything to the required supernatural focus. Without this fidelity in little things actuated by the spirit of faith and love, humility, patience and gentleness, the contemplative life will never penetrate the active, the ordinary everyday life. Contemplation will be confined, as it were, to the summit of the intellect, where it is more speculative than contemplative; it will fail to permeate our whole existence and manner of life and will remain almost completely barren whereas it should become every day more fruitful.

This is a matter of supreme importance. St. Francis de Sales more than once speaks of it. St. Thomas says the same thing in another way when he teaches, as we have already seen, that in the concrete reality of life no deliberate act is hic et nunc morally indifferent. In a rational being every deliberate act should be rational, should have an “honorable” end in view, and in the Christian every act should be directed at least virtually to God as to the supreme object of love. This truth brings out the importance of the multifarious actions we have to perform day by day. Perhaps they are trivial in themselves, nevertheless they are of great importance relative to God and the spirit of faith and love, of humility and patience that should actuate us in performing them and offering them to Him.

This critical moment of which we are speaking marks a difficult crisis in the spiritual life of many fairly advanced souls, who then run the risk of falling back again.

If a soul that has shown itself generous or even heroic, after reaching this point is still far too personal in its manner of judging and acting and does not see the need of a change, it continues on its way with a merely acquired

impetus, and its prayer and activities are no longer what they should be. There is a real danger here. The soul may become stunted and its development arrested like one dwarfed through some deformity. Or it may take a false direction. Instead of true humility, it may almost unawares develop a sort of refined pride, which scarcely appears at first except in the small details of daily life. For that reason this will remain unknown to a spiritual director living apart from those he directs. This pride will steadily take the form of an amused condescension, and subsequently develop into an acerbity of manner in our relations with our neighbor, permeating the whole life of the day and thus stultifying everything. This acerbity may lead to rancor and contempt for our neighbor, whom nevertheless we should love for God's sake.

A soul that has come to this pass will not easily be led to make those holy considerations which are necessary for it to return to the point whence it went astray. Such a soul should be recommended to our Lady's care; in many cases she alone can lead it back into the right path.

The remedy for this evil is to make the soul very attentive to the grace of the moment and faithful in trivial things.

To quote Pere de Caussade once more:

Actions are not determined by ideas or by a confusion of words which by themselves would only serve to excite pride.... We must make use only of what God sends us to do or to suffer, and not forsake this divine reality to occupy our minds with the historical wonders of the divine work instead of gaining an increase of grace by our fidelity. The marvels of this work, which we read about for the purpose of satisfying our curiosity, often only tend to disgust us with things that seem trifling but by which, if we do not despise them, the divine love effects very great things in us. Fools that we are! We admire and bless this divine action in the writings that relate its history; and when it is ready to continue this writing on our hearts, we keep moving the paper and prevent it writing by our curiosity, that we may see what it is doing in and around us.... For love of Thee, O my God, and for the discharge of my debts, I will confine myself to the one essential business, that of the present moment, and thus enable Thee to act.

This is what is meant by the common saying, Age quod agis. And so, if we are really doing our utmost day by day to be faithful to God in little things, He will certainly give us strength to be faithful to Him in difficult and very painful circumstances, if through His permission that should be

our lot. Thus will be realized the words of the Gospel: “Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof”; “He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in that which is greater.”

23. The Attitude Of Providence Toward Those Who Abandon Themselves Completely To It

Fidelity to daily duty by docile correspondence to the graces offered us every moment, soon receives its reward in that special assistance which Providence gives to those who practice this childlike self-surrender. This assistance, it may be said, is shown mainly in three ways, which it will be well to emphasize: thus Providence gives special guidance to those souls in their darkness; it defends them against whatever is hostile to their spiritual welfare; and it intensifies their interior life more and more.

IN WHAT WAY GOD GUIDES THOSE SOULS THAT ABANDON THEMSELVES TO HIM

He enlightens them through the gifts of wisdom and understanding, knowledge and counsel, which with sanctifying grace and charity we received in baptism and to a greater degree in confirmation. In imperfect souls these gifts, together with those of piety, fortitude, and filial fear, are, so to speak, shackled by more or less inordinate inclinations, so that such souls are living but a superficial life, which prevents them from being attentive to the inspirations of the Master of the interior life.

These gifts have been likened to the sails of a boat by which it readily accommodates itself to the least stir of a favorable wind. In imperfect souls, however, the sails are furled and will not respond to the breeze. On the other hand, when the soul does what it can to fulfil its daily obligations and steer its bark as it should, abandoning itself to God, He visits it with His inspirations, at first latent and confused, which if well received, become more and more frequent, more insistent and luminous.

Then, amidst the joyful and painful events of life, the clash of temperaments, in times of spiritual dryness, amidst the snares of the devil or of men, their suspicion and their jealousies, the soul in its higher regions at any rate remains always at peace. It enjoys this serenity because it is

intimately persuaded that God is guiding it and, in abandoning itself to Him, it seeks only to do His will and nothing more. Thus it sees Him everywhere under every external guise and makes use of everything to further its union with Him. Sin itself, by its very contrast, will recall the infinite majesty of God.

Then is increasingly realized the words of the Apostle St. John to the faithful for whom he wrote his First Epistle: “Let the unction you have received from God abide in you. And you have no need that any man teach you: but as His unction teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie” (I John 2:27).

The soul has then less need of reasonings and methods in its prayer and meditation, or for its guidance; it has become more simplified in its mode of thought and desire. It follows rather the interior action of God in its soul, which makes itself felt not so much by the impression of ideas, as through the instinct or the necessity imposed by circumstances where only one course is possible. It perceives at once the depth of meaning in some phrase from the Gospels which has not previously impressed it. God gives it an understanding of the Scriptures such as He gave to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus. The simplest sermons are a source of enlightenment and it discovers treasures in them; for God makes use of these means that He Himself may enlighten the soul, just as a great artist may use the most ordinary implement, the cheapest pencil, to execute a great masterpiece, a wonderful picture of Christ or the Blessed Virgin.

In God’s dealings with souls that abandon themselves to Him, much remains obscure, mysterious, disconcerting, impenetrable; but He makes it all contribute to their spiritual welfare, and some day they will see that what at times to them was the cause of profound desolation was the source of much joy to the angels.

Moreover, God enlightens the soul by means of this very darkness and just when He appears to blind it. When the things of sense, which once so charmed and fascinated us, are obliterated, then the grandeur of spiritual things begins to be seen. A fallen monarch, like Louis XVI after losing his throne, sees more clearly than ever before the sublimity of the Gospel and of the many graces he has received in the past. Formerly he scarcely gave them a thought, being too absorbed in the external splendors of his kingdom. And now it is the kingdom of heaven that is revealed to him.

An important law in the spiritual world is that the transcendent darkness of divine things is in a sense more illuminating than the obviousness of earthly things. We have an illustration of this in the sensible order. Surprising as the truth may at first appear, we see much farther in the darkness of the night than in the light of day. The sun, in fact, must first be hidden before we can see the stars and have a glimpse of the unfathomable depths of the sky. The spectacle presented to us on a starry night is sometimes incomparably more beautiful than anything to be seen on even the sunniest day. In the daytime, doubtless, our view may extend far over the surrounding country, and even to the sun itself, though its light takes eight minutes to reach us. But in the darkness of the night we see at a single glance thousands of stars, although the light from even the nearest requires four and a half years to reach us. From the spiritual point of view the same holds true: as the sun prevents our seeing the stars, so in human life there are things which by their glare obstruct our view of the splendors of the faith. It is fitting, then, that from time to time in our lives Providence should subdue this glare of inferior things so as to give us a glimpse of something far more precious for our soul and our salvation.

Indeed, in the spiritual order, as in the physical, there is often an alternation of day and night; it is mentioned more than once in the Imitation. If we are saddened at the approach of twilight, God could well answer us by saying: How can I otherwise reveal to you all those thousands of stars which can be seen only at night?

Thus is verified the truth of our Lord's words when He said: "He that followeth me walketh not in darkness" (John 8:12). The light of faith dispels the lower darkness of ignorance, sin, and damnation, says St. Thomas. Moreover, since this divine darkness is owing to a higher light which is too intense for our feeble vision, it does enlighten us in its own fashion and gives us a glimpse into the abyss of the heavens, into the deep things of God, into the mystery of the ways of Providence. St. Paul says:

We speak wisdom among the perfect: yet not the wisdom of the world, neither of the princes of this world that come to nought. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, a wisdom which is hidden, which God ordained before the world, unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew. For if they had known it, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory. But, as it is written: That eye hath not seen, nor ear heard: neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared

for them that love him. But to us God hath revealed them by His Spirit. For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

God has His own way of enlightening souls concerning His intimate life and the secrets of His ways. Sometimes He seems to blind them, yet, in reality, just when an inferior light disappears, then it is that He gives them a more sublime light. For the saint, the darkness of death is followed immediately by the light of glory. Those around him are saddened to see this present life coming so quickly to an end; he is happy to see it drawing to its close, for it means his entry into everlasting life.

If at times in our lives everything seems desperate, and, as Tauler says, the masts have gone overboard and the ship is reduced to a mere hulk in the midst of the tempest, then is the moment to abandon ourselves to God fully and completely, without reserve. If we do so with all our heart, God will at once take into His own hands the immediate direction of our lives, for He alone can save us." The Lord leadeth the just by right ways and showeth him the kingdom of God" (Wis. 10: 10).

THE SOUL THAT ABANDONS ITSELF TO GOD IS DEFENDED BY HIM AGAINST THE ENEMIES OF ITS SPIRITUAL WELFARE

This is what St. Paul tells us in the Epistle to the Romans (8: 31) : "If God be for us, who is against us? He that spared not even His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how hath He not also, with Him, given us all things." The Book of Wisdom says of the just who in confidence abandon themselves to God: "With His right hand He will cover them, and with His holy arm He will defend them" (5: 17).

All things are controlled by Providence; the least circumstance, however insignificant, is in its hands. With Providence there is no such thing as chance; and so by some little unforeseen incident it can easily upset the cunning calculations of those hostile to spiritual good. We have an example of this in the life of Joseph, who was sold by his brethren. Had not the Ismaelite merchants, by chance apparently, passed by just when his brothers had decided to put him to death, he would have been left there in the cistern where they had thrown him. But it was then and not an hour later, as was ordained by God from all eternity, that the merchants arrived on the scene, and Joseph was thus sold into slavery. And so, being led into Egypt, he was later to be a benefactor to those who had wished to destroy him. Let us

recall also the story of Esther, of the prophet Daniel, and of many others. j Similar and more striking are the circumstances surrounding the birth of our Lord. Herod had organized all the forces at his disposal to put the Messias to death and had then requested the wise men from the East to obtain for him precise information about the child. But, “having received an answer in sleep that they should not return to Herod, they went back another way to their own country” (Matt. 2: 12).” Then Herod, perceiving that he was deluded by the wise men,... sending, killed all the men children that were in Bethlehem and in all the borders thereof” (ibid., 2: 16), but an angel, appearing in sleep to Joseph, commanded him to save the child from the king’s wrath and flee into Egypt.

In the lives of the just it is not miraculous that their guardian angels intervene at God’s command to inspire some holy thought in them, whether they be asleep or awake; it is a providential occurrence by no means rare in the lives of those who abandon themselves completely to God. In the Book of Psalms (90: 10) we are told: “There shall be no evil come to thee: nor shall the scourge come near thy dwelling. For the Lord hath given His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. In their hands they shall bear thee up, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.” We must not tempt God, of course; but in the fulfilment of our daily duties we must resign ourselves humbly into His hands, and those who thus abandon themselves to Him, He will protect as a mother protects her children. If He allows persecution, often bitter persecution, to come upon them, as He did in the case of His own Son, nevertheless He will not allow the just to lose courage, but will sustain them in invisible ways and, if in a moment of weakness they should fall, as Peter did, He will raise them up again and lead them on to the haven of salvation.

The soul that abandons itself to God instead of resisting its enemies, so the saints tell us, finds in them useful allies. Says Pere de Caussade:

There is nothing that is more entirely opposed to worldly prudence than simplicity; it turns aside all schemes without comprehending them, without so much as a thought about them.... To have to deal with a simple soul is, in a certain way, to have to deal with God. What can be done against the will of the Almighty and His inscrutable designs? God takes the cause of the simple soul in hand. It is unnecessary to study the intrigues of others against it.... The divine action makes the soul adopt such just measures as to surprise even those who wish to take it by surprise. It profits by all their

efforts.... They are the galley-slaves who bring the ship into port with hard rowing. All obstacles turn to the good of this soul.... All it has to fear is lest it should take part in a work and so disturb it... in which it has nothing to do but peacefully to observe the work of God, and follow with simplicity the attractions He gives it.... The soul in the state of abandonment can abstain from justifying itself by word or deed. The divine action justifies it.

Thus it is in the lives of the saints, and, in due proportions, the way they have followed ought to be ours also.

Not infrequently we hear people who are beset by difficulties say in a flippant sort of way: “Why worry?” That is a sheer materialistic and egotistic conception of the doctrine we are here considering. The animating principle of this doctrine is a trustful self-abandonment to Providence. If this trustful self-abandonment is no longer present, as in such recipes for life as that “why worry?” then nothing is left but a body without a soul, a formula of no greater value than the moral energy of the person who utters it. When one has departed from this way of salvation, all that is left of the noblest maxims on life is a dead formula that will serve as an excuse for anything. Yet to all is offered the light of life in the Gospel. The consecrated host elevated every morning on our altars is offered up for all, and all can unite themselves with this oblation. In place of that confidence in God which should accompany our daily task, for us to substitute an arrogant assurance based on purely human calculations is a tremendous misfortune. Man then sets himself up in the place of God; he destroys the theological virtues within him. He is poles asunder from the doctrine we are considering here, which is pre-eminently that of life.

GOD QUICKENS MORE AND MORE THE INTERIOR LIFE OF SOULS THAT ABANDON THEMSELVES TO HIM

Not only is He their protector and guide, but He quickens them by His grace, by the virtues and the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and also through the fresh inspirations He is continuously sending them. Moreover, He is quickening them even when He appears to strip them, even to death itself, according to these words of St. Paul: “To me to live is Christ: and to die is gain” (Phil. 1:21). For many life consists in sport or art or some intellectual activity, such as science or philosophy. But for such souls as we are speaking of, life is simply Christ, or as St. Paul says, union with Christ.

Christ is their life, says St. Thomas, in the sense that He is the constant motive of their most profound vital activity. It is for Him they live and act continuously; not for any human purpose but in very truth for the Lord, who quickens them more and more, making this life of theirs depend upon just those things that apparently must destroy them, even as Christ Himself made of His cross the most potent instrument of our salvation.

This profound teaching was expressed with remarkable clearness by a seventeenth century Dominican, Pere Chardon, in his book, La Croix de Jesus. He points out that the divine action, in gradually detaching us from all that is not God, sometimes in most painful ways, tends by that very detachment to unite us more and more closely to Him. Loss is thus turned into gain. As grace increases within us, it becomes at once a source of separation and of union; the progressive separation is simply the reverse side of the union. Says Chardon:

For fear lest a too frequent enjoyment of consolations should arrest the soul's inclination to Himself, God interrupts the flow of the stream in order to make the soul yearn more ardently for the source.... He withdraws His graces to give Himself instead. He steals gently through the soul, making Himself master of the faculties and all their concerns that He may cause it to rejoice in the one necessary good, which must be loved only in that same solitude in which the supremacy of its being is isolated from all else.

Thus with the disappearance of an inferior light and life, another light appears, to illuminate our life in a way far more sublime.

When an apostle is struck down with paralysis in the midst of his apostolate and in the prime of life, people often imagine that his influence is at an end, whereas it ought to be, as it often is, the beginning of something higher, the direct external apostolate giving place to that hidden yet profound apostolate which exerts its influence on souls through prayer and self-immolation in Christ and thereby causes to overflow upon them the chalice of superabounding redemption.

ACT OF SELF-ABANDONMENT

This whole doctrine is beautifully summed up in the following anonymous prayer inspired by St. Augustine:

O my God, I leave myself entirely in Thy hands. Turn and turn again this mass of clay, as a vessel that is fashioned in the potter's hand (Jer. 18: 6).

Give it a shape; then break it if Thou wilt: it is Thine, it has nothing to say. Enough for me that it serves all Thy designs and that nothing resists Thy good pleasure for which I was made. Ask, command. What wouldst Thou have me to do? What wouldst Thou have me not to do? Lifted up, cast down, in persecution, in consolation, in suffering, intent upon Thy work, good for nothing, I can do no more than repeat with Thy holy Mother: “Be it done unto me according to Thy word.”

Give me that love which is beyond all loves, the love of the cross—not those heroic crosses with a glory that might foster self-love, but those ordinary crosses which we bear with so much distaste—those daily crosses with which our life is strewn and which at every moment we encounter on our way through life: contradictions, neglect, failures, opposition, false judgments, the coldness or impulsiveness of some, the rebuffs or contempt of others, bodily infirmities, spiritual darkness, silence and interior dryness. Only then wilt Thou know that I love Thee, even though I neither know nor feel it myself; and that is enough for me.

This is truly holiness of a high order. Were there but a few such moments of great affliction in our lives, we should then have reached the topmost heights and have come very nigh to God. Now every moment God is inviting us to live this way and lose ourselves in Him. Especially at such moments as these it can be truly said: “The Lord leadeth the. just by right ways and showeth him the kingdom of God” (Wis. 10: 10).

24. Providence And The Way Of Perfection

If one thing more than another should interest us in the providential plan, it is the way of perfection traced out by God from all eternity. The itinerary of this ascent has been described by all the great spiritual writers, but some have given special consideration to its relations with Providence. Among these is St. Catherine of Siena. We propose to give here the main outlines of her testimony on this subject, which she received from on high.

If we choose St. Catherine's testimony in preference to that of other saints, this is because she has a broad view of concrete realities, and thus we can easily apply what she says to the spiritual needs of persons in every state of life. Moreover, her style, though never descending from the sublime, is so realistic and practical that it is suited to every type of mind. It almost attains to the loftiness and simplicity of the Gospels.

It has often been remarked how perfect is the harmony between the teaching of St. Thomas and that expounded by St. Catherine in her ecstasies and written down by her secretaries, in that book which has been called the Dialogue.

Nowhere is this doctrinal harmony more striking than on this subject of Christian perfection and the path which, in the designs of Providence, must lead to it. As evidence of this we shall consider the following points:

1) In what especially does perfection consist?

2) Is perfection a matter of strict precept or is it simply a matter of counsel?

3) Is the light of faith sufficient for Christian perfection, or is there also required the light which comes from the gift of wisdom? And is this light normally in proportion to our degree of charity, of our love for God?

4) In the designs of Providence, what purifications are necessary for us to arrive at perfection? Can we acquire it without passing through the so-called passive purifications, the patient and loving endurance of the crucifixion of the senses and the spirit?

5) Is every interior soul called by Providence to an infused contemplation of the mysteries of faith illumined by the gift of wisdom, and to that union with God which is the result of this contemplation and which is widely different from such extraordinary graces as revelations and visions? In other words, according to the providential plan is the highest point reached normally in the development of the life of grace here on earth (the normal prelude to our heavenly life), of the ascetical order, or does it pass to the mystical order? Is our own activity under the influence of grace its distinctive characteristic, or is it rather our docility in responding to the inspirations of the Holy Ghost?

In reply to these questions we will quote from the Dialogue certain passages that deal expressly with this subject.

IN WHAT CHRISTIAN PERFECTION ESPECIALLY CONSISTS

Does it consist mainly in bodily mortifications or in practices of piety or in the knowledge of divine things? St. Catherine of Siena replies with St. Thomas (IIa IIae, q. 184, a. 1) that Christian perfection consists principally in charity, primarily in the love of God and secondarily in the love of our neighbor.

This doctrine is very clearly expressed in the Dialogue (chapter 11) where we read:

Some time ago, if thou remember, when thou wert desirous of doing great penance for my sake, asking, “What can I do to endure suffering for Thee, O Lord?” I replied to thee, speaking in thy mind, “I take delight in few words and many works.” I wished to show thee that he who merely calls on me with the sound of words, saying: “Lord, Lord, I would do something for Thee, “ and he who desires for my sake to mortify his body by many penances, but does not renounce his own will, was wrong in thinking this to be pleasing to me.... I, who am infinite, seek infinite works, that is, unlimited surgings of the heart. I wish therefore that the works of penance, and of other corporal exercises, should be observed merely as means, and not as the fundamental perfection of the soul. For if the principal affection of the soul were placed in penance, I should receive a finite thing like a word, which, when it has issued from the mouth, is no more, unless it has issued with affection of soul, which conceives and brings forth virtue in truth. It is by means of this interior virtue that the

finite operation, which I have called a word, is united with the affection of love.

If it is otherwise we shall have no more than the material side of perfection; the soul and inspiration of the interior life will no longer be there. In the same passage she tells us: “We must not make our final end to consist in penance, or in any external act; these, as I have said, are finite works.... It is good at times for us to discontinue them, whether this arise from necessity or from obedience (whereas there must never be any interruption in that life which consists in the love of God).... The soul ought therefore to adopt them as means, and not as an end... they please when they are performed as the instruments of virtue, and not as a principal end in themselves.” This last sentence brings out the necessity of avoiding the opposite extreme in neglecting bodily mortification as practiced by all the saints.

Merit consists in the virtue of love alone, directed by the light of true discretion, without which the soul is worth nothing. Discretion gives me this love endlessly, boundlessly, since I am the supreme and eternal truth. The soul can therefore place neither laws nor limits to her love for me; but her love for her neighbor, on the contrary, is ordered in certain conditions. It is within the scope of charity not to cause the injury of sin to self so as to be useful to others; for if one single sin sufficed for the production of an act of great consequence, it would not be a charity dictated by prudence to commit it.

Holy discretion ordains that the soul should direct all her powers unreservedly to my service with a manly zeal and that her love for her neighbor be such that she would lay down a thousand times, if it were possible, the life of her body for the salvation of souls, prepared to endure whatever torments so that her neighbor may have the life of grace.

This, then, is what Christian perfection consists in especially, principally in a generous love for God, and secondarily in a love for our neighbor which is not just affection, but translates itself into action.

This is why St. Catherine of Siena loves to speak of charity as giving life to all the virtues, as rendering their acts meritorious of eternal life. It is the mother of them all; it is the bridal garment of God’s servants; it is like a tree which, when planted in the soil of humility, lifts high to the heavens its blossoms and its abundance of fruit, the fruit of eternal life. The saint frequently insists on the impossibility of separating love for our neighbor

from the love of God, the love of our neighbor being simply the radiation of the love we have for God, its sure sign and token. The love of our neighbor, she adds, cannot be really efficacious unless we love him in God and for His sake. It is compared to a vessel filled at a fountain: “If a man carry away the vessel and then drink from it, the vessel becomes empty, but if he keeps his vessel standing at the fountain while he drinks, it always remains full.”

If you wish friendship to endure, if you would continue long to refresh yourself from the cup of friendship, then leave it to be filled continuously at the fount of living water, otherwise it will no longer be capable of satisfying your thirst.

We find precisely the same teaching in the Summa Theologica of St. Thomas. For him, too, perfection consists principally in charity, which gives life to all the virtues and unites us to our last end, to God the author of grace; for by charity we love God more than ourselves, more than all else, and for His sake everything that is at all worthy of love.

Without charity nothing is of any value for eternal life. No knowledge, not even the knowledge of divine things can bear any fruit unless it is united with the love of God. Such knowledge, says the saint, may be infected with the poison of pride, and frequently it will obtain far more light from prayer than from study, that light of life, at once simple yet sublime, the source of contemplation, by which knowledge is unified and rendered fruitful.

PERFECTION AND THE PRECEPT OF LOVE

Does this perfection, consisting in a high degree of charity, come under the commandments or is it merely a matter of counsel?

The teaching of St. Thomas is that this perfection comes under the supreme commandment, not however as something to be realized immediately but as the ideal at which all Christians must aim, each according to his condition, some in the religious life, others in the world. The Angelic Doctor declares explicitly that Christian perfection consists essentially in a generous fulfillment of the commandments, especially of those two commandments that concern the love of God and of our neighbor; the actual practice of the three counsels, poverty, chastity, and obedience is only accidental, enabling us to arrive at a perfect love for God

more readily and more surely. Such perfection, in fact, is still attainable even in the married state and in the midst of worldly occupations, as is evidenced in the lives of a number of the saints.

This same teaching we find in St. Catherine of Siena. In her Dialogue she points out that the supreme commandment has no limits, as its phrasing shows: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with all thy strength and with all thy mind” (Luke 10: 27). This law of love is not binding merely up to a certain degree beyond which charity becomes simply a matter of counsel; every Christian is bound to aim at perfection in love. We read in the Dialogue: “Thou seest how discreetly every soul... should pay her debts, that is, should love me with an infinite love and without measure.” Indeed, St. Catherine distinctly states that, although it is possible to observe the commandments without the actual exercise of the three evangelical counsels, nevertheless the perfect fulfilment of the commandments is impossible without the spirit animating the counsels, that spirit of detachment from creatures which is simply one aspect of the love of God and which must always increase in us.

This point is well expressed by the saint in God’s words to her:

Inasmuch as the counsels are included in the commandments, no one can observe the latter who does not observe the former, at least in spirit, that is to say, that they possess the riches of the world humbly and without pride, as lent to them and not their own; for they are only given to you for your use, through My goodness, since you only possess what I give you and can retain only what I allow you to retain. I give you as much of them as I see to be profitable for your salvation, and in this way should you use them, for a man, so using them... observes the counsels in spirit, having cut out of his heart the poison of disordinate love and affection.

As St. Paul said, we should use these things as though we used them not. This means “to possess the things of this world not as their servants but as their lords, “ and not be enslaved by them as a miser by his wealth. Thus in every state of life we shall so walk as to gain eternal life, advancing daily in charity as the supreme commandment requires, and as Eucharistic communion enables us to do by strengthening the soul in the measure of its desires.

By following this path the soul may reach the perfection of charity even in this world, may reach such a pure and mighty love for God and souls that it will be prepared to accept insults, contempt, affronts, ridicule,

persecution, everything, for the honor of our Lord and the salvation of one's neighbor.

PERFECTION AND THE LIGHT WHICH THE GIFT OF WISDOM IMPARTS IN PRAYER: THE VISITATION OF THE LORD

To attain this high degree of charity in which Christian perfection principally consists, are the light of faith and the use of vocal prayer sufficient? Must we not have recourse besides to mental prayer, in which the Holy Ghost illuminates the soul by the light of His gifts?

Prayer, the saint tells us, is one of the great means of arriving at perfection. True prayer, founded in the knowledge of God and of self, consists in the fervor of desire. Vocal prayer must be accompanied by mental prayer, or it will be like a body without a soul. Again, we must abandon vocal for mental prayer when God invites us to do so. We read in the Dialogue:

The soul should season the knowledge of herself with the knowledge of My goodness, and then vocal prayer will be of use to the soul who makes it, and pleasing to Me, and she will arrive, from the vocal imperfect prayer, exercised with perseverance, at perfect mental prayer; but if she simply aims at reciting a certain number of stereotyped phrases, and for vocal prayer abandons mental prayer, she will never arrive at it.... Let her be attentive when I visit her mind sometimes in one way and sometimes in another, in a flash of self-knowledge or of contrition for sin, sometimes in the broadness of My charity, and sometimes by placing before her mind, in diverse ways, according to My pleasure and the desire of the soul, the presence of My truth.... The moment she is aware of My imminent presence she must abandon vocal prayer; then, My visitation past, if there should be time, she can resume the vocal prayers, which she had resolved to say... of course provided it were not the divine office which clerics and religious are bound and are obliged to say.... If they at the hour appointed for saying it should feel their minds drawn and raised by desire, they should so arrange as to say it before or after My visitation.... And so, by practice and perseverance, she will taste prayer in truth and the food of the blood of My only begotten Son, and therefore I told thee that some communicated virtually with the body and blood of Christ, although not sacramentally; that is, they communicate in the affection of charity, which they taste by means

of holy prayer, little or much, according to the affection with which they pray. They who proceed with little prudence and without method taste little, and they who proceed with much, taste much. For the more the soul tries to loosen her affection from herself, and fasten it in Me with the light of the intellect, the more she knows; and the more she knows, the more she loves and, loving much, she tastes much.

St. Catherine shows clearly how those who have reached the state of union have their understanding illumined by an infused supernatural light.

“The eye of the intellect, “ she says, “is lifted up and gazes into My Deity, when the affection behind the intellect is nourished and united with Me. This is a sight which I grant to the soul, infused with grace, who, in truth, loves and serves Me.” It is in this sense that we say generally that St. Thomas received much more enlightenment in prayer than from study. It is that infused contemplation which we shall find St. John of the Cross speaking of later on and which usually, he says, is granted to the more advanced and to the perfect. St. Catherine continues:

The doctors, confessors, virgins, and martyrs, all of them had this infused knowledge and received their inspiration therefrom, each in a different way, according to the demands of their own or their neighbor’s salvation.... This supernatural light is given by grace to the humble who are desirous of receiving it... but the proud blind themselves to this light, because their pride and the cloud of self-love prevents them from seeing this light. Wherefore, in examining the books of the Scripture, they interpret it merely in a literal sense. They get not to the marrow of it, because they have deprived themselves of the light by which the Scripture was written and is interpreted.

We see it to be the general rule, as St. Thomas already declared, that this vital illumination proceeding from the gift of wisdom is bestowed to a degree corresponding to that of charity. Hence St. Catherine continues: “Under the guidance of this light we love, because love follows the intellect. The greater the knowledge, the greater the love, and the greater the love, the greater the knowledge. Thus the one feeds the other.” If those who write about Raphael or Michelangelo let nothing pass in the effort to exhaust their subject, then surely we should neglect nothing that will enable us to probe more deeply into the Gospel and really live by the holy mass.

“The tongue is at a loss to recount the joy felt by him who goes on this, the true road, for even in this life he participates in that good which has

been prepared for him in eternal life." As St. Thomas says: "It is a certain commencement of eternal life."

This state of union is described in chapter 89, where it is distinguished absolutely from the visions and revelations spoken of in chapter 70. In this state are combined an experimental knowledge of our own poverty and a quasi-experimental knowledge of God's infinite goodness; they are, says the saint, like the lowest and the highest points on a circle that will continue to expand until we enter heaven. This graceful image brings out clearly the intimate connection between these two kinds of experimental knowledge, and shows the great difference between them and that knowledge which is purely abstract and speculative. We have here the very essence of the spiritual life.

In the same chapter we read:

Growing, and exercising herself in the light of self-knowledge, she (the soul) conceives displeasure at herself and finally perfect hatred, at the same time acquiring a true knowledge of My goodness, and thereby being inflamed with love. She begins to unite herself to Me, and to conform her will to Mine, and experiences a joy and a compassion hitherto unknown. The joy she experiences is that of loving Me;... at the same time she lovingly grieves at the offense committed against Me, and at the loss of her fellow-creature.... She is in a state of desolation at not being able to give glory as she would wish, and in the agony of her desire she finds it delightful to satiate herself at the table of the holy cross.

This brings us to the very center of the mystery of redemption.

The contemplation involved in this union with God distinctive of the Christian life in its full perfection is evidently an infused contemplation, for in chapters 60 and 61 we read:

If My servants are confused at the knowledge of their imperfection, if they give themselves up to the love of virtue, if they dig up with hatred the root of spiritual self-love... they will be so pleasing to Me... that I will manifest Myself to them.... My charity is manifested in two ways; first, in general, to ordinary people. The second mode of manifestation... is peculiar to those who have become My friends.... When I reveal Myself to her it makes itself felt in the very depths of the soul, by which such souls taste, know, prove and feel it. Sometimes I even reveal Myself to the soul by arousing in her sentiments of love, and endowing her with the spirit of prophecy.

But, as is evident from chapter 70, this last favor is no longer normal but extraordinary.

Providential trials and union with God

Obviously the union with God we have been considering presupposes mortification or active purification, which we must impose upon ourselves in order to extinguish within us the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life. But, over and above this, does it presuppose passive purifications or the patient and generous acceptance of crosses?

Most certainly it does. Nothing could be more definite than St. Catherine's teaching on this point when she speaks of temptation, of the trials of the just, and of the different sorts of tears, which must be carefully distinguished according as they proceed from the love of self or from pure love.

When faced with temptation, the soul can always resist in virtue of the merits of the blood of the Savior; God never commands the impossible. These temptations, when they are resisted, bring a deeper knowledge of ourselves and of God's goodness and strengthen us in virtue.

Again, God sends trials to purify us from our failings and imperfections, and to put us to the necessity of growing in His love when there is no longer air to breathe but in Him. The way the soul welcomes these trials is the test of its perfection. Then, after shedding the unfruitful tears of self-love and those caused by servile fear which dreads the punishment rather than the sin, the soul by degrees comes to experience the tears of pure love. Thus in chapter 89 the saint tells us:

Inasmuch as she (the soul) has not yet arrived at great perfection, she often sheds sensual tears, and if thou askest Me why, I reply: because the root of self-love is not sensual love, for that has already been removed (by mortification and the preliminary trials)... but it is a spiritual love with which the soul derives spiritual consolations or loves some creature spiritually.... Therefore, when such a soul is deprived of the thing she loves, that is, internal or external consolation (the former coming from Me, the latter from the creature), and when temptations and the persecutions of men come on her, her heart is full of grief. And, as soon as the eye feels the grief and suffering of the heart, she begins to weep with a tender and passionate sorrow, pitying herself with the spiritual compassion of self-love.... But growing, and exercising herself in the light of self-knowledge, she

conceives displeasure at herself and finally perfect self-hatred.... Immediately her eye... cries with hearty love for Me and for her neighbor, grieving for the offense against Me and her neighbor's loss.... Her heart is united to Me in love.... This is the last stage in which the soul is blessed and sorrowful. Blessed she is through the union which she feels herself to have with Me, tasting the divine love; sorrowful through the offenses which she sees done to My goodness and greatness, for she has seen and tasted the bitterness of this in her self-knowledge, by which self-knowledge, together with her knowledge of Me, she arrived at the final stage. Yet this sorrow is no impediment to the unitive state.

We are reminded by it how our Lord's own afflictions were ever united to a perfect peace, even on the cross.

The purifications leading up to this state of union are plainly those same passive purifications which are treated of later on at such great length by St. John of the Cross. In proof of this it will be sufficient to read chapter 24: "How God prunes the living branches united to the stem in order to make them bear abundant fruit"; chapter 43: "Of the advantage of temptations"; chapter 45: "Who those are whom the thorns germinated by the world do not harm"; and finally chapter 20: "How, without enduring trials with patience, it is impossible to please God."

CONCLUSION: THE GENERAL CALL

What conclusion are we to come to? The passages we have just quoted, lead to the following conclusions: This union with God which normally constitutes the full perfection of the Christian life is something more than a purely active union, the result of our own personal activity under the influence of grace; it is also a passive union, the result of our docility to the Holy Ghost and the divine inspirations we receive through His sevenfold gifts, and these again normally increase with charity.

Thus the soul will normally arrive at the contemplative way in prayer, in reading the Scriptures and in assisting at mass, contemplating ever more profoundly the infinite value of the sacrifice of the altar, which perpetuates in substance the sacrifice of the cross. It will arrive also at the contemplative way of exercising the apostolate, in which, far from losing its union with God, it will preserve that union so that others may acquire it.

Is every interior soul called to this state of union? St. Catherine gives the answer to this question when she explains, in chapter 53, these words of our Lord: “If any man thirst, let him come to Me and drink.... Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water” (John 7:37-38). The Dialogue says:

You were all invited generally and in particular, by My Truth, My Son, when, with ardent desire, He cried in the temple, saying: “Whosoever thirsteth, let him come to Me and drink.” ...So that you are invited to the fountain of living water of grace, and you must come to Me, therefore, through My Son, with perseverance, keeping by Him who was made for you a bridge, not being turned back by any contrary wind that may arise, either of prosperity or of adversity, and to persevere until you find Me, who am the giver of the water of life, by means of this sweet and amorous Word, My only begotten Son.... The first condition required is for you to have thirst, because only those who thirst are invited: “Whosoever thirsteth, let him come to Me and drink.” He who has no thirst will not persevere, for fatigue causes him to stop, persecution frightens him and no sooner does it begin to assail him than he retreats. He is afraid because he is alone.... You must then have thirst.... A man who is full of love and that of his neighbor, suddenly finds himself the companion of many royal virtues. Then the appetite of the soul is disposed to thirst. Thirst, I say, for virtue, and the honor of My name and salvation of souls.... Wherefore then he follows on with anxious desire, thirsting after the way of truth, in which he finds the fountain of the water of life, quenching his thirst in Me, the ocean of peace.

St. Catherine expresses the same idea under another symbol in chapter 26, where the Father bids her pass over the bridge that binds earth to heaven, which is none other than Christ, the way, the truth, and the life.” These pierced feet of the Savior are steps by which thou canst arrive at His side, which manifests to thee the secret of His heart.... Then the soul is filled with love, seeing herself so much loved. Having passed the second step, the soul reaches out to the third, that is, to the mouth, where she finds peace.”

Lastly, what is the sign by which we may recognize that the soul has arrived at perfect love? The Lord explains this to Catherine from chapter 74 to chapter 79:

It now remains to be told thee how it can be seen that souls have arrived at perfect love. This is seen by the same sign that was given to the holy disciples after they had received the Holy Spirit, when they came forth from

the house, and fearlessly announced the doctrine of My Word, My only begotten Son, not fearing pain, but rather glorying therein. Those who are enamored of My honor, and famished for the food of souls, run to the table of the Holy Cross.

Their only ambition is to suffer and endure untold hardships in the service of their neighbor. They run eagerly in the path of Christ r crucified, for it is His doctrine they accept, and they slacken not their pace on account of the persecutions, injuries, or pleasures of the world. They pass by all these things with fortitude and tranquil perseverance, their heart transformed by charity, tasting this sweetness of this food of the salvation of souls and ready to endure all things. This proves that the soul is in perfect love, loving without consideration of self.... If these souls love themselves, they do so for My sake, caring only for the praise and glory of My name.... In the midst of injuries it is patience that is resplendent, asserting her royal prerogative.... Such as these do not feel any separation from Me, whereas in the case of others, I come and go, not that I withdraw from them My grace, but the feeling of My sensible presence. I do not act thus to these most perfect ones who have arrived at a very high degree of perfection and are entirely dead to their own will, but I remain continually with them by My grace, giving them that feeling of My sensible presence.

Here obviously we have the exercise of charity and the gift of wisdom, each in an eminent degree, through which, St. Thomas says, we are given a quasi-experimental knowledge of God present within us. This, surely, is the mystical life, the culminating point of the life of grace as it normally develops and the prelude to the heavenly life.

Those acquainted with the spiritual teaching of St. Thomas will realize how closely it agrees with the ascetic utterances of St. Catherine of Siena. In our opinion they are the expression of the traditional doctrine, which is content to lay stress on the right points in the reading of the Gospels and Epistles.” He that abideth in charity abideth in God, and God in Him” (I John 4:16) ; “His unction teacheth you of all things” (ibid., 2:27) ; “The Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit that we are the sons of God. And if sons, heirs also; heirs indeed of God and joint heirs with Christ: yet so, if we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified with Him” (Rom. 8: 16-17) ; “For you are dead: and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ shall appear, who is your life, then you also shall appear with Him in glory” (Col. 3:3-4).

Have we forced the sense of these passages from the Dialogue? On the contrary, it is better to acknowledge that they cannot be comprehended fully. As Raphael was wont to say, “to comprehend is to equal, “ and to grasp the full meaning of the passages quoted, the same spirit of faith, the same exalted charity would be necessary as was possessed by St. Catherine of Siena.

Such, according to this witness, is the way of perfection God has traced out from all eternity in His providential plan to lead souls to their final destiny. It is the way that leads to the fountain of living water.” If any man thirst, let him come to Me and drink.... Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water”; “He that shall drink of the water that I will give him shall not thirst forever” (John 7:37-38;4:13).

PART V

PROVIDENCE, JUSTICE AND MERCY

25. Providence And Divine Justice

Now that we have spoken of providence in itself and its attitude to souls, we may suitably consider it in its relations with divine justice and with divine mercy. As in us prudence is connected with justice and the rest of the moral virtues, which it directs, so also in God providence is united with justice and mercy, these being the two great virtues of the love of God in our regard. Mercy has its foundation in the sovereign good in so far as it is of itself diffusive and tends to communicate itself externally. Justice, on the other hand, is founded in the indefeasible right of the sovereign good to be loved above all things.

These two virtues, says the psalmist, are found combined in all the works of God: “All the ways of the Lord are mercy and truth” (Ps. 24: 10). But, as St. Thomas remarks, Cf. St. Thomas, in certain of the divine works, as when God inflicts chastisement, justice stands out the more prominently, whereas in others, in the justification or conversion of sinners, for example, it is mercy that is more apparent.

This justice, which we attribute analogically to God, is not that commutative justice which regulates mutual dealings between equals: we cannot offer anything to God that does not belong to Him already. It is a distributive justice, analogous to that which a father shows toward his children or a good monarch toward his subjects. Thus, by reason of this justice of His, God first of all sees to it that every creature receives whatever is necessary for the attainment of its end. Secondly, He rewards merit and metes out punishment to sin and vice, especially if the sinner does not ask for mercy.

We shall do well to consider how providence directs the action of justice (1) during the course of our earthly existence, (2) at the moment of death, and (3) after death.

PROVIDENCE AND JUSTICE IN THE COURSE OF OUR EARTHLY EXISTENCE

Providence and justice combine in this present life to give us whatever is necessary to reach our true destiny: that is, to enable us to live an upright life, to know God in a supernatural way, to love and to serve Him, and so obtain eternal life.

There is a great inequality, no doubt, in circumstances, natural and supernatural, among men here on earth. Some are rich, others are poor; some are possessed of great natural gifts, whereas others are of a thankless disposition, weak in health, of a melancholy temperament. But God never commands the impossible; no one is tempted beyond his strength reinforced by the grace offered him. The savage of Central Africa or Central America has received far less than we have; but if he does what he can to follow the dictates of conscience, Providence will lead him on from grace to grace and eventually to a happy death; for him eternal life is possible of attainment. Jesus died for all men, and among those who have the use of reason only those are deprived of the grace necessary for salvation who by their resistance reject it. Since He never commands the impossible, God offers to all the means necessary for salvation.

Moreover, not infrequently providence and justice will make up for the inequality in natural conditions by their distribution of supernatural gifts. Often the poor man in his simplicity will be more pleasing to God than the rich man, and will receive greater graces. Let us recall the parable of the wicked rich man recorded in St. Luke (16: 19-31) :

There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and feasted sumptuously every day. And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, who lay at his gate, full of sores, desiring to be filled with the crumbs that fell from the rich man’s table. And no one did give him: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass that the beggar died and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom. And the rich man also died.... And lifting up his eyes when he was in torments, he saw Abraham... and he cried and said: Father Abraham, have mercy on me.... And Abraham said to him; Son, remember that thou didst receive good things in thy lifetime, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted and thou art tormented.

This is to declare in effect that, where natural conditions are unequal, providence and justice will sometimes make up for it in the distribution of natural gifts. Again, the Gospel beatitudes tell us that one who is bereft of this world’s enjoyments will in some cases feel more powerfully drawn to

the joys of the interior life. This is what our Lord would have us understand when He says: “Blessed are the poor in spirit.... Blessed are the meek... that suffer persecution for justice’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

The love of Jesus goes out to those servants of His nailed to the cross, because then they are more like Him through the effective oblation they make of their entire being for the salvation of sinners. In them He continues to live; in them He may be said to prolong down to the end of time His own prayers and sufferings, and above all His love, for perfect love consists in the complete surrender of self.

For some there comes a time when every road in life is barred against them; humanly speaking, the future holds out no prospect whatever to them. In some cases this is the moment when the call comes to something higher. Some there are who spend long years confined to a bed of pain; for these henceforth there is no way open but the way of holiness.

And so providence and justice, while giving to each one what is strictly necessary, will often make up for any disparity in natural conditions by the bestowal of grace. They reward us, even in this life, for the merits we have gained, reminding us, too, of our solemn duties by salutary warnings and well-deserved corrections, which are no more than medicinal punishments for the purpose of bringing us back into the right path. In this way will a mother correct her child if she loves it with a really enlightened, ardent love. When these salutary corrections are well received, we make expiation for our sins, and God takes the opportunity of inspiring us with a more sincere humility and a purer, stronger love. There is a sharp distinction between souls according to their willingness or unwillingness to listen to these warnings from God.

PROVIDENCE AND JUSTICE AT THE MOMENT OF DEATH

As a general rule those who have paid heed during life to the warning of God’s justice and to the indefeasible right of the sovereign good to be loved above all things are not taken unawares when death comes, and in that supreme moment they find peace. Wholly otherwise is it usually with those who have refused to give ear to the divine warnings and who during life have confounded hope with presumption.

If there is one thing that is dependent on Providence, it is the hour of our death.” Be ye also ready, “ says our Lord, “for at what hour you think not

the Son of man will come” (Luke 12: 40). The same is true of the manner of our death and the circumstances surrounding it. It is all completely unknown to us; it rests upon Providence, in which we must put all our trust, while preparing ourselves to die well by a better life.

Looked at from the point of view of divine justice, what a vast difference there is between the death of the just and that of the sinner! In the Apocalypse (20: 6, 14) the death of the sinner is called a “second death, “ for he is already spiritually dead to the life of grace, and if the soul departs from the body in this condition it will be deprived of that supernatural life forever. May God preserve us from that second death. The unrepentant sinner, says St. Catherine, is about to die in his injustice, and appear before the supreme Judge with the light of faith extinguished in him, which he received burning in holy baptism (but which he has blown out with the wind of pride) and with the vanity of his heart, with which he sets his sails unfurled to all the winds of flattery. Thus did he hasten down the stream of the delights and dignities of the world at his own will, giving in to the seductions of his weak flesh and the temptations of the devil.

The remorse of conscience (which is not to be confused with repentance) is then aroused with such lively feelings, that it gnaws the very heart of the sinner, because he recognizes the truth of what at first he knew not, and his error is the cause of great confusion to him.... The devil torments him with infidelity in order to drive him to despair.

What are we to say of this struggle which finds the sinner disarmed, deprived of his living faith now extinguished in him, deprived also of a steadfast hope, which he has failed to foster as he ought by committing himself daily to God and laboring for Him? The wretched sinner has placed all his hopes in himself, not realizing that everything he possessed was but lent and must one day be accounted for. He is deprived, too, of the flame of charity, of the love of God which he has now utterly lost. He finds himself alone in his spiritual nakedness, bereft of all virtue. Having turned a deaf ear to the many warnings given during life, now, whichever way he turns, he sees nothing but cause for confusion. Due consideration was not given to divine justice during life; now it is the full weight of that justice which makes itself felt, while the enemy of all good seeks to persuade the sinner that for him henceforth there is no mercy. How we should pray for those who are in their agony! If we do, then others will pray for us when our last moment comes.

In those last moments mercy still accommodates itself to the sinner, as it did to Judas when our Lord said at the last supper (Matt. 26: 24) : “Woe to that man by whom the Son of man shall be betrayed. It were better for him, if that man had not been born.” Our Lord has not yet said who it is that is about to betray Him: He is too tender-hearted to reveal it. And then, the Gospel continues, “Judas that betrayed Him answering said: Is it I Rabbi? He saith to him: Thou hast said it.” In delaying to put the question until the rest of the Apostles had done so, Judas feigns innocence, as if that were possible with one who even in this world reads the secrets of the heart. Notice, says St. Thomas commenting on these words, with what gentleness Jesus continues to call him friend and answers: “Thou hast said it”; as if to say, “It is you, not I, who say so, who are revealing it.” Once again our Lord shows Himself full of compassion and mercy, closing His eyes to the sins of men so as to give them one more salutary warning and lead them to repentance. In Him are realized those touching words of the Scripture: “The Lord is compassionate and merciful” (Ps. 102: 8) ; “overlooking the sins of men for the sake of repentance” (Wis. 11: 24) ; “Let the meek hear and rejoice” (Ps. 33: 3).

In view of these final warnings from God, we may well ask how the sinner dare accuse God of being a tyrant. No, it is the sinner who is his own tyrant; it is the sinner who has no consideration for himself; and none for God either, since he refuses Him the joy of applying to him what He said of the prodigal: “This my son was lost and is found” (Luke 15: 24).

If the sinner will only disburden his conscience by a sincere confession, making acts of faith, of confidence in God, and contrition, at the last moment the divine mercy will enter in to temper justice and will save him. By reason of God’s mercy every man may cling to hope at death if he so wills, if he offers no resistance. Remorse will then give place to repentance.

Otherwise the soul succumbs to remorse and abandons itself to despair, a sin far more heinous than any of the preceding, as in that neither infirmity nor the allurements of sensuality can excuse, a sin by which the sinner esteems his wickedness as outweighing God’s divine mercy. And once in this despair, the soul no longer grieves over sin as an offense against God, it grieves only over its own miserable condition, a grief very different from that which characterizes attrition or contrition.

Blessed is the sinner who like the good thief then repents, reflecting that, as St. Catherine says, “the divine mercy is greater without comparison than

all the sins which any creature can commit."

Happier still is the just soul that throughout life has given due thought to the loving fulfilment of duty and, after the merits won and the struggle sustained here on earth, yearns for death in order to enjoy the vision of God, even as St. Paul desired "to be dissolved and to be with Christ" (Phil. 1: 23).

As a rule a great peace fills the soul of the just in their last agony, a peace the more profound the greater their perfection; and this is often most true of those who during life have had the greatest dread of the divine justice. For them death is peaceful because their enemies have been vanquished during life. Sensuality has been reduced to subjection under the curb of reason. Virtue triumphs over nature, overcoming the natural fear of death through the longing to attain their final end, the sovereign good. Being conformed to justice during life, conscience continues tranquil, though the devil seeks to trouble and alarm it.

At that moment, it is true, the value of this present time of trial, which is the price of virtue, will be more clearly seen, and the just soul will reproach itself for not having made better use of its time. But the sorrow it then experiences will not overwhelm it; it will be profitable in inducing the soul to recollect itself and place itself in the presence of the precious blood of our Savior, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. In the passage from time to eternity there is thus an admirable blending of God's mercy and justice. In his dying moments the just man anticipates the bliss prepared for him; he has a foretaste of his destiny which may sometimes be seen reflected in his countenance.

GOD'S PROVIDENCE AND JUSTICE IN THE NEXT LIFE

After death God's providence and justice intervene forthwith in the particular judgment. Revelation tells us so in the parable of the wicked rich man and the beggar Lazarus, whose souls were judged once and for all the moment they quitted this earth. Equally clear is St. Paul's teaching in more than one passage: "We must all be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ, that everyone may receive the proper things of the body, according as he hath done, whether good or evil"; "I have a desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ"; "I have finished my course.... As to the rest, there is laid up for me a crown of justice which the Lord the just judge will render to me

in that day: and not only to me, but to them also that love His coming"; "It is appointed unto man once to die, and after this the judgment."

It was the universal belief of the early Church that the martyrs entered at once into heaven and that unrepentant sinners, like the bad thief, received their punishment immediately after death.

The nature of this particular judgment is to be explained from the condition of the soul when separated from the body. Once the body has been left behind, the soul has direct vision of itself as a spiritual substance, in the same way that the pure spirit has direct vision of itself, and in that instant it is made aware of its moral condition. It receives an interior illumination rendering all discussion useless. God passes sentence, which is then transmitted by conscience, the echo of God's voice. The soul now sees plainly what is its due according to its merits and demerits, which then stand out quite distinctly before it. This is what the liturgy expresses symbolically in the Dies Irae: Liber scriptus proferetur, in quo totum continetur. The soul will see whatever has been written down in the book of life concerning it.

Justice will then mete out condign punishment for sins committed, to last for a time or for eternity. Mortal sin still unrepented at the moment of death will be henceforth like an incurable disease, but in something that cannot die, the immortal soul. The sinner has turned his back unrepentantly on the sovereign good, has in practice denied its infinite dignity as the last end, and has failed to revoke this practical denial while there was yet time. It is an irreparable disorder and a conscious one. Remorse is there, but without repentance; pride and rebellion will continue forever and with them the punishment they deserve. But above all it involves the perpetual loss of the divine life of grace and the vision of God, of supreme bliss, the sinner clearly realizing that through his own fault he has failed forever to attain his destined end.

Here the justice of God is seen to be infinite; it is a mystery that surpasses our understanding, as does the mystery of His mercy.

Here on earth the concepts or ideas we are able to have of divine justice and the rest of God's perfections must always remain limited, confined, and that in spite of the correction we apply in denying all limitation. These concepts represent the divine attributes as distinct from one another, though we did say that there is no real distinction between them. It follows that these restricted ideas harden the spiritual features of God somewhat, as the

human features are hardened when we attempt to reproduce them in little squares of mosaic. Our concept of justice being distinct from that of mercy, divine justice appears to us not only infinitely just but absolutely unyielding, and His mercy appears to be sheer caprice.

In heaven, however, we shall see how the divine perfections, even those to all appearances directly opposed, are intimately blended, identified in fact, yet without destroying one another in the Deity, in God's intimate life, of which we shall then have distinct and immediate knowledge.

We shall then see that nowhere but in God do justice and mercy exist in their pure state, free from all imperfection, and that just as in us the cardinal virtues are interconnected and inseparable, so also in Him justice cannot exist unless it is united with mercy, and conversely there can be no such thing as mercy apart from justice and providence.

This is what is revealed to the saints from the moment of the particular judgment, which is immediately followed by their entry into glory.

There will be another manifestation of justice in the general judgment after the resurrection of the body, according to the words of the Creed: "I believe in Jesus Christ... who shall come to judge the living and the dead." Our Lord tells us (Matt. 24: 30-46) : "All tribes of the earth... shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with much power and majesty. And He shall send His angels with a trumpet and a great voice: and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest parts of the heavens to the utmost bounds of them." If Jesus had not been the Son of God, how could He, a poor village artisan, have uttered such words as these? It would have been the height of foolishness, whereas everything goes to show that it is the essence of wisdom.

This general judgment is evidently expedient, because man is not merely a private person, but is a social being, and this judgment will reveal to all men the rectitude of Providence and its ways, the reason also of its decisions and their outcome. Divine justice will then appear in all its sovereign perfection in contrast to the frequent miscarriage of human justice. Infinite mercy will be revealed in the case of repentant and pardoned sinners. Every knee will bend before Christ the Savior, triumphant now over sin, the devil, and death. Then will appear also the glory of the elect: he who was humbled will now be exalted, and the kingdom of God will be established forever in the light of glory, in love and in peace.

This is the kingdom we long for when day by day we say in the Our Father: “Thy kingdom come, Thy will [signified to us in Thy precepts and in the spirit of the counsels] be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

26. Providence And Mercy

We have been considering the relations between providence and divine mercy in the distribution of the means necessary for all to attain their end, in rewarding merit and chastising sin and wickedness. It now remains for us to speak of providence in its relation to divine mercy. God's mercy seems at first sight to differ so widely from His justice as to be directly contrary to it; it appears to set itself up in opposition to justice, intervening in order to restrict its rights. Yet in reality there can never be any opposition between two divine perfections; however widely they may differ from each other, the one cannot be the negation of the other. As we have already seen, they are so united in the eminence of the Deity, the intimate life of God, as to be completely identified.

Far from setting itself up in opposition to justice and putting restrictions upon it, mercy unites with it, but in such a way as to surpass it, as St. Thomas says. In psalm 24: 10, we read: "All the ways of the Lord are mercy and truth (i. e., justice), " but, adds St. James, "Mercy exalteth herself above judgment [justice]." In what sense is this to be understood? Says St. Thomas:

In this sense, that every work of justice presupposes and is founded upon a work of mercy, a work of pure loving kindness, wholly gratuitous. If, in fact, there is anything due from God to the creature, it is in virtue of some gift that has preceded it.... If He owes it to Himself to grant us grace necessary for salvation, it is because He has first given us the grace with which to merit. Mercy (or pure goodness) is thus, as it were, the root and source of all the works of God; its virtue pervades, dominates them all. As the ultimate fount of every gift, it exercises the more powerful influence, and for this reason it transcends justice, which follows upon mercy and continues to be subordinate to it.

If justice is a branch springing from the tree of God's love, then the tree itself is mercy, or pure goodness ever tending to communicate, to radiate itself externally.

We shall best understand this by a consideration of our own lives. Our best course will be to proceed, as we did with justice, by considering the relations between providence and mercy first of all in this present life, then at the moment of death, and lastly in the next life.

PROVIDENCE AND MERCY IN THE COURSE OF OUR PRESENT LIFE

If in this present life divine justice gives to each of us whatever is required for us to live rightly and so attain our end, mercy, on the other hand, gives far beyond what is strictly necessary, and it is in this sense that it surpasses justice.

In creating us, for example, God might have established us in a purely natural condition, endowing us with a spiritual, immortal soul, but not with grace. Out of pure goodness from the very day of creation He has granted us to participate supernaturally in His intimate life by bestowing on us sanctifying grace, the principle of our supernatural merits.

Again, after the fall, He might have left us in our fallen condition so far as justice is concerned. Or He might have raised us up from sin by a simple act of forgiveness conveyed through the mouth of a prophet after we had fulfilled certain conditions. But He has done something infinitely greater than this: out of pure mercy He gave us His only Son as a redeeming victim, and it is possible for us at all times to appeal to the infinite merits of the Savior. Justice loses none of its rights, but it is mercy that prevails.

Once Jesus had died for us, all we needed was to be guided by interior graces as well as by the preaching of the Gospel; but divine mercy has given us far more than this: it has given us the Eucharist, in which the sacrifice of the cross is perpetuated in substance on our altars and the fruits of that sacrifice are applied to our souls.

Finally, those of us who have been born into Christian and Catholic families have received incomparably more from the divine mercy than the bare essentials God has given to the savage of Central Africa. With those essentials God has given to the savage, provided the first prevenient graces are not resisted, the savage will receive whatever further graces are required for salvation; but we have received much more than this from our very childhood. When we consider the matter, we realize that we have been led on by the invisible hands of Providence and Mercy, preserving us from

many a false step and raising up each one of us individually when we have fallen.

Again, if divine justice rewards the merits we have acquired even in this life, the gifts of mercy go far beyond anything we have deserved.

In the collect for the eleventh Sunday after Pentecost we pray: “Almighty and eternal God, who in the abundance of Thy goodness dost surpass the merits and even the desires of Thy suppliants: pour out Thy mercy upon us, forgive us the things our conscience must fear, and grant us what we cannot presume to ask. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, etc.”

The grace of absolution from mortal sin is not something that can be merited, it is a gratuitous gift. And how often has that grace been granted us!

Again, by no merit of ours could we obtain the grace of communion; it is the fruit of the sacrament of the Eucharist, which of itself produces that grace within us, even daily if we wish. And how many communions has not the divine mercy granted us! Let us bear in mind that if we are faithful in fighting against all attachment to venial sin, each successive communion becomes substantially more fervent than the last, since each successive communion must not only preserve but increase charity within us, thus disposing us to receive our Lord on the morrow with a substantial fervor, a readiness of desire not merely the same but more intense.

This law of acceleration governing the love of God in the souls of the just must, if we are alive to it, arouse our admiration. It will be seen that, just as the stone falls more rapidly as it approaches the earth which is attracting it, so is it with the souls of the just: the more nearly they approach to God and therefore the greater the force of His attraction, the more rapid must their progress be. We then grasp the meaning of these words of the psalm (32: 5) : “The earth is full of the mercy of the Lord.” Even the sinner can say with the psalmist: “Return, O Lord,... we are filled in the morning with Thy mercy: and we have rejoiced, and are delighted all our days” (Ps. 89: 14).

If we could only see the whole span of our life as it is written down in the book of life, how many instances should we find where providence and mercy have intervened to piece together again the chain of our merits which again and again perhaps we have broken by our sins! But at the final moment mercy intervenes in a manner no less gracious.

If at that moment justice alone were to enter in, all those who had led a life of sin would die as they had lived. After so many warnings from Providence had been neglected, the final warning would receive no better response; remorse would not give place to a salutary repentance. Thanks to the mercy of God, however, this last appeal is more insistent. If His justice inflicts the punishment due to sin, here again His mercy will outstrip it by pardoning. To pardon means to "give beyond" what is due. The rights of justice are safeguarded, but mercy outweighs it by constantly inspiring the sinner, as death approaches, to make a great act of love for God, and of contrition, which will wipe away sin and the eternal punishment mortal sin incurs. And so, through the intervention of mercy, through the infinite merits of the Savior, through the intercession of Mary refuge of sinners, and of St. Joseph patron of the dying, for many persons death is something very different from the way they lived. These are the laborers of the eleventh hour whom the Gospel parable speaks of (Matt. 20:9) ; they receive eternal life, as do the rest, in proportion to the few meritorious acts they have per formed before death, when already in their agony. Such was the death of the good thief who, touched by the loving kindness of Jesus dying on the cross, was converted, and he had the happiness of hearing from the Savior's lips: "This day thou shalt be with Me in paradise" (Luke 23: 43).

These interventions of mercy at the moment of death are one of the sublimest features of the true religion. This was often clearly enough shown during the World War, when a man, dying a tragic death after absolution, was saved, who in ordinary circumstances, in the midst of his occupations and pleasures, would perhaps have been lost.

So, too, where there are Catholic hospitals, many a poor soul, heeding the warning that the disease from which he is suffering is soon to carry him off, there prepares himself for a happy death. He listens to some sister speaking to him on this subject and then to the priest who finally reconciles him to God after thirty or forty years of a life spent practically in indifference, a life that has left much to be desired.

The divine mercy extends appealingly to every one of the dying. Jesus said: "Come to Me, all you that labor and are burdened: and I will refresh you" (Matt. 11:28). He dies for all men: as the beautiful prayers for those in their agony remind us, He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

The death of the repentant sinner is one of the greatest manifestations of divine mercy. Some striking examples of it are given us in the life of St. Catherine of Siena written by her confessor, Blessed Raymund of Capua. Two condemned criminals, who were being tortured with hot pincers, were blaspheming ceaselessly, and then through her prayers the unhappy wretches received a vision of our Lord, who appeared covered with wounds, inviting them to repent and promising them forgiveness. At that same moment they begged earnestly for a priest and with heartfelt contrition confessed their sins. Thereupon their blasphemies were turned to praise, and they went joyfully to their death as to the gateway of heaven. Those who witnessed the incident were struck with amazement and could assign no reason for such a sudden change in their interior dispositions.

On another occasion the saint herself was present at the execution of the young nobleman, Nicholas Tuldo, who had been condemned to death for criticizing the government. When she saw how desperately he clung to life, refusing to accept what seemed to him so unjust a punishment, she herself prepared his soul to appear before God. Her account of the death-scene is given in a letter to her confessor, Raymund of Capua:

Seeing me at the place of execution, he began to smile, and wanted me to make the sign of the cross upon him. I did so and then I said to him: “On your knees, sweetness my brother. You are going to the marriage feast. You are about to enter into everlasting life.” He prostrated himself with great gentleness, and I stretched out his neck; and bending over him, I reminded him of the blood of the Lamb. His lips said nought save “Jesus’, and “Catherine. ‘, And so saying, I received his head in my hands, closing my eyes in the divine goodness, and saying, “I will.”

Then I saw, as might the clearness of the sun be seen, the God-man, the wound in His side being open. He was permitting a transfusion of that blood with His blood, and adding the fire of holy desire given to that soul by grace to the fire of His divine charity.

But if the death of the sinner is a manifestation of the divine mercy, far more beautiful is the death of the saint who has always remained faithful. His last moments are, as a rule, peaceful because he has vanquished his enemies during life and his soul is now prepared for the passage to eternity. Uniting himself with all the masses then being celebrated, he makes of his death a last sacrifice of reparation, adoration, thanksgiving, and

supplication to obtain thereby that last grace of final perseverance which carries with it the assurance of salvation.

PROVIDENCE AND MERCY AFTER DEATH

Mercy and justice, the Scripture tells us (Ps. 24: 10), combine in every one of God's works; but whereas mercy is the more prominent in some, as in the conversion of the sinner, in others justice predominates, as in the case of punishment due to sin.

Thus it is that, as St. Thomas says, after death "mercy intervenes on behalf of the reprobate, in the sense that the punishment they receive is less than they deserve." Were justice alone to enter in, they would suffer still more. St. Catherine of Siena is of the same mind. Mercy is there to temper justice even for those who have fomented hatred among others, between class and class, nation and nation, even for the most perverse, for monsters like Nero, who have shown a refinement of malice, an obstinacy of will that spurned all advice.

Obviously, with the souls in purgatory divine mercy is still more active, inspiring them with the loving desire to make reparation, which tempers a little that keen purifying pain they are undergoing and confirms them in their assurance of salvation.

In heaven divine mercy shines forth in the saints according to the intensity of their love for God. Our Lord will greet them with the words recorded in St. Matthew (25: 34) :

Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave Me to eat: I was thirsty, and you gave Me to drink: I was a stranger, and you took Me in: naked, and you covered Me: sick, and you visited Me: I was in prison, and you came to Me. Then shall the just... answer Him saying: Lord, when did we see Thee hungry... thirsty... and came to Thee? And the King answering shall say to them: Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these My least brethren, you did it to Me.

What joy will be ours in that first instant of our entering into glory, when we shall receive the light of glory in order to see God face to face, in a vision that will know no end, whose measure will be the unique instant of changeless eternity.

How consoling is the thought of this infinite mercy, which transcends all wickedness and is inexhaustible. For this reason no relapse into sin, however shameful, however criminal, should cause a sinner to despair. There can be no greater outrage against God than to consider His loving kindness inadequate to forgive. As St. Catherine of Siena tells us, “His mercy is greater without any comparison than all the sins which any creature can commit.”

In this matter we should keep before our minds these words from the psalms, words that the liturgy is constantly putting before us:

The mercies of the Lord I will sing forever.... For Thou hast said: Mercy shall be built up forever in the heavens. Thy truth shall be prepared in them.... Thou art mighty, O Lord, and Thy truth is round about Thee, Thou rulest the power of the sea.... Thou hast humbled the proud one....

The Lord is compassionate and merciful: longsuffering and plenteous in mercy. He will not always be angry: nor will He threaten forever.... For according to the height of the heaven above the earth, He hath strengthened His mercy toward them that fear Him.... As a father hath compassion on his children, so hath the Lord compassion on them that fear Him: for He knoweth our frame. He remembereth that we are dust.

Man’s days are as grass: as the flower of the field so shall he flourish. For the spirit shall pass in him, and he shall not be.... But the mercy of the Lord is from eternity and unto eternity, upon them that fear Him.

May the Lord deign that these words be revealed in us also, that we may glorify Him forever.

Rarely have the relations between mercy, justice, and providence been better expressed than in the Dies Irae.

Day of wrath and doom impending, David’s word with Sibyl’s blending! Heaven and earth in ashes ending!

O, what fear man’s bosom rendeth, When from heaven the Judge descendeth, On whose sentence all dependeth!

Death is struck, and nature quaking, All creation is awaking, To its Judge an answer making.

Lo! the book exactly worded, Wherein all hath been recorded; Thence shall judgment be awarded.

When the Judge His seat attaineth, And each hidden deed arraigneth, Nothing unavenged remaineth.

King of Majesty tremendous, Who dost free salvation send us, Fount of pity, then befriend us!

Think, kind Jesu! my salvation Caused Thy wondrous incarnation; Leave me not to reprobation.

Faint and weary Thou hast sought me, On the cross of suffering bought me; Shall such grace be vainly bought me?

Righteous Judge! for sin’s pollution Grant Thy gift of absolution, Ere that day of retribution.

Through the sinful woman shriven, Through the dying thief forgiven, Thou to me a hope hast given.

Low I kneel, with heart submission, Crushed to ashes in contrition; Help me in my last condition!

Spare, O God, in mercy spare him! Lord all-pitying, Jesu blest, Grant them Thine eternal rest. Amen.

Let us acquire the habit of praying for those in their last agony, that the divine mercy may incline to them. Then others will assist us when the moment of our own death arrives. Where or how we shall die, we know not; it may be quite alone; but if we have prayed frequently for the dying, if again and again we have said with attention and from our hearts: “Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death, “ then at the supreme moment mercy will incline to us also.

27. Providence And The Grace Of A Happy Death

One of those vital questions that should be of the deepest interest to every soul, no matter what its condition, is the question of a happy death. On this subject St. Augustine wrote one of his last and finest works, the Gift of Perseverance, in which he gives his definite views on the mystery of grace.

By the Semi-Pelagians on the one hand and Protestants and Jansenists on the other, this vital question has been understood in widely different, even fundamentally opposite, senses. These two contrary heresies prompted the Church to define her teaching on this point more precisely and to declare the truth in all its sublimity as the transcendent mean between the extreme errors.

A brief summary of these errors will give us a better appreciation of the truth and a clearer understanding of what the grace of a happy death really is. We shall then see how this grace may be obtained.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH AND THE ERRORS OPPOSED TO IT

The Semi-Pelagians maintained that man can have the initium fidei et salutis, the beginning of faith and a good desire apart from grace, this beginning being subsequently confirmed by God. According to their view, not God but the sinner himself takes the first step in the sinner’s conversion. On the same principles the Semi-Pelagians maintained that, once justified by grace, man can persevere until death without a further special grace. For the just to persevere unto the end, it is enough, they said, that the initium salutis, this natural good will, should persist.

It amounted to this, that God not only wills all men to be saved, but wills it to the same extent in every case; and further, that precisely the element which distinguishes the just from the wicked—the initium salutis and those final good dispositions which are to be found in one and not in another, in

Peter and not in Judas—is not to be referred to God as its author; He is simply an onlooker.

It meant the rejection of the mystery of predestination and the ignoring of those words of our Lord: “No man can come to Me, except the Father, who sent Me, draw him” (John 6: 44), words that apply both to the initial and to the final impulse of our hearts to God.” Without Me you can do nothing” (John 15: 5), our Lord said. As the Second Council of Orange recalled against the Semi-Pelagians, St. Paul added: “Who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received?” (I Cor. 4:7) ; “Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God” (II Cor. 3: 5). If this is true of our every thought, still more true is it of the least salutary desire, whether it be the first or the last.

St. Augustine, too, pointed out that both the first grace and the last are in an especial way gratuitous. The first prevenient grace cannot be merited or in any way be due to a purely natural good impulse, since the principle of merit is sanctifying grace, and this, as its very name implies, is a gratuitous gift, a life wholly supernatural both for men and for angels. Again, the final grace, the grace of final perseverance, is, as St. Augustine pointed out, a special gift, a grace peculiar to the elect, of whom our Lord said: “No one can snatch them out of the hand of My Father” (John 10: 29). When this grace is granted, he added, it is from sheer mercy; if on the other hand it is not given, it is as a just chastisement for sin, usually for repeated sin, which has alienated the soul from God. We have it exemplified in the death of the good thief and that of the unrepentant one.

For St. Augustine the question is governed by two great principles. The first is that not only are the elect foreseen by God, but they are more beloved by Him. St. Paul had said: “Who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received?” (I Cor. 4:17.) Later on we find St. Thomas saying that “since the love of God is cause of whatever goodness there is in things, no one thing would be better than another, if God did not will a greater good for one than for the other” (Ia, q. 20, a. 3).

The other principle, formulated by St. Augustine in express terms, is that God never commands the impossible, though in commanding He admonishes us to do what we can and to ask for grace to accomplish what we ourselves cannot do: Deus impossibilia non jubet, sed in jubendo monet et facere quod possis et petere quod non possis. These words, taken from his De natura et gratia, are quoted by the Council of Trent and bring out

how God desires to make it really possible for all to be saved and observe His precepts, and how in fact He does so. As for the elect, He sees to it that they continue to observe His precepts until the end.

How are these two great principles, certain and beyond dispute, to be intimately reconciled? Before receiving the beatific vision, no created intellect, of men or of angels, can perceive how this can be. It must first be seen how infinite justice, infinite mercy, and a sovereign liberty are reconciled in the Deity, and this requires an immediate vision of the divine essence.

As we know, these principles laid down by St. Augustine against Semi-Pelagianism were in substance approved by the Second Council of Orange. Thus it remains true that the grace of a happy death is a special grace peculiar to the elect.

At the opposite extreme to Semi-Pelagianism, Protestantism and Jansenism distorted the first principle formulated by St. Augustine by rejecting the second. On the pretext of emphasizing the mystery of predestination, they denied the all embracing character of God's saving will, maintaining also that in some cases God commands the impossible, that at the moment of death it is not possible for all to be faithful to the divine precepts. We know what the first proposition of Jansenius was, that certain of God's commandments are impossible for some even among the just, and this not merely when they are negligent or have not the full use of reason and will, but even when they have the desire to carry out these precepts and do really strive to fulfil them: justis volentibus et conantibus. Even for them the carrying out of certain precepts is impossible because they are denied the grace that would make it possible.

Such a proposition must drive men to despair and shows how wide is the gulf separating Jansenism from the true doctrine of St. Augustine and St. Thomas: Deus impossibilia non jubet. This grave error involves the denial of God's justice and hence of God Himself; a fortiori it denies His mercy and the offering of sufficient grace to all. Indeed it means the rejection of true human liberty (libertas a necessitate), so that finally sin becomes unavoidable and is sin no longer, and hence cannot without extreme cruelty be punished eternally.

From the same erroneous principles, Protestants were led to declare not only that predestination is gratuitous, but that good works, in the case of adults, are not necessary for salvation, faith alone sufficing. Hence that

saying of Luther's: Pecca fortiter et crede fortius: sin resolutely, but trust even more resolutely in the application of Christ's merits to you and in your predestination. This is no longer hope, but is an unpardonable presumption. Jansenism and Protestantism, in fact, oscillate between presumption and despair, without ever being able to find true Christian hope and charity.

Against this heresy the Council of Trent defined that "Whereas we should all have a steadfast hope in God, nevertheless (without a special revelation) no one can have absolute certainty that he will persevere to the end." The Council quotes the words of St. Paul: "Wherefore, my dearly beloved (as you have always obeyed...), with fear and trembling work out your salvation.... For it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish according to His good will" (Phil. 2: 12) ; "He that thinketh himself to stand, let him take heed, lest he fall" (I Cor. 10: 12). He must put all his trust in the Almighty, who is alone able to raise him up when he has fallen and keep the just upright in a corrupt and perverse world." And he shall stand: for God is able to make him stand" (Rom. 14: 4).

And so the Church maintains the Gospel teaching in its rightful place above the vagaries of error, above the extreme heresies of Semi-Pelagianism and Protestantism. On the other hand, the elect are more beloved of God than are others and, on the other hand, God never commands the impossible, but in His love desires to make it really possible for all to be faithful to His commandments.

It remains true therefore, as against Semi-Pelagianism, that the grace of a happy death is a special gift and, as against Protestantism and Jansenism, that among those who have the use of reason they alone are deprived of help at the last who actually reject it by resisting the sufficient grace offered them, as the bad thief resisted it, and that in the very presence of Christ the Redeemer.

This being so, how are we to obtain this immense grace of a happy death? Can we merit it? And if it cannot be merited in the strict sense, is it possible for us at any rate to obtain it through prayer? What are the conditions that such a prayer must conform to?

These are the two points we wish to develop, relying especially on what St. Thomas has written about them in Ia IIae, q. 114, a. 9.

CAN WE MERIT THE GRACE OF A HAPPY DEATH?

Are we able to merit it in the strict sense of the term “merit, “ which implies the right to a divine reward?

Final perseverance, a happy death, is no more than the continuance of the state of grace up to the moment of death, or at any rate it is the coincidence or union of death and the state of grace if conversion takes place at the last moment. In short, a happy death is death in the state of grace, the death of the predestinate or elect.

We now see why the Second Council of Orange declared it to be a special gift, why, too, the Council of Trent declared the gratuitous element in it by saying that, “this gift cannot be derived from any other but from the One who is able to establish him who standeth that he stand perseveringly, and to restore him who has fallen.”

Whatever we are able to merit, though it comes chiefly from God, is not from Him exclusively; it proceeds also from our own merits, which imply the right to a divine reward. Hence we feel that the just must humbly admit that they have really no right to the grace of final perseverance.

St. Thomas demonstrates this truth by a principle as simple as it is profound, one that is now commonly received in the Church (cf. Ia IIae, q. 114, a. 9). We may profitably pause to consider it for a moment; it will serve to keep us humble.

“The principle of merit, “ says St. Thomas, “cannot itself be merited (principium meriti sub merito non cadit) “; for no cause can cause itself, whether it be a physical cause or moral (as merit is). Merit, that act which entitles us to a reward, cannot reach the principle from which it proceeds. Nothing is more evident than that the principle of merit cannot itself be merited.

Now the gift of final perseverance is simply the state of grace maintained up to the moment of death, or at least at that moment restored. Furthermore, the state of grace, produced and maintained by God, is in the order of salvation the very principle of merit, the principle rendering our acts meritorious of an increase in grace and of eternal life. Apart from the state of grace, apart from charity whereby we love God with an efficacious love, more than ourselves, with a love founded at least on a right estimation of values, our salutary acts have no right to a supernatural reward. In such case these salutary acts, like those preceding justification, bear no proportion to such a reward; they are no longer the actions of an adopted son of God and of one who is His friend, heir to God and coheir with Christ, as St. Paul

says. They proceed from a soul still estranged from God the last end, through mortal sin, from one having no right as yet to eternal life. Hence St. Paul writes (I Cor. 13: 1-3) : “If I have not charity, I am nothing... it profiteth me nothing.” Apart from the state of grace and charity, my will is estranged from God, and personally therefore I can have no right to a supernatural reward, no merit in the order of salvation.

Briefly, then, the principle of merit is the state of grace and perseverance in that state; but the principle of merit cannot itself be merited.

If the initial production of sanctifying grace cannot be merited, the same must be said of the preservation of anyone in grace, this being simply the continuation of the original production and not a distinct divine action. So says St. Thomas (Ia, q. 104, a. 1 ad 4um) : “The conservation of the creature by God is not a fresh divine action, but the continuation of the creative act.” Hence the maintenance of anyone in the state of grace can no more be merited than its original production.

To this profound reason many theologians add a second, which is a confirmation of it. Strictly condign merit (meritum de condigno) or merit founded in justice presupposes the divine promise to reward a certain good work. But God has never promised final perseverance or preservation from the sin of final impenitence to one who should keep His commandments for any length of time. Indeed it is precisely this obedience until death in which final perseverance consists; hence it cannot be merited by that obedience, for otherwise it would merit itself. We are thus brought back to our fundamental reason, that the principle of merit cannot be merited. Moreover, with due reservations, the same reason is applicable to congruous merit (meritum de congruo), that merit which is founded in the rights of friendship uniting us to God, the principle of which is again the state of grace.

What it all comes to is this, that God’s mercy, not His justice, has placed us in the state of grace and continues to maintain us therein.

The just, it is true, are able to merit eternal life, this being the term, not the principle of merit. Even so, if they are to obtain eternal life, it is still required that the merits they have won shall not have been lost before death through mortal sin. Now no acts of charity we perform give us the right to be preserved from mortal sin; it is mercy that preserves us from it. Here is one of the main foundations of humility.

Against this doctrine, now commonly accepted by theologians, a somewhat specious objection has been raised. It has been said that one who merits what is greater can merit what is less. Hence, since the just can merit eternal life de condigno and since this is something more than final perseverance, it follows that they can merit final perseverance also.

To this St. Thomas replies (ibid., ad 2um et 3um) : One who can do what is greater can do what is less, other things being equal, not otherwise. Now here there is a difference between eternal life and final perseverance: eternal life is not the principle of the meritorious act, far from it; eternal life is the term of that act. Final perseverance, on the other hand? is simply the continuance in the state of grace, and this, as we have already seen, is the principle of merit.

But, it is insisted, one who can merit the end can merit also the means to that end; but final perseverance is a means necessary to obtain eternal life and, therefore, like eternal life, can be merited.

Theologians in general reply by denying that the major premise is of universal application. Merit, indeed, is a means of obtaining eternal life, and yet it is not itself merited: it is enough that it can be had in other ways. Similarly, the grace of final perseverance can be obtained otherwise than by merit; it may be had through prayer, which is not directed to God’s justice, as merit is, but to His mercy.

But, it is further insisted, if final perseverance cannot be merited, neither can eternal life, which is only the consequence of this. From what has already been said, we must answer that anyone in the state of grace may merit eternal life only on condition that the merits he has gained have not been lost or have been mercifully restored through the grace of conversion. Hence the Council of Trent states (Sess. VI, cap. 16 and can. 32), that the just man can merit eternal life, si in gratia decesserit, if he dies in the state of grace.

We are thus brought back to that saying of St. Augustine and of St. Thomas after him: where the gift of final perseverance is granted, it is through mercy; if it is not granted, it is in just chastisement for sin, and usually for repeated sin, which has alienated the soul from God.

From this we deduce many conclusions, both speculative and practical. We shall draw attention only to the humility that must be ours as we labor in all confidence to work out our salvation.

What we have been saying is calculated from one point of view to inspire dread, but what we have still to say will give great consolation.

HOW THE GRACE OF A HAPPY DEATH MAY BE OBTAINED THROUGH PRAYER

What are the conditions to which this prayer must conform? If, strictly speaking, the gift of final perseverance cannot be merited, since the principle of merit does not merit itself, it may nevertheless be obtained through prayer, which is directed not to God's justice but to His mercy.

What we obtain through prayer is not always merited: the sinner, for example, who now is in the state of spiritual death, is able with the aid of actual grace to pray for and obtain sanctifying or habitual grace, which could not be merited, since it is the principle of merit.

It is the same with the grace of final perseverance: we cannot merit it in the strict sense, but we can obtain it through prayer for ourselves, and indeed for others also (cf. St. Thomas, ibid., ad Ium). What is more, we can and indeed we ought to prepare ourselves to receive this grace by leading a better life.

Whatever the Quietists may have said, failure to ask for the grace of a happy death and to prepare ourselves to receive it argues a disastrous and stupid negligence, incuria salutis.

For this reason our Lord taught us to say in the Our Father: "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil"; and the Church bids us say daily: "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen."

Can our prayer obtain this grace of a happy death infallibly? Relying on our Lord's promise, "Ask and you shall receive, " theology teaches that prayer made under certain conditions is infallible in obtaining the gifts necessary for salvation, including therefore the final grace. What are the conditions required that prayer shall be infallibly efficacious? "They are four, " St. Thomas tells us (IIa IIae, q. 83, a. 15 ad 2um) : "We must ask for ourselves, the things necessary for salvation, with piety, with perseverance."

We are, in fact, more certain of obtaining what we ask for ourselves than when we pray for a sinner, who perhaps is resisting grace at the very moment we are praying for him. But even though we ask for the gifts necessary for salvation, and for ourselves, prayer will not be infallibly efficacious unless it is made with piety, humility, and confidence, as well as

with perseverance. Only then will it express the sincere, profound, unwavering desire of our hearts. And here once again together with our own frailty, appears the mystery of grace; we may fail to persevere in our prayer as we may fail in our meritorious works. This is why we say before communion at mass: “Never permit me, O Lord, to be separated from Thee.” Never permit us to yield to the temptation not to pray; deliver us from the evil of losing the relish and desire for prayer; grant us that we may persevere in prayer notwithstanding the dryness and the profound weariness we sometimes experience.

Our whole life is thus shrouded in mystery. Every one of our salutary acts presupposes the mystery of grace; every one of our sins is a mystery of iniquity, presupposing the divine permission to allow evil to exist in view of some higher good purpose, which will be clearly seen only in heaven.” The just man liveth by faith” (Rom. 1: 17). We need help to the very end, not only that we may merit, but that we may pray even. How are we to obtain the necessary help to persevere in prayer? By bearing in mind our Lord’s words: “If you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it to you. Hitherto you have not asked anything in My name” (John 16: 23-24).

We must pray in the name of our Savior. That is the best way of purifying and strengthening our intention, and will do more than the sword of Brennus to turn the balance. We must ask Him besides to make personal intercession on our behalf. This intercession of His is continued from day to day in the holy mass, wherein, as the Council of Trent says, through the ministry of His priests He never ceases to offer Himself and apply to us the merits of His passion.

Seeing that the grace of a happy death can be obtained only through prayer and not merited, we should turn to that most excellent and efficacious of all prayers, the prayer of our Lord, principal Priest in the sacrifice of the mass. It was for this reason Pope Benedict XV, in a letter to the director of the Archconfraternity of Our Lady For a Happy Death, earnestly recommended the faithful to have masses offered during life for the grace of a happy death. This is indeed the greatest of all graces, the grace of the elect; and if at that last moment we unite ourselves by an intense act of love with Christ’s sacrifice perpetuated on the altar, we may even obtain remission of the temporal punishment due to our sins and thus be saved from purgatory.

Therefore, to obtain this grace of final perseverance, we should frequently unite ourselves with the Eucharistic consecration, the essence of the sacrifice of the mass, pondering on the four ends of sacrifice: adoration, supplication, reparation, and thanksgiving. Let us bear in mind that in this continuous oblation of Himself, our Lord is offering, as well the whole of His mystical body, especially those who suffer spiritually and thereby share a little in His own sufferings. This is a path that will carry us far if only we follow it perseveringly.

This practice of uniting ourselves with the sacrifice of the mass, with the masses that all day long are being celebrated wherever the sun is rising upon the earth, is the best preparation for a happy death, the best preparation for that hour when for the last time in our lives we shall unite ourselves with the masses then being celebrated far and near. United then with the sacrifice of Christ perpetuated in substance upon the altar, our death will itself be a sacrifice of adoration both of God's supreme dominion, who is master of life and death, and of the majesty of Him who "leadeth down to hell and bringeth up again" (Tob. 13: 2). It will be a sacrifice of supplication to obtain the final grace both for ourselves and for those who are to die in that same hour. It will also be a sacrifice of reparation for the sins of our life, and a sacrifice of thanksgiving for all the favors we have received since our baptism.

The sacrifice we thus offer with a burning love for God may well open to us forthwith the gates of heaven, as it did for the good thief dying there by the side of our Lord as He brought to its close the celebration of His bloody mass, the sacrifice of the cross.

Before this last hour of our life comes, we should cultivate the practice of praying for the dying. At the door of some chapels may be seen the little inscription: Pray for those who are to die while holy mass is being offered. A certain French writer was one day much struck by this inscription and thereafter every day prayed for the dying while he was attending mass. Later on he was overtaken by a serious illness, which lasted for years; unable any longer to go to mass, he offered up his sufferings each morning for those who were to die in the course of the day. He thus had the joy of obtaining a number of unexpected conversions in extremis.

Let us also pray for the priests who assist the dying. It is a sublime ministry to assist a soul in its agony, in that last struggle. Pray that the priest may arrive in time and, if the sick man is already sunk in profound torpor,

that he may obtain from heaven the necessary moment of consciousness. Pray that the priest may be able to prompt the sick man to make the great sacrifices God demands of him and that by his priestly prayer, offered in the name of Christ, in the name of Mary and of all the saints, he may obtain for him the final grace, the grace of graces.

As the priest is giving this assistance to the dying, he sometimes has the immense consolation of looking on, as it were, and watching our Lord save the soul as it suffers in that last moment. Hitherto perhaps he has prayed for a cure, but now that he sees the soul well prepared for death he ends by reciting confidently and with great peace that beautiful prayer of the Church:

Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison, Kyrie eleison.... Proficiscere, anima christiana, de hoc mundo, in nomine Dei Patris omnipotentis, qui te creavit, in nomine Jesu Christi Filii Dei vivi, qui pro te passus est, in nomine Spiritus Sancti, qui in te effusus est (“Go forth from this world, O Christian soul, in the name of God the Father Almighty, who created thee; in the name of Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, who suffered for thee; in the name of the Holy Ghost, who was poured out upon thee; in the name of the holy and glorious Virgin Mary, Mother of God; in the name of Blessed Joseph, predestined spouse of the Virgin; in the name of the angels and archangels... ; in the name of the patriarchs and prophets; in the name of the Apostles and the Evangelists; in the name of the holy martyrs and confessors; and of all the saints of God. May thy place be this day in peace and thy abode in holy Sion, through Our Lord Jesus Christ.

THE MYSTERY OF SALVATION

And so for us a holy death throws light on the mystery of predestination, that terrible and yet gracious mystery which concerns the choice of the elect.

We now have a better grasp of those two great principles formulated by St. Augustine and St. Thomas which we quoted at the beginning of the chapter.

On the one hand, “since God’s love is the cause of things, no one thing would be better than another, if God did not will a greater good for one than for the other.” No one thing would be better than another by reason of some salutary act, whether it be the first or the last, easy or difficult, in its

inception or continuance, were he not more beloved of God. This is what our Lord refers to when He says of the elect, that “no man can snatch them out of the hand of My Father” (John 10: 29). He was speaking here of the efficacy of grace, which also led St. Paul to ask, “Who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received?” (I Cor. 4:7.) Could we find anywhere a more profound lesson in humility?

On the other hand, God never commands the impossible, but love constrains Him to make the fulfilment of His precepts really possible for all, and especially for the dying; final grace is denied them only when they reject it by resisting the final appeal.

And therefore, say St. Augustine and St. Thomas, when the grace of final perseverance is granted, as it was to the good thief, it is through mercy; if it is not granted, it is as a just chastisement for sin and usually for repeated sin; it is a just chastisement, too, for the final act of resistance, as it was with the impenitent thief, who was lost even as he hung dying by the side of his Redeemer.

In the words of St. Prosper quoted by a council of the ninth century, “If some are saved, it is the gift of Him who saves; if some perish, it is the fault of them that perish.”

Absolutely certain as are these two great principles when considered apart—the efficacy of grace and the possibility for all to be saved—how are they infinitely reconciled one with the other? Here is St. Paul’s answer: “O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are His judgments, and how unsearchable His ways!” (Rom. 11: 33.) No created intellect can perceive this intimate reconciliation before receiving the beatific vision. To perceive that is to perceive also how infinite justice, infinite mercy and a sovereign liberty are united and identified without any real distinction in the Deity, the intimate life of God, in precisely what is unutterable in Him, in that perfection which is exclusively His own and naturally incommunicable to creatures—in the Deity as it transcends being, unity, truth, goodness, intelligence, and love. For in all these absolute perfections creatures can participate naturally, whereas participation in the Deity is possible only through sanctifying grace, which is a participation in the divine nature not simply as intellectual life, but as a life strictly divine and the principle of that immediate vision and of that love which God has for Himself.

That we may perceive how the two principles of which we are speaking are intimately reconciled with each other, we must have immediate vision of the divine essence.

The more certain we are of the truth of these two principles, the more striking by contrast is the obscurity, the light-transcending obscurity, enveloping the heights of God's intimate life in which they are united. They are like the two extremities of a dazzling are disappearing above into what the mystics call the great darkness, which is none other than that light inaccessible in which God dwells (I Tim. 6: 16).

This, though very imperfectly expressed, is to our mind the subject of Augustine's speculation, or rather let us say of his contemplation, and it is the constant source of inspiration to St. Thomas in these difficult questions. The divine obscurity here mentioned is far beyond the reach of speculative theology; it is the proper object of faith (fides est de non visis), of faith illumined by the gifts of understanding and wisdom (fides donis illustrata).

From this higher standpoint, the contemplation of this terrible yet gracious mystery brings peace. Penetrated through and through with this doctrine, Bossuet writes as follows to one tormented with all sorts of ideas about predestination:

When such thoughts come into the mind, when all our efforts to dissipate them have proved vain, we should end by abandoning ourselves to God, with the assurance that our salvation is infinitely more secure in God's hands than in our own. Only thus shall we find peace. All teaching about predestination should end in this; this should be the effect produced in us by our sovereign Master's secret, a secret we should adore without pretending to sound its depths. We must lose ourselves in the heights and impenetrable depths of God's wisdom, must cast ourselves into the arms of His immense loving kindness, looking to Him for everything, yet without unburdening ourselves of that care for our salvation which He demands of us.... The result of this tormenting must be the abandonment of yourself to God, who by reason of His loving kindness and the promises He has made will then be bound to watch over you. This, while the present life lasts, must be the final solution to all those questions about predestination which beset you; henceforth you must find your repose not in yourself but solely in God and His fatherly loving kindness."

Bossuet, speaking in the same strain in one of the finest chapters of his Meditations sur l'Evangile (Part II, 72d day), says:

The proud man fears that unless he retains his salvation in his own hands, it is rendered too insecure; but in this he deceives himself. Can I find any security in myself? O my God, I feel my will escaping me at every moment, and even wert Thou willing to make me the sole master of my fate, I should refuse a power so dangerous to my weakness. Let it not be said that this doctrine of grace and predilection will bring pious souls to despair. How can anyone imagine he will give me greater assurance by throwing me back upon myself, by delivering me up to my own inconstancy? No, my God, I will have none of it. I can find no security except in abandoning myself to Thee. And this security is the greater when I reflect that those in whom Thou dost inspire this confidence, this complete self-abandonment to Thee, receive in this gentle prompting the highest mark of Thy loving kindness that can be had here on earth.

As we have shown elsewhere, this to us seems to be the true mind of St. Augustine at its loftiest, when finally he soars above all reasoning, and comes to rest in the divine obscurity where the two aspects of the mystery, to all appearances diametrically opposed, must at last be reconciled. As formulated in the two principles—God never commands the impossible; no one would be better than another, were he not more beloved of God—these two aspects of the mystery are as two stars of the first magnitude shining brightly in the dark night of the spirit, yet wholly inadequate to reveal to us the uttermost depths of the firmament, the secret of the Deity.

Until we are given the beatific vision, grace by a secret instinct allays all our fears as to the intimate reconciliation of infinite justice and infinite mercy in the Deity, and this it does because it is itself a participation in the Deity, the light of life far surpassing the natural light of either the angelic or the human intellect.

Doubtless the whole of our interior life, every one of our actions, are shrouded in mystery; for every salutary act presupposes the mystery of grace from which it proceeds, and all sin is a mystery of iniquity, presupposing the divine permission that evil shall exist in view of some higher good purpose which will often escape us and will be clearly seen only in heaven. But in this obscurity characteristic of faith and also of contemplation here on earth, we are reassured when we remember that God’s will is to save, that Christ has died for us, that His sacrifice is perpetuated in substance on the altar, and that our salvation is more secure

in His hands than it would be in ours, since we are more certain of the rectitude of the divine intentions than of our own, even the best of them.

Let us abandon ourselves in all confidence and love to His infinite mercy: there can be no better way of ensuring His condescending mercy toward us at this moment and above all at the hour of our death.

Let us frequently call to mind those beautiful words of the psalm, recurring each week in Thursday's office of Tierce: "Cast thy care upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee: He shall not suffer the just to waver forever" (Ps. 54: 23).

Let us call to mind the beautiful canticle of Tobias: "Thou art great, O Lord, forever, and Thy kingdom is unto all ages. For Thou scourgest, and Thou savest: Thou leadest down to hell, and bringest up again. He hath chastised us for our iniquities: and He will save us for His own mercy" (Tob. 13: 1).

In this self-abandonment we shall find peace. As our Lord hung dying for us, He experienced in His holy soul the keenest suffering our sins had caused, yet likewise the profoundest peace. So, too, in every Christian death, as in that of the good thief, there is suffering, a holy fear and trembling before the infinite justice of God, and a profound peace, a most intimate union prevailing between them. Nevertheless it is peace, the tranquillity that comes of true order, which predominates, as is apparent from these words of our Lord as He died: 'It is consummated.... Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit" (Luke 23: 46).

28. Providence And Charity Toward Our Neighbor

In the preceding chapter we saw how one of the greatest means in the workings of providence is charity toward our neighbor, by which all men should be united for their mutual aid in their progress toward the common goal, eternal life.

This subject is always of the greatest interest and we should often revert to it, especially in this age when charity toward others is summarily rejected by individualism in all its forms and completely distorted by the humanitarianism of the communist and internationalist.

Individualism aims at nothing higher than the search for what is useful and pleasurable to the individual or at most to the restricted group to which the individual belongs. Hence the bitter strife arising sometimes among members of the same family, but especially between classes and races or nations. Hence arise jealousy and envy, discord and hatred, and the most profound disruptions. It implies a complete disregard for the common good in its different degrees and an almost exclusive assertion of individual or particular rights.

In opposition to this, communist and internationalist humanitarianism lays so much stress on the rights of humanity as a whole, which in some degree is identified with God in a pantheistic sense, that the rights of individuals, families, and nations disappear altogether. On the pretext of promoting unity, harmony, and peace, the way is prepared for appalling confusion and disorder, like that which has prevailed in Russia since the revolution. To desire that all the parts in an organism shall have the perfection of the head, or to do away with the head because it is more perfect than the members, is to destroy the organism altogether.

Obviously the truth lies within these two extreme errors, yet transcends them. Equally remote from both individualism and communism, it affirms the rights inherent in the individual, in families, and in nations, and at the same time the claims of the common good, which is above every particular good. Thus a right estimation of things will safeguard the welfare of the

individual through two kinds of justice: commutative, regulating the mutual dealings between one private party and another, and distributive, which sees to a fair distribution of general utilities and burdens. Also it will safeguard the common good through legal justice providing for the enactment of just laws and their observance, and again through equity, which looks to the spirit of the law in those exceptional cases where the letter of the law cannot be applied.

Admirably differentiated by Aristotle and well developed by St. Thomas in his treatise De justitia (IIa IIae, q. 58, 61, 120), these four kinds of justice (commutative, distributive, and legal or social justice, and equity) suffice in a way to preserve the just mean between the opposing errors of individualism and communist humanitarianism. St. Thomas' teaching on this question is too little known and might well be made the subject of a series of interesting and useful studies.

However perfect this fourfold justice may become, even when enlightened by Christian faith, it can never attain the perfection that distinguishes charity toward God and our neighbor, the formal object of which is incomparably on a higher plane.

Let us recall what the primary object of charity is and what is its secondary object. We shall then see how we are to practice charity toward our neighbor and what part it plays in the fulfilment of the plan of Providence.

THE PRIMARY OBJECT AND FORMAL MOTIVE OF CHARITY

The primary object of charity is something far above the distinctive good of the individual, far above the good of the family, of country, even of humanity. It is God, to be loved above all things, even more than ourselves, since His goodness is infinitely greater than our own. That is the first commandment: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with all thy strength and with all thy mind" (Luke 10: 27).

To this supreme commandment, all the other commandments and all the counsels are subordinate. Though it belongs to the supernatural order, nevertheless it corresponds to a natural inclination, to the primordial inclination of nature both in ourselves and in a certain sense in every creature.

Of course, innate in us is the instinct for self-preservation, the instinct, too, for the preservation of the species, the inclination to defend family and country, to love our fellows. But deeper still, as St. Thomas has shown (Ia, q. 60, a. 5) in our nature is the inclination prompting us to love more than ourselves God the very author of our nature. Why should this be? Because whatever by its very nature belongs to another, as the part belongs to the whole, the hand to the body, is naturally inclined to love that other more than itself: thus the hand will voluntarily sacrifice itself to protect the body. Now every creature, and in all that it is, is necessarily dependent upon God the Creator and Conserver of our being; hence every creature is inclined naturally, each after its own fashion, to love its Creator more than itself.

Thus the stone tends toward the center of the earth for the cohesion, for the very welfare of the universe, which is itself a manifestation of God's goodness radiating externally. Again, to use our Lord's own illustration, we know that the hen will gather her chickens under her wings to defend them from the hawk, sacrificing her own life if necessary for the welfare of the species, which in its turn contributes to the good of the universe.

In men and angels this primordial natural inclination is illumined by the light of intelligence, and thus we are led to love God the author of our nature more than ourselves, but with a love in some degree conscious.

No doubt this natural inclination has been enfeebled by original sin; but in spite of this weakening it persists, imperishable as is this spiritual faculty, our will.

This natural inclination is sublimated by the supernatural or infused virtue of charity, of an order infinitely transcending nature, whether of men or of angels. Illumined by infused faith, charity inclines us to love God more than self, more than all else, but now as the author of grace and not simply of our nature. This is God who "hath first loved us" (I John 4: 10) by bestowing on us over and above existence, life, and intelligence, the supreme gift of sanctifying grace, the germ of eternal life, a germ that one day is to flower into the immediate vision of the divine essence and a most holy, supernatural love which nothing thenceforth shall be able to destroyer diminish.

Such is the primary object of charity: God who has first loved us and has communicated to us a share in His own intimate life. For this reason charity is a friendship between God and us.

The formal motive why we must love God, is His own infinite goodness, a goodness infinitely greater than ours, infinitely greater than any gift He can confer upon us.

If we do not constantly dwell upon this, the primary object of charity and its formal motive, we shall not in the least understand the sort of love that must be given to its secondary object.

There are not two virtues of charity, one relating to God, the other to our neighbor. It is one and the same theological virtue from which these two acts of love proceed, one being essentially subordinated to the other.

Charity can desire nothing except in relation to God and for the love of God, as the power of vision cannot be exercised except through color and in relation to color, as the power of hearing can hear nothing except sound and what emits sound. For the love of God we are bound to love everything that is in any way related to Him.

THE SECONDARY OBJECT OF CHARITY

Expressed for us in the second commandment: “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself for the love of God, “ it includes first of all ourselves, in the sense that we must love self with a holy love, desiring salvation that we may give glory to God eternally. It includes in the second place our neighbor, to be loved as we love ourselves, for God’s sake; which means that we must desire for our neighbor all the gifts necessary for salvation and salvation itself, so that with us also he may give glory to God eternally. This love of our neighbor the Savior puts before us as the necessary consequence, the radiation and the sign of our love for God: “By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13: 35). And St. John himself tells us: “If any man say: I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar” (I John 4: 20).

Evidently this charity toward our neighbor is infinitely removed from that natural inclination which prompts us to do good in order to please, to love our benefactors, to hate those who do us any harm, and to remain indifferent to the rest of men. Natural love makes us love our neighbor for his naturally good qualities and the benefits we receive from him. The motive that inspires charity is something quite different, the proof being that we must “love our enemies, do good to them that hate us, and pray for them that persecute and calumniate us” (Matt. 5: 44; Luke 6: 27, 35).

Charity, too, surpasses justice, not only commutative and distributive justice, but also that legal justice and equity which command respect for the rights of others out of love for the common good of society.

Charity constrains us to love our neighbor, even our enemies, for the love of God and with the same supernatural, theological virtue of love we have for Him. But how is it possible for us to have for men a love that is divine, when for the most part they are so imperfect and in some cases sinners?

Theology replies with a very simple illustration which St. Thomas explains in this way: One who has an intense love for a friend will love with the same love his friend's children; he will love them because he loves their father and will wish them well for his sake. Again, for the sake of his friend he will, when necessary, come to the assistance of these and, if he is offended, will forgive them. If, then, all men are the children of God, are at least called to be so, we must love them all, even our enemies, in the measure that we love their common Father.

But that we may love our neighbor with this supernatural love, we must look on him with the eyes of faith and say to ourselves: Here is one very different from me perhaps in temperament and character, who yet is "born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, " but like myself is "born of God" (John 1: 13), at least is called to be so and to participate in the same divine life, in the same beatitude. This is how members of the same family should regard one another, those too who are united in the same society and are citizens of the same country. This truth applies especially to all those who are of the Church universal which, while respecting the legitimate and inevitable differences between one country and another, unites them all in order to bring their children into the kingdom of God.

And so we can and indeed should say of everyone with whom we live, even of those with whom we are not naturally in sympathy: Here is a soul which, even if it is not in the state of grace, has undoubtedly been called to be God's child, or to become His child once again, to be the temple of the Holy Ghost and a member of Christ's mystical body. Perhaps it is nearer to the heart of our Lord than I am, a living stone upon which He is working, more elaborately, it may be, than upon others, in order to fit it into its place in the heavenly Jerusalem.

This being so, how is it possible for me not to love that soul if in very truth I love my God? And if in fact I do not love this person, if in fact I

have no desire for his welfare and his salvation, then my love for God is a lie. On the other hand, if, in spite of differences in temperament, character, and upbringing, I really do love him, this is a sign that I really love God. I can truly give to that person the same essentially supernatural and theological love I have for the three divine Persons, because my love for him is directed to that participation in the intimate life of God which he either possesses already or is at least called to receive. And my love is directed to the realization of the divine plan that presides over his destiny, and to the glory he has been called to render to God.

But the unbeliever raises an objection. Is this really to love men, he asks? Is it not simply to love God and Christ in man, as a diamond is admired in its setting? Man wants to be loved for his own sake; in that case he cannot ask for a love that is divine. It was by way of reaction against this egoistic tendency that Pascal uttered what was intentionally a paradox: “I have no desire to be loved by anyone.”

In reality it is not only to God-in-man that the love of charity is directed, but to man-in-God: man is loved in himself but for God’s sake. After all, charity loves what man is destined to be, an imperishable member of Christ’s mystical body, and it does everything possible to bring heaven within his reach. It loves besides what man is already by grace, and if grace is absent it will love his very nature, not precisely as fallen nature, wounded and hostile to grace, but as capable of receiving it.

It is indeed to man himself that charity is directed, but for God’s sake, for the sake of the glory he is called to render to God, a glory which is nothing less than the manifestation, the radiation of the divine goodness.

Charity toward our neighbor, or fraternal charity, is in essence the love of God extended so as to embrace all whom God Himself loves.

From this consideration we derive the characteristics of fraternal charity. It must be universal, knowing no limits whatever. None may be excluded, whether on earth, in purgatory, or in heaven. It stops only at hell. Only the damned we cannot love, for no longer is it possible for them to become God’s children, nor have they the slightest wish to be raised up again; pride and hate smother the very thought of asking for pardon. But apart from those whose damnation is certain—and who can be certain that a soul is lost?—all have a claim on our charity, which knows no limits but those imposed by that love which is seated in the very heart of God.

Here is something incomparably sublime, and the more profound the gulf that, humanly speaking, separates souls, the more sublime does charity appear. Once during the World War a little French soldier as he lay dying was unable to finish the Hail Mary he was reciting and it was finished for him by a young German who was himself dying there by his side. Our Lord and the Blessed Virgin brought these two brethren together at the very moment when the rupture between their two countries was complete. Such are the mighty victories won by charity.

For charity to be universal, it need not necessarily be given everywhere in the same degree. It respects and sublimates the order dictated by nature itself. We must love God in the first place more than all else, even more than ourselves, and with a love founded at least on a right estimation of values (appretiative). Though we may not always experience for God the sensible yearning of our hearts, nevertheless our love for Him should ever be increasing in intensity. Next after God we should love our own souls, destined to give glory to Him eternally, then our neighbor, and lastly our bodies, for these must be sacrificed where the salvation of a soul is at stake, especially when it is our bounden duty to watch over its welfare. Among our fellows greater love should be given to those who are holier and nearer to God, to those, too, who are nearer to us by blood, by marriage, by vocation, or by friendship. The nearer a soul is to God, the more it deserves our esteem; the closer the ties that bind it to us, the more sensible is our love for it, and the more whole-hearted should be the devotion we show in all that concerns family, country, vocation, and friendship. Thus, instead of destroying patriotism, charity exalts it, as we see in the case of St. Joan of Are or St. Louis.

This, then, is the order to be observed in charity. God desires to reign in our hearts, but He excludes no affection that can be subordinated to what is due to Himself. On the contrary, He exalts and quickens it, inspiring it with a greater dignity and generosity. This is the way we must love even the enemies of the Church and pray for them. But, on pretext of showing a certain pity, to have for the Church’s enemies a greater love than for certain of her children who are laboring side by side with us, and of whom perhaps we are a little jealous, is completely to reverse the order dictated by charity.

Lastly, fraternal charity, like the love we have for God, must be effective, not simply affective, must be beneficent as well as benevolent.” Love one another as I have loved you” (John 13: 34), our Lord tells us, and He has

loved us even to the death of the cross. Him the saints have imitated, and their lives are one continuous act of radiant charity, bringing great peace and a holy joy. Such is fraternal charity, an extension of that charity we must give to God.

THE PRACTICE OF FRATERNAL CHARITY AND THE WATCHFULNESS OF PROVIDENCE

In the Dialogue, St. Catherine of Siena often notes the wide diversity of qualities which Providence has bestowed on one and another. Thus we have opportunities to promote one another's welfare and perfection, and we have abundant occasions to practice fraternal charity.

Nor have we far to seek for opportunities of failing in this respect. Even where a deeply Christian spirit prevails we have to acknowledge that, side by side with admirable virtues, there is notable moral weakness. Even if we could rid ourselves of all our shortcomings, the possibility of discord and irritation would persist owing to differences of temperament and character, differences also in intellectual bent, inclining some to speculation and others to more practical things, for some opening wide views, while inspiring in others an attention to detail rather than to general effect. Again, there arise further occasions of friction through the influence of him who loves to create divisions in order to spoil God's work, to frustrate especially those things that are most sublime, most divine, and most beautiful. Only in heaven will all occasion of friction disappear, for there, illumined by a divine light, each one of the blessed sees in the Word what his desires and wishes must be.

Surrounded as we are with all sorts of difficulties, how are we to practice fraternal charity? In two ways. In the first place by benevolence, viewing our neighbor in the light of faith, so as to discover in him the life of grace, or at any rate a certain aspiration to that life. And secondly, by beneficence, by giving our service, by bearing with the failings of others, even returning good for evil, by avoiding jealousy, and by frequently asking God to effect the union of minds and hearts.

First of all benevolence. We must be clear-sighted and keen to discover in our neighbor, sometimes beneath a coarse exterior difficult to penetrate, the presence of a divine life, or at least certain latent aspirations to that life, the fruit of prevenient actual graces which every man receives at some time or

other. But, to look thus into the soul of our neighbor, we must be detached from self.

Very often what provokes and irritates us in him is not some serious fault in the sight of God, but simply a defect in temperament, a twist of character, which is quite compatible with very real virtue. We would be ready enough perhaps to tolerate a sinner utterly estranged from God, but of a lovable nature, whereas a soul that is fairly advanced we will sometimes find trying. We must be careful, then, to regard those with whom we live in the light of faith, so as to detect in them just what makes them pleasing to God, and love them as He does.

The great obstacle to this benevolence is rash judgment. This is something more than a simple impression; it consists in affirming the presence of evil on nothing more than slight evidence. People make things out to be twice as bad as they are, usually through pride. If the matter is grave and there is full deliberation and consent, a judgment of this sort is a serious failure in justice and charity; a failure in justice, because our neighbor has a right to his good reputation, a right which, after that of doing his duty, is one of the most sacred he has, far more so than the right to his property. There are many who would not think of stealing five dollars, yet they will rob their neighbor of his good reputation by rash judgments without any solid foundation in fact. More often than not, the judgment is false. How are we to estimate truthfully the interior intentions of one whose doubts, difficulties, temptations, good desires, and repentance are unknown to us? And even if the rash judgment is true, it falls short of justice, since in thus passing sentence we arrogate to ourselves a jurisdiction that does not belong to us. God alone can judge of the intentions of the heart so long as they are not made sufficiently clear externally.

Rash judgment is also wanting in charity, because it proceeds from ill will, though often framed under a mask of kindliness, a few faint praises leading up to that characteristic “but...” Instead of looking on our neighbor as a brother, we regard him as an adversary, a rival to be supplanted. For this reason our Lord tells us: “Judge not that you may not be judged. For with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged: and with what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why seest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye; and seest not the beam that is in thy own eye?” (Matt. 7: I.)

But supposing the sin is patent. Does God mean us to delude ourselves? He does not; but He does forbid that murmuring which springs from pride. In some cases, in fact, He imposes on us in the name of charity the obligation of fraternal correction to be carried out with kindliness, humility, gentleness, and discretion. Where this private correction is impossible or has been unsuccessful, it may be necessary humbly to refer the matter to the superior whose duty it is to watch over the welfare of the community. In any case, as St. Catherine of Siena says, where the sin is evident the perfect way consists not in murmuring, but in showing compassion before God, laying the blame to some extent at least upon ourselves, after the example of our Lord who took upon Himself the sins of us all and who has bidden us "love one another as I have loved you" (John 13: 34). This is one of the sublimest features of the providential plan.

Therefore, to check rash judgment, we must acquire the habit of looking upon our neighbor in the light of faith.

But we must love him, too, with a love that is real, efficacious, practical: our charity must be beneficent, not merely benevolent. In what way? By giving our service where necessary and when it is in our power to do so. By bearing also with our neighbor's failings, this being one way of rendering him service and leading him to self-correction. In this connection we should remember that frequently what most irritates us in our neighbor is not a serious fault in the sight of God, but a defect in temperament. This may be a certain nervousness, for instance, which makes him slam doors, a certain narrowness in his views, a way of generally doing the wrong thing, a constant eagerness to push himself forward, and other like failings. Let us in all charity bear with one another and not become irritated at what after all is simply an evil permitted by God to humble the one and try the patience of the other. We must not allow ourselves to develop a bitter zeal, and if we must complain of others, we should never imagine that we ourselves have reached the ideal. Our prayer must not be the prayer of the Pharisee.

Again, we must be able to recognize the right moment to put in a kindly word—another means Providence has put in our way of helping others. A religious who is overwhelmed with difficulties will often take fresh courage through a few simple words from a superior wishing him many consolations in his ministry and just enough trouble to enable him to undergo purgatory here on earth.

Needless to say, if we are to love our neighbor effectively, we must be careful to avoid jealousy, and therefore, as Bossuet somewhere remarks, we must take a holy delight in the good qualities God has bestowed on others and which we ourselves do not possess. Thus there has been a distribution of labor and functions in the Church, for the beauty of the Church and of religious communities. As St. Paul says, the hand is not jealous of the eye; the light which the eye receives is for the benefit of the hand also. So should it be with us: far from being jealous of one another, we should rejoice in the good qualities we find in our neighbor, for they are also ours; we and our neighbor are all members of the same mystical body, in which everything should contribute to the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

Not only must we bear with one another and avoid jealousy, we must also return good for evil, by prayer, by good example, and by mutual help. One way of entering into St. Teresa's good graces, it is said, was by causing her to suffer. She thus put into practice the counsel given by our Lord: "If a man will take away thy coat, let go thy cloak also unto him" (Matt. 5: 40). Prayer for our neighbor at a time when we are suffering because of him is of special efficacy. Such was the prayer of St. Stephen the first martyr and of St. Peter Martyr for their executioners.

And lastly, for the proper practice of fraternal charity we must often ask God that minds and hearts be in unison. The first Christians in the infant Church "had but one heart and one soul" (Acts 4: 32). Men said of them, "See how they love one another." Our Lord had declared: "By this shall all men know that you are My disciples" (John 13: 35), and by the light of faith every Christian family, every Christian community should recognize here that charity so characteristic of the Christians in the infant Church. Then will be forever realized the prayer of Christ: "Not for them only [the Apostles] do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall believe in Me. That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee; that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me. And the glory which Thou has given Me, I have given to them: that they may be one, as We also are one" (John 17: 20-22).

Thus, mightily yet sweetly charity contributes to the working out of the providential plan: thus human beings truly help one another as they journey on to eternal life. Herein also is a proof of the divine origin of Christianity, for obviously charity such as this cannot come from a world that builds upon egoism, self-love, and divided interests; its own particular associations

quickly fall asunder, those high-sounding words, solidarity and fraternity, being often no more than a cloak to cover the deepest jealousy and hatred.

The Savior alone can deliver us, and it was for this He came.” Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven.... And He was made man” (Nicene Creed).

29. Providence And The Communion Of Saints

Nowhere is the kindliness and majesty of Providence and the divine governance more clearly seen than in the communion of saints. We have already said that although Providence disposes all things, even the least of them, immediately, yet in the divine governance, in the execution of the providential plan, its action extends to the lower orders of beings through the higher, and thus it is that through the angels and saints in heaven it assists men in their journey to eternity and the souls that are in purgatory. This is clearly brought out in the dogma of the communion of saints: “I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints” (Apostles’ Creed).

This dogma expresses the communion or mutual relations existing between the various members of the Church militant, suffering, and triumphant, and their participation in the merits of Christ and the saints. There is a reciprocal communication of the merits of the just.

Protestants have attacked this dogma as being an alien growth. Some have even maintained that, by giving worship to the saints, Catholics look upon them as so many gods and thus fall into a sort of polytheism. Others have chosen to see in this reciprocal communication of the merits of the just a mere mechanical system whereby sinners may be justified without any co-operation on their part.

A clear statement of the dogma suffices to show what a travesty of it such an interpretation is. It is not an alien growth, but a synthesis of the principal truths of faith: the dogmas on the Trinity and the indwelling of the three divine Persons in the souls of the just, the dogmas relating to Christ the head of the Church militant, suffering, and triumphant: the dogmas on grace, on works of merit and satisfaction, and on prayer. Let us see in what this communion of saints consists according to the Scripture, and then consider in particular what are the relations souls have with God and Christ, and with one another.

This dogmatic truth may be expressed as follows: There is a communion of saints whereby all the members of Christ are closely united through Him and in Him, participating in varying degrees in the same spiritual gifts.

The Gospels make this point clear when they speak of the kingdom of God. This kingdom is something more than the external visible society of the Church militant instituted for the salvation of souls; it is a spiritual society embracing, besides the faithful on earth, the holy souls of the departed and the saints and angels in heaven, all united through Christ with God, living by the same truth, the same charity. Charity is presented as the bond of perfection, that spiritual bond which unites one soul with another by uniting them all with God.

What the Gospel says on this point is clear. Our Lord, after declaring His intentions and preparing the way, at length establishes the kingdom of God, in which all the members, united through charity, are to form one family with God as their Father. To that family the angels also belong, for the Gospel speaks of their joy at the conversion of sinners.

It will be enough to recall Christ's words as recorded in St. Matthew and as a rule in St. Mark and St. Luke also.

First, St. John the Baptist admonishes his hearers to "do penance, for the kingdom of God is at hand."

Later on, the Savior, before sending forth His Apostles to preach the Gospel, tells them: "He that receiveth you, receiveth Me: and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me."

And a little later He says: "If I by the Spirit of God cast out devils, then is the kingdom of God come upon you."

All the faithful are brethren, since all are the children of God and in their prayer are to address Him as "Our Father, who art in heaven." Again, our Lord tells us: "Pray for them that persecute and calumniate you: that you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven, and who maketh His sun to rise upon the good and bad."

This dogma is expressed even more clearly in our Lord's sermon after the last supper as recorded in St. John: "I am the vine: you the branches. He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for without Me you can do nothing." A little further on He says: "Not for them only [the Apostles] do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall believe in Me. That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in

Thee.” It is with this in mind that St. John says in his First Epistle (1:3) : “That which we have seen and have heard, we declare unto you: That you also may have fellowship with us and our fellowship may be with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.” Here we have the true doctrine of the communion of saints.

St. Paul declares it again and again, and explains it by showing how the risen and ever-living Christ is the head of a mystical body of which we are the members.

THE RELATION OF THE MEMBERS WITH CHRIST THE MEDIATOR AND WITH GOD

As in our own organism there is a physical influence exerted by the head upon the members, communicating their appropriate movements to them through the nervous system, so also in the mystical body virtue goes out from our Lord’s humanity upon all the faithful, upon all the members composing this body, imparting to them the life of grace, of faith, hope, and charity, and at the same time giving to the blessed in heaven that consummation of grace which we call glory and which can never be lost. In this way our Savior applies the fruits of His merit to us, passing on all the graces He has obtained for us on the cross. This transmission of graces is effected through His humanity as an instrument inseparably united to His divinity, the source of all grace, and again through the sacraments as detached instruments vibrating as it were at Christ’s touch and so able to affect and quicken our very souls. But first and foremost this communication of graces is made daily through the holy mass perpetuating in substance the sacrifice of the cross, applying the merits of that sacrifice to us and permitting us to participate in it by holy communion. Souls are thus able to grow daily in the life of grace as they journey toward eternity.

The supernatural influence exerted upon us by God and Christ is principally one of illumination and love, since to the faithful on earth and the souls in purgatory it imparts the light of faith and the gifts of the Holy Ghost together with the love of charity, while to the blessed in heaven it communicates the light of glory which is the source of the beatific vision, and a love of charity that nothing henceforth can destroy or diminish.

The supernatural life which the members of the mystical body thus receive by this supernatural inpouring of illumination and love must be made to ascend once again to the Most High, being the same supernatural

life, the same knowledge and love, praising the glory of God by acknowledging His infinite goodness.

And so from the souls of all the just on earth, in purgatory, and in heaven there ascends to God a love in which the sovereign good is preferred to all else. In the faithful on earth this act of love illumined by faith inspires a homage of adoration, supplication, thanksgiving, and reparation, especially during the time of-mass. These are the four ends of sacrifice.

Thus the supernatural influx of illumination and love coming down from God through Christ the Redeemer upon the souls of men on earth, in purgatory, and in heaven, ascends again to God as a hymn of grateful acknowledgment and brings them peace by keeping them there within the radiance of the divine goodness. There lies the purpose of Creation; almighty God has created all things for the manifestation of His goodness, and His glory is simply this goodness radiating externally.

THE RELATIONS OF THE MEMBERS WITH ONE ANOTHER

Such being the ties binding the souls of the just upon earth, in purgatory, and in heaven to Christ the Mediator and to God, the ultimate source of all grace, we are given the explanation of the relations existing between one member and another, and particularly between the Church triumphant on the one hand and the Church militant and suffering on the other.

The blessed in heaven intercede for the faithful here on earth and the souls in purgatory, and to that intercession we may have recourse in all confidence, especially to the intercession of Mary Mediatrix, as the Church constantly does in the Hail Mary and the Litany of Loreto. As St. Paul wrote to the Hebrews (12: 22) : “You are come to Mount Sion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to the company of many thousands of angels, and to the Church of the first-born who are written in the heavens, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of the just made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the New Testament, and to the sprinkling of blood which speaketh better than that of Abel.”

Every one of the saints in union with Christ, makes intercession for us when we invoke them. The angels also come to our assistance, for they too are subject to Christ. St. Paul delights in telling the Colossians how even the most exalted of creatures are subject to the Word made flesh: “In Him were all things created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether

thrones, or dominations, or principalities, or powers. All things were created by Him and in Him.... And He is the head of the body, the Church" (1: 16). To the Church triumphant the angels also belong, inferior only to Jesus and Mary in the intensity of their charity and the light of glory.

But there are also close ties linking the Church militant with the Church suffering. It is our duty to pray for the souls in purgatory, to have masses said for their deliverance, to gain indulgences for them, which means that we obtain for them the application of the fruits of our Savior's merits and the merits of the saints. And the works of charity we perform in their behalf (the prayers we offer for them, the crosses we take upon ourselves to alleviate their sufferings) God will certainly reward. The Church has always prayed for the dead: in the Second Epistle to Timothy (1:8) we read of St. Paul begging God's mercy for the repose of the soul of his friend Onesphorus.

And lastly, no less intimate are the ties that bind the faithful on earth with one another. They can assist one another by prayer and good works, works of merit and satisfaction. One who is in the state of grace can merit in the wide sense for his neighbor also, and in the same sense can make satisfaction for him, can take upon himself the penalties due to his neighbor's sin. United as they are with Christ, God regards the merits and sufferings of the just and has mercy on the sinner. God said to Abraham: "If I find in Sodom ten just within the city, I will spare the whole place for their sake" (Gen. 8: 26, 32).

It is to these spiritual relations existing between the faithful on earth that St. Paul is referring when he tells us:

There are diversities of graces, but the same Spirit. And there are diversities of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but the same God, who worketh all in all.

One body and one Spirit: as you are called in one hope of your calling.... One Lord, one faith, one baptism. One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all.

For the body also is not one member, but many. If the foot should say: Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body: is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear should say: Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body: is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were the eye, where would be the hearing?... The eye cannot say to the hand: I need not thy help. Nor again the head to the feet: I have no need of you.... And if one member

suffer anything, all the members suffer with it: or if one member glory, all the members rejoice with it. Now you are the body of Christ and members of member. ... Bear ye one another's burdens: and so you shall fulfil the law of Christ.... Whilst we have time, let us work good to all men, but especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

Were we to behold the mystical body as we behold a multitude of persons, we should discern an immense gathering of men, women, and children, and within them a hungering for God more or less intense, more or less conscious, temptation too, and pain. Here are souls very generous in their sufferings, there are the humdrum Christians; lower down the line are souls on the point of yielding to the temptations of the senses, others about to lose their faith, and there are the aged who are near the grave. Then we should realize how true Christians living by prayer must have the same attitude toward souls as a mother bending over the cradle of her child.

Further, let us remember that, as St. Thomas says (Ia IIae, q. 89, a. 6), when a child, even though not baptized and still in unbelief, comes to the full use of reason, he is bound to choose between the right and the wrong road, between duty and pleasure, between the true last end, though but vaguely recognized, and whatever is opposed to it. If there is no resistance to the grace then offered him, he loves above all things God thus vaguely recognized and is thereby justified, so as to enter into the mystical body." If he then direct himself to the due end, he will, by means of grace, receive the remission of original sin" (loc. cit.).

Now the precious blood of our Savior has been put at our disposal that with Him we may offer it up for the many souls who as yet know Him not or who have turned their backs upon Him.

Among all the faithful, therefore, charity should reign, which is the bond of perfection, uniting us with God and with Christ the Redeemer and with Mary.

In this age of revolt, no longer confined to Europe but worldwide, when atheistic "Leagues of the Godless, " the spawn of Russian Bolshevism, are multiplying throughout the nations and the way is being prepared for a terrible conflict between the spirit of Christ and the spirit of the Evil One, now more than ever must we live by this mystery of the communion of saints.

We feel the urgent need of rising above the violent opposition that prevails between an international communism, materialist in its inspiration,

which tramples underfoot the dignity of the human person, of family and country, and a nationalism which, when no longer simply for defense but for offense, develops in one way or other into an idolatrous nation-worship. Though we should entertain a real and if necessary heroic love for our country, it is absolutely imperative for us to direct our thoughts even more to that City of God which has its beginnings here on earth, to be consummated in that heavenly and enduring country in which the peoples of all nations should one day be united.

Believers living in the different countries of Europe and throughout the world must unite without delay in fervent prayer, especially in the holy sacrifice of the mass, that the peace of Christ may reign among the nations.

It is the same body and blood of the Savior that is offered on every altar throughout the world, in Rome and in Jerusalem, in every Catholic church of the five continents. It is the same interior, ever living oblation in the heart of Jesus that animates all the thousands of masses celebrated daily wherever the sun is rising.

We must pray and pray with all earnestness that the kingdom of God may come, placing our petitions in the hands of Mary Mediatrix to present to her Son, to whom at the beginning of this century His Holiness Leo XIII consecrated the whole human race.

Embracing as it does those who are still in unbelief, this consecration of the whole human race brings down upon them new graces. It is by living this mystery of the communion of saints more intensely and above all by having masses said for the conversion of unbelievers, that the way is prepared for the missionary apostolate. As Pere de Foucauld realized, we must prepare for the apostolate by bathing, so to speak, the souls of unbelievers in the blood of Christ, which has been given to us and which we are able to offer daily with Him.

Through the communion of saints the chalice of superabundant redemption is put into our hands, that by our prayers and sacrifices it may be made to overflow upon souls that, all unconsciously perhaps, are hungering for God and are dying far from Christ.

To the doctrine we are explaining here, this objection has been raised: How is it that, with so many thousands of saints in heaven, confirmed now in grace, more sinners are not converted by them?

A certain contemplative has correctly answered:

Though inseparable, heaven and the Church on earth are nevertheless distinct. Although there is enough heat in a single star to melt every particle of ice on the earth, yet we have still to submit to the rigors of winter. To raise a heavy weight with a powerful lever, we still need a fulcrum. Similarly, it is God's will that every action exerted from heaven on this world shall have its fulcrum here below. That fulcrum is to be found in the saints who are still pursuing their pilgrimage in this life. The incomprehensible might of heaven will not have its full efficacy on earth except through one who is really in communion with Christ, through one who is in immediate contact with Calvary and the cross.

As Pere de Foucauld wrote, "Has not a man riches enough, happiness enough, when he possesses Jesus?" Though all abandon him, he still has the one thing necessary, which by prayer and sacrifice he is able to pass on to others.

The practical consequences of this mystery of the communion of saints are numberless. Bossuet has given us a summary of them in his Catechisme de Meaux. Every spiritual gift is the common property of all the faithful: the graces each one receives and the good works each one performs are for the benefit of the whole body and every other member of the Church, by reason of their close union. And so, when one member of the Church possesses some gift or other, let the others rejoice instead of giving way to jealousy; when one member suffers, all should show their compassion instead of closing their hearts to him. What are the vices incompatible with the communion of saints? They are all enmities and jealousies. Those who entertain jealousy, sin against this article of the Creed, the communion of saints.

Finally, we realize why in this dogma the faithful are called saints: because they are called to be holy, because, too, they have been consecrated to God through baptism.

Who are they to whom the term "saint" is especially applicable? The term applies to those who in perfect faith lead also a holy life.

From this we see what a misfortune it is to be deprived of the communion of saints; so the Church by her excommunication deprives notorious sinners of the sacraments, the source of their life, until such time as. they show a sincere desire to repent.

This mystery of the communion of saints shows with special clearness how the Christian life is the beginning here on earth of life eternal, since it

is primarily by sanctifying grace and charity that we have in very truth the seed of glory within us. Thus we are given a wonderful insight into the supreme end and purpose to which all things have been ordered by Providence, and the meaning and implications of these words in our Lord's sacerdotal prayer: "That they who believe in Me may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee" (John 17: 21).

30. The End And Purpose Of The Divine Governance

We have said it is the divine governance that presides over the execution of the providential plan, its purpose being to manifest the divine goodness, which bestows upon the just and maintains within them forever a life that is eternal. Concerning this end and purpose, let us see what the Old Testament with its incomplete revelation has to tell us, and then we shall be able to appreciate better the full light given us in the Gospels. This was the method used by St. Augustine, particularly in his work on providence or the divine plan: the City of God, its progressive building up here on earth and its full development in eternal happiness.

THE INCOMPLETE INTIMATION

In the Old Testament the ultimate purpose of the divine governance was expressed in a manner as yet imperfect, often merely symbolic. The Promised Land, for instance, was the symbol of heaven. The whole system of worship with its sacrifices and varied rites, and in a greater degree the prophecies, proclaimed the coming of the promised Redeemer, who was to bring light and peace and reconciliation with God.

The announcement of the future Redeemer thus contained in a vague way the promise of eternal life, which was to be given us through Him. That in the Old Testament, prior to the fullness of light contained in the Gospels, so little enlightenment should have been given on this matter of eternal beatitude, is easily explained; it was because, until Christ had suffered and died, the souls of the just had to wait in limbo for the gates of heaven to be opened to them by their Savior.

Nevertheless, as we have already seen, the Prophets occasionally contain sublime and most significant passages on the magnificent reward God has

in store for the just in the next life, passages that state more clearly what was already said before them.

Thus the psalmist said: “As for me, I will appear before Thy sight in justice: I shall be satisfied when Thy glory shall appear.” Job spoke in a similar strain.

Speaking of the New Jerusalem, Isaias said (60: 19) : “The Lord shall be unto thee for an everlasting light, and thy God for thy glory. Thy sun shall go down no more. For the Lord shall be unto thee for an everlasting light: and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.”

Daniel wrote (12:3) : “But they that are learned [in the things of God, and are faithful to His law] shall shine as the brightness of the firmament: and they that instruct many to justice, as stars for all eternity.” Nor is it a question here of the just who will appear on earth in the years to come; the reference is to those still living or who have already died: the reward promised them is eternal.

More explicit still, as we have seen, is the Second Book of Machabees (7: 9), where we are told how with his last breath one of the martyrs addressed his executioners: “Thou, indeed, O wicked man, destroyest us out of this present life: but the King of the world will raise us up, who die for His laws, in the resurrection of eternal life.”

Again, it is of eternal bliss that the Book of Wisdom speaks when it says:

The souls of the just are in the hands of God: and the torment of death shall not touch them.... The just shall shine, and shall run to and fro like sparks among the reeds. They shall judge nations, and rule over people: and their Lord shall reign forever... for grace and peace is to His elect.... The just shall live for evermore: and their reward is with the Lord, and the care of them with the most High (3: I; 5: I ff.).

ETERNAL LIFE ACCORDING TO THE NEW TESTAMENT

In the fullness of revelation contained in the New Testament, eternal bliss is spoken of in terms within the reach of all. Indeed, Christ has now been given us. Whereas everything that preceded Him pointed to His coming, henceforth He Himself proclaims to all peoples the establishment of the kingdom of God and leads souls to eternal life.

This is expressed again and again in our Savior’s sermons recorded in the first three Gospels. There it is said of the reward in store for the just:

“Neither can they die any more: for they are equal to the angels and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection” (Luke 20: 36) ; “The just shall go into life everlasting” (Matt. 25: 46; Mark 10: 30). It is not merely the future life spoken of by philosophers like Socrates and Plato, but an everlasting life, a life participating in God’s eternity, transcending time, past, present, and future.

Elsewhere, in a passage recalling the prophecy of Daniel (12: 13), Jesus exclaims: “Then shall the just shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father” (Matt. 13: 43).” Then shall the king [the Son of man] say to them that are on His right hand: Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” Here we have truly the ultimate purpose of the divine governance.” For I was hungry, and you gave Me to eat: I was thirsty, and you gave Me to drink: I was a stranger, and you took Me in: naked, and you covered Me: sick, and you visited Me” (Matt. 25: 34).

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus had said: “Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God.... Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven” (Matt. 5: 8-12). Here indeed is the true Promised Land of which the Old Testament scarcely spoke except in symbols. The souls of men were too conscious of their profound need of redemption to be ready for the full enlightenment.

In the Gospel of St. John, Christ speaks of eternal life more frequently still. Thus to the Samaritan woman: “If thou didst know the gift of God.... He that shall drink of the water that I will give him shall not thirst forever. But the water that I will give him shall become in him a fountain of living water, springing up into life everlasting” (John 4: 10-14).

Several times in the Fourth Gospel Jesus repeats the phrase: “He that believeth in Me hath everlasting life” (cf. 3: 36; 6: 40, 47). That is, one who believes in Me with living faith combined with the love of God has already within him the beginnings of eternal life. And why? Because, as He tells us later in His sacerdotal prayer, “this is eternal life: that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent” (John 17: 3) ; “Father, I will that where I am, they also whom Thou hast given Me may be with Me: that they may see My glory which Thou hast given Me, because Thou hast loved Me from the creation of the world” (ibid., 17: 24). To look upon Christ in His glory we must be there where Christ was even then present in the higher regions of His holy soul: that is, in heaven, as He

Himself said: “No man hath ascended into heaven, but He that descended from heaven, the Son of man who is in heaven” (John 3 :11-13).

In the same sense Jesus said: “Amen, amen, I say to you: If any man keep My word, he shall not see death forever” (John 8: 51). And again at the tomb of Lazarus He said: “I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in Me, although he be dead, shall live: and everyone that liveth and believeth in Me shall not die forever” (John 11: 25-26).

Here is the fullness of that revelation heralded in the distant past by Job and the psalmist, by Isaias, by Daniel, in the Book of Machabees, and again in the Book of Wisdom. Then it was no more than a little stream; now it is a vast river moving onward and losing itself in the infinite ocean of the divine life.

Elsewhere Jesus speaks of the narrow gate and the strait way (of self-abnegation) that leads to life, that immeasurable way that leads to God. The Lord calls all men to labor in His vineyard, giving them as recompense, even to the laborers of the eleventh hour, His own eternal happiness (Matt. 20: 1-6). The recompense He gives is Himself, though according to the merits and degree of charity each one has attained, for “in His Father’s house there are many mansions” (John 14: 2).

Our Lord’s teaching is still more clearly expounded in the Epistles of St. Paul and of St. John.

St. Paul refers to eternal happiness when he says (I Cor. 2:9) : “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard: neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him. But to us God hath revealed them, by His Spirit. For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.”

Still more distinctly St. Paul says in another passage of the same Epistle (13: 8) :

Charity never falleth away: whether prophecies shall be made void or tongues shall cease or knowledge [imperfect knowledge] shall be destroyed. For we know in part, and prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away.... We see [God] now through a glass in a dark manner: but then face to face. Now I know in part: but then I shall know [Him] even as I am known [by Him] , with a knowledge that is immediate and perfectly distinct; I shall behold Him as He beholds Himself, face to face, and no longer as in a mirror, obscurely, confusedly.

St. John speaks in the same sense in his First Epistle (3: 2) : “Dearly beloved, we are now the sons of God: and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that when He shall appear we shall be like to Him: because we shall see Him as He is.” The Church has defined that this revealed teaching must be understood of an immediate vision of the divine essence with no created thing intervening as medium previously known. In other words, through intellectual vision we shall see God more clearly than we see with our bodily eyes the persons with whom we are conversing, for we shall see Him distinctly as something more intimately present to us than we are to ourselves. Here on earth our knowledge of God is in the main confined to what He is not. We say that He is not material, not subject to change, not limited or confined. Hereafter we shall see Him as He really is, in His Deity, in His infinite essence, in that intimate life of His, common to the three Persons, of which grace, and especially its consummation in glory is a participation, since it is through grace that it will be granted to us to see and love God as He sees and loves Himself, and thus we shall live by Him eternally.

Such is the teaching of revelation on eternal life as the manifestation of the divine goodness and the ultimate purpose of God’s governance. Let us now glance briefly at what theology has to add, haltingly always, in an endeavor to give us a better understanding of the mystery.

THE BEATIFIC VISION AND THE LOVE FOR GOD OF WHICH IT IS THE SOURCE

Theology throws a certain amount of light on this subject by contrasting a purely natural happiness with that happiness which only grace in its consummation can bring.

Had God created us in a purely natural state, with a mortal body and an immortal soul but without the supernatural life of grace, our final destiny, our happiness, would still have consisted in knowing God and loving Him above all things, for our intellect was made to know truth and above all the supreme truth, our will was made to love and desire the good and beyond all else the sovereign good.

Had we been created without the supernatural life of grace, the final reward of the just would indeed have been, so to say, from without, through the reflexion of His perfections in creatures, as the great philosophers of antiquity knew Him. This would have been a knowledge more certain than

theirs, and without any admixture of error, but still an abstract knowledge, obtained through the medium of things, in the mirror of things created. We should have had a knowledge of God as the first cause of spiritual and corporeal beings, we should have numbered His infinite perfections as they are known analogically from their reflexions in the created order. Our ideas of the divine attributes would still have been like tiny bits of mosaic, incapable of reproducing without hardening the spiritual features of God.

Similarly we should have loved God as the author of our nature, doubtless with a love of admiration, reverence, and gratitude, but without that gentle, simple familiarity which God's children experience in their hearts. We should have been the servants of God, not His children.

Such a destiny, however, would still have been of a very high order. It could never have palled upon us any more than our eyes can ever tire of beholding the blue skies. It would have been a spiritual destiny, moreover, and unlike material things the spiritual can be enjoyed fully by each one without detriment to the enjoyment of others and the consequent risk of jealousies.

But in this abstract and indirect knowledge of God, many obscurities would have remained, particularly as to the manner in which the divine perfections are reconciled with one another. We should always have been asking how an omnipotent goodness can be reconciled with the divine permission of evil, how infinite mercy can be intimately harmonized with justice.

The human mind would have been forced to exclaim: "Would that I might behold this God, the fount of all truth and of all goodness, whence steals forth the life of creation, the life of intellect and of will!"

But what reason even at its highest cannot discover, has been made known to us through revelation. Here we are told that our final destiny consists in beholding God immediately, face to face, and as He really is, in knowing Him no longer simply from without, but intimately, even as He knows Himself; that it consists also in loving Him even as He loves Himself. It tells us that we are now predestined "to be made conformable to the image of His Son: that He might be the first-born among many brethren" (Rom. 8:29). In creating us, God was not bound to have us partakers with Himself in His intimate life, to invite us to this immediate vision of Him, but it was in His power to do so by making us His adopted sons, and this out of pure loving kindness He has willed to do.

It is our destiny therefore to see God not merely as mirrored in creatures, no matter how perfect, not even in that radiation of Him in the angelic world, but to behold Him immediately, without any creature intervening, and more distinctly than we behold ourselves with the eyes of sense. Being wholly spiritual, God will be intimately present to our intellect, illuminating and invigorating it and so giving it strength to look upon Him. (Cf. St. Thomas, Ia, q. 12, a. 2.)

This exclusion of any intermediary between God and ourselves extends even to the idea. No created idea could ever represent, as it really is, that purely intellectual and eternally subsisting flash which is God. No word of ours, not even an interior word, will be adequate to express what we are contemplating: thus even now when we are absorbed in gazing at some sublime spectacle, we cannot express what we see. Only one word can utter what God really is in Himself-His own eternal, substantial Word.

This vision of God face to face infinitely surpasses the most sublime philosophy. No longer will there be mere concepts of the divine attributes, these concepts reminding us of tiny bits of mosaic. Part of the destiny to which we are called is to behold all the divine perfections intimately reconciled, nay, identified in their common source, the Deity, the intimate life of God; to behold how the tenderest mercy and an absolutely inflexible justice proceed from one and the same infinitely generous and infinitely holy love that possesses a transcendent quality in which these apparently conflicting attributes are in fact identified; to behold how justice and mercy combine in all the works of God. Part of our destiny is to behold how this love, even when the freest good pleasure, is yet identified with pure wisdom, how in this love there is nothing that is not all-wise and in this wisdom nothing that is not transformed into love. Our destiny is to behold how this same love is identified with the sovereign good forever loved from all eternity, how divine wisdom is identified with the supreme truth forever known, and how all these perfections are but one with the essence of Him who is.

Our destiny is to contemplate in God this transcendent simplicity of His, absolute in its purity and holiness; to behold the infinite fecundity of the divine nature flowering in three Persons; to contemplate the eternal generation of the Word, “the brightness of the Father’s glory and the figure of His substance” (Heb. 1: 3) ; to behold the ineffable spiratio of the Holy Ghost, the term of the mutual love between Father and Son, uniting them

eternally in this most exhaustive outpouring of themselves." Goodness is essentially diffusive of itself" in God's interior life, and freely it scatters its riches abroad.

No one can express the joy begotten of such a vision, or the love that will spring from it, a love so mighty, so perfect, that nothing henceforth shall be able to weaken, far less destroy it. It is a love born of admiration and reverence and gratitude, but of friendship most of all, with all the simplicity and holy familiarity that friendship implies. Filled with this love, we shall rejoice first and foremost that God is God, with His infinite holiness, His infinite justice, His infinite mercy; we shall adore every decree of His providence, whose sole purpose is the manifestation of His goodness. And in all things we shall be subject to Him.

Wholly supernatural, such a knowledge and love will be made possible only through grace sublimating our faculties, and there at the very root of them, in the very essence of the soul, remaining a divine engrafting that can nevermore be lost to us. This consummation of grace, which we call glory, will in very truth be an enduring participation in the very nature of God, in His intimate life, since it will enable us to behold Him and to love Him even as He beholds and loves Himself.

Such, though very imperfectly expressed, is eternal life, a life to which we may all aspire, since through baptism we have already received it in germ, in sanctifying grace, which is the semen gloriae.

Herein lies the purpose of the divine governance, to show forth that divine goodness which is one day to bestow an eternal happiness upon us and maintain it forever within us. Then indeed will these words be realized: "God hath predestined us to be made conformable to the image of His Son: that He might be the first-born among many brethren" (Rom. 8: 29), that He who is Son by His very nature might be the first-born among many brethren, the children of God by adoption. It will be the perfect fulfilment of these words of Jesus: "Father, I will that where I am, they also whom Thou hast given Me may be with Me: that they may see My glory which Thou hast given Me, because Thou hast loved Me before the creation of the world" (John 17: 24). Christ's glory is the supreme manifestation of the divine goodness, for Him and for us unending happiness, the measure of which is the measure of God's own happiness, which is something transcending time, being no less than the unique instant of changeless eternity.

Let us conclude with St. Paul: “For which cause we faint not: but though our outward man is corrupted, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For that which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory” (II Cor. 4: 16-17)

REALITY

A SYNTHESIS OF THOMISTIC THOUGHT

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REALITY: A SYNTHESIS OF THOMISTIC THOUGHT

Preface

In this work we are incorporating the article on Thomism which we wrote for the Dictionnaire de theologie catholique. To that article we add: first, occasional clarifications; secondly, at the end, a hundred pages on the objective bases of the Thomistic synthesis, chiefly philosophic pages, which were not called for in a dictionary of theology.

Contradictory views, intellectual and spiritual, of St. Thomas have been handed down to us. The Averroists reproached him as but half-Aristotelian; the Augustinians saw in him an innovator too much attached to the spirit, principles, and method of Aristotle. This second judgment reappeared, sharply accented, in Luther, and again, some years ago, in the Modernists, who maintained that St. Thomas, a Christian Aristotelian, was rather Aristotelian than Christian.

In other words, some scholars saw in the work of St. Thomas "a naturalization of revealed truth," a depreciation of Christian faith, faith losing its sublimity, by a kind of rationalism, by exaggeration of the power and rights of reason. Now this rationalization of faith is indeed found in Leibnitz. It is certainly not to be found in St. Thomas.

But these contrary judgments, however inadmissible, serve by contrast to set in relief the true physiognomy of the master, whom the Church has canonized and entitled Doctor Communis.

His whole life, all his intelligence, all his forces, were bent to the service of the Christian faith, both in his doctrinal battles and in the serenity of contemplation. Justification of this statement appears in the way he conceived his vocation as teacher. You find therein an ascending gradation which arouses admiration.

1. Whereas on the one hand he fully recognizes all that is excellent, from the philosophical standpoint, in the teaching and method of Aristotle, he shows, on the other hand, against the Averroists, that reason can prove nothing against the faith. This latter task he accomplished by demonstrating against them from philosophy itself, that God's creative act is free, that

creation need not be ab aeterno, that man’s will is free, that the human soul is characterized by personal immortality.

2. In opposition to the Augustinians, who, repeating their master by rote, were in large measure unfaithful to that master, he carefully distinguishes reason from faith, but, far from separating these two, he rather unites them. .

3. He shows that philosophy deserves to be studied, both for its own sake, and also to establish, by arguments drawn simply from reason, that the praeambula fidei are attainable by the natural force of human intelligence.

4. As regards the purposes of theology, which he calls “sacred doctrine,” he shows, first, that it is not to be studied merely for personal piety or for works of edification or to comment on Holy Scripture or to assemble patristic compilations or, finally, to explain the Sentences of Peter Lombard. Theology must rather, he goes on to show, be studied as a branch of knowledge, which establishes scientifically a system of doctrine with objectivity and universal validity, a synthesis that harmonizes supernatural truths with the truths of the natural order. Theology is thus conceived as a science, in the Aristotelian sense of the word, a science of the truths of faith. .

5. This position granted, it follows that reason must subserve faith in its work of analyzing the concepts and deepening the understanding of revealed truths, of showing that many of these truths are subordinated to the articles of faith which are primary, and of deducing the consequences contained virtually in the truths made known by revelation.

6. Nor does faith by thus employing reason lose aught of its supernatural character. Just the contrary. For St. Thomas, faith is an infused virtue, essentially supernatural by its proper object and formal motive, a virtue which, by an act that is simple and infallible, far above all apologetic reasoning, makes us adhere to God revealing and revealed. . Infused faith, therefore, is superior not only to the highest philosophy, but also to the most enlightened theology, since theology can never be more than an explanatory and deductive commentary on faith.

7. Further, this conception of theology does not in any way lower Christian faith from its elevation. For, as the saint teaches, the source of theology is contemplation, that is, infused faith, vivified, not only by charity, but also by the gifts of knowledge, understanding, and wisdom, gifts which make faith penetrating and pleasant of taste. Thus theology

reaches a most fruitful understanding of revealed mysteries, by finding analogies in truths which we know naturally, and also by tracing the intertwining of these mysteries with one another and with the last end of our life. .

Such is the conception formed by St. Thomas on his vocation as Catholic doctor and particularly as theologian. And his sanctity, added to the power of his genius, enabled him to reply fully to his providential calling.

In his doctrinal controversies carried on exclusively in defense of the faith, he was always humble, patient, and magnanimous, courageous indeed, but always prudent. Trust in God led him to unite prayer to study. William de Tocco, his biographer, writes of him: “Whenever he was to study, to undertake a solemn disputation, to teach, write, or dictate, he began by retiring to pray in secret, weeping as he prayed, to obtain understanding of the divine mysteries. And he returned with the light he had prayed for.” .

The same biographer gives two striking examples. While writing his commentary on Isaias, the saint came to a passage which he did not understand. For several days he prayed and fasted for light. Then he was supernaturally enlightened. To his confrere, Reginald, he revealed the extraordinary manner in which this light came to him, namely, by the apostles Peter and Paul. This account was confirmed by one of the witnesses in the saint’s canonization process.

A second example is reported. In the friary at Naples, when the saint was writing of the passion and the resurrection of Christ, he was seen, while praying before a crucifix in the church, to be lifted up from the floor. Then it was that he heard the words: “Thomas, thou hast written well of Me.”

Daily, after celebrating Mass, he assisted at a second, where often he was the humble server. To solve difficulties, he would pray before the tabernacle. He never, we might say, went out of the cloister, he slept little, passed much of the night in prayer. When, at compline during Lent, he listened to the antiphon: “Midst in life we are in death,” he could not restrain his tears. Prayer gave him light and inspiration when he wrote the Office of the Blessed Sacrament. William de Tocco tells us also that the saint was often seen in ecstasy, and that, one day, while he was dictating a long article of the Trinity, he did not notice that the candle in his hand had gone so low that it was burning his fingers. .

Toward the end of his life he was favored with an intellectual vision, so sublime and so simple that he was unable to continue dictating the treatise on Penance which he had commenced. He told his faithful companion that he was dying as a simple religious, a grace he had prayed the Lord to grant him. His last words were given to a commentary on the Canticle of Canticles.

Let these traits suffice to show that St. Thomas reached the heights of contemplation, and that in his own life he exemplified his own teaching on the source of theology: theology pouring forth "from the fullness of contemplation." This truth the Church recognizes by calling him Doctor Communis and by commending his teaching in numerous encyclicals, especially by the Aeterni Patris of Leo XIII.

The present work is an exposition of the Thomistic synthesis, an exposition devoted to the principles often formulated by the saint himself. We do not undertake to prove historically that all the doctrinal points in question are found explicitly in the works of St. Thomas himself, but we will indicate the chief references to his works. And our main task will be to set in relief the certitude and universality of the principles which underlie the structure and coherence of Thomistic doctrine.

First, then, we will note the chief works that expound this Thomistic synthesis, and likewise point out the most faithful and most penetrating among the saint's commentators. There will follow a philosophic introduction, to underline that metaphysical synthesis which is presupposed by Thomistic theology. Then we will emphasize the essential points in this doctrine by noting their force in the three treatises, De Deo uno, De Verbo incarnato, De gratia. Finally we will note briefly their importance in the other parts of theology.

Chapter 1

Philosophical Writings

The Thomistic synthesis, prepared gradually by the saint's commentaries on Scripture, on Aristotle, on the Master of the Sentences, by the Summa contra Gentes, by the Disputed Questions, reached definite form in the Summa theologiae. We will speak first of his philosophical writings, then of his theological works.

HERE COME FIRST THE COMMENTARIES ON ARISTOTLE

1. On interpretation (Peri hermenias, on the act of judgment).
2. The Later Analytics (a long study of method in finding definitions, of the nature and validity of demonstration).
3. The Physica (natural philosophy).
4. De coelo et mundo.
5. De anima.
6. The Metaphysica.
7. Ethical works.

In searching Aristotle the saint fastens attention, not so much on the last and highest conclusions concerning God and the soul, but rather on the first elements of philosophy, just as we go to Euclid for the axioms of geometry. Nevertheless Aquinas often finds that these elements are deepened and their formulation most exact when Aristotle transcends the contrary deviations, first of Parmenides and Heraclitus, secondly of Pythagorean idealism and atomistic materialism, thirdly of Platonism and Sophistry. In Aristotle the saint discovers what has justly been called the natural metaphysics of human intelligence, a metaphysics which, commencing from sense experience, rises progressively till it reaches God, the pure act, the understanding of understanding (Noesis noeseos).

In commenting on the Stagirite, St. Thomas discards Averroistic interpretations contrary to revealed dogma, on Providence, on creation, on the personal immortality of the human soul. Hence it can be said that he "baptizes" Aristotle's teaching, that is, he shows how the principles of Aristotle, understood as they can be and must be understood, are in harmony with revelation. Thus he builds, step by step, the foundations of a solid Christian philosophy.

In these commentaries St. Thomas also combats certain theses sustained by his Augustinian predecessors, but held by the saint to be irreconcilable with the most certain of Aristotle's principles. Aristotle conceives the human soul as the only substantial form of the human body. He maintains the natural unity of the human composite. Human intelligence, he maintains, is on the lowest rank of intelligences, and has as object the lowest of intelligible objects, namely, the intelligibility hidden in things subject to sense. Hence the human intelligence must use the sense world as a mirror if it would know God. And only by knowing the sense world, its proper object, can the human soul come, by analogy with that sense world, to know and define and characterize its own essence and faculties.

BRIEF ANALYSIS

At the court of Urban IV, St. Thomas had as companion William de Moerbecke, O. P.: who knew Greek perfectly. The saint persuaded William to translate from Greek into Latin the works of Aristotle. This faithful translator assisted the saint in commenting on Aristotle. Thus we understand why Aquinas has such a profound understanding of the Stagirite, an understanding far superior to that of Albert the Great. On many points of Aristotelian interpretation St. Thomas is the authentic exponent.

Here we proceed to underline the capital points of Aristotle's teaching, as presented by St. Thomas.

In the saint's commentaries we often meet the names of Aristotle's Greek commentators: Porphyry, Themistius, Simplicius, Alexander of Aphrodisia. He is likewise familiar with Judaeo-Arabian philosophy, discerning perfectly where it is true and where it is false. He seems to put Avicenna above Averroes.

In regard to form, as is observed by de Wulf, the saint substituted, in place of extended paraphrase, a critical procedure which analyzes the text.

He divides and subdivides, in order to lay bare the essential structure, to draw out the principal assertions, to explain the minutest detail. Thus he appears to advantage when compared with most commentators, ancient or modern, since he never loses sight of the entire corpus of Aristotelian doctrine, and always emphasizes its generative principles. These commentaries, therefore, as many historians admit, are the most penetrating exposition ever made of Greek philosophy. Grabmann notes that scholastic teachers cited St. Thomas simply as “The Expositor.” And modern historians generally give high praise to the saint’s methods of commentating.

Aquinas does not follow Aristotle blindly. He does point out errors, but his corrections, far from depreciating Aristotle’s value, only serve to show more clearly what Aristotle has of truth, and to emphasize what the philosopher should have concluded from his own principles. Generally speaking, it is an easy task to see whether or not St. Thomas accepts what Aristotle’s text says. And this task is very easy for the reader who is familiar with the personal works of the saint.

St. Thomas studied all Aristotle’s works, though he did not write commentaries on all, and left unfinished some commentaries he had begun.

ON INTERPRETATION

From Aristotle’s corpus of logic, called Organon, Thomas omitted the Categories, the Former Analytics, the Topics, and the Refutations. He explained the two chief parts.

1. De interpretatione (Peri hermenias) .
2. The Later Analytics .

In De interpretatione he gives us a most profound study of the three mental operations: concept, judgment, reasoning. The concept, he shows, surpasses immeasurably the sense image, because it contains the raison d’etre, the intelligible reality, which renders intelligible that which it represents. Then he proceeds to arrange concepts according to their universality, and shows their relation to objective reality. He finds that the verb “to be” is the root of all other judgments. We see that Aristotle’s logic is intimately related to his metaphysics, to his teaching on objective reality, to his principle of act and potency. We have further a penetrating study of the elements in the proposition: noun, verb, and attribute. We see how truth

is found formally, not in the concept, but in the objectively valid judgment. We are thus led to see ever more clearly how the object of intelligence differs from the object of sensation and imagination, how our intellect seizes, not mere sense phenomena, but the intelligible reality, which is expressed by the first and most universal of our concepts, and which is the soul of all our judgments, wherein the verb “to be” affirms the objective identity of predicate with subject.

The saint proceeds to justify Aristotle’s classification of judgments. In quality, judgments are affirmative or negative or privative, and true or false. In modality they are possible or contingent or necessary. And at this point enter problems on necessity, on contingency, on liberty. Finally we are shown the great value of judgments in mutual opposition, as contradictories, or contraries, and so on. We know how often this propositional opposition, studied by all logicians since Aristotle, is employed in the theology of Aquinas.

LATER ANALYTICS

St. Thomas expounds and justifies the nature of demonstration. Starting with definition, demonstration leads us to know (scientifically) the characteristics of the thing defined, e. g.: the nature of the circle makes us see the properties of the circle. Then, further, we see that the principles on which demonstration rests must be necessarily true, that not everything can be demonstrated, that there are different kinds of demonstration, that there are sophisms to be avoided.

In the second chapter of this same work, he expounds at length the rules we must follow in establishing valid definitions. A definition cannot be proved since it is the source of demonstration. Hence methodical search for a real definition must start with a definition that is nominal or popular. Then the thing to be defined must be put into its most universal category, whence by division and subdivision we can compare the thing to be defined with other things like it or unlike it. St. Thomas in all his works follows his own rules faithfully. By these rules he defends, e. g.: the Aristotelian definitions of “soul,” “knowledge,” “virtue.” Deep study of these commentaries on the Later Analytics is an indispensable prerequisite for an exact knowledge of the real bases of Thomism. The historians of logic, although they have nearly all recognized the great value of these Thomistic pages, have not

always seen their relation to the rest of the saint's work, in which the principles here clarified are in constant operation.

THE PHYSICA

Here the saint shows, in the first book, the necessity of distinguishing act from potency if we would explain "becoming," i. e.: change, motion. Motion we see at once is here conceived as a function, not of rest or repose (as by Descartes): but of being, reality, since that which is in motion, in the process of becoming, is tending toward being, toward actual reality.

Attentive study of the commentary on the first book of the Physica shows that the distinction of act from potency is not a mere hypothesis, however admirable and fruitful, nor a mere postulate arbitrarily laid down by the philosopher. Rather it is a distinction necessarily accepted by the mind that would reconcile Heraclitus with Parmenides. Heraclitus says: "All is becoming, nothing is, nothing is identified with itself." Hence he denied the principle of identity and the principle of contradiction. Parmenides, on the contrary, admitting the principle of identity and of contradiction, denied all objective becoming. St. Thomas shows that Aristotle found the only solution of the problem, that he made motion intelligible in terms of real being by his distinction of act from potency. What is in the process of becoming proceeds neither from nothingness nor from actual being, but from the still undetermined potency of being. The statue proceeds, not from the statue actually existing, but from the wood's capability to be hewn. Plant or animal proceeds from a germ. Knowledge proceeds from an intelligence that aspires to truth. This distinction of potency from act is necessary to render becoming intelligible as a function of being. The principle of identity is therefore, for Aristotle and Thomas, not a hypothesis or a postulate, but the objective foundation for demonstrative proofs of the existence of God, who is pure act.

From this division of being into potency and act arises the necessity of distinguishing four causes to explain becoming: matter, form, agent, and purpose. The saint formulates the correlative principles of efficient causality, of finality, of mutation, and shows the mutual relation of matter to form, of agent to purpose These principles thereafter come into play wherever the four causes are involved, that is, in the production of

everything that has a beginning, whether in the corporeal order or in the spiritual.

Treating of finality, St. Thomas defines “chance.” Chance is the accidental cause of something that happens as if it had been willed. The grave-digger accidentally finds a treasure. But the accidental cause necessarily presupposes a non-accidental cause, which produces its effect directly (a grave). Thus chance can never be the first cause of the world, since it presupposes two non-accidental causes, each of which tends to its own proper effect.

This study of the four causes leads to the definition of nature. Nature, in every being (stone, plant, animal, man): is the principle which directs to a determined end all the activities of the being. The concept of nature, applied analogically to God, reappears everywhere in theology, even in studying the essence of grace, and of the infused virtues. In his Summa the saint returns repeatedly to these chapters, as to philosophical elements comparable to geometric elements in Euclid.

In the following books Aquinas shows how the definition of motion is found in each species of motion: in local motion, in qualitative motion (intensity): in quantitative motion (augmentation, growth). He shows likewise that every continuum (extension, motion, time): though divisible to infinity, is not, as Zeno supposed, actually divided to infinity.

In the last books Of the Physica we meet the two principles which prove the existence of God, the unchangeable first mover. The first of these principles run thus: Every motion presupposes a mover. The second thus: In a series of acting movers, necessarily subordinated, we cannot regress to infinity, but must come to a first. In a series of past movers accidentally subordinated an infinite regression would not be self-contradictory (in a supposed infinite series of past acts of generation in plants, say, or animals, or men). But for the motion here and now before us there must be an actually existing center of energy, a first mover, without which the motion in question would not exist. The ship is supported by the ocean, the ocean by the earth, the earth by the sun, but, in thus regressing, you are supposing a first, not an interminable infinity. And that first, being first, must be an unchangeable, immovable first mover, which owes its activity to itself alone, which must be its own activity, which must be pure act, because activity presupposes being, and self-activity presupposes self-being.

DE COELO ET MUNDO

St. Thomas commented further, on the two books of De generatione et corruptione. Of the De meteoris he explained the first two books. Of the De coelo et mundo, the first three books.

Reading the work last mentioned, De coelo, we see that Aristotle had already observed the acceleration of speed in a falling body and noted that its rate of speed grows in proportion to its nearness to the center of the earth. Of this law, later to be made more precise by Newton, St. Thomas gives the following foundation: The speed of a heavy body increases in proportion to its distance from the height whence it fell. .

In regard to astronomy, let the historians have the word. Monsignor Grabmann and P. Duhem give Aquinas the glory of having maintained, speaking of the Ptolemaic system, that the hypotheses on which an astronomic system rests do not change into demonstrated truths by the mere fact that the consequences of those hypotheses are in accord with observed facts. .

DE ANIMA

In psychology Aquinas expounds the three books of De anima, the opusculum De sensu et sensato, and the De memoria. .

In De anima, he examines the opinions of Aristotle’s predecessors, particularly those of Empedocles, Democritus, and Plato. He insists on the unity of the soul in relation to its various functions. Following Aristotle, he shows that the soul is the first principle of vegetative life, of sense life, of rational life, since all vital faculties arise from the one soul. .

How are these faculties to be defined? By the objects to which they are proportioned. Having studied vegetative functions, he turns to sensation. Here we have penetrating analysis of the Aristotelian doctrine on characteristic sense objects (color, sound, and so on): and on sense objects per accidens (in a man, say, who is moving toward us). These sense objects per accidens (called in modern language “acquired perceptions”) explain the so-called errors of sense. .

St. Thomas gives also a profound explanation of this text from Aristotle: “As the action of the mover is received into the thing moved, so is the action of the sense object, of sound, for example, received into the sentient subject: this act belongs both to the thing sensed and to the thing sentient.”

St. Thomas explains as follows: Sonation and audition are both in the sentient subject, sonation as from the agent, audition as in the patient.” .

Hence the saint, approving realism as does Aristotle, concludes that sensation, by its very nature, is a relation to objective reality, to its own proper sense object, and that, where there is no such sense object, sensation cannot exist. Hallucination indeed can exist where there is no sense object, but hallucination presupposes sensation. Echo, says Aristotle, presupposes an original sound, and even before Aristotle it had been observed that a man born blind never has visual hallucinations.

The commentary insists at length that the thing which knows becomes, in some real sense, the object known, by the likeness thereof which it has received. Thus, when the soul knows necessary and universal principles, it becomes, in some real fashion, all intelligible reality. This truth presupposes the immateriality of the intellective faculty. .

This same truth further presupposes the influence of the “agent intellect,” which, like an immaterial light, actualizes the intelligible object, contained potentially in sense objects, and which imprints that object on our intelligence. That imprinting results in apprehension from which arises judgment and then reasoning. The saint had already formulated the precise object of human intelligence, namely, the intelligible being in sense objects. In the mirror of sense we know what is spiritual, namely, the soul itself, and God.

Just as intelligence, because it reaches the necessary and universal, is essentially distinct from sense, from sense memory, and from imagination, so too, the will (the rational appetite): since it is ruled only by unlimited universal good and is free in face of all limited, particular good, must likewise be distinct from sense appetite, from all passions, concupiscible or irascible. .

Immortality, a consequence of spirituality, immortality of the human intellect and the human soul, may seem doubtful in certain texts of Aristotle. Other texts, more frequent, affirm this immortality. These latter texts are decisive, if the agent intellect is, as St. Thomas understands, a faculty of the soul to which corresponds a proportionate intelligence which knows the necessary and universal, and hence is independent of space and time. These latter texts are further clarified by a text in the Nicomachean Ethics, which seems to exclude all hesitation.

METAPHYSICA

The saint's commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysica has three chief divisions:

1. Introduction to the Metaphysica.
2. Ontology.
3. Natural Theology.

THE INTRODUCTION

Metaphysics is conceived as wisdom, science pre-eminent. Now science is the knowledge of things by their causes. Metaphysics, therefore, is the knowledge of all things by their supreme causes. After examining the views of Aristotle's predecessors, Thomas shows that it is possible to know things by their supreme causes, since in no kind of cause can the mind regress to infinity. The proper object of metaphysics is being as being. From this superior viewpoint metaphysics must again examine many problems already studied by the Physica from the viewpoint of becoming.

This introduction concludes with a defense, against the Sophists, of the objective validity of reason itself, and of reason's first principle, the principle of contradiction. He who denies this principle affirms a self-destructive sentence. To deny this principle is to annihilate language, is to destroy all substance, all distinction between things, all truths, thoughts, and even opinions, all desires and acts. We could no longer distinguish even the degrees of error. We would destroy even the facts of motion and becoming, since there would be no distinction between the point of departure and the point of arrival. Further, motion could have none of the four causes as explanation. Motion would be a subject which becomes, without efficient cause, without purpose or nature. It would be attraction and repulsion, freezing and melting, both simultaneously.

A more profound defense of the objective validity of reason and reason's first law has never been written. Together with the saint's defense of the validity of sensation, it can be called Aristotle's metaphysical criticism, Aristotelian criteriology. "Criticism" is here employed, not in the Kantian sense of the word, but in its Greek root (krinein): which means "to judge" and the correlate noun derived from that verb (krisis) Genuine criticism, then, is self-judgment, judgment reflecting on its own nature, in order to be sure it has attained its essential, natural object, namely, objective truth, to

which it is naturally proportioned, as is the eye to color, the ear to sound, the foot to walking, and wings to flying. He who wishes to understand the saint's work De veritate must begin by absorbing his commentary on the fourth book of Aristotle's Metaphysica.

ONTOLOGY

This name may be given to the saint's commentary on the fifth book. It begins with Aristotle's philosophic vocabulary. Guided by the concept of being as being, St. Thomas explains the principal terms, nearly all of them analogical, which philosophy employs. Here is a list of these terms: principle, cause, nature, necessity, contingence, unity (necessary or accidental): substance, identity, priority, potency, quality, relation, and so forth.

Further, he treats of being as being in the sense order, where he considers matter and form, not now in relation to becoming, but in the very being of bodies inanimate or animated. Then he shows the full value of the distinction between potency and act in the order of being, affirming that, on all levels of being, potency is essentially proportioned to act; whence follows the very important conclusion: act is necessarily higher than the potency proportioned to that act. In other words, the imperfect is for the sake of the perfect as the seed for the plant. Further, the perfect cannot have the imperfect as sufficient cause. The imperfect may indeed be the material cause of the perfect, but this material cannot pass from potentiality to actuality unless there intervenes an anterior and superior actuality which acts for that superior end to which it is itself proportioned. Only the superior can explain the inferior, otherwise the more would come from the less, the more perfect from the less perfect, contrary to the principles of being, of efficient causality, of finality. Here lies the refutation of materialistic evolutionism, where each successive higher level of being remains without explanation, without cause, without reason. .

Book X treats of unity and identity. The principle of identity, which is the affirmative form of the principle of contradiction, is thus formulated: "That which is, is," or again: "Everything that is, is one and the same." From this principle there follows the contingence of everything that is composed, of everything that is capable of motion. Things that are composite presuppose a unifying cause, because elements in themselves diverse cannot unite

without a cause which brings them together. Union has its cause in something more simple than itself: unity.

NATURAL THEOLOGY

The third part of Aristotle's Metaphysica can be called natural theology. St. Thomas comments on two books only, the eleventh and the twelfth, omitting the others which deal with Aristotle's predecessors.

The eleventh book is a recapitulation, dealing with the preliminaries for proving the existence of God. The twelfth book gives the actual proofs for the existence of God, of pure act. Since act is higher than potency, anything at all which passes from potency to act supposes, in last analysis, an uncaused cause, something that is simply act, with no admixture of potentiality, of imperfection. Hence God is "thought of thought," "understanding of understanding," not only independent, subsistent being, but likewise subsistent understanding, ipsum intelligere subsistens. Pure act, being the plenitude of being, is likewise the Supreme Good, which draws to itself all else. In this act of drawing, in this divine attraction, St. Thomas, in opposition to many historians, sees not merely a final cause, but also an efficient cause, because, since every cause acts for an end proportioned to itself, the supreme agent alone is proportioned to the supreme end. Subordination of agents corresponds to subordination of ends. Since the higher we rise, the more closely do agent and purpose approach, the two must finally be one. God, both as agent and as goal, draws all things to Himself. .

Let us note on this point the final words of St. Thomas. "This is the philosopher's conclusion: [60} There is one Prince of the universe, namely, He who is the first mover, the first intelligible, and the first good, He who above is called God, who is unto all ages the Blessed One. Amen."

But what he does not find in Aristotle is the explicit concept of creation from nothing, nor of eternal creation, and far less of free and non-eternal creation.

COMMENTARIES ON THE ETHICS

St. Thomas comments on two works of Aristotle's ethical and moral treatises.

1. The Nichomachean Ethics. .
2. The Politica. .

THE NICOMACHEAN ETHICS

Following Aristotle, the saint here shows that ethics is the science of the activity of the human person, a person who is free, master of his own act, but who, since he is a rational being, must act for a rational purpose, a purpose that is in itself good, whether delectable or useful, but higher than sense good. In this higher order of good man will find happiness, that is, the joy which follows normal and well-ordered activity, as youth is followed by its flowering. Man's conduct, therefore, must be in harmony with right reason. He must pursue good that is by nature good, rational good, and thus attain human perfection, wherein, as in the goal to which nature is proportioned, he will find happiness. .

By what road, by what means do we reach this goal, this human perfection? By the road of virtue. Virtue is the habit of acting freely in accord with right reason. This habit is acquired by repeated voluntary and well-ordered acts. It grows thus into a second nature which these acts make easy and connatural. .

Certain virtues have as goal the control of passions. Virtue does not eradicate these passions, but reduces them to a happy medium, between excess and defect. But this medium is at the same time the summit. Thus fortitude, for example, rises above both cowardice and rashness. Temperance, above intemperance and insensibility. .

Similarly, generosity holds the highway, between prodigality and avarice. Magnificence, between niggardliness and ostentation. Magnanimity, between pusillanimity and ambition. Meekness defends itself, without excessive violence, but also without feebleness. .

But disciplining the passions does not suffice. We must likewise regulate our relations with other persons by giving each his due. Here lies the object of justice. And justice has three fields of operation. Commutative justice acts in the world of material exchanges, where the norm is equality or equivalence. Above it lies distributive justice, which assigns offices, honors, rewards, not by equality, but by proportion, according to each man's fitness and merit. Highest of all is legal justice, which upholds the laws established for the well-being of society. Finally we have equity, which

softens the rigor of the law, when, under the circumstances, that rigor would be excessive. .

These moral virtues must be guided by wisdom and prudence. Wisdom is concerned with the final purpose of life, that is, the attainment of human perfection. Prudence deals with the means to that end. It is prudence which finds the golden middle way for the moral virtues. .

Under given circumstances, when, for instance, our fatherland is in danger, virtue must be heroic. .

Justice, indispensable for social life, needs the complement which we call friendship. Now there are three kinds of friendship. There is, first, pleasant friendship, to be found in youthful associations devoted to sport and pleasure. There is, secondly, advantageous friendship, as among businessmen with common interests. Finally there is virtuous friendship, uniting those, for example, who are concerned with public order and the needs of their neighbor. This last kind of friendship, rising above pleasure and interest, presupposes virtue, perseveres like virtue, makes its devotees more virtuous. It means an ever active good will and good deed, which maintains peace and harmony amid division and partisanship. .

By the practice of these virtues man can reach a perfection still higher, namely, that of the contemplative life, which gives genuine happiness. Joy, in truth, is the normal flowering of well-ordered activity. Hence the deepest joy arises from the activity of man’s highest power, namely, his mind, when that power is occupied in contemplating its highest object, which is God, the Supreme Truth, the Supreme Intelligible. .

Here we find those words of Aristotle which seem to affirm most strongly the personal immortality of the soul. St. Thomas is pleased to underline their importance. Aristotle’s words on contemplation run as follows: “It will in truth, if it is lifelong, constitute perfect happiness. But such an existence might seem too high for human condition. For then man lives no longer as mere man, but only is as far as he possesses some divine character. As high as this principle is above the composite to which it is united, so high is the act of this principle above every other act. Now if the spirit, in relation to man, is something divine, divine likewise is such a life. Hence we must not believe those who counsel man to care only for human affairs and, under pretext that man is mortal, advise him to renounce what is immortal. On the contrary, man must immortalize himself, by striving with all his might to live according to what is most excellent in himself. This

principle is higher than all the rest. It is the spirit which makes man essentially man.”

Many historians have noted, as did St. Thomas, that in this text the Greek word for mind signifies a human faculty, a part of the soul, a likeness which is participated indeed from the divine intelligence, but which is a part of man’s nature. Man it is whom Aristotle counsels to give himself to contemplation, thus to immortalize himself as far as possible. He goes so far as to say that this mind constitutes each of us.

This summary may let us see why St. Thomas made such wide use of these ethical doctrines in theology. They serve him in explaining why acquired virtue is inferior to infused virtue. They serve likewise to explore the nature of charity, which is supernatural friendship, uniting the just man to God, and all God’s children to one another. .

THE POLITICA

St. Thomas commented the first two books, and the first six chapters of the third book. What follows in the printed commentary comes from Peter of Auvergne. .

We note at once how Aristotle differs from Plato. Plato, constructing a priori his ideal Republic, conceives the state as a being whose elements are the citizens and whose organs are the classes. To eliminate egoism, Plato suppresses family and property. Aristotle on the contrary, based on observation and experience, starts from the study of the family, the first human community. The father, who rules the family, must deal, in one fashion with his wife, in another with his children, in still another with his slaves. He remarks that affection is possible only between determinate individuals. Hence, if the family were destroyed there would be no one to take care of children, who, since they would belong to everybody, would belong to nobody, just as, where property is held in common, everyone finds that he himself works too much and others too little.

Aristotle, presupposing that private ownership is a right, finds legitimate titles to property in traditional occupation, in conquest, in labor. He also holds that man is by his nature destined to live in society, since he has need of his fellow men for defense, for full use of exterior goods, for acquiring even elementary knowledge. Language itself shows that man is destined for society. Hence families unite to form the political unity of the city, which

has for its purpose a good common to all, a good that is not merely useful and pleasurable, but is in itself good, since it is a good characteristic of rational beings, a good based on justice and equity, virtues that are indispensable in social life.

These are the principal ideas proposed by Aristotle in the first books of the Politica, and deeply expounded by St. Thomas. In the Summa he modifies Aristotle's view of slavery. Still, he says, the man who cannot provide for himself should work for, and be directed by, one wiser than himself.

In the second book of the Politica we study the constitutions of the various Greek states. Thomas accepts Aristotle's inductive bases, and will employ them in his work De regimine principum. In the nature of man he finds the origin and the necessity of a social authority, represented in varying degree by the father in the family, by the leader in the community, by the sovereign in the kingdom.

He distinguishes, further, good government from bad. Good government has three forms: monarchical, where one alone rules, aristocratic, where several rule, democratic, where the rule is by representatives elected by the multitude. But each of these forms may degenerate: monarchy into tyranny, aristocracy into oligarchy, democracy into mob-rule The best form of government he finds in monarchy, but, to exclude tyranny, he commends a mixed constitution, which provides, at the monarch's side, aristocratic and democratic elements in the administration of public affairs. Yet, he adds, if monarchy in fact degenerates into tyranny, the tyranny, to avoid greater evils, should be patiently tolerated. If, however, tyranny becomes unbearable, the people may intervene, particularly in an elective monarchy. It is wrong to kill the tyrant. He must be left to the judgment of God, who, with infinite wisdom, rewards or punishes all rulers of men.

On the evils of election by a degenerate people, where demagogues obtain the suffrages, he remarks, citing St. Augustine, that the elective power should, if it be possible, be taken from the multitude and restored to those who are good. St. Augustine's words run thus: "If a people gradually becomes depraved, if it sells its votes, if it hands over the government to wicked and criminal men, then that power of conferring honors is rightly taken from such a people and restored to those few who are good." .

St. Thomas commented also the book De causis. This book had been attributed to Aristotle, but the saint shows that its origin is neo-Platonic. He

likewise expounded a work by Boethius: De hebdomadibus. His commentary on Plato's Timaeus has not been preserved.

All these commentaries served as broad and deep preparation for the saint's own personal synthesis. In that synthesis he reviews, under the double light of revelation and reason, all these materials he had so patiently analyzed. The synthesis is characterized by a grasp higher and more universal of the principles which govern his commentaries, by a more penetrating insight into the distinction between potency and act, into the superiority of act, into the primacy of God, the pure act.

The saint knew and employed some of Plato's dialogues: Timaeus, Menon, Phaedrus. He also knew Plato as transmitted by Aristotle. And St. Augustine passed on to him the better portion of Plato's teaching on God and the human soul. Neo-Platonism reached him first by way of the book De causis, attributed to Proclus, and secondly by the writings of pseudo-Dionysius, which he also commented.

Among the special philosophic books which the saint wrote, we must mention four: De unitate intellectus (against the Averroists): De substantiis separatis, De ente et essentia, De regimine principum.

Chapter 2

Theological Works

The saint’s chief theological works are:

1. Commentaries.

a) on Scripture.

b) on the Sentences.

c) on the Divine Names.

d) on the Trinity.

e) on the Weeks.

2. Personal works.

a) Summa contra Gentes.

b) Disputed Questions.

c) the Quodlibets.

d) The Summa theologiae.

St. Thomas commented on these books of the Old Testament:

a) the Book of Job.

b) the Psalms (I-5 I).

c) the Canticle of Canticles.

d) the Prophet Isaias.

e) the Prophet Jeremias.

f) the Lamentations.

In the New Testament, he commented on the following books:

a) the Four Gospels.

b) the Epistles of St. Paul.

He wrote further a work called Catena aurea (“chain of gold”): a running series of extracts from the Fathers on the four Gospels.

Here follows a list of those Fathers of the Church whom, throughout these works, the saint cites most frequently: Chrysostom, Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, Leo the Great, Gregory the Great, Basil, John Damascene, Anselm, Bernard.

In his commentary on the Sentences, we see that the saint is keenly aware of the omissions and imperfections of previous theological work, and we observe how his own personal thought becomes more precisely established. Peter the Lombard had divided theology, not according to its proper object, but in relation to two acts of the will: to enjoy; to use.

a) Things to be enjoyed: the Trinity, God’s knowledge, power, and will.

b) Things to be used: the angels, man, grace, sin.

c) Things to be both enjoyed and used: Christ, the sacraments, de novissimis.

St. Thomas sees the necessity of a more objective division, based on the proper object of theology, namely, God Himself. Hence his division of theology:

1. God, the source of all creatures.

2. God, the goal of all creatures.

3. God, the Savior, who, as man, is man’s road to God.

In the Sentences, moreover, moral questions are treated, accidentally, as occasioned by certain dogmatic questions. Thomas notes the necessity of explicit treatment, on beatitude, on human acts, on the passions, on the virtues, on the states of life, and he becomes ever more conscious of the value of the principles which underlie his synthesis, on God, on Christ, on man.

The work Contra Gentes defends the Christian faith against the contemporary errors, especially against those which came from the

Arabians. In the first books the saint examines truths which are demonstrable by reason, the preambles of faith. Then in the fourth book he deals with supernatural truths. Here St. Thomas treats especially of the mysteries, of the Trinity, the Incarnation, the sacraments, the way to heaven.

In each chapter of this work he sets forth a great number of arguments bound together by simple adverbs: “again,” “further,” “likewise,” “besides.” You may at first think the arguments proceed by mere juxtaposition. Nevertheless they are well ordered. Some are direct proofs, others are indirect, showing how his opponent tends to absurdity or inadmissible consequences. We do not have as yet the simple step-by-step procedure of the Summa theologiae, where we often find, in the body of the article, only one characteristic proof, ex propria ratione. And, when many proofs do occur, we clearly see their order, and the reason why each is introduced (e. g.: a special kind of causality).

In the Disputed Questions the saint examines the more difficult problems, beginning each article with as many as ten or twelve arguments for the affirmative, proceeding then to give as many to the negative, before he settles determinately on the truth. Through this complexity, for and against, he marches steadily onward to that superior simplicity which characterizes the Summa, a simplicity pregnant with virtual multiplicity, a precious and sublime simplicity, unperceived by many readers who see there only the platitudes of Christian common sense, because such readers have not entered by patient study of the Disputed Questions. Here, in these extended questions, the saint’s progress is a slow, hard climb to the summit of the mountain, whence alone you can survey all these problems in unified solution.

The most important of the Disputed Questions are these four: De veritate, De potentia, De malo, De spiritualibus creaturis. The Quodlibets represent the same mode of extended research on various contemporary questions.

The Summa itself, then, gives us that higher synthesis, formed definitively in the soul of St. Thomas. This work, he says, in the prologue, was written for beginners. Its order is logical. It excludes everything that would hinder the student’s advance: overlapping, long-windedness, useless questions, accessory and accidental arguments.

For this end he first determines theology’s proper object: God, as revealed, inaccessible to mere reason. This proper object determines the divisions, as follows:

1. God, one in nature, three in person, Creator of the world.
2. God, the goal of creatures.
3. God, incarnate in Christ, who is the road to God.

This work reveals the saint at his best. He is master of all details studied in previous works. More and more he sees conclusions in their first principles. He exemplifies his own teaching on “circular” contemplation, which returns always to one central, pre-eminent thought, better to seize all the force of its irradiation. His principles, few in number but immense in reach, illumine from on high a great number of questions.

Now intellectual perfection is based precisely on this unity, on this pre-eminent simplicity and universality, which imitates that one simple knowledge whereby God knows all things at a glance. Thus, in the Summa, we may single out, say, fifty articles which illumine the other three thousand articles, and thus delineate the character of the Thomistic synthesis. We think therefore that the proper kind of commentary on the Summa is one which does not lose itself in long disquisitions, but rather emphasizes those higher principles which illumine everything else. Genuine theological science is wisdom. Its preoccupation is, not so much to elicit new conclusions, as to reduce all conclusions, more numerous or less, to the same set of principles, just as all sides of a pyramid meet at the summit. This process is not lifeless repetition. Rather this timely insistence on the supreme point of the synthesis is a higher fashion of approaching God’s manner of knowing, whereof theology is a participation.

This permanent value of the saint’s doctrine finds its most authoritative expression in the encyclical Aeterni Patris. Leo XIII speaks there as follows: “St. Thomas synthesized his predecessors, and then augmented greatly this synthesis, first in philosophy, by mounting up to those highest principles based on the nature of things, secondly by distinguishing precisely and thus uniting more closely the two orders of reason and faith, thirdly by giving to each order its full right and dignity. Hence reason can hardly rise higher, nor faith find more solid support.” Thus Leo XIII.

Definitive recognition of the authority of St. Thomas lies in the words of the Code of Canon Law: “Both in their own study of philosophy and theology, and in their teaching of students in these disciplines, let the professors proceed according to the Angelic Doctor’s method, doctrine and principles, which they are to hold sacred.” .

Chapter 3

The Thomistic Commentators

We deal here with those commentators only who belong to the Thomistic school properly so called. We do not include eclectic commentators, who indeed borrow largely from Thomas, but seek to unite him with Duns Scotus, refuting at times one by the other, at the risk of nearly always oscillating between the two, without ever taking a definite stand.

In the history of commentators we may distinguish three periods. During the first period we find defensiones against the various adversaries of Thomistic doctrine. In the second period commentaries appear properly so called. They comment the Summa theologiae. They comment, article by article, in the methods we may call classical, followed generally before the Council of Trent. In the third period, after the Council, in order to meet a new fashion of opposition, the commentators generally no longer follow the letter of the Summa article by article, but write disputationes on the problems debated in their own times. Each of the three methods has its own raison d'etre. The Thomistic synthesis has thus been studied from varied viewpoints, by contrast with other theological systems. Let us see this process at work in each of these periods.

The first Thomists appear at the end of the thirteenth century and the beginning of the fourteenth. They defend St. Thomas against certain Augustinians of the ancient school, against the Nominalists and the Scotists. We must note in particular the works of Herve de Nedellec against Henry of Ghent; of Thomas Sutton against Scotus, of Durandus of Aurillac against Durandus of Saint-Pourcain and against the first Nominalists.

Next, in the same period, come works on a larger scale. Here we find John Capreolus, whose Defensiones earned him the title princeps thomistarum. Capreolus follows the order of the Lombard Sentences, but continually compares the commentaries of Thomas on that work with texts

of the Summa theologiae and of the Disputed Questions. He writes against the Nominalists and the Scotists. Similar works were written in Hungary by Peter Niger, in Spain by Diego of Deza, the protector of Christopher Columbus. With the introduction of the Summa as textbook, explicit commentaries on the Summa theologiae began to appear. First in the field was Cajetan (Thomas de Vio). His commentary is looked upon as the classic interpretation of St. Thomas. Then followed Conrad Kollin, Sylvester de Ferraris, and Francis of Vittoria. Vittoria's work remained long in manuscript and was lately published. A second work of Vittoria, Relectiones theologicae, was likewise recently published. .

Numerous Thomists took part in the preparatory work for the Council of Trent. Noted among these are Bartholomew of Carranza, Dominic Soto, Melchior Cano, Peter de Soto. The Council itself, in its decrees on the mode of preparation for justification, reproduces the substance of an article by St. Thomas. Further, in the following chapter on the causes of justification, the Council again reproduces the teaching of the saint. When on April 11 1567, four years after the end of the Council, Thomas of Aquin was declared doctor of the Church, Pius V, in commending the saint's doctrine as destruction of all heresies since the thirteenth century, concluded with these words: "As clearly appeared recently in the sacred decrees of the Council of Trent." .

After the Council of Trent, the commentators, as a rule, write Disputationes. Dominic Banez, an exception, explains still article by article. The chief names in this period are Bartholomew of Medina, and Dominic Banez. We must also mention Thomas of Lemos 1629): Diego Alvarez (1635): John of St. Thomas (1644): Peter of Godoy (1677). All these were Spaniards. In Italy we find Vincent Gotti (1742): Daniel Concina (1756): Vincent Patuzzi (1762): Salvatore Roselli (1785). In France, Jean Nicolai (1663): Vincent Contenson (1674): Vincent Baron (1674): John Baptist Gonet (1681): A. Goudin (1695): Antonin Massoulie (1706): Hyacinth Serry (1738). In Belgium, Charles Rene Billuart (1751). Among the Carmelites we mention: the Complutenses, Cursus philosophicus, and the Salmanticenses, Cursus theologicus. .

Let us here note the method and importance of the greatest among these commentators. Capreolus correlates, as we saw above, the Summa and the Disputed Questions with the Sententiae of the Lombard. Answering the

Nominalists and the Scotists, he sets in relief the continuity of the saint's thought.

Sylvester de Ferraris shows that the content of the Contra Gentes is in harmony with the higher simplicity of the Summa theologiae. He is especially valuable on certain great questions: the natural desire to see God : the infallibility of the decrees of providence; the immutability in good and in evil of the soul after death, from the first moment of its separation from the body. Sylvester's commentary is reprinted in the Leonine edition of the Summa contra Gentes.

Cajetan comments on the Summa theologiae article by article, shows their interconnection, sets in relief the force of each proof, disengages the probative medium. Then he examines at length the objections of his adversaries, particularly those of Durandus and Scotus. His virtuosity as a logician is in the service of intuition. Cajetan's sense of mystery is great. Instances will occur later on when he speaks of the pre-eminence of the Deity. Cajetan is likewise the great defender of the distinction between essence and existence. His commentary on the Summa theologiae was reprinted in the Leonine edition. .

Dominic Banez is a careful commentator, profound, sober, with great powers, logical and metaphysical. Attempts have been made to turn him into the founder of a new theological school. But, in reality, his doctrine does not differ from that of St. Thomas. What he adds are but more precise terms, to exclude false interpretations. His formulas do not exaggerate the saint's doctrine. Even such terms as "predefinition" and "predetermination" had been employed by Aquinas in explaining the divine decrees. A Thomist may prefer the more simple and sober terms which St. Thomas ordinarily employs, but on condition that he understands them well and excludes those false interpretations which Banez had to exclude. .

John of St. Thomas wrote a very valuable Cursus philosophicus thomisticus. Subsequent authors of philosophic manuals, E. Hugon, O. P.: J. Gredt, O. S. B.: X. Maquart, rest largely on him. J. Maritain likewise finds in them much inspiration. In John's theological work, Cursus theologicus, we find disputationes on the great questions debated at his time. He compares the teaching of St. Thomas with that of others, especially with that of Suarez, of Vasquez, of Molina. John is an intuitionist, even a contemplative, rather than a dialectician. At the risk of diffusiveness, he returns often to the same idea, to sound its depths and irradiations. He may

sound repetitious, but this continual recourse to the same principles, to these high leitmotifs, serves well to lift the penetrating spirit to the heights of doctrine. John insists repeatedly on the following doctrines: analogy of being, real distinction between essence and existence, obediential potency, divine liberty, intrinsic efficaciousness of divine decrees and of grace, specification of habits and acts by their formal object, the essential supernaturalness of infused virtue, the gifts of the Holy Spirit and infused contemplation. John should be studied also on the following questions: the personality of Christ, Christ's grace of union, Christ's habitual grace, the causality of the sacraments, the transubstantiation, and the sacrifice of the Mass.

In their methods the Carmelites of Salamanca, the Salmanticenses, resemble John of St. Thomas. They first give, in summary, the letter of the article, then add disputationes and dubia on controverted questions, discussing opposed views in detail. Some of these dubia on secondary questions may seem superfluous. But he who consults the Salmanticenses on fundamental questions must recognize in them great theologians, in general very loyal to the teaching of St. Thomas. You may test this statement in the following list of subjects: the divine attributes, the natural desire to see God, the obediential potency, the absolute supernaturalness of the beatific vision, the intrinsic efficaciousness of divine decrees and of grace, the essential supernaturalness of infused virtues, particularly of the theological virtues, the personality of Christ, His liberty, the value, intrinsically infinite, of His merits and satisfaction, the causality of the sacraments, the essence of the sacrifice of the Mass.

Gonet, who recapitulates the best of his predecessors, but also, on many questions, does original work, is marked by great clarity. So likewise is Cardinal Gotti, who gives a wider attention to positive theology. Billuart, more briefly than Gonet, gives a substantial summary of the great commentators. He is generally quite faithful to Thomas, often quoting in full the saint's own words.

While we do not cite in detail the works of contemporary Thomists, we must mention N. del Prado's two works: De veritate fundamentali philosophiae christianae, and De Gratia et libero arbitrio. He closely follows Banez. Further, A. Gardeil's three works: La credibilite et l'apologetique, Le donne revele et la theologie, and La structure de l'ame et

l’experience mystique. Inspired chiefly by John of St. Thomas, his work is still personal and original.

Among those who contributed to the resurgence of Thomistic study, before and after Leo XIII, we must mention eight names: Sanseverino, Kleutgen, S. J.: Cornoldi, S. J.: Cardinal Zigliara, O. P.: Buonpensiere, O. P.: L. Billot, S. J.: G. Mattiussi, S. J.: and Cardinal Mercier.

First Part

Metaphysical Synthesis Of Thomism

The metaphysical synthesis is above all a philosophy of being, an ontology, differing entirely from a philosophy of appearance (phenomenalism): from a philosophy of becoming (evolutionism): and from a philosophy of the ego (psychologism). Hence our first chapter will deal with intelligible being, the primary object of intelligence, and with the first principles arising from that object. A second chapter will show the precision given to the metaphysical synthesis by the first principle of act and potency, with the chief applications of this rich and fruitful principle.

Chapter 4

Intelligible Being And First Principles

St. Thomas, following Aristotle, teaches that the intelligible being, the intelligible reality, existing in sense objects is the first object of the first act of our intellect, i. e.: that apprehension which precedes the act of judging. Listen to his words: “The intellect’s first act is to know being, reality, because an object is knowable only in the degree in which it is actual. Hence being, entity, reality, is the first and proper object of understanding, just as sound is the first object of hearing.” Now being, reality, is that which either exists (actual being) or can exist (possible being): “being is that whose act is to be.” Further, the being, the reality, which our intellect first understands, is not the being of God, nor the being of the understanding subject, but the being, the reality, which exists in the sense world, “that which is grasped immediately by the intellect in the presence of a sense object.” Our intellect, indeed, is the lowest of all intelligences, to which corresponds, as proper and proportioned object, that intelligible reality existing in the world of sense. Thus the child, knowing by sense, for example, the whiteness and the sweetness of milk, comes to know by intellect the intelligible reality of this same sense object. “By intellect he apprehends as reality that which by taste he apprehends as sweet.” .

In the intelligible reality thus known, our intellect seizes at once its opposition to non-being, an opposition expressed by the principle of contradiction: Being is not non-being. “By nature our intellect knows being and the immediate characteristics of being as being, out of which knowledge arises the understanding of first principles, of the principle, say, that affirmation and denial cannot coexist (opposition between being and non-being): and other similar principles.” Here lies the point of departure in Thomistic realism.

Thus our intellect knows intelligible reality and its opposition to nothing, before it knows explicitly the distinction between me and non-me. By reflection on its own act of knowledge the intellect comes to know the existence of that knowing act and its thinking subject. Next it comes to know the existence of this and that individual object, seized by the senses. In intellective knowledge, the universal comes first; sense is restricted to the individual and particular.

From this point of departure, Thomistic realism is seen to be a limited realism, since the universal, though it is not formally, as universal, in the individual sense object, has nevertheless its foundation in that object. This doctrine rises thus above two extremes, which it holds to be aberrations. One extreme is that of absolute realism held by Plato, who held that universals (he calls them “separated ideas”) exist formally outside the knowing mind. The other extreme is that of Nominalism, which denies that the universal has any foundation in individual sense objects, and reduces it to a subjective representation accompanied by a common name. Each extreme leads to error. Platonist realism claims to have at least a confused intuition of the divine being (which it calls the Idea of Good). Nominalism opens the door to empiricism and positivism, which reduce first principles to experimental laws concerning sense phenomena. The principle of causality, for example, is reduced to this formula: every phenomenon presupposes an antecedent phenomenon. First principles then, conceived nominalistically, since they are no longer laws of being, of reality, but only of phenomena, do not allow the mind to rise to the knowledge of God, the first cause, beyond the phenomenal order.

This limited moderate realism of Aristotle and Aquinas is in harmony with that natural, spontaneous knowledge which we call common sense. This harmony appears most clearly in the doctrine’s insistence on the objective validity and scope of first principles, the object of our first intellectual apprehension. These principles are laws, not of the spirit only, not mere logical laws, not laws merely experimental, restricted to phenomena, but necessary and unlimited laws of being, objective laws of all reality, of all that is or can be.

Yet even in these primary laws we find a hierarchy. One of them, rising immediately from the idea of being, is the simply first principle, the principle of contradiction; it is the declaration of opposition between being and nothing. It may be formulated in two ways, one negative, the other

positive. The first may be given either thus: “Being is not nothing,” or thus: “One and the same thing, remaining such, cannot simultaneously both be and not be.” Positively considered, it becomes the principle of identity, which may be formulated thus: “If a thing is, it is: if it is not, it is not.” This is equivalent to saying: “Being is not non-being.” Thus we say, to illustrate: “The good is good, the bad is bad,” meaning that one is not the other. According to this principle, that which is absurd, say a squared circle, is not merely unimaginable, not merely inconceivable, but absolutely irrealizable. Between the pure logic of what is conceivable and the concrete material world lie the universal laws of reality. And here already we find affirmed the validity of our intelligence in knowing the laws of extramental reality. .

To this principle of contradiction or of identity is subordinated the principle of sufficient reason, which in its generality may be formulated thus: “Everything that is has its raison d’etre, in itself, if of itself it exists, in something else, if of itself it does not exist.” But this generality must be understood in senses analogically different.

First. The characteristics of a thing, e. g.: a circle, have their raison d’etre in the essence (nature) of that thing.

Secondly. The existence of an effect has its raison d’etre in the cause which produces and preserves that existence, that is to say, in the cause which is the reason not only of the “becoming,” but also of the continued being of that effect. Thus that which is being by participation has its reason of existence in that which is being by essence.

Thirdly. Means have their raison d’etre in the end, the purpose, to which they are proportioned.

Fourthly. Matter is the raison d’etre of the corruptibility of bodies.

This principle, we see, is to be understood analogically, according to the order in which it is found, whether that order is intrinsic (the nature of a circle related to its characteristics): or extrinsic (cause, efficient or final, to its effects). When I ask the reason why, says St. Thomas, I must answer by one of the four causes. Why has the circle these properties? By its intrinsic nature. Why is this iron dilated? Because it has been heated (efficient cause). Why did you come? For such or such a purpose. Why is man mortal? Because he is a material composite, hence corruptible.

Thus the raison d’etre, answering the question “why” (propter quid): is manifold in meaning, but these different meanings are proportionally the same, that is, analogically. We stand here at a central point. We see that the

efficient cause presupposes the very universal idea of cause, found also in final cause, and in formal cause, as well as in the agent. Thus the principle of sufficient reason had been formulated long before Leibnitz.

We come now to the principle of substance. It is thus formulated: “That which exists as the subject of existence is substance, and is distinct from its accidents or modes.” Thus in everyday speech we call gold or silver a substance. This principle is derived from the principle of identity, because that which exists as subject of existence is one and the same beneath all its multiple phenomena, permanent or successive. The idea of substance is thus seen to be a mere determination of the idea of being. Inversely, being is now conceived explicitly as substantial. Hence the conclusion: The principle of substance is simply a determination of the principle of identity: accidents then find their raison d’etre in the substance. .

The principle of efficient causality also finds its formula as a function of being. Wrong is the formula: “Every phenomenon presupposes an antecedent phenomenon.” The right formula runs thus: “Every contingent being, even if it exists without beginning, needs an efficient cause and, in last analysis, an uncreated cause.” Briefly, every being by participation (in which we distinguish the participating subject from the participated existence) depends on the Being by essence. .

The principle of finality is expressed by Aristotle and Aquinas in these terms: “Every agent acts for a purpose.” The agent tends to its own good. But that tendency differs on different levels of being. It may be, first, a tendency merely natural and unconscious, for example, the tendency of the stone toward the center of the earth, or the tendency of all bodies toward the center of the universe. Secondly, this tendency may be accompanied by sense knowledge, for example, in the animal seeking its nourishment. Thirdly, this tendency is guided by intelligence, which alone knows purpose as purpose, that is, knows purpose as the raison d’etre of the means to reach that purpose. .

On this principle of finality depends the first principle of practical reason and of morality. It runs thus: “Do good, avoid evil.” It is founded on the idea of good, as the principle of contradiction on the idea of being. In other words: The rational being must will rational good, that good, namely, to which its powers are proportioned by the author of its nature. .

All these principles are the principles of our natural intelligence. They are first manifested in that spontaneous form of intelligence which we call

common sense, that is, the natural aptitude of intelligence, before all philosophic culture, to judge things sanely. Common sense, natural reason, seizes these self-evident principles from its notion of intelligible reality. But this natural common sense could not yet give these principles an exact and universal formulation. .

As Gilson well remarks, Thomistic realism is founded, not on a mere postulate, but on intellectual grasp of intelligible reality in sense objects. Its fundamental proposition runs thus: The first idea which the intellect conceives, its most evident idea into which it resolves all other ideas, is the idea of being. Grasping this first idea, the intellect cannot but grasp also the immediate consequences of that idea, namely, first principles as laws of reality. If human intelligence doubts the evidence of, say, the principle of contradiction, then—as Thomists have repeated since the seventeenth century—the principle of Descartes simply vanishes. If the principle of contradiction is not certain, then I might be simultaneously existent and non-existent, then my personal thought is not to be distinguished from impersonal thought, nor personal thought from the subconscious, or even from the unconscious. The universal proposition, Nothing can simultaneously both be and not be, is a necessary presupposition of the particular proposition, I am, and I cannot simultaneously be and not be. Universal knowledge precedes particular knowledge. .

This metaphysical synthesis, as seen thus far, does not seem to pass notably beyond ordinary natural intelligence. But, in truth, the synthesis, by justifying natural intelligence, does pass beyond it. And the synthesis will rise higher still by giving precision to the doctrine on act and potency. How that precision has been reached is our next topic.

Chapter 5

Act And Potency

The doctrine on act and potency is the soul of Aristotelian philosophy, deepened and developed by St. Thomas. .

According to this philosophy, all corporeal beings, even all finite beings, are composed of potency and act, at least of essence and existence, of an essence which can exist, which limits existence, and of an existence which actualizes this essence. God alone is pure act, because His essence is identified with His existence. He alone is Being itself, eternally subsistent.

The great commentators often note that the definition of potency determines the Thomistic synthesis. When potency is conceived as really distinct from all act, even the least imperfect, then we have the Thomistic position. If, on the other hand, potency is conceived as an imperfect act, then we have the position of some Scholastics, in particular of Suarez, and especially of Leibnitz, for whom potency is a force, a virtual act, merely impeded in its activity, as, for example, in the restrained force of a spring.

This conceptual difference in the primordial division of created being into potency and act has far-reaching consequences, which it is our task to pursue.

Many authors of manuals of philosophy ignore this divergence and give hardly more than nominal definitions of potency and act. They offer us the accepted axioms, but they do not make clear why it is necessary to admit potency as a reality between absolute nothing and actually existing being. Nor do they show how and wherein real potency is distinguished, on the one hand, from privation and simple possibility, and on the other from even the most imperfect act.

We are now to insist on this point, and then proceed to show what consequences follow, both in the order of being and in the order of operation. .

According to Aristotle, real distinction between potency and act is absolutely necessary if, granting the multiplied facts of motion and mutation in the sense world, facts affirmed by experience, we are to reconcile these facts with the principle of contradiction or identity. Here Aristotle steers between Parmenides, who denies the reality of motion, and Heraclitus, who makes motion and change the one reality.

Parmenides has two arguments. The first runs thus: If a thing arrives at existence it comes either from being or from nothing. Now it cannot come from being (statue from existing statue). Still less can it come from nothing. Therefore all becoming is impossible. This argument is based on the principle of contradiction or identity, which Parmenides thus formulates: Being is, non-being is not; you will never get beyond this thought.

Multiplicity of beings, he argues again from the same principle, is likewise impossible. Being, he says, cannot be limited, diversified, and multiplied by its own homogeneous self, but only by something else. Now that which is other than being is non-being, and non-being is not, is nothing. Being remains eternally what it is, absolutely one, identical with itself, immutable. Limited, finite beings are simply an illusion. Thus Parmenides ends in a monism absolutely static which absorbs the world in God.

Heraclitus is at the opposite pole. Everything is in motion, in process of becoming, and the opposition of being to non-being is an opposition purely abstract, even merely a matter of words. For, he argues, in the process of becoming, which is its own sufficient reason, being and non-being are dynamically identified. That which is in the process of becoming is already, and nevertheless is not yet. Hence, for Heraclitus, the principle of contradiction is not a law of being, not even of the intelligence. It is a mere law of speech, to avoid self-contradiction. Universal becoming is to itself sufficient reason, it has no need of a first cause or of a last end.

Thus Heraclitus, like Parmenides, ends in pantheism. But, whereas the pantheism of Parmenides is static, an absorption of the world into God, the pantheism of Heraclitus is evolutionist, and ultimately atheistic, for it tends to absorb God into the world. Cosmic evolution is self-creative. God, too, is forever in the process of becoming, hence will never be God.

Aristotle, against Heraclitus, holds that the principle of contradiction or of identity is a law, not merely of the inferior reason and of speech, but of

the higher intelligence, and primarily of objective reality. Then he turns to solve the arguments of Parmenides.

Plato, attempting an answer to Parmenides, had admitted, on the one side, an unchangeable world of intelligible ideas, and on the other, a sense world in perpetual movement. To explain this movement, he held that matter, always transformable, is a medium between being and nothing, is “non-being which somehow exists.” Thus, as he said, he held his hand on the formula of Parmenides, by affirming that non-being still in some way is. Confusedly, we may say, he prepared the Aristotelian solution, deepened by St. Thomas.

Aristotle’s solution, more clear and profound than Plato’s, rests on his distinction of potency from act, a distinction his thought could not escape. .

In fact, that which is in process of becoming cannot arise from an actual being, which already exists. The statue, in process of becoming, does not come from the statue which already exists. But the thing in process of becoming was at first there in potency, and hence arises from unterminated being, from real and objective potency, which is thus a medium between the existing being and mere nothing. Thus the statue, while in process, comes from the wood, considered not as existing wood, but as sculptilis. Further, the statue, after completion, is composed of wood and the form received from the sculptor, which form can give place to another. The plant is composed of matter and specific (substantial) form (oak or beech): and the animal likewise (lion, deer).

The reality of potency is thus a necessary prerequisite if we are to harmonize the data of sense (e. g.: multiplicity and mutation) with the principle of contradiction or of identity, with the fundamental laws, that is, of reality and of thought. That which begins, since it cannot come either from actuality or from nothing, must come from a reality as yet undetermined, but determinable, from a subject that is transformable, as is the prime matter in all bodies, or as is second matter, in wood, say, or sand, or marble, or seed. In the works above cited St. Thomas gives explicit development to this conception of the Stagirite. Let us briefly note these clarifications.

a) Potency, that which is determinable, transformable, is not mere nothing. “From nothing, nothing comes,” said Parmenides. And this is true, even admitting creation ex nihilo, because creation is instantaneous, unpreceded by a process of becoming, with which we are here concerned.

b) Potency, the transformable, is not the mere negation of determined form, not the privation, in wood, say, of the statue form. For negation, privation, is in itself nothing, hence again “from nothing comes nothing.” Further, the privation of statue-form is found in gases and liquids, say, out of which the statue cannot be made.

c) Potency, the determinable, out of which arises the statue, is not the essence of the wood, which makes wood to be actually wood. Neither is it the actual figure of the wood to be carved, because what already is is not in process of becoming. .

d) Neither is potency identified with the imperfect figure of the statue that is in process of becoming, for that figure is imperfect actuality. The imperfect figure is not the determinable potency, but is already motion toward the statue to be.

But now this determinableness, transformableness: what is it positively? What is this real, objective potency, presupposed to motion, to mutation, to transformation? It is a real capacity to receive a definite, determined form, the form, say, of the statue, a capacity which is not in air or water, but is in wood, or marble, or sand. This capacity to become a statue is the statue in potency.

Here lies Aristotle’s superiority to Plato. Plato speaks of “non-being which in some way is.” He seems to be thinking of privation or simple possibility, or of an imperfect actuality. His conception of matter, and of non-being in general, remains quite obscure when compared with the Aristotelian concept of potency, passive or active.

St. Thomas excels in explaining this distinction, just now noted, between passive potency and active potency. Real passive potency is not simple possibility. Simple possibility is prerequired and suffices for creation ex nihilo. But it does not suffice as prerequisite for motion, change, mutation. Mutation presupposes a real subject, determinable, transformable, mutable, whereas creation is the production of the entire created being, without any presupposed real potency. Now, since active potency, active power, must be greater in proportion to its passive correlative, it follows that when passive potency is reduced to zero, the active potency must be infinite. In other words, the most universal of effects, the being of all things, cannot be produced except by the most universal of all causes, that is, by the Supreme Being. .

Real potency admitted, we have against Parmenides the explanation, not merely of mutation and becoming, but also of multiplicity. Form, of itself unlimited, is limited by the potency into which it is received. The form then, say of Apollo, can be multiplied by being received into different parts of wood or marble. And from this viewpoint, as long as that which was in potency is now in act, this real potency remains beneath the act. The wood, by receiving the statue-form, limits and holds this form and can even lose it and receive another form. The form of Apollo, as long as it remains in this particular piece of wood, is thereby limited, individualized, and as such, irreproducible. But a similar form can be reproduced in another portion of matter and that in indefinitum.

ARTICLE TWO: ACT LIMITED BY POTENCY

Act, being completion, perfection, is not potency, which is the capacity to receive perfection: and act, perfection, is limited only by the potency which is its recipient. This truth is thus expressed in two texts of St. Thomas: “Form, even the lowest material form, if it be supposed, either really or mentally, separate from matter, is specifically one and one only. If whiteness, e. g.: be understood as apart from any subject of whiteness, it becomes impossible to suppose many whitenesses.” Again: “Things which agree in species and differ by number, agree in form and differ only in matter. Hence since the angels are not composed of matter and form, it is impossible to have two angels agreeing in species.” .

This doctrine is embodied in the second of the twenty-four theses, approved by the Sacred Congregation of Studies in 1914. That thesis runs thus: “Act, perfection, is limited only by potency, which is the capability of receiving perfection. Hence, in an order of pure act, only one unlimited act can exist. But where act is limited and multiplied, there act enters into real composition with potency.” .

From this principle, upheld by St. Thomas and his entire school, follow many consequences, both in the order of being and in the order of activity, since activity is proportioned to the agent’s mode of being.

ARTICLE THREE

First we will indicate, rising from lower to higher, the consequences in the order of being.

a) Matter is not form; it is really distinct from form. Let us look attentively at substantial mutation. We take two instances. First, a lion is burned, and there remain only ashes and bones. Secondly, food, by assimilative, digestive power, is changed into human flesh. These substantial mutations necessarily presuppose in the thing to be changed a subject capable of a new form but in no way as yet determined to that form, because, if it had already some such determination, that determination would have to be a substance (like air or water): and the mutations in question would no longer be substantial, but only accidental.

The subject of these mutations, therefore, must be purely potential, pure potency. Prime matter is not combustible, not "chiselable," and yet is really determinable, always transformable. This pure potency, this simple, real capacity, to receive a new substantial form, is not mere nothing (from nothing, nothing comes) ; nor is it mere privation of the form to come; nor is it something substantial already determined. It is not, says St. Thomas, substance or quality or quantity or anything like these. Nor is it the beginning (inchoatio) of the form to come. It is not an imperfect act. The wood which can be carved is not yet, as such, the beginning of the statue-form. the imperfect act is already motion toward the form. It is not the potency prerequired before motion can begin.

This capacity to receive a substantial form is therefore a reality, a real potency, which is not an actuality. It is not the substantial form, being opposed to it, as the determinable, the transformable, is opposed to its content. Now, if, in reality, antecedently to any act of our mind, matter, pure potency, is not the substantial form, then it is really distinct from form. Rather, it is separable from form, for it can lose the form it has received, and receive another though it cannot exist deprived of all form. Corruption of one form involves necessarily the generation of another form. .

From the distinction, then, of potency from act arises between prime matter and form that distinction required to explain substantial mutation. Consequently prime matter has no existence of its own. Having no actuality of itself, it exists only by the existence of the composite. Thomas says: "Matter of itself has neither existence nor cognoscibility " .

In this same manner Aquinas, after Aristotle, explains the multiplication of substantial form, since matter remains under form, limits that form, and

can lose that form. The specific form of lion, a form which is indefinitely multipliable, is, by the matter in which it exists, limited to constitute this individual lion, this begotten and corruptible composite.

Aristotle already taught this doctrine. In the first two books of his Physica he shows with admirable clearness the truth, at least in the sense world, of this principle. Act, he says, is limited and multiplied by potency. act determines potency, actualizes potency, but is limited by that same potency. The figure of Apollo actualizes this portion of wax, but is also limited by it, enclosed in it, as content in vessel, and as such is thus no longer multipliable, though it can be multiplied in other portions of wax or marble. .

Aristotle studied this principle in the sense world. St. Thomas extends the principle, elevates it, sees its consequences, not only in the sense world, but universally, in all orders of being, spiritual as well as corporeal, even in the infinity of God.

b) Created essence is not its own existence, but really distinguished from that existence. The reason, says St. Thomas, why the substantial, specific form is limited in sense objects (e. g.: lion) lies precisely in this: Form, act, perfection, precisely by being received into a really containing capacity, is thereby necessarily limited (made captive) by that container. Under this formula, the principle holds good even in the supersense order: Act, he says, being perfection, can be limited only by the potency, the capacity which receives that perfection. Now, he continues, existence is actuality, even the ultimate actuality. And he develops this thought as follows: “Existence is the most perfect of realities. It is everywhere the ultimate actuality, since nothing has actuality except as it is. Hence existence is the actuality of all things, even of forms themselves. Hence existence is never related as receiver is related to content, but rather as content to receiver. When I speak of the existence of a man, say, or of a horse, or of anything else whatever, that existence is in the order of form, not of matter. It is the received perfection, not the subject which receives existence.” .

Further, since existence (esse) is of itself unlimited, it is limited in fact only by the potency into which it is received, that is, by the finite essence capable of existence. By opposition, then “as the divine existence (God’s existence) is not a received existence, but existence itself, subsistent, independent existence, it is clear that God is infinitely and supremely

perfect.” Consequently God is really and essentially distinct from the world of finite things. .

This doctrine is affirmed by the first of the twenty-four Thomistic theses: Potency and act divide being in such fashion that everything which exists is either pure act, or then is necessarily composed of potency and act, as of two primary and intrinsic principles. .

For Suarez, on the contrary, everything that is, even prime matter, is of itself in act though it may be in potency to something else. Since he does not conceive potency as the simple capacity of perfection, he denies the universality of the principle: act is limited only by potency. Here are his words: “Act is perhaps limited by itself, or by the agent which produces the act.” .

The question arises: Does this principle, “act is limited only by potency,” admit demonstration? In answer, we say that it cannot be proved by a direct and illative process of reasoning, because we are not dealing here with a conclusion properly so called, but truly with a first principle, which is self-evident (per se notum): on condition that we correctly interpret the meaning of its terms, subject and predicate. Nevertheless the explanation of these terms can be expressed in a form of reasoning, not illative, but explicative, containing at the same time an indirect demonstration, which shows that denial of the principle leads to absurdity. This explicative argument may be formulated as here follows.

An act, a perfection, which in its own order is of itself unlimited (for example, existence or wisdom or love) cannot in fact be limited except by something else not of its own order, something which is related to that perfection and gives the reason for that limitation. Now, nothing else can be assigned as limiting that act, that perfection, except the real potency, the capacity for receiving that act, that perfection. Therefore that act, as perfection of itself unlimited, cannot be limited except by the potency which receives that act.

The major proposition of this explicative argument is evident. If, indeed, the act (of existence, of wisdom, of love) is not of itself limited, it cannot in fact be limited except by something extraneous to itself, something which gives the reason for the limitation. Thus the existence of the stone (or plant, animal, man) is limited by its nature, by its essence, which is susceptible of existence (quid capax existendi). Essence, nature, gives the reason of limitation, because it is intrinsically related to existence, it is a limited

capability of existence. Similarly wisdom in man is limited by the limited capacity of his intelligence, and love by the limited capacity of his loving power.

Nor is the minor proposition of the argument less certain. If you would explain how an act, a perfection, of itself unlimited is in point of fact limited, it is not sufficient, pace Suarez, to appeal to the agent which produces that act, because the agent is an extrinsic cause, whereas we are concerned with finding the reason for this act's intrinsic limitation, the reason why the being, the existence, of the stone, say (or of the plant, the animal, the man): remains limited, even though the notion of being, of existence implies no limit, much less of different limits. Just as the sculptor cannot make a statue of Apollo limited to a portion of space, unless there is a subject (wood, marble, sand) capable of receiving the form of that statue: so likewise the author of nature cannot produce the stone (or the plant, the animal, the man) unless there is a subject capable of receiving existence, and of limiting that existence according to the different capacities found in stone, plant, and animal.

Hence St. Thomas says: "God produces simultaneously existence and the subject which receives existence." And again: "In the idea of a made thing lies the impossibility of its essence being its existence because subsistent, independent existence is not created existence." .

Were this position not admitted, the argument of Parmenides, renewed by Spinoza, would be insoluble. Parmenides denied multiplicity in the sense world, because being cannot be limited, diversified, multiplied of itself, he says, but only by something other than itself, and the only thing other than being is non-being, is pure nothing.

To this argument our two teachers reply: Besides existence there is a real capacity which receives and limits existence. This capacity, this recipient, which limits existence, is not nothing, is not privation, is not imperfect existence; it is real objective potency, really distinct from existence, just as the transformable wood remains under the statue figure it has received, just as prime matter remains under the substantial form, really distinct from that form which it can lose. As, antecedently to consideration by our mind, matter is not form, is opposed to form, as that which is transformable is opposed to that which informs, thus likewise the essence of the stone (the plant, the animal) is not its existence. Essence, as essence (quid capax existendi): does not contain actual existence, which is a predicate, not

essential, but contingent. Nor does the idea of existence as such imply either limitation or diversity in limitation (as, say, between stone and plant).

To repeat: Finite essence is opposed to its existence as the perfectible to actualizing perfection, as the limit to the limited thing, as the container to the content. Antecedently to any thought of ours, this proposition is true: Finite essence is not its own existence. Now, if in an affirmative judgment, the verb “is” expresses real identity between subject and predicate, then the negation denies this real identity and thus affirms real distinction.

How is this distinction to be perceived? Not by the senses, not by the imagination, but by the intellect, which penetrating more deeply (intus legit): sees that finite essence, as subject, does not contain existence, which is not an essential predicate, since it is contingent.

A wide difference separates this position from that which says: Being is the most simple of ideas, hence all that in any way exists is being in act, though it may often be in potency to something else. Thus prime matter is already imperfectly in act, and finite essence is also in act, and is not really distinct from its existence Thus Suarez. .

A follower of Suarez, P. Descoqs, S. J.: writes thus concerning the first of the twenty-four Thomistic theses: “Now if it is maintained that this thesis reproduces faithfully the teaching of Cajetan, and of subsequent authors inspired by Cajetan, I would certainly not demur. But however hard he tries, no one will show, and the chief commentators, however hard they have tried, have not been able to show, that the said teaching is found in the Master.” .

Must we then say that the Congregation of Studies was in error, when, in 1914, it approved as genuine expression of the doctrine of St. Thomas, both that first thesis here in question and the other theses derived from that first? Is it true, as the article just cited maintains, that St. Thomas never said that, in every created substance there is, not merely a logical composition, but a real composition of two principles really distinct, one of these principles, essence, subjective potency, being correlated to the other, existence, which is its act?

Now surely St. Thomas does say just this, and says it repeatedly. Beyond texts already cited, listen to the following passage: “Everything that is in the genus of substance is composed by a real composition, because, being substance, it is subsistent (independent) in its being. Hence its existence is something other than itself, otherwise it could not by its existence differ

from other substances with which in essence it agrees, this condition being required in all things which are directly in the predicaments. Hence everything that is in the genus of substance is composed, at least of existence and essence (quod est).” The beginning of this passage shows that the composition in question is not merely logical, but is real. Thus the passage says exactly what the first of the twenty-four theses says.

Let us hear another passage. “Just as every act (existence) is related to the subject in which it is, just so is every duration related to its now. That act however, that existence, which is measured by time, differs from its subject both in reality (secundum rem): because the movable thing is not motion, and in succession, because the substance of the movable thing is permanent, not successive. But that act, which is measured by aevum, namely, the existence of the thing which is aeviternal, differs from its subject in reality, but not in succession, because both subject and existence are each without succession. Thus we understand the difference between aevum and its now. But that existence which is measured by eternity is in reality identified with its subject, and differs from it only by way of thought.” .

The first text just quoted says that in every predicamental substance there is a real composition between potency and act. The second text says that in substances measured by aevum (the angels) there is real distinction between existence and its subject. This is exactly the doctrine expressed by the first of the twenty-four theses.

We may add one more quotation from St. Thomas: “Hence each created substance is composed of potency and act, that is, of subject and existence, as Boethius says, just as the white thing is composed of white thing and whiteness.” Now the saint certainly holds that there is real distinction between the white subject and its whiteness, between substance and accident. In both cases then, between substance and accident, and between essence and existence, we have a distinction which is not merely logical, subsequent to our way of thinking, but real, an expression of objective reality.

Antecedently to our way of thinking, so we may summarize Aristotle, matter is not the substantial form, and matter and form are two distinct intrinsic causes. St. Thomas supplements Aristotle with this remark: In every created being there is a real composition of potency and act, at least of essence and existence. Were it otherwise, the argument of Parmenides

against multiplicity of beings would remain insoluble. As the form is multiplied by the diverse portions of matter into which it is received, just so is existence (esse) multiplied by the diverse essences, or better, diverse subjects, into which it is received.

To realize this truth you have but to read one chapter in Contra Gentes. The composition there defended is not at all merely logical composition (of genus and differentia specifica, included in the definition of pure spirits): but rather a real composition: essence is not really identified with existence, which only contingently belongs to essence.

Throughout his works, St. Thomas continually affirms that God alone is pure act, that in Him alone is essence identified with existence. In this unvaried proposition he sees the deepest foundation of distinction between uncreated being and created being. Texts like these could be endlessly multiplied. See Del Prado, where you will find them in abundance.

The first of the twenty-four theses, then, belongs to St. Thomas. In defending that thesis we are not pursuing a false scent, a false intellectual direction, on one of the most important points of philosophy, namely, the real and essential distinction between God and the creature, between pure act, sovereignly simple and immutable, and the creature always composed and changing. .

On this point, it is clear, there is a very notable difference between St. Thomas and Suarez, who in some measure returns to the position of Duns Scotus. Now this difference rests on a difference still more fundamental, namely, a difference in the very idea of being (ens): which ontology deals with before it deals with the divisions of being. To this question we now turn.

THE IDEA OF BEING

Being, for St. Thomas, is a notion, not univocal but analogous, since otherwise it could not be divided and diversified. A univocal idea (e. g.: genus) is diversified by differences extrinsic to genus (animality, e. g.: by specific animal differences). Now, nothing is extrinsic to being (ens). Here Parmenides enters. Being, he says, cannot be something other than being, and the only other thing than being is nothing, is non-being, and non-being is not. St. Thomas replies: “Parmenides and his followers were deceived in this: They used the word being (ens) as if it were univocal, one in idea and

nature, as if it were a genus. This is an impossible position. Being (ens) is not a genus, since it is found in things generically diversified.” .

Duns Scotus returns in a manner to the position of Parmenides, that being is a univocal notion. Suarez, seeking a middle way between Aquinas and Scotus, maintains that the objective concept of being (ens) is simply one (simpliciter unus): and that consequently everything that is in any manner (e. g.: matter and essence) is being in act (ens in actu). This viewpoint granted, we can no longer conceive pure potency. It would be extra ens, hence, simply nothing. The Aristotelian notion of real potency (medium between actuality and nothing) disappears, and the argument of Parmenides is insoluble.

We understand now why, shortly after the Council of Trent, a Thomist, Reginaldus, O. P.: formulated as follows the three principles of St. Thomas:

Ens (being) is a notion transcendent and analogous, not univocal.

God is pure act, God alone is His own existence.

Things absolute have species from themselves; things relative from something else.

METAPHYSICAL IDEA OF GOD

From this initial ontological divergence we have noted between St. Thomas and Suarez there arises another divergence, this time at the summit of metaphysics. Thomists maintain that the supreme truth of Christian philosophy is the following: In God alone are essence and existence identified. Now this is denied by those who refuse to admit the real distinction between created essence and existence.

According to Thomists this supreme truth is the terminus, the goal, of the ascending road which rises from the sense world to God, and the point of departure on the descending road, which deduces the attributes of God and determines the relation between God and the world. .

From this supreme truth, that God alone is His own existence, follow, according to Thomists, many other truths, formulated in the twenty-four Thomistic theses. We will deal with this problem later on, when we come to examine the structure of the theological treatise, De Deo uno. Here we but note the chief truths thus derived.

CONSEQUENCES OF THIS DISTINCTION

God, since He is subsisting and unreceived being, is infinite in perfection. In Him there are no accidents, because existence is the ultimate actuality, hence cannot be further actualized and determined. Consequently He is thought itself, wisdom itself, love itself. .

Further, concerning God's relations to creatures we have many other consequences of the real distinction between act and potency. Many positions which we have already met on the ascending road now reappear, seen as we follow the road descending from on high. There cannot be, for example, two angels of the same species, for each angel is pure form, irreceivable in matter. The rational soul is the one sole substantial form of the human composite, since otherwise man would not be simply a natural, substantial unity, but merely one per accidens (as is, e. g.: the unity between material substance and the accident of quantity). For substantial unity cannot arise from actuality plus actuality, but only from its own characteristic potency and its own characteristic actuality. Consequently the human composite has but one sole existence (see the sixteenth of the twenty-four Thomistic theses). Similarly, in every material substance there is but one existence, since neither matter nor form has an existence of its own; they are not id quod est, but id quo (see the ninth of the twenty-four). The principle of individuation, which distinguishes, e. g.: two perfectly similar drops of water, is matter signed with quantity, the matter, that is, into which the substantial form of water has been received, but that matter as proportioned to this quantity (proper to this drop) rather than to another quantity (proper to another drop). .

Again, prime matter cannot exist except under some form, for that would be "being in actuality without act, a contradiction in terms." Prime matter is not "that which is (id quod est): " but "that by which a thing is material, and hence limited." Consequently "matter of itself has no existence, and no cognoscibility." Matter, namely, is knowable only by its relation to form, by its capacity to receive form. The form of sense things, on the contrary, being distinct from matter, is of itself and directly knowable in potency. Here is the reason for the objectivity of our intellectual knowledge of sense objects. Here also the reason why immateriality is the root of both intelligibility and intellectuality. .

ARTICLE FOUR

We come now to the applications of our principle in the order of action, operation, which follows the order of being. Here we will briefly indicate the chief consequences, on which we must later dwell more at length.

Powers, faculties, habitudes differ specifically, not of themselves, but by the formal object, the act to which they are proportioned. Consequently the soul faculties are really distinct from the soul, and each is really distinct from all others. No sense faculty can grasp the proper object of the intelligence, nor sense appetite the proper object of the will. .

“Whatever is moved (changed) is moved by something else.” This principle is derived from the real distinction between potency and act. Nothing can pass from potency to act except by a being already in act, otherwise the more would come from the less. In this principle is founded the proof from motion, from change, for God’s existence. Now, for Suarez, this principle is uncertain, for he says, “there are many things which, by virtual acts, are seen to move and reduce themselves to formal acts, as may be seen in appetite or will.” Against this position we must note that if our will is not its own operation, its own act of willing, if “God alone is His own will, as He is His own act of existence, and His own act of knowing,” then it follows that our will is only a potency, only a capability of willing, and cannot consequently be reduced to act except by divine motion. Were it otherwise, the more would come from the less, the more perfect from the less perfect, contrary to the principle of causality. St. Thomas speaks universally: “However perfect you conceive any created nature, corporeal or spiritual, it cannot proceed to its act unless it is moved thereto by God.” .

The next consequence deals with causal subordination. In a series of causes which are subordinated necessarily (per se, not per accidens): there is no infinite regress; we must reach a supreme and highest cause, without which there would be no activity of intermediate causes, and no effect. .

We are dealing with necessary subordination. In accidental subordination, regress in infinitum is not an absurdity. In human lineage, for example, the generative act of the father depends, not necessarily, but accidentally, on the grandfather, who may be dead. But such infinite regress is absurd in a series necessarily subordinated, as, for example, in the following: “the moon is attracted by the earth, the earth by the sun, the sun by another center, and thus to infinity. Such regress, we must say, is absurd. If there is no first center of attraction, here and now in operation, then there would be no

attraction anywhere. Without an actually operating spring the clock simply stops. All its wheels, even were they infinite in number, cause no effect.” .

This position Suarez denies. He speaks thus: “In causes necessarily (per se) subordinated, it is no absurdity to say that these causes, though they be infinite in number, can nevertheless operate simultaneously.” Consequently Suarez denies the demonstrative validity of the proofs offered by St. Thomas for God’s existence. He explains his reason for departing from the Angelic Doctor. He substitutes for divine motion what he calls “simultaneous cooperation.” The First Cause, he says, does not bring the intermediate second cause to its act, is not the cause of its activity. In a series of subordinated causes, higher causes have influence, not on lower causes, but only on their common effect. All the causes are but partial causes, influencing not the other causes, but the effect only. All the causes are coordinated rather than subordinated. Hence the term: simultaneous concursus, illustrated in two men drawing a boat. .

This view of Suarez is found also in Molina. Molina says: “When causes are subordinated, it is not necessary that the superior cause moves the inferior cause, even though the two causes be essentially subordinated and depend on each other in producing a common effect. It suffices if each has immediate influence on the effect.” This position of Molina supposes that active potency can, without impulse from a higher cause, reduce itself to act. But he confuses active potency with virtual act, which of itself leads to complete act. Now, since a virtual act is more perfect than potency, we have again, contrary to the principle of causality, the more perfect issuing from the less perfect.

St. Thomas and his school maintain this principle: No created cause is its own existence, or its own activity, hence can never act without divine premotion. In this principle lies the heart of the proofs, by way of causality, for God’s existence. .

All these consequences, to repeat, follow from the real distinction between potency and act. From it proceed: the real distinction between matter and form, the real distinction between finite essence and existence, the real distinction between active potency and its operation.

In the supernatural order we find still another consequence from the idea of potency, namely, obediential potency, that is, the aptitude of created nature, either to receive a supernatural gift or to be elevated to produce a supernatural effect. This potency St. Thomas conceives as the nature itself,

of the soul, say, as far as that nature is suited for elevation to a superior order. This suitableness means no more than non-repugnance, since God can do in us anything that is not self-contradictory. .

For Suarez, on the contrary, this obediential potency, which he regards as an imperfect act, is rather an active potency, as if the vitality of our supernatural acts were natural, instead of being a new, supernatural life. Thomists answer Suarez thus: An obediential potency, if active, would be natural, as being a property of our nature, and simultaneously supernatural, as being proportioned to an object formally supernatural. .

A last important consequence, again in the supernatural order, of the real distinction between potency and act, between essence and existence, runs as follows: In Christ there is, for both natures, the divine and the human, one sole existence, the existence, namely, of the Word who has assumed human nature. Suarez, on the contrary, who denies real distinction between created essence and its existence, has to admit two existences in Christ. This position reduces notably the intimacy of the hypostatic union.

Such then are the principal irradiations of the Aristotelian distinction between potency and act. Real, objective potency is not act, however imperfect. But it is essentially proportioned to act. Next come consequences in the four kinds of causes, with the absurdity, in necessary causal subordination, of regress in infinitum, either in efficient causality or in final causality. Culmination of these consequences is the existence of God, pure act, at the summit of all existence, since the more cannot come from the less, and in the giver there is more than in the receiver. The first cause, therefore, of all things cannot be something that is not as yet, but is still in process of becoming, even if you call that process self-creating evolution. The first cause is act, existing from all eternity, is self-subsisting Being, in whom alone essence and existence are identified. Already here we see that nothing, absolutely no reality, can exist without Him, without depending on Him, without a relation to Him of causal dependence on Him. Our free act of will, being a reality, has to Him the same relation of causal dependence, and is thereby, as we shall see, not destroyed, but on the contrary, made an actual reality. .

This metaphysical synthesis, as elaborated by Aquinas, while far more perfect than the doctrine explicitly taught by Aristotle, is nevertheless, philosophically speaking, merely the full development of that doctrine. In Aristotle the doctrine is still a child. In Aquinas it has grown to full age.

Now this progress, intrinsically philosophic, was not carried on without the extrinsic concurrence of divine revelation. Revelation, for St. Thomas, was not, in philosophy, a principle of demonstration. But it was a guiding star. The revealed doctrine of free creation ex nihilo was, in particular, a precious guide. But under this continued extrinsic guidance, philosophy, metaphysics, guarded its own formal object, to which it is by nature proportioned, namely, being as being, known in the minor sense world. By this formal object, metaphysics remains specifically distinct from theology, which has its own distinctive formal object, namely, God as He is in Himself, God in His own inner life, known only by divine revelation. And here we can already foresee what harmony, in the mind of St. Thomas, unites these two syntheses, a harmony wherein metaphysics gladly becomes the subordinated instrument of theology. .

Second Part

Theology and De Deo Uno

Chapter 6

The Nature Of Theological Work

MUCH has been written in recent years on the nature of theological development and in widely divergent directions, also by disciples of St. Thomas. One much ventilated question is that of the definability of theological conclusions properly so called, namely, conclusions obtained by a genuinely illative process, from one premise of faith and one premise of reason. On this question Father Marin-Sola is far from being in accord with Father Reginald M. Schultes, O. P. We have personally written on this subject, refusing with Father Schultes to admit definability of the theological conclusion as above defined. .

Father Charlier, still more recently, has entered the lists in diametrical opposition to Father Marin-Sola. His thesis runs thus: Demonstration, in the strict sense of the word, cannot be employed in theology. Theology, he argues, cannot of itself arrive with certitude at these conclusions, which belong to the metaphysics that the theologian employs rather than to theology itself. Theology must be content to explain and to systematize the truths of faith. But, of itself, it can never deduce with certitude conclusions which are only virtually revealed. .

One position then, that of Marin-Sola, holds that theological reasoning strictly illative can discover truths capable of being defined as dogmas of faith. The contrary position, that of Charlier, holds that theology is of itself incapable even of discovering such truths with certitude.

Neither of these opposed positions is, we think, in accord with the teaching of St. Thomas and his chief commentators. Genuine Thomistic teaching, we hold, is an elevated highway, running above these two extremes. Extended quotation, from the saint and his best interpreters, would sustain our view. We have elsewhere followed this method. Here we

must be content to attain our goal by enumerating and outlining the various steps of theological procedure.

ARTICLE ONE: THE PROPER OBJECT OF THEOLOGY

Theology is a science made possible by the light of revelation. Theology, therefore, presupposes faith in revealed truths. Hence the proper object of theology is the inner life of God as knowable by revelation and faith. By this object theology rises above metaphysics, which sees in God the first and supreme being, the author of nature, whereas theology attains God as God (sub ratione Deitatis). .

How does theology differ from faith? The object of theology, in the theologian who is still viator, is not the Deity clearly seen, as in the beatific vision, but the Deity known obscurely by faith. Theology, then, is distinguished from faith, which is its root, because theology is the science of the truths of faith, which truths it explains, defends, and compares. Comparing these truths with one another, theology sees their mutual relations, and the consequences which they virtually contain. But to use this method for attaining its proper object, the inner life of God as God, theology must presuppose metaphysics which sees God as the Supreme Being. That this is the object of metaphysics is clear, we may note, from revelation itself. When God says to Moses: “I am who am,” we recognize in those words the equivalent statement: God alone is subsistent existence. .

Theology, therefore, though here below it proceeds from principles which are believed, not seen as evident in themselves, is nevertheless a branch of knowledge, a science in the proper sense of the word. The characteristic of science is to show “the reason why this thing has just these properties.” Theology does just that. It determines the nature and properties of sanctifying grace, of infused virtue, of faith, of hope, of charity. St. Thomas, in defining theology, uses the Aristotelian definition of science which he had explained in his commentary on the Later Analytics. To know scientifically, he says, is to know this thing as what it is and why it cannot be otherwise. Theology then is a science, not merely in the broad sense of certain knowledge, but also in the strict sense of conclusions known by principles. .

Such is theology here below. But when the theologian is no longer viator, when he has received the beatific vision, then, without medium, in the

Word, he will behold the inner life of God, the divine essence. Then he will know, with fullest light, what before he knew by faith. And beyond that, extra Verbum, he will see the conclusions derivable from faith. In heaven, theology will be perfect, its principles evident. But here below, theology is in an imperfect state. It has not, so to speak, become adult.

Hence theology, as attainable here below, while it is a science, and is a sub-alternate science, resting on the mind of God and the blessed in heaven, is nevertheless, when compared with all merely human knowledge, a wisdom specifically higher than metaphysics, though not as high as the infused faith which is its source. Theology then, generated by the theological labor, is by its root essentially supernatural. If, consequently, the theologian loses faith (by grave sin against that virtue): there remains in him only the corpse of theology, a body without soul, since he no longer adheres, formally and infallibly, to revealed truths, the sources of the theological habit. And this is true, even if, following his own will and judgment, he still holds materially one or the other of these truths.

So much on the nature of theology. We must now consider the different steps, the different procedures, to be followed by the theologian, if he would avoid opposed and exaggerated extremes.

ARTICLE TWO: STEPS IN THEOLOGICAL PROCEDURE

These steps are pointed out by St. Thomas, first in the first question of the Summa, secondly, more explicitly, when he treats of specific subjects: eternal life, for example, predestination, the Trinity, the mysteries of the Incarnation, the Redemption, the Eucharist, and the other sacraments. We distinguish six such successive procedures.

1. The positive procedure.
2. The analytic procedure.
3. The apologetic procedure.
4. The manifestative procedure.
5. The explicative procedure.
6. The illative procedure.

a) of truths explicitly revealed.
b) of truths not explicitly revealed.
c) of truths virtually revealed.

1. Theology accepts the depositum fidei, and studies its documents, Scripture and tradition, under the guidance of the teaching Church. This is positive theology, which includes study of biblical theology, of the documents and organs of tradition, of the various forms of the living magisterium.

2. The next step is analysis of revealed truths, in particular of the more fundamental truths, to establish the precise meaning of the subject and the predicate by which that truth is expressed. Take, for example, this sentence: The Word was made flesh. Theological analysis shows that the sentence means: The Word, who is God, became man. This labor of conceptual analysis appears in his first articles when St. Thomas begins a new treatise, on the Trinity, for example, or the Incarnation. In these articles you will search in vain for a theological conclusion. You will find but simple analysis, sometimes grammatical, but generally conceptual, of the subject and predicate of the revealed proposition.

3. On the next step theology defends revealed truths by showing either that they are contained in the deposit of faith, or that they contain no manifest impossibility. No effort is made to demonstrate positively the intrinsic possibility of the mystery. If such possibility could be demonstrated by reason alone, then would the existence of the mystery be likewise demonstrated, for the Trinity is a being, not contingent, but necessary. The only thing attempted in this apologetic procedure is to show that there is no evident contradiction in the proposition which enunciates the dogma. God is triune, and one. He is “one” by nature, and “triune” in so far as this unique nature is possessed by three distinct persons, as in a triangle, to illustrate, the three angles have the same surface.

4. On the fourth level theology uses arguments of appropriateness, to illumine, not to demonstrate, revealed truth. Thus, to clarify the dogma, say, of the Word’s eternal generation or that of the redemptive Incarnation, theology appeals to the following principle: God is by nature self-diffusive; and the more elevated good is, the more intimately and abundantly does it communicate itself. Hence it is appropriate that God, the supreme Good, communicate His entire nature in the eternal generation of the Word, and that the Word be incarnate for our salvation. These mysteries, so runs the common theological doctrine, cannot be proved, and cannot be disproved, and although they do have a persuasive probability, they are held with certitude by faith alone. .

5. Further, theology has recourse to explicative reasoning, to demonstrate, often in strictest form, a truth, not new, but implicitly contained in a revealed truth. This procedure passes from a confused formulation of a truth to a more distinct formulation of the same truth. To illustrate: take the sentence, The Word, which was God, was made flesh. Against the Arians, that sentence was thus expressed: The Word, consubstantial with the Father, was made man. This consubstantiality with the Father, whatever some writers say, is much more than a theological conclusion, deduced illatively from a revealed truth. It is a truth identical, only more explicitly stated, with that found in the Prologue of St. John's Gospel.

A second illustration: Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and gates of hell shall not prevail against it. This same truth is expressed, only more explicitly, as follows: The sovereign pontiff, successor of St. Peter, is infallible when ex cathedra he teaches the universal Church in matters of faith and morals. This latter formula does not enunciate a new truth deduced from the first. In each sentence we have the same subject and the same predicate, joined by the verb "to be." But the language, metaphorical in the first formula, becomes proper, scientific, in the second.

6a. Again, theology uses reasoning, not merely explicative, but strictly and objectively illative, to draw from two revealed truths a third truth, revealed elsewhere, often less explicitly, in Scripture and tradition. This kind of illative reasoning, frequent in theology, unites to the articles of the Creed other truths of faith, and thus forms a body of doctrine, with all constituent truths in mutual relation and subordination. This body of doctrine stands higher than all theological systems, higher even than theological science itself. Thus we understand the title: De sacra doctrina, given by St. Thomas to the first question in the Summa theologiae. The first article of that question is entitled, doctrina fidei. In the following articles, the subject is doctrina theologica, sacra theologia, which is declared to be a science, itself superior to systems that have not, properly speaking, attained the status of science. How the various elements of this body of doctrine are grouped around the articles of faith becomes apparent only by that objective illative procedure, of which we are now speaking, which from two revealed truths deduces a third which has also been revealed, even at times explicitly, in Scripture or tradition. To illustrate, let us take these two statements: first,

“Jesus is truly God,” second, “Jesus is truly man.” From these two statements there follows, by a strictly illative process, this third statement: Jesus has two minds and two wills. And this third truth is elsewhere explicitly revealed, in the words of Jesus Himself: “Not as I will, but as Thou wilt.” .

Now a conclusion of this kind, a conclusion revealed elsewhere, can evidently be defined by the Church as a dogma of faith. Does it follow, then, as is sometimes said, that in such cases theological reasoning is useless? Not at all. Reasoning in such cases gives us understanding of a truth which before we accepted only by faith. The characteristic of demonstration is not necessarily to discover a new truth, but to make the truth known in its source, its cause. In this kind of reasoning we realize the full force of the classic definition of theology: faith seeking self-understanding. This realization is very important. .

6b. Theology uses reasoning, illative in the proper sense, to deduce from two revealed truths a third truth not revealed elsewhere, that is, not revealed in itself, but only in the other two truths of which it is the fruit. Thomists generally admit that such a conclusion, derived from two truths of faith, is substantially revealed, and hence can be defined as dogma. Reasoning enters here only to bring together two truths which of themselves suffice to make the third truth known. The knowledge of the third truth depends on the reasoning, not as cause, but only as condition. .

6c. Lastly, from one truth of faith and one of reason, theology, by a process strictly illative, deduces a third truth. Such a truth, since it is not revealed simply and properly speaking (simpliciter): is revealed only virtually, that is, in its cause. A truth of this kind, strictly deduced, lies in the domain, not of faith, but of theological science.

A subdivision enters here. In every reasoning process the major proposition, being more universal, is more important than the minor. Now, in the present kind of argument the truth of faith may be either the major or the minor. If the major is of faith, the conclusion is nearer to revelation than is a conclusion where the truth of faith forms the minor.

Many theologians, in particular many Thomists, maintain that a conclusion of this kind, where either premise is a truth of reason, cannot be defined as a dogma of faith. They argue thus: Such a conclusion has, simply speaking, not been revealed. It has been revealed only in an improper sense (secundum quid): only virtually, in its cause. It is, properly speaking, a

deduction from revelation. It is true, the Church can condemn the contradictory of such a conclusion, but if she does, she condemns it, not as heretical, that is, as contrary to the faith, but as erroneous, that is, contrary to an accepted theological conclusion.

Exemplifications of the six theological procedures we have now outlined appear throughout the Summa, particularly in the first question, and in the structure of all the theological treatises of St. Thomas.

The reason is now clear, we think, why we cannot admit the two contrary opinions we spoke of at the beginning of this section. Not all theological conclusions can be defined as dogmas of faith. In particular, we cannot admit that the Church can define as dogma, as simply revealed by God, a truth which is not revealed simpliciter, but only virtually, secundum quid, in causa.

On the other hand, theology can very well reach certitude in such a conclusion which lies in its own proper domain, which is more than a conclusion of metaphysics placed at the service of theology. Further, the most important task of theology is evidently not the drawing of these conclusions, but rather the explanation of the truths of faith themselves, penetration into their deeper meaning, into their mutual relation and subordination. In this task theology has, as aids, the gifts of knowledge and wisdom, by which theological labor becomes more penetrating and savorous. Conclusions are thus sought, not for their own sake, but as a road to more perfect understanding of the truths of faith. Such labor, manifesting the deep inner power of faith, is proportioned to the scope so beautifully expressed by the Council of the Vatican: to attain, God granting, some understanding of the mysteries, an understanding in every way most fruitful. .

ARTICLE THREE: THE EVOLUTION OF DOGMA

The conception of theology outlined in the foregoing pages, though it denies the definability of theological conclusions properly so called, still occupies an important place in the evolution of dogma.

St. Thomas is certainly not unacquainted with dogmatic progress. Let us but recall his remarks concerning venatio (“hunting”): in his commentary on the Later Analytics, on how to find, first a definition that is merely nominal (quid nominis): which expresses a confused notion of the thing to

be defined, and, second, how to pass from this nominal definition to one that is clear, distinct and real. The most important task both of philosophy and of theology lies in this methodic step from the confused concept of common sense (or of Christian sense) to a concept that is clear and distinct. This process is not that from premise to conclusion. Rather, we deal with one concept all the way through, a concept, at first generic, becoming by precision specific, and then, by induction, distinguished from concepts which more or less closely resemble it. In this fashion have been reached the precise definitions now prevailing, of substance, of life, of man, of soul, of intellect, of will, of free will, of all the various virtues.

This same conceptual analysis has furnished great contributions to the refining of concepts indispensable in dogmatic formulas, of being, say, created and uncreated, of unity, of truth, of goodness, ontological and moral; concepts, further, of analogy relative to God, of divine wisdom, of the divine will, of uncreated love, of providence, of predestination; or again, of nature, of person, of relation, in giving precise formulas to the teaching on the Trinity and the Incarnation; of grace, free will, merit, sin, virtue, faith, hope, charity, justification; of sacrament, character, sacramental grace, transubstantiation, contrition; of beatitude, pain in purgatory and in hell, and so on.

Thus we see that immense conceptual labor is pre-required before we can proceed to deduce theological conclusions. Confused concepts, expressed in nominal definitions or in current terms of Scripture and tradition, must become distinct and precise, if we would refute the heresies that deform revelation itself. Long schooling is needed before we can grasp the profound import, sublimity, and fertility of the principles which faith gives us.

Here lies the most important contribution of theological science to dogmatic development. And the degree of merit which a theological system will have in efficacious promotion of this development will depend on the universality of its synthesis. A synthesis generated from the idea of God, author of all things in the order both of nature and of grace, must necessarily be universal, whereas a synthesis dominated by particular, partial, and subordinated concepts, the free will of man, say, cannot reach a true universality, attainable only under a spiritual sun which illumines all parts of the system.

As image of the relation between theological systems and faith, we suggest a polygon inscribed in a circle. The circle stands for the simplicity and superiority of the doctrines of faith. The inscribed polygon, with its many angles, contains the rich details of the theological system. The polygon traced by Nominalism differs by far from that initiated by St. Augustine and elaborated by St. Thomas. But even if it is conceived as perfect as possible, the polygon can never have the transcendent simplicity of the circle. Theology, likewise, the more it advances, the more does it humiliate itself before the superiority of that faith which it never ceases to set in relief. Theology is a commentary ever drawing attention to the word of God which it comments on. Theology, like the Baptist, forgets itself in the cry: Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.

Chapter 7

The Proofs Of God’s Existence

To show the structure and style of the treatise De Deo uno, as that treatise is found in the Summa, as understood by the Thomistic school, our first consideration must be given to the proofs there given for God’s existence, since these proofs are starting points in deducing all divine attributes. Next, we will dwell on the pre-eminence of the Deity, and the nature and limits of our knowledge, natural and supernatural, of that divine nature. The last chapters, then, will speak of God’s wisdom, of His will and His love, of providence and predestination.

In the Summa, St. Thomas reassumes, from a higher viewpoint, proofs for God’s existence already given by Aristotle, Plato, Neo-Platonists, and Christian philosophers. After a synthetic exposition of these five arguments, we will examine their validity and point of culmination.

1. Synthetic Exposition

Examining these five ways, the saint finds in them generic types under which all other proofs may be ranged. We have given elsewhere a long exposition of this problem.

St. Thomas does not admit that an a priori proof of God’s existence can be given. He grants indeed that the proposition, God exists, is in itself evident, and would therefore be self-evident to us if we had a priori face-to-face knowledge of God; then we would see that His essence includes existence, not merely as an object of abstract thought, but as a reality objectively present. But in point of fact we have no such a priori knowledge of God. We must begin with a nominal definition of God, conceiving Him only confusedly, as the first source of all that is real and good in the world. From this abstract knowledge, so far removed from direct intuition of God’s essence, we cannot deduce a priori His existence as a concrete fact.

It is true we can know a priori the truth of this proposition: If God exists in fact, then He exists of Himself. But in order to know that He exists in fact, we must begin with existences which we know by sense experience, and then proceed to see if these concrete existences necessitate the actual objective existence of a First Cause, corresponding to our abstract concept, our nominal definition of God. .

This position, the position of moderate realism, is intermediary, between the agnosticism of Hume on the one hand, and, on the other, that excessive realism, which in varying degree we find in Parmenides, Plato, and the Neoplatonists, and which in a certain sense reappears in St. Anselm, and later, much accentuated, in Spinoza, in Malebranche and the Ontologists, who believe that they have an intuition and not merely an abstract concept of God's nature.

The five classical proofs for God's existence rest, one and all, on the one principle of causality, expressed in ever deepening formulas, as follows. First: whatever begins has a cause. Second: every contingent thing, even if it should be ab aeterno, depends on a cause which exists of itself. Third: that which has a share in existence depends ultimately on a cause which is existence itself, a cause whose very nature is to exist, which alone can say: I am who am. Wherever, then, we do not find this identity, wherever we find composition, union between essence and existence, there we must mount higher, for union presupposes unity.

Most simply expressed, causality means: the more does not come from the less, the more perfect cannot be produced by the less perfect. In the world we find things which reach existence and then disappear, things whose life is temporary and perishable, men whose wisdom or goodness or holiness is limited and imperfect; then above all this limited perfection we must find at the summit Him who from all eternity is self-existing perfection, who is life itself, wisdom itself, goodness itself, holiness itself.

To deny this is to affirm that the more comes from the less, that the intelligence of a genius, that the goodness of a saint, come from blind material fatality. In this general formula are contained all a posteriori proofs, all founded on the principle of causality.

To see the validity of these arguments we may recall here what was said above on the law of necessary subordination in causes. In looking for the cause here and now required for this and that existent reality, we cannot have recourse to causes that no longer exist. Without grandfather and father

this son would not exist. But he can now exist, though they and all his ancestors may be dead. They too, like himself, were contingent, not necessary, and, like him, compel us to look for a cause that gave them existence. They had each received existence, life, intelligence. None among them, progenitor or descendant, could ever say: I am the life. In all forms of life the same principle holds good. The first source, the first ancestor, would have to be its own cause. .

Further, must we admit at all that contingent existences necessarily had a beginning? St. Thomas says: No, this is a question of past fact which we cannot know a priori. But contingent existence, though it should be without beginning, can simply not be conceived without origin, without a cause, which had and has an unreceived existence and life, the eternal source of received existence and life.

The saint gives us an illustration. The footprint on the sand presupposes the foot from which it came, but if the foot were eternally placed on the sand, the footprint too would be eternal, without beginning, but not without origin. The priority of the foot is a priority, not of time and duration, but of origin and causality. Thus the whole world, with or without beginning, has its origin in the Supreme Cause. .

The cause demanded by existing facts, therefore, is not to be found in a series accidentally subordinated, in which previous causes are just as poor as subsequent causes, whose order itself might have been inverted. The cause necessarily required for this existing fact can be found only in a series of causes essentially subordinated, and here and now actually existing. This is what metaphysicians term the “search for the proper cause,” that is, the cause necessarily required here and now for the effect in question. This is the meaning of the words: Any effect suffices to show that its proper causes exists. We do not say “that its proper cause once existed.” From a son’s actual existence we cannot conclude that his father still exists. The son’s existence which, in becoming, in fieri, at the moment of generation depended on the father’s existence, does not thus depend quoad esse, for continued existence. .

This dependence of effect on its proper cause is as necessary and immediate as is the dependence of characteristic properties on the nature of the circle, from which they are derived. Illustrative examples: the murderer murders, light illuminates, fire heats.

Let us see this principle at work in the first of the five ways of proving God's existence. Motion is not self-existent; we instinctively ask for the source, the moving agent. If motion is not self-explanatory, then nothing else that is in motion is self-explanatory. Hence the proper cause of motion is something that is not in motion, an unmoved mover, the source of all movement, of all change, local, quantitative, qualitative, vital, intellectual, voluntary, a mover which is its own uncaused and unreceived activity.

In illustration, take an example already given: the sailor supported, in ascending order, by the ship, by the waves, by the earth, by the sun, by some still higher cosmic center. Here we have a series of causes, necessarily subordinated and here and now existent. Were there here no ultimate and supreme center, no unmoved mover, then there could not be any intermediate center, and the fact we started from would be nonexistent. For the whole universe, with its all but numberless movements and intermediate sources of movement, you still need a supreme mover, just as necessarily, to illustrate, as you need a spring in your watch if the hands are to move. The wheels in the watch, whether few or many, can move the hands only so far as they are themselves moved by the spring. This proof is valid. But a wrong conception of causality can render it invalid. .

Let us now look at the five different ways on which St. Thomas follows the applications of the principle of causality.

1. If movement is not self-explanatory, whether the movement is corporeal or spiritual, it necessitates a first mover.

2. If interconnected efficient causes are here and now actually operating, air and warmth, say, to preserve my life, then there must be a supreme cause from which here and now these causes derive their preservative causality.

3. If there exist contingent beings, which can cease to exist, then there must be a necessary being which cannot cease to exist, which of itself has existence, and which, here and now, gives existence to these contingent beings. If once nothing at all existed, there would not be now, or ever, anything at all in existence. To suppose all things contingent, that is, of themselves non-existent, is to suppose an absurdity.

4. If there are beings in the world which differ in their degree of nobility, goodness, and truth, it is because they have but a share, a part, because they participate diversely, in existence, in nobility, goodness, and truth. Hence there is, in each of them, a composition, a union, between the subject which participates and the perfection, existence, goodness, truth, which are

participated to them. Now composition, union, presupposes the unity which it participates. Hence, at the summit, there must be one cause, one source of all perfection, who alone can say, not merely “I have existence, truth, and life,” but rather “I am existence, truth, and life.”

5. Lastly, if we find in the world, inanimate and animated, natural activities manifestly proportioned to a purpose, this proportioned fitness presupposes an intelligence which produces and preserves this purposeful tendency. If the corporeal world tends to a cosmic center of cohesion, if plant and animal tend naturally to assimilation and reproduction, if the eye is here for vision and the ear for hearing, feet for walking and wings for flying; if human intelligence tends to truth and human will to good, and if each man by nature longs for happiness, then necessarily these natural tendencies, so manifestly ordained to a proportioned good, a proportioned purpose, presuppose a supreme ordinator, a supreme intelligence, which knows and controls the raison d’etre of all things and this supreme ordinator must be wisdom itself and truth itself. For again, union presupposes unity, presupposes absolute identity. A thing uncaused, says St. Thomas, is of itself, and immediately (i. e.: without intermediary) being itself, one by nature, not by participation. .

2. Fundamental Validity Of The Five Ways

All these proofs rest on the principle of causality: Anything that exists, if it does not exist of itself, depends in last analysis on something that does exist of itself. To deny this principle leads to absurdity. To say “a thing contingent, that is, a thing which of itself does not have existence, is nevertheless uncaused” is equivalent to saying: A thing may exist of itself and simultaneously not exist of itself. Existence of itself would belong to it, both necessarily and impossibly. Existence would be an inseparable predicate of a being which can be separated from existence. All this is absurd, unintelligible. Kant here objects. It is absurd, he says, for human intelligence, but not perhaps in itself absurd and unintelligible.

In answer, let us define absurdity. Absurd is that which cannot exist because it is beyond the bounds of objective reality, without any possible relation to reality. It is agreement between two terms which objectively can never agree. Thus, an uncaused union of things in themselves diverse is absurd. The only cause of union is unity. Union means a share in unity, because it presupposes things which are diverse, brought together by a higher unity. When you say: “Anything (from angel to grain of sand) can

arise without any cause from absolute nothing," then you are making a statement which is not merely unsupported and gratuitous, but which is objectively absurd. Hence, we repeat: A being which is not self-existent, which only participates in existence, presupposes necessarily a Being which by nature is self-existent. Unity by participation presupposes unity by essence. .

We have here presented the principle of causality, as St. Thomas does in question three, by the way that ascends from effect to cause. The same truth can be treated in the descending order, from cause to effect, as it is in fact treated later in the Summa. Many modern authors proceed from this second viewpoint. But the first order ought to precede the second. .

To proceed. The denial of the principle of causality is not, it is true, a contradiction as immediately evident as if I were to say: "The contingent is not contingent." St. Thomas gives the reason why this is so. In denying causality, he says, we do not deny the definition itself of the contingent. What we do deny is, not the essence Of the contingent, but an immediate characteristic (proprium) Of that essence. But to deny the principle as thus explained is as absurd as to affirm that we cannot, knowing the essence of a thing (e. g.: of a circle): deduce from that essence its characteristics. Hence to deny essential dependence of contingent being on its cause leads to absurdity, because such denial involves the affirmation that existence belongs positively to a thing which is not by nature self-existent and still is uncaused. Thus we would have, in one subject, the presence both of unessential existence and of non-dependence on any cause of its existence: a proposition objectively absurd.

But we find the denial of this principle of causality in ways that are still less evidently contradictory (in Spinoza, for example) where the contradiction is, at first sight, hidden and unapparent. To illustrate. Some who read the sentence, "Things incorporeal can of themselves occupy a place," cannot at once see that the sentence contains a contradiction. And still it is absurd to think that a spirit, which lives in an order higher than the order of quantity and space, should nevertheless be conceived as of itself filling place, place being a consequence of quantity and space. .

Likewise there are contradictions which emerge only under the light of revelation. Suppose, as illustration, a man says there are four persons in God. Faith, not reason, tells us the proposition is absurd. Only those who

enjoy the beatific vision, who know what God is, can see the proposition's intrinsic absurdity.

If denial or doubt of the principle of causality leads to doubt or denial of the principle of contradiction, then the five classic proofs, truly understood, of God's existence cannot be rejected without finding absurdity at the root of all reality. We must choose: either the Being who exists necessarily and eternally, who alone can say "I am truth and life," or then a radical absurdity at the heart of the universe. If truly God is necessary Being, on which all else depends, then without Him the existence of anything else becomes impossible, inconceivable, absurd. In point of fact, those who will not admit the existence of a supreme and universal cause, which is itself existence and life, must content themselves with a creative evolution, which, lacking any raison d'etre, becomes a contradiction: universal movement, without subject distinct from itself, without efficient cause distinct from itself, without a goal distinct from itself, an evolution wherein, without cause, the more arises from the less. Contradiction, identity, causality, all first principles go overboard. Let us repeat. Without a necessary and eternal being, on which all else depends, nothing exists and nothing can exist. To deny God's existence and simultaneously to affirm any existence is to fall necessarily into contradiction, which does not always appear on the surface, in the immediate terms employed, but which is always there if you will but examine those terms. Many of Spinoza's conclusions contain these absurdities. A fortiori, they lie hidden in atheistic doctrine which denies God's existence. Hence agnosticism, which doubts God's existence, can thereby be led to doubt even the first principle of thought and reality, the principle of contradiction.

Having thus shown the validity of the five ways to prove God's existence we now turn to dwell on their unity, the point where they all converge and culminate.

3. Point Of Culmination

This point is found in the idea of self-subsistent being. This idea unifies the five ways as a common keystone unifies five arches. Five attributes appear, one at the end of each way, in ascending order thus: first mover of the universe, corporeal and spiritual, first efficient cause, first necessary being, supreme being, supreme directing intelligence. Now these five attributes are to be found only in self-subsistent being, who alone can say: "I am who am." Let us look at each of the five.

The prime mover must be his own activity. But mode of activity follows mode of being. Hence the prime mover must be his own subsistent being.

The first cause, being uncaused, must have in itself the reason for its existence. But the reason why it cannot cause itself is that it must be before it can cause. Hence, not having received existence, it must be existence.

The first necessary being also implies existence as an essential attribute, that is, it cannot be conceived as merely having existence, but must be existence.

The supreme being, being absolutely simple and perfect, cannot have a mere participated share of existence, but must be of itself existence.

Lastly, the supreme directing intelligence cannot be itself proportioned to an object other than itself; it must itself be the object actually and always known. Hence it must be able to say, not merely "I have truth and life," but rather "I am truth and life."

Here, then, lies the culminating keystone point, the metaphysical terminus of the road that ascends from the sense world to God. This ascending road ends where begins the higher road, the road of the wisdom which, from on high, judges the world by its supreme cause. .

Thus again, at the summit of the universe reappears the fundamental Thomistic truth. In God alone are essence and existence identified. In this supreme principle lies the real and essential distinction of God from the world. This distinction reveals God as unchangeable and the world as changeable (the first three proofs for His existence). It becomes more precise when it reveals God as absolutely simple and the world as multifariously composed (fourth and fifth proofs). It finds its definitive formula when it reveals God as "He who is," whereas all other things are only receivers of existence, hence composed of receiver and received, of essence and existence. The creature is not its own existence, it has existence after receiving it. If the verb "is" expresses identity of subject and predicate, the negation "is not" denies this identification.

This truth is vaguely grasped by the common sense of natural reason, which, by a confused intuition, sees that the principle of identity is the supreme law of all reality, and hence the supreme law of thought. As A is identified with A, so is supreme reality identified with absolutely one and immutable Being, transcendently and objectively distinct from the universe, which is essentially diversified and mutable. This culminating point of

natural reason, thus precisioned by philosophic reason, is at the same time revealed in this word of God to Moses: “I am who am.” .

Now we understand the formulation given to the twenty-third of the twenty-four theses. It runs thus: The divine essence, since it is identified with the actual exercise of existence itself, that is, since it is self-subsistent existence, is by that identification proposed to us in its well-formed metaphysical constitution, and thereby gives us the reason for its infinite perfection. To say it briefly: God alone is self-subsistent existence, in God alone are essence and existence identified. This proposition, boundless in its range, reappears continually on the lips of St. Thomas. But it loses its deep meaning in those who, like Scotus and Suarez, refuse to admit in all creatures a real distinction between essence and existence.

To repeat. According to St. Thomas and his school God alone is His own existence, uncaused, unparticipated self-existence, whereas no creature is its own existence; the existence it has is participated, received, limited, by the essence, by the objective capacity which receives it. This truth is objective, a reality which antecedes all operation of the mind. Hence the composition of essence and existence is not a mere logical composition, but something really found in the very nature of created reality. Were it otherwise, were the creature not thus composed, then it would be act alone, pure act, no longer really and essentially distinct from God. .

Self-existent understanding is given by some Thomists as the metaphysical essence of God, as the point where the five ways converge and culminate. While we prefer the term self-existent being, self-existent existence, the difference between the two positions is less great than it might at first seem to be. Those who see that culminating point in ipsum esse subsistens, begin by teaching that God is not body but pure spirit. From that spirituality follow the two positions in question: first, that God is the supreme Being, self-existent in absolute spirituality at the summit of all reality; second, that He is the supreme intelligence, the supreme truth, the supreme directive intelligence of the universe.

On this question, then, of God’s metaphysical essence according to our imperfect way of understanding, the two positions agree. They agree likewise when the question arises: What is it that formally constitutes the essence of God as He is in Himself, as He is known by the blessed in heaven who see Him without medium, face to face? The answer runs thus: Deity itself, not self-subsistent existence, not self-existent understanding.

Self-subsisting existence indeed contains all divine attributes, but only implicitly, as deductions to be drawn therefrom in order, one by one. But Deity, God as He is in Himself, contains in transcendent simplicity all these divine attributes explicitly. The blessed in heaven, since they see God as He is, have no need of progressive deduction.

The pre-eminence of the Deity, this transcendent simplicity, will be our subject in the chapter which now follows.

Chapter 8

Divine Eminence

We give here the chief characteristics of the knowledge creatures may have of God: first by the beatific vision; secondly by the analogical knowledge we must be content with here below.

ARTICLE ONE: THE ESSENTIALLY SUPERNATURAL CHARACTER OF THE BEATIFIC VISION

The Deity, the divine essence as it is in itself, cannot be naturally known by any created intelligence, actual or possible. Created intelligence can indeed know God as being and First Being, starting from the analogical concept of being as the most universal of ideas. But such knowledge will never lead to positive and proper knowledge of the Deity as Deity. No creature, solely by its own natural powers, can ever see God without medium. “No one has ever seen God.” “He dwells in light inaccessible.” .

This impossibility, according to St. Thomas and his school, is an absolute impossibility, resting, not on a decree of God’s free will, as some authors say, but on the transcendence of God’s nature. The proper object of the created intelligence is that intelligible reality to which, as mirrored in creatures, it is proportioned. For the angels, that object is mirrored by spiritual realities, for man by sense realities. Thus man’s faculties are specifically distinguished by their formal objects, the human intellect, feeblest of intellects, by the intelligible realities of the sense world, the angel’s more vigorous intellect by the intelligible realities of the spirit world, the divine intellect by the uncreated reality of the divine essence itself. Hence, to say that created intelligence can, solely by its own natural powers, positively and properly know the divine essence, Deity in itself, can even see that essence without medium, is equivalent to saying that the

created intellect has the same formal object as has the uncreated intellect. And that is the same thing as to say that the intellective creature has the same nature as uncreated intelligence, that is, is God Himself. But a created and finite God is an absurdity, found in pantheism, which cannot distinguish uncreated nature from created nature, which forgets that God is God and creature is creature.

Further, if the created intellect can, by its own natural power, see God as He is, then elevation to the supernatural order of grace becomes impossible, since our soul, by its own spiritual nature itself would be a formal participation in the divine nature, which is the very definition of supernatural grace. Our natural intelligence would have the same formal object as have infused hope and infused charity. Hence these infused virtues would no longer be essentially supernatural. Only accidentally could they be infused, as might geometry, if God so willed. And this holds good also in the angels.

It is then an impossibility that a creature were able, solely by its own powers, to know, positively and properly, the divine essence, or even to see it without medium. And this impossibility is based on objective reality, on the unchangeable transcendence of the divine nature. Hence this impossibility is a metaphysical and absolute impossibility. Sense objects, says St. Thomas, which come from God as cause, are not the adequate effect of their cause. Hence, by knowing the sense world we cannot know God's full power nor, consequently, see His essence. These conclusions are equally valid in the world of spiritual realities. .

According to St. Thomas and his school, then, the creature's natural impossibility to see God, does not arise, as Duns Scotus maintains, from a decree of divine liberty, but from the unchangeable transcendence of the divine nature. According to Scotus, God could have willed that human intelligence could see Him naturally, that the light of glory and the beatific vision be properties of created nature, human or angelic, but that in fact God did not so will. Thus the distinction between the order of nature and the order of grace would be, not necessary, but contingent, resting on a decree of God's free will. Hence, according to Scotus, there is in our soul an inborn natural desire for the beatific vision. A vestige of this Scotistic doctrine appears in the "active obediential potency" of Suarez. .

Thomists reply as follows: An inborn natural appetite for the beatific vision, and also an active obediential potency, would be, on the one hand,

something essentially natural, as being a property of our nature, and, on the other hand, simultaneously something essentially supernatural, as being specifically proportioned to an object which is essentially supernatural. Thomists in general say further that the natural desire to see God, of which St. Thomas speaks, cannot be inborn. It is, they say, an elicited desire, that is, a desire which presupposes a natural act of knowledge, and that, as elicited, it is not an absolute and efficacious desire, but one that is conditional or inefficacious, to be realized in fact only on condition that God freely raises us to the supernatural order. Let us recall that, in 1567, the Church condemned the doctrine of Baius which admitted desire of such exigence that elevation to the order of grace would be due to our original nature and not a gratuitous gift. Thus he confounds the order of grace with the order of nature. Any efficacious natural desire would be exigent, grace would be due (debita) to nature.

St. Thomas, in speaking of conditional and inefficacious desire, uses the term “first will,” meaning thereby that attitude of the will which precedes the efficacious intention to attain an end. To illustrate. The farmer desires rain, really but inefficaciously. The merchant in a storm wills inefficaciously to save his goods, but efficaciously he wills to throw them into the sea. St. Thomas finds this distinction also in God’s will. God wills all men to be saved. If God willed this efficaciously, all men in fact would be saved. Hence we must admit in God an antecedent will, not indeed fruitless, but conditional and inefficacious. .

This desire to see God, natural but inefficacious, arises thus: Our intelligence seeks naturally to know the essence of the First Cause. But its natural knowledge of this cause rests on analogical concepts, many indeed, but all imperfect, which cannot make manifest the nature of that First Cause as it is in itself, in its absolute perfection and supreme simplicity. In particular, these limited concepts (justice, say, as contrasted with mercy) cannot show us how in God infinite mercy is identified with infinite justice, or omnipotent goodness with permission of evil. Dissatisfaction with our limitations leads to a natural inefficacious desire to see God without medium, if He would deign, gratuitously, to elevate us to see Him face to face.

Is this desire supernatural? Not properly and formally speaking, say the Thomists, but only materially, because it is by the natural light of the reason that we know this object to be desirable, and the object we desire is the

immediate vision of the Author of nature whose existence is naturally known. The desire in question is not a supernatural desire like that of hope and charity, which under the light of faith carries us toward the vision of the triune God, the author of grace. Thus we safeguard the principle that acts are formally distinguished by their object, which object must be in the same order as the acts. This would not be so if the desire in question were inborn, rising from the weight of nature, anteceding natural knowledge, and specifically proportioned to an object formally supernatural.

This natural desire is indeed a sign that the beatific vision is possible. It furnishes an argument of appropriateness for this possibility, an argument very deep and inviting, but not an argument that is apodictic. Such at least is the common view of Thomists, since there is here question of the intrinsic possibility of a supernatural gift, and what is essentially supernatural cannot be naturally demonstrated. Mysteries essentially supernatural are beyond the reach of the principles of natural reason. We cannot positively demonstrate the possibility of the Trinity. All that the created intellect, human or angelic, can at its utmost show, is this: not that the mysteries are possible, but that their impossibility cannot be demonstrated.

This then is the proposition upheld generally by Thomists: The possibility and a fortiori the existence of mysteries essentially supernatural, cannot naturally be either proved or disproved; and though they are supported by persuasive arguments of appropriateness, they are held with certainty by faith alone. .

The entire Thomistic school holds also that the gratuitous gift called the light of glory is absolutely necessary for the immediate vision of God. Any created intellectual faculty, angelic or human, since of itself it is intrinsically incapable of seeing God without medium, must of necessity, if it be called to such vision, be rendered capable thereto by a gift which raises it to a life altogether new, to a life which, since it gives to the intellectual faculty itself a supernatural vitality, makes also the intellectual act essentially supernatural. Here appears the marvelous sublimity of eternal life, which rises not only above all forces but also above all exigencies of any nature created or creatable. On this point Thomists differ notably from Suarez and from Vasquez. .

The beatific vision, finally, excludes all mediating ideas, even all infused ideas however perfect. Any created idea is only participatedly intelligible, and hence cannot make manifest as He is in Himself Him who is being

itself, who is self-subsistent existence, who is self-existent intellectual brightness.

But this beatific vision, which without the medium of any created idea sees God directly as He is, can still not comprehend God, that is, know Him with an act of knowledge as infinite as God Himself. God alone comprehends God. Hence the blessed in heaven, even while they see God face to face, can still not discover in Him the infinite multitude of possible beings which He can create. Their act of intellect, which knows Him without medium, is still a created act which knows an infinite object in a finite manner, with a limited penetration, proportioned to its degree of charity and merit. St. Thomas illustrates. A disciple can grasp a principle (subject and predicate) just as well as his master. But his knowledge does not equal that of the master in seeing all the consequences which that principle contains virtually. He sees the whole, but not wholly, totally.

ARTICLE TWO: ANALOGICAL KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

If the Deity as it is in itself cannot be known naturally, and not even by the supernatural gift of faith, how can our natural knowledge, remaining so imperfect, be nevertheless certain and immutable?

The answer to this question rests on the validity of analogical knowledge. Here, as we said above, Scotists, and also Suarez, do not entirely agree with Thomists. This lack of agreement rests on different definitions of analogy. Scotus admits a certain univocity between God and creatures. Suarez was certainly influenced on this point by Scotus.

The teaching of St. Thomas appears in its most developed form in the thirteenth question of the first part of the Summa. All articles of that question are concerned to show God’s pre-eminent transcendence. They may be summarized in a formula which is still current: All perfections are found in God, not merely virtually (virtualiter): but in formal transcendence (formaliter eminenter).

What is the exact sense of this formula? Our answer, by citing freely the first five articles, will again show that St. Thomas runs on an elevated highway between two contrary doctrines: between Nominalism, which, accepting the opinion attributed to Maimonides, leads to agnosticism, and a kind of anthropomorphism, which substitutes for analogy a minimum of univocity.

Our saint, then, establishes three positions.

1. Absolute perfections, which do not imply any imperfection and which it is always better to have than not to have, existence, for example, and truth, goodness, wisdom, love, are found formally in God, because they are in Him essentially and properly. They are found in Him essentially because, when we say “God is good,” we do not mean merely that He is the cause of goodness in creatures. If that were our meaning then we would say “God is a body,” since He is the cause of the corporeal world. Further, these perfections are in God properly speaking, that is, not metaphorically, as when we say “God is angry.”

The reason for this double assertion is that these absolute perfections, in contrast to mixed perfections, do not in their inner formal meaning imply any imperfection, although in creatures they are always found to be finite in mode and measure. Manifestly the first cause of perfection must pre-contain, in pre-eminent fashion, all those perfections which imply no imperfection, which it is better to have than not to have. Were it otherwise, the first cause could not give these perfections to His creatures, since perfection found in the effect must be first found in its cause. Hence no perfection can be refused to God unless it implies attributing to Him also an imperfection. On this truth theologians in general agree. Absolute perfections, then, we repeat, are in God essentially and formally.

2. The names which express these absolute perfections are not synonyms. Here Thomists, Scotists, and Suaresians are in agreement, and hence opposed to the Nominalists, who hold that these names are synonymous, distinguished only logically and quasi-verbally, as “Tullius” is distinguished from “Cicero.” They argue thus: Since in God all these perfections, being infinite, are really identified each with all others, we can substitute any one of them (e. g.: mercy) for any other (e. g.: justice): just as in a sentence about Cicero we can, without any change of meaning, write “Tullius” instead of “Cicero.”

Now this nominalistic position, which would allow us to say, for example, that God punishes by mercy and pardons by justice, makes all divine attributes meaningless and leads to full agnosticism, which says that God is absolutely unknowable.

3. Absolute perfections are found both in God and in creatures, not univocally, and not equivocally, but analogically. This is the precise

meaning of the term formaliter eminenter, where eminenter is equivalent to “not univocally, but analogically.” Let us listen to St. Thomas: .

“Any effect which does not show the full power of its cause receives indeed a perfection like that of its cause, but not in the same essential fullness [that is, in context, not univocally]: but in a deficient measure. Hence the perfection found divided and multiplied in effects pre-exists in unified simplicity in their cause.” Hence all perfections found divided among numerous creatures pre-exist as one, absolute, and simple unity in God.

This text is very important. It contains precisely the saint’s idea of analogy, an idea to which Suarez did not remain faithful. Suaresians often define analogy as follows: The idea conveyed by an analogous predicate (“being” [ens]: e. g.: in the expressions “Deus est ens, creatura est ens”) is, simply speaking, one idea, and only in a sense diversified. Thomists, on the contrary, speak thus: The idea conveyed by an analogous term (as above) is, simply speaking, diversified, and only in a sense one, that is, one proportionally, by similarity of proportions. .

This formula agrees perfectly with the text just cited from St. Thomas. In that same article he adds: “When God is called ‘wise’ and man is called ‘wise’, the idea conveyed by the one word is not found in the same way in both subjects.” Wisdom in God and wisdom in man are proportionally one, since wisdom in God is infinite and causative, whereas wisdom in man is a created thing, measured and limited by its object. And what holds good of wisdom holds good of all other absolute perfections.

This manner of speaking is entirely in harmony with the common teaching in logic on the distinction between analogical and univocal. The genus animal, animality, e. g.: is univocal, because it everywhere signifies a character found simply in the same meaning, in all animals, even in such a worm as does not have all the five exterior senses found in higher animals. In contrast, take the analogous term “cognition.” It expresses a perfection, essentially not one, but diversified, which, while found in sense cognition, is not found there in essentially the same way as it is found in intellective cognition. It is an idea proportionally one, in the sense that, just as sensation is related to sense object, so the intellective act is related to intelligible object. “Love” is similarly an idea proportionally one, love in the sense order being essentially different from love in the spiritual order.

Hence it follows that analogical perfection, in contrast to univocal, is not a perfectly abstract idea, because, since it expresses a likeness between two proportions, it must actually, though implicitly, express the two subjects thus proportioned. Animality is a notion perfectly abstracted from its subjects, expressing only potentially, in no wise actually, the subjects in which it is found. But cognition cannot be thought of without actual, though implicit, reference to the difference between subjects endowed only with sense and those endowed also with intellect. Hence the difficulty in so defining cognition as to make the definition applicable both to sense cognition, and to intellective cognition, and uncreated cognition.

If, then analogical perfection is only proportionally one, it follows that when we speak of God, there is an infinite distance between the two analogues, that is, between God as wise, say, and man as wise, although the analogical idea (wisdom) is found in each, not metaphorically, but properly. Wisdom in God is infinitely above wisdom in man, though wisdom in the proper sense is found both in God and in man. This truth may surprise us less if we recall that there is already an immeasurable distance between sense cognition and intellective cognition, though each is cognition in the proper sense of the word.

The terminology of St. Thomas and of the Thomistic definition of analogy are in full accord with these words of the Fourth Lateran Council: “Between Creator and creature there can never be found a likeness ever so great without finding in that likeness a still greater unlikeness.” This declaration is equivalent to saying that analogical perfection is, in its analogues, simply diversified, and only in a sense one, proportionally one.

Hence in the formula commonly accepted, viz.: absolute perfections are in God formally, the word “formally” must be understood thus: formally, not univocally, but analogically, yet properly, and not metaphorically. The adverb “formally” thus explained, we now turn to explain the second adverb, “pre-eminently.”

4. From what has already been said we see that the infinite mode in which the divine attributes exist in God remains hidden to us here below. Only negatively and relatively can we express that mode, as when we say “wisdom unlimited,” “wisdom supreme,” “sovereign wisdom.” Listen again to St. Thomas: “When this term ‘wise’ is said of man, the term somehow circumscribes and encloses the thing signified [the man’s wisdom, distinct from his essence, from his existence, from his power, etc.]. But not so

when it is said of God. Said of God, the term presents the thing signified (wisdom) as uncircumscribable, as transcending the meaning of the term." This is the meaning of "preeminently" in the term "formally pre-eminently"; but we must make that meaning still more precise.

It is clear from the foregoing conclusion that Scotus is wrong when he maintains that the divine perfections are distinguished one from the other by a formal-actual-natural distinction. This distinction, as explained by Scotus, is more than a virtual distinction, since it antecedes all act of our mind. Now such a distinction, anteceding human thought, must be real and objective. Such distinction in the attributes of God is irreconcilable with His sovereign simplicity, wherein all His attributes are identified. "In God all perfections are one and the same reality, except in terms that are relatively opposed." .

Distinction then among divine attributes must be but a virtual distinction, even a minor virtual distinction, since each attribute contains all others actually, but not explicitly, only implicitly, while genus contains its species, in no wise actually, but only potentially, virtually. Yet, on the other hand, against the Nominalists, we must also maintain that the names applied to God (e. g.: mercy and justice) are not synonyms. The distinction between them is not merely verbal ("Tullius" and "Cicero").

Hence arises a difficult question: How can these perfections be really identified with one another in God without destroying one another? How can each remain in Him formally, that is, essentially, properly, non-synonymously, and simultaneously be in Him pre-eminently, transcendently, infinitely? We can easily see, to illustrate, how the seven rainbow colors are pre-contained with virtual eminence in white light, since white light, formally, is not blue, say, or red. But the pre-eminent Deity is, not merely virtually, but formally, true and good and intelligent and merciful. To say that the Deity has all these attributes only virtually (just as it is virtually corporeal because it produces bodies) is to return to the error of Maimonides.

Let us repeat our question: How can the divine perfections be formally in God, if in Him they are all one identical reality? Scotus answers thus: They cannot be each formally in God unless they are, antecedently to any action of our mind, formally distinct one from another. Cajetan gives a profound answer to this difficulty, and his solution is generally held by Thomists. He writes: "Just as the reality called wisdom and the reality called justice are

found identified with that higher reality called Deity and hence are one reality in God: so the idea (ratio formalis) of wisdom and the idea of justice are identified with the higher idea called the idea of Deity as such, and hence are an idea, one indeed in number, but pre-containing each of the two ideas transcendentally, not merely virtually, as the idea of light contains the idea of heat, but formally. Hence the conclusion drawn by the divine genius of St. Thomas: the idea of wisdom is of one order in God, of another in creatures.” .

Hence Cajetan elsewhere gives us the formula: An analogical idea is one idea, not one absolutely (simpliciter): but one proportionally. Thus we see that Deity, in its formal raison d’etre, is absolutely preeminent, transcending all realities expressed by being, unity, goodness, wisdom, love, mercy, justice, and hence pre-contains all these realities, eminently and yet formally. This is equivalent to the truth, admitted by all theologians, that the Deity, both as it is in itself and as seen by the blessed, contains, actually and explicitly, all the divine perfections, which therefore are known in heaven without deduction, whereas here on earth, where we know God merely as self-subsistent being, which contains all these perfections, actually indeed, but implicitly, we can know these divine attributes only by progressive deduction.

Guided thus by Cajetan, we may now see the Thomistic meaning of the two adverbs: formaliter, eminenter. Formaliter means: essentially and not only causally, properly, and not merely metaphorically, but analogically. Eminenter excludes formal actual distinction in the divine attributes, and expresses their identification, better, their identity, in the transcendent raison d’etre of the Deity, whose mode of being, which in itself is hidden from us here below, can be known only negatively and relatively. It is in this sense that we say there is a transcendent world which, antecedently to the act of our mind, excludes all real and formal distinction, so that in God the only real distinction is that of the divine persons relatively opposed one to another. .

Let us listen to another passage from St. Thomas: “Now all these perfections pre-exist in God absolutely as one unit, whereas they are received in creatures as a divided multitude. Hence to our varied and multiple ideas there corresponds in God one altogether simple unity, which by these ideas is known imperfectly.” And again: “The many ideas expressed by these many names are not empty and nugatory, because to

each of them there corresponds one simple unity, represented only imperfectly by all of them taken together.” .

In the transcendental pre-eminence of the Deity, therefore, all these divine attributes, far from destroying one another, are rather identified one with another. Each is in God formally, but not as formally distinct from all others. .

Further: these attributes, thus identified and in no way self-destructive, find in God’s transcendence their fullest, purest perfection. Thus existence in God is essential existence. His act of understanding is self-subsistent, His goodness is essential goodness, His love self-subsistent.

This identification is rather easily understood when the perfections in question are on the same level of thought, and are thus distinguished, virtually and extrinsically, by reference to creatures. Thus the faculty of intellect, and its act, and its object, three distinct realities in the creature, are in the Creator manifestly identified, since He is the self-subsistent act of understanding.

But when the perfections in questions are in different lines of being, identification is less easily explained. Take intelligence and love, for example, or justice and mercy. But that all such seemingly opposite perfections are really identified in God is evidently clear from the foregoing pages. And that this identification is commonly accepted appears in phrases like the following: “the light of life,” “affectionate knowledge,” “the glance of love,” “love awful and sweet.” When God is seen face to face, this identification becomes clearly seen. But here below, in the light of faith only, even the mystics speak of the “great darkness.” Overwhelming splendor becomes obscurity, in the spirit still too feeble to support that splendor, just as the shining sun seems dark to the bird of night.

What distinction is there further between the divine essence and the divine relation, or between the divine nature which is communicable and the paternity which is incommunicable? This distinction is not formal and actual, but virtual and minor. Listen to Cajetan: “Speaking secundum se, not quoad nos, there is in God one only formal reality, not simply absolute, nor simply relative, not simply communicable nor simply incommunicable, but pre-containing, transcendentally and formally, all there is in God of absolute perfection and also all the relative perfection required by the Trinity. For the divine reality antecedes being and all its differentiations. That reality is above ens, above unum, etc.” .

We conclude. The divine reality, as it is in itself, transcends all its perfections, absolute and relative, which it contains formally preeminently.

ARTICLE THREE: COROLLARIES

From this high doctrine of God's transcendent pre-eminence there follows a number of corollaries. Here we shall notice only three of very special importance.

1. Reason, of its own sole force, by discovering the transcendence and inaccessibility of the Deity, can demonstrate thereby the existence in God of a supernatural order of truth and life. But to know that such supernatural truths exist is not the same thing as knowing what those truths are. The Deity, the whatness of God, manifestly surpasses all the natural powers of all created or creatable intelligence. Thus St. Thomas, having granted that man can clearly know the existence in God of truths which far surpass man's power of knowing them in their nature, goes on to show, a few lines farther down, that the Deity as such is inaccessible to the natural powers even of the angels. .

2. Sanctifying grace, defined thus, "a participation in the divine nature," is a participation, physical, formal, and analogical, in the Deity as it is in itself, not merely in God conceived naturally as self-subsistent existence, or as self-subsisting intelligence. Hence sanctifying grace, when it reaches consummation, is the radical principle of the beatific vision which knows Deity as it is in itself. Is grace, then, a participation in divine infinity? Not subjectively, because participation means limitation. But grace does, objectively, proportion us to see the infinite God as He is.

Created analogical resemblances to God form an ascending scale: minerals by existence, plants by life, man and angels by intelligence, all have likeness unto God. But grace alone is like unto God as God.

3. We cannot, as long as we are here below (in via): see clearly the harmony between God's will of universal salvation and the gratuitousness of predestination. That means we cannot see how, in the transcendent pre-eminence of the Deity, are harmonized and identified these three attributes: infinite mercy, infinite justice, and that supreme liberty which in mercy chooses one rather than another.

Theological contemplation of this pre-eminence of Deity, if it proceeds from the love of God, disposes us to receive infused contemplation, which

rests on living faith illumined by the gifts of knowledge and wisdom. This infused contemplation, though surrounded by a higher and ineffable darkness, still attains that Deity, whom St. Paul calls “light inaccessible”: inaccessible, that is, to him who has not received the light of glory.

Chapter 9

God’s Knowledge

The next step in the Thomistic synthesis is to apply its fundamental principles to the manner and nature of God’s omniscience. The essential points are.

1. God’s knowledge in general.
2. God’s knowledge of the conditional future.

ARTICLE 1: GOD’S KNOWLEDGE IN GENERAL

Immateriality is the root of knowledge. The more immaterial a being is, the more capable it is of knowing. Now God is altogether immaterial, because He transcends the limits, not of matter merely, but even of essence, since He is infinite in perfection. Hence He is transcendently intelligent. .

Hence God knows Himself, rather, comprehends Himself, since He knows Himself as far as He is knowable, that is, infinitely. His intellect is not a faculty, distinct from its act and from its object, since He is the self-subsistent act of understanding. Nor does He have to form first an idea of Himself, that is, form an interior accidental concept and word, because His essence is not only actually intelligible, but is subsistent truth, actually and eternally understood. When revelation tells us that God the Father expresses Himself in His Word, we are meant to understand this as an expression of superabundance, not of indigence. Besides, the divine Word is not, as in us, an accident, but substance. Hence all elements of thought (thinking subject, faculty of thought, actual thinking, idea, and object) are all identified in God, who is pure act. And His actual thinking, far from being an accident, is identified with His substance. God, says Aristotle, is understanding of understanding, an unmixed intellectual splendor eternally self-subsistent.

How does God know what He Himself is not, that is, realities that are possible, realities that actually exist, and future events? First of all, divine knowledge, cannot, like ours, depend on, be measured by, created things. Such dependence, being passive, is irreconcilable with the perfection of pure act. On the contrary, nothing can be possible, existent, or future except in dependence on essential existence, since it is clear that any conceivable existence outside of the First Cause must necessarily carry with it a relation of dependence on that First Cause. Things other than Himself, says St. Thomas, are known by God not in themselves (by dependence on them): but in Himself. Whereas we, in order to know God, must look up from below, from the sense world which mirrors God, God, on the contrary, does not have to look down, but knows us there on high, in Himself as mirror. By knowing His own creative power God knows all that He could do if He willed, all that He is doing now, all that He still will do, all that He would do did He not have some higher purpose, all, lastly, that He permits for the sake of a higher good. There is no need of neologisms, of new special terms. The traditional terms of common usage suffice to express well this omniscience of God. In Himself, the creative mirror, God knows all things.

How does God know the possible world, that absolutely numberless and truly infinite multitude of worlds which could exist but never will in fact exist? The answer is: God knows them by knowing the omnipotence of His creative power. .

Further, by knowing what He willed to do in the past and what He wills to do in the future and what He is actually doing now, God knows all things, past, present, and future, all that creatures have done, are doing now, and will do. And all this world of time, past, present, and future, He knows not in general and confusedly, but in particular and distinctly, since from Him, the First Cause, comes all reality, even prime matter, which is the source of all individual differences in the corporeal world. Hence even the minutest particularity in creatures, since it is a reality, depends on God for its existence, even when it gets that existence, not by creation, but by God’s concurrence with created causes. But this knowledge, infinitely distinct and particularized, is still not discursive, but intuitive, taking in with one instantaneous glance all that God does or could do. .

This divine knowledge is the cause of things, since it is united to God’s free will, which, among all possible things, chooses one particular thing to exist rather than another. God’s knowledge of possible things, since it

presupposes no decree of the divine will, is called simple intelligence. But His knowledge of actual things, since it does presuppose such a decree, is called “knowledge of approbation,” approbation, not of evil, but of all that is real and good in the created universe.

How then does God know evil? He knows it by its opposition to the good wherein alone evil can exist. Hence God knows evil by knowing what He permits, what He does not hinder. No evil, physical or moral, can come to be unless, for a higher good, God permits it to be. Knowing what He permits, God knows by that permission all evil that has been, is, or will ever be.

ARTICLE 2: GOD’S KNOWLEDGE OF THE CONDITIONAL FUTURE

When God permits evil, what is His will regarding the good opposed to that evil? That good cannot be willed efficaciously, otherwise it would be. But it can be willed by God conditionally. Thus God would wish to preserve the life of the gazelle, did He not will to permit that death for the life of the lion. He would hinder persecution, did He not judge good to permit it for the sanctification of the just and the glory of the martyrs; He would will the salvation of the sinner, Judas, for example, did He not permit his loss as manifestation of divine justice.

Starting from this point, we understand how God knows the conditional future. God knows all that He would will to be realized, all that He would bring to pass, did He not renounce it for a higher end. Hence God’s knowledge of the conditioned future presupposes a conditional decree of God’s will. The futuribilia are a medium between a merely possible future and a future really to be. It would be a grave error to confound them with the merely possible. This is the teaching of all Thomists, in opposition to the Molinistic theory, that is, an intermediate knowledge (scientia media): a knowledge, preceding any divine decree, of the conditional future free acts of the creature. This theory, Thomists maintain, leads to admitting in God’s knowledge a passivity, dependent on something in the created order. If God does not determine (by His own decree): then He is determined (made to know) by something else. This dilemma seems to Thomists to be insoluble.

As regards the knowledge of the contingent future, of what a free creature, say, will be actually willing a hundred years from now, God knows it not as future, but as present. For this knowledge is not measured by time,

does not have to wait until future becomes present. It is measured, as God Himself is measured, by the unchangeable now of eternity, which surrounds and envelops all other durations. Thus, to illustrate, the culminating point of a pyramid is simultaneously present to all points of its base. An observer, on the summit of a mountain, sees the entire army defiling in the valley below. .

Now it is evident that the event, in itself future, would not be present even in eternity, had not God willed it (if it is good): or permitted it (if it is evil). The conversion of St. Paul is present in eternity only because God willed it, and the impenitence of Judas only because God permitted it.

This knowledge too is intuitive, because it is the knowledge of what God either wills to be or permits to be. God sees His own eternal action, creative or permissive, though the effect of that action is in time, coming into existence at the instant chosen for it by God from eternity. His eternal permissions He sees in relation to that higher good of which He alone is judge.

Our free and salutary acts God sees in His own eternal decision to give us the grace to accomplish those acts. In Himself, in His own creative light, He sees them freely done, under that grace which, far from destroying our liberty, actualizes it, strongly and sweetly, so that we cooperate with that grace for His glory and our own. This doctrine will become more explicit in the following chapter, where we study God’s will and love.

Chapter 10

God’s Will And God’s Love

Will is a consequence of intelligence. Divine intelligence, knowing the Supreme Being, cannot be conceived without divine will, which loves the good, pleases itself in good. This will of God cannot be, as it is in us, a mere faculty of willing. Divine will would be imperfect if it were not, by its own nature, an unceasing act of willing, an unceasing act of loving, unceasing love of good, a love as universal and spiritual as the intelligence which directs it. All acts of God’s will proceed from His love of good, with its consequent hatred of evil. Hence, necessarily, there is in God one act, spiritual and eternal, of love of all good, and primarily of Supreme Good, the Infinite Perfection. This first divine love is indeed spontaneous, but it is not free. It is something higher than liberty. Infinite good, known as it is in itself, must be loved with infinite love. And the Good and the Love, both infinite, are identified one with the other. .

ARTICLE ONE: GOD’S SOVEREIGN FREEDOM OF WILL

In willing the existence of creatures God is entirely free. This follows from what has just been said. Only an infinite good necessitates the will. Hence, while God, we may say, is inclined to creation, since good is of itself diffusive, He nevertheless creates freely, without any necessity, physical or moral, because His happiness in possessing Infinite Good cannot be increased. Creatures can add nothing to infinite perfection. Inclination to self-diffusion is not the same thing as actual diffusion. While it is not free in causes which are non-intelligent (the sun, for example): it is free in causes which are intelligent (e. g.: in the sage dispensing wisdom). This free diffusion, this free communication, does not make God more perfect, but it does make the creature more perfect.

“God would be neither good nor wise had He not created.” Thus Leibnitz. Bossuet answers: “God is not greater for having created the universe.” Bossuet’s sentence is a simple and splendid summary of Aquinas. The creative act does not impart to God a new perfection. This free act is identified with the love God has for Himself. In regard to Himself as object, God’s love is spontaneous and necessary, whereas in regard to creatures it is spontaneous and free, because creatures have no right to existence, and God has no need of them. Purpose and agent give perfection to the effect, but are not themselves made more perfect by that effect. This doctrine, the freedom of creation, puts St. Thomas high above Plato and Aristotle, for whom the world is a necessary radiation of God. .

ARTICLE TWO: THE CAUSALITY OF GOD’S WILL

God’s will is not only free in producing and preserving creatures, but it is the cause by which He produces and preserves. Herein God’s causality differs, for example, from man’s generative causality. Man is free indeed to exercise this causality, but if he does exercise it, he is not free to engender aught else than a man, since his generative faculty is by its nature limited to the human race. Man’s free will is not of itself productive, but depends on a limited faculty distinct from itself. God’s free will is itself infinitely productive. Let us listen to St. Thomas:

“A natural agent, since it is limited, is in its activity limited by that nature. Now, since divine nature is not limited within certain bounds, but contains in itself all the perfection of being, it follows that its boundless causality does not act by natural necessity (unless you absurdly conceive God as producing a second God). And if God does not create by natural necessity, then it is only by the decrees of God’s will and intellect that limited created effects arise from His infinite perfection.” In these words lies the refutation of a capital thesis of Averroism. God, the saint repeats, acts only by His uncaused will. There are not in God, as in us, two acts of will, one willing the end, the other willing the means. By one sole act God wills both end and means. The phrase “for the sake of” modifies, not God’s will, but the object, the effect which God wills. Hence the proper expression is not: For the sake of life God wills food, but rather, God wills food to exist for the sake of life. .

Now we understand that God's efficacious will is always infallibly fulfilled. Nothing that is in any way real and good can reach existence except in dependence on God's universal causality, because no second cause can act unless actuated by the first cause, and evil can never come to be without divine permission. .

So much on the efficacious will of God. In what sense, then, do we speak of God's inefficacious will? This will, says St. Thomas, is a conditioned will, an antecedent will, which wills all that is good in itself, independently of circumstances. Now this conditional, antecedent will remain inefficacious because, in view of a higher good of which He alone is judge, God permits that this or that good thing does not come to pass, that defectible creatures sometimes fail, that this or that evil comes to pass. Thus, in view of that higher good, God permits, to illustrate, that harvests do not reach maturity, that the gazelle becomes the prey of the lion, that the just suffer persecution, that this or that sinner dies in final impenitence. Sometimes we see the higher good in question, sometimes we cannot. In permitting final impenitence, for example, God may be manifesting infinite justice against obstinacy in evil.

Such is the Thomistic distinction of antecedent (inefficacious) will from consequent (efficacious) will. On this distinction as foundation rests, further, the distinction of sufficient grace (which depends on antecedent will) from efficacious grace (which depends on consequent will). Sufficient grace is really sufficient, it makes fulfillment of precepts really and objectively possible. But efficacious grace gives the actual fulfillment of the precepts here and now. Actual fulfillment is something more than real power to fulfill, as actual vision is something more than the real power of sight. .

To illustrate. God willed, by consequent will, the conversion of St. Paul. This conversion comes to be, infallibly but freely, because God's will, strong and sweet, causes Paul's will to consent freely, spontaneously, without violence, to his own conversion. God did not on the other hand will, efficaciously, the conversion of Judas, though He, conditionally, inefficaciously, antecedently, certainly willed it, and He permitted Judas to remain, freely, in final impenitence. What higher good has God in mind? This, at least: the manifestation of infinite justice. .

We must add this remark: Resisting sufficient grace is an evil which comes solely from ourselves. But non-resistance is a good, which, in last

analysis, comes from God, source of all good. Further, sufficient grace, however rich in the order of power, proximate power, still differs from efficacious grace, which effectively causes the salutary act itself, which is something more than the power. And to say that he who does not have efficacious grace, which causes the salutary act, cannot have even the real power to place that act is equivalent to saying that a sleeping man is blind, because, forsooth, since he does not actually see, he cannot have even the power of sight. .

ARTICLE THREE: THE THOMISTIC DILEMMA

This dilemma runs thus: In regard to any created and limited good, if God's knowledge is not unlimited and independent, then God's knowledge would be dependent on, determined by, something created.

But scientia media is dependent on something finite and created, the creature's act of choice.

The efficacious will of God, far from forcing the sinner at the moment of conversion, actualizes the free will, carries it on, strongly and sweetly, to make its own free choice of good. From all eternity God willed efficaciously that Paul, at that particular hour, on the road to Damascus, hic et nunc, would consent to be converted. God's will, entering into all details of space and time, is infallibly fulfilled by actualizing, not by forcing created liberty. Similarly, from all eternity God willed efficaciously that Mary, on Annunciation Day, would freely consent to the realization of the mystery of the Incarnation and that divine will was infallibly fulfilled.

On this point Thomists have written much against "simultaneous concursus" as defended by Molina and Suarez. For this "simultaneous concursus" is a divine causality which is indifferent, that is, can be followed, in fact, either by an evil act or by a good act. Thomists, on the contrary, to defend God's efficacious acts of will, call these acts "predetermining divine decrees," which are all summed up in the term "physical premotion." They insist that this physical premotion does not force the created will, does not destroy created liberty, but, in us and with us, actualizes the essential freedom of our choice. If even a beloved creature, they argue, can lead us to choose freely what that creature wills we would choose, how much more the Creator, who is more deeply intimate with us than we ourselves are! .

Let us here note the harmony of this doctrine with a commonly accepted theological principle. All theologians agree in admitting that, since all good comes from God, the best thing on earth, sanctity, is a special gift of God. Now what is the chief element of sanctity, not as it is in heaven, but as it is in the saints who still live here on earth? It is their meritorious acts, especially their acts of charity. Even sanctifying grace, a far higher thing than the soul which has received that grace, even the infused virtues, and charity in particular, have a purpose beyond themselves, namely, free and meritorious acts, in particular acts of love for God and neighbor. Free choice makes these acts what they are. Without free and self-determined choice the act would have no merit; and eternal life must be merited.

Hence this free self-determination, this choice as such, must come from God, who alone by His grace brings it to be a reality in us. Think of what is best in Peter and Paul at the moment of martyrdom. Think of the merit of Mary at the foot of the cross. Think, above all, of that free and self-determined act of love in the soul of Jesus when He cried: “Consummatum est.”

According to Molina, this free self-determination of the meritorious act does not come from the divine motion, from divine causality, but solely from us, in the presence indeed of the object proposed by God, but under a grace of light, of objective attractiveness, which equally solicits both him who is not converted and him who is converted. .

Simultaneous concursus gives no more to the one than it does to the other. Let us suppose that from God comes the nature and existence of the soul and its faculties, and sanctifying grace, and actual grace in the form of objective attractiveness, and also a general divine concursus under which man can will evil as well as good. Let us further suppose two just men, who have received all these gifts in equal measure. If one of these men freely determines himself to a new meritorious act, even to an act of heroism, whereas the other freely falls into grievous sin and thus loses sanctifying grace—then the first man’s free and meritorious self-determination, that by which he is better than the second, does not come from God, since He is not the author of that which precisely distinguishes the first from the second. Here, then, since God is not the creative and determining source of this self-determining meritorious act, God’s knowledge of that act is dependent on, determined by, the act of God’s creature. God is spectator, not author, of

what is best in the heart of God's saints. How can this doctrine be reconciled with the infinite independence of God, the Author of all good?

Now listen to St. Thomas: "Since God's act of love is the source of all good in creatures, no creature can be better than another, did not God give to that creature a higher good than He gives to another." .

And again: "Certain authors, since they cannot understand how God can cause an act of will without harm to our liberty, give of these verses a wrong exposition. The words 'to will' and 'fulfill' they expound thus: God gives the power of willing, but not the actual choice between this and that. ... But Scripture is evidently against this exposition. Isaias, for example, in 36: 12, speaks thus: 'All our deeds Thou hast wrought for us, O Lord!' Hence we have from God not only our power of willing, but also our act of willing." .

Let us now summarize. If God is the cause of our faculties, then a fortiori He is cause of that which is still better than our faculties, since a faculty exists only for the sake of its act. Hence man's free and self-determined choice, which comes entirely from man as second cause, comes likewise entirely from God as first cause. Thus, to illustrate, the apple belongs entirely both to the tree and to the branch.

ARTICLE FOUR: DIFFICULTIES

We must now examine some texts wherein St. Thomas seems at first sight not to be in accord with his own texts just cited. Here is one such text. .

"God, as universal mover, moves the will of man to the universal object of the will, to good, namely, and without this universal motion man cannot will anything. But man by reason determines himself to will this or that, either to a true good, that is, or to an apparent good."

The text, even as it stands, is thus interpreted by Thomists: Man, as second cause, certainly determines himself, since he deliberates only to make a choice. His deliberation ends, either in a salutary act, under actual operating grace, or then in an evil act, under that universal motion treated in our text, which motion is not the cause of the act as evil, just as, to illustrate, the energy of a lame man is the cause of his walk, but not of the limp. But the text cited does not at all prove that the divine motion toward

the salutary free act is never predetermining, or that it remains indifferent, so that from it an evil act might as equally come forth as a good act.

So far the text as it stands. But, in that same response, the saint adds these words: “Yet sometimes God moves some men in a special manner to will determinately something which is good, as in those whom He moves by grace.” This is particularly true of gratia operans, of special inspiration. But now, if even in one sole case divine motion infallibly produces a salutary act, which must be free (Mary’s fiat, for example, or Paul’s conversion): it follows evidently that the divine motion does not destroy the creature’s freedom of will.

Now let us consider another text from which an objection has been drawn. It runs thus: “The will is an active principle, not limited to one kind of object. Hence God so moves the will that it is not of necessity determined to one act, but that its act remains contingent and not necessary, except in objects to which it is moved by nature” (e. g.: happiness, beatitude).

Is this text opposed to common Thomistic doctrine? Not at all. Throughout this whole question the two expressions, non ex necessitate movet and movet sed non ex necessitate, are used interchangeably. Similarly, voluntas ab aliquo objecto ex necessitate movetur, ab alio autem non (in art. 2) and voluntas hominis non ex necessitate movetur ab appetitu sensitivo (in art. 3). Moreover, in the very same article from which the objection is taken, the saint in the third response writes as follows: “If God moves the will to act, then, under this supposition, it is impossible that the will should not act. Nevertheless, speaking simply and absolutely, it is not impossible that the will should not act. Hence it does not follow that the will is moved by God ex necessitate.” .

Clearly, the meaning of the passage is this: The divine motion obtains infallibly its effect, i. e.: man’s act of actual choice, but without forcing, necessitating, that choice. Thus, on Annunciation Day, the divine motion infallibly brought Mary to say freely her fiat. Far from forcing the act, far from destroying Mary’s freedom, the divine motion instead actualized her freedom. When efficacious grace touches the free will, that touch is virginal, it does no violence, it only enriches.

Let us listen again to the saint, in a passage where he first presents an objection incessantly repeated down to our day, and then gives his own answer. The objection runs thus: If man’s will is unchangeably (infallibly)

moved by God, it follows that man does not have free choice in willing. The answer is this: God moves the will infallibly (immobiliter) by reason of the efficacy of His moving power; but, since our will can choose indifferently among various possibilities, its act remains, not necessary, but free.

God moves each creature according to its nature. That is the saint's central thought. If the creature has free will, God actualizes that freedom to act freely, selectively, by choice, just as, in plants, He actualizes the vegetative power, or in animals the sense power, to act without choice, each in accord with its nature. If the musician can evoke from each instrument the natural vibrations suited to express his inspirations, how much more easily can the divine musician, who lives in us more intimately than our own freedom does, evoke from one free instrument (e. g.: St. Paul) vibrating chords, fully natural and fully free, yet so different from those he evokes from a second free instrument (e. g.: St. John).

Again St. Thomas: "If God's intention is that this man, whose heart He is moving, shall receive (sanctifying) grace, then that man receives that grace infallibly." Why? Because, as he says three lines earlier: "God's (efficacious) intention cannot fail, that is, as Augustine says, by God's gifts, all who are saved are infallibly (certissime) saved." .

Further, St. Thomas often speaks of a divine predetermination which does not necessitate the will. Thus, in explaining our Lord's words: "My hour is not yet come," he says: " 'Hour' in this text means the time of Christ's passion, an hour imposed on Him, not by necessity, but by divine providence. And this holds good of all the acts freely done by Christ in that hour of His passion. Here are the saint's own words: "That hour was imposed on Him, not by the necessity of fate, but by the eternal sentence of the entire Trinity." Here we have a predetermining decree, with no allusion to anything like scientia media, a knowledge, that is, which would depend on prevision of our free consent. .

We must return again and again to the principle: God's knowledge, being uncreated, can never be dependent on, determined by, anything created, which, though it be only a future conditional thing, would never be at all had God not first decided it should be. And nothing can, here and now, come to pass unless God has from all eternity efficaciously willed it so, and no evil unless He has permitted it. In this sense St. Thomas, following St.

Paul and St. Augustine, understands the words of the Psalmist: “In heaven and on earth whatever God willed, that He has done.” .

Elsewhere our saint reduces this doctrine to a simple formula: “Whatever God wills simpliciter, comes to pass, though what He wills antecedently does not come to pass.” Thus, God, who willed the conversion of one thief simpliciter, willed that of the other antecedenter. Admitting, as we must, that we are here faced with an impenetrable mystery, the mystery, that is, of predestination, we must nevertheless hold that whatever there is of good in our free choice comes from God as first cause, and that nothing in any way good come to pass here and now unless God has from all eternity willed it so.

The saint does not tire of reiteration. Whatever there is of reality and goodness in our free acts comes from the Author of all good. Only that which is evil in our acts cannot come from Him, just as, to repeat, the limp of the lame man does not come from the energy by which he walks.

In this sense, then, we understand certain formulas coined by Thomists. The divine motion, they say, prescinds perfectly from the evil in a bad act, that is to say, malice, moral evil, is not contained in the adequate object of God’s will and power, just as, to illustrate, sound is not contained in the adequate object of sight. This leads to a second formula: Nothing is more precisive (praecisivum) than the formal object of any power. Thus truth is the precisive object of intelligence, and good is that of the will. Evil, disorder, cannot be the object of divine will and divine power, and hence cannot have other source than the second cause, defectible and deficient.

SUMMARY

To show the harmony between this doctrine and generally received theological principles, let us recall that all theologians maintain that what is best in the souls of saints on earth must come from God. Now that which is best in these saints is precisely their self-determined free choice of meritorious acts, above all of love for God and neighbor. To this end are ordained and proportioned all forms of grace: habitual grace, infused virtues, the gifts of the Spirit, all illumination, all attractive, persuasive, actual graces. This general principle, accepted by all theologians, surely inclines to accepting the Thomist doctrine. Without that doctrine we rob the divine causality of what is best in us, and insert into uncreated causality a

knowledge dependent on our free choice, which, as such, would not come from Him.

In the light of this principle the saint shows the nature of God’s love for us, how God loves those who are better by giving them that by which they are better. 420 He shows further that mercy and justice are the two great virtues of the divine will, and that their acts proceed from love of the Supreme Good. Love of the Supreme Good, which has the right to be preferred to all other good, is the principle of justice. This love of the Supreme Good, which is self-diffusive, is the principle of mercy, a principle higher than justice, since, as radiating goodness, it is the first expression of love.

Chapter 11

Providence And Predestination

Presupposing the Thomistic doctrine on God’s knowledge and God’s will, we are now to draw from that doctrine a few essential conclusions on providence and predestination. .

ARTICLE ONE: DIVINE PROVIDENCE

The proof a posteriori of the existence of divine providence is drawn from the fifth proof of God’s existence. The proof quasi a priori rests on what was said in the foregoing chapter about the divine intelligence and the divine will. It can be formulated as follows: In every intelligent agent there pre-exists an intelligent plan, that includes the special reason for each of the intended results. But God’s intelligence is the cause of every created good, and consequently of the relation which each created good has to its purpose, above all to its ultimate purpose. Therefore there pre-exists in God’s intelligence an intelligent plan for the whole created universe, a plan which includes the special relation of each created being to its purpose, proximate and ultimate. The name we give to this universal plan is Providence.

This notion of providence implies no imperfection. On the contrary, by analogy, starting from created prudence and prevision, as seen, say, in the father of a family or in the head of a state, we must assign the word “providence” to God, not in the metaphorical, but in the proper sense of the word. Divine providence is the complete and ordered plan of the universe, a plan pre-existing in God’s eternal mind. Divine government is the execution of that plan. But providence presupposes God’s efficacious will to bring about the purpose of that plan. Whatever He ordains, whatever He prescribes, is what He must do to attain His purpose.

1. The Nature of Providence

The nature of providence, so Thomists generally hold, includes these four elements:

a) God wills, as purpose of the universe, the manifestation of His goodness.

b) Among possible worlds known to Him by simple intelligence, anterior to any decree of His will, He selected as suited to that purpose this present world, which involves, first, an order of nature subordinated to the order of grace, second, the permission of sin, third, the hypostatic order of redemptive Incarnation.

c) He freely chooses, as means suited to manifest His divine goodness, this present world with all its orders and parts.

d) He commands the execution of this choice of decree by the imperium, an intellectual act, which presupposes two efficacious acts of will, one the intention of purpose, the other the choice of means. Divine providence consists, properly and formally, in this imperium, whereas divine government is the execution in time of that eternal plan which is providence.

Hence we see that providence presupposes, not merely God's conditional, inefficacious, antecedent will, but also God's consequent, absolute, efficacious will, to manifest His goodness through His own chosen ways and means, by the present orders of nature and of grace, which includes permission of sin with the consequent order of redemptive Incarnation. This order manifestly presupposes, first, God's antecedent will to save all men in virtue of which He makes really and truly possible to all men the fulfilling of His precepts. It presupposes, secondly, God's consequent will to save all men who will in fact be saved. Thus predestination, by its object, is a part, the highest part of providence.

Is providence infallible? Thomists in general answer Yes, with a distinction. Providence, inasmuch as it presupposes God's consequent will, is infallible, both in the end to be obtained and in the ways and means that lead to that end. But in as far as it presupposes solely God's antecedent will, it is infallible only with regard to ways and means. Here lies the distinction between general Providence, which makes salvation genuinely possible for all men, and predestination, which infallibly leads the elect to their preordained good.

2. Scope and Reach of Providence

All creation down to tiniest detail is ruled by providence. “Not a sparrow falls to earth without your Father’s permission.” “The very hairs of your head are numbered.” Hence the question arises: How can providence govern these multitudinous details, without suppressing contingency, fortune, and liberty, without being responsible for evil?

We answer with St. Thomas: “Since every agent acts for an end, the preordaining of ways and means to reach that end extends, when the First Cause is in question, as far as extends the efficient causality of that First Cause. Now that causality extends to all created things, not only as regards their specific characters, but also to their utmost individual differences. Hence all created reality must be preordained by God to its end, must be, that is, subject to providence.” Even the least detail of the material world is still a reality, hence known by God, since He is cause not only of its form, but also of its matter, which is the principle of all individual differences. .

When we talk of events which men ascribe to fortune, good or evil, we must remember that we are dealing only with the second causes of those events. In relation to the First Cause such events are in no wise accidental and fortuitous, since God eternally foresees all results, however surprising to men, that come from complicated series of created causes.

Evil as such is not a positive something, but is the privation of good in the created thing. God permits it only because He is strong enough and good enough to draw from evil a higher good, the crown of martyrdom, say, from persecution. And God’s causality, as we saw above, far from destroying, actualizes liberty. The mode of contingency, and the mode of liberty, says St. Thomas, being modes of created being, fall under divine Providence, the universal cause of being. A great poet expresses with equal perfection sentiments the strongest or the sweetest. God, who can do all things He wills as He wills, can bring it about that the stone falls necessarily and that man acts freely. God moves each creature according to the nature which He gave to that creature.

Here emerges a rule for Christian life. We must work out our salvation, certainly. But the chief element in that work is to abandon ourselves to providence, to God’s wisdom and goodness. We rest more surely on God’s design than on our own best intentions. Our only fear must be that we are not entirely submissive to God’s designs. To those who love God, who persevere in His love, all things work together unto good. This abandonment evidently does not dispense us from doing our utmost to

fulfill the divine will signified by precepts, counsels, and the events of life. But, that done, we can and should abandon ourselves completely to God's pleasure, however hidden and mysterious. Such abandonment is a higher form of hope; it is a union of confidence and love of God for His own sake. Its prayer unites petition and adoration. It does not pray, indeed, to change the dispositions of providence. But it does come from God, who draws it forth from our heart, like an earthly father, who, resolved on a gift to his child, leads the child first to ask for the gift.

ARTICLE TWO: PREDESTINATION

What we here attempt is a summary of the principles which underlie Thomistic doctrine on the high mystery of predestination. .

1. Scriptural Foundation

St. Thomas studied deeply those texts in St. John and St. Paul which express the mystery of predestination, its gratuitousness, and its infallibility. Here follow the chief texts.

a) "Those whom Thou gavest Me have I kept: and none of them is lost but the son of perdition that the Scripture may be fulfilled." .

b) "My sheep hear My voice. And I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them life everlasting: and they shall not perish forever. And no man shall pluck them out of My hand. That which My Father hath given Me is greater than all: and no one can snatch them out of the hand of My Father." .

c) "For many are called, but few are chosen." .

St. Thomas, based on tradition, interprets these texts as follows: There are elect souls, chosen by God from all eternity. They will be infallibly saved; if they fall, God will raise them up, their merits will not be lost. Others, like the son of perdition, will be lost. Yet God never commands the impossible, and gives to all men genuine power to fulfill His precepts at the moment when these precepts bind according to the individual's knowledge. Repentance was genuinely possible for Judas, but the act did not come into existence. Remark again the distance between potency and act. The mystery lies chiefly in harmonizing God's universal will of salvation with the predestination, not of all, but of a certain number known only to God.

This same mystery we find often affirmed by St. Paul, implicitly and explicitly. Here are the chief texts.

a) “For what distinguisheth thee? or what hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received? “ This is equivalent to saying: No one would be better than another, were he not more loved and strengthened by God, though for all the fulfillment of God’s precepts is genuinely possible. “It is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will.” .

b) “He chose us in Him [Jesus Christ] before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and unspotted in His sight. He hath predestinated us to be His adopted children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of His will, to make shine forth the glory of His grace, by which He has made us pleasing in His eyes, in His beloved son.” .

This text speaks explicitly of predestination. So St. Augustine. So St. Thomas and his school. St. Thomas sets in relief both the good pleasure of God’s will and the designs of God’s mind, to show the eternal freedom of the act of predestination.

c) “We know that to them who love God all things work together unto good, to those who are called according to His designs. For those whom He foreknew, these also He predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His son, that His son might be the firstborn among many brethren. And whom He predestinated, these He also called, and whom He called, these He also justified. And whom He justified, these He also glorified.” .

“Those whom He foreknew, these also He predestinated.” How does St. Thomas, following St. Augustine, understand these salient words? Nowhere does he understand them of simple prevision of our merits. Such a meaning has no foundation in St. Paul, and is excluded by many of his affirmations. The real meaning is this: “Those whom God foreknew with divine benevolence, these He predestinated.” And for what purpose? That His Son might be the first among many brethren. This is the genuine meaning of “foreknew.”

d) This same idea appears clearly in the commentary on Romans, where St. Paul is magnifying the sovereign independence of God in dispensing His graces. The Jews, the chosen people of old, have been rejected by reason of their unbelief, and salvation is being announced to the pagans. St. Paul sets forth the underlying principle of God’s predilection, applicable both to nation and to individuals:

“What shall we say? Is there injustice in God? Far from it. For He says to Moses: ‘I will have mercy on whom I will, I will have compassion on whom I will. ‘ This then depends not on him who wills, not on him who runs, but on God who shows mercy.” If predestination includes a positive act of God, hardening of the heart, on the contrary, is only permitted by God and comes from the evil use which man makes of his freedom. Let no man, then, call God to account. Hence the conclusions: “Oh unsounded depth of God’s wisdom and knowledge! How incomprehensible are His judgments, how unsearchable His ways!. Who hath first given to Him, that recompense should be made? For of Him and by Him and in Him are all things. To Him be glory forever. Amen.” .

2. Definition of Predestination

The Scripture texts just quoted are the foundation of the doctrine, Augustinian and Thomistic, of predestination. The definition of St. Augustine runs thus: Predestination is God’s foreknowledge and preparation of those gifts whereby all those who are saved are infallibly saved. By predestination, he says elsewhere, God foreknew what He Himself would do. .

The definition of St. Thomas runs thus: That plan in God’s mind whereby He sends the rational creature to that eternal life which is its goal, is called predestination, for to destine means to send.

This definition agrees with that of St. Augustine. In God’s mind there is an eternal plan whereby this man, this angel, reaches his supernatural end. This plan, divinely ordained and decreed, includes the efficacious ways and means which lead this man, this angel, to his ultimate goal. This is the doctrine of Scripture. This is the doctrine of the two saints, Augustine and Thomas.

3. Questions

Why did God choose certain creatures, whom, if they fall, He raises ever again, while He rejects others after permitting their final impenitence? The answer of St. Thomas, based on revelation, runs as follows: In the predestined, God manifests His goodness under the form of mercy. In the reprobate, He manifests His goodness under the form of justice. This answer comes from St. Paul: “If God, willing to show His wrath (His justice): and to make His power known, endured (permitted) with much patience vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction, and if He willed to show

the riches of His glory in the vessels of mercy which He had prepared for glory... (where is the injustice?).”

Divine goodness, we recall, tends to communicate itself, and thus becomes the principle of mercy. But divine goodness, on the other hand, has the inalienable right to the supreme love of creatures, and thus becomes the principle of justice. Both the splendor of infinite justice and the glory of infinite mercy are necessary for the full manifestation of God’s goodness. Thus evil is permitted only in view of a higher good, a good of which divine wisdom is the only judge, a good which the elect will contemplate in heaven. To this doctrine Thomists add nothing. They simply defend it. And this holds good likewise of the answer to the following question.

Why does God predestine this creature rather than the other? Our Lord says: “No man can come to Me unless the Father who hath sent Me draw him.” St. Augustine continues: Why the Father draws this man, and does not draw that man, judge not unless you would misjudge. Why did not the saint find an easier answer? He could have said: God predestines this man rather than the other because He foresaw that the one, and not the other, would make good use of the grace offered or even given to him. But then one man would be better than the other without having been more loved and strengthened by God, a position contrary to St. Paul and to our Lord. The merits of the elect, says St. Thomas, far from being the cause of predestination, are, on the contrary, the effects of predestination. .

Let us here repeat the saint’s formula of the principle of predilection: “Since God’s love is the source of all created goodness, no creature would in any way be better than another, did God not will to give it a good greater than the good He gives to another.” Hence, as the saint says elsewhere, God’s love precedes God’s choice, and God’s choice precedes God’s predestination. And in that same article he adds that predestination to glory precedes predestination to grace. .

The Pelagians thought of God as spectator, not as author, of that salutary consent which distinguishes the just from the wicked. The Semi-Pelagians said the same of the initium fidei et bonae voluntatis. St. Thomas, following St. Augustine, teaches that from God comes everything there is in us of good, from the beginning of a good will to the most intimate goodness of our free and self-determined salutary acts.

To the question, then, of God’s motive in choosing one rather than the other, St. Thomas answers that the future merits of the elect cannot be the

reason of their predestination, since these merits are, on the contrary, the effect of their predestination. Then he adds: “Why God chose these for glory and reprobated others finds answer only in the divine will. Of two dying men, each equally and evilly disposed, why does God move one to repentance and permit the other to die impenitent? There is no answer but the divine pleasure. .

Thomists restrict themselves to defending this doctrine against Molinism and congruism. They add to it nothing positive. The more explicit terms they employ have no other purpose than to exclude from the doctrine false interpretations, which favor simultaneous concursus or premotio indifferens.

Mystery there is in this doctrine, mystery unfathomable but inevitable. How harmonize God’s gratuitous predestination with God’s will of salvation for all men? How harmonize infinite mercy, infinite justice, and infinite freedom? Mystery there is, but no contradiction. There would be contradiction, if God’s salvific will were illusory, if God did not make fulfillment of His precepts really and genuinely possible. For thus He would, contrary to His goodness, mercy, and justice, command the impossible. But if these precepts are really possible for all, whereas they are in fact kept by some and not by all, then those who do keep them, being better, must have received more from God.

St. Thomas thus sums up the matter: “One who gives by grace (not by justice) can at his good pleasure give more or less, and to whom he pleases, if only he denies to no one what justice demands. Thus, the householder says: ‘Take what is thine and go. Or is it not lawful for me to do as I will? ‘ “ .

This doctrine is expressed by the common language of daily life. When of two great sinners one is converted, Christians say: God showed him special mercy. This solution of daily life accords with that of St. Augustine and St. Thomas when they contemplate the mysterious harmony of infinite mercy and infinite justice. When God with sovereign freedom grants to one the grace of final perseverance, it is a gift of mercy. When He does not grant it to another, it is a deed of justice, due to last resistance to a last appeal.

Against all deviations in this matter, toward predestinationism, Protestantism, and Jansenism, on the one hand, and, on the other, toward Pelagianism and Semi-Pelagianism, we must hold fast these two truths,

central and mutually complementary: first, “God never commands the impossible,” and second, “No one would be better than another were he not loved more by God.” Guided by these truths we can begin to see where the mystery lies. Infinite justice, infinite mercy, sovereign liberty are all united, are even identified, in the Deity’s transcendent pre-eminence, which remains hidden from us as long as we do not have the beatific vision. But in the chiaro oscuro of life here below, grace, which is a participation of the Deity, tranquillizes the just man, and the inspirations of the Holy Spirit console him, strengthen his hope, and make his love more pure, disinterested, and strong, so that in the incertitude of salvation he has the ever-growing certitude of hope, which is a certitude of tendency toward salvation. The proper and formal object of infused hope is not, in fact, our own effort, but the infinite mercy of the “God who aids us,” who arouses us here to effort and who will there crown-that effort. .

Chapter 12

Omnipotence

Omnipotence is the immediate source of God's external works. God's productive action cannot, properly speaking, be transitive, since that would imply imperfection, would imply that God's action is an accident, something emanating from God and received into a creature. Speaking properly, God's action is immanent, is identified with the very being of God. But it is virtually transitive, since it produces an effect distinct from God.

God's active power is infinite because, the more perfect a being is, the more perfect is its power of acting. Hence God, who is pure act, who is actuality itself, has a power which is boundless, which can give existence to whatever is not self-contradictory. This infinite power is seen, first in creation, secondly in preservation, thirdly in divine motion. Hence the three articles which now follow.

1. Creation

According to revelation, God freely created heaven and earth, not from eternity, but in time, at the origin of time. Here we have three truths.

a) God created the universe ex nihilo.

b) God created the universe freely.

c) God did not create the universe ab aeterno.

The first two truths are demonstrable by reason, hence belong to the preambles of faith. The third, so St. Thomas, is indemonstrable, is an article of faith. Let us look more closely at each of these three truths.

a) Creation ex Nihilo.

Creation from nothing means a productive act where there is no material cause, no subject matter to work on, so that the entire being of created things comes from their creative cause. Before creation, nothing of the created thing existed, not even its matter, however unformed you may

suppose it. This production of the entire created being has indeed an efficient cause and a final cause and an exemplary cause (the divine idea): but no material cause.

St. Thomas shows that the distance is infinite between creation from nothing and production, however masterly, of something from preexisting matter. The sculptor makes the statue, not from nothing, but from pre-existing marble or clay. The father begets the son from the pre-existing germ. The thinker builds a system from pre-existing facts and principles. Our will produces a free act from its own pre-existing power to act. The teacher fashions, he does not create, his pupil's intelligence. No finite agent can create, properly speaking, it can but transform what pre-exists. Creative power, says St. Thomas, cannot, even by miracle, be communicated to any creature. This conclusion, he says, follows from the distinction between God and the world. Since in God alone are essence and existence identified, God alone who is essential existence can bring forth from nothing participated existence, a being composed of essence and existence. Though that creature be merely a particle of dust, God alone can create it. Those who, like Suarez, follow notably different principles regarding essence and existence, are much less clear and affirmative in their doctrine on creation.

Between Aristotle and St. Thomas there is also at this point a great distance. Plato and Aristotle, though they admitted an eternal creation, did not rise to the explicit notion of creation from nothing. They did indeed see the dependence of the world on God, but were unable to make precise the mode of that dependence. Nor did they see that the creative act is free, sovereignly free. The world seemed to them a necessary radiation from God, like the rays from the sun. This double truth, free creation and creation from nothing, accessible to reason under the influence of revelation, is of capital importance in Christian philosophy, and signalizes immense progress beyond Aristotle.

Yet in attaining this truth St. Thomas employs Aristotle's own principle: "The most universal effect comes from the most universal cause." St. Thomas argues from this principle as follows: "Being as being is the most universal of effects. Hence the production of being as such, of the whole being (even of the tiniest thing): must come from the supreme cause, which is the most universal of causes. As only fire heats, as only light shines, so that cause alone which is being itself, existence itself, can produce the

whole being of its effect. The adequate object of omnipotence is being, the whole being, and no created power can have an object so universal."

From this vantage point new light falls on Aristotle's very definition of metaphysics, which is: Knowledge of things through their supreme cause, knowledge of being as such. Why? Aristotle did not give the explicit reason, but St. Thomas did: In every finite thing being as such is the proper and exclusive effect of the supreme cause.

This immense progress, though attained under the light of revelation, is nevertheless a truth of reason, reached by philosophic demonstration. The traditional doctrine of potency and act, adolescent still in Aristotle, reaches maturity in Aquinas. Revelation did indeed facilitate the demonstration, by pointing out its goal, but did not furnish the principle of that demonstration. In the Christian milieu, the doctrine of potency and act can produce new fruits, which rise from this principle, though Aristotle himself did not see those fruits.

St. Thomas adds a confirmation of this truth: "The poorer is the matter to be transformed, i. e.: the more imperfect is passive power, the greater must be the active power. Hence, when passive power is simply nothing, active power must be infinite. Hence no creature can create." .

b) Creation a Free Act

The doctrine of free creation is not less important than that of creation from nothing. Why must creation be a free act of God? We gave the reason above. God, possessing infinite goodness and infinite joy, has no need of creatures. The act of creation itself adds no new perfection to God. God, says Bossuet, is none the greater by having created the universe. He was not less perfect before creation, and He would not have been less perfect had He never created. Revelation, indeed, shows us the infinite fecundity of the divine nature, in the generation of the Word and in the spiration of the Holy Spirit. But divine goodness, thus necessarily self-communicative within (ad intra): is just as freely self-communicative without (ad extra).

The chief opponents of St. Thomas on the liberty of the creative act were the Averroists. Against them he speaks frequently. Let us listen to a few sentences: "God can do all things." "Neither the divine intellect nor the divine will is limited to determined finite effects." "God can act beyond the order of nature."

The reasons laid down in these articles are equally valid against the pantheistic determinism of Spinoza and of numerous modern philosophers,

and also against the moral necessity of creation taught by Leibnitz, who maintained an absolute optimism, according to which, he says: “Supreme wisdom was obliged to create, and could not fail to choose the best of possible worlds.”

This position of Leibnitz was refuted beforehand by St. Thomas. Here are the saint’s words: “The plan in fact realized by infinite wisdom is not adequate to the ideals and inventive power of that wisdom. A wise man chooses means proportionate to his purpose. If the end is proportioned to the means, then those means are imposed by necessity. But divine goodness, which is the purpose of the universe, surpasses infinitely all things created (and creatable): and is beyond all proportion to them. Hence divine wisdom is not limited to the present order of things, and can conceive another.” .

Leibnitz treated this problem as a mathematical problem: “While God calculates, the world comes into being.” He forgot that, whereas in a mathematical problem all elements stand in mutual and limited proportion, finite things have no such proportion to the infinite goodness which they manifest.

To the objection of Leibnitz that infinite wisdom could not fail to choose the best, St. Thomas had already replied: “The proposition, ‘God can do something better than what He actually does,’ has two meanings. If the term ‘better’ is understood as modifying ‘something,’ the proposition is true, because God can ameliorate all existing things and can make things which are better than those things He has made. But if the term ‘better’ is understood adverbially, as modifying ‘do,’ then the proposition is false, because God always acts with infinite wisdom and goodness.” .

The actual world, so we conclude, is a masterpiece, but a better masterpiece is possible. Thus, to illustrate: the plant’s organism is wonderfully adapted to its purpose, but the animal’s organism is still more perfect. Any symphony of Beethoven is a masterpiece, but does not exhaust his genius.

Thus are solved the difficulties which seem to have held Aristotle from affirming divine liberty and divine providence.

c) Creation in Time

Revelation teaches that God created the universe in time, at the origin of time, not from eternity. This truth, says St. Thomas, since it cannot be demonstrated by reason, is an article of faith.

Why? Because creation depends on divine freedom, which could have created millions of ages earlier, and even beyond that still earlier, in such wise that the world would be without beginning, but not without origin, since by nature and causality it would be eternally dependent on God, just as, to illustrate, the footprint on the sand presupposes the foot that makes it, so that if the foot were from eternity on the sand, the footprint too would be without beginning. Further, since, as revelation teaches, spiritual creatures will never cease to exist, and even men's bodies, after the general resurrection, will live on without end, so likewise could the world exist, without beginning, created from eternity and forever preserved by God. .

On the other hand, as the saint shows against the Averroists, it is not necessary that the world must have been created from eternity. The creative action in God, yes, that is eternal, since it is, properly speaking, immanent, and only virtually transitive, but since it is free, it can make its effect commence in time, at the instant chosen from eternity. Thus there would be "a new divine effect without new divine action." .

ARTICLE TWO: DIVINE PRESERVATION

The doctrine of creation, well understood, has as consequence the doctrine of preservation. If God, even for an instant, ceased to preserve creatures, they would instantly be annihilated, just as, if luminous bodies were no more, light too would cease to be. The reason is that the very being of creatures, composed as they are of essence and existence, is being by participation, which always and necessarily depend on Him who is essential being, in whom alone essence is identified with existence. .

God, in fact, is the cause, not only of the creature's coming into existence, but also, and directly, of its continued being. The human father who begets a son is the direct cause only of the son's coming into existence, and hence the son can continue to exist after the death of his father. But, even in creatures, there are causes on which depends the continued existence of their effects. Without atmospheric pressure and solar heat, even the most vigorous animal will not delay in dying. Light without its source is no more. Sensation without its sense object disappears. In the intellectual order, he who forgets principle can no longer grasp conclusion, and he who no longer wills the end can have no desire of means.

Where cause and effect belong both to the same specific level of being, there cause is cause only of the effect's coming into being. The continued being of that effect cannot depend directly on that cause, since the cause, equally with the effect, has participated existence, which each must receive from a cause higher than both.

It is characteristic, on the contrary, of a cause which is of a higher order than its effects, to be the direct cause both of becoming and of continuing to be. Principles, in relation to consequences, and ends in relation to means, are such causes. Now God, the supreme cause, is subsistent being itself, whereas His effects are beings by participation, beings composed of essence and existence. Hence each and every creature must be preserved by God if it is to continue in existence. And this preservative action, outside and above movement and time, is simply continued creative action, somewhat illustrated by the continued influence of the sun on light. God, the Preserver, who thus without medium preserves the very existence of His creatures, is more intimately inexistent in creatures than are creatures themselves. .

ARTICLE THREE: DIVINE MOTION

Scripture speaks often of God working in us: "Thou hast wrought all our works in us." "In Him we live and move and are." "He works all things in all." On texts like these is based the doctrine that God moves to their operations all second causes. .

We are not to imitate the occasionalists, who understand this doctrine to mean that God is the sole cause, that fire, for instance, does not warm us, but that, by the occasion of fire, God alone warms us. But neither are we to go to the opposite extreme and maintain that the second cause can act without previous divine motion, and that consequently the second cause is rather coordinated than subordinated to the first cause, like a second man who aids a first man to draw a boat.

Here again the position of St. Thomas is a higher synthesis, which marches between these two mutually opposed conceptions. Causality follows being, and the mode of causality follows the mode of being. Hence, only the causality of God, who is existence itself, is self-initiated, whereas the creature, existing by participation, in dependence on God, must also in its causality be dependent on previous divine motion.

Let us listen to the saint: “God not only gives to creatures the form which is their nature, but also preserves them in existence and moves them to act, and is the purpose of their actions.” .

Were it not so, if the creature, without divine motion, could pass from potency to act, then the more would come from the less, the principle of causality would fail, and the proofs of God’s existence, proofs based on motion and created causality, would lose their validity. .

Here is another text, still more explicit: “God is the cause of every created action, both by giving the power of acting and by preserving that power, and by moving it to act, so that by His power every other power acts.” Then he adds: “A natural created thing cannot be raised so as to act without divine operation.” Thomists have never said anything more explicit. .

Here Molina objects. He cannot see, he says, what that motion should be, that application to act in second causes, of which St. Thomas speaks. Molina himself maintains that God’s act of concurring with the second cause does not move that cause to act, but influences immediately the effect of that cause, as when two men draw a boat. Suarez retains this manner of speech.

Thomists reply thus: Then the second cause is, in its causality, coordinated with, not subordinated to, the first cause. Its passage from potency to act is inexplicable. We must say, on the contrary, that the created cause is necessarily subordinated to the first, and in such manner that the effect is entirely from God as first cause, and entirely from the creature as second cause, just as, to illustrate, the fruit comes entirely from the tree as its radical principle, and from the branch as proximate principle. And just as God, the first cause, actualizes the vital function of plant and animal, so also He illuminates our intelligence and actualizes our freedom of will without violence. .

The De Deo uno concludes with a short treatise on God’s beatitude, which rests on His infinite knowledge and love of Himself, whereas the knowledge and love which even beatified creatures have of God remain forever finite.

Third Part

The Blessed Trinity

On the subject of the Thomistic synthesis as regards the mystery of the Trinity, we will first examine what St. Thomas owes to St. Augustine, then the doctrine of St. Thomas himself on the divine processions and relations and persons, and on the notional acts of generation and spiration. This doctrine then will enable us to see better why the Blessed Trinity is unknowable by natural reason. Next we will study the law of appropriation, and lastly the manner of the Trinity's indwelling in the souls of the just. Throughout we will emphasize the principles which underlie the development of theological science

Chapter 13

Augustine And Thomas

In his commentaries on the New Testament, St. Thomas carefully examined the principal texts regarding the Blessed Trinity, in the Synoptic Gospels, in the Gospel of St. John, and in the Epistles of St. Paul. He analyzes with special emphasis the formula of baptism, our Lord's discourse before His passion, and especially St. John's prologue. His guides throughout are the Fathers, Greek and Latin, who refuted Arianism and Sabellianism.

These scriptural studies led him to see clearly the part played by St. Augustine in penetrating into the meaning of our Lord's words on this supreme mystery. This debt of Thomas to Augustine must be our first study. We find here a very interesting and important chain of ideas. Unless we recall both the advantages and the difficulties presented by the Augustinian conception, we shall not be able to understand fully the teaching of St. Thomas.

Sabellius had denied real distinction of persons in the Trinity. Arius, on the other hand, had denied the divinity of the Son; Macedonius, that of the Holy Spirit. In refuting these opposite heresies, the Greek Fathers, resting on scriptural affirmation of three divine persons, had sought to show how this trinity of persons is to be harmonized with God's unity of nature. This harmony they found in the term "consubstantial," a term which by controversy grew more precise, and was definitively adopted by the Council of Nicaea. The Son, said the Greek Fathers, led particularly by St. Athanasius, is consubstantial with the Father, because the Father who begets the Son communicates to that Son His own divine nature, not a mere participation in that nature. And since this Son is the Son of God, His redemptive merits have infinite value. And. the Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is likewise God, consubstantial with the Father

and the Son, without which consubstantiality He could not be the sanctifier of souls. .

Now these Greek Fathers thought of the divine processions rather as donations than as operations of the divine intelligence and the divine will. The Father, in begetting the Son, gives to that Son His own nature. And the Father and the Son give that divine nature to the Holy Spirit. The mode, they add, of this eternal generation and spiration is inscrutable. Further, following the order of the Apostles' Creed, they spoke of the Father as Creator, of the Son as Savior, of the Holy Spirit as Sanctifier. But their explanations left the road open to many questions.

Why are there two processions, and only two? How does the first procession differ from the second? Why is that first procession alone called generation? Why must there be one Son only? And why, in the Creed, is the Father alone called Creator, since creative power, being a characteristic of the divine nature, belongs also to the Son and to the Holy Spirit? The Latin doctrine of appropriation is not found explicitly in the Greek Fathers.

St. Thomas, reading Augustine's work, realized that this greatest of the Latin Fathers had taken a great step forward in the theology of the Trinity. St. Augustine's point of departure is the unity of God's nature, already demonstrated philosophically. Guided by revelation, he seeks the road leading from that unity of nature to the trinity of persons. This road, followed also by St. Thomas, is the inverse of that followed by the Greek Fathers.

In St. John's prologue, our Lord is called "the Word" and the "Only-begotten." These terms struck St. Augustine. Did they not offer an explanation of that generation which the Greek Fathers called inscrutable? The Son, proceeding from the Father, is called the Word. That divine Word is, not an exterior, but an interior word, a mental, intellectual word, spoken by the Father from all eternity. The Father begets the Son by an intellectual act, as our spirit conceives its own mental word. But while our mental word is an accidental mode of our intellectual faculty, the divine word, like the divine thought, is substantial. And while our spirit slowly and laboriously conceives its ideas, which are imperfect, limited, and necessarily manifold, to express the diverse aspects of reality, created and uncreated, the Father, on the contrary, conceives eternally one substantial Word, unique and adequate, true God of true God, perfect expression of all that God is and of

all that God does and could do. Much light is thus thrown on the intimate mode of the Word's eternal generation. .

The saint also explains, in similar fashion, the eternal act of spiration. The human soul, created to the image of God, is endowed with intelligence and with love. It not only understands the good, but also loves the good. These are its two highest faculties. If then the Only-begotten proceeds from the Father as the intellectual Word, we are led to think that the Holy Spirit proceeds from both by a procession of love, and that He is the terminus of this latter procession. Here, then, enter the divine relations. The saint speaks thus: "It is demonstrated that not all predicates of God are substantial, but that some are relative, that is, as belonging to Him, not absolutely, but relatively to something other than Himself." The Father is Father by relation to the Son, the Son by relation to the Father, the Holy Spirit by relation to the Father and the Son. This doctrine is the basis of Thomistic doctrine on the divine relations.

So far, then, we have the reason why there are two processions in God, and only two, and why the Holy Spirit proceeds, not only from the Father, but also from the Son, just as in us love proceeds from knowledge. St. Augustine, however, does not see why only the first procession is called generation, and why we are not to say that the Holy Spirit is begotten. On this point, and on many others, St. Augustine's doctrine awaits precision by St. Thomas.

A similar remark must be made on St. Augustine's doctrine concerning the question of appropriation. Starting from the philosophically demonstrated unity of God's nature, and not from the trinity of persons, he easily shows that not the Father alone is Creator, but also the Son and the Holy Spirit, since creative power is a characteristic of the divine nature, which is common to all three persons. This doctrine, through the course of centuries, becomes more precise by successive pronouncements of the Church. St. Thomas is ever recurring to it. The three persons are one and the same principle of external operation. If then, in the Apostles' Creed, the Father is in particular called the Creator, He is so called by appropriation, by reason, that is, of the affinity between paternity and power. Similarly, the works of wisdom are appropriated to the Word, and those of sanctification to the Spirit of love. This theory of appropriation, initiated by St. Augustine, finds final precision in St. Thomas, and definitive formulation in the Council of Florence. .

Other difficulties still remain in St. Augustine's Trinitarian conception, difficulties which St. Thomas removes. Here we note briefly the chief difficulties.

The generation of the Word is an intellective process. Now, since the intellective act is common to the three persons, it seems that generation, even to infinity, belongs to all three persons. St. Thomas answers. From the essential act of understanding, common to the three, we must distinguish the personal "act of speaking" (dictio): which is characteristic of the Father alone. .

A similar difficulty attends the second procession, which is the mode of love. Since all three persons love infinitely, each of them, it seems, should breathe forth another person, and so to infinity. But again, from that essential love which is common, we must distinguish, first, notional love, that is, active spiration, and secondly personal love, which is the Holy Spirit Himself. .

These distinctions are not to be found explicitly in St. Augustine. But in St. Thomas they appear as natural developments of St. Augustine's principles, in contrast to the conception prevalent in the Greek Fathers Let us note the chief advantages of this Augustino-Thomistic conception.

a) Starting from De Deo uno, it proceeds methodically, from what is better known to us to what is less knowable, the supernatural mystery of three divine persons.

b) It explains, by analogy with our own soul life, of mind and love, the number and characteristics of the divine processions, which the Greek Fathers declared to be inscrutable. Thus it gives the reason why there are two and only two processions, and why the Holy Spirit proceeds not only from the Father but also from the Son.

c) It shows more clearly why the three persons are but one single principle of operations ad extra, since divine activity derives from omnipotence, which is common to all three persons. Here lies also the reason why this mystery is naturally unknowable, since creative power is common to all three. .

These positive arguments of appropriateness show how far St. Augustine had progressed from the Greek conception, attained from a different viewpoint. The difficulties left unsurmounted by St. Augustine himself are due, not to deficient method, but to the sublimity of the mystery, whereas the difficulties in the Greek conception are due to imperfect method, which,

instead of ascending from natural evidence to the mysterious, descends rather from the supernatural to the natural.

We will now examine the structure of De Trinitate as it appears in the Summa, dwelling explicitly on the fundamental questions which virtually contain all the others. First, then, the divine processions.

Chapter 14

The Divine Processions

1. Generation

Following revelation, particularly as recorded in St. John's prologue, St. Thomas shows that there is in God an intellectual procession, "an intellectual emanation of the intelligible Word from the speaker of that Word." . This procession is not that of effect from cause (Arianism): nor that of one subjective mode from another (Modalism). This procession is immanent in God, but is a real procession, not merely made by our mind, a procession by which the Word has the same nature as has the Father. "That which proceeds intellectually (ad intra) has the very nature of its principle, and the more perfectly it proceeds therefrom the more perfectly it is united to its principle." This is true even of our own created ideas, which become more perfect by being more perfectly united to our intellect. Thus the Word, conceived from eternity by the Father, has no other nature than that of the Father. And the Word is not like our word, accidental, but substantial, because God's act of knowledge is not an accident, but self-subsisting substance.

In Contra Gentes St. Thomas devotes long pages to this argument of appropriateness. The principle is thus formulated: "The higher the nature, the more intimately is its emanation united with it." He illustrates by induction. Plant and animal beget exterior beings which resemble them, whereas human intelligence conceives a word interior to it. Yet this word is but a transient accident of our spirit, where thought follows after thought. In God, the act of understanding is substantial, and if, as revelation says, that act is expressed by Word, that Word must itself be substantial. It must be, not only the idea of God, but God Himself. .

Under this form St. Thomas keeps an ancient formula, often appealed to by the Augustinians, in particular by St. Bonaventure. It runs thus: Good is

essentially self-diffusive. The greater a good is, the more abundantly and intimately does it communicate itself. The sun spreads light and heat. The plant, the animal, beget others of their kind. The sage communicates wisdom, the saint causes sanctity. Hence God, the infinite summit of all that is good, communicates Himself with infinite abundance and intimacy, not merely a participation in being, life, and intelligence, as when He creates stone, plant, animal, and man, not even a mere participation of His own nature, as when He creates sanctifying grace, but His own infinite and indivisible nature. This infinite self-communication in the procession of the Word reveals the intimacy and fullness of the scriptural sentence: “My Son art Thou, this day I beget Thee.” .

Further, this procession of the only-begotten Son is rightly called generation. The living thing, born of a living thing, receives a nature like that of its begetter, its generator. In the Deity, the Son receives that same divine nature, not caused, but communicated. Common speech says that our intellect conceives a word. This act of conception is the initial formation of a living thing. But this conception of ours does not become generation, because our word is, not a substance, but an accident, so that, even when a man mentally conceives his own substantial self, that conception is still but an accidental similitude of himself, whereas the divine conception, the divine Word, is substantial, is not merely a similitude of God, but is God. Divine conception, then, is rightly called generation. Intellectual conception, purified from all imperfection, is an “intellectual generation,” just as corporeal conception terminates in corporeal generation.

In this argument we have the highest application of the method of analogy. The Word of God, far from being a mere representative similitude of God the Father, is substantial like the Father, is living like the Father, is a person as is the Father, but a person distinct from the Father. .

2. Spiration

There is in God a second procession, by the road of love, as love in us proceeds from the knowledge of good. But this second procession is not a generation, because love, in contrast with knowledge, does not make itself like its object, but rather goes out to its object. .

These two processions alone are found in God, as in us intelligence and love are the only two forms of our higher spiritual activity. And in God, too, the second procession, spiration, presupposes the first, generation, since love derives from knowledge.

Further on St. Thomas solves some difficulties inherent in St. Augustine's teaching on the divine processions. The three persons, he shows, have in common one and the same essential act of intellect, but it is the Father only who speaks the Word, a Word adequate and hence unique. To illustrate: Of three men faced with a difficult problem, one pronounces the adequate solution, while all three understand that solution perfectly. Similarly the three persons love by the same essential love, but only the Father and the Son breathe (by notional love) the Holy Spirit, who is personal love. Thus love in God, whether essential or notional or personal, is always substantial.

Chapter 15

The Divine Relations

If there are real processions in God, then there must also be real relations. As in the order of nature, temporal generation founds two relations, of son to father and father to son, so likewise does the eternal generation of the Word found the two relations of paternity and filiation. And the procession of love also found two relations, active spiration and “passive” spiration. .

Are these relations really distinct from the divine essence? No.Since in God there is nothing accidental, these relations, considered subjectively in their inherence (esse in) are in the order of substance and are identified with God’s substance, essence and existence. It follows then that the three persons have one and the same existence. The existence of an accident is inexistence. Now in God, this inexistence of the relations is substantial, hence identified with the divine existence, hence one and unique.

This position, so simple for St. Thomas, was denied by Suarez, who starts from different principles on being, essence, existence, and relation. Suarez holds that even in the created order essence is not really distinct from existence, that relation, subjectively considered, in its inexistence, in its esse in, is identified with its objective essence, its esse ad. Hence the divine relations, he argues, cannot be real, unless each has its own existence. Thus he is led to deny that in God there is only one existence. This is an important divergence, similar to that on the Incarnation, where the proposition of St. Thomas, that in Christ there is only one existence, is also denied by Suarez.

Those divine relations which are in mutual opposition are by this very opposition really distinct one from the other. The Father is not the Son, for nothing begets itself. And the Holy Spirit is not the Father nor the Son. Yet the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God. Thus, by

increasing precision, we reach the formula of the Council of Florence: In God everything is one, except where relations are opposite. .

Here enters the saint's response to an objection often heard. The objection runs thus: Things which are really identified with one and the same third thing are identified with one another. But the divine relations and the divine persons are really identified with the divine essence. Hence the divine relations and the divine persons are identified with one another.

The solution runs thus: Things which are really identified with one and the same third thing are identified with one another; yes, unless their mutual opposition is greater than their sameness with this third thing. Otherwise I must say No. To illustrate. Look at the three angles of a triangle. Are they really distinct one from the other? Most certainly. Yet each of them is identified with one and the same surface.

Suarez, having a different concept of relation, does not recognize the validity of this response. Instead of admitting with St. Thomas, that the three divine persons by their common inexistence (esse in): have one and the same existence (unum esse): Suarez, on the contrary, admits three relative existences. Hence his difficulty in answering the objection just now cited. He solves it thus: The axiom that things identified with one third thing are identified with one another—this axiom, he says, is true in the created order only, but not universally, not when applied to God.

Thomists reply. This axiom derives without medium from the principle of contradiction or identity, and hence, analogically indeed, but truly, holds good also in God, for it is a law of being as such, a law of all reality, a law absolutely universal, outside of which lies complete absurdity.

Thus the doctrine of St. Thomas safeguards perfectly the pre-eminent simplicity of the Deity. The three persons have but one existence. Hence the divine relations do not enter into composition with the divine essence, since the three persons, constituted by relations mutually opposed, are absolutely equal in perfection. .

A conclusion follows from the foregoing discussion. Real relations in God are four: paternity, filiation, active spiration, "passive" spiration. But the third of these four, active spiration, while it is opposed to passive spiration, is not opposed to, and hence not really distinct from, either paternity or filiation. .

This doctrine, perfectly self-coherent, shows the value of St. Augustine's conception, which is its foundation and guaranty.

Chapter 16

The Divine Persons

Person in general is a being which has intelligence and freedom. Its classic definition was given by Boethius: Person is an individual subject with an intellectual nature. Hence person, generally, is a hypostasis or a suppositum, and, specifically, a substance endowed with intelligence. Further, since person signifies substance in its most perfect form, it can be found in God, if it be stripped of the imperfect mode which it has in created persons. Thus made perfect, it can be used analogically of God, analogically, but still in its proper sense, in a mode that is transcendent and pre-eminent. Further, since revelation gives us two personal names, that is, the Father and the Son, the name of the third person, of the Holy Spirit, must also be a personal name. Besides, the New Testament, in many texts, represents the Holy Spirit as a person. .

Now, since there are three persons in God, they can be distinct one from the other only by the three relations which are mutually opposed (paternity, and filiation, and passive spiration): because, as has been said, all else in God is identical.

These real relations, since they are subsistent (not accidental): and are, on the other hand, incommunicable (being opposed): can constitute the divine persons. In these subsistent relations we find the two characteristics of person: substantiality and incommunicability.

A divine person, then, according to St. Thomas and his school, is a divine relation as subsistent. Elsewhere the saint gives the following definition: A divine person is nothing else than a relationally distinct reality, subsistent in the divine essence.

These definitions explain why there are in God, speaking properly, not metaphorically, three persons, three intellectual and free subjects, though these three have the same identical nature, though they understand by one

and the same intellective act, though they love one another by one and the same essential act, and though they freely love creatures by one and the same free act of love.

Hence, while we say: The Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God, we also say: The Father is not the Son, and the Holy Spirit is not the Father, and the Holy Spirit is not the Son. In this sentence the verb “is” expresses real identity between persons and nature, and the negation “is not” expresses the real distinction of the persons from each other.

These three opposed relations, then, paternity, filiation, and passive spiration, belong to related and incommunicable personalities. Thus there cannot be in God many Fathers, but one only. Paternity makes the divine nature incommunicable as Father, though that divine nature can still be communicated to two other persons. To illustrate. When you are constructing a triangle, the first angle, as first, renders the entire surface incommunicable, though that same surface will still be communicated to the other two angles; and the first angle will communicate that surface to them without communicating itself, while none of the three is opposed to the surface which they have in common.

Here appears the profundity of Cajetan’s remark: the divine reality, as it is in itself, is not something purely absolute (signified by the word “nature”) nor something purely relative (signified by the name “person”): but something transcending both, something which contains formally and eminently that which corresponds to the concepts of absolute and relative, of absolute nature and relative person. Further, the distinction between nature and the persons is not a real distinction, but a mental distinction (virtual and minor): whereas the distinction between the persons is real, by reason of opposition. On this last point theologians generally agree with Thomists.

Chapter 17

The Notional Acts

There are two notional acts: generation and active spiration. They are called notional because they enable us to know the divine persons better. Their explanation serves St. Thomas as a kind of final synthesis, a recapitulation of Trinitarian doctrine.

Here we find the most difficult of the objections raised against that Augustinian conception which St. Thomas defends. The objection runs thus: The relation called paternity is founded on active generation, hence cannot precede generation. But the personality of the Father must be conceived as preceding active generation, which is its operation. Hence the personality of the Father which precedes generation, cannot be constituted by the subsisting relation of paternity which follows generation.

In other words, we have here a vicious circle.

St. Thomas replies as follows: “The personal characteristic of the Father must be considered under two aspects: first, as relation, and as such it presupposes the notional act of generation. But, secondly, we must consider the personal characteristic of the Father, not as relation, but as constitutive of His own person, and thus as preceding the notional act of generation, as person must be conceived as anterior to the person’s action.”

Hence it is clear that we have here no contradiction, no vicious circle, because divine paternity is considered on the one hand as anterior to the eternal act of generation, and on the other hand as posterior to that same act. Let us look at illustrations in the created order.

First, in human generation. At that one and indivisible instant when the human soul is created and infused into its body, the ultimate disposition of that body to receive that soul—does it precede or does it follow the creation of the soul? It both precedes and follows. In the order of material causality, it precedes. In all other orders of causality, formal, efficient, and final, it

follows. For it is the soul which, in the indivisible moment of its creation, gives to the human body its very last disposition to receive that soul. Hence, from this point of view, that disposition is in the human body as a characteristic deriving from the soul.

Secondly, in human understanding. The sense image precedes the intellectual idea. Yet that same image, completely suited to express the new idea, follows that idea. At that indivisible instant when the thinker seizes an original idea, he simultaneously finds an appropriate image to express that idea in the sense order.

Again, in human emotion. The sense emotion both precedes and follows intellectual love, is both antecedent and consequent.

Again, still more strikingly, in human deliberation. At the terminus of deliberation, in one and the same indivisible instant, the last practical judgment precedes the voluntary choice, and still this voluntary choice, by accepting this practical judgment, makes that judgment to be the last.

Again, look at the marriage contract. The man’s word of acceptance is not definitively valid before it is accepted by the woman. The man’s consent thus precedes the woman’s consent, and hence is not yet actually related to her consent, which has not yet been given. Only by her consent does his consent have actual matrimonial relation to his wife.

Lastly, look again at the triangle. In an equilateral triangle, the first angle drawn, though it is as yet alone, constitutes, nevertheless, the geometric figure, but does not as yet have actual relation to the two angles still undrawn.

In all these illustrations, there is no contradiction, no vicious circle. Neither is there contradiction when we say that the divine paternity constitutes the person of the Father anteriorly to the eternal act of generation, although that same paternity, as actual relation to the Son, presupposes the act of generation.

To proceed. These notional acts, generation and spiration, belong to the persons. They are not free acts, but necessary, though the Father.

wills spontaneously to beget His Son, just as He spontaneously wills to be God. And active spiration proceeds indeed from the divine will, but from that will, not as free, but as natural and necessary, like our own desire of happiness. Generative power belongs to the divine nature, as that nature is in the Father. “Spiratory power also belongs to the divine nature, but as that nature is in both the Father and the Son. Thus the Holy Spirit proceeds from

the Father and the Son as from one sole principle: there is but one Breather (Spirator): though two are breathing (spirantes).” .

If these two powers, generative and spiritave, belonged to the divine nature as such, as common to the three persons, then each of the three persons would generate and breathe, just as each of them knows and loves. Hence the word of the Fourth Lateran Council: “It is not the essence or nature which generates, but the Father by that nature.” Hence the formula, common among Thomists: “The power of generating signifies directly (in recto) the divine nature, indirectly (in obliquo) the relation of paternity.”

What is the immediate principle (principium quo) of the divine processions? It is, so Thomists generally, the divine nature, as modified by the relations of paternity and active spiration. To illustrate. When Socrates begets a son, the principium quo of this act of generation is indeed human nature, but that nature as it is in Socrates. Were it otherwise, were human nature the principium quo, as common to all men, then all men without exception would generate, as they all desire happiness. Similarly, the surface of a triangle, as far as it is in the first angle drawn, is communicated to the second, and by the second to the third; but as it is in the third it is no longer communicable. If it were, then we would have a fourth person, and for the same reason a fifth, and thus on to infinity.

So much on Thomistic doctrine concerning the notional acts. It is in perfect harmony with the foregoing chapters.

Chapter 18

Equality And Union

Numeric unity of nature and existence makes the three persons perfectly equal. And unity of existence means unity of wisdom, love, and power. Thus, to illustrate, the three angles of an equilateral triangle are rigorously equal. Hence, in God, to generate is not more perfect than to be generated. The eternal generation does not cause the divine nature of the Son, but only communicates it. This divine nature, uncreated in the Father, is no less uncreated in the Son and in the Spirit. The Father is not a cause on which the Son and the Spirit would depend. He is rather a principle, from which, without dependence, the Son and the Spirit proceed, in the numerical identity of the infinite nature communicated to them.

Again to illustrate. In the equilateral triangle we have an order, of origin indeed, but not of causality. The first angle drawn is not cause, but principle, of the second, and the principle also, by the second, of the third. Each angle is equally perfect with the others. The illustration is deficient, since you may start your triangle with any angle you choose. But illustrations, however deficient, are useful to the human intellect, which does not act unless imagination cooperates.

This perfect equality of the divine persons expresses, in supreme fashion, the life of knowledge and love. Goodness, the higher it is, the more is it self-diffusive. The Father gives His infinite goodness to the Son and, by the Son, to the Holy Spirit. Hence of the three divine persons each comprehends the other with the same infinite truth and each knows the other with the same essential act of understanding. Of their love the same must be said. Each embraces the other with infinite tenderness, since in each the act of love is identified with infinite good fully possessed and enjoyed.

The three persons, purely spiritual, are thus open to possession one by the other, being distinguished only by their mutual relations. The Father's entire personality consists in His subsistent and incommunicable relation to the Son, the ego of the Son is His relation to the Father, the ego of the Holy Spirit in His relation to the first two persons.

Thus each of the three persons, since He is what He is by His relationship to the others, is united to the others precisely by what distinguishes Him from them. An illustration: recall again the three angles in a triangle. How fertile is that fundamental principle that in God everything is identically one and the same except where we find opposition by relation!

The three divine persons, lastly, are the exemplar of the life of charity. Each of them speaks to the others: All that is mine is thine, all that is thine is mine. The union of souls in charity is but a reflection from the union of the divine persons: "That all may be one, as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee, that they also be one in Us." As Father and Son are one by nature, so the faithful are one by grace, which is a participation in the divine nature.

Chapter 19

The Trinity Naturally Unknowable

The Trinity is a mystery essentially supernatural. St. Thomas expounds the reason for this truth much more clearly than his predecessors did. By natural reason, he says, we know God only as Creator. Now God creates by His omnipotence, which is common to all three persons, as is the divine nature of which omnipotence is an attribute. Hence natural reason cannot know the distinction of persons in God, but only His one nature. In this argument we have one of the most explicit expressions of the distinction between the natural order and the supernatural order.

Hence it follows, as Thomists in general remark, that natural reason cannot positively demonstrate even the intrinsic possibility of the mystery. After the mystery is revealed, we can indeed show that it contains no manifest contradiction, but we cannot show, apodictically, by reason alone, that it contains no latent contradiction. Mysteries, says the Vatican Council, cannot, by natural principles, be either understood or demonstrated.

Further. If reason alone could demonstrate, positively and apodictically, the objective possibility of the Trinity, it would likewise demonstrate the existence of the Trinity. Why? Because, in things which necessarily exist, we must, from real possibility, deduce existence. If, for example, infinite wisdom is possible in God, then it exists in God.

In this matter, the possibility, namely, and the existence of the Trinity, theology can indeed give reasons of appropriateness, reasons which are profound and always fruitful, but which are not demonstrative. Theology can likewise show the falseness, or at least the inconclusiveness, of objections made against the mystery. Here is a formula held by theologians generally: The possibility, and a fortiori the existence, of supernatural mysteries cannot be proved, and cannot be disproved, but can be shown to be appropriate, and can be defended against impugners. .

The analogies introduced to clarify the mystery rise in value when they are pointed out by revelation itself. Thus, when St. John says that the only-begotten Son proceeds as God's mental Word, we are led to think that the second procession is one of love.

Chapter 20

Proper Names And Appropriations

Proper names aid us to understand better the characteristics of each divine person.

The First Person is called by four proper names: The Father, the Unbegotten, the Ungenerated, Principle-not-from-principle. Further, by appropriation, He is called the Creator, because creative power, though common to all three persons, has a special affinity with the first, in this sense that He has this creative power of Himself, that is, has not received it from another person. .

The Second Person has three proper names: Son, Word, Image. Hence appropriation assigns to him the works of wisdom.

To the Third Person are assigned three proper names: Holy Spirit, Love, and Uncreated Gift. Love, as proper name, signifies, not essential love, not notional love, but personal love. By appropriation, there are assigned to him the works of sanctification and indwelling in the just soul, since this indwelling presupposes charity: the charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given to Us. Charity gives us a greater likeness to the Holy Spirit than faith does to the Word. Perfect assimilation to the Word is given by the light of glory.

Chapter 21

The Indwelling Of The Blessed Trinity

We cannot here treat of the missions of the divine persons. But we must look briefly at Thomistic doctrine concerning the mode of the Trinity's indwelling in the souls of the just.

This doctrine derives from the words of our Savior: "If anyone love Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him." What will come? Not merely created effects, sanctifying grace, infused virtues, the seven gifts, but the divine persons themselves, the Father and the Son, from whom the Holy Spirit is never separated. Besides, the Holy Spirit was explicitly promised by our Lord and was sent visibly on Pentecost. This special presence of the Trinity in the just differs notably from the presence of God as preserving cause of all creatures.

We must note three different explanations of this indwelling: that of Vasquez, that of Suarez, and that of St. Thomas.

Vasquez reduces all real indwelling of God in us to the general presence of immensity, by which God is present in all things which He preserves in existence. As known and loved, God is in no way really present in the just man. He is there only as represented, like a loved friend who is absent. This view allows very little to the special presence of God in the just.

Suarez, on the contrary, maintains that God, even if He were not present by immensity, would still, by the charity which unites men to Him, be really and substantially present in the just. This opinion has to face a very grave objection, which runs thus: When we love the humanity of our Lord and Savior, or the Blessed Virgin, it does not follow that they are really present in our souls. Charity certainly is an affective union and creates a desire for real union, but cannot itself constitute that union.

Here again the thought of St. Thomas dominates two opposed views, one of Vasquez, the other of Suarez.

According to the Angelic Doctor, the special presence of the Trinity in the just presupposes the general presence of immensity. This is against Suarez. But again (and this is what Vasquez did not see): God, by sanctifying grace, by infused virtues, by the seven gifts, becomes really present in a new and higher manner, as object experimentally knowable, which the just soul can enjoy, which it at times knows actually. God is not like a loved friend who is absent, but He is really present.

The saint assigns the reason. The soul in the state of grace, he says, has God as its supernatural object of knowledge and of love and with that object the power of enjoying God.

To say truly that the divine persons dwell in us, we must be able to know them, not in abstract fashion, like distant friends, but in a manner quasi-experimental, with the vibrancy of infused charity, which gives a connatural intimacy with the inner life of God. It is the very characteristic of experimental knowledge that it terminates in an object really present.

But this experimental knowledge need not always be actual. Thus the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity lasts even during sleep. But as long as, by grace, virtue, and gifts, this indwelling continues, this experimental knowledge will, from time to time, become actual, when God makes Himself known to us as the soul of our soul, the life of our life. “You have received,” says St. Paul, “the spirit of adoption wherein we cry Abba, Father. It is the Spirit Himself who testifies that we are children of God.” .

Commenting on this passage in Romans, St. Thomas speaks thus: The Holy Spirit gives this testimony, by the filial love He produces in us. And elsewhere he traces this experimental knowledge to the gift of wisdom which clarifies living faith. And in another passage he is still more explicit. Not merely any kind of knowledge, he says, is in question when we speak of the mission and indwelling of a divine person. It must be a mode of knowledge coming from a gift appropriated to that person, a gift by which we are conjoined to God. That gift, when the Holy Spirit is given, is love, and therefore the knowledge is quasi-experimental.

Here lies the meaning of our Savior’s words: “The Spirit of truth, whom the Father will send in My name, will be in you, and will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind whatsoever I have said to you.”

If the Blessed Trinity lives in the just soul as in a temple, a living temple of knowledge and love even while the just man lives on earth, how wondrously intimate must be this indwelling of the Blessed Trinity in the blessed who form the temple of heaven! .

This doctrine of the indwelling leads from the treatise on the Trinity to the treatise on grace. Grace is the created gift, brought forth and preserved in us by the Holy Spirit, who, by appropriation, is the Uncreated Gift, or by the Blessed Trinity, wholly present in us. Adoptive filiation, says St. Thomas, comes to us, by appropriation, from the Father, who is the principle of natural filiation; but it comes also by the gift of the Holy Spirit, who is the love of the Father and the Son. The act of adoption by grace, he says elsewhere, though it is common to the entire Trinity, is appropriated nevertheless to each person singly, to the Father as author, to the Son as exemplar, to the Holy Spirit as imprinting on us the likeness of that exemplar.

Grace, we may recall in conclusion, depends by its very nature on the divine nature common to all three persons; but, as merited for all redeemed souls, it depends on Christ the Redeemer.

Fourth Part

Angel and Man

Chapter 22

The Sources

It is sometimes thought that the treatise of St. Thomas on the angels is an a priori construction, having as its sole foundation the book of Pseudo-Dionysius, called De coelesti hierarchia. This is a misconception. Scripture itself is the foundation on which St. Thomas rests. Scripture gives him the existence of angels, their knowledge, their number, their differences in good and evil, their relations to men. Pertinent and numerous texts appear already in the Old Testament, in Genesis, Job, Tobias, Isaias, Daniel, the Psalms. Angels appear in the New Testament, at our Lord's birth, Passion, and Resurrection. St. Paul enumerates them: thrones, dominations, principalities, powers. .

Here lies the foundation of the treatise on the angels. These testimonies show that the angels are creatures indeed, but higher than men. Though at times they appear under a sense form, the common term by which they are called, i. e.: spirits, justifies us in saying that they are purely spiritual creatures, notwithstanding the difficulties which several early Fathers found in conceiving a creature to be real unless it had at least an ethereal body.

To this spirituality of the angels, St. Thomas gave greater scope and precision. By distinguishing also in the angels the orders of nature and grace, by deduction from the interior life of God, from the character of the beatific vision, which is a supernatural gift for any intelligence inferior to God, from the doctrine on grace and the infused virtues, St. Thomas defended and explained the tradition, summarized thus by St. Augustine: Who gave to the good angels their good will? No one but He who, at their creation, founded their nature, and, simultaneously, gave them the gift of grace.

In this outline of the treatise on the angels we will emphasize its essential principles, noting opportunely the opposition raised by Scotus, and in part

by Suarez, who, as often elsewhere, searches here also for a middle ground between St. Thomas and Scotus. These differences appear chiefly in the doctrines relating to the nature of angels, their modes of knowing and loving, and to the manner of their merits under grace. Those who seek detailed exposition can easily find it in the works cited. Our chief interest in this treatise on angels is to clarify from on high the treatise of St. Thomas on man.

Chapter 23

Angelic Nature And Knowledge

1. Nature Of Angels

St. Thomas teaches clearly that the angels are creatures purely spiritual, subsistent forms without any matter. Scotus says they are composed of form and incorporeal matter, without quantity, because, being creatures, they must have an element of potentiality. The Thomistic reply runs thus: This potential element is first the angelic essence, really distinct, as in all creatures, from existence. Secondly, the real distinction between person and existence, between quod est and existence. Thirdly, real distinction of substance from faculties, and of faculties from acts. All these distinctions are explicitly formulated by St. Thomas himself. .

From their pure spirituality St. Thomas concludes that there cannot be two angels of the same species, because the only principle by which a substantial form can be individualized is matter, matter capable of this quantity rather than any other. Thus, to illustrate, two drops of water, perfectly similar, are by their matter and quantity two distinct individuals. But angels have no matter. .

Scotus, on the contrary, since he admits a certain kind of matter in the angels, maintains also that there can be many angels of one and the same species. Suarez, in his eclecticism, admits this conclusion of Scotus, although he sides with St. Thomas in maintaining that the angels are purely spiritual and immaterial beings. Thomists reply: if the angels are purely spiritual, you can find in them no principle of individuation, no principle capable of multiplying within one and the same species.

Form unreceived in matter, they say with St. Thomas, is simply unique. Whiteness, for example, if conceived as unreceived in this or that white thing, would be one and unique. If you deny this, then you simultaneously deny the principle which demonstrates the unicity of God, the principle,

namely, which St. Thomas thus formulates: Existence unreceived is necessarily subsistent and unique.

2. Angelic Knowledge

There are three orders of knowledge: human, angelic, divine. The object of knowledge in general is intelligible reality. The proper object of human intelligence is the intelligible being of sense objects, because the human intellect has as its proportioned object the lowest order of intelligible reality, the shadowy reality of the sense world. By opposition, then, the proper object of angelic intelligence is the intelligible reality of spiritual creatures. Hence, the proper intelligible object of each particular angel is that angel's own essence, just as God's proper intelligible object is His own divine essence. .

This position granted, let us see its consequences. The human idea, by which man knows, is an abstract and universal idea, drawn forth, by the intellect agent, from particular sense objects. But the angelic idea, not being drawn from external sense objects, is a natural endowment of the angelic intellect, infused into it by God at the moment of creation. Hence the angelic idea is at once universal and concrete. The angel's infused idea of the lion, say, represents not only the nature of the lion, but all individual lions that either actually exist or have in the past been objects of the angel's intellect. Angelic ideas are thus participations in God's own creative ideas. Infused ideas, then, which Plato and Descartes falsely ascribed to men, are, on the contrary, an angelic characteristic.

Thus these angelic ideas, at once universal and concrete, represent whole regions of intelligible reality, and each angel has his own distinctive suprasensible panorama. The higher the angel, the stronger is his intelligence and the fewer are his ideas, since they are more rich and universal. Thus, with ever fewer ideas, the higher angels command immense regions of reality, which the lower angels cannot attain with such eminent simplicity. A human parallel is the sage, who, in a few simple principles, grasps an entire branch of knowledge. The stronger is the created intellect, to say it briefly, the more it approaches the preeminent simplicity of the divine intellect.

A further consequence. The nature of his ideas, at once universal and concrete, make the angel's knowledge intuitive, not in any way successive and discursive. He sees at a glance the particular in the universal, the conclusion in the principle, the means in the end. .

For the same reason his act of judging does not proceed by comparing and separating different ideas. By his purely intuitive apprehension of the essence of a thing, he sees at once all characteristics of that essence, for example, he simultaneously sees all man's human and created characteristics, for instance, that man's essence is not man's existence, then man's existence is necessarily given and preserved by divine causality. .

Why this immense distance between angel and man? Because, seeing intuitively, the angel sees without medium, as in clearest midday, an immensely higher object, sees the intelligible world of spirits, whereas man's intellect, the most feeble of all intellects, having as object the lowest order of intelligibility, must be satisfied with twilight glances into the faint mirror of the sense world.

A further consequence is that the angel's intuitive vision is also infallible. But while he can make no mistake in his natural knowledge, he can deceive himself in the supernatural order, on the question, for example, whether this or that individual man is in the state of grace. Likewise he may deceive himself in forecasting the contingent future, above all in attempting to know the future free acts of men, or the immanent secrets of man's heart, secrets which are in no way necessarily linked with the nature of our soul or with external physical realities. The secrets of the heart are not fragments of the material world, they do not result from the interplay of physical forces. .

Contrary to this view, Scotus holds that the angel, though he has no sense faculties, can still receive ideas from sense objects. This view arises from his failure to distinguish intellects specifically by their proper and proportioned object. Thus he goes on to say that, had God so willed, the unmediated vision of the divine essence would be natural to both angels and men. Thus the distinction between uncreated intelligence and created intelligence is, for Scotus, a distinction not necessary, but contingent. A fortiori, then, he denies any necessary distinction between the proper object of the human intellect and that of the angelic intellect.

Scotus further denies that the ideas by which higher angels know are less numerous and more universal than those of lower angels. Perfection of knowledge, he says, derives less from the universality of ideas than from their clearness and brightness. Here Thomists distinguish. In the empiric order, yes, clearness does not depend on the universality of ideas. But in the order of perfection, in the order of higher principles, themselves

concatenated with the supreme principle—in this order doctrinal clearness most certainly depends on the universality of its ideas.

Scotus holds also that the angel can know discursively, can engage in reasoning, a view which notably depreciates the perfection of the pure spirit. On the other hand, he holds that the angel can know, naturally and with certitude, the secrets of man's heart, though God, he adds, refuses this knowledge to the demons.

Suarez, again eclectically, admits with St. Thomas that the angelic ideas are innate, but holds, with Scotus, that the angel can use reasoning, and can be mistaken regarding the characteristics of the object he knows.

Chapter 24

The Angelic Will

St. Thomas seeks to understand the angelic will by the object to which that will is specifically proportioned. Scotus insists rather on the subjective activity of that will.

Studying the object of the angelic will, St. Thomas concludes that certain acts of that will, though voluntary and spontaneous, are nevertheless not free, but necessary, by reason of an object in which the angelic intelligence sees no imperfection, but perfect happiness. As regards angelic freedom of will, he holds that angelic choice, like human choice, is always determined by the last practical act of judgment, but that the act of choice by accepting that judgment makes it to be the last. Scotus, on the contrary, holds that freedom belongs essentially to all voluntary acts, and that free choice is not always determined by the last practical act of judgment. On this point Suarez follows Scotus. Against them Thomists invoke the following principle: “If nothing can be willed unless it be foreknown as good, then nothing can be here and now preferred unless it be here and now foreknown as better.” In other words, there can be no will movement, however free, without intellectual guidance, otherwise we confound liberty with haphazard, with impulse, which acts necessarily and without reflection. Here lies the source of the chief doctrinal divergences concerning the angelic will.

St. Thomas teaches that the objects which the angel loves, not freely, but necessarily, at least necessarily as regards specification, are, first, his own happiness, second, himself, third, God as author of his nature, the reason being that in these objects he can find nothing repulsive. Hence it is more probable that the angel cannot, at least not directly and immediately, sin against the natural law, which he sees intuitively as written into his own essence. Yet the demons, in sinning directly against the supernatural law,

sin indirectly against the natural law which prescribes that we obey God in everything He may command.

Further. If the angel sins, his sin is necessarily mortal, because, seeing end and means with one and the same intuitive glance, he cannot be disordered venially, i. e.: in regard to means, without previous mortal disorder in regard to his last end.

Again, the sin of the angel is irrevocable, and hence irremissible. In other words, since the angel chooses with perfect knowledge after consideration, not abstract, discursive, successive, but intuitive and simultaneous, of all that is involved in his choice, he can no longer see any reason for reversal of his choice. Hence arises the demon's fixed obstinacy in evil. Nothing was unforeseen in his choice. If we were to say to him: "You did not foresee this," he would answer, "Surely I foresaw it." With fullest knowledge he refused obedience, and refuses it forever in unending pride. Similarly the choice of the good angel is irrevocable and participates in the immutability of God's free act of choice. St. Thomas cites approvingly the common expression: Before choice the free will of the angel is flexible, but not after choice. .

Scotus admits none of these doctrines. No act of the angelic will is necessary, not even the angel's natural love of his life or of the author of life. The will can sin even when there is no error or lack of consideration in the intellect, because free choice is not always conformed to the last practical judgment. The first sin of the demon is not of itself irrevocable and irremissible. The demons, he says, committed many mortal sins, before they became obstinate in evil, and could have repented after each of those sins. And their obstinacy itself he explains extrinsically, as due to God's decree that, after a certain number of mortal sins, He would no longer give them the grace of conversion. On these points Suarez follows Scotus, since he too holds that free choice is not always conformed to the last practical judgment. But he does not explain how free choice can arise without intellectual direction. Thomists repeat: Nothing can be willed unless here and now foreknown as better.

Contrast shows clearly that St. Thomas has a higher conception of the specific distinction between angelic intelligence and human intelligence than have Scotus and Suarez. Faculties, habits, and acts are proportionally specified by their formal objects. To this principle, repeatedly invoked in the Summa, Thomism insistently returns.

This treatise on the pure spirit, on intuitive knowledge, lies on a very high level. Its conclusions on the angelic will are faithful to the principle: nothing willed unless foreknown as good. From the speculative point of view this treatise is a masterpiece, a proof of the intellectual superiority of the Angelic Doctor, an immense step forward from the Sentences of Peter the Lombard. Scotus and Suarez did not maintain this elevation, did not see the sublimity, intellectual and voluntary, of the pure spirit as contrasted with the lowly intellect and will of man.

Chapter 25

Angelic Merit And Demerit

St. Thomas holds that all the angels were elevated to the state of grace before the moment of their trial, because without sanctifying grace they could not merit supernatural happiness. With this doctrine Scotus and Suarez agree. They also agree in saying that most probably all angels received this gift at the moment of their creation. All three teachers, following St. Augustine, hold that the revelation had the obscurity of faith. The three agree also in saying that after their trial the good angels were immovably confirmed in grace and received the beatific vision, while the wicked angels became obstinate in evil. But, notwithstanding this agreement, there remain three problems concerning the state of the angels before and during their trial. On these problems St. Thomas again differs widely from Scotus and Suarez.

1. Natural Happiness

St. Thomas holds that at the very moment of their creation the angels received all their natural perfection of spirit and their natural happiness, because their innate knowledge proceeds instantaneously, without succession, from faculty to act. Hence, at the very moment of creation, they have perfect intuition of their own nature, and in that nature as mirror they know God as author of that nature, on which their own natural law is inscribed. Simultaneously also in that same moment they know all other angels, and have instantaneous use of their own infused ideas.

Here Scotus and Suarez do not follow St. Thomas. They deny, first, that angels had natural beatitude from the moment of creation. They hold, secondly, that the angels could, from that first moment, sin against the natural law directly and immediately. In reply, Thomists simply insist that pure spirits must from their first moment of creation, know their own selves perfectly as pure spirits, and hence know their own nature as mirror of the

Author of that nature, and consequently must love that Author as the source of their own natural life, which they necessarily desire to preserve.

2. Instantaneous Choice

At the very moment of creation, so St. Thomas, the angels could not sin, but neither could they fully merit, because their very first act must be specially inspired by God, without their own self-initiated interior deliberation. But at the second instant came either full merit or full demerit. The good angel after the first act of charity, by which he merited supernatural beatitude, was at once among the blessed. Just as immediately the demons were repudiated.

Hence, with St. Thomas, we must distinguish three instants in the life of the angel: first, that of creation; second, that of merit or demerit; third, that of supernatural beatitude or of reprobation. We must note, however, that an angelic instant, which is the measure of one angelic thought, may correspond to a more or less long period of our time, according to the more or less deep absorption of the angel in one thought. An analogy, in illustration, is that of the contemplative who may rest for hours in one and the same truth.

The reason for the instantaneousness of the divine sanction after the first angelic act, fully meritorious or fully demeritorious, has been given above. Angelic knowledge is not abstract and discursive like ours, but purely intuitive and simultaneous. The angel does not pass successively, as we do, from one angle of thought to another. He sees at once, simultaneously, all the advantages and disadvantages. Hence his judgment once made is irrevocable. There is nothing he has not already considered.

What kind of sin was that of the demons? Pride, says St. Thomas. They chose as supreme purpose that which they could obtain by their natural powers, and hence turned away from supernatural beatitude, which can be reached only by the grace of God. Thus, instead of humility and obedience, they chose pride and disobedience, the sin of naturalism.

Scotus and Suarez, as we have seen, since they hold that the angelic knowledge is discursive and successive, maintain likewise that the angel’s practical judgment and act of choice are revocable, but that after many mortal sins, God no longer gives them the grace of conversion.

3. Source Of Angelic Merit

St. Thomas holds that the essential grace and glory of the angels does not depend on the merits of Christ, because “the Word was made flesh for men

and for our salvation." Christ merited as Redeemer. Now the essential grace of the angels was not a redemptive grace. And their essential glory, he says elsewhere, was given them by Christ, not as Redeemer, but as the Word of God. Yet the Word incarnate did merit graces for the angels, graces not essential but accidental, to enable them to cooperate in the salvation of men.

Scotus again differs. Since the Word, he says, also in the actual plan of Providence, would have become man even if man had not sinned, we should hold that Christ merited for the angels also their essential grace and glory. And Suarez holds that Adam's sin was the occasion and condition, not of the Incarnation, but of the Redemption. Even if man had not sinned, he says, the Word would still perhaps have become incarnate, but would not have suffered. Hence, he concludes, Christ merited for the good angels their essential grace and glory, and is therefore their Savior.

Thomists reply that Christ is the Savior only as Redeemer. But for the angels He is not Redeemer. Further, they reflect, if the angels owed to Christ their essential glory, the beatific vision, they would, like the just of the Old Testament, have had to wait for that vision until Christ rose from the dead.

Let us summarize this Thomistic treatise on the angels. The main point of difference from Scotus and Suarez lies in the specific difference between angelic intelligence and human intelligence, a difference that depends on their respective formal object, his own essence for the angel, for the man the essence of the sense world known by abstraction. Hence angelic knowledge is completely intuitive. From this position derive all further conclusions of St. Thomas, on angelic knowledge, will, merit, and demerit. This Thomistic conception of pure spirit is much higher than that of Scotus and Suarez. This treatise also throws much light on the following treatise where St. Thomas, in studying the nature of man, dwells on the quasi-angelic state of the separated soul.

A last remark. St. Thomas, as he proceeds, corrects the grave errors of the Latin Averroists, who looked upon all immaterial substances as eternal and immutable, as having a knowledge eternally complete, as depending on God, not for creation, but only for preservation. .

Chapter 26

The Treatise On Man

In his commentary on Aristotle's work, De anima, the method of St. Thomas had been philosophical, ascending progressively from vegetative life to sense life, from sense life to intellectual life, and finally to the principle of intellective acts, the spiritual and immortal soul. In the Summa, on the contrary, he follows the theological order, which first studies God, then creatures in their relation to God. Hence, after treating of God, then creation in general, then of angels, he now treats of man, under five headings:

1. The nature of the human soul.
2. The union of soul with body.
3. The faculties of the soul.
4. The acts of intelligence.
5. The production and state of the first man.

Before we follow him, let us recall that St. Thomas pursues a golden middle way, between the Averroists and the Augustinians.

Averroes maintained that human intelligence, the lowest of all intelligences, is an immaterial form, eternal, separated from individual man, and endowed with numeric unity. This intelligence is both agent intellect and possible intellect. Thus human reason is impersonal, it is the light which illumines individual souls and assures to humanity participation in eternal truths. Hence Averroes denies individual souls, and also personal liberty. Such was the doctrine taught in the thirteenth century by the Latin Averroists, Siger of Brabant and Boethius of Dacia. Against these St. Thomas wrote a special treatise. .

Siger maintained that, beside the vegetativo-sense soul, there exists indeed an intellective soul, but that this soul is by its nature separated from the body, and comes temporarily to the body to accomplish there its act of

thought, as, so he illustrates, the sun illuminates the waters of a lake. Thus the intellectual soul cannot be the form of the body, for then, being the form of a material organ, it would itself be material and therefore be intrinsically dependent on matter. This intellectual soul is unique, for it excludes from itself even the very principle of individuation, which is matter. Still it is always united to human bodies, because, although human individuals die, humanity itself is immortal, since the series of human generations is without beginning and will never end. .

On the other hand, some pre-Thomistic theologians, notably Alexander of Hales and St. Bonaventure, admitted a plurality of substantial forms in man and also a spiritual matter in the human soul. These theologians were seeking, unsuccessfully, to harmonize the doctrine of St. Augustine with that of Aristotle. The multiplicity of substantial forms did indeed emphasize St. Augustine's view about the soul's independence of the body, but at the same time compromised the natural unity of the human composite.

Steering between these two currents, St. Thomas maintains that the rational soul is indeed purely spiritual, entirely without matter and hence incorruptible, but that it is nevertheless the form of the body, rather, the one and only form of the body, although in its intellectual and voluntary acts it is intrinsically independent of matter. And if in these acts it is independent, then it is independent of the body also in its being, and, once separated from the body which gave it individuation, it still remains individualized, by its inseparable relation to this body rather than to any other.

Turning now to special questions, we shall continue to underline the principles to which St. Thomas continually appeals, and which Thomists have never ceased to defend, particularly against Scotus and Suarez, who still preserve something of the theories held by the older Scholasticism. Thus Scotus admits, first a materia primo prima in every contingent substance, even in spiritual substances, and holds, secondly, that there is in man a form of corporeity distinct from the soul, and that, thirdly, there are in the soul three formally distinct principles, that of the vegetative life, that of the sense life, and that of the intellective life.

He likewise holds, against St. Thomas, that prime matter, speaking absolutely, can exist without any form. This last thesis reappears in Suarez who, since he rejects the real distinction between essence and existence, goes on to admit that prime matter has its own existence. We shall see that the principles of St. Thomas cannot be harmonized with these positions.

Chapter 27

The Nature Of The Soul

Its Spirituality And Immortality

The soul of man is not only simple or unextended, as is the soul of plant and animal, but it is also spiritual, that is, intrinsically independent of matter, and therefore subsistent, so that is continues to exist after its separation from the body. These statements are proved by the soul's intellective activity, because activity follows being, and the mode of activity reveals the mode of being. How do we show that intellective activity is independent of matter? By the universality of the object, which the intellect abstracts from the particular and limited sense world. Among the truths thus discovered are universal and necessary principles, independent of all particular facts, independent of all space and time. .

This necessity and universality, we now note, is manifest on three levels of abstraction. On the first level, that of the natural sciences, the intellect, abstracting from individual matter, studies, not this mineral, plant, or animal perceived by the senses, but the inner universal nature of mineral, plant, or animal. On the second level, that of the mathematical sciences, the intellect, abstracting from all sense matter, from all sense qualities, considers the nature of triangle, circle, sphere, or number, in order to deduce their necessary and universal characteristics. Here it appears clearly that man's idea of the circle, for example, is not a mere image, a sort of medium between great and small circles, but a grasp of some nature intrinsic in each and every circle, great or small.

Again, though the imagination cannot represent clearly to itself a polygon with a thousand sides, the intellect grasps the idea with ease. Thus the idea differs absolutely from the image, because it expresses, not the sense qualities of the thing known, but its inner nature or essence, the source of all its characteristics, not as imagined, but as conceived.

Lastly, on the third level of abstraction, the intellect, abstracting entirely from matter, considers the intelligible being inaccessible to the senses. This being, this inner reality, is not a special sense quality, like sound, nor a common sensory quality like extension, but something grasped by the intellect alone, as the raison d'etre of reality and all its characteristics. Intellect alone grasps the meaning of the little word "is," which is the soul of every judgment made by the mind, which is presupposed by every other idea, and which is the goal of all legitimate reasoning. Being then, that which is, since it does not involve any sense element, can exist beyond all matter, in spirits, and in the first cause of spirits and bodies.

On this third level of abstraction, then, the intellect recognizes the characteristics of being as such: unity and truth and goodness. From the very nature of being, of inner reality, derive the principles, absolutely necessary and universal, of contradiction, causality, and finality, principles which reach out immeasurably beyond the particular and contingent images pictured by the imagination, reach even to the existence of a first cause of all finite things, of a supreme intelligence, regulating the universe. By its own act, lastly, the intellect recognizes its own kinship with the immaterial world.

To summarize. Our mode of intelligent activity proves the immateriality of our soul, and immateriality founds incorruptibility, since a form which is immaterial is uncomposed and subsistent, hence incorruptible.

Here lies the meaning of man's desire for immortality. Since the intellect, says the saint, grasps a reality beyond time, every intellectual being desires to live forever. Now a natural desire cannot be void and empty. Hence every intellectual being is incorruptible.

How does the human soul come into existence? Since it is immaterial, it cannot come from the potency of matter, i. e.: it cannot arise by generation, hence it must arise by God's creative power. That which acts independently of matter, says the saint, must have this same independence, not only in its existence, but also in its manner of receiving existence.

Is our universal and necessary knowledge a proof that we can be elevated to an immediate knowledge of Him who is subsistent being itself? Not a proof, says the saint, but at least a sign. .

We may insert here two of the twenty-four Thomistic theses.

The fifteenth: The human soul is of itself subsistent. Hence at the moment when its subject is sufficiently disposed to receive it, it is created

by God. By its own nature it is incorruptible and immortal. .

The eighteenth: Intellectuality is a necessary consequence of immateriality, and in such wise that levels of intellectuality are proportioned to their elevation above matter. .

Here Suarez differs notably from St. Thomas.

Chapter 28

The Union Of Soul With Body

The rational soul is the substantial form of the human body, gives that body its own nature, for it is the radical principle by which man lives, vegetatively, sensitively, and intellectively. These various vital acts, since they are not accidental to man, but natural, must come from his nature, from the specific principle which animates his body.

What makes man to be man? Is it his soul alone? No, because each man is aware that he uses not only his mind but also his sense powers. But without body there can be no sense activity. Hence the body too belongs to man's constitution.

But can we not say, with Averroes, that the soul is an impersonal intelligence, united with the body, say, of Socrates, in order to accomplish there that act which we call thinking? No, again, because such a union, being accidental, not essential, would prevent the act of thinking from being in truth the action of Socrates. Socrates would have to say, not: "I think," but instead: "It thinks," somewhat as we say, "It rains." Nor can we say, further, that intelligence is united to the body as motor, to move and guide the body, since thus it would follow that Socrates would not be a natural unity, would not have one nature only. .

But can then the rational soul be a spiritual thing, if it is the principle of vegetative and sense life? It can, because, to quote the saint, "the higher a form is, the less it is immersed in matter, the more likewise does it dominate matter, and the higher does its operation rise above materiality." Even the animal soul is endowed with sense activity. Much more then can the rational soul, even as form of the body, dominate that body, and still be endowed with intellectual knowledge. The spiritual soul communicates its own substantial existence to corporeal matter, and this existence is the one and only existence of the human composite. Hence, also, the human soul, in

contrast to the soul of beasts, preserves its own existence after the destruction of the body which it vivified. It follows, further, that the spiritual soul, when separated from its body, preserves its natural inclination to union with that body, just as naturally as, to illustrate, a stone thrown into the air still preserves its inclination to the center of the earth. .

Is there possibly only one soul for all human bodies? No, because it would follow that Socrates and Plato would be simply one thinking subject, and the one's act of thinking could not be distinguished from that of the other. .

Since each individual human soul has an essential relation to its own individual body, it follows that, by this essential relation, the separated soul remains individualized, and hence has a natural desire for reunion with that body, a reunion which, so revelation tells us, will become fact by the resurrection of the body. .

Is the rational soul the one and only form of the human body? Yes, because from this one form come both sense life and vegetative life, and even corporeity itself. If there were more than one substantial form in man, man would be, not simply one, but accidentally one. Supposing many substantial forms, the lowest of these forms, by giving corporeity, already constitutes a substance, and all subsequent forms would be merely accidental forms, as is, to illustrate, the form we call quantity when added to corporeal substance. A form is not substantial unless it gives substantial being. .

Notice how, throughout these articles too, the saint insistently recurs to the principle of potency and act. "Act united with act cannot make a thing one in nature." On the contrary, "only from act and from potency essentially proportioned to that act can arise a thing of itself one, as is the case with matter and form." This principle of potency and act is the source of the wonderful unity in the Thomistic synthesis.

Is there not contradiction in saying that a form essentially spiritual can, nevertheless, be the source of corporeity? No, because superior forms contain eminently the perfection of inferior forms, as, to illustrate, the pentagon contains the quadrilateral. The rational soul contains, eminently and formally, life sensitive and vegetative, and these qualities are only virtually distinct from one another. There would be contradiction if we said that the soul is the immediate principle of act, intellective, sensitive, and

nutritional. But the soul performs these acts by the medium of specifically distinct faculties. .

If the rational soul has as object the lowest of intelligible realities, namely, the sense world, what kind of body shall that soul have? Evidently a body capable of sense activity. Thus the body is meant by nature to subserve the soul's intellective knowledge. Only accidentally, particularly as a consequence of sin, is the body a burden to the soul.

A summary of the principles which dominate the question of the natural union of the soul to body is found in the sixteenth of the twenty-four Thomistic theses. It runs thus: This same rational soul is united to the body in such wise that it is the one and only substantial form of that body. To this one soul man owes his existence, as man, as animal, as living thing, as body, as substance, as being. Thus the soul gives to man all degrees of essential perfection. Further, the soul communicates to the body its own act of existence, and by that existence the body, too, exists.

To Thomists this proposition seems demonstrated by the principle of real distinction between potency and act, between essence and existence. Suarez, who has a different understanding of this principle, holds that the proposition, "the soul is the one and only form of the body," is not a demonstrated proposition, but only a more probable one. Here again we see his eclectic tendency.

What we have said of the soul's spirituality, its personal immortality, its union with the body, shows clearly the degree of perfection given by St. Thomas to Aristotle's doctrine, which had been misinterpreted by Averroes as pantheistic. The precision Aquinas has given to Aristotle, particularly on the question of free and non-eternal creation, and on the present question of the soul, justifies the statement that St. Thomas baptized Aristotle. The principle of potency and act explains and defends these important preambles of faith. .

Chapter 29

The Faculties Of The Soul

The principle which dominates all questions on distinction and subordination of faculties, and which, consequently, dominates all moral theology, is formulated as follows: Faculties, habits, and acts are specifically distinguished by their formal object, or more precisely, by their formal object which (quod) they attain without medium and their formal object by which (quo) the object is attained. This principle, which clarifies all psychology, all ethics, all moral theology, is one of the three fundamental truths of Thomism. As formulated, in the seventeenth century, by A. Reginald, it runs thus: A relative thing becomes specifically distinct by the absolute thing to which it is essentially proportioned. Thus sight is specifically distinct from the other senses by its proportion to color, hearing by its proportion to sound, intellect by proportion to intelligible reality, will by proportion to the good which it loves and wills. .

From this principle it follows that the soul faculties are really distinct realities, not identified with the soul itself. In other words, when the soul knows, it knows, not immediately of itself, but by its accidental faculty of intellect, and wills by its faculty of will, and so on. This truth is not a mere habit of daily speech. It lies in the very nature of things. The essence of the soul is certainly a real capacity, a real potency, but since it is not its own existence, it receives from God that substantial existence to which it is proportioned. This existence is an act different from the act of understanding or willing, because a thing must be before it can act. Therefore, just as the soul’s essence is a real capacity for existence, so must the soul have potencies, faculties, real capacities for knowing the truth, for loving the good, for imagining, for feeling emotion, for seeing, hearing, and so on.

In God alone are all these things identified: essence, existence, intelligence, understanding, willing, loving. In the angel, as in man, essence is not existence, essence is not faculty, intellect is not its successive acts, nor will its successive volitions. .

In place of this real distinction Scotus demands a distinction formal-actual ex natura rei. Here, too, Thomists answer, that a medium between real distinction and mental distinction is impossible. If a distinction is anterior to our mental act, it is real, otherwise it is merely mental.

Suarez, here again, seeks a medium between Aquinas and Scotus. He thinks the distinction between soul and soul faculties is not certain, only probable. This position too derives from his departure from St. Thomas in the doctrine of potency and act.

How do the soul faculties derive from the soul? As characteristics derive from essence, so all soul faculties, intellective, sensitive, and vegetative, derive from the one human soul. But the reason why the intellective faculties so immeasurably transcend the sense faculties lies in their respective formal object. Sense faculties, however perfect, since they are limited to here and now, can never reach the inward raison d'etre of a thing, never grasp necessary and universal principles, speculative or practical. In this transcendent power of the intellective faculty lies the proof for the spirituality of the soul. .

Thus also the will, by its formal object, is distinguished from sense appetite, concupiscible and irascible. The will is a spiritual power, directed by the intellect, and specifically distinguished by universal good, which cannot be known by sense faculties, whereas sense appetite, illuminated only by these sense faculties, is specifically proportioned to sensible good, delectable or useful. Hence sense appetite as such can never desire that rational good which is the object of virtue.

This profound distinction, this immeasurable distance, between will and sense appetite goes unrecognized by many modern psychologists, who follow Jean Jacques Rousseau.

Does each faculty have its own special and determinate corporeal organ? Each sense faculty does, and hence the immediate subject of all sense faculties is, not the soul, but the human composite, soul and body united. But intellect and will, being independent of the organism, which is particular and limited, have as their subject, not the human composite, but the soul alone. .

We cannot here dwell on the intellectual act. Let us merely note that its adequate object is intelligible being in its fullest amplitude, by reason of which amplitude man can, in the natural order, know God, the first cause, and, in the supernatural, can be elevated to the immediate vision of the divine essence. Since its proper object, however, is the essence of the sense world, our intellect can know God and all spiritual beings only by analogy with the sense world, the lowest of intelligible realities, to know which it needs the sense faculties as instruments. In this state of union with body, its manner of knowing the spiritual world is not immediate like that of the angel. So its very definition of the spiritual is negative. Spiritual, it says, is what is immaterial, i. e.: non material. And this negative mode of knowing the spiritual shows clearly that its proper sphere is in the world of sense.

This teaching on the nature of human intelligence leads us to the nature of human freedom. Of this freedom there are two opposed definitions, one Thomistic, the other, Molinistic. Molina gives this definition: That agent is free, who, granting all prerequisites for acting, can either act or not act. Now this definition, standard among Molinists, however simple and satisfactory it seems at first sight, is in reality linked necessarily with Molina's theory of scientia media. .

What does Molina mean by the phrase "granting all prerequisites for acting"? His explanations show that the phrase includes, not merely what is prerequired by priority of time, but also what is prerequired by priority of nature and causality. It includes therefore the actual grace received at the very moment of performing a salutary act. Hence this definition, Molina explains, does not mean that the free will, under efficacious grace, preserves the power of resisting even while, in fact, it never does resist. What it does mean is this: Grace is not of itself efficacious, it is efficacious only by our own consent, pre-known by God (pre-known by God's scientia media of future conditional things).

Molina's definition, in the eyes of Thomists, is defective because it leaves out of consideration the object which specifically distinguishes the free act. It neglects the fundamental principle, that all faculties, habits, and acts are what they are by their specific relation to their respective object.

Now if, on the contrary, we consider the specific object of free will, we will recall the words of St. Thomas: "If we set before the will an object, which from any point of view is not good, the will is not drawn to it by necessity." These words contain, equivalently, the Thomistic definition of

free will which runs thus: Freedom is the will's dominative indifference in relation to any object which reason proposes as in any way lacking in good.

Let us dwell on this definition. Reason proposes an object which, here and now, is in one way good but in some other way not good. Faced with such an object the will can choose it or refuse it. The will, as faculty, has potential indifference; as act, it has actual indifference. Even when the will actually chooses such an object, even when it is already determined to will it, it still goes freely toward it, with its dominating indifference no longer potential but actual. Indeed, in God, who is supremely free, there is no potential indifference, but only an actual and active indifference. Freedom arises from the disproportion which exists between the will, specifically distinguished and necessitated by universal good, and this or that limited and particular good, good in one way, not good in another way.

Against Suarez, Thomists pronounce thus: It is impossible that God, even by His absolute power, could necessitate the will to choose an object which reason proposes as indifferent. Why? Because it is self-contradictory, that the will should necessarily will an object which reason says is in some way not good, and which therefore is absolutely disproportioned to the only object which can necessitate the will. .

Here enters the twenty-first of the twenty-four theses. "The will follows, it does not precede the intellect. And the will necessarily wills only that object which is presented to it as good from every angle, leaving nothing to be desired. But the will chooses freely between good things presented by mutable judgment. Hence choice follows indeed the last practical judgment, but it is the will which makes that judgment to be the last."

How does the will make the last practical judgment to be the last? It does this by accepting it as last, instead of turning to a new consideration which would result in an opposed practical judgment. Intellect and will are thus reciprocally related, with a kind of matrimonial relation, since voluntary consent, ending deliberation, accepts the judgment here and now present as last. Intellectual direction is indispensable, since the will is of itself blind: nothing can be willed unless foreknown as good.

Suarez, on the contrary, following Scotus, maintains that voluntary choice is not necessarily preceded by a practical judgment immediately directive. The will, when faced with two good objects, equally or unequally good, can, he says, freely choose either of them, even though the intellect does not propose that one as here and now the better. Using their principle

as measuring-stick, Thomists reply: Nothing can be preferred here and now, unless foreknown as here and now better. That something not really better can here and now be judged better depends, of course, on the evil disposition of man's appetites, intellectual and sensitive. .

We have elsewhere examined at great length this problem: the special antinomies relative to freedom; the reciprocal influence of the last practical judgment and free choice; comparison of Thomist doctrine with the psychological determinism of Leibnitz, on the one hand, and on the other, with the voluntarism of Scotus, followed partly by Suarez.

In a brief word, the essential thing for St. Thomas is that the intellect and will are not coordinated, but mutually subordinated. The last practical judgment is free when its object (good from one viewpoint, not good from another) does not necessitate it. Freedom of will, to speak properly, is to be found in the indifference of judgment.

Chapter 30

The Separated Soul

We treat this subject briefly under three headings:

1. Subsistence of the separated soul.
2. Knowledge of the separated soul.
3. The will of the separated soul.

1. Subsistence

The continued subsistence of the separated soul may be thus demonstrated. Every form which, in its being, in its specific activity, and in its production, is intrinsically independent of matter, can subsist, and in fact, does subsist, independently of matter. But the human soul is such a form, intrinsically independent of matter. Hence, after the dissolution of the human body, the human soul continues to subsist.

The Averroistic question was this: How can the soul, separated from the matter which gave it individuality, remain individualized, that is, remain as the soul of Peter rather than the soul of Paul? It remains individualized, answers St. Thomas, by its essential, transcendental relation to that human body which originally gave it individuation, even though that body is now buried in the dust. Were this relation merely accidental, then it would disappear with the disappearance of its terminus, as does, e. g.: the relation of a father’s paternity when his son dies. But the separated soul is individualized by its relation to an individual body, a relation comparable to that between the soul and the living body, and this relation remains in the separated soul, which by that relation remains individualized. Thus St. Thomas against the Averroists, who, holding that the soul is individualized only by actual union with matter, went on to say pantheistically that all men together have but one immortal and impersonal soul. .

We must note that soul and body form a natural composite, which is one, not per accidens, but per se. Were the human soul united only accidentally

to the body, then it would have only an accidental relation to its body, which relation could not remain after the dissolution of the body. Quite otherwise is the case if the human soul is by nature the form of the body.

Here we may again see how faithful St. Thomas is to the principle of economy, which he himself thus formulates: When fewer principles suffice, search not for more. In the present treatise too he draws all conclusions from principles, very profound but very few. The saint is thus responsible for great progress in the unification of theological knowledge.

Let us note briefly a few more of these consequences. First, it is more perfect for the human soul to be united to the body than to be separated, because its connatural object lies in the sense objects to know which it needs the sense faculties. Second, the separated soul has a natural desire to be reunited to its body, a conclusion in harmony with the dogma of universal corporeal resurrection. Third, the separated soul cannot by its will be reunited to its body, because it informs the body, not by its voluntary operation, but by its very nature. .

2. Knowledge

Sense operations and sense habits do not remain actually in the separated soul, but only radically (i. e.: in their root and principle). What it does actually retain are, first, its immaterial faculties (intellect and will): second, the habits it acquired on earth, habits of knowledge, for example, and third, the actual exercise of these habits, that of reason, for example. Yet the separated soul finds itself impeded in this exercise, because it no longer has the actual cooperation of the imagination and the sense memory. But it receives from God infused ideas comparable to those of the angels. To illustrate, we may compare its state to that of a theologian who, unable to keep in touch with new publications in his science, receives illuminations from on high.

Sometimes we find an emphasis on this last point, an emphasis which neglects another truth, very certain and very important, namely, that the separated soul knows itself directly, without medium. This truth carries with it many other truths. By this immediate self-knowledge, it sees with perfect evidence its own native spirituality, its immortality, its freedom. It sees also that God is the author of its nature. It thus knows God, no longer in the sense world as mirror, but as mirrored in its own spiritual essence. Hence it sees with transcendent evidence the solution of the great philosophic problems, and the absurdity of materialism, determinism, and pantheism.

Further, separated souls have knowledge of one another and also of the angels, though their knowledge of the latter is less perfect, since the angels belong by nature to a higher order of things.

Does the separated soul know what is happening on earth? Not in the natural order. But in the supernatural order, God manifests to the blessed in heaven such events on earth as have a special relation to their blessed state, as, for instance, the question of sanctification of living persons for whom the blessed are praying. .

3. The Will

Every separated soul, so faith teaches us, has a will immutably fixed in relation to its last end. For this truth St. Thomas gives a profound reason. The soul, in whatever state, he says, thinks of its last end rightly or wrongly according to its interior disposition. Now as long as the soul is united to the body, this disposition can change. But when the soul is separated, since it is no longer tending to its last end, it is no longer on the road (in via) to its good, but has obtained its goal, unless it has missed it eternally. Hence its dispositions at the moment of separation remain immovably fixed either in good or in evil. Here again we see the harmony between dogma and reason, between revelation on the immutability of the separated soul and the doctrine that the soul is the form of the body.

Concluding, St. Thomas, shows that man, first by his intellectual nature, secondly by grace, thirdly by the light of glory, is made to the image of God. Is man also an image of the Trinity? Yes, by his soul, which is the principle from which proceed both thought and then love.

Chapter 31

Original Sin

Was the first man created in the state of grace? Did that original justice include sanctifying grace? Peter Lombard and Alexander of Hales, followed by St. Albert the Great and St. Bonaventure, had answered as follows: Adam was not created in the state of grace, but only with the full integrity of human nature. Thereupon, after voluntarily disposing himself thereunto, he received sanctifying grace. From this point of view grace seems to be a personal gift to Adam rather than a gift to be transmitted to his descendants. Still, according to these four teachers, these descendants too by the dispositions given them in their transmitted integrity of nature would have received sanctifying grace.

What is the position of St. Thomas? We find a development in his thought. When he wrote his commentary on the Sentences, after expounding the foregoing view, he goes on to speak as follows: “But others say that man was created in grace. According to this view the gift of gratuitous justice would seem to be a gift to human nature itself, and therefore grace would have been transmitted simultaneously with nature.”

At this time then, around 1254, he does not as yet give preference to either of these views. But a little later, farther on in the same work, he says that it is more probable that Adam received grace at the moment of his creation.

In his subsequent works, he favors this view ever more strongly. In a work written between 1263 and 1268, he speaks thus: “Original justice includes sanctifying grace. I do not accept the view that man was created in the simple state of nature.” Later on, in the same work, he again says: “According to some authors sanctifying grace is not included in the concept of original justice. This view I hold to be false. My reason is this: Original justice consists primordially in the subjection of the human mind to God,

and such subjection cannot stand firm except by grace. Hence original justice must include grace."

Finally, in the Summa, he affirms without qualification, that the first man was created in the state of grace, that grace guaranteed the supernatural submission of his soul to God, and, further, that this primordial rectitude brought with it perfect subordination of passion to reason and of the body to the soul, with the privileges of impassibility and immortality.

Original justice, then, includes grace. This truth St. Thomas finds in a word of Scripture: God made man right. Thus this text was understood by tradition, notably by St. Augustine, who often says that, as long as reason submitted to God, the passions submitted to reason. Hence St. Thomas holds that the original justice received by Adam for himself and for us, included, as intrinsic and primordial element, sanctifying grace, and that this grace is the root and source of the other two subordinations, of passion to reason, of body to soul.

Let us hear the saint's own words: "Since the root of original justice, which made man right, lies in the supernatural subjection of reason to God, which subjection, as said above, comes with sanctifying grace, we must say that children born in original justice would also have been born in grace. Would grace then be something natural? No, because grace would not be given by seminal transfusion of nature, but by God, at the moment when God infused the rational soul." .

And here is another text: "Original justice belonged primordially to the essence of the soul. For it was a gift divinely given to human nature, a gift which is given to the essence of the soul, before being given to the faculties." .

Original justice, then, includes sanctifying grace, received by Adam for himself and for us. That this is the position of St. Thomas is maintained by most of the commentators. .

We may add here a word from the saint's teaching on baptism. If original justice meant merely full integrity of nature, then original sin would be merely the privation of this integrity, and hence would not be remitted by baptism, since baptism does not restore this integrity. But original sin, the death of the soul, is the privation of grace, and grace is what is restored by baptism.

This position of St. Thomas, compared to the other view, is much nearer to the position later defined by the Council of Trent, which condemned

anyone who would assert that Adam's fall harmed himself only and not his progeny, or that he lost for himself but not for us that sanctity and justice he had received from God. The word "sanctity" in that sentence was declared by many fathers of that Council to mean "sanctifying grace." And while the sentence underwent many amendments, the word "sanctity" was never expunged. .

Thus Adam is conceived as head of nature elevated, who, both for himself and for us, first received and then lost, that original justice which included sanctifying grace. This truth is thus expressed in the preparatory schema for the Council of the Vatican: God raised primordially the whole human race in its root and head to the supernatural order of grace, but now Adam's descendants are deprived of that grace.

Original sin, therefore, is a sin of nature, which is voluntary, not by our will, but only by the will of Adam. Hence original sin consists formally in the privation of original justice, of which the primordial element is grace, which is restored by baptism. Listen to St. Thomas: "The disorder found in this or that man descended from Adam is voluntary, not by his will, but by the will of our first parent." .

To say it in a word, the human nature transmitted to us is a nature deprived of those gifts, supernatural and preternatural, which, without being gifts of nature, still enriched our nature as if they were gifts of nature. .

Much light is thrown on the transmission of this sin of nature by the doctrine of the soul as form of the body. The soul, being the substantial and specific form of the body, constitutes with the body one and only one natural unity; hence although the soul, being an immaterial thing, does not arise from matter but must be created by God from nothing, still that soul enters into a natural union with a body which is formed by generation. If human nature is thus transmitted, then, after Adam's sin, it is transmitted as deprived of original justice. Were the soul, like a motor, only accidentally united to the body, we would have no way of explaining the transmission of original sin. Let St. Thomas speak: "Human nature is transmitted from parent to child by transmission of a body into which then the soul is infused. The soul of the child incurs the original stain, because that soul constitutes with the transmitted body one nature. If the soul were not thus united to form one nature, but were only united as an angel is united to an assumed body, then the soul would not incur this original stain." .

This same doctrine, the soul as form of the body, explains also, as we saw above, the immutability of the soul, immediately after death, in regard to its last end. The purpose of the body is to aid the soul to reach that last end. Hence, when the soul is no longer united to the body, it is no longer on the road to its last end, but is settled in its relation to that end by the last act, meritorious or demeritorious, which it placed during its state of union with the body. .

Thus all questions concerning man from beginning to end, from conception unto death and thereafter, are explained by one and the same set of principles. This is a great step in attaining unity of theological science.

We have now seen, from the viewpoint of principle, the most important questions regarding God, and the angels, and man, before his fall and after. Let us summarize and conclude. God alone is pure act, in whom alone is essence identified with existence, who alone is not only His own existence, but also His own action. Every creature is composed of essence and existence, it has its existence, but it is not its existence. Here appears the gulf between the verb “to be” and the verb “to have.” Since activity follows being, every creature is dependent on God for its activity, just as it is dependent on Him even for its being.

Such is the word of wisdom, which decides all questions in the light of the supreme cause, God, the source and goal of all creation.

Fifth Part

Redemptive Incarnation

Chapter 32

Introduction

In order to show the appropriateness of the Incarnation, St. Thomas employs this principle: good is self-diffusive, and the higher the order of good, the more abundantly and intimately does it communicate itself. The truth of this principle is seen on every level of being: in the light and heat of the sun, in the fruitfulness of vegetative life, of sense life, of intellective knowledge and love. The higher a thing stands in goodness the more creative it is, both as goal to attract and as agent to effect.

But does a thing that is good necessarily communicate itself? Yes, if it is an agent limited to one kind of activity, as is the sun to radiation. But if the agent is free, then its self-communication is also free. By such free self-communication a perfect agent gives perfection, but does not itself become thereby more perfect. Now God is the supremely good thing, infinitely good. Hence it is appropriate that He communicate Himself in person to a created nature, and this is what comes to pass in the incarnation of the Word.

Does this reason prove the possibility of the Incarnation? No, because reason can simply not prove apodictically even the possibility of a mystery essentially supernatural. But, as profound reason of appropriateness, the argument just given is inexhaustibly fruitful. And on this point we find among theologians no notable controversy. Real controversy begins when we put the questions: Why did God become incarnate?

The answer of St. Thomas runs thus: In the actual plan of providence, if the first man had not sinned, the Word would not have be come incarnate. He became incarnate to offer God adequate satisfaction for that first sin and all its consequences. Let us listen to his argument.

A truth which absolutely surpasses all that is due to human nature, a truth which depends solely on God’s will, can be known by divine revelation

only. But according to revelation, contained in Scripture and tradition, the reason everywhere assigned for the Incarnation is drawn from the sin of the first man. Hence it is reasonable to conclude that, if the first man had not sinned, the Word would not have become incarnate, and that, after that sin, He became incarnate in order to offer God adequate satisfaction, and thus to give us salvation.

This line of reasoning is in harmony with Scripture. Among the many texts let us quote one: The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost. It is also the voice of tradition, formulated thus by St. Augustine: Had man not sinned, the Son of man had not come.

Such is the answer of St. Thomas. Scotus, on the contrary, maintains that, even if Adam had not sinned, the Word would still have become incarnate. But, since He would not have come to atone for sin, He would not have a human nature subject to pain and death. Suarez, seeking a middle ground, says that the Word became incarnate equally for the redemption of man and for the manifestation of God's goodness. By the adverb "equally" he understands that these two motives are coordinated, as being two chief purposes, each equal to the other, whereas Thomists hold that the ultimate purpose of the Incarnation was indeed to manifest God's goodness, but that the proximate purpose was man's redemption.

Against the Scotist view Thomists use the following argument. Divine decrees are of two kinds: one efficacious and absolute, the other inefficacious and conditional. The latter is concerned with the thing to be realized taken in itself, abstracting from all actual circumstance. Thus, for example, God wills the salvation of all men. But, in fact, God permits final impenitence in a sinner (e. g.: Judas) as manifestation of infinite justice. Efficacious decrees on the contrary are concerned with the thing to be realized taken with all its concrete circumstances of place and time. Hence these decrees are immutable and infallible. Now the present efficacious decree extends to the concrete circumstance of the passibility of our Savior's humanity. And Scotists themselves concede that the union between divine nature and human nature subject to passibility presupposes Adam's sin.

This reasoning, which Thomists hold to be irrefutable, supposes that the last end of the Incarnation is to manifest the divine goodness by way of redemption, redemption being efficaciously decreed as subordinated to this manifestation. Thus proposed, the argument concludes against both Suarez

and Scotus. For us men and for our salvation, says the Council of Nicaea, He came down from heaven. Had man not sinned, the Son of man had not come, says tradition. Scotus and Suarez would reword this sentence. They say: Had man not sinned, the Son of man would still have come, but not in a "passible" humanity. By such restatement the assertion of the Fathers, taken simply as it stands, would be false. To illustrate, it would be false to say that Christ is not really in heaven and in the Eucharist, though He is not in either place in a passible humanity.

Scotus brings another difficulty. A wise man, he says, wills first the end, then the means in proportion to their nearness to that end. Thus he transfers the subordination in question from the order of different acts of the divine will to the order of different objects of those acts. Then he continues: Now Christ, being more perfect, is nearer the last end of the universe than is Adam. Hence God, to reveal His goodness, chose first the incarnation of the Word, before Adam was willed, and hence before his sin had been committed.

In answer to this objection, many Thomists, following Cajetan, distinguish the final cause from the material cause. To illustrate. In the order of final causality God wills, first the soul, secondly the body for the sake of the soul. But in the order of material causality He wills first the body, as being the material cause to be perfected by the soul, and the soul is created only when the embryo is sufficiently disposed to receive the soul.

Applying this distinction to the Incarnation, God wills, under final causality, the redemptive Incarnation before He wills to permit Adam's sin, conceived as possible. But in the order of material causality, He permits first the sin of Adam, as something to be turned into a higher good. Similarly, in the order of beatitude, beatitude itself is the final cause and man is the material cause, the subject, which receives beatitude.

This distinction is not idle, verbal, or fictitious. It is founded on the nature of things. Causes have mutual priority, each in its own order: form before matter, matter before form. If Adam had not sinned, if the human race were not there to be redeemed, the Word would not have become incarnate. That is the order of material causality. But in the order of finality, God permitted original sin in view of some higher good, which good we, after the Incarnation, know to be an incarnation universally redemptive.

On this last point some Thomists hesitate. John of St. Thomas and Billuart say they have no answer to the question: What higher good led God

to permit original sin? But others give a satisfactory answer. Before the Annunciation, they say, the question could not be answered. But, after the Annunciation, we see that the higher good in question is the universally redemptive Incarnation, subordinated of course to the revelation of God's infinite goodness.

That this is the thought of St. Thomas himself appears in the following words: "Nothing hinders human nature from being led after sin to a greater good than it had before. God permits evils only to draw forth from them something better." Where sin abounded, says St. Paul, there grace superabounded. And the deacon, when he blesses the Easter candle, sings: Oh happy guilt, which merited so great and so beautiful a Redeemer!

Thus God's mercy, goodness, and power find in the Incarnation their supreme manifestation. How does God manifest His omnipotence? Chiefly, says the liturgy, by sparing and showing mercy. .

Hence, as the Carmelites of Salamanca so well say, we are not to multiply divine decrees, and to suppose, as did John of St. Thomas and Billuart, a whole set of conditional and inefficacious decrees. It suffices to say that among all possible worlds known by what we call God's simple intelligence, there were included these two possible worlds: first, a human race that remains in a state of innocence and is crowned with a non-redemptive Incarnation; secondly, a fallen human race restored by a redemptive Incarnation. Thus, while the fallen race is first as material subject of the Incarnation, the Incarnation itself is first in the order of finality. And thus, too, the ultimate purpose of the universe is the manifestation of God's goodness.

How, then, are we to conceive the succession, not in divine acts of will, but in the order of objects willed by God? Let us take an architect as illustration. What the architect aims at first is not the summit nor the foundation but the building as a whole with all its parts in mutual subordination. Thus God, as architect, wills the whole universe as it now stands with its ascending orders, nature first, then grace (with the permission of sin): then the hypostatic union as redemptive from sin. The Incarnation, though it presupposes a sinful human race, is not "subordinated" to our redemption. Redemptive by its material recipient, it remains in itself the transcendent cause of redemption, and we, as recipients, as bodies are to souls, remain ourselves subordinated to Christ, who is the author of salvation and the exemplar of holiness. All things

belong to you, says St. Paul, but you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God.

Let us conclude with a corollary, thus expressed by St. Thomas: : “God’s love for Christ is greater than His love for all creatures combined. By this love He gave Christ a name that is above every name, since Christ is truly God. Nor is Christ’s pre-eminent excellence in any way diminished by the death which God imposed on Him as Savior of the human race. On the contrary, by this death Jesus gained the most glorious of victories, a victory which made Him the Prince of peace, whose shoulders bear the government of the world.” Having humbled Himself, says St. Paul, having become obedient unto death, even unto death on the cross, He was exalted and given the name that is above every name.

This transcendent excellence of the Savior, thus delineated by St. Thomas, is in fullest accord with Scripture and tradition. The glory of God’s Son was not diminished, was rather pre-eminently enhanced, when for our salvation He came down from heaven and was made man.

Chapter 33

The Hypostatic Union

The hypostatic union is the union of two natures, one divine, one human, in the person of the Word made flesh. What is meant by person, personality?

The classic definition is that of Boethius: Person means an individual substance having a rational nature. Of this definition St. Thomas gives the following explanation.

Person signifies an individual subject, which is first intellectual, secondly free, i. e.: master of his own acts, one whose acts are self-initiated. Person, he continues, being the primary subject which bears all predicates attributable in any way to its being, is itself incommunicable to any other subject. To each human person, for example, belong and are attributed, his soul, his body, his existence, his faculties, his operations, the parts of his body. .

This explanation simply makes precise that notion of person already held by the common sense of mankind. In everyday speech, when we speak of person, we mean that deep inward self-ownership, that ontological personality, which is the root, first of the self-conscious ego, and this we may call psychological personality, and secondly of that self-controlled use of liberty, which we may call moral personality.

Person, personality, thus defined, is found in men, in angels, and, analogically, in God. In God, moreover, according to revelation, there are three persons, three subjects intellectual and free, which have each the same intellect and the same liberty, the same act of understanding and the same free act, by which all three are one principle of external operation. This same notion of personality allows us to say that Jesus too is a person, one sole intellectual and free subject, one sole ego, although he has two natures, one divine, one human, and hence first two intellects, and secondly two

liberties, His human liberty, however, completely conformed to His divine liberty. When Jesus says that He is the way, He is speaking according to His human nature. But when, in the same text, He adds that He is the truth and the life, He is speaking primarily according to His divine nature, which makes Him truth itself and life itself. “All things whatsoever the Father hath are Mine.” .

What is the formal and radical element of ontological personality? Here the Scholastics divide into opposed camps. Scotus, who denies real distinction of essence and existence, who denies further real distinction between suppositum (quod est) and existence (esse): answers thus: Personality is something negative. In any particular individual humanity (in Peter or Paul) personality is the denial, the absence in that person of hypostatic union with a divine person. Suarez says that personality is a substantial mode which follows the existence of a particular individual nature, and makes that nature incommunicable. He cannot admit, as Thomists do, that personality is presupposed to existence, since, like Scotus, he denies real distinction of essence and existence.

But even those who admit this real distinction are not all of one mind in defining personality. One view, that of Cajetan, who is followed by most Dominican and Carmelite Thomists, defines personality as follows: Personality is that by which an individual nature becomes immediately capable of existence. A second view, less explicit, but almost identical, is that of Capreolus, who says that personality is the individual nature as that nature underlies its existence. A third view, that of Cardinal Billot and his disciples, says that personality is existence itself, as actualizing the individual nature.

By what criterion are we to arrive at the true definition of personality? We must start with the nominal definition, furnished by common usage, a definition which all theologians intend to preserve. Now, by that common usage, when we use the word “person” or its equivalent pronouns “I,” “you,” and “he,” we mean to signify, not a mere negation, not something accidental, but a distinct, individual and substantial thing, even though its existence be contingent. Why, then, should the philosopher or theologian, in his search for a real and distinct definition, abandon this nominal definition of common sense? Let him rather follow the method indicated by Aristotle and St. Thomas, which requires that we proceed, first, negatively, then positively.

1. Ontological personality, then, that by which a subject is person, cannot be a negative something. If personality is to constitute the person, it must itself be something positive. Further, the personality of Socrates or of Peter must be something in the natural order, and hence it cannot be defined, as Scotus wills, by the negation of hypostatic union, which belongs essentially to the supernatural order; a consequence would be that personality, the personality, say, of Socrates, would be something naturally unknowable.

2. Ontological personality is not only something positive, but also something substantial, not accidental, because “person” means a substance, a real subject of accident. Hence personality, speaking properly, ontological personality, is not formally constituted by self-consciousness, which is rather an act of the person already constituted, an act which manifests the person which it presupposes. Similarly, personality is not constituted by freedom of will, which is a consequence that shows the dignity of the person who is already constituted. Moreover, in Jesus, we find two self-conscious intellects and two free wills, though He is one sole person, one sole ego. Hence personality is something positive and substantial. Let us now compare it with those elements in the line of substance which it most resembles.

3. Is personality identified with nature as found concrete in the individual? No, because person is a whole which has nature indeed as a part, the essential, formal, and perfective part, but still only a part. Were nature not a mere part, but the whole of person, we could say “Peter is his nature.” But since person contains more than nature, we say “Peter has human nature.”

4. Is then personality identified with individualized nature which underlies existence? Again no, because the concrete singular nature of Peter is not that which exists but is that by which Peter is man. That which exists is Peter himself, his person. Hence personality is not the concrete singular nature as preceding existence. Further, were this view granted, since as in Christ there are two natures, so there would likewise be two personalities, two persons.

5. Nor is personality to be identified with existence. Existence is attributed to created persons as contingent predicate, not as a formal constitutive predicate. No creature is its own existence. Creatures have existence, but the distance between “to be” and “to have” is measureless. Only God is His own existence.

In every creature, St. Thomas repeats, that which exists (the suppositum, the person) differs from its existence. Existence, he says elsewhere, follows both nature and person. But it follows nature as that by which the thing is what it is, whereas it follows person as that which has existence. The word "follows" in this passage expresses a sequel that is real and objective, not a mere logical consequence. And thus, if existence follows person, it presupposes person, and hence cannot constitute personality.

Further, if existence formally constituted person, then the created person would be identical with his existence. Peter would be his own existence, he would not simply have existence. St. Thomas would be wrong in repeating: In every creature person differs from existence.

In other words, the fundamental argument of the Thomistic thesis runs thus: That which is not its own existence is really distinct from that existence, really, that is, anteriorly to any mental act of ours. Now the person of Peter, and much more his personality, is really distinct from his existence, and existence is in him as a contingent predicate. God alone is His own existence, a truth of supremest evidence to those who have received the beatific vision.

6. To recapitulate. Ontological personality is a positive something, a substantial something, which so determines the concrete singular nature of a rational substance that it is capable, without medium, of existing in itself as a separate and independent entity. More briefly, it is that by which a rational subject is that which exists (quod est): whereas its nature is that by which it belongs to its species, and existence is that by which it exists.

Existence is a contingent predicate of the created person, it is his ultimate actuality, not in the line of essence but in another line. Hence, since existence presupposes personality, personality itself cannot be a substantial mode posterior to existence.

Hence we may say that personality is the point where two distinct lines intersect: the line of essence and the line of existence. Personality, speaking properly, is that by which an intellectual subject is that which is. This ontological personality, which constitutes the ego, is thus the root, both of the psychologic personality, that is, of the ego as self-conscious, and of the moral personality, that is, of self-mastery, of self-initiated activity. Thus Christ's person, as theologians in general say, is the personal principle (principium quod) of His theandric actions, and thus gives to His acts their infinite value.

This objective definition of personality does but make explicit the content of the nominal definition which common sense accepts. Personality is that by which the intellectual subject is a person, as existence is that by which it exists, hence personality differs both from the essence and the existence which it unites into one complete whole.

Hence created essence and its contingent existence do not make one sole nature, but they do belong to one and the same subject (suppositum): nature as its essential part, and existence as its contingent predicate. This terminology rests on Aristotle's doctrine of the four modes of predicating per se, i. e.: of saying that this predicate belongs to this subject. We have the first mode in a definition, the second mode when we predicate a characteristic of the essence, the third when we predicate something of an independent suppositum, and the fourth when we predicate of an effect its proper and necessary cause. Following this accepted terminology, we see that created essence and its contingent existence make one complete whole as belonging each to one suppositum, in the third mode of predicating per se.

Ontological personality thus conceived, far from preventing union between essence and existence, is rather that which unites the two and makes them one complete whole.

Such is the conception of personality defended by Cajetan and the majority of Thomists. This conception, they maintain, is the metaphysical foundation of grammatical usage in regard to personal pronouns, and of the verb "to be": he is a man, for example, or he exists, or, he is active, he is patient, and so on.

The texts of Capreolus are less explicit. "Nature as individualized under existence" is his definition of personality. We have said, with the majority, that personality is that by which individualized nature becomes immediately capable of existing. Now that which exists is, precisely speaking, not the nature of Peter, but Peter himself, Peter's person. Thus Cajetan, though he speaks more explicitly, does not contradict Capreolus.

In clarification of this doctrine, held by most Thomists, let us quote a few more texts from St. Thomas. The form signified by this name person, he says, is not essence or nature, but personality. The contrast with nature shows that personality is something substantial. Again he says: The name person rests on personality, which expresses subsistence in rational nature. This means, in other terms, that personality is that by which a rational

subject is capable, first of separate existence, second, of self-initiated activity.

Again, speaking now of Christ directly, he writes thus: Had not His human nature been assumed by a divine person, that nature would have its own proper personality. Hence we may say, speaking inexactly, that the divine person consumed the human personality, because the divine person, by being united to the human nature prevented that nature from having its own personality. In other words, personality, though it is not a part of the essence, is still something positive and substantial, not identified however with existence which, in a created person, is something contingent. Existence, he said above, follows person which is the subject of existence.

Lastly, speaking now of the Trinity, he says: The three divine persons have each one and the same existence. This text shows clearly that personality differs from existence, since in God there are three personalities but only one existence. Similarly he says: Existence is not included in the definition of person (suppositum). Only God is His own existence, whereas in a created person existence is a predicate, not essential, but contingent.

Now for some consequences of this position. Person is to be found in man, in angel, and, analogically, in God. By personality the intellectual subject becomes the first subject of attribution, the subject of which all else in him is predicated, the center from which all else radiates, the ego which possesses his nature, his existence, his self-conscious act, his freedom. By deviation, this principle of ownership and possession can become the principle of egoism and individualism, which prefers itself to family, society, and God. But while egoism and pride are thus an abuse of created personality, an enormous abuse, rising even to the denial of the Creator’s supreme right, still the right use of personality, psychological and moral, grows into truth, self-devotedness, and sanctity.

In what, then, consists the full development of created personality? It consists in making ourselves fully independent of inferior things, but also, and still more closely, dependent on truth, on goodness, on God.

Propriam personalitatem haberet; et pro tanto dicitur persona (divina) consumpsisse personam, licet improprie, quia persona divina sua unione impedivit ne humana natura propriam personalitatem haberet.

Himself. The saints are complete personalities, since they recognize that human personality grows great only by dying to self so that God may live in us, may rule us ever more completely. As God inclines to give Himself ever

more and more, so the saint renounces ever more completely his own judgment and his own will, to live solely by the thoughts and will of God. He desires that God be his other self, more intimate than his proper self. Thus, from afar off, he begins to understand the personality of Jesus.

But the saint, however high, is still a creature, immeasurably below the Creator, eternally distinct from God. In Jesus Christ, the Word of God gave Himself, in the highest conceivable manner, to humanity, by uniting Himself personally to humanity, in such wise that the human nature thus united becomes one sole ego with that Word, which assumed forever that human nature. Thus, there is in Christ one sole person, one sole intellectual and free subject, even while there are two natures, two intellects, two freedoms. Hence Christ alone among men can say: “Before Abraham was, I am.” “The Father and I are one.” “All that belongs to the Father belongs to Me.”

To clarify this hypostatic union, St. Thomas proceeds as follows: According to Catholic faith, human nature is really and truly united to the person of the Word, while the two natures remain distinct. Now that which is united to a person, without a union in nature, is formally united to it in person, because person is the complete whole of which nature is the essential part. Further, since human nature is not an accident, like whiteness, for example, and is not a transitory act of knowledge or love, the human nature is united to the Word not accidentally, but substantially. .

Christ, then, is man, though He has no human personality. But His humanity, far from being lowered by this union with the Word, is rather thereby elevated and glorified. From that union His humanity has an innate sanctity substantial and uncreated. To illustrate. Imagination, the highest of sense faculties, has a higher nobility in man than in animal, a nobility arising from its very subordination to the higher faculty of the intellect. A thing is more noble, says Thomas, when it exists in a higher being than when it exists in itself. .

Whereas individuation proceeds from matter, personality, on the contrary, is the most perfect thing in nature. Thus in Jesus, as in us, all individualizing circumstances, of time and place of birth, of people and country, arise from created matter, whereas His person is uncreated.

This union of two natures therefore is not an essential union, since the two are distinct and infinitely distant. Nor is it an accidental union, like that of the saints with God. It is a union in the substantial order, in the very

person of the Word, since one real subject, one sole ego, possesses both natures. Hence this union is called the hypostatic union.

This teaching of St. Thomas, and of the majority of Thomists, rests, first on the words of Jesus concerning His own person, secondly on the idea of person accessible to our natural intelligence. Hence this doctrine can be expounded in a less abstract form, in formulas that elevate the soul to sure and fruitful understanding of this mystery. .

But a more subtle question arises: Is this hypostatic union of two natures something created? In answer, it is clear, first, that the action which unites the two natures is uncreated, because it is an act of the divine intellect and will, an act which is formally immanent in God, and only virtually transitive, an act which is common to the three divine persons. It is clear, secondly, that the humanity of Jesus has a real and created relation to the Word which possesses that humanity, and on which that humanity depends, whereas the Word has only a relation, not real but only of reason, to the humanity which it possesses, but on which it does not depend. On these two points there is no discussion.

But there is discussion when the question is posed thus: Is there a substantial intermediate mode which unites the human nature to the Word? Scotus, Suarez, and Vasquez answer affirmatively, as do likewise some Thomists, the Salmanticenses, for example, and Godoy. Thomists in general answer negatively, appealing with justice to repeated statements of St. Thomas. Thus he says: “In the union of the human nature to the divine, nothing mediates as cause of this union, nothing to which human nature would be united before being united to the divine person: just as between matter and form there is no medium. So likewise nothing can be conceived as medium between nature and person (suppositum).” Thus the Word terminates and sustains the human nature of Christ, which human nature thus constituted depends directly, without medium, on the Word. And creation itself, passive creation, is nothing but a real direct relation by which the creature depends on the Creator.

Further, St. Thomas holds that the hypostatic union is the most deep and intimate of all created unions. The human nature, it is true, is infinitely distant from the divine, but the principle which unites them, namely, the person of the Word, cannot be more one and more unitive. The union of our soul to our body, for example, however immediate it is and intimate, is yet broken by death, whereas the Word is never separated either from the body

or from the soul which He has assumed. Thus the hypostatic union is immovable, indissoluble, for all eternity.

This deep inward intimacy of the hypostatic union has as consequence the truth that there is in Christ one existence for the two natures. This consequence, since it supposes real distinction between created essence and existence, is denied by Scotus and Suarez, who thereby attenuate that union which constitutes the God-man. St. Thomas thus establishes his conclusion: There can be, in one and the same person, many accidental existences, that of whiteness, for example, that of an acquired science or art: but the substantial existence of the person itself must be one and one only. Since existence is the ultimate actuality, the uncreated existence of the Word would not be the ultimate actuality if it were ulteriorly determinable by a created existence. Hence we say, on the contrary, that the eternal Word communicates His own existence to His humanity, somewhat as the separated soul communicates its own existence to the body at the moment of resurrection. “It is more noble to exist in a higher thing than to exist in one’s self.” “The eternal existence of God’s Son, an existence identified with divine nature, becomes the existence of a man, when human nature is assumed by God’s Son into unity with His person.” .

Scotus and Suarez, as has been said, since they reject real distinction between essence and existence, reject likewise the doctrine of one existence in Christ. They not only attenuate the hypostatic union but even compromise it, because existence, as ultimate actuality, presupposes subsistence or personality. Hence, as Thomists say, if there were two existences in Christ, there must be likewise two persons. One thing St. Thomas insists on: one person can have but one sole existence.

This doctrine shows the sublimity of the hypostatic union. Under this union, just as the soul of Christ has the transcendent gift of the beatific vision, so the very being of Christ’s humanity, since it exists by the Word’s uncreated existence, is on a transcendent level of being. Here we see in all its fullness the principle with which St. Thomas begins his treatise on the Incarnation: Good is self-communicative, and the higher is that good the more abundantly and intimately does it communicate itself.

Christ’s personality, then, the unity of His ego, is primarily an ontological unity. He is one sole subject, intellectual and free, and has one sole substantial existence. But this most profound of all ontological unities expresses itself by a perfect union of this human mind and will with His

divinity. His human mind, as we have just said, had even here on earth the beatific vision of God's essence, and hence of God's knowledge. Hence, even here below, there was in Jesus a wonderful compenetration of vision uncreated and vision created, both having the same object, though only the uncreated vision is infinitely comprehensive. Similarly there was perfect and indissoluble union of divine freedom and human freedom, the latter also being absolutely impeccable.

Chapter 34

Consequences Of The Hypostatic Union

1. By the substantial grace of personal union with the Word, the humanity of Christ is sanctified, with a sanctity that is innate, substantial, and uncreated. By the grace of union Jesus is united to God personally and substantially, by that grace He is Son of God, the well-beloved of the Father, by that grace He is constituted as the substantial principle of acts, not merely supernatural but theandrical, and by that grace He is sinless and impeccable.

2. Nevertheless it is highly appropriate that the soul of the Savior should have, as consequence of the hypostatic union, the plenitude also of created grace, of sanctifying grace, with all the infused virtues and with all the gifts of the Holy Ghost, that thus his supernatural and meritorious acts be connatural. This connaturalness requires that also the proximate principles of these acts, His intellect and will, be of the same supernatural order as are the acts themselves. .

3. This habitual and sanctifying grace, being a consequence of the hypostatic union, was, from the first moment of His conception, so perfect that it could not be augmented. By His successive deeds, says the Second Council of Constantinople, Christ Himself was not made better.

This initial plentitude of grace expanded at once into the light of glory and beatific vision. It is highly appropriate that He who came to lead humanity to its last end should have perfect knowledge of that end. Were it otherwise, did He have from His divinity only faith illumined by the gifts of the Holy Ghost, then, on receiving later the light of glory, He would, contrary to the Council just cited, have Himself become better.

This expansion of sanctifying grace into the vision of God was paralleled by a corresponding expansion of zeal for God’s glory and man’s salvation, a zeal which led the Savior, at His entrance into the world, to offer Himself as

a perfect holocaust for us. The same plenitude of grace is the source, on the one hand, of a supreme beatitude, which did not leave Him even on the cross, and, on the other hand, of the greatest suffering and humiliations, arising from His zeal to repair all offenses against God and to save mankind. This identity of source serves in some manner to explain the mysterious harmony, in Christ crucified, between supreme beatitude and supreme suffering, physical, moral, and spiritual.

4. The priesthood of Christ, which gives to His sacrifice an infinite value, on what does it rest? It presupposes, not merely the fullness of created grace, but also the grace of union. The priestly acts of Christ draw their theandric and infinite value from His divine personality. Some Thomists, it is true, say that Christ's priesthood is constituted by His created grace, by His grace of headship, which of course presupposes the grace of union. But the majority, more numerous as time goes on, hold that Christ's priesthood rests directly on the uncreated grace of union itself. That union it is which makes Jesus the "Anointed one of the Lord." That union gives Him His primordial anointing, His substantial holiness. .

Further, the grace of union is also the reason why we owe to Christ's humanity the homage of adoration. It is likewise the reason why Christ sits at the right hand of God, as universal king of all creatures, as judge of the living and the dead. This is the view which dominates the encyclical on Christ as King. Jesus is universal judge and universal king, not only as God, but also as man, and that above all by His grace of union which makes Him God-man.

This uncreated grace of union, then, is the reason why Christ, as man, since He possesses substantial holiness, is to be adored with the adoration due to God alone. And primarily by this same grace He is first priest, capable of priestly acts which are theandric, secondly universal king and judge.

Here appears the necessity of contemplating our Savior from three points of view: first according to His divine nature, by which He creates and predestines; secondly, according to His human nature, by which He speaks, reasons, and suffers; thirdly, according to His unity of person with the Word, by which His acts are theandric and have a value infinitely meritorious and satisfactory.

Christ was predestinated. In what sense? St. Thomas and his school, in opposition to Scotus, teach that Jesus as man was predestined, first to divine

filiation, secondly and consequently, to the highest degree of glory, which is given to Him because He is God's Son, by nature, not by adoption. They teach, further, that Christ's own gratuitous predestination is the cause of our predestination and that Jesus merited for the elect all the effects of predestination, all the graces which they receive, including the grace of final perseverance. .

5. Christ's meritorious and satisfactory acts have an intrinsic value which is infinite. On this important question, which touches the very essence of the mystery of Redemption, Thomists and Scotists are divided. St. Thomas and his school, as we saw above, by insisting on the one existence of Christ, emphasize, much more than Scotus does, the intimacy of the two natures in Jesus,—which gives to His acts, meritorious and satisfactory, an intrinsically infinite value. Thomists insist on the substantial principle of these acts, which is the Word made flesh, the divine suppositum, the divine person of the Son of God.

Hence, whereas Scotists assign to Christ's acts a value that is only extrinsically infinite, that is, only so far as God accepts those acts, Thomists, on the contrary, and with them many other theologians, hold that the value of these acts is intrinsically infinite by reason of the divine person of the Word, which is their substantial and personal principle. That which acts, merits, satisfies, is not, speaking properly, the humanity of Jesus, but rather the person of the Word, which acts by His assumed humanity. But that person, having an infinite elevation, communicates that elevation to all His acts. He that properly satisfies for an offense, says St. Thomas, must give to the one offended something for which his love is at least as great as is his hatred for the offense. But Christ, by suffering in charity and obedience, offered God something for which His love is greater than is His hatred for all offenses committed by the human race. As offense grows with the dignity of the person offended, so honor and satisfaction grow with the dignity of the person who makes amends. .

This thesis, admitted by theologians generally, is in accord with the teaching of Clement VI: One little drop of Christ's blood, by His union with the Word, would have sufficed to redeem the whole human race. It is to men an infinite treasure... by reason of Christ's infinite merits.

Chapter 35

Freedom And Impeccability

Christ's acts of merit and satisfaction presuppose freedom in the proper sense, not merely spontaneity, which is found already in the animal. Now it would seem that Christ, if He is to obey freely, must also be able to disobey. Hence the question: how is freedom to be harmonized with absolute impeccability? Impeccability, in Christ, does not mean merely that, in fact, He never sinned. It means that He simply could not sin. He could not for three reasons:

a) by reason of His divine personality, which necessarily excludes sin:

b) by reason of His beatific vision of God's goodness, from which no blessed soul can ever turn aside:

c) by reason of His plentitude of grace, received inamissibly as consequence of the grace of union.

How can Jesus be perfectly free if He is bound by obedience to His Father's will? Dominic Banez was obliged to study this question profoundly, in answer to certain theologians of his epoch, who tried to safeguard the freedom of Jesus by saying that He had not received from His Father a command to die on the cross for our salvation. This position has defenders even in our own times. Thomists reply that the position contradicts the explicit words of Scripture: "I give My life. This is the command I have received from My Father. That the world may know that I act according to the commandment My Father has given me. Arise, let us go. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, even as I have kept the commandments of My Father, and abide in His love." Christ became obedient unto death, even to death on the cross. .

Now obedience, properly speaking, has as formal object a command to be fulfilled. And if one says, unjustifiably, that the commands given to Christ were only counsels, how could Christ, being absolutely impeccable,

neglect even the counsels of His Father? Hence the question inevitably returns: How can impeccability be harmonized with that real freedom which is presupposed by merit?

The Thomistic reply begins by distinguishing psychological liberty from moral liberty. A command takes away moral liberty, in the sense that disobedience is illicit. But the command, far from taking away psychological liberty, rather builds on this liberty as foundation. The command is given precisely to ensure free acts. No one commands fire to burn, or the heart to beat, or any other necessary act. A command is self-destructive where there is no liberty.

And precept remains precept, and is freely fulfilled, even when he who obeys is impeccable, because the thing commanded (death for our salvation) is good from one viewpoint, and not good, even painful, from another viewpoint. This object is entirely different from the divine goodness clearly seen in the beatific vision. The blessed in heaven are not free to love God whom they see face to face, though they too remain free in other acts, to pray, for example, at this time, or for this person.

Further, if the command to die destroys Christ's liberty, we would have to say the same of all precepts, even of those commanded by the natural law, and thus Christ would have no freedom to obey any precept, and hence could have no merit.

But the difficulty seems to remain. If Christ was free to obey, then He could disobey and thus sin. But faith teaches, not only that He did not sin, but that He could not sin.

In answer let us weigh the following reflections.

1. Liberty of exercise suffices to safeguard the essence of liberty. Man is master of his act when he can either place the act or not place it. Such an act is free, even where there is no choice between contrary acts, hating, say, and loving, or between two disparate ways of attaining an end.

2. The power to sin is not included in the idea of freedom, but is rather the defectibility of our freedom, just as the possibility of error is the defectibility of our intellect. This power to sin does not exist in God who is sovereignly free, nor in the blessed who are confirmed in good. Hence it did not exist in Christ, whose freedom, even here on earth, was the most perfect image of divine freedom. Genuine freedom then does not include disobedience, but rather excludes it. Genuine freedom wills, not evil, but

always good. It chooses between two or many objects, none of which is bad, but all good. .

3. Disobedience is not to be confused with the mere absence of obedience. In a sleeping child, for example, though he be the most obedient of children, there is, here and now, the absence of obedience, but no disobedience. Disobedience is a privation, a wrong, a fault, whereas mere absence of obedience is a simple negation. This distinction may seem subtle, but it expresses the truth. Christ, like the blessed in heaven, could not disobey, even by omission or neglect. But His human will, incapable of disobedience, can still see the absence of obedience as good, as something here and now not necessarily connected with His beatitude. Death on the cross was good for our salvation, but it was a good mixed with non-good, with extreme suffering, physical and moral. Hence it was an object which did not impose necessity on His will. Nor did the divine will impose necessity, since, as we have seen, the precept, by making the omission illicit, removes indeed moral liberty, but, on the contrary, presupposes and preserves physical and psychological liberty.

When then does Jesus love necessarily? He thus loves His Father seen face to face, and hence all else that is, here and now, connected, intrinsically and necessarily, with that supreme beatitude, just as we necessarily will existence, life, and knowledge without which we see that we cannot have happiness. But Jesus willed freely all that was connected, not intrinsically, but only extrinsically, by a command, with beatitude. Death, at once salutary for us and terrible in itself, did not attract necessarily. The command did not change either the nature of the death, or the freedom of the act commanded. Hence Christ’s response.

Thus Jesus obeyed freely even though He could not disobey. As distant illustration of this mystery, we may refer to a painful act of obedience in a good religious. He obeys freely, hardly reflecting that he could disobey. Even if he were confirmed in grace, this confirmation would not destroy the freedom of his obedient act. The will of Christ, says St. Thomas, though it is confirmed in good, is not necessitated by this or that particular good. Hence Christ, like the blessed, chooses by a free will which is confirmed in good. This sentence, in its simplicity, is more perfect than the long commentaries thereon, but the commentaries serve to show the truth hidden in that simplicity. The sinless liberty of Christ is the perfect image of God’s sinless liberty. .

Chapter 36

Christ’s Victory And Passion

We consider here three important problems.

1. How is Christ’s passion in harmony with His beatific vision?

2. How did His passion cause our salvation?

3. Why did He suffer so much, seeing that His least suffering would suffice to save us?

1. According to St. Thomas our Savior’s sufferings were the greatest that can be conceived. In particular, His moral suffering surpassed that of all contrite hearts, first because it derived from a transcendent wisdom, which let Him realize, far beyond our power, the infinite gravity of sin, and the countless multitude of men’s crimes; secondly because it derived from a measureless love for God and men; thirdly because He suffered, not merely for the sins of one man, as does a repentant sinner, but for all sins of all men taken together. Hence the question: How under such intense pain, physical and moral, could our Lord simultaneously preserve the boundless joy of the beatific vision?

This mystery, as theologians generally teach, is the consequence of another mystery, namely, that Jesus was simultaneously a viator (on the road to ultimate glory) and a comprehensor (already in possession of ultimate glory). How is this possible? The truest answer is that of St. Thomas, an answer that is full of light, though the mystery remains a mystery.

We must distinguish also in Christ, says the saint, the higher soul faculties from the lower. Hence, as long as He was simultaneously viator and comprehensor, He did not allow the glory and the joy of the superior part to overflow on the inferior part. Only the summit of His soul, that is, His human mind and will was beatified, while He freely abandoned to pain all His faculties of sense. He would not permit His beatific joy in the

summit of His soul to send down the slightest softening ray upon that physical and moral pain, to which He would fully surrender Himself, for our salvation. In Illustration, think of a lofty mountain, the summit Illumined by the sun, while a violent storm envelops the lower slopes and the foundations, and, as analogy, think of the contrite penitent, whose higher faculties rejoice in the affliction of his lower faculties, and rejoice the more, the more he is thus afflicted.

2. How did Christ's passion cause our salvation? In five different ways: as merit, as satisfaction, as sacrifice, as redemption, as efficient cause. Is this series a mere juxtaposition of scriptural terms? No, we have here an ordered process, rising from general terms to terms which are specific and comprehensive. All acts of charity are meritorious, but not all are satisfactory. An act may be satisfactory without being, properly speaking, a sacrifice, which presupposes a priest. And even a true sacrifice, as in the Old Law, may not of itself be redemptive, but only as prefigurative of a perfect sacrifice. And, lastly, even a redemptive sacrifice may be only a moral cause of grace, whereas Christ's redemptive sacrifice is also the efficient cause of grace.

Christ's passion, then, wrought our salvation under the form of merit because, as the head of humanity, He could pour out grace on us from His own fullness, and, as divine person, His merits have an infinite value. .

His passion was, second, a perfect satisfaction, because by bearing that passion with theandric love, He offered something for which the Father's love was greater than His displeasure at all sins of mankind. And the life He offered, the life of the God-man, had infinite value. Personally then, and objectively, satisfaction was completely adequate. .

His passion, further, was sacrificial cause of our redemption, for it was an oblation, in the visible order, of His life, of His body and blood, made by Him as priest Of the New Covenant. .

Hence, also as redemption, His passion is cause of our salvation, because, being an adequate and super-abounding satisfaction, it was the price paid for our deliverance from sin and penalty. .

Merit, satisfaction, sacrifice, redemption are forms of moral causality. But Christ's passion is also an efficient cause of our salvation, since the suffering humanity of Christ is the instrument by which the divinity causes in us all graces which we receive. .

Recapitulating, St. Thomas speaks thus: The passion of Christ's humanity compared to His divinity, has instrumental efficiency; compared to Christ's human Will, it energizes as merit; considered in His flesh, it energizes as satisfaction; it energizes as redemption, in delivering us from the captivity of guilt; lastly, it energizes as sacrifice, by reconciling, by making us the friends of God.

We should note here that St. Thomas sees the essence of satisfaction in our Savior's theandric love rather than in His great sufferings, since these sufferings draw their value from that love which pleases God more than all sin displeases Him. This love makes Christ's satisfaction superabundant, and, further, as Thomists hold against Scotus, intrinsically, of itself, superabundant, not merely extrinsically, by God's acceptance. And this satisfaction, they add, being of itself superabundant, has the rigorously strict value of justice.

Let us note another conclusion. Jesus is the one sole Redeemer, the universal Redeemer from whom alone all others, even His mother, the Virgin Mary, receive their sanctity. .

The effects of Christ's passion, to recapitulate, are deliverance and reconciliation, deliverance from sin, from the domination of the devil, from the penalties due to sin; and reconciliation with God, who opens to us the gates of heaven. Here we see, in mutual order and Illumination, the various terms and truths whereby Scripture and tradition speak of our Savior's passion. The conclusions thus presented are not, strictly speaking, theological conclusions, even when at times they proceed from two premises of faith. They are rather explanations of the truths contained in the "doctrine of faith," truths that precede theology, and of which theology is itself the explanatory science.

3. Why did Jesus suffer so much, seeing that the least of His sufferings offered with such love would superabundantly suffice for our salvation? .

In answer, let us look at our Savior's sufferings from three points of view; our own, His own, and that of God the Father.

a) We need to be Illumined on how to receive the greatest testimony of love, accompanied by the highest example of heroic virtue. Now there is no greater love than giving life for those we love. .

b) Christ Himself must fulfil His redemptive mission in the highest manner. Now, as priest, no victim but Himself was worthy. And to be a perfect holocaust He must be completely victim, in body, in heart, in a soul

“sorrowful unto death.” Further, having the fullness of charity, and being both viator and comprehensor, He necessarily suffered with boundless intensity from mankind’s sins taken on Himself, seeing in these sins both the offense against God and the cause of the loss of souls.

c) God the Father willed by this road of suffering and humiliation to give our Savior the grandest of victories, a threefold victory, over sin, over the devil, over death. The victory over sin was gained by the greatest of all acts of charity, victory over the devil’s disobedience and pride by the supreme act of obedience and the loving acceptance of the lowest humiliations, victory over death, the consequence and punishment of sin, by the glorious external sign of the two preceding victories, a victory culminating in His resurrection and ascension. “Christ humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to death on the cross. Hence God exalted Him, and gave Him a name above every name, a name before which all kneel... while every tongue, to the glory of God the Father, confesses that Jesus Christ is the Lord.” .

This treatise on the redemptive Incarnation, like that on God, shows that Thomism is not a mere sum of haphazard theses, but a mental attitude of research, a method of expounding truth in the order of nature and of grace, a unified grasping, a living synthesis, of the natural order of truth in its essential subordination to the supernatural order of truth. Such a synthesis radiates from one mother-idea. In the treatise on God that parent-idea is this: God is subsistent being, in whom alone essence is identified with existence. In the treatise on the Incarnation, the parent idea is the divine personality of our Savior. This unity of person in two natures implies first, unity of existence, secondly, substantial sanctity, thirdly, a priesthood supremely perfect, fourthly, a royal dominion over all creatures. Lastly, since person is the substantial principle of all acts, the theandric acts of Christ have a value intrinsically infinite in the order of merit and satisfaction.

We add one remark. These two treatises, that on God and that on the Incarnation, are the foundations of the theological edifice. On their solidity all else depends.

Chapter 37

Mariology

As from the hypostatic union arise all the prerogatives of Christ, so the divine maternity is the raison d'etre of all Mary's graces, particularly of her role as our Mother and Mediatrix. We treat here four questions:

1. Mary's predestination.
2. Her dignity as Mother of God.
3. Her sanctity.
4. Her universal mediation.

Under these headings we give the common Thomistic teaching, and attempt to make precise the reason why St. Thomas hesitated to affirm the privilege of the Immaculate Conception.

ARTICLE ONE: MARY'S PREDESTINATION

By one and the same decree God predestined Jesus and Mary, Jesus unto natural divine filiation, Mary to be the Mother of God, because Christ's eternal predestination includes all the circumstances which here and now attend His incarnation. Of these circumstances the most important is that signalized in the Nicene Creed: He was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of Mary the Virgin. To this one and the same decree testimony is borne by Pius IX in the bull Ineffabilis Deus: This Virgin's privileges are primordial, given by that one and the same decree which willed that divine Wisdom be incarnate.

The parallelism is complete. Jesus was predestined, first to divine filiation, secondly and consequently to the highest degree of glory and hence to that fullness of grace which belongs to the holy soul of the Word made flesh. Thus too, by the same decree, Mary was predestined first to the divine maternity, secondly and consequently to a very high degree of glory,

and hence to that fullness of grace which belongs to the Mother of God, a fullness worthy of the grandeur of her mission, a mission which uniquely associated her with the redemptive work of her Son. .

Mary's predestination, further, again like that of Christ, depends, in the order of material causality, on the permission and prevision of Adam's fall, because, in the actual plan of Providence, if the first man had not sinned, were there no original sin to repair, Mary would not be the Mother of God. But where sin abounded, grace super-abounded. The Fall was permitted in view of that great good which we see radiating from the redemptive Incarnation, and Mary, predestined to be Mother of the Redeemer, is thereby predestined likewise to be the Mother of mercy.

Mary's predestination, like that of Christ, is absolutely gratuitous. By no title, either of justice (de condigno) or even of strict appropriateness (de congruo proprie): could she merit divine maternity. This is the common teaching, against Gabriel Biel. The principle underlying this doctrine runs thus: The source of merit cannot itself be merited. Now, in the actual economy of salvation, the Incarnation is the source of all grace, and of all merit, of Mary's graces and of our own.

Further, there is no proportion between merits in the order of created grace and the hypostatic order of uncreated grace. But divine maternity, though it terminates in the hypostatic order, in the person of the Word made flesh, is in itself a created grace. Hence, when we say that the Blessed Virgin merited to bear the Lord of all, we do not mean, says St. Thomas, that she merited the Incarnation itself. What we do mean is this: By the grace given her she merited that degree of purity and sanctity which was demanded by her dignity as Mother of God. Can we therefore say that she merited the Incarnation, not indeed by justice (de condigno): nor even by strict appropriateness (de congruo stricte dicto): but at least by appropriateness in a wider sense (de congruo late dicto) ? St. Thomas seems to say so, and is thus understood by many Thomists. The saint's words run thus: The Blessed Virgin did not merit the Incarnation, but, the Incarnation supposed, she merited, not de condigno but de congruo, that the Incarnation should be accomplished through her. This position is in full accord with two other positions: first that she merited our graces de congruo proprio, secondly that Christ merited our graces de condigno.

Mary is truly and properly the Mother of God. This definition of the Church is to be explained thus: The terminus of the act of conceiving is not, properly speaking, the nature of the child, but the person of the child. Now the person in whom Mary's act of conception terminates is the Word incarnate, a divine person.

The divine maternity, therefore, is a relation, of Mary to Christ and of Christ to Mary. Since Christ belongs to the hypostatic order, Mary's maternity is a relation to the hypostatic order. This relation is, in Mary, a real relation, like that of creature to Creator, whereas it is only a relation of reason in the unchangeable Word, like that of Creator to creature.

The sublimity of this divine maternity is thus expressed by St. Thomas: "The Blessed Virgin, by being Mother of God, has a certain infinite dignity, by this relation to that infinite good which is God. And nothing in this line can be conceived greater than this maternity, just as nothing can be conceived greater than God." This conception underlies the saint's words on hyperdulia, a cult due to Mary alone. He says: "Hyperdulia is the highest kind of dulia, because the reverence due to any person grows with that person's affinity to God." Mary's maternity, then, since it terminates in God, has an infinite dignity.

By what is Mary sanctified? Is it by the divine maternity, independently of her plenitude of grace? Some theologians say Yes, just as the hypostatic union gives to Christ a substantial sanctity independently of His fullness of sanctifying grace. But the generality of theologians say No, because the divine maternity, in contrast to Christ's grace of union, is only a relation to the Word incarnate, and relation as such does not seem to be a sanctifying form.

Nevertheless this relation of divine maternity, though it does not sanctify formally and immediately, does sanctify radically and exigitively, because it connaturally postulates all the graces given to Mary to make her the worthy Mother of God. .

To understand this distinction, let us note that the divine maternity, considered materially, consists in the acts of conceiving, carrying, bearing, and nourishing the Word made flesh. Now, in themselves, these acts are less perfect than that of loving God and doing His will according to our Lord's word: "Yea, rather blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it." But we must consider the divine maternity also formally. To become Mother of God, Mary had to give her consent to the realization of the

mystery. By this consent, as tradition says, she conceived her Son, not only in body, but also in spirit, in body, because He is flesh of her flesh, in spirit, because He awaited her consent. But her act of consent was given, says St. Thomas, in the name of the human race. Further, in thus consenting, she consented likewise to that train of sufferings predicted by the Messianic prophecies. Considered thus, formally, the divine maternity demands those high graces which make her, in God's plan, the worthy Mother of the Redeemer, His most intimate associate in the work of redemption. .

Let us add that maternity, in a rational creature, presupposes the mother's consent, and that, in the present case, that consent must be supernatural, since it terminates in the mystery of the redemptive Incarnation. Thus while the divine maternity, taken formally, demands grace, the inverse is not true. Fullness of grace, in idea, does not demand the divine maternity. It may be said, of course, that, by God's absolute power, divine maternity could exist without grace. But thus considered, even the soul of Christ could be annihilated, since there is no intrinsic contradiction. But, it need hardly be said, we are dealing here with God's ordinary power, as guided by wisdom which suits all things to their purpose.

A last question. Divine maternity, taken in itself, without considering Mary's fullness of grace—is it higher than sanctifying grace and the beatific vision? Many theologians answer No. Among Thomists, Contenson, Gotti, Hugon, Merkelbach, answer Yes, maintaining that the affirmative answer is more in conformity with traditional doctrine. They give three convincing reasons.

1. The divine maternity belongs, terminatively, to the hypostatic order, it reaches physically the person of the Word made flesh, to whom it gives His human nature. But the hypostatic order surpasses by far the orders of grace and glory. Hence the divine maternity has an infinite dignity. Besides, while grace can be lost, the divine maternity cannot be lost.

2. The divine maternity is the original reason for Mary's fullness of grace, and the converse is not true. Hence her maternity, being the measure and purpose of that fullness, stands simply higher than its effects.

3. Why do we owe Mary the cult of hyperdulia? Answer: because of her divine maternity. This cult cannot be given to the saints, however high in grace and glory. Hyperdulia is due to Mary, not because she is the greatest of saints, but because she is the Mother of God. Hence, speaking simply, her divine maternity, considered purely in itself, is superior to her

sanctifying grace and her glory. Thus we return to our thesis: Mary was predestined, first to the divine maternity, secondly and consequently to a surpassing degree of glory, thirdly and again consequently to her fullness of sanctifying grace.

Since Mary by her divine maternity belongs to the hypostatic order, she is higher than all angels, and higher than all priests, who have a priesthood participated from Christ. This maternity divine is the foundation, the root, the fountainhead, of all her other graces and privileges, which either precede her maternity as dispositions, or accompany it, or follow it as consequences.

ARTICLE THREE: MARY'S SANCTITY

Mary's sanctity, considered negatively, includes the privileges of the Immaculate Conception, and exemption from even the least personal sin. Considered positively, it means the fullness of grace.

1. St. Thomas and the Immaculate Conception

Was St. Thomas in favor of granting to Mary the privilege of the Immaculate Conception? Many theologians, including Dominicans and Jesuits, say Yes. Many others say No. We hold, as solidly probable, the position that St. Thomas hesitated on this question. This view, already proposed by many Thomists, is defended by Mandonnet, and by N. del Prado, E. Hugon, G. Frietoff, and J. M. Voste. This view we here briefly expound.

At the beginning of his theological career St. Thomas explicitly affirms this privilege: The Blessed Virgin, he says, was immune, both from original sin and from actual sin. But then he saw that many theologians understood this privilege in a sense that withdrew the Virgin from redemption by Christ, contrary to St. Paul's principle that, just as all men are condemned by the crime of one man (Adam): so all men are justified by the just deed of one man (Christ, the second Adam): and that therefore, just as there is but one God, so there is also only one mediator, Christ, between God and men. Hence St. Thomas showed that Mary, too, was redeemed by the merits of her Son, and this doctrine is now part and parcel of the definition of the Immaculate Conception. But that Mary might be redeemed, St. Thomas thought that she must have the debt of guilt, incurred by her carnal descent from Adam. Hence, from this time on, he said that Mary was not sanctified

before her animation, leaving her body, conceived in the ordinary way, to be the instrumental cause in transmitting the debitum culpae. We must note that, in his view, conception, fecundation, precedes, by an interval of time, the moment of animation, by which the person is constituted. The only exception he allowed was for Christ, whose conception, virginal and miraculous, was simultaneous with the moment of animation.

Hence, when we find St. Thomas repeating that the Blessed Virgin Mary was conceived in original sin, we know that he is thinking of the conception of her body, which precedes in time her animation.

At what exact moment, then, was Mary sanctified in her mother's womb? To this question he gives no precise answer, except perhaps at the end of his life, when he seems to return to his original view, to a positive affirmation of Mary's Immaculate Conception. Before this last period, he declares that we do not know the precise moment, but that it was soon after animation. Hence he does not pronounce on the question whether the Virgin Mary was sanctified at the very moment of her animation. St. Bonaventure had posed that question and like many others had answered in the negative. St. Thomas preferred to leave the question open and did not answer it.

To maintain his original position in favor of the privilege, he might have introduced the distinction, familiar in his works, between priority of nature and priority of time. He might thus have explained his phrase "soon after" (cito post) to mean that the creation of Mary's soul preceded her sanctification only by a priority of nature. But, as John of St. Thomas remarks, he was impressed by the reserved attitude of the Roman Church, which did not celebrate the feast of Mary's Conception, by the silence of Scripture, and by the negative position of a great number of theologians. Hence he would not pronounce on this precise point. Such, in substance, is the interpretation given by N. del Prado and P. Hugon. The latter notes further the insistence of St. Thomas on the principle, recognized in the bull Ineffabilis Deus, that Mary's sanctification is due to the future merits of her Son as Redeemer of the human race. But did this redemption preserve her from original sin, or did it remit that sin? On this question St. Thomas did not pronounce.

In opposition to this interpretation two texts of the saint are often cited. In the Summa he says: The Blessed Virgin did indeed incur original sin, but was cleansed therefrom before she was born. Writing on the Sentences, he says: The Virgin's sanctification cannot properly be conceived either as

preceding the infusion of her soul, since she was not thus capable of receiving grace, or as taking place at the very moment of the soul's infusion, by a grace simultaneously infused to preserve her from incurring original sin.

How do the theologians cited above explain these texts? They answer thus: If we recall the saint's original position, and the peremptoriness of the principle that Mary was redeemed by Christ, these two texts are to be understood rather as a debitum culpae originalis than the actual incurring of the sin itself. Thus animation would precede sanctification by a priority of nature only, not of time.

Here we must remark, with Merkelbach, that these opportune distinctions were not yet formulated by St. Thomas. The saint wrote "she incurred original sin," and not "she should have incurred it," or "she would have incurred it, had she not been preserved." Further, the saint wrote: "We believe that the Blessed Virgin Mary was sanctified soon after her conception and the infusion of her soul." And he does not here distinguish priority of nature from priority of time.

But we must add, with Voste, that St. Thomas, at the end of his life, seems to return to the original view, which he had expressed as follows: Mary was immune from all sin, original and actual. Thus, in December 1272, he writes: Neither in Christ nor in Mary was there any stain. Again, on the verse which calls the sun God's tent, he writes: Christ put His tent, i. e.: His body, in the sun, i. e.: in the Blessed Virgin who was obscured by no sin and to whom it is said: "Thou art all beautiful, my friend, and in thee there is no stain." In a third text he writes: Not only from actual sin was Mary free, but she was by a special privilege cleansed from original sin. This special privilege distinguishes her from Jeremias and John the Baptist. A fourth text, written in his last year of life, has the following words: Mary excels the angels in purity, because she is not only in herself pure, but begets purity in others. She was herself most pure, because she incurred no sin, either original or actual, not even any venial sin. And he adds that she incurred no penalty, and in particular, was immune from corruption in the grave.

Now it is true that in that same context, some lines earlier, the saint writes this sentence: The Blessed Virgin though conceived in original sin, was not born in original sin. But, unless we are willing to find in his supreme mind an open contradiction in one and the same context, we must

see in the word, “She was conceived in original sin,” not original sin itself, which is in the soul, but the debt of original sin which antecedently to animation was in her body conceived by the ordinary road of generation. .

We conclude with Father Voste: “Approaching the end of his life here below, the Angelic Doctor gradually returned to his first affirmation: the Blessed Virgin was immune from all sin, original and actual.”

2. Mary’s Fullness of Grace

The Blessed Virgin’s fullness of grace made her of all creatures the nearest to the Author of grace. Thus St. Thomas. He adds that her initial fullness was such that it made her worthy to be mother of Christ. As the divine maternity belongs, by its terminus, to the hypostatic order, so Mary’s initial grace surpassed even the final grace of the angels and of all other saints. In other words, God’s love for the future Mother of God was greater than His love for any other creature. Now, grace, being an effect of God’s love for us, is proportioned to the greatness of that love. Hence it is probable, as weighty Thomists say, that Mary’s initial fullness surpassed the final grace of all saints and angels taken together, because she was already then more loved by God than all the saints taken as one. Hence, according to tradition, Mary’s merits and prayer, could, even without any angel or saint, obtain even here on earth more than could all saints and angels without her. Further, this initial plentitude of sanctifying grace was accompanied by a proportional plentitude of infused virtues and of the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost.

With such initial fullness, could Mary still grow in grace? Most assuredly. In her we have the perfect exemplification of the principle which St. Thomas thus formulates: “Natural motion (in a falling stone) is intensified by approaching its goal. In violent motion (in a stone thrown upwards) we have the inverse. But grace grows like nature. Hence those who are in grace grow in proportion to their approach to their goal.” Hence Mary’s progress in grace, ever more prompt toward God, grew ever more rapid in answer to God’s greater attraction.

But while Mary’s grace thus grew greater until her death, there were two moments when her grace was augmented sacramentally: the moment of the Incarnation, and that on Calvary when she was declared the Mother of all men.

From her divine maternity and her fullness of grace arises Mary's function of universal Mediatrix, a title given to her by tradition, and now consecrated by a feast of the Church universal.

Two special reasons underlie this title. First, by satisfaction and merit she cooperated with the sacrifice of the cross, and this is her ascending mediation. Second, and this is her descending mediation, by interceding she obtains and distributes all graces which we receive.

How did she cooperate with the sacrifice of the cross? By giving to God, with great pain and great love, the life of her adorable Son, whom she loved more than her life. Could this act of hers satisfy God in strict justice? No, only our Savior's act could do that. Yet Mary's satisfaction was a claim, not of strict justice, but of loving friendship, which has given her the title of co-redemptrix, in the sense that with, by, and in Christ she redeemed the human race. .

Hence whatever Christ on the cross merited in strict justice, Mary too merited by the claim of appropriateness, founded on her friendship with God. This doctrine, now common, is sanctioned by Pius X: Mary merited by appropriateness (de congruo) what Christ merited by justice (de condigno). Hence she is the chief administratrix of all grace that God wills to grant.

What is the difference between meriting de condigno and meriting de congruo? Merit in these two lines, says St. Thomas, is used analogically, merit de condigno meaning a claim founded on justice, and merit de congruo meaning a claim founded on the friendship of charity. But in Mary's case this merit means congruousness in the strict sense and hence is still merit in the proper sense of the word, which presupposes the state of grace. We do indeed speak of the prayers of a man in mortal sin as meritorious, but the merit in this case, being founded, not on divine friendship, but solely on God's mercy, is merit only in an improper, metaphorical sense. Between merit de condigno (Christ's merit) and merit proprie de congruo (Mary's merit) there is the analogy of proper proportionality, and in each case merit in the proper sense, whereas, in the third case, that of a sinner who prays, there is merit only by metaphorical analogy.

Mary performs her function as universal Mediatrix by intercession. This doctrine expressed by the prayer commonly addressed to Mary in the liturgy, is founded on Scripture and tradition. But, granting Mary's

intercessory power, can we hold that she is also a physical cause, an instrumental cause, and not merely moral cause, of all graces we receive? Many Thomists say Yes. They reason thus: If the humanity of Jesus is the physical instrumental cause of all our graces, His Mother too should be an instrumental cause, subordinated, of course, to Him who is her Son and her God. We do not see that this position can be established with true certitude, but the principles of St. Thomas on the role of Christ's humanity incline us to accept it. What is certain is that Mary is the spiritual Mother of all men, that, as co-adjutrix in the Savior's work of redemption, she merits the title "Mother of divine grace," and that therefore she pours out graces on all humanity.

Among the authors who have best developed this doctrine we may signalize Blessed Grignon de Montfort. .

Sixth Part

The Sacraments of the Church

With this sixth part we complete the dogmatic section of this synthesis. We give, in six chapters, the principal Thomistic theses on the sacraments.

1. The sacraments in general.
2. Transubstantiation.
3. The Sacrifice of the Mass.
4. Attrition and contrition.
5. The reviviscence of merits.
6. The treatise on the Church.

Chapter 38

The Sacraments In General

The precision given by St. Thomas to sacramental doctrine is best seen on three important points:

a) the efficacious causality of the sacraments.

b) their matter and form.

c) their raison d'etre.

The sacraments of the New Law are efficacious signs, which produce grace of themselves (ex opere operato): by a causality that is physical and instrumental. In the sacraments, he says, there is an instrumental power which produces the sacramental effect. Again: The principal efficient cause of grace is God Himself, who has, as conjoined instrument, the humanity of Christ, and, as separated instrument, the sacrament itself. These texts, in themselves and in their context, are entirely clear, and all Thomists, Melchior Cano excepted, hold that the sacraments are physical, instrumental causes of grace. The word itself, "physical," is not, it is true, in the text of St. Thomas, but "instrumental" in his mind means real causality which is distinct from the moral order.

St. Thomas applies to the sacraments analogically the theory of matter and form, giving precision to the teaching of William of Auxerre and Alexander of Hales. We see, in fact, an analogy, in the order of signification, between sacramental words and form. As form determines matter, so the sacramental words determine the signification of the sacramental thing, for example, the baptismal ablution. Thus absolution is the form of penance, which has as matter the exterior acts of the penitent. As regards matrimony (the question is subject to discussion) the consent of the two parties contain both matter and form. In this manner of speaking, we have an analogy of proportionality which, though it must not be forced

but should remain supple and elastic, is still a legitimate form of expression, founded on reality.

What is it that specifically distinguishes one sacrament from all others? Its specific effect. Each sacrament is essentially related to this effect. And Christ is the author of the sacrament by manifesting His will for a sensible sign to produce a particular and special effect. To be author He need not have Himself determined matter and form.

Why are there seven sacraments? St. Thomas, to show the appropriateness of this number, appeals to the analogy between life natural and life supernatural. In the order of natural life, man must first receive life, then grow, then maintain life, and, at need, be cured, and re-established. These same needs are found in the supernatural order. To meet these needs, we have, in order, the corresponding sacraments: baptism, confirmation, the Eucharist, penance, and extreme unction. Then, in the social order, man needs to be prepared, first for the propagation of the race, to which corresponds the sacrament of matrimony, secondly, for public office, to which corresponds the sacrament of orders.

The following chapters will emphasize the most important points of the teaching of St. Thomas, especially on transubstantiation, on the Sacrifice of the Mass, and the difference between attrition and contrition.

Chapter 39

Transubstantiation

Transubstantiation is the change of the whole substance of bread into the body of Christ and of the whole substance of wine into the blood of Christ. This truth is indispensable in explaining the Real Presence. If the glorious and impassible body of Christ does not cease to be in heaven, it cannot become present under the species of the bread and the wine by an adductive action which would make that body descend from heaven to each host consecrated. Hence, if the body of Christ Himself is not subject of the change, He cannot become really present except by the change into Him of the substances of bread and wine. Briefly, if a body becomes present there where before it was not, then, by the principle of identity, this body must undergo a change of place, or then another body must be changed into it. To illustrate. A pillar, remaining immovable, which was at my right, cannot be at my left unless I have changed in my relation to it. Again: If in a house where there was no fire we now find a fire, that fire either must have been brought there or produced there. .

By this change, then, of the substance of the bread into the body of Christ, this body, itself remaining unchanged, becomes really present under the accidents of the bread, because these accidents lose the real and containing relation they had to the substance of the bread and they acquire a new, real, and containing relation to the body of Christ. This new real relation presupposes a real foundation, which is transubstantiation.

This position granted, St. Thomas draws therefrom all other Eucharistic truths, particularly in regard to the Real Presence, and the Eucharistic accidents. He is faithful to the principle of economy which tells us to explain facts without useless multiplication of causes.

This doctrine of St. Thomas is not admitted by Scotus, who explains the Real Presence by annihilation of the substance of the bread and adduction

of the substance of Christ's body. Many other theologians, following him in part, speak of an "adductive transubstantiation." Speaking thus, they no longer preserve the proper meaning of the words "conversion" and "transubstantiation," words used in conciliar decrees. To speak of transubstantiation as adductive is to deny the conversion of one substance into another, and to affirm the substitution of one for the other.

Further, what is the meaning of "adduction," if Christ's impassible body remains in heaven? Christ's body, Thomists repeat St. Thomas, does not become present by any change in itself, local, quantitative, qualitative, or substantial. Hence the real presence of that body has no other explanation than the substantial change of the bread into that body.

But can we, with Suarez, say that transubstantiation is quasi-reproductive of Christ's body? No, because that body is in heaven as it was before, neither multiplied nor changed. It is numerically the same glorified body which is in heaven and in the Eucharist. Gonet and Billuart, who indulge somewhat in the terminology of Suarez, nevertheless teach, like other Thomists, that transubstantiation is a substantial change in the proper sense of the word. "Thus it comes," says the Catechism of the Council of Trent, "that the entire substance of the bread is by divine power changed into the entire substance of Christ's body without any mutation in our Lord."

Which view is verified in the sacramental formula: This is My body? This formula most certainly expresses neither annihilation nor adduction, whereas, by being causatively true, it does express conversion of the entire substance of the bread into the substance of Christ's body. Besides, annihilation does not include adduction, nor the inverse. And the Council of Trent speaks not of two divine interventions, distinct and independent, but of one intervention only, by which the entire substance of the bread is changed into Christ's body, and the entire substance of the wine is changed into Christ's blood. And this change, the Council adds, is rightly called transubstantiation.

In what precisely does transubstantiation terminate? Cajetan, followed by Thomists generally, gives answer by this formula: That which was bread is now Christ's body, not Christ's body taken absolutely, as it existed before transubstantiation, but Christ's body as terminus of this transubstantiated bread. More explicitly, transubstantiation terminates in this, that what was the substance of bread is now the body of Christ.

Is transubstantiation an instantaneous process? Yes, one and the same indivisible instant terminates the existence of the bread and initiates Christ's existence under the species of bread. .

How is transubstantiation possible? St. Thomas has recourse to the Creator's immediate power over created being as being. If God can produce the whole creation from nothing, He can also change the entity of one thing into that of another. Whereas in a substantial mutation there is a subject (prime matter) which remains under the two successive forms, here in transubstantiation there is no permanent subject, but the whole substance of bread, matter and form, is changed into that of Christ's body. These formulas reappear in the Council of Trent. .

Let us note some consequences of this doctrine. Christ's body is in the Eucharist, not as in a place but in the manner of substance. The quantity of Christ's body is also really present in the Eucharist, but again, in the manner of substance, that is, by its relation, not to place, but to its own substance, since it is present, not by local adduction, but only by a change exclusively substantial. Thus we see too that it is numerically the same body which, without division or distance, is simultaneously in heaven and in the Eucharist, because it is present in the Eucharist illocally, in the manner of substance, in an order superior to the order of space.

By this same line of reasoning St. Thomas explains the Eucharistic accidents, as existing without any subject of inhesion. All other Eucharistic theses are simply corollaries from his teaching on transubstantiation. The principle of economy could not be better exemplified. We cannot say the same of the theories which have been substituted for that of St. Thomas. They are complicated, factitious, useless. They proceed by a quasi-mechanical juxtaposition of arguments, instead of having an organic unity, which presupposes as source one mother-idea. Here again we see the wonderful power of the Thomistic synthesis.

Chapter 40

The Sacrifice Of The Mass

What is the essence of the Sacrifice of the Mass? This question was posed in one manner in the time of St. Thomas, and in another manner after the appearance of Protestantism. Yet in his very first article the saint formulates the objection which will be developed by Protestantism.

1. In the thirteenth century the question was generally posed in these terms: Is Christ immolated in this sacrament? And the answer commonly given is that of Peter Lombard, which is based on these words of St. Augustine: Christ was immolated once in Himself, and yet He is daily immolated in the sacrament. The words “in the sacrament” were explained as meaning: He is immolated sacramentally, not, as on the cross, physically. Hence in the Mass there is an immolation, not a physical immolation of Christ’s body, for that body is now glorified and impassible, but a sacramental immolation. This language had been familiar to the Church Fathers. It is repeated by Peter Lombard, and by his commentators, notably by St. Bonaventure and St. Albert the Great. The explanation of St. Thomas runs as follows: In two ways this sacrament is the immolation of Christ. First because, in the words of Augustine, “we are accustomed to name an image by the name of the thing of which it is the image.” Now this sacrament, as said above, is an image of the passion of Christ, which was a true immolation..

Secondly by efficient causality, because this sacrament makes us participators in the fruits of our Lord’s passion.

On the nature of this sacramental immolation the saint speaks thus: As on the cross Christ’s body and blood were separated physically, thus, in the Mass, by the double consecration, they are separated sacramentally. Thus, the substance of the bread having been changed into Christ’s body and that of the wine into His blood, Christ is really present on the altar in the state of

death, His blood being shed, not physically, but sacramentally, even while, by concomitance, His body is under the species of wine and His blood under the species of bread.

2. When Protestantism denied that the Mass is a true sacrifice, Catholic theologians, instead of asking, “Is Christ immolated in this sacrament? “ began to pose the question in this form: “Is the Mass a true sacrifice, or only a memorial of the sacrifice on the cross?”

But we must note here that St. Thomas had anticipated the Protestant objection. He formulates it thus: Christ’s immolation was made on the cross, whereon He “delivered Himself as offering and victim, an odor of sweetness unto God.” But in the mystery of the Mass, Christ is not crucified. Hence neither is He immolated. To this objection he replies that, although we do not have in the Mass the bloody immolation of the cross, we do have, by Christ’s real presence, a real immolation, commemorative of that on the cross.

The objection itself, however, under various forms, is reasserted as truth by Luther, by Calvin, by Zwingli. The last says: Christ was slain once only, and once only was His blood shed. Hence He was offered in sacrifice only once.

Let us notice the assumption which underlies this argument. Any true sacrifice includes essentially a physical immolation of the victim, whereas, in the Mass, there can be no physical immolation of His body which is now glorified and impassible. The Council of Trent, recalling the doctrine of the Fathers and of the theologians of the thirteenth century, notably St. Thomas, answers that the unbloody immolation, the sacramental immolation of the Mass, is a true sacrifice.

Is real, physical immolation of the victim an essential element of sacrifice? In a bloody sacrifice, yes. But there can be, and is in the Mass, an unbloody sacramental immolation, which represents the bloody immolation of the cross and gives its fruits to us. This answer of St. Thomas is repeated by the great Thomists. Thus Cajetan says: This unbloody mode, under the species of bread and wine, re-presents, sacrificially, Christ who was offered on the cross. Similarly, John of St. Thomas: The essence of the Eucharistic sacrifice consists in the consecration, taken, not absolutely, but as sacramentally and mystically, separative of the blood from the body. On the cross the sacrifice consisted in the real and physical separation of Christ’s blood from His body. The action, therefore, which mystically and

sacramentally separates that blood is the same sacrifice as that on the cross, differing therefrom only in its mode, which there was real and physical and here is sacramental.

The Carmelites of Salamanca teach the same doctrine. But they add a modification which is not admitted by all Thomists, viz.: Reception of the sacrament by the priest belongs to the essence of this sacrifice. Many other Thomists hold that the priest's Communion (which destroys, not Christ's body, but only the Eucharistic species) belongs not to the essence, but only to the integrity of the sacrifice. But whatever may be the truth on this last point, the Salmanticenses hold that this double consecration constitutes a true immolation, not physical, but sacramental. Bossuet has the same doctrine. And this thesis, which seems to us the true expression of the thought of St. Thomas, is reproduced, not only by the majority of living Thomists, but also by other contemporary theologians. .

Some Thomists, however, under the influence, it seems, of Suarez, wish to find in the double consecration a physical immolation. Then, since they must recognize that only the substance of the bread and that of the wine undergo a real physical change, and that these are not the thing offered in sacrifice, they are led to admit, with Lessius, a virtual immolation of Christ's body. This virtual immolation is thus explained: In virtue of the words of consecration the body of Christ would be really and physically separated from His blood, did it not remain united by concomitance, from the fact that Christ's body is now glorified and impassible. This innovation is not a happy one, because this virtual immolation is not in fact real and physical, it remains solely mystic and sacramental. Besides, what it would virtually renew would be the act by which Christ was put to death. But this act, says St. Thomas, was not a sacrifice, but a crime, which therefore is not to be renewed, either physically or virtually.

The only immolation which we have in the Mass, therefore, is the sacramental immolation, the sacramental separation, by the double consecration, of His blood from His body, whereby His blood is shed sacramentally.

But is this sacramental immolation sufficient to make the Mass a true sacrifice? Yes, for two reasons: first because exterior immolation, in sacrifice of any kind, is always in the order of sign, of signification: secondly because the Eucharist is simultaneously sacrifice and sacrament.

First then, even where there is no physical immolation, we can still have a true sacrifice, if we have an equivalent immolation, above all if we have an immolation which is necessarily the sign, the signification, the representation of a bloody immolation of the past. The reason is as we have said, that exterior immolation is effective only so far as it is a sign, an expression of the interior immolation, of the "contrite and humbled heart," and that without this interior immolation, the exterior is valueless, is like the sacrifice of Cain, a mere shadow and show. The visible sacrifice, says St. Augustine, is the sacrament, the sacred sign, of the invisible sacrifice.

Even in the bloody sacrifice, the exterior immolation is required, not as physical death (this condition is required to make the animal fit for eating) but as the sign of oblation, adoration, contrition, without which the slaughter of the animal has no religious meaning, no religious value.

This position granted, we see that the Mass is a true sacrifice, without being bloody in its mode, even if the immolation is only sacramental, in the order of a sign signifying something that is now impossible, namely, the physical separation of Christ's blood from His impassible body. Yet this sacramental immolation is the sign, is essentially the memorial and representative sign, of the bloody immolation on Calvary, an effective sign, which makes us sharers in the fruits of that bloody immolation, since the Eucharist contains the Christ who has suffered. Again, this immolation in the Mass of the Word made flesh, though it is only sacramental, is, as sign, as expression, of reparative adoration, much more expressive than all the victims of the Old Testament. St. Augustine and St. Thomas demanded only this sacramental immolation to make the Mass a true sacrifice.

A second reason for this doctrine, as we said above, lies in the character of the Eucharist as being simultaneously sacrament and sacrifice. Hence we are not surprised that the exterior immolation involved should be, not physical, but sacramental.

But it does not follow that the Mass is a mere oblation. St. Thomas writes: We have a sacrifice in the proper sense only when something is done to the thing offered to God, as when animals were killed and burned, or bread was broken and eaten and blessed. The very word gives us this meaning, because sacrificium is used of man doing something sacred. But the word "oblation" is used directly of a thing which unchanged is offered to God, as when money or loaves are laid unchanged on the altar, Hence, though every sacrifice is an oblation, not every oblation is a sacrifice.

In the Mass, then, we have, not a mere oblation, but a true sacrifice, because the thing offered undergoes a change; the double transubstantiation, namely, which is the necessary prerequisite for the Real Presence and the indispensable substratum of the sacramental immolation.

3. St. Thomas insists on another capital point of doctrine: The principal priest who actually offers the Mass is Christ Himself, of whom the celebrant is but the instrumental minister, a minister who at the moment of consecration does not speak in his own name, nor even precisely in the name of the Church, but in the name of the Savior “always living to intercede for us.” .

Let us hear some further texts of St. Thomas. This sacrament is so elevated that it must be accomplished by Christ in person. And again: In the prayers of the Mass the priest indeed speaks in the person of the Church, which is the Eucharistic unity; but in the sacramental consecration he speaks in the person of Christ, whom by the power of ordination he represents. When he baptizes, he says “I baptize thee”: when he absolves, he says “I absolve thee”; but when he consecrates, he says, not “I consecrate this bread,” but, “This is My body.” And when he says “Hoc est corpus meum,” he does not say these words as mere historical statement, but as efficient formula which produces what it signifies, transubstantiation, namely, and the Real Presence. But it is Christ Himself who, by the voice and ministry of the celebrant, performs this substantiating consecration, which is always valid, however personally unworthy the celebrant may be. .

Is it then sufficient to say that Christ offers each Mass, not actually, but only virtually, by having instituted the sacrifice and commanded its renewal to the end of the world? This doctrine, from the Thomistic viewpoint, depreciates the role of Christ. Christ Himself it is who offers actually each Mass. Even if the priest, the instrumental minister, should be distracted and have at the moment only a virtual intention, Christ, the one high priest, the principal cause, wills actually, here and now, this transubstantiating consecration. And further, Christ’s humanity, as conjoined to His divinity, is the physically instrumental cause of the twofold transubstantiation. .

It is in this sense that Thomists, together with the great majority of theologians, understand the following words of the Council of Trent: “In the two sacrifices there is one and the same victim, one and the same priest, who then on the cross offered Himself, and who now, by the instrumentality

of His priests, offers Himself anew, the two sacrifices differing only in their mode.” .

Substantially, then, the Sacrifice of the Mass does not differ from the sacrifice of the cross, since in each we have, not only the same victim, but also the same priest who does the actual offering, though the mode of the immolation differs, one being bloody and physical, the other non-bloody and sacramental. Hence Christ’s act of offering the Mass, while it is neither dolorous nor meritorious (since He is no longer viator): is still an act of reparative adoration, of intercession, of thanksgiving, is still the ever-loving action of His heart, is still the soul of the Sacrifice of the Mass. This view stands out clearly in the saint’s commentaries on St. Paul, particularly in his insistence on Christ’s ever-living intercession. Christ also now, in heaven, says Gonet, prays in the true and proper sense (by intercession): begging divine benefits for us. And His special act of intercession is the act by which, as chief priest of each Mass, He intercedes for us. Thus the interior oblation, always living in Christ’s heart, is the very soul of the Sacrifice of the Mass; it arouses and binds to itself the interior oblation of the celebrant and of the faithful united to the celebrant. Such is, beyond doubt, the often repeated doctrine of St. Thomas and his school. .

Each Mass, finally, has a value that is simply infinite. This position is defended by the greatest Thomists against Durandus and Scotus. This value arises from the sublimity both of the victim and of the chief priest, since, substantially, the Sacrifice of the Mass is identified with that on the cross, though the mode of immolation is no longer bloody but sacramental. The unworthiness of the human minister, however great, cannot, says the Council of Trent, reduce this infinite value. Hence one sole Mass can be as profitable for ten thousand persons well disposed as it would be for one, just as the sun can as easily give light and warmth to ten thousand men as to one. Those who object 41 have lost sight, both of the objective infinity which belongs to the victim offered, and of the personal infinity which belongs to the chief priest.

Chapter 41

Attrition And Contrition

Contrition in general, whether perfect or imperfect, is thus defined by the Council of Trent: “Inward and dolorous detestation of sin, with proposal not to sin again.” Perfect contrition proceeds from charity, whereas attrition, imperfect contrition, exists in a soul which is still in the state of sin. Hence arises a difficult problem: How can attrition be supernatural, and how is it related to the love of God?

1. Two extremes are to be avoided: laxism and Jansenism. The laxists maintained as probable the statement that attrition, if it is naturally good, united with sacramental absolution, suffices for justification. The Jansenists, on the contrary, seeing no medium between cupidity and charity, said that the attrition which is not accompanied by benevolent love toward God is not supernatural. In this view, attrition seems to include an initial act of charity and hence, though it includes the intention of receiving the sacrament of penance, nevertheless justifies the penitent before he actually receives absolution.

We are, then, to show that attrition without charity is still good, that it can be supernatural, and thus suffices for the fruitful reception of sacramental absolution.

The Thomistic teaching on this point is expounded by Cajetan. He says that attrition is a contritio informis, which, by reason of an initial love of God, already detests sin as an offense against God.

What qualities, then, must attrition have if absolution is to be fruitful? Is the attrition inspired simply by fear of God’s judgments sufficient? Or must it include also love of God, and if so, what kind?

First, we must say against the laxists that the attrition which is only naturally good, but not supernatural, is not sufficient, even when united with sacramental absolution, because this act, remaining in the natural

order, is neither itself a salutary act nor even a disposition to supernatural justification. Much less is it a meritorious act since merit presupposes the state of grace. Further, it cannot include even the smallest act of charity, since, if it did, it would justify the penitent even before he receives absolution.

2. The difficulty lies in finding a middle ground between cupidity and charity, to use Augustine's terms. Now there is no middle ground between the state of mortal sin, the state of cupidity, the unregulated love of self, and the state of grace which is inseparable from charity. How, then, can we find in a person who is in the state of mortal sin, an act which is not only naturally good, ethically good, but also salutary, even though not meritorious?

All theologians admit and the Church has defined that the state of mortal sin does not prevent the sinner from having "uninformed" acts of faith and hope, which acts are personally supernatural and salutary, although not meritorious. Hence attrition also which presupposes these acts of faith and hope, may also be salutary without being meritorious.

3. Must we go a step further? Must we admit that this salutary attrition, which disposes us for sacramental justification, implies also an initial benevolent love of God, which nevertheless is not an act of charity, however small? The Thomists above cited say Yes. That attrition which suffices as disposition for the sacrament of penance, thus the Salmanticenses, necessarily implies some love for God, the fountain of justice. And the Council of Trent, speaking of adults preparing for baptism, after mentioning their acts of faith, fear, and hope, continues thus: "They begin to love God as the source of all justice, and thus are moved to hate and detest their sins." Now it is true that the Council in another text where it treats of the difference between attrition and contrition, does not mention this act of love for God as the author of all justice. The reason probably is that the Council wishes to leave open a question disputed among theologians, but does not in any way modify the affirmation cited above. .

Further, the Thomists we have cited add the following theological argument. Attrition, according to the Council, contains detestation of the sin committed. Now this detestation of sin, of an offense against God, can simply not exist without an initial benevolent love for God as the source of justice. Why not? Because love is the very first of the acts of the will, and hence must precede hate or detestation. A man can detest injustice only

because he loves justice, hence he can detest an injury done to God only because he already loves God as the source of justice. This argument is solid. Only he can detest a lie who already loves truth. Only he can detest the evil of sin who loves the good opposed to that evil.

This is surely the thought of St. Thomas, when he says that penance detests sin as an offense against God supremely lovable. But, for justification, the sinner must have an act of true penance. Hence attrition, in the mind of St. Thomas, must include some initial love of benevolence for God as the author of all justice.

But then, so runs an objection, this initial benevolent love must be itself an imperfect act of charity, and hence would justify the penitent before absolution. The Thomists cited reply thus: No, this initial love of benevolence is not an act of charity, because charity includes, not merely mutual benevolence between God and man, but also a convictus a common life with God which exists only by man's possession of sanctifying and habitual grace, the root of infused charity. Charity, says St. Thomas, is a friendship which presupposes, not merely mutual benevolence, but a habitual convictus, a communion of life. Between two men who, living far apart, know each other only by hearsay, there can exist a reciprocal benevolence, but not as yet friendship. Now this common life between God and man begins only when man receives that participation in the divine life which we call habitual grace, the root of charity, the seed-corn of glory. But attrition, as distinguished from contrition, does not give man the state of grace.

Cajetan's description of attrition is based on a profound study of St. Thomas. It runs thus: "In the line of contrition comes first an imperfect contrition (not yet informed by charity) which is displeasure against sin as the most hateful of things, together with a proposal to avoid and shun sin as of all things most to be shunned, the displeasure and the proposal arising from a love of God as of all things the most lovable." This description tallies with that initial love of benevolence for God which we gave above from the Council of Trent. God Himself, by actual grace, leads us to attrition, to this initial love of Himself, before He justifies us by sacramental absolution. Sin, as the best Thomists have ever insisted, is not merely an evil of the soul, but essentially and primarily an offense against God, and we cannot detest this offense without an initial love of God as source of all justice, without that initial love of benevolence which is the

previous disposition for that common life with God which presupposes charity.

Chapter 42

The Reviviscence Of Merit

We will dwell here on the chief difference between the doctrine of St. Thomas and that of many modern theologians, inspired less by him than by Suarez. On the fact of the reviviscence of merits, there is no controversy, since the definitions of Trent imply this truth. The controversy is concerned with the manner and mode of this reviviscence.

Suarez maintains, and with him many modern theologians, that all past merits revive in equal degree as soon as the penitent is justified by absolution, even though his attrition is barely sufficient to let the sacrament have its effect. If we represent his merits, for example, by five talents of charity, then under absolution, even if attrition is just sufficient, he recovers not only the state of grace, but the same degree of grace, the five talents which he had lost. The reason given by Suarez is that these merits remain in God's sight and acceptance, and since their effect, even as regards essential glory, is only impeded by the presence of mortal sin, they must revive in the same degree as soon as that impediment is removed.

St. Thomas, and with him many ancient theologians, expresses himself in fashion notably different. The principle which he often invokes in his treatise on grace, and explains also elsewhere, runs thus: Grace is a perfection, and each perfection is received in a manner more perfect or less according to the present disposition of the subject. Hence in proportion to the intensity of his disposition, attrition or contrition, the penitent receives grace, and his merits revive, sometimes with a higher degree of grace, as probably did St. Peter after his denial, sometimes with an equal degree, and sometimes with a lower degree.

The question is important, and the answer must be sought in what is true, not in what may seem to be more consoling. It is particularly important in the spiritual life. If an advanced soul commits a grave sin, it cannot again

begin its ascent at the point where it fell, unless it has a really fervent contrition which brings back the same degree of grace as that which it lost, and must otherwise recommence its climb at a point possibly much lower. Such at least is the thought of many older theologians, notably of St. Thomas. We will quote here a passage which seems to have been in some measure forgotten.

It is clear that forms which can be received in varying degrees owe their actual degree, as we have said above, to the varying dispositions of the receiving subject. Hence the penitent receives grace in a higher degree or in a lower degree, proportionate to the intensity or to the remissness of his free will against sin. Now this intensity of the will is sometimes proportioned to a higher degree of grace than that from which he fell by sin, sometimes to an equal degree of grace, and sometimes to a lower degree. And what is thus true of grace is likewise true of the virtues which follow grace.

This passage, let us note, is not merely a passing remark. It is the very conclusion of the article. In that same question, a little farther on, he speaks thus: “He who rises in a lower degree of charity will receive his essential reward according to his actual measure of charity. But his accidental reward will be greater from the works he did under his first measure of grace than from those he does in his second and lower degree of grace.”

Banez seems to understand these words in a sense too restricted, which would exclude reviviscence in regard to the essential reward. Billot seems to exaggerate in the opposite direction. Cajetan, in the following passage, keeps well to the thought of St. Thomas. “When grace revives, all dead merits revive too, but not always in the same quantity, in their power, that is, to lead the man to a higher degree of glory as they would have done had he not fallen. This is the case of a man who, having risen from sin in a degree of grace lower than was his before his fall, dies in that state. The reason for this lower degree of reviviscence is the lower degree of disposition in him who rises.” .

To this explanation of Cajetan, Suarez gives no answer. But the Salmanticenses and Billuart explain St. Thomas well. The latter writes as follows:1. Merits do not always arise in that degree which they had before, since they revive in proportion to the present disposition.

2. Also as regards their quantity, merits revive according to the present disposition. This does not mean, as Banez thinks, that the same essential glory is now given to the penitent by a twofold title, first by reason of his

present disposition, secondly by reason of his now revived merits. What it does mean is this: There is conferred on the penitent, in addition to that degree of essential glory which corresponds to his present disposition, a sort of right to additional glory corresponding to his preceding merits.

To conclude. Merits revive, even as regards their essential reward, not always in a degree equal to what they formerly had, but in proportion to the penitent's actual disposition. He who had five talents and has lost them, can revive on a lower level, and can die on that level, and hence will have a degree of glory proportioned, not to the five talents, but to some lower degree of charity, whereof God alone knows the proportion, as God alone can measure the fervor of man's repentance.

Chapter 43

The Treatise On The Church

Throughout the Summa we find the lineaments of a treatise on the Church, a treatise which became an actuality against Protestant errors. But this later mode of treatment, being predominantly exterior and apologetic, led to a disregard for the theological treatment, properly so called, of the inner constitution of the Church. Such a treatise has its normal place after the treatise on Christ the Redeemer and His sacraments. Here lies the road pointed out by St. Thomas.

In his treatise on Christ's grace of headship he calls the Church the mystical body, which includes all men in the measure of their participation in the grace that comes from their Savior. .

In his treatise on faith he finds in the Church a doctrinal authority that is plenary and infallible, extending even, as in canonizing her saints, not merely to dogmatic truths, but also to dogmatic facts. The pope has this power in its fullness, and can even, against heretics, define the exact meaning of the articles of faith.

He compares the relation between Church and state to that between soul and body. The Church has power to annul the authority of unbelieving or apostate princes, a power extending to excommunication. This normal pre-eminence of the Church derives from her superior goal, in virtue of which princes themselves are bound to obey the sovereign pontiff as vicar of Jesus Christ.

In the fifteenth century the disciples of St. Thomas clung closely to the saint's formulas. Special distinction here belongs to Torquemada, whose work is a careful study of the notes of the Church, of the union in the mystical body between head and members, of the Church's indirect power in matters temporal. .

Chapter 44

The Soul’s Immutability After Death

Why does death make the soul immutable, either in good or in evil? The most explicit answer is found in the Summa contra Gentiles. .

Our will for a definite last end depends on our will’s disposition; as long as this disposition lasts, the desire of this end cannot change, since it changes only by the desire of something more desirable as last end.

Now the soul’s disposition is variable during its union with the body, but not after separation from the body. Why? Because changes in the body bring corresponding changes in the soul’s disposition, since the body has been given to the soul as instrument of the soul’s operations. But the soul, separated from the body, is no longer in motion toward its end, but rests in the end attained (unless it has departed in a state of failure toward this end).

Hence the will of the separated soul is immutable in the desire of its last end, on which desire depends all the will’s goodness, or then all its malice. It is immutable, either in good or in evil, and cannot pass from one to the other, though in this fixed order, immutable as regards the last end, it can still choose between means. .

In this line of reasoning we see again the force of the doctrine on the soul as form of the body. Since the body is united to the soul, not accidentally, but naturally, to aid the soul in tending to its goal, it follows that the soul, separated from the body, is no longer in a state of tendency to its good.

Cajetan proposes on this subject an opinion which seems to disregard the distance that separates the angel from the human soul. Having said that the angel’s choice of a good or evil end is irrevocable, he adds these words: “As to the soul, I hold that it is rendered obstinate by the first act which it elicits in its state of separation and that its final act of demerit occurs, not when it is in via, but when it is in termino.” .

Thomists in general reject this view. Thus Sylvester de Ferrara, who says: The soul in the first moment of its separation has indeed immutable apprehension, and in that first moment begins its state of obstinacy. But it does not, as some say, have in that moment a demeritorious act, because human demerit like human merit presupposes man. Now the separated soul is not a man, not even in its first moment of separation. Rather, that moment is the first moment of its non-existence as man. Therefore its obstinacy is caused, inchoatively, by its last mutable apprehension of its last end before death, but irrevocably by that apprehension which becomes immutable in its first moment of separation. .

The Salmanticenses pronounce thus on Cajetan's opinion, saying: "This mode of speaking does not agree with Scripture, which states expressly that men can merit or demerit before death, but not after death. 'We must work while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work. ' " .

Cajetan conceived the matter too abstractly. He saw correctly that man's road to God is terminated by the moment when that road closes. But he did not notice that merit belongs to the man who is on the road, not to the separated soul. The last merit, or demerit, so St. Thomas and nearly all his commentators, is an act of the soul still in union with the body, and this act of the united soul becomes immutable by the soul's separation from the body.

Hence it is wrong to say: The condemned soul, seeing its misery, can still repent. Of such a soul, as of the fallen angel, we must rather say: The pride wherein it is immovably fixed closes the road of humility and obedience whereby alone it could repent. Could a soul repent after final impenitence, it would no longer be condemned.

The contrary immutability, that of those who die in the state of grace, the immutability of their free choice of the Supreme Good, supremely loved, is a wonderful echo of the immutability of God's own freedom of choice. God, knowing beforehand all that he has either willed or permitted to come to pass in time, can have no reason to change. Thus, when the separated soul of one of the elect receives the beatific vision, it loves God seen face to face with a love beyond its freedom, a love that is indeed spontaneous, but necessary and inamissible. .

We have here, then, in the grace of a good death, a new view of the grand mystery, namely, the mystery of the inner harmony between infinite mercy, infinite justice, and sovereign freedom, a harmony realized in the pre-

eminence of the deity, but obscure to us as long as we have not been raised to the beatific vision.

Seventh Part

Moral Theology and Spirituality

The Prima secundae is a general treatise on morality, under the following headings:

1. Man’s ultimate purpose and goal,
2. Human voluntary acts,
3. Passions and habits,
4. Virtues, gifts, and vices,
5. Law, by which God guides us,
6. Grace, by which God aids us.

The Secunda secundae is a detailed treatment, first on each of the virtues, theological and cardinal, then on the active and contemplative life, lastly on the state of perfection, episcopal and religious.

Everywhere throughout these treatises we find the formulas of a solid spiritual life supported by theological foundations. These principles appear chiefly, in the Prima secundae, under grace, virtues, and gifts, in the Secunda secundae, under the theological virtues, then under prudence, justice, humility, and their corresponding gifts. Here we can but underline the essentials.

Chapter 45

Man’s Ultimate Purpose And Goal

In treating man’s last end St. Thomas draws inspiration from St. Augustine, from Aristotle, and from Boethius. .

First of all man, with a rational nature, must know what he is working for, that is, must know purpose as purpose, as something which he thinks will satisfy his desire, something wherein he can find rest. Without an ultimate purpose, known at least vaguely, man would never undertake anything. As, in a series of efficient causes, there must be a first cause, so in a series of final causes, of things which attract, there must be an ultimate cause which attracts for its own sake. This ultimate purpose, reached last in the order of execution, is first in the order of attention, is the motivating center of all else. In illustration, it is to each man what defense of his country is to the commander-in-chief. Thus all men desire some ultimate goal which they think will give them complete satisfaction and happiness, even though many do not realize that genuine happiness, the ultimate goal, is to be found in God alone, the Sovereign Good.

In the second question St. Thomas shows that no created values, neither riches nor honors nor glory nor power, neither bodily advantage nor pleasure, not even knowledge or virtue, can give man ultimate contentment, because the object of man’s will is good as such, unlimited and universal good, just as unlimited truth is the object of man’s intelligence. The will can find lasting repose only in the possession of what is in every way good, universally good. But this universal good can be found, not in creatures, since they, all and singly, are but limited participations in good, but only in God. Note that the object to which our will is proportioned is not this or that particular good, subjective or objective, but universal good, unlimited good, as known, not by sense and imagination, but by the intellect, by man’s higher intelligence.

Here lies another proof of God's existence. This proof rests on the following principle: a natural desire, founded, not on imagination nor on error, but on the universal amplitude of man's will, cannot be vain or chimerical. Now while each man has this natural desire of complete happiness, both reason and experience show that this desire cannot be satisfied by any limited and finite good, because, since our intelligence knows good as universal and unlimited, the natural amplitude, the embracing capacity of our will, illumined by our intelligence, T is itself universal and unlimited.

Further, this desire is not conditional and inefficacious, as is the desire of the beatific vision, which is founded on this conditional judgment: this vision would be for me perfect happiness, if it were possible that I should be raised to it and if God would raise me to it. But the desire now in question is natural and innate, since it is founded on a judgment not conditional but absolute, arising without medium from the naturally unlimited amplitude of man's will for good. Now since a natural desire presupposes a naturally desirable good, the object of man's desire must be as unlimited as that desire itself. Hence there exists an unlimited good, goodness itself, wherein alone is found that universal good to which our will is proportioned. And this unlimited good can be known naturally, in the mirror of created goodness.

Hence to deny the existence of God is to deny the universal amplitude of our will, is to deny that will's boundless depth, which no limited good can fill. This denial is a radical absurdity, is absolute nonsense. We have here an absolute impossibility, inscribed in the very nature of our will, whose natural desire tends, not to the mere idea of good, but to a real and objective good, because good is not a mental image but objective reality.

We must note, however, that the specific object of the will must be distinguished from what is simply man's last end. The will's specific object is not God, the Sovereign Good, as He is in Himself, which is the specific object of infused charity. The naturally specific object of man's will is good taken universally, as known by man's natural intelligence, an object which is found participatedly and limitedly in everything that is in any way good, but which as good, simultaneously real and universal, is found in God alone. God alone is universal good itself, not indeed in the order of predication, but in the order of being and causing. Thus Cajetan, commenting on Aristotle's word: "While truth is formally in the mind,

goodness in the objective thing." Hence we pass legitimately, by the objective realism of the will, from what is universal as predicate to what is universal in being.

Had man been created in a state purely natural, without grace, he would have found natural happiness in the natural knowledge and love of God, the author of nature. Now our intelligence, far surpassing sense and imagination, is by nature meant to know even the supreme truth, as mirrored in the world of creation. For the same reason, our will, meant by nature to love and will what is good, tends naturally to love also the supreme good, as far at least as that good is naturally knowable. .

But revelation, passing beyond nature, tells us that God has called us to a happiness essentially supernatural, to see Him without medium and to love Him with a love that is supernatural, perfect, and indefective. The essence of that supreme beatitude lies in the act of vision, the act of seeing God without medium, for by that act we take possession of God. But love, in the form of desire, precedes that act, and, in the form of joy, follows that act. Hence love of God, though it is not the essence of beatitude, is both the necessary presupposition and the equally necessary consequence of that beatific vision of God. Beatitude, therefore, constituted essentially by vision, brings with it, as necessary complement, love and joy in the supreme good, in a glorified body, and in the company of the saints. .

Chapter 46

Human Acts

ARTICLE ONE: PSYCHOLOGY OF HUMAN ACTS

Human acts are the acts of the will directed by reason. They are either elicited, that is, produced by the will itself, or commanded, that is, produced by some other faculty under the influence of the will. Elicited acts are concerned either with the end or with the means.

Three acts are concerned with the end:

a) simple velleity, not yet efficacious.

b) efficacious intention of the end; .

c) joy in the end attained. .

Two acts are concerned with means:

a) consent, which accepts means.

b) choice of a determined set of means. .

Each of these five acts of the will is preceded by a directive act of-the intellect. Simple velleity, by the knowledge of the good in question; intention, by a judgment that this end should be attained; consent, by counsel; choice, by the last practical judgment which terminates deliberation. .

After voluntary choice there follows, in the intellect, the act called imperium, which directs the execution of the means chosen, ascending from lower means to those higher and nearer to the end to be obtained, in order inverse to that of intention, which descends from the desired end to the means which come first in execution. .

After the intellect’s imperium there follows in the will the act called active use, which sets the other faculties to work. These acts of the other faculties, called passive use, are, properly speaking, commanded acts of the will. And the will’s last act is that of joy in the possession of the end

obtained. The end, which was first in the order of intention, is the last in the order of execution. .

The next question is that of morality, which is studied in general, in the interior act, in the exterior act, and in its consequences. .

The morality of a human act derives primarily from its specific object, secondarily from its end and circumstances. Thus an act may have a double goodness or a double malice. An act, good in its object, can be bad by its end, almsgiving, for example, done for vainglory. Hence, although there are acts which in their object are indifferent, as for example, walking, there is nevertheless no deliberate concrete act which is indifferent in its end, because, unless it is done at least virtually for a good end, it is morally bad. All the good acts of a just man, therefore, are supernaturally meritorious, by reason of their relation to the last end, which is God.

By the term “interior act” St. Thomas often means an act which does not arise from a previous act, the first act, for example, of willing an end. By opposition, then, “exterior act” often means not only the act of the corporeal members, but also an act of the will itself, if this act arises from a preceding act, as when, for example, we will the means because we already will the end.

Here we must remark, further, that a human act, voluntary and free, is not necessarily preceded, if we speak precisely, by a discursive deliberation, but may be the fruit of a special inspiration, superior to human deliberation. But, even here, the act is free and meritorious, because the will consents to follow the inspiration. Here lies the difference between the virtue of prudence, which presupposes discursive deliberation, and the gifts which make man prompt and docile to the inspirations of the Holy Ghost. These latter acts, free but not in the proper sense deliberate, are the fruit, as we shall see later, not of cooperating grace, but of operating grace. .

ARTICLE TWO: CONSCIENCE AND PROBABILISM

Probabilism is a question which has been often discussed since the sixteenth century. Solution of the question depends on the definition of opinion.

“Opinion,” says St. Thomas, “is an act of the intellect which inclines to one part of a contradiction with the fear that the other part is true.” Hence, to have a reasonable opinion, the inclination to adhere to it must outweigh

the fear of error. Hence, if Yes is certainly more probable, No is probably not true, but rather probably false, and therefore, as long as Yes seems more probable, it would be unreasonable to follow No. In other words, against an opinion probable enough to obtain the consent of wise men, there can be only an improbable opinion, which we should not follow.

This position is in accord with the teaching of St. Thomas on prudential certitude, which rests on conformity with right desire. Where we cannot find the truth with evidence, we should follow that opinion which is nearest the truth, i. e.: is most in harmony with the inclination of virtue. The virtuous man judges by his inclinations to virtue, not by the inclination to egoism.

Bartholomew de Medina proposed a theory quite different from that just now outlined. It does not seem, he says, that it is wrong to follow a probable opinion, even when the opposed opinion is more probable. But, in order to close the door against laxism, he adds: An opinion does not become probable by the mere support of apparent reasons and the fact that some maintain it, otherwise all errors would be probable. An opinion is genuinely probable only when it is supported by wise men and confirmed by excellent arguments.

But the position of Medina, even thus safeguarded, is not the less open to criticism, because he gives to the word “probable” a moral meaning which is not in harmony with its philosophical meaning, contained in the definition of opinion as given by St. Thomas. Medina’s theory amounts to saying that, with sufficient justification, we may uphold both Yes and No on one and the same object of the moral order.

Nevertheless Medina succeeded in persuading others of the utility of his theories, and was followed by a certain number of Spanish Dominicans: Louis Lopez, Dominic Banez, Diego Alvarez, Bartholomew and Peter of Ledesma. The Jesuits, too, in general adopted this theory, which became more and more known by the name of probabilism.

But the descent was slippery. “The facility,” says Mandonnet, “with which all opinions became probable since their contradictories were probable did not delay in leading to great abuses. Then, in 1656, the Provincial Letters of Pascal threw into the public arena a controversy confined until then to the schools. Faced with a great scandal, Alexander VII in that same year intimated to the Dominican general chapter his will that the order campaign efficaciously against the probabilist doctrines.”

From that time on probabilist writers disappeared completely among the Friars Preachers. .

In 1911, a posthumous work of P. R. Beaudouin, O. P. proposed an interesting conciliation between the principles of St. Thomas and the teaching of St. Alphonsus Liguori, namely, equiprobabilism, considered as a form of probabilism. In matters where probability is permitted, St. Alphonsus, in fact, invokes “the principle of possession” in order to pronounce between two opinions equally probable. This principle seems to have priority in the system of St. Alphonsus over a second principle that “doubtful laws do not bind.” Now this principle of possession is itself derived from a more general reflex principle which has always been admitted, namely, that in doubt we are to stand by the view which is presumably true. .

From that time forward, Father Gardeil, following Father Beaudouin, insisted on the philosophical sense of the word “probable,” so well explained by St. Thomas, from which it follows that, when Yes is certainly more probable, then No is probably not true, but probably false. In other words, when Yes is certainly more probable, then the reasonable inclination to accept that Yes prevails over the fear of error, whereas, if, knowing this, we maintain the No, the fear of error would outbalance the inclination to deny. To repeat: When affirmation is certainly more probable, negation is not probable, that is, is not probably true, but rather probably false.

St. Thomas, it is true, does cite at times other reflex principles, useful in forming conscience, for example, that in doubt we are to stand by the view which is presumably true. But if he seldom dwells on these reflex principles, it is because he holds that prudential certitude is found in that view which is nearest to evident truth, and most in conformity, not with egoism, but with the inclination to virtue.

ARTICLE THREE: THE PASSIONS

The passions are acts of the sense appetite, hence are common to man and animal. But they participate in man’s moral life, either by being ruled, or even aroused, by right reason, or by not being ruled as they should.

Hence man’s will should reduce these passions to the happy medium where they become instruments of virtue. Thus hope and audacity become instruments of courage; sense-pity subserves mercy; and bashfulness

subserves chastity. Here again St. Thomas rises above two opposed extremes: over Stoicism, which condemns passion, and over Epicureanism, which glorifies passion. God gave us sense appetite, as He gave us imagination, as He gave us two arms, all to be employed in the service of true manhood, virtue, moral good.

Passions, then, well employed, become important moral forces. Antecedent passion, as it is called, since it precedes judgment, does, it is true, becloud reason, in the fanatic, for example, and in the sectary. But consequent passion, since it follows reason clarified by faith, augments merit and strengthens the will. But if left unruled, undisciplined, passions become vices. Thus sense-love becomes gluttony or lust, audacity becomes temerity, fear becomes cowardice or pusillanimity. In the service of perversity passion augments the malice of the act.

In classifying the passions, St. Thomas follows Aristotle. Six passions, in three pairs, hate and love, desire and aversion, joy and sadness, belong to the concupiscible appetite. To the irascible appetite belong five passions, two pairs, hope and despair, audacity and fear, and one single passion, anger (ira, which gives its name “irascible” to the whole series). First among all these passions, on which all others depend, is love From love proceed desire, hope, audacity, joy, and also their contraries, hate, aversion, despair, fear, anger, and sadness.

St. Thomas scrutinizes in detail each of the eleven passions. The result is a model, too little known, of psychological analysis. Deserving of special study is his treatise on love, its causes, its effects. Here he formulates general principles which he later applies, analogically, in his study of charity, that is, the supernatural love of benevolence, just as his doctrine on the passion of hope is later applied analogically in his study of the infused virtue of hope.

Chapter 47

Virtues And Vices

After the time of St. Thomas moral theology often followed the order of the Decalogue, of which many precepts are negative. The saint himself follows the order of the virtues, theological and moral, showing their subordination and interconnection. These virtues he sees as functions of one and the same spiritual organism, functions supported by the seven gifts which are inseparable from charity. Thus moral theology is primarily a science of virtues to be practiced, and only secondarily of vices to be shunned. It is something much higher than casuistry, which is mere application to cases of conscience.

Thus charity, which animates and informs all the other virtues and renders their exercise meritorious, appears very clearly as the highest of all virtues, and the most universal of all virtues, in the exercise of which every Christian reaches perfection. Thus moral theology is identified with the spiritual life, with the love of God and docility to the Holy Spirit. Thus asceticism, which teaches the method of practicing virtue and shunning sin, is subordinated to mysticism, which teaches docility to the Holy Spirit, infused contemplation of the mysteries, and intimate union with God. And the exercise of the gifts, particularly of wisdom and knowledge, which make faith penetrating and savory, is a normal element in all Christian life, quite distinct from extraordinary favors, such as visions and stigmatizations.

ARTICLE ONE: HABITS

Habits, moral habits, are operative qualities, that is, principles of activity, either acquired or infused, distinct from sanctifying grace, which is an entitative habit, infused into the very essence of the soul, whereas operative

habits are received into the faculties of the soul. This description applies to good habits, to which are opposed bad habits or vices.

St. Thomas studies habit, in its nature, its subject, and its cause. To distinguish one habit from all others, his dominating principle is that each habit is specifically proportioned to its object, each under its own special viewpoint. This principle is of capital importance, illumining as it does all questions that follow: on the theological virtues, on the moral virtues, on the gifts of the Spirit. Here we give a brief summary of this Thomistic doctrine. .

1. Habits can be considered as forms which we receive passively. Then they are specifically distinguished by the active principle which produces them. Thus infused habits come from God as participations in His own inner life; acquired habits arise either from the demonstrative principles which engender them (scientific habits): or from repeated virtuous acts regulated by reason (moral habits).

2. Habits considered formally as habits are divided by their relation, favorable or unfavorable, to the nature in which they reside. Thus, whereas infused habits are always favorable to grace, acquired habits may be either favorable to human nature, and are then called virtues, or unfavorable, in which case we call them vices.

3. Lastly, habits may be considered in relation to their mode of operation, and are then distinguished by their formal object, infused habits by an object essentially supernatural, acquired habits by an object naturally attainable. “Habits,” says St. Thomas, “considered as operative dispositions, are specifically distinguished by objects specifically different.”

Some theologians, under the influence of Scotism and Nominalism, say that infused virtues may be specifically distinct from acquired virtues by their active principles, even while they have the same formal object. In this view, the formal object of the infused virtues, even of the theological virtues, would be attainable by the natural forces of our faculties, supposing that divine revelation be proposed to us exteriorly in the pages of the Gospel, and be confirmed by miracles which are naturally knowable.

Thomists, and also Suarez, forcefully reject this interpretation, saying that it approaches Semi-Pelagianism by compromising the essentially supernatural character of all infused virtues, including the theological virtues. If without infused faith the formal object of faith can still be attained, faith itself either becomes useless, or is at best useful only as a

means to make the act of faith more easy (Pelagianism): or at least presupposes its beginning as coming from our nature without the support of grace (Semi-Pelagianism). If faith's formal object is attainable by the natural force of our intelligence, aided by natural good will, after reading the Gospel confirmed by miracles, then Paul would be wrong in calling faith "a gift of God." Why should infused faith be necessary for salvation, if acquired faith suffices to attain the revealed mysteries?

Hence the commentators insist that the three distinguishing viewpoints outlined above are inseparably connected. A virtue, then, is not infused virtue unless these three qualities are found in it simultaneously:

1. it is producible by God alone.
2. it is conformed to grace, our participation in the divine nature.
3. it has an object essentially supernatural, inaccessible to our natural faculties.

To disregard this third point is to approach Nominalism, which considers concrete facts, not the inner nature of things.

ARTICLE TWO: CLASSIFICATION OF VIRTUES

Some virtues are intellectual, some are moral, some are theological. The intellectual virtues are five: three in the speculative order, namely, first principles, science, and wisdom, and two in the practical order, prudence and art. .

Moral virtues are perfections, either of the will or of the sense appetite. In dividing them St. Thomas is guided by the ancient moralists, Aristotle, St. Ambrose, and St. Augustine. All moral virtues are reduced to the four cardinal virtues: prudence, justice, fortitude, temperance. Prudence, though it is an intellectual virtue, is likewise a moral virtue, because it guides both the will and the sense appetite in finding the right means in attaining an end. Justice inclines the will to give everyone his due. Fortitude strengthens the irascible appetite against unreasonable fear. Temperance rules the concupiscible appetite.

The theological virtues elevate our higher faculties, intellect and will, proportioning them to our supernatural end, that is, to God's own inner life. Faith makes us adhere supernaturally to what God has revealed. Hope, resting on His grace, tends to possess Him. Charity makes us love Him, more than ourselves, more than all else, because His infinite goodness is in

itself lovable, and because He, both as Creator and as Father, loved us first. The theological virtues, therefore, are essentially supernatural and infused, by reason of their formal objects, which without them are simply inaccessible.

By this same rule St. Thomas distinguishes the infused moral virtues from acquired moral virtues. This distinction, of capital importance yet too little known, must be emphasized. The acquired moral virtues do indeed incline us to what is in itself good, not merely to what is useful or delectable. They make man perfect as man. But they do not suffice to make man a God's child, who, guided by faith and Christian prudence, is to employ supernatural means for a supernatural end. Thus infused temperance, say, is specifically distinct from acquired temperance, as, to illustrate, a higher note on the key board is specifically distinct from the same note on a lower octave. Thus we distinguish Christian temperance from philosophic temperance, and evangelical poverty from the philosophic poverty of Crates. Acquired temperance, to continue with St. Thomas, differs from infused temperance in rule, object, and end. It observes the just medium in nourishment, so as not to harm health or occupation. Infused temperance observes a higher medium, so as to live like a child of God on his march to a life that is eternal and supernatural. It implies a more severe mortification, which chastises the body and reduces it to subjection, not merely to become a good citizen here below but rather a fellow citizen of the saints, a child in the family of God. .

This same difference between infused and acquired is found likewise in prudence, justice, and fortitude. Yet we must note that acquired virtue facilitates the exercise of infused virtue, as, to illustrate, finger exercises facilitate the musician's art which resides in the musician's intellect.

As the acquired virtues in the will and sense appetite, justice, namely, and fortitude, and temperance, are inseparable from prudence, so the infused virtues are inseparable from charity. Faith and hope can indeed continue to exist without charity, but they no longer exist in a state of virtue, and their acts are no longer meritorious. And whereas all moral virtues, infused or acquired, must preserve a medium between excess and defect, the theological virtues have no medium properly speaking, because we can neither believe too much in God, nor hope too much in Him, nor love Him too much. .

ARTICLE THREE: THE GIFTS

This entire supernatural organism, all the virtues, moral and theological, spring from sanctifying grace, as the faculties of the soul spring from the soul. And this supernatural organism has its complement in the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost. These gifts, too, must be classed as habits, infused habits, which dispose us to receive with docility and promptitude the inspirations of the Holy Ghost, as, to illustrate, the sails dispose the ship to receive impulse from the wind. Charity, which is “poured out in our hearts by the Holy Ghost who has been given to US,” is the inseparable source of these gifts, which, with charity, grow all together and simultaneously, like the five fingers of the hand. .

ARTICLE FOUR: THE VICES

Vices are habits that turn us from God and incline us to evil. They have four sources: ignorance, more or less voluntary; passions, if unruled; pure malice, evidently more grave; the demon, who acts on the sense faculties to suggest evil. God can never be the cause of sin or moral disorder, though He is the first cause of the physical entity of the act which is morally sinful, and though, by the deserved withdrawal of grace, He allows the sinner to be blinded and hardened.

From selfishness, the unregulated love of self, from what St. John called “concupiscence of the flesh, concupiscence of the eyes, and pride of life,” come the seven capital sins, enumerated by St. Gregory in this order; vainglory, envy, wrath, avarice, sloth, gluttony, and lust. From these capital sins arise others, often more grave, hatred of God, for example, and despair, because man does not all at once reach complete perversity.

ARTICLE FIVE: SIN

Sin is a deed, a word, a desire, against the eternal law. Admitting this definition of sin by St. Augustine, St. Thomas studies sin, not only in its causes, but in itself as act. As to be expected, he distinguishes sins specifically by their objects, whereas Scotus distinguishes them rather by their opposition to virtues, and Vasquez by their opposition to precepts.

What distinguishes mortal sin from venial sin? The answer of St Thomas is profound. The idea of sin, he says, as applied to mortal and venial, is not

a univocal notion, is not a genus divided into species, but is found analogically in both. Mortal sin is a turning away from our last end, is simply against the law, and is in itself irreparable, whereas venial sin is not a turning away from our last end, but a disorder in the use of means, and is rather beside the law than against it, halting us on our road to God. It is therefore reparable.

Mortal sin deprives the soul of sanctifying grace, reduces our natural inclination to virtue, and deserves eternal punishment, because without repentance it lasts forever as habitual sin, and hence draws on a punishment which also lasts forever. Yet not all mortal sins are equal in malice, the worst being sins directly against God: apostasy, despair, hatred of God.

Venial sin tarnishes that brightness given to the soul by acts of virtue, but not that of sanctifying grace. But it can lead imperceptibly to mortal sin and merits temporal punishment. A feeble act of virtue contains an imperfection, which is not, like venial sin, a privation, but only a negation of desirable perfection, a lack of promptitude in the service of God. .

Original sin is specifically distinct from actual sin which we have been speaking of. It is the sin of nature, transmitted with nature. It is voluntary in its cause, the sin of the first man. It consists formally in the privation of original justice, by which our will was subject to God. Materially, it consists in concupiscence. It resides, as privation of grace, in the essence of the soul, before it infects the will and man’s other powers. .

Chapter 48

Law

Virtues and vices are intrinsic principles of human acts. St. Thomas now turns to the extrinsic principle, to God who causes human acts by His law and His grace.

Law is “a regulation of reason in favor of the common good, promulgated by the ruler of the community.” Its violation deserves punishment, to re-establish the law. There are many kinds of law. The highest kind, whence all others are derived, is the eternal law, “the plan by which divine wisdom rules all creatures.” Natural law, a direct derivation from the eternal law, is imprinted on our rational faculties, inclining them to the end willed by the author of nature. It is immutable, like nature itself. Its first precept is: Do good, shun evil. From this principle follow other natural precepts, relative to the individual, to the family, to social life, and to the worship of God. .

Positive laws, human or divine, presuppose the eternal law and the natural law. Divine positive law is either the Old Law or the New. The New Law is inscribed in our souls before it is inscribed on parchment. It is identified with grace and infused virtue. It brings the Old Law to perfection. It is the law of love, since it continually recalls the pre-eminence of charity, with its two grand precepts of love for God and neighbor. .

Human laws, coming from human authority, must conform to natural law and to divine positive law. They must be morally good, just, suited to people and time. They bind in conscience, as derivations from the eternal law. Unjust laws do not bind in conscience, unless their observance is necessary to avoid a greater evil. In such cases we may yield on our rights, but not on our duties. But we may not obey a law which is manifestly against a higher law, especially if the higher law is a divine law. .

On the immutability of the natural law Scotus maintains that the only necessary precepts are those relating to the service of God, whereas God could revoke the precept “Thou shalt not kill,” and then murder would no longer be sin. Thus all relations of man to man would depend, not on God’s natural law, but on His positive law. Occam goes still further, saying that God, being infinitely free, could have commanded us to hate Him. God might thus be, comments Leibnitz, the evil principle of the Manichaeans rather than the good principle of Christians. This nominalistic doctrine brings forth complete juridical positivism, since it leaves no act intrinsically either good or evil. Gerson approaches this position, saying there is only one act intrinsically good, namely, the love of God. St. Thomas, on the contrary, holding the natural law to be as immutable as human nature itself, establishes on high a luminary to guide all legislation worthy of the name.

Chapter 49

A Treatise On Grace

Following the order of St. Thomas, we dwell here, first, on the necessity of grace, second, on its essence, third, on its divisions, fourth, on its causes, fifth, on its effects, which are justification and merit.

ARTICLE ONE: THE NECESSITY OF GRACE

Man, even in his fallen state, can without grace, by God's concurrence in the natural order, know certain natural truths, though this concurrence of God is gratuitous in this sense, that it is accorded to men in varying degree. Yet, even within the natural order, fallen man cannot without supernatural grace attain all truths, in particular not the more difficult truths. To reach these latter truths man must have long years of study, an ardent love of truth, a persevering will, and subservient passions, and these qualities man in his actual state cannot have without grace added to his nature. .

Even supposing revelation as an exterior fact, man cannot without interior grace give a supernatural assent to divine revelation. This point of doctrine is strenuously upheld by Thomists against those who approach more or less nearly to Pelagianism or Semi-Pelagianism. The act of faith, by which we adhere to supernatural truths as revealed, is essentially supernatural, by reason of its specific object and motive The mysteries of faith are more supernatural than miracles. A miracle is supernatural, not by the essence of its effect, but only by the mode of production, as when resurrection, for example, restores to a corpse the natural life it once had. Whereas, then, the miraculous fact is naturally knowable, the life of grace, on the contrary, and the mysteries of the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Redemption, are in their very essence supernatural, inaccessible to all natural knowledge, human or angelic. .

Here Thomists part company with Scotus, the Nominalists, and Molina, who maintain that the assent of faith to revelation is natural in substance and only supernatural by superadded modality. This “supernatural veneer” is contrary to the principle: Acts and habits are specifically proportioned to their formal object, that is, a supernatural object can be attained as supernatural only by an act which is itself essentially supernatural. Further, if you hold that the act of faith is substantially natural, you must likewise say the same of the acts of hope and charity, and you must further say that charity here below is not identified with charity above, because charity is, like the beatific vision, essentially supernatural.

What Thomists do concede is this: After revelation has been preached, fallen man can, without grace, by God’s natural concurrence, know and admit the supernatural truths materially, by an imperfect consent given for a human motive. Thus heretics, by their own judgment, retain dogmas that please them, and reject dogmas that displease them. Such faith is not infused; it is a human faith, similar to the acquired faith of the demons, who, by reason of confirmatory miracles, admit supernatural mysteries. But while such faith, founded on the evidence of miraculous signs, is possible without grace, true faith, founded formally on the veracity of God, the author of supernatural life, is impossible without grace. But this necessary grace can be lacking in an adult only by his own fault, because if he does not resist the voice of conscience and prevenient grace, he will be led to the grace of faith. .

A man in mortal sin, deprived of grace and charity, can still perform acts, morally good in the natural order, and, if he preserves infused faith and hope, can, with actual grace, elicit supernatural acts in those virtues.

Fallen man, without the grace of faith, can perform natural acts that are morally good, honor his parents, for example, pay his debts, and so on. The acts of infidels are not all sins. They retain, however enfeebled, the natural inclination to moral good. The natural concurrence of God in these acts, ethically good, is gratuitous only in this sense that it is given in varying degree. .

Fallen man, without medicinal grace, cannot love God more than himself, more than all else, not even as the author of nature, much less as the author of grace. .

Whereas Scotus, Biel, and Molina grant that man cannot, without grace, though he may have the firm purpose, carry out that purpose by fulfilling

the whole natural law, Thomists hold that medicinal grace is necessary even for that firm purpose which precedes execution. To love God naturally above all things, says St. Thomas, fallen man needs the aid of medicinal grace. The reason is that fallen man, until healed by grace, prefers his own good to that of God.

The injured faculties of fallen man cannot, it is clear, perform the most elevated of those acts which they would have performed when still sound. The feebleness of will in fallen man, while it consists directly in aversion from his supernatural end, includes at least indirectly aversion from his natural end. Every sin against the supernatural end is indirectly against the natural law, which binds us to obey all God's commands, be they in the natural order or in a higher order.

Hence Thomists in general, against Molina and his school, hold that man, in his fallen state, is less able to keep the natural law than he would have been in the state of pure nature. In a purely natural state his will would not, initiatively, be turned away even indirectly from his natural end, but would be capable of choosing this end, or of turning away from it. Hence we understand that fallen man, without medicinal grace, cannot observe the whole natural law. Could he do so, he could even keep that firm purpose we spoke of above.

Hence, further, fallen man, in the state of mortal sin, cannot, without special grace, avoid all grievous sin against the natural law or conquer all temptations thereto. But the just man can, under the ordinary concurrence of grace and without special privilege, avoid each venial sin, because sin, if it were inevitable, would no longer be sin. Yet in the long run he cannot escape all venial sin, since reason cannot be always vigilant enough to suppress even the first movements of disorder.

Can fallen man, without the concurrence of actual grace, prepare himself for sanctifying grace? To this question the Semi-Pelagians answered Yes, saying the beginning of salvation comes from our nature and that grace comes with this initial natural movement of good will. They were condemned by the Second Council of Orange, which affirmed the necessity of actual, prevenient grace in our preparation for conversion. Insisting on this point, St. Thomas recalls the words of our Savior, "No one can come to Me unless My Father draws him," and the words of Jeremias, "Convert us, O Lord, and we will be converted." The reason lies in the principle of finality. Disposition to grace must be supernatural, as is grace itself. Hence

this disposition must come from the Author of grace. Natural acts have no proportion to the supernatural gift of grace, which lies in an order immeasurably higher.

But is there not a common axiom: To him who does what lies in his power God does not refuse grace? Thomists explain thus: To him who, under the concurrence of actual grace, does what in him lies, God does not refuse sanctifying grace. But that God confers this actual grace because man of himself makes a good use of his natural will—this interpretation cannot be admitted. Why God draws this man and not that man, says St. Augustine, judge not unless you would misjudge. The divine judgment, which gives a special mercy to one and not to another, is inscrutable. But it would not be inscrutable if grace were given by reason of a good natural disposition, since we could answer: God gave grace to this man and not to this other, because the first did, and the second did not, prepare himself thereto by his natural powers. But such explanation would destroy the mystery, would lose from sight the immeasurable distance between the two orders, one of nature, the other of grace.

Molinists give the axiom a different interpretation. They say that God, by reason of Christ's merits, gives to the man who does what he naturally can an actual grace, and then if the man makes good use of this actual grace, God gives also sanctifying grace. This divergence rests on scientia media, by which God depends on the foreseen choice of the creature. Thomists, denying scientia media, since it posits in God dependent passivity, deny also the above interpretation. Man cannot, then, without the concurrence of grace, even begin to escape from the state of sin. .

Even the justified man, however high be his degree of habitual grace, has need of actual grace for each and every meritorious act. Sanctifying grace, and the infused virtues arising therefrom, are indeed supernatural faculties, supernatural potencies, but still depend for their acts on the divine motion, just as necessarily as do faculties in the natural order.

Does man need a special grace of perseverance until death? The Semi-Pelagians said No. They were opposed by St. Augustine in a special work, and were condemned by the Second Council of Orange (can. 10). The Church teaches this special grace when she prays: Thy kingdom come. This grace of final perseverance is the union of the state of grace with the moment of death, whether that state has endured for years or has been attained only a moment before death. This union of grace and death is

manifestly a special effect of providence, and even of predestination, since it is given only to the predestinate.

In what does it consist? For the infant who dies after baptism it is the state of grace until death, death being permitted by providence at a determined moment before the infant can lose grace. In the case of adults, the grace of perseverance includes, not merely sufficient grace which gives the power to persevere, but also efficacious grace by which the predestinated adult does in fact persevere, even amid great temptations, by a last meritorious act. According to Thomists this grace is of itself efficacious, whereas, according to Molinists, it becomes efficacious by the human consent foreseen by scientia media.

Such is the Thomistic doctrine: Grace is necessary for knowing supernatural truth, for doing good, for avoiding sin, for disposing man unto justification, for performing each meritorious act, for persevering unto the end.

ARTICLE TWO: THE ESSENCE OF GRACE

Grace here means above all sanctifying grace which makes us children and heirs of God. Actual grace is either the disposition for sanctifying grace, or the divine concurrence which makes us act supernaturally.

Sanctifying grace, which makes us pleasing to God, is not a mere extrinsic denomination, as when we say that we are seen or loved by human persons, or that a poor infant is adopted by a rich man. Grace is something real and intrinsic in our soul: “He hath given us most great and precious promises that by them you may be made partakers of the divine nature.” Whereas human love, as that of the rich man adopting a child, is given to what already exists, divine love creates something to be loved. Divine love is not sterile, and not merely affective, but effective and efficacious, creating, not presupposing, the good it loves. God cannot love a man without producing in that man a good, be it in the natural order, as when he gives him existence, life, and intelligence, or in the supernatural order, as when He makes man His adopted child, His friend, to prepare him for a blessedness wholly supernatural, wherein He gives Himself to man eternally. God’s love, says St. Thomas, creates goodness in creatures. Uncreated love does not presuppose, but creates, our lovableness in His eyes.

Thus St. Thomas excludes in advance the error of Luther, who says that man is justified solely by the extrinsic imputation to him of Christ's merits, without grace and charity being poured into his heart. This view is manifestly contrary to Scripture, which teaches that grace and charity were given to us by the Holy Ghost. .

Sanctifying grace, to proceed, is a permanent quality of the soul. It is the living water, springing up into eternal life. It is "the seed of God," which tradition calls "the seed of glory." St. Thomas formulates a precise doctrine, which found ever wider acceptance and final approval in the Council of Trent. We cannot hold, he says, that God provides less generously in the supernatural order than He does in the natural order. Since in the natural order He gives nature as radical, principle and the faculties as proximate principles of our natural operations, we may expect that He will give us grace as radical principle of our supernatural operations. Thus sanctifying graces becomes "a second nature," which enables us to connaturally know and love God in a higher order than that of our natural faculties.

This participation in the divine nature is indeed formal and physical, but only analogical. Human words, even inspired words, far from being exaggerations, can express supernatural truths only by understatement. As the divine nature is the principle by which God knows and loves Himself, without medium or interruption, so sanctifying grace is the radical principle which disposes us to see God without medium, to love Him eternally without interruption, to do all things for His sake. That is the meaning of "participation in the divine nature." This participation is not a mere moral quality, a mere imitation of God's goodness. It is a real and physical participation, spiritual and supernatural, because it is the root principle of acts which are themselves really, physically, essentially supernatural. Human adoption gives to the child the moral right to an inheritance. Divine adoption creates in the soul a real and physical claim to divine inheritance.

Sanctifying grace, then, is a participation, not, like actual grace, virtual and transient, but formal and permanent. Still this participation is, not univocal, but analogical, because the divine nature is independent and infinite, whereas grace is essentially finite and dependent on God. Further, grace is an accident, not a substance, and the utmost knowledge it can give us of God is only intuitive, never absolutely comprehensive. Nevertheless this participation, though it is analogical, is still a participation in the deity as deity, since it is the source of the light of glory which enables us to see

God as He is in Himself, the deity as deity. Now the deity as deity, though it pre-contains formally all perfections, being, life, intelligence, which it can communicate to creatures, still transcends infinitely all these perfections. The stone, by participating in being, has an analogical resemblance to God as being. The plant, participating in life, has an analogical resemblance to God as living. Our soul, participating in intelligence, has an analogical resemblance to God as intelligent. But sanctifying grace alone is a participation in the deity as deity, a participation which is naturally impossible and hence naturally unknowable. Only the obscure light of infused faith here below, and only the light of glory there above, can let us see the deity as deity, God as He is in Himself.

We are here in a world of truth far beyond the reach of reason. Hence, first, the adversaries of the faith can never prove that sanctifying grace is impossible. But, secondly, neither can its possibility be rigorously demonstrated by reason. What, then, of the arguments we have just been proposing? They are arguments of appropriateness, profound indeed and inexhaustible, but since they move in an order beyond reason and philosophy, they can never be apodictically demonstrative. Both the intrinsic possibility of grace and its existence are affirmed with certitude, not by reason, but by faith alone. .

Grace, we must insist, is by its very nature absolutely supernatural. Angelic nature, since it far transcends human nature, is relatively supernatural, not essentially. Miracles are indeed absolutely supernatural, but only in the mode of their production, not in the effect they produce. The life restored miraculously to a corpse is in itself a natural life, not a supernatural life. But grace is absolutely supernatural, not in the mode of production merely, but in its very essence. Hence the remark of St. Thomas: The grace even of one man is a greater good then the whole universe of nature. Only those who enjoy the beatific vision can fully know the value of grace, the source and root of their glory. Hence God loves one soul in grace more than He loves all creatures with merely natural life, as, to illustrate, a father loves his children more than he loves his houses, and fields, his herds, flocks and droves. God, says St. Paul, guides the universe in favor of the elect.

Scotus greatly reduces this transcendent distance between the order of grace and the order of nature. His distinction between them is not essential but contingent, since God, he says, could have given us the light of glory as

a characteristic property of our nature. This grace and glory would indeed be supernatural in fact, but not by intrinsic essence. This intrinsic supernaturality of grace is denied also by the Nominalists who admit in grace only a moral right to eternal life, a right which may be compared to paper money, which, though it is only paper, gives us a right to this or that sum of silver or gold. This Nominalistic thesis prepared the way for that of Luther, which makes grace a mere extrinsic imputation to us of Christ's merits. How profoundly, by contrast with human adoption, does St. Thomas set in relief the creative adoption by God, which gives to the soul an intrinsic root of eternal.

How does sanctifying grace differ from charity? Charity is an infused virtue, an operative potency, residing in the will. But just as acquired virtue presupposes human nature, so infused virtue presupposes a nature raised to supernatural life, and this supernatural life is given to the soul by sanctifying grace. Activity presupposes being, in every order, and God cannot provide in the supernatural order less generously then He provides in the natural order. Hence grace is received into the essence of the soul, whereas charity is received into the soul faculty which we call the will. Grace, when consummated, is called glory, the root principle whence the light of glory arises in the intellect, and inalienable charity in the will.

ARTICLE THREE: DIVISION OF GRACE

Sanctifying grace must be distinguished from charismatic graces, like prophecy and the grace of miracles, which are signs of divine intervention. These charismatic graces, far from being a new life uniting us to God, can be received even by men who are in the state of mortal sin. Hence infused contemplation, since it proceeds from faith illumined by the gifts, does not belong to the order of charismatic grace, but to the order of sanctifying grace, of which such contemplation is the connatural development, as normal prelude to the life of heaven.

Sanctifying grace, being permanent, must be distinguished also from actual grace, which is transient, just as being, which is permanent, is the presupposition of activity, which is transient.

Actual grace itself is either operative or cooperative. Under cooperative grace, the will, under the influence of a previous act, posits a new act, as when, to illustrate, noticing that our daily hour has come, we give ourselves

to prayer. But under operative grace, the will is not moved by a previous act, but by a special inspiration, as when, for example, absorbed in our work, we receive and follow an unforeseen inspiration to pray. Such acts are indeed free, but are not the fruit of discursive deliberation. But they are nevertheless infused acts, arising, not from cooperating grace, but from operative grace.

Actual grace, further, is either sufficient or efficacious. How is the one distinguished from the other? The following article gives the classic Thomistic answer to this much discussed question.

ARTICLE FOUR: GRACE, SUFFICIENT AND EFFICACIOUS

Efficacious grace, in contrast with sufficient grace which can remain sterile, is infallibly followed by a meritorious act. This efficacious grace, so Thomists maintain, is intrinsically efficacious because God wills it; not merely extrinsically efficacious, that is, by the consent of our will.

We shall consider first the texts of St. Thomas which express this doctrine, then the Scriptural texts on which it reposes. The main distinction here is that between God's antecedent will and God's consequent will, a distinction fully in harmony with that between potency and act.

Commenting on St. Paul, St. Thomas writes: "Christ is the propitiation for our sins, for some efficaciously, for all sufficiently, because the price, which is His blood, is sufficient for universal salvation, but, by reason of impediment, is efficacious only in the elect." God removes this impediment, but not always. There lies the mystery. God, he says again, withholds from no one his due. Again: the New Law gives of itself sufficient aid to shun sin. Then, commenting on the Ephesians, he becomes more precise: God's aid is twofold. One is the faculty of doing, the other is the act itself. God gives the faculty by infusing power and grace to make man able and apt for the act. God gives further the act by inner movement to good, working in us both to will and to do. .

All men receive concurrence of grace which makes them able to fulfill the divine precepts, because God never commands the impossible. As regards efficacious grace, by which a man actually observes God's commands, if it is given to one, it is given by mercy, if it is refused to another, it is refused by justice. If man resists the grace which makes him able to do good, he merits deprival of that grace which gives him the actual

doing of good. By His own judgment, says St. Thomas, God does not give the light of grace to those in whom he finds an obstacle.

Here follow the chief Scripture texts on which this doctrine rests:

a) “I called, and you refused.” .

b) “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children as the hen doth gather her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldst not.” .

c) “You always resist the Holy Ghost.” .

Such texts most certainly speak of graces which remain sterile by man’s resistance. Yet they are surely sufficient, whatever Jansenists say, because God could not blame those for whom fulfillment of divine commands is impossible. God wills that all men be saved, says St. Paul, because Jesus gave Himself as ransom for all. Hence the Council of Trent, quoting St. Augustine, says: “God does not command the impossible, but gives His command as admonition to do what you can and to pray when you cannot.” The grace which the sinner resists, which he makes sterile, was really sufficient, in this sense, that fulfillment was really in his power.

Further, Scripture often speaks of efficacious grace. Here are the chief texts:

a) “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you. I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My spirit in the midst of you, and I will cause you to walk in My commandments and to keep My judgments.” .

b) “As the potter’s clay is in his hand... so man is in the hand of Him that made him.” .

c) “My sheep... shall not perish forever. And no man shall pluck them out of My hand.” .

d) “It is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish.” .

“Whenever we do good,” says the Second Council of Orange, “God in us and with us works our work.” .

These words surely indicate a grace that is of itself efficacious, efficacious intrinsically, because God wills it to be efficacious, not efficacious merely because He has foreseen that we will consent without resistance.

Further, as we have said, the distinction between grace sufficient and grace intrinsically efficacious is an immediate consequence of the distinction between God’s antecedent will and His consequent will.

Antecedent will deals with an object absolutely, abstracting from concrete circumstances. God thus wills the salvation of all men, as, to illustrate, a merchant at sea wills to preserve all his goods. But consequent will deals with a good to be realized here and now. Thus the merchant, willing antecedently and conditionally to save his goods, wills, in fact, during a tempest, to throw his goods into the sea. Thus God, proportionally, analogically, though he antecedently and conditionally wills salvation for all men, permits nevertheless, to manifest His justice, the final impenitence of a sinner, Judas say; while with consequent and efficacious will He gives final perseverance here and now to other men, to manifest His mercy.

“In heaven and on earth, whatever God willed He has done.” This verse of the psalm surely means that God’s consequent will is always fulfilled. In this sense it was understood by the Council of Tuzey: “Nothing happens in heaven or on earth, unless God either propitiously does it or justly permits it.” Hence it follows clearly, first, that no good comes to pass here and now, in this man rather than in that other, unless God has from all eternity efficaciously willed it; secondly, that no evil comes to pass, here and now, in this man rather than in that other, unless God has permitted it. The sinner, at the very instant when he sins, can avoid the sin, and God from all eternity has by sufficient grace made him genuinely able to avoid it. But God has not willed efficaciously the actual avoidance here and now, say of the sin of Judas. Did God will this efficaciously, the sinner would have had not merely the great benefit of being able to shun sin, but the far greater benefit of its actual avoidance.

On these sure principles, generally received, rests the Thomistic teaching on the difference between sufficient grace, which makes man able to do good, and grace self-efficacious, which, far from forcing our freedom, actualizes that freedom, leading us, strongly and sweetly, to give freely our salutary consent. .

“What hast thou that thou hast not received? “ This word of St. Paul carries our entire doctrine. That which is best in the hearts of the just, their free choice of salutary acts, was received from God. This free choice, without which there is no merit, is clearly a good beyond that of precept, beyond pious thought, and that velleity which inclines to consent, because these can be found even in him who does not give good consent. Manifestly, he who fulfills the precept in fact has more, has a greater good,

then he who, though genuinely able to do so, does not in fact fulfill it. And he who has this greater good has received it from the source of all good.

"Since God's love," says St. Thomas, "is the cause of all created good, no created thing would be better than another, did it not receive from God that good which makes it better." Besides, if the free and meritorious choice did not come from God, God could not foreknow it by His own causality. His foreknowledge of the future, of His free act, would be dependent and passive.

Here lies the reason why Thomists have never been able to admit the doctrine called scientia media, thus expressed in two propositions by Molina: .

a) "With equal aid of grace it can come to pass that one is converted and the other not."

b) "Even with a smaller aid of grace one can arise while another with greater aid of grace does not rise."

Against this view Thomists, Augustinians, and Scotists are in accord. Their formula is thus expressed by Bossuet: "We must admit two kinds of grace, one of which leaves our will without excuse before God, while the other allows our will no self-glorification."

For better understanding of this doctrine, we add five remarks.

1. Sufficient grace acts on a very wide field. Exteriorly, it includes preaching and miracles. Interiorly, it includes the infused virtues, the seven gifts, and all good thoughts, and invitations which precede meritorious consent. But all these, while in varying degree they perfect the power, still differ notably and intrinsically from self-efficacious grace. The power to act may be ever so proximate and ready to act, power to act is never the act itself. But power to act is still a reality, a great good. To say that sufficient grace which gives this reality is insufficient in its own order is equivalent to saying that a sleeping man is blind, because, forsooth, since he is not now exercising the act of vision, he cannot even have the power of vision. .

2. Sufficient grace, sufficient as regards a perfect act like contrition, may be efficacious as regards, say, attrition. Sufficient grace is not sterile, it produces a good thought, a good movement of will, some disposition to consent. It is called sufficient, says Alvarez, as counter-distinguished from "simply efficacious." But each sufficient grace is in a sense efficacious, i. e.: in its own order.

But each meritorious act, however small, requires a grace simply efficacious. It is good here and now realized, hence presupposes an eternal decree of God's consequent will. Nothing comes to pass hic et nunc, unless God has efficaciously willed it (if it is good) or permitted it (if it is evil). We cannot, says Bossuet, refuse to God the power of actualizing our free and salutary choice, without which no merit can exist.

3. Resistance to sufficient grace is an evil, arising from us, from our defectibility and our actual deficience, whereas our non-resistance is, on the contrary, a good, arising from ourselves as second causes, but from God as first cause.

Billuart sums up the matter: "Efficacious grace is required for consent to sufficient grace. But for resistance to sufficient grace the man's own defective will is sufficient cause. And since that resistance precedes the privation of efficacious grace, it is true to say that man is deprived of efficacious grace because he resists sufficient grace, whereas it is not true to say that he sins because he is deprived of efficacious grace." .

4. Efficacious grace is offered to us in sufficient grace, as fruit is offered in the blossom, as act is offered in the power. But by resistance to sufficient grace we merit deprival of efficacious grace. Resistance falls on sufficient grace as hail falls on a tree in blossom, destroying its promise of fruit. .

5. Mystery remains mystery. How can God have both a universal will of salvation and a divine predilection for the elect? How can God be simultaneously infinitely just, infinitely merciful, and supremely free? We must leave the mystery where it belongs: in the transcendent pre-eminence of the deity, in the inner life of God, to be unveiled to us only in the beatific vision. There we shall see what now we believe: That some are saved is the Savior's gift, that some are lost is their own fault. But even here below simple everyday Christian speech grasps the reality of the mystery. What a special act of God's mercy, it says, when of two sinners equal in evil disposition one alone is converted. All that is good comes from God, evil alone cannot come from Him.

Such are the principles which rule Thomistic doctrine on the efficaciousness of grace, a doctrine which claims as sponsors St. Augustine and St. Paul.

ARTICLE FIVE: THE PRINCIPAL CAUSE OF GRACE

The principal cause of grace is God Himself, since grace is a participation in the divine nature. As only fire ignites, so the Deity alone can deify. .

Grace, since it is not a subsistent reality, is not, properly speaking, created, nor concreated. It presupposes a subject in which it begins and continues, the soul, namely, of which it is an accident. But since it is an accident essentially supernatural, not natural and acquired, it is drawn forth from the obediential potency of the soul. This obediential potency of the soul is its aptitude to receive all that God can will to give it, and God can give it anything that is not self-contradictory. Thus the soul has obediential potency to receive not only grace and glory, and the hypostatic union, but also an ever higher degree of grace and glory, since obediential potency can never be so completely actualized as not to be still more actualizable. It is formally a passive potency, yet, if it resides in an active faculty, it is materially active, as when the will receives infused charity. Thomists cannot agree with the Scotist and Suaresian view that obediential potency is formally active.

In the ordinary course of providence, the production of grace presupposes, in the adult, some movement of the free will as disposition. “Prepare your hearts unto the Lord,” says Samuel. God moves all things according to their nature. But though a repeated good act engenders an acquired habit, the disposition we treat of here cannot engender grace, which is an infused habit. Yet to the man who, under actual grace, does what is in his power to prepare for justification, habitual grace is indeed given infallibly, not because this preparation proceeds from our free will, but because it comes from God who moves efficaciously and infallibly. “If God who moves,” says St. Thomas, “intends that man attain grace, he attains it infallibly.” .

In proportion to his disposition man receives a higher or a lower degree of grace. But God, who is the first cause of each degree of disposition, distributes His gifts more or less abundantly, so that the Church, the mystical body, may be adorned with different levels of grace and charity. .

Can man be certain that he is in the state of grace? Only special revelation can give absolute certitude. The only ordinary certitude man can have is a relative certitude, a moral and conjectural certitude. “Neither do I judge my own self,” says St. Paul. “I am not conscious to myself of

anything," he continues. "Yet am I not hereby justified; but He that judgeth me is the Lord."

We can always fear some hidden fault, or some lack of contrition, some confusion of charity with a natural love which resembles charity. Further, the Author of grace transcends our natural knowledge. Hence, without special revelation, we cannot know with genuine certitude whether He dwells in us or not. Yet there are signs whereby we may conjecture our state of grace: to have no conscience of mortal sin, to have no esteem for terrestrial things, to find our joy in the Lord.

ARTICLE SIX: JUSTIFICATION

1. By justification sins are truly remitted, deleted, taken away, not merely externally covered. Were it otherwise, man would be simultaneously just and unjust, God's love for sinners would be the same as His love for His friends and children, and sinners remaining in a state of sin would be worthy to receive eternal life, and Jesus Christ would not have taken away the sins of the world. .

For this remissive justification, infusion of sanctifying grace is absolutely necessary. Against Scotists and Nominalists, Thomists insist on this doctrine, because justification is an effect of God's love, and God's love, since it is not merely affective, but effective, produces something real in the soul, the grace, namely, which justifies and sanctifies. God's act of adoption is not a mere human adoption.

Inversely, the state of sin implies that the sinner's will is habitually, if not actually, turned away from his last end. This habitual estrangement can be changed only by a voluntary turning of his will to God, which requires infusion of grace by God. Hence, says the Council of Trent, sanctifying grace is the formal cause of justification.

Thomists, consequently, against Scotists and Suarez, maintain that God, even by His absolute power, cannot bring it to pass that mortal sin, habitual or actual, can coexist, in one and the same subject, with sanctifying grace. Grace is essentially justice, rectitude, sanctity, whereas sin is essentially iniquity, defilement, disorder. Hence the two are absolutely incompatible. One and the same man, at one and the same moment, cannot be to God both pleasing and displeasing, spiritually both dead and alive.

2. What are the acts prerequired in the justification of an adult? Six acts are enumerated by the Council of Trent: faith, fear, hope, love, contrition, firm proposal. St. Thomas insists chiefly on faith and contrition, but notes also filial fear, humility, hope, and love of God. Firm proposal is included in contrition.

In order these acts begin with faith, both in God's justice and His mercy. From this faith arise fear of justice and hope of pardon. Hope leads to love of God, the source of both justice and all benevolent mercy. Love of God leads to hatred of sin, as harmful to the sinner and offensive to God. This hatred of sin is contrition, perfect contrition if sin is hated chiefly as offensive to God, imperfect contrition if sin is hated chiefly as harmful to the sinner. And genuine contrition, perfect or imperfect, includes the firm proposal to begin a new life.

Must all these acts be explicitly present? Two of them must certainly be so present: faith, which is in the intellect, and love, which is in the will. These two acts cannot be contained virtually in other acts. Contrition, too, must be ordinarily present, though it can be contained virtually in the act of love if the man is not at the time thinking of his sins. Hope can likewise be virtually contained in charity.

3. These acts of contrition and love, which are thus the ultimate disposition for sanctifying grace, proceed from what effective principle? Here Thomists divide. John of St. Thomas and Contenson hold that these acts proceed from actual grace, whereas many others maintain that they arise from sanctifying grace at the very moment of its infusion, since the divine motion which infuses grace infuses simultaneously the virtues from which the acts in question proceed.

St. Thomas favors this second interpretation. The subject's disposition, he says, precedes the form, not in time but in nature, and in the order of material causality. But in the order of formal and efficient causality, this disposition does not precede, but follows, the action of the agent which disposes the subject. Thus the act of the free will, though it precedes materially the infusion of grace, follows that infusion, formally and effectively.

In illustration, the saint offers the sun and the air in regard to dispelling darkness. By priority of material causality the air loses darkness before it is illuminated. But by priority of the efficient causality the sun illuminates the air before dispelling darkness. Thus God, at one and the same moment, but by priority of nature, infuses grace before dispelling sin, whereas man, by another priority, ceases to be sinner before receiving grace.

The saint, we see, is faithful to his general principle. In its own order, each of the four causes is first. The ultimate disposition precedes, materially, the form, but follows it, formally, as characteristic of that form. In the human embryo, the ultimate disposition both precedes and follows the infusion of the soul. The air does not enter if the window is not opened, and the window would not be opened if the air were not to enter. We have here no contradiction, no vicious circle, because each priority has its own order, its own circle of causality.

Opposed to this Thomistic teaching is the Nominalistic position which prepared the Lutheran doctrine of justification without infusion of grace, by merely external attribution of the merits of Christ. Thomists have always affirmed, even before the Council of Trent, the doctrine defined by that Council, that the formal cause of justification is sanctifying grace.

The depth and reach of this doctrine appears in the unvaried Thomistic thesis of the absolute incompatibility, in one and the same man, of mortal sin and sanctifying grace. A consequence of this thesis runs thus: In the actual plan of providence, under which a state of pure nature has never existed, each and every man is either in the state of sin, or then in the state of grace. “He who is not with Me is against Me,” i. e.: he who does not love God as his last end is turned away from God. But the other word of our Lord is also true: “He who is not against you is for you,” i. e.: he who, by actual grace, is disposing himself for conversion will, if he continues, reach that ultimate disposition which is realized at the moment when sanctifying grace is infused.

ARTICLE SEVEN: THE MERITS OF THE JUST

Merit follows as a consequence of sanctifying grace, as activity follows being.

1. Definition and Division

Taken concretely, merit is a good work which confers right to a reward. Hence, in the abstract, merit is the right to a reward, opposed to demerit, i. e.: to guilt which deserves punishment. .

On this definition of merit are founded its division. The idea of merit, we must note, is not univocal, but analogical, because it is found, in meanings proportionally similar and subordinated, first, in the merits of Christ, second, in the merits of the just, third, in the sinner's dispositive preparations for sanctifying grace. We have already seen many exemplifications of analogy: sin, mortal and venial, knowledge, sensitive and intellectual, love, sensible and spiritual. Many errors arise from treating as univocal an idea which is really analogical.

The merits of Christ, then, are founded on absolute justice, because Christ's person is divine. The merits of the just are also founded on justice, not absolute, but dependent on Christ's merits. To this merit we give the name "condignness," which expresses a value, not equal to the reward, but proportioned to it. Condign merit rests on God's ordination and promise, without which it could not give a right in the proper sense of the word.

But the just have also a second kind of merit, founded, not on justice, but on friendship, which presupposes grace and charity. To this kind of merit we give the name "merit of proper congruity." The word "proper" is added to distinguish this merit, based on friendship, from the sinner's dispositive merits, which are based, not on friendship with God, but on God's liberality to His enemies. These merits too are called "merits of congruity," but in a wider sense of the word. .

Merit, then, has four different levels. On the three higher levels, which presuppose sanctifying grace, we have merit by proper proportion, whereas on the lowest level we have improper proportion, almost metaphorical proportion.

Here Thomists are separated by a wide distance from Scotus. Against him they maintain, first, that the merits of Christ have a value intrinsically infinite, not merely extrinsically infinite by divine acceptation. This value is intrinsically equal by absolute justice to the eternal life of all the elect, intrinsically sufficient for universal salvation. Secondly, they hold, against Scotus and the Nominalists, that the condign merits of the just are properly and intrinsically meritorious of eternal life, not merely extrinsically by God's ordination and acceptation. Thirdly, they hold that God cannot accept

merely naturally good works as meritorious of eternal life. The order of grace, they repeat, is supernatural, by its very essence, not merely by the mode of its production, as is life miraculously restored to a dead man. The act of charity is, therefore, meritorious, properly, intrinsically, condignly, of eternal life, though such merit presupposes the divine ordination of grace to glory, and the divine promise of salvation to those who merit that salvation. .

The merit of “proper congruity” is found in acts of charity, elicited or commanded, in favor of our neighbor. Thus the just man merits the conversion of a sinner. Thus Monica merited the conversion of Augustine. Thus Mary, universal Mediatrix, merited, de congruo proprie, all graces merited de condigno by Christ. .

The merit of “improper congruity,” arising not from grace but from some disposition thereto, a prayer, say, while it is not merit in the proper sense, can still be called merit in so far as God’s mercy directs it to the sinner’s conversion. .

2. Principle and Qualities of Merit

A meritorious act, in the proper sense, whether condign or congruous, has six qualities. It must be free and good, addressed to the rewarder, and be done in the present life, proceed from charity, and be under God’s promise of reward.

Why must it come under God’s promise? Because our good works are already due to God, as Creator, Ruler, and Last End. For lack of this quality the good works done by those in purgatory and heaven are not meritorious. Scotus and the Nominalists, exaggerating this requirement of God’s promise, say that merit is not intrinsically meritorious, but only extrinsically, i. e.: because God has promised. The precise doctrine of St. Thomas is that the act is intrinsically meritorious, but must still be supported by divine promise which makes its reward a duty which God owes to Himself. “Rejoice and be glad,” says our Savior, “because your reward is great in heaven.” God’s creative ordinance gives our good acts a title of justice, intrinsically proportioned to eternal life. But if the man falls into sin and dies in that state, he loses all his merits. Hence the necessity of the grace of final perseverance, either to preserve or to recover merit.

It is above all by charity that sanctifying grace is the principle of merit, since it is by charity, either actual or virtual, that we tend to our last end. Merit is therefore greater as charity is higher and its influence greater. Thus

an act objectively easy, if it comes from great charity, is more meritorious than a difficult act arising from a lower degree of charity. Mary, the mother of God, merited more by easier acts than the martyrs by their torments.

3. What can we merit? We can merit whatever our acts have been ordained by God to merit. This truth includes implicitly a second truth: We cannot merit the principle of grace.

The just man, then, so faith teaches, can condignly merit growth of grace and charity, and a corresponding degree of glory. Further, he can merit, not indeed condignly, but congruously and properly, the graces of conversion and spiritual advancement for his neighbor. Temporal favors, as far as they are conducive to salvation, also fall under merit.

But the first grace, actual or habitual, being the presupposed principle of merit, cannot itself be merited, either condignly or congruously. This truth of faith rests on the disproportion between naturally good works and the supernatural order. Neither can man merit in advance a grace of contrition to be given after a fall into mortal sin. This position is not admitted by all theologians. St. Thomas defends it, by pointing out that, since all merits are lost by mortal sin, the sinner must begin a new road of merit, on which contrition is the first step, the presupposition of merit, which cannot itself be merited, either condignly or congruously. Further, if men could merit this act of contrition in advance, they would obtain it infallibly, and thus persevere unto death. Thus all men now in grace would belong to the predestinate. Nevertheless the man in sin can, by the merit of improper congruity, by prayer to the divine mercy, obtain the grace of contrition.

Lastly, the just man cannot merit the grace of perseverance, i. e.: the grace of a good death. Since the Council of Trent, this point of doctrine is admitted by all as theologically certain, at least if merit is understood as condign merit. The Council quotes this word of Augustine: “This gift can come from one source only, from Him who is able first to so establish man that man will stand perseveringly, and, second, to raise up the man who has fallen.” .

St. Thomas supports this commonly received truth by the axiom: The principle of merit cannot be itself merited. Now the gift of perseverance is nothing but the state of grace itself, the principle of all merit, preserved by God up to the moment of death. Hence it cannot be merited, certainly not by condign merit, and only certainly not by merit of proper congruity, which also has its source and principle in grace and charity. God has not

promised that each man who has performed meritorious acts for a period of time more or less long has thereby a right to final perseverance. A man may now be just without being among the elect. Hence man cannot merit either condignly or congruously that efficacious concurrence of grace which alone can preserve him from mortal sin. If he could merit it, he would infallibly obtain it; he could then likewise merit a second and a third efficacious concurrence, and thus infallibly obtain the grace of perseverance.

Still we can obtain this grace of final perseverance. How? By humble, confident, persevering prayer. In this sense, by the merit of improper congruity, we may say that man merits perseverance. This kind of merit addresses itself, not to divine justice, but to divine mercy. In this sense we understand the promise of the Sacred Heart to Margaret Mary, that He will give the grace of a good death to those who receive Holy Communion on nine successive first Fridays.

Here emerges an objection: If we can merit eternal life, which is something higher than final perseverance, why can we not merit perseverance itself? The answer runs thus: Eternal life, as the goal of perseverance, is higher than perseverance. But God, while He has ordained that eternal life shall be merited, has not ordained that the state of grace, the presupposed source of merit, can itself be merited, though He has ordained that the grace of perseverance, though unmerited, can be obtained by prayer.

But how, the questioner continues, can man merit eternal life if he cannot merit perseverance, which is a prerequired condition of obtaining eternal life? You cannot merit eternal life, so runs the answer, unless you preserve your merits to the end, and that preservation, being the principle of your merits to eternal life, cannot itself be merited. You merit eternal life, and, if you die in grace, the actual attainment of that eternal life. . Such are the operative principles in the treatise on grace. St. Thomas, here again, is a summit, rising above two radically opposed heresies, above Pelagianism and Semi-Pelagianism on the one hand, and, on the other, above Predestinarianism. Against Pelagianism, which denies elevation to grace, the saint insists on the immeasurable distance between the two orders, one of nature, one of grace, the latter being a formal participation in the deity as deity. “Without Me,” says our Lord, “you can do nothing.” Hence the absolute necessity of grace in the order of grace. “What hast thou that thou hast not received? “ Hence the absolute gratuity of grace. If one man is

better than another, let him thank God who has loved him more. God alone, the Author of grace, can move man to a supernatural end, and only God's self-efficacious grace can, by actualizing our freedom, carry us on effectively to acts that are meritorious and salutary.

Against Predestinarianism, to reappear later in Protestantism and Jansenism, the saint insists that God cannot command the impossible, and that God's sufficient grace makes universal salvation genuinely possible. But, if man resists, he merits deprivation of efficacious grace. Lastly, man can merit everything to which the meritorious act is by God's ordination proportioned, but he cannot merit the very principle of merit.

Between these opposed heresies lies the mystery, descending from the transcendental deity which binds in one God's infinite mercy, His infinite justice, and His sovereign freedom.

Chapter 50

The Theological Virtues

ARTICLE ONE: FAITH

The theological virtues and their acts, like faculties, virtues, and acts in general, are specifically proportioned to their formal object. The profound import of this principle went unrecognized by Scotus and by the Nominalists and their successors, as is clear from the controversies which, from the fourteenth century onwards, have never ceased.

Faith, says St. Thomas, has as its material object all truths revealed by God, but chiefly the supernatural mysteries not accessible to any natural intelligence human or angelic. But the formal object of faith, its formal motive of adherence, is God's veracity, which presupposes God's infallibility. The veracity here in question is that of God as author, not merely of nature, but of grace and glory, since the revealed mysteries, the Trinity, for example, and the redemptive Incarnation, are essentially supernatural. Let us quote the saint's own words:

"Faith, considered in its formal object, is nothing else than God, the first truth. For faith assents to no truth except in so far as that truth is revealed. Hence the medium by which faith believes is divine truth itself. Again: "The formal object of faith is the first truth, adherence to which is man's reason for assenting to any particular truth." Once more: "In faith we must distinguish the formal element, i. e.: the first truth, far surpassing all the natural knowledge of any creature; and second, the material element, i. e.: the particular truth, to which we adhere only because we adhere to the first truth." Lastly: "The first truth, as not seen but believed, is the object of faith, by which object we assent to truths only as proposed by that first truth." .

Thomists, explaining these words, note that the formal object of any theological virtue must be something uncreated, must be God Himself.

Neither the infallible pronouncements of the Church nor the miracles which confirm those pronouncements are the formal object of faith, though they are indispensable conditions. Faith, therefore, being specifically proportioned to a formal object which is essentially supernatural, must itself be essentially supernatural. Again we listen to Thomas.

"Since the act by which man assents to the truths of faith is an act beyond man's nature, he must have within, from God, the supernatural mover, a principle by which he elicits that act." And again: "The believer holds the articles of faith by his adherence to the first truth, for which act he is made capable by the virtue of faith." .

In other words the believer, by the infused virtue of faith and by actual grace, adheres supernaturally to the formal motive of this theological virtue, in an order which transcends all apologetic arguments, based on evident miracles and other signs of revelation. His act of adherence is not discursive, but simple, since all through it is one and the same act. That act can be expressed in three ways: I believe God who reveals, I believe what has been revealed concerning God, I believe unto God. But by these three expressions, says St. Thomas, we designate, not different acts of faith, but one and the same act in different relations to one and the same object, as, we may add in illustration, the eye, by one and the same act of vision, sees both light and color.

Faith, therefore, has a certitude essentially supernatural, surpassing even the most evident natural certitude, whether that of wisdom, of science, or of first principles. God's authority claims our infallible adherence in an order far higher than apologetic reasoning, which is prerequired for credibility, i. e.: that the mysteries proposed by the Church are guaranteed by signs manifestly divine, and are therefore evidently credible. Even for the willingness to believe, actual grace is prerequired.

This essential supernaturalness of faith is not admitted by Scotus, nor the Nominalists, nor their successors. Scotus says that the distinction of grace from nature is not necessary, but contingent, dependent on the free choice of God, who might have given us the light of glory as a characteristic of our nature, since a natural act and a supernatural act can each have the same formal object. Neither is infused faith necessary by reason of a supernatural object, because the formal object of theological faith is not higher than acquired faith. Lastly, the certitude of infused faith is based on acquired faith in the veracity of the Church, which veracity is itself founded on

miracles or other signs of revelation. Otherwise, so he claims, we would regress to infinity. This same doctrine is upheld by the Nominalists. Thence it passes to Molina, to Ripalda, and with slight modification to de Lugo and to Franzelin. Vacant shows clearly wherein this theory differs from Thomistic teaching.

Thomists reply as follows: The formal motive of infused faith is the veracity of God, the author of grace, and this motive, inaccessible to any natural knowledge whatsoever, must be attained by an infused virtue. If acquired faith, which even demons have, were sufficient, then infused faith would not be absolutely necessary, but would be, as the Pelagians said, a means for believing more easily. Against the Pelagians the Second Council of Orange defined the statement that grace is necessary even for the beginning of faith, for the pious willingness to believe.

Resting on the principle that habits are specifically differentiated by their formal objects, Thomists, since the days of Capreolus, have never ceased to defend the essential supernaturalness of faith, and its superiority to all natural certitude. On this point Suarez is in accord with Thomists, but with one exception. To believe God who reveals, and to believe the truths revealed concerning God, are for him two distinct acts, whereas for Thomists they are but one.

Thomists are one in recognizing that the act of infused faith is founded on the authority of God who reveals, and hence that God is both that by which and that which we believe, as light, to illustrate, is both that by which we see, and that which is seen, when we see colors. But this authority of God can be formal motive only so far as it is infallibly known by infused faith itself. Were this motive known only naturally, it could not found a certitude essentially supernatural.

We may follow this doctrine down a long line of Thomists. Capreolus writes: “With one and the same act I assent, both that God is triune and one, and that God revealed both truths. By one and the same act I believe that God cannot lie, and that what God says of Himself is true.” Cajetan writes: “Divine revelation is both that by which (quo) and that which (quod) I believe. Just as unity is of itself one without further appeal, so divine revelation, by which all else is revealed, is accepted for its own sake and not by a second revelation. One and the same act accepts the truth spoken about God and the truthfulness of God who speaks.” “This acceptance of the first truth as revealing, and not that acquired faith by which I believe

John the Apostle, or Paul the Apostle, or the one Church, is the ultimate court of appeal. The infused habit of faith makes us adhere to God as the reason for believing each and every revealed truth. ‘He that believeth in the Son of God hath the testimony of God in himself.’” This same truth you will find in Sylvester de Ferraris, in John of St. Thomas, in Gonet, in the Salmanticenses, and in Billuart. .

All Thomists, as is clear from these testimonies, rest on the principle so often invoked by St. Thomas: Habits and acts, since they are specifically differentiated by their formal objects, are in the same order as are those objects. This principle is the highest expression of the traditional doctrine on the essential supernaturalness of faith, and of faith’s consequent superiority over all natural certitude. Let us repeat the doctrine in a formal syllogism, whereof both major and minor are admitted by all theologians.

We believe infallibly all that is revealed by God, because of the authority of divine revelation, and according to the infallible pronouncements of the Church. But revelation and the Church affirm, not only that the revealed mysteries are truths, but also that it is God Himself who has revealed those mysteries. Hence we must believe infallibly that it is God Himself who has revealed these mysteries.

Note, as corollary, that the least doubt on the existence of revelation would entail doubt on the truth of the mysteries themselves. Note further that infallible faith in a mystery as revealed presupposes, by the very fact of its existence, that we believe infallibly in the existence of divine revelation, even though we do not explicitly reflect on that fact. .

An objection arises. St. Thomas teaches that one and the same truth cannot be simultaneously both known and believed. But, by the miracles which confirm revelation, we know the fact of revelation. Hence we cannot simultaneously believe them supernaturally. In answer, Thomists point out that revelation is indeed known naturally as miraculous intervention of the God of nature, and hence is supernatural in the mode of its production, like the miracle which confirms it. But revelation, since it is supernatural in its essence, and not merely in the mode of its production, can never be naturally known, but must be accepted by supernatural faith. By one and the same act, to repeat St. Thomas, we believe the God who reveals and the truth which He reveals.

“Faith,” says the Vatican Council, “is a supernatural virtue by which we believe that all that God reveals is true, not because we see its truth by

reason, but because of the authority of God who reveals." By the authority of God, as the phrase is here used, we are to understand, so Thomists maintain, the authority of God, not merely as author of nature and of miracles, which are naturally known, but the authority of God as author of grace, since revelation deals principally with mysteries that are essentially supernatural.

Is this distinction, between God the author of nature and God the author of grace, an artificial distinction? By no means. It runs through all theology, particularly the treatise on grace. Without grace, without infused faith, we cannot adhere to the formal motive of faith, a motive far higher than the evidence of credibility furnished by miracles. The believer holds the articles of faith, says St. Thomas, simply because he believes and clings to the first truth, which act is made possible by the habit of faith. Thus the believer's act, essentially supernatural and infallible, rises immeasurably above acquired faith as found in the demon, whose faith is founded on the evidence of miracles, or in the heretic who holds certain dogmas, not on the authority of God which he has rejected, but on his own judgment and will.

The consequences of this doctrine for the spiritual life are very pronounced. We see them in the teaching of St. John of the Cross on passive purification of the spirit. Faith is purged of all human alloy in proportion to its unmixed adherence to its formal motive, at a height far above the motives of credibility, including all accessory motives, life in a believing community, say, which facilitates the act of faith. .

The gifts which correspond to the virtue of faith are, first, understanding, which enables us to penetrate the revealed mysteries, second, knowledge, which illumines our mind on the deficiency of second causes, on the gravity of mortal sin, on the emptiness of a worldly life, on the inefficacy of human concurrence in attaining a supernatural end. This gift thus also facilitates a life of hope for divine gifts and eternal life.

ARTICLE TWO: HOPE

We dwell here, first on the formal motive of hope, secondly on its certitude.

1. Hope tends to eternal life, i. e.: God possessed eternally. The formal motive of hope is not our own effort, is not a created thing, but is God Himself, in His mercy, omnipotence, and fidelity. All these divine

perfections are summed up in the word: God the Helper. Only the supreme agent can lead to the supreme end. Since an uncreated motive is the characteristic of each theological virtue, hope's uncreated motive is God as source of unfailing succor, transmitted to us by our Savior's humanity and Mary auxiliatrix. .

Thus the infused virtue of hope, preserving us equally from presumption and from despair, is something immeasurably higher than the natural desire, conditional and inefficacious, to see God, or the confidence born from the natural knowledge of God's goodness.

Infused hope necessarily presupposes infused faith, by which we know, first the supernatural end to which God has called us, secondly the supernatural aid in attaining that end which He has promised to those who pray for it.

Is hope inferior to charity? Certainly; but this inferiority, as Thomists hold against the Quietists, does not mean that hope contains a disorder, and that consequently we must sacrifice hope in order to arrive at disinterested love. By infused hope, says Cajetan, I do indeed desire God for myself, yet not for my own sake, but for His sake. By hope we desire God as our supreme Good, not subordinating Him to ourselves, but subordinating ourselves to Him, whereas in the case of a good inferior to ourselves, we wish it not only to ourselves, but as subordinated to ourselves. Here the Quietists did not see clear. The last end of hope is God Himself. To that end we subordinate ourselves. Thus also God the Father, giving us His only Son as Redeemer, subordinated us to that Son. "All things are yours," says St. Paul, "but you are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

But when we say that hope desires God for His own sake, are we not confounding hope with charity? No, because this phrase, "for God's sake," means, when used of hope, that God is the final cause, whereas when used of charity it means the formal cause. Charity loves God, primarily as He is in Himself, infinitely good, secondarily as desirable to ourselves and to our neighbors. But hope, though inferior to charity, still has God as its last end, even when, in the state of mortal sin, it is separated from charity. In the state of grace hope has God efficaciously loved for His own sake as final motive. But when this love is inefficacious by disordered self-love, it can still be good and salutary, though not meritorious of life eternal. The sinner's hope, though it remains a virtue, is still not in a state of virtue, because its act is not efficaciously related to man's last end.

But when, on the contrary, hope is vivified by charity, it grows with charity, and is a great virtue though not the greatest of virtues. To understand this truth better, we may note that acquired magnanimity, and still more infused magnanimity, which are closely related to hope, make us strive for great objectives, to which we dedicate ourselves, a truth which we see exemplified in the labors and struggles of founders of religious orders. Now the infused virtue of hope stands still higher, because it aims, not at great deeds merely, but at God Himself, to whom we dedicate ourselves. Hope desires, not merely a precise degree of beatitude, but eternal life itself. Hope carries us ever onwards toward God as our supreme goal.

Consequently, whatever Quietists may say, we are not to sacrifice hope and desire of salvation when we are undergoing that passive purification of the spirit described particularly by St. John of the Cross. Far from it. As St. Paul says, we are to “hope against hope.” Passive purification, in truth, outlines in powerful relief the supreme formal motive of this theological virtue. While all secondary motives all but disappear, the supreme motive, “God is my support,” remains always. God abandons not those who hope in Him.

Further, in these passive purifications, confidence in God is ever more animated and ennobled by charity. In adversity, in seeming abandonment by God, hope is purified from all dross and selfishness, and the soul desires God ever more keenly, not only to possess Him but to glorify Him eternally.

2. The Certitude of Hope

St. Thomas has already noted four kinds of certitude: (a) the certitude of science, founded on evidence; (b) the certitude of faith, founded on revelation; (c) the certitude of the gift of wisdom, founded on the inspiration of the Holy Spirit; (d) the certitude of prudence in the practical order. It remains to show precisely in what the certitude of hope consists. Hope resides, not in the intellect, but in the will, under the infallible guidance of faith. Hope, then, has a participated certitude. It has, to speak formally and precisely, a certitude of tendency to our last end, notwithstanding the uncertainty of salvation. Thus, to illustrate, the swallow, following animal instinct under the guidance of providence, tends unerringly to the region which is its goal. Just as moral virtues, under the guidance of prudence, tend to their goal, viz.: to the right medium of their respective fields, so does hope tend with certainty to the last end.

It is true that we cannot, without a special revelation of our predestination, be certain of our individual salvation. But, notwithstanding this incertitude, we tend certainly to salvation, resting on faith in the promises of God, who never commands the impossible, but wills that we do what we can and pray when we cannot. The passenger from Paris to Rome, to illustrate, even while he knows of accidents which make his arrival uncertain, still has a certitude of final arrival, a certitude which grows with nearness to his goal.

Infused hope, like infused faith, can be lost only by a sin contrary to itself, i. e.: by a mortal sin either of despair or of presumption. But though it remains in the soul under mortal sin, it does not remain in a state of virtue, because the soul deprived of grace is not a connatural subject of virtue.

The gift which corresponds to the virtue of hope is the gift of filial fear, which turns us away from sin and preserves us from presumption. .

ARTICLE THREE: CHARITY

St. Thomas devotes to this subject twenty-five questions. We single out two points: first, the formal object of charity; second, its characteristics. .

1. Charity is that infused theological virtue by which, first, I love God the author of grace, for His own sake, more than I love myself, more than His gifts, more than all else; by which, secondly, I love myself, and then my neighbor because he like myself is loved by God and is called to glorify God both here and in eternity. Charity is not indeed identified, as the Lombard thought, with the Holy Spirit, but it is a gift created in the will by that uncreated charity, which loved us first, and which constantly preserves, vivifies, and re-creates our love.

Charity is, properly speaking, supernatural friendship, friendship between God’s children and God Himself, mutual friendship among all the children and that one Father in heaven. Friendship is a love of mutual benevolence, founded on life in common, a life which is a participation in God’s own inner life, a life which enables us to see Him without medium, to love Him without end. .

The formal motive of charity is, therefore, the divine goodness, supernaturally known and loved for its own sake. We must, it is true, love God by reason of His gifts to us. But this love of gratitude, though it is a disposition toward loving God for His own sake, is not as such an act of

charity, since the goodness of the divine benefactor far surpasses all His gifts. Hence charity desires eternal life in order to glorify God's incommunicable goodness.

Charity, further, attains God without medium. Whereas in our natural knowledge sense creatures are the medium, and whereas, in the knowledge of faith, the ideas abstracted from the sense world are the medium, in charity, on the contrary, our love of God has no medium, and we love creatures only because we first love God. "Charity," says St. Thomas, "tends to God first, and from God goes out to all else. Hence charity loves God without medium, and all else with God as mediator." .

This unmediated love of God above all else must be objectively universal and efficacious, but we should aim also at affective intensity, at that conscious enthusiasm of the heart possessed by God which in its full perfection is realized in heaven. .

By one and the same act of charity we love God, and in God our neighbor. .

2. The first characteristic of charity is universality. No one can be excluded from our love, though we love those who are nearer to God with a greater love of esteem, and those who are nearer to us with a greater intensity of feeling. And this love for charity's secondary object, i. e.: myself and my neighbor, is a love essentially supernatural and theological, far above that affection which is merely natural.

Further, charity on earth is specifically identified with charity in heaven, because the object, God's goodness, is the same when not seen as when seen, the intellectual grasp of that object being the condition indeed but not the cause of our love. Hence charity, even here on earth, is, as St. John and St. Paul never cease to proclaim, the most excellent of all virtues. Hence too, whereas in heaven knowledge of God is higher than charity, here on earth charity is higher than knowledge, since the latter is somehow limited by its medium, i. e.: our finite ideas of God. .

Being the highest of virtues, charity inspires and commands the acts of all other virtues, making them meritorious of eternal life. In this sense, charity is the form, the extrinsic form, of all other virtues. Without charity the other virtues may still exist, but they cannot exist in a state of virtue. Mortal sin brings with it an enfeeblement of all virtues, hinders their living connection, and allows none of them to be in a state of virtue, i. e.: a state which can be changed only with difficulty. .

Charity grows by its own acts. An imperfect act of charity, an act inferior in intensity to the virtue it proceeds from, still merits condignly an augmentation of charity, but will not receive that augmentation until its intensity disposes it thereto. .

The gift of the Holy Ghost which corresponds to the virtue of charity is wisdom, which gives a connatural sympathy for and appreciation of things divine. Faith, illumined by the gifts of wisdom, understanding, and knowledge, is the source of infused contemplation.

The formal motive, which is the guiding star of St. Thomas in studying each of the three theological virtues, has important consequences in the spiritual life, notably in the passive purification of the spirit. It is in this process that these virtues are purified from human dross, that their formal motives are thrown into powerful relief far beyond all inferior and accessory motives. First truth, supporting omnipotence, infinite goodness, shine in the spirit’s awful night like three stars of the first magnitude. .

Chapter 51

The Moral Virtues

ARTICLE ONE: PRUDENCE

The charioteer among the virtues, the name given to prudence by the ancients, shows that prudence is an intellectual virtue which guides the moral virtues. St. Thomas, following Aristotle, says that prudence is right reason as directing human acts. This definition is found, proportionally, in acquired prudence which educates and disciplines the will and the sense faculties, and in infused prudence which pours divine light into these faculties. .

Prudence, acquired or infused, determines the golden middle way between extremes, between cowardice, say, and temerity, in the virtue of fortitude. But the medium way of acquired prudence is subordinated to that of infused prudence; as, for example, in the musician finger dexterity is subordinated to the art of music which is in the practical intellect.

Prudence has three acts: first counsel, which scrutinizes the means proposed for an end; second, practical judgment, which immediately directs choice; third, imperium, which directs execution. .

In determining the relation between prudence and the moral virtues, St. Thomas is guided by Aristotle's principle: "As are a man's dispositions, so are his judgments." If we are ambitious, that is good which flatters our pride. If we are humble, that is good which agrees with humility. No one, then, can give prudent judgments unless he is disposed thereto by justice, temperance, fortitude, loyalty, and modesty, just as, to illustrate, the coachman cannot guide the vehicle well unless he has well-trained horses. This is what St. Thomas means when he says that the truth of the judgment passed by prudence depends on its conformity to well-trained appetites, rational and sensitive. .

Here, as always, we see St. Thomas passing progressively from the common sense of natural reason to philosophic reasoning, all in the service of theology. Thus, even when the judgment of prudence is speculatively false, in consequence of ignorance, say, or of involuntary terror, that judgment is still true in the practical order. To illustrate. When we simply cannot know nor even suspect that the drink offered to us is poisoned, our act of drinking is not imprudent. In the speculative objective order our judgment is not true, but in the practical order it is true, because conformed to right disposition and intention.

This virtuous disposition and intention, necessary for counsel, is more necessary for the imperium. Prudence cannot command unless the will and the sense appetites are seasoned in obedience. Here lies what is called the interconnection of virtues, the union of all virtues in one spiritual organism. Prudence, acquired and infused, is the charioteer whose first task is continual training of his steeds. For the education and formation of a good conscience, the doctrines just explained are excellent guides, more sure, profound, and useful than the shifting balance of conflicting probabilities.

The gift which corresponds to prudence is that of counsel, which gives us divine inspirations in eases where even infused prudence hesitates, in answering, for instance, an indiscreet question, so as neither to lie nor to betray a secret. .

ARTICLE TWO: JUSTICE

Justice, either acquired or infused, is a virtue residing in man’s will, a virtue which destroys selfishness, and enables him to give to each neighbor that neighbor’s due. Justice is found on four ascending levels: commutative justice, distributive justice, social justice, equity.

Commutative justice rules everyday commercial life. It commands honesty in buying, selling, and exchanging. It forbids theft, fraud, calumny, and obliges to restitution.

Distributive justice is concerned with the right distribution of public duties and awards, which are not to be given indiscriminately, but in proportion to merit, need, and importance. .

Social justice, also called legal justice, establishes and maintains the laws required for the common good and advancement of society. Its source lies in political prudence, which belongs principally to the rulers of the state,

but also to the subjects of the state, since without it the subject cannot be interested in the common good which he shares with his fellow citizens, nor in the observance of the laws which uphold that common welfare. .

Equity, also called epikeia, is the highest form of justice. It is concerned, not merely with the letter of the law, but with the spirit of the law, i. e.: with the intention of the legislator, particularly in difficult and afflicting circumstances, where rigid application of the law's mere letter would work injustice and thus defeat the intention of the legislator. Equity, resting on great good sense and wisdom, sees the spirit behind the law and emulates charity, which is still higher than itself.

All these divisions reappear in higher form in infused justice, which increases tenfold the energies of the will, imprinting upon it a full Christian character which dominates even man's physical temperament. If acquired virtue pours natural rectitude down into our will and sense appetites, infused virtue, from an immeasurably higher source, pours into those same faculties the supernatural rectitude of faith and grace.

Justice, further, though it is the instrument of charity, differs from it notably. Justice gives to each fellow man his right and due. Charity gives each not only his rights, but the privileges of a child of God and a brother of Jesus Christ. Justice, says St. Thomas, looks on our neighbor as another person with his own personal rights, whereas charity looks on him as another self. When our neighbor sins, justice will not punish him beyond measure, whereas charity will even forgive his sin. And, while peace depends, first on justice, secondly on charity, justice produces peace indirectly by removing wrongs, whereas charity, by making men's hearts one in Christ, produces peace directly.

A specific question under justice is the right of ownership. "Ownership," says St. Thomas, "includes two rights: first, the right to acquire and administer property as my own, second, the right to use the revenues arising from this property." "But from this second right," he adds, "there arises the duty of aiding others in their necessities." The rich man, far from being a selfish monopolist, should rather be God's administrator in favor of the needy. Only thus can human society escape the domination of covetousness and jealousy, and live in God's kingdom of justice and charity. .

Lastly, let us notice the auxiliary virtues of justice, i. e.: virtues which can only imperfectly render to others their due. Here we find, first religion which, aided by the gift of piety, gives to God that worship to which He has

transcendent right. Secondly penance, which repairs injuries to God. Thirdly filial piety, toward parents and fatherland. Fourthly obedience to superiors. Fifthly gratitude for benefits. Sixthly vigilance, to be just, but also mild, in inflicting just punishment. Seventhly truthfulness, both in word and deed. Eighthly, ninthly, and tenthly are friendship, amiability, and generosity. .

ARTICLE THREE: FORTITUDE

Fortitude keeps fear from shrinking and audacity from rushing. Thus it holds the golden middle way between cowardice and foolhardiness.

This definition holds good, proportionally, both of acquired fortitude, as in the soldier who faces death for his country, and of infused fortitude, as in the martyr who, guided by faith and Christian prudence, faces torments and death for Christ.

The principal act of fortitude is endurance, and its secondary act is aggression. Endurance, says St. Thomas, is more difficult than aggression and more meritorious. Greater moral strength is shown in daily and long-continued self-control than in the momentary enthusiasm which attacks a deadly adversary. Three reflections show this truth:

a) He who endures is already in continual warfare against a self-confident adversary.

b) He is accustomed to suffering, whereas he who waits for the far-off struggle does not in the meantime exercise himself in suffering and even hopes to escape it.

c) Endurance presupposes long training in fortitude, whereas attack depends on a moment of temperamental enthusiasm.

Endurance at its best is exemplified in martyrdom, the supreme act of fortitude, which gives even life to God. Whereas counterfeit martyrdom, supported by pride and obstinacy, may also be inflexible against pain, the genuine martyr is supported by virtues seemingly opposed to fortitude, namely, charity and prudence and humility, and loving prayer for his tormentor.

Fortitude is also the name of the gift which corresponds to the virtue. He who is faithful to the Holy Ghost in the details of daily life is prepared to be heroically faithful in the supreme trial. .

The auxiliary virtues of fortitude are magnanimity, constancy, patience, perseverance.

Article Four: Temperance

Temperance rules the concupiscible appetite, particularly in the domain of the sense of touch. It holds the golden mean between intemperance and insensibility. Acquired temperance is ruled by right reason, infused temperance by faith and grace. .

The kinds of temperance are chiefly three: abstinence, the right medium in food; sobriety, the right medium in drink; chastity, the right medium in sex. Chastity, the virtue, must be clearly distinguished from the instinct of shame, which naturally inclines man to the virtue, just as sense pity inclines him to the virtue of mercy. .

Virginity is a virtue distinct from chastity, say, of the widow, because virginity offers to God perfect and lifelong integrity of the flesh. Virginity, then, is related to chastity as munificence is related to liberality. It is a more perfect state than that of matrimony, since it is a disposition for contemplation, which is a higher good than propagation of the race. .

Among the auxiliary virtues of temperance we must emphasize humility and meekness. Humility, which, in Jesus and Mary, found no pride to repress, consists in self-abasement first, before the infinite Creator, secondly before each creature’s share in God’s goodness. The humble man, recognizing that of himself he is nothingness and emptiness, sees in all other creatures what they have from God, and hence is persuaded, and acts according to his persuasion, that he is the lowest of all. This simple and profound formula, the key to the life of the saints, ascends by successive levels to perfection: .

a) I recognize that I am contemptible.

b) I accept the consequent suffering.

c) I acknowledge my contemptibleness;

d) I wish my neighbor to believe me contemptible;

e) I hear patiently his expression of that belief.

f) I accept corresponding treatment.

g) I love this kind of treatment.

Humility is thus a fundamental virtue, which eradicates all pride, the root of all sin, and leaves us completely docile to divine grace. The sin of the first man, we note further, was, like that of the angels, a sin of pride. But angelic pride arose from a perfect knowledge which pre-existed, whereas

human pride came from a desire of knowledge which man had not, but wished to have, in order to live independently of God, without being bound by obedience. .

Finally, we note the auxiliary virtue of studiousness, which is again the golden middle road, between uncontrolled curiosity and intellectual laziness, the latter being often a consequence of the former, curiosity being spasmodic and short-lived.

All in all, St. Thomas examines about forty virtues, all arranged under the four cardinal virtues. Justice excepted, each virtue is flanked by two opposite vices, one by excess, the other by defect. Hence it comes that a virtue may have an external resemblance to a vice. Magnanimity, for example, thus resembles pride. Acquired virtue is often defective in this way, until it is perfected by gifts of the Holy Ghost. Hence, if man’s virtuous organism be compared to an organ, defective virtue can easily strike false notes, and thus we need the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost to attain perfection in virtue. And thus we are brought to the study of perfection, contemplative and active.

Chapter 52

Christian Perfection

Perfection, so we are taught by the Gospel and St. Paul, means perfection in charity. “Every being,” says St. Thomas, “is perfect when it attains its final goal. But charity unites us to God, the goal of all human life, a truth expressed by St. John’s word on him who abides in God and God in him. Hence charity constitutes the life of Christian perfection.” Faith and hope, since they can coexist with mortal sin, cannot constitute perfection. Nor can infused moral perfections, since they are concerned with the roads that lead to God, and hence are meritorious only so far as they are vivified by charity, which is their animating principle.

“Perfection,” St. Thomas continues, “lies principally in love of God, secondarily in love of neighbor, and only accidentally in the evangelical counsels,” obedience, chastity, and poverty, which are unprescribed instruments of perfection. Hence perfection can be attained without literal observance of the counsels, in the state, say, of matrimony, though the spirit of the counsels, i. e.: detachment from worldliness, is necessary for perfection in any state. The advantage of literal observance of the counsels lies in this: they are the most sure and rapid road whereby to reach sanctity.

Love of neighbor, though secondary in value when compared to love of God, is nevertheless first in the order of time, because love of our neighbor, who is the visible image of God, is the indispensable first proof of our love for God. Our Lord says: “By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love one for another.” .

Which is higher in value, love of God, or knowledge of God? In this life, so runs the answer of St. Thomas, love of God stands higher than knowledge of God. Why? Because, although in general the intellect is higher than the will which it guides, our intellect, until it obtains the beatific vision, draws God down within its own limited and finite ideas, whereas

when we love God we ourselves are drawn upward to God's own unlimited and infinite perfection. Hence it comes that when a saint, the Cure of Ars, for example, teaches catechism, his act of love his higher value than the wisest meditation of a theologian with a lower degree of love. In this sense we can love God more than we know Him, and we love Him the more, the more His mysteries surpass our knowledge. Charity is the bond of perfection, since it draws all virtues into one unit which is anchored in God.

But love of God and neighbor, in matrimony, priesthood, or religion, is subject to the law of unlimited growth. It is an error, says St. Thomas, to imagine that the commandment of charity is limited to a degree beyond which it becomes a simple counsel. The commandment itself has no limits. We must love God with our whole heart, soul, mind, and strength. Charity is in no way a mere counsel, but the purpose and goal of all commandments. Means may be loved with measure, but not the end itself. No one, says Aristotle, wills a goal by half. Does the physician will to restore merely half of health? No. What he does limit and measure is the medicine, the means whereby to restore, if he can, unlimited health. Now the counsels are means, the precept, the love of God, is the end. But why does God command, not merely counsel, to love Him completely, with heart, soul, mind, and strength, seeing that our love here below can never be perfect? Because, as St. Augustine answers his own question, love of God and neighbor is not a thing to be finished here and now, but a goal to be ceaselessly aimed at by all men each according to his own state of life. This ancient doctrine, from which in part Suarez departs, is well preserved by St. Francis de Sales, and reappears in two encyclicals of Pius XI. .

In relation to this perfection which consists in charity we distinguish three forms of human life: the contemplative life, the active life, and the apostolic life. Contemplation studies divine truth, action serves our neighbor, preaching and teaching gives to our neighbor the fruits of our own contemplation. .

The active life is the disposition for the contemplative life, because it subordinates passion to advancement in justice and mercy. Its end is contemplation, the better part, which leads us to rest eternally in the inner life of God. The apostolic life is the completion of the contemplative life, because it is more perfect to illumine others than to be merely illumined ourselves. Hence the perfect apostolic life, as exemplified in the apostles and their successors, presupposes plenitude of contemplation, which itself

advances by the gifts of knowledge, understanding, and wisdom, which make faith penetrating and attractive. .

Bishops must be perfect both in the active life and in the contemplative. And whereas religious are tending to the perfection of charity, bishops are already in the state of perfection to which they are to lead others. Hence a bishop who would enter religion would make a step backward, as long as he is useful to the souls for whom he has accepted responsibility. .

Chapter 53

Charismatic Graces

Charismatic graces are given chiefly for the good of others, to instruct them in revelation (by the word of knowledge, by the word of wisdom): or to confirm that revelation (by miracles, prophecies, discernment of spirits, etc.). Here we restrict ourselves to underlining the Thomistic doctrine regarding prophecy, revelation, and biblical inspiration.

1. Prophetic Revelation

Prophecy has degrees. On the lower level the prophet (Caiphas, for example) may not know that he is prophesying. On the higher level, in perfect prophecy, the prophet needs first the supernatural proposition of a truth so far hidden, secondly a supernatural knowledge that that proposition is divine in its origin, thirdly an infused light by which he judges infallibly regarding the truth itself and its divine origin. In giving the prophet this revelation, God may use as intermediary the prophet's external sense power, or his internal sense power, or his intellect. As to his physical state, the prophet can be either awake or in ecstasy or in dream. The object revealed may be either a truth in itself essentially supernatural, or a future contingent event, which, when it comes to pass, can be naturally known. In either of these cases the prophecy thus becomes, like miracles, a supernatural proof of divine revelation. .

2. Biblical Inspiration

Under the name "prophecy," St. Thomas includes all charismatic intellectual graces. Hence biblical inspiration is a special kind of prophecy, which, in the words of St. Augustine, he defines thus: "a hidden and divine inspiration which human minds receive unknowingly." Thus inspiration differs from revelation. In receiving revelation the mind receives new ideas, whereas in simple inspiration, unaccompanied by revelation, no new ideas are infused, but only a divine judgment on the ideas which the inspired

writer has already acquired, from experience, say, or from human testimony, as the Evangelists, for example, knew before inspiration the facts of our Lord's life which they report. And since it is in judgment that truth or falsity resides, the infused judgment of the inspired writer is divinely and infallibly certain. .

Biblical inspiration, then, is a divine light which makes the judgment of the inspired writer divine, and consequently infallible. Yet this scriptural inspiration, which has as its object a written book, is not only a divine light for the writer's spirit, but also a divine motion, which energizes the writer's will, and through his will all his other faculties which cooperate in producing the inspired book. But his charismatic grace of inspiration is not a permanent and habitual grace, but is transient and intermittent. .

Thus Scripture has two authors, one divine and principal, the other human and instrumental. This doctrine, generally held both in medieval times and in our own, is clearly expounded in the Providentissimus of Leo XIII. As instrumental cause, the inspired writer attains the goal intended by the principal cause, and yet retains his own character and style, and adopts any literary genus he finds suited to his purpose.

Inspiration, then, to repeat, is a divine causality, physical and supernatural, which elevates and moves the human writer in such fashion that he writes, for the benefit of the Church, all that God wills and in the way God wills. Hence God's causality enters not only into the truth conceived by the human writer, but into the very words employed by the human writer to express those truths, as is seen by the very terms Holy Scripture, the Holy Books, the Holy Bible, which faith, according to Jewish and to Christian tradition, employs to express the results of inspiration. These terms imply that the human author's decision to use this set of words rather than another is also an effect of inspiration.

Hence we are not to conceive inspiration as a mere material dictation, whereby the human author would have no freedom in the choice of words. Verbal inspiration, as here defended, leaves the inspired authors even more free and personal than authors who are not inspired, since God moves all second causes in conformity with their individual natures. Hence, although verbal inspiration is necessarily implied if the book is to be God's book, we must, if we are to understand the literal meaning of that book, be fully aware of the personal characteristics of the human writer, in whom, as in every writer, style is subordinated to thought. .

Lastly, let us notice that statements may be infallible without being inspired. Thus the definitions of the Church, although they express divine truth infallibly, are not spoken of as inspired. Infallibility is indeed the work of the Holy Ghost, but not in the form of biblical inspiration. .

Chapter 54

Conclusion

In the first six parts of this work we studied what may be called the dogmatic portion of the Summa. In the seventh part we expounded the moral portions. Our exposition has shown how faithful the saint has remained to his initial announcement that dogmatic theology and moral theology are not two distinct branches of knowledge, but only two parts of one and the same branch of knowledge. Like God's knowledge from which it descends, theology is, pre-eminently and simultaneously, both speculative and practical, having throughout but one sole object: God revealed in His own inner life, God as source and goal of all creation.

This conception of theology is at war with what we may call Christian eclecticism. Hence we add here two articles, one, an exposition of the evils of eclecticism, the other devoted to the power of Thomism in remedying these evils.

ARTICLE ONE: THOMISM AND ECLECTICISM

This article reproduces substantially the important discourse of his eminence, J. M. R. Villeneuve, archbishop of Quebec, delivered May 24, 936, at the close of the Thomistic Convention in Ottawa, Canada. .

Thomism is concerned primarily with principles and doctrinal order, wherein lie its unity and its power. Eclecticism, led by a false idea of fraternal charity, seeks to harmonize all systems of philosophy and theology. Especially after Pope Leo XIII the Church has repeatedly declared that she holds to Thomism; but eclecticism says equivalently: Very well, let us accept Thomism, but not be too explicit in contradicting doctrines opposed to Thomism. Let us cultivate harmony as much as possible.

This is to seek peace where there can be no peace. The fundamental principles of the doctrine of St. Thomas, they would say, are those accepted by all the philosophers in the Church. Those points on which the Angelic Doctor is not in accord with other masters, with Scotus, say, or with Suarez, are of secondary importance, or even at times useless subtleties, which it is wise to ignore, or at least to treat as mere matters of history. The Cardinal says:

In fact, the points of doctrine on which all Catholic philosophers, or nearly all, are in accord, are those defined by the Church as the preambles of faith. But all other points of Thomistic doctrine, viz.: real distinction of potency from act, of matter from form, of created essence from its existence, of substance from accidents, of person from nature—these, according to eclecticism, are not fundamental principles of the doctrine of St. Thomas. And they say the same of his doctrine that habits and acts are specifically proportioned to their formal objects. All these assertions, they say, are disputed among Catholic teachers, and hence are unimportant.

These points of doctrine, which eclecticism considers unimportant, are, on the contrary, says the Cardinal, the major pronouncements of Thomism as codified in the Twenty-four Theses. Without these principles thus codified, says the Cardinal of Quebec, Thomism would be a corpse. The importance of these Thomistic fundamentals is set in relief by a series of Suaresian counter-theses, published by the Ciencia Tomista. .

In the following two paragraphs Cardinal Villeneuve signalizes the consequences of contemporary eclecticism.

Since the days of Leo XIII many authors have tried, not to agree with St. Thomas, but to get him to agree with themselves. Consequences the most opposite have been drawn from his writings. Hence incredible confusion about what he really taught. Hence a race of students to whom his doctrine is a heap of contradictories. What ignoble treatment for a man in whom, as Leo XIII wrote, human reason reached unsurpassable heights! Thence arose the opinion that all points of doctrine not unanimously accepted by Catholic philosophers are doubtful. The final conclusion was that, in order to give St. Thomas uncontradicted praise, he was allowed to have as his own only what all Catholics agree on, that is, the definitions of faith and the nearest safeguards of that faith. Now this process, which reduces Thomistic doctrine to a spineless mass of banalities, of unanalyzed and unorganized postulates, results in a traditionalism without substance or life, in a practical

fideism, a lack of interest in questions of faith. Hence the lack of vigilant reaction against the most improbable novelties.

If we once grant that the criterion of truth, which ought to be intrinsic evidence deriving from first principles, lies instead in external acceptance by a majority, then we condemn reason to atrophy, to dullness, to self-abdication. Man learns to get along without mental exertion. He lives on a plane of neutral persuasion, led by public rumor. Reason is looked upon as incapable of finding the truth. We might be inclined to trace this abdication to a laudable humility. But, judged by its fruits, it engenders philosophic skepticism, conscious or unconscious, in an atmosphere ruled by mystic sentimentalism and hollow faith.

Eclecticism, we may add, entertains doubts about the classic proofs of God's existence, hardly allowing any argument to stand as proposed by St. Thomas.

"If we must leave out of philosophy," the Cardinal continues, "all questions not admitted unanimously by Catholics, then we must omit the deepest and most important questions, we must leave out metaphysics itself, and with that we will have removed from St. Thomas the very marrow of his system, that wherein he outstrips common sense, that which his genius has discovered."

Further, we may add, with such a decapitated Thomism, we could no longer defend common sense itself. With Thomas Reid's Scotch School we would, after renouncing philosophy in favor of common sense, find ourselves unable to analyze that common sense, to anchor it in self-evident, necessary, and universal principles.

Does charity oblige us to sacrifice depth and exactness of thought to unity of spirit? No, replies the Cardinal; that which wounds charity is not truth nor the love of truth, but selfishness, individual and corporate. Genuine doctrinal harmony lies along the road to which the Church points when she says: Go to Thomas. Loyalty to Thomas, far from curtailing intellectual freedom, widens and deepens that freedom, gives it an unfailing springboard, firm and elastic, to soar ever higher out of error into truth. "You shall know the truth; and the truth shall make you free." .

ARTICLE TWO: THE ASSIMILATIVE POWER OF THOMISM

A doctrine’s assimilative power is in proportion to the elevation and universality of its principles. Here, then, we wish to show that Thomism can assimilate all the elements of truth to be found in the three principal tendencies which characterize contemporary philosophy. Let us begin with an outline of these three tendencies.

The first of these is agnosticism, either empiric agnosticism, in the wake of positivism, or idealist agnosticism, an offshoot of Kantianism. Here belongs the neo-positivism of Carnap, Wittgenstein, Rougier, and of the group called the Vienna Circle. In all these we find the re-edited Nominalism of Hume and Comte. Here belongs also the phenomenology of Husserl, which holds that the object of philosophy is the immediate datum of experience. All these philosophies are concerned, not with being, but with phenomena, to use the terms of Parmenides in pointing out the two roads which the human spirit can follow.

The second tendency is evolutionist in character. Like agnosticism, it appears in two forms: one idealist, in the wake of Hegel, represented by Gentile in Italy, by Leon Brunschvicg in France; the other empiric, in the creative evolution of Bergson, who, however, toward the end of life, turned again, like Blondel, in the direction of traditional philosophy, led by the power of an intellectual and spiritual life devoted to the search for the Absolute.

The third tendency is the metaphysical trend of the modern German school. It appears under three chief forms: voluntarism in Max Scheler; natural philosophy in Driesch, who leans on Aristotle; and ontology in Hartmann of Heidelberg, who gives a Platonic interpretation of Aristotle’s metaphysics. The great problems of old, we see, compel attention still: the constitution of bodies, the essence of life, sensation, knowledge, freedom, and morality, the distinction between God and the world. And as the ancient problems reappear, so reappear the ancient antinomies, mechanism or dynamism, empiricism or intellectualism, monism or theism. Let us now see how Thomism assimilates, in transcendent unity, all that is true in these opposed theories.

1. The Generative Principle

In Thomism, which is simply a deepened form of perennial philosophy, we find again what is best in the thought of Aristotle, Plato, and Augustine. This philosophy, says Bergson, is nothing but the natural development of ordinary human intelligence. This philosophy, therefore, is open to all

genuine progress in science. It is not, like Hegelianism, the huge a priori construction of one bewitching genius, but a temple that rests on a broad inductive base, centuries-old, but perpetually repaired by the most attentive study of all attainable fact, a study strikingly exemplified in the work of Albert the Great, the teacher of St. Thomas.

This inductive basis presupposed, Thomistic metaphysics continues through the ages to scrutinize the relations between intelligible being and becoming, the passage from potency to act, the various kinds of causes. By these two characteristics, one positive, the other intellectual, Thomism is deeply opposed to Kantianism and its offshoots. Thomism, because it remains in continual contact with facts, and because it simultaneously studies the laws of being, becoming, and causality, accepts all the genuine elements found in systems otherwise mutually contradictory. This power of absorption and assimilation is a criterion of its validity, both for thought and for life.

Here we introduce a profound remark of Leibnitz, though he himself only glimpsed its consequences. Speaking of the philosophia perennis, he says that philosophic systems are generally true in what they affirm, but false in what they deny. This remark, which has its roots in Aristotle and Aquinas, must be understood of genuine and constituent affirmations, not of negations disguised as affirmations. Thus materialism is true in its affirmation of matter, false in its denial of spirit. The reverse is true of idealism. Similarly, though Leibnitz did not see it fully, psychological determination is true in affirming that the intellect guides the free choice of the will, but false in denying genuine freedom of will. And the reverse is true of “Libertism,” which dreams of a freedom unfettered by intellectual guidance.

But this remark, applied eclectically by Leibnitz, holds good likewise from the higher viewpoint of Aristotle and Aquinas. Each successive system affirms some element of reality even while it often denies another element of reality. This denial, then, as Hegel said, provokes a counter-denial, before the mind has reached a higher synthesis.

We hold, then, that Aristotelian-Thomistic thought, far from being an immature a priori construction, remains always on the alert for every aspect of reality, eager not to limit that reality which dominates our ever-growing sense experience, external and internal, but eager also not to limit our intelligence, intuitive in its principles, discursive in its conclusions. Thus,

while it rests on common sense, it rises far above common sense, by its discovery of the natural subordination in which sense knowledge stands to intellect. The common sense of Thomas Reid does not build a foundation for Thomas Aquinas.

This traditional philosophy differs further from eclecticism because, not content to limit itself to choosing, without a directive principle, what seems most plausible in various systems, it begins rather with a superior principle that illumines from on high the great problems of all times. This principle, itself derived from that of contradiction and causality, is the distinction of potency from act, a distinction without which, as Aristotle says and Thomas reaffirms, it is impossible to answer both Heraclitus, who defends universal evolution, and Parmenides, who defends a changeless monism.

Potency distinct from act explains the process of becoming, the passage from one form to another, the passage from seed to plant, from potentiality to actuality. This process presupposes an agent that prepossesses the perfection in question, and a directing intelligence toward the perfection to be realized. The process of becoming is essentially subordinated to the being which is its goal. Becoming is not, as Descartes would have it, a mere local movement defined by its points of rest, but a function of being in its passage from potency to act.

The process of becoming therefore presupposes four sources: matter as passive potency, as capacity proportioned to the perfection it is to receive; act in three fashions, first in the actualizing agent, secondly in the form which terminates becoming, thirdly in the purpose toward which the form tends.

Finite beings are conceived as composed of potency and act, of matter and form, and, more generally, of real essence and existence, essence limiting the existence which actualizes it, as matter limits its actualizing form. Then, preceding all beings composed and limited, must be pure act, if it is true that actuality is more perfect than potentiality, that actual perfection is something higher than mere capacity to receive perfection, that what is something more than what as yet is not. This is a most fundamental tenet of Thomism. At the summit of all reality we must find, not the endless evolutionary process of Heraclitus or Hegel, but pure actuality, being itself, truth itself, goodness itself, unlimited by matter, or essence, or any receiving capacity whatever. This doctrine on the supreme reality, called by Aristotle the self-existing and self-comprehending act of understanding,

contained also in Plato's thought, is fortified and elevated by the revealed truth of the freedom of God's creative act, revealed, it is true, but still attainable by reason, hence not a mystery essentially supernatural like the Trinity.

Let us now see the assimilative power of this generative principle on ascending philosophical levels: in cosmology, in anthropology, in criteriology, in ethics, in natural theology. By way of general remark, let us note that Thomistic assimilation is due to the Thomistic method of research. In meeting any great problem Thomism begins by recalling extreme solutions that are mutually contradictory. Next it notes eclectic solutions which fluctuate between those extremes. Lastly, it rises to a higher synthesis which incorporates all the elements of reality found in its successive surveys of positions which remain extreme. This ultimate metaphysical synthesis it is which Thomism offers as substructure of the faith.

1. Cosmology

Mechanism affirms the existence of local motion, of extension in three dimensions, often of atoms, but denies sense qualities, natural activity and finality. Hence it cannot well explain weight, resistance, heat, electricity, affinity, cohesion, and so on. Dynamism, on the contrary, affirming sense qualities, natural activity, and finality, reduces everything to mere force, denying any extension properly so called, and denying also the principle that activity presupposes being. Now the doctrine of matter and form accepts all that is positive in these two extreme conceptions. By two principles, distinct but intimately united, it explains both extension and force. Extension has its source in matter, which is common to all bodies, capable of receiving the specific form, the essential structure, of iron, say, or gold, or hydrogen, or oxygen. And the doctrine of specific form explains, far better than does Plato's idea or the monad of Leibnitz, all the natural qualities, characteristics, and specific activities of bodies, in full harmony with the principle that specific activity presupposes specific being.

Matter, being a purely receptive capacity, while it is not yet substance, is still a substantial element, meant to blend with form into a natural unity, not accidental but essential.

This doctrine explains too how extension can be mathematically, not actually, divisible into infinity. Extension cannot be composed of indivisible points, which would be all identical if they were in contact, and if not in contact would be discontinuous. Hence the parts of extension must be

themselves extended, capable indeed of mathematical division but not of physical.

Mechanism tries in vain to reduce plant life to physico-chemical developments of a vegetative germ, which produces, here a grain of corn, and there an oak, or from an egg brings forth a bird, a fish, or a snake. Must there not be, asks Claude Bernard, some force that guides evolution? In the germ, in the embryo, if it is to evolve into definite and determined structure, there must be a vital and specifying principle, which Aristotle called the vegetative soul of the plant and the sense soul of the animal. This doctrine assimilates, without eclecticism, all that is positive in mechanism and dynamism even while it rejects their negations.

2. Anthropology

Man is by nature a unified whole, one, not accidentally but per se and essentially. He is not two complete substances accidentally juxtaposed. Matter in the human composite is actualized by one sole specific and substantial form, which is the radical principle of life, vegetative, sensitive, and intellectual. This would be impossible if one and the same soul were the proximate principle of all man's actions, but it is possible if the soul has a hierarchy of faculties. Here, again, we have an application, not eclectic, but spontaneous and daring, of the distinction between potency and act. The essence of the soul is proportioned to the existence which actualizes it, and each faculty is proportioned to its own act. The soul, therefore, cannot act without its faculties, can understand only by its intellect, and will only by its will.

Here Leibnitz and Descartes represent extremes. Leibnitz, misunderstanding the Aristotelian term dynamis, which may be either passive or active, puts the principle of mere force and power in the place of potency and act. Descartes, at the opposite extreme, sees in the mental activity of thought the sole principle of philosophizing about man. Leibnitz neglects to reduce force, and Descartes neglects to reduce thought, to functions of being.

Man's intellect, to go further, since it attains universal and necessary truth, is not limited by material conditions and material organs. Hence man's soul, the source of his intellect, is independent of matter, and hence survives the corruption of the human organism.

3. Criteriology

The extremes here are empiricism and intellectualism. Thomism accepts both the inductive method of empiricism and the deductive method of intellectualism. But Thomism insists further that the first principles from which deduction proceeds are not mere subjective laws of the mind but objective laws of reality. Without, say, the principle of contradiction, the principle of Descartes ("I think, therefore I am") may be a mere subjective illusion. Perhaps, since one contradictory (I think) does not objectively exclude its opposite (I do not think): perhaps thinking is not essentially distinct from non-thinking. Perhaps, further, thought is buried in the subconscious, its beginning unknown and its end. Perhaps, again, "I am" and "I am not" are both true. Perhaps, finally, the word "I" stands for a mere transient process, unsupported by any individual permanent and thinking subject.

But if, on the contrary, the objective reality of the sense world is the first object of the human intellect, then, by reflection on the source of its act, the intellect grasps its own existence with absolute certitude, knows itself in an objectively existing faculty, capable of penetrating through sense phenomena into the nature and characteristics of the objective world. It sees then its own immeasurable heights above, say the imagination, which however rich it may be and fertile, can never grasp the "why" of any motion, of a clock, for example.

By this same line of thought we distinguish further the will, illumined by intellect, from sense appetite, guided by sense knowledge. As the object of the intellect is objective and universal truth, so the object of the will is objective and universal good.

4. Freedom and morality

By normal development of the distinction between potency and act Thomism rises above the psychological determinism of Leibnitz and the freedom of equilibrium conceived by Scotus, Suarez, Descartes, and certain moderns, Secretan, for example, and J. Lequier. Thomas admits the positive point of psychological determinism, namely, that intelligence guides man's act of choice, but he goes on to show that it depends on the will itself whether the intellect's practical judgment shall or shall not terminate deliberation. Why? Because, granted that the intellect has to propose its object to the will, it is the will which moves the intellect to deliberate, and this deliberation can end only when the will freely accepts what the intellect proposes. Intellect and will are inseparably related.

What then is free will? Free will, in God, in angel, and in man, is indifference, both of judgment and of choice, in the presence of any object which, however good otherwise, is in some way unattractive. God, when seen face to face, is in every way attractive, and draws our love infallibly and invincibly. But even God is in some way unattractive as long as we must know Him abstractly, as long as we feel His commandments to be a burden.

Why is the will thus free and indifferent in the presence of an object in any way unattractive? Because the will's adequate object is unlimited and universal good. Hence even the moral law does not necessitate the will. I see the better road, I approve it speculatively, but I follow, in fact and by choice, the worse road.

Thomism, further, admits fully the morality governed by duty and the longing for happiness. Why? Because the object of the will, as opposed to sense appetite, is the good proposed by reason. Hence the will, being essentially proportioned to rational good, is under obligation to will that good, since otherwise it acts against its own constitution, created by the author of its nature as preparation for possessing Himself, the Sovereign Good. Always, we see, the same principle: potency is naturally proportioned to the act for which the creature was created.

5. Natural theology

That which is, is more than that which can be, more than that which is on the road to be. This principle led Aristotle and Aquinas to find, at the summit of all reality, pure act, understanding of understanding, sovereign good. But Aquinas rises above Aristotle and Leibnitz, for whom the world is a necessary consequence of God. St. Thomas shows, on the contrary, the reason why we must say with revelation that God is sovereignly free, to create or not to create, to create in time rather than from eternity. The reason lies in God's infinite plentitude of being, truth, and goodness, which creatures can do nothing to increase. After creation, there are more beings, it is true, but not more being, not more perfection, wisdom, or love. "God is none the greater for having created the universe." God alone, He who is, can say, not merely "I have being, truth, and life," but rather "I am being itself, truth itself, life itself."

Hence the supreme truth of Christian philosophy is this: In God alone is essence identified with existence. The creature is only a capability to exist, it is created and preserved by Him who is. Further, the creature, not being

its own existence, is not its own action, and cannot pass from potency to act, either in the order of nature or in that of grace, except by divine causality.

We have thus shown how Thomism is an elevated synthesis, which, while it rejects unfounded denials, assimilates the positive tendencies of current philosophical and theological conceptions. This synthesis recognizes that reality itself is incomparably more rich than our ideas of that reality. In a word, Thomism is characterized by a sense of mystery, which is the source of contemplation. God's truth, beauty, and holiness are continually recognized as transcending all philosophy, theology, and mysticism, as uncreated richness to be attained only by the beatific vision, and even under that vision, however clearly understood, as something which only God Himself can comprehend in all its infinite fullness. Thomism thus keeps ever awake our natural, conditional, and inefficacious desire to see God as He is. Thus we grow in appreciation of the gifts of grace and charity, which move us, efficaciously, to desire and to merit the divine vision.

This power of assimilation is therefore a genuine criterion whereby to appraise the validity and scope of Thomism, from the lowest material elements up to God's own inner life. Economy demands that any system have one mother-idea, as radiating center. The mother-idea of Thomism is that of God as pure act, in whom alone is essence identified with existence. This principle, the keystone of Christian philosophy, enables us to explain, as far as can be done here below, what revelation teaches of the mysteries of the Trinity and the Incarnation, the unity of existence in the three divine persons, the unity of existence in Christ. It explains likewise the mystery of grace. All that is good in our free acts comes from God as first cause, just as it comes from us as second causes. And when we freely obey, when we accept rather than resist grace, all that is good in that act comes from the source of all good. Nothing escapes that divine and universal cause, who without violence actualizes human freedom, just as connaturally as He actualizes the tree to bloom and bear fruit.

Let Thomism then be judged by its principles, necessary and universal, all subordinated to one keystone principle, not a restricted principle as is that of human freedom, but by the uncreated principle of Him who is, on whom everything depends, in the order of being and activity, in the order of grace and of nature. This is the system which, in the judgment of the

Church, most nearly approaches the ideal of theology, the supreme branch of knowledge.

Eighth Part

Developments and Confirmations

To develop and confirm the synthesis so far expounded, we add five supplementary chapters:

1. The Twenty-four Thomistic Theses.
2. The Principle of Contradiction.
3. Truth and Pragmatism.
4. Ontological Personality.
5. Grace, Efficacious and Sufficient.

The first chapter is a summary of the Thomistic synthesis. The second and third chapters deal with the objective foundations of this synthesis. The fourth treats a question, much controverted and very important, in the treatise on the Trinity and in that on the Incarnation. The fifth deals with the opposition between Thomism and Molinism.

Chapter 55

The Twenty-Four Thomistic Theses

By the Motu Proprio of June 29, 1914, Pius X prescribed that all courses in philosophy should teach “the principles and the major doctrines of St. Thomas,” and that in the centers of theological studies the Summa theologiae should be the textbook.

ORIGIN OF THE TWENTY-FOUR THESES

The state of things which Pius X intended to remedy has been well described above (p. 343 ff.) by Cardinal Villeneuve. We repeat here briefly the Cardinal’s contentions:

a) Authors try to make St. Thomas the mouthpiece of their own pet theories.

b) Hence contradictory presentations by teachers and writers, confusion and disgust among students.

c) Hence, Thomism reduced to the minimum on which all Catholic thinkers can agree, hence to a blunted traditionalism and an implicit fideism.

d) Hence, carelessness in the presence of extremely improbable new doctrines, abdication of thought in the domain of piety, practical skepticism in philosophy, mysticism based on emotion.

Against this withered and confused Thomism, Pius X prescribes return to the major doctrines of St. Thomas. What are these major doctrines? The Congregation of Sacred Studies, having examined the twenty-four fundamental theses presented by Thomistic professors of various institutions, replied, with the approval of the Holy Father, that these same twenty-four theses contain the principles and major doctrines of St. Thomas.

What shall be the binding force of these theses? They are safe norms of intellectual guidance. This decision of the Congregation, confirmed by Benedict XV, was published March 7, 1916.

The next year, 1917, saw the promulgation of the New Code, which makes the method, the principles, and the teaching of St. Thomas binding on the professors and students both in philosophy and in theology. Among the sources of this canon the Code cites the decree of March 7, 1916.

Pope Benedict XV, on various occasions, expressed his mind on this point. He approved, for instance, in a special audience, the intention of P. E. Hugon, O. P.: to write a book on the twenty-four theses. The author of the book reports that the Pontiff said that he did not intend to impose the twenty-four theses as compelling internal assent, but as the doctrine preferred by the Church.

It gradually became known that these twenty-four theses had been formulated by two Thomists of great competence who, throughout their long teaching career, had been teaching these theses in juxtaposition with their respective counter-theses.

Is the real distinction of potency from act a mere hypothesis? Some historians of great name, who in special works have expounded the teaching of St. Thomas, saw in the real distinction of potency from act a mere postulate. And an excellent review has, for forty years, carried a series of learned articles which culminate in this conclusion: the doctrine of real distinction between potency and act is an admirable hypothesis, most fertile in results.

Now if this distinction were but a postulate or a hypothesis, then, however strongly suggested it might be by the facts, it would still not compel the mind’s assent. What becomes then of the proofs for God’s existence, which are based on that distinction?

Those who formulated these theses, on the contrary, saw in the distinction of potency from act not a mere postulate or hypothesis, but the very first principle, the necessary foundation for all the other theses. In truth, if we study the commentaries of St. Thomas on the first two books of Aristotle’s Physica and books three and four of his Metaphysica, we see that real distinction of potency from act imposes itself necessarily on the mind which attempts to harmonize the principle of contradiction or identity with that of becoming or multiplicity.

“That which is, is, and that which is not, is not. That’s a sentence we cannot escape from.” This is the formula of Parmenides, which makes of the principle of identity not merely a necessary and universal law of reality, but a law which governs all processes of becoming. A thing supposed to be in process of becoming cannot arise either from being or from non-being. Not from being, which already is: the statue cannot come from a statue which already is. Not from non-being: out of nothing comes nothing. Hence all becoming is an impossibility, an illusion. If you set yourself to walking, to disprove Parmenides, he retorts: Walking is a mere appearance, a sense phenomenon, whereas the principle of identity is a primordial law both of the mind and of reality.

For the same reason Parmenides concludes the impossibility of more than one being. Being cannot be diversified by itself, nor by something different from itself, which could only be non-being, i. e.: nothing. Hence being is one and immutable. Parmenides here, like Spinoza later, confounds being in general with divine being.

With Parmenides, Aristotle too, against Heraclitus, defends the principle of contradiction, which is the negative form of the principle of identity: being is being, non-being is non-being, we cannot confound the two.

But Aristotle shows too that the process of becoming, which is an evident fact of experience, is to be harmonized with the principle of identity and contradiction by the real distinction between potency and act. This distinction, accepted, however confusedly, by natural reason, by the common sense of mankind, is indispensable in solving the arguments of Parmenides against the reality of generation and multiplicity.

That which is generated, which comes into existence, cannot come from an actually existing thing: a statue does not arise from something which is already a statue. Nor can it come from that which is simply nothing. But that which comes into existence comes from indeterminate potential being, which is nothing but a real capacity to receive an actual perfection. The statue comes from the wood, yes, yet not from wood as wood, but from wood as capable of being carved. Movement supposes a subject really capable of undergoing motion. The plant, the animal, comes from a germ capable of definite evolution. Knowledge comes from the infant’s intelligence capable of grasping principle and consequences.

That there are many statues, say, of Apollo, supposes that the form of Apollo can be received in diverse portions of matter, each capable of

receiving that form. That there are many animals of one specific kind supposes that their specific form can be received in diverse parts of matter, each capable of being thus determined and actualized.

Potency, then, is not act, not even the most imperfect act conceivable. Potency is not yet initial movement. Potency, therefore, since it cannot be act, is really distinct from act, and hence remains under the act it has received, as a containing capacity of that act which it receives and limits. Matter is not the form which it receives but remains distinct under that form. If potency were imperfect act, it would not be really distinct even from the perfect act which it receives.

In the eyes of Aristotle, and of Aquinas who deepened Aristotle, real potency, as receiving capacity, is a necessary medium between actual being and mere nothing. Without real potency there is no answer to Parmenides, no possible way to harmonize becoming and multiplicity with the principle of identity, the primordial law of thought and of reality. Becoming and multiplicity involve a certain absence of identity, an absence which can be explained only by something other than act, and this other something can only be a real capacity, either to receive the act if the capacity is passive potency, or to produce the act, if the potency is active. But active potency is still potency, and hence presupposes an actual mover to actualize that potency. Hence arise the four causes, matter, form, agent, and end, with their correlative principles, in particular that of efficient causality, of finality, of mutation. Thus, in his first proof of God’s existence, St. Thomas writes: “Nothing can be moved except it be in potency. The thing which moves it from potency to act must be actual, not potential. Nothing can be reduced from potency to act except by being which is not potential, but actual.” This proof, it is evident, rests on the real distinction of potency from act. If that principle is not necessarily true, the proof loses its demonstrative power. The same holds good for his following proofs.

This truth was clearly seen by those who formulated the twenty-four theses.

Derivative Propositions

In the Thomistic Congress, held in Rome (1925): we illustrated the inner unity of the twenty-four theses by showing the far-reaching consequences of the distinction between potency and act. The points made in that paper we here summarize.

In the order of being we note ten consequences of the principle that potency is really and objectively distinct from act.

I. Matter is not form, but really distinct from form. Prime matter is pure potency, mere receiving capacity. Without form, it can simply not exist.

2. Finite essence is not its own existence, but really distinct from that existence.

3. God alone, pure act, is His own existence. He is existence itself, unreceived and irreceivable. “Sum qui sum. “

4. In all created person, personality is really distinct from existence.

5. God alone, existence itself, can have no accidents. Hence, by opposition, no created substance is immediately operative; it needs, in order to act, a super-added operative potency.

6. Form can be multiplied only by being received into matter. The principle of individuation is matter as preordained to this particular quantity.

7. The human soul is the sole form of the human body, since otherwise it would be, not substantial form, but accidental, and would not make the body one natural unity.

8. Matter, of itself, has neither existence nor cognoscibility. It becomes intelligible only by its relation to form.

9. The specific form of sense objects, since it is not matter, is potentially intelligible.

10. Immateriality is the root both of intelligibility and of intellectuality. The objectivity of our intellectual knowledge implies that there is in sense objects an intelligible element, distinct from matter, and the immateriality of the spirit is the source of intellectuality, the level of intellectuality corresponding to the level of immateriality.

In the order of operation, we note six consequences.

I. The operative potencies, the faculties, are distinguished specifically by the formal object and act to which each is proportioned.

2. Hence each faculty is really distinct, first, from the soul itself, second, from all other faculties.

3. Each cognoscitive faculty becomes, intentionaliter, i. e.: in a supramaterial order, the object known, whereas matter cannot become form.

4. Whatever is in motion has that motion from something higher than itself. Now, in a series of actually and necessarily subordinated causes regression to infinity is impossible: the sea is upheld by the earth, the earth

by the sun, the sun by some higher source, but somewhere there must be a first upholding source. Any cause, which is not its own activity, can have that activity ultimately only from a first and supreme cause which is its own activity, and hence its own existence, because mode of activity follows mode of being. Hence the objective necessity of admitting God's existence.

5. Since every created faculty is specifically constituted by its own proper object, it follows evidently that no created intellect can be specifically proportioned to the proper object of divine intelligence. Hence the divinity as it is in itself, being inaccessible to created intelligence, constitutes an order essentially supernatural, an order of truth and life which transcends even the order of miracles, which are indeed divine deeds, but can be known naturally.

6. The obediential potency, by which the creature is capable of elevation to the supernatural order, is passive, not active. Were it otherwise, this potency would be both essentially natural, as a property of nature, and simultaneously supernatural, as specifically constituted by a supernatural object, to which it would be essentially proportioned. The word "obediential" relates this potency to the agent which alone can raise it to a supernatural object, to which, without that elevation, it can never be related and proportioned. Here lies the distinction between the two orders. The theological virtues are per se infused only because they are specifically constituted by a supernatural object which, without grace, is inaccessible.

Revelation admitted, the real distinction of potency from act, of finite essence from existence, leads us to admit, further, that in Christ, just as there is one person for the two natures, so there is likewise one existence for those two natures. The Word communicates His own existence to his human nature, as, to illustrate, the separated soul, when it resumes its body, gives to that body its own existence. Similarly, in the Trinity, there is for the three persons one sole uncreated existence, namely, existence itself, identified with the divine nature.

Such are the consequences of the distinction between potency and act, first in the natural order, then in the supernatural order. The brief analysis just given shows what the Congregation of Studies had in mind when it declared that the twenty-four theses are safe norms of intellectual direction. The supreme authority does not intend these theses to be definitions of faith, but declarations of the doctrine preferred by the Church.

We have noted above the state of things that led to the formation of the twenty-four theses. Now, thirty years later, the same conditions seem to have returned. Lip-service to St. Thomas is universal, but the theses defended under his name are often worlds apart, and even contradict the holy doctor. Can a man be called Thomist by the mere fact that he admits the dogmas defined by the Church, even while he follows Descartes in his teachings on the spiritual life, or denies the evident principle of causality, and hence the validity of proof for the existence of God.

A small error in principle is a great error in conclusion. This is the word of St. Thomas, repeated by Pius X. To reject the first of the twenty-four theses is to reject them all. This reflection led the Church to approve the twenty-four.

But are not the truths of common sense a sufficient foundation for Catholic philosophers and theologians? They are, but not when they are distorted by individualistic interpretations. If these truths are to be defended today, against phenomenalists, idealists, and absolute evolutionists, we must penetrate to their philosophic depths. Without this penetration we lose all consistency, even in fundamentals, and fall prey to a skepticism, if not in thought, at least in life and action, to a fideism which is the dethronement of reason and of all serious intellectual life. And if it be said that sincerity in the search for truth remains, then we must retort that a sincerity which refuses to recognize the value of the greatest doctors whom God gave to His Church is surely a doubtful sincerity, destined never to reach its goal. Common sense is a term to conjure with. But let it be genuine common sense, fortified by deep analysis of man’s first notions and man’s first principles. Otherwise, deserting Thomas of Aquin, we may find ourselves in the poor encampment of Thomas Reid.

Here we may well listen to Pierre Charles, S. J.: “In favor of the history of dogma, and in discredit of metaphysics, an extremely virulent relativism had been, almost without notice, introduced into the teaching of doctrine. Psychology replaced ontology. Subjectivism was substituted for revelation. History inherited the place of dogma. The difference between Catholics and Protestants seemed reduced to a mere practical attitude in regard to the papacy. To arrest and correct this baneful and slippery attitude, Pius X had the proper gesture, brusk and definitive. Anglican modernism today shows

all too well the frightening consequences to which, without the intervention of the Holy See, doctrinal relativism might have led us.

“Papal condemnation has brought to light, in many Catholic theologians, a gaping void: the lack of philosophy. They shared the positivistic disdain for metaphysical speculation. Sometimes they proclaimed a highly questionable fideism. Fashion led them to ridicule philosophy, to jeer at its vocabulary, to contrast its infatuated audacity with the modesty of scientific hypotheses. The pope, by describing and synthesizing the modernistic error, compelled theology to re-examine, not so much particular problems, but rather fundamental religious notions, so skillfully distorted by the school of innovators. The philosophic bone-structure began to reappear ever more clearly as indispensable for the entire theological organism.”

We admonish professors, Pius X had said, to bear well in mind, that the smallest departure from Aquinas, especially in metaphysics, brings in its wake great harm.

An historian of medieval philosophy has recently said that Cajetan, instead of limiting himself to an excellent commentary of the Summa, was rather bound to follow the intellectual movement of his time. The truth is that Cajetan did not feel himself thus called by Him who guides the intellectual life of the Church on a higher level than that of petty combinations, presumptions, and other deviations of our limited intelligences. Cajetan’s glory lies in his recognition of the true grandeur of St. Thomas, of whom he willed to be the faithful commentator. This recognition was lacking in Suarez, who deserted the master lines of Thomistic metaphysics to follow his own personal thought.

Many a theologian, on reaching the next world, will realize that here below he failed to appreciate the grace which God bestowed on His Church when He gave her the Doctor Communis.

In these late years one such theologian has said that speculative theology, after giving beautiful systems to the Middle Ages, does not today know what it wants, or whither it is going, and that there is no longer serious work except in positive theology. He is but repeating what was said during the epoch of modernism. In point of truth, theology, if it disregarded the principles of the Thomistic synthesis, would resemble a geometry which, disregarding Euclidean principles, would not know whither it is going.

Another theologian of our own time proposes to change the order among the chief dogmatic treatises, to put the treatise on the Trinity before that of

De Deo uno, which he would notably reduce. Further, on the fundamental problems relative to nature and grace, he invites us to return to what he holds to be the true position of many Greek Fathers anterior to St. Augustine. The labors of Aquinas, the labors of seven centuries of Thomists, are either of no value or of very little value.

Alongside these extreme and idle views, we find an eclectic opportunism, which strives to reach a higher level between positions which it regards as extreme. But it is destined to perpetual oscillation between two sides, since it can not recognize, or then cannot appreciate, that higher truth, which, amid fruitless tentatives, the Church unswervingly upholds and opportunely repeats, as she has done in our own time by approving the twenty-four theses.

We must grant that the problems of the present hour grow continually graver. But this situation is an added reason for returning to the doctrine of St. Thomas on being, truth, and goodness, on the objective validity of first principles, which alone can lead to certitude on God's existence, which is the foundation of all duty, and to attentive examination of those prime notions which are involved in the very enunciation of the fundamental dogmas. This necessity has been recently reinculcated by the Right Reverend St. M. Gillet, general of the Dominicans in a letter to all professors in the order. Msgr. Olgiati urges the same necessity in a forthcoming book on "Law according to St. Thomas." By this road alone can we reach the goal, thus indicated by the Vatican Council:

"Reason, illumined by faith, if it seeks sedulously, piously, and soberly, can attain a most fruitful understanding of revealed mysteries, both by analogy with natural knowledge and by the interwoven union of these mysteries with one another and with man's last end. "

Who more surely than St. Thomas can lead us to this goal? Let us not forget the word of Leo XIII, on the certainty, profundity, and sublimity of the saint's teaching.

In the life of the priest, above all in the life of a professor, whether of philosophy or not, it is a great grace to have been fashioned by the principles of St. Thomas. How much floundering and fluctuation does he thereby escape: on the validity of reason, on God one and triune, on the redemptive Incarnation, the sacraments, on the last end, on human acts, on sin, grace, virtues, and gifts! These directing principles of thought and life become ever more necessary as the conditions of existence grow ever more

difficult, demanding a certitude more firm, a faith more immovable, a love of God more pure and strong.

Chapter 56

Realism And First Principles

The problem we treat here, that of the fundamental objective foundation of the Thomistic synthesis, merits greatest attention.

The depth of thought in the Middle Ages stands revealed in the importance they gave to the problem of universals. Does the universal idea correspond to reality, or is it a mere concept, or is it, lastly, just a name with a mere conventional meaning? Do our ideas agree with the objective reality of things, or are they mere subjective necessities of human thought and language?

This fundamental problem, which certain superficial minds look on as antiquated, has reappeared, under a new form, in the discussions relative to the question of fixed species, and still more notably in the discussion on absolute evolutionism. The primary reality, the universal principle—is it something absolutely immutable, or is it on the contrary, something identified with universal change, with creative evolution, with a God who evolves in humanity and the world? On this problem traditional realism is radically opposed to subjective conceptualism and to nominalism.

The importance of this problem of the universal stands out most clearly in its relation to the principle of contradiction. Aristotle sees in this principle the primordial law of being and of thought, Locke sees in it nothing but a solemn futility, and Descartes thinks that God could have created a world where this principle would not be true. These different conceptions arise, it is clear, from different forms of solving the problem of universals. This radical discord at the very roots of human thought vividly illumines the meaning and importance of traditional realism.

Hence we proceed here to recall the essentials of this problem in relation:

a) to the absolute realism of Parmenides.

b) to the absolute nominalism of Heraclitus.

c) to the limited realism of Aristotle and St. Thomas. .

CONTRADICTION AND EXAGGERATED REALISM

The first man on record as having seen the primordial importance of the principle of contradiction is Parmenides. But, in enthusiastic intuition, he gave to the principle a realist formula, so absolute as to deny all facts of change and multiplicity. “Being exists, non-being does not exist: from this thought there is no escape.” Thus, for him, the principle affirms, not merely the objective impossibility of simultaneous contradiction, but also the exclusion from reality of all changing existence. Being, reality, is one, unique, and immutable, ever identified with itself. It could be changed, diversified, multiplied, only by something other than itself, and something other than being is non-being, and non-being simply is not. Nor can being commence to exist, because it would have to arise either from being or from non-being. Now it cannot come from being which already is. Nor can it come from non-being which is not, which is nothing. Beginning, becoming, is an illusion. Thus does absolute realism of the intellect lead to the mere phenomenalism of sense knowledge.

Aristotle, we recall, solved these arguments of Parmenides by distinguishing potency from act. The actual statue comes from the wood which is potentially the statue, the plant from the seed which potentially is the plant. Being is an analogous notion, not univocal, and is found only proportionally in potency and act, in pure act and in beings composed of potency and act. Parmenides could not distinguish being in general from the divine being. Of the divine being only is it true to say that it is unique and immutable, that it can neither lose nor gain, that it can have no accidents, no additions, no new perfections.

What led Parmenides to this confusion? It was the supposition, at least implicit, that the universal as such, as it exists in the mind, must likewise be formally universal in the mind’s object. The conditions of thought must be likewise the conditions of reality.

What Parmenides said of being Spinoza says of substance. Being exists, said Parmenides, non-being does not exist. Substance exists, says Spinoza, because in substance existence is an essential predicate. Hence, instead of saying: If God exists, He exists of Himself, Spinoza affirms a priori the existence of God, the one and only substance.

But all absolute realism, including Spinoza's restriction to substance, leads by reaction to nominalism. Plurality of substance, plurality of attributes and faculties, are mere sounds. There is but one unique and eternal substance, says Spinoza, even while the finite modes of that substance follow one another eternally. Were Spinoza consequent, he would agree with Parmenides. He would deny all reality to these modes, and admit as real only the one unique and substantial being, which can lose nothing and gain nothing.

In attenuated form, absolute realism reappears in the ontologists who admit the a priori proof of God's existence, because they claim to have intuition of God, and see in Him the truth of first principles. They say: "Immediate knowledge of God, at least habitual, is so essential to the human intellect, that without that knowledge it can know nothing. For that knowledge is itself man's intellectual light." "That reality which is in all things, and without which we know nothing, is the divine reality." "Our universal ideas, considered objectively, are not really distinguished from God." .

Exaggerated realism, to conclude, tends to confound being in general with the divine being. Hence it turns the principle of contradiction into a judgment, not essential but existential, or even confounds that principle with the affirmation of God's existence. "Being exists" becomes equivalent to: "There exists one sole Being, which cannot not exist."

CONTRADICTION AND NOMINALISM

Heraclitus, according to Aristotle, denied the objective validity of the principle of contradiction or identity, because of the perpetual mobility of the sense world, where everything changes and nothing remains absolutely identical with itself. The arguments of Parmenides who, invoking the principle of identity, denies multiplicity and change, become from Heraclitus' point of view, a mere play of abstract concepts, without objective foundation, and the principle of contradiction a mere law of language and of inferior discursive reason, which employs these more or less conventional abstractions. Superior reason, intuitive intelligence, rises above these artificial abstractions, and reaches intuition of the fundamental reality, which is a perpetual becoming, wherein being and non-being are

identified, since that which is in the process of becoming is not as yet, but still is not mere nothing.

This radical nominalism of Heraclitus reappeared among the Greek Sophists, Protagoras in particular and Cratylus. It emerges again among the radical nominalists of the fourteenth century, and in our own day among absolute evolutionists, under an idealistic form in Hegel, under an empiric form in many positivists. Hegel's universal becoming leads him to nominalism as regards the notions of being and substance, leads him to deny all reality in substance, divine or created.

In the Middle Ages, Nicholas of Autrecourt had expressed the first principle thus: If something exists, something exists. Nicholas and Parmenides are antipodes. The principle of contradiction has become a mere hypothesis. Beneath the words, "If something exists, something exists," lies a mental reservation, running somewhat as follows: "But perhaps nothing exists, perhaps our very notion of being, of reality, is without validity, even in the possible order, perhaps that which to us seems impossible, a squared circle, for example, or an uncaused beginning, is not really impossible in extra-mental reality, perhaps uncaused beginning, creative evolution, is the one fundamental reality."

The principle of contradiction thus forfeited, the principle of causality, having no longer ontological value, becomes a mere law of succession. Every phenomenon presupposes an antecedent phenomenon. Proof for the existence of God becomes impossible. Let us listen to Nicholas: .

"Natural appearances can give us hardly any certitude." "Nothing can be evidently concluded from another thing." "The two propositions, God is and God is not, signify, only in a different manner, the same thing." "These two conclusions are not evident. If there is an act of understanding, then there must be an intellect; if there is an act of will, then there must be a faculty of will."

Absolute nominalism, we see, has led to complete skepticism. Many scholars, who wished to harmonize St. Augustine with Descartes, failed to see that Descartes is profoundly nominalist when he declares that the principle of contradiction depends on God's free will, that God could have made a world wherein two contradictories would be simultaneously true. Imagine Augustine admitting this! Descartes' idea of divine liberty is an idea gone mad.

Further, if the principle of contradiction is not absolute, then the formula of Descartes himself loses all real validity and becomes a mere mental phenomenon. If I can deny this principle, then I may say: Perhaps I think and do not think simultaneously, perhaps I exist and do not exist, perhaps I am I and not I, perhaps "I think" is impersonal like "it rains." Without absoluteness of the principle of contradiction I cannot know the objective existence of my own individual person.

Some years ago Edward Le Roy wrote as follows: "The principle of contradiction, being only a law of speech and not of thought in general, applies only in what is static, particular, and immobile, in things endowed with identity. But just as there is identity in the world, so is there also contradiction. Fleeting mobilities, beginnings, duration, life, which, though not in themselves discursive, are transformed by discourse into contradictory categories" (Le Roy, Rev. de Met. et de morale, 1905, pp. 200 ff.).

Now by this road, as by that of radical nominalism, we arrive at absolute evolutionism, or then at complete agnosticism. "If something exists, then something exists." Then we must continue: But perhaps nothing exists, perhaps everything is in flux, perhaps the fundamental reality is uncaused becoming, perhaps God is not eternal, but only arriving in humanity and the world.

CONTRADICTION AND LIMITED REALISM

According to traditional realism, as formulated by Aristotle and Aquinas, the universal idea exists in the sense world, not formally, but fundamentally, and of all ideas the most universal is that of being, on which is founded the principle of contradiction. This principle is not a mere existential judgment, but neither is it, as nominalists would have it, a mere hypothetical judgment, nor, as the conceptualists maintain, a mere subjective law of thought. It is simultaneously a law both of thought and of being. It excludes not only what is subjectively inconceivable, but also what is objectively impossible.

This limited realism does not, like Parmenides, stop short with saying: Being is, non-being is not. Neither does it say with nominalism: If something exists, then of course it exists, but perhaps our notion of being does not allow us to know the fundamental law of extramental reality. No,

limited realism claims to have intellectual intuition of the objective extramental impossibility of a thing which, remaining the same, could simultaneously be and not be, the impossibility, say, of a square circle, or of an uncaused beginning. Its positive formula is: Being is being, non-being is non-being. Its negative formula is: Being is not non-being. Positively expressed, it is the principle of contradiction. Both formulas express the same truth. .

“No one can ever conceive,” says Aristotle, “that one and the same thing can both be and not be. Heraclitus, according to some, differs on this point. But it is not necessary that what a man says be also what he thinks. To think thus would be to affirm and deny in the same breath. It would destroy language, it would be to deny all substance, all truth, even all probability and all degrees of probability. It would be the suppression of all desire, all action. Even becoming and beginning would disappear, because if contradictories and contraries are identified, then the point of departure in motion is identified with the terminus and the thing supposed to be in motion would have arrived before it departed.” .

Hence we must hold absolutely this fundamental law of thought and of reality, a law founded on the very notion of being. That which is, is, and cannot simultaneously not be.

Granting, then, the principle of contradiction, we must likewise grant that there is more reality in that which is than in that which is in the process of becoming and which as yet is not; more in the plant than in the seed, more in the adult animal than in the embryo, more in being than in becoming. Hence the process of becoming is not self-explanatory, it presupposes a cause. Evolution, becoming, is not identified with the primary and fundamental reality, as A is identified with A. Becoming is not identical with being. That which is in the process of becoming as yet is not.

Hence in man’s order of discovering truth, the principle of contradiction is both his first and his last step. As first step, it says: “That which is, is, and cannot simultaneously not be.” As last step, on the highest level of discovery, it says: “I am He who is.”

This is no a priori proof of God’s existence, nor even of God’s objective possibility, because we must first know sense realities, from which alone, by the road of causality, we can rise from this lower analogue of being to the supreme analogue of uncreated reality. But the first step in discovery: “That which is, is,” corresponds to the last step: “I am He who is.” .

But if we follow Descartes in doubting the absolute necessity, the objective validity, independent of God's decrees, of the principle of contradiction, if we maintain that the Creator could perhaps make a squared circle, then we cannot possibly maintain even "I think, therefore I am" as an objective judgment, nor can we find any valid a posteriori proof of God's existence. If, on the contrary, we maintain the absolute necessity of this principle, we find that the supreme reality is identified with being as A is identified with A. The supreme reality then, is not becoming, is not creative evolution, but is Being itself, ever identical with itself, in whom alone is essence identified with existence. This profound view of the initial truth, of the principle of identity founded on the notion of being, leads necessarily, first, to the primacy of being over becoming, second, by the road of causality, to the supreme truth: I am He who is, who cannot but be, who can lose nothing, who can gain nothing.

Parmenides confounded the initial truth with the ultimate and supreme truth. Heraclitus, denying the initial truth, closed all approach to that supreme truth. Limited realism, penetrating the meaning and the range of the initial truth, its inner union with the primacy of being and hence with the principle of causality, leads us naturally and necessarily to the supreme truth. Any true philosopher, it has been said, has at bottom one sole thought, a root thought whence all his ideas branch forth. The root thought of traditional philosophy is the principle of identity and contradiction, of the primacy of being over becoming. This primacy, expressed initially and implicitly by the principle of identity, reaches complete and definitive expression in affirming the existence of God, being itself, wherein alone essence is identical with existence: I am He who is.

REALISM AND THE PRINCIPLE OF CAUSALITY

Unlimited realism, as conceived by Parmenides, and in attenuated forms by Spinoza, starts from pseudo-intuition of the Supreme Being and arrives at the negation of causality and creation, God being all reality. Absolute nominalism reduces the principle of causality to a law of the phenomenal order. Every phenomenon presupposes an antecedent phenomenon, conventionally called its cause. Hence there can be no first cause, nor any miracle, because the so-called miraculous phenomenon would have to have

a phenomenal antecedent, since there can be no supraphenomenal intervention of a divine cause.

Against the pseudo-intuition of the unlimited realists, including Malebranche, nominalism holds that the first object of human intelligence is the brute fact of existence of phenomena. To this it adds: If anything really exists, then it is, but perhaps, properly speaking, nothing is, everything is in a state of uncaused becoming, a mere series of brute facts, all unintelligible.

In limited and traditional realism, the first object of human intelligence is not God, who is its highest object, is not merely the brute fact of existence, but the intelligible being of sense objects, wherein, as in a mirror, we can discover a posteriori, by the road of causality, the existence of God.

Thus we explain the ontological validity, not merely of the principle of contradiction, but also that of causality. It is just as impossible that the contingent being be contingent and not contingent as it is that the triangle be not a triangle. And just as we cannot deny that characteristic of the triangle which makes its three angles equal to two right angles, so we cannot deny that characteristic of the contingent being which presupposes a cause. In other words, existence is incompatible with an uncaused contingent being. Such a being would be absurd.

Our sense of sight knows the brute fact, the phenomenon of color, but our intellect knows the intelligible reality of that fact. Man’s intelligence, the lowest of all intelligences, has as object the lowest level of intelligible reality, the intelligibility of the sense world, wherein, as in a mirror, it knows the existence of a first cause, of God. .

In the ascending order of discovery, we thus formulate the principle of causality: All that begins, all that is contingent, has a cause, and in last analysis a supreme cause, an uncaused cause. In the descending order, thus: All beings by participation depend on the Being by essence as on their supreme cause. That which is being by participation is not its own existence, since we must distinguish the subject which participates from the existence which it receives and participates. Peter is not his existence, but has his existence, received from Him who alone can say: I am He who is, I am existence itself.” .

Chapter 57

Realism And Pragmatism

The eternal notion of truth, conformity of thought with reality, impels us to say: This displeases me and annoys me, but it is none the less true. Still, human interests are so strong that Pilate's question often reappears: What is truth? One answer which we must here examine is that of pragmatism.

I. PRAGMATISM AND ITS VARIATIONS

There are two kinds of pragmatism, one historical, the other theoretical. In England, at the end of the last century, Charles S. Peirce, aiming at unburdening philosophy of parrotism and logomachy, sought for a precise criterion whereby to distinguish empty formulas from formulas that have meaning. He proposed to take as criterion "the practical effects we can imagine as resulting from opposed views." A starting-point is found in a remark of Descartes: "We find much more truth in a man's individual reasoning on his own personal affairs, where loss follows error, than in those of the literary man in his study, where no practical result is anticipated." Equivalent remarks were often made by the ancients.

This form of pragmatism, which still grants much objectivity to knowledge, is also that of Vailati and Calderoni. Subsequently, however, with William James, pragmatism becomes a form of subjectivism, thus defined in the work cited: "A doctrine according to which truth is a relation, entirely immanent to human experience, whereby knowledge is subordinated to activity, and the truth of a proposition consists in its utility and satisfactoriness." That is true which succeeds.

Hence arise many variations. We find a pragmatic skepticism, similar to that of the ancient sophists, where success means pleasure to him who defends the proposition. Truth and virtue give way to individual interest. A

profitable lie becomes truth. What is an error for one man is truth for his neighbor. “Justice limited by a river,” says Pascal. “How convenient! Truth here is error beyond the Pyrenees!”.

An opposite extreme understands success to mean spontaneous harmony among minds engaged in verifying facts held in common. At the end of his life, James approached this view, which endeavors to uphold the eternal and objective notion of truth.

Between these two extremes we find many nuances, reasons of state, for example, or of family, where interests, national or private, defy objective truth and even common sense. Or again, opportunism, for which truth means merely the best way to profit by the present situation. Seeing these inferior connotations of pragmatism, as in course of acceptance by public usage, Maurice Blondel resolved to renounce the word which he had previously employed.

Edouard Le Roy writes as follows: “When I use the word ‘pragmatism,’ I give it a meaning quite different from that of the Anglo-Americans who have made the word fashionable. My employment of the word does not at all mean to sacrifice truth to utility, nor to allow, in the search for particular truths, even the least intervention of considerations extraneous to the love of truth itself. But I do hold that, in the search for truth, both scientific and moral, one of the signs of a true idea is the fecundity of that idea, its aptitude for practical results. Verification, I hold, should be a work, not merely a discourse.” .

Yet Le Roy proceeded to this pragmatist conception of dogma: In your relations to God, act as you do in your relations with men. Dogma, accordingly, is before all else a practical prescription. Dogma, speaking precisely, would not be true by its conformity with divine reality, but by its relation to the religious act to be performed, and the practical truth of the act would appear in the superior success of that religious experience in surmounting life’s difficulties. Hence the following proposition was condemned by the Church: “The dogmas of faith are to be retained only in the practical sense, i. e.: as preceptive norms of action, but not as norms of belief.” Thus the dogma of the Incarnation would not affirm that Jesus is God, but that we must act towards Jesus as we do towards God. The dogma of the Eucharist would not affirm, precisely, His Real Presence, but that practically we ought to act as if that Presence were objectively certain. Thus we see that the elevated variations of pragmatism are not without danger,

both in maintaining truth in general, and in particular dogmatic truths, defined by the Church as immutable and as conformed to the extramental reality which they express.

In opposition to all forms of pragmatism, let us recall the traditional notion of truth, in all its manifestations, from highest to lowest, including the truth in prudential arguments, which are always practically true, even when at times they involve a speculative error absolutely involuntary.

II. THE TWO NOTIONS COMPARED

Adequation of intellect and object: that is the definition of truth given by St. Thomas. He quotes that of St. Augustine: Truth is that by which reality is manifested, and that of St. Hilary: Truth declares and manifests reality. The first relation of reality to intellect, St. Thomas continues, is that reality correspond to intellect. This correspondence is called adequation of object and intellect, wherein the conception of truth is formally completed. And this conformity, this adequation, of intellect to reality, to being, is what the idea of truth adds to the idea of being.

Truth, then, is the intellect’s conformity with reality. Change in this universal notion of truth brings with it total change in the domain of knowledge. The modernists, says Pius X, overturn the eternal notion of truth. .

Without going to this extreme, Maurice Blondel, in 1906, one year before the encyclical Pascendi, wrote a sentence that would lead to unmeasured consequences in science, in philosophy, and in faith and religion. In place of the abstract and chimerical definition of truth as the adequation of intellect and reality, thus he wrote, we must substitute methodical research, and define truth as follows: the adequation of intellect and life. How well this sentence expressed the opposition between the two definitions, ancient and modern! But what great responsibility does he assume who brands as chimerical a definition maintained in the Church for centuries. .

Life, as employed in the new definition, means human life. How, then, does the definition escape the condemnation inflicted on the following modernist proposition: Truth is not more unchangeable than is man himself, since it evolves with, in, and through man. .

Change in definition entails immense consequences. He who dares it should be sure beforehand that he clearly understands the traditional

definition, particularly in its analogous quality, which, without becoming metaphorical, is still proportional. Ontological truth, for example, is the conformity of creatures with the intellect of the Creator. Logical truth is the conformity of man's intellect to the world around him, which he has not made but only discovered. Logical truth is found both in existential judgments, e. g.: Mont Blanc exists, this horse is blind, I am thinking, and in essential judgments, e. g.: man is a rational animal, blindness is a privation, the laws of the syllogism are valid.

Truth, then, like being, unity, the good, and the beautiful, is not a univocal notion, but an analogical notion. Thus truth in God is adequation in the form of identity, God's intellect being identified with God's being eternally known. Truth in possible creatures is their correspondence with God's intellect. Truth in actual creatures is their conformity with the decrees of God's will. Nothing that is not God, not even created free acts, can exist except as causally dependent on God.

Truth, then, is coextensive with all reality. A change in defining truth, then, brings corresponding changes, not only in the domain of knowledge, but in that of willing and acting, since as we know, so do we will.

III. PRAGMATIC CONSEQUENCES

In sciences, physical and physico-mathematical, those facts which exist independently of our mind are considered certain, as laws which express constant relations among phenomena. Postulates, hypotheses, are defined by their relation to the truth to be attained, not as yet accessible or certain. To illustrate. On the principle of inertia, many scientists hold that inertia in repose is certain, meaning that a body not acted upon by an exterior cause remains in repose. But others, H. Poincare, for example, or P. Duhem, see in this view a mere postulate suggested by our experience with inertia in movement, which means that "a body already in motion, if no exterior cause acts upon it, retains indefinitely its motion, rectilinear and uniform." Experience suggests this view, because as obstacles diminish, the more is motion prolonged, and because "a constant force, acting on a material point entirely free, impresses on it a motion uniformly accelerated," as is the motion of a falling body. But the second formula of inertia, as applied to a body in repose, is not certain, because, as Poincare says: "No one has ever experimented on a body screened from the influence of every force, or, if he

has, how could he know that the body was thus screened? “ The influence of a force may remain imperceptible.

Inertia in repose, then, remains a postulate, a proposition, that is, which is not self-evident, which cannot be proved either a priori or a posteriori, but which the scientist accepts in default of any other principle. The scientist, says P. Duhem, has no right to say that the principle is true, but neither has he the right to say it is false, since no phenomenon has so far constrained us to construct a physical theory which would exclude this principle. It is retained, so far, as guide in classifying phenomena. This line of argument renders homage to the objective notion of truth. We could not reason thus under truth’s pragmatic definition.

Let us look now at metaphysical principles: The principle of contradiction or identity, that of sufficient reason, that of efficient causality, and that of finality. These principles, we say, are true, because it is evident that they are primary laws, not only of our mind but of all reality. They are not merely existential judgments, but express objective and universal impossibilities. Never and nowhere can a thing simultaneously exist and not exist, can a thing be without its raison d’etre, can a non-necessary thing exist without cause, can a thing act without any purpose. Metaphysical principles admit no exception. But they all disappear under the pragmatic definition of truth.

The truth in the formulas of faith is their conformity with the realities which they express; the Trinity, the Incarnation, eternal life, eternal pain, the Real Presence, the value of Mass. Although the concepts which express subject and predicate in these formulas are generally analogous, the verb “is” (or its equivalent) expresses immutable conformity to the reality in question. I am the truth and the life, says Jesus Though “truth” and “life” are analogous notions, Jesus added: “My words shall not pass away.” The same holds good of all dogmatic formulas. They are not mere “norms of action.” They do not express mere “conformity of our minds with our lives.” They express primarily, not our religious experience, but divine reality, a reality which often transcends experience, as, for instance, when we believe in heaven or n hell. Who can claim to experience the hypostatic union? Or the infinite values of Christ’s death? We may experience indeed, not these mysteries themselves, but their effects in us. The Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit that we are the sons of God. The Spirit, says St. Thomas, commenting on that sentence, evokes in us a filial affection

which we can experience. But even this experience we cannot absolutely distinguish from a mere sentimental affection.

Faith, therefore, both by its divine object and by its infallible certitude, transcends our experience. This is true even when faith, under the special inspirations of the gifts of knowledge and wisdom, becomes ever more savorous and penetrating. These gifts, far from constituting faith, presuppose faith. The same holds good of all religious experience. It holds good likewise of the certitude of faith and of the ardor of charity. Hope and charity presuppose faith and the act of faith itself presupposes credibility in the truths to be believed.

Dogmatic propositions, too, derive certainty from their conformity to the reality which they express. When God's revelation employs the natural notions of our intelligence, the natural certainty we have on all truths deriving from these notions is supplemented by a supernatural certainty, deriving from that revelation. Thus, when God says: I am He who is, our philosophical certainty of the attributes that belong to self-existent being is supplemented by theological certitude. When Jesus is revealed as truly God and truly man, theology deduces, with a certitude which transcends our experience, that Jesus has two wills, one belonging to His divine nature, and the other to His human nature.

Under the pragmatist definition of truth, on the contrary, we would have to say, and it has been recently said, that theology is at bottom merely a system of spirituality which has found rational instruments adequated to its religious experience. Thus Thomism would be the expression of Dominican spirituality, Scotism that of Franciscan spirituality, Molinism that of Ignatian spirituality. Hence, since these three systems of spirituality are approved by the Church, also the theological systems, which are their expression, would all be simultaneously true, as being each in conformity with the particular religious experience which is their respective originating principle. This position, if we recall that at times these systems contradict one another, is itself a painful illumination of the contrast between the traditional and pragmatist definitions of truth.

The question arises: Can a system of spirituality be true if it is not objectively founded on true doctrine? We, like many others, look on these ingenious theories as false spiritualizations of theology, reduced to a religious experience, wherein we look in vain for an objective foundation. Spiritual pragmatism may lead at best to prudential certitude which arises,

not directly from objective conformity with reality, but from subjective conformity with a right intention. But it would then have to descend still lower, because prudential truth and certitude presuppose a higher certitude, an objective certitude, without which even prudential certitude would vanish.

The certitude of prudence, as explained by Aquinas, following Aristotle, contains that which is true in limited pragmatism. Prudence is a virtue, even an intellectual virtue, in the moral order, a virtue which transcends opinion, and reaches a practical certitude on the goodness of the act in question. The truth of the practical intellect, Aristotle has said, differs from that of the speculative intellect. Speculative truth means conformity with objective reality. But since the intellect is limited to the necessary truths of reality, it cannot attain infallible conformity with the contingent and variable elements of reality. The contingent, as such, cannot be the subject matter of a speculative science. Truth in the practical intellect, on the contrary, means conformity with good will, with good intention. When for instance, presented with an unsuspected poisoned drink, a man proceeds to partake, his speculative error does not prevent his having a true prudential judgment based on his intention to obey charity and politeness. Practical truth can coexist with speculative error. Pragmatism can claim this partial truth.

PRAGMATISM MUST RETURN TO TRADITION

One chief difficulty, proposed by the philosophy of action, appears in St. Thomas in the form of an objection. The thesis is: Goodness in the will depends on reason. The objection runs thus: The reverse is true, because as the Philosopher says, truth conformed to right appetite is the goodness of the practical intellect, and right appetite means good will In other words, each man’s judgment follows his fundamental inclination, bad or good. If this fundamental inclination is bad, the judgment will be wrong. But if the inclination is good, the judgment too will be right and true, just as spiritual pragmatism maintains.

The saint’s answer runs thus: The Philosopher is speaking here of the practical intellect, as engaged in the order of means, to find the best road to a presupposed goal, for this is the work of prudence. Now it is true that in the order of means the goodness of the reason consists in its conformity with the will’s inclination to the right end and goal. But, he adds, this very

inclination of the will presupposes the right knowledge of the end, and this knowledge comes from reason. .

Prudential certitude, then, does presuppose right intention in the will, but this right intention itself derives its rectitude from those higher principles of reason which are true by their conformity with objective reality, with our nature and our last end. To reduce all truth to prudential certitude means to destroy prudential certitude itself.

To this extreme we seem to be led by those who, abandoning the eternal notion of truth as conformity with objective reality, propose rather to define truth as conformity of spirit with the exigencies of human life, a conformity known by a constantly developing experience, moral and religious. Here we are surely near the following modernistic proposition: Truth is not more immutable than is man himself, since it evolves with him, in him, and through him. .

The pragmatism we are here dealing with is not, we must acknowledge, the grovelling pragmatism of social climbers or politicians, who utilize mendacity as practical truth, as sure road to success. It is rather the pragmatism of good and honest men who claim to have a high level of religious experience. But they forget that man’s will, man’s intention, can be right and good only by dependence on the objective and self-supporting principles of man’s nature and man’s destination, as known by reason and revelation, principles which impose on him the duty of loving God, above all things, man himself included. This truth, the source of man’s good will and intention, rests on its conformity with the highest levels of reality, on the nature of our soul and our will, on the nature of God and God’s sovereign goodness, on the nature of infused grace and charity, which are proportioned to God’s own inner and objective life.

The consequences, then, even of this higher pragmatism, are ruinous, though unforeseen by those who meddle with the traditional definition of truth. We noted above the remark of M. Maurice Blondel that the abstract and chimerical definition of truth as “conformity of intellect to reality” should be abandoned in favor of “conformity of mind with life.” That was in 1906. Though he later attempted to draw near to St. Thomas, he still wrote: “No intellectual evidence, even that of ah solute and ontologically valid principles, is imposed on us with a certitude that is spontaneous and infallibly compelling; not more than our objective idea of the absolute Good

acts on our will as it would if we already had the intuitive vision of perfect goodness."

To admit parity here would be a grave error, because our adherence to first principles is necessary, whereas our choice to prefer God to all else is, in this life, free. Here below God is not known as a good which draws us invincibly, whereas the truth of the principle, say of contradiction, can simply not be denied. He who knows the meaning of the two words "circle" and "square" has necessary and compelling evidence of the objective impossibility of a square circle.

The higher pragmatism does not, it is true, sacrifice truth to utility. But to abandon the traditional definition of truth is to unsettle all foundations, in science, in metaphysics, in faith, in theology. Prudential truth rests on an order higher than itself. The enthusiasm of hope and charity, if it is not to remain a beautiful dream of religious emotion, must rest on a faith which is in conformity with reality, not merely with the exigencies of our inner life, or even with our best intentions Nothing can be intended except as known. Unless the intellect is right in its judgment on the end to be attained, there can be no rectitude in the will. The good, says St. Thomas, belongs first to reason under the form of truth, before it can belong to the will as desirable, because the will cannot desire good unless that good is first apprehended by the reason.

Our view is supported by Emile Boutroux. He writes as follows: "Is it the special action of the will which is in question? But the will demands an end, a purpose. Can you say that you offer an intelligible formula when you speak of a will which takes itself as purpose, that it has its own self as proper principle? That which these men search for by these ingenious theories is action, self-sufficient action independent of all concepts which would explain or justify action.

"Is not this to return willy-nilly to pragmatism? Human pragmatism, if the action is human, divine pragmatism, if the action is divine: action, conceived as independent of intellectual determination, which ought to be the source (and supreme rule) of human activity. Action for action's sake, action arising from action, simon-pure praxis, which perhaps brings forth concepts, but is itself independent of all concepts—does this abstract pragmatism still merit the name of religion?

"... And do you not enter on an endless road if you search in a praxis isolated from thought for the essence, for the true principle of a life

according to religion? “.

Let us, then, return to the traditional definition of truth. Action can never be the first criterion. The first criterion must be ontological, must be that objective reality from which reason draws first principles. The first act of the intellect is to know, not its own action, not the ego, not phenomena, but objective and intelligible being. The exigencies of life, far from making our thoughts true, derive their own truth from the thoughts that conform to reality and to divine reality. .

DIFFICULTIES

But surely we know our life, our will, our activity, better than we know the external world.

The question is not what we know best, but what we know first, and what we know first is not individual differences, not even specific differences, but external intelligible reality as being, as giving us first principles, without which we could not even say: “I think, therefore I am.” Further, the intellect knows what is within it better than it knows what is in the will, since we can always have some doubt on the purity of our intentions, which may be inspired by secret selfishness or pride. Man knows first principles with an incomparable certainty. But he cannot know with certainty that he is in the state of grace, in the state of charity.

As regards E. Le Roy, we hear it said that what is false is not his notion of truth in general, but his notion of the truth of dogma.

We reply, first, that this defense is itself an admission that pragmatism in its proper sense leads to heresy. Secondly, Le Roy maintains pragmatism, not only in the field of dogma, but also in that of philosophy. “All ontological realism is ruinous and absurd: anything beyond thought is by definition unthinkable. Hence, with all modern philosophy, we must admit some kind of idealism.” .

Thirdly, the phrase “anything beyond thought is unthinkable” holds good indeed of divine thought, but not of human thought, which distinguishes between things as yet undiscovered and things which we know, the extramental reality, e. g.: of this table on which I write. Common sense knows evidently the objective validity of the sense knowledge here exemplified. And even idealists, forgetting that they are idealists, often speak the language of common sense. .

As regards Blondel's philosophy of action, we find that he still maintains in his latest work, these two positions: first, concepts are always provisional, second, free will governs the intellect, not only in the act of attention, but also in the act of admitting the validity of first principles. Thus, though he has turned back to some traditional positions, he is still far off. He gives, as P. Boyer says, too much imperfection to universal concepts. This is the least one can say. But Blondel rises at times above his own philosophy and affirms the absolute truth concerning God, truth which is conformity of our intellect to extramental reality, to Supreme Reality. .

In the 1945 volume of Acta. Acad. S. Thomae (no. 226) the statement is made that I was obliged to retract what I had said concerning Blondel. That statement is false. My position is still what it was in 1935 and 1944. The propositions there quoted, I held and still hold, are untenable. The philosophy of action must return to the philosophy of being, must change its theories of concept and judgment, must renounce its nominalism, if it is to defend the ontological, extramental validity of first principles and dogmatic formulas.

But did not Blondel retract the last chapter of l'Action? He did. But he still holds that concepts have their stability only from the artifice of language, not only in physics and biology, but also in mathematics and logic. He still maintains that the free will intervenes in every judgment, not only as regards attention, but also as regards mental assent, even in first principles. Hence first principles are not necessary only probable. .

The immutable judgments of faith, then, cannot be preserved inviolate unless we cling to the immutable concepts of being, unity, truth, goodness, nature, and person. And how shall these concepts remain immutable if "they have their stability only from the artifice of language"?

The philosophy of action is true in what it affirms, false in what it denies. It affirms the value of the action by which the human will raises itself to the love of God. But in denying the validity proper to the intellect, It compromises the validity of voluntary action. Depreciating intellective truth, we cannot defend our love of God.

Chapter 58

Ontological Personality

Father Carlo Giacon, S. J.: recently published an important work, La seconda scolastica (Milan, 1943): which deals with the great Thomistic commentators of the sixteenth century: Cajetan, Ferrariensis, Victoria. The author maintains that the twenty-four theses are the "major pronouncements" of the philosophy of St. Thomas. He has excellent remarks on this doctrine, and on its opposition to Scotism, and to nominalism. Having recognized the great merits of Capreolus, Cajetan, Ferrariensis, and John of St. Thomas, he continues: "After these two great men (Cajetan and Ferrariensis): the Thomistic synthesis, with unimportant deviations, remained intact among the Dominicans. But it became ever wider among the Jesuits, and wider still among the disciples of Suarez than in Suarez himself. There was no return to nominalism, but there was some yielding to nominalistic influences. Scotism, too, which lived on, came to have views somewhat loosely connected with traditional speculation."

While we are in general accord with this author and must commend his penetrating and disinterested love of truth, we feel bound to differ from him when he maintains that, on the question of ontological personality, Cajetan departed from St. Thomas. It seems well to dwell on this point, since the doctrine of personality is so closely united with that on essence and existence and hence of special importance in treating the Incarnation and the Trinity.

Person (human, angelic, or divine) means a subject, a suppositum which can say "I," which exists apart, which is sui juris. The question is: What is it that formally constitutes that ontological personality, which is the root of the intellectual personality and the moral personality?

Ontological personality, says Cajetan, is that which constitutes the person as universal subject of all its attributes: essence, existence, accidents,

operations. In this view, says Father Giacon, Cajetan departs from St. Thomas. We, on the contrary, hold that Giacon, who says that existence is the formal constitutive element of personality, has himself departed from St. Thomas. .

Many texts are available in St. Thomas. Throughout he affirms that the suppositum, that which exists, the subject formally constituted as subject, is really distinct from its existence, and that existence, far from being the formal constituent, is only a contingent predicate. .

Existence is not id quo subjectum est quod est, id quo persona est persona, but id quo subjectum seu persona existit. Natura est id quo subjectum est in tali specie.

To say that the subject, Peter, is formally constituted by a contingent predicate is to suppress all that constitutes him as subject, is to suppress id quo aliquid est quod. Then, there being no longer a real subject, there cannot be longer any real predicate: essence, existence, operation, all disappear with the suppositum.

“That which exists” is not the essence of Peter, it is Peter himself, and Peter, a creature, is not his own existence. .

Peter of himself is Peter, of himself he is a person, but he is not of himself existent, not his own existence; Peter is really distinct from his nature, as whole is distinct from essential part, and he is really distinct from his contingent existence. Peter is not his existence, but has existence. .

But then, if person is not formally constituted by existence, nor by individualized nature (since this in Christ exists without a human personality): what is it that does constitute personality?The name “person,” says St. Thomas, is derived from the form which we call “personality,” and “personality” expresses subsistence in a rational nature. Again: The form signified by this noun “personality” is not essence or nature, but personality. Again, speaking of suppositum, i. e.: first substance, he says: Substance signifies an essence to which it belongs to exist per se, though this existence is not that essence itself.

These texts say, equivalently, that personality is not that by which the person exists, but that by which it is suited to exist, is that by reason of which the person is made capable of existing per se. And this is the teaching of Cajetan.

Further, personality thus conceived is something real, distinct from nature and from existence. In Christ, says the saint, if the human nature had

not been assumed by a divine person that human nature would have its own personality. The divine person, uniting with human nature, hindered that human nature from having its own personality.

But then, one may say, you must admit that personality is a substantial mode. Now St. Thomas never spoke of this substantial mode which later came into vogue among the Scholastics.

The answer is that St. Thomas not only speaks of accidental modes (e. g.: the speed of movement): and of transcendental and special modes of being, but he also freely uses the term “substantial mode.” Thus he writes: By the name “substance” we express that special mode of being, which belongs to independent being. Again, speaking precisely of person, he says: Person is contained in the genus of substance, not as species, but as determining a special mode of existing. This means, in other words, that personality, just as Cajetan says, is that by which person is immediately capable of independent and separate existence. Capreolus is less explicit, but is in essential agreement. Suppositum, he writes, is identified with individual substantial being which has existence per se. He does not say that personality is formally constituted by existence. We can without difficulty admit his enunciations.

Cajetan’s doctrine is not merely the only doctrine that agrees with that of St. Thomas, it is also the only doctrine that agrees with that which common sense and natural reason employ when we use the personal pronouns (I, you, he) of the subject which is intelligent and free. There must be something real to constitute this subject as subject. .

Rightly, therefore, does Cajetan say to his opponents: “If we all admit the common notion of person as point of departure, why do we turn away from that common notion when we come to scrutinize the reality signified by that common notion? “ His opponents pass from the nominal definition to a pseudo-philosophic notion, which forgets the point of departure which they originally intended to explain.

LET US SUMMARIZE

1. To deny this doctrine is gravely to jeopardize the real distinction of essence from existence.

2. To deny it is to destroy the truth of affirmative propositions relative to a real subject. In propositions like the following: Peter is existent,. Peter is

wise, the verb “is” expresses real identity between subject and predicate. Now this identity thus affirmed is precisely that of the suppositum, the person, notwithstanding the real distinction of essence from existence, of substance from accidents. If these propositions are to be true, there must be a reality which formally constitutes Peter as subject. Now this cannot be his individual essence, which is attributed to him as essential part, nor his existence which is a contingent predicate.

Similarly, this proposition spoken of Jesus: This man is God, can be true only by identity of His person, notwithstanding the distinction between the two natures. .

3. To reject this doctrine, to say that personality is existence itself, is to overturn the order of the treatise on the Incarnation. The seventeenth question on the one existence in Christ would have to be incorporated in the second question where St. Thomas discusses the hypostatic union. Further, a common point of doctrine in this treatise is that the person is the principium quod of theandric acts. Now existence, which is common to the three persons, cannot be principium quod of theandric actions which belong solely to the Second Person. .

We regret our disagreement on this point with Father Giacon, who has often penetrated deeply into the merits of Cajetan and Ferrariensis. He recognizes that they have correctly interpreted and vigorously defended the great metaphysical doctrines of the Thomistic synthesis. Hence we hope that a serene and objective study of our differences on ontological personality will not be without result.

Chapter 59

Efficacious Grace

Treating the questions of God's foreknowledge, of predestination and of grace, many Molinists, in order to denote themselves as Thomists, refer to classic Thomism under the name of "Bannesianism." Informed theologians see in this practice an element of pleasantry, even of comedy.

Our purpose here is to insist on a principle admitted by all theologians, a principle wherein Thomists see the deepest foundation of the distinction between grace sufficient and grace efficacious.

THE PROBLEM

Revelation makes it certain that many graces given by God do not produce the effect (at least the entire effect) toward which they are given, while other graces do produce this effect. Graces of the first kind are called sufficient graces. They give the power to do good, without bringing the good act itself to pass, since man resists their attraction. The existence of such graces is absolutely certain, whatever Jansenists say. Without these graces, God, contrary to His mercy and His justice, would command the impossible. Further, since without these graces sin would be inevitable, sin would no longer be sin, and could not justly be punished. Judas could have really here and now avoided his crime, as could the impenitent robber who died near our Savior.

Graces of the second kind are called efficacious. They not only give us real power to observe the precepts, but carry us on to actual observance, as in the case of the penitent robber. The existence of actual efficacious grace is affirmed, equivalently, in numerous passages of Scripture. Ezechiel says, for example: I will give you a new heart and put in you a new spirit, I will take away your heart of stone, and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My

spirit in you and bring it about that you follow My commands and observe and practice My laws. Again, the Psalmist says: All that God wills, He does. The word “wills” must here be understood as meaning all that God wills, not conditionally, but absolutely. Thus He wills a man’s free conversion, that of Assuerus, e. g.: at the prayer of Esther: Then God changed the wrath of the King into mildness. God’s omnipotence is, in these texts, assigned as reason for the infallible efficacy of God’s decree. .

The Second Council of Orange, against the Semi-Pelagians, after citing many of these texts, says of the efficaciousness of grace: Whenever we do good, God, in us and with us, brings our work to pass. Hence there is a grace which not only gives real power to act right (a power which exists also in him who sins): but which produces the good act, even while, far from excluding our own free cooperation, it arouses rather this cooperation, carries us on to consent.

St. Augustine thus explains these same texts: God, by His power, most hidden and most efficacious, turns the king’s heart from wrath to mildness.

The great majority of older theologians, Augustinians, Thomists, Scotists, hold that the grace called efficacious is efficacious of itself, because God wills it to be so, not because we will it to be so, by an act of consent foreseen by God. God is, not a mere spectator, but the Author of salvation. How is grace self-efficacious? Here these older authors differ. Some recur to the divine motion called premotion, some to what they call “victorious delectation,” some to a kind of attraction. But, amid all differences, they agree that grace is of itself efficacious.

Molina, on the contrary, maintains that grace is efficacious extrinsically, by our consent, foreseen by scientia media. This scientia media has always been rejected by Thomists, who say that it implies a passivity in God relative to our free determinations (futuribilia, and future): and that it leads to “determination by circumstances” (since it is by knowledge of these circumstances that God would foresee what man would choose). Thus the very being and goodness of the will and salutary choice would come from man and not from God. Granted equal grace to each, says Molina, it can come to pass that one is converted, the other not. Even with a smaller aid of grace one can rise, while another with greater grace does not rise, and remains hardened.

Molina’s opponents answer thus: Here we have a good, the good of a salutary act, which does not come from God, Source of all good. How then

maintain the word of Jesus: Without Me you can do nothing? Or that of St. Paul: What hast thou that thou hast not received? If, with equal grace, and amid equal circumstances, one is converted and the other not, then the convert has a good which he has not received.

Molinists object: If, in order to do good, you demand, besides sufficient grace, also self-efficacious grace, does sufficient grace really and truly give you a real power to act?

It does, so Thomists reply, if it is true that real power to act is distinct from the act itself; if it is true that the architect, before he actually builds, has a real power to build, that he who is seated has a real power to rise; that he who is sleeping is not blind, but has a real power to see. Further, if the sinner would not resist sufficient grace, he would receive the efficacious grace, which is offered in the preceding sufficient grace, as fruit is offered in the blossom. If he resists he merits privation of new aid.

But does St. Thomas explicitly distinguish self-efficacious grace from that grace which gives only the power to act?He does, and often. God's aid, he says, is twofold. God gives the power, by infusing strength and grace, by which man becomes able and apt to act. But He gives further the good act itself, by interiorly moving and urging us to good... since His power, by His great good will, operates in us to will and to do. Again: Christ is the propitiation for our sins, for some efficaciously, for all sufficiently, because His blood is sufficient price for the salvation of all, but does not have efficacy except in the elect, because of impediment. Does God remedy this impediment? He does, often, but not always. And here lies the mystery. God, he says, withholds nothing that is due. And he adds: God gives to all sufficient aid to keep from sin. Again, speaking of efficacious grace: If it is given to this sinner, it is by mercy; if it is refused to another, it is by justice.

Thomists add, in explanation: Every actual grace which is self-efficacious for an imperfect act, say attrition, is sufficient for a more perfect salutary act, say contrition. This is manifestly the doctrine of St. Thomas. If man resists the grace which gives him the power to do good, he merits privation of the grace which would carry him on to actual good deed. But the saint has not merely distinguished the two graces, he has pointed out the deepest foundation for this distinction.

“The will,” says St. Thomas, “is related to things as they are in themselves, with all their particular circumstances. Hence we will a thing simply (simpliciter) when we will it with all its concrete circumstances. This will we call the consequent will. Thus it is clear that everything which God wills simpliciter comes to pass.”

If, on the contrary, we will a thing in itself good, but independently of its circumstances, this will is called the antecedent will, or conditional will, since the good in question is not realized here and now. That man should live, says St. Thomas, is good. But if the man is a murderer, it is good that he be executed. Antecedently, God wills that harvests come to maturity, but He allows for some higher good, that not all harvests do in fact mature. Similarly, He wills antecedently the salvation of all men, though for some higher good, of which He alone is judge, He permits some to sin and perish.

But, since God never commands the impossible, His will and love make the observance of His commandments possible to all men, to each according to his measure. He gives to each, says St. Thomas, more than strict justice requires. It is thus that St. Thomas harmonizes God’s antecedent will, of which St. John Damascene speaks, with God’s omnipotence.

THE SUPREME PRINCIPLES

Nothing comes to pass, either in heaven or on earth, unless God either brings it to pass in mercy, or then in justice permits it. This principle, taught in the universal Church, shows that there is in God a conditional and antecedent will, relative to a good which does not come to pass, the privation of which He permits in view of some higher good.

To this principle we must add another: God does not command the impossible. From these two revealed principles derives the distinction between God’s efficacious consequent will and His antecedent will, which is the source of sufficient grace.

All that God wills, He does. This principle has no exception. All that God wills (purely, simply, unconditionally) comes to pass without our freedom being thereby in any way forced, because God moves that freedom sweetly and strongly, actualizing it, not destroying. He wills efficaciously that we freely consent and we do freely consent. The supreme efficacy of divine causality, says St. Thomas, extends to the free mode of our acts.

Many repeat these principles, but do not see that they contain the foundation of the distinction between the two kinds of grace, one that is self-efficacious, the other simply sufficient which man may resist, but not without divine permission.

Hence we find that in the ninth century, to terminate the long controversy with Gottschalk, the Council of Thuzey (860): at the instance of the Augustinian bishops, harmonized God's will of universal salvation with the sinner's responsibility. That Council's synodal letter contains this sentence: Whatever He has willed in heaven or on earth, God has done. For nothing comes to pass in heaven or on earth that He does not in mercy bring to pass or permits to come to pass in justice.

Since God's love is the cause of created goodness, says St. Thomas, no created thing would be better than another, if God did not give one a great good than He gives to another. This is equivalent to St. Paul's word: What hast thou that thou hast not received?

CONSEQUENCES

Christian humility rests on two dogmas, that of creation from nothing, and that of the necessity of grace for each and every salutary act. Now this same principle of God's predilection contains virtually the doctrine of gratuitous predestination, because the merits of the elect, since they are the effects of their predestination, cannot be the cause of that predestination. .

Even all there is of being and action in sin must come from God, Source of all being and of all activity. As the divine will cannot indeed, either directly or indirectly, will the disorder which is in sin, so neither can divine causality produce that disorder. Disorder is outside the adequate object of God's omnipotence, more than sound is outside the object of sight. As we cannot see sound, so God cannot cause the disorder of sin. Nothing is more precise and precisive, if we may use the word, than the formal object of a power. The good and the true are not really distinct in the object, yet the intellect attains in that object only the truth, and the will only the good. In our organism, it is impossible to confuse the effects of weight with the effects of electricity, say, or of heat. Each cause produces only its own proper effect. And thus God is the cause, not of the moral disorder in sin, but only what there is in sin of being and action. No reality comes to pass, to repeat the principle, unless God has willed it, and nothing of evil unless

God has permitted it. How necessary, then, it is that the theologian, after drawing conclusion from principles, should remount from conclusions to principles, thus clarifying his conclusions for those who do not see the bond that binds all consequences to the primal verities.

If, then, one of two sinners is converted, that conversion is the effect of a special mercy. And if a just man never sins mortally after his baptism, this perseverance is the effect of a still greater mercy. These simple remarks are enough to show the gratuity of predestination.

Molina, refusing to admit that grace is intrinsically self-efficacious, maintains that it is efficacious only by our consent, foreseen from eternity by scientia media. Thus we have a good which comes to pass without God having efficaciously willed it, contrary to the principle we have just laid down.

Molina does indeed attempt to defend that principle. God, having seen by scientia media that Peter, placed in such and such circumstances, would with sufficient grace be in fact converted, wills to place him in those favorable circumstances rather than in others where he would be lost. But this explanation surely reduces the absolute principle of predilection to a relative, indirect, and extrinsic principle. Grace is efficacious, not of itself and intrinsically, but only by circumstances which are extrinsic to the salutary act. With equal aid, yea with less aid, says Molina, one rises, the other perseveres in obstinacy. One who thus rises, St. Paul would say, has something he has not received.

THE MYSTERY

Who can resist God’s will? St. Paul answers this question with a hymn on the mysterious depths of God’s wisdom. Why God draws this man and not that man, says St. Augustine, judge not unless you would misjudge. Predestination, says St. Thomas, cannot have the merits of the elect as cause, because these merits are the effects of predestination, which is consequently gratuitous, dependent on the divine good pleasure.

Not infrequently we meet authors who, in explaining this mystery, wish to speak more clearly than St. Paul, St. Augustine, and St. Thomas. Superficially, they may be more clear. But is not this superficial clarity incompatible with the sense of mystery? Willy-nilly, these authors return to Molina. One of them recently wrote as follows: “Here is the mystery of

predestination. Since God knew from all eternity that Judas would not profit by the sufficient grace accorded to him, why did God not give to Judas, as He did to the good robber, those graces to which He knew that Judas would correspond? “.

This explanation is Molinistic, since it rests on scientia media, since it implies in God’s foreknowledge a passivity, depending on the course man would take, were he put in such and such circumstances, and which he will take if in fact he is placed there. The dilemma remains: Is God’s knowledge causal and determining? Or is it rather caused and determined? There is no medium.

If we follow the principle commonly received that all good comes from God’s efficacious will and all evil from God’s permission, then it is not sufficient to say with the author just quoted: God knew what would happen if, etc. We must rather say: God permitted the final impenitence of Judas. Had God not permitted it, it would not have come to pass and God could not have infallibly foreseen it. And God would not have permitted it, had He willed efficaciously to save Judas. But God did efficaciously will the conversion of the penitent robber, because He willed efficaciously his salvation (gratuitous predestination to glory). .

The free will moved and aroused by God, says the Council of Trent, can dissent if it will. This declaration, which was prepared by Dominic Soto, a Thomist, and by many Augustinians, is not a condemnation of self-efficacious grace. Grace actualizes our liberty, but leaves intact the freedom to resist. As he who is seated retains real power to rise, so he who chooses a particular road has real power to refuse it freely. Real power to resist is one thing, actual resistance is something else. .

No one, then, can be better than another unless he be loved more by God. Divine predilection is the foundation of predestination. Bannez says nothing more than does St. Thomas. Molina, more frank than some of his followers, recognized that his own doctrine is not that of St. Thomas. .

As regards reprobation, it consists precisely, says St. Thomas, in God’s will to permit sin (negative reprobation) and of inflicting punishment of damnation for sin (positive reprobation).

Hence it is wrong to say, as has been recently said, that permission of sin is found in the same way among the elect as it is among the reprobate. Final impenitence is never found among the elect.

Nothing comes to pass unless God wills it efficaciously, if it is good, or permits it if it is evil. God never commands the impossible. From these two most fundamental principles arises the distinction between efficacious grace, which is the effect of the intrinsically efficacious will of God, and sufficient grace, which is the effect of God's antecedent will, accompanied by permission of sin. The first grace gives the actual doing of salutary acts, the second gives real power for salutary acts. But—we cannot repeat it too often—sufficient grace is a blossom wherein efficacious grace is offered, yet so that, if man resists, he merits privation of the efficacious grace which, without this resistance, he would have received.

A very great mystery, certainly. God cannot be unjust, cries St. Paul. What creature can claim to have first given anything to God, so as to claim a reward? But this much is manifest in this chiaro oscuro: we are dealing here with the transcendent pre-eminence of the deity, wherein are harmonized infinite justice, infinite mercy, and supreme freedom. Final perseverance comes from infinite mercy. Final impenitence is a just punishment. The infinity of all God's attributes will be manifest only in the immediate vision of God as he is in Himself.

Let us learn, says Bossuet, to make our intelligence captive, to confess these two graces (sufficient and efficacious): one of which leaves our will without excuse before God, while the other forbids all self-glorification. Resistance to grace is an evil which comes only from ourselves. Non-resistance to grace is a good, which would not come to pass here and now, had not God from all eternity efficaciously willed it so.

Let us notice some common errors, especially in the minds of those who are just being introduced into this doctrine. It is an error to think that some receive only efficacious graces and others only those which are sufficient. All of us receive both kinds of graces. Even those in mortal sin receive from time to time efficacious graces, to make, say, an act of faith, or of hope. But often too they resist the sufficient grace which inclines them to conversion, whereas good servants of God often receive sufficient graces which they do not resist and which are followed by efficacious graces.

We should note too that there are various kinds of sufficient grace. There are first exterior graces, as, e. g.: a sermon, a good example, a proper guidance. Then interior graces, as, e. g.: that of baptism, the infused virtues and graces, which give us the proximate power to act supernaturally.

Thirdly, there are actual graces, graces of illumination, which give us good thoughts, graces of attraction which incline us to salutary consent, even though consent does not follow. A grace which efficaciously produces attrition is, as regards contrition, a sufficient grace. .

Sufficient grace often urges us insistently not to resist God's will, manifested to us by our superior, say, or by our director. For a year, it may be, or two years, or many years, circumstances strengthen what is demanded of us in God's name, and still we remain deceived by our selfishness, though prayers are said for us, and Masses celebrated for our intention. Notwithstanding all light and attraction that comes from these graces, we may still reach a state of hardening in sin. Behold I stand at the gate and knock.

Resistance comes from the soul alone. If resistance ceases, the warmth of grace begins, strongly and sweetly, to penetrate our coldness. The soul begins to realize that resistance is her own work, that non-resistance is itself a good that comes from the Author of all good, that it must pray for this good, as the priest prays just before his Communion at Mass: "Grant, O Lord, that I may ever cling to Thy precepts, and let me never be separated from Thee."

One who keeps the commandments sincerely is certainly better than he who, though fully able, does not keep them. He is therefore bound to special gratitude to God who has made him better. Hence our present distinction, between grace sufficient and grace efficacious, is the foundation of a gratitude intended to be eternal. The elect, as St. Augustine so often says, will sing forever the mercy of God, and will clearly see how this infinite mercy harmonizes perfectly with infinite justice and supreme freedom. .

The Thomistic synthesis sets all these principles in bold relief, thereby preserving the spirit of theological science which judges all things, not precisely and primarily by their relation to man and man's freedom, but by their relation to God, the proper object of theology, to God, the source and goal of all life, natural and supernatural. Truth concerning God is the sun which illumines our minds and wills on the road that rises to eternal life, to the unmediated vision of the divine reality.

THE LOVE OF GOD AND THE CROSS OF JESUS

REVEREND REGINALD GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE O.P.

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THE LOVE OF GOD AND THE CROSS OF JESUS

INTRODUCTION

Great speculative theologians and great mystics have written so many excellent books on the love of God that we have only to get at the truth which they contain, for we can desire nothing better than to understand them well. But the works of the great masters of theological speculation, like St. Thomas, and those of the mystics strictly so-called, like St. John of the Cross, present serious differences, both in form and in point of view. We may, then, profit by comparing them, not to establish a harmony between them which would destroy both their difference and their individuality, but to see if, by reason of this very difference, these works do not mutually clarify one another. Such is the purpose of the present investigation.

In a preceding work, Christian Perfection and Contemplation, we saw that Christian perfection consists especially in charity, or the love of God and of neighbor. And we noted that the perfection of this virtue falls under the precept of love, not as matter, or that which is to be immediately realized, but as the end toward which all men ought to tend, each according to his condition. We said further that the gifts of the Holy Ghost, particularly the gifts of understanding and of wisdom, the principles of infused contemplation, are connected with charity and develop with it, so that infused contemplation belongs to the normal growth of holiness. St. John of the Cross has, in fact, shown that contemplation, which is quite distinct from such extraordinary graces as visions, revelations, and interior words, begins to grow ordinarily at the outset of the illuminative way and comes to full flower in the unitive way. This first work was an exposition of the principles of ascetical and mystical theology; it might have been called "The Love of God and Contemplation."

In the present work, entitled The Love of God and the Cross of Christ, we are not taking up again the study of those problems already dealt with; we presuppose their solution as given in the light of the principles of St. Thomas and of St. John of the Cross. Here we shall confirm that solution by what the two great masters teach on the love of God and the mystery of the

cross. Plainly, the subject touches what lies deepest in the interior life of our Lord Jesus Christ and consequently in the life of every Christian who would imitate Him. It is only by the royal road of the cross that the Christian soul truly enters into supernatural contemplation of the mysteries of faith and lives lovingly and deeply by them.

DIVISION OF THE SUBJECT

In the first part of this work we treat in a general way of God's love for us, the response He expects from us, and the mystery of the cross. It contains a study of the problem of love, which comes to this: Is pure or disinterested love of God possible, and, if it is, what is its relation to love of self? In other words, does the primordial inclination of our nature lead us to love ourselves above everything else, or to love God still more? We shall study this problem in the light of St. Thomas' principles, which contain virtually the metaphysics and theology of love; we shall also see the relation of these principles to the mystery of the cross in our Lord and in His mystical body. Then we shall discover what the progress of the love of God ought to be in a truly faithful Christian, a progress by means of mortification made necessary by the remains of original and personal sin, as well as by the infinite loftiness of our supernatural end.

We shall examine the laws of the progress of love or of the increase of charity, obtained by our meritorious acts and by Holy Communion. We shall see how, in principle, this progress ought, without haste, waste, or worry, to become ever more and more rapid.

Having done this, we shall be the better prepared to understand the crosses of the sensitive powers and of the spirit, the role of these purifying graces, and the way we should act during such trials. Finally we shall speak of the life of union, of its relation to the indwelling Blessed Trinity, together with the influence of the humanity of the Savior and of Mary our Mediatrix.

These pages are, then, a treatise on God's purifying graces, preceded by an introduction on His love for us and the return He expects from us. We have developed, especially under the title of "The Cross of the Senses" and "The Cross of the Spirit," the teaching of St. John of the Cross on the passive purifications of the senses and of the spirit, and of the states preceding and following them.

Although St. Thomas did not treat these purifications ex professo, he has given us, in the questions on grace, the theological virtues, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost which accompany them, principles that make the description of the Doctor of Carmel more understandable by throwing light on them from above, so to speak. These descriptions reproduce and enrich those already given by St. Gregory in his reflections on the book of Job, and later those of Hugo of St. Victor and of Tauler.

Instead of “passive purification” we have chosen to use the more general and profound term, “the cross,” in the sense our Lord Himself gave it in the gospel, so frequently explained by the Fathers and so beautifully chanted in the liturgy, especially during Passiontide. St. Thomas, in treating of this divine Passion, has left us some profound considerations on the love of God and the mystery of the cross. These considerations, united to his doctrine on charity, on living faith, and on the purifying role of the gifts of knowledge and understanding, help us to get a better grasp of the meaning and implication of the words of St. John of the Cross. These two great masters throw light on each other, the abstract considerations of St. Thomas showing us the profound essence of those things the great mystic of Carmel describes so concretely and vividly. Through this association the doctrine of the Summa theologica gains in life, throwing open vast perspectives before us, and the doctrine of The Dark Night reveals itself as much more theological than at first sight it seems to be. St. Thomas has made it his special task to lay bare the essence or nature of the infused virtues and of the gifts, reasoning to their properties and mutual relationships; and St. John of the Cross has described their progress to perfect development.

It is to our advantage to note at the start what each possesses unshared and what both hold in common.

THE THEOLOGY OF ST. THOMAS AND THE SPIRITUALITY OF ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS

Anyone frequently consulting the works of St. Thomas and meditating on those of St. John of the Cross can easily see that fundamentally they agree. Although mystics often have a disdain for scholastic theology, St. John of the Cross, who knew it well, had great respect for it, and especially for the Angelic Doctor, whom he follows with particular care on questions relative to habitual and actual grace, the infused virtues, and the gifts of the Holy

Ghost. Some writers find a perfect harmony between their doctrines difficult. They say that St. Thomas, following Aristotle, has as his characteristic the mean and defends the value of everything human without in the least failing to recognize the infinite greatness of God. St. John of the Cross, they maintain, is the representative of excess, continually reminding us that no measure can exist for a love that should be measureless, placing the value of divine union in such strong relief that he seems to put too little value on things human.

If we forget the difference between scholastic terminology and the language of mysticism, we may come to suppose a wide doctrinal divergence between them; and this will widen if we understand St. Thomas' "mean" as a designation for the mediocre or the halfway, lying at an equal distance from philosophical and theological minimism and its opposite extreme.

We often find the fundamental theses of Thomism presented in this very way. In philosophy men assign them a place midway between Empiricism and idealistic Platonism, between materialism and exaggerated spiritualism; in theology, between Pelagianism and predestinationism; and in morals, between the laxist and rigorist, the liberal and authoritarian, points of view. A writer can easily slip into making such antitheses, frequently refuting the first of two extremes by the second and then the second by the first just to keep to a vague middle course that oscillates first this way and then that, depending on the moment's need. As a result, agnostics say that the antinomies are insoluble, and any thinking man could rightly label such a middle course eclecticism and, in the practical order, opportunism.

If this were St. Thomas' doctrine, it certainly would differ from the thought of St. John of the Cross: insisting on this is pointless. But does this idea belong to Thomism, or to the eclectics treading their aloof and careful way between those who exaggerate and those who minimize? It is their darling. St. Thomas' "mean" is a summit lifting its great shoulders high above the crooked course of error that splays out in ever-lengthening lines to far, flat extremes.

A truth is not on the same horizontal plane, on the same level, as the two contrary errors it opposes. It rises far above them like a great peak radiant with principles. Eclecticism has never reached it, for eclecticism seeks, in its oscillations, to remain at an equal distance from the apex of this height and those errors which are like the two extremities of its base. Progress

towards truth should not be a fluctuation between extremes, but an ascent, deviating neither to the right nor to the left, like the path drawn by St. John of the Cross in the ascent of Mount Carmel.

If time permitted, we could easily show that this is the character of St. Thomas' progress toward the heights of truth and of the mean typical of his doctrine. The problems of becoming and of being, of knowledge, of the union of soul and body, of the relationship between intellect and will, and many others, could all be examined with this in mind; but, obviously, we would then be wandering too far afield from the subject in hand, the spirituality of St. John of the Cross. This great mystic, Thomistically trained at Salamanca and consciously faithful to that training, has confined himself to treating of the soul's intimate relation with God, preparation for divine union in this life, and that union itself. To compare his doctrine with that of St. Thomas, we must, then, consider chiefly the terms of the divine union: God in His intimate life, the author of grace, and the human soul supernaturalized by grace, the infused virtues, and the gifts. Viewed in this light, the apparent distance separating these two conceptions contracts; more than that, St. John of the Cross brings out in a wonderful way the wealth of lofty truths expressed only virtually by St. Thomas and turns out before our eyes the hidden richness of his highest principles. The Angelic Doctor certainly does uphold the value of human things but always points to its infinite smallness when weighed against the infinite greatness of God. And St. John of the Cross, in all his works, never ceases praising God's infinite greatness by insisting on the purifications necessary to approach the inaccessible light of God and the conditions indispensable for divine union in this world. We do well, by the way, to remember that even here and now divine union belongs to the normal development of the life of grace—by right if not, because of human weakness, in fact.

When it is a question of God, the first cause, probably no one holds that St. Thomas' thought lies halfway between the unlikely attenuations of the minimists and the exaltation of the great mystics. None have excelled the Angelic Doctor in dealing with the subject of God's sovereign dominion over all creation. Nor has anyone set forth the universality of the divine causality and the infinite sublimity of our supernatural end better than he. According to him, divine causality, by reason of its intrinsic and transcendent efficacy, infallibly moves us not only to will the good in

general but to choose a particular salutary good. And, far from injuring our liberty, it extends to the free mode of our determination.

The Thomistic doctrine of grace is not only at an equal distance from Pelagianism and predestinationism as revived by Calvin, but it also rises above all such mediocre conceptions as the different forms of congruism. In one way or other, these put limitations on the universal causality of the First Agent and the sovereign efficacy of grace. They rob some or all of their meaning from St. Paul's words: "For who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received?" "For it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will."

On this fundamental point, St. John of the Cross, like the Carmelites of Salamanca, is the faithful disciple of St. Thomas. Few souls have actually lived the doctrine as deeply as he did. What the prince of theologians says speculatively about the intrinsic efficacy of grace, St. John of the Cross experienced, especially in the passive purification of the spirit, wherein men undergo temptations against the theological virtues such as God alone could vanquish by His grace. This He gives not only to precede our choice but to infallibly produce it in and with us. "Lord," says the saint, "if to grant what I ask You await my works, give them to me, accomplish them in me, and join to them the sufferings You will to accept from me." This thought recurs often in the Oracion de alma enamorada, preserved in an autographed manuscript at Andujar.

The author of The Dark Night and The Living Flame has grasped particularly well the consequences of the deep and often misunderstood distinction made by St. Augustine and St. Thomas between operating grace, by which the soul is moved without, properly speaking, moving itself, and cooperating grace, by which the soul both is moved and moves itself through its own proper activity.

Like all the best Thomists, St. John of the Cross has recognized that through operating grace, through that divine inspiration dominant in the passive state, man can act not only vitally but also freely and meritoriously without, properly speaking, acting deliberately, that is, as the result of discursive deliberation. Such is the act of the gift of piety inspired by the Holy Ghost. It is superior to the act of the virtue of religion under the guidance of Christian prudence. We can recite the Rosary but cannot have at will that filial lifting up of the heart that reaches to our Father in heaven. Of itself, by its own proper activity, the soul does not attain to acts of the

gifts or purpose in advance to accomplish them. The Holy Ghost leads the soul to perform them without deliberation but with free consent to receive the divine inspiration. Like the most acute interpreters of St. Thomas, St. John of the Cross understood this and made it the principle of his mystical doctrine. He clearly distinguishes between the acts that the soul effects by its own activity under common and cooperating actual grace and those higher acts lying beyond the reach of the soul's capacity and in the power of God alone. Infused contemplation and the love flowing out from it are, for example, vital, free, and meritorious acts not only during times of grievous purification but even in ecstasy and rapture.

Living this doctrine deeply, St. John of the Cross admits without difficulty St. Thomas' teaching on the gratuitousness of our predestination to glory. We ought to remark this attentively that we may not misunderstand his statement that the call of interior souls to contemplation is a part of the normal way of sanctity. Of eternal life, the normal fulfillment of the life of grace, the Gospel says: "For many are called, but few are chosen." The same is true of divine union, its normal prelude in this life, as St. John of the Cross and St. Thomas perfectly agree. We read in The Spiritual Canticle: "In the . . . day of eternity God predestined the soul to glory, and therein determined the glory which He would give her, and gave it to her freely, without beginning, before He created her. And this . . . is proper to this soul, in such wise that no happening or accident, high or low, will suffice to take it from her for ever; but she will come to possess without end that to which God predestined her without beginning." We find the same thought again in The Ascent of Mount Carmel: "For, although it is true that a soul, according to its greater or smaller capacity, may have attained to union, yet not all do so in the same degree, for this depends upon what the Lord desires to grant to each one. It is in the same way that souls see God in heaven."

This accord of St. John of the Cross with St. Thomas on the doctrines of grace and of predestination, certainly neither accidental nor material, is essential and formal, truly fundamental, reaching to the very spirit and orientation of their doctrines. No less agreement exists between them on another subject that concerns God Himself: the infinite sublimity of our supernatural end. The sentimentalism of the Modernists, through conforming to the method and doctrine of immanence, shows an unmistakable tendency to confound the order of grace with the order of

nature, our higher with our merely sensitive faculties. This confusion leads a man to deny the necessity of mortification and the cross. Following St. Thomas, St. John of the Cross, on the contrary, states in the strongest terms that the order of nature is infinitely below the order of grace and declares the latter absolutely inaccessible to the natural powers of man or angel, no matter how fully those powers are developed. Because he believes so firmly in the infinite transcendence of the supernatural order, he insists, more than anyone else has ever done, on the necessity of the passive purification of the spirit to free the acts of the theological virtues from every natural alloy. Because together with St. Thomas and contrary to nominalist empiricists he is fully convinced of the absolute superiority of our intellect enlightened by faith and of our will animated by charity over our imagination and sensitive appetite, he insists on the necessity of the passive purification of the senses. These three orders, infinitely distant from one another, are so constituted—not in virtue of a free decree of God, as Duns Scotus would have it, but by their very nature, because of the very nature of God and of His intimate life, inaccessible to the natural powers of every created intellect, actual and possible alike.

Like St. Thomas, St. John of the Cross keeps repeating that imagination and emotion could be developed to infinity within their own order without ever attaining to the lowest degree of intellectual or moral life, just as the intellectual and volitional powers natural to men and angels too, could continue growing steadily and constantly without becoming worth the least degree of that grace, infused faith, and charity to be found in a baptized infant. St. Thomas says: “The good of grace in one is greater than the good of nature in the whole universe.” These primordial truths so clearly stated by St. Thomas have been misunderstood by the nominalist theologians and their successors and more recently by the Modernists, even when writing about “the dark night.” No one, perhaps, has had a deeper insight into the practical consequences of these truths on the supernatural life than St. John of the Cross. The same cannot be said of Baruzi, whose recent work testifies to his bondage to the principles of idealistic immanentism.

Besides, so convinced is the author of The Dark Night of the Soul that these great truths cannot find sufficient expression in our human language, that to make us understand them better he often has recourse to mystical hyperbole. His terminology thus differs from that of St. Thomas and the Scholastics. Difference of expression is, however, anything but doctrinal

divergence. Indeed St. John of the Cross, intending to make us fully understand their value and to win us from our habit of bringing all things, even the most spiritual, down to the level of the material, accentuates precisely those things in theology which are the very soul of the doctrinal body.

Readers not familiar with his style believe that he, unlike the moderate St. Thomas, exaggerates the necessity of austerity and purification. They forget that St. Thomas himself recognized the legitimate use of mystical hyperbole as a means of expression and that, moreover, spiritual writers who use it have Holy Scripture as their model. An expression like "the nothingness of creatures" helps us to realize how trifling is the most gifted creature in comparison to God. The style of the mystic is a telling style, an apt instrument wisely used for a definite purpose. Our Lord Himself said, "If thy eye scandalize thee, pluck it out . . . thy hand, . . . cut it off. . . ." The spiritual or mystical style is not the scholastic style. It would be an error, for example, to maintain as scholastically true those propositions about the nothingness of creatures, true only in mystical language, where we expect and properly interpret the use of hyperbole. Were we to take "the nothingness of creatures" literally, we would be granting that, strictly speaking, creatures are absolutely nothing and God alone exists, a position that entails the denial either of the dogma of creation or a fusion and confusion of the being of creatures with the being of God, the error of pantheists and immanentists. Logically there follows the denial of created free will and consequently of sin. If some mystics have gone off in this direction, if Master Eckhart's thought approaches or approximates this dangerous position, nothing is more contrary to the doctrine of St. John of the Cross. He repeatedly insists upon the infinite distance between the created and the Uncreated, the existence of sin, and the necessity of profound purification for the soul. St. Thomas expresses this distance by saying that God alone is self-subsisting Being, "I am who am." In Him alone are essence and existence identical; in every creature they are really distinct. In these entirely speculative domains, perfect harmony exists between St. John of the Cross and St. Thomas; this is true in equal measure in the practical order, as we are about to see.

A close study of the Angelic Doctor's answers to the two most important questions in the spiritual life reveals no doctrinal disagreement between St. John of the Cross and himself. These questions are: (1) Do the virtues

consist in an exact mean? (2) How should the virtues grow? Let us see if, in this connection, the enthusiasm of St. John of the Cross is opposed to the perfect mean of St. Thomas Aquinas.

If St. Thomas says that the moral virtues, either acquired or infused, consist in an exact mean between too much and too little and generally between two contrary vices, this is certainly not the golden mean of the Epicureans. They avoid vice to escape its inconvenient consequences and not out of love for the true good transcending the useful and delectable alike. The moral mean, as St. Thomas conceived it, is a summit as well, the culminating point of the life of reason. It is above the opposing forms of the irrational and the evil. The more virtue grows, the higher this exact mean becomes, without deviating either to the right or to the left. Fortitude, for example, remains at an equal distance from cowardice and from rashness, but at the same time it is ever reaching new heights. Infused fortitude is a higher mean than acquired fortitude; the gift of fortitude is higher still. Likewise St. Thomas admits, without any difficulty, that the different phases of the soul's ascent to God are marked by the progress of the Christian moral virtues, especially with the help of the gifts. This is what he tells us when speaking of the perfecting virtues and the virtues of the perfect soul, those clear likenesses of the divine virtues, the supreme exemplars of our own. What St. Thomas merely indicates on this subject in one article, St. John of the Cross develops throughout The Ascent of Mount Carmel and The Dark Night in regard to the theological virtues and the gifts accompanying them. The harmony of these two doctrines is particularly apparent. St. Thomas teaches that, because these virtues immediately concern our last end, God Himself, they cannot consist essentially in an exact mean and that consequently they far surpass even the noblest moral virtues. God Himself in His infinite truth and goodness is the primary object and formal motive of faith, hope, and charity. Therefore we cannot believe too much in Him, hope too much in Him, or love Him too much. It is true that, as far as we are concerned and in an entirely accidental way, by relation to some material and secondary object, faith is to be found between unbelief and

credulity. In the same way, hope has a middle position between despair and presumption. But deviations from the THEOLOGICAL VIRTUES DO NOT ORIGINATE IN ANY LIMITATION IN THEIR

primary object or formal motive, as though development of these virtues reached boundaries beyond which it cannot pass without falling into excess. Departures from the virtues originate in a bad application of their motive to some secondary matter that is unfitting; for example, we can hold as revealed what is not revealed or we can hope for the grace of a happy death and yet have no will to realize its necessary condition, a good life.

So not only is it true that we cannot believe in God too much, hope in Him too much, or love Him too much, but it is also true that we cannot believe in Him, or hope in Him, or love Him enough. Hence we are not only counseled but required to grow in virtue until death. In this matter the exact mean no longer characterizes St. Thomas' doctrine; at these great heights he says with all the great mystics that the measure of our love of God is to have no measure. "Now the love of God and of our neighbor is not commanded according to a measure, so that what is in excess of the measure be a matter of counsel. This is evident from the very form of the commandment, pointing, as it does, to perfection, for instance, in the words, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart.' . . . The reason of this is that the end of the commandment is charity . . . and the end is not subject to a measure but only such things as are directed to the end, as the Philosopher observes." The perfection of charity falls under the first and greatest commandment not as matter, as that which is to be immediately realized, but as the end toward which all Christians should advance, each according to his condition. Here, as St. Thomas says, the objective measure of our acts is no longer created but uncreated and, therefore, infinite and impassable. In every one of his works, St. John of the Cross repeats the same thing.

The essentially supernatural and naturally inaccessible character of the uncreated formal motive of the three theological virtues should receive particular attention because of its importance. Once we have appreciated this, then the more we read The Dark Night of the Soul and The Living Flame and compare them with St. Thomas' treatises on the theological virtues and the gifts accompanying them, the more we see how these two dissimilar works mutually clarify each other. St. Thomas shows us the nature and properties of the infused virtues and of the gifts; St. John of the Cross holds up before us the wonder of their growth and strengthening—the loveliest thing in the world. This takes place in the midst of those passive purifications which bring into strong relief the wholly supernatural, formal

motive of the theological virtues: God, the first revealing truth, God all-powerful, ever merciful and ready to help, God infinitely good in Himself. Nowhere is the full development of the theological virtues and of the gifts of wisdom and understanding better presented than in the works of this great saint. In his treatment of these lofty and difficult subjects lies his claim to that greatness the Church recognizes in conferring upon him the title of Doctor.

To appreciate fully the penetration of these two great masters, we must consider that for them—contrary to Scotus, the nominalist theologians, and their numerous followers—the infused Christian virtues and especially the theological virtues are supernatural not only quoad modum, by the mode of their production, like the resurrection of the dead, when natural life is supernaturally restored to the body; but they are supernatural quoad substantiam, by their very essence, like sanctifying grace, the physical and formal participation in the nature of God. These virtues have their source in sanctifying grace as its properties, and are specified by an essentially supernatural formal object and motive, inaccessible to the natural competence of any human or angelic intellect, however powerful. “In the object of faith,” St. Thomas says, “there is something formal, as it were, namely, the First Truth surpassing all the natural knowledge of a creature, and something material, namely, the thing to which we assent while adhering to the First Truth. With regard to the former, before obtaining the happiness to come, faith is common to all (whether men or angels) who have knowledge of God, by adhering to the First Truth.” “A heretic does not hold the other articles of faith, about which he does not err, in the same way as one of the faithful does, namely, by adhering simply to the Divine Truth, because, in order to do so, a man needs the help of the habit of faith.” This faith, essentially supernatural by reason of the formal motive and the primary object specifying it, is altogether different from the acquired faith of the demons who, forced by the evidence of miracles, believe while trembling: “compelled by the evidence of signs. Whence ‘believing’ is used equivocally of the faithful and of demons; in them faith is not due to any infused light of grace, as it is in the faithful.”

Without the infused light of faith, man, when face to face with the gospel, is like a tone-deaf listener at a symphony; he hears it but cannot perceive its beauty. As St. Paul says: “But the sensual man perceiveth not these things that are of the Spirit of God. For it is foolishness to him; and he cannot

understand, because it is spiritually examined." Faith is "the gift of God," "the substance of things to be hoped for," the seed of eternal life.

Very few souls have understood this statement of St. Paul as fully as the author of The Dark Night. For a real comprehension of his splendid commentary on it, let us recall that the historical and critical study of the gospel and the philosophical examination of the miracles confirming it can give us evidence of the credibility of the mysteries of faith. They can bring us to a rational certitude that God, the author of a naturally knowable miracle, is also the author of the gospel. This rational certitude, however, does not have the same formal motive as infused faith, for it rests on the first principles of natural reason and not on the revealed and revealing First Truth.

In itself, the First Truth is the cause of faith, being that which and that by which we believe, making us adhere by the infused light of faith to the mysteries of faith revealed to us. By God I believe in God, my single "Credo" acknowledging Him who reveals and is revealed in one and the same essentially supernatural act.

This is a new domain, the kingdom of God, infinitely beyond the natural knowledge of every actual or even possible creature. In this realm, by an act of obscure but wholly supernatural faith, man infallibly clings to God. In a divine obscurity far above the reach of human reasoning, the created intellect finds refuge in the immutable.

When the act of faith, infinitely superior to the natural activity of both our reason and the angelic intellect, is illumined by the gifts of understanding and wisdom, we shall have infused contemplation of the revealed mysteries and the understanding and delight of a spirit of great faith. Infused contemplation proceeds from faith and the enlightening gifts, as both the Carmelite Joseph of the Holy Ghost and Cajetan have brought out so well.

Certain theologians who forget this great teaching and follow the nominalists come to consider our act of faith as a kind of discursive and substantially natural act invested with a supernatural modality. They think that it rests formally on the natural evidence of miracles and the other signs that confirm revelation and therefore they regard it as substantially natural although invested with a supernatural modality and efficacious for salvation. The supernatural would not be, according to this view, a new and essentially divine life, but a sort of finish, a pretty process of supernatural

gold plating, as it were. If this is said of the act of faith, it must logically be asserted of the acts of hope and of charity as well. Then charity would no longer be the same on earth as it is in heaven, since in heaven alone would it be essentially supernatural. This sort of supernatural is but an imitation diamond. We seek the genuine.

What nominalist theologians and their followers failed to see, St. John of the Cross, walking in the way of St. Thomas, has comprehended in a masterly way. The doctrine that there are acts essentially supernatural because of their formal motive and inaccessible to both the human and the angelic intellects serves as the basis for all he has written on faith, hope, and charity. Few others have possessed the same insight into the meaning and implication of our Lord's words: "No man can come to Me except the Father, who hath sent Me, draw him. . . . Amen, amen, I say unto you: He that believeth in Me hath everlasting life." "My sheep hear My voice." "The school in which God teaches and is heard," says St. Augustine, "is far from the realm of the senses. We see many men come to the Son of God, since we see many who believe in Christ; but when and how they have learned this truth of the Father we do not see; too intimate and too secret is this grace." "He who has supernatural faith," says St. Thomas, "cleaves through the influence of an infused light, to the First Truth revealing."

St. John of the Cross always keeps before us the increasing intensity of this infused light. He says: "From what has been said it is to be inferred that, in order for the understanding to be prepared for this Divine union, it must be pure and void of all that pertains to sense, and detached and freed from all that can be clearly perceived by the understanding profoundly hushed and put to silence, and leaning upon faith, which alone is the proximate and proportionate means whereby the soul is united with God; for such is the likeness between itself and God that there is no difference, save that which exists between seeing God and believing in Him. . . . And thus, by this means alone, God manifests Himself to the soul in Divine light, which surpasses all understanding. And therefore, the greater is the faith of the soul, the more completely is it united with God . . . beneath this darkness [of faith] the understanding is united with God, and beneath it God is hidden."

This evidently means that the primary object and the formal motive of infused faith infinitely surpass the natural powers of every created intellect. But in his immortal pages on the passive purifications of the spirit St. John

of the Cross revealed to best advantage one of the highest consequences of this doctrine. St. Thomas had already given the principles and traced the course to be followed when he showed that the gift of understanding progressively purifies faith from every human alloy by freeing our mind from speculative and practical errors and from attachment to sensible images. St. John of the Cross showed us how, in the night of the spirit under the two contrary influences of God and Satan and through purifying, redeeming, and almost overwhelming suffering, the three formal motives of the theological virtues grow brighter and brighter in spite of the darkness. In all their uncreated and supernatural sublimity these are like three great spiritual diamonds—God the revealing First Truth, God able and willing to help us, God infinitely good and eminently lovable. St. Thomas had declared that these three formal motives are inaccessible to the natural intellectual powers of any actual or possible creature. St. John of the Cross made known to us how the Holy Ghost, by purging the theological virtues of every natural impurity through the light of His gifts, gives them the capacity to cleave with great purity to God and to His intimate life, unattainable by the natural knowledge of even the greatest angel.

Such is the immediate preparation for transforming union: wherein, in this life, the soul is divinized by being made to share in the very nature of God; wherein it enjoys, through the gift of wisdom, the quasi-experimental and almost continual realization of the indwelling Trinity; and wherein it loves with a pure and generous love the infinitely good God and, in Him, the souls of men. In this state God touches the soul deeply, substantially. The Holy Spirit breathes His most secret inspirations into its depths. This is the supreme, the normal, development of the life of grace, eternal life begun in time. “Amen, amen, I say unto you: he that believeth in Me hath everlasting life.”

The doctrine of St. John of the Cross is, then, in full harmony with the principles formulated by Thomas Aquinas and unfolds all their rich virtuality in the order of the mystical life. It has the great merit of joining to the theology of the theological virtues and the gifts the mystical states that St. Teresa contented herself with describing. It gives a scientific knowledge of these states by designating their four causes—their immediate subject, their formal constituent, their principle, and their end. It has another merit no less great. It draws a clear-cut distinction between infused contemplation (which proceeds from faith united to charity and from the gifts of wisdom

and understanding) and those extraordinary favors that sometimes accompany it (visions, revelations, interior words). And it shows that the first alone belongs to the normal way of sanctity and is greatly to be desired. St. John of the Cross is one of the masters who do most to warn souls against the desire for extraordinary favors while, at the same time, making them desire more and more the full perfection of charity, together with infused contemplation of the mysteries of faith, which usually accompanies it. He even insists that the desire for revelations turns the soul from true contemplation, from the divine darkness of faith. In this he again faithfully follows St. Thomas, who has taught us that the grace of the virtues and the gifts is far superior to the gratuitous graces (gratis datae) which are, in a sense, external, like the gift of miracles or of tongues, or the prophetic knowledge of future events.

St. John of the Cross has merited the title of Doctor of the Church because of the absolute trustworthiness and the great sublimity of his doctrine. Many things in mystical doctrine and in the works of his great predecessors become clear to us when we read him. He floods new light upon every subject. With him speculative mystical theology becomes a definitive science; and, instead of separating itself from general theology, is incorporated within it, becoming its highest and most beautiful branch.

So, in perfect fidelity to tradition, the work of St. John of the Cross marks a great step forward in doctrinal mystical theology. He has, indeed, what is very unusual, the double authority of a sure theologian and a great mystic who has had deep and experimental knowledge of the divine things about which he speaks. For this reason he is far ahead of most authors who have written on the same subject. He speaks of these things as only the great masters can. In his writings we are aware of the continual influence of the gifts of wisdom and understanding. His words flow freely from their source, the Holy Ghost, “a fountain of water, springing up into life everlasting.”

When we have meditated on this doctrine and have observed at close range souls that, during the trials of the night of the spirit, live, and live deeply, by it, we return with new joy to St. Thomas’ treatises on grace, the theological virtues, and the gifts. And we realize that the best commentators have not told us all they contain. We discover new treasures in them. We see that the principles which the Angel of the Schools formulated on faith, hope, and charity are fully verified only in the mystical life. And we are convinced that doctrinal mysticism is nothing else but the full flowering of

speculative theology, just as experimental mysticism is the normal and full development of the grace of the virtues and of the gifts in a truly faithful, interior soul.

May these two great masters obtain for us light to understand them well and fidelity to follow them closely.

VOLUME 1

PART I

GOD'S LOVE FOR Us, OUR RETURN OF LOVE, AND THE MYSTERY OF THE CROSS

In this first part we shall consider God's love for us as the ultimate foundation of the love we ought to have for Him. We shall consider the problem of the relationship between our love of God and our love of self and St. Thomas' solution of the problem. Then we shall study the bearing of the love of God upon two mysteries, namely, the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity in our souls, and the Cross.

CHAPTER I

GOD’S LOVE FOR US; OUR RETURN OF LOVE

Let us therefore love God: because God first hath loved us. I John 4: 19

Man naturally desires to be happy, and true wisdom consists in seeking, not apparent, but real happiness, to be found not in the fleeting but in the immutable, in possessing and loving the infinite Good, who alone can satisfy the deepest longing of our hearts.

THE BASIS FOR THE GREAT COMMANDMENT

The First Commandment of God accords with these longings. Besides being the principle and end of all the other commandments, it is the end of the evangelical counsels as well. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with all thy strength and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself.” St. Paul calls the love of God and neighbor “the bond of perfection” because it unites our souls to God, our last end, and tends to make all our powers center in Him. Divine charity has sovereignty over all the other virtues, informing, animating, and ordering them toward their last end. All the exploits of the other virtues are attributed to it, the general of the army of virtues, the principle of merit. So true is this that without charity we are, according to St. Paul, personally nothing, even though we might have, for the good of our neighbor, the gifts of prophecy and of miracles and the knowledge of the angels. We are personally nothing in the order of salvation, because without charity our soul is in a state of death, devoid of merit, and our will is turned aside from the divine will, directed away from God, our last end. On the other hand, true charity suffices, in a sense, for everything, because it necessarily presupposes the faith and hope it vivifies and because it implies all the infused moral virtues subordinated to it and animated by it. In this sense St. Augustine could say:

“Love and do what you will”—provided you love in truth. In the same vein St. Paul has written: “Charity is patient, is kind; charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely, is not puffed up, is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never falleth away: whether prophecies shall be made void or tongues shall cease. . . . And now there remain faith, hope, and charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.”

From this revealed doctrine, St. Augustine and St. Thomas have concluded that Christian perfection in this life consists neither in knowledge of God nor in wisdom, so highly extolled by philosophers, nor yet in fortitude, so much admired by the heroes of paganism, nor in the external austerities and solitary life of the anchorites, nor in the acts of divine worship and of religion. For St. Augustine and St. Thomas, Christian perfection consists essentially and particularly in the increasingly faithful observance of the two commandments of the love of God and of neighbor, secondarily and instrumentally in the evangelical counsels, since these are ordered to the destruction of whatever hinders the perfect exercise of charity. They add that the first and greatest commandment has no limits and that the perfection of charity falls under the precept not as matter or that which is to be immediately realized but as the end toward which all men, each according to his condition, ought to tend.

Such ,is the first and greatest commandment. What is its basis? We find the answer in the words of St. John: “Let us therefore love God, because God first hath loved us.” For our deeper understanding of charity, let right reason first tell us what love is due to God in the purely natural order. Then supernatural revelation will teach us what it alone can: the intimate nature of the supernatural love we owe to God. In this way we shall see more clearly the basis for the first and greatest commandment.

REASON AND THE LOVE OF GOD

Free from error, reason alone suffices to tell us that our hearts, made as they are to love the good, ought to love the Sovereign Good, the principle of all others, before and above them all. Not without purpose did God grant to us the intelligence He denied to animals. Fashioned to know the truth, our intellect finds complete repose only in the knowledge of the supreme

truth upon which all others depend. Since it knows the good, it knows not only the sensible, delectable good possessed by animal and libertine alike, not only the useful good sought after by the man of affairs as a means to an end, but the true good that has its perfection within itself, independently of the pleasure or advantages derived from it. Justice in every form is such a good, as is truthfulness as opposed to falsehood, courage and patience too, in fact, the whole harmony of the virtues that make a man a good man. Our intellect, having an idea of the true good, conceives it without limitations. Above and beyond justice mixed with imperfection, we conceive of justice without a shadow, a limit, or a restriction. Transcending every particular, our thoughts reach pure Good, Supreme Good, which, by its essence, is identical with Beauty, that Beauty spoken of by Plato in The Banquet as "everlasting, not growing and decaying, or waxing and waning . . . not fair in one point of view and foul in another, or at one time or in one relation or one place fair, at another time or in another relation or at another place foul, as if fair to some and foul to others . . . or existing in any other being, as, for example, in an animal or in heaven or in earth or in any other place; but beauty absolute, separate, simple, and everlasting, which without any diminution and without increase, or any change, is imparted to the ever-growing and perishing beauties of all other things."

Our intellect, seeing itself superior to blind matter, realizes that it could not have come from matter. Is there any greater absurdity than to maintain that the intellect of a St. Augustine could be produced by blind material fatality, that life could spring up from absence of life, that order and the principle of order could rise out of lack of order? The greater does not come from the less. Furthermore, our intellect, seeing its own dependence and the dependence of all other intellects on the true, realizes that it owes its existence to a higher Intellect identified with the Truth itself always known. Likewise our will, which seeks the good, owes its existence to a higher Will identified with the Sovereign Good always loved. And the Sovereign Good cannot be distinct from the Supreme Truth and from Being itself—self-defined for Moses as "I am who am."

When our intellect has a notion, however imperfect, of limitless goodness and beauty, the will, following the intellect, desires that good. Made to love and desire the good, the will ought to love first and most the Sovereign Good, the principle of all others. Nothing could be more obvious. St. Thomas goes so far as to say that in our will there is a natural tendency to

love God, the author of our nature, more than ourselves. The reason given by the holy doctor for this is profound, taken from the very nature of things.

Now in natural things everything which, as such, is dependent upon and naturally belongs to another, is principally and more strongly inclined to that other to which it belongs than toward itself. . . . For we observe that the part naturally exposes itself in order to safeguard the whole; as, for instance, the hand is without deliberation exposed to the blow for the whole body's safety. And since reason copies nature, we find the same inclination among the social virtues; for it behooves the virtuous citizen to expose himself to the danger of death for the public weal of the state; and if man were a natural part of the city, then such inclination would be natural to him and not acquired. Consequently, since God is the universal good, and under this good both man and angel and all creatures are comprised (because every creature in regard to its entire being naturally belongs to God, its creative and conserving first cause), it follows that from natural love angel and man alike love God before themselves and with a greater love. Otherwise, if either of them loved self more than God, it would follow that natural love [given by the Author of nature] would be perverse, and that it would not be perfected but destroyed by charity.

We shall take up this point at some length in the next chapter in order to determine the true relationship between love of God and legitimate love of self. For the moment, it is enough to ask: Since the Sovereign Good is the principle of every other good, is it not infinitely better and more worthy of love than we are?

Our natural inclination to love God above all things is no doubt weakened by the effects of original and personal sin. Moreover, as we actually find ourselves, it does not bring us to love God, the author of our nature, efficaciously by observing the whole natural law. Nevertheless it does subsist in the very core of our will, for it is identified with the will's very nature. And it exists in the damned and contributes much to their suffering. In them there is a grievous quasi-contradiction between their natural inclination still leading them to love existence and life and God, the author of life, and the pride, disobedience, and hate that persist in turning them from God.

Thus right reason shows us that only the Sovereign Good can really allay our natural thirst for happiness and satisfy our heart's deepest yearnings. This fact is a proof of the existence of God; since, if He did not exist, these

natural inclinations would be absurd. The two greatest philosophers of antiquity, Plato and Aristotle, put this truth into words when they placed beatitude in the natural knowledge of God and in a certain natural love of the Sovereign Good.

What right reason can establish is daily confirmed by experience. Whenever we think we have found happiness in some created good—some situation, the knowledge of some science, an intimate and fine friendship—it is not long before we discover that what we have is still only a finite good, incapable of fully satisfying a mind with a capacity to know and desire infinite good. The profound boredom so often experienced by worldlings, whose pleasure-seeking footsteps are everywhere dogged by it, testifies that their hearts are made for a good infinitely greater than the joys they pursue. Their continual need for change and the disillusionment that drives them from one creature to another make it evident that only God can fill the infinite void within their hearts. Our will, made to love the good in general and the Sovereign Good most of all, has depths that are, in a sense, infinite. Finite goods can do no more than move its surface. It is free to respond to their attraction or not. Only God, seen face to face, can exercise an attraction upon it that is irresistible and perfectly adequate to its capacity for loving. That is why in heaven love of God is not free but follows necessarily upon the beatific vision. It is above liberty, as the very first movements of our emotions are below it.

God alone can fully satisfy our thirst. The living waters flow from Him, their source. The realization of this truth made St. Catherine of Siena say that, if we wish to quench our thirst at the cup of a lasting friendship, we must keep it refilled from the source of living water or, soon exhausted, it will fail us and we shall go thirsty.

Even alone, when unerring, reason can reveal to us the possibility and, more than that, the necessity of loving God the author of our nature. In this, experience confirms reason. Reason points to the commandment of love of God as the first of the natural law and shows that it virtually contains all the others. As love of truth is the scholar’s principle of life; love of art and beauty, the artist’s; love of country, the soldier’s; so love of God seems to be the principle of every human life. To love God is natural. Reason, even when left to its own resources, realizes that man should love God. Great philosophers have sung the praises of this natural love. And poets, whose lives may have left much to be desired, have, by thinking about the beauty

of the divine perfections, attained to an inefficacious act of natural love of God, to admiration of Him that is full of velleities, and only of velleities.

For us, as we actually are after the Fall, to have an efficacious love of God, the author of our nature, we must have the help of grace and we must ask for it. Without it, we can understand the necessity of such a love; but we cannot succeed in making our own love efficacious. Even if, without grace, we succeeded in loving God, author of our nature, efficaciously and above all things, and managed to observe the natural law in its entirety, our natural love of God would remain infinitely removed from divine and Christian charity. For charity is essentially supernatural and has for its primary object God, the author of grace, in His intimate life.

GOD'S LOVE FOR ALL, THE BASIS OF OUR LOVE FOR HIM

No man of genius, no angel, can by his unaided intellect alone, comprehend or conceive of supernatural charity, the loving friendship between God and man.

Often in the Old Testament just men like the patriarchs and prophets are called "friends of God." The Canticle of Canticles speaks symbolically of this strong and tender love of friendship. Our Lord Jesus Christ, by bringing us the fullness of divine revelation, has made it clearer to us than anyone else could by telling us: "I will not now call you servants: for the servant knoweth not what his lord doth. But I have called you friends: because all things whatsoever I have heard of My Father, I have made known to you." Just before this He had said: "As the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you. Abide in My love. If you keep My commandments you will abide in My love, as I also have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have Ioved you. Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends if you do the things that I command you."

Philosophers who recognize the realm of spirit but have not come to the Christian faith sometimes say: "We cannot understand a love of friendship, such as you describe, between man and God. We can certainly have sentiments of admiration, respect, gratitude, and obedience towards God. We can worship Him interiorly and even exteriorly. But how can we love

Him as a friend? We have never seen Him. He is so far above us as to be invisible and incomprehensible by His very nature. We obviously owe Him all we have and are; yet we can do nothing for Him in return. Friendship presupposes mutual good will, the possibility of doing good to one another, a certain intercourse or community of life, a common life, if it may be so expressed, that demands mutual revelation of intimate thoughts, a common quest for the same good, and the shared pursuit of one ideal." Between God and us love and intimacy like this seem to be impossible. So argues reason when left to itself.

What reason cannot discover, what the angelic intellect by its own natural powers cannot know, has been revealed to us by God in the days of the Old Testament and brought to us in its fullness by our Lord Jesus Christ. He has made known to us the infinite love of God, who wills our participation in His own intimate life through grace. He has taught us that to make our Father in heaven a fitting return we have only to model our love on His, who first loved us. As St. John says: "By this hath the charity of God appeared towards us, because God hath sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we may live by Him. In this is charity: not as though we had loved God, but because He hath first loved us, and sent His Son to be a propitiation for our sins. My dearest, if God hath so loved us, we also ought to love one another."

From this text St. Thomas Aquinas concluded that divine charity, uniting us to God and to one another in Him, is true love of friendship. It certainly implies mutual good will for God wills our good, our eternal salvation, and we will His glory, that He be known and loved as He deserves now and forever. Besides, the charity that unites us to Him is founded, like all true friendship, on real community of life, since He communicates to us a participation in His own intimate life, sanctifying grace, the seed of eternal life and happiness, by which we shall be forever associated in the intimate life of God. Then we shall see Him without intermediary, as He sees Himself; and, so seeing, we shall love Him as He loves Himself.

To have a deeper understanding of God's uncreated love, the basis of our own supernatural charity, let us consider the nature of true and generous love. Then let us take away all limitations from its qualities, making them infinite, and we shall catch a far, faint glimpse of what God's love is like.

When we love another truly we love him for his own sake, not for ours, not regarding him as something to be used or enjoyed but wishing him well,

willing him well. True love is not mere emotion, rising spontaneously at the sight of a lovable object; it is a love of well-wishing and well-doing. By it we desire and do good to another, loving actively, effectively and generously.

Love usually demands three things of us: that we go out of self by tending toward the one to whom we would do good; that we be united to him by a close communion of ideas, sentiments, and desires; that we devote ourselves to him, give ourselves to him, and, if need be, sacrifice ourselves for him, that he may be made better and may reach his final goal.

A real mother images this kind of love. No mere emotional delight in the lovableness of her child contents her. She must both will and do him good, going out of herself, forgetting herself, abandoning all the preoccupations of self-love and egotism to reach out to her little one. When she takes him up, puts her arms around him, and holds him close, it is as though she would become one with him. Wholly and always devoted, her love leaps up to meet his every need, and when he is ill nothing can take her from his side where, day and night, she cares for all his wants. From her he learns to walk and talk and pray; she it is who first awakens his mind, his heart, his soul.

By endowing these qualities of truly generous love with infinity, we can discover something of the meaning of God's love for us. Rightly did Isaias compare His mercy to the tenderness of a mother for her child, because the tenderness of a mother's heart has its source in the infinitely greater goodness of God.

God's uncreated charity for us has ever been and ever will be a benevolent, bountiful, and essentially active love. Such love could not be a merely affective, passive pleasure in whatever is lovable in us. All that makes us lovable in God's eyes comes from Him and is given to us only by His sovereignly free and gratuitous love. Whatever is lovable is good, and every good of every order can come only from the source of all good things, Goodness itself. From all eternity God necessarily loves this infinite Goodness which is Himself. In it He finds His essential beatitude. He had no need to create us, for He is no greater, no happier, no wiser for having created the universe. Freely He willed to manifest His goodness, to have us participate in His own inner riches. He willed to radiate goodness as He made the sun to radiate light. The same God who filled the air with the song of birds also willed the mighty hymn of His infinite praises to roll out from Him to other minds and other lives. "The heavens show forth the glory of

God.” God’s love is creative. Far from supposing lovableness in those He loves, He creates it in them by His pure, sovereignly free, and gratuitous benevolence.

Out of wholly gratuitous love God has given us existence, the life of the body and of the spiritual and immortal soul; He keeps us in existence and gives us, besides, the help necessary at each moment to make those intellectual and volitional acts indispensable for attaining goodness and truth. Even what seems most exclusively our own—the free determination to choose good rather than evil—comes to us from Him. The disorder and failure so often adulterating our acts comes from us exclusively, for it requires only a defective cause. When we choose the good, then God, as first cause, first intellect, first liberty, and source of every good, makes us choose it by an act at once vital and free. He is closer to us than we are to ourselves. If all that comes to us from Him were taken out of our lives, we would be, in the strictest sense of the term, absolutely nothing. Two dogmas serve as the basis for Christian humility: creation ex nihilo and the necessity of grace for the least act effective for salvation.

God has loved us from all eternity. He made His love manifest at the moment of creation. And in the daily creation of souls, in the creation of my individual soul, which He freely maintains in existence at this instant, He renews and reenacts that moment. In the beginning He gave the first man natural life, a gift of love. This gift Adam was to transmit to us all. By a still more gratuitous love, He gave him also something immeasurably above the natural life of men and angels alike, the life of grace, a participation in the divine life properly so called. The gift of eternal life, of seeing and loving God as He sees and loves Himself, was given to the first man to be passed on to all his children.

Just as he had received it for himself and for us, the first man “lost for himself and for us” the seed of glory, sanctifying grace. He failed to appreciate the value of divine life and in his blindness preferred the infinitely inferior life of “the knowledge of good and evil.” He chose a life which, so the temptation said, was to be his own to lead, free of any necessity to ask God for light or to obey Him. To living faith and infused wisdom, to divine contemplation and supernatural love of God united to humility and obedience, man preferred a mode of knowledge of the natural order. He chose to be his own master, to rely on himself and his self-collected pseudo-data, instead of confiding in God, the first truth and

sovereign good. Through his own fault, he fell from original justice and the heights of sanctity where the Creator had placed him.

God's love followed us in our downfall and misery. To pardon us, God could have contented Himself with sending a prophet to express His forgiveness. Freely He willed to do infinitely more: "For God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting." Infinite mercy could do no more. At the same time, according to the decree of the divine liberty, the utmost requirements of justice itself were to be satisfied by the Savior's sacrifice. "Mercy and truth have met each other."

We fell, and God willed to stoop down to us as a mother stoops down to a hurt child. He chose to descend, in a sense, to our level that He might raise us up to His. He stripped Himself, as it were, of the brightness of His glory, of His infinite majesty, not willing to appear in the splendor of His magnificence as He did on Mt. Sinai when He showed Himself to Moses. He willed to empty Himself, so St. Paul put it, that He might be found according to our measure. He took a body and soul like ours and was seen in the form of a little child in the lowliest circumstances, in the ranks of the poorest, that all might come to Him without fear. For thirty years He who could have forced everyone to accept Him by the ascendancy of His mind, His character, and His miracles, lived the hidden life of a poor village carpenter of Nazareth.

By His lowliness and abasement our God has made Himself one of us. In flesh like ours, He shared our life, willed our happiness, performed our duties, bore our sufferings, felt our weariness, wept our tears. He has taken us into His arms. More than that, on Holy Thursday He, the Word of God, of His own will kissed our feet. Finally, by taking on Himself all our offenses, He has given Himself for us, sacrificed Himself for us. He has died a victim for us, shed His blood in cruel suffering, that the heritage of eternal life, which in our blindness we despised and lost, might be once more ours.

Well might St. Paul speak of this as God's "exceeding charity," an "excess of love," for it infinitely exceeds anything within the natural compass of human reason or angelic intellect. St. Paul can even call it "foolishness," for by it the narrow calculations of human wisdom are, in a sense, reversed. As a mother, in the folly of her love, offers herself as a victim that the son who has insulted and despised her may be brought

back to the right path, so God, out of love, dies for His own creature, who has despised and shunned Him. This is the folly of the Cross beyond and above reason, the remedy for another very real folly which falls far short of reason, the folly of sin: of lust, avarice, envy, and pride, and of forgetfulness and hatred of God.

The evil that destroys reason is far inferior to it; the remedy that heals reason is infinitely above it. Rationalists make no mistake in saying that reason, left to its own resources, cannot understand it; for this so-called folly belongs to a higher order, beyond the mind's natural reach. In such abysses of love reason is lost; only the supernatural discernment of the saints can penetrate these depths. Only in heaven shall we see the sublime and the infinite fitness of the mystery of the redemptive Incarnation. To grasp it as it is in itself, we need an immediate vision of the divine essence and of the uncreated personality of the Word made flesh, whom love led to die for us.

In heaven we shall see that goodness is essentially communicative, and that the higher its order the more intimately and fully it tends to communicate itself. We shall see that God the Father, in the interior expression of His thought, communicates to the Word within Him, His Son, not only a participation in His nature, but His whole indivisible nature without loss or multiplication. He thus gives to His Word to be "God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God." He begets His Son in that single moment which never passes, the unique "now" of changeless eternity. We shall see that the Father and the Son, by loving each other, spirate personal love, the Holy Ghost, the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, the flaming spiritual current that unites the first two persons in intimate communion. The three live upon the same infinite Truth by the same intellectual act, upon the same infinite Goodness by the same essential act of love. They are distinct only through the relations of paternity, filiation, and spiration, according to which they are "distinguished as the opposite terms of a relation."

Goodness being diffusive of itself and the more intimately and abundantly so as it ascends in the various orders of being, we shall also see that God has freely willed to communicate Himself as much as possible to humankind by uniting Himself "in person" to the humanity of the Savior in such a way that the Word of God and the holy soul and body of Jesus together make but one and the same person, one and the same being;

somewhat as in each one of us the soul and body, despite their distinction, constitute a single whole, a person really one.

Moreover, God has willed that the acts of love Christ made for us as He hung dying on the cross should have an infinitely meritorious and satisfactory value in the uncreated person of the Word, who truly loved us in those acts of His human will whereby He sacrificed Himself for us, while, in strict justice, He merited for us as the constituted head of humankind. “Therefore as by the offense of one, unto all men to condemnation; so also by the justice of one, unto all men to justification of life.” Such is the priceless worth of the cross of Christ.

But our Lord has, in a sense, gone even farther than this; He has abased Himself yet more, united Himself even more closely to us, given Himself to us still more generously in the Eucharist. In this sacrament He is, in a way, emptied of Himself, being willing to lie hidden under the humble appearances of bread and wine, docile alike under the hands of the holy or the sacrilegious priest that He may be brought to all, even the repentant criminal about to die. He has willed to descend so low that the poorest missionary, with only a bit of bread at his disposal, can make Him really and substantially present among the tribes he is evangelizing. Under these poor appearances the sacred body of Jesus is present, together with His soul and divinity. The host can be divided in half, then in quarters, and so on until only a small particle, almost imperceptible to bodily eyes, is left; and faith tells us that under this particle are found the soul and body of the Savior, His divinity and omnipotence, and all those infinite riches He wills us to share more abundantly each day.

The Word made flesh is on the altar. During Mass He continues to offer Himself for us and to unite to Himself all who desire to receive the Eucharist. To saints like Catherine of Siena it has been granted to drink in ecstasy at the sacred wound of the heart of Jesus; all Christians have the daily privilege of drinking spiritually at the same source through Holy Communion.

Christ could not have given Himself to us any more than He has, willingly becoming our food, being eaten by us. The Eucharistic Bread, so superior to us, is not assimilated by us, but it daily assimilates us more and more to Christ. It transforms us into Him and increases our vitality as members of the mystical body of which Jesus is the head.

We are accustomed to these marvels. Habit, degenerating at times into routine, prevents us from admiring what is absolutely gratuitous and sublime in the infinite mercy of our God, who thus stoops down to our misery. Thomas Aquinas always kept this admiration alive within him.

O res mirabilis: manducat Dominum
Pauper servus et humilis!

This goes beyond anything our reason could of itself conceive or our heart naturally desire. Not only do the expressions of God's love as the author of grace satisfy our deepest natural longings; they immeasurably exceed them and likewise surpass the natural knowledge and desire of any angelic mind, whether actual or possible. Going beyond our natural yearnings, they arouse in us the higher and essentially supernatural aspirations of infused hope and divine charity.

OUR RETURN OF LOVE

"Let us therefore love God; because God first hath loved us." It would be well for us to recall what return the saints have made to God for His love, and then see what our own response ought to be.

The saints are not content to love God emotionally, to admire His goodness intellectually, to think with poetic enthusiasm of His divine perfections. They understand Christ's words: "Not everyone that saith to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the will of My Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven." He gave this assurance especially for those

> who do the will of God not merely through duty and with resignation, those who, even in the midst of trials, do it out of love and with generosity, courageously allowing themselves to be loved and purified by God, refusing Him nothing and truly following the example of our Savior who died for us. No saint measures his charity by the sweetness of the sensible consolations sometimes accorded in prayer, but loves deeply with a love rooted in the will. The love of the saints lives on in the midst of prolonged and barren aridity and is nourished by the hard bread of tribulation as well as the milk of consolation, is compounded of strength as well as of tenderness, and grows more and more generous by continually

giving even when it seems to be done with receiving. Love like this makes the saints burn with desire to have God's name hallowed, His kingdom come, His will done on earth as it is in heaven. They hunger and thirst for justice, not with the brief flare of callow enthusiasm but with an ardor born of the gift of fortitude and of charity that endures through struggles and contradictions of all kinds. These they surmount, or rather are lifted across and go on with God, towards God, keeping their peace and sharing it with others.

A saint's love strives to reproduce whatever is imitable in God's love, to model itself on God's love so as to make Him a like return. God has come down to our level. In the ardor of His love He has lowered Himself so far as to become the man of sorrows, covered with our sins, "a worm and no man," an abasement we simply cannot comprehend. To make such love some return, the saints reduce themselves to the level of this God who was made less than they. They go down from the throne of their self-love to stand together with their God, stripped of glory and emptied of self. They love Him in His awful abasement more than any prince has even been loved in his most brilliant triumph.

St. Dominic went by preference into that part of Languedoc where the Albigensians ridiculed and abused him in every way. He experienced a holy joy in being so treated, the joy of becoming more like the humiliated Christ. And thereafter when he talked to those poor misguided people, it was no longer a man who spoke to them but the Lord who spoke by his mouth and gave him the power to convert their hearts. St. Benedict Joseph Labre was as eager to follow those who insulted him as he was to flee from those who praised him, deeming himself unworthy of any good words. In different ways all the saints find a need to abase themselves out of love for our humiliated, scourged, and stricken Lord.

The Word of God united Himself to us and took on our human ways that He might live with us. The desire of the saints to take on divine ways that they may live with Him. Many of them have retired into solitude to live in perpetual recollection. Many others, kept in the world by duty, have, like St. Catherine of Siena, made an interior cell in the core of their hearts so that their conversation has been with the indwelling Trinity, whom they have served as living temples. They have preferred God to everything else besides, loved Him above all other things, without division and without

exclusion, loving all men in Him, their legitimate affections raised to a new level by their love of Him. Fired in the flame of charity, natural love becomes a burning thirst for the salvation of souls.

Our Lord gave Himself to us on the cross. The saints give themselves to God, often even by martyrdom, that His name may be glorified, that His kingdom may come, and His will be done. And when they do not shed their blood as a testimony to Him, they may experience a martyrdom no less heroic, the martyrdom of the heart, a kind of slow death in the midst of daily griefs and trials of all kinds. In a wholly practical way they understand and follow the example of St. Paul, who said: “I now rejoice in my sufferings for you and fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, in my flesh, for His body, which is the Church.” Nothing is lacking in the divine Passion itself. It has infinite and superabundant value. We alone lack something, the reflected reproduction of Christ within us. This is ours to give our Lord by allowing Him to assimilate us to Himself, by working in Him, with Him, and by Him for the salvation of souls through the means He Himself has chosen, prayer and immolation. Our Lord is at once a victim and a priest. He makes all His priests participate in His priesthood and requires all His saints to share with Him in some way His character of victim. Thus man’s growing configuration to the crucified Word of God is effected and God’s love receives a return of love from His saints.

What should our return be? It should be love of the same essentially supernatural quality as that received in baptism and restored by absolution, if we have been so unhappy as to lose it. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with all thy strength and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself.” Consequently, as we have already repeated after St. Augustine and St. Thomas, the perfection of charity falls under this commandment not as matter or that which is to be immediately realized, but as the end toward which all men ought to tend, each according to his condition, one in marriage, another in religious life, another in the priesthood. Everyone in the world ought to grow in charity continually. Growth in charity is progress towards God. As soon as we make up our minds to stop before reaching the end of our journey, we cease to be travelers toward eternity. Our souls become retarded, like children who stop growing before reaching adulthood and so become dwarfs. The

road toward eternity is for travel, not for rest. The Fathers of the Church tell us that he who does not go forward on the way to God goes back.

We shall even see that the progress of charity, effected especially by daily Communion, ought in principle to advance more and more swiftly. A stone falls faster and faster as it nears the earth; so should our souls advance more and more quickly towards God as they draw nearer to Him and are increasingly attracted by Him. The sublimity of the First Commandment being what it is, we cannot doubt that actual graces are progressively offered to us that we may attain its end. Our Lord does not command the impossible. He does exhort us to ask His help.

This being so, we ought to ask ourselves whether we are falling behind on our way to God, whether we are willing enough to come down from the throne of our self-love and our pride in order to stoop down, after the example of the saints, to the abasement of Jesus Christ, which perhaps is more alive in certain souls we look down upon than in our own. Are we willing to die to our own judgment and our own will that we may be united in a perpetual communion of ideas and of will with Christ Jesus, not only at prayertime but all day long? Is our soul's habitual conversation with Him, our Savior, our best friend, our counselor in all life's duties and affairs? Are we sufficiently willing to be devoted, to sacrifice ourselves when necessary, that we may become each day more like Him who died for us, that we may be associated in some small way at least in the work of redemption before receiving a share in His glorious life for all eternity?

To reach the perfection of love of God and neighbor, two methods, it is said, lie before us: one descending, the other ascending. The first consists in beginning with the consideration of the great mystery of God's love for us: "Let us therefore love God, because God first hath loved us." This is the way we have been discussing, the one the saints have followed in contemplating the sorrowful Passion. The second method consists in taking ourselves as the starting point, in examining our conscience, our failings, our predominant fault, in considering, too, the many virtues to be practiced in this and that circumstance. Certainly we cannot neglect these practices, but we should make all such examinations under the higher light of the great mystery of love; otherwise the multitude of our own failings and of the virtues to be acquired will confuse us. Moreover, virtue has no strong attraction for us when not contemplated in our Lord and in our Lady. It is incumbent on us, then, to go to the very heart of the interior life, to charity,

which ought to inform, animate, and vivify all the virtues, and, that we may grow in charity, to contemplate how Christ has loved us. We are full of faults; alone we shall not succeed in correcting them. We must beg the Savior to come to us and put our house in order with us. For love of Him, let us allow Him to lead us on the way He has chosen for us. He is the Good Shepherd who leads His sheep into eternal pastures, calling each by name and teaching them, if they will but listen to Him, all He Himself desires of them on the way to eternity.

CHAPTER II

THE PROBLEM OF PURE LOVE

This we know: God's love for us demands a return. How pure, how disinterested should our return be? Will it always be tainted by a certain self-love? How far must we sacrifice love of self to arrive at a truly pure love of Him who first loved us?

In the Encyclical Studiorum ducem of June 27, 1923, His Holiness Pope Pius XI strongly emphasized the following point of St. Thomas' doctrine: the commandment to love God has no limits; the perfection of charity falls under this precept, of course, not as matter or that which is to be immediately realized, but as the end toward which every Christian ought to tend, each according to his condition. Whether in religious life or in the world, all ought to draw ever nearer to God, their last end. As nature's law requires a child to grow under penalty of becoming a dwarf, so the law of our earthly pilgrimage requires that travelers on the road toward eternity go ever forward by steps of love, as St. Gregory the Great says, until we reach our journey's end. A road is not for rest or sleep, but for travel. In the way of virtue, according to a traditional adage, "He who does not go forward slips back"; for the law demands advancement and even increasing advancement. The speed of falling bodies increases as they approach the earth's surface; so souls ought in principle to go more quickly towards God the nearer they come to Him and are more attracted by Him.

The doctrine concerning the compass of the commandment of love has often been misunderstood, although it was dearly formulated by the Fathers of the Church, particularly St. Augustine. In the encyclical of January 26, 1923, written for the third centenary of St. Francis de Sales, His Holiness Pius XI remarked that the author of the Treatise on the Love of God was cognizant of this traditional teaching and gave it clear expression in his works.

If our love of God ought to keep growing until death, evidently it should become ever purer, freer from all egotism and every inordinate love of our own good. This point of doctrine leads us to consider fully the problem of love that we may better understand the relationship of our desire for our own highest good with pure love of God and of His glory. First, we shall recall the way this problem has been stated and the principal solutions it received in the Middle Ages. One of these appears more as an evident tendency then as an explicit theory in some of the works of St. Bernard, Richard of St. Victor, and other medieval mystics. The other, together with its chief consequences, St. Thomas plainly formulated. A statement of the first viewpoint and the difficulties it leaves unsolved will lead us to an examination of the second, a logical and chronological procedure for, as we shall see, in proposing his own solution St. Thomas was aware of the insufficiency of the one already proposed. His has its foundation in Aristotle's views on human nature and the teaching of St. Augustine and Dionysius on the love of God.

We shall draw inspiration from the works of the Dominicans of the seventeenth century, Chardon, Piny, and Massoulié. We shall also make use of the thought-provoking work of Father Pierre Rousselot, S.J. However, instead of turning aside from St. Thomas' doctrine with him, we shall keep to it, bringing our study to a close with St. Thomas' solution of the difficulties raised by the other opinion. The recent study of Abbé Eugéne Kulesza on Richard of St. Victor contains a criticism of some of Father Rousselot's conclusions and can be read with profit. We may throw open to question whether these two conceptions are as opposed as the latter says and ask ourselves whether we can find, within the metaphors of the first, the rough draft of the second, which alone achieves an exact terminology.

ARTICLE I

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

When reading good works like Massoulié's on the subject, we should like to see at the very beginning, before any search for a solution is instituted, a deep study of the problem itself. This was St. Thomas' method. Following Aristotle, he first examined the difficulties of the question and the frequently contrary answers already given by earlier authors; afterward he

revealed the lofty intellectual reaches of those principles to which recourse must be had, leading us up to them little by little as toward a summit from which the light of the solution emanates.

This method of procedure has lead St. Thomas, apropos of the question "Ought man, by charity, to love God more than himself?" to give an apt statement of the problem of love in the following difficulty: "One loves a thing in so far as it is one's own good. Now the reason for loving a thing is more loved than the thing itself which is loved for that reason, even as the principles which are the reason for knowing a thing are more known. Therefore man loves himself more than any other good loved by him. Therefore he does not love God more than himself." Elsewhere St. Thomas has proposed the same difficulty in another form. "Nature," he says, "is always self-centered in its operation, for we behold every agent acting naturally for its own preservation. But nature's operation would not be self-centered were it to tend toward anything else more than nature itself."

In the light of these texts of St. Thomas, Father Rousselot writes: "In abstract terms the problem of love could be formulated like this: Is love without egotism possible? And if it is possible, what relationship has such pure love of another to love of self, seemingly the basis of all natural tendencies? The problem of love is analogous to the problem of knowledge. In the latter we ask how a being can have consciousness (or at least knowledge) of that which is not himself; in the former, how a being can be drawn by desire toward that which is not its own good."

This seems to be a good statement of the problem, except the word "egotism," which, to my mind, creates an equivocation, for it generally denotes a disordered love of self, which cannot be found, as we shall see, in the very essence of the primary natural inclination. Hence it is better to avoid using the expression and to keep St. Thomas' terms as quoted.

After asking ourselves how a knowing being can acquire knowledge not only of its own impressions but of extramental realities, how our intellect can attain to that which is true in itself and universally, independently of us, we seek to discover how we can love another with a love not subordinated to the desire for our own good. Is pure love of another—above all, of God—possible? And if it is, what relation has it to our desire for personal happiness?

To the two great problems so stated, two radically extreme and contrary solutions have been given. These are subjectivism and pantheistic realism. Subjectivism denies or throws open to doubt the objective value of our intellect and, consequently, the authority of its object, extra-mental being or the truly real. Likewise subjectivism does not recognize the rights of the object of the will, the good, and particularly the right of the Sovereign Good to be loved above all things. In antiquity a tendency toward this position marked the Sophists and Skeptics; today it characterizes the modern subjectivists. It plainly leads to utilitarianism or, at best, to a certain love of human dignity that makes a pretense of having no special obligation toward God, as though He were not the clearly evident author of every good and Himself the supreme good.

The solution radically contrary to this, absolute realism, is no less erroneous. It confounds being in general, or universal being, with the divine Being, and good in general or the universal good, with the divine Good. It leads to pantheism, reduces all things to God, identifies all things with Him, and so denies their own proper existence. Parmenides held this doctrine in antiquity; Spinoza with his pantheistic ontologism maintains it among the moderns. It implicitly denies personal beatitude, contenting itself with an impersonal immortality entirely different from the immortality about which Christian faith speaks to us.

Evidently Catholic theologians could not go so far astray as these two extremes, although the nominalists of the fourteenth century came strikingly close to the subjectivist position and, inversely, Master Eckhart apparently arrived at the frontiers of pantheism when, after having taught in mystical language that creatures are nothing, that is, nothing of themselves, he seems to have asserted that in strict philosophical terms they are absolutely nothing. This view amounts to a denial of the very effect of the creative act.

But, be these indefensible and quite exceptional paradoxes as they may, it can be said that Catholic theologians have been preserved from these extreme errors by faith in the existence of God, the sovereignly free Creator, really and essentially distinct from the world and from all created spirits. They have been saved, too, by the great commandment that dominates the Decalogue in the Old Testament and is the spirit of the New: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with thy whole strength and with thy whole mind.”

The Scholastics generally have stated the problem of love in the loftiest and most profound concrete terms possible: Are men and angels led by their nature to love God more than themselves or can divine grace alone effect this? Father Rousselot says: “It seems that Scholasticism could not have concentrated the question in a happier formula. No other would have been at once so concrete and so profound.” Are not free creatures commanded to love virtuously the same God who is both the author of their natural appetites and their only last end? Is He not the sum of all goodness? If, therefore, love of our own good and pure love of another can be reconciled, that reconciliation should take place in love of God, an analysis of which ought to give us principles for judging other disinterested affections.

CONTRARY HERESIES TO BE AVOIDED

The problem has not been solved by the fact that all scholastic theologians recognize God as our last end and the object of our eternal beatitude. The difficulty reappears as expressed by St. Thomas: “A man loves God as much as he loves to enjoy God. But a man loves himself as much as he loves to enjoy God; since this is the highest good a man can wish for himself. Therefore man is not bound, out of charity, to love God more than himself.” In other words, if we have two loves, love of personal happiness and love of God more than self, which is the more fundamental, which is the primordial love—if not in the concrete order of psychological phenomenon, at least metaphysically, in the very essence of the first natural inclination of our will ?

It seems that, if love of God is derived from love of our own good, it lacks purity and can become purified only if grace in some way destroys nature by demanding the sacrifice of our desire for personal happiness. To retain that desire would entail a certain affective subjectivism. If, on the contrary, our nature itself inclines us to love God in Himself, objectively, more than ourselves, grace seems unnecessary to attain to it and we lean, it will be said, toward a Pelagian or Semi-Pelagian naturalism reminiscent of the pantheistic confusion of our nature with the nature of God.

In the Middle Ages the question had not yet been stated with the sharpness Fénelon gave to it later. Nevertheless theologians of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries did have to explain in their treatises on charity how we are to understand St. Paul’s words: “I have great sadness and continual

sorrow in my heart. For I wished myself to be an anathema from Christ for my brethren; who are my kinsmen according to the flesh; who are Israelites." Moses had said the same thing in Exodus 32: 31-33: "This people hath sinned a heinous sin, and they have made to themselves gods of gold. Either forgive them this trespass, or if thou do not, strike me out of the book that Thou hast written." And the Lord answered: "He that hath sinned against Me, him will I strike out of My book." St. Thomas has given a sublime and fearless explanation of these words of both St. Paul and Moses. We shall quote it later.

It was inevitable that the problem should be stated thus: What is primordial in the natural tendency of our will: love of our own good or love of God for Himself? If, in a virtuous life, these two loves converge, they are either coordinated or subordinated. But every coordination supposes subordination to a principle of order. As St. Thomas says, many soldiers are coordinated in view of a common action only if all are subordinated to their leader. Neither natural love of our own good nor love of God in preference to ourselves can be subordinated to some more radical principle or higher end. Necessarily, then, one of these two loves has to be subordinated to the other. Which of the two is more fundamental? So the question becomes clearer and clearer and we can more easily foresee what errors we are to avoid.

If every created nature, ours, the angels' too, tends to love its own good, its own personal happiness first and most, how can this primordial tendency be reconciled with the certainly realizable precept to love God more than ourselves and above all things? If this natural tendency is truly primordial, will it not be found even in our love of God? Will not our love of Him be always more or less mercenary, touched by self-interest and tainted by egotism, unless grace, by remitting original sin and gradually healing us of its effects, comes to correct our very nature, particularly the essential constitution of our will? Must not grace in some way destroy nature by inspiring us to the heroic sacrifice of our desire for personal happiness? Fénelon thought so. If he is right, then, despite the loftiness of the words "pure love," such a grace, being in some way destructive of nature, is (as Baius later and erroneously held) a hard remedy for nature's defect rather than a life principle of an infinitely higher order. If, on the contrary, a primordial tendency impels both men and angels to love God more than themselves, grace seems necessary only to make us accomplish more easily

what nature can already do, as the Pelagians say. In neither idea is grace a life principle of a higher order. The Pelagian views it as the complement of a fortunate nature, quite close to the divine, whereas Fénelon and those of his opinion see it as a remedy for a "natural disorder." We may ask: if the farthest extremes of subjectivism and pantheism are avoided, does the mind still waver between the two less distant extremes: either toward Pelagian naturalism or toward the pseudo-supernaturalism of Baius, revived, in a sense, by the Modernists? If here, as in other cases too, there are masters who well deserve the title of doctor oscillans, no one can say the same of St. Thomas, as we are about to see.

All theologians are plainly in accord on this point: to arrive at a pure love of God we must mortify in ourselves the concupiscence of the flesh and of the eyes, the pride of life, and all disordered appetites. And we must do it even to arrive at that contempt of self spoken of by all Christian authors when explaining the words of our Lord, "Let him deny himself," and in treating of sin and its effects, of contrition, and the degrees of humility. But in grievous purifying trials, when a man's own misery is so apparent to him that he thinks his salvation is in grave danger, how is perfect abandonment to God's good pleasure to be reconciled with desire for personal happiness? St. Thomas was aware of this question, for the problem it contains is of interest not only in these extreme cases but for the orientation of the whole of life, since it concerns the essence of charity and our will's fundamental natural inclination. Without doubt original sin wounded and weakened this faculty's natural inclination to virtue, and our personal sins have weakened it still more. None the less it has kept its intangible essence as a purely spiritual faculty, and the question now under consideration concerns the intimate relations that actually exist between nature and grace within the will.

Hence the importance of the question: What primordial inclination lies within the very essence of our natural will? Love of our own good? Or a natural love of God? Is it, at the very least, a natural love of a true good transcending the useful and the pleasurable, a good that is good in itself? For example, do we love truth and justice in themselves and above ourselves, more than any particular personal perfection they bring to us? The true solution of this problem treated by the great theologians of the Middle Ages, later by Bossuet and Fénelon and in a lower order by Spinoza, Kant, and the German idealists, should contain virtually, if it is

satisfactorily formulated, the whole theology and the whole metaphysics of love.

To the problem so stated two solutions were given in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. For some, they really differ; for others, one is a rough draft, the other, a finished work literally rather than metaphorically expressed. The latter, explicitly formulated by St. Thomas, reached the status of doctrine; the former is found implicit in many sermons and commentaries on the Psalms, the Canticle of Canticles, and the Epistles of St. Paul, wherever there is a question of the intensity of the love of God in the hearts of the saints. The works of St. Bernard produced in the latter half of his life presented it in a mystical form kept within fitting limits. Richard of St. Victor emphasized it in his decidedly debatable theory of the Trinity. Abelard gave it a speculative and dialectical form, believing that from it the necessity of creation had to be deduced (a conclusion incompatible with dogma), and reaching an idea of pure love approximating Fénelon's later view. Abelard died in 1142; St. Bernard, who combatted his errors and, therefore, his doctrine of the necessity of creation, lived until 1153; Richard of St. Victor, probably until 1173.

ARTICLE II

THE VIEWS OF ST. BERNARD AND RICHARD OF ST. VICTOR

Using numerous texts that can be supplemented by others, —we shall cite the most important—Father Rousselot apparently establishes the characteristics of true love as discussed in the views of St. Bernard and Richard of St. Victor. On examination we find that, according to Father Rousselot, disinterestedness, based on the distinction of persons it unites, is true love's first trait; violence and holy folly distinguish it when it becomes intense; and an inherent sufficiency for uniting us to God marks it from first to last.

THE DISINTERESTEDNESS OF TRUE LOVE

St. Bernard and Richard of St. Victor insist particularly on the point that the only perfect love worthy of the name is love of friendship, love of another not for our own but for his sake. Love of self becomes perfect only

when we love self for God by going out of self, as it were, to come to Him. Like some theologians of the twelfth century who shared their thoughts, St. Bernard and Richard of St. Victor are fond of quoting the classical text of St. Gregory the Great: “Charity cannot exist between less than two. Therefore, no one can be said, properly speaking, to have charity for himself, but love of another is potential charity.” As charity, like friendship, supposes at least two persons, St. Bernard and Richard of St. Victor are led, according to Father Rousselot, to form an ecstatic conception of love founded, he says, much less on the notion of nature or a natural inclination than on the duality of persons loving each other. By love of friendship we are carried outside of self, extra se, toward the beloved: a kind of ecstasy wherein we no longer love our own personal good but the good of another. In the case of love for God, we desire His glory more than anything else and, if need be, even to the sacrifice of our own good. This being so, the principle of this idea is not a natural inclination or a nature which has God for its author, and grace as its elevating principle, but rather the duality of persons united and drawn out of egotism by love.

In the thirteenth century Duns Scotus said that even if God were not our good, our last end, even if He had no relation to the basic inclination of our nature and will, we still could and should love Him above all things, even to sacrificing ourselves for Him, because He is in Himself the sovereign good.

For Richard of St. Victor, true love is so different from love of self and supposes so necessarily a distinction of persons that he thinks he can demonstrate the mystery of the Trinity in this way: Perfect love certainly exists in God; love’s first requirement demands two and even three persons loving each other equally; thus to be absolutely pure and disinterested, free from every trace of self-love, envy, and jealousy, the highest of all loves, God’s own, demands a distinction of persons, the Trinity.

The same idea is found in another form in Abelard’s condemned theory of the necessity of creation. He says, in substance, that perfect love is manifestly a perfection of God and that, since love requires the duality of lover and beloved, God of necessity willed to create us and gave us existence. St. Bernard combated this consequence, as he did Abelard’s other errors.

True love of another, thus conceived as founded on the distinction of persons rather than on the notion of nature, seems in some way independent of our natural inclination; it even seems contrary to it, in a sense, for it draws us out of ourselves and, when intense, becomes violent, demanding in holy folly the sacrifice of all self-love.

In the De diligendo Deo, where St. Bernard formulates some principles which anticipate St. Thomas' doctrine, he shows that man, who begins by loving himself for his own sake, ought in heaven to come to love himself only for God's sake. In his sermons on the Canticle of Canticles composed later, he speaks more explicitly, according to his own experience, of the violence of divine love triumphing over all that is other than itself. Not infrequently he writes, as in Sermon 79:

O divine love, impetuous, vehement, burning, irresistible love, which allows no thought but of thee, scorning and despising all else besides, thou art thy own sufficiency. . . .

How great love is . . . yet it has its degrees. The spouse has reached love's summit. The children love, too, but they are mindful of their inheritance and fear to lose it, and are more respectful and less loving. I am suspicious of that love which needs to be sustained by the hope of acquiring any other good. Love is feeble when its warmth and strength grow less with the loss of hope's support. Love is not pure when desiring anything else. Pure love is not mercenary, does not draw new strength from hope. The spouse loves purely; for by love alone is she all that she is; her every hope, her every good, is love alone.

Massoulié should be consulted on this text.

From this point of view more than any other, intense love, becoming violent, "wounds" him who loves and "makes him die to self" by making him live for another, by leading him to "go out of himself" and give himself generously to the beloved. Intense love is, therefore, not without a certain destruction of the lover, not without that interior immolation represented by exterior sacrifice and spoken of by the Scriptures. It implies a martyrdom of heart known to all the saints and a mystical death symbolized in the Gospel by the death of the grain of wheat that becomes the seed of new life. Happily, love causes this death, destroying all that is contrary to it. According to the words of The Canticle, "love is strong as death, jealousy as hard as hell."

We are familiar with the enumeration of the ten degrees of charity, attributed to St. Bernard, commented on later in an opusculum published under St. Thomas' name, and explained by St. John of the Cross in The Dark Night of the Soul: "Wise is the love of God, for it makes us dull to all else besides; it drives us to seek Him always and in all things, constrains us to work without rest and to endure without fatigue, to desire Him eagerly, seek Him swiftly, dare for Him courageously, cleave to Him inseparably, and burn with loving for Him until, in heaven, He assimilates us wholly to Himself."

In a treatise on charity compiled of texts from St. Bernard, Pierre de Blois, and Richard of St. Victor, we read: "Love takes no account of the impossible and in this reason praises and restrains not its eagerness. . . . Love's hunger is insatiable. . . . Love itself is its own merit and its own reward. . . . In this world none of us can perfectly fulfill the precept to love God, but all of us should desire its perfect fulfillment."

Richard of St. Victor develops these ideas in his celebrated opusculum De quatuor gradibus violentae caritatis:

In the first degree, the soul is unable to resist its desire; in the second, it is continually preoccupied by it; in the third, it can take pleasure in nought else besides; in the fourth and last, it can no longer find any satisfaction for its desire. In other words, in the first degree love is invincible; in the second, possessive; in the third, exclusive; in the fourth, insatiable. . . . These four degrees of love differ according to whether it is a question of sentiment towards God or affection for men. In spiritual desires, the stronger the love, the better it is. In sensual desires, love degenerates as it grows and, because nothing can satiate mutual passion, at last becomes hate, a changeling that matches its former ardor by its present implacability, burning with desire while hating and never ceasing to hate even while loving.

In human affections, only the first degree of love can be good; even the second is undoubtedly evil. But if, in human desires, the fourth degree of love is the worst of all, it is otherwise with our sentiment for God, since the last and greatest degree of love for Him is the best of all.

Richard points out these four degrees of intense love of God in the Canticle of Canticles, the Psalms, and the Epistles of St. Paul: "Even in the first degree, 'Many waters cannot quench charity, neither can the floods drown it' for it is invincible. In the second degree, the soul puts its beloved

‘as a seal upon its heart,’ for no longer can it cease thinking of him. In the third degree, ‘If a man should give all the substance of his house for love, he shall despise it as nothing,’ for he no longer finds any enjoyment elsewhere. Finally, in the fourth degree, ‘Love is strong as death; jealousy as hard as hell,’ for all that love does or endures for its God is as nothing.”

Likewise in the Psalms, “In the first degree, love is invincible: ‘I will love thee, O Lord, my strength.’ In the second, it is inseparable: ‘Let my tongue cleave to my jaws, if I do not remember thee.’ In the third, it is exclusive: ‘My soul refused to be comforted: I remembered God and was delighted.’ In the fourth, love is insatiable: ‘What shall I render to the Lord for all the things that He hath rendered to me?’”

Again in St. Paul, “In the first degree, love is invincible: ‘Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation? or distress? or famine? or nakedness? or danger? or persecution? or the sword?’ In the second degree, the lover never loses sight of his love, no separation can part them: whence it is said, ‘My soul hath stuck close to Thee,’ for nothing can tear it away. In the third degree, the soul counts all things as dung that it may gain Christ. In the fourth, Christ is its life, and death for Him is gain, for the lover of Christ desires to be dissolved and to be with Christ.”

In the four degrees of ardent charity thus enumerated by Richard we get a foreshadowing of St. Teresa’s four inner mansions. For these authors of the twelfth century, the vehemence and violence they hold characteristic of intense love exists even in uncreated love. They speak of God as being “overcome” by His love for us when He created us, and, still more, when He sent us His only Son and delivered Him up for our salvation. Although writing with occasional brilliance on this subject, they do not seem to have made any real distinction between the metaphorical and the literal; they well knew, however, that God cannot properly be said to be “overcome” by anything whatever, even by His own love, since there can be no passivity in Him.

When they speak of “the spiritual wound of love,” of “the destruction” worked in us by love of God, we encounter more difficulty in distinguishing between the metaphorical and the proper sense of their expressions. Their absolute manner of speaking about death to self, of mystical death, they shared in common with most theologians of their period. The latter had not yet distinguished explicitly enough between human nature considered in itself, in its essence, and fallen nature corrupted by original sin and still

wounded after baptism. They considered man as he is concretely and practically. Like the author of The Imitation and unlike St. Thomas, they failed to study, in an abstract and speculative fashion, what essentially constitutes human nature, independently of the consequences of original and personal sin.

As a result, they came to assert more or less explicitly that the primordial tendency of our nature is a love tainted with egoism, love of our own good. The testimony of our first concrete psychological experiences, even as manifested in the baptized, evidently led them to think that, metaphysically speaking, the primordial inclination of the will's nature is toward self. For some of them, the will was, if not perverse, at least feeble, feebler than our intellect, since the intellect suffices to show us we ought to love God as the author of our nature more than ourselves.

Among these theologians are those who, like William of Auxerre and Alexander of Hales, attributed this weakness even to the natural will of the unfallen Adam and to the angelic wills as well, although in both these cases there clearly could be no question of original sin. They dared not say we are naturally inclined to love God more than ourselves, fearing to lean toward Pelagianism, which holds that grace is necessary only to accomplish more easily what nature can do by itself.

They like to cite the classical texts of St. Augustine on the radical opposition between cupidity and charity, their favorite being: "Two loves have built two cities; the earthly city has for its principle love of self even unto contempt of God; and the heavenly city, love of God even unto contempt of self. One glories in itself; the other is glorified in the Lord."

We err, however, if we think that these theologians of the twelfth century prepared the way for the doctrine of Baius. For there is an immense difference between: (1) not distinguishing explicitly enough between nature and grace; and (2) formally denying, as Baius did, this essential distinction after it has been expressly formulated by great theologians.

Some theologians of the twelfth century certainly conceived of intense love of God as violent and even, one might say, as essentially violent or contrary to our natural appetite for our own good. We can understand then why, in treating of the order of charity, some maintained that, although we ought to help our parents more than we help others who are equally pleasing to God, we ought not to love them more. Intense love of God becomes like a purifying and wholly consuming fire, insatiable, alleviated

only by a certain destruction of the lover by his absorption into the beloved, by mystical death, the blessed effect of love. Some beautiful scriptural texts are to be understood in this sense: “Love is strong as death.” “He that shall lose his life for Me, shall find it.” “Gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me.” “Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall live also together with Christ.” “For you are dead; and your life is hid with Christ in God.”

Abelard strained the point and so erred in the direction Fénelon took later; but for St. Bernard and Richard of St. Victor this blessed death most surely led to life. They saw intense love as a holy folly surpassing reason, the folly of the Cross, the only efficacious remedy of that other folly called sin. St. Paul’s words must have deeply impressed these great contemplatives: “For the word of the cross to them indeed that perish is foolishness; but to them that are saved, that is, to us, it is the power of God. For it is written, ‘I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; and the prudence of the prudent I will reject.’ . . . For, seeing that in the wisdom of God, the world, by wisdom, knew not God, it pleased God, by the foolishness of our preaching, to save them that believe. For both Jews require signs; and the Greeks seek after wisdom. But we preach Christ crucified: unto the Jews indeed a stumbling-block, and unto the Gentiles foolishness; but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. . . . We are fools for Christ’s sake, but you are wise in Christ. . . . We are reviled; and we bless. . . . We are blasphemed; and we entreat. We are made as the refuse of this world, the offscouring of all, even until now.”

Prompted by St. Paul’s words, St. Bernard and Richard love to speak of the holy folly of love “which knows no measure, overcomes all distances, ignores every necessity, and triumphs over the opportune and the reasonable.”

LOVE ALONE THE BOND OF UNION

These two twelfth-century masters of mysticism do not go so far as to require the sacrifice of our natural desire for personal beatitude; but they do insist on this, that in itself the perfect love of charity is all-sufficient, even in the greatest aridity, for it unites us to God. “True love is its own

happiness." "O chaste and holy love! . . . O pure intention of the will! becoming more and more pure as it loses every admixture of self-interest, growing sweeter as it comes to experience only the divine. To love like this is to be made like to God."

"Love itself is enough. . . . It is its own merit, its own reward; it needs no other motive, no other profit; is content to be and to grow. I love because I love, I love that I may love. . . . God Himself when He loves asks nothing but love in return . . . knowing that love is a lover's only happiness."

Scripture contains some readily available support for this thought. According to the words of the Gospel, he who loves the Lord ardently is happy even in persecution: "Blessed are those who suffer persecution for justice' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Eternal life has begun in their hearts, for "he that abideth in charity abideth in God, and God in him." "Charity . . . is the bond of perfection." "Charity never falleth away" . . . it is "the fulfilling of the law." "Many waters cannot quench charity, neither can the floods drown it." As St. Augustine says, "Love God and do what you will"; for what you do will be good, if you love in truth. Before Pascal, St. Bernard wrote, "No one can seek Thee, Lord, without already having found Thee."

Certainly love, even in the midst of persecution, and, in a sense, especially then, unites us to God and formally constitutes, as St. Thomas puts it, an "affective union" with God by making us desire the "real union" of the beatific vision. St. Bernard, while not making this explicit distinction, never wearies of writing about affective union with God. After speaking of the love of God in the servants of His household, then in His children, he says of the spouse's love: "Her heart having been entirely purified, the spouse reaches a degree of love in which she desires and seeks God alone, asking nothing of God save God Himself, . . . no longer desiring anything out of self-love, either her own happiness or glory, being drawn only towards God . . . to cleave to Him and to enjoy Him."

Quietists have made this quotation their own. Massoulié, to reconcile the first part of it with the last and with other sayings of St. Bernard, makes this apt commentary: "Love must will to be united with the beloved. True, a soul in the transports and ardors of love does not actually think of the possession of this good under the aspect of its own good; but by simply following love's inclination it tends toward the beloved. However, this disposition cannot constitute a permanent state; it is composed only of

particular acts which do not equal the full compass of the habit of charity; for, if we consider this virtue in its permanent state, the desire for the possession of God as the Sovereign Good belongs inseparably to it."

St. Bernard was by no means speaking of the sacrifice of future beatitude. So little does he separate possession of God from love of God that for him, at least in this world and for such time as we lack the beatific vision, we possess God and are united to Him chiefly by love. Love is union, and both as union and as love it wills to endure and increase until death and to last on through all eternity, as St. Bernard would never deny. In the texts quoted he simply made evident his recognition of the superiority of charity, as pure love of God, over hope.

Richard of St. Victor speaks in the same vein: "There is nothing better, nothing lovelier than charity. This, nature itself teaches us and experience daily testifies to us." "God requires of us only our love. Charity is the fulfillment of the law; it contains the law and the prophets; because all that divine law commands or forbids can be reduced to love. If we pay Him the tribute of love, God is satisfied." "O good God, to love You is to be fed by You . . . and the more You give us, the more our hunger grows . . . for the more they are heaped upon us, the less do the good things of love satisfy our hearts. . . . Implevit bonis. . . . What are these good things of love? Things eye has not seen, ear has not heard, things that have not entered into the heart of man to conceive: the things God has prepared for those who love Him . . . the delights of eternity."

Forgetting, it would seem, what St. Augustine had written on the intellectual generation of the Word in God, Richard chose to consider the Blessed Trinity solely, as it were, from the point of view of love and thus he wandered from the path of tradition and encountered grave difficulties. During the thirteenth century, Scotus, too, manifested a tendency to place charity even above the beatific vision and adopted the position that, even in God, charity enjoys primacy. For Scotus, the happiness of heaven or the "possession of God" consists essentially and formally not in the beatific vision but in the "love of God seen face to face."

St. Bernard is silent on this point but, for the rest, the qualities Father Rousselot describes as characteristic of his conception of love seem properly ascribed to him: love draws us, not without violence, outside ourselves; it has its holy follies; and, in this world, it suffices to unite us to God. This being true, should we acknowledge that the views of St. Bernard

and St. Thomas are as different as Father Rousselot thinks? Massoulié seems to have admitted that a search into St. Bernard's metaphors reveals, even if only obscurely, the principles clearly formulated later by the Angelic Doctor. We are inclined to agree with him, especially since Father Rousselot has forgotten to bring out a key point of St. Thomas' doctrine: that love, far from drawing what we love toward us, draws us toward what we love.

St. Thomas frequently states this principle, which is founded on the fact that the good, unlike to the true, is formally not in the mind but in the thing, as Aristotle aptly observed. By this principle St. Thomas establishes that, although the intellect is superior to the will, which it directs, love of God is, in this world, better than knowledge of God, "melior est amor Dei, quam cognitio." By the same principle, St. Thomas also explains how love, especially the love of friendship, produces ecstasy, taking us out of self by drawing us toward the one we love, the more and more perfectly so when we love one not our equal but our superior. "We ought to love God," says St. Thomas, "in such a way that there is nothing in us not ordered to Him." The case differs entirely when we love an inferior or an equal with the love of friendship. St. Thomas, following Dionysius, says that St. Paul was drawn out of himself by no longer living his own life but the life of Christ for the sake of Christ: "I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me."

All this is closely akin to St. Bernard's way of thinking. His idea, however, remains obscure on one important point. Although it certainly brings out the generosity and purity of love in God's great servants, it achieves far less success in showing the relationship between disinterested love and love of self, a seemingly indestructible inclination of our nature. So the second part of the problem of love, intimately bound up with the first, apparently remains unsolved and, to solve it, we must make a deeper study of the problem and the basic ideas it implies.

ARTICLE III

ST. THOMAS' VIEW

St. Thomas was familiar with St. Bernard's ideas and with Richard's. We know this from what he has to say about the duality of persons required for the friendship of charity, and the relationship of this infused virtue to the

natural fundamental inclination of our will. He gives evidence of this familiarity, too, when he touches on the question of the violence of love, and of the foolishness of that preaching by which God has been pleased to save believers; and, again, when he distinguishes between “affective union” formally constituted by love, even of persons separated by distance, and “real union,” which love desires but does not constitute. Whoever meditates on this part of St. Thomas’ doctrine can testify how profound are the metaphysics and theology of love to be found there.

DIFFICULTIES OF THE PRECEDING VIEW

The Angelic Doctor does not deny any of the characteristics of love mentioned in St. Bernard’s works. He recognizes that love for God, especially when intense, draws us out of ourselves, not without violence; that it has its holy follies; and that, in this world, it, more than any other act, unites us to God. But how, he asks, can union with God bring us repose if love of Him has an essentially, and not merely accidentally, violent character? How can charity give joy and peace if it is not in conformity or in harmony with our deepest natural inclinations and aspirations? This chief difficulty contains virtually all others relative to each of the characteristics of love remarked by St. Bernard and Richard of St. Victor.

Love of friendship as such certainly makes us will good to another and brings us to love him for himself. St. Gregory certainly said that charity can exist only between distinct persons. Yet should we not love ourselves supernaturally? Should we not, in charity, will life eternal for ourselves? It is said: “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” After God, the author of all natural and supernatural good, we apparently should then love ourselves. Apparently, too, we must desire our own participation in the divine good before we can desire to share that good in common with our neighbor. My unity, my identity, with myself is surely a closer bond than my union with anyone else. The subordination of each of us to the principle of order is prior to the coordination of all so subordinated. True love of another, even the most generous love of friendship, seems founded on natural likeness even more than on the distinction of persons. Every living creature loves its own kind, finding itself in some way in its counterparts. Why should there not be a natural love of self that is legitimate? There is no apparent reason why such a love cannot rightly belong to the primordial inclination of our

nature, if it is subordinated to a natural love of God as the author and preserver of our existence. St. Bernard and Richard failed to examine this point sufficiently, but St. Thomas probed it to its depths. Undoubtedly, intense love of God is at times violent; sin, because it offends God and condemns souls to hell, inflicts keen suffering upon it. St. Thomas recognizes that our Lord, because of His profound knowledge of men's sins and their quasi-infinite gravity and, most of all, because of His great charity, suffered more during His passion than all contrite hearts put together. The Angelic Doctor gives an excellent explanation of St. Paul's words about the folly of the cross and the text, "love is strong as death, jealousy as hard as hell," from the Canticle of Canticles. Our crucified Lord has loved us with a love stronger than death, stronger than hell. The infinite value which His love drew from the person of the Word gave Him victory over sin, over Satan, and over death.

The holy violence of the Cross restored love's higher order and gave to mankind a wonderful remedy against those violations of the divine law which, if not forgiven in this world, incur the terrible punishment of eternal privation of God. But it need not follow that intense love possesses a character essentially violent or contrary to our nature. Certainly any disordered love of an apparent good runs counter to nature; but, just as surely, intense love of the truly good, and especially of God, follows nature's law. Intense love can, indeed, have reverberations on the human body that wear it out; but, no matter what its intensity, it seems to conform to our deepest natural inclinations and aspirations and to possess an essential connaturality. God created our nature. He gave it certain inclinations. Into these He, the source of all good, could inject no essential disorder. Anyone who fails to grasp this truth should seek light from St. Thomas. Can we say with absolute truth that in this world love suffices to unite us with God and really constitutes our union with Him? Of course, it formally constitutes an affective union with Him, the kind of union existing between separated lovers. It certainly provides joy and peace, even in the midst of trials. But the question still remains: Does love formally constitute real union with God; or does it not rather drive us to desire that real and perfect union formally constituted by the immediate vision of the divine essence?

In relation to this matter, St. Thomas introduces some nice and necessary distinctions. Most of the truth contained in the views about love's violence

just discussed applies not only to the distinction of persons united by love but also, and particularly, to the consequences of original and personal sin, to egotism properly so called, and to the disorder it implies. We are to understand the holy folly of love in contrast to the wisdom of the world, a consequence of sin. And, if we compare it with right reason, we do so only to learn how far it surpasses, not how much it contradicts, reason. The idea so dear to St. Bernard and Richard fails signally to bring out the good in the very essence of our will's primordial inclination, an inclination charity ought not to contradict but elevate.

THE PRINCIPLE OF ST. THOMAS' SOLUTION

These difficulties made St. Thomas formulate precisely certain views of Aristotle, pseudo-Dionysius, and St. Augustine on the fundamental inclination of our nature. They also led him to show the relationship between this inclination and grace, which should elevate it, not destroy it. In this way he came to discover some things but dimly glimpsed by theologians of the twelfth century.

St. Thomas differs from St. Bernard and from Richard, as well as from the author of The Imitation, in method rather than in doctrine. St. Bernard and Richard of St. Victor keep to the concrete. And we must admit that, in the concrete, and even among the baptized, a disordered love of self or egotism properly so called is usually the prime psychological manifestation. But truth demands a deeper study of human nature and requires us to consider the very essence of our nature's primordial inclination, taking our nature as it is in itself, abstractly, from the metaphysical point of view, as God conceived it from all eternity. Nominalists would pronounce such a study futile. We hold it of utmost importance, if men and angels really have determinate natures and if grace also has its essence, really distinct from all things in the merely natural order.

Aristotle observed that everything in nature is attracted to God, pure act, the immovable mover, the last end of the universe. Certain writings circulated under the name of Dionysius expressed the same thing in a variety of ways. St. Augustine, in his book De natura boni, clearly asserted in opposition to the Manichaeans that all nature as such, since God created it, is good; in some texts quoted by St. Bonaventure he even stated that all created nature, in a more or less confused way, tends toward the Supreme

Good. In his book De diligendo Deo, St. Bernard himself frequently alludes to this principle. Richard implicitly affirms it also. And Holy Scripture expresses the same truth clearly in its own manner, were it only in the Canticle of the Three Children: “All ye works of the Lord, bless the Lord; praise and exalt Him above all forever.”

St. Thomas, whose thought on the subject is notably in advance of St. Albert the Great’s, gave clear and definite formulation to these views by establishing, without leaning in the slightest way toward pantheism, that every created nature, especially when endowed with intellect and will, naturally tends to love God its author more than itself: just as in an organism each part naturally loves the whole more than itself. No less clearly has the Angelic Doctor shown what an infinite distance lies between the natural love of God as the author of nature and the supernatural love of God considered in His inner life and as the author of grace. St. Thomas’ clear teaching on this important point raises him above both Pelagian naturalism or Semi-pelagianism and what will later be called the pseudo-naturalism of Baius.

The principle of St. Thomas’ doctrine of love rests not merely on the distinction of persons loving one another or the necessity of overcoming egotism’s disorders but on our very nature itself, as fashioned by its Author. Therefore in regard to the order of charity, St. Thomas never neglects to consider our natural inclinations but shows how charity perfects them by elevating them to a higher order. The problem whether pure love ought to sacrifice the desire for personal beatitude does not really exist; for this desire, as it exists in the very essence of our nature’s primordial inclination, is not disordered but, on the contrary, is initially subordinated to love of God. Man possesses a natural inclination to virtue, weakened, indeed, by original and personal sin but not destroyed. Mortification and the Cross should remove every stain from this inclination, together with our natural desire for happiness. Purification, however, differs from destruction. Infused hope, and charity even more, elevate our nature to a higher level, and we come to love our eternal happiness for God’s sake, wishing to glorify Him eternally. The desire for happiness belongs essentially both to our nature and to the virtue of charity, which unites us to God and which, for the sake of God Himself, desires to continue united with Him forever.

A closer study of St. Thomas’ works reveals to us the nature of our initial love for our Creator, the character of our inclination to love Him more than

self. St. Thomas' thought unfolds gradually, chronologically, and brings us step by step to a complete and satisfying solution of the questions raised by others.

In the second book of his Commentary on the Sentences, he gives an excellent statement of the problem of love in the difficulties presented at the beginning. Every being seems inclined, he says, to seek what is good for itself (bonum sibi), or its own particular good, before everything else; for nature refers everything to self; only supernatural charity can make us love God more than self. Were the inclination to love God first and most nature's own, then wherever we find nature we should also find this tendency, even in the worst sinners, even in Satan.

In answer to this, St. Thomas first gives the opinion of William of Auxerre without, however, naming him. This thought is summarized elsewhere even more clearly as follows: "There have been some who maintained that an angel loves God more than himself with natural love, both as to the love of concupiscence, through his seeking the divine good for himself rather than his own good; and in a fashion with regard to the love of friendship, so far as he naturally desires a greater good for God than for himself; because he naturally wishes God to be God, while, as for himself, he wills to have his own nature. But absolutely speaking, out of natural love he loves himself more than he does God, because he naturally loves himself before God, and with greater intensity."

Even in his early works, St. Thomas judged William of Auxerre's opinion as improbable for the general reason that an angel's nature, as well as man's, is good in itself, fashioned to the image of God and, as a result, unmarked by any perverse inclination, such as love of self above love of God, the author of angelic life.

A little later, when writing his Commentary on Book III of the Sentences, he rejected William of Auxerre's opinion for a more exact reason, and his rejection contains the principle that now interests us, the genesis of which we are studying. It is expressed, however, with complex cleverness and has an air of effort about it quite foreign to the lofty simplicity of the Summa theologica. Although labored and extremely involved, the article can be resolved into two lines of reasoning: both men and angels prefer the good most suitable to them, the good most conformed to their appetites or desires, and they desire to preserve this good, especially where it exists perfectly and principally. But our good exists more perfectly in God than in

ourselves, for it is in Him as in the first, universal, creative, and conserving cause of every good; in much the same way as the good of the part is more in the whole than in itself, for, as we know, a hand by itself, separated from the body, loses its life. So it follows that we all naturally delight in the good in God more than the good in ourselves. For example, we delight more in the existence, life, intellect, and goodness of the Author of our nature than in our own individual life, just as in the body the band's natural bent is to love the body more than itself, even, when necessary, to the point of sacrificing itself for the body. Besides, as it is said in the same passage, the end ought to be loved more than the means; and God, even in the natural order, is the end of all things, as He is, by His preservative act, more intimate to all than each is to itself.

In contradiction of William of Auxerre, St. Thomas further remarks: The natural love under consideration is not only a love of concupiscence but a love of benevolence as well, for we all naturally delight in the goodness in God our Creator, more than the goodness we find in ourselves, naturally choosing the source of light and heat in preference to any of its rays. The love referred to here falls far short of infused charity, of course, yet it remains the normal consequence of the good bent God has given our very nature.

In the Summa theologica, written at least ten years after the Commentary on the Third Book of the Sentences, St. Thomas achieves a simpler and more perfect expression of the same principle and definitely discards the opinion of William of Auxerre as false. As we learn from his manuscripts, the Angelic Doctor usually perfected his line of reasoning not by amplification but by condensation. His progressive conciseness shows that his thought advances more by penetration than by extension. As is fitting in a contemplative, his thought rises toward the highest, simplest, and most universal principles and offers a human parallel to the hierarchy of angelic intellects. The higher angels grasp by a few ideas, in a single glance, and reduced to a sort of supra-sensible panorama or metaphysical view, a multitude of intelligible realities which the lower angels can achieve only by means of many less universal ideas. So St. Thomas' thought progressed from the more complex development of his Commentary to the simplified exposition of the Summa, wherein he rises above the sensible order and attains to a principle that throws light on the full compass of the problem of love.

A part of this text has been quoted elsewhere. The preceding discussion will now enable us to grasp more fully and deeply the meaning and implication of the whole.

The natural tendency of things devoid of reason shows the nature of the natural inclination residing in the will of an intellectual nature. Now, in the natural order of things, everything which of its nature belongs to another, is principally and more strongly inclined to that other to which it belongs, than toward itself. Such a natural tendency is evidenced from things which are moved to act according to nature: because whatever is moved of its nature to act in a certain manner, has the inborn aptitude for such action, as the Philosopher says (Phys., ii). For we observe that the part naturally exposes itself to safeguard the whole; as, for instance, the hand is without deliberation exposed to the blow for the whole body's safety. And since reason copies nature, we find the same inclination among the social virtues; for it behooves the virtuous citizen to expose himself to the danger of death for the public weal of the state; and if man were a natural part of the city, then such inclination would be natural to him.

Consequently, since God is the universal good, and under this good both man and angel and every creature is comprised, because every creature in regard to its entire being naturally belongs to God; it follows that from natural love angel and man alike love God before themselves and with a greater love. Otherwise, if either of them loved self more than God, it would follow that natural love would be perverse, and that it would not be perfected but destroyed by charity.

In this beautiful text St. Thomas emphasizes the inner structure of his reasoning—major, minor, and conclusion—and takes up the consideration of God not only as the first efficient, creative, and conserving cause of our nature and existence but also as our last end and supreme good.

The order of agents corresponds to the order of ends: a principle properly and profitably invoked in relation to any being and therefore to any creature on any level. Even the lowliest beings, by tending toward their natural perfection, tend toward a certain likeness of the divine perfection, and toward the good of the whole universe even more than their own. This is true of the stone that tends toward the earth's center, of the earth that turns round the sun, of the sun that is drawn by a still greater force. It is true of plant and of animal: they naturally tend more toward the conservation of their species than to self-preservation. As our Lord said, "the hen doth

gather her chickens under her wings" and will expose her own life, as St. Thomas remarks, to defend them from the hawk. So all creation moves toward the good of the universe and toward God its author, a truth called to our minds by Aristotle and Dionysius and triumphantly proclaimed by the Old Testament: "All ye works of the Lord, bless the Lord; praise and exalt Him above all forever."

In commenting on this canticle, St. Bernard, Richard of St. Victor, St. Bonaventure, and St. Thomas all join in saying: "All ye works of the Lord, bless the Lord . . . angels of the Lord . . . , heavens . . . , waters that are above the heavens . . . , stars of heaven . . , shower and dew . . . , ice and snow . . . , light and darkness . . . , bless the Lord; mountains and hills . . . , seas and rivers . . . , birds of the air, bless the Lord; sons of men . . . , priests, servants of God . . . , spirits and souls of the just . . . , the holy and humble of heart, bless the Lord: praise and exalt Him above all forever . . . because He is good: because His mercy endureth forever and ever."

Chanted by the Church at daybreak, this lovely canticle of Lauds expresses with a magnificence full of praise, contemplation, and love the same principle St. Thomas cast into a metaphysical formula in his Summa: "In its own way everything loves God more than itself."

Elsewhere in his works St. Thomas has expressed the same great truth in approximately the same terms. In the Summa he makes more explicit the distinction between natural love of God and supernatural charity: "The good we receive from God is twofold, the good of nature and the good of grace. But the fellowship of natural goods bestowed on us by God is the foundation of natural love, in virtue of which not only man, so long as his nature remains unimpaired, loves God above all things and more than himself, but also every creature, each in its own way (that is, by an intellectual or rational or animal or at least natural love, as stones do, for instance, and other things bereft of knowledge), because each part naturally loves the common good of the whole more than its own particular good. This is evidenced by its operation, since the principal inclination of each part is toward common action conducive to the good of the whole. It may be seen also in civic virtues whereby sometimes the citizens suffer damage even to their own property and persons for the sake of the common good. Therefore much more is this realized with regard to the friendship of charity which is based on the fellowship of the gifts of grace.

“Therefore man ought, out of charity, to love God, who is the common good of all, more than himself: since happiness is in God as in the universal and fountain principle of all who are able to have a share of that happiness.”

Duns Scotus has made the objection: “Even conceding that the part does expose itself for the whole, it acts thus only because of its identity with the whole and to save itself, for it can exist only in the whole. Besides, no creature is a part of God.” Is St. Thomas’ doctrine, then, in danger of falling into pantheism?

Cajetan has answered this objection as follows:

The reason why the part exposes itself for the whole is not because of its identity with it. The proof of which lies in this: that it will expose itself, if necessary, to the point of losing its identity that it may save the whole (as a hand will sacrifice itself for the body). The reason for this natural inclination is that given by St. Thomas: by its nature and very being the part is first and essentially for the whole and from the whole. This is fittingly applied to every creature in relation to God. Each is, according to its nature, a natural part of the universe and, as a result, naturally loves the universe more than itself. With far greater reason it naturally prefers to self the universal or essential good which as eminent or first cause contains the good of the whole universe.

No pantheism lurks in this doctrine; for it maintains an infinite distance between God and the highest of creatures: God alone is existent by essence; He is Being itself; no creature is its own existence; every created essence is really distinct from its existence; God alone is essential goodness; every creature, no matter how great, is good only by participation.

Without at all approaching pantheism, we can say that God possesses goodness in its entirety, as the eminent cause in which every good is virtually contained. Angels and men do not love themselves as their last end. They love themselves as creatures subordinated to a last end, God. They naturally love themselves for God, and so love God more than themselves.

SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM

The principle that “every created nature tends to love its Author more than itself” has innumerable consequences. Only the principal ones will be noted. The first marks a certain hierarchy: the higher a nature is, the more

perfect it is, and the stronger is its natural inclination to love God. The gravitating stone, the growing, seed-bearing plant, the living, breeding animal, the loving, thinking man, the matter-free and flesh-unfettered angel, all move in an ascending order of perfection toward the good of the universe. Thinking upon this, St. Thomas reached the conclusion that, at the moment of their creation, God gave to His angels grace in proportion to their natural capacity and the natural energy of their will.

The principle now under discussion has another and no less remarkable consequence. The natural motion resulting from this inclination of all creatures becomes more and more rapid as it nears its fitting term, the natural end toward which they move and in which they come to rest. As any child knows who throws a ball into the air, movement that is violent or contrary to nature slows down progressively until it stops, whereas movement in conformity with nature, following her law of gravity, increases steadily in speed. So spirits gravitating toward God naturally (and connaturally by infused charity) advance toward Him more and more quickly as they come closer to Him and are more drawn by Him, until they see Him face to face. The law here at work, to be seen later as manifest in the progress of the saints, is more general and therefore higher than Newton's law of gravity, which comes within its wider compass.

A third consequence of this principle results from its application to a sphere above matter, the spiritual order, and contains the solution to the problem of love. True spiritual goods coincide with what is good in itself. By rightly desiring its own perfection, by loving itself as it ought, the created spirit loves its Creator still more; further, by ceasing to love its own perfection, it ceases to love God. Here, in plain opposition to quietism, St. Thomas proposes his solution to the problem of love, making no demand, under pretext of purifying our love for God, that we sacrifice our desire for perfection, virtue, sanctity, and salvation. Having made his expert deductions, he turns to the spiritual realm to find them verified in the natural and supernatural life of those pure spirits, the angels, and, in due proportion, in man's as well.

In the natural order conflict arises between two individuals of the same species because they desire the same material good, whether useful or pleasurable; for example, the same field, the same house, the same profits, things which cannot properly belong to them both at the same time. Between several spirits desiring the same spiritual good (for example, the

same light of truth, the same virtue, the same beatitude) conflict is impossible. Why? St. Thomas gives the answer by putting into exact terms the profound thought of St. Augustine that includes a virtual solution of the social question. Matter, by individualizing, divides. Material goods, because individualized and limited, cannot belong to all at the same time. On the contrary, spirit universalizes and can acquire immaterial goods which, because of their universality, can belong to all at the same time. These immaterial goods, far from dividing, unite us, if pride does not go seeking apparent goods and falsifying all things. The true good of created spirits is identical with good in itself, with real good. Right reason's evaluation of a true good is independent of any individual pleasure or particular utility resulting from its possession. It recognizes, for example, that to tell the truth and refrain from lying is good even though it should cost life itself. There can be no question of sacrificing a spiritual good, because by efficaciously loving it and ourselves through it we love God our Sovereign Good more than self. By ceasing to love it, we turn from God.

St. Thomas has examined this consequence with particular thoroughness in his treatise on the angels. His thought may be summarized as follows: Even in the order of animal life, when "the hen gathers her chickens under her wings" to defend them from the hawk, she naturally loves the good of her species, and her motherhood more than her individual life, more than her own good, which she will sacrifice if need be. No parallel obtains in regard to any goods proper to the soul, such as virtue or spiritual perfection. And because no such parallel exists, the propositions of Molinos and Fénelon declaring that the truly interior soul should not desire its own perfection, have been condemned.

St. Thomas points out the profound reason why the quietist view is wrong when he shows how the proper perfection of created spirits coincides with what is good in itself and ultimately with the Sovereign Good. He remarks it again when he reasons that the angels could not have sinned directly against the natural law, which was absolutely evident to them, but must have done so indirectly by turning away from the supernatural law known to them only in the obscurity of faith.

If the multiplicity of individuals of the same species actually proceeds from matter which receives the same specific form many times—as wax receives the imprint of a seal over and over again—and if, in consequence, each pure spirit, being without matter, is the only one of his species, then no

spirit could suffer inner conflict because of opposition between the good of his species and his individual good. Furthermore, as each pure spirit always intuitively sees his own essence and the natural law imprinted therein, he cannot be deceived in regard to the law, nor can he cease to consider the law. The voluntary disorder of sin always presupposes some error of practical judgment or at least a certain failure to consider the law when it could and should be considered. It follows, according to St. Thomas, that the angels could never sin directly against the natural law, which is absolutely evident to them. As has been remarked, the nature of each draws him to love God more than himself and, as a result, to observe the whole natural law as seen written in his own essence. So he sees intuitively that his own true good as a pure spirit coincides with that which is good in itself; and by loving it he loves yet more the Sovereign Source of all good. Although one of the greatest corollaries of the principle formulated above, this truth has not always been understood by modern theologians despite St. Thomas' full and satisfying explanation of it. The fact is that not only could the angels sin indirectly against the natural law, but many of them actually did. How? Before receiving the immediate vision of the divine essence, they knew the supernatural law only in the obscurity of faith; so they could sin against it, particularly through pride. As a result they could also sin indirectly against the natural law, which obliges them to obey God in whatever He commands either in the natural or in the supernatural order.

By sinning, the devil stopped loving God directly as author of grace; consequently he stopped loving God indirectly as the author of the natural moral law. He no longer loves himself rightly, no longer loves his own true good, pride making him seek it where it is not to be found. While hating his just Judge and the punishment inflicted by Him, he keeps on loving life itself and, in a wholly natural, physical, and in no way moral or supernatural sense, and in despite of everything, he keeps on loving the Author of nature and of life.

The consequence of the principle appealed to above does not apply to man exactly in the same way. However, so far as man is a spirit, the good proper to his higher part coincides with the good in itself as willed by God; and, by loving himself according to the higher part of his nature, man loves his Creator still more. Not to so love himself would be to turn from God.

In this respect man differs from the angels because his intellect is the last and least of intellects, and its proper object is the lowest of intelligibles and

lies in the shadow of sensible things; yet in the mirror of material things he can know purely spiritual realities. His intellect cannot see the very essence of his own soul intuitively or the natural law written there. Moreover, through his imagination, which does not always follow reason, sensible things exert an attraction upon him and provoke his emotions to disorder. These in turn influence his judgment and lead him into error, especially in practical matters. Consequently they lead to sin, even to sins directly opposed to the natural law. Besides, since no man comprises the whole of his species but each is only one among many, conflict can exist between the good of the species and the sensible good of the individual; and only too often man sins by preferring his personal good, whether useful or pleasurable, and sometimes comes at last to sin even against nature itself.

However, in man too, spiritual good and essential good are at one, according to the words of Psalm 10: “He that loveth iniquity hateth his own soul.” From the lips of Christ Himself we hear: “He that shall lose his life for Me shall find it”

Aristotle presented the same truth from a philosophical point of view in his Ethics:

The question is also debated, whether a man should love himself most, or someone else. People criticize those who love themselves most, and call them self-lovers, using this as an epithet of disgrace. . . . But the facts clash with these arguments, and this is not surprising. For men say that one ought to love best one’s best friend, and a man’s best friend is one who wishes well to the object of his wish for his sake, even if no one is to know of it; and these attributes are found most of all in a man’s attitude toward himself. . . .

Perhaps we ought to mark off such arguments from each other and determine how far and in what respects each view is right. Now if we grasp the sense in which each school uses the phrase “lover of self,” the truth may become evident. Those who use the term as one of reproach ascribe self-love to people who assign to themselves the greater share of wealth, honours, and bodily pleasures; for these are what most people desire. . . . So those who are grasping with regard to these things gratify their appetites and in general their feelings and the irrational element of the soul; and most men are of this nature (which is the reason why the epithet has come to be used as it is—it takes its meaning from the prevailing type of self-love, which is a bad one); it is just, therefore, that men who are lovers of self in

this way are reproached for being so. That it is those who give themselves the preference in regard to objects of this sort that most people usually call lovers of self is plain; for if a man were always anxious that he himself, above all things, should act justly, temperately, or in accordance with any other of the virtues, and in general were always to try to secure for himself the honourable course, no one will call such a man a lover of self or blame him.

But such a man would seem more than the other a lover of self; at all events he assigns to himself the things that are noblest and best, and gratifies the most authoritative element in himself and in all things obeys this; and just as a city or any other systematic whole is most properly identified with the most authoritative element in it, so is a man; and therefore the man who loves this and gratifies it is most of all a lover of self. . . . Whence it follows that he is most truly a lover of self, of another type than that which is a matter of reproach, and as different from that as living according to a rational principle is from living as passion dictates, and desiring what is noble from desiring what seems advantageous. . . .

For he will throw away both wealth and honours and in general the goods that are objects of competition, gaining for himself nobility; since he would prefer a short period of intense pleasure to a long one of mild enjoyment, a twelve-month of noble life to many years of humdrum existence, and one great and noble action to many trivial ones. Now those who die for others doubtless attain this result; it is therefore a great prize that they choose for themselves. They will throw away wealth too on condition that their friends will gain more; for while a man’s friend gains wealth he himself achieves nobility; he is therefore assigning the greater good to himself. The same too is true of honour and office; all these things he will sacrifice to his friend; for this is noble and laudable for himself. Rightly then is he thought to be good, since he chooses nobility before all else. But he may even give up actions to his friend; it may be nobler to become the cause of his friend’s acting than to act himself. . . . In this sense, then, as has been said, a man should be a lover of self; but in the sense in which most men are so, he ought not.

Both when treating of magnanimity or greatness of soul and when inquiring whether sinners truly love themselves, St. Thomas carefully examines Aristotle’s noble thought in the light of the Gospel, remarking:

For it is common to all for each one to love what he thinks himself to be. . . . In this way too, all men, both good and wicked, love themselves, in so far as they love their own preservation.

Secondly, a man is said to be something in respect of some predominance, as the sovereign of a state is spoken of as being the state, and so, what the sovereign does, the state is said to do. In this way, all do not think themselves to be what they are. For the reasoning mind is the predominant part of man, while the sensitive and corporeal nature takes the second place, the former of which the Apostle calls the inward man, and the latter, the outward man (II Cor. 4: 16). Now the good look upon their rational nature or the inward man as being the chief thing in them, wherefore in this way they think themselves to be what they are. On the other hand, the wicked reckon their sensitive and corporeal nature, or the outward man, to hold the first place. Wherefore, since they know not themselves aright, they do not love themselves aright, but love what they think themselves to be. But the good know themselves truly, and therefore truly love themselves. . . .

In this way the good love themselves, as to the inward man, because they wish the preservation thereof in its integrity, they desire good things for him, namely spiritual goods, indeed they do their best to obtain them, and they take pleasure in entering into their own hearts, because they find there good thoughts in the present, the memory of past good, and the hope of future good, all of which are sources of pleasure. Likewise they experience no clashing of wills, since their whole soul tends to one thing.

On the other hand, the wicked have no wish to be preserved in the integrity of the inward man, nor do they desire spiritual goods for him, nor do they work for that end, nor do they take pleasure in their own company by entering into their own hearts, because whatever they find there, present, past and future, is evil and horrible; nor do they agree with themselves, on account of the gnawings of conscience. . . .

In the same manner it may be shown that the wicked love themselves, as regards the corruption of the outward man, whereas the good do not love themselves thus.

The love of self which is the principle of sin is that which is proper to the wicked, and reaches to the contempt of God, . . . because the wicked so desire external goods as to despise spiritual goods.

The wicked have some share of self-love, in so far as they think themselves good. Yet such love of self is not true but apparent: and even this is not possible in those who are very wicked."

The damned, in fact, hate themselves and, in a sense, will their own annihilation that they may escape suffering.

Everything we have been considering drives home to us the fact that spiritual creatures love God by perfectly loving themselves and turn from God by failing to love themselves as they should; for, though men can love money, sensual pleasures, and honors too much, no one can, contrary to quietist teaching, love virtue too much. To love virtue is to love our best self, and to love our best self is to love the best of all goods, God Himself.

Truths found in St. Augustine, St. Bernard, and Richard, but emphasized and synthesized by St. Thomas, have formed this simple solution of a great problem. Father Rousselot may have forgotten to note that love, contrary to knowledge, draws us toward reality instead of bringing reality to us, but he has thoroughly grasped St. Thomas' solution. He writes: "St. Thomas thus reconciles two apparently contradictory statements: (1) that disinterested love is possible and even profoundly natural (since man's nature leads him to love God more than self): (2) that purely 'ecstatic' love, a love of pure duality,' is impossible." As a matter of fact, a love that would take us entirely out of ourselves, so to speak, would not at all conform to our nature's basic inclination toward good, and especially our own good as properly subordinated to the supreme and incomparable Good.

Putting this problem into words, we ask ourselves: Can man love God with a really pure and truly disinterested love? And, if he can, how reconcile this love with self-love, commonly and correctly recognized as fundamental to his nature? Apparently man can love God only as his own particular good; for him to love God in any other way would conflict with his nature and is, therefore, impossible.

St. Thomas' answer is to distinguish between the end and the subject of love. Regarding the end, he declares that our nature leads us to love God not for ourselves, as subordinating Him to us, but for Himself and more than ourselves, as our first cause and last end. At the same time, concerning the nature of our love for God, he admits that none of us could love Him were we not dependent on that good which is Himself. In other words, if our faculty for loving had no relation to God, we surely could not love Him;

but such a relationship exists, is absolutely fundamental, and pertains to our first cause and last end.

Man's existence, personal unity, and goodness depend entirely upon God, his creator and conserver. In this single fact the following two truths find reconciliation: (1) a man really loves himself only when he loves God still more and, therefore, with a pure and disinterested love; and (2) no man can love God without loving himself in God, as the Canticle of Canticles expresses it, "My beloved to me, and I to Him."

The disciple speaks to the Master, saying: "I abandon myself and lose myself that I may find Thee; yet I know that nothing is lost to him who finds the treasure of Thy heart, where love is disinterested and faithful and makes us hunger to reproduce it in our own hearts."

"He that shall lose his life for Me shall find it." When St. Bernard and Richard of St. Victor make use of this passage for the purpose of exhorting the faithful, they emphasize the first part of our Savior's words; but obviously, like St. Thomas, they accept the second. The same cannot be said of the quietists.

Much more clearly than either St. Bernard or Richard, the Angelic Doctor has perceived that by loving God and neighbor disinterestedly man's free will does not play the rebel against nature, as though his nature could not rise above the selfish love of concupiscence. Admittedly, original sin has weakened his natural inclination to virtue, but, together with every creature, he still holds to his original bent to love God more than his particular good and even to love himself for God. Grace perfects and uplifts this inclination without destroying it, without demanding the sacrifice of his desire for perfection and happiness, a desire initially good and one essentially subordinated to love of God and therefore never to be sacrificed.

A further consequence of St. Thomas' principle relates to love of neighbor and can be stated thus: According to his spiritual nature, man ought to love himself less than God and more than his neighbor; to do so is neither egoism nor inordinate love of self—even should his neighbor be better than he.

St. Thomas gives the reason for this when he says: "A man is not a friend to himself, but something more than a friend, since friendship implies union, for . . . love is a unitive force, whereas a man is one with himself, which is more than being united to another. Hence, just as unity is the principle of union, so the love with which a man loves himself is the form

and root of friendship." A friend is another self, and so Holy Scripture admonishes us, "Thou shalt love thy friend as thyself," bidding us, in other words, to will for our friend the same good things we will for ourselves. Love of neighbor rises no higher than the level of concupiscence if founded on mutual pleasure-seeking; it becomes true friendship only when based on the common quest for goodness, when friend wants for friend what he himself most desires. To this, St. Thomas adds: "Just as unity surpasses union, the fact that man himself has a share of the divine good is a more potent reason for loving than that another should be a partner with him in that share. Therefore man, out of charity, ought to love himself more than his neighbor," at least according to his higher part.

The objection may be made that, as the poet expresses it, "we needs must love the highest when we see it," and my neighbor is often a better man than I. To this St. Thomas replies that we must love those who are better than ourselves by desiring for them their merited and greater reward; on the other hand, no other human being is so close to us as we are to ourselves; God, and God alone, is more intimately present. Every just man, then, prizes the charity uniting him to God more than the charity of any other just man. A child loves its own poor and far from faultless mother much more than someone else's who may be rich and virtuous; and would rather wear, as St. Augustine observes, its own clothes than someone else's richer and finer garments.

Undoubtedly saints have laid down their lives for others; yet, even in dying they love themselves more, according to the higher part of their souls, than those for whom they die, St. Thomas says, for never may they sacrifice their own spiritual good to free another from sin. The good of our country can indeed demand the sacrifice of a man's life, but not of his spiritual good; it cannot require him to sin or lose his virtue. If, considered in this matter (the principle of individualization), an individual is subordinate to the state, the latter is subordinate to the human person as having a spiritual and immortal soul in immediate relation with God.

After this enumeration of the chief consequences of the principle that every creature's natural bent is to love God the Creator first and most, an examination of the difficulties that may be raised concerning the principle itself will give us a deeper understanding of it and reveal to us, by the way, other conclusions flowing from the same principle and sounding the fully

harmony of nature and grace as realized in the unitive life on earth and the life of glory in heaven.

CONFIRMATION OF THE THOMISTIC SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM OF LOVE

As stated in the Summa (Ia, q. 60, a. 5; IIa IIae, q. 26, a. 3), these difficulties have reference to the end of our primordial natural inclination and to its relations, on one hand, with infused charity and, on the other, with sin and reparation.

One objection contends that natural love is founded on natural union; and that our nature, being separated by its own inferiority from the divine, can have no natural attraction drawing it to love God more than itself. St. Thomas answers by agreeing that natural love is based on natural union, pointing this out as the reason why a man loves himself more than his neighbor with whom he can have, at most, union, whereas with himself he enjoys true unity. The Angelic Doctor goes on to drive home the truth that this unity of a man with himself necessarily depends, in turn, upon God, the creator and conserver of man's nature, the whole reason or total cause of his existence and participated goodness. To Him man's affection naturally first turns. In any species, the individual loves the good of the species more than its own individual good, as observation of the way mothers defend their young will teach us. God is not merely the good of the human species, He is the absolutely universal and essential good. Our love turns towards him first. The proximate cause of this natural inclination is our own nature; its ultimate cause is God.

THE END OF OUR PRIMORDIAL NATURAL INCLINATION

At this point, let us return to the difficulty expressed in the statement of the problems: All that we love we love as our own good; now we love whatever is the reason for love more than the object of love, just as we know principles better than conclusions; man, therefore, loves himself more than any other good whatever, even the Supreme Good.

Now the meaning and implication of St. Thomas' distinction between the end of love and the loving subject, whose good it is to love God more than self, becomes clearer to us. "When it is said that God is loved by an angel in so far as He is good to the angel, if the expression in so far denotes an end,

then it is false; for he does not naturally love God for his own good, but for God's own sake. If it denotes the nature of love on the part of the one loving, then it is true; for it would not be in the nature of anyone to love God, except from this, that everything is dependent on that good which is God."

Does not a man wish his friend well even when it will mean no personal advantage for himself? With how much greater reason ought he not to love God in the same way? "The part does indeed love the good of the whole, as becomes a part, not however so as to refer the good of the whole to itself, but rather itself to the good of the whole."

To love is to will good to another. If we will good to ourselves, this good can be either inferior or superior to us. If, like our daily food, it is inferior to us, we will it to ourselves and for ourselves, subordinating it to us as to an end. If it is superior to us, we should will it to ourselves but not for ourselves; far from subordinating it to us, we should subordinate ourselves to it, as is done in that higher love of concupiscence called hope, especially when this virtue is united to charity. By charity we will to God His glory and to ourselves our own salvation that we may glorify God eternally. These two forms of supernatural love of God, far from being contrary to our nature, are perfectly conformed to it, His handiwork.

The following division of love into its various kinds is based on St. Thomas' note: "To love is to wish good to someone. Hence the movement of love has a twofold tendency: toward the good which a man wishes to someone (to himself or to another) and toward that to which he wishes some good. Accordingly man has love of concupiscence toward the good that he wishes to another, and love of friendship toward him to whom he wishes good."

In the natural order, every creature is naturally inclined to love its own good for the common good of the universe and, in a more or less obscure fashion, to manifest the goodness of the Creator whose might is the source and support of the universe.

The two preceding difficulties about the basis and end of nature's primordial inclination can be combined into one: Nature's acts are all fundamentally self-centered: the way

Love	love of benevolence	In the order of grace:
charity	I will the glory of God, the author of grace.	
	I will my own salvation that I may glorify God eternally.	

In the order of nature I will the glory of God, the author of my nature, in which He manifests His goodness.

love of concupiscence Of God In the order of grace Hope enlivened by charity: I efficaciously desire that God be loved more than myself.

Hope without charity: I inefficaciously desire that God be loved more than myself.

In the order of nature I desire God by subordinating myself to Him, as to that which is good for me, but which I desire ultimately, for His own sake, not for mine.

Of inferior things I desire food as a good to be obtained for myself, subordinating it to my life, as to an end.

creatures act for their own self-preservation reveals this to us. Nature, then, inclines no creature to love God more than itself. St. Thomas concedes this to be true of fallen nature which, because of original sin and its consequences, certainly does tend toward egoism. He denies it to be true of nature as it came from the hand of God. “Nature’s operation is self-centered not merely with regard to certain particular details, but much more with regard to what is common; for everything is inclined to preserve not merely its individuality, but likewise its species. And much more has everything a natural inclination toward what is the absolutely universal good.”

When this objection persists, maintaing that love of God is really a desire to enjoy Him and therefore remains nothing but self-love whereby we desire good for ourselves, St. Thomas replies: “That a man wishes to enjoy God pertains to that love of God which is love of concupiscence. But we love God with the love of friendship more than with the love of concupiscence, because the divine good is greater in itself than our share of good in enjoying Him.” Another observation of his bearing on this subject really composes a theological commentary on the expression of the Canticle of Canticles, “My beloved to me, and I to him.” “Hope makes us tend to God, as to a good to be obtained finally, and as to a helper strong to assist: whereas charity, properly speaking, makes us tend to God, by uniting our affections to Him, so that we live, not for ourselves, but for God.” This supernatural inclination of charity, far from being contrary to our natural desire for happiness, is conformed to it; charity’s pure love could not, as a result, require us to sacrifice this desire but raises it to a new height in us by making us will our salvation chiefly that we may glorify God eternally.

William of Auxerre held that anyone maintaining that an angel can, without grace, love God more than himself, practically asserts that he can, without grace, live a just and holy life; but to maintain this view is to fall into the Pelagian heresy. In fact, he continues, quoting St. Augustine as his authority, the words of St. Paul, “The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost who is given to us,” apply to angels as well as to men.

St. Thomas does not subtract anything from St. Augustine’s meaning; rather he gives it greater clarity by replying: “God, in so far as He is the universal good, on whom every natural good depends, is loved by everything with natural love. So far as He is the good which of its very nature, beatifies all with supernatural beatitude, He is loved with the love of charity.” This is the distinction between God, the author of nature (regarded as outside God), and God in His intimate life (that is, as the author of grace). This distinction was always taught by the Church and explicitly formulated in the condemnation of Baius. Grace and charity belong to the same order as the beatific vision; they are indeed the seed of the state of glory. Neither man nor angel can, solely by natural intellectual power, see God directly; they can apprehend Him naturally only through the reflection of His perfections—man in the mirror of sensible things, angels in the mirror of His own essence.

Without stating it as clearly as St. Thomas does, St. Augustine had formulated this distinction, not only in regard to men but also in regard to the angels, for he says:

Who gave them good will, if not He who created them with good will and a chaste love whereby to cleave to Him, who produced their natures and gave them grace by one and the same act? We believe that the good angels never were without good will or love of God. As to the bad angels, they were created good but became bad by their own will, itself made evil not by its own good nature but by its defection from the good; for evil springs not from goodness but from defection from goodness. The angels who fell either received less of the grace of divine love than those who persevered or, all having been created in equal goodness, they fell by their own evil will while the others were more strongly aided to a fullness of happiness which, when they had attained, they could never lose. . . . We must therefore give due glory to our Creator, because of angels as well as of

men it can be said that the charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost who has been given to us.

This text contains a clear distinction between nature and grace and, inasmuch as it concerns the angels, there can be no question of St. Augustine's purpose. He intended to differentiate not only between fallen nature and healing grace but also between the most perfect and unspoiled angelic nature and the grace that raises that nature to a higher order, the divine, where it lives and acts in the realm of God by participating in His intimate life and, in heaven, enjoys the immediate vision which He has of Himself.

NATURE AND SIN

The mystery of iniquity contained in all sin raises a special difficulty formulated by St. Thomas thus: "Natural love lasts while nature endures. But the love of God more than self does not remain in the angel or man who sins. . . . Therefore it is not natural to love God more than self."

The substance of St. Thomas' replies amounts to this: The sinner and the devil certainly do not love God as the author of the moral law and their own just judge; they turn away from Him in this guise. Nevertheless their natures still incline them to love God as the author of existence and life and to love Him even more than themselves, for, in spite of everything, they continue to love the existence and life God conserves in them and, as a result, to love its source still more, not willing the good of God as an object distinct from their own, but as identified with it.

Because of this primordial inclination, sin is not possible for those who see God face to face and recognize His sovereign goodness. On the contrary, sin is possible for all those who still know the Creator only through His effects and His precepts, some of which gall them. So they can turn from God as the author of the moral law while continuing to love physical and intellectual life and, in a confused way, its supreme source. By loving existence, the sinner, without reflecting or heeding, loves what conserves existence, just as in an organism a sick part still clings to the life coming to it from the whole body.

But how, it will be asked, can such a difference exist between the very essence of our will's primordial inclination and those concrete psychological manifestations which, even in the baptized, generally appear

at the very beginning of moral life and testify to our inordinate love of self, our real egoism? How does it happen that only in the unitive way does a man come to conform his individual life to the first and fundamental inclination of the nature of man? If man's nature is as upright as has just been claimed, why are mortification and the cross so necessary? How can St. Thomas' doctrine be reconciled with what The Imitation says about the different motions of nature and grace?

St. Thomas has not left this difficulty unanswered. He shows that the natural inclination to virtue is weakened by sin, which, especially when repeated, gives rise to a contrary habit. Nature remains the same, but any natural inclination ordered to a good action is weakened by an evil act, and this weakness remains after the act as an obstacle to good. Original sin itself has four resultant wounds: (1) the will, turned from God, its natural and supernatural last end, becomes weak in well doing; (2) the intellect tends to err, especially in the guidance of life; and the sensible appetite is inclined (3) to impatience and cowardice, and (4) to sensuality.

After baptism, faithfulness heals these wounds; personal sins magnify them until they serve as the source for concupiscence of the flesh, and of the eyes, the pride of life, and the seven capital sins, principles of so many others. If we read the nineteen long questions St. Thomas devoted to these subjects, we shall see that, although his method differs from that of The Imitation because he keeps to the speculative and abstract rather than the practical and concrete, he stresses quite as strongly the necessity of mortification.

Evidence of this accord stands out in what St. Thomas tells us about love of self: "Now self-love may stand in a threefold relationship to charity. In one way it is contrary to charity, when a man places his end in the love of his own good. In another way it is included in charity, when a man loves himself for the sake of God in God. In a third way, it is indeed distinct from charity, but is not contrary thereto, as when a man loves himself from the point of view of his own good yet not so as to place his end in this his own good." Hope of divine benefits disposes us to love our Benefactor Himself for Himself.

The Angelic Doctor's teaching provides us with a satisfactory explanation of the sinner's weak natural love of God and inclination to virtue. Passion and vice have attenuated them. Mortification and the cross,

on the contrary, bring man's individual life into harmony with the very essence of his nature's ultimate inclination.

There is a last difficulty relative to suffering in reparation for others. How can St. Paul say, "For I wished myself to be an anathema from Christ, for my brethren"? Instead of harmonizing with man's natural inclination, this act of supreme charity seems contrary to it. The same can be said of St. John of the Cross who, when asked by our Lord what he desired, answered: "Lord, to suffer and to be despised for Your sake"; and of St. Teresa, whose reply was: "To suffer or to die."

Apropos of St. Paul's words, "For I wished myself to be an anathema from Christ, for my brethren," all that St. Thomas concedes is that a saint transported by love for Christ's honor and the salvation of his brethren, can desire, should Christ's honor and the salvation of souls require it, to be deprived of the joy of divine union—though not of that union itself, which can be lost only through mortal sin. Besides, as Massoulié remarked, such a desire belongs to the transports of love, is an intense act of charity and not a permanent state.

Moreover, St. Paul's words, far from being contrary to our nature, conform to its deepest inclination since fundamentally we love God the author of our nature more than ourselves and are ready to sacrifice ourselves for His sake, if need be, even as the hand endangers itself to save the head. St. Paul makes not an absolute but a conditional sacrifice of his personal beatitude—if necessary for the honor of Christ and the salvation of his brethren. His act includes rather than excludes hope, because he bids us to hope like Abraham who, when God asked of him the sacrifice of his only son Isaac, "accounting that God is able to raise up even from the dead," hoped on heroically, hoped on against all hope.

So St. Thomas' principle applies, as we see, to the highest interior states and, at the same time, serves to help us avoid the extreme and contrary errors of naturalism and pseudo-supernaturalism. Pelagian or Semi-Pelagian naturalism unconsciously supposes a certain pantheistic confusion of human nature with the divine. Contrarily, the pseudo-supernaturalism of Baius, following a subjectivist tendency, blindly assumes an original disorder in our nature itself, which absolutely requires the remedy of grace. In the latter view, the original disorder so unthinkingly accepted is seen as tainting our every affection and evidently can be destroyed only at the sacrifice of personal beatitude.

St. Thomas' doctrine rises above these two contrary errors and brings out effectively the harmony of nature and grace without detracting in the least from the gratuitousness and sublimity of grace. According to him, man's first natural love is for God. Original and personal sin weaken this tendency and leave traces in the soul of man that require purification and even, it may be, violent purification. But after his soul is purified, the initial harmony of his God-given nature shines forth transfigured in his supernatural love of God, the author of grace. Nature suffers no loss at the hands of grace, which destroys sin and its consequences only that it may raise nature to an infinitely higher order where, in the immediate and eternal vision of a loving and beloved God, every human aspiration finds satisfaction beyond the scope of any man's desire.

ARTICLE IV

ST. THOMAS AND NEWTON

Newton, noticing the accelerating fall of an apple, saw the law of gravity; St. Thomas watched it and beheld a figure of the natural or connatural movement of all spiritual creatures toward God.

Reflection and further observation led Newton to conclude that all bodies fall toward the earth with increasing speed and that their speed is affected by their mass and the distance of their fall. He went further in his generalization and concluded that all bodies in the universe mutually attract one another in direct ratio to their mass and in inverse ratio to the square of their distance. He had discovered the law of universal gravity, which rules not only the solar system but the entire physical universe, the whole concourse of heavenly bodies, those forming, those dying, fixed stars, suns, planets, satellites, comets, and meteorites.

All men had seen fruit fall from trees; few had asked themselves with that admiring wonder which is the beginning of science and the quest for causes, "Why do bodies fall?" And so far no one had seen in this commonplace fact the law of universal gravity. The word "intellect" comes from intelligere or intus legere, to read in a sensible fact the intelligible law written there by the Creator. Wisdom, the greatest science, should consist in connecting an intelligible law so discovered with the most general laws of

real being and, in the last analysis, with the Supreme Intelligible, the First Being.

Being a mathematician and astronomer more than anything else, Newton did not go that far but stopped at grasping a particular instance of a more general law. And experience verified that all bodies falling freely through space move with uniform acceleration. At the end of the eighteenth century, the English physician Atwood invented a means of demonstrating experimentally the laws governing the fall of bodies, and it was observed that, if in the first second of its fall the speed of a body is 20, then in the next second it is 40, in the third 60, in the fourth 80, and in the fifth 100. And thus a law was established: falling bodies move with uniformly accelerated speed. Why? Modern physics makes no inquiries into final causes and goes only a short distance in the search for efficient causes. Being first and foremost phenomenal, quantitative, and practical, it is limited to studying and measuring phenomena, to establishing their unvarying relations or laws with a view to reproducing them, contenting itself with proving, for example, that the speed of falling bodies increases proportionately with the duration of their fall and that the contrary takes place when a stone is thrown vertically into the air, for then its speed decreases proportionately until the moving object no longer rises but falls back in virtue of its own weight—the intimate nature of which eludes us.

Innumerable consequences of these physical and verifiable principles are being realized every moment in the universe, whether on our earth or in the most remote nebulae. The law of acceleration is one of the most beautiful things in the whole order of inanimate bodies. At bottom it contains a mystery which thinkers have dwelt on too little in wonder, admiration, and meditation, a mystery which becomes a contradiction if we refuse to admit the existence of a first unmoved Mover who is at once the first cause and last end of all motion in the universe, attracting all things to Himself and being drawn by nothing whatever. The ship rests upon the sea, the sea leans upon the bosom of the earth, the earth is upheld by the long-reaching sun, the sun turns for support to some mightier sphere; but a series of actually subordinate causes cannot go on to infinity. In the last analysis we shall reach a first Mover without need of premotion, who will be his own act, very act, and, since action presupposes being, very being eternally subsistent, Pure Act, as Aristotle called him, without admixture of imperfection or limit: God.

Men of antiquity did not demonstrate the laws governing falling bodies, but they observed that the speed of bodies falling toward the earth increases both with their weight and with the distance they fall. In Aristotle's De Coelo we read that bodies with weight fall ever more quickly as they come closer to the center of the earth. In St. Thomas' commentary on this work, the same law is formulated in his statement that the speed of falling bodies with mass increases in proportion to the height from which they fall. Of old, men searched for the "why" of this fact. Natural philosophy as they conceived it, was not, like modern physics, concerned only with the phenomenal, quantitative, and practical; it sought to know being, the substance of things, their qualities, their properties, studying their movements in relation to their nature, determining which are natural, which unnatural, striving to make things intelligible through their four causes, and coming finally, by simply following the exigencies of the laws of thought and reality, to the First Mover and Last End. Thus the natural philosophy of the ancients was not only quantitative and practical but qualitative and speculative, seeking to make things and their movements intelligible by connecting them with the first principles of reason and ultimately with the supreme Intellect, God, the first being and ordainer of all things.

To the question, "Why do bodies fall faster and faster?" St. Thomas answered, following Aristotle, that they do so because such movement is natural to bodies and because, in falling, they draw ever nearer the place naturally fitting for them. He adds that, on the contrary, a stone thrown vertically into the air moves more and more slowly because this movement, far from being natural to it, is violent or contrary to its natural attraction toward the center of the earth.

Unlike the natural philosophy of other and earlier days, modern physics makes little reference to the distinction between natural and unnatural movement because, in a way, it abstracts from the intimate nature of bodies and the finality of their movements. However, it would not dare to deny this distinction absolutely and, in more than one instance, admits it at least implicitly, particularly when treating of the state toward which the universe is tending.

Having classified the movement of falling bodies as natural in contradistinction to unnatural movement, the early philosophers of nature went on to enunciate a law relative to all movement properly called natural, not only in the order of bodies but in the order of spirits as well since these,

too, have their natures and natural properties. St. Thomas expressed their further and more general conclusion when he wrote: “For every natural movement is more intense in the end, when a thing approaches the term that is suitable to its nature, than at the beginning, when it leaves the term that is unsuitable to its nature: as though nature were more eager in tending to what is suitable to it than in shunning what is unsuitable. Therefore the inclination of the appetitive power is, of itself, more eager in tending to pleasure than in shunning sorrow.”

St. Thomas purposely wrote the omnis, “every natural movement,” with which this text begins, for he was formulating a universal law applying with equal truth to the movement of all things—stones, plants, animals, men, and angels. Of old, men sought to symbolize this law in a poetic fancy, the swan song; and, resultantly, fell into the habit of giving that title to the last work of any great poet whenever they considered it the culminating point of his genius.

Newton, seeing an apple drop from a tree, reasoned that the law of its accelerating fall applied to all bodies in the universe; St. Thomas glimpsed in it the tiny mirroring of an incomparably greater law applying to the movement of all creatures, especially the natural or connatural movement of created spirits gravitating toward God in response to the attraction of His sovereign goodness.

As we have seen, St. Thomas also remarks that the part loves more than itself the whole to which it naturally belongs because it exists for the whole, the hand naturally endangering and even sacrificing itself to preserve the body. It follows that every creature has a natural inclination to love the good of the universe and God, its author and end, more than itself. As a matter of fact, every creature aspires to a more or less dim likeness of the divine perfection, a likeness that manifests the goodness of the Author of creation.

Natural love of God, unconscious in a being unendowed with reason, becomes more and more conscious and ever and ever stronger in proportion as it rises in the hierarchy of intellectual natures until it reaches the level of the highest angel. “The angel is not,” St. Thomas says, “a compound of different natures, so that the inclination of the one thwarts or retards the tendency of the other; as happens in man, in whom the motion of his intellective part is either hindered or thwarted by the inclination of his sensitive part. But when there is nothing to retard or thwart it, nature is

moved with its whole energy. Hence it is reasonable to suppose that the angels, who had a higher nature, were turned to God more mightily and efficaciously."

Infused charity, essentially supernatural in men and angels alike, does not destroy this fundamentally natural inclination, but perfects and elevates it. The nearer a Christian draws to his God the more quickly he ought to advance towards Him, according to St. Paul's words, "And let us consider one another, to provoke unto charity and to good works; . . . and so much the more as you see the day approaching." In his commentary on this epistle, St. Thomas writes that, in perfecting us, grace inclines us to what is good for our nature which, in this case, is increasing progress toward our natural end. Hence the charity of those in the state of grace ought to increase as they draw nearer and nearer their last end, because, as we read in the Scriptures, "The night is passed and the day is at hand" and "the path of the just, as a shining light, goeth forward and increaseth even to perfect day." St. Thomas' comment is clear. The curve of the saints' lives rises to a zenith from which it never falls away. They know no spiritual twilight; only their bodily powers grow dim with age.

Our Lord expressed the law of universal attraction as it operates in the spiritual order when He said: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself." And again, "No one can come to Me except the Father, who hath sent Me, draw him" and unless My Father draw him through the universal mediator and savior of humanity.

The higher the scale of being the more closely efficient and final causes draw together: our Savior draws us to Himself that He may bring us to the Father, the principle and end of all things, the sovereign and increasingly attractive good. In the lives of the saints, their progress in love quickens with the passing of the years. In spite of the heaviness of age and a certain attendant dulling of the senses, their steps of strong love move on towards God at an ever-increasing pace. Grace, and charity particularly, never cease to grow in their souls. The Blessed Virgin's love for God began under the impulse of a great grace and, meeting no obstacle in her who was without sin, made such eminent progress that nature can give us, in the phenomena of gravity, only a faint, far image of her increasing attraction towards God.

Something analogous to this should take place in us, particularly if we receive Communion daily. Substantially each Communion ought to be more fervent than the preceding, since each should not merely preserve but

increase our charity and so dispose us to receive more and more perfectly the Author of grace. The readiness of our will to reach out to Him constitutes substantial devotion and ought in principle to wax stronger and stronger when not bound down with a growing attachment to venial sin.

The consideration of these facts reveals that St. Thomas grasped the universal validity of a law which Newton saw at work in one particular class of things. Newton's conclusions were limited to the order of bodies. St. Thomas was particularly interested in applying to the spiritual realm a law which he held as universal and which he used as a principle from which to reason concerning the hierarchy of angelic natures, grace, and increasing charity, the constant growth of the Mother of God in holiness, and the instantaneous and absolute fullness of grace granted to the soul of Christ.

Every soul journeying to God is a world gravitating toward its cosmic center: this is the law of gravity glorified. As St. Augustine has put it in his own case, Amor meus pondus meum, "Love is the weight that draws me." The modern world sees the law of universal attraction only in its material and inferior aspect in the order of inanimate bodies; we dare look at its full beauty. To the modern philosopher the material world may be only a condition for the development of consciousness; for St. Augustine and St. Thomas, and for us, it is a mirror truly though imperfectly reflecting the perfections of the spiritual order. Angels see material things from above, through spiritual things; men see spiritual things from below, through material things. We must not halt at the reflection but go on to grasp the reality it reveals to us, above all, that supreme reality which is at once the efficient and final cause, the attraction center, for the material and spiritual universe. As the Psalmist says, the heavens declare the glory of the Lord, making manifest to us a supreme cause moving, ordering, and attracting all things, especially those spiritual worlds, our souls, which should move faster and ever faster toward their center of gravity the closer they come to Him.

Rerum tenax vigor
Immotus in te permanens,
Lucis diurnae tempora
Successibus determinans.

CHAPTER III

LOVE OF GOD AND THE INDWELLING OF THE BLESSED TRINITY

Those who would know what it means to love God should seek to learn it from the Christian doctrine expressed in St. John's words: "God is charity; and he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God in him." Reflection on how and why charity makes the soul a living temple of the Trinity gives some appreciation of the grandeur of the love of God in souls possessing His grace, for the special presence of God within us is the foundation of our interior life. With it our interior life begins, generally without any consciousness of it on our part; and with it our interior life comes to full flower when, freed from all stain by mortification and the cross, the soul consciously and truly enters into its heart of hearts and finds the Blessed Trinity at home there.

ARTICLE I

THE SPECIAL PRESENCE OF THE BLESSED TRINITY IN THE JUST

Faith first teaches us that God is present in all His creatures by the general presence of immensity. Knowing this, the Psalmist exclaimed: "Whither shall I go from Thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy face? If I ascend into heaven, Thou art there; if I descend into hell, Thou art present." Realization of the same truth prompted St. Paul's preaching in the Areopagus: "God, who made the world and all things therein, He being Lord of heaven and earth . . . is not far from every one of us. For in Him we live and move and are.

St. Thomas gives an excellent explanation of this general presence of God by saying that God is present to all things: first, by His infinite vision

from which nothing is hidden, even the secrets of men's hearts; secondly, by His power, the causality of which extends to all that exists in such a way that we cannot act even in the natural order without His concurrence; thirdly, by His essence, which is one with His creative and conserving power and maintains all spiritual and material creation in existence. He is in deep, hidden, and immediate contact with all beings, with what is innermost in each; and if His divine conserving action, the continuation of His creative act, were to cease, all creatures would be at once annihilated, returning to the nothingness from which they came, as light fails when the sun goes down.

Faith teaches us that God is wholly and really present in all created things —plants, men, angels, and devils. He is present to all as a cause is in the effect it produces and conserves, since the being of every creature is the proper effect of God, as illumination is the proper effect of light. God is whole and entire in heaven and whole and entire in the world in such a way that He embraces all things and is not limited by any. He is the burning hearth from which the life of creation flames up, the center of gravity drawing all things to Himself, as the liturgy proclaims.

Rerum Deus tenax vigor,
Immotus in te permanens.

GOD'S SPECIAL PRESENCE AS REVEALED IN SCRIPTURE

Holy Scripture speaks to us of something beyond God's universal presence in all things; it tells us of His special presence in the just, warning us, in the Book of Wisdom, that "wisdom will not enter into a malicious soul, nor dwell in a body subject to sins." Lest we think only created grace or the created gift of wisdom comes to dwell in the just, our Lord's own words show us that the three divine Persons themselves come to dwell in us. "If anyone love Me," He says, "he will keep My word. And My Father will love him; and We will come to him and will make Our abode with him." Every word of this statement is worth noting. "We will come." Who or what? Created effects? Supernatural gifts? No. Those who love and those who come are the same, the divine Persons, Father, Son, and inseparable Spirit promised to us by our Lord and sent visibly to His Church on Pentecost. "We will come," not merely for a little while but to make Our abode with him who receives Us and keeps Us through grace.

The apostles were aware of this marvel and mystery. St. John tells us: “God is charity; and he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God in him.” He who loves God, bears God; him whom God loves, God bears, upholding him in natural and supernatural life.

Wherefore St. Paul warningly asks us: “Know you not that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” “Or know you not that your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost, who is in you, whom you have from God; that you are not your own? For you are bought with a great price. Glorify and bear God in your body.” And, together with our Lord and St. John, he tells us that with charity we receive the Giver of charity Himself: “The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost who is given to us.”

St. Ignatius of Antioch, too, taught that all true Christians bear God within them and calls them theophoroi (God-bearers). So well known was this doctrine in the primitive Church that the martyrs proclaimed it openly before their judges. We hear St. Lucy answer her judge Paschasius with the claim, “Those who are bearers of the Holy Ghost cannot lack for words.” And to this inquiring taunt, “So the Holy Ghost is in you?” she calmly maintains, “Yes. All who lead a chaste and holy life are temples of the Holy Ghost,” expressing a doctrine the Church herself has many times proclaimed.

The words of St. John’s Gospel already quoted make it clear that the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity truly come to dwell in us, for Christ says “We,” having already alluded to Himself and the Father. Therefore, if this special presence is attributed to the Holy Ghost, it is only because He has His special mission as the One sent by the other two Persons from whom He proceeds and because charity likens us to the Holy Ghost just as the intellectual gifts liken us to the Word—although only in heaven will He make us perfect likenesses of Himself, assimilating us to the Father, whose splendor He is.

THEOLOGICAL VIEWS ON GOD’S SPECIAL PRESENCE

For those seeking a theological explanation of the special presence of the Blessed Trinity in the just, Father Gardeil’s work, La structure de l’âme et l’expérience mystique, gives a new and profound study of the subject, based

on St. Thomas' explanation of the mystery, and abounding with excellent, original, and suggestive thoughts.

Using the same method as John of St. Thomas, Father Gardeil gives an account of three theological opinions on the special presence of the Blessed Trinity in the just, presenting the views of Vasquez, then of Suarez and others who share his way of thinking, and, lastly, what he considers the real thought of St. Thomas.

Commenting on the passage in the Summa theologica where St. Thomas defines the special mode whereby God dwells in rational creatures by grace as being "as the known in the knower and the object of desire in him who desires," Vasquez makes this statement at the start:

About the mode of presence no actual controversy is found among doctors of the Church; it is of such a nature as to be insufficient to render God present to things by His essence if He were not already present to them by His immensity. As a matter of fact, this mode of presence unites man to God only by knowledge and affection, according as these are actual or habitual. . . . The true explanation is that God, being already in us on another account, deigns to make Himself evident by another effect, grace. And, as the gift of grace is attributed to the Holy Ghost, it is said that He Himself is given and sent to us and that with Him comes the whole and entire Trinity. . . . These gifts of grace unite us by affection to God as our rule or measure, whence the name of "just"; they unite us to God as our friend, whence the name of "beloved" and, ultimately, of "saints," the unspotted. All these effects, since they are related to affection, can evidently exist between beings substantially at a distance from one another.

In other words, Vasquez reduces any real presence of God in us to the presence of immensity whereby He maintains all things in existence. This amounts to saying that God is not really present in the just as an object known and loved but only as absent loved ones are represented in minds and hearts that hold them dear. Vasquez' conception seems to rob the Gospel and Pauline texts relative to the indwelling Trinity of much of their wealth. St. Paul does not say that only charity is given to us at the moment of justification, but that "the charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost who is given to us." He does not assert merely that the Holy Ghost is known and loved by us but that He dwells in us. Indeed, were the three divine Persons present to the just only in the same mode in which they are said to be in all things, the general presence of immensity, how could

our Lord say: “If anyone love Me, he will keep My word. And My Father will love him; and We will come to him and will make Our abode with him”? These words plainly mean, “We will really come to him.” And the words “I will ask the Father: and He shall give you another Paraclete,” promise a real sending, a real coming.

To avoid subtracting anything from the obvious meaning of such scriptural texts, we apparently must accept St. Thomas’ explanation of the special presence of the Blessed Trinity in the just: in those who possess grace the three divine Persons are present as an object known in the knower, as an object loved in the lover; no distance divides Them from Their host who really possesses Them and enjoys a quasi-experience of Their presence. St. Thomas was not afraid to label as error the opinion that we receive the gifts of the Holy Ghost but not the Giver Himself. If Vasquez’ theory were true, it would be difficult to see why God does not dwell in those belonging to His Church who are in mortal sin, for, after all, they have God present in them through His immensity, they know him supernaturally by an act of infused faith, they hope in Him, and even, if may be, love Him, though with a wholly inefficacious love. God is really present to all sinners as their conserving cause; as the object of their faith He is present to none, for they know Him only as one far from them and possess no quasi-experience of His nearness. That the just possess God in a deeper and fuller way than this, the Scriptures attest.

Contrary to Vasquez, Suarez holds that, when sanctifying grace and charity are conferred on us, the person of the Holy Ghost is really given to us and comes to us together with the entire Trinity in such a way that, if God were not already present in all things by the presence of His immensity because of His universal operation and as to His substance, He would become really and substantially present in us by reason of the grace and charity uniting us to Him. “By charity,” says Suarez, “God and man contract a perfect friendship. Now friendship demands union between friends, not mere oneness through affection but inseparable companionship so far as that is possible. The perfect spiritual friendship between God and man demands by divine right the intimate presence of God in the sanctified soul.”

As Father Gardeil remarks, the big difficulty with this second opinion comes from the fact that in this life the supernatural love of charity formally constitutes not a real but an affective union between God and us. After all,

separated friends are bound together with ties of affection, yet distance lies between them just the same; for friendship as such makes us desire the real presence of the one we love, but it cannot bring him to us.

Many facts confirm this truth. A deep supernatural love for our Savior's sacred humanity fails to make it substantially present to us. Devotion to the Blessed Virgin does not succeed in effecting her real presence within the compass of our hearts. St. Thomas justly says: "The union of lover and beloved is twofold. The first is real union; for instance, when the beloved is present with the lover. The second is union of affection: and this union must be considered in relation to the preceding apprehension. . . . The first of these unions is caused effectively by love; because love moves man to desire and seek the presence of the beloved, as of one who fittingly belongs to the lover. The second union is caused formally by love; because love itself is this union or bond."

The same reason is the basis for St. Thomas' teaching that perfect beatitude, or possession of God, consists not in love essentially but in the beatific vision, love preceding possession in the form of desire and following upon it in the form of joy.

It follows, as John of St. Thomas says, that the union of love is merely affective, not real. Granted that perfect love ardently desires and seeks the presence of the beloved and that, therefore, a tendency toward real and effective presence arises out of affective union, nevertheless this real presence does not flow from love itself acting as a formal cause nor does love serve as a disposing medium for effecting the real presence of the beloved, as the light of glory unites the intellect of men to the divine essence. Suarez and the theologians who follow him have never really answered this objection. Father Gardeil makes this fact quite plain in his satisfying completion, and slight correction, of Father Froget's excellent work.

ST. THOMAS' VIEW

The extreme opinions of Vasquez and Suarez evidently fail to convey to us an exact idea of the mystery of the Blessed Trinity's real and special presence in the just. From his place among the best Dominican Thomists, John of St. Thomas, whom Father Gardeil follows step by step in this

matter, proposes a third solution, which he offers as St. Thomas' own thought.

"This union and special presence of God in the [just] soul," he says, "is in addition to the presence of immensity, is distinct from it but necessarily presupposes it." By these last words he puts himself in opposition to Suarez, but for all that, he by no means adopts Vasquez' opinion because he immediately adds: "By sanctifying grace, God becomes present in a new way, so that the soul can know Him experimentally and delight in His presence."

The baptized who are in mortal sin have no such possession of God; although He continues in them as the first conserving cause of their being, they know Him only as someone absent from them. The just know Him as the object of quasi-experimental knowledge really and especially present in them.

Vasquez says that the special presence of the Blessed Trinity in the just is not of itself real but only ideal and affective. Suarez says that of itself it is so real that it is separable from the general presence of immensity. John of St. Thomas, claiming to follow his master with complete faithfulness, teaches that it is distinct from the general presence of immensity but not separable from it, just as in all creatures essence and existence are really distinct although inseparable.

From the start, St. Thomas noted that other modes of presence—presence by grace, by glory, by hypostatic union—all presuppose the general presence of immensity. In fact, he says in The Commentary on the Sentences: "These three modes [by power, presence, and essence, whereby God in His immensity is present to all things He conserves in being] originate not in the diversity of creatures but on the part of God Himself operating in things; and therefore in every creature they are demanded and presupposed by other modes of presence. So, in whomever God is present by union, He is present by grace, and in whomever God is present by grace, He is present by power, presence, and essence."

If a man would learn the meaning of God's indwelling in those who are making their pilgrimage toward heaven, he should contemplate it in those whom grace has brought to full development, the blessed; for grace is the seed of glory, and no one knows the acorn until he has seen the oak. God is substantially present in the glorified soul of the blessed by His immensity inasmuch as He preserves its natural and supernatural being; furthermore,

He is there not merely by representation but also in reality, seen and possessed without intermediary in virtue of the light of glory.

If grace is the seed of glory, then at bottom the life of grace and the life of glory are essentially the same supernatural life, the means of apprehending God the author of grace in His intimate life and of loving Him above all things. However, these two states have their differences: in this life we do not see God, but believe in Him and, in the obscurity of faith, we can have a quasi-experimental knowledge of Him such as the Scriptures frequently describe, and sometimes, by a gift of His good pleasure, we may experience Him in us through the gift of wisdom. In heaven the possession of God is absolutely certain and inamissible, whereas in this life the just cannot, without a special revelation, have absolute certainty of being temples of God and they can at any time lose the life of grace by mortal sin. Apart from these differences, the life of grace continues as the life of glory and remains, in essentials, the same supernatural life.

In the state of grace, therefore, God is substantially present in the just by His immensity inasmuch as He preserves its natural and supernatural being; furthermore, He is there by a special presence that is again real and not merely ideal, representative, and affective; He is there as an object really present and knowable in a quasi-experimental manner, an object possible for us to possess imperfectly and in some way to enjoy. So Thomas puts this truth into plain words, saying:

The divine Person is fittingly sent in the sense that He exists newly in anyone; and He is given as possessed by anyone; and neither of these is otherwise than by sanctifying grace.

For God is in all things by His essence, power, and presence, according to His one common mode, as the cause existing in the effects which participate in His goodness. Above and beyond this common mode, however, there is one special mode belonging to the rational nature wherein God is said to be present as the object known is in the knower, and the beloved in the lover. And since the rational creature by its own operation of knowledge and love attains to God Himself, according to this special mode, God is said not only to exist in the rational creature, but also to dwell therein as in His own temple. So no other effect can be put down as the reason why the divine Person is in the rational creature in a new mode, except sanctifying grace. Hence, the divine Person is sent, and proceeds temporally only according to sanctifying grace.

God dwells in no man without sanctifying grace and charity. Natural knowledge of Him, even the supernatural knowledge of infused faith united to hope, fails to make Him ours. We must know Him by living faith and the gifts of the Holy Ghost united to charity; then we shall hold Him not as a distant being apprehended by some mere representation but as a real person here and now with us, ours to possess and enjoy.

Vasquez missed seeing this beautiful truth, his nominalist tendency preventing him from grasping the divine reality hidden in the words of Holy Scripture and tradition. St. Thomas, however, has driven home the point very clearly in the rest of the article just transcribed: “Again, we are said to possess only what we can freely use or enjoy: but to have the power of enjoying the divine Person can only be according to sanctifying grace. Moreover, the Holy Ghost is possessed by man, and dwells within him, in the very gift itself of sanctifying grace. Hence the Holy Ghost is given and sent.” His Commentary on the Sentences also contains an important text stating that, for the Holy Ghost to be sent, for Him to take up His abode in man in an entirely new way, any kind of knowledge of God will not suffice but only a quasi-experimental knowledge proceeding from a gift of God that unites us to Him according to the proper mode of this divine Person, that is, by love. Joined to charity, this gift, called wisdom, judges divine things connaturally, with a loving understanding grounded on charity.

St. Thomas gives an even more exact statement of his thought in the same place in his Commentary on the Sentences, saying:

In the procession of the Spirit, as we are here discussing it, in the sense that it includes the giving of the Holy Spirit, it does not suffice that there be a new relation, of any kind whatsoever, of the creature to God; but there must be reference to Him as to something possessed; because what is given to anyone is possessed by him in some manner. A divine Person cannot be possessed by us except as a perfect delight, and in this way is had through the gift of glory; or as an imperfect delight, and in this way is had through the gift of gratia gratum faciens or rather as that through which we are joined to the delectable in so far as the divine Persons, by a kind of impression of themselves, leave in our souls certain gifts which we formally enjoy, namely, love and wisdom; wherefore the Holy Spirit is called the pledge of our inheritance.

According to this passage the quasi-experimental knowledge of God spoken of in the preceding text, is rooted expressly in the gift of wisdom

united to charity. St. Thomas preserves exactly the same doctrine in a shorter form in the Summa theologica: “Since the rational creature by its own operation of knowledge and love attains to God Himself, according to this special mode [through sanctifying grace] God is said not only to exist in the rational creature, but also to dwell therein as in His own temple. . . . By the gift of sanctifying grace the rational creature is perfected so that it can freely use not only the created gift itself, but enjoy also the divine Person Himself.”

For it to be said that the Blessed Trinity dwells in us, we must have the proximate power for knowing God by quasi-experimental knowledge. St. Thomas asserts this not only as a result of theological deduction but because of the express statement of Holy Scripture. We read in the Epistle to the Romans: “For whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. . . . You have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry: Abba (Father). For the Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit that we are the sons of God.” In his commentary on this epistle St. Thomas says that the Holy Spirit gives testimony to our spirit by the filial love He produces in us.

St. John has a like message: “And as for you, let the unction, which you have received from Him, abide in you. . . . His unction teacheth you of all things, and is truth and is no lie.” His anointing, therefore, teaches experimentally by the effect of filial love produced in us, giving us both illumination for the intellect and inspiration for the will.

And our Lord Himself says to us: “The Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not nor knoweth Him. But you shall know Him; because He shall abide with you and shall be in you.” “But the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you.” When the apostles must preach truly, when the Church must define infallibly, when the faithful must endure bravely, then shall this Advocate of Christ bring to minds in need the teaching of their Master. “But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what to speak; for it shall be given you in that hour what to speak. For it is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you.”

With the same thought in mind St. Paul writes: “But the sensual man perceiveth not these things that are of the Spirit of God. For it is foolishness to him: and he cannot understand, because it is spiritually examined. But

the spiritual man judgeth all things, and he himself is judged of no man." As St. Thomas explains in his commentary on this epistle, the spiritual man judges with an enlightened intellect and an inspired will.

To make the idea of a quasi-experimental knowledge of God comprehensible to us, St. Thomas was fond of using the quotation from the Apocalypse that reads: "To him that overcometh I will give the hidden manna and will give him a white counter; and in the counter a new name written, which no one knoweth but he that receiveth it." So the just man, says St. Thomas, can have a certain knowledge of the existence of sanctifying grace within himself, "because whoever receives it knows by experiencing a certain sweetness, which he who does not receive it, does not experience."

St. John speaks of the same quasi-experimental knowledge when saying: "He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is charity." Evidently there can be no question here of either philosophical knowledge of God or that knowledge of Him by faith possible to a baptized person in mortal sin. The whole doctrine of St. Thomas, founded immediately on Scripture, can be expressed in a synthesis written by John of St. Thomas and incorporated by Father Gardeil into his own work.

God in His immensity reaches out to all the effects of His power and, having given them being, continues to act as the root of all creatures, pouring being into them as the vine pours sap into its branches. To none is He an informing form, as man's soul to his body; to all, He is sufficient cause, the universal root and principle from which their being proceeds. Holy Scripture describes Him to us as "upholding all things by the word of His power," . . . recalling to the mind of man, "thou bearest not the root; but the root thee." For "He is before all; and by Him all things consist." "He is not far from every one of us. For in Him we live and move and are."

God exists in all things as their hidden root, their principle of being, nearer their being's very core than their form to their matter or their substance to their accidents, entirely and intimately filling each with His presence by giving all that they are to all.

Despite the wonder of this presence, through it God is with us not as friend to friend but as the root of all creatures and the universal principle intimately united to His effects. How differently He manifests Himself through grace, showing Himself to us as an object of our created intellect, not as any other object we know but as uniquely and entirely penetrating it

in a way possible only to the root of our being. His introduction of Himself, the holy familiarity and intercourse that follow, necessarily require a new presence of God in the soul altogether other than that which it shares with all creation. Through grace God offers Himself to the soul as an object of knowledge and love, coming to it in a new and real (not merely an ideal and affective) way. Intimately ours as the cause and reason of our being, He is present in us in an entirely different manner from any other object of knowledge, making us know and love Him through experiencing His blessed familiarity, giving us the kind of knowledge of Him that an angel has of its own substance, which is manifest and united to his intellect as intimately and really present and experimentally known.

No Thomists reject this synthesis of John of St. Thomas. If, in studying the mystery of God's indwelling, some, like the Carmelites of Salamanca, seem inclined to follow Suarez' manner of speaking, apparently this is only because they failed to go deeply enough into the subject. They seem to have meant only that if, by an impossible assumption, God were not really present in the just man as the conserving cause of his natural being, He would become really present in him as the cause of grace and charity and as an object quasi-experimentally known and loved above all things.

We owe Father Gardeil our gratitude for having brought this fundamental point back to light. Since the publication of Father Froget's work no one else has written so profound a study of the mystery which serves as the basis for Christian spirituality. At the moment of justification, without any consciousness of our own, our spiritual life begins with God's indwelling; and in that inner sanctuary to which St. Teresa refers in her Seventh Mansion it reaches its culmination by and with the same divine presence.

ARTICLE II

THE NATURE OF MAN'S QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

First of all, as is evident, the just man's knowledge of the indwelling Godhead is not discursive, not inferred. St. Thomas gives abundant proof for this truth in a number of texts; for example, when showing that the gift of wisdom, from which experimental knowledge of God proceeds, judges not by reasoning but by a certain connaturality or conformity to divine

things founded on charity and given to it by a special illumination of the Holy Ghost.

This quasi-experimental knowledge of God excludes reasoning, for it does not make use of the effect of filial love as an objective term from which to conclude to His presence. The just man can experience within himself the effect of filial love as making known to him the vivifying presence of God, the author of salvation; somewhat as the soul, through its acts of intellect and will, knows its own existence experimentally and without reasoning, perceiving not thought in general but its own act of thinking and, by it, its substantial subject. In this way its act is at once that which is known by experience and that which makes known to the soul its own substance. As much must be said of the effect of filial love in relation to the vivifying presence of God; for, by the special inspiration of the gift of wisdom, God makes Himself in some way felt as the radical principle of our whole life, more intimate to us than we are to ourselves.

To produce this quasi-experimental and non-discursive knowledge in us, the Holy Ghost, by His illumination and inspiration, uses a means prepared by charity, the soul's connaturality or conformity to divine things. In itself, a deep attachment to chastity makes us sound judges of what is in conformity with chastity, even if we are ignorant of moral theology; for, from the very fact of this attachment a relation of proportion exists between the subject so disposed and those things in harmony with the virtue, which appear to him as entirely fitting and in line with his own aspirations. Likewise, as our love for God grows, so does our apprehension of His truth and supreme goodness, even when we have to see Him in those decrees of His will that remain obscure and disconcerting to us. The good hidden in this divine obscurity lies out of the reach of our understanding, but supernatural love makes us taste and see that it is good. By His special illumination, the Holy Ghost uses our interior disposition of love for the divine Persons, which He Himself has aroused, to make Their presence manifest to us. In the De veritate, St. Thomas says that from affection for divine things arises a manifestation of them, and he interprets in this sense St. John's words: "He that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father; and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him." Surely St. Paul's words have the same meaning: "You have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry, Abba (Father). For the Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit that we are the sons of God." Mother and child have no need of reasoning

to reveal their hearts to each other, but know each other deeply through their mutual love. The same is true of God and those who are born of God.

At this point it may be easy to grant that the just man's knowledge of God is evidently not discursive and yet wonder why St. Thomas calls it quasi experimentalis instead of proprie experimentalis. There are two reasons why he adopts this terminology. First, in this life, we do not, properly speaking, experience God immediately but only through the effect of filial love, which He produces in us. If the divine essence were presented to our intellects immediately, without any created effect or idea acting as a medium of knowledge, then either we should have the vision of God because of the light of glory uplifting our intellects to apprehend God or we should not have any such knowledge, however obscure, for lack of that light. The intellect either attains to God immediately or it does not; it immediately apprehends the divine essence as it is in itself or does not. If it does, then it enjoys the beatific vision at least in some degree; if it does not, then it has no immediate knowledge of God. The beatific vision is the only absolutely immediate knowledge or experience of God. It alone attains not only to God Himself, as faith too apprehends Him, but also to God as He is in Himself, in His inner life, a reality impossible for any created effect to represent. In this fact lies rooted one of the reasons why, in this life, the just man cannot have absolute certitude of being in the state of grace, of being the temple of God, unless God reveals it to him. "But the principle of grace and its object is God, who by reason of His very excellence is unknown to us, according to Job 26: 26. 'Behold God is great, exceeding our knowledge.' And hence His presence in us and His absence cannot be known with certainty, according to Job 9: 11: 'If He come to me, I shall not see Him; if He depart, I shall not understand.' "

Secondly, the just man's knowledge of God is called quasi-experimental and not simply experimental because he cannot differentiate with absolute certitude between the supernatural effect of filial love and a certain natural lifting up of the heart which resembles it. Even when not in the state of grace, a poet may so delight in the beauty and perfection of God that he translates both for himself and for us as to mistake a natural mood for a supernatural state, complacence for charity. In this life, then, the just man enjoys no absolute certitude of being in the state of grace but only a reasonable certainty to which he concludes from certain signs, such as his joy in divine things, contempt for the things of the world, and peace of

conscience. God's assurance in the Apocalypse has its application here: "To him who overcometh, I will give the hidden manna . . . which no man knoweth but he that receiveth it"; he shall know a certain sweetness unshared by those who have not grace.

Because he maintains that Holy Scripture implies no absolute or literal certitude in this quotation, St. Thomas cites other passages that demonstrate the truth of his opinion, such as St. Paul's words, "I am not conscious to myself of anything. Yet am I not hereby justified; but He that judgeth me is the Lord." And the petition of the Psalmist, "From my secret ones [sins] cleanse me, O Lord," from sins indirectly voluntary, sins of negligence in not considering or accomplishing what could and should be considered and accomplished.

As the soul's purification progresses and it continues to grow in charity and the gifts of the Holy Ghost, its quasi-experimental knowledge of God becomes more and more perfect. St. John of the Cross thinks that the soul is never joined to God in transforming union without being confirmed in grace. And some writers consider that a state so sublime requires that God make known to the soul, His spouse, the indissoluble friendship existing between them. In other words, they hold that God does accord the soul that special revelation which the Council of Trent declares is necessary for anyone to know with absolute certitude that he is in the state of grace. Before the passive purifications of the soul, its quasi-experimental knowledge of God lacks much in depth and penetration, and St. Thomas has done well to give us an insight into its character by purposely using the term "quasi."

THE ROLE OF QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL KNOWLEDGE IN THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

With Father Gardeil, we would insist that to St. Thomas' mind the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity is inconveivable without some quasi-experimental knowledge of God's presence, a truth that strongly confirms a doctrine we regard as traditional and have held for many years: namely, that infused contemplation of the mysteries of faith belongs to the normal progress of sanctity. Father Gardeil has devoted his best efforts to showing that mystical experience comes to the Christian life of grace as its highest, though entirely normal, development, its full and final flowering. As a matter of fact, the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity is explicable only so far

as God can be known and loved as the object of quasi-experimental knowledge. And, since this knowledge proceeds from faith enlightened by understanding and wisdom and since these gifts are united to charity, it follows that, as charity increases, the quasi-experimental knowledge of God grows too, manifesting itself either in a clearly contemplative form or in one more directly orientated to action. Quasi-experimental knowledge attains to its full perfection in contemplation, which, according to St. John of the Cross, begins in the illuminative way and develops during the unitive.

When the Holy Ghost comes to dwell in the just He brings His seven gifts, two of which play a special part in the soul's purification. The gift of knowledge is particularly active during the night of the senses, when it keeps before the mind the emptiness of all created things; the gift of understanding, during the night of the spirit, when it leads the soul to penetrate more and more deeply into the spirit of the mysteries of faith and to abandon all too human conceptions of divine things. The quasi-experimental knowledge of God needs these two purifications to clear away the obstacles put in its way by unconscious egoism and self-love. At life's beginning, thought of self so dominates man that he unconsciously seeks to relate everything to self; after the purifications of the senses and the spirit, he gives first place to the thought of God and His glory and the salvation of souls.

Experimental knowledge of God's infinite goodness and that of our own nothingness and misery keep pace with each other, and the soul learns, as St. Catherine was taught by her divine Spouse, "I am He who is; thou art she who is not." This knowledge St. Catherine describes to us as having two complementary aspects which share and share alike in mutual development, like two opposite points in an ever-growing circle. The more a man realizes his own misery, the more he realizes by contrast the infinite goodness of God, and his fear of sin increases with his love for God until he reaches the hour of perfect knowledge when, in the home of his Father, he receives the immediate vision of the divine essence. That we may reach this end, our souls must undergo purification, we must place ourselves wholeheartedly in the school of Jesus Christ and there learn by experience the deep affinity existing between the cross of Christ and the love of God.

The mystical life serves as the normal completion and crowning of the life of grace because of the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity. During the latter half of the seventeenth century, Louis Chardon, one of the Thomistic theologians to see this truth most clearly, wrote a book entitled La croix de Jésus which treats of this subject in some profound and little known chapters on the invisible missions of the Word and the Holy Ghost.

Chardon first shows that the divine Persons are not only the object of knowledge and supernatural love but also the principles of supernatural operation. He says: “We naturally conclude that, since grace is communicated with a view to operation, it does not render the uncreated Persons present in us in the manner of a mere idle habit, as though God were to come to us as a man asleep. . . . They are no longer present to us simply as objects powerfully attracting our operations but as actualizing, effecting, applying, and directing our operations for, as Christ says, ‘My Father worketh until now; and I work.”

A little before this he expresses his thought with even greater precision: “That it may attain to God Himself and possess Him, the soul needs the help of those supernatural gifts that are inseparable from the divine Persons. These gifts of Theirs make us like to Them by assimilating and conforming us to Their likeness, so that the divine Persons Themselves become the lovable object of our operations, and, by Their gifts, their all-powerful principle, support, and end.” By the production of the intellectual gifts in us, the Son, the Eternal Wisdom, is said to be invisibly sent by the Father; and, by the inpouring of charity, the Holy Ghost, who is Love, is also said to be invisibly sent by the Father and the Son. The invisible missions of the divine Persons conform to the visible missions of the Incarnation and Pentecost.

Concerning the relation of the temporal missions of the divine Persons to the eternal processions, Chardon follows the teaching of St. Thomas when he writes: “The temporal mission of a divine Person is only an extension of the eternal procession in God. . . . The condition of time adds nothing new to the immutable and fully perfect God. Change occurs only in the creature, who begins to participate in what God is from all eternity. Thus the Word, begotten by the Father from all eternity, and with Him the Holy Ghost, are invisibly sent to the just at the moment of conversion.” The Father, since He does not proceed from any person, cannot be sent but dwells in us together with the Son and the Holy Ghost.

Asking the question, “How are the divine Persons the principle of mystical operations in souls progressing in grace?” Chardon answers it by saying:

God ordinarily communicates Himself to His creatures according to the measure of their dispositions. As a man’s purification advances, the divine Persons become more intimately present to him through their missions. They are more deeply united to him and more completely possessed by him as the object and principle of his soul’s higher operations. . . .

Charity may at times act with such efficacious strength that it reduces souls to a passive state in regard to divine things; they are no longer conscious of their cooperation and concurrence in supernatural and Godlike acts. They do not so much live the life of God as the life of God lives in them; they are more loved than loving; and even when they love, they receive rather than give.

Beginners are rightly cautioned against being held back by sensible graces, for man must give as well as receive, and the gifts he offers God must include himself. Yet in the passive states which Chardon refers to here, God accomplishes in us and for us a much more perfect and complete giving of ourselves that we could ever achieve by our own efforts with ordinary actual grace.

Chardon concludes:

What joy is ours to have God make His home in us! He fills our hearts’ deepest recesses, pours Himself out over the soul’s entire compass, overflows into its powers and faculties, and penetrates all and destroys nothing, making us participants of His divine society and sharers, by imitation, in His own natural life that we may be caught up and embraced by the fullness of Divinity.

Through the invisible missions of the divine Persons, since they conform to the visible missions of the Incarnation and Pentecost, God is in us and we are in God. More than that, since They are principles of operations in us, They necessarily make us change and advance continually along the way of perfection, even if we have reached its eminences.”

Chardon could have found no better way of saying that the purgative way normally leads to the mystical life and that, when the soul has entered there, it begins by degrees to advance along the way of illumination and of union. He immediately tells us, too, the reason for spiritual progress, saying:

As principles of supernatural operation, these wonderful missions cannot allow grace to remain idle but force it to advance, sometimes so much that the soul is said to change its state and experiences a newness of grace that lifts it to a height incomparably above its first sanctification. In the measure that it advances in grace and charity, the divine Persons are present anew within it (or better, are sent to it in a new way, as St. Thomas says) and the soul possesses Them with rights and privileges it had not formerly.

Because it keeps the soul solicitous for its progress and ready for the most difficult and fervent acts of virtue, the truth of the divine missions is one of the strongest incentives for spiritual advancement, stimulating beginners, encouraging the proficient, and confirming the perfect. It makes the soul eager to grow in grace that God may abide in it more fully, more deeply, more personally, by a union growing more and more sublime as it becomes purer, stronger, and more intimate.

Louis Chardon's words were written before the time of Bossuet and Fénelon. In his work he emphasizes another truth even more than the relation of the divine missions to supernatural life; that truth, as we shall see, is the affinity existing between grace and the cross. He points out in the Gospels and Epistles the summits toward which converge theological speculation like St. Thomas' and the mysticism of men like Tauler and St. John of the Cross. And he leads us to appreciate more and more fully how the theology of the great masters, because it is derived by faith from divine revelation, disposes us to desire infused contemplation that we may, by an act of living faith enlightened by the gifts, enter into and enjoy the mysteries revealed to us by God. So Chardon, in a really vital way, brings us back to the very source of theology, the truths of Scripture and tradition.

NOTES

EXPERIENCE OR QUASI-EXPERIENCE?

In opposition to the theologians for whom “that which is immediately perceived is not God here present but His effects in the soul,” Father Gardeil is inclined to admit an “immediate experience” of God. He finds that these authors react with good reason “against fantastic opinions which ascribe to the soul, particularly in the prayer of union, a sight or intuition of God through species miraculously superadded to the ideas of faith.” He adds:

But, in my opinion, these authors fall into exaggerations in their reaction against such opinions. They regard God’s impressions on the soul, the divine touches it experiences, as effects received and remaining in the soul and claim that the soul perceives these effects and only these effects, that its regard rests on them as on an objective term from which it concludes to the presence of God. If this be true, then mystical contemplation in its apogee, the experience of God, consists essentially in an inference and necessitates reasoning. I do not think that this mode of attaining to the presence of God is the mode of experimental and, consequently, of immediate knowledge of God, who gives of His fullness in the prayer of union.

In the first of these two opinions criticized by Father Gardeil, we can recognize the thought of Bishop Farges, the intuition of God by infused ideas; in the second, the entirely contrary view of Father Saudreau, the knowledge of God’s presence through His effects. Saudreau would probably answer this criticism by saying that he does not hold that quasi-experimental knowledge of God through the effect of filial love is inferential but that it is supra-discursive, an act of the gift of wisdom transcending reason. This position we too maintain. In his work, Western Mysticism, Dom Butler sets down Father Gardeil’s manner of expression as being in opposition to the common interpretation of St. Thomas’ doctrine,

but Father Gardeil has since explained his position on this point. In substance we are in agreement with him.

We feel certain, and have said so already, that some forms of experimental knowledge are by no means discursive and yet are not absolutely immediate either. As soon as my sight perceives the color of an object, my intellect, without reasoning, apprehends the substance of that colored object; the substance itself, unlike its color, is not sensible but is called sensible per accidens because it is grasped immediately by the intellect with the first presentation of the sensible object. Here we have an instance of intellectual experimental knowledge without reasoning, which is, however, mediate in the sense that it presupposes sensation and its object as an intermediary. As Aristotle says, by seeing Callias I see without reasoning that he lives, although life itself is not sensible like color and sound.

We have an experimental knowledge of our own souls, too, inasmuch as they operate as the principles of our intellectual and voluntary acts. We do not arrive at this knowledge by reasoning, yet we attain to the soul's substance only by means of its acts. "Plato or Socrates perceives that he has an intellectual soul because he perceives that he understands." And, as the Angelic Doctor also teaches, the angel, too, knows his own substance only by means of a mental term, for the substance of an angel, although in itself intelligible in act, is not of itself known in act (intellecta in actu); for the angel is not pure act, not its own existence, not its own intellection, and so has to be expressed in an interior word to be known. But the reality expressed in that mental word, which makes him an image of the Trinity, is not far from him.

Lastly, in discussing the knowledge which a just man possesses of God by the gift of wisdom and through the action of the Holy Ghost, St. Thomas purposely and pointedly adds the qualification "quasi" whenever he refers to it as "experimental." In the final pages which Father Gardeil devoted to this question and in those where he shows so well how infused contemplation proceeds from faith enlightened by the gifts, he comes very near the explanation just given, which we hold as traditional among Thomists.

In a recent publication, Father Picard poses the question: “Can an immediate apprehension of God other than the beatific vision be admitted?” And he gives the answer that even in the natural order man can have an immediate though obscure apprehension of God’s presence. Father Picard then seeks to discover the part of such an immediate apprehension of God in the mystical state, trying to find support for his views as being implied by St. Thomas. His interpretation of St. Thomas’ texts is highly debatable; for example, when he uses St. Thomas’ Commentary on the Sentences by quoting his answer to an objection according to St. Augustine and omitting his answer according to Aristotle. Further, references to the opusculum De intellectu et intelligibili carry no weight since this work is not authentic.

Certainly God is intimately present to us in the natural order since He is the conserving cause of all creatures; but that fact does not make Him present to us in such a way that in the natural order we have an obscure immediate apprehension of His presence—as Father Picard would lead us to believe. Treating ex professo of God’s natural presence in us, St. Thomas says: “No other perfection, except grace, added to substance, renders God present in anything as the object known and loved; therefore only grace constitutes a special mode of God’s existence in things.” He repeats the same conclusion in many other places in his works. Father Picard explains his use of Vallgornera’s interpretation of those texts of St. Thomas which seem favorable to his theory by saying that he quotes Vallgornera not so much because he seeks to lean on his authority as because he finds in him an excellent expression of his own thought: “namely, that the ontological presence of God produces in the soul’s depths an immediate experimental knowledge of Him, analagous to a man’s consciousness of self.” He immediately adds: “In detail, the theory I propose is perhaps a shade different from his. He demands the state of grace for the ontological presence of God to become perceptible even in an obscure fashion; I do not see the necessity for it.” Do these two theologies, then, differ “perhaps” only in detail and by just a shade of meaning? The “shade of difference” has to do with the distinction and the distance between the order of nature and that of grace, a distance so great that the natural powers of man and angel could develop to infinity without ever attaining to the formal object specifying either infused faith or the gift of wisdom. And that is what Vallgornera, together with St. Thomas, speaks about in the quotation referred to. Of course, Father Picard admits that our natural intuition of God

is obscure and that “under the influence of grace and the gift of wisdom, in the ascetical plan, this immediate apprehension of God emerges from its obscurity and becomes half-clear” and at last, in transforming union (St. Teresa’s “seventh mansion”) “reaches the maximum of clarity and intimacy it can attain in this life.”

About this theory many readers have asked themselves the question that Father Heris clearly formulated: In the formal object, is there a difference between the obscure natural intuition of God and that supernatural experimental knowledge of Him proceeding from the gift of wisdom? We do not see this distinction. This seems to be admitted by the claim that obscure natural intuition of God attains to Him immediately, not only as it is not, but positively, yet without apprehending Him as He is in Himself (sicuti est). The double distinction between “obscure” and “half-clear” and between the latter and “clearly distinct” does not constitute a distinction of nature such as the difference between the natural and the supernatural order demands. Here we need to apply the universal and inflexible Thomistic principle that faculties, habits, and acts are specified by their formal objects.

We make a distinction between obscure, half-clear, and clearly distinct knowledge in the natural order. A man of common sense knows rational principles obscurely; a young student of philosophy has a half-clear knowledge of them; a metaphysician of St. Thomas’ genius apprehends distinctly their ontological value, absolute necessity, universality, and relative subordination. Yet no matter how great a genius the metaphysician may be, his natural knowledge can never grasp even obscurely the formal object of either faith or the gift of wisdom. Nor can any other creature, however perfect, man or angel, succeed where he fails. The distinction of order here depends on the distinction of formal objects. This principle might be called the theme or leitmotiv of the second part of the Summa: potentia, habitus et actus specificantur ab objecto formali.

If we would avoid falling into the errors of the ontologists, and ultimately into pantheism itself, we must realize that, although faith belongs essentially to the same order as the beatific vision because it adheres to supernatural mysteries, human reason and angelic intellect do not. The ontologists failed to see this. For them man’s intellect naturally attains, even if only obscurely, to the same formal object as the beatific vision, an opinion leading to pantheism through a confusion of the human intellect with the divine. Infused faith and the gift of wisdom are not only

supernatural quoad modum, in the mode of their production, but also quoad substantiam, by their very nature, as specified by their formal object. The resurrection of the dead entails the supernatural restoration of natural life; but sanctifying grace, faith, and charity, and the gift of wisdom belong to an essentially supernatural life, which fits us for an essentially supernatural object.

It is to be regretted that Father Picard did not treat of the key problem about the intuition of God, that is, the distinction between nature and grace. By nature, man's intellect first apprehends neither himself nor his God but the being of sensible things. In a criticism he makes of our views on the subject, Father Picard seems to be ignorant of St. Thomas' opinion on man's first intellectual apprehension as well as the chief difference between St. Thomas' ontological realism and both nominalism and conceptualism. At all events, for St. Thomas certainly, man's intellect is not a faculty for the divine in the sense that his first intellectual apprehension attains immediately and obscurely to the divine, to God Himself. If it did, man's intellect would be specified neither by the being of sensible things nor by being in general but by God Himself. Its formal object would differ not a whit from the formal object of faith; and, as a result, man's will would not be immediately specified by the universal good but by God Himself and would have the same formal object as infused charity, or, at the very least, of hope. Of the soul itself we would have to say what we now teach of sanctifying grace: that it is a real and formal participation in the divine nature. Thomists have always jealously defended the distinction between nature and grace against any trace of naturalism. One of St. Thomas' greatest glories is that he marked out clearly the limits of these two orders by the great principle that faculties and acts are specified by their formal object. So universal is this principle that, should it fall, the whole of Thomistic doctrine would go down with it; the distinction between the intellect and the external and internal senses would disappear, together with the proofs for the spirituality of the soul; and we would revert to radical nominalism, the lineal forefather of contemporary positivism; the way would be immediately opened also to naturalism and pantheism, for it would no longer be evident that the natural powers of intellectual creatures cannot attain to the formal object of the divine intellect. No wonder St. Thomas so treasured this principle, confirmed in modern times by the Council of the Vatican.

CHAPTER IV

LOVE OF GOD AND THE MYSTERY OF THE OSS

The mystery of the cross throws open to us vast perspectives that add width and depth to our knowledge of God and of Christ, as well as to our understanding of sin. The cross offers us the clearest and most impressive evidence of God's love for the supreme good, which is Himself, for His incarnate Son, and for our souls. It tells us, too, not only of His love for good, the basis of all duty, but also of His hatred for evil, and of the need for reparation to re-establish the order of justice.

Moreover, incredible as it may seem at first, it speaks to us of God's great love for the Word made flesh. By sending Christ to ignominious death on Calvary, the Most High willed to have Him gain a hidden victory far surpassing His triumph over death on the day of His resurrection, a victory without parallel, the overthrow of sin and Satan. Lastly the cross makes known to us God's love for our souls, since He delivered up His only Son that we might be saved. The better to grasp this truth, we now wish to consider the Savior's passion as the supreme manifestation of the plenitude of grace He received at His conception in view of His universal mission as Redeemer.

One of the most mysterious and at the same time most revealing aspects of Christ's passion is the union of terrible suffering with that great peace He experienced in consummating His redemptive work—the two perfectly united extremes of His whole interior life. We can learn a lesson from our Master here: how, in union with Him, we ought to preserve peace and abandonment to God in the midst of our worst trials. When we have to undergo not only sharp and prolonged physical pain but moral suffering as well, and are left to ourselves with little human help, and even without

apparent aid from heaven, we nearly always fall into discouragement and seem about to lose all courage and hope.

Rare are the souls that, in hours of profound sadness, preserve perfect abandonment to God and the peace which can come to us only from Him. First in rank among these heroic souls and far above all the rest, stands the holy soul of the Word made flesh, so strengthened by the superabundant grace received at its coming into the world as to suffer much and to be ever at peace.

ARTICLE I

OUR LORD'S FULLNESS OF GRACE AND ARDENT DESIRE FOR THE CROSS

From the first instant of its creation and union with the body formed in Mary's virginal womb, the holy soul of Christ received a fullness of created grace proportionate to it personal union with the Word; for the nearer we are to God, the more light and life we receive from Him, just as the closer we come to a fireside the more light and warmth it gives us.

THE PERSONALITY OF THE WORD MADE FLESH

As created, Christ's soul was and will always be more united to the Word of God than any other creature could be: it constitutes one and the same person with Him, since it exists by the uncreated existence of the Word. No more intimate or indissoluble union of two infinitely distant natures can be conceived: they are one not merely because of an accidental union by way of knowledge and love but through a substantial union by way of being itself, since, without becoming confused, the divine and human natures really belong to the uncreated person of the Word made flesh in such a way that in Christ there is no human personality, no human "I," but only the "I" of the Word of God.

Our Savior's humanity loses nothing because of this, but acquires a peerless perfection found faintly reproduced in the lives of the saints. The more the saints grow in the love of God the more, in a sense; they lose their human personality. In their union with God they become independent, as it were, of everything created and rise above the natural condition of men of their country and time so that they may guide human generations toward the

life of eternity; they oppose hatred of self to disordered self-love; they abandon their own ideas for the thoughts of God received through faith; they turn their wills from egoism to love of God until, although they are but human beings still, they can exclaim with St. Paul: “I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me.”

The faculties of Christ’s soul, too, are thus transformed and deified. His intellect is ruled and enlightened in all its ideas and judgments by divine truth. Supereminent charity guards His will from any egoism. The highest degree of sanctifying grace has been engrafted into His soul’s very essence. Yet, above and beyond all this, at the very root of His faculties and the soul itself, exists no human self, no human person; in its stead reigns supreme the very self of the Word made man. The Word, who possesses from all eternity with the Father and the Holy Ghost the infinite and indivisible divine nature, has also intimately and forever assumed our human nature, a body and a soul like ours. Christ can truly say: “I am the way and the truth and the life,” not merely, “I have received truth and life,” but “I am the truth and the life.” And as truth is being, only He who is being itself could so speak. “Amen, amen, I say to you, before Abraham was made, I am.” “No one knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither doth anyone know the Father, but the Son and he to whom it shall please the Son to reveal Him.” “I and the Father are one.”

So close is this incomparably intimate union of natures that the personality of the Word acts as the radical principle of all the human operations of Christ; in Him, the Word of God knows by a human intellect, wills by a human will, speaks, suffers, and dies for us.

CHRIST’S FULLNESS OF GRACE

It follows that, because Christ’s soul is nearer the source of all grace than any other soul or any other spirit, it has evidently received more light and more love; it has received an absolute plenitude of created grace proportionate to the dignity of the Word made flesh and to the universal mission of the Savior of humanity. Every divine mission demands holiness proportionate to the task; if all too often in the government of human affairs the incapable and the improvident occupy high positions to the detriment of the governed, no equal disorder or disproportion can prevail in those God Himself has directly and immediately chosen for an exceptional divine

work. A supereminent divine mission demands supereminent sanctity. The soul of the Savior, already sanctified by personal union with the Word, must have received such an intensive and extensive fullness of grace that from it grace could overflow upon all mankind and give life to all generations. Of Christ, the constituted head of the Church, St. John can say: “And of His fullness we all have received.”

The special graces received by the great servants of God form them chiefly for the accomplishment of their missions. Together with His mission as universal Redeemer, Priest, and Victim, the fullness of grace was unquestionably bestowed on Christ. As soon as His soul existed, its ardor for the cross was born. As St. Thomas says: “God the Father did deliver up Christ to the passion; . . . by the infusion of charity, He inspired Him with the will to suffer for us.”

CHRIST AND HIS CROSS

That our Savior was ever moved and inspired by the sacrifice of the cross, we learn not only from theology but from a far higher source—the revelation spoken by His own mouth. In the Epistle to the Hebrews St. Paul wrote that, in coming into the world, Christ said: “Sacrifice and oblation [of the blood of bulls and of goats] Thou wouldst not; but a body Thou has fitted to Me. . . . Behold I come . . . that I should do Thy will, O God.” This act of oblation Christ unceasingly renewed during the course of His life and expressed again in Gethsemane, saying: “My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt.” He was ever moving on toward the end of His redemptive mission. Even His anguish before the impending cross could not weaken His efficacious desire to be fully faithful to His mission of priest and victim. The desire prevailed and came to realization in the Consummatum est.

We can regard our Lord’s ardent thirst for our salvation as the soul of His apostolate. Although some modernists maintain that St. Paul’s genius invented the idea of the sacrifice of the cross, which was foreign to Christ’s preaching, we know that He was continually voicing it, not only in the form given us by St. John, but in the varied ways preserved in the first three Gospels.

In the Gospel according to St. Matthew, Jesus says: “The Son of man is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a

ransom for many." And in one of His most beautiful parables He tells us: "I am the good shepherd; and I know Mine, and Mine know Me. As the Father knoweth Me, and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for My sheep. . . . And there shall be one fold and one shepherd. Therefore doth the Father love Me; because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No man taketh it away from Me; but I lay it down of Myself. And I have power to lay it down; and I have power to take it up again. This commandment I have received of My Father."

The same thought recurs again and again in His preaching. "I am come to cast fire on the earth. And what will I, but that it be kindled? And I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptized. And how am I straitened until it be accomplished!" He speaks here of that most perfect baptism, baptism of blood. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself." Which He said, adds St. John, to signify by what death He was to die.

When unable to bear Christ's foretelling of His passion, Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying: "Lord, be it far from Thee, this shall not be unto Thee," our Lord answered: "Get behind Me, Satan; thou art scandal unto Me, because thou savorest not the things that are of God, but the things that are of men." Indeed, the human thoughts of Peter at moment protested against the very mystery of redemption and the whole economy of our salvation.

Our Lord's thoughts and desires were ever turning to the cross, which He held out to us all as the one way of salvation. As St. Luke relates: "And He said to all: If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: for he that shall lose his life for My sake shall save it." And as it is recorded elsewhere: "And whosoever doth not carry his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple." The sons of Zebedee He challenged with the words: "You know not what you ask. Can you drink of the chalice that I drink of, or be baptized with the baptism wherewith I am baptized?"

Again, in the upper room, the night before the Passion, Christ expressed His great desire to accomplish His mission as priest and victim by instituting the Eucharistic sacrifice, identical in substance with the sacrifice of the cross. As St. Luke records: "And He said to them: With desire I have desired to eat this pasch with you before I suffer. For I say to you that from this time I will not eat it, till it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. . . . And

taking bread, He gave thanks and brake, and gave to them, saying: This is My body, which is given for you. Do this for a commemoration of Me. In like manner, the chalice also after He had supped, saying: This is the chalice, the new testament in My blood, which shall be shed for you."

Upon going out of the Cenacle to walk to Gethsemane, He continued speaking His thoughts: "The prince of this world cometh; and in Me he hath not anything. But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father hath given Me commandments, so do I. Arise, let us go hence." As St. Thomas remarks in his commentary on this passage of St. John's Gospel, Jesus obviously so speaks by His Father's inspiration, which made Him desire to die for us out of love and obedience. And as He nears Calvary, His words grow in clarity: "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends." And in the sacerdotal prayer: "Father, . . . sanctify them in truth. . . . And for them do I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth."

As St. John says: "In this we have known the charity of God, because He hath laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." In other words, we members of our Lord's mystical body should have a more or less perfect participation in His fullness of grace.

The decree of redemption embraced the cross and all that the cross entailed as the consummation of Christ's work and destiny as priest and victim. By being personally united to the Word and constituted head of the Church, Christ's soul contracted an obligation to satisfy for mankind. The head had to rectify the disorder of its members. Our Lord's fullness of grace disposed Him for the perfect accomplishment of His mission and acted as a magnet drawing Him toward the cross and making Him desire it ardently for our salvation.

PONDUS CRUCIS ET PONDUS GLORIAE

Louis Chardon's clear and masterly treatment of this doctrine shows that the grace of Christ acts as the principle of two forces or weights, which draw Him, so to speak, in contrary directions: the attraction of glory and the pull of the cross. Even on Thabor our Lord thought more of offering Himself for us than of anything else and, when He spoke with Moses and Elias, He talked about the Passion.

Plunged in the divine essence and absorbed in the fullness of eternal happiness, . . . Christ would not allow His spirit to rest in the joy that filled all His faculties. The divine torrent might go so far as to reach even His garments, yet He withdrew from it, turning His thoughts to the whips, the thorns, the nails, the shameful death that lay ahead. . . . He looked through the deifying and deiform light of beatitude to rest His eyes on the cross ahead and He longed for the terrible sufferings of His passion; for the satisfactions of eternal glory could not slake His thirst to suffer.

Two extremes presented themselves to His mind: glory and dishonor; the life of blessedness and shameful death . . . at a time when He tasted the one and had no experience of the other. Nevertheless grace so drew Him to pay the debt of our ransom that beatitude could not move Him.

No joy, not eternal glory itself, could distract Christ's mind from the cross which held sway over all His faculties. Hence the lower part of His soul was not inundated by the effects of the Transfiguration, even though it did share, by divine Providence and through a kind of reflection, in the glory of that mystery. The attraction of the cross was so strong that Thabor was less in the mind, the love, the heart, of the transfigured Christ than Calvary.

God willed the Incarnation chiefly as redemptive. Drawn by the same motive Christ ardently desired to fulfill perfectly His mission as Redeemer.

THE MOTIVE OF THE INCARNATION

We enter into what is most intimate and primordial in Christ's life when we seek to know the motive of the Incarnation. "Mercy" is the best answer to our why, for the Incarnation was motivated most of all by mercy for sinning and unhappy humanity. Misery calls for mercy. Mercy exists because of misery. Mercy is, as it were, so characteristic of God, that through it He best teaches us of His power and goodness, as He so strikingly shows us when He lifts us up from mortal sin and gives us back the eternal treasure of His infinite life.

Often God gives more through mercy than He would have given through simple liberality, as we see from the conversion of Magdalen and the good thief, and in truth, from the ransom of all mankind.

Certainly an opinion exists which holds that the Word would have become incarnate even if man had not sinned. But, St. Thomas remarks:

“Since everywhere in the Sacred Scriptures the sin of the first man is assigned as a reason for the Incarnation, it is more in accordance with this to say that had sin not existed, the Incarnation would not have been.” In other words, mercy motivated the Incarnation, as the Credo tells us: “Qui propter nos homines et propter nostram salutem descendit de coelis et incarnatus est.” “For God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting.”

Insistence on this point will easily resolve difficulties raised by those who maintain the contrary opinion. Their arguments come to this: the superior cannot be ordered to the inferior, but this is just what would happen if the Incarnation were ordered to our redemption. According to St. Thomas, mercy brings the superior down to the inferior, not, of course, to become subordinated to him, but to raise him up and to restore and magnify the primitive order, the original harmony. The Word, by becoming incarnate, by bending down in mercy to sinning humanity, in no way subordinates Himself to humanity; rather does He wonderfully manifest His omnipotence and goodness by subordinating humanity to His Father, to Himself, and to the Holy Ghost. From all eternity, the divine Mercy has willed the Incarnation as redemptive: “Ratio miserendi est miseria.”

Another aspect of this great mystery demands consideration. Since God can permit evil only in view of a greater good, it must be said that He permitted original sin only in view of the redemptive Incarnation, a supreme manifestation of mercy, wherein all the rights of justice are at the same time safeguarded. As St. Thomas says: “There is no reason why human nature should not have been raised to something greater after sin. For God allows evils to happen in order to bring a greater good therefrom; hence it is written (Rom. 5: 20): ‘Where sin abounded, grace did more abound.’ Hence, too, in the blessing of the paschal candle, we say: ‘O happy fault, that merited such and so great a Redeemer.’ “

And therefore Jesus Christ is before and above all, not King or Doctor or Prophet or Wonder Worker, but Savior and Victim. In His predestination this role is not something secondary, superadded accidentally as a result of the first man’s sin; it is primordial. By the will of God, Christ was first and foremost the Redeemer, the victor over sin, Satan, and death. So, at any rate, St. Thomas thought, and many theologians with him, all believing themselves the possessors of the true meaning of Scripture. If they are right,

then we can see how fundamental and predominant in Christ's life was His desire to save us, to suffer for us on the cross.

HIS HOUR

No one need wonder then why Christ so often spoke of His hour, the hour of His passion, His great hour. Divine Providence had infallibly determined it from all eternity, and before it came His enemies could do nothing against Him. He spoke of it as an approaching certainty which in no way violated or necessitated either His own freedom or that of His executioners The nearer this hour approached, the more urgent became His warnings to His disciples. At Gethsemane "He taketh Peter and James and John with Him, and He began to fear and to be heavy. And He saith to them: 'My soul is sorrowful even unto death.' "

No contradiction lies in this. Our Lord did not negate His ardent desire to suffer for us and to accomplish perfectly His mission as victim. He was not just a little inferior to those martyrs who have experienced no equal sadness in the face of death: like St. Ignatius of Antioch, for example, who longed to be ground by the teeth of beasts that he might become the wheat of Christ. After the holy ardor of His oblation, our Savior willed to be overwhelmed with grief, and, that He might offer a perfect sacrifice, to suffer for our sakes that mortal sadness and terror a man naturally experiences in the face of such a death. He also willed to leave us an example for our own hours of overwhelming sorrow. His sadness was not an emotion which preceded and troubled the judgment of right reason and the consent of the will; on the contrary He willed to become sorrowful that His holocaust might be perfect. Instead of hardening Himself stoically against suffering and proudly denying its existence, Christ surrendered Himself to it voluntarily for our salvation. Of His life He says: "No man taketh it away from Me; but I lay it down of Myself. And I have power to lay it down; and I have power to take it up again."

He willed each and all of His sufferings, the crowning with thorns, the scourging, which reduced His whole body to one great wound, the torture when His robe was put on Him again and adhered to His wounds, the flaming of His whole body into vivid pain when the soldiers tore it off for the crucifixion. Being offered as a holocaust for us, He willed, too, to be nailed to the cross, to suffer from the priests of the Synagogue whose

mission it was to recognize the coming of the Messias, to suffer from Judas, who betrayed Him, to suffer from His people, who acclaimed Him on Palm Sunday and forsook Him so shortly after, to suffer from Peter, who denied Him, the disciples, who deserted Him, the crowd that mocked and blasphemed Him.

He willed to go still farther. After taking our sins upon Himself, He willed to suffer in our stead the curse due to sin; becoming as St. Paul says, "a curse for us." An expiatory victim, He felt the terrible justice of God weighing upon Him. Isaias, contemplating the Passion with the very eyes of God, prophetically foretold: "But he was wounded for our iniquities; He was bruised for our sins. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and by His bruises we are healed. . . . And the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. . . . And the Lord was pleased to bruise Him in infirmity. If He shall lay down His life for sin, He shall see a long-lived seed; and the will of the Lord shall be prosperous in His hand."

Our Lord's fullness of grace brought Him even to this extremity that His mission as Redeemer and Victim might be realized. If almost all the saints have desired martyrdom, if St. Ignatius of Antioch longed to be ground by the teeth of beasts, what must have been Christ's desire for the cross! He willed not only to experience through grace a holy enthusiasm for His oblation, but also, as a victim literally bruised in our stead, to know mortal sadness and anguish, offering it all for us with a love so pure and intense that it could be found nowhere else but in the heart of God. "Surely He hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows."

ARTICLE II

THE PASSION AND PEACE OF CHRIST

In mortal sadness, in entire forsakenness, in that desolation expressed in the twenty-first Psalm, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Christ kept perfect mastery over Himself, complete abandonment to the divine will, and a profound peace that found expression in His last words.

THE SEVEN WORDS

Peace is the tranquility of order, and order is restored by the cross, which reconciles sinning humanity to God. Nowhere can we find an expression of greater peace than in the last words of the dying Christ, spoken for His executioners, for the good thief, for Mary and John, for us all: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” “Amen I say to thee: This day thou shalt be with Me in paradise.” “Woman, behold thy son.” “Behold thy mother.” “I thirst.” “It is consummated.” “Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit.” These words, which we ought to repeat daily, are our Lord’s testament whereby He restored peace to our souls. Those He spoke last of all offered and consecrated the sacrifice of the cross at the very moment of its immolation.

Calvin sought to find an expression of despair in the words, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?”; but, on the contrary, these are plainly the inspired words of the first verse of Psalm 21, the Messianic psalm, which came to the lips of our dying Lord and have an unquestionable significance. They utter a cry of sorrow and then make an act of perfect confidence and pure love. In saying them, Christ thought of our blindness and prayed for us. To be convinced of this, we have only to reread Psalm 21:

O God, my God, look upon me: why hast Thou forsaken me? O my God, I shall cry by day, and Thou wilt not hear: and by night, and it shall not be reputed as folly in me.” This is the supplication of a victim, who adds immediately: “But Thou dwellest in the holy place, the praise of Israel. In Thee have our fathers hoped . . . and Thou has delivered them. . . . But I am a worm, and no man: the reproach of men, and the outcast of the people. . . . Depart not from me. For tribulation is very near: for there is none to help me. Many calves have surrounded me, . . . the council of the malignant hath besieged me. They have numbered all my bones. And they have looked and stared upon me. They parted my garments among them: and upon my vesture they cast lots. But Thou, O Lord, remove not Thy help to a distance from me; look toward my defense. Deliver me from the lion’s mouth: and my lowness from the horns of the unicorns. I will declare Thy name to my brethren; in the midst of the church will I praise Thee. Ye that fear the Lord, praise Him; all ye seed of Jacob, glorify Him . . . because He hath not slighted nor despised the supplication of the poor man. Neither hath He turned away His face from me: and when I cried to Him He heard me. With Thee is my praise in a great church. . . . The poor shall eat and shall be

filled: and they shall praise the Lord that seek Him: their hearts shall live forever and ever. All the ends of the earth shall remember, and shall be converted to the Lord: and all the kindreds of the Gentiles shall adore in His sight.

The Messianic psalm that welled up to the lips of the dying Christ obviously expresses no despair; the first verse simply cries out the deep sorrow of a victim bearing on Himself the curse due to our sins. Our Lord willingly shouldered this anguish that He might deliver His loved ones from its burden and, by the same act, pay His tribute of adoration to the sovereign Justice that punishes sin.

As to the other seven words, martyrdom has spoken none stronger, none more beautiful. They spoke the peace of Christ; they bestowed the peace of Christ; and those who stood around His cross were strengthened for that terrible trial they shared with Him. St. Augustine says that the beatitude of the peacemakers corresponds to the gift of wisdom, the principle of contemplation. Never on earth were such heights of contemplation reached as those Christ experienced on the cross.

“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” This was said for His executioners at the very moment when they crucified their own Savior, a word to be repeated by St. Stephen and many other martyrs, a word that plainly distinguishes the true martyr from the false, since it rises not from obstinacy but from strength companioned by exquisite meekness and perfect charity.

Of like character is the word spoken to the good thief, promising him the peace of heaven at once: “This day thou shalt be with Me in paradise.” And no other are the words of balm poured into the aching hearts of Mary and John. “Woman, behold thy son.” Then did Mary become more than ever the mother of all men represented in John, and the mediatrix and dispenser of all graces. “Son, behold thy mother.” And from that moment John loved the Mother of God with the deep and reverent love of a son.

After the first words of Psalm 21, Jesus added “I thirst” and “It is consummated.” At the very moment when He thirsts for souls, He Himself was bringing them the living waters of grace. There is more joy in giving than in receiving. He had the boundless joy of consummating the work of redemption by a perfect holocaust, reconciling sinners to God, giving peace to all who would accept it, and eternal life to all those who would not, through their own fault, refuse to receive it.

Surely the peace of the sacerdotal prayer pervades the last word, “Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit.” By it, the sacrifice of the cross was consecrated. All things were restored in God. Divine peace returned to the world, and the love of God flowered again in the hearts of men.

In His last discourse our Lord had promised to give us peace. Dying, He kept His promise. His words express not defeat and desperation, but victory over sin and Satan. So mysterious was His triumph, however, that very few around the cross recognized it—Mary and John, some faithful women, a repentant thief, and a Roman officer. Three days later another more striking though lesser triumph, bound to the first by transcendent logic, made the earlier victory manifest. Christ showed His supremacy over sin itself by vanquishing the fruit of sin, death. Only the mouth that said, “I have overcome the world” could pronounce, “It is finished.”

PEACE IN ANGUISH

One of the most sublime aspects of the mystery of the redemption, an object of study for theologians and of contemplation for mystics, is the union of deep sorrow and perfect peace in the dying Christ. Theologians and mystics alike generally agree that this intimate union of seemingly opposed sentiments is both a miracle and an essentially supernatural mystery: a miracle, in virtue of which Christ was at one and the same time viator et comprehensor, a traveler toward eternity who already possessed eternal life; a mystery essentially supernatural, because the two extremes united here, greatest peace and deepest sorrow, are, like grace and charity, both supernatural, and, as a result, their union also is essentially supernatural, and thus inaccessible to the natural powers of any human or angelic intellect. The coexistence of states apparently so contrary requires some clarification, although during our lifetime this union must always remain somewhat incomprehensible to us, hidden by light too strong for our weak eyes.

In attempting to explain this mystery, some theologians have fallen into contradictions. They extenuate or disfigure its truth in one of three theories now to be stated and discussed.

Certain theologians, like Aureolus, have held that, during the Passion, Jesus suffered only in the sensitive part of His soul, and not in its purely spiritual part. But, as the Carmelites of Salamanca remark, this opinion goes

contrary to the common doctrine of the Fathers founded on Scripture, according to which Christ suffered from the sins of all men, an evidently spiritual suffering. Like contrition, such sufferings belong not to the sensitive part of the soul, which man shares in common with animals, but to the will, and all the more so as the will is elevated and animated by supernatural charity, the love of God and of souls in God. The ordinary magisterium of the Church teaches this doctrine plainly.

A second entirely different theory was proposed by Melchior Cano, Velantia, Salmeron, and Maldonatus. According to them, our Lord did not will to preserve during the Passion the beatific joy that normally originated at the summit of His soul because of the vision of the divine essence. This second theory conflicts with what St. Thomas says, and, as Gonet notes, it appears to contain a contradiction. It seems impossible that the Sovereign Good, God seen face to face, could be possessed by an intellect and proposed to a created will without the latter experiencing immense joy. If our Lord did have the vision of the divine essence during the Passion, He had, too, at the highest point of His soul, the joy which comes from that vision.

Theophile Raynaud proposed a third theory: that sovereign beatitude and deepest sorrow, even if contrary can coexist miraculously in the same soul. But, as Gonet says, equal contrariety implies contradiction; and this obtains if, at the same time, the same will is made both deeply glad and deeply sad by the same object. Even by a miracle, God cannot do anything contradictory. Almost all theologians admit that the union of deepest sorrow and perfect beatitude in our Lord was miraculous, a result of His being at the same time viator and comprehensor, so that in Him the glory of the beatific vision did not overflow into the lower part of the soul. To recognize a miracle, however, is not to concede a contradiction.

Since these three theories are evidently insufficient, let us turn to St. Thomas and his principal commentators for an understanding of this union of sentiments apparently so opposed. We shall find that the tradition preserved by them gives us a much nobler and more comprehensive view. St. Thomas is not one to minimize; he does not make little of the mystery in any way. First of all, he establishes the fact that even during the Passion Christ enjoyed the beatific vision and, as a result, perfect beatitude; and that, on the other hand, His sorrow far surpassed all the suffering endured by men in the present life. The solution to this enigma St. Thomas sees in

our Lord's will to suffer for us. His will prevented His beatitude from overflowing into the relatively inferior part of His spiritual soul and into His sensibility.

THE CROSS AND THE BEATIFIC VISION

St. Thomas firmly believes that all during the Passion, Christ's soul possessed the immediate vision of the divine essence. Our Lord's fullness of grace overflowed in three ways: in a very high knowledge of God and of His kingdom, in love of God, and in love of souls. This twofold love was at the same time the principle of Christ's perfect peace and of His profound sorrow at the sight of men's sins.

For a better understanding of this doctrine, let us recall its dogmatic foundations, all too little known. At our Savior's conception, the fullness of grace He received flooded His intellect as the light of glory. He more than believed in His divinity. He saw His own divine personality, and the divine essence, from which His personality is not distinct. The common teaching of the Fathers and of theologians holds that with the first moment of life Christ enjoyed the vision possessed by the blessed in heaven. Their view rests upon the words of the Gospel, and to dissent from it would be to err almost to the point of heresy.

"No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." Evidently these words mean that, unlike the prophets, who had not seen God, the only Son had seen Him, inasmuch as the Son was in the bosom of the Father, and saw God not only by His divine intellect, but by His human intellect as well. As man, the Son made known the Father; as man also the Son saw the Father. Testimony and the knowledge from which it springs should surely correspond.

When talking to Nicodemus about spiritual regeneration, our Lord said: "Amen, amen, I say to thee that we speak what we know, and we testify what we have seen. . . . And no man hath ascended into heaven but He that descended from heaven, the Son of man who is in heaven." In these words "what we know" is synonymous with "what we have seen." The "speaking," the "bearing witness" that Christ refers to here, He certainly did as man: as man also then He saw God, not by the knowledge of faith but with that vision the blessed in heaven possess. And, as at the time He was speaking the souls of the just already dead were awaiting entrance into

heaven, He added: “And no man hath ascended into heaven but He that hath descended from heaven: the Son of man who is in heaven.” Christ was already in heaven not only as the Son of God, by reason of His divinity and His divine intellect, but as the Son of man, through His human intellect; not only would He be in heaven after His death and resurrection, but He was already there; even then, by His human intellect, seeing God face to face, without any intermediary. As tradition says, He was at the same time viator and comprehensor, traveling toward eternity and already home and in possession of eternal life.

St. John the Baptist told our Lord’s disciples the same truth: “You yourselves do bear me witness that I said that I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before Him. . . . He that cometh from above is above all. He that is of the earth, of the earth he is, and of the earth he speaketh. He that cometh from heaven is above all. And what He hath seen and heard, that He testifieth; and no man receiveth His testimony.”

Not only the friendly Nicodemus but even the contentious Jews at Capharnaum were told: “Everyone that hath heard of the Father and hath learned cometh to Me. Not that any man hath seen the Father; but He who is of God, He hath seen the Father. Amen, amen, I say unto you: He that believeth in Me hath everlasting life.” A little later the Pharisees as well heard: “It is My Father that glorifieth Me, of whom you say that He is your God. And you have not known Him; but I know Him. And if I shall say that I know Him not, I shall be like to you, a liar. But I do know Him and do keep His word.” Finally, in the sacerdotal prayer, when praying for His disciples, Jesus again says: “Father, I will that where I am, they also whom Thou hast given Me may be with Me; that they may see My glory which Thou hast given Me, because Thou hast loved Me before the creation of the world.” These last words are particularly expressive: “where I am,” that is, in heaven; those who have been given to Christ already have supernatural faith; He asks the beatific vision for them, the vision of the divine essence and of the glory He has been given as man. “Now this is eternal life: that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.”

St. John the Apostle surely understood the Savior’s words in this sense when he wrote: “Dearly beloved, we are now the sons of God; and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that when He shall appear we shall be like to Him; because we shall see Him as He is.” Then will be

granted the sacerdotal prayer of Jesus: “Father, I will that where I am, they also whom Thou hast given Me may be with Me; that they may see My glory which Thou hast given Me.” The more we contemplate the literal meaning of these words, the more we grasp, in the obscurity of faith, the truth that, even in this life, our Savior possessed the light of glory.

St. Thomas gives a sound reason of congruity for this prerogative of our Lord. He says that since in this world Christ, the Master of teachers, apostles, and doctors, was entrusted with bringing mankind to eternal life, that is, to the vision of God, He Himself should see God even in this life. To give we must first have. If we would dispel darkness, we must possess light; if we would warm others, we must provide heat. It was eminently fitting, then, that the Master should possess the vision of heaven so that He might lead men to see God. If St. Paul, called to become the Doctor of the Gentiles, was caught up to the third heaven and “heard secret words which it is not granted to man to utter,” with how much greater reason should Christ, the Savior of mankind, have had evidence of the supernatural mysteries about which He taught us!

Without the beatific vision our Lord would have remained in the order of faith; for only through faith would He have known His own divine personality, a thing seemingly contrary to His dignity as Son of God. If the fullness of grace received by Christ’s soul at His conception surpassed the grace of all saints and all angels combined, we must say as much of His knowledge of divine things. In consequence of the personal union of Christ’s soul with the Word of God, and of the fullness of created grace flowing from that union, it was highly fitting that His human intellect be lifted up in this life to the divine vision, in a degree proportionate to His super-eminent charity which, from the very first, surpassed that of all the just together.

Had our Lord not enjoyed the vision of God in the first but only in the following moment of His existence then, in this subsequent instant, grace and charity would have increased in Him. Yet the Second Council of Constantinople teaches that Christ non melioratus est, “did not become more perfect,” did not grow in charity, but received an absolute plentitude of charity from the first instant of His life on earth.

St. Thomas did not believe we can admit that our Lord lost the beatific vision during the Passion, giving several reasons for his judgment. First of all, the beatitude constituted by this vision is inamissible by its very nature.

Well named “eternal life,” it is not touched by time but shares in the immutability of eternity. Our Lord never lost it even in sleep because it required no concurrence of the imagination. Besides, Christ possessed the beatific vision as the normal result of the hypostatic union and of His fullness of grace. Certainly in the Passion, no grace was lost to Him; indeed it so filled Him as to overflow more than ever upon all men. Lastly, even on the cross and above all on the cross, Christ continued to be the Master of masters in the things of eternity, incomparably superior to the greatest contemplative raised to the most sublime union. While speaking from the height of His cross to Mary, to John, to the good thief, to us all, Christ was seeing God; in this unparalleled light He pronounced the seven words, and, as Bossuet says, “the light He received without measure He gave to us with measure, that our weakness might be able to bear it.”

The vision of the divine essence, of God’s sovereign goodness, was not, therefore, lost to our Lord on the cross, and even then it gave Him happiness that nothing could trouble or lessen. No soul can see God face to face without loving Him and without experiencing, at least in the highest point of the will, the joy that necessarily comes from the possession of the Sovereign Good.

Before the Passion our Lord revealed to His disciples the secret of His peace, of that tranquility of order founded on the knowledge and love of God. “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth do I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled; nor let it be afraid.” “Behold, the hour cometh, and it is now come, that you shall be scattered every man to his own and shall leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. These things I have spoken to you that in Me you may have peace. In the world you shall have distress. But have confidence. I have overcome the world.”

Charity effects peace by subordinating all our affections to the love of God above all things and establishing in us the tranquility of order. During His life on earth, Christ’s charity surpassed that of all the saints, and it was exercised to the greatest degree during the Passion and on the cross; and while He was in torment He was not content to preserve His own deep peace, but He gave peace to those about Him who were most deeply grieved, whom He sustained and strengthened—Mary, John, the holy women, the good thief. He was the true peacemaker, reconciling the world to God. From His cross comes the peace given by all the absolutions of

nineteen centuries. From His cross comes the peace procured through every Mass to the end of time. The peace of the Crucified can make every desolation sweet, every weakness strong.

THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST

Our Lord cannot be said to have endured every possible suffering. Some sufferings naturally preclude others. A man cannot both drown and be burned to death. Besides, Christ's body never knew sickness and remained in perfect health up to the time of the Passion. St. Thomas maintains that our Lord did, however, endure for our salvation every kind of suffering that can touch us in this life. If we consider the men who made Him suffer, we find that affliction came to Him from the Jews, the Gentiles, the chief priests, the people, the disciples, Judas, from Peter himself. If we consider what was taken from Him, He suffered in His heart by being abandoned by His friends; He suffered in His body by being stripped, scourged, crowned with thorns, and crucified; He suffered in transfixed hands and feet; He suffered in His soul, sad unto agony and unto death.

The Passion, adds St. Thomas, was the greatest agony endured by any man in the present life, and that for many reasons: because of the violence and general character of these sufferings; because of the fineness of our Lord's constitution; because Christ willed to give Himself up fully to pain of body and grief of soul without seeking any alleviation; and, above all, because of the principal cause of these afflictions, the sins of all men.

Christ's body, conceived miraculously in the virginal womb of Mary, was endowed with a keen sensibility augmented, if we may so express it, by the exceptional penetration of His intellect. The sufferings of the scourging, of the crowning with thorns, of the crucifixion, of the pierced hands and feet, on which the whole weight of His body rested, could not have been more bitter or more terrible. As regards His interior sorrow, all the sins of mankind were its chief cause. The Savior had to satisfy for them—sins without number, sins the gravity of which Jesus realized more than anyone else, sins that made Him suffer in the measure of His love for an outraged God and for sinners. Lastly, our Lord's physical and moral agony was more intense than any martyr's because no joy, no consideration of the higher reason, and no distraction mitigated or sweetened it, because Christ willed

to give Himself up fully to pure suffering, to go to the last limits of sacrifice: those of love.

The objection has been made that the greater the good lost, the greater the sorrow. It is said, for example, that a sinner by losing sanctifying grace is deprived of a greater good than the life of the body which our Lord lost on the cross, and that, therefore, he knows greater desolation than that known by his Lord. The repentant Peter is cited as an instance.

To this St. Thomas makes answer: “Christ grieved not only over the loss of His own bodily life, but also over the sins of all others. And this grief in Christ surpassed all grief of every contrite heart, both because it flowed from a greater wisdom (by which He saw better than anyone else the infinite gravity of mortal sin) and a greater charity (love of an offended God and of those who offend Him) by which the pang of contrition is intensified, and because He grieved at the one time for all sins, according to Isaias 53: 4: ‘Surely he hath carried our sorrows.’ “

Only a great contemplative can penetrate deeply into the richness of these sober words. We catch a suggestion of what they contain by thinking of those who have offered themselves as victims for some sinner and have sometimes had to suffer terribly for his sins, in order to detest them in his stead and with the intention of obtaining for him the grace of conversion.

Christ had to suffer not only for a few sinners, but for thousands and thousands of all peoples and generations, and for all their sins at the same time. The chalice of Gethsemane brimming with all the iniquities and infamies of the whole world He took for Himself, and gave us instead the chalice of His precious blood, offered daily on the altar. These two chalices, like the scales of a balance, represent the whole history of humanity, all the evil on one side and all the good on the other: “And where sin abounded, grace did more abound.”

If St. Catherine of Siena was sickened and nauseated at seeing the interior state of certain prelates’ souls, what must our Lord have suffered at the sight of the sins of all men! The suffering that sin caused Mary at the foot of the cross can be measured only by her love. To know what she suffered we would have to realize how much she loved her offended God and His crucified Son, how much she loved our own souls, so ravaged by wrongdoing. Plainly, we cannot compass her secret or her suffering. What then can we know of her Son’s? The fullness of grace and charity in our Savior sharpened and deepened His capacity for suffering. Our egoism

makes us live on the surface of ourselves so that we are dull to evil but quite alive to whatever wounds our sensitiveness and pride. Christ's suffering, like His peace and happiness, had its origin in His plenitude of grace. Between these two extremes of perfect peace and unparalleled sorrow lies the whole interior life of Christ in this world. St. Thomas offers us some measure of understanding of this mystery which contemplation will help us to penetrate more and more deeply each day.

THE UNION OF PEACE AND SORROW

St. Thomas in no way makes little of the divine obscurity in this mystery. The difficulty that our minds encounter he formulates thus: "It is not possible to be sad and glad at the one time, since sadness and gladness are contraries. But Christ's whole soul suffered grief during the Passion. . . . Therefore His whole soul could not enjoy the beatific vision." The holy doctor answers with a principle expressed by St. John Damascene that has become classic: Divinitas Christi permisit carni agere et pati quae propria: "The divinity of Christ allowed His body to act and to suffer according to its nature." And, inversely, the agony of the Passion did not prevent the highest part of Christ's soul from experiencing the joy proper to it because of the immediate vision of the divine essence.

In this world our efforts to explain supernatural things achieve only partial success. St. Thomas has indeed penetrated profoundly into this mystery. With certainty, yet in the obscurity of faith, he sees the truth and shows it to us. He first answers the proposed difficulty with an abstract, wholly metaphysical consideration of the very essence of the soul. This serves as a preparation for a more concrete solution, reached through a consideration of the faculties.

We must distinguish, he says, between the essence of the soul and the total of the faculties which proceed from it. The essence of the soul is indivisible; and, as a result, it is whole in the entire body it informs, animates, or vivifies, and whole in each part of the body, although by the head it exercises much higher functions than by the other parts. If, therefore, we consider the very essence of the soul of Christ, we can and should say that Christ suffered in His whole soul, for He suffered in all the parts of His body and in His different faculties that were affected by such grievous objects. "For my soul is filled with evils."

For the same reason, that is, because of its essential indivisibility, the soul is the complete subject of each of its faculties. We can, therefore, say that Christ, even during His passion, rejoiced in His whole soul so far as His soul was the subject of His higher faculties, and the vision of the divine essence beatified the summit of those higher powers.

But to speak more concretely, following St. Thomas' trend of thought: if, on the other hand, we no longer consider the essence of the soul but its different faculties in relation to the objects toward which they are directed, then we see that, during the Passion, the vision of the divine essence beatified only the highest point of Christ's human intellect and human will; whereas the lower part of these higher faculties and all the sensitive faculties were plunged in agony at the sight of the sins of men and the torments of the Passion.

If, therefore, by the expression "the whole soul" we understand no longer the essence of the soul but "all its faculties," we cannot say that Christ was beatified in His whole soul; for the glory which shone on the summit of His higher faculties was not reflected either in their lower part or in His other, sensitive faculties. Our Lord freely willed that these be abandoned to sorrow, without seeking any alleviation for it in the vision of the divine essence. Our Savior's humanity was like a mountain peak crowned with sunshine and hemmed in by calm blue heavens, the while, far down the mountain side, below the clouds, a raging storm seems to devastate everything. Such in substance is the doctrine set forth by St. Thomas in his Summa theologica.

A superficial reading of these two articles has led some to misunderstand St. Thomas, believing that, according to him, our Lord suffered only in the inferior part of His soul during the Passion, and by these words, "inferior part of His soul," they understand only the sensitive part. Aureolus, not St. Thomas, holds this opinion, already refuted as contrary to Scripture and to the ordinary magisterium of the Church.

That Christ suffered especially from the sins of men, St. Thomas himself clearly asserted a little earlier in the Summa. "Christ grieved not only over the loss of His own bodily life, but also over the sins of all others. And this grief in Christ surpassed all the grief of every contrite heart, because it flowed from a greater wisdom and charity, by which the pang of contrition is intensified." Suffering experienced at seeing God offended and souls lost, plainly belongs, like contrition, not to the sensitive part, but to the purely

spiritual part of the soul, to the will that loves and desires spiritual good, and even to the will as elevated by grace and charity. The suffering essential to contrition is not only spiritual but supernatural, for it has its immediate source in the supernatural love of God and is proportionate to that love.

The question arises whether Christ suffered from the sins of men in the highest part of His soul, in the summit of His higher faculties, in ratione superiori. Scotus and Suarez think that He did. in several works St. Thomas teaches, on the contrary, that our Lord did not suffer because of sin in ratione superiori, at the highest point of His mind; there He possessed the Sovereign Good seen face to face and loved above all things, as do the blessed in heaven, who no longer suffer because of sin, although they are displeased by it, as is God Himself.

We need not conclude that St. Thomas was of the opinion that the great suffering our Lord experienced at the sight of men's sins pertained only to His lower reason. Cajetan seems to preserve the real thought of his master when he says that it belonged to the lower reason of Christ directed by His higher reason. According to the terminology of St. Augustine, what is called the "lower" reason has to do with temporal things, and sin is a temporal thing. However, the sadness a just man experiences at the sight of sin comes from "the higher reason" which contemplates the eternal law of God. Sin makes the just suffer chiefly inasmuch as it is an offense against God.

It would, then, be a gross error to say that Jesus suffered only in the sensitive part of the soul, which is common to man and animal alike; He suffered from the sins of all men in the purely spiritual part of His soul, even in those high regions of His mind that are enlightened by the principles of the highest wisdom. However, He did not suffer in the very peak of His mind beatified as it was by the sight of God seen face to face, by the possession of the Sovereign Good. This peak is called the summit of the soul, the apex mentis, in relation to the sensible faculties regarded as inferior; the mystics sometimes also use another metaphor for it, calling it the depth of the soul, the fundus animae, in relation to the sensitive faculties and sensible things considered as external.

Sin causes no suffering to the saints in heaven although it displeases them, for they see the victory of mercy in regard to forgiven sins and the splendor of justice in the punishment due to other sins. Even in this world, on Calvary, Christ saw this victory and this splendor. Nevertheless He

experienced untold suffering at the sight of sin, for He was at the same time viator and comprehensor, both a traveler toward eternity and a possessor of eternity, one of the blessed. In other words, He freely prevented the irradiation of the light of glory on His lower reason and sensitive faculties, not wishing the radiance of this light and its consequent joy to sweeten in any way the sadness that assailed Him from every side.

Theologians generally regard this inner state of Christ as no less miraculous than His sudden stilling of the storm on the sea of Galilee. According to the natural laws of life, joy in the higher part of the soul reflects on the lower, and inversely, the suffering of the latter has its echo in the highest part. Christ voluntarily and freely worked a miracle that He might give Himself up to sorrow, just as He freely willed to bring back to life Lazarus and the son of the widow of Naim.

In the natural order perfect happiness and profound grief cannot coexist in one person. Only a miracle could bring them together in an entirely exceptional, unique union, the result of the incarnation of the Word in passible and mortal flesh. No one claims that Christ was saddened and made glad by the same object under the same aspect, a manifest contradiction. In reality, He suffered from His passion inasmuch as it was contrary to His human nature and effected by the world's greatest crime; He rejoiced in it so far as it was ordered as an expiatory sacrifice for the salvation of man and therefore pleased God.

In somewhat the same way, a true penitent, while sorry for his sins and saddened by them, may find much joy in his own contrition since it proceeds from love of God. St. Augustine says in his book De poenitentia: "Semper doleat poenitens et de dolore gaudeat: Let the penitent be ever sorry for his sins and let him find joy in his sorrow." In His higher reason, Jesus took joy in His passion, for it pleased God that our Lord's suffering and death should ransom humanity. The apostles mirrored their Master when "they went out from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus."

Our Lord, therefore, suffered chiefly because of men's sins, and His suffering surpassed that of all contrite hearts, because of the superiority of His knowledge and love. He saw incomparably better than we can the gravity of mortal sin and He knew the number of men's offenses. Immeasurably more than we, He loved both Him whom sin offends, God His Father, and our own souls, which die of sin.

God permits sin only in view of a greater good. In this life, even during His passion, Christ contemplated this higher good: the victory of mercy and the splendor of justice: the supreme victory of the Sovereign Good over sin, Satan, and death. Therefore the divine and holy permission for sin caused the higher reason of Christ no suffering. What we have been contemplating in Christ is both miracle and mystery and lies beyond the laws of nature and the ordinary laws of the order of grace.

More and more clearly we can see that the fullness of grace in our Lord produced two apparently contrary effects that were like the two poles of His interior life: the vision of God bound Him to eternal life, desire for the cross drew Him on to the mortal agony of death that He might be a perfect holocaust.

THE HARMONY WITHIN OUR DYING LORD

In our Lord, these two effects originated in the same radical source, His fullness of grace; and, in a more proximate way, they proceeded from His charity, from the intensity of His love for God and souls. Here we have the secret of their intimate union.

To love God above all things is to have peace, for, as St. Augustine says, peace is nothing but the tranquility of order, the wonderful harmony of all sentiments and all desires completely subordinated to one supreme love, which ought to have first place in our hearts. Love of God burned so ardently in Christ's soul that He could bear and even forget His physical suffering. On the other hand, this very love added to His suffering.

Sin is the practical denial of the Creator's infinite goodness. Christ realized this fully and saw how many times men would attempt, as it were, to wrest from God His dignity as their last end merely to gain some miserable, momentary satisfaction. And because He loved the Father so intensely, this knowledge caused him terrible suffering.

Our Lord experienced such peace in suffering because of His love for God and also because of His love for us. On the cross He certainly knew boundless joy in saying, "It is consummated." There is, indeed, more joy in giving than in receiving, in loving than in being loved; and the more precious, lasting, and immortal our gift is, the more joy there is in sharing it with others. Now, in dying for us, Christ merited eternal life for us all, bringing back to us the stream of divine mercy. He told us He came that we

might have life, and have it in abundance; surely He experienced great joy in giving Himself up for us. “Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends,” He said; and from the height of the cross He seemed to repeat the words: “If any man thirst, let him come to Me and drink. He that believeth in Me, as the Scripture saith: ‘Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.’ “ Since that time the Sacred Heart has never ceased saying to us: “Only in the heart of a God will souls find ease for their sufferings and strength for their weakness; let them stretch out their hands to Me, I Myself will lead them to that heart.”

On the other hand, Christ suffered in proportion to His charity for men and the gravity of their sins, which He had taken upon Himself to expiate. He knew sin as the destroyer, the death of souls, the way from God to abysmal misery, misery as inexpressible as the glory of which it is the privation. The thought that some souls would not profit from the sacrifice of the cross, however infinite and superabundant its value, made our Lord suffer in the measure of His love for us, a love so great that the hearts of all saints and angels together could not hold it.

The desire of dying for us on the cross was always alive in the heart of Christ, even on Thabor at the moment of the Transfiguration. As St. Luke relates, “And whilst He prayed, the shape of His countenance was altered, and His raiment became white and glittering. And behold two men were talking with him. And they were Moses and Elias, appearing in majesty. And they spoke of His decease that He should accomplish in Jerusalem.” A little while later, Jesus again prophesied His sorrowful death to His disciples.

The fullness of grace in Christ was, then, the source of His perfect happiness and intense suffering. In the seventeenth century Louis Chardon, O.P., made this sublime thought the soul of his masterpiece, La Croix de Jésus. He says:

The same unction of grace is both a principle of joy and a source of sadness for our Lord. If, on one hand, it disposed His soul to enjoy the perfection of eternal happiness, on the other, it filled His powers to overflowing with untold suffering. He was anointed for immortality; He was also anointed for death. . . . Of old, men used two kinds of oil, one for feasts, the other for the burial of the dead. The soul of Jesus was anointed with both kinds of oil: with festal oil because of His beatific love, and with burial oil because of His love for justice. . . . He had an unction to make

Him impassible; He had an unction to make Him susceptible to suffering. He received the oil of glory and He received the oil of the cross.

A little while before his martyrdom, Polyeuctus expressed the same great thought.

God alone do I adore, God alone
The Master of the universe, before whose throne
Heaven and earth and hell must bow;
Whom love led here for love to die,
Sharp-limned in shame against His own wide sky;
Who, still unsatisfied with giving, stays till now
With us—the same dying, deathless victim as when
First offered as the homely bread of men.

Seen from without, this mystery, like a stained-glass window, appears unintelligible and almost contradictory; seen from within, in the right light, by those who understand it a little by living it, it expresses the divine harmony of mercy and justice, of strength and gentleness, of deepest suffering and that peace which will shine undimmed throughout all eternity.

THE LESSON OF CALVARY

Fortis est ut mors dilectio. “Love is strong as death.” What is particularly striking in Christ’s love, whether for His Father or for our souls, is the close and wonderful union of deepest tenderness with heroic strength in suffering and death: Fortiter et suaviter. Our love sometimes lacks one of these qualities. Neither can survive long without the other. Without strength, tenderness becomes languid and affected; without sweetness, strength grows bitter and harsh.

No one can know how Christ loved His Father. If He loved the Virgin Mary tenderly, how much more He must have loved His Father, to whom He rendered unceasing adoration and thanksgiving! Supernatural tenderness has always flowed out from Him to empty itself upon souls, not merely on those of one country or time, on a restricted group of a few friends, but on the souls of all generations that all may have life eternal.

Christ’s love, while tender, is stronger than death, stronger than sin, stronger than the spirit of evil. It led our Lord to offer Himself as a victim in our stead, to save us, by satisfying for us, by giving God an infinite reparation. Cor Jesu, fornax ardens caritatis: in that heart all the tenderness

and energy of love are wonderfully blended; for the heart of the Savior is a pure mirror of mercy and justice, the two great virtues of the uncreated love of God.

Members of the mystical body of Christ should participate in His life more and more so as to become like unto Him. The sacred humanity of our Savior communicates to us progressively the graces it merited for us on the cross. The head of the mystical body pours out its riches on its members. Our Lord desires to assimilate us more and more to Himself, by baptism, absolution, frequent Communion, the crosses or purifications necessary for our advancement, at the last by extreme unction and up until our entrance into heaven. The lives of many of the saints show this progressive assimilation by a sort of reproduction of the mysteries of Christ's life—first His childhood and hidden life, then His apostolic life, and, at last, His sorrowful life or passion.

One of the great marks of the spirit of Christ in souls is the reproduction of those two effects that have their origin in His own inner life and flowed from His fullness of grace. The first is peace, the tranquility of order, the more and more perfect subordination of every sentiment and desire to the love of God and of souls in God, a love ever growing by the actual influence of Christ.

The second is acceptance of the cross in order to follow the Master, as He has bidden us to do. We must accept the cross with patience, otherwise our burden increases but bears no fruit; with thankfulness, for it is a hidden grace, as those who bear its weight will find out; with love, for, in any cross, Christ crucified comes to us, to reproduce in us His own traits. Love like this brings abandonment and peace, and offers for our discovery the true wisdom, divine contemplation.

In commenting on St. Paul, the austere Louis Chardon makes some profound statements:

A reverential consideration of Christ's energetic and insatiable longing for the cross gives us a great deal of light on His disposition of crosses among those souls who belong to Him by the bonds of grace. . . . We understand, too, that the more closely souls are united to His spirit, the greater the obligation they contract to suffer. . . . It would be a disorder in grace and against the laws of love for delicately bred members to be united to a head pierced with thorns. . . .

The same grace that has its universal source in Christ sanctifies His members. His grace as head is communicated to Him for the purpose of His office, which is to satisfy the strict justice of God for the sins of His members. Consequently He contracted the loving obligation to suffer, the cause of that mighty attraction which constantly bore Him on toward the cross. Of necessity, then, grace produces the same propensity in predestined souls and makes the same demands of them, that the mystical body may not seem an entirely monstrous whole in the order of grace, which it would indeed be if the spirit of Christ were contrary to itself—altogether otherwise in the members than in the head . . .

In its original source, the soul of Christ, grace produces an attraction that relates to the end for which He was made man. Overflowing upon men's souls, the grace of Christ necessarily effects the same disposition in those made worthy to receive it.

By its essence grace is a participation in the divine nature, but, so far as it is transmitted to us by Christ, it has a special modality which configures us to Him, an effect of the grace of Christ as such. This St. Thomas teaches when he asks whether sacramental grace, and, in particular, baptismal grace as such, adds anything to the grace of the virtues and the gifts as possessed by Adam before the fall.

Louis Chardon rounds out St. Thomas' thought with the teachings of men like Tauler and St. John of the Cross.

Because this kind of grace cannot be idle in a soul ... it hungers for growth and, because it cannot receive any considerable increase without the help of crosses, . . . God does not fail to abandon the soul to its own weakness and to naked grace, stripped by Him of all its sensible effects. This is done to teach the soul to know itself and to renounce itself and to cleave to Him alone. The closeness and intimacy of its union depend on its separation from everything else.

Whence it comes that the same love is at once the principle of life and of death . . . uniting and separating . . . detaching and binding together. . . . For the holiness of God as communicated to His creatures completely deprives them of all that is incompatible with His immaculate purity. . . .

To experience this glorious death . . . is to be rich in divine fruitfulness . . . for in it we find more presence than absence; more union than separation . . . although it is a death more cruel, for all that, than the common way of nature . . . leaving only sad desolation within the soul. Nevertheless those

who are well versed in the characteristics of sacred love, and of the end that the good God has in view in all these trials, would not wish to change for a moment their hard martyrdom for the rapturous delights of paradise, or the cruel torments of death for a happy life in glory.

One historian, who would make amends for the way Chardon's work has been neglected, says: "Never, perhaps, has the separating, simplifying, stripping action of grace been analyzed with more penetration." To see it at work we have only to turn to the life of Mary.

Reread slowly the beautiful chapter of The Imitation of Christ, "On the Few Who Love the Cross of Jesus," and you will see that the mark of Christ's spirit is peace and abandonment in suffering, peace and abandonment in the anguish of the Passion as reproduced in different degrees in souls for their own purification and for their cooperation in their neighbor's salvation with and by our Lord and through the means that He Himself used. So, in a sense, Christ is in agony until the end of the world in His mystical body, until it is fully purified and glorified, until the word of the Master, "I have overcome the world," is perfectly realized by the final victory over sin, Satan, and death.

When by faith we look with the eyes of God into what the holy liturgy tells us, we see how infinitely it surpasses the sublimest flights of human poetry.

Salve Crux sancta, salve mundi gloria,
Vera spes nostra, vera ferens gaudia,
Signum salutis, salus in periculis,
Vitale lignum vitam ferens omnium.
Crux fidelis, inter omnes
Arbor una nobilis:
Nulla silva talem profert
Fronte, flore, germine:
Dulce lignum, dulces clavos,
Dulce pondus sustinet.

O magnum pietatis opus! Mors mortua tunc est, in ligno quando mortua Vita fuit.

Nos autem gloriari oportet in Cruce Domini nostri Jesu Christi.

Crux benedicta nitet, Dominus qua carne pependit, atque cruore suo vulnera nostra lavit.

Blessed Grignon de Montfort provides us with a conclusion for this thought.

In His incarnation, Wisdom incarnate has taken the cross for His treasure and has espoused it with ineffable love. During His whole life, which was nothing but a continual cross, He sought after it and carried it with unutterable joy. At last He was fixed and, as it were, fitted to the cross; and He died in its dear embrace joyfully, as though it were a couch of honor and triumph. . . . Do not believe that for His greater triumph after death He is now detached from the cross, that He now rejects the cross. . . . He does not wish the homage of even relative adoration to be paid to creatures, however great, like His own most holy Mother; this great honor is reserved and due only to His dear cross. On the day of the last judgment He will bring to an end the worship of the relics of the saints, however venerable; but as for the worship of the cross, He will command the first among the seraphim and the cherubim to go out into the world and gather up every piece of the true cross. These, by His all-powerful love, will be so well reunited that they will make but one cross, the very cross on which He died. He will have this cross carried in triumph by the angels. . . . He will have it go before Him and, seated on a cloud of glory such as eye has never seen, He will judge the world with it and by it. What joy the friends the cross will then know! . . . Wisdom eternal awaits that day . . . desiring the cross to be the sign, the seal, and the sword of all the elect. He has hidden so many of life's treasures and graces to a cross that He gives the knowledge of it only to those He most favors. . . . Oh, how humble, little, mortified, interior, and despised we must be to know the mystery of the cross! Whoever carries it shall find it an eternal weight of glory in heaven.

CHAPTER V

THE LOVE OF GOD AND THE MYSTICAL BODY OF CHRIST

The Church our Lord founded is an external, visible, hierarchical society, in which the supreme authority is vested in the successor of Peter. It is a society commissioned to preserve and propagate the evangelical doctrine and to sanctify the faithful by the administration of the sacraments, the oblation of the Holy Sacrifice, and the direction of souls. Protestants, who are unwilling to admit the visible hierarchy of the Church, ignore Christ's words: "And I say to thee: that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church. And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." "But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and thou, being once converted, confirm thy brethren." After the resurrection Peter was told: "Feed My lambs. . . . Feed My sheep." He was thus constituted the supreme pastor, the vicar of Jesus Christ; and the divine words, "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it," were said for him and for his successors until the end of time.

Although visible in its external aspect, the Church is a spiritual society essentially ordered to the life of eternity; as St. Paul says, it is a mystical body, whose members are united by supernatural life to the Holy Ghost, the soul of the body, and to Christ, its head, in communion with the souls in purgatory and the saints in heaven. This is one of the most fundamental and sublime doctrines of our holy religion. Let us try to make it more understandable by seeing: (1) what the mystical body of Christ is; (2) how the faithful are incorporated in Christ, what relationship exists between members and head; (3) the nature of the communion of saints, the relationship of the members to one another, and the way all things work together in this body for the advancement of the love of God.

The mystical body of Christ, often referred to by St. Paul, shows the resemblance of the Church to our physical body and to a moral body, like the family or nation.

Our physical body is a group of organs and members animated by one and the same principle, the soul, the highest functions of which are exercised in the head, which sees, hears, directs the members, and transmits neural impulses to the whole organism. The organs really form but one body because they are vivified by the same soul and vitally united with the head. When in old age the organism wears out, we make up for its losses by artificial devices which do not form a part of man's body for they receive no vital influx from it.

In a moral body, like the family or nation, there are also members; they are animated by the same family or national spirit and are banded together under the direction of a leader or head. In a family the father, mother, and children form a whole, all the parts of which are united by ties of blood, affection, common interest, honor, ancestry, name, and resemblance. These ties act as a vital principle animating the whole. The family truly forms a moral body in which each lives upon the same affection, devotion, and memories—everything that unites them all. Like ties should bind us to our country, for we are its debtors because of its goodness and the benefits of all kinds we have received from it. "Consequently man is debtor chiefly to his parents and his country, after God." True patriotism is the moral virtue of filial piety, which, in the light of supernatural faith and Christian prudence, is, as found in St. Louis and St. Joan of Arc, an infused virtue perfectly subordinated to the love of God and of all men in Him.

The Church forms a still higher body uniting men and nations to bring them into the kingdom of God. This higher body is called the mystical body. Why? Because in the Church the principle that animates the whole is essentially mysterious, infinitely superior to, and infinitely more unitive than the soul of our body or the spirit of either a family or a nation. The soul of the mystical body is the Sanctifier, the Holy Ghost, who dwells in all just souls but exercises His highest functions through the humanity of Christ. The Holy Ghost is the source of grace; He pours charity into our hearts, but always through the soul of our Savior, as an intermediary, for our Savior is indeed the head of the mystical body. The fullness of sanctifying grace received by Christ was ordered, in fact, to the sanctification of all

mankind. We enter into this body by baptism, which, by applying the merits of the Savior to us, remits original sin and makes us children of God.

In the mystical body there is great diversity but profound unity: a true harmony. It has the diversity of very different nations and races gathered together by baptism under one Spirit and under one head; St. Paul says: “For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether bond or free; and in one Spirit we have all been made to drink. For the body also is not one Member, but many.” At Pentecost, the apostles miraculously spoke many unknown languages to make it evident that the Gospel was to be preached to all nations in spite of differences of race, customs, manners, and institutions.

It also has diversity of function. St. Paul describes the details of this mysterious body by telling us about the subordinated functions of eyes, hands, and feet. These last symbolize those who, in the vine of the Savior, are dedicated to the active life. The ear cannot say: “Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body.” The hand should not wish to perform the function of the eyes. Nobody can live without diversity of function. If all the members of the human body had the dignity of the eye, the eye itself could not exist.

In this diversity a wonderful unity rules, and ought to become increasingly predominant. All Christians are kinsfolk, brothers, members of the same body. These members are or ought to be united much more closely than those in a human family. Among them there ought to be, as is commonly taught, unity of faith, unity of obedience to the hierarchy, unity of worship, especially through the Mass, unity in the common fare of Communion, and unity of life, since each ought to be nourished by Jesus Christ; unity of sentiments, of affection, of interests that are great and eternal, unity of hope and of charity. Since here all live by grace and later all will live in glory, they have unity of wealth, the merits of Christ, and unity of heritage, eternal life.

As our members form a physical body, so do the faithful united in faith, hope, and charity form the mystical body of our Lord; they are His members; more than that, they are members of one another, too, and help one another like the fingers of one hand.

HOW INCORPORATION INTO CHRIST IS EFFECTED

Christ said: “I am the vine; you the branches. He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit.” Before the Passion He prayed to His Father, saying: “That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee. . . . And the glory which Thou hast given Me, I have given to them; that they may be one, as We also are one.”

St. Paul, too, said that incorporation into Christ is effected by a kind of engrafting union in which two lives are so intimately mingled that they are lost in each other. In this union the life of the grafted branch is absorbed into the life of the trunk. “If the root be holy, so are the branches. And if . . . thou, being a wild olive, art ingrafted in them, and art made partaker of the root and of the fatness of the olive tree . . . thou bearest not the root; but the root thee.”

Christians live a new life; Christ lives in them through faith. He ought to be the principle of their thoughts, of their words, of their acts. Let us see how Christ exercises His functions as head of the Church and how the members of His body are more and more animated by Him.

First of all, Christ exercised His functions as head of the Church by meriting and satisfying for us. The merits of the Savior have an infinite value because He is the Word made flesh; and He has been able to communicate these merits to us in strict justice, because He is constituted head of mankind. As Adam, the constituted head of mankind, could lose the life of grace for us by his sin, so could Christ pour His justice, His sanctity, into our hearts and give us back supernatural life. The substitution of the dying Christ for us is clearly explained in the light of the revealed doctrine that our Savior received capital grace. This constituted Him the head of mankind and was meant to flow out from Him into His members. “And of His fullness we have all received.” God, says St. Paul, “hath made Him head over all the Church, which is His body.”

Christ still really exercises His function as head or leader of the Church, by interceding for us and by communicating to us the graces He merited for us on the cross. As a living instrument ever united to the divinity, the source of all grace, He communicates His grace to us, just as our head communicates to our bodily members the vital influx that has its principle in the soul. To understand this well, we must distinguish between our Lord’s divinity and His humanity.

As the Word, Christ lives in the depth of our soul in the same way as the Father and the Holy Ghost. Closer to the soul than the soul’s own self, He

preserves its natural and supernatural life; and by operating grace excites it to wonderful hidden acts far beyond its own powers.

The Savior's humanity is, as St. Thomas says, an instrument ever united to the divinity, through which all graces are communicated to us. The sacraments, too, the water of baptism and the sacramental form, for example, are the instrumental physical cause of sacramental grace in the sense that God makes use of the water and the form, communicating to them a divine transitory virtue in order to produce grace: so the humanity of the Savior, especially the acts of His holy soul, are the instrumental physical cause of all the graces we receive, either in the sacraments or outside of them.

A great artist like Beethoven uses an instrument in order to transmit his musical thought to us; a great thinker has his own particular style, a special language that he chooses as a means of self-expression. God, too, has His instruments for the production of effects that are properly divine and can come only from Him. The Savior's humanity is a conscious and free instrument united to the divinity in the production of any and every supernatural effect. The graces Christ merited for us on the cross, He communicates to us. Every illumination of the intellect, every grace of attraction, of consolation, and of strength is transmitted to us by the soul of our Savior. His influence is continual, extending to every salutary act we make, so all-incompassing that a mother's loving influence on her child bears only a dim analogy to it. The beating of the Sacred Heart, the thoughts and desires of Christ's soul, transmit supernatural life to us daily. And as new graces are continually being accorded to souls, Christ's activity never ceases.

Our Savior transmits to unbelievers the light of faith, to sinners justifying contrition, to the just persevering charity, to the souls in purgatory the indulgence that is their deliverance, and to saints in heaven the glory that is the fulfillment of grace. Throughout the ages Christ has been the light and life of all who live supernaturally, the spiritual sun of souls, shining the same on every generation. He exercises His influence especially through the Sacrifice of the Mass, in which the sacrifice of the cross is perpetuated in substance until the end of time. It is a unique sacrifice, not exactly renewed, but continued in substance (idem nunc offerens), perpetuated in a way that transcends time and applied to all generations. He is like an inexhaustible

source of living water, to which all can and must come to quench their thirst.

But the Savior's influence is not restricted to the Sacrifice of the Mass and the sacraments; it extends to people who do not yet know of the Eucharist, of baptism, of absolution. Not one of them is entirely removed from the influence of the Word made flesh. From Christ even the most degraded people receive supernatural lights and actual graces that are ordered to salvation. Christ indeed, as head, exercises an unbroken influence on His whole body.

Because the Blessed Virgin as coredemptrix merited for us with meritum de congruo, all that Christ obtained for us in strict justice, she transmits to us all the graces we receive; she is like the virginal neck uniting head and members, or, as the Fathers called her, the aqueduct of grace. Blessed Grignon de Montfort has given an especially clear elucidation of this doctrine.

Through the influence of Jesus and Mary on the mystical body, its members receive life by progressive sanctification. Baptism gives them the life of grace and blots out original sin by remitting the chief punishment due to sin. Whoever dies immediately after baptism goes directly to heaven; there the soul enjoys supreme beatitude while waiting for the resurrection and glorification of the body. If after baptism the soul falls back into sin, it must acknowledge and repent of its fault to obtain pardon; and if its contrition has intense charity, even the remission of all punishment can be obtained by the appropriation, through love and sorrow for sin, of the merits and satisfactions of Christ Jesus.

The Eucharist, especially, makes us attain to conformity with the will of our Savior. But deliverance from sin, in order to be perfect, and incorporation into Christ, in order to be complete, must follow the three phases of the purgative, illuminative, and unitive life. Before communicating His glorified life to us, Christ first communicates to us the life of grace as He lived it in a world of strife.

We must first, St. Paul says, die more and more to the earthly man and crucify our old self that we may no longer be slaves of sin. "And be not conformed to this world; but be reformed in the newness of your mind, that you may prove what is the good and the acceptable and the perfect will of God." "And they that are Christ's have crucified their flesh, with the vices and concupiscences. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."

In the exercise of their ministry, the apostles were persecuted, “always bearing about in our body the mortification of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodies.” These ideas, repeated in very different ways by St. Paul, comprise one of the fundamental points of spiritual doctrine, and a commentary on the Master’s: “Amen, amen, I say to you, unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground, die, itself remaineth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world keepeth it unto life eternal.”

Thus purified, the Christian must put on the new man and be ever enlightened and renewed according to the image of his Creator. “Put ye on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, the bowels of mercy, benignity, humility, modesty, patience; bearing with one another, if any have a complaint against another. Even as the Lord hath forgiven you, so do you also. But above all these things have charity, which is the bond of perfection.” We must imitate Christ and those who resemble Him; we must have His sentiments, assume the spirit of His mysteries, His passion, crucifixion, death, burial, and ascension. So it was that St. Paul suffered the pangs of labor until Christ should be formed in the souls of the faithful, until their souls should be enlightened by the true light of life.

A soul so enlightened and configured to Christ must live in continual union with our Lord. “Therefore, if you be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth. For you are dead; and your life is hid with Christ in God.” “And let the peace of Christ rejoice in your hearts; wherein also you are called in one body. And be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you abundantly: in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual canticles, singing in grace in your hearts to God. All whatsoever you do in word or in work, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.” “When Christ shall appear, who is your life, then you also shall appear with Him in glory.” Thus, each member of Christ should receive supernatural life progressively, advancing in sanctification until he reaches full and perfect maturity.

One of the principal qualities of a living body is the union and solidarity of its parts. In the human body, each member or organ profits from the activity of the others. The heart could not make the blood circulate if the blood were not renewed by the respiration of the lungs; and respiration itself would be impossible if the heart stopped beating. If one organ functions well, the others, well nourished in their turn, exercise their functions all the better; but if, on the contrary, one member or organ is sick, all the others are affected.

In a moral body we find the same phenomenon verified. Let one member of a family disgrace himself, and the whole family is shamed. On the other hand, a family is overjoyed when one of its own covers himself with glory. This solidarity is straighter in the mystical body of Christ than anywhere else. The communion of saints is a mysterious community of life and of interests in virtue of which whatever one member of the Church has and does reflects on all the others.

The principal part of this mysterious communion is the divine intercourse between God and souls through Christ. The Blessed Trinity is the source of all supernatural life, which, like a stream of living water, descends through Christ to all the blessed in heaven, to the souls in purgatory, and to all Christians on earth, making its influence felt even in unbelievers. Then this stream of divine life reascends toward Christ and the Blessed Trinity in the form of prayer, merit, adoration, and thanksgiving.

From the point of view of expiation as well, the sins we have committed have been transferred to our Savior’s head, and the full value of His merits has become our property. Each time a sin is pardoned us or a grace is accorded to us, it is done in virtue of our communion with the Saint of saints.

The members have communion with one another, too: they share one another’s goods. The saints in heaven intercede for us, and through our veneration receive an accidental glory that is like an added ray in their aureole. We gain indulgences, have Masses said, and offer sacrifices for the souls in purgatory; in return we shall be rewarded for our charity. The deceased father and mother are helped by their children still living in the world, and the Lord blesses this assistance. Lastly, all the members of the Church militant who journey toward eternity together can be of help to one another. The virtues and prayers of one draws the divine mercy upon the other—the tears of a St. Monica obtain the conversion of a St. Augustine.

It must also be recognized that the crimes of the wicked sometimes bring down the effects of divine vengeance upon the just. An atheistic school prevents a child's mind from opening up to the things of God, provides him with the means of becoming perverted, makes vice easy and virtue difficult for him. For the impiety that promotes and results from such conditions, reparation must be made.

Besides, evil is not found merely in the enemies of the Church; it seeks to penetrate within. The Church is not only, as certain heretics have believed, a spiritual society of predestined just; it includes sinners even among its ministers. Their sins and the sins of the faithful mar the external features of the Spouse of Christ, as St. Catherine of Siena was told, but the light and grace the Church gives are nonetheless divine for all that. "For the evil of My ministers can neither spoil nor defile My blood nor lessen its grace and virtue." "And since the mystery of the sacrament cannot be diminished or divided by their sins, the reverence due to the treasure of My blood, and not to them personally, should not be less because of them." However, it remains true, as our Lord said to the Virgin of Siena: "I have laid upon you the charge of working for the salvation of your soul and the souls of your neighbors in the mystical body of Holy Church, by example, by doctrine, by continual prayer. . . . Cease not to cast up before Me the incense of prayer for the salvation of souls, for I would have mercy on the world. With your prayers and sweat and tears will I wash the face of My spouse, Holy Church."

The Lord permits evil, as St. Augustine says, only because He is powerful enough and good enough to draw a greater good from it; so manifesting both His mercy and His justice and showing the indefeasible rights of the Sovereign Good to be loved above all things.

Good can exist in this life only in a state of conflict, and that is why the Church on earth is called "militant"; for she must fight without ceasing against the maxims of the world and the spirit of evil. But she has the promises of eternal life, and, if at times she must say harsh things to her children, they ought to answer her as Peter answered our Lord: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

We must conclude, then, that the sons of the Church cannot be united with one another unless they are united to their head. All coordination, St. Thomas says, presupposes a subordination to the very principle of order. Soldiers can have coordination only through subjection to their leader. In

the Church, despite diversity of peoples, institutions, and human interests, there must be sincere and profound unity of faith, of hope, charity, and supernatural obedience.

Consequently children of the Church ought to be united by the mutual observance of true justice and true charity, real virtues altogether different from the word-of-mouth variety which robs the sublime words of their true meaning. Justice and charity ought to be practiced particularly in regard to the suffering. We should heed the words of St. Paul: “Bear ye one another’s burdens; and so you shall fulfill the law of Christ. For if any man think himself to be something, whereas he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let everyone prove his own work. . . . For every one shall bear his own burden.” The two chief services one Christian can render another in this life, are prayer and reparation. When the Blessed Virgin appeared at Lourdes, she recommended that we “pray and do penance.”

When the good pray for the wicked, their prayer calls forth the pity and pardon of the Lord. If faithful Christians do penance, unfaithful Christians feel the good effects of it, and their offenses are more likely to be pardoned. Sometimes a just man is the savior of an impious man. Had there been ten just men in Sodom, Sodom would have been spared. Finally, not only can we pray and satisfy for our neighbor, but we can merit for him, too, if not in strict justice as our Savior did, at least with the merit of congruity founded on the bonds of charity uniting us to God and souls.

Why did Providence permit the terrible European war of some years back which stained almost a whole continent with blood just when its peoples were dreaming of universal peace? How can we escape seeing the chastisement of God in this? Why should there be such chastisement? Because the word from heaven, “Pray and do penance,” was not heeded. God punishes men through men. Why? Because Christians are often only half-Christians, the “practicing” are not virtuous, the good are not good enough, those consecrated to God are not really holy. More mortification and a return to the austerity of old, inspired by hatred of sin and love of God, would bring peace back to the world. In our own time the conversion of the good to a better life, is perhaps the most efficacious good to be accomplished; for, in the mystical body, supernatural life descends from above in order to reascend toward the Lord. Let the good join repentance of heart to prayer and action, then in virtue of the communion of saints they will save many others in saving themselves. To dam up the inflowing grace

that Christ wills to communicate to other souls through us would be a terrible misfortune.

Charity is “the bond of perfection” in the mystical body uniting members to their head and members with one another; this bond ought to keep on growing until in eternity the saints and the angels have become one and are, in a way, but one spirit with God. “But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.”

Such perfect union of mind and heart cannot be attained by regarding souls simply in the light of the senses or as deformed by prejudice; for, seen so, the diversity of temperaments, inclinations, characters, and human conceptions would revolt and disgust us. We need to realize that this diversity, when subordinated to a higher, supernatural, and truly divine principle, can contribute to the harmony and beauty of the whole.

We must see souls in the light of faith. Then, beneath a sometimes dull and rough exterior, we reach the supernatural being of souls—their nature, not as opposed to grace, but as capable of receiving it. And we end by discovering among their very real faults, the work of the Savior. Failing to see souls in this light, we will only too often keep in embittered hearts the memory of hard words said to us, sometimes even when they have been taken back by contrition and confession.

When we see souls in the light of faith, we cannot help but love them and try to contribute to their sanctification. Let us remember our Lord’s prayer: “That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee. . . . And the glory which Thou hast given Me, I have given to them; that they may be one, as We also are one.” Let us see one another in this light. Then divisions will begin to disappear. The heart will grow large with active, not merely verbal, charity. Justice according to the spirit rather than the letter of the law will be established, real and simple obedience, equally alien to servility and insubordination. This is more than the keeping of the law; it is true equity, wholly penetrated with the spirit of Christ.

We should think of the great doctrine of the mystical body of our Lord while assisting at Mass, in which the sacrifice of the cross is perpetuated on the altar. Communion ought to be a participation in this sacrifice; by it our Lord desires to make our hearts like to His own heart of priest and victim; in continuing to offer Himself, He offers His mystical body, particularly those souls that pray and suffer supernaturally somewhat as He suffered.

St. Paul could say: “Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you and fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, in my flesh for His body, which is the Church.” So, in a sense, in the mystical body, Christ is in agony until the end of the world. From this point of view, as stated many times by St. Paul, contemplation on the redeeming Passion and suffering supernaturally borne are as necessary for the mystical body as the light of the sun is for our bodily eyes.

Unfortunately, great sufferings, which could become purifying, only too often merely crush and exasperate souls not open to the light that would reach them from the crucifix and the tabernacle, if they would but pray and persevere in prayer. God’s providence sends afflictions not only to individuals, but to groups of men, that they may come to know themselves better, to find out by experience their own limitations, to discover and correct their faults, to aspire to a higher good, and to enlist a more perfect help in reaching that end.

We sometimes believe a conflict of duty exists between subordinate obligations when opposing human passions have really upset their perfect balance. To see their subordination, we must purify our hearts by prayer and love of God and neighbor; we must silence pride and listen to our Savior; we must be as kind and understanding with others as we need them to be with us. The gift of understanding will then illuminate our understanding, and we shall grasp in apparently complex and difficult cases the true meaning of our obligations, the right way to our last end or salvation. We shall discover how all truth and all human justice are subordinated to the “one thing necessary,” the thing we must seek above all others. Calmly, as Christians, we can then recall that, if we have a family and an earthly country to love and defend, we are also members of a great spiritual family founded by Christ, the mystical body of the Savior. We Christians belong to that Church which combats the spirit of guile and iniquity in this life, which suffers in purgatory, and which in heaven, our true homeland, is intimately associated with the life of God, with His infallible knowledge, sovereignly luminous with total and infinite Truth, in His immutable love of the unmixed Good, and with His eternal happiness that no disorder can trouble or decrease. Under the guidance of the Good Shepherd, who incorporates us with Himself, who assimilates us to Himself by giving us life, let us push on toward our true country, which is His and ours, too, since the life of grace is eternal life already begun.

Having spoken of God's love for us and the return He expects from us, of the love of God and the mystery of the cross in our Lord, and lastly, of the love of God and the mystical body of Christ, we are now about to consider our progress in love. The Christian grows in love by self-imposed mortification, by meritorious acts, by Holy Communion, by the crosses sent to purify senses and spirit and to make him work with and like Christ and His Blessed Mother, for his neighbor's salvation.

The doctrine as developed by St. Thomas and St. John of the Cross is what we shall follow. With the latter we shall see, as we have indicated in another work, that "the passive purification of the senses is common, and occurs in the greater number of beginners" in order to lead them into the illuminative way. We shall also see that the proficient or advanced find themselves in "the way of illumination or of infused contemplation wherewith God Himself feeds and nourishes the soul." As to the passive purification of the spirit, it is, as we shall show, the door to the perfect unitive way, which in turn is a prelude to the life of heaven.

PART II

THE LOVE OF GOD AND MORTIFICATION

CHAPTER VI

MORTIFICATION OR ACTIVE PURIFICATION

Spiritual progress, being especially progress in charity, ought to make us fulfill more and more perfectly the two great precepts of love of God and of neighbor, to which the other commandments and the three evangelical counsels are subordinated. In other words, we must make God some return for the love He has shown us in creating us, in preserving us, in having us participate in His intimate life, in increasing the life of grace in us that He may bring us to the life of eternity. Progress in charity is measured not by sensible consolations, which sometimes accompany devotion, but by two essential manifestations: a dying to sin and progressive configuration to Christ Jesus by imitation of His virtues.

Let us consider these two signs of spirtual advancement; and first, the dying to sin. Speaking to all of us, as St. Luke remarks, our Lord said: “If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me.” “Let him deny himself”: this is the law of mortification, which should be self-imposed. “Let him take up his cross”: this is the obligation to bear patiently the trials God Himself sends us to purify us and to make us work for the salvation of souls. To make it clear that renouncement is not an end, but a means, masters of the spiritual life often call mortification active purification because we impose it on ourselves, and the cross passive purification, because it is imposed on us. Both of these forms of purification we are about to discuss; the former, first.

ARTICLE I

PRACTICAL NATURALISM

Mortification and humility as permanently organized in the religious life through the practice of the three counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience, are things so contrary to the spirit of the world that it feels forced to deny their necessity. Practical naturalism keeps reappearing in one form or another, and it always makes little of mortification and the vows of religion, fancying that these vows are not means of deliverance for a man, but an obstacle to the good he ought to achieve. It questions why Christianity talks so much about mortification, if it is a doctrine of life; of renouncement, if its task is to assimilate rather than to destroy human activity; of obedience, if the gospel is a doctrine of liberty. Naturalism contends that these passive virtues have nothing but the force of inertia, and matter little except for negative souls incapable of positive activity.

It asks why we should depreciate our natural activity, reminds us that nature is good and comes from God, who has made it with a bent to love its Author more than itself and above all things. We are told to recall that our passions or emotions, that is, the different movements of our sensible appetite, such as desire and aversion, joy and sadness, are morally neither good nor evil; they become so only through the intention of our will when consenting to them, arousing them, controlling them, or failing to control them. The point is then made that we need not mortify the passions but only regulate them, as they are forces to be utilized, not destroyed. An appeal to the teaching of St. Thomas follows, noting how much he differs from many spiritual authors and in particular the author of The Imitation. That the expressions found in the latter's treatment of "the different motions of nature and of grace" are somewhat Jansenistic is delicately proposed.

To wage such war on our own judgment and will may make us a prey to scrupulosity, reduce us to a state of servitude, and rob us of all spontaneity. We should not condemn the life of the world, since Providence has placed us in the world, not to fight it but to make it better. The value of religious life can be measured by its social influence. That it may exercise this influence, it must not be hampered by excessive preoccupation with renouncement, mortification, humility, and obedience. On the contrary, it ought to permit the greatest possible development of the spirit of initiative and every natural aspiration. Only in this way can we understand the people of our own time and make contact with a world we should not despise but improve. This is the objection formulated by Americanism and repeated by

Modernism, a clever mixture of truth and falsity which invokes St. Thomas' authority for support.

St. Thomas does say that the emotions or movements of the sensible appetite, the passions as he calls them, are forces to be utilized and not destroyed. He also says we should regulate and not kill them. Nevertheless we must not forget that as soon as they are not well regulated by temperance, detachment, chastity, strength, patience, humility, meekness, justice, obedience, and the other virtues animated by charity, these passions become the roots of a host of faults and vices. Almost all the virtues, both the theological and the cardinal, as well as the others connected with them, must avoid two contrary vices. Now vices and their consequences ought not simply to be covered up or regulated or moderated; they must be rooted out. The virtue of penance inspires us to make reparation for our sins by mortification. St. Thomas has laid open to us, in the Secunda secundae of the Summa theologica, the whole field for mortification by his enumeration of the vices: the seven capital sins, progeny of the three concupiscences and parents each to six or seven offspring worse than themselves. St. Gregory describes the terrible progeny of the capital sins as numbering more than forty vices, which happily at least are not connected like the virtues; for, unlike the kingdom of good, the kingdom of evil can never be one since it has forsaken unity. The material for mortification is scattered but, sad to say, nowhere lacking, whatever amateurs may say of the "short and easy way" to go to God.

Frequently, too, practical naturalism repeats St. Thomas' principle: "Grace must not destroy but perfect nature." The motions of nature, it is added, are not as disordered as the author of The Imitation says; we must have the full development of nature under grace. When a man lacks the true spirit of faith, he misinterprets the very principle he invokes. St. Thomas as here quoted is speaking of nature in the metaphysical and not in the ascetical sense of the term; that is, of human nature as such, the nature of man as abstractly defined, in its essential goodness as a work of God. As such it certainly ought to be perfected and not destroyed by grace.

In this instance St. Thomas is not speaking of man's fallen and wounded nature deformed by that often unconscious egoism which alloys so many of our actions, human nature as really found in the concrete since the sin of Adam. And it is of just this nature, hurt by wounds so slow to heal even after baptism, that ascetical and mystical works like The Imitation speak.

And they are merely restating what St. Thomas himself taught about the results of original and personal sin. The disorder consequent upon sin ought certainly to be destroyed; and grace works for this destruction, for it not only lifts us up but also heals us, gratia sanans et elevans.

To a thoughtless young man who never left off invoking the principle, “Grace does not destroy nature,” a fine priest and teacher once answered: “Grace not only does not destroy nature, but reconstitutes and restores it by destroying the seeds of death in it; that done, grace perfects nature in proportion to the thoroughness of this salutary destruction, as the lives of the saints all show.” Only in the saints can we see what the “full development of nature under grace” means. To look elsewhere is to risk a misunderstanding that may end in perverting it completely, by destroying both nature and grace under the pretext of saving everything.

Because the equivocal use of the word “nature” provides the lukewarm and the mediocre with an escape, they are apt to keep and cherish it with swift and disastrous consequences. The tree is judged by its fruits. Because they have cared too much about the world, these new style apostles have not converted the world but have been converted by it. They begin by ignoring the consequences of original sin; holding, with the Pelegians and Jean Jacques Rousseau, that man is born good. Next, they forget the infinite gravity of mortal sin as an offense against God; and consider it only from the human, the external, point of view, by the evident evil it works in the present life. As a natural consequence they cannot appreciate at all the gravity of sins of the spirit: incredulity, presumption, pride, and the disorders resulting from these.

Likewise they disregard the infinite sublimity of our supernatural end. Instead of speaking of the beatific vision and the life of eternity, they indulge in talk about a vague moral ideal, tinged with religion, wherein the radical opposition between heaven and hell disappear. Finally, the writers to whom we refer have completely forgotten that our Lord chose the cross as the great means to save the world.

By its four principal consequences this doctrine plainly reveals its sources: practical naturalism or the practical negation of the supernatural, a principle that has at times been openly declared in this form, “Mortification is not essential to Christianity.”

ARTICLE II

THE NECESSITY OF MORTIFICATION

According to the teaching of St. Paul, all these more or less cleverly presented inventions clearly have no connection with the life and doctrine of our Lord and the saints. The work our Savior came to do on earth was not human philanthropy, but divine charity; He accomplished it by talking to men more about their duties than about their rights, by telling them they must wholly die to sin in order to receive new and abundant life; and He willed to prove His love for them by dying on the cross for their redemption. The saints have followed Him; they have all been marked by the likeness of Christ crucified; they have all loved mortification and the cross, whether they were saints of the primitive Church, like the first martyrs, or saints of the Middle Ages like St. Bernard, St. Dominic, and St. Francis of Assisi, or saints of more recent times like St. Benedict Joseph Labre and the holy Curé of Ars.

Our Lord was speaking to us all when He said: “If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: for he that shall lose his life for My sake shall save it. For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world and lose himself and cast away himself?” “Amen, amen, I say to you, unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, itself remaineth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world keepeth it unto life eternal.” Blessed are they who hate themselves in the sense in which the saints use that expression. Because they glorify God by hating that self within them which is compounded of egoism and pride and by loving their own souls holily, in and for God, they glorify Him on earth, and His glory will be their song for all eternity. God helps them in this work of dying that He may make them live with new and superabundant life, for He has said: “I am the true vine; and My Father is the husbandman. Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit, He will take away; and every one that beareth fruit, He will purge it, that it may bring forth more fruit.” This pruning is surely not done without suffering. The mortification and patience demanded in the Sermon on the Mount, as we shall see, go far in that direction.

St. Paul continues the teaching of the Master. He does not merely say, like pagan moralists, that man must restrain his passions. He says: “I

chastise my body and bring it into subjection; lest perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway." "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh. For these are contrary one to another; so that you do not the things that you would." "For I am delighted with the law of God, according to the inward man; but I see another law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind and captivating me in the law of sin that is in my members. Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" "And they that are Christ's have crucified their flesh, with the vices and concupiscences." Moreover, by the works of the flesh, St. Paul meant not simply immorality, licentiousness, but also, as he says in the same place: "enmities, contentions, emulations, wraths, quarrels, dissensions, sects." All of these are opposed to the fruits of the Spirit: "charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, longanimity, mildness, faith, modesty, continency." That the new man may live, the old man must indeed die. "This then I say and testify in the Lord: That henceforward you walk not as also the Gentiles. . . . You have not so learned Christ: if so be that you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, as the truth is in Jesus: to put off, according to former conversation, the old man, who is corrupted according to the desire of its error. And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and put on the new man, who according to God is created in justice and holiness of truth. . . . And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and anger and indignation and clamor and blasphemy be put away from you, with all malice. . . . Be ye therefore followers of God, as most dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us and hath delivered Himself for us, an oblation and a sacrifice to God for an odor of sweetness."

"Therefore, if you be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth. For you are dead; and your life is hid with Christ in God." "If you live according to the flesh, you shall die; but if by the Spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live. For whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

The law of mortification and the cross applies especially to apostles, who ought to follow our Lord Jesus Christ more closely that they may manifest Him to the world and save souls. This is why St. Paul writes: "We have this treasure [of divine light] in earthen vessels, that the excellency may be of

the power of God and not of us. In all things we suffer tribulation, but are not distressed. We are straitened, but are not destitute. We suffer persecution, but are snot forsaken. We are cast down, but we perish not. Always bearing about in our body the mortification of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodies. For we who live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal flesh. . . . For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man is corrupted, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For that which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory."

St. Paul's words, like his Master's, are a far cry from the practical naturalism we spoke of earlier; for to maintain that mortification is not of the essence of Christianity amounts to saying that Christianity does not teach us to die to sin and its consequences, that the virtue of penance is unnecessary for Christians. The preaching of the Precursor and all that St. Paul wrote about putting off the old man and putting on the new have no place in such teaching and have to be passed over or suppressed.

ARTICLE III

PRINCIPLES OF ST. THOMAS AND ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS CONCERNING NECESSARY PURIFICATION

Later, with St. Thomas, we shall study the four great reasons why mortification and the cross are imposed on us; let it suffice us for the moment to recall as a fundamental principle the specific difference he pointed out between Christian or infused temperance, as described in the Gospel and St. Paul, and acquired temperance, as described by Aristotle and the great pagan moralists.

He thus expresses himself: "Any change introduced into the difference expressed in a definition involves a difference of species. But the definition of infused virtue contains the words, "which God works in us without us." Therefore acquired virtue, to which these words cannot apply, is not the same species as infused virtue.

There is a twofold specific difference among habits. The first is taken from the specific and formal aspects of their objects. Now the object of every virtue is a good considered as in that virtue's proper matter: thus the object of temperance is a good in respect of the pleasures connected with

the concupiscence of touch. The formal aspect of this object is from reason which fixes the mean in these concupiscences . . . Now it is evident that the mean that is appointed in such concupiscences according to the rule of human reason, is seen under a different aspect from the mean which is fixed according to the divine rule. For instance, in the consumption of food, the mean fixed by human reason is that food should not harm the health of the body nor hinder the use of reason: whereas, according to the divine rule, it behooves man to chastise his body and bring it into subjection (I Cor. 9: 27), by abstinence in the matter of food and drink and the like. It is therefore evident that infused and acquired temperance differ in species; and the same applies to the other virtues.

The other specific difference among habits is taken from the things to which they are directed: a man's health and a horse's are not of the same species, on account of the difference between the natures to which their respective healths are directed. In the same sense, the Philosopher says (Polit., Bk. III) that citizens have diverse virtues according as they are well directed to diverse forms of government. In the same way, too, those infused moral virtues, whereby men behave well in respect of their being fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God (Eph. 2: 19) differ from the acquired virtues, whereby man behaves well in respect of human affairs.

Infused or Christian temperance and the acquired temperance described by Aristotle are virtues of different orders. The Christian virtue, under the direction of faith and the inspiration of charity and penance, requires mortification that acquired temperance does not demand. Ruled by the principles of natural reason, the acquired moral virtues could go on increasing indefinitely without ever attaining the dignity of the correlative infused moral virtues; for the latter have an essentially supernatural object, inaccessible to the natural powers of man or angel; they are ruled by principles essentially supernatural, and thus, in proportion to their formal objects which specify them, they are directly conformed to participation in the divine nature, that is, sanctifying grace as received at baptism. The infused moral virtues do not belong to the natural order, whether human or angelic, but to the supernatural order of the inner life of God. Hence infused temperance, and the virtues annexed to it, are ruled by faith and infused prudence, under the inspiration of charity and penance. This we know from the Church's doctrines on original sin and the gravity and consequences of

mortal sin, as well as other teachings of the Church, all of which can come to us only through divine revelation, since they are above the natural grasp of even the angelic intellects.

Lastly, let us remark that, according to St. Thomas, the infused moral virtues ought to keep growing, to climb toward the summit of perfection, without deviating toward their contrary vices on the right or the left; they are something besides and above the social virtues of a good citizen. They progressively merit the name of purifying (purgatoriae) virtues or virtues of the purified soul (virtutes purgati animi). We recall how St. Thomas describes the purifying virtues: “Some are virtues of men who are on their way and tending toward the divine similitude; and these are called perfecting virtues. Thus prudence, by contemplating the things of God, counts as nothing all things of the world, and directs all the thoughts of the soul to God alone; temperance, so far as nature allows, neglects the needs of the body; fortitude prevents the soul from being afraid of neglecting the body and rising to heavenly things; and justice consists in the soul’s giving wholehearted consent to follow the way thus proposed. Besides these, there are the virtues of those who have already attained to the divine similitude: these are called the perfect virtues. Thus prudence sees nothing but the things of God; temperance knows no earthly desire; fortitude has no knowledge of passion; and justice, by imitating the divine mind, is united thereto by an everlasting covenant. Such are the virtues attributed to the blessed, or in this life to some who are at the summit of perfection.”

According to St. Thomas’ teaching, every Christian should become an interior soul and attain to the truly solid, purifying virtues which, with actual grace, are capable of resisting the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil. But these purifying virtues, as St. Thomas has just described them, are conceivable only in a spiritual organism animated by an already high degree of charity and they must be accompanied by the corresponding gifts of the Holy Ghost, under the direction of the gift of wisdom. Therefore even people in the active life should aspire to complete development of the spiritual organism; they ought to tend toward perfection not only by the moral virtues, but by the theological virtues and the gifts. Although evidently not called to the life of a Carthusian or a Carmelite, they ought to remember, as St. Thomas says, that the active life disposes us for the contemplative life, that it precedes the contemplative life “as that which is common to all precedes in the order of generation that which is proper to

the perfect." The contemplative life belongs properly to the perfect because, as the holy doctor says, "it is directed to the love of God not of any degree but to that which is perfect." By its radiation, love becomes the veritable soul of the aspostolate.

Moreover, many Christian souls ought to unite the life of Martha with Mary's in the mixed life. Our Lord willed His apostles to have this type of life. In itself it is higher than either the active or the purely contemplative life. If our own hearts are not purified, if we ourselves are not closely united to God, we cannot snatch souls from evil, make them love Christ more than themselves, and lead them successfully to the works of salvation.

If a truly perfect life requires the full development of the spiritual organism by the virtues and the gifts connected with charity, a profound purification is needed to reach such a development. To obtain a clear idea of this truth, we need only recall that, in our advance toward the summit of perfection, often we deviate from the right path, and we then try to make good our error in one direction by going as far wrong in the other. Without exterior and interior mortification and the testing of purification, we cannot keep to the ascending course traced by the Lord between negligence and oversolicitude, imprudence and cunning, cowardice and rashness, softness and stubbornness, timidity and pride, discouragement and presumption, self-depreciation and bragging, obedience and servility, inept indulgence and excessive harshness.

We find divergence from the right path easy because of secret pride, of subtle self-love worming its way into the apparent practice of the highest virtues. Therefore, at the beginning of the Ascent of Carmel, St. John of the Cross described a symbolic mount at the base of which the soul finds three paths which seem to lead to the summit; although in reality only one path does so. In the center the narrow way of perfection plunges steeply upward. It begins with total abnegation. At the entrance we read: "Nothing, nothing, nothing," and a little farther on: "Since I desire nothing out of self-love, everything is given to me without my seeking it."

The misguided spirit may take the way of the good things of the earth, where it is written: "The more I seek, the less I find; I cannot climb the mountain because I have lost my way." Whoever takes this route must ultimately make this admission.

The imperfect spirit chooses a third way—wishing to reach the goods of heaven without too much trouble and stopping to delight in first

consolations or even in the exercise of the apostolate. Over this road we read: “I have dallied and so have not gone far or high, for I did not take the narrow path.” To arrive at the summit of perfect union with God, we must take the narrow path of mortification and of the purification of the senses and the spirit: “How narrow is the gate and strait is the way that leadeth to life!” But the route that is so narrow at the beginning widens out more and more in the sketch made by St. John of the Cross. He shows that it leads to the four cardinal virtues, to the virtues of the purified soul, then to the seven gifts, to the perfect theological virtues, to the twelve fruits of the Holy Ghost, and finally to the very summit of the mount where we read: “Divine silence, divine wisdom, unending banquet; the glory and honor of God live alone on this mountain.” This is truly, as the Psalmist declares, “a mountain in which God is well pleased to dwell” and to which He calls His friends.

CHAPTER VII

MORTIFICATION AND THE RESULTS OF ORIGINAL SIN

Mortification is not, as naturalism would have us believe, the destruction of nature, but the restoration or healing of nature through the destruction of sin and its consequences. It entails surgery, but only to extirpate the seeds of corruption and to restore health. It can be defined as “death to sin,” which is, in reality, death to death or increasingly perfect life, holy and pure and unalterably united to God. An integral definition would put it: Mortification is the destruction of sin and its consequences, the renouncement of things licit but not useful for us, so that preoccupation with them may not absorb us to the detriment of divine union. Being ordered to the spiritual edification of Christians, this destruction is necessary for all; for everyone, each according to his condition, ought to tend toward the perfection of charity in virtue of the first commandment: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with all thy strength and with all thy mind.” And if all cannot actually practice the three counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience, all ought to have the spirit of these counsels, the spirit of detachment, that they may die more and more completely to the three concupiscences and fulfill more and more perfectly the one great commandment.

Mortification as here defined has nothing in common with the misrepresentation of it given by naturalism, with a view to denying its necessity. It is a far cry, too, from what the Jansenists made of it, for their proud austerity did not enlarge the heart but narrowed it. They forgot the words of the divine Master: “But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head and wash thy face, that thou appear not to men to fast, but to the Father who is in secret. And thy Father who seeth in secret will repay thee.”

Mortification is called active purification, for we impose it upon ourselves in conformity with what Christ “said to all,” as St. Luke relates: “If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself.” What our Lord immediately adds: “and take up his cross daily and follow Me,” refers to whatever passive purifications God imposes on us, as He laid the cross upon our Savior. God Himself comes, in fact, to bring the work of active purification to deep and full completion, if we will but permit Him, so that we may attain to perfect purity and be associated in the great mystery of redemption through suffering. “The Lord killeth and maketh alive; He bringeth down to hell and bringeth back again. . . . He humbleth and He exalteth, . . . lifteth up the poor from the dunghill: that he may sit with princes, and hold the throne of glory.” These words of the Canticle of Anna come back to lasting life in the Magnificat.

Mortification is, then, necessary for the soul to be delivered from sin and its consequences, that it may “die to sin” and cleave more purely and firmly to God by imitating Christ Jesus. These two big reasons can be expressed more concretely by being divided as follows: Mortification is necessary (1) to destroy the consequences of original sin in us, (2) to do away with the results of our own personal sins, (3) to subordinate our natural activity perfectly to the life of grace, never losing sight of the infinite sublimity of our supernatural end, (4) to imitate Christ crucified and be associated with Him in the work of redemption.

In the following article we shall speak of the first reason. We shall see the consequences, the wounds of original sin that continue to exist in the baptized. We shall examine the nature of these wounds and learn how they are treated and gradually healed.

ARTICLE I

THE RESULTS OF ORIGINAL SIN IN THE BAPTIZED

In this matter we must avoid the pessimism of the Protestants and the Jansenists, who maintain that our will has been destroyed by original sin and unrestored by grace. We must be equally careful not to fall into the unrealistic optimism of those who, partly forgetting about the fomes peccati, seem to believe that the state of fallen man is in no way inferior to a

purely natural state and that baptism delivers us from every disorder resulting from original sin.

Baptism certainly produces two inestimable effects: sanctifying grace and the baptismal character; and the “good of grace in one [little child] is greater than the good of nature in the whole universe.” It has more value than all the angelic natures taken together, because it belongs to an infinitely higher and strictly divine order, and makes us temples of the indwelling Trinity. Baptism incorporates us into Christ, illuminates our intellect by faith, converts our will to God by hope and charity, opens the gates of heaven to us, and remits all the punishment due to our sins.

However, baptism does not take away the penalties of the present life: sorrow, concupiscence and death, the remains of original sin in human nature. St. Thomas says that “this is suitable for our spiritual training; namely, in order that, by fighting against concupiscence and other defects to which he is subject, man may receive the crown of victory.” “Concupiscence,” he adds, “is diminished by baptism”; it is not destroyed.

This doctrine is thus defined by the Council of Trent: “In the one baptized there remains concupiscence or an inclination to sin, which, since it is left for us to wrestle with, cannot injure those who do not acquiesce but resist manfully by the grace of Jesus Christ; indeed, he who shall have striven lawfully shall be crowned. This concupiscence, which the Apostle sometimes calls sin (Rom. 6: 12 ff.), the holy council declares the Catholic Church has never understood to be called sin in the sense that it is truly and properly sin in those born again, but in the sense that it is of sin and inclines to sin.”

The wound of concupiscence that results from original sin, begins to mend with baptismal grace but is long in healing. It is by no means the only wound. There are three others, as St. Thomas explains.

As a result of original justice, the reason had perfect hold over the lower parts of the soul, while reason itself was perfected by God and was subject to Him. Now this same original justice was forfeited through the sin of our first parents, as already stated; so that all the powers of the soul are left, as it were, destitute of their proper order, whereby they are naturally directed to virtue; which destitution is called a wounding of nature.

Again, there are four of the soul’s powers that can be the subject of virtue, namely, the reason, where prudence resides, the will where justice is, the irascible, the subject of fortitude, and the concupiscible, the subject of

temperance. Hence so far as the reason is deprived of its order to the true, there is the wound of ignorance; so far as the will is deprived of its order to the good, there is the wound of malice; so far as the irascible is deprived of its order to the delectable, moderated by reason, there is the wound of concupiscence.

Accordingly these are the four wounds inflicted on the whole of human nature as a result of our first parents' sin. But since the inclination to the good virtue is diminished in each individual on account of actual sin, . . . these four wounds are also the result of other sins, so far as through sin the reason is obscured, especially in practical matters, the will hardened to evil, good actions become more difficult, and concupiscence more impetuous.

The four wounds caused by original sin and aggravated by our personal sins may be listed as follows:

Wounds of the soul the higher faculties in the will: the wound of malice
or the inclination to evil, egoism
in the intellect: the wound of ignorance, whence come imprudence, blindness
the lower faculties in the irascible appetite: the wound of weakness, whence come pusillanimity, sloth
in the concupiscible appetite: the wound of concupiscence, whence come lust, gluttony

According to St. Thomas, original sin, initially in the essence of the soul as a privation of the grace of original justice, first infects the will, which should be subject to God, and then the other powers that should be subject to right reason. Sin, found first in the rebel will, afterwards extends its ravages to the other faculties.

St. Thomas examines the question whether the three wounds of malice, ignorance, and weakness, like concupiscence, remain in the baptized, or whether they are immediately healed by baptismal grace. When considering grace and the infused virtues that are the effects of baptism, he says: "Difficulty in doing good and proneness to evil are in the baptized, not through their lacking the habits of the virtues, but through concupiscence, which is not taken away in baptism. But just as concupiscence is diminished, that it may not enslave us, so are difficulty in doing good and proneness to evil, that man may not be overcome by them." Evidently as much must be admitted in regard to our ignorance about the moral direction

of our lives. The four wounds are in process of healing in the baptized, but they are not cured by baptism.

We sum up. The wound in the will, an inclination to evil, is the source of self-love, often of gross unconscious egoism, pride, envy, and avarice; the wound in the intellect, ignorance, is the principle of imprudence in all its forms—thoughtlessness, foolhardiness, and blindness of mind in regard to higher things; the wound in the irascible appetite, weakness, is the principle of faintheartedness, cowardice, sloth, human respect or worldly fear, and discouragement; and concupiscence, the wound of the concupiscible appetite, is the principle of lust and the different forms of intemperance.

ARTICLE II

THE NATURE OF THE WOUNDS RESULTING FROM ORIGINAL SIN

All theologians admit that repeated personal sins gradually weaken our natural inclination to virtue, for an inclination to evil weakens an inclination to good. The question naturally arises whether the wounds resulting from original sin also weaken man's natural inclination to virtue.

Many theologians have thought that the wounds of original sin do not weaken our natural inclination to virtue, that they are only a privation of the gratuitous gift of original justice, which, by elevating man to supernatural life, raised his nature to a state of integrity or of perfection. It would follow that man in his fallen state is no less able to do good than he would have been in a merely natural state, called a state of pure nature, in which God could have created him, without giving him sanctifying grace, or integrity, or natural perfection.

Most Thomists disagree with this opinion, believing that man in the state of fallen and unrestored nature, has less strength to do natural moral good than he would have had in a purely natural state. Almost all the great commentators on St. Thomas hold this view.

They base their opinion principally on the fact that in the state of fallen nature man is born with a will turned away from God by original sin, aversa a Deo; whereas, in a merely natural state or the state of pure nature, he would have been born with a will that could either be directed toward God or could prefer a created good to Him, but which would not be turned away from Him. Original sin certainly turns the will away from God as our

ultimate supernatural end, and indirectly also from God as our ultimate natural end, for every sin against our final supernatural end is, indirectly, a sin against the natural law, which ordains that we obey God in whatever He commands. Since the will sets all the other faculties in action, if it turns from God toward evil, all the other faculties will suffer too, for they will not possess fully the inclination to virtue that would be theirs in a purely natural state.

That this doctrine is undoubtedly St. Thomas' very own we can conclude from what he teaches on the necessity of grace both to love God, the author of our nature, above all things and to keep the natural law. The holy doctor first says that "man, by his natural powers alone, can love God more than himself and above all things." Then, after recalling the principle that every creature is naturally inclined to love God, as the author of its nature, more than itself, he adds that in the state of corrupt nature man cannot do so. As a result of the corruption of his nature, his will, unless healed by the grace of God, will tend toward its own private good. Against this egoism we must be ever at war.

For the same reason man in the state of fallen nature cannot keep the whole natural law. Fallen nature gets back to its normal state only by habitual grace which has the function of healing (gratia sanans), as well as of restoring it to supernatural life (gratia elevans).

In many other places St. Thomas speaks in the same way, notably when he describes the wounds resulting from original sin. They are not merely the privation of a gratuitous gift: "Malice is not to be taken here as a sin, but as a certain proneness to evil, according to the words of Gen. 8: 21: 'Man's senses are prone to evil from his youth.' " The wound that Venerable Bede calls "weakness" is opposed to the virtue of fortitude. Likewise the one called "concupiscence" is not concupiscence in so far as it is natural to man "but in so far as it goes beyond the bounds of reason."

This is plainly a question not only of the wounds caused by our personal sins, but also of those that come from original sin and continue to exist even after baptism, although they are then in process of healing. St. Thomas speaks in the same way in other places in his works. He even sees in the disorder of concupiscence and the weakness for good which we find in humanity a rather probable sign of original sin.

This doctrine seems to echo both the Gospels and the Epistles of St. Paul, where the Apostle treats the question of the "old man" and the necessity of

“putting on the new man.” We meet it again in the well known pages of The Imitation of Christ where the author treats “Of the Different Motions of Nature and Grace” and “Of the Corruption of Nature and of the Efficacy of Grace.”

The saints, enlightened by the gift of knowledge in regard to human misery, generally speak thus. And the same is true not only of those who, like St. Augustine, have written against the Pelagians and other deniers of original sin, but even of those who, like St. Alphonsus Liguori, have combated seventeenth-century Jansenism. St. Alphonsus expressly says: “In man’s present state, concupiscence impels more strongly to sin than it would have done in the state of perfect nature.”- “In the state of fallen nature the miseries of man are much graver than they would have been in the state of perfect nature.”

The natural sense of certain passages of the Church’s official teaching seems to come to the same thing. To verify this we have only to examine what is said about the wounds of our fallen nature. The enfeeblement and attenuation, though not the ruin, of the will, the fomes peccati, and finally the condemnations of naturalism and its different forms, nationalism and liberalism.

Naturalism itself gives confirmation to this view by feeling impelled to deny the existence of the wounds of original sin, as well as the reason for mortification and the spirit of sacrifice.

ARTICLE III

THE GRADUAL HEALING OF THE WOUNDS OF ORIGINAL SIN

Our healing begins with baptism, which lessens our concupiscence, proneness to evil, and weakness for good. But this healing is never quite complete in this world. As the Council of Trent says, in quoting St. Paul: “ ‘Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall’ (I Cor. 10: 12). You must ‘work out your salvation with fear and trembling’ (Phil. 2: 12), in labor, in watching, in almsgiving, in prayer and oblations, in fasting and in chastity. You must have a holy fear, knowing well that, regenerated in the hope but not in the possession of glory, the battle is against the world, the flesh, and the devil; and victory is possible only by conforming to the grace of God, according to the words of St. Paul: ‘If you live according to

the flesh you will die; but if by the spirit you put to death the deeds of the flesh, you will live.' " (Rom. 8: 13.) Our healing will near its completion in this life only after earnest mortification, accompanied by the passive purifications of the senses and the spirit. In other words, as the lives of the saints show, it will come about only in the unitive way.

To reach that, we must put into practice what St. Paul says: "Therefore, if you be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth. For you are dead; and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ shall appear, who is your life, then you also shall appear with Him in glory. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness . . . anger, indignation. . . . Lie not one to another; stripping yourselves of the old man with his deeds, and putting on the new, him who is being renewed unto knowledge according to the image of Him that created him. . . . Put ye on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, the bowels of mercy, benignity, humility, modesty, patience: bearing with one another and forgiving one another. . . . But above all these things have charity, which is the bond of perfection." In the same spirit, the great Apostle invites the Ephesians to "put on the new man, who according to God is created in justice and holiness of truth."

Now we can see how the infused moral virtues are of an infinitely higher order than the acquired moral virtues as described by the great pagan moralists. We can conceive, too, what they must become in a purified soul, virtutes purgati animi. And we have an explanation why the threefold concupiscence of the eyes, of the flesh, and of pride finds a perfect remedy only in the three evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience; and why every Christian ought to have the spirit of the counsels, even though the circumstances of his life do not allow him to practice them effectively. Lastly, we understand the true greatness of the great commandment: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with all thy strength and with all thy mind." And we are no longer astonished at the words of St. Augustine: "Two loves have built two cities: the love of self unto contempt of God, has built an earthly city; the love of God unto contempt of self, the City of God." Contempt of self is contempt for the seeds of death existing in us, contempt for all that can separate us from God and our neighbor; it is love of self as we ought to love ourselves in order to glorify God. To destroy our egoism and all its

mean little ways, we ought to love ourselves in an incomparably higher and deeper fashion, we ought to love ourselves for God, desiring to see Him as He sees Himself that we may give Him eternal glory. Then the perfect victory of Christ over sin and death will be realized in us. Our wounds will really heal. And supernatural life will so penetrate, elevate, and fortify our whole being as to fix the kingdom of God in us firmly, fully, and forever.

CHAPTER VIII

MORTIFICATION AND THE RESULTS OF PERSONAL SIN

We have seen how necessary mortification is because of the results of original sin that continue to exist in the baptized: concupiscence, proneness to evil and error, and weakness for good. Mortification is no less necessary because of the results of our personal sins; and from this point of view it proceeds especially from the virtue of penance. This virtue, under the higher inspiration of the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity, makes temperance, particularly chastity, and fortitude and patience as well, serve to destroy sin and its residual disorders. If penance belongs to the essence of Christian life, as much must be said of mortification.

As a matter of fact, we must not forget that penance is a special virtue, with its own proper acts. If each virtue formally excludes its contrary vice, as white excludes black, penance has for its special end to work effectively for the destruction of sin, of all sin, so far as it is an offense against God that can be remitted by grace together with the cooperation of man.

For a good understanding of this, we shall consider the three chief effects of penance: (1) the remission of sin, whether mortal or venial; (2) the remission of the punishment due to sin (reatus poenae); (3) the destruction of the remains or marks of sin (reliquiae peccati) and the struggle against temptation.

ARTICLE I

THE REMISSION OF SIN

Remission of sin, St. Thomas teaches, is effected chiefly in virtue of the passion of our Savior through the sacrament of penance, and secondarily by

the acts of the penitent that appertain to the virtue of penance, that is, by the acts of contrition, confession, and satisfaction, which are the proximate matter of the sacrament of penance.

For a sin to be forgiven us, we must detest it for a supernatural motive. Perfect contrition, inspired by the very motive of charity or love of God above all things, remits mortal sin, even before the reception of the sacrament of penance, if we have at least an implicit desire to receive the sacrament. This implicit desire is contained in the will to accomplish all that is necessary for our salvation. Imperfect contrition, or attrition, is sorrow or detestation of sin which proceeds from a supernatural motive less than charity. This motive is either the vileness of mortal sin, as an injury done to God and an evil for the soul, or fear of losing eternal happiness, of being separated from the source of all good and drawing down upon ourselves the divine chastisement. Even in attrition, since it excludes the will to sin and implies hope of pardon, there is supernatural love of God, as the source of all justice. Alone this love does not suffice to justify us, but, united to sacramental absolution, it obtains the remission of mortal sins by the infinite merits of the passion of our Savior.

As to venial sins, they cannot be remitted without at least virtual regret for having committed them and the intention to avoid them in the future: not that in this world it is possible for us, without a special privilege, to avoid all venial sins all the time, but we can and we should avoid each in. particular, and their number should obviously diminish as we progress in charity. At least virtual regret for venial sins committed and a firm purpose to do whatever possible to avoid falling again are contained in any fervent act of love of God. The Our Father, the use of holy water and other sacramentals, dispose us to make fervent acts of charity and penance; so, a fortiori, do Holy Communion and the sacrament of extreme unction.

The imitation of Christ tells us that “through levity of heart and neglect of our defects we feel not the sorrows of the soul. . . . Happy the man who casteth away from him whatever may strain or burden his conscience. . . . Have always an eye upon thyself in the first place, and admonish thyself preferably to all thy dearest friends.” “As thine eye observeth others, so again thou art also observed by others. . . . Ever keep in mind thine end, that time lost returneth no more. . . . But if thou give thyself to fervor, thou shalt find great peace; and thou shalt feel thy labor light, through the grace of God, and for the love of virtue.”

ARTICLE II

MORTIFICATION AND THE REMISSION OF PUNISHMENT DUE TO SIN

The special virtue of penance does not merely bring us to detest sin as an offense against God but leads us on to make reparation for sin. To stop sinning is not enough. Satisfaction must be offered to divine justice, since every sin deserves punishment.

Mortal sin, when not remitted in this life, deserves eternal punishment because it works an irreparable moral disorder by turning us away from God, our sovereign good and last end. As long as it lasts, its punishment must last. When, on the contrary, mortal sin is remitted in this life and the sinner is converted, eternal punishment is also remitted; but often temporal punishment remains to be undergone. This is merited by sin, whether mortal or venial, so far as it is directed in an inordinate way toward a finite good. "Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that worketh evil. . . . But glory and honor and peace to everyone that worketh good."

There is a profound reason why every sin merits punishment, just as every act inspired by charity merits a reward. St. Thomas explains it to us in this way:

For we observe in natural things that when one contrary supervenes, the other acts with greater energy. . . . Wherefore we find that the natural inclination of man is to repress those who rise up against him. Now it is evident that all things contained in an order are, in a manner, one, in relation to the principle of that order. Consequently whatever rises up against an order is put down by that order or by the principle thereof. And because sin is an inordinate act, it is evident that whoever sins commits an offense against an order: wherefore he is put down, in consequence, by that same order, which repression is punishment.

Accordingly man can be punished with a threefold punishment corresponding to the three orders to which the human will is subject. In the first place a man's nature is subjected to the order of his own reason; secondly, it is subjected to the order of another man who governs him either in spiritual or in temporal matters, as a member either of the state or of the household; thirdly, it is subjected to the universal order of the divine government. Now each of these orders is disturbed by sin, for the sinner acts against his reason, and against human and divine law. Wherefore he

incurs a threefold punishment; one, inflicted by himself, namely, remorse of conscience; another, inflicted by man; and a third, inflicted by God.

Here we have the basis for the virtue of penance, and the reason why reparation or satisfaction for offenses committed against God are due Him in justice. Every sin merits punishment, whether voluntary or involuntary. The vindictive justice of a judge inflicts punishment on the guilty against his will to make the principles of the law respected. Penance is that part of justice which impels the guilty either to submit voluntarily to punishment or to impose on himself whatever punishment he has merited. Although unable to offer God reparation absolutely equal to his offense, he does offer a satisfaction proportionate to his own capacities. This derives its value from the love inspiring it and, even more than that, from the merits of Christ, the principle of our justification.

Sacramental absolution takes away sin, but a penance or satisfaction is imposed on us besides, that through it we may obtain remission of the temporal punishment which ordinarily remains to be undergone, even when the sin itself has been remitted. Satisfaction is part of the sacrament of penance, and in this capacity does its share to restore or to increase grace. By it the sinner pays in part at least the debt contracted with divine justice. For the same end he should also bear patiently the sufferings of life, and if his patience does not suffice to purify him entirely, he will have to pass through purgatory, for nothing defiled can enter heaven.

The dogma of purgatory serves as a strong confirmation of the necessity for mortification because it shows us that we must pay our debts either in this life while meriting, or after death without meriting. This fact makes the author of The Imitation say: “Didst thou also well ponder in thy heart the future pains of hell or purgatory, methinks thou wouldst bear willingly labor and sorrow, and fear no kind of austerity.” On the contrary, repentance full of love washes away both sin and punishment, like those happy tears Christ blessed by saying: “Wherefore I say to thee: Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much.”

For the adult who receives it properly, baptism remits both all his sins and all the punishment due to them, for the baptized receives at that moment everything that should be produced in him by the power of the Savior’s passion. By absolution, on the other hand, we receive the effect of the Passion according to the mode of our own proper acts, which are the matter of the sacrament of penance and so cooperate in our restoration; that

is why the remission of the punishment is complete only when the acts of penance, satisfaction included, are complete.

According to the fervor of his contrition, the justified penitent recovers a grace either higher than, or equal to, or less than the grace he lost. Merits lost by mortal sin revive according to the fervor of contrition. And the fervor of a penitent's contrition and first satisfaction alone can be such that all the temporal punishment due to sin is instantly remitted, sometimes together with all the remains of sin, as evidently happened in the conversion of Magdalen.

ARTICLE III

DESTRUCTION OF THE REMAINS OF SIN BY MORTIFICATION

Even after being remitted, sin generally leaves its traces in us, especially when, through repetition, it engenders a bad habit, a vice. Absolution does indeed wash away the sin and convert our will towards God, but we still have an inclination to fall again into a fault often committed. This inclination is no longer as strong as it was before contrition, but it continues to exist in some measure, just as the fomes peccati, the tinder for sin, although diminished by baptismal grace, remains in the baptized.

Daily experience shows that this is so. A man who has formed the habit of drunkenness, on being converted, receives through absolution the infused virtue of temperance, together with sanctifying grace; but he does not have the corresponding acquired virtue. On the contrary, he has as inclination to fall again into the sin so frequently committed. And he will fall into it again if he does not avoid its occasions and fails to have recourse to earnest mortification, to destroy the remains of sin now impregnating his temperament.

The same thing can be said of unresisted antipathies and aversions that have grown in our hearts; even after sincere repentance and absolution, they somehow stay with us, no longer as sins but as dispositions to fall again. These remains of sin must not be simply covered over, moderated, regulated; they must be put to death, mortified. Unless they are, they will so completely impregnate our whole being that profound and grievous passive purifications will be necessary to deliver us from them. Our temperaments come under our own fashioning influence. Even our faces, after thirty, are

our own creations so far as they reveal our self-sufficiency, presumption, pride, fatuity, or envy.

The remains of sin weaken us very much, leaving us languid, debilitated, and reluctant to try what virtue demands. Mortification must eradicate these evil roots and make our souls healthy, doing its part to win the recovery of all our spiritual energies.

ARTICLE IV

RESISTANCE TO TEMPTATION

We need to remember that we have to fight the results of sin and also temptations that come from the spirit of the world and the spirit of evil. “Put you on the armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the deceits of the devil. For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places. . . . Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth and having on the breastplate of justice: and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.”

We have enemies of wonderful powers, and the evil they can do is in proportion to their strength and greatness. Remembering Aristotle’s statement that a wicked man is worse than a wild beast, we may well wonder what to think of the devil. To resist him, we must have the armor of God, the virtues, “taking the shield of faith, wherewith you may be able to extinguish all the fiery darts of the most wicked one.” “Resist the devil; and he will fly from you.” On the contrary, the more we yield to him, the more he pursues us.

God permitted man, when in a state of innocence and living in divine familiarity, to be tempted by the devil, and it is true today that the devil always tempts more directly those who aspire to perfection and lead other souls there as well; for he has a keen interest in making them fall from their height. As for great sinners, he tempts them through the flesh and the world, having no need to seduce them by direct action.

Our Lord Himself willed to be tempted, after the days of fasting spent in the desert, that He might teach us to resist temptation and give us strength and confidence. And we see from this example that the devil does not

attempt to lead a spiritual man immediately into mortal sin, but tries to bring him by way of slight faults to grave sin.

He brought Adam and Eve to evil by the temptations of pride, curiosity, disobedience, and gluttony (cf. St. Thomas IIa IIae, q. 163, a. 1, c., and ad 1um, ad 2um): “Why hath God commanded you, that you should not eat of every tree of paradise? . . . No, you shall not die the death. For God doth know that in what day soever you shall eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened; and you shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil.”

In like manner he sought to seduce Christ by three successive temptations —desire for food after a long fast, vainglory or ostentation, and extreme pride: “If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. . . . If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down [from the pinnacle of the temple]. . . . All these things [the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them] will I give Thee, if falling down Thou wilt adore me.” Following the example of our Lord, let us answer with the words of God and without argument; then temptation will become an occasion for meritorious acts of faith, trust, and love of God. In such moments we are in the happy necessity of not being able to content ourselves with acts of imperfect virtue (remissi); we must have recourse to intense meritorious acts.

The principal works of satisfaction for resisting temptation and expiating our sins are generally and fittingly distinguished as these three: almsgiving, fasting, and prayer. Every satisfaction offered to divine justice ought, for the honor of God, to deprive us of some of the goods we have abused. Now there are three kinds of goods: (1) those of the soul, which are abused by pride and which ought to be atoned for by humble prayer that bows us down before God; (2) goods of the body, which are abused by concupiscence of the flesh and which ought to be expiated by fasting; (3) exterior goods, which are abused by concupiscence of the eyes and which ought to be expiated by almsgiving.

All other sins stem from the two concupiscences and pride, as from three roots; and all other works of satisfaction are reduced to the three we have just enumerated. Whatever afflicts the body, like the discipline and austerities of that kind, has the same reason for existence as fasting; watching ought to be consecrated to prayer, so as to become a true work of satisfaction; and all the works of mercy we do for our neighbor are like an almsgiving made to him.

When patiently borne, the trials of life are also, of course, a satisfaction, remitting the punishment due to sin, wiping away the traces sin leaves in us, and preserving us against temptation.

In the old religious orders, penance has an important place. Their religious, both men and women, must offer satisfaction to God not only for themselves, but for sinners who are unmindful of the necessity for reparation. All the saints have understood this truth, particularly the founders of orders, and they have never stopped reminding their children: “Mitigate the observance, and you mitigate the spirit; relaxation of rule infallibly leads to relaxation of thought and of life. God, who inspired the rule, will not bless its decadence.” The world today, ravaged by so many evils, has no less need of prayer and penance than it had in the first days of Christianity, as the Blessed Virgin reminded us when she appeared at Lourdes. Reparation offered, as it should be, in a spirit of love and adoration, becomes a sublime act proceeding from the three subordinate virtues of charity, religion, and penance. It renders God the glory that sin took from Him. And by it we become closely associated with Christ, our priest and our offering, in the work of redemption.

CHAPTER IX

TWO METHODS OF EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

As a practical application of the doctrine just developed concerning mortification, two methods of examination of conscience will now be proposed. Both serve to point out those things in us needing mortification and they show us also, in part at least, the obstacles we possess to divine union. Later we shall have to discuss the passive purifications of the senses and the spirit which act as a means of destroying obstacles to divine union and of configuring the fervent and generous Christian more and more to Christ crucified.

Examinations of conscience generally follow the order of the commandments and of our duties to God, to our neighbor, and in relation to ourselves. For growth in self-knowledge, it is useful sometimes to vary this examination and the questions comprising it. While remembering that whenever we look at self we should always keep our gaze on God, the exemplar of all virtue, we will find it helpful at times to examine ourselves in reference to the seven capital sins and the sins derived from them, and at other times, on the contrary, by considering the hierarchy of the virtues that constitute the different functions of our spiritual organism. It is important, too, for us not to neglect the relation between the interior life and external behavior.

ARTICLE I

AN EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE WITH REFERENCE TO THE SEVEN CAPITAL SINS

An examination of conscience concerning the capital sins and their consequences can easily be made by using the enumeration given by St.

Thomas following St. Gregory the Great. As organized under the following headings, the sins called capital because they are the head or principle of all the others reveal themselves as derived from the three concupiscences spoken of by St. John the Apostle. They are called capital not because they are the gravest of all sins but those toward which we are most inclined and which lead to estrangement from God and still graver wrongdoing. Vainglory, for example, leads to disobedience, hypocrisy, and animosity. And animosity is the principle of discord and obstinacy in heresy. No man reaches complete perversity all at once; he is led there step by step.

St. Thomas says that every sin originates in egoism. Inordinate love of self prevents us from loving God above all things and prompts us to turn away from Him. From inordinate self-love proceed the three concupiscences of the flesh, the eyes, and the pride of life. From the three concupiscences the capital sins, the principles of all the others, are derived.

This outline shows us how the capital sins are the principles of all other sins, and themselves spring from pride and concupiscence: pride turning us away from God, and con-

Inordinate self-love Pride in regard to self
Vainglory, from which arise disobedience, boastfulness, hypocrisy, contention, discord, eccentricity, and obstinacy. Vainglory has as a further consequence the following sin:

Sloth, a disgust for spiritual things and the work of sanctification. It is contrary to the love of God and gives birth to malice, spite, faintheartedness, despair, spiritual sluggishness, neglect of the commandments, and the seeking for unlawful things.

in regard to neighbor Envy, or sadness at another's good as though it subtracted from our own exaltation. From it come hatred, tale-bearing, detraction, joy at another's misfortune, and grief at his prosperity.

Anger, which is opposed to meekness and from which are born quarreling, swelling of the mind, contumely, clamor, and blasphemy.

Concupiscence of the eyes Covetousness, which is contrary to liberality and often to charity and justice as well, and from which are derived treachery, fraud, falsehood, perjury, restlessness, callousness, and violence.

of the flesh Gluttony, which engenders unseemly joy, scurrility (buffoonery), uncleanness, loquaciousness, and dullness of mind.

Lust, the contrary of chastity, from which proceed blindness of mind, thoughtlessness, rashness, inconstancy, self-love, hatred of God, and an attachment to the world destructive of any hope in a future life.

cupiscence inducing us to seek our highest happiness in earthly goods.

We see, too, the importance of humility, how it well merits being called the fundamental virtue because it checks pride. Pride is, in fact, the source of all other sins in the sense that the act of turning away from God found in every mortal sin appertains more directly to pride than to any other sin. Inordinate love of our own excellence makes us refuse submission and obedience to God.

A thoughtful reading of the preceding classification will reveal how vainglory can bring us by degrees to terrible falls, even to apostasy. It leads first to disobedience and boastfulness, then stoops to hypocrisy to hide its ugly inner core, turns then to contention and discord and, in matters of doctrine and religious practices, prompts us to eccentricity to the point of clinging obstinately to error and even to heresy.

Another consequence of vainglory is the capital vice of sloth, disgust for spiritual things and the work of sanctification. This sin goes directly contrary to the love of God and the holy joy resulting from love. When a man’s life no longer mounts towards God, it starts to go down the path away from Him; the man’s soul is weighed down with sadness, with a disgust for holy things. Not only weakness but malice may follow, showing itself in spite toward neighbor, faintheartedness before duty, slackness and sloth in spiritual matters. The same discouragement that leads the spiritual sluggard to neglect the commandments sets his mind hunting a refuge in forbidden things. By losing their footing on the slope of pride, vainglory, and sloth, many unfortunately have abandoned their vocation, forgotten the promises they made to God, and started down the way of damnation.

This kind of consideration of the sources of sin makes it possible for us to avoid two contrary faults in the examination of conscience. On one hand, we are forewarned against the carelessness of the quietists, who called examination of conscience useless, under the pretext that the heart of man is so inscrutable that he can know it only superficially. They even said, and this statement has been condemned, that “all reflection on self is harmful, even the examination of our sins,” and they added that it is a grace from God no longer to be able to reflect on our sins. The rejoinder to this statement is easy: precisely because the nature of our interior dispositions is

so difficult to know, we must examine them well and ask for divine light to discern whether they are as upright as we would have them be.

On the other hand, we thus avoid the meticulous searching for every least fault taken in its materiality, a search apt to lead to scrupulosity and sometimes to the neglect of really important things. Statistical compilation is beside the point here. To cure a skin eruption no doctor sets about counting every pimple on the surface of the skin. He looks for the source of the trouble and tries to remedy it. We do wisely not to neglect contemplating God lest we may spend too much time considering our own soul. We have no need to anticipate divine prevenient grace but only to follow it faithfully as duty requires.

Self-examination in the way just described, especially through considering the capital sins in relation to spiritual things, as St. John of the Cross does, helps the soul to discover its predominant fault, the source of its other failings. Some people are more prone to pride, others to spiritual sloth, others to sensuality, others to impatience or anger, or even to excessive natural activity insufficiently ordered to God, to fruitless agitation which makes them forget their last end, the one thing necessary: to love God above all things.

The people who live with us generally know our predominant fault well enough. Often it stands in their way as a hindrance to the common good. We ourselves should be able to recognize it and, if the superficiality of our self-examination prevents that, we should bear with having others call it to our attention.

ARTICLE II

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE WITH REFERENCE TO THE HIERARCHY OF THE VIRTUES

For us to know our predominant fault is not sufficient; it is expedient for us besides to examine ourselves in regard to our fidelity to the principal inspiration by which God draws us to Himself. In the order of salvation we can do nothing without grace. Our Lord says: “Without Me you can do nothing.” We must, therefore, be attentive to the divine inspiration given to us, whether in the broad sense, that is, in every prevenient actual grace, or by inspiration properly so called, as it proceeds from the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Not only must we be attentive to the inspiration of God but we must

ask to be more enlightened and more impelled by it that we may triumph over all attachment to sin and go ahead generously in the practice of virtue.

Just as every soul has a predominant fault, it has also a particular spiritual attraction, answering to the name God has given it from all eternity. In the parable of the good shepherd it is said that “he calleth his own sheep by name and leadeth them out.” In some souls the intellect naturally dominates; they receive special graces of enlightenment and, if they are faithful to these, they will also receive a greater and greater degree of the graces of fortitude to lead them to perfection. Others climb toward the mountain peak by another approach. They receive graces which lead them to spend themselves without calculation in the service of God; in them graces of enlightenment are hardly perceptible at first and become evident only later. Others, in whom memory and practical activity dominate, receive chiefly graces of fidelity to daily duty and can be led by that way to a very high degree of perfection, to a wonderful exercise of the theological virtues and the corresponding gifts. Each soul has, in the natural order, a particularly strong aptitude, which grace delights in perfecting that it may then enlighten and enliven abilities less strong. Some people are more attracted to prayer, others to austerities, still others to the apostolate in one form or another.

Certainly no special supernatural inclination need be resisted. It ought to grow stronger, serving as a means of making a man die to sin and attain to perfection. The action of grace ought not to destroy whatever is good in our personality but should perfect it by abnegation and the cross. So saints are made. “Be supernaturally yourselves minus your faults,” as an excellent director expressed it. Wisdom warns us not to imitate clumsily whatever is unsuitable for us. It is a wise David who sticks to his slingshot and lets Goliath wear the armor.

Frequent self-examination by the yardstick of the virtues will help us to attain to being ourselves minus our faults. The virtues are, as it were, the different functions of our spiritual organism. By considering them we understand better the things within us opposed to their perfection.

In the outline that follows, the hierarchical character of the virtues stand out. At the top is charity, the highest of the theological virtues. Directly beneath the theological virtues we find prudence, and under prudence the moral virtues, which it directs. Beside the virtues are their opposites, the

contrasting vices which, because of this contrast, show up more clearly in their ugly gravity.

We can picture the hierarchy of the virtues as the spiritual edifice of traditional symbolism. The necessary excavation made for its foundation represents humility. This must be dug not once and for all as in house building but worked at until the end of life, for the spiritual edifice is in fact a growing organism and the taller it gets the farther its roots must reach into the earth. The dome of this temple is supported by the twin columns of faith and hope. The keystone of its great value is love of God, charity, the highest virtue and life-giver of all the rest. Opening inward, two great doors swing on four great hinges or cardines, the four cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance. The wrought iron about these hinges is the annexed virtues. Justice is companioned by religion, penance, obedience, truthfulness; fortitude by magnanimity, patience, and perseverance; temperance by chastity, meekness, and humility. For each cardinal virtue there is a corresponding gift of the Holy Ghost, symbolized by a precious stone set in the door. And into the column of faith is fastened the sconce of the gift of understanding, and from the keystone of the vault swings the lamp of wisdom, illuminating the whole interior.

Virtues theological Charity towards God, and the gift of wisdom
towards neighbor, and mercy disgust for spiritual things
envy, discord, scandal Contrary Vices
Hope confidence, abandonment, and the gift of fear opposed to presumption presumption despair
Faith and the spirit of faith, and
the gifts of understanding and knowledge infidelity, blasphemy, blindness, culpable ignorance

cardinal Prudence, docility to good advice, and the gift of counsel imprudence and negligence, carnal prudence, craftiness
Justice and the annexed virtues of religion (gift of piety), of penance, of filial piety, of obedience, of gratitude, of
truthfulness, of fidelity, of
liberality injustice, impiety, superstition, hypocrisy, lying

Fortitude	and the gift of fortitude, with the annexed virtues of magnanimity, patience, and perseverance	foolhardiness, meanness, pusillanimity
Temperance	(sobriety and chastity) and the annexed virtues of meekness and humility	intemperance, lust, anger, pride, curiosity

The final important point to be made regarding methods of examination of conscience is that the relationship between the interior life and external behavior should not be neglected. Some directors have beginners pay a great deal of attention to their deportment at prayer, while assisting at Mass, when receiving the sacraments, in dealing with their superiors, their equals, and, as a matter of fact, in every situation. This is as it should be, but carried to excess such a method leads to a certain hypocrisy, to neglect of the interior life while keeping up appearances. Our Lord said: “When you fast, be not as the hypocrites, sad. For they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Amen I say to you, they have received their reward.”

Reacting against this excess, others do not give enough attention to external behavior and, as their souls are not united closely enough to God, their ways leave much to be desired. They wish to “skip a grade” and, through unconscious pride, do not take sufficiently into account those things that are useful or necessary for both beginners and proficients. Man, being composed of spirit and body, knows spiritual and interior things only in the mirror of sensible and exterior things, in speculo sensibilium. The latter, while remaining quite secondary, ought to be given their proper place in the scheme of things.

Here again truth rises like a mountain top above and between two contrary tendencies. It rests on the principle that the end sought, though first in the order of intention, comes last in the order of execution. A man putting up a building first sees its noble beauty as an idea in his own mind. Then he decides on whatever means are necessary to have it built, neglecting nothing and beginning with the meanest part of the work, for the foundations have to be laid. All the time, little by little, at every stage of the undertaking, he is pushing on to the realization of the end he desires to obtain. In the same way, a man who desires a doctorate must first follow a course of study in a graduate school, and before he can do even that he must register there.

The same can be said of man's approach to perfection. Although reached at the very last, the end of the interior life has to be first in the order of intention, and with the help of grace efficaciously willed. Those who lean to preoccupation with externals need to remember this fact.

On the contrary, when we start to put our intention into execution, we must not neglect the little means so necessary for beginnings. We must give real attention to our external behavior, the framework, as it were, of our spiritual life. Without exterior recollection, union with God is impossible, and unless we practice humility externally we shall never come to possess true humility of heart. Our inner life and outer conduct are interrelated, as are the physical and the moral, the sensible and the intelligible, the image and the idea, the passions and the will. The image precedes the idea, which is abstracted from it; then afterward the image serves to express the idea.

Bodily worship and vocal prayer dispose us for mental prayer, which then animates psalmody and the liturgical chant. The interior surely has the primacy; yet the exterior cannot be neglected without real loss to ourselves and probably scandal to our neighbor.

By means of this twofold examination of conscience, we come to see plainly the necessity both for mortification and for those passive purifications or crosses which God sends us to cleanse us from all attachment to the world and to self that our love for Him may take first place in our soul and be reflected in all our acts. By whatever form we examine ourselves, we do well not to look at ourselves without keeping our eyes on God, the exemplar of all perfection. This look at God is a look of faith, perfected by the gift of wisdom, and it makes us judge all things in relation to God, the first cause of our salvation and our last end.

In thinking about the divine perfections of truth, beauty, love, justice, and mercy, we see the misery of man and the disorder of sin the better for this contrast. In thinking about the book of life and the whole story of our own life written there with absolute truth, we can see more clearly, and as if from above, how much we have been of and for ourselves through pride, vanity, jealousy, and concupiscence instead of being of and for God, ex Deo nati, by humility, meekness, the spirit of faith, hope, and charity. Made in this way, examination of conscience tends to become transformed into prayer, into prayer that begs for efficacious grace to enter again into intimacy with God.

CHAPTER X

MORTIFICATION AND OUR SUPERNATURAL END

Having shown the necessity of mortification for destroying the results of original and personal sin, we now consider how mortification serves to subordinate our natural activity perfectly to the life of grace, that we may never lose sight of the infinite sublimity of our supernatural end.

Had man been created in a purely natural state, with a body and an immortal soul but without the life of grace, he would have had to discipline his passions, submitting them to right reason and will. He would also have had to submit these higher faculties to God, the author of his nature, to whom his first love as a faithful servant would have been due. And he never would have known God except by the reflection of His perfections in the mirror of His creatures. But it pleased the Most High in His infinite goodness to call us to an incomparably higher last end, to call us to see Him directly, face to face, as He sees Himself, and to love Him as He loves Himself. It pleased Him to have us participate in His intimate life and, even in this world, to possess the beginning of eternal life in the life of grace, for grace is the seed of glory.

It follows that man in his every deliberate act should live not only in a reasonable but in a supernatural way, since everything he does should be ordered at least virtually to his last supernatural end, the goal of his journey. We ought to live as reasonable beings and also children of God redeemed by His only Son. We must not only submit our passions to reason but subordinate reason itself to faith, to the spirit of faith, and subject all our natural activity to the life of grace and charity, in fidelity to the Holy Ghost.

Our supernatural end, because of its infinite sublimity, demands the mortification of the first interior movements of concupiscence, pride, anger, jealousy, and envy. It requires even the mortification of natural activity

which, though not plainly reprehensible, would not hesitate to push its own development to the detriment of the life of grace. What is generally meant in ascetical language by natural activity is activity insufficiently subordinated to our last supernatural end, unsanctified activity, activity stemming almost entirely from an extroverted temperament, from natural enthusiasm, poorly disciplined curiosity, and a need for diversion, influence, and recognized and enjoyed success. People of this type, while no doubt doing good, unconsciously tend to make themselves the center of things, to attract souls to themselves instead of drawing them to God. They forget the words of the Master, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His justice; and all these things shall be added unto you.”

Natural activity can be developed to a point where its detrimental effect on the life of grace is astonishing. Christians of great literary, scientific, and legal education whose faith has scarcely developed at all since their first Communion are not few and far between. And even when they have managed to keep the faith, it is so unenlightened and weak, so out of proportion to their natural activity, that it has little defense against the dangers which surround it. Giants in scholarship are often spiritual dwarfs.

People devoted to the active apostolate or to study, even to the study of philosophy, theology, exegesis, or canon law, may allow themselves to be so taken up with natural activity that the life of grace, the spirit of faith, influences them but little. Overworked, ridden with too human preoccupations, they seem to be living intensely when, in the eyes of God, they are supernaturally sick unto death.

Men with an infinitely sublime supernatural end require mortification that no merely natural man can understand. The perfection of charity requires it. And by the great commandment every Christian is committed to perfection, not as being bound to realize it immediately but as ceaselessly tending toward it in his own state of life.

In the Sermon on the Mount our Lord has something to say on this subject. It would be well for us to consider His words in relation to the first inordinate movements of our natural appetency and, later, to what ascetical doctrine calls “natural activity.”

ARTICLE I

MORTIFICATION AND OUR INORDINATE TENDENCIES

Because our Lord wished to show the excellence of the new law, the law of love and grace, and its superiority over the Old Testament law of fear, He put insistent stress on the sublimity of our supernatural end by beginning the Sermon on the Mount with the eight beatitudes: “Blessed are the poor in spirit . . . the meek. . . . Blessed are they that mourn . . . they that hunger and thirst after justice . . . the merciful . . . the clean of heart . . . the peacemakers. . . . Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice’ sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” They will be comforted, satisfied, they will obtain mercy, they will see God, they will be called His children, they will have a great reward in heaven.

How can men attain an end as high as the eternal life of God Himself? They must begin to live it in this world by grace: “Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect.” For such perfection real mortification is necessary and it must be exercised not only in our outer life but especially in our inner life, where it deals with the beginnings of every unregulated movement of concupiscence, anger, hatred, pride, and hypocrisy.

The true Christian is not to keep resentment or animosity in his heart. “If therefore thou offer thy gift at the altar, and there thou remember that thy brother hath anything against thee, leave there thy offering before the altar and go first to be reconciled to thy brother; and then coming thou shalt offer thy gift.” “Be at agreement with thy adversary betimes.” Looking on an adversary, we must see a brother and a son of God. Blessed are the meek.

The evil looks and desires of concupiscence by which a man commits adultery in his heart must be mortified. “If thy right eye scandalize thee, pluck it out; . . . thy right hand . . . cut it off. . . . For it is expedient for thee that one of thy members should perish, rather than that thy whole body go into hell.” The right eye that serves as an occasion for sin may be a really evil thought that comes to us under the pretext of having some value for our apostolate; it may be a friend, an adviser, even a father, astray himself and apt to lead us into evil. Our Lord could not have expressed Himself more forcefully to show our danger: “If thy right eye scandalize thee, pluck it out.” We can resort, if need be, to corporal austerities, to fasting, watching, the discipline, and find in them great liberty of spirit.

Every disordered desire for vengeance must be mortified. “You have heard that it hath been said: An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. But I say to you not to resist evil.” The Christian reacts to injury not by a bitter

desire for revenge and, although out of duty he must resist unto death any evildoer attempting to lead him into sin, he is to endure injury with patience and without irritation or hatred. “If one strike thee on thy right cheek, turn to him also the other; and if a man will contend with thee in judgment and take away thy coat, let go thy cloak also unto him.” In other words, the Christian is warned to be ready to endure injustice with forbearance. The apostles, as founders of the Church, fittingly had to meet the terrible blow of persecutions that through their heroic constancy and goodness many might be converted. But patience in bearing injuries is not reserved for apostles but is recommended to all Christians. No other means serves so well to mollify and win over an angry adversary.

A Christian should be less concerned with jealously defending his rights than with gaining over to God his angry brother. His special charta is not the declaration of the rights of man but the Gospel. The greatness of Christian justice is made manifest by its union with charity. To the man who would take away our tunic we would do well to give our cloak also, rather than to take action that will set souls deeply at variance with one another. Contention should be avoided by all; litigation by the perfect, unless the circumstances place them under the obligation of protecting the higher interests of those committed to their keeping. But if they cannot yield in a matter of their duties, they can yield concerning their rights, as the saints have always shown us.

Egoism and self-will must be mortified by great charity: “Whosoever will force thee one mile, go with him other two. Give to him that asketh of thee; and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not away.” When anyone asks some help or service, be ready, out of kindness, to give him even more than he asks. When it is a question of your earthly goods or the good of your neighbor’s soul, do not cling to what is yours.

Hatred, even toward our worst enemies, must be mortified. Not only supernatural patience and forgiveness of injuries but love of enemies is required of us. “I say to you: Love your enemies; do good to them that hate you; and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you; that you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven. . . . For if you love them that love you, what reward shall you have? Do not even the publicans this? And if you salute your brethren only, what do you more? Do not also the heathens this?” Charity has a formal motive infinitely higher than that of natural friendship.

We love those who do good to us as naturally as we are inclined to hate those who do us evil and to remain indifferent to those indifferent to us. Natural love makes us love our neighbor for his good natural qualities and for the benefits we receive from him. The formal motive of charity is altogether different, since charity demands that we love even our worst enemies supernaturally. We must love them with the same supernatural and theological love we have for God, being reminded by faith that our enemies, if not actually children of God, are called to become so, divine grace urging them to conversion. We ought to pray for them to be converted, to be saved. We ought to wish them, like ourselves, to reach the goal of their journey, the life of heaven, through the blessing and help of our common Father, whom all of us are to glorify eternally. To love our neighbor in this supernatural manner when we are suffering at his hands, we must look at him with the eyes of faith, seeing him as a son of God, and, for love of God, wishing him the true and imperishable goods of the supernatural life. All this evidently requires mortification of every inclination to antipathy, aversion, and rancor. When the fire of charity has destroyed these dispositions in us, then will that great virtue really take first place in our souls and animate our every action.

Finally and forcefully, our Lord makes a special demand of those consecrated to God to mortify every least inclination to hypocrisy and spiritual pride, for if our justice does not surpass that of the scribes and Pharisees, we shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. “Take heed that you do not your justice before men, to be seen by them; otherwise you shall not have reward of your Father who is in heaven. Therefore when thou dost an almsdeed, sound not a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets.” “When ye pray, ye shall not be as the hypocrites that love to stand and pray in the synagogues and corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. . . . And when thou fast, be not as the hypocrites, sad. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear unto men to fast. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward.”

Christ points out to us the true spirit of mortification—death to sin and its results through love of God. “But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head and wash thy face, that thou appear not to men to fast, but to thy Father who is in secret. And thy Father who seeth in secret will repay thee.” Anoint your face, with the oil of charity, mercy, and spiritual joy. Wash your face; that is, purify your soul entirely of the spirit of ostentation and of every

inordinate affection. When you do acts of piety, you are not forbidden to be seen, but to wish to be seen, for then you would lose that purity of intention which goes directly to God our Father, present in the secret sanctuary of your soul.

Pride can be mortified in another way. “Judge not, that you may not be judged. For with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged. . . . And why seest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye; and seest dost the beam that is in thy own eye?” Rash judgment, generally born of pride, reads malice into every peccadillo and fails in charity and also in justice. God alone can judge the secrets of men’s hearts. When we attempt it we arrogate to ourselves a jurisdiction we do not have. Pride bribes our judgment, and we are incapable of giving a just verdict about the man we view not as a brother but as a rival to be put down.

Of those charged with instructing others in the things of salvation, our Lord requires a very special mortification of intellectual pride. In speaking of the Pharisees, He says that they “love the first places at feasts and the first chairs in the synagogues, and salutations in the market place, and to be called by men, Rabbi. But be not you called Rabbi. For one is your Master, and all you are brethren. . . . He that is the greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be humbled; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.”

St. Paul speaks in the same way. “Knowledge puffeth up; but charity edifieth. And if any man think that he knoweth anything, he hath not yet known as he ought to know. But if any man love God, the same is known by Him.” In commenting on this text, St. Thomas says that knowledge without charity profits nothing for salvation and leads to pride. Charity must accompany knowledge, and truth must be sought not through curiosity and vainglory but out of love for God and souls. Only then will knowledge become profitable for salvation. St. Bernard says that some people desire to know merely to know, and they are curious; others, to be known, and they are vain; others, to sell their knowledge, and they are calculating; others, to be edified, and they are prudent; still others, to edify their neighbor, and they are charitable.

For us to avoid curiosity on the one hand and intellectual sloth on the other, mortification and a special virtue are needed. To study for love of God and souls, a supernatural end, we need the virtue of studiousness. Charity animates our study so that we will never sacrifice the principal to

the accessory or the Creator to the creature in intellectual work; nor, as it too often happens, pursue a detailed, critical study of the letter of the Gospel without ever penetrating beyond the words to the very spirit of the word of God.

St. Thomas insists on this point when explaining the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount: “Everyone therefore that heareth these My words and doth them, shall be likened to a wise man that built his house upon a rock. . . . And everyone that heareth these My words and doth them not shall be like a foolish man that built his house upon the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew: and they beat upon that house. And it fell; and great was the fall thereof.” About this the Angelic Doctor says that every man must examine the foundations of his own building, the basis on which his intention rests; some listen to the words of the Gospel only to know, to edify merely the intellect, and so build on sand; others listen to put what they hear into practice, to love God and neighbor, and they build on the rock of charity. “Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ?”

The Sermon on the Mount places before us the greatness of Christian morality and keeps us from losing sight of the necessity for generous mortification to reach our supernatural end. The spirit of mortification in the new law is the spirit of the love of God and of souls in God.

ARTICLE II

MORTIFICATION OF NATURAL ACTIVITY

Authors of ascetical and mystical writings use the term “natural activity” to mean whatever the soul does outside of and prejudicial to the influence of grace, unsanctified activity, apt, when developed, to lead men from divine union toward practical naturalism. Commonly, people are all too unaware that they should mortify their “natural activity.” Yet, to realize that such mortification is necessary, we have only to recall St. Thomas’ principle that no individual deliberate act is indifferent but either morally good or morally bad.

Objectively, some acts are indifferent—taking a walk, for instance. Yet every act we do deliberately, we do for either a good or a bad end, and not to act deliberately but mechanically is hardly an ideal for man. All our

deliberate acts should be at least virtually ordered to God and have such reasonable and truly good ends that they lead us finally to Him who has first claim on our love.

"No man can serve two masters. For either he will hate the one and love the other; or he will sustain the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon." No one can seek two different last ends, two supreme goods. "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all to the glory of God." In the Saint Gotthard range of the Alps there is said to be a watershed where every drop turns either north toward the Rhine and the North Sea or south to the Rhone or the Ticino and the Mediterranean. So in our lives every deliberate act goes in the direction of good or of evil; for in the concrete reality of life neutrality in moral matters simply does not exist. We need, then, to consider the proximate and ultimate consequences of our action and our apparently good or at least inoffensive natural activity. If it is born outside the influence of grace, it will most likely grow up to do grace harm. Too often we keep the divine life in us as a kind of superstratum without bearing or influence on many of our actions which lack even virtually the spirit of faith and love.

Of the three degrees of "natural activity" the first and grossest consists in that natural ardor which makes some people undertake everything they do through impetuosity, acting with little or no reflection and with hot and hasty vigor. The boiling over of an impetuous disposition into activity in no way proceeds from grace and quickly becomes contrary to it, being trailed by disorder and followed up by trouble, incoherence, and blindness. The principle behind impulsive activity is self-love. The desire for immediate self-satisfaction makes a man act hastily and imprudently. His agitation is the very opposite of peace, of that tranquility of order wherein a man keeps himself in the presence of God. Because so much unconscious egoism, whether individual or that collective type we might call "nosism," enters into impulsive actions, we do well to stop or postpone beginning whatever work seems to carry us away. Group or party spirit may come to substitute for the spirit of God when we desire something good to be done but wish to do it ourselves and in our own way either personally or through our society, religious family, or community. The resultant and saddening divisions among workers in the Lord's vineyard certainly dispose no one for divine contemplation.

Sometimes natural ardor manifests itself in loud, expressive enthusiasm, so tiresome to thoughtful and recollected people who recognize it as a rhinestone imitation of the diamond of spiritual joy and as different from it as chauvinism is from patriotism or the silly, affected cult of knowledge is from love of truth. But the man of impulse is himself fooled, believing himself, when only an unformed or mediocre scholar, to be quite an authority, or, if a very ordinary administrator, an exceptional man of affairs. If a man like this is simply an inoffensive megalomaniac, he may be nothing worse than ridiculous; but if he is ambitious and reaches a high office, he can be dangerous because of the harm he can do.

The second, less gross and less dangerous, degree of natural activity may be called natural eagerness. Natural eagerness marks a man when, although he has a much more delicate conscience than the ambitious enthusiast, he does not enter enough into the privacy of his heart to listen to the Holy Ghost. Self-will slips into his activity and blocks the workings of grace. Fascination for some proximate end like study or the apostolate makes him lose sight of its relationship to the ultimate end, the glory of God and the salvation of souls. Then, not keeping his ultimate end sufficiently in mind, he no longer turns to God enough for help to do what he should, he no longer prays enough. He has forgotten the great principle St. Thomas recalled so often: the order of agents corresponds to the order of ends. No one can tend toward the last end without the concurrence of the supreme agent, the author of our salvation, God. When we see only the proximate and human end to be attained, we rarely have recourse to anything but human effort and let our natural eagerness take control. Then if our success does not measure up to our expectations, we become sad and upset. This would not happen if, instead of acting precipitately, without counsel or precept, we awaited the movement of grace, the motive force of God’s will. Many souls aspiring to perfection have this fault and fail to realize what an obstacle it is to the operation of the Holy Ghost. To overcome it we must always consult God in prayer about any important affair, asking earnestly for His light. Only thus can we become really interior souls, guided in all things by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

As our Lord led His apostles to sanctity, He corrected this fault little by little. Before the Passion, Peter said to Him: “Although all shall be scandalized in Thee, yet not I.” And Jesus answered: “Amen I say to thee, today, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny Me

thrice.” When James and John wished for fire from heaven to fall on a village that had remained deaf to God’s words, He replied: “You know not of what spirit you are.” And St. Paul reminds us that natural activity can puff a scholar up with pride and make a preacher but sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.

The third degree of natural activity, though without passion and excessive eagerness, is a natural movement of more subtlety and therefore more difficult to know than the two others. People of well controlled passions and pure intention who consult God in prayer about anything of importance may still not wait sufficiently for the action of grace before carrying out some work. They seem to forget that the Holy Ghost knows the day and hour for doing.

From time to time some trace of unconscious self-love makes them judge things, not in the spirit of faith, but in a wholly natural way, so that they act in an entirely human fashion without waiting for the time willed by God. Not being contemplative enough, they forget the lesson of Psalm 39, Expectans expectavi Dominum, et intendit mihi. This does them more harm than they think, forming a cloud between them and God, momentarily dimming the divine light in their souls. The soul already possessed of union is for that instant somehow disfigured, commonplace, even vulgar. Overanxious to get things started, it has lost the particular assistance of the Holy Ghost and marred God’s work within itself. And that “sense” it once had for the things of God may be lost to it for a while.

When Christ foretold His terrible passion to His disciples, Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him by saying: “Lord, be it far from Thee, this shall not be unto Thee.” But Jesus turned on him and said, “Go behind Me, Satan; thou art a scandal unto Me, because thou savorest not the things that are of God, but the things that are of men.” Peter had spoken too naturally, forgetting that no one can reprove the Son of God. Of course he spoke out of his love for Christ, but it was a natural reaction, not conformed to the Spirit of God; were it not for Christ’s response, the devil could easily have used it to deceive Peter and prevent him from understanding the great mystery of the redemption.

The infinite sublimity of our supernatural end requires mortification to prevent the first disordered movements of natural activity from developing and from harming the divine life, to keep us from dissipating ourselves in externals, and to save us from forgetting the indwelling Master of our

sanctification. Practiced generously, mortification will make us appreciate more and more that the contemplation of the mysteries of salvation through habitual recollection belongs to the normal way of sanctity.

We can understand why our Lord told us: “How narrow is the gate and strait is the way that leadeth to life! And few there are that find it.” The way of the flesh, of pride, is very wide at the start but narrows down more and more as it leads on towards hell. On the contrary, the way of the spirit begins as the narrow path of humility and abnegation but widens afterward until it becomes as immense as God Himself, to whom it leads. At its end, the full heart cries: “O how great is the multitude of Thy sweetness, O Lord, which Thou hast hidden for them that fear Thee!”

St. Paul, too, tells us: “This therefore I say, brethren: The time is short. It remaineth that they also who have wives be as if they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as if they rejoiced not; and they that use this world, as if they used it not. For the fashion of this world passeth away.” Therefore, to oppose the three concupiscences, the three counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience have been given to us that our lives may be “hid with Christ in God.” If we follow the narrow way that grows ever wider and wider, we shall find realized within us what nature could never hope for, the fulfillment of the promise: “When Christ shall appear, who is your life, then you also shall appear with Him in glory.” “For whom He foreknew, he also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son, that he might be the firstborn amongst many brethren.”

Tired and bruised, men will push on through the risks and hardships of mountain climbing to stand on Mt. Blanc and view its great glaciers. The vision of the divine Essence for all eternity is surely worth more mortification. “For that which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory. . . . Now He that maketh us for this very thing is God, who hath given us the pledge of the Spirit.” For us not born of flesh, nor of blood, but of God, for us who are of God— Noblesse oblige.

For a practical, simple, yet sublime summary of all that has been said about mortification and its relationship to the love of God and the spirit of wisdom, we now turn to Blessed Grignon de Montfort’s L’Amour de la divine Sagesse.

Not in those who live at their ease, who concede to their passions and senses all they desire, is Wisdom found; for the wisdom of the flesh is the enemy of God and those who walk according to the flesh cannot please God. “My spirit shall not remain in man forever, because he is flesh.” All who belong to Christ, Wisdom eternal, have crucified their flesh with its vices and concupiscences and carry actually and always in their bodies the death of Christ. . . .

Never imagine that Wisdom, purer than the rays of the sun, enters into a soul and body stained by sense pleasures. . . . To communicate itself, Wisdom demands not partial and temporary mortification, but universal and continual mortification that is both courageous and discreet. If you would have Wisdom:

1) You must really give up the goods of this world . . . or at least detach your heart from them and possess them as though not possessing them. . . .

2) You must not conform to the outer manner of worldlings, a practice more necessary than people are apt to think.

3) You must neither accept nor follow the false maxims of the world. . . . Ordinarily worldlings will not teach sin expressly; they simply treat it as though it were either honest virtue or a matter of indifference and little consequence. This adroitness the world has learned from the devil to cover up the false and ugly face of sin, and it is this very sagacity that constitutes the malice St. John speaks of in his first epistle: “. . . and the whole world is in the power of the evil one” (I John 5: 19). Now more than ever, the whole world is thoroughly penetrated with malice.

4) You must, in so far as you can, keep away from evil and dangerous companions and even devout people who stand in your way and waste your time . . . that your life may be hidden with Christ Jesus in God (Col. 3: 3). Keep silence among men that you may converse with Wisdom, for a silent man is a wise man (Ecclus. 20: 5).

5) To have Wisdom, you must mortify the body, not only by suffering patiently whatever sicknesses and inconveniences come to you but also by punishing yourself with fasting, watching, and the other austerities penitent saints have practiced. . . . The world rejects as useless all mortifications of the body and will do or say anything to turn saints away from practicing austerities since it knows that all of them have brought their bodies into subjection by some use of fasting and the discipline. . . .

6) Although voluntary exterior mortification is good, you must join to it, by holy obedience, mortification of the judgment and will. Obedience routs self-love, the despoiler of all things; then every smallest act becomes meritorious . . . and a man arrives surely and as though while asleep at the door of salvation. All this is reaffirmed by the great counsel: Leave all and you shall find all —in Jesus Christ, Wisdom incarnate.

CHAPTER XI

IMPERFECTION

Before turning to the passive purifications and considering how they help to destroy the imperfections of beginners and proficients alike, we wish to return to a previously examined question much discussed lately in French, Belgium, and German reviews: the distinction between venial sin and imperfection. To understand the question better, we shall compare it to another similar problem, that of the lesser of two evils.

Everyone agrees that there are imperfections distinct from venial sin in actions done without deliberation; for example, in good or, at the very least, objectively indifferent acts, done mechanically because of involuntary inattention. One man's abstraction may be another man's distraction. The absentminded man who blunders noisily into chapel will certainly disturb those praying there. And whenever we chant more quickly or more slowly than the rest of the choir because our minds are not on what we are doing, we annoy those around us. Life is full of such imperfections. In communities the chapter of faults is meant to remedy them, lest community life become a general torture that hinders the progress of souls toward perfection. Actions of this kind are not venial sins as long as they remain indeliberate and altogether involuntary, but they should become less and less frequent in anyone truly tending toward perfection. Were we more closely united to God, more attentive in our duties, more delicate in regard to our neighbor, more reverential toward all that gives life value, such things would hardly happen at all. They had no place in the life of our Lord or His Blessed Mother.

Besides, we must not forget that troublesome indeliberate actions begin to be venial sins as soon as we can and should stop to consider and resolve to mend our ways but do not do so. Then our inadvertence is no longer absolutely involuntary but indirectly voluntary and partly culpable through

negligence. The same is true of the first inordinate movements of sensuality or impatience. They begin to be culpable when we can and should notice and repress them but fail to do so. So far in this matter almost everybody is agreed.

THE LESSER GOOD—AN EVIL?

But all are not agreed about whether it is in itself a venial sin deliberately to choose a lesser good when we know the greater good is better in itself and also better for us here and now. The problem assumes that the choice involves no contempt of counsel, no laziness or negligence, but simply less effort, less generosity, to advance in the way of perfection.

First of all, we should note that, when people prefer a lesser good to something better both objectively and subjectively, they often make that choice through laziness and negligence and thereby, of course, commit venial sin. We also agree with Billuart that it is illicit to omit a thing better for us solely because we are not bound to do it and wish to use our liberty. This is, as the Thomists say with good reason, a desire without a proper motive; and since no individual deliberate act is indifferent (for each must have a good end or be bad) the act in question is bad.

But it is not impossible to prefer a lesser to a greater good for a legitimate, though less good, motive. Many theologians express this view as follows: “A man accepts a lawful satisfaction, like eating between meals, smoking or using snuff, purely for pleasure and without necessity. Or he prolongs useful conversations he could have shortened. All these things remain within the circle of what is licit and therefore meritorious, too; but he would have progressed much more rapidly and merited much more intensely had he chosen the other alternative.”

We find a similar example in the good doctor who, having assisted at Mass for nine consecutive days to obtain a special grace, notices that this half hour given to God each morning does no harm at all either to his medical studies or his practice. On the tenth morning he has this good thought: “I could continue to attend Mass daily, and it would be better in itself and better for me, although of course it is not obligatory. Not only would it do no harm to my work but it would even, in a higher sense, be good for it. My confrere assists at daily Mass without his duties as a faculty professor suffering from it and I could follow his example and thus do more

good. This may be an inspiration of the Holy Ghost. It is, however, not an obligation but a counsel. I am far from despising it. I know it would be better for me to follow it but I commit no sin by employing this half hour every morning in study. I admit it is a lesser good and that, with more generosity, I could find time later for a half hour's work at my books. It is, then, less good, but still good. Let us not call something bad in itself when it is only less good in itself, and let us not say it is bad for me when it is only less good for me."

We find an analogous case in the priest who habitually makes a fifteen-minute thanksgiving after Mass and has this good thought: "If I really wished to, I certainly could give a half hour to my thanksgiving as so many of my friends do whose ministry seems much more fruitful than my own. However, I am not obliged to do it and I will not allow myself to become lazy but will study some philosophy or history at that time although that could, with more generosity, be put off until later." Surely this priest has no idea that he commits sin. Please God, he may not come to devote himself to study with such immoderate ardor that he will neglect prayer for it and let his prayer become no more than a moment of relaxation and pleasant idleness. Imperfections, especially when repeated, like lax virtuous acts, dispose us indirectly to venial sin by allowing tendencies to develop which we would do well to struggle against with more energy.

However, to return to the question whether whatever is less good for us is bad for us, those who deny the distinction between imperfection and venial sin answer that to prefer a lesser good to one that seems better for us here and now is a venial sin, the motive for doing it cannot be legitimate, and what some people would like to call less generosity is really sloth or negligence.

Theologians who take this stand are preoccupied with the relative side of the problem, the lesser good compared to the greater rather than the lesser good taken in itself, absolutely. They thus come to think at least implicitly that the lesser good, in comparison to what is better for us here and now, becomes an evil; and so they make no distinction between imperfection and venial sin which they view as differing only per accidens, lack of attention reducing sin to imperfection.

This point of view encounters serious objections in the very arguments invoked in favor of the contrary solution as proposed, among Thomists, by the Carmelites of Salamanca, and stated in Christian Perfection and

Contemplation. According to this second viewpoint, venial sin and imperfection are distinct in themselves, and the lesser good must be considered absolutely, as it is in itself, before being compared to something better. For example, in the case of the doctor just discussed, it would be better for him to continue going to daily Mass, but it is still good and legitimate for him to consecrate that half hour to studying medicine—an act that is good because of its object (the study to which he devotes himself without falling into either sloth or curiosity), because of its end (the care of the sick), and because of its circumstances, for we are assuming that he studies as he should, when he should, and where he should. Now, according to the principles St. Thomas enunciated in regard to the morality of human actions, this action is good in its object, end, and circumstances. It is less good than assistance at Mass but, after all, what is only less good in itself need not be called bad in itself, and what is only less good for us here and now need not be called bad for us here and now.

The first reason for adopting this point of view is that human actions are specified by their objects and not by the relation of their objects to some greater good. Therefore, if the object and the motive for which it is willed and the circumstances in which it is done are all conformed to right reason, the act is good, although it may be less good than another which could be done at that time.

A second reason is based on the distinction between a counsel and a precept, a counsel by its nature not obliging but only inviting us to do what is better. And it cannot be said, as is sometimes claimed, that this is true of counsels in the abstract but not of a counsel in the concrete which, because it appears opportune to me here and now, thereby becomes obligatory. We might just as well say, as Billuart somewhere remarks, that in the concrete a counsel loses its nature, its very essence as a counsel, and becomes a command. This can no more be admitted than that a man, by being a particular man, loses his human nature. Should any counsel here and now oblige anyone, it would do so not of itself, but in a wholly accidental fashion, because not to follow the counsel would involve sloth or contempt. Sin has elsewhere been defined as any word, deed, or desire against the eternal law, whatever is contrary to a precept sub gravi or sub levi.

We admit that the perfection of charity falls under the great commandment to love God. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength and with all

thy mind.” But perfection comes under the commandment not as matter, or as something to be immediately realized, but only as the end toward which every Christian should tend, each according to his state of life. This is the sense in which every Christian ought to have the spirit of the counsels.

Sin occurs only through the transgression of a precept regarding the matter of that precept, obligatory sub gravi or sub levi. Even an expedient counsel, some good inspiration about a matter of counsel, even when conformed to our vocation, does not suffice ipso facto to constitute an obligation. In the lives of the saints we see that the Holy Ghost sometimes makes them understand that a certain act is better for them (for example, to offer themselves as a victim for some great cause) but that they are not obliged to do it, unless they have made the vow to do what is most perfect. However, they are made to understand that, having offered themselves, they should not take back their gift. The virtuous act being specified by its object, the virtues should be considered, not apart from the commandments, but together with them.

A third reason could be added: that God Himself does not always choose what is best in itself, for He can create beings more perfect than those to whom He has given existence. And to save men, He was not bound, but freely willed, to choose the Incarnation. It was, of course, wonderfully fitting, but the choice of some lower means of salvation would not have implied anything unfitting. God could have contented Himself with sending us a prophet to tell us that He would pardon us under certain conditions. Likewise, despite the fact that it was fitting for Him to create, God could very well not have created. The absolute optimism of Leibnitz, who declared that God would not be good or wise had He not created, is a grave error, a heresy. Between God and ourselves there is this undoubted difference: He is not greater for having created the universe, whereas we do become better by being more generous. However, analogously is also remains true that I can refrain from acting with great liberality to a poor man and content myself with giving him merely a little money—and still commit no sin.

The three reasons just given have not been really refuted by those theologians who reject the distinction between venial sin and imperfection. Their answering objection comes to this: that the refusal of a greater good cannot be referred to God and is therefore a venial sin.

To which the reply is, that the refusal of a greater good cannot be referred to God when this greater good is obligatory or when, in a matter of the counsel, the refusal is made with contempt of the counsel or through sloth or negligence. But the same cannot be said when, for a legitimate motive, a man, to do something less good, omits some greater good that is counseled. For example, if the doctor we were speaking about a little while ago stayed away from Mass when it was not obligatory to give himself to study, even if he recognized that with more generosity he could find time to do both, he would commit no sin. Besides, as has already been said in agreement with the theologians of Salamanca, the absence of perfection in the less generous act is not good, but the less perfect act itself is still good because of its object, end, and circumstances, and it can be referred to God. You can climb mountains by direct and difficult footpaths or by zigzag roads that wind upward less steeply. If you choose the winding highway in preference to the short but hard assent, you move ahead more slowly to the summit but you still go on, you do not come down. What is less hot it not cold. Because ten degrees of temperature is lower than twenty, it does not equal zero.

Although we may not find it easy to distinguish between the highest degree of vegetative life and the lowest degree of sensitive life, and the question arises whether a sponge is a plant or an animal, yet the distinction between these two orders holds. The highest degree of the lower order in some way touches the lowest degree of the higher order, but the vegetable and the animal kingdoms are distinct. Likewise, in the concrete reality of life it may be anything but easy to distinguish between slight venial sins and imperfections. However, unless everything is to become confounded, there is surely a difference between what is purely and simply evil and what is only less good in itself and for us. Before comparing a lesser with a greater good, which is a relative matter, we should consider the lesser good absolutely, as it is in itself. As such it can be referred to God. Effort is indeed withheld, yet this is not to stand still on the mountainside and not to retrace the steps already taken, but only to go forward more slowly by an easier route. We have merely to recall the design made by St. John of the Cross for the ascent of Mt. Carmel to see that, besides the middle course, the narrow way that mounts directly and steeply to the summit by complete abnegation, and the way of the misguided spirit which leads away from God, there is a third path—that of the imperfect soul. As this route spirals its slow, sloping way up the mountainside, it offers much slower travel than

the narrow way of perfection, but it still goes upward. St. John of the Cross has managed, in this design and its headings, to preserve all the nuances needed to safeguard so delicate a subject, and his doctrine prompts the generous to holy austerity without discouraging those less generous but still good.

THE LESSER EVIL

The question of the lesser evil—whether it is lawful to choose a lesser evil in order to avoid a greater—throws light on the subject under discussion. Nobody doubts that lesser physical evils may be chosen, for example, the amputation of some part of the body to save the whole. But may a man choose a lesser moral evil?

Some theologians answer affirmatively, saying that the lesser evil takes on the nature of good when compared to the greater evil to be avoided. The comparison of the lesser to the greater evil, a relative consideration, takes precedence over the consideration of the lesser evil taken in itself, absolutely. A little while back we saw how this precedence of the relative over the absolute led to a certain rigorism by confusing the lesser good with evil, and imperfection with venial sin. Now it results in a sort of laxism by confusing the lesser evil with good. Such inconsistent fluctuation between two extremes appears to be the sign and seal of relativism.

St. Thomas seems to give the solution to this problem when he takes up the question whether lying is always a sin. The objection states that we must choose a lesser evil to avoid a greater and goes on to say that, as a doctor amputates a limb to save the body, so a lie may cause error in another's mind to prevent a homicide, since a lie works less harm than such a crime. St. Thomas gives his answer: "A lie is sinful not only because of an injury to one's neighbor, but also on account of its inordinateness, for speech is by its nature made for the expression of thought, just as the intelligence is made to know truth. Now it is not allowed to make use of anything inordinate in order to ward off injury or defect to another. . . . Therefore it is not lawful to tell a lie in order to deliver another from any danger whatever. Nevertheless it is lawful to hide the truth" because hiding the truth is not speaking against it. Actually, when the saints found themselves in difficulties of this kind, since they were habitually united to God, they received from the Holy Ghost through the gift of counsel an

inspiration which supplied for the imperfection in their prudence and made them avoid lying while keeping their secret when it was absolutely necessary that it be kept. Our Lord said to His disciples: “When they shall deliver you up, take no thought how or what to speak; for it shall be given you in that hour what to speak.”

It follows from St. Thomas’ answer that no one may will something intrinsically evil in order to avoid a greater evil. Human acts are in fact specified by their objects. If the object of an act is essentially evil from a moral point of view, the act specified by it is morally bad. But if certain things or persons, a man running for some public office, for instance, possess enough good for us to be able not positively to choose but merely to tolerate the evil in them, we may have recourse to them to avoid greater evils, as long as we cannot by other means avoid the evil they entail. Yet we ought to try either to find other means or to create them, so as not to prolong a critical situation and cooperate in its disorders. We have a duty, for instance, to do what we can to have good candidates run for office.

To return to the question of imperfection, it should be remarked that if the lesser evil does not become a good simply by being chosen to avoid a greater evil, neither does a lesser good become an evil simply because it is chosen in preference to something better both in itself and for us. Acts are specified by their objects. If the object is intrinsically bad, even if less bad than another, the choice specified by it is bad. If the object is good, even if less good than another, the choice specified by it is still good.

CONFORMITY TO THE DIVINE WILL

Conformity to the will of God differs on earth and in heaven, during our exile and in our homeland. In this life, as we travel toward eternity, we are bound to conform our will to the divine will by willing for the same motive as that for which God Himself wills—for the good and the glory of God; but, except in the case of a precept, we are not bound to will each thing that God wills, such as the death of a father when it comes time for him to die. What is actually a good from the universal viewpoint of Providence may not be good from the particular point of view of some living Christian individual or family. Filial piety itself makes us grieve to lose father or friend, even while we submit to the divine will. Christ wept at the tomb of Lazarus. When God sends us some humiliation or temporal affliction, we

do better, of course, to will the event itself, but we are not obliged to do so and need only will the accomplishment of divine justice and the order of Providence.

In heaven the blessed see in God everything they are to desire and will and they not only never fail to will God's glory but they also will all that He wills so that they are no longer saddened by what would have legitimately grieved them here on earth. Indeed they no longer see all things in the limited, particular way they saw them during their earthly pilgrimage, but from the higher, eternal viewpoint of divine Providence. Evidently no imperfection exists in heaven although we find it on earth and know it as distinct from venial sin. What is less white is not therefore black, the lesser good is not an evil, and less generosity becomes neither sloth nor negligence by being compared with greater generosity.

Nevertheless imperfect actions dispose us indirectly for venial sin because, as in the case of the man with five talents who acts as though he had but two, they allow tendencies to develop in us which we would do well to struggle against with more energy.

Shortly an exact statement of this doctrine will be found in studying what St. John of the Cross has to say about the role of the passive purifications in perfecting souls—in beginners by means of the purification of the senses, in the more advanced through the night of the soul.

DIFFICULTIES ABOUT THE QUESTION OF IMPERFECTION

In the preceding pages the question has been asked whether not to act with the maximum generosity of which we are here and now morally capable is in itself a venial sin. Suppose I can attend Mass daily without great difficulty and know that I can, must I do so or commit venial sin? Or may I use the time which attendance at Mass would take to do some other work less good in itself and less good for me? Suppose I know it would be better for me to bind myself by vow to fast for nine days than merely to fast without making a vow, must I, under pain of venial sin, make the vow? Or, as theologians commonly teach, am I merely less generous? Is the lesser good an evil? The difficulty of the question offers no excuse for confusing good and evil, but gives us an opportunity for solving the problem through the application of self-evident principles.

To know what St. Thomas really teaches on this point, since his opinion has been invoked as contrary to the opinion generally accepted, all his texts relative to the subject should be consulted, both where he treats the question ex professo in the Summa theologica, his definitive thought expositively taught, and where the subject comes up in his other works. Having seen the reasons for his doctrine, we can then turn to an examination of opposing difficulties.

IMPORTANT THOMISTIC TEXTS

In his treatise on the New Law, answering the question whether it was fitting to add counsels to commandments, St. Thomas says: “The difference between a counsel and a commandment is that a commandment implies obligation, whereas a counsel is left to the option of the one to whom it is given. . . . We must therefore understand the commandments of the New Law to have been given about matters that are necessary to gain the end of eternal bliss . . . but that the counsels are about matters that render the gaining of this end more assured and expeditious.”

This is true not only of the three counsels properly speaking but even of the others, for at the end of the same article St. Thomas adds: “For instance, when anyone gives an alms to a poor man, not being bound so to do, he follows the counsels in that particular case. In like manner, when a man for some fixed time refrains from legitimate carnal pleasures that he may give himself to prayer, he follows the counsel for that particular time. And again, when a man follows not his will as to some deed he might do lawfully, he follows the counsel in that particular case: for instance, if he do good to his enemies when he is not bound to, or if he forgive an injury of which he might justly seek to be avenged.”

By means of these different cases, St. Thomas shows us that, although some acts are better than others both in themselves and for the man performing them, they are still not obligatory for him at the time. They are acts which may be lawfully left undone, not merely without mortal sin but without venial sin as well. St. Thomas’ meaning is plain because he has just said, “He could lawfully follow his own will.” Now no one can ever lawfully commit a sin. We are, in the strict sense of the word, bound to avoid every venial sin, bound sub Levi, according to St. Thomas and all theologians.

The definition of sin given by St. Augustine (dictum, vel factum, vel concupitum contra legem aeternam) applies not only to mortal sin, but, analogically, to venial sin as well. If the latter is not against the eternal law, properly speaking, in the sense that it does not turn us away from our last end, it departs from the law as a disorder in the use of means to our last end. Consequently it is not a lesser good but an evil, and we are bound to avoid it. (On this point Passerini, when appealed to in the discussion, has the same thing to say as the other commentators.) The case of good but less generous acts is quite different and a man may, as St. Thomas has just said, licitly decide to do something less perfect.

In the same article of the Summa, St. Thomas notes, as theologians commonly do, that in regard to the counsels a distinction must be made between what is better in itself and what is better for us here and now. Thus virginity, in itself more perfect than marriage, is not expedient for us all. "He that can take, let him take it." Simply because of this distinction we may not conclude that, according to St. Thomas, whatever appears better here and now, not only in itself but for us, becomes by that very fact obligatory for us; for St. Thomas has just said, in the body of the same article, that at the very moment when accomplishing a better act of this kind, we can licitly abstain from doing it. Likewise, when explaining in his Commentary on St. Matthew the "Qui potest capere, capiat," he says: "He who has received from God the grace to comprehend the value of absolute chastity is counseled to practice it"—counseled, but not therefore obliged under pain of venial sin.

As a matter of fact, the holy doctor had already noted in his Commentary on the Sentences that a counsel never obliges of itself but only on account of particular circumstances, when it may have the force of a command. For example, someone who has not made a vow of absolute chastity may be obliged to practice it for a certain time because of circumstances.

All this obviously harmonizes with the Thomistic principle already discussed at length —that the perfection of charity comes under the commandment of love, not as matter or something to be realized immediately but as the end toward which all ought to tend, each according to his state of life. For St. Thomas, as well as for St. Augustine, the commandment of love embraces even the perfection of charity realizable only in heaven, clearly not as matter to be immediately effected but as the final end and summit toward which all should go, some with great strides,

some with less, some by the steep and generous bypath of perfect abnegation where the saints climb upward, others over the gently sloping, slower route of less perfect souls.

Moreover, even in the case of religious, St. Thomas teaches in the Summa: “Hence he who enters the religious state is not bound to have perfect charity, but he is bound to tend to this, and use his endeavors to have perfect charity. For the same reason he is not bound to fulfill those things that result from the perfection of charity, although he is bound to intend to fulfill them: against which intention he acts if he despises them, wherefore he sins not by omitting them but by contempt of them. In like manner he is not bound to observe all the practices whereby perfection may be attained, but only those which are definitely prescribed to him by the rule which he has professed.”

In the same article he remarks: “Yet there is a certain wholeness of perfection which cannot be omitted without sin, and another wholeness which can be omitted without sin, provided there be no contempt. . . . So too, all, both religious and seculars, are bound in a certain measure to do whatever good they can . . . as required by the conditions of their state of life.” In other words, as expressed in the body of the article, all ought to tend toward perfection—without having to do right now whatever seems best, without being obliged to push ahead as fast as they can by the quickest and most direct route, to attain at every moment the maximum generosity which they are capable of. The case would be different if they had made a vow to do always what is most perfect. The Summa theologica contains many other similar passages.

Moreover, not only in the Summa but in many other of his works St. Thomas reiterates this view. The early Thomists knew these passages well, as we can see from the Tabula aurea operum S. Thomae of Peter of Bergamo where, under the words imperfectio and even more precisely, melius, quotations to the point are cited. These different passages he sums up in two propositions: first, that all are bound to aspire to what is better but not to accomplish it, for not to care for what is better is to be contemptuous of good; secondly, that all are bound to prefer the better of two goods—in judging between these goods but not in now choosing and acting upon them.

One of the characteristic passages quoted by Peter of Bergamo is from the De veritate and treats of conformity to God’s will. The objection is

made that sin consists chiefly in perverse choice or election and that to prefer a lesser to a greater good is to make a perverse choice and therefore —. To this St. Thomas makes the answer that choice involves both an act of judgment and an act of will. If in judging a man prefers what is less good to what is better, he acts perversely; but if his preference is a matter of will only, he is not bound to will or do what is better, unless it be a matter of precept. Were this not so, every man who could follow the counsels would be bound to do so. Again in his Commentary on St. Matthew, when considering our Lord's words, "Qui potest capere, capiat," St. Thomas tells us that, although a man is obliged to aspire to what is better, he need not do it here and now.

THE CRUX OF THE QUESTION

Although a divergence of opinion exists between the common view of theologians, especially the Carmelites of Salamanca, and the opposing view already set down as unacceptable here, we need to keep the proper perspective in regard to this difference and not to exaggerate it. As remarked earlier, a man often chooses a lesser good through laziness or negligence and to be lazy or negligent is to sin. Further, we agree with Billuart that not to choose what is better simply because we are not bound to do so and wish to act freely is not lawful. Although quoted as opposed to the view expressed in this present work, St. Thomas' statement amounts to this—that to prefer a delectable to a true good is always sinful, because unreasonable. Even the most elementary psychology tells us such is the case of a seminarian who had a real vocation and who quits the seminary because he is seduced by the sensible charms of a cousin whom he wishes to marry. In this he resembles the young man of the Gospel who did not follow our Lord's call, being too much attached to worldly goods. Even if the call was not obligatory, his rejection of the call contained a sin, that of being too much attached to worldly goods. In the case of our seminarian his conduct involves not less generosity in forging ahead on the way of perfection but an evident and outright turning back on the path, whatever pretexts may be called upon to defend the action.

A case of this kind is altogether different from the cases given earlier. They involve no preference of a delectable to a true good, but the choice of a true good, easier to achieve than one more difficult although realizable, as

evidenced in the example of the teaching priest who daily devoted an hour and a quarter to his prayers before beginning work. Having said Prime, made his meditation, celebrated Mass and spent some time in thanksgiving, he realizes that, like some of his confreres, he could, with more generosity, give two hours to our Lord before beginning his daily tasks. But he does not do so, not through contempt of the idea or because of sloth, but to study philosophy, a thing he could do at some other time, were he more generous. On Sunday, too, having said his own Mass, he says his breviary while attending a High Mass, although with more effort he could say his breviary earlier and so perform two good works instead of one. The problem is whether such choices are always venial sins of negligence or sloth or whether they sometimes simply constitute less generosity.

If the priest's action is good, although less perfect than the alternative proposed, there is all the more reason for coming to the same conclusion about the doctor who, after making a novena of Masses, considers the possibility of continuing the practice of daily Mass but decides not to and devotes himself to studying medicine instead. The doctor is not, like the seminarian, retracing his steps; he is going ahead, though by an easier and slower route than he might have chosen. He is not preferring a delectable to a true good, but a true good of less worth than another which would demand more effort of him.

THE BASIS FOR THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN IMPERFECTION AND VENIAL SIN

The basis for the distinction between imperfection and venial sin has already been pointed out in the Salmanticenses. From the very first they remark that not St. Thomas but Scotus maintains the opinion that failure to follow a counsel is in itself a venial sin. The principal argument they use against the Scotist position amounts to what has already been said here: that no lesser good becomes evil from the fact that a man chooses it in preference to something better in itself and better, as well as more difficult, for him. Everybody agrees it would be confounding good and evil to call something bad in itself when it is only less good in itself. We are not to condemn marriage because it constitutes a less perfect state of life than perpetual virginity consecrated to God. Likewise, we must not call things bad for us when they are only less good for us. Like the seminarian seeking a pretext for leaving the seminary so that he can marry, others, too, have

abused this doctrine; but abuses of this kind take away none of the value of the argument itself which is immediately founded on the fundamental principle of all morality: the distinction between good and evil.

We must keep in mind that virtue does not consist in one indivisible unit, a maximum generosity below which there is no room for anything except venial and mortal sin. Virtue has its degrees. Fortitude, for example, is the just mean between cowardice and foolhardiness; but this just mean is capable of acquiring new heights without deviating either to right or left until it reaches the perfect exercise of the acquired virtue of fortitude; the infused virtue of the same name is still higher, and the gift of fortitude, higher yet. Degrees of virtue inferior to this final height are not a disorder, like venial sins of cowardice and recklessness. The disorder of venial sin (a deordination of means to our last end) is evil. A lower degree of virtue is not evil; it is good, although it has less goodness than greater virtue has.

The same is true of charity. A man with ten talents of charity who acts as if he had but two talents acts imperfectly, whether it be apparent to others or not, but his imperfect acts of charity are not therefore venial sins. His actions are, as St. Thomas says, meritorious although they do not immediately obtain that increase of charity to which they give him the right.

In answer to the question whether a lesser good becomes evil from the fact that it prevents a greater good, the answer is No, unless the good it prevents is obligatory. But no single good, simply because it is greater than another, is here and now obligatory, as St. Thomas tells us. Our Lord has inspired some of the saints to offer themselves as victims for some great cause, at the same time making them understand they were free to do it or not, but that once having made the offering they should not take back their gift.

Not to follow a good counsel because of sloth or negligence or a spirit of contradiction or to respond to a counsel with light-hearted contempt is certainly sinful. Such sins can become habitual and lead to a real lack of judgment. Nevertheless a man can omit following a good counsel that he may do something less good but still legitimate because inspired by a good motive. In such an instance, according to the principle that acts are specified by their objects, the act is good in its object, its end, and its circumstances, as in the case of the doctor referred to earlier. All the arguments educed are still maintained, with special emphasis on the fact

that, if we confound the lesser good with evil, we must logically, as relativists, come to admit that a lesser evil is therefore a good.

As the Carmelites of Salamanca remark, what we call an imperfection is an act lacking perfection. The absence of perfection in the action, taken formally, cannot be good (for it lacks being, and being and goodness are really identified); were the privation of something obligatory the act would constitute a sin; but if there is no immediate obligation, there is no sin but only the absence of higher perfection, of greater generosity, as in an imperfect act of charity. St. Thomas tells us exactly the same thing: “And again, when a man follows not his own will as to some deed which he might do lawfully, he follows the counsel in that particular case: for instance, if he does good to his enemies when he is not bound to, or if he forgives an injury of which he might justly seek to be avenged.”

We read also: “It belongs to a well-disposed mind that a man tend to perfect righteousness, and consequently deem himself guilty, not only if he falls short of common righteousness, which is truly a sin, but also if he falls short of perfect righteousness, which sometimes is not a sin.” In other words, a humble man may call his lack of perfection a sin when it is only an imperfection. On the other hand, St. Thomas also leaves us this statement: “Therefore it is not lawful to tell a lie in order to deliver another from any danger whatever.” To lie to get another out of great danger is always a venial sin and not merely an imperfection. We are allowed to hide the truth but we may not speak against it.

A Christian mother who loves God above all things with the love of esteem but loves the child in her arms more intensely, more emotionally, loves imperfectly but not sinfully. The intensity of her mother love simply results from the condition of our nature, more attracted by the visible and the concrete than by the invisible, even when incomparably more precious. In heaven, where we shall see God face to face, we shall be freed from this imperfection. Meanwhile, on earth, we should tend toward loving God with the intensity of heaven just as we tend toward heaven itself. To lack this intensity here is not, however, a venial sin.

Admittedly, some casuists have made wrong use of the distinction between imperfection and venial sin, being too ready to see imperfection where venial sin really exists. However, the distinction itself was not invented by them but was given by good spiritual authors, both ascetical and mystical, who have leaned neither toward laxism nor toward negligence

but have studied attentively all the subtleties of human actions, calling attention not only to venial sins but even to what should be avoided in order to advance with generosity on the way of perfection.

The imperfections we should especially eliminate are those St. John of the Cross finds existing in the proficient. These the passive purifications should destroy. The saint says that, while the narrow way of complete abnegation mounts straight toward the summit to be attained, the way of the imperfect but not wayward spirit is a winding road where the traveler goes ahead with less effort, less speed, and less success. We ought to have a keener appreciation of the reason why he wrote on the diagram at the beginning of the Ascent of Mount Carmel all along the way followed by the imperfect soul: “Not having taken the straight way I push on slowly and shall not reach the heights I might have attained.” On the contrary, on the footpath which goes straight to the top, he wrote: “Nothing, nothing, nothing. . . . Since I desire nothing through self-love, everything is given to me without my seeking for it. Since I am attached to nothing, I find that nothing is lacking to me.” The lesser good is not an evil, but in all truth a lesser good.

Of those who fail to rid themselves of these imperfections, St. John of the Cross says that they suffer “from a deadening of the mind and the natural roughness which every man contracts through sin, and the distraction and outward clinging of the spirit, which must be enlightened, refined, and recollected by the afflictions and perils of that night. These habitual imperfections belong to all those who have not passed beyond this state of the proficient; they cannot co-exist, as we say, with the perfect state of union.” St. Teresa tells us the same thing.

Only in such union is there realized, so far as it can be realized in this life, the full perfection toward which the great commandment bids us tend: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with all thy mind and with all thy strength.” Then will the just man accomplish not imperfectly but perfectly the great commandment and be truly a worshiper in spirit and in truth.

CHAPTER XII

THE FLOWER OF MORTIFICATION: CONSECRATED VIRGINITY

At the beginning of his study on virginity, St. Thomas quotes the following words from St. Augustine's De virginitate: "Virginity is continence whereby integrity of the flesh is vowed, consecrated, and observed in honor of the Creator of both soul and body." "It is the continual meditation [or firm purpose] to preserve incorruptible purity in corruptible flesh."

St. Thomas explains that the act of the virtue of virginity consists formally in the firm resolution to abstain until death from sensual or sexual pleasure. It follows that a virgin preserves her virginity when violated if she withholds her consent, whereas she loses the virtue by mere internal consent to sensual pleasure. In the latter case, it is true that as long as there has been no exterior and gravely culpable action, virginity can be recovered by contrition and penance.

Following the lead of the Angelic Doctor, we now discuss the following topics: (1) the meaning and import of the evangelical counsel inviting men to practice the virtue; (2) the nature of virginity and its relation to the other virtues; (3) the manner of consecrating virgins; (4) virginity as a preparation for contemplation and divine union.

THE EVANGELICAL COUNSEL

Virginity is the object of an evangelical counsel, St. Paul tells us: "Now concerning virgins, I have no commandment of the Lord; but I give counsel, as having obtained mercy of the Lord, to be faithful. . . . If thou take a wife, thou hast not sinned. And if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned: nevertheless, such shall have tribulation of the flesh. . . . The time is short.

It remaineth, that they also who have wives be as if they had none. . . . And they that use this world, as if they used it not. For the fashion of this world passeth away. But I would have you to be without solicitude. He that is without a wife is solicitous for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please God. But he that is with a wife is solicitous for the things of the world, how he may please his wife. And he is divided. And the unmarried woman and the virgin thinketh on the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit. But she that is married thinketh on the things of the world, how she may please her husband. . . . Therefore, both he that giveth his virgin in marriage, doth well; and he that giveth her not, doth better."

Every evangelical counsel invites us to do something better than the act contrary to it, est de meliori bono. Perpetual virginity preserved for love of God is more perfect than marriage. In fact, our Lord told us that some give up having a family that they may devote themselves more completely to the things of God's kingdom, "for the kingdom of heaven. He that can take, let him take it." And the Apocalypse adds: "These follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were purchased from among men, the first fruits to God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth there was found no lie; for they are without spot."

Also, at the Council of Trent the Church condemned as heretical the Lutheran doctrine that the state of virginity is neither higher nor more perfect than the married state. Luther went so far as to say that the vow of virginity is illicit, because contrary to nature. This heresy St. Thomas refuted before it was even proposed, when he showed that, because the body is made for the soul and the soul for God, a man may lawfully abstain from all carnal pleasure to be free to give himself more fully to the contemplation of divine Truth. That all means may be perfectly subordinated to our last end, the body must live for the soul and the soul for the contemplation, love, and praise of God. It seems questionable that a man could err to the point of holding that virginity preserved for love of God is unlawful. Far from being below the level of common morality, virginity rises above it by disposing the soul for the contemplative life, the life of God. It delivers men from servitude to the body and the passions, which generally overstep the mean unless they are kept this side of it. Our Lord, the Blessed Virgin, and many saints after them have excelled in the practice of this virtue.

Some, following Luther, unreasonably object that the common good of humanity, the perpetuation of the human race assured by marriage, is higher than the individual good sought by the preservation of virginity. Through St. Thomas wisdom answers that God, the sovereign good, is above the common good of the human race; the divine good comes before any human good, the good of the soul comes before the good of the body, the good of the contemplative life before that of the active life. Now holy virginity is immediately ordered to the good of the soul, to the contemplative life and union with God, whereas marriage is ordered to the conservation of the human species and to the active life.

Contemplation of divine things being obviously more perfect than the end of marriage (multiplication of the human species), the state of virginity is indisputably a higher state than married life. To deny this would be heretical, as the Council of Trenty stated in the condemnation of Lutheranism and as Pope Pius IX reaffirmed in his attack on modern naturalism.

By virginity, a human person lives, in a body of flesh, a wholly spiritual life, a kind of angelic life, a life so pure that it makes the body more and more like the soul, and the soul more and more like God. Virginity disposes the soul for participation in the light and love and strength of God. Purity of heart becomes apparent in look, attitude, and gesture. Sometimes the bodies of the saints have remained incorruptible in death, a glorious sign of their perfect chastity. The common measure provides no norm for virginity; like magnanimity, it has its own lofty measure and tends toward those great things perfectly in keeping with the sovereign good, God.

Against the great traditional doctrine concerning virginity, Luther made a further objection: since none can know the certainty that they will have the grace to remain faithful to the vow of chastity, no one can prudently and licitly make the vow. Theology replies that we need not have absolute certainty of receiving this grace; it suffices that we hear our Lord’s counsel, are attracted by it and, having taken the advice of a good guide, place our confidence in God’s grace. Hope’s certitude is not speculative like faith’s but belongs to the practical order. The will plays a part in it, tending surely, under the direction of faith, toward its divine end. “Hence it is expedient to take vows.” The vow of virginity, far from being unlawful, is perfectly fitting for those who feel attracted by our Lord’s counsel and put their trust in Him. In the same way conversion to Christianity and the making of the

baptismal promises demand only that we know perseverance is possible with the help of grace.

VIRGINITY AND THE OTHER VIRTUES

Having asked whether virginity is a special virtue distinct from simple chastity, St. Thomas answers unhesitatingly that it is, because of its particular excellence, the renouncement for life of all sensual or sexual pleasure. Two comparable parallels are magnanimity, which is a special virtue because it reaches out to greatness in the practice of all the other virtues it inspires; and munificence which, by its generosity, surpasses ordinary liberality. On the other hand, conjugal chastity and the chastity of widowhood are not special virtues distinct from ordinary chastity.

The renouncement of the material fecundity of marriage for God's sake receives its hundredfold even in this world; for virginity becomes the principle, or at least the condition, of spiritual fatherhood and motherhood, and the life it transmits lasts not merely for sixty or seventy years but forever. Our Lord founded no family of His own because He came to found the Church, an immense family lasting throughout time and eternity. Together with the apostles, every priest participates in the priesthood of Christ and receives from it his spiritual fatherhood for transmitting the life of grace to souls.

Even more fully than the apostles, the Blessed Virgin received this power and privilege. To her was given not the priestly character but the spirit of the priesthood in its fullness for she is at once the mother of God and the mother of men, the universal mediatrix of all graces in general and in particular. As she stood at the foot of the cross our Lord indicated John, the representative of redeemed humanity, and said to her: "Woman, behold thy son." Together with His mother, all the spouses of Christ who share Mary's virginity are called to share her spiritual motherhood of souls as well. And they, too, must be ready to pray and sacrifice themselves for their children.

From the fact that virginity has such greatness, it does not follow that virgins consecrated to God are always more perfect than faithful Christian mothers. Although a virgin is no doubt more perfect from one point of view, that is, because of her virginity, she can be simply less perfect, if she has less charity. Charity, the supreme virtue, unites us to God and neighbor and inspires and animates all the other virtues. The Christian virgin should be

humble in her virginity and not believe that her virginity makes her absolutely more perfect than some good mother who is continually sacrificing herself, in the spirit of Christ, for her children.

Virginity is not, then, the greatest of all virtues but the most perfect form of the virtue of chastity. It stands below the theological virtues, which unite us immediately to God; below prudence, which directs all the moral virtues; below the virtue of religion, which renders to God the worship that is His due and offers to Him the acts of religious chastity; and even below fortitude, which sacrifices not only certain pleasures but, if need be, life itself for God by enduring martyrdom. Ends always have precedence over means; the virtues, as means, are the more perfect the nearer they approach the end toward which they are ordered.

Although not the greatest virtue, virginity gives to charity a visible body, as it were, and, by the renouncement of all other loves, opens men's eyes to the splendor of love for God.

THE CONSECRATION OF VIRGINS

In his works St. Thomas often refers to the consecration of virgins, particularly in the Fourth Book of the Sentences, where he asks whether, among people consecrating themselves to the service of God by the vow of perpetual continence, a special veil should be given to virgins. His answer is as follows: "It is unfitting that the Church should have in her liturgy anything erroneous. But throughout the entire ceremony for the veiling of virgins mention is made of integrity of the flesh, as can easily be verified. Therefore the veil of virgins can be given only to virgins."

St. Thomas explains the reason for this as follows:

Every sensible thing the Church uses has a spiritual significance. And since a single corporeal thing fails to represent adequately something spiritual, one spiritual reality may sometimes be represented by several corporeal signs. The spiritual marriage of Christ and the Church is fruitful, for by it the sons of God are given birth; it is pure, for, as the Epistle to the Ephesians reads, "Christ also loved the Church, and delivered Himself up for it, . . . that He might present it to Himself, a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing." . . . For which reason, St. Paul writes (II Cor. 11: 2): "For I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."

Now bodily fruitfulness and virginity or integrity of the flesh are incompatible. Therefore two different signs are needed to represent the spiritual marriage of Christ and His Church, one to image its fruitfulness, the other to reflect its perfect purity or integrity.

Since on earth marriage represents the fruitfulness of the spiritual relationship between Christ and His Church, another symbol is needed to typify its integrity. The veiling of virgins accomplishes this in all its words and ceremonies. Because of that fact, only bishops, into whose keeping the Church has been committed, can give virgins the veil, acting as the friend and proxy of the bridegroom. Further, the pure integrity of Christ's union with the Church is symbolized perfectly by virginal continence but only imperfectly by the continence of widows. Therefore, although they too receive the veil, it is not given to them with the same solemnity.

The holy doctor himself raises the objection: "But the veiling of virgins confers no grace; if it did, it would be a sacrament and should be given to non-virgins as well that they may have the help of grace to observe continence." To this he gives answer:

In the consecration of virgins, as in the anointing of kings and other blessings of the same kind, grace is given if there is no obstacle on the part of the recipient. However, these consecrations and blessings are not called sacraments for they were not instituted, like the sacraments, to cure the sickness of sin.

For any eminent state of life some special help of grace is needed and is given by some sanctifying action; for example, in the consecration of kings and of monks and of nuns. These consecrations are acts belonging to the hierarchy . . . they have not, however, the nature of sacraments . . . monks and abbots are blessed . . . these blessings, unlike that of holy orders, give no power to those who receive them to dispense divine things . . .

Marriage is solemnized in . . . the array of the bridegroom and the bride and the gathering of their kindred. Now a vow is a promise made to God; wherefore the solemnization of a vow consists in something spiritual or something special pertaining to God; i.e., in some spiritual blessing or consecration which, in accordance with the institution of the apostles, is given when a man makes profession of observing a certain rule, in the second degree after the reception of holy orders as Dionysius states (Eccl. Hier. vi.). The reason of this is that solemnization is not wont to be employed, save when a man gives himself entirely to some particular thing;

. . . a vow is solemnized when a man devotes himself to the divine ministry by receiving holy orders, or embraces the state of perfection by renouncing the world and his own will by the profession of a certain rule.

To St. Thomas' mind, this consecration of persons is lasting, just as the consecration of a chalice endures as long as the chalice is a chalice.

Because of the excellence of virginity, the consecration of virgins is reserved to bishops. Whereas priests may bless marriages and give the veil to widows, only the bishop, into whose care the Church has been confided, may espouse virgins to Christ, for they are a figure of the Church, the spouse of the Savior.

St. Thomas himself brings up two more objections against this ancient custom of the Church, asking first whether it is not unjust to deny this solemn consecration to those who through violence have lost their virginity yet desire to give themselves to God. He answers this by saying that those who have been violated against their will keep the glory of their virginity in the eyes of God but, because it is so difficult not to take some illicit pleasure in the experience and the Church cannot pass judgment on individual consciences in this matter, the veil of virgins should not be bestowed on those who have suffered external violence to their virginity. Pope St. Leo considered it better that those who had lost their bodily integrity during the barbarian oppression should, out of humility and modesty, not seek to join a community of virgins.

The second objection St. Thomas introduces is that scandal would sometimes result when, through refusing someone the veil and consecration of virgins, it became known that she had lost her virginity. To this St. Thomas makes answer that the avoidance of scandal is not a sufficient reason for modifying the sacraments or sacramentals of the Church but that, according to certain theologians, in a particular case, to avoid scandal, those parts of the ceremony which belong to the substance of the consecration and blessing of virgins may be omitted and the word virginity replaced by the word chastity. As a matter of fact, the ceremonials of some religious orders, notably the Order of St. Dominic, contain certain modifications for the ceremony of veiling widows.

In all this St. Thomas' teaching conforms to tradition and follows very closely St. Ambrose's writings, especially the wording he used in consecrating virgins. These came at times even from Bologna and other neighboring cities to receive this consecration from him before the altar at

Milan. The same custom existed in the Churches of Africa and, as many documents show, goes back as far as the first century, and it was common teaching that only a bishop could perform this consecration. Many religious belonging to orders antedating the thirteenth century and even a few of recent foundation still receive this ancient consecration. In other orders, the solemn vow of virginity is considered its equivalent.

VIRGINITY, CONTEMPLATION, AND DIVINE UNION

If virginity is to be a spiritual flower of unfading perfection and delicacy, it must be carefully guarded. It needs exterior mortification of the body and the senses, particularly sight and touch, and interior mortification both of the imagination and its bent for day dreaming and of the heart and its weakness for forging chains to bind its own liberty to seek and find God. It must have the freedom of a strong flame to reach up to its infinitely good and beautiful Lord and love.

God gives the virtue of virginity. To keep it we must turn to the two great mediators deeded to us for the support of our weakness. We must consecrate ourselves to Mary, the Virgin of virgins, so that she may bring us close to Christ, who leads us to the Father, making real the words of the beatitude, “Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God.” Blessed are those who keep their hearts lifted up to the Most High. They will see Him face to face in heaven and even, though in another way, in this life—within themselves and within their brethren, in that inner sanctuary He deigns to make His home.

St. Thomas, in his Commentary on St. Matthew, remarks that a pure heart free from thoughts and affections apart from God is like a temple consecrated to the Lord where He may be contemplated even in this world. Nothing proves so great a hindrance to divine contemplation as impurity. The pure must possess peace, too, for as the Epistle to the Hebrews tells us, “Follow peace with all men, and holiness: without which no man shall see God.” Even during their lifetime, the saints, with hearts full of grace and divine justice, contemplate God in a way far beyond the reach of those who know Him only through material creation. The higher the effects of the First Cause, the better they make Him known to us. Pure hearts, as they come to know God better, make Him known more perfectly, being more like Him, tasting and knowing His sweetness.

By perfect chastity, the soul becomes purified of all inordinate affections and, freed from every illusion, mounts, by the gift of understanding, from the sensible to the spiritual and, without in this life being able to behold God as He is, yet sees more and more clearly what He is not and how He infinitely surpasses not only all material things, but all actual and potential spirits. And the soul gains deeper and deeper insight into the truth that the intimate life of God surpasses every idea that we can form of Him. Even on earth the pure of heart begin to taste experimentally that God is, in a sense, greater than truth or goodness or wisdom or love or justice or mercy or omnipotence, for His intimate life contains formally and eminently these infinite perfections, grounded and identified in an ineffable harmony, revealed only in the beatific vision, and never fully comprehensible except to His own uncreated intelligence.

Happy are those who hear the evangelical counsel of virginity and follow it perfectly. To them, as to St. Bernard, St. Thomas Aquinas, and St. John of the Cross, it is given to grasp the meaning of the book closed to so many, the Canticle of Canticles. Under the illumination of the Holy Ghost, who loves to stoop down to pure hearts, they discover in its pages spiritual beauties hidden from the most penetrating human critics.

In The Dialogue of St. Catherine of Siena certain passages form one of the loveliest spiritual canticles ever written and express the complete and deepening consecration of perfect virginity.

Wherefore these pierced feet are steps by which thou canst arrive at his side, which manifests to thee the secret of his heart, because the soul, rising on the steps of her affection, commences to taste the love of his heart.

But there are many who begin their course climbing so slowly, and render their debt to me by such small degrees, and with such negligence and ignorance, that . . . because they imperfectly climb to the first step of the Bridge of Christ crucified, they do not arrive at the second step of his heart.

These weak ones of whom I speak relax their energy, impatiently turning backwards, and sometimes abandon, under color of virtue, many of their exercises, saying to themselves, “This labor does not profit me.” All this they do because they feel themselves deprived of mental consolation.

The soul who has climbed this step with servile fear and mercenary love alone, falls into many troubles. Such souls should arise and become sons, and serve me, irrespective of themselves. . . . While they remain in the state of mercenary love I do not manifest myself to them. If they, through

displeasure at their imperfection, and love of virtue, dig up, with hatred, the root of spiritual self-love . . . they will be so pleasing to me that they will attain to the love of the friend. And I will manifest myself to them, as my Truth said in these words: “He who loves me shall be one thing with me and I with him, and I will manifest myself to him and we will dwell together.” This is the state of two dear friends, for though they are two in body, yet they are one in soul through the affection of love, because love transforms the lover into the object loved, and where two friends have one soul, there can be no secret between them, wherefore my Truth said: “I will come and we will dwell together,” and this is the truth.

Where did the soul know of this her dignity, in being kneaded and united with the blood of the Lamb, receiving the grace in holy baptism, in virtue of the blood? In the side, where she knew the fire of divine charity. . . . Because . . . I had finished the actual work of bearing pain and torment, and yet I had not been able to show, by finite things, because my love was infinite, how much more love I had, I wished thee to see the secret of the heart, showing it to thee open, so that thou mightest see how much more I loved than I could show thee by finite pain.

Such as arrive at the mouth show it by taking the office of the mouth. The mouth speaks . . . and tastes. . . . The soul does likewise. First she speaks to me with the tongue of holy and continual prayer . . . offering to me sweet and amorous desires for the salvation of souls, and actually announcing the doctrine of my Truth, admonishing, counselling, confessing . . . taking the food of souls, for my honor, on the table of the cross . . . swallowing, for the sake of the salvation of souls, insults, villainies, reproofs and persecutions. . . . She then tastes the relish of the fruit of toil and the delight of the food of souls, on fire with my love and that of her neighbor. . . .

The death of the sensitive will, after the soul has eaten of the affection of my charity, is the sign by which it is known, in truth, that the soul has arrived at the third step, that is the mouth. And in the mouth she finds peace and quiet, and nothing can disturb her peace and quiet, because her sensual will is dead. They who have arrived at this step, bring forth the virtues upon their neighbor without pain, not because pain is no longer painful to them, but because, their sensitive will being dead, they voluntarily bear pain for my sake. They run without negligence, by the doctrine of Christ crucified, and slacken not their pace on account of persecutions, injuries or pleasures of the world. They pass by all these things with fortitude and perseverance,

their affection clothed in the affection of charity, and eating the food of souls with true and perfect patience, which patience is a sign that the soul is in perfect love, loving without any consideration of self. For did she love me and her neighbor for her own profit, she would, in impatience, slacken her steps, but loving me, who am the Supreme Being and worthy to be loved, she loves herself and her neighbor through me alone, caring only for the glory and praise of my name, which causes her to be patient and strong to suffer, and persevering.

Such as these follow the Immaculate Lamb, my only-begotten Son, who was both blessed and sorrowful on the cross. He was sorrowful in that he bore the cross of the body, suffering pain and the cross of desire, in order to satisfy for the guilt of the human race, and he was blessed because the divine nature, though united with the human, could suffer no pain, but always kept his soul in a state of blessedness, being revealed without a veil to her, so that he was both blessed and sorrowful, for, while the flesh endured, neither the Deity nor the superior part of the soul, which is above the intellect, could suffer.

So these, my sons of delight, who have arrived at the third and fourth states, are sorrowful, for they carry both a physical and a mental cross—that is to say, they bear pain in their bodies according to my permission, and in their mind the cross of desire, for they are tortured by sorrow at the offence done to me, and the loss of their neighbor. Yet I say to thee that they are blessed, because the delight of charity which makes them so, cannot be taken away from them. . .

Souls, arising with anxious desire, run, with virtue, by the Bridge of the doctrine of Christ crucified, and arrive at the gate, lifting up their minds in me, and in the blood, and burning with the fire of love they taste in me, the eternal Deity, who am to them a sea pacific, with whom the soul has made so great a union, that she has no movement except in me.

These passages echo the song of St. Agnes: “It is Christ whom I love, I am become the bride of him whose mother is a virgin, and whose father knoweth not a woman, the instruments of his music sound sweetly in mine ears: When I love him I am chaste; when I touch him I am pure; when I possess him I am a virgin.”

St. Paul was speaking to all the faithful when he wrote: “For I am jealous of you with the jealousy of God. For I have espoused you to one husband that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ” (II Cor. 11: 2). The

faithful form one body, the Church, the spouse of Christ, which must persevere in faith and hope and love. Our insight into this supernatural mystery grows as we see that the spiritual union of Christ and the Church is fruitful and perfectly pure and that it needs to be symbolized in its fecundity by the sacrament of matrimony and in its absolute purity by the consecration of virgins, who, like the Church, bear the name of spouses of Jesus Christ.

When in heaven we shall see all the souls saved by the prayers and sacrifices of those whom Christ has chosen for close association in His inner life and the great redemptive mission and mystery, then only shall we understand the value and rich fruitfulness of this spiritual union.

PART III

THE LAWS OF PROGRESS IN LOVE OF GOD

CHAPTER XIII

ST. THOMAS' DOCTRINE ON THE INCREASE OF CHARITY AND MERITORIOUS ACTS

If there is one subject that is especially important for the spiritual life, it is unquestionably the increase of charity. Being the greatest of all virtues, charity ought to inspire and animate all the others by making them direct their every act to God, loved more than ever and above all things. No one can be saved without this supernatural virtue, meant to grow in us daily all our life long.

To insure giving an orderly treatment of the subject, we shall follow the plan outlined in St. Thomas (Summa theologica), considering first how and why charity can increase in us; secondly, whether every act of charity, no matter how imperfect, increases the virtue; thirdly, whether charity can go on increasing indefinitely; and fourthly, what perfection charity can achieve in this life. In the following chapters we shall show how fervor falls away because of venial sin and grows strong through daily Communion.

ARTICLE I

THE GROWTH OF CHARITY

Charity of any degree, however small, always loves God, the author of salvation, above all things, even self, and neighbor as self for love of God. Charity excludes no one. Any exclusion would mean a sin so grave as to destroy charity.

Granting that charity extends to all, we next inquire in what way it may be said to grow. We can have no doubt that it can and must grow in our souls, for St. Paul tells the Ephesians: "But doing the truth in charity, we may in all things grow up in Him who is the head, even Christ." And to the

Philippians he writes: “And this I pray, that your charity may more and more abound.” And to the Thessalonians: “And may the Lord multiply you and make you abound in charity towards one another and towards all men: as we do also towards you, to confirm your hearts without blame, in holiness, before God and our Father.” The words of the angel in the Apocalypse add: “He that is just, let him be justified still: and he that is holy, let him be sanctified still.” Even in the Old Testament in the Book of Proverbs the same idea finds expression: “But the path of the just, as a shining light, goeth forwards and increaseth even to perfect day.” The Council of Trent solemnly defined the truth found expressed in the Church’s prayer, Da nobis fidei, spei et caritatis augmentum. “Increase our faith, our hope, our charity.”

Theological reasoning explains this infallible teaching by reminding us that the Christian is called a traveler, a viator, since he is making his way toward God and heaven. It is

not by steps of the body, by local motion, that we draw near to God but by acts of increasingly perfect love, gressibus amoris, steps of love, as St. Gregory puts it. We must conclude, then, that in this life charity can always be increased; if not,

the Christian would no longer be a traveler, he would have stopped on his journey before reaching home. In this life he must push on along the road. It offers him nowhere to stop, to rest, no place to call his home.

The contrasting words found in St. Luke, “Woe to you that are filled: for you shall hunger,” and those recorded by St. Matthew, “Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice: for they shall have their fill,” remind us again that our home is not here. Home is where the heart is, and the heart is with its treasure, “If any man thirst, let him come to Me, and drink. . . . Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.”

Not only beginners and proficients but even those who have already reached a higher degree of perfection should continue growing in charity. Further, the perfect outpace the less generous because the nearer they come to God the more He attracts them, just as falling bodies move faster and faster as they near the earth owing to the increasing attraction it exercises over them. The progressive acceleration of the soul approaching God finds a most striking example in the Blessed Virgin Mary for she was unhampered by the slightest venial sin and continually drew nearer to God. In a lesser degree the spiritual progress of the saints obeys the same law;

even when weighed down by old age they understand and live the words of the Psalmist: “Thy youth shall be renewed like the eagle’s.”

Since even the lowest degree of charity requires that we love God above all things and our neighbor as ourselves, without any exception, charity evidently cannot acquire any greater extension. It can grow in intensity, becoming more and more deeply rooted in the will and more and more determined by increasingly generous actions to fly sin and to seek God.

If charity grew by addition, like a pile of golden coins, it would multiply but not really increase since it would not become more intense, multiplication belonging to the order of quantity not of quality, an entirely different thing. Charity really increases in us through becoming more and more deeply rooted in the will by informing it and determining it more completely to supernatural goods and leading it farther all farther from evil. The scholar offers us a parallel here. Even if he sometimes fails to keep up to the minute on every new discovery in his particular science, his knowledge deepens, sharpens, and becomes more certain because, although he has long known the principles and conclusions of his science, his understanding of their relationship keeps growing and he grasps more fully, intimately, and simply the formal object of his study. So charity grows and deepens in us by cleaving more and more closely to God for His own sake and to our neighbor for the sake of God. Incidentally Thomistic teaching on this point explains the necessity for the passive purification of the spirit to rid the great virtues of every imperfection and bring into strong relief their formal object, divine truth and goodness.

The next question to be considered is whether acts of charity themselves have the power to effect an increase of charity. If charity were a virtue acquired by repeated acts, it would certainly increase in the same way. But charity is an infused virtue, God-given at baptism. Since charity is a participation in God’s own life, the uncreated love uniting the three divine persons, only God can produce it in us. Since only God can give it, only He can increase it by making us further gifts. The same must be said of all the infused virtues and the gifts of the Holy Ghost. “And he that ministereth seed to the sower, will both give you bread to eat, and will multiply your seed, and increase the growth of the fruits of your justice: that being enriched in all things, you may abound unto all simplicity, which worketh through us thanksgiving to God.” God indeed and God alone gives the increase, sanctifying and making saints.

Nevertheless, although our acts of charity cannot of themselves effect an increase of the virtue of charity, they do concur in its growth in two ways. First, they concur from a moral point of view by meriting a right to a reward. The just really merit an increase of charity by their supernatural good works, as the Council of Trent defined. While waiting for their heavenly reward, they receive from God a recompense in this life, the growth of divine love within them so that they love God with greater strength and purity. The quietists forgot that the more disinterested a soul becomes, the more it desires its reward—to love God more and more.

In the second place, our acts of charity physically dispose the will to receive an increase of the divine life or infused charity, just as, at the moment of conversion or justification, our acts of faith, hope, and contrition dispose us to receive sanctifying grace and charity. Acts of charity in some way, enlarge our higher faculties so that they are capable of holding more; or better, they lift our powers up to new heights and make them ready to climb still hither. The infused virtues and the gifts of the Holy Ghost received with sanctifying grace grow along with grace since they form, as it were, one supernatural organism.

ARTICLE II

THE ACTS AND GROWTH OF CHARITY

Having seen that charity can increase in us and that it grows through the inpouring action of God and yet according to the measure of our merits and dispositions, we next ask whether charity grows with its every act, however imperfect. We know that a man of ten talents who acts as if he had but five talents acts imperfectly, because his action has less intensity than the virtue from which it proceeds. The question, therefore, arises whether an imperfect action of this kind can increase the virtue of charity by an added talent or degree.

Theologians before and after St. Thomas have argued this difficult question. As usual, some adopt either one of two extreme opposing theses, between which we find a third, keeping to the just mean and rising above the other two toward the heights of truth, St. Thomas’ own thought, as we believe.

Some theologians, even some great theologians, say that imperfect acts of charity do no merit condignly or in justice an increase of the virtue of charity. Others, like Suarez, take the opposite view, holding that every act of charity, even when imperfect, merits in justice an increase of the virtue and obtains it immediately.

St. Thomas seems to find the proper mean and the point of culmination when he says: “Every act of charity merits everlasting life, which, however, is not to be bestowed then and there, but at its proper time. In like manner every act of charity merits an increase of charity; yet this increase does not take place at once, but when we strive for that increase.” He adds: “Even when an acquired virtue is being engendered, each act does not complete the formation of the virtue, but conduces toward that effect by disposing to it, while the last act, which is the most perfect and which acts in virtue of all those acts that preceded it, reduces the virtue into act, just as when many drops hollow out a stone.”

St. Thomas demonstrates the truth of this doctrine as follows. Every act of charity, even when imperfect, merits in justice an increase of charity because it fulfills all the conditions for condign merit. It is a supernatural act done by a just man, God’s friend, for God’s sake, and our Lord has promised a reward for every least act of charity, even a cup of water given in His name. Besides, the Council of Trent has defined that by his own good works done through God’s grace a just man truly merits an increase of grace. Now any act of charity, even if markedly inferior to the degree of charity from which it proceeds, is a good work, a supernatural act of love for God, of divine friendship. It has not all the perfection required for generous progress; it contains imperfection, something formally not good, but the act itself is not bad, not a venial sin, however slight; and, although less good than a more intense act of charity, it is still intrinsically good and meritorious.

St. Paul says: “He who soweth sparingly shall also reap sparingly.” He reaps something however. And if the hairs of our head are all numbered and on judgment day we must answer for every idle word of ours, the Lord also takes account of every smallest act of charity; they are all written in the book of life and will receive their reward.

Besides, if we refuse to admit this conclusion, we get into serious difficulties. It would follow that imperfect acts performed by a great saint would not merit an increase of charity, whereas the generous, although

inferior, acts of a beginner would merit it. Anyone with ten talents who acted as if he had but nine would not merit, while another of one talent who used it to the full would merit. It seems, therefore, certain that every act of charity, even if imperfect, merits an increase of the virtue.

However, we hold with St. Thomas that imperfect acts of charity do not immediately obtain the increase which they merit, because God confers more sanctifying grace and charity only when a man is ready, by his dispositions, to receive them, just as, at the moment of conversion or justification, sanctifying grace is given according to the convert's dispositions, the fervor of his contrition.

Speaking in the language of talents, certainly one who has ten talents but acts as if he had only two, is not yet disposed to receive another, for his action falls short of the virtue from which it proceeds. In this we can see a certain analogy between the natural and the supernatural; for a man with intelligence above the average who barely applies himself to his work, makes little progress in scientific studies while another, despite the fact that he is not so gifted, gains an excellent grasp of his subject because of his industry. In the natural order, too, friendship grows stronger only through increasing generosity; niggardly ways may keep it going but can never add to it. It seems, then, that we must conclude with St. Thomas that, although imperfect acts of charity are meritorious, they do not immediately obtain their merited increase of grace.

The question at once arises as to precisely when good men do receive the increase of charity merited by their imperfect acts. Some Thomists reply that as soon as a man makes a fervent act of charity he thereby becomes disposed to receive the increase of grace due his imperfect past actions and so receives it. However, according to the same authorities, the increase of grace given him would be just as great without them. Other Thomists usually answer that this amounts to saying that the meritorious but imperfect actions already done are really deprived of the increase of grace they merit; they have then no condign merit and by them the just cannot really be said to grow in charity, contrary to the Council of Trent's declaration that the just man grows in grace and charity by good works.

Suppose a man with ten talents of charity lives for years as if he had only eight but, when dying, makes an act of charity of ten talents. Another man who is dying after having spent his whole life in mortal sin makes an identical act. Certainly the first man deserves a greater essential reward than

the second. His good but imperfect acts seem to merit a special increase of grace, distinct from what is due to the fervent act following them. And what is true for him is true for all.

The question still remains, then, as to when the just will receive the special increase of charity due their imperfect but meritorious acts, so frequent in our lives. It would be difficult to admit that this happens during a man's lifetime on the performance of a more fervent act, for then the increase received would correspond only to the disposition realized by this last act.

Some excellent Thomists consider that the just who pass through purgatory receive there the merited increase of grace on making an intense act of charity. Such acts are no longer meritorious, since the hour for merit is past, but they dispose the soul to receive the increase of charity already merited but not yet obtained for lack of proper dispositions. This would explain how the souls in purgatory grow, in a sense, in charity, their love of God intensifying as they become purified; for, although they can no longer merit, purgatory, like the passive purifications undergone in this life, makes them more capable of loving God.

According to the same theologians, when a just man dies and goes directly to heaven, the increase of charity due to his imperfect meritorious acts is accorded to him at the moment he enters into glory and is given the immediate vision of God. On entering heaven, the separated soul, although no longer able to merit, loves God to the full of its capacity and in the measure of all its past merits.

This opinion conforms to the general principle that the last disposition of a form or perfection is realized at the instant when the perfection itself comes into being. For example, the last disposition for sanctifying grace is an act of charity produced under God's inflowing action at the very moment of justification. And in the first moment of heaven the soul makes an act of love so intense that it disposes the soul to receive the increase of charity due to all its imperfect but meritorious acts. Thus participation in the beatific vision would correspond in intensity to the soul's charity and all its merits on earth.

Theology can say nothing further about things so high and mysterious; it has done much to arrive at statements that have the exactness and serious probability of these.

St. Thomas' doctrine that imperfect acts of charity do not immediately obtain their merited increase of charity invites us to a greater generosity than Suarez' contrary view. To Suarez, the Christian of ten talents who is content to act for a long time as if he had but two seems less abnormal than he does to St. Thomas. According to the Angelic Doctor, perseverance in fervor demands intense acts of charity, and normally acts even more intense than those preceding them, actus non remissos, sed intensiores. There should be a real ascent, a growing progress, an ever-increasing development of all the infused virtues and the gifts connected with charity. We should not be surprised that normal progress is like this, that really interior and generous souls usually receive the grace of infused contemplation and the divine union resulting from it. In fact, the Holy Ghost generally moves souls so far as, through the infused virtues and the gifts, they are habitually docile to Him. We cannot see why He would, without reason, move souls to imperfect acts, for they would then have received a high degree of infused virtues and gifts in vain. A just man who places no obstacle in the way of divine action will normally receive greater and greater virtues so that he may go forward courageously to God, in the light of that divine wisdom which is contemplation.

Obviously then, as the Carmelites of Salamanca observe, God is more glorified by a single act of charity of ten talents than by ten acts of charity of one talent each, or again one perfect man alone is more pleasing to God than many mediocre and lukewarm followers. Quality matters more than quantity. At the first moment of her life Mary's fullness of grace surpassed all the graces of all the saints. She is the diamond of greater worth than all the rest of God's jewels put together. And the conversion of one sinner like Magdalen or Saul to great sanctity gives more glory to God than the preservation of many sinners arrested at the first stages of the spiritual life.

In developing these inferences at length in their treatise on charity, the Carmelites of Salamanca have given us new insight into the normal progress of the infused virtues and the gifts and they have added a further confirmation to the teaching to be found in Christian Perfection and Contemplation on the relationship between infused contemplation and perfect charity in the normal life of sanctity.

To the question whether we should look on charity as a line stretching into infinity or, on the contrary, as something akin to the human body in having bounds beyond which its development cannot go, St. Thomas answers that we can put no stopping place to the progress of charity in this life.

Indeed, St. Paul's words to the Philippians reveal this truth to us: "Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect; but I follow after, if I may by any means apprehend, wherein I am also apprehended by Christ Jesus." And in the Apocalypse more advanced souls are told: "He that is just, let him be justified still." In this life no one dares say: "Now I love God enough." To set limits to love would mean leaving the way that leads to God or, at least, stopping on the way before the journey's end.

Theological reasoning explains this truth by considering the possible ways in which charity might be limited and by rejecting them all. In itself charity finds no limiting principle, for it is a participation in uncreated and infinite charity, just as sanctifying grace is a participation in the divine nature. In God who gives it, charity finds nothing to set bounds to it, for God has infinite power and can always increase our charity. Even the finiteness of our souls which receive charity places no limitations on its growth, since charity develops our capacity for more charity; by love the spiritual heart is enlarged, as it were, that it may hold more love. "I have run the way of Thy commandments, when Thou didst enlarge my heart." "Our mouth is open to you, O ye Corinthians; our heart is enlarged," says St. Paul. "You are not straitened in us; but in your own bowels you are straitened. But having the same recompense (I speak as to my children), be you also enlarged."

Even if we were to grow continually in charity, none of us could ever overtake Mary, the mother of God, for by God's predestination the initial fullness of graces she received at the moment of her immaculate conception surpassed even then the graces of all the saints, and it never stopped growing during her whole life. There is all the more reason why our charity could never equal Christ's because, from the first moment of His conception, He had an absolute fullness of charity proportionate to the uncreated grace uniting His sacred soul to the person of the Word.

A just man cannot attain in this life to the degree of charity he will have at home with God in heaven, for on entering into glory all will receive a last increase of the virtue. But, in line with what has just been said, it certainly

seems, as many Thomists teach, that a great saint, even while living, may have a degree of charity equal or superior to that possessed in heaven by the soul of an infant who died immediately after baptism. We can hardly doubt this in the case of the Blessed Virgin Mary, or even of St. Paul and St. John.

Nevertheless in heaven charity is more perfect than it is on earth from two points of view: first, it can never be lost, for the beatific vision of God's infinite goodness makes sin impossible; secondly, it is continually and completely occupied with God, suffering no interruptions from sleep and the other necessities of life on earth.

All these considerations lead us to ask whether men can have perfect charity in this life. St. Thomas answers by making two distinctions. We cannot now or ever love God as much as He deserves to be loved. Our return of love to His infinite lovableness must be finite. God alone, by His uncreated charity, can give Himself a love commensurate with His own lovableness. Further, in this life our charity cannot always be concerned with God; that is possible only in heaven.

However, our charity can be perfect in this world by avoiding not only everything contrary to it (mortal sin) but whatever would, of its nature, slow its ascent to God. Those who have the true spirit of the evangelical counsels and practice more and more perfectly the first commandment of divine love do love God perfectly in this life.

On the way of perfection, beginners are concerned principally with their battle against sin, proficients practice the virtues and grow in love of God and of neighbor, and the perfect seek above all to act only out of love of God, to cleave to Him, to enjoy Him and, like St. Paul, they desire to do so that they may die with Christ.

CHAPTER XIV

CHARITY AND VENIAL SIN

Having discussed why and how charity can increase, having explained that acts of charity, although unable directly to produce an increase of the virtue, do merit it and even physically dispose our will to receive it, we then took up the question of imperfect acts of charity. These, we said, are meritorious, even though they do not immediately obtain the increase of charity they merit.

The next subject to be considered is the effect of venial sin upon charity. The question whether charity is directly and intrinsically impaired by venial sin, just as it is entirely destroyed by mortal sin, concerns habitual charity, the virtue itself, not its acts. These certainly can become less fervent.

St. Thomas and other theologians explain that habitual charity is not lessened intrinsically and directly but only indirectly by venial sin; for, being a spiritual fire, charity by nature mounts upward as long as it keeps burning.

Venial sin cannot directly subtract from charity because venial sin is a disorder relative not to our last end, the object of charity, but only to the means to our end; it causes no direct loss, therefore, to the virtue by which we love God, our ultimate end, above all things. A sick man longs for health no less because he fails to keep faithfully to his diet. A scholar who makes an error in drawing deductions from an evident principle experiences no lessening of certitude in regard to the principle itself.

If God punished venial sin by a decrease of charity, the punishment would in a sense be graver than the offense, since venial sin does not turn us away from our last end, but a decrease of charity would rob us of strength to reach it.

This is a consoling point of doctrine, since it follows that, if anyone has had great charity and then afterward allowed himself to become lukewarm

without, however, falling into mortal sin, he does not go back to being a beginner again. He keeps his place as a proficient, even if his growth has stopped, and when he has done penance he should take up his spiritual life where he left off.

In two ways the virtue of charity is, nevertheless, indirectly injured by venial sin. First, venial sin, at the time when committed, prevents the application of charity, which cannot order to God the matter of inordinate acts of this kind. Moreover, if a just man has a habitual affection for any venial sin, the fervor of his charity becomes habitually weakened; that is, the infused virtue, without suffering any direct loss in itself, loses its radiant liberty of action. Tie up a man's arms for some time, and they will not lose their strength but they will lose their liberty of action. Let the light of a lantern burn as brightly as ever; but if the glass enclosing it gets dirtier and dirtier, the lantern will give less and less light. A spring may give as much water as before, but when it becomes smothered with weeds, its clear jet is dissipated and muddied.

The evil inclinations engendered by repeated venial sins make the exercise of love for God more difficult, merit as punishment the withholding of certain actual graces, and even serve to dispose a man for mortal sin. Love of pleasure, for example, although at first a venial sin, leads to grave falls.

Repeated sins of vanity, pride, jealousy, and sloth bind, as it were, the infused virtues and gifts of the Holy Ghost. Father Lallemant remarks that it seems astonishing that so many religious who have lived in the state of grace for forty or fifty years, said Mass daily, and followed all the exercises of the religious life, and consequently have the gifts of the Holy Ghost to a physically high degree, should yet make so few acts of the gifts and reach no intimacy with God. We need not be surprised, he adds; venial sins committed in great number, eagerness for recognition and praise and for whatever else flatters self-love, little jealousies and sharp words, and love of ease, have all kept the infused virtues and the gifts in bondage, and barred the actual graces necessary to produce their acts.

The Dialogue of St. Catherine of Siena gives us a good account of the way charity cools in many souls:

Some there are who have become faithful servants, serving me with fidelity, without servile fear of punishment, but rather with love. This very love, however, if they serve me with a view to their own profit, or the

delight and pleasure which they find in me, is imperfect. Dost thou know what proves the imperfect character of this love? The withdrawal of the consolations which they found in me, and the insufficiency and short duration of their love for their neighbor, which grows weak by degrees and oftimes disappears.

Towards me their love grows weak when, on occasion, in order to exercise them in virtue and raise them above their imperfection, I withdraw from their minds my consolation and allow them to fall into battles and perplexities. This I do so that, coming to perfect self-knowledge, they may know that of themselves they are nothing and have no grace, and, accordingly in time of battle fly to me as their benefactor, seeking me alone, with true humility, for which purpose I treat them thus, withdrawing from them consolation indeed, but not grace. At such a time these weak ones . . . sometimes abandon, under color of virtue, many of their exercises, saying to themselves, This labor does not profit me. . . . This happens because their love was originally impure, for they gave to their neighbor the same imperfect love which they gave to me, that is to say, a love based only on desire for their own advantage. . . .

For those who desire eternal life, a pure love, prescinding from themselves, is necessary, for it is not enough for eternal life to fly sin from fear of punishment, or to embrace virtue from the motive of one’s own advantage. Sin should be abandoned because it is displeasing to me, and virtue should be loved for my sake.

The bonds which the soul has made for itself must be cut away, for a single thread, as long as it remains unbroken, is enough to keep it from taking wing. Many such bonds hold us back without our clearly realizing it. To break them we must generously practice both exterior and interior mortification. We need, too, passive purification of the senses and the spirit so that, in the light of the gifts of understanding and knowledge, we may become conscious of the depth of our misery and the infinite greatness of God that we may be delivered from all our flaws and those defects in the inmost core of our faculties which hold back our upreaching faith, hope, and love.

If the soul allows itself to be purified, the Holy Ghost will not fail to enlighten it more and more according to the degree of its habitual docility, by leading it on to a greater and greater generosity. St. John of the Cross tells us: “Hence the more the soul dispossesses the memory of forms and

things which may be recalled by it, which are not God, the more will it set its memory upon God, and the emptier will its memory become, so that it may hope for Him who shall fill it." St. Catherine of Siena and all the great spiritual writers speak in the same way.

In heaven, faith gives way to vision, and hope to possession; but charity remains for all eternity. The blessed can never lose it, because the immediate vision of infinite Goodness will make mortal and venial sin absolutely impossible; nothing can anymore destroy charity, or lessen it in any way.

It is impossible for anyone seeing the divine essence, to wish not to see it. . . . The vision of the divine essence fills the soul with all good things, since it unites it to the source of all goodness; hence it is written (Ps. 16: 15): "I shall be satisfied when Thy glory shall appear"; and (Wisd. 7: 11): "All good things came to me together with her," i.e., with the contemplation of wisdom. In like manner neither has it any inconvenience attached to it: because it is written of the contemplation of wisdom (Wisd. 8: 16): "Her conversation hath no bitterness, nor her company any tediousness." It is thus evident that the happy man cannot forsake happiness of his own accord [i.e., he cannot turn from God seen face to face, or ever love Him less]. Moreover, neither can he lose happiness, through God taking it away from him. Because, since the withdrawal of happiness is a punishment, it cannot be inflicted by God, the just Judge, except for some fault; and he that sees God cannot fall into a fault, since the rectitude of the will, of necessity, results from that vision.

The summit of the life of charity is a love of divine friendship without end. To give us an idea of its duration, it is not enough to say that it will last for always, or to multiply millions of years by millions more; its span lies far beyond every multiplication of hours, or years, or centuries, beyond all time, however long we may imagine it, even above angelic time, measured by the succession of angelic thought. Charity, like the beatific vision, must be measured by eternity itself, the measure of the being of God, of His ever immutable thought and uncreated love. Even if time had no beginning and no end, it would not be at all like eternity, for time is always flying, and past, present, and future follow one after the other. Eternity is absolutely immutable, without any succession; it is a nunc stans, a changeless now and not a nunc fluens, a changing now, a present following on no past, preceding no future, an unmoving not a fugitive moment, an endless dawn

encompassing perfectly and all at once the interminable life of God, without beginning or end. We are told that musical geniuses hear the melodies they compose all at once, just as great philosophers have a synthesis of their subject that is like a single glance. These serve as dim analogies of the immediate vision of God and the love flowing from it; both will be in the most exact sense of the term life eternal, measured as God's own. So great a goal is worth much suffering, demands deep purification, and has as its normal prelude in this world charity and contemplation.

CHAPTER XV

NORMAL SPIRITUAL PROGRESS AND DAILY COMMUNION

As has already been so often said, traditional doctrine as explained by St. Thomas tells us that normal spiritual progress should not only continue but should become greater and greater as the soul draws nearer to God and is more attracted by Him, just as falling bodies fall faster and faster as they near the earth and are more drawn to it. The just man, then, in his journey to eternity, ought to push on by steps of love, gressibus amoris, as St. Gregory said, going ahead more and more generously as he approaches God. Normally those in the unitive way make more rapid progress than beginners, those in the purgative way. In their last years, the saints, despite the weight of age, go forward more swiftly along the upward way to God than they did at first, although then the attraction of newness helped to carry them along. We have a striking example of this truth in St. Thomas' last years, for he became so occupied with contemplating God that he could no longer continue dictating the Summa theologica and left it unfinished.

St. Thomas knew that, unlike violent movements, that is, movements contrary to the natural tendency of the mover, all natural movement, like that of falling bodies, is more rapid when approaching the term or end naturally fitting for it. He adds, as we have seen, that the same is true in the order of grace: "Qui sunt in gratia, quanto plus accedunt ad finem, plus debent crescere." Those in the state of grace ought to grow spiritually in proportion to their nearness to their last end, according to the words of St. Paul to the Hebrew, "comforting one another, and so much the more as you see the day approaching."

The progress of souls attracted by God ought to follow the same law of accelerating motion in the spiritual realm as a movement of bodies drawn

by the force of gravity in the material universe. St. Augustine's words express this thought: "Wherever I go, love is the weight that draws me."

But, as a matter of fact, spiritual growth often resembles the slowing motion of a stone thrown into the air: its speed falls off until the stone comes to a standstill and then begins to fall earthward. Granted that this frequently happens to souls, we need not for that reason look upon it as normal, since it is an abnormality resulting from negligence and sin, which weigh the soul down and finally smother the fiery up- thrust of grace.

If we consider the nature of charity, we realize that it is an infused virtue tending to unite us more and more completely to God, to respond ever more perfectly to the first commandment: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with all thy strength and with all thy mind: and thy neighbor as thyself." The more our love of God grows, the greater becomes our supernatural capacity for loving Him; love empties itself more and more, as it were, that it may be filled with the fullness of the sovereign Good.

EFFECTS OF FERVENT DAILY COMMUNION

This doctrine about grace finds strong confirmation in the Church's teaching concerning the effects of daily Communion. When we receive daily with the necessary dispositions and a right and pious intention, in a spirit of faith and with the desire to overcome our inordinate inclinations and to advance in God's love, it produces in us ex opere operato an increase of charity proportionate to the degree of our fervor. Today's Communion disposes us to receive tomorrow's more worthily by increasing our charity and preparing us to communicate, if not with more sensible fervor, for that is accidental, at least with greater readiness of will for God's service, a livelier substantial devotion, even in spite of any aridity. In principle, or normally, then, if we remain generous, each of our Communions ought to be not only as fervent as the one preceding, but even more so and to produce in us an increase of charity proportionate to our growing fervor. We should make steadily increasing progress in loving God. If we put no obstacle in the way and especially if we receive Communion every day with better dispositions, our love of God becomes a stronger and stronger spiritual attraction drawing us more and more powerfully to the Sovereign Good.

All this was verified in the life of the Blessed Virgin, for no venial sin, no imperfection, choked up the wellspring of her charity. The initial fullness of grace she received at the moment of her immaculate conception surpassed the graces of all the saints and angels together. She is the one perfect diamond among God's innumerable precious stones. And each succeeding and growing act of charity increased her initial spiritual treasure in a way too marvelous for our understanding.

Mary's supernatural love grew particularly when she received Holy Communion from St. John. She had within her no result of original sin, no imperfection to abate the ardor of her charity. The principal condition for a fervent Communion is huger for the Eucharist. Even the greatest saints have never experienced the same spiritual hunger as the Blessed Mother knew for her Eucharistic Lord. Yet St. Catherine of Siena desired the Eucharist so ardently that one day when she had been refused Communion a piece of the large host which the celebrant held in his hands detached itself and came to her miraculously. The same miracle took place, too, in the first Communion of Blessed Imelda, who died of love during her thanksgiving.

Think, then, of the attractive force drawing Mary's soul to Christ really present in the Eucharist. With a heart at once virginal and motherly she loved Him not only as a beloved but as a really adorable Son. Entirely forgetting herself, she relived during the Mass celebrated by St. John the sacrifice of the cross. Better than anyone else she understood in what a profound sense these two sacrifices make but one, the same Victim being offered and the same Priest offering, "idem nunc offerens, ministerio sacerdotum," as the Council of Trent says. As she had on Calvary, Mary united herself daily more closely with Christ's sacrifice perpetuated on the altar and she shared in it by an increasingly fervent Communion.

On His side, Christ had the greatest desire for Mary's definitive sanctification. He asks only to communicate to us the treasure of grace overflowing from His heart. On earth He suffered much on finding obstacles to His divine generosity. In Mary no obstacle ever existed. Her communion with Christ in the Eucharist was the closest possible fusion of their two spiritual lives. He the Redeemer, she the coredemptrix, herself ransomed by an act of perfect preservative redemption, the highest of all Christ's works. When she received Communion, Mary became again the living tabernacle of our Savior's sacred body, a pure tabernacle a thousand

times more precious than any golden ciborium, or tower of ivory, ark of the covenant, vas insigne devotionis.

What St. Teresa says of transforming union in the seventh castle gives us a little insight into the effects of Mary's Communion. St. Teresa tells us that this spiritual union is as close as light to the crystal it passes through, as fire to the glowing iron which has taken on its properties. The rays of supernatural light and heat coming from Christ's soul and divinity more and more enlightened the intellect and strengthened the will of His virgin Mother. These spiritual goods, her infused wisdom and shining goodness, the humble Virgin could in no way refer to herself; she never ceased giving glory to God for them. In her was fully realized our Lord's words as recorded by St. John: "As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me."

During her life on earth, Mary our Mediatrix was, especially at the time of Holy Communion, a pure mirror reflecting back to Christ the supernatural rays received from Him while at the same time in some way condensing them to diffuse them into our souls.

In the case of the saints, venial sins of weakness, impossible to avoid entirely, retard their progress in God's love; however, their growth in humility because of such slight offenses in some way compensates for them, and that is why God permits these negligences in His elect. At any rate, the saints go forward ever more quickly to God as they get older, despite the burden of age. The priest of eighty can say with ever new fervor when beginning Mass: "Introibo ad altare Dei, ad Deum qui laetificat juventutem meam." The Eucharist can always really renew the spiritual youth of the priestly soul and of any interior soul. The tree of life in the garden of Paradise could never have kept us young in so marvelous a way.

HOLY COMMUNION AND ARRESTED PROGRESS

Nevertheless, even among daily communicants, we find arrested souls, no longer making enough progress and consequently not to be called either beginners or proficients or perfect; for a dwarf is neither a perfect child, adolescent, nor adult.

Retarded souls manifest an analogous deviation from the spiritual norm. They are in the state of grace, and when they communicate their

Communions are not entirely ineffectual, really producing in them a slight increase of charity. But a contrary growth of deliberate venial sins covers over this minimum increase, and progress may become slower and slower, like a stone thrown into the air.

Certainly St. Thomas and many other theologians agree in saying that venial sins do not directly subtract from charity considered in itself; for, being an infused virtue, it cannot be developed directly like the acquired virtues by the repetition of virtuous acts and consequently cannot be intrinsically impaired by their cessation. Further, venial sin, being a disorder relative not to our last end but to the means to our end, cannot be punished by a direct lessening of charity, since charity concerns our ultimate end, God to be loved above all things. Mortal sin can indeed destroy charity as the two are incompatible, and mortal sin turns us away from our last end. Venial sin, however, cannot impair charity in itself. Anyone who had ten talents of charity two years ago and has not sinned mortally since, still has ten talents of charity today in spite of venial sins committed during that time.

Although this is true, as we have seen, venial sins indirectly work harm to charity and even dispose the soul for mortal sin. They diminish the fervor of charity extrinsically by keeping it from applying itself to some object, by preventing it from radiating; they hedge it in with obstacles and rob it of liberty of action, developing inordinate inclinations that hamper the exercise of love of God and neighbor. Thus charity gives less light though it burns as before; it goes in bondage though no less strong.

It follows that if a soul has a habitual and growing attachment to venial sin, the sacramental increase of charity is not wholly lost but it grows less each day. Please God it may not come to a complete halt. If it did, then Holy Communion would indeed produce no effect whatever; it would no longer be a good Communion; the attachment to venial sin would have at last disposed the soul for mortal sin, directly or indirectly willed. The old adage, “Not to go forward is to go back,” would then be completely verified. No longer to grow at all by daily Communion is to fall back as far as mortal sin, a bad state to be in.

Probably many who seem to make no progress in spite of frequent Communion actually receive at least the grace to avoid mortal sin, for which repeated venial sin disposes them. If they did not receive Communion, they would fall into grave sin; the fact that they do not, that

they resist temptation, shows that they are still making progress and meriting. Therefore, if they avoid mortal sin or at least, after having sinned, do not make a bad confession, their Communions received with the good intention to resist temptation produce at least some feeble growth of charity though it may be hidden by venial sins and their effects. Too often our increase of charity is slight because, owing to lack of fervor, we do not approach often enough the fire of grace, the Eucharist. And sometimes the growth of charity is not only feeble but continually more feeble, a disorder consequent on persistent and progressive attachment to venial sin. Notwithstanding, normally every Communion ought to be more fervent and more fruitful than the preceding, not in accidental, sensible devotion, but in the substantial devotion of the will.

This doctrine leads good people to ask themselves whether throughout years of daily Communion they are advancing more quickly or more slowly. In our spiritual life there lies a mystery known only to God and judged in many different ways by men. Often saints, the Curé of Ars for example, think they are slipping back, whereas in reality, by receiving Communion frequently and meriting, they are not only journeying to God at a faster and faster pace but also growing in insight into their own misery. On the other hand, many who are making no progress at all have a false sense of security springing from nothing less than carelessness and neglect of sanctification or even, it may be, of salvation.

In reacting against the Jansenistic proscription of frequent Communion, we must not fall into the other extreme as expressed in the laxist proposition that frequentation of confession and Communion, even by those who live like pagans, is a sign of predestination. This proposition was condemned by Innocent XI.

CONDITIONS FOR FERVENT COMMUNION

For Holy Communion to produce its effects in us, we must receive it with the right intentions. For fervent Communion, we must have a living faith and that ardent desire called hunger for the Eucharist. There is no question here of any desire of the sensible order, like certain consolations sometimes accorded to us by our Lord, but of spiritual aspiration, founded on the absolute certitude of supernatural faith in the Eucharist as the good and

refreshment for our spiritual forces, fire for our heart, light for our intellect, strength for our will, peace for our passions.

If we wonder how it can happen that we do not experience any spiritual hunger for the Eucharist, we ought to remember that doctors advise people who have lost their appetite to take exercise. The same can be said in regard to our spiritual life. We lack exercise. At least one act of mortification a day is a necessity for us; and little by little we should develop a spirit of sacrifice. It will give us peace and joy by putting to death our egoism, self-love, and pride, and by making room in our souls for love of God and neighbor until they take first place there. Then, by daily sacrifice and through the growth of supernatural love, we shall indeed hunger for the Eucharist.

Before approaching the holy table, we do well to remember how Mary received Communion and to ask her to obtain grace for us that our hearts may be so purified that when our Lord comes to us He will find no obstacle to His grace, but only an ardent desire to receive Him. Then we shall allay His burning thirst for our salvation and sanctification. Then in Communion and thanksgiving, we shall truly find the Eucharistic heart of Christ and grow in appreciation of that supreme act of love by which it is given to us in the holy sacrament. We shall see more clearly how the Eucharistic heart is indeed a heart that loves us, that waits for us patiently, hears us eagerly, burns with new graces to give us and longs to speak to listening hearts.

Blessed Grignon de Montfort advises us at Communion time to ask Mary to share with us her own sentiments in receiving; to obtain for us a loving faith in the mystery of redemption, and in the infinite value of the sacrifice of the cross perpetuated on our altars; to give us a deeper understanding of how Holy Communion ought to be daily a more intimate participation in that sacrifice, that is, in the sentiments our Lord Himself had when He offered Himself for us on Calvary and in those ever living in His heart as He continues to offer Himself through the ministry of His priests.

If we always had these dispositions, every Communion would be more fervent than the one before, and our journey to God would, by the same token, be made at greater and greater speed, like the saints’. This would be nothing extraordinary, but merely the normal life of generosity, even as in the life of grace the normal thing is never to sin mortally after baptism. Frequent mortal sin in the baptized is an absolute disorder killing what was meant to last forever and flower forth in glory—the life of grace. Not only

should sanctifying grace never be destroyed after baptism, but it ought to go on developing until death in proportion to our nearness to God and His growing attractive force on our souls. In following this normal way generously, souls ordinarily arrive at loving contemplation of the mysteries of faith, and particularly that mystery daily renewed for us, the Mass. Certainly this is the meaning of the quotation from St. Thomas cited at the beginning of the chapter: “Qui sunt in gratia, quanto plus accedunt ad finem, plus debent crescere.” Those who are in the state of grace ought to grow spiritually all the more as they near the end of their journey to eternity.

CHARITY AND THE GIFT OF WISDOM

That the virtues and the seven gifts grow together with charity, is especially true of the gift of wisdom, the highest gift of all, with a particular affinity for the great virtues. Therefore the apostle St. James teaches us to ask for the light of wisdom: “But if any of you want wisdom, let him ask of God . . . and it shall be given him.” Blessed Grignon de Montfort tells us that we must ask for it with a firm and lively faith and without hesitation; whoever wavers in his faith cannot hope to obtain it. And we must ask for it with pure faith, without grounding our prayer on sensible consolations, visions, or personal revelations. Although all these may be genuine and good, as they were in the lives of some of the saints, it is always dangerous to depend on them, and faith may become less pure and meritorious in the degree in which it is based on extraordinary and sensible graces of this kind. In what the Holy Ghost makes known of the wonders and beauties of wisdom, of our need for it and God’s desire to give it to us, we find powerful motives for desiring and asking wisdom of God in all faith and eagerness.

The just man, the wise man, lives by faith without seeing, without feeling, although he may be attacked by doubts and darkness of mind, of illusions in the imagination, of disgust and boredom of heart, and sadness and anguish of soul. The wise do not ask to see the extraordinary things saints have seen, nor to taste sweetness in their prayers and devotions; they ask with faith for divine wisdom, and it ought to be held as more certain that it will be given to them (Jas. 1: 5) than if an angel had come down from heaven to assure them of it, because Wisdom Himself has said: “For every

one that asketh, receiveth" (Luke 11: 10). "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father from heaven give the good Spirit to them that ask Him?" (Luke 11: 13.)

We must, moreover, ask for wisdom with perseverance, for if we are to acquire this precious pearl and have this infinite treasure, we must use a holy importunity with God, or we shall never receive it. Whoever would obtain wisdom, must ask for it day and night, without growing weary or disheartened. Happy will he be if he obtains it after ten, twenty, or thirty years of prayer, and even an hour before death. . . .

The Holy Ghost Himself has composed a prayer to express our plea for wisdom: "God of my fathers, and Lord of mercy, who hast made all things with thy word, . . . give me wisdom, that sitteth by thy throne, and cast me not off from among thy children. . . . Send her out of thy holy heaven, and from the throne of thy majesty, that she may be with me and may labor with me, that I may know what is acceptable with thee. . . . For by wisdom they were healed, whosoever have pleased thee, O Lord, from the beginning" (Wisd., chap. 9).

VOLUME 2

PART I

CROSSES OF THE SENSES

CHAPTER I

THE PASSIVE PURIFICATION OF THE SENSES

When speaking of mortification or active purification we have already said that we must impose it upon ourselves chiefly for the following reasons: (1) to correct whatever inordinate tendencies resulting from original sin remain after baptism; (2) to destroy the results of our personal sins and to make reparation for offending God; (3) to prevent an overdevelopment of our natural activity and consequent injury to the life of grace, together with an increasing blindness to the infinite sublimity of our supernatural end; (4) to imitate Christ crucified and to work with Him for the salvation of Souls.

Our Lord Himself pointed out this fourth reason to us when He said: “If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.” In quoting these words, St. Luke remarks that Christ said them “to all.” To mortify ourselves still falls short, in fact, of what is necessary; we must bear patiently as well the crosses God sends us to purify us, to make us like to our Savior, and, in a sense, to so continue the mystery of redemption with Him, by Him, and in Him until the end of time.

What Christian terminology calls “the Cross” by analogy with the sufferings and death of our Lord, is made up of the daily physical and moral trials arising from our relations with the world of things and of men but especially of those sufferings sent more directly by God to make us more like Christ Jesus, who became “obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross” for the ransom of mankind. “As the Father hath given Me commandment, so do I.” All Christians, each in the measure of his capacity, must go even to these lengths to follow our divine Master.

The necessity of the cross is laid on us principally for two reasons. The first is that the roots of evil we bear within us go much deeper than we may think, and we hardly know where these germs of death are to be found.

Even when we have mortified ourselves and tried hard to be regular and fervent, we still have many unconscious faults: egoism in various forms, even in our prayers and devotions, in study and the apostolate. Natural eagerness, spiritual sensuality, intellectual pride, self-judgment and self-will, all these prevent God's kingdom from becoming deeply established in us and keep us from closer union with Him. A vast difference exists between regularity, even when accompanied with a certain fervor, and true sanctity. The cross patiently borne for love bridges the distance between these two. Our Lord knows better than we do where the evil in us lies; He sends messengers to tell us, not always too charitably, the truth about ourselves and to put a finger on our touchiest points. He comes Himself, when necessary, with metal and fire to cut and cauterize our wounds, the principles of corruption which prevent us from becoming the living image of His Son.

The second reason why the cross is imposed on us has to do with our two great models, Jesus and Mary. They had no need for purification; they suffered for our redemption. We must imitate them in this. Our association with our Lord in His redemptive work keeps pace with the growth of our union with Him, and He Himself used the cross as the principal means for redeeming the world, the supreme manifestation of His love for the Father and for us.

Consequently, as the lives of all the saints prove, the necessity of the cross is proportionate to the purification souls need and to the degree of their union with Christ, as well as of the apostolic and reparative life God efficaciously wills for them. Some souls, still in their baptismal innocence, have less need for purification; others, though already quite pure, live in almost continual suffering because our Lord calls them to an incomparably higher perfection than that which contents so many easily satisfied Christians. The more God loves us, the heavier crosses He sends us, and the more they resemble the cross carried by Christ and shared by His Blessed Mother.

To bear the cross patiently, we must understand it, see where it leads, and carry it in the light of love. It is therefore good for us to know the different ways in which God usually tries souls. Some crosses are intended to purify the senses and subject them to the spirit; these occur frequently and are common to many persons, especially to beginners. Other crosses are of the spirit. These have for their purpose the progressive supernaturalization of

the soul and its growing subjection to God. Trials of this kind are the lot of a small number of advanced souls.

Spiritual writers properly speak, then, of two kinds of trials, calling one passive purification of the senses and the other passive purification of the soul, designations that help us to determine what is essential to each and what trials commonly accompany them. And thus we can come to understand why souls must undergo a twofold passive purification to arrive at the full perfection of Christian life.

For the sake of order, the following questions will be taken up in this chapter in regard to the passive purification of the senses: first, the necessity for purification; secondly, its psychological description; and thirdly, its theological and causal explanation. In subsequent chapters the rules for direction appropriate for this state, together with its purifying effects and accompanying trials, will be discussed. Lastly we shall see just when the passive purification of the senses normally takes place, whether at the beginning of the illuminative way or considerably later.

ARTICLE I

THE NECESSITY FOR PURIFICATION

The spiritual imperfections of beginners (possible paths to pride, sensuality, and sloth of a spiritual kind) make purification necessary, as St. John of the Cross shows. These imperfections are, as it were, so many modulations of the seven capital sins appearing as different deviations in the spiritual life but all leading back to the principal ones just spoken of above. St. John of the Cross confines himself exclusively to the consideration of the trouble these cause in our relations with God, but they work no less harm to our relations with our neighbor and to the apostolate entrusted to us.

A man may become immoderately attached to sensible consolations and seek them for themselves, forgetting that they are not an end but a means; thus he may come to prefer the flavor of spiritual things to their essence. Spiritual greediness of this kind, when unsatisfied, begets impatience and, as soon as “the narrow path” has to be taken, spiritual sloth and a distaste for the work of sanctification so frequently referred to by early writers under the name of acedia.

If, instead, everything goes as we would have it, we take pride in our perfection and judge others severely, posing as masters when we are nothing but poor disciples. Spiritual pride, St. John of the Cross says, leads beginners to avoid masters who disapprove of their spirit and even sometimes to harbor ill will toward them. They look for guides to suit their tastes, desire to be intimate with them, and confess their sins to them in such a way as "to excuse themselves rather than to accuse themselves. . . . And sometimes they seek another confessor to tell the wrongs they have done, so that their own confessor shall think they have done nothing wrong at all."

This hypocrisy pointed out by St. John of the Cross in beginners, who need to undergo the passive purification of the senses, shows clearly that, for him, they are beginners in the sense in which that term is generally understood and that we should take literally and in the ordinary sense of the words what is said in The Dark Night: "the night of sense is common and comes to many; these are the beginners." It cannot, therefore, be admitted, as some hold, that the beginners referred to here are already living in the unitive way after passing through active purification and that they merit the name of beginners only from a very special point of view, so far as they are making a beginning, not in the interior life, but in the passive ways, considered as more or less extraordinary and beyond the normal way.

The faults St. John of the Cross speaks of certainly show that he is talking about real beginners, not in a special sense, but in the traditional sense of the word, taken in its full and unwatered meaning with particular reference to those having either a contemplative vocation or a call to the apostolate, the overflowing of contemplation.

Many other faults companion those remarked by St. John of the Cross, but he scarcely comments on them since he concerns himself, as has been said, only with our relations with God and not, as it were, with the repercussions these faults have on study and the apostolate. However, to round out his thought on this point presents little difficulty.

Beginners—and the retarded, too, of whom there are but too many—devote themselves to study more out of curiosity than from love of truth and, as they fail to appreciate the value of truth, they take insufficient precautions against error. They are likely to overevaluate themselves, to become irritated when others seem not to recognize their worth. Jealousy and envy lead them to disparage fellow workers more talented and more

disinterested than themselves and so to block the good influence these might have exerted on others, who may fail, therefore, to advance or even to persevere because of this lack. People who do things like this may work great harm to the general good without being conscious of it. Even in scholarly religious circles a thousand petty passions and intrigues may influence minds and result in books and reviews becoming tainted with untruth, even when, and perhaps especially when, all concerned profess to be quite objective. Irritating controversies arise only too often because those concerned have but relative good faith.

Those who give themselves to the apostolate bring much natural eagerness and self-seeking to it and they unconsciously make themselves the center of their activity and attract souls either to themselves or to the groups to which they belong instead of to our Lord Jesus Christ. And when trials come they complain and allow themselves to sink into discouragement. Anyone who sets out to indicate all the nuances of the seven capital sins on this level of human activity, either in beginners or in the great number of retarded souls, would never be done.

All this shows us the necessity for profound purification. Exterior, and especially interior, mortification can doubtless correct many of these faults, but what we impose on ourselves cannot suffice to tear up the roots that reach down into the depths of our faculties. The remains of sin impregnate, as it were, our temperament and character. We are unconscious of this, but our neighbor is not and sometimes, without saying anything, suffers much because of it. St. John of the Cross says:

But neither from these imperfections nor from those others can the soul be perfectly purified until God brings it into the passive purgation of that dark night whereof we shall speak presently. It befits the soul, however, in so far as it can, to contrive to labour, on its own account, to purge and perfect itself, so that it may merit being taken by God into that Divine care wherein it becomes healed of all things that it was unable of itself to cure. Because, however greatly the soul itself labours, it cannot actively purify itself so as to be in the least degree prepared for the Divine union of perfection of love, if God takes not its hand and purges it not in that dark fire, in the way and manner that we have to describe.

Further, to remedy the faults of the proficient, there must later be another much more grievous and proportionately more fruitful purification of the spirit.

ARTICLE II

PSYCHOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE PASSIVE PURIFICATION OF THE SENSES

In describing this state, many authors place particular emphasis on its negative aspect: the loss of all sensible devotion and the great difficulty experienced in discursive meditation. They give us the impression that it is a time of relapse rather than of progress, not bringing out what is positive and principal in the night of the senses: a strong desire for God, a sign of the beginning of infused contemplation, the entrance into a new way.

It is commonly and truly said that, in the passive purification of the senses, the soul experiences complete sensible aridity in prayer and pious exercises; nothing offered to it in meditation or in the books it used to love attracts it anymore; it no longer has any taste for these things and everywhere finds dryness and sterility. It has the impression of being left in darkness and penetrating cold, as though the sun which gave light and warmth to the spirit had ceased. Sometimes this painful aridity engenders a disgust for spiritual things and even a sort of desolation, especially in souls temperamentally inclined to sadness, souls that formerly received sensible consolations. In the words of the Book of Job, they become a burden to themselves, “factus sum mihimetipsi gravis.” They have no spirit for prayer or for work, and yet they realize how necessary prayer is. They ask themselves whether their aridity is lukewarmness, whether it comes from some partly unconscious fault of their own, for example, from presumption which they have taken for zeal. If they consult others, many wish to persuade them that their trouble is due to melancholy and that they ought to take the appropriate remedies for it: exercise, diversion, and exterior works.

Authors usually add that sensible aridity is a privation of merely accidental, but not of substantial, devotion. The will to give oneself generously to the service of God is not lost, but the senses and imagination are left in a kind of emptiness and the sensuous appetency finds no savor in anything. The disgust experienced with everything is really involuntary and fails to affect the will, which is as far above the sensuous appetency as the intellect is above the senses and imagination.

All this is true; but we must consider aridity or dryness of the sensuous appetency more closely so as to distinguish it from spiritual sloth or acedia, the privation of substantial devotion itself, a disgust for spiritual things both culpable and voluntary, if not in itself at least in the negligence which gives

it birth. To confuse the night of the senses with spiritual sloth would be a grave speculative and practical error leading straight to quietism.

To draw a clear distinction between them, we shall have to return to the description of the passive night of the senses left us by St. John of the Cross, who plumbed the depths of St. Gregory the Great's doctrine on this point. In the Middle Ages Hugh of St. Victor and later Tauler developed this teaching. Together with these masters, we must insist on stressing the positive aspect of the state of purification, that is, a strong desire for God and for perfection, rather than the negative characteristics of aridity and difficulty in meditating. Indeed the soul makes great progress during this period because of the profound working of God within it, and this divine activity and the passive state resulting from it are plainly the chief elements of the state, although the negative notes of dryness and quasi-impossibility to meditate serve as the chief means of evidencing it, especially at first.

The description given by St. John of the Cross brings out what is most fundamental, positive, and divine in this state and will serve to help us get beyond its negative aspects to the supernatural reality produced by God. According to St. John of the Cross three principal signs, already noted by Tauler, manifest this state. He expresses it thus in The Dark Night:

The first (sign) is whether, when a soul finds no pleasure or consolation in the things of God, it also fails to find it in anything created; for, as God sets the soul in this dark night to the end that He may quench and purge its sensual desire, He allows it not to find attraction or sweetness in anything whatsoever. Hence it may be laid down as very probable that this aridity and insipidity proceed not from recently committed sins or imperfections. For, if this were so, the soul would feel in its nature some inclination or desire to taste other things than those of God. . . . Since, however, this lack of enjoyment in things above or below might proceed from some indisposition or melancholy humour, which oftentimes makes it impossible for the soul to take pleasure in anything, it becomes necessary to apply the second sign and condition.

The second sign whereby a man may believe himself to be experiencing the said purgation is that ordinarily the memory is centred upon God, with painful care and solicitude, thinking that it is not serving God, but is backsliding, because it finds itself without sweetness in the things of God. And in such a case it is evident that this lack of sweetness and this aridity come not from weakness and lukewarmness; for it is the nature of

lukewarmness not to care greatly or to have any inward solicitude for the things of God . . . for lukewarmness consists in great weakness and remissness in the will and in the spirit, without solicitude as to serving God; whereas purgative aridity is ordinarily accompanied by solicitude, with care and grief, as I say, because the soul is not serving God. And although this may sometimes be increased by melancholy or some other humour (as it frequently is) it fails not for this reason to produce a purgative effect upon the desire, since the desire is deprived of all pleasure, and has its care centred upon God alone. . . . When the cause is aridity, it is true that the sensual part of the soul has fallen low, and is weak and feeble in its actions, by reason of the little pleasure which it finds in them; but the spirit, on the other hand, is ready and strong.

St. John of the Cross insists on the positive character of the second sign:

For the cause of this aridity is that God transfers to the spirit the good things and the strength of the senses, which, since the soul's natural strength and senses are incapable of using them, remain barren, dry and empty. For the sensual part of a man has no capacity for that which is pure spirit, and thus, when it is the spirit that receives the pleasure, the flesh is left without savour and is too weak to perform any action. But the spirit, which all the time is being fed, goes forward in strength, and with more alertness and solicitude than before, in its anxiety not to fail God; and if it is not immediately conscious of spiritual sweetness and delight, but only of aridity and lack of sweetness, the reason for this is the strangeness of the exchange; for its palate has become accustomed to those other sensual pleasures upon which its eyes are still fixed, and, since the spiritual palate is not made ready or purged for such subtle pleasure, until it finds itself becoming prepared for it by means of this arid and dark night, it cannot experience spiritual pleasure and good. . . .

These souls whom God is beginning to lead through these solitary places of the wilderness are like to the children of Israel; to whom in the wilderness God began to give food from Heaven, containing within itself all sweetness, and, as is there said, it turned to the savour which each one of them desired. But withal the children of Israel felt the lack of the pleasures and delights of the flesh and the onions which they had eaten aforetime in Egypt.

This state has also been compared to the teething period of infants; when they begin to cut their teeth, they have continual pain, but after their teeth

have come through they are ready for stronger food and will receive it. At first it has no appeal for them, but soon they grow to need and desire it. Because the same is true of the spiritual life, St. John of the Cross adds:

The which food is the beginning of contemplation that is dark and arid to the senses; which contemplation is secret and hidden from the very person that experiences it; and ordinarily, together with the aridity and emptiness which it causes in the senses, it gives the soul an inclination and desire to be alone and in quietness, without being able to think of any particular thing or having the desire to do so. If those souls to whom this comes to pass knew how to be quiet at this time . . . then they would delicately experience this inward refreshment in that ease and freedom from care. So delicate is this refreshment that ordinarily, if a man have desire or care to experience it, he experiences it not; for, as I say, it does its work when the soul is most at ease and freest from care; it is like the air which, if one would close one's hand upon it, escapes. . . .

For in such a way does God bring the soul into this state, and by so different a path does He lead it that, if it desires to work with its faculties, it hinders the work which God is doing in it rather than aids it. . . . For anything that the soul can do of its own accord at this time serves only, as we have said, to hinder inward peace and the work which God is accomplishing in the spirit by means of that aridity of sense. . . .

The third sign whereby this purgation of the senses may be recognized is that the soul can no longer meditate or reflect in its sense of the imagination, as it was wont, however much it may endeavor to do so. For God now begins to communicate Himself to it, no longer through sense, as He did aforetime, by means of reflections which joined and sundered its knowledge but by pure spirit, into which consecutive reflections enter not; for He communicates Himself to it by an act of simple contemplation.

On the subject of this third sign, St. John of the Cross remarks that "the embarrassment and dissatisfaction of the faculties proceed not from indisposition, for, when this is the case, and the indisposition, which is never permanent, comes to an end, then the soul is able once more, by taking some care about the matter, to do what it did before, and the faculties find their needed support. But in the purgation of the desire this is not so: when once the soul begins to enter therein, its inability to reflect with the faculties grows ever greater . . . although, at first, and with some persons, it is not as continuous."

In the Ascent of Mount Carmel, too, St. John of the Cross, while not following absolutely the same order, mentions these three signs when indicating at what time it is well to pass from discursive meditation to contemplation. This passage refers to infused contemplation. St. John of the Cross says that contemplation works not actively but passively, being received from God operating in us and having such subtlety and delicacy that the soul may hardly notice its presence. In this state "God communicates Himself to it passively, even as to one who has his eyes open, so that light is communicated to him passively without his doing more than keep them open. And this reception of light which is infused supernaturally is passive understanding." The state here referred to is the same as that described in The Dark Night.

Therefore, although this state is made manifest by two negative characteristics,—aridity or the deprivation of all sensible consolation and difficulty or quasi-powerlessness to meditate—it has another more important and positive element: the beginning of infused contemplation and the ardent desire for God which is born of it. Further, aridity of the sensuous appetency and difficulty in meditating spring precisely from this, that grace is starting to take on a new and purely spiritual form, superior to the senses and to discursive reasoning. At first sight we might be led to believe that God purifies us chiefly by depriving us of something, sensible grace; in reality He gives us much more than we had before because, far from taking grace away from us, He gives it to us more abundantly but in a higher form, far above the reach of any sense enjoyment. The state into which God thus leads the soul will be better understood when we have tried to discover its causes.

ARTICLE III

A CAUSAL EXPLANATION OF THE STATE OF PURIFICATION

Some authors find the explanation for the state of purification chiefly in the deprivation of sensible grace. Since the beginner might, through spiritual greediness, become too attached to it, he is deprived of it for his own sake, as the author of The Dark Night remarks. Although the deprivation of grace truly belongs to this state, it is not the principal thing at issue. The fundamental characteristic for us to note is the beginning of

infused contemplation due to the habitual intervention of the Holy Ghost. The texts already quoted from St. John of the Cross treating of the three signs make this clear to us.

The first sign is, as has already been said, that the soul can no longer find consolation either in things created or in the things of God presented in a sensible manner. The gift of knowledge effects this, making us understand as if experimentally the emptiness of created things and their radical inability to tell us anything of God's inner life. Knowledge differs from wisdom inasmuch as it knows things not through their Supreme Cause but through their proximate and lower causes. Now the only thing in the world and in us that does not spring from the Supreme Cause is sin, the imperfection of our acts, our indigence, our weakness. All these arise solely from defectible and deficient created causes. Because St. Augustine and St. Thomas appreciated this truth, they have related the holy sadness spoken of by Christ in the fifth beatitude to the gift of knowledge; for knowledge of the gravity of sin and of the nothingness of creatures brings us to tears of contrition. St. Augustine says that those who mourn are those who know what defeats they have suffered by seeking evils as good.

St. Thomas, too, tells us that the gift of knowledge makes us judge as we should of human things, showing us how foolish a man is to seek the sovereign good in them even when they often prove an occasion for turning us from God. In the Old Testament the Book of Ecclesiastes is never done telling us of the vanity and poverty of all human things: riches acquired with great effort, worldly pleasures, human wisdom. "Vanity of vanities," said Ecclesiastes, "and all things are vanity," except to love and serve God. "Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth, before the time of affliction come . . . before . . . the dust return into its earth, from whence it was, and the spirit return to God, who gave it. . . . Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is all man. And all things that are done, God will bring into judgment from every error, whether it be good or evil."

This deep sense of the vanity of things created when not ordered to God, when not directed to knowing, loving, and serving Him, penetrates every page of The Imitation. We are told, for example, "Without Me, friendship can neither profit nor endure"; "Never read anything in order that thou mayst appear more learned or more wise."

Ruysbroeck gives us the same message: divine knowledge will teach us to be without presumption and not to place our joy either in perishable

things or in our works but to be dissatisfied with ourselves as unprofitable servants and creatures weak in every way. Blessed are they who suffer this dissatisfaction for they shall be comforted in the eternal kingdom of God. Ruysbroeck also notes the relationship between the gifts of the Holy Ghost and the passive purification of the senses, writing that Christ first comes to exercise His influence and action on a man's lower powers to purify, uplift, and inflame them, and orient them toward his inner life. Working within the soul, God holds out His gifts to us or takes them away, enriches us or makes us poor, gives us joy or makes us desolate, quickens us or abandons us, sets our hearts on fire or binds them about with ice. No language whatever, Ruysbroeck tells us, can express these contrary gifts. They are graces evidently connected with the passive purification of the senses. By them we begin truly to know by experience the emptiness of created things and really to see that God alone can be our ultimate end. The gift of knowledge is having a profound influence on the soul.

The gifts of fear of the Lord and of fortitude are deeply at work too, as shown by the second sign referred to above when, in the words of St. John of the Cross, the soul knows "painful care and solicitude, thinking that it is not serving God, but is backsliding; . . . the sensual part of the soul has fallen low . . . but the spirit, on the other hand, is ready and strong."

The care and solicitude experienced by the soul are certainly effected by the gift of fear of the Lord, the filial fear of sinning which grows with the progress of charity, while servile fear, the fear of being punished, diminishes. Under the influence of this gift the soul resists the temptations against chastity and patience which often accompany passive purification of the senses. It repeats the words of the Psalmist, "Pierce Thou my flesh with Thy fear: for I am afraid of Thy judgments." According to St. Augustine, the gift of fear of the Lord corresponds to the beatitude of the poor in spirit, for he who fears God does not become puffed up, seeks neither honors nor riches, but is especially inspired to love poverty and the hidden life because they make him more like his Savior. "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." And even in this world their poverty will give them a share in the only true wealth.

The influence of the gift of fortitude makes itself felt at this time in an ardent desire to serve God in spite of dryness, temptations, and every other possible difficulty. According to St. Augustine and St. Thomas, this gift corresponds to the fourth beatitude, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst

after justice: for they shall have their fill." The relationship is evident. St. Thomas says: "Now it is very difficult, not merely to do virtuous deeds, which receive the common designation of works of justice, but furthermore to do them with an insatiable desire, which may be signified by hunger and thirst for justice." The gift of fortitude must come to the aid of the virtues of patience and longsuffering; otherwise, amid the difficulties, misfortunes, and contradictions that have to be met, we would lose our ardent desire for perfection.

Enthusiasm based on sense feelings burns out like a fire of dried grass; we need ardor of another and wholly spiritual order, something God alone can give us. The imitation says: "If thou carry the cross willingly, it will carry thee, and bring thee to thy desired end. . . . And the more the flesh is brought down by affliction, the more is the spirit strengthened by interior grace. . . . This is not man's power, but the grace of Christ; which doth and can effect such great things in frail flesh that what it naturally abhors and flies, even this, through fervor of spirit, it now embraces and loves."

Ruysbroeck says that the gift of fortitude allows us to rise above joys and sorrows, gains and losses, hope and care for earthly things, and every kind of intermediary and multiplicity. It delivers us and makes us free of all creatures. The man who has it will not let himself become dissipated by sensible affection or in covetousness for sweetness and consolation or for any divine gift. Even the rest and peace of his own heart will not lure him from going beyond all gifts and consolations to find the only one whom he desires and loves.

Lastly, the third sign, that is, great difficulty in discursive meditation, certainly reveals to us the gift of understanding making itself evident as the principle of newly infused contemplation. In explaining the third sign, St. John of the Cross says: "God now begins to communicate Himself to it, no longer through sense, as He did aforetime, by means of reflections which joined and sundered its knowledge, but by pure spirit, into which consecutive reflections enter not; but He communicates Himself to it by an act of simple contemplation, to which neither the exterior nor the interior senses of the lower part of the soul can attain." Here we have "the beginning of a contemplation that is dark and arid to the senses, . . . secret and hidden to the very person that experiences it. . . . So delicate is this refreshment that ordinarily, if a man have desire or care to experience it, he

experiences it not; for, as I say, it does its work when the soul is most at ease and freest from care."

The gift of understanding and that of piety show their influence in producing this effect. Ruysbroeck says that the first result of the gift of understanding shines forth in the spirit of simplicity. A remarkable clarity floods simplicity, for the grace of God is the basis of all the gifts and dwells essentially in our passive intellect as a simple light, fixing and enlightening the mind in a simple manner so that it acquires a resemblance to God. And it is a property of the unity of God's divine essence to attract whatever resembles it. Nevertheless a just man may sometimes think that he fails really to love God and rest in Him. But this very fear itself springs from love, for his desire to love God more than he can leads a man to believe that he loves God less than he is able.

Before the subject had been dealt with by these great mystics, St. Thomas took it up when treating of the effects of the gift of understanding, pointing out the purifying action of the gift, saying that it cleanses the mind by purging it of "phantasms and errors, so as to receive the truths which are proposed to it about God, no longer by way of corporeal phantasms, nor infected with heretical misrepresentations." It makes us penetrate simply but deeply into the mysteries of faith, taking us beyond images to the divine reality they represent and through the letter to the life-giving spirit. During the dark night of the soul, the purifying influence of this gift penetrates much more deeply into the soul although it is already plainly operative in the night of the senses.

Furthermore, St. Thomas, following Dionysius, says that for the soul to reach the uniformity of contemplation, symbolized by circular motion without beginning or end, it must rid itself of a twofold lack of uniformity arising first from the variety of external things with which the mind is occupied and secondly from reasoning or discursive thought. The soul heals itself of its deformity by the simple contemplation of intelligible truth.

St. Augustine often says the same thing. We find a clear expression of it, for example, in the first book of the De quantitate animae when he describes the seven degrees of life: (1) vegetative life; (2) sentient life; (3) the knowledge of human things and of the different sciences; (4) the life of true virtue; (5) the tranquility of soul springing from control of the passions by solid virtue; (6) entrance into the higher spiritual light; (7) contemplation and union with God. As early as in the fourth degree he gives a description

of the purification necessary for the soul to acquire true virtue and to understand practically how much more it is worth than the body and the whole material universe. He says that in the difficult work of purification the soul must place its whole confidence in God in order to resist all the temptations then arising and to persevere in virtue. The more the soul advances, the more it sees how far it still is from true purity of heart; but finally, God helping it, it lets itself be more and more animated by Him.

The doctrine taught by St. John of the Cross and by Ruysbroeck shows, in regard to this subject and many others, a wonderful harmony with the teaching of St. Augustine and St. Thomas. What has been presented here is what seems to be the psychological description and theological explanation of the state of purification according to the great masters. Although the soul appears at first to lose rather than gain by having sensible graces taken away from it, it is in reality entering upon infused contemplation and standing on the threshold of the mystical life.

Still to be considered are rules of guidance suitable for those in this state, the effects of passive purification, the trials usually accompanying it, and lastly the stage of spiritual progress at which it normally appears. Because of the importance of the question, we should do all we can to know the mind of the great masters concerning it. In regard to the first stage of development at which passive purification occurs, whether during the course of the unitive way, as some seem to think, or at the beginning of the illuminative, the great masters evidently regard the illuminative way as a period in which the soul frees itself more and more from the senses and from reasoning so that it may go on under the special illumination of the Holy Ghost to the contemplation of divine things, to find, as all of us should, the soul of the interior life and of the apostolate in contemplation and charity.

CHAPTER II

WHAT IS TO BE DONE DURING THE NIGHT OF THE SENSES

Having given a psychological description of the passive purification of the senses and a theological explanation of the causes producing it and the end to which it is ordered, we must now speak of rules for direction suitable to this state. St. John of the Cross has treated the subject in the tenth chapter of the first book of The Dark Night; his teaching can be reduced to five principal observations explaining what ought not to be done, and then afterward what positive action should be taken.

God leads certain spiritual souls from meditation to contemplation, suspending the activity of the soul's faculties so that there may be no obstacle to the infused contemplation He is preparing them to receive, vivifying them with more abundant peace and enkindling them with the spirit of love. St. John of the Cross says that they particularly need someone to understand them at this time and that, lacking such help, they may "abandon the road or lose courage; or, at least they may be hindered from going farther by the great trouble they take in advancing along the road of meditation and reasoning," or by desiring to enjoy consolation and satisfy their own inclinations.

In other words, those who presently find themselves devoid of all sensible grace must guard against backsliding and should choose, if they can, a learned and experienced director. Difficulties in interior prayer arise because of the withdrawal of sensible graces and of the quasi-impossibility of meditating and because of accompanying temptations against chastity and patience aroused by the devil to turn the soul from prayer. Our Lord's words seem fully verified: "How narrow is the gate, and strait is the way that leadeth to life: and few there are that find it!"

Our Lord permits aridity and temptations to make us live the life of the spirit more vigorously, but beginners get the impression that they have been left in a barren and waterless desert and they are afraid “of being lost on the road, thinking that all spiritual blessing is over for them and that God has abandoned them since they find no help or pleasure in good things.” In the midst of such difficulties they may turn back if they do not have a well instructed and experienced guide; and, as a matter of fact, many do grow tired and retreat. At this time more than at any other the old saying that “Not to go forward is to go back” is found true. And those who would help souls to advance while in this state must see more in it than melancholy of temperament or God’s punishment; otherwise they may make those whom they would encourage lose heart.

About directors St. Teresa has the same thing to say as St. John of the Cross.

So then, it is of great consequence that the director should be prudent-I mean, of sound understanding—and a man of experience. If, in addition to this, he is a learned man, it is a very great matter. But if these qualities cannot be found together, the first two are the most important, because learned men may be found with whom we can communicate when it is necessary. . . . My opinion has always been, and will be, that every Christian should continue to be guided by a learned director if he can, and the more learned the better. They who walk in the way of prayer have the greater need of learning; and the more spiritual they are, the greater is that need.

We do well, then, to choose a learned and experienced director; if such cannot be found, then a well instructed and virtuous priest; and if he cannot be had, a pious even though ignorant priest who will have the humility to recognize his own limitations and to encourage us on occasion to consult others better informed than he is. According to St. Teresa, such a man is to be preferred to those with some learning who wish to seem to know it all, setting themselves up as judges of things they know nothing about and either leading souls astray or blocking their advancement.

Besides having a good director, souls in this state should follow the advice of St. John of the Cross when he says: “It is well for those who find themselves in this condition to take comfort, to persevere in patience and to be in no wise afflicted. Let them trust in God, who abandons not those that seek Him with a simple and right heart, and will not fail to give them what

is needful for the road, until He bring them into the clear and pure light of love. This last He will give them by means of that other dark night, that of the spirit, if they merit that He should bring them thereto."

In aridity and powerlessness we must not become discouraged nor abandon prayer, saying that it has become useless and fruitless. All spiritual writers tell us that at this time we have to persevere in humble, trusting prayer and keep on mortifying our inordinate inclinations. But some authors say all this somewhat sadly with an ascetic air indicating that the direction we are to take is along the line of mere duty, without showing us that prolonged aridity marks the beginning of a new life, that we have come upon the bitter roots of a tree that bears sweet fruit. We must have recourse to prayer and mortification more than ever before to help us overcome present difficulties. This we must do because these very difficulties indicate the germinating of the mystical life within us. And so it is without any sadness but with real joy that an experienced director will encourage us to enter into the strait way that will, for faithful hearts, widen out into the immensity of God Himself.

This time of trial is a time for making generous acts of faith, trust, and love, for we find ourselves in the happy necessity of being unable to confine ourselves to imperfect acts of these virtues. Let us not forget St. Thomas' doctrine that generous acts of charity obtain an immediate increase of charity, but imperfect acts (actus remissi) do not. The man who has five talents and acts as if he had only two does not immediately obtain a sixth; he receives it when he acts to the full power within him.

If we are not to lose ground during the night of the senses, we must begin to love God with all our strength, no longer by the virtues alone but by the special inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Then our strength will be the strength of ten. Far from giving up or shortening prayer, although it seems to have become useless, the beginner must often appeal to God, saying: "Lord, save me, keep my patience; make me do what You command, and command me to do what You will."

Sensible fervor doubtless is lost at this time, but normally substantial devotion greatly increases, for it proceeds from the virtue of religion and the gift of piety; the losses of the senses leave untouched the will's readiness to serve God: "the will to do promptly what pertains to the service of God." The illuminative way is dawning and is well worth the trouble required for entering into it. Men climb the Alps and risk their lives to stand

on Mt. Blanc and look down on the glaciers. We should be willing to accept much to enter into true intimacy with God.

A third step in our inquiry deals with the question whether souls in this state can persevere patiently in prayer when they find meditation impossible. St. John of the Cross advises them what to do:

The way in which they are to conduct themselves in this night of the sense is to devote themselves not at all to reasoning and meditation, since it is not the time for this, but to allow the soul to remain in peace and quietness, although it may seem clear to them that they are doing nothing. . . . The truth is that they will be doing quite sufficient if they have patience and persevere in prayer without making any effort. What they must do is merely to leave the soul free and disencumbered and at rest from all knowledge and thought, troubling not themselves, in that state, about what they think or meditate, but contenting themselves with no more than a peaceful and loving attentiveness toward God.

A little earlier, when speaking about those who desire to return to meditation, St. John of the Cross remarks:

This effort they make not without great inward repugnance and unwillingness on the part of their soul, which was taking pleasure in being in that quietness and ease, instead of working with its faculties. So they have abandoned one pursuit, yet draw no profit from the other; for, while they seek what is prompted by their own spirit, they lose the spirit of tranquility and peace which they had before. And thus they are like to one who abandons what he has done in order to do it over again, or to one who leaves a city only to re-enter it, or to one who is hunting and lets his prey go in order to hunt it once more. This is useless here, for the soul will gain nothing further by conducting itself in this way, as has been said.

We give ourselves profitless trouble when we try to move against the current of grace instead of going with it. It is as if we were to go on looking for the source of living water when we already stand on the water’s edge; we will be certain to go past it if we do not give up searching. It is as if we wished to keep on spelling out words when we know how to read and can take in a whole line at a glance. We are struggling downhill instead of letting God lift us up to the heights.

Spiritual persons who find themselves in prolonged sensible aridity and are not conscious of any recent outstanding fault, may conclude that they are gaining and not losing by being deprived of sensible fervor and that,

although they cannot feel it, grace is being accorded to them in another higher and more spiritual form.

St. John of the Cross makes a fourth observation that relates to those who do not exactly wish to return to discursive meditation but who would like to feel some consolation again:

What they must do is merely to leave the soul free and disencumbered and at rest from all knowledge and thought, troubling not themselves, in that state, about what they think or meditate, but contenting themselves with no more than a peaceful and loving attentiveness toward God, and in being without anxiety, without the ability and without desire to have experience of Him or to perceive Him. For all these yearnings disquiet and distract the soul from the peaceful quiet and sweet ease of contemplation which is here granted to it. . . .

Let them remain in peace, as there is no question save of their being at ease and having freedom of spirit. For if such a soul should desire to make any effort of its own with its interior faculties, this means that it will hinder and lose the blessings which, by means of that peace and ease of the soul, God is instilling into it and impressing upon it. It is just as if some painter were painting or dyeing a face; if the sitter were to move because he desired to do something, he would prevent the painter from accomplishing anything and would disturb him in what he was doing. And thus, when the soul desires to remain in inward ease and peace, any operation and affection or attention wherein it may then seek to indulge will distract it and disquiet it and make it conscious of aridity and emptiness of sense. For the more a soul endeavors to find help in affection and knowledge, the more will it feel the lack of these, which cannot now be supplied to it upon that road.

This passage is psychologically profound, revealing how natural activity, when exerted contrary to the gifts of the Holy Ghost, serves as an obstacle to their delicate inspirations. We must not desire to feel God’s gift but seek to receive it with docility in the obscurity of faith; then it will bear fruit. Aristotle says that as youth has its bloom, so has every act its pleasure; we must seek not pleasure but the object and end of the virtuous act itself; peace or the tranquility of order will follow, bringing with it a pure joy which, though not the end of the act, is its result.

Having seen what souls should not do, that they ought not to attempt to go back to discursive meditation and to experiencing feelings, we should

next find out what positive action is to be taken. St. John of the Cross tells us:

Wherefore it behooves such a soul to pay no heed if the operations of its faculties become lost to it; it is rather to desire that this should happen quickly. For, by not hindering the operation of infused contemplation that God is bestowing upon it, it can receive this with more peaceful abundance, and cause its spirit to be enkindled and to burn with the love which this dark and secret contemplation brings with it and sets firmly in the soul. For contemplation is naught else than a secret, peaceful and loving infusion from God, which, if it be permitted, enkindles the soul with the spirit of love.

At the beginning of the same chapter, the holy doctor says that in this way God brings the soul from meditation to contemplation, that is, to infused contemplation, there being no question here of acquired contemplation but only of the infusion of the sweet light of life. The soul should, in other words, content itself with "a peaceful and loving attentiveness toward God." The general and obscure knowledge of His presence which God infuses into the soul is superior to every sense image and distinct idea; it reaches the spirit quickening the letter of the Gospel, discovers the treasure it contains, and fulfills our Lord's words: "But the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you."

These words were not addressed only to the apostles, for in his first epistle St. John writes to the faithful: "As for you, let that which you have heard from the beginning, abide in you. . . . You also shall abide in the Son. . . . Let the unction, which you have received from Him, abide in you . . . as His unction teacheth you of all things."

At first sight it may seem that, if we find ourselves in like circumstances, we should do nothing; in reality, the Gospels we have read and meditated on so often will communicate their spirit to us, opening up the rich treasure of their meaning and giving us what apostles particularly need to be fit ministers not of the letter but of the spirit of the New Testament. Every Christian, too, must, in a sense, become truly interior and have some depth of understanding of Christ's' words, our "spirit and life." Infused prayer begins with a spiritual lifting up of our souls to God in a way senses and reasoning cannot reach; it is adoration in spirit and in truth, surpassing all

figures of the imagination and formulas of reason, arriving at the divine reality which they seek to express, attaining to that infinite and diffusive goodness from which all life comes.

When we are undergoing the passive purification of the senses which takes place, according to St. John of the Cross, at the beginning of the illuminative way, the conduct we should follow is then indicated for us. However, a difficulty remains to be cleared up. Suppose the soul has no such general and obscure knowledge of God, should it then return to discursive meditation, giving itself, for example, to the consideration of our Savior's passion or slowly reflecting on the petitions of the Our Father?

To resolve the difficulty proposed, a commentary was added to early editions of The Dark Night after the tenth chapter of Book I. No manuscript contains the commentary. Instead of recourse to an interpolation of this kind, it is quite simple to call attention to the fact that St. John of the Cross himself met the objection in the Ascent of Mount Carmel with the following solution. He says:

With regard to what has been said, there might be raised one question—if progressives (that is, those whom God is beginning to bring into this supernatural knowledge of contemplation whereof we have spoken) must never again, because of this that they are beginning to experience, return to the way of meditation and argument and natural forms. To this the answer is that it is not to be understood that such as are beginning to experience this loving knowledge must never again, as a general rule, try to return to meditation; for, when they are first gaining in proficiency, the habit of contemplation is not yet so perfect that whensoever they wish they can give themselves to the act thereof, nor, in the same way, have they reached a point so far beyond meditation that they cannot occasionally meditate and reason in a natural way, as they were wont. . . .

The soul, then, will frequently find itself in this loving or peaceful state of waiting upon God without in any way exercising its faculties—that is, with respect to particular acts—and without working actively at all, but only receiving. In order to reach this state, it will frequently need to make use of meditation, quietly and in moderation.

To meditate slowly on the Our Father or on some verses from the Gospel serves as an excellent preparation for receiving a general and obscure knowledge of God, the beginning of infused contemplation.

In her Life St. Teresa describes how the noria, or water wheel, which symbolizes human effort under grace, has to be put to use during the beginning of the prayer of quiet, although the prayer of quiet is God's gift and lies beyond the attainment of all the soul's efforts, bringing with it some knowledge of the bliss of glory, giving new strength to the virtues, and manifesting a new and special work of God in the soul. In other words, it indicates a special inspiration of the Holy Ghost higher than ordinary actual grace. St. Teresa's words about the noria as typifying the initial degree of the prayer of quiet agree exactly with what St. John of the Cross says about the work of the understanding in preparing the soul for deeper recollection and for what will be given to it during the passive night of the senses, the beginning of infused contemplation.

The principal rules of direction for the state of purification having now been outlined, we still have to investigate its effects; for a tree is judged by its fruits, and the fruit of this tree is abundant and full of flavor. The accompanying trials, the temptations allowed by God to provoke the soul to energetic reaction and to the firm establishment of the virtues having their seat in the sensuous appetency, must also be considered. To find out precisely when the passive purification of these senses ordinarily takes place is another task that lies ahead.

Even now it is already evident how much this purgation achieves in making the soul holy and wholesome and the way in which it brings to pass our Lord's words, "How narrow is the gate, and strait is the way that leadeth to life: and few there are that find it!" Blessed are they who will not let the difficulties of the way discourage them; with every forward step they make their hearts burn more and more ardently for God and they sing the song of the Psalmist with their whole soul: "As the hart panteth after the fountains of water; so my soul panteth after Thee, O God. My soul hath thirsted after the strong living God; when shall I come and appear before the face of God? . . . Send forth Thy light and Thy truth: they have conducted me, and brought me unto Thy holy hill, and into Thy tabernacles. And I will go in to the altar of God: to God who giveth joy to my youth. To Thee, O God my God, I will give praise upon the harp."

What is expressed here is not merely the conditional and inefficacious desire to see the First Cause, the furnace of life from which creation flames up; it is an increasingly pressing and burning supernatural desire enkindled in the heart by the Holy Ghost Himself. "Blessed are they that hunger and

thirst after justice: for they shall have their fill.” Even in this life they shall know true intimacy with God.

CHAPTER III

EFFECTS OF THE PASSIVE PURIFICATION OF THE SENSES

Following the lead of St. Gregory the Great and Hugo of St. Victor, Tauler has touched on this subject many times in his Sermons, and St. John of the Cross has given it a searching treatment in the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth chapters of the first book of The Dark Night. To acquire an exact knowledge of his doctrine on the matter, a useful procedure is to give special consideration to the results effected as he indicates them: purification of the sensuous appetency, knowledge of self, knowledge of God, humility, a great increase of divine charity, and the twelve fruits of the Holy Ghost.

PURIFICATION OF ME SENSUOUS APPETENCY

The soul is freed from the necessity of seeking God by the weak, limited, and defective operations proper to the senses, which serve as means of transposing the disorder of the seven capital sins into the order of spiritual things. At the beginning of the interior life, the soul desires sensible consolations somewhat as if they were not simply a minor means of the spiritual life, but its end; for the soul is still in the infancy of its spiritual life, and infants are greedy for milk. Sometimes consolations have even had a disturbing, although involuntary, echo in the lower senses. The soul, with something like avarice, desires to hold on to everything conducive to sensible devotion and, if deprived of it, falls into spiritual sloth, impatience, and anger or it may even come to envy its neighbor’s graces. Sensible consolations often lead to pride because the soul that has them is likely to think itself well on the way to perfection and to judge others with severity and a somewhat bitter zeal.

The night of the senses quenches sensible inclinations and, because of its darkness, puts an end to the habit of using reason, together with the imagination, in interior prayer. The purification of the senses, at first sight seemingly such a loss, is in reality the best thing that could happen to any soul. Deprived of the milk of infants, it can then begin to live on the bread of the strong. When the capacity to take pleasure in sensible things has dried up in the soul, God begins to communicate Himself to it by infused contemplation, His primary and principal benefit to it and the source from which all others are derived.

The senses are subdued, reformed, silenced; they can no longer enjoy any taste or relish of a sensible kind, whether high or low. The force of inordinate passion has spent itself in emptiness and darkness and a blessed spiritual sobriety comes to take its place and marks the beginning of peace. Times of aridity dull the natural sensitive appetite. The interior faculties leave off reasoned meditation and, together with the senses, are ruled by a higher harmony and lead beyond sensible delights and the letter of God's word to its spirit, which lies outside and above the reaches of all human poetry, however marked by genius.

This is the first and principal benefit caused by this aridity and dark night of contemplation: the knowledge of oneself and of one's misery . . . these aridities and this emptiness of the faculties compared with the abundance which the soul experienced aforetime and the difficulty which it finds in good works, make it recognize its own lowliness and misery, which in the time of its prosperity it was unable to see. . . . Wherefore the soul knows the truth that it knew not at first, concerning its own misery; for, at the time when it was clad as for a festival and found in God much pleasure, consolation and help, it was somewhat more satisfied and contented, since it thought itself to some extent to be serving God. . . . But, now that the soul has put on its other and working attire—that of aridity and abandonment—and now that its first lights have turned into darkness, it possesses these lights more truly in this virtue of self-knowledge, which is so excellent and necessary.

Notice that this self-knowledge, so remarkably deeper than any that results from mere examination of conscience, is, according to St. John of the Cross, an effect of awakening infused contemplation. He certainly believes that infused contemplation, as also the self-knowledge accompanying it, belongs to the normal way of sanctity. At this period of

development the soul begins to know in a quasi-experimental fashion what both St. Augustine and St. Thomas have taught us, that our own efforts cannot make God's grace efficacious, but God's grace itself both arouses and sustains our efforts. The soul comes to realize that it does nothing and can do nothing of itself; that it is nothing; and so it takes no satisfaction in itself and this, "together with the soul's affliction at not serving God, is considered and esteemed by God as greater than all the consolations which the soul formerly experienced and the works which it wrought, however great they were, inasmuch as they were the occasion of many imperfections and ignorances." St. John of the Cross tells us that the other benefits following on aridity have their source in self-knowledge.

The gift of knowledge evidently effects all this, for it judges things, not like wisdom, by their highest cause, but by their secondary, proximate causes. Its special function is to show us especially that the disordination of sin cannot come from God, but must come from deficient causes, from ourselves, our defectibility, self-love, and radical egoism. Tears of true contrition flow from this supernatural knowledge given by the Holy Ghost. In its light, St. Benedict Joseph Labre used to begin his confessions by saying, "Have pity on me, I beg you, Father. I am a great sinner."

Those who have received much, who have been filled to overflowing, see revealed the relative gravity of faults that would be slight in others less illumined. The more we see of God's greatness, the more we realize the absolute and infinite gravity of mortal sin, the attempt to snatch from God His dignity as last end by turning away from Him; the more, too, we perceive the relative gravity of certain dangerous faults which, although venial in themselves, may proximately dispose us for a mortal fall. In the light of the gift of knowledge our eyes are opened to our own misery, and we understand in what a singularly fragile vessel we bear the infinitely precious treasure of grace and of the indwelling Trinity.

A higher knowledge of God always accompanies a deeper knowledge of self. They are, St. Catherine of Siena says, the highest and lowest points of an ever-growing circle; if we see one of these clearly we see the other by contrast, for these two kinds of knowledge grow together. As St. Augustine expresses it, "Noverim te, noverim me."

He who knows how powerless he is to do good and to persevere until death, knows by contrast and as if experimentally, how good and almighty is God, and how wonderful His grace, which owes its efficacy not to our

consent but to itself. “For it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will,” St. Paul says. Elsewhere, after he had heard our Savior’s words, “My grace is sufficient for thee; for power is made perfect in infirmity,” he goes on to say, “For when I am weak, then am I powerful.” When the soul experiences its own weakness and cries out to God, it becomes strong in His help and, “though our outward man is corrupted, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For that which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory. While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen . . . (the) eternal.”

Growth in knowledge of our own weakness reveals to us the contrasting and infinite greatness of almighty God. And, as St. John of the Cross expresses it, the soul learns to commune with God with more respect and courtesy than it showed to Him in times of pleasure and consolation.

For that pleasant favour which it experienced made its desire towards God somewhat bolder than was fitting, and discourteous and ill-considered. Even so did it happen to Moses, when he felt that God was speaking to him . . . he was making bold to go to Him, if God had not commanded him to stay and put off his shoes. When Moses had obeyed . . . he became so discreet and so attentive that the Scripture says that not only did he not make bold to draw near to God, but that he dared not even look at Him. . . . Even so likewise the preparation which God granted to Job in order that he might speak with Him consisted not in those delights and glories which Job himself reports that he was wont to have in his God, but in leaving him naked upon a dunghill. . . . And then the Most High God, He that lifts up the poor man from the dunghill, was pleased to come down and speak with him face to face . . . in a way that He had never done in the time of his prosperity. Then in the time of his testing, the saint answered his Lord: I know that thou canst do all things, and no thought is hid from thee. . . . Therefore I have spoken unwisely, and things that above measure exceeded my knowledge. . . . Therefore I reprehend myself, and do penance in dust and ashes.

The Scripture says, “Then shall thy light rise up in darkness.” In the darkness of the night of the senses a light dawns that shows the soul its misery and God’s infinite greatness, a light that tests and frees and purifies the soul, for by it the soul comes to know God, and then God teaches it His

wisdom, as He did not do in the days of its first delights and satisfactions. “The soul habitually has remembrance of God, with fear and dread of backsliding upon the spiritual road . . . the soul is purified and cleansed of the imperfections that were clinging to it because of the desires and affections, which of their own accord debilitate and darken the soul.”

A knowledge of God, springing from living faith and enlightened by the gifts, strengthens the virtues very much, especially humility, hope, and charity, as St. John of the Cross makes clear to us:

Likewise the soul draws from the aridities and voids of this night of the desire, spiritual humility, which is the contrary virtue to the first capital sin, which, as we said, is spiritual pride. Through this humility, which is acquired by the said knowledge of self, the soul is purged from all those imperfections whereinto it fell with respect to that sin of pride, in the time of its prosperity. For it sees itself so dry and miserable, that the idea never even occurs to it that it is making better progress than others, or outstripping them, as it believed itself to be doing before. On the contrary, it recognizes that others are making better progress than itself. . . . It is aware only of its own wretchedness, which it keeps before its eyes to such an extent that it never forgets it, nor takes occasion to set its eyes on anyone else. This was described wonderfully by David, when he was in this night, in these words: “If I was dumb and was humbled . . .” This he says because it seemed to him that the good that was in his soul had so completely departed. . . .

In this condition, again, souls become submissive and obedient upon the spiritual road, for, when they see their own misery, not only do they hear what is taught them, but they even desire that anyone soever may set them on the way and tell them what they ought to do. The affective presumption which they sometimes had in their prosperity is taken from them.

We begin to get a deep understanding of the beatitude, Beati pauperes spiritu. Spiritual humility, the fruit of nascent infused contemplation, far surpasses the humility produced in us by examination of conscience and meditation on the chief duties of our state of life. St. Teresa so informs us in her Life, where she remarks the fact that, when souls begin to advance in virtue and then read in spiritual books an account of all they must do to be perfect, they lose heart. She says: “For instance, they read that we must not be troubled when men speak ill of us, that we are to be then more pleased than when they speak well of us; that we must despise our own good name,

be detached from our kindred . . . with many other things of the same kind. The disposition to practice this must be, in my opinion, the gift of God; for it seems to me a supernatural good, contrary to our natural inclinations." At another time she observes that we can spend years of prayer and retain certain bad habits, such as standing on our dignity and possessions, whereas perfect prayer rids us of them.

All interior souls, not merely those in the purely contemplative life like the Carmelites, but those in the mixed or apostolic life and even those in the active life, should make such progress that they are at last free of such faults. For all of them, infused contemplation, which alone can produce such fruits, belongs to the normal way of sanctity, although it may be accorded earlier to some, later to others, in an evident way to one and in a less manifest form to another, according to the vocation of each and God's own good pleasure.

Spiritual humility being united to confidence in prayer, the petitions of the psalms are no longer words used more or less mechanically but become truly the soul's spirit and life: "I cried to the Lord with my voice. . . . In the day of my trouble I sought God with my hands lifted up to Him in the night, and I was not deceived. Thy way, O God, is in the holy place: who is the great God like our God? Thou art the God that dolt wonders." Humble and trusting prayer obtains patience and long-suffering, virtues needful in dryness and emptiness, when we must learn to persevere in spiritual exercises without either consolation or attraction.

At the same time the soul grows in charity because it no longer acts for any satisfaction of its own but simply and solely for God's sake and "often, in the midst of aridity and hardship, God communicates to the soul, when it is least expecting it, the purest spiritual sweetness and love, together with a spiritual knowledge which is sometimes very delicate, each manifestation of which is of greater benefit and worth than those which the soul enjoyed aforetime; although in its beginnings the soul thinks that this is not so, for the spiritual influence now granted to it is very delicate and cannot be perceived by sense."

This period marks the evident passage of the soul from affective charity, content with saying "Lord! Lord!" to effective charity, the orientation of the whole of life toward God. The soul enters into His kingdom, has true conformity to the divine will in suffering as well as in joy, and loves with a

will nourished by the hard bread of tribulation as well as by the milk of consolation.

Love for God, growing together with love of neighbor, gradually takes first place in the soul, thanks to the spirit of sacrifice, which destroys whatever is inordinate within us and makes us love the destruction which God Himself works there. The spirit of sacrifice brings us peace, the tranquility of the order of charity, wherein we truly love God more than ourselves and above all things. And the Lord begins to rule completely all our affections, purifying, ennobling, and super-naturalizing them, and making us love everything lovable in Him. “Finally, inasmuch as the soul is now purged from the affections and desire of sense, it obtains liberty of spirit, whereby in ever greater degree it gains the twelve fruits of the Holy Spirit.” To enumerate them is to reveal to ourselves what God’s kingdom within us should be like; it should reign in “charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, longanimity, mildness, faith, modesty, continency, chastity.”

Gradually the soul triumphs over its three enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil; with the Psalmist it can say of the grievous state through which it has come: “I am brought to nothing, and I knew not. I am become as a beast before Thee: and I am always with Thee. Thou hast held me by my right hand: and by Thy will Thou hast conducted me, and with Thy glory Thou has received me. For what have I in heaven? and besides Thee what do I desire upon earth? . . . But it is good for me to adhere to my God, to put my hope in the Lord God: that I may declare all Thy praises.”

These are the chief effects of the passive purification of the senses, the purpose of which is to spiritualize in some way the life of the senses, subordinating them to the spirit. The passive purification of the soul aims to bring about the entire super-naturalization and complete submission of the soul to God, making it, so to say, deiform and preparing it for divine union in this life, a union which is the normal prelude, for those who become perfect, of the eternal union of life everlasting.

CHAPTER IV

TRIALS ORDINARILY ACCOMPANYING THE NIGHT OF THE SENSES

In discussing any interior state, we must distinguish between its essential character and the phenomena frequently accompanying it. Supernatural words, visions, and ecstasy may, for example, occur together with mystical union without formally constituting it, since the latter continues after these transitory phenomena have passed away. The same is true in regard to the afflictions so commonly associated with the passive purification of the senses. It takes place because of the withdrawal of sensible grace and the purely spiritual influx of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, especially the gifts of knowledge and fortitude. The former shows us the emptiness of things created; the latter makes us hunger and thirst for justice.

In addition, usually come temptations against chastity and patience, permitted by God to provoke a vigorous reaction of these virtues so that they may grow strong, sink their roots more deeply in the sensitive appetite, and bring about its more complete purgation and fuller submission to reason and to grace. Other trials are sometimes joined to these, the loss of temporal goods, of fortune, of honors, and of friendships to which we have become too attached; sometimes, too, sickness is providentially sent to remind us that of ourselves we can do nothing.

We must here distinguish, as St. John of the Cross does, between the accentuated form these afflictions take in the relatively few souls that God will afterward lead on through the night of the soul, and the mitigated way in which they are found in others.

But those who are very weak are kept for a long time in this night, and these He purges very gently and with slight temptations. Habitually, too, He gives them refreshments of sense so that they may not fall away, and only after a time do they attain to purity of perfection in this life, some of them

never attaining to it. Such are neither properly in the night nor properly out of it; for, although they pass on no farther, yet, in order that they may be preserved in humility and self-knowledge, God exercises them for certain periods and at certain times in those temptations and aridities; and at other times and seasons He aids them with consolations, lest they should grow faint and return to seek the consolations of the world.

We shall first point out these trials as they occur in a tempered form and then afterward in that accentuated mode which is a forerunner of the night of the soul in those friends of God who are to be led by Him to the full perfection of the Christian life.

THE REASON FOR THE TEMPTATIONS OF THIS PERIOD

To gain a good understanding of traditional doctrine on the subject, we should recall, as St. Thomas and most theologians teach, that we have in us, far below the purely spiritual or immaterial intellect and will, faculties like the animals', essentially united to the organism: the external senses, the imagination and sensory memory, and the sensuous appetency, called concupiscible when tending toward a delectable sensible good, and irascible when it is bent on a sensible good difficult to attain. These are the two forms of sensitive appetite in both men and animals; from them arises the whole gamut of the different emotions, according to whether the sensible good is present or absent, and whether it appears to be obtainable or not. The concupiscible appetite gives rise to the contrary passions of love and hate, desire and aversion, joy and sadness; the irascible, to hope and despair, fear and daring, and anger.

To moderate the passions according to the rule of right reason, man must, by repeated acts, acquire the virtues of temperance, sobriety, chastity, fortitude, and patience. The first three give the concupiscible appetite a share, as it were, in the light of reason; the last two discipline the irascible in the same way.

But Christians must live not only like reasonable beings but as sons of God, subordinating their passions to right reason as the philosophers conceive it, and also to the life of grace and the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity. This fact is why we receive at baptism the infused moral virtues of temperance, sobriety, chastity, fortitude, and patience. They give our sensitive appetite not merely a share in the light of reason but an

entirely supernatural participation in God's inner life, as the strength of martyrs and the absolute purity of virgins consecrated to God make evident to us.

For the thorough purgation of the sensuous appetency, the acquired and the infused moral virtues must become rooted in it and work its progressive perfection, determining it to follow the rule of reason and of faith more closely and to forsake evil in the form of excess and of defect, not falling into foolhardiness or cowardice, lust or insensibility.

To fight temptations we have to make more energetic acts of the virtues, that they may penetrate deeply into the soil of the harrowed and upturned sensitive appetite and become fertile seeds of rational and divine life. Seen in this light, the struggle against temptation has something great and glorious about it. Lacking temptation, we often are content with less effort, with feeble virtuous acts that are without intensity and that are inferior to the degree of virtue we already possess, acting like clever but lazy people who let themselves be outstripped by others with less intelligence but more diligence. As we have already noted, St. Thomas holds that acts of this kind fail to increase the acquired virtue from which they proceed: only a more intense act of any virtue will win its increase. Hence, although the good but feeble acts of a just man are meritorious, they do not immediately obtain an increase of charity and of the infused virtues; this increase will be given to him by God only after he makes a more generous act, proportionate to the degree of the infused virtues he possesses. Besides, very weak acts of virtue indirectly dispose us for venial sin in the sense that they do not sufficiently oppose certain inordinate inclinations, which gradually develop and may end by getting the upper hand some day.

God permits us to be tempted but not beyond our strength aided by His grace; otherwise sin would be inevitable and no longer sin, as happens when reason is entirely obliterated by a sudden uprush of violent passion. Although temptation stays within the limits of our strength, it makes us ill content with weak acts of virtue, for we must struggle with all our heart and strength, while begging for divine help. Because of this, if we are faithful to grace, we make very meritorious and sometimes even heroic acts, which deepen the acquired virtues and obtain for us an immediate and proportionate increase of the infused virtues.

The reason why temptation must come was told to Tobias by the angel Raphael: "And because thou wast acceptable to God, it was necessary that

temptation should prove thee." When we are tempted, we receive help in proportion to our need, but we must be on guard not to forfeit the grace given. "Wherefore he that thinketh himself to stand, let him take heed lest he fall. . . . And God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able: but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it." God, who is faithful, will give us grace so that we will not be vanquished but win merit in the struggle. From Him comes our constancy and our profit in temptation. If the temptation comes from the devil, God makes his evil influence itself serve to purify our soul. Undoubtedly the devil could defeat us if he were allowed, but, in the words of Isaias, the Lord "giveth strength to the weary, and increaseth force and might to them that are not. Youths shall faint and labor, and young men shall fall by infirmity. But they that hope in the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall take wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."

The soul grows hardy by passing through difficulties. Of course, we ought not to desire temptation, for it is not useful in itself, as a means to an end, but only accidentally, as an occasion for more earnest prayer and more generous effort. In this sense we well understand the saying in Ecclesiasticus, "What doth he know, that hath not been tried?" He is ignorant of his own weakness and misery; nor has he learned practically all that divine grace can accomplish in us. On the other hand, the man who is tempted knows his own frailty and learns to say with St. Paul, "For when I am weak, then am I powerful," because he gives up relying on himself and places his whole confidence in God. Therefore the apostle St. James tells us: "My brethren, count it all joy, when you shall fall into divers temptations; knowing that the trying of your faith worketh patience. And patience hath a perfect work; that you may be perfect and entire, failing in nothing."

St. Augustine says that He who permits the devil to tempt us accords us His mercy at the same time, giving us strength to fight and conquer, if we but humbly ask His help. Those who do not expose themselves to the scorching wind of pride but keep themselves humbly in the shadow of God's help are not burnt. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he hath been proved, he shall receive the crown of life, which God hath promised to them that love Him."

Our Lord Himself willed to be tempted so that He might teach us to be watchful and prudent in these difficult times, give us an example of generosity, increase our trust, and merit for us the help necessary for victory. We can understand why, out of jealousy, the devil tempts better people more directly, since he has a special interest in keeping them back so that they will not draw others forward with them; we understand, too, why he begins to tempt them in little things, hoping in this way to lead them on to grave sin.

We shall take time to consider especially temptations against chastity and patience; against chastity because these temptations disturb people most and because the virtue itself is one of the loveliest forms of temperance; against patience, because such temptations happen so often, since the purpose of patience is to make us bear our daily troubles in a rational and Christian manner, whereas we exercise fortitude, properly speaking, only in times of great danger.

CONCUPISCENCE AND GRACE

St. James speaks of the first type of temptation when he says: “But every man is tempted by his own concupiscence, being drawn away and allured. Then when concupiscence hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin. But sin, when it is completed, begetteth death. Do not err, therefore, my dearest brethren. Every best gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no change, nor shadow of alteration.”

According to this text, when temptation begins independently of the will, as long as concupiscence has not conceived, that is, as along as it has not obtained our consent, there is no sin; there can even be merit if the just man resists temptation immediately. But if concupiscence conceives, or obtains our consent, it brings forth sin, and when that sin is grave it does the soul to death by depriving it of the supernatural life of grace.

Souls that have never experienced these temptations are rare. St. Teresa is cited as an example because, when asked by her daughters about such things, she could not give them any counsel, being ignorant of this evil; therefore she sent them to other older sisters. St. Thomas, too, after a first victory won in his youth against one of these assaults, was delivered from

them forever after so that he could attend more freely to the contemplation of the things of God and teach them to others.

On the contrary, many experience temptations of this kind, particularly during the passive purification of the senses. And as they already have a deep love for purity of body and soul, they are tortured interiorly, seeing their imagination sullied, their sensory appetite fanned and violently inflamed. St. John of the Cross tells us of this purgation: “It is wont to be accompanied by grave trials and temptations of sense, which last for a long time, albeit longer in some than in others. For to some the angel of Satan presents himself—namely, the spirit of fornication—that he may buffet their senses with abominable and violent temptations, and may trouble their spirits with vile considerations and representations which are most visible to the imagination, which things at times are a greater affliction to them than death.”

Not uncommonly, interior souls that have had a guarded childhood and adolescence may pass many years with almost no trouble from the senses. Then a day comes when violent temptations surge up within them and last for months or even years, with intervals of calm. If the three signs of the night of the senses just described above are found in them, this new trial confirms the presence of the state of purgation. Souls going through this must not be discouraged, for they are beginning to live a higher spiritual life, and their director should give them firm assurance of this truth, exhorting them to bear themselves with courage.

St. Paul tells us of himself: “And lest the greatness of the revelations should exalt me, there was given me a sting of my flesh, an angel of Satan, to buffet me. For which thing thrice I besought the Lord, that it might depart from me. And He said to me: My grace is sufficient for thee: for power is made perfect in infirmity. Gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me. For which cause I please myself in my infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ. For when I am weak, then am I powerful.” Similar cases are remarked in the lives of the fathers of the desert, of St. Jerome, St. Benedict, St. Catherine of Siena, Blessed Angela of Foligno, St. Alphonsus Liguori, and many other saints.

In explaining what St. Paul attested, St. Thomas says that a doctor often induces a less dangerous sickness to heal or prevent another that is more serious; for example, he may cure a convulsion by bringing on a fever. The

Apostle shows us that the physician of souls, our Lord Jesus Christ, acts in the same way. To rid us of serious spiritual maladies, or to immunize us against them, He permits most of His elect and even those who are not so holy to be much tried in the body; sometimes, to cure them of very grave sins, He even allows them to fall into lesser, though mortal, sins.

Of all sins, pride is the most serious. Charity unites us to God and is the root of all the virtues. Pride makes us desire our own excellence without subordinating it to God and thus it separates us from God and is therefore the root of all the vices. For this reason God resists the proud. And since, in some respects, the good run a greater risk of taking pride in themselves precisely because of the good to be found within them, God at times permits some fault or failing of theirs, mortal sin even, to interfere with the good that they might do. They are led in this way to humble themselves and to recognize that by their own strength they cannot stand. St. Thomas adds that St. Paul was allowed to be so tempted to keep him from becoming puffed up by his exceptional vocation, supernatural lights, apostolic works, virginity, and knowledge. In his testing God gave him a remedy to preserve him from pride.

If St. Paul took refuge in prayer at such times, what should we not do, who are so much weaker than he was? We know how he was answered. A sick man who is ignorant of the nature of his illness may beg the doctor not to prescribe some strong and painful remedy; but the doctor, who wishes him to recover his health, pays no attention to him. God acted thus in regard to St. Paul, not putting an end to his trial but giving him more than he asked —help to keep him from yielding and to make him triumph over temptation. “My grace is sufficient for thee; for power is made perfect in infirmity.” St. Jerome says that we see God’s goodness in this, that He often refuses to grant us what we ask of Him only to give us something better, which we should prefer.

Besides prayer and work, a great devotion to Mary is recommended by spiritual authors to help us resist temptations against chastity. Blessed Grignon de Montfort gives a beautiful treatment of this subject in his treatise on True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. He tells us that our devotion to Mary should be interior, tender, holy, constant, and disinterested; that it consists in the perfect consecration of our entire selves to Jesus through Mary, a renewing of our baptismal vows and a deeding

over to Mary of all that is communicable in our good works and prayers so that she may use them all to benefit souls according to her good pleasure.

Alluding directly to the passive purifications, Blessed Grignon adds: “It is true that we can attain divine union by other roads; but it is by many more crosses and strange deaths, and with many more difficulties, which we shall find it hard to overcome. We must pass through obscure nights, through combats, through strange agonies, over craggy mountains, through cruel thorns and over frightful deserts. But by the path of Mary we pass more gently and more tranquilly.

“We do find, it is true, great battles to fight, and great hardships to master; but that good Mother makes herself so present and so near to her faithful servants, to enlighten them in their darknesses and their doubts, to strengthen them in their fears, and to sustain them in their struggles and their difficulties, that in truth this virginal path to find Jesus Christ is a path of roses and honey compared with other paths.”

Mary gives us special protection against the wiles and temptations of the devil, helps us to draw much profit from our struggle, and makes the battle both easier and more meritorious for us: easier, because she joins forces with us; more meritorious, because she obtains for us the means to fight valiantly—by a greater charity, the very principle of merit.

THE FRUITS OF PATIENCE AND MEEKNESS

As our contest with temptations against chastity implants the virtue itself more deeply in the sensory appetite, weakens the appetite’s inclination to concupiscence, and subordinates it more and more to right reason and grace, so the exercise of patience and meekness serves to discipline the other and easily irritated part of our sensory appetite, the irascible. It is no wonder, then, that God so often allows temptations against the virtues of patience and mildness during the passive purification of the senses. We meet unforeseen and redoubled vexations, misfortunes, contradictions, and sometimes even persecutions, although we should take care not to exaggerate the importance of the latter. These experiences, in one degree or another, prove the truth of St. Paul’s words, “And all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution.” At the very least, they will suffer to see sin preventing the coming of God’s kingdom in souls.

The way to true wisdom is wanting to none: it is the cross. Plato and Aristotle were of the opinion that few men would attain wisdom because the human means to reach it were not within the compass of all. Our Lord tells us, “If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.” The cross, when carried with supernatural love and patience, teaches us more and more of the deep meaning of the mysteries of faith.

In St. Thomas’ words, “The principal act of fortitude is endurance, that is, to stand immovable in the midst of dangers rather than to attack them.” Attack, with its strong and largely temperamental uprush of courage, is not the principal act of fortitude. Endurance, the restraint of fear by reason and will, is. To stand firm under assault, to pass through passion without any moral yielding to evil, to tire the adversary by force of constancy, belongs to heroism and marks the martyr. To control fear is more difficult than to moderate daring; to bear up under a present evil demands more of us than to rush out to meet one still ahead.

Now the chief act of fortitude, to endure or to stand firm, is found in a certain way in patience, not in regard to great dangers but in relation to our daily troubles; for patience makes us endure like Christians the sadness they cause us. Its companion virtue, meekness, restrains our anger, makes us masters of ourselves, and keeps us from answering sharply and hotly when people tell us the truth about ourselves. Thus it prepares us to receive the knowledge of the supreme truth, God.

Our Lord teaches us all this when He says, “Blessed are the meek; for they shall possess the land.” They shall possess first the land of their own souls, if we may so express it; because meekness, by restraining anger in the midst of contradictions, gives us great self-possession inspired by faith, by love of God and of neighbor. All these virtues increase together when, instead of giving in to temptations of impatience and irritability, we resist them firmly. “Patience bears roses,” says an old proverb. Because of patience, Job, when deprived of possessions and health alike, could still say, “the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away . . . blessed be the name of the Lord.” Analogously, we must practice patience in the night of the senses; it disposes us for the dawning of contemplation.

The crosses met in this period of the spiritual life are all the harder to bear when they come not only from the wicked but also from good people, particularly relatives and friends and those to whom we are especially

devoted. When we are the only ones to suffer, we do well to remember our Lord's words, "But I say to you not to resist evil: but if one strike thee on thy right cheek, turn to him also the other." Meekness often wins an adversary to God, a greater victory than the defense of our own rights and a display of anger. "Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou be made like him." However, immediately after these words in the Book of Proverbs we read, "Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he imagine himself to be wise." When it is a question of the good of our adversary himself or the legitimate defense of the common good of family, country, or Church, then we do well to answer.

The baseless opposition of good people with good intentions is particularly hard to bear; for it makes us ask ourselves whether those who grieve us, with their evident good will, have not genuine reasons for doing so. The more there are who judge us severely, the more this purgation hurts. St. Teresa went through such trials when priests and religious, some of them her own confessors, thought that she was deceived by the devil and began to estrange themselves from her. She suffered great anguish at this, the more so because in certain respects her humility made her judge herself even more harshly than her critics did.

The more we have done for friends and the more we have loved them, the harder it is to suffer persecution at their hands. "For if my enemy had reviled me, I would verily have borne with it. And if he that hated me had spoken great things against me, I would perhaps have hidden myself from him. But thou a man of one mind, my guide, and my familiar, who didst take sweetmeats together with me: in the house of God we walked with consent." Betrayal by a friend is one of the most trying things to bear, and the spirit of evil sometimes makes use of it to introduce the worst kind of divisions in the Church and in religious communities.

When we are wronged the temptation to curse presents itself. At times the devil tries to lead us to blaspheme. In Job's trials, his wife said to him: "Dost thou still continue in thy simplicity? Curse God and die." To which he answered: "Thou hast spoken like one of the foolish women: if we have received good things at the hand of God, why should we not receive evil?"

In the same way, after Tobias, a man of many charities, had become blind but continued to give thanks to God daily, his wife and friends came to him saying: "Where is thy hope, for which thou gavest alms, and buriedst the dead?" Tobias answered: "Speak not so; for we are the children of saints,

and look for that life which God will give to those that never change their faith from him. . . . Thou art just, O Lord, and all Thy judgments are just, and all Thy ways mercy, and truth, and judgment: And now, O Lord, think of me, and take not revenge of my sins, neither remember my offenses nor those of my parents." Humility and compunction of heart, the fruit of trials like these, always speak in the same accents. Cursed by Semei, David answered forbearingly: "Let him alone that he may curse as the Lord hath bidden him. Perhaps the Lord may look upon my affliction, and the Lord may render me good for the cursing of this day."

The opposition of well-intentioned superiors may cause souls their greatest sorrow during this period. Preoccupied with what they consider the common good, superiors may fail to appreciate spiritual attractions that come, nevertheless, from God. When this happens, we should, in a spirit of faith, recognize it as providential. Those who obey humbly and heroically in such times of testing show that they are being led by the spirit of God.

Humility and patience and meekness are necessary in these contradictions; and God lets us be proven in exactly this way so that we may make very meritorious acts of these virtues and increase them tenfold by our exertion. The hailstorm that seems to be beating us down is really a rain of diamonds. When our Lord told His disciples that they would have much to suffer, He said too: "But a hair of your head shall not perish. In your patience you shall possess your souls." "Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when they shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you, untruly, for My sake. Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven."

As a matter of fact, later, after the apostles had been beaten with rods, they went out of the Sanhedrin "rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus." They accepted the cross not merely with resignation but with understanding and love, bearing their sufferings in such a way as to bring marvelous fruitfulness to their apostolate.

When we are put to the proof, we should say to God: "It is good for me that Thou hast humbled me." And when calm returns, we shall see the fruit of our ordeal and can say to God: "O how great is the multitude of Thy sweetness, O Lord, which Thou hast hidden for them that fear Thee! Which Thou hast wrought for them that hope in Thee. . . . Thou shalt hide them in

the secret of Thy face, from the disturbance of men. Thou shalt protect them in Thy tabernacle from the contradiction of tongues. Blessed be the Lord. . . . But I said in the excess of my mind: I am cast away from before Thy eyes. Therefore Thou hast heard the voice of my prayer, when I cried to Thee."

What is said here of the purification of individuals is equally true of religious families, they being tried especially at the time of their foundation. Our Lord's words must be fulfilled in both cases: "Everyone that heareth these My words, and doth them, shall be likened to a wise man that built his house upon a rock. And the rain fell, and the winds blew, and they beat upon that house, and it fell not, for it was founded on a rock. And everyone that heareth these My words, and doth them not, shall be like a foolish man that built his house upon the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and they beat upon that house, and it fell, and great was the fall thereof." Our Lord gives us an even more striking image of this purgation when, after saying, "I am the true vine; and My Father is the husbandman," he adds: ". . . and every [branch] that beareth fruit, He will purge it, that it may bring forth more fruit."

THE TIME FOR THE NIGHT OF THE SENSES

The last question to be considered concerning the passive purification of the senses is when it ordinarily takes place and how long it usually lasts in the spiritual life. Many modern authors treat of this question in chapters on the unitive way, as if it generally occurred after the soul had already entered there. Other authors, Vallgornera, for instance, discuss it at the end of the purgative way and take up the consideration of the night of the soul at the end of the illuminative way.

To discover which of these viewpoints represents the traditional one, we must consult the great masters who have themselves experienced such a purgation and have considered it in itself and for itself and not in relation to numberless irrelevancies connected with it. Among the masters, St. John of the Cross, recently declared a doctor of the Church, takes precedence because he has treated the problem ex professo and gone into the subject more thoroughly than anyone before him and deserves to be considered a faithful witness to tradition.

An attentive reading of St. John of the Cross reveals what Vallgornera saw so well, that, for him, the passive night of the senses is the normal

transition from the purgative to the illuminative way, just as the night of the soul marks the passage from the illuminative to the unitive way.

In The Dark Night we read: “When this house of sensuality was now at rest—that is, was mortified—its passions being quenched and its desires put to rest and lulled to sleep by means of this blessed night of the purgation of sense, the soul went forth, to set upon the road and way of the spirit, which is that of progressives and proficients, and which, by another name is called the way of illumination or of infused contemplation, wherewith God Himself feeds and refreshes the soul, without meditation, or the soul’s active help. Such, as we have said, is the night and purgation of sense in the soul.” Earlier, when explaining the third sign of the night of the senses, St. John of the Cross says that infused contemplation begins during the period of transition from the purgative to the illuminative way.

Elsewhere in the same work we find another confirmation that this time marks the soul’s progress from the purgative to the illuminative way: “The night of sense is common and comes to many; these are the beginners; and of this night we shall first speak. The night of the spirit is the portion of the very few, and these are they that are already practiced and proficient, of whom we shall treat hereafter.” Few souls are generous enough in fact to reach the full perfection of Christian life and to pass through the two purifications demanded by it.

St. John of the Cross always calls those undergoing the passive purification of the senses “beginners” and, as has been done traditionally ever since the time of Clement of Alexandria, he distinguishes them from the proficient and the perfect. St. Teresa’s view is the same. In The Interior Castle, before taking up the subject of the prayer of quiet, she treats, at the end of the third mansions of sensible aridity, another designation for the night of the senses; later, at the beginning of the sixth mansions, she describes the night of the soul, a means of disposing the soul for a life of perfect union with God.

In her Life, after saying that she endured sensible dryness for many years and all that time considered it a mercy of God if she got but one drop of water from the well of consolation, she adds: “I believe that it is our Lord’s good pleasure frequently in the beginning, and at times in the end, to send these torments, and many other incidental temptations, to those who love Him.” The words “and at times in the end” seem to correspond to a thought

St. John of the Cross had that the senses are truly purified only when the purgation of the soul has begun.

It seems an obvious mistake to maintain that St. John of the Cross gave a special meaning to the traditional terms “beginners,” “proficients,” and “perfect,” and that those he calls beginners are beginners in the sense of starting out on the unitive way. The beginners St. John of the Cross talks about have the faults of real beginners, as we can see from his description of them. He even says that some of them have two confessors, one to whom they relate their progress, another to whom they tell their failings: a thing they would not do if they had really reached the unitive way. St. John of the Cross takes these three terms in the traditional sense in which they have been used since the time of Clement of Alexandria, by St. Augustine, by St. Gregory the Great, and by St. Thomas. He accepts, too, the corresponding terms of purgative, illuminative, and unitive ways, although he describes the latter two stages of the spiritual life not in any attenuated form but as they exist in their fullness.

The only comment that need be added is that interior souls not called to a purely contemplative life reach the illuminative way more slowly and, in many instances, the passive purgations are hidden in the ordinary sufferings of life or the trials of the apostolate. The light of contemplation is less evident and more diffuse, yet quite real. The lives of saints devoted to the apostolate and to the corporal and spiritual works of mercy provide examples of this.

As to how long the night of the senses usually lasts, St. John of the Cross says:

For how long a time the soul will be held in this fasting and this penance of sense, cannot be told with any certainty; for all do not experience it after one manner, neither do all encounter the same temptations. For this is meted out by the will of God, in conformity with the greater or the smaller degree of imperfection which each soul has to purge away. In conformity, likewise, with the degree of love of union to which God is pleased to raise it, He will humble it with greater or less intensity or in greater or less time. Those who have the disposition and greater strength to suffer, He purges with greater intensity and more quickly.

The purgation of others is not so hard but lasts longer. Some never come to the end of it, alternating between consolation and aridity, both sent by

God, for if He did not seem to withdraw from them, some souls would never draw nearer to Him.

In The Living Flame, when speaking of divine union as the end of purification, St. John of the Cross says:

And here it behooves us to note the reason why there are so few that attain to this lofty state of the perfection of union with God. It must be known that it is not because God is pleased that there should be few raised to this high spiritual state, for it would please Him that all souls should be perfect, but it is rather that He finds few vessels which can bear so high and lofty a work. For, when He proves them in small things and finds them weak and sees that they at once flee from labour, and desire not to submit to the least discomfort or mortification, He finds that they are not strong and faithful in the little things wherein He has granted them the favour of beginning to purge and fashion them, and sees that they will be much less so in great things; so He goes no farther with their purification, neither lifts them up from the dust of the earth, since greater constancy and fortitude would be necessary for this than they exhibit.

In her Life, St. Teresa, too, warns us that many begin to give themselves to the spiritual life but then make no further progress—although their failure saddens them—mainly because they have no love for the cross. The same thought is repeated by all the masters of the spiritual life: Tauler, Blessed Henry Suso, St. Catherine of Siena. In her Dialogue, St. Catherine says that patience in time of trial is the sign of perfect love, the touchstone of true obedience, and the marrow of charity.

In answer to the question why good men never come to experience what he tells them of the wonderful things of God, Ruysbroeck says that they fail to respond to the divine motion by self-abnegation, care too little for self-knowledge, and also regard good works as more important than a right motive and love of God. They remain, therefore, exterior and complex.

The Imitation summarizes this whole doctrine as follows:

“Why, then, art thou afraid to take up thy cross, which leadeth to the kingdom? In the cross is salvation; in the cross is life; in the cross is protection from enemies. In the cross is infusion of heavenly sweetness; in the cross is strength of mind; in the cross is joy of spirit. In the cross is height of virtue; in the cross is perfection of sanctity. . . . Take up, therefore, thy cross, and follow Jesus, and thou shalt go into life everlasting. . . . If

thou carry the cross willingly, it will carry thee, and bring thee to thy desired end."

"And this is the reason why there are found so few contemplative persons, because there are few that know how to sequester themselves entirely from perishable creatures."

St. Paul taught the same high spiritual wisdom: "For the Spirit himself giveth testimony to our spirit, that we are the sons of God. And if sons, heirs also; heirs indeed of God, and joint heirs with Christ: yet so, if we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified with Him. For I reckon that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us."

Blessed Grignon de Montfort speaks of the passive purifications to be encountered in the apostolate. Having said that eternal Wisdom communicates all Its light and the virtues and gifts in an eminent degree to those who possess the spirit of wisdom, he adds that Wisdom inspires them to undertake great things for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. To prove them and make them worthy, Wisdom makes Its chief work the securing of great combats for them, laying up contradictions and crosses for them in almost everything that they undertake. Sometimes the devil is permitted to tempt them, the world to calumniate and despise them, their enemies to overcome them and cast them down, their friends and relatives to abandon and betray them. They lose some treasure, meet sickness and sadness, and know what it is to be faint of heart and tried at every turn. Yet the Holy Ghost says: "Their affliction is light and their reward will be great because God has proven them and found them worthy of Him. He has tried them like gold in a furnace; He has received them as a victim of holocaust and He will look upon them with favor when their time comes."

Wisdom protects the just man against his enemies, defends him from seducers, and gives him a strong conflict so that he may overcome and know that wisdom is mightier than all. And Wisdom, being a lovable sovereign, does all things according to number, weight, and measure, meting out crosses to friends only in proportion to their strength and pouring out so much sweetness on each cross that it becomes the delight of him who takes it up. Those who seek or possess eternal Wisdom, have the cross as their portion and reward.

CHAPTER V

THE UNION WITH GOD ORDINARILY FOLLOWING THE NIGHT OF THE SENSES

Between the two nights of which St. John of the Cross speaks in his description of the soul's ascending journey toward perfect divine union, there is, as it were, a time of calm, when the soul keeps on advancing in the light without great difficulty or fatigue. Other spiritual authors speak of this period between what they call the second and third conversions. Father Lallemant, S.J., alludes to it several times in his beautiful book, The Spiritual Doctrine. The first conversion takes place when we renounce the spirit of the world to give ourselves to God, for example, on entering religion. Since the engrafted plant is apt to go back to its wild state, it must experience a second conversion, or as St. John of the Cross calls it, the night of the senses, during which our Lord Himself teaches us the emptiness of created things and the value of the one thing necessary. The third conversion, if it takes place in this life in such a way as to enable us to avoid purgatory, consists of the different degrees of the night of the soul, when the Lord enlightens us much more concerning our weakness and misery and His own infinite greatness.

The relatively calm period that takes place between the second and third conversions is what we wish to discuss now, following the teaching of St. John of the Cross and of St. Teresa. They have both, in quite different ways, given exactness to what had already been said by St. Gregory, Hugh of St. Victor, Tauler, St. Catherine of Siena, the author of The Imitation, and many other great spiritual writers.

THE VIEW OF ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS

St. John of the Cross says:

When the house of sensuality was now at rest-that is, was mortified—its passions being quenched and its desires put to rest and lulled to sleep by means of this blessed night of the purgation of sense, the soul went forth, to set out upon the road and way of the spirit, which is that of progressives and proficients, and which, by another name, is called the way of illumination or of infused contemplation, wherewith God Himself feeds and refreshes the soul, without meditation, or the soul's active help. Such, as we have said, is the night and purgation of sense in the soul.

In the preceding chapter he had said that the soul is no longer

moved by the pleasure of attraction and sweetness which it finds in its work, but only by God. It likewise practices here the virtue of fortitude, because, in these difficulties and insipidities which it finds in its work, it brings strength out of weakness and thus becomes strong. . . .

It is no longer angry with itself and disturbed because of its own faults, nor with its neighbour because of his faults, neither is it displeased with God, nor does it utter unseemly complaints because He does not quickly make it holy.

Then as to envy, the soul has charity toward others in this respect also; for, if it has any envy, this is no longer a vice as it was before, when it was grieved because others were preferred to it and given greater advantage. Its grief now comes from seeing how great is its own misery, and its envy (if it has any) is a virtue, since it desires to imitate others, which is great virtue. . . .

Often, in the midst of these times of aridity and hardship, God communicates to the soul, when it is least expecting it, the purest spiritual sweetness and love, together with a spiritual knowledge which is sometimes very delicate, each manifestation of which is of greater benefit and worth than those which the soul enjoyed afore-time; although in its beginnings the soul thinks that this is not so, for the spiritual influence now granted to it is very delicate and cannot be perceived by sense.

Finally, inasmuch as the soul is now purged from the affections and desires of sense, it obtains liberty of spirit, whereby in ever greater degree it gains the twelve fruits of the Holy Spirit.

These St. Paul enumerates as follows: "But the fruit of the Spirit is charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, longanimity, mildness, faith, modesty, continency, chastity." These fruits are, as St. Thomas teaches, acts proceeding from the influence of the Holy Ghost in us and

bringing us a holy delight. They are, therefore, entirely different not only from the fruits of concupiscence but also from the fruits of simple reason, even when enlightened by faith, as in discursive meditation.

St. John of the Cross adds:

The soul which God is about to lead onward is not led by His Majesty into this night of the spirit as soon as it goes forth from the aridities and trials of the first purgation and night of sense; rather it is wont to pass a long time, even years, after leaving the state of beginners, in exercising itself in that of proficients. In the latter state it is like to one that has come forth from a rigorous imprisonment; it goes about the things of God with much greater freedom and satisfaction of the soul, and with more abundant and inward delight than it did at the beginning before it entered the said night. For its imagination and faculties are no longer bound, as they were before, by meditation and anxiety of spirit, since it now very readily finds in its spirit the most serene and loving contemplation and spiritual sweetness without the labour of meditation.

To prevent our thinking that this means the soul will no longer experience any dryness, St. John of the Cross immediately adds:

Although, as the purgation of the soul is not complete (for the principal part thereof, which is that of the spirit is wanting . . .), it is never without certain occasional necessities, aridities, darknesses and perils which are sometimes much more intense than those of the past, for those were as tokens and heralds of the coming night of the spirit, and are not lasting. . . . For, having passed through a period, or periods, or days of this night and tempest, the soul soon returns to its wonted serenity; and after this manner God purges certain souls which think not to rise to so high a degree of love as do others, bringing them at times, and for short periods, into this night of contemplation and purgation of the spirit, causing night to come upon them and then dawn.

The Imitation often speaks of the same thing.

A final remark made on the subject in The Dark Night says: “This sweetness, then, and this interior pleasure which we are describing, and which these progressives find and experience in their spirits so easily and so plentifully, is communicated to them in much greater abundance than aforetime, overflowing into their senses more than was usual previous to this purgation of sense; for, inasmuch as the sense is now purer, it can more easily feel the pleasures of the spirit after its manner.”

What St. John of the Cross has to say about the degrees or “cellars” of love contributes much to the clarification of this teaching. He writes: “And we may say that there are seven of these degrees or cellars of love, all of which the soul comes to possess when she possesses in perfection the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, in the manner wherein she is able to receive them.” These seven cellars or cells of the soul remind us of St. Teresa’s seven mansions, which also correspond to the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, as Isaias ranked them in descending order: “And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him: the spirit of wisdom, and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge, and of godliness. And he shall be filled with the spirit of the fear of the Lord.”

In the night of the senses, as we have seen, the gifts of knowledge and of fear of the Lord have most prominence, making plain to us the emptiness of created things and strengthening us against the frequent temptations of this same period. In the night of the soul we shall see the special working of the gifts of understanding and fortitude. In the transforming union the gift of wisdom is in most evident operation. The gifts of counsel and of piety dominate the time of calm after the night of the senses, and at this time the gift of knowledge serves less to reveal the emptiness of created things than their symbolism of the divine.

The gift of piety, as St. Thomas remarks, disposes us to receive docilely those inspirations producing in us an entirely filial affection for our Father in heaven, such as St. Paul speaks of in his Epistle to the Romans: “For you have not received the spirit of bondage again in fear; but you have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry: Abba (Father). For the Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit, that we are the sons of God.”

The gift of piety corresponds to the beatitude of the meek, for it leads us to see other men not as rivals but as God’s children and our brothers. The gift of counsel, the guide of true piety, corresponds to the beatitude of the merciful, since in difficult cases it inclines us more toward mercy than toward rigorous justice. The predominating influence of these two gifts imparts to the period under discussion its peculiar character of calm, the fruit of the passive purification of the senses. However, the soul has not reached the end of its upward journey, although those who have come so far may be carried away like St. Peter on Thabor and say: “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles, one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.” As St. Mark goes on to say, “He knew not what

he said." And soon afterward our Lord foretold His passion, "It is written of the Son of man, that He must suffer many things and be despised." The Passion finds its reflection in the purgation of soul which, for truly generous hearts, follows the period of calm spoken of here.

ST. TERESA'S TESTIMONY

For anyone who has studied St. Teresa's Interior Castle closely, it is apparent that the union with God enjoyed by the soul between the night of the senses and the night of the soul corresponds to the period covering the second phase of the fourth mansion and the whole of the fifth. The fourth mansion begins with "supernatural recollection" following a period of dryness and often accompanied by the aridity characterizing the passive night of the senses. Furthermore, the time of quiet following it may be arid because of the opposition encountered from the imagination and sensitive appetite.

The life and works of St. Jane Frances de Chantal show that this arid quiet can last a long time. In it we find the two elements which, according to St. John of the Cross, are characteristic of the passive night of the senses: on one hand, the beginning of infused contemplation together with a strong desire for God and for perfection; and on the other, the deprivation of what we call sensible grace and of the facility or even of the ability to enlist the cooperation of the imagination and devote oneself to discursive meditation.

At the beginning of her sixth mansion St. Teresa describes the night of the soul as follows:

I shall not enumerate these trials in their proper order, but will describe them as they come to my memory, beginning with the least severe. This is an outcry raised against such a person by those amongst whom she lives. . . . Persons she thought were her friends desert her, making the most bitter remarks of all. . . . Yet oh! the rest would seem trifling in comparison could I relate the interior torments met with here, but they are impossible to describe. . . . Let us first speak of the trial of meeting with so timorous and inexperienced a confessor that nothing seems safe to him; he dreads and suspects everything but the commonplace. . . . The poor soul, beset by the same fears, . . . feels a torture and dismay at his condemnation that can only be realized by those who have experienced it themselves. For one of the severe trials of these souls . . . is their belief that God permits them to be

deceived in punishment for their sins . . . (their) fears become almost unbearable. Especially is this the case when such spiritual dryness ensues that the mind feels as if it never had thought of God nor ever will be able to do so.

Anyone reading this chapter and meditating on it sees that it describes the night of the soul discussed by St. John of the Cross in the second book of The Dark Night. We understand, then, that the union with God enjoyed by the advanced or proficient between the two nights corresponds to the second phase of St. Teresa's fourth mansion: for these souls know a quiet of soul no longer arid but consoling, and when they enter her fifth mansion they experience some degree of simple union, whether complete or incomplete.

In the prayer of quiet the will alone is captivated. A mysterious light manifesting the goodness of its indwelling God together with the gift of piety, present in the will itself and disposing it for an entirely filial affection for God, achieves this work within it. This state of soul has been compared to a child at the breast. Better still, it is like possession of that living water of which Christ told the Samaritan woman. This water has its source in God yet it springs up in the inmost depths of our being, giving us great peace and sweetness, enlarging our hearts and our whole interior life, accomplishing such things within us that the soul itself cannot comprehend what it has received. In this state, however, the intellect, memory, and imagination are not captivated by the divine action. Sometimes they act as aids to the will and set themselves to serve it, at other times their cooperation causes it nothing but trouble.

In her Life, St. Teresa uses the noria, a kind of water wheel, to symbolize the prayer of quiet. We remember the image she borrowed from the four ways of watering gardens: The first is by bucketing water from the well hand over hand, the symbol of discursive meditation. The second is by using the noria, a sort of water wheel or windlass that demands less effort than was required at the start to dispose us to receive God's grace; here, the saint says, the flowers of virtue are ready to appear. The third is done by irrigation from a river or spring and corresponds to the sleep of the powers captivated by God and unconscious of the things of the world; here the flowers of virtue blossom. Lastly, the watering is done by rain, symbol of the prayer of union, the source of heroic resolutions and of great growth in humility.

Progress in prayer is, therefore, generally accompanied by progress in virtue; in fact, living faith, charity, and the gifts accompanying them are exercised in prayer; for charity informs and animates, so to say, the other virtues resulting from it and increasing with it. According to St. Teresa, then, if the soul that has already reached the prayer of quiet is humble and generous, it will be raised still higher—to union. But the saint notes that regularity, a fidelity of a somewhat external kind, is not sufficient; we must have besides great docility to the Holy Ghost, because He requires more and more of us as He gives and desires to give us more.

In simple union the divine action is so strong that it completely absorbs the activity of the interior faculties of the soul during the time of prayer. Their entire activity is directed to God and no longer strays away from Him. Not only the will, but the intellect, too, is captivated by Him, and the natural operations of the memory and imagination come to a standstill so that the soul is usually no longer troubled by distractions, at least when it experiences complete union.

This fact explains why the higher faculties, the intellect and will, are positively captivated, fixed, and absorbed by God through the illumination and inspiration of the Holy Ghost necessary for infused loving contemplation. This losing of themselves in God is the eminent exercise of the supernaturalized intellect and will in this life. Intensity of contemplation and of union with God brings about a certain suspension of the natural exercise of the lower faculties (the imagination and sensory memory) and, as a result, of reason as well. This happens because the entire activity of the soul is directed toward God by the higher faculties and these exert a spiritual influence over the lower powers, which are stilled, as it were, and lulled to sleep. The absorbed scholar who abstracts his attention from external things to the extent of no longer seeing them offers us a parallel in the natural order. The soul no longer makes any effort to get the health-giving, refreshing, and purifying waters but simply receives the rain as it falls from heaven, God allowing it to cooperate with Him only by complete submission of will. Yet we continue to merit, not that the vital will-act in such a case is the result of discursive meditation, but because it acts freely in its docility to the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

As St. Teresa says, “How beautiful is the soul after having been immersed in God’s grandeur and united closely to Him but for a short time!” By dying wholly to self such a soul becomes so changed that its

transformation is comparable to the metamorphosis of a silkworm into a white butterfly. In both instances, life reaches maturity only after a transformation. Thus we see why St. John of the Cross calls the period of the spiritual life which we have been discussing the age of the proficients or advanced.

It should be remarked, with St. Teresa, that the prayer of union is often incomplete, without cessation of the activity of the imagination and memory, these powers sometimes making war on the intellect and will. Here again, as in the case of the prayer of quiet, we must pay no more attention to the imagination than we would to a fool. When treating of incomplete mystical union St. Teresa says: “Is it necessary, in order to attain to this kind of divine union, for the powers of the soul to be suspended? No; God has many ways of enriching the soul and bringing it to these Mansions besides what might be called a ‘short cut.’ “

The effects of the prayer of union are wonderfully sanctifying. The soul knows deep contrition for sin and a burning desire to praise and serve God; it suffers much to see sinners lost and catches a glimpse of the sufferings Jesus Christ endured; and it really begins to practice heroic virtue.

What distinguishes St. Teresa from St. John of the Cross is that she puts more stress than he does on the extraordinary favors which may accompany the different states of prayer. Yet she takes care not to confuse concomitant and accidental favors with the essential character of interior states, recognizing that certain graces are bestowed only on a few of those who gain admittance to the inner mansions. Moreover, St. Teresa emphasizes the progressive extension of the mystical state to the different faculties of the soul. To bring out the increasing intensity of this life she shows how the higher powers are more and more positively captivated by God and the natural exercise of the lower faculties becomes suspended. However, she knows, as the text cited above shows, that the binding of the imagination is only an attendant and accidental phenomenon of the infused prayer of union and that ecstasy is not a sure sign of greater knowledge and love of God since it usually comes to an end in transforming union, the most perfect mystical state.

In connection with this subject Father Lallemant has something most apt to say in his Spiritual Doctrine:

The degrees of contemplation, according to some, are, first, recollection of all the powers of the mind; secondly, semi-rapture; thirdly, complete

rapture; fourthly, ecstasy. But this division expresses not so much the essence of contemplation as its accidents; for sometimes a soul without rapture will be favoured with a sublimer light, a clearer knowledge, a more excellent operation from God, than another who is favoured with the most extraordinary raptures and ecstasies. The Blessed Virgin was more elevated in contemplation than all the angels and saints united; and yet she had no raptures.

Like the girl Bernadette, some saints had raptures and ecstasies when they were children but afterward experienced them less often or not at all.

St. John of the Cross makes it quite clear that such phenomena are accidental. To bring out the increasing intensity of union with God, rather than the extension of the mystical state to the different faculties, he lays stress on the passive purifications required by this union. They provide a much better indication of the soul's progress in knowing and loving God because they belong to the very essence of the different stages of the spiritual life.

As we have seen, St. Teresa has not neglected these signs, but neither has she elucidated them as well as St. John of the Cross. He, being a theologian, was more concerned than she with linking contemplation and union with God to their causes and thus explaining them. So he has shown us how contemplation is connected with an eminent degree of the theological virtues and the gifts of the Holy Ghost and how the progressive purification of the virtues brings souls to a higher and simpler form of contemplation and to closer union with God. Thus he gives us an explanation of how virtue usually grows with prayer, since all the functions of the spiritual organism develop together. The passive purification of the soul evidences this truth more strikingly than any other state because it requires heroic acts of faith, confidence, patience, and love of God and during it more than at any other time is verified the old maxim, Ad lucem per crucem. The cross frees men from illusions and leads anyone who carries it supernaturally to true contemplation and perfect love of God.

With a view to keeping souls from falling into discouragement, they should be advised at this time frequently to renew their consecration to Mary the Mediatress and, with all the more reason, to the Sacred Heart. It should also be suggested that they consecrate themselves to the Holy Ghost, the Master of our interior life, so as to be henceforth more and more docile to Him in darkness as well as in light, in dryness as well as in joy. If we

place our full consent in such a consecration, it will have marvelous consequences. If a formal pact with the devil, when fully consented to, can have such terrible results, we know that the will's full consent has no less import in the order of good than in the order of evil. Doubtless it is easier to destroy than to build; yet, with the help of grace, the building of the spiritual temple is always possible, and the Holy Ghost is infinitely more powerful than the demons. We have only to place ourselves under the direction of our inner Master and set ourselves never to refuse Him anything plainly in conformity with the duties of our state and of our vocation; then the more faithful we are, the more He will keep our chief obligations before our minds and so lead us, by a more and more generous practice of virtue, to perfect purification and union with God.

THE VALUE OF THE HIDDEN LIFE

Everything just said about the passive purification of the senses and the period normally following it, called the illuminative way, reveals the value of the hidden life to us. For a living and practical idea of it, we shall quote from a commentary on the Canticle of Canticles written by a priest friend long tried by illness, who obviously speaks from experience and desires to remain unknown. The great merit of this commentary is that it rises spontaneously and immediately from sensible symbols to spiritual realities and has passages of real beauty. The following pages relative to the first verses of the Canticle concern the apostolate of the hidden life.

O my God, when I meet a soul that You seem to have called to the true life, I feel impelled to pray boldly: Here is one of Your children, O Father! Give him a new mark of Your affection. You have already given him so much! If anything is lacking in his preparation, supply it so that he may be worthy of You! Purify him, adorn him, surround him with Your love. Take him up, as it were, in Your arms and hold him against Your great heart. And, I dare ask it, Father, reverently, humbly, but ardently as well, put Your kiss upon his mouth. I shall know no peace until You fulfill my desire. It is good; it is legitimate. I ask it for Your glory, for the good of this soul, and for my own sake, O Jesus. Remember the words of Your holy precursor: "He that hath the bride, is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, who standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth with joy because of the

bridegroom's voice." And grant that I may be able to say as he did: "This my joy is therefore fulfilled."

The conditions necessary to make an apostle of the interior life can evidently be reduced to two: an ardent desire to lead the hidden life and perfect docility to grace, so that the Holy Ghost may make whatever use He will of us as instruments for others. If we are to help souls by speaking to them of the interior life, the preparation necessary for it, its nature and its crown and consummation, we must have more than a scientific knowledge of these mysterious realities, such as can be had from a serious study of the masters. In this matter personal experience means much and rounds out common doctrine.

When a man is in immediate contact with the reality he is describing, his speech has an indescribable persuasiveness. He not only knows this reality but lives it and, in a sense, is it and, therefore, has no trouble putting it into words. Under the action of grace, his words become light and warmth and life to the listener. They have fire because the soul that expresses and is expressed by them is itself on fire and has, after striving long and patiently, been given this sometimes unmerited gift of utterance by God Himself. Then a man may give away the fruits of his garden, as St. Teresa puts it, without harm to himself. We must abide God's time, the autumn of the soul. If we attempt to reap in the spring instead of at harvest time, we are liable to let others go hungry and to starve to death ourselves. But when the time is really ripe, we must not let false humility or sham prudence make us refuse to give of our good things to others lest we smother our fire with ashes and allow the children of our heavenly Father to go hungry for bread.

Docility to grace is then most necessary for the apostle of the hidden life. Being only an instrument in the hands of the divine Worker, he must do nothing of himself and by himself. Ordinarily, of course, he remains free and autonomous. Only at certain times and in certain events the Holy Ghost moves him without his taking the initiative of his own action. When this happens he has no other duty than to give his full and perfect consent to all his Master desires him to say or to do. In all other cases, he need only concern himself with cooperating disinterestedly, intelligently, and docilely with grace. God alone knows what He expects of a soul, what He desires to do with it, the plan of life He has sketched for it, the place He has set aside for it in His spiritual edifice, the part it has to play in time and in eternity. Nothing can prevail against the divine will.

The apostle of the hidden life who has fulfilled the two necessary conditions has a wonderful mission. God's mercy works but for one end: to teach us what heaven is, to make us desire it, to put in our hands the means to gain it. Now heaven is nothing else but perfect, conscious, and definitive participation in the inner life of God. And the interior life is nothing else but the imperfect but very real beginning of this participation: inchoatio vitae aeternae, inchoatio et praelibatio beatitudinis. Therefore, nothing on earth so resembles and so prepares us for eternal life as a life of intimacy with the adorable Trinity living at home in our hearts. And no more beautiful task exists in this world than to teach souls the art of beginning their heaven on earth. God is glorified, they are given happiness, and we are made glad.

O my Jesus, since You love interior souls so much, increase the number of those who worship the Father "in spirit and in truth." Let each one of them be more recollected, more earnest, more generous, and, in a word, more loving. Give to Your other selves, those to whom You have willed to confide the care of discovering, cultivating, and improving the souls so dear to You, an abundant share in Your priestly grace, that they may give themselves entirely to this divine task. Show them the beauty of these souls. See to it that they understand their full value. Illumine them with Your light. Surround them with Your love. Be their counselor and guide in such an important and difficult undertaking. Make them prudent, patient, devoted, forgetful of self and concerned only with making You known and loved.

PART II

CROSSES OF THE SOUL PURIFYING GRACES OF THE NIGHT OF THE SOUL

CHAPTER VI

THE PASSIVE PURIFICATION OF THE SOUL AS DESCRIBED BY ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS

One of the most profound and original parts of the doctrine of St. John of the Cross, his richest contribution to the development of mystical theology and his greatest claim to the title of doctor, is that which deals with what he calls the passive night of the soul. By following what he says concerning it in the second book of The Dark Night, we wish first to show the necessity for such a purification, then to point out the principal features of his psychological description of it, and lastly to try to give a theological explanation of this grievous state by relating it to the supernatural cause which produces it and the end to which it is ordered.

There are several reasons why really interior souls will not find such a knowledge of his doctrine useless. They may not profit from a first superficial reading; but if they reread it more attentively, it will reveal to them the worth of the daily cross which we all must carry and teach them not to confuse our self-made troubles with those of real purifying value. It will make them see, too, the great differences between what beginners suffer in the night of the senses and what the advanced undergo in their preparation for the intimacy of divine union. And so they will come to understand how ridiculous it would be to believe ourselves in the second night when we have hardly entered the first. A meditative reading discloses the distance separating us from the full perfection of Christian life. Only a few attain to it, and they have all passed through the crucible in one way or another. Spiritual pride does much to deceive us into believing that, without having traveled the long hard road, we are ready to reach the summit.

The Holy Ghost has deemed it wise to reveal these things to us in the great Book of Job and in some of the most beautiful verses of the psalms. They give us foreknowledge of the sufferings awaiting us in purgatory, if

we fail to profit sufficiently from the crosses sent to us in this life. Finally, this sublime doctrine gives us a deeper understanding of the meaning of the seven last words of Christ on the cross, the best expression of the mystery of redemption and a subject for our daily meditation.

THE NECESSITY FOR THE PASSIVE PURIFICATION OF THE SOUL

Those who go forward into the illuminative way must undergo the passive night of the soul so that the highest part of the soul, the intellect and the will, may be purified and rid of imperfections. To enter into this way, they have already had to pass through the passive night of the senses for the purging of the lower, sensory part of the soul from the faults of beginners: spiritual greediness, laziness, jealousy, impatience, and spiritual pride. By plunging the soul into aridity, the passive night of the senses has achieved its purgation from sensuality especially, and the soul has begun to live the life of the spirit, receiving a general and obscure mode of contemplating what so attracts it, the infinite goodness of God.

Having passed through this night and left the state of beginners, the soul may spend a long time, even years, exercising itself in the way of proficients. Like someone liberated from rigorous imprisonment, it goes about the things of God with much greater freedom and satisfaction of soul and with more inward delight than it ever knew before. This relatively calm period, usually occurring between the two purifications, the first of the senses and the second of the spirit, corresponds, as mentioned before, to the fourth and fifth mansions of St. Teresa. It includes the period of quiet, during which the will is caught by an attraction for God, and the period of simple union, during which God’s action becomes strong enough at prayer to captivate not only the will but also the intellect, at times so completely that the operation of the memory and imagination is momentarily suspended. The imagination and other faculties are no longer bound, as before, by meditation and anxiety of mind, since the soul now finds within itself, without the labor of meditation, a sweet, serene, and loving contemplation. Yet the soul is far from being completely purified since its spiritual powers still want for purgation; and as long as this is so, some disorder will always arise in the lower part of the soul, not completely at peace until after the second night.

Those making progress in the illuminative way still have many imperfections, defects of the old man that remain in the soul like so much rust that only intense fire can remove. In fact, only too often the advanced are still distracted at prayer, given to foolishness and natural affections, and to pouring themselves out on external things. At times they are still rude and impatient. Some use spiritual goods with too little detachment and thus expose themselves to greater danger than they met at the start, since excessive attachment to spiritual communications lays them open to the devil, and he delights to take them in with vain visions and false prophecies, making them presume to trust their own imaginings as the voices of God and His saints. In this way he inflates their presumption, fills them with pride, and leads them to affect the manners of sanctity and to give a display of raptures and other visible signs of apparent holiness. People dedicated to the apostolate manifest the same weakness in a slightly different form. They can, for example, mistake a kind of romantic lyricism for the special inspiration of the Holy Ghost and go far astray in teaching and in directing souls; or they can apply quite true principles incorrectly; or make false mystics of those whom they would lead to divine union.

In regard to some of the advanced, St. John of the Cross has something further to add: “In some of these souls so many falsehoods and deceits are multiplied and so persistent do they become, that it is very doubtful if such souls will return to the pure road of virtue and true spirituality.” The holy doctor says that this subject is inexhaustible, despite the fact that he considers only faults relative to the interior life. What would it be then if we were also to consider faults that wound charity and even justice in the relations of these souls with others, whether superiors, equals, or inferiors; also, if we took up whatever taints teaching, the apostolate, and the government and direction of souls, if those referred to are engaged in such work?

Spiritual pride takes many different forms: jealousy, secret ambition, intellectual pride, and an autocratic assertion of authority on one hand, and broad-minded and culpable indulgence on the other. For we meet the seven capital sins transposed into the spiritual life, where they work it grave harm.

All this evidences the necessity for the “strong lye” of the night of the soul. Without it the purity necessary for divine union will always be lacking.

Therefore, since these proficients are still at a very low stage of progress, and follow their own nature closely in the intercourse and dealings which they have with God, because the gold of their spirit is not yet purified and refined, they still think of God as little children, and speak of God as little children, and feel and experience God as little children, even as St. Paul says, because they have not reached perfection, which is the union of the soul with God. In the state of union, however, they will work great things in the spirit, even as grown men, and their works and faculties will then be divine rather than human.

In these words of St. John of the Cross we have a clear statement that the perfection of Christian life is normally of the mystical order, since it presupposes the purification of the senses and of the soul, both passive and distinctly defined mystical states.

DESCRIPTION OF THE NIGHT OF THE SOUL

As the night of the senses is marked by privation of sensible consolations, although it consists chiefly in the beginning of an unfelt and wholly spiritual life, the dawning of infused contemplation, so the night of the soul at first seems to mean the loss of what lights the soul had previously received. In reality, what is happening is that a much more intense light has begun to illumine and almost to dazzle the soul in regard to the depths of its own misery and the infinite greatness of God.

“He [God] strips their faculties, affections, and feelings, both spiritual and sensual, both outward and inward, leaving the understanding dark, the will dry, the memory empty, and the affections in the deepest affliction, bitterness and straitness, taking from the soul the pleasure and experience of spiritual blessings which it had aforetime.” This is the nakedness or poverty of spirit to which the beatitude refers when it says, “Blessed are the poor in spirit.” The understanding knows darkness, the will constraint, for it loves and seeks its Lord in anxiety, the memory is anguished because of its inability to recall what it once knew. The soul must go forward in blind faith, the darkness of night for the natural powers. Now we grasp the full meaning of St. Thomas’ principle that the object of faith is hidden and unseen and can neither be immediately evident nor be proven to us, no matter how great our faith may be. With increasing experience of this truth, the soul leaves behind the base mode it had of understanding God, the

miserable way it used to love Him, and the limited manner it once had of experiencing Him.

It cannot be said that the soul discerns nothing in this dark night because, without seeing it, it is drawing nearer and nearer to the infinite greatness and purity of God, which no idea of ours could ever represent. Then by contrast the soul perceives its own misery much better than ever before. This doctrine throws much light on the life of the Curé of Ars and the inner torments he experienced, since his greatest suffering came from the fact that he felt himself to be so far from the priestly ideal. In the obscurity of faith, he saw more and more clearly the greatness of the priestly character and the immense needs of the countless souls that came to him. In such circumstances the soul's pain resembles what weak and unhealthy eyes suffer when looking at an intense light. "When this pure light assails the soul, in order to expel its impurity, the soul feels itself to be so impure and miserable that it believes God to be against it, and thinks that it has set itself up against God. This causes it so much grief and pain (because it now believes that God has cast it away) that one of the greatest trials which Job felt when God sent him this experience, was as follows, when he said: 'Why hast Thou set me against Thee, so that I am grievous and burdensome to myself?' "

Seeing its own impurity, until now unsuspected, the soul is persuaded that it has lost all piety and is unfit for God or man. It cannot look forward to being any different or to possessing the good things it once knew and has now lost. In a flood of obscure divine light all its infidelities lie exposed before it, and it sees that by its own power it cannot act otherwise. It suffers to find in itself nothing but reasons why God should abandon it, while it yet loves Him with all its strength. It experiences that holy hatred of self spoken of by St. Catherine of Siena, having nothing but contempt for that self compounded of pride, egoism, and self-love. What St. Augustine had to say about the two cities begins to be realized: from the love of self unto contempt of God arises the city of evil, and from the love of God unto contempt of self, the city of God. Our Savior's words receive strong confirmation: "He that hateth his life in this world, keepeth it unto life eternal." The just man now really begins to love to be forgotten and to be despised by men: amare nesciri et pro nihilo reputari.

At times this imports such agony that the sufferer would regard it as a relief to be able to die, making us remember the words spoken by the

prophet Elias when crushed by the difficulties of his apostolate: “It is enough for me, take away my soul: for I am no better than my fathers.” The infinite perfection of God, without being seen, in some way makes itself felt and becomes like an enormous and invisible burden weighing down the soul. Dominated by this oppression, the soul sees itself as entirely unacquainted with divine favor and believes itself deprived of every support and bereft of all pity. The twenty-first psalm, remembered by Christ on the cross, gives deep expression to this experience: “O God my God, look upon me: why hast Thou forsaken me? Far from my salvation are the words of my sins. O my God, I shall cry by day, and Thou wilt not hear: and by night, and it shall not be reputed as folly in me. But Thou dwellest in the holy place, the praise of Israel. In Thee have our fathers hoped: they have hoped, and Thou hast delivered them. They cried to Thee, and they were saved. . . . But I am a worm, and no man; the reproach of men, and the outcast of the people. . . . From my mother’s womb Thou art my God, depart not from me. For tribulation is very near: for there is none to help me.”

Undergoing a similar trial, Job cried out: “Having pity on me, have pity on me, at least you my friends, because the hand of the Lord hath touched me.” The soul feels itself languishing and dying by a cruel spiritual death and it must abide in the dark tomb until the coming of the spiritual resurrection for which it hopes. Until that day, it seems to the soul that it has lost every natural and supernatural good, that prayer itself has become impossible. A deep void cleaves down into the soul, its higher and lower powers are completely impoverished, and it feels the shadow of death over it, experiencing an inner destruction that goes to its very substance. Every remedy appears useless, every hope, lost. If it prays, it does so with such aridity that God seems no longer to hear it. “Yea, and when I cry,” says Jeremias, “He hath shut out my prayer.”

The whole description of the night of the soul can be summed up in the statement that the soul now knows what it never before suspected, the depths of its own misery, and by contrast it has a growing realization of God’s infinite greatness, apparently inaccessible for such as itself. Three complementary signs complete the description: they will be discussed later. For the present it is enough to say that purgation of soul is usually accompanied by strong temptations against faith—its object seems so distant; against hope—God’s help no longer makes itself felt; against

charity—the Lord has apparently cruelly deserted the tried man at the very time when his friends have forsaken him or remained at his side only to prove Job's comforters. In comparison to sufferings such as these, the trials of the night of the senses and its concomitant temptations against chastity and patience are of small moment.

On the degree to which the soul will later be raised depends the length and severity of its purgation. However, if such a refining process is to achieve its final end, its severest phase will last for some years. The soul works its way forward through a tunnel of darkness, catching occasional glimpses of daylight. Ordinarily the more intense a purgation is, the shorter it lasts. The description of it given by St. John of the Cross presents it as it takes place in all its intensity and fullness in the saints, as he himself had to undergo it. Often, however, it is found in lower degrees and in less contemplative forms, united to the trials encountered in the apostolate.

St. Gregory spoke of this state in his commentaries on the Book of Job; after him, Hugh of St. Victor and Tauler gave descriptions of it which, though lacking the compass and depth of that given by St. John of the Cross, provided the framework for it. St. Teresa treats of it somewhat at length at the beginning of the sixth mansion before taking up the subject of spiritual betrothal, showing at what period she thought this purification generally appears. St. Angela of Foligno, too, has left us a description entirely in accordance with the one given in The Dark Night. Lastly, in almost all lives of the saints that make an attempt to unveil the mystery of their inner life, we find similar descriptions in those chapters dealing with their interior suffering and heroic practice of the theological virtues. Again and again we encounter different degrees of what at bottom is always the same purgation of soul, not merely in pure contemplatives, but in active souls like St. Vincent de Paul, too, as we realize when we recall the temptations which he had against faith for almost four years. So terrible were they that he wrote the Credo on a piece of paper and wore it over his heart so that he could put his hand over it and reassure himself that he had not consented to the thoughts that obsessed him. It was by passing through the crucible of this suffering that he was purified and attained to sanctity.

THE THEOLOGICAL EXPLANATION OF PASSIVE PURIFICATION: ITS CAUSES AND END

In describing this state, we have just determined where it is found—chiefly in the highest part of the soul, the spiritual powers, and what its essential character is—the deep experimental knowledge of our misery and of God's infinite majesty, together with great spiritual aridity and an earnest desire for perfection. These constitute what can be called the material and formal causes of this state. The proximate efficient cause, as well as the principle and end of this grievous and obscure contemplation remain to be considered.

The causal explanation of the state of purgation given by St. John of the Cross is theological, given in the light of revelation as contained in Scripture and tradition. Theology teaches us that faith is a supernatural gift of God, that the Holy Ghost is within us together with His sevenfold gifts, and from theology we learn also how faith and the gifts attain their full growth. The author of The Dark Night finds the principle for his explanation in scriptural texts. After noting the chief ones given, we shall go on to discover in what sense he understands them and how his thought conforms completely to what St. Thomas tells us of the purifying role of the gift of understanding.

In the Book of Wisdom it is said of the just: "As gold in the furnace He hath proved them, and as a victim of a holocaust He hath received them." In the crucible gold is purified of all dross, and holocaustal offerings are entirely consumed by fire for God's honor. The soul of a saint is a sort of spiritual diamond offering no obstacle to divine light, and it takes no ordinary flame to make diamonds out of coal. In his Lamentations, Jeremias says: "From above He hath sent fire into my bones, and hath chastised me." In the light of the fire consuming him the prophet sees clearly both the gravity of Israel's sins and the justice and goodness of the Most High, and he begs God earnestly for deliverance.

Like gold, the soul is purified by fire; but as the soul must realize its misery and desire to be freed of its dross, the fire purifying it must make God's infinite riches and its own radically opponent poverty more evident to it in the obscurity of faith. Growth in this knowledge leads to such an ardent love of God that the soul has nothing but contempt for itself. "Who can understand sins? From my secret ones cleanse me, O Lord." "My substance is as nothing before Thee." "The Lord . . . will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts." "Enlighten my eyes that I never sleep in death." "O my God,

enlighten my darkness." "Create a clean heart in me, O God: and renew a right spirit within my bowels. Cast me not away from Thy face; and take not Thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation: and strengthen me with a perfect spirit." The soul asks Christ to realize within it His own words, "I am come to cast fire on the earth: and what will I, but that it be kindled?" Christ answers inwardly by His grace just as if He were saying: "You would not seek Me, if you had not already found Me." The ardent love growing in a purified soul is a fire burning and consuming all that cannot be quickened by divine charity. Often we long for souls to receive light and strength, and in this way our desires for them are wonderfully fulfilled.

St. John of the Cross explains these texts of Scripture just quoted by saying simply: "This dark night is an inflowing of God into the soul, which purges it from its ignorances and imperfections, habitual, natural, and spiritual, and which is called by contemplatives infused contemplation, or mystical theology. Herein God secretly teaches the soul and instructs it in perfection of love, without its doing anything, or understanding of what manner is this infused contemplation."

Repeating the comparison made by Hugh of St. Victor, the holy doctor adds:

For the greater clearness of what has been said, and of what has still to be said, it is well to observe at this point that this purgative and loving knowledge or divine light whereof we here speak acts upon the soul which is purged and prepared for perfect union with it in the same way as fire acts upon a log of wood in order to transform it into itself; for material fire, acting upon wood, first of all begins to dry it, by driving out its moisture and causing it to shed the water which it contains within itself. Then it begins to make it black, dark, and unsightly, and even to give forth a bad odour, and, as it dries it little by little, it brings out and drives away all the dark and unsightly accidents which are contrary to the nature of fire. And, finally, it begins to kindle it externally and give it heat, and at last transforms it into itself and makes it as beautiful as fire. . . .

In this same way we have to philosophize with respect to this divine fire of contemplative love, which, before it unites and transforms the soul in itself, first purges it of all its contrary accidents. It drives out its unsightliness, and makes it black and dark, so that it seems worse than before and more unsightly and abominable than it was wont to be. For this

divine purgation is removing all the evil and vicious humours which the soul has never perceived because they have been so deeply rooted and grounded in it; it has never realized, in fact, that it has had so much evil within itself. But now that they are to be driven forth and annihilated, these humours reveal themselves, and become visible to the soul . . . and, as it sees in itself that which it saw not before, it is clear to it that it is not only unfit for God to see it, but that it deserves His abhorrence and that He does indeed abhor it.

This means a purgatory before death, purifying the soul not by material fire but through the spiritual fire of contemplation and of love. St. John of the Cross says that an hour of purgation here being worth many hereafter, a soul so treated in this world either has no need to make expiation in the next life or stays in purgatory only a short time. While on earth we are purified while meriting and growing in charity, whereas after death we are purified without meriting, the time of merit being past.

The supernatural light coming from God to the soul at this time is not merely the light of infused faith, although this surely is deeply at work because the soul lives more and more in the spirit of faith; but the Holy Ghost exercises a further and special influence over it through the gift of understanding, perfectly in harmony with faith. As St. John of the Cross says, the soul, being now united to divine love, no longer loves according to its own lowly nature but with the strength and purity of the Holy Ghost, receiving a new way of looking at things since the light and grace of the Holy Ghost is as different from natural knowledge as the divine is from the human. “For this night is gradually drawing the spirit away from its ordinary and common experience of things and bringing it nearer the divine sense, which is a stranger and an alien to all human ways. It seems now to the soul that it is going forth from its very self, with much affliction.”

The doctrine of St. John of the Cross seems to be fully in accord with what St. Thomas teaches concerning the gift of understanding as principle of a new penetration and purification. “The stronger the light of the understanding, the further can it penetrate into the heart of things. Now the natural light of our understanding is of finite power; wherefore it can reach to a certain fixed point. Consequently man needs a supernatural light in order to penetrate further still so as to know what it cannot know by its natural light: and this supernatural light which is bestowed on man is called the gift of understanding.” What God bestows is called the gift of

understanding and not of reason, because what is designated is something higher than reasoning, a kind of knowledge as simple and penetrating as a shaft of light.

Whereas faith makes us simply hold to revealed truths, this gift helps us to perceive them in some way, keeping us from taking them for inventions of men or doubting them because of objections from unbelievers. It perfects our first grasp of the truths of faith and disposes us the better to judge them and experience them by the gift of wisdom. It dissipates dullness of mind; our Lord was thinking of it when He said: Qui potest capere, capiat. Happy are those who have eyes to see and ears to hear, who grasp the spirit beneath the letter, who take hold of the divine reality hidden under figure, symbol, and parable. The gift of understanding is at once contemplative and practical, since it considers eternal truths both in themselves and so far as they are the supreme law of human conduct. It shows us what is blameworthy in ourselves much better than the most careful examination of conscience and reveals the value of our last end with the clarity of a lightning flash.

Further, as St. Thomas tells us, the gift of understanding frees our mind of speculative and practical errors and from attachment to sensible imagery. Moreover, together with faith, it serves as the principle of a high degree of contemplation. “The sight of God is twofold. One is perfect, whereby God’s essence is seen: the other is imperfect, whereby, though we see not what God is, yet we see what He is not; and whereby, the more perfectly do we know God in this life, the more we understand that He surpasses all that the mind comprehends. Each of these visions of God belongs to the gift of understanding; the first, to the gift of understanding in the state of perfection, as possessed in heaven; the second, to the gift of understanding in its state of inchoation, as possessed by wayfarers.” In the same article St. Thomas explains how the gift of understanding purifies our hearts and corresponds to the beatitude, “Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God.” By it we apprehend more and more clearly that the most highly endowed creature is nothing of itself and that God alone is eternally subsistent being, in whom essence and existence are one and the same. “I am who am.”

St. Thomas has much the same to say elsewhere when showing that uniform infused contemplation in some way demands the sacrifice of the senses and of discursive reasoning:

In intelligible operations, that which is simply uniform is compared to circular movement. . . . Wherefore Dionysius assigns the circular movement of the angels to the fact that their intuition of God is uniform and unceasing. . . . But on the part of the soul, ere it can arrive at this uniformity, its twofold lack of uniformity needs to be removed. First, that which arises from the variety of external things: this is removed by the soul withdrawing from externals, and so the first thing he mentions regarding the circular movement of the soul is the soul's withdrawal into itself from external objects. Secondly, another lack of uniformity requires to be removed from the soul, and this is owing to the discoursing of reason. This is done by directing all the soul's operations to the simple contemplation of intelligible truth, and this is indicated by his saying in the second place that the soul's intellectual powers must be uniformly concentrated; in other words, that discoursing must be laid aside and the soul's gaze fixed on the contemplation of the one simple truth. . . . Afterwards these two things being done, he mentions thirdly the uniformity which is like that of the angels, for then all things being laid aside, the soul continues in the contemplation of God alone.

This turning of the intellectual powers around their center, closes them, so to say, like the spirals of a conch, so that external things are shut out and they are left open only to a simple and obscure but more and more penetrating intuition of God.

This penetration comes, we see, from the gift of understanding. Its infused and purifying light makes known to us the most hidden recesses of our conscience, the secret intentions of our heart, and, on the other hand, it enables us to go beyond the letter of God's word to reach its spirit, and it makes us see, as we could not see before, that, just as the firmament is far vaster than the stars that map it out for us, so is God above any distinct idea whatever that we can have of Him, even though it is given to us by revelation. The light of the gift of understanding discovers to us that the Deity or inner life of God (what makes God to be God) is above every perfection that is common in an analogous way to Him and to us, that the Deity is greater than being, unity, truth, goodness, intellect, and love.

To grasp the intimate reconciliation of divine immutability and the freedom of the creative act, of inexorable justice and infinite mercy, of sovereign wisdom and of that good pleasure which seems at times arbitrary, we would need to have an immediate apprehension of the Deity itself. All

these perfections exist formally and eminently in God and, far from being destroyed by being united in the eminence of the Godhead, they are found there in a pure state, with no trace of imperfection. Whereas the seven colors of the rainbow exist only virtually in white light, the divine perfections exist formally in the eminence of the Deity but according to a transcendent mode inaccessible to us. Deitas est super ens et super unum, as Dionysius says, and Cajetan joyfully repeats. The highest theological speculation accords then with what the mystics tell us of the great darkness that envelops the soul. “What my soul sees,” Angela of Foligno says, “cannot be conceived by thought or expressed in words. I see nothing and I see all; the more the infinite good is beheld in darkness, the more certain it becomes to us and the more it surpasses all things. . . . All the graces that have been accorded to me amount to very little in comparison to the infinite good that I see in the divine darkness.”

The reason for the darkness and suffering resulting from the infused light of understanding

There are three reasons why the light God sends us seems like darkness and brings so much suffering. They are: the sublimity of God’s mysteries, our own impurity, and the temptations of the devil. In regard to the first, it comes about precisely because the Deity or inner life of God is infinitely above every sensible image, whether actual or potential. To see the Godhead as It is in Itself, sicuti est, It would have to be presented to us without any intermediary. And the more we understand the incapacity of all created ideas, whether of men or of angels, to reveal the uncreated and infinite light to us, the more inaccessible this light seems to us. It has, not the infra-intellectual mysteriousness of matter, but the ultra-luminous darkness of supreme truth, of truth too intelligible for us to grasp. Sunlight is darkness for the owl. Its eyes are not strong enough to bear such brightness. Comparably, the intellectual and eternally subsistent brilliance of God is darkness to any created intelligence, whether angelic or human, as long as it is not uplifted and strengthened by the light of glory, as are the elect in the homeland of heaven.

In order to prove the first point, we must here assume a certain doctrine of the philosopher, which says that, the clearer and more manifest are divine things in themselves, the darker and more hidden are they to the soul naturally; just as, the clearer is the light, the more it blinds and darkens the pupil of the owl, and, the more directly we look at the sun, the greater is the

darkness which it causes in our visual faculty, overcoming and overwhelming it through its own weakness. In the same way, when this divine light of contemplation assails the soul which is not yet wholly enlightened, it causes spiritual darkness in it . . . not that this is so in fact, but that it is so to our weak understanding, which is blinded and darkened by so vast a light, to which it cannot attain.

Now this is a thing that seems incredible, to say that, the brighter and purer is supernatural and divine light, the more it darkens the soul, and that, the less bright and pure is it, the less dark it is to the soul. Yet this may well be understood if we consider what has been proved above by the dictum of the philosopher—namely, that the brighter and the more manifest in themselves are supernatural things the darker are they to the understanding.

Our natural knowledge comes, in fact, from sensible things, a mirror through which from below and very imperfectly it reaches purely spiritual realities. For us the statement that "the sun exists" is clearer than that "God is," notwithstanding the fact that God alone is eternally subsistent being itself. Time seems clearer to us than eternity, in spite of the fact that a fleeting moment is in itself less intelligible than the nunc stans, the changeless now, of eternity, in which God possesses all at once, tota simul, His whole life without beginning or end. The decrees of Providence that we find hardest to understand are the most enlightened in themselves. The Savior's passion, the worst time of darkness and discouragement for the apostles, was Christ's greatest victory over sin and Satan, far greater than His triumph over death by the glorious miracle of the resurrection, itself only a sign of confirmation for the Consummatum est of Good Friday.

The more hidden a revealed mystery is, the more devotion St. Teresa had for it. Her intense charity made her prefer to love and delight in all that is most obscure and mysterious in the faith, whatever transcends all rational evidence and every express formula. So, too, the most brilliant passages in the doctrine of St. Paul, of St. Augustine, and of St. Thomas on the transcendent efficacy of the divine causality working in us both to will and to accomplish will always be enveloped in mystery in this life. A divine obscurity at the opposite pole from incoherence and absurdity enshrouds them. The higher, simpler, and more unalterable supernatural things are, the more obscure they seem to us, since our knowledge is generally drawn from sensible, multiple, composite, and changing things. Now the infused light of understanding belongs to the same order as the supernatural objects which it

makes us able to penetrate; like them it seems dark, although we receive from it the spirit of the divine word and enter by it into the supreme simplicity of God.

St. John of the Cross tells us that the divine ray of contemplation transcends the soul's natural powers and thus

darkens and deprives it of all natural affections and apprehensions which it apprehended aforetime by means of natural light; and thus it leaves it not only dark, but likewise empty, according to its faculties and desires, both spiritual and natural. And by thus leaving it empty and in darkness, it purges and illumines it with divine spiritual light even when the soul thinks not that it has this light, but believes itself to be in darkness, even as we have said of the ray of light, which, although it be in the midst of the room, yet, if it be pure and meet nothing on its path, is not visible. With regard, however, to this spiritual light by which the soul is assailed, when it has something to strike—that is, when something spiritual presents itself to be understood, however small a speck it be and whether of perfection or imperfection, or whether it be a judgment of the falsehood or the truth of a thing—it then sees and understands much more clearly than before it was in these dark places.

St. Thomas makes an analogous observation concerning the inspiration or illumination coming to us from the angels.

A second reason why the divine light seems obscure and sometimes causes much suffering, is the impurity of our own souls. As St. Augustine tells us, the same light that healthy eyes enjoy cannot be borne by those that are unsound. "And when the soul is assailed by this divine light, its pain, which results from its impurity, is immense; because, when this pure light assails the soul, in order to expel its impurity, the soul feels itself to be so impure and miserable that it believes God to be against it, and thinks it has set itself up against God." There are some truths that we do not wish to hear and will not let others tell us. If God efficaciously wills to lead us to perfection, He Himself will come to make us listen to them, even if this causes us terrible suffering.

A third and further cause for suffering springs from temptations arising against faith, hope, and charity. Although making heroic acts of these virtues, acts simple, direct, and often unperceived, the soul wonders whether it may not have consented to temptation; it becomes so bewildered in its reasoning that it begins to think itself abandoned by God and is unable

to feel that it can ever reach Him. The more it loves Him, the more it suffers, knowing the same sort of ebb and flow that the souls in purgatory must bear, for it is carried toward God with the full uprush of its love and then feels itself turned back by its well-known wretchedness, fearing much to offend Him whom it would love above all things.

As a result of such a purgation the three theological virtues show marked growth, having been frequently constrained to make heroic acts to overcome temptation and thus taking deep root in the soul and becoming purified of every defect. The gifts accompanying these great virtues also increase proportionately with them. St. John of the Cross gives an excellent description of the state of deliverance of the purified soul when he says: “It has pleasure in nothing and understands nothing in particular, but dwells in emptiness, darkness, and obscurity”; yet, as he goes on to say, “it embraces everything with great adaptability, to the end that those words of St. Paul may be fulfilled in it: having nothing, and possessing all things. For such poverty of spirit as this would deserve such happiness.”

The fire of love, . . . like material fire acting upon wood, begins to take hold upon the soul in this night of painful contemplation. . . . This is an enkindling of love in the spirit, where, in the midst of these dark afflictions, the soul feels itself to be keenly and acutely wounded in strong divine love. . . .

And inasmuch as this love is infused, it is passive rather than active, and thus it begets in the soul a strong passion of love . . . and may thus attain to a true fulfillment of the first commandment, which sets aside nothing pertaining to man nor excludes from this love anything that is his, but says: Thou shalt love thy God with all thy heart and with all thy mind, and with all thy soul and with all thy strength.

For a completely faithful soul the living flame of love is the normal development of charity in this life. In darkness and suffering, “in this vale of tears,” it is the prelude of eternal life. We can understand then how a soul purified in such a meritorious way, passes immediately from earth to heaven without remaining in purgatory, where merit is no longer possible. Such is the perfect order willed by God. The just who are even more docile in time of trial than in time of consolation and never give up pushing on toward God are ready for the rendezvous fixed by Him for the moment after death. They enter at once into their heavenly home and receive their reward, the very happiness of God; and they find the highest aspirations of our

nature fulfilled and exceeded, and also the burning supernatural desires aroused during the night of the soul fully satisfied: “But as for me, I will appear before Thy sight in justice: I shall be satisfied when Thy glory shall appear.”

CHAPTER VII

THE PASSIVE PURIFICATION OF FAITH

TRIALS ACCOMPANYING THE PASSIVE PURIFICATION OF THE SOUL

The period of trial which St. John of the Cross calls the night of the soul is necessary, not only to free souls from those things that still prevent them from enjoying the intimacy of divine union—the remains of unconscious egoism, self-love, and intellectual and spiritual pride—but also to give great strength to the higher virtues. Because of the temptations against chastity and patience often accompanying initial infused contemplation, the night of the senses is a period of holy warfare, during which the virtues having their basis in the sensuous appetency show great gain. For the same reasons, the night of the soul is marked by still greater progress in the highest virtues, in humility, the virtue of religion, and the three theological virtues.

The means used by God to purify us in this way is, as St. Thomas and St. John of the Cross have shown, the supernatural light of the gift of understanding. It illumines the soul about the infinite greatness of God, for we recognize more and more clearly how far He is above every idea and formula that we can frame of His greatness. By contrast, the soul discovers that it has miseries heretofore unsuspected. The light that God gives it is sometimes so intense that the eyes of the mind, as yet still weak, become dazzled and as if blinded by it and, although the soul is moving forward into greater clarity, it believes itself swallowed up in darkness.

God purifies humility and the theological virtues chiefly by means of this light, but He also makes use of the enemy of salvation himself for this work, sometimes permitting the devil to try souls with violent temptations against faith, hope, and charity. Those tried in this way find that they must make intense and meritorious acts of virtue, and so temptation contributes to their growth. The soul is the arena for a struggle between Satan and the Holy Ghost, a struggle that at times becomes terrible, the devil evidently

desiring to attack God's work with weapons like His own. The more the Lord attracts a soul toward the heights of faith, the more the devil strives to deny that they exist. The soul finds itself between two kinds of sufferings: one comes from God and is essentially purifying; the other comes from the spirit of evil, and God makes it serve His own ends indirectly.

Something marvelous now happens, something reminiscent of the first conversion or justification of the impious, when the soul passes from the state of mortal sin into the state of grace. As St. Thomas taught and the Council of Trent later defined, the soul at the time of its first conversion is led by God to realize its own misery and to make an act of faith in the infinite merits of the Savior, to hope in God, to love Him above all things, and to hate sin as the greatest of evils. By justifying us, the good God has, as it were, plowed a furrow in the soul for the sowing of the divine seed there; now, in the passive night of the soul, He goes back over the same furrow again to extirpate all the evil roots still to be found there. This He does that the seed of eternal life, the semen gloriae, can give its full yield of thirty, sixty, or even a hundredfold, according to the parable of the sower.

By the light of the gift of understanding the Lord shows the soul not what He is in His infinite holiness, but what He is not; by opposition, it sees its own nothingness, weakness, and baseness, and, under the influx of the grace that it receives, makes profound acts of humility, of faith, of hope, and of charity, acts necessary and indispensable if it is to resist the temptations arising against these virtues.

To get a better understanding of how this great purification is effected, let us compare what St. John of the Cross tells us of the infused light given in the night of the soul with what St. Thomas teaches about the formal motive of the highest supernatural virtues. Clearly, the more perfectly these virtues attain by their acts to the primary object and formal motive specifying them, the more purified they are of every natural alloy.

Acts and habits are specified by their formal object. We are going to see the manner of purification described by St. John of the Cross. It often occurs in a less rigorous way, mixed with the sufferings of the apostolate; but even this mitigated form is properly understood only if we discern in it the other higher mode that represents the perfect development of the supernatural seed within us. It must be noted, too, that not merely in the lives of individuals do these purgations take place but in the lives of groups of people, of religious families as well, especially at the time either of their

foundation or of their full development, when trial is made to discover whether the house is built on rock or on sand. And the Lord waits, as it were, until these trials are done so that He may give crowns to those who are faithful to Him, whether they are individuals or whole peoples.

HUMILITY AND PIETY ON TRIAL

The good God teaches humility to the saints by showing them the abyss still separating them from Him. We can learn to practice the same virtue by looking at the distance dividing us from the saints. They show us how, in a truly Christian spirit, we ought to bear our crosses, so much less heavy than theirs.

St. Augustine says that humility is the foundation of the spiritual structure. For the building to be sound its foundation must go deep into the earth. Its cornerstone, St. Thomas says, is faith; the excavation necessary before the first stone can be laid is humility, which drives out spiritual pride so that we can receive the word of God with docility. As these things have been said to us again and again from the first days of our interior life, we have broken ground, done some excavating, and then begun to build our spiritual structure. But days stormy with temptations of pride and of revolt have made us realize that our building lacked sturdiness and might have been blown down, had the storm been worse.

We should have made our foundation deeper. When the Lord desires to raise the spiritual edifice of a soul to great heights, He Himself takes charge of digging down into depths which we are unaware of. Saints whom He has so grounded, no matter to what heights He may later lead them, find pride impossible because they have had sufficient experience of their own nothingness and wretchedness, less than mere nothingness. We too often forget that the interior sufferings of the Curé of Ars came from his growing enlightenment regarding the greatness of the priesthood and his consequent conclusion that he himself fell far short of being fit for it.

Intense supernatural light gives the soul a lofty idea of perfection and shows it its own powerlessness and poverty incomparably better than the most careful examination of conscience. We then come to know experimentally the profound meaning of Christ’s words, “Without Me you can do nothing.” “No one can come to Me, except the Father, who hath sent Me, draw him.” We discern much better than ever before what St. Paul

meant when he wrote: “For who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?” Experience teaches the soul how truly the Church has spoken in teaching, against the Pelagians and Semi-Pelagians, that grace is necessary, not merely to accomplish supernatural acts better, but to accomplish them at all. It understands more truly how grace, as St. Augustine and St. Thomas say, is efficacious of itself and not because of our efforts, according to St. Paul’s deep pronouncement: “For it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will.”

In the light of the gift of understanding, the soul discerns everything that taints its best deeds. Just as when a ray of sunlight passes through apparently limpid water we detect a host of tiny particles imperceptible in diffused light, so now the soul sees such a multitude of faults within itself that it is completely humiliated and overwhelmed. The devil often takes this opportunity to tempt it to discouragement, and if the Lord were to withhold His special help, it would yield to the temptation.

St. Anselm marks out the way to true humility as having seven degrees: first a man knows that he is worthy of contempt; then he learns to endure being contemptible; goes on to own that he is so; and then to wish His neighbor to believe it of him; comes to put up with being told that he is; and after that to accept being treated with contempt; and finally to love to be so used. The humble man no longer glories in himself, but in God alone, and lives in the profound conviction that whatever we have of ourselves—our worthlessness and our sins—is inferior to whatever another man holds from God. All the saints have had a realization of our nothingness. Full Christian perfection is impossible without it, for it sets the soul definitively in the way of truth and gives to God the glory due Him.

When Blessed Angela of Foligno was enduring the passive purification of which we are speaking, she saw herself as an abyss of sin and wished to make it known to everybody and make an end of what she called her hypocrisy. St. Benedict Joseph Labre began his confession by saying, “Have pity on me, Father. I am a great sinner.” The confessor, not finding anything grave in what he accused himself of, thought that he did not know how to make his confession and questioned him on the commandments of God, receiving answers so humble and so penetrated with the spirit of faith, that he knew he was dealing with a saint.

Together with humility, the virtue of religion grows mightily during such trials. In those who remain faithful, substantial devotion (which is nothing else but readiness of will in God's service) shows fuller and fuller development in the absence of all accidental devotion, since the soul perseveres in prayer without experiencing either sensible or spiritual consolation. The gift of piety lends strong support to the virtue of religion, and prayer is infused but very arid. St. Jane Frances de Chantal spent long years in this state.

Going into the matter more deeply, we find that the special end of this purgation is to rid the theological virtues of all defects. By the light of St. Thomas' doctrine, we see now more than at any other time that the purification of the great virtues is accomplished by freeing their absolutely supernatural motive from all human ends, now recognized as being infinitely below it. Despite all obstacles and notwithstanding its own foresakenness, the soul is led to cleave to God solely because He is first truth, infinite mercy, supreme and sovereignly lovable goodness.

As already remarked, nominalist theologians and those who follow them, have frequently failed to appreciate the essentially supernatural character, the quoad substantiam, of the formal motive of these virtues. The supernaturalness of a miracle belongs to a far lower order since it is naturally knowable, whereas the formal motive of the theological virtues lies beyond the reach of any natural knowledge. What we are going to consider next will show us the magnitude of the mistake made by those with nominalistic leanings.

IMPERFECTIONS THAT STAND IN THE WAY OF A LIFE OF DEEP FAITH

Faith is an infused, essentially supernatural virtue by which we believe the mysteries revealed by God because He has revealed them and as they are proposed to us by the Church, die proximate guide of our belief. Through the inspiration and illumination of the Holy Ghost our intellect, moved by the will, adheres to an essentially supernatural revelation and to the hidden mysteries which it makes known.

These formulas are soon said, but what do they contain? Of course, every good Christian believes what God has revealed because He has revealed it; but whereas we say that "the just man liveth by faith," it often happens that we live too little by the supernatural mysteries which are the primary object

of divine revelation: the Blessed Trinity and the mysteries of salvation. Our thoughts may tend more toward the natural truths of religion, such as the existence of God as the author of nature, His power, His providence in the natural order, and the spirituality and immortality of the soul. These are all revealed, too, but are accessible to reason and demonstrable as well. Or, if we do think of supernatural mysteries often enough, do we not, for example, dwell too much on the sensible symbolism of divine things when assisting at Mass by paying too much attention to the external mold, the letter of the liturgy, and all those things within the grasp of our natural faculties?

Some people's faith is so little enlightened that is could be called embryonic and bears no proportion to their literary, scientific, or professional development. Generally our faith is far too weak for us really to live by the mysteries of the Blessed Trinity, creation, the elevation of the first man to the life of grace, the redemptive Incarnation, the mission of the Holy Ghost as the special guest and sanctifier of the just, and the beatific vision as reward of those faithful to grace. For many these are colorless and oft-repeated formulas, and their object seems as far removed as the remotest heaven. We fail to let these supernatural truths become the light of our life, points of reference for our judgment on every subject, guiding principles for our thinking. In the obscurity of faith God reveals to us the very object of His own contemplation, that which constitutes His own infinite happiness, and what a pity it is if we do not live by it! The weakness of our faith, our lack of the spirit of faith, becomes especially apparent in adversity, sickness, and in other sufferings badly borne. Our lack of kindness toward our neighbor reveals it, too, for it shows how slow we are to recognize him as a brother called to the same supernatural happiness as we are.

The reason why we believe the truths of faith is that God has revealed them; but it is questionable whether we fully grasp the greatness of this uncreated and wholly supernatural motive. Nominalist theologians and their followers, let it be said, have not recognized it, nor have they grasped what an infinite distance lies between natural knowledge of God as the author of nature and essentially supernatural knowledge of God as the author of grace. Such a supernatural knowledge of God implies not merely knowing Him as the author of different corporeal and spiritual natures or as the worker of naturally knowable miracles. It implies knowing Him as He is in His inner life, which He Himself has revealed to us, giving our intellects a

capacity beyond the natural powers of the greatest angels to adhere to His divine revelation of Himself.

Acquired faith, immediately founded on the evidence of miracles, belongs to a far lower order than infused faith and is possessed by the devil himself, although he is bereft of every supernatural gift. Because we fail to grasp fully the sublimity of the formal motive of infused faith, we dwell too much on secondary motives, reasons not for believing supernaturally and infallibly, but for orientating ourselves toward the faith. Motives of this kind are many—the evident harmony of dogma with demonstrated truths, the higher intuition of great philosophers and poets, and our own natural aspirations, whether individual or social, or again with our own personal experience when in a moment of consolation we are given some cognizance of God's action within us. Those called Modernists have placed far too much emphasis on secondary motives like these, confusing them with the formal motive of infused faith. As a result they have failed utterly to recognize the essentially supernatural character of infused faith, so infinitely beyond and above all natural knowledge, whether human or angelic. The final outcome of such a confusion is the reduction of Christian faith to a kind of natural and Kantian belief in the existence of God and of free will, while denying the whole order of grace. Often men's unconscious and latent confusions lead, if we deduce their consequences, to greater mistakes. In the present instance they would lead to a denial of the essentially supernatural character of the three theological virtues.

GOD'S PURIFICATION OF OUR FAITH

When God desires to purify our supernatural faith from every natural alloy, He brings out in relief its formal motive and seems even to do away with any secondary motives, for they are not genuine reasons for belief. We no longer have any sensible experience of the divine action within us; only dryness and aridity, not only of the senses but also of the soul, are our portion. The harmony of dogma with the truths of reason is blotted out, and the testimony of the world's greatest thinkers in favor of the faith seems weak indeed. The life of Christ and the lives of His saints as well, seem more wonderful than ever; but the failings of churchmen do much to disconcert us, bringing to mind, it may be, the description of her times

drawn by St. Catherine of Siena in her Dialogue. Motives of credibility, like miracles and prophecies, no longer have any force for the tormented reason.

Two contrary causes bring all this about: God accords us a new light to lead us away from our too human ways of doing things, and the devil makes use of this change, although it both liberates and elevates us, to tempt us and make us fall. As St. John of the Cross shows, we receive at this time a supernatural light that discloses to us the spirit of God's word and obliges us to rise above its letter and our own inferior way of conceiving the divine perfections. The wholly supernatural heights of the mysteries of infinite justice, of predestination, of the Savior's passion, of the salvation and loss of souls, are all illumined by this infused light; the narrow concepts to which we have been used are, in a sense, blown wide open. We stand astonished before inexorable justice, asking how it can be reconciled with unbounded mercy. The question arises before us how such a good God can allow such great evils. Objections formulated by heretics and examined speculatively by theologians present themselves to us, not in the abstract, but at life's core, for example, on the death of father or friend. Everything contributes to the impression that the understanding is lost in the dark, whereas in reality it is flooded with light too strong for its feeble vision. God plunges the soul into the depths of the mysteries of faith and it feels itself sinking and drowning, like a child put down in the sea before it knows how to swim, although held up by the unseen hand of its father. And souls that go down into the troubled sea of the dark night find that the hand of God yet bears them up.

At these times, the Lord also allows the devil to tempt His elect to doubt the existence of eternal life, the redemptive Incarnation, the mystery of grace, and all supernatural realities. To reason about the matter of the temptation is not the way to meet such an attack. We cannot meet this adversary with arguments; we must turn our back on him in contempt and, although he will bend every effort to keep us from doing so, we must adhere firmly to God's word. As St. John of the Cross says, the devil torments and afflicts the soul in ways that defy the telling, for now two spirits are engaged in open warfare within it.

Secondary motives all seem poor weak things now. The harmony of dogma with the truths of reason, with philosophic and poetic intuitions, and with human aspirations, appear almost childish. God is, however, making temptation serve His ends. He sustains the soul in secret and, by the gift of

understanding, preserves within it, even in times of greatest darkness, its certitude that it must believe, that it must believe for the single and supernatural reason that God has said it; God, who can neither deceive nor be deceived; God, the First Truth revealing.

What will help us to adhere to the First Truth? Some story from the life of Christ? An account of one of His miracles? Or any of the histories of the Church written by fallible men? The rereading perhaps of a good historical and critical treatise of apologetics? Any rational inquiry, no matter how indispensable and unerring, serves only as art inferior disposition for the act of faith; between the two stretches the infinite distance separating nature and grace. To return to such a pursuit would mean going back to discursive reasoning at a time when we need to rise above it and fly over temptation, instead of fighting it with arguments. To succeed, we have to beg ardently for the actual grace of faith and we must also will to believe, for the object and the formal motive of faith is inevident and hidden, and the will must intervene to bring the intellect to give it firm adherence.

With God's help, the soul is inwardly led to say the apostles' prayer, "Lord, increase our faith." Lord, give me grace to believe, lift up my intellect to Thee, and to the uncreated Father. Raise my mind to what it cannot naturally attain, the infinite, grant that I may cleave supernaturally to Thyself, the First Truth revealing. Grant that I may believe. Give me refuge from my inconstancies in Thy immutability. I believe in God revealing and in God revealed.

Presently the full sublimity of the formal motive of faith begins to appear not simply in a speculative but in an experimental way. The First Truth revealing, the authority of God the revealer, is a motive as essentially supernatural as the mysteries to which we hold because of it. It belongs to an order much higher than the natural knowledge of the angels; they too, in their state of wayfaring, had it as a supernatural gift. When faith has been purified and cleansed of every natural alloy, natural knowledge of the signs of revelation—miracles and prophecies—retains its force but we see plainly that it pertains to a much lower domain than the properly divine order, to which the act of infused faith belongs. By infused faith we adhere to revealed mysteries simply because of their infinite weight as truths proposed to us by God for our belief.

In her Dialogue St. Catherine of Siena says that faith is an infused light received at baptism and serves as the pupil of the eye of the intellect,

making us know supernaturally revealed things as though seen with the eye of God. She thought, in fact, that, although we still remain in darkness, we ought to judge human and divine things with the perfect clarity with which God judges them. In sinners, the light of faith is clouded by a stained conscience so that they often judge things according to their own pride, self-love, and sensuality, and not by the spirit of God.

No other way leads to perfect purity of faith but the passive purification of the soul. The infused virtue of faith must become so deeply rooted in our intellect that the intellect can no longer, so to say, do otherwise than judge things human and divine by the spirit of faith. This spirit has to become second nature to it, and at the end of the period of purgation the healed and supernaturalized intellect should tend spontaneously toward divine mysteries and the First Truth revealing, just as the eye turns toward light and color and the mind reaches out to the first principles of reason.

A HIGHER LAW IN THE ORDER OF GRACE

That faith is purified in this way is not a notion peculiar to St. John of the Cross and a few other mystics because of the particular way they themselves followed. The apostles' faith went through just such a purification during the dark night of the Passion. They had heard Christ's sublime sermons and seen them confirmed by His holiness and miracles, as well as by all the good works He had done; three of them had been present at His transfiguration on Mount Thabor. But when Jesus was made a prisoner, condemned, scourged, crowned with thorns, and crucified, their faith was sorely tried, despite the fact that the Master had repeatedly foretold everything to them. What a dark night this was for the apostles, "the hour of darkness" indeed! Christ seemed overcome and forsaken by God and man, His work brought to nothing.

The Blessed Virgin, St. John, and Mary Magdalen remained at the foot of the cross. Not for a moment did the Blessed Virgin stop believing that her Son was the Word of God made flesh, the Savior of mankind, and that in three days He would arise again as He had said. She alone grasped the full meaning of the seven last words of the agonizing Christ. When she heard the Consummatum est she understood that our apparently defeated Lord had conquered sin and Satan and she knew, too, that Christ's victory on Good Friday was greater than His triumph over death by His glorious

resurrection. Death being the result of sin, the resurrection of the body is only the sign and result of His great victory over sin. Mary the Co-Redemptress understood this in the dark night of the Passion according to the measure of her union with Christ the Redeemer. John and Mary Magdalen continued to believe in proportion to the light and love given to them by our Lord in His last hours.

What Christ had foretold of the other apostles came true: “Behold the hour cometh, and it is now come, that you shall be scattered every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. . . . In the world you shall have distress: but have confidence, I have overcome the world.” Christ warned Peter particularly: “Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and thou, being once converted, confirm thy brethren.” Immediately afterward our Lord made known to Peter that he would deny Him. The apostles were indeed sifted by tribulation, thus learning their own powerlessness and frailty and seeing their faith itself apparently on the point of shipwreck; but Christ sustained them, and Peter failed only through weakness in the external confession of his faith, immediately afterward weeping abundant tears for his sin. The graces of Easter and of Pentecost confirmed his faith and the faith of his brethren for all time. They had had their dark night and, if we would share in their intimacy with Christ, we must first follow them into the shadows.

The passive purification of faith occurs in some way in the lives of all the saints, although it may take different forms, being sometimes entirely interior, sometimes mixed with the sufferings of the apostolate. It can be safely said that in the depth of every interior soul some cross of mind or heart is to be found, and none can really know that soul while unaware of the cause of its hidden suffering. All the saints have had to carry the cross and follow our Lord along the way of sorrows, praying in the depths of their hearts that God would grant them the grace to bear within them the death of Christ. Make me a bearer of Christ’s death in the company of Mary and John and the holy women around the cross.

For ten years Blessed Henry Suso had temptations against faith. St. Vincent de Paul passed four years in this kind of torment, becoming a spiritual martyr, for he no longer quite knew whether he had or had not consented to temptation and could reassure himself only by holding to his

heart a little piece of paper on which he had written the Credo. In her last years St. Teresa of the Child Jesus also had to make her way through this dark tunnel; what she tells us of her trial brings the doctrine of St. John of the Cross down to the concrete for us. If we are to resist temptation and reach the place our Lord desires us to have, we must perform heroic acts of faith at this time. Such acts at once obtain a great increase of the infused virtue so that it receives a tenfold or even the promised hundredfold increase.

When the time of purgation comes to a close, the night of the soul becomes a sparkling and delightful night, according to the verse which St. John of the Cross loves to quote: “and night shall be my light in my pleasure.” Stars appear only after the sun has set and thus, too, supernatural mysteries shine forth only when the soul knows how to make a perfect sacrifice of reason in the order of grace, not permitting it to attempt to cross the boundaries of the region accessible to it. Souls walking in darkness have often been enlightened after calling on St. Thomas Aquinas. He often obtains for them the grace to rise above their affliction, to look down upon it and see the end to which its darkness leads.

The passive purification of faith having been achieved, the soul is fully convinced that only supernatural truth and reality matter and everything else is only, as it were, a shadow of reality. It comes to understand how truly the Book of Wisdom says: “I called upon God, and the spirit of wisdom came upon me. And I preferred her before kingdoms and thrones, and esteemed riches nothing in comparison of her . . . for all gold in comparison of her is as a little sand, and silver in respect to her shall be counted as clay. I loved her above health and beauty, and chose to have her instead of light; for her light cannot be put out.” This is the kingdom of God, the pearl of great price, for which a man sells all that he has that he may buy it. Those who have understood and experienced these things have almost always left in the depths of their souls a memory of God, an obscure contemplation of His infinite perfection.

The purification of faith proceeds thus and, until the Lord has completely purged the soul in the way that He wills, “no means or remedy is of any service or profit for the relief of its affliction . . . until the spirit is humbled, softened, and purified, one with the Spirit of God, according to the degree of union of love which His mercy is pleased to grant it.”

CHAPTER VIII

THE PASSIVE PURIFICATION OF HOPE

When faith has undergone its purgation, the passive purification of hope almost always follows immediately, as in the conversion of a sinner an act of hope follows upon an act of faith. The Lord goes back over the same furrow that He has already plowed, further deepening it. The soul is now convinced that the only reality that matters, the one thing necessary, is eternal life, but it wonders whether it can ever attain to it.

Hope is an essentially supernatural virtue by which we tend toward God as our supreme beatitude, while relying on His mercy and all-powerful help to bring us to Him. The primary object of hope is the possession of God for all eternity; the formal motive of this theological virtue is God as our helper, Deus auxilians, just as the formal motive of faith is God as the revealer, Veritas prima revelans.

Surely we have hope, for we desire to reach God and to possess Him forever and we often ask for the grace to be saved; but do we not somehow allow our hope to go straggling after temporal goods? These are things which we may deem useful for our salvation but which really are not, human goods which God knows will be harmful for us and prevent our having those greater goods that would come to us through detachment and humility. And is there no alloy in the motive inspiring our hope? Certainly we hope; but do we not place too much confidence in ourselves, in our knowing how, our energy, our friends, in all the different human helps which we find at hand and which, when taken away, leave us discouraged and at a loss?

GOD’S PART IN THE PURGATION OF HOPE

To purify our hope, to give us a better understanding of its true object and pure motive, the good God may take away from us all temporal goods that are dear to us: position, apparently deserved honors, influence, and the human help that we can expect of friends. It may be that, by a special and mysterious dispensation of Providence, superiors who have always shown esteem for us, no longer give any evidence of confidence in us, without, however, being at fault in the matter. At the same time we awaken to our own frailty and powerlessness and the gravity of our sins, and if unlooked-for obstacles rise up before us in our work and we meet stubborn opposition, calumnies, and illness, too, and all the natural props that once sustained us are withdrawn, shall we not still hope against all human hope for the sole and entirely supernatural motive that God has lost nothing of His infinite power to help us?

The saints have hoped with hope like this, placing their trust in divine grace, knowing that it is always offered for our salvation, believing firmly that the Lord does not first abandon us. The cry, “Never permit me to be separated from Thee,” has gone up continually to God. Secure my hope. Grant that I may hope, whatever happens. “In te, Domine, speravi, non confundar in aeternum.” When Job had been despoiled of everything, he kept on hoping in God, saying, “The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: as it hath pleased the Lord so is it done: blessed be the name of the Lord.” St. John the Baptist, having announced the kingdom of God and then seen it set upon by all the powers of the world, never gave up hoping in his prison. The apostles, and all the martyrs, too, had hope in the midst of persecution. Thrown into a dungeon with hardly enough light at any time of the day to say the Divine Office, St. John of the Cross did not relinquish his hope, although he could no longer see anything but obstacles to the work which it was his mission to accomplish.

Those passing through the night of the soul should hope against all hope, too. The supernatural light which God makes use of for their purification reveals so clearly the height of the ideal to be attained, the greatness of Christian perfection, that they are convinced they have done nothing as yet to reach it, and that everything still remains to be done. As the Curé of Ars grew daily more enlightened in regard to the priesthood, his thoughts and feelings were of this kind, for the end to be attained seemed to him to be far, far, from what he was. The glimpses of the ideal which the soul catches in the God-given light accorded to it, make it perceive its own contrasting

miseries so well, St. John of the Cross says, that it feels as if it were dying a cruel spiritual death, or as if God had rejected it in abhorrence and flung it into darkness. It feels itself to be empty and poor, a stranger to grace. Added to all this are memories of happier times for, as a rule, such people have received many consolations from God and have served Him zealously. When they are deprived of happiness and convinced that it will not return, they suffer twice as much because of His remembered bounty.

Furthermore, the Lord now allows these souls to be tempted by the devil, who seeks to attack the work of God and of the guardian angels on their own ground, trying to close off the approach to divine union, attempting to terrify, disturb, and harass. He tempts souls especially against the mystery of predestination, against the righteousness of God's good pleasure, to make them see it as nothing more than an arbitrary caprice on His part. A voice seems to say to them: "If you are predestined, whatever you do you will be saved; if you are not, of what good are your prayers and struggles to make progress?" A wise director will answer to such suggestions: "That is just as silly as if a farmer were to say: 'If Providence has decreed for me to have wheat next summer, what good is it for me to till and sow? If the harvest is not to be, the work will be so much loss.' Such talk is foolishness, because Providence and predestination have to do not only with ends, but with the means leading there. Plow and sow if you wish to see the harvest." Sometimes the director can recall St. Catherine of Siena's tit-for-tat answer to the devil: "If I am predestined, what good are your efforts to bring about my ruin? And if I am not, why give yourself so much trouble?" Nevertheless, as St. Teresa remarks, the understanding of anybody so tempted is clouded and incapable of grasping the truth. It believes everything represented by the imagination and whatever foolery is suggested by the devil.

The evil voice keeps on: "Perhaps you are predestined but you do not know it. How, then, can you have any sure hope?" The devil would like to make us believe that the certitude of hope lacks validity because it is not speculative like the certitude of faith, because it does not rest on the very fact of salvation itself. But our salvation is not certain: we can resist God's grace and, as a result, be deprived of other divine helps, perhaps the grace of a good death. Not only is the soul conscious of this fact, but it also believes that it discovers indications to the contrary and fears reprobation. Henry Suso knew fears such as this when the devil would say to him: "Of

what use are good works to you, since you are already condemned? Why do you struggle against the eternal decrees of God?”

Full of compassion, a spiritual director can reply with St. Thomas that hope has not the same kind of certitude as faith. Faith’s certitude in revealed mysteries is speculative whereas hope’s is practical, a certitude grounded on a tendency infallibly directed toward the end to be attained, a trust in a God infinitely powerful and ready to help, who has given us divine promises of assistance. We must not attempt to search into the unfathomable designs of God, and one of the signs of predestination is found precisely in great interior trials like these. Whoever bears them in union with our Lord, repeating the seven words which He Himself uttered during His agony, has a certain participation in the redemptive Passion. Evildoers may often, on the contrary, drink iniquity like water and in apparent tranquility.

Answers of this kind fail to suffice when temptation grows more violent. St. Teresa tells us that during such storms we are incapable of receiving any consolation. From Angela of Foligno we hear the same cry uttered so long ago by Jeremias. She says, “I no longer have any hope,” just as he exclaimed: “I am the man that sees my poverty by the rod of His indignation. He hath led me, and brought me into darkness, and not into light. Only against me He hath turned, and turned again His hand all the day. My skin and my flesh He hath made old, He hath broken my bones. He hath built round about me. . . . He hath built against me round about, that I may not get out. . . . Yea, and when I cry and entreat, He hath shut out my prayer. He hath shut up my ways with square stones, . . . He hath made me desolate. He hath bent His bow, and set me as a mark for His arrows. . . . He hath filled me with bitterness. . . . And my soul is removed far off from peace, I have forgotten good things. And I said: My end and my hope is perished from the Lord.”

To overcome such temptations we, too, must make the same ardent prayer that the prophet then went on to add: “The mercies of the Lord that we are not consumed: because His commiserations have not failed; . . . therefore will I wait for Him.” Lord, the tested soul cries, give me hope, bring my hope back to life. And the soul never utters such a cry in vain. It may not always feel that it has been heard, but it keeps on praying, and that in itself is a sign that God has harkened to it for, without a new actual grace, prayer would not continue to well up from the heart. “You would not be seeking Me, had you not already found Me.”

Sometimes temptations redouble, and the soul again cries out with the prophet: “Thou, O Lord, art just, if I plead with Thee, but yet I will speak what is just to Thee: Why doth the way of the wicked prosper: why is it well with all them that transgress, and do wickedly?” “How long, O Lord, shall I cry, and Thou wilt not hear? Shall I cry out to Thee suffering violence, and Thou wilt not save?” Job in his grief went much farther still: “One thing there is that I have spoken, let Him kill at once, and not laugh at the pains of the innocent. The earth is given into the hand of the wicked.” For a little while it may be the soul yields completely to the temptation to murmur. Sometimes even the urge to blasphemy raises its head.

For this reason we must beg God anew to give us hope in Him, to create within us trust in His mercy: “Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed: save me, and I shall be saved: for Thou art my praise.” “Convert us, O Lord, to Thee, and we shall be converted: renew our days, as from the beginning.” “Arise, O Lord, help us and redeem us for Thy name’s sake.” Then, with persevering prayer, heroic hope mounts higher and higher in the soul like a forgotten leitmotiv, very sweet and very strong, and soon becoming salient until, with a great burst of song, the soul hymns its complete trust and perfect abandonment. “For the Lord will not cast off forever. For if He hath cast off, He will also have mercy, according to the multitude of His mercies.” “The Lord killeth and maketh alive, He bringeth down to hell and bringeth back again.” “But they that hope in the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall take wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.” “In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped, let me never be confounded.” The soul has a presentiment of the Savior’s answer: “You shall want for help only when I have none to give.”

Under the higher illumination of the gift of understanding, the soul discovers, as if at a glance, the infinite superiority of the formal motive of hope: almighty God as our help. What matter all the sorrows, the disillusionments, and contradictions of the world, if I reach the end of my journey to eternity? And what are the helps of men in comparison to those of God who never first abandons us? Permit me not, O Lord, to be separated from Thee. Grant that I may hope in Thee unto the end. In Thy hands my salvation is incomparably more secure than in my own.

The first star has already appeared in the night of the soul: God, the First Truth revealing. Now a second star becomes brighter and brighter: God our helper. Beneath Him shine the two great mediators: Christ our Savior and

Mary, His Mother and our aid. The soul really knows how powerless all natural energy is to accomplish the least supernatural act and with what truth St. Paul has said: “Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves: but our sufficiency is from God.” “For it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will.” The same thought is expressed elsewhere in Scripture: “As the divisions of waters, so the heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord; whithersoever He will He shall turn it.” “Who hath first given to Him?” “So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.” “And there are diversities of operations, but the same God, who worketh all in all.” “For in Him we live and move and are.” “For of Him and by Him and in Him are all things.” The sweet and terrible mystery of predestination is no longer a stumbling block. The soul fully grasps the distance between the perfect holiness of God’s good pleasure and the arbitrary nature of caprice and it says with St. Teresa that the harder divine things are to understand, the more devotion it has for them. Their obscurity arises not because of any absurdity or incoherence on their part but because of the feebleness of the eyes that look upon their light.

SATAN’S PART IN THE PURGATION OF HOPE

In the twenty-third chapter of the second book of The Dark Night, St. John of the Cross makes it quite clear that in the passive purification of hope both the divine illuminating action and the activity of the devil are at work at one and the same time. Satan desires to keep the soul from making progress, but God shows us how He makes use of His enemy’s tempting to serve His own high purposes.

Wherefore, the more spiritual, the more interior, and the more remote from the senses is the communication, the farther does the devil fall short of understanding it.

And thus it is of great importance for the security of the soul that its inward communion with God should be of such a kind that its very sense of the lower part will remain in darkness and be without knowledge of it, and attain not to it . . . let it be a secret between the spirit and God alone.

It is quite true that oftentimes, when these very intimate and secret spiritual communications are present and take place in the soul, although the devil cannot get to know of what kind and manner they are, yet the great

repose and silence which some of them cause in the senses and the faculties of the sensual part make it clear to him that they are taking place and that the soul is receiving a certain blessing from them. And then, as he sees that he cannot succeed in thwarting them in the depth of the soul, he does what he can to disturb and disquiet the sensual part, to which he is able to attain —now by means of afflictions, now by terrors and fears, with intent to disquiet and disturb the higher and spiritual part of the soul by this means, with respect to that blessing which it then receives and enjoys. But often, when the communication of such contemplation makes its naked assault upon the soul and exerts its strength upon it, the devil, with all his diligence, is unable to disturb it. . . .

At other times, when the spiritual communication is not made in any great measure to the spirit, but the senses have a part therein, the devil more easily succeeds in disturbing the spirit . . . the devil is occasionally able to see certain favours which God is pleased to grant the soul when they are bestowed upon it by the mediation of a good angel . . . partly so that he may do that which he can against them according to the measure of justice . . . in proportion as God is guiding the soul and communing with it, He gives the devil leave to act with it after this manner. . . .

At other times the devil prevails and plunges the soul into a perturbation and horror which is a greater affliction to it than any torment in this life could be. For, as this horrible communication passes direct from spirit to spirit, in something like nakedness and clearly distinguished from all that is corporeal, it is grievous beyond what every sense can feel; and this lasts in the spirit for some time, yet not for long, for otherwise the spirit would be driven forth from the flesh by the vehement communication of the other spirit. Afterwards there remains to it the memory thereof, which is sufficient to cause it great affliction.

All that we have here described comes to pass in the soul passively, without its doing or undoing anything of itself with respect to it. But it must be known in this connection that, when the good angel permits the devil to gain this advantage of assailing the soul with this spiritual horror, he does it to purify the soul and to prepare it by means of this spiritual vigil for some great spiritual favour and festival which he desires to grant it, for he never mortifies save to give life, neither humbles save to exalt, which comes to pass shortly afterwards. Then, according as was the dark and horrible purgation which the soul suffered, so is the fruition now granted it of a

wondrous and delectable spiritual contemplation, sometimes so lofty that there is no language to describe it. But the spirit has been greatly refined by the preceding horrors of the evil spirit, in order that it may be able to receive this blessing.

Earlier, when speaking of the yearning love which the soul experiences as its purgation progresses, St. John of the Cross says: “For it rises up by night (that is, in this purgative darkness) according to the affections of the will. And with the yearnings and vehemence of the lioness or the she-bear going to seek her cubs when they have been taken away from her and she finds them not, does this wounded soul go forth to seek its God. For, being in darkness, it feels itself to be without Him and to be dying of love for Him. And this is that impatient love wherein the soul cannot long subsist without gaining its desire or dying. Such was Rachel’s desire for children when she said to Jacob: Give me children, else I shall die.” Suffering like this gives us some idea of what the souls in purgatory endure spiritually when they have reached the end of their purification and ardently desire the vision of God.

PURE HOPE AND TRUE ABANDONMENT TO GOD’S WILL

Now it becomes strikingly evident how mistaken the quietists are in counseling souls tried in this way and tempted to despair to make a sacrifice of their salvation on the pretext of attaining to pure love, just when they ought, with God’s help, to be making heroic acts of hope. Grace does not destroy but really perfects nature. Now man’s will being specified by the good, he cannot do otherwise than will his own happiness, his final end. Besides, the virtue of hope, far from being incompatible with perfect charity, draws more and more life from it. By hope we desire God, our supreme good, and subordinate ourselves to Him, il1stead of subordinating Him to ourselves. By charity we love Him for Himself and desire our salvation so that we may glorify Him eternally. Any of us who endure trials of this nature should certainly accept them as long as it pleases God for them to last but this is not making a sacrifice of our salvation. Any such sacrifice would include giving up the pure desire to glorify God eternally—something contrary to the very nature of our will and of charity.

The Church answers the counsels of the quietists with the words of the Psalms: “Preserve me, O Lord, for I have put my trust in Thee.” “In Thee,

O Lord, have I hoped, let me never be confounded." "Behold, God is my savior, I will deal confidently, and will not fear: because the Lord is my strength, and my praise, and He is become my salvation." The purified soul comes at last to sing of God's power: "The right hand of the Lord hath wrought strength. I shall not die, but live: and shall declare the works of the Lord." An act of abandonment is united to its acts of perfect hope and perfect charity. "I love Thee, O my God, more than myself and above all things and I abandon myself to Thee, that Thou mayst give me to love Thee and glorify Thee eternally. My salvation is incomparably more assured in Thy hands than in mine. I adore Thy infinite justice and confide myself to Thy mercy."

In the midst of trials and calumnies saints have spoken these profound words: in the injustice of men we find the justice of God for the purgation of our hidden sins. During His passion our innocent Lord saw better than anyone else ever has seen how God's justice lies in the injustice of men. That justice weighed upon Him, a victim in our stead, and He adored it with perfect abandonment, the fruit of love for God in this world.

When the great purification of hope has been accomplished, the soul understands the entire meaning and full beauty of the psalm, Confitemini Domino: "Give praise to the Lord, for He is good: for His mercy endureth forever. . . . In my trouble I called upon the Lord: and the Lord heard me, and enlarged me. The Lord is my helper. I will not fear what men can do unto me. . . . It is good to trust in the Lord, rather than to have confidence in man. . . . The Lord is my strength and my praise: and He is become my salvation. . . . I shall not die, but live: and shall declare the works of the Lord." Then indeed the Lord appears as the author of our salvation: "I am, I am the Lord: and there is no savior besides Me." The soul knows as if experimentally that it is made for eternal life; it has a burning desire to possess God, yet God does not show Himself to it; and so begins its final purgation, the purification of charity or of love.

Some penetrating pages on this subject are to be found in La Croix de Jésus, written in 1647 by Louis Chardon, a Dominican. As remarked earlier, the basic idea of this beautiful dogmatic and mystical book is that Christ's fullness of grace produced two great effects within His soul: first, the highest kind of happiness, an unalterable peace, that lasted even during the Passion, and secondly, an ardent desire for the cross as the means of our salvation, a desire which reduced Christ's blessed soul to grief and anguish.

Although the second effect seems contrary to the first, it springs from it, just as the charity that drove Christ to save our souls proceeded from His love for the Father. Louis Chardon shows clearly not only how these two effects were reproduced in the souls of the Blessed Mother and the great saints but also how they ought to be found, too, in different degrees, in all members of Christ's mystical body, according to the measure of their union with Him. He shows plainly how Christ is at once the source of grace and the principle of the cross, giving those intimately united to Him a share in His own deep peace, even when they are enduring those purifying and redemptive sufferings which, through the mystical body, in some way continue His passion until the end of time.

In accordance with these principles we do well frequently to ask God to make known to us the obstacles that we more or less consciously place in the way of grace. At times souls hear the question: Wilt thou be perfect? They cannot help but answer: "Lord, if it is Thy desire to purify me, then purify me, even if it means that I must suffer much, even if it means that I must shed my blood for Thee."

CHAPTER IX

THE PASSIVE PURIFICATION OF CHARITY

Charity, like faith and hope, needs to be freed from every natural alloy in order to operate with utmost purity in the order of grace, so far above everything natural, no matter how richly endowed. In fact, charity has a special need for purgation because of the existence of a counterfeit charity compounded of culpable indulgence and weakness or humanitarian sentimentality. It seeks the sanction of true charity and, by its contact, often sullies it. The chief conflict of our day is not between what is good and what is evidently and cynically malicious, but between true and false charity. What was said of false Christs in the Gospel could apply to this so-called charity: “For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets.” They are more dangerous when covert than when openly known as real enemies of the Church.

Optimi corruptio pessima. The worse kind of corruption is that which attacks the best in us, the highest of the theological virtues. If there is nothing in the world better than true charity, there is nothing worse than false, for the more an apparent good resembles some real and great good the more it attracts and imperils us. If foolishness and more or less conscious cowardice leads those who ought to represent true charity to give occasional approval to the false, incalculable evil may result. Persecutors accomplish much less for they fight in the open, and we are clearly bound to oppose them or, if need be, to give our Lord the testimony of our blood in martyrdom. More could be said, but this is not the place for it. Yet a simple glance at the subject can give us a deeper appreciation of the necessity for purifying charity to free it of all dross, of all that seemingly resembles it but really forms only a silly or perverse caricature of virtue.

To remind ourselves how much more we need the purifying cross than most of us think, we have only to notice how much that is human insinuates

itself into works for God. When the Lord desires to make one of His servants a saint, the divine will may be terrible on poor human nature. Years of suffering come, when the soul must carry the cross daily; but after it has passed through the time of trial, it rejoices because of what it has been through, understanding at the last something of the necessity of the cross for Christian life. Without the cross no Christian can become spiritual and really live the divine life, so mercifully accorded to us.

THE ESSENTIAL FEATURES OF THE PURGATION OF CHARITY

The purification of charity has many different phases; St. Teresa speaks of the last, which precedes entrance into transforming union, saying of it:

She [the soul] sees herself still far away from God, yet with her increased knowledge of His attributes her longing and her love for Him grow ever stronger as she learns more fully how this great God and Sovereign deserves to be loved. As, year by year her yearning after Him gradually becomes keener, she experiences the bitter suffering I am about to describe. . . . Perhaps you will say this is an imperfection, and you may ask why she does not conform herself to the will of God since she has so completely surrendered herself to it. Hitherto she has been able to do so and she consecrated her life to it; but now she cannot because her reason is reduced to such a state that she is no longer mistress of herself, nor can she think of anything but what tends to increase her torment. . . . She is like one suspended in mid-air, who can neither touch the earth nor mount to heaven; she is unable to reach the water while parched with thirst and this is not a thirst that can be borne, but one which nothing will quench nor would she have it quenched save with the water of which our Lord spoke to the Samaritan woman, but this is not given to her.

Although the soul suffers so much and “seems dying from its desire for death,” the saint says that it is conscious, even while suffering, that its suffering is a great boon.

In other words, the purification of love takes place in even greater darkness than the purgation of faith and of hope. This may be owing to either of two reasons: because the soul is still very imperfect; or because it has made a special offering of itself as a victim for sinners, and God has accepted its oblation. An attempt will be made here to outline the essential characteristics of this purification without emphasizing its various phases.

Afterward we shall see what it is like when accompanied by a special share in our Lord's role of victim.

Charity is that supernatural virtue which makes us love God for His own sake because He is infinitely good in Himself, and our neighbor as well, not just because of his natural qualities or the good things that we receive from him, but for love of God, who has loved him and called him, as He has called us, to glorify Him eternally. Charity is then real friendship, a mutual love of benevolence between God, the author of grace, and the just man enlivened by grace, a sharer in the intimate life of the Most High. God's love for us is not a response to any lovableness already in us but is itself the cause of our lovableness. Since God shares His intimate life with us and wills to make His eternal happiness ours, we in turn model our love on His, rejoicing that He is God, that He possesses infinite perfections, His wisdom, His holiness, and His happiness, and we will Him to be known, loved, and glorified as the First Truth and the Supreme Good deserve to be known, loved, and glorified.

The formal motive of the love of friendship between our Father in heaven and His children is therefore the uncreated Goodness as supernaturally known by faith to be supremely lovable, infinitely more lovable than any gifts that come to us from Him. To love God not merely for Himself but for the good things that we have received or hope to receive from Him falls short of being an act of charity, although a consideration of God's benefits disposes us for a better knowledge of the sovereignly lovable divine goodness. Charity and perfect gratitude rise above the love of benefits to love the Benefactor Himself. It is in this sense that God ought to be loved for Himself, and if charity leads us to desire our own happiness, it does so for a motive higher than mere hope, out of the will to glorify God eternally, so that His infinite goodness may be known and loved as He deserves: "Not to us, O Lord, not to us; but to Thy name give glory."

The just, even when still imperfect, possess charity, although many faults, such as unconscious egoism, self-love, pride, sensuality, and sloth, may keep it company. Even though charity makes us love God for Himself, we often dwell too much on the benefits of all kinds that He bestows on us, such as the sensible or spiritual consolations accorded to us in prayer which make Him felt, so to say, within us. Charity makes us love others, too, for love of God, but affection and gratitude also bind us to them. And who can

tell what motive prevails in some affections, the divine or the human; and who knows whether the human is truly and fully subordinated to the divine

When a soul has ardent hope and our good God wills its charity to become more disinterested, cleansed of all faults and imperfections, and freed from every trace of egoism, He deprives it at times of all consolation, both sensible and spiritual. To put it more correctly, He does not exactly deprive it of these gifts but gives it such an ardent desire of Himself for His own sake that it suffers much at being still separated from Him, at having to wait for perfect union with Him. Like a banked fire, God remains in the soul's center; no spark seems to come from Him. Nevertheless faith and hope frequently are almost purified in such souls. They are like the souls in purgatory who have come to the end of their sufferings and ardently desire the vision of God. No created good can any longer offer them consolation, so strong is their desire for an infinitely greater good. More clearly than ever before the soul now sees that "Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity" save to love God and to serve Him. Yet the Lord seems to withdraw Himself from the soul; and the more it desires to be united to Him, the more this separation pains and racks it.

As St. John of the Cross expresses it so well: "The very light and the loving wisdom which are to be united with the soul and transform it are the same that at the beginning purge and prepare it: even as the very fire which transforms the log of wood into itself, and makes it part of itself, is that which at the first was preparing it for that same purpose." He adds that this figure serves to explain the sufferings of the souls in purgatory: "For the fire would have no power over them, even though they came into contact with it, if they had no imperfections for which to suffer. These are the material upon which the fire of purgatory seizes; when that material is consumed, there is nought else that can burn. So here, when the imperfections are consumed, the affliction of the soul ceases and its fruition remains." These sufferings, like personal purifications, last for a shorter time when more intense and when borne more supernaturally, with perfect abandonment.

It is no wonder that when the very core of a man's soul is being purged that he feels forever bereft of any good that he once possessed. At this point, people are tempted to believe God cruel. Job complains that instead of God hearing him and coming to his aid: "I cry to Thee, and Thou hearest me not: I stand up, and Thou dost not regard me. Thou art changed to be

cruel toward me, and in the hardness of Thy hand Thou art against me." The Psalmist makes the same plaint: "Arise, why sleepest Thou, O Lord? arise, and cast us not off to the end. Why turnest Thou Thy face away? and forgetest our want and our trouble?" Above all, the words of the psalm uttered by Christ in His agony come back to memory at such times: "O God, my God why hast Thou forsaken Me?" But with them comes the thought that in His hour of darkness our Savior offered Himself to His Father who had delivered Him up for us.

In union with Him, frequently repeating His seven last words, we too can make a great act of love for the single and pure motive that God is sovereignly lovable in Himself, infinitely more deserving of love than all the gifts that He has accorded to us or that we can hope to receive from Him. This realization marks the rising of the third star in the night of the soul; and contemplating it, a man resigns himself fully to God's will. Whatever acts of faith, of hope, and of charity he makes are in some way all grounded in an act of perfect abandonment to the divine will. Christ consecrated the sacrifice of the cross with His dying words, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit."

The Christian now believes with ardent faith that Christ continues to offer Himself to His Father and, together with Himself, all the members of His mystical body, by the ministry of His priests. Knowing this, the follower of Christ unites himself with the Eucharistic sacrifice that perpetuates the substance of Christ's sacrifice on our altars. And those who suffer supernaturally some particle of what our Lord endured and, mindful of the four ends of sacrifice, allow themselves to be offered to the Father by Him, have a special share in Christ's offering. Our actions have only finite worth, but when Christ Jesus offers them, they are His oblation and, because of His divine personality, their value is beyond measure. Yet, even when our Lord offers up our personal sufferings to God, they are not the matter for the Sacrifice of the Mass: we must always distinguish between the victim of infinite worth and all others. The oblation which Christ makes of Himself includes us, however, for in offering Himself, He offers us as well. By embracing us, our Lord's sacrifice becomes no more perfect in itself but radiates on us and through us; just as in creating the universe and having it reflect His goodness and hymn His glory, God becomes no greater than He was before.

At this period of the spiritual life, the time for the purification of our love of neighbor has also come. Therefore we no longer receive from him any marks of esteem or of gratitude, in spite of all the good that we would do for him. Sometimes those to whom we are most devoted cause us this apostolic suffering. Then we learn to love those dear to us purely for God's sake, that they may be saved and sanctified and may glorify Him eternally, and we understand of what small moment this act of ours is in comparison to St. Peter Martyr's supplication for the man who killed him and afterward became a saint, in comparison to St. Stephen's cry for those who stoned him, and our Lord's prayer for those who crucified Him. What St. John of the Cross says of our intimate relations with God must also be affirmed of our relations with our neighbor, superiors and equals alike.

At the end of this trial, charity for God and neighbor is purified of every alloy. Like gold out of the crucible, it has lost whatever dulled and tainted it and yet it comes out more abundant than it was before. Unlike feeble acts of charity, heroic acts obtain immediately the increase of charity which they merit, and they merit according to the measure of their fervor. And, with sanctifying grace, all the virtues and the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost united to charity, show a like increase.

St. John of the Cross says:

This is an enkindling of love in the spirit, where, in the midst of these dark afflictions, the soul feels itself to be keenly and acutely wounded in strong divine love. . . . And, inasmuch as this love is infused, it is passive rather than active, and thus it begets in the soul a strong passion of love. . . . The yearning and the grief of this soul in this enkindling of love are greater because it is multiplied in two ways: first, by the spiritual darkness wherein it finds itself, which afflicts it with its doubts and misgivings; and then by the love of God, which enkindles and stimulates it, and with its loving wound, causes it a wondrous fear. . . . But in the midst of these dark and loving afflictions the soul feels within itself a certain companionship and strength which bear it company and strengthen it.

After the purification of charity, begins that "transforming" union with God which both St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross speak of, she in seventh mansions of The Interior Castle and he in The Living Flame of Love. Our Lord's words to His Father are as fully realized as they can be in this world: "That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee; that they also may be one in Us." The soul reaches its perfect age and

experiences the fulfillment of St. Paul's words, "But he who is joined to the Lord, is one spirit." The action of fire offers us some comparison to transforming union, for it first blackens and dries wood and then pervades and transforms it into fire itself. Crystal shot through with sunlight provides another parallel. As St. Thomas says, fire can transform bodies, but God alone can make souls Godlike.

The more perfect deification possible to the soul in this life has now been achieved; it has been brought into the inner sanctuary, the intimate center where the Blessed Trinity dwells; and it receives a supernatural peace that can never, so to speak, be lost; and lives only to contemplate and love God. Under certain substantial touches, it feels God so near that He seems to be just behind a thin veil and about to be seen. By the gift of wisdom it tastes more and more of God's infinite goodness: "Taste and see that the Lord is sweet." And it recalls the words of the Canticle of Canticles: "For winter is now past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers have appeared in our land, the time of pruning is come: the voice of the turtle is heard in our land . . . the vines in flower yield their sweet smell." Something like a prelude to eternal life has begun in time, yet sometimes at this juncture new trials begin.

PARTICIPATION IN OUR LORD'S VICTIMHOOD

Often souls in this state are led by the Holy Ghost to offer themselves as victims for sinners, in union with Christ and following His example. Before making such an offering, we should do well to make satisfaction for our own sins and become purified ourselves. But when the Holy Ghost Himself seems to incline a soul that way and it wins the approval of a wise director with the grace of state to recognize divine inspiration, should it not say: "If it is indeed Thou, Lord, inspiring this act, I have no desire to resist Thy appeal." Then just as the cross has led to perfect love, now perfect love leads back to the cross, and the soul accepts it with much greater generosity than before, somewhat as our Lord and His Blessed Mother, who needed no purification for themselves, took up the cross for our sakes. So, after some time of intimate divine union, the night of the soul begins again but in a different way. Now a partially perceptible peace reigns at the summit of the soul and holds its own even in the midst of the most terrible tempests, a dim

but true image and reminder of our Lord's peace during the anguish of the cross.

When souls have become united to God in this way, the sufferings that recommence thereafter are more redemptive than purifying. All at once the purification of the three theological virtues seems to begin again but it has a new character. When we offer ourselves for sinners, prayer alone fails to suffice. We must struggle with them, share their dangers and trials, feel in ourselves what they endure in losing God, and, in union with our Savior, in some way bear their sins, their unbelief, their despair, their discontent, and their anger. A soul thus put to the proof feels rejected by God, damned. Nevertheless, although grace is unfelt, it strengthens and sustains the sufferer, giving him, in the place of those for whom he suffers, a holy hatred for the sins which they will one day repent of through the grace thus won for them.

Souls called to follow this hard path go through such darknesses and torments that sometimes their directors have no idea where they are going and, because of their anxiety, cause them much more suffering without meaning to do so. St. Teresa speaks of the trial of having confessors who dread and suspect everything. To go through all this means real agony, a terrible conflict with the spirit of evil, a martyrdom of the heart. But those who are faithful will find realized within themselves what is greatest in the life of the Church militant, the spouse of Christ: "Love is strong as death, jealousy as hard as hell, the lamps thereof are fire and flames. Many waters cannot quench charity, neither can the floods drown it." Supernatural love for God and souls is stronger than the death of the body, for it lives on eternally; it is stronger than spiritual death and hell, for it gives crucified souls a share in our Redeemer's victory over sin and Satan.

St. Catherine of Siena, St. Rose of Lima, St. Magdalen of Pazzi, and many others were made acquainted with torment of this kind and thus came to love God and souls for God so purely that their love had no trace of egoism. We admire the pure conjugal love of Christian widows who, with the courage of love, manage to raise their children to become living images of the father they have lost. How much more we should admire the spouses of Christ who, without consolation for years, remain faithful to Him in their life of prayer and immolation and keep on loving Him with a love as strong and as pure as it is sorrowful.

Under the special influence of the gift of understanding, progressively enlightening us about the infinite greatness of God and our own weakness, the three theological virtues are purified of every alloy. Like three stars in the night, the three pure motives of these virtues shine out more and more clearly in their essential supernaturalness, inaccessible to the natural powers of any created intellect and will. Faith, hope, and charity, and the gifts of wisdom and understanding show considerable growth and, as the Holy Ghost generally moves souls according to the degree of the virtues and gifts to be found in them, He now gives them supernatural contemplation and a proportionate degree of actual union. They are brought thus to the supreme and normal completion of the life of grace and the perfect realization of the first commandment: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with all thy strength and with all thy mind: and thy neighbor as thyself.”

What practical conclusion should we draw from all this? When reading of the wonderful things that took place in the lives of the saints, let us not get big-headed and desire crosses that we could not carry or believe ourselves burdened with trials that exist only in our imagination; but let us carry the crosses which our Lord actually sends us—usually they are small. Let us carry them with resignation, with thankfulness, and with love. With resignation: we have to suffer. Modern progress has tried to do away with suffering but has certainly not succeeded; and to struggle against suffering only adds irritation to pain and robs us of merit. In the world there are, sad to say, many who carry a lost cross, gaining no more from it than the bad thief gained from his.

Gratitude should be joined to resignation, for the cross is a hidden and precious grace sent to us for our purification. We may not see this immediately, but when we think about some of the crosses that have come to us in the past, we realize how useful and fruitful they have been for us. Sometimes we wish for crosses other than our own, but were they given to us, we would wish to take back the one that Providence has chosen for us, since it is perfectly adapted to our strength aided by grace.

Love ought to accompany gratitude, or, if not love, at least a desire to love the cross. We should never consider the cross apart from our Savior. Let us look upon Christ crucified to be drawn to Him by sufferings that make us resemble Him. From Him will come our strength to bear them. Let us have the courage to allow Him to love and purify us and incorporate us

into Himself. He desires to communicate to us something of His hidden and sorrowful life, before giving us a participation in His glorious life in heaven. We see this in the lives of saints with a special love for the cross, such as St. Benedict Joseph Labre. Shortly before his death, when in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament, he seemed to have the face of Christ, so much like Him had he become through sufferings accepted with love. Blessed are those who have a deep understanding of the mystery of redemption and live by it. In them Christ's sufferings are in some way continued. The mystical body of the Savior can no more live without suffering than our eyes can function without light. The sorrowful mysteries are the way leading to the glorious mysteries of eternity, the beginning of eternal life in time.

CHAPTER X

CHARACTERISTIC SIGNS OF THE PASSIVE PURIFICATION OF THE SOUL

If all that glitters is not gold, neither is every kind of darkness and suffering of soul a passive purification. Let us take a brief glance at the nature of those painful times of darkness that are entirely different from the night of the soul, and then afterward take up the discussion of certain purifications that are real but very difficult to judge, pointing out, finally, the true signs of the night of the soul. In this we shall follow four Thomists: Philip of the Blessed Trinity, C.D., Valgornera, Alexander Piny, and Louis Chardon. Of the three Dominicans—all of whom have made a special study of the subject —Chardon will be quoted at length so that interior souls will be led to read his book, La Croix de Jésus, referred to earlier and far too little known.

SUFFERINGS OF A PENAL RATHER THAN OF A PURIFYING NATURE

The spiritual afflictions described in the exposition of the night of the soul given by St. John of the Cross must not be confused with sufferings in some regards analogous to them but of a very different character. They ought not to be taken for morbid states, such as profound melancholia, neurasthenia, or psychastenia—in other words, with nervous exhaustion and its reverberations on moral life. People so afflicted distress themselves over nothing and sometimes end by developing a persecution mania. This may take any one of its many different forms, including the religious, depending on the person’s environment and ordinary preoccupations.

Temptations against chastity and patience are certainly not enough to ensure that a soul has entered into the passive night of the senses; nor are

temptations against the three theological virtues a guaranty that it is undergoing the night of the soul.

Describing the state of those who make bad use of spiritual consolations, Father Louis Chardon aptly remarks:

Because they lack steady resoluteness, they are continually changing, desiring consolations without patience and seeking them without temperance. Such over-eagerness leads to confusion, troubles and clouds the understanding, and robs the mind of peace. Restlessness of this kind weakens the life and vigor of a man's powers, depriving them of light and strength and abandoning them to their own resources. People who have fallen into a state like this fail to recognize it. Even if it is brought to their attention in such a way that they cannot help knowing it, or at least, suspecting it, the weakness which they have already contracted keeps them from making up their minds to practice those hard exercises demanded of all who would take the kingdom of God by storm.

Souls such as these continue to make violent efforts to convince themselves that a liberal God desires to accord them nothing but a great deal of sweetness. Their lack of discretion may sometimes reach the point of weakening the body. Even if health is not lost, it is so affected that the soul cannot use the body for those operations that can be produced in this life only with its cooperation. There is a weight on the breast, the brain is fagged, and breathing shallow, the heart contracts and, whenever there is an attempt to apply themselves attentively to any consideration, they get a headache. Then the imagination plays its part by representing this sorry state of affairs as worse than it actually is.

Finding themselves so sadly off, people are likely to go seeking relief in the senses and some succeed so well in finding it that they fall from their newly and generously undertaken spiritual life into what St. Paul calls an animal way of living. So reads the story of many who have left off the pursuit of perfection to which they were called by an abundance of graces from a generous God. Doctors see the results of melancholy in bodily dispositions consequent on mental torment and conflict. Those so affected ultimately give up trying to resist the impulses that trouble them. Please God, may He give such souls the profound humility to draw nearer those of whom we are now going to speak.

Lastly, true passive purification of the soul should also be distinguished from another state, not so much a trial sent by God's mercy to dispose the

soul for divine union as a chastisement of His justice. It must be remarked in regard to this subject that there are three different kinds of crosses, the same three that were raised on Calvary: the cross of Christ, the cross of the good thief, and the cross of the bad thief. Our Lord in no way merited His; He voluntarily accepted its sufferings in our stead. His was the redemptive cross. By contrast, the bad thief fully merited his cross and besides drew no profit from it. His was a lost cross, without any purifying effect, like many others in the world. The good thief certainly merited his. It was a punishment. Yet he was able to make it purifying and reparative by uniting his contrite heart to Christ.

Crosses such as the good thief's may indeed resemble the night of the soul without having all its characteristics. Sometimes, because of grave sins against the Savior which remained unconfessed and entailed a number of sacrilegious Communions as well, a repentant sinner may have a heavy debt to pay divine justice although he has already been forgiven his sins. The torments that he suffers lead him to ask whether his sins have really been forgiven or whether he is on the way to damnation. Frequent temptations against hope and charity arise, and God Himself seems cruel. In such cases, there is no question of any passive purification or proximate preparation of the soul for divine union but chiefly of expiation which, although hard, is better endured in this life while meriting than after death in purgatory, when we can no longer merit.

The different instances just examined—marked neurasthenia, anxiety neurosis, and the painful expiation for grave sins already remitted, are plainly quite different from the true night of the soul. There are, however, cases of real passive purification about which it is difficult to decide.

OBSCURE FORMS OF PASSIVE PURIFICATION

The topic being a delicate one, it behooves us to listen to the best authorities on the subject. Father Louis Chardon describes states of this nature when speaking of three different kinds of interior crosses: first, those that make us cowardly and scrupulous; secondly, those that arouse our lower nature to rebellion; and finally, those caused by a sort of general lassitude.

Of the crosses that stun and stupefy the will, he says:

In the course of the trials sent by God to the soul, it comes about that the will is forsaken at the same time that the intelligence is filled with knowledge, due either to its natural power of reason or to supernatural illumination. When this happens to a man, he then carries a cross far heavier than any he has ever known before. Light may flood the mind, but the will remains empty. Holy people so tried believe that they would have been better off ignorant than possessed of a sublime knowledge which yet gives them no power to love what their very nature forbids them to hate. They suffer much, feeling themselves forbidden to take hold of what they long for with a love beyond any power to express or prove. They see that the object of their love is worthy of all love, yet cannot turn to Him with all their strength. God's mercy inspires no confidence, His justice excites no fear. . . . Meditation on His mysteries leaves the affections cold.

A kind of constraint of heart results, a timid and repressed disposition of mind, a shrinking of the soul's courage. . . . Souls that rose like eagles toward the sun become scared nestlings fluttering along on the ground. They begin to be afraid of everything and see all their actions as tainted with sin. The wisest counsel succeeds in calming their fears only with great difficulty. Their minds remain cowardly, enervated, and depressed. They shun the remedy to be found in the advice of enlightened directors . . . defying them and doubting the uprightness of their intention. They come to Communion as if presenting themselves before the tribunal of some terrible judge. They have attention only for their own misery, are so conscious of it and fed themselves so evil that they think it impossible that they could be of any use to others. . . . In other words, they know that they have offended God but are not sure that they have obtained His pardon.

Lack of knowledge, together with its imaginings and terrifying thoughts, causes a cross unparalleled, bowing down the heart and breaking courage. An experienced director will see, however, that the grief experienced for their faults, proves that these souls love God above all things and that, to do His will, they are ready, in spite of everything, to suffer still more.

When talking of the crosses that cause our lower nature to revolt, Louis Chardon relates that, according to Sulpicius Severus, there was once an illustrious prelate of outstanding virtue who had often with his blessing freed those troubled by the devil. One day he was dismayed to find himself incited to pride and begged God that he himself might rather become the

habitation of the devil than be guilty of complacency. And the result of his prayer was soon manifest.

Louis Chardon adds:

It seems that something analogous happens to some sods. Long experience of God's guidance has given them a wonderful grace of discernment. Yesterday they knew the way that they must follow to go forward without fear on the road of perfection. And today they know nothing. They have to go asking light of others to whom they could have given it in abundance before. Souls accomplished in the practice of high virtue see themselves driven to the necessity of going to learn the first elements of the spiritual life in the school of less perfect people. . . . For a long time they have been penetrated by the vanity of everything that is not God and filled with horror at inordinate desires, having reason to believe that they were forever cut off from new temptations. And now they feel themselves harried and tormented with thoughts, and desires . . . and passions that almost make them lose hope of ever again finding the favors that they once knew. If they desire to find some solace for their misery in God, they see that the avenues leading to Him are closed. And were they open, their understanding would be too darkened to be aware of it and their will too slack to get up and more toward Him. . . . All the faculties under the will's direction revolt against it. The more it desires to rise toward the source of all good, the more it is held back by the deterrent weight of our lower nature, which represents to it only objects that crucify it. . . . With severity, yet full lovingly, God holds its interior acts as though in a state of suspension. It has no other support but Him. He Himself put it in this crucible where, almost without being able to act, it suffers through God, through creatures, and through itself. . . .

People so tried are often tempted to impatience. Their nature is left to its own weakness. No sensible influence of any kind comes to them from heaven, and everything conspires to cause them desolation. . . . What has become of the pure flaming love that used to purify the imperfections of their heart and the efficacious strength once manifest in their actions? They know only irksome disgust and aversion and are even tempted to turn from resignation and submission to God's adorable designs. . . . Nature revolts against the spirit with such violence that nothing else can make itself felt. The higher faculties are as if unconscious and incapable of action; and such is the sway of our evil nature that it is impossible even to distinguish for

practical purposes between what is necessary and what is free, between consent and feeling.

These passages make us think of the violent and prolonged temptations experienced by St. Alphonsus Liguori at the age of eighty. When reading his life, we might take this trial for the night of the senses, but it must have been a purification of a much higher order.

Louis Chardon continues: “In this state, doubts, anxieties, and disturbances arise in the soul. Are not these aversions and revolts that it experiences acts of the will, freely consented to? The truth is that they are as far from being acts of the will as they are from being sweet communications of holy love.”

All the effects of violent passions make themselves felt. . . . Thoughts of denying divine Providence haunt the mind. The senses are aroused and disturbed with an intensity reminiscent of delirium. Yet the fact that all this martyrdom results from continued resistance in the contest remains unknown. . . . If it were otherwise, if the besieged gave way before these assaults, if the powers of the soul yielded their consent, all this travail, that makes us think of the dread spectacle of souls forever banished from God’s sight, would come to a halt.

In resignation and silence these souls are really cleaving to all that God is pleased to decide for them. They practice patience just when their nature is most impatient; they enjoy peace in spite of anxiety and keep silence in the face of trouble, practicing indifference in the midst of turmoil, and conformity in spite of up-rushes of anger. Nevertheless, because their acts of submission are tacit rather than explicit, they remain ignorant of their own state.

God permits all this for their advancement. May they then allow this trial to go forward and be accomplished in them, having their purgatory here on earth and coming at last to free themselves of every stain and imperfection. For those who have eyes to see, the full strength of love first appears in this conflict: Fortis est ut mors dilectio.

Crosses caused by general helplessness: The rigorous action of love delivers others over to another form of passive purification difficult to judge. Having received great graces, these souls can no longer bring them back to mind. The understanding is clouded; the will, numbed; and the devil is permitted to interpose in order to exercise their fidelity. How can they ask God’s help? He is hidden. Faith sleeps so heavily that we could believe it

dead. When St. Teresa was undergoing this trial it seemed to her that she was like a ball in the hands of her enemy. She wrote of it: “The mind feels as if it never had thought of God nor ever will be able to do so. When men speak of Him, they seem to be talking of some person heard of long ago.”

Elsewhere she says:

Faith is then as dead, and asleep, like all the other virtues; not lost, however,—for the soul truly believes all that the Church holds; but its profession of the faith is hardly more than an outward profession of the mouth. And, on the other hand, temptations seem to press it down, and make it dull, so that its knowledge of God becomes to it as that of something which it hears of far away. . . . Vocal prayer or solitude is only a greater affliction. . . . To converse with any one is worse, for the devil then sends so offensive a spirit of bad temper, that I think I could eat people up; nor can I help myself. I feel that I do something when I keep myself under control; or rather our Lord does so, when He holds back with His hand any one in this state from saying or doing something that may be hurtful to his neighbours and offensive to God.

Then, as to going to our confessor, that is of no use; for there certainly results—and very often has it happened to me—what I shall now describe. Though my confessors, with whom I had to do then, and have to do still, are so holy, they spoke to me and reproved me with such harshness, that they were astonished at it afterwards when I told them of it. They said that they could not help themselves; for, though they had resolved not to use such language, and though they had pitied me also very much,—yea, even had scruples on the subject, because of my grievous trials of soul and body,—and were, moreover, determined to console me, they could not refrain. They did not use unbecoming words-I mean, words offensive to God; yet their words were the most offensive that could be borne with in confession. They must have aimed at mortifying me. At other times, I used to delight in this, and was prepared to bear it; but it was then a torment altogether.

Louis Chardon has the same thing to say and adds something further in regard to directors:

Sometimes eminent people, men of probity and of mild and indulgent character, become brusque, rough, and forbiddingly severe with these poor afflicted souls. They reproach them with their sufferings, accuse them of impatience, and lay all their difficulties at the door of a lack of resignation. Or they begin to have doubts and misgivings about the state of their souls,

becoming persuaded that they are deceived by the devil and are likely to impose on their acquaintances as well. Often directors have no patience to listen to their tales of woe . . . and sometimes those best versed in spiritual things are the ones to desert them.

These pages of Chardon, at times verified to the letter, are all worth reading.

To see such cases with some clarity, a director must either know the person for some time, or have some special grace of state akin to discernment of spirits. If he perseveres in prayer and patience, he will be enlightened and come to recognize in this state of affliction genuine love for God. These souls would indeed fear to lie by saying that they love the Lord, but at bottom they are His familiars. We recognize this chiefly in the fact that although they no longer desire the cross, they do not wish it to be taken from them. And although their faith and hope seem dead, in the depth of their souls direct but imperceptible acts of these virtues take place and are seen by God, by Christ, and His Blessed Mother, and by all the angels and saints in heaven. And that suffices.

Sometimes people offer to suffer in order to obtain the grace of conversion, or at least of a good death, for some unhappy and fallen soul, and God seems to accept their offering, judging by the crosses that come to them and increase from day to day. After having frequently renewed their act of oblation, they reach a point where they no longer feel ready to do so, being too overcome and spent and tormented with frightful doubts about the mystery of predestination and the thought of the damned. Their faith seems to have gone to sleep. Then their director may sometimes suggest to them: “Perhaps you could say to our Lord: ‘My God, if Thou didst not inspire my act of oblation, I do not renew it. It no longer holds.’ “ And not infrequently, after a moment of reflection and of prayer, these poor victims will answer: “I really cannot say it. This thing is stronger than I. I feel that if I were to renounce my oblation I would destroy what is best in my life.”

In the depths of these souls a little breath of hope still stirs, making them cling to reparation. This little breath is a heroic act of confidence in God in the midst of the sorrowful Passion continued in some way within them and of necessity so continued in some members of Christ’s mystical body until the end of time. In a sense, Jesus Christ is in agony until the end of the world. It was at the moment when He suffered most that the disciples, with the exception of John, deserted Him, and so it is that sometimes when the

saints are most configured to the suffering Christ they too are forsaken. The cross is a mystery and, in its essential supernaturalness, lies infinitely beyond the grasp of the most gifted minds. “I have not loved you in jest,” our Lord said to Blessed Angela of Foligno. There are supernatural depths of love into which only the saints can look.

Therefore we need not be surprised that there are forms of real passive purification most difficult to judge; such indeed are the greatest and deepest passive purifications, which are sometimes accompanied by sicknesses that exhaust the nervous system. But to finish the subject let us come to the most evident signs.

THREE CHARACTERISTIC SIGNS OF THE PASSIVE PURIFICATION OF THE SOUL

The characteristic signs of the passive purification of the soul are rarely as clear in concrete reality as they are in the abstract treatises that enumerate them. However, an attentive examination quite often does enable us to recognize them when they occur.

The distinctive signs of true passive purification of the soul are found in the effects produced by it; as our Lord has said, “By the fruit the tree is known.” St. Thomas remarks that some effects reveal their cause wholly, not only its existence but also its nature; these belong to the same species as their causes. Only one plant produces the iris, and the fig tree alone gives figs. Other effects not having a specific likeness to their cause reveal only its existence but not its nature. The effects of the First Cause lack the capacity to make known His inner nature, although some of them, such as existence, life, and intellect, for instance, can only come from a First Being, from the Author of life and the First Intellect. Other effects again manifest neither the nature nor the existence of the cause which produces them, for they could be produced by several causes. For example, physical depression can come either from a state of health due to atmospheric conditions like the sirocco or from moral causes such as overwhelming sadness.

Among the signs of the night of the soul enumerated in the description given by St. John of the Cross and referred to earlier, some which are characteristic of it could come from no other source. Others, however, reveal it only imperfectly: do not make its nature known, or even fail to give us positive assurance of its existence, for they could spring from other causes. We wish therefore to enumerate the distinctive marks of these trials,

to total those which, when taken together, show clearly that a soul is passing through the passive purification of the soul, sent by God's mercy to prepare it for divine union.

Remembering that purgation of the spirit is accomplished chiefly by the gift of understanding, which reveals to us much more clearly than we ever knew before our own miseries and God's infinite greatness, we should note first of all that this state can be either one of pure and simple purification disposing the soul for divine union, or at one and the same time both a purification and a punishment due to sin. In the latter case, it may take on many shades of difference, from being more a testing than a chastisement, to being more a punishment than a purification immediately ordered to divine union. Sometimes, toward the end of life, people who have not yet reached union properly speaking enter into this state and seem to have their purgatory, in part at least, before death. Finally, as has already been brought out, there are, on a much higher level, sufferings more redemptive than purifying, by which some souls are associated in Christ's sorrowful life for the salvation of sinners. According to Philip of the Blessed Trinity, three characteristic signs of the true night of the soul proclaim it as a pure and simple purification or at least as much more a testing preparatory to divine union than a chastisement.

The first of these signs consists in this: On one hand the soul has no consciousness of having recently committed any materially grave sin, and on the other hand it has passed from a state of consolation or spiritual sweetness into great aridity. There it meets with nothing but darkness and affliction and finds itself buried in a sort of purgatory or even in a kind of hell owing to violent temptations against the highest virtues.

If this sign reveals nothing to the tormented soul itself, it serves to inform an enlightened and experienced director, much needed by souls at such times. He should offer encouragement, telling the soul that this trial is sent by divine mercy to lead it to perfect abandonment and a more intimate union with God. When, in fact, God leads souls as far as to make a resolution to serve Him on all occasions, He does not leave them for long at rest. He shows a sort of jealousy toward them and will not suffer that their affection be attached to anything not Himself. He takes away from them everything that could distract them from Him, even divine consolations, and in this sense, we can say, with Chardon, that God withdraws His gifts from us so that we may have the Giver Himself.

The second sign is a long-term avoidance of all fully deliberate sin, whether mortal or venial, together with disinterest in exterior things, an almost continual consciousness of the soul's own miseries, and an ardent desire for perfection. This sign must accompany the preceding, because it confirms the fact that a person has not recently committed any serious sin that would rob it of the state of grace and God's friendship. As St. Thomas shows, anyone deprived of divine grace and charity cannot long avoid deliberate sin and is not slow in betraying an attachment for creatures and a propensity for external things. Chardon says: "The faithful soul soon shows what love possesses it and makes it act, how different is its love from that which is grounded in nature. . . . In the greatest tribulations hearts filled with disinterested charity do not lose the constancy and sweetness they acquired in the time of sensible communications. Their intention then becomes upright, pure, and perfect. . . . They order all things to God and do all things for Him. . . . In this state, their intention not only grows established in absolute uprightness but becomes divine or deiform, transformed in God." The same doctrine was developed at length in the seventeenth century, thirty-six years after Chardon, by Father Alexander Piny, O.P.

The third sign is an almost continual contemplation of the divine goodness despite the soul's extreme aridity. This contemplation is general and obscure and, although it resists, it does not exclude, temptations against faith. At the same time the soul has an ardent but unfelt love of God and for this reason suffers much at the sight of sin. The measure of its suffering is the measure of its love—for God first of all, whom sin offends, for our Lord, whom sin has crucified, and for souls, whom sin sends to death. This third sign, united to and confirming those preceding it, is proof positive to an enlightened director of the true night of the soul. This state certainly can be present, however, without giving such manifest signs of its existence.

Louis Chardon says:

The soul becomes divine or deiform, no longer having any life but God's, or any knowledge or any love but His. . . . A pure supernatural sight is given to it. It beholds the emptiness of all things sensible and everything that can harm the soul. It sees that God is all, and that consequently everything else is nothing. . . . It has come to the summit of contemplation, reached not without cost. . . . The soul is reduced to perfect poverty of spirit, to a state of pure dependence, of simple capacity, in which nothing

human is to be found . . . and it lives in the darkness wherein the uncreated light dwells and is there more plainly seen. . . . Man draws nearer the inaccessible perfections of God when he is abased than when he is exalted and full of delights. When in this state he is unacquainted with any revelations whatsoever, undisturbed by transports or ecstasies, visions or apparitions. In a light unknown to itself, the soul sees that any other means can only represent God less perfectly than this state of nakedness and privation. Through it we are drawn to God in perfect purity.

These facts have led mystics to believe that at such times the understanding produces no vital act and operates without images —and without ideas—although these two are necessary conditions for the knowledge of wayfarers. Because a suspension of the knowledge acquired by way of affirmation takes place in the understanding and it apprehends by way of negation and in a manner above any sensory mode of knowledge or any positive concept; and because the divine light, without which knowledge of this kind would be impossible, is communicated in excess, . . . the understanding therefore remains submerged in the depths of a wise obscurity and hidden in the secrecy of a knowing ignorance.

THE ATTENTION OF ALL THE POWERS IS PLUNGED INTO THE ABYSS OF DIVINE LOVE.

It is sometimes said that St. Thomas nowhere speaks of such a state. Louis Chardon cites to the contrary St. Thomas' commentary on the following words of Dionysius: "There is a perfect knowledge of God, obtained in ignorance and in virtue of an incomprehensible union; this takes place when the soul, leaving all things and forgetting itself, is united to the splendors of divine glory and enlightened by the unfathomable divine wisdom." St. Thomas writes in his commentary: "We know God in ignorance, by a certain supernatural union, in which the mind is enlightened by the deep, and to us impenetrable, divine wisdom." In other places the Angelic Doctor makes allusion to negative knowledge and transluminous darkness, about which the Scriptures have so often spoken. To read what he has to say on the following words of St. Paul will prove particularly helpful: "the Blessed and only Mighty . . . who . . . inhabiteth light inaccessible."

Often the three characteristic signs of the night of the soul are not so plainly evident. The time of spiritual testing can be complicated by sickness

and even by neurasthenia. Sometimes directors find it difficult to distinguish between sufferings not of a purifying character and others more penal than purifying. They may also find it hard to tell the latter from others of a higher type, more redemptive than purifying, and likely to be found in souls dedicated to a life of reparation. Because of these difficulties, when those who have care of souls search for signs of true love for God, it is important for them not to judge any case by isolated acts or over a short period of time but in relation to the whole of life.

Finally, it should be noted that, between the night of the senses and the night of the soul, various trials and afflictions of a transitory character occur. The author of The Imitation often speaks of them, and St. John of the Cross remarks:

For, having passed through a period, or periods, or days of this night and tempest, the soul soon returns to its wonted serenity; and after this manner God purges certain souls which think not to rise to so high a degree of love as do others, bringing them at times, and for short periods, into this night of contemplation and purgation of the spirit, causing night to come upon them and then dawn, and this frequently, so that the words of David may be fulfilled, that He send His crystal—that is, His contemplation—like the morsels; although these morsels of dark contemplation are never as intense as is that terrible night of contemplation . . . into which, of set purpose, God brings the soul that He may lead it to divine union.

Sixty years later, Louis Chardon expounds the same doctrine; and after that we find it again in Alexander Piny's beautiful pages on abandonment to God's will. For all of them, this dark period means in reality an entrance into light, when the Lord harkens to the petition we make so often when reciting the psalms: "Give me understanding, and I will search Thy law." "Give me understanding, and I will learn Thy commandments." "Give me understanding, and I shall live." Longings like St. Paul's for the Colossians are then realized: "Therefore we . . . cease not to pray for you, and to beg that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will, in all wisdom, and spiritual understanding: That you may walk worthy of God, in all things pleasing," "being instructed in charity, and unto all riches of fullness of understanding, unto the knowledge of the mystery of God the Father and of Christ Jesus: in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

PART III

THE LIFE OF UNION THROUGH JESUS AND MARY

CHAPTER XI

THE ABIDING OF THE BLESSED TRINITY IN PURIFIED SOULS AND TRANSFORMING UNION

By way of synthesis, we should now like to show how perfect union with God, prepared for by the passive purifications of the senses and spirit, is the normal result of the mysterious indwelling of the Blessed Trinity in the just. To accomplish this we shall first recall to mind the mystery as understood by St. Thomas and his best commentators; then we shall speak of St. John of the Cross as a great mystical doctor with an exceptional insight into the results which are achieved by our giving ourselves without any reservation to the true interior life.

Following the great spiritual authors who preceded him and stating their doctrine exactly, St. John of the Cross shows, from the prologue of the Ascent of Mount Carmel up to the last pages of The Spiritual Canticle, that the Christian who gives himself generously to the interior life and does not hesitate to follow the royal road of the cross, should reach so close a union with the indwelling Trinity that it merits the name of transforming union. He sees the latter, coming as it does after the passive purification of the theological virtues and the gifts of the Holy Ghost, as the supreme and therefore the rare, although the normal, development of the spiritual life.

THE INDWELLING OF THE BLESSED TRINITY: SOURCE AND END OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

Holy Scripture often speaks of the general presence of God in all things, which He conserves in existence but tells us just as positively—as was noted earlier—of the special presence of the Blessed Trinity in the just.

Christ says: “If anyone love Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and will make Our abode with him.” Evidently He is not talking here of the general presence of God in everything which He conserves in existence, but of His presence in the just who love Him above all things and keep His word. He accords to them not only the created gift of grace but, as our Lord says, “My Father and I will come to him and will make Our abode with him.”

Three verses later, He tells us in the same chapter of St. John’s Gospel: “But the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you.” A little earlier, He had already said: “If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you forever.” St. John writes the same thought in his first epistle: “No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abideth in us, and His charity is perfected in us. . . . God is charity: and he that abideth in charity, abideth in God, and God in him.” The same doctrine is frequently affirmed by St. Paul, for example, in the Epistle to the Romans: “And hope confoundeth not: because the charity of God is poured forth in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us.” “Know you not, that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” “Or know you not, that your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost, who is in you, whom you have from God; and you are not your own?”

Earlier we saw how theology gives some understanding of this mystery. After the discussion of the passive purifications, the meaning and implication of the mystery should be more within our reach, and we may also gain some insight into why the divine indwelling normally results in transforming union.

Theology first shows what this special presence is in the just who have reached the perfect and definitive development of the life of grace, that is, the blessed in heaven. According to divine revelation, it is certain that every soul in heaven is like a living, spiritual tabernacle. In each the triune God really dwells, is known as He knows Himself, and is loved and glorified eternally. Consummated grace, a participation in the divine nature, acts as the principle from which the light of glory proceeds. Because of it the blessed see the divine essence face to face, better than we see people with whom we converse. They are external to us whereas the beatified behold

Him who sustains their natural and divine life in the depths of their own souls.

The life of grace and of charity in this world is basically the same as that in heaven: “If thou didst know the gift of God,” Jesus told the Samaritan woman, “and who He is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou perhaps wouldst have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water . . . a fountain of water, springing up into life everlasting.” The life of grace is life eternal begun; for sanctifying grace, when definitively developed, consummated, and made inamissable, will be called glory, and will become the radical principle of the beatific vision. As for the charity that we bear within our hearts, it is to last for all eternity. There are indeed two essential differences between a Christian’s life on earth and in heaven: in this life we attain to God only in the obscurity of faith and we also run the risk of losing Him; in heaven we shall take hold of Him in the clearness of vision with no fear or possibility of ever losing Him. In spite of these two differences, grace and glory are basically the same life, grace being the seed of glory. We see parallels in nature: basically the same life sleeps in the acorn and thrusts upward later in the vigorous oak; and the same life of reason slumbers in the infant and makes itself actively evident in the grown man.

If, therefore, the Blessed Trinity is present and seen unveiled in the souls of the blessed, it should surely be plain to us that the triune God dwells in the souls of the just here on earth. St. Paul’s words glow with light from on high when he says: “The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us.” And so we gain a better understanding of what our Lord means and implies in the words: “If anyone love Me . . . We will come to him, and will make Our abode with him.”

Theology gives us a more exact knowledge of the nature of this mysterious presence. It is not simply the presence of God through some representation of Him within us. A philosopher not in the state of grace can speculate about God and His attributes, and, according to revelation, the Blessed Trinity dwells not within him. Furthermore, a Christian in the state of mortal sin preserves infused faith and hope, thinks about God supernaturally, and even makes some inefficacious acts of love for God; yet, according to Scripture, the Blessed Trinity dwells not within him. He knows the Blessed Trinity as a distant object imperfectly represented but not really present objectively within him. God is within him only as his conserving cause.

Every just soul possesses the special presence of God, a real, objective, and affective presence of the Author of grace. God is within the just man not as some distant object might be represented and loved but as one really present, one known as we know things by experimental knowledge, as St. Thomas puts it.

God is really present in beings inferior to us not as an object of knowledge and of love but only as their conserving cause. For the Christian in the state of mortal sin, He is, so to say, like a distant object of faith and of hope. In the just he dwells really as an object present to them, and capable of being known quasi-experimentally, of being loved and imperfectly possessed, sometimes making Himself felt there as the very life of their life.

St. Thomas and many other doctors of the Church have thus understood this consoling point of revealed doctrine. The three divine persons are really and substantially within us as the conserving cause of our natural and supernatural life; and they dwell there besides as the object of loving, quasi-experimental knowledge, most mysterious but very real, and attested to not only by great theologians but by revelation itself.

St. Paul speaks of it to the Romans: “For you have not received the spirit of bondage again in fear; but you have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry: Abba (Father). For the Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit, that we are the sons of God.” In commenting on this Epistle, St. Thomas says that the Holy Ghost gives us this testimony through the supernatural and filial love which He produces in us and which we know experimentally, although we may find it difficult to distinguish between it and a more or less sentimental natural impulse of love sometimes resembling it.

Our Lord Himself has said: “The Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, nor knoweth Him; but you shall know Him; because He shall abide with you, and shall be in you.” And St. John also tells his disciples, “His unction teacheth you of all things.” Lastly, we read in the Apocalypse: “To him that overcometh, I will give the hidden manna, a spiritual nourishment and . . . a new name written, which no man knoweth, but he that receiveth it.”

Scripture plainly speaks in these texts of a quasi-experimental knowledge of God present within us. Such knowledge alone, according to St. Thomas, can offer an explanation of how God, already present in all things as their conserving cause, becomes really present in a new and special manner in

the just as a knowable, known, and loved object. Sanctifying grace, charity, and the gift of wisdom make us capable of possessing the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and, in the darkness of faith, taking a holy joy in Their presence before seeing Them face to face in eternity.

According to revelation it must be so. If in fact the Holy Ghost has been given to us, we have received Him, and in a sense we possess Him and can revel with holy delight in His presence. Likewise the Father and the Son have come to us, with grace and charity, to make their abode. So divine revelation itself speaks and we ought now to have a better grasp of its sense and import.

If, by an impossible assumption, God were not already present in a just man as the conserving cause of his natural being, He would become really present in him as the productive and conserving cause of grace and of charity, and resultantly as an object of quasi-experimental knowledge and of the supernatural love of friendship.

The loving and quasi-experimental knowledge of God proceeds, St. Thomas says, from the gift of wisdom, the highest of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which makes us judge everything experimentally in relation to God, the author of salvation and our last end. Both theological wisdom and the gift of wisdom judge all things in relation to God. But theological wisdom is acquired by study and makes its judgments according to reasoning founded on revelation; the gift of wisdom, on the other hand, makes us judge divine things by a certain connaturality, a sort of supernatural sympathy with them founded on charity. This takes place by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, who uses this sympathy aroused by Him to make Himself felt within us. Our interior Master makes us in some way taste the mysteries of salvation, showing us how much they conform, in spite of their obscurity, with our highest aspirations. He even gives us some foresight that just what seems most obscure about them is most divine, the darkness shrouding them coming not from their incoherence or absurdity but from the failure of our weak eyes looking upon so brilliant a light. Under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, a special sympathy is established between this transluminous obscurity and charity, an actual and profound sympathy that becomes the principle of a lived and living knowledge far superior to reasoning. We can thus in some manner taste the mystery of the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity when it becomes apparent that it fully conforms to the aspirations of charity awakened in us by God Himself.

However mysterious this knowledge may be, we find analogies to it in the natural order. A pure heart, St. Thomas says, knows as if by instinct what is pure without being taught. A loving son needs no psychological studies to teach him what his mother's ways reveal to him of her heart; and she herself, through her deep sympathy with him and more truly than reasoning could discover to her, knows the heart of her son.

John of St. Thomas brings out another, and striking, analogy. In the natural order, our spiritual soul, without seeing itself as it will see it when separated from the body, at present knows itself experimentally in the acts of which it is the principle, the operations of intellect and will. It requires no reasoning to do this. Thus, in a sense, but in a mysterious manner, the Holy Ghost gives to the just, inspires in the just, a kind of experimental knowledge of God through the supernatural acts of trust and filial love, of which He is the principle. Such knowledge pertains to the gift of wisdom and is far superior to reasoning. God, the author of grace and of salvation, thus becomes more intimate to us than we are to ourselves, inspiring within us profound acts that we ourselves could not produce, making Himself felt in some way within us as the life of our life.

Let us remember that, in regard to this subject, St. Thomas speaks of a knowledge not proper but rather quasi-experi-mental. Why? Because it is experimental in a sense, having to do with an object not distant but actually present and attaining to it without reasoning. However, it remains only quasi-experimental, as we have said earlier: first, because it apprehends God not in an absolutely immediate way, as occurs in the beatific vision, but in the act of filial love which He produces within us; and secondly, because we cannot distinguish with complete certitude between supernatural acts of love and the natural impulses of the heart that resemble them; moreover, without a special revelation we cannot be absolutely certain of being in the state of grace.

Here we have the teaching of theology, and in particular of St. Thomas, on the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity. The three divine persons abide with us permanently. Our union with Them endures as long as the state of grace lasts. Often, for example during sleep, it resembles the theological virtues when unexercised, being only habitual, a disposition or habit. At other times, on the contrary, it becomes actual through the exercise of the theological virtues and the gifts accompanying them.

The great mystical doctors, St. John of the Cross particularly, have built their works on the dogma of the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity. The merit of the author of The Dark Night consists in showing clearly how actual initial union, experienced at times by the just, ought normally to become more intimate, profound, frequent, and almost continual in the true unitive way. The unitive way forms the summit of the interior life in this world, a summit too rarely attained but none the less normal and entered by the saints, after the passive purification of the soul, as the ordinary prelude to eternal life. St. John of the Cross states this truth at the beginning of his works and reaffirms it at the end.

Let us look back for a moment over the way to be traveled. The journey described by the saint consists in an ascent toward the summit of perfection. The just man keeps climbing upward toward the peace of divine union by struggling generously against whatever he finds inordinate and disorderly within him.

From the start, the Author of grace dwells in the center of his soul, as in an inner sanctuary; but the soul remains too occupied with outside things and fails to penetrate into its own depths, which remain as yet hidden to it. From time to time the Holy Ghost breathes into it some thought or impulse of heart, speaking softly in the low tones of friend to friend, and often His voice remains unheard because of a tumult of passions, too natural affections, wounded susceptibilities, and the secret pursuits of pride. To hear the voice of the Holy Ghost, we must keep an interior silence and must merit having His inspirations become less latent, more manifest, luminous, frequent, and urgent.

Exterior mortification of body and senses little by little silences inordinate and violent passions, and a beginning is made on the narrow and ascending path of abnegation. As St. Luke tells us, “And He said to all: If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.” The Imitation of Christ frequently speaks of the royal road of the cross, presenting it to us rightly as nothing extraordinary in itself, like prophetic visions and miracles, but the way that all of us should follow to reach heaven, especially if we would arrive there without passing through purgatory. Yet how few of us actually follow it!

To encourage us on a way so difficult, our Lord accords us sensible graces that make it easier for us to advance, but after a time we run the risk

of becoming attached to these as an end in themselves, although they are but means. Lest, then, sensible consolations should become an obstacle to our progress, our Lord takes them away from us, He weans us from them, and makes us feel the emptiness of everything created: honor, position, and too human friendships. We begin to see as if experimentally the truth of the words of Scripture: “Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity”—except to love and serve God. Infused contemplation has now begun.

At the same time the Lord allows us to be tempted against chastity and patience, virtues grounded in the sensuous appetency; and, as a consequence, we are obliged to react energetically and so strengthen the virtues greatly. Little by little the sense appetite is purified, subjected to the soul, and becomes less and less an obstacle to divine union. But the soul itself requires purification: it understands the letter of revealed mysteries but must grasp and live by their spirit. It halts at symbols and figures, or again at its own fabrications, reasonings, and too human, limited, and material interpretations of the divine word. It must go farther into the depth of the mysteries of the Incarnation, the Redemption, the Eucharist, grace, and the Blessed Trinity; it must live by them for they must be to the soul the sort of nourishment that bread is to the body.

This necessitates purification of the soul. St. John of the Cross tells us that the infused light of the gift of understanding effects such a purgation, leading us to the heart of the mysteries of salvation, helping us to find the spirit beneath the letter and the wonderful meaning of the redemptive Incarnation, and with it, a better discernment of infinite mercy and infinite justice. The soul comes to know as if experimentally the boundless worth of the sacrifice of the cross and of the Mass, the value of the hidden life and the crosses sent to us by God, the abysmal misery of being lost and, by contrast, the great happiness of returning to God.

The mysteries of faith, in particular the impenetrable mystery of predestination, appear in all their sublimity, and therefore in all their obscurity. Yet the soul in some way ascertains that the obscurity arises not from the unintelligibility of the mystery but from light so strong as to dazzle us. Often temptations against faith also arise and begin their questioning: Is it possible that God loved the world enough to give His own Son for it? If He really did, could the world be so uncomprehending? Is it possible that after this life there exists an eternity of happiness or of irreparable loss?

In the face of our own misery, temptations against hope also arise, temptations of such a character that we must hope on against all hope. In this hard travailing the virtues of faith and of hope sometimes increase tenfold. We believe more and more for the pure and simple motive that God has revealed mysteries inaccessible to reason. We hope more and more, unsustained by any human support, with unmixed hope in God's help alone.

Something similar takes place in purified charity: we come to love God for Himself alone, and not for the sensible or spiritual consolations that may come to us from Him; we keep on loving Him as generously in times of dryness as we do in times of joy; and in the same way we have charity toward our neighbor when he shows us no gratitude, loving him for the pure motive that God loves him, and whatever about him pleases God should please us too. We really acquire some understanding of Christ's words: "Love one another, as I have loved you. . . . By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love one for another."

The command to love God and neighbor in God is thus truly fulfilled and the perfection of charity is reached. The soul enters into its own center, the inner sanctuary, where, after baptism, the Blessed Trinity abides, as long as we remain in the state of grace. A deep and almost continual actual union with God succeeds what was heretofore simple habitual union.

After this brief summary of matter covered previously, we are now in a better position to answer the important question posed earlier: In the grievous passive purifications is there a law higher than the order of grace at work? It has been sometimes asserted that the passive purifications do not conform to a universal law, but are peculiar only to some individuals, as a result of certain circumstances, like living a cloistered life, for example, or having a predominantly sensitive temperament.

St. John of the Cross together, we think, with the great masters of the spiritual life, comes to another conclusion. Of course, as has already been conceded, these trials do not always have the acute character described by Tauler or St. John of the Cross. These masters show them to us in the depths reached by contemplative souls called to great heights, and in a number of cases, given to a life of reparation. Certainly in people dedicated to the apostolate, these interior crosses, even if they exist, stand out less strikingly, for they are mixed with the difficulties of the apostolic life. However, in one way or another, must not all pass through the purifying crucible, where

together with humility and patience, fraternal charity shows much growth and points to great love of God?

We agree that this experience constitutes no general law in the sense that no union with God can be achieved without it. In fact, union with God begins with the passive purification of the senses, well in advance of the purification of the soul, although at that time it has a very imperfect character. However, we hold that not only predominantly sensitive temperaments need purgation of soul but, because it is a question of the spirit, others as well. Those who wish to reason out everything, who stop at the letter of supernatural mysteries and fail to enter deeply into their spirit, especially in the case of the mystery of the Cross, obviously have just as real a need for spiritual purification.

Therefore the question is whether Christians must pass through the passive purification of the soul not to arrive at the lower degrees of the unitive life but to reach transforming union, the true, high, and therefore rare, but normal prelude to the beatific vision. The law here is not universal in the sense of being common, of being frequently found in the concrete; it is universal in the sense of being a higher law, relating to a rarely attained but normal summit. We see the normality of this height in the lives of the only really normal people—God's saints.

To arrive at such a summit before death a purification analogous to purgatory would seem necessary. St. Thomas has not treated ex professo either the growth or the full development of the theological virtues and the gifts in the way he has dealt with their nature and properties. However, what he says of the love of enemies, the degrees of humility, and the tribulations of the saints in his commentaries on Job, Isaias, Jeremias, the Psalms, and the Epistles of St. Paul, together with what he teaches concerning the great sufferings of purgatory, and what we know of his own deep interior life, show that he was not far from what St. Catherine of Siena, Tauler, and St. John of the Cross have expressly told us on the matter.

TRANSFORMING UNION AS DESCRIBED BY ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS

St. John of the Cross describes transforming union as a state of spiritual perfection, the full flowering of the grace of the virtues and of the gifts He says that perfect spiritual life consists in the possession of God through the

union of love, and that transforming union is the perfect stage of the spiritual life.

In The Spiritual Canticle, speaking of the “inner cellars,” he writes:

And we may say that there are seven of these degrees or cellars of love, all of which the soul comes to possess when she possesses in perfection the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, in the manner wherein she is able to receive them. . . . It must be known that many souls attain to the first cellars and enter therein, each according to the perfection of love which he possesses, but few in this life attain to this last and innermost perfection, for in this there comes to pass that perfect union with God which they call the Spiritual Marriage.

When the soul possesses the full perfection of the gift of wisdom, the highest of the seven gifts received at baptism together with sanctifying grace, it has arrived at the inner sanctuary wherein the Blessed Trinity abides, and union with God no longer remains habitual but becomes actual and in some way transforming. The soul is deified by receiving a perfect participation in the divine nature.

The reason for this is given by St. John of the Cross in a principle stated in the Ascent of Mount Carmel. He says that the more purified and detached the soul becomes in living and perfect faith, the more it possesses infused charity, and the more charity it has, the more the Holy Ghost enlightens it and pours out upon it His gifts, in such a way that charity is the cause and means of His communications. St. Thomas likewise says that the seven gifts are connected with charity and, as a result, like the infused virtues, grow together with it, like parts of the same organism, as fingers grow with the hand.

In The Living Flame of Love St. John of the Cross adds: “And finally, all the movements and operations which the soul had aforetime, and which belonged to the principle of its natural life, are now in this union changed into movements of God. For the soul, like the true daughter of God that it now is, is moved wholly by the Spirit of God, even as St. Paul says: that they that are moved by the Spirit of God are the sons of God.”

He has something similar to say elsewhere in the same work:

We term the deepest centre of a thing the farthest point to which its being and virtue and the force of its operation and movement can attain. . . . Accordingly, we shall say that a stone, when it is within the earth, is in its centre, because it is within the sphere of its activity and movement . . . but it

is not in the deepest part of that element . . . and when it attains to its centre and there remains to it no more power of its own to move farther, we shall say that it is in the deepest centre.

The centre of the soul is God; and, when the soul has attained to Him according to the whole capacity of its being, and according to the force of its operation, it will have reached the last and deep centre of the soul, which will be when with all its powers it loves, understands, and enjoys God; and as long as it attains not as far as this, although it be in God, . . . it is not in the deepest centre, since it is capable of going still farther. Love unites the soul with God, and the more degrees of love the soul has, the more profoundly does it enter into God and the more it is centred in Him. . . . If it attain to the last degree, the love of God will succeed in wounding the soul even in its deepest centre—that is, in transforming and enlightening it as regards all the being and power and virtue of the soul, such as it is capable of receiving, until it be brought into such a state that it appears to be God. In this state the soul is like the crystal that is clear and pure; the more degrees of light it receives the greater concentration of light there is in it, and this enlightenment continues to such a degree that at last it attains a point at which the light is centred in it with such abundance that it comes to appear to be wholly light, and cannot be distinguished from the light, for it is enlightened to the greatest possible extent and thus appears to be light itself.

We read in The Spiritual Canticle: “And thus I think that this estate is never attained without the soul being confirmed in grace therein.” This truth implies a certain participation in the impeccability of the blessed, brought about by God’s special protection.

In this state God touches the soul so deeply that the mystics tell us that the divine contact makes an imprint on the very substance of the soul. What are we to understand by this statement in the light of St. Thomas’ principles? As has been explained elsewhere, God keeps the substance of the soul in existence by an act identified with His divine essence, the work of creation continued. Between the divine essence and the soul there exists a contact not quantitative and spatial, but supra-spatial, spiritual, and absolutely immediate. By this contact God operates immediately on the soul’s substance, although the soul cannot operate immediately on itself; it can act, as a matter of fact, only by its faculties, knowing only by its intellect, loving and willing only by its will.

Further, God, the author of salvation, produces and conserves sanctifying grace in the very essence of the soul. From it the infused virtues and the gifts arise in the faculties. He also moves the faculties either by proposing an object to them, or by applying them to the exercise of their acts ab intus, from within. The divine touch which we are speaking of is a supernatural but deeper motion of this kind, acting on the very center of the will and of the intellect, where the faculties are rooted in the substance of the soul as their source. Closer to the soul than the soul is to itself as the conserving cause of its existence, God moves the center of its faculties from within by a spiritual contact, which, despite the obscurity of faith, reveals itself as divine.

This does not mean that the purified soul knows in an immediate and absolute manner its own substance and the sanctifying grace that it possesses, for the soul cannot operate immediately, without the concurrence of its faculties; but now it knows itself through the center of its supernaturalized faculties. Under the infused light of faith and of the gift of wisdom it has a quasi-experimental knowledge of the sanctifying grace which it possesses by the effect of a filial love more and more clearly distinguishable from sentimentality. This supernatural love derived from grace and charity acts without reasoning by the infused light of the gift of wisdom and makes manifest to us God Himself present within us, giving us life, leading us to love Him with ever greater purity and strength, stirring up within us the desire to behold Him.

Let us add what The Spiritual Canticle has to tell us about spiritual betrothal: “It is not to be understood that to all such as arrive at this estate He communicates all that is expounded in these two stanzas, nor that He does so according to one single way and degree of knowledge and feeling. For to some souls He gives more and to others less; to some after one manner and to others after another; though souls belonging to either category can be in this estate of the spiritual betrothal. But we set down here the highest that is possible because in this is comprehended all else.” The same can be stated of quasi-continual transforming union as of spiritual marriage: it certainly admits of different degrees, including that enjoyed by the Blessed Virgin Mary during her lifetime on earth. Although souls may possess different degrees of transforming union we can truly say of all of them that they have reached their deepest and predestined center in this world.

Thus understood, the transforming union seems like the normal result of the abiding of the Blessed Trinity in a really purified soul, that is, a soul that has gone through the passive purifications to the end. As St. Thomas shows us, the indwelling of the divine persons requires from the very beginning a certain quasi-experimental knowledge of God, or at least the supernatural capacity for this knowledge through charity and the gift of wisdom. As the soul approaches the end of the passive purifications by the royal road of the cross, it reaches its full and normal development.

Then the soul imitates our Lord perfectly. Throughout His lifetime on earth, because of His fullness of grace, He possessed supreme happiness, perfect peace, and a strong desire for the cross as well, an ardor to accomplish fully His mission as Savior, priest, and victim. Perfect peace remained His even during the Passion and on the cross when He said, “It is consummated. . . . Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit.” Indeed here was true peace, the tranquility of order recovered through the reconciliation of sinning humanity with its Creator. Something of the peace of Christ, of the peace that holds fast even in the midst of adversities, belongs to the soul that has reached the transforming union. Jesus speaks of it in the beatitudes: “Blessed are they that mourn. . . . Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice. . . . Blessed are the peacemakers. . . . Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice’ sake” and that, in the very midst of persecution, keep a deep peace not only for themselves but for others, to whom they communicate it, lifting up the hearts of all, even the most discouraged.

The commandment of love finds its complete realization in this life in perfect union with God: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart”—from the very beginning, the time of sensible consolations, we love God with our whole heart; “and with thy whole soul”—when we are glad to spend ourselves in all kinds of work for our Lord then we love Him with our whole soul; “with all thy strength”—only later, especially during the painful purification of the soul can we be said to love God with all our strength; “and with thy whole mind”—before being purified the soul rarely mounted to the higher part of itself, the spirit, but after it has been purified it becomes established there, a true adorer in spirit and in truth.

The realization of such a union with God means the perfect consummation of the life of grace in this world and serves as a normal prelude to the life of heaven. It disposes souls to receive the beatific vision

immediately after death, without passing through purgatory. None of us pass that way but through our own fault, as a result of negligences that could have been avoided by a more generous acceptance of the cross.

Because this union forms a prelude to the life of heaven, it has, St. John of the Cross says, the “savor of eternal life.” St. Thomas designates it by the expression “inchoatio vitae aeternae,” life eternal begun in the obscurity of faith before opening out into the definitive flowering of vision. Few Christians reach such perfection in this world; yet, because of the first commandment, all of us ought to aspire to a charity increasing day by day and all of us should recall that, as St. John of the Cross has pointed out, in the evening of life we shall be judged by love, on the reality of our love for God and of our neighbor in God.

THE LIFE OF UNION AND THE INVISIBLE MISSIONS OF THE DIVINE PERSONS

Louis Chardon stands out among Thomistic theologians for the skill with which he has shown how transforming union normally results from the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity in a truly purified soul. In La Croix de Jésus he says:

That true friendship which should exist between God and the holy soul is founded on grace. Now it is a law that perfect friendship produces union not merely by affection, but also, so far as possible, real and intimate presence, that there may be a transformation of lover into the beloved, a complete union in which the beloved withholds nothing. Therefore, as the soul advances in God’s friendship, grace, the form or, if you will, the cause of this friendship, dominates its essence and powers more and more fully, taking more intimate possession of them. Because of this, the divine persons have a more perfect presence within the soul. They dwell in souls only by means of grace and its properties and They produce within them effects that reveal to us more the action of God than of creatures.

This transformation reaches a point in some souls where we can hardly discern anything human any more. As a drop of water spilt into a cask of wine is entirely lost by taking on the color, the odor, and the taste of wine; as the glowing iron resembles the fire which penetrates it; and as the air filled with the sun’s rays becomes transformed into light and seems to be light itself rather than another element illuminated by it: in like manner souls die a wonderful and mysterious death to all affection and to every

human operation and become so perfectly possessed by the Spirit of God, so united to Him and so deified in Him, that the glorious Trinity lives, operates, and acts in them more really than they do in themselves.

Louis Chardon deduces three important truths from the relation of the growth of charity to the divine and invisible missions.

The first is that (having already received the divine missions with the state of grace) souls must make considerable progress in grace to receive them anew. . . . Those who make no advance in the spiritual life fail to dispose themselves to receive the divine persons anew (or to enter into greater intimacy with Them).

The second truth is that no kind of knowledge of God, however profound, subtle, or clear it may be, can render a soul worthy of these missions. . . . It must be rooted in grace . . . and in grace that grows, is fruitful, acts with increasing energy, and attains to greater heights of perfection. Savants fail to dispose themselves for these blessed missions when they trouble themselves more about knowing the mystery of the Trinity than of making themselves pleasing to the glorious and triune God, when they possess more curiosity about divinity than attentive and eager love for the divine Being, when, in a word, their charity lags behind their knowledge.

The third truth is that no grace, no knowledge, no perfection of the spiritual (i.e., the supernatural) order can exist without the invisible missions of the divine persons. It is not enough for Paul to plant, for Apollo to water: God must give the increase. . . . I dare add that the visible sending of the divine persons (the Incarnation and Pentecost) have effect and application in souls only through the invisible missions. . . . It should not astonish us to find Jesus deeming His mother happier for having conceived Him in her spirit than for having conceived and borne Him in her womb. The mystery of the Incarnation gave Him to her but once; the invisible mission gives Him to her again every time the superabundant grace within her increases. . . . The first plenitude of grace was given to her at the Immaculate Conception. . . . The second came to her with her divine Son, when she became His mother. . . . The third descended upon her when the Holy Ghost was given to her visibly in the Cenacle on the day of Pentecost. The first served as a preparation for the second, and the third perfected the other two.

Chardon skillfully applies the doctrine of the invisible missions to the spiritual crosses received by advanced souls, either for their purification or for their participation, with Jesus and Mary, in the work of their neighbor's salvation. He shows that the hardest crosses are reserved for the most perfect, that they bring about great perfection and close union with God, drawing into the soul a new sending of the divine persons.

The original edition contains these words:

Spiritual crosses, being powerful means of purifying the spirit, help to attract a more perfect mission of the divine persons. The more afflicting the cross, the more it severs the soul from other things, and the more perfectly it prepares the soul for an increasingly intimate abiding of the Trinity. Crosses rather than consolations introduce God into the most secret and profound recesses of the soul.

The soul grows from tenderness into strength, leaving aside sensible affections to receive whatever impressions God Himself will make upon it. Lest too frequent consolations interfere with our tending toward Him, God stops up the sweet stream of consolation to make our thirst drive us in search of the source. He keeps back His gifts that He may bestow Himself. . . . Gently He enters our souls and makes Himself master, claiming the attention of all our powers, that they may enjoy the one necessary Good and, as they should, love Him with a love far above the love of all other things, since He is the Creator and they are His creatures.

How beautifully all this is said! Could we find a more closely knit union of speculative theology and true mysticism? Could there be a better demonstration that the transforming union alluded to by the saints is the normal result of the indwelling of the three divine persons in a truly purified soul?

EVIDENCE IN ST. TERESA'S WRITINGS

The account of the transforming union given by St. John of the Cross and Louis Chardon's explanation of it by the progress of grace and the invisible missions of the divine persons are both sublime. St. Teresa's writings in the seventh mansions belong to the same high level. She remarks that some people in these mansions have an intellectual vision of the Blessed Trinity present within them; but that this insight varies in clarity and occurs intermittently, does not belong to the essence of transforming union, and

even seems to have no necessary connection with it, St. John of the Cross contenting himself with describing it as a very high contemplation of the divine perfections.

St. Teresa also observes that when such union has been reached ecstasies generally come to an end, and that what constitutes the bedrock of this most eminent state is nothing miraculous; the higher faculties are passively attracted to their deepest center, where the Blessed Trinity abides. Because of this grace, the soul cannot doubt the presence of the divine persons within itself and is almost never deprived of their companionship. St. Teresa says that the soul recognizes by certain secret aspirations that God is giving it life. Many authors consider the graces of this mansion the equivalent of a special revelation making the soul certain of its state of grace and predestination.

The effects of the transforming union are those of the fully developed theological virtues and the gifts. The passions hardly trouble at all the souls that possess it; while they experience the actual grace of the transforming union they commit no deliberate venial sin. Outside of these times they may happen to commit some faults, but they quickly make reparation for them. What is striking about them is their self-forgetfulness, their great desire to suffer after our Lord’s example, and their real joy in persecution. They share in the very strength of Christ and in His boundless love of neighbor; they practice at the same time seemingly contradictory virtues, justice and mercy, strength and gentleness, the simplicity of the dove and the wisdom of the serpent, uniting the highest possible contemplation with practical common sense about their daily concerns, bearing a marked likeness to Christ. St. Catherine of Siena in her Dialogue gives a like report of this state. Wherever we find it described we see set before us the dispositions of a soul purified and prepared for immediate entrance into heaven after death.

CHAPTER XII

THE PLACE OF THE UNITIVE LIFE AND THE MYSTICAL ORDER

A COMPARISON OF THE VIEWS OF ST. ALPHONSUS WITH THE THOUGHT OF ST. THOMAS AND ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS

All that has gone before shows clearly enough, we believe, that the unitive life, like the passive purifications of the senses and of the soul presupposed by it, belongs to the mystical order, that is to say, it requires infused contemplation of the mysteries of faith. The testimony of St. John of the Cross is explicit on the point and seems to conform perfectly to tradition. However, because St. Alphonsus Liguori has sometimes been quoted as opposed to him, we should like to make certainty more certain by comparing the two.

Father Charles Keusch of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer has recently published a study on the spirituality of St. Alphonsus which will be of service in making this comparison. His work purposes to make people more familiar with St. Alphonsus' thought on the relationship between the ascetical and the mystical life: whether the ascetical is ordered to the mystical as to its normal fulfillment, or whether, on the contrary, infused contemplation of the mysteries of faith consists in something by nature extraordinary and outside of the normal way of sanctity, like revelations and visions. Because St. Alphonsus has sometimes been quoted as supporting the second point of view, defended by many authors of his time, we are fortunate to have the different shadings of his doctrine brought out with great delicacy and distinction by one of his sons dedicated in a special way to the study of his spiritual doctrine. With him let us examine the general characteristics of St. Alphonsus' teaching on spirituality and then let us compare it with the doctrine set forth in this work, following St.

Thomas' principles and their application to spiritual progress as worked out by St. John of the Cross.

ARTICLE I

THE SPIRITUALITY OF ST. ALPHONSUS: ITS GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

After twenty years of work, Father Keusch has put before us his explanation of St. Alphonsus in the book, Die Aszetik des hl. Alfons Maria von Liguori, im Lichte der Lehre vom geistlichen Leben in alter und neuer Zeit. This work has had three editions in ten years and has been highly praised at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland, where the author brilliantly defended his doctrinal thesis. It contains a penetrating study of the personality of St. Alphonsus, an examination of the early and modern sources on which he drew, and the entire literature concerning the subject.

The doctrinal points gone into most deeply include the concept of perfection, the call to perfection for Christians in general, and for priests and religious in particular, detachment, and divine union. To reach some conclusion on the value of this spirituality, Father Keusch considers it in the light of St. Thomas' principles and then compares it with the more modern schools of spirituality of St. Ignatius, St. Francis de Sales, and St. Vincent de Paul. Some critics accuse him of straining to prove the harmony of St. Alphonsus' views with St. Thomas' and do not believe that the Doctor of Salvation was actually so completely Thomistic in his doctrine.

The author answers that he has made his appraisal from a theological rather than from a historical point of view and that, to arrive at an exact definition of doctrine, he could choose no better guide than St. Thomas. St. Alphonsus' attachment to the Angelic Doctor is furthermore deeper than is generally supposed. Shortly after his death, a Dominican master of theology, Father Vincenzo Gregorio Lavazzoli, professor at the Theological College of St. Thomas at Naples, wrote: "We are fully aware of how much the servant of God loved our Order and especially St. Thomas, whom he took as his only and sure guide in all his works."

The spiritual works of St. Alphonsus are to be recommended because of their doctrinal certainty, the saintly unction found on every page and, above all, because of their eminently practical character. They are calculated to round out the great speculative views to which St. Thomas accustoms us,

and to show how these ought to give direction to our daily actions in advancing toward perfection.

St. Alphonsus has been declared a doctor of the Church precisely because of his sure doctrine on moral and spiritual matters. He was given by God to His Church at a time when the Jansenist heresy was turning souls away from the contemplation of infinite mercy, when quietist errors tended to drive generosity out of the service of God, when the doctrines of Voltaire, Rousseau, and the Encyclopedists were ravaging the minds of men. In the sorry eighteenth century this great saint served as the voice of God reminding men of His indefeasible rights and even more of His boundless mercy, restating the greatness of the divine law and the Christian conscience. He gave new life to moral doctrine, then so often smothered under the vain discussions of casuists more interested in the material circumstances of human acts than in the divine exigencies of the last end; and he re-established, for the greater good of souls, the confessional as the center of parochial life.

As to spirituality properly so called, he continued the work of the sanctification of the common people undertaken by St. Dominic and St. Francis of Assisi in the thirteenth century and continued by St. Francis de Sales in the seventeenth. The latter had, as it were, brought spirituality out of the cloister and among seculars but his Introduction to the Devout Life addressed only people of culture. St. Alphonsus Liguori, like the great popular preachers of the Middle Ages, brought himself down to poor folk, to country people, who were receiving all too little care, that he might teach them, in language wonderfully suited to their understanding, the beauty of the mysteries of faith and of the Christian life. His excellent hymns to the Blessed Sacrament, always so popular in Italy, lifted up the souls of the simple, revealing to them the grandeur of the mysteries of the Rosary, the beauties of the Eucharist, the practice of the love of God, the great means of prayer. In his day he became throughout the whole region around Naples an incarnation of the gospel spirit: “The poor have the gospel preached to them.” After perusal of his wonderful life, no one could travel through that part of the country or visit the shrine of Pagani, where his relics are venerated, without being deeply stirred and moved to thank God for having raised up for His Church at such a time a saint who has left us both his teachings and sons to diffuse them.

St. Alphonsus' influence is not limited to this one field only; he deeply affected the clergy and religious, both men and women. We can always read with much profit the Selva or The Sanctified Priest, the different writings relative to pastoral life and its great responsibilities, the counsels given to his sons, particularly to student novices, on the relations between piety and study. In these he shows how piety should animate and supernaturalize study and how study should preserve piety from errors due to imagination and sentiment. Many religious find their spiritual nourishment in The True Spouse of Jesus Christ, Visits to the Blessed Sacrament, The Glories of Mary, The Way of Salvation, the second part of which contains the best "reflections for souls desiring to advance in divine love." These "reflections" of some sixty pages suffice of themselves to show the sublimity of the doctrine proposed by the saint to every really interior Christian desirous of advancing in God's love.

A soul of deep and unremitting prayer and of perfect abnegation, the founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer went through, as we know, the most grievous interior purifications and the most wounding exterior trials that the founder of an order could know. This is why, even when St. Alphonsus treats only questions of the ascetical order or when he speaks of moral virtues and gives practical advice for beginners, his words have the inspiration of mystical truths, the breath of the theological virtues, the greatness of the spirit of faith, the confidence of abandonment, and the generosity of charity. These presuppose the light of the gifts of wisdom and of understanding and point ahead to the higher end to which asceticism is ordered, the intimacy of divine union.

If many of St. Alphonsus' works have a clearly defined practical character, let us not forget that the great height of his spirit of faith and the increasingly generous aspiration of his heart belong to the mystical order and serve well to turn souls toward all that belongs to the normal way of salvation, toward everything that ought to dispose them for the life of heaven, the possession of God through the beatific vision.

When, for example during a retreat, we take time to read slowly and in God's presence the spiritual writings of this great servant of His, we see how much he was ruled by the Holy Ghost and what a high degree of divine union he enjoyed. Under the influence of the seven gifts, his union with God was not only active but passive as well, patiebatur divina. From this source his life drew its sublimity, its power, and, in spite of the multiplicity

of acts involved in certain practices of his, its unity. This could not help but be apparent to the good Christian people to whom he preached; his words awoke in them a desire for union with God in the full sense of the commandment of love, which sets no limits whatever to charity but bids us love with all our heart. Some people with their minds full of external things felt his power less because of his great prudence, his care to warn them against exaltation; others, of a more spiritual mold, felt it all the better for that, his very prudence dispelling all compromise, simulation, and illusion.

ARTICLE II

A COMPARISON OF THE SPIRITUALITY OF ST. ALPHONSUS WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF ST. THOMAS AND THE DOCTRINE OF ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS

We now return to a question introduced at the beginning of the chapter: Does St. Alphonsus consider, as we have often taught, that the ascetical is ordered to the mystical as to its normal consummation? To put it more precisely, does he hold that infused contemplation—absolutely distinct from extraordinary graces such as prophetic revelations, visions, stigmatizations, and so forth—forms part of the normal way of sanctity, is the full perfection of the Christian life; or rather, since in fact we so rarely encounter infused contemplation or perfection itself for that matter, does he look upon it as something extraordinary, like private revelations?

The question often arises these days, and we encounter it stated in oversimplified terms not only to the neglect of the nuances of the subject but also to the disregard of its essentials. As a result, it is robbed of significance, and the answer to it which we maintain as traditional also loses meaning and importance and becomes strangely distorted either by those who admit it spontaneously without sufficient reflection or those who reject it without any thorough examination.

Father Keusch, who has spent his life studying the spiritual doctrine of St. Alphonsus and desires to follow him faithfully, tells us of this matter:

La vie spirituelle has given new life . . . to St. Thomas' doctrine on perfection, the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and contemplation. It has broken down, so to say, the barriers of the school of pure asceticism to allow the integral notion of sanctity to shine out with much greater luster than before. . . . In themselves, it seems . . . these beautiful doctrines are not in opposition to the deep thought of St. Alphonsus. The holy doctor admits—

we have no formal text to deny it—the unicity of the interior life, and for sanctity the possibility of the existence of . . . and even a certain necessity for, transitory infused prayer. For reasons of theology, of experience, and of conscience, which we have set forth, he thinks that mystical states of more intense development are not necessary, although elsewhere he concedes their high efficacy and excellence.

Father Keusch's judgment, because of his profound knowledge of St. Alphonsus' spirituality, is of great interest, and we are happy to see it formulated in this wise. He adds a little farther on:

The apparent opposition between St. Alphonsus' doctrine and that given in La vie spirituelle arises in my opinion from diversity of method. La vie spirituelle sees things "from the heights." . . . It shows us the origins, development, and consummation of the interior life in the light of Thomistic principles. Its point of view we share in many ways and believe that its sublime outline correctly sketches the approaches to heaven. The zealous apostle St. Alphonsus has followed the opposite method. A man in the midst of an active life, he sees things "from the valleys" . . . and builds his theory from experience, although he takes into consideration the data of theology.

"We conclude then," Father Keusch finishes by saying, "that there seems to be no fundamental doctrinal discord between St. Alphonsus and La vie spirituelle, although in questions of method diversity appears. Let us add a prayer that it be often given us to complete the teachings of the Angelic Doctor with the thought of the Zealous Doctor for the inevitable profit of souls."

Having taken up again recently the invigorating spiritual works of St. Alphonsus, which we propose to study further with the purpose that Father Keusch desired to have pursued, we are led to believe that the doctrinal accord is even more complete than he thinks and that the difference of method, although it exists, seems more apparent than real. A brief examination of these two questions will therefore follow.

DIVERSITY OF METHOD

In speaking of method, we must make a distinction here between the method of doctrinal exposition that is followed in such articles as we have written for La vie spirituelle and the method of practical teaching to be used

for preaching, which must be adapted to different audiences, and lastly, the method of direction, which must be suited to individual souls. In the latter case, the question arises not only of the preservation of a logical sequence of ideas, but of prudence; and when we recall how St. Thomas cautions us to practice this virtue, we can, it seems, fully agree with St. Alphonsus.

St. Thomas is the first to tell us that a foreseen and desired end is first in the order of intention but last in the order of realization. Accomplishment must begin by employing the lowest kinds of means in order to rise by degrees to the use of higher means and so to come at last to achieve the end, conceived, desired, and willed before anything else. Elsewhere we have developed the consequence of this principle of spirituality. The most elementary prudence moves us never to lose sight of it. A saying goes that a good life is thought out during youth and realized during maturity. The conception of an ideal comes at the beginning; its realization only at the end.

The architect first conceives the building that he plans to erect in all its grandeur and beauty and then he decides on the means that he must use to build it, and when he starts construction it never occurs to him to begin the arches before laying the foundation. What must we think of any director who, having disclosed to someone under his direction the beauty of Christian perfection by reading the evangelical beatitudes to him from the Sermon on the Mount, then attempts to begin the construction of his spiritual edifice not with the foundation, by the spade work of humility, mortification, and obedience, but with the topmost part of the building? He would be like an architect essaying to begin the erection of a cathedral with the spire or a young bird trying to fly before growing its wings.

From this viewpoint, the most elementary common sense demands that we admit as indispensable the first of the three propositions drawn up by Father Keusch as representing St. Alphonsus' thought. Father Keusch summarizes it thus: "Before introducing a soul into the higher regions of the spiritual life constituted by the presence of the mystical element or by the exercise of the prayer of contemplation properly so called, St. Alphonsus demanded with redoubled insistence that the life of ordinary virtue be first quite solidly established." Following St. Thomas, we have always said the same thing: that the active life or the practice of the moral virtues regulating the movements of our sensuous appetency and the acts of our will must

precede the contemplative life, which becomes thereafter the soul of the apostolate.

The expression “rushing souls into the mystical way” shocks us no less than the disciples of St. Alphonsus. No serious theologian, and no director with even a modicum of prudence, would adopt such a policy. There seems little difference between pushing people into the mystical way and forcing them to prophesy or work miracles; for, after all, despite the fact that we maintain that infused contemplation of the mysteries of faith belongs to the normal way of sanctity, we firmly hold that God infuses it into our souls and that none of us can acquire it by our own efforts or introduce others into it by means of direction. The quietists, on the contrary, upheld their passivity as acquired, as entered upon at will through the cessation of all activity, a sort of pious sleep.

A much more understandable expression is to be found earlier in Father Keusch’s work where he says: “St. Alphonsus does not belittle mystical graces; quite the opposite, he presents them as desirable but only for those souls who are prepared for them by God’s invitation.” We should recognize the great prudence that St. Alphonsus shows here. He is more the mystic than he would have us know. When he speaks of these sublime things to the general run of pious souls, he prudently tones down what he has to say in order to avoid the risk of having them overreach God’s grace. In this prudence, every director should imitate him, especially when dealing with youthful imaginations, for he was, as Father Keusch says, one of the most skilled handlers of souls that ever lived. Let us not forget, however, that he avoided both of two extremes. He knew that a director should intervene neither too early nor too late and he said that sometimes “God calls us without being heard.” As soon as “God’s invitations” began in souls under his direction he would detect them because of his supernatural vigilance. Many other directors discover them only much later and allow souls to mark time for a long period because, for example, they attribute to melancholy the aridities attendant on the beginning of habitual infused prayer.

The prudent practical direction given by St. Alphonsus in no way runs counter to the speculative doctrine that the normal development of the gifts of the Holy Ghost includes not an individual and proximate but a general and remote call to all interior souls to enter upon infused contemplation of the mysteries of faith. St. Alphonsus’ prudence makes him give that kind of

direction which leads souls to desire divine union without telling them exactly how contemplation of the mysteries of faith contributes to that end. We can see clear evidence of this in the saint's meditations for the time of Ascension and Pentecost and in his reflections for those desiring to advance in divine love. In his novena to the Holy Ghost he tries to draw souls out of the shadow of sin by telling them: "The Holy Ghost, called the lux beatissima, inflames our hearts with His divine splendor, making us know the vanity of earthly goods, the value of those of eternity, the importance of salvation, the worth of grace, God's goodness and Christ's infinite love for us. . . . St. Teresa says that God is not loved because He is not known. Wherefore the saints are always asking God for light: Emitte lucem; illumina tenebras meas; revela oculos meos. Without divine light we can neither avoid destruction nor find God." Can anyone say that the saint had no thought of infused contemplation when speaking in this way of the supernatural light received from the Holy Ghost? Similar passages are found throughout his spiritual works. Addressing all of us and speaking from the abundance of his heart, he goes beyond the strict limits of the purely ascetical and leads us to aspire, with humility and discretion, to a closer union with God and to whatever that normally requires of the understanding.

The saint invites those whom he directs, whenever they say the Office, to be supernaturally attentive to the words of the psalms. If we follow his advice, we shall grasp more and more perfectly the meaning of the aspirations that they contain: "Da mihi intellectum, et scrutabor legem tuam; da mihi intellectum, et discam mandata tua; da mihi intellectum, et vivam." God inspires this petition said so often by all priests and religious; it contains and expresses a holy and humble desire for the light of the gift of understanding, which, together with the gift of wisdom, constitutes the principle of infused contemplation.

St. Alphonsus used these aspirations often, even when speaking to the general public, and certainly not because he had forgotten the rule of prudence: nulla nimia securitas, ubi periclitatur aeternitas. He knew full well that complete security can be found only in perfect docility to the inspirations of the Holy Ghost. And if, as Father Keusch says, "Above all he never left off recommending St. John of the Cross to young confessors for a deeper study of things mystical," he did so because he knew that in these matters no one has done more to warn us against the desire for

extraordinary graces like visions and revelations than the author of The Dark Night, while at the same time he continually leads interior souls to desire the light of the Holy Ghost, without which they cannot grow in the spirit of faith and reach divine union. He even makes the profound remark that a desire for extraordinary graces turns us away from true contemplation wherein the soul lives more and more in the blessed darkness of faith.

The difference of method between St. Alphonsus and St. John of the Cross arises in large part from the different environment in which they made their influence felt. St. Alphonsus wrote in an age suffering from the aberrations of the quietists and, as Father Keusch says, he had in mind two classes of readers: one, young confessors, to whom he directed his scientific works particularly; the other, a circle of men and women readers made up of average pious persons for whom he intended his works on spirituality. St. John of the Cross says himself at the end of the prologue to the Ascent of Mount Carmel that he was speaking principally to the men and women religious of his own Order, at whose request he wrote; then he adds the remark that the solid and substantial doctrine given was addressed to all, provided that they had made up their minds to pass through the detachment of soul which he preached.

The difference of method seems, therefore, more apparent than real, if we compare the practical direction given by St. Alphonsus not with the speculative teaching founded on the principles of St. Thomas and St. John of the Cross, but with the practical direction inspired by these principles and instrumental in applying them with prudence and according to different circumstances.

COMPARISON OF METHOD: A PATH TO COMPARISON OF DOCTRINE

Without trying to make their teaching identical, we seem justified in recognizing agreement and accord in doctrinal matters between these doctors of the Church. St. Alphonsus, having told souls that they can desire contemplation properly so called, redoubles his insistence that they must first solidly establish the life of ordinary virtue. Father Keusch points this out in the first of the three propositions with which he summarizes the teaching of his master.

This rule of direction in no way runs counter to the doctrine which we have set forth here, if by an “ordinary virtuous life” is meant the virtues

which ought to be commonly practiced in the way usually called purgative: self-imposed mortification, both exterior and interior, patience, meekness, humility, obedience, and the rest. But does St. Alphonsus consider that these virtues reach a notably higher degree without the soul passing through the interior trials remarked by St. Augustine, St. Gregory the Great, St. Bernard, Hugh of St. Victor, and St. Thomas?

It seems that in the crucible of purgation infused contemplation begins in aridity and with the realization of the emptiness of all things created. The Holy Ghost opens our minds to this view through the gift of knowledge, giving us, by contrast, a glimpse of the infinite greatness of God. This "seeing," distinctly different from discursive meditation, serves, according to St. Alphonsus, as the principle of perfect detachment in the practice of solid virtue. All this sounds remarkably like St. Teresa's reflections on the indifference demanded by some spiritual reading books. To their requirement that we be indifferent to the evil said of us, that we rejoice even more than if something good were said, that we care nothing for honor and become quite detached from our relatives and a whole host of other things, she observes that in her opinion all this is a pure gift of God, a supernatural good. She warns us, too, that, even after years of prayer, or better, of meditation, we shall not advance much if we cling to love of honor and of temporal goods; whereas perfect prayer frees us from these faults.

St. Alphonsus evidently thinks no differently when, treating of love of solitude, he says:

God does not speak to us in the midst of the talk and transactions of the world; or if He does speak, we do not hear Him. God's words are the inspirations, lights, and secret invitations by which saints are enlightened and encompassed by divine love; but whoever has no love for solitude cannot hear the sound of God's voice. . . . When He desires to lift a soul to an eminent degree of perfection, He leads it to withdraw into some place of solitude and there He speaks to it, not through the ears of the body but of the soul; and in this way He enlightens it and encompasses it with His divine love. "Ducam eam ad solitudinem et loquar ad cor ejus." I will lead her into the wilderness: and I will speak to her heart (Osee 2: 14). . . . At least let us try as far as possible to secure some place of retreat where we can be alone with God and thus obtain the strength to overcome the disadvantages of our necessary dealings with the world. . . . Those whose position obliges them to live in the world may have to carry on its business,

walk its streets, appear in its public places, but they can have, nevertheless, solitude of heart and union with God, provided that they keep their hearts detached from worldly things. . . . “Be still and see that I am God” (Ps. 45: 11). To be enlightened with divine light and so to realize and love God’s goodness, we must put a check upon ourselves, that is, we must rid ourselves of earthly attachments, for they prevent us from knowing Gods.

All these pages compose a discreet invitation to desire contemplation under a title which runs no risk of exciting flights of imagination: “Love of solitude; solitude of heart.” In the beautiful chapter on aridity of soul in the same “Reflections” the saint shows the dawning of contemplation which, though ignorant of its own existence, instinctively leads us byond and above our own miseries to God. We come to know true humility, learning from ourselves yet taught by God. St. Alphonsus cites the example of St. Jane Frances de Chantal, who remained a long time in this arid quiet, telling us that she imagined herself to have neither love of God nor hope nor faith, yet kept her gaze always on God and sought her rest in the arms of the divine will. St Francis de Sales observed that her soul reminded him of a deaf person gifted with a beautiful voice but unable to enjoy her own singing. In the Praxis confessarii St. Alphonsus says that the soul often has (infused) prayer of quiet without any sensible sweetness.

When we meditate on the “Reflections” written for souls desiring to advance in God’s love and deeply lived by the saint himself, we see how closely St. Alphonsus approaches what St. John of the Cross has to say about the necessity of those periods of aridity which he calls the night of the senses and the night of the soul. St. Alphonsus encouraged young confessors to read The Dark Night of the Soul and would never deny the two following propositions contained in its pages. The first reads: “The passive purification of the senses is common and occurs in a great number of beginners.” Under the illumination of the Holy Ghost, those starting to live the interior life recognize the emptiness of created things much better than they ever could have done by meditating from many books. The second reads: “The proficient or advanced belong in the illuminative way, wherein God nourishes and strengthens their souls by infused contemplation.” God accomplishes this through the gifts of understanding and wisdom, generally given according to the measure of our charity. Yet often, let us not forget it, passive prayer is marked by aridity and provides no sensible consolation.

The spirit of prayer ordinarily develops together with the virtues, especially the love of God. St. Alphonsus, like the other saints, recognizes this. Without solitude of heart, in which the lights of the Holy Ghost are received, we can have only a certain degree of virtue but not generally those deep and solid virtues of the illuminative and the unitive way-humility without fear of contempt, and patience almost without any shadow of change, one of the marks of true perfection. We do not, then, see that any serious difference exists between the doctrine of St. Alphonsus as summarized by Father Keusch in his first proposition and the doctrine generally taught in La vie spirituelle.

We come then to the second proposition: “A life of virtue being realized, St. Alphonsus excludes from his plan of perfection and the ends that he would seek neither passive transitory graces nor more lasting passive states. Although he upholds the latter as more perfect in themselves than the works of the active life, he does not believe them necessary for sanctity.”

From the way Father Keusch expresses the thought of St. Alphonsus, it seems that he has a better grasp of it than some of his predecessors. He has labored long and arduously over it, made it a scholarly work, apparently a work of conscience. This would seem clear from many passages treating of the agreement between the doctrine expounded by St. Alphonsus and that generally taught in La vie spirituelle. Like Father Keusch, we too believe such a reconciliation possible; and the doctrines seem even closer akin to one another than Father Keusch states in his second proposition. Passive purifications, even those of the senses, are already in fact, because of their aridity, a passive state lasting some time, and we believe that St. Alphonsus judges them no less necessary for sanctity than does St. John of the Cross, although his terminology may be different.

He notes in the Praxis confessarii:

Before leading the soul into the prayer of contemplation, God generally purifies it by supernatural aridity called the purgatio spiritualis, a spiritual purgation intended to free it from those imperfections which hinder contemplation. . . . When aridity is supernatural, it throws the soul into profound darkness, lasts longer than natural aridity, and increases daily. Placed in this state (in tali statu constituta), the soul feels itself separated from creatures and its gaze remains fixed on God and it has an ardent desire and a firm purpose to love Him perfectly; yet it discovers itself powerless to

do so because of its imperfections, which seem to make it detestable in God's eyes. However, it continues practicing virtue. . . .

This trying aridity is an effect of grace, of a supernatural light, a light bringing suffering and, through its brilliance, darkness. Grace would communicate itself to the soul but finds the soul incapable because its powers are not sufficiently detached from sensible consolations, are still too material and full of sensible forms, images, and symbols; then this supernatural light produces in the soul an effect of darkness, a trying but profitable night. Through it, in fact, the soul comes to detach itself from all earthly pleasures and from the sensible consolations of the life of piety. Moreover, it acquires in this way a deep knowledge of its miseries and its impotence for good without the help of grace, and at the same time a great reverence for God, manifest to it in all His strength and majesty. . . . After the purification of the senses, God usually accords the gift of contemplation, that is, supernatural recollection, and then quiet and union, which we shall speak of later. But before union, after passive recollection and quiet, God generally makes the soul undergo the passive purification of the spirit, willing it to experience a sort of death. . . . Divine light makes the soul recognize its own nothingness and leads it into a real agony. . . . Sometimes God allows this state of desolation to be accompanied by temptations to impurity, anger, blasphemy, incredulity, and despair.

The saint's words tell us plainly that he is talking about purifications proper to the mystical state.

In all causes considered for beatification and in almost all the lives of the saints, the question of these purifications comes up under the title of "interior trials" and during the discussion of the heroic character of their faith and hope. Can anyone think that St. Alphonsus judged these passive purifications unnecessary for sanctity or that he rejected the teaching of St. John of the Cross on the subject? The essential lines of St. John's teaching are well known: Exterior trials cannot suffice to accomplish purgation of soul without this purifying interior light, which alone teaches us how to bear them with resignation, thankfulness, and love.

In the "Reflections" already quoted, St. Alphonsus aptly remarks: "Naturally all suffering repels us, but when divine love reigns in the heart, it makes it pleasing." In the eleventh chapter, explaining our Savior's words, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me," he says: "To carry the cross that we must carry is not

enough. Sinners carry theirs but without merit. To carry it meritoriously we must embrace it with love. . . . Since God wills that we keep on bearing it patiently, should we not carry it until death? . . . Those who love the Lord disinterestedly never abandon prayer, no matter what aridity and boredom they may experience. . . . Their actions have but one end, to please God; if He wills it, they are ready to suffer aridity until death and even for all eternity."

This goes beyond the bounds of asceticism and pertains to the mystical life, necessitating a special inspiration of the Holy Ghost and manifesting a suprahuman mode of the gifts of piety, fortitude, understanding, and wisdom, all growing together with charity. And if this abandonment to God endures in the midst of such sufferings as have been alluded to, then it comprises a state and presupposes the continual inspiration of the Holy Ghost. We can dispose ourselves for this or we can fail and lose it, but no personal efforts of ours can acquire abandonment of such a sort; it is infused. For this reason St. Alphonsus adds in the same passage: "O how dear to God is a soul who suffers and loves like this! O ineffable gift! O gift above all gifts! to love while suffering and to suffer while loving. . . . Give me, Lord, Thy love, which will bring me strength to suffer everything for love of Thee. Take everything from me, deprive me of all that I possess, parents, friends, health of body, indeed life itself, but leave me Thy love."

A little later in the same "Reflections" addressed to all generous interior souls, St. Alphonsus gives an explanation of St. Teresa's words: "Detach your heart from creatures, then seek God and you will find Him." He says: "You will not always obtain spiritual sweetness, for our Lord does not always give it to those who love Him during their life, only from time to time bestowing it upon them to make them desire heaven more ardently; but He makes them experience an inner peace which is such that no sense pleasure can be compared with it: Pax Dei, quae exsuperat omnem sensum. . . . Divine love despoils us of everything else. . . . Lose all rather than be despoiled of God's love."

In the fourteenth chapter, which treats of the necessity of mental prayer, St. Alphonsus also writes: "Let us hear what St. John of the Cross has to say on the subject: 'Now it is that God teaches me His heavenly wisdom, enlightens my mind, and gives me His heart.' St. Louis Gonzaga also tells us that none of us can reach a high degree of perfection without much prayer, giving ourselves to it, continuing it, never quitting it, no matter what

weariness may come to us." "We must pray to obtain the lights of the Holy Ghost . . . not to taste spiritual consolations, but to learn of God what He expects of us. . . . When we find ourselves powerless, let us humble ourselves; such prayer will profit us more than any other."

St. Alphonsus realizes that a purifying light is at work in these times of trial and that is why he adds: "Happy are those who in times of desolation cleave to prayer! God will overwhelm them with His graces." Later he adds: "God lovingly contemplates acts of trust and resignation made in the midst of darkness." This and other references throughout the same chapter certainly relate to obscure infused contemplation, such as that experienced for some time by St. Jane Frances de Chantal. It consists in nothing extraordinary, like visions and revelations, but in something eminent yet normal in the development of sanctity; and that is the reason why St. Alphonsus talks about it in his reflections for the use of those who desire to advance in God's love.

Many similar texts could be quoted; these suffice, we believe, to show that St. Alphonsus does not reject the doctrine of St. John of the Cross that passive states of infused arid prayer—in other words, passive purification-are necessary for sanctity. Anyone familiar with the doctrine will grasp the cogency of this argument.

AN EXAMINATION OF SOME DIFFICULTIES

Perhaps it will be objected that in the Praxis confessarii, when St. Alphonsus comes to speak of passive union, having already described the passive purifications, the infused prayer of recollection and of quiet, infused negative and obscure contemplation, he says it is not necessary for perfection and that, as Cardinal Petrucci says, active union suffices. By way of corroboration he cites a text of St. Teresa as quoted by Bernardo del Castelvetere to the effect that perfection consists not in ecstasy but in the union of our will with the divine will. He even remarks in passing that in the passive state of contemplation the soul gains no merit.

On this subject something further should be said:

(1) In a new edition of the Praxis confessarii, published at Rome, 1912, by Father G.-M. Blanc, C.SS.R., a footnote points out that St. Alphonsus here quotes St. Teresa as given by Bernardo del Castelvetere and that the exact text is not found in the saint's writings. The editor notes that St.

Teresa, when referring to people whom she knew, does not say that few souls are led by supernatural paths but rather just the opposite. The fact that she says that perfection does not consist in ecstasy creates no difficulty for us, since ecstasy is only a concomitant phenomenon of passive union, which can, of course, exist without it. Further, in this passage of the Praxis, St. Alphonsus expressly says that he understands by "passive union" a state higher than the passive purification of the senses, passive recollection, and the prayer of quiet. Therefore, even if passive union thus understood were not necessary for perfection, it would not follow that the passive states below it were also unnecessary, especially since the saint previously remarked that the passive prayer of quiet often takes place without any sensible sweetness. How could it be proven that such prayer does not exist in the prolonged aridities through which perfect souls pass without abandoning prayer?

We notice, too, that when St. Alphonsus describes transforming union as St. Teresa presents it in her seventh mansions, he really gives such a complete description of the full perfection of Christian life that it seems unrealizable before this summit. He recalls that in this higher state a suspension of the powers no longer occurs and that they, being purified, thereafter are capable of divine union. But for them to have the capacity for union, they must pass through the passive purification of the senses and of the soul, a purification which ought, St. John of the Cross says, to free us from the necessity of passing through purgatory. We pass through purgatory in fact only to expiate without meriting faults which we should have avoided or should have atoned for in this life while meriting. What St. Alphonsus describes surely seems to be the normal earthly prelude to the beatific vision, that is, a perfect proximate disposition to receive it immediately after death. The radical order of grace, let us not forget, would require that we receive the beatific vision as soon as we have drawn our last breath. This is why the separated soul suffers so much at being deprived of the vision of God in purgatory. A careful reading of St. Alphonsus' text reveals that his description of transforming union follows St. Teresa's and presents it not as a grace in itself extraordinary, like prophetic revelations or miracles, but the summit, the high and rarely attained but normal development, of the life of grace. In other words, just as the saints achieve that high perfection in which sanctity consists while on earth, so do they

enter into that union with God which serves in this life as the normal prelude to the life of heaven.

(2) If we grant this as true, how does it happen that St. Alphonsus says a little previously in no. 136 of the Praxis that passive union forms no necessary requirement for perfection and that active union suffices for it? He reproduces here, as he expressly states, Cardinal Petrucci's ideas, and, as a matter of fact, active union is sufficient for a certain degree of perfection. But is it enough to bring us to perfect detachment from creatures and from self? Is it enough to lead us to the end which St. Alphonsus holds out to us all saying: "The sum of perfection lies in conformity to God's will: it must be entire and without reserve, unwavering and irrevocable. All our perfection consists in this; I repeat it, all our actions, desires, and prayers must tend to this end."

When spontaneously expressing his own thought and not quoting from the theologians of his own day like Cardinal Petrucci or Bernardo del Castelvetere, St. Alphonsus far outdistances them and overtakes St. John of the Cross, whose thought and authority, needless to add, far surpasses theirs. He says, in agreement with the author of The Dark Night, that true Christian perfection cannot exist without great docility to the lights and inspirations of the Holy Ghost, characteristic of the illuminative and unitive ways. However short a time they may last, they introduce the soul into a passive state, at least for a few minutes, whether it is a state of aridity and purgation or of consolation. To obtain a clear idea of St. Alphonsus' position, we need only read his novena to the Holy Ghost.

These texts and others like them show that, according to the mind of the saint, the full perfection of Christian life demands a stronger unifying principle than acquired union can supply. The reason why is pointed out by St. Thomas when showing the necessity for the gifts of the Holy Ghost and their connection with charity:

But in matters directed to the supernatural end, to which man's reason moves him, according as it is, in a manner, and imperfectly, informed by the theological virtues, the motion of reason does not suffice, unless it receive in addition the prompting or motion of the Holy Ghost, according to Rom. 8: 14, 17: "Whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God . . . and if sons, heirs also": and Ps. 142: "Thy good Spirit shall lead me into the right land," because, to wit, none can receive the inheritance of that land of the Blessed, except he be moved and led thither by the Holy Ghost.

Therefore, in order to accomplish this end, it is necessary for man to have the gift of the Holy Ghost.

"Whether we consider human reason as perfected in its natural perfection, or as perfected by the theological virtues, it does not know all things. Consequently it is unable to avoid folly and other like things mentioned in the objection. God, however, to whose knowledge and power all things are subject, by His motion safeguards us from all folly, ignorance, dullness of mind, and hardness of heart, and the rest. Consequently the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which make us amenable to His promptings, are said to be given as remedies to these defects." The gifts are necessary for salvation as habitual dispositions to receive God's inspirations readily and docilely, just as the moral virtues serve to render the sensuous appetency and the will docile to the direction of prudence.

Because the seven gifts are connected with charity, which unites us to the Holy Ghost, they form part of the spiritual organism and grow together with it, as the five fingers and the hand develop together. It would be inconceivable for a just man to have a high degree of charity without having a corresponding degree of the gifts of wisdom and understanding connected with this virtue. Now the Holy Ghost usually moves souls according to their supernatural dispositions, unless some accidental obstacle prevents it. Every soul with a high degree of charity therefore normally receives contemplation of the mysteries of faith. The form it takes may be evident and sometimes striking or diffuse but very real, giving a truly supernatural tone to the life of the soul and manifesting the soul as indeed the temple of the Holy Ghost.

Without contemplation saints dedicated to the active life, such as St. Vincent de Paul, would not have continually beheld the sick poor and abandoned children as suffering members of Christ. Without it we cannot begin to fathom the infinite value of the Sacrifice of the Mass or live sufficiently by the solemn moment of Eucharistic consecration. Now all Christians are called to live, and live deeply, by it, that they may have life more abundantly, even as all men are called to the beatific vision of the very essence of God, although many woefully neglect their salvation. St. Alphonsus certainly denies none of these Thomistic principles but, as we see from his novena to the Holy Ghost, teaches them to all interior souls, thus far surpassing certain mystical theologians of his own time, whom he found useful to quote but whom our own times no longer remember.

(3) When reproducing the statements of these theologians, St. Alphonsus comments in passing that souls in a passive state acquire no merit because they do nothing but simply receive. Later, when speaking for himself, he has something else to say that conforms to St. Teresa's thought: "In the (passive) prayer of quiet, the will is as if bound, for it cannot love any other object than God, who attracts it to Himself." In this passive state, therefore, the soul is acting, it is freely loving God, and, as a result, meriting. St. Teresa, when speaking of a more passive state of union, says the same thing: "Here God allows us nothing else but the concurrence of an entirely submissive will,"—which merits by its docility. According to St. Thomas and all his disciples, the will's docility to the Holy Ghost makes the acts of the seven gifts meritorious. No doubt they are not, properly speaking, deliberate acts, like those reached by discursive deliberation and ruled by prudence under the inspiration of the gift of counsel. Acts of the gift of piety, for example, are above human deliberation and yet are vital, free, and meritorious, and, when they last some time, are called passive states.

We see then that, when St. Alphonsus denies merit to passive states and holds passive union unnecessary for perfection, he utters the opinion of certain theologians of his own time rather than his own deep thought, so much more like that of St. Thomas and of St. John of the Cross. He would certainly not deny the statement from the Ascent of Mount Carmel that "the more intense charity a soul has, the more the Holy Ghost enlightens it and communicates His gifts to it," These gifts are, in fact, as St. Thomas says, connected with charity, and all the infused habitus, like the different parts of a spiritual organism, grow together. Nothing in St. Alphonsus' writings contradicts these principles; rather, everything that he tells us of the Holy Ghost and of the increase of charity repeatedly confirms them.

The objection still arises that Benedict XIV, using the words of Cardinal de Laurea, has written: "Many servants of God have been canonized without any mention, in their process of canonization, of infused contemplation; it is sufficient to prove the heroism of their virtues, confirmed by miracles." The objection is easily met, for Benedict XIV was not talking from a theological point of view with the intention of describing what normally belongs to the full perfection of Christian life; he was speaking rather from a juridical point of view, stating that in the process of beatification nothing need be examined but the heroic character of the virtues and the miracles confirming it: that is certain. However, can heroic

virtue exist without the activity of the gifts of the Holy Ghost? We know St. Thomas' response to the question and what St. John of the Cross has to say when reproducing the teaching of St. Augustine and St. Gregory the Great. Now the activity of the gifts of understanding, of wisdom, and of piety takes place chiefly in prayer, which, when dominated by their influence, is called infused.

Besides, in almost every process of canonization, when the demonstration of the saints' heroic faith and hope makes reference to their interior trials, these are nothing else but the passive purifications so clearly analyzed by St. John of the Cross in The Dark Night. They are certainly not graces gratis datae, extraordinary gifts like prophecy, but they constitute a grievous passive state, marked by a high degree of contemplation of God's infinite majesty together with a deep recognition of our misery, knowledge such as only the Holy Ghost can give. For example, when we read the chapter in the life of the Curé of Ars about his interior trials, we find expressed in terms within the reach of all, what St. John of the Cross has to say of the night of the soul.

Finally, Benedict XIV, when speaking of mystical questions, reproduces word for word Cardinal de Laurea's work, De oratione christiana. This author, when speaking not from a juridical but from a theological point of view, tells us: "It is permissible to desire mystical union, usually given by God to the perfect with infused contemplation." His presentation here belongs to traditional teaching as commonly formulated by Dominican and Carmelite Thomists.

Father Keusch, at the end of his article, is kind enough to say of La vie spirituelle: "We believe that it correctly outlines the theory of the sublime ways to heaven" and adds that practically "the shortness and difficulty of life, the vehemence of concupiscence, and original sin with all its consequences . . . these are the facts that struck St. Alphonsus." Original sin and its results certainly make the realization of the ideal difficult. St. Augustine is the first to say so when combating the Pelagians. Nevertheless, in his commentary on the Sermon on the Mount he speaks to all Christians about what the full development of charity and of the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost should be in them. Opposed as the evangelical beatitudes are to all the maxims of human wisdom, our Lord preached them to all.

If the founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer has taken full account of the consequences of original sin, he also bears as his motto

the words Copiosa apud eum redemptio and he loved to quote St. Paul to the Romans 5: 20: “And where sin abounded, grace did more abound,” a passage he explains in the same way as St. Thomas does in his beautiful commentary in the Summa. St. Paul also told the Ephesians: “Wherefore I also . . . cease not to give thanks for you, making commemoration of you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and of revelation, in the knowledge of Him: the eyes of your heart enlightened, that you may know what the hope is of His calling, and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. And what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us, who believe according to the operation of the might of His power.” Such is indeed the great doctrine preserved by St. Alphonsus in his treatment of the triumph of charity in souls.

If our wounded nature falls far below the perfection which our nature had when it was gifted with integrity, as it existed in the state of innocence, yet the Son of God made man, the new Adam, is infinitely above the first Adam; and Mary, the new Eve, is incomparably more perfect than the first Eve. The Eucharistic worship taking place in the smallest country church, especially at the moment of consecration, infinitely surpasses the worship that went on in the Garden of Paradise. Really faithful and generous souls never lack for graces but continually receive more. Jesus Christ our Mediator and Mary our mediatrix will lead them, through increasingly fervent Communions, to a union with God no less intimate than that which man knew in the state of original justice, although now this union is often accompanied by hard purgation, which serves, moreover, as a means of increased merit. With this in mind, St. Paul tells us, “I exceedingly abound with joy in all our tribulation.”

If St. Alphonsus in no way disparages the results of original sin, he believes no less in baptismal regeneration and in everything which it contains in germ: gratia, semen gloriae. Like his guide, St. Thomas, he teaches that the grace of the virtues and of the gifts develops in such a way as to dispose the soul through purgation for the beatific vision, being wholly ordered to that end. Through the power of the Redeemer then practice catches up with the great doctrinal principles, and the real rises by degrees to the level of the ideal, once glimpsed from afar off. We believe that St. Alphonsus subscribed entirely to the assertion of the author of The Imitation that: “If there are few contemplatives, the reason lies in the fact

that few know how to detach themselves wholly from creatures and from all temporal things."

St. Alphonsus tells us this earlier in the "Reflections" when explaining St. Teresa's statement: "Detach your heart from creatures, then seek God, and you will find Him." He says, "You will not always obtain spiritual consolations, for the Lord does not give them continually to those who love Him. . . . But He does make them experience an interior peace that surpasses all understanding, quae exsuperat omnem sensum. O how good God is to those who seek Him only!"

The peace that He gives, quae exsuperat omnem sensum, constitutes the blessedness of peacemakers promised by our Lord to all generous souls; and, as both St. Augustine and St. Thomas show, this beatitude corresponds to the gift of wisdom, which makes us in some way see all the events of life through God's eyes rather than with our own, whether these events are pleasant or unpleasant and even if they surprise and baffle us. A practical and lofty contemplation gives deep direction to the activity of life just because it comes to us from on high; in the words of St. Thomas, "Wisdom as a gift is not merely speculative but practical." Just because it outdistances natural wisdom, the gift of wisdom extends to conduct and directs action. "The higher a virtue is, the greater the number of things to which it extends."

A very interesting work remains to be done, we think, one that should tempt Father Keusch to complete his work on the ascetical doctrine of St. Alphonsus. It would consist in doing research on the saint's spiritual work to bring out his ideas on the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity, the increase of charity, the seven gifts, and the perfect divine union attained by complete detachment from creatures.

Far from denying the connection between charity and the gifts of the Holy Ghost so plainly asserted by St. Thomas, St. Alphonsus expresses what is equivalent to the same thing in different places in his works, for example, in the novena to the Holy Ghost. There he shows that the love of charity is not simply a fire but also a light that illumines, a living water that refreshes, a power that grows, an unction that consecrates our souls as temples for the increasingly intimate abiding of the Holy Ghosts. On this subject he quotes the scriptural texts in which St. Augustine and St. Thomas found the doctrine of the seven gifts and of their relationship with charity.

A work of this kind would be a useful contribution to mystical studies. It would show, we believe, that the spirituality of St. Alphonsus in no way runs counter to the doctrine here set forth according to Thomistic principles. It would make it possible for people to see that the saint's great prudence led him in no way whatever to reduce the height of the end to which all interior souls should aspire, but reminds us that, although this end is first in the order of intention it is last in the order of execution, and we must begin our spiritual edifice with a foundation of humility, mortification, and obedience, and by the practice of solid virtue. Although men never begin cathedrals with the arches, an architect must have from the very beginning a plan for the whole building, arches and all, since the foundation must be made with its height in mind.

Not only do we believe in a real harmony between the doctrine of La vie spirituelle and St. Alphonsus' spirituality, but we consider the reading of his works very useful as a practical completion to the great speculative views to which St. Thomas accustoms us. St. Alphonsus shows how these should be reflected in the details of daily life; in the order of execution, he directs our steps toward the high ideal proposed to us all in the beatitudes preached by Christ at the beginning of His Sermon on the Mount. The beatitudes are nothing but the highest acts of the virtues and the gifts, the beginning, as it were, of eternal life in time, the end glimpsed while we are as yet afar off. "Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God": in a way pure hearts begin to see God in the penumbra of faith while still on earth and the more the light of life makes Him known to them the more they love Him, completely fulfilling the demands of the great commandment to love God "with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with all thy strength and with all thy mind."

CHAPTER XIII

THE UNITY AND SUBLIMITY OF THE APOSTOLIC LIFE: A SYNTHESIS OF CONTEMPLATION AND ACTION

> "For the letter killeth, but the spirit quickeneth."
>
> II Cor. 3: 6

"The work of the active life is twofold. One proceeds from the fullness of contemplation, such as teaching and preaching. . . . The other work of the active life consists entirely in outward occupation, for instance, almsgiving, receiving guests." Summa theol., IIa IIae, q. 188, a. 6

Having dealt with the union of the purified soul with God and the contemplation presupposed by such union, we would now do well to discuss its fruits in the apostolic life as maintained in its unity and sublimity. To define purely contemplative religious life is an obviously less exacting task than to define the kind of life that unites both contemplation and apostolic activity. The difficulty here arises partly from the fact that the ideal of apostolic religious life is realized under quite a number of different forms, according to the place given to action. This place varies somewhat in the Carmelites, the Dominicans, and the sons of St. Francis, not to mention the older orders.

Nevertheless the difficulty we experience in defining the apostolic religious life, in grasping what really constitutes its spirit, arises chiefly from the fact that we are prone to materialize it, to stop short at the letter, at the multiplicity of somewhat tangible elements within it, without rising above these to its well-balanced unity, which alone can explain the true role of these different elements and give them life. Here is a case where we need to recall St. Paul's words: "Our sufficiency is from God. Who also hath

made us fit ministers of the new testament, not in the letter, but in the spirit. For the letter killeth, but the spirit quickeneth."

When we have looked, as St. Thomas generally does, at the difficulty of the problem, we shall afterward be in a better position to understand the worth of its solution as the holy doctor gives it to us.

ARTICLE I

THE APOSTOLIC LIFE: ITS DIFFICULTY AND SUPERIORITY

As higher organisms have many clearly differentiated but convergent functions, so the apostolic or mixed life is obviously more complex than the purely contemplative life of the Carthusians and the active life of the hospitalers. Precisely this complexity makes the apostolic life particularly difficult. In religious orders like St. Dominic's, St. Francis', the Carmelites, the Premonstratensians, and others, monastic observances such as fasting and abstinence, night watches, the deep study of philosophy and theology, integral liturgical prayer, that is, the Divine Office chorally recited, and finally, the apostolate through oral or written teaching and preaching, all find a place.

If one of these elements is overstressed, the harmony of the apostolic life is endangered; there occurs hypertrophy of one organ and atrophy of another, a lack of balance of functions, and consequently more or less serious disorder. Every evidence points to the necessity of maintaining a close unity in such diversity. Unity is breath to this life; when it is lost, all is lost. The mixed life disintegrates into its various elements and perishes. Substitutes resembling it take its place but have not its high nature. Sometimes we hear people say that the old orders have had their day. If they have remained faithful to the ideals of the saints who founded them, how can this be true?

If we lose sight of that higher unity which is the very soul of apostolic life, some of us come to think that monastic observances harm study; others consider that deep study works against proper monastic observance. We even manage to establish an apparent opposition between study and preaching. Some romantic preachers depreciate philosophical and theological teaching as too abstract and lifeless: "baseless, formless, alright for the classroom." On the other hand, we find men of learning occupied in

patient historical and critical research who belittle preaching, looking upon it as something superficial and meaningless. In one way or another what constitutes the life of all great apostles is forgotten. Men of deep meditation, prayer, true contemplatives, the Pauls and Dominics of every age, have given to other souls for their salvation, their own living contemplation of God and of Christ.

Blessed Henry Suso in his Book of Eternal Wisdom clearly points out how the spiritual life is only too frequently materialized by two opponent groups, the one devoting themselves almost exclusively to study, and the other to observances and austerities; he makes no allusion to those who give themselves entirely to the externals of the apostolate or to natural, and largely unsanctified, activity.

The disciple desired to know if somewhere a man might not exist who had reached the noble height of renouncement (about which the Truth had spoken to him), a man really transformed into Christ; and he desired that God would make this man known to him so that he might speak familiarly with him. And as the disciple was thinking seriously of this, he was lifted out of himself and taken into a country where the senses cannot go. There he beheld an image hanging between heaven and earth, the image of a man whose look was full of goodness though he was held fast to a cross. And the disciple saw ranged about the cross yet unable to draw near to it two classes of people. One of these saw the image interiorly but not exteriorly; the others exteriorly but not interiorly. . . . Oh! Eternal Truth, said the disciple, tell me the meaning of this marvelous vision.

And a voice answered him interiorly saying: The image which you have seen represents the only Son of God, inasmuch as He has taken upon Himself our human nature. You saw but one image and yet it was diversified and multiplied, representing as it does all the men who are His members and, through Him and in Him, sons of God. The Head rules the many members of the one body. He is the first born by reason of His assumption into the Divine Person; the others, on the contrary, become sons only in so far as they are transformed in union with this image. The cross signifies that a man who has really renounced himself ought always to live interiorly as well as exteriorly, in complete abnegation, accepting all that God wills him to suffer, no matter from whence it comes, dying to himself and being ready to take anything for the glory of our Heavenly Father. Such men are noble within and on guard without.

Those who see this image interiorly but not exteriorly merely reason about the life of Christ, considering it only speculatively but not practically, failing to mortify their nature by imitating this image. They think of it but afterwards give themselves up to their natural tendencies and false liberty, deeming those of a different outlook than themselves as narrow and unintelligent men.

Those who consider this image exteriorly but not interiorly, seem hard and severe. They perform penitential exercises, live circumspectly, and enact before men a kind of honorable and holy life, but neglect the interior consideration of Christ, Whose life was sweet and lovable. They are absolutely unlike the model which they themselves propose. . . . Self will remains, preserved to such a degree that they never come to possess the divine virtues of obedience, patience, submissiveness, and others of like character which make men conformable to the image of Christ.

Blessed Henry Suso then understood why "these two kinds of people stood about the cross but would not approach it." He understood much better than he had before, that "God has given the potentiality and the power to become the sons of God only to those who are born of God. . . . The man who has renounced himself, who has God alone as his father, sees nothing temporal purely in its temporality but looks upon and understands all things in God." The "opened eyes" with which he regards everything get their sight from the contemplation of revealed mysteries, a contemplation superior to the exterior practices of penance and to mere study. It ought to be, together with the love of God, the soul of the apostolate. This truth can become more evident to us if we consider the genuine purpose of religious life, ordered not to personal sanctification alone but to the salvation of souls as well.

ARTICLE II

THE SPECIAL END OF THE APOSTOLIC LIFE

To see more clearly what should be the relationship between the different elements of the religious life, particularly in the case of the orders already mentioned, we need to ask ourselves what is their special end, since the end, the reason for which the means exist, is first in the order of intention, although last in the order of execution.

As an answer to the problem, we have St. Thomas' remark that preaching the great mysteries of faith ought to flow from the contemplation of these divine mysteries, "ex plenitudine contemplationis, derivatur." This serves as the principle of his response: "It is better to give to others the fruits of one's contemplation than merely to contemplate. . . . Accordingly the highest place in religious orders is held by those which are directed to teaching and preaching, which, moreover, are nearest to the episcopal perfection. . . . The second place belongs to those which are directed to contemplation, and the third to those which are occupied with external actions." In other words, the apostle, like Jesus Christ and the Twelve, should be a contemplative, passing on his contemplation to others in order to save and sanctify them. St. Thomas' words expressing the particular end of religious life dedicated to the apostolate have become the motto of his Order: Contemplari et contemplata aliis tradere: to contemplate and to give to others the fruits of contemplation.

But how are these words to be understood? Three interpretations are proposed, plainly corresponding to three different mentalities, each more or less aware of its own spirit. The Carmelites of Salamanca set them down as follows:

According to the first interpretation, reminiscent of some views expressed by Suarez, the mixed or apostolic life tends equally to contemplation and to action, as to two principal and immediate ends, ex aequo.

According to the second interpretation, a more or less conscious opinion of many preachers, the mixed or apostolic religious life has apostolic action for its primary and principal end, but it also tends toward some sort of contemplation as a means necessary to action.

The third interpretation gives us a much loftier view, holding that the mixed or apostolic religious life tends, on the contrary, principally and primarily to that contemplation and union with. God which it implies and secondarily to action, an effect of the apostle's own contemplation and a possible means of disposing his hearers in their turn for the contemplation of divine things and for union with God.

We need now to evaluate these three interpretations, so strikingly different in spirit. From St. Thomas' point of view, the first cannot be admitted. The mixed or apostolic life cannot tend to contemplation and to action, as to two principal and immediate ends ex aequo. The notion of two

entirely adequate ends, neither of which would be subordinate to the other implies a duality without subordination and therefore the destruction of unity in religious life. Action and contemplation sought as two principal and immediate ends would be prejudicial to each other. Finally, a choice between them would have to be made. The hound cannot chase two rabbits at once.

The second interpretation is no more admissible. If in fact the mixed life has action for its primary and principal end and tends to contemplation only as a means to action, nothing remains to distinguish it from the active religious life, which also ought to give some place to prayer in order that the corporal works of mercy may be exercised in a supernatural manner. Besides, contemplation and union with God cannot conceivably be made a means subordinated to action, for they are greater than action. Obviously this life can hold nothing higher than union with God through contemplation and love. As a result, apostolic action has real worth only so far as it stems from this source, in no way a subordinate means to it but its eminent cause. Moreover, apostolic action itself is a means subordinated to divine union, for the purpose of the apostle is to lead souls to union with God. The order of agents corresponds to the order of ends: “Ordo agentium debet correspondere ordini finium.” The apostle seeks to lead others to divine union, and his own union with God serves to bring them to share the same divine gift and to be saved.

The third interpretation holds that the mixed or apostolic life tends primarily and principally toward contemplation and union with God, not stopping there as the purely contemplative life does, but flowing over into apostolic action, preaching, the administration of the sacraments, and spiritual direction. The Carmelites of Salamanca expressed their view in this wise, and the Dominican Passerini followed Blessed Humbert of Rome in holding the same opinion: “The mixed or apostolic life has as its principal end contemplation or union with God, a source of fruitfulness for the salvation of souls.”

St. Thomas clearly took the same position when he said that theological teaching and preaching are works of the active life but ought to overflow from the fullness of contemplation if they are to bear fruit. He adds that our Lord Jesus Christ was not content to limit Himself to a purely contemplative life but chose one that presupposed abundant contemplation and shared it with souls through preaching. St. Thomas puts it this way:

“For it is becoming to that kind of life, which we hold Christ to have embraced, wherein a man delivers to others the fruits of his contemplation, that he devote himself first of all to contemplation, and that he afterward come down to the publicity of active life by associating with other men.”

Disciples of St. Thomas have even pointed out that the relationship of contemplation and union with God to the apostolic life bears a likeness to the relationship of the Incarnation to Redemption. The Incarnation, the hypostatic union of the human nature of Christ with the uncreated person of the Word, is not ordered to our redemption as a means to a higher end, but as an eminent cause to an inferior effect. St. Thomas tells us: “God loves Christ not only more than He loves the whole human race, but more than He loves the entire created universe: because He willed for Him the greater good in giving Him a name that is above all names, so far as He was true God. Nor did anything of His excellence diminish when God delivered Him up to death for the salvation of the human race; rather did He become thereby a glorious conqueror: The government was placed upon His shoulder, according to Isa. 9: 6.”

From all eternity, by the formal motive of mercy, God has willed not an Incarnation subordinated to the Redemption, as a means to a higher end, but the redemptive Incarnation, in view of which He permitted the sin of the first man. Similarly, the purpose of an order dedicated to the mixed or apostolic life is not the apostolate, with contemplation subordinated to it as to a higher end, but contemplation becoming fruitful in the apostolate.

The view here expressed conforms, moreover, to the Church’s habit of making a distinction in the constitutions of religious orders between their primary and principal end: religious perfection, union with God by the spirit of faith and charity, the end to which the three virtues and vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience are subordinated; and the secondary or derivative end: one or other of the works of mercy.

Only St. Thomas’ doctrine clearly shows the unity and sublimity of die apostolic life. He brings out plainly how the apostolate must have contemplation as its source. Then the good news of the gospel is preached in an enlightening, living, simple, and penetrating way, with unction to draw hearts and deep conviction to win them. An apostolic order can then be said to have a unique end, contemplation bearing fruit in the apostolate.

Apostolic work, preaching, when they well up from the contemplation of divine things, give not only the letter but the spirit of the word of God, of

supernatural mysteries, the commandments, and the counsels. The letter of the gospel can be easily known and even easily preached in a literary fashion. The conclusions of moral theology as expounded in most manuals can also be stated with a little application. What the faithful demand of a preacher, however, is the soul of things, that breath and supernatural flame, altogether different from romantic lyricism, which burns with the brief blaze of straw quickly set on fire and just as quickly turns to ashes. The breath of any apostolate, of preaching, should be the breath of divine truth, a great spirit of faith, of trust, of essentially supernatural love, putting the accent where it belongs on the mysteries of the Incarnation and the Redemption, the Eucharist, the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity, eternal life begun on earth and consummated in heaven.

As St. Paul says, God is indeed our sufficiency, making us fit ministers of the new testament, not in the letter, but in the spirit, the letter bringing death but the spirit giving life. “Our sufficiency is from God. Who also hath made us fit ministers of the new testament, not in the letter, but in the spirit. For the letter killeth, but the spirit quickeneth.” “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Christ Jesus. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency may be of the power of God, and not of us.” Here St. Paul is telling us of infused contemplation of revealed mysteries, which bears good fruit in the apostolate.

The letter of the Old Law, St. Thomas remarks, made known what we must do to avoid sin but put no check on concupiscence, and wrought no justification in men like the New Law, which is, more than anything else, spirit and charity poured forth in our hearts. The letter of the Old Law even in a sense provided an occasion for sin, because concupiscence moves with more ardor after forbidden pleasures; and the knowledge that we are forbidden to do something which we continue to covet will kill us, if we deviate from righteousness to follow our inclinations. In fact, to sin at the same time against the natural law and the written law is a more serious matter than to sin only against the former. In this sense the letter of the Old Law occasionally did work death; not that it was bad, for it forbade evil; but because it was imperfect; for it failed to remove the cause of evil. Law, without the spirit engraven in men’s hearts, is an occasion for death. We need to receive that law which is spirit and life and pours forth charity into our hearts.

To grasp what the preaching of the gospel should be like, we must recall, as St. Thomas says, that the New Law is only secondarily a written law, but above and before all a law infused into men's souls.

Now that which is preponderant in the law of the New Testament, and whereon all its efficacy is based, is the grace of the Holy Ghost, which is given through faith in Christ (Rom. 7: 2). The law of the spirit of life, in Christ Jesus, hath delivered me from the law of sin and of death. . . . Nevertheless the New Law contains certain things that dispose us to receive the grace of the Holy Ghost, and pertaining to the use of that grace: such things are of secondary importance, so to speak, in the New Law; and the faithful needed to be instructed concerning them, both by word and writing, both as to what they should believe and as to what they should do.

The preaching of the gospel ought therefore above all to be spirit and life; that is, it should spring from contemplation of the mysteries of salvation in order that the faithful may truly live by them. The apostle carries the light of contemplation in a fragile vessel "that the excellency may be of the power of God, and not of us." Had our Lord's apostles been rich, powerful, of noble blood, all the great things they did would have been attributed to them and not to God. Therefore St. Paul adds: "In all things we suffer tribulation, but are not distressed; we are straitened, but are not destitute; we suffer persecution, but are not forsaken; we are cast down, but we perish not: always bearing about in our body the mortification of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal flesh." In a sense, this carrying of Christ's death in other mortal flesh always continues in the life of the persecuted Church; and while Jesus promised a hundredfold to those who would follow Him, He also foretold persecution.

Many more people than we realize expect those who preach the gospel to have an even greater hunger and thirst for justice than their own. Supernatural hunger and thirst far surpass any kind of passing enthusiasm and endure through the frequent setbacks of the apostolate only because of the gift of fortitude, corresponding, as St. Augustine and St. Thomas point out, to the evangelical beatitude: "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice." The gift of fortitude, united to the doctrine of faith and the fire of charity, indeed makes athletes of the faith, as preachers should be. More people than we surmise look for this in those who bring the word of God to them.

We must understand that the apostolic life is not only an exact mean between two extremes toward which youth deviates by turns, first to a dried-up scientific attitude and then to a lyric approach without doctrinal foundation. The just mean is a summit, a culminating point, the great peak of living divine truth, which constitutes the soul of the perfect mean, somewhat in the same way that charity animates or informs the moral virtues and lifts them above mediocrity or lukewarmness.

Those true apostles whom the Church has raised to her altars attained this end. Their words recall the Verbum spirans amorem, the Word from which Love proceeds, really reflecting for us the inner life of God. In them we see the special end of the apostolic life, contemplative and at the same time active.

ARTICLE III

THE ELEMENTS OF RELIGIOUS LIFE IN APOSTOLIC ORDERS

To attain its end an apostolic order should neglect none of the elements of formation determined by its divinely inspired founder, for to founders God has given an exceptional grace of state for the guidance of their children. These elements must be seen not only in themselves but especially in relation to the end to which they are ordered; from this point of view nothing is reckoned as of small moment in religious life. Things little in themselves become great because of their relationship to their end; just as the functioning of any cell in an organism cannot be unimportant to it.

From this vantage point we see that all the elements of apostolic religious life are ordered in an ascending and balanced harmony: (1) regular observance, (2) study, (3) well-performed liturgical prayer leading to contemplation and union with God and then overflowing into (4) apostolic action. This life rises nearer and nearer to God to reach divine intimacy and then flows back to souls to save and sanctify them by making them know and love the mystery of Christ, who will Himself lead them to the Father.

A glance at the different elements of this life as lived in the orders of St. Dominic, St. Francis, and of Carmel, will serve to convince us of this. Regular observances, long or total abstinence, fasting, and night watches, have all been chosen by the founders of these orders in a spirit of penance or of immolation. He who can grasp their supernatural meaning sees them

as a worship of adoration offered to God. The priest, especially if he has entered the religious state, ought to remember that, since he shares in the priesthood of Christ by the priestly character and by grace, he should also share in some measure in our Lord's state of victim. Since Christians are told to "take up their cross daily," priests particularly must heed this word, for they should work for the salvation of souls by the same means that our Lord Himself chose, self-immolation, as Father Lacordaire reminds us by his way of defining the priesthood: "The priesthood is the immolation of a man joined with the immolation of God."

When in one place or another the old orders give up saying the night office as determined by their founders, the Lord seems no longer to send them so many and such strong vocations, raising up new congregations which have in their rule an hour of nocturnal adoration, for prayer should be unceasing day and night. Regular observances, especially fasting and abstinence, plainly have less importance than study and prayer; but they serve religious orders as the bark serves the tree. Strip off the bark of any tree, even a vigorous one, and the sap no longer rises in it. The saints warn us that we cannot detract from our observances without losing something of our spirit. Suppression or marked relaxation of rules leads infallibly to relaxation of ideas and of life; and God, who inspired the rules, does not bless such decadence. If regular observances are suppressed or attenuated contrary to the will of an order's founder, inspired as he was by God, thought and life decline as well, losing their supernatural character of radiant contemplation in an effort to become more reasonable, more scientific, but no longer capable of communicating life or of responding to the deep needs of souls. We should not be astonished then if our times lack true preachers, if those who speak utter cold words, expounding their theories without touching hearts or moving wills, no longer talking of God in a way alive enough to move others to love Him. When life fails to remain on the heights with thought, thought soon descends to the level of life.

A second means for achieving the end of the apostolic life is study, especially the deep study of the word of God preserved in Holy Scripture and tradition, the study of philosophy, and of theology together with its related sciences. Here we find a twofold wisdom: one purely natural, philosophy; the other acquired too but rooted in infused faith, theology. These two acquired wisdoms ought not to remain in the apostolic soul without being related to infused wisdom, the highest of the gifts of the Holy

Ghost received at baptism and given more abundantly at confirmation. For an apostle, study should be a way of hymning the glory of God, especially the study of the doctrine of grace as made known to us by our Lord, and by St. Paul, St. Augustine, and St. Thomas Aquinas: “Without Me you can do nothing.” “If thou didst know the gift of God!”

We recall the place given to study in the ascending series described by St. Benedict in the forty-eighth chapter of his rule: “lectio, cogitatio, studium, meditatio, oratio, contemplatio.” St. Thomas received his first formation from the Benedictines and kept this gradation. Although for him study may be more speculative, it always leads the faithful and generous soul to desire and to ask humbly for the higher light of contemplation. Theology with its complexity of theses never approximates the simplicity of faith. We can find a likeness to their relationship in the field of plane figures. Think of a polygon inscribed within a circle. The sides of the polygon could be increased to infinity, yet, no matter how small they were, they would never equal a single point, nor would the polygon ever come to overlie the circumference of the circle. Similarly, the best theology will never reach the wholly supernatural height of infused faith to be found in the smallest Christian child. Faith is to theology as Christ’s sacerdotal prayer is to an Augustinian or Thomistic commentary upon it. We search in vain in this high and simple prayer for a major, a minor, and a conclusion. It describes the perfect circle of contemplation, always returning to the same idea, the better to enter into its meaning. It is a flash of light coming down from the height of heaven to illumine our minds, a treasure of a higher order, which discursive theology distributes to us in the coin of its conclusions, somewhat as the lower angels receive the lofty and simple contemplation of the higher angels by a greater number of more limited ideas.

Preaching, if it is to save souls, must not stop at theology but go on to the height of faith, reaching thus the spirit of revealed mysteries, of the commandments and counsels, by means of contemplation proceeding from infused faith and the gifts of understanding and wisdom. Seen from above, theology then shows itself a living science, indeed the most living of all sciences, “scientia subalternata scientiae Dei et beatorum,” as St. Thomas says, a science subordinated to the science of God and of the blessed by the intermediary of living faith. As the science of optics receives its principles from geometry, so theology receives its principles from God the revealer through infused faith. The principles which God contemplates in Himself

and which the blessed in heaven see in Him we supernaturally believe, penetrating them by the gift of understanding, tasting and savoring them by the gift of wisdom. Then bookish formulas come to life, and study acts as a preparation for contemplation. The moving windlass described by St. Teresa now turns with ease and brings up the water necessary for the garden of our spirit.

Above regular observance and the work of study, stands liturgical prayer, if it is done well and with recollection; and beyond it, mental prayer; then above and beyond all, the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. These, because of the union with God to be found in them, are the culminating point of the apostolic life. From this summit the great river of God's word should flow down in living preaching. For it to do so, we must live liturgical prayer; if, as it so often happens, we recite it hurriedly and mechanically, it ceases to be prayer and, performed in such a way by a community, can even become a serious obstacle to recollection and divine union. We believe that we are gaining time by hurrying, and we lose the best time of life, the time due the Lord, when, were we teachable, we would find breath, repose, and renewed energy for our souls.

We must live by mental prayer, too, observing the exterior and interior silence which it requires and conversing with God throughout the day. If, in the apostolic life, the daily hour given to mental prayer is omitted or not properly observed, the apostle runs a great risk of becoming, as St. Paul expressed it, sounding brass and tinkling cymbal. Those who would preach without living liturgical and mental prayer are like travelers who like to talk about the view from the top of Mount Blanc without ever having made the climb. Anyone can run through a guidebook describing the panorama, but this glance cannot take the place of a real look over the glaciers. By dint of daily work, we find it no great difficulty to skim through the Bible, the works of St. Augustine and St. Thomas, but these books yield up their spirit only to those who read them by the same supernatural light in which they were thought out and written. Lacking this light, we see them as men beholding a beautiful stained glass window from the outside; we see and see not; if we would know its beauty we must go within.

The highest moment of an apostle's day should obviously be the celebration of holy Mass. The apostle is to be as another Christ to his fellow men, sacerdos alter Christus. When can he be more united to his Master than at the time of consecration? Then he becomes indeed one with Him, as

His conscious and free instrument, pronouncing the substance-changing words: “This is My body.” “This is the chalice of My blood.” At that moment Christ, who offered Himself on the cross, continues to offer Himself through His minister. In thus offering Himself, our Lord also offers His whole mystical body, especially those who follow His example in the supernatural endurance of suffering. Each of our Masses and Communions should be more fervent than the one before, because each should increase in us the grace of the virtues and of the gifts. Day by day the priest should grow in understanding of the mysterious sacrifice of the cross perpetuated in substance on the altar. Contemplation of this kind ought to become the very soul of apostolic preaching, related to it not as a subordinate means but as its eminent cause, the ever-flowing source of a mighty river. St. Thomas in no way exaggerates when he says that evangelical preaching ought to have its source in the fullness of contemplation: “ex plenitudine contemplationis derivatur.” And the word fullness, “plenitudo,” has all the more significance because of the moderation that always marks the great doctor’s style. Then, and then only, the preaching of the gospel gives both the letter and the spirit of the word of God in the measure of the soul’s readiness and spiritual need.

Blessed Grignon de Montfort in his Amour de la divine sagesse says that eternal Wisdom gives to those who possess Its lights the capacity to express them. Then he goes on to add:

Our Lord’s words to the apostles promise this: “For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to resist and gainsay.” How few preachers have the ineffable gift of speech and can say with St. Paul, “We speak the wisdom of God!” For the most part, they express only the natural lights of their minds or information gathered from books but not what divine Wisdom makes them feel, or rather, not the divine abundance communicated to them by Wisdom. As a result, few conversions are wrought by the spoken word. If a preacher really received from Wisdom the gift of speech, his listeners could no more withstand his words than those who heard St. Stephen could resist the wisdom and spirit that spoke. Whatever such a preacher would say would be uttered with so much sweetness and authority that his word could not return to him without effect.

Too often we run a great risk of lowering the apostolic ideal by reducing contemplation, the nourishment of the apostolate, to mere historical and

theological study, considered as a means subordinate to preaching. This brings about a loss to the whole apostolic life because it implies the abandonment of any aspiration to reach its summit, where all its elements are unified, where preaching wells up and overflows in something akin to the fire of eloquence spoken of by the Psalmist. Not to aspire to the summit of the apostolic life means to neglect the one thing necessary, to dry up the river at its source.

If on the contrary we look at the apostolic life in the light of the principles formulated by St. Thomas, we see both its unity and its sublimity and we no longer say that regular observance harms study or that deep study interferes with a life of observance. We do not give ourselves to lifeless study while depreciating preaching, nor to wholly external activity while underestimating study. On the other hand, we stop materializing the elements of a life so rich and harmonious and we rediscover the sense of St. Paul's words, "The letter killeth, but the spirit quickeneth." We even rediscover it sufficiently to communicate it to others, according to St. Thomas' formula, "Contemplari et contemplata aliis tradere": to contemplate the mysteries of Christian faith deeply enough to have a living and radiant knowledge of them and to bring the light of God to others, that they may be sanctified and united to Him.

CHAPTER XIV

THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST AND THE LIFE OF UNION

> "Having therefore a great high priest that hath passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God; let us hold fast our confession."
>
> Heb. 4: 14

When we talk of the unitive way, or, for that matter, of the illuminative way, we find difficulty in expressing ourselves, because of the varied modes in which these ways occur. We often encounter them in an attenuated form, in which infused contemplation of the mysteries of faith remains latent. Their full normal development demands contemplation; but contemplation may manifest itself in more ways than one. In pure contemplatives it shows itself as clearly and evidently as a shaft of light; in the proficient and perfect dedicated to the apostolate and to action, in St. Vincent de Paul, for example, it has the character rather of diffused light, appearing in a form ordered more to action. Extraordinary graces, such as the revelations and visions described by St. Teresa, may or may not accompany the complete development of the illuminative and unitive ways. Favors of this kind are not at all necessary for the full flowering of infused contemplation and of union with God, as St. John of the Cross plainly shows.

This diversity of form makes any study of the illuminative and unitive ways difficult. To obviate the difficulty, we must imitate what the Church does in her liturgy, addressed, as it is, to us all. She sets before her children these two ways as she beholds them in our Lord and our Lady, the great mediators and great models for everybody. The liturgy places insistence on those mysteries in their lives which by their very nature enlighten all souls sincerely desirous of growing in God's love, whether they are especially dedicated to contemplation or to action.

Therefore we shall bring this work to a close by considering the life of union in relationship to the priesthood and kingship of Christ, His impeccable and exemplary liberty, and the fruitful sufferings of Mary our mediatrix. To bring out more clearly the bond between these truths and the life of union, we shall put special emphasis on their relationship to the Sacrifice of the Mass, the high point in our day, the time of all times most potent to unite us to God.

The revealed doctrine most capable of giving us some insight into the greatness of the Sacrifice of the Mass, is the priesthood of Christ. The great theologians of the thirteenth century, such as St. Thomas, antedated the Lutheran heresy on the Sacrifice of the Mass, and, as a result, have left us an incompletely developed teaching on the subject. As a compensation for this, they treated at length of Christ's priesthood, as revelation unfolds it for us in the Epistle to the Hebrews in texts of great beauty frequently commented upon by the Fathers. These texts contain doctrinal riches which serve to illuminate the Eucharistic sacrifice and give us a fuller understanding of the Council of Trent's solemn definition against the Lutherans: "In the divine sacrifice accomplished in the Mass, Christ, who offered Himself on the altar of the cross by shedding His blood for us, is offered in an unbloody manner. The same Victim is offered. The same Priest offers, 'idem nunc offerens sacerdotum ministerio'; He Himself made the offering on the cross, now He makes it through His ministers, only the manner of oblation differs." It is the same sacrifice in substance, for both victim and priest are the same, although the offering is now made by Christ through His ministers.

To grasp something of the greatness, power, and influence of Christ's priesthood, we should first recall what the Epistle to the Hebrews tells us of its essential character and then think over how theology, particularly as expounded by St. Thomas Aquinas, develops this teaching.

ARTICLE I

CHRIST'S PRIESTHOOD IN THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

The Epistle applies to our Lord's priesthood the great thoughts expressed by St. Paul in his epistles to the Romans, to the Corinthians, and to Timothy, about Christ the Redeemer, the universal Mediator, the Head of

the Church, and the necessity of faith in Christ for salvation. “For there is one God, and one mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus: who gave himself a redemption for all.”

The first part of the Epistle to the Hebrews purposes to show the superiority of the priesthood of Jesus Christ, the mediator of the new covenant, over all the mediums used by God to manifest Himself to men in the Old Testament. Jesus is here declared to be higher than the angels, Moses, and all the prophets and priests of the Old Law. This teaching shows us that the Epistle was well calculated to instruct recently converted Jews and to fortify them against the temptation to return to the rites of the Levitical priesthood. Let us underline the essential points of St. Paul’s thought.

(1) Jesus is above the angels; they are only servants of God, but He is the Son of God by origin and by nature, the Creator and Master of all things: “For to which of the angels hath He said at any time: Thou are My Son, today have I begotten Thee? . . . But to which of the angels said He at any time: Sit Thou on My right hand, until I make Thy enemies Thy footstool”? And He excels the angels in obedience. They are faithful bearers of God’s words to men. How much more perfectly Jesus Christ became God’s messenger, God’s message!

He is higher than the angels not only because of the mysteries of His divine sonship and Incarnation, but also because of the Redemption, because He has suffered for love of us and His sufferings have an infinitely meritorious and satisfactory value. Abased during His earthly life, He is now crowned with glory because of His sufferings and death. “Wherefore it behooved Him in all things to be made like unto His brethren, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest before God, that He might be a propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that, wherein He Himself hath suffered and been tempted, He is able to succour them also that are tempted.”

(2) Jesus is greater than Moses, for Moses, the greatest of the prophets, was no more than a servant, whereas Christ is the Master Builder and Head of the house of God. Let us not, therefore, imitate the unbelief and disobedience of the early Israelites toward Moses by our attitude toward Jesus Christ. He is leading us to another land of promise far greater than that pledged to the Israelites. Let us heed His voice: “For the word of God is living and effectual, and more piercing than any two-edged sword; and

reaching into the division of the soul and the spirit, of the joints also and the marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Moses stammered out the name of God; Jesus is the substantial Utterance, the eternal Word of God come down upon earth to save us, and our hearts' secrets lie revealed before His eyes.

(3) Jesus is incomparably greater than the high priests of the Old Law. Three very understandable reasons make this clear to us. The high priests succeeded one another in office. Those claimed by death were succeeded by others who soon followed them into the shadows. But Christ continues forever and "hath an everlasting priesthood, whereby He is able to save forever them that come to God by Him; always living to make intercession for us."

Then, too, whereas the priests of the Old Law had first to offer sacrifice for their own sins and then for the people's, Jesus is "holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens," not for His own sake, but for ours, to be a fitting high priest for us.

Finally, the rites and sacrifices of Mosaic worship, though multiple, lacked efficacy of themselves, despite the external magnificence with which they were surrounded. The Old Law provided for a sacrifice for sin, suitable for penitents, a peace offering for purified souls to express their gratitude, and a holocaust or whole burnt offering to signify man's complete submission to God's sovereign law by offering Him as His due an act of perfect adoration. No less variety obtained in the matter of the sacrifice itself; doves, heifers, and the paschal lamb, a figure of the mysterious Lamb to come and take away the sins of the world, were all used. All these sacrifices had value only as figures of a unique sacrifice to be accomplished not in great exterior magnificence but in the perfect divestment of Golgotha. "But Christ, being come a high priest of the good things to come . . . neither by the blood of goats, or of calves, but by his own blood, entered once into the holies, having obtained eternal redemption." "For Jesus is not entered into the holies made with hands, the patterns of the true: but into heaven itself, that He may appear now in the presence of God for us."

Unlike the sacrifices of the Old Law, multiple but ineffectual of themselves, Christ's sacrifice is unique and perfect. His offering began when He came into the world: "Sacrifice and oblation Thou wouldst not: but a body Thou hast fitted to Me. Holocausts for sin did not please Thee. Then said I: Behold I come . . . that I should do Thy will, O God." This act

of oblation has never ceased being offered in Christ's heart. Although He no longer merits in heaven, His offering always continues, for He never ceases to make intercession for us.

The first lines of the Epistle to the Hebrews sum up this entire doctrine: "God, who, at sundry times and in divers manners, spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, last of all, in these days hath spoken to us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the world. Who being the brightness of His glory, and the figure of His substance, and upholding all things by the word of His power . . . sitteth on the right hand of the majesty on high." We could not ask for a more telling assertion of the divinity of Jesus than this, spoken to the first generation of Christians as an accepted dogma and infinitely precious treasure of the new-born Church.

ARTICLE II

THE PERFECTION OF CHRIST'S PRIESTHOOD

The teaching of the Epistle to the Hebrews is cast into exact terminology by theological and particularly Thomistic teaching concerning the priesthood in general and the perfection proper to it. The priest's office is to act as mediator between God and men: offering to God the prayers of the people, sacrifice especially, as being the most perfect act of the virtue of religion; bringing the things of God to the people (sacerdos sacra dans) by preaching the light of truth, and, through the administration of the sacraments, dispensing the grace necessary to fulfill God's law.

To accomplish the exterior and social worship due to God, the priestly mediation must both ascend to Him and descend from Him. Man, being composed of soul and body, owes God both interior and exterior worship, and living by nature in society, owes Him, too, social worship, God being no less the author and benefactor of human society than of our soul and body. We need the priest to bind into a single whole the prayers of all the people, to unify their acts of adoration, of praise, and of reparation, and to make up for the imperfection of the acts of the faithful. His sanctity, that is, his special consecration to the Lord for this purpose, makes him capable of offering the prayers of the people to God as an expression of their whole soul.

The priest is no less necessary to bring to the people the things of God, divine light and grace, without human alteration or adulteration, neither failing to differentiate between divine fire and poetic ardor, nor between sentimentality and piety. The priest should be indeed “the salt of the earth” and “the light of the world.”

The twofold priestly mediation takes place especially in sacrifice, the offering of the sacrifice forming the ascending mediation, and the sharing of the victim offered with the faithful by communion forming the descending mediation. Just as the priesthood constitutes the pre-eminent sacred function, so sacrifice, as its name indicates, forms the pre-eminent sacred action. Without sacrifice, no priesthood; without the priesthood, no sacrifice; for sacrifice supposes an offering priest and an offered victim. Why should there be an outward oblation and destruction or immolation? To express in a sensible way an inward oblation and immolation. Even the act of adoration expressed in genuflecting shows that we recognize, St. Thomas says, our weakness before God, bowing down before Him as an admission that of ourselves we are nothing, “quasi profitentes nos nihil esse ex nobis.”

If a simple genuflection has such symbolism, the sacrifice of adoration most vividly expresses the same truth: that, even when innocent, creatures are nothing of themselves; that God alone is Being, He who is, and in comparison to Him we are not, “Substantia mea tanquam nihilum ante te.” After creation, there was no more being than before, because infinite being already existed; after creation there were more beings, but no more being; more living things, but no more life; more minds, but no more wisdom, no more sanctity, no more love.

The great truth of God’s infinite fullness can be expressed only in a negative fashion in this life, by speaking of the nothingness of creatures, by saying that there would be no less being and no less perfection if every creature were annihilated. And over this nothingness that we are, the sovereign dominion of God must be exercised, the stars paying Him the tribute of their obedience all unwittingly, but we, with knowledge and freedom. To express God’s infinite greatness and sovereignty and our contrasting weakness and nothingness, man gives himself to God by offering Him something external in a certain way, annihilating it, as if to say: God alone is He who is; I am he who is not. This symbolic destruction

thus hymns the infinite greatness of the Most High and forms a sacrifice of adoration, which would have existed even if man had never sinned.

The recognition of God's sovereign dominion ought to be accompanied by an act of thanksgiving for all we have received from Him; to benefactors we offer the best that we have to give in order to express our gratitude to them. By sacrifice man also asks new graces of God to secure perseverance in goodness. Even before sin, the triple sacrifice of adoration, thanksgiving, and supplication was due to God in virtue of the natural law, which regulates the relations of creatures to their Creator.

After mortal sin, especially since it has affected the whole human race, man ought not only to recognize that of himself he is nothing, but he ought also to acknowledge his misery and his sin. Sin descends below nothingness because of its disorder and baseness. The man who has risen up against the principle of all order should recognize that he deserves to be put down, to undergo a punishment proportionate to his wrongdoing. He who has despised God's love and preferred the lowest goods to Him, who has lost the life of grace and has no right to the divine friendship, still owes his debt to sovereign Justice and should pay it. Urged by actual grace to repentance, man seeks to express the sorrow of "a contrite and humble heart," and takes from among the animals belonging to him the best, the purest, the gentlest, and, as if he wished to burden the animal with his crime, he then immolates it to the Lord, asking His pardon with this sacrifice of expiation or reparation.

The four great motives of sacrifice are then adoration, thanksgiving, petition, and expiation. In the Old Testament these four ends were often represented by different sacrifices. The unique sacrifice of the new alliance unites them all and realizes in a marvelous way a twofold mediation between God and man, offering adoration, gratitude, and reparation to God and bringing to man pardon and the new graces needed for his perseverance and growth in goodness.

Considered from this point of view both our Lord's sacrifice and His priesthood are the most perfect conceivable. The perfection of the priesthood results from the triple union of the priest with God, with the victim which he offers, and with the people for whom he offers it. The fathers and theologians of the Church frequently concern themselves with these considerations.

The holier a priest is, and the more united to God, the more perfect is his sacrifice, for a priest should make up by his sanctity for the people's imperfection in adoring, thanking, and petitioning God, and offering reparation to Him. The purer and more precious the victim and the more fully it is consumed in God's honor, the more perfect is the sacrifice. In the Old Law the holocaust was recognized as the most perfect of all sacrifices because the entire victim was consumed in God's honor to signify man's duty to offer his whole self to God.

A sacrifice gains in perfection according to the closeness of the union between priest and victim, the victim's external oblation and immolation being only a sign of the internal oblation and immolation in the priest's heart as he performs the greatest act of the virtue of religion.

Lastly, the more united priest and people are, the more perfect is the sacrifice. The priest should unify all the acts of adoration, thanksgiving, petition, and reparation offered by the faithful into one great elevation to God, lifting up, as it were, the soul of the whole people. As a consequence, the greater the number of people united to the priest, the greater is the homage paid to God and the more far-reaching are the effects of the sacrifice.

We have only to apply these principles to our Lord's priesthood to conclude immediately that none greater than His could be conceived. Christ Jesus, our priest, has no taint whatever of original or personal sin or any imperfection; He is holiness itself. Priest inasmuch as He is man and not inasmuch as He is God, He is a mediator and, under this title, less than God. Nevertheless, because Christ's humanity belongs to the Word made flesh, the priestly acts of Jesus proceed from His human intellect and will and yet have an infinitely meritorious and satisfactory value because they arise from the fountainhead of the divine personality of the Word. And even until now the Word made flesh keeps interceding for us through His human soul.

Furthermore, as head of the Church, our Lord received the fullness of created grace to pour out its overflow upon us, and a power of excellence to institute the sacraments. The sacraments He fashioned potent to produce and increase the divine life in us and the priesthood He made participant in His own. His sacrifice takes away all the sins of the world: Ecce Agnus Dei, qui tollit peccata mundi. If sin continues, it continues not because His sacrifice lacks virtue like those of the Old Law but because men often have no will to receive its fruits.

The victim of Calvary is worthy of Calvary's priest. Jesus could not have offered any other victim than Himself to His Father. As a figure of Christ, the youth Isaac allowed himself to be used for his father's sacrifice; but at the crucifixion Jesus made His own offering of Himself. "Therefore doth the Father love Me: because I lay down My life, that I may take it up again. No man taketh it from Me: but I lay it down of Myself, and I have power to lay it down: and I have power to take it up again. This commandment have I received of My Father."

This purest victim has infinite worth for it is the body of the Word of God, His blood, His torn and broken heart, His very soul, abandoned and full of sorrow. "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" His complete immolation makes reparation for the pride of life, the concupiscence of the flesh and of the eyes. The final humiliations, the overwhelming suffering, and perfect self-divestment are offered for love of us. No mind can think of a victim purer or more precious or more completely consumed in God's honor than our dying Jesus, the most perfect holocaust ever lifted up to God in the greatest anguish of body and soul.

The union between priest and victim could not be more intimate; nor the bond between the interior and exterior sacrifice straiter, because the priest Himself is the victim, not only as to His body, but also as to His heart and soul. The sorrow that pierces Him through arises from His charity in the face of the tremendous evil that His Father commissioned Him to blot out. It follows, then, that the priest, the Savior's minister, can become a living image of His adored Master only by becoming in some measure a victim like Him. We see this in the lives of the saints who win honor for the priesthood. If they have not endured martyrdom of body, they have undergone martyrdom of heart; otherwise their apostolate would not bear the likeness of the crucified Savior.

The union of priest and victim becomes more and more evident in the Cenacle, on Calvary, and after the resurrection. The Eucharist celebrated in the Cenacle is the beginning of the Passion as well as its consequence. Love prepares for suffering, and suffering perfects love. Suffering is the measure of love; and love, of suffering. Whoever loves God and is loved by Him becomes devoted to a life of suffering, as Jesus, our Savior and model, was. He speaks to His best friends of His love and of His passion, leading them to realize that He desires them to have a share in both that they may be intimately at one with Him.

The union between priest and people could not be closer than between Jesus and us. Jesus is the head of the mystical body; we are the members. From Him the fruit of His sacrifice, the life of grace nourished by Holy Communion, continually flows down to us. At the same time, through Him our acts of adoration, thanksgiving, petition, and reparation ascend to the Father in union with His and do more to please God than all the sins of men can achieve to displease Him.

Above all at Holy Mass are St. Paul's words verified: "Now you are the body of Christ, and members of member." "But doing the truth in charity, we may in all things grow up in Him who is the head, even Christ." "Christ is the head of the Church. He is the savior of His body." It is chiefly through the Mass, the perpetuation of the sacrifice of the cross, that these words of St. Paul continue to be realized until the end of time: "Christ also loved the Church, and delivered Himself up for it; that He might sanctify it, cleansing it by the laver of water in the word of life: that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish."

In the Sacrifice of the Mass the victim is the same as in the sacrifice of the cross, being present there substantially. The same High Priest offers the sacrifice, never ceasing to make intercession for us, continuing to offer Himself for us through the ministry of His priests by applying to us the fruits of His merits and giving Himself to us as our food. The Council of Trent expressed it thus: "For the victim is one and the same, the same now offering by the ministry of priests who then offered Himself on the cross, the manner alone of offering being different. The fruits of that bloody sacrifice, it is well understood, are received most abundantly through this unbloody one, so far is the latter from derogating in any way from the former."

On the cross the victim and the immolation were evident; the priest and His intention of offering a sacrifice for all mankind remained mysterious and hidden for many. To some Christ on the cross has nothing of victory about Him, but seems Himself vanquished by sin and Satan and His work destroyed. Since the resurrection, the priest as Christ's minister, the intention of offering sacrifice, and the offering itself are all evident; but the mystical and unbloody immolation wrought through the separate consecration and transubstantiation of the bread and wine changed into the body and blood of Christ is mysterious. On the altar Christ is represented in

the state of death, and so continues to offer Himself through the ministry of His priests until the end of time. The Cross and the Mass serve to illuminate one another in a wonderful way. What lies concealed in the Cross becomes manifest in the Mass; and what remains mysterious in the Mass stands out clearly in the Cross. Both hold in common the principal priest, His interior act of oblation, and the victim offered; that is, each contains the substance of the sacrifice.

Since Jesus came into the world His interior act of oblation has never been absent from His heart. This act continues in heaven, the ever-living Christ never ceasing to make intercession for us. His act is no longer meritorious, because He has reached the end of His journey; but it applies to us the merits of the crucifixion and remains ever an act of adoration of infinite worth, an oblation alone worthy of the victim offered. “Idem nunc offerens sacerdotum ministerio.”

Together with Himself Christ offers His Church militant, His suffering members, who do what they can to make up for what is wanting in the sufferings of Christ, not that the passion of Jesus of itself lacks anything, but it needs to find its reflection and application in His members throughout the centuries; and Jesus Himself accomplished what suffering remains to be done in His mystical body, really configuring us to His own image.

After the last Mass, when the world has passed away, no sacrifice of expiation or of impetration will endure. Sacrifice properly so called will be over; the time of symbols and figures and sacraments will have passed; we shall see God face to face. Christ will no longer ask of His Father the remission of our sins, the grace for us to avoid sin. Yet His priesthood will be no less eternal: Tu es sacerdos in aeternum. If sacrifice will no longer exist, there will be the consummation of sacrifice. Jesus in a perfect and eternal act of adoration and thanksgiving, will continue His interior offering of Himself and His wholly glorified mystical body.

St. Augustine speaks of this eternal adoration and thanksgiving in his work De praedestinatione sanctorum; and the Church associates us even in this world with the worship of the elect when she has us sing at Mass, Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus. . . . Christ is “a high priest of the good things to come.” He has entered once and for all into the holy of holies, and the blessed are enriched with glory merited by Him as the consummation of His sacrifice. “For the glory of God hath enlightened it (the city of God), and the Lamb is the lamp thereof.”

ARTICLE III

THE FORMAL CAUSE OF CHRIST'S PRIESTHOOD

Theologians ask what formally constitutes our Lord's priesthood, what corresponds in Jesus to the priestly character in His ministers. Is it the substantial grace of personal union with the Word, by which Jesus is the Holy One, the Sanctifier, and Mediator? Or is it rather the created habitual grace received into His sacred soul, constituting Him head of the mystical body and exercising His influence immediately on the members of that body?

The Carmelites of Salamanca maintain that what formally constitutes Christ's priesthood is habitual created grace (gratia capitis) so far as it presupposes and connotes the grace of union. According to this view, the same grace that designates Christ as head of the Church also makes Him our priest.

Other theologians, many Thomists among them, come to the apparently correct conclusion that what formally constitutes the priesthood of Jesus Christ is the grace of union, because of which He is the Holy One, the Sanctifier, and Mediator. To be priest and universal mediator, the offerer of a sacrifice of infinite value, means more than to be head of mankind. In the state of innocence Adam was mankind's head (caput naturae elevatae), but he had no power as priest and mediator to offer a sacrifice of infinite worth. The formal cause of Christ's priesthood would therefore seem to be the grace of substantial union with the Word, which makes Him God's anointed. The grace of union implies in fact a unique priestly vocation and is the principle of created habitual grace, by which Christ, the head of the Church, immediately influences His members and communicates supernatural life to them. All these gifts are essential to His priesthood, but the grace of union is its formal constituent.

Such seems to be St. Thomas' thought in those passages treating of Christ as the universal mediator. To his mind, Jesus as man acts as mediator between God and men by the grace of the hypostatic union, through which He touches the two extremes to be reunited or reconciled, God and mankind. His substantial grace of union with the Word sanctifies Jesus, giving Him not an accidental sanctity like ours, which proceeds from created habitual grace, a divinely engrafted accident in the soul, but a substantial sanctity, acting as the principle of His infinitely meritorious and

satisfactory human acts. Now among these acts, the offering of the sacrifice of the cross, substantially perpetuated in the Mass, is His greatest priestly act. While Christ's ministers are constituted priests by an indelible accident or mark imprinted on their souls, the priestly character, Jesus Himself is our priest by reason of the substantial grace of union, which makes Him the saint of saints.

He is a priest, therefore, because of the Incarnation itself, and His priesthood, like His sanctity, is substantial. God decreed the Incarnation and called Jesus to the priesthood and to His universal mediatorship by one and the same act. For Jesus to communicate His holiness to us, He had to be the head of humanity as well, through habitual grace, the proximate principle of meritorious and satisfactory acts.

Bossuet, in speaking of the nature of Christ's priesthood, has the same thing to say.

O Christ! O Messias! You who were expected and given under the sacred name signifying the Lord's anointed! teach me, in the excellence of Your unction, the origin and basis of Christianity. . . . O Christ! The Psalmist saw You under this name when he sang: "Thy throne, O God is forever and ever . . . therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness." When the angel Gabriel announced the exact time of Your coming, he made it known by saying that the saint of saints would be anointed and that the Anointed, the Christ, would be slain. And You Yourself, of what did You preach in the synagogue when You told Your mission? What did You choose but that beautiful text from Isaias, "The spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because the Lord hath anointed Me"? "For God doth not give the Spirit by measure," says St. John, but without measure and with perfect fullness. . . . Jesus is therefore anointed by the Holy Ghost, having the Holy Ghost within Him because of His divinity and thus made Christ and by this divine union our anointed king, high priest, and prophet.

Come, Jesus, eternal Son of God, without mother in heaven and without Father on earth. In You we see and acknowledge a royal descent; but Your priesthood can come to You and be held by You only from Him who has said to You: "Thou art My son, this day have I begotten Thee." To possess a divine priesthood one must be born of God; You have Your vocation by eternal birth. The privilege of Your priesthood has been established by an unshakable oath, without repentance and without alteration: "The Lord hath sworn, and He will not repent, Thou art a priest forever." You alone are the

eternal priest; yet You have left us priests as Your delegates, without power to offer any other victim than that which You onetime offered upon the cross and which You now offer eternally at the right hand of the Father.

Pope Pius XI in an allocution (December 28, 1925) also said that the Omoousios became man and poured out and still pours out His inexhaustible and infinite person in Jesus Christ, who is consecrated priest by this union, called by theologians substantial: “E unicamente perche l’Omoousios di Nicea si è incarnato . . . che si effuse e si effonde, inesauribile ed infinita, in Gesu Christo, quella che i teologi chaimano unzione sostanziale, che los consecrava sacerdote.”

To end with a practical conclusion, it would be impossible to recommend too strongly that interior souls have a great devotion to the consecration, the very essence of the Sacrifice of the Mass, the most solemn moment of each day. It is, Bossuet says, “the action of Jesus Christ, setting His body on one side and His blood on the other by virtue of His words, showing Himself to God under the imagery of death and burial, honoring Him as Lord of life and death, plainly acknowledging His sovereign majesty by the most perfect obedience . . . even to the death of the cross. The oblation made on the altar is but a mystical death and immolation. The Lamb is nevertheless there, and the blood too in its entirety, and it is shed, although in a hidden and mysterious manner, that to each may be applied what was once offered for all.”

When Christ instituted the Eucharist He lifted His eyes to heaven and His face shone. He burned with desire to annihilate Himself in a way under the species of bread and wine, in order to remain really and substantially among us until the end of time, giving Himself to us as our food. At the moment of consecration, the priest, as the minister of the universal Mediator, lifts his eyes to heaven and should also ardently desire to unite himself to the oblation of Christ ever living to make intercession for us. Christ never ceases to offer to the Father, together with the offering of Himself, all the living members of His mystical body, particularly those who follow His example and suffer some little of what He has suffered.

At the moment of consecration, the faithful assisting at Holy Mass should also unite themselves to the oblation of the eternal Priest, who continues to offer Himself through the ministry of His priests, as the Council of Trent tells us. Interior souls should offer Christ’s sacred body and precious blood to His Father in union with our Lord. Under the inspiration of the Holy

Ghost they too offer themselves and should ask to love the future crosses reserved for them from all eternity by Providence to purify them and make them cooperate in some measure in the great mystery of the Redemption. People and communities who live deeply united to the act of consecration enjoy Christ’s love to an eminent degree and, as it is said in the beautiful prayer to the Eucharistic Heart, they enter more and more deeply into the secrets of divine union and find great peace therein, whatever trials may come to them. They dispose themselves to renew this act with special fervor at the hour of death, to make it a perfect sacrifice of adoration, of supplication, of reparation, and of thanksgiving, capable of immediately opening the gates of heaven for them.

CHAPTER XV

THE KINGSHIP OF CHRIST

> "All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth."
>
> Matt. 28: 18

The Church's doctrine on our Lord's priesthood receives a happy complement from what the liturgy for the feast of Christ the King teaches us about His universal kingship over minds and hearts.

The present era, with the Bolshevist movement ravaging Russia with satanic fury and now attempting to spread through the Orient and threatening all Europe, drives home to us the fact that, when the spirit of Christ no longer reigns, the deadly spirit of evil takes its place. The League of Nations refused to recognize God's rights over men and therefore, by failing to recognize the principle of order, showed itself radically powerless to re-establish order.

As Cardinal Mercier wrote in his pastoral letter of 1918: "The principal crime which the world is expiating at the present time is the official apostasy of nations." His Eminence added: "That religious indifference which places divine religion and the invented religions of men on the same footing, and surrounds them all with the same skepticism, I do not hesitate to call blasphemy. More than all the sins of individuals and of families, it calls down upon society the chastisement of God."

Secularism denies God's rights over human society and commits the crime of "lèse-divinité," of high treason against the Author of society, the greatest evil of the modern world. To make reparation for this crime, we must extol Jesus Christ as the universal king of individuals, families, and societies. If Christ's universal kingship is proclaimed and His social reign recognized, one of the chief errors of the modern world will be struck at its very root.

Interior souls especially should live more by this great thought and their worship of Christ's kingship should include both adoration and reparation. It has seemed worthwhile, therefore, to consider our Lord's royal character in relation to the interior life, which should be the soul of all exterior worship, whether individual or social.

With this thought in mind, let us see: (1) what Sacred Scripture tells us of Christ's universal kingship; (2) its nature, basis, and excellence; (3) the way Jesus exercises His universal royal power.

ARTICLE I

CHRIST'S UNIVERSAL KINGSHIP IN HOLY SCRIPTURE

The Messianic texts that foretell the future Christ, make increasingly plain His attributes as universal king. Genesis announces that the peoples of the earth shall be blessed in Him and that He shall be the expected of the nations. Numbers says that out of Jacob shall arise the true ruler.

Psalm 2 represents the Messiah as a person distinct from the Father, whom the Father calls His real son, who has all peoples as His heritage: "The Lord hath said to Me: Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee. Ask of Me, and I will give Thee the Gentiles for Thy inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for Thy possession. . . . And now, O ye kings, understand: receive instruction, you that judge the earth. Serve ye the Lord with fear: and rejoice unto Him with trembling."

Psalm 109 describes Christ's kingship and His priesthood: "The Lord said to my Lord: Sit thou at My right hand; Until I make thy enemies thy footstool. The Lord will send forth the scepter of thy power out of Sion: rule thou in the midst of thy enemies. . . . He shall judge among nations."

Psalm 71, Deus, judicium regi da, announces the justice, peace, and prosperity of the reign of the Messiah: "And He shall rule from sea to sea. . . . And all kings of the earth shall adore Him; all nations shall serve Him. For He shall deliver the poor from the mighty: and the needy that had no helper. . . . Let His name be blessed for evermore: His name continueth before the sun. And in Him shall all the tribes of the earth be blessed: all nations shall magnify Him."

Isaias likewise proclaims: "The government is upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, God the Mighty, the Father

of the world to come, the Prince of peace . . . to establish it and strengthen it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth and forever."

Daniel also speaks of this kingdom when he says that a little stone will first overthrow and break into pieces the colossus with clay feet and then become a great mountain filling the whole earth.

Zacharias extols the virtues of his humble and poor but just and saving King: "Behold thy King will come to thee, the just and savior: He is poor."

If the Old Testament so clearly and frequently declares the Savior's universal kingship, we would expect the New Testament to be even more explicit; and so it is. The archangel Gabriel, announcing to Mary the birth of her Son, said of Him: "The Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of David His father; and He shall reign in the house of Jacob forever." "Cujus regni not erit finis," as we say in the Credo. In the adoration of the Magi, kings reveal Him as a universal king, for these men who offered gold, frankincense, and myrrh to Him as a king sent by God were not Jews but Gentiles.

In His public life Jesus exercised His supreme power in different ways. He brought to perfection the divine law given to men through Moses. He showed Himself as Lord of the divinely instituted Sabbath. With a single word He forgave sins and brought souls as well as bodies back to life. By His miracles He manifested His power over the whole of material and spiritual creations. The very angels gladly subjected themselves to Him and served Him.

At the end of His public life Jesus entered Jerusalem in triumph to hear the crowd cry out: "Hosanna to the son of David." . . . "Blessed be the king who cometh in the name of the Lord, peace in heaven, and glory on high!" As St. Matthew records, it had been declared in the Old Testament: "Tell ye the daughter of Sion: Behold thy king cometh to thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of her that is used to the yoke." The garb of humility is worthy of Him who came into the world to trample human greatness underfoot; and, as Bossuet says, we cannot help but be struck by the fact that, although Jesus fled to the mountains when the people wished to make Him a temporal king after the multiplication of the loaves of bread, He accepted the Palm Sunday acclamations of the crowd in public testimony of His spiritual kingship. He entered Jerusalem to consummate the work of our redemption and to win His kingdom. The Pharisees, provoked by the people's acclamations, said to Him, "Master, rebuke Thy

disciples." And He answered them, "I say to you, that if these shall hold their peace, the stones will cry out."

Jesus makes His point even more forcefully by refusing all the outward honors of temporal kingship and then confessing during His passion that He is a king. Never was He greater or more dignified than during those hours of humiliation and ignominy. As Bossuet says, He who had never spoken to His disciples of His kingship revealed it to Pilate; He who made no reference to it when He was working miracles proclaimed it while suffering the torments of His passion.

He desires us to understand that He holds His spiritual sovereignty over our souls not only by right of birth but also by His death as our Redeemer. Pilate said to Him, "Art Thou the king of the Jews?" And Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world." That is, My kingdom has its origin elsewhere and My rule is exercised otherwise than in the kingdoms of this world. Pilate insists, "Art Thou a king then?" And Jesus answers: "Thou sayest, that I am a king. For this was I born, and for this came I into the world; that I should give testimony to the truth. Everyone that is of the truth, heareth My voice." That is to say, I am king not only of the Jews but of all those who hear My testimony of truth.

Jesus is a king, but a king of poverty and sorrow, winning His right to rule His spiritual realm by His passion. In mockery the Jews gave Him a crown of thorns for a diadem, and a fragile reed for a scepter, not understanding the symbolism of the crown of thorns which they bestowed nor seeing the infinite value of the drops of blood with which Christ jeweled it. Pilate had our Lord's title of kingship written above Him on the cross in the three most widely known languages of the ancient world, Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, in order that all might know of it. The Jews protested, but Pilate, until that moment so weak, stubbornly held to what he had written.

Jesus is a king, but a crucified king, a redeemer king because of His suffering. "His cross is His throne, His blood is His royal purple, His torn flesh is His power." Who understood all this as Jesus hung dying? She who shared His sufferings and His kingship, Mary, the co-redemptrix.

God's kingdom is now established. Our King, by His crucifixion, has redeemed us from the slavery of sin and Satan; three days after His death His mysterious victory over sin is manifested in a striking way by His victory over death, the consequence and chastisement of sin. The risen

Jesus then says to His apostles: “All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth. Going therefore, teach ye all nations. . . . Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.”

The resurrection restores Christ’s glory to Him, and in the Apocalypse St. John contemplates His triumph in heaven, seeing Him on a throne of splendor, with His name written on His garment Rex regum, Dominus dominorum, King of kings and Lord of lords, the supreme Judge rendering to every man according to his works.

St. Paul tells the Philippians that Jesus holds His universal kingship by right of inheritance because of His equality with God, and by right of conquest because “He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross. For which cause God also hath exalted Him, and hath given Him a name which is above all names: that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth: and that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father.” “For He must reign. . . . And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then the Son also Himself shall be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.”

Among the Fathers who spoke most distinctly of Christ’s universal and kingly sovereignty, we should cite St. Justin, St. Irenaeus, St. Ephrem, St. Cyril of Alexandria, and St. Ambrose, who wrote: “Rightly was the title of king placed on the cross, because from it radiated the kingly majesty of Jesus.” The liturgy salutes Christ as the King of glory in the Te Deum, “Tu rex gloriae, Christe”; in the Advent antiphons it calls Him the King of nations, “O Rex gentium”; and for the feast of Corpus Christi it addresses Him as “Christum Regem dominantem gentibus,” the Lord and ruler of earth’s peoples. The Mass for the feast of Christ the King summarizes the whole doctrine in the brevity of a collect: “Almighty, everlasting God, who in Thy beloved Son, King of the whole world, hast willed to restore all things anew; grant in Thy mercy that all the families of nations, rent asunder by the wound of sin, may be subjected to His most gentle rule.”

ARTICLE II

THE NATURE, BASIS, AND EXCELLENCE OF CHRIST’S KINGSHIP

When we think of kingship two kinds come to mind: first, temporal kingship, ordered to promote the temporal good of society; and secondly, spiritual kingship, with the direction of all men to the supernatural happiness of a future life as its end. Had Christ a temporal kingship over the whole world? So far as He is God and Creator, He is most surely the absolute Master of the universe in the temporal as well as in the spiritual order. But so far as He is man, had He royal temporal power? The majority of theologians answer that He had it by right but in fact willed not to exercise it.

St. Thomas and St. Antoninus as well teach that, although Christ was constituted king by God Himself, He did not will to have on earth the temporal administration of an earthly realm. This doctrine, well defended by the Carmelites of Salamanca, has become more and more common today and was sanctioned by the encyclical Quas primas of December 11, 1925. If some theolgians have doubted or denied that Jesus as man possessed royal temporal power, this is owing to the fact that they have considered the question from too narrow a point of view.

Following the Carmelites of Salamanca, Father Hugon justly remarks:

It is not enough to say that Jesus is simply a spiritual king, for that means putting limits to a kingship which Scripture and tradition attribute to Him without reserve. Let us look at the question in a higher and more general way and say: The whole Christ, the Redeemer, our blessed Savior, who subsists in two natures, the divine and the human, is a king in the completest sense of the word, ruling in the temporal as well as in the spiritual order, without restriction. . . . He who said, “All power is given to me in heaven and in earth,” is Christ in His two natures, the visible Christ, speaking to His apostles. Now nothing is excluded from His empire, absolute on earth as well as in heaven. . . . St. Paul states the same truth when he says: “All things are put under Him; undoubtedly, he is excepted, who put all things under Him.” “All,” in the temporal as in the spiritual order, all except the Father, to whom He is subject. What is meant is that Christ reigns not only in His divine nature, because of which He has no need for the Father to subject all creatures to Him, but also in His human nature, because of which He can receive the government of the universe.

As a consequence of the hypostatic union, Jesus has received sovereign dominion over all things, being constituted by God the judge of the living and of the dead, of kings as well as of subjects, and, as St. Peter says, “Lord

of all." Therefore the liturgy calls Him the King of nations, "O Rex gentium . . . veni et salva hominem quem de limo formasti."

In fact, however, Jesus willed not to exercise His temporal power in the world. He freely chose a poor and humble life, and payed the tribute like anyone else, although He had no obligation to do so. Moreover, after the multiplication of the loaves when the people were dazzled by the miracle and carried away by dreams of material prosperity and wished to make Him king, Jesus saw that they looked for an entirely earthly magnificence and He left them, fleeing away into the mountains alone.

The apostles themselves, laboring under the same delusion, believed that He was going to found a temporal kingdom, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee came asking that they might have the first two places in the new realm. Our Lord answered: "You know not what you ask. Can you drink the chalice that I shall drink?" Up until the time of the ascension the apostles still held a mistaken view on this subject, and at the very moment when Jesus was about to ascend into heaven they asked Him, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" They had not yet really grasped Jesus' answer to the Pharisees: "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation. Neither shall they say: Behold here, or behold there. For lo, the kingdom of God is within you."

Jesus shows us by these words that His kingship belongs first of all to the spiritual order. He wields His royal power by ascendency, by attraction, by love, by intellectual, moral, and supernatural authority over minds, wills, and hearts. By it He has founded a spiritual society, the Church, and holds the place of its head by a double title: first, as His birthright; for He is the Word made flesh, the Son of God, and thus inherits from His Father the right to command all men; secondly, as His by right of conquest; for we have been unfaithful, becoming traitors to our king, and He has won us back by wresting our souls from the slavery of sin and Satan, buying us back with a great price. And we, by our baptismal vows freely renewed, have recognized His sovereign authority over us.

Christ's spiritual and temporal authority has the excellence of supremacy, leading all souls of good will to eternal happiness. It is an authority with power not only over bodies but over souls, not only over people, but over all kings and heads of states as well, the authority of the Son of God, Himself subject to the Father alone. Christ's authority belongs to the

greatest intellect, the most loving heart, the most upright, kindest, and strongest will, and implies also the power of legislator and supreme judge.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus declared Himself the equal of the divine Legislator of Sinai by claiming that He had come to complete the Old Law. He repeated His assertion more than once: “You have heard that it was said to them of old; . . . but I say to you . . .” Perfecting the Old Law of fear, He made the New Law a law of grace and love. “A new commandment I give unto you: That you love one another, as I have loved you, that you also love one another.” “Love your enemies, . . . pray for them that persecute and calumniate you.”

He is also the supreme judge, as His words to the apostles show: “And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: And whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven.” He declared that He would one day come to judge the living and the dead.

His supreme authority is consequently universal, extending to all places, to all times, to all creatures; for Jesus has command even of the angels, the ministers of His kingdom. By right all things are now subject to Him; in fact at His second coming all will be subject to Him on earth as in heaven. In regard to Him no one can remain neutral. “He that is not with Me, is against Me.” We cannot be neutral in regard to the final end of life; if we have no desire for it, we turn away from it.

The universal kingship of Jesus orders all things toward their ultimate end; He is “the way, the truth, and the life.” He leads souls to eternal life, there to enjoy God face to face and to love Him above all things with the absolute certainty of never losing Him by sin. Herein the infinite goodness of our King shows itself strong with nothing of weakness about it. The kings of earth seek to obtain temporal goods for their people by imperfect and often impotent means. Christ leads us effectually to our last supernatural end, to everlasting happiness; He bestows upon us His light, His strength, His life, and His love to bring us there, giving Himself as our food to restore our strength and to communicate His life to us. Only those who obstinately refuse to let Him lead them, to let Him save them, who scorn His divine love and will not be drawn to Him as He wills to draw them, fail to reach their goal.

Yet even the enemies of Jesus glorify Him indirectly. The obstacles they raise up against Him He transforms into means; persecutors serve to bring glory to martyrs, and that greatest of all obstacles, the cross, becomes the

marvelous instrument of our salvation. A day will come when all Christ's unrelenting enemies will be finally and fully overcome. Then if He does not reign over them by mercy, He will reign over them by justice, as the Messianic psalm expresses it: "Thou shalt rule them with a rod of iron, and shalt break them in pieces like a potter's vessel." Even now hell trembles whenever we call upon His name.

But to men of good will, whose good will itself is evoked by His grace, He will be sweetness and peace, Princeps pacis. As the Apocalypse says: "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and death shall be no more, nor mourning nor crying nor sorrow." He will have vanquished death after having triumphed over sin, the cause of sorrow and death in the actual plan of Providence. The reign of our King is our happiness and our salvation. He rules us in perfect peace, in the tranquility of order radiating from Him upon us all.

ARTICLE III

THE EXERCISE OF CHRIST'S ROYAL POWER

Christ wields His royal power with wisdom unparalleled and goodness compounded of strength and sweetness, neglecting no smallest detail in its universality, whether in matters of Church government or of the intimate direction of souls.

Jesus exercises His royal power over civil society with prudence. He has the right to require not only that society should not be ruled by the atheistic principles of secularism, destructive of family and country alike, but also that it should be governed according to the principles of Christian law. He has the right to demand not only that national leaders should refrain from denying divine authority, the basis of their own, but also that they should recognize it publicly and submit to it themselves. Christ Jesus, the incarnation of truth, goodness, and justice, has a right to be taught in schools, to be carried to the sick in hospitals, to be represented in courts of justice when oaths are taken. He has a right to public worship in our cities, and the heads of nations will be judged if they have violated the imprescriptible law of Christ the King or if they have tried to stay neutral toward Him.

Our Lord comes to the aid of all who beg His help, inspiring their leaders to conform themselves and their institutions to the spirit of the gospel; to respect, for example, the divine law concerning the unity and indissolubility of marriage, to govern for the security of all, to procure a temporal peace subordinate to peace of soul and eternal life.

In the Church, Christ exercises His spiritual kingship by governing it through His vicar and the ecclesiastical hierarchy: that is, the bishops, pastors, and superiors of religious orders. Heresy and schism have often sought to divide Christ's realm, but the Church will remain one and indefectible until the end of time despite the efforts of hell against it. Christ is in His Church as once He was in Peter's boat; now as then a word from Him suffices to calm the tempest.

Our Lord is not only the absolute Master but the living head of His kingdom, directing all, bestowing life through the sacraments, giving regeneration to souls through baptism, later confirming them, sanctifying marriages, restoring grace by absolution, increasing it through Communion, sustaining those in their last agony, and leading all to eternal life. He inspires His ministers, enlightens His doctors, strengthens His missioners, protects His virgins, upholds Christian families, and fructifies vocations. Whatever human imperfections we find in His Church, He allows in view of a greater good until the time comes when evil will be definitively vanquished.

In the interior direction of souls Jesus exerts His kingly power in a profound and hidden way. Only He and His Father know what marvels take place within souls, although the lives of the saints from time to time reveal to us something of what will be fully known only on the last day. Jesus enlightens our souls interiorly with illuminations of faith, with gifts of wisdom, of understanding, of knowledge, and of counsel. He attracts and consoles us, inspiring us with filial piety for His Father, for Himself, and for His Blessed Mother. He prompts us to make good resolutions and strengthens us to keep them.

Jesus as God has sent us the Holy Ghost; as man He has received the fullness of the Spirit's gifts and He desires to share them with us. If we abandon ourselves completely to Him, He will fill us with His graces, and we shall receive more and more life from Him, growing in experimental knowledge of the Te Deum, "Tu Rex gloriae, Christe, and those words of

the Credo which lifted St. Teresa into an ecstasy of joy, “Cujus regni non erit finis.”

It is fitting, therefore, that we pay Christ’s royal sovereignty special worship, particularly now when atheistic secularism is making greater and greater efforts to destroy it. The official apostasy of nations constitutes a crime calling for reparation by exterior as well as interior worship and by public as well as private acknowledgment of Christ’s sovereignty. Such reparation can find no better expression than in the solemn, sincere, deep, and effective recognition of Christ’s kingship over minds, wills, and hearts, over nations and over heads of nations. “For He must reign. . . . And when all things shall be subdued unto Him then the Son also Himself shall be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.”

The purifications of the senses and of the soul discussed earlier in this work assure the complete reign of Jesus in our souls, for they lead us to that pure love of the Savior which finds all things in Him and seeks nought else besides. Realizing this, St. John of the Cross tells us: “To possess all, desire nothing. When thou thinkest upon anything, thou ceasest to cast thyself upon the All. . . . Thou must possess without desiring; for, if thou wilt have anything, thou hast not thy treasure purely in God.” And the liturgy speaks to us of God as the greatness of the humble, lifting up the lowly to His own exalted heights.

CHAPTER XVI

EXEMPLAR FOR OUR FREE WILL: CHRIST'S IMPECCABLE LIBERTY

> "Whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin . . . if therefore the son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed."
>
> John 8: 34, 36

A life of union with God implies the use of our liberty in such a way that it becomes more and more confirmed in its choice of God, modeling itself on our Lord's impeccable liberty, a subject now to be considered in relation to the interior life.

The Church has defined that Jesus has two wills, as He has two intellects, a divine and uncreated will proper to His divine nature, and a human will proper to His human nature. Indeed if Jesus had not, below His divine will, a human will, He would not be really man and He could neither obey nor merit, for obedience and merit presuppose submission of will to another and higher will. The human will of Jesus contains a great mystery and a great lesson.

The great mystery consists in this, that, although our Lord's will was impeccable even while on earth, it was perfectly free in meriting, not merely with the kind of freedom admitted by the Jansenists, which is nothing else but spontaneity (libertas a coactione), but with the true liberty required for meriting. Jesus could not have disobeyed His Father; yet He obeyed Him freely. How can obedience be free and meritorious when disobedience is not possible? So great is this mystery that some theologians, not seeing how they could avoid contradiction in admitting both truths, have maintained that the Father gave no command to Jesus and laid no obligation upon Him to die for us but merely proposed the sacrifice to Him, and He freely accepted it.

This solution is foreign to the doctrine of the great masters and has no foundation in Holy Scripture. On the contrary, more than once in the Gospels Jesus speaks of having received a command from His Father to die for us: “No man taketh it [life] away from Me: but I lay it down of Myself, and I have power to lay it down: and I have power to take it up again. This commandment have I received of My Father.” After the Last Supper, just before the Passion, our Lord again says: “I will not now speak many things to you. For the prince of this world cometh, and in Me he hath not anything. But that the world may know, that I love the Father: and as the Father hath given Me commandment, so do I. Arise, let us go hence.”

St. Paul refers to an order and not simply to a counsel when he says to the Philippians that Jesus Christ “humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross.” Besides, other divine precepts constituted an obligation for our Lord’s human liberty: “If you keep My commandments, you shall abide in My love; as I also have kept My Father’s commandments, and do abide in His love.”

How then could Christ be at once impeccable and perfectly free in His obedience? This mystery will always remain obscure to us in this life, but it seems impossible only to those who entertain the world’s idea of liberty rather than the saints’. The saints consider liberty freedom for good; as such Christ possessed it in a sovereign degree; whereas the world looks upon liberty as freedom for evil just as much as freedom for good. Here a light is given to us for contemplation and for action, a great lesson on the relationship between free will and deliverance from sin.

The better to understand it, let us see: (1) the world’s notion of liberty; (2) Christ’s liberty on earth; (3) the liberty of the saints.

ARTICLE I

THE WORLD’S NOTION OF LIBERTY

The world holds liberty to be the ability to choose between good and evil, between duty and the whims of egoism, the power to withdraw from law and authority. The world then readily puts opposition between freedom and authority and seems to feel itself at liberty only when it has escaped from some obligation, from what it terms servile obedience, believing itself really free when it can say with Satan, “I will not serve, I will not obey.” Or,

if it achieves some good, it desires to do so not because God has commanded it but because it results in some satisfaction or entails the development of the natural faculties.

What the world calls liberty has no patience with restraint or rule, flees the wise directions of authority, and rushes toward real servitude, toward a fall, and sometimes into vileness. We escape God's holy commandments only to be made slaves of our own passions, which throw off the rule of reason and soon become its masters: "Whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin." The sinner is no longer led by right reason, but allows himself to be driven by inordinate inclinations and, wherever he goes, he carries his slavery with him.

In one of His most beautiful parables, Jesus has shown us the world's view of liberty and to what a downfall it leads. The prodigal son, impatient to use his freedom to throw off his father's authority, asks for his share of the inheritance, and his father gives it to him. "And not many days after, the younger son, gathering all together, went abroad into a far country: and there wasted his substance, living riotously." Liberty was not enough for him; he had to have license, and license leads to misery. "And after he had spent all, there came a mighty famine in that country: and he began to be in want. And he went and cleaved to one of the citizens of that country. And he sent him into his farm to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks the swine did eat; and no man gave unto him."

The story of the prodigal is re-enacted daily in the realm of the spiritual. How many souls who had faith, hope, and charity and lived in their heavenly Father's house, have asked Him for their share of the inheritance that they might use their liberty as they liked! They have given up being directed by faith in order to direct themselves, to be guided, so they say, by reason; but then they fall below reason into egoism, pride, and sensuality. Their passions enslave them, take turns at ruling them and make war upon one another. They become slaves of this poor world, bound by conventions that are often ridiculous. Unwilling to submit to God's holy laws, they find themselves obliged to bow down before the silly caprices of those who set the fashion in artistic, intellectual, and moral matters. It would be bad enough if there were nothing worse than absurdity in such fashions, but they harbor sacrilege and blasphemy as well. The liberty of this world is the most abject slavery.

The story of the prodigal is repeated by entire peoples who have abandoned the faith and obedience to the commandments of God and the Church in order to follow the principles of modern liberalism. And what have they received from liberalism in return? It has led to tyranny, to the oppression of the good by the wicked, who make whatever laws they deem fit, as dictated by their egoism, their religious indifference, or their positive hatred for all that is great and good.

In the liberalism that rises up against the authority of God and of the Church we find in its fullness the world's conception of liberty. Liberalism is essentially a doctrine that man and society have no obligation to receive divine revelation, no matter how evident its confirmatory signs may be. Each man is free to live without religion or to choose among religions the one that he prefers, as if God had no absolute right to be believed when He speaks and confirms His utterance with unmistakable signs; as if it mattered little whether God has spoken or not; as if man could be saved without faith in the divine word; as if contradictory religions could both be equally true and divine; as if states should and could remain neutral toward truth and error, religion and blasphemy, the Church and secret societies.

The heresy of liberalism consists in the denial of God's rights and the proclamation of the absolute independence of human freedom, which is thus placed above God and wears an air of charity and of generosity toward the cult and faithful of all sects alike. Here we have no partial heresy but the rejection of all religious obligations, the acting as if God had no rights whatever, as if divine authority were only a vain word. We can clearly see in a society ambitious to be called modern the aberrations stemming from the world's notion of liberty. Assuredly, if we understand liberty thus, we cannot understand how Christ was free, for He never withdrew from the divine authority and could not exempt Himself from nor escape the commandments of His Father.

ARTICLE II

CHRIST'S LIBERTY ON EARTH

Looking at Christ's liberty from below, we find it incomprehensible to us; looking at it from above, as a reflection of the divine perfections, we become enlightened by it. Christ never had freedom for evil, but only for

good; His human will was the most perfect and the greatest living image of the divine liberty on earth.

From all eternity, infinitely above the false liberty of the world, the principle of all servitude, there exists a most holy liberty, the principle of all freedom. God in His infinite happiness and holiness is sovereignly impeccable and sovereignly free. If He sinned, He would no longer be God; to sin is to turn away from the Sovereign Good. How could God turn away from Himself? He is absolutely impeccable and nevertheless infinitely free, free not in relation to Himself, because He necessarily loves Himself, but in regard to creatures, whom He can create or not, and whom He can thereafter fill with His gifts according to His own measure.

"The Spirit breathes where He will" with sovereign liberty. The divine seed which He implants in different souls has not all the same life and beauty but is given according to His good pleasure. Why was Joseph chosen rather than any other man of Nazareth to act as father and provider for Jesus? Why was he predestined before birth for this high mission? Because such was God's good pleasure. God is perfectly free to choose whom He pleases as an instrument of His mercy. He is free to call workers at the last hour to labor in His vineyard and to give them as much out of His bounty as He gives those who worked the whole day long. He defrauds no one, but freely and gratuitously gives more to some than to others. His sovereign liberty renders account to no man, and is yet plainly and fully reconciled with absolute impeccability. God cannot turn away from Himself, but He is perfectly free in regard to everything created. He has no liberty for evil, like ours, which indicates our defectibility, but He has freedom for good in absolute plenitude.

Regarded in relation to the heights of divine liberty, the mystery of Christ's human liberty becomes wonderfully illumined for us. Not only as God, but also as man, Jesus is impeccable. He could say to His enemies, "Which of you shall convince Me of sin?" for not only had He never sinned in fact, but He could not sin, having no freedom to do evil.

Jesus was impeccable during His lifetime on earth for three reasons. First of all, He was impeccable because He was the Word made flesh. If He had sinned through His human will, the sin would have been attributable to the Word made flesh. Actions are attributable to the person who places them, and a culpable act could not be attributed to a divine person. It could not be said without absurd impiety, without blasphemy, that God made man was

capable of sinning. The Word could indeed bear in our stead the evil of punishment; He could be crucified for us; but He who came to blot out sin could not commit the evil of sin. “Ecce Agnus Dei qui tollit peccata mundi.”

The greater the sanctity, the farther it is from all deordination and weakness; now the sanctity of Jesus consists in a personal, substantial, indissoluble, and closest possible union with divinity. As a mass of iron reddened and kept hot in a glowing furnace cannot cool off while held in the fire, so Christ’s holy soul, personally united to the divinity of the Word and wholly penetrated with His splendor, could not have become sullied.

A second reason why Christ’s human will was impeccable even in this world is that His soul received the fullness of habitual grace; and this fullness He could not lose, for it flowed from the personal union of His humanity with the Word as its necessary consequence. He always had, too, efficacious actual grace for the accomplishment of the commandments and counsels.

Thirdly, while on earth Jesus was impeccable because He possessed the beatific vision as the saints enjoy it in heaven. But a soul that has an immediate vision of the divine essence perceives so clearly God’s infinite goodness that it cannot turn away from Him, nor prefer anything whatever to Him. Sin is impossible in heaven, and even while in the world Christ’s soul opened out upon heaven.

During His earthly life, Jesus’ human will was perfectly subordinated to the divine will and therefore impeccable. His two wills were united in a theandric activity, being unified in the person of the Word acting through both natures. Because of His impeccability, which admitted no possibility of disobeying, how could Jesus be free to merit with real liberty, with something other than mere spontaneity? He had no freedom for evil such as we have as a concomitant of our defectibility, but He had full freedom for good. To turn from His Father, whom He saw face to face and loved above all things with a love greater than all the saints’ in heaven, He could not. He had nonetheless liberty for good in regard to creatures, everything attractive or forbidding in the created order.

He held free mastery over sensible goods and honors. They could not captivate Him, precisely because His soul, being full of grace, adhered immovably to the Sovereign Good. He likewise rose above the threats of His enemies. They could not intimidate Him. Jesus was also at liberty to

call to the apostolate His first twelve disciples rather than any other fishermen of Galilee. He freely chose Peter rather than some other apostle to be His vicar, the head of His Church, and He freely called John to a friendship of predilection.

In the very accomplishment of His inevitable duty, Jesus was free. He could not have disobeyed, nevertheless He was freely "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Of His life He said, "No man taketh it away from Me: but I lay it down of Myself. . . . This commandment have I received of My Father." How was Jesus free in this instance and in what is His liberty to be found? Under one aspect, the death awaiting Him was terrible; under another, it was good for the salvation of mankind, for the deliverance of souls. Of itself it had no invincible attraction for Jesus as the face-to-face vision of His Father's goodness had. In one way it attracted Him, but in another it repelled and terrified Him, inspiring aversion in His sensitive appetite, in His whole human nature. The will of Jesus intervened to make one rather than the other of these contrary aspects prevail, freely giving preference to the good, to heroic sacrifice. His will is completely upright, it always intervenes as it should, and here it interposed freely because the death of the cross was not in itself an invincibly attractive good; far from it. But the human will of Jesus intervened impeccably and infallibly because it is the will of the Word made flesh, illumined by the beatific vision, full of habitual grace, ever receptive of strong and sweet actual graces, which do no violence to the will's freedom but lead liberty to exercise itself as it should.

Christ merited by His free acts in this world because He had not yet reached the end of His mission, did not yet possess all that He was going to conquer hereafter. Merit signifies the right to a future recompense. On earth Jesus merited for Himself and for us: for Himself, His glorious resurrection, His ascension, the exaltation of His name; for us, all the graces necessary or useful for our salvation and sanctification. In heaven Jesus remains free in regard to creatures, but He no longer merits, for He has reached the end of His course and now possesses His reward, communicating it to all who do not resist Him but seek their salvation through Him.

This imperfect explanation of the mystery of Christ's obedience and the reconciliation of His impeccability and freedom can be summed up in a few words: Jesus had no freedom for evil but He had, like His Father, full liberty for good. However obscure this mystery may remain, it contains

great light for contemplation and a great practical lesson. To indicate this, let us look at the liberty of the saints and then consider what our own should be.

ARTICLE III

THE LIBERTY OF THE SAINTS

The saints enjoy liberty in regard to the things of this world because they have been freed from them by renunciation; and they are not constrained by God's commandments because they bear them with love. Even as our Lord, the saints are at liberty in regard to all created goods, and the more they love God the freer they are. The stronger their love of God is, the more ably it delivers them from the slavery of the passions and of the world with its maxims and prejudices. They indeed have understood Christ's words: "If therefore the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed." "The truth shall make you free."

Divine truth delivers them from error, from anxiety, from small and foolish ideas, giving them instead the great thoughts of God. The more the saints love God, the richer they are spiritually, having no need for the vanities of the world, being indeed too great for them. They are spiritual millionaires: the promise of a few small coins cannot attract them.

The saints likewise overcome the threats of the world, the persecution of the impious, and the snares of the devil. Their enemies serve them, even in their persecution of them giving them the boon of martyrdom. Martyrdom is the transfiguration, the Thabor, of liberty, for the most terrible physical sufferings cannot bind liberty. Who was ever freer than St. Agnes or St. Cecilia bowing their heads to the swords of their executioners?

Above all, the saints become masters of themselves through the liberty coming to them from God; they are no longer, as we, prisoners of their own ego, captives to their egoism and self-love. They conquer vain complacency, and their hearts dilate in the one thought of God's glory and the salvation of souls. An immense liberty of spirit they find in the observance of our Lord's words: "Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God, and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you." Who, then, can prevent the saints from seeking the kingdom of God, if God gives Himself especially to those who suffer persecution for His sake?

Who can limit or constrain the saints' freedom? Do God's commands or His grace compel them? The more the saints advance, the more liberty they find in accomplishing the Lord's commands, because they regard them not merely as precepts, as rigid laws, but as expressions of God's love for us. And they respond to them with love as well as with obedience. To follow God's ways merely to satisfy our feelings falls below obedience; to follow God's ways through the generous impulse of charity rises above mere obedience. And the more charity grows, the more the heart is enlarged in the way of the commandments: "I have run the way of Thy commandments, when Thou didst enlarge my heart."

Souls can reach a degree of sanctity in which they are so possessed by God's love that they reject immediately and as if by instinct whatever would lead to sin. Although not yet confirmed in goodness, they draw near this goal, where nothing will henceforth have power to encompass their downfall. They are borne toward God with all the energy of perfect charity, yet obey Him freely and can therefore merit.

Shall we perhaps find that grace violates the liberty of the saints? Far from violating freedom, grace acts strongly, sweetly, and steadily to release and deliver them from the slavery of sin. The saints desire to subject themselves perfectly to grace and not to know any other initiative than that born of grace. They no longer seem to think for themselves, to make their own deliberations, to organize their lives for their own ends, to act of themselves, but rather to abandon themselves to the divine action within them. They embrace a kind of slavery for God's sake and so attain the highest liberty possible in this life, walking in the ways called passive.

At prayer they feel themselves interiorly prompted to make God the absolute master of their hearts, to renounce everything for Him. They are not concerned more with one practice than with another but do everything for God's love, using their liberty to second the divine motion, never allowing natural eagerness to make them anticipate it. God, by His continual action on the soul, by the practices that He requires of it, by the interior trials that He sends it, insensibly purifies it of its faults and impresses upon it all that it exercises by His help, without thinking about its virtues, or even being conscious that it has any.

No one has possessed so high a degree of holy liberty as the Blessed Virgin Mary. It was her privilege to be confirmed in goodness while still on earth; she never committed the smallest venial sin and always received such

strong and sweet grace that she accomplished the will of God with utmost freedom. She was free in her obedience; she therefore merited; and she merited more by her easiest actions than all the saints together by their most heroic deeds. Surely Mary was free at the foot of the cross when saying her sorrowful fiat, when offering her dear Son to God, an oblation which she knew as both crucifying and salutary. She spoke her grief-filled fiat on Calvary with the same freedom that she pronounced her joyful fiat at the annunciation. Grace drew her to it strongly but wiped away none of its loving suffering, even increasing it to proportions that no other creature has ever endured on earth.

In heaven the saints, confirmed in goodness by the beatific vision, love God of necessity, because they are invincibly attracted to infinite Goodness unveiled. Their beatific love is sovereignly spontaneous but necessitated in the sense of being above liberty and not below it like mechanical action. However, in heaven the saints freely carry out God's orders in regard to creatures, having in such things freedom for good, not for evil. They no longer merit, not because they lack freedom in obeying God's commands, but because they have reached the end of their course, already enjoy their supreme reward, and have nothing more to merit.

Our practical conclusion should be to ask our Lord to take away from us our freedom for evil, which is only an aspect of our defectibility, and give us more freedom for good. Our whole desire should be never to abuse our freedom, to make it as much as possible like God's, like Christ's, by loving the good and hating evil. The more strongly we are drawn to the good through our growth in charity, the more like to God we shall be, for He is necessitated by His nature to the good. Divine truth, the commandments of the Lord, and His grace serve to liberate us more and more from our servitude to sin and self.

During our lifetime we always run the unhappy risk of throwing off our Lord's yoke, no matter how light it may be, and resisting His grace. This misfortune is the more to be feared when our will pretends to be its own master instead of abandoning itself to divine Providence; for the perfection of the will consists in placing itself in God's hands, in making use of its own proper activity only to become more dependent on Him, in being always docile to grace. Let us offer our liberty to Jesus through Mary and try never to take it back again; in this holy slavery we shall find deliverance and a most sure road to heaven.

CHAPTER XVII

MARY, MODEL OF THE LIFE OF REPARATION

Some souls that have entered the unitive way are called to a life of reparation. Having reached perfect love through the cross, they are led by love to accept the cross anew, not only to promote their own purification but to make reparation for the sins of their fellow men and, through prayer and immolation, to obtain for them the graces necessary for salvation.

The Blessed Virgin is the eminent model of such souls. She has merited the title of co-redemptrix and universal mediatrix under, in, with, and through our Lord. In the encyclical Miserentissimus Redemptor Pope Pius XI willed to consecrate the title of Mary Reparatrix and to confirm the doctrine of the universal mediation of all graces.

We wish to speak of the fruitfulness of Mary's reparative sorrows and, to gain a better understanding of their worth, we shall consider them in relation to the greatest grace that the Mother of God can obtain for us, the grace of final perseverance, the consummation of the life of union and the crown of every Christian life. The second part of the Hail Mary asks this grace for us: "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen."

Every Christian perceives at least dimly the relationship of Mary's suffering to the grace of a good death, but the more we enter into Mary's sorrowful and immaculate heart, the more we see that the depth of her love for the agonizing Jesus has made her the strong and tender helper of all the dying who implore her aid. Our last sigh should express a holy love and a holy hatred: love of God and hatred for sin. Whence shall we draw final contrition and love stronger than death, if not from the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the sorrowful heart of His Blessed Mother?

ARTICLE I

MARY MEDIATRIX AND THE GRACE OF FINAL PERSEVERANCE

To understand the full worth of Mary's mediation, let us first consider the greatest grace asked through her and with her by those who seek to make reparation for sinners—the grace of a good death. Let us see in what it consists and how it can be obtained.

To die well we need grace. Children studying their catechism know that to be saved we must be in the state of grace at the moment of death. So simply expressed, this lofty doctrine infinitely surpasses all the speculations of scholars and philosophers about death. When our body loses its powers, its life, it begins to corrupt and soon falls into dust, yet we have within us a principle of intellectual and moral life which cannot die: a spiritual soul. Right reason has the native ability to affirm this truth, and some non-Christian philosophers have taught it. From a purely natural point of view, philosophers have even been able to state the conditions of a good death, describing for us the just or wise man at the end of a life ennobled by the will to do his full duty as manifested and dictated by right reason. And the unbelieving think that we have no need of grace to die thus, that the will's natural energy suffices for it and sometimes rises even to heroism.

But in an order far higher than unaided reason, faith tells us what the catechism teaches: that to die a good death we must be in the state of grace. What does this mean? It means that it is not enough for us to die in the love of our family and our country: we must die in God's love, in conformity to the will of our heavenly Father, who calls us to supernatural happiness, to the life of eternity, and gives to all souls of good will the grace to come to Him. He Himself rectifies the will, comes to its aid, and finally confirms it in goodness.

At death the germ of the life of heaven, semen gloriae, must exist in the soul. What an astonishing and sublime contrast: at the moment of death just when the body is losing its powers, growing cold and beginning to corrupt, the soul must, if we are to be saved, be living not only the natural life of a clear-sighted intellect and an energetic will but the divine life, a sharing in God's own inner life. We must die as Christians and have sanctifying grace in the very essence of our souls, in the intellect the supernatural light of faith, in the will the hope of heaven and the love of God above all things, charity. Through Jesus death becomes then only an entrance into eternal

life. As soon as the last minute of our earthly existence is over, we have an interior and positive discernment of the state of our conscience, perceiving what is forever our due, according to our merits or demerits.

We should remember that almost all the soul's life is to be passed in the world to come. How can sixty or eighty years here on earth be compared to millions and millions of years, or rather, to a life without end, happy or unhappy, to be spent beyond the grave? Nothing is more important for each of us than to die a Christian death in God's love and in true repentance. How precious is that sweet and strong grace that will lead us to perform our last act of contrition and confirm us in charity: the grace of a good death, or of final perseverance! Without it, we are lost for all eternity; with it, heaven opens to us or will be opened to us, after we have been purified, to remain ours forever.

We seldom think seriously of the grace of final perseverance. Many of us live in foolish recklessness, believing that plenty of time still remains to be converted, putting it off until later, until that moment perhaps when, after we have abused all the divine helps and when consciousness itself has gone, we can no longer give our attention to the matter of salvation. Life on earth is like a great train in which people settle down comfortably, chatting, playing games, sleeping, and doing all so successfully that they pay no attention to the speed at which the train is traveling. In their journey toward eternity, many fail to notice how fast time is flying, and those without hope make no effort to prepare for death but try to divert themselves to keep from thinking about it. Sometimes others with the manners of Christian living manifest an assurance resembling presumption rather than real hope, apparently believing that they have merited the grace of a good death.

Can we claim to merit the last grace in the true sense of "merit"? Merit properly so called signifies a strict right to a reward. Have we a right to the grace of a good death because we have lived a Christian life for twenty, forty, sixty years or more? Because of our merits can we be assured of final perseverance? Here we have a grave question, concerning which Pelagians and Protestants have both been mistaken, although in contrary ways.

Here as always the true faith has the simplicity of wonderful depth. Our Lord foretold to us: "The charity of many shall grow cold. But he that shall persevere to the end, he shall be saved." "Then two shall be in one field: one shall be taken, and one shall be left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill: one shall be taken, and one shall be left." St. Paul adds:

“Wherefore, my dearly beloved . . . with fear and trembling work out your salvation. For it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will.” “Wherefore he that thinketh himself to stand, let him take heed lest he fall.” Let him place his trust in the Almighty, alone capable of preserving the just in simplicity and above reproach in the midst of a corrupt and perverse world.

Holy Church, warning us against presumption and despair, tells us that, although we should hope firmly in God, without a special revelation none of us can have absolute certitude of persevering until the end. Of course the good God will never first abandon us, but we ourselves can abandon Him; we can be unfaithful to grace and relax in our struggle against the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Theology as taught by St. Augustine and St. Thomas renders Holy Scripture and the Church’s teaching more explicit by adding that we cannot merit the very principle of merit itself. Now the principle of merit consists in the state of grace and perseverance in that state. Therefore, just as we cannot merit the first grace of conversion, we cannot strictly merit the last. But gifts that we are unable to merit in the strict sense, such as the grace of conversion and the still more precious grace of final perseverance, we can, and even should, ask for and dispose ourselves for. Not to pray for it, not to prepare ourselves for it, no matter what the quietists may say, is foolish and fatal negligence. “Ask, and it shall be given to you; . . . knock, and it shall be opened to you.” Our Lord Himself has taught us to say in the Our Father, “And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil,” that we may persevere.

Can we then by prayer infallibly obtain the grace of a good death? Theology teaches that prayer made under certain conditions obtains for us infallibly the goods necessary for salvation and therefore final grace. But what are the conditions for infallibly efficacious prayer? When begging the necessary goods for salvation it must be humble, trusting, and persevering. Here our weakness reappears: we can fail to persevere in prayer as well as in meritorious works. Bossuet says with much depth: “God so desires to keep us from succumbing to the temptation not to pray that He delivers us from the evil of losing the taste and the will to prayer. Is there any time in life when we experience more sensibly the need of grace that lays hold of the heart than in prayer? The greatest, the most efficacious, and the most gratuitous of all graces is the grace of persevering in prayer without ever

giving up . . . despite times of dryness and many temptations to abandon it all."

We need help until the end, not only to merit, but also to pray. From whom shall we ask help? From the good God, the author of all grace, surely; from our Lord, who has shed His blood for our salvation. He Himself has told us: "Amen, amen I say to you: if you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it to you. Hitherto you have not asked anything in My name." And as Jesus is our Mediator with the Father, Mary is our mediatrix with Jesus. "God wills to give all His gifts, even the gift of final perseverance, to those who ask Him for it as He wills to be asked,"—through the intercession of the Savior and His Blessed Mother. We ought now to speak of Mary's mediation in order that we may show how she is the model of all souls dedicated to the work of reparation.

ARTICLE II

THE MYSTERY OF MARY'S SORROWS

One of the most profound, most touching, most luminous, and most fruitful mysteries of the Blessed Virgin's life is the mystery of her sorrows. Why is it that Mary, more than any other creature, can obtain for us the grace of final contrition? Because, holy as she is, she has suffered the gravest evil due to sinners for their chastisement. Let us enter a little way into the mystery of Mary's loving heart and look upon the cause and fruitfulness of her sufferings.

THE CAUSE OF MARY'S SUFFERINGS

Every Christian accustomed to making the way of the cross knows that the basic cause of Mary's sorrows, as well as of Christ's, was sin. Blessed are those simple souls, for whom this fundamental truth is not merely a formula committed to memory but a truth of life. Blessed are those who experience true sorrow for their sins. Of them our Lord has said, "Blessed are those who mourn." Only grace can produce this blessed suffering in us. We suffer from sicknesses that try the body, still more perhaps from wounds to our self-love, our vanity, and our pride. We also suffer in an entirely natural way from the ingratitude of men, from injustices that afflict our

family and our country. But we suffer far too little because of sin, from our own sins so far as they offend God.

On reflection we tell ourselves with truth that sin comprises the greatest of evils. Whether it goes by the name of pride, avarice, envy, or lust, it strikes into our very soul and reaches all its energies; as a result it causes all the disorder that we deplore in families and societies and the sometimes exceedingly bitter struggles between classes and peoples. Despite our knowledge of the fact, we experience no really great sorrow for our personal sins, by which we contribute our share to the general disorder; our light-mindedness and inconstancy prevent us from becoming too conscious of evil, and its depth escapes us. It works like some dread malady that we carry around all unconsciously in our vital organs the while we cry over a scratch.

To experience vividly the good suffering of contrition we must have a deep love of God, whom sin offends; we need also an earnest desire for the salvation of souls, that sin leads astray from their last end. The saints suffered because of sin in the measure of their love for God and neighbor. St. Catherine of Siena recognized souls in the state of mortal sin by a most obnoxious odor which she perceived in their presence. A Carmelite, learning of the publication of Renan's work attacking Christ's divinity, almost fainted from grief. But if you desire to grasp how far suffering caused by sin can go, ask Mary's heart for the secret. Her sorrow was measured by her love for God, for her Son, and for souls.

Who can measure Mary's love for God? The most ardent charity of the greatest saints, St. Paul, St. John, cannot be compared with Mary's. Let us remember that, from the first instant of her immaculate conception, she who was to be called the Mother of the Savior received a fullness of grace and of love surpassing the grace of all the saints and angels together. As a diamond is worth countless less precious stones, Mary from the first moment of her life surpassed all other souls in charity. Her initial fullness of grace never left off growing because of her perfect fidelity; no slightest venial sin checked the great upsurge of her love. Each of her meritorious acts, more fervent than the one preceding, multiplied the intensity of her charity, a wonderful development beyond our powers to conceive. If the Blessed Virgin loved God with such fervor, how much she must have suffered from the gravest of all evils, which our frivolity prevents from troubling us at all!

Her intellect illuminated with supernatural light, Mary saw that all souls are called to hymn God's glory with praise incomparably greater than the stars of heaven. Each soul should be like a ray of the divinity, a spiritual beam of thought and love. Are not our minds made to know God, our hearts to love Him? Whereas the stars follow faithfully the path fixed for them by Providence and tell the glory of their Creator, innumerable souls, each worth a world in itself, turn aside from God. Instead of a reflection of the divinity, a radiation of the glory of the Most High, three horrible wounds are to be found in thousands of hearts: concupiscence of the flesh, as if carnal love alone were desirable; concupiscence of the eyes, as if no glory but fortune and honor existed; the pride of life, as if we had no Creator and no God other than ourselves. Mary sees evil in souls, as we ourselves see purulent sores in a sick body. The perfection wrought in her through the Immaculate Conception makes her extraordinarily sensitive to all sharp griefs, and to sin particularly.

First and foremost, however, the Mother of our Savior has seen, without any possible illusion, the greatest of all crimes planned and carried out, the sin against the divine liberating Light, the sin against the Author of salvation, deicide. The cause of Mary's sorrows was the whole mass of all sins taken together, of all revolts, of all sacrilegious furies, brought in one instant to a climax and implacably turned against our Lord Jesus Christ.

Think of Mary's love for her Son, not only beloved but rightly adored. Recall that she had miraculously conceived Him, that she loved Him with a mother's heart, a virgin's heart, the purest and most tender heart that ever existed, that she loved Him not only as her only child but as her God with a supernatural intensity of love that we cannot even conjecture. Realize that Mary knew full well the causes of the crucifixion; the human causes, the animosity of the Jews, the chosen people, her people; the higher causes, the redemption of sinful and sinning souls; then you will catch a glimpse of the interior sorrows of the Virgin Mary.

There was no need for another cross for her, as Bossuet says, her Son's cross sufficed: love made her one with Him. All Christ's physical sufferings she felt in her keen affections, enduring more from the wounds in His hands and feet than any stigmatist has ever suffered. All the Savior's moral sufferings, those that came from men, their treason and mockery; those that came from hell; and those that came from God, the just judge: Mary experienced them all according to the measure of her love.

Mary's heart, like Christ's whole bruised and crushed being, was transformed with anguish by the sins of mankind, being altered more than the bodies and hearts of the sick, the dying, the martyred. Mary became the queen of martyrs because, after Jesus, she has endured the greatest martyrdom of heart. Truly, as the aged Simeon had foretold, a sword pierced her breast; the thrust of the lance that opened the Savior's heart entered her own soul as the final outrage to the God-man on the cross and as a symbol of all those later to strike at Him in the Eucharist.

To get a vivid notion of the Virgin Mary's sufferings we would need to share with the saints those crucifying graces that give souls a participation in the Savior's cross. St. Catherine de Ricci, for example, endured for twelve years an ecstasy of suffering beginning every Friday and lasting twenty-eight hours, during which she relived the Passion. Whenever it began she used to tremble and beg for grace, and our Lord would answer her that her sufferings would be accepted for a sinner whom she had recommended to His mercy. Then she would consent to make that terrible way of the cross again. Yet the sufferings of St. Catherine de Ricci fell far short of the Blessed Virgin's: all that rent the heart of Jesus was re-echoed in her own, and she would have died of such moral torture had she not been sustained supernaturally with exceptional grace. We who ask for the grace of a good death, for a holy sorrow for sin, should have recourse to our Savior's Mother. Her sufferings are fruitful for us in a measure we scarcely even suspect.

THE FRUITFULNESS OF MARY'S SUFFERINGS

In the order of salvation what really serves to draw us nearer to God? The progress of human science, of art, of industry, and of social works, certainly has value in their own order, assuring us of the necessities of life; but everything of this kind remains far inferior to the life of the soul. What counts as far as souls are concerned is merit, sacrifice, and prayer. Now the sufferings of the Blessed Virgin on Calvary have an inexhaustible fecundity for us, precisely because of their triple coredemptive value of merit, sacrifice, and prayer.

Her sufferings merit for us because in union with our Lord she has endured martyrdom of heart for our salvation and sanctification. All that the Word made flesh merited for us in strict justice, the Blessed Virgin merited

for us by a certain congruity founded on the charity uniting her to the Most High. His Holiness Pope Pius X approved the common teaching of theologians that Mary, in union with our Lord, has merited for us de congruo what Christ Himself has merited for us de condigno.

Who can appreciate the value of such merit as this, measured as it is by the degree of charity in Mary's immaculate heart? Because of her fullness of grace, the Mother of the Savior acquired more merit by her simplest actions than all the martyrs together achieved by their most difficult and painful deeds. How then could we ever estimate the value of Mary's compassion at the foot of the cross? To gain some hint of its worth, let us consider the three theological virtues as found in Mary's soul.

No greater act of faith than Mary's on Calvary is conceivable: in the deep gloom of that day which has been called the hour of darkness, when the faith of the apostles themselves wavered, when Jesus, humanly speaking, seemed wholly defeated and His work forever brought to nothing; when Heaven Itself seemed to make no answer to the entreaty of the Crucified, Mary never for a moment stopped believing that her Son was the Savior of mankind. When He spoke His last words, "Consummatum est," the Virgin understood, in the fullness of her faith, that the work of salvation was finished by her Son's terrible annihilation, that even then her agonizing Jesus was victorious over sin and in three days would conquer death, the result of sin. Her great act of faith consisted in seeing the hand of God, even more than that, God's intervention, where the best and most believing of men could not see anything but darkness and desolation. She offers us a great lesson for our times of deepest grief, when all seems lost, yet when everything can be saved by a great faith, drawing down upon us the words of resurrection, capable of producing what they signify.

Just when all seemed hopeless, Mary made a supreme act of hope as well. She understood the full meaning of the words spoken to the good thief: "This day thou shalt be with Me in paradise," and she saw heaven opening for the elect.

She made the greatest act of charity, loving God to the extent of offering Him her innocent and tormented Son, loving Him above all things at the very moment when He had struck her in her greatest and deepest affection, in the very object which she rightfully adored.

Her sacrifice equaled her merit, and both had inestimable value. Jesus alone, of course, can offer reparation equal to the offense of mortal sin; but

in union with Jesus, the eternal priest, Mary said her fiat in sorrow just as she had said it in joy on the day of the Annunciation. In union with her Son she too became a victim for us, a victim conscious of the gravity of the offenses to be expiated, a victim of boundless generosity, not only giving her whole self but offering her only Son, far, far dearer to her than life itself. Because she was an absolutely innocent victim and had no need to do reparation for herself, Mary Immaculate offered to God an expiation all the more acceptable to Him and profitable for mankind. Her whole spiritual treasure has become our heritage, and the Church unceasingly applies it to us through indulgences.

The sufferings of Mary had an inexhaustible fecundity. She bore indeed the pains of spiritual childbirth when Jesus confided to her the motherhood of our race in the person of St. John: “Son,” said Jesus to John, “behold thy mother,” and to Mary, “Woman, behold thy Son.” Uttered from the height of the cross, these words of our Savior produced, as His sacramental words do, what they signify. They were spoken by the Word made flesh about to die for us yet possessed of the same power as ever to touch and enliven hearts at will. His words created a close spiritual bond between Mary and John, giving Mary a deep and wholly motherly affection for John and all souls ransomed by the sacrifice of the cross, an affection reaching out and enfolding them all.

Calvary for Mary as well as for Jesus was truly the consummatum est of her mission as co-redemptrix. All who have a true devotion to Mary should say of the Mother of Sorrows: “I know nothing save Mary, who compassioned the Crucified”; just as St. Paul said of the Savior: “For I judge not myself to know anything among you, but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.”

In heaven Mary, like her Son, no longer merits, no longer suffers to offer atonement to God for us, but she never ceases praying for us. Of her as of Jesus it can be truly said that she is “always living to make intercession for us.” She prays that we may be accorded all the helps merited by the sacrifice of the cross, and the prayer of the Virgin is an enlightened and universal prayer, for she knows all the graces that we need because she is our Mother and has received from God a universal mission to help us all on the way of salvation. Her prayer is fervent and extends to the last sinner without losing any of its intensity. She is sovereignly good and prays for all men, yet she prays especially for those who offer no resistance to her good

inspirations and faithfully recommend themselves to her, looking upon them with particular tenderness, interceding for them more pressingly, more absolutely, until she finally obtains what she asks and brings them safe home to the harbor of salvation.

The graces that she obtains, she dispenses. She herself being the ideal of the predestined, Mary progressively forms the elect, distributing those supernatural helps during life that prepare for and assure a good death and at the end exerting her patronage as the advocate and help of the dying. At the hour of death, that supreme moment when the soul's destiny is decided, the Blessed Virgin Mary bears in mind the love that has been shown to her, recalling how her servants have said to her time and time again: "Pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death." She holds them up in the struggle of their last agony and defends them against the devil. She whose heart holds a peerless hatred for sin inspires them with the grief of true contrition and brings them to make an act of perfect charity, and when they have died she watches over them in purgatory that she may lead them at last into heaven.

It is said that St. John of God, who had great devotion to Mary throughout his life, longed to feel her near him in his last agony but could not and gently complained to her for having left him alone. She deigned to appear to him and addressed to him the consoling words reported to us by the Bollandists: "John, it is not my way to abandon my servants at such a time."

If she does not abandon saints, neither does she forsake sinners, leaving no stone unturned to bring them to repentance, to open up their minds to let in confidence. There must be very few last minute conversions not due to some practice in honor of the Blessed Virgin, the wearing of the scapular, the recitation of the Hail Mary, the Angelus, the Memorare, the Rosary. In recent years a certain extremely frivolous writer finally acceded to his mother's insistent requests and promised to say a daily Hail Mary. He kept his promise, but outside of that prayer his life held nothing that would dispose him for a good death; yet at the last moment he made his confession and died like a Christian. Many times during the last war Mary came to the help of dying soldiers. It is told that a young Frenchman in his agony was saying the Ave Maria in Latin but could not finish it and a dying German soldier beside him took up the prayer and completed it. Mary watched over them both and led them to make the supernatural sacrifice of their lives, that

she might bring them to a better world. With our Blessed Mother helping us, death is no longer death but, as Bossuet says, the beginning of deliverance, the doorway to immortality.

What can we conclude but that devotion to Mary is a sign of predestination and that the closer we are bound to this distributer of grace the nearer we are to our Lord; the more united we are to her, the more we receive of the divine influence? For devotion to Mary to become a guaranty of salvation it must be more than lip-service prayers and external practices that leave the passions unchecked: it must be a work of imitation. The mediation of the Mother of God surely calls for cooperation on our part. The best means of assuring that we give our cooperation is to live in union with Mary, meditating on the joyous, the sorrowful, and the glorious mysteries of her holy life, particularly recalling her sorrows in order to sanctify our own trials, which we often meet irrationally, accept morosely, and carry without profit. Let us live by our devotion to Mary, consecrating ourselves to her as Blessed Grignon de Montfort counsels, offering her all that is incommunicable in our merits that she make it fruitful, and all that is communicable that she may use it according to her good pleasure for the benefit of erring and suffering souls.

In this spirit, let us often repeat the invocation, “Sorrowful and immaculate heart of Mary, pray for us.” Because Mary’s heart was immaculate and pure it suffered so much for the sins of mankind. Sorrowful heart, overflowing with divine life, pray for us. We do well to become used to saying this invocation, for then at death it will come back to mind spontaneously and become the expression of our last sigh. Then Mary will lead us to make the sacrifice of our life in a spirit of adoration, thanksgiving, reparation, and supplication, uniting our intention with all the Masses being celebrated throughout the world.

CHAPTER XVIII

ST. JOSEPH: MODEL OF THE HIDDEN LIFE AND FIRST AMONG THE SAINTS

> "For he that is the lesser among you all, he is the greater."
>
> Luke 9: 48

After our Lord and His Blessed Mother we can find no more perfect model of the life of union than St. Joseph. The doctrine which holds that after Mary he has always been more closely united to our Lord than any other saint tends to become more and more commonly accepted in the Church. It fearlessly declares the humble carpenter greater in grace and beatitude than the patriarchs, Moses, the greatest of the prophets, St. John the Baptist, and all the apostles, including St. Peter, St. John, and St. Paul, and, with all the more reason, proclaims him higher in sanctity than the greatest martyrs and doctors of the Church.

This doctrine was taught by Gerson and by St. Bernardine of Siena, and became more and more widely held from the sixteenth century on, being accepted as true by St. Teresa, St. Francis de Sales, Suarez, and later by St. Alphonsus Liguori and many others.

Pope Leo XIII in his encyclical Quanquam pluries wrote that the dignity of the Mother of God is indeed so sublime that nothing higher could be created, but as Joseph was united to the Blessed Virgin by the conjugal bond he no doubt approaches closer than anyone else the supereminent dignity by which the Mother of God so far surpasses all other creatures. Conjugal union is in fact the greatest of all unions; because of its very nature it brings about a reciprocal communication of good between the two spouses. If therefore God gave St. Joseph to the Virgin as her spouse, He most certainly did not give him to her merely for her material support, as a witness to her virginity, and the guardian of her honor, but He must also

have made him share through the marriage bond in the eminent dignity which she had received. Since Mary surpassed in dignity all other creatures, as the encyclical just cited says, does it not follow that Joseph's pre-eminence should be understood not only as exceeding all other saints' but also even the angels'? We cannot assert it with certainty. Let us content ourselves by expressing the doctrine more and more widely accepted throughout the Church by saying that of all the saints Joseph is the highest in heaven, standing among the angels and archangels, nearest Jesus and Mary. His mission in regard to the holy family has made him the patron, protector, and defender of the universal Church; to him, in a special sense, Christians of all generations are confided, as the beautiful litanies summarizing his prerogatives show.

We wish to recall here the principle that serves as a basis for the doctrine of St. Joseph's pre-eminence, which for five centuries has been gaining wider and wider acceptance; in this way we shall see him as a perfect model of the hidden life.

THE REQUISITE FOR AN EXCEPTIONAL DIVINE MISSION: EXCEPTIONAL SANCTITY

The general principle used by the theology to explain revelation and show us what Christ's fullness of grace, Mary's sanctity, and the apostles' faith should be, rests on their exceptional divine mission, a mission demanding a proportional sanctity. St. Joseph's case bears a similarity to theirs.

God's works are perfect, particularly those which He raises up immediately and exclusively. No disorder, no disproportion, can be found in them. The whole harmony of the divine work of creation offers us an instance in case. We have other examples in God's great servants raised up by Him in an exceptional and immediate way to restore some divine work marred by sin. "And God created man to His own image." "He hath purposed . . . in the dispensation of the fullness of time, to re-establish all things in Christ."

We get a better grasp of the truth and importance of this revealed and self-evident principle by considering as a contrast what often happens in human affairs. Not infrequently the incapable and improvident occupy high offices and cause much harm to those whom they govern. At times we would be incensed at this condition if we did not remember that God

compensates for such things by hidden and often heroic acts of sanctity or if we forgot that each of us must say mea culpa for our own negligence in the exercise of offices and works entrusted to us, failing so frequently that we finish by no longer noticing our shortcomings. But disorder is disorder and inadequacy is inadequacy and nothing like either can be found in those immediately chosen and directly prepared by God Himself to act as His exceptional ministers in the work of redemption. God gives them a sanctity proportionate to their task, for He performs all things according to measure, and disorder or disproportion cannot be found in works properly divine, which have God alone as their author.

We see our chief example of this truth in the sacred soul of Jesus. From the first instant of its creation, it received an absolute fullness of grace, because it was united as intimately as possible to the Word of God, the source of all supernatural life, and because it was to communicate the divine life to us through the light of the gospel and by the infinite merits of the sacrifice of the cross: “And of His fullness we all have received. . . . No man hath seen God at any time: the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.” St. Thomas considers that this Gospel text and others similar to it signify not only the fullness of grace but glory or the beatific vision, enjoyed by our Savior in this world that He might lead us, as the Master of masters, to eternal life.

In virtue of the same principle, if Mary was to be fittingly the Mother of God, she had to be “full of grace,” preserved from original sin, and associated with Jesus in all His sufferings and all His glories. Because of her unique mission in the world, the Mother of God should draw as near as possible to the Word made flesh in the two great mysteries of the Incarnation and the Redemption. She should receive more grace than any other creature, whether angel or saint, because she stands nearest the source of all grace. For the same reason theology teaches us that the apostles, because they were more closely associated with our Lord than the saints who came after them, grasped the mysteries of faith more perfectly than they. In St. Thomas’ eyes it would be bold to deny this, but we must remember that he was comparing the apostles only to the saints who came after them and not to St. Joseph or St. John the Baptist. St. Joseph’s mission seems greater than the apostles’, greater too than the precursor’s. His vocation had a uniqueness comparable to Mary’s, and his exceptional

destiny leads us to believe that he drew nearer to the source of all grace and is more closely united to our Lord than either the apostles or the precursor.

ST. JOSEPH'S EXCEPTIONAL MISSION

To St. John the Baptist was entrusted the task of announcing the immediate coming of the Messiah. It can be said then that he was the greatest precursor of Jesus in the Old Testament; and it is in this sense that St. Thomas understands our Lord's pronouncement in St. Matthew's Gospel: "Amen I say to you, there hath not risen among them that are born of woman a greater than John the Baptist." But our Lord immediately adds: "Yet he that is the lesser in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." The kingdom of heaven is the Church on earth and in heaven, the New Testament surpassing the perfection of the Old although some just men of the Old have been holier than many of the New. And in the Church who is "he that is the lesser"? These mysterious words have received more than one interpretation. They make us think of words spoken later by Jesus: "For he that is the lesser among you all, he is the greater." The lesser means the most humble, the servant of all, and therefore, because of the connection and proportion of the virtues, the one who has the greatest charity. And who in the Church is the most humble? He who was neither apostle nor evangelist nor martyr—exteriorly at least—nor pontiff nor priest, nor doctor, but who knew and loved Christ Jesus certainly no less than the apostles, the Evangelists, the martyrs, the popes and doctors of the Church: the humble artisan of Nazareth, the humble Joseph.

The apostles were called to make the Savior known, to preach the gospel that men might be saved. Their mission, like John the Baptist's, belongs to the order of grace necessary for the salvation of all; but an order still higher than the order of grace exists, one constituted by the very mystery of the Incarnation, the order of the hypostatic or personal union of the humanity of Jesus with the very Word of God. Mary's unique mission of divine motherhood adjoins this order, and Joseph's hidden mission also, in a sense, has a like position. This argument has been put forth in different forms by St. Bernard, St. Bernardine of Siena, the Dominican Isidore de Isolanis, Suarez, and other authors of more recent times.

Bossuet expresses all this with lovely clarity in his first panegyric on this great saint when he tells us: "Among vocations I have noticed two in the

Scriptures that seem direct opposites, the apostles' and Joseph's. Jesus is revealed to the apostles to be announced throughout the universe; He is revealed to Joseph to be passed over in silence and to be kept hidden. The apostles act as light, to show Jesus Christ to the world. Joseph serves as a veil to cover Him; and under this mysterious veil are hidden for us Mary's virginity and the Savior's greatness. . . . He who glorifies the apostles with the honor of preaching glorifies Joseph with the humility of silence." Before the manifestation of the first Christmas should come, it had to be prepared for by thirty years of hidden life.

For each of us perfection consists in doing what God wills in the life to which He has called us. Joseph's entirely exceptional vocation seems, in its silence and obscurity, to surpass the calling of the greatest apostles, touching so closely the mystery of the redemptive Incarnation. After Mary, Joseph appears nearer than anyone else to the Author of grace; and if he was, then he received in the silence of Bethlehem, during the sojourn in Egypt, and in Nazareth's little home, more graces than any other saint will ever receive.

His special mission in regard to Mary consisted chiefly in contracting with the Mother of God a real and absolutely holy marriage. According to the account given in St. Matthew's Gospel, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in his sleep and told him: "Joseph, son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost." Mary was really his wife by a true and entirely heavenly marriage, which was to have a fruitfulness wholly divine. The initial fullness of grace given to the Virgin in view of her divine motherhood in a sense evoked the mystery of the Incarnation. As Bossuet says: "The virginity of Mary drew Jesus down from heaven. . . . Since her purity made her fruitful, I have no fear to assert that Joseph had his part in this great miracle; for if angelic purity is Mary's treasure, this treasure lay in the keeping of the just Joseph."

Joseph, in the simple framework of a village carpenter's life, had the privilege of sharing in a stainless and reverent union with the most perfect creature that God has ever made. He has drawn nearer the Mother of God than any other saint, more closely allied than anyone else to the Mother of all men, Joseph himself included. Under all her titles as co-redemptrix, universal mediatrix and distributer of all grace, Joseph loved Mary with the purest and most devoted love, a love that can rightly be called theological, for he loved the Virgin in God and for God, because of all the glory that she

gave to God. The beauty of the whole universe bears no comparison to the sublime union of these two souls, a union created by the Most High, giving delight to the angels and joy to God Himself.

As to Joseph's exceptional mission in regard to our Lord, we know that in all truth the Word of God made flesh was confided to him rather than to any other of the just men of all generations. The holy old Simeon took the child Jesus into his arms for a few moments and saw in Him the salvation of the people, "lumen ad revelationem gentium," but Joseph looked after Him night and day during His whole infancy, often holding in his arms the Child in whom he beheld his Creator and Savior. From Him he received grace upon grace during the long years when he lived with Him in closest daily intimacy, watching Him grow, contributing to His human education, receiving His obedience. He is commonly called the "foster father of the Savior," but he was in a sense more than that for, as St. Thomas points out, by marriage a man becomes a child's "foster father" or "adopted father" only accidentally; while there was nothing at all accidental in Joseph being given charge of Jesus. He had been created and put into the world for just that end. It was his predestination, and in view of his wholly divine mission Providence had accorded to him all the graces that he had received from his infancy, graces of deep piety, of virginity, of prudence, and of perfect fidelity. In the eternal designs of God, Joseph's union with Mary existed simply for the Savior's protection and education, and Joseph received from God a father's heart to care for the Child Jesus. This was his principal mission; in view of it he received sanctity proportionate, in a sense, to his rank, to the mystery of the Incarnation, which dominates, in its infinite reaches, the whole order of grace. Sinibaldi's recent work, La Grandezza di San Giuseppi, brings out St. Joseph's eternal predestination as the Blessed Virgin Mary's spouse, explaining with St. Thomas the threefold fitness of such a predestination. The Angelic Doctor established the same point himself; asking whether it was fitting that Christ should be born of a virgin who had contracted a real marriage, he gave as his answer that it was fitting for the sake of Christ Himself, His Mother, and us.

It was highly fitting for our Lord Himself because, until the time should come for the mystery of His birth to be manifested, He would not then be considered an illegitimate son and would have protection during His childhood. For the Blessed Virgin it was no less fitting because it kept her from being judged a guilty adulteress and stoned as such by the Jews, as St.

Jerome observed; it also served to protect her in the difficulties and persecution that began with the Savior's birth. It was, St. Thomas adds, very expedient for us, too, because we thus learn through testimony above suspicion, Joseph's, about Christ's virginal conception; in the human order of things, his testimony also lends support to Mary's. Lastly, it was supremely fitting that we should find in Mary at once the perfect model of virgins, of wives, and of Christian mothers.

Herein lies the explanation of why, according to some authors, the eternal decree of the Incarnation, so far as it must be realized hic et nunc, in such and such determined circumstances, included not only Jesus and Mary but Joseph as well. From all eternity indeed it was decided that the Word of God made flesh should be born miraculously of Mary ever virgin united to the just Joseph in bonds of true marriage. St. Luke thus expresses the carrying out of this providential decree: "And in the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God into a city of Galilee, called Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary."

St. Bernard called St. Joseph "Magni concilii coadjutorem fidelissimum." Sinibaldi, following Suarez and others, asserts for the reasons given above that St. Joseph's ministry adjoins in a sense the order of the hypostatic union, not that St. Joseph intrinsically cooperated with the Holy Ghost as a physical instrument in realizing the mystery of the Incarnation; his role is a much lesser one than Mary's as the Mother of God; but he was predestined to be, in the order of moral causes, the guardian of Mary's virginity and honor and the protector of the Child Jesus. We must avoid in this matter certain exaggerations which falsify the expression of a great mystery. The worship due to Joseph does not specifically exceed the dulia paid to the other saints, but everything leads us to think that he, more than any other saint, deserves to receive the worship of dulia. In her prayers the Church mentions him immediately after Mary and before the apostles, for example in the prayer A cunctis. Although St. Joseph receives no mention in the canon of the Mass, today he has a special preface, and the month of March is dedicated to him.

In a discourse that was given in the Consistory Chamber on the feast of St. Joseph, March 19, 1928, His Holiness Pope Pius XI compared St. Joseph's vocation with St. John the Baptist's and St. Peter's. There is significance, His Holiness said, in the fact that God raises up certain

magnificent and lustrous figures so near to one another as to be almost contemporaries:

St. John the Baptist, who came out of the desert with a voice now thundering like a roaring lion and now speaking with the accents of the friend of the bridegroom rejoicing at the bridegroom's glory, and at the last offering up before the world the glory of his own martyrdom; Peter, who heard the divine Master speak to him divine words that bore witness about him before all men of all ages: "Thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build My Church." "Going therefore, teach ye all nations." His was a magnificent and divinely radiant mission. Between these two, St. Joseph's appears, in recollection and in silence, almost unperceived and unknown, coming to light only centuries later when its silence was to be broken by a resounding hymn of glory. There where the mystery lies deepest, the surrounding night grows darkest, the silence grows greatest, the highest mission is to be found, accompanied and reechoed by a happy necessity in a brilliant retinue of virtues and merits. It is a unique and very high mission to guard the Son of God, the King of the world, to watch over the virginity and sanctity of Mary, to have a hidden place and share in this great mystery, shielded from the eyes of the centuries while cooperating in the Incarnation and Redemption. All Joseph's sanctity lies precisely in the completely faithful accomplishment of this great and humble mission, so high and so hidden, so splendid and so surrounded with shadows.

ST. JOSEPH'S SUPERNATURAL VIRTUES AND GIFTS

St. Joseph possessed the virtues of the hidden life in a degree corresponding to his sanctifying grace: he had profound humility, penetrating and undismayed faith, immovable hope, and above all, immense charity growing without pause because of his contact with Jesus. He was characterized too by the delicate bounty of a poor man made rich in his poverty by God's greatest gifts, the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, bestowed in a degree proportionate to his charity. The litany says of him: "Joseph most just, most chaste, most prudent, most strong, most obedient, most faithful, mirror of patience, lover of poverty, model of workers, glory of home life."

At times his living faith was anguished: in its obscurity he had a foreboding of something too great for him, especially when he remained in

ignorance of the secret of the virginal conception, which Mary's humility kept hidden from him. Then God's message transmitted by an angel brought him light. Joseph could have hesitated to believe a thing so extraordinary, but he believed it firmly in the simplicity of his heart, and this signal grace, far from making him proud, confirmed him for all time in humility. Why, he asked himself, has the Most High given this infinite treasure to me, Joseph, to be guarded? He saw with truth that he could never merit such a gift and understood the complete gratuitousness of the divine predilection for him, that the sovereignly free divine good pleasure has no other reason for being than itself. At the same time, the carpenter saw with new clarity the meaning of the prophecies, and his faith grew greater and greater.

However, the darkness delayed little in returning, for Joseph was to make his way through sunlight and shadow. Already poor before becoming the object of the divine predilection, before receiving the secret of God, he became poorer still, as Bossuet remarks, when Jesus came into the world. The Savior found no room even in Bethlehem's meanest inn and had to go out and seek shelter in a stable. With so tender a heart, Joseph must have suffered at having nothing to give Mary and her Son. When Jesus enters a soul, the saints tell us, He comes bringing His cross and detaches the soul from everything else that He may unite it to Himself. Joseph and Mary understood this from the first, and the prophecy of the aged Simeon served to confirm their foreboding.

Persecution began almost at once, Herod seeking to have the Messiah killed. Warned by an angel, the head of the holy family had to escape to Egypt with Mary and the Child Jesus. He set out for a distant country where no one knew him, with his work as his only resource; but he undertook the journey with strong faith in God's word as told him by the angel. His mission demanded that he hide our Lord, shielding Him from His persecutors, and returning to Nazareth only when the danger had been dispelled. Joseph acted as the minister and protector of Christ's hidden life, just as the apostles served as the ministers of His public life.

In the hidden life led by St. Joseph an ever brighter and sweeter light radiated from the holy soul of the Word made flesh and illumined the dark and afflictive night of faith in which he walked. After the return from Egypt, during the years when the holy family lived at. Nazareth, recollection and silence reigned in the carpenter's little home, a true sanctuary, more sacred than the holy of holies in the temple at Jerusalem.

The three there maintained a silence full of sweetness, for it spoke of loving contemplation of God's infinite mystery come down to earth but still unknown to men. From time to time words served to convey the depths of their souls to one another, but in an atmosphere of such innocence and love they had little need for speech; a look sufficed for mind to communicate with mind and heart to speak to heart.

After the contemplation of the Blessed Virgin there existed none simpler or more loving than the humble carpenter's when he looked upon Jesus. By grace he had received the sentiments of a most devoted and tender father and protector for Jesus and was loved by Him as a child and growing boy with a tenderness, gratitude, and strength only to be found in the heart of God. One look at Jesus served to bring back to Joseph the mystery of Bethlehem, the exile in Egypt, the great mystery of the salvation of the world. The incessant action of the Word of God made flesh upon Joseph was a creative activity, first giving life and then conserving it: "amor Dei infundens et creans bonitatem in rebus"; it was a supernatural action, rich with ever new graces. No searching of ours will disclose to us greatness that can surpass Joseph's, found in such perfect simplicity.

In the Old Testament we find a similar figure in the prophet Joseph, sold by his brothers and destined to become a symbol of Christ. He also knew the highest contemplation in the simplest form, divine contemplation wholly (penetrated with the pure love of charity. In the new dispensation Joseph carried in his heart the world's greatest secret, the redemptive Incarnation, for the hour had not yet come to reveal it. The Jews would not have understood, they would not have believed; many of them looked for a temporal Messiah clothed in glory, not a Messiah made poor and suffering for us. Joseph's presence veiled the mystery: Jesus was called the carpenter's son. A common artisan housed the Word made flesh in his home, he possessed the Desired of the nations announced by the prophets and said no word of it to anyone, witnessing the mystery and tasting its delights in secret and in silence.

Joseph's contemplation brought him sweetness, but it also demanded abnegation great enough to include bitter sacrifice whenever he recalled Simeon's words: 'Behold this Child is set . . . for a sign which shall be contradicted," and those spoken to Mary, "And thy own soul a sword shall pierce." Joseph saw the acceptance of the mystery of Redemption through suffering as the sorrowful consummation of the mystery of the Incarnation

and he had need of all his great love's generosity to offer God, as a supreme sacrifice, the Child Jesus and His Blessed Mother, far dearer to him than life itself. To offer the Eucharistic sacrifice was not given to him, but he often offered the Child Jesus to His Father for us. As Abbé Sauvé says, without seeing God's will St. Joseph accepted from it with equal simplicity the deepest joys and the bitterest sorrows.

We can hardly conceive what wonderful progress St. Joseph made in faith, in contemplation, and in love. The more hidden was his life on earth, the more glorified is he now in heaven. He whom the Word of God obeyed on earth still holds a marvelous power of intercession over the heart of Jesus in heaven. As he once watched over Nazareth's home, he now watches over Christian families, religious communities, and virgins consecrated to God, acting as their guide, so St. Teresa tells us, in the ways of prayer. He is also, as his litany reminds us, the solace of the wretched, the hope of the sick, the patron of the dying, the terror of demons, and the protector of Holy Church, the great family of our Lord. Let us ask him to reveal to us the worth of the hidden life, the splendor of Christ's mysteries, and God's infinite goodness as he himself saw it in the redemptive Incarnation.

Let us ask of him the grace of contemplation and of union that we may come to a fuller understanding of the Psalmist's beautiful words which the Church puts daily on our lips in the Pretiosa: "Look upon thy servants and upon their works: and direct their children. And let the brightness of the Lord our God be upon us: and direct thou the works of our hands over us; yea, the works of our hands do thou direct." Of St. Joseph we can say that such was his grace that the brightness of the Lord our God dwelt and continues to dwell in him, and so abundant was the fruit of this grace in him that he would share it with all who have caught a glimpse of the value of prayer and truly aspire to a life hidden with Christ in God.

CHAPTER XIX

THE SOUL OF THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

To complete the doctrine already set forth on union with God and the purifications that dispose us for such union, we discuss next what constitutes the very soul, as it were, of the Sacrifice of the Mass and in what manner we should unite ourselves to the sacrifice through personal oblation. Recent controversies about the essence of the sacrifice of the altar have brought into bolder and bolder relief certain fundamental points that are enlightening.

Sacrifice in general is the oblation of a sensible thing made by a priest to God through some destruction or immolation consecrating it to God and consuming it in His honor in recognition of His sovereign dominion over all things and of our perfect submission to Him. Throughout the ages different peoples have offered to God incense, the fruits of the earth, bread and wine, and the best of their animals. The word “holocaust” applies to the most perfect sacrifice of all, in which the whole victim is consumed in God’s honor as a sensible expression of perfect adoration, of thanksgiving for benefits received, of supplication for graces to be obtained, and of complete and whole-souled contrition for sins committed, whether openly or in secret, acknowledging their gravity and imploring God’s pardon.

We see, then, that the soul of the Holy Sacrifice consists in the priest’s interior oblation, in which all unite with him. Without it we have only the external part of the act, and external immolation alone loses all significance, for it comprises only the body of the sacrifice, and when the body lacks a soul it is nothing but a corpse, as Cain’s offering serves to show us. The outward immolation of an animal as the reality, ut res, of the sacrifice is required even in bloody sacrifice only as an outward sign of an inner oblation of adoration and contrition. Without these interior dispositions the external offering has no meaning and no value, a fact of prime importance.

In seeking to discover the essence of the Sacrifice of the Mass we think too little about this and should find it helpful to recall that it stands at absolutely the opposite pole from Cain's sacrifice. Sometimes we involve ourselves in insoluble difficulties because we forget the most elementary truths.

Furthermore, a simple interior offering cannot suffice for a sacrifice properly so called, for sacrifice includes not only an interior but also an exterior and even a public act of religion. It must then have a body, as it were, a material part expressing the offering just as language provides a material mode of expression for acts of thought and will.

The sacrifices offered in the Old Testament were only a figure of the great sacrifice to be offered by our Lord in the future. The figure had value in proportion as the interior offering was inspired by faith and love of God. Sometimes the interior offering was made with absolutely heroic faith and love. When Abraham made ready to immolate his son Isaac, the child of promise, and the boy himself, a figure of Christ, allowed himself to be bound for the sacrifice, both were inspired by the same faith, obedience, and piety.

THE EVERLASTING OBLATION OF OUR LORD, THE ETERNAL PRIEST

From all eternity the Word of God willed to become incarnate, to offer Himself as a victim for our salvation: "Qui propter nos homines et propter nostram salutem descendit de caelis." As it is written in the Epistle to the Hebrews: "For it is impossible that with the blood of oxen and goats sin should be taken away. Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith: Sacrifice and oblation Thou wouldst not: but a body Thou hast fitted to Me: holocausts for sin did not please Thee. Then said I: Behold I come . . . that I should do Thy will, O God."

What other reparation indeed could suffice? By mortal sin men willfully turn away from God and practically deny Him His infinite dignity as their sovereign good and last end, deliberately preferring some miserable finite good, some object of the concupiscence of the flesh, of the eyes, or of pride. The gravity of an offense is measured by the dignity of the person offended and, since God's dignity is boundless, an offense against Him exceeds all measure. An act of love, of acknowledgment of God's sovereign goodness, and of hatred for sin with an infinite value is necessary to make reparation for an offense of infinite magnitude. Now no human or angelic creature,

even with an absolutely exceptional degree of grace and of charity like Mary's, could make such an act of love and recognition of God's sovereign dominion; any created will, any created charity, and the acts proceeding from them likewise, are always limited.

That the world might offer to God an act of love of infinite value, it was necessary that the Word become incarnate and take a body and soul like ours. Certainly the act of love that sprang up and still arises from His human will, vivified by the fullness of created charity, draws an infinite value from His divine personality. The Word made flesh, through His human will offers up an act of reparative charity which pleases God more than all the crimes of the whole world together can displease Him.

CHRIST'S CONTINUAL OFFERING DURING HIS LIFE ON EARTH

St. Paul tells us that from the first moment of our Lord's entrance into the world He began His offering of Himself, and it continued without interruption until it was completed by the consummatum est. In the crib of Bethlehem, at the presentation in the temple when He enlightened the aged Simeon, later when He astonished the doctors by His wisdom, unceasingly during His hidden life at Nazareth, and all throughout His public life, His heart kept making its one offering. This act constituted the soul of His apostolate and served as the leitmotiv of His preaching: "I am come to cast fire on the earth: and what will I, but that it be kindled? And I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptized: and how am I straitened until it be accomplished?" "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself." "Can you drink the chalice that I shall drink?"

As long as it remained interior only, Christ's act could not suffice to constitute a sacrifice properly so called but it became so at the Last Supper, when He immolated Himself sacramentally under the appearance of bread and wine, thus giving reality to what had been prefigured by the oblation of Melchisedech, a priest of the true God. The sacrifice of the Last Supper was the same in substance as the sacrifice of the cross soon to be accomplished: "Take ye and eat. This is My body. . . . Drink ye all of this. For this is My blood of the new testament, which shall be shed for many unto remission of sins.''

Our Lord's inner oblation obviously continued and even attained its apogee during the passion and crucifixion, accompanying the most perfect

outward sacrifice, the passive immolation of the one really worthy victim by the one great High Priest, our Lord. Certainly, Christ did not procure His own death; deicide, the greatest of crimes, in no way belongs to the sacrifice of the cross; but our Lord could have miraculously protected His body from suffering, as later He protected some of the martyrs; but He gave Himself up fully to pain, seeking no palliative in the beatific vision still preserved at the peak of His intellect, offering Himself as He had foretold, "I lay down My life. . . . No man taketh it away from Me: but I lay it down of Myself, and I have power to lay it down: and I have power to take it up again. This commandment have I received of My Father."

Even abstracting from the Last Supper, the passion and the cross had, as St. Thomas shows, everything required for the greatest sacrifice, containing eminently and formally the ritual character of all the sacrifices prefiguring it. It lacked nothing: the passive immolation of the only victim of infinite worth and the active oblation of infinite value. When Jesus prayed at Nazareth and preached on the mountain, then as always He was making an interior oblation of Himself to the Father; on the cross His offering became exteriorized, for His bruised body was immolated, His blood poured out, and His oblation expressed in those last words that were the consecration of the sacrifice of the cross: "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." "It is consummated." When Christ had spoken, then was the most perfect holocaust conceivable immolated.

Christ's unending intercession for us

"... always living to make intercession for us."

Heb. 7: 25

"Idem nunc offerens ministerio sacerdotum."

COUNCIL OF TRENT

Christ's bloody immolation is over and done, but His interior offering continues forever. It is no longer meritorious, for Christ no longer makes His way toward eternity, but it remains forever a prayer of adoration, thanksgiving, reparation, and supplication, and continues to apply to succeeding generations the merits of Calvary. Jesus Christ is, as St. Paul says, "always living to make intercession for us." It is of faith that Christ always possesses the beatific vision, seeing more fully than all the angels

and saints the divine essence and, in the divine essence, all that touches the kingdom of God. He never ceases loving His Father and souls in Him, never fails to support us by His love, never stops adoring and giving thanks. In Him, with Him, and by Him the elect shall forever sing the hymn of praise, Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus.

Christ's prayer of supplication shall cease, of course, at the end of the world, but until then Christ prays for us, that His merits and His reparation may be applied to us. The infinite treasure of His infinitely rich prayer is expressed chiefly in the Sacrifice of the Mass, by which our Lord as the principal priest offers and is offered, priest and victim being one and the same, as once upon the cross and now through His ministers, only the manner of oblation differing, being bloody on Calvary and unbloody on the altar.

On the altar we have only a sacramental immolation reminding us of the bloody immolation of the cross and applying its fruits to us. Although it is but sacramental, it suffices to constitute a true sacrifice, unbloody indeed but more real than any of the Old Testament sacrifices. Under the Old Law in fact the bloody immolation of bulls and goats was required merely as an outward sign, non ut res sed ut signum, of adoration and of contrition of heart. Although simply sacramental, our Lord's immolation at Holy Mass through the separate consecration of the bread and wine is as an outward sign of adoration and reparation and incomparably more expressive than the bloody immolation of all the victims of the Old Law. Jesus becomes present on the altar as if in the state of death, as if His body and blood were separated. This sacramental immolation, by applying Christ's merits to us, signifies that He is always ready to bear the greatest sufferings and to die for each of us, if need be, that we may be saved.

As two different modes of external oblation, the cross and the Mass serve to illuminate each other in a wonderful way. What stood out plainly and clearly to all witnesses at the cross was the bloody immolation of an innocent victim; what remained so hidden and mysterious that all the apostles except John failed to grasp it, in spite of their preparation by the Old Testament prophecies, Christ's own words, and the Last Supper, was the oblation of the eternal priest, who became by His annihilation in this hour of darkness the victor over sin and Satan.

On the contrary, in the Mass we see plainly the evident enactment of an outward oblation and easily grasp the intention of offering a sacrifice; what

remains mysterious for us is the immolation called mystical, the sign of Christ's continual oblation by which He offers up to God Himself and all souls united to Him, particularly those who suffer supernaturally, something of what He endured.

What stands out sharply on the cross lies hidden in the Mass, and what shows up boldly in the Mass remains mysteriously hidden on the cross: these two different modes of offering serve to lay bare the heart of one and the same sacrifice.

IDENTITY OF SUBSTANCE IN CHRIST'S SACRIFICE ON THE CROSS AND IN THE MASS

The Mass perpetuates in substance the sacrifice of the cross and also commemorates it by a new mode of oblation applying its fruits to us. It is not merely another sacrifice like Calvary's, having a specific similarity to it, as this year's roses have to last year's; it is individually the same sacrifice quoad substantiam, that is, as to its substance. Although the bloody manner of oblation ceased with the Savior's death and the unbloody outward oblation begins anew with each Mass, the same victim is always offered and the same high priest always makes the offering by the same interior act of oblation which will last forever, "idem nunc offerens ministerio sacerdotum." When the priest at the altar pronounces the words of consecration in our Lord's name, Jesus here and now wills that they be pronounced and He Himself communicates to them as His instruments their transubstantive power, desiring to be offered up in this manner in order that the merits of His passion and death may be applied to all generations of men upon the earth and to the souls in purgatory.

If it should happen that the consecrating minister becomes distracted at the very moment of consecration, Jesus is not distracted. Even if the minister should be a bad priest, provided that he still wills to perform the act instituted by our Lord according to the mind of the Church, the Mass that he offers always has an infinite value and can profit thousands of souls as easily as one, just as the sun shines with ready bounty on all who walk in its light.

The question will arise: How can the same sacrifice be substantially perpetuated without the bloody immolation also being continued or at least renewed? The bloody immolation is a passing external act and has no need

to be reenacted for a profound reason well within the grasp of all. We can consider first the active immolation which it contains, the putting to death, and then secondly the passive immolation, the real and violent separation of the Savior's body and blood, a separation resulting from the active immolation and incapable of being produced without it.

Now the active immolation of the Word of God made flesh in the sense of His being put to death stands out as the greatest crime that the earth has ever known and certainly should not be renewed. St. Thomas declares that it was not a sacrifice but an evil deed, "non fuit sacrificium . . . sed maleficium." It formed no part of the sacrifice of the cross but was on the contrary a wicked act, a sacrilege, deicide, certainly not to be renewed on the altar either really or virtually. This act could be attributed to Christ's minister and to Christ Himself only on condition that our Lord would either really or virtually encompass His own death, something which plainly did not take place on the cross.

As to the bloody passive immolation, that is, the real and violent separation of the Savior's body and blood, it came about only through the active immolation or killing and takes place no more since the resurrection. Moreover, not every real sacrifice, but only bloody sacrifice, requires the victim's actual destruction.

This truth answers the Protestant objection that every true sacrifice demands as one of its essentials the real destruction of the victim offered; that in the Mass no such real destruction takes place, Christ being now impassible; that the Mass cannot therefore be a true sacrifice and to claim that it is would be to declare the sacrifice of the cross as lacking in sufficiency. To the difficulty proposed, the Council of Trent replies, as we have already noted, that the Mass is not a bloody sacrifice but a true sacrifice, perpetuating in an unbloody manner the substance of the sacrifice of the cross in order that we may commemorate it and receive its fruits. The body of Christ offered on the altar is the same body that really suffered on the cross for love of us.

It may be insisted that active and passive bloody immolation certainly cannot be continued or renewed but that without them neither can the sacrifice of the cross be substantially perpetuated on our altars. To this we answer that what can be asserted of Christ's humanity can be held in regard to His sacrifice as well. Christ's humanity remains substantially the same, although it has become impassible and immortal instead of being passible

and mortal as it was during His earthly life. Not only the Savior's soul subsists, but His body also has become immortal. Comparably, not only the soul of Christ's sacrifice, the interior oblation, endures but the offering of the victim continues to be made, although in an unbloody manner. Not merely the soul of the sacrifice but the substance of the sacrifice is perpetuated. Nothing demands that the Savior's humanity be passible rather than impassible or the very contrary, although it must be one or the other. In like manner, Christ's sacrifice can exist in substance without being restricted to one or other of the two exterior modes of oblation and of immolation, for every true sacrifice properly so called comprises an act of religion, interior as well as exterior and public, and necessitating some kind of immolation, at least sacramental, of the victim offered. No immolation existed in the presentation of Jesus in the temple; nor does it exist outside the Mass in a host reserved in the ciborium; nor will it exist when the last Mass has been said. After the end of the world no sacrifice properly so called will be found, St. Thomas says, but the eternal adoration and thanksgiving of Christ and the elect will endure.

BEYOND THE LAWS OF SPACE AND TIME

To discuss this truth in relation to space and time should serve to enlighten us and lead us more deeply into the possession of this mystery. St. Thomas, in quoting as St. Ambrose's a text from St. John Chrysostom, shows how this could be the same sacrifice in substance: everywhere the same body is offered, not being multiplied but remaining one; everywhere too, the same sacrifice is rendered. The same body of Christ that hung on the cross, now lives in heaven as its natural dwelling place and remains on earth in every consecrated host. It is not localized in one place, non sicut in loco, but exists wherever it is substantially, and just as substantially as the bread which it replaced through transubstantiation. Now a substance exists entirely in the whole and entirely in each part of the whole, the whole substance of bread being in each part of the host before consecration and the whole substance of Christ's body being in each part of the host after consecration. Christ's body, by reason of its real, substantial, and sacramental presence, transcends the laws of space, as does every substance.

The body of Christ also transcends the laws of time, for it is the same body that lay in Bethlehem's crib, that hung on Calvary's cross, that was tabernacled in the infant Church and receives our adoration today, as young as it was two thousand years ago. The changes of time cannot touch it; it remains the same hostia perpetua, offered today and tomorrow and until the end of the world. And as our Lord's body is found in each consecrated host on every altar in the world non sicut in loco, not subject to the laws of space, so is it also non sicut in tempore, not subject to the laws of time.

If the body of Jesus once crucified for us presently surmounts the laws of time in the sense here given, what shall we say of His sacred soul, of His interior act of oblation, measured like the beatific vision, like love, adoration, and thanksgiving, neither by the continuous time of our sun, nor by the discrete time of the angels marked off only by their thoughts, but by immovable eternity, by the moment that never passes, the nunc stans et non fluens? Our Lord's interior oblation needs no renewal but continues without interruption, just as God conserves beings in existence not by any renewed operation but simply by a continuation of the act of creation.

Recent controversies have attracted more and more attention to the interior oblation formally present in the soul of our Savior, the principal priest of the Mass. Some authors give it too little notice; others consider it rather too exclusively. By itself, without the external sign of sacramental immolation, it does not suffice to constitute a sacrifice properly so called; but it forms its soul, and we cannot emphasize too strongly the Council of Trent's words, "idem nunc offerens sacerdotum ministerio."

We find in these considerations an explanation of how the substance of Christ's sacrifice on the cross perpetuated on our altars surmounts time, although the external mode of oblation takes place in time, and the bloody manner of Calvary's oblation belongs to the past and the unbloody manner of the Mass is re-enacted afresh each time the Holy Sacrifice is offered. In this sense each Mass is distinct from every other. The prophecy of Malachias has found its verification: "For from the rising of the sun even to the going down . . . in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to My name a clean oblation: for My name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord of hosts." Wherever the sun rises over the world Masses begin, their number so great that four elevations take place every second all day long; and so it shall be until the world comes to an end: the same sacrifice in substance shall ever be offered and the soul of that sacrifice shall always

remain the same ever-living interior oblation of Christ's heart. Generation after generation can thus come to quench their thirst at the infinite and timeless source of all grace. Every Christian should, by living faith and the gifts of understanding and wisdom, grasp this mystery more and more fully, taste it with growing delight, and live it with increasing fidelity.

At Mass our Lord not only offers Himself but His mystical body as well, all souls in the state of grace and united to Him by charity, especially those who follow after Him by bearing their sufferings supernaturally. St. Albert the Great and St. Thomas say that, when Christ offers Himself to His Father, He offers too all those whose nature He shares, all who are purified by His blood and made one body with Him.

The common preface of the Mass contains the same truth: "It is truly meet and just, right and availing for salvation, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks unto Thee, O holy Lord, Father almighty and everlasting God, through Christ our Lord. Through whom the angels praise Thy majesty, the dominions worship it. . . . With whom we pray Thee join our voices also, while we say with lowly praise: Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus." This prayer, the adoration of angels and of men, Jesus offers to the Father, especially at the moment of Eucharistic consecration, the essence of the Sacrifice of the Mass, in which we share through Communion. When the last Mass has been said, the sacrifice of petition and reparation will be no more, but the worship of adoration and thanksgiving will continue in heaven for all eternity as the consummation of Christ's sacrifice.

HOW TO UNITE OURSELVES TO THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

To learn how we should unite ourselves to the Sacrifice of the Mass, let us first recall how the Virgin Mary, the universal mediatrix, the vas insigne devotionis, united herself to the sacrifice of her Son.

MARY'S OBLATION

To Christ's unending oblation of Himself, Mary is united more closely than anyone else. During her whole earthly life, from the moment when she realized that she was to give birth to the Savior until He was born at Bethlehem, at His presentation when Simeon's warning words were spoken, during the flight into Egypt, in the silence of the home at Nazareth, and

later when seeing the difficulties of Jesus' ministry increase and the fury of the Pharisees grow, and finally and fully at the foot of the cross, she was ever offering her Son while He offered Himself for us and she offered herself together with Him, thus meriting for us in the broad sense, de congruo, what He merited for us strictly speaking, de condigno.

Mary had no need to expiate for herself; she was the Immaculate Conception, preserved from the original stain, redeemed in the most perfect way possible by her Son's future merits. She never committed the slightest sin; but for our sakes she was associated in the terrible sufferings and humiliations and great redemptive work of Jesus. No one else in the world, no saint, no martyr, no apostle, no stigmatic has ever been so closely linked to it as she. Indeed she has merited the titles of co-redemptrix and universal mediatrix through, with, in, and by our Lord. What wonderful insight into the Sacrifice of the Mass we can glean from the titles which the Church has proclaimed as Mary's! To her was not given the priestly character but she received the fullness of the spirit of the priesthood, the spirit of Christ the Redeemer.

Let us think about Mary's understanding of the Sacrifice of the Mass as St. John celebrated it before her. Better than anyone else she comprehended that the sacrifice of the altar perpetuated the sacrifice of the cross, commemorating its bloody immolation by a mystical immolation, full of meaning for her who could forget nothing of Calvary's drama. Better than anyone else Mary understood that our ever-living Lord is the principal priest of the Sacrifice of the Mass and that in the Mass He continues to offer Himself, interceding for us and applying to us the fruits of His merits. Mary saw in the continuation of the interior oblation of our Savior, always living in heaven and made present on our altar, the point of conjunction between heaven's adoration and thanksgiving and the worship of the Church militant.

Mary united the immolation of her heart to the mystical immolation of the Mass, generously accepting all the trials experienced when the infant Church was tasting the first anguish of three centuries of persecution. The Virgin never ceased offering herself as she had done at the foot of the cross, the remembrance of those hours being vividly and deeply engraved in her heart; she offered herself for the extension of her Son's kingdom, for the apostolate of the Twelve, for souls tempted and sorely tried, for the strength of martyrs and their triumph over the spirit of evil.

Because Mary shared until death in our Lord's redemptive mission, she also shared in His glory on the day of the assumption, remaining always "through Him, with Him, and in Him" the universal mediatrix, interceding for us and distributing to us the graces for every moment of our lives, answering our supplication, "pray for us now and at the hour of our death. Amen." The grace of the present moment, the grace for now, is for us all throughout our lives, the most special grace of all; every minute for centuries thousands of Christians have been receiving it through Mary. She acts as mediatrix not only of all different kinds of graces necessary for apostles, martyrs, doctors, confessors, and virgins, but also for all particular graces accorded to us moment by moment. She is the universal mediatrix because as the Mother of God she is the one most closely united to our Savior's oblation, the act of reparative love that has saved the world.

OUR PERSONAL OFFERING

How should we unite ourselves personally to the offering of Christ the Redeemer? We must make reparation for our own sins, and we should accomplish something for the salvation of our neighbors as they make their way toward eternity in our company. To achieve this we ought to keep before our eyes daily the four ends of the sacrifice of the Mass: adoration, thanksgiving, petition, and reparation. And since at the most solemn moment of the day, the Eucharistic consecration, Christ Jesus performs for our sakes the ceaseless offering of Himself and with Him His whole mystical body, we ought to lend ourselves to His action and join in it by lifting up to God all the contradictions and sorrows of the present and the future in order that Mary Reparatrix, to whom God has promised the victory over the serpent, may present this oblation to her Son. He Himself will unite it to His own and offer it to the Father. Let us, then, speak to Mary with the beautiful prayer of Blessed Nicholas de Flue: "Take me from myself and give me to Thyself."

The host being consecrated, the priest lifts it up for those assisting at Mass to see, not only that they may adore, but also, as St. Albert the Great says, that they may "extend their hands and show their intention of now offering themselves to the Father through Him who has already offered Himself for us on the cross." This seems to be the sense of the words of the canon preceding the Pater noster: "Per ipsum, et cum ipso, et in ipso est tibi

Deo Patri omnipotenti, in unitate Spiritus Sancti, omnis honor et gloria." By our Lord, with Him, and in Him, we ought to perform all our actions for God's glory, proffering Him all our joys and sorrows by uniting ourselves to the joyful and sorrowful mysteries of Christ's earthly life, the harbingers of the glorious mysteries to come. The beautiful prayer of the Rosary speaks this great message to us.

The Church teaches us that each Eucharistic Communion should increase our charity and make our hearts more and more like the Eucharistic heart of Jesus, priest and victim. Every time we receive, our Communion should be substantially more fervent than the one before, giving us a greater and greater share in our Lord's intentions and desires in instituting the Eucharist and in accomplishing the sacrifice of the cross on Calvary. No doubt St. Paul had all this in mind when he wrote to the Romans: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercy of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing unto God, your reasonable service."

St. Peter also spoke of the same great truth: "If so you have tasted that the Lord is sweet. Unto whom coming, as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen and made honorable by God: be you also as living stones built up, a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." The Fathers of the Church often recalled this teaching, telling us how we should assist at Mass, reminding us to unite ourselves to the principal priest, the sacred victim, by putting into practice our Savior's words: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."

The priest particularly, as Christ's minister, should share not only in His priesthood, but also in some measure at least in His victimhood. For his apostolate he should have recourse to the same means that Jesus used, daily uniting his sufferings to those which the Master endured for us, and bringing down on those whom he would evangelize the overflowing superabundance of Christ's redemption: "copiosa apud eum redemptio."

In Matins for the feast of All Saints the liturgy first recalls the merits of the apostles and martyrs and then speaks of the life of oblation and immolation proper to priests, doctors, and confessors of the faith, who offer themselves and their trials together with the sacred victim. It honors too the no less meritorious life of virgins, faithful in holy vigils, rejoicing in tribulations, bearing injuries and calumnies with humility, glad to endure all in order to become more conformed to our Lord Jesus Christ.

St. Paul gives us the secret of his fruitful preaching: “I, Paul . . . fill up those things that are wanting of the suffering of Christ, in my flesh, for His body, which is the church.” Our Lord’s passion lacks nothing in itself; it possesses infinite value, but we ourselves want for its reflection and application. To bring this about St. Paul uses the same means that our Lord used through, with, and in Him. In a sense, then, Christ’s suffering as well as His prayer is carried on in His apostles and through them produces fruit for eternal life. Jesus thus dignifies the members of His mystical body with the gift of causality, just as God gives efficiency to secondary causes in the universe. Several beautiful chapters in The Imitation deal with this subject and should be read and reread.

What priests should do to obtain grace for the souls whom they evangelize and to give battle to the spirit of evil, all faithful souls should also undertake in a measure proportionate to their grace and state of life, and all that they attempt should be carried out in union with the priest at the Holy Sacrifice and during the day by recalling that Masses are continually being offered throughout the world, wherever the sun rises. Devotion to the Eucharistic consecration comprises something essential in Christian life; without it we can have no real interior life. The double consecration, the essence of the Holy Sacrifice, marks the most solemn moment of every day of our lives. From its summit and source a fire of light and of energy should flow down over our lives and conform them to itself.

St. Thomas tells us:

Man’s good is threefold. There is first his soul’s good which is offered to God in a certain inward sacrifice by devotion, prayer, and other like interior acts: and this is the principal sacrifice. The second is his body’s good, which is, so to speak, offered to God in martyrdom, and abstinence or continency. The third is the good which consists of external things; and of these we offer a sacrifice to God, directly when we offer our possessions to God immediately, and indirectly when we share them with our neighbor for God’s sake. The three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience also make this triple oblation by sacrificing to God external goods, the pleasure of the senses, and our will.

Every Christian, even without the vows, can make an offering of self having a meritorious value based on charity and proportionate to the intensity of his love for God and for souls. Our offering of self has, too, as a prayer of petition an intercessory value based on Christ’s promise: “Ask,

and you shall receive." It will obtain whatever it asks within the framework of the divine intentions, that is to say, whenever it humbly and trustfully petitions for things necessary for salvation, the extension of God's kingdom, pardon for our offenses, and victory over the spirit of evil. When, in union with "the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world," we offer ourselves to God, our oblation also possesses a reparative value, serving to blot out our sins and to obtain the remission of the punishment due to them.

When we make such an offering it contains something incommunicable, something incapable of belonging to anyone except ourselves; this is merit properly so called, de condigno. To ask for graces personally necessary or useful for ourselves, to make satisfaction for our own sins, are both actions that are ours in such a way that they cannot be given over to another. Because of the mystery of the communion of saints, however, such an offering contains something communicable, too, something that we can pass on to our neighbors on earth and in purgatory; this is merit in the broad sense, de congruo. Praying for others, satisfying for the falls of sinners and the punishment due to them offer examples of actions that can be handed over to the profit of others. The different members of the mystical body can in this way mutually help and heal one another, discharging one an-other's debts and obtaining pardon for the guilty.

To offer ourselves to God in the way suggested here entails no vow to become a victim; nor does it imply the abandonment of everything communicable in our good works to Mary in order that she may use it for our neighbor's good, as Blessed Grignon de Montfort counsels, although it holds out an invitation to this abandonment. It does not oblige under pain of sin, can be made monthly, yearly, or for a longer period of time, and is fittingly renewed daily.

Whenever some major and deeply entrenched evil, such as French Masonry and its effect, must be fought, whenever evil manifests itself as truly satanic, then to appease God's justice spiritual action no less profound must come forward under the immediate direction of her whom God set up as the terror of demons, Mary. The Carthusians, Carmelites, Dominicans, and Poor Clares, who lead a contemplative life, have a hidden apostolic role against the furious efforts of the spirit of evil and the great devils, opposing them with a life of incessant prayer and immolation. Every apostle, even every fervent soul within the Church militant, should take some part in the contemplative life and its struggle, making a renewed offering of self daily

at Holy Mass with increasing devotion to the consecration, the act of the Savior's eternal priesthood, and continuing the same offering throughout the course of the day in difficulties and trials and in the more and more perfect accomplishment of the duties of our state of life. When we accept supernaturally the daily trials sent to us by Providence, we should also ask God not for crosses but for the love of the crosses which He Himself has laid upon us, that we may be purified and become instruments for the salvation of our neighbor.

If we would but give our full consent to such an acceptance and oblation, what consequences it would have! When we realize what evil a free and formal pact with the devil can achieve, can we doubt what great things could be accomplished in the order of good? Of course, to destroy is easier than to build, but with the help of grace, the extension of God's kingdom, although it may often be difficult, never becomes impossible, and the Holy Ghost is infinitely stronger than Satan. Those who would thus offer themselves should be consecrated to the Holy Ghost that they may come more and more under His guidance and be ever open to His inspirations and always docile to His influence.

Under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost we understand that our own offering may not be worth a great deal, that in itself it amounts to a drop of water in the ocean, but then we are led to offer to God as our greatest gift the precious blood of His Son in a spirit of adoration, of thanksgiving, of petition, and of reparation, recalling Christ's words, "If you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it to you." In the light of this message we understand that if our Lord could suffer anything in glory, He would suffer because of the obstacles that we place in the way of the graces that He desires to accord us. To surmount these obstacles we know that we must pray very especially in the name of Christ, that His prayer may really be carried on by us. When we have done this, we shall have tapped a treasure, the fullness of charity in our Savior's heart will pour out upon the Church, upon the Father of the faithful, upon bishops, pastors, and religious orders, that all the workers in our Lord's vineyard may labor efficaciously together and in perfect accord against the scheming spirit of evil, that Christian faith may shine forth, hope stand firm, and charity rise victorious over class hatred, uniting all men of our generation and of the generations to come as our Savior prayed that we might be united: "Holy Father, keep them in Thy name whom Thou has given Me; that they may be one, as We also are. . . .

And not for them only do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall believe in Me; that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee; that they also may be one in Us; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me."

The Christian who understands the meaning and implication of the oblation of self, makes it, and then renews it every day, will experience in some regards more difficulties than before because he enters the arena of a contest that has importance for all eternity; but he will receive ever-new graces to enlarge his heart and lead him to share in the manifestation of the only Son of God as the world's true Savior.

EPILOGUE

THE NARROW PATH OF PERFECTION AND THE FULL DEVELOPMENT OF THE ILLUMINATIVE AND UNITIVE WAYS

We see now the deep significance of the sketch outlined by St. John of the Cross at the beginning of the Ascent of Mount Carmel and explained later in the same work. It gives a synthesis of his whole doctrine and represents, as we know, three ways which at first seem to lead to the summit of the symbolic mountain, although in reality only one reaches it, the narrow path of perfection represented between the other two.

On the right we see the road followed by the misguided. Those who follow it keep their attachment for the things of earth: rest, ease, human knowledge, what the world calls liberty, a taste for the things of sense and of time. Where this road begins we find the words written: “The more I seek, the less I find; I cannot climb the mountain because I have lost my way.” As a matter of fact, the road that offers such a generous width at the start constricts and, instead of fulfilling its promise of ascent, soon turns downward. Sad to say, many set out along this way.

On the left we see the road followed by the imperfect: those who dally, detained not by the goods of the world but by the enjoyment which they find in spiritual goods, for example, in the knowledge of divine things sought through curiosity, in spiritual consolations desired for themselves, in a security without firm foundation, in the esteem and praise of good people. Where this road begins we read the words: “Instead of climbing the narrow path I sought for good things and now I possess fewer than if I had taken the strait way, and the delay has held me back.” In fact, the way of the imperfect soul reaches only halfway to the top; from the sketch we can see

that it fails to attain even a low degree of the illuminative way, where all too rarely contemplation of divine things and actual union with God are found.

In the middle we see the strait path of perfection, entered by an opening far narrower than the other two but gradually widening as it climbs upward, for it leads to divine immensity. On this steep path, plunging sharply upward, is written, “Nothing, nothing, nothing”: that is, the renouncement of earthly goods, rest, knowledge, freedom, the attraction of human things, and also the complacency taken by a still egoistic character in spiritual goods, learning, consolation, security, honor, or the esteem of others. A little farther on above this perfect purgative way is written: “The smaller your desires become, the greater shall you grow.” And yet a little farther: “Because I no longer desire anything through self-love, all is given to me without my seeking it. Being attached to nothing, I find that I am without lack.” By this way souls enter the perfect illuminative way through the passive night of the senses.

St. John of the Cross explains at length the renouncement which leads thither in the Ascent of Mount Carmel, showing that perfect detachment, “Nothing, nothing, nothing,” leads to the All, that is, to intimacy with Christ Jesus, who contains within Himself the whole of faith. He says, “These counsels for the conquering of desires . . . I believe to be as profitable and efficacious as they are concise; so that one who sincerely desires to practice them will need no others, but will find them all included in these.”

First, let him have an habitual desire to imitate Christ in everything that he does, conforming himself to His life. . . .

Secondly, in order that he may be able to do this well, every pleasure that presents itself to the senses, if it be not purely for the honour and glory of God, must be renounced and completely rejected for the love of Jesus Christ; . . . if there present itself the pleasure of looking at things that help him not Godward, let him not desire the pleasure or look at these things. . . . And similarly with respect to all the senses, in so far as he can fairly avoid the pleasure in question. . . . And in this wise he will be able to mortify and void his senses of such pleasure and leaven them, as it were, in darkness. And having this care he will soon profit greatly.

For the mortifying and calming of the four natural passions, which are joy, hope, fear and grief, from the concord and pacification of which come these blessings, and others likewise, the counsels which follow are of the greatest help, and of great merit, and the source of great virtues.

Strive always to choose, not that which is easiest, but that which is most difficult; not that which is most delectable, but that which is most unpleasing; not that which gives most pleasure, but rather that which gives least; . . . not that which is loftiest and most precious, but that which is lowest and most despised. . . .

Strive thus to desire to enter into complete detachment and emptiness and poverty, with respect to that which is in the world, for Christ's sake. And it is meet that the soul embrace these acts with all its heart and strive to subject its will thereto. For, if it perform them with its heart, it will very quickly come to find in them great delight and consolation, and to act with order and discretion.

St. John of the Cross then encourages us to strive for contempt of self and to desire that our neighbor count us for little as well, remarking that this is salutary for the destruction of the pride of life.

If you would love all, seek satisfaction in none.

If you would have all knowledge, rest content to do without it.

If you would possess all, pursue nothing.

Whatever you possess, hold it as if you had it not;

For whenever you find that you desire something

Then do you discover that God is not yet treasure enough for you.

In these words is contained the full meaning of the words written across the middle of his sketch of the ascent of Mount Carmel, "Because I desire nothing out of self-love, all is given to me without my seeking it": all, and first of all, the solid moral virtues written by name as prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance, followed by the inspirations of the gifts and fruits of the Holy Ghost, written to right and left of them.

As the soul then becomes more and more subject to the rule of the gifts and ought to be especially docile to interior inspirations, we read on the sketch, for the continuation of the climb, the statement that beyond this point no fixed road lies ahead; the soul must thereafter listen in silence and recollection for the voice of the interior Master and be docile to it, going forward by ways unmarked through the passive night of the soul toward the perfect unitive way.

Then under the inspirations of the spirit of wisdom comes the full flowering of the three theological virtues, the names of which St. John of the Cross wrote almost at the peak of the mountain. From them proceed those highest acts which the saint expresses in these words: "Divine silence,

divine wisdom, unending banquet. The glory and honor of God dwell alone on this mountain." It is still night, but the dawn of eternal life has begun to break as the saint expresses it in the beautiful chant Aunque es de noche ("Although It Be Night"): "I know this water which springs up and flows away. . . . Its source is hidden in Life eternal but its secret course I have learned, although it be night."

This is the summit reached by the narrow road leading to life. This is the footpath which St. John of the Cross himself followed for forty-nine years through suffering and persecution to its end. Climbing it, he learned what he himself said, i.e., that suffering is the means par excellence of entering a deep and delightful knowledge of God because suffering purges us and brings intimate and pure knowledge and consequently the purest and highest joy that we can know. The words of the Master begin to be realized even in this life: "Well done, good and faithful servant, because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord," into the very beatitude of God Himself, knowing Him as He knows Himself and loving Him as He loves Himself.

Who would say that this lofty doctrine, drawn from the well of contemplation and charity, is in some way opposed to St. Thomas'? The Angelic Doctor most surely has a different way of approach and of expression; he follows an abstract and speculative method, disengaging from the spiritual life in the concrete the great universal laws of spirituality, the highest and most universal principles concerning grace, faith, hope, and charity, together with the corresponding gifts of the Holy Ghost. What is striking about him is his genius for perfect balance and measure and harmony, which, precisely because perfect, in no way lessen the sublimity of the end to be attained.

St. John of the Cross was not a speculative theologian seeking to harmonize the facts of revelation with the findings of sound philosophy but a great contemplative who gave more time to prayer than to study, who often passed entire nights in pure and loving contemplation, translated at last into a spiritual canticle of marvelous beauty. Instead of abstracting from concrete spiritual life the notions and principles relative to the virtues in general and to each theological virtue together with each one's correlative gift, instead of composing distinct treatises on grace, faith, hope, and charity, he has done just the reverse: he has reunited these notions and

principles as they are found in the concrete case of a perfect spiritual life, flourishing at once with living faith, abandonment, and love.

St. Thomas shows the nature and properties of the theological virtues, insisting on their essentially supernatural character because of their formal object. St. John of the Cross shows us their growth to full development, when their three formal motives shine out like three great stars glowing with increasing clarity in the night of the soul. As we pointed out in the introduction to this work, it is because of their different viewpoints and methods that these two doctrines serve to clarify each other. There is no question of making a clumsy attempt to effect a reconciliation between them but of listening to what two doctors of the Church both have to tell us on the same subject, each speaking from his own point of view and for our great profit.

St. John of the Cross teaches us much, showing what is contained virtually in some of the principles so well formulated by St. Thomas. He gives us knowledge of profound things, because, as he says in the prologue of the Ascent of Mount Carmel, he wishes to give us solid and substantial instruction, as being as well suited to one kind of person as to another, if we make up our minds to arrive at detachment of spirit by the narrow way: as he himself expresses it, he desires to lead contemplatives to the highest union by the most direct road.

His sublime doctrine conforms perfectly with what St. Thomas tells us of the imitation of Jesus Christ, the virtues of the purified soul, the higher degrees of humility, patience, the spirit of faith, confidence in God, and charity. These two doctors of the Church meet on common ground in their profound understanding of the Psalms, the Book of Job, Jeremias, and Isaias, and in their penetrating grasp of the same texts in St. Paul: “Laying aside every weight and sin which surrounds us, let us run by patience to the fight proposed to us: looking on Jesus, the author and finisher of faith, who having joy set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and now sitteth on the right hand of the throne of God. For think diligently upon Him that endured such opposition from sinners against Himself; that you be not wearied, fainting in your minds. For you have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. . . . God dealeth with you as with His sons . . . for our profit, that we might receive His sanctification.”

The two doctors whom we have followed have drawn their profound knowledge of the cross of Jesus from the same source, of which St. Paul

before them drank deeply when he set down these words of the Master, “My grace is sufficient for thee: for power is made perfect in infirmity,” himself then adding: “Gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me. For which cause I please myself in my infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ. For when I am weak, then am I powerful.” “For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man is corrupted, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. . . . For the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen, are eternal.”

CONSECRATION TO THE HOLY GHOST

O Holy Spirit, divine Spirit of light and love, to Thee I consecrate my understanding, my heart, my will, my whole being for time and for eternity.

May my understanding be ever submissive to Thy divine inspirations and to the teaching of the Holy Catholic Church of which Thou are the infallible guide; may my heart be ever inflamed with love of God and of neighbor; may my will be ever conformed to the divine will and may my whole life be a faithful imitation of the life and virtues of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, to whom with the Father and with Thee, O Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever. Amen.

CONSECRATION OF THE SOUL TO THE HOLY GHOST

(Prayer of St. Catherine of Siena written by her own hand
and preserved at Siena)

“O Holy Spirit, come into my heart, by thy power draw me to Thyself and grant me charity with fear.

“Keep me, O ineffable Love, from every evil thought, warm and kindle me with Thy sweetest love so that every suffering may seem light to me.

“My heavenly Father, help me this day in every act. Jesus Love! Jesus Love!”

THE WAY OF THE CROSS ACCORDING TO ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

1. JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

God’s justice and infinite mercy lie hidden beneath men’s injustice. The Father delivered up His Son to death when He inspired Him to offer Himself for us at the very moment when He came into the world. By sending His Son to death and giving Him up to the torment of the cross, the Father willed to glorify Him by having Him obtain the greatest of all victories, His triumph over sin and Satan, a hidden victory, far greater than that which He achieved on Easter by the resurrection, His victory over death being a striking sign, but only a sign and effect, of the victory that preceded it.

Redemption, and redemption through the cross, is the very motive of the Incarnation. First and foremost Jesus is the Savior “qui propter nostram salutem descendit de coelis et incarnatus est.” Let us ask Him to bring us to some understanding of the motive of the Incarnation, a motive of mercy responding to our misery. From all eternity sin was permitted only in view of a greater good, and the Savior’s mercy in lifting us up from our fall is the most beautiful manifestation of the all-powerful goodness of God: “And where sin abounded, grace did more abound.”

My Jesus, pardon and mercy, by the merits of Thy sacred wounds. Father, we offer Thee the wounds of Thy Son for the healing of our wounded souls.

2. JESUS IS MADE TO BEAR HIS CROSS

In bearing His cross Jesus makes an interior offering of Himself for us; the fullness of the gift of self is achieved in the complete sacrifice, the perfect holocaust which is about to be consumed. The transports of St. Andrew when faced with his cross, of St. Ignatius when he gave expression to his desire to be ground by the teeth of wild beasts, are but feeble echoes

of Christ's ardent desire, invested as He was with the fullness of grace for the accomplishment of His mission as the Redeemer of sinful mankind. This fullness of grace acted like a weight in His soul drawing Him toward Calvary, a "pondus crucis"; it drove deep into Him an unfathomable attraction for the cross, the ardor of His love leading Him to that sacrifice which would render all glory to God and accomplish the salvation of men: "Love is the weight that draws me."

My Jesus, pardon and mercy, by the merits of Thy sacred wounds. Father, we offer Thee the wounds of Thy Son for the healing of our wounded souls.

3. JESUS FALLS BENEATH THE WEIGHT OF THE CROSS

Jesus falls, not because He is overcome by weariness against His will but because His love aspires to the farthest limits of suffering that we may know His love for us. He wills to experience not only a holy enthusiasm for His oblation because of the abundant grace that is His but to become acquainted with overwhelming anguish that He may offer it up in the pure intensity of His supernatural love for the Father and for us.

Men lay the cross upon Jesus. He is absolutely innocent; yet He sees the justice of God in men's injustice. If we who are guilty of so many hidden faults with which no one reproaches us happen to suffer some injustice from others, let us see in it God's purifying justice.

My Jesus, pardon and mercy, by the merits of Thy sacred wounds. Father, we offer Thee the wounds of Thy Son for the healing of our wounded souls.

4. JESUS MEETS HIS BLESSED MOTHER

Who knows better than Mary the motive of our Lord's sufferings, the love with which He bore them, and their value for our souls?

Let us ask the Blessed Mother to help us understand the mystery of the cross that we may accept and carry our cross not in revolt and vexation but with thankfulness and then with love, or at least with the beginning of love, which will keep on increasing through daily Communion, by personal merit and by love itself, which by its own action obtains an increase of grace. After the Savior no one else can so well obtain for us a wholly supernatural understanding of the mystery of the cross as the Immaculate Virgin; and no one else can so clearly reveal to us its effect upon our daily life.

My Jesus, pardon and mercy, by the merits of Thy sacred wounds. Father, we offer Thee the wounds of Thy Son for the healing of our wounded souls.

5. SIMON OF CYRENE HELPS JESUS TO CARRY HIS CROSS

What would we have said if we had met our Lord carrying His cross and He had asked us, “Will you help Me?” Today when a cross comes to us, it is Jesus who comes, Jesus who loves us, Jesus who desires to reproduce in us His own traits, Jesus whom we love. Just as the first cause does not rob secondary causes of their usefulness, so our Savior’s redemptive action does not render our efforts useless but on the contrary brings them into being and communicates to them their salutary and meritorious value.

We fail to realize how much we need the cross for our own purification and for the humble measure of work which God is good enough to let us do for the salvation of our neighbor. In a sense Jesus continues His agony to the end of the world in His mystical body, offering to let us help Him by carrying the cross prepared for us from all eternity and adapted by Him to our strength as sustained by His grace. We all have a cross, just as we all have a predominant fault and a particular supernatural attraction; our cross may be some sickness, some worry, or some other special trial. Through contemplation and love our cross becomes healing for us and radiant for others, helping them to carry their own holily. We really know others only when we know the cross they carry. The hidden apostolate exercised by contemplative souls consists chiefly in helping others to bear their cross by prayer and immolation.

My Jesus, pardon and mercy, by the merits of Thy sacred wounds. Father, we offer Thee the wounds of Thy Son for the healing of our wounded souls.

6. VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS

Our Lord’s expression, the look in His eyes especially, speaks His thoughts and His love. What are His thoughts? From the first moment of the Incarnation Jesus possessed the beatific vision in His soul, beholding the immediate vision of the divine essence, which constitutes the joy of the blessed in heaven. He preserved this vision even during the sorrows of the passion, during the great grief that He endured at the sight of the sins of all men, which He had taken upon Himself to expiate. Our Lord’s sacred face,

His look, expressed highest peace and deepest sorrow. Sentiments so opposed as to seem even contrary and contradictory arose from the same source, that is, the fullness of His grace, which was itself the result of the uncreated grace of the personal union with the Word.

Our Savior's fullness of grace acted as the principle of the beatifying light of glory in His soul, as the principle of His great love, happier in giving than in receiving, and of His suffering at the sight of men's sins, which caused Him anguish in proportion to His love.

The sacred face of the Savior is the face of the Master of masters, the Master of apostles and doctors and of great contemplatives; it may be marked with bruises and spittle, but it loses nothing of its nobility and greatness and bears the reflection of His sacred soul, which even in this life contemplated the divine essence unveiled and looked upon the life of eternity to which He was leading us. But He willed to confine the light of glory to the summit of His intellect and gave Himself up to every humiliation and opprobrium during that hour when Veronica came forward to wipe His blood-stained face.

Lord, help us to strike the right mean between depressing sadness and feigned optimism and teach us to suffer for love of Thee and give us peace in suffering. My Jesus, pardon and mercy, by the merits of Thy sacred wounds. Father, we offer Thee the wounds of Thy Son for the healing of our wounded souls.

7. JESUS FALLS THE SECOND TIME

It would be a serious mistake to believe that Jesus suffered only in His sensory powers, those which we share in common with the animals. Jesus suffered most of all because of sin, the greatest of evils, a spiritual affliction to be found in the higher faculties. Jesus suffered because of the sins of all men of every race and time. And His suffering was proportionate to His wisdom: He knew better than anyone else the number and gravity of men's crimes; they lay open before Him somewhat as we see the purulent sores of a body consumed with disease. His immense love of God, whom sin offends, and for our souls, which sin ravages and destroys, served also as the measure of His suffering. From this source sprang the sorrow that prostrated and crushed Him and surpassed the grief of all contrite hearts, afflicted for their sins. Jesus' fullness of grace augmented His capacity for

suffering, whereas the egoism that keeps us living on the surface of ourselves, allows us to find pain only in whatever touches us personally and renders us incapable of supernatural suffering arising out of love of God and souls, an anguish unknown to superficial minds.

Lord, give us great sorrow for our sins. My Jesus, pardon and mercy, by the merits of Thy sacred wounds. Father, we offer Thee the wounds of Thy Son for the healing of our wounded souls.

8. JESUS CONSOLES THE DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM

"Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me. . . ." No one takes My life away from Me. I give it freely. Nothing can give you so striking a proof of My love for you as My Passion. Through the mystery of the cross, God tells you of His love for goodness and His hatred of evil, of injustice in every form. My grievous Passion makes known to you also My Father's ardent love for Me in willing to glorify Me with victory over sin. Lastly, it expresses His incomprehensible love for your souls, since to save them, He delivered up His own beloved Son.

"Weep for yourselves. . . ." Blessed are they who weep the holy tears of contrition. Weep not for your crosses, which serve to purify you and make you free, but weep for your sins. "If any man will come after Me, let him . . . take up his cross. . . ." There is no other way to follow Me. "Weep for your children . . . ," for all who fail to understand, who curse and blaspheme the divine mystery of the cross.

My Jesus, pardon and mercy, by the merits of Thy sacred wounds. Father, we offer Thee the wounds of Thy Son for the healing of our wounded souls.

9. JESUS FALLS THE THIRD TIME

Jesus saw plainly the whole plan of Providence and could not suffer because of the divine permission for evil, holy as it is and ordered to the manifestation of mercy and justice; but He suffered beyond all reckoning because of sin itself. He willed to drink to the dregs the terrible chalice presented to Him in Gethsemane and containing all the shame and iniquity of the world, taking it for Himself and giving us in exchange the chalice of His precious blood, a blessed cup filled to overflowing with grace issuing from His bruised heart. These two chalices form the two scales of a balance,

one containing all goodness and the other all evil and they sum up and show forth the whole profound story of sinning and redeemed mankind.

Jesus is going to give us the chalice of His precious blood shed for us, but for Himself He wills no mitigation of His sufferings. He prevents the light of glory beatifying the summit of His soul from shining down on the lower part of His higher faculties and on His sensuous appetency, limiting it to the peak of His intellect, as if He were to cease hearing the countless choir of the elect chanting, “O happy fault! Where sin abounded, grace did more abound.” He gives Himself up to suffering that He may expiate our sins. His imminent triumph is not allowed to assuage His grief as He falls once more face downward on the ground, just as He fell in the Garden of Olives.

My Jesus, pardon and mercy, by the merits of Thy sacred wounds. Father, we offer Thee the wounds of Thy Son for the healing of our wounded souls.

10. JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS

Our Lord’s garments adhere to the wounds made by the scourging and, as they are torn off, His body flames with pain. This exterior and humiliating divestment symbolizes another and interior divestment which our Lord asks of us. We ought to strip ourselves of that self compounded of egoism, self-love under all its many forms, and of pride, that we may be clothed with humility and divine charity, which will enlarge our hearts and give them in a sense the great-heartedness of God by making us love everything as He loves it.

The saints understand the lesson of inner divestment, renouncing themselves and in a sense losing their own personality in the very personality of God. The spirit of faith rules their minds; God’s judgments and God’s will take the place of their own; they have become servants of God in somewhat the same way that our hand is the servant of our will. At the same time they have reached a kind of independence of all things created and rule over them with God, who makes all things, even evil, work together unto good.

Above and beyond the saints, our Lord not only divested Himself of all judgments except God’s, all desires other than God’s, but He also has no human “I” or self at the root of His faculties, at the base of His sacred soul. In its stead reigns the sovereignly adorable “I” of the Word made flesh,

possessed from all eternity of the divine nature and in time taking upon Himself human nature that He may become our Savior.

We should not consider it a deprivation for Jesus to have no human self: it is, quite the contrary, a supreme perfection. The full development of human personality consists in making ourselves more and more independent of what is inferior to us and more and more dependent upon God; the full development of human personality consists in losing ourselves in a sense in the personality of God by an ever more intimate union; in Jesus this is identity. He Himself says to us, “Let Me live in thee and die in thee.”

The uncreated person of the Word made flesh is the principle of the infinite value of His merits and His reparative death. Seen from above, as God and His angels behold it, how glorious is the cross of Christ!

My Jesus, pardon and mercy, by the merits of Thy sacred wounds. Father, we offer Thee the wounds of Thy Son for the healing of our wounded souls.

11. JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS

St. Luke tells us: “And when they were come to the place called Calvary, they crucified Him there: and the robbers, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. And Jesus said: Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” How different are these three crosses! Lord, never let ours be useless like the bad thief’s, make them like the good thief’s, the convert thief’s, and even more than that, like Thine own.

The words of Jesus, “Father, forgive them . . . ,” express the highest act of fortitude and meekness combined. In the midst of His sufferings He not only preserves the profoundest peace within Himself but communicates its overflowing abundance to the most afflicted and erring of men, provided that they do not refuse the light. At the very moment when His executioners crucify Him He is meriting grace for them and asking the Father that they may have eternal life. Many martyrs will repeat His prayer, and it will serve as evidence that their strength and their perfect charity toward their persecutors are not simply human but truly divine. Thus the Savior’s great prayer and suffering is continued, so to speak, in the mystical body until the end of time. If we must suffer from another, let us pray for him; if on our part we make others suffer, let us think that perhaps God inspires them to

pray for us; let us remember that He most certainly prayed for us who were the cause of His death.

Because the crucifixion was our Lord's hour, His great hour and the highest point of the whole history of the world, let us look at every moment of our lives in relation to it, that we may be faithful to the grace of the present moment. Then let us see each minute not merely in the horizontal plane of fleeting time, poised between a past which is gone and must be left at God's mercy and a future which is shrouded in uncertainty for us, but let us live in the present moment in a higher and more realistic way, seeing it in the vertical order, as it connects with the unique instant of changeless eternity, that moment of eternal dawn which never passes. We shall then come to know the infinite riches of the present moment. It slips away, but my body keeps on existing and my soul too, together with the grace which urges it, the influence of the Savior, and the three divine persons indwelling within me, provided I am in the state of grace. The present moment, no matter how laborious and lackluster it may appear, holds an infinite treasure; let us live it in such a way as to make it part of eternity, preparing for a good death, a sacrifice of adoration, of reparation, and of thanksgiving in union with our Lord.

Let us pray for those in their agony and those undergoing severe trials. My Jesus, pardon and mercy, by the merits of Thy sacred wounds. Father, we offer Thee the wounds of Thy Son for the healing of our wounded souls.

12. JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

Agonized and overwhelmed with suffering, Jesus preserved that peace which is the tranquility of the order that His love restores to us. His last words express deep and radiant peace.

To the good thief: "This day thou shalt be with Me in paradise": a word of peace to all great penitents, that they may know themselves pardoned.

To Mary and to John: "Woman, behold thy son. . . . Behold thy mother": words producing what they signify, greatly increasing the Virgin's motherly love for all redeemed souls represented by the beloved apostle.

The cry of unequaled sorrow: "My God, my God, why hast thou abandoned me ?" is the first verse of Psalm 21, the Messianic psalm consummated in perfect abandonment by Him who restores peace to the world and bears in our stead the malediction due to sin.

“I thirst”: the Savior thirsts for souls and He Himself leads them to the living water of grace to purify, refresh, and save them.

“It is consummated”: the perfect holocaust prefigured by the sacrifices of the Old Law is offered; it will be perpetuated in substance in the holy Mass until the end of the world. His fullness of grace made Jesus desire to suffer for us even to this extremity and it now overflows on all souls not closed against God’s love.

“Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit”: these words consecrate and offer the sacrifice of the cross. Because the boundless love of the Word made flesh inspires His oblation, it has an infinitely meritorious and satisfactory value and achieves more to please God than all the sins of all men accomplish to displease Him.

My Jesus, pardon and mercy, by the merits of Thy sacred wounds. Father, we offer Thee the wounds of Thy Son for the healing of our wounded souls.

13. JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS AND LAID IN THE ARMS OF HIS MOTHER

The Blessed Virgin and, in some measure, those who remained faithful, St. John and the holy women, apprehended the mystery accomplished on Calvary, the ardent love of the Son of God offering Himself for us, the victory achieved over sin and Satan. Receiving into her arms the body of her Son, Mary glimpsed by faith to some extent God’s infinite mercy for sinners and she adores the divine justice to which Jesus made perfect reparation.

What shall we ask of Mary, now that the sufferings of the cross have passed and their immense worth becomes more and more apparent? Let us not have the presumption to ask for crosses, which we might perhaps carry imperfectly, but let us ask of the Virgin of sorrows love for those crosses made ready for us from all eternity. Give us, O Lord, love for them, whatever they may be and even if they must be carried in lonely martyrdom of heart and soul and mind; give us the grace not to exaggerate our crosses but to bear them just as they are and will be, without turning in upon ourselves, and simply out of love for Thee, Lord, and for souls. Mary Immaculate will lead us to bear them with more ease and perhaps with more merit, for she will obtain for us an increase of charity, the principle of merit, and help us efficaciously by consoling us in our struggles.

My Jesus, pardon and mercy, by the merits of Thy sacred wounds. Father, we offer Thee the wounds of Thy Son for the healing of our wounded souls.

14. JESUS IS PLACED IN THE SEPULCHER

The Savior’s body rests in the tomb; in three days it will rise again. Through the cross Jesus has won the greatest of all triumphs, the victory over sin and Satan, and He can say to His disciples: “In the world you shall have distress: but have confidence, I have overcome the world.” During the agonies of the Passion He remained the great Peacemaker, pouring out upon us the river of divine mercies. The resurrection or victory over death comes as a striking sign of that incomparably greater victory won over sin on Good Friday. “Sin entered into the world, and by sin death,” death being a chastisement for sin. By the transcendent logic of supernatural mysteries, He who has vanquished sin should also defeat death. In prayer let us ask for understanding of this mystery that we may live more and more for God through, in, and with Christ.

My Jesus, pardon and mercy, by the merits of Thy sacred wounds. Father, we offer Thee the wounds of Thy Son for the healing of our wounded souls. Amen.

THE MYSTERIES OF THE ROSARY

(Seen in the light of the principle: The fullness of grace in Jesus and Mary served as a source of peace and of reparative suffering)

THE JOYFUL MYSTERIES

1. THE ANNUNCIATION

“Ave, gratia plena.” From the moment of her immaculate conception, Mary received an initial plenitude of grace excelling that given to all the saints and angels together. Her soul outshone all others, a diamond among lesser jewels. The plenitude of faith, of hope, and of charity that never left off growing in her was given to Mary because of her unique mission in the world as the Mother of God, her divine motherhood surpassing the order of grace and attaining in a sense to the hypostatic order constituted by the personal union of the humanity of Jesus with the Word of God.

This mystery of the Incarnation was announced to Mary and, enlightened by God, she spoke her Fiat with great faith, great peace, and great courage, for she had a presentiment of what sufferings her Son would undergo in fulfilling what the prophets had foretold. After the Fiat, at the moment when the mystery of the Incarnation was realized, the coming of the Word greatly increased Mary’s initial fullness of charity. Mary therefore participated and will always participate more fully than anyone else in the effects produced by the yet higher fullness of charity received into Christ’s sacred soul at the time of His incarnation. The Word became incarnate to save us by dying on the cross for us. In His sacred soul and in Mary’s the fullness of grace produced two apparently contrary but intimately united effects, a deep peace which should find its reflection in us, and a desire for the cross which would continue to heighten until the hour of the Consummatum est.

2. THE VISITATION

Mary saluted Elizabeth and, as St. Luke recounts, as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting the infant which she bore leapt in her womb and she was filled with the Holy Ghost. Lifting up her voice she cried: "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy."

Mary, who was to give birth to the Savior, brought grace to Elizabeth and to the unborn precursor. Mary herself had been redeemed in an absolutely exceptional manner by the future merits of her Son and she concurred in the redemption of us all. From the moment of her immaculate conception she had been redeemed by a sovereign redemption, being preserved from original sin instead of being healed of it. It was fitting that a perfect Redeemer should accomplish a sovereign and preservative redemption in at least one soul, and in that soul more closely associated with Him than any other in the work of man's salvation. Truly, what Jesus merited for us in justice, Mary has merited for us with Him and in Him and by Him through the merit of congruity. In this sense it has pleased our Lord that no one should be saved except in consideration of the merits of His Mother. In the same sense it has pleased Him to sanctify the precursor by Mary's words.

3. THE NATIVITY

The Blessed Virgin's fullness of grace increased still more with the birth of the Savior, when she had the immense joy of giving Him to the world.

Let us relinquish joys which are often all too human and sometimes even dangerous, joys which estrange us from God, that we may live in the high and pure joy springing from the good news of the gospel. The angel said to the shepherds who were guarding their flocks at night: "Behold, I bring to you good tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people: for, this day is born to you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David." The mystery of the Incarnation brings us the joy of the real presence of God among us, of God who continues to live in our midst in the Eucharist. The first effect of grace then begins to radiate upon us all: "Glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace to men of good will."

4. THE PRESENTATION OF JESUS IN THE TEMPLE

On the day of the annunciation Mary said her Fiat in peace, with both joy and grief, having some foreknowledge of the Savior's sufferings, so plainly foretold by Isaias. The Blessed Virgin's grief increased when she was directly enlightened by the prophecy of the aged Simeon clearly predicting: "Behold this Child is set for the fall, and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted; And thy own soul a sword shall pierce, that out of many hearts, thoughts may be revealed."

Presenting her Son in the Temple, Mary offered Him for us in sorrow; her suffering was, however, intimately united to the profound joy which she experienced when she heard Simeon's words of peace: "Now thou dost dismiss Thy servant, O Lord, according to Thy word in peace: because my eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people: a light to the revelation of the Gentiles and the glory of Thy people Israel."

5. THE FINDING OF JESUS IN THE TEMPLE

Our Lord said to Mary and Joseph: "How is it that you sought Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" Mary accepted in the obscurity of faith what she could not yet understand, the meaning and depth of the mystery of the Redemption being progressively revealed to her. To find Jesus was a joy, but a joy that carried a foreboding of much suffering.

In the life story of souls joy comes at the beginning with the glimpse of the desired and distant goal, but afterward our Lord makes us understand that we must adopt austere means to reach it. There should be three great acts in the life of a soul: the joyous desire for the happiness of heaven, the continually renewed choice of the means leading there, although they may often be painful, and the possession of the end achieved. These great acts correspond to the joyful, sorrowful, and glorious mysteries of the Rosary, a school for contemplation leading us gently to the living, enlightening, and activating contemplation governing all action.

THE SORROWFUL MYSTERIES

1. THE AGONY IN THE GARDEN

In His overwhelming sorrow, Jesus remained in perfect conformity to God's will: "My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me. Nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

Let us compare Jesus' sorrow with ours. We often fashion our own griefs, which lack reason and foundation. At other times our imprudent actions and faults have painful and well merited consequences against which we rebel. It also happens that our Lord sends us very afflicting trials for our purification, and these too, sad to say, are rarely borne well. Let us contemplate our two great models, Jesus and Mary, and we shall understand that the real evil which should give us concern is to be found in the sins that we have committed and in their consequences, wrongdoing which results in the loss of souls. Our Lord suffered because of them according to the measure of His love for His offended Father and for us who have offended Him.

Let us beg Him to teach us how to suffer in a way profitable not only for ourselves but for others as well. Out of something apparently useless, suffering, Christ's love once fashioned something aboundingly fruitful for good. He now in a sense continues His agony until the end of the world in His mystical body, in His cross-bearing members; and the mystical body can no more dispense with reparative suffering, a reflection of Christ's own, than our eyes can do without the light of the sun.

In Gethsemane Jesus wept because of our sins; they made Him suffer a bloody sweat. Let us ask Him for deep and true sorrow for our sins, the holy tears of contrition, spoken of in the beatitude, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."

2. THE SCOURGING

By His wounds Jesus expiated for the guilty voluptuousness of men. He is struck, and we are healed. Mary, who saw her Son scourged for us, was not healed but preserved by Him from original sin and its blighting effects. She never knew our sad concupiscence. Sovereignly redeemed by Him, she gave Him the pure blood now shed under the lashes of His executioners that we may be cured of the concupiscence of the flesh, which turns us from God, brings families to ruin and nations to desolation.

Pro peccatis suae gentis

Vidit Jesum in tormentis
Et flagellis subditum.

3. THE CROWNING OF THORNS

Jesus was crowned with thorns in cruelty and derision but the painful crown by which He expiated for our sins of pride flowered into a crown of glory for Him as the King of kings and Lord of lords. And Mary, who saw Him go by bearing His crown of thorns, became associated with Him in His glory. “And the king loved her more than all . . . and he set the royal crown on her head” (Esther 2: 17). Before having her share in His final victory, our Lord allied her with Him in His sufferings, in the intimate peace that continued in the depth of their hearts in spite of everything, and in His desire to be immolated as a perfect holocaust for the salvation of men. The peace of our thorn-crowned Lord not only remained in the depth of His own soul but for two thousand years has radiated on all who meditate in their hearts on His passion and on the humility of both Mother and Son. As Blessed Grignon de Montfort says, the demon, who is pride personified, suffers more by being vanquished by Mary’s humility than if he were immediately put down by the all-powerful God.

The humble and thorn-crowned Jesus will be uplifted above all. “He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross. For which cause God also hath exalted Him, and hath given Him a name which is above all names: that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven and on earth, and under the earth: and that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father.”

4. THE CARRYING OF THE CROSS

“If any man will follow Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.”

We ought to carry our cross in union with our Savior. When we bear it holily, it brings us a sweetness which the world cannot know. If we never come to carry our cross as we should, it is because our desire for eternal life wants for strength, life, and ardor. If we recoil before the harshness of the means, it is because our desire for the end lacks energy. We must reanimate

our desire, asking the Blessed Virgin to increase it in us, together with our faith, hope, and charity. Then our crosses, because they are carried with more love, have less pain and more merit for us. Charity, the principle of merit, lightens the Savior's yoke upon us.

Lord, transform our trials. So often they weigh us down profitlessly; let them bring us onward to our end and become for us and for others a pledge of eternal salvation.

The carrying of the cross reminds us, as it has been said, that life holds but one real misfortune, more evident in times of sorrow and danger than at others, the misfortune of not being a saint. We are absolutely sure of not having to bear more than we are able, God's grace aiding us. We are also sure of our guide and have but to follow in His footsteps.

5. THE CRUCIFIXION

Jesus is going to die in terrible physical and moral suffering, and the apostles, with the exception of St. John, have left Him. The Mother of Sorrows stands at the cross making the greatest act of faith and hope that has ever existed. The Crucified has more than faith and hope: He preserves even in His anguish the vision of the divine essence. But He limits its glory to the apex of His intellect that He may give Himself up to sorrow. He seems overcome, His work appears destroyed, even His disciples have all fled. Not for an instant, however, does Mary cease to believe that He is the Savior, the Word of God made flesh, and that He will arise again in three days as He foretold. She has a greater understanding of the seven words that He spoke than anyone else could ever have. She offers to the Father a Son whom she not only cherishes but rightly adores. With all the love which she is capable of she offers to the Father the still greater love of Him who hangs dying on the cross for us. Because of this offering she has received a final plenitude of grace constituting her more than ever the Mother of men, the co-redemptrix, the universal mediatrix.

To Mary who "bore the death of Christ within her" let us say Fac ut portem Christi mortem. Let us ask her to share with us the two great effects of her fullness of grace: peace and the desire for the cross. May she help us to love the cross as all the saints have loved it; may she obtain for us an ever livelier and deeper understanding of the mystery of the Redemption

and of the infinite value of the Mass by which it is perpetuated upon our altars.

THE GLORIOUS MYSTERIES

1. THE RESURRECTION

Jesus is victor over death because on the cross He vanquished sin and Satan. He could say to His apostles, “I have overcome the world,” for He had overcome that spirit of the world which is compounded of concupiscence and pride. We have in the resurrection a striking evidence of this victory. Is not death the result and punishment of sin? Victory over death then follows as the result of victory over sin, a fact which led St. Paul to say, “And if Christ be not risen again, your faith is vain, for you are yet in your sins.”

Such is the meaning of the resurrection and of the glorious mysteries following after it. The joyful mysteries speak the delight springing from the first eager desire for the end seen afar off; the sorrowful mysteries remind us of the severe means that we must use in daily carrying our cross; the glorious mysteries tell us of our final conquest, introducing us into eternal life, our destination and last end. Toward this glory all our joys and sorrows should be directed, as Jesus and Mary directed all the joys of His childhood and all the sorrows of His passion, uniting in offering the same holocaust. Let us contemplate these two great models and consider how we ought to imitate them every day of our lives, striving always more generously toward the end to which they desire to bring us.

2. THE ASCENSION

Jesus was lifted up to heaven and placed on the right hand of the Father, where He will reign forever over the minds and hearts of men. With Him the souls of the just entered heaven to enjoy the beatific vision according to the measure of their merits and the degree of their charity. The Blessed Virgin had a degree of charity higher than that of all the saints together. Why did she not follow her Son immediately? She remained with the Church militant as its animating, suffering, meriting heart, sustaining the

apostles in their difficult labors. Our Lord deprived the apostles of His visible presence, but He left them His mother for their consolation. The new-born Church owed its development to the past merits of the Savior and also in Him, by Him, and with Him, to the prayer and suffering love of the Blessed Virgin, the spiritual mother of all men.

3. PENTECOST

The Holy Ghost descended visibly in the form of tongues of fire on the Blessed Virgin and the apostles. Let us think of this new increase of grace produced in Mary's soul. As the falling stone drops earthward with greater and greater speed as the earth's attraction increases, the Blessed Virgin's soul was drawn more strongly to God as she drew nearer to Him. The initial plenitude of charity which she received at the moment of her immaculate conception surpassed that of all the great saints. What a marvelous upsurge of love she must have known as her life went on! The law of gravity is only a kind of reflection of an incomparably higher law ruling the tendency of all creatures, especially spirits, to God. If they freely follow the double inclination of nature and of grace, spirits tend toward God with ever increasing love until they reach Him, their journey's end. The nearer they come to God, the more He attracts them: a truth we see verified on the day of Pentecost in the souls of the apostles but especially in Mary's soul for no sin or imperfection held back the flight of her charity.

If the sacerdotal character was not given to her, she did receive the fullness of the spirit of the priesthood, the spirit of the redeeming Christ, and this she transmitted to the apostles, whom her prayer and interior immolation were to sustain in their great labors and struggles.

Through the hands of the most Blessed Virgin, let us consecrate ourselves to the Holy Ghost, asking Him to make us henceforth docile to His precious inspirations, which we have so often wasted. Let us also ask for apostles, strong priestly vocations, begging for many, but above all, for generous workers. Our Lord desires more than we do to perpetuate His priesthood and to save souls; we shall greatly please His divine heart by obtaining through Him, with Him, and in Him efficacious graces for the formation of a chosen and faithful following who will continue worthily the apostolate of His first disciples and apostles, using the same supernatural means which they used.

4. THE ASSUMPTION

The Blessed Virgin died of love, her soul ravished out of her body by the strength of her love for God. Swept up to heaven by the flight of her charity, her soul was not long separated from her body, which had no contact either with original or actual sin and was not to become acquainted with the corruption of the tomb. Our Lord advanced the day of resurrection for His Blessed Mother, making her His companion in His victory over death because she was more closely associated with Him than anyone else in His victory over sin on Calvary.

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Through the merits of thy Son and through thy intercession for us we can work out our salvation. Make us understand that for those who love the Lord and love Him unto the end, all things work together unto good, omnia cooperantur in bonum. Make us to be numbered among those who continue to love until the end; obtain for us the grace of final perseverance, the grace of a good death. Then we shall see that through God's goodness, the merits of thy Son, and thy prayers, everything in our lives has turned into good; everything—natural qualities, efforts, all the graces received since baptism, all the absolutions and Communions, all the defeats and crosses and contradictions, and even all the sins, for, as St. Augustine says, the Lord permits sin in the life of His elect only that He may bring them to a deeper knowledge of themselves, to true humility, that rising again after their fall, they may go on to greater gratitude and love.

5. THE CORONATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

The Blessed Mother is exalted above the choirs of angels: "exaltata est super choros angelorum, ad celestia regna." As we can form no idea of the final plenitude of charity which her holy soul possessed at the hour of death, neither can we determine the corresponding brilliance of the light of glory which she received nor the intensity of her vision into the most holy depths of the divine essence. She is queen of angels, of patriarchs, of prophets, of apostles, of martyrs, of confessors, of virgins, and of all saints, but she ever remains more our mother than our queen.

Let us keep asking her continually until death for the grace of the present moment. This is the grace that we beg of her when we pray, Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us now. . . . We plead for this most particular grace,

which changes with each changing moment, makes us equal to the duties of the whole day, and opens our minds to the greatness of all those small things that bear a relationship to eternity. When we say “now” even if we may be distracted, Mary is not and listens to us, graciously receiving our prayer, and the grace necessary for us to continue praying, suffering, or doing at the present moment comes to us like a breath of air. Let us ask for the grace to live to the full the richness of the passing moment, especially the time of prayer. We can fall into a hasty and mechanical way of saying the Rosary and the Divine Office that militates against contemplation. Preserve us, O Mary, from such materialism. During the present escaping moment not only our body and its impressionable appetites exist but our spiritual soul lives too and Christ lives and exerts His influence over us and the Blessed Trinity lives and dwells within us. Let us abandon to God’s infinite mercy everything in our past and in our future and live practically and sublimely in the present moment, seeing in this fleeting now, whether it be dull or joyful or full of pain, a distant image of the unique instant of changeless eternity and, because of the actual grace which it contains, a living proof of God’s fatherly goodness.

Deign, O Blessed Virgin, to make us recognize the holy demands of God’s love for us at the present moment of our lives: He requires more of us now than before, because grace is meant to go on increasing until the time of death and, if we follow the divine plan, our whole life will be a direct journey to eternity, traveled ever more and more quickly as God draws us more and more strongly to Himself.

THE MOTHER OF THE SAVIOUR

AND OUR INTERIOR LIFE

REVEREND REGINALD GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE O. P.

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TRANSLATED BY REVEREND BERNARD J. KELLY, C.S.SP., D.D.

“O GOD, WHO ART THE GREATNESS OF THE HUMBLE, REVEAL TO US MARY’S HUMILITY, WHICH IS PROPORTIONED TO THE ELEVATION OF HER CHARITY.”
—2 TIMOTHY 4:3–4

NIHIL OBSTAT:
MICHAEL L. DEMPSEY, S.T.D.
THEOL. CENSOR DEPUTATUS

IMPRIMATUR:
I-JOHN CAROL
ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN,
PRIMATE OF IRELAND DUBLIN,
DECEMBER 8, 1948

IMPRIMI POTEST:
PATRICK O’CARROLL, C.S.SP.
PROVINCIAL SUPERIOR DUBLIN,
DECEMBER 2, 1948

IMPRIMI POTEST:
FR. BERNARD MARIE, O.P.
VICAR PROVINCIAL OF THE FREE ZONE
JULY 8, 1941

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THE MOTHER OF THE SAVIOUR

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

A theologian of the eminence of Father Garrigou-Lagrange does not himself need to be introduced to the public, This present work of his would, however, seem to invite a few words of explanation.

It is not a devotional book in the ordinary sense of the term: it is too openly theological for that. On the other hand, it is no mere theological treatise: the author's aim has been to inflame hearts no less than to enlighten minds. The result is a work which demands more intellectual application than many others on Our Lady. But, by way of compensation, it touches the will at a deeper and more spiritual level than would a work of less rich content. The author's insistence—a fully justified one—on the doctrinal side of his subject has, of course, left little room for mere literary ornament. But this lack, if lack it be, will not turn away any reader who is sincerely desirous to know Our Lady better.

As for the translation itself, though care has been taken not to attribute to Father Garrigou-Lagrange anything he did not write, it has not been possible always to translate the original with literal fidelity. Theologians who wish to use the book for strictly scientific purposes would be well advised to compare passages they intend to quote with the original. The translator will be glad to supply it, if necessary, as far as possible.

Holy Ghost Missionary College, Kimmage,
Corpus Christi, May 27th, 1948.

AUTHOR’S PREFACE

This book is intended to be an exposition of the principal theses of Mariology in their bearing on our interior life. While writing it I have noticed more than once how often it has happened that a theologian admitted some prerogative of Our Lady in his earlier years under the influence of piety and admiration of her dignity. A second period then followed when the doctrinal difficulties came home to him more forcefully, and he was much more reserved in his judgement. Finally there was the third period, when, having had time to study the question in its positive and speculative aspects, he returned to his first position, not now because of his sentiment of piety and admiration, but because his more profound understanding of Tradition and theology revealed to him that the measure of the things of God—and in a special way those things of God which affect Mary—is more overflowing than is commonly understood. If the masterpieces of human art contain unsuspected treasures, the same must be said, with even more reason, of God’s masterpieces in the orders of nature and grace, especially when they bear an immediate relation to the Hypostatic Order, which is constituted by the mystery of the Incarnation of the Word. I have endeavoured to show how these three periods may be found exemplified in the process of St Thomas’ teaching on the Immaculate Conception.

These periods bear a striking analogy to three others in the affective order. It has often been noticed that a soul’s first affective stage may be one of sense-perceptible devotion, for example to the Sacred Heart or the Blessed Virgin. This is followed by a stage of aridity. Then comes the final stage of perfect spiritual devotion, overflowing on the sensibility. May the Good God help the readers of this book who wish to learn of the greatness of the Mother of God and men to understand in what this spiritual progress consists.

The doctrines proposed in this book are not personal ones: it has been my aim to give what is most commonly held by theologians—especially those

of the Thomistic school—and to explain the various points in the light of St. Thomas's principles. Lastly, every effort has been made to avoid merely metaphorical expressions. There are sometimes too many of them in books on Our Lady. A bibliography is given with each question treated.

PART I

The Divine Maternity and the Plenitude of Grace

Chapter 1

THE DIVINE MATERNITY: ITS EMINENT DIGNITY

THE two truths which stand out like mountain peaks in the chain of revelation concerning Our Blessed Lady, and around which cluster all other truths we hold about her, are her divine maternity and her fullness of grace, both of which are affirmed in the Gospels and in the Councils of the Church. To grasp their importance it will be well to compare them, asking which of the two comes first, and gives, as it were, the true Pisgah view of all Mariology. In that spirit have theologians enquired which was the greater of Mary's prerogatives, her divine maternity (her motherhood of God) or her fullness of grace.

THE PROBLEM STATED

There have been theologians who have declared Mary's fullness of grace her greatest prerogative. The words spoken to Jesus by a certain woman as He passed in the midst of the people, and His answer, have led them to adopt this position: "Blessed is the womb that bore Thee, and the paps that gave thee suck. But He said: Yea rather, blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it." (Luke 11: 27–28). On their view the Saviour's answer implies that the fullness of grace and of charity which was the principle of Mary's supernatural and meritorious acts was superior to her divine maternity, a privilege in itself of the corporeal order only.

According to many other theologians the reason given just now is not conclusive. Their arguments are many. They say that the woman in question did not speak precisely of the divine maternity: she thought of Jesus less as God than as a prophet whose words were heard eagerly, who was admired and acclaimed, and she was thinking therefore of a natural motherhood

according to flesh and blood: “Blessed is the womb that bore thee and the paps that gave thee suck.” She did not speak of the divine maternity as of something which included a supernatural and meritorious consent to the mystery of the redemptive Incarnation. That was why Our Blessed Lord answered as He did: “Yea rather, blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it.” For it was precisely by hearing the word of God and believing in it that Mary became Mother of the Saviour. She said her fiat generously and with perfect conformity of will to God’s good pleasure and all it involved for her, and she kept the divine words in her heart from the time of the Annunciation onwards. Elisabeth, for her part, expressed this when she said: “Blessed art thou that hast believed, because those things be shall accomplished which were spoken to thee by the Lord” (Luke 1:45). What a contrast with Zachary who was struck dumb for not having believed the words of the Angel Gabriel: “And behold thou shalt be dumb . . . because thou hast not believed my words.” (Luke 1:20).

Nothing said so far, therefore, is sufficient to solve the problem: which was the greater, the divine maternity as realized in Mary or her fullness of grace and charity?

We must search deeper for a solution. To make the terms of the problem still more precise, it should be noted that the maternity proper to a creature endowed with reason is not the maternity according to flesh and blood which is found in the animal kingdom, but something which demands by its very nature a free consent given by the light of right reason to an act which is under the control of the will and is subject to the moral laws governing the married state: failing this, the maternity of a rational being is simply vicious. But the maternity of Mary was more than rational. It was divine. Hence her consent needed to be not free only, but supernatural and meritorious: and the intention of divine providence was that in default of this consent the mystery of the redemptive Incarnation would not have taken place—she gave her consent, St. Thomas says, in the name of mankind (Ilia, q. 30, a. 2).

Hence the maternity we are discussing is not one which is merely of flesh and blood, but one which by its nature included a supernatural consent to the mystery of the redemptive Incarnation which was about to be realized, and to all the suffering it involved according to the messianic prophecies—especially those of Isaias—all of which Mary knew so well. There can, in consequence, be no question of any divine maternity for Mary except a

worthy one: in the designs of God she was to be a worthy Mother of the Redeemer, united perfectly in will to her Son. Tradition supports this by saying that her conceiving was twofold, in body and in soul: in body, for Jesus is flesh of her flesh, the flame of His human life having been lit in the womb of the Virgin by the most pure operation of the Holy Ghost: in soul, for Mary's express consent was needed before the Word assumed our nature in her.

To the problem so stated the great majority of theologians answer that tradition teaches that the divine maternity, defined in the Council of Ephesus, is higher than the fullness of grace, and that Mary's most glorious title is that of Mother of God. The reasons for their answer are as follows. We ask the reader's special attention for the first few pages. Once they have been grasped the rest follows quite naturally.

Article 1

THE PREDESTINATION OF MARY

Let us examine first the primary object in the predestination of Mary, and the sense in which it was absolutely gratuitous.

MARY'S PREDESTINATION TO THE DIVINE MATERNITY PRECEDED HER PREDESTINATION TO THE FULLNESS OF GLORY AND GRACE.

This proposition may appear a little too profound for a beginning. In reality it is quite easy to understand. Most people admit it, at least implicitly. Besides it throws a flood of light on all that follows.

Pius IX affirmed it in effect in the Bull Ineffabilis Deus, by which he defined the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, when he said that God the Father predestined Jesus to natural divine sonship—so superior to adoptive sonship—and Mary to be Mother of God, in one and the same divine decree. The eternal predestination of Jesus included not only the Incarnation itself as object but also all the circumstances of time and place in which it would be realized, and especially the one expressed by the Nicene Creed in the words: "Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria Virgine." By the same eternal decree, therefore, Jesus was predestined to be Son of the Most High and Mary to be Mother of God. It follows that as

Christ was predestined to natural divine son-ship before (in signo priori) being predestined to the summit of glory and to the fullness of grace (the germ of glory) so also the Blessed Virgin Mary was predestined first to the divine maternity, and in consequence to a very high degree of heavenly glory and to the fullness of grace, in order that she might be fully worthy of her mission as Mother of the Saviour. This second predestination was all the more necessary seeing that, as His Mother, she was called to closest association with Jesus, by perfect conformity of her will with His, in His redemptive work. Such, in substance, is the teaching of Pius IX in the Bull Ineffabilis Deus.

Thus, just as in Jesus the dignity of Son of God, or Word made flesh, surpasses that of the plenitude of created grace, charity, and glory, which He received in His sacred soul as a result of the hypostatic union of two natures in Him by the Incarnation, so also in Mary the dignity of Mother of God surpasses that of the plenitude of grace and charity, and even that of the plenitude of glory which she received through her unique predestination to the divine maternity.

It is the teaching of St. Thomas and many other theologians when treating of the motive of the Incarnation (for the redemption of mankind) that Mary's predestination to be Mother of the Redeemer depended on the divine foreknowledge and permission of Adam's sin. As St. Thomas explains (Ilia, q. 1, a. 3, ad 3), that sin was permitted in view of a greater good, namely that through the redemptive Incarnation "where sin abounded, grace (might) more abound" (Rom. 5:20). Just as God wills the human body for the sake of the human soul, and yet, since He wills that the soul give life to the body, does not create a soul till there is a body ready to receive it, so also God allowed in view of the greater good of the redemptive Incarnation that there should be a sin to be atoned for, and He willed the redemptive Incarnation for the sake of the regeneration of souls: thus in the actually existing order of divine providence there would have been no Incarnation had there been no sin. And in this order everything is subordinated to Christ and His Holy Mother, so that it is true to say with St. Paul (1 Cor. 3:23): "All things are yours . . . And you are Christ's; and Christ is God's." Thus the greatness of Christ and of His Mother are in no way lessened by their dependence on Adam's sin.

Mary was therefore predestined first to the divine maternity. This dignity appears all the greater if we recall that Mary, who was able to merit glory,

was not able to merit the Incarnation nor the divine maternity, for the Incarnation and the divine maternity lie outside the sphere of merit of the just, which has as outer limit the beatific vision.

There is also another conclusive reason: the principle or beginning of merit cannot itself be merited. Since original sin, the Incarnation is the principle of all the graces and merits of the just; it cannot therefore be itself merited. Neither, then, could Mary merit her divine maternity de condigno nor de congruo proprie, for that would have been to merit the Incarnation.

As St. Thomas very accurately indicates, what Mary could merit by the first fullness of grace which she received gratuitously in view of the foreseen merits of her Son, was an increase of charity and that higher degree of purity and holiness which was becoming in the Mother of God. Or, as he says elsewhere: “Mary did not merit the Incarnation (nor the divine maternity) but, granted that the Incarnation had been decreed, she merited (merito congrui, not condigni) that it should come to pass through her, since it was becoming that the Mother of God should be most pure and perfect.” That is to say, she merited the degree of sanctity which it was becoming for the Mother of God to have, a degree which no other virgin had in fact merited, or could merit, since none other had received nor was entitled to receive the initial fullness of grace and charity which was the principle of Mary’s merits.

This first reason for the eminent dignity of the Mother of God, based on her gratuitous predestination to that glorious title, is clear beyond question. It contains three truths which are, as it were, stars of first magnitude in the heavens of theology: 1st—that by one and the same decree the Father predestined Jesus for natural divine sonship and Mary for the divine maternity; 2nd—that Mary was predestined for the divine maternity before being predestined to the glory and the grace which the Father prepared for her that she might be the worthy Mother of His Son; 3rd—that though Mary merited Heaven de condigno she could not merit the Incarnation, nor the divine maternity, since these lie outside the sphere and purpose of human supernatural merit which does not extend beyond gaining eternal beatitude.

Many theologians have considered the argument just given as conclusive. It implies the arguments we shall expose in the following article, which really are but its developments, much as the history of a predestined soul is the unfolding of what was implied in its predestination.

A few additional remarks about the uniqueness of Mary's predestination will make its gratuitousness all the more apparent.

Among men Jesus is the first of the predestined, since His predestination is the model and cause of ours. As St. Thomas shows (Ilia, q. 24, a. 3 and 4), He merited for us all the effects which follow on our predestination. But the man Jesus was predestined, as we have said, to natural divine sonship, even before being predestined to glory and grace. Hence, His first or primary predestination is none other than the decree of the Incarnation. This eternal decree covers not only the Incarnation taken in the abstract—its mere substance—but also all circumstances of time and place in which it was to be put into execution, including the fact that Jesus was to be conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary "espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David." (Luke 1:27). Mary's predestination to the divine maternity being thus included in Jesus's predestination to natural divine sonship, it follows that it precedes her predestination to glory, since Jesus is the first of those so predestined. A striking confirmation of the thesis of the preceding pages!

It is no less clear that Mary's predestination, like that of Jesus, was gratuitous. Jesus did not merit His predestination to natural divine sonship for the reason that His merits presuppose His Person, which is that of the Son of God by nature. Being therefore the principle of all His merits, His Divine Sonship could not itself be merited: else it would be cause and effect at the same time and under the same respect.

In the same way Mary's predestination to the divine maternity is gratuitous or independent of her merits, for we have seen that to merit it would involve meriting the Incarnation itself, which is the principle of all the merits of mankind since the Fall. That is the reason for Mary's words in the Magnificat: "My soul doth magnify the Lord. . . . Because He hath regarded the humility (the lowly condition) of His handmaid." Her predestination to glory and grace is clearly gratuitous also, since it is a result or morally necessary consequence of her predestination to be Mother of God. This does not however involve a denial that she merited Heaven. On the contrary, we affirm that she was predestined to gain Heaven by her merits. For the whole question of Mary's predestination cf. Diet. Theol. Cath., article Marie, col. 2358.

The sequence or order of the divine plan is therefore clear: 1st—God willed to manifest His goodness; 2nd—He willed Christ and His glory as Redeemer—in which will the permission of original sin for the sake of the greater good is included; 3rd—He willed Our Blessed Lady as Mother of the Redeemer; 4th—In consequence He willed her glory; 5th—He willed the grace and merits by which she would attain to glory; 6th—He willed the glory and grace of all the other elect.

The predestination of Mary appears now in all its sublimity. We can understand why the Church extends to her the application of the words of the Book of Proverbs, 8:22–35: “The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His ways, before He made anything from the beginning. I was set up from eternity, and of old before the earth was made . . . when He prepared the Heavens was present . . . when He balanced the foundations of the earth, I was with Him forming all things: and was delighted every day, playing before Him at all times; playing in the world, and my delights were to be with the children of men . . . He that shall find me shall find life, and shall have salvation from the Lord.” Mary had been promised as the woman who would triumph over the serpent (Gen. 3:15), as the Virgin who would bear Emmanuel (Is. 7:14); she had been prefigured by the ark of alliance, the house of gold, the tower of ivory. All those testimonies show that she was predestined first of all to be Mother of God. And the precise reason why the fullness of glory and grace was given her was to make her the worthy Mother of God—“to make her fit to be mother of Christ, as St. Thomas expresses it (Ilia, q. 27, a. 5, ad 2), This doctrine appeared to him so certain that we find him saying in the same article (corp. art.): “The Blessed Virgin Mary came nearer than any other person to the humanity of Christ, since it was from her that He received His human nature. And that is why Mary received from Christ a plenitude of grace which surpassed that of all the saints.”

Pius IX speaks in the same sense at the beginning of the Bull Ineffabilis Deus: “From the beginning and before all ages God selected and prepared for His only Son the Mother from whom, having taken flesh, He would be born in the blessed fullness of time; He loved her by herself more than all creatures, and with such a love as to find His delight in a singular way in her. That is why, drawing from the treasures of His divinity, He endowed her, more than all the angels and saints, with such an abundance of heavenly gifts that she was always completely free from sin, and that, all beautiful

and perfect, she appeared in such a plenitude of innocence and holiness that, except God's, no greater than hers can be conceived, and that no mind but the mind of God can measure it."

Article 2

OTHER REASONS FOR ASSERTING THE PRE-EMINENCE OF THE DIVINE MATERNITY

We have seen that by the decree of the Incarnation ex Maria Virgine the Blessed Virgin was predestined first of all to the divine maternity and by way of consequence to glory and grace. There are still other reasons, which we shall now bring forward, which show that the divine maternity surpassed the plenitude of grace.

THE VALUE OF A DIGNITY OF THE HYPOSTATIC ORDER

Since the value or worth of a relation depends on the term which it regards and which specifies it—as, for example, the dignity of the beatific knowledge and love of the elect depends on their object, which is the divine essence known intuitively—the dignity of the divine maternity is to be measured by considering the term to which it is immediately referred. Now this term is of the hypostatic order, and therefore surpasses the whole order of grace and glory.

By her divine maternity Mary is related really to the Word made flesh. The relation so set up has the uncreated Person of the Incarnate Word as its term, for Mary is the Mother of Jesus, who is God. It is not precisely the humanity of Jesus which is the term of the relation, but rather Jesus Himself in Person: it is He and not His humanity that is Son of Mary. Hence Mary, reaching, as Cajetan says, even to the frontiers of the Divinity, belongs terminally to the hypostatic order, to the order of the personal union of the Humanity of Jesus to the Uncreated Word. This truth follows also from the very definition of the divine maternity as formulated in the Council of Ephesus.

But the order of the hypostatic union surpasses wonderfully that of grace and glory, just as this latter surpasses that of nature—of human nature and of angelic nature, created or possible. The three orders distinguished by Pascal in his Pensees, that of bodies, that of spirits with their powers

sometimes amounting to genius, and that of supernatural charity, are separated by an immeasurable distance from each other. The same is true of the hypostatic order and that of glory and grace, considering the latter even as found in the greatest saints. “The earth and its kingdoms, the firmament and all its stars, are not worth a single thought: all spirits taken together (and all their natural powers) are not worth the least movement of charity, for it belongs to another and an entirely supernatural order.” Similarly, all the acts of charity of the greatest saints, men or angels, and their heavenly glory, are far below the personal or hypostatic union of the Humanity of Jesus to the Word. The divine maternity which is terminated by the uncreated Person of the Word made flesh surpasses therefore immeasurably, because of its term, the grace and glory of all the elect, and even the plenitude of grace and glory received by Mary herself.

St. Thomas says (la, q. 25, a. 6, ad 4): “The Humanity of Christ since it is united to God, the beatitude of the elect since it is the possession of God, the Blessed Virgin Mary since she is the Mother of God—all these have a certain infinite dignity from their relation to God Himself, and under that respect there can be nothing more perfect than them since there can be nothing more perfect than God.” St. Bonaventure supports this when he says: “God could make a greater world, but He cannot make a more perfect mother than the Mother of God.” (Speculum, c. 8).

As Fr. E. Hugon, O.P, says: “The divine maternity is by its nature higher than adoptive sonship. This latter produces only a spiritual and mystic relationship, whereas the maternity of the Blessed Virgin establishes a relationship of nature, a relationship of consanguinity with Jesus Christ and one of affinity with the entire Trinity. Besides, adoptive sonship does not impose, as it were, such obligations on God: for the divine maternity imposed on Jesus those obligations of justice which ordinary children contract naturally in regard to their parents, and it confers on Mary that dominion and power over Him which are the natural right accompanying the dignity of motherhood.”

By way of corollary it may be mentioned that the divine maternity surpasses all the gratiae gratis datae or charismata, such as the gift of prophecy, knowledge of the secrets of hearts, the gift of miracles or of tongues, for all these graces are in some way exterior and lower in dignity than sanctifying grace (cf, la Ilae, q. 3, a. 5). It should be noted also that the divine maternity cannot be lost, whereas grace can be lost on earth.

The eminent dignity of the divine maternity has been set in striking relief by Bossuet in his sermon on the Conception of the Blessed Virgin (towards the end of the first point): “God so loved the world, said Our Saviour, as to give His only begotten Son (John 3:16) . . . (But) the ineffable love which He had for you, O Mary, made Him conceive many other designs in your regard, He ordained that He should belong to you in the same quality in which He belonged to Himself: and in order to establish an eternal union with you He made you the Mother of His only Son and Himself the Father of yours. O prodigy! O abyss of charity! what mind does not find itself lost to consider the incomprehensible regard He had for you; you come so near to Him, through this Son common to you both, this inviolable bond of your sacred alliance, this pledge of your mutual love which you have given so lovingly to each other, the Father giving Him in His impassible divinity, and you giving Him in the mortal flesh in which He was obedient.”

God the Father communicated to His Son the divine nature. Mary gave Him a human nature, subject to pain and death, in which to redeem us. But Mary’s Son is the only-begotten of the Father, and in that consists the whole grandeur of her maternity.

THE REASON WHY SO MANY GRACES WERE CONFERRED ON MARY

The eminent dignity of the divine maternity is revealed in a new light if we consider that it is the reason why the fullness of grace was given to Mary, that it is the measure and end of that fullness, and that it is superior to it.

The reason why Mary was given a fullness of grace from the first instant was that she might be enabled to conceive the Man-God in holiness, by uttering her fiat with the utmost generosity on the day of the Annunciation in spite of the sufferings which she knew had been foretold of the Messiah; it was given her, too, that she might bring forth her child while remaining a virgin, that she might surround Him with the most motherly and most holy devotion; it was given her, finally, that she might unite herself to Him in closest conformity of will, as only a most holy mother can, during His hidden life, His apostolic life, and His suffering life—that she might utter her second fiat most heroically at the foot of the Cross, with Him, by Him, and in Him.

As Fr. Hugon has so well put it: “The divine maternity postulates intimate friendship with God. Since a mother is bound both by a law of nature and an express precept to love her son, and he to love her, Mary and Jesus love each other mutually; and since the maternity in question here is supernatural the love must be of the same order. But this means that it is a sanctifying love, since by the fact that God loves a soul He makes it lovable and sanctifies it.” There is thus the most complete conformity between the will of Mary and her Son’s oblation which was, as it were, the soul of the sacrifice of the Cross.

It is clear that it was for the reason we have given and for none other that Mary was given an initial plenitude of grace followed by a consummated plenitude in glory. The same reason or end was the measure of her grace and glory: therefore it surpassed them. Admittedly it is not possible to deduce from the divine maternity each and every one of the privileges received by Mary, but all derive ultimately from it. If, finally, she was predestined from all eternity to the highest degree of glory after Jesus, the reason is that she was predestined first of all to be His most worthy mother, and to retain that title during eternity after having enjoyed it in time. The saints who contemplate in Heaven the sublime degree of glory, so far surpassing that of the angels, in which Mary is enthroned, know that the reason why she was predestined to it is that she might be and might remain for eternity the most worthy Mother of God: Mater Creatoris, Mater Salvatoris, Virgo Dei Genetrix.

Such was the teaching of St. Albert the Great on more than one occasion. The poets have sung it in their verses. We refer in a note to one of their most recent tributes.

THE MOTIVE OF THE CULT OF HYPERDULIA

A last consideration, which will be found in the works of many theologians, can be adduced in favor of our thesis.

It is because she is Mother of God rather than because she is full of grace that Mary is entitled to the cult of hyperdulia, a cult superior to that due to the saints highest in grace and glory. In other words, hyperdulia is due to Mary not because she is the greatest of the saints but because of her divine maternity. It would not have been her due had she been raised to her present

degree of glory without having been predestined to be Mother of God. This is the express teaching of St. Thomas.

In the Litanies of the Blessed Virgin the first title of glory mentioned is the Sancta Dei Genetrix. All the others follow as something which pertains to Mary as Mother of God: Sancta Virgo Virginum, Mater divinae gratiae, Mater purissima, Mater castissima, Mater inviolata, Mater intemerata, Mater amabalis, Mater admirabilis, Mater boni consilii, etc.

CONSEQUENCES OF THE PRINCIPLES THUS FAR OUTLINED

It follows from what has been said thus far that, simpliciter loquendo, purely and simply, the divine maternity, even considered in isolation, is superior to the plenitude of grace, consummated no less than initial. The ultimate reason for this assertion is that by its term the divine maternity belongs to a higher order, that of the hypostatic union.

Thus the rational soul which, considered even in isolation, pertains to the order of substance, is superior to its faculties of intellect and will: it is their end, for they proceed from it as accidents and properties in order that it may have the power of knowing and willing. In a somewhat similar way, the divine maternity, considered in isolation from Mary's other dignities, is the end and reason of her fullness of grace, and is therefore higher than it.

It is now clear why Mary was predestined first to be Mother of God before being predestined to the highest degree of glory after Jesus. The dignity of a relation is to be judged more by its term than by anything else; but the divine maternity is something relative to the Person of the Word made Flesh. In much the same way the mother of a king is nearer to him than the most able of his lawyers.

However, under a certain respect—secundum quid, as theologians say—sanctifying grace and the beatific vision are more perfect than the divine maternity. As regards sanctifying grace, it makes its bearer holy in the formal sense of the term, whereas the divine maternity, being only a relation to the Word made flesh, does not sanctify in that way. The beatific vision, for its part, unites the intellects of the elect to the divine essence without the intermediary of the Sacred Humanity.

It is evident that the hypostatic union of the two natures in Christ, considered absolutely, surpasses the beatific vision, even though the latter includes a perfection in the order of knowledge not found in the former. In a

similar way, and with all due reservations, the divine maternity, if considered absolutely or simpliciter, surpasses the plenitude of grace and glory, even though this latter is more perfect in a secondary way, or secundum quid. For the divine maternity, being but a real relation to the Incarnate Word, is not enough of itself to sanctify Mary. But it called out for, or demanded, the fullness of grace which was granted her to raise her to the level of her singular mission. She could not have been predestined to be any other kind of mother to the Saviour than a worthy one. Everything follows from that certain truth. All Mariology is dominated by it just as all Christology is dominated by the truth that Jesus is the Son of God.

Since Mary pertains by the term of her maternity to the hypostatic order, it follows that she is higher than the angels; higher also than the priesthood, which participates in that of Christ. Of course, not having the priestly character, Mary could not consecrate as does the priest at the altar. But none the less, her dignity is higher than that of the priest and of the bishop, since it is of the hypostatic order. The Victim offered on the Cross, and whom the priest offers on the altar, was given us by Mary. The Principal Offerer of our Masses was given us by her. She was more closely associated with Him at the foot of the Cross than anyone else—more than even the stigmatics and the martyrs. Thus, had Mary received the priestly ordination (but it did not form part of her mission), she would have received something less than what is implied in her title of Mother of God. As St. Albert the Great so well expressed it: “The Blessed Virgin was not called by God to be a minister, but a consort and a helper, in accordance with the words ‘Let us make him a help like unto himself’” (Mariale, 42 and 165). Mary was chosen to be not the minister of the Saviour but His associate and helper in the work of redemption.

The divine maternity is therefore, as is commonly taught, the foundation, source, and root of all Mary’s graces and privileges, both those that preceded it as preparation, and those that accompanied it or followed from it as its consequence. It was by way of preparation for the divine maternity that Mary was the Immaculate Conception, preserved from the stain of original sin by the future merits of her Son. He redeemed her as perfectly as was possible; not by healing her, but by preserving her from the original stain before it touched her soul for even an instant. It was because of her maternity that Mary received the initial fullness of grace which ceased not to increase till it reached its consummated plenitude. And because of the

same maternity she was exempt from all personal fault, even venial—and from all imperfection, for she never failed in promptitude to obey the divine inspirations even when they came to her by way of simple counsels. The dignity of Mary surpasses therefore that of all the saints combined.

Recall, too, that Mary had a mother's authority over the Word of God made flesh. She contributed therefore to His knowledge: not, of course, to His beatific or infused knowledge, but to the progressive formation of His acquired knowledge, which knowledge lit up the acquired prudence in accordance with which He performed acts proportioned to His age during His infancy and hidden life. In this way the Word made flesh was subject to Mary in most profound sentiments of respect and love. How, then, could we fail to have the same sentiments in regard to the Mother of Our God?

In one of the most beautiful books written about Mary, the Treatise on True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin, St. Grignon de Montfort says (ch. 1, a. 1): "God made Man found liberty in being enclosed in her womb; He showed His power by allowing Himself to be carried by her, young maiden though she was; He found glory, and His Father found glory too, in hiding His splendor from all creatures of earth, so as to reveal them to Mary alone; He glorified His majesty and His independence by depending on the Virgin in His conception, His birth, His presentation in the temple, His hidden life of thirty years—and even up to the time of His death, for she was present then, and He offered one only sacrifice in union with her, and was immolated to the eternal Father with her consent as once Isaac was immolated to the divine will by the consent of Abraham. . . . It is she who nourished and supported Him, who brought Him up and then sacrificed Him for us. . . . Finally, Our Lord remains as much the Son of Mary in Heaven as He was on earth."

Such is the first reason for the cult of hyperdulia which we owe her. It explains why the voice of tradition, and especially the Council of Ephesus and Constantinople, insisted, before everything else concerning Mary, on the fact that she was the Mother of God, thereby affirming afresh against Nestorianism that Jesus was God.

To conclude this chapter we should note that many Christians find it so evident that Mary's greatest title is that of Mother of God, and that all her other titles follow from and are explained by it, that they do not understand why time should be devoted to proving the point. It is quite clear to them that had we, for our part, been in a position to do so, we should have given

our mother every gift at our disposal. That is why St. Thomas is content to state quite simply (Ilia, q. 27, a. 5, corp. et ad 2): “To be the worthy Mother of God, Mary needed to receive fullness of grace.” Bossuet repeats this in his sermon on the Compassion of the Blessed Virgin (1st point, end): “Since God disposes things with wonderful aptness, it was necessary that He should imprint on the heart of the Blessed Virgin a love going far beyond nature even to the last reaches of grace, so that she might have for her Son sentiments worthy of a Mother of God and of a Man-God.”

Chapter 2

MARY’S FIRST PLENITUDE OF GRACE

“Hail, full of Grace” (Luke 1:28.)

HAVING seen the nobility of Mary’s title, Mother of God, it is now appropriate to examine the meaning and implications of the words spoken to her by the Angel Gabriel on the day of the Annunciation: “Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: Blessed art thou among women.” (Luke 1:28). As a help to understanding these words spoken in God’s name we shall consider: 1st—the different plenitudes of grace; 2nd—the privilege of the Immaculate Conception; 3rd—the sublimity of Mary’s first grace.

Article 1

THE DIFFERENT PLENITUDES OF GRACE

According to the usage of Holy Scripture, which becomes more and more explicit in the New Testament, it is grace in the strict sense of the term which is implied in the term “fullness of grace”—that is to say, grace which is really distinct from nature, both human and angelic, grace which is a free gift of God surpassing the natural powers and exigencies of all nature, created or creatable. Habitual or sanctifying grace makes us participate in the very nature, in the inner life of God, according to the words of St. Peter (2 Peter 1;4): “By whom he hath given us most great and precious promises: that by these you may be made partakers of the divine nature.” By grace we have become adopted children of God, heirs and co-heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17); by grace we are “born of God.” (John 1:13). It prepares us to receive eternal life as a heritage and as a reward of the merits of which it is itself the principle. It is even the germ of eternal life, the semen gloriae

as Tradition terms it, since by it we are disposed in advance for the face to face vision and the beatific love of God.

Habitual grace is received into the very essence of the soul as a supernatural graft which elevates and deifies its vitality. From it there flows into the faculties the infused virtues, theological and moral, and the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, all of which supernatural organism constitutes a sort of second nature of such a kind as to enable us to perform con-naturally the supernatural and meritorious acts of the infused virtues and the seven gifts. We have, too, by habitual grace the Blessed Trinity dwelling within us as in a temple where They are known and loved, even as it were experimentally. And at times we do know Them in this quasi-experimental fashion when by a special grace They make Themselves known to us as the life of our life, for " . . . you have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry Abba (Father)." (Rom. 8:15). Then does the Holy Ghost inspire us with filial love, and in that sense " . . . the spirit himself giveth testimony to our spirit, that we are the sons of God." (Rom. 8:16).

While habitual grace makes us thus children of God, actual or transitory grace first of all disposes us for adoptive childhood, and subsequently makes us act, through the infused virtues and gifts working separately or both together, in a manner becoming God's children. This new life of grace, virtues and gifts, is none other than eternal life begun on earth, since habitual grace and charity will outlive the passage of time.

Grace—call it, if you will, a participation in the divine nature—was no less gratuitous for the angels than for us. As St. Augustine says (De Civ. Dei, XII, c. 9): "God created them, at the same instant forming their nature and endowing them with grace." When creating the angels God conferred grace on them, to which grace their nature, richly endowed though it was, could lay no claim. The angels, and man also, could have been created in a purely natural condition, lacking the divine graft whence issues a new life.

The grace intended in the words "Hail, full of grace" addressed to Our Lady is therefore something higher than nature or the exigencies of nature, created or merely possible. It is a participation in the divine nature or in the inner life of God, which makes the soul to enter into the kingdom of God, a kingdom far surpassing all the kingdoms of nature—mineral, vegetable, animal, human, and even angelic. So elevated is grace that St. Thomas could say: "The good of the grace of one soul is greater than the good of the nature of the whole universe."2 The least degree of grace in the soul of a

newly baptised child is worth more than all created natures, including those that are angelic. Being a participation in the inner life of God, grace is something greater than all miracles and exterior signs of divine revelation or of the sanctity of God's favored servants. And it is of this grace, germ and promise of glory, that the angel spoke when he said to Mary: "Hail, full of grace." Gazing at Mary's soul, he saw that, though he himself was in the possession of the beatific vision, Mary's grace and charity far surpassed his for she possessed them in the degree required to become at that instant the Mother of God.

Mary, of course, had received from the Most High natural gifts of body and soul in wonderful perfection. Judged even from the natural level, the soul of Jesus united in itself all that there is of beauty and nobility in the souls of the great poets and artists, of men of genius and of men of generosity. In an analogous way the soul of Mary was a divine masterpiece because of the natural perfection of her intelligence and will and sensibility. There is no shadow of doubt that she was more gifted than anyone who has ever struck us as remarkable for penetration and sureness of mind, for strength of will, for equilibrium or harmony of higher and lower faculties. Since she had been preserved from original sin and its baneful effects, concupiscence and darkness of understanding, her body did not weigh down her mind but rather served it. When forming the body of a saint, God has in mind the soul which is to vivify it: when forming Mary's body He had in mind the Body and the infinitely holy Soul of the Word made flesh. As St. Albert the Great loves to recall, the Fathers of the Church say that Mary, viewed even naturally, had the grace of Rebecca, the beauty of Rachel, and the gentle majesty of Esther. They add that her chaste beauty never held the gaze for its own sake alone, but always lifted souls up to God.

The more perfect these gifts of nature in Mary, the more elevated they make her grace appear, for it surpasses them immeasurably.

When speaking of fullness of grace it is well to note that it exists in three different degrees in Our Lord, in Mary, and in the just. St. Thomas explains this a number of times.

There is, first of all, the absolute fullness of grace which is peculiar to Jesus, the Saviour of mankind. Taking into consideration only the ordinary power of God, there can be no greater grace than this. It is the eminent and inexhaustible source of all the grace which all men have received since the

Fall, or will receive till the end of time. It is the source also of the beatitude of the elect, for Jesus has merited all the effects of our predestination.

There is, in the second place, the fullness of superabundance which is Mary's special privilege, and which is so named since it is like a spiritual river which has poured of its abundance upon the souls of men for almost two thousand years.

There is finally the fullness of sufficiency which is common to all the just and which makes them capable of performing those meritorious acts—they normally become more perfect in the course of years—which lead them to eternal life.

These three fullnesses have been well compared to an inexhaustible spring, to the stream or river which flows from it, and to the different canals fed by the river, which irrigate and make fertile the whole region they traverse—that is to say, the whole Church, universal in time and space. The river of grace proceeds from God through the Saviour, as we read "Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the just: let the earth be opened, and bud forth a saviour." (Is. 14:8). And then finally it rises once more to God, the Ocean of peace, in the form of merits, prayers, and sacrifices.

To continue the image: the fullness of the spring has not increased; that of the river, on the contrary, which flows from it has increased. Or, to speak in plain terms, the absolute fullness of Our Saviour knew no increase, for it was sovereignly perfect from the first instant of His conception by reason of the personal union with the Word. For, from the first instant, the lumen gloriae and the beatific vision were communicated to Jesus's soul, so that the second Council of Constantinople could say (Denz. 224) that Christ did not grow more perfect by reason of His meritorious acts: "Ex profectu operum non melioratus est." Mary's fullness of grace, however, did not cease to increase up to the time of her death. For that reason theologians usually speak of, 1st—her initial fullness or plenitude; 2nd—the fullness of her second sanctification at the instant of the conception of the Saviour; 3rd—the final fullness (at the instant of her entry into glory), its extent, and its superabundance.

Article 2

THE PRIVILEGE OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

The initial fullness of grace in Mary presents two aspects. One is negative, at least in its formulation: her preservation from original sin. The other is positive: her conception, absolutely pure and holy by reason of the perfection of her initial sanctifying grace in which were rooted the infused virtues and the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

THE DOGMATIC DEFINITION

The definition of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, made by Pius IX on December 8th, 1854, reads as follows: “We declare, announce, and define that the doctrine which states that the Blessed Virgin Mary was preserved, in the first instant of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of God Omnipotent and because of the merits of Jesus Christ the Saviour of the human race, free from all stain of original sin, is revealed by God and must therefore be believed firmly and with constancy by all the faithful” (Denz. 1641).

This definition contains three especially important points: 1st—It affirms that the Blessed Virgin was preserved from all stain of original sin from the first instant of her conception. The conception meant is that known as passive or consummated—that in which her soul was created and united to her body—for it is then only that one can speak of a human person, whereas the definition bears on a privilege granted to the person of Mary. The definition states also that the Immaculate Conception is a special privilege and an altogether singular grace, the work of divine omnipotence.

What are we to understand by original sin from which Mary has been preserved? The Church has not defined its intrinsic nature, but she has taught us something about it by telling us its effects: the divine hatred or malediction, a stain on the soul, a state of non-justice or spiritual death, servitude under the empire of Satan, subjection to the law of concupiscence, subjection to suffering and to bodily death in so far as they are the penalty of the common sin. These effects presuppose the loss of the sanctifying grace which, along with integrity of nature, Adam had received for us and for himself, and which he lost by sin, also for us and for himself.

It follows therefore that Mary was not preserved free from every stain of original sin otherwise than by receiving sanctifying grace into her soul from the first instant of her conception. Thus she was conceived in that state of justice and holiness which is the effect of the divine friendship as opposed

to the divine malediction, and in consequence she was withdrawn from the slavery of the devil and subjection to the law of concupiscence. She was withdrawn too from subjection to the law of suffering and death, considered as penalties of the sin of our nature, even though both Jesus and Mary knew suffering and death in so far as they are consequences of our nature (in came passibili) and endured them for our salvation.

2nd—It is affirmed in the definition, as it was already affirmed in 1661 by Alexander VIII (Denz. 1100) that it was through the merits of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the human race, that Mary was preserved from original sin. Hence the opinion held by some 13th-century theologians—that Mary was immaculate in the sense of not needing to be redeemed, and that her first grace was independent of the future merits of her Son—may no longer be admitted. According to the Bull Ineffabilis Deus, Mary was redeemed by the merits of her Son in a most perfect way, by a redemption which did not free her from a stain already contracted, but which preserved her from contracting one. Even in human affairs we look on one as more a saviour if he wards off a blow than if he merely heals the wound it inflicts.

The idea of a preservative redemption reminds us that Mary, being a child of Adam and proceeding from him by way of natural generation, should have incurred the hereditary taint, and would have incurred it in fact had not God decided from all eternity to grant her the unique privilege of an immaculate conception in dependence on the future merits of her Son.

The liturgy had already made this point in the prayer proper to the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, which was approved by Sixtus IV (1476): “Thou hast preserved her (Mary) from all stain through the foreseen death of this same Son.” The Blessed Virgin was preserved from original sin by the future death of her Son, that is to say, by the merits of Christ dying for us on the Cross.

It is therefore clear that Mary’s preservation from original sin differs essentially from that of the Saviour. Jesus was not redeemed by the merits of another, not even by His own. He was preserved from original sin and from all sin for two reasons: first because of the personal or hypostatic union of His humanity to the Word in the very instant in which His sacred soul was created, since it could not be that sin should ever be attributed to the Word made flesh; secondly, since His conception was virginal and due to the operation of the Holy Ghost, so that Jesus did not descend from

Adam by way of natural generation. These two reasons are peculiar to Jesus alone.

3rd—The definition proposes the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception as revealed, that is, as contained at least implicitly in the deposit of Revelation—in Scripture and Tradition, or in one at least of those two sources.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE SCRIPTURES

The Bull Ineffabilis Deus quotes two texts of Scripture, Genesis 3:15, and Luke 1:28, 42.

The privilege of the Immaculate Conception is revealed as it were implicitly or confusedly in the book of Genesis in the words spoken by God to the serpent, and thereby to Satan (Gen. 3:15): “I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel.” The pronoun we translate as “she” in “she shall crush thy head” is masculine in the Hebrew text, and stands for the posterity or seed of the woman; this is true also of the Septuagint and the Syraic versions. The Vulgate however has the feminine pronoun “ipsa,” referring the prophecy directly to the woman herself. However there is no essential difference of meaning between the two readings since the woman is to be associated with the victory of Him Who will be the great representative of her posterity in their conflict with Satan throughout the ages.

Taken by themselves these words are certainly not sufficient to prove that the Immaculate Conception is revealed. But the Fathers of the Church, in their comparison of Eve and Mary, have seen in them an allusion to it, and it is on that account that the text is cited by Pius IX.

To the naturalist exegete the text means no more than the instinctive revulsion man experiences towards the serpent. But to the Jewish and Christian tradition it means much more. The Christian tradition sees in that promise—it has been termed the protoevangelium—the first sketch of the Messiah and His victory over the spirit of evil. For Jesus is pre-eminently the posterity of the woman in conflict with the posterity of the serpent. But if Jesus is termed the posterity of the woman, that is not because of His remote connection with Eve, who was able to pass on to her descendants only a fallen and wounded nature, deprived of the divine life. Rather is it

because of His connection with Mary, in whose womb He took a stainless humanity. As Fr. F. X. le Bachelet says, in col. 118 of the article referred to already, “We do not find in Eve the principle of that enmity which God will put between the race of the woman and the race of the serpent; for Eve, like Adam, is herself fallen a victim to the serpent. It is only between Mary, Mother of the Redeemer, that enmity ultimately exists. Hence the person of Mary is included, though in a veiled manner, in the protoeuangelium, and the Vulgate reading “ipsa” (she) expresses something really implied in the sacred text, since the victory of the Redeemer is morally, but really, the victory of His Mother.”

For that reason early Christianity never ceased to contrast Eve who shared in Adam’s sin by yielding to the serpent’s suggestion with Mary who shared in the redemptive work of Christ by believing the words of the angel on the morning of the Annunciation.

The promise of Genesis speaks of a victory that will be complete: “She shall crush thy head.” And since the victory over Satan will be complete, so also the victory over sin which makes the soul slave and the devil master. But as Pius IX teaches in the Bull Ineffabilis Deus, the victory over Satan would not be complete if Mary had not been preserved from original sin by the merits of her Son: “De ipso (serpente) plenissime triumphans, illius caput immaculato pede (Maria) contrivit.”

The Immaculate Conception is contained therefore in the promise of Genesis as the oak is contained in the acorn. A person who had never seen an oak could never guess the value of the acorn, nor its final stage of development. But we who have seen the oak know for what the acorn is destined, and that it does not yield an elm nor a poplar. The same law of evolution obtains in the order of progressive divine revelation.

The Bull Ineffabilis quotes also the salutation addressed by the angel to Mary (Luke 1:28): “Hail, full of grace . . . blessed are thou among woman,” as well as the similar words uttered by St. Elisabeth under divine inspiration (Luke 1:42). Pius IX does not state that these words are sufficient by themselves to prove that the Immaculate Conception is revealed; for that, the exegetic tradition of the Fathers must be invoked.

This tradition becomes explicit with St. Ephrem the Syrian (d. 373). Among the Greeks it is found on the morrow of the Council of Ephesus (431), especially in the teaching of two bishop-opponents of Nestorious, St. Proclus who was a successor of St. John Chrysostom in the chair of

Constantinople (431–446) and Theodore, bishop of Ancyra. Later we find it in the teaching of St. Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem (634–638), Andrew of Crete (d. 740), St. John Damascene (d. towards the middle of the 8th century). These different testimonies will be found at length in the article Marie of the Diet. Apol., cols. 223–231.

Understood in the light of this exegetic tradition, the words of the angel to Mary "Hail, full of grace"—that is "Hail, thou art fully pleasing to God and loved by Him"—are not limited temporally in their application in such a way as to exclude even the initial period of Mary's life. On the contrary, the Blessed Virgin would not have received complete fullness of grace had her soul been even for an instant in the condition of spiritual death which follows on original sin, had she been even for an instant deprived of grace, turned away from God, a daughter of wrath, in slavery to the devil. St. Proclus says that she was "formed from stainless clay." Theodore of Ancyra says that "the Son of the Most High came forth from the Most High." St. John Damascene writes that Mary is the holy daughter of Joachim and Anne "who has escaped the burning darts of the evil one," that she is a new paradise "to which the serpent has no stealthy access," that she is exempt from the debt of death which is one of the consequences of original sin, and that she must therefore be exempt from the common fall.

If Mary had contracted original sin her fullness of grace would have been diminished in this sense that it would not have extended to the whole of her life. Thus, Our Holy Mother the Church, reading the words of the angelic salutation in the light of Tradition and with the assistance of the Holy Ghost, saw revealed implicitly in it the privilege of the Immaculate Conception. The privilege is revealed in the text not as an effect is in a cause which could exist without it, but as a part is in a whole; the part is actually contained in the whole at least by way of implicit statement.

THE TESTIMONY OF TRADITION

Tradition itself affirms the truth of the Immaculate Conception more and more explicitly in the course of time. St. Justin, St. Irenaeus, Tertullian, contrast Eve, the cause of death, and Mary, the cause of life and salvation. This antithesis is constantly on the lips of the Fathers and is found also in the most solemn documents of the Church's magisterium, especially in the Bull Ineffabilis Deus. It is presented as perfect and without restriction; thus,

Mary must always have been greater than Eve, and most particularly at the first moment of her life. The Fathers often say that Mary is stainless, that she has always been blessed by God in honour of her Son, that she is intemerata, intacta, impolluta, intaminata, illibata, altogether without spot.

Comparing Mary and Eve, St. Ephrem says: “Both were at first simple and innocent, but thereafter Eve became cause of death and Mary cause of life.” Speaking to Our Blessed Lord, he continues: “You Lord and Your Mother are the only two who are perfectly beautiful under every respect. In You there is no fault, and in Your Mother there is no stain. All other children of God are far from such beauty.”

In much the same way St. Ambrose says of Mary that she is free from every stain of sin “per gratiam ab omni integra labe peccati.” St. Augustine’s comment is well known: “The honour of the Lord does not permit that the question of sin be raised in connected with the Blessed Virgin Mary.” If however the question be put to the saints “Are you sinless? he affirms that they will answer with the Apostle St. John (i John, 1:8): “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” There are two other texts which seem to show that St. Augustine meant his words to be understood in the sense of the Immaculate Conception, Many other texts of the Fathers will be found in the works of Passaglia, Palmieri and Le Bachelet.

It should not be forgotten that the Feast of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary has been celebrated in the Church, especially in the Greek Church, since the 7th and 8th centuries. The same Feast is found in Sicily in the 9th, in Ireland in the loth, and almost everywhere in Europe in the 12th century.

The Lateran Council, held in the year 649 (Denz., 256) calls Mary “Immaculate.” In 1476 and 1483 Pope Sixtus IV speaks favorably of the privilege in connection with the Feast of the Conception of Mary (Denz., 734 sqq.). The Council of Trent (Denz., 792) declares, when speaking of original sin which infects all men, that it does not intend to include the Blessed and Immaculate Virgin Mary. In 1567 Baius is condemned for having taught the contrary (Denz., 1073). In 1661 Alexander VII affirmed the privilege, saying that almost all Catholics held it, though it had not yet been defined (Denz., 1100). Finally, on December 8th, 1854, we have the promulgation of the solemn definition (Denz., 1641).

It must be admitted that in the 12th and 13th centuries certain great doctors, as, for example, St. Bernard, St. Anselm, Peter Lombard, Hugh of St. Victor, St. Albert the Great, St. Bonaventure and St. Thomas Aquinas appear to have been disinclined to admit the privilege. But this was because they did not consider the precise instant of Mary's animation, or of the creation of her soul, and also because they did not distinguish, with the help of the idea of preservative redemption, between the debt to contract the hereditary stain and its actual contraction. In other words, they did not always distinguish sufficiently between "debebat contrahere" and "contraxit peccatum." We shall see later that there were three stages in St. Thomas's doctrine and that though he appears to deny the Immaculate Conception in the second, he admits it in the first, and probably in the third also.

THEOLOGICAL REASONS FOR ADMITTING THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

The principal argument ex convenientia, or from becomingness, for the Immaculate Conception, is an elaboration of the one which St. Thomas (Ilia, q. 27, a. 1) and others give for Mary's sanctification in her mother's womb before birth. "It is reasonable to believe that she who gave birth to the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, received greater privileges of grace than all others. . . . We find however that to some the privilege of sanctification in their mother's womb has been granted, as for example to Jeremias . . . and John the Baptist. . . . Hence it is reasonable to believe that the Blessed Virgin was sanctified before birth." In a. 5 of the same question we read also: "The nearer one approaches to the source of all grace the more grace one receives; but Mary came nearest of all to Christ, Who is the principle of grace."

But this argument ex convenientia needs to be expanded before it will prove the Immaculate Conception.

It is Scotus's glory (Thomists should consider it a point of honour to admit that their adversary was right in this matter) to have shown the supreme becomingness of this privilege in answer to the following difficulty which St. Thomas and many other theologians put forward: Christ is the universal Redeemer of all men without exception (Rom. 3:23; 5:12, 19; Gal. 3:22; Cor. 5:14; 1 Tim. 2:16); but if Mary did not contract original sin she would not have been redeemed; hence, since she was redeemed, she must have contracted original sin.

Duns Scotus answers this objection by referring to the idea of a redemption which is preservative, not liberative. He shows how reasonable this idea is, and in some places at least does not link it up with his peculiar doctrine concerning the motive of the Incarnation, so that it can be admitted independently of what one thinks about the second matter.

This is his line of argument.

It is becoming that a perfect Redeemer should make use of a sovereign mode of redemption, at least in regard to the person of His Mother who was to be associated more closely with Him than anyone else in the work of salvation. But the sovereign mode of redemption is not that which liberates from a stain already contracted, but that which preserves from all stain, just as he who wards off a blow from another saves him more than if he were simply to heal a wound that has been inflicted. Hence it was most becoming that the perfect Redeemer should, by His merits, preserve His Mother from original sin and all actual sin. This argument can be found in embryo in Eadmer.

The Bull Ineffabilis gives this argument, in a somewhat different form, along with others. For example, it states that the honor and dishonor alike of parents affect their children, and that it was not becoming that the perfect Redeemer should have a mother who was conceived in sin. Also, just as the Word proceeds eternally from a most holy Father, it was becoming that He should be born on earth of a mother to whom the splendor of sanctity had never been lacking. Finally, in order that Mary should be able to repair the effects of Eve’s fall, overcome the wiles of the devil, and give supernatural life to all, with, by, and in Christ, it was becoming that she herself should never have been in a fallen condition, a slave to sin and the devil.

If it be objected that Christ alone is immaculate, it is easy to answer: Christ alone is immaculate of Himself, and by the double title of His Hypostatic Union and His virginal conception; Mary is immaculate through the merits of her Son.

The consequences of the Immaculate Conception have been developed by the great spiritual writers. Mary has been preserved from the two baneful fruits of original sin, concupiscence and darkness of understanding.

Since the definition of the Immaculate Conception we are obliged to hold that concupiscence has been not only bound, or restrained, in Mary from the time she was in her mother’s womb, but even that she was never in any sense its subject. There could be no disordered movement of her sensitive

nature, no escape of her sensibility from the previous control of reason and will. Her sensibility was always fully subject to her rational powers, and thereby to God's Will, as obtained in the state of original innocence. Thus Mary is virgin of virgins, most pure, "inviolata, intemerata," tower of ivory, most pure mirror of God.

Similarly, Mary was never subject to error or illusion. Her judgment was always enlightened and correct. If she did not understand a thing fully she suspended her judgment upon it, and thus avoided the precipitation which might have been the cause of error. She is, as the Litanies say, the Seat of Wisdom, the Queen of Doctors, the Virgin most prudent, the Mother of good counsel. All theologians realise that nature spoke more eloquently to her of the Creator than to the greatest poets. She had, too, an eminent and wonderfully simple knowledge of what the Scriptures said of the Messiah, the Incarnation, and the Redemption. Thus she was fully exempt from concupiscence and error.

But why did the Immaculate Conception not make Mary immune from pain and death since they too were consequences of original sin?

It should be noted that the pain and death which Jesus and Mary knew were not consequences of original sin as they are for us. For Jesus and Mary they were consequences of but human nature, which, of itself, and like the animal nature in general, is subject to pain and death of the body: it was only because of a special privilege that Adam had been exempt from them in the state of innocence. As for Jesus, He was conceived virginally in passible flesh in order to redeem us by dying, and when the time came He accepted suffering and death, its consummation, freely for love of us. Mary, for her part, accepted suffering and death voluntarily in imitation of Him and to unite herself to Him; she was one with Him in His expiation and in His work of redemption.

There is one wonderful thing, one delight of contemplatives, which we should not overlook. It is that the privilege of the Immaculate Conception and the fullness of grace did not withdraw Mary from pain, but rather made her all the more sensitive to suffer from contact with sin, the greatest of evils. Precisely because she was so pure, precisely because her heart was consumed by the love of God, Mary suffered pains to which our imperfection makes us insensible. We suffer if our self-love is wounded, or our pride, or our susceptibilities. Mary, however, suffered from sin, and that in the measure of her love of God Whom sin offends, and her love of Her

Son Whom sin crucifies; she suffered in the measure of her love of us, whom sin wounds and kills. Thus the Immaculate Conception increased Mary's sufferings and disposed her to bear them heroically. Not one of them did she squander. All passed through her hands in union with those of her Son, thus to be offered up for our salvation.

ST. THOMAS AND THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

As certain commentators have suggested, three periods may be distinguished in St. Thomas's teaching.

In the first—that of 1253–1254, the beginning of his theological career—he supports the privilege, probably because of the liturgical tradition which favored it, as well as because of his pious admiration for the perfect holiness of the Mother of God. It is in this period that he wrote (I Sent., d. 44, q. I, a. 3, ad 3): "Purity is increased by withdrawing from its opposite: hence there can be a creature than whom no more pure is possible in creation, if it be free from all contagion of sin: and such was the purity of the Blessed Virgin who was immune from original and actual sin." This text states therefore that Mary was so pure as to be exempt from all original and actual sin.

During the second period St. Thomas, seeing better the difficulties in the question—for the theologians of his time held that Mary was immaculate independently of Christ's merits—hesitated, and refused to commit himself. He, of course, held that all men without exception are redeemed by one Saviour. (Rom. 3:23; 5:12, 19; Gal. 3:22; 2 Cor. 5:14; 1 Tim. 2:6). Hence we find him proposing the question thus in Ilia, q. 27, a. 2: Was the Blessed Virgin sanctified in the conception of her body before its animation? for, according to him and many other theologians, the conception of the body was to be distinguished from the animation, or creation of the soul. This latter (called today the consummated passive conception) was thought to be about a month later in time than the initial conception.

The holy doctor mentions certain arguments at the beginning of the article which favor the Immaculate Conception—even taking conception to be that which precedes animation. He then answers them as follows: "There are two reasons why the sanctification of the Blessed Virgin cannot have taken place before her animation: 1st—the sanctification in question is cleansing from original sin . . . but the guilt of sin can be removed only by

grace (which has as object the soul itself) . . . 2nd—if the Blessed Virgin had been sanctified before animation she would have have incurred the stain of original sin and would therefore never have stood in need of redemption by Christ. . . . But this may not be admitted, since Christ is Head of all men. (1 Tim. 2:6)."

Even had he written after the definition of 1854 St. Thomas could have said that Mary was not sanctified before animation. However, he goes further than that here, for he adds at the end of the article: "Hence it follows that the sanctification of the Blessed Virgin took place after her animation." Nor does he distinguish, as he does in many other contexts, between posteriority in nature and posteriority in time. In the answer to the second objection he even states that the Blessed Virgin "contracted original sin." However, it must be recognised that the whole point of his argument is to show that Mary incurred the debt of original sin since she descended from Adam by way of natural generation. Unfortunately he did not distinguish sufficiently the debt from actually incurring the stain.

Regarding the question of the exact moment at which Mary was sanctified in the womb of her mother, St. Thomas does not make any definite pronouncement. He states that it followed close on animation—cito post are his words in Quodl. VI, a. 7. But he believes that nothing more precise can be said: "the time of her sanctification is unknown" (Ilia, q. 27, a. 2, ad 3).

St. Thomas does not consider in the Summa if Mary was sanctified in the very instant of animation. St. Bonaventure had put himself that question and had answered it in the negative. It is possible that St. Thomas's silence was inspired by the reserved attitude of the Roman Church which, unlike so many other Churches, did not celebrate the Feast of the Conception (cf. ibid., ad 3). This is the explanation proposed by Fr. N. del Prado, O.P., in Santo Tomas y la Immaculada, Vergara, 1909, by Fr. Mandonnet, O.P, Diet. Theol. Cath., art. Freres Precheurs, col. 899, and by Fr. Hugon, O.P, Tractatus Dogmatici, t. II, ed. 5, 1927, p. 749. For these authors the thought of the holy doctor in this second period of his professional career was that expressed long afterwards by Gregory XV in his letters of July 4th, 1622: "Spiritus Sanctus nondum tanti mysterii arcanum Ecclesiae suae patefecit."

The texts we have considered so far do not therefore imply any contradiction of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. They could even be retained if the idea of preservative redemption were introduced. There is

however one text which cannot be so easily explained away. In III Sent., dist. Ill, q. 1, a. 1, ad 2am qm, we read: “Nor (did it happen) even in the instant of infusion of the soul, namely, by grace being then given her so as to preserve her from incurring the original fault. Christ alone among men has the privilege of not needing redemption.” Frs. del Prado and Hugon explain this text as follows: The meaning of St. Thomas’s words may be that the Blessed Virgin was not preserved from original sin in such a way as not to incur its debt, as that would mean not to stand in need of redemption. However, one could have expected to find in the text itself the explicit distinction between the debt and the fact of incurring the stain.

In the final period of his career, when writing the Exposito super salutatione angelica—which is certainly authentic—in 1272 or 1273, St. Thomas expressed himself thus: “For she (the Blessed Virgin) was most pure in the matter of fault (quantum ad culpam) and incurred neither original nor mortal nor venial sin.” Cf. J. F. Rossi, C.M., S. Thomae Aquinatis Expositio salutationis angelieae, Introductio et textus. Divus Thomas (PL), 1931, pp. 445–479. In this critical edition of the Commentary on the Ave Maria, it is stated, pp. 11–15, that the passage quoted just now is found in sixteen manuscripts out of nineteen consulted by the author, who concludes that it is authentic. He gives photographs of the principal manuscripts in an appendix. Let us hope that the same conscientious work will be performed on the other opuscula of St. Thomas!

In spite of the objection raised by Fr. P. Synave the text appears to be authentic. If it is, then St. Thomas returned towards the end of his life—moved, we may believe, by his love of the Mother of God—to the position he had adopted when he affirmed the Immaculate Conception in his Commentary on the Sentences. Nor is the text we are considering the only indication of such a return.

Such an evolution of doctrine is not rare among theologians. At first they propose a thesis which they accept from tradition without seeing all its difficulties. Later reflection leads them to adopt a more reserved attitude. Finally they return to their first position, realising that God is more bounteous in His gifts than we can understand and that we should not set limits to Him without good reason. In the case of St. Thomas, we have seen that the reasons he invoked against the privilege are not conclusive, and that they even support it when considered in the light of the idea of preservative redemption.

Article 3

WAS MARY EXEMPT FROM EVERY FAULT, EVEN VENIAL?

The Council of Trent has defined that “after his justification a man cannot avoid, during the whole course of his life, every venial sin, without a special privilege such as the Church recognises was conferred on the Blessed Virgin.” The soul in the state of grace can therefore avoid any venial sin considered separately, but cannot avoid all venial sins taken together by keeping itself always free from them. Mary however avoided all sin, even the least grave. St. Augustine affirms that “for the honour of her Son Who came to remit the sins of the world, Mary is never included when there is question of sin.” The Fathers and theologians consider, to judge from their manner of speaking, that she is free even from every voluntary imperfection, for, according to them, she never failed in promptness to obey a divine inspiration given by way of counsel. Though a minor lack of generosity is not a venial sin, but simply a lesser good, or an imperfection, not even so slight a shortcoming was found in Mary. She never elicited an imperfect (remissus) act of charity, that is to say, one that fell short in intensity of the degree in which she possessed the virtue.

St. Thomas gives the reason for this special privilege when he says: “God prepares and disposes those whom He has chosen for a special purpose in such a way as to make them capable of performing that for which He selected them.” In that God differs from men, who sometimes choose incapable or mediocre candidates for important posts. “Thus,” continues St. Thomas, “St. Paul says of the Apostles (2 Cor. 3:6), “It is God Who has made us fit ministers of the new testament, not in the letter, but in the spirit.” But the Blessed Virgin was divinely chosen to be the Mother of God (that is to say, she was predestined from all eternity for the divine maternity). Hence, it cannot be doubted that God fitted her by grace for her mission, according to the words spoken her by the angel (Luke 1:30): “Thou hast found grace with God. Thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus.” But Mary would not have been a worthy Mother of God had she ever sinned, for the honor and dishonor of parents is reflected on the children according to the words of the Book of Proverbs: “The glory of children are their fathers.” Besides, Mary had a special affinity to Jesus, from Whom she took flesh, but “What concord hath Christ with Belial?” (2 Cor. 6:15). Finally, the Son of God,

Who is Divine Wisdom, inhabited Mary in a very special manner, not in her soul only but in her womb also; and it is said (Wisdom 1:4): “Wisdom will not enter into a malicious soul, nor dwell in a body subject to sins.” Hence it must be said without any reservation that the Blessed Virgin committed no sin, mortal or venial, so that the words of the Canticle of Canticles are fully verified in her regard (Cant. 4:7): “Thou art all fair, my love, and there is not a spot in thee.”’

Mary had therefore impeccantia (the term is parallel to inerrantia) or freedom from sin, and even impeccability. Her title to these endowments is not however the same as her Son’s. In her case it was a matter of preservation from every sin through a special privilege. This privilege includes first of all a very high degree of habitual grace and charity, which gives the soul a strong inclination to the act of love of God and withdraws it from sin. It includes also confirmation in grace, which when granted to a saint is had normally through an increase of charity, especially that proper to the state of transforming union, and an increase of actual efficacious graces which preserve the soul de facto from sin and move it to ever more meritorious acts. Thus Mary enjoyed a special assistance of Divine Providence. This assistance—more effective than even that which belonged to the state of innocence—preserved all her faculties from faults, and kept her soul in a state of the most complete generosity. Just as confirmation in grace is an effect of the predestination of the saints, so this preservative assistance granted to Mary was an effect of her peculiar predestination. Far from diminishing her liberty or free will, the effect of this preservation from sin was to confer on her full liberty in the order of moral goodness, with no inclination to evil (just as her mind never tended to error). Hence her liberty, following the example of that of Jesus, was a faithful and most pure image of God’s liberty, which is at once sovereign and incapable of sin.

If human masterpieces of art, in architecture, painting and music, and if the precision instruments produced by human skill all reach such perfection, what must not be the perfection of God’s masterpieces? And among these, if the works of the natural order are so perfect—the majesty of the ocean and the high mountains, the structure of the eye and ear, the human mind and the mind of the angels—how perfect must not the works of the supernatural order be, among which so remarkable a place is held by the soul of Mary which was adorned with every choice gift from the first moment of her existence?

NOTE

THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN IMPERFECTION AND VENIAL SIN

The problem has been taken from its proper context by the casuists. It is one which concerns interior souls, advanced in the spiritual life, and careful to avoid every more or less venial sin. Those who consider the problem in relation to less advanced souls run the risk of taking for imperfection what is really a venial sin.

At one time the problem was closely associated with another one: is it possible to commit no more than a simple imperfection by resisting a religious vocation? The answer ordinarily given to this question is that though the religious vocation does not oblige under pain of sin, sin is always involved in rejecting it for the reason that religion is a way of life that embraces the whole of life, and the other ways of life, being less safe than it, are never chosen in preference to it except through some inordinate attachment to the things of this world, as is seen in the example of the rich man in the Gospel. Thus, the rejection of a vocation involves an inordinate attachment (which is forbidden by divine precept) and not only a lack of generosity.

To see the problem of an imperfection as distinct from a venial sin in its proper perspective, it must be viewed in its relation to very generous souls, and still more in relation to the impeccability of Christ and the sinlessness of Mary. Here we may ask: Was there any voluntary imperfection in the lives of Jesus and Mary? The question is obviously a most delicate one.

The answer usually given to this problem is that there was never any imperfection, however slightly voluntary, in the lives of Jesus and Mary, for they never failed in their prompt obedience to every divine inspiration given by way of counsel. But if there had been any lack of promptitude, it would have been a mere lack of generosity, not a moral disorder in the strict sense of the term, as is an inordinate attachment to the things of this world.

As regards interior souls, it may be said that as long as they have not taken the vow of always doing the most perfect thing, they are not bound under pain of venial sin to act always with the maximum of generosity possible to them at any given instant. It is becoming, however, that those more advanced should, without binding themselves by vow, promise the Blessed Virgin always to do what will appear to them evidently the most perfect in any given circumstance.

Article 4

THE PERFECTION OF MARY'S FIRST GRACE

The habitual grace which the Blessed Virgin received at the instant of the creation of her holy soul was a fullness or plenitude to which the words of the angel on the Annunciation day might have been applied: "Hail, full of grace." This is what Pius IX affirms when he defines the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. He even says that, from the first instant, Mary "was loved by God more than all creatures, (prae creaturis universis), that He found most extreme pleasure in her, and that He loaded her in a wonderful way with His graces, more than all the angels and saints." Many texts might be quoted from tradition to the same effect.

St. Thomas explains the reason of this plenitude of grace when he says: "The nearer one approaches to a principle (of truth and life) the more one participates in its effects. That is why St. Denis affirms (De caelestia hierarchia) that the angels, who are nearer to God than man is, participate more in His favors. But Christ is the principle of the life of grace; as God He is its principal cause and as Man (having first His humanity is, as it were, an instrument always united to the Divinity: 'Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ' (John 1:17). The Blessed Virgin Mary, being nearer to Christ than any other human being, since it is from her that He received His humanity, receives from Him therefore a fullness of grace, surpassing that of all other creatures." It is true that St. John the Baptist and Jeremias were sanctified, according to the testimony of Sacred Scripture, in their mother's womb, without, however, being preserved from original sin. But Mary received grace from the very first instant in a degree far excelling theirs, and received as well the privilege of being preserved from every fault—even venial—a privilege we find accorded to no other saint.

In his Expositio super salutatione angelica St. Thomas describes Mary's plenitude of grace (and his words are applicable to the initial plenitude) in terms of which the following is a summary:

Though the angels do not manifest special respect for men, being their superiors by nature and living in holy intimacy with God, yet the Archangel Gabriel when saluting Mary, showed himself full of veneration for her. He understood that she was far above him through her fullness of grace, her intimacy with God, and her perfect purity.

She had received fullness of grace under three respects. First, so as to avoid every sin, however slight, and to practice all the virtues in an eminent degree. Secondly, so as to overflow from her soul upon her body and prepare her to receive the Incarnate Son of God. Thirdly, so as to overflow upon all men and to aid them in the practice of all the virtues.

Further, she surpassed the angels in her holy familiarity with the Most High. On that account, Gabriel saluted her saying: “The Lord is with thee.” It was as if he said: “You are more intimate with God than I. He is about to become your Son, whereas I am but His servant.” In truth, Mary, as Mother of God, is more intimate with the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, than are the angels.

Finally, she surpassed the angels in purity, even though they are pure spirits, for she was both pure in herself and the source of purity to others. Not only was she exempt from original sin and from all mortal and venial sin, but she escaped the curse due to sin, namely, “In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children . . . into dust thou shalt return” (Gen. 3:16, 19). She will conceive the Son of God without loss to her virginity, she will bear Him in holy recollection, she will bring Him forth in joy, she will be preserved from the corruption of the tomb and will be associated by her Assumption with the Ascension of the Saviour.

Already she is blessed among women, for she alone, with and through her Son, will lift the curse which descended on the human race, and will bring us blessings by opening the gates of Heaven. That is why she is called the Star of the Sea, guiding Christians to the harbour of eternity.

Elisabeth will say to her: “Blessed is the fruit of thy womb.” Whereas the sinner looks for that which he cannot find in the object of his sinful desires, the just finds everything in what he desires holily. From this point of view, the fruit of the womb of Mary will be thrice blessed.

Eve desired the forbidden fruit, so as to have the knowledge of good and evil, and thereby to become independent and free from the yoke of obedience. She was deceived by the lying promise “You will be as God,” for far from becoming like God, she was turned away from Him. Mary, on the contrary, found all things in the blessed fruit of her womb. In Him she found God, and she will lead us to find God in Him.

By yielding to the temptation, Eve sought joy and found sadness. Mary, on the contrary, found joy and salvation for herself and us in her Divine Son.

Finally, the fruit sought by Eve had beauty only for the senses, whereas the fruit of Mary's womb is the splendor, the eternal and spiritual glory of the Father. Mary is blessed herself, and still more blessed in her Son, Who has brought all men blessing and salvation.

The preceding is a synopsis of what St. Thomas has to say of Mary's fullness of grace in his commentary on the Hail Mary. He has in mind most of all the fullness of the Annunciation day. But what he says is applicable also to her initial fullness, just as what is said of the stream is applicable also to its source.

MARY'S INITIAL GRACE COMPARED WITH THAT OF THE SAINTS

It has been asked if Mary's initial grace was greater than the final grace of the greatest of angels and men, or even than the final grace of all angels and men taken together. The question is usually understood not of the final and consummated grace of Heaven, but of the grace which is final in the sense that it immediately preceded entry into glory.

As for the first part of the question, theologians commonly hold that Mary's initial grace was greater than the final grace of the highest of angels and men. This is the teaching, for example, of St. John Damascene, Suarez, Justin of Miechow, O.P., Contenson, St. Alphonsus, Fathers Terrien, Godts, Hugon, Merkelbach, etc. Today, all textbooks of Mariology are unanimous in considering this teaching certain. It can even be found expressed by Pius IX in the Bull Ineffabilis Deus in the passage we have quoted already. The principal argument in favor of this teaching is arrived at from a consideration of the divine maternity, which is the reason for all the privileges conferred on Mary. There are two ways of outlining it: from the point of view of the end to which Mary's initial grace was ordained, and from the point of view of the divine love which was its cause.

Mary's initial grace was given her as a worthy preparation for the divine motherhood—to prepare her to be a worthy Mother of the Saviour, said St. Thomas (Ilia, q. 27, a. 5, ad 2). But even the consummated grace of the other saints is not a worthy preparation for the divine maternity, for it pertains to the hypostatic order. Hence the first grace of Mary surpasses the consummated grace of the other saints. Pious authors express this truth by taking in an accommodated sense the words of Psalm 86: "The foundations thereof are in the holy mountains." They say that the summit of the

perfection of the other saints is not as yet the beginning of the perfection of Mary.

The same conclusion is reached by considering the uncreated love of God for the Blessed Virgin. Since grace is the effect of the active love of God which makes us pleasing in His eyes as adoptive children, the more a person is loved by God the more grace he receives. But Mary, since she was to be the Mother of God, was more loved by Him in the first instant of her being than any angel or saint. Hence she received from the first instant a greater gift of grace than any of them, however favored.

Was Mary's First Grace higher than the Final Grace of all the Angels and Saints taken together?

A number of theologians, both ancient and modern, have answered this question in the negative. However, the affirmative answer, which is given by Ch. Vega, Contenson, St. Alphonsus, Godts, Monsabre, Billot, Sinibaldi, Hugon, L. Janssens, Merkelbach and others, is at least probable.

For it there is, first of all, the argument from authority. Pius IX favors it in his Bull Ineffabilis Deus, when he says: "Deus ab initio . . . unigenito filio suo Matrem . . . elegit atque ordinavit, tantoque prae creaturis universis est prosecutus amore, ut in ilia una sibi propensissima voluntate complacuerit. Quapropter illam longe ante omnes angelicos Spiritus, cunctosque Sanctos coelestium omnium charismatum copia de thesauro Divinitatis deprompta ita mirifice cumulavit, ut . . . earn innocentiae et sanctitatis plenitudinem prae se ferret, et qua major sub Deo nullatenus intelligitur, et quam praeter Deum nemo assequi cogitando potest." (This text is translated on page 14.) Taken in their obvious sense all these expressions, especially the "cunctos sanctos," mean that Mary's grace surpassed that of all the saints together from the first instant mentioned in the text. If Pius IX wished to say that Mary's grace surpassed that of each angel and saint individually, he would have said "longe ante quemlibet sanctum et angelicum" rather than "longe ante omnes angelicos Spiritus cunctosque sanctos." Nor would he have said that God loved Mary above all creatures, "prae creaturis universis," and that He took greater delight in her alone, "ut in ilia una sibi propensissima voluntate complacuerit." It cannot be contended that in all this there is no question of the first instant of Mary's existence since Pius IX goes on to say, immediately after the passage just quoted, "Decebat omnino ut beatissima Virgo Maria perfectissimae sanctitatis splendoribus semper ornata fulgeret."

A little further on in the same Bull, we are told that, according to the Fathers, Mary is higher by grace than the Cherubim, the Seraphim, and the whole Heavenly Host (omni exercitu angelorum)—that is to say, all united. Though it is universally admitted that these words refer to Mary in Heaven, it must yet be recalled that one's degree of heavenly glory is proportionate to the preceding grace or charity at the hour of death. And in the case of Mary, this latter was proportionate to her dignity as Mother of God, a dignity for which she had been prepared from the very first instant of existence.

To the argument from the authority of the Bull Ineffabilis, two theological reasons can be added. They are based on the divine maternity, considered as the end towards which Mary's first grace was ordained and on the uncreated love which was its cause. As a help to grasping them, it is necessary to remark that even though grace is a quality and not a quantified thing, there are many to whom it is not at once evident that if Mary's first grace surpassed that of the highest of the saints, it must also surpass that of all angels and saints united. They say, for example, that though the eagle's vision is more acute than that of the most keen-sighted man, it does not follow that an eagle sees more than all men taken together. Of course, in this example an element of quantity—that is, of extension and distance—enters in, which is not found in the case of Mary's grace, so that it is really irrelevant. But, at the same time, it may be well to clarify the question still more.

1st—Since Mary's first grace prepared her to be the worthy Mother of God, it must have been proportionate, at least remotely, to the divine maternity. But the final consummated grace of all the saints together is not proportionate to the divine maternity, since it belongs to an inferior order. Hence the final consummated grace of all the saints united is less than the first grace received by Mary.

This argument—even though not admitted by all theologians—seems to be quite conclusive. The objection has been raised that Mary's first grace was not a proximate preparation for the divine maternity and hence was not necessarily of a different order from the grace of all the saints. To this it may be answered that, though not a proximate preparation, Mary's first grace was a worthy and proportionate preparation, according to the teaching of St. Thomas (Ilia, q. 27, a. 5, ad 2): "The first perfection of grace (was) as it were dispositive, making the Blessed Virgin worthy to become the

Mother of Christ." But the consummated grace of all the saints united is not proportionate to the divine maternity, which is of the hypostatic order. The argument therefore retains its force.

2nd—The person who is more loved by God than all creatures united receives grace surpassing theirs, for grace is the effect of uncreated love and is proportionate to it. As St. Thomas says (la, q. 20, a. 4): "God loves one more than another by the fact that He wills him a higher good, for the divine will is the cause of the good that is in creatures." But God has loved Mary from all eternity more than all creatures united, as being she whom He was to prepare from the first instant of her conception to be the worthy Mother of the Saviour. In the words of Bossuet: "He always loved Mary as His Mother, and considered her as such from the moment she was conceived." This does not, of course, exclude the possibility that Mary advanced in holiness, or grew in grace. For grace, being a participation in the divine nature, can always increase though still remaining finite; Mary's final fullness of grace is limited, while yet being so full as to overflow on all souls.

To these two arguments, taken from the divine maternity, another may be added, which will become increasingly evident as we speak of Mary's universal mediation. It is that Mary could obtain by her merits and prayers —even on earth, and from the time when she could first merit and pray— more than all the saints together, for they obtain nothing except through her universal mediation. Mary is, as it were, the aqueduct which brings us grace; in the mystical body she is, as it were, the neck which joins the members with the Head. In short, from the time she could merit and pray, Mary could obtain more without the saints than they could without her. But merit corresponds in degree to charity and sanctifying grace. Hence Mary received from the beginning of her life a degree of grace superior to that which the saints and angels united had attained to before their entry into Heaven.

There are other indirect confirmations, or more or less close analogies. For example, a precious stone—a diamond—is worth more than a number of other stones united; a saint like the Cure of Ars could do more by his prayers and merits than all his parishioners together; a founder of an order like St. Benedict surpasses all his first companions by the grace he has received, for without him they could not have made the foundation whereas, had they failed him, he could have enlisted others to take their place; the

intellect of an archangel surpasses that of all inferior angels united; the intellectual worth of St. Thomas is greater than that of all his contemporaries; the power of a king is greater, not only than that of his prime minister, but also that of his ministers combined.

Early theologians did not examine the question of the degree of Mary's first grace, but that is probably because its solution appeared evident to them. They taught, for example, at the end of the treatises on grace and charity that whereas a ten-franc piece is worth no more than ten one-franc pieces, the charity signified by the ten talents of the parable is worth more than ten charities of one talent. That is why the devil tries to keep souls called to high sanctity by their priestly and religious vocation at the level of mediocrity. He wishes to prevent the growth of their charity, knowing that one man of great charity will do much more than many whose charity is at a lower, lukewarm level. Thus Mary, in virtue of the first grace which disposed her for the divine maternity, was worth more in God's eyes than all the apostles, martyrs, confessors, and virgins united, more than all men and all angels created from the beginning.

The thought of the marvellous instruments which human skill can produce is a reminder of what the Divine Artist can do in this soul of His special choice, in her of whom it is said "Elegit earn Deus et praeelegit earn," in her who the liturgy tells us was raised above all the angelic choirs. The first grace she received was already a worthy preparation for her divine maternity and her exceptional glory which is inferior only to that of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Nor should we forget that she suffered proportionately as He did, for she was called to be a victim with Him so as to be victorious with and by Him.

These reasons permit us to get some glimpse of the dignity and elevation of Mary's first grace.

One more point before concluding. The classics in the literature of every country mean much more to us when we take them up in mature age, than they did when we first read them at the age of fifteen or twenty years; and the same is true of the works of the great theologians, of St. Augustine and St. Thomas. Must there not, then, be beauties hidden as yet from our eyes in God's masterpieces, in those composed immediately by Himself, and especially in that masterpiece of nature and grace, the soul of Mary, God's Mother? This thought alone is enough to make one begin by affirming the richness of her initial grace. Perhaps the next thing will be, to wonder if the

affirmation has not been too hasty, if a probability has not been made into a certainty. But last of all, there will come a return to the first position; not now because it is beautiful, but because careful study has shown that it is true; not because it has a merely theoretical becomingness but because its becomingness acted as a motive in determining the choice that God actually made of it.

Article 5

THE CONSEQUENCE OF MARY'S PLENITUDE OF GRACE

From the instant of her conception, Mary's initial plenitude of grace included the infused virtues and the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, which are the different parts or functions of the spiritual organism. Even from before St. Thomas's time, habitual grace was called "the grace of the virtues and the gifts" because of its connection with them; for the infused virtues, theological and moral, flow from grace (in a degree proportioned to its perfection) as its properties, just as the faculties flow from the substance of the soul. The gifts flow from it also (in a similar proportionate degree) as infused permanent dispositions which make the soul docile to the inspirations of the Holy Ghost, somewhat as the sails of a boat make it docile to a favorable wind.

Furthermore, the infused virtues and the gifts are linked up with charity which makes their acts meritorious, and they keep pace with it in their growth as do the five fingers of the hand with one another. It may well happen that the gifts of wisdom, understanding and knowledge, which are both speculative and practical, will manifest themselves in one saint more in their practical and in another more in their speculative roles. But normally all seven exist in every soul in the state of grace in a degree proportionate to its charity—the charity itself being proportionate to the sanctifying grace of the soul.

From these principles, which are commonly accepted in treatises on the virtues in general and the gifts, it is usually deduced that Mary had the infused theological and moral virtues and the gifts from the first instant of her conception, and that they flowed from and were proportionate to her initial fullness of grace. Mary—destined even then to be Mother of God and men—could not have been less perfect than Eve was at her creation. Even if

she did not receive in her body the privileges of impassibility and immortality, she must have had in her soul all that pertained spiritually to the state of original justice—all, and more, even, since her initial fullness of grace surpassed the grace of all the saints together. Her virtues in their initial state must, therefore, have surpassed the heroic virtues of the greatest saints. Her faith, lit up by the gifts of wisdom, understanding and knowledge, was unshakably firm and most penetrating. Her hope was unconquerable, proof against presumption and despair alike. Her charity was most ardent. In fine, her initial holiness, which surpassed that of God's greatest servants, was born with her, and did not cease to grow all through life.

The only difficulty in this matter is that of the exercise of the infused virtues, already so perfect, and the gifts. Their exercise demands the use of reason and of free will. We must, therefore, ask if Mary had the use of her rational faculties from the first instant.

All theologians admit that the holy soul of Christ had the use of intellect and will from the beginning. They admit too that He had the beatific vision, or the immediate vision of the divine Essence, a doctrine which the Holy Office declared on June 6th, 1918, to be certain. Jesus is the Head in the order of grace, and therefore He enjoyed from the first instant, as a consequence of the personal union of His humanity to the Word, the glory He was to give to the elect. He had also infused knowledge similar to that of the angels, but in a much more perfect degree than it has been found in some of the saints—in those, for example, who had the gift of understanding and speaking languages they had never learned. Theologians teach that these two knowledges—the beatific and the infused—were perfect in Jesus from the beginning. It was only the knowledge which He acquired by experience and reflection which developed. Jesus, the sovereign priest, judge, and king of the universe, offered Himself for us, says St. Paul, from the moment of His entry into the world and knew everything in the past, present and future, that could be submitted to His judgement.

Though there is little serious difference of opinion among theologians regarding Jesus" knowledge, the problem of Mary's knowledge is much disputed. It would appear that there is no reason to assert that she had the beatific vision here on earth, especially from the first instant of her conception. But many theologians hold that she had per se infused

knowledge from the beginning, at least from time to time—though some contend that she had it in a permanent way. On this view she would have had the use of her intellect and of her free will in her mother's womb—on certain occasions at least—and would, in consequence, have had the use of the infused virtues and the gifts which she possessed in so high a degree. One can hardly deny this view except by asserting that Mary's intellect, will and infused virtues remained as it were asleep, as they do in other children, and did not wake up till she attained the ordinary age of the use of reason.

For our part, we may say, first of all, that it is at least very probable, according to the teaching of the majority of theologians, that Mary had the use of her free will through her infused knowledge from the first instant of her conception, at least in a passing manner. Such is the teaching of St. Vincent Ferrer, St. Bernardine of Sienna, St. Francis de Sales, St. Alphonsus, Suarez, Vega, Contenson, Justin de Miechow, and most modern theologians. Fr. Terrien goes so far as to say that he found only two opponents of the doctrine: Gerson and Muratori.

The following are the reasons that can be adduced in favor of the privilege:

1st—It is not becoming to hold that Mary, Queen of patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and all the saints, lacked a privilege granted to St. John the Baptist. We read of him in Luke 1:41 and 44, while he was still in the womb: "When Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the infant leaped in her womb," and Elisabeth herself said: "For as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy." St. Irenaeus, St. Ambrose, St. Leo the Great, and St. Gregory the Great have noted that the joy of St. John the Baptist before his birth was not merely of the sense order, but was elicited by the coming of the Saviour, Whose precursor he was. Thus Catejan notes that this joy, being a spiritual order, presupposes the use of reason and will, and at the time there could be no question of acquired but only of infused knowledge (Comment, in Ilia P., q. 27, a. 6). The church too sings in her liturgy, in the hymn for Vespers of St. John the Baptist "Senseras Regem thalamo manentem . . . Suae regenerationis cognovit auctorem: You have recognised your kind and the author of your regeneration." If, therefore, St. John the Baptist had the use of reason and will before birth, because of his vocation as precursor of Christ, the same privilege can hardly be denied to Christ's mother.

2nd—Since Mary received grace and the infused virtues and the gifts in the first instant in a degree higher than that of the final grace of the saints, she must have been sanctified in the way proper to adults, that is, by disposing her through actual grace for habitual grace, and by using this latter as a principle of merit from the moment she received it; in other words, she offered herself to God as her Son did on His entry into the world. “Then I said: Behold I come to do thy will, O God” (Heb. 10:9). Mary did not, of course, know then that she would be one day the Mother of God, but none the less she would accept all that the Lord asked and would yet ask of her.

3rd—Mary’s initial fullness of grace, virtues, and gifts which surpassed already the final fullness of all the saints, could not have remained inactive at the beginning of her life. Such inactivity would appear opposed to the sweet and generous dispositions of Divine Providence in favor of the Mother of the Saviour. But unless she had the use of her free will through infused knowledge, the virtues and gifts which she possessed in so high a degree would have remained inactive for a considerable part of her life (that is, the beginning).

Almost all present-day theologians admit that it is at least very probable that, in her mother’s womb, Mary had the use of her free will through infused knowledge—transitorily, at any rate. They admit too that she had the use of this infused knowledge on certain occasions, such as the Incarnation, the Passion, the Resurrection, the Ascension; also that she had the use of it for the purpose of acquiring a more perfect knowledge of the divine perfections and of the mystery of the Blessed Trinity. There is all the more reason for admitting that Mary had this privilege when we recall that infused knowledge was given to the apostles on the first Pentecost when they received the gift of tongues, and that the great St. Teresa, after arriving at the Seventh Mansion, had frequent intellectual visions of the Trinity such as can only be explained by infused ideas. Even those theologians who are most conservative in their views do not hesitate to admit this much of Mary. It is in fact the least that may be attributed to the Mother of God who enjoyed the visit of the Archangel Gabriel, who was on terms of saintly familiarity with the Incarnate Word, who was constantly enlightened by Him during the hidden life, who must have received special revelations during and after the Passion, and who received on the day of Pentecost the

light of the Holy Ghost in more abundant measure than the apostles themselves.

WAS MARY'S USE OF REASON AND FREE WILL IN HER MOTHER'S WOMB ONLY TRANSITORY AND INTERRUPTED?

According to St. Francis de Sales, St. Alphonsus, and theologians of the standing of Sauve, Terrien95 and Hugon, Mary's use of her privilege was uninterrupted. Fr. Merkelbach and other theologians assert that there is no convincing argument in proof of that thesis. It is our opinion that though it cannot be demonstrated with certainty that Mary enjoyed the uninterrupted use of reason and free will in her mother's womb, it is seriously probable and difficult to disprove that she had it. For if it be conceded that she had it in the first instant, it follows that she would become less perfect when deprived of it. But it does not appear becoming that so holy a creature should fall in any way without guilt on her part, all the more so since her dignity demanded that she should progress continuously and that her merit should be unbroken.

It has been objected that St. Thomas regards the privilege as peculiar to Christ. Certain it is that Christ's permanent exercise of reason and will belongs to Him alone as a strict right and consequence of the beatific vision. Mary cannot lay any such claim to the privilege. But it appears altogether becoming that the future Mother of God should have been granted it as a special and most appropriate favor. Besides, St. Thomas's words may be explained by the fact that the Immaculate Conception had not been defined in his time and, in consequence, prominence had not been given to the motives we have adduced for admitting the privilege in Mary's case. Today, however, after the Bull Ineffabilis, we realise that Mary was favored from the first instant more than all the saints united. Besides, as we have said, almost all theologians admit that she had the privilege at least transitorily from the first instant. If so, it is hard to see why it should ever have been withdrawn, interrupting her merit and progress, and leaving the initial plenitude, as it were, unproductive and sterile—all of which is opposed to the sweet and strong way in which Providence cared for Mary.

Such was the initial fullness of grace which accompanied the Immaculate Conception, and such were its first consequences. More and more can we see the implications of the angelic salutation: "Hail, full of grace."

Chapter 3

MARY’S PLENITUDE OF GRACE AT AND AFTER THE INCARNATION

IN this chapter we shall speak of Mary’s spiritual progress up to the Annunciation, of the increase of grace at that instant, of her perpetual virginity, of her growth in charity on certain important occasions which followed—notably on Calvary; finally we shall speak of Mary’s wisdom, of her principal virtues and charismatic gifts.

Article 1

MARY’S SPIRITUAL PROGRESS UP TO THE ANNUNCIATION

The method which we have adopted in this book is first to treat principles, bringing out their force and their sublimity, and then to apply them to the Mother of God. Hence we begin this article by recalling that spiritual progress is, most of all, progress in charity, the virtue which inspires, animates, and renders meritorious the other virtues. All the other infused virtues are connected with charity, and grow to the rhythm of its growth, just as the five fingers of a child’s hands grow proportionately.

In the sections that follow we shall see why and how charity developed in Mary, and examine the stages of its growth.

THE RAPIDITY OF THE GROWTH OF CHARITY IN MARY

Why is it that charity grew in Mary up to the time of her death? First of all, because such growth is in accordance both with the nature of the charity which is tending to eternity and with the divine precept: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with

all thy strength”—a precept which is so worded as to denote progress. This divine precept, which takes precedence over all other precepts and counsels, obliges all Christians to tend towards the perfection of charity and the other virtues in the manner appropriate to their condition of life—some in the married state, others in the priestly or the religious state. Not all are obliged to the practice of the three evangelical counsels. But all are obliged to strive to acquire their spirit, which is one of detachment from self and the things of this world in view of closer union with God.

Of Our Blessed Lord alone can it be said that He never grew in grace or charity, for He alone received the complete fullness of them both at His conception in consequence of the hypostatic union. Thus, the Second Council of Constantinople declares that Jesus did not develop spiritually through progress in good works, even though He followed the normal sequence in performing the acts of virtue peculiar to each period of life. Mary, however, was continually growing in grace all through her life. What was still more, her growth was an accelerated one, in accordance with the principle formulated by St. Thomas a propos the text: “ . . . comforting one another, and so much the more as you see the day approaching.” (Heb. 10:25). In his commentary in loc, he writes: “It may be asked why we should thus always progress in faith and love. The reason is that a natural (or connatural) movement always becomes more rapid the nearer it approaches its term (the end which attracts it). With violent or unnatural movement, it is quite different.” [Today we remark that the downward movement of a falling body is uniformly accelerated while the upward movement of one thrown into the air is uniformly slowed down.] “But,” continues St. Thomas, “grace perfects the soul and makes it tend to the good in a natural way (like a second nature); it follows then, that those who are in the state of grace should grow more in charity according as they come nearer to their final end (and are more strongly attracted by it). That is why it is said in the Epistle to the Hebrews: ‘Not forsaking our assembly . . . but comforting one another, and so much the more as you see the day approaching’—that is to say, the end of your journey approaching. We read elsewhere: ‘The night is passed, and the day is at hand.’ (Rom. 13:12). ‘But the path of the just, as a shining light, goeth forwards and increaseth even to perfect day.’” (Prov. 4:18).

St. Thomas wrote this at a time when the law of universal gravitation was not yet known, and the rate of acceleration of falling bodies had not been

calculated accurately. Nevertheless, his genius enabled him to find in the little that had been observed a symbol of the accelerated progress of the saints who gravitate towards the Sun of justice and the Source of all good. His point is, therefore, that the intensity of the life of the saints increases, that they move more promptly and generously towards God, the nearer they come to Him. That is the law of universal attraction in the spiritual life. Just as bodies attract one another in proportion to their mass and in inverse proportion to the square of their distances, so souls are attracted to God in proportion to their holiness and their nearness to Him. The trajectory of the spiritual motion of the saints is towards a zenith from which it does not descend. There is no twilight for them. Age weakens only their bodily powers. Their progress in love is even more rapid in their last years. They advance, not with a regular, but with an ever hastening step, in spite of the weight of years, and their "youth shall be renewed like the eagle's." (Ps. 102:5).

Mary's progress was the most continuous of all. It encountered no obstacle, was not halted nor delayed by attachment to self or to the things of this world. It was the most rapid of all, because the rate at which it commenced was determined by Mary's fullness of grace and therefore surpassed that of all the saints. Thus there was in Mary (especially if, as is probable, her infused knowledge gave her the use of reason and will during her hours of sleep) a wonderful increase in the love of God of which the accelerated motion of bodies under the force of gravitation is but a distant image.

Modern physical science tells us that the velocity of a falling body increases uniformly. This is an image of the growth of charity in a soul which allows nothing to hold it back, and which moves faster towards God according as increasing nearness to Him increases His attraction. Such a soul usually makes each sacramental or spiritual communion more fervently, and in consequence more fruitfully, than the preceding one. The movement of a stone thrown in the air, which grows uniformly slower and finally falls back, is a symbol of the lukewarm soul, especially if through a growing attachment to venial sin its communions become less fervent.

The principles outlined in this article show what must have been Mary's spiritual progress from the time of her Immaculate Conception, especially if she had, as is probable, the uninterrupted use of reason and will in her mother's womb and afterwards. Besides, since it appears that Mary's initial

fullness of grace surpassed that of all the saints, her subsequent progress cannot but exceed our powers of description. Nothing held her back, neither the consequences of original sin, nor any venial sin, neither negligence, nor distraction, nor imperfection. She was like a soul which, having taken the vow always to do the most perfect thing, proved completely faithful to it.

Saint Anne must have been struck by the unique holiness of her child. But she could not have suspected the Immaculate Conception nor the future divine maternity. Her child was much more loved by God than she thought. In a somewhat similar way, each soul in the state of grace is more loved by God than it thinks. To know fully how much it is loved, it would need to understand grace, and the glory of which grace is the germ, just as to know the full value of the acorn it is necessary to have seen a fully developed oak tree. The greatest things often lie concealed in the most insignificant, as in a mustard seed, or in the tiny trickle which is the beginning of a mighty river.

MARY'S PROGRESS BY MERIT AND PRAYER

If Mary's charity grew uninterruptedly in accordance with the great law of love, we may ask what were the sources of its growth. They were merit, prayer, and a certain spiritual communion with God who was present in Mary's soul from the first moment of her existence.

It must be recalled first of all that it is not precisely in extension that charity grows, for even the least degree of charity extends to God and to all men without exception—though it is true that we can and do extend the field of our active goodwill. Charity grows most of all in intensity. It takes ever deeper root in the will, or, to lay metaphor aside, it makes the will determined to avoid both evil and that which is less good and to tend generously to God. The growth of charity is not quantitative—as is that of a heap which grows by having more added to it—but qualitative, as is the growth of knowledge which, even if no fresh conclusions are drawn, can become more penetrating, more profound, more unified, more certain. Charity grows by tending to love God above all things, more perfectly, more purely, and more firmly, and our neighbour as ourselves, so that all may be united in glorifying God in time and in eternity. This growth brings the formal object and motive of charity into fuller relief than it usually is at the beginning of a spiritual life. At first, we love God more for what He has given and for what we hope He will yet give, and less for His own sake. But

gradually we come to realise that the Giver is greater and more lovable than the gift, and that He deserves to be loved for the sake of His own Infinite Goodness.

In our case, a number of different influences contribute to the growth of charity—merit, prayer, the sacraments. We shall now consider the first of these in relation to Mary.

A meritorious act, proceeding from charity or from a virtue inspired by it, establishes a right to a supernatural reward, and first of all to the reward of an increase of habitual grace and charity itself. The increase of grace and charity is not caused directly by the meritorious act, for grace and charity are not acquired but rather infused habits. God alone can produce them, for they participate in the depths of His life; He alone can increase them. That is why St. Paul says: “I have planted (by preaching and baptism), Apollo watered, but God gave the increase” (1 Cor. 3:6); and again: “He will . . . increase the growth of the fruits of your justice.” (2 Cor. 9:10).

But though our acts do not directly increase charity, they contribute in two ways to its growth: morally, by meriting it; physically, by disposing for it. Meritorious acts confer on the soul the right to receive from God an increase of charity so as to love Him more purely and more firmly. Besides, they dispose the soul for this increase by opening out in some way, or by unfolding, its higher faculties, enabling the divine life to enter them, to elevate them, and to purify them.

It often happens that our meritorious acts remain imperfect—remiss, as theologians put it—that is to say, below the level or degree in which the virtue of charity exists in us. Oftentimes, though we have a charity of three talents, we act as if we had one of but two, It is as when an intelligent man is careless and does not apply himself seriously to what he is doing. Remiss acts are meritorious. But St. Thomas and the older generation of theologians teach that they do not obtain for the soul at once the increase of charity which they merit, precisely because they do not dispose it to receive it. A person who, having three talents of charity, acts as if he had only two, is obviously not preparing or disposing himself to have his charity increased to four talents. He will receive the increase he merits only when he disposes himself for it by a more generous or more intense act of charity or of one of the virtues which it controls.

These few principles throw a flood of light on what has been said about Mary’s progress by way of merit.

She never performed a remiss or imperfect meritorious act, for that would have been a moral imperfection, a lack of generosity in God's service such as theologians declare she was never guilty of. Hence her meritorious acts were rewarded at once by the increase of charity which they merited.

But there is something more. Theologians tell us that God is more glorified by a single act of charity of ten talents, than by ten acts of one talent. Similarly, one devout soul gives more glory to God than many who are lukewarm. In the spiritual order especially, quality means more than quantity. Hence, Mary's merits grew continuously in perfection. Her most pure heart dilated, and her capacity for the divine increased, as is described in Psalms 118:32: "I have run the way of thy commandments, when thou didst enlarge my heart." Whereas we often forget that we are journeying towards eternity and treat this world as if it were to last for ever, Mary never withdrew her eyes from the goal of her life, God Himself, and never wasted a moment of the time He gave her. Each instant of her life on earth entered into the single instant of eternity through her accumulating ever richer merits. She saw the present not along the horizontal line of time which ends in a future on earth, but along the vertical line which ends in an eternity that never passes.

Another thing to be noted is that, according to the teaching of St. Thomas, no deliberate act really performed in the course of a lifetime is ever indifferent. For an act which is indifferent in itself, such as to take a walk or to teach mathematics, becomes good or bad in performance because of the end to which it is directed, and a reasonable being is obliged always to act for a reasonable or good end, and not simply for self-gratification or for some other disordered purpose. From this it follows that every deliberate act of a person in the state of grace which is not a sin is morally good; in consequence, it is virtually ordained to God, the final end of the just, and is meritorious. "Every act of those who have charity is either meritorious or de-meritorious" (De Malo, a. 5, ad 17). This is an additional reason for saying that all Mary's deliberate acts were good and meritorious. And we may add that none of the acts she performed during her waking hours were indeliberate or machine-like, but all were under the control of her intellect and her grace-directed will.

When we meditate on the outstanding occasions in Mary's life, it is especially in the light of the preceding principles that we should do so. And since, just now, we are concerned with those which preceded the

Incarnation, let us turn to her Presentation in the Temple, when she was as yet a child, or to her participation in the great feasts of Israel, or to her reading of the Messianic prophecies—those particularly of Isaias—which increased so wonderfully her faith, her hope, her love of God, and her longing for the advent of the Messiah. How much she must have penetrated the depth of meaning in Isaias' words: "For a child is born to us, and a son is given to us, and the government is upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, God the Mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of peace." (Is. 9:6). Though she was still so young, Mary's vivid faith must have grasped better than even Isaias did the meaning of the words "God the Mighty." She understood already that the plenitude of the divine power would be in that Child, that the Messiah would be an eternal and immortal King, always the Father of His people.

The life of grace increases not by merit only but by prayer as well, which has its own peculiar efficacy (of impetration). For that reason, we pray every day to grow in the grace of God, saying: "Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy Name; Thy Kingdom come (more and more in us); Thy Will be done (may Your precepts be better observed by us)." Similarly, the Church makes us pray on the 13th Sunday after Pentecost: "Grant us, O Lord, an increase of faith, hope and charity."

After justification, one can therefore grow in grace both by the way of merit—which is based on the divine justice, and gives a right to a reward—and by the way of prayer—which relies on the divine mercy. Prayer is efficacious in the degree in which it is humble, confident, persevering, and desirous of an increase of virtue rather than of temporal favors: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be given to you." And it can happen that the soul in the state of grace will receive at once, in answer to fervent prayer, more than it merits. In other words, a person may, on occasion, receive an increase of grace through the impetratory power of a prayer which exceeds that due to prayer's meritorious value.

Mary's prayer was most efficacious from her very childhood, not only because of its meritorious value, but also because of its wonderful impetratory value, proportionate to her humility, her confidence, and her perseverance in a continually growing generosity. Through it she grew continuously in the pure and strong love of God. She obtained also all the actual efficacious graces which cannot be merited strictly, such as those

which incline to new meritorious acts, or the special inspiration which is the principle of infused contemplation. This must certainly have happened when she repeated in her prayer the words of the Book of Wisdom 7:7: “Wherefore I wished, and understanding was given me: and I called upon God, and the spirit of wisdom came upon me: and I preferred her before kingdoms and thrones, and esteemed riches nothing in comparison with her . . . for all gold in comparison of her, is as a little sand, and silver in respect of her shall be counted as clay.” In this way, the Lord came to her to nourish her with Himself, and each day gave Himself more fully to her by prompting her to give herself more fully to Him.

More appropriately than anyone else except Jesus, she said with the psalmist: “One thing I have asked of the Lord, this will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life; that I may see the delight of the Lord . . . (Ps. 26:4). Day after day brought her a fuller understanding of the infinite goodness of God to those who seek Him and to those who find Him. Even before the institution of the Blessed Eucharist, Mary enjoyed, therefore, that spiritual communion which consists in the simple and intimate prayer of the soul in the unitive stage when it enjoys God present within it as in a spiritual temple: “O taste and see that the Lord is sweet.” (Ps. 33:9).

The psalmist expresses his thirst for God in burning words: “As the hart panteth after the fountains of waters; so my soul panteth after thee, O God. My soul hath thirsted after the strong living God.” (Ps. 41:2). What must have been Mary’s thirst for God from the moment of the Immaculate Conception up to the day of the Incarnation!

St. Thomas tells us that Mary’s progress in charity was not such that she merited the Incarnation, for the Incarnation is the principle of all merit since the sin of Adam, and could not itself be merited by one who was redeemed. Nevertheless, her progress merited for her gradually (as a result of the first grace which came from the future merits of her Son) that eminent degree of charity, humility, and purity which made her, on the Annunciation day, the worthy mother of the Saviour.

Neither did she merit the divine maternity; that would have been equivalently to merit the Incarnation. She did, however, merit the degree of charity which was the proximate disposition for being made Mother of God. This proximate disposition must have been an unimaginable summit of

holiness, since even the remote disposition—Mary's first fullness of grace—surpassed the united holinesses of all the saints.

Finally, we may add that Mary's years in the temple accelerated her growth in the grace of the virtues and the gifts in a way with which the growth of the most generous of souls is quite unworthy to be compared.

It is, of course, possible to exaggerate Mary's growth in grace and to attribute to her a perfection which belongs only to her Son. But even if we are careful to confine ourselves to what were really her prerogatives, we are utterly incapable of forming a worthy idea of the elevation of her beginning and her progress in the spiritual life. The most we can do is to attain to some small measure of understanding of so sublime a mystery.

NOTE

WHEN IN OUR LIVES DO THE LESS FERVENT OR REMISS ACTS OF CHARITY OBTAIN THE INCREASE OF CHARITY DUE TO THEM?

According to St. Thomas, every act of charity of the "wayfarer" is meritorious, meriting an increase of this virtue and disposing the soul, at least in a remote manner, to receive it; but only fervent acts dispose one proximately, i.e. acts at least equal in intensity to the degree of the infused virtue from which they proceed. Therefore only fervent acts obtain immediately the increase of charity that they merit.

WHEN DO THE LESS FERVENT ACTS OBTAIN IT?

One might think that it is as soon as a fervent meritorious act is made. However, there is a difficulty, for whereas this act certainly obtains the increase due to it and to which it disposes one proximately, it is not certain that it obtains at the same time the increase due to the less fervent meritorious acts which have preceded it and which has not yet been given.

One way by which these arrears can be obtained is by fervent acts of charity which are themselves meritorious, and which also dispose one to receive already in the present life not only what they merit themselves but even more than they merit.

This is the case with the fervent act of charity by which one prepares oneself for a good communion, which confers "ex opere operato" an

increase of charity corresponding to the actual fervent disposition and to the "arrears." This must be quite frequent with good priests and good Christians, especially at the more fervent communions which they make on certain feast-days or on the First Friday of the month. More so must this take place when, with good dispositions, one receives Holy Communion as Viaticum, or with Extreme Unction, which, effacing the remains of sin (reliquiae peccati), produces an increase of charity in proportion to the fervour with which it is received; it can therefore produce also the "arrears" merited but not yet obtained.

One's "arrears" may be obtained also by a fervent prayer for an increase of charity; for this prayer is at once meritorious, inasmuch as inspired by charity, and impetratory; and on this latter score it obtains more than it merits and can dispose one proximately to receive the "arrears" already merited but not obtained. Finally, it remains probable that the soul which may not have obtained its "arrears" during this life by any of the means we have mentioned, can dispose itself proximately to receive them by its fervent acts in Purgatory, acts which, however, are no longer meritorious. It is certain that these souls in Purgatory, as their purification advances, make more and more fervent acts (non-meritorious), which attain at least to the degree of intensity of the infused virtue from which they proceed. These acts do not merit an increase of this virtue, but it is probable that they dispose one actually to receive the "arrears" already merited "in via" and not yet obtained. Thus a soul which entered Purgatory with a charity of five talents, could leave it with a charity of seven, the degree of glory corresponding always to the degree of merit.

And if this is true, it would appear to be true especially with regard to the final act by which the soul disposes itself (in genere causae materialis) to receive the light of glory, an act which is produced (in genere causae efficientis et formalis) under the influence of this light at the exact moment of its infusion, just as the last act which immediately disposes one for justification proceeds from charity at the exact moment of its infusion. Thus the "arrears" would be obtained at least at the last moment, on one's entry into glory.

Article 2

MARY'S WONDERFUL INCREASE IN GRACE AT THE ANNUNCIATION

As St. Thomas explains, it was becoming that the mystery of the Incarnation should be announced to the Blessed Virgin so as to instruct her in its meaning and that she might give her consent to it. Thereby she conceived the Word spiritually, as the Fathers say, before conceiving Him physically. And St. Thomas adds that her supernatural and meritorious consent was given in the name of the whole human race which stood in need of the promised Redeemer.

It was becoming also that the Annunciation should have been made by an angel, coming as ambassador of the Most High. A rebellious angel had caused the Fall; a holy angel, the highest of the archangels, announces the Redemption. Becoming, as well, that Mary should have been enlightened before St. Joseph about the mystery, for by her predestination she was greater than he. Becoming, in the last place, that the Annunciation should have taken the form of a corporeal vision accompanied by an intellectual illumination, for the corporeal vision is, in itself, more certain and reliable than the imaginative one, and the grace of the intellectual illumination revealed with certainty the meaning of the words spoken. Joy and confidence succeeded reverential fear and astonishment as the angel spoke: “Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God. Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High. . . . The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.” And the angel adds, both as sign and as explanation of what is to come to pass: “And behold thy cousin Elisabeth, she also hath conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month with her that is called barren. Because no word shall be impossible with God.”

And Mary consented, saying, “Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word.” Bossuet tells us in his Elevations on the Mysteries, 12th Week, 6th Elevation, that Mary manifested principally three virtues in her consent: virginity, by her noble resolution to renounce the joys of the senses for ever; perfect humility in regard to God who so favored her; and faith, by conceiving the Son of God in her soul before she conceived Him in her body—which is why Elisabeth saluted her: “And blessed art thou that hast believed, because these things shall be accomplished that were spoken to thee by the Lord.” She manifested also

confidence in God and courage, for she was not ignorant of the messianic prophecies—those especially of Isaias—which foretold the great sufferings of the Messiah in which she was called to share.

Many interior souls are struck most by Mary's total self-forgetfullness at the Annunciation, and see in it the highest humility. She thought only of God's will, of all that the Incarnation would do for His glory and for our salvation. And God, Who is the greatness of little ones, regarded her humility, and made her faith, her confidence, and her generosity all they were called to be by her participation in our redemption. There are men who think that their greatness consists in their genius and their gifts of nature. Mary, the greatest of creatures, turned her gaze from herself, and sought her greatness in God. Deus humilium celsitudo, God, who art the greatness of the humble, reveal to us the greatness of Mary, the loftiness of her charity.

St. Thomas tells us that Mary's fullness of grace increased notably at the Incarnation, through the presence of the Word of God made flesh. If she had not been already confirmed in grace, she would have been so from that moment.

THE REASON FOR MARY'S INCREASE IN GRACE AND CHARITY AT THE INCARNATION

Three reasons have been given for Mary's increase in the divine life at the Incarnation: the finality, or purpose, of her grace; the cause of her grace; the mutual love of Jesus and His Mother.

In the first place, an increase in grace and charity was most becoming as a proximate and immediate preparation for the dignity of the divine motherhood. It is a general principle that the proximate preparation (ultimate disposition) for any perfection is proportionate to it. But the divine maternity is superior by its term—which is of the hypostatic order—to every other dignity of nature or of grace. Hence, Mary must have received as proximate preparation for it a special increase of her fullness of grace. This special increase made her proximately worthy to be the Mother of God and to take her unique place in regard to the Word made flesh.

In the second place, the Son of God owed it to Himself to enrich Mary with a still greater grace when He became present in her by the Incarnation. For by His Divinity He is principal cause of grace, and by His Humanity He

is its meritorious and instrumental cause. But Mary was, of all creatures, the one who entered into closest contact with Him in His Humanity since He took flesh in her womb. Hence, it was appropriate that she should have received a notable increase of grace at the Incarnation. Receiving the Word into her womb, she must have experienced all—and more than all—the benefits of a fervent sacramental communion. Jesus gives Himself to us in the Blessed Eucharist under the appearances of bread; He gave Himself to Mary in His true form, and by an immediate contact which produced, ex opere operato, an increase in her participation in the divine life more bounteous than even that produced by the greatest of the sacraments.

There is one remarkable point of dissimilarity between Jesus' gift of Himself to Mary and His gift of Himself to us in Holy Communion. He gives Himself to us that we may live by Him. But, though He nourished Mary's soul and gave Himself to her by the Incarnation, in His human nature, He lived by her and received from her the nourishment which His sacred Body required.

In the third and last place, the mutual love of Jesus and Mary demanded an increase of Mary's fullness of grace. As we have said, grace is an effect of God's active love for His creature. But if the Word made Flesh loves all the men for whom He is prepared to shed His blood, if He loves in a special way the elect and among them in a still more special way the apostles and the saints, His love for Mary, who was to be the most closely associated with Him in His work for souls, is the greatest of all. But Jesus is God. Hence His love for her produces grace in her soul—such an abundance of grace as to be capable of overflowing on souls. He is man too, and as man has merited all the effects of our predestination. Hence, in His love for her, He communicated to her the effects of her special predestination, most particularly that increase of charity which brought her nearer to the final fullness that was to be hers in glory. We must remember too that Mary was never in the slightest degree unresponsive to Jesus' love for her; on the contrary, her maternal love for Jesus answered most fully to Jesus' love for her. On that account it was possible for Him to give Himself to her much more fully than to any of the great saints. To form some idea of Mary's maternal love for Jesus, we have only to think of the heroic love and of the immense sacrifices of which mothers are capable for their children in their hour of trial and suffering. Think too of how loving Mary's pure virgin heart was; and of how she loved her Son as her God; and of how her love

was supernatural as well as natural, growing continuously in intensity. Such thoughts will enable you to glimpse Mary's love in a distant way.

Speaking of the time when the Body of the Saviour was formed in Mary's virginal womb, Fr Hugon says: "She must have made uninterrupted progress in grace during those nine months—ex opere operato, as it were—through her permanent contact with the Author of holiness. If her plenitude of grace is incomprehensible at the time of the Incarnation, what must it have been at the Nativity. . . . Each time she fed him at her virginal breast, she was nourished with grace. . . . When she held Him in her arms and gave Him the kisses of a virgin-mother, she received from Him the kiss of the divinity, which made her still purer and holier." These words are but an echo of the liturgy. Even when physical contact with Jesus in her womb had ceased, Mary's charity and motherly love continued to grow, and this up to the hour of her death. In her case, grace perfected nature in a degree which will remain for ever beyond the powers of the human tongue to express.

Article 3

THE VISITATION AND THE "MAGNIFICAT"

1. THE VISITATION

After the Annunciation the Blessed Virgin went to visit her cousin, St. Elisabeth. As soon as Elisabeth heard Mary's salutation, the child she bore leaped in her womb for joy, and she was filled with the Holy Ghost. And she cried out: "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. For behold, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed art thou that hast believed, because those things shall be accomplished that were spoken to thee by the Lord." In the light of divine revelation Elisabeth understands that the Fruit of Mary's womb is beginning to bless men through His mother. She knows that it is the Lord Himself who comes to her. The Son of God comes, through His mother, to His precursor; and the precursor, through his mother, recognized the Son of God.

St. Luke gives the canticle of the Magnificat in the verses which follow. The context, the authority of the great majority of the best manuscripts, and the unanimous voice of the oldest and most learned Fathers (Irenaeus,

Origen, Tertullian, St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, St. Augustine, etc.) all point to Mary as its author.

What strikes one most of all in the Magnificat is its simplicity and its dignity. In substance it is a song of thanksgiving, which recalls that God is the greatness of the humble, that He lifts them up even while He casts down the pride of the mighty. Bossuet sums up well what the Fathers say about the Magnificat in his Elevations on the Mysteries, 14th week, 5th Elevation. We shall follow him in the next few pages.

2. GOD HAS DONE GREAT THINGS IN MARY

"My soul doth glorify the Lord." Mary leaves self, as it were, to glorify God alone and to find in Him all her joy. She is in perfect peace, for no one can take from her Him of whom she sings.

"My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." What Mary cannot find in herself she finds in God, who is the Supreme Treasure. She rejoices "because He hath rewarded the humility of His handmaid." She does not think herself capable of attracting His gaze, for she is nothing. But He, in His goodness, has turned towards her, and now she has a sure ground for confidence—the Divine mercy. No longer does she fear to recognise all she has received freely from Him: rather is that a debt of gratitude to be paid. "For behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed"—a prophecy which is still fulfilled after two thousand years with each "Hail Mary" that men say.

And now she sees that her joy will be the joy of all men of good will: "He that is mighty hath done great things to me; and holy is His name. And His mercy is from generation unto generation, to them that fear Him." He who is mighty has performed in her the greatest work of His might—the redemptive Incarnation: He has given a Saviour to the world through her, while yet leaving her virginity intact.

The Most High is holy, is Holiness. This is all the more evident to us who believe that the Son of God, who is also the Son of Mary, has bestowed mercy, grace and holiness on men of so many different times and nations who feared God with that childlike fear which is the beginning of wisdom, and accepted the yoke of His commandments by grace.

3. GOD RAISES UP THE HUMBLE AND THROUGH THEM TRIUMPHS OVER THE PRIDE OF THE MIGHTY

To explain these wonderful effects Mary appeals to the Divine Power: “He hath showed might in His arm; He hath scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart. He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble.” God did all she mentions when He sent His only Son to confound the proud by the preaching of His gospel, and to make use of the weakness of the apostles, confessors and virgins, to bring the strength of a proud paganism to naught. His sublime mysteries He has hidden from the wise and revealed to little ones. (Matt. 11:25). Mary is herself an example of what God does by the little ones. He raised her above all because she looked on herself as the least of all. The Son of God chose for His dwelling not the rich palaces of kings but the poverty of Bethlehem, and He manifested His power by the very weakness in which He came to exalt the little ones.

“He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich He hath sent empty away.” Jesus in His turn will say: “Blessed are ye that hunger now, for you shall be filled. . . . Woe to you that are filled, for you shall hunger.” (Luke 6:21, 25). In Bossuet’s words, it is when the soul sees the glory of the world in ruins and God alone great that it finds peace.

The Magnificat concludes as it began, with thanksgiving: “He hath received Israel His servant, being mindful of His mercy: As He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed for ever.” We should make our own the words of St. Ambrose: “Let Mary’s soul be in us to glorify the Lord; let her spirit be in us that we may rejoice in God our Saviour.” May His Kingdom come in us through the accomplishment of His will.

Article 4

MARY’S PERPETUAL VIRGINITY

The Church teaches three truths concerning Mary’s virginity: that she was a virgin in conceiving Our Saviour, that she was a virgin in giving Him birth, and that she remained a virgin her whole life through. The first two truths were defended against the Cerinthians and the Ebionites towards the end of the 1st century; against Celsus, who was refuted by Origen; in the 16th century against the Socinians, whom Paul IV and Clement VIII

condemned; and recently against the rationalists—Strauss, Renan, and the Pseudo-Herzog in particular. The second truth was attacked by Jovinian, who was condemned in 390. The third truth was denied by Helvidius and defended by St. Jerome.

THE VIRGINAL CONCEPTION

Mary's virginity in the conception of her Son was foretold by Isaias (Is. 7:14): "A virgin shall conceive, and bear a son." The virginal conception is clearly the literal sense of this text; otherwise, as St. Justin pointed out to Tryphon, there would be no question of a sign, as Isaias had promised. Gabriel also gave testimony to the virginal conception at the Annunciation: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee." The message given by the angel to St. Joseph is to the same effect: "Joseph, son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary, thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 1:20). And St. Luke says of Jesus: " . . . being (as it was supposed) the son of Joseph." (Luke 3:23).

Tradition confirms that the conception of Christ was virginal, as can be learned from the testimonies of St. Ignatius the Martyr, Aristides, St. Justin, Tertullian, St. Irenaeus. All the creeds teach that the Son of God made flesh "was conceived by the Virgin Mary, by the operation of the Holy Ghost." It was defined by the Lateran Council under Pope Martin I in 649 and it was reaffirmed by Paul IV against the Socinians.

The arguments which show the appropriateness of the virginal conception are exposed by St. Thomas: 1—It is appropriate that He who is the natural Son of God should have no father on earth, but only in Heaven; 2—The Word, conceived eternally in the most complete purity, should be conceived virginally when being made flesh; 3—That the human nature of the Saviour be exempt from original sin it was appropriate that it should not be formed by the ordinary process of human generation, but virginally; 4—By being born of a virgin Christ showed that His members should be born by the Spirit of His virginal and spiritual spouse, the Church.

THE VIRGINAL BIRTH

St. Ambrose bears witness to the virginal birth when commenting on the text of Isaias: “A virgin shall conceive, and bear a son;” she will be a virgin, he says, in giving birth as well as in conceiving. The same had been said earlier by St. Ignatius the Martyr, Aristides, Clement of Alexandria. It was defined by the Lateran Council. St. Thomas gives the following arguments to show the appropriateness of the virginal birth: 1—The Word, who is conceived and who proceeds eternally from the Father without any corruption of His substance, should, if He becomes flesh, be born of a virgin mother without detriment to her virginity; 2—He who came to remove all corruption should not by His birth destroy the virginity of her who bore Him; 3—He who commands us to honor our parents should not Himself diminish by His birth the glory of His holy mother.

THE PERPETUAL VIRGINITY OF MARY AFTER THE SAVIOUR’S BIRTH

The Lateran Council affirmed this point of doctrine in 649, as did Paul IV later against the Socinians.

Among the Greek Fathers two deserve special mention as having explicitly taught it: Origen and St. Gregory the Wonderworker. The expression semper virgo—“always a virgin”—is common in the 4th century, especially in the works of St. Athanasius and Didymus the Blind. It was also used by the 2nd Council of Constantinople. The Latin Fathers are represented by Saints Ambrose, Augustine, and Jerome. St. Ephrem voices the mind of the Syriac Church.

St. Thomas’s arguments to show the appropriateness of the perpetual virginity are as follows (Ilia, q. 28, a. 3): 1—Helvidius’s error is opposed to the dignity of Christ Himself, for just as He is the only Son in eternity of the Father so also He ought to be the only Son in time of the Virgin; 2—It is opposed also to the dignity of the Holy Ghost who sanctified once and for ever the virginal womb of Mary; 3—It is opposed to the dignity and holiness of the Mother of God as it would imply that she was dissatisfied with having borne such a Son; 4—Finally, St. Joseph would have been guilty of the greatest presumption had he violated the virginity of her whom he knew, by the angel, to have conceived of the Holy Ghost.

St. Thomas explains also (Ilia, q. 28, a. 4) the commonly accepted teaching that the Blessed Virgin had taken a vow of perpetual virginity. Her words to the angel prove the point: “How shall this be done, because I know

not man?" Tradition is summed up in the phrase of St. Augustine's: "Virgo es, sancta es, votum vovisti."

Article 5

THE PRINCIPAL MYSTERIES WHICH CONTRIBUTED TO MARY'S INCREASE IN GRACE AFTER THE INCARNATION

These mysteries are those especially which the Rosary proposes for our consideration.

THE NATIVITY

Mary grew in humility, poverty and love of God by giving birth to her Son in a stable. His cradle was but a manger. But, by contrast, there were the angels there to sing "Glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace to men of good will." Those words were sweet to the ears of the shepherds and of St. Joseph, and still more sweet to the ears of Mary. They were the beginning of a Gloria which the Church does not cease to sing at Mass while this world endures, and the liturgy of eternity has not yet replaced that of time.

It is said of Mary that she kept all these words, pondering them in her heart. Though her joy at the birth of her Son was intense, she treasured it up in silence. St. Elisabeth alone received her confidences. God's greatest actions defy human expression. What could Mary say to equal what she had experienced?

THE PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE

Mary said her Fiat in peace and holy joy on the day of the Annunciation. There was sorrow too in her heart at the thought of the sufferings which Isaias had foretold would befall her Son. Still more light is thrown for her on the mystery of the Redemption when the holy old man Simeon speaks of the Child Jesus as the "Salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples: A light to the revelation of the Gentiles." Mary remains silent in wonder and thanksgiving. Simeon continues: "This child is set for the fall, and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall

be contradicted." Jesus, come for the salvation of all, will be the occasion of the fall of many, He will be a stumbling block (Is. 8:14) for many of the Jews, who, refusing to recognise Him as the Messiah, will fall into infidelity and thence to eternal ruin. (Rom. 9:32; 1 Cor. 1:3). Jesus Himself will say later: "Blessed is he that shall not be scandalised in me." (Matt. 11:6).

Turning then to Mary herself, Simeon addressed to her the prophetic words: "And thy own soul a sword shall pierce, that out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed." Mary will have a share in the Saviour's trials. His sufferings will be hers. Her very heart will be pierced by a sword of sorrow.

Had the Son of Man not come thus on earth we should never have known the full malice of pride's revolt against truth. The hidden thoughts of hypocrisy and false zeal were revealed when the Pharisees cried out for the crucifixion of Him Who is Holiness.

Jesus' fullness of grace had two apparently contradictory effects: the most perfect peace of soul; the will to offer Himself as a redemptive victim. Mary's grace produced two similarly contrasting effects: the pure joys of the days of the Annunciation and the Nativity; the desire to be united most generously to the sufferings of her Son for our salvation. Thus, presenting Him in the temple, she already offers Him for us. Joy and sorrow are wedded in the heart of the Mother of God who is already the Mother of all who will believe in her Son.

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

St. Matthew tells us how, after the Magi had come to adore, an angel appeared to Joseph in his sleep saying: "Arise, and take the Child and his mother, and fly into Egypt; and be there until I shall tell thee. For it will come to pass that Herod will seek the Child to destroy him." True to the angel's prophecy, Herod ordered the massacre of all the children of two years and under, in and around Bethlehem.

It is Jesus whom this king fears. He fears where there is no reason to fear, and despises God's anger which he should hold in dread. Mary and Joseph are called to share in Jesus' sufferings. "Before, they had lived in peace and earned their bread without anxiety by the labour of their hands. But as soon as Jesus is given to them their tranquil calm is broken . . . they must share in

His Cross.” The Holy Innocents share also in the Cross. Their massacre shows us that they were predestined from all eternity for the glory of martyrdom.

When Herod has died, an angel appears again to Joseph to tell him that the time has come to go to Nazareth in Galilee.

THE HIDDEN LIFE OF NAZARETH

Mary grew continuously in grace and charity as she carried the Infant in her arms, fed Him, embraced Him and was caressed by Him, heard His first words, guided His first steps.

“Jesus advanced in wisdom and age and grace with God and men.” Arrived at the age of twelve years, He accompanied Mary and Joseph to Jerusalem for the Pasch. When the day of departure came, He remained in the city unknown to His parents. It was only after three days that they found Him in the midst of the doctors. And He said to them: “How is it that you sought me: did you not know that I must be about my Father’s business?” But Mary and Joseph “understood not the word that he spoke to them.”

Mary accepted in faith what she could not as yet understand. The depth and the extent of the Mystery of the Redemption will be revealed to her only gradually. She is glad to have found Jesus again. But in her joy sounds many an overtone of sadnesses yet to come.

Bossuet has some remarkable reflections on the hidden life, which lasted up to the time of Jesus’ public ministry.

“There are some who feel ashamed for Jesus’ sake that He should have endured the wearisomeness of so long a retirement. They experience much the same feelings in regard to Mary, and try to enliven her period at Nazareth by attributing continual miracles to her. Rather let us pay heed to the words of the gospel: “Mary kept all these words in her heart.” Was not that a task worthy of her? And if the mysteries of His infancy were so rich a subject for her meditation, what of the mysteries that succeeded them? Mary meditated on Jesus . . . she remained in perpetual contemplation, her heart melting, as it were, in love and longing. What then shall we say to those who invented so many pretty fables about Our Lady? What, if not that humble and perfect contemplation did not seem enough in their eyes? But if it was enough for thirty years of Mary’s—and of Jesus’—life, it was enough for the other years too. The silence of the Scriptures about Mary is more

eloquent than all discourses. Learn, O man, in the midst of your restless activity, to be satisfied to think of Jesus, to listen to Him within, to hear again His words. . . . Of what are you complaining, human pride, when you say you count for little in this world? Did Jesus count for much there? Or Mary? They were the wonder of the world, the sight that ravished God and angels. And what did they do? What name did they bear? Men wish to bear an honored name, to take part in brilliant movements. They do not know Jesus and Mary. . . . You say you have nothing to do. The salvation of souls is in your hands—in part, at least! Do you not know enemies whom you could help to reconcile, quarrels you could mend? Are there not souls in misery you could save from blasphemy and despair? And even if you have nothing of all that, have you not the work of your own salvation, which is for every soul the true work of God?"

Reflecting on the hidden life of Nazareth and on Mary's spiritual progress in its silence, and reflecting by way of contrast on what the world terms progress, we are forced to conclude: men never talked more of progress than since they began to neglect its most important form, spiritual progress. And what has been the result? That the baser forms of progress, sought for their own sake, have brought pleasure, idleness and unemployment in their train, and prepared the way for a moral decline towards materialism, atheism—and even barbarism, as the recent world wars prove. In Mary, on the contrary, we find the ever more perfect realization of the gospel words: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind." The further she advances the more she loves God with all her heart, for the more she sees the opposition to Jesus growing in the course of His ministry up to the consummation of the mystery of the Redemption.

THE CAUSE OF MARY'S DOLORS ON CALVARY AND THE INTENSITY OF HER LOVE OF GOD AND OF HER SON AND OF SOULS

What was the profound cause of Mary's sorrows on Calvary? Every Christian soul for whom practice has made the Stations of the Cross familiar will answer: the cause of Mary's sorrows, as of those of Jesus, was sin. Happy the souls for whom that answer is a vital truth, who experience true sorrow at the thought of their own sins—a sorrow that only grace can produce in them.

We understand but little of the sorrows of Mary, for little grieves us except what wounds our bodies, our self-love, our vanity, or our pride. We suffer too from men's ingratitude, from the afflictions of our family or our native land. But sin grieves us but little. We have but little sorrow for our faults considered as offenses against God. In theory, we admit that sin is the greatest of evils since it affects the soul itself and its faculties, and since it is the cause of the disorders which we deplore in society; it is only too evidently the cause of the enmity between classes and nations. But in spite of that we do not experience any great sorrow for the faults whereby we contribute more or less ourselves to the general disorder. Our superficiality and our inconstancy prevent us from seeing what an evil sin is; precisely because it strikes so deep it cannot be known by those who look only at the surface. In its manner of ravaging souls and society, sin is like one of those diseases which affect vital but hidden organs, and which the sufferer is ignorant of even while they near a crisis.

To experience salutary grief, grief for sin, it is necessary truly to love God whom sin offends and sinners whom it destroys. The saints suffered from sin in the degree in which they loved God and souls. St. Catherine of Siena recognized souls in the state of mortal sin by the insupportable odor which they exhaled. But to know just how far grief for sin can go, one must turn to the heart of Mary. Her grief sprang from an unequalled love for God, for Jesus crucified, and for souls—a love which surpassed that of the greatest saints, and even of all the saints united, a love which had never ceased to grow, a love which had never been restrained by the slightest fault or imperfection. If such was Mary's love, what must her grief have been! Unlike us who are so superficial, she saw with piercing clarity what it was that caused the loss of so many souls" the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes, the pride of life. All sins combined to add to her grief; all revolts against God, all outbursts of sacrilegious rage, such as that which reached its paroxysm in the cry "Crucify Him" and in utter hatred of Him who is the Light Divine and the Author of Salvation.

Mary's grief was deep as was her love, both natural and supernatural, of her Son. She loved Him with a virginal love, most pure and tender; loved Him as her only Son, miraculously conceived, and as her God.

To understand Mary's dolours, one would need to have received, as did the stigmatics, the impression of the wounds of the Saviour; one would need to have relived with the mystics His physical and moral sufferings,

and to have shared with Him the hours of His Passion and Death. We shall try once more to speak of this matter when considering Mary as Mediatrix and Co-Redemptrix, and the reparation which she offered with, and by, and in her Son.

Mary's love in her dolours was meritorious for us and for her also. By her sufferings she grew in charity as well as in faith, and hope, and religion; she grew in fact in all the virtues—those of humility, and meekness, and supernatural courage suggesting themselves especially to the mind. Her virtue in suffering was heroic in the highest degree. Thereby she became Queen of Martyrs.

On the hill of Calvary, grace and charity overflowed from the Heart of Jesus to the heart of His mother. He it was who sustained her, just as it was she who sustained St. John. Jesus offered up her martyrdom as well as His own, and she offered herself with her Son, who was more dear to her than her own life. If the least of the acts of Nazareth increased Mary's charity, what must have been the effect of her participation in the Cross of Jesus!

PENTECOST

The glorious resurrection of Our Saviour and His different apparitions all marked new stages in Mary's spiritual growth. She saw in them the realization of so many of Jesus' prophecies. She saw in them too His victory over death, a sign of Good Friday's victory over Satan.

The mystery of the Ascension raised Mary's thoughts still higher heavenwards. The evening of that day, when she withdrew to the Supper-room with the Apostles (Acts 1:14) she must have felt, as they too did, how empty the world was without Jesus. The difficulty of converting the pagan world loomed up in all its magnitude. The presence of Our Lady helped the Apostles to face it. In union with Jesus she merited, de congruo, the graces they were about to receive in this room where the Blessed Eucharist had been instituted, where they had been ordained priests, and where the Master had appeared to them after His Resurrection.

The day of Pentecost comes. The Holy Ghost descends on Mary and on the Apostles in the form of tongues of fire, to give the final enlightenment concerning the mysteries of man's salvation, and to impart the strength needed for the immense and arduous task that awaited its accomplishment. On that day, the Apostles were confirmed in grace. St. Peter went forth to

manifest by his preaching that he had received fullness of knowledge of the mystery of Jesus Christ, Saviour and Author of newness of life. One and all, from being fearful the apostles became courageous, rejoicing to suffer for the name of Jesus. How marvellous must not Mary's progress have been—she who was to be on earth, as it were, the heart of the infant Church!

Now that Jesus has ascended to Heaven no one will participate as she in His love for His Father and for souls. By her prayer, her contemplation, her ceaseless generosity, she will, in some way, sustain the souls of the Twelve, following them as a mother in the labours and difficulties of their apostolate, right up to the crown of martyrdom. They are her sons. The Church will later call her Queen of Apostles.

Even now she cares for them and makes their work fruitful by a continual oblation of herself in union with the sacrifice of Jesus perpetuated on the altar.

MARY, MODEL OF DEVOTION TO THE EUCHARIST

It is most becoming to insist here a little on what Holy Mass and Holy Communion, received from the hands of St. John, must have meant for Our Blessed Lady.

Why had Mary been committed to St. John on Calvary rather than to the holy women who were also at the foot of the Cross? The reason was that St. John was a priest and had a treasure which they could not give her, the treasure of the Eucharist.

Why among the Apostles was John chosen rather than Peter? One reason is that John alone remained at the Cross, drawn and held there by a strong sweet grace. Another is that he is, as St. Augustine remarks, the model of the contemplative life, of the interior and hidden life which had always been that of Mary and which would be hers till death. Mary's life will be cast in a very different mould from that of Peter, for she will have no share in ruling the Church. Her vocation will be to contemplate and to love Our Saviour in His sacramental presence, and to obtain by her unceasing prayer the spread of the faith and the salvation of souls. She will be thus in a very real sense the heart of the infant Church, for none other will enter as she into the depths and the strength of the love of Jesus.

Let us consider her in this hidden life, especially at the hour when John celebrated Holy Mass in her presence. Mary has not the priestly character;

she cannot perform the priestly functions. But she has received, in the words of M. Olier, “the plenitude of the priestly spirit,” which is the spirit of Christ the Redeemer. Thus she is able to penetrate deeper than St. John himself into the meaning of the mysteries he celebrates. Besides, her dignity of Mother of God is greater than that of ordained priest; she has given us both the Priest and the Victim of the sacrifice of the Cross and she has offered herself with Him.

Holy Mass was for her, in a degree we can only suspect, the memorial and the continuation of the sacrifice of the Cross. A sword of sorrow had pierced her heart on Calvary, the strength and tenderness of her love for Jesus making her suffer a true martyrdom. She suffered so much that the memory of Calvary could never grow dim, and each Holy Mass was a fresh renewal of all she lived through there. Mary found the same Victim on the altar when John said Mass. She found the same Jesus, really present; not present in image only, but in the substance of His Body with His Soul and Divinity. True, there was no immolation in blood, but there was a sacramental immolation, realised through the separate consecration of the bread and the wine: Jesus’ blood is shed sacramentally on the altar. How expressive is that figure of His death for her who cannot forget, for her who bears always in the depths of her soul the image of her Son, outraged and wounded, for her who hears yet the insults and the blasphemies offered Him. St. John’s Mass, with Mary present at it, was the most striking memorial of the Cross as it is perpetuated in its substance on our altars.

MARY FOUND IN THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS THE POINT OF CONTACT OF THE CULTS OF HEAVEN AND EARTH

It is the same Victim who is offered at Holy Mass and who, in Heaven, offers His glorious wounds to the Heavenly Father. The Body of Christ never ceases to be in Heaven, it is true. It does not come down from Heaven, in the strict sense of the terms, on to the altar. But, without being multiplied. It is made really present by the transubstantiation of the substance of the bread and the wine into Itself.

There is the same principal priest, or offerer, in Heaven and on earth also, “always living to make intercession for us.” (Heb. 7:25). The celebrant of the Mass is but a minister who speaks in Jesus’ name. When he says “This is my body” it is Jesus who speaks by him.

It is Jesus who, as God, gives to the words their power of transubstantiation. It is Jesus as Man who, by an act of His holy soul, transmits the divine power and who continues to offer Himself thus for us as principal priest. If the human minister ever happens to be slightly distracted, the principal Offerer is not distracted, and Jesus as Man, continuing to offer Himself sacramentally for us, sees all that we miss—sees all the spiritual influence exercised by each Mass on the faithful present and absent, and on the souls in Purgatory.

Jesus continues to offer Himself in each Mass, the actual offering being made through the hands of His minister. The soul of the sacrifice of our altars is the interior oblation which is always a living reality in His Sacred Heart; through that oblation He applies to us continually the merits and satisfaction of Calvary. The saints have sometimes seen Jesus in the priest's place at the moment of consecration. Mary knew the full truth better than any of the saints. Better than any of them she knew that the soul of every Mass was the oblation that lived in her Son's Heart. She understood too that when, this world having reached its term, the last Mass,would have been said, Jesus' interior oblation would continue for ever, not now as supplication but as adoration and thanksgiving—as the eternal cult expressed even now at Mass by the Sanctus in honor of the thrice-holy God.

How did Mary unite herself to the oblation of Jesus, the principal priest She united herself to it, as we shall explain later, as universal Mediatrix and CoRedemptrix. She continued to unite herself to it as at the foot of the Cross—in a spirit of adoring reparation, in petition and thanksgiving.

Model of victim-souls, she offered up the anguish she suffered at those denials of the divinity of Jesus which prompted St. John to write his fourth Gospel. She offered thanks for the institution of the Blessed Eucharist and for all the benefits of which It is the source. She prayed for the conversion of sinners, for the progress of the good, for the help the Apostles needed in their work and their sufferings.

In all that Mary is our model, teaching us how to become adorers in spirit and in truth.

What shall we say of Mary's communions? The principal condition for a fervent communion is to hunger for the Eucharist. The saints hungered for It. When Holy Communion was denied St. Catherine of Siena, her desires obtained that a portion of the large Host broke off unknown to the celebrant and was carried miraculously to the saint. But Mary's hunger for the

Eucharist was incomparably greater and more intense than that of the saints. Let us contemplate reverently the strong loving desire which drew Mary to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

Every soul is drawn towards God, for He is the Sovereign Good for whom we have been made. But the consequences of sin—original and actual—and of innumerable imperfections make God appear unattractive in our eyes and weaken our inborn desire for union with Him. Mary's soul, however, knew nothing of the consequences of sins and imperfections; nothing ever checked the Godwards tendency of her wonderful charity. Forgetting herself, Mary turned firmly towards God, with a firmness that grew daily as did her merits. The Holy Ghost dwelling in her moved her to give herself to God and to be united to Him. Her love of God, like an intense thirst, was accompanied by a sweet suffering which ceased only when she died of love and entered on the union of eternity. Such was her desire of the Eucharist.

Jesus for His part desired most ardently to consummate Mary's holiness, to communicate to her the overflowing riches of His Sacred Heart. If He could suffer in glory, He would suffer from the resistance we offer to the same desire He has in our regard. But He found no resistance in Mary. And so He was able to communicate Himself to her in the most intimate way possible for two lives to be fused into one on earth: Jesus' union with Mary was a reflection of the sanctifying union of the Word with the Sacred Humanity, an image of the communion of the Three Divine Persons in the one infinite Truth and the one limitless Goodness.

Mary became again the pure living tabernacle of the Lord when she communicated—a tabernacle which knew and loved; one a thousand times more precious than any golden ciborium; a true tower of ivory, house of gold, and ark of the alliance.

What were the effects of Mary's communion? They surpassed anything St. Teresa recounts of transforming union in the Seventh Mansion of the Interior Castle. Transforming union has been compared, in its power to transform the soul in some way into God by knowledge and love, to the union of fire with a piece of iron, or that of light with the air it illumines. Rays of supernatural warmth and light came forth from the soul of Jesus and communicated themselves to Mary's intellect and will. Mary could not take the credit to herself for the sublime effects they produced in her. Rather did she give praise on their account to Him who was their principle and

end: “He that eateth me, the same also shall live by me;” he who eats my flesh lives by me and for me, just as I live by my Father and for my Father.

Each of Mary’s communions surpassed the preceding one in fervour and, producing in her a great increase of charity, disposed her to receive her next communion with still greater fruit. Mary’s soul moved ever more swiftly Godwards the nearer she approached to God; that was her law of spiritual gravitation. She was, as it were, a mirror which reflected back on Jesus the light and warmth which she received from Him; concentrated them also, so as to direct them towards souls.

In everything she was the perfect model of Eucharistic devotion. If we turn to her she will teach us how to adore and to make reparation; she will teach us what should be our desire of the Blessed Eucharist. From here we can learn how to pray at Holy Mass for the great intentions of the Church, and how to thank God for the graces without number He has bestowed on us and on mankind.

Article 6

MARY’S INTELLECTUAL ENDOWMENTS AND HER PRINCIPAL VIRTUES

To understand Mary’s fullness of grace, especially towards the end of her life on earth, it is necessary to examine the perfection of her intellect. We must consider her faith, enlightened by the gifts of Wisdom, Understanding and Knowledge. It will be necessary then to pass on to a consideration of some of her principal virtues, which, through their connection with her charity, were in her soul in a degree proportionate to her fullness of grace. To conclude this section we shall glance briefly at the gratuitous gifts of intellect which she received, particularly those of prophecy and the discernment of spirits.

MARY’S FAITH ENLIGHTENED BY THE GIFTS

The natural perfection of Mary’s soul resulted in very great powers of penetration in her intellect, as well as moral rectitude in her will and her lower faculties. These natural endowments continued to develop throughout the course of her life.

As regards her faith, it perceived its object in an exceptionally penetrating manner because of the revelation made to her at the Annunciation concerning the mysteries of the Incarnation and the Redemption, and because also of her daily intercourse with the Word made Flesh. Subjectively also her faith was remarkable, being strong, certain and prompt in its assent. In fact, Mary received the virtue of faith in the highest degree in which it was infused into any soul on earth, and the same must be said of her hope also. Jesus, having the beatific vision from the first instant of His conception, had neither faith nor hope: to Him belonged the full light of vision and full undelayed possession.

Hence, the sublimity of Mary's faith surpasses our understanding. She did not hesitate at the Annunciation but believed at once the very moment the mystery of the redemptive Incarnation was sufficiently proposed to her, so that St. Elisabeth can say soon after: "And blessed art thou that hast believed, because these things shall be accomplished that were spoken to thee by the Lord." In Bethlehem she sees her Son born in a stable and believes that He is the Creator of the world; she sees all the weakness of His infant body and believes in His omnipotence; when He commences to essay His first words she believes His infinite wisdom; when the Holy Family takes flight from Herod's anger she believes that Jesus is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, as St. John would later say. At the Circumcision and the Presentation in the Temple her faith in the mystery of the Redemption expands. Her whole life on earth was passed in a dark brightness, the darkness arising not from human error and ignorance but from the very transcendence of the light itself—a darkness which was, in consequence, revealing of the heights of the mysteries contemplated by the blessed in Heaven.

She is at the foot of the Cross on Calvary, though all the Apostles, St. John only excepted, have fled; she stands erect there, firm in her faith that her Son is the Son of God, that He is the Lamb of God who is even then taking away the sins of the world, that though apparently defeated, He is Victor over Satan and sin, and that in three days He will conquer death by His resurrection. Mary's act of faith on Calvary was the greatest ever elicited on earth, for the hour was unspeakably dark and its object was the most difficult of all—that Jesus had won the greatest of victories by making the most complete of immolations.

Her faith was aided then by the gifts of the Holy Ghost. By the gift of Understanding she read far into the revealed mysteries, far into their inner meaning, their harmony, their appropriateness, their consequences. She was particularly favored in her understanding of the mysteries in which she herself had a part to play, such as the virginal conception of Christ, His Incarnation, and the whole economy of the Redemption. Brought as she had been into close contact with the Three Divine Persons, the mystery of the Blessed Trinity revealed more of its depths to her than to any other mere human being.

By the gift of Wisdom the Holy Ghost enabled her to judge the things of God through a certain connaturality or sympathy which is based on charity. She knew therefore in an experimental manner how truly the great mysteries answer to our highest aspirations, and how grace continually awakens new desires in us so as to prepare the way for clearer light and more burning love. She relished the mysteries in the measure of her ever-growing charity, her humility, and her purity. In her were verified most strikingly the words “God gives His grace to the humble . . . Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God.” Even on earth the pure have some vision of their Father in Heaven.

By the gift of Knowledge the Holy Ghost taught her to judge temporal things, at times as symbols of eternal and divine things (as, for example, to see the heavens telling the glory of God) or again in their nothingness and frailty so as to appreciate eternal life all the more by contrast.

SPECIAL PRIVILEGES OF HER INTELLECT

Besides faith and the gifts of the Holy Ghost which all the faithful have as part of their spiritual organism, Mary, like many of the saints, had the gratiae gratis datae, or charismata which are given principally for the benefit of others rather than for the benefit of the person who receives them. These charismata are exterior signs having as purpose to confirm revelation or holiness, rather than fresh forms of sanctity. That is why they are distinct from grace, the infused virtues, and the gifts, all of which belong to a higher order.

Regarding the charismata, theologians usually admit the principle: Mary received all privileges which it was becoming for her to receive, and which were not incompatible with her state, in a higher degree than the saints did.

In other words, we cannot conceive of her as being inferior to the saints in the matter of charismata, seeing how much she surpassed them in the matter of holiness.

The principle is not, however, to be taken in a material sense. If, for example, certain saints have lived long months without food, if they have walked on the waters to come to another's aid, it does not follow that Mary did the same; it is enough if she received grace of a higher order in which such lower graces were contained and surpassed. At the same time, in virtue of the principle just now enunciated, we must assert that she had certain charismata, either certainly or very probably.

First of all, she had by a special privilege a knowledge of the Scriptures greater than that of any of the saints, particularly in what concerned the Messiah, the redemptive Incarnation, the Blessed Trinity, the life of grace and of the virtues, and the life of eternity. And even though Mary did not receive the commission to share in the official ministry of the Church, she must have enlightened St. John and St. Luke concerning the infancy and the hidden life of Jesus.

She must have known in a clear and penetrating manner all that was useful about objects of the natural order. Though she need not have known the chemical formula of such things as salt or water, it would still be possible for her to know their natural properties, and still more their higher symbolism. For Mary's knowledge of natural objects was of the kind which throws light upon the great religious and moral truths, such as the existence of God, His universal Providence extending to the minutest details, the spirituality and immortality of the soul, free will and moral responsibility, the principles and conclusions of the moral law, the relation between nature and grace. She saw clearly the finality of nature, the order of creation, and the subordination of every created cause to the First Cause. She saw that every good thing comes from God, even the free determination of our salutary and meritorious acts; she saw too that no one person would be better than another were he not more loved by God—a principle which is at the root of all humility and thanksgiving.

The knowledge which Mary had while still on earth had limits, especially at the beginning. She did not, for example, understand the full import of what Jesus said about His Father's business when she found Him in the Temple. But, as has been often said, the limits were limits, not gaps. Hence she was in no sense ignorant, for the limits did not deprive her of the knowl

—edge of anything she should have known at the time. God's Mother knew at every stage of her life all that it was becoming for her to know.

Nor was she subject to error. She was never precipitate in judging; if she had not sufficient light she suspended her judgement; if she was not sure about a thing she was satisfied to affirm that it was likely or probable. For example, when she thought it likely that Jesus was not in the company of her friends and relatives on the occasion when she lost Him, her belief was a very likely one indeed—though in point of fact it was not true—and in looking on it as likely Mary did not err.

We have seen earlier (Chapter II, art. 5) that it is very probable that she had infused knowledge from the time she was in her mother's womb. We have seen too that it is equally probable that she was never deprived of it in the course of her life, and that many: theologians hold that she had the use of it even during her sleeping hours.

Among Mary's gratuitous gifts we must include that of prophecy. An example of its exercise can be found, in the Magnificat: "For behold from henceforth all gem erations shall call me blessed." The realization of this prophecy in the course of ages is as evident as is the meaning of the words themselves. It is more than likely that this was not the only occasion on which Mary used her prophetic gift since prophecy is so common among the saints, as for example St. John Bosco and the Cure of Ars.

Finally, she had, like so many saints, the gift of discernment of spirits, by which to recognise the spirit of God and to distinguish it from diabolical illusion and natural exaltation. It enabled her also to read the secrets of hearts, especially when someone came to ask counsel of her. Thus her advice was always sound, opportune and practical.

Many theologians hold that Mary had the gift of tongues when she travelled in foreign countries—in Egypt, for example, and also in Ephesus. There is still greater reason for believing that she had this gift after the Assumption, for in her apparitions at Lourdes and La Salette and elsewhere she spoke the dialect of the district—the only one understood by those to whom she appeared.

The question has been asked if Mary enjoyed on earth—even for a few instants—the face to face vision of the divine essence as the blessed in Heaven do. On one point theologians are unanimous against Vega and Franciscus Verra: unlike her Divine Son, she had not that vision in a permanent way on earth, for if she had it permanently she would not have

had the virtue of faith. But it is more difficult to say whether or not she enjoyed the beatific vision from time to time. It is true that she must have had an intellectual vision of the Trinity higher than that described by St. Teresa in the Seventh Mansion. But the vision of which St. Teresa speaks does not transcend faith, and is therefore immeasurably inferior to that of the blessed.

Some light is thrown on the problem by what we know of St. Paul. St. Augustine and St. Thomas teach that it is probable that St. Paul enjoyed the beatific vision momentarily when, in his own words, he was "caught up to the third Heaven . . . and heard secret words which it is not given to man to utter" (2 Cor. 12:2). The two great doctors both mention that according to the Jews the third Heaven was not merely the higher air, but the spiritual Heaven inhabited by God, where He is seen face to face by the angels—Paradise, as St. Paul says in the same context. Hence they conclude that St. Paul, having been called to be the Doctor of the Gentiles and of grace, was probably favored by a brief moment of the beatific vision, since grace cannot be understood fully without having seen the glory of which it is the beginning. The authority of two such doctors, themselves favored with mystical graces and thus especially competent to speak of such matters, is sufficient to constitute serious probability. It must, however, be admitted that neither Estius nor Cornelius a Lapide accepts such an exegesis of St. Paul's text. Modern commentators tend to be non-committal.

To return to Our Lady, we agree entirely with Fr Hugon when he states that if it is probable that St. Paul enjoyed the beatific vision momentarily, it is difficult to see why the same should not be said of Our Blessed Lady, for her divine maternity, her fullness of grace, and her freedom from every stain disposed her more perfectly than any saint for the beatitude of eternity. Hence, even if it is not certain that she had moments of the beatific vision, it remains very probable.

This brief survey will suffice to give some idea of the rich intellectual gifts which Mary enjoyed on earth.

MARY'S PRINCIPAL VIRTUES

We have spoken already of her faith. A few words may now be said of her hope and her charity, as well as of the cardinal virtues and the virtues of humility and meekness.

Her hope, by which she tended to the possession of God whom she did not as yet fully possess, was a perfect confidence and trust which relied not on self but on the divine mercy and omnipotence. It was therefore sure. And its sureness was increased by the gift of Piety. For Piety awakens in us a filial attitude to God, and by it the Holy Ghost "giveth testimony to our spirit that we are the sons of God" (Rom. 8:16) and assures us that we can count on His assistance. It was increased also by the fact that Mary was confirmed in grace and preserved free from every shortcoming—lack of confidence as well as presumption.

Some of the occasions for the exercise of hope in Mary's life spring at once to the mind. She exercised it when, yet a child, she awaited the coming of the Messiah and the salvation of all peoples; again, when she awaited the time that the secret of the virginal conception would be revealed to St. Joseph; again, when she fled into Egypt; again—and most of all—when on Calvary all seemed lost, but she awaited the victory which her Son had foretold He would win over death. Finally, her confidence, her unshaken hope, sustained the Apostles in their ceaseless labours for the spread of the Gospel and the conversion of the pagan world.

Her charity—her love of God in Himself and of souls for His sake—surpassed even in its beginnings the charity of all the saints combined, for it was of the same degree as her fullness of grace. Mary was always most intimately united to the Father as His best-beloved daughter, to the Son as His Virgin Mother, and to the Holy Ghost in a mystic marriage more perfect than the world had ever known. She was, in a way beyond all power of understanding, a living temple of the Trinity, loved by God more than all creatures, and corresponding perfectly with that love by consecrating herself fully to Him in the instant of her conception, and by living thenceforth in the most complete conformity to His Will.

No disordered passion, no vain fear, no distraction, checked the surge of her love for God. Her love for souls was of the same intensity, she offered her Son and herself unceasingly for souls.

The pages of the Gospel call many occasions to mind when her charity must have burned with a special flame—the Annunciation, the finding of Jesus after the three days' loss, Calvary. . . . Well may the Church apply to Mary the words of Ecclesiasticus (Eccl. 24:24): "I am the mother of fair love, and of fear, and of knowledge, and of holy hope."

The moral infused virtues are in all souls in the state of grace in the degree of their charity: prudence in the intellect, to make their judgement right in accordance with God's law; justice in their will to prompt them to give every one his due; fortitude and temperance in their sensitive nature to bring it into conformity with reason and faith. The acquired virtues—which bear the same names—facilitate the exercise of the corresponding infused virtues.

Mary's prudence directed all her actions undeviatingly towards her supernatural destiny. All her actions were deliberate and meritorious. Thus the Church calls her the Virgin most prudent. Aided by the gift of Counsel she exercised prudence in a notable manner at the Annunciation when, troubled at the angel's word, she wondered what his salutation could mean, and again when she asked "How shall this be done, because I know not man?" Nor was her prudence less when, the angel having explained his mission, she accepted God's will: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word."

She practiced justice in its highest form—that is to say, justice in regard to God, which is the virtue of religion aided by the gift of Piety—when she consecrated herself to God in the first instant of her being.

She practiced it also by her vow of virginity, her presentation of Jesus to His Father in the Temple, and her final offering of Him on the Cross. On Calvary she offered the greatest act of the virtue of religion in union with Jesus, the perfect sacrifice and the holocaust of infinite value.

Justice was always wedded to mercy in Mary. As did her Son, she forgave all the wrongs done to her and showed the greatest compassion for sinners. Then, as now, she was the Mother of Mercy, Our Lady of Perpetual Succour. The words of the psalmist find in her their realisation: "The earth is full of the mercy of God."

Fortitude, that firmness of soul which can withstand the greatest dangers, the most difficult tasks, and the cruellest afflictions, was found in Mary in a no less eminent degree than the other virtues. At the foot of the Cross she did not flinch nor weaken, but stood courageously, as St. John tells us. Cajetan wrote a special tract, De spasmo Virginis, refuting the idea that Mary fainted on the road to Calvary. In this he was at one with Medina, Toletus, Suarez and with theologians generally, who all agree that Mary did not collapse under her grief. By her courageous bearing of trials Mary merited to be called Queen of Martyrs. She shared more intimately in Jesus'

suffering by her inner union with Him than did all the martyrs by their exterior afflictions. This thought is called to mind by the Church on the Feast of the Compassion of Our Lady and the Feast of the Seven Dolours, particularly in the Stabat Mater:

> Fac ut portem Christi mortem,
> Passionis fac consortem Et plagas recolere.
> Fac me plagis vulnerari,
> Fac me cruce inebriari, Et cruore Filii
>
> Let me to my latest breath,
> In my body bear the death
> Of that dying Son of thine.
> Wounded with His every wound,
> Steep my soul till it hath swoon'd
> In His very blood away.
> —Fr. Caswall.

Temperance in its different forms, especially in that of perfect virginity, appeared in her angelic purity. In Mary the soul reigned over the body, the higher faculties over the senses. The image of God was reflected in her as in a mirror.

Her humility never had to struggle against the slightest movement of pride or vanity. She recognized that of herself she was nothing and could do nothing in the supernatural order. Therefore she bowed down before the Divine Majesty and before all that there was of God in creation. She placed all her greatness in God alone, realising thus the words of the Missal: Deus humilium celsitudo.

At the Annunciation she speaks of herself as the handmaid of the Lord, and in the Magnificat she thanks the Most High for having regarded her lowliness. On the day of the Purification she submits to a law which did not bind her. Her whole life long, humility was manifested in her bearing, her modesty, her voluntary poverty, in the lowly tasks she performed—and all that, even though she had received graces as no other mere human ever did.

The Liturgy reminds us too of her meekness: Virgo singularis, inter omnes mitis. She uttered no word of reproach against those who crucified Jesus, but in union with Him she forgave them and prayed for them. Here we have meekness at its highest united to consummate fortitude.

Such are, then, the intellectual endowments and the principal virtues with which Mary was adorned. They made her a model of the contemplative life, one characterised by devotion to the Incarnate Word, and, through

participation in His redemptive work, one in whom we find the most universal of all hidden apostolates.

What we have said in this chapter about Mary's principal virtues and her intellectual endowments shows in a concrete way the general plan of her spiritual progress. It remains to speak in the next chapter of her final fullness of grace at the moment of her death and of her entry into Heaven. We shall, then, have followed the stages of her spiritual life from her Immaculate Conception to her final glorification, a life which in its progress resembles a river rising at a great height and causing the fertility of the regions through which it passes, before it plunges at length into the mighty ocean.

Chapter 4

THE FINAL PLENITUDE OF MARY'S GRACE

THE plan of this chapter will be: to speak first of Mary's fullness of grace at the time of her death; then to recall the teaching of the Church concerning her Assumption; finally to treat of her fullness of grace as it unfolded itself in Heaven.

Article 1

MARY'S FULLNESS OF GRACE AT THE MOMENT OF DEATH

Bossuet remarks that Mary was left in the world after Jesus to console the Church. This she did by her prayers and ever-increasing merits which were the support of the Apostles in their labours and trials as well as the hidden source of the fecundity of all they did for souls.

We have seen already that in Mary's case death was not a consequence of original sin, but simply of human nature as such. Man was not made immortal at the beginning otherwise than by a special privilege. The Incarnate Word willed to take passible flesh. Mary's flesh was passible too. Thus the deaths of Jesus and Mary were consequences of the inherent weakness of human nature left to itself and unsustained by any preternatural gift. Jesus, however, mastered death by accepting it for our salvation. Mary united herself to Him in His death, making for us the sacrifice of His life in the most generous martyrdom of heart the world has ever known after that of Our Saviour. And when, later on, the hour of her own death arrived, the sacrifice of her life had been already made. It remained but to renew it in that most perfect form which tradition speaks of as the death of love, a death, that is to say, in which the soul dies not simply in grace or in God's love, but of a calm and supremely strong love which draws the soul, now

ripe for Heaven, away from the body to be united to God in immediate and eternal vision.

Mary's last moments are described by St. John Damascene in the words "She died an extremely peaceful death." St. Francis de Sales' chapters in his treatise on the Love of God (ch. 13 and 14) are an eloquent commentary on the words of St. John Damascene:

"The Blessed Virgin, Mother of God, died of love for her Son. . . . It is impossible to conceive of her death as having been anything except a death of love, which is the most noble of all deaths and the fitting crown of the most noble of all lives. . . . If the early Christians were said to have but one heart and one soul because of their perfect mutual love, if St. Paul lived no longer for himself but Christ lived in him because of the intense union of his heart with the heart of his Master . . . how much more true is it that the Blessed Virgin and her Son had but one soul, one heart, and one life . . . so that her Son lived in her. Mother most loving and most loved that could be . . . of a love incomparably higher than that of angels and men in the measure in which the titles of only mother and only Son are higher than all names that are united in love.

But if this mother lived by the life of her Son, she died also by His death; for as the life is, so is the death. . . . Retaining in her memory all the most lovable mysteries of the life and death of her Son, and receiving always the most ardent inspirations which her Son, the Sun of Justice, poured out on men in the noonday ardor of His charity . . . she was at length consumed by the sacred fire of this charity, as a holocaust of sweetness. And thus she died, her soul ravished and transported in the arms of the love of Jesus. . . .

She died of a most sweet and tranquil love. . . . The love of God increased every moment in the virginal heart of our glorious Lady, but in a sweet, peaceful, and continuous way, without agitation, nor shocks, nor any violence . . . like a great river which, finding no obstacles in the level plain, flows along effortlessly.

Just as iron, if not hindered, is drawn strongly but sweetly by the magnet, and the attraction increases according as it is drawn more close to it, so the Blessed Virgin, being in no way hindered in the operation of the love of her Son, united herself to Him in an incomparable union by sweet, peaceful and effortless ecstasies. . . . So that the death of the Virgin was more peaceful than we can conceive, her Son drawing her gently by the odor of His

ointments. . . . Love had caused Mary the pangs of death on Calvary; it was only just, then, that death should cause her the highest delights of love."

Bossuet, in his turn, voices the same sentiments in his first sermon for the Feast of the Assumption.

"If to love Jesus and to be loved by Jesus are two things which draw down the divine blessing on souls, what a sea of graces must have inundated the soul of Mary Who can describe the impetuosity of that mutual love in which all that is tender in nature concurred with all that is efficacious in grace? Jesus never tired of seeing Himself loved by His Mother: Mary never thought she had had enough of the love of her Son. She asked no grace from her Son except that of loving Him, and that fact drew down more graces on her.

Compare, if you can, with her love the holy impatience she experienced to be united to her Son. . . . St. Paul wished to burst at once the bond of the flesh so as to be with his Master at the right hand of the

Father, and how much greater must have been the longing of a maternal heart! The absence of a year was enough to pierce the heart of the mother of Tobias with sorrow, and what must have been the regret of Mary when she felt herself so long separated from a Son she loved so well! When she saw St. Stephen and so many others depart from this world she must well have asked her Son why He wished to leave her the last of all. He had brought her to the foot of the Cross to see Him suffer, and would He delay to allow her to see Him enthroned? If only He would allow her love its way, it would soon withdraw her soul from her body to unite it to Him in whom she lived.

That love was so ardent, so strong, so inflamed, that not a desire for Heaven sprang from it which was not capable of drawing with it Mary's soul.

Thus, Mary yielded her holy and blessed soul peacefully and without violence into the hands of her Son. Just as the least touch gathers the ripe fruit, so was gathered her blessed soul, to be at once carried to Heaven; thus the divine Virgin died in a movement of the love of God."

That holy death reveals the final fullness of Mary's grace, a fullness which corresponded wonderfully to that initial fullness which had not ceased to grow from the moment of the Immaculate Conception. It disposed her for the consummated fullness of Heaven which is always proportionate to the merits acquired at the moment of death.

Article 2

THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

What is meant by the Assumption? The whole Church understands by the term that the Blessed Virgin, soon after her death and glorious resurrection, was taken up body and soul to Heaven to be forever throned above the angels and saints. The term Assumption is used rather than Ascension since, unlike Jesus who ascended to Heaven by His own power, Mary was lifted up by God to the degree of glory for which she had been predestined.

Was the Assumption capable of being perceived by the senses, and if there were witnesses—the Apostles and St. John in particular—had they ocular evidence of it? Certainly there was something of the sense-perceptible order about the Assumption, since it was the taking up of Mary's body to Heaven. But the term of that taking up, that is, the entry to Heaven and the exaltation of Mary above all the saints, was invisible and inaccessible to the senses.

It can be admitted that did certain witnesses find the tomb of the Mother of God empty after her burial, and did they later witness her resurrection and her being raised up in the skies, they would have been able to presume that she entered Heaven and that Our Blessed Lord had associated her with the glory of His Ascension. But a presumption is not certitude. Mary's body could have been transported, for all their evidence proved, into a place not visible to human eyes—to the place, for example, in which Jesus' risen body was between His different apparitions.

But if a presumption is not certitude, how was Our Lady's entry into Heaven ever known with certainty? For that a divine revelation was required. St. Thomas remarks that there was such a revelation in the case of the Ascension made through the intermediary of the angels who said: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand you looking up to Heaven? This Jesus who is taken up from you to Heaven, shall so come, as you have seen him going into Heaven." (Acts 1:2).

Besides, without a divine revelation, the Assumption would not be capable of being defined a dogma of faith, since the motive of faith is the authority of God in revelation. A private revelation would not however be sufficient. Private revelations—those made to St. Joan of Arc, to St. Bernadette, to the little shepherds of La Salette, are examples of private revelations—could become well known and public in that sense. But they

are not public in the sense of being part of the common deposit of revelation and proposed infallibly by the Church to all the faithful. Neither would a revelation of the kind made to St. Margaret Mary be sufficient. For her revelations were private too, and did no more than to draw attention to certain practical consequences of what was already known to be an object of faith—the already accepted truth that the Sacred Heart of Jesus is entitled to adoration or the cult of latria.

Hence, that the Assumption should have been known as certain and capable of being proposed to the whole Church for acceptance, a public revelation must have been made to the Apostles, or at least to one of them —to St. John, for example. Note that this revelation must have been made to an Apostle since the deposit of common and public revelation was completed with the death of the last Apostle. It may have been made explicitly or implicitly. In this latter case its message would have become more explicit in the course of time.

Let us now see what we have to learn from Tradition, and also the theological arguments which have been commonly invoked, at least since the 7th century.

1st—The documents of Tradition show that the privilege was at least implicitly revealed.

It is not possible to prove directly from Sacred Scripture nor from primitive documents that the privilege of the Assumption was revealed explicitly to any of the Apostles, for no text of scripture affirms it explicitly, and there is a similar absence of explicit testimony in the primitive documents. But it can be proved indirectly from later documents that there was at least an implicit revelation since there are certain facts, dating from the 7th century, which are explicable in no other way.

From the 7th century, almost the whole Church, east and west, celebrated the Feast of the Assumption. Pope Sergius (687–707) ordered a solemn procession on that day. Many theologians and liturgists contend that it existed already before the time of St. Gregory the Great (d. 604) and they quote in support of their opinion the Collect of the Mass of the Assumption contained in the Sacramentary known as Gregorian (though it is probably later in date) where we read the words: “Nec tamen mortis nexibus deprimi potuit.” St. Gregory of Tours seems to imply that the Feast was celebrated in Gaul in the 6th century. At any rate, it was certainly celebrated there in the 7th century as is proved by the Missale Gothicum and the Missale

Gallicanum vetus, which date from the beginning of that century and contain very beautiful prayers for the Feast. (P. L., t. LXXII, col. 245–246.)

In the East the historian Nicephorus Callistus recounts that the Emperor Maurice (582–602), contemporary and friend of St. Gregory the Great, ordered the solemn celebration of the Feast on August 15th. The earliest testimony to the traditional faith of the East appears to be that of Saint Modestus, Patriarch of Jerusalem (d. 634), in his Encomium in dormitionem Deiparae (P. G., t. LXXXVI, col. 3288 sqq.). His account of the matter is that the Apostles were led to the

Blessed Virgin by a divine inspiration and were present at the Assumption. After him, mention must be made of St. Andrew of Crete (d. 720), monk in Jerusalem and later Archbishop of Crete, the author of the homilies In dormitionem Deiparae, of St. Germanus, Patriarch of Constantinople (d. 733), author of In sanctam Dei Genitricis dormitionem,, and finally of St. John Damascene (d. 760), author of In dormitionem beatae Mariae Virginis.

There is no shortage of testimonies from the 8th century on. Those commonly quoted are Notker of St. Gall, Fulbert of Chartres, St. Peter Damien, St. Anselm, Hildebert, Peter Abelard, St. Bernard, Richard of St. Victor, St. Albert the Great, St. Bonaventure and St. Thomas. The period between the 7th and the 9th centuries witnessed the development of the liturgy, theology, and preaching of the Assumption. Pope Leo IV instituted the octave of the Feast around the year 847. Authors then and in the succeeding periods regarded the object of the Feast not as a pious belief peculiar to this or that country, but as an integral part of the general tradition which went back in the Church to the earliest times. And not only the authors, but the Church herself voiced the same doctrine: the simple fact that the Church celebrated the Feast universally in East and West, usually on the 15th of August, shows that she considered the privilege of the Assumption to be a certain truth taught by her ordinary magisterium, that is to say, by all the bishops in union with the supreme pastor. For the faith of the Church is manifested in her prayer: Lex orandi, lex credendi. The doctrine of the Assumption has not yet been solemnly defined, but it is commonly asserted that it would be at least temerarious or erroneous to deny it. When some few authors proposed to change the Feast of the 15th of August, Benedict XIV answered: Ecclesiam hanc amplexam esse sententiam.

The attitude of the Church in regard to the doctrine is not therefore simply one of tolerance: she proposes it positively in the liturgy and in preaching both in the East and the West. This universal agreement of the whole Church in celebrating the solemn Feast shows that her ordinary magisterium is at work. But the ordinary magisterium presupposes at least that the doctrine has been implicitly revealed: otherwise, as we have seen, there could be no certainty that Mary had entered Heaven. And we may go further still and assert that it is probable that the revelation made to the Apostles, or to one of them, was even explicit, since otherwise it is hard to explain the universal tradition in the East and the West from the 7th century at the latest, which manifests itself in the celebration of the Feast. For if the revelation had been only implicit at the beginning, how could it happen that the different bishops and theologians in the different parts of the Church, both East and West, would agree that it was implicitly revealed? For such agreement much preliminary work and many preliminary councils would be required, of which there is absolutely no record. Neither is there any record of private revelations such as are sometimes made in order to set the Church's official investigations of the deposit of revelation in motion.

Up to the 6th century this privilege of Mary's was hidden behind a veil of silence, lest it be misunderstood through an unfortunate confusion with the fables concerning pagan goddesses. The principal contribution of the early centuries of the Church to Mariology was to establish her great title, "Mother of God," and eventually to define it in the Council of Ephesus.

Thus, we may conclude that everything tends to indicate that the privilege of the Assumption was explicitly revealed to the Apostles, or at least to one of them, and that it was transmitted subsequently by the oral tradition of the Liturgy; otherwise there is no explanation of the universal Feast of the Assumption, found so clearly from the 7th century on, by which time the Assumption itself was already the object of the ordinary magisterium of the Church.

2nd—The theological reasons usually adduced show that the Assumption is at least implicitly revealed.

These theological arguments, as well as the scriptural texts on which they are built, may be considered in two ways: abstractly—from which point of view many of them are mere arguments ex convenientia and are not demonstrative—and in the concrete—that is to say, as expressing concrete facts, the complexity and richness of which is learned from tradition. It is

well to note too that even the arguments ex convenientia may be considered from two points of view: either purely theoretically or as being themselves at least implicitly revealed and as having influenced the divine choice.

In this section we shall insist on two arguments which, taken as expressing Tradition, show that the privilege of the Assumption is implicitly revealed. As for the eminent dignity of the Mother of God, though this is the root reason of all Mary's privileges, it is not the proximate cause of her Assumption. Thus it seems to yield only an argument ex convenientia which is not demonstrative. The first of these two arguments runs as follows:

Mary received fullness of grace and was blessed by God among women in an exceptional way. But this exceptional blessing negatives the divine malediction to bring forth children in pain and to return to dust (Gen. 3:16-19). Mary was therefore preserved through it from corruption in her body: her body would not return to dust but would be resuscitated in an anticipated resurrection. Since the two premisses of this argument are revealed, the conclusion is, according to the teaching of most theologians, capable of being defined.

A thing to be noted in this argument is that the reasoning process in it is not precisely illative, but rather explicative since the divine malediction contains the "into dust thou shalt return" of Genesis not as a cause contains an effect but as a whole contains its parts: "Into dust thou shalt return" is a part of the divine malediction. Thus Mary, blessed among women, and not falling under the malediction, would not suffer the corruption of the tomb. The hour of the resurrection would be anticipated for her, and her glorious resurrection would be followed by the Assumption or elevation of her glorified body to Heaven. It is, then, clear that the privilege of the Assumption is contained implicitly revealed in the plenitude of grace and the exceptional blessing with which Mary was favored.

The second argument is no less cogent. It was put forward by the many fathers of the Vatican Council who asked for the definition of the dogma of the Assumption and was indicated by Pius IX in the Bull Ineffabilis Deus. The argument may be formulated thus:

Christ's perfect victory over Satan included victory over sin and death. But Mary, the Mother of God, was most intimately associated with Jesus on Calvary in His victory over Satan. Hence she was associated with Him in His victory over death by her anticipated resurrection and her Assumption.

In this argument, as in the first one, the premisses are both revealed, and the argument itself is explicative rather than illative: it turns on Christ's perfect victory which is a whole containing as its parts victory over sin and victory over death.

The major premiss is known to be revealed, as the Fathers of the Vatican Council stated, from many texts in the Epistles of St. Paul. Among texts from other books of the New Testament, we may mention a few from St. John's gospel. Jesus is "the Lamb of God . . . who taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29); He said of Himself "I have overcome the world" (John 16:33); shortly before His Passion He said "Now is the judgement of the world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself." (John 12:31–32). The sacrifice of the Cross offered in love, the acceptance of humiliation and a most painful death—these were the victory over Satan and sin. But death is a consequence of sin. Hence, He who had conquered Satan and sin on the Cross would conquer death by His glorious resurrection.

The minor premiss is revealed also—that is, that Mary, Mother of God, was associated as closely as possible on Calvary with Jesus' perfect victory over Satan. It is announced mysteriously in Genesis in the words addressed to Satan: "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head. . . ." And though that text alone would not suffice to establish the point, we have in addition Mary's words at the Annunciation" "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to Thy word . . ." uttered when she consented to be the Mother of the Redeemer. But she would not have been a worthy mother unless her will were perfectly conformed to the will of Him who was to offer Himself for us. Besides, Simeon told her of the sufferings to be borne: "And thy own soul a sword shall pierce. . . ." Last of all we read in St. John's gospel: "There stood by the Cross of Jesus, his mother, and his mother's sister." She shared in His sufferings, therefore, in the measure of her love for Him: so fully did she share that she is called Co-Redemptrix.

There is a very intimate connection between compassion and motherhood, for the deepest compassion is that of a mother, and Mary would not have been a worthy mother of the Redeemer had she been lacking in conformity of will with His redemptive oblation.

Since, therefore, Mary was associated very intimately with Jesus in His perfect victory over Satan, it follows that she was associated also with Him

in the different parts of His triumph, that is to say, in His victory over sin and over death, sin's consequence.

It could, perhaps, be objected that it would be enough were Mary associated in His victory over death by her final resurrection on the Last Day. To which the answer can be given that Mary was more closely associated than anyone else with Jesus in His perfect victory—or in the perfection of His victory—over Satan, and that perfect victory included exemption from bodily corruption, and, in consequence, anticipated resurrection and assumption into Heaven. As we read in the Collect of the Mass of the Assumption: "Mortem subiit temporalem, nec tamen mortis nexibus deprimi potuit. . . She died; but she was not retained captive by the bonds of death—a privilege accorded to no other saint, for even though the bodies of some saints are miraculously preserved from corruption, they are still in the bonds of death.

These two great theological arguments taken respectively from Mary's fullness of grace united to her special blessing, and her association with Jesus in His perfect victory, prove that the Assumption is implicitly revealed and capable of definition as an article of faith.

There are other theological arguments too which confirm the same conclusion, at least by way of proof ex convenientia. The love of Jesus for Mary can be appealed to as a reason why she should have been accorded the privilege. The excellent virginity of Mary seems to demand that her body, free from all stain of sin, should be free from the bonds of death, the consequence of sin. The Immaculate Conception calls for it also since death is a consequence of original sin from which Mary was preserved. It may also be added that there are no relics of Our Lady, which is a probable indication of her Assumption, body and soul, into Heaven.

Since the Assumption is contained at least implicitly in Revelation, it can be defined as an article of faith. The opportuneness of its definition is manifest, as Dom Renaudin says. For, from the doctrinal point of view, the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin along with the Ascension of Our Blessed Lord, crowns our faith in the objective completion of the work of the Redemption, and gives our hope a new guarantee. For their part, the faithful will derive from a solemn definition of the Assumption the advantage of being able to go beyond their adherence to the infallibility of the ordinary magisterium of the Church who has instituted the Feast, and to adhere immediately to the dogma on the authority of God who revealed it, in which

dogma they will find an arm against all those errors of our times—whether materialism, rationalism, or liberal Protestantism—which agree in minimising the faith in every possible way rather than to recognise that the gifts of God surpass our ideas of them. From the point of view of heretics and schismatics, the solemn definition will be a help rather than a hindrance, for it will make more manifest the power and goodness of Mary who has been given to men to lead them along the way of salvation. Finally, the just man lives by his faith. Hence he finds in the solemn definition of a revealed truth a form of spiritual nourishment which increases his faith, and strengthens his hope, and makes his charity more fervent.

Article 3

THE FINAL PLENITUDE OF GRACE IN HEAVEN

In this article we shall consider Mary's eternal beatitude: the beatific vision; the love of God and the joy which results from it; her elevation above the choirs of angels; her participation in Christ's Kingship and the consequences which follow from it.

MARY'S ESSENTIAL BEATITUDE

Mary's essential beatitude surpasses in intensity and extension that conferred on all the other blessed. This doctrine is theologically certain. Heavenly glory, or essential beatitude, is proportioned to the degree of grace or charity which precedes entry to Heaven. But Mary's initial fullness of grace surpassed the final grace of the highest saints and angels; and we have seen that it is probable, if not certain, that it surpassed their final graces united. It follows that Mary's essential beatitude surpasses that of all the saints taken together. In other words, Mary's beatific vision penetrates more deeply into the divine essence seen face to face than that of all the other blessed—exception being, of course, made for the beatified soul of Jesus.

It is true that the natural intellectual powers of the angels are greater than those of Mary, or even the human powers of Jesus. Nevertheless Mary's intuitive gaze of the divine essence is more piercing than theirs because of the much more intense lumen gloriae (light of glory) with which she is

enriched. The object of the beatific vision being essentially supernatural, greater natural powers confer no greater advantage in knowing it. In much the same way an unlettered Christian can have a greater infused faith and charity than a highly endowed and qualified theologian.

Not only does Mary know more of the essence of God in Heaven, but she knows more too of His wisdom, His love, His power, and she sees better the range of their extent both in the order of possible and of existing realities. Besides, since the blessed in Heaven see more things in God according as their mission is a more universal one, Mary, as Mother of God, Universal Mediatrix, Co-Redemptrix, Queen of Angels, Saints, and the whole universe, sees much more in God, in Verbo, than do the other blessed. Higher than her in glory is only her Divine Son. His human mind reads into the divine essence deeper than hers. He knows certain secrets which are hidden from her, for they pertain to Him only, the Saviour, the High Priest and the Universal King.

Mary comes immediately after Jesus in heavenly glory. That is why the liturgy affirms, on the Feast of the 15th of August, that she has been lifted up above the choirs of angels, and that she is at the right hand of her Son. (Ps. 44:10). According to St. Albert the Great, she constituted among the blessed an order apart, higher than the seraphim as they are higher than the cherubim: for the queen is as much higher than the first of her servants as they are higher than the last of their fellows.

Being Mother of God she participates more than anyone else in the glory of her Son. And since the divinity of Jesus is absolutely evident in Heaven, it is clear to the blessed that Mary belongs to the hypostatic order, that she has a special affinity to the divine Persons, and that she shares in a unique way in Jesus' universal kingship over all creatures. This is the doctrine of so many of the liturgical prayers: Ave Regina Coelorum . . . Regina Coeli . . . Salve Regina. It is found also in the Litanies: Queen of Angels . . . Queen of all saints. . . . And it is affirmed also in the passage we quoted earlier from the Bull Ineffabilis Deus. It is taught explicitly by St. Germanus of Constantinople, St. Modestus, St. John Damascene,24 St. Anselm (Orat. I), St. Bernard, St. Albert the Great, St. Thomas Aquinas, and all the doctors.

To Mary’s accidental beatitude contribute her more intimate knowledge of the glorious Humanity of Jesus, the exercise of her universal mediation and of her motherly mercy, and the cult of hyperdulia which she receives as Mother of God. She enjoys also in an eminent way the triple aureola of the martyrs, the confessors, and the virgins, for she suffered more than the martyrs during the Passion of her Son, she instructed the Apostles themselves in a private and intimate way, and she preserved virginity of soul and body in all its perfection. The glory of her body—which is a reflection of that of her soul—is of the same eminent degree.

Under all these respects Mary is raised above all the saints and angels, and it becomes increasingly evident that the reason and root cause of all her privileges is her eminent dignity as Mother of God.

PART II

Mary, Mother of all Men

Her Universal Mediation and Our Interior Life

INTRODUCTION TO PART II

Having considered the Blessed Virgin as Mother of God, and the fulness of grace which was given her that she might be God's worthy mother, it remains to speak of her relations with men. Tradition attributes to Mary three titles, Mother of the Redeemer, Mother of all men, and Mediatrix, to express her relations with men as yet on their way to eternity. In regard to the blessed she has especially the title, Universal Queen.

Theology teaches us that these titles correspond to those of Christ the Redeemer. He performed His redemptive work as Head of the humanity He was to regenerate, as First Mediator Who has the power by His priesthood to sacrifice and to sanctify, and to exercise teaching authority, and finally as Universal King, Who legislates for all men, judges the living and the dead, and governs all creatures not excluding the angels. Mary, in her quality of Mother of the Redeemer, is associated with Jesus in those three roles. She is associated with Him as Head of the Church by being spiritual Mother of all men; she is associated with Him as First Mediator by being a secondary and subordinate mediatrix; and she is associated with Him as Universal King by being Queen of the universe. That is Mary's triple mission to men which we are about to consider in this part of the book.

We shall speak first of Mary as Mother of the Redeemer and as Mother of all men; then of her universal mediation on earth and in heaven; finally of her universal queenship.

All these titles, but especially that of Mother of God, are the justification of the cult of hyperdulia of which we shall speak in the last place. At no time shall we endeavor to put forward original views, or those of individual authors—nor have we done that in the earlier part of the book—but rather will it be our aim to expose the common teaching of the Church, transmitted by the Fathers and explained by theologians. It is only on such a foundation that one can safely build.

Because of the method we have chosen, a superficial reader may think our treatment of the different questions banal or elementary. But it is well to

recall that the most elementary philosophical truths, such as the principles of causality and finality, and the most elementary religious truths, such as those contained in the Our Father, are found to be the most profound and vital when they are examined carefully and put into practice. In the present matter as elsewhere it is necessary to advance from what is known and certain to what is less well known, from what is easy to what is difficult; were one to embark on a premature consideration of more difficult problems, especially if they were presented in the form of dramatic and striking paradoxes, the result might be—as has happened to so many heretics—to end up by denying evident truths and obvious conclusions. The history of theology and philosophy shows that this is no fictitious danger. Finally it should not be forgotten that though in human matters, where truth and falsity, good and evil, are jumbled together, simplicity is superficiality and exposes one to error; in the things of God, where there is but the true and the good, simplicity alone will reveal the greatest heights and the most secret depths.

Chapter 1

THE MOTHER OF THE REDEEMER AND OF ALL MEN

These two titles are evidently connected. We shall consider them in the order indicated.

Article 1

THE MOTHER OF THE SAVIOUR ASSOCIATED WITH HIS REDEMPTIVE WORK

The Church calls Mary Mother of the Saviour as well as Mother of God. In the Litany of Loreto, for example, after the invocations, “Holy Mother of God,” and “Mother of the Creator,” we find the other, “Mother of the Saviour, pray for us.” Though some have thought the contrary, the fact of these two titles is no reason for believing that Mariology labors under the defect of a duality of distinct principles: “Mother of God” and “Mother of the Saviour, who is associated with His redemptive work.” Mariology is a unity, for Mary is “Mother of God the Redeemer or the Saviour.” In much the same way the two mysteries of the Incarnation and the Redemption do not take away from the unity of Christology, for its central point is the redemptive Incarnation. The motive of the Incarnation is sufficiently indicated in the Creed which says that the Son of God came down from Heaven for our salvation.

Let us now see how Mary became Mother of the Saviour by her consent, and how, as Mother of the Saviour, she was to be associated with His redemptive work.

MARY BECAME MOTHER OF THE SAVIOUR BY HER CONSENT

Mary gave her consent to the redemptive Incarnation when, on the day of the Annunciation, the angel said to her: “Thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus”—the name to be given to her Son meaning “saviour.” Mary was not ignorant of the Messianic prophecies—most particularly those of Isaias—which foretold the redemptive sufferings of the promised Saviour. Thus, when she uttered her fiat she accepted in advance for herself and for her Son all the sufferings which the redemption would involve.

She learned something still more explicit about them a few days later when Simeon spoke to her: “Behold this child is set for the fall, and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted; And thy own soul a sword shall pierce.” A little earlier he had spoken of Jesus as . . . thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples.” Mary, we are told, kept all these words in her heart. The divine plan became gradually clearer to her contemplative faith, lit up as it was by the illumination of the gift of understanding.

Mary therefore became freely Mother of the Redeemer in His role of Redeemer; she grew in her appreciation of the fact that the Son of God became Man for our salvation. She united herself to Jesus as only a mother, and a very holy mother, could in perfect oneness of love for God and souls. That was her way of fulfilling the great precept of the law—and what more perfect way could there be? Tradition is clear on Mary’s union with the Redeemer; it never tires of repeating that as Eve was united to the first man in the work of perdition Mary was united to the Redeemer in the work of redemption.

Mother of the Redeemer, she grew too in her appreciation of the manner of our redemption. It was sufficient for her to call to mind and meditate on the prophecies which all knew so well. (Isaias 53:1–12) announced the sufferings and humiliations of the Messiah, saying that they would be borne to expiate our sins by Him Who is innocence itself, and that by His Death He would justify many. She knew too David’s psalm (Ps. 21) “O God, my God, why has thou forsaken me?” describing the prayer of the Just One, His cry of anguish in His abandonment, and His confidence in Jahve, His apostolate and its effects in Israel and among the gentiles. There was finally Daniel’s prophecy of the Son of Man (Dan. 7:13–14) and of the power that would be given Him: “And he gave him power, and glory, and a kingdom: and all peoples, tribes, and tongues shall serve him: his power is an

everlasting power that shall not be taken away: and his kingdom, that shall not be destroyed." All Tradition has seen the Messiah promised as Redeemer in the Man of Sorrows of Isaias and the Son of Man of Daniel.

Mary, who was not ignorant of these prophecies, became therefore Mother of the Redeemer in His role of Redeemer at the Annunciation. From her consent "Be it done to me according to thy word" follows all the rest of her life, just as all Jesus' life followed from the consent He gave to His Father's will on entering the world: "Holocausts for sin did not please thee. Then said I: Behold I come to do thy will, O God." (Heb. 10:6–9). The Fathers could say that our salvation depended on Mary's consent, and that she conceived her Son spiritually before she conceived Him corporeally.

It may be objected that a divine decree such as that of the Incarnation could not depend on the consent of a creature who was free not to give it. To this theology answers that God has efficaciously willed and infallibly foreseen everything that will happen in the course of time. Therefore, He willed efficaciously and foresaw infallibly Mary's consent to the realization of the mystery of the Incarnation. From all eternity God, who works with strength and gentleness, decided to give Mary the efficacious grace which would move her to consent freely and meritoriously. Just as He makes the trees to bear their blossoms, so He makes our wills to produce their free acts; and far from doing them any violence He is the author of their freedom, for that too is a reality, a form of being. The "how" of all this is the secret of God Omnipotent. Just as Mary conceived the Saviour by the operation of the Holy Ghost without losing her virginity, so she uttered her fiat infallibly under the motion of efficacious grace without prejudice to her complete liberty—rather did her will, under the divine motion, flower spontaneously into the free consent she gave in the name of all mankind.

Mary's fiat belonged entirely to God as First Cause and entirely to Mary as secondary cause. In it we find a perfect example of what St. Thomas speaks of (Ia, q. 19, a. 8): "Since the will of God is supremely efficacious it follows that not only do the things that God wills (efficaciously) happen, but that they happen in the way in which He wills. But it is His will that some things should happen of necessity and others freely." By her fiat, then, Mary became voluntarily the Mother of the Redeemer.

Tradition recognizes that Mary consented to be Mother of the Redeemer in His redemptive role by calling her the New Eve. The first Eve, by consenting to temptation, led the first man to commit the sin which lost

original justice for mankind. Mary is the New Eve by her consent to be the Mother of the Redeemer for the sake of the work of redemption.

Some non-Catholics have objected that Mary's parents could equally well have been entitled father or mother of the Redeemer and regarded as associated with Him in the work of redemption. It is not hard to find an answer to this objection. Mary alone received the light required for the consent of which we speak. Her parents did not know that the Messiah would be born of their family. St. Anne could not foresee that her child would be the mother of the Messiah.

HOW WAS THE MOTHER OF THE REDEEMER TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH HIS WORK?

According to what the Fathers of the Church tell us about Mary as the New Eve whom many saw foretold in the words of Genesis, it is common and certain doctrine, and even fidei proxima, that the Blessed Virgin, Mother of the Redeemer, is associated with Him in the work of redemption as secondary and subordinate cause, just as Eve was associated with Adam in the work of man's ruin.

The doctrine of Mary as the second Eve was universally accepted in the 2nd century. The Fathers who taught it then did not regard it as the fruit of personal speculation but as the traditional doctrine of the Church supported by the words of St. Paul which describe Jesus as the second Adam and oppose Him to the first as the Author of salvation to the author of the fall. (2 Cor. 15:45 sqq.; Rom. 5:12 sqq.; 1 Cor. 15: 20–23). They fitted St. Paul's words into the context of Genesis' account of the fall, the promise of the redemption, and the victory over the demon, as well as St. Luke's account of Mary's consent at the Annunciation. It is necessary therefore to regard the doctrine of Mary as the second Eve, associated with the redemptive work of her Son, as a divinoapostolic tradition.

The Fathers who speak most explicitly of this matter are St. Justin, St. Irenaeus, Tertullian, St. Cyprian, Origen, St. Cyril of Jerusalem, St. Ephrem, St. Epiphanius, St. John Chrysostom, St. Proclus, St. Jerome, St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, St. Basil, St. Germanus of Constantinople, St. John Damascene, St. Anselm, St. Bernard. In later times the theologians of the middle ages and of our own day have maintained the same doctrine.

What, according to Tradition, is the sense in which Mary, the New Eve, was associated with the work of redemption?

It was not merely by having conceived the Redeemer physically, by having given Him birth and nourished Him, but rather was her association moral, through her free, salutary, and meritorious acts. Eve contributed morally to the fall by yielding to the temptation of the devil, by disobedience, and by leading up to Adam's sin; Mary, on the contrary, co-operated morally in our redemption by her faith in Gabriel's words, and by her free consent to the mystery of the redemptive Incarnation and to all the sufferings it entailed for her Son and for herself.

Clearly, Mary is not the principal and perfective cause of the Redemption: she could not redeem us in justice, de condigno, since for that a theandric act of infinite value which could belong only to an incarnate Divine Person was required. But she is really a secondary cause of salvation, dispositive, and subordinate to Jesus. She is said to be subordinated to Jesus not merely in the sense that she is inferior to Him, but also in the sense that she concurred in saving us by a grace which proceeded from His merits, and therefore acted in Him, with Him, and by Him. We must never forget that Jesus is the Universal Mediator. He redeemed Mary by preserving her from original sin. Similarly, it is through Him that she contributed to saving us. She is not the perfective cause of salvation, but a dispositive one, disposing us to undergo the action of her Son, who it is achieves our salvation and is our Redeemer.

Mary's association with Jesus in the redemption is therefore not like that of the Apostles, but is something still more intimate. That is what St. Albert the Great formulated so happily when he said: "The Blessed Virgin Mary was chosen by God not to be His minister but to be His consort and His helper—in consortium et adjutorium—according to the words of Genesis: Let us make him a help like to himself." (Mariale, q. 42).

We can now see that the unity of Mariology does not suffer from the defect of having two distinct principles. There is one principle which dominates it: Mary is Mother of God the Redeemer and is by that fact associated to His work. In the same way, the two mysteries of the Incarnation and the Redemption do not constitute a duality so as to take from the unity of Christology, for they find themselves united in the idea of the redemptive Incarnation; and their union in it is expressed in the Creed in the words " . . . qui propter nos homines et propter nostram salutem descendit de caelis, et incarnatus est."

Jesus' natural sonship of God or His grace of hypostatic union is greater than His fulness of created grace and our redemption. In the same way Mary's motherhood of God is greater than her fulness of grace which overflows on us, as has been shown in the first chapter of this book. The unity of theological knowledge contributes to its certainty, since, because of its unity, it uses subordinated and not co-ordinated principles. All the different treatises, too, which go to make it up are subordinated in their totality to some supreme truth.

Article 2

THE MOTHER OF ALL MEN

Tradition ascribes to Mary the titles Mother of Divine Grace, Mother most amiable, Mother most admirable, Mother of Mercy. The Fathers have often spoken of Mary as Mother of all Christians, and even as Mother of all men. In what sense is this maternity to be understood? When did Mary become our Mother? How does her maternity affect all the faithful, even those who are not in the state of grace, and all men, even those who have not the true faith? These are the questions we shall try to answer in this section.

IN WHAT SENSE IS MARY OUR MOTHER?

Evidently Mary is not our mother in the ordinary sense of the term since she did not give us natural life. Considering our natural life, it is Eve who deserves to be called the mother of all men. Mary is our mother rather in a spiritual sense and through adoption, for, by her union with Jesus the Redeemer, she has communicated to us the supernatural life of grace. She is very much more than a sister in grace: we say, on the analogy of natural life, that she has given us birth to a divine form of life. St. Paul could say, speaking to the Corinthians, "In Christ Jesus, by the gospel, I have begotten you." (1 Cor. 4:15). With still more truth can we speak of Mary's spiritual maternity—a maternity which is source of a life destined to endure not sixty or eighty years, but all eternity.

Mary's maternity is adoptive, as is God's fatherhood of the just. It is, however, much more intimate and fruitful than in ordinary human adoption.

Human adoption constitutes a person legally the child and heir of another. But all this is in the legal order; and even though it is a sign of the affection bestowed on the adopted child, it does not produce any interior change in it. Divine adoption, on the contrary, produces sanctifying grace in the soul of the just, thereby making it to participate in the divine nature and to have within itself the germ of eternal life. The soul which is endowed thus with grace is agreeable in God's eyes and is His child, called to know Him face to face and to love Him for all eternity. St. John speaks of this in his prologue when he describes those who believe in the Son of God made man as "Who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John 1:13). Mary's maternity participates in the fruitfulness or fecundity of the divine Paternity: in union with the Redeemer, she has truly and really communicated to us grace, the germ of eternal life. She can therefore be called Mother of grace, Mother of mercy. That is what the Fathers meant when they called her the New Eve, and said that she had co-operated voluntarily in our salvation as Eve had cooperated in our fall.

The points of doctrine just outlined are found in the Church's preaching from the 2nd century on. The references are the same as those given a short while ago in connection with the doctrine of the New Eve. St. Ephrem, in the 4th century, is a particularly eloquent witness. He calls Mary "Mother of life and of salvation, Mother of the living and of all men" since she gave us the Saviour and united herself to Him on Calvary. Similar expressions are found in St. Germanus of Constantinople, St. Peter Chrysologus, Eadmer, St. Bernard, Richard of St. Laurence, St. Albert the Great who calls Mary "Mater misericordiae, Mater regenerations, totius humani generis mater spiritualis," and in St. Bonaventure.

Every day the liturgy repeats: "Hail holy Queen, Mother of mercy . . . Show thyself a mother . . . Hail, Mother of mercy, Mother of God and Mother of pardon, Mother of hope and Mother of grace."

WHEN DID MARY BECOME OUR MOTHER?

The different texts we have quoted indicate that Mary became our mother by consenting freely to be the Mother of the Saviour, the Author of grace and of our spiritual regeneration. By that act she conceived us spiritually and would have been our adoptive mother as its result even had she died

before her Son. But that was not to be. Instead she lived on to unite herself to Jesus in the sacrifice of the Cross and by that great act of faith, hope and love of God and souls, she became our mother in a still more perfect way and contributed more directly, more intimately, and more profoundly to our salvation. Besides, it was on Calvary that Jesus proclaimed Mary our mother, when He addressed to Mary the words: “Woman, behold thy son,” and to St. John, who personified all the redeemed, the words: “Behold thy mother.” Tradition has always understood the words in that sense: they do not refer to a grace peculiar to St. John alone, but go beyond him to all who are to be regenerated by the Cross.

The words of the dying Saviour, like sacramental words, produce what they signify: in Mary’s soul they produced a great increase of charity and of maternal love for us; in John a profound filial affection, full of reverence for the Mother of God. There is the origin of devotion to Mary.

Mary continues to exercise her motherly functions in our regard by watching over us so that we grow in charity and persevere in it, by interceding for us and by distributing to us all the graces we receive.

WHAT IS THE EXTENSION OF MARY’S MATERNITY?

She is first of all Mother of the faithful, of those who believe in her Son and receive through Him the life of grace. But she is also Mother of all men, since she gave the world the Saviour of all men and since she united herself to the oblation of her Son Who offered His precious blood for all. This is what has been affirmed by Popes Leo XIII, Benedict XV, and Pius XI.

She is not the Mother of all men in a general way, as may be affirmed of Eve in the natural order, but of each man in particular, for she intercedes for each and obtains for each all the graces he receives. Jesus says of Himself that He is the Good Shepherd who “calleth his own sheep by name.” (John 10:3). Something the same may be said of Mary who is the mother of each individual man.

However, Mary is not Mother of the faithful and of infidels, of the just and sinners, in exactly the same way. The distinctions which are made in regard to the members of Christ’s Mystical Body must be made here also. Mary is Mother of infidels in that she is destined to engender them to grace, and in that she obtains for them the actual graces which dispose them for

the faith and for justification. She is Mother of the faithful who are in the state of mortal sin, in that she watches over them by obtaining for them the graces necessary for acts of faith and hope, and for disposing themselves for justification. Of those who have died in the state of mortal sin, she is no longer the mother: she was their mother. She is fully the Mother of the just, since they have received sanctifying grace and charity through her. She cares for them with tender solicitude so that they may continue in grace and grow in charity. She is in an eminent way the Mother of the blessed who can no longer lose the life of grace.

All this makes clear the meaning of what the Church sings every day at Compline: Hail, Holy Queen, Mother of mercy; Hail, our life, our sweetness, and our hope. To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve. To thee do we send up our sighs in this vale of tears . . .

St. Grignon de Montfort has explained the consequences of this doctrine very beautifully in his Treatise on True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin, ch. 1, art. 1, no. 2: God wishes to make use of Mary for the sanctification of souls. He sums up thus in the Secret of Mary (First Part: Why Mary is necessary for us):

“She it is who has given life to the Author of grace, and on that account she is called Mother of grace. In giving her His Son, God the Father, from whom all good things descend, gave her all graces: as St. Bernard says, God’s will is given her in Him and with Him.

“God has chosen her to be treasurer and dispensatrix of all His graces. All His graces and all His gifts pass by her hands. . . . Since Mary has formed the Head of the predestined, Jesus Christ, it pertains to her to form also the members of the Head, who are the true Christians. . . . She has received from God a special power to nourish souls and to make them grow in Him. St. Augustine goes so far as to say that the predestined in this world are enclosed in Mary’s womb and that they come to the light only when their good Mother brings them forth to eternal life. It is to her that the Holy Ghost has said ‘Take root in my elect’ (.Eccl. 24:13)—roots of profound humility, of ardent charity and of all the virtues.

“Mary is called by St. Augustine, and is in fact, the living mould of God —forma Dei. In her was the Man–God formed . . . and in her alone can man become deiform. Whoever is in this mould and allows himself to be shaped there, takes on the appearance of Jesus Christ, true God, in a manner adapted to his human weakness, without excess of pain and labor. This is a

sure way, without danger of illusion, for Satan never had and never will have power over Mary, holy and immaculate, stainless and sinless.

"What a difference there is between a soul formed in Jesus by the method of those who, like sculptors, rely on their art and their industry, and a soul which, relying in nothing on itself, and freed from all attachments and submissive in all things, throws itself into Mary's hands, there to be shaped by the action of the Holy Ghost. What stains, what defects, what darkness, what illusions, what an amount of the merely natural there is in the first soul, and how the second one is pure, divine, and like to Jesus . . . !

"A thousand times happy is the soul to whom the Holy Ghost reveals the secret of Mary and to whom

He opens this enclosed garden. That soul will find God alone in that most lovable creature—God infinitely holy and infinitely condescending, yet proportioned to its weakness. . . . God lives in her and, far from causing souls to rest in herself, she leads them to God and unites them to Him."

Thus Christian doctrine becomes the object of a penetrating faith for St. Grignon de Montfort, of a contemplation which issues in a true and strong charity.

MARY, EXEMPLARY CAUSE OF THE ELECT

Jesus is our model. His predestination to natural divine sonship is the exemplary cause of our predestination to adoptive sonship for "whom he foreknew he also predestined to be made conformable to the image of his Son; that he might be the first-born among many brethren." (Rom. 8:29). Similarly Mary our Mother, associated with her Son, is the exemplary cause of the life of the elect. It is in that sense that St. Augustine and St. Grignon de Montfort after him say that she is the mould or the model according to which God forms the elect. One must be marked with Mary's seal and reproduce her characteristics to have a place among those loved by Our Lord—which is the reason why theologians teach commonly that a true devotion to Mary is one of the signs of predestination. Blessed Hugh of Saint-Cher even says that she is, as it were, the book of life, or the mirror of that eternal book, since God has written in her the names of all the elect, just as He willed to form, in her and by her, Jesus Who is the First of the elect.

St. Grignon de Montfort writes: “God the Son said to His Mother ‘Let thy inheritance be in Israel.’ (Eccl. 24:13). It is as if He had said: God, My Father, has given Me for heritage all the nations of the earth, all men good and evil, predestined and reprobate; I shall lead some by a rod of gold and others by a rod of iron; I shall be the father and advocate of some, the just chastiser of others, and the judge of all; but you, My dear Mother, you shall have for your heritage only the predestined who are prefigured by Israel, and as their mother, you will give them birth, nourish and rear them; as their Queen you will lead, govern and protect them.”

It is in that same sense that we must understand the words of St. Grignon de Montfort a little further on in the same work, when showing that Mary, like Jesus, makes her choice always in accordance with the divine good pleasure: “The Most High has made her His treasurer and the dispenser of His favors, to ennoble, raise up, and enrich whom she wills, to allow whom she wills to enter on the narrow way of Heaven, to make whom she wills pass through the narrow gate of life in spite of everything, and to give the throne, the sceptre, and the kingly crown to whom she will. To Mary alone has God given the keys of the cellars of divine love, and the power to enter on the highest and most secret ways of perfection and to lead others thereto.”

Those words make clear the scope of Mary’s spiritual maternity by which she forms the elect and leads them to the term of their predestination.

Chapter 2

MARY’S UNIVERSAL MEDIATION DURING HER EARTHLY EXISTENCE

We shall see first of all in what this mediation consists and what are its principal characteristics. After that we shall examine the two ways in which Mary exercised her mediation during her life on earth, by her merits and her satisfaction.

Article 1

MARY’S UNIVERSAL MEDIATION IN GENERAL

Our Holy Mother the Church approved during the pontificate of Benedict XV the proper Mass and Office of Mary, Mediatrix of all Graces. Many theologians consider that the doctrine of Mary’s universal mediation is sufficiently contained in the deposit of revelation to be one day proposed solemnly as an object of faith by the infallible Church. It is taught by the ordinary magisterium of the Church through the liturgy, through encyclical letters, through pastoral letters, in preaching, and in the works of theologians approved by the Church. Let us see first what is meant by this mediation and then enquire if it is affirmed by tradition and proved by theology.

WHAT IS MEANT BY MARY’S UNIVERSAL MEDIATION?

St. Thomas says, speaking of the mediation of the Saviour (Ilia, q. 26, a. I): “It pertains to the office of a mediator between God and men to unite them.” That is, as he explains in the following article, the mediator offers to God the prayers of men, and most particularly, sacrifice which is the

principal act of the virtue of religion, and distributes as well to men God's sanctifying gifts, light from on high and grace. There is, thus, a double movement in mediation: one upwards in the form of prayer and sacrifice, and the other downwards in the form of God's gifts to men.

The office of mediator belongs fully only to Jesus, the Man-God, Who alone could reconcile us with God by offering Him, on behalf of men, the infinite sacrifice of the Cross, which is perpetuated in Holy Mass. He alone, as Head of Mankind, could merit for us in justice the grace of salvation and apply it to those who do not reject His saving action. It is as man that He is mediator, but as a Man in Whom humanity is united hypostatically to the Word and endowed with the fulness of grace, the grace of Headship, which overflows on men. As St. Paul puts it: "For there is one God, and one mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus: who gave Himself for a redemption for all, a testimony in due times." (1 Tim. 2:5–6).

But, St. Thomas adds (loc. cit.): "there is no reason why there should not be, after Christ, other secondary mediators between God and men, who co-operate in uniting them in a ministerial and dispositive manner." Such mediators dispose men for the action of the principal Mediator, or transmit it, but always in dependence on His merits.

The prophets and priests of the Old Testament were mediators of this kind, for they announced the Saviour to the chosen people by offering sacrifices which were types of the great sacrifice of the Cross. The priests of the New Testament may also be spoken of as mediators between God and men, for they are the ministers of the supreme Mediator, offering sacrifice in His Name, and administering the sacraments.

The question arises, is Mary, in subordination to and in dependence on the merits of Christ, universal mediatrix for all men from the time of the coming of the Saviour, in regard to obtaining and distributing all graces, both in general and in particular? Does it not appear that she is? Nor is her role precisely that of a minister, but that of an associate in the redemptive work, in the words of St. Albert already quoted.

Though non-catholics answer the question with a denial, the Christian sense of the faithful, formed for years by the liturgy, which is one of the voices of the ordinary magisterium of the Church, has no hesitation in maintaining that, by the very fact of her being Mother of the Redeemer, all the indications are that Mary is universal mediatrix, for she finds herself

placed between God and men, and more particularly between her Son and men.

Since she is a creature she is, of course, altogether below God Incarnate. But at the same time she is raised far above men by the grace of the divine maternity, which is of the hypostatic order, and by the fulness of grace which she received even from her Immaculate Conception. Hence, the mediation attributed by the liturgy and the Christian sense of the faithful to Mary is, strictly speaking, subordinated to that of Jesus and not co-ordinated; her mediation depends completely on the merits of the Universal Mediator. Nor is her mediation necessary (for that of Jesus is superabundant and needs no complement): it has however been willed by God as a kind of radiation of the Saviour's mediation, and of all radiations the most perfect. The Church regards it as most useful and efficacious to obtain from God all that we need to lead us directly or indirectly to salvation and perfection. Last of all, Mary's mediation is perpetual and extends to all men, and to all graces without any exception whatever.

The above is the precise sense in which universal mediation is attributed to Mary in the liturgy, in the

Feast of Mary Mediatrix, and by the theologians who have recently treated the question at great length.

THE TESTIMONY OF TRADITION

Mary's mediation was affirmed in a general and implicit way from the earliest centuries by the use of the titles, the New Eve, the Mother of the Living. There is all the more reason for so understanding tradition in that the titles were attributed to her not solely because she gave birth physically to the Saviour but because she co-operated morally in His redemptive work, especially by uniting herself very intimately to the sacrifice of the Cross. From the 4th century onwards, and notably in the 5th century, the Fathers affirm clearly that Mary intercedes for us, that all the benefits and helps to salvation come to us through her, by her intervention and her special protection. From the same time too she is called mediatrix between God and men or between Christ and us. Recent studies have thrown much light on this point.

The antithesis between Eve, cause of death, and Mary, cause of salvation for all men is repeated by St. Cyril of Jerusalem, St. Epiphanius, St. Jerome,

St. John Chrysostom. The following invocation of St. Ephrem deserves to be quoted in full: “Hail, most excellent mediatrix of God and men, hail most efficacious reconciler of the whole world.”

St. Augustine speaks of Mary as mother of all the members of our Head, Jesus Christ. He tells us that by her charity she co-operated in the spiritual birth of all the faithful who are Christ’s members. St. Peter Chrysologus says that Mary is the mother of all the living by grace whereas Eve is the mother, by nature, of all the dying. It is evident that he considers Mary as associated with the divine plan for our redemption.

From the 8th century we may quote the Venerable Bede. St. Andrew of Crete calls Mary Mediatrix of grace, dispenser and cause of life. St. Germanus of Constantinople says that no one has been saved without the co-operation of the Mother of God. The title of mediatrix is given by St. John Damascene also, who asserts that we owe to her all the benefits conferred on us by Jesus.

In the 9th century we find St. Peter Damien teaching that nothing is accomplished in the work of our redemption without her. The teaching of St. Anselm, Eadmer, and St. Bernard in the 12th century is the same. St. Bernard speaks of Mary as: gratiae inventrix, mediatrix, salutis restauratrix saeculorum.

From the middle of the 12th century the explicit affirmation of Mary’s co-operation in our redemption becomes quite common. Her co-operation is looked on as consummated by her consent to her sacrifice at the Annunciation, and its accomplishment on Calvary. Among names that may be cited are those of Arnold of Chartres, Richard of St. Victor, St. Albert the Great, and Richard of Saint-Laurent. St. Thomas seems to be of the same opinion. It is found quite explicitly in St. Bernadine of Siena, St. Antonine, Suarez, Bossuet, and St. Alphonsus. St. Grignon de Montfort is one of those who, in the 18th century, did the most to spread the doctrine by bringing out its practical conclusions.

In the encyclical Ad Diem Ilium, Pius X stated that Mary is the all-powerful mediatrix of the world before her Son: “Totius terrarum orbis potentissima apud Unigenitum Filium suum mediatrix et conciliatrix.” The title of mediatrix has been consecrated by the institution of the feast of Mary, Mediatrix of all graces, on January 21st, 1921.

The theological arguments invoked by the Fathers and still more explicitly by theologians are principally the following:

Mary deserves the title of universal mediatrix, subordinated to the Redeemer, if she is an intermediary between Him and men, presenting to Him their prayers and obtaining benefits from Him for them. But that is precisely Mary's role. For, though a creature, she reaches by her divine maternity to the frontiers of the divinity, and she has received a fulness of grace which is intended to overflow on us. She has, too, cooperated in saving us by consenting freely to be the Mother of the Saviour and by uniting herself as intimately as possible to His sacrifice. We shall see later that she has merited and made satisfaction for us, and we know from the teaching of the Church that she continues to intercede for us so as to obtain for us all graces that contribute to our salvation. These different offices pertain to the exercise of her maternity, as we have already seen.

Thus Jesus is the principal and perfect Mediator, in dependence on Whose merits—and they are superabundant and sufficient of themselves—Mary exercises her subordinate mediation. But Mary's mediation has nevertheless been willed by God because of our weakness and because God wished to honor her by allowing her the exercise of causality in the order of salvation and sanctification.

The work of redemption proceeds therefore entirely from God as First Cause of grace, entirely from Jesus as principal and perfect Mediator, and entirely from Mary as subordinate mediatrix. These three causes are not partial and co-ordinate—as are three men who drag the same load—but total and subordinated: the second acts under the influence of the first, and the third under the influence of the second. An example which may make the point clear is that of the fruit which proceeds entirely from God the Author of nature, entirely from the tree, and entirely from the branch on which it grows. It does not proceed in its different parts from different causes: neither is our redemption the work in part of the Divinity, in part of the Humanity, and in part of Mary. It is worth noting how becoming it is that Mary who was redeemed by the Saviour in a most excellent manner and preserved from all sin, original and actual, should co-operate in this way in our justification and our final perseverance.

Mary's mediation is of a much higher order than that of the saints, for she alone has given us the Saviour, she alone was so intimately united to the sacrifice of the Cross, she alone is universal mediatrix for all mankind and

(as we shall see later) for all graces in particular—even for that grace which is of all the most particular, the grace of the present moment which assures our fidelity from instant to instant.

We shall grasp this universality better when we shall have seen that Mary merited de congruo everything that Jesus merited in strict justice, that she made satisfaction (ex convenientia) for us in union with Him, and that as regards the application of the fruits of the redemption, she continues to intercede for each one of us, and more particularly for those who invoke her, so that of all the particular graces granted to us, none are granted de facto without her intervention.

Article 2

MARY'S MERITS FOR US

NATURE AND EXTENT OF HER MERITS

The exercise of her functions as universal mediatrix was not confined for Our Lady to the period of her glory in heaven: she exercised them on earth, as far as the acquisition of grace was concerned, by co-operating in our redemption by her merits and her satisfaction. In that she followed the example of Jesus Who was Mediator during His life on earth, most of all by His death on Calvary: in fact, His mediation on earth was the foundation of His mediation in heaven, whence, by His intercession, He transmits to us the fruits of His sacrifice.

THE THREE KINDS OF MERIT

Merit in general means a right to a reward: the meritorious act confers a right to a reward even though it does not itself produce it. Supernatural merit—which presupposes habitual grace and charity—is a right to a supernatural reward. It is distinguished from satisfaction, which has as purpose to expiate the insult offered the Divine majesty by sin and to render God once more propitious. It is distinguished also from prayer, for even a sinner in the state of mortal sin can pray with the help of actual grace. Besides, unlike merit, prayer appeals not to the divine justice but to the divine mercy. Even when a person is in the state of grace the meritorious

value of his prayer should be distinguished from its value considered precisely as prayer. Considered as prayer—that is, from the point of view of impetratory value—it can obtain grace, such as that of final perseverance, which cannot be merited in the strict sense of the term.

There are three kinds of merit. The highest kind, which was that of the Incarnate Word, is merit which is perfectly and fully worthy of a reward, perfecte de condigno: the act of charity of the God-Man, since it is the act of a divine Person, is at least equal in value to the reward, even when evaluated in strict justice. Even when the reward was not for Himself, but for us, Jesus could still merit it in strict justice since He was Head of the human race through the fulness of grace which had been given Him that we might all receive of it.

The second kind of merit is that of the person in the state of grace. It is a dogma of faith that every person in the state of grace and endowed with the use of reason and free will, and who is as yet a member of the Church militant, can merit an increase of charity and of eternal life with a merit commonly termed de condigno. The force of the term (which may be translated literally “of worthiness”) is that such a person is capable of performing acts which are really worthy of a supernatural reward, not in the sense that they are fully equal in value to it, but in the sense that they are proportionate to it since they proceed from habitual grace which is the germ or beginning of that eternal life which God has promised to those who keep His commandments. Merit de condigno is a right in distributive justice, though not in the full rigor of justice. The connection between merit de condigno and justice throws light on certain texts of scripture such as those in which eternal life is spoken of as a crown of justice (2 Tim. 4:8), a retribution made according to each one’s work (Rom. 2:6–7), or the recompense of a labor which God could not pass over. (Heb. 6:19).

A person in the state of grace cannot, however, merit grace de condigno for another—for example, the conversion of a sinner or another’s advance in charity. The reason is that Christ alone has been constituted Head of the human race to regenerate men and to lead them to salvation. In other words the merit de condigno of the just, and even of Mary, is incommunicable. One person can, however, merit grace for another by a lower kind of merit —that known as de congruo proprie, or merit of becomingness. Merit de congruo is founded on charity or friendship with God rather than on justice: theologians say that it is founded on the rights of friendship, in jure

amicabili. St. Thomas explains it thus: “since a man in the state of grace does God’s will, it is in keeping with the proprieties (or rights) of friendship that God should do his will in saving another person (for his sake)—although it can happen that at times there will be an obstacle on the side of the other person.” In this way, a good Christian mother, for example can, by her good works, her love of God and of her neighbour, merit the conversion of her son de congruo proprie. St. Monica obtained the conversion of St. Augustine by that kind of merit as well as by her prayers: “The son of so many tears,” said St. Ambrose, “could not be lost.”

This third kind of merit is that of Mary in our regard. It should be noted that it is merit in the proper sense of the term since it is founded on the rights of friendship and presupposes the state of grace in the person meriting. The reason why it is truly and properly merit, and not something else or something less, is that the idea of merit is analogical, and admits therefore of differing senses which bear some proportion to one another. Thus there are, lower than the merits of Christ, and lower than the merits whereby the just man merits for himself, the merits de congruo proprie, founded not on the rights of strict equality of justice, nor even on the rights of distributive justice, but on the rights of friendship.

There is a fourth member of the merit group which is merit in an improper sense of the term. It is that of the sinner in the state of mortal sin who prays to God under the impulse of an actual grace. His prayer has impetratory value; it addresses itself to God’s mercy and not to His justice, and it is founded not on the rights of friendship but on the actual grace which moves the sinner to pray. It is merit de congruo improprie—merit of becomingness in the wide or improper sense.

MARY’S MERIT DE CONGRUO FOR US

Once the nature of merit de congruo has been explained, it is at once evident that Mary could merit for us de congruo just as any mother can merit for her children. Hence, it is in no way astonishing that from the 16th century on theologians have taught that Mary merited for us de congruo proprie all that Jesus merited for us de condigno. Suarez is very explicit. He shows, by appealing to a wide tradition, that though Mary merited nothing for us de condigno, since she was not constituted head of the Church, she co-operated in our salvation by her merits de congruo. John of Cartagena,

Novatus, Chr. de Vega, Theophile Raynaud, George of Rhodes, all teach the same as Suarez. Later theologians follow this teaching also. Among the 19th and 20th century theologians the following may be mentioned: Ventura, Scheeben, Terrien, Billot, Lepicier, Campana, Hugon, Bittremieux, Merkelbach, Friethoff, and all those who have written in recent years on the universal mediation of the Blessed Virgin.

We may conclude this list of authorities with the words of Pius X in his encyclical Ad Diem Ilium, Feb. 2nd, 1904: "Mary . . . since she surpasses all creatures in holiness and union with Christ, and since she has been associated by Him with the work of salvation, has merited for us de congruo, as it is termed, all that Christ merited for us de condigno, and is the principal minister in the distribution of graces."

As has been remarked there is a double difference between Mary's merit de congruo for others and that of ordinary souls in the state of grace. The first difference is that Mary merited all graces, and not some only, in that way. The second is that she merited the acquisition of grace as well as its application, since, by her union with Jesus on Calvary, she had a share in the act of redemption itself even before interceding for us in Heaven.

The doctrine expressed by Pius X in the words quoted just now are merely an application to Mary of the commonly received doctrine regarding the nature and condition of merit de congruo proprie. Some theologians look on it as morally certain; others as a certain theological conclusion; others as a truth formally and implicitly revealed and capable of being defined as a dogma of faith. In our opinion, it is at least a certain theological conclusion. We shall return to the point later (pp. 207–214).

WHAT IS THE EXTENSION OF MARY'S MERIT FOR US?

To answer this question it is enough to recall what Jesus has merited for us, since Mary has been associated with Him in the whole work of redemption and since the theologians—and their teaching has the authority of Pius X to support it—teach in general that Mary merited de congruo all that Jesus merited for us de condigno, But Jesus merited injustice all the graces required that all men should really be enabled to observe the commandments, even though in point of fact they do not observe them. He merited also all efficacious graces and their effects—that is to say, the effective accomplishment by men of the divine will. He merited finally for

the elect all the effects of their predestination: their Christian vocation, their justification, their final perseverance, and their eternal glory.

It follows that Mary has merited all these same graces de congruo and that she asks for their application now in Heaven and distributes them.

The foregoing points show in what an elevated, intimate and all-embracing manner Mary is our spiritual mother, Mother of all men. We can suspect too what her care must be for those who are not content to invoke her at distant intervals but who consecrate themselves to her that she may lead them to intimacy with Jesus, as St. Grignon de Montfort explains so admirably in the following extract from his Treatise on True Devotion.

Treatise, Ch. I, a. 2: “Mary is necessary for men that they may arrive at their final end. (Devotion to Mary is not therefore a work of supererogation, as is devotion to any particular saints: it is necessary, and when it is true, faithful and persevering, it is a sign of predestination.) That devotion is still more necessary for those who are called to special perfection, and I do not think it possible that anyone can arrive at intimate union with Our Blessed Lord and perfect fidelity to the Holy Ghost without a great spirit of union with Our Blessed Lady and of dependence on her assistance . . . I have said that this will happen especially towards the end of the world . . . because then the Most High and His Holy Mother will need to form great saints. . . . These saints great, full of grace and zeal, will be chosen to oppose the enemies of God who will rage on every side, and they will be singularly devout to Our Lady, enlightened by her, nourished by her, led by her spirit, sustained by her and kept under her protection, in such wise that they fight with one hand and build with the other. . . . That will arouse many enemies, but it will also yield many victories and much glory to God.”

This noble spiritual doctrine, the fruits of which we see daily more clearly, is the normal consequence, on the level of contemplation and intimate union with God, of the doctrine admitted by all theologians: that Mary has merited de congruo all that Jesus has merited for men de condigno, and especially has she merited for the elect the effects of their predestination.

Article 3

THE SUFFERINGS OF MARY AS CO-REDEMPTRIX

HOW DID MARY MAKE SATISFACTION FOR US?

The purpose of satisfaction is to repair the offence offered to God and to make Him once more favourable to the sinner, The offence offered by mortal sin has about it a certain infinity, since offence is measured by the dignity of the person offended. Mortal sin, by turning the sinner away from God, his final end, denies in practice to God His infinite rights as the Supreme Good and destroys His reign in souls.

It follows from this that only the Incarnate Word could offer to the Father perfect and adequate satisfaction for the offence of mortal sin. For satisfaction to be perfect, it must proceed from a love and oblation which are as pleasing to God as, or more pleasing than, all sins united are displeasing to Him. But every act of charity elicited by Jesus had these qualities for His Divine Person gave them infinite satisfactory and meritorious value. A meritorious work becomes satisfactory (or one of reparation and expiation) when there is something painful about it. Hence, in offering His life in the midst of the greatest physical and moral sufferings, Jesus offered satisfaction of an infinite and superabundant value to His Father. He alone could make satisfaction in strict justice since the value of satisfaction like that of merit comes from the person, and the Person of Jesus, being divine, was of infinite dignity

It was, however, possible to associate a satisfaction of becomingness (de congruo) to Jesus' satisfaction, just as a merit of becomingness was associated to His merit. In explaining this point, we shall show all the more clearly the depth and extent of Mary's sufferings.

Mary offered for us a satisfaction of becomingness (de convenientia) which was the greatest in value after that of her Son.

When a meritorious work is in some way painful it has value as satisfaction as well. Thus theologians commonly teach, following upon what has been explained in the previous section, that Mary satisfied for all sins de congruo in everything in which Jesus satisfied de condigno. Mary offered God a satisfaction which it was becoming that He should accept: Jesus satisfied for us in strict justice.

As Mother of the Redeemer, Mary was closely united to Jesus by perfect conformity of will, by humility, by poverty, by suffering—and most particularly by her compassion on Calvary. That is what is meant when it is said that she offered satisfaction along with Him. Her satisfaction derives its value from her dignity as Mother of God, from her great charity, from the

fact that there was no fault in herself which needed to be expiated, and from the intensity of her sufferings.

The Fathers treat of this when they speak of Mary “standing” at the foot of the Cross, as St. John says. (John 19:25). They recall the words of Simeon, “Thy own soul a sword shall pierce,” and they show that Mary suffered in proportion to her love for her crucified Son; in proportion also to the cruelty of His executioners, and the atrocity of the torments inflicted on Him Who was Innocence itself. The liturgy also has taught many generations of the faithful that Mary merited the title of Queen of Martyrs by her most painful martyrdom of heart. That is the lesson of the Feasts of the Compassion of the Blessed Virgin and of the Seven Dolours, as well as of the Stabat Mater.

Leo XIII summed up this doctrine in the statement that Mary was associated with Jesus in the painful work of the redemption of mankind.45 Pius X calls her “the repairer of the fallen world” and continues to show how she was united to the priesthood of her Son: “Not only because she consented to become the mother of the only Son of God so as to make sacrifice for the salvation of men possible, but also in the fact that she accepted the mission of protecting and nourishing the Lamb of sacrifice, and when the time came led Him to the altar of immolation—in this also must we find Mary’s glory Mary’s community of life and sufferings with her Son was never broken off. To her as to Him may be applied the words of the prophet: My life is passed in dolors and my days in groanings. To conclude this list of Papal pronouncements we may refer to the words of Benedict XV: “In uniting herself to the Passion and Death of her Son she suffered almost unto death; as far as it depended on her, she immolated her Son, so that it can be said that with Him she redeemed the human race.”

THE DEPTH AND FRUITFULNESS OF MARY’S SUFFERINGS AS CO-REDEMPTRIX

Mary’s sufferings have the character of satisfaction from the fact that like Jesus and in union with Him, she suffered because of sin or of the offence it offers to God. This suffering of hers was measured by her love of God Whom sin offended, by her love of Jesus crucified for our sins, and by her love of us whom sin had brought to spiritual ruin. In other words, it was measured by her fulness of grace, which had never ceased to increase from the time of the Immaculate Conception. Already Mary had merited more by

the easiest acts than the martyrs in their torments because of her greater love. What must have been the value of her sufferings at the foot of the Cross, granted the understanding she then had of the mystery of the Redemption!

In the spiritual light which then flooded her soul, Mary saw that all souls are called to sing the glory of God. Every soul is called to be as it were a ray of the divinity, a spiritual ray of knowledge and love, for our minds are made to know God and our wills to love Him. But though the heavens tell God's glory unfailingly, thousands of souls turn from their Creator. Instead of that divine radiation, instead of God's exterior glory and His Kingdom, there are found in countless souls the three wounds called by St. John the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life: living as if there were no desirable love except carnal love, no glory except that of fame and honor, and no Lord and Master, no end, except man himself.

Mary saw all that evil, all those wounds in souls, just as we see the evils and wounds of bodies. Her fulness of grace had given her an immense capacity to suffer from the greatest of evils, sin. She suffered as much as she loved God and souls: God offended by sin and souls whom it rendered worthy of eternal damnation. Most of all did Mary see the crime of deicide prepared in hearts and brought to execution: she saw the terrible paroxysm of hatred of Him who is the Light and the Author of salvation.

To understand her sufferings, we must think too of her love, both natural and supernatural, of her only Son Whom she not only loved but, in the literal sense of the term, adored since He was her God. She had conceived Him miraculously. She loved Him with the love of a virgin—the purest, richest and most tender charity that has ever been a mother's. Nor was her grief diminished by ignorance of anything that might make it more acute. She knew the reason for the crucifixion. She knew the hatred of the Jews, His chosen people—her people. She knew that it was all for sinners.

From the moment when Simeon foretold the Passion—already so clearly prophesied by Isaias—and her compassion, she offered and did not cease to offer Him Who would be Priest and Victim, and herself in union with Him. This painful oblation was renewed over years. Of old, an angel had descended to prevent Abraham's immolation of his son Isaac. But no angel came to prevent the immolation of Jesus.

In his sermon on the Copassion of our Lady, we read the following magnificent words of Bossuet: “It is the will of the Eternal Father that Mary should not only be immolated with the Innocent Victim and nailed to the Cross by the nails that pierce Him, but should as well be associated with the mystery which is accomplished by His death. . . . Three things occur in the sacrifice of Our Saviour and constitute its perfection. There are the sufferings by which His humanity was crushed. There is His resignation to the will of His Father by which He humbly offered Himself. There is the fruitfulness by which He brings us to the life of grace by dying Himself. He suffers as a victim who must be bruised and destroyed. He submits as a priest who sacrifices freely; voluntarie sacrificabo tibi. (Ps. 53:8). Finally He brings us to life by His sufferings as the Father of a new people. . . .

“Mary stands near the Cross. With what eyes she contemplates her Son all covered with blood, all covered with wounds, in form now hardly a man! The sight is enough to cause her death. If she draws near to that altar, it is to be immolated there: and there, in fact, does she feel Simeon’s sword pierce her heart. . . .

“But did her dolors overcome her, did her grief cast her to the ground? Stabat juxta crucem: she stood by the Cross. The sword pierced her heart but did not take away her strength of soul: her constancy equals her affliction, and her face is the face of one no less resigned than afflicted.

“What remains then but that Jesus who sees her feel His sufferings and imitate His resignation should have given her a share in His fruitfulness. It is with that thought that He gave her John to be her son: Woman, behold thy son. Woman, who suffer with me, be fruitful with me, be the mother of my children whom I give you unreservedly in the person of this disciple; I give them life by my sufferings, and sharing in the bitterness that is mine your affliction will make you fruitful.”

In the sermon, of which the paragraphs I have quoted are the opening, Bossuet develops the three main points outlined and shows that Mary’s love for Jesus was enough to make her a martyr: “One Cross was enough for the well-beloved Son and the mother.” She is nailed to the Cross by her love for Him. Without a special grace she would have died of her agony.

Mary gave birth to Jesus without pain: but she brings the faithful forth in the most cruel suffering. “At what price she has bought them! They have cost her her only Son. She can be mother of Christians only by giving her Son to death. O agonizing fruitfulness! It was the will of the Eternal Father

that the adoptive sons should be born by the death of the True Son. . . . What man would adopt at this price and give his son for the sake of strangers? But that is what the Eternal Father did. We have Jesus' word for it: God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son. (John 3:16).

"(Mary) is the Eve of the New Testament and the mother of all the faithful; but that is to be at the price of her Firstborn. United to the Eternal Father she must offer His Son and hers to death. It is for that purpose that providence has brought her to the foot of the Cross. She is there to immolate her Son that men may have life. . . . She becomes mother of Christians at the cost of an immeasurable grief . . . We should never forget what we have cost Mary. The thought will lead to true contrition for our sins. The regeneration of our souls has cost Jesus and Mary more than we can ever think.

We may conclude this section by noting that Mary the Co-Redemptrix has given us birth at the foot of the Cross by the greatest act of faith, hope and love that was possible to her on such an occasion. One may even say that her act of faith was the greatest ever elicited, since Jesus had not the virtue of faith but the beatific vision. In that dark hour when the faith of the Apostles themselves seemed to waver, when Jesus seemed vanquished and His work annihilated, Mary did not cease for an instant to believe that her Son was the Saviour of mankind, and that in three days He would rise again as He had foretold. When He uttered His last words "It is consummated" Mary understood in the fulness of her faith that the work of salvation had been accomplished by His most painful immolation. The evening before, Jesus has instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice and the Christian priesthood; she sees now something of the influence the sacrifice of the Cross will exercise. She knows that Jesus is the true Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, that He is the conqueror of sin and the demon, and that in three days He will conquer death, sin's consequence. She sees the hand of God where even the most believing see only darkness and desolation. Hers was the greatest act of faith ever elicited by a creature, a faith higher than that of the angels when they were as yet in their period of trial.

Calvary saw too her supreme act of hope at a moment when everything seemed lost. She grasped the force of the words spoken to the good thief: "This day thou shalt be with me in paradise;" Heaven, she realised, was about to be open for the elect.

It was finally her supreme act of charity: so to love God as to offer His only Son in the most painful agony: to love God above everything at the moment when He tried her in the highest and deepest of her loves, even in the object of her adoration—and that because of our sins.

It is true that the theological virtues grew in Mary up to the time of her death, for these acts of faith, hope, and charity were not broken off but continued in her as a kind of state. They even expanded in the succeeding calm, like a river which becomes more powerful and majestic as it nears the ocean. The point which theology wishes to stress is not that of Mary's subsequent growth in the virtues but the equality between her sacrifice and her merits at the foot of the Cross itself: both her sacrifice and her merits were of inestimable value and their fruitfulness, while not approaching that of Christ's sacrifice and merits, surpasses anything the human tongue can utter. Theologians express this by saying that Mary made satisfaction for us de congruo in proportion to her immense charity, while Jesus made satisfaction de condigno.

Even the saints who have been most closely associated with the sufferings of the Savior did not enter as Mary did into the most secret depths of the Passion. St. Catherine de Ricci had every Friday during 12 years an ecstasy of pain which lasted twenty eight hours and during which she lived over again all the sufferings of the way of the Cross. But even such sufferings fell far short of those of Mary. Mary's heart suffered in sympathy with all the agony of the Sacred Heart to such a point that she would have died of the experience had she not been especially strengthened. Thereby she became the consoler of the afflicted, for she had suffered more than all, and patroness of a happy death. We have no idea how fruitful these sufferings of hers have been during wenty centuries.

MARY'S PARTICIPATION AS CO-REDEMPTRIX IN THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST

Though Mary may be termed Co-Redemptrix in the sense we have explained, there can be no question of calling her a priest in the strict sense of the word since she has not received the priestly character and cannot offer Holy Mass nor give sacramental absolution. But, as we have seen already, her divine maternity is a greater dignity than the priesthood of the ordained priest in the sense that it is more to give Our Saviour His human nature than to make His body present in the Blessed Eucharist. Mary has

given us the Priest of the sacrifice of the Cross, the Principal Priest of the sacrifice of the Mass and the Victim offered on the altar.

It is more also, and more perfect, to offer her only Son and her God on the Cross as Mary did, by offering herself with Him in community of suffering, than to make the body of Our Lord present and to offer It on the altar as the priest does at Holy Mass.

We must affirm, too, as has recently a careful theologian who has devoted years to the study of these questions that "it is a certain theological conclusion that Mary co-operated in some way in the principal act of Jesus' priesthood, by giving, as the divine plan required, her consent to the sacrifice of the Cross as it was accomplished by the Saviour." In another context he writes: "If we consider only certain immediate effects of the priest's action such as the eucharistic consecration or the remission of sins in the sacrament of penance, it is true that the priest can do certain things which Mary, not having the priestly power, cannot. But to look at the matter so as not to compare dignities but merely particular effects which are produced by a power which Mary lacks and which do not necessarily indicate a higher dignity."

But even if Mary cannot, for the reasons given, be spoken of as priest in the strict sense of the term, it remains true, as M. Olier has said, that she has received the fulness of the spirit of the priesthood, which is the spirit of Christ the Redeemer. That is the reason why she is called Co-Redemptrix, a title which, like that of Mother of God, implies a higher dignity than that of the Christian priesthood.

Mary's participation in the immolation and oblation of Jesus, Priest and Victim, cannot be better summed up than in the words of the Stabat Mater of the Franciscan Jacopone de Todi (1228–1286).

The Stabat Mater manifests in a singularly striking manner that supernatural contemplation of the mystery of Christ crucified is part of the normal way of holiness. In precise and ardent words it speaks of the wounding of the Saviour's Heart and shows the intimate and persuasive manner in which Mary leads us to Him. Not only does Mary lead us to the divine intimacy, in a sense she produces it in us: that is what the repetition of the imperative "Fac" in the following strophes brings out:

> Eia Mater, fons amoris,
> Me sentire vim doloris
> Fac, ut tecum lugeam.

Fac ut ardeat cor meum
In amando Christum Deum,
Ut sibi complaceam.

Fac ut portem Christi mortem
Passionis fac corsortem
Et plagas recolere.

Fac me plagis vulnerari
Fac me cruce inebriari,
Et cruore Filii.

O Thou Mother! Fount of love!
Touch my spirit from above,
Make my heart with thine accord!

Make me feel as thou hast felt;
Make my soul to glow and melt
With the love of Christ my Lord.

Let me, to my latest breath,
In my body bear the death
Of that dying Son of thine.

Wounded with His every wound,
Steep my soul till it hath swoon'd
In His very blood away.

—Fr. Caswall

This is the prayer of a soul which, under a special inspiration, wishes to know in a spiritual way the wound of love and to be associated in these painful mysteries of adoring reparation as were John and the holy women on Calvary—and Peter, too, when he shed his bitter tears. Those tears of adoration and sorrow are what the Stabat asks for in the following strophes:

Fac me tecum pie flere,
Crucifixo condolere,
Donee ego vixero.

Juxta crucem tecum stare,
Et me tibi sociare In planctu desidero.

Let me mingle tears with thee,
Mourning Him who mourn'd for me,
All the days that I may live.

By the cross with thee to stay.
There with thee to weep and pray,
Is all I ask of thee to give.

—Fr. Caswall

Mary exercised therefore a universal mediation on earth by meriting de congruo all that Jesus merited de condigno and also by making similar satisfaction in union with Him. For both Jesus and Mary, the mediation exercised on earth is the foundation of that now exercised in Heaven of which we shall speak in the next chapter.

Chapter 3

MARY’S UNIVERSAL MEDIATION IN HEAVEN

Mary’s mediation in Heaven which she has exercised since the Assumption has as purpose to obtain for us the application at the appropriate time of Jesus’ merits and hers, acquired during their life on earth and especially on Calvary. We shall speak in this connection of Mary’s power of intercession, of the way in which she distributes graces or the mode of her influence on us, and finally of the universality of her mediation and of its definability.

Article 1

MARY’S POWER OF INTERCESSION

Even during her life on earth, Mary appears in the gospels as distributing graces. Jesus sanctifies the precursor through her when she comes to visit her cousin Elisabeth. Through her He confirms the faith of His disciples at Cana by performing the miracle for which she asked. Through her He confirms John’s faith on Calvary, saying: “Son, behold thy mother.” Through her finally the Holy Ghost gave Himself to the Apostles, for we read in the Acts (Acts 1:14) that she prayed with them in the Cenacle while they prepared themselves for the apostolate and for the light and strength and graces of Pentecost.

With still greater reason is Mary powerful in her intercession now that she has entered Heaven and has been lifted up above the choirs of the angels. The Christian sense of the faithful assures us that a mother in Heaven knows the spiritual needs of the children she has left behind her on earth, and that she prays for their salvation. It is a universal practice in the Church for the faithful to recommend themselves to the prayers of the saints

in Heaven. As St. Thomas says, when the saints were on earth, their charity led them to pray for their neighbor. With still greater reason do we say that in Heaven they pray for their neighbour since when their charity is inflamed by the beatific vision it is greater than it was on earth: their charity in Heaven is uninterrupted in its acts and proceeds from a fuller realization of human needs and the value of life eternal.

The Council of Trent defined that the saints in Heaven pray for us and that it is useful to invoke them (Denz. 984). Their merits and their expiation have ceased, but not their prayer—no longer a prayer of tearful supplication but one now of intercession.

St. Paul tells us that Our Blessed Lord does not cease to make intercession for us. (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25). He is the principal and necessary intercessor. But Jesus Himself wishes that we should have recourse to Mary so that our prayers may have greater value through being presented by her.

As Mother of all men Mary knows the spiritual needs of all men, knows all that concerns their salvation. Because of her immense charity she prays for them. And since she is all-powerful with her Son because of the love by which they are united, she obtains from Him all the graces for which she asks—that is to say, all the graces we receive.

This power of Mary's intercession is proclaimed by the faithful each time they recite the Hail Mary.

Theology explains the belief of the faithful by pointing to three fundamental reasons for Mary's power of intercession.

The first of these is that since Mary is Mother of men she knows all their spiritual needs. It is a principle admitted by all theologians that the happiness of the blessed in Heaven would not be complete if they did not know what happens on earth to the extent to which it concerns them by reason of their office, their role, or their relations with men. Such knowledge is the object of a legitimate desire which must find its satisfaction in beatitude, and with all the more reason when the knowledge they desire is of men's spiritual needs and is therefore desired in charity: it is in charity that the saints desire men's salvation so that they may glorify God with them for all eternity and share thus in their happiness. Fathers and mothers, for example, know from Heaven the needs of their children, especially those which bear on their salvation. The same may be said of the founders of religious institutes. With all the more reason may the same be

said of Our Lady, who has the highest degree of glory after her Son: as Mother of all men she must know everything which bears directly or indirectly on the supernatural life which she has been commissioned to give us and to nourish in us. This universal knowledge, certain and detailed, of all that concerns our destiny—our thoughts, desires, the dangers in which we are, the graces we need, temporal affairs which have some connection with our salvation—is a prerogative which belongs to Mary because of her motherhood of God and her spiritual motherhood of men.

Knowing our spiritual needs and even the temporal needs which are connected with our salvation Mary is obviously impelled by her great charity to intercede for us. If a mother but suspects that her child needs her help she flies to its side. There is no question here of Mary's acquiring new merits in Heaven but simply of her obtaining that her merits—and her Son's—be applied to us at the appropriate moment.

Is Mary's prayer omnipotent? Tradition has honoured Mary with the title, Omnipotentia supplex, omnipotence in the order of supplication.

In support of the title, we may refer to the principle that the intercession of the saints is proportioned to their degree of glory in heaven, or of union with God (Cf. Ha Ilae, q. 83, a. II). It follows then that Mary, whose glory surpasses that of all the saints, must have all power in intercession. Even before the 8th century, this is the explicit teaching of St. Ephrem. In the 8th century, the most clear-cut statements are those of Andrew of Crete, of St. Germanus of Constantinople, and of St. John Damascene. Towards the end of the 11th century, St. Anselm and his disciple Eadmer affirm Mary's intercessory omnipotence, a doctrine explained by St. Bernard and transmitted to succeeding generations of theologians.

Bossuet brings out the underlying principles very well in his sermon on the Compassion of Our Lady, when he recalls the two texts: "God so loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son" (John 3:16) and "He that spared not even his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how hath he not also, with him, given us all good things?" (Rom. 8:32). Mary in her turn has loved God and souls to the extent of delivering up her Son, Jesus, on Calvary. She is in consequence all-powerful with God the Father and with Jesus to obtain all that is necessary for the salvation of those who turn to her mediation.

One paragraph of the sermon deserves to be quoted: "Intercede for us, O Blessed Virgin Mary: you have in your hands, if I may so speak, the key

that opens the treasury of the divine blessings. That key is your Son: He closes and no one can open: He opens and no one can close: it is His innocent blood which makes us to be inundated with heavenly graces. And to whom will He give the right to that blood, if not to her from whom He drew all His blood. . . . For the rest, you live in such perfect union of love with Him that it is impossible that your prayer should not be heard." It is enough, as St. Bernard says, if Mary speaks to the Heart of Jesus.

The teaching of Tradition, thus formulated by Bossuet, has been proclaimed by Leo XIII in his first encyclical on the Rosary, September 1st, 1883, in which he calls Mary the dispenser of heavenly graces, coelestium administra gratiarum. In the encyclical Jucunda Semper, September 8th, 1894, the same Pope makes his own the two statements of St. Bernard: that God in His great mercy has made Mary our Mediatrix and that He has willed that all graces should come to us through her. The same teaching will be found in the encyclical Ad Diem Ilium, February 2nd, 1904, where Mary is spoken of as "the dispenser of all the graces which have been acquired for us by the Blood of Jesus." Jesus is the source of these graces: Mary is, as it were, the aqueduct, or—to use another image—as it were the neck which unites the Head to the members and transmits the vital impulse to them: "Ipsa est collum capitis nostri, per quod omnia spiritualia dona corpori ejus mystico communicantur." Benedict XV has consecrated this teaching by approving the Mass and the liturgical Office of Mary, Mediatrix of all graces, for the universal Church.

As Fr. Merkelbach indicates, three points are to be noted.

First of all, it is of faith that Mary prays for us, and even for each one of us, in her capacity as Mother of the Redeemer and of all men, and that her intercession is very useful for us. This follows from the general dogma of the intercession of the saints (Council of Trent: Session 25). In support of this assertion we may refer to the practice of the Church in praying, Sancta Maria, ora pro nobis: Holy Mary, pray for us. Legem credendi lex statuat supplicandi: dogma and prayer have one and the same law (Denz. 139).

In the second place, Tradition teaches us as certain that Mary's powerful intercession can obtain for all those who invoke her with the proper dispositions all the graces required for salvation and no one is saved without her intervention. Thus the Church repeats: Sentiant omnes tuum juvamen: Let all be cognizant of your assistance.

In the third place, it is common and safe doctrine, taught by different Popes, by the liturgy, and by preachers throughout the world, that no grace is granted us without Mary's intervention. This is contained clearly in the Mass and Office of Mary, Mediatrix of all graces, and it would be at least rash to deny it.

Historically, this doctrine will be found implicit in the doctrine of Mary's universal mediation up to the 8th century. It becomes more explicit as we draw nearer to the 15th century, in the form of the affirmation that all God's gifts come to us through Mary as intermediary. From the 16th century onwards, the question has been examined under all its aspects. Even the graces of the sacraments are considered to fall under Mary's universal mediation in the sense that the dispositions which we must bring to the reception of the sacraments are obtained through her intercession. Besides, if Mary has merited de congruo all that Jesus has merited for us de condigno, it follows that she has merited the sacramental graces themselves.

It is clear therefore that Mary's intercession is much more powerful and efficacious than that of all the other saints—even taken all together—for the other saints obtain nothing without her. Their mediation is included under her universal mediation, while hers is, in its turn, subordinated to that of Jesus. There is another point to be noted: it is that Mary has merited all the graces which she asks for us, whereas the saints often ask for graces for others which they have not merited themselves. Their prayer could not then have the same efficacy as Mary's.

Regarding the efficacy of Mary's prayer, a principle which applies to the prayer of Christ may well be recalled. The prayer of Christ is always heard when the thing prayed for is asked absolutely and in conformity with the divine intentions which He knows so well; it is not so heard, however, when the thing prayed for is asked conditionally, as happened in the case of the prayer of the Garden of Olives. In the case of Mary's prayer, she obtains infallibly from her Son all that she asks absolutely and in conformity with the divine intentions: these intentions she knows, and her will is in complete accord with them.

What has been said in this section is sufficient to show that Mary's omnipotence in intercession, resting as it does on the merits of the Saviour and on His love for His Mother, is far from derogating from His own universal mediation. On the contrary it is one of its brightest manifestations, and throws into clearer relief the marvellous way in which Jesus redeemed

and adorned her who was so intimately associated with Him in the redemption of men.

Article 2

MARY AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF GRACE

Does Our Lady distribute grace only in the sense that she intercedes for each one of us and so obtains that the fruits of the merits of her Son be applied to each one of us at the appropriate moment, or does she transmit graces to us in the way in which the Sacred Humanity does? According to the teaching of St. Thomas and many other theologians, the Sacred Humanity is a physical instrumental cause of grace, an instrument always united to the divinity and higher than the sacraments, which are instruments separated from the divinity.

St. Thomas has treated of this question in many places in so far as it refers to Christ, the Head of the Church. It is but reasonable to ask if something similar to what he says about the Head may be affirmed of her who is, according to the teaching of Tradition, as it were the neck of the Mystical Body which unites the Head to the members and transmits the vital impulse to them.

In this connection theologians commonly admit that Mary exercises moral causality by her past merits and satisfaction and by her present intercession. But very many stop there and do not admit that she exercises any physical instrumental causality. Other theologians admit physical instrumental causality in subordination to the Sacred Humanity. They rely in support of their thesis on the traditional doctrine of Mary as the neck of the Mystical Body, uniting Head and members, and transmitting the vital influence to them.

It is certain that St. Thomas taught explicitly that the Sacred Humanity and the sacraments of the New Law are physical instrumental causes of grace. God alone is its principal cause, since it is a participation in His inner life. But there is no similar statement of his about Our Lady. There are even theologians—with whom we do not agree—who hold that he explicitly denied her any such causality. In his explanation of the Ave Maria, he attributes to Mary a fulness of grace which overflows on souls and

sanctifies them, but he does not say explicitly that this overflowing is anything more than moral causality.

However, since physical instrumental causality was not an impossibility for the Sacred Humanity nor for the sacraments—for example, for the words of the priest at the consecration or when giving absolution—in the opinion of St. Thomas and his commentators, neither is it an impossibility for Mary. St. Thomas even admits that a miracle-worker is sometimes instrumental cause of a miracle, for example, when it is worked through a blessing. Not only can he obtain the miracle by his prayer, he may even perform it as God's instrument.

It is not possible therefore to be certain that Mary did not exercise a similar influence in regard to grace. We must also allow for the fact that God's masterpieces—among which we must include Mary—are richer, more beautiful, more brimful of life than we can find words to describe.

But at the same time it must be admitted that it does not seem possible to prove with certainty that Mary did exercise physical causality. Theology will hardly advance beyond serious probability in this matter for the reason that it is very hard to see in the traditional texts quoted where precisely the literal sense ends and the metaphorical sense begins. Those who are in the habit of using metaphors whenever they can will not appreciate this difficulty. But anyone who is accustomed to using words in their exact and proper sense will be fully sensible of it. When Tradition tells us that Mary's position in the Mystical Body is comparable to that of the neck which unites the Head to the members and transmits the vital impulse to them, at the very least the metaphor it uses is an expressive one, but we cannot affirm with certainty that it is more than a metaphor.

However, as Father Hugon points out, the comparison does not seem to be given credit for all its force unless physical instrumental causality be admitted. Fr. R. Bernard, O.P., is of the same opinion: "God and His Christ make use of her (Mary) in this sense, that they make all the graces which they destine for us pass through her. . . . By using her as intermediary, They temper Their action all the more with humanity, without in any way diminishing its divine efficacy. They make Mary live by the life we are to live by. She is first filled to overflowing with it. Grace is pre-formed in her and receives in her the imprint of a special beauty. All grace and all graces come to us thus canalised and distributed by her, impregnated with that special sweetness which she imparts to all she touches and all she does.

“By her action Mary enters therefore into our lives as bearer of the divine. In the whole course of our lives, from the cradle and before it to the grave and beyond it, there is nothing of grace in which she had no part. She shapes us to the likeness of Jesus. . . . She leaves her mark on everything and adds to the perfection of what passes through her hands. I have said that we are sustained by her prayer: we are similarly sustained by her action and, if one may say it, have our spiritual being in her hands. Every Christian is a child of Mary, but a child is not worthy of the name unless it is formed by its mother.”

By admitting that Mary not only obtains grace for us by her prayers but transmits it to us by her action, a fuller meaning is given to her titles of treasurer and dispensatrix of all graces. This same fuller meaning seems to be suggested by certain strong and beautiful expressions found in the Liturgy, especially in the Stabat, where the repetition of the imperative Fac implies that Mary in some way produces the grace of intimacy with Christ in us.

Mary’s influence on our souls remains, it is true, shrouded in mystery, but it appears probable that it is more than moral: she seems to enter into the production of grace as a free and knowing instrument, somewhat as a miracle-worker can perform a miracle by his contact and his blessing. Even in the natural order a smile, a look, the tone of the voice, communicate something of the life of the soul.

In addition to the argument drawn from the traditional formulae there are theological ones which have a certain weight.

As Fr. Hugon says: “Once it is granted that the angels and the saints are frequently physical secondary causes of miracles, it seems quite natural to postulate the same power for the Mother of God and in a higher degree.” And if she is the physical instrumental cause of miracles which God alone produces as Principal Cause, what reason can there be for not admitting that she causes grace in the same manner? Fr. Hugon continues: “Every prerogative which is possible in itself and which harmonises with the role and dignity of the Mother of God should be found in Mary. . . . She receives under a secondary title everything that Jesus has under a full and primary title—merits, satisfaction, intercession. Why should this relation between Mother and Son not extend to the order of physical causality? What necessitates an exception? Would it not appear that the supernatural parallelism between Jesus and Mary should be continued to the very end,

and that the Mother should be secondary instrument wherever the Son is first and conjoined instrument? . . . It seems but natural that Mary's acts of which God makes continual use in the order of intercession should be elevated and transformed by His infinite fecundity and commissioned to communicate the life of grace instrumentally to souls."

Another argument may be drawn from the fact that the priest who absolves is instrumental cause of grace by reason of his union with the Redeemer. But Mary is no less closely united to the Redeemer since she is Mother of God and Co-Redemptrix.

The influence which Jesus, Head of the Mystical Body, exercises is itself most mysterious since it is supernatural. No wonder then if that which Mary exercises over and above her intercession is also a mystery. We may note before concluding that Mary's influence seems to be exercised especially on our sensibility—which is sometimes so rebellious or so distracted—to calm it, to subordinate it to our higher faculties, and to make it easy for these latter to submit to the movement of the Head when He transmits us the divine life.

Though the manner of Mary's action upon us is hidden, the fact of her influence is in no way doubtful. It is beyond question that Mary is dispensatrix of all graces, at least by her intercession. It may be added with Fr. Merkelbach that Mary does not intercede in the same way as the other saints: her prayer is not such as may possibly not be heard, but rather it is like the prayer of Christ, our Mediator and Saviour, Whose intercession is effective in fact as well as in right. The intercession of Christ, says St. Thomas, is the expression of His desire for our salvation which He acquired at the price of His precious blood. Since Mary was associated with the redemptive work of her Son she is associated with His intercession; she too expresses a desire which is always united to that of Jesus. In this sense she disposes of the graces which she asks for: her prayer is the efficacious cause of their being obtained, and she is united also to Christ's influence in transmitting them.

For that reason the Church sings in the hymn of Matins of the Feast of Mary Mediatrix of all graces:

> Cuncta, quae nobis meruit Redemptor,
> Dona partitur genitrix Maria,
> Cujus ad votum sua fundit ultro Munera Natus.

She bestows on us all the graces which her Son has merited for us and which she has merited with Him.

If, as it would appear, Mary transmits to us by physical instrumental causality all the graces which we receive, all the actual graces which are given us to be the air which the soul breathes unceasingly, it follows that we are at all times under her influence, subordinated to the influence of Jesus the Head of the Mystical Body; she transmits to us continuously the vital influence which comes from Him.

But even if her action upon us is only the moral causality of intercession, she is present, by an affective presence, in souls in the state of grace who pray to her just as a beloved object, even if physically distant, is present to the person who loves it. Mary being physically present in body and soul in Heaven is physically distant from us on earth. But she is affectively present within the interior souls who love her.

Mary's influence becomes increasingly all-embracing as souls advance in the interior life. This has been often noted by St. Grignon de Montfort. "The Holy Ghost," he says, "became fruitful on earth through Mary, His spouse. It was with her and of her that He produced His masterpiece, God-made-man, and that He produces daily till the end of the world the predestined members of the body of our adorable Head: that is why He is all the more active to produce Jesus Christ in a soul the more He finds there Mary, His dear and inseparable spouse.

"This does not mean that Mary gave the Holy Ghost His fecundity. . . . It means that the Holy Ghost manifests His fecundity by making use of Mary, even though He does not need her, to produce Jesus Christ and His members in her and through her: this is a mystery of grace unknown even to the most learned and spiritual of Christians."

As Fr. Hugon remarks a propos of these words of St. Grignon de Montfort: "The exterior fecundity of the Divine Paraclete is the production of grace, not in the order of moral causality—for the Holy Ghost is not a meritorious or impetratory cause—but in the order of physical causality. To reduce this fecundity to act is to produce physically grace and the other works of holiness which are appropriated to the Third Divine Person. From this it follows that the Holy Ghost produces grace physically in souls by Mary: she is the secondary physical instrument of the Holy Ghost. Such seems to us the import of these strong expressions of the saint: such the sublime doctrine which he says is a mystery of grace unknown even to the

most learned and spiritual of Christians." Mary's virginal motherhood reaches its completion in her transmission of the graces which she obtains by her intercession, just as the Incarnation is prolonged, in a certain sense, by the vivifying influence of Christ the Head upon His members.

St. Grignon de Montfort never expressed himself otherwise than as we have seen. Reference must also be made to the work "The Mystic Union with Mary" composed by a Flemish recluse, Mary of St. Teresa (1623–1677), who had herself experience of what she taught. Such writings show that Mary exercises a very profound influence on faithful souls to lead them to ever greater intimacy with Our Blessed Lord. Those who enter on this way find themselves introduced far into the mystery of the communion of saints, and come gradually to share in the sentiments Mary had at the foot of the Cross, after Jesus' death, and later on at Pentecost when she prayed for the Apostles and obtained for them the graces of light and love and strength which they needed to carry the name of Jesus to the limits of the earth. And now that she has entered Heaven the influence of Mary, universal Mediatrix, is still greater, more universal, and more effective.

NOTE

THE MODE OF PRESENCE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN IN SOULS UNITED TO HER

To make clear the doctrine on this point, it is necessary to explain briefly what theologians understand by virtual contact on one hand, and by affective presence on the other.

VIRTUAL OR DYNAMIC CONTACT

With regard to the presence of God in all things or of that of the angels in the bodies on which they act, a distinction is generally made between virtual contact (contactus virtutis) and quantitative contact. Two bodies are present to each other by quantitative contact, i,e. by that of their own quantity or extension. A pure spirit, having no body, and consequently no quantity or extension, is present where it operates by virtual contact, by its power, the principle of its action. This is the dynamic contact of a spiritual force which takes possession of what it acts on.

The Power of God is not distinct from His Essence, and so God is really and substantially present, by virtual contact, in everything He Himself produces immediately, or without the intermediary of an instrument, i.e. in what He creates in the strict sense of the term ex nihilo and keeps immediately in existence. He is thus present in Prime Matter, in souls and in angels which can only be produced by creation ex nihilo and cannot be brought about by the intermediary of an instrument (cf. Ia, Q8, a. 1, 2, 3, 4; Q45, a., 5; Q104, a. 2).

For the same reason theologians admit generally that an angel, which, strictly speaking, is not in a place inasmuch as it is pure spirit, is really present where it acts, for it touches by virtual contact (contactus virtutis) the body which it moves locally (cf. Ia, Q52). An angel can also enlighten a human intelligence and act on it through the imagination, like a master who instructs.

The presence of the Soul of Jesus and that of the soul of the Blessed Virgin in persons united to them resembles that of the angels, but differs from it, however, under a certain respect. The difference comes from the fact that a human soul united to its body, like the Soul of Jesus and that of His Holy Mother, is really present (definitive) where its body is and nowhere else. Now the Body of Jesus, since the Ascension, is in Heaven alone according to its natural place, and the same must be said of Mary's body since the Assumption. And the soul, being of its nature united to its own body, acts on others only through it. In this it differs from an angel, which has no body.

But just as God can make use of angels to produce instrumentally a properly divine effect such as a miracle, He can make use also of the Soul of Jesus, of His acts, and even of His Body, or again of the soul of Mary, of her acts and of her body. When God makes use of the humanity of the Saviour as a physical instrumental cause to produce grace in us, as St. Thomas admits (Ilia, Q43, a. 2; Q48, a. 6; Q62, a. 4), we are under the physical influence of the Humanity of Jesus. However, It does not touch us, for It is in heaven. In the same way, if someone speaks to us from a distance by means of a megaphone, this megaphone does not touch us immediately: there is only virtual contact and not quantitative contact of the instrument and the subject on which it acts—virtual contact similar to that of the sun which gives us light and warmth from afar.

If the Blessed Virgin is a physical instrumental cause of grace, subordinate to Christ's Humanity, we are also under her physical influence, without her touching us, however, otherwise than by virtual contact.

It must be noted, however, that the human soul, in so far as it is spiritual and transcends the body, is not as such in a place. From this point of view, all souls, in the measure in which they grow in the spiritual life and become detached from the senses, by bringing themselves spiritually nearer to God, bring themselves spiritually nearer to one another as well. Thus is explained the spiritual presence of Christ's Holy Soul and that of Mary in us, especially if we admit that they are both physical instrumental causes of the graces we receive.

Thus one can say that we are constantly under their influence in the spiritual order, as in the corporal order our body is constantly under the influence of the sun which gives us light and warmth, and under the permanent influence of the air which we breathe at all times.

In this spiritual presence of which we have just spoken there can be united the influence of instrumental causality called physical, which is here spiritual, and the presence called affective, which we shall now explain and which for its part is not only probable but certain.

AFFECTIVE PRESENCE

Even if the Blessed Virgin were not the physical instrumental cause of the graces we receive, she would be present in us by an "affective presence" as an object known and loved is present to the lover, and this in varying degrees of intimacy according to the depth and strength of our love.

Even a very imperfect soul is under the so-called physical influence of the Blessed Virgin if she is the physical instrumental cause of the graces received by this soul. But the deeper our love of Mary becomes, the more intimate does her affective presence in us become. It is necessary to insist on this, for the affective mode of presence is one which certainly exists, and St. Thomas has admirably explained it (la Ilae, Q28, a. 1 and 2) where he asks whether union is the effect of love and whether a mutual inherence results from it.

He replies (a. 1): "Love, as the Areopagite has said, is a unitive force. There are two unions possible to those who love: 1—a real union, when they are really present to each other (as are two persons who are in the same

place and see each other directly); 2—an affective union (as that which exists between two persons physically distant). This latter proceeds from the knowledge (derived from actual remembrance of the person loved) and the love of this person. . . . Love suffices to constitute affective union and leads to the desire for real union." There is, then, an affective union resulting from love, in spite of whatever distance may separate the persons.

If St. Monica and St. Augustine, far away from each other, were nevertheless spiritually united and in that way affectively present to each other in a more or less profound manner according to the degree or intensity of their affection, how much more is a soul that grows daily closer in intimacy with our heavenly Mother affectively united to her?

St. Thomas goes further: ibid., a. 2, corp. et ad 1, he shows that a mutual spiritual inherence can be an effect of love in spite of the remoteness of the persons. And he distinguishes very well two aspects of this affective union: 1—amatum est in amante, the person loved is in him who loves, as being imprinted on his affection through the delight he inspires him with; 2—and on the other hand, amans est in amato, the lover is in the person loved, inasmuch as he rejoices greatly and intimately at what makes for his happiness.

The first mode is often the one more felt, and, with regard to God, we run the risk here of simulating such a union before the time; moreover, even when it is really the fruit of grace, it can have too strong an effect on the sensibility and thus expose one to spiritual greediness.

The more disinterested and at the same time the stronger and more intimate love is, the more does the second aspect tend to prevail. Then the soul is more in God than God in it; and there is something similar to this with regard to the Humanity of Jesus and of the Blessed Virgin.

Finally, this strong and disinterested love produces, says St. Thomas (ibid., a. 3), the ecstasy of love (with or without suspension of the use of the senses), a spiritual ecstasy through which the lover goes out of himself; so to speak, because he wishes the good of his friend as his own and forgets himself.

We see by this what can be the intimacy of this union of love and of this presence, not corporal, but affective. It is true, however, that this affective union tends to the real union which we shall enjoy in Heaven in the immediate sight of the Saviour's Humanity and of the Blessed Virgin. Even in this life there is a sort of prelude to it in the physical influence of the

Humanity of Jesus and probably in that of the Blessed Virgin, when we derive a higher degree of grace and a charity which takes deeper and deeper root in our will—cf. infra the section dealing with Mystical Union with Mary, pp. 259–265.

Article 3

THE UNIVERSALITY OF MARY'S MEDIATION AND ITS DEFINABILITY

On this article we shall consider the universality of Mary's mediation, the degree of certainty we have concerning it, and its precise meaning.

As a matter of fact the universality of Mary's mediation follows so evidently from the principles we have established that the onus of proof lies altogether on our opponents. Mary Mother of the Redeemer and Co-Redemptrix has merited de congruo all that Jesus has merited for us and has made satisfaction in union with and in dependence on Him. Does it not follow that she can obtain in Heaven the application of the fruits of these merits, and that she thereby obtains for us not only all graces in general but all graces in particular?

This assertion is more than pious opinion, however probable. It is theologically certain in virtue of the principles on which it rests, it has been commonly accepted by theologians, it has been part of the Church's preaching and has been confirmed by the encyclicals of different Popes. To quote but one striking papal pronouncement, we find Pope Leo XIII teaching in the encyclical Octobri Mense on the Rosary, September 22nd, 1891 (Denz. 3033), "Nihil nobis nisi per Mariam, Deo sic volente, impertiri:" No grace is given to us except through Mary, such being the Divine Will.

The universality of Mary's mediation is affirmed also in the prayers of the Church, which are an expression of her faith. Graces of every kind, temporal and spiritual—and among these latter all those which lead to God, from the grace of conversion to that of final perseverance—are asked through Mary. She is prayed also for the graces needed by apostolic workers, by martyrs in time of persecution, by confessors of the faith, by virgins that they may preserve their virginity intact, etc. The Litany of Loretto gives some idea of the many graces which the Church asks through her intercession.

Thus through her are granted all the graces all men need, in their different conditions and stages of life. It has been so for twenty centuries: it will remain so till the end of time. Mary obtains for us all we need for our journey towards eternity.

Among all the different graces that which is the most peculiar to any particular wayfarer is the grace of the moment in which he finds himself. That too comes through Mary. We pray for it daily and many times each day when we say “Pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death.” By the word “now” we ask for the grace required to fulfil the duty of the present moment, to practise this or that virtue asked of us here and now. Even if we do not ourselves realise what grace we need, Mary in Heaven does, and it is through her intercession that we obtain it. The succession of graces of the moment, varying from one moment to the next, is like a spiritual atmosphere which we inhale and which renews our souls as air does the blood.

Mary’s mediation is therefore truly universal: such is the teaching of Tradition. It extends to the whole work of our salvation, without being limited to graces of any particular kind. On this point, there is moral unanimity of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, and of the faithful whose belief is expressed in the liturgy.

DEFINABILITY OF THE DOCTRINE

It would appear that the doctrine of Mary’s universal mediation is capable of being defined as a dogma of faith, for it is implicitly revealed in the different titles which Tradition gives Mary—that of Mother of God, most powerful in intercession with her Son, that of the new Eve intimately associated with the Redeemer, that of Mother of all men. Besides, it is a doctrine explicitly and formally affirmed by the morally unanimous consent of Fathers and Doctors of the Church, of preaching throughout the Church, and of the Liturgy. Leo XIII, after having stated that we receive nothing–except–through Mary, goes on to say that “as no one can come to the Father except by the Son, in much the same way (ita fere) no one can come to the Son except by Mary” (Denz. 3033). Pius X calls her “the dispensatrix of all the graces which Jesus acquired for us by His blood” (Denz. 3033). Benedict XV gave his approval to the same doctrine when he instituted the universal feast of Mary, Mediatrix of all graces (Denz. 3034).

Mary’s universal mediation appears then to be capable of definition as a dogma of faith: it is at least implicitly revealed and it is already universally proposed by the ordinary magisterium of the Church.

WHAT IS THE PRECISE MEANING OF THIS UNIVERSALITY?

A number of preliminary remarks will be necessary in order to arrive at the precise meaning of Mary’s universal mediation.

In the first place, all the graces received by men from the Fall up to the Incarnation were granted in view of the foreseen merits of the Saviour—with which we must associate those of His Mother—but neither Jesus nor Mary distributed or transmitted them. This limitation was removed with the coming of the Saviour on earth in human flesh. As for Mary, it is especially since her Assumption into Heaven that she knows the spiritual needs of all men and that she intercedes for them and distributes the graces they need.

Since Mary distributes all that she has merited, it follows that she distributes the graces we receive in the sacraments. She does this at least by giving us the grace of being disposed for their reception, and sometimes even by sending us a priest without whose ministry we could not have received them.

Mary’s universal mediation should not be understood as if it meant that no grace is given to us without our having asked it explicitly of her; that would be to confuse our prayer to her with her prayer to God. Mary does in fact ask for graces without being invoked explicitly. Many graces are given to both children and adults even before they pray for them—especially the grace of beginning to pray. The Our Father can be said without any explicit invocation of Mary; but she is invoked implicitly in it when it is said according to the order established by divine providence.

It should not be thought either that Mary was Mediatrix for herself. She obtained her fulness of grace through the mediation of her Son.

It would, however, be an error by defect to say that Mary merited nearly all graces, or morally all graces—say, something like eight or nine tenths of them. All graces without exception come by her mediation. Such is the general law established by divine providence, and there is no known indication of any exceptions.

A point which distinguishes Mary’s mediation from that of the saints is that she is mediatrix de jure and not simply de facto for all men, since she is

the mother of all. This makes her intercession all-powerful. Her prayers are more efficacious than those of all the saints united. The saints can do nothing without her intercession for the reason that it is universal.

Mary's universal mediation extends to the souls in Purgatory. "It is certain that the Mother of Mercy knows the needs of these souls. . . . She can bring her satisfaction to the support of her prayers . . . she did not need it for herself but has given it all into the hands of the Church who distributes it to souls in the form of indulgences. . . . Thus when the satisfaction of Mary is applied to the poor debtors of Purgatory, they have a kind of right to deliverance since they pay their debt with what is their own. . . . She obtains also that her children on earth pray for her clients in Purgatory, offer good works for their intention, and have the sacrifice of redemption offered for them. . . . She can obtain also that prayers destined for souls who do not need them or who are not capable of benefitting by them should be made available for the children of her special love."

In the same spirit a Doctor of the Church, St. Peter Damien, assures us that on every Feast of the Assumption many thousands of the souls captive in Purgatory are delivered. St. Alphonsus de Liguori adds, quoting Denis the Carthusian, that such liberations take place most particularly on the Feasts of Christmas and the Resurrection. Though these testimonies do not impose themselves on our faith for acceptance, they point to and, in their own way, explain Mary's mediation.

SOME DIFFICULTIES

The objection has been raised: the mother of a king has not the right to dispose of his treasures; neither then has Mary the right to dispose of the graces which Jesus has merited.

There is no parity between the two cases. The mother of a king is simply the mother of a child who subsequently became king and, more usually than not, she has not cooperated closely with him in his government. But Mary is Mother of God the Redeemer, Universal King, by the simple fact of her divine maternity. She has given Him His human nature and she has been intimately associated with Him in His redemptive sufferings and in His merits. She shares therefore in His spiritual royalty and has the right, in subordination to Him, to dispose of the graces He—and she—acquired.

Another objection is that Mary's universal mediation is no more than becoming or appropriate, and therefore cannot be affirmed with certainty.

We may answer that the becomingness or appropriateness in question is more than ordinary. It is based on Mary's divine maternity, on her spiritual motherhood of men, on her union with the Redeemer, and is so connected with them that its opposite would be unbecoming. It is con-natural to the spiritual mother of all men to watch over them and to distribute to them the fruits of the Redemption. And—what is still more conclusive—Tradition shows that God has in fact disposed the scheme of our Redemption in accordance with this becomingness. This is the teaching of the Fathers of the Church, of the Doctors of the Middle ages, and of later theologians, who all in their own way have thrown the universality of Mary's mediation into clearer relief.

CONCLUSION

There is therefore no serious difficulty against defining Mary's universal mediation as a dogma of faith, provided it is understood as we have indicated: as a mediation subordinate to that of Jesus and depending on His merits; as a mediation which is not considered to add any necessary complement to Jesus' merits, the value of which is infinite and superabundant, but which shows forth the influence and fruitfulness of those same merits in a soul fully conformed to Him. As a matter of fact, the difficulties which are raised against Mary's universal mediation are much less serious than those raised against the Immaculate Conception in the 13th century. The Assumption is usually looked on as capable of definition; Mary's universal mediation seems to be even more certain, if we consider the principles which underlie it: the divine maternity, the motherhood of men, and the venerable tradition which contrasts Mary and Eve. Since this is so, and since the ordinary magisterium of the Church makes Mary's universal mediation to be theologically certain, we can only hope and pray that it be one day defined so as to increase devotion to her who is the watchful and loving Mother of all men.

Mary's mediation in no way obscures that of Jesus. Her mediation is but a share in His: her merits have been acquired under His influence, and it is He Who confers on her the dignity of being a cause in the order of salvation and sanctification. History shows, too, that devotion to Mary has been lost

by those nations precisely which have lost their devotion to Jesus, whereas those which have been the first to honor Mary have also been the first in their faith in the redemptive Incarnation. When Dr. Pusey objected to Fr. Faber's statement: "Jesus is obscured because Mary is kept in the background," Newman answered that its truth "exemplified in history might be abundantly illustrated . . . from the lives and writings of holy men in modern times." As examples he quoted St. Alphonsus de Liguori and St. Paul of the Cross, in whom ardent love of Jesus was inseparable from great devotion to Mary.

True cult of Mary, like her action upon us, leads surely to intimacy with Jesus. Far from diminishing our intimacy with Jesus it increases it, just as the action of the Holy Soul of Jesus increases our union with the Blessed Trinity.

The universality of Mary's mediation will become more evident when we consider in the next chapter that she is Mother of Mercy.

Chapter 4

MOTHER OF MERCY

We shall consider this title first in itself and then in its principal manifestations which are, as it were, that radiance of the revealed doctrine concerning Mary which makes it accessible to all minds.

Article 1

GREATNESS AND POWER OF THIS MATERNITY

The title of Mother of Mercy is one of Mary's greatest. Mercy is not the same thing as mere emotional pity. Mercy is in the will, pity is but a good inclination of the sensibility. Pity, which does not exist in God who is a pure spirit, leads us to suffer in unison with our neighbor as if we felt his suffering in ourselves. It is a good inclination but usually a timid one, being accompanied by fear of harm to ourselves and often helpless to render effective aid.

Mercy, on the contrary, is a virtue of the will, and, as St. Thomas so well notes, whereas pity is found most of all in feeble and timid beings who feel themselves threatened by the evil that has befallen their neighbor, mercy is the virtue of the powerful and the good, who are capable of giving real assistance. That is why it is found in God especially: as one of the prayers of the Missal says, it is one of the greatest manifestations of His power and goodness. St. Augustine remarked that it was more glorious for God to obtain good out of evil than to create out of nothing: it is greater to convert a sinner by giving him grace than to make a whole universe, Heaven and earth, out of nothing.

As Mother of Mercy, Mary reminds us that if God is Being, Truth and Wisdom, He is also Goodness and Love, and that His infinite Mercy, which

is the radiation of His Goodness, flows from His love and anticipates His vindicatory Justice which proclaims the inalienable right that the Supreme Good has to be loved above every other object: “Mercy exalteth itself above justice” (James 2:13). She teaches us, though, that if mercy is not justice it is not opposed to it as injustice is, but unites itself to it and goes beyond it: most of all in pardoning, for to pardon is to go beyond what is demanded by justice in forgiving an offence.

Every work of divine justice presupposes a work of mercy or of gratuitous goodness. If God can be said to owe anything to a creature it is because of some preceding gratuitous gift: if He owes a recompense to our merits, it is because He has first of all given the grace to merit, and if He punishes, it is after having given us the assistance which made the accomplishment of His precepts really possible, for He never commands the impossible.

Mary reminds us too that God often gives us His mercy more than we need, more than He is obliged in justice to Himself to give; that He gives us more than we merit—the grace of Holy Communion, for example, which is not merited. She tells us that mercy is wedded to justice in the trials of this life. Trials are a medicine to heal us, to make us right again, to bring us to the good. She tells us finally that mercy often makes the good inequality of natural conditions among men by a correspondingly more generous distribution of graces. This is the lesson of the different beatitudes—of the poor, the meek, those that weep, those that hunger and thirst after justice, those that are merciful, those that are pure of heart, those that are peacemakers, those that suffer persecution for justice.

Article 2

PRINCIPAL MANIFESTATIONS OF MERCY

Mary manifests herself as Mother of Mercy by being “Health of the sick, Refuge of sinners, Comforter of the afflicted, Help of Christians.” The gradation of titles here is very beautiful. It shows that Mary is merciful to those who are sick of body in order to benefit their souls, and that afterwards she consoles them in their afflictions and strengthens them in the midst of all the difficulties they have to overcome. Among creatures no one

is higher than Mary, and yet no one is more approachable, more helpful, and more gentle.

HEALTH OF THE SICK

Mary is Health of the Sick by the many providential or miraculous cures which have been obtained through her intercession in Christian sanctuaries up to our own days. So many have these cures been that it may be said that Mary is a fathomless ocean of miraculous healing. But it is to help the infirmity of the soul that she cures the body. Her most important cures are those of the four spiritual wounds which we have suffered as a result of original sin and our personal sins—the wounds of concupiscence, of weakness, of ignorance, and of malice.

She heals concupiscence—a wound of our sensibility—by diminishing the ardour of our passions and by breaking our sinful habits. She helps the sinner to begin to will what is right with sufficient firmness to enable him to reject evil desires as well as the appeal of honors and riches. In this way she cures the concupiscence of the flesh and that of the eyes.

She heals the wound of weakness too, our feeble pursuit of the good, our spiritual sloth. She makes the will constant and firm in its practice of virtue and helps it to despise the attractions of this world by throwing itself into the arms of God. She strengthens those who falter and lifts up those who have fallen.

She heals the wound of ignorance by lighting up the darkness of our minds and providing us with the means to escape from error. She calls to our minds the simple and profound truths of the Our Father, thereby lifting our minds up to God. St. Albert the Great, to whom she gave the light to persevere in his vocation and to see through the wiles of Satan, said frequently that she preserves us from losing rightness and firmness of judgement, that she helps us not to grow weary in the pursuit of truth, and that she leads us eventually to a relish of the things of God. He himself speaks of her in his Mariale with a spontaneity, an admiration, a freshness, and a fluency which are rarely found in the works of great students.

She heals us finally of the wounds of malice, by urging our wills Godwards, sometimes by gentle advice, sometimes by stern reproaches. Her sweetness checks anger, her humility lowers pride and restrains the temptations of the evil one. In a word, she heals us of the wounds which we

bear as a result of original sin and which our personal sin has made all the more dangerous.

Sometimes this healing power of hers works in a miraculous manner by producing its effects instantaneously. An example is the conversion of the young Alphonse Ratisbonne, at the time a Jew and far removed from faith, who visited the Church of Sant' Andrea delle Frate in rome through curiosity. Mary appeared to him there, as she is represented on the miraculous medal, with rays of light issuing from her hands. She indicated gently to him to kneel. He obeyed, and while on his knees lost the use of his senses. When he returned to himself he expressed an intense desire for baptism. He was baptised and later, with his brother who had been converted before him, founded the congregation of the Fathers of Sion and that of the religious of Sion, to pray, suffer, and work for the conversion of the Jews, saying daily at Holy Mass: 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.'

REFUGE OF SINNERS

Mary is Refuge of sinners precisely because she is so holy. Detesting sin, which does so much harm to souls, she welcomes sinners and wishes to bring them to repentance. She frees them from the bonds of sinful habits by the power of her intercession; she obtains their reconciliation with God by the merits of her Son, and reminds the sinner too of the same merits. Once converted to penance, she protects them from Satan, against everything which could lead to fresh falls. She helps them to learn of the sweetness of penance.

To her, after Jesus, all sinners now in Heaven owe their salvation. she has converted them in countless numbers, especially in places of pilgrimage—at Lourdes where she issued the invitation 'Pray and do penance,' and more recently at Fatima where the number of conversions since 1917 is known to God alone. There are many condemned criminals who owe to her their conversion at the last moment. She has inspired the foundation of religious orders consecrated to prayer, to penance, and to the apostolate of the conversion of sinners—those of St. Dominic and of St. Francis, the Redemptorists, the Passionists, and so many others.

What sinners are there whom she does not protect? Those only who despise God's mercy and call down His malediction on themselves. She is

not the refuge of those who are obstinate in evil—in blasphemy, perjury, impurity, avarice, pride of the spirit. But even to them she sends from time to time, as Mother of Mercy, graces for the mind and the will, and if they accept them they will be led from grace to grace and finally to the grace of conversion. To such she has suggested by the lips of a dying mother that they should say at least one Hail Mary each day, and often it has happened that though they made no other effort than that to change their lives, the feeble spark of good-will it contained was enough to light them the way to a worthy and penitent reception of the Last Sacraments. They have been laborers of the last hour, called and saved by Mary. For almost two thousand years Mary has been the Refuge of sinners.

CONSOLER OF THE AFFLICTED

Mary was Consoler of the afflicted even during her lifetime on earth: she consoled Jesus by her presence on Calvary; she consoled the Apostles in the difficulties they encountered in the conversion of the pagan world and obtained for them a spirit of strength and holy joy in their sufferings. she must have helped St. Stephen by her prayers when he was being stoned to death. She obtained for many the grace to bear persecution patiently and without giving way to cowardly fears. Though she saw the dangers which threatened the infant Church, she did not waver; her face was ever calm, for her soul was tranquil and confident. Sadness never took possession of her heart. What we know of the intensity of her love of God assures us that she remained joyous in affliction, that she did not complain of poverty or privations, that insults had no power to alter her meekness. Her example alone was enough to hearten many a despairing soul.

REFUGE OF SINNERS

She has given to many saints the grace to be themselves consolers of the afflicted. Such were St. Genevieve, St. Elizabeth, St. Catherine of Siena, St. Germaine de Pibrac.

The Holy Ghost is called the Consoler most of all because He makes us shed tears of contrition, thereby to wash away our sins and to restore to us the joy of God’s friendship. For the same reason the Blessed Virgin is the

Consoler of the afflicted when she prompts them to bewail their sins from a contrite heart.

Mary is particularly attentive to our inner or secret poverty: she knows how little are the resources of our hearts, and she comes to their assistance. She knows all the needs of soul and body: she has consoled Christians in persecution, she has delivered the possessed, she has assisted and strengthened the dying by calling to their minds the infinite merits of her Son. She lessens the rigours of purgatory, and obtains for those who suffer there that the faithful pray and have Masses offered on their behalf.

In a sense, Mary's power as Consoler of the afflicted is felt even in the terrible regions of Hell. For St. Thomas tells us that the damned suffer less than they deserve since the divine mercy is found even in the strictest exercise of divine justice. Whatever less there is of the pain of Hell than there might be is due to the merits of Jesus and Mary. St. Odilon of Cluny says in his sermon on the Assumption that the Feast of the Assumption brings some slight alleviation of pain to Hell's torments.

Mary has been Consoler of the afflicted throughout the ages in the most varied ways, because of her great knowledge of the many trials through which men pass.

HELP OF CHRISTIANS

Mary is Help of Christians. Help is an effect of love, and Mary has now consummated fulness of love. She loves the souls redeemed by Jesus' blood. She helps them in their difficulties and assists them in the practice of the virtues.

The thought of Mary, Help of Christians, inspired St. Bernard in the well-known passage from his second homily on the Missus est: "If the tempest of temptation rages, if the torrent of tribulation carries you away, look at the star, look at Mary. If the waves of pride and ambition, of slander and jealousy, buffet you and almost engulf you, look at the star, look at Mary. If anger or avarice or passion tosses the frail bark of your soul and threatens to wreck it, look once more at Mary. Let her memory be ever in your heart and her name always on your lips. . . . But remember that to obtain the benefit of her prayer you must walk in her footsteps."

She has been the refuge of whole peoples as well as of individuals. Baronius tells us that Narses, general of the armies of the Emperor

Justinian, delivered Italy by her help in 553 from bondage to Totila the Goth. He tells us also that in 718 the city of Constantinople was rescued from the Saracens, who had been put to flight on many similar occasions already with Mary's aid. In the 13th century, Simon, Count of Montfort, defeated a powerful Albigensian army near Toulouse while St. Dominic invoked the Mother of God. In 1513 the city of Dijon was delivered miraculously through her. On the 7th of October, 1571, a Turkish fleet, much more numerous and powerful than that of the Christians, was defeated at Lepanto, at the entrance of the Gulf of Corinth, through the help of Mary invoked in the Rosary. Finally, Mary's title of Our Lady of Victories reminds us how often her intervention on the battlefield has been decisive in favor of oppressed Christian peoples.

The four invocations of the Litany of Loreto, Health of the Sick, Refuge of Sinners, Consoler of the Afflicted, Help of Christians, recall unceasingly to the faithful how truly Mary is Mother of divine grace and Mother of mercy. The Church sings that she is our hope: Hail, Holy Queen, Mother of mercy! Hail, our life, our sweetness, and our hope! She is our hope in that she has merited, with her Son, all that we need of help from God, and in that she transmits it to us now by her intercession. She is therefore the living expression and the instrument of God's helping Mercy, which is the formal motive of our hope. Confidence, or firm hope, is certain in its tendency to salvation, and its certainty increases with our growth in grace. This certainty derives from our faith in the goodness of God Omnipotent and in His fidelity to His promises. Thence comes that almost constant sense of His watchful Paternity which we find in the saints. Mary's influence leads us gradually to this perfect confidence and makes its motive ever more clear.

Mary is even called Mother of holy joy and Cause of our joy, for she obtains for generous souls the hidden treasure or spiritual joy in the midst of suffering. She obtains for them from time to time the grace to carry their cross with joy after the Lord Jesus. She initiates them into love of the cross. And even though they do not experience that joy uninterruptedly themselves, she helps them to communicate it to others.

NOTE

In La Vie Spirituelle, April, 1941, p. 281, Fr. M. J. Nicolas, O.P., has written of a holy religious, Fr. Vayssiere, who died as Provincial of the Dominicans at Toulouse: “The grace of intimacy with Mary that he received, he owed first of all to the state of littleness to which he had been reduced and to which he had consented. But he owed it as well to his Rosary. During the long days of solitude at Sainte-Baume, he had acquired the habit of saying several Rosaries in the day, sometimes as many as six. He often said the whole of it kneeling. And it was not a mechanical and superficial recitation: his whole soul Went into it, he delighted in it, he devoured it, he was persuaded that he found in it all that one could seek for in prayer. ‘Recite each decade,’ he used to say, ‘less reflecting on the mystery than communicating through the heart in its grace, and in the spirit of Jesus and Mary as the mystery presents it to us. The Rosary is the evening Communion (elsewhere he calls it the Communion of the whole day) and it translates into light and fruitful resolution the morning Communion. It is not merely a series of Ave Marias piously recited; it is Jesus living again in the soul through Mary’s maternal action.’ Thus he lived in the perpetually moving cycle of his Rosary, as if‘surrounded’ by Christ and by Mary, communicating, as he said, in each of their states, in each aspect of their grace, entering thus into and remaining in the depth of God’s Heart: ‘The Rosary is a chain of love from Mary to the Trinity.’ One can understand what a contemplation it had become for him, what a way to pure union with God, what a need, like to that of Communion.”

Chapter 5

MARY’S UNIVERSAL QUEENSHIP

In the language of the Church, both in the Liturgy and in her universal preaching, Mary is not only Mother and Mediatrix but Queen of all men and even of the angels and the whole universe. In what sense is she a queen? In a true or in a merely metaphorical sense? It should be recalled first that God alone has universal kingship over all things through His Essence: He governs all things and leads them to their end. Jesus and Mary share in this Divine Kingship. Even as man, Jesus shares in it for three reasons: because of His Divine Personality, because of His fulness of grace which overflows on men and angels, and because of His victory over sin, Satan and death. He is King of all men and of all creatures including the angels, who are “His angels.” Thus He says (Mark 13:26): “And then they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds, with great power and glory. And then shall He send his angels . . . For Jesus is Son of God by nature, whereas the angels are but God’s servants and adopted sons. Jesus has said too of Himself: “All power is given to me in Heaven and on earth” (Matt. 28:18), and we read in the Apocalypse that He is “King of Kings and Lord of Lords.” (Apoc. 19:16).

Article 1

HER QUEENSHIP IN GENERAL

Can it be said of Mary, since her Assumption especially, and her crowning in Heaven, that she shares in God’s universal Kingship in the sense that she is Queen of all creatures in subordination to Christ?

She could certainly be called a queen in the wide sense of the term by reason of her spiritual qualities and her fulness of grace, of glory and of

charity which raise her above all other creatures. It is quite customary to use the words king and queen to designate persons of such eminence. Her motherhood of Christ the King would also entitle her to be called a queen—still in a wide sense of the term at least.

But would it not appear that she is a queen in the literal sense of the term by the fact of having received royal authority and power? Has she not, in dependence on Jesus and through Him, not only a primacy of honor in regard to the angels and saints, but a real power to command both angels and men? This is, in fact, what emerges from an examination of Tradition as expressed in the preaching of the universal Church, the Fathers, the statements of different Popes, the Liturgy. There are theological arguments besides in favor of the affirmative answer.

The Fathers of both East and West referred frequently to Mary under such titles as Domina, Regina, Regina nostrae salutis. It is sufficient to mention a few among many: in the East SS. Ephrem, Germanus of Constantinople, Andrew of Crete, John Damascene; in the West St. Peter Crysologus, the Venerable Bede, St. Anselm, St. Peter Damien, St. Bernard. The same titles occur also in the works of the theologians: in St. Albert the Great, St. Bonaventure, St. Thomas, Gerson, St. Bernadine of Siena, Denis the Carthusian, St. Peter Canisius, Suarez, St. Grignon de Montfort, St. Alphonsus. Different Sovereign Pontiffs have often used the same expressions.

The Roman and Oriental liturgies proclaim Mary Queen of the heavens, Queen of angels, Queen of the world, Queen of all the saints. Among the mysteries of the Rosary commonly recited in the Church since the 13th century the last of all is that of the crowning of Our Lady in Heaven—a scene represented in one of Fra Angelico’s most beautiful frescoes.

The arguments adduced by theologians to prove that Mary has universal Queenship in the proper, non-metaphorical sense of the term, are conclusive. They may all be reduced to the following three.

Jesus Christ is King of the universe, even as man, in virtue of His Divine Personality. But Mary as Mother of God made man belongs to the hypostatic order and shares in the dignity of her Son, for His Person is the term of her divine motherhood. Hence she shares connaturally, as Mother of God, in His universal Kingship. Our Blessed Lord owes it to Himself to recognise His Mother’s title in gratitude.

A second argument is that Jesus is King of the universe by His fulness of grace and by the victory which He won over Satan and sin by His humility and His obedience unto death, “For which cause God hath exalted Him. . . .” But Mary was associated with His victory over Satan, sin, and death by her union with Him in His humiliations and sufferings. She is therefore really associated with Him in His Kingship.

The same conclusion may be arrived at by considering the close relationship in which Mary stands to God the Father, of whom she is the first adoptive daughter and the highest in grace, and God the Holy Ghost through whose operation the word took flesh in her womb.

It has been objected that the mother of a king, the queen-mother, is not by that simple fact queen in the strict sense of the term: she has nothing of royal power. Neither then has Mary. We have answered this objection already. There is no parity between the two cases. A queen-mother is simply the mother of a child who later became king. But Mary is the mother of Him who from the instant of His conception is King of the universe by His hypostatic union and His fulness of grace. Besides, Mary was associated closely with the victory by which He obtained universal kingship as a right of conquest, even though He possessed it already as Son of God. Mary is therefore associated with His Kingship in a true, even if in a subordinate, manner.

Many consequences follow from this truth. As universal King, Jesus has power to establish and promulgate the New Law, to propose revealed doctrine, to judge the living and the dead, to give souls sanctifying grace and all the virtues. Mary shares in this universal kingship especially by dispensing in an interior and hidden manner the graces which she merited in dependence on Jesus. She participates in it exteriorly also by the fact that she gave on earth the example of all the virtues, that she helped to enlighten the Apostles, and that she continues to enlighten us when, for example, she manifests herself exteriorly in sanctuaries such as those of Lourdes, La Salette, and Fatima. Theologians note that she does not seem to share in any special way in the royal judicial power of inflicting punishment for sin, for Tradition calls her not the Mother of justice but the Mother of mercy, a title which is hers in virtue of her mediation of all graces. Jesus seems to have kept to Himself the reign of justice as is becoming Him who is the “judge of the living and the dead.”

Mary has a radical right to universal queenship by the fact of her divine motherhood, but the divine plan was that she should merit it also by her union with her suffering Son, and that she should not exercise it fully before being crowned queen of all creation in Heaven. Her royalty is spiritual and supernatural rather than temporal and natural, though it extends in a secondary way to temporal affairs considered in their relation to salvation and sanctification.

We have seen how Mary exercises her queenship on earth. She exercises it in Heaven also. The essential glory of the blessed depends on Jesus' merits and hers. She contributes to their accidental glory—as well as to that of the angels—by the light she communicates to them, and by the joy they have in her presence and in the realization of what she does for souls. To both the angels and the saints she manifests Christ's plan for the extension of His Kingdom.

Mary's queenship extends to purgatory, for she prompts the faithful on earth to pray for the souls detained there and to have Masses offered for them. She herself offers their prayers to God, thereby increasing their value. She applies the fruits of the merits of Jesus and of herself to the Holy Souls in Jesus' name.

Her queenship extends to the demons too who are obliged to recognise her power, for she can make their temptation cease, can save souls from their snares, and can repulse their attacks. "The demons suffer more," says St. Grignon de Montfort, "from being conquered by the humility of Mary than by the Omnipotence of God." Her reign of mercy extends to Hell itself, as we have seen, in the sense that the lost souls are punished less than they deserve, and that on certain days—including possibly the Assumption—their sufferings become less fearful.

Thus Mary's queenship is truly universal. There is no region to which it does not extend in some way.

Article 2

SPECIAL ASPECTS OF MARY'S QUEENSHIP

Mary's universal queenship comes home to us in a more concrete form if we consider its different aspects as presented in the Litany of Loreto: Queen

of angels, of patriarchs, of prophets, of martyrs, of confessors, of virgins, of all the saints, of peace.

QUEEN OF ANGELS

Mary is Queen of the angels since her mission is higher than theirs. They are but servants, whereas she is the Mother of God. She is as much above them as the word “mother” surpasses the word “servant.” She alone with the Father can say to Jesus: “Thou art my Son, I have begotten thee.”

She is higher than the angels also by her fulness of grace and glory, which surpasses that of all the angels united. She is purer than they, for she has received purity for others as well as for herself. She was more perfect than they and more prompt in her obedience to God’s commandments and in following His counsels. By her co-operation in the redemption she merited de congruo for the angels themselves the accidental graces by which they help us to save our souls and the joy which they experience in doing so.

As Justin of Miechow well remarks, if the angels have served Our Lord, how much more did not Mary serve Him, she who conceived and bore Him, who cared for Him, who carried Him into Egypt to escape Herod’s anger?

She surpasses the angels in this also, that they have each care of one soul or one community, but she is the guardian of all men and of earth in particular. She is, more than they, the messenger of God who brought us not a created word but the Uncreated Word.

Archangels are appointed to protect this or that city: Mary protects all cities and all churches in them. Principalities are the custodians of provinces: Mary has the whole Church under her protection. Powers repel demons: Mary has crushed the serpent’s head; she is terrible to the demons by the depth of her humility and the ardour of her charity. Virtues perform miracles as God’s instruments: but the greatest miracle was to conceive the Incarnate Word for our salvation. Dominations command the lower angels: Mary commands all the heavenly choirs. The Thrones are those angels in whom God dwells in a specially intimate way: Mary, who gave birth to Jesus, is the Seat of Wisdom, and the Blessed Trinity reside in her more familiarly than in the highest angel—that is to say, in a way proportionate to her consummated grace.

She surpasses even the Cherubim and Seraphim. The Cherubim shine with the splendor of their knowledge: but Mary has penetrated deeper than they into the divine mysteries since she has the light of glory in a degree far above theirs. She has carried in her womb Him in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. She lived with Him for thirty years on earth, and in Heaven she is nearest of all to Him.

The Seraphim burn with the flame of love: but more ardent still is the living flame of Mary's charity. She loves God more than all creatures together, for she loves Him not only as Creator and Father but as her Infant and her treasured Son.

She is therefore the Queen of angels. They serve her faithfully, surround her with veneration, marvel at her tender solicitude for each one of us and for the whole Church. Her charity, her zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls are the objects of their intense admiration.

Such is the substance of Justin of Miechow's treatise on Mary, Queen of Angels.

QUEEN OF PATRIARCHS

The superiority of Mary to Adam in the state of innocence is clear from all that has been said thus far. She was higher in grace than he, and had as well the principal effects of original justice: subordination of the sensibility to the higher faculties, and subordination of these latter to God. Mary's charity was greater from the first instant of her conception than that of Adam in the state of innocence, and she had in addition the special grace of freedom from all sin however slight, even though she was conceived in passible and mortal flesh.

Her intimacy with God was much closer than that of Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, or Joseph. Abraham's most heroic act was that of preparing himself to immolate his son Isaac, the son of the promise. It was far more for Mary to offer Jesus who was dearer to her than her own life: nor did an angel come to arrest Jesus' immolation as one did in the case of Isaac. Her title of Mother of God, her charity and the heroicity of all her virtues make Mary shine as a star without compare among the patriarchs.

QUEEN OF PROPHETS

Prophecy in the strict sense of the term is the gift of knowing with certainty and predicting the future under divine inspiration. It was given to many in Old Testament times. In the New Testament St. John and St. Paul were both prophets and apostles. Sacred Scripture tells us of certain holy women also who received the gift of prophecy: Mary the sister of Moses, Deborah, Anne, mother of Samuel, Elisabeth, mother of John the Baptist.

Mary is Queen of prophets. She foretold the future in the Magnificat when she sang: “Behold from henceforth all nations shall call me blessed.” Of her the prophets spoke when they announced the mystery of the Incarnation. She bore in her womb Him of Whom the prophets spoke, and she heard from His own lips the mysteries of the kingdom of God.

She had the gift of prophecy in the highest degree after Our Blessed Lord, and at the same time she had perfect understanding of the fulness of the revelation which He communicated to the world.

QUEEN OF APOSTLES

In what sense is Mary Queen of the twelve Apostles? Her dignity as Mother of God surpasses theirs. The apostolate is a form of ministry. But according to the phrase of St. Albert which we have quoted already, Mary is not simply God’s minister since as Mother of the Saviour she is still more closely associated with Him. After the Ascension the Apostles had need of direction, of counsel, and no one was better equipped than Mary to give it to them. She consoled them in their grief at the departure of Our Lord when they felt lonely and helpless in face of the task of the evangelisation of the pagan world. Jesus had left them His mother to help them. She was for them, it has been said, a second paraclete, a visible paraclete, a mediatrix; she was their guiding star in the midst of the tempest of persecution that raged about them. She was truly a mother to them. None of them ever left her side without having been enlightened and consoled, without having been strengthened. By her example in suffering calumnies, by her experience of the things of God she sustained them in times of trial and persecution.

There was no one who could talk as she did of the virginal conception of Christ, of His birth, His infancy, His hidden life, of what took place in His soul on the cross. This is what prompted St. Ambrose to say: “It is not strange that St. John should have spoken better of the mystery of the

Incarnation than the others did; he lived at the source of heavenly secrets." He lived in Mary's company what he speaks of in the fourth gospel.

QUEEN OF MARTYRS

The title of Queen of Martyrs has been applied to Mary by SS. Ephrem, Jerome, Ildephonsus, Anselm and Bernard. The implied allusion is to her martyrdom of heart of which Simeon spoke: "Thy own soul a sword shall pierce."

Mary's grief was proportionate to her love for her Son. She suffered when He was called a seducer, a violator of the Law, one possessed by a devil; she suffered inexpressibly when Barabbas was preferred to Him, when He was nailed to the cross, when He was tortured by the crown of thorns, when He was parched with thirst; she shared in all the anguish of His priestly and victim soul. She felt as it were all the blows Jesus received in His scourging and crucifixion, for her love made her one with Him. As Bossuet exclaims: "One cross was enough to make martyrs of Him and her." They offered but one sacrifice, and since she, for her part, loved Jesus more than herself, she suffered more than if she herself had been the victim. All this she endured so as to confess her faith in the mystery of the redemptive Incarnation, and in her the faith of the Church was strong at that moment, stronger and more ardent than in all the other martyrs.

We should remember that Mary's sufferings had the same cause as her Son's—the accumulated sins of men and their ingratitude which made the sufferings to be partly of no avail. We must remember too that she suffered from the time of the conception of the Saviour, still more after Simeon's prophecy, still more as she saw the opposition to Jesus mounting, and most of all at the foot of the cross. But even then, even when her soul was inundated with grief, her zeal for the glory of God and for the salvation of souls caused her a holy joy at the sight of her Son consummating His redemptive work by the most perfect of holocausts.

Lastly, she has helped the martyrs in their torments. She is Our Lady of a happy death because of her care for the dying who call on her. Much more does she help those who die to profess their faith in the Redeemer.

QUEEN OF CONFESSORS MARY AND PRIESTS

She is Queen of all who confess their faith in Jesus for she herself confessed the same faith more than any other creature.

But we shall speak principally in this section of what she is to the priests of Our Blessed Lord. To represent Jesus truly, the priest who brings Him down on the altar and offers Him sacramentally in Holy Mass should unite himself more and more to His sentiments, to the oblation which is always living in the Heart of Jesus "always living to make intercession for us." In addition, he should, through the different sacraments, distribute the grace which is the fruit of the merits of Jesus and Mary.

Because of the work to which they are called, Mary is specially zealous for the sanctification of priests. She sees that they share in the priesthood of her Son and she watches over their souls that the grace of their ordination may bear fruit in them, that they become living images of the Saviour. She protects them against the dangers which surround them and lifts them up if they happen to stumble. She loves them as sons of predilection, just as she loved St. John who was committed to her on Calvary. She attracts their heart to herself to raise it up and to lead them to greater intimacy with Jesus, so that one day they may be able to say in all truth: "I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me."

Mary helps priests in a special way at the altar so that they may become more fully conscious of their union with the Principal Offerer. She is spiritually present at that sacramental oblation which perpetuates the substance of the sacrifice of the Cross, and she distributes to the priest the actual graces he needs to minister with recollection and in a spirit of self-donation. In that way she helps the priest to share in Jesus' victimhood as well as in His priesthood. All this means to form priests to the image of the Heart of Jesus.

With Jesus she arouses priestly vocations and cultivates them. She knows that where there are no priests there is no Baptism, no Confession, no Mass, no Christian Marriage, no Extreme Unction, no Christian life: without the priest the world returns to paganism.

Our Lord who has willed to have need of Mary in the work of salvation has willed also to have need of priests, and Mary forms them in holiness. We can see her action clearly in some of the saints who were priests—St. John the Evangelist, St. Bernard, St. Dominic, the Apostle of the Rosary, St. Bernardine of Siena, St. Grignon de Montfort, St. Alphonsus.

Mary is Queen of Virgins since she had the virtue of virginity in the most eminent degree and preserved it in the conception, birth, and after the birth of the Saviour. She teaches souls the value of virginity. It is a true virtue, a spiritual force, something more than a mere good inclination of the sensibility. She teaches them that virginity consecrated to God is higher than simple chastity since it promises integrity of the body and purity of the heart for the whole of life—a consideration which led St. Thomas to say that virginity stands in much the same relation to chastity as munificence does to simple liberality, since it is a perfect gift of self, and sign of a perfect generosity.

Mary safeguards virgins from danger, she supports them in their difficulties and leads them, if they are faithful, to great intimacy with her Son.

What is her role in regard to consecrated souls? The Church calls such souls “spouses of Christ.” It follows that Our Lady is their perfect model. Following her example they should live a life of prayer and of reparation in union with Our Blessed Lord. They should become also consolers of the afflicted, remembering that the consolation which they afford in a supernatural spirit to the suffering members of Christ is afforded to Himself and makes amends for the ingratitude, coldness, and even hatred of so many. Thus, these souls are called to reproduce the virtues of Mary and to continue in some measure her work for Our Blessed Lord and for souls.

If consecrated souls but know and follow Mary’s guidance they find through her a wonderful compensation for the privations their lives impose on them, and which, though all accepted in advance, are felt most keenly only as they come one by one, day after day. Through Mary they can aspire to a certain spiritual motherhood, which is an image of her own, in regard to all—the poor, the afflicted, sinners—who are in need of spiritual care. Our Blessed Lord alluded to that spiritual motherhood when He said: “I was hungry, and you gave me eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me to drink; I was a stranger, and you took me in: naked, and you covered me: sick, and you visited me: I was in prison and you came to me.” (Matt. 25:35–36).

Spiritual motherhood in the life of contemplation and reparation may be practised also by the apostolate of prayer and suffering which makes fruitful the exterior apostolate for the conversion of sinners and the extension of the reign of Christ. A hidden, interior apostolate can be one of great sufferings;

but Our Lady will show how to bear them and she will afford some glimpse of their effects in souls.

Another work of Mary's is to help Christian mothers to bring up their children to a life of faith, confidence in God, and love. She helps them also to win back their erring children, as St. Monica did St. Augustine.

Thus, we see the universality of Mary's Queenship. She is Queen of all the saints by virtue of her unique mission in God's providential plan, and her fulness of grace and glory. She is Queen of all the saints, the unknown as well as the known, the uncanonised as well as the canonised, the Queen of all those who strive after holiness on earth, whose trials and joys are so well known to her, and the crown of whose merits she foresees even now.

Chapter 6

TRUE DEVOTION TO OUR LADY

In this chapter we shall speak of: 1st—the cult of hyperdulia which is due to the Mother of God; 2nd—the usual forms of Marian devotion, especially the Rosary as a school of contemplation; 3rd—Consecration to Our Lady as explained by St. Grignon de Montfort; 4th—Intimate and mystical union with Mary.

Article 1

THE CULT OF HYPERDULIA AND THE BENEFITS IT CONFERS

Cult in general means honor paid in a spirit of submission and dependence to a superior because of his excellence. Whether it be merely interior, or exterior as well, cult differs according to the position or excellence of the person to whom it is paid. Since the excellence of God is infinite, He being First Principle and Supreme Master of all things, the cult to which He has a right is supreme. It is known as latria and to pay it is an exercise of the virtue of religion. This same cult is due to the Sacred Humanity of Our Blessed Lord considered as belonging to the uncreated Person of the Word, and in a relative manner it is due to crucifixes and to pictures and statues which represent Him.

Created persons who have a certain excellence are entitled to the cult called dulia: a cult of respect. Thus, in the natural order respect is due to parents, kings, teachers; in the super natural order it is due to the saints, the heroicity of whose virtues has been recognised. The latter cult paid to God’s servants honors God Himself who is revealed to the world in the saints and draws us by them to Himself.

It is commonly taught in the Church that the Blessed Virgin is entitled to a cult of hyperdulia, or supreme dulia, because of her eminent dignity as Mother of God.

NATURE AND FOUNDATION OF THE CULT OF MARY

There have been two opposed false tendencies in regard to the cult of Mary. According to the testimony of St. Epiphanius (Haer78–79) the Collyridians wished to pay her divine cult and to offer sacrifice to her. This error might be termed Mariolatry. It was of brief duration. Opposed to it is the Protestant contention that the cult offered to Mary by Catholics is a form of superstition.

To answer this charge, we must insist that the cult of latria or adoration can be and is offered to God alone. If we adore the Sacred Humanity, it is because of Its personal union with the Word; if we offer relative cult of adoration to the crucifix, it is because it represents Our Saviour, for it is quite clear that the crucifix and other representations of Our Saviour have no other excellence than that of representing Him. Were relative adoration to be offered to Our Lady because of her connection with the Word made flesh, it might easily be mistaken for adoration offered to her because of her own intrinsic excellence, and would therefore be an occasion of grave error and of idolatry, as St. Thomas remarks.

The cult due to Our Lady is therefore one of dulia. This statement is of faith, because of the teaching of the universal magisterium of the Church; hence the condemnation of the opposed propositions of Molinos. It is common and certain doctrine that Mary is entitled to a special kind of dulia known as hyperdulia, which is due to her considered as Mother of God. This doctrine is traditional. It is found quite explicitly in the works of St. Modestus in the 7th century, of St. John Damascene in the 8th, and later in the works of St. Thomas, St. Bonaventure, Scotus, Suarez and almost all Catholic theologians.

The cult of hyperdulia is due to Mary formally because she is Mother of God since the dignity of her divine motherhood belongs by its term to the hypostatic order and is therefore very much higher than that which follows upon her degree of grace and glory. If Mary had received only the fulness of grace and glory without having been made the Mother of God, if, in other

words she were higher than the other saints only through her degree of consummated glory, a special cult of hyperdulia would not be due to her.

It is the more common and more probable opinion that hyperdulia differs from dulia not in degree only but in kind, just as the divine maternity belongs by its term to the hypostatic order, which is specifically distinct from that of grace and glory.

The cult of hyperdulia is offered to Mary since she is Mother of the Saviour. But we should remember that for the same reason she is Mother of men, universal Mediatrix and Co-Redemptrix.

WHAT ARE THE FRUITS OF THIS CULT?

By rendering Mary the cult of hyperdulia we move her to look down on us with still greater love, and for our part are drawn to imitate her virtues. The cult of hyperdulia leads effectively to salvation, for Mary can obtain the grace of final perseverance for all those who pray faithfully to her for it. For this reason true devotion to Our Lady is commonly looked on as one of the signs of predestination: though it does not give absolute and infallible certainty of salvation—a possibility ruled out by the authority of the Council of Trent (Denz. 805)—it gives rise to a firm hope. This firm hope rests on Mary's great power of intercession and her special love for those who invoke her.15 In this sense St. Alphonsus asserts (The Glories of Mary, Part I, ch. viii) that it is morally impossible that they should be lost who have the desire to amend their lives and who honor the Mother of God faithfully and commit themselves to her protection. Those who have no serious desire to amend their lives cannot, of course, look on the fact that they keep up a certain appearance of devotion to Our Lady as a probable sign of predestination. But a sinner who tries to give up sin and turns to Mary for assistance will find that she will not fail him. This is the opinion of St. Alphonsus (lb., ch. I, 4) and of most modern theologians.

The cult offered to Mary in the Church confirms in a general way the foundations of our faith since it derives from the Redemptive Incarnation. Thereby it destroys heresies: "Cunctas haereses interemisti in universo mundo." The same cult leads to holiness by suggesting the imitation of Mary's virtues, and it glorifies the Son by honoring the Mother.

OBJECTIONS

The objection raised by some Protestants, that cult offered to Mary is derogatory to the divine cult, can be answered without much difficulty. The Catholic Church teaches that the cult of latria or adoration is offered to God alone and that the cult of Mary, far from taking from the cult of the Godhead, promotes it by recognising God as the Author of all the gifts with which Mary is endowed. The honor paid to the Mother redounds to the glory of the Son, and Mary the Mediatrix of all graces helps us to know better God, the Author of all graces. Experience has shown that faith in the divinity of Christ has best been preserved in those countries which are marked by devotion to Mary. All the saints were devout to both Jesus and Mary.

Since the cult of Mary is more sense-perceptible, there are some who perform its acts with more intensity than those pertaining to the cult of the Godhead. But even for such persons the cult of the Godhead is higher in kind, for they love God above all things with a love of preference (amour d'estime), and this love in its turn becomes more intense according as they advance in holiness and live a life more detached from the senses.

Confidence in Mary increases our confidence in God. The confidence that pilgrims had in the Cure of Ars, for example, increased their confidence that God would help them through his instrumentality.

It would be a real lack of humility, as St. Grignon de Montfort says, to pass over the mediators whom

God has given us because of our weakness. Far from lessening our intimacy with God, they prepare us for its increase. Just as Jesus does nothing in souls except in order to lead them to His Father, so also Mary works on minds and hearts solely in order to lead them nearer to her Son. God has willed to make continual use of Mary for the sanctification of souls.

Article 2

THE ROSARY: A SCHOOL OF CONTEMPLATION

From among the many customary devotions to Our Lady, such as the Angelus, the Office of the Blessed Virgin, the Rosary, we shall speak especially of the last in so far as it prepares us for and leads us up to contemplation of the great mysteries of salvation. After Holy Mass it is one

of the most beautiful and efficacious forms of prayer, on condition of understanding it and living it.

It sometimes happens that its recitation—reduced to that of five mysteries—becomes a matter of routine. The mind, not being really gripped by the things of God, finds itself a prey to distractions. Sometimes the prayer is said hurriedly and soullessly. Sometimes it is said for the purpose of obtaining temporal favors, desired out of all relation to spiritual gain. When a person says the Rosary in such a way, he may well ask himself in what way his prayer is like that of which Pope Leo XIII spoke in his encyclicals on the Rosary, and about which Pius XI wrote one of his last apostolic letters.

It is true that to pray well it is sufficient to think in a general way of God and of the graces for which one asks. But to make the most out of our five mysteries, we should remember that they constitute but a third of the whole Rosary, and that they should be accompanied by meditation—which can be very simple—on the Joyful, Sorrowful and Glorious Mysteries, which recall the whole life of Jesus and Mary and their glory in Heaven.

THE THREE GREAT MYSTERIES OF SALVATION

The fifteen mysteries of the Rosary thus divided into three groups are but different aspects of the three great mysteries of our salvation: the Incarnation, the Redemption, Eternal Life.

The mystery of the Incarnation is recalled by the joys of the Annunciation, the Visitation, the Birth of the Saviour, His Presentation in the Temple and His finding among the doctors. The mystery of the Redemption is recalled by the different stages of the Passion: the Agony in the garden, the Scourging, the Crowning with thorns, the Carrying of the Cross, the Crucifixion. The mystery of eternal life is recalled by the Resurrection, the Ascension, Pentecost, the Assumption of Our Lady and her crowning as Queen of Heaven.

Thus, the Rosary is a Credo: not an abstract one, but one concretised in the life of Jesus who came down to us from the Father and who ascended to bring us back with Himself to the Father. It is the whole of Christian dogma in all its splendor and elevation, brought to us that we may fill our minds with it, that we may relish it and nourish our souls with it.

This makes the Rosary a true school of contemplation. It raises us gradually above vocal prayer and even above reasoned out or discursive meditation. Early theologians have compared the movement of the soul in contemplation to the spiral in which certain birds—the swallow, for example—move when they wish to attain to a great height. The joyful mysteries lead to the Passion, and the Passion to the door of Heaven.

The Rosary well understood is, therefore, a very elevated form of prayer which makes the whole of dogma accessible to all.

The Rosary is also a very practical form of prayer for it recalls all Christian morality and spirituality by presenting them from the sublime point of view of their realization in Jesus and Mary. The mysteries of the Rosary should be reproduced in our lives. Each of them is a lesson in some virtue—particularly in the virtues of humility, trust, patience and charity.

There are three stages in our progress towards God. The first is to have knowledge of the final end, whence comes the desire of salvation and the joy to which that desire gives rise. This stage is symbolised in the joyful mysteries which contain the good news of the Incarnation of the Son of God who opens to us the way of salvation. The next stage is to adopt the means —often painful to nature—to be delivered from sin and to merit Heaven. This is the stage of the sorrowful mysteries. The final stage is that of rest in the possession of eternal life. It is the stage of Heaven, of which the glorious mysteries allow us some anticipated glimpse.

The Rosary is therefore most practical. It takes us from the midst of our too human interests and joys and makes us think of those which center on the coming of the Saviour. It takes us from our meaningless fears, from the sufferings we bear so badly, and reminds us of how much Jesus has suffered for love of us and teaches us to follow Him by bearing the cross which divine providence has sent us to purify us. It takes us finally from our earthly hopes and ambitions and makes us think of the true object of Christian hope—eternal life and the graces necessary to arrive there.

The Rosary is more than a prayer of petition. It is a prayer of adoration inspired by the thought of the Incarnate God, a prayer of reparation in memory of the Passion of Our Saviour, a prayer of thanksgiving that the glorious mysteries continue to reproduce themselves in the uninterrupted entry of the elect into glory.

A more simple and still more elevated way of reciting the Rosary is, while saying it, to keep the eyes of faith fixed on the living Jesus who is always making intercession for us and who is acting upon us in accordance with the mysteries of His childhood, or His Passion, or His glory. He comes to us to make us like Himself. Let us fix our gaze on Jesus who is looking at us. His look is more than kind and understanding: it is the look of God, a look which purifies, which sanctifies, which gives peace. It is the look of our Judge and still more the look of our Saviour, our Friend, the Spouse of our souls. A Rosary said in this way, in solitude and silence, is a most fruitful intercourse with Jesus. It is a conversation with Mary too which leads to intimacy with her Son.

We sometimes read in the lives of the saints that Our Blessed Lord reproduced in them first His childhood, then His hidden life, then His apostolic life, and finally His Passion, before allowing them to share in His glory. He comes to us in a similar way in the Rosary and, well said, it is a prayer which gradually takes the form of an intimate conversation with Jesus and Mary. It is easy to see how saintly souls have found in it a school of contemplation.

It has sometimes been objected that one cannot reflect on the words and the mysteries at the same time. An answer that is often given is that it is not necessary to reflect on the words if one is meditating on or looking spiritually at one of the mysteries. The words are a kind of melody which soothes the ear and isolates us from the noise of the world around us, the fingers being occupied meanwhile in allowing one bead after another to slip through. Thus, the imagination is kept tranquil and the mind and the will are set free to be united to God.

It has also been objected that the monotony of the many repetitions in the Rosary leads necessarily to routine. This objection is valid only if the Rosary is said badly. If well said, it familiarises us with the different mysteries of salvation and recalls what these mysteries should produce in our joys, our sorrows, and our hopes. Any prayer can become a matter of routine—even the Ordinary of the Mass. The reason is not that the prayers are imperfect, but that we do not say them as we should—with faith, confidence and love.

To understand the Rosary better it is well to recall how St. Dominic conceived it under the inspiration of Our Lady at a time when southern France was ravaged by the Albigensian heresy—a heresy which denied the infinite goodness and omnipotence of God by admitting a principle of evil which was often victorious. Not only did Albigensianism attack Christian morality, but it was opposed to dogma as well—to the great mysteries of creation, the redemptive incarnation, the descent of the Holy Ghost,' the eternal life to which we are called.

It was at that moment that Our Blessed Lady made known to St. Dominic a kind of preaching till then unknown, which she said would be one of the most powerful weapons against future errors and in future difficulties. Under her inspiration, St. Dominic went into the villages of the heretics, gathered the people, and preached to them the mysteries of salvation—the Incarnation, the Redemption, Eternal Life. As Mary had taught him to do, he distinguished the different kinds of mysteries, and after each short instruction he had ten Hail Marys recited—somewhat as might happen even today at a Holy Hour. And what the word of the preacher was unable to do, the sweet prayer of the Hail Mary did for hearts. As Mary had promised, it proved to be a most fruitful form of preaching.

If we live by the prayer of which St. Dominic's preaching is the example our joys, our sorrows, and our hopes will be purified, elevated and spiritualized. We shall see that Jesus, Our Saviour and Our Model, wishes to make us like Himself, first communicating to us something of His infant and hidden life, then something of His sorrows, and finally making us partakers of His glorious life for all eternity.

Article 3

CONSECRATION TO MARY

In his Treatise of True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin, St. Grignon de Montfort has distinguished a number of different degrees of true devotion to the Mother of God. He speaks only briefly of the forms of false devotion—that which is altogether exterior, or presumptuous, or inconstant, or hypocritical, or self-interested—since his main concern is true devotion.

Like the other Christian virtues, true devotion grows in us with charity, advancing from the stage of the beginner to that of the more proficient, and

continuing up to the stage of the perfect. The first degree or stage is to pray devoutly to Mary from time to time, for example, by saying the Angelus when the bell rings. The second degree is one of more perfect sentiments of veneration, confidence and love; it may manifest itself by the daily recitation of the Rosary—five decades or all fifteen. In the third degree, the soul gives itself fully to Our Lady by an act of consecration so as to belong altogether to Jesus through her.

WHAT DOES THIS CONSECRATION MEAN?

This act of consecration consists in promising Mary to have constant filial recourse to her and to live in habitual dependence on her, so as to attain to more intimate union with Our Blessed Lord and through Him with the Blessed Trinity present in our souls. The reason for making it lies, St. Grignon de Montfort says, in the fact that God has willed to make use of Mary for the sanctification of souls, having already made use of her to bring about the Incarnation (Treatise of True Devotion, ch. I, a. 1, no. 44).

The saint continues: “I do not think that anyone can attain to great union with Our Blessed Lord or perfect fidelity to the Holy Ghost without being closely united to Our Lady and depending very much on her help. . . . She was full of grace when she was saluted by the Archangel Gabriel, she was superabundantly filled with grace by the Holy Ghost when He overshadowed her, she so advanced in grace from day to day and from moment to moment as to arrive at an inconceivable summit of grace; on which account the Most High has made her His unique treasurer and the unique dispenser of His graces, so that she may ennoble, enrich and elevate whom she wills, and make whom she wills enter the narrow gate of Heaven. . . . Jesus is everywhere and always the Son and the fruit of Mary; Mary is everywhere the true tree which bears the fruit of life and the true mother who produces it.”

In the same chapter, a little earlier, we read: “We may apply to Mary with even more truth than St. Paul applies them to himself the words: ‘My little children, of whom I am in labour again, until Christ be formed in you. I am in labour daily with God’s children till Jesus be formed in them in the fulness of His age.’ St. Augustine says that the predestined are in this world hidden in the womb of Mary in order to become conformed to the image of the Son of God; and there she guards, nourishes, and supports them and

brings them forth to glory after death, which is the true day of their birth—the term by which the Church always speaks of the death of the just. O mystery of grace unknown to the reprobate and little understood by the predestined!" Mary is truly the mother of the just, conceiving them spiritually and bringing them forth after death by their entry into glory, which is their definitive spiritual birth. It is clear then that it would be a falling short in humility to neglect to have frequent recourse to the Universal Mediatrix whom Divine Providence has given us as our true spiritual mother to form Christ in us. It is clear also that theology cannot but recognize that it is lawful and more than lawful to consecrate oneself to Mary, Mother and Queen of all men.

Consecration to Our Lady is a practical form of recognition of her universal mediation and a guarantee of her special protection. It helps us to have continual childlike recourse to her and to contemplate and imitate her virtues and her perfect union with Christ. In the practice of this complete dependence on Mary, there may be included—and St. Grignon de Montfort invites us to it—the resignation into Mary's hands of everything in our good works that is communicable to other souls, so that she may make use of it in accordance with the will of her Divine Son and for His glory. "I choose thee this day, O Mary, in the presence of the whole court of Heaven, as my Mother and Queen. I give and consecrate to you as your slave my body and my soul, my interior and exterior possessions, and even the value of my past, present and future good actions, allowing you the full right to dispose of me and of all that belongs to me, without any exception whatever, according to your good pleasure, for the greater glory of God, in time and in eternity." This offering is really the practice of the so-called heroic act, there being question here not of a vow but of a promise made to the Blessed Virgin.

We are recommended to offer our exterior possessions to Mary, that she may preserve us from inordinate attachment to the things of this world and inspire us to make better use of them. It is good also to consecrate to her our bodies and our senses that she may keep them pure.

The act of consecration gives over to Mary also our soul and its faculties, our spiritual possessions, virtues and merits, all our good works past, present and future. It is necessary, however, to explain how this can be done. Theology gives us the answer by distinguishing what is communicable to others in our good works from what is incommunicable.

To begin at the other end of the problem, our merits de condigno which constitute a right in justice to an increase of grace and to eternal glory are incommunicable. Our merits de condigno differ in that from those of Our Blessed Lord. He was Head of the human race and could in justice communicate His merits to us. If, therefore, we offer our merits de condigno to Mary, it is not in order that she may give them to others but that she may keep them for us, that she may help us to make them bear fruit, and, if we have the misfortune to lose them by mortal sin, that she may obtain for us the grace of really fervent contrition.

There is, however, something in our good works which we can communicate to others whether on earth or in purgatory. There is in the first place the merit de congruo proprie, founded on the rights of friendship with God by grace. God gives grace to some because of the good intentions and good works of others who are His friends. There are, in the second place, our prayers; we can and should pray for our neighbor, for his conversion and his spiritual progress; we should pray also for the dying, for the souls in purgatory. There are finally our acts of satisfaction. We can make satisfaction de congruo for others, for example, by accepting our daily crosses to help to expiate for their sins. We may even, if God moves us to do so by His grace, accept the penalty due to their sins as Mary did at the foot of the Cross, and thereby draw down the divine mercy on them. This the saints did frequently. An example is found in the life of St. Catherine of Siena. To a young Sienese whose heart was full of hate of his political enemies she said: “Peter, I take on myself all your sins, I shall do penance in your place; but do me one favor; confess your sins.” “I have been frequently to Confession,” answered Peter. “That is not true,” replied the saint. “It is seven years since you were at Confession,” and she proceeded to enumerate all the sins of his life. Confounded, he repented and pardoned his enemies. Even without having all St. Catherine’s generosity, we can accept our daily crosses to help other souls to pay the debt they owe to the divine justice.

We can also gain indulgences for the souls in purgatory, opening to them the treasury of the merits and satisfactions of Christ and the saints and hastening the day of their liberation.

There are, therefore, three things which we can share with others: our merits de congruo, our prayers, our satisfaction. And if we put these in

Mary's hands for others, we ought not to be surprised if she sends us crosses—proportionate, of course, to our strength—to make us really work for the salvation of souls.

Who are those who may be advised to make this act of consecration? It certainly should not be recommended to people who would make it for merely sentimental reasons or through spiritual pride, and would not understand its true meaning. But those who are truly spiritual may be recommended to make it for a few days at first and then for some longer time; when finally they are prepared they may make it for their whole lives.

Someone may say that to give everything to Our Lady is to strip oneself, to leave one's own debts unpaid, and so to add to one's term in Purgatory. This is in fact the difficulty the devil suggested to St. Brigid of Sweden when she thought of making the act of donation to Mary. Our Blessed Lord explained, however, to the saint that the objection sprang from self-love and made no allowance for Mary's goodness. Mary will not be outdone in generosity: her help to us will far exceed what we give her. The very act of love which prompts our donation will itself obtain remission of part of our Purgatory.

Others wonder if making the act of donation to Mary leaves them free to pray for relatives and friends afterwards. They forget that Mary knows the obligations of charity better than we do: she would be the first to remind us of them. There may even be some among our relatives and friends on earth and in purgatory who have urgent need of prayers and satisfactions, without our knowing who they are. Mary, however, knows who they are, and she can help them out of our good works if we have put them at her disposal.

Thus understood, consecration and donation make us enter more fully, under Mary's guidance, into the mystery of the Communion of Saints. It is a perfect renewal of the baptismal promises.

FRUITS OF THIS CONSECRATION

"This devotion," St. Grignon de Montfort tells us, "gives us up altogether to the service of God, and makes us imitate the example of Our Blessed Lord, who willed to be 'subject' in regard to His Blessed Mother. (Luke 2:51). It obtains for us the special protection of Mary, who purifies our good works and adorns them when she offers them to her Divine Son. It leads us to union with Our Blessed Lord; it is an easy, short, perfect and safe way. It

confers great interior freedom, procures great benefits for our neighbor, and is an excellent means of assuring our perseverance." The saint develops each of these points in a most practical way.

He speaks of the easiness of the way in ch. 5, a. 5: "It is an easy way, one followed and prepared for us by Our Blessed Lord in His own coming, one where there are no obstacles in reaching Him. It is true that one can arrive at union with God by following other roads; but there will be many more crosses and trials, and many more difficulties which it will not be easy to surmount—there will be combats and strange agonies, steep mountains, sharp thorns, fearful deserts. But the way of Mary is sweeter and more peaceful.

"Even along the way of Mary there are stern battles and great difficulties; but our good Mother makes herself so near and present to her faithful servants to enlighten them in their doubts, to strengthen them in their fears, and to sustain them in their battles, that in truth the Virgin's way to Jesus is a way of roses and honey compared with all others." The saint adds that the truth of this can be seen from the lives of the saints who have followed this way most particularly: St. Ephrem, St. John Damascene, St. Bernard, St. Bonaventure, St. Bernardine of Siena, St. Francis de Sales.

A little further on in the same chapter, the saint states that Mary's servants "receive from her Heaven's greatest graces and favors which are crosses; but it is the servants of Mary who bear the crosses with most ease, merit and glory; and what would hold back another makes them advance," for they are more aided by the Mother of God, who obtains for them the unction of love in their trials. It is wonderful how Mary makes the cross at the same time easier to bear and more meritorious: easier to bear because she helps us, and more meritorious because she obtains for us greater charity, which is the principle of greater merit.

"It is a short way . . . one advances more in a little while of submission to and dependence on Mary than in many years of self-will and self-reliance. . . . We can advance with giant strides along the path by which Jesus came to us. . . . In a few years we shall arrive at the fulness of the perfect age."

"It is a perfect way, chosen by God Himself . . . The Most High descended to us by way of the humble Mary without losing anything of His divinity; it is by Mary that little ones can rise perfectly and divinely to the Most High without fear."

It is finally a safe way, for the Blessed Virgin preserves us from the illusions of the devil and our imagination. She preserves us from sentiment as well, calming and ruling our sensibility, giving it a pure and holy object, and subordinating it to the rule of the will vivified by charity.

In consecration to Mary, we find great interior liberty: this is the reward of putting ourselves in such complete dependence on Mary. Scruples are banished; the heart dilates with confidence and love. The saint confirms this point by referring to what he read in the life of the Dominican, Mother Agnes de Langeac, "who, suffering great anguish of soul, heard a voice which said to her that if she wished to be delivered and to be protected from her enemies, she should make herself at once the slave of Jesus and His Holy Mother.

. . . When she had done so all her anguish and scruples ceased, and she found herself in a state of great peace, as a result of which she determined to teach the devotion to others . . . among whom was M. Olier, the founder of the seminary of Saint-Sulpice, and many other priests of the same seminary." It was in the same seminary that St. Grignon de Montfort received his priestly formation.

"Finally, this devotion is one which procures the good of our neighbor and it is for those who live by it an admirable means of persevering in grace . . . for by it one gives to Mary, who is faithful, all that one has. . . . It is on her fidelity that reliance is placed . . . that she may preserve and increase our merits in spite of all that could make us lose them. . . . Do not commit the gold of your charity, the silver of your purity, the waters of heavenly graces, or the wine of your merits and virtues . . . to broken vessels such as you yourselves are; else you will be despoiled by robbers, that is by the demons, who watch day and night for a favorable opportunity. . . . Put all your treasures, all your graces and virtues, in the womb and in the heart of Mary: she is a spiritual vessel, a vessel of honor, a singular vessel of devotion.

"Souls who are not born of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God and of Mary, understand and relish what I say; and it is for them that I write. . . . If a soul gives itself to Mary without reserve, she gives herself to it without reserve" and helps it to find the road which leads to the eternal goal.

Such are the fruits of this consecration: Mary loves those who commit themselves to her fully; she guides, directs, defends, protects, supports and

intercedes for them. It is good to offer ourselves to her so that she may offer us to her Son according to the fulness of her prudence and her zeal.

There are also fruits of a higher order which this devotion produces, fruits which are strictly mystical, as we shall explain in the next section.

Article 4

MYSTICAL UNION WITH MARY

A soul faithful to the devotion of which we have been speaking performs all its actions through Mary, in Mary and for Mary, and attains thereby to great intimacy with Our Lord. To consider only humility, the theological virtues, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost, the following are the more precious fruits of consecration to Mary when it is lived fully: a gradually increasing participation in Mary's humility and faith, great confidence in God through her, the grace of pure love, and the transformation of the soul to the image of Jesus.

PARTICIPATION IN MARY'S HUMILITY AND FAITH

By the light of the Holy Ghost the soul consecrated to Mary will come to learn of all the evil that is in itself; it will see by experience that it is naturally incapable of every salutary and supernatural good and that through self-love it opposes many obstacles to the work of grace within it. Thus, it will attain to that contempt of self of which St. Augustine speaks in the City of God (Bk. XIV, ch. 28): "Two loves have built two cities. The love of self even to the degree of despising God has built the city of Babylon, and the love of God even to the degree of despising self has built the city of God." "The humble Mary," says St. Grignon de Montfort, "will make you a sharer in her deep humility, so that you will despise yourself and no one else, and you will love to be despised.

"She will give you a share in her faith also, which was greater than the faith of the patriarchs, the prophets, the apostles, and all the saints. She herself has that faith no longer, for she sees all things clearly in God in the light of glory; but she keeps it . . . in the Church militant for her most faithful servants.

“The more you win her love . . . the more you will have a pure faith, which will make you set little store by the sense-perceptible and the extraordinary; a faith living and animated by charity which will make you act from a motive of pure love; a faith firm and immovable as a rock which will make you constant in the midst of storms and afflictions; a faith active and piercing which, like a mysterious master-key, will give you entry to all the mysteries of Jesus, the final destiny of man, and the heart of God Himself; a courageous faith which will make you undertake and bring to achievement great things for God and the salvation of souls; a faith that will be your flaming torch, your divine life, your hidden treasure of divine wisdom, your all-powerful weapon, yours to use for the enlightenment of those who are in darkness and the shadow of death, for the inflaming of those who are lukewarm and who need the purified gold of charity, for the restoration to life of those who are dead by sin, for touching and uprooting by your sweet and powerful words the hearts of marble and the cedars of Lebanon, and finally for resisting the devil and all the enemies of salvation.” These wonderful pages are the fruit of the full development of the virtue of faith, lit up by the gifts of understanding and wisdom—fides donis illustrata, as theologians say.

GREAT CONFIDENCE IN GOD THROUGH MARY

By confidence we mean that firm hope which tends towards eternal glory with sureness of direction. According to St. Grignon de Montfort, the Blessed Virgin inspires great confidence in God and in herself: 1st—since through consecration we approach Jesus no longer alone but in the company of His Mother; 2nd—having given Mary all our merits, graces and satisfactions to dispose of as she wills, she in return will communicate to us her virtues and clothe us with her merits; 3rd—since we have given ourselves to Mary she will give herself to us. We can say to Mary: “I belong to you, O Holy Virgin. Save me.” And to God we can say with the psalmist (Ps. 130:1): “Lord, my heart is not exalted: nor are my eyes lofty. Neither have I walked in great matters, nor in wonderful things above me. No, but I keep my soul in calm and silence; as a child that is weaned (from the pleasures of the world, and resting) on its mother’s breast (and trusting in her).” Through Mary we receive more and more the inspirations of the gift of knowledge which shows us the emptiness of the things of this world and

our frailty, and contrasts them with the reward of eternal life and the divine assistance.

THE GRACE OF PURE LOVE AND OF TRANSFORMATION OF SOUL

Those who walk by the way of Mary grow in charity under the influence of her who is called the “Mother of fair love.” (Ecclus. 24:24). “She will take out of your heart every scruple and servile fear; she will expand it so that you will run in the commandments of her Son (Ps. 118:32) with the holy freedom of the children of God. She will introduce into your heart that pure love of which she has all the treasures so that you will no longer serve the God of love in fear as you have done, but in pure love. You will look on Him as your good Father whom you will try to please at all times, with whom you will converse in all confidence. If you have the misfortune to offend Him . . . you will at once ask forgiveness humbly, you will stretch out your hands to Him . . . and you will continue your journey towards Him with unshaken confidence.”

Mary’s soul will be communicated to yours to glorify the Lord and to rejoice in Him, to live the Magnificat. The faithful Christian “inhales Mary in a spiritual manner just as his body inhales the air.” So well is her spirit of wisdom communicated that her fully faithful servant and child becomes a living image of her mother.

Through this communication the soul is transformed to the image of Jesus Christ. “St Augustine calls the Blessed Virgin the mould of God, forma Dei . . , Whoever is cast in this mold is soon formed in Christ . . . Some directors are like sculptors who, placing their trust in their art, deal blow after blow with hammer and chisel to a hard stone or a piece of wood in order to shape it into a representation of Jesus, and sometimes do not succeed . . . one badly-aimed blow can botch the whole work. But those who accept the secret of grace of which I write are like the artists who work from a mould. Having found the beautiful mould of Mary, where Jesus was formed naturally and divinely, they do not trust their own industry but only the fidelity of the mould, and cast and lose themselves in Mary, becoming thus images of Christ . . . But remember that you can cast in a mould only what has been melted to a liquid: that is to say, you must destroy and melt down the old Adam, to become the new Adam in Mary.”

The way of Mary increases purity of intention. By it a person renounces his own peculiar intentions, even if good, to be lost in those of the Blessed Virgin. “One enters thus into the sublimity of her intentions which were so pure that she gave more glory to God by the least of her actions—for example, by winding her distaff, or by some needlework—than St. Laurence did on the gridiron by his martyrdom, or even all the saints by their most heroic acts . . . or all the angels. . . . By deigning to receive into her virginal hands the gift of our actions she gives them a beauty and splendor which glorify Our Blessed Lord much more than if we offered them to Him ourselves. . . . Finally, you never think of Mary but she thinks of God for you. . . . She is all she is relative to God . . . she is the echo of God, who says and repeats but ‘God.’ . . . When she is praised God is loved and praised. We give to God through and in Mary.”

GRACE OF INTIMACY WITH MARY

Some souls are favored with a special grace of union with Mary. Fr. E. Neubert, the Marianist, has gathered a number of significant testimonies in this connection. Reference must also be made to the work “Mystic Union with Mary,” written by a Flemish recluse, Marie de Sainte-Therese (1623–1677), who had personal experience of the subject on which she wrote.

Fr. Chaminade, who exercised the priestly ministry at Bordeaux with great zeal during the French Revolution and who founded the Marianists, had the same experience. He wrote: “There is a gift of the habitual presence of the Blessed Virgin even as there is a gift of the habitual presence of God—very rare, it is true, but obtainable through great fidelity.” As Fr. Neubert explains, this text refers to normal and habitual mystical union with Mary. The Ven. L. Ed. Cestac had the same gift. “I do not see her,” he said, “but I feel her presence as the horse feels the hand on the rein.” Thus these souls are conscious of the influence which Mary exercises on us continually by transmitting actual graces to our souls.

Marie de Sainte-Therese has words to the same effect: “That sweet mother has taken me under her maternal direction just as a teacher takes in her own the hand of the child she is teaching to write. . . . She remains almost uninterruptedly before my soul, drawing me to herself in so loving and motherly a manner, stimulating me, guiding me, instructing me in the way of the spirit and in the perfect practice of the virtues. And I do not lose

for a single instant the charm of her presence along with that of the God head. . . . She produces the divine life in me by an imperceptible inflow of different graces. . . . It is of the nature of love to unite itself to the object loved. . . . Thus tender, burning and unifying love draws the soul which loves Mary to live in her, to be united to her, and to other effects and transformations. . . . Then God shows Himself in Mary and by her as in a mirror." Such was a great part of the life of this servant of God.

Some souls who have had great intimacy with Mary say that they never experienced her presence in them, but rather her presence very near them—as near as possible, in fact—and that they felt a great joy at knowing of her happiness. We have known a saintly Carthusian who said: "I suffer, but she is happy."

Finally, many holy souls have had, in the midst of their sufferings, a gift of deep intimacy with Mary which was the source of their strength even though they have left no account of it. Many of them have experienced, were it only for an instant, her presence like that of a mother who peeps into the room where her children are. In such experiences she communicates an indescribable holiness, and prompts to more generous sacrifices, such as lead the soul into the depths contained in the Magnificat and the Stabat Mater.

Article 5

THE CONSECRATION OF THE HUMAN RACE TO MARY FOR THE PEACE OF THE WORLD

The gravity of the events of these latter years, since the Russian Revolution, the Spanish Civil War and the World War, shows that the faithful should have recourse to God more and more through the great mediators He has given us on account of our weakness. The horror of these events shows in a singularly striking manner to what men can come if they wish to do absolutely without God, and organise their life without Him, far from Him and against Him. When, instead of believing in God, hoping in Him and loving Him above all and our neighbor in Him, we wish to believe in humanity, hope in it, and love it in a purely earthly manner, it does not take long to show itself to us with all its blemishes and gaping wounds: the pride of life, the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes, and all the brutality that ensues from them. When, instead of making our

last end God, who can be simultaneously possessed by all, we seek our final end in earthly goods, we are not long in finding out that they divide us profoundly; for the same house, the same field, the same territory, cannot belong simultaneously and integrally to several owners. The more life is materialized, the more the lower appetites are excited, without any subordination to a superior love, the more the conflicts between individuals, classes and peoples become acute, till finally earth becomes a veritable Hell.

The Lord shows thus to men what they can be without Him. It is a striking commentary on these words of the Saviour: “Without me you can do nothing” (John 15:5); “He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth” (Matt. 12:30); “seek ye first the kingdom of God and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you.” (Matt. 6:33). The psalmist in the same way says: “Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it. Unless the Lord keep the city, he watcheth in vain that keepeth it.” (Ps. 126:1).

The two great evils of the age, as Pope Pius XI said, are on the one hand materialistic and atheistic communism according to the programme of the “God-less,” and on the other hand, an unbounded nationalism which aims at establishing the supremacy of the stronger nations over the weaker, without respect for divine and natural law. Hence the bitter conflict in which the entire world is plunged.

As a remedy for these evils, the best and most zealous among catholics in nations actually on opposite sides feel the need for common prayer which will reunite before God the souls of true Christians in all countries, to obtain that the reign of God and of His Christ be established more and more in the place of the reign of pride and covetousness. To this end, masses are daily offered along with adoration of the Blessed Sacrament; which latter has been established in different countries in so speedy and widespread a manner that one must consider it the fruit of a great grace from God.

Exterior peace will not be obtained for the world except by the interior peace of souls, bringing them back to God and working to establish the reign of Christ in the depths of their intellects, of their hearts and of their wills. For this return of straying souls to Him who alone can save them, it is necessary to have recourse to the intercession of Mary, Universal Mediatrix and Mother of all men. It is said of sinners who seem for ever lost that they must be confided to Mary: it is the same for Christian peoples who stray.

All the influence of the Blessed Virgin has as its end to lead souls to her Son, just as that of Christ, the Universal Mediator, has as its end to lead them to His Father.

Mary's prayer, especially since she was assumed into Heaven, is universal in the widest sense of the term. She prays not only for individual souls on earth and in Purgatory, but also for families and for all nations, which ought to live beneath the rays of the Gospel's light and the influence of the Church. Moreover, her prayer is all the more powerful in that it is more enlightened and proceeds from a love of God and of souls which nothing can weaken or interrupt. The merciful love of Mary for men surpasses that of all the angels and saints united, and so does the power of her intercession with the Heart of her Son.

That is why on all sides many interior souls, before the unprecedented disorders and tragic sufferings of the hour, feel the need for recourse to the redeeming Love of Christ through the intercession of Mary Mediatrix.

In many countries, especially in convents of fervent contemplative life, it is remembered that many French bishops united at Lourdes, at the second national Marial Congress, on the 27th of July, 1929, expressed to the Sovereign Pontiff their desire for a consecration of the human race to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. It is remembered also that Father Deschamps, SJ., in 1900, Cardinal Richard, Archbishop of Paris, in 1906, Fr. Le Dore, Superior General of the Eudists, in 1908 and 1912, and Fr. Lintelo, S.J., in 1914, took the initiative in the matter of petitions to the Sovereign Pontiff to obtain the consecration of the human race to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

By a collective act, the bishops of France, at the beginning of the war of 1914, in December of the same year, consecrated France to Mary. Cardinal Mercier in 1915, in his Pastoral Letter on Mary Mediatrix, saluted the Blessed Virgin, Mother of the human race, as Queen of the World. Fr. Lucas, new Superior General of the Eudists, obtained finally in a few months more than three hundred thousand signatures to hasten by this consecration the peace of Christ in the reign of Christ.

The strength that we need in the present upheaval is the prayer of Mary, Mother of all men, who will obtain it for us from the Saviour. Her intercession is very powerful against the spirit of evil which ranges individuals, classes and peoples one against the other. If a formal pact, fully consented to, with the demon, can have dire consequences in the life of a soul and send it to eternal damnation, what spiritual effect will a

consecration to Mary not have, made in a deep spirit of faith and often renewed with still greater fidelity?

One may remember how in December, 1836, the venerable cur6 of Our Lady of Victories in Paris, while celebrating Mass at the altar of the Blessed Virgin, heartbroken at the thought of the apparent failure of his ministry, heard these words: “Consecrate your parish to the Holy and Immaculate Heart of Mary,” and how once the consecration was made the parish was transformed.

Mary’s prayer for us is that of a Mother very enlightened, very loving and very strong, who watches ceaselessly over her children, over all men, called to receive the fruits of the Redemption. This is the experience of anyone who daily consecrates to Mary all his works, material and spiritual, and all his undertakings. He recovers faith and confidence when all seems lost.

Now, if the individual consecration of a soul to Mary obtains for it daily great graces of light, love and strength, what will not be the fruits of a consecration of the human race made to the Saviour by Mary herself, at the request of the common Father of the faithful, the supreme Pastor? What will not be the effect of a consecration thus made, especially if the faithful among the different peoples unite, so as to conform their lives to it, in fervent prayer often renewed at Holy Mass?

To obtain that the Sovereign Pontiff perform this act, it is necessary that a sufficient number of the faithful understand the recent lessons given us by Divine Providence. In other words, a sufficient number must have seized the meaning and the import of the consecration asked for. Otherwise it will not be able to produce the required effects. In the divine plan, trials end when they have produced the effect they were intended to produce, when souls have profited by them—just as Purgatory ends when the soul is purified.

As a saintly religious used to say: “We do not live for ourselves; we must see everything as it is in God’s plan; our present sufferings—even were they to rise to their peak and were we ourselves to be sacrificed in the disaster—gain and prepare the future assured triumphs of the Church. . . . The Church goes thus from struggle to struggle and from victory to victory, each succeeding the other until Eternity, which will be the final victory.” “Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and so to enter into His glory?” (Luke 24:26). The Church and souls must go along the same road. The

Church does not live only for a day; when the martyrs fell like snowflakes in winter, might one not have believed that all was lost? No, their blood was preparing the triumphs of the future.

In the difficult period we are going through the Church has need of very generous souls, of real saints. It is Mary, Mother of Divine Grace, Mother most pure, Virgin most prudent and strong, who must shape them.

From various sides the Lord suggests to interior souls a prayer of which the form may differ but of which the substance is always the same: “In this time when a spirit of pride pushed to the point of atheism seeks to spread itself among the peoples, O Lord, be Thou as the soul of my soul, the life of my life; grant me a deeper understanding of the mystery of the Redemption and of Thy holy self-abasement, the remedy of all pride. Grant me a sincere desire to participate, in the measure intended for me by Providence, in these salutary humiliations and make me find in this desire the strength, peace and—when Thou desirest it—the joy, to stir up my courage and the confidence of those around me.”

To enter thus practically into the depths of the mystery of the Redemption, it is necessary that Mary, who at the foot of the Cross entered into them deeper than did any other creature, should teach us interiorly and reveal to us in the words of the Gospel the spirit in which she herself lived so fully.

May the Mother of the Saviour deign by her prayer to place all the faithful of the different nations beneath the rays of these words of Christ: “The glory which thou hast given me I have given to them; that they may be one, as we also are one.” (John 17:22).

It is to be hoped that one day, when the hour appointed by Divine Providence will have come, and when souls are prepared, the Supreme Pastor, in answer to the prayers of the bishops and the faithful, will consecrate the human race to the merciful and Immaculate Heart of Mary, that she may offer us all the more appealingly to her Son and so obtain peace for the world. This would be a new affirmation of the universal mediation of the Blessed Virgin.

Let us go to her with the greatest confidence: she has been called “the hope of the hopeless,” and by going to her as to the best and the most enlightened of mothers we shall go to Jesus as to our sole and merciful Saviour.

Chapter 7

THE PREDESTINATION OF ST. JOSEPH AND HIS EMINENT SANCTITY

> "He that is lesser among you all, he is the greater."
> —Luke 9:48

One cannot write a book on Our Lady without referring to the predestination of St. Joseph, his eminent perfection, the character of his special mission, his virtues, and his role in the sanctification of souls.

HIS PRE-EMINENCE OVER THE OTHER SAINTS

The opinion that St. Joseph is the greatest of the saints after Our Lady is one which is becoming daily more commonly held in the Church. We do not hesitate to look on the humble carpenter as higher in grace and eternal glory than the patriarchs and the greatest of the prophets—than St. John the Baptist, the apostles, the martyrs and the great doctors of the Church. He who is least in the depth of his humility is, because of the interconnection of the virtues, the greatest in the height of his charity: "He that is the lesser among you all, he is the greater."

St. Joseph's pre-eminence was taught by Gerson and St. Bernardine of Siena. It became more and more common in the course of the 16th century. It was admitted by St. Teresa, by the Dominican Isidore de Isolanis, who appears to have written the first treatise on St. Joseph, by St. Francis de Sales, by Suarez, and later by St. Alphonsus Liguori, Ch. Sauve, Cardinal Lepicier and Mgr Sinibaldi; it is very ably treated of in the article "Joseph" in the Diet, de Theol. Cath. by M. A. Michel.

The doctrine of St. Joseph's pre-eminence received the approval of Leo XIII in his encyclical Quamquam pluries, August 15th, 1899, written to proclaim St. Joseph patron of the universal Church. "The dignity of the

Mother of God is so elevated that there can be no higher created one. But since St. Joseph was united to the Blessed Virgin by the conjugal bond, there is no doubt that he approached nearer than any other to that super-eminent dignity of hers by which the Mother of God surpasses all created natures. Conjugal union is the greatest of all; by its very nature it is accompanied by a reciprocal communication of the goods of the spouses. If then God gave St. Joseph to Mary to be her spouse He certainly did not give him merely as a companion in life, a witness of her virginity, a guardian of her honor, but He made him also participate by the conjugal bond in the eminent dignity which was hers." When Leo XIII said that Joseph came nearest of all to the super-eminent dignity of Mary, did his words imply that Joseph is higher in glory than all the angels? We cannot give any certain answer to the question. We must be content to restate the doctrine which is becoming more and more commonly taught: of all the saints Joseph is the highest after Jesus and Mary; he is among the angels and the archangels. The Church mentions him immediately after Mary and before the Apostles in the prayer A cunctis. Though he is not mentioned in the Canon of the Mass, he has a proper preface, and the month of March is consecrated to him as protector and defender of the universal Church.

The multitude of Christians in all succeeding generations are committed to him in a real though hidden manner. This idea is expressed in the litanies approved by the Church: 'St. Joseph, illustrious descendant of David, light of the Patriarchs, Spouse of the Mother of God, guardian of her virginity, foster-father of the Son of God, vigilant defender of Christ, head of the Holy Family; Joseph most just, most chaste, most prudent, most strong, most obedient, most faithful, mirror of patience, lover of poverty, model of workers, glory of domestic life, guardian of virgins, support of families, consolation of the afflicted, hope of the sick, patron of the dying, terror of demons, protector of the Holy Church." He is the greatest after Mary.

THE REASON FOR ST. JOSEPH'S PRE-EMINENCE

What is the justification of this doctrine which has been more and more accepted in the course of five centuries? The principle invoked more or less explicitly by St. Bernard, St. Bernardine of Siena, Isidore de Isolanis, Suarez, and more recent authors is the one, simple and sublime, formulated by St. Thomas when treating of the fulness of grace in Jesus and of holiness

in Mary: “An exceptional divine mission calls for a corresponding degree of grace.” This principle explains why the holy soul of Jesus, being united personally to the Word, the Source of all grace, received the absolute fulness of grace. It explains also why Mary, called to be Mother of God, received from the instant of her conception an initial fulness of grace which was greater than the initial fulness of all the saints together: since she was nearer than any other to the Source of grace she drew grace more abundantly. It explains also why the Apostles who were nearer to Our Blessed Lord than the saints who followed them had more perfect knowledge of the mysteries of faith. To preach the gospel infallibly to the world they received at Pentecost the gift of a most eminent, most enlightened, and most firm faith as the principle of their apostolate.

The same truth explains St. Joseph’s pre-eminence. To understand it we must add one remark: all works which are to be referred immediately to God Himself are perfect. The work of creation, for example, which proceeded entirely and directly from the hand of God was perfect. The same must be said of His great servants, whom He has chosen exceptionally and immediately—not through a human instrument—to restore the order disturbed by sin. God does not choose as men do. Men often choose incompetent officials for the highest posts. But those whom God Himself chooses directly and immediately to be His exceptional ministers in the work of redemption receive from Him grace proportionate to their vocation. This was the case with St. Joseph. He must have received a relative fulness of grace proportionate to his mission since he was chosen not by men nor by any creature but by God Himself and by God alone to fulfil a mission unique in the world. We cannot say at what precise moment St. Joseph’s sanctification took place. But we can say that, from the time of his marriage to Our Lady, he was confirmed in grace, because of his special mission.

TO WHAT ORDER DOES ST. JOSEPH’S EXCEPTIONAL MISSION BELONG?

St. Joseph’s mission is evidently higher than the order of nature—even by angelic nature. But is it simply of the order of grace, as were that of St. John the Baptist who prepared the way of salvation, and that the Apostles had in the Church for the sanctification of souls, and that more particular mission of the founders of religious orders? If we examine the question carefully we shall see that St. Joseph’s mission surpassed the order of grace.

It borders, by its term, on the hypostatic order, which is constituted by the mystery of the Incarnation. But it is necessary to avoid both exaggeration and understatement in this matter.

Mary's unique mission, her divine motherhood, has its term in the hypostatic order. So also, in a sense, St. Joseph's hidden mission. This is the teaching of many saints and other writers. St. Bernard says of St. Joseph: "He is the faithful and prudent servant whom the Lord made the support of His Mother, the foster-father of His flesh, and the sole most faithful co-operator on earth in His great design."10

St. Bernardine of Siena writes: "When God chooses a person by grace for a very elevated mission, He gives all the graces required for it. This is verified in a specially outstanding manner in the case of St. Joseph, Foster-father of Our Lord Jesus Christ and Spouse of Mary . . ." Isidore de Isolanis places St. Joseph's vocation above that of the Apostles. He remarks that the vocation of the apostles is to preach the gospel, to enlighten souls, to reconcile them with God, but that the vocation of St. Joseph is more immediately in relation with Christ Himself since he is the Spouse of the Mother of God, the Foster-father and Protector of the Saviour. Suarez teaches to the same effect: "Certain offices pertain to the order of sanctifying grace, and among them that of the apostles holds the highest place; thus they have need of more gratuitous gifts than other souls, especially gratuitous gifts of wisdom. But there are other offices which touch upon or border on the order of the Hypostatic Union . . . as can be seen clearly in the case of the divine maternity of the Blessed Virgin, and it is to that order that the ministry of St. Joseph pertains."

Some years ago Mgr Sinibaldi, titular Bishop of Tiberias and secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Studies, treated the question very ably. He pointed out that the ministry of St. Joseph belonged, in a sense, because of its term, to the hypostatic order: not that St. Joseph co-operated intrinsically as physical instrument of the Holy Ghost in the realization of the mystery of the Incarnation—for under that respect his role is very much inferior to that of Mary—but that he was predestined to be, in the order of moral causes, the protector of the virginity and the honor of Mary at the same time as foster-father and protector of the Word made flesh. "His mission pertains by its term to the hypostatic order, not through intrinsic physical and immediate cooperation, but through extrinsic moral and mediate (through Mary) co-operation, which is, however, really and truly co-operation."

ST. JOSEPH'S PREDESTINATION IS ONE WITH THE DECREE OF THE INCARNATION

St. Joseph's pre-eminence becomes all the clearer if we consider that the eternal decree of the Incarnation covered not merely the Incarnation in abstraction from circumstances of time and place but the Incarnation here and now—that is to say, the Incarnation of the Son of God who by the operation of the Holy Ghost was to be conceived at a certain moment of time by the Virgin Mary, espoused to a man of the family of David whose name was Joseph: "The angel Gabriel was sent from God into a city of Galilee, called Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David." (Luke 1:26–27).

All the indications are therefore that St. Joseph was predestined to be foster-father of the Incarnate Word before being predestined to glory; the ultimate reason being that Christ's predestination as man to the natural divine sonship precedes the predestination of all the elect, since Christ is the first of the predestined. The predestination of Christ to the natural divine sonship is simply the decree of the Incarnation, which, as we have seen, includes Mary's predestination to the divine motherhood and Joseph's to be foster-father and protector of the Incarnate Son of God.

As the predestination of Christ to the natural divine sonship is superior to His predestination to glory and precedes it, and as the predestination of Mary to the divine motherhood precedes (in signo priori) her predestination to glory, so also the predestination of St. Joseph to be foster-father of the Incarnate Word precedes his predestination to glory and to grace. In other words, the reason why he was predestined to the highest degree of glory after Mary, and in consequence to the highest degree of grace and of charity, is that he was called to be the worthy foster-father and protector of the Man-God.

The fact that St. Joseph's first predestination was one with the decree of the Incarnation shows how elevated his unique mission was. This is what people mean when they say that St. Joseph was made and put into the world to be the foster-father of the Incarnate Word and that God willed for him a high degree of glory and grace to fit him for his task.

THE SPECIAL CHARACTER OF ST. JOSEPH'S MISSION

This point is explained admirably by Bossuet in his first panegyric of the saint: "Among the different vocations, I notice two in the Scriptures which

seem directly opposed to each other: the first is that of the Apostles, the second that of St. Joseph. Jesus was revealed to the Apostles that they might announce Him throughout the world; He was revealed to St. Joseph who was to remain silent and keep Him hidden. The Apostles are lights to make the world see Jesus. Joseph is a veil to cover Him; and under that mysterious veil are hidden from us the virginity of Mary and the greatness of the Saviour of souls . . . He who makes the Apostles glorious with the glory of preaching, glorifies Joseph by the humility of silence." The hour for the manifestation of the mystery of the Incarnation had not yet struck: it was to be preceded by the thirty years of the hidden life.

Perfection consists in doing God's will, each one according to his vocation; St. Joseph's vocation of silence and obscurity surpassed that of the Apostles because it bordered more nearly on the redemptive Incarnation. After Mary, Joseph was nearest to the Author of grace, and in the silence of Bethlehem, during the exile in Egypt, and in the little home of Nazareth he received more graces than any other saint.

His mission was a dual one.

As regards Mary, he preserved her virginity by contracting with her a true but altogether holy marriage. The angel of the Lord said to him: "Joseph, son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived of her is of the Holy Ghost." (Matt. 1:20; Luke 2:5). Mary is truly his wife. The marriage was a true one, as St. Thomas explains (Ilia, q. 29, a. 2) when showing its appropriateness. There should be no room for doubt, however light, regarding the honor of the Son and the Mother: if ever doubt did arise Joseph, the most informed and the least suspect witness, would be there to defend it. Besides, Mary would find help and protection in St. Joseph. He loved her with a pure and devoted love, in God and for God. Their union was stainless, and most respectful on the side of St. Joseph. Thus he was nearer than any other saint to the Mother of God and the spiritual Mother of men—and he too was a man. The beauty of the whole universe was nothing compared with that of the union of Mary and Joseph, a union created by the Most High, which ravished the angels and gave joy to the Lord.

As regards the Incarnate Word, Joseph watched over Him, protected Him, and contributed to His human education. He is called His foster-father, but the term does not express fully the mysterious supernatural relation between the two. A man becomes foster-father of a child normally

as a result of an accident. But it was no accident in the case of St. Joseph: he had been created and put into the world for that purpose: it was the primary reason of his predestination and the reason for all the graces he received. Bossuet expressed this well: “If nature does not give a father’s heart, where will it be found? In other words, since Joseph was not Jesus’ father, how could he have a father’s heart in His regard?

“Here we must recognise the action of God. It is by the power of God that Joseph has a father’s heart, and if nature fails God gives one with His own hand; for it is of God that it is written that He directs our inclinations where he wills. . . . He gives some a heart of flesh when He softens their nature by charity. . . . Does He not give all the faithful the hearts of children when He sends to them the Spirit of His Son? The Apostles feared the least danger, but God gave them a new heart and their courage became undaunted. . . . The same hand gave Joseph the heart of a father and Jesus the heart of a son. That is why Jesus obeys and Joseph does not fear to command. How has he the courage to command his Creator? Because the true Father of Jesus Christ, the God who gives Him birth from all eternity, having chosen Joseph to be the father of His only Son in time, sent down into his bosom some ray or some spark of His own infinite love for His Son; that is what changed his heart, that is what gave him a father’s love, and Joseph the just man who feels that father’s heart within him feels also that God wishes him to use his paternal authority, so that he dares to command Him who he knows is his Master.” That is equivalent to saying that Joseph was predestined first to take the place of a father in regard to the Saviour who could have no earthly father, and in consequence to have all the gifts which were given him that he might be a worthy Protector of the Incarnate Word.

Is it necessary to say with what fidelity St. Joseph guarded the triple deposit confided to him: the virginity of Mary, the Person of Jesus Christ, and the secret of the Eternal Father, that of the Incarnation of His Son, a secret to be guarded faithfully till the hour appointed for its revelation?

In a discourse delivered in the Consistorial Hall on the 19th of March, 1928, Pope Pius XI said, after having spoken on the missions of St. John the Baptist and St. Peter: “Between these two missions there appears that of St. Joseph, one of recollection and silence, one almost unnoticed and destined to be lit up only many centuries afterwards, a silence which would become a resounding hymn of glory, but only after many years. But where the

mystery is deepest it is there precisely that the mission is highest and that a more brilliant cortege of virtues is required with their corresponding echo of merits. It was a unique and sublime mission, that of guarding the Son of God, the King of the world, that of protecting the virginity of Mary, that of entering into participation in the mystery hidden from the eyes of ages and so to co-operate in the Incarnation and the Redemption." That is equivalently to state that Divine Providence conferred on St. Joseph all the graces he received in view of his special mission: in other words, St. Joseph was predestined first of all to be as a father to the Saviour, and was then predestined to the glory and the grace which were becoming in one favored with so exceptional a vocation.

THE VIRTUES AND GIFTS OF ST. JOSEPH

St. Joseph's virtues are those especially of the hidden life, in a degree proportioned to that of his sanctifying grace: virginity, humility, poverty, patience, prudence, fidelity, simplicity, faith enlightened by the gifts of the Holy Ghost, confidence in God and perfect charity. He preserved what had been confided to him with a fidelity proportioned to its inestimable value.

Bossuet makes this general observation about the virtues of the hidden life: "It is a common failing of men to give themselves entirely to what is outside and to neglect what is within; to work for mere appearances and to neglect what is solid and lasting; to think often of the impression they make and little of what they ought to be. That is why the most highly esteemed virtues are those which concern the conduct and direction of affairs. The hidden virtues, on the contrary, which are practised away from the public view and under the eye of God alone, are not only neglected but hardly even heard of. And yet this is the secret of true virtue . . . a man must be built up interiorly in himself before he deserves to be given rank among others; and if this foundation is lacking, all the other virtues, however brilliant, will be mere display . . . they will not make the man according to God's heart. Joseph sought God in simplicity; Joseph found God in detachment; Joseph enjoyed God's company in obscurity."

St. Joseph's humility must have been increased by the thought of the gratuity of his exceptional vocation. He must have said to himself: why has the Most High given me, rather than any other man, His Son to watch over? Only because that was His good pleasure. Joseph was freely preferred from

all eternity to all other men to whom the Lord could have given the same gifts and the same fidelity to prepare them for so exceptional a vocation. We see in St. Joseph's predestination a reflection of the gratuitous predestination of Jesus and Mary. The knowledge of the value of the grace he received and of its absolute gratuitousness, far from injuring his humility, would strengthen it. He would think in his heart: "What have you that you have not received?"

Joseph appears the most humble of the saints after Mary—more humble than any of the angels. If he is the most humble he is by that fact the greatest, for the virtues are all connected and a person's charity is as elevated as his humility is profound. "He that is lesser among you all, he is the greater." (Luke 9:48).

Bossuet says well: "Though by an extraordinary grace of the Eternal Father he possessed the greatest treasure, it was far from Joseph's thought to pride himself on his gifts or to make them known, but he hid himself as far as possible from mortal eyes, enjoying with God alone the mystery revealed to him and the infinite riches of which he was the custodian. Joseph has in his house what could attract the eyes of the whole world, and the world does not know him; he guards a God-Man, and breathes not a word of it; he is the witness of so great a mystery, and he tastes it in secret without divulging it abroad."

His faith cannot be shaken in spite of the darkness of the unexpected mystery. The word of God communicated to him by the angel throws light on the virginal conception of the Saviour: Joseph might have hesitated to believe a thing so wonderful, but he believes it firmly in the simplicity of his heart. By his simplicity and his humility, he reaches up to divine heights.

Obscurity follows once more. Joseph was poor before receiving the secret of the Most High. He becomes still poorer when Jesus is born, for Jesus comes to separate men from everything so as to unite them to God. There is no room for the Saviour in the last of the inns of Bethlehem. Joseph must have suffered from having nothing to offer to Mary and her Son.

His confidence in God was made manifest in trials. Persecution came soon after Jesus' birth. Herod tried to put Him to death, and the head of the Holy Family was forced to conceal the child, to take refuge in a distant

country where he was unknown and where he did not know how he could earn a living. But he set out on the journey relying on Divine Providence.

His love of God and of souls did not cease to increase during the hidden life of Nazareth; the Incarnate Word is an unfailing source of graces, ever newer and more choice, for docile souls who oppose no obstacle to His action. We have said already, when speaking of Mary, that the progress of such docile souls is one of uniform acceleration, that is to say, they are carried all the more powerfully to God the nearer they approach Him. This law of spiritual gravitation was realized in Joseph; his charity grew up to the time of his death, and the progress of his latter years was more rapid than that of his earlier years, for finding himself nearer to God he was more powerfully drawn by Him.

Along with the theological virtues the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which are connected with charity, grew continuously. Those of understanding and of wisdom made his living faith more penetrating and more attuned to the divine. In a simple but most elevated way his contemplation rose to the infinite goodness of God. In its simplicity his contemplation was the most perfect after Mary's.

His loving contemplation was sweet, but it demanded of him the most perfect spirit of abnegation and sacrifice when he recalled the words of Simeon: "This child will be . . . a sign that will be contradicted" and "Thy own soul a sword shall pierce." He needed all his generosity to offer to God the Infant Jesus and His Mother Mary whom he loved incomparably more than himself. St. Joseph's death was a privileged one; St. Francis de Sales writes that it was a death of love. The same holy doctor teaches with Suarez that St. Joseph was one of the saints who rose after the Resurrection of the Lord (Matt. 27:52 sqq.) and appeared in the city of Jerusalem; he holds also that these resurrections were definitive and that Joseph entered Heaven then, body and soul. St. Thomas is much more reserved regarding this point. Though his first opinion was that the resurrections were definitive he taught later, after an examination of St. Augustine's arguments in the opposed sense, that this was not the case.

ST. JOSEPH'S ROLE IN THE SANCTIFICATION OF SOULS

The humble carpenter is glorified in Heaven to the extent to which he was hidden on earth. He to whom the Incarnate Word was subject has now

an incomparable power of intercession. Leo XIII, in his encyclical Quamquam pluries finds in St. Joseph's mission in regard to the Holy Family "the reasons why he is Patron and Protector of the universal Church. . . . Just as Mary, Mother of the Saviour, is spiritual mother of all Christians . . . Joseph looks on all Christians as having been confided to himself. . . . He is the defender of the Holy Church which is truly the house of God and the kingdom of God on earth."

What strikes us most in St. Joseph's role till the end of time is that there are united in it in an admirable way apparently opposed prerogatives. His influence is universal over the whole Church, and yet, like Divine Providence, it descends to the least details; "model of workmen," he takes an interest in everyone who turns to him. He is the most universal of the saints, and yet he helps a poor man in his ordinary daily needs. His action is primarily of the spiritual order, and yet it extends to temporal affairs; he is the support of families and of communities, the hope of the sick. He watches over Christians of all conditions, of all countries, over fathers of families, husbands and wives, consecrated virgins; over the rich to inspire them to distribute their possessions charitably, and over the poor so as to help them. He is attentive to the needs of great sinners and of souls advanced in virtue. He is the patron of a happy death, of lost causes; he is terrible to the demon, and St. Teresa tells us that he is the guide of interior souls in the ways of prayer. His influence is a wonderful reflection of that of Divine Wisdom which "reacheth from end to end mightily, and ordereth all things sweetly." (Wis. 8:1).

He has been clothed and will remain clothed in Divine splendor. Grace has become fruitful in him and he will share its fruit with all who strive to attain to the life which is "hid with Christ in God." (Col. 3:3).

THE ONE GOD

REVEREND REGINALD GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE O.P.

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

THEOLOGY is the queen of sciences. Many, who are not Catholics, would seriously dispute this statement, and a considerable number perhaps would emphatically deny it. Cardinal Newman, in his Idea of a University, declared and proved that no institution of learning can rightly call itself a university unless it teaches theology. St. Thomas Aquinas in the very first question of his admirable Summa theologica states and proves that theology is nobler than the other sciences. But his appeal is to men who have the faith, who believe there is a God who will reward those that seek Him, as St. Paul assures us in equivalent words.

There is a crying need at the present day for the civilized nations to give up materialism and return to belief in God and acceptance of His revelation with all that this implies. The words of G. K. Chesterton uttered twenty years ago read now almost like a prophecy. He said: "The age-long struggle of the Church against heresy, in the technical sense of the word, is over. But another great struggle is approaching. I may not live to see it. Hell's next attack will be on that doctrine on which all religion and all morality are based, the existence of a personal, infinite, and eternal God. That effort will be accompanied by a mighty effort to sweep away the standards of Christian purity." What we are experiencing at the present time confirms what Chesterton said.

One of the chief purposes of dogmatic theology is to defend the doctrine of God's existence and His revelation against all adversaries. For all Christians some knowledge of dogmatic theology will prove most beneficial. A knowledge of theology is also of great importance for the spiritual life, especially for a deepening of the interior life of communion with God. There is at the present time, even among devout Christians, too much extroversion and too little introversion. The connection between theology and the interior life is shown by Father Garrigou-Lagrange in the Introduction to his commentary on The One God. He points out that there is often too great a separation between study and prayer. He has in mind those

who believe in the supernatural, and what he says about study applies not only to theology, but to all branches of knowledge. He sounds a note of warning about sentimentalism in piety, which consists in a certain affected love that is not accompanied by a true and deep love for God and souls. Certainly the emotional element in our nature has its place in the spiritual life, but it must not be allowed to be the standard of judgment in spiritual things. St. Theresa conversed with good theologians, as she says in her Autobiography, so as not to stray from the path of truth. She is referring to theologians who sanctified their study of theology by prayer. What Father Garrigou-Lagrange says in his Introduction on the relation between study and prayer is well worth reading. St. Thomas Aquinas realized the importance of prayer in its relation to study. Whenever an intricate problem presented itself either in theology or in philosophy, he did not spend more time in study, but more time in prayer.

It should not be necessary to stress the importance of the study of theology for the clergy. Yet it is to be feared that too often among priests books on dogmatic theology are relegated to the back shelves of oblivion. After their ordination this branch of knowledge tends to become more and more a forgotten science. Undoubtedly a knowledge of dogmatic theology is of great help in preaching, and the reason why some find it difficult to preach is very often that they have forgotten their dogmatic theology. There is also the danger that many seminarians may approach the study of dogmatic theology in a perfunctory manner, viewing it merely as a study required in the seminary course, but as being of no practical value. Moral theology and canon law are considered of more importance. These sacred branches are necessary, but they should never be allowed to usurp the place of dogmatic theology. It must also be said that the study of dogmatic theology, and especially a perusal of this manual, will be of great benefit to the more educated among the laity. How beautifully St. Thomas discusses the mysteries of our faith in his compendious Summa theologica. All the fundamental principles of moral theology and canon law are to be found in this work of St. Thomas. There have been many Latin commentaries on the Summa theologica of St. Thomas, but it is the opinion of the writer of this preface that there has never been any English translation of any part of any of the Latin commentaries on the Summa theologica of St. Thomas. Without a commentary it is often difficult to grasp all that St. Thomas wishes to convey to the student, since at times he expresses his mind on

certain points with a brevity that contains richness of thought. It is to be hoped that this English translation of Garrigou-Lagrange's Latin commentary on the first twenty-six questions of the Summa theologica of St. Thomas will appeal to many of the clergy, students of theology, and the more educated among the laity.

In conclusion I wish to express my deep sense of gratitude to the Rev. Newton Thompson, S.T.D., for his very careful preparation of my manuscript for the printer, and also for his many valuable suggestions.

INTRODUCTION

THE IMPORTANCE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE THEOLOGICAL SUMMA OF ST. THOMAS

SINCE this volume is an explanation of the first part of the Theological Summa of St. Thomas, it is expedient by way of introduction, first to show the importance or value and the significance of this work from two points of view, historical and theoretical. Our reference to the history of theology concerns only those matters about which one is not allowed to plead ignorance.

1) In the history of theology generally three periods are distinguished. First we have the patristic period, which extends from the first century to the eighth, and this is chiefly apologetic, polemic, and positive. Then we have the period of the Middle Ages, from the eighth century to the fifteenth, and this is the scholastic period. Finally there is the modern period, from the sixteenth century to the present time, and this period is chiefly positive and critical.

In each successive age the progress of theology is clearly seen, since, whatever period we take, a certain function of theology comes particularly into prominence, according to the necessities of the times. In this evolution we have the manifestation of something that is truly providential.

Thus in the patristic period, theology is primarily apologetic (second century) for the conversion of the world from paganism to Christianity. It afterward becomes chiefly polemic in tone, being directed particularly against the heresies cropping up within the fold of the Church, and these heresies, such as Arianism, Nestorianism and Monophysitism, are concerned with the more important dogmas, such as the Trinity, Incarnation, and Redemption. Theology must then defend the principles of faith from the very sources of revelation, namely, from Holy Scripture and tradition. Thus theology gradually assumes the form which is called positive, that is, it gathers together the various points of revealed doctrine as contained in

Holy Scripture and divine tradition. But a systematic theology, combining all that is of faith and what is connected with it, so as to form one body of teaching, did not yet exist in the patristic period, except in certain works of St. Augustine and St. John Damascene.

But in the second period, the Middle Ages, we find systematic or Scholastic theology definitely established, which didactically and speculatively expounds and defends what is of faith, and which deduces from it theological conclusions. Thus there is gradually formed a body of teaching which, though subordinate to what is strictly of faith, includes the science of theology, as it is commonly accepted in the Church, and which transcends, by reason of its universality and certainty, the various theological systems more or less in opposition to one another. In this age the theological Summae were written, which are so called because each is a complete treatise on all subjects pertaining to theology, and according as these various subjects are considered under the light of the higher principles of faith and reason.

In the third or modern period, theology again becomes chiefly both polemic and positive against the Protestants, and apologetic against the rationalists. We may call this third period critical or reflexive, and in this period, too, we see clearly the progress made in theology, since critical reflection normally follows direct knowledge. As St. Thomas says: “human reasoning, by way of seeking and finding, advances from certain things simply understood, namely, the first principles; and again, by way of judgment returns by analysis to first principles, in the light of which it examines what it has found.” Thus in this third period, we find developing a more critical knowledge and defense, against Protestants and rationalists, of the very foundations of the faith or sources of revelation, namely, Holy Scripture and divine tradition, and as a result of this we have the fundamental treatises on revelation, the Church, the de locis (theological sources), this last being a scientific method of sacred theology.

In this we readily see the progress made in theology which, like a tree, grows and is perpetually renewed as a result of the more diligent efforts made in acquiring a knowledge of the sources, these being, as it were, the roots from which it proceeds.

2) We should note in the history of theology three brilliant epochs, each following immediately the close of an ecumenical council. Thus, after the First Council of Nicaea (325) against Arianism, in the fourth century and

the beginning of the fifth century the greater Fathers of the Church flourished. In the East, in the Greek Church, we have St. Athanasius, St. Basil, St. Gregory of Nazianzus, St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. John Chrysostom, and St. Cyril of Alexandria. In the West we have St. Hilary, St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, St. Augustine, and St. Leo the Great.

Similarly, in the second epoch, after the Fourth Lateran Council, held in the year 1215 against the Albigenses and Waldensians, the thirteenth century saw the rise of the great theologians St. Albert the Great, Alexander of Hales, St. Bonaventure, and St. Thomas.

Finally, the third brilliant epoch in the history of theology is at the time of the Council of Trent (1545-63). Even before this time there had been some celebrated theologians, such as Cajetan and Sylvester of Ferrara, and during the period of the council and afterward we have Soto, Bannez, Tolet, Medina, the Salmanticenses, John of St. Thomas, and Suarez in speculative theology. But all these theologians are commentators of the Summa of St. Thomas, even Suarez, although he pursues his own eclectic method. During the same period Cano, St. Robert Bellarmine, Natalis Alexander, and Bossuet are prominent in the art of controversy; and in exegesis we have Maldonatus, Cornelius a Lapide, and others.

In like manner, after the Vatican Council (1869-70) there is a revival of theology in the works of Joseph Kleutgen, S.J., Scheeben, Schwane, Hefele; and in the revival of Thomism we have Sanseverino, Cornoldi, S.J., Zigliara, O.P., and others. In several of his encyclicals, especially in the Aeterni Patris (1879), Leo XIII highly recommends the doctrine of St. Thomas.

From the fact that these three golden ages of sacred theology follow in the wake of ecumenical councils, it is seen how the Holy Spirit directs, by the living voice of the authoritative teaching of the Church, the progressive knowledge of dogmatic truths with regard to those matters that are of faith, and the progress of theology in questions subordinate to faith. For God, by His special providence, watches over His science, that is, theology, which in the strict sense is the science of God proceeding from divine revelation. On the other hand, in these three generally accepted periods preparations were somehow made for the ecumenical councils then held by reason of the inquiries of the theologians during these times of preparation. Thus human labor is the disposing cause, and God assisting the Church teaching is the principal cause, of the progressive understanding of dogma in matters of

faith, and also in consequence of this of the progress itself made in theology.

3) It is to be observed that in each of these three periods there is a time of preparation, a time of splendor, and a stationary time when compendiums and compilations make their appearance. Finally, there is the period of more or less pronounced decline, as in the seventh, the fourteenth, and the eighteenth centuries.

In the time of splendor, the wonderful harmony in the various functions of theology is particularly in evidence, a harmony which the human mind cannot attain suddenly. Generally speaking, during the time of preparation there are two tendencies to some extent opposed to each other, because of a certain excess in each case. Some, for instance, exaggerate the necessity of speculation, as the Alexandrian school does; others devote themselves exclusively to the positive study of Holy Scripture, as the school of Antioch does. Likewise, in the Middle Ages, in the twelfth century, Abélard, assigning too much to the role of reason, falls into many errors, while, on the other hand, several of the school of St. Victor stress too much the mystic element and do not rely sufficiently upon reason.

Contrary to this, in the golden age, especially in the thirteenth century, the doctors succeed in effecting a marvelous reconciliation between the various functions of theology, which is then perfected in its positive, speculative, and even affective aspects. For we then see all the great theologians writing commentaries on Holy Scripture; they have a profound knowledge of the teaching of the Fathers, and they are conspicuous for their wisdom or exalted perception of the mysteries that are most productive of fruit in the Christian life.

This we see is the case in the thirteenth century, in which we detect notable differences as to genius, inclination, and method among the greater theologians.

Thus St. Bonaventure in his works is generally faithful to the teaching of St. Augustine. His preference is for Platonic instead of Aristotelian philosophy, giving precedence to the will over the intellect, and he devotes himself more to mystic contemplation than to speculative theology. At the same time St. Albert the Great, who is profoundly versed in philosophical subjects, purges Aristotelian philosophy of the errors injected into it by the Arabian commentators and accommodates it to the uses of theology as an instrument that is more precise and exact than Platonic philosophy.

Finally, St. Thomas completed what St. Albert had begun. He showed the value of the foundations of Aristotelian philosophy with regard to first ideas and first principles of reason, as also in determining the constitutive principles of both natural things and human nature. Thus he determines more accurately what is the proper object of our intellect and hence what absolutely transcends our natural knowledge, and even the natural knowledge of any created intellect. Better, therefore, than any of his predecessors, St. Thomas distinguished between natural reason and supernatural faith, though he showed how they are interrelated. With wonderful logical order he expounded the various parts of theology according as it treats of God as He is in Himself, how all things proceed from Him, and how He is the final end of all things. Thus he collected all the theological material so as to form one body of doctrine, and this he did by a display of qualities rarely united in one individual, namely, with great simplicity as well as profundity of thought, and also with great rigor of logic as well as with a deep sense of the inaccessibility of the mystery. Therefore his doctrine was praised in the highest terms by the Supreme Pontiffs. Leo XIII wrote as follows: “Among the scholastic doctors, the chief and master of all, towers Thomas Aquinas, who, as Cajetan observes, because `he most venerated the ancient doctors of the Church, in a certain way seems to have inherited the intellect of all.’ The doctrines of those illustrious men, like the scattered members of a body, Thomas collected together and cemented, distributed in wonderful order, and so increased with important additions that he is rightly and deservedly esteemed the special bulwark and glory of the Catholic faith. . . .

“Moreover, the Angelic Doctor pushed his philosophic conclusions into the reasons and principles of the things which are most comprehensive and contain in their bosom, so to say, the seeds of almost infinite truths, to be unfolded in good time by later masters and with a goodly yield. And as he also used this philosophic method in the refutation of error, he won the title to distinction for himself: that single-handed he victoriously combated the errors of former times, and supplied invincible arms to rout those which might in after times spring up.

“Again, clearly distinguishing, as is fitting, reason from faith, while happily associating the one with the other, he both preserved the rights and had regard for the dignity of each; so much so, indeed, that reason, borne on the wings of Thomas to its human height can scarcely rise higher, while

faith could scarcely expect more or stronger aids from reason than those which she has already obtained through Thomas."

In the same encyclical various testimonies of the Sovereign Pontiffs are quoted, and we would draw especial attention to the crowning point of these, which is the judgment by Innocent VI, who writes: "His teaching above that of others, the canons alone excepted, possesses such an elegance of phraseology, a manner of statement, and a soundness in its propositions, that those who hold to it are never found swerving from the path of truth, and he who dares to assail it will always be suspected of error." After the thirteenth century scholastic theology gradually begins to decline, just as following the age of the greater Fathers, after the fourth and fifth centuries, we have that of the minor Fathers, from the sixth to the eighth centuries.

Even after the beginning of the fourteenth century, John Duns Scotus in many of his metaphysical questions receded from the logical method of St. Thomas and established a new school of thought. Duns Scotus disagrees with St. Thomas on two points.

1) He admits a new distinction, namely, an actual-formal distinction on the part of the object, which he considers a possible distinction between the real and the logical, whereas the Thomists say that distinction either precedes the consideration of the mind, and is real, or else it does not, and then it is logical. There is no possible intermediary. Scotus substitutes this formal distinction sometimes for the real distinction which St. Thomas holds, for instance, between created essence and existence, between the soul and its faculties, and between the faculties themselves, and thus he paves the way for nominalism. But sometimes Scotus tends toward extreme realism, substituting the formal distinction for the logical distinction which St. Thomas admits, for instance, between the divine attributes, and between the various metaphysical grades in the created being, for instance, between animality, vitality, substance, and being. Hence being is conceived as univocal, for the distinction between being and the substance of both God and creatures is formal, before any consideration of the mind. This new teaching in metaphysics does not, according to the Thomists, escape the danger of pantheism; for if the created substance and the divine substance are outside of being, since they are formally distinguished from it as objective realities, then they are non-entities, because outside of being is not-being; and so there would be but one thing. Moreover, by such formalism, Scholasticism ends in subtleties and a war of words.

2) Voluntarism is another innovation introduced by Scotus. Thus he maintains that the distinction between the orders of nature and grace depends upon God's free will, as if grace were not supernaturally essential, but only actually so. This same voluntarism makes Scotus affirm that God could have established another natural moral law regulating the duties among human beings, and so He could revoke such precepts as "thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal." Thus Scotus paves the way for the contingency and positivism of the nominalists of the fourteenth century.

About the same time Roger Bacon, a prodigy of erudition, though not free from rash opinions, here and there in his writings speaks with contempt of Aristotle's philosophy, and of St. Albert and St. Thomas, whom he calls children.

Thomas Sutton, O.P., said to be English by birth († 1310), was one among others who in his commentaries on the four books of the Sentences wrote in defense of St. Thomas against Scotus. But Peter Aureolus, O.M., Anthony Andrea, O.M., Richard of Middletown, O.M., took up the defense of Scotus' doctrine, and Gerard of Bonn, O.D.C., strove to reconcile the opinions of each school.

Throughout the fourteenth century and in the early fifteenth century, scholastic theology gradually resolved itself into a war of words, railleries, and useless subtleties. The chief reason for this decline was the revival of nominalism, which maintains that universals are mere concepts of the mind or common names. Hence not even an imperfect knowledge of the nature of things can be acquired, whether of corporeal things or of the soul and its faculties, or the foundation of the natural law, or the essence of grace and the essential distinction between it and our nature.

Thus the advocates of nominalism deny the principle that the faculties, habits, and acts are specified by the formal object. Wherefore nominalists, especially William Ockham, despising the sound and lofty doctrine of their predecessors, prepared the downfall of solid scholastic theology, and prepared for the errors of Luther, whose teachers in the schools of Wittenberg were nominalists.

In the fifteenth century a revival in scholastic theology began with John Capreolus, O.P. († 1444). who is called the prince of Thomists, with Juan de Torquemada, O.P. († 1468), who wrote the Summa de Ecclesia, with Cajetan, O.P. († 1534), the distinguished defender of Thomistic doctrine, who was practically the first in the schools to explain the Theological

Summa of St. Thomas instead of the Sentences. In this same period we have Conrad Kollin, O.P. († 1536), who wrote a series of commentaries on the Summa contra Gentes. These last mentioned theologians prepared the way for the theology of modern times, which began with the sixteenth century. Its first task was to refute the errors of this time, namely, Protestantism, Baianism, and Jansenism. These attenuated forms of Lutheranism deny the essential distinction between the order of nature and that of grace, and give a distorted notion of predestination and the divine motion.

Most prominent among the controversialists who labored to refute these errors are St. Robert Bellarmine, S.J. († 1621), Cano († 1560), and Bossuet († 1704). Among scholastic theologians, in the Dominican order we have Victoria († 1546), Soto († 1560), Bannez († 1604), John of St. Thomas († 1644), and Gonet († 1681); among the Carmelites we have the theologians of Salamanca, who wrote the best commentaries on the works of St. Thomas. In the Society of Jesus we have Toletus († 1596), Suarez († 1617), Molina († 1600), and Lugo († 1660), who proposed a different interpretation of the Angelic Doctor's teaching. Suarez, the eclectic, sought to steer a middle course between St. Thomas and Scotus, and receded less than Molina did from the Thomistic doctrine on predestination and grace.

Eminent in positive theology during this time are Batavius, Thomassin, Combefis, and others.

In the eighteenth century there was a gradual decline in theology from its former splendor. Yet we still have such Thomists as Charles René Billuart and Cardinal Louis Gotti, who defended the teaching of the Angelic Doctor with clarity and soundness of argument; St. Alphonsus Liguori, who wrote particularly on moral subjects, has received the title of Doctor of the Church.

Finally, after the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars, when peace was again restored, the study of both positive and speculative theology gradually began to flourish, and later on a special incentive was offered for the advancement of theology by the Vatican Council in its condemnation of Positivism and agnosticism. The fruits of this were seen in Modernism, condemned by Pius X. This Sovereign Pontiff, like Leo XIII, again highly recommended the study of St. Thomas' works and wrote: "But we warn teachers to bear in mind that a slight departure from the teaching of Aquinas, especially in metaphysics, is very detrimental. As Aquinas himself says, 'a slight error in the beginning is a great error in the end.' "

Finally, the Code of Canon Law, promulgated by the authority of Benedict XV in 1918, says: “Mental philosophy and theology must be taught according to the method, teaching and principles of the Angelic Doctor, to which the professors should religiously adhere.” This is stated again in the new law for the doctorate promulgated by Pius XI.

All these testimonies, whether of the Sovereign Pontiffs or of the theologians who always have recourse to the Theological Summa of St. Thomas, most clearly proclaim its value and significance. All know of the works that have been written in recent times concerning the Theological Summa.

THE METHOD OF ST. THOMAS ESPECIALLY THE STRUCTURE OF THE ARTICLES OF THE THEOLOGICAL SUMMA

Many seem to think that before Descartes wrote his Discourse on Method, traditional philosophy was not yet fully and unmistakably cognizant of the rules governing sound reasoning for the construction and teaching of knowledge. Many others, on the contrary, think that Descartes, who despised history and his predecessors, could easily have found out from these latter the true rules of method. Some logicians are even of the opinion that a discourse on method could have been written, more scientific than Descartes’, one in accordance with the teachings of Aristotle and St. Thomas. I should like in this article to explain briefly the main features of St. Thomas’ method. Let us see first, by way of a statement of the question, what several of our contemporaries have to say about it. Then we shall examine how the Angelic Doctor found the solid foundation of this method in Aristotle’s writings and how he made use of analysis in inductive inquiry, and also of synthesis in demonstration. Finally, we shall see how he closely connected analysis and synthesis in the light of divine contemplation.

ON THE VARIOUS JUDGMENTS ABOUT THIS METHOD

Nowadays there are some who say that the method of St. Thomas is too scholastic and artificial, that it is not sufficiently historical and real. It is, so they say, too much and a priori method, almost always a process of deduction and analysis, or else in the analysis itself there is too much abstraction. It even seems at times to confound logical abstractions with the

objectivity of things. Some, though not realizing that they are nominalists, nowadays assert that “St. Thomas speaks sometimes of matter and form, of essence and existence, as if these were distinct realities.” To be sure, for the Angelic Doctor, even before any consideration of the mind, matter is not form, created essence is not existence; and therefore, before any consideration of the mind, matter is distinct from form, and essence from existence. Yet form and essence are not, for St. Thomas, that which is, but that by which something is; nor does it follow that they are merely logical entities and not realities. But in these days many no longer know how to distinguish between metaphysical abstraction of direct consideration and logical abstraction of reflex consideration. Therefore they think only that which is is real, namely, the concrete singular. Hence, for them, the abstract object not only is not concrete, but it is not real. Thus the essence of man, of virtue, of society, and such things, would not be anything real, and the whole of metaphysics, not excepting the principle of contradiction, would be reduced to logic, logical abstractions, logical being, or, as they say, to extreme intellectualism that is without reality and lifeless. They would not dare to say explicitly that the abstract principle of contradiction (that something cannot at the same time be and not be) is not a law of real being but only a logical law governing the operations of the mind, as the laws of the syllogism are. To such an extreme admission, however, is one brought by this silly and at the present day common enough objection.

Moreover, several say that the method of St. Thomas often proceeds, not according to the natural way in which the mind operates, but in the conventional way of the schools of the thirteenth century, namely, by first proposing objections, at least three, which might be proposed afterward with better results; for, placed at the beginning, they are a source of obscurity rather than of light to the mind. Furthermore, it is indeed surprising, some say, that St. Thomas begins by setting forth the errors, introducing them with the formula Videtur quod non, and only after this comes the true doctrine, which is proved in very few words by an appeal to authority, more at length, however, in a theoretical manner; and finally the objections are solved.

Therefore some nowadays, in philosophy and also in speculative theology, depart from this method which, so they say, is too scholastic. Already in the time of Pius IX, as is evident from the thirteenth proposition of the Syllabus, several said: “The method and principles by which the old

scholastic doctors cultivated theology are not at all suitable to the demands of our times and to the progress of the sciences." Some, not considering the profound difference between St. Thomas' method of procedure and the merely a priori or synthetic method adopted by Spinoza, seem to admit that St. Thomas' method and even St. Bonaventure's, from the abuse of philosophical deduction, lead to rationalism and pantheism, as clearly seen from the propositions to which the Sacred Congregation of the Index ordered Augustine Bonnetty to give his assent (1855) in writing.

Now some depart from St. Thomas' method, preferring the historical not only for the useful and necessary investigation in the history of philosophy and theology, but also for a more or less direct knowledge of even philosophical or theological truth. This mode of procedure was indeed already in vogue among the followers of idealistic evolutionism, especially with Hegel, and later on we come across it, though in a modified form, in many works of modern authors. Whatever these modifications may be, this method, so it seems, tends by its very nature to confuse philosophy with the history of philosophy, and thus is established a certain philosophy of the history of doctrines, one that is more or less according to the tenets of evolutionism.

According to this view, which is not infrequent today, among all the systems appearing in the course of time in accordance with the evolution of ideas, no system is absolutely true, but each is relatively true, that is, in opposition to another preceding doctrine, or else to some other brief evolutionary period of the past. They say that, for instance, Thomism was relatively true in the thirteenth century in opposition to the doctrine of certain Augustinians, which it surpassed; but it, too, is not absolutely but relatively false with respect to the subsequent system which, either as an antithesis or as a superior synthesis, is of a higher order in the evolution of ideas. Thus Scotism, coming at a later date, would be truer than St. Thomas' doctrine, and this by the momentum of its progress in the history of philosophy and theology. Then why should not this be so for the nominalism of William Ockham? In like manner, the eclecticism of Suarez, which often seeks to steer a middle course between the system of St. Thomas and that of Scotus, would be a still more perfect synthesis and the beginning of a new process and progress among the modern intellectuals.

If it were so, nothing would be absolutely true, not even the principle of contradiction, at least as a law of being and higher reason, as Hegel admits.

All the more so, none of the accepted definitions would be absolutely true, and hence from none of them could the true properties of things be deduced. There would be only relative truth, in its reference to the present state of knowledge, and this rather as regards the already superseded past than the unknown future. Even for knowing the relative truth of any doctrine, it would be necessary to have full knowledge of the preceding periods of evolution, which were the prerequisites for the manifestation of its ultimate development. By way of illustration, we may say that for a knowledge of what ought to be our philosophical conception according to the intellectual exigencies of the twentieth century, we would have to go through Kantianism and Hegelianism, and then vitally reconsider Thomism so as to render it truly presentable to modern minds. Yet this new cogitation, as regards the mental attitude of the twentieth century, would not be absolutely but only relatively true, just as the cogitation of St. Thomas was relatively true in the thirteenth century.

This conception of truth, however, does not seem to differ from that of the Modernists, who said: “Truth is no more immutable than man himself is, in that it is developed with, in, and by him.” But this proposition, if we wish to consider the question more seriously, presupposes immanence or absolute evolutionism. According to this theory, as Pius IX said in the first proposition of the Syllabus: “In effect God is produced in man and in the world, and all things are God and have the very substance of God, and God is one and the same thing with the world, and, therefore, spirit with matter, necessity with liberty, good with evil, justice with injustice.” Indeed the charge is made against St. Thomas that his method—as if it did not differ from Spinoza ‘s—leads to pantheism; and now the new historical method, which is evolutional in its tone of thought, leads to the form opposed to it, which is pantheism. Spinoza, indeed, identified all things with the immobile God, while the evolutionists reduce God to universal evolution. According to the evolutionists, God is really in a process of becoming both in man and in the world, and He never will be in the true sense, as Renan said. Thus nothing would be absolutely true and nothing absolutely false. There would be only relative truth and relative falsehood. Only relativity would be absolute.

The above-mentioned confusion between history and philosophy corresponds to the desires neither of the true historian nor of the true philosopher. But the true historian seeks to acquire a knowledge of history

from the facts, before the uncertain philosophy of history is established. The desire of the true philosopher is, indeed, to acquire an accurate knowledge of philosophy, but he does not consider the temporal sequence of doctrines, as if these were the criterion or sign of their relative truth, and as if this sequence of doctrines were always and necessarily an evolution in the ascendant order, but never a regression and senile decline. From the fact that Scotus came after St. Thomas, it does not follow that his doctrine is truer, and that later on there is greater perfection in the eclecticism of Suarez.

We must use the historical method in the history of doctrines, and this is indeed of great help in understanding the state and difficulty of the question, so as to give us, as it were, a panorama of the solutions of any great problem. But in philosophy we must employ the analytic and synthetic method proportionate to it. In theology, however, we rely first upon proofs taken from the authority of Holy Scripture or divine tradition, or even the writings of the holy Fathers, and in the second place on arguments drawn from reason, while, of course, not neglecting the history of problems and their solutions.

ON THE ARISTOTELIAN FOUNDATION OF ST. THOMAS' METHOD

If we consider, however, the works of St. Thomas, we shall see that the common Doctor of the Church did not despise history, as was the case with Descartes, but, so far as possible in his time, he made use of the history of doctrines, appropriating whatever truth he found in the writings of the ancient philosophers, especially Aristotle, as well as in the works of the Fathers and other Doctors of the Church. Often, too, with very keen mental perception, St. Thomas has recourse to the history of errors in formulating his objections, since Providence permits errors so that the truth may become more apparent, and permits evils so that greater good may result therefrom.

If we consider the general structure of St. Thomas' articles, we detect in it a scientific application of method, which the Angelic Doctor had previously discussed at length in his commentary on Aristotle's Posterior Analytics. This work of Aristotle treats of the search for real definition by the division of the genus and the inductive and comparative inquiry into the specific difference; it also discusses a priori and a posteriori demonstrations, and especially the middle term in demonstration.

Some modern writers say that the structure of the Theological Summa is artificial, as in the case of eclectic syncretism in which heterogeneous elements are mechanically and, as it were, accidentally joined together. However, not only all the commentators of the Angelic Doctor, but many contemporary historians (e.g., Father Grabmann) point out that the Theological Summa from beginning to end constitutes one organic whole. The orderly arrangement of the three parts, containing thirty-eight treatises (about three thousand articles, almost ten thousand objections), is effected with superb constructive skill. Furthermore, the divisions are not accidental, but have their foundation in the very nature of things. Notwithstanding so great a complexity of questions, the whole doctrinal edifice, as it is well called, is simple in its magnitude, like the Egyptian pyramids or the Gothic cathedrals, not even one column of which can be changed without destroying the perfect harmony of the edifice. But what is the foundation of this method of doctrinal construction?

For a closer inspection of this architecture, attention must be drawn to the general way the articles are composed in accordance with the technique of scholastic exposition, to which St. Thomas adheres, as he didactically proceeds in the Summa theologica and the Quaestiones disputatae. But he dispensed himself from this in the Opuscula and the Summa contra Gentes, where he often juxtaposes arguments at the reader’s choice, not explicitly distinguishing between direct and indirect arguments, or between those derived from proper and those from common principles.

This art or technique, which to some seems too conventional, truly corresponds to the normal progress of the intellect in the philosophical or theological investigation of truth. Why, in the Summa theologica, do we always find at the beginning of each article three objections, which are introduced by the formula, Videtur quod non? Why does an article in the Quaestiones disputatae often begin with ten objections against one part of the contradiction and ten or twelve against the other?

To some it seems that these objections should follow the demonstration of the truth. On the contrary, according to Aristotle’s method and that of almost all the doctors, in the beginning there must be a statement of the question and of what is essentially the point at issue in the difficulty to be solved. It is about this that the methodical doubt is chiefly concerned, and the Stagirite spoke of it long before Descartes, and with shrewder judgment,

too, not by doubting the validity of the first principles of reason, but by solving the objections of the skeptics.

The necessity of this methodical doubt is well shown by St. Thomas. Aristotle said: “With a view to the science which we are investigating, we must first approach the subjects about which it behooves us first to raise doubts. . . . The difficulty to be solved must first be examined.” Concerning this the Angelic Doctor says: “Just as he who wishes to free himself from a chain that binds him, must first inspect the chain and the way it binds him, so he who wishes to solve a doubt must first examine all the difficulties and their causes. . . . Those who wish to search for truth, not taking doubt first into consideration, are like those who do not know where they are going . . . hence they cannot go by a direct route, unless perhaps they do so by chance . . . nor can they know when they find the truth sought, and when they do not. . . . Just as in judgments no one can give a decision unless he hears the reasons for and against, so he who has to examine philosophical questions is necessarily in a better position to judge if he has informed himself of practically all the reasons for the doubts raised by the adversaries. On account of these reasons it was Aristotle’s custom in almost all his works to prepare for the search or determination of the truth by recounting the doubts raised against it.” In this the philosopher’s critical spirit manifests itself, nor is it a matter of little importance for one to be well aware of the nature of the difficulty to be solved. Such must be the method of procedure, at least for the great and fundamental questions; otherwise the true difficulty of the problem sometimes remains almost unknown even to the very end of the thesis, or else it receives but a passing comment in the last objection.

But the state and difficulty of the question to be solved are made manifest by the opposite solutions that have already been given by the predecessors, or by the opposing arguments for and against the thesis. This was Aristotle’s method of procedure, and St. Thomas followed him, especially in his Quaestiones disputatae, in which first he sets forth the opposition, so to say, between thesis and antithesis, the mind being fully aware of the nature of the difficulty to be solved before it proceeds to the development of the superior synthesis. And this is part of the truth contained in the Hegelian method, which Hegel did not retain in its purity of form. Thus the hearers do not let the merits of their case consist in the solution of accidental difficulties, nor do they ask useless questions, which distract the mind from the main point at issue; but at once they go to the very root of the difficulty.

Thus the theses must be elaborated in harmony with the teaching of St. Thomas and that is why they are enunciated in the form of a question by means of the particle “Whether,” and not in the form of a positive statement; for the complete solution is to be found only at the end, and often many propositions are required so as fully to express the meaning.

In the Summa theologica, because St. Thomas proceeds with more brevity of diction than in the Quaestiones disputatae, there are only three principal objections; sometimes they are most striking, gems, and, in opposition to these, there is the counterargument, which generally is taken from authority. St. Thomas does not develop these arguments from authority, but gives only one in each case, sometimes expressed in very few words, because he presupposes what was already said by him in his commentaries on Holy Scripture, especially on the Epistles and Gospels, and also in his Catena aurea. Evidently, in our days, these arguments from authority, especially on dogmatic subjects, must be developed, so that whatever is declared by the Church as the proximate rule of faith may be clearly and explicitly known and what is the foundation for this both in Scripture and in tradition.

The body of the article is variously constructed in accordance with the different questions to be solved. But, as the Angelic Doctor explains elsewhere, there are four scientific questions: (1) whether a thing is, for instance, whether God is; (2) what He is; (3) whether He is such by nature, for instance, whether He is free; (4) for what purpose He is such, for instance, for what purpose or why He is free? These four questions are evidently different in nature, notwithstanding the identity of the classical formula in the Summa theologica: “Whether this is . . .”

The question whether a thing is presupposes what it means in name or the nominal definition, that is, what the name of the thing means according to conventional use. This leads up to the question about what the thing is, just as the third question, whether a thing is of such a nature, leads up to the fourth: for what purpose it is of such a nature. In all these questions, as Aristotle said, the middle term in the demonstration must be the subject of special consideration.

When the argumentative part of the article answers the question, whether a thing is, for instance, whether God is, then, as the Angelic Doctor says: “it is necessary to accept as the middle term the meaning of the word,” for instance, this name “God.” That is, the name “God” means the first

uncaused cause; and the first uncaused cause exists, for everything that comes into being has a cause, and there is no process to infinity in directly subordinated causes. Therefore God exists.

It must especially be taken into consideration how St. Thomas answers the question about the quiddity and purpose of things.

ON THE INDUCTIVE SEARCH FOR DEFINITIONS

But when it is asked what a thing is, for instance, what is the human soul, what is charity or faith, it is a question of seeking for a real definition in accordance with laws laid down by Aristotle in one of his works, in which it is shown that the meaning of a definition cannot be demonstrated, unless there are two definitions of the same thing, one of which, obtained by means of final or efficient causality, contains the reason for which of the other, namely, of the essential definition. Thus the circle and its circumference is defined as a figure, every point of which circumference is equally distant from the center, because it is formed by the revolution of a straight line around one of its extremities. But, with the exception of these cases, the definition cannot be demonstrated either a posteriori, as the existence of a cause can be demonstrated from its effects, or a priori, as a property is deduced from the essence; for the definition of a thing is the very means by which its properties are demonstrated, nor is there any process to infinity in this. But if the real definition cannot be demonstrated, it is to be sought for by beginning with the nominal or conventional definition, which determines only what is the subject of discussion. The transition from the nominal to the real and essential definition is effected, as shown in the same work just quoted, by the gradual process of the division of the genera from the highest to the lowest, and by the inductive ascent to the specific difference from a comparison of similar and dissimilar things. This method of finding definitions that truly expresses the reality and essence of things, is most admirably retained by St. Thomas. While several modern authors right at the beginning propose definitions that are sometimes very complex, as if they had received them by revelation, often not saying how they obtained them, St. Thomas at the beginning of each treatise inquires throughout several articles into the definition of the thing in question, for instance, the definition of charity, as being a friendship between God and man, and also a special and most sublime virtue. He also

inquires into the definition of the four kinds of justice: equalizing, legal, distributive, and commutative, into the definition of prudence, and so on. In these articles there is no inquiry into the middle term of the demonstration, since the quest of the definition is not demonstration; but in this inductive inquiry the holy Doctor often adduces the most appropriate of observations, as Father Simon Deploige observed, for instance, in the case of social matters. Thus the transition is made gradually from natural reason or common sense of mankind to philosophic reason.

This search for the definition is evidently of great importance, for all the demonstrations of the properties of anything have their foundation in its definition. In like manner, the direct division of any whole rests upon its definition; even universal principles are derived from rightly constituted and interconnected primary notions, and these principles, in the metaphysical order, are in every case true. Thus St. Thomas with profound penetration of thought decisively distinguishes between the antecedent and consequent wills from the very definition of the will, the object of which is good, this latter being formally not in the mind but in the things themselves. He says: “The will is directed to things as they are in themselves, and in themselves they exist under particular qualifications (here and now). Hence we will a thing simply, inasmuch as we will it when all particular circumstances are considered, and this is what is meant by willing consequently.” On the other hand, as stated in this same article, we will some good antecedently, as long as we will it when all particular circumstances are not considered, but according as it is absolutely good in itself; and this is to will it in a qualified manner and not simply. From these definitions thus established, St. Thomas deduces in the same article this most universal principle: “Thus it is clear that whatever God simply wills, takes place; although what He wills antecedently may not take place.” But this double proposition virtually contains the whole teaching of St. Thomas about efficacious grace. If, indeed, the above-stated definitions of the consequent and antecedent wills have metaphysical validity, the same must be said of the principle that has its foundation in them. Then not even the least good act and most easy of performance right at the moment happens as dependent solely upon God’s antecedent will, or without a decree of His consequent will, the causality of which is infallible, although it most admirably preserves intact human liberty, for, as just stated: “Whatever God simply wills, takes place; although what He wills antecedently may not take

place.” If any good act, even most easy to perform right at the moment, were to happen without such a decree of the consequent will, then the principle enunciated by St. Thomas would no longer he metaphysically true, and this would mean the complete ruination of his doctrine concerning God’s foreknowledge and consequent will. If this principle were of no metaphysical validity, it would amount to nothing more than saying that salutary acts in the majority of cases do not take place unless they have been consequently willed by God, or, in other words, the universal Ordainer did not ordain all good things but only very many. This doctrine would be of no value either philosophically or theologically. But the principles that have been formulated in this order are not metaphysically and universally, or in every case, true unless they have their foundation in the due or correct definition of the subject. In this we clearly see the importance of searching for real definitions.

ON THE MIDDLE TERM IN DEMONSTRATION

From the articles, however, in which a methodical inquiry is instituted into the real definition of anything, we must distinguish and otherwise explain those in which St. Thomas solves the question, whether a thing is of such a nature, and often he solves as one question the composite: For what purpose is it of such a nature? Examples of such are: when he asks whether the human soul is incorruptible (that is, whether and for what purpose it is incorruptible); whether man is free, whether faith is most certain, whether it belongs to God alone to create, whether and for what purpose Christ’s passion was the cause of our salvation by way of merit, and other similar questions. In these cases the solution of the question for what purpose, refers to a true and indeed a priori demonstration, nor does it mean one derived from common but from proper principles. Hence in these last-mentioned articles that are strictly demonstrative, whether they are deduced from reason alone or from faith and reason, a special inquiry must be made into the middle term of the demonstration, which is, as it were, the golden key of the article.

The title of the article gives the two terms of the conclusion, namely, the minor and the major; the middle term must be assigned by which the other two can be united in a scientific conclusion, and this term assigns “why a

thing is and cannot be otherwise than it is." It is the very Aristotelian definition of scientific knowledge.

Sometimes, however, in the composition of the body of these articles, St. Thomas begins with the major and through the minor descends to the conclusion, so that the argument is easily presented in scholastic form as to make it clear what is the middle term in the demonstration. Thus, in the question, "Whether the human soul is incorruptible," the argument may be condensed into the following syllogism: Every simple and subsistent form is absolutely incorruptible. But the human soul is a simple and subsistent form. Therefore the human soul is incorruptible. Likewise, in the question, "Whether it belongs to God alone to create," the argument may be reduced to this syllogism: The most universal effects must be reduced to the most universal and first cause, and that is God. Now being itself, which is absolutely produced in creation, is the most universal of effects. Therefore to produce being absolutely, not as this or that being, or to create, belongs to God alone.

Often, too, St. Thomas begins with the minor, the subject of which is already given in the title and will appear again as the subject of the conclusion. Thus by the minor he ascends from the subject of the title to the middle term in the demonstration. Afterward he enunciates the major, its subject being the same middle term, its predicate being the major term of the title, which in the conclusion must be joined to the minor term. Thus often the process of proof in the article is by the ascent from the minor to the middle term in the demonstration, and by the descent from the major to the conclusion. We have an example of this in the question: "Whether any created good constitutes man's happiness." St. Thomas replies by enunciating first the minor: Happiness is the perfect good, completely lulling the rational appetite which is specified by universal good; now the perfect good, which completely lulls the rational appetite that is specified by universal good, cannot be anything created or limited; therefore man's happiness cannot consist in any created good.

If we wish to present the argument in syllogistic form, the major must be enunciated first. In the generality of cases, by retaining the very propositions of St. Thomas, the argument can be reduced to scholastic form. It is better, however, to keep to the Doctor's own terms than to change them so as to follow an excessive logical formalism. Finally, the major or minor

must be defended against the attacks made upon it by the opponents of St. Thomas.

In the explanation of the body of the article the middle term of the demonstration must be the subject of diligent inquiry, or, if there are several subordinate middle terms, evidently we must concentrate our attention upon the principal one. The reason is that, as St. Thomas often remarks, “the conclusions are known materially; but the middle terms in the demonstration are the formal cause of our knowledge, and by these the conclusions are known.” Thus it is known formally for what purpose a thing is of such a nature, for instance, why man is free. It is because he has knowledge of universal good that his attitude toward some particular good is one of dominating indifference. Or again, why man is a social being; this is because of the requirements of his specific act, which are to know those things which he needs to know. Because of his very limited intelligence he needs the assistance of others.

Thus there is only one formal or proximate middle term, which is the definition of the thing as to its essence, from which the first property is to be deduced, and from this first property the one subordinate to this, and so on in ascending order. Nevertheless, anything that has already been demonstrated directly and from the properties of the thing by means of the formal cause, can still be demonstrated in other ways, for instance, by means of its proper final cause, or even from its common principles, or indirectly either by what signifies it or by the method of reduction to absurdity. Thus St. Thomas in the books of the Contra Gentes makes use of these direct or indirect arguments so as to reach the same conclusion and places them together, not giving the reason why they are six or ten in number. But in the Summa theologica and the Quaestiones disputatae there is usually only one direct argument, which is of the formal kind and is deduced from the properties of a thing, introducing the proximately formal middle term, or if the holy Doctor gives two or three arguments he assigns the scientific reason why and how there are two or three methods of argumentation.

Therefore the middle term in the demonstration must be clearly presented, which in the syllogism of the first figure is the subject of the major and the predicate of the minor and we know that the modes of the other figures can be reduced to the modes of the first figure.

Therefore this middle term thus clearly stated presents itself as the keystone of the article, inserted in the syllogism as a precious jewel set in a ring. Thus we make use of logic, not indeed for its own sake, but that by it we may acquire a direct knowledge of the middle term or principle in which the truth of the conclusion must be considered, or at least of the main conclusion, if there are several conclusions in the article, as sometimes happens. Having accomplished this task to commit to memory what is of first importance in the article, it is enough to bear in mind the middle term. When the question is again posited, the major and minor terms are included in it; hence in replying to the question it suffices to enunciate the middle term in the demonstration, so that again we may have the demonstration of the conclusion. In illustration of this let us take the question: "Whether the human soul is incorruptible?" It suffices to reply to this: "Every simple and subsistent form . . . Therefore the human soul is incorruptible."

If the middle term in the demonstration of the article is thus carefully taken into consideration, this makes us see more clearly, without the aid of a syllogism, the solution of the objections which were presented in the beginning of the article. As a matter of fact, St. Thomas casts upon the solution of the objections the searchlight of the middle term in the demonstration, and by means of this light the distinction to be made is easily discovered and understood. After this, whatever doubts and corollaries there may be, these can be profitably presented. This method was often adopted by the Salmanticenses.

The stand taken by St. Thomas, if properly understood, is seen to be the just mean and summit between and above the two extremes: on the one hand, of empiric nominalism—which retains a certain objectivity of experience, though denying the necessity and universality of knowledge—and on the other, of the idealism of the conceptualists or subjectivists, which retains a certain necessity and universality of knowledge, although without any ontological validity, that is, without any true objectivity.

Thus St. Thomas' method of procedure in the construction of his articles is far more in accordance with the natural progress of the mind in its search for truth than is the method adopted by several Scholastics of a later date, who in the beginning multiply the preliminary remarks about those things that have already been explained by them and that do not need any further explanation. Often also they materially juxtapose these various preliminary remarks, not showing the essential relation between them, and then they

propose the argument in the briefest manner, so that the middle term in the demonstration is not sufficiently clear, and sometimes several arguments in succession are proposed in which the direct formal argument deduced from the properties of a thing is not sufficiently distinguished from the others, or from those derived from the common principles, or from the indirect arguments. This later method is rather mechanical, whereas the method of St. Thomas is organic, according to the natural process of the mind in operation.

Lastly, the importance of the middle term in the demonstration is clearly perceived from the rules to be observed in scholastic disputations. The objector, in accordance with these rules, by clever argumentation, so as to overthrow the conclusion, must attack by three successive objections in scholastic form the middle term in the demonstration, which is, so to speak, the chief point of attack to be defended in the article, and, as it were, the citadel of the defender. But the defender of this citadel must train upon the objector the light of the middle term in the form of a brilliant distinction that is not accidentally but directly and truly to the point. Thus after a well-ordered scholastic demonstration, which is of reasonable difficulty, the truth of the article, having been sifted and freed of all its difficulties, becomes increasingly clear, and is certainly confirmed by this austere criticism which is, as it were, the acid that attacks all metals, gold alone excepted.

ON THE PERFECT UNION OF ANALYSIS AND SYNTHESIS IN THE ANGELIC DOCTOR'S METHOD

In this way St. Thomas perfectly observed the rules of method in general, namely, by always beginning from the more known, by proceeding gradually and not jumping to the conclusion. He never reaches the more remote conclusions before the immediate conclusions are known with certainty. Thus the connection between them is clearly perceived, and all the conclusions make up a truly organic body of doctrine.

In like manner he perfectly applied the rules of the analytic method in the order of finding, especially so, in the direct and not accidental division of the complex subject to be considered, until he reaches the transcendental notions and first principles. Thus, after carefully considering the parts, he arrives at a correct judgment of the whole. He likewise most adroitly made use of the analytic method in the inductive and comparative inquiry into the

specific difference of a thing so as to discover the distinct real definitions contained in a confused manner in the nominal ones.

With an equal degree of perfection he employed the synthetic method in his doctrine, both in the questions to be proposed and in the manner of solving them. For in proposing the questions he always begins from the more universal and gradually descends to the less universal, from the essence to the properties, from causes to effects. Likewise, in solving the questions he always starts from principles either revealed or directly known, or derived from experience and from the definition of the thing in question; nor does he depart from the certain principles because of the obscurity of the mystery to which these principles lead, as in the case of the questions on grace and free will. Hence we may say that the element of truth contained in the rules of method as formulated by Descartes, was already perfectly known by the Angelic Doctor.

Thus the Theological Summa is a splendid example of this synthetic method in the orderly arrangement of theological knowledge. It first treats of God's existence and His nature, then of His attributes, in the third place of the three Persons, fourthly of God's actions ad extra, and so on for the rest. In this orderly arrangement anyone can see that St. Thomas far surpasses the Master of the Sentences, who treats but incidentally of moral theology, discussing faith, hope, and charity on the occasion of the following question: "Whether Christ had faith, hope, and charity," and treating of sin in general when the question of original sin presents itself.

Finally, and this must especially be noticed, the Angelic Doctor succeeded exceedingly well in combining analysis and synthesis, according as ascendant analysis, which terminates in principles and causes, is the principle of descendant analysis. For analysis, having finished with natural philosophy, in ontology ascends to consider the notions of analogous being, act and potency, as also the universal principles of reason and being, which illumine the whole synthesis of general metaphysics. After this the mind ascends to consider the pure Act, the Supreme Being, which is required in the final analysis, the true notion of which is, as it were, the sun of all synthesis in the universality of its scope, which is knowledge of all beings inasmuch as they are beings.

By no means do we find in the system of St. Thomas this abuse of the a priori method which, as clearly seen in the works of Spinoza, excludes by means of mathematics the consideration of efficient and final causes, and

hence leads to rationalism and pantheism, as if all things could be deduced from God's nature in a geometrical way. By way of investigation and analysis St. Thomas ascends by the light of the first principles of reason from sensible things and the most certain facts of experience to the supreme and most universal cause who, since He is infinitely perfect and in no way stands in need of creatures, created all things with absolute freedom. Then by the way of synthesis, the holy Doctor judges of all things by means of a lofty principle. As he himself says: "By way of judgment, from eternal things already known, we judge of temporal things, and according to laws of things eternal we dispose of temporal things." In accordance with this union of analysis and synthesis, presented by the Angelic Doctor, as Father del Prado shows, the supreme truth of Christian philosophy, in which the analytic method, or method of finding in the ascending order, terminates, and which is the principle of the synthetic method of judgment, is this: God is the self-subsisting Being, I am who am. In other words only in God are essence and existence identical. This is the golden key of the whole doctrinal edifice, which is constructed by the Angelic Doctor with such penetration of thought and fixity of principles that, as Leo XIII testified, no one surpassed him in this. Avoiding both nominalism, which denies the objectivity of metaphysics, reducing it to logic, and the extreme realism of Plato, which on no just grounds considers the universal to exist formally apart from the thing, St. Thomas admirably distinguished between logic and metaphysics, between logical and real being. He clearly shows that, before our mind considers the question, the essence of any finite being is not its existence, and that hence only in God are essence and existence identical. This is the culminating point of the five proofs for God's existence, the terminus in the ascending order by the method of finding, and it is the principle of judgment from the highest cause by the synthetic method.

For many years the more we have studied this Theological Summa, the more we have seen the beauty of its structure. The expositions and demonstrations are simple and clear, especially if they are compared with the commentaries on the Sentences of Peter Lombard, and superfluous questions are avoided in accordance with the Angelic Doctor's plan as stated in the Prologue. Likewise, repetitions are eliminated, as much as possible, because subjects are always treated in a general way before they receive special consideration, and St. Thomas does not refer his reader to what is to be said later on. In this simplicity and clarity, the Angelic Doctor

evidently far surpasses not only his predecessors, but even Scotus and Suarez.

The perfection of this edifice is in great part due to the consummate skill with which he effects the divisions between the treatises or the questions or the articles or the arguments. These divisions, of course, are not extrinsic but intrinsic, arranged in accordance with the formal point of view of the whole to be divided, and effected by means of members that are truly opposites to each other, so that the divisions are adequate, with subordinate subdivisions; yet all is done with discretion and not by descending to the least details. Thus by a gradual process the light of the principles reaches to the ultimate conclusions that are, nevertheless, still universal—for speculative knowledge does not descend to the particular—and thus it is essentially distinct from experience and prudence.

THE DOCTRINE OF ST. THOMAS PROCEEDS FROM THE FULLNESS OF HIS CONTEMPLATION

In addition to all these considerations, we must finally say that the Angelic Doctor never cherished method for its own sake, but for the purpose of finding out the truth and transmitting it to posterity, especially divine truth to which he especially directed his attention. On the contrary, just as many hunters find greater delight in the sport of hunting than in the game they take, so some evidently have in mind the mode of demonstrating the truth rather than the actual discovery of the truth itself, even when they are investigating things most sublime, such as the infinite value of Christ's merits or the divine processions. This is a deformation of the theologian's profession, when he is not sufficiently contemplative. He then digresses too much and is too much given to argumentation.

Nevertheless, in the hours of study we must give careful consideration to the proper method, which, as we acquire the habit, we unconsciously make use of little by little, as is the case with a musician who is practicing to play on the guitar or the harp. Thus the greater facility gradually acquired in the use of the proper method disposes a person for a correct knowledge of the different parts of philosophy and theology, and by this very fact for the contemplation of truth from which proceeds the living doctrine that illuminates the mind and inflames the heart. The Angelic Doctor says that doctrine and preaching must "proceed from the fullness of contemplation."

It was so when he taught. Just as only those musicians make good use of their method who, under the influence of a certain inspiration, fully penetrate the soul of a symphony, so St. Thomas employed his scientific method, inspired as it were from above, illuminated by the light of vivid faith and the gifts of the Holy Ghost; and this light absolutely transcends all systems and all knowledge acquired by human efforts. Thus only by this supernatural light does theology attain its end, and then we find verified in it the words of the Vatican Council: “Reason, indeed, enlightened by faith, when it seeks earnestly, piously, and calmly, attains by a gift from God some, and that a very fruitful, understanding of mysteries. . . . But reason never becomes capable of apprehending mysteries as it does those truths which constitute its proper object. For in this mortal life we are pilgrims, not yet with God: we walk by faith and not by sight.”

Therefore St. Thomas, before he dictated or wrote or preached, used to recite this prayer: “Ineffable Creator, who out of the treasures of Thy wisdom hast appointed three hierarchies of angels and set them in admirable order high above the heavens and hast disposed the diverse portions of the universe in such marvelous arrays, Thou who art called the true source of light and supereminent principle of wisdom, be pleased to cast a beam of Thy radiance upon the darkness of my mind and dispel from me the double darkness of sin and ignorance in which I have been born.

“Thou who makest eloquent the tongues of little children, fashion my words and pour upon my lips the grace of Thy benediction. Grant me penetration to understand, capacity to retain, method and facility in study, subtlety in interpretation, and abundant grace of expression.

“Order the beginning, direct the progress, and perfect the achievement of my work, Thou who art true God and man and livest and reignest forever and ever. Amen.”

This prayer was heard; for in the holy Doctor’s works on the logical method is to be seen the light of the gifts of the Holy Ghost as also the gratuitously given grace of the “word of wisdom,” as Pope Pius XI says. Therefore, in a certain responsory in the office for the feast of St. Thomas, we read: “There is brevity of style, a pleasing eloquence, sublimity, clarity, and well-founded opinion.”

There is sublimity, because the knowledge is derived from the highest of causes; there is clarity, because by the light of the highest principles he penetrates to the very source of the question; there is well-founded opinion,

because “he assigns the cause why the thing is and cannot be otherwise than it is,” according to the Aristotelian definition of knowledge. This pleasing eloquence coupled with a brevity of style is the result of a vivid and supernatural contemplation, by which the holy Doctor was conversant not only with the literal but also with the spiritual interpretation of Holy Scripture. He knew, to be sure, that, especially for the discussion of divine subjects, prayer and contemplation were no less necessary than laborious efforts in the pursuit of knowledge; and when difficulties arose, he did not pray less so as to give himself more time for study, but in preference to this he spent more time in prayer. This truth is of great importance for renewing the spirit of study in theology, so that it may be something vital and productive of its due effects. Concerning the holy Doctor’s contemplation, Pope Pius XI wrote as follows: “The more readily to obtain these illuminations from above, he would often abstain from food, spend whole nights in prayerful vigil, and, surrendering to a holy impulse, would repeatedly lean his head against the tabernacle and would constantly turn his eyes with sorrow and love toward the image of Jesus crucified. To his friend St. Bonaventure he confided that whatever he knew he had for the most part learned from the book of the crucifix.” Christ indeed had said: “The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.” Of course, books give us the letter, but study without prayer and the interior life does not attain to the spiritual meaning.

Whoever considers the light of divine contemplation from which this great synthesis of St. Thomas proceeds cannot say that this doctrine is extreme intellectualism, devoid of reality and lifeless.

By an intellectual process, as befitting a science, and not according to the tenets of “sentimentalism,” St. Thomas treats of God, our natural and supernatural states. But he never separates our intellectual life from the influence exerted upon it by the will or even by the sensitive faculties; for he shows to our complete satisfaction the mutual relations between the faculties. He says, indeed: “If therefore the intellect and the will be considered with regard to themselves, then the intellect is the higher power. . . . For the object of the intellect is simpler, and more absolute than the object of the will.” Being is prior to and more universal than good; thus the intellect is simpler and higher than the will which it directs. Yet the holy Doctor adds: “But relatively and by comparison with something else, we find that the will is sometimes higher than the intellect . . . thus the love of

God (at least in this life) is better than the knowledge of God." The reason is that the intellect draws to itself the thing understood even though this is superior to it, whereas the will is drawn to the thing. Thus charity is the most excellent of all the virtues. St. Thomas also says: "Some are hearers that they may know, and these build upon intellect (only, and not upon charity); and this is building upon sand."

This doctrine is not, indeed, extreme intellectualism. Concerning all these things St. Thomas speaks not oratorically but scientifically, as befitting his scope, which is the search not for the beauty that attracts as in poetic art, but for the truth, without which there cannot be any true goodness or beauty.

St. Thomas excludes the particular from knowledge in the strict sense, since nothing is knowable except by way of abstraction from individualized matter. He certainly affirms that "the knowledge of singulars does not pertain to the perfection of the intellective soul in speculative knowledge"; but he adds immediately that "it pertains to the perfection of the same in practical knowledge," namely, of prudence and the gift of counsel. It pertains also to either external or internal experience, which the Angelic Doctor certainly did not despise. He even asserts that the just person can have by the gift of wisdom "a quasi-experimental knowledge" of the presence of God in the soul and of the mysteries of salvation, according to the following text of St. Paul: "For the Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit that we are the sons of God." He gives this testimony "through the effect of filial love which God produces in us."

The holy Doctor possessed this mystic experience in the highest degree, and it certainly influenced the construction of his theological synthesis, but, as it were, from on high, by conforming and elucidating his faith. But knowledge in the strict sense, whether philosophical or theological, which is acquired by study, is essentially distinct from any individual experience whatever, even the most sublime, and is concerned only with universals either in predication or being or causation.

But the universal in predication is fundamentally in individual things, and expresses what is necessary and negatively eternal in

them, namely, what is true not only here and now, but always. It is ϫὸ ϫί ἦν εἶναι: the being what is was intended to be. Therefore

the holy Doctor says: "So far as universals taken as logical entities are concerned, so far as they are the cause of knowledge and demonstration, they are more truly beings than particulars are, because the former are

incorruptible, whereas the latter are not. But as regards natural subsistence, particulars are more truly beings, because they are called first and principal substances." Thus reality is preserved absolutely intact.

Hence in scientific knowledge, and rightly so, St. Thomas reduces all things to universal principles that are fundamental, necessary, and perpetual laws not only of the mind but of being, and of being whether natural or supernatural.

Thus his method is of great help in remedying the defects of modern philosophy, in which the distinction between the internal senses and the intellect, between nature and grace, gradually disappeared. With the elimination of ontological validity from the first principles of reason there is nothing firm and stable left in the speculative order and a fortiori in the practical order.

The Theological Summa of St. Thomas, constructed as it is according to the above-mentioned method, since it avoids the opposite extremes of rationalism and fideism, is a work that is both truly scientific and always elucidated by the light of supernatural revelation. It is, therefore, truly a classical and perennial work, not indeed of extreme intellectualism, but of "sacred theology" that has been raised to the status of a true science notwithstanding the obscurity of faith. It constitutes a really organic body of doctrine, and is truly a single science, though subordinated to God's knowledge and to that which the blessed have of Him, and bears, as it were, the stamp (in us) of the divine science, considering all things under the formality of God as author of grace and as the ultimate end.

THE RELATION BETWEEN THE STUDY OF THEOLOGY AND THE INTERIOR LIFE

There is often too great a separation between study and the interior life; we do not find sufficiently observed, that beautiful gradation spoken of by St. Benedict which consists in: reading, cogitation, study, meditation, prayer and contemplation. St. Thomas, who received his first education from the Benedictines, retained this wonderful gradation when speaking of the contemplative life.

Several defects result from separating study too much from prayer. Thus the hardship and difficulty that not infrequently accompany study are no longer considered a salutary penance, nor are they sufficiently directed to

God. Thus weariness and disgust sometimes result from study, without any spiritual profit.

St. Thomas speaks about these two deviations when discussing the virtue of studiousness or application to study, which must be commanded by charity as a check to inordinate curiosity and sloth, so as to study those things which one ought to study, how, when, and where one ought, especially with regard to the spiritual end in view, this being for the acquisition of a better knowledge of God and for the salvation of souls.

To avoid the above-mentioned defects that are opposed to each other, it is good to recall how our intellectual study can be sanctified, by considering first what benefit the interior life receives from a study that is properly directed, and then, on the other hand, what the study of theology can hope to receive in an increasing degree from the interior life. It is in the union of these two functions of our nature that we find the best verification of the principle: “Causes mutually interact, but in a different order.” There is a mutual causality and priority among them, which is truly wonderful.

THE INDEBTEDNESS OF THE INTERIOR LIFE TO STUDY

By the study of theology the interior life is especially preserved from the two serious defects of subjectivism in piety and of particularism.

Subjectivism, as it applies to piety, is often now called “sentimentalism.” It consists in a certain affected love which lacks a true and deep love for God and souls. This defect arises from the fact that the natural inclination of our sensitive nature prevails in prayer according to each one’s disposition. An emotion of our sensitive nature prevails, and this emotion sometimes expresses itself in certain outbursts of praise which are quite without solid foundation in reality. In our days several skeptical psychologists, such as Bergson in France, think that even Catholic mysticism is the result of some prevailing and noble emotion that arises from the subconscious self, and that afterward finds expression in the ideas and judgments of the mystics. But a doubt always remains whether these judgments are true that result from the impulse of the subconscious self and the affections.

Contrary to this, our interior life must be founded on divine truth. It already has this from infused faith that rests upon the authority of God revealing. But study that is properly directed is of great help in fully realizing what the truths of the faith are strictly in themselves,

independently of our subjective dispositions. Study is of special help, indeed, in forming a true concept of God's perfections, of His goodness, love, mercy, justice, as also of the infused virtues of humility, religion, and charity, and this without any admixture of emotion that has not its foundation in truth. Therefore St. Theresa says that she received much help by conversing with good theologians, so that she might not deviate from the path of truth in difficult straits.

When our study is rightly ordered, it frees the interior life not only from subjectivism but also from particularism resulting from the excessive influence of certain ideas prevalent at some period of time or in some region, ideas which after thirty years will appear antiquated. Some years ago ideas of this or that particular philosophy prevailed, which now no longer find favorable acceptance. It is so in every generation. There is a succession of opinions and events that arouse one's admiration; they pass with the fashion of the world, while the words of God remain, by which the just man must live.

Thus, in truth, study that is well ordered preserves intact the objectivity which the interior life should have above all the deviations of our sensitive nature, and it also preserves the universality of the same which is founded upon what the Church teaches everywhere and at all times. Thus it becomes increasingly clear that the higher, the deeper, and the more vital truths are none other than the elementary truths of Christianity, provided they are thoroughly examined and become the subject of daily meditation and contemplation. Such are the truths enunciated in the Lord's Prayer and in the following words from the first page of the catechism: "What must we do to gain the happiness of heaven? To gain the happiness of heaven we must know, love, and serve God in this world." Equally so it becomes increasingly clear that the fundamental truth of Christianity is: "God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son."

It is a matter of great importance that these truths profoundly influence our lives, without our deviating into the subjectivism, sentimentalism, and particularism prevalent at some period of time or in some region. In this, however, our interior life is in many ways benefited by good study; and the choicest fruit of penance is to be found in the arduousness of study. It is a fruit much more precious than the natural pleasure to be found in study that may consist in intellectual labor not sufficiently sanctified or directed to God. In diligent study that is commanded by charity, we find pre-eminently

verified the common saying: If the roots of knowledge are bitter, its fruits are the sweetest and best. We are not considering here the knowledge that inflates, but that which, under the influence of charity and the virtue of studiousness, is truly upbuilding.

The interior life, which study saves from a number of deviations, therefore remains objective in its tendency and is truly founded on what has been universally and at all times the traditional doctrine. On the other hand the interior life influences the study of theology.

WHAT THE STUDY OF THEOLOGY OWES TO THE INTERIOR LIFE

Often this study remains lifeless, whether viewed in its positive, or in its speculative and abstract aspect. Sometimes it lacks the noble inspiration and influence of the theological virtues and of the gifts of understanding and wisdom. Hence theological wisdom is sometimes not that "savory knowledge" which St. Thomas speaks of in the first question of the Theological Summa.

At times our mind is occupied too much with dogmatic formulas, in the analysis of their concepts, in the conclusions deduced from them, and it does not by means of these formulas penetrate the mystery of faith sufficiently to taste its spiritual sweetness and live thereby.

Here it is fitting to state that a number of saints, who were incapable of such serious studies as we engage in, penetrated these mysteries of faith more deeply. Thus St. Francis of Assisi, St. Catharine of Siena, St. Benedict Joseph Labre, and many others, who certainly did not attempt to analyze in an abstract and speculative manner the dogmatic concepts of the Incarnation, the Redemption, and the Eucharist, and did not deduce theological conclusions that are known to us. Yet from the fountainhead of these mysteries with a holy realism they drew abundant life for themselves.

Through the formulas they reached by a vital act, in the obscurity of faith, the divine reality itself. As St. Thomas says: "The act of the believer does not terminate in a proposition, but in a thing," in a revealed truth.

Even without the great grace of contemplation, a number of very good Christians, by humility and self-denial, penetrate in their own way the depths of these mysteries. And if this fact is verified in these good Christians among the faithful, with far more reason it must be verified in the religious or priest who has truly understood the dignity of his vocation.

Daily the priest must celebrate the Holy Sacrifice with a firmer faith, a more vivid hope, and a more ardent charity, so that his Eucharistic Communion may be almost every day substantially more fervent, and not only preserve but also keep on increasing in him the virtue of charity.

St. Thomas well says: “The more a physical motion approaches its terminus, the more it is intensified. It is just the opposite with a violent motion (the throwing of a stone). But grace inclines in a way similar to that of nature. Therefore (as the physical motion of a falling stone is always accelerated), so for those who are in a state of grace, the nearer they approach the end, the more they must increase in grace”; because the nearer they approach God, the more they are enticed or drawn by Him, just as the stone is drawn toward the center of the earth.

If our interior life were to receive such increase of grace every day, it would have a most favorable influence upon our study, and each day this would become more vigorous. Thus study and the life of prayer are causes that interact in beautiful harmony.

THE FRUIT OF THIS MUTUAL INFLUENCE

When the priest’s interior life is one of great and solid piety, his theology is always more vigorous. After this theologian has made the descent from faith for the purpose of acquiring theological knowledge by the discussion of particular questions, he desires to return to the source, namely, to ascend from the theological knowledge thus acquired by the discussion of particular questions to the lofty peak of faith. The theologian is like a man who is born on the top of a mountain, for instance, Monte Cassino, and who afterward descends into the valley to acquire an accurate knowledge of individual things. Finally this man wishes to return to his lofty abode, that he may contemplate the whole valley from on high and in a single glance.

There are some men who prefer the plains, but others are more attracted by the mountains: “Wonderful is the Lord on high.” So the good theologian must daily breathe the mountain air and derive from the Apostle’s Creed an abundance of spiritual nourishment for himself, and also, at the end of the Mass, from the Prologue of St. John’s Gospel, which is, as it were, the synthesis of all Christian revelation. Daily, in like manner, he must live his life on a higher plane, directed by the Lord’s Prayer, the beatitudes, and the

Sermon on the Mount in its entirety, which is a synthesis of all Christian ethics in its wondrous elevation.

When the priest has, as he should have, the spirit of prayer, then his interior life urges him to search more in dogmatic theology and in moral theology for that which savors preferably of vitality and fecundity. For then, under the influence of the gifts of understanding and wisdom, faith becomes more penetrating and savory.

Then the most beautiful quasi-obscurity in Christian doctrine becomes apparent, or the harmonious blends of light and shade which, like chiaroscuro in a painting, hold the intellect spellbound and are the subject of contemplation for the saints. As an example of this, gradually all the great questions of grace are reduced to these two principles: on the one hand, "God does not command what is impossible, but by commanding, both admonishes thee to do what thou art able, and to pray for what thou art not able to do," as St. Augustine says, who is quoted by the Council of Trent against the Protestants. On the other hand, against the Pelagians and Semipelagians we have: "For who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received?" As St. Thomas says: "Since God's love is the cause of goodness in things, no one thing would be better than another, if God did not will greater good for one than for another."

These two principles taken separately are clear and most certain; but their intimate reconciliation is very obscure, the obscurity resulting from too great a light. To perceive this intimate reconciliation, we would have to see how infinite justice, mercy, and liberty are reconciled in the eminent Deity.

Likewise there is another example; for in proportion as the interior life develops within us, so much the more do we realize the sublimity of the treatise on the Incarnation accomplished for the purpose of our redemption; and we are especially impressed with the motive of the Incarnation of the Son of God, "who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and became man."

In the same way, under the influence of a life of prayer, the treatise on the Incarnation is presented to us in a more striking light, and among the various opinions concerning the Sacrifice of the Mass we more and more realize that the teaching of the Council of Trent surpasses them all, when it states: "The victim is one and the same, the same now offering by the ministry of priests, who then offered Himself on the Cross, the manner of offering being different." Increasingly Christ appears as the high priest,

“always living to make intercession for us,” especially in the Mass, which is therefore of infinite value. Thus we gradually discover in the councils those most precious adamantine rocks, and likewise in the Theological Summa the dominant chapters or the more sublime articles are by degrees made known to us, which are, as it were, the higher peaks by which the whole mountain range is clearly outlined.

If we were to apply ourselves to the study of theology in a true spirit of faith, prayer, and penance, we would find verified in us these words of St. Thomas: “Doctrine and preaching proceed from the fullness of contemplation,” somewhat in the manner of the preaching of the apostles after the day of Pentecost.

Theology, understood in this sense, is of great importance in the ministry of souls. It thoroughly imbues a priest with the spirit of sound judgment according to the mind of Christ and the Church, so that souls are exhorted to strive after perfection in accordance with true principles, by showing one, for instance, that according to the supreme precept, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart,” all Christians must strive after the perfection of charity, each one, however, according to the manner of his state in life.

And we cannot reach this fullness of perfection in the Christian life unless our lives are profoundly influenced by the mystery of the Incarnation in its redemptive aspect and by the Eucharist, and unless, by faith, enlightened by the gifts of wisdom and understanding, we penetrate these mysteries and taste their sweetness. For this, indeed, the study of theology is of great help provided it be properly directed, not for the satisfaction we get from it, but for the purpose of knowing God better and for the salvation of souls.

Thus these beautiful words of the Vatican Council become increasingly possible of verification in us: “Reason, enlightened by faith, when it seeks earnestly, piously, and calmly, attains by a gift of God some, and that a very fruitful, understanding of mysteries; and this both from the analogy of those things which it naturally knows, and from the relations which the mysteries bear to one another and to the last end of man.”

The study of sacred theology, which sometimes is hard and arduous, though fruitful, thus disposes our minds for the light of contemplation and of life, which is, as it were, an introduction and a beginning of eternal life in us.

PROLOGUE TO THE THEOLOGICAL SUMMA

IN THIS prologue St. Thomas expresses his intention, namely, to treat of whatever belongs to the Christian religion, in such a way as may tend to the instruction of beginners, because the Catholic doctor must be a teacher to all, even to little ones.

But from the explanation of this purpose it is evident that this work is suitable for beginners, not because it treats solely of the first principles of Christian doctrine, but because all questions are proposed in it according to the order of the subject matter, and not as the occasion of the argument may offer, by which it frequently happens that there are useless questions and repetitions as in many works of preceding authors. Since Holy Scripture includes the order of charity or of the subjection of all affections to God's love, a logical order must also be pursued in the body of Christian doctrine.

Hence this Summa of St. Thomas was not meant to be merely an elementary work; for, as Cajetan remarks, all theological problems are here appropriately and dearly treated. Already in this prologue St. Thomas shows himself the great classicist of sacred theology because of his superior simplicity, which is, as it were, a development of common sense and the Christian sense. There is a vast difference between this simplicity and the complicated exposition of Scotus.

As we shall see at the beginning of the second question, the order observed in this work is didactic and strictly theological. St. Thomas adopts a far better method than that of the Master of the Sentences or of Alexander of Hales in the arrangement of the questions, and this not only as to generalities but also as to particulars. In the Summa of the Angelic Doctor all questions are considered as they refer to God, who is the proper object of theology, rather than as they refer to man and his liberty. This point of view may be called therefore theocentric but not anthropocentric, as the psychological tendency is of modern times.

CHAPTER I

QUESTION 1

THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF SACRED DOCTRINE

THIS question contains ten articles. It treats (1) of the necessity of sacred doctrine, asking whether it is necessary; (2) of the nature of this sacred doctrine in three articles: whether it is a science; whether it is one science; whether it is speculative or practical; (3) of its excellence compared with the other sciences, in articles five and six; (4) of its subject or proper object; (5) of its method: whether it is a matter of argument, the intrinsic and extrinsic sources being discussed in a general way in this article; there is also an article on the use of metaphor, and the last article concerns the use which theology makes of Holy Scripture.

As to the arrangement of these articles, the objection might be raised that St. Thomas ought to have treated of the subject or object of sacred doctrine before he discussed its nature and excellence, because the nature of a science depends upon its object. In answer to this it must be said that from the very beginning of this question he supposes the nominal definition of sacred doctrine, in which the object of this latter is expressed at least in a confused manner. After this, gradually and methodically, he makes the transition from the nominal to the real and scientific definition, which is completed in the seventh article, in which he speaks explicitly of the proper subject of this science.

Concerning the nominal definition, or the meaning of the words “sacred doctrine,” there is a dispute as to what the holy Doctor implies by them. Does he mean faith? or theology? Or does he mean sacred doctrine in general according as it abstracts from faith and theology? Cajetan and several others hold this last view; but John of St. Thomas, Sylvius, and others contend that by these words St. Thomas means theology in the strict sense. This seems to be the true answer, although, of course, the first article

is concerned more with sacred doctrine in general. But immediately from the second article it is strictly a discussion of sacred science as distinguished from faith. Gradually St. Thomas passes from the confused to the distinct notion of this science.

FIRST ARTICLE

WHETHER BESIDES PHILOSOPHY ANY FURTHER DOCTRINE IS REQUIRED

State of the question. Necessity is of many kinds. It is: (a) absolute; (b) hypothetical, which is either physical or moral.

It is a question of hypothetical necessity for the attainment of the end; but it is certainly not a question of absolute necessity that is presupposed by the very nature of the thing independently of the end to be attained, as when we say it is necessary for man to be a rational animal.

We must note that a thing is said to be necessary for the end in two ways. First, as indispensable for the attainment of the end (ad esse simpliciter), and this is called physical necessity, as in the case of food for the preservation of human life. Secondly, a thing is said to be necessary for the convenient attainment of the end (ad bene esse), as in the case of a horse for a long journey; for otherwise there would be great difficulty in attaining the end, though it would not be a physical impossibility.

The difficulties placed at the beginning of the article by way of a statement of the question, are those which later on were proposed in another form by the positivists and the rationalists. These are: (1) that man must not seek to know those things that are above reason; so say the positive agnostics; (2) now a certain part of philosophy treats of God; so say several rationalists, who seek to reduce theology to philosophy, and they propose a merely natural interpretation of the mysteries of faith, as Spinoza and afterward Hegel did.

In the body of the article there are two conclusions which may be briefly expressed as follows: (1) the divine revelation of supernatural truths is hypothetically necessary, but it is so indispensably (simpliciter) or physically; (2) the revelation of certain natural truths that pertain to religion was hypothetically necessary, conveniently so (ad bene esse) or morally speaking.

First conclusion. This is proved in the body of the article according to St. Thomas' usual way by beginning with the minor, which is as follows: It is necessary that the end first be made known to men who are to direct their actions to the end. But according to revelation men are ordained to a supernatural end. Therefore it is necessary that the supernatural end first be made known to men by divine revelation.

It is evidently a question of hypothetical, but of indispensable (simpliciter) or of physical necessity, because nothing is willed unless it is foreknown. The middle term of the demonstration is: the foreknowledge of the end.

In this argument the major is founded upon reason; the minor is revealed, for the Scripture says: "The eye hath not seen, O God, besides Thee, what things Thou hast prepared for them that wait for Thee." In like manner we read: "But to us God hath revealed them by His Spirit. For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." Hence the Vatican Council says that divine revelation is necessary "because God of His infinite goodness has ordained man to a supernatural end, to be a sharer of divine blessings which utterly exceed the intelligence of the human mind." This council likewise declared that the mysteries of faith transcend also the natural powers of the created intellect, which includes even the angelic.

The second conclusion concerns the moral necessity for the revelation of certain truths of the natural order that pertain to religion, such as the existence of God the Author of nature, His universal providence that extends even to the least detail, creation from nothing, the personal immortality of the human soul.

St. Thomas gives the reason for this, namely, that otherwise few there are who would come to know these truths, and this only after a long time, and with a mixture of many errors. This reason is developed by St. Thomas in another of his works, and solemn utterance was given to it in the Vatican Council in the following words: "It is to be ascribed to this divine revelation, that such truths among things divine as of themselves are not beyond human reason can, even in the present condition of mankind, be known by everyone with facility, with firm assurance, and with no mixture of error."

We have the confirmation of this in the history of philosophy, since the Greeks, who were particularly apt at speculation, having spent a long time in this pursuit, did not succeed in acquiring a clear idea of creation from

nothing, and they had more or less doubts about the universal scope of Providence and the personal immortality of the soul. In this we clearly see how first of all revelation, even from the very opening words of Genesis in which it speaks of creation, emphatically confirms from on high the certain findings of philosophy, as evidently is the case in Christian philosophy. This latter surpasses the philosophy of the more profound Greek philosophers, Plato and Aristotle, especially in two respects, namely, as regards the unwavering certainty concerning the most free creation of all things from nothing and the personal immortality of the soul. Thus philosophical speculation directed by faith reaches much loftier heights among the great Christian philosophers.

We have another confirmation of this from the history of modern philosophy, especially from the history of agnosticism, whether of the positivist or idealist type. A third confirmation is found in the history of religions, and of their fluctuating opinions about the great problems concerning God and the soul.

It is not as yet scientific theology but sacred doctrine according as it abstracts from faith and theology that is the subject matter of the body of the first article. There is also a reference to faith inasmuch as faith and not theology is necessary for salvation. Theology as a science is not indeed necessary for any of the faithful, but for the Church collectively, at least according to the ordinary law, since the teaching Church must also make use of human means in the discharge of her office, having recourse to reason in defending what is of faith against the objections of the adversaries.

In the reply to the second objection we find the first mention of theology as distinct from faith. This reply states that there is no reason why theology, guided by the higher light of divine revelation, may not teach those truths which philosophy already teaches us by means of the natural light of reason.

The reason for this is that sciences are differentiated according to the various means through which knowledge is obtained. For it is not the material but the formal object that differentiates the sciences, according as the knowledge is obtained from a different source. Thus the astronomer and the geologist prove that the earth is round in different ways, the former by mathematics, the latter by physics. Thus the distinction between the sciences is the result of the different degrees of abstraction.

Scotus, as Cajetan remarks, attacks this first article since he has a different conception of the distinction between human nature and grace. For Scotus, our soul is by its very nature positively ordained for the beatific vision, the desire for which would be natural and innate, although the soul cannot attain to it without God's help, to which it is not entitled, and which depends upon God's most free sanction. This theory of Scotus is in harmony with his teaching on being which, he says, applies univocally to God and creatures, and thus the infinite distance between the divine and human natures is not sufficiently safeguarded, as we shall see in question thirteen.

The Vatican Council speaks according to the terminology of St. Thomas when it says: "The Catholic Church, with one consent, has also ever held, and does hold, that there is a twofold order of knowledge, distinct both in principle and in object; in principle, because our knowledge in the one is by natural reason and in the other by divine faith; in object, because, besides those things to which natural reason can attain, there are proposed to our belief mysteries hidden in God which, unless divinely revealed, cannot be known. . . . For the divine mysteries by their own nature [it does not say according to God's free decree] so far transcend the created intelligence that, even when delivered by revelation and received by faith, they remain covered with a veil of faith itself, and shrouded in a certain degree of darkness."

SECOND ARTICLE

WHETHER SACRED DOCTRINE IS A SCIENCE

State of the question. From this title we see that it is now not merely a question of sacred doctrine in general according as it abstracts from faith and theology, but it is a question of theology as a science.

The difficulty is that every science proceeds from principles directly known and evident, whereas sacred theology proceeds from principles of faith, which are obscure and not admitted by all. Moreover, science is not concerned with individual facts but with universal principles, whereas sacred doctrine treats of particulars, namely, of Christ, the apostles, the patriarchs, and the prophets.

The reply of St. Thomas is this: sacred doctrine, that is, sacred theology, is a science, but it is a science that is subordinated to a higher science possessed by God, and in a lesser degree by the blessed. It is proved to be a science in the counterargument from the authority of St. Augustine who says: “to this science alone belongs that whereby saving faith is begotten, nourished, protected, and strengthened.” In this descriptive definition obtained from the effects, the divers functions of theology are already to some extent distinguished, for, as theology is somewhat apologetic, by means of it saving faith is begotten; afterward, by the theological explanation of sacred doctrine, faith is nourished and is defended against those denying it, and it is strengthened since the various points of faith are so arranged as to constitute one body of doctrine, and, like the setting of precious stones in a diadem, its value becomes increasingly apparent by this orderly arrangement.

Nevertheless the difficulty remains if we contend that theology is a science not only in the broad sense but in the strict sense; for science properly so called is certain knowledge of truth that is deduced by demonstration from true and certain principles. Moreover, the certitude of sciences has its foundation in the evidence of the principles, and, contrary to this, the principles of sacred theology are not evident.

To solve this difficulty, St. Thomas establishes the second part of the conclusion: that theology is a science subordinated to the higher science of God and the blessed. It is proved as follows:

A subordinate science proceeds from principles known by the light of a higher science, as the science of perspective (optics) proceeds from principles established by geometry. Now sacred theology proceeds from principles transmitted by God through revelation. Therefore sacred theology is a science subordinated to the science of God and the blessed. We say “of the blessed,” because they see God’s essence, although in a finite way, a point which we will discuss in question twelve.

Thus in the reply to the first objection the difficulty presented at the beginning is solved. For the principles of any science are either in themselves self-evident—and thus a science is not subordinated—or else they are reducible to the conclusions of a higher science. Hence, too, the conclusions of a subordinated science are reduced to self-evident principles, but through the intermediary of a subordinating science.

First corollary. The principles of a subordinated science can be known in two ways: either by faith and without evidence of reason, or by a higher science already acquired, and then there is evidence of reason.

Thus the optician, if he is not a geometer, believes the principles transmitted by geometry, and then his optics is truly a subordinated science, but as yet imperfect. If afterward this optician becomes a geometer, then his optics will be not only a truly subordinated science, but a perfect one. Likewise, the musician believes the principles he receives from arithmetic, if he does not know arithmetic; but he can acquire this knowledge.

In the same manner, the theologian who is still a wayfarer, believes the principles transmitted by God revealing and proposed by the Church; and thus his theology is truly a subordinated science, but as yet imperfect. But when this theologian afterward attains to the beatific vision or comes into possession of it, then he not only believes but sees the principles transmitted to him by God through the beatific vision, or in the Word, and he still can, outside the Word, make use of his discursive theology, which then is truly not only a subordinated science, but a perfect one. Thus with the attainment of the beatific vision faith is made void, but not theology. St. Thomas' conclusion concerns sacred theology as it is in itself, and this can be in the theologian either as wayfarer, or as one of the blessed or possessors of God.

Second corollary. The theologian will have the same theological habit in heaven as he now has on earth; just as the optician does not lose his science of optics when he becomes a geometer. So Christ when on earth had acquired knowledge as well as the beatific vision.

Third corrollary. Therefore what is substantially a true science is sometimes imperfect under certain conditions. Thus in the theologian as wayfarer, theology is substantially a true science (and is neither opinion nor faith), because its conclusions are reducible to evident principles. But if, in fact, the reduction does not result in actual evidence, this is not owing directly to the defect of this science, but is, as it were, accidentally so, because of the defect in the person knowing, as in the case of the optician who would not know geometry. Hence the theology of the wayfarer is a true science, but it is imperfect as to its status.

In other words, a science that is imperfect, not in itself but because it is in the initial stage of its development, can still be called a science, because as such its conclusions are reducible to principles. The optician who is not a

geometer has good grounds for thinking that his optics is a science and not merely an opinion.

It must be observed that this distinction between the essence of a science and its state, is of almost similar application in many other problems, and there is a most certain foundation for this. In fact, one as yet merely a boy or even an infant is, as regards his nature, a true human being, but he is in an imperfect state. In like manner, the acquired moral virtues in a sinner can be true virtues, but they are in an imperfect state as regards their disposition. Thus the acquired virtue of true temperance differs from the temperance of the miser which has not as yet reached the perfect state of a virtue that is practically stabilized, but is still in the imperfect state of a fickle disposition.

Likewise the Christian philosophy of St. Thomas does not differ specifically, as regards its formal object, from Aristotle's philosophy; but the difference consists in this, that in Aristotle the habit was imperfect, whereas in St. Thomas it was perfect. Thus Aristotle did not succeed in acquiring a clear idea of creation from nothing, nor of providence that extends even to the least detail, nor was he fully convinced of the personal immortality of the soul. His philosophy never penetrated to such depths as this. In our days some would wish to relegate Christian philosophy to Christian apologetics, which is sacred theology functioning by an appeal to reason. To be sure, the Christian philosophy of St. Thomas did not differ specifically from the philosophy of Aristotle except in its circumstances, because it was fortified from on high by divine revelation as its guiding star; because of this positive fortification and the perfection resulting therefrom, it is called Christian.

SOLUTION OF THE OBJECTIONS

Durandus, Scotus, and Aureolus raised objections against the conclusion of St. Thomas. These objections are examined by Cajetan.

First objection. According to Aureolus, since the theologian does not have evidence of the truth of the conclusions, theology is the science of consequences or of logical inferences, but not of the conclusions themselves, or of actual facts. In other words, it would be but a good application of logic to matters of faith.

We reply with Cajetan that from this it follows that theology is a science in an imperfect state, but not that it is not a science. The theologian is not only a logician applying logic to matters of faith, but he must also be a metaphysician, and in addition to this a theologian in the strict sense of the term, treating not only of logical being, or merely of being purely as such, but of the mystery of God's life.

Second objection. A subordinating science states the reason why the principles of a subordinated science are true. But it does not give the reason why the principles of faith are true.

Reply. Wayfarers do not see the reason for this; however there is such a reason. Thus there is a certain reason on account of which God is triune, for He is triune by reason of Himself. Likewise there is a certain reason for the free decree of the redemptive Incarnation.

Third objection. The object of a subordinated science is distinct from that of a subordinating science, as optics with reference to geometry. But theology and the beatific vision have the same object. Cajetan replies to this objection by the following distinction: that theology has the same object as it is an entity, this I concede; as it is an object, this I deny; for the object of the beatific vision is God clearly seen, whereas the object of theology is God as revealed, abstracting both from clarity and obscurity. But if, moreover, a subordinating science has a limited object, such as geometry, then the object of the subordinated science, such as optics, is also distinct as an entity.

This distinction between the object as an entity and the object as an object, is of great importance. Thus God, although He is most simple as an entity, is the object of several specifically distinct habits, namely, of the light of glory, of infused faith, of the gifts of understanding and wisdom, of sacred discursive theology (whether in the blessed or in wayfarers), and of natural theology. And these various habits remain specifically distinct by reason of their object, not as it is an entity, but as it is an object. Likewise man is the material object of various sciences, namely, of biology, psychology, metaphysics, and even theology.

In the reply to the second objection of this article, St. Thomas remarks why sacred theology can treat of individual facts, although science treats of universals. In truth, it treats of these things, namely, of the deeds performed by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, not as constituting the principal object but as they are examples, and to establish the authority of those through whom the

divine revelation came down to us. But when it treats of Christ, it considers in Him what the redemptive Incarnation is, just as physics or astronomy treats of the sun, considering its influence in the solar system.

First doubt. For true theology is it enough for one to have a knowledge of supernatural things, not through infused faith but through faith acquired by human efforts, such as the formal heretic has? In other words, is infused faith necessary for theology, so that the loss of infused faith through heresy would mean the loss of theology?

Vasquez replies that acquired faith suffices for theology: (1) because theology survives in the heretical theologian; (2) because theology is a naturally acquired habit and therefore does not necessarily depend upon any infused habit. It suffices that the principles of faith be believed by whatever kind of faith.

John of St. Thomas, on the contrary, justly replies that the opposite opinion must by all means be held; and he says that it is the one commonly held among theologians, especially the Thomists. This we deduce from the text of St. Thomas who, when comparing the certitude of theological science with other sciences, says: “whereas this derives its certitude from the light of the divine knowledge, which cannot be misled”; and he shows that it is divine revelation which gives to theology its formal aspect.

Now the acquired faith of the formal heretic is uncertain, because he believes by an act of his own judgment and will those truths which he approves of, and rejects others that have been revealed, thus rejecting the formal motive of infused faith, which is the authority of God revealing as regards all revealed truths. Those which he retains are believed on grounds of human reason. Hence the faith of the formal heretic is some kind of opinion from which certainty of conclusions cannot be deduced.

Hence many ideas concerning matters of faith survive indeed materially in the theologian who becomes a formal heretic, but there is no longer the formal connection between these ideas, and in the conclusions deduced the word “is” implies an affirmation that is merely an opinion and not a certainty. Hence nothing is left but the corpse, as it were, of theological science in such a person. For science is a habit or simple quality together with subordination of ideas. But this simple quality is specified by the formal object, which in this case is God as made known to us by virtual revelation. Hence, when divine revelation is rejected by formal

heresy, this simple quality or theological habit no longer remains, but in its place we have only ideas that are precariously connected under the dominance of a fickle opinion which is the result of the

heretic's own judgment and volitional act. Thus the human body, when the soul has departed, is no longer truly a human body; for, lacking what formally connects the various parts, it is but a corpse in the process of corruption or disintegration. The habit of sacred theology implies the presence of a theological bent of mind, and this the heretic, such as Luther or Calvin, no longer possesses.

In reply to Vasquez, it must be said that theology, since it is acquired and not infused, is formally natural, though radically it is supernatural, in that it has its root in infused faith, as we shall state later on. Nor can anyone be said to have acquired a subordinated science who is not certain of having acquired a subordinating science; nor can such a science be acquired by one who accepts from a subordinating science what he approves of and nothing else, as in the case of the optician who would accept from geometry only those things which he approved of; for he would be accepting these things not on scientific but aesthetic grounds.

Second doubt. With what theological conclusions is this article concerned? It is chiefly concerned with conclusions strictly so called, with those that are inferred by a discursive process which is not only explanatory but also objectively illative, and that establish a new truth which is deduced and distinct from the two truths enunciated in the premises. In other words, it is a new truth that is not formally but virtually revealed.

It must be noted that there can thus be several distinct truths of the same thing, even of the same divine reality; because, although God is most simple as an entity, yet He can be the object of different habits and even more so of different judgments or truths in the same science. Thus three distinct truths are enunciated in the following syllogisms: Every intellectual being is free. But God is intellectual. Therefore God is free. Being is consequent upon person. But in Christ there is only one person. Therefore in Christ there is one being.

These are examples of objectively illative reasoning by which we acquire a new truth. For to say that "God is intellectual," and "God is free," is to enunciate two distinct truths, two true judgments (truth is formally in the mind), although these are enunciated of the same divine reality. If this were not so, we should have to say with the nominalists that the divine names,

such as mercy and justice, are synonymous. Father Marin Sola does not stress this point sufficiently in his new theory on the evolution of dogma, about which more will be said later on.

On the other hand, the theological conclusion improperly so called, which is obtained by an explicative process of reasoning is not a new truth but one that has already been revealed and is now more explicitly proposed. Thus the infallibility of the Supreme Pontiff speaking ex cathedra is the same truth as that revealed by Christ when He said: “Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build My Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” In the explicative process of reasoning there may be some inference resulting therefrom which is merely of subjective import, or as far as we are concerned, but in itself it means no addition to knowledge. In this way there is no acquisition of a new truth, but the truth that was formally and implicitly revealed is expressed in another form and more explicitly.

On the contrary, in the objectively illative process a new truth is acquired, which is not formally but virtually revealed, and which is deduced from what has been revealed, as in the proposition: there is one being in Christ. In this we see the specific distinction between theology and faith, which latter is not a discursive science.

Third doubt. When is the discursive reasoning proper or truly illative? It is generally admitted that such is the case when the conclusion is contained in the premises, as the property is contained in the essence, or the effect in its cause. We have an example of this in the following syllogism: every man is free; but Christ is truly a man; therefore Christ has human liberty (which is distinct from His divine liberty). But this truth thus deduced is otherwise revealed in that it has been revealed that Christ freely obeyed and merited for us. Another example is the following: every man can acquire knowledge by experience and observation; but Christ was truly a man; therefore Christ had acquired knowledge (and not only infused knowledge and the beatific vision). A third example would be: it was fitting that Christ, like His apostles, should have the gift of tongues; but this gift presupposes infused knowledge; therefore Christ had infused knowledge.

On the contrary, we have the case of discursive reasoning improperly so called, if the conclusion is contained in the whole, or the singular in the universal, or the implicit in the explicit. The following is an example: all men have sinned in Adam; but Abraham was a man; therefore he sinned in Adam. Likewise in the following syllogism: Christ died for all men; but

Abraham was a man; therefore Christ died for him. In the same way it is shown that Christ died for the Blessed Virgin Mary, whom He redeemed, but by preservative redemption.

Fourth doubt. What theological conclusions are definable by the Church as dogmas of faith, such that their contradictory propositions would not only be erroneous but heretical? All know the difference between these two terms: erroneous and heretical. A proposition is said to be erroneous when it is against a theologically certain conclusion, and heretical when it is against the faith.

In answer to this we say:

1) All theologians are agreed that the theological conclusion improperly so called is definable as a dogma. The reason is that it is not a question here of a new truth that has been deduced, but of a truth that has already been formally but confusedly or implicitly revealed, such as the infallibility of the Supreme Pontiff when our Lord said: “Thou art Peter. . . .” Then the discursive reasoning is only explicative, or at most subjectively but not objectively illative. In this case the discursive method explains only the subject or predicate of the proposition that is expressly revealed. Thus it has been revealed that Christ is truly God and truly man. But for true humanity a rational soul is an essential requisite. Therefore Christ had a rational soul. This conclusion was defined against Apollinaris.

For this same reason particular propositions included in an expressly revealed universal proposition are definable as dogmas of faith. Thus we conclude that Abraham contracted original sin, for the universal proposition that has been expressly revealed, “in whom (Adam) all have sinned,” covers all particular cases. This assertion is generally admitted by theologians.

2) A conclusion deduced even by a truly illative process of reasoning from two principles that are of faith, is also definable as a dogma of faith. The reason is that, although the conclusion is reached by the illative process, yet specifically as such it is of faith. It is implicitly revealed, indeed, in the two revealed premises; for a new idea is not introduced, and the connection between predicate and subject can be affirmed by reason of the formal revelation. It is, as it were, the logical explanation of the two propositions taken together that are of faith.

3) A theological conclusion that is deduced by an objectively illative process of reasoning from one premise that is of faith, and another founded on reason, is not of faith in itself, nor can it be for us defined as a dogma of

faith. The reason is that this conclusion is a new truth that is not simply revealed, but is simply deduced from revelation and is only virtually revealed.

We have an example of this in the following syllogism: being is consequent upon person, so that there is only one substantial existence for each person; but in Christ there is only one person; therefore in Christ there is only one being, namely, the one and only substantial existence for the two natures.

In this discursive method, the major is founded on reason, and the minor is of faith. Hence in the conclusion the connection between the predicate and the subject cannot be affirmed solely on account of the authority of God revealing, but partly because of the revelation contained in the minor, and partly on account of the light of natural reason, by which we are impelled to give our assent to the major premise. Therefore this conclusion belongs directly to theology and not to faith.

In other words, this conclusion is not simply revealed (not even implicitly), but it is simply deduced from revealed principles and is only virtually revealed. Hence if the Church were to propose it as a dogma of faith, the contradictory of which would be heresy, the Church would be uttering what is false, because it would propose as simply revealed and to be believed on the authority of God revealing, what is not simply revealed but merely deduced from what is revealed. But the Church can condemn infallibly as erroneous the denial of such a deduced conclusion.

Another example: infused knowledge is necessary so that the human intellect may not remain imperfect but may know, for instance, various languages not known by one’s natural powers; but it was not to be thought of that Christ’s human intellect even in this life should be imperfect; therefore Christ even in this life had infused knowledge. This conclusion is not of faith, nor is it definable as a dogma of faith.

In these truly illative processes of reasoning a new truth is inferred in that from the premise known by the natural power of reason (especially if this premise is the major), a new truth is introduced, and we have not merely an explanation of the subject or predicate of the revealed proposition. Such conclusions (if not otherwise equivalently revealed in Sacred Scripture or tradition) are not defined by the Church. But the Church sometimes condemns, and even infallibly, as erroneous, opinions that deny theologically certain conclusions.

For a more complete explanation of the conclusion just stated, we must add that, according to the Vatican Council, “all those things are to be believed with divine and Catholic faith which are contained in the word of God written or handed down, and which the Church, either by a solemn judgment or by her ordinary and universal teaching, proposes for our belief as having been divinely revealed.” This is the definition of dogma. But that which is only connected with what is revealed, cannot be said to be simply and strictly revealed, but is distinguished from what is revealed as being deduced from it.

Moreover, if the Church defined as a dogma such a conclusion, it would not only be infallibly guarding and explaining the deposit of the faith, but it would be perfecting the teaching that is of faith, and would be establishing new dogmas; for by this definition it would be declaring of faith what before was not of faith, either in itself or for us.

Finally, if the above-mentioned theological conclusions were definable as dogmas of faith, then all theologically certain conclusions, even those most remote, would be equally definable as dogmas, and all conclusions condemned as erroneous could be condemned as heretical in the strict sense of the term. Thus a great part of the Theological Summa and, especially so, practically the whole treatise on God and His attributes, rigorously deduced from revealed principles, could become dogmas of faith.

We must therefore carefully distinguish between a theological conclusion that is only virtually connected with what is revealed, and a truth that is formally and implicitly revealed. Yet in individual cases it is not always easy to make this distinction. For what seems to the majority virtually connected with that which is revealed, to one of prodigious and keener intellect appears to be formally and implicitly revealed. There are Thomists who see in the words of St. Paul, “It is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will,” a formally implicit revelation that grace is efficacious of itself and not because God foresees our consent. They come to the same conclusion from the following words of our Lord: “My sheep . . . shall not perish forever, and no man shall pluck them out of My hand . . . and no one can snatch them out of the hand of My Father.” In accordance with these texts, for many Thomists, an explicative process of reasoning, and one that is objectively illative, suffices to show that grace is of itself efficacious, because it concerns not a new truth that is deduced, but the same truth more explicitly formulated.

Objection. Father Marin Sola disagrees, saying that at least if it concerns God, a conclusion obtained by a truly illative process of reasoning from one premise that is founded on reason and another that is of faith, is revealed, because it concerns the same most simple divine reality.

We reply to this objection by appealing to the classical distinction given by Cajetan. That the premises of faith and the above-mentioned theological conclusion concern the same divine reality, as an entity, this I concede; as an object, this I deny. For the same divine reality specifies various specifically distinct habits, as it is variously presented to them as object, namely, as clearly seen, or as obscurely believed, or as the object of the gift of wisdom, or as the object of sacred theology, or as the object of natural theology. With greater reason it can be the object of several propositions in the same science, or of several judgments, which are different truths (truth is formally in the mind) of the same divine reality.

For it is evident that, if for the same divine reality there is only one truth for the divine intellect, which by one intuitive act knows the divine essence, for the created intellect, however, and especially for the human intellect, there are several true judgments and truths concerning the same divine reality, as, for example, God is intellectual, God is free, God is just, God is merciful. But it is now a question not of the divine intellect, but of the human intellect with reference to which a distinction must be made between truth that is revealed and truth that is deduced from what is revealed.

Moreover, by this method, in seeking to avoid nominalism, the mind would revert to the same, according to the theory that claims divine names to be synonymous terms, a theory which is refuted by St. Thomas. Thus divine mercy and justice would be synonymous and it could therefore be said that God punishes by means of His mercy.

Finally, if the above-mentioned opinion were true, then all conclusions in the treatise on God, even those most remote, provided they are metaphysically certain, could be defined as dogmas under pain not only of error, but of heresy in the strict sense. Thus merely one revealed truth concerning God, namely, that He is the self-subsisting Being, would suffice to render all conclusions deduced from it such that they could be said to be strictly revealed, and to be believed on the authority of God revealing.

This seems to be an inadmissible exaggeration of the powers assigned to theology, or what is called theologism, and consequently it impairs the superiority of faith to theology.

Instance. For anything to be defined as a dogma of faith, it suffices that it is contained actually and implicitly in what is revealed; but any divine attribute whatever is contained actually and implicitly in the divine nature, since this is the self-subsisting Being (“I am who am”); therefore any divine attribute deduced from revelation is a dogma of faith.

Reply. I distinguish the major: provided it is the same truth, this I concede; even if it is a new truth that is deduced, this I deny. And this Father Marin Sola concedes. I contradistinguish the minor: that every divine attribute is actually and implicitly contained in the divine nature, and that each is the same truth for the human intellect, this I deny; that each is a new and deduced truth, this I concede.

Explanation. One divine attribute is actually and implicitly contained in another and in the divine nature, considered reduplicatively as a divine reality, this I concede; considered as an object, so that each is the same truth, again I distinguish: that it is so for the divine intellect, I concede; for the human intellect, this I deny.

Otherwise, as we said, all divine names, for instance, justice and mercy, would be synonymous terms, and it could be said that God punishes by means of His mercy. Moreover, the revelation of merely one proposition about God would be sufficient, namely, that He is the self-subsisting Being, so that from this all the deduced attributes and all the metaphysically certain propositions in the treatise on God could be defined as of faith.

For a dogmatic definition it is necessary that the definition should be the expression of a truth that is the same with what has already been formally and explicitly revealed, and that is not explicitly proposed for our belief. Now even being in general contains actually and implicitly all the modes of being, for these are not outside of being; and yet, concerning these modes, namely, substance, quantity, and quality, new truths are enumerated.

THIRD ARTICLE

WHETHER SACRED DOCTRINE IS ONE SCIENCE

State of the question. The question is whether it is one science reduced to its ultimate species, or whether it is divided into several sciences, just as there are several mathematical sciences, namely, geometry, arithmetic, and

several philosophical sciences, as logic, natural philosophy, metaphysics, and ethics.

The difficulty is, as stated in the beginning of the article, that sacred theology treats not only of God, but also of created beings, namely, of angels, of man, or irrational creatures, as also of the morality of human acts. But these various subjects pertain to different philosophical sciences, namely, metaphysics and ethics. Hence it seems that dogmatic theology, which treats especially of God, is a science distinct from moral theology, which is concerned with the morality of human acts. Thus there seem to be several theological sciences, as, among the Scholastics, Vasquez thought subsequent to the time of such nominalists as Durandus and Gabriel Biel.

The answer of St. Thomas is that sacred doctrine is one science. This indeed is what its name, “sacred theology,” implies, for it is singular and not plural in form.

The conclusion is proved as follows: The unity of a faculty or habit is gauged by the unity of the formal aspect of its object; but sacred theology considers all things according as they are knowable by revelation; therefore sacred theology is one science reduced to its ultimate species.

The major is philosophically certain. Thus sight is specified by the colored object perceived by the light of the sensitive faculty, logic by being that is a creation of the mind, natural philosophy by mobile being perceived by the light of reason according to the first degree of abstraction, mathematics by quantitative being according to the second degree of abstraction, metaphysics by being as such perceived by the light of reason according to the third degree of abstraction, namely, as removed from all that is material, and ethics is specified by human acts.

The minor. But sacred theology considers everything as it is knowable by revelation. It thus includes all that is formally revealed and believed as of faith, and likewise all that is virtually revealed, which means all that can be deduced from revealed principles. These virtually revealed truths can be said to be, as stated in the body of this article, potentially revealed. They are known by the light not of formal but of virtual revelation. What is formally revealed is the formal motive of faith. But virtual revelation is the light or formal motive why we assent to theological conclusions.

Therefore everything that is considered in theology, namely, God, creatures, morality of human acts, come under the one formal aspect of the

object, according as they are considered as included within the scope of virtual revelation, which is the objectum formale quo of sacred theology.

1) This conclusion receives its confirmation from the reply to the first objection, which is as follows: “Sacred doctrine does not treat of God and creatures equally, but of God primarily; and of creatures only so far as they are referable to God as their beginning or end. Hence the unity of this science is not impaired.”

This reply is concerned with the objectum formale quod of sacred theology. This will be more explicitly determined in the seventh article in which the question will be taken up of the proper and formal subject of this science. But even from its nominal definition theology is evidently concerned principally with God and only secondarily with those things that proceed from God, namely, creatures, and the movement of the rational creature toward God. Thus the unity of the science is not impaired. And how this unity of sacred theology depends upon both formal objects, namely, quo and quod, will be more clearly seen from the explanation of the seventh article. For theology treats of God under the aspect of Deity, in so far as this comes within the scope of virtual revelation. Thus it is distinct from metaphysics, which treats of being as such, and of God as included in the notion of being, in so far as He is known by the light of natural reason.

It is, however, the common teaching in philosophy that the sciences derive their species and unity from the unity of both formal objects quo and quod. Thus the difference between physics, mathematics, and metaphysics consists in this, that physics treats of mobile being according to the first degree of abstraction; mathematics, of being according to the second degree of abstraction; metaphysics, of being as such according to the third degree of abstraction. Thus any science is specified by its object, not as this latter is an entity, but as it is formally an object, such being the means or precise reason why it can be known.

2) This conclusion is furthermore confirmed by the reply to the second objection, in which it is shown that although there are different philosophical sciences, yet theological science is specifically one. The reason is that the higher science considers its object in its more universal aspect, just as the common sense, which is the lowest of the internal senses and in which the five objects of the external senses are united, attains the visible, the audible, the tangible, and other objects according to the more common notion of the sensible.

So these things discussed by philosophical sciences, namely, by natural philosophy, metaphysics, and ethics, sacred theology can consider under one aspect, inasmuch as they are capable of being divinely revealed, or are virtually revealed, and according as all these are directed to God, as being the principle whom they manifest and the end to whom they tend.

We shall see in the sixth and seventh articles that God in His intimate life can be known only by divine revelation, and this applies equally to those things that participate in God's intimate life, such as grace, the infused virtues, and the gifts. So we shall see that the formal object quod and the formal object quo in theology are interchangeable, as in the other sciences. The Deity and the divine light are interchangeable, just as being as such and the light of reason in the third degree of abstraction are, just as mathematical quantity and the light of reason in the second degree of abstraction are, just as the colored object and sense perception are.

First corollary. Positive theology and speculative theology are not two sciences, but they are, so to speak, the inductive and deductive parts of the same science. For positive theology brings together the revealed truths by the inductive method from Holy Scripture and tradition. After this, speculative theology takes up the analysis of the concepts of these truths, defending them against opponents by arguments drawn from the analogy of things known by the natural power of reason, and it deduces conclusions that are virtually contained in them.

Second corollary. Positive theology, since it is truly a part of theology, reaches its conclusions under the guidance of the light of revelation, and thus it is distinct from history; but it makes use of history, just as speculative theology makes use of metaphysics.

Third corollary. Specialization is a more difficult process in theology than the other sciences, and this because of its unity. The relationship between moral theology and grace, the infused virtues, the gifts, merit and demerit cannot be fully perceived without a

profound knowledge of what dogmatic theology teaches about God's love for us, the divine motion, redemption and its application to us. Hence specialization in theology sometimes leads to a too material and superficial knowledge, which no longer penetrates to the very vitals of this corporate doctrine.

Sometimes specialists in this or that branch of theology have an insufficient knowledge of theology in general, and therefore of those things

that are fundamental in theology, so that the branch in which they specialize, for instance, ascetic or mystic theology, is not properly understood by them. Doctors, too, must not be ignorant of the general principles of medical science, otherwise their knowledge of that in which they particularly specialize is deficient.

It is evident from St. Thomas' reply to the second objection that sacred theology, even when discussing man and the morality of his acts, examines in them what is strictly divine, what can be known only by the light of virtual revelation, and what is related to God as such, that is, to His intimate life. In this we see the sublimity of theology, since it considers what is divine in all things by means of the divine light, namely, the various participations of God's intimate life—grace, the virtues, the gifts, their acts, the modalities of these acts, these being meritorious and their opposites demeritorious, in that contraries are governed by the same law.

Just as in the preaching about Christ no distinction is drawn between the dogmatic and the moral parts, but the kingdom of God is spoken of, or God's life as it is in itself and as it is participated in by us, so sacred theology does not consist of two specifically distinct sciences, dogma and moral, but is only one scientific habit, which treats of God as knowable by revelation and of those things that refer to God. Therefore St. Thomas says at the end of the reply to the second objection: "So that in this way sacred doctrine bears, as it were, the stamp of the divine science which is one and simple yet extends to everything." Hence dogmatic theology and moral theology are but branches of the same science, and this applies more so to soteriology, mariology, asceticism, and mysticism.

Fourth corollary. In the human sciences, metaphysics bears a certain relation to theology since it treats of being as such, that is, it treats of supreme generalities and higher principles. Thus it is one and yet it discusses all things from a higher point of view, according as they are reduced to being and to the first principles of being.

Sacred theology considers all things from a higher plane according as these are directed to God, and in this it is guided by the divine light. Hence the unity of this science is perfect, and it thus disposes one for the contemplation enjoyed by the blessed, which is a still more simplified process.

FOURTH ARTICLE

WHETHER SACRED DOCTRINE IS A PRACTICAL SCIENCE

State of the question. It seems that sacred doctrine is a practical science, because its purpose is the regulation of action, namely, direction in the Christian life; and it explains both the Old Law and the New Law, which direct human acts. It is to be noted that according to Scotus, who wrote very extensively on this subject, theology is a practical science because its proper end is action, especially the love of God and one's neighbor, since the whole law and the prophets depend upon these two precepts. Scotus inclines to this view because he thinks that the will is a higher faculty than the intellect, and that all knowledge, even the beatific vision, is ordained to love, as disposing one for a perfection of a higher order.

It must also be noted that we already detect this practical tendency in the writings of the Master of the Sentences, who divided his work, as to the acts of the will, into enjoyment and use, in the following manner:

1) The things to be enjoyed are the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

2) The things to be made use of for the attainment of eternal happiness are the world and created things.

3) The things to be enjoyed and made use of are the humanity of Christ, the angels, and the saints.

St. Bonaventure said that sacred theology is an affective science, since it is intermediary between speculative theology and practical theology, because contemplation and the performance of good constitute the end in view. St. Albert the Great expresses a similar view at the beginning of his Summa. In his opinion sacred theology is an affective study since it is directed to God's love. The nominalists along with Durandus admit that theology consists of two sciences, one of which is speculative and the other practical.

St. Thomas' reply is that sacred doctrine, being one, is both eminently speculative and practical, but it is speculative rather than practical.

1) It is proved in the counterargument from the nominal definition of theology, because it is chiefly concerned with God, who does not come within the scope of things operable, but who is the Being to whom our intentions and actions must be directed.

2) The first part of the conclusion is proved from the intrinsic end of this science in the body of the article as follows: A science which considers

things speculative and practical from the same formal point of view, is eminently speculative and practical; but sacred theology considers all things speculative and practical as virtually revealed and directed to God, the first truth and last end; therefore sacred theology is eminently speculative and practical.

The term eminently is taken in the sense of formal eminence and not merely of virtual eminence. This means that, just as the absolutely simple perfections are contained in God formally and eminently (which is more than virtually), just as the human soul is formally and eminently sensitive and vegetative, so also, as we shall state farther on, infused faith is eminently speculative and practical, since it is concerned with mysteries to be believed, the precepts, and the counsels. In various passages St. Thomas says that the same applies to the gifts of understanding and wisdom.

3) The second part of the conclusion is proved in the body of the article as follows: Sacred theology is more speculative than practical, because, as its name implies, it is more concerned with God than with human acts. God, however, is the object of speculation and contemplation, but He does not come within the scope of things operable, as in the case of ethics that is concerned with things capable of being done, and of the arts that are concerned with things capable of being made. Thus St. Thomas distinguishes better than St. Bonaventure does between theology, which is acquired by human effort, and infused contemplation. This latter is truly an affective and quasi-experimental knowledge that proceeds from the gift of wisdom.

But although theology, which is acquired by human effort, and the gift of wisdom are specifically distinct, yet they are most fittingly united, and this point is clearly exemplified in the great doctors of the Church, as in St. Augustine, St. Thomas, St. Bonaventure, St. Albert, and others. In fact, the Church never declares any servant of God a doctor of the Church unless he has first been not only beatified but also canonized. This means that he must first have been of eminent sanctity, and hence that the gift of wisdom and acquired knowledge are each possessed in a high degree.

Concerning the doctrine of this article, it is important to note here that Scotus denies the possibility of one and the same science being both eminently speculative and practical. To this Cajetan replies that the practical and the speculative are not essential differences of a science, as it is a science, but as it is finite. The divisions we find in things of the lower order,

for instance, in the philosophical sciences, are found united in those of the higher order, as in the case of faith and the gifts of understanding and wisdom. Gonet, too, ably defends the doctrine of this article by considering the loftiness of both formal objects quod and quo of sacred theology. For the formal object quod of theology is not only something speculative, such as being inasmuch as being, nor is it something merely operable, such as human actions about which ethics is concerned, but its object is God considered under the aspect of the Deity, who is the first speculative truth and the last end to be attained and the first rule of our life

Likewise, the formal object quo or light of sacred theology is virtual revelation, but it is virtual revelation that has its foundation in both speculative and practical knowledge. Thus formal revelation is the formal motive of faith, which is both speculative or contemplative, and practical according as it is concerned with the belief of mysteries or the fulfillment of precepts. The formal objects quod and quo, however, are correlatives, in that the latter is the searchlight enabling one to know the former.

Objection. If theology were both speculative and practical, then many of its acts would be both speculative and practical, because of the formal aspect of this science. But this is false; for there are in theology merely speculative conclusions, such as the four relations in the divine Persons, and there are conclusions that are merely practical, such as a particular act to be avoided.

We reply to this by denying the major. Although it is true to say that the rational soul is eminently and formally both vegetative and sensitive, yet it does not follow that its every act must be both vegetative and sensitive. So also each and every act of any science does not extend to everything included in this science. It is not necessary that each and every act totally and adequately share in the formal aspect of a science. Although this latter is formally indivisible, nevertheless it is virtually multiple.

Hence some theologians, such as St. Thomas, excel in dogmatic theology, whereas others, such as St. Alphonsus Liguori, are conspicuous for their knowledge of moral theology. In like manner, although the gift of wisdom is formally and eminently both speculative and practical, some saints, such as St. John of the Cross, are prominent in contemplation; others, however, such as St. Vincent de Paul, distinguish themselves by the wisdom of their direction in works of mercy. In the two saints just mentioned we see the gift of wisdom operating in a high degree; but in the

former it manifests itself more in contemplation, whereas in the latter it concentrates rather on those things that pertain to the active life. In the former it is like a searchlight, but in the latter it is like a glow in the heavens that illuminates all things from on high.

From this article as also from the preceding we see that the unity of sacred theology is of a higher order, since it is, as it were, a participation in the science of God and the blessed, a subordinate science, as it were, to this latter science or rather to this higher vision.

FIFTH ARTICLE

WHETHER SACRED DOCTRINE IS NOBLER THAN THE OTHER SCIENCES

State of the question. Our contention so far is that sacred theology is a true science, and indeed one as such eminently speculative and practical. It is one and the same aspect in these three conclusions, namely, that sacred theology proceeds from principles that have been revealed by the higher science of God, a science that is not only most certain but also absolutely one and eminently speculative and practical. Our discussion now centers upon the nobility or excellence of sacred theology with reference to the other sciences, namely, as to the certitude and sublimity of the object.

The difficulty about sacred theology is that it proceeds from principles that are not evident and that are doubted by some. Thus it seems to be inferior to the mathematical sciences. Moreover, theology draws upon the philosophical sciences. Therefore it seems to be inferior to them. St. Thomas accepted several principles from Aristotle.

St. Thomas replies to this, however, as follows: sacred theology transcends all other sciences both speculative and practical. He proves this:

1) By the argument from tradition, in which philosophy and the other human sciences are said to be handmaids of sacred doctrine. He also quotes the following text of Sacred Scripture in support of his doctrine: “Wisdom hath built herself a house . . . and hath sent her maids to invite to the tower, and to the walls of the city.” The Supreme Pontiffs have often drawn attention to the dignity of sacred theology.

2) In the argumentative part of the article this twofold aspect of the conclusion is taken up in turn and proved theologically. Among the speculative sciences it is because of the certitude and dignity of the subject

matter that one is nobler than the other. Now sacred theology excels the other speculative sciences in both respects. Therefore it is nobler than the others.

The major is evident; for dignity is thus considered from both the objective and the subjective points of view. The minor is no less certain; for sacred theology derives its certitude not from the light of reason but from the light of the divine knowledge, from principles believed by divine faith. But faith in itself is more certain than all the sciences on account of the authority of God revealing. The object of theology has reference to those things which by reason of their loftiness transcend both human reason and the angelic intellect.

Likewise, sacred theology is nobler than ethics and all the practical sciences, because it ordains and directs to a higher end, namely, to the ultimate supernatural end, which is eternal life. Since this latter is essentially supernatural, it surpasses the future life about which the nobler minded among the ancient philosophers spoke.

The argumentative part of the article presents no difficulty about what is meant. The formal aspect is clearly set forth, and is the same as in the preceding articles, namely, that sacred theology proceeds under the guidance of the divine light, and treats of the loftiest object that is both the supreme truth and the ultimate end.

There remains but the difficulty presented in the first objection, namely, that sacred theology, since it argues from principles that are not evident to reason, seems to be less certain than metaphysics, mathematics, and physics.

In the reply to the first objection it is stated that sacred theology is more certain than the other sciences in itself, but not to us. It is more certain in itself on account of its formal motive being higher, for this is virtual divine revelation. It is, however, less certain to us on account of the weakness of our intelligence, “which confronted by the light of those things more intelligible in themselves is as dazzled as the owl is by the light of the sun.” Yet, as Aristotle says, “the slightest knowledge that may be obtained of the highest things is more desirable than the most certain knowledge obtained of lesser things.” Why is this? It is for the reason that, since knowledge is specified by its object, its worth is estimated more from the object known than from the way in which it is known. Thus the argument of the

fittingness about the possibility of the Trinity is of a higher order than the rigorous demonstration of any property of the triangle.

Concerning the distinction made in this reply to the first objection between what is more certain in itself and not to us, and between what is more certain to us and not in itself, we must recall what Aristotle says on several occasions in his Metaphysics, namely, that those things which are more intelligible in themselves, as God, the pure Act, His immutable eternity, are less intelligible to us because they are most remote from the senses; for our human knowledge originates from the senses. On the contrary, motion and time, which are to us more intelligible than immobile eternity, are less intelligible in themselves. Eternity is most lucid in itself, for it is the measure of the subsistent Intelligence or of the pure Act, who is pure intellection.

First doubt. Does the greater degree of objective certainty though not of subjective certainty enjoyed by sacred theology over the other sciences apply to this same theology as possessed by us as wayfarers? We answer in the affirmative to this with the Thomists.

Proof. It is repugnant for a formal cause to inform a subject and not give it its formal effect. Thus infused faith by the very fact that it is received in our intellect, notwithstanding the obscurity of the mysteries, imparts to our intellect a firmness or a greater certainty than that enjoyed by any natural science. St. Augustine says: “It would be easier for me to doubt that I am living than to doubt what I have heard (from God) to be true.” What indeed Christ says, “Heaven and earth shall pass away; but My word shall not pass away,” is therefore most firmly to be held as true. Hence St. Paul says: “But though we, or an angel from heaven preach a gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema.” Hence, according to the teaching of St. Thomas, infused faith, not only as it is in itself, and as if it were in the air, external to us, but as it is in us, is more certain than the first principles of reason, because its formal motive, namely, the authority of God revealing, surpasses in validity the evidence of reason, or the power of the light of reason. But sacred theology, since its motive is virtual revelation, though it is inferior to faith, shares in this certitude of faith which we truly possess.

Nevertheless faith and theology are less certain to us because an obscure object but partially dispels the doubt arising in our mind, but imperfectly corresponds to the connatural mode of knowing by our intellect. St. Thomas

says: “Certitude can be looked at in two ways. First, on the part of its cause (in itself); and thus a thing which has a more certain cause, is itself more certain. In this way faith is more certain than those three virtues (i.e., all natural knowledge); because it is founded on the divine truth, whereas the aforesaid three virtues are based on human reason. Secondly, certitude may be considered on the part of the subject (for us), and thus the more a man’s intellect lays hold of a thing, the more certain it is. In this way faith is less certain” than the evidence of natural knowledge, because our intellect does not so connaturally and fully attain an obscure as an evident object. Obscure objects do not give us that pleasure and fruition which evident ones do. But St. Thomas goes on to say: “Each thing is judged simply with regard to its cause, but relatively with respect to a disposition on the part of the subject; hence faith is more certain simply, while the others are more certain relatively, i.e., for us.” But theology, since the source from which it argues is infused faith, shares in the certitude of faith.

So “we have this treasure (of faith) in earthen vessels,” but we have it. It is in us. This means that faith and also theology are more certain in themselves and in us than any natural knowledge whatever, although they are not so to us. Hence, if doubts suddenly arise on account of the obscurity of the object, these are merely subjective, resulting from the weakness of our intellect, but not from the formal motive of the habits of either faith or theology.

In this matter we must therefore take care to distinguish between the two expressions in us and to us. We have an example of this in the principle of finality. That every agent acts for an end is more certain in itself and in us than the objective existence of colors. Yet this existence of colors is to us (at least for many, for the majority of mankind) more certain than the principle of finality. All see colors by the sense of sight, but all do not perceive intellectually the absolute necessity and universality of the principle of finality. So, in like manner, faith in the Trinity is more certain in itself and in us than the existence of colors, but it is less certain to us. The reason is that the Trinity is the object most removed from the senses, from which our knowledge originates.

On the contrary, some cling most tenaciously to improbable opinions, for example, to political opinions. The formal heretic persists obstinately in his error, which is not in itself anything certain but is something stubbornly inhering in this badly disposed subject. Some do not firmly assent to truths

that in themselves are most certain, and others cling most tenaciously either to the poorest of opinions, or to errors. Thus it is quite clear that there is a distinction between what is certain in itself and what is certain for us. Therefore sacred theology is nobler than all the other sciences. It is so objectively because of the dignity of the object, and subjectively because of the greater certitude accruing to it from the divine light.

Second doubt. How is it that sacred theology is nobler than the sciences from which it accepts anything? It accepts a number of principles from metaphysics and therefore seems to be inferior to it; as optics, accepting something from geometry, is inferior to this latter, as being a subalternate science.

In the reply to the second objection it is stated that sacred theology does not accept its principles from other sciences, for these principles are revealed by God; but it accepts from them a certain means for the better manifestation of revealed truths, and thus it makes use of these sciences as being inferior to it and ancillary. It makes use of them, indeed, not because of any defect on its part but on that of our intellect, which is more easily led by means of natural things to acquire a certain understanding of supernatural truths.

This reply is profound and contains several points worthy of note. If sacred theology were to accept its principles from metaphysics, it would be subordinated to this latter, as optics is to geometry. But it accepts them only as the means for the greater manifestation of the revealed truths.

Thus sacred theology makes use of the natural sciences in accordance with the proper meaning of the word “use.” In the strict sense of the term, only the superior makes use of the inferior, that is, ordains the action of the inferior in co-operating with the superior’s action, which is ordained to a higher end. Thus the writer uses his pen, the painter his brush, the general of the army his soldiers, the finer arts the inferior, as the art of navigation avails itself of the constructive art of shipbuilding. In like manner sacred theology, as the superior science, makes use of metaphysics as the inferior and the handmaid. Thus metaphysics, for instance, the metaphysics of Aristotle, serves a much higher end. The Aristotelian notion of predicamental relation, for instance, is for us instrumental in acquiring a certain knowledge of the Trinity. Aristotle could not foresee so great an honor and glory for his metaphysics that it would serve the uses of the higher science of God. Thus metaphysics is not despised but is honored,

just as that citizen is honored who is at the king’s immediate disposal; for it is better to obey a king than to rule over a household, and this because of the high end in view for the attainment of which this collaboration is given.

Hence, as John of St. Thomas correctly observes, when sacred theology makes use of natural premises, a metaphysical truth, for example, it makes use of this as a means. But a means, such as a pen or brush, acts in virtue of the power transmitted to it by another, and is at the same time applied to its act and elevated by the motion of the principal agent, so as to produce an effect that transcends its own power. Thus by means of the motion imparted to the pen by the writer, it not only deposits the ink on the paper, but it writes something intelligible; and the brush not only puts the colors on the canvas, but arranges them most beautifully and artistically. In like manner, according to the navigator’s instructions, the shipwright constructs a vessel that is seaworthy. So also sacred theology uses the natural premise taken, for instance, from metaphysics. It first approves of the premise for this purpose under the guidance of the divine light of revelation, at least negatively, according as this natural premise is not in opposition to what has been revealed. Then it makes use of this premise not only by a motion that applies the same to act but also by a motion that is instrumental in the attainment of its higher end. This end is a certain understanding of the supernatural mysteries either in themselves (if it is a case of an explicative process of reasoning), or as regards their consequences, corollaries (if it is a case of an illative process of reasoning). Therefore the theological conclusion thus obtained, although it has less certainty than a proposition of the faith, has more certainty than a natural premise as such, because it is deduced from this premise which has been elevated and clarified by a higher light. Thus also in this case, the instrument produces an effect that transcends its own power and it operates by way of disposing for the effect of the principal agent.

It must be noted that great doctors, such as St. Augustine, produced even with a most imperfect instrument, for instance, with Neoplatonic philosophy, a wonderful theological work. It was in this way that St. Augustine wrote his books on the Trinity. Thus great painters sometimes paint a beautiful picture with a most imperfect brush. And besides, in these great doctors, faith, illuminated by the gifts of understanding and wisdom, makes up for the deficiency of the instrument, or of philosophy.

The philosophy, however, to which St. Thomas had recourse was more exact because Aristotle enunciated with great precision the philosophical notions and metaphysical principles, as Euclid did the elements of geometry. Thus St. Thomas excels in both kinds of wisdom, namely, acquired wisdom which is the result of the perfect functioning of reason, and infused wisdom which proceeds according to a connaturalness of judgment with things divine under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

In other words, a natural premise is in some way elevated so as to manifest the supernatural order, and it receives a somewhat greater certitude than it would have in its own right; for it is judged by faith and theology, corrected (if it needs to be) and approved by them. Thus St. Thomas in his treatise on the Trinity approves of and in some measure corrects the Aristotelian distinction between principle and cause, by showing that in the divine Persons the Father is the principle of the Son but not the cause. We have some evidence of this from experience. We are conscious of assenting with greater certainty to natural truths discovered by us, when we see that they have the approval of the leading doctors, especially when we see that they have divine confirmation and approval.

Even a natural premise which in itself would be only probable would not become certain by reason of its connection with a principle that is of faith, nor would it lead to a theologically certain conclusion; it would only be probable. But if it is certain in itself, it becomes more certain in proportion as it is clarified by a higher light. Thus the philosopher who already has metaphysical certainty of God’s existence before he receives infused faith, is after its reception more certain of this truth, since infused faith confirms from on high this metaphysical certitude. These statements are true even for the strictly illative process of reasoning, and more so for the explicative process.

From what has been said it is evident that sacred theology is a science subordinated not to metaphysics but solely to the science possessed by God, and by the blessed; for, as regards its own intrinsic principles, it depends solely upon divine revelation. But theology from its exalted position makes use of natural principles as strangers to it, and it makes use of them not because of any deficiency in itself, but because of the deficiency of our intellect, which is incapable of knowing the truths that are implicitly and virtually contained in the revealed principles solely by the light of faith. Now the angelic intellect, since it is not discursive, does not thus stand in

need of this additional natural knowledge so that it may have a certain understanding of supernatural mysteries. For the angel immediately sees the conclusion contained in the principles, the properties in the essence, and thus it immediately knows all the properties of man from the very concept of the human nature. Hence the angel, without any discursive process, immediately understands in this revealed truth, “The Word was made flesh,” what we deduce only by a slow process of reasoning.

It follows from this that the certitude of a strictly theological conclusion is less than the certitude of infused faith, but it is greater than the certitude of the natural sciences, even of metaphysics. The certitude of the theological conclusion improperly so called, of the conclusion that is obtained by the explicative process of reasoning, is less than the certitude of faith; but it acquires the certitude of faith, if by the special assistance of the Holy Spirit it is defined by the Church. Then it must be firmly accepted not because it has been proved by an explicative process of reasoning, but because “it hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost.”

Objection. The conclusion in a syllogism follows from the weaker premise. But the theological conclusion often results from a premise that is only naturally certain. Therefore then the conclusion is only naturally certain, for it follows from the weaker premise.

We reply with Gonet by distinguishing the major. If the premises equally influence the conclusion, then I concede the major; if one is the instrument of the other under the guidance of a higher light, then I deny it. I contradistinguish the minor: that the theological conclusion often results from a natural premise which is the instrument of another premise that is of faith, under the guidance of a higher light, this I concede; that this natural premise equally influences the conclusion, this I deny. And I deny the consequent and the consequence. Nevertheless, we may still say that the aforesaid logical axiom is in some manner verified since the theological conclusion is not so certain as the premise that is of faith. For to a theological conclusion strictly so called we cannot firmly assent solely on the authority of God revealing, but we assent to it partly on the evidence of reason; although faith makes use of reason in the deduction of this new truth that is only virtually contained in revelation. Such is the case if the natural premise is the major rather than the minor.

Third doubt. Is theology an essentially supernatural habit? It is the common teaching of the Thomists that sacred theology is essentially or

intrinsically a natural habit; infused faith, this being however, its extrinsic root, is essentially supernatural. Contenson disagreed with them on this point.

The reason is that theology is a habit acquired by human effort, that is, by natural acts of understanding which are acquired and not infused. Moreover, the formal object quod of theology, which is God, specifies it only in that it underlies the formal object quo. And this formal object quo, or light, is not formal but virtual revelation, which means that it is the light of reason deducing from revelation the conclusions virtually contained in this latter. The object of theology is God not formally revealed but virtually revealed. Nevertheless the extrinsic root of theology is infused faith, and this is essentially supernatural as regards both formal objects quod and quo; so that, as we said, with the removal of faith by formal heresy, we no longer have theology but merely its corpse, because there is wanting that formal connection between the ideas effected by the principles of faith.

Hence there are some theologians, like St. Bernard, who excel in faith, this being of a higher order and intense, and these are holier. Others, like Abélard, excel in dialectic, or in reason or the instrument of faith. There are some saints who have no knowledge of theology but they have great faith, which means that their lives are spent in a most profound contemplation of the mysteries of Christ; the faith of these is most intense and deep. On the other hand, there are many theologians whose faith is not so intense and profound, but they have a more extensive knowledge of what has been defined by the Church and of very many theological conclusions. The intensive increase of faith, however, is of more importance than its extensive increase.

SIXTH ARTICLE

WHETHER SACRED THEOLOGY IS THE SAME AS WISDOM

State of the question. We have seen that sacred theology is a science subordinated to the science possessed by God, that it is eminently speculative and practical. The question is whether it is worthy of the name of wisdom, as is the case with metaphysics or first philosophy among the sciences of the natural order.

The difficulty is that: (1) sacred theology borrows its principles from a higher science, and therefore is subordinate to this science, whereas “it is for the wise man to direct,” and not to be directed; (2) sacred theology does not prove or defend from on high the principles of the other sciences, as metaphysics, which treats of being, does by defending the principles invoked by the other sciences; (3) sacred theology does not seem to be supernatural wisdom, because this latter is infused, and is not acquired by human effort.

The reply, however, to this is that sacred theology is wisdom above all other human wisdom. Sacred doctrine is often called wisdom in Holy Scripture. St. Paul, comparing God’s wisdom with the wisdom of this world, says: “Howbeit we speak wisdom among the perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, neither of the princes of this world that come to naught. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, a wisdom which is hidden. . . . For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.” St. Paul speaks in this text, indeed, of revealed sacred doctrine, of faith illuminated by the gifts of the Holy Ghost. But sacred theology, which is acquired by human effort, proceeds from this faith, and thus it participates in the perfection of wisdom.

In the body of the article St. Thomas has recourse to the philosophical notion of wisdom as determined by Aristotle, who shows that metaphysics is not only a science, but wisdom, or the highest of sciences, because it is the knowledge of things acquired not only through their causes, but through the highest of causes. St. Thomas retains this notion of wisdom in the present article and in other parts of the Summa.

The doctrine of the article is briefly expressed as follows: Wisdom is the knowledge of things through their highest cause. But sacred theology essentially treats of God, the highest cause, also so far as He is known to Himself alone and to others by revelation. Therefore sacred theology is first of all wisdom, and more so than metaphysics.

The major is the very definition of wisdom established by Aristotle. In this article St. Thomas briefly shows the validity of this real definition, beginning with the nominal. For, according to the nominal definition, wisdom is something of eminence in the cognitive order; thus we have the common saying that it is for the wise man to direct and judge. But a scientific judgment about a thing is obtained through its causes, inquiring what the thing is in itself, what are its efficient and final causes. The highest

judgment is therefore obtained through the highest of causes. Thus wisdom surpasses the sciences, since science pure and simple is knowledge through proximate causes, but wisdom is knowledge through the highest of causes. Thus metaphysics treats of being as such through its highest causes, and it therefore does not reach perfection unless it acquires a definite idea of creation or of the production of the totality of finite being from nothing, and of the end of creation, which is the manifestation of God's goodness. Aristotle did not acquire this definite idea that can be known by the natural power of reason, and which, moreover, is equivalently expressed in the first words of the Bible: "In the beginning God created heaven and earth."

The nominal definition of sacred theology and the preceding remarks establish the evidence of the minor. For theology is the knowledge of God derived from revelation. Hence "it essentially treats of God viewed as the highest cause," and not only as He is the cause of the being as such of created things, but as He is the cause of grace and glory, that is, as He is the Author of salvation. The reason is that it treats of God not only so far as He can be known naturally from creatures, but also so far as He is known to Himself alone and made known to others through revelation.

In other words, sacred theology not only treats of God as He is the first Being, the self-subsisting Being, and the cause of beings as such, but it treats of God in His intimate life or under the aspect of the Deity. This is what St. Paul said: "But to us God hath revealed them by His Spirit. For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God," or God's intimate life. That is, the object expressed in this utterance is God under the aspect of the Deity, because the Deity contains formally and eminently all absolutely simple perfections such as being, unity, truth, goodness . . . , in which creatures are naturally capable of participation; whereas the Deity is not capable of participation except by grace, which makes us "partakers of the divine nature." Thus the Deity in a certain manner transcends being and the one, since it contains all these perfections formally and eminently in its higher eminence. It contains them more so than whiteness contains the seven colors of the rainbow, which are included in it not formally and eminently but only virtually and eminently.

Hence sacred theology is especially wisdom because it treats essentially of God, the highest cause, in His intimate life. Nevertheless theology, especially that of the wayfarer, does not attain to a quiddative knowledge of God as He is in Himself; it does not see the Deity, but reaches this in the

midst of faith, especially when it discusses the mystery of the Trinity. Thus sacred theology can from on high judge of all created things and of human life, namely, through the highest cause of being and of grace, and through the ultimate end not only natural but also supernatural.

In the reply to the first objection it is stated that sacred theology derives its principles not from any human knowledge but from the divine science, and thus it remains wisdom. Its principles are especially the fourteen articles of faith from which also the other articles of faith can be deduced.

First doubt. How does sacred theology judge of other sciences?

In his reply to the second objection St. Thomas says that:

1) "Theology is not concerned with proving the principles of other sciences," because its proper sphere of action extends to what has been supernaturally revealed, and the principles of the natural sciences are either directly known or are proved in a subalternating science, as geometry proves the principles of optics. In like manner metaphysics defends the first principles of reason.

2) Sacred theology judges, however, of the other sciences, and this in two ways. It judges negatively, because "whatever is found in other sciences contrary to any truth of this science must be condemned as false." Thus many hypotheses that have not been scientifically proved, from the very fact that they are contrary to divine revelation are repudiated by theology. But it positively approves of a certain proposition of metaphysics or of natural philosophy or of ethics, according as it is otherwise revealed, or at least is in conformity with revelation. Thus it approves of propositions about the immortality of the soul or the foundation of moral obligation or the distinction between virtuous, pleasant, and useful good.

Corollary. Thus the legitimate and relative autonomy of the natural sciences is preserved intact according as they proceed from their own naturally known principles and make use of their own method, as the Vatican Council states. But they cannot affirm as a scientific certainty what is contrary to revealed truth, because truth does not contradict itself. Hence the rationalist assertion of the absolute autonomy of reason was condemned by the Vatican Council in the following words: "If anyone shall say that human reason is so independent that faith cannot be enjoined upon it by God, let him be anathema."

Thus there are several declarations of the Church about the benefits of revelation. By means of it reason is freed from error, enlightened and

confirmed in truth. It upholds the certainty and purity of natural knowledge; it is the infallible guide of philosophy, and its indispensable norm; not only the philosopher but even philosophy is subject to its teaching authority. In the Syllabus of Pius IX the following proposition is condemned against moderate rationalism: “As the philosopher is one thing, and philosophy another, so it is the right and duty of the philosopher to subject himself to the authority which he shall have proved to be true; but philosophy neither can nor ought to submit to any such authority.” This is practically the same assertion as that condemned as heretical by the Vatican Council, which reads: “Human reason is so independent that faith cannot be enjoined upon it by God.” This latter assertion is tantamount to saying that the formal motive of a philosophical admission does not come within the scope of the formal motive of infused faith, namely, the authority of God revealing, and thus in the final analysis the certitude of infused faith would rest not only materially and extrinsically but even formally and intrinsically upon the natural evidence of the signs of revelation. Thus human reason would remain the supreme judge of truth and falsehood. This was the semi-rationalist error of Gunther, Hermes, and the Modernists.

Second doubt. How does theological wisdom differ from the gift of wisdom? St. Thomas answers this question in his reply to the third objection of this article, and more explicitly when he discusses the gift of wisdom. Theological wisdom, which is acquired by human effort guided by the light of divine revelation, judges according to the perfect use of reason, namely, by analyzing the concepts of the principles of faith or of the enunciation of the mysteries, and by deducing the conclusions contained in these principles. Contrary to this, the infused gift of wisdom, under the special inspiration of the Holy Ghost, transcending the discursive method, judges of divine things by way of an inclination or connaturalness for them, and it has its foundation in charity. This connaturalness arising from charity, is a loving sympathy, and by means of this quality the revealed mysteries manifest themselves not only as true, as revealed by God, but as most good since they admirably correspond to our higher aspirations.

So also in the natural order, there are two ways of judging, for instance, in questions of morality. It is accomplished either by way of scientific knowledge, as he judges who is well versed in moral science even though he is not virtuous; or it is accomplished by way of an inclination, as he who is virtuous, who is chaste, for instance, even though he has no knowledge of

moral science, judges well of those things that pertain to chastity, because these are in conformity with his virtuous inclination. According to each one's inclination or affection, so does he see the fitness of the end, said Aristotle. Wherefore the prudent judgment is said to be practically true by reason of its conformity with a right appetite, that is, with an upright intention, even though it is speculatively false because of an involuntary error. Thus prudence presupposes all the moral virtues and without it they cannot be virtues. In like manner, knowledge that is the fruit of the gift of wisdom, presupposes charity, whereas acquired theology remains in a theologian who is in a state of mortal sin.

The reply to the third objection of this article must be carefully read and compared with what St. Thomas has to say later on about this subject. Some who read these passages superficially, see in the knowledge resulting from the gift of wisdom but a loving connaturalness for divine things (and this is already present in the act of living faith that is informed by charity, even without the special inspiration of the Holy Ghost). What others perceive is this special inspiration, but they do not sufficiently advert to the fact that the Holy Spirit by means of this special inspiration makes use of the aforesaid loving connaturalness to manifest how excellent are the mysteries of faith, in that they admirably satisfy our nobler aspirations: "O taste and see that the Lord is sweet." If this special inspiration of the Holy Ghost is not considered, one fails to understand why Hierotheus is said "to be patient of divine things."

Great theologians excel in both kinds of wisdom. Thus knowledge that is not discursive and that is the result of the gift of wisdom, illustrates and confirms from on high the discursive knowledge of acquired theology. This is clearly seen in the writings of St. Augustine and not infrequently this reinforcement from on high in some way makes up for the imperfection that is of philosophical formation.

Another corollary. Apologetics is not a science specifically distinct from sacred theology, but it is theology functioning according to the principles of reason, and pertains to it, inasmuch as theology is wisdom and inasmuch as it defends the principles of faith and adheres to the same against those denying them. This has been more fully explained in another of our works. It will be made clearer in the eighth article, in which it is said that theology defends its principles against those who deny them, and it does not leave this defense to another science, because it is wisdom or the highest of the

acquired sciences. But in this rational or apologetic function of theology, it makes use of history and philosophy.

SEVENTH ARTICLE

WHETHER GOD IS THE SUBJECT OF THIS SCIENCE

State of the question. At first sight is seems that this article comes rather late in the discussion, because a science is specified by its proper object or subject, and from this its definition is derived, its properties are deduced, and its relations are established to the other sciences either inferior or superior.

Nevertheless, if the difficulties propounded at the beginning of this article are carefully considered, we see that it is in the right place here as being a recapitulation of the preceding articles and the goal of the hunt or search for the real scientific definition of sacred theology. The nominal definition of sacred theology, that it is the science of God derived from revelation, sufficed for the preceding articles.

It is now formally and explicitly determined why the subject of sacred theology is not, as some said, either Christ the mediator, or the sacraments, or the public worship due to God, or supernatural being in general, but God Himself in His intimate life.

The difficulty, however, is that every science knows what its subject is by means of the definition of the same, and from this it deduces the properties. Thus mathematics knows what is quantity, either continuous or discrete, namely, magnitude and number. Likewise natural philosophy knows what is mobile being, and metaphysics what is being as such. Contrary to this, sacred theology does not know properly or quiddatively what God is. As Damascene says: “It is impossible to say what God is.” To say what the Deity is we should have to see it; the beatific vision, however, is not given to one in this life. Moreover, sacred theology treats not only of God, but also of creatures and of human acts.

The reply, however, is that God is the subject of sacred theology.

1) This is already evident from the nominal definition of theology, since the term implies a discussion about God.

2) The direct proof is as follows: The object of a faculty or the subject of a science is that under the aspect of which all things are referred to the

faculty or the science; but all things are considered in sacred theology with reference to God under the aspect of God; therefore God under the aspect of God is the subject of this science.

The major distinguishes to some extent between object and subject. The object is that which is presented to the faculty, and is that which the faculty directly and immediately attains, and hence that under the aspect of which it attains all other things. Thus the object of sight is the colored object seen by sense perception; the object of the intellect is being, but the proper object of the human intellect is intelligible being of sensible things. With reference to science, which demonstrates conclusions about some subject (properties of man, for instance, about man), its object is the demonstrated conclusion or conclusions, but its subject is that which is the subject of the conclusions, or that about which the properties are demonstrated. Object and subject are commonly accepted for the same thing. But, strictly speaking, the subject of metaphysics is being as such, because metaphysics demonstrates the properties of being. The subject of natural philosophy is mobile being, and the subject of psychology is the soul. Hence, if metaphysics treats of God in natural theology, it does not discuss Him as the proper subject but as He is the cause of the being as such of various things.

Likewise the subject of medicine is the human body viewed under the aspect of health; and medicine considers all other things as remedies—salts, for instance, medicinal herbs, and such like—and so far as these have reference to the health of the human body. So also psychology considers the various manifestations of the life of the soul, languages, for instance, so far as these refer to the soul. It does not treat of these as the linguist does. Hence, although the object of a faculty may be something common to many sciences, the subject of a science may be something that is restricted.

The minor is: In sacred theology all things are considered with reference to God under the aspect of God. By logical induction this is evident; for it treats either of God Himself, or of those things that refer to Him as the beginning and end of all things Thus sacred theology in the treatises on God as one, as triune, as creator, as Word made flesh, treats of God as the proper subject, not as metaphysics does, which treats of God as He is the cause of the being as such of various things. Moreover, sacred theology treats of God under the aspect of God or of the Deity, and not only as He is the first Being, which metaphysics does. This means that it treats of God in His intimate life, and it is concerned with the “deep things of God.” Therefore

all the conclusions of sacred theology are derived from a certainty of knowledge of the Deity transmitted through revelation and directed to a greater knowledge of this Deity, just as all the conclusions of metaphysics presuppose the notion of being and are directed to a more profound knowledge of being, and just as all the conclusions of psychology tend to a greater knowledge of the soul.

As long as sacred theology treats of creatures it considers them as they refer to God under the aspect of the Deity, just as medicine considers mineral remedies or medicinal herbs so far as they refer to man's health. This means that sacred theology treats of creatures, in that they are vestiges or images of God, and in that the nobler creatures have been admitted to participate in God's intimate life by grace, and are ordained to see God and love Him above all things. Thus God under the aspect of God is the proper subject of theology; or He is the formal object quod of theology made known by the light of virtual revelation. St. Thomas had said in the preceding article that it is "God so far as He is known to Himself alone and revealed to others."

This is confirmed by the following argument: A science and its principles have the same subject, since the whole science is virtually contained in its principles; but God under the aspect of the Deity is the subject of the principles of this science, which are the articles of faith; therefore God is the subject of this science.

St. Thomas enumerates the articles of faith. Four of them concern the one and triune God; three refer to Him as He is the cause of creatures, as also of grace and glory; the rest are about the Word made flesh. All the other truths of faith are referred to these articles of faith. As theology is a science deriving its principles from faith, its object is the same as that of faith, though this object is perceived not by the light of formal but of virtual revelation.

We have as yet to consider the difficulty posited at the beginning of this article, which is to the effect that in this life we cannot know what God is or know His essence. The Deity as such or the divine essence is known through the beatific vision. How can it be said, therefore, that sacred theology is the science that treats of God under the aspect of the Deity?

St. Thomas replies to the first objection by saying that, "although we cannot know what constitutes the essence of God, nevertheless in this science we make use of His effects either of nature or of grace, in place of a

definition." Thus we say that sacred theology treats of God as the Author of grace, and this means a formal participation in the Deity. We also know the infinite fecundity within the Deity, in that it is manifested to us through the revealed mystery of the Trinity. Thus we have analogical knowledge of the divine Paternity, the divine Filiation, and the divine Spiration.

As Cajetan remarks, God can be considered: (1) under the common concepts of being and act; (2) under the relative concept of supreme cause; (3) under the mixed concept (namely, one that is both common and either relative or negative) of pure act, first being; (4) transcending all these modes, however, God can be considered according to His proper quiddity or essence, "which by way of circumlocution we call the Deity."

We have only the name but not the proper concept of the Deity as such. In this life by this name we understand an eminence that contains formally all absolutely simple perfections, such as being, unity, truth. . . . As regards the Deity we are somehow like one who, having seen the seven colors of the rainbow and knowing of whiteness only by name, would understand that by this name is meant the origin of colors. The difference, however, is this, that whiteness contains colors only virtually, whereas the Deity contains absolutely simple perfections formally and eminently.

At the end of the reply to the first objection, St. Thomas remarks that in some philosophical sciences the effect is taken in place of a definition of the cause. Such is the case in a descriptive definition, for it is only descriptively and, as it were, empirically that we define the species of minerals, plants, and animals, man being the exception. We do not know the essence of the rose, the lion, the eagle. This means that we do not know their distinct specific difference, so as to deduce their properties. The reason is that the substantial forms of these plants and animals are immersed in matter. Man alone among animals is properly defined by means of the specific difference, and from this his properties are deduced, because his form, the rational soul, is not immersed in matter, and the power to reason is a mode of intelligence the object of which is intelligible being. Thus by the light of intelligible being man becomes intelligible to himself; he defines his own nature better than that of a lion or eagle, the forms of which do not transcend the material; and just as the specific difference of the lion and eagle is inferior to our intellectual knowledge, so the Deity, which is, as it were, the specific difference of God, is superior to our natural intellectual knowledge. It remains to be said, however, that the Deity is known in the

mist of faith as the root of the divine processions manifesting its fecundity, and as the cause of grace and glory, these being properly the formal participations in the Deity as such, since by these gifts “we are made partakers of the divine nature.”

In this sense, therefore, we say that the subject of sacred theology is God under the aspect of the Deity, according as He comes within the scope of virtual revelation. But if we distinguish between its object and subject, then the conclusions about God or those things that are directed to Him constitute its object.

First corollary. Even when sacred theology treats of creatures, of the morality of human acts, God is always its subject, that is, God the Creator or God the ultimate end. On the other hand, the subject of ethics is human action. Thus ethics is specifically distinct from moral theology, just as acquired prudence, described by Aristotle as “the right ordering of things to be done,” differs from infused prudence spoken of in the Gospels.

Second corollary. Among the various theological systems, that one approaches closer to the perfection of a theological science which has as its germinating idea and, as it were, as its golden key, the exalted notion of God the Author of grace and salvation, rather than the notion of the created will. The reason is that in theology the idea of God is, as it were, the sun illuminating all things, just as in metaphysics this role belongs to the idea of being as such.

Third corollary. From the fact that God is the proper object of theology, this science begins by treating of God as He is in Himself, then of the procession of creatures from God, and finally of the ordaining of created things to God as to their end. Such is the method employed in the Theological Summa. It is the synthetic method of descent from God and a return to Him.

Contrary to this, metaphysics is the science of being as such, of being as previously known by us in sensible things, and it begins to treat of the knowableness of extramental being, of being as divided into substance and accident, potency and act, and it discusses God only at the end of the treatise. Moreover, metaphysics, as a general rule, comes after natural philosophy, since the being of sensible things is what is first known by our intellect. The method in philosophy is analytico-synthetic; it ascends to God, and afterward judges of creatures from its lofty standpoint of reference to the first cause.

This difference must be carefully noted. St. Thomas says: “In the doctrine of philosophy . . . the discussion is first about creatures and finally about God; in the doctrine of faith, which discusses creatures only as they refer to God, God is its first consideration; and then creatures; thus it is more perfect, as being more like God’s knowledge.” Wherefore the philosophical treatise on the soul begins by discussing the vegetative and sensitive faculties of the soul and ends by discussing the intellective faculties, the spirituality and immortality of which it finally proves; whereas from the very start the treatise on man, considering the soul as coming from God, treats almost immediately of its incorruptibility and its difference from the angelic nature.

EIGHTH ARTICLE

WHETHER SACRED DOCTRINE IS A MATTER OF ARGUMENT

State of the question. The meaning of the title is: Have those things which sacred doctrine teaches the force of conviction? The difficulty is that what is transmitted to us in theology is believed rather than proved. In fact, it seems that proof would lessen the merit of faith. The reply, however, is that sacred theology is a matter of argument, and this for three reasons:

1) That it may prove, not its principles, but the conclusions to be deduced from them.

2) That it may defend its principles from the revealed truths admitted by the opponent.

3) That it may defend its principles by solving the objections of opponents, if they concede nothing at all of divine revelation.

As regards the proof of conclusions, sacred theology is in this respect like all the sciences. As for the defense of its principles, in this it does not differ from metaphysics which, since it is wisdom, defends its own principles against those denying them, solving their objections at any rate, and proving them to be false or at least not convincing.

Thus Aristotle defends the real validity of the first principle of reason, that is, of the principle of contradiction, and also the validity of reason itself. In this process metaphysics, to be sure, makes use of logic, but it does not leave the defense of its principles to logic, for these are concerned not only with logical being but also with real being. It is the privilege of

wisdom as such to defend its principles by the analysis of their concepts and the solution of objections, before it proceeds to the deduction of conclusions. So also sacred theology, inasmuch as it is wisdom, before deducing conclusions analyzes the principles of faith, and defends these principles against those who deny them and, by positive and speculative arguments drawn from revelation, solves the objections. In doing so, sacred theology makes use of history and philosophy.

As St. Thomas says: “It refutes those things that are said against the faith by showing that they are false or of no consequence,” that is, not convincing. Cajetan admirably says: “There is a difference between the solution of an objection and the proof of a thesis. For a proof is drawn from the evidence of argument . . . ; a solution, however, does not require evidence, but simply that the intellect be not compelled. . . . A solution is also obtained from what does not seem to be false, though it may not be known to be true.”

We have an example of this in the case of the Trinity. If it is objected that one and the same nature does not belong numerically to several persons, the theologian replies: that this can be said of a finite nature, I concede; of an infinite nature, that I deny. It is not that the theologian positively knows that the infinite nature pertains to several persons; this he believes and consequently maintains that there is no means of proving the impossibility of this in an infinite nature. Thus the possibility of essentially supernatural mysteries is neither proved nor disproved. But we are reasonably persuaded of the same; it is defended against those denying and it is firmly believed. St. Thomas says: “Therefore what is of faith can be proved by authority alone to those who accept the authority; while as regards others it suffices to prove that what faith teaches is not impossible.” John of St. Thomas says: “It is not evident to reason that a proposition contradictory to the faith is in itself false, but simply that the arguments by which it is proved are not cogent.”

Essentially supernatural mysteries are, of course, likewise super natural as to their knowableness, for being and truth are one and the same. Therefore not only the existence of mysteries but even their intrinsic possibility is neither proved nor disproved, but we are reasonably persuaded of the same (by an argument of congruence), and it is firmly believed. If, indeed, it were positively proved, for instance, that the Trinity is really possible, then the fact of its existence would be proved because, in

necessary things, what is really possible demands of necessity the existence of the same. And if it were positively proved that the beatific vision or eternal life is really possible, this mystery would transcend our naturally acquired knowledge, not because of its essentially supernatural nature but because of its contingency, in that it is a contingent future of the natural order which depends upon God's most free good pleasure, just as the last day of this material world does.

From the privilege sacred theology enjoys as wisdom, it follows, as we already remarked, that apologetics is not a specifically distinct science from sacred theology, but is the same science functioning rationally for the defense of the credibility of the mysteries of faith. Just as the critical part of metaphysics defends the real validity of the first principles of reason and of intellectual evidence, and in this it makes use of logic, so sacred theology defends the credibility of the mysteries of faith, and in this it makes use of history and philosophy, presenting from its lofty standpoint, under the direction of faith, arguments drawn from reason as to the demonstrative force, for instance, of miracles and other signs, so that unbelievers may know from these signs that revelation is a fact and may so present unto God "a reasonable service."

What is the mode of argumentation that is pre-eminently proper to sacred theology?

In the reply to the second objection it is stated that the argumentation is from divine authority, for sacred theology proceeds under the guidance of the light of revelation or of the authority of God revealing.

In this reply to the second objection we have the germ, as it were, of the treatise on the theological sources. Melchior Cano, O.P., was the first in this field. The theological sources are divided as follows:

Theological sources Proper Apodictic Sacred Scripture
Divine tradition
Authority of the
Catholic Church of ordinary magisterium and of ecumenical councils
Authority of the
Roman Pontiff
Probable Authority of holy Fathers
Authority of scholastic theologians

Extrinsic	Apodictic	The natural power of reason and history as we can rely on its certainty
Probable		The authority of philosophers

Cajetan points out that sacred theology makes use of natural or metaphysical reasons, as extrinsic or probable arguments, if these reasons are absolutely considered; it makes use of them as proper and sometimes necessary arguments, if these are considered as ministering to theology, that is, as helping in the deduction of the theological conclusion. But if we use these reasons as persuasive arguments in favor of the possibility of mysteries, then they furnish us with only a probable argument or with one of fitness that may be, however, most profound and always to be examined, but that is not apodictic.

Melchior Cano in treating of history as an extrinsic theological source, holds that, if all the approved and weighty historians concur in admitting the same historical fact, then we have an argument of certainty on their authority.

Hence sacred theology first of all appeals to the argument from authority, and then has recourse to reason for the explanation, defense, right ordering of the authorities, and for the deduction of the conclusions from them.

The method of procedure in sacred theology is explained in the treatise on the theological sources, especially as regards the positive part. It lays down rules for discerning the literal sense of Sacred Scripture, for the discernment of divine tradition, as also for the correct interpretation of the definitions of the solemn utterances of the Church and for the validity of the other decisions. It also decides the doctrinal authority of the Fathers and theologians. It is likewise concerned with the appeal to reason and history.

But as to the speculative part of theology, the fundamentals of the analogical method are explained by St. Thomas when he discusses the divine names; for our knowledge of God and of the supernatural gifts is but analogical, derived by means of a comparison with things in nature.

NINTH ARTICLE

WHETHER HOLY SCRIPTURE SHOULD USE METAPHORS

State of the question. The reason for this inquiry is that the theologian must carefully distinguish in Sacred Scripture between the literal sense

according to the proper signification of the words, and the metaphorical sense, according to some similitude, as when it is said that “our God is a consuming fire.” Hence the question is Why does Sacred Scripture sometimes have recourse to metaphorical language?

The difficulty is: (1) that metaphor fittingly pertains to poetry, not to the proposition of some truth; and thus it is not allowed in the sciences; (2) that by metaphors the truth is obscured; (3) that metaphors taken from corporeal creatures cannot at all represent the purely spiritual life of God.

The answer, however, is: It is befitting Holy Writ to put forward divine and spiritual truths metaphorically by means of comparisons with material things. This is proved in two ways: (1) because it is natural for man to attain to intellectual truths through sensible objects, and God provides for everything according to the capacity of its nature; (2) because many are unable of themselves to grasp intellectual things, and Sacred Scripture is proposed to all. Hence Christ our Lord spoke to the multitude in parables.

Does Sacred Scripture make use of metaphors in the way poetry does? In the reply to the first objection it is stated that poetry makes use of metaphors on account of the pleasure derived from representation, but Sacred Scripture on account of its usefulness. Farther on, St. Thomas states in substance that poetry makes use of metaphors because of the lack of appeal on the part of the object extolled, but theology because of the preponderance of the divine reality, which cannot be expressed except by way of analogy.

God, however, is analogically made known to us in two ways, either by proper analogy, as when it is said that God is just; or by metaphorical analogy, as when it is said that God is angry?

In the reply to the second objection it is pointed out that “those things which are taught metaphorically in one part of Scripture, in other parts are taught more openly.” Moreover, “the hiding of truth in figures is useful as a defense against the ridicule of the impious.”

Commenting on the reply to the third objection, regarding metaphors taken from corporeal things, as when it is said that God is a consuming fire, we say that these are more fitting, in this sense that they do not permit us to rest the merits of our case in the similitudes, because God is not a material fire and because this is said only by way of similitude. On the other hand, when we speak of the divine perfections in the strict sense, it may be that some judge of these perfections as being formally and actually distinct in

God as they are in our mind. This would be to detract from God's absolute simplicity and loftiness of life.

TENTH ARTICLE

WHETHER IN HOLY SCRIPTURE A WORD MAY HAVE SEVERAL SENSES

State of the question. The special purpose of this article is to distinguish between the literal sense and the spiritual sense in Holy Scripture. The difficulty in admitting several senses is: (1) that many different senses in one text produce confusion; (2) that authors are not fully in agreement about the names to be given to these various senses.

The reply is, however, that in Holy Scripture a word can be used both in the literal or historical sense and in the spiritual sense, which latter is either allegorical or moral or analogical, in accordance with the traditional terminology.

A profound reason is given for this first distinction, namely, that "the Author of Holy Writ is God, in whose power it is to signify His meaning not by words only (as man also can do), but also by things themselves." But what is signified by the words belongs to the literal sense, whereas the signification by which things signified by words have themselves also a signification belongs to the spiritual sense. Thus Job is the figure of Christ suffering, the paschal lamb is the figure of the Lamb who taketh away the sins of the world. Therefore these two senses are fittingly distinguished.

But the spiritual sense (1) is called allegorical so far as the things of the Old Law signify in figure the things of the New Law; (2) it is called moral according as the things done in Christ are types of what we ought to do; (3) it is called anagogical, as the New Law is itself a figure of future glory, as Dionysius says.

So far there is no special difficulty, but St. Thomas furthermore says in the last paragraph of the body of the article: "Since the literal sense is that which the author intends, and since the author of Holy Writ is God, who by one act comprehends all things by His intellect, it is not unfitting, as Augustine says, if, even according to the literal sense, one word in Holy Writ should have several senses." This statement has been and still is a subject of controversy, namely, whether a word can have several senses. St. Thomas seems to affirm this in the passage quoted above, and his leading

commentators are generally of the same opinion. Many modern exegetes, however, such as Patrizzi and Cornely, take the opposite view. This question of the many different literal senses in Holy Scripture is explained at length by Father P. V. Zapletal, O.P. When it is said, for instance, “God created heaven and earth,” the word “heaven” would mean, so says St. Augustine, both the material heaven and the angels. Or again, when it is said: “Give us this day our daily bread,” this would mean both the ordinary bread and the supersubstantial bread, explicitly so named in the Gospel. Let us see first the replies to the objections that are advanced in argument by those who deny the many different literal senses in Holy Scripture.

In the reply to the first objection it is stated that: “The multiplicity of these senses does not produce equivocation . . . seeing that these senses (namely, these about which the objection is concerned, the literal sense, and the threefold division of the spiritual sense) are not multiplied because one word signifies several things, but because the things signified by the words can be themselves types of other things.”

Some say that in this passage St. Thomas seems to deny the multiplicity of the literal sense. Many Thomists reply that such is not the case, because St. Thomas would then contradict himself. He is now speaking, they say, only of the quadruple sense about which the objection was concerned, the literal sense, namely, and the threefold spiritual sense.

In the same reply to the first objection it is furthermore remarked that: “In Holy Writ no confusion results, for all the senses are founded on one (the literal) from which alone can any argument be drawn . . . and nothing necessary to faith is contained under the spiritual sense which is not elsewhere put forward by the Scripture in its literal sense.”

In the reply to the second objection, St. Augustine’s terminology is explained, who called the spiritual sense, for instance, allegorical.

In the reply to the third objection it is stated that the literal sense is either proper or parabolical, that is, metaphorical. Thus when God’s arm is mentioned, the literal sense is to be taken metaphorically as expressing God’s power.

There is still a doubt whether there are not several literal senses in some texts of Holy Scripture. St. Augustine answers in the affirmative. Summing up the question, he writes: “When it is said ‘In the beginning God created heaven and earth,’ it is revealed that God did not create from eternity and at one and the same time both the material heaven and the angels, both visible

and invisible things; for this truth is afterward held as certainly revealed." St. Augustine remarks that if we perceive this twofold sense, why is it that Moses, guided by the light of inspiration, did not perceive it? St. Gregory the Great says the same.

St. Thomas, says Father Zapletal, frequently speaks of the literal sense in a favorable manner, as he so does at the end of the argumentative part of this article. Likewise in another of his works he writes: "It is not incredible that Moses and other authors were granted by God knowledge of various truths capable of perception by man, and that the one statement of words denotes these truths, so that any one of them may be the meaning intended by the author."

Thus it is not incredible that Moses, inspired to write: "In the beginning God created heaven and earth," understood not only the material and visible heaven, but also the invisible angels, as Augustine says. In like manner, our Lord Jesus, saying that thus we must pray: "Father . . . give us this day our daily bread," could have had in mind both the ordinary bread and supersubstantial bread. The opponents say that this second sense is not literal but spiritual. But it is evidently not so, for the actual words of the first Evangelist are: "Give us this day our supersubstantial bread." Perhaps Jesus said to the multitude "daily bread," and to the apostles "supersubstantial bread."

St. Thomas, who is conservative in his statement, writes: "it is not incredible. . . ." He would have more to say if it were a question only of the spiritual sense, because this latter is quite evident. Hence he is speaking of the twofold literal sense. The majority of the commentators of St. Thomas, as Father Zapletal points out, admitted the multiplicity of the literal sense. Among these are Cajetan, Cano, Bannez, Sylvius, John of St. Thomas, and Billuart.

Against this multiplicity of senses are quoted, among the earlier theologians, Alexander of Hales, St. Bonaventure, and St. Albert the Great who said: "Theology gives one meaning to a word." Of the same opinion are most of the modern exegetes, who bring forward the objection that, if there were several literal senses, the result would be confusion and equivocation. This is their chief reason.

In reply to this we say that if the names used were equivocal, as in the case of dog used to denote the terrestrial animal and the heavenly constellation, then I concede the assertion; but if the names are analogous,

then I deny it. Thus heaven denotes both the starry firmament and the angels, and bread is understood in the ordinary sense of the term and it also means the Holy Eucharist. But if it is a case of two subordinated analogates, or of two that are coordinated under a higher, and if no false sense arises from this, then there is no equivocation.

It is still a disputed question. The following argument may be advanced in favor of those who admit a twofold literal sense. If men can utter words that have a twofold literal sense and that are most intelligible to an intelligent hearer, much more so can God do this, who is the author of Holy Scripture. But intelligent men frequently utter words that have a twofold literal sense and that can easily be understood. Thus at a certain banquet a prelate who was a moderate Thomist said to another prelate who was of the rigid type: “Do you want a little water in your wine?” The rigid Thomist perceived quite well the twofold literal sense in the words, the first being a reference to the mixing of water with the wine, the other to the moderation of Thomism. His answer therefore was: “I admit only one drop of water in the wine of the Mass.” There was likewise in these words a twofold literal sense: (1) the obvious sense; (2) the metaphorical literal sense, the one however primarily meant, namely, that there must be no mitigation in the soundest of doctrine. Thus it is said that W. Goethe sometimes assigned a twofold literal sense to his verses, so that at least the more intelligent readers might perceive this second sense. This frequently is the case when persons of great culture converse.

But if men can so express themselves, why could not God, and even Moses, have attached a twofold sense to the words: “In the beginning God created heaven” (namely, the material heaven and the angels). And why could not these words, “Give us this day our daily bread,” have a twofold literal sense, the one referring to ordinary bread and the other to supersubstantial bread?

But the opponents would say that in these examples one of the senses is literal (as in the case of ordinary bread and the material heaven), whereas the other sense is spiritual, since bread in the usual sense of the term is the symbol of the other kind, and since the material heaven is the quasi abode of the angels. Hence it is not quite clear that there are two literal senses; but neither is the contention of the opponents an established fact. It is therefore a probable opinion, if the question concerns the presence of a twofold literal

sense in certain texts, and a more than probable opinion if it is a question of the possibility of these two senses.

As for the words, “In the beginning God created heaven and earth,” it is not quite clear that there are two literal senses. However, the Fourth Lateran Council discovers two truths in this text, namely, that God did not create the world from eternity, and that “He created out of nothing, from the beginning of time, both the spiritual and corporeal creature, to wit, the angelic and the mundane,” which means that the angels were not created before corporeal creatures. Hence this council seems to understand, as St. Augustine did, that the words, “In the beginning God created heaven,” mean that He created at one and the same time, the heavenly bodies and the angels.

We must conclude that the possibility of a word having two literal senses appears to be a certainty, but that there are actually two senses is but a probability. Therefore St. Thomas says: “It is not incredible that Moses and other authors were granted by God knowledge of various truths capable of perception by man, and that one statement of words denotes these truths, so that any one of them may be the meaning intended by the author.”

Thus we bring to an end the question on sacred doctrine, a question in which the holy Doctor determined the nature and dignity of sacred theology, effecting this by an examination of its object and of the light from which it proceeds. He also determined its method of argumentation and the various senses of Holy Scripture.

CHAPTER II

QUESTION 2

PROLOGUE

THE prologue to this question is concerned with the orderly arrangement of the whole Theological Summa. The definition of sacred theology, however, is the foundation for this division; for it is the knowledge of God as such, as acquired by the light of revelation. Hence it follows that theology must treat: (1) of God in Himself, and as He is the principle of creatures, especially of rational creatures; (2) of the rational creature's advance toward God as its end; (3) of Christ, who as man, is our way to God. Thus there are three parts to the Theological Summa.

It must be noted that the order is not philosophical but strictly theological. St. Thomas says: "For in the teaching of philosophy, which considers creatures in themselves and leads us from them to the knowledge of God, the first consideration is about creatures, and the last about God; whereas in the teaching of faith, which considers creatures only in their relation to God, the consideration about God takes the first place, and that about creatures the last. And thus it is more perfect as being more like God's knowledge; for He beholds other things by knowing Himself."

This theological order is known as the synthetic order. It begins by considering the higher and more universal things in causation, and it descends to the lower and less universal; and this is in accordance with the very order of nature and causality.

Moreover, in this order, those things that are necessary receive first consideration, which, in the first and second parts of the Summa, are God and created natures, especially human nature. These are considered before the great contingent fact of the Incarnation of the divine Word for the redemption of the human race in accordance with the following statement in

the Apostle's Creed: "Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven."

Finally, this order is of the nature of a complete revolution, in that its starting-point is God, the beginning of all things; and in the treatise on the last things it returns to this same starting-point, which is God, the ultimate end of all things. Thus it embraces everything, and for this reason the work is truly a Summa in which the dogmatic and moral parts of sacred theology are united under one formal aspect.

It is not exactly the same order that is observed in the Summa Contra Gentes, because in that work St. Thomas proceeds by the apologetic method. Yet it is not a philosophical summa that begins with a consideration of creatures, for it begins with a consideration of God Himself. In the first three books, however, God and creatures are considered according to what can be known of these by reason alone, whereas in the fourth book strictly supernatural mysteries are discussed, such as the Trinity and the Incarnation.

Although St. Thomas proceeds by the synthetic method in these two theological works, nevertheless, in beginning the treatise by considering the question of the demonstration of God's existence, he brings together arguments which had been given by Aristotle. Thus he makes use of them, as was said, "not because of the defect or insufficiency of sacred theology, but because of the defect of our intelligence, which is more easily led by what is known through natural reason (from which proceed the other sciences), to that which is above reason, such as are the teachings of this science." It is, indeed, under the guidance of a higher light that this assembly of philosophical arguments concerning God's existence is effected, and by this means certitude rests on more solid grounds.

There is a threefold division in the first part of the Summa. Here are considered: (1) whatever pertains to the divine essence, or de Deo uno; (2) whatever pertains to the distinction of Persons, or de Deo trino; (3) whatever pertains to the procession of creatures from God, or de Deo creante et elevante.

The treatise on the one God is likewise divided into three parts. First, whether God exists (q. 2). Secondly, the manner of His existence, or rather, what is not the manner of His existence. This is discussed from the third question to the end of the thirteenth, in which the metaphysical attributes of God are considered, many of them expressed in the negative form, such as

the simplicity, the perfection, the infinity, the immutability, and the unity of God. These pertain to God as He is in Himself, and are considered from the third question to the end of the eleventh. Then in the twelfth and thirteenth questions God is discussed in His relation to us, how He is known and named by us. The analogical method is employed here, namely, the method of speculative theology. Thirdly, whatever concerns God's operation is discussed from the fourteenth question to the end of the twenty-sixth. In these questions the knowledge, life, will, love, justice, mercy, providence, predestination, power, and beatitude of God are considered.

From this division it is already apparent that the theological treatise on the one God is concerned with several truths that cannot be known by reason alone. Such are the beatific vision (q. 12), God's providence even as it concerns those creatures that are of the supernatural order, or predestination (q. 23). These must be the subject of special consideration, because there are other attributes that have already been discussed by philosophy in their metaphysical aspect.

It must be pointed out that this order proposed by St. Thomas is a great improvement upon the order established by Peter Lombard in the Books of the Sentences. This theologian, as we remarked, divides the subject matter not as it refers to God (the subject of sacred theology), but as it refers to the human will, the two acts of which are enjoyment and use. Thus his treatise is concerned first of all with those things in which we must find our delight, with those things that bring us happiness, namely, with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, or, with the triune God. Then he discusses the knowledge, power, and will of God. He afterward comes to a consideration of those things which we must make use of, namely, creatures; in other words, angels, man, and grace. Original sin and actual sin are here discussed. Afterward he takes up the consideration of those things that must be the object both of our enjoyment and of our use, namely, Christ as man, and the virtues. Finally he discusses the sacraments and our last end.

In this division a discussion of the moral part of theology is not directly intended, but only as the occasion requires, as in the third book of the Sentences, although the division of the entire treatise gives one the impression that it is concerned more with moral questions, namely, with those things that can be the object of our enjoyment and use.

Several modern authors, such as Scheeben, after the treatises on the one and triune God, and on creation, begin at once with the treatise on Christ

before discussing grace and the infused virtues. Thus grace is presented more in its Christian aspect; but, on the other hand, grace must be considered as it existed even in the state of innocence and in the angels, who were not redeemed by Christ.

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

THERE are three articles to this question: (1) whether the existence of God is self-evident; (2) whether it can be demonstrated that God exists; (3) whether God exists. Thus three possible standpoints are considered. (1) There is the standpoint of those who, Like St. Anselm, say that God's existence is self-evident; (2) then there are those who, like the agnostics, hold that God's existence is neither self-evident, nor possible of demonstration; (3) and we have the stand taken by St. Thomas, who shows that God's existence can be and is demonstrated by a consideration of existing effects.

John of St. Thomas asks why St. Thomas treats in theology of God's existence. He replies that the reasons given by sacred theology in proof of the existence of God as the Author of nature, are not its own but are taken from metaphysics. These reasons, however, are corrected and perfected by theology guided by the light of revelation, which says those men are inexcusable who, from the orderly arrangement of all things in the world, did not know that there is a supreme Ordainer. This constitutes the preamble to the faith. It is also of faith that God exists as the Author of grace and salvation; and this is not proved but supposed by sacred theology, and is afterward explained and defended by it.

This question begins by taking for granted what is meant by the name God or the nominal definition, namely, that by this name men generally understand the intelligent and supreme Cause of the universe, which He has designed. Hence the question is, whether this highest and most perfect cause truly exists as really and essentially distinct from the world. Thus any demonstration of God's existence begins by some nominal definition of God, and the existence is proved of the first Mover, the first Cause, the first necessary Being, and the supreme Ordainer.

FIRST ARTICLE

State of the question. That proposition is self-evident which, as soon as the terms are known, and without the medium of demonstration, is known as true and necessary. Such are the first principles of reason, which are immediately evident and which therefore cannot be demonstrated except indirectly or by a reduction to absurdity. Is the proposition, God is, self-evident; is it evident from the terms alone?

In the state of the question St. Thomas first gives the reasons for affirming this. (1) Damascene says: “The knowledge of God is naturally implanted in all,” and therefore the proposition seems as self-evident as the first principles of reason are. (2) St. Anselm’s argument is proposed by the following syllogism: Nothing greater can be thought of than what is signified by the word “God”; but what exists actually and mentally is greater than what exists only mentally; therefore, as soon as the word “God” is understood, it evidently follows that God exists not only mentally but also actually. This argument was later on revived by Descartes, Leibnitz, and the ontologists. It was admitted even by Spinoza, but according to the pantheistic type of ontologism. (3) It is evident that truth exists, says St. Thomas (for if it is said that truth does not exist, then it is true that truth does not exist); but God is truth; therefore God exists.

It must be noted that St. Anselm’s argument, as de Wulf relates, was admitted by William of Auxerre, Richard Fitzacre, and Alexander of Hales. St. Albert the Great seems to be of the opinion that this argument appeals to philosophers. It is rejected, however, by St. Thomas, Robert Middleton, Scotus, and many Scholastics. Among modern intellectuals it is rejected by Kant who, moreover, in accordance with his subjectivism, maintains that St. Anselm’s deceptive argument, which he calls the ontological argument, is implied in all the classic proofs of God’s existence. In this difficult question that must be carefully considered, as we shall at once see, there are three systems of thought that are in opposition to one another, namely, the exaggerated realism of St. Anselm and the ontologists, the subjective conceptualism of Kant, and the moderate realism of St. Thomas, this latter being, so to speak, the just mean and summit between the other two.

The reply. That God exists, is not self-evident, at least to us.

1) The indirect proof is given in the counterargument as follows: no one can mentally admit the opposite of what is self-evident (e.g., of the

principle of contradiction, or of causality); but “the fool said in his heart, there is no God”; therefore, that God exists, is not self-evident,

To this the followers of St. Anselm reply: This proposition, “God is,” is self-evident only to the philosophers, as this other, that “incorporeal substances are not in space.” It is not self-evident, however, to those whose intelligence is obscured by reason of inordinate passions, and who, therefore, do not consider what is signified by this name God. Truly this indirect argument does not seem to be apodictic. On the contrary, what is said in the body of the article constitutes a cogent argument for St. Thomas.

2) The direct proof is then given. The entire argumentation has its foundation in the distinction between “what is self-evident in itself and to us,” and “what is self-evident in itself, but not to us,” and is reduced to this conclusion: A proposition is self-evident in itself, but not to us, when the predicate is included in the essence of the subject, the essence of either subject or predicate being unknown to us. Now in this proposition, “God is,” the predicate is included indeed in the essence of the subject (for God is His own existence), but we do not know the essence of God. Therefore this proposition is self-evident in itself, but not to us, not even to philosophers; it needs to be demonstrated by things that are more known to us, though less known in their nature, namely, by effects. The major is evident; but the difficulty is in the minor, as regards the words, “we do not know God’s essence.” For a better understanding of this difficulty the objections of St. Anselm’s followers must be presented as they increase in urgency.

The followers of St. Anselm object that we have not the quiddative knowledge of God which the blessed enjoy in heaven, which means that we do not know the Deity as it is in itself; but we do know what is meant by the name God, namely, that if God exists, then He is the first Cause and the most perfect Being; and this suffices.

St. Thomas would reply to this, as he points out in the reply to the second objection of the following article, by saying: The names given to God are derived from His effects (as first Cause, most perfect Being), and this point will be more clearly explained later on in the first article of the thirteenth question in which the analogy between names taken from creatures as applied to God is discussed. “Consequently, in demonstrating the existence of God from His effects, we may take for the middle term the meaning of the word God.” In other words, the nominal definition of God does not include actual existence, and from this definition all that can be concluded

is that God is self-existent and independent of any other being, if He exists. It follows then that God's existence must be demonstrated a posteriori, that is, from those effects already known to us. This is just what is said in the reply to the second objection of this article.

The followers of St. Anselm again object that, even apart from the effects, we at once know God's essence, namely, that He is the primal Truth and the supreme Good. And it is at once evident that truth exists, especially primal Truth; and it is likewise evident that good exists, especially the supreme Good.

In the reply to the third objection of this article, we read: "The existence of truth in general is self-evident; but the existence of a primal Truth is not self-evident to us." This is proved indeed a posteriori in the third article by the fourth way as follows: "Among beings there are some more and some less good, true, noble, and the like. But 'more' and `less' are predicated of different things, according as they resemble in their different ways something which is the maximum . . . and consequently something which is uttermost being."

Likewise in the reply to the first objection of this article, we read: "Man naturally desires happiness (or to be happy), and what is naturally desired by man must be naturally known to him." Thus he has a confused knowledge of the supreme good. "This, however, is not to know absolutely that God exists; just as to know that someone is approaching is not the same as to know that Peter is approaching, even though it is Peter who is approaching; for many there are who imagine that man's perfect good, which is happiness, consists in riches, and others in pleasures, and others in something else."

From these replies to the first and third objections, we see that St. Anselm's argument would be valid and fundamentally true if absolute realism were true, that is, if the formal universal had objective existence, as Plato, the Platonists, the ontologists, and Spinoza thought, though the latter applied this theory only to the notion of substance. Even long ago Parmenides formulated the principle of contradiction in accordance with the theory of absolute realism, when he said: "Being exists, non-being does not exist." The principle of contradiction would be then not only an abstract principle (abstracting from actual existence), but also a judgment pertaining to the order of existence. Contrary to this, Aristotle formulated this

principle in the abstract by saying: “Being is not non-being”; something cannot at the same time be and not be.

But if absolute realism were true, that is, if the universal existed not only fundamentally, but formally apart from the thing, then being in general would be identical with the divine being, as Parmenides maintained, later on Spinoza, and also the ontologists, though with some modifications. That such is the conclusion of their teaching is clear from their condemned propositions. These are: “An immediate and at least habitual knowledge of God is essential for the intellect, so that without this there is no possibility of its acquiring any knowledge since this is intellectual light itself. That being which is in all things and without which nothing is perceived by the intellect, is the divine being. There is no real distinction between universals considered apart from things and God. All other ideas are but modifications of the idea by which God as being is simply understood.”

Hence, whereas St. Thomas says: “What first comes to our mind is intelligible being” of sensible things, these extreme realists say that what first comes to our mind is the divine being. In other words, the ontological First or the first Being is what is first known by our mind. But in this case being in general is identified with the divine being, as Parmenides maintained among the ancient philosophers and Spinoza among the moderns. Evidently, if this extreme realism were true, St. Anselm’s argument would be valid and undoubtedly a fundamental truth even in the order of invention (like the principle of contradiction). But this absolute realism leads to pantheism and is without any foundation; for what is first known is intelligible being of sensible things, and this will be more clearly seen later on. Sometimes we have a superficial refutation of St. Anselm’s argument. Its true refutation does not leave out of consideration the problem of universals.

Several followers of St. Anselm object that, even independently of absolute realism, God’s essence is sufficiently made known to us by the name God, so that we can at once affirm that God is not a stone, or a man, but that He is “the greatest being that is possible of conception.” It is especially this that the philosophers understand the name implies. But the greatest being possible of conception must exist not only mentally but also actually; otherwise it would be possible to conceive a greater being, namely, one that would exist both mentally and actually. Thus God’s existence is demonstrated, but by an a priori proof derived from the notion of God.

About the end of the reply to the second objection of this article the minor of the preceding syllogism is denied, for we read: “Nor can it be argued that this being actually exists, unless it be admitted (by the adversary) that there actually exists something than which nothing greater can be thought.” In other words, the atheist or the agnostic will say: Most certainly God is self-existent and is independent of any other being, if He truly and actually exists; but it must be proved that He actually exists. This is not proved from merely the abstraction of God, a notion that does not include actual existence. In other words, if extreme realism is untrue, in this argument given by St. Anselm there is an unwarranted transition from the ideal order of essences to the real order of actual or de facto existence. Against the proof of the minor it must be said that neither God existing is greater than God viewed as possible as regards His essence, to which the nominal definition refers; but in addition to this He has actual existence, and this cannot be proved merely from the abstract notion of God.

To state the case more briefly, in the ideal order of essences conceived by us there cannot be anything greater than the most perfect being; but in the order of real and de facto existence, a fly that really exists is greater as regards actual existence than a creatable angel, and even than the most perfect being that is conceived as merely possible of existing. From this we more clearly see what St. Thomas meant when in the body of the article he said: “We do not know the essence of God.”

Similarly, St. Thomas had said in the prologue to this second question: “We must consider whether God exists and the manner of His existence, or, rather, what is not the manner of His existence”; this means that He is not finite, not mobile, not corporeal, and so forth. To know positively what God is would be to have a proper and positive knowledge of the Deity, and not a knowledge that is analogical and as it refers to creatures. In this case, the proposition, “God is,” would be self-evident, as St. Bonaventure says, who, on this point, does not seem to differ from St. Thomas.

If we had an intuitive and quiddative knowledge of the Deity, then we would see actual existence in the same, because God is His existence. But we know God’s essence only in an abstract and analogical way, and essential existence is of course included in this abstract notion, but not actual existence. In other words, it is indeed a priori evident that, if God exists, He is self-existent and independent of any other (this being a hypothetical proposition that concerns essential existence); but it is not a

priori evident solely from the abstract notion of God, that He truly and de facto exists.

This already virtually excludes the opinion of those who posit either some impressed or expressed species in the beatific vision. From this species we would have only an abstractive and analogical knowledge of God, and we would not know God just as He is. As St. Thomas says: “The essence of God, however, cannot be seen by any created similitude representing the divine essence as it really is,” because the essence of God is the self-subsisting Being. We cannot know of God what He is, unless we directly see the Deity, without the intermediary of any created species or representation. We shall then at once see not only that God is self-existent if He exists, but that He is actually self-existent, existing as such externally to the soul.

In other words, as with our abstract notions, so our abstract and analogical notion of the most perfect Being does not include actual existence, but abstracts from it. It differs, however, from our notions of contingent beings, such as of an angel or a stone, in that it includes essential existence. Thus we already have evidence of the truth of the hypothetical proposition that, if God exists, then He is self-existent.

THE ONTOLOGICAL ARGUMENT AND THE OPINIONS OF MODERN PHILOSOPHERS

Several modern philosophers sought to confirm St. Anselm’s argument by a consideration of the objective validity of our intellect. Descartes says: Whatever is contained in the clear and distinct idea of anything, the same is true; but real existence is contained in the clear and distinct idea of God; therefore God exists.

We reply to this by distinguishing the major. In the ideal order of essences known by abstraction, whatever is contained in the clear idea of God is true, this I concede; in the order of real and actual existence, this I deny. We contradistinguish the minor in like manner; for our idea of God is, like our other ideas, an abstract one and, moreover, is analogical, derived from creatures.

Leibnitz says: For the argument of Descartes to be valid, this must prove that it is really possible for God to exist objectively, or outside the mind. His argument is as follows: If God is really possible, He exists, because His essence implies existence; but it is a priori manifest that God is really

possible, for neither contradiction nor negation is implied in the idea of God; therefore God exists. Father Roselli, O.P., incautiously admitted this argument.

We reply to this by neither affirming nor denying the major, because in absolutely necessary things, existence that is necessary and not contingent follows from real possibility. Thus if the Trinity were proved a priori to be really possible, then its existence would follow from this. We distinguish the minor. That it is a priori manifest that God is really possible, and that this is negatively apparent, I concede; positively so, this I deny. This means that we do not see the existence of the most perfect Being to be an impossibility; but neither can this be positively proved a priori. Why so? It is because, as St. Thomas says, in the body of the article, we do not know God's essence; we have not a positive and proper knowledge, but only an analogical knowledge of the Deity. In a relative and negative sense we know that God is the supreme Being, the principle of other beings. In other words, because we do not know God's essence, we cannot know a priori whether He is capable of existing. Moreover, it is difficult to reconcile certain absolute perfections that are clearly properties of the most perfect Being, such as God's absolute immutability and His liberty. It is also difficult to reconcile the free act which, as an act, could be non-existent in God, with His absolute immutability and necessity. Likewise, the intimate reconciliation between the omnipotent God's mercy and justice, as also between His goodness and permission of evil, these are hidden from us. They do not indeed impair the forcefulness of the a posteriori demonstration of God's existence, but they do not allow of an a priori demonstration.

But Leibnitz objects that there is nothing of negation implied in the idea of God. Therefore it evidently excludes contradiction, for this latter is the result of some negation.

In reply to this we say that concealed contradiction can be the result only of the association of two ideas for which there is no foundation. Thus there is no negation involved in the idea of the swiftest motion; yet it implies contradiction because it is always possible to think of a swifter motion, just as the sides of a polygon inscribed in a circle are always divisible. So also there is no negation involved in the greatest possible creature, but it implies a contradiction because "God can make something else better than each thing made by Him." Likewise, there is perhaps no foundation for the union of the two concepts of being and infinite.

Hence we cannot positively affirm a priori the possibility of God's existence. For a positive knowledge of the analogical validity of our ideas of being, goodness, and the like, as these relate to God, this postulates God as the cause of finite beings from which our notions of being, goodness, and the like, are abstracted; for between the cause and its effects there is a certain similarity, at least that of analogy.

Being is that the act of which is to exist (whether it be self-existent or dependent upon another for existence), and it is only from the similitude of the inferior analogate previously known to us that we can know the supreme analogate of being; but this similitude has its foundation in causality, and from the existence of the effect we conclude the actual existence of the cause.

In more recent times Father Lepidi sought to revive the ontological argument by having recourse to the principle of the objective validity of our intellect. His argument is as follows: The intellect clearly makes known to us that being is either logical or real; there is no intermediary. But the objective idea of the most perfect and infinite Being clearly represented in our mind is not a logical being. Therefore it is a real being. Yet it is not, as is self-evident, being that is possible of realization, existing potentially in its cause. Therefore it is actually existing real being.

We reply to this by conceding the major. Concerning the minor, we say, please prove it. Probable reasons, to be sure, are advanced, just as persuasive reasons are given to show the possibility of the Trinity; but they have no demonstrative value. It is not positively proved a priori that God is really possible or that the Trinity is really possible. This possibility is neither efficaciously proved a priori, nor is it efficaciously disproved by unbelievers.

But Father Lepidi persists in his objection by proving the minor as follows: Logical being is that which in no way exists in itself, nor can it so exist, but exists only in the mind. Because logical beings are not in the true sense entities, they are absolute non-entities, squared circles or negations, as a not-man, or privations, such as blindness. But, on the contrary, the most perfect Being is conceived as having plenitude of being. Therefore the idea of the most perfect Being is not the idea of a logical being, but of a real being, and it is not only possible of existence, but it also actually exists.

In reply we say that this proves only that we do not see the impossibility of the most perfect Being existing; in fact, we are persuaded of the same

(just as we are persuaded of the possibility of infinite internal fecundity), but we have no positive proof of the same. The atheist can say: Perhaps there are no legitimate grounds for uniting in one concept the notions of being and infinity. An infinite man implies a contradiction; infinite being does not seem, indeed, to imply a contradiction; but yet we do not know a priori whether the notion is correct that has reference to something extramental. It may be like the notion of a supreme and infinite possible being, which at first sight does not seem to imply a contradiction, and yet it does if "God can make something else better than each thing made by Him."

Finally, Father Lepidi objects that the aforesaid argument presupposes the five a posteriori proofs given by St. Thomas; but these are required only for acquiring the true notion of the most perfect Being, and from this correct notion, due to the objective validity of our intellect, the existence of this most perfect Being is proved. Thus the five proofs would serve as the ladder of ascent to the roof of the edifice, and after we have reached the roof, the ladder is no longer necessary.

We reply to this with the following distinction: If this notion of the most perfect Being were univocal or at least of itself immediately referred to God, as our notion of being of sensible things has immediate reference to the being of sensible things, then I agree. But this notion is analogical and for this reason does not bring us to a knowledge of God, the first analogate, except by the way of causality, by beginning from the previously known inferior analogate, which is finite being. By reason of the principle of causality, when imperfections have been removed from the absolutely simple perfections in which finite beings participate, these are attributed to God, the first Cause. Hence the five classical proofs of God's existence, as we shall see farther on, are not only guides but are truly a posteriori demonstrations. They would be merely guides if our intellect had a confused intuition of God, as the ontologists contend, in accordance with the realistic tendency of Plato.

Yet there is an element of truth in what Father Lepidi and others of like mind say, for it will be more clearly seen later on that the five classical proofs are in some way co-ordinated since they all have their remote foundation in the notion of being and in the principle of contradiction or of identity (of being with itself, in that it is opposed to not-being), and their proximate foundation is in the principle of causality.

Thus we construct the following apodictic but a posteriori argument: Because of the objective validity of our reason, the principle of contradiction or of identity is the fundamental law not only of reason but of extramental being. But, if such is the case, the fundamental or supreme reality must be one of absolute identity, which means that it is not composite but is most simple and immutable, so that it is its being and its act, which means that it is the self-subsisting Being. Therefore the most simple and immutable self-subsisting Being exists above all composite and mutable beings.

This proof is apodictic but a posteriori. It is, as it were, a combination of the five classical proofs, clearly setting forth the opposition that prevails between the principle of identity and the changeableness of the world (first three proofs), and its composition (fourth and fifth proofs). Thus, by reason of this opposition, it would make it at once evident, at least for the philosophers, from the very fact that the world is composite and changeable, that it is contingent, which means that it is not self-existent. From this, too, the immediate conclusion is that the self-existing Being must be to existence, as A is to A, that it must be identical with it, so that He is the self-subsisting Being.

In other words, at the beginning of our discovery by the way of finding, it is first of all apparent, by reason of the real validity of the principle of contradiction or of identity, that being is being, nonbeing is non-being, or being is not non-being. And at the end of our discovery by the way of finding, due to the same principle of identity, it is evident that the supreme reality is absolutely identical with itself, without composition and change, that it is the self-subsisting Being: “I am who am.” In this, indeed, we have the refutation of pantheism, since the most simple and unchangeable self-subsisting Being is really and essentially distinct from every composite and changeable being. But this distinction is clearly seen only after a profound penetration of the five a posteriori proofs.

God’s existence is known not a priori solely from the notion of being, as the followers of St. Anselm declare; but a posteriori from the notion of being and its first principles by means of the light reflected in the mirror of sensible things.

Confirmation of this proof. The existence of God who transcends the world cannot be denied without denying the real or ontological validity of the principle of contradiction or of identity. We already have precise

evidence of this in the ancient teaching of Heraclitus, and more so in Hegelianism, which declares that the principle of contradiction is only a grammatical law and at the same time a law of the lower reasoning faculty, but not the supreme law of the higher or intuitive reason and of reality. Instead of the most simple and immutable God we then have universal pantheistic evolution; for the denial of the existence of the immutable and self-subsisting Being means that the creative evolution of itself or universal becoming is the only fundamental reality, in which being and not-being are identified, since what is becoming does not as yet exist and still in some way does exist. But if this becoming is its own reason for such becoming and needs no extrinsic cause, then we have the denial of the principles of efficient and final causality and hence of the real validity of the principle of contradiction or of identity. For if evolution is creative of itself, that is, if this becoming is its own reason for such becoming, then it is without an efficient cause, and so in evolution of this kind the greater proceeds from the less. It is likewise without a final cause, because this evolution lacks a directing agent; it has no material cause and is like a flux without a fluid, because this evolution is not in any subject that is distinct from it and that would necessitate being moved by another; it is without formal cause, for "in effect, God is produced in man and in the world, and God is one and the same thing with the world, and therefore, spirit with matter, necessity with liberty, good with evil, justice with injustice." In all this we have the very negation of the real validity of the principle of contradiction, which would be merely a grammatical law of speech, and a law of logic governing the discursive process of the lower reason, but it would not be a law of the higher intellect directly perceiving the universality of this flux.

Hence if Hegelianism were non-existent, the theologians could devise it as a means of proving by the method of absurdity God's existence and His distinction from the world. Thus we pass from the criticism of St. Anselm's argument, which in our opinion is insufficient, to the a posteriori proofs of God's existence.

THE DECLARATIONS OF THE CHURCH ABOUT ONTOLOGISM

A decree of the Holy Office (September 18, 1861) condemned seven propositions of the ontologists, stating that the propositions cannot be safely held. In this decree it is not the ontological or a priori argument, or its

possibility that is rejected; but the doctrine is condemned which states that “the immediate knowledge of God, at least habitual, is essential for the human intellect, so that without it the intellect can have no knowledge of anything; since it is intellectual light itself.” The following two propositions are also condemned: “That being which is in all things and without which there is not anything we do understand, is the divine being. Universals objectively considered are not really distinct from God.” Ontologism confuses being in general with the divine being, and thus would end in the pantheistic ontologism of Spinoza.

Equally condemned is the ontologism of A. Rosmini, who declared that “being, which is the object of man’s direct perception, must of necessity be something of the necessary and eternal being.” We say that the intelligible being of sensible things is the proper object of our intellect, and the ontologists apply this to the divine being about whom we have a confused knowledge.

SECOND ARTICLE

WHETHER IT CAN BE DEMONSTRATED THAT GOD EXISTS

State of the question. Posited that God’s existence is not self-evident to us, the question is whether it can be demonstrated. The difficulty is threefold: 1) that God’s existence is the first article of the Creed, “I believe in God,” and it is not the articles of the faith but only the preambles to the articles that are demonstrated; (2) that the medium of demonstration is the essence of a thing, and we do not know God’s essence; (3) and that God’s existence cannot be demonstrated from effects, for there is no proportion between the finite effect and the infinite God.

This last difficulty is variously proposed by modern agnostics, whether they are positivist empiricists such as Stuart Mill and Spencer, or idealists such as the Kantians. According to the positivists, we have indeed knowledge only of phenomena, and of their laws or constant relations. According to Kant, the theoretical reason cannot prove God’s existence, because the principle of causality is only a subjective law of our mind; at least it is not clearly seen to be a law of real being, for the notion of causality seems to be a subjective category of our understanding, useful indeed for the subjective and for us necessary classification of phenomena,

but without any ontological validity, and a fortiori without any transcendent validity for acquiring a knowledge of the transcendent Cause.

According to Kant only the practical reason proves God's existence with a certainty that is objectively insufficient but subjectively sufficient, namely, from the postulates of moral action. Kant indeed says: It is a synthetic a priori or subjectively necessary principle that the just person is deserving of happiness. But the just do not enjoy permanent happiness in this life. Therefore God the rewarder must exist, who is the only one who in the other life can effect a permanent union between virtue and happiness. This is not theoretically demonstrated, but it is reasonably believed by moral faith.

Likewise the traditionalists or fideists, condemned in the year 1855, held that reason left to itself (without the aid of primitive revelation handed down by traditions among the nations) cannot demonstrate God's existence. Already in the Middle Ages Nicholas of Ultricuria upheld fideism, denying the real validity of reason, especially the real validity of the principle of causality.

The reply is that God's existence can be demonstrated by effects known to us.

1) The authority of Scripture is proof of this, for we read: "The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made." But this would not be the case if, by the things that are made, God's existence could not be demonstrated. All Scholastics, except such radical nominalists as Nicholas of Ultricuria, so understood this and similar texts of Holy Scripture. The above-mentioned text from the Epistle to the Romans is quoted by the Vatican Council in defining against traditionalists, fideists, Kantians, and positivists that "the same Holy Mother Church holds and teaches that God, the beginning and end of all things, may be known for certain by the natural light of human reason by means of created things; for the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood from the things that are made." The same is defined in the corresponding canon.

Moreover, there is a better explanation of this text against the agnostics of our times in the antimodernist oath that expresses the faith of the Church in the following words: "I (name) firmly hold as true and accept everything which the infallible teaching authority of the Church has defined, maintained, and declared, especially those points of doctrine which are

directly contrary to the errors of the present time. And first of all I profess (profiteor) that God, the beginning and end of all things, can be known for certain and proved by the natural light of reason, that is to say, through the visible works of His creation, just as the cause is made known to us by its effects." The word "profiteor" in the Latin of this oath expresses a profession of faith, and this is especially evident from what is stated a little farther on, for we read: "Thirdly, I firmly believe that the Church was instituted by the true and historic Christ." We have elsewhere fully examined each word of the above quoted dogmatic definition of the Vatican Council, which is explained by this oath.

In the definition as explained by the oath we have the condemnation of the fideism of the traditionalists whose theses had already been proscribed. Kantianism is likewise condemned. Moreover, the Church declares that God's existence can be proved not only from the postulates of practical reason, but from the visible effects. Nor is the proof founded in the primacy of the immanent method of sufficient weight, because the proof does not give us objectively sufficient certitude. This has already been shown at length in another work.

Hence the Church in some measure gives her approbation to the validity of the a posteriori traditional proof of God's existence, but she neither approves nor condemns St. Anselm's argument and Descartes' theory of innate ideas.

Moreover, the above-quoted definition as given by the Council is concerned with "the existence of the true God, the beginning and end of all things." It is not, however, formally defined that reason can demonstrate creation out of nothing, but that it can demonstrate the existence of God, the first Cause, and that the divine attributes of infinity, eternity, supreme wisdom, providence, and sanctity are included in this notion. To avoid the charge of heresy, therefore, it would not suffice to say with several agnostics that reason can demonstrate the existence of some first eternal cause, which however is perhaps an imminent principle in the world, neither transcendent nor personal, that is to say, intelligent and free. This would not be proving the existence of the true God.

It is not defined whether reason alone can deduce explicitly the proper attributes of the true God, especially infinity. However, Bautain had to acknowledge his acceptance of the following proposition: "Human reasoning can with certainty prove the existence of God and the infinity of

His perfections. Faith, being a supernatural gift, presupposes revelation, and hence cannot be consistently invoked to prove the existence of God against an atheist." Hence, if the denial of the demonstrability of God's infinity is not heretical, it is at least erroneous.

Finally, the aforesaid definition is concerned not with the fact but with the possibility of proving God's existence. It is defined to be physically possible even in the state of fallen nature. Moral possibility, however, or a possibility that presents no great difficulty, is proximate to the faith, this being the common teaching of the theologians; otherwise the Scripture would not have said: "But all men are vain, in whom there is not the knowledge of God: and who by these good things that are seen could not understand Him that is, neither by attending to the works have acknowledged who was the workman." At least from the order to be seen in the world there is no difficulty in concluding as to the probability of a supreme Ordainer, and then man is bound to make further inquiries. If he does not do so, his ignorance is not entirely involuntary or invincible. Therefore theologians commonly reject the possibility of invincible ignorance about the existence of God as the author of the natural moral law. The first principle of this law, namely, "good must be done, evil must be avoided," is known without difficulty; and there cart be no law without a lawgiver, nor can there be any passive designing without active designing, or without a supreme Designer.

Hence the following proposition was condemned as temerarious and erroneous, namely, the proposition about a philosophical sin that would be against right reason and yet not an offense against God, because it would be committed "by a man who either has no knowledge of God, or does not advert to Him."

Revelation is morally necessary, however, as the Vatican Council says: "that such truths among things divine as of themselves are not beyond human reason can, even in the present condition of mankind, be known by everyone with facility, with firm assurance, and with no admixture of error." These are the principal arguments drawn from authority.

2) The conclusion is proved by reason. In the body of the article St. Thomas: (1) distinguishes between two kinds of demonstration, one being a priori, the other a posteriori; (2) he shows that the demonstration a posteriori, or from the effect, is valid; and (3) he shows how this applies to the demonstration of God's existence.

1) Demonstration is of two kinds. The a priori demonstration is through the cause, and it assigns the reason for which of the thing demonstrated. Each of the four causes can give us this kind of demonstration. Thus the spirituality of the soul is assigned as the reason for its incorruptibility (formal cause); likewise, man is mortal from the fact that he is composed of contraries (material cause); also that we are free is proved from the fact that we are endowed with reason and have knowledge not only of particular but also of universal good (directive formal cause). In like manner, the necessity of the means is demonstrated a priori from the end; thus grace is necessary for the supernatural vision of God. The same is true of the efficient cause. Given the cause in the act of causing, as in the case of the sun illuminating, then the effect follows. Thus this kind of demonstration can be effected by means of the four causes.

Demonstration through the effect, however, is called a posteriori, because the effect is something posterior to the cause; but sometimes it is previously known to us. This demonstration shows that the cause is, quod vel quia est, for in the Latin terminology of the Scholastics, quia est means the same as quod est. Thus it is called demonstratio quia in opposition to demonstratio propter quid. It is therefore a demonstration by means of those things that are previously known to us. The order of invention is then ascendant, whereas the order of things is descendent.

It must at once be noted from the reply to the second objection that, “in demonstrating God’s existence from His effects, we must take for the middle term the meaning of the word ‘God.’ “ This means that we must begin with the nominal definition of God, since by the name “God” is understood the supreme Cause, the most perfect Being, the supreme Ordainer, and the question is whether the supreme Cause exists.

2) The reason for the validity of the demonstration from the effect and the kind of demonstration required. It is valid in virtue of the principle of causality, for, as St. Thomas says in the body of the article, “since every effect depends upon its cause, if the effect exists, the cause must pre-exist.”

But this principle of causality must be properly understood. The Positivists understand it as referring only to the phenomenal order, since every phenomenon presupposes an antecedent phenomenon. Thus if we have expansion of iron, this presupposes the phenomenon of a greater degree of heat, because heat expands iron. If such were the case, this principle would hold good only in the order of phenomena, and as an

experimental law but not as an absolutely necessary law. But a miracle would be out of the question, because a miraculous phenomenon does not suppose an antecedent phenomenon, but proceeds from God's exceptional intervention as first Cause, operating beyond the ordinary course of nature. Nor does it suffice, as the Kantians say, that the principle of causality should be a subjectively necessary law of our mind for the necessary subjective classification of phenomena. To prove the existence of the transcendent Cause, this principle must have, moreover, ontological validity as regards extramental being; in fact it must have transcendent validity.

As a matter of fact, this principle is commonly formulated not only in the phenomenal but also in the ontological order, and not only does it state that "every phenomenon supposes an antecedent phenomenon," but it also says: "Everything that comes into being has a cause"; or rather, to express it more universally, every contingent being is efficiently caused by another. Even if de facto this contingent being eternally existed, it would still need a productive and conservative cause, because a contingent being is not its own reason for existence.

Nor need we be surprised that this principle is thus formulated with reference to extramental being and not only to phenomena, because the proper object of our intellect, as distinct from the object of either the external or internal senses, is not only color, sound, extension, hardness, and such like, but it is the intelligible being of sensible things. Whereas the object of sight is colored being considered as colored, the object of the intellect is colored being considered as being; and at once our intellect perceives the truth of the first principle of contradiction or of identity, that "being is being, not-being is not being," or "no being is not-being." This pertains to the ontological order, which is above the order of phenomena.

Moreover, one cannot deny the principle of causality without denying the principle of contradiction. This is evident from an analysis of the terms, for this principle of causality is immediately evident without any middle term of demonstration; but it can, moreover, be demonstrated indirectly by the method of reduction to absurdity, as all Scholastics admit.

In fact, uncaused contingent being is repugnant to reason. In other words, nothing is what results from nothing, without a cause nothing comes into being, Parmenides already expressed the same in the negative form (for it was the negative formula of the principle of causality, in which the efficient cause was not as yet sufficiently distinguished from the material cause).

Why is an uncaused contingent being repugnant to reason? It is because a contingent being is that which can either exist or not exist (this being its definition). Therefore it is not self-existent, and must be dependent upon another for this; otherwise, if it were neither self-existent nor dependent upon another for existence, it would have no reason for existing, and so would be the same as nothing. “Nothing is what results from nothing.” To say that from nothing, or that from no cause either efficient or material, something comes into being, is a contradiction.

It is not, indeed, so clearly and directly contradictory, as if one were to say, “the contingent is not contingent”; but to say, “something that is contingent is not caused,” is to deny a property of the same that directly enters into its definition, and indirectly this means to nullify its definition. Such would be the case if Lucifer were to say: “Therefore I came forth from nothing, not having been caused.” To say, “Something contingent exists that is not caused,” is to affirm a positive relation of agreement between two terms which are in no way related to each other. Most certainly nothing comes into being without a cause.

Hence the ontological validity of the notion of being and of the principle of contradiction or of identity being admitted, this means that the ontological and not only the phenomenal validity of the notion of cause and of the principle of efficient causality must be admitted. The experimental law that heat expands iron pertains to the order of phenomena, and is hypothetically necessary, which means that if heat exerts its influence, the expansion of iron is the result; but this does not exclude the possibility of this expansion being produced by a higher cause beyond the ordinary course of nature. On the contrary, the principle of efficient causality is a law of the ontological order and is of absolute necessity; we cannot conceive of even a miraculous exception, for nothing comes into being without a cause. This formula extends to every cause whatever, whether the proximate and lowest, or the supreme cause.

It must be noted that for our demonstration it is not absolutely necessary to prove that the notion of cause is not innate to us, but that it is abstracted from sensible things. Even if it were innate to us, it could and would have not only phenomenal but also transcendent and ontological validity; for it manifests to us something deeper than phenomena, namely, the dependence of contingent being upon another being, for that which is not self-existent is dependent upon another for its existence.

St. Thomas says: “From every effect the existence of its proper cause can be demonstrated.” Why does he say “the proper cause”? It is because, if it is not a case of the proper cause, then the demonstration is invalid. Thus the following inference is valueless: this man exists, therefore his father exists, and yet the father is the cause of the son. Very often the father dies before the son. Likewise, very often the antecedent phenomenon disappears when the subsequent phenomenon makes its appearance, as in the case of the local motion of rubbing the hands together by which heat is produced. Hence the agnostics would merely say that “from every effect it can be demonstrated, not that its cause does exist, but that it did exist.” Thus heat is produced by local motion, and this latter presupposes heat, and so on indefinitely. In like manner, rain comes from the clouds, the clouds from the evaporation of the water, the evaporation is caused by the heat of the sun, and so on indefinitely, so that there was never a first rain, or a first evaporation. The case is the same in the series of generations of plants, animals, and men. There was never a first oak or a first lion or a first man. In fact, even Aristotle admitted that the world and generations are eternal, yet according to a certain mysterious dependence on the pure Act.

St. Thomas would reply that we are concerned with the proper cause, whereas the proposed difficulty does not refer to the proper cause. What is the proper cause? It is the cause on which the effect absolutely first of all, or necessarily and immediately, depends, as Aristotle said, just as the property depends on the specific difference, for instance, the faculty of reasoning on the ability to reason. The proper effect is like a property manifested ad extra in its relation to the proper cause about which we are concerned in this article.

St. Thomas presupposes from the works of Aristotle the philosophical and profound notion of the required proper or absolutely first cause. Of the four modes of per se predication, the fourth pertains to causality, as the killer kills, light illuminates, the sculptor is the cause of the statue. St. Thomas also examines more closely this notion of cause in his discussion of creation. The most universal effect (that is, being inasmuch as this term applies to all existing things) must be reduced to its most universal cause, as the proper effect of this cause. St. Thomas again refers to this causality when treating of the conservation of all things by God. These articles constitute the most sublime comment on the doctrine of the present article, and this because they treat of the same relation of causality, but they do so

by starting from above, from God already known, and not by ascending to Him as we do here by the way of finding out.

For a more profound understanding of the proper or proximately direct cause, that is, of the one that is necessarily and immediately required, we must recall the five evident propositions taken from the Metaphysics of Aristotle, In this we see the methodical transition from the natural reason or the common sense to the philosophical reason, in accordance with Aristotle's accustomed way, who thus gave metaphysics its elements as Euclid did to geometry.

1) The proper cause must be the direct or necessarily required cause, and not the accidental cause. We have an example of a direct cause in the following: a man generates a man, or the man generating is the direct cause of the generation of the man. An accidental cause would be: Socrates generates a man; because for a man to be generated it is not necessary that the one generating be Socrates or Plato. A fortiori, it is accidental that the musician generates a man, because it is accidental for the one generating to be a musician. In like manner and with far greater reason, the grandfather is the accidental cause of the generation of the grandson, for he is not directly concerned in it, and often he is already dead. His son generates inasmuch as he is a man, and not inasmuch as he is the son of another man, as St. Thomas says. Hence a series of past causes, as grandfather, great-grandfather, and so on, is a series of accidental causes and in Aristotle's opinion was infinite in the past, that is, there was no first generator; but, according to St. Thomas, this is not repugnant to reason, as we shall state farther on. We maintain it to be of revelation, however, that the world had a beginning, and Adam the first man was able to generate because, as we have said, man generates inasmuch as he is of adult age, and not inasmuch as he is the son of another man.

2) The proper cause must be not only direct, but proximately or immediately required for its proper effect, as the specific difference is the cause of the property that is derived from it. Thus to say that an animal generates a man, is to assign the direct cause, but not the proximately direct cause, not the proper cause. We must say that a man generates a man.

3) Hence a most particular or singular cause is the proper cause of a most particular effect. Thus Socrates is the proper cause of the generation, not of a man, but of this man, his son. St. Thomas says: "Of two things in the same species (as a father and son), one cannot directly cause the other's

form as such, since it would then be the cause of its own form, which is essentially the same as the form of the other; but it can be the cause of this form for as much as it is in matter, in other words, it may be the cause that this matter receives this form." Thus Socrates is said to be the proper cause of the generation not of a man but of this man.

4) The most universal cause is the proper cause of the most universal effect. As St. Thomas says: "For the more universal effects must be reduced to the more universal and prior causes. Now among all effects, the most universal is being itself. Hence it must be the proper effect of the first and most universal cause, and that is God." Thus only God can create or "produce being absolutely, not as this being (for instance, this wood), or such being (for instance, wood rather than stone)." In like manner, "this movement is produced by this mover," for example, the movement of the carriage by the horse; but if motion taken in the absolute sense is not its own reason for existence and needs a cause, we must reduce motion taken in the absolute sense and hence all motions to a higher universal cause, namely, to the first mover, who will be the proper or proximately direct cause, not of this particular motion, but of motion itself taken in the absolute sense (as it is a universal effect); and hence this first mover, the cause of all motions, will be immobile, at least as regards local motion. In fact, if immobility is a requisite for the mover not only of bodies but also of spirits, whatever kind of motion this may be, then our soul is mobile, not by way of local motion, but because of the discursive and deliberative process of its reasoning faculty.

5) Finally, we must distinguish between the proper cause of the beginning of the effect and the proper cause of the being of the effect. Thus the builder is the proper cause of the building of the house, and when the actual construction of the house ceases, then its construction in the passive sense also ceases; but the builder is not the proximately direct cause of the being of the house, for its being does not depend on the being of the builder; in fact, when the builder dies the house continues in its being. Likewise, Socrates is the cause of his son as to his becoming, or as to his passive generation, but not as to his being; for the son's being is independent of the father's being; in fact, whereas the father dies, the son continues to exist.

On the other hand, the illumination by the sun is the cause of the air being illuminated, and when the sun ceases to illuminate, then the air is no

longer illuminated. In like manner, the object seen is the objective cause of the seeing, so that the seeing ceases with the removal of the object. Likewise the evidence of the principles is the cause of the evidence of the conclusion, not only as to its becoming, but also as to its being. Also the attraction of the good that is desired is the cause of the desire not only as to its becoming, but also as to its being and continuance in being.

These five subordinate propositions not only give us a more profound insight into the meaning of the proper or proximately direct cause as understood by Aristotle and St. Thomas, but they also explain the following words of this article: “From every effect the existence of its proper cause can be demonstrated,” and not only that it did exist.

This is the same as saying with Aristotle, that the positing of the cause (as it is the cause) means the positing of the effect, and, on the other hand, the removal of the cause means the removal of the effect. Thus the positing of a potential cause means the positing of a potential effect; for instance, the builder can build, and the house can be built. The positing of the cause in the act of causing the becoming of the effect means the positing of this becoming (the one who builds, is building); the positing of the cause in the act of producing the being of its effect means the production of this being. Thus, as long as the sun illuminates the atmosphere by its presence, this latter remains illuminated.

It is now easy to explain the end of the argumentative part of this article, which is but the application of the preceding to the proof of God’s existence. This means that, if there are in the world effects proper to God, the supreme Cause, then God’s existence can be demonstrated a posteriori from them, and, indeed, by an absolutely necessary metaphysical demonstration, if these effects pertain to being, inasmuch as it is the being of created things. But these effects proper to God are investigated in the following article.

Already from the aforesaid it is clear that these effects must be universal, since the most universal effects are the proper effects of the most universal cause, as being by participation is the proper effect of Him who is essential being. Thus our conclusion will be that this motion is caused by this previous motion; but if motion taken absolutely in its generic sense is not its own reason for existence, then we must seek for the proper cause of motion in the generic sense, and of all motions.

So we shall conclude: (1) that the proper cause of all motions is the first and immobile Mover (first way); but that it does not follow immediately from this that the first Mover is infinite and intelligent; (2) likewise that the proper cause of all caused causality is the first uncaused Cause (second way); (3) that the proper cause of all contingent being is the necessary Being (third way), and this necessary Being will manifest Himself to us as the cause not only of the becoming but also of the being of contingent beings; (4) that the proper cause of those things that admit of greater and less in being, in truth, and in goodness, is the greatest in being, in truth, and in goodness (fourth way); (5) finally that the supreme and intelligent Ordainer of all things is the proper cause of the ordaining of all things. This means that the supreme Ordainer is the absolutely first cause of the ordaining and preserving of all things in the world, just as the sculptor is the proximately direct cause of the formation of the statue as to its becoming (but not as to the being of the statue, for this continues in existence after the sculptor's death).

First doubt. The question is whether the aforesaid demonstration from effects ought to have its foundation in a series of accidentally connected causes, or in a series of actually existing and essentially connected causes.

This difficulty arises from another general principle that together with the principle of causality is included in all proofs of God's existence. The principle is that we cannot proceed to infinity in a series of subordinated causes. Therefore we must come to a first uncaused cause. What sort of subordination are we concerned with here?

Some, having failed to grasp the meaning of St. Thomas in the following article, think that he considers an infinite series of accidentally subordinated causes to be a contradiction in terms, so that this necessarily implies that creation was not eternal, which means that there must have been a first man, a first lion, and no series of eternal generations of men, animals, and plants. But afterward, these same persons find St. Thomas, in the article in which he asks whether it is of faith that the world began, writing as follows: "But it is not impossible to proceed to accidental infinity as regards efficient causes," in a series, for instance, of past generations. This shows that they misunderstood the proofs of God's existence.

We find the solution to the doubt precisely in the complete reply of St. Thomas from which the above-mentioned quotation is taken. He writes: "In efficient causes it is impossible to proceed to absolute infinity; for example,

there cannot be an infinite number of causes that are absolutely required for a certain effect; for instance, that a stone be moved by a stick, the stick by the hand, and so on to infinity. But it is not impossible to proceed to accidental infinity as regards efficient causes; as for instance, if all the causes thus infinitely multiplied should have the order of only one cause, their multiplication being accidental; as an artificer acts by means of many hammers accidentally, because one after the other may be taken. It is accidental, therefore, that one particular hammer acts after the action of another; and likewise it is accidental to this particular man as generator to be generated by another man; for he generates as a man, and not as the son of another man. For all men generating hold one grade in efficient causes, namely, the grade of a particular generator. Hence it is not impossible for a man to be generated by man to infinity; but such a thing would be impossible if the generation of this man depended on this man, and on an elementary body, and on the sun, and so on to infinity."

Hence the ancients said that "man and the sun generate man," which means man acting in conjunction with the general agents actually existing; for, if there were a cessation of solar heat on the earth, this would mean the end of the generations of animal and plant life. But the influence of the sun directly depends on the actual influence of a higher cause, and we cannot proceed to infinity in a series of directly subordinated efficient causes; as Aristotle said: ἀνάγκη στῆναι, or we must come to a first in this series. Otherwise all movers would be moved and no reason could be assigned for the being or cause of motion itself. We must therefore come to a first cause that is its own principle of action.

In accordance with the modern physics of our times, we may express the series of directly subordinated efficient causes as follows: the ship supports the sailor, the sea enables the ship to float, the earth holds the sea in check, the sun keeps the earth fixed in its course, and some unknown center of attraction holds the sun in its place. But we cannot proceed to infinity in this series; otherwise all movers would be moved, and so we could not assign any cause for motion itself, which needs a cause, since it is not its own principle of motion. Hence we must come to the supreme Mover that is not of the past but is actually existing, who is His own action and His own being, because operation follows being, and the mode of operation the mode of being.

Similarly there may be many wheels in a clock, but we must come to that part of the mechanism whose elasticity, whether you call it tension or weight, is the cause of the local motion of the wheels and of the index hand of the hours. Thus local motion originates from some force, from some dynamic influence that must be explained by some higher cause.

In the opinion of St. Thomas, that creation was not eternal but took place in time, so that there was a first day, a first revolution of the sun, is dependent on God's most free will and is known only by revelation.

So also Aristotle, although he admits the eternity of motion, proves the existence of a supreme and immobile mover who does not need to be premoved so as to act. In fact, he says that the greatest motion must be infinitely powerful to move in an infinity of time (that is to say, eternally). In like manner, from the fact that act is prior to potency, Aristotle seeks to prove the perpetuity of eternal generation. Hence he concludes that the first Mover is permanently unmoved. Indeed he shows that there is no process to infinity in any genus of directly subordinate causes.

1) In the genus of material cause we must admit the presence of first matter, namely, some first material subject; otherwise there would be no second matter or what is disposed to receive this or that form. In such a case there would be no earth, air, water, fire, or bodies composed of elements. To deny first matter would be to do away with the material cause, which is a necessary requisite as constituting the subject of alteration.

2) In the genus of formal cause there must be a substantial form underlying the accidental forms, and also in the category of substance, as in the categories of quantity, quality . . . we must come to the supreme genus, for without this there would be no directly subordinate genera, and so there would be nothing definable and nothing intelligible. Thus the supreme genus of substance is divided into corporeal and incorporeal substances; the corporeal are divided into non-living and living; the living into non-sensitive and sensitive; the sensitive into irrational and rational. Likewise there is no proceeding indefinitely in a series of demonstrations, but we must come to those first indemonstrable and to us self-evident principles. It is always a case of ἀνάγκη στῆναι (necessity of a first).

Similarly, in the genus of efficient cause there is no proceeding indefinitely in a series of directly connected causes, although there may be such a series of accidentally connected past causes. Thus, as Aristotle says, man is moved to take off his clothes when it is warm, but this happens

because of the sun, but now the sun is moved by a superior force, and we cannot proceed to infinity in this series of directly connected causes; otherwise there would be no cause for movement as such or in the absolute sense (and not merely as it is this particular motion). But motion needs a cause, because it is not its own principle of motion; it is not as A is to A in its reference to being, that is to say, it is not identical with its being.

Lastly, in the genus of final cause there is no process to infinity in a series of directly subordinated ends, otherwise there would be no final causality. As St. Thomas says: "Absolutely speaking, it is not possible to proceed indefinitely in the matter of ends from any point of view. For in all things whatever there is an essential order of one to another, so that if the first is removed, those that are ordained to the first, must of necessity be removed also. . . . In ends, that which is first in the order of intention, is the principle as it were, moving the appetite. Consequently, if you remove this principle, there will be nothing to move the appetite (that is, attract it). . . . But since accidental causes are indeterminate . . . it happens that there is an accidental infinity of ends and of things ordained to the end."

There is direct subordination when it is said that we walk so as to keep in health, and that we seek health for the sake of happiness. But if we were to say that happiness is sought for some other reason and so on indefinitely, then this would do away with all finality and hence with every desire and action. The ultimate end, considered at least under the aspect of happiness in general, is prior in intention. Thus all men wish to be happy, although many do not know what truly constitutes happiness.

Hence in the four kinds of causes there can be no process to infinity in a series of directly connected causes, otherwise this would do away with every kind of cause. Thus we see that this principle of the impossibility of proceeding indefinitely in such a series of causes is, as it were, the corollary of the principle of causality; in fact, it is the corollary to the commonly accepted principle of causality according as this latter is proportionately or analogically verified in the four kinds of causes.

Corollary. But if the process were to infinity in a series of accidentally connected past causes, as regards generations of men, animals, and plants, then the first Cause would have only a priority of dignity and causality in its relation to the world. This will be more clearly explained farther on when we show that there is no necessity for a first man, a first lion, a first day, or a first revolution of the sun. So it would have been if God had most freely

willed an eternal creation; yet in this case He would have priority of causality as regards the created world, just as the foot would have with reference to its imprint or trace left in the sand, if the foot were eternally implanted in the sand. Hence in the proofs for God's existence, we must not proceed according to a series of past causes, but we must get away from this series and rise above it to an actually existing higher cause. For it is evident that any contingent being, such as Abel the son of Adam, does not necessarily require another contingent being as cause, but they both postulate the necessary Being as higher cause.

Second doubt. What is to be our method of procedure as regards agnosticism, in showing the ontological and transcendental validity of the ideas and principles from which the proofs for God's existence are deduced?

This question has been fully discussed by us elsewhere, and only the outstanding principles will be discussed here. Agnosticism in general rejects the demonstrability of God's existence because it denies the ontological and transcendental validity of first ideas and principles of reason, especially the principle of causality. For their formula of the principle of causality is not: every contingent being has an efficient cause; but they say: every phenomenon presupposes an antecedent phenomenon, and so on indefinitely. Hence, by virtue of this principle thus formulated in the order of phenomena, it is impossible to transcend this same order.

These agnostics are either of the empirical or idealist type. The empiricists, such as the Positivists, reduce the principle of causality to an experimental law which is repeatedly confirmed and corroborated by heredity; but in their opinion we do not know whether the law applies beyond the scope of our experience. Perhaps, beyond the limits of our experience, there is a phenomenon without one preceding it, or perhaps something comes into being that is not caused. But this is contrary to common sense or natural reason, for something to come into being that is not caused.

The idealist agnostics, however, such as Kant, seek somehow to explain this intimate persuasion of the common sense and of the absolute necessity and universality of the principle of causality. But they say that this necessity is subjective, and is the result of the subjective application of the category of our mind, namely, of the category of causality as regards phenomena. Thus they say that it is for us unintelligible for something to come into

being that is not caused; but perhaps this is not absolutely impossible outside our mind.

But we cannot in the course of this theological treatise engage in a lengthy and philosophical discussion of this question, which we have done in another of our works as above mentioned. It suffices to point out the fundamentals, the ignorance of which does not excuse one.

The ontological validity of first ideas and of the first principles of reason is shown inasmuch as these ideas and correlative principles do not express sensible phenomena but being that is in itself intelligible and accidentally sensible, and also the first modes of being. Hence they are said to have not merely phenomenal validity, as the ideas of color, heat, or sound have, for these express phenomena; but their validity is ontological since by means of them we acquire a knowledge of being that underlies the phenomena.

Of such a nature are the ideas of being, substance, and also of causality. For causality is not anything directly sensible (either the proper sensible, as color or sound; or the common sensible that affects several senses, such as extension or figure); but it is the accidentally sensible and directly intelligible which, as St. Thomas says, "is apprehended by the intellect immediately that the object of sense perception is presented to it; just as, when I see someone speaking or moving, I apprehend by the intellect (without any illative process of reasoning) that there is life; hence I can say that I see him living," although life is not directly sensible as color is. Just as only the intellect, reading what is within, can directly apprehend being, and substance or substantial being, so only this faculty is able directly to apprehend efficient causality and finality. For efficient causality is the production or realization of actual being, and this realization is apprehended only by the faculty whose object is real being. It is not apprehended by sight which is specified by the colored object, or by hearing which is specified by sound. But, whereas sight apprehends the colored being as colored, the intellect apprehends colored being as being and, if this being undergoes a change, the intellect apprehends its passive and active realization. Likewise, whereas the sense of touch is aware of the extension and hardness of bodies, the intellect knows that the passive pressure produced upon us by the resistance of bodies is a reality.

Hence St. Thomas says: "Understanding implies an intimate knowledge, for intelligere (to understand) is the same as intus legere (to read inwardly). This is clear to anyone who considers the difference between intellect and

sense, because sensitive knowledge is concerned with external sensible qualities (or phenomena), whereas intellective knowledge penetrates into the very essence of a thing (at least the intellect has a confused knowledge, which means that it penetrates to the intelligible being of sensible things). The object of the intellect is what a thing is, as stated in De anima (Bk. III, chap. 6). . . . Thus, under the accidents lies hidden the nature of the substantial reality (and only the intellect knows the difference between the natures of a stone, a plant, and an animal); under words lies hidden their meaning . . . and effects lie hidden in their causes, and vice versa." In like manner, St. Thomas shows that although the irrational animal knows by sense perception the thing toward which it tends as its prey, yet it does not see in it the idea of an end as such, or the reason for the existence of the means. These cannot be apprehended except by the faculty whose object is intelligible being and the reasons for the existence of things.

Nor can it be said that the idea of causality is merely a subjective category of the mind, the sole purpose of which is to express something mental or logical being; for this idea, just as that of extramental being, is a representation that is essentially related to the thing represented. As St. Thomas says: "That which is primarily understood is the object, of which the species is the likeness." Just previous to this he had said: "But since the intellect reflects upon itself, by such reflection it understands both its own act of intelligence, and the species by which it understands." Similarly he writes: "Yet it is the stone which is understood, not the likeness of the stone, except by a reflection of the intellect on itself; otherwise the objects of sciences would not be things, but only intelligible species." That the sciences are concerned with things is a truth held by all men as in accordance with natural reason. Thus these sciences are distinct from logic, which is concerned with mental being. Otherwise we should have to identify direct with reflex understanding; yet the two are distinct, because the latter presupposes the former.

Confirmation. The ontological validity of the first ideas of reason and of the correlated principles is admitted by all as naturally evident, even by the agnostics when they are not actually defending their own opinion, which is a denial of this validity. Thus all men are convinced that even in some world of which we know nothing it is absolutely impossible that anything should come into being without a cause. Therefore, in opposition to empiricism, we say that this principle transcends experience. Even the

idealist agnostics hold that they are really the authors of their books; hence they admit that causality expresses a reality, and not only what is merely subjective. Otherwise we should have to say that the murderer was not really the cause of death, and that he does not deserve really to be punished; but we must say that he was the cause of death only in the manner in which we conceive of it. In like manner, we should have to say that Kant was not really the author of the Critique of Pure Reason, but is said to be the author of this work as we conceive of it. According to this opinion there would be no real relation of dependence of the creature on God, but only a logical relation, just as we conceive it to be in God with reference to creatures.

Hence to deny the ontological validity of the first ideas of our intellect is to deny that the object of the intellect is intelligible being. In other words, this means that intelligible being is reduced either to the order of sensible phenomena that are the objects of the external or internal senses, or else to that of mental being which is the object of logic, and thus there would no longer be any distinction between logic and the other sciences. Hence this question in its final analysis is one that concerns the problem of universals. Empirical agnostics, like all sensualists, are nominalists. For such as these the idea is but a certain composite and confused image of the imagination accompanied by a common name. The idealist agnostics are subjectivist conceptualists, and for these every idea is but an expression of mental being. Contrary to this, traditional realism holds that the proper object of our intellect is the intelligible being of sensible things which "the intellect apprehends immediately that the object of sense perception is presented to it," previous to any illative process of reasoning.

But the transcendent validity of the first principles of reason and of their correlated principles consists in this, that by them we acquire certainty of knowledge as regards the first transcendent cause, or, in other words, of the Cause that is really and essentially distinct from the world. Taken in this sense, the transcendent validity of these ideas is clearly seen from the fact that these ideas express perfections which, in what is formally denoted by them, imply no imperfection. Hence the analogical but proper attribution of these ideas in an eminent degree to the supreme Being implies no contradiction, and they are actually attributed to Him, if the world demands a supreme cause having these perfections.

Such are the ideas of being, unity, truth, goodness, causality . . . for these are already analogically predicated of various finite beings; analogically, to

be sure, but properly and not merely metaphorically. Thus being is first of all predicated of substance and then of accidents, of a stone, for instance, and then of its size, qualities, and other notes. In like manner, goodness is already predicated analogically but properly of a good stone, a good fruit, a good horse, of a virtuous and generous man. Moreover, these ideas are not only predicated analogically of finite beings, but they imply no imperfection in what they formally denote, although the way in which they are predicated of creatures does imply perfection. Thus wisdom, as found in human beings and even in angels, is imperfect; but wisdom as such is not, for it means the knowledge of all things by the highest of causes. Hence there is no repugnance in the idea that these perfections, which in themselves imply no imperfection, should be attributed analogically and in a most eminent degree to the most perfect Being. And they must actually be attributed to Him if the world requires these perfections.

Thus the idea of cause, unlike the idea of being, is not absolute, but is relative to the thing caused. It therefore admits the possibility of our raising the mind to God and of actually attributing to Him the aforesaid perfections. But before doing so we see no repugnance in this kind of attribution, since these ideas, analogical as they are in the created order, imply no imperfection.

We must therefore stress especially the transcendent validity of the idea of cause, inasmuch as it is already analogically but properly predicated in the created order and implies no imperfection in what it formally denotes. For it is quite clear that the word “cause” is predicated analogically but properly of the four kinds of causes. The intrinsic causes (the material and the formal) of course denote imperfection, especially matter which is able to be actuated and perfected, and also the form, which is a component part, something that is participated and limited by the matter in which it is received. But extrinsic causes (efficient and final) imply no imperfection, and are de facto predicated analogically but properly in the created order. Thus the efficient cause is de facto predicated of the principal cause, which operates in virtue of its own power, as in the case of a writer, and the same applies to the instrumental cause, which acts in virtue of another power, as a pen is moved by the hand of a writer. Hence it is not repugnant to the idea of efficient causality that it should be attributed analogically but properly to the most perfect Being. And it must de facto be attributed to Him, if the world requires the presence of a most perfect Cause. But the proper or

uncreated mode of the divine causality will not be for us positively knowable in this life but only negatively (saying that it is the uncaused cause, not premoved), and relatively (as when we call it the supreme, most eminent, absolutely transcendent cause).

St. Thomas does not here take up professedly this question of analogy, but explains it at length later on. Why is this? It is because he proceeds as a theologian, by the synthetic method, starting from the divine Being and His knowableness by us, and not by the analytical method of investigation, as the philosophers would, inquiring step by step into the foundations for the demonstrability of God's existence.

However, St. Thomas points out what is necessary for this in his reply to the second and third objections of this article. This difficulty is presented in the second objection as follows: The middle term of demonstration is the essence, or what is called the definition; but we cannot know what constitutes God's essence; therefore we cannot demonstrate that God exists.

The reply may be expressed in scholastic form by saying: I distinguish the major. That the middle term of demonstration is the essence in a priori demonstrations, this I concede; thus the immortality of the soul is demonstrated from its spirituality. But in a posteriori demonstrations, I subdistinguish: that the middle term is the real definition of the cause, this I deny; that it is the nominal definition, this I concede. Therefore it can be demonstrated a posteriori that God exists, taking as a prerequisite for this the nominal definition of God, which states that He is the supreme and most perfect Cause; of course this definition derives its force from its reference to God's effects, and it suffices, although God's nature or His intimate life is hidden from us.

The third objection may be expressed equivalently by the following syllogism: A cause can be demonstrated only by an effect that is proportionate to it; but God's effects are finite, and hence they are not proportionate to Him, since He is infinite; therefore God's existence cannot be demonstrated a posteriori from His effects.

The reply of St. Thomas is that from the effects we cannot have a perfect knowledge of the first Cause, but its existence is proved. There is also the possibility of a distinction as regards the word "proportionate" in its application; for God's effects are proportionate to Him, the proportion not being of perfection but of causality, and this suffices for an a posteriori demonstration. For there is a proportion of causality between the proper

cause and its proper effect, although this latter is less perfect. Thus, just as we say that light illuminates, fire heats, so we say that the first Mover moves all things, the supreme Ordainer has ordained all things in the world, the most real Being "realizes" or produces and preserves all things in being. This proposition pertains to the fourth mode of direct predication between the effect and its proper, necessarily and immediately required, cause.

This a posteriori knowledge of God from finite effects will indeed be very imperfect, namely, analogical; but the knowledge acquired will apply properly and not merely metaphorically to God, as will be stated farther on. For, whereas God is said metaphorically to be angry, inasmuch as anger is a passion and not an absolute perfection, it is without any use of metaphor that justice, and a fortiori the supreme Cause, the most perfect Being, and other such terms are predicated of God.

Final doubt. In the first objection of this article a difficulty of a different kind is presented, which may be expressed by the following syllogism: The articles of faith are not demonstrated; but that God exists is an article of faith, for we say, "I believe in one God"; therefore that God exists is not demonstrated.

In the reply to this first objection it is remarked that God's existence, so far as it is known by natural reason, is not an article of faith, but is a preamble to the faith. In other words, the major is conceded, and the minor is denied. But St. Thomas adds: "There is nothing to prevent a man, who cannot grasp a proof, accepting, as a matter of faith, something which in itself is capable of being scientifically known and demonstrated."

Two objections are raised against this reply. The first is as follows: No one can accept revelation as the motive for believing in the existence of God as the author of nature; for the act of faith presupposes the evidence of credibility, and this has its foundation in the principle that God's veracity is infallible and that He has confirmed this revelation by divine signs.

Reply. That the existence of God as the author of nature cannot begin to be known by revelation, in a rudimentary and confused manner, let this pass without comment; that we cannot have a more explicit and more certain knowledge of the same by revelation, this I deny. All men have, practically by natural instinct, a confused knowledge of God's existence as the Ordainer of the world and the Lawgiver; for when human beings come to the full use of reason, they have knowledge at least of the first precept of the natural law, which is that "we must do good and avoid evil"; the natural

law, however, like the order prevailing in the world, presupposes clearly enough a supreme Ordainer. This truth not only is known as the result of a scientific or philosophic process of reasoning, but it also arises as it were spontaneously from the rational faculty, as when we say: “The heavens show forth the glory of God.”

But, if afterward men doubt God’s existence, influenced by their unrestrained passions and the objections of materialists and skeptics, this truth can be manifestly made known to them by revelation and confirmed by some divine sign; for, as the Vatican Council declares: “the miracle is a clear indication of God’s omnipotence and liberty.” Thus certain materialists, who believed in the absolute determinism of the laws of nature, when confronted by what was manifestly a miracle, acknowledged God’s existence and liberty, and accepted the Christian revelation.

They had already given their assent to the hypothetical truth that, if there is a God, He cannot lie. This suffices in conjunction with some clearly enough divine sign for the evidence of credibility that is a prerequisite to the act of faith elicited on the authority of God revealing.

For this reason we said in the reply, let the major pass without comment, rather than conceding it; for God’s existence as the Author of nature can be made known to one, if not by revelation itself, at least by some manifest and divine sign that confirms the revelation. This sign suffices in conjunction with the hypothetical truth that, if there is a God, then He cannot but say what is true. It was by this method that certain Positivists were converted. Certainly God can, if He so wills, clearly manifest Himself to unbelievers.

Second objection. The Vatican Council seems to infer that all the faithful, even philosophers and theologians, must believe in God’s existence from a supernatural motive. Therefore this truth is “an indemonstrable article of faith” and not merely a demonstrable preamble to the faith. For the Vatican Council says: “The Holy . . . Church believes that there is one God. . . .”; and the principal attributes of the true God are enumerated. Farther on we read: “All those things are to be believed with divine and Catholic faith which are contained in the word of God, written or handed down, and which the Church . . . proposes for belief as having been divinely revealed.” But St. Paul says: “He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and is a rewarder to them that seek Him.”

It is the common teaching of the theologians that at least these two primary truths can be the subject matter of belief, and that they always were necessary as means for attaining salvation. Therefore all, even Christian philosophers, must believe God's existence and say, by reason of belief and not of knowledge, "I believe in one God."

We are confronted by two difficulties (1) the article of faith in itself, as it is distinct from the preamble to the faith, cannot be demonstrated; (2) for us, at least according to the teaching of St. Thomas, one and the same thing cannot be both known (or evident) and believed (or obscure) by the same person. We do not believe what we already see, for the evident object is already sufficient of itself to move the intellect. I do not believe, but I see the presence of the pen which I hold in my hand.

Certain theologians, as Mazzella and Didiot, thought it impossible, after the declaration of the Vatican Council, for the Thomists to continue to defend the thesis that, one and the same thing cannot be the object of science and of belief for the same person.

On the contrary A. Vacant, although he himself does not admit the Thomist thesis, shows that it was not condemned by the Vatican Council, and, in fact, that it is more easily reconciled with the declarations of the Council.

What is the more common opinion among the Thomists? They say that all the faithful, even philosophers, who know the demonstration of God's existence as the Author of nature, must believe God's existence as the Author of grace or salvation. This is what St. Paul has in mind in the following text: "He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and is a rewarder to them that seek Him." The reference is certainly to a supernatural rewarder, otherwise the believer would not have a supernatural end in view, since he would not have even a confused knowledge of this. There is also reference in this text, as in the parallel texts of the Council, to God's existence as the Author of salvation and grace. This truth is an indemonstrable article of the faith, and is something more than a preamble to the faith. God, the Author of salvation, is called the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Old Testament, and the heavenly Father in the New Testament.

On the other hand, God's existence as the Author of nature is a demonstrable preamble to the faith, as St. Thomas stated in his reply to the first objection. Thus it remains true that the same thing, taken in the same

sense, is not for the same person both known (or evident) and believed (or obscure). God as the Author of nature is not called either the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, or the heavenly Father, but the first Mover and Ordainer of the world, pure Act.

Moreover, according to the teaching of the Thomists, when the Christian philosopher is not actually considering the demonstration of God's existence as the Author of nature, it is possible for him to believe the same, and he actually does, as included in the belief of God's existence as the Author of grace. Finally, infused faith confirms from on high the certitude resulting from a philosophical demonstration, since it is the same faculty and is concerned with the same object, considered not in its formal but in its material aspect.

This view, which is the one more commonly held among the Thomists, is more in harmony with the Vatican Council, which says: "The Church believes that there is one God . . ." (then His attributes are enumerated). Certainly the whole of this previous declaration pertains directly to the faith, if the reference is to God as the Author of salvation and His supernatural providence. But from this it does not follow that God's existence as the Author of nature must be strictly believed by Christian philosophers. Likewise, when the Council says: "All those things are to be believed by faith which are contained in the word of God, written or handed down . . . , and which the Church proposes for belief," this does not militate against the general principle that some of the faithful are ignorant of certain dogmas that are necessary for salvation, and that Christian philosophers may hold it to be true that God exists as the Author of nature, and this solely for the reason that they have proved the same, and while they are actually considering this proof.

The foregoing suffices to establish the demonstrability of God's existence.

THIRD ARTICLE

WHETHER GOD EXISTS

State of the question. From the difficulties presented by St. Thomas at the beginning of this article, it seems that he had in mind the principal

objections raised by both the pessimists and the pantheists against the true God.

The first difficulty, which has often been formulated, is taken from the fact that physical and moral evil are in the world. It seems from this that the world has not been produced by a perfect cause, by one of infinite goodness whose works exclude all that is evil. Thus among modern philosophers, Stuart Mill admitted that God is finite, because He cannot prevent all evils. This same point of view accounts for the pessimistic doctrine of Schopenhauer and Hartmann. The second difficulty is as follows: What can be accounted for by a few principles is not produced by many; but natural things can be reduced to one principle, which is nature; and voluntary things can be reduced to one principle, which is human reason or will; therefore it is not necessary to admit the existence of a first transcendent cause that is distinct from the world. This difficulty is later on developed in its pantheistic aspect.

From what is said in the present article, some have made the unwarrantable assertion that St. Thomas did not consider the pantheistic hypothesis and therefore did not refute it, and that his five ways of proving God’s existence are of no validity in disproving the pantheism of Spinoza, who admitted in some sense the existence of a first Mover, a first Cause, a first necessary Being, a supreme Being, even to some extent a first Ordainer, but a being who is not really and essentially distinct from the world. If such were the case, the Angelic Doctor would have been ignorant of this question as it was discussed even in his time.

In answer to this we say that the pantheism of several ancient as well as of certain medieval philosophers was not unknown to St. Thomas. In fact, he has this error in mind in the second objection of this article, and he alludes to it more explicitly farther on He certainly knew from the works of Aristotle about the two principal forms of monism, or the pantheism of antiquity, that is, the static monism of Parmenides, and the absolute evolutionism of Heraclitus. In the former case, the material things of the world are absorbed in the one and only immobile Being, and it is a sort of acosmism. In the latter case, and in contradistinction to the former, God is absorbed in the evolution itself of the world; God becomes in the world, and this pantheism is a sort of atheism. Pantheism must of necessity always fluctuate between atheism and acosmism. Spinoza is of the school of Parmenides in the application of his absolute realism to the notion of

substantial being. Hegel's evolutionism, on the contrary, is developed more in conformity with the views of Heraclitus.

St. Thomas was acquainted, moreover, with the pantheism of certain medieval philosophers. In a certain article he does indeed refute the materialistic pantheism of David of Dinant as well as the pantheistic theory that God is the formal cause of all things. He even refuted the pantheistic emanationism of the Neoplatonists who, to some extent, adopted the views of the Averroists. The latter taught that God operates externally by reason of the necessity of His nature or of His wisdom, and that there is only one intellect for all human beings.

As a matter of fact, St. Thomas radically refuted pantheism by showing that there can be no accident in God, that the world postulates God as its extrinsic, most simple, and absolutely immutable cause, whereas the world is essentially composite and mobile, that nothing is predicated univocally of God and creatures, and that creation is a most free act. But all these statements have at least their philosophical foundation in the five proofs which we shall now set forth in detail, since they refer to the efficient Cause, which is extrinsic to the world, and which is absolutely simple and immutable, and therefore really and essentially distinct from the world that is changeable and composite.

Certainly the Angelic Doctor had all these points in mind when he wrote the five proofs, which we shall now carefully consider. We must preface our examination of each of the five proofs in detail by a more general statement regarding their universality and order. Are the five proofs included confusedly in this most general of demonstrations?

THE UNIVERSALITY AND ORDER OF THESE PROOFS

The five proofs given by St. Thomas are most universal in scope, being deduced from the highest metaphysical principles. The starting point, which is also the minor, and which is previously enunciated in each of these proofs, is the fact as established in any created being whatever, namely, the fact of corporeal or spiritual motion, of causality, of contingency, of composition and imperfection, and of ordination in the passive sense. But the principle or the major in each of these a posteriori demonstrations is the principle of causality with its corollary: that there is no process to infinity in directly subordinated causes. The first proof is concerned with the supreme

and efficient cause of motion, the second with conditioned causality, the third with contingency, the fourth with composite and imperfect being, and the fifth with the orderly arrangement of things in the world. The fourth and fifth proofs treat also, and especially so, of the supreme and exemplary directive cause. The terminating point of these five proofs is the existence of the self-subsisting Being, who is absolutely simple and unchangeable, and hence really and essentially distinct from the world that is composite and changeable. The ultimate objective, indeed, of no matter which of these proofs we take, is the establishing of some divine attribute, and this latter can be predicated only of the essentially self-subsisting Being. The five proofs reach this summit, as constituting the supreme truth in the order of finding, from which afterward the divine attributes are deduced. This highest truth, which is also revealed ("I am who am"), is, so to speak, the golden key to the entire treatise on the one God. It is the culminating point in the way of finding and the beginning in the way of judgment, and in this transcendent truth are contained the supreme reasons of things.

This must be carefully noted, because several theologians, such as Suarez, not understanding these five proofs, so changed them as to deprive them of all demonstrative validity.

All these proofs are deduced from the laws of finite or created being, considered as such, inasmuch as any finite being whatever, ranging from stone to angel, in accordance with these five general aspects, is dependent on the first Cause. There is not one of these proofs that is deduced from objects of the sensible or physical order, although examples are given from objects of sense perception, since these are more known to us. This means that the starting point of these five proofs can also be facts pertaining to the intellective life, according as these are in our soul and also in the angels, that is, from intellectual and volitional movements, from their causality, from the contingency of mind, its composition and imperfection,' and from the fact that either our mind or the angelic is ordained to something else as its universal truth and its universal good.

The universality of these proofs may be expressed as follows:

Every finite being is mobile……...
and is dependent on the first immobile Mover

the self-subsisting Being

caused in causing……... and is dependent on the first uncaused Cause

contingent……. and is dependent on the first necessary Being

composite and imperfect……... and is dependent on the most perfect and most simple Being

ordained to something……... and is dependent on the supreme Ordainer

THE ORDER IN WHICH THESE FIVE PROOFS ARE PRESENTED

These proofs start from the more evident signs of contingency and proceed to discuss those of deeper significance, namely, from the very beginning of motion, which obviously is contingent, and they proceed to discuss the composition and imperfection even of beings that existed before our time, for instance the stars and the whole world of physical entities, or else they proceed to discuss the composition of any finite being whatever, even if it had no beginning. The ordaining of any finite being whatever to some end is also considered, for instance, even of any finite intelligence whatever, whose object is truth.

As regards the terminus of these five proofs, they manifest: (1) the necessity of a first cause, as first mover, first uncaused cause, first necessary being; (2) the perfection of the first cause, as most perfect, most simple, and the ordainer of all things to an end. Hence these five proofs start from the more elementary principles, from those already known to us, and they proceed gradually to a consideration of those that are of deeper significance and of greater perfection. This will be more clearly seen in the exposition of the proofs. The orderly arrangement of these proofs excels by far that presented by the theologians who preceded St. Thomas.

We shall see farther on that the other traditional proofs are easily reduced to these five, particularly the proof based on the contingency of mind, which refers back to the third way; and to the fourth way are referred the proof based on the eternal verities leading up to the maximum in truth, and the proof based on the natural desire for the sovereign good leading up to the maximum in good. Also the proof based on moral obligation that leads to the admission of a supreme Ordainer and Lawgiver refers back to the fifth way.

IS THERE A MOST GENERAL PROOF THAT INCLUDES CONFUSEDLY THESE FIVE PROOFS?

There is indeed a general proof which is readily understood by the natural reason or the common sense, and which includes confusedly the other proofs. It has its foundation in the principle that is derived from the principle of causality, namely, that the greater or more perfect does not come from the less perfect, but the imperfect comes from the more perfect. This principle, especially as expressed in its primary negative form, is self-evident, even for the common sense, and it concludes confusedly the principles of the five typical proofs. For the principles of the first three proofs show clearly the necessity of a first mover, a first uncaused cause, a first necessary being, and the principles of the other two proofs clearly denote the perfection of the first cause, since the imperfect is evidence of the most perfect Being, and the orderly arrangement of things of a supreme intelligence.

Hence this general demonstration, although in itself somewhat vague, is very strong, for it contains virtually the probative force of the five typical proofs. The natural knowledge of God's existence finds expression in it, and the spontaneous certitude resulting from it, which is prior to strictly philosophical certitude is confirmed by this latter. It holds its own against objections, even though it may not give a direct answer to particular difficulties.

This most general proof may be presented in the following form: The greater does not proceed from the less, the more perfect from the less perfect, but contrariwise; but men, who contingently exist, have being, life, intelligence, morality, and sometimes holiness; therefore there must be a first Cause which possesses, by reason of itself and eternally, these perfections of existence, life, intelligence, and holiness. Otherwise the greater would come from the less, as the proponents of absolute evolutionism are obliged to admit, and it is by recourse to this method of absurdity that God's existence is proved, who is absolutely perfect and distinct from the world.

The principle of this general demonstration refers back to the negative formula of the principle of causality, long ago expressed by Parmenides, who said: "Nothing is made from nothing," which means that without a cause nothing comes into being. But if the greater or more perfect were to come from the less perfect, then this greater degree of being would be

without a cause. Hence it is the common saying that after creation we have not more of being but more beings. This means that we have not more of being by way of intensity, or more of perfection, because whatever of perfection there is in the world pre-existed in God in a more eminent way.

The minor of this proof is a fact admitted by all. The principal perfections in the world are existence, life, and intelligence; and these are found in human beings. But evidently human beings are contingent, because they are born and die.

Hence the conclusion is, that there is an eternally existing being, life, and intelligence; more than this, there is an externally self-existing Being, Life, and Intelligence. Otherwise, if there were only eternally existing contingent beings, since these have not in themselves the reason for their existence, they would have no reason for existing. Any contingent being does not necessarily require another contingent being as its cause, but they both of necessity require the necessary Being.

This demonstration is therefore most forceful, even though it still fails to give a definite answer to the particular difficulties that we shall afterward have to examine. This explains why the certitude either of natural reason or of the common sense persists, even though it may be incapable of giving a definite answer to all the objections. In this sense the saying is true, that a thousand difficulties do not make one doubt, provided they do not destroy the middle term in the demonstration of the declared conclusion, or its principle, but are, as it were, from some extrinsic source.

We have elsewhere examined these five proofs, which St. Thomas has expounded in various works of his. We shall now, however, briefly consider them as they are given in the Theological Summa, and as they are further elucidated in the subsequent articles of the same work.

Each of these proofs starts from some established fact (of motion, of conditional causality, of the presence of contingent beings, their imperfection, of order in the world), and it ascends to God by the principle of causality and its corollary, namely, that there is no regress to infinity in a series of directly subordinated causes.

THE FIRST PROOF: FROM MOTION

The fact: “It is certain and evident to our senses, that in the world some things are in motion.” It is a question of motion or change taken in its

widest sense, first, indeed, of physical change (whether substantial, local, qualitative, or quantitative), which latter is by way of augmentation. We are also concerned, as is evident from this article, with the spiritual motion of our intellect and our will.

The principle: “Now whatever is in motion is put in motion by another.” This principle is necessary and most universal. For motion is the transition from potentiality to actuality, or from indetermination to determination. “But nothing can be reduced from potentiality to actuality except by something that is in actuality . . . ; now it is not possible that the same thing should be at once in actuality and potentiality in the same respect.” In the same being, to be sure, one part of it can move the other, as in the case of living beings. But if the part that moves, is itself moved, by a motion of the higher order, then this requires an external and higher mover.

Moreover, there can be no regress to infinity in a series of essentially subordinated movers. We are not concerned with past movers, as in the series of generations either of animals or of men; for these movers are accidentally and not essentially subordinated, and their influence as such has ceased. “Hence it is not impossible,” says St. Thomas, “for man to be generated by man to infinity.” But it is contrary to reason for the absolutely sufficient reason or first cause of motion to be explained by this past and even infinite series of movers, which also themselves are moved. If this series is eternal, it is an eternally insufficient explanation of motion, and is not its own reason for this.

We are concerned, therefore, with a series of actually and essentially subordinated movers. St. Thomas says farther on: “It would be impossible to proceed to infinity, if the generation of this man depended on that man, and on an elementary body, and on the sun, and so on to infinity.” Thus we say that the moon is attracted by the earth, the earth by the sun, and the sun by another center of attraction. But in this ascending series there can be no process to infinity. For if all the essentially subordinated movers receive that impulse which they transmit, so that there is not a prime mover which imparts movement without receiving it, then motion is out of the question. So a clock, even if you increase the number of wheels, will never run without a spring, or without the ductility or elasticity of some metal, or without some weight that acts as its driving power.

Therefore it is necessary to arrive at a first mover, which is set in motion by no other; and this everyone understands to be God as He is nominally

defined. The first mover is immobile, not with the immobility of inertia or of passive potency, which implies imperfection and is inferior to motion, but with the immobility of actuality, who does not need to be premoved so as to act. In other words, we must come to a first mover, who acts by himself, who is his own action, and consequently his own being, for operation follows being, and the mode of operation the mode of being. The prime and most universal mover of bodies and of spirits must, therefore, be pure Act, without any admixture of potentiality, both with regard to action and with regard to being; and hence, as will be clearly seen farther on, He must be the self-subsisting Being. And so it is evident that this prime mover absolutely transcends the changeable world. We shall see farther on that the first Cause is free, and that when it wills, a new effect is the result of its eternal action, and that this has been eternally decreed by it.

Thus absolute evolutionism is refuted, according to which becoming or creative evolution, which underlies the phenomena, is the principle of all things. This is impossible, since becoming is not its own reason for this; for it includes a new element that is not the effect of its action, otherwise the greater would come from the less, being from nothing. This absurdity must be acknowledged by all who believe in a progressive evolution, in the course of which the more perfect is always produced by the less perfect.

THE SECOND PROOF: FROM THE NATURE OF EFFICIENT CAUSE

The fact, which is the starting point of this proof, is expressed as follows: “In the world of sense we find that there is an order of efficient causes,” for instance, of those things that are necessary not only for the production but also for the conservation of vegetative and sensitive life on the face of the earth. And from conditional causality the mind soars to the unconditioned first Cause, that is necessary not only for the production but also for the conservation of things in being. Hence this proof is of somewhat deeper significance than the proof from motion, but the method of procedure is about the same. It is made clear from what St. Thomas says in the two subsequent articles, about God’s preservation of things in being. This same relation of dependence is considered in these articles, though the consideration is of the transcendent order, not by way of finding but of judgment, the descent being from God to creatures.

The minor of our proof, previously enunciated in the first way, is: We find that there are in the world essentially subordinated causes. For instance, there are all the cosmic causes, which are necessary not only for the production but also for the conservation of animal and plant life. Thus we have the chemical activity of the air, the atmospheric pressure according to its determinate degree, solar heat. . . . But causes of this kind presuppose a first unconditioned cause. For, on the one hand, it is impossible for "anything to be the efficient cause of itself, for in this case it would be prior to itself." On the other hand, in actually and essentially subordinated causes, it is impossible to go on to infinity, as was already shown in the first way. Therefore, apart from and transcending the series of mundane and efficient causes, there is a first cause that is not caused, or an unconditioned cause that is absolutely independent of the others. But the unconditioned cause must be its own action, and even its own being, because operation follows being, and the mode of operation the mode of being. In fact, this cause is the self-subsisting Being, a point that will be more clearly established farther on. Hence this cause merits the name God, since it corresponds to the nominal definition of God. Thus an absolutely unconditioned Cause is required, who transcends the physical energy of heat or of electricity or of magnetism, and of whom the liturgy says:

"God, powerful sustainer of all things,
Thou who dost remain permanently unmoved."

THE THIRD PROOF: FROM THE CONTINGENCY OF THINGS IN THE WORLD

This third proof, like the others, starts from a fact of experience, which serves as the minor in the demonstration, and is as follows: We find in nature certain things that manifestly are contingent, which means that it is possible for them to be and not to be. Daily indeed we see plants and animals being generated and perishing, or ceasing to exist. It is indeed a fact attested to by science, that there was a time when there were no plants, animals, or men on this earth, when the heavenly bodies did not exist as they now do, but only in a nebulous state. This fact of the contingency of corruptible things is illustrated by the following principle.

Contingent beings, however, since they have not in themselves the reason of their existence, of necessity presuppose the necessary self-existent Being. Otherwise nothing would have existed. If at any time the necessary Being

had not existed, then nothing would exist. Therefore there must be something the existence of which is necessary.

Moreover, if something is only hypothetically or physically and not absolutely and metaphysically necessary (as cosmic matter is necessary for all changes), “it has its necessity caused by another.” But it is impossible to go on to infinity in necessary things which have their necessity caused by another. Therefore there is required, as the cause of all other things, the existence of a being that is not hypothetically but absolutely necessary.

The difficulty is that perhaps this necessary being is in the world as its immanent principle, and so is not God. We say in reply that this necessary being is not: (a) an aggregation of contingent beings, even though it were infinite in time and space, because to increase the number of contingent beings still leaves the series contingent, and no more constitutes a necessary being than a numberless series of idiots results in an intelligent man; (b) it is not the law governing contingent beings, since the existence of this law depends on the existence of contingent beings; (c) it is not the common substance of all the phenomena, for this substance would be the subject of motion (first proof), and susceptible to perfection. Thus at any moment it would be deprived of some contingent perfection, which it could not give itself, because its being and perfection can never be more than it previously had. The necessary being can indeed give, but not receive; it can determine, but not be determined; it must have, however, of and by itself, and eternally, whatever it can have.

From this very fact that the necessary Being is self-existent, it follows that His essence is not only something capable of existing, of receiving and limiting existence, but that this necessary Being is the self-subsisting Being. This point will be made clearer in the next question.

THE FOURTH PROOF: FROM THE GRADES OF PERFECTION IN BEINGS

The perfection of the First Cause is what is particularly made manifest in this proof, which is as follows: Among beings there are some more and some less good, true, noble. This means that being and its transcendental and analogous properties (unity, truth, goodness, beauty) are susceptible of greater and less, which we do not find to be the case with specific and generic perfections. Thus goodness is predicated of the stone, the fruit, the horse, the professor, the saint, on various grounds and in varying degrees. In

like manner the unity of the soul excels that of the body; there is a greater degree of truth in principles than in conclusions, and in necessary propositions than in those that are contingent. So also life is found in varying degrees according as it is vegetative, sensitive, intellective, moral; and the highest degree of the moral life is sanctity. This fact of the inequality of perfection in beings is illustrated by the following principle.

More and less are predicated of different things according as they resemble in their different ways something which is the maximum and which is the cause of the others. To understand this principle, its terms must be explained.

1) It is a case of different things. But a multiplicity of things different in themselves does not explain the unity of similarity that is found in these things. To express this more briefly: multitude does not give the reason for the unity in which it participates. Elements that are different in themselves, do not of themselves coalesce to form some sort of unity. As St. Thomas says: “Multitude itself would not be contained under being, unless it were in some way contained under one.” Thus those things that are many numerically, are one specifically; and those that are many specifically are one generically; and there are many processes of reasoning that are one in principle. Our first conception is of being, then of non-being, of division of being, of indivision or of unity of being, and finally of multitude, which last is logically and ontologically posterior to unity.

2) We are concerned with the absolute perfections of being, truth, goodness predicated of different things in varying degrees, which means that they are predicated of finite beings in an imperfect manner. But the imperfect is a composite of perfection and of a limited capacity for perfection. Thus goodness is found in varying degrees in the stone, the fruit, the horse, the good professor, the saint; and in all of these it is found in a finite manner, although this goodness in itself is not limited, for what is formally denoted by the concept implies no imperfection.

But the composite of perfection and of a limited capacity for the same needs a cause, for, as St. Thomas says, “things in themselves different (perfection and limited capacity for this) cannot unite unless something causes them to unite.” The reason is that the union of several things presupposes unity. Multitude does not explain the reason for the unity that is imperfectly contained in it. Union that is effected according to either composition or similitude presupposes a unity of a higher order. It is a

question of the exemplary cause and also of the efficient cause, because the exemplary cause without the efficient does not actually produce anything. “Consequently there is something that is truest, something best, something noblest, and something that is uttermost being; for those things that are greatest in truth are greatest in being.” So says St. Thomas in this article. But why does he add: “Now the maximum in any genus is the cause of all in that genus”? He does so to show that the greatest in truth, in goodness, and in being is the true equivalent of the nominal definition of God, or of the supreme Being, and of the cause of all beings. Therefore he concludes by saying: “And this we call God.” If this greatest in being were not the cause of all beings, it would not correspond to the nominal definition of God.

Some were of the opinion that, previous to the introduction of this causal element, this proof does not proceed by the way of causality. But there is no other way of proving God’s existence, as was previously stated, and we must not only come by this proof to the ideal conception of the supreme Good, conceived by us as the exemplar in this order, but also to the supreme Good as truly existing outside the mind, and as truly and actually the cause of other beings.

This interpretation is confirmed by what St. Thomas says in another of his works: “If one of some kind is found as a common note in several objects, this must be because some one cause has brought it about in them; for it cannot be that the common note of itself belongs to each thing, since each thing is by its very nature distinct from others, and a diversity of causes produces a diversity of effects. . . .

“(Moreover), if anything is found to be participated in various degrees by several objects, it must be that, starting with the one in which it is found in the highest degree, it is attributed to all the others in which it is found more imperfectly. For those things that are predicated according to more and less, this they have by reason of their greater or less approximation to one of some kind; for if any one of these were to possess this perfection in its own right, then there is no reason why it should be found in a higher degree in one than in the other.” St. Thomas also says: “What belongs to a being by its very nature, and not by reason of any cause, cannot be either partially or completely taken away.”

This argument differs entirely from St. Anselm’s, for it does not start from the idea of perfect being, but from the real grades of perfection as

found in the world. Therefore, by means of the proof based upon exemplary and efficient causality, the most perfect Being is established, since actually existing imperfect beings originate from the real fount of perfection.

We find the same argument in the Theological Summa, but the order is reversed. The descent is from God, since the same relation of dependence can be considered by starting from the lowest or from the highest in the grades of being. The passage from the above-mentioned work reads as follows: “Whatever is found in anything by participation must be caused in it by that to which it belongs essentially, as iron becomes ignited by fire. Now it has been shown above (q. 3, a. 4) that God is the essentially self-subsisting Being; and it was also shown (q. 11, a. 3, 4) that subsisting being must be one; as, if whiteness were self-subsisting, it would be one, since whiteness is multiplied by its recipients. . . . Therefore it must be that all things which are diversified by the diverse participation of being, so as to be more or less perfect, are caused by one first Being, who possesses being most perfectly. Hence Plato said that unity must come before multitude.”

Thus this fourth way proves the necessity of a maximum in being, unity, truth, and goodness; in fact, it proves the necessity of the most pure Being that is not a reality considered as distinct from the limited capacity in which it would be received. Thus the maximum in being must be to being as A is to A. It must be the self-subsisting Being. And so it is quite clear that this supreme Being by reason of His absolute identity, which excludes composition, imperfection, and changeableness, completely transcends the world, which is essentially composite and imperfect.

St. Thomas applies this proof to the intellect, truth, goodness, and the natural law.

1) The application to our intellect. “What is such by participation and what is mobile and imperfect, always requires the preexistence of something essentially such, immovable and perfect. Now the human soul is called intellectual by reason of a participation in intellectual power; a sign of which is that it is not wholly intellectual but only in part. Moreover, it reaches to the understanding of truth by arguing, with a certain amount of reasoning and movement. Again, it has an imperfect understanding. . . . Therefore there must be some higher intellect by which the soul is helped to understand.” And this higher intellect must be the self-subsisting Being.

2) Application to eternal truths. We perceive by the intellect truths that are at least negatively eternal, absolutely necessary and universal, such as

the principle of contradiction. But the absolute necessity of these, which is the rule of every finite intellect and of every possible and actual contingent being, calls for an actually existing and necessary foundation. Therefore this necessary and eternal foundation exists, and it is the necessary and the eternal intellect.

St. Thomas says practically the same in the following passage: “From the fact that the truths understood are eternal as regards what is understood, it cannot be concluded that the soul is immortal, but that the truths understood have their foundation in something eternal. They have their foundation, indeed, in the first Truth as in the universal Cause that contains all truth.” This means that, in accordance with the fourth proof, they have their foundation in the maximum truth.

Obviously the absolute necessity of the principle of contradiction, which is the law governing every real being, whether possible or actual, has not its foundation in either contingent being or in the different natures of contingent beings; multitude does not explain the reason for unity. There is required a supreme truth. Likewise the first principle of ethics, good is to be done and evil to be avoided, has its proximate foundation in the nature of virtuous good to which our will is ordained, and its ultimate foundation is in the supreme Good and in the maximum Truth.

Thus the natural law in the rational creature is “the participation of the eternal law.” This is confirmed by the fifth proof, since the passive ordination of our will to do what is virtuously good presupposes the active ordination of the supreme Ordainer or Lawmaker.

3) Application to the natural desire in us for universal good. More and less are predicated of different goods, according as these approximate in varying degrees to the highest goods. It follows psychologically from this that, in conceiving universal good, we naturally desire a non-finite good (in virtue of the principle of finality: every agent acts for an end). And this desire, being natural, cannot be to no purpose. We are not concerned here with the conditional and inefficacious desire for the beatific vision, but with the natural desire for natural happiness, which no finite good, but only the supreme Good naturally known and loved can satisfy. Hence St. Thomas says: “That good which is the last end, is the perfect good fulfilling the desire. Now man’s appetite, otherwise the will, is for the universal good. And any good inherent to the soul is a participated good, and consequently a portioned good. Therefore none of them can be man’s last end.” And

farther on he says: “Hence it is evident than nothing can lull man’s will except the universal good. This is to be found not in any creature, but in God alone, because every creature has good by participation.”

This may be expressed more briefly as follows: If there is a natural appetite for universal good in the things of nature, since good is not in the mind but in things, then it must be the universal or most perfect good. Otherwise the existence of this appetite or natural desire would be a psychological contradiction. In such a case the tendency of this natural desire would be and would not be for infinite good.

This is an apodictic argument at least for philosophers, and it must be most clear to the angels. It is an application of the fourth proof in conjunction with the principle of finality: that every agent acts for an end, and that a natural desire cannot be purposeless. The fifth proof confirms this argument, since the passive ordination of our will to non-finite good presupposes the supreme Ordainer.

THE FIFTH PROOF: FROM THE ORDER OR THE GOVERNANCE IN THE WORLD

We see that things lacking intelligence act for an end. Not only is this an established fact, but it is the minor of this demonstration. Indeed we notice that there is a wonderful order and finality prevailing in the strikingly regular courses of the heavenly bodies. The centripetal and centrifugal forces are so regulated that the heavenly bodies move in their orbits with enormous speed and in perfect harmony. More striking are the unity and variety that we behold in the organic structures of plants, animals, and man. Finality, or the relation to an end, is clearly seen in the evolution of the primitive embryonic cell, which in its simplicity virtually contains all that belongs to the determinate organism of this particular species rather than of a certain other, of a lion, for instance, rather than of a dog. This evolution manifestly tends to a determined end. Hence Claude Bernard spoke of “the directive idea” of this evolution. There is something truly wonderful in this. In like manner the organs of animals are adapted to this particular function rather than to a certain other, such as the eye with its multiplicity of visual conditions and its cells is adapted to this most simple operation of seeing, and the ear to that of hearing. Similarly the instinct and activities of animals are directed to certain determined ends. Thus the activities, of the bee are for the building of its hive and the making of honey.

What particularly manifests this finality, as St. Thomas notes, is the fact that natural agents of the irrational order "always or nearly always act in the same way, so as to obtain the best result." If God had created but one eye for the evident purpose of seeing, this would already be something wonderful. This best result, which is the terminus of action, is strictly entitled to the name of end; for the end is the good in view of which an agent acts. In fact, before God's existence is proved, the principle of finality, "every agent acts for an end," is an evident truth. As St. Thomas says: "An agent does not move except out of intention for an end (unless it do so at least unconsciously). For if the agent were not determined to some particular effect, it would not do one thing rather than another. Therefore, in order that it produce a determinate effect, it must of necessity be determined to some certain one, which has the nature of an end."

It will not do to have recourse to chance, for chance is an accidental cause, and hence is not the cause of what happens always and according to nature. Otherwise the accidental would no longer be accidental but essential; instead of being something which accrues to the essence, it would be its foundation, and in that case the essential would be subordinate to the accidental, and this would be unintelligible and absurd. The wonderful order existing in the universe would be the result of no order, the greater would proceed from the less. Neither will it do to appeal solely to the efficient cause, and to reject the final cause. For in that case we could not give any reason for the action of an agent: why, for instance, a certain organ has a certain determinate tendency; nor could we say why an agent acts instead of not acting. There would be no raison d'être for the action. The active potency or the inclination of the agent tends essentially toward something, just as the imperfect tends toward the perfect. "Potency refers to act." For instance, the faculty of sight is for seeing. Therefore, we cannot doubt the existence of finality in the world, the order of which is the suitable arrangement of means in view of an end. Now the existence of order or finality in the world is illustrated by the following principle which is the major of this demonstration.

Irrational beings cannot tend toward an end, unless they are directed by some supreme Intelligence. In fact, to be directed presupposes a directing cause, which is an act that pertains to the intellect and not to the imagination. "It is for the wise man to direct." Why? Because an intelligent being alone perceives the raison d'être of the means. "Irrational beings,"

says St. Thomas, “tend toward an end by natural inclination; they are, as it were, moved by another and not by themselves, since they have no knowledge of the end as such.” Animals have a sensitive knowledge of the thing which constitutes their end, but they do not perceive the formal end as such in this thing. If, therefore, there were no intelligent designer directing the world, the order and intelligibility in things would be the effect of an unintelligible cause, and our own intelligences would originate from a blind and unintelligible cause, and again we should have to say that the greater comes from the less, which is absurd. This was understood to be so by Anaxagoras, and he was very much praised by Aristotle for having made this assertion. There is, therefore, a supreme intelligent Being, who directs all things in nature to their respective ends.

Kant objects that this argument proves only the existence of some finite intelligence. We reply to this by saying that it is not enough for the first Ruler to have, like ourselves, an intellectual faculty directed to intelligible being, for this would at once demand the presence of a designing intelligence of a higher order. The supreme Designer cannot be designed for any other purpose. Therefore He must be the self-subsisting Intellection and self-subsisting Being, and this will be more clearly seen in subsequent articles.

This proof, like the preceding proofs, is most universal in scope. It takes in anything whatever that denotes design, and from this it rises up to the supreme Designer. Thus it starts with equal force either from the fact that the eye is for seeing, and the ear for hearing, or that the intellect is for the understanding of truth, or the will for the willing of good.

Viewed under this aspect, there are two proofs for God’s existence that are referred back to this fifth way. One is the natural tendency of our will to do what is good and avoid what is evil; the other is the natural desire of the will for happiness, or for unlimited good, which is found only in God, who is the essential Good.

Evidently this twofold ordination of the will presupposes a supreme Ordainer, just as the ordination of sight to seeing does. This proof must be most convincing for the angels; by the very fact that they see that their will is directed to universal good, at once without any discursive process they see that passive ordination presupposes the active ordination of a supreme Ordainer. “There is no ordination without an ordainer.”

This fifth proof, since it starts from the consideration of the order prevailing in the world, the harmony, for instance, in the movements of the heavenly bodies, is readily understood at least in a confused way by the natural reason. Hence it is said: “All men are vain in whom there is not the knowledge of God, and who by these good things that are seen could not understand Him that is. Neither by attending to the works have acknowledged who was the workman.” Hence the Psalmist says: “The heavens show forth the glory of God.”

THE ONE END TO WHICH THESE FIVE PROOFS CONVERGE

We have already pointed out at the end of each of these five proofs that the result of each is to move us to admit the existence of a divine attribute which can be predicated only of the self-subsisting Being, as will be explicitly proved by St. Thomas. The article referred to serves the double purpose of pointing out to us what is the terminus in the ascending order in the process of reasoning or the terminus by way of finding in proving God’s existence, which rises from sensible things until it reaches the supreme cause, and it is also the principle in the descending or synthetic process, by which reason deduces the divine attributes, and judges of all things by the highest cause.

In fact, the prime mover must be his own action, and, therefore, his own existence, and the same must be said of the first uncaused cause, of the necessary being, of the most perfect being, and of the ruler of the universe. Thus the supreme truth of Christian philosophy, or the fundamental truth by way of judgment, is that “in God alone essence and existence are identical.” God is “He who is.” This is the golden key to the whole treatise on the one God, and its dominating principle.

These are, therefore, the principal metaphysical proofs to which all others are reduced. If we study them carefully, we see, contrary to the assertions of modern agnostics, that the existence of God, who transcends the world, cannot be denied without denying the principle of causality, namely, that “every being which is contingent, changeable, composite, imperfect, and relative, is caused,” and so requires a first and unchangeable being, one that is absolutely simple and perfect. Now, the principle of causality cannot be denied or doubted without denying or doubting the principle of contradiction, for “a contingent and uncaused being” would exist neither of

itself nor by reason of another, and consequently could not be distinguished from nothingness, since it would have no reason for existing. This would mean the subversion of the principle of contradiction, that “being is not non-being,” and of the principle of identity, that “being is being, non-being is non-being.”

If, on the contrary, the principle of contradiction or identity is the supreme law of reality and of our reason, then the supreme reality must indeed be the identity of essence and existence, or self-subsisting Being. Thus the five ways of proving God’s existence unite in the wonderful opposition prevailing between the principle of identity and the changeableness and composition of the world. From this opposition it is at once evident that the world is contingent and depends on the immutable and pre-eminently simple Being whose name is “I am who am.”

It is, therefore, absolutely necessary to choose between the existence of God, who transcends the world, and the denial of the real validity of the principle of contradiction. Absolute evolutionism denies this validity, maintaining that motion or becoming is its own reason for such, and hence that the more perfect comes from the less perfect, and that contradictories are identified in a universal process of becoming. Thus we see in absolute evolutionism an incontestable proof, by reductio ad absurdum of the true and transcendental God, since this existence cannot be denied without denying the real validity of the first principle of reason, and without positing a fundamental absurdity as the principle of all things. For if God is truly the absolutely necessary being, then the denial of His existence means the positing of a fundamental absurdity as the principle of all things.

We see the radical absurdity of this system in the first of the propositions condemned in the Syllabus of Pius IX, which reads as follows: “There is no supreme Being, who is all-wise, ruler of the universe and distinct from it; God is identical with the nature of things, and is, therefore, subject to changes; God really becomes or begins to be in man and in the world, and all things are God and have the same substance with Him; thus God and the world, spirit and matter, necessity and liberty, truth and falsehood, goodness and evil, justice and injustice, are all identified in the one same and only reality.” If absolute evolutionism were true, then nothing would be stable, and therefore we should have to say that there is nothing but relative truth. In such a state of knowledge the antithesis would always be truer than the thesis and then there would be a synthesis of a higher order, and so on

indefinitely. Contradictories would be identified in the very process of becoming, which would be its own reason for such.

To avoid this absurdity we must affirm the existence of God, who, as the Vatican Council says, “being one, sole, absolutely simple and immutable spiritual substance, is to be declared as really and essentially distinct from the world (which is composite and subject to change), of supreme beatitude in and from Himself, and ineffably exalted above all things which exist or can be conceived beside Himself.”

St. Thomas gives us in merely a few words his solution to the objection raised against God’s existence because of the prevalence of evil in the world, because he intends to examine this problem more at length farther on in this treatise. But we now merely call to mind the solution of the problem of evil given by St. Augustine, who says: “Since God is supremely good, He would not at all permit any evil in His works if He did not have power and goodness enough to draw good out of evil.” Thus in the physical order He permits the death of some animal for the preservation of another, of a lion, for instance; and in the moral order He permits persecution for this greater good, namely, the constancy of the martyrs. Similarly, St. Thomas says: “God allows evils to happen in order to bring a greater good therefrom. Hence it is written (Rom. 5:20): ‘Where sin abounded, grace did more abound.’ Hence, too, in the blessing of the paschal candle we say: ‘O happy fault that merited such and so great a Redeemer.’ “

Reply to the second objection. Nature is not the first cause of those things that are done in a natural way, because, “since nature works for a determinate end under the direction of a higher agent, whatever is done by nature must needs be traced back to God, as to its first cause. So also whatever is done voluntarily,” as all mobile and defectible beings must be traced back to some first immobile and essentially necessary being.

This suffices for the proofs of God’s existence, which we have expounded more philosophically in another work.

CHAPTER III

QUESTION 3

INTRODUCTION

ON GOD'S NATURE AND HIS ATTRIBUTES IN GENERAL

BEFORE we come to consider God's various attributes, we must discuss His nature as conceived by us, and His attributes in general. This especially applies here, because from the very end to which the five proofs converge, which is the self-subsisting Being, there arises the question whether what formally constitutes God's nature, according to our conception of it, is self-subsisting Being, from which perfection all the other attributes are afterward deduced.

WHAT FORMALLY CONSTITUTES GOD'S NATURE ACCORDING TO OUR CONCEPTION OF IT

State of the question. We are not concerned here with God's nature as it is in itself and as it is seen by the blessed; for what formally constitutes the divine nature as it is in itself, is that most proper and most eminent formal concept of the Deity, which contains actually and explicitly (and not merely implicitly) all God's attributes, which are truly identified in the absolute simplicity of the Deity, and which are seen in it by the blessed without any deductive process.

It is our analogical and very imperfect knowledge of God's nature that concerns us here, and the question is whether among all the divine perfections there is one that is, as it were, the source of the others, just as in the human nature rationality is the source of the various properties in man. Then the divine nature, when so viewed, according to our imperfect mode of knowing it, is virtually distinct from the divine attributes. This means

that it contains them actually and implicitly, but not explicitly; for these attributes are afterward explicitly derived from it.

Billuart and certain other Thomists make another addition to the state of the question, but, unless I am mistaken, on insufficient grounds. Billuart is of the opinion that it is not a question of the divine nature as expressed by the most common and transcendental concept of uncreated being, which applies to all the divine attributes, just as the concept of created being applies to all the differences found in creatures.

There seems to be no foundation for this distinction between what is common and special in God, for God is not in any genus, not even according to our mode of conceiving Him. We can indeed distinguish in any creature the transcendentals that are common to all the genera and the species. But this distinction is of no value in God, since God is not in any genus, and transcendentals, such as being, unity . . . , are verified in God in a most special manner, that is, by reason of Himself. Hence it is not repugnant on a priori considerations for what constitutes the divine nature to be the self-subsisting Being, this constituting the terminus of the five proofs in the ascending order and the principle for the derivation of the attributes.

THE VARIOUS OPINIONS AS TO WHAT CONSTITUTES THE DIVINE NATURE

1) The nominalists reply that God is an accumulation of perfections, and there is no need of our inquiring into the logical priority of one perfection over the others. It would be a useless question. In fact, the nominalists said that the distinction between the divine attributes was a purely mental one (rationis ratiocinantis), a verbal distinction, such as we have between Tullius and Cicero, and from this it would follow that the divine names are synonymous. This opinion of the nominalists leads to agnosticism, for it could just as well be said that God punishes by His mercy and forgives by His justice. This would mean the end of all knowledge about God, and for this reason the nominalists were formerly expelled from the University of Paris.

2) On the other hand, Scotus admitted an actual and formal distinction between the divine attributes, a distinction that is actual from the nature of the thing, and which is prior to the consideration of our mind, and which gives us the answer to the question as to what constitutes the divine nature,

by saying that it is radical infinity, demanding as such the various divine attributes.

In reply to this, the Thomists say that radical infinity, or the exigency of all perfections, does not constitute the divine nature, but is presupposed by it and has its foundation therein. It is indeed the very essence of God that demands all the perfections which are derived from it. Moreover, God's infinity is deduced from the fact that He is the self-subsisting Being. Besides, infinity is a mode of each of the divine attributes. Finally, the Thomists say that the actual and formal distinction of Scotus, by the very fact that it is prior to our consideration of it, is already a real distinction, however slight this may be, and hence it is excluded from God by reason of His absolute simplicity in whom, as the Council of Florence says, "all things are one and the same where there is no opposition of relation," and this opposition is to be found only between the divine Persons.

3) Several Thomists of the seventeenth century and later, such as John of St. Thomas, the Salmanticences, and Billuart, hold that subsistent intellection is what constitutes the divine nature. Their principal argument is as follows: The supreme degree of being is that which must constitute the divine nature; but the various grades of being are existence, life, and intellection; therefore subsistent intellection is what constitutes the divine nature.

Hence in their opinion "self-subsisting Being" is in God to be taken as something transcendental and not specific. But, as we have pointed out in the state of the question, there seems to be no foundation for this distinction in God between what is common and what is specific; because God is not in any genus, not even according to our mode of conceiving Him.

4) Many other theologians, several of them being Thomists, hold that self-subsisting Being is what constitutes the divine nature. Among the Thomists holding this opinion we have Capreolus, Bannez, Ledesma, Contenson, Gotti, and more recently del Prado and Father Billot. We find this view expressed in the twenty-third proposition of the Thomistic theses approved by the Sacred Congregation of Studies (1914): "The divine essence, in that it is identical with the actuality of the divine being in act, or in that it is the self-subsisting Being, is proposed to us as constituted, as it were, in its metaphysical aspect, and by this same furnishes us with the reason of His infinite perfection." But Suarez says that it is better to posit

the fact itself of aseity as the principle from which the divine attributes are derived.

Others reply to this, and justly so, that the reason for this fact is that only in God are essence and existence identical, or that God alone is the self-subsisting Being. But Suarez expresses a different view, because he does not admit a real distinction between created essence and existence.

As we shall at once see, it seems that our preference must be for this opinion, on the supposition, however, that God is not a body but pure spirit. But it is especially because God is He who is that He transcends all spirits. Before we prove this fourth opinion, mention must be made of two other views proposed by those outside the Catholic schools of theology.

Fifth opinion. There are those who maintain that essential goodness is what formally constitutes the divine nature. Thus Plato was of the opinion that the supreme reality is the idea of Good transcending essence and intelligence. In like manner Plotinus considered that the supreme reality is the One Good transcending intelligence. We still find some traces of this theory in the writings of several Augustinians although they do not explicitly examine this question. Thus Peter Lombard divided the subject matter of his Book of the Sentences with reference to enjoyable and useful good, namely, to those things that can be enjoyed, especially God, usables or creatures, inasmuch as they are means for the attainment of the supreme Good.

To this opinion the Thomists reply in the words of St. Thomas, that, as being is absolutely prior to the good, God, prior to being conceived as the supreme Good, is conceived as the supreme Being existing of Himself; in fact, God is the supreme Good only because He is the plenitude of being. In other words, the idea of being is more absolute, simple, and universal than the idea of good, and good can be conceived only as being that has reached its final stage of perfection, and that is capable of appealing to the appetitive faculty and perfecting it. Hence God is the supreme Good inasmuch as He is the plenitude of being.

But it must be conceded that in a certain sense, that is, not in order of being but of causality, good is prior to being, since the end is first among causes, attracting the agent, and the agent educes the form from the matter for the production of the causated being. Hence, for us, God is first of all considered as the supreme Good, our ultimate end; but in Himself, God is

first of all the self-subsisting Being, and would be so even if He had not created anything, and were not the end of any creature.

Sixth opinion. It is that of certain modern philosophers, such as Secrétan and J. Lequier, who believed in voluntarism and absolute libertism. These maintained that divine liberty is what formally constitutes the divine nature, for God is His own reason for what He is. But there is nothing, they say, that is more its own reason for what it is than liberty, which determines itself as it wills. Hence God would be absolute liberty, and most freely would have determined all things, even those that pertain to His intimate life. Wherefore, according to Secrétan, the definition of God is not "Who is" or "I am who am," but "I am that which I most freely will to be."

The writings of Descartes revealed a tendency to accept this theory. In his opinion, eternal truths, even the truth of the principle of contradiction, depend upon God's free will. Ockham had said something similar to this in maintaining that God could have commanded us to commit murder and even to lead an irreligious life; to which Leibnitz replied that "God would then no more be, according to His nature, the supreme Good than the supreme evil of the Manichaeans." St. Thomas likewise said: "To say that justice depends simply upon the will of God, is to say that the divine will does not act according to wisdom; and this is blasphemy."

This libertarian theory cannot be admitted, because freedom of choice presupposes deliberation on the part of the intellect, otherwise it would be the same as chance. But chance is an accidental cause, and so cannot be the first cause; for the accidental presupposes the essential. If anyone digging a grave, did not intrinsically as such dig, the treasure would not accidentally be found. Hence it is most manifest that the first liberty presupposes the supreme Being and the first Intellect.

Besides these six opinions, it is difficult to conceive or think of any other ways of solving this problem. Priority is given either to Being or to the Good or to the Infinite or to Intellection or to liberty. Whether we consider in God what is subjective or what is objective, no other answers than these can be found.

We have already stated why the last two opinions cannot be admitted, nor the opinion of the nominalists nor that of the Scotists. Therefore we have but two opinions left to consider, namely, whether self-subsisting Being is what formally constitutes the divine nature, or whether it is self-subsisting intellection.

Solution. From the teaching of St. Thomas we see that the formal constituent of the divine nature is self-subsisting Being, which is the view held by several Thomists above mentioned, although not all are of this opinion.

We are at least persuaded of this for three reasons: (1) because of the order observed by St. Thomas in this treatise on God; (2) from his teaching on this point; (3) from the solution of the difficulties proposed against this opinion.

1) The order observed in the treatise is evidence of this. In fact, according to this order, by means of the five proofs, we advance in knowledge to the establishing of this supreme truth: “God is the self-subsisting Being,” and the divine attributes are afterward derived from this supreme truth.

Thus from the beginning of the third question to the end of the fourth article the mind continually advances in knowledge, for the first article establishes that God is not a body; the second, that God is not composed of matter and form; the third, that God is not a composite, consisting of His nature and the principle of individuation. From this we conclude that God is a pure spirit. But a pure spirit can be a created being; hence to distinguish God from even the noblest of creatures, it is established in the fourth article that God is the self-subsisting Being, since He is the first efficient cause, pure act, and essential being.

This is the culminating point in the ascendant order or by the way of finding, and the principle in the descendent process or by the way of judgment, of wisdom, which judges of all things by the highest of causes. Thus from the fact that God is the self-subsisting Being is deduced the real distinction between God and the world, and from this the divine attributes are afterward deduced, such as goodness (plenitude of being), infinity (being not received in anything is infinite), immutability, eternity, and other attributes. Likewise the divine intellection is deduced from the immateriality of the divine being, and omniscience from the fact that God is the self-subsisting Being. Hence it is only in the fourteenth question that the divine intellection is discussed. In fact, the opening words of the prologue to this question are: “Having considered what belongs to the divine substance, we have now to treat of God’s operation.” Being is prior to truth and intellection, for intellection is predicated only of the subject and as this latter is related to intelligible being as the object.

Such is the order observed in this treatise on God. From this we see that the formal constituent of the divine nature is stated before the fourteenth question, in the fourth article of the third question, where it is shown that only in God are essence and existence identical. As Father del Prado with good reason shows, this proposition constitutes the fundamental of Christian philosophy, fundamental indeed not by way of finding but by way of judgment, since wisdom judges of all things by the highest cause, or by reason.

2) This opinion is equivalently what St. Thomas said: “This name, He who is, is most properly applied to God for three reasons. First, because of its signification . . . , since the existence of God is His essence itself. . . . Secondly, on account of its universality . . . to designate by this the infinite sea of substance. . . . Thirdly, from its consignification, for it signifies present existence, and this above all applies to God, whose existence knows not past or future.”

Thus, when Moses asked God His name, “God said to Moses: I am who am. He said Thus shalt thou say to the children of Israel: He who is hath sent me to you.” The Hebrew word “Yahweh” (from which the word Jehovah is derived, which is written with the vowel signs of Adonai) is the equivalent of “He who is.” It is known as the Tetragrammaton, a word of four letters, and is God’s proper name in the strictest sense.

3) This opinion receives its confirmation from the solution of the principal difficulty proposed by other Thomists who hold a different opinion. This difficulty is enunciated as follows: The highest degree of being is what constitutes the divine essence. But this highest degree is intellection; for, in the ascendant order of the grades of being we have: existence, life, intellection. Therefore intellection is what constitutes the divine nature.

St. Thomas replies to this by distinguishing between participated being—which can be without life and intelligence—and self-subsisting being, which is the fullness itself of being, including all other perfections actually and implicitly. In the passage referred to, St. Thomas says: “Although therefore existence does not include life and wisdom, because that which participates in existence need not participate in every mode of existence, nevertheless God’s existence includes in itself life and wisdom, because nothing of the perfection of being can be wanting to Him who is subsisting being itself.” Similarly, from the work just quoted, we read: “Being taken

simply, as including all perfection of being, surpasses life and all that follows it."

THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES IN GENERAL

The theologians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries usually discussed this question at the beginning of their treatise on God. St. Thomas discusses it in a special manner in the thirteenth question, in connection with the divine names, and rightly so, because the divine being is first considered by him, and then our possibility of knowing it.

Nevertheless the different views about these attributes as presented by nominalism, the formalism of Scotus, and the moderate realism of St. Thomas, oblige us to insert this introduction, which serves as material for reflection upon this treatise, and which was ideally present to the mind of St. Thomas as he was assigning in orderly arrangement the various parts of this treatise.

In this question of the divine attributes, all theologians distinguish between absolutely simple perfections, which imply no imperfection (such as intellection) and relative or mixed perfections, which denote imperfection even in their formal signification (such as reasoning). But certain theologians do not sufficiently distinguish the divine attributes or the absolutely simple perfections from God's free action and the divine persons; for, although the latter do not imply any imperfection, yet they are not absolutely simple perfections in the strict sense.

HOW THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTE IS DEFINED

To avoid the above-mentioned confusion we must define the expression "divine attribute," as the Thomists usually do, by saying that it is an absolutely simple perfection which exists necessarily and formally in God, and which is deduced from what we conceive as constituting the divine essence.

Explanation of this definition.

1) We are concerned with what is an attribute in the strict sense of the term, for sometimes the term refers in an improper sense to all that is predicated even not necessarily of God (as the divine free act) or else

relatively (as the relations of paternity, filiation, passive spiration, by which the divine persons are constituted).

2) It is called an absolute perfection, not to the exclusion of perfections that are named with reference to creatures, such as providence, mercy, justice, omnipotence, but to the exclusion of the divine relation, to which the term “attribute” does not apply since the relations are not common to the three Persons; for the attribute is a property of the nature and is common to the three Persons.

3) It is called an absolutely simple perfection so as to exclude relative or mixed perfections, which essentially imply imperfection, such as rationality. But what in the strict sense is an absolutely simple perfection? It is that perfection which in its formal concept implies no imperfection, and which it is better for one to have than not. Many add these last words to the definition, and rightly so, because the divine free act and the divine relations, although they imply no imperfection, yet are not absolutely simple perfections, at least in the strict sense. For it is not better for God to have the creative act than not, and there would have been no imperfection in God if He had not created, no matter what Leibnitz said about this; nor does it add to God’s perfection that He most freely wills to create the universe. In like manner the Father, to whom the opposite relation of filiation does not apply, would be lacking in some absolutely simple perfection if the relation of filiation were an absolutely simple perfection, as if it were superadded to the infinite perfection of the divine nature, which is common to the three Persons. Hence neither the divine relations nor the divine free act are absolutely simple perfections, at least in the strict sense. But the contrary of this is true as regards liberty and omnipotence, for God would be free and omnipotent, even if He had not created anything.

4) It is said to be necessarily existing in God, which means that it is like a property of the divine nature, so that God’s free acts such as creation, are excluded by these words.

5) It is said to be formally existing in God so that also mixed perfections may be excluded; for these are only virtually in God, since He can produce them in creatures. Thus life is formally attributed to God, but not animal or rational.

6) It is said, “as derived from the essence,” so as to exclude the prior concept of the divine nature. Thus the divine attribute is accurately defined.

HOW THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES ARE CLASSIFIED

The theologians are not altogether in agreement concerning this classification. Some stress too much the attributes as they relate to us in the classification; others prefer to discuss the attributes as they relate to God as He is in Himself.

Suarez and several other theologians, discussing the attributes more as they relate to us, classify them into positive attributes, such as goodness, wisdom, justice, and negative attributes, such as incorporeity, infinity, immutability, ineffability. They also point out that very many negative attributes, such as infinity and immutability, are incommunicable, or cannot be participated in.

A difficulty presents itself in this classification, inasmuch as certain attributes expressed in a negative form, such as infinity, are in themselves positive, just as incorporeity in itself denotes spirituality, and immutability in itself expresses stability in the highest degree, the positive form of which is eternity. Hence this Suarezian division stresses too much the quoad nos element in the attributes.

St. Thomas, however, in considering the attributes as they relate to God as He is in Himself, seems to have devised a better classification, by distinguishing between those that pertain to the divine substance and those that refer to the divine operation. In the first class of attributes we have simplicity, perfection, goodness, infinity, immensity, immutability, eternity, unity, invisibility, and ineffability. In the second class, however, we have knowledge, will, and love, and subordinate to these are justice, mercy, and providence, as virtues residing either in the will or in the intellect. Finally, as regards virtually transient operations, we have the creative, conservative, and directive powers. This division is primary and fundamental, because it stresses more God as He is in Himself, and not so much as we are related to Him. The classification proposed by Suarez is more of the nature of a subdivision, and St. Thomas refers to it as such.

HOW THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES ARE DISTINCT FROM ONE ANOTHER AND FROM THE DIVINE ESSENCE

There are three leading opinions, and they are the result of the different ways of solving the twofold problem about universals and the analogy of

the divine names. Let us first consider the extreme views that are fundamentally in opposition.

1) The nominalists admitted only a mental distinction between the divine attributes, like the verbal one between Tullius and Cicero, or between Cicero the subject of some proposition and Cicero the predicate of another proposition.

They give two reasons for this opinion: (1) The universal is not even fundamentally present in things; only individuals exist, and in these there is no true, essential, and unchangeable similarity according to the species, the genera, and the transcendentals; (2) hence not even analogically can anything be predicated of God and creatures at least in the proper sense, but only metaphorically or symbolically. Hence to say, "God is just," would no more properly belong to Him, than to say "God is angry." To say that "God is just" would not mean that He is so substantially but only causally, inasmuch as He is the cause of justice in creatures just as He is the cause of life in animals.

Criticism. From this opinion it follows that the divine names are synonymous and that, contrary to reason, Scripture, and tradition, it can be said therefore that God punishes by means of His mercy and pardons by means of His justice; for, as the nominalists say, there is only a verbal distinction between these two attributes as between Tullius and Cicero, and wherever we find the name Tullius written the name Cicero can be written for it. Thus this opinion leads to pure agnosticism, which would result in God being absolutely unknowable, the treatise on God an absolute impossibility, and all the definitions of the Church about the divine attributes would be identical in meaning. As St. Thomas remarks: "If the words 'God is good' signified no more than 'God is the cause of good things,' it might in like manner be said that God is a body, inasmuch as He is the cause of bodies." In the next two articles of this question he observes that not all the names applied to God are metaphorical in meaning, for some are applied properly although analogically (as in the case of "God is just"), and not all the divine names are synonymous. The nominalist view destroys the analogy of being, and leads to equivocality of being.

2) Scotus admits, however, that the divine essence is distinct from the attributes and the Persons, and he posits an actual and formal distinction pertaining to the nature of the thing, between the divine attributes, which is previous to our consideration of them, as already stated. Only in this way,

according to Scotus, it can be affirmed that God punishes by His justice and not by His mercy. This necessitates that these two attributes be formally and actually distinct in God, previous to our consideration of them, about the same way as, in our soul, the intellect and the will are formally and actually distinct.

This theory has its foundation in the extreme realism advocated by Scotus, who contends that already in created beings there is an actual and formal distinction between the metaphysical degrees of anything whatever, as, for instance, in Peter, between humanity, vitality, substantiality, and entity. From this it follows that being is predicated univocally of God and creatures, as Scotus explicitly maintains. Nor is it to be wondered at that being is univocal, if, previous to the mind's consideration, it is formally and actually distinct from substantiality, vitality, that is, from the modes of being.

Criticism. (a) This actual and formal distinction, devised by Scotus, if it is truly more than virtual, that is, as we remarked, if it truly exists in the thing before the mind's consideration, is already a real distinction, however slight it may be, and then it is opposed to God's absolute simplicity; for, as the Council of Florence says: "In God all things are one and the same where there is no relation of opposition." In other words, in this way Scotus ends in extreme realism and in a certain anthropomorphism, since he posits in God a distinction that exists only in the mind. This theory is the absolute reverse of nominalism and agnosticism. Thus Scotus does not sufficiently recede from the exaggerated realism of Gilbert de la Porrée, which was condemned in the Council of Reims as contrary to God's absolute simplicity.

b) The metaphysical degrees are not actually distinct in a thing before the mind's consideration, as, for instance, in Peter, animality, vitality, rationality, and substantiality; for these are reduced to the same concept of humanity, of which animality is the genus, and rationality is the specific differentia. Thus they correspond to the same reality that is in itself one but virtually multiplex.

c) Moreover, if being is formally and actually distinct from its modes, then these modes would be outside being, and therefore nonentities. There is danger of pantheism in this, for if being were univocal, there would be but one being, because the univocal is not differentiated except by differences extrinsic to it, and what is not being is a nonentity. Truly the

modes of being are included in the concept of being, and are contained in it actually and implicitly. Therefore being is not univocal (like a genus, the differentiae of which are extrinsic to it), but analogical. Being expresses something that is not absolutely but proportionately the same in self-existing Being, in created substantial being, and in accidental being. Finally, this doctrine of Scotus does not seem to be in conformity with the teaching of the Fourth Lateran Council, in which we read: “So great similarity cannot be detected between the Creator and the creature that we do not have to take note of a greater dissimilarity between them.” This is practically a definition of analogy, since the analogical aspect in God and creatures is not absolutely but proportionately the same, as with wisdom which in God is the cause of things and in us is measured by things. Hence, while the nominalists tend toward equivocation of being, Scotus maintains the univocation of being. The two opinions are fundamentally in opposition.

3) The common opinion of the theologians mediates, so to speak, between nominalism and exaggerated realism, and towers above them. This opinion, the source of which is the moderate realism of St. Thomas, is commonly formulated by the Thomists and a great number of theologians as follows: There is a minor virtual distinction between the divine attributes and God’s essence, between the divine attributes, and likewise between the divine persons and the essence.

St. Thomas uses simpler terminology, saying that God’s essence is distinct from the attributes and the divine Persons “not really but logically.” He is speaking of the logical distinction that is founded on reality, which subsequently is commonly called virtual; and this calls for an explanation.

a) The virtual distinction is a distinction founded on reality, which means, contrary to Scotus’ theory, that it is non-existent previous to the mind’s consideration, and it does not destroy God’s absolute simplicity. Against the nominalists and agnostics, however, it is said to be “founded on reality,” since the different absolute perfections found in creatures are equivalently expressed in the eminence of the Deity. St. Thomas says expressly: “To the various and multiplied conceptions of our intellect there corresponds one altogether simple principle, according to these conceptions, imperfectly understood.” The eminence of the Deity is most simple, but it is virtually multiple, and all absolutely simple perfections are contained in it formally and eminently. This must now be briefly explained, and more fully in the thirteenth question.

Formally: This means substantially and properly; not merely metaphorically, but analogically and properly.

Eminently: How the perfections are contained is mysterious; but the divine attributes are so identified in the most eminent and formal concept of the Deity as not to be destroyed by it. They are contained formally in it, and yet they are not formally distinct. In fact, they are found in their purest state, without any imperfection, only in the Deity.

More briefly, absolute perfections are in God more so than the seven colors are in the white light; for these seven colors are only virtually present in whiteness, whereas the divine perfections are formally distinct from one another. For, whereas whiteness is not blue, one and true are predicated of the Deity.

b) The distinction between the divine attributes is called a minor virtual distinction. For the major virtual distinction is that which is of the nature of excluding and excluded, as in Peter the genus of animality is distinct from rationality, which is the differentia extrinsic to it, and there is a real foundation for conceiving it as in potentiality for this latter, as being susceptible of further perfection by something extraneous to it. But there is no real foundation for conceiving anything in God as in potentiality for some further perfection by the addition of something extraneous to Him. Whatever is conceived in God, must be conceived in Him as purest act. Hence there is a minor virtual distinction between the divine attributes, and between these and the divine essence. This means that the distinction is not of the nature of excluding and excluded, but of implicit and explicit. In other words, God’s nature as we conceive it (the self-subsisting Being) contains the attributes more so than virtually, more so than the genus contains the differences extrinsic to it, for they are contained actually and implicitly in it; but discursive reasoning is necessary for their explicit deduction from the divine nature. But the Deity, as it is itself, contains them actually and explicitly. Thus the blessed no longer need to have recourse to discursive reasoning so as clearly to see God’s attributes in the Deity. Hence all the attributes mutually include one another, or each contains the others actually and implicitly.

Moreover, this minor virtual distinction properly applies only to those attributes that are differentiated specifically and that pertain to different orders, as, for instance, between intellection and volition, justice and mercy; but there is no such distinction between attributes which, as found in

creatures, differ only as potency and act do, such as between essence and existence, intellect and intellection. There is only an extrinsically virtual distinction between these, which means that the foundation for this distinction is not in the divine reality but in creatures. Otherwise it would have to be said that our conception of God includes the presence of something potential in Him for which there is a foundation in the divine reality. St. Thomas, as we have remarked, makes use of simpler terminology, and says that the distinction between the attributes and the Persons and the divine essence is "not real but logical." Moderate realism and the doctrine of analogy are the two fundamental reasons for this traditional opinion.

1) According to moderate realism, the universe exists fundamentally in things, and there is a foundation for this in them. Thus in Peter there is a virtual distinction between rationality, animality, and entity. In like manner, there is a virtual distinction between God's attributes.

2) Being is analogous, and is not a genus, for the differences of being would be outside being, and what is outside being is a nonentity. Nor is being equivocal, for this would mean the abolition of all true resemblance between beings. God would be absolutely unknowable, and it could be said of Him, as Nicholas of Autrecourt contended, "God is" and "God is not." In fact, if being were equivocal, the principle of contradiction would be false.

Therefore the divine attributes apply to God analogically, and are present in Him formally and eminently; but between the attributes and between each of them and the divine essence there is only a virtual distinction. Expressed more briefly: the attributes are formally in God, but they are not formally distinct.

THE SIMPLICITY OF GOD

PROLOGUE

CONCERNING God we must consider what He is and how He is, or rather how He is not, for in this life we cannot know His essence, since this would be to see the Deity. Hence we inquire how God is not, by removing from Him what does not apply to Him, such as composition and motion. Thus we must treat of God's simplicity, perfection, infinity, immutability, and unity. But we shall afterward see how God is known and named by us.

This question of God's simplicity starts out by excluding from Him what is known as physical composition, or of really distinct parts. In the first four articles it is established: (1) that God is not a body; (2) that He is not composed of matter and form; (3) nor of nature and suppositum; (4) nor of essence and existence. Then what is known as metaphysical composition, which consists of genus and differentia, is excluded in the fifth article.

Finally, it is shown that there is no accident in God (a. 6), that God is altogether simple (a. 7), and that He does not enter into the composition of other things, either as form or matter, since He is the extrinsic cause, which means that He is the efficient and final cause of all things (a. 8). In these last three articles we have the refutation of pantheism, and they are the result of the conclusions of what was established in the fourth article, namely, that only God is the self-subsisting Being. This fourth article contains the dominating principle of this question, that is, it is the terminus in the ascending order by way of investigation, and the beginning in the descending order by way of judgment, since wisdom judges of all things by the highest of reasons.

FIRST ARTICLE

WHETHER GOD IS A BODY

State of the question. A body is defined as a substance that is extended according to three dimensions. But Holy Scripture speaks metaphorically of God's arm, right hand . . . , as pointed out in the beginning of this article, and we must carefully distinguish between the metaphorical and literal senses in Holy Scripture. Tertullian did not sufficiently observe this distinction. But among philosophers Spinoza, as a pantheist, maintains that extension is an attribute of God, and he admits that it is infinite.

The reply, which is de fide, is as follows: God is a spirit and therefore is not a body. Jesus said to the Samaritan woman: "God is a spirit, and they that adore Him, must adore Him in spirit and truth." Similarly St. Paul says: The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made." Preaching to the Athenians, he said: "We must not suppose the divinity to be like unto gold or silver or stone, the graving of art and device of man." The Vatican Council says:

“The Holy Catholic Church believes that there is one true and living God . . . absolutely simple and immutable spiritual substance.”

Three proofs from reason are given, that God is not a body. The first proof discusses the body as a physical entity; in the second proof the quantitative aspect is considered; in the third proof the metaphysical element is stressed.

First proof. No body is in motion unless it is put in motion; but God is the first unmoved Mover (first way); therefore God is not a body. Against the major there is the difficulty of attraction, since the magnet attracts other bodies to itself, although it is not itself set in motion. In reply to this we say that, although the magnet has this property of attraction, its action is not its own, its power to act is not its action; for this it would have to be its own being, because operation follows being, and the mode of operation the mode of being. Therefore the magnet is moved invisibly by the first Mover, at least as a qualitative motion. Moreover, as Cajetan observes, the magnet can also be moved locally, and every moving body is moved at least as in potentiality for this, since it is by nature apt to be moved, and this suffices to distinguish it from the absolutely immobile first mover (this immobility not being that of inertia but of perfection), which is the terminus of the first way in proving God’s existence. Hence the major can be construed as meaning: every body is mobile. But God is the first immobile Mover. Therefore He is not a body.

Second proof. It considers rather the quantitative aspect in bodies, inasmuch as the parts are continuous. Every body is in potentiality, at least because the continuous is divisible to infinity. But God is pure act and there is absolutely no potentiality in Him. Therefore God is not a body.

The minor is proved as follows: actuality is, absolutely speaking, prior to potentiality, for whatever is in potentiality can be reduced into actuality only by some being in actuality; but God is the first Being, as established in the fourth way of proving God’s existence; therefore God is pure Act. Every potentiality presupposes actuality, for every being that is in potentiality expresses a relation to actuality and cannot be reduced into actuality except by a being that is in act. Therefore the supreme Being is in no way in potentiality.

Third proof. It considers the metaphysical aspect in bodies. The noblest of all beings cannot be a body; but God is the noblest of all beings, as

established in the fourth way of proving God's existence; therefore God is not a body.

The major is proved by showing that corporeity is something inferior. For a body is either living or non-living, and a living body is nobler than a non-living body; thus the ant is, absolutely speaking, nobler than a heavenly body. Moreover, the principle of life in a living body is nobler than the body as such. To put it more briefly, life is something nobler than corporeity, otherwise every body would be a living body. Vegetative life and sensitive life come from the specific form in the living body; this form, however, is not a body, but vivifies the body. From this third argument, as also from the other two, it is proved, indeed, that God is not a body; but this does not as yet prove that God is not the form of a body, so that He might be the soul of the world. This is proved, however, in the following articles, especially in the eighth article.

In the reply to the objections, St. Thomas explains the metaphors of Holy Scripture, when it speaks of the height or the depth of God and of His knowledge.

SECOND ARTICLE

WHETHER GOD IS COMPOSED OF MATTER AND FORM

State of the question. According to St. Thomas, everything composed of matter and form is a body, as he affirms in the counter-argument. But in Avicebron's opinion there is a composite of matter and form that is not a body, because this philosopher said that even spiritual substances are composed of spiritual matter and form. Perhaps he said this so as to explain their individuation, and thus there could be several angels of the same species. Contrary to this, St. Thomas is of the opinion that the only composition in created spiritual substances is that of essence and existence, and of substance and accident. Each of them is a subsistent and immaterial form, and hence there cannot be two angels of the same species.

The conclusion of the article states the impossibility of matter existing in God. The proofs for this are given by considering: (1) matter in itself; (2) matter in its relation to its participated form; (3) matter in its relation to the action of the first agent.

First proof. Matter is in potentiality. But God is pure act, as stated in the preceding article, because He is the first being, the maximum in being (fourth way). Therefore God is immaterial. This article is expressed according to Aristotle's terminology.

Second proof. Here Plato's terminology concerning participation is more in evidence. Everything composed of matter and form is a participated good, or a participated form in matter; but God, inasmuch as He is the greatest good, is the essential good (fourth way); therefore God is not composed of matter and form.

Third proof. It starts from the principle that God is primarily and essentially an agent. Since the agent acts by its form, the manner in which it has its form is the manner in which it is an agent. But God, since He is the first agent (second way), is primarily and essentially a form, but not composed of matter and form.

The major is evident from the fact that the agent acts by its form, that is, the form is the reason of its acting; for to act is to determine, to actuate, and it is only by reason of its own determination that any being can determine. Thus fire heats and water cools. Hence it is said that the agent acts inasmuch as it is in act, and it is in act by means of its form, primarily by its substantial form from which the natural qualities originate.

Minor. God, being the first agent, is primarily and essentially an agent, which means that He is not moved by some higher power, but is of Himself essentially and immediately operative, just as the triangle of itself and immediately (or essentially and primarily) has three angles equal to two right angles. But this is a necessary property of the triangle, whereas God, as we shall see farther on, is free in His external operations.

There arises a difficulty from this third argument. It seems that we can conclude only that God has essentially and primarily a form that is the reason of His action, but not that He is essentially and primarily a form. There is considerable difference between the verb "to be" and the verb "to have." Thus fire essentially and primarily generates heat, because it has essentially and primarily heat, but it is not heat.

In reply to this we say with Cajetan: It can truly be concluded that God is primarily and essentially a form, because He is primarily and essentially an agent, and not dependent upon any other being. For if God were an agent who, by reason of His form, constituted a part of a composite, He would not be primarily and essentially an agent; for action in this sense could be

attributed to all that participate in such a form. Thus fire is not, strictly speaking, essentially and primarily generative of heat, because it is not heat, but participates in heat. If fire were unreceived heat, then, just as in the case of unreceived or subsistent heat, it would be unique of its kind. Hence St. Thomas' argument holds good. From the fact that God is primarily and essentially an agent, it follows that He is primarily and essentially a form not received in matter. This is also evident, as was said, from the fact that God is pure act and essential good. Thus God is pure spirit.

In the replies to the objections St. Thomas explains the metaphorical use of terms in Holy Scripture, when discussing the questions of a soul and of anger in God. It is said in the reply to the third objection: "The form which cannot be received in matter, is individualized precisely because it cannot be received in a subject."

Hence God is an unreceived and unreceptive form. We shall see in the fourth article that God is also the unreceived and unreceptive being, and in the sixth article that He is the unreceived being because He cannot be the recipient of accidents. Thus what is meant by participation and unparticipated being is made increasingly clear, and we already find this vaguely presented to us in the writings of Plato.

THIRD ARTICLE

WHETHER GOD IS THE SAME AS HIS ESSENCE OR NATURE

State of the question. It is asked whether there is composition of suppositum and nature in God. In the order of created things the suppositum is the complete subsisting being, of which the nature is the essential part. Thus the suppositum is really distinct from the nature, as the whole is from its principal part. Thus man is not his humanity (as stated in the second objection), but has humanity. The question is therefore, whether God is His Deity or has Deity. Thus it becomes increasingly evident that there is a difference between the verb "to be" and the verb "to have." By this name "God" in the concrete sense, St. Thomas understands that which is, namely, suppositum or the Godhead as it connotes the individual, whether this word is previously taken to mean that He consists of three Persons or is one of the three Persons. This point is at present undetermined.

Reply. God is the same as His essence or nature. In other words, God is His Godhead and not only has the Godhead.

1) There is evidence of this on the authority of Holy Scripture, and it is a revealed truth, since Jesus said: “I am the way, and the truth, and the life.” He did not say: “I have truth and life,” or merely: “I am true or truthful and living,” but “I am the truth and the life.” So that underlying the logical difference between subject and predicate, the verb “is” expresses real identity between them. Just as life, however, refers to the living being, so the Godhead refers to God. Hence God is His Godhead whereas, on the contrary, man is not His humanity, because the whole is not its part, but has its part, a point that will be more clearly explained in the body of the article.

In like manner, “God is charity,” and not only has charity. Contrary to this, the just, whether angels or men, have charity and are not charity. It must be observed that the Council of Reims defined against Gilbert de la Porrée, who denied that abstract terms can be predicated of God in the concrete: “We believe and confess that the simple nature of the Divinity is God, nor can it be denied in any Catholic sense that the Divinity is God and God is the Divinity.”

2) Proof from reason. In corporeal things nature differs from suppositum, just as the essential part differs from the whole, for besides the essential part there are the individualizing principles, for example, these bones and this flesh. But God is not corporeal, or composed of matter and form, but is a pure subsistent form (preceding article). And thus in God nature does not differ from suppositum. In other words, the suppositum is the subsistent form itself of the Godhead.

This proof rests upon the principle that, if affirmation is the cause of affirmation, negation is the cause of negation. But the affirmation that nature is a part of the suppositum, is the foundation for the aforesaid distinction. Therefore to deny that nature is a part of the suppositum, is to deny the aforesaid distinction. This argument is of validity provided it is properly understood.

A difficulty, however, presents itself, since it seems to follow from this that, since the archangel Michael is a pure subsistent form apart from matter, he is his Michaelness. But this is false, for Michaelness is only an essential part of Michael, who in addition to this has existence and accidents.

In reply to this we say that, from the very fact that God is a pure form without matter, St. Thomas excludes from Him in this article individuating principles that are distinct from the common nature. In the angel, too, there are no individuating principles distinct from the nature.

But in the present article St. Thomas is not yet explicitly considering the fact that in God there is no composition of either essence and existence, or of substance and accident. This he will do in the fourth and sixth articles, in which it will be more clearly seen that God is His Godhead, because the Godhead in God is not solely an essential part, whereas, on the other hand, Michaelness is but an essential part in Michael, who is also a contingent being with the accidents of intellect and will. Hence Cajetan says in reference to this article: “Although this process of argumentation taken by itself can be criticized, yet when taken in conjunction with the doctrine of the subsequent articles it was found to be irreproachable, because the subsequent articles of this question exclude all composition.” Hence, to bring out more clearly the force of this argument, it may be expressed by the following syllogism: Where nature is not a part of the suppositum they do not differ; but in God nature is not a part of the suppositum; therefore in God nature and suppositum do not differ. The major is explicitly enunciated by St. Thomas in several places.

Proof of minor. Since God is pure form, there are no individuating principles in addition to His nature. In fact, His existence is identical with His nature, nor is there such distinction as that between accidents and nature. Thus Gad and the Godhead are absolutely identical whereas, on the contrary, Peter is not his humanity, nor also, strictly speaking, is Michael his Michaelness.

But if God is His Godhead, then why the use of the concrete noun God and the abstract noun Godhead? The reply to the first objection solves this difficulty by saying: “We can speak of simple things only as though they were like the composite things from which we derive our knowledge.” But the composite is the subsistent concrete thing, and its nature is spoken of in the abstract, as its essential part.

FOURTH ARTICLE

WHETHER ESSENCE AND EXISTENCE ARE THE SAME IN GOD

State of the question. This article, as we already pointed out, is the terminus in the ascending order by way of finding, of the five proofs for God's existence, and it is also the principle in the descending order by way of judgment, by which wisdom judges of all things by the highest of reasons and causes. We shall at once see that what St. Thomas says in this article is already a refutation of pantheism, since he gives us the reason why God is really and essentially distinct from every finite being.

But it must be well understood what is meant by existence, so as to distinguish the divine existence from existence as applied to various other things. The first objection of this article refers to this difficulty. The second objection, however, is as follows: We can know whether God exists, but we can cannot know what He is (at least know Him quiddatively). Therefore His essence is not existence.

Reply. God and God alone is His existence, or in God alone are essence and existence identical.

There is at least a veiled reference to this in the Scripture, for we read: "God said to Moses: I am who am. . . . Thus shalt thou say to the children of Israel: He who is hath sent me to you." This constitutes God's proper name. Creatures, however, have existence, and cannot be so named. Therefore from this it is intimated that God not only has existence but is existence, that He is His own existence.

Also truth and being are convertible terms. But Christ said: "I am the truth," and not merely: "I have truth." Therefore this supposes that He is essential being. But being derives its name from existence, because being is that which exists or can exist, whose act is existence. Similarly, St. Hilary, who is quoted in the counter-argument, says: "In God existence is not an accidental quality, but subsisting truth." This does not mean that existence is properly an accident of created substance, but that it is predicated contingently of the creature, though not so of God.

St. Thomas replies in the body of the article by advancing three proofs from reason for his conclusion. In the first he proves that God is the first efficient cause (first and second ways); in the second, that He is pure act (third and fourth ways); in the third, that He is the first being. Thus we can truly say that in this article we have the one end expressed to which the five proofs for God's existence by the ascending process of reasoning converge.

First proof. Essence and existence are the same in the first uncaused cause. But God is the first uncaused cause (second way). Therefore essence

and existence are the same in God. The minor presents no difficulty, and it is the terminus of the second proof for God's existence.

The major is proved as follows: Whatever a thing has besides its essence must be caused either by the essential principles or by some exterior agent; but in the first uncaused cause, existence is not caused either by any other cause or by the essential principles of the thing, because "no thing is its own cause," since operation follows being; therefore existence is not something besides essence in the first uncaused cause, but is identical with it.

It cannot be said that God is cause of Himself, because to cause is to operate, and operation follows being. But it can be said that God's essence is the reason of His existence, inasmuch as He exists of Himself, is of Himself the reason for His existence. Thus this proposition, God exists, as stated above, is self-evident in itself, but not to us.

Corollary. Father N. del Prado rightly infers against Suarez that in all other efficient causes existence differs from essence. He says: "It belongs therefore to the nature of the first efficient cause that its essence and existence is one and the same, since the first efficient cause must of necessity have its existence uncaused; and it is of the essence of uncaused existence in a being that this is identical with its nature, which exists without being caused. Therefore . . . it must be inferred that in all other efficient causes existence differs from essence. Otherwise there would be no secondary efficient causes, and before we could establish God's existence by means of efficient cause we should also have to find out what properly belongs to an uncaused cause, namely, identity of essence and existence."

Thus this first argument serves a double purpose: (1) It points out the terminus of the first, second, and third proofs for God's existence, namely, of first unmoved Mover, of first uncaused Cause, and of the first necessary Being who is His own existence, or of the self-subsisting Being. (2) It assigns the ultimate reason for the distinction between caused or created being and the uncreated Being, as also between contingent being and the necessary Being. Contingent being is a potentiality to be or not to be, because it is not its own existence, but, if it exists, has existence. There is a vast difference between the verbs "to be" and "to have." Hence it is said that "the powers tremble" with reverential fear in seeing the self-subsisting Being, because the angels are not their own existence, but only have existence, and they could be annihilated by God's absolute power.

Second proof. It has its foundation in the principle that God is pure act, and is as follows: Existence is compared to essence, which is a distinct reality from it, as actuality to potentiality; but God is pure act, in whom there is no potentiality; therefore God's essence

is not potentiality for existence, but is identical with existence. The major is the very definition of esse or existence. It is that which makes every form or nature actual. Thus humanity is not spoken of as actual except so far as it is spoken of as existing.

The minor was proved in the first article of this question. The reason given was that, absolutely speaking, actuality is prior to potentiality, since a being is said to be in potentiality with reference to its actuality, and is not reduced into actuality except by

some being in actuality. But God is the first Being (fourth way). Therefore nothing of potentiality is in Him, but He is pure act. This is also evident from the fact that God is the first Mover, the

first Cause, the first necessary Being. God must be His action, and hence His own existence, because operation follows existence, and the mode of operation the mode of existence. This argument points out the one end to which these three proofs for God's existence converge.

Corollary. Therefore in everything that is caused by God, essence is potentiality with reference to existence, and hence is really distinct from it, just as matter is from form. Before the consideration of our mind, matter is not form, but is potency that is made actual by its form, and hence is really distinct from it. In like manner, the essence of a caused thing is not its existence, previous to the mind's consideration of this. In other words, it is not identical with its existence, but is distinct from it previous to the mind's consideration. Therefore this distinction, however slight it may appear, is real. The angel, knowing its own essence directly, sees this to be distinct from its existence. From this it is already apparent that there can be only one essence that is existence itself, for multiplication presupposes participation. Thus participated existence is manifold, as the existence of a stone, of a plant, of an animal, of a man.

Third proof. It is derived from the principle that God is the first Being (fourth way). That which is essential being is its own existence; but God is essential being, since He is the first being; therefore God is His own existence.

The minor presents no difficulty, for it is the terminus of the fourth way in proving God's existence. The major is declared as follows: "That which has existence, but is not existence, is a being by participation," just as that which has fire, but is not itself fire, as a coal fire, is on fire by participation. Therefore, "that a thing be essential being, it must be its own existence."

We have in this argument a transcendent confirmation of the principle of efficient causality. This principle, which is invoked in proving God's existence, is thus formulated: Some other being is the efficient cause of every contingent being. It is commonly held among the Scholastics that an uncaused contingent being is a contradiction in terms, that is, it is something not only unintelligible (which Kant admits), but is also an absurdity and an absolute impossibility, as for instance, that Lucifer originates from nothing, without any efficient cause.

However, an "uncaused contingent being" is not so clearly repugnant to reason as a "caused non-contingent being"; to say that it is uncaused is not a direct denial of the definition of contingent being, but of its property. "The uncaused contingent being" would be neither self-existent nor dependent on another for existence, and the proposition, "the uncaused contingent being exists," would be the affirmation of the positive agreement between two terms that in no way agree. Hence what exists, but is not self-existent, depends on another for its existence.

But now it is said that the contingent being has existence and is not its existence. Therefore it is participated being, and hence it depends on the essential Being. The idea of participated being, however, is not completely intelligible apart from the correlative idea of essential Being. Therefore it is better to use this term after and not before the proofs for God's existence. Plato, indeed, practically started out with this notion of being but, on account of his extreme realism, he thought he had a certain intuition of the supreme Good, or of God.

St. Thomas, in accordance with moderate realism, makes use of this notion of participated being preferably after the proofs of God's existence. Then the principle of causality receives its confirmation as from a transcendent source, since participated being is shown to be dependent on essential being, or being composed of potency and act on pure act.

Corollary. Father del Prado concludes from this argument that the division of real being into essential being and participated being has its root

in the distinction between the self-subsisting Being and that which is composed of essence and existence.

In this distinction we have the foundation for the refutation of pantheism. For if God is the self-subsisting Being, then nothing can be added to His being, because He is ultimate actuality. Hence there can be no accident in God, because the self-subsisting Being is not capable of further determination, but is the maximum in determination, although not limited, for limitation is on the part of matter that receives the form, or of essence that receives existence. From this we have the refutation of absolute evolutionism, according to which God is becoming in the world, and of Spinoza according to whom God is the recipient of finite modes that are, as it were, His accidents. Neoplatonic emanatism is likewise virtually refuted. This theory states that the soul is not made, not created out of nothing, but is "of God's substance," generated, as it were, from God. St. Thomas says in contradiction to this: "The soul is not its own existence, but is a being by participation. Therefore it is not a pure act like God." Hence it is not the same as God's nature, and therefore is not generated from Him, is not of His substance, because generation is the origin of a living being from a living principle in the likeness of nature. Thus man generates man, and as stated in revelation, God the Father generates the Son in the likeness of His nature, communicating to Him even the whole of His indivisible nature, which cannot be multiplied.

Thus we readily see from this that pantheism, by confusing God with the creature, must end either in the absorption of the world in God, as in the acosmism of Parmenides, or else in the absorption of God in the world, as in the absolute evolutionism of Heraclitus and of several modern philosophers.

There are other corollaries to which Father del Prado alludes, such as that the real distinction between created essence and existence is the foundation of the division of real created being according to the various grades of perfection, for the formal concept of existence does not denote either imperfection or limitations, and it is not susceptible to divers limitations in the stone, the plant, the animal, and man, unless it is received in some subject, namely, in some essence which is capable of existing, or in which there is a real capacity for existence, just as in matter there is a real capacity for its form, which is received in it and thus limited by it. Hence the various grades of being or of perfection are the result of the diversity of

participation in being. Thus the fourth way of proving God's existence is illustrated from a transcendent source, namely, from the grades of being.

Finally, in accordance with this doctrine of a real distinction between created essence and existence, which Suarez rashly rejected, St. Thomas admits one existence for the composite of matter and form, although the essence is composite, that is, the parts of the essence (matter and form) have not partial existences. Thus the unity of the natural composite is much better safeguarded. There is one existence even in the human composite; and the soul, which is essentially subsistent and immortal, will again communicate its existence to the reassumed body on the resurrection day. Moreover, as St. Thomas teaches, there is one existence for the two natures in Christ, which is the divine existence. All these things presuppose that created essence is really distinct from its existence. And this is the corollary of the conclusion of this article, namely, that only in God are essence and existence identical.

Hence this truth is rightly termed by Father del Prado the fundamental truth of Christian philosophy, fundamental indeed, not by way of investigation (which starts from facts attested by experience and the first principles of reason), but by way of judgment, by which wisdom judges of all things from the highest reason and cause.

Father del Prado expressly says: "This is the primary fundamental truth of Christian philosophy, not by way of investigation by which the mind ascends from creatures to God . . . but by way of judgment, since we decide about those things and resolve the truth of our knowledge into its ultimate causes, and we seek for the ultimate reason why there must be only one unrelated absolute immutable being that is endowed with every perfection, and why all other beings except this one have received and must receive both what they have and desire to have, because of their absolute dependence on the first Being from whom, through whom, and in whom are all things."

Thus it is apparent why the proper name of God is "Who is" or "I am who am," and why God said to St. Catherine of Siena: "I am who am; thou art who art not," because, as St. Augustine says, creatures in comparison to God are as if they did not exist. For after creation, although there are more beings, there is not more of being or more of perfection.

Hence with good reason Father del Prado says: "All those things that are set forth by St. Thomas in his first consideration of the one God are

contained fundamentally, virtually, and as to their beginnings, in the third article of the second question, and the subsequent questions are but explanations of those five ways by which God's existence can be proved. And the golden key of entrance in the explanation of these proofs is presented by St. Thomas in the fourth article of the third question, where he gives many reasons why it is impossible for God's existence to differ from His essence. In this we have the secret for finding out not what constitutes but rather what does not constitute the nature of the one who is the mover, the causer, the necessary in being, the maximum in being and in intelligence. In this we have the scientific foundation of the whole treatise on the one God. This constitutes the cornerstone of all subsequent statements, namely, the identity of essence and existence in God," and in God alone.

CONFIRMATION OF THE THESIS FROM THE SOLUTION OF THE OBJECTIONS

Reply to the first objection. The divine being is being to which nothing can be added, because being is the ultimate actuality of essence, and therefore divine being is neither received nor receivable, but is irreceptive, and is not in potentiality to further actuality; wherefore, as stated in the sixth article, there can be no superaddition of any accident in God. In fact, it is only in an improper sense that addition can be attributed to God in His external operations by way of causality and creation. For after creation, although there are more beings, there is not more of being, of perfection, because God already possesses unlimited being and perfection. Contrary to this, universal being is that to which something can be added, as in the determination of the genus and the species, or in the modifications of being, and these are contained actually and implicitly in being.

Reply to the second objection. From the fact that we know a posteriori that God is, we do not, however, know that God's existence is His essence; but from the effects we know that this proposition is true, when we say: "God is." In creatures, "to be" concerns in itself only the question of the existence, not of the quiddity, of a being. In God, "to be" concerns also, and even in the strict sense, the question of His quiddity, for God alone is the self-subsisting Being, and what this self-subsisting Being is in Himself, this we shall see only in heaven, because, as stated farther on, in this life we know God only by means of His effects, from the concepts derived from

creatures, and “every effect which is not an adequate result of the power of the efficient cause, receives the similitude of the agent not in its full degree, but in a measure that falls short.” This existence in creatures is a contingent, but in God an essential, predicate, which is not really distinct from God’s essence that is unknown to us. Hence in this life we know God’s essence not as it is in itself, but as it is the foundation for the truth of the proposition known from effects, namely, “God is.”

Doubt. Has St. Thomas clearly deduced the corollary of this article, namely, that in every creature its essence differs from its existence? He explains this at length in another of his works (Contra Gentes), where he says: “Now being, as being, cannot be diverse, but it can be differentiated by something besides being: thus the being of a stone is other than the being of a man. Hence that which is subsistent being can be one only. Now it was shown above (Bk. I, chaps. 22, 42) that God is His own subsistent being: therefore nothing besides Him can be its own being. Therefore in every substance, besides Him, the substance itself must be distinct from its being.” Likewise in every creature, what is (or the suppositum) and existence are different.

Father del Prado proposes this fundamental argument in the deduction of the above corollary as follows: Act is multiplied and limited by the really distinct potency in which it is received; but in creatures existence is multiplied and limited by the essences of different creatures; therefore in creatures essence is potency, or real capacity, which is really distinct from existence, just as matter is real capacity for the form, and really distinct from the form. In other words, previous to the mind’s consideration, essence and existence are not identical in creatures, just as matter is not form.

The major is explained by stating that the division of being into potency and act is absolutely necessary for the understanding of change and multiplicity, as Aristotle shows in solving the arguments of Parmenides against change and multiplicity in beings, by appealing to the real distinction between potency and act. Being does not come from what is already being, just as a statue does not come from a statue, for it is already such. Nothing comes from nothing. But being comes from potential being, just as the statue can be sculptured from the wood, and just as the plant is developed from the seed.

In like manner, the act of existence cannot be multiplied or limited by itself, because in its formal concept it implies no limitation. Therefore it can be limited and multiplied only by the real capacity in which it is received, that is, by the essence which is capable of existing, for instance, by the essence of either stone, plant, animal, or man. Thus the form is limited and multiplied by the matter, which is the principle of individuation; thus intellection is limited and multiplied according to the various intellectual capacities of human beings, and so forth.

Thus by means of the distinction between potency and act we have not only the reconciliation of the principle of identity or of contradiction, a principle to which Parmenides always appealed, but also change and multiplicity, which Heraclitus defended. In other words, it is only in this way that the first principle of reason is reconciled with the most certain facts of experience. But because there is a certain lack of identity in change and multiplicity, in virtue of the principles of identity and causality our mind of necessity soars to the first Cause who is absolutely identical with Himself, who is to being as A is to A, and in whom there can be neither change nor composition, but who is absolutely simple. This point will be made still clearer in the subsequent articles.

FIFTH ARTICLE

WHETHER GOD IS CONTAINED IN A GENUS

State of the question. By genus, in the strict sense, is meant the logical genus. Thus, according to Aristotle, there are ten genera or categories, namely, substance, quantity, quality . . . and under the supreme genus come the less universal genera ranging down to the proximate genus, and this latter is expressed together with the specific difference in a definition, for instance, by the words rational animal, by which man is defined.

The principal difficulty is that God seems to come at least under the genus of substance, because substance is a being that subsists of itself, and we speak of the divine substance. But, on the other hand, it is generally admitted that God transcends the genera and species. But it may be asked whether God is at least reducible to the genus of substance, as habitual grace is to the genus of quality, or as the point is to the genus of quantity, as the terminus of the line.

Conclusion. God is not in any genus either directly or as reducible to it.

It is proved in many ways that God does not come directly under any genus, and this first of all in the counterargument from general notions. For genus is prior in the mind to what it contains. But nothing is prior to God either really (because He is the first Being), or mentally, because He is the self-subsisting Being, and all formal concepts, such as those of substance, quality, presuppose being whose act is to exist. Yet for us there is something prior to God, namely, being in general.

In the body of the article three proofs are given why God is not directly in any genus. The first is founded on the notion of genus, the second on the notion of being, and the third on the identity of essence and existence in God.

1) On the notion of genus. Genus takes the place of potency, whereas specific difference takes the place of act. But God is pure act. Therefore God is not in a genus.

The minor has been proved. The major needs explanation. Genus is not indeed matter; but it is to the specific difference as matter is to form. For just as the matter is determined by the form, so the genus is determined by the specific difference. Thus, for instance, the genus animality is determined by rationability; for animality is derived from the material body endowed with sensitive life, and rationability is derived from the rational soul. Hence no being is in a genus unless there is really something potential in it, something susceptible of further determination. The genus is in potentiality for the differences by which it is determined.

2) On the notion of being. Being cannot be a genus, but transcends the genera. But if God were in a genus, then being would be His genus. Therefore God is not a genus.

The major is proved by Aristotle. For the genus is diversified by the differences that are extrinsic to it, for instance, animality by rationality. But being cannot be diversified by differences that are extrinsic to it, for what is not being is nothing. Whereas rationality is not animality, substantiality still is being, and the same is true of vitality and other notes. Whereas the genus contains only virtually the differences extrinsic to it and is not contained in them, being contains actually and implicitly the modes of being and is contained in them. Therefore being is transcendent, or transcends the genera or the categories of being, and hence is analogous. It signifies in the different categories something that is proportionately alike, namely, that

whose act is to exist. But the existence of substance is existence not in another, whereas the existence of accidence is inexistence or existence in another. Hence being is not a genus.

The minor. If God were in a genus, being would be His genus, because God is essential being, since He is His existence. Manifestly, if God were in a genus, His genus would have to be most universal and unlimited being.

3) On the identity of essence and existence in God. Essence and existence differ in all things that are in a genus. But essence does not differ from existence in God. Therefore God is not in a genus.

Cajetan given us the following explanation of the major: “When St. Thomas says that ‘all in a genus differ in existence,’ ‘esse’ is taken both for specific existence (specific difference) and for actual existence; and from the verification of one is inferred the verification of the other”; for those things that differ in species differ also in existence, because specific (and individual) existences are the proper recipients of the act of existence. Hence from the fact that God is His existence, He is above all the genera. This proves that God is not at least directly in a genus.

Corollary. God cannot be defined by genus and differentia.

In the last part of the body of the article it is proved that God is not in any genus as reducible to it. For “a principle reducible to any genus does not extend beyond that genus; as a point is the principle only of continuous quantity; and unity, of discontinuous quantity. But God is the principle of all being” and of all the genera of being. Likewise habitual grace, which is reduced to the genus of a quality, is not in the other genera. The solution of the objections confirms this.

Reply to the first objection. God is not in the genus of substance, because the word “substance” does not signify the self-subsisting Being, but an essence that has the property of existing in itself and not in another. Now existence is predicated contingently of every substance, for the substance of a stone, plant, animal, man, or angel exists contingently. Spinoza refuses to give this consideration, defining substance as being that exists of itself, in this sense, that existence is not a contingent but an essential predicate of substance. It follows from this that there can be only one substance.

Reply to second objection. If God is said to be the measure of things, He is not the homogeneous measure, as unity is the principle of number, but He is the heterogeneous measure since everything has being only according as it resembles God, who is the maximum in being (fourth way).

Thus it is evident that God is not in a genus, and this is commonly admitted, even by Scotus, although he holds that being is univocal. We shall comment on this farther on.

SIXTH ARTICLE

WHETHER IN GOD THERE ARE ANY ACCIDENTS

State of the question. Composition of substance and accident is excluded from the exposition of God's simplicity. We are here concerned with accident as a predicament, the existence of which is to exist in another, whether this accident is necessary as a property as, for instance, the intellective faculty in our soul, whether this accident is contingent, as this man who happens to know geometry. The difficulty here is because wisdom and virtue, which are accidents in us, are attributed to God.

Conclusion. There cannot be any accident in God.

For this conclusion three proofs are given, based on the fact that God is (1) pure act, (2) the self-subsisting Being, (3) the first Being.

1) A subject is compared to its accidents as potentiality to actuality by which it is perfected; but God is pure act; therefore there cannot be any accident in God.

The major is evident; for the subject is determined and perfected by a positive accident, for instance, the soul by faculties and habits. But God is pure act and therefore is not in potentiality for any further actuality. He is not determinable but is supremely determined.

2) Being that is absolute and unreceived cannot have anything superadded to it; but God is the absolute and unreceived being; therefore God cannot have any accident superadded to Him.

Cajetan explains the major by pointing out that what is not received cannot have anything else superadded to it without receiving. But absolute being cannot receive or be determined, because it is the ultimate actuality of a thing. Therefore unreceived being cannot have anything superadded to it, and so is at the same time incapable of receiving anything.

Contrary to this, therefore, it must be said that if, as we see in creatures, being has an accident superadded to it, for instance, operation, then this is not unreceived being, but is received in the essence, which is potency in relation to being; and this essence or substance is capable of further

determination by the faculties and operations. Hence created essence can be determined in two ways, namely, by the act of existence and by the faculties and operations. On the other hand, God is the self-subsisting Being and is therefore incapable of further determination.

3) What is essential is prior to what is accidental, and accident is what comes after; but God is the absolute primal being, and in Him there cannot be anything that comes after, whether this be caused or derived; therefore nothing accidental can be in God.

In the reply to the first objection it is stated that virtue and wisdom, which are accidents in us, are not so in God, because they are predicated only analogically of Him. Indeed, as we shall see, God is not in potentiality, either as to the act of understanding, or as to that of loving, but is self-subsisting intelligence and essential love. We already have some evidence of this inasmuch as God is pure act.

Corollary. This article gives us a complete refutation of pantheism, for pantheism, willingly or unwillingly, must posit accidents in God. Thus Spinoza posited in God not only necessary attributes (which are, according to his theory, thought and infinite extension), but he also posited finite modes of thought and extension, these being successively produced in the world from eternity. But Spinoza never succeeded in deducing these finite modes from the divine substance, and he did not refute the doctrine of St. Thomas in the present article, in which it is shown that there can be no accident in God, since God is incapable of further determination. Likewise it follows from this that God cannot be "creative evolution," which is always capable of further determination and perfection. Creative evolution cannot be to being, as A is to A. Only the true God is the self-subsisting Being, and for this very reason He absolutely transcends the composite and changeable world.

Difficulty. We shall have the completion of this doctrine in a subsequent article, in which it will be shown that God's free act of creation, although it would be possible for Him not to act, is not an accident. Free will in God is not as in us a faculty that must be perfected by act, but it is self-subsisting will, by which the divine good is necessarily loved, and creatable good not necessarily so. In other words, God's liberty is the dominating indifference, not of a faculty in need of perfection, but of pure act itself. Thus it is said of Him:

"God, powerful sustainer of all things,

Thou who dost remain permanently unmoved,
Determining the course of time,
By the successions of the light of day.”

SEVENTH ARTICLE

WHETHER GOD IS ALTOGETHER SIMPLE

State of the question. This article is a recapitulation and synthesis, as it were, of the preceding articles.

The difficulty is that creatures are but images of God, and among created things the composite are better than the simple, as chemical compounds are better than simple elements, plants than stones, and animals than plants. The higher organisms are more complex. The same is to be said of sciences that have acquired their final development.

The reply is, however, that God is absolutely simple. It is of faith, and is thus enunciated by the Vatican Council: “God, as being one, sole, absolutely simple and immutable spiritual substance, is to be declared as really and essentially distinct from the world (which is composite and changeable).”

In the body of the article many proofs from reason are given for this conclusion. They have their foundation in the doctrine of the preceding articles, which is here recapitulated, and in the truths that God is the first Being, the first Cause, pure Act, and the self-subsisting Being.

1) From the very start, composition of many kinds is excluded, such as that of quantitative parts, of matter and form, of suppositum and nature, of essence and existence, of genus and differentia, of substance and accident. This means the exclusion of all composition, both physical and metaphysical.

2) Every composite is posterior to its component parts, and is dependent on them; but God is the first Being; therefore He is absolutely simple.

To understand the major we must note that every composite is posterior to its component parts, at least by a posteriority of nature if not of time, for the composite results from the parts, and is dependent on them. Thus man results from matter and form, from body and soul. But God is the first Being according to priority not only of duration, but of nature and dignity,

so that there is nothing in God that is caused or dependent, or that is resulting. Therefore He is absolutely simple.

3) Every composite has a cause; but God is the first uncaused cause; therefore in God there is no composition.

The major is explained by St. Thomas as follows: “Things in themselves different do not unite unless something causes them to unite”; or the uncaused union of different things is impossible. This principle is implicitly contained, as we have said, in the fourth way of proving God’s existence, which starts in the ascending order from a consideration of diverse and imperfect composites to establish the existence of the maximum and uncaused in being. Expressed more briefly: things in themselves different, do not in themselves unite.

In another of his works, St. Thomas thus explains this principle: “A diversity of causes produces a diversity of effects.” In like manner he writes: “Whatever a thing may fittingly have, if it does not originate from its nature, accrues to it from an extrinsic cause; for what has no cause is first and immediate.” This means that what has no cause is to existence as A is to A; it not only has existence, but is identical with its existence, in virtue of the principle of identity: being is being, not-being is not-being. This principle is absolutely verified, without any lack of identity, only in the one who can say: “I am who am.” More briefly: the uncaused being has not existence, but is its existence.

4) In every composite there must be potentiality and actuality; but God is pure act; therefore God is in no way composite.

The major is evident, whether the reference is to essential and natural unity, or to accidental unity. If it is a question of essential unity, as in the human composite, then one part, matter, is in potentiality as regards the other. If it is a question of accidental unity, as in the proposition, the man is a musician, then the subject is to its accident as potentiality is to actuality.

5) In every composite there is something which is not it itself, or which is not predicated of it first. Thus the parts are distinguished from the whole. But since God is pure form, in fact the self-subsisting Being, there is not anything that is not predicated of Him first, for this latter would be less perfect than the self-subsisting Being, and therefore cannot be in God.

In other words, whereas no part of man is man, whatever is in God is God. Likewise, whereas the parts of the air, although they are air, are not the whole air, whatever is in God is the whole of God and not a part of Him.

This has its foundation in the principle that is inserted in the body of the article about the end of the fifth proof, and which is very briefly expressed as follows: “In the form itself (that is not received), there is nothing besides itself. Hence since God is absolute form, or rather absolute being, He can be in no way composite.” Thus the fourth way of proving God’s existence is illustrated from on high, by the very fact that we have reached the terminus of this proof. Thus when we are on the summit of a mountain we have a better knowledge of the way that leads to it.

Reply to the first objection. It declares that there is a real distinction between created essence and existence: “It is of the essence of a thing caused, to be in some sort composite, because at least its existence differs from its essence, as will be shown hereafter.”

Reply to the second objection. “With us composite things are better than simple things, because the perfection of created goodness cannot be found in one thing, but in many things.” However, there is a certain likeness in creatures to God’s higher simplicity, inasmuch as the soul is of a higher and simpler order than the body, the angel than the soul, and although a perfect science is more complex than one in its rudimentary stage, yet its tendency is toward a simplicity of a higher order, for it sees all things in a few principles. Thus we must distinguish between the lowest simplicity of pure potency, of matter, for instance, and the highest simplicity of the most pure Act. Thus this makes more complete the refutation of pantheism, namely, that God, being absolutely simple, is really and essentially distinct from the composite world.

A certain difficulty still presents itself, for according to revelation there are three distinct Persons in God. Does this mean then that God is composed of three Persons? St. Thomas considers this difficulty in one of his works, and says: “A plurality of Persons posits no composition in God. For we may consider the Persons from two points of view. First in their relation to their essence with which they are identified; and thus it is evident that there is no composition remaining. Secondly we may consider them in their mutual relations, and thus they are related to one another as distinct, and not as united. For this reason neither from this point of view can there be composition: for all composition is union.” Elsewhere he remarks: “All the divine relations are not greater than only one; because the whole perfection of the divine nature exists in each Person”; otherwise any one of the Persons would not be God.

Therefore God is absolutely simple, and it will be stated farther on that the three Persons have, in fact are, one existence, one intellect, one essential will.

EIGHTH ARTICLE

WHETHER GOD ENTERS INTO THE COMPOSITION OF OTHER THINGS

State of the question. The purpose of this article is to complete the refutation of pantheism, or to prove that God absolutely transcends the world and all finite beings.

In the title, as Cajetan observes, “enter into the composition of other things” is said of form and matter that constitute a composite, and of substance and accident. Hence the meaning is whether God can be joined to another in the entitative order, as the informing act or as potency, as if He were either the matter or soul of the world, or the common substance of the whole universe. This must be carefully considered, so as to distinguish the composition in question here from the hypostatic union, which according to revelation is possible and de facto exists. In the hypostatic union, the Word is united, indeed, in the entitative order with the humanity of Christ, but not as the informing form, but as the Person terminating the humanity and communicating to it His existence. And thus the Word does not enter into composition with Christ, because the Word is not related to Christ as a part, for the part is always less perfect than the whole.

To explain the doctrine of St. Thomas against pantheism, let us see: (1) what forms of pantheism were known to St. Thomas, which he wished to refute; (2) how he refuted them; (3) how, in accordance with the principles formulated by St. Thomas, modern pantheism can be refuted; (4) how the doctrine of St. Thomas on the divine causality preserves that portion of truth, which pantheism distorts.

1. THE FORMS OF PANTHEISM KNOWN TO ST. THOMAS

This question is not of minor importance, for many and also modern philosophers tend toward pantheism. Moreover, several modernists said that St. Thomas in his treatise on the one God did not professedly consider, and therefore did not refute, pantheism. So says Hébert.

On the other hand, others said that Thomism exaggerates the divine universal causality, and that it tends toward occasionalism and pantheism, as if God alone existed and acted in every agent. Thus do those sometimes speak who reject physical premotion. Hence it must be carefully considered whether St. Thomas wished to refute various forms of pantheism. The present article already makes this point clear, for the body of the article distinguishes three forms of pantheism. The first form is of those who said that God is the soul of the world or at least of the highest heaven. It is the pantheism of the Stoics, who to some extent revived the evolutionism of Heraclitus, who taught that the principle of all things is the artificer, fire, which is endowed, as it were, with intelligence. St. Thomas mentions in this article the error spoken of by St. Augustine.

This type of pantheism was to some extent retained by Spinoza, who said that God is the only substance, whose two principal attributes are thought and infinite extension, in which finite modes are distinguished, which from all eternity are successively produced in time.

The second type of pantheism to which St. Thomas alludes is of those who said: “God is the formal principle of all things,” even of the lower order. So said Amalric of Chartres or of Bena, who died in 1209, and whose disciple was David of Dinant.

The third type is materialistic pantheism or rather the atheism of David of Dinant, who, as St. Thomas says, “most absurdly taught that God is prime matter.” He says “most absurdly,” because this teaching is quite opposed to wisdom, which judges of all things by the highest cause. David of Dinant judges of all things, even of the highest, by the lowest cause, and his is simply foolishness, which is contrary to wisdom. Thus St. Thomas, after the question on the gift of wisdom, professedly treats of folly. For what is there more absurd than to say that the minds of St. John the Baptist and of St. Augustine, and their holiness, come from matter or are the result of material and blind necessity? This means that the greater comes from the less, the more perfect and the nobler from the least and the ignoble. It means a return to the doctrine of the first Ionian philosophers, to Thales, Anaximenes . . . who said that the principle of all things is a material element, either water, air, or fire.

It must be observed that the Fourth Lateran Council condemned the pantheism of Amalric in the following words: “We reject and condemn the most perverse teaching of the impious Amalric, whose mind was so blinded

by the father of lies, that his doctrine is to be considered not so much heretical as insane." In like manner, the Council of Sens condemned the following error of Abélard: "The Holy Spirit is the world-soul."

What has just been said suffices to show, contrary to what certain modernists declared, that the error of pantheism was not unknown to St. Thomas. In fact, St. Thomas has elsewhere explained more fully these types of pantheism, beginning with that of Parmenides. Moreover, St. Thomas refuted, as Aristotle did, two ancient types of pantheism. These are: (1) the static monism of Parmenides, who reduces all things to one being, in fact, to the sole and motionless being, and this by denying change and multitude; (2) the absolute evolutionism of Heraclitus, who denied the real validity of the principle of contradiction or of identity, because according to his view everything becomes, nothing is, and being and non-being are identified in the very becoming, which is its own reason for such. The first type is a sort of acosmism, the second is rather atheism.

St. Thomas, following Aristotle, solves the arguments of Parmenides by distinguishing between potency and act; and from this distinction the four kinds of causes are derived. Thus becoming and multitude are explained, but as dependent on the sole supreme Cause, who is motionless and most simple. Against Heraclitus, however, St. Thomas defends the real validity of the principle of contradiction. Thus St. Thomas not only knew the various types of ancient and medieval pantheism, but he examined and refuted the sources of these errors.

Finally, throughout his life St. Thomas refuted Averroism, which is another type of pantheism, for the Averroists say that there is a single intellect for all men.

After having explained the article we shall consider the principal types of modern pantheism condemned by the Vatican Council. It suffices at present to say, as noted in the schemata of the Vatican Council, that for the modern pantheists either God becomes the world, or the world becomes God.

According to Spinoza and Schelling, God, actually existing from all eternity and prior to the world, becomes the world; thus in some way we have a revival of the teachings of Parmenides and the Neoplatonists, which is descendent evolution or emanation.

On the contrary, in absolute evolutionism, according to the ascendant process of evolution, the world becomes God. According to the modern pantheists, however, absolute evolutionism appeared under two forms. It

was conceived either from the materialist (Haeckel), or the idealist point of view (Hegel). It is a quasi revival of the Heraclitean evolutionism.

There is always a return to the two ancient types of pantheism, those of Parmenides and Heraclitus. The former is a quasi absorption of the world in God, the latter is rather the absorption of God in the world. Thus it is clearly enough established from the history of pantheism that it cannot be defined unless it includes the tendency to deny either God or the world. From this we already see clearly the contradiction in identifying God with the world.

2. WHERE AND HOW ST. THOMAS REFUTED THE ABOVE-MENTIONED TYPES OF PANTHEISM

a) St. Thomas explains, indeed, in his commentaries on Aristotle's works how this philosopher refuted Heraclitus and Parmenides by the division of being into potency and act, and also by the principle of causality: nothing is reduced from potency to act except by a being that is in act, and in the final analysis by the pure Act, who by reason of His immutability and absolute simplicity is really and essentially distinct from the changeable and composite world. But Aristotle said nothing about the divine liberty in the production of things, and so he left unanswered the question whether God, who is distinct from the world, is the cause of it by a necessity of nature or of knowledge. These questions are solved by St. Thomas himself in his own works.

b) In the body of the article St. Thomas shows that God cannot enter into the composition of other things either as the formal principle or as the matter of the world. Three proofs are given for this in the present article, from the truth that God is (1) the first efficient Cause, (2) the first and essential Agent, (3) the first and unparticipated Being.

1) The agent and the form are not numerically identical, and the agent and matter are not so specifically; for the matter is potential, whereas the agent is actual; but God is the first efficient Cause; therefore He cannot be either the form or the matter of any composite.

This is a simple application of the distinction between potency and act, from which the four kinds of causes are derived. Of these, the efficient and final are the extrinsic causes, whereas the form and matter are the intrinsic causes. Thus it is evident that the efficient cause is not numerically identical with either the form or the matter, for nothing produces itself.

A difficulty arises concerning the proof. Perhaps God is the form of another composite, that is, of the one generating but not generated. To this Cajetan replies: “To be a composite implies being an effect (because every composite is made, as evident from the preceding article)”; but every effect depends on the first efficient cause; therefore the first efficient cause is neither the form nor the matter of any composite, because it would be the form or matter of its effect, which is impossible, since the agent is not numerically identical either with the form or matter of its effect, as was said.

2) No part of the composite is primarily and essentially the agent; but God is primarily and essentially the agent; therefore God is not a part of any composite.

The major is illustrated by the following example: “For the hand does not act, but the man by his hand.” St. Thomas does not mean by this, as Cajetan observes, that the composite is primarily and essentially an agent. On the contrary, he said that God is primarily and essentially an agent, therefore He is primarily and essentially a form, that is, a form separated from matter; in fact, He is the Being that is not received in another.

3) The major is evident, for matter is potency, and thus is posterior to act and less perfect. But the form which is part of a compound is a participated form; and as that which participates is posterior to that which is essential, so likewise is that which is participated. Therefore no part of a compound can be absolutely primal among beings.

These three proofs can be compendiously expressed as follows: God is not the matter of the world, because matter which is potency or capacity susceptible to further determination, can be determined only by another, namely, by an agent, and in the final analysis by the first agent, who is His activity and His being. (First, second, and third proofs of God’s existence.)

Moreover, God is not the form of the world, because thus He would be something participated and less perfect than the composite of which He would be a part. In fact, everything composite requires a cause. Therefore God must be superior to everything composite, as being the absolutely simple and unchangeable cause, not capable of further determination.

N.B. In the hypostatic union, the Word is not a part, either as matter or as informing act, but as terminating act, just as in some way, in the order of being as in that of intelligence, the divine essence clearly seen terminates the intellect of the blessed. This is a mystery, and the existence or even the

possibility of this can be neither proved nor disproved by reason. Apparent contradiction is excluded, since the terminating perfection is not participated as an informing form. Thus the statue of Moses seen by me, terminates my vision, but it is not something participated in me, as is the case with the representative similitude which is received in the visual faculty. Thus the confusion of the divine and human natures is avoided in the hypostatic union. They remain unconfused, and the one is not to the other as matter is to form.

Even if God were to unite Himself hypostatically to all created natures, this would not result in pantheism, for there could not be a fusion of the assumed natures with the divine nature. We know from revelation that God is hypostatically united only with Christ's humanity, and if He were united with the humanity of other human beings, these would be impeccable as Christ is, which is manifestly not so.

We shall find the completion of the refutation of pantheism in two subsequent articles, in which St. Thomas shows that God did not produce the world either by a necessity of His nature, or by a necessity of science, but with absolute freedom: (1) because God's goodness, which He necessarily loves with utmost joy, is infinite and can exist without other things, "inasmuch as no perfection can accrue to Him from them"; (2) because God acts not only freely but immediately by His intellect and will in things external to Himself, not by nature as man does in freely generating. For every natural agent by the very fact that it acts for an end must be directed by the supreme and intelligent agent (fifth way). Therefore already from the fifth way of proving God's existence it is to some extent clear that God acts by His intellect and will.

Finally, emanatism is refuted when St. Thomas denies that the soul is of God's substance, for God would be material if things were not produced from nothing, but from God's substance as their pre-existing subject. Thus God's substance would not be His existence, for He would be capable of further determination. In like manner, he shows that there cannot be one intellect for all men, nor even one active intellect for all; for the human soul, which is intellectual, is the form of the body and is multiplied with the body. The same man understands that he understands, and that he wills freely.

Summing up, we must therefore say that these refutations of pantheism proceed from the five proofs for God's existence, and they can be reduced

to this one statement of the Vatican Council: “God is really and essentially distinct from the (mutable and composite) world,” for He is required as the absolutely immutable Cause (first, second, and third proofs), and is absolutely simple and perfect (fourth and fifth proofs).

3. HOW MODERN PANTHEISM CAN BE REFUTED BY INVOKING THE PRINCIPLES FORMULATED BY ST. THOMAS

The Vatican Council refers to the various types of modern pantheism. “If anyone shall say that the substance and essence of God and of all things is one and the same; let him be anathema.” Here we have pantheism in general. Then the Council condemns emanatism in the following terms: “If anyone shall say that finite things, both corporeal and spiritual, or at least spiritual, have emanated from the divine substance; let him be anathema.” Here we have descendent emanatism in which God exists with all His perfections prior to the world, and He then becomes the world, since the world emanates from Him. Thus God would be capable of further determination, and thus He would not be the pure Act, at least He would have accidents. After this the pantheism of Schelling is condemned, in which God still becomes the world: “If anyone shall say that the divine essence by the manifestation and evolution of itself becomes all things; let him be anathema.”

Finally pantheism of universal being is condemned, and it is especially this type that was proposed by Hegel. It is evolution of the ascendant order; hence in this type it is rather the world that becomes God: “If any one shall say that God is universal or indefinite being, which by determining itself constitutes the universality of things, distinct according to genera, species, and individuals; let him be anathema.”

The various types of pantheism are refuted by one and the same principle already formulated by St. Thomas. It is thus expressed by the Vatican Council: “God, as being one, sole, absolutely simple, and immutable spiritual substance, is to be declared as really and essentially distinct from the world . . . and ineffably exalted above all things.”

The reference is to a real distinction. God and creatures are not one being but many beings, although after creation there is not more being, namely, more perfection. The reference is not only to a real but to an essential distinction, since the divine nature infinitely transcends other natures.

The Vatican Council confirms the condemnation of pantheism by its definition of the absolutely free creation of all things, both corporeal and spiritual, from nothing and not from God's substance. Pantheism is absolute determinism, which is a denial of both divine and human liberty, and hence of the distinction between moral good and moral evil, of merit and demerit. It excludes the moral life from man, just as it excludes true personality from him.

But previous to this, the Syllabus of Pius IX had clearly set forth the contradiction in pantheism, condemning the following formula propounded by it: God is one and the same thing with the world, and, therefore, spirit with matter, necessity with liberty, good with evil, justice with injustice." It would follow from this, of course, that all things in the world, even the gravest errors and crimes, would be, with the destruction of contingency and liberty, necessary moments of universal evolution, in which nothing could be absolutely and simply true; but there would be something that is relatively true and good in the present state of knowledge and of ethics, which would be followed by an opposite state or antithesis, which again would be succeeded by a superior synthesis, and so on in succession. There would be nothing stable, not even the principle of contradiction or of identity, because the fundamental reality would be this universal becoming, which would be its own reason for such. Contrary to this, it must be said that the greater does not come from the less, and what is already in existence is greater than what is becoming. Hence there is an eternally self-existing Being, who is the self-subsisting Being, who said of Himself: "I am who am."

It must be noted that certain theses of the ontologists savor somewhat of pantheism, and for this reason they were condemned. Such are the following propositions: "That being, which is in all things and without which nothing is understood by us, is the divine being. Universals considered in the concrete are not really distinct from God." In this way universal being is confused with the divine being, and universal truth with the divine truth. . . . The same is to be said of certain propositions propounded by Antonio Rosmini.

All these declarations are a confirmation for us that the fundamental truth of Christian philosophy is, that God alone is the self-subsisting Being, that essence and existence are identical only in God. The first truth by way of investigation is the principle of identity: being is being, not-being is not-

being. The supreme truth by way of investigation and the first by way of judgment is: God alone is His existence, so that He is really and essentially distinct from any other being whatever.

4. DOES ST. THOMAS IN HIS DISCUSSION OF THE DIVINE CAUSALITY PRESERVE INTACT THE TRUTH THAT IS DISTORTED BY PANTHEISM?

In every error there is a distortion of some part of the truth. Yet it is there not as "the soul of truth," but rather as the servant of error, because it serves to seduce or deceive the intellect. Thus in pantheism it is, as it were, the grain of truth that is distorted. This is most apparent in the natural order. (1) There is nothing that is not, as to the whole of its being, caused by God. (2) There is nothing that is not preserved by God, for the being of things is the proper effect of God. Just as the becoming ceases when the cause of any becoming ceases to act, so when the cause of the being of things ceases to act, the being of things would cease to exist, just as the light in the air disappears when the sun ceases to give us its light, or just as there is no longer evidence in the conclusions when there is a cessation of evidence in the principles, or just as the means to the end lose their attraction for us when the end ceases to attract us. (3) There is not any being in existence to which God is not intimately present, contacting it by His power and keeping it in existence. Thus God is intimately present in all things, and is even more intimately present to our soul than it is to itself, for He moves it to acts that are more intimate and profound to which it could not move itself. (4) God operates in every agent, not to dispense the creature from acting, as the occasionalists think, but to apply it to action. (5) God moves every intellect, and immediately moves the created will, but He does no violence to it, for He moves it interiorly in accordance with its inclination for universal good, and He moves it to a particular good which can be the object of its deliberate choice; or He permits sin, and then He is the cause only of the physical entity of the act of sin, but not of the sin itself as it is a defect, for which only a deficient cause is needed.

Thus there is nothing real and good external to God that is not related to Him as causally dependent on Him. Even the free determination of our will, inasmuch as it is something real and good, cannot be external to God so as not to be in a relation of dependence on Him. Thus the fruit of the tree comes all from the tree as from its secondary cause, and all from God as its first cause; so also my choice, inasmuch as it is real and good, is all from

God as first cause and all from myself as secondary cause. Thus God is present in all things by a virtual contact, keeping them in being, and He operates in every agent applying it to its act.

It is this truth which pantheism distorts. This truth is strikingly affirmed by St. Thomas, although he absolutely rejects pantheism, since God is neither the material cause nor the formal cause of the world, nor its necessary and efficient cause, but its absolutely transcendent and free efficient cause.

Then after our elevation to the order of grace, the intimacy of our union with God is increased, since habitual grace is a formal and physical, although analogical, participation in the Deity, or in God's intimate life, so that we are like to Him not only in being, life, and intelligence, but in the very Deity. Thus a soul in the state of grace is the temple in which the most Holy Trinity dwells, dwelling indeed in the blessed as clearly seen by them, but dwelling in us as obscurely known.

Finally, the union of the divine and human natures in Christ is the greatest that can be. The union is substantial and personal, so that there is only one person and one existence. However, there is not the least trace of pantheism in this, for there is an infinite distinction between the two natures and without any confusion of the natures. All these truths are strikingly affirmed by St. Thomas.

Moreover, in none of the teachings of Catholic theologians is the truth more clearly expressed than in Thomism, namely, that God is distinct from the world, and yet He is most intimately present to it by His efficacious influx. The doctrine of analogy as set forth by St. Thomas brings out far more clearly, indeed, the distinction between God and the world than does univocation of being, which is admitted by Scotus, and which is retained to some extent by Suarez. On the other hand, St. Thomas stresses the intimacy of divine motion in us more than Scotus does, and he stresses especially its efficacy more than Suarez and Molina do.

Thus we terminate the question of God's simplicity. The principles enunciated here about being can easily be applied to cognition and volition, by treating of the most eminent simplicity of God's wisdom and love. But this will be discussed in subsequent questions.

CHAPTER IV

QUESTION 4

THE PERFECTION OF GOD

THIS question contains three articles: (1) whether God is perfect; (2) whether the perfections of all things are in God; (3) whether creatures can be said to be like God. The third article contains the fundamentals of the teaching of analogy between God and creatures, and under this aspect it concerns the present question, namely, whether God is so perfect that no creature can be like Him.

FIRST ARTICLE

WHETHER COD IS PERFECT

State of the question. The title, as Cajetan observes, does not mean: whether God has some perfection; for the various perfections are discussed subsequently. Nor does it mean: whether God possesses all perfections, since this point is discussed in the second article. The question is whether God is pre-eminently that which He is, for instance, pre-eminently the efficient cause.

Reply. God is most perfect. The conclusion is of faith, for Jesus says: “Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect.” The same is affirmed in very many texts of Holy Scripture. The Vatican Council affirms it in these words: “The holy Church believes that there is one God . . . infinite in all perfection . . . who, to manifest His perfection by the blessings which He bestows on creatures, with absolute freedom created them.”

Proof from reason. In the body of the article it is proved that God is most perfect for the reason that God is the first active principle, whereas, on the contrary, the ancient philosophers of Ionia thought that the first principle of

all things is something material (water, air, or fire) and hence most imperfect, nay even absolute evolutionism, in which by an ascendant process of evolution the greater is produced from the less.

The argument of St. Thomas is reduced to this syllogism: The first active principle must needs be most actual and hence most perfect; but God is the first active principle (second way); therefore God is most actual. The major is proved from the fact that the agent, as such, is in actuality; for if any agent needs to be premoved so as to act, inasmuch as it is moved it is mobile as regards a higher agent; but as an agent it is already in actuality, as in the case of water which heats, not inasmuch as it becomes hot, but inasmuch as it is already hot. From this we see that the supreme agent is most actual and motionless, and hence most perfect. For, as stated at the end of the body of this article: "We call that perfect which lacks nothing of the mode of its perfection."

It must be observed that, according to the opinion of several historians of philosophy, Aristotle held that God is only the final but not the efficient cause of the world, because, in explaining how the first mover is immobile, he gives the example of the end, which, although it is immobile, attracts other things to itself. But it does not follow from this that Aristotle denied that God is the efficient cause of the world, as if the immobile agent could not move others. On the contrary, he said on several occasions that an agent, inasmuch as it is an agent, is in actuality; for nothing is reduced from potentiality to actuality except by a being that is in actuality. Thus the agent, as an agent, already is in actuality and so is perfect. Hence the supreme agent is most in actuality and most perfect.

In the reply to the third objection it is remarked that the existence of anything is not only more perfect than matter, but also more perfect than form, for it is its ultimate actuality. But God is unreceived or subsisting existence; therefore He is most perfect. St. Thomas, like an eagle that makes the same circular flight several times high up in the air, always returns to the same supreme truth. He makes it the object not only of direct contemplation (by ascending from one fact to be explained) and of oblique (in spiral form), but also of circular.

SECOND ARTICLE

WHETHER THE PERFECTIONS OF ALL THINGS ARE IN GOD

State of the question. It concerns all perfections, whether these include no imperfection or admit an admixture of imperfection. The difficulty is (1) that God is absolutely simple whereas the perfections of things are manifold; (2) that, in fact, there are several perfections of things which are in opposition to one another, for example, opposite differentiae in the same genus, and they cannot be at the same time in the same subject; (3) that God's essence is His existence, but life and intelligence are more perfect than existence.

The conclusion, however, is: all created perfections are in God. This truth is affirmed in equivalent terms in many texts of Holy Scripture, and they are not difficult to find. Such are: "All things were made by Him, and without Him was made nothing that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." "For of Him and by Him and in Him are all things."

Two proofs from reason are given for the conclusion: (1) because God is the first effective cause of things; (2) because He is the self-subsisting Being.

1) Whatever perfection exists in an effect must pre-exist in the agent, and in a more eminent way in the supreme agent. But God is the supreme agent, the effective cause of all things. Therefore the perfections of all things pre-exist in God in a more eminent way.

Molina ought to have taken note of the major of this argument; for whatever perfection there is even in the free determination of our choice pre-exists in the supreme agent, and this free determination of ours cannot exist externally to God unless it is in a relation of dependent causality to Him.

If anyone objects that the plant reaches the perfection of its growth from an imperfect shoot, and that the animal is developed from the seed, we must reply that the seed is but the instrumental cause of the agent. It is not indeed the seed of the ox that generates the ox, but the fully developed ox by means of the seed generates an ox; in like manner the fully grown plant by means of the shoot generates a plant like itself in species; for it is only the fully developed that generate. Otherwise the greater would be produced from the less, and this more of being would have no reason for its existence. Therefore it is a common saying among theologians that after creation there are more beings but not more of being or perfection, because whatever perfection is in the effect pre-existed in a more eminent way in the first

eternal cause. Thus the validity of the notion of efficient cause in its relation to the First Cause becomes increasingly clear.

2) The conclusion is proved also from the principle that God is the self-subsisting Being. The perfections of all created things are included in the perfection of being, for a thing is perfect in that it has being, for instance, in that there is in it either solely corporeity, or life, whether this is vegetative, sensitive, or intellectual; for being is the actuality of all these things; in fact, the existence of intellection is its actuality. But since God is the self-subsisting Existence, He has in Himself the whole perfection of being. Therefore God contains in Himself the perfection of all things.

If He did not have the whole perfection of being, then He would have only participated being, and would not be essentially the self-subsisting Being. Thus "if heat were self-subsisting, nothing of the virtue of heat would be wanting to it"; self-subsisting heat would have the whole perfection of heat.

Reply to first objection. All these perfections, because they are in God in a more eminent way, are in Him without detriment to His simplicity. Thus white light contains eminently whatever perfection there is in the seven colors of the rainbow; yet it contains them only virtually and eminently (in that it can produce them), whereas the Deity contains formally and eminently absolutely simple perfections, a point that will be more clearly brought out in subsequent articles. Whereas white light is neither azure blue nor red, the Deity is formally and eminently real, one, true, good . . . ; and, moreover, it contains mixed perfections, such as rationality, virtually and eminently. Now, indeed, visual sensation contains in a unified form a great variety of sensible objects, and scientific synthesis contains many experiences, for what is divided in things of the lower order is found united in those of the higher order. Similarly our soul, although simple, is vegetative, sensitive, and intellective.

Reply to third objection. Although participated being, as in a stone, is without life and intelligence, the self-subsisting Being, in that He is plenitude itself of being, contains life and intelligence. And therefore this can be what constitutes the divine nature according to our imperfect mode of conceiving it. "Nothing of the perfection of being can be wanting to Him who is subsisting being itself."

THIRD ARTICLE

WHETHER ANY CREATURE CAN BE LIRE COD

State of the question. The meaning of the title is, as Cajetan remarks, whether God's perfection is so great that no creature can be like Him. It concerns likeness to Him as He is the first Being and the first Cause, and not as He is the triune God; nor is it concerned with this special likeness that is called image, for this is discussed elsewhere. We are concerned here with the general likeness that is found in every created being. This article contains the fundamentals of the doctrine about the analogy between God and the creature as explained in a subsequent article.

The difficulties that present themselves are the following: (1) that God and the creature are not contained even in a genus, therefore they are absolutely different; (2) that they do not communicate in any form, which is the foundation for similitude; (3) that, if the creature were said to be like God, then it could be said that God is like the creature, which seems to be inappropriate and contrary to Scripture.

The conclusion, however, is: all created beings, so far as they are beings, are like God; moreover, in many this likeness is in life and intelligence. Not infrequently Holy Scripture speaks of this likeness, even of the likeness according to image, as when it says: "Let us make man to our image and likeness."

About this question we should note what the Fourth Lateran Council says: "The similarity which we note between the Creator and the creature cannot be so great as to prevent us from detecting a greater dissimilarity." Moreover, this statement is made about the similarity of grace, and in this sense the Scripture says: "Be you therefore perfect (by grace) as also your heavenly Father is perfect (by nature)." In this text of the Fourth Lateran Council we have a quasi definition of analogy between God and creatures, and this text is more in conformity with the Thomist definition of analogy than it is with the Suarezian. According to St. Thomas and the Thomists: things that are analogous are those having a common name, but the idea signified by the name is simply different in each of them, and relatively or proportionately the same; thus being is predicated of essential being, of substantial being that is produced by another, and of accident. On the contrary, according to the principle of Suarez: "things that are analogous are those having a common name, but the idea signified by the name is simply

the same in each of them, and relatively different. To this the Thomists reply by asking why the Fourth Lateran Council therefore had said: “The similarity which we note between the Creator and the creature cannot be so great as to prevent us from detecting a greater dissimilarity?’ Moreover, animality, which is predicated univocally of the lion and the worm, is simply the same and relatively different in them; analogical similarity, however, is less than univocal similarity.

Lastly, the Vatican Council says: “Reason enlightened by faith when it seeks earnestly, piously, and calmly, attains by a gift of God to some . . . understanding of mysteries; partly from the analogy of those things which it naturally knows, partly from the relations which the mysteries bear to one another. . . .” Therefore the analogy that prevails between God and the creature is a certainty; in fact, its certainty is that of faith.

The conclusion is proved from reason in the body of the article by one argument which is founded on causality. But first of all, by way of introduction, St. Thomas distinguishes between three kinds of likeness.

Likeness is of three kinds: (1) of form which is of the same formality and of the same mode, as two things equally white, or two grown-up men; (2) of form which is of the same formality but not of the same mode, as something less white is like something more white, or as the boy is like the man; (3) of form but not according to the same formality, as between the effect and the non-univocal agent, or as prevails in things of a higher nature, as in the subordination of causes. Thus, inasmuch as the intellective life arouses the action of the sensitive life, as when the intellect by a rational process arranges in an orderly manner the phantasms and words for the expression of some syllogism, then the verbal expression, which previously exists in the imagination, is indeed ration-able, but by participation, being dependent on the reason as directing it. Thus the rationability of the verbal expression and the rationability of the conception or judgment are alike according to form but not according to the same formality; there is indeed unlikeness on the part of the one directing and of that which is directed. Thus rationability is primarily in prudence and secondarily by participation in the virtues of fortitude and temperance by which the sensitive appetite is directed by reason. In like manner and with greater reason, order is not according to the same formality in the supreme Ordainer of the universe and in the natural agents which are directed by Him to a certain end (fifth way).

Thus likeness is of three kinds: (1) univocal and according to the same mode; (2) univocal and not according to the same mode, as between the boy and the man; (3) non-univocal, which is not either according to species or according to genus, but is analogical.

With these preliminary observations, the conclusion is proved by one argument as follows: every agent reproduces itself, either specifically or generically or at least analogically; but God, who is not contained in a genus, is the efficient cause of creatures; therefore creatures are analogically like God.

For some the major, like the experimental laws, is evident only by induction, in so far as a man generates a man, an ox generates an ox, and a plant one like itself in species. Yet, in truth, this major is more than an experimental law; it is a principle that is directly known from the analysis of the terms; for to act is to determine or reduce from potentiality to actuality, from indetermination to determination; for actuality is the principle of determination. But a thing can determine only according to its own determination; hence the common saying: every agent acts inasmuch as it is in actuality, and it is in actuality by means of its form. Thus a man generates a man, and a body that is hot makes another hot. Hence St. Thomas says in this article: “Since every agent reproduces itself so far as it is an agent, and everything acts according to the manner of its form, the effect must resemble the form of the agent.” This principle is self-evident from an analysis of the terms.

But this principle is applied in various ways in accordance with the previous remarks, namely: (1) If the agent is contained in the same species with the effect, there is likeness according to the same formality of the species; (2) if the agent is not contained in the same species, but in the same genus, then there is only generic likeness. The old example of the sun is here given. Nowadays we can say: There are various effects of heat, since it expands metals, produces the fusion of solids and the evaporation of liquids. In like manner, there are various effects of electricity and magnetism, and these effects are not specifically but generically like the cause. Thus electricity produces local motion, atmospheric changes, chemical combinations . . . ; (3) lastly, if the agent is not contained in any genus, “its effects will still more distantly reproduce the form of the agent,” that is, not specifically or generically, but analogically.

The minor, however, was proved in a previous article, in which it was shown that God, who is not in any genus, is the efficient cause of all creatures. Therefore creatures are analogically like God, at least inasmuch as they are beings. Many creatures, too, are like God in life (as plants), in intellect (as our soul), and the just are like God according to His intimate life or His Deity.

Being indeed is that which exists or can exist; in other words, it is that whose act is to exist. But it is not predicated according to absolutely the same formality of the self-subsisting Being, of the caused substantial being, and of its accidents. Of these three it is predicated proportionately or according to a similarity of proportions. Thus God is to His existence as the created substantial being is proportionately to its existence. Thus the likeness is true and not merely metaphorical (as when it is said that God is angry), but it is according to the proper meaning of the name "being."

However, as the Fourth Lateran Council said: "A greater dissimilarity is to be noted" in that God is the self-subsisting Being, whereas created substance is not its own existence, but has existence in itself, and accident has existence in another. When we shall see God face to face, then it will be clearly seen that creatures are as if they do not exist in comparison with God, as St. Augustine often says.

This means that the analogous perfection cannot be perfectly abstracted from the analogates because it expresses a likeness of proportions, and this cannot be conceived by the mind without having actual and explicit concepts of the members of the proportionality. Being is that which exists either of itself, or in itself, though dependent on another, or in another that is dependent on some other.

Contrary to this, the genus (for instance, animality) can be perfectly abstracted from the species, because it is diversified by differentiae that are extrinsic to it. Thus animal signifies what is simply one and the same; the living body signifies the sensitive life, whereas being signifies what is proportionately one. The analogical concept can be represented by 8, and the universal concept by o. There is a certain intrinsic variety in the analogical concept; for every mode of being is still being, whereas the differentia of animality, for example, rationality, is not animality.

Objection. Being abstracts perfectly from the modes of being in that it is defined as that which exists independently of its modes (id quod est independenter ab his modalitatibus). In like manner, "knowledge" is the

union of the one knowing with the thing known or of subject and object without any reference to sensation and intellection. The same applies to "love" and "cause" in reference to first cause and second cause: for the efficient cause is that from which another being comes into existence.

Reply. This seems to be so if the words of the definition are considered only materially, but it is not so if they are taken in their formal sense; for these very words of the definition of being are analogous; namely, id is predicated analogically, as also are quod and est. The same must be said of other definitions, such as those of cause, knowledge, love. Cause is predicated analogically of the four causes, as it is also of the first efficient Cause and of the secondary cause. In like manner, although our cognitive faculties are univocal as faculties in the genus of quality, as they are cognitive, they are analogous. Thus knowledge can be attributed analogically to God, and the same applies to love.

It is already quite clear from St. Thomas' own words that being and existence are not predicated of God and creatures purely "according to the same formality," but proportionately, as stated at the end of the body of the article. And what is said here of existence applies to all absolutely simple perfections, and this will have to be discussed in a subsequent article (q. 13, a. 5). Thus it applies to the intellect that is specified by intelligible being, and to the will that is specified by good.

Reply to second objection. God is related to creatures as the principle of all genera.

Reply to third objection. Likeness of creatures to God is therefore "solely according to analogy, inasmuch as God is essential being, whereas other things are beings by participation."

Reply to fourth objection. Although the creature is like God, God is not like the creature, because there is no real relation of God to creatures, but only of creatures to God; for God does not depend on creatures, nor is He in the same order. Thus the image is said to be like Caesar, but Caesar is not said to be like his image: "When two extremes are not of one order, in one of the extremes the relation is a reality, and in the other it is an idea." Thus knowledge refers to the knowable, but the knowable thing, as a thing, is outside the order of intelligibility, and does not refer to knowledge. Thus all creatures are ordered to God, but God is not ordered to creatures.

CHAPTER V

QUESTION 5

OF GOODNESS IN GENERAL

THE attribute of goodness follows perfection, for, as will be said immediately, everything is good in so far as it is perfect. Therefore St. Thomas treats of God's goodness before treating of His truth and unity, although unity and truth are predicated before goodness of being and the divine nature. St. Thomas inserts here the question of the divine goodness as being a part of the divine perfection. And he treats first of goodness in general.

The question is concerned with transcendental good, which is a property of being, and is being viewed as perfect and appetible. It is called transcendental, because it transcends all the categories of being, and is common to all of them, such as good substance, good quantity, good quality. . . . However, in this question, goodness is also divided into the pleasant, the useful, and the virtuous, and from this division we get the idea of moral goodness, which is discussed by St. Thomas in the moral part of his theology, where he shows that moral goodness is virtuous goodness in so far as it is governed by the rules of moral actions and especially by the eternal law. Moral goodness is conformity of the object and the action with the rules of moral actions. But we are at present concerned with transcendental good.

There are three points of investigation in this fifth question: (1) The relation of goodness to being (a. 1-3); (2) of goodness in itself, considered under the aspect of end and order in goodness (a. 2-5); (3) the way goodness is divided (a. 6). The explanation of these articles must be brief, for they pertain rather to metaphysics.

FIRST ARTICLE

WHETHER GOODNESS DIFFERS REALLY FROM BEING

Conclusion. Goodness and being are really the same, and differ only in idea. The first part is proved as follows: That which is included in the idea of being is not really distinct from being; but goodness is included in the idea of being, for it is being considered as perfect and desirable; therefore goodness is not really distinct from being.

The major is certain. Just as humanity, which contains in its connotation animality as genus, is not really distinct from animality, so that which in its connotation contains the idea of being is not really distinct from being. On the contrary, created essence, which in its connotation does not contain the idea of existence, is really distinct from it. Where we have two concepts irreducible to each other and to a third concept, there we have irreducibility of realities, in virtue of the objective validity of our intellect. But if two concepts are reduced to one concept, as animality and ration-ability are reduced to humanity, then there is no real distinction between them. Animality is included in the idea of humanity, although the latter includes something else, namely, rationality.

The minor. The idea of being is included in the idea of goodness. For goodness is that which is desirable; but it is desirable in so far as it is at least somehow perfect and perfective; therefore the idea of being is included in the idea of goodness, although it explicitly denotes something else.

Thus a fruit is good in so far as it is desirable. But for this it is necessary that the fruit be ripe, that in its species it be perfect and perfective, as a food that is preservative of life. And it would not be so unless it were actual being. Thus we speak proportionately of a good stone for the construction of a building, of a good horse for drawing a carriage, of a good sculptor or of a good painter. Hence it is clear that good is predicated of things by analogy of proportion, and is not really distinct from being.

The second part of the conclusion, namely, that goodness and being differ in idea, is easily proved; for “goodness presents the aspect of desirableness, which being does not present.” In other words, being contains the notion of goodness actually and implicitly, but not actually and explicitly. Something explicitly is declared in the notion of goodness, which is only implicitly

declared in the notion of being. Thus there is no addition of any extrinsic difference to being, but of an explicitly signified mode of being.

It must be remembered with Cajetan, however, that desirableness does not constitute the idea of goodness, but presupposes it, as a property its essence. However, if the desirable is viewed not formally but fundamentally, then goodness is intrinsically desirable in so far as it is the foundation for desirableness. Hence many Thomists say: The formal notion of goodness consists in perfection as being the foundation for desirableness. And this foundation is not really distinct from the desirableness, because it is a relation, not indeed real but logical as regards the appetite. On the contrary, there is a real relation of the appetite to the appetible on which it depends. Thus there is a real relation of knowledge to the thing knowable, but not of this latter to knowledge.

Hence for goodness to be fundamentally desirable, it must be perfect and perfective and therefore actual being. As John of St. Thomas says against Durandus and Vasquez: If goodness were to consist formally in desirableness, it would not be anything real, but a logical relation.

The reply to the first objection confirms this: Although goodness and being are not really distinct, for what is simply being (which a thing has through substantial being) is not simply goodness (which a thing has through some superadded perfection). Thus a barren tree is simply a being in so far as it has substantial being, but it is not something simply good in its species, because it is barren. The same applies to an unripe or overripe fruit, as also to a young or old carriage horse.

Hence what is simply being is good relatively, for example, a young horse not yet fully grown is, however, truly a horse and not a mule. Thus it has relative goodness of its species, although it has not as yet attained its due perfection. The same may be said of wine that has not much body to it, which, however, is truly wine and not vinegar.

Conversely, that by reason of which something is good simply, is being relatively, since it is an accidental perfection superadded to substance, as ripeness in fruit.

It must be observed that according to Scotus the properties of being, such as goodness, are distinct from being by a distinction that is formal and actual on the part of the thing. In reply to this we say that such distinction posits an impossible intermediary between the real distinction and the logical distinction that has its foundation in the object; for a distinction

exists either before or not before the mind’s consideration; if before, it is real; if not, it is logical. In the present case, however, there can be no real distinction, because then goodness would be outside being; it would not be being, and thus would be nothing. Being is included in all its modes, which are still being.

Consequently there is only a virtual distinction between being and goodness; in fact, a virtual minor distinction, since being includes goodness actually and implicitly, but not explicitly. In other words, the mode of goodness is not an extrinsic difference with reference to being, as rationability is with reference to animality.

SECOND ARTICLE

WHETHER GOODNESS IS PRIOR IN IDEA TO BEING

State of the question. The Platonists taught that goodness is prior to being. For Plato the supreme reality is the separate Idea of Good. Likewise, Plotinus held that the supreme hypostasis is the One-Good, the super-Intelligence. According to this tendency some, such as Scotus, said that the will, which is specified by good, is simply superior to the intellect, which is specified by being.

St. Thomas, by way of a difficulty he puts to himself in the beginning of the article, refers to the opinion of the Platonists in the words of Dionysius who, among other names, assigned the first place to good rather than to being. Likewise, in the counterargument the Neoplatonist Proclus is quoted, the author of the book De causis.

Plato and Plotinus placed good above being and essence, because every essence is intelligible, and the intelligible is the correlative of intellect, and is distinct from it. Hence above the duality of intellect and intelligible, there must be a higher and ineffable, a most perfect unity, from which all things proceed, namely, the One-Good. But the divine causality is explained by the Platonists independently of the divine liberty, in that good is essentially diffusive of itself. We already find this principle admitted by Plato, who does not sufficiently distinguish between final causality and efficient causality. It is also admitted by Plotinus, who held that the supreme Good is essentially, or by a necessity of nature, diffusive of itself, and not because of a most free creative act.

Contrary to this, St. Thomas, following Aristotle, correctly distinguishes between the final cause and the efficient cause, and he maintains that good is diffusive of itself as the end which attracts the agent to act. St. Thomas adds that in accordance with the dogma of creation the supreme agent is absolutely free since He already contains within Himself infinite goodness, and is not in need of created goods, which cannot increase His perfection and happiness. The conclusion of St. Thomas is: In idea being is prior to goodness.

This had been already proved by him, in that the idea of being is included, as presupposed, in the idea of goodness, which is perfect and desirable being. In this article, however, the same argument is proposed as follows: That is prior in idea which is first conceived by the intellect; but the first thing conceived by the intellect is being; therefore in idea being is prior to goodness.

The major is not concerned with the order of time and investigation, according to which we first have a knowledge of sensible things; it concerns, however, the order of nature and of formal concepts or notions. But the notion of being is the first of all notions. Why is this? It is because everything is intelligible inasmuch as it is actual. Thus the proper object of the intellect, as such, and not as it is human, is intelligible being, just as color is the first thing visible, and sound the first thing audible. Hence every formal concept or notion, for it to be intelligible, presupposes the concept or notion of being.

As Bannez remarks, St. Thomas is speaking of goodness in general. From this it follows that, both in God and in created beings, being is prior in idea to goodness. Being is included implicitly in goodness, and it implicitly includes goodness, as its transcendent mode.

St. Thomas deduces from this the following corollary: “If therefore the intellect and will are considered with regard to themselves, then the intellect is the higher power. And this is clear if we compare their respective objects. For the object of the intellect (namely, intelligible being) is simpler and more absolute than the object of the will (which is goodness). Now the simpler and the more abstract (and more universal) a thing is, the nobler and higher it is in itself (at least as an object). . . . Thus the intellect is absolutely higher and nobler than the will.” Therefore it directs the will, knowing the very concept of good in the good willed.

Second conclusion. We discover this in the reply to the first objection, which states that goodness is relatively prior to being, that is, as a cause, as the end is prior to the form. This is goodness considered not in itself, but with respect to something else.

To the Platonists and Neoplatonists, and particularly to Dionysius, St. Thomas makes the concession that, "among the names signifying the divine causality, goodness precedes being." The reason is that, in the order of causality, goodness conveys the idea of end; but the end is the first in the order of causes, since it attracts the agent to act, and by the agent the matter is prepared to receive the form. Thus in this order of causality God is called the supreme Good, or the good God.

Yet, absolutely speaking, it is still true to say that in idea being is prior to goodness. By simpliciter is meant, if the essence of the thing in question is discussed; but by secundum quid is meant, if something secondary in this thing is considered. Thus a wise man is simpliciter better than unwise Hercules; but as regards physical strength, Hercules is better secundum quid. Simpliciter loquendo means about the same as "absolutely speaking" or "in its primary aspect," whereas secundum quid means "in some secondary aspect."

Thus being, "relatively" considered with respect to the four causes, and not in itself, corresponds to the formal cause; for being is predicated of a thing in so far as it is in actuality by reason of its form, as in stone, wood, animal, or man. But the form, in the order of causes, is posterior to the end and the agent, because it is produced by the agent operating in view of the end. Thus it must be conceded to the Platonists that the supreme Good is prior to created being, which is produced in manifestation of divine goodness. Likewise the supreme Good is prior to finite intelligence, the object of which is finite good, in which God is known as in a mirror.

It may be asked whether St. Thomas gives us a correct statement of Plato's doctrine. It must be said that Plato, in calling God (or the supreme reality) the supreme Good, considered God with reference to inferior realities, which He produces by a diffusion of Himself, to be the sun from which emanate light and heat. Hence Plato said: Since God is good, He produced the world. Yet Plato and Plotinus seem to hold also that good is absolutely prior to being. If such is the case, then St. Thomas on this point separates from them. Hence we conclude that in idea being is prior to goodness absolutely, but posterior to it relatively, namely, in causation.

Corollary to the second conclusion. The will is relatively prior to the intellect (namely, in moving to the exercise of the act). Thus the intellect in the exercise of its act, or attention to its object, is moved by the will. Thus at the end of deliberation it is the will that causes the final judgment to be final. Likewise, as stated by St. Thomas, in this life "the love of God is better than the knowledge of God," because, whereas the intellect draws God to itself, to its imperfect conception of Him, the will is drawn to God, since goodness is in things and not in the mind. So also, though seeing is absolutely nobler than hearing, yet the hearing of a beautiful symphony is nobler than the seeing of something mediocre.

It must be observed that St. Thomas, at the end of the reply to the first objection, gives us a good explanation why the Platonists held that goodness applies to more things than being does. The reason is that in their opinion being does not apply to matter, which they thought to be a privation and non-being. Yet they said: Matter manifests its appetency for good.

On the contrary, St. Thomas and Aristotle, distinguishing matter from privation or non-being, declare it to be, indeed, a real potency or a real capacity for receiving a form, and thus matter is being in potentiality, for example, it is in potentiality to receive the form of either air, wood, or animal. Hence being is just as extensive in application as goodness; in fact, it is more universal than goodness, for not every being is perfect and appetible.

The following objection may be raised against the first conclusion: Goodness is absolutely more perfect than being because it includes being and its perfection.

Reply. It is true to say this of the suppositum or subject, about which good is predicated; but it is not true to say this of the formal concept of goodness. This means that the suppositum, which is said to be absolutely good, such as wine of the best vintage, is more perfect than the suppositum which is only being, such as wine not of the best vintage. But the formal concept of goodness is by nature posterior to the formal concept of being, which is simpler, more abstract and more universal, and thus more perfect as an object.

But I insist. Although animality is simpler than humanity, yet it is more imperfect.

Reply. It is simpler logically, since it is the genus of humanity; but it is not so really, because it is derived from matter, which has not the unity,

simplicity, and perfection of a form, especially of man's form, which is the intellectual soul.

This article, however, is concerned with being and goodness, not only in their logical aspect, but as they are realities. It must be conceded that only the concrete suppositum which is good, is a more perfect suppositum than if it were not good. But St. Thomas is not speaking in this article of the good as suppositum, but of the idea of goodness, which is viewed, however, ontologically and not merely logically. Being, which is prior to goodness, derives its name from existence, namely, from its ultimate actuality. This must be our reply to the Neoplatonists and also to Scotus.

Thus the intellect truly is absolutely nobler than the will, because it is specified by being (that is, the faculty is specified by the object, and not by the suppositum), so that the will is specified by this object that is good, viewed as such, but it is not specified by the good as suppositum.

THIRD ARTICLE

WHETHER EVERY BEING IS GOOD

State of the question. It seems that not every being is good, for good adds perfection and desirableness to being. Matter, however, is being, but it has not the aspect of desirableness. Likewise Aristotle says: "In mathematics goodness does not exist."

The conclusion, however, is: Every being, as being, is good.

This doctrine is of faith against the Manichaeans, who said that some beings are good, and some are evil, in accordance with their error of a twofold principle. The Scripture says: "And God saw all the things that He had made, and they were very good."

The conclusion is proved from reason as follows:

Perfect presents the aspect of what is desirable and good; but every being, inasmuch as it is being, is actual and in some way perfect; therefore every being, inasmuch as it is being, is good.

This means to say, as remarked above, that every being is such simply and good relatively, in that it has at least its essence and existence, even though it is not good simply. Thus every wine, pro-vided it still is wine and not vinegar, can be said to be good, or not corrupt, although it is not the best of wine.

Reply to first objection. Good does not contract being to any of the predicamental modes, that is, it does not limit being to any category, such as substance, quantity . . . ; however, goodness is a transcendental mode of being that is not so universal as being itself. For being applies also to unity and truth.

Reply to second objection. Evil is the privation of any good that is due to any subject.

Reply to third objection. Prime matter is being in potentiality and good in potentiality. Moreover, it implies goodness for the composite to have its matter, which cannot exist without it.

Reply to fourth objection. "In mathematics goodness does not exist," because it abstracts from motion and end. Wherefore Spinoza, who sought to proceed geometrically in metaphysics, excluded the efficient and final causes from the subject matter of metaphysics. He wanted to deduce everything from God, just as the properties of a triangle are deduced from its nature.

Thus the foregoing consideration sufficiently explains goodness with reference to being, which does not differ really but logically from being, and which is absolutely posterior to being. Every being is good at least relatively, although it frequently is lacking in that perfection by which it could be said to be good absolutely. In the two following articles goodness is considered, not in its relation to being, but as it is in itself.

FOURTH ARTICLE

WHETHER GOODNESS HAS THE ASPECT OF A FINAL CAUSE

State of the question. The difficulty is that Dionysius often says that goodness is self-diffusive. But to be diffusive implies the aspect of an efficient cause. Also St. Augustine says: "We exist, because God is good."

The conclusion, however, is: Goodness has the aspect of a final cause.

1) It is proved on the authority of Aristotle, for he thus defines the end and the good as "that for the sake of which something is done."

2) It is proved by reason as follows: The desirable has the aspect of an end; but goodness is desirable; therefore goodness has the aspect of an end, at least as regards the act of the one desiring; and it can be desirable either

because it is pleasant (as a fruit), or because it is useful (as a bitter medicine), or because it is virtuous.

There is furthermore another conclusion in the body of the article, which may be enunciated as follows: Goodness is the first in causation and the last in being, because the end is the first in causation, in the order of intention, since it attracts the agent to act; and the end is the last in being, or in the order of execution. Thus the generator tends to reproduce its form, for instance, fire tends to reproduce the form of fire, the ox the form of an ox, and the form of the thing generated terminates the passive generation, and afterward what is generated is made perfect. Thus when the animal acquires its complete development, then it is perfectly like the one generating.

Reply to first objection. Goodness and beauty differ logically, for goodness relates to the appetite, whereas beauty relates to the cognitive faculty; for things are said to be beautiful that please the eye. Thus beauty is the splendor of form in material things, as in the rose or the lily; but if it is a case of intellectual beauty, then it is the splendor of truth or the irradiation of some principle in the many conclusions deduced from it. In like manner the splendor manifesting itself in a life of heroic moral acts constitutes moral beauty; transcending all, we have the sublime, when there is the greatest of diversity in the closest of unity, as in Holy Communion: O wonderful thing, he that is poor, and a servant, and lowly, eateth the Lord.

Beauty seems to be a transcendental property of being, for everything produced by the divine artist is beautiful; but every being is produced by the divine artist as the author of nature; therefore every being is beautiful, at least according to its nature or essence, for it conveys to us some idea of God. But integral beauty, as seen in God, in Christ, in the Blessed Virgin Mary, is splendor of being according to unity, truth, and goodness, that is, splendor and harmony of all the properties of being.

Reply to second objection. There is a brief solution of the difficulty arising from the Platonist conception, that goodness is self-diffusive: and this pertains to the efficient cause. St. Thomas replies: “Goodness is described as self-diffusive, as being the end,” namely, in that it attracts die agent to act, and the appetite to desire. But as remarked farther on, by way of a logical sequence, goodness is an active diffusion inasmuch as the agent operates effectively because of the end intended, and this either by a necessity of nature, as the ox generates an ox, or else freely, as when man communicates his knowledge to others or exhorts them to good.

Hence St. Thomas says: “It belongs to the essence of goodness to communicate itself to others. Hence it belongs to the essence of the highest good to communicate itself in the highest manner to the creature, and this is brought about chiefly by . . . (the incarnation of the Word).” Thus self-diffusion primarily belongs to the end as attracting, and afterward to the agent. But God is not necessitated, however, in His external operations, but is absolutely free, for He is in no need of finite goods, and He operates to manifest His goodness, as will be stated farther on.

Therefore, when the Neoplatonists said: “Goodness is essentially self-diffusive,” they did not sufficiently distinguish between the agent and the end, and so they unwarrantably asserted that God operates externally by a necessity of His nature, as the sun diffuses heat and light in the air. The consequence of this was pantheistic emanatism, which is contrary to the dogma of an absolutely free creation.

Reply to third objection. The saying of St. Augustine, “We exist, because God is good,” refers to the final cause. This means that we exist because God willed to manifest His goodness in loving and creating us; thus we receive a certain participation of the divine goodness. Therefore goodness has the aspects of an end.

FIFTH ARTICLE

WHETHER THE ESSENCE OF GOODNESS CONSISTS IN MODE, SPECIES, AND ORDER

State of the question. It is concerned with causated good, as Cajetan says, and this is manifest from the counterargument, which quotes the following definition of goodness given by St. Augustine, as consisting “in everything which God has made.”

The reply in the affirmative is thus presented: “For a thing to be perfect and good it must have a form together with all that precedes and follows upon that form,” for everything is what it is by its form. But the form is itself signified by the species, that which is prerequired for it by the mode, and that which follows upon it by the order. Thus the form of a fruit constitutes it in a certain species; but this presupposes the mode of commensuration of the material and efficient principles, for instance, of the earth and the sun, so that the fruit may attain its ripeness. Finally, in the fruit there is order toward an end, for instance, the preservation of life in

man. Likewise these three conditions are required so that one may be a good painter, a good sculptor, or a good musician. The mode is required for the acquisition of the art, and its order for the end. Thus goodness demands the congruent concurrence of the four causes, because the end is last in the order of execution. Thus the reason is assigned for this descriptive definition given by St. Augustine.

SIXTH ARTICLE

WHETHER GOODNESS IS RIGHTLY DIVIDED INTO THE VIRTUOUS, THE USEFUL, AND THE PLEASANT

State of the question. This question is concerned with transcendental goodness, but in the formal and not in the material sense of the term. Good in the material sense, subjectively considered, is divided into the ten categories. Thus we speak of a good substance, a good quantity, a good quality. . . . Goodness in the formal sense, however, is divided according to the idea of goodness, namely as it is something perfect and desirable. But this division is the foundation for the notion of moral goodness, which is virtuous goodness that is in conformity with the rules of moral action, that is, with the eternal law and right reason.

Certain difficulties are raised against this division. (1) It seems better to divide transcendental goodness by the ten categories in which it is found. (2) This division is not made by members that are opposites to one another, for some thing, for instance, a virtue, is both objectively good and pleasant. (3) There is the aspect of end in goodness, but there is no such aspect in the useful.

The conclusion, however, is affirmative.

1) It is proved on the authority of St. Ambrose, who gives the aforesaid division, which he found in Cicero’s works. It was already given by Aristotle. Thus Aristotle distinguishes between three kinds of friendship, in so far as it is the foundation for goodness that is either useful, or pleasant, or virtuous. This last kind is friendship among the virtuous. This classical division is found in the writings of St. Augustine and Dionysius. The Master of the Sentences divided the subject matter of theology, according as some parts are useful, but as other parts are virtuous and capable of being enjoyed by us.

This classical division, however, is not retained by the Epicureans who, like all materialists and sensualists, belittle virtuous good, and consider that goodness consists only in what is useful and pleasant. Thus they recommend a virtuous life only as a means of avoiding the inconveniences of vices that are in opposition to one another, and not because the object of virtue demands our love.

2) The genuineness of this classical division is proved from reason, for it applies, as St. Thomas says, not only to human goodness, but to goodness as such. A good division has its foundation in the formal aspect of the whole that is to be divided, and so it is with this division. For goodness, inasmuch as it is desirable, terminates the movement of the appetite. But this terminus is either the means (and thus it is called the useful), or it is the ultimate end, as the thing desired for its own sake (and thus it is called the virtuous), or else it is the ultimate end in the form of rest in the thing (and thus it is called the pleasant). This division properly has its foundation in the formal aspect of the whole that is to be divided, and it is effected by parts that are opposites to one another. Thus the division is not accidental, but essential and adequate.

We must particularly insist on the definition of virtuous good. It is that good which is desired for its own sake, as stated in the body of this article, and the reply to the second objection says that “the virtuous is predicated of such as are desirable in themselves,” that is, regardless of any pleasure or usefulness resulting from it, as in the case of telling the truth even though death or martyrdom may be the result of this. As St. Thomas says elsewhere, honest means the same as worthy of honor, and is indeed the object of virtue, and the source of spiritual elegance and beauty. It is also called rational or moral goodness, in so far as it is in conformity with right reason, as the object of the upright will.

Reply to first objection. This division is derived formally in accordance with the formal aspect of goodness, and not materially according as the subject serves as the foundation for this.

Reply to second objection. “This division is not by opposite things but by opposite aspects.” Therefore the same thing, such as a virtue, can be both virtuous and pleasant, and even useful as regards the ultimate end.

However, those things are properly called pleasant that are only pleasant, being sometimes hurtful and contrary to virtue. Likewise those things are properly called useful that are only useful, as money and bitter medicine. St.

Thomas shows elsewhere that the virtuous is desired for its own sake by the rational appetite; that the pleasant is desired for its own sake by the sensitive appetite, and that nothing repugnant to virtuous good is absolutely and truly useful, but relatively so.

Reply to third objection. Goodness is not divided into these three as something univocal, but as something analogical; and it is predicated chiefly of the virtuous, secondly of the pleasant, and lastly of the useful.

First corollary. In this division we have the principle for the refutation of hedonism and utilitarianism, namely, of the false ethics that has its foundation in the pleasant and the useful, but not in the virtuous good. But the sensualists cannot truly preserve in their system the idea of virtuous good, which is good as such, regardless of the pleasure and usefulness resulting from it, as in the case of suffering martyrdom for the love of divine truth.

Second corollary. The first principle of ethics is: "We must do good and avoid evil." The reference here is to virtuous good toward which our rational nature is inclined by its Author. Hence when a person comes fully to the use of reason, such person must love efficaciously the virtuous good for its own sake, and this more than himself. But this implies that confusedly or implicitly, though efficaciously, God, the author of nature and the supreme good, is loved more than oneself. But since this efficacious love, in the state of fallen nature, is impossible without a healing grace, which is also elevating, St. Thomas, speaking of the age of reason, concludes: "If he (the child) then directs himself to the due end, he will by means of grace receive the remission of original sin," namely, by baptism of desire. This remark alone suffices now, so as to show clearly how virtuous good transcends the pleasant and useful.

Doubt. It may be asked whether the brute beast tends at least materially toward the virtuous good that is proportionate to its natural inclination, although it has no knowledge of the end or of the virtuous as such.

We reply in the affirmative with St. Thomas, who says: "Everything (whatsoever creature) naturally loves God more than itself . . . since each part (in the universe of created things) naturally loves the whole more than itself. And each individual naturally loves the good of the species more than its own individual good." Thus the malice of onanism is clearly seen, for it is against the good of the species and of its preservation. In like manner St. Thomas in commenting on these words of Christ, "How often would I have

gathered thy children together as the hen gathers her young under her wings, but thou wouldst not!" has this to say: "The hen, feeling concerned about her young, defends them, and gathers them under her wings. So also Christ takes pity on us, and truly bore our infirmities." From this we clearly see how sublime is virtuous good, which is already materially present in the nobler actions of animals, so that Christ speaking of generosity could appeal to this example of the lower order, an example that is known to all.

And so with this we bring to a close the question of goodness in general.

This question gives us the nominal definition of goodness (that which all things desire), its real definition (perfect and desirable being), its relation to being and to causality, and also its division into the virtuous, the pleasant, and the useful.

CHAPTER VI

QUESTION 6

THE GOODNESS OF GOD

IN this question there are four points of inquiry. It treats first of God as He is in Himself, and then in His relation to creatures. The first two articles consider the question of God's goodness: whether God is good, and whether He is the supreme good. After this there is a discussion of the mode in which goodness belongs to God, namely, whether He alone is essential goodness. Lastly, the question is discussed, whether all things are good by the divine goodness, at least in so far as all things proceed from the divine goodness and tend toward it.

Therefore it treats of ontological goodness, by which God is good and desirable in Himself, and according to which He is the end of all things and the supreme agent communicating to creatures all good things they receive.

But this ontological goodness is the foundation of benevolence or of the love of benevolence, and it is also the foundation of justice and mercy, these being discussed by St. Thomas after his question about the divine will, since justice and mercy are, so to speak, virtues of the divine will. We must draw special attention to this, for many already expect that the discussion of God's goodness means a discussion of His love of benevolence.

In this question it will be seen that St. Thomas proceeds by the way of affirmation and excellence, since goodness is a positive attribute. The middle term of the demonstration in these articles is the first efficient Cause (second proof of God's existence). For the first efficient Cause is the source of all good, and hence it is thus a posteriori evident that this Cause is the essential Good.

FIRST ARTICLE

WHETHER GOD IS GOOD

State of the question. Among philosophers, Plato had said that the supreme reality is the subsistent good. Aristotle, too, says that God is pure Act and, as the end or the supreme good, attracts or draws all things to Himself. Several historians maintain that God, according to Aristotle, is only the end of all things, but not the efficient cause. Certainly Aristotle did not get so far as to admit the idea of a free creation from nothing; but he did not deny that God is in some way the efficient cause of the change in things, and of things themselves. In this question St. Thomas shows that God would not manifest Himself to us as the supreme good and the ultimate end of all things, unless He were the supreme efficient cause. But with this admission, there must be an application of the following principles, namely, that every agent acts with an end in view, and the order of agents must correspond to the order of ends, and the supreme agent to the ultimate end.

The reply of the article is this: Since God is the first effective cause of all things, evidently the aspect of good and of desirableness belong to Him.

1) This truth is revealed in countless passages of Holy Scripture, and is, so to speak, more than of the faith; for if God's goodness is denied there would be nothing left of Christian faith; this denial would be, in a certain sense, something more than heresy, for the heretic denies something and retains something; but with the denial of God's goodness there would be nothing left of the Christian mysteries.

From the Holy Scripture the following text is quoted: "The Lord is good to them that hope in Him, to the soul that seeketh Him." In like manner Christ says: "Why askest thou Me concerning good? One is good, God."

Manichaeism is condemned, which denies that the supreme Good is the sole principle and source of all goodness. Against this heresy the Council of Florence defined that "God is the creator of all things visible and invisible, who when He willed, of His goodness created all creatures, both spiritual and corporeal; the good, indeed, because they were made by the supreme Good; but they are changeable, because they were made from nothing; and it (the Church) asserts that no nature is evil, because every nature as such, is good." In like manner, the Vatican Council says: "God of His goodness . . . to manifest His perfection which He bestows on creatures . . . created them out of nothing.

2) The reply is proved from reason as follows: The effective cause is desirable and good as regards its effects (thus the father is so as regards his children); but God is the first effective cause of all things (2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th proofs of God's existence); therefore God is good as regards all creatures.

The major is proved as follows: The proper perfection of the effect is its likeness to the agent, for every agent makes its like; but everything seeks its own perfection; therefore everything seeks to be like its efficient cause. But if the likeness of the efficient cause is desirable, then a fortiori the effective cause itself is desirable.

Some object that this argument is very involved for the affirmation of this most simple truth: God is good.

We reply by saying that this rather involved argument is expressed more simply by the Christian mind when it is said that God, inasmuch as He is the source of all good things, is in the highest degree good.

But this argument brings out more clearly this great law of progressive development in all created things, namely, that the perfection of anything whatever is for it to be like its cause. Thus the perfection of the boy is that he becomes a man, just as his father is who begot him. In like manner the perfection of the disciple is for him to become like his master. Hence it is natural for the son to love his father, just as it is natural for the father to love his son; but the father's love is stronger because it is the love of one who is the cause.

Hence because God is the first effective cause of all things, evidently He is good. Thus men and especially apostolic men, must manifest His goodness, by laboring effectively as true causes for the salvation of souls. They must have the goodness of a true intermediate cause which is intimately united with the supreme Cause of salvation. Thus the apostles are the salt of the earth and the light of the world, provided they receive the power to live an interior life not from inferiors but from God, who is the source of life. If the apostolic man is thus the true intermediate cause of salvation, he will certainly be desirable and desired, and all will say, as was said of the saints, whose effective influence was an evident manifestation of their goodness, how good he is. This applies far more so to God Himself. This is the profound meaning of this article, which at first sight seems very abstract and metaphysical, and yet there is in it some reference to the

intimate life of a spiritual and apostolic man. In fact, the doctrine of this article is above sentimentalism, and is truly Christian realism.

This will be made much clearer to us in a subsequent article in which it is stated that “the love of God infuses and creates goodness in things,” for His love does not presuppose lovableness in creatures, but posits or creates, preserves and increases, this in them. Thus goodness is appropriated to the Holy Spirit, who proceeds by way of love as personal love.

Reply to first objection. Mode, species, and order, which give us the descriptive definition of goodness, are in God as in the One who is the cause of order.

Reply to second objection. That which all creatures either knowingly or unknowingly love is a certain participated similitude of the divine goodness; thus when the hen gathers her chickens under her wings, she is loving the good or conservation of her species.

SECOND ARTICLE

WHETHER GOD IS THE SUPREME GOOD

State of the question. It is still a question whether there is such goodness in God. Certainly it is of faith that God is supremely, in fact, infinitely, good.

The same middle term is employed in proving this from reason as in proving the conclusion of the preceding article. It is as follows: In the univocal cause the likeness of an effect is found uniformly, but in the higher and non-univocal, cause it is found eminently; but goodness belongs to God as the supreme effective cause of all things, which is non-univocal, yet transcending every genus; therefore goodness belongs to God in a most excellent way. For “all desired perfections flow from Him as from the first cause.” However, the objections of this article are of minor importance, but they are formulated, such as they are, in accordance with the scholastic method of the thirteenth century.

THIRD ARTICLE

WHETHER TO BE ESSENTIALLY GOOD BELONGS TO GOD ALONE

State of the question. Essential goodness is set in opposition to participated goodness. This article is the explanation of our Lord's words when He said: "None is good but God alone."

The reply is in the affirmative; and its proof is the synthesis of what St. Thomas already wrote in another of his works, and is reduced to this syllogism: A thing is good in so far as it is perfect, (1) according to its being, (2) as to its operative principles, (3) according as it attains its end; but this threefold perfection belongs to God essentially, because He alone is His own existence, His own action, and His own end; therefore essential goodness belongs properly to God, and all else is goodness by participation.

The difficulty is that St. Thomas, in virtue of the minor, concludes rather that only God is essentially good, whereas he intended to conclude that only God is the Good essentially, not by participation, that is, He does not participate in goodness. These two conclusions are not however universally the same; for Socrates is by reason of his essence a man, and yet he is not man per essentiam, but by participation. For it is only the "separate man," of which Plato speaks, who would be man per essentiam or the archetype of man.

In reply to this it must be said that in God, though nowhere else, these two modes of predication coincide, or, as Cajetan says, coincide "because of their matter." This means that not only does it follow from the argument of St. Thomas that God is essentially good, but also that He is the Good per essentiam; for God not only has goodness, but He is the very plenitude of being, or He is the supreme perfection, hence supremely desirable, or, in other words, He is bonum per essentiam.

On the contrary, although Socrates is by reason of his essence a man, yet he is not his humanity; for humanity is an essential part in him, and Socrates has this; but he is not his humanity.

Reply to first and third objections. Anything whatever is one or undivided by reason of its essence, but it is not absolutely good by reason of its essence, but because of a superadded perfection.

Reply to second objection. "The essence of a created thing is not its existence," and this is true before the mind considers it. Thus, in the teaching of St. Thomas, created essence and existence, which are not included in one and the same concept, are really distinct. We can find any number of similar expressions in his works.

FOURTH ARTICLE

WHETHER ALL THINGS ARE GOOD BY THE DIVINE GOODNESS

State of the question. This article was written to refute Plato’s error, who held that the species of things are separate entities from individual things; in like manner, he held that the goodness of things is a separate entity from them, so that things are called good by extrinsic denomination and by a certain participation, the nature of which is a secret of Platonism.

This teaching is the result of absolute realism, which maintains that the universal exists not only fundamentally but formally, apart from the thing in which it is found, or that it exists extra-mentally. Thus universal being is confused with the divine being, universal good with the divine good. In other words, the universal in predication is confused with the universal in being and causation. The pupils of Gilbert de la Porrée revived this extreme realism in the Middle Ages.

St. Thomas already examined this question in another of his works. He now briefly recalls to mind Plato’s opinion and concludes: Everything is called good from its own goodness formally and intrinsically as such, and it is called good from the divine goodness as from the effective and exemplary principle of all goodness.

The proof of the first part of this conclusion, which is against absolute realism, is that the species of things are not separated from them, any more than entity, unity, and goodness of things are separated from them. Everything is called formally good by intrinsic denomination, or by reason of its own goodness, which in an individual thing is its individual goodness. Thus the universal does not exist formally outside the mind, but fundamentally inasmuch as in individual things the similarity is either specific, generic, or analogical.

The proof of the second part of the conclusion is clearly deduced from the fourth proof of God’s existence, since more and less are predicated of different things according as they resemble in their different ways something which is the maximum; for multitude does not explain the idea of unity of similarity to be found in them, and everything that is a compound (of receptive capacity and received perfection) needs a cause.

Hence Plato unwarrantably posited a separate or essential man, because man cannot exist apart from matter, and bones and flesh cannot exist unless they are the bones and flesh of this particular person. But he had a good

reason for contending that there is a separate and essential Good. Yet he did not sufficiently distinguish this from universal good; and so we must say that in Platonism there is a pantheistic trend, which is more accentuated in the necessary emanatism of the Neoplatonists, which is radically in opposition to the dogmatic teaching of an absolutely free creation.

St. Thomas does not explicitly refute Manichaeism in this sixth question, because he does this later on when discussing the problem of evil. But this heresy is virtually refuted, since the supreme principle of all things, as stated, is the essential Good.

CHAPTER VII

QUESTION 7

THE INFINITY OF GOD

AFTER a consideration of the divine perfection, the question of God's infinity is discussed, because infinity is a mode of perfection of the divine nature and of every divine attribute. This question considers infinity in the divine nature, and is not concerned with the mode of this infinity in this or that particular divine attribute, such as wisdom or power.

First we consider God's infinity, then we discuss whether anything except God can be essentially infinite, or at least infinite in magnitude or multitude.

FIRST ARTICLE

WHETHER GOD IS INFINITE

State of the question. It concerns infinity of perfection or infinite perfection. The difficulty is: (1) that infinity is attributed also to matter, since there is in matter an infinite capacity for receiving all kinds of forms; (2) that it is attributed likewise to quantity, which can always be increased, as a series of days can; (3) that the coexistence of the finite and the infinite seems an impossibility, for, if the infinite in magnitude exists, no place is left for the finite.

The reply is in the affirmative, however, and it is of faith that God is infinite, or infinitely perfect.

1) Several texts in Holy Scripture assert this. Thus we read: "Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised; and of His greatness there is no end." The Vatican Council declared: "God is incomprehensible and infinite in all perfection."

2) The reply is proved from reason by the following fundamental argument, which St. Thomas considers a simple corollary of the assertion that God is the self-subsisting Being.

Whereas matter is called infinite by an infinity of imperfection, the unreceived form is infinite by an infinity of perfection, at least relatively so. Thus if whiteness were not received in anything, it would have the total perfection of whiteness without any limit. But being is the most formal of all things, as it is the actuality of forms themselves. Therefore being that is not received in anything —and this being is God—is infinite by an infinity of perfection, and not merely relatively as included in some genus as would be the case with whiteness that is not received in anything, but is so absolutely, transcending every genus.

The major is explained in the beginning of the body of this article. The ancient philosophers of the Ionian school, such as Thales, Anaximenes, Anaximander, Heraclitus, attributed infinitude to the first principle because it is the source of an infinity of things. But they erred about the nature of the first principle, considering it to be something material, such as water, air, or fire. Hence they erred about its infinity, which they thought was something material and quantitative as consisting in an infinitely extended body. But infinity of matter is infinity of imperfection or something privative in that matter, which is pure potentiality and lacking in all determination, since it is made finite by the form, is perfected or determined by it.

On the contrary, the form is limited by the matter in which it is received, and the form considered in itself, or as not received in anything, has an infinity of perfection, since it is unlimited and is infinitely capable of being participated in, as in the case of whiteness. Hence if whiteness were not received in anything, it would have the total perfection of whiteness without any limit and would be infinitely perfect in a restricted sense, that is, in the genus of whiteness, though not of heat. Hence the common assertion: Matter is determined by the form, and the form is limited by the matter in which it is received. Thus determination is perfection or action; whereas limitation is imperfection. It is a question of the form as such, which is thus infinitely perfect in a relative sense, if it is not received in anything. But such a form (for instance, that of an ox) is perfected together with matter, without which it cannot exist.

The minor, however, is evident, namely, that being is the most formal of all things, since it is the actuality of the forms themselves. Therefore being

that is not received in anything, which is God, is infinite with an infinity of perfection, and absolutely so. Thus St. Thomas makes the transition from the relative infinity—for instance, of whiteness, that cannot be limited by matter; or of Michaelness, that is not indeed limited by matter—to the absolute infinity of the self-subsisting and unreceived Being, who is not limited by an essence which is distinct from Himself and in which He would be received.

Reply to the first and second objections. The infinity which is attributed to quantity has reference to matter and therefore does not apply to God.

Reply to third objection. Pure Act or being that is not received in any other is really and essentially distinct from every finite being; for every finite being is a compound of limiting essence and of limited or participated existence. Thus is solved the difficulty of the coexistence of the finite and the infinite. The existence of the infinite does not prevent the existence of the finite, which is distinct from it. Even if it were to prevent the existence of the finite, this would be because the infinite could not produce anything external to itself; and thus this being would not be infinite, because the power of causing, or infinite power, would be denied this being. The infinite being can indeed not create, because He was most free in creating; but He must of necessity have the power to create.

Objection of Suarez. Suarez, who came after Scotus, says that the aforesaid argument presented by St. Thomas presupposes something not admitted by all theologians, namely, the real distinction between created essence and existence. In fact, Suarez denies this distinction and says: “Being is not finite, because it is received in some other; and it is not infinite, because it is not received in any other.”

In reply to this, we say with John of St. Thomas that, even apart from the direct consideration of the real distinction between essence and existence, the reason given by St. Thomas is still cogent. Indeed, before we consider that the existence of the creature is received subjectively in the created essence and is really distinct from it, we see that it is received objectively and by participation, since it is produced contingently by God and contingently belongs to the subject, which does not have to exist. On the contrary, self-subsisting Being is not received in any other objectively and by participation, because it is not produced, and is not a contingent but a necessary predicate of the subject.

But from this it follows that God alone is His own existence, and that contrary to this the creature, before any consideration on our part, is not its existence, but has existence, just as matter is not form, but receives it. Thus it remains true, as St. Thomas says, that there is a real distinction between created essence and existence, and this for three reasons: (1) because actuality (which of itself is unlimited), is de facto limited only by the real capacity in which it is received; (2) because created essence and existence cannot be reduced to the same concept (as animality and rationality are reduced to the concept of humanity); (3) because existence is a contingent predicate for every creature, and is not included in the adequate concept of its essence.

But how does Suarez prove God's infinity? He proves that God is infinite because no being can be thought of greater than God; whereas it is possible to think of something greater than any finite being whatever.

As John of St. Thomas remarks, even St. Thomas proposed this argument; but it does not bring out clearly what is the very foundation and reason for God's essential infinity, since it does not take as its starting point the very lack of terms limiting His existence.

On the contrary, when it is said that God is the self-subsisting and unreceived Being, the reason is given for His infinite perfection, just as, if whiteness were of itself subsistent and unreceived, it would have all the perfection of whiteness without limitation. The self-subsisting and unreceived Being has, without limitation, all the plenitude of being.

St. Thomas shows farther on that there cannot be two angels of the same species, because the angel's nature is a subsistent form, which is not received in matter and is not capable of being participated in by matter. Thus, by the very fact that Michaelness is not received in any other, it is relatively infinite; the Deity, however, is absolutely infinite. Briefly stated: God is supremely determined or perfect, and therefore unlimited. The reference is to intensive infinite perfection.

But from the infinity of God's being is derived the infinite perfection of His operation, namely, of His intellection, love, and power: for operation follows being, and the mode of operation follows the mode of being.

SECOND ARTICLE

WHETHER ANYTHING BUT GOD CAN BE ESSENTIALLY INFINITE

State of the question. This article is written for the purpose of distinguishing more clearly between absolute infinity and relative infinity. It begins by proposing three difficulties. (1) Why cannot God produce anything infinite, since His power is infinite? (2) The human intellect, for the very reason that it has knowledge of the universal, has infinite power in knowing all the singulars contained in the universal. (3) Prime matter itself is said to be infinite.

Conclusion. Things other than God can be relatively infinite, but not absolutely infinite.

This conclusion is of faith. Only God is infinitely perfect, “ineffably exalted above all things besides Himself which exist or are conceivable” as the Vatican Council says.

The reason is that absolute infinity is the infinity of the being that is not received in any other, and there can be only one such infinity, just as, if whiteness were not received in any other, there would be but one whiteness.

However, immaterial forms, such as Michaelness, are relatively infinite with an infinity of perfection. Thus Michael has all the perfection that belongs to his species. Infinity that is said to be secundum quid is also relative, or as referring to some genus of infinity, whereas infinity that is said to be so simpliciter, is absolute infinity. But matter is relatively infinite, with an infinity of imperfection, since it has a real capacity for receiving all natural forms.

It must be noted that the end of the argumentative part of this article again affirms clearly the real distinction between created essence and existence in the following words: “Because a created subsisting form (as Michaelness) has being, yet is not its own being, it follows that its being is received and contracted to a determinate nature. Hence it cannot be absolutely infinite.”

Likewise, in the reply to the first objection we read: “It is against the nature of a made thing for its essence to be its existence; because subsisting being is not a created being.” Thus God, although He is omnipotent, cannot make something that is absolutely infinite, because this is really an impossibility.

Reply to second objection. Our intellect, since it transcends matter, naturally tends to extend itself in a way to know an infinity of things; yet it knows them in a finite way. Thus farther on it will be stated that our

intellect elevated by the light of glory can directly see God's essence, but in a finite way, not comprehensively as it is seen by God Himself.

THIRD ARTICLE

WHETHER AN ACTUALLY INFINITE MAGNITUDE CAN EXIST

State of the question. It is asked, for instance, whether it is possible for air to be infinite in extent, and yet for it to be finite according to the essence of air. The purpose of this article and the following one is to distinguish between actual or categorematic infinity, and potential or syncategorematic infinity, which is the finite that is always perfectible, or which is always capable of having something added to it, as in the case of magnitude or a series of numbers. This distinction was already made by Aristotle, who showed that everything which is continuous is, indeed, infinitely divisible, but is never infinitely divided; for it consists, indeed, of parts that can always be divided and of terminating points. In like manner, the sides of a polygon inscribed in a circle can always be subdivided, and yet the polygon will never be equal to the circumference. It must be observed that Spinoza, not sufficiently distinguishing between infinity of perfection and infinity of imperfection—a distinction which St. Thomas had made in the first article of this question-said that actually infinite extension is one of God's attributes.

The conclusion of St. Thomas is: "No natural body, in fact, no mathematical body can be actually infinite."

A physical body is an existing subject of three dimensions; in it are matter, form, and sensible qualities. A mathematical body is merely quantity according to three dimensions. This distinction was not sufficiently upheld by Descartes.

The first part of the conclusion, concerning natural bodies, is proved in two ways; metaphysically and physically.

The metaphysical proof may be thus enunciated: Determinate accidents, and hence determinate quantity, follow upon a determinate form. But every natural body, for instance, air or water, has a determinate specific form; so also has every created being. Therefore every natural body has a determinate quantity.

The major has its foundation in the principle that accidents in-here in substance, and, as it were, flow from it or are derived or emanate from it. Therefore an infinite accident is not derived from a finite substantial form; otherwise this finite form would be infinite in power.

It may be objected, however, that infinite air or infinite water would not constitute one individual body, but would be an aggregation of molecules of either water or air. In reply we say that then this would be another question, which is solved in the subsequent article about infinite multitude.

The physical proof is thus formulated:

Every natural body has some natural movement, either direct or circular. Thus the direct tendency of a stone is downward, but the movement of the planets is circular (or elliptical). But an infinite body could not be so moved; not indeed by a direct movement, because it would already occupy every place; nor could it be so moved by a circular movement because the lines, the farther they are drawn from the center of such a body as this toward the circumference (which would be in no place), would be infinitely distant from one another, and thus one of these lines could never reach the place occupied by another; but such a condition is required for the circular movement of any body revolving in the same place by a rotatory motion. There would be neither periphery nor circular motion in this periphery. Thus Paschal speaks of some sphere whose center would be everywhere and its circumference nowhere.

This physical argument presupposes the doctrine of natural motion as opposed to violent motion and as terminating at some natural place, as in the motion of a stone downward to the center of the earth. But after Galileo’s experiments dealing with the falling of any body in a vacuum, this doctrine of the natural motion of bodies cannot now be admitted, at least without some modifications. However, modern physics has retained something of this teaching in the law of the diminution of energy. In accordance with this law, the heat required for the production of local motion cannot be fully restored by the conversion of this local motion into heat, and thus the whole world tends by a natural motion toward a certain state of equilibrium.

The proposed argument seems a sound one, if it is conceded that every natural body has a natural motion, at least in the same place. But some may say that this infinite body cannot be moved all at once as a compact mass, but perhaps the parts of this body can be moved.

In reply to this we say that then we are concerned with another question, namely, that of the actually infinite multitude of distinct parts, which is discussed in the following article.

But can one imagine an actually existing mathematical body that would be infinite in magnitude? St. Thomas replies in the negative at the end of the argumentative part of this article. His reason is that this body could not be actual without some form or figure. But every figure is finite. Therefore it is impossible to imagine an actually existing body that would be infinite in magnitude.

Nevertheless St. Thomas himself, commenting on this last proof, says: “It is not conclusive but only probable, because whoever would assert the existence of an infinite body would not concede that it is of the essence of a body to be bounded by a surface, unless perhaps potentially, although this view is probable and much argued.” Furthermore it must be said that a mathematical body cannot naturally exist without a subject that is a composite of matter and form, and thus the previous arguments remain in force.

Reply to first objection. In geometry by the expression “infinite” is meant an actually finite line that can always be extended.

Reply to second objection. Infinite is not against the nature of magnitude in general, but it is against the nature of any of its species, because any species whatever of magnitude has a finite figure. “Now what is not possible in any species cannot exist in the genus.” This last proposition confirms the probable argument about a mathematical body, given at the end of the argumentative part of this article.

Reply to third objection. “The infinite is not in the addition of magnitude, but only in division.” The first part of this statement is true of a natural body, because it increases until it reaches a determinate size that is proportionate to its specific form. Moreover, even if a body were capable of infinite increase, it would never be actually or categorematically infinite, but only potentially or syncategorematically.

Reply to fourth objection. It is conceded that infinite is not against the nature of time and movement, because time and movement differ from magnitude inasmuch as they are not in actuality as to the whole of their being, but only successively. Hence there seems to be no repugnance in the idea that the movement of the heavenly bodies and time should be from

eternity, as Aristotle thought, and then there would be neither a first revolution of the sun nor a first day.

FOURTH ARTICLE

WHETHER AN INFINITE MULTITUDE CAN EXIST

State of the question. This question, is a very difficult one, this being the decision of St. Thomas, as will at once be seen, especially from what he wrote on this subject in another of his works in which he stated: “Whoever would assert that any multitude is infinite, would not mean that it is a number, or that it belongs to the species of number. For number adds to multitude the idea of measurement. Number is, indeed, multitude measured by one.” Hence it is certain that an infinite number is a contradiction in terms, because every number bears a fixed relation to unity, and is the result of addition beginning from one, which is the principle of number. But the question is, whether an actually infinite and innumerable multitude, such as of grains of sand, is an impossibility. We have already discussed this question elsewhere.

It is difficult for the peripatetic philosopher to give a negative reply to this question, because for him, as also for St. Thomas, there does not seem to be any repugnance in the idea that the world may have been created from eternity. In this case there would have been no commencement of motion, for instance, of the sun; there would have been no first revolution of the sun, no first day, and there would be no difference between creation and preservation of things in existence. We find it difficult to imagine this, yet there does not seem to be any repugnance in it according to St. Thomas. It would be like a footprint made in the sand from eternity by an eternal foot, which would have a priority not of time but of causality as regards its imprint.

But if it were so, already the series of days antecedently would be actually infinite, just as the series of acts of immortal souls subsequently will be infinite. It is indeed true that past days, since they no longer exist, do not constitute an actually infinite multitude of actually existing parts. But in this hypothesis, there is nothing repugnant in the idea of God creating from eternity on any day whatever a grain of sand or an angel, and forever conserving these effects in being. In this case there would already

be antecedently an actual infinite multitude of grains of sand, or of angels, although there could always be made an addition to these subsequently.

But these difficulties were not unknown to St. Thomas; in fact, he hints at them in the beginning of this article by remarking: (1) Number can be multiplied to infinity; nor is it impossible for a potentiality to be made actual; (2) the species of figures are infinite; thus the sides of a polygon can be multiplied to infinity; (3) if we suppose a multitude of things to exist, for instance, grains of sand, there can still be infinitely many others added to these. This third difficulty finds its confirmation in the consideration of the non-repugnance of the world having been created freely from eternity, without a first day; for as was said, if on any day whatever, God had eternally created one grain of sand, and had afterward conserved all these grains in being, then the multitude of these grains would be actually infinite antecedently, and the multitude of these grains would be innumerable in a regressive series starting from the last created and going back to the earlier creations, because in this hypothesis there would not have been a first grain created, just as there would not have been a first day. But the days and years would have been from eternity, just as forever without end the intellectual and volitional acts of immortal souls are multiplied.

We shall see that it can be denied that St. Thomas took a definite stand in this difficult problem. Nevertheless the Thomists and many other Scholastics commonly deny the possibility of an actually infinite multitude of actually coexisting things. Many of them, however, grant that a multitude of past days could be actually infinite antecedently and innumerable, just as a multitude of intellectual acts of an immortal soul will be infinite subsequently, but these acts do not all exist at the same time.

Contrary to this among those who maintain the possibility of an actually infinite multitude of even coexisting things, must be named Scotus, and the nominalists Gregory of Arimini, Ockham, Gabriel Biel, as also Vasquez. The Jesuits of Coimbra University considered it to be a probable opinion that there is no repugnance in the idea of an actual infinite. Cardinal Toletus was of the same opinion. Of modern philosophers, Descartes and Leibnitz admit the actual infinite. Likewise Spinoza admits in a pantheistic sense the infinity of all things, in existence, magnitude, and multitude. In more recent times this point has been the subject of great controversy, for instance, in France. Charles Renouvier keenly defended finiteness, and Milhaud defended the opposite thesis.

We must first of all exclude arguments that have no probative force, before we consider the more cogent reasons advanced by St. Thomas.

It is quite astonishing that several authors did not even see the difficulty of the problem and said: Every multitude is divisible into two parts. But any part of it is finite. Therefore the whole multitude is finite. Those who assume that multitude is actually infinite antecedently, would reply: Certainly multitude can be divided into two parts, one of them being finite both antecedently and subsequently, and the other being infinite antecedently. Others wish to prove the impossibility of an actually infinite multitude, because something could be added to and subtracted from it whereas nothing can be added to or subtracted from the infinite. It is easy to reply to this objection by saying that an actually infinite multitude requires merely that it have antecedently no beginning, and then something can be added to or subtracted from it subsequently, just as this could be done to the succession of days, if it were from eternity.

Finally, some unwarrantably assert that of two actually infinite multitudes, one cannot be greater than the other. But it would be so if the series of days were from eternity, because the series of hours would still be much greater.

We reply by distinguishing the antecedent: of two actually infinite multitudes one cannot be greater than the other, in their infinite aspect, this I concede; in their finite aspect, this I deny. Thus the series of hours would be greater in their finite aspect, so that there could be a series of days greater in their finite aspect by the addition of new days.

St. Thomas begins the argumentative part of this article by referring to the opinion of Avicenna and Algazel and then refuting it. He denies the possibility of an actually infinite multitude of coexisting things, and admits the possibility of a potentially infinite multitude.

The opinion of Avicenna and Algazel is this: An actually infinite multitude of things not essentially but accidentally subordinated, is possible. Examples of this are, if the generation of man actually depended on the man generating, and on the sun and on other agents actually exerting their influence in an infinite series; or if we take the case of a hammer moved by the hand, and by the will, and so on in an infinite series. In such cases there would be no supreme efficient cause, and hence no secondary causes which in their causation are dependent solely on the supreme cause.

But according to Avicenna and Algazel, it is not repugnant to reason that there should be an infinite series of accidentally subordinated causes. This would be the case if the artificer were to make something with an infinite multitude of hammers, inasmuch as one after the other may be broken. This is accidental multitude, for it happens by accident, inasmuch as one hammer or mallet is broken and another is used.

It must be observed that St. Thomas admits this saying: “It is not impossible to proceed to accidental infinity as regards efficient causes . . . as an artificer acts by means of many hammers accidentally, because one after the other may be broken.”

But St. Thomas denies that any particular consequence follows from this general assertion: namely, that now there would be an actually infinite multitude of coexisting things, for instance, of broken hammers or of immortal souls, granted that the series of generations is eternal. St. Thomas seems to see no repugnance in an actually infinite multitude of past things or of past days, which are no longer in existence, of generations of animals, for instance, which are now not in existence; but he denies this for the generation of men, because there would now be an actually infinite multitude (antecedently) of immortal souls. He excludes the particular reason given by Avicenna, with the following remark: “One might say that the world was eternal, or at least some creature, as an angel, but not man. But we are considering the question in general, whether any creature can exist from eternity.” In like manner, in the reply to the first objection he says: “A day is reduced to act successively, and not all at once,” so also a series of days.

The conclusion of St. Thomas is this: An actually infinite multitude of coexisting things, even accidentally connected, is an impossibility.

Reasonable proofs are given which, however, according to the judgment of St. Thomas, do not appear to be incontestable.

The counterargument is taken from the Scripture: “Thou hast ordained all things in measure, and number, and weight.” But this is said of those things that have been made, so that it leaves undecided the question of those things that can come into existence. The body of the article has two arguments; the first is derived from the determinate species of multitude, the other from the fixed intention of the Creator. The first argument is reduced to the following syllogism: Every kind of multitude must belong to some species of multitude. But no species of multitude is infinite; for the species of

multitude are to be reckoned according to the species of numbers and any number whatever is finite, being multitude measured by one. Therefore no kind of multitude is infinite.

Doubt. Is this an incontestable argument? In answer we should note what St. Thomas wrote, following the statement of this proof as given by Aristotle. St. Thomas says: “It must be observed that these arguments are probable, expressing the commonly accepted view; they are not, however, rigorously conclusive: because . . . if anyone were to assert that any multitude is infinite, this would not mean that it is a number or that it belongs to the species of number: for by number a multitude becomes measurable, as is stated in the tenth book of the Metaphysics, and therefore number is said to be a species of discrete quantity; but this is not the case with multitude which is of the nature of a transcendental.” Thus it is that things of the same species are numbered, and the multitude of angels, who are not of the same species, is not a number. However, it must be observed that St. Thomas wrote his commentary on the Physics in 1264, and the first part of the Theological Summa in 1265. In fact, in 1264 he wrote in another work: “It has not yet been proved that God cannot bring it about that there be actually infinite beings,” for instance, the creation from eternity on any day whatever (without there being a first day) a grain of sand, and the conservation in being of all these grains. Then this multitude would be antecedently infinite and innumerable.

Likewise St. Thomas wrote later on (1274) as follows: “To make something actually infinite, or to bring it about that infinites should exist actually and simultaneously, is not contrary to the absolute power of God, because it implies no contradiction; but if we consider the way God acts, it is not possible. For God acts through the intellect, and through the word, which assigns to all things their forms, and hence it must be that all things are formally made (that is, determined) by Him.”

This last consideration belongs to the discussion of the second argument. But on first inspection it does not appear to be incontestable. An adversary could say that a multitude of things accidentally connected (as grains of sand) is not necessarily in any determinate species, and in this it differs, for instance, from a plant or animal. Every plant must be in a certain genus and species, and the same is to be said of every animal, because its parts unite to form one natural and determinate whole. But it is not so evident that such is the case with a multitude of accidentally connected things; for it would

have to be proved that an innumerable and actually infinite multitude of things antecedently and simultaneously existing is an impossibility. It is indeed evident that an infinite number is a contradiction in terms; but it is not so clear that such is the case with an actually infinite multitude, because, as St. Thomas says, “by number a multitude becomes measurable; for number is multitude measured by one.” Moreover, there is an infinite multitude of possible things.

St. Thomas says that “God can make something else better than each individual thing.” Why then could not God from eternity (that is, without any first day) have created every day an angel and always more perfect angels, and preserve them in being? Then the multitude of these would not be a certain number or measurable by number, but would be infinite antecedently. Hence the first argument does not appear to be incontestable; to consider it as absolutely certain would seem to be exaggerated realism. Moderate realism can indeed prove that every body, for instance, a mineral or a living being, which is essentially one as a natural whole, is in some species under some genus; but it does not conclusively prove anything like this of a multitude of simultaneously existing things that are accidentally connected.

The second argument is derived from the clear intention of the Creator, and is reduced to the following syllogism: Everything created is comprehended under some clear intention of the Creator; but multitude in nature is created; therefore it is finite.

St. Thomas seems to propose this as a certain argument, for he wrote: “If we consider the way God acts, it is not possible. For God acts through the intellect and through the word, which assigns to all things their forms.”

What force has this argument? The work just quoted gives us the answer in these words: “To make something actually infinite is not contrary to the absolute power of God, because it implies no contradiction. But if we consider the way (assigning the forms) God acts, it is not possible.”

This is the same as saying that it is not intrinsically impossible according to God’s merely absolute power, but that it is so if we consider God’s power of ordaining all things in accordance with His divine wisdom, whether this power is ordinary or extraordinary. Thus it is shown farther on that God could by His absolute power annihilate all creatures, immortal souls, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the humanity of Christ, but this is not possible in accordance with God’s power in ordaining all things (whether it is ordinary

or extraordinary), for there can be no purpose or end in view in such annihilation, “since the power of God is conspicuously shown in His preserving all things in existence.” But it is not so clear that this argument applies as to the impossibility of an actually infinite multitude.

Is this argument as thus set forth incontestable? It is not quite certain that St. Thomas himself considered it an incontestable argument, for farther on he proposes the following objection: “Everything that works by intellect works from some starting point; but God acts by intellect; therefore His work has a starting point. The world, therefore, which is His effect, did not always exist.” He replies to this objection as follows: “This is the argument of Anaxagoras (Physics, Bk. III, chap. 4, no. 5, lect. 6 of St. Thomas). But it does not lead to a necessary conclusion, except as to that intellect which deliberates in order to find out what should be done, which is like motion. Such is the human intellect, but not the divine intellect.”

Moreover, this argument would have more force if it referred to any created thing whatever taken by itself, the parts of which unite to form one natural whole; for instance, if it referred to every plant or animal. But it has less force if it refers to a multitude of accidentally connected things; for if, every day from eternity, God had created the souls of men, any one of these would be determinate, and yet the multitude of these souls would be infinite antecedently. Nor it is easy to prove that God cannot so bring them into being and preserve them in being.

Finally, it must be observed that no serious consequence arises if we say with St. Thomas that these arguments are not incontestable; for no truth of great importance has its foundation in them. On the contrary, a very serious consequence would arise if the proofs of God’s existence depended on this conclusion. We have already seen that the proofs of God’s existence have not their foundation in the principle that it is impossible to proceed to infinity in a series of accidentally subordinated past causes, but in the principle that it is impossible to proceed to infinity in a series of essentially subordinated and actually existing causes. And this last process is impossible, not because an actually infinite multitude is impossible, but because secondary causes do not act unless they are premoved to act by the supreme Cause. If therefore the supreme Cause does not exist, or does not move others to act, then there are no secondary causes actually in motion and no effects. Therefore no serious consequence arises, if the aforesaid arguments of this article are not incontestable.

From the very fact that the arguments are not considered by St. Thomas to be incontestable, this brings out more clearly the demonstrative validity required by him in a truly apodictic argument, in such arguments, for instance, as the proofs of God's existence.

Cajetan in his commentary is moderate in his statements. He writes: "It is sufficiently in agreement with the art of logic, so that it can be enunciated as a universal proposition, that every species of multitude is according to some species of number." But when it is a question of an apodictic argument, he says more than "it is sufficiently in agreement with the art of logic."

At the end of the argumentative part of this article, St. Thomas says without any hesitation: "A potentially infinite multitude is possible," whether this be the continuous divisible to infinity, or the multitude to which something can always be added. From the replies to the objections evidently St. Thomas understands an actually infinite multitude as consisting of things simultaneously existing, so that it does not seem to be contrary to reason for a series of past days to be infinite antecedently.

RECAPITULATION

Thus the question of the divine infinity comes to an end. There is infinity of perfection, so that God is both in the highest degree determined, as pure Act, and unlimited, since He is the unreceived and self-subsistent Being, possessing in Himself all plenitude or perfection of being, just as whiteness that is not received in any other would have all the perfection of whiteness. Only God, who is not a body, is infinitely perfect. Hence also, if besides God there existed an infinite body or an actually infinite multitude either of angels or of bodies, none of these would be confused with God. It was therefore a great mistake for Spinoza to say that an actually infinite multitude is one of God's attributes. This would mean that God is a body, just as man is. But this has already been refuted. It would follow, of course, from this that God is a composite of spirit and body; but every composite demands a cause, and in the final analysis a most simple cause, which is to being as A is to A, the self-subsisting Being without limitation of essence. "Things in themselves different (as spirit and body) cannot unite unless something causes them to unite," says St. Thomas, in treating of God's absolute simplicity, which would be destroyed in saying with Spinoza that

infinite and divisible quantity is one of God's attributes. Thus not everything that is in God would be God, but a part of God.

All these things are contrary to reason if it is properly understood that God is the self-subsisting Being, who is (without any limitation of essence) not received in any other, incapable of this, and to whom there can be no superaddition of any accident, as are the finite modes of Spinoza, which would be successively produced from eternity.

From all that has been said we are assured that the supreme truth of the treatise on the one God is this: in God alone are essence and existence identical. It follows from this, as we have said, that God is absolutely simple and unchangeable and hence He is really and essentially distinct from the composite and changeable world. The infinity of God's intelligence, of His love, justice, mercy, power, follows from the infinity of the divine nature, because infinity is a mode of any of the divine attributes.

CHAPTER VIII

QUESTION 8

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD IN THINGS

IN this chapter we consider how God is immanent to the world, although at the same time transcending it. We shall also clearly distinguish between this immanence and pantheism, inasmuch as immanence belongs to God not as the formal or material cause of the world, but as its efficient or extrinsic cause, which is intimately connected, however, with the effect that immediately proceeds from it.

This question is placed right after that of God's infinity, because God's immensity and omnipresence are discussed in it, and these are in some way related to God's infinity.

First of all, we must note that immensity and omnipresence have not absolutely the same meaning. Immensity, or impossibility of being circumscribed by real space, is commonly defined as the aptitude or capacity to exist in all things and places. But omnipresence is the actual presence of God in all places. Hence immensity is an attribute that is an indispensable accompaniment of the divine nature. Even if God had not created, He would have been immense; on the contrary, omnipresence is a relative attribute since it refers to actually existing creatures.

There are four points of inquiry in this question. (1) Whether God is in all things. The question considers His actual presence, but the mode of His presence is likewise touched upon in this article. (2) Whether God is everywhere, or in all things in so far as these are in place. (3) How God is everywhere: whether by essence, power, and presence. (4) Whether to be everywhere belongs to God alone. The first article is of great importance, and from this article it is evident that there is a considerable difference between the doctrine of St. Thomas and that proposed later on by Scotus, as we shall at once see.

FIRST ARTICLE

WHETHER GOD IS IN ALL THINGS

State of the question. Several difficulties are proposed: (1) that, since God is above all, He is not in all things; (2) that God rather contains things than is contained by things; (3) that God is the most powerful of agents and therefore He can, like the sun, act at a distance, and all the more so inasmuch as He is the more powerful agent; (4) that God does not seem to be in the demons, and therefore He is not in all things that exist.

It must be observed that because of these and similar difficulties several persons denied that God is in all things. Thus the Manichaeans said that only spiritual things are subject to the divine power, but that corporeal things are subject to the power of the contrary principle. Some denied God's existence in things by His general presence, inasmuch as they said that divine providence does not extend to the lower grades of being. Moreover, certain Jews confined God to the temple of Jerusalem. Lastly, the Socinians and certain Calvinists said that God is everywhere by His power and action, making His presence felt as the sun does on things here below, but that He is substantially present only in heaven.

Reply. God is in all things, and intimately so.

1) In evidence of this we may quote the following texts from Holy Scripture: "Whither shall I go from Thy spirit? Or whither shall I flee from Thy face? If I ascend into heaven, Thou art there; if I descend into hell, Thou art present." "Do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord?" "He is not far from every one of us, for in Him we live and move and are." "In Him are all things." "One God and Father of all, who is above all and through all, and in us all." Moreover, Isaias says: "Lord, Thou hast wrought all our works for us."

But we must seek for the reason why God, who is pure spirit, and ineffably exalted above all things, is in all things, even those that are corporeal. St. Thomas gives us the reason for this in the body of this article, when he says: "God is in all things, neither as part of their essence (matter or form) nor as an accident, but as an agent is present to that upon which it works." It is proved as follows:

Every agent must be joined to that wherein it acts immediately, by virtual contact if not by quantitative contact, which does not belong to an incorporeal agent; but God is the proper and immediate cause of the

production and conservation of all things in being; therefore God is in all things as agent, not by quantitative contact, since God is incorporeal, but by His virtual contact, which is really not distinct from His essence.

Then St. Thomas proves that God, as agent, is innermost in all things, because He conserves in them that which is more inherent, namely, "being which is formal in respect of everything found in a thing," Just as, in anything whatever, form is more inherent than matter, because it contains and determines the matter (for instance, in us the soul remains just the same, whereas the body undergoes a change), so being is more inherent in anything whatever than the form, because it is related to the form as its ultimate actuality. All that is contained in anything is actuated by being, either by substantial being or by accidental being.

In this article St. Thomas declares but does not prove, that God is the conservative and immediate cause of being in all things. This he proves farther on, saying: "As the becoming of a thing cannot continue when that action of the agent ceases which causes the becoming of the effect (as when the building of the house ceases, the house ceases to be built), so neither can the being of a thing continue after that action of the agent has ceased which is the cause of the effect not only in becoming but also in being."

Thus when color ceases to affect the sense of sight, sense perception of color ceases; likewise, when the end, such as health, ceases to attract, then the desire ceases for the means, such as medicine, to attain the end; also when the principles of a demonstration cease to have any force, then there is no more evidence in the conclusion. When the sun ceases to illumine, there is no longer light in the air. If therefore God is the proper cause of created being, which is distinct from the becoming of things, then the being of things cannot continue in existence without God's preservative action.

In the body of the article, however, it is proved in a few words that "created being is the proper effect of God, just as to ignite is the proper effect of fire." The reason is that God is essentially being. Thus He is the cause of participated being. For the proper effect is that which necessarily and immediately depends on its proper cause. The proper effect is like a property manifested ad extra, for it is related to its proper cause, as a property is related to its essence; but it is external to its cause. Thus the killer kills (for there can be no one killed without a killer); so also the builder builds, the painter paints, the singer sings. Thus God brings things into existence and preserves them in being. Indeed, as St. Thomas says

more explicitly, “the more universal effects must be reduced to the more universal and prior causes. But among all effects the most universal is being itself. Hence it must be the proper effect of the first and most universal cause, and that is God.”

Thus my free choice, as it is my own personal choice, is the proper effect of my will; but as it is a being, it is the proper effect of God. Thus God is in all things by a virtual act, preserving them in being.

However, there is still a difficulty in this demonstration. We have yet to show that God immediately preserves things in being, and not through the intermediary of some other being.

It is only in one of his subsequent articles that St. Thomas explicitly proves this for us, when he shows that there can be no instrumental cause in God’s creative act: “Now the proper effect of God creating is what is presupposed to all other effects, and that is absolute being. Hence nothing else can act dispositively and instrumentally to this effect, since creation is not from any presupposed (subject), which can be disposed by the action of the instrumental agent.” There would be no effect produced by the instrument, and, moreover, the instrumental action would be an accident in God, and it would have to terminate in something that is acted upon, that is, in a pre-existing subject, and there is nothing such in creation.

In like manner, St. Thomas shows farther on that God preserves the being of things directly, and indirectly the less universal effects, for he says: “An effect is preserved by its proper cause on which it depends. Now just as no effect can be its own cause, but can only produce another effect, so no effect can be endowed with the power of self-preservation, but only with the power of preserving another.” Thus the sun is the conservator of light in the air inasmuch as it is light, but not inasmuch as it is being, because the sun is just as much a created being as light is. Hence just as God does not create by means of an instrument, neither does He preserve things in being, inasmuch as they are being, by means of an instrument, but does so immediately, as stated in this article.

Thus the major of this article is explained; namely, “Every agent must be joined to that wherein it acts immediately, and be in virtual contact with it.” But if the agent is corporeal, there are two ways in which it comes immediately in contact with its effect, namely, by its quantitative matter and by its power. But if the agent is incorporeal, it does not come immediately

in contact with its effect by quantitative matter, but by its power. In this case there is immediate contact both of power and suppositum.

There is immediate contact of power because the divine power does not produce its effect through some intermediary power; for it does not operate by the power of a higher agent, but immediately of itself.

There is also immediate contact of suppositum, that is, there is no intermediate suppositum between God preserving and the being of the thing preserved; for there is no instrumental cause in the creative act and in the immediate preservation of things in being. Nor is the divine power something distinct from God, for it is the very essence of God, since God is His own action and His own being. Thus St. Thomas proves that God is in all things by His preservative action.

This conclusion is confirmed by the solution of the objections.

Reply to first objection. God, who transcends all things, not locally but by the excellence of His nature, is in all things, not as a part of their essence but as the agent who is the cause of being in all things.

Reply to second objection. God, being pure spirit, is in things as containing things, in a way, as the soul contains the body. However, God contains things, not as a form determining matter, but as a cause conserving the effect.

Reply to third objection. No agent acts upon any distant thing except through some medium. Thus the sun illumines and imparts heat to bodies on this earth through the medium of the air and ether, for the power of the agent can be only in a subject; but if it is not in the subject to which it properly belongs, then it is in an intermediate subject, as in an instrument. But, as stated, God cannot make use of an instrument in creating and preserving things in being, inasmuch as they are being. Therefore He preserves them immediately. As St. Thomas in this article says: “But it belongs to the great power of God that He acts immediately in all things,” because He alone is the proper Cause of being as such in things.

Hence to the objection, “The more powerful an agent is, the more extended is its action,” we must reply with the following distinction: that it is so when there is some medium, this I concede; when there is no medium, then I deny it. Thus while the sun preserves light as such, God preserves the same as being; just as He preserves the sun as being. Moreover, matter, the human soul, and angels can be produced only by God’s creative act, and their preservation in being depends on God alone.”

Reply to fourth objection. God is in the demons, not as preserving the deformity of sin in them, which is not from Him, but as preserving them in their nature.

In order to bring out more clearly the meaning and validity of St. Thomas' doctrine, these objections may be presented in syllogistic form. Thus the syllogism serves as a means of direct perception.

1) What is above all things is not in all things; but God is above all things; therefore God is not in all things.

Reply. I distinguish the major; what is above all things because of the dignity of its nature is not in all things as an essential part, this I concede; that it is not in all things as their cause, this I deny. I concede the minor, and distinguish the conclusion in the same way as the major.

2) But neither is God in all things as cause. Therefore the difficulty remains. The proof: The supreme cause produces inferior things only through the mediation of secondary causes; but God is not the sole, but the supreme cause; therefore God is not in all things as cause, at least not in inferior things.

Reply. I distinguish the major: that the supreme cause does not produce particular being, luminous being, for instance, this I concede; that it does not produce absolute being, or being as such, this I deny. I concede the minor, and distinguish the conclusion in the same way as the major.

3) But neither God as cause of being as such is in all things. Proof: The more powerful an agent is, the more it can act at a distance; but God is the most powerful of agents; therefore God can produce the being of things at a distance.

Reply. I distinguish the major: that the agent can act at a distance without an intermediary, this I deny; through an intermediary, again I distinguish; that it can so act by producing such or such being, this I concede, by producing being as such, this I deny.

4) It seems that God can create and maintain things in being by means of an instrumental cause, that is, by not acting immediately. For God, indeed, creates every day the souls of children, while the parents give to the matter the final disposition requisite for the human form.

Reply. The parents are not, strictly speaking, the instruments in the creation of the soul, because the spiritual soul is not educed from the potentiality of matter. But the matter is duly disposed so that it can be informed by the soul, which is created from nothing. On the contrary, there

is an instrument (namely a sacrament) in the production of grace, which is educed from the obediential potentiality of the soul, on which it depends as its accident.

5) Nevertheless the action of the creature can extend to being as such, at least instrumentally. For my freedom indeed is the proper cause of my choice, as it is my choice, and it is the instrumental cause of the same choice as it is being. Then being as such is not immediately produced by God.

Reply. This is not a case of creation from nothing, but under the divine motion our will elicits its act. Nevertheless the being as such of my choice depends of itself and immediately as such on God as its proper effect, and God produces it immediately not only by the direct contact of His power but also of His suppositum. In a broad sense we can speak of the will as an instrument with reference to the being as such of our choice. Nevertheless God, who maintains immediately our soul in being, is intimately present in it and in its operations.

6) How is it, then, that creation does not apply to operations of the natural order, if God is the proper cause, for instance, of the being as such of the ox that is generated?

Reply. Although the being as such of the generated ox depends of itself and immediately as such on God as His proper effect, yet it is not produced by way of creation, namely, from no presupposed subject. Hence in this case the total entity of the ox is not produced, because the matter, which is immediately preserved in being by God, was already in existence.

OBJECTIONS OF SCOTUS AND THE SCOTISTS

Scotus and the Scotists attacked this doctrine of St. Thomas. They deny that God’s virtually transitive operation is precisely the reason for His existence in things, just as material quantity is precisely the reason why a body occupies a place. Scotus attacks the major of St. Thomas, namely, “an agent must be joined to that wherein it acts immediately.” He holds this proposition to be true only as regards corporeal and limited agents, which must be in quantitative contact with the subject to which they are joined, before they can act upon it.

Reply. This major of St. Thomas is true of every agent as such, and does not apply merely to a corporeal agent, which first occupies a place before it

acts. Although indeed the agent may be a pure spirit and likewise the effect be merely spiritual, as the angel maintained in being by God, the agent must be joined to its effect at least by a virtual contact, and this for two reasons. (1) Because the perfecter and the perfectible that is immediately actuated by the perfecter must be joined together; for the effect seeks immediate contact with the active power from which it dynamically (though not always spatially) proceeds. There is no other way possible of conceiving this. (2) If it were not so, then there is no reason why this causative power would produce that particular effect rather than a certain other. The divine power is not something distinct from God, but is the very Deity, a formally immanent action, which is said to be virtually transitive in that it produces an effect external to itself.

1) Objection. It may be said that this is something merely philosophical, which has not at all been revealed, not even virtually.

Reply. There is at least a veiled reference to this proposition in the following familiar words of St. Paul: “He is not far from every one of us. For in Him we live and move and are.” Here the Apostle clearly shows from God’s operation in us that He is present in us, even in those who do not know Him. The reference is to God’s general presence or to His immensity, and not to His special presence in the souls of the just, in whom He dwells as knowable by them by a quasi-experimental knowledge, and by whom He is loved. Moreover, St. Augustine says: “Since we are something other than God Himself, it is not because of something else that we are in Him, but because this latter is the result of His operation.”

2) Objection. The Scotists say that it is not repugnant for God to operate in things by a power that goes forth from Him, and to make use of creatures as instruments. Therefore the difficulty remains.

Reply. I distinguish the antecedent. It is not repugnant for God to operate by a power that goes forth from Him and is created, so as to produce such or such being, for instance, luminous being, this I concede; to produce being as such or absolutely, this I deny. There can be no instrument, indeed, in the act of creation, no presupposed subject being required for this.

3) Objection. Just as operation follows being, so operation in a place follows the presence of a being in a place, and not vice versa. Therefore a being must be there where it operates.

Reply. I distinguish the antecedent. I concede that operation in a place follows the presence of a being in a place, as regards a corporeal agent,

which essentially occupies a place by reason of its quantity; I deny that this applies to a spiritual agent. For the spiritual agent occupies a place only in so far as it operates in a place; and yet in the order of being, not of location, its operation follows upon its being.

4) Objection. However, God's operation does not appear to be the reason for His presence where He operates. For, what is not distant is present. But, if by an impossibility, God did not act in any thing, He would not, however, be distant from it, because God is not absolutely assigned to a place. Therefore He would be present.

Reply. I distinguish the major. What is not locally distant is present, always positively present, this I deny; always negatively present, or not distant, this I concede. That God would be negatively present, which means not locally distant, this I concede; that He would be positively present, this I deny.

5) Objection. But a necessary attribute of God cannot be dependent on His free action. But ubiquity is one of God's necessary attributes. Therefore it cannot be dependent on His free action.

Reply. I distinguish the minor. That this is true of ubiquity in the broad sense of the term, or of immensity, this I concede; of ubiquity in the strict sense, this I deny. For immensity is only the aptness to exist in all things and places. But ubiquity is the actual existence in all things.

Final objection. Just as God by His eternity is immediately coexistent in all time, so by His immensity He is immediately present in every place.

Reply. The difference between the two is that eternity is the actual and simultaneously whole duration of the immutable God, whereas immensity is not the actual existence in things, but only the aptness to exist in them. The reason is that God is by His very nature absolutely and actually immutable and His life is simultaneously whole and interminable without any successive duration, and He would be so if there were no created beings. On the contrary, it is not in accordance with God's nature to occupy a place, because He is a pure spirit. And before creation He was nowhere, transcending the spatial order.

This last reply shows that the teaching of St. Thomas on this subject follows as a logical conclusion from the principle that God is incorporeal, a pure spirit. Those, on the contrary, who seek to explain God's presence in all things apart from His divine action in them, willingly or unwillingly posit a certain virtual extension in God prior to His action, and thus they do

not sufficiently distinguish between immensity and ubiquity. Thus Suarez, who follows Scotus to some extent in this thesis as in several others, maintains that God actually exists in imaginary spaces, beyond the limits of the universe.

To this the Thomists reply that God is virtually present in imaginary spaces, in that He can create some body in them; but He is not actually and positively present in them, for these imaginary spaces are not actual realities, but only possible receptacles of bodies. This question, however, belongs rather to the following article.

SECOND ARTICLE

WHETHER GOD IS EVERYWHERE

State of the question. The subject of inquiry in this article is whether God is not only in all things, but also in all places, inasmuch as they are places. The liquid is formally in the dish inasmuch as it is a place, whereas the picture is in the painted dish, inasmuch as it is a thing, and not formally inasmuch as it is a place. Can it be said that God is in a place, and in all places?

It seems this cannot be said of God, because incorporeal things are not in a place. Moreover, if God could be in a place, then He could not be everywhere, because He is indivisible and unextended, and because, if He were in a place, He would be there totally, and therefore He would not be everywhere.

Reply. God is in all places not absolutely but relatively, inasmuch as they are formally places. The reason is that God is in a place, not as a body is by filling the place to the exclusion of an-other body, but because He gives being to all things placed, and also to the real place itself, or to the surface of the encompassing body. Hence God does not exclude other things from being there, but He causes things placed to be there.

Reply to first objection. Incorporeal things are in place by virtual contact.

Reply to second objection. God is indivisible, though not like a point which is the term of the continuous, for He is outside the whole genus of the continuous. Thus, unlike the point, He can be everywhere, and for this it suffices that He maintain all bodies in being by His divine power.

Reply to third objection. God, inasmuch as He preserves things in being, is whole in all and in each of them, somewhat as the soul is whole in the entire body and whole (by a totality of essence) in each and every part of it. Even whiteness is whole, by a totality of essence in each and every part of the wall, but it is not whole by a totality of extension.

Descartes, who is referred to, and rightly so, as an extreme spiritualist, since he denies that the soul is the form of the body, did not properly understand the indivisibility of the soul; he viewed it in a sort of material way as if it were a point, saying that the soul can contact the body only in one point, namely, the pineal gland. Likewise Leibnitz calls the monads metaphysical points. They failed to see that the substantial form is indivisible, not as a point is, but inasmuch as it is outside the whole genus of the continuous, as St. Thomas says in this article; and so it can be whole in each and every part of the body. With far greater reason it must be said that God, not as form, but as agent, maintains things in being.

THIRD ARTICLE

WHETHER GOD IS EVERYWHERE BY ESSENCE, PRESENCE, AND POWER

State of the question. The purpose of this article is to explain the classical statement of St. Gregory quoted in the counter-argument, that “God by a common mode is in all things by His presence, power, and substance; still He is said to be present more familiarly in some by grace.”

In the body of the article St. Thomas distinguishes between God’s general presence by way of agent in all things and His special presence in the just inasmuch as He is present in them as the object of quasi-experimental knowledge in the knower, and as the beloved is in the lover, and especially so in the blessed, being in them as clearly seen.

This article mentions the three ways by which God, after the manner of an agent, is in all things: (1) by His power, inasmuch as all things are subject to His power, as the King of the universe; (2) by His presence, inasmuch as all things are bare and open to His eyes, since all things, even the smallest, are the immediate object of divine providence; (3) by His essence, inasmuch as God’s essence, which is not really distinct from His omnipotence and preservative action, is present to all things as the cause of their being.

The error of the Manichaeans was in denying God's universal presence by His power, maintaining that corporeal things were not subject to His power. Others, such as Plato and Aristotle, denied that individual things are the immediate concern of God's providence. If Aristotle admitted a certain general providence, as the Averroists did later on, he did not acknowledge its extension to each particular thing.

Also, since he never had a clear idea of creation, he could not conceive of God's existence in all things. We see that great advance has been made on this point from the time of Aristotle to that of St. Thomas. This has been accomplished by the light of revelation, which is truly like a guiding star for the Christian philosopher, and it is, moreover, the proper light of theology, whose objectum formale quo is virtual revelation.

In the body of the article St. Thomas notes that there were certain philosophers who, although they said all things are subject to God's providence, still maintained that all things are not immediately created by God, but that He immediately created the first creatures, and these created the others. So thought certain Neoplatonists. If such were the case, God would not be present by His essence in inferior things, because He would not have immediately created them and would not immediately preserve them in being.

On the other hand, according to revelation it is certain that "God, with absolute freedom of counsel, created out of nothing, from the beginning of time, both the spiritual and the corporeal creature, namely, the angelic and the mundane; and afterward the human creature, as partaking, in a sense, of both, consisting of spirit and of body."

Certainly it is only by creation from nothing that the angels, the soul, and matter can be produced, for these are not educed from any presupposed subject; it is equally certain that they can be immediately maintained in being only by God. In this there is a vast difference between our Catholic faith and the teaching of Aristotle, which says nothing either about God's liberty, or about His absolute freedom in creating all things. Aristotle wrote very well the elements of metaphysics, as Euclid did those of geometry, but he never soared to the sublime in metaphysics, except in a very imperfect way, when he spoke of the pure Act as "the self-contemplative thought" or the self-subsistent intellection.

In reply to the fourth objection we should note the following: "No other perfection except grace, added to substance, renders God present in

anything as the object known and loved; therefore only grace constitutes a special mode of God's existence in things. There is, however, another special mode of God's existence in man by the (hypostatic) union."

This is explained in a subsequent article. There we see that the philosophical knowledge of God, which can be acquired without grace, does not suffice for His special presence; for God is known only in an abstract way, as something distant, not as something really present. On the contrary, by habitual grace and living faith enlightened by the gift of wisdom, a quasi-experimental knowledge of God can be acquired and sometimes He is known as the principle of our interior life, prompting us to intimate acts of filial love, as St. Paul assures us in the following passage: "The Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit that we are the sons of God." St. Thomas, explaining this text in his commentary on this epistle, says that the Spirit gives testimony by means of the filial love which He arouses in us, as when the disciples going to Emmaus said: "Was not our heart burning within us whilst He spoke in the way?"

From this it cannot be argued against what was said in the first article of this question, that there is another way by which God can be present in all things than by His preservative action; for this special presence presupposes the general presence, that is, God gives being to the just; in fact, He causes and effectively preserves charity in them. Thus He preserves the humanity of Christ, which is hypostatically united to the Word.

FOURTH ARTICLE

WHETHER TO BE EVERYWHERE BELONGS TO GOD ALONE

State of the question. The purpose of this article is to determine more accurately the mode of the divine omnipresence, and to distinguish it from the mode of omnipresence of universal being, prime matter, the universe, and the human soul that sees even remote stars. As Augustine says: "The soul feels where it sees, and lives where it feels, and is where it lives."

Reply. To be everywhere primarily and absolutely, belongs properly to God alone.

1) Proof from authority. St. Ambrose says: "Who dares to call the Holy Ghost a creature, who in all things and everywhere and always is, which assuredly belongs to the Divinity alone."

2) Proof from reason. That is everywhere absolutely and primarily, which is everywhere not accidentally but necessarily, and immediately in its whole self, and not according to its parts in different places. But God alone, after creation, is necessarily and immediately in His whole self in all things and places, for He maintains all things in being. Therefore, to be everywhere belongs primarily and absolutely to God alone.

In opposition to what is stated in the major and in explanation of it, it may be said that a grain of sand would be accidentally everywhere, on the supposition that no other body existed. But God, after creation, is necessarily everywhere, no matter what may be the number of things and places, even though the number of places should be infinite.

Moreover, contrary to this, the whole world is everywhere, not primarily or immediately, namely in its whole self, but according to its different parts.

Reply to first objection. Abstract being and prime matter are indeed everywhere, but not according to the same mode of existence. This view is moderate realism. Contrary to this, extreme realism confuses abstract being with the divine being, inasmuch as it maintains that the universal (in predication) exists formally and not only fundamentally in the objective world, that is, extramentally. If it were so, pantheism would be true, and abstract being would be everywhere according to the same mode of existence. God would not only preserve immediately the being of all things, but He would be the very being of all things.

Prime matter is everywhere, but not according to the same mode of existence, for it receives its existence from the form, and under the different quantitative dimensions of the universe the form is not the same, and consequently neither is the matter the same according to existence. However, prime matter is negatively one, inasmuch as there are not two prime matters.

Reply to sixth objection. How are we to understand St. Augustine when he says: “Where the soul sees and feels, there it lives and is”? He must be understood as meaning that the soul, seeing the heavens, reaches the heavens as object; but subjectively it lives only in itself, because to live is an immanent act. Hence it does not follow that the soul is everywhere. Seeing is an immanent act, but the thing seen is not immanent, whatever the idealists may say. In fact, there can be no true seeing (as distinct from hallucination) without a thing seen, or a true sensation without an object of sense perception, or a true sensation of resistance without a resistant object.

“Bodily vision (as distinct from imaginary apparition) is that whereby the object seen exists outside the person beholding it and can accordingly be seen by all. Now by such vision only a body can be seen.” Hence the soul, although it is not everywhere, can see even remote bodies; it is, of course, in the very act of seeing, in transcendental relation to these bodies.

With this we conclude the question of God’s existence in things, a question in which immensity must be carefully distinguished from omnipresence, namely, aptitude to exist in all things from actual existence in them. Before creation, God was immense, but He was not everywhere, because there were not things and places in which God was; but He was with Himself, in Himself, for as the Gospel says, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

CHAPTER IX

QUESTION 9

THE IMMUTABILITY OF GOD

FROM the truth that God is the self-subsisting Being, we have thus far deduced that He is absolutely simple, perfect and good, infinite and immense, and everywhere present inasmuch as He maintains all things in being. From the very fact that God is the self-subsisting Being, it likewise follows that He is absolutely immutable, with an immutability not of inertia but of supreme perfection, which belongs to God alone.

We shall see that, although this immutability is expressed in negative terms (inasmuch as our knowledge is first of mutable things), yet in itself it is something absolutely positive; and it can be expressed by the word "stability," whereas the mutability of things in the world is their instability.

Evolutionist philosophy does its utmost to eliminate the word "stability," for it maintains that all immutability is imperfect, being like the immobility of an inert, lifeless thing. On the contrary, supreme life is absolutely immutable or supremely stable. The refutation of pantheism is completed in this question, inasmuch as the self-subsisting Being, since He is absolutely identical with Himself and stable, is really and essentially distinct from the changeable world and from the soul that is always capable of further perfection in knowledge and love. There are now two points of inquiry: (1) Is God altogether immutable? (2) Does it belong to God alone to be altogether immutable?

FIRST ARTICLE

WHETHER GOD IS ALTOGETHER IMMUTABLE

State of the question. The difficulty here is that St. Augustine says: “The Creator Spirit moves Himself neither by time nor by place.” In like manner wisdom is said to be more mobile than all active things. We also read in the Scripture: “Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you.” In all these utterances we must distinguish between the metaphorical and the literal sense. The analysis of concepts contained in revelation is of great importance in speculative theology, and this is prior to the deduction of the theological conclusion. This point is brought out clearly in the present article, in which the reply is not a theological conclusion but an explanatory proposition of the faith.

Reply. God is altogether immutable. This must be stated most emphatically against absolute and pantheistic evolutionism.

This truth is expressed in Holy Scripture by the following texts: “I am the Lord and I change not.” “God is not a man, that He should lie; nor as the son of man, that He should be changed.” “The heavens shall perish, but Thou remainest; and all of them shall grow old like a garment. And as a vesture Thou shalt change them, and they shall be changed, but Thou art always the selfsame, and Thy years shall not fail.” “For she is the brightness of eternal light. . . . And being but one, she can do all things; and remaining in herself the same, she reneweth all things, and through nations conveyeth herself into holy souls.” “Every best gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no change, nor shadow of alteration.” “And they changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of the image of a corruptible man.”

The councils on several occasions also affirmed God’s immutability. Thus the Council of Nicaea anathematizes those who say that the Son of God is “changeable.” The Fourth Lateran Council says: “We firmly believe and absolutely confess that the one and only God is eternal, immense, and unchangeable.” In like manner, the Vatican Council declares: “God, as being one, sole, absolutely simple and immutable spiritual substance, is to be declared as really, and essentially distinct from the world.”

Three proofs are given from reason that God is absolutely immutable: (1) inasmuch as He is pure Act; (2) inasmuch as He is absolutely simple; (3) inasmuch as He is not perfectible.

1) Everything that is changeable must be in potentiality, as receiving determination; but God is pure Act without the admixture of any

potentiality, because He is the first Being (fourth proof), and act is absolutely prior to potentiality; therefore God is absolutely immutable.

It is, indeed, quite clear that potentiality is spoken of with reference to its act, and, in the order of dignity and nature, it presupposes this act. If, then, there were potentiality in God, He would not be really the first Being, and there could be imperfection in Him; a certain part in Him would not be God. He would thus be no longer the self-subsisting Being. But if He were not the self-subsisting Being, then existence would be predicated contingently of Him. Thus God would be participated being; He would be like the highest angel in whom there is an admixture of potentiality, namely, essence subordinate to existence, and an operative faculty that is subordinate to operation. There is here a recapitulation of what was said on this subject, but without repetition, which is somewhat like circular contemplation.

God's immutability is proved from His absolute simplicity. Indeed, everything that is mutable is in some way composite; for it partly remains as it was, and partly passes away, or at least can do so. This means that it is variable. In other words, every mutation presupposes a subject that is susceptible to variation. Thus in everything that is moved, there is some kind of composition to be found; but there cannot be any composition in God.

God's immutability is proved from the fact that He is not susceptible to further perfection. For indeed everything that is moved acquires something. But God, since He is the very plenitude of being, cannot acquire anything; nor can He lose anything, for He is the necessary Being, the self-subsisting Being.

This must be said in refutation of absolute evolutionism, whether of the idealist type as proposed by Hegel or of the empirical type as proposed by Henry Bergson. Hence universal being, which according to Hegel's opinion is the principle of all things, cannot be the true God; for, if it were, it would be the self-subsisting Being, absolutely immutable or stable, incapable of any evolution. Absolute evolutionism must say that the principle of all things is "the creative evolution of itself." It then admits that something becomes universal which is its own reason for this. Such an admission means the denial of the real or ontological validity of the principle of identity or of contradiction (being and non-being are identified in this becoming, which is its own reason for such); it likewise means the denial of

the real validity of the principle of efficient causality and of finality; for the evolution of anything to something more perfect would always tend to this without any efficient cause and without being directed to any end. Thus the greater would always be produced from the less, the more perfect from the less perfect; for there is more in what exists than in what is becoming and does not as yet exist; there is more in the adult and developed man than in the embryo and the child.

Corollary. Hence the immobility of inertia, which is inferior to motion and our activity, must not be confused with the immobility of perfection, which is the supreme stability of Him who is self-subsisting Being, Intelligence, and Love. These two immutabilities are distinct, just as the infinity of matter, which is always capable of further determination and perfection, is distinct from the infinity of perfection, as was stated above. Thus equally so, supreme and permanent contemplation is distinct from the ever changeable aberrations of error, as also the supreme love of the supreme good is distinct from the human emotions.

Reply to first objection. Augustine says that “God moves Himself neither by time nor by place,” meaning that God’s mode of operation, namely, by understanding, willing, and loving, transcends time. The expression is metaphorical, and it owes its origin to the fact that there is no intellection in us without movement or transition from ignorance to knowledge. Hence what must be carefully considered in analogy, is the analogical concept, which is attributed formally and analogically to God (such as life, intellection, love), and the imperfect and created mode (movement), which is not attributed properly but only metaphorically to God.

Reply to second objection. Wisdom is called mobile by way of similitude, or metaphorically, not formally but causally, according as it diffuses its likeness even to the outermost of things. This means that it is mobile, not in itself, but according as it produces all mutations of things. We find this stated in the canonical hour of none as follows:

God, powerful sustainer of all things,
Thou who dost remain permanently unmoved,
Determining the course of time
By the successions of the light of day.

Thus also metaphorically and causally God is said to be angry, inasmuch as, like an angry man, He punishes sinners.

Reply to third objection. In like manner, it is in a metaphorical sense that God is said to approach to us inasmuch as we receive the influx of His goodness.

SECOND ARTICLE

WHETHER TO BE IMMUTABLE BELONGS TO GOD ALONE

State of the question. The purpose of this article is to distinguish between God's absolute immutability and that of the angel and the human soul, their substances being incorruptible. It is also the purpose of this article to distinguish between God's absolute immutability and that of the blessed, who are in possession of eternal life.

Conclusion. God alone is altogether immutable.

Thus St. Augustine says: "God alone is immutable; and whatever things He has made, being from nothing, are mutable."

It is proved from reason by distinguishing between incorruptible and corruptible creatures.

1) All created things, even the incorruptible, are, as regards substantial being, mutable by an extrinsic power that is in God. For God, indeed, by a most free act of His power brought creatures into existence, and He freely preserves them in the same. He can, therefore, by His absolute power, annihilate all things, although He would never do so by His well-ordered power (whether ordinary or extraordinary).

2) All created and corruptible things are mutable, as regards their substantial being by an intrinsic power that is in them; for these are composed of matter that can lose its present form and receive another.

3) All creatures, as regards their accidental being, are mutable by an intrinsic power. Even in the angels there is mutability as regards their choice of either good or evil. All were created good and in grace, and some freely merited their eternal happiness, whereas others sinned. In fact, the blessed are capable of receiving new accidental illuminations and of acquiring accidental glory. Finally, there is mutability in the angels by way of virtual contact, inasmuch as they can act in this place or that, and do not always act in the same place.

On the contrary, God is absolutely immutable as regards substantial being, which is absolutely necessary and not contingent, nor is there any

accident in God. Moreover He always preserves in being all existing things by His virtual contact. Hence it is only in those things external to God that there can be mutability, as when the blessed begin to see Him. God's free act is a difficulty which must be later examined.

It must be noted that God can annihilate all created things by His absolute power, but not by His well-ordered power (whether ordinary or extraordinary), for no end can be assigned as reason why God should annihilate the angels, the blessed, and Christ's humanity. Yet it remains true to say that all created things can be annihilated by an extrinsic power.

On this point Cajetan remarks that the potentiality of created things does not refer primarily to non-existence, because potentiality refers essentially to actuality, and not to its opposite. Real potentiality by its very nature is directed to actuality, although it cannot directly reduce itself to actuality; hence a thing is said to be in potentiality to exist in a particular way and not to exist in a certain other, just as active potency of itself means that a thing is capable of acting and not acting. In other words, potentiality is really ordained for actuality, and is not really but logically ordained for its opposite.

Hence in created things there can be no real potency for nonexistence except in a secondary sense, inasmuch as in anything there is a potency to exist in another way that is incompatible with the existence that it actually has. Thus in composites of matter and form there is a real potency to exist in another way, inasmuch as the matter can receive another form, which can give it a different existence. Hence for anything to have a real potency and not merely a logical potency for non-existence, it must have matter that is capable of receiving another form.

Therefore in the essence of the angel and of the soul there is a real potency for existence, and only a logical potency for nonexistence; corresponding to this there is the real power of God, who can annihilate all things created and freely maintained in being by Him. For just as the power of creating presupposes only a logical potency or a possibility on the part of the thing creatable, so the power to annihilate presupposes only the possibility of annihilation. In incorruptible things there is therefore no real potency for non-existence.

Corollary. Therefore the instability in any being arises solely from the possibility of its desiring some other reality which it does not have, for nothingness is not desired by anyone. Hence instability comes from the

imperfection of that which is possessed, inasmuch as this does not fully satisfy the capacity for desiring.

Therefore the more we approach to God, the more stability takes the place of instability. This is the immutability of perfect sanctity that exists in heaven. The saints in heaven adhere immutably to God, so that sin is no longer possible. This immutability is of a higher order and is by participation.

On the other hand, there is an inferior kind of immutability that proceeds not from the illimitation of being, but from the limitation of its capacity or desire, which is found in those, as St. Paul so vividly expresses it, who are already filled and have no higher aspirations. For he says: “You are now full, you are now become rich.” This is an inferior kind of immutability, a sort of inert egotism, fanaticism, or sectarianism, since such persons do not sufficiently aspire to the higher truth and goodness.

Intermediate between this inferior kind of immutability of those who are now filled and the higher immutability of the blessed, is the praiseworthy mutability of the holy wayfarer who is, like Daniel, “a man of desires” and who always aspires to something higher. This praiseworthy mutability, which tends toward the higher immutability, differs entirely from the instability of the dilettante, who regards no truth as immutable, who does not tend toward God, but who is always of a fickle disposition.

Reply to second objection. The good angels have a participated immutability of the will for good.

And so this terminates the question of God’s immutability compared with that of any created being whatever. This question perfects the teaching proposed by St. Augustine since it brings out clearly the distinction between mutability that is the result of intrinsic power, and mutability that is the result of extrinsic power. In this we have a wonderful application of the Aristotelian distinction between real potentiality and actuality.

CHAPTER X

QUESTION 10

THE ETERNITY OF GOD

WE now come to consider eternity, because, as will at once be seen, eternity follows from immutability, since it is the duration of the absolutely immobile being. There are two things which St. Thomas considers in this question: (1) eternity as such is considered in the first three questions, namely: what is eternity, whether God is eternal, whether to be eternal belongs to God alone; (2) in the remaining articles eternity is compared with created durations, that is, with reference to our continuous time, to the discrete time of the angels which is measured by their successive thoughts, and to aeviternity, or the duration of the angelic substance and the separated soul, which as substances are immutable, though they had a beginning.

In these last three articles the comparison is made from on high, namely, from eternity as it has already been defined. In the first three articles, however, there is already a similar comparison made, but it starts as it were from below, and by way of investigation finally formulates the definition of eternity.

FIRST ARTICLE

WHETHER THIS IS A GOOD DEFINITION OF ETERNITY: “THE SIMULTANEOUSLY-WHOLE AND PERFECT POSSESSION OF INTERMINABLE LIFE”

State of the question. The definition of Boethius is the subject of inquiry. It must be observed that this definition is implied in what Holy Scripture says about God’s immobility, as we shall state in the second article. Among the philosophers, Plato likewise says that time is the mobile image of immobile eternity. Aristotle says equivalently, “God is the everlasting and

noblest living being. In God there is both life and duration that is continual and eternal." In like manner, farther on, he shows that God is subsistent intellection who continually understands Himself, transcending succession of time. Moreover, Aristotle defined time as "movement that is estimated according to its before and after." Thus the motion of the sun is measured in time, inasmuch as one revolution is called a day, and this day consists of distinctly different hours according to a before and after. Thus we have already at least a confused notion and a nominal definition of eternity.

Plotinus explains eternity in the same way, speaking not only of the immobility of eternity but also of its indivisibility, whereas time is divided into years, days, and hours. Hence Plotinus says that, if one were to say that eternity is life interminable and totally present to itself, none of it pertaining to the past or to the future, such a one is not far from its true definition.

St. Augustine says the same, speaking of the indivisible and ever constant now of eternity, whereas time is fleeting. Thus gradually the transition is effected from the nominal and confused definition to the real and distinct definition. Then Boethius (†524) gave us the same concept of eternity in the aforesaid classical definition, saying that it is "the simultaneously-whole and perfect possession of interminable life."

St. Thomas shows here that this definition is a good one, since it is in accordance with the laws governing the search for a definition, inasmuch as by these laws there is a methodical transition from a confused to a distinct notion. But St. Thomas first of all sets forth the difficulties, the two principal ones being these: (1) a whole is what has parts. But this does not apply to eternity, which is simple; (2) further, if a thing is said to be whole, perfect is a superfluous addition; nor does it seem that possession implies duration.

Yet the reply is that this definition is a good one, since it properly expresses eternity as the interminable duration, which is without succession, and so it is spoken of as "being simultaneously whole."

This is not, strictly speaking, demonstrated in the body of the article, for, as it is pointed out elsewhere, it is not the definition of a thing but its property that is, strictly speaking, demonstrated. The definition is sought by a certain investigation, says Aristotle, by a division of its genus or quasi-genus (in the present instance, the notion of duration) and then comparing the thing to be defined with things similar and dissimilar (in the present instance, by comparing the confused notion of eternity, according to its

nominal definition, with time). Yet in the body of the article there is a sort of demonstration, inasmuch as eternity is deduced from God's absolute immobility. This will be made clearer in the second article.

The argument of the article by the way of investigation may be summed up as follows: We must come to the knowledge of eternity by means of time. But time is but the numbering of movement by before and after. Contrary to this, in the duration of that which is without movement, there is absolute uniformity, without any before and after. Moreover, what is absolutely immutable is interminable, without beginning and end, whereas those things that are measured by time have a beginning and an end. Thus, therefore, eternity has two characteristics: (1) uniformity without succession, and so it is truly spoken of as "being simultaneously whole"; (2) interminableness, so that it can be truly said to be "the simultaneously-whole and perfect possession of interminable life."

It must be observed that the first characteristic is the principal one, and so also if the movement of the heavenly bodies and time were eternal, as Aristotle thought, that is without beginning and end, time would still be distinct from eternity; for in time there is always a succession of centuries and years, although there would never have been a first or last day. Hence the principal difference between eternity and time is that the former is without before and after or that it is "being simultaneously whole."

Contrary to this, our life is not simultaneously whole, for it consists of the distinct periods of infancy, youth, adult age, prime of life, and old age. Our life is also divided into periods of labor, prayer, sleep, and the like, so that there is a great variety and instability in this succession. Hence the now of time is the current now between the past and the future, so that past and future do not actually exist but exist only in the mind, whereas the now of eternity is a standing now, which is absolutely permanent and immobile, and we find this already equivalently expressed, although less distinctly, in the writings of Plato, Aristotle, and Plotinus.

Thus the definition of Boethius is a good one, since it complies with the rules to be observed in the search for a definition. The transition is effected methodically from a confused to a distinct notion, and this by a correct division of duration, and by a comparison of one's already confused notion of eternity with that of time.

This hunt or search presupposes the true definition of time as given by Aristotle, who says that it is movement estimated by its before and after, for

example, the movement of the sun is estimated by its successive revolutions and portions of one revolution. It seems that this definition is a good explanation of what is obscurely implied in the popular or common notion of time and its parts, namely, century, year, day, hour. This is the realistic notion of time. On the contrary, Kant proposed an idealist notion of time, which in his opinion is an a priori subjective form of our sensibility, in which things appear to us as a succession of phenomena.

But Kant unjustifiably denied the reality of time, giving as his reason the false antinomies that would result from this. In his opinion, it is equally demonstrated that the world had and did not have a beginning in time. But, as St. Thomas points out: “By faith alone do we hold, and by no demonstration can it be proved, that the world did not always exist.” God, who created with absolute freedom, could have eternally created, so that there never would have been a first day; just as the imprint of a foot in the sand would be eternal, if the foot were eternal. And even if the movement of the sun and time had been eternal creations, as we remarked, there would still be a complete distinction between time and eternity, only this latter being simultaneously whole.

The proof given in the argumentative part of the article may be presented in the following syllogistic form: What is absolutely immutable is simultaneously-whole and interminable; but eternity is attributed to a thing that is absolutely immutable, just as time is attributed to things that are mobile; therefore eternity must be simultaneously-whole and interminable duration.

The solution of the difficulties confirms this conclusion.

Reply to first objection. Eternity is conceived by us as being negatively interminable, because our knowledge is first of things that come to an end.

Reply to second objection. “Interminable life” is predicated of eternity rather than “interminable being,” because what is truly eternal is not only being, but also life, in fact, self-subsistent life. But life extends to operation, and not to being. Hence it is clear that both God’s being and His operation are measured by eternity, whereas the angel’s immutable essence and operations are not measured the same way.

Reply to third objection. Eternity is called whole, not because it has parts, but inasmuch as it is wanting in nothing. In this we see the imperfection of our knowledge.

Reply to fourth objection. Sacred Scripture speaks metaphorically of the "days of eternity."

Reply to fifth objection. The word perfect is not a superfluous addition, for simultaneously whole excludes past and future, and perfect excludes the passing now, which is imperfect.

Reply to sixth objection. Lastly eternity is said to be perfect possession rather than duration, to designate the indeficiency of eternity; for what is possessed, is held firmly and quietly. On the contrary, a boy does not yet possess the maturity of old age, nor does the old man possess the complete vitality of youth. So also in the interior life, the beginner does not yet possess the perfection of the unitive life.

Therefore the above definition of eternity is a very fine one, especially as regards the words "being simultaneously whole." This last expression must be the object not only of speculation, but also of acquired contemplation resulting from sacred theology, and of infused contemplation which is the result of living faith that is illumined by the gifts of intellect and wisdom.

As a complement to this investigation into the true notion of eternity, it must be observed that great geniuses have a certain experimental knowledge of a life which by remote comparison can be called "simultaneously whole." For the most sublime manifestations of art (for instance, of music) are a certain remote participation of this kind of perfection. Thus it is said of Mozart that he heard all together a whole melody that he was composing, in that he was hearing it or previously heard it in the thought that gave it birth; whereas others heard it only successively. Thus great mathematicians by one intellectual act perceive the many elements of a very complex problem. In like manner great philosophers and theologians toward the end of their life have a sort of simultaneously whole knowledge of their science, inasmuch as they see it from on high as an irradiation of its principles. So also the contemplative experiences the joy of infused contemplation, and it remains with him during the day as a sort of latent reserve force, possessing this throughout the day as it were from on high; for when the time of prayer comes to an end, there is not a complete cessation of prayer, for it continues as it were during the time of study or even of recreation. Thus the inferiority inherent in multiplicity gradually resolves itself into the superiority of unity, and this finds its realization in the unitive life of the saints. Hence St. Augustine exhorts us to a loving union with God and His eternity, peacefully awaiting the events of time,

which are, as it were, beneath us, beneath the summit of the soul that is united with God.

But if Mozart heard all at once the various parts of a melody which he was composing, so we can conclude that God possesses His life all at once and sees simultaneously from on high the entire sequence of centuries. Thus eternity is like the apex of a cone, the base of which represents time. All the successive points of this base correspond to the one point of the apex.

But many difficulties, especially about the problem of evil, result from the fact that we do not see from on high the succession of time, but only successively. Thus we do not know that it is for the greater good of the world and of the Church that God permits this or that very great evil actually to happen. But if this succession of time were seen from on high by one glance, then evil would appear as a certain particularization that is a condition of the higher good, as in a picture we have the harmonious blending of light and shade, especially so in the "light transcending obscurity." In the above examples, as in that of the musical composition which is quoted by H. Bergson, there is a certain experimental knowledge of a life that bears a certain analogical resemblance to eternity. Thus the investigation is completed in a less abstract and more concrete way.

Solution of certain difficulties. As Cajetan remarks, Aureolus raised several objections against this article of St. Thomas. In the first place, he says that uniformity, because it does not differ from immutability, is not the chief characteristic of eternity.

In reply we must say with Cajetan that uniformity differs from immutability as a property differs from its essence. Immutability is the denial of the possibility of change. Uniformity adds to immutability the idea of unity of form, and this can be attributed also to motion; for we speak of uniform motion, the velocity of which is always the same, and thus it differs from variation in motion. In fact, we speak of a uniformly accelerated motion, such as the fall of a stone, or of the uniformly retarded motion of a stone thrown in the air. And just as there is uniformity in motion or succession, so also there is the same in immobility or permanence. Immutability is opposed to motion, whereas, on the other hand, uniformity is not, for there can be uniformity in motion. Consequently it is false to say that there is no distinction between uniformity and immutability. Hence eternity is correctly and more briefly defined as the uniformity of an absolutely immutable thing.

But again Aureolus objects, saying that time is not the variation of motion, and therefore uniformity is not the uniformity of the immobile.

We reply to this by distinguishing the antecedent. That time is not solely the variation of motion, this I concede; that it is not variation of motion according to before and after, this I deny. Therefore the uniformity of the immobile, in which there is no before and after, suffices for the constitution of eternity. This point will be made clearer in the following article.

SECOND ARTICLE

WHETHER GOD IS ETERNAL

State of the question. The purpose of this article is to show in what particular sense God is eternal and is His eternity, and also to explain how eternity can be called the measure of God, although He is not measured; whereas even the sun's motion is measured, inasmuch as its revolutions are numbered.

Reply. God is not only eternal, but He is His eternity.

1) It is of faith that God is eternal and is so essentially. This truth is clearly stated in many texts of Holy Scripture. Thus we read: "Abraham . . . called upon the name of the Lord God eternal." "For He is the living and eternal God." God is often called eternal.

The Athanasian Creed says: "The Father is eternal, the Son is eternal, the Holy Spirit is eternal." The Fourth Council of the

Lateran declares: "We firmly believe that there is only one true God, who is eternal."

According to Vacant, it is of faith that God has neither beginning nor end. That there is no succession in God is a certain truth and is proximate to the faith. Vacant thinks, however, that this does not as yet appear to be a dogma of the faith.

2) In the body of the article God's eternity is deduced from His immutability, and may be expressed by the following syllogism:

Eternity follows immutability, as time follows movement; but God is supremely immutable; therefore it supremely belongs to Him to be eternal. It is also stated that God is His own eternity. For God and God alone is His own existence and essence; consequently God is His own duration.

This is the same as saying that everything survives inasmuch as it retains its existence; but God alone is His existence. Therefore He alone is His own uniform duration. Thus St. Thomas holds that eternity is God's duration. Wherefore the notion of duration is far more universal than that of time. Duration is predicated analogically of eternity, of our continuous time, of the discrete time of the angels, and of aevum or aeviternity, as will be stated farther on.

In the reply to the first objection the words of Boethius are explained, namely: "The now that flows away makes time, the now that stands still makes eternity." This latter now is said to make eternity according to our apprehension. This means that the apprehension of eternity is caused in us inasmuch as we apprehend the now standing still. Eternity has complete existence extramentally, whereas, on the other hand, time has complete existence only in the mind, inasmuch as past and future exist only in the mind.

What is real in time is the now that flows away, and it is said to flow away like movement, which is the act of a being in potentiality inasmuch as it is such, the act of a further perfectible and to be perfected being, the successive transition from potentiality to perfect

actuality. Contrary to this, the now of eternity is spoken of as standing still, and corresponding to it are all the successive moments of time, just as all the points in the base of a cone correspond to its apex. Thus there is but one instant in the immobility of eternity.

In this reply to the first objection there is an explanation of St. Augustine's words: "God is the author of eternity," which are to be understood of participated eternity consisting in the eternal life of the saints. Their beatific vision begins but will not end, and there is no succession or variation in this vision at least as regards the primary object, which is God's essence clearly seen. Thus, strictly speaking, their life is not only said to be a future life with reference to ours, but it is eternal life, because it is measured by participated eternity.

It must be observed that just as a beginning is not repugnant to the idea of participated eternity, so also the end is not absolutely repugnant to this idea, provided there is no succession in this participated eternity. Therefore if St. Paul had on this earth the beatific vision as a transient act, this vision could have been measured by participated eternity, transcending our continuous

time and the discrete time of the angels in which their successive thoughts are measured.

Reply to second objection. When the Scripture says that “the Lord shall reign forever and ever,” this means always. Others change the phrase to “forever and always,” thus making it in a way redundant. St. Thomas points out that eternity transcends time, and this would be the case even if time were unlimited as regards the future.

Reply to third objection. It is pointed out that eternity is said to be the measure of God “according to the apprehension of our mind alone.” In several other passages St. Thomas says that eternity is the measure of divine life. This must be understood of intrinsic measurement, inasmuch as God is His eternity. Thus God is not measured. Contrary to this the motion of the heavenly bodies is measured by a recurrent succession of revolutions or of days, and all the more so is the motion of other bodies, which is measured extrinsically according to solar time. There was formerly a dispute of minor importance on this subject, as can be readily seen by consulting Billuart.

Reply to fourth objection. “Eternity includes all times” or “comprises all time,” which means that it virtually contains all inferior durations, just as the apex of a cone virtually contains all the points of its base, or the center of a circle all the radii and points of its circumference.

Doubt. How are created things said to be present in eternity?

The Thomists hold, as will be stated farther on, that creatures are physically present in eternity, coming under God’s direct vision. John of St. Thomas says: “Eternity does not immediately measure created things on the supposition that they have already undergone a passive change and been passively produced, but it measures them precisely for the reason that they are contained in the divine action, which contacts and regards created things as its terminus. Indeed, not only God’s intellection and volition are eternal, but even His external action is eternal, and yet it has its effect in time. “From the eternal (free) action of God an eternal effect did not follow; but such an effect as God willed, namely, that which has being after not being.”

Thus created things are really present in eternity, and are not merely either possible or future. They are contained in the divine essence not as merely having the power or will to produce them, but as actually producing them. Thus God’s knowledge of these things is intuitive, although they may not as yet have been passively produced. It is evident that this presence of things in eternity or in God’s eternal action presupposes God’s free decree,

for the action spoken about here is a free one. Thus St. Paul's conversion was eternally present to God's intution only because He eternally willed it; otherwise this conversion would not be a contingent but a necessary act.

THIRD ARTICLE

WHETHER TO BE ETERNAL BELONGS TO GOD ALONE

There are two conclusions in this article: (1) Eternity truly and properly so called is in God alone, because eternity follows on absolute immutability, which is in God alone; (2) creatures share in God's eternity, just as they do in His immutability. Thus it is said by participation that "the earth standeth forever." Thus, because of the length of their duration, the mountains are said to be eternal and their peaks to be covered with perpetual snow. Incorruptible spiritual substances share more fully and in a nobler manner in the nature of eternity. This is especially so of the blessed, who are said to have eternal life, inasmuch as the beatific vision, whose primary object is always the same, is measured by participated eternity. It is, indeed, an absolutely immutable operation.

Several Thomists remark that, just as the different motions of the earth are measured by solar time, or according to the measure of the sun's motion, so also the beatific vision is measured according to God's eternity, inasmuch as, by reason of the object or of God who is clearly seen, there is a participated eternity in this vision.

Reply to second objection. The punishment in hell is eternal inasmuch as it never ends. However, "in hell true eternity does not exist, but rather time" in accordance with a certain change in sensible pain.

Reply to third objection. The principles of demonstration are called eternal truths but in a negative sense, in that they abstract from time and place and are absolutely necessary. Moreover, they are positively eternal inasmuch as they are positively in the intellect of God, who alone is positively eternal.

FOURTH ARTICLE

WHETHER ETERNITY DIFFERS FROM TIME

State of the question. It is not, strictly speaking, a question here as to whether there is a difference, but it is asked what is the reason for this difference. Thus eternity and time are compared from on high, whereas in the first article the ascent of the mind was made by the way of investigation, from time to the definition of eternity. Now by the way of sapiential judgment, time is judged from the highest of causes, or from eternity as already defined. There are three difficulties: (1) It seems that eternity does not differ from time, because they occur together. Hence it seems that time is a part of eternity, just as an hour, which occurs along with a day, is a part of a day. In other words, the finite cannot coexist with the infinite, unless it is a part of the infinite, as several pantheists say. (2) According to Aristotle, the now of time remains the same in the whole of time. Therefore it does not differ from the now of eternity. (3) Eternity, which comprises all time, seems to be the measure of all things inasmuch as they proceed from God, and so it does not differ from time.

Yet the reply is that time and eternity are not the same, because eternity is simultaneously whole, whereas time has a before and an after.

In the body of the article, St. Thomas shows that, even if time had neither beginning nor end, it would differ from eternity, inasmuch as it would consist of a succession of years and centuries, namely, of a before and an after; whereas only eternity is simultaneously whole. He even says that the difference, which is founded on the fact that time has a beginning and will have no end, is an accidental one, which means that it could as well not be so. Therefore the reason for the difference lies essentially in the fact that eternity is the measure of permanent being, whereas time is the measure of movement. The solution of the difficulties confirms this.

Reply to first objection. Eternity and time can coexist and yet time is not a part of eternity, because they are not of the same genus, but only analogically agree in point of duration. So the finite being and the infinite being can coexist, and yet the finite is not a part of the infinite, because they are not of the same genus; but they are alike in this, that being is predicated analogically of each. Infinite being is self-existing being, whereas finite being is participated being, and is not its own being. There is never any variation from this in the refutation of pantheism.

Reply to second objection. What sort of identity is there between the now of time and the whole of time as this differs from the identity between the now of eternity and eternity? The now of time is the same as regards its

subject in the whole course of time, just as movement is measured by time; but it differs in aspect, for what is movable is first here and then there. On the contrary, the permanent now of eternity is absolutely the same as regards both its subject and its aspect.

St. Thomas says with profundity of thought in this article: “The flow of the now as alternating in aspect, is time,” just as the progressive passive actualization of the movable is movement. When he says that the now differs in aspect in the whole course of time, he does not mean that alternation is merely according to aspect and is not anything real. He is speaking, as he does in one of his commentaries, in which he says that terminative transitive action and passion are the same as movement, but differ in aspect, inasmuch as action is movement as coming from an agent, and passion is movement as found in the movable. This means to say that they are the same as regards their subject, but that they differ according to their constitutive aspects, and so, according to the Thomists, there is a modal distinction between terminative action and passion. In like manner, St. Thomas says: “Man and white are the same in subject, and different in idea; for the idea of man is one thing, and that of whiteness is another.” He does not mean that whiteness, which is an accident, is not really distinct from the substance of man; but it can be said that this man is white, so that in this proposition as in every affirmative proposition, “the predicate and the subject signify the same thing in reality.”

There is a most manifest difference, at least in the abstract sense, between the passing now of time and the permanent now of eternity. The passing now of time comes within our experience, but the permanent now of eternity does not. Hence eternity is less intelligible to us than time, but it is more intelligible in itself. For in itself the now of time is scarcely intelligible, because it is almost nothing, is among the inferior limitations of being, is always changing, and when it is said that the present moment is, it already is not. On the contrary, the now of eternity is always permanent, always is; in fact, it is the self-subsisting Being, inasmuch as God is His eternity.

Reply to third objection. The being of corruptible things, because it is changeable, is not measured by eternity, but by time. However, as we remarked above, since created things are not passively produced in themselves, but are present in God as the terminus of His eternal action,

they are measured by eternity. Thus eternity is the measure of all measures and includes all times.

FIFTH ARTICLE

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AEVITERNITY AND TIME

State of the question. The purpose of this question is to inquire into the proper meaning of aevum (age). This word, which is still one in common use, as when we speak of the Middle Ages (medium aevum), means, among Latin authors, either a certain age of the human race or that of some man—thus the first age corresponds to the period of youth, whereas full age corresponds to maturity—or perpetual duration (Varro). Aeviternal means also perpetual.

The Scholastics say that aeviternity is "the measure of spiritual substances." Previous to this, St. Augustine had said that we must admit a certain intermediate duration between eternity and time. This intermediate duration is difficult to conceive. It is, indeed, not so intelligible in itself as eternity, and not so intelligible to us as time, because it does not come within our experience. The principal difficulty that confronts us in distinguishing between aeviternity and time is that, if aeviternity is not eternity, then it is not simultaneously whole. Therefore it has a before and an after, and hence it does not seem to differ from time.

Yet the reply is that aeviternity differs from time and from eternity, as the mean between them.

The proper reason for this difference is not given by some, whose conception of eternity is more material than formal. They said that eternity has neither beginning nor end; that aeviternity has a beginning but no end (inasmuch as the angels were not created from eternity); that a time has both beginning and end. But this difference is accidental, because even if aeviternal things had always been, aeviternity would be distinct from eternity.

Others said that aeviternity differs from eternity, in that it has a before and an after; and that it differs from time, because it has neither youth nor age. But this involves a contradiction; for if aeviternity has a before and an after, it also has youth and age. It would have youth when the after part appears, and age in the receding of the first part. In like manner, if the

aeviternal thing were not subject to youth and age, this would be because it is immutable, and hence it would have neither before nor after.

But the true difference consists in this, that aeviternity is the mean between eternity and time, because it is unchangeable, though it has changeableness annexed to it. It is proved as follows: In so far as anything recedes from permanence of being, it recedes from eternity. But mutation, whose measure is time, recedes more from eternity, than does immutation, to which, however, mutation is annexed, whose measure is aeviternity. Therefore aeviternity is the mean between eternity and time

St. Thomas explains this in his reply to the first objection, in which he says: “Spiritual creatures, as regards successive affections and intelligences, are measured by time (not by continuous time, however, such as solar time, but by discrete time). . . . But as regards their nature, they are measured by aeviternity, and as regards the vision of glory, they have a share of eternity.”

Thus aeviternity is the measure of an immutable thing, which in its operations, however, is connected with change. Hence aeviternity has not in itself either before or after, as stated in the second opinion; but before and after are compatible with it.

Scotus objects to this, remarking that at least several angelic operations are not successive but permanent. Hence they are measured, he says, not by discrete time but by aeviternity.

Bannez replies by saying that there are three kinds of angelic operations. (1) There are those angelic operations that are connatural to the angel and unceasing. These are measured by aeviternity, as St. Thomas himself says. Thus the angel’s natural knowledge of himself, of God as the Author of nature; and his natural love of himself and of God are of this first kind. (2) Then there are those immanent angelic operations that are not permanent but successive. These are measured by angelic discrete time. This time refers to the number of angelic thoughts, as St. Thomas states farther on as follows: “If the time of the angel’s motion is not continuous, but a kind of succession of nows, it will have no proportion to the time which measures the motion of corporeal things, which is continuous, since it is not of the same nature.” Thus one angelic thought constitutes one angelic moment, and it can last for several years of our continuous solar time. Thus with those saints who are still wayfarers, when they are in ecstasy, there is a sort of immobile and loving contemplation that takes place in the summit of their soul, and sometimes this lasts for several hours of our continuous time.

(3) There is finally, the virtually transitive operation of the angel by which he locally moves bodies. It is measured terminatively by our continuous time, in that the movement of this body is measured by solar time and it lasts, for instance, half an hour.

Doubt. How can aeviternity be simultaneously whole, although before and after are compatible with it, as St. Thomas says in his reply to the second objection?

The difficulty is that if aeviternity is simultaneously whole, it contains time eminently, just as eternity does. Such being the case, the angels would have a natural knowledge of future contingent things, and they would not have to wait for their realization.

St. Thomas replies to this by saying that aeviternity is simultaneously whole inasmuch as the angel's substantial being is immutable, and is not the subject of succession. However, aeviternity does not contain time eminently as eternity does, because angelic being does not contain eminently the being of mutable things, as the first cause in its action contains all things that are. Moreover, as it has been remarked, the angelic knowledge of particular things is not measured by aeviternity but by discrete time. Thus angels cannot have a natural but only a conjectural knowledge of future contingent things. Hence aeviternity coexists with our continuous time somewhat as an immovable stone placed in a river, coexists with the various parts of the flowing water. But eternity is like a mountain peak from which the whole river is seen by one glance. And so this proves that aeviternity is the mean between eternity and time.

SIXTH ARTICLE

WHETHER THERE IS ONLY ONE AEVITERNITY

State of the question. The purpose of this article is to compare the unity of aeviternity of all aeviternal things, namely, of angels and of disembodied spirits, with the unity of time of all sensible movements.

The reply of St. Thomas is that, according to the truer opinion, there is one aeviternity for all subordinate aeviternal things, just as there is one time for all subordinate sensible movements in the universe. For it is evident that to form an idea of the unity of duration of spiritual beings, we must first consider the unity of duration of sensible things. But the unity of duration

of sensible things or the unity of continuous time depends on the fact that the movement of the first movable (we are speaking of the sun in our solar system) is supposed to be uniform. Thus solar time is the intrinsic measure of solar movement and the extrinsic measure of other subordinate movements. Thus time is one and continuous. By analogy, therefore, there is one aeviternity, inasmuch as there is subordination among the angels, and thus the being of all subordinate aeviternal beings is measured extrinsically, as it were, according to the intrinsic measure of the first aeviternal being, or of the highest angel. This opinion presupposes that the angels are not equal, but are subordinated, or that they proceed from God in a certain degree and order.

It must be observed that unity of continuous time presupposes, but does not apodictically prove as many think, that the apparent movement of the sun is uniform, or that the real movement of the earth around the sun is uniform, that is, always of the same velocity. But this, as many think, is not apodictically true, for there would have to be first a fixed unity of time which is reckoned according to a presupposed uniformity of movement. Nevertheless the hypothesis of the uniformity of the sun's apparent movement is confirmed by the harmony that prevails between the various ways we have of measuring time, for instance, in the clocks we use. Moreover, this hypothesis, which was already explicitly formulated by Aristotle, is more in conformity with the simplicity of the laws of nature than is the hypothesis of some non-uniform but accelerated or retarded movement, or of one that is sometimes accelerated and sometimes retarded with compensation, whose velocity is not always the same. Therefore the truer opinion is that there is one time and one aeviternity.

Yet the fourth objection in this article states that things not dependent on one other, do not seem to have one measure of duration. But aeviternal things do not depend on one another, for one angel is not the cause of another angel. Consequently there is not only one aeviternity.

St. Thomas replies by saying: "For things to be measured by one, it is not necessary that the one should be the cause of all, but that it be simpler than the rest." Thus arithmetical unity is the principle of number, and the letter is the principle of unity for the syllable.

Recapitulation. And so we bring to an end this beautiful question of eternity, which is compared with other durations. From the foregoing we clearly see that the principle characteristic of eternity is not to be without

beginning and end, but to be simultaneously whole, without succession and variation, according to a most perfect uniformity. Hence there is but one and permanent now of eternity. On the contrary, the now of continuous time alternates between the past and the future. Aeviternity is the mean between time and eternity, and so it is “simultaneously whole, but before and after are compatible with it,” according to a succession of thoughts in the angels. Finally, in the discrete time by which these successive thoughts of the angels are measured, there are several standing, successive nows; so that one angelic thought or contemplation is present in the same moment of time, and a subsequent thought in another, without any continuous time intervening; whereas in our time two moments are always separated from the one time that is infinitely divisible. Thus also, while the angels move bodies locally, as stated farther on, “the time of an angel’s motion can be non-continuous; so an angel can be in one place in one instant, and in another place in the next instant without any time intervening.”

Wherefore “the standing now” of eternity is like the apex of a cone, the base of which would represent the successive parts of time. But between the apex and the base is aeviternity to which change is annexed, and discrete time consisting of several successive standing nows. Thus a more profound knowledge is acquired of the definition of eternity as formulated by Boethius, who says it is “the simultaneously-whole and perfect possession of interminable life.” The unitive life of the saints, already here below, approaches this eternity, and especially so does the beatific vision of which participated eternity is the measure.

CHAPTER XI

QUESTION 11

THE UNITY OF GOD

WHY does St. Thomas now treat of God's unity? It seems that he should have discussed it before God's goodness, because unity is the first property of being considered in itself, and it precedes truth and goodness. Moreover, it seems that St. Thomas had already discussed God's unity in the third question in connection with God's simplicity, because unity is the undividedness of being, and it was already shown in that question that God is the absolutely undivided and indivisible being, because He is not composed of matter and form, of essence and existence, of substance and accident, or of other parts.

In reply to this it must be said that in this eleventh question, as appears particularly from the third article, in which St. Thomas inquires whether there are one or several gods, he is concerned especially with God's unicity; but God's unicity has its foundation in the absolute indivisibility of the divine nature, that is, in the unity and absolute simplicity of the divine nature. Therefore, in order properly to discuss God's unicity, St. Thomas speaks also of His indivisibility or of unity in the strict sense.

St. Thomas first treated of the divine nature, having considered it quasi-metaphysically as it is in itself. He now inquires whether this divine nature can be in several gods, just as one would ask whether Michaelness can be in several angels, as humanity is found in several numerically distinct human beings. It is therefore more a discussion of God's unicity, as is evident from the third article of this question; but the two preceding articles treat of unity in general, in that it is along with simplicity the foundation of unicity.

Thus there are four articles. (1) Whether one adds anything to being. (2) Whether one and many are opposed to each other (this article confirming,

as it were from on high, the fourth proof for God's existence). (3) Whether there is only one God. (4) Whether God is supremely one.

To some this seems a repetition of the preceding; yet it is not, properly speaking, a repetition, but rather a case of circular contemplation, which always returns to the same supreme truth (God is the self-subsisting Being), to behold the new rays emanating from it.

FIRST ARTICLE

WHETHER ONE ADDS ANYTHING TO BEING

State of the question. The discussion is not about numerical unity, which is the principle of number and which belongs to the category of quantity, but it concerns transcendental unity, which is a property of being and which is found in every category of being, inasmuch as we speak of the unity of substance, of the unity and simplicity of quality, of the unity of action, and similarly of the other predicaments. This distinction is implied in the first objection of this article.

It must be noted that in ancient times Parmenides and Heraclitus seriously disputed this point. Parmenides affirmed the unity and unicity of being, even denying the multiplicity of beings. He proceeded along the lines of absolute realism, conceiving the universal as existing formally in the concrete, and thus he confused universal being with the divine being and said: Being cannot be diversified by itself (because being is being and nothing else); nor can it be diversified by something other than itself (because what would be other than being would be non-being, and non-being is nothing). Hence he concluded: "Being is being, non-being is non-being, and it is impossible to think of anything else." In other words, multiplicity of beings is absolutely impossible. This argument was revived by Spinoza to prove the unicity of being.

St. Thomas, following the lead of Aristotle, examined this argument of Parmenides, and says of it: "In this Parmenides and his disciples were deceived, since they always referred to being as if it had one meaning and one nature, as is the case with any genus (which is diversified by extrinsic differences). But this is impossible. For being is not a genus, but is predicated (analogically) of various things and in many different senses."

For the modes of being are not extrinsic to being, but being is included in them. Thus quantity still is being.

But on the other hand, of ancient philosophers it was Heraclitus who denied the unity or indivisibility and identity of being; for he said that experience tells us that everything is becoming, and nothing is, and so to some extent Heraclitus identified being and non-being with becoming, which thus would be its own reason for such, as the absolute realists maintain. Thus, contrary to Parmenides, he ends in denying the real validity of the principle of contradiction or of identity, namely, "being is being, non-being is non-being," or "being is not non-being."

Thereupon Plato sought to solve the problem of unity and multiplicity by admitting the intelligible order of ideas, the highest of which is the Idea of Good, which is one, indivisible, and immutable, and also admitting the sensible order in which all things undergo a change. This was a sort of juxtaposition of the doctrines of Parmenides and Heraclitus.

Finally, Aristotle with greater penetration investigated the problem of unity and multiplicity, showing that unity is a transcendental property of being, and is found in every category of being. In like manner, what makes Aristotle famous is his affirmation of the indivisibility and unicity of God, of the pure Act. But he did not explain how multiplicity of beings proceeds from the one God. For his reasoning did not lead him to admit the idea of a most free creation. The Neoplatonists, however, sought to explain by necessary emanation how plurality of beings proceeds from the One-Good, inasmuch as good is essentially self-diffusive. But in doing so they denied the revealed doctrine of an absolutely free creation, and contradicted themselves, because God in operating from a necessity of His nature could not produce anything finite or limited. Now St. Thomas proceeds, however, in accordance with Aristotle's doctrine, very much improving upon it.

Conclusion. One does not add any reality to being, but is only a negation of division.

This conclusion is proved from the analysis alone of the terms, for "one means undivided being." This is evident from inductive reasoning, by considering the various categories of being: unity of substance is undivided substance, unity of quantity is undivided quantity, and the same applies to unity of quality, action, passion, relation, place, time, position. Nevertheless, one or undivided being is capable of being divided. Thus substance, which is composed of matter and form, man, who is a composite

of soul and body, likewise the continuous (magnitude, movement, time), each is undivided, but indefinitely divisible.

Hence from the analysis of the terms it is clear that unity is nothing but undivided being, as Aristotle had already shown. Hence unity does not add any reality to being, but is only a negation of division.

From this we get the following corollary: one is convertible with being. Indeed what is convertible with another is that which is predicated absolutely first of it, or necessarily and immediately, whether as specific difference, or as an inseparable property. But every being is one, because it is either simple or composite. But what is simple is perfectly one, because it is undivided and indivisible. But what is composite has not being while its parts are divided. Hence every being is one.

That everything guards its unity as it guards its entity, is a sign in confirmation of this truth. Thus in every living being, whether rational or irrational, in every nation whose country is in danger of being attacked, we find this instinct for self-preservation. Thus the Church guards her unity of faith, government, and worship, just as she guards her being.

From this it is clear that one does not add any reality to being, but is only a negation of division. Thus there is only a distinction of the mind between them. And contrary to the teaching of Parmenides, just as being is predicated not univocally but analogically of the different categories of being and of different beings, so also is one. Thus unity can be merely either analogical, or generic, or specific, or numerical. The solution of the objections confirms this doctrine.

Reply to first objection. Transcendental unity, which is found in all the categories of being, differs from unity that is the principle of number, this belonging solely to the category of quantity. Pythagoras, and Plato to some extent, as also Bannez among modern philosophers, erred in not distinguishing between these unities. Yet there is clearly a distinction between them. Thus we say of a doctrine lacking in coherence that it is one among many others, but that it lacks unity.

Does unity that is the principle of number add any reality to being? It does not add anything really distinct from being, because what is not being is nothingness; but it adds a special and limited mode of being, which is actually and implicitly contained in being, so that quantity still is being and not other than being.

It is in this sense that St. Thomas says at the end of his reply to the first objection: “The one which is convertible with being does not add a reality to being; but the one which is the principle of number does add a reality to being, which belongs to the genus of quantity.” In other words, although quantity is not an extrinsic differentia to being, as rationality is an extrinsic differentia to the genus of animality, yet quantity connotes a special nature which the notion of being does not connote, and which does not apply to every being. On the contrary, one which is convertible with being does not connote any other nature than being, but the transcendental mode of this nature.

Reply to second objection. In this reply several arguments are presented that serve to elucidate the fourth way of proving God’s existence.

1) What is one or undivided absolutely may be divided accidentally. Thus what is one in essence and subject may have many accidents. Likewise the continuous is one absolutely or is actually undivided, but it can be divided indefinitely into still smaller parts. Thus it is one absolutely and many accidentally.

2) On the other hand, those things that are absolutely divided and many, are one accidentally. Thus those things that are many in number are one in species or in principle. Thus many men are absolutely many.

3) Therefore, since being is one absolutely, “being is divided by one absolutely and by many accidentally.” This means that one and many do not refer on equal terms to being; they are not coordinated but subordinated. “For multitude itself would not be contained under being, unless it were in some way contained under one.” Thus Dionysius says that “there is no kind of multitude that is not in a way one. But what are many in their parts, are one in their whole; and what are many in accidents, are one in subject; and what are many in number, are one in species; and what are many in species, are one in genus; and what are many in processions, are one in principle.” Similarly, what are many in genera, are one in analogous being.

4) The elucidation of the fourth way follows from this, namely, that multitude, which is subordinate to one, cannot be the reason for the unity found by participation in it, the unity of similarity, for instance, either specific, generic, or analogical. Therefore, as St. Thomas says, “if one of some kind is found as a common note in several objects, this must be because some one cause has brought it about in them; for it cannot be that the common note of itself belongs to each thing, since each thing is by its

very nature distinct from the other, and a diversity of causes produces a diversity of effects. Since, therefore, being is found as a common note in all things, which, in all that they are, differ from one another, it must of necessity be that being is attributed to them not of themselves but from some one cause. And this seems to have been Plato's idea, whose wish was that, prior to any multitude, there should be some unity, not only in numbers, but also in the natures of things." For this reason, too, it was stated in a previous article that "every composite has a cause, for things in themselves different cannot unite unless something causes them to unite." Thus the unity of being is preserved, which was the wish of Parmenides; yet it is neither univocal unity nor unicity of being that is preserved, but analogous unity of beings, which are dependent on the supreme Being.

Reply to third objection. "It is not nugatory to say being is one, because one adds an idea to being." Likewise it is not nugatory or tautological to say every being is one and the same with its phenomena; for this is the principle of identity so determined that it can be called the principle of substance. Nor is it nugatory to say being is being, non-being is non-being, because by such statements it is affirmed that being is not non-being. Likewise if we say: Flesh is flesh, spirit is spirit; good is good, evil is evil. As our Lord says: "Let your speech be yea, yea: no, no." This means that being is necessarily by its nature opposed to non-being, as good is to evil, as spirit to flesh. By this the identity of being is affirmed against the contentions of absolute evolutionism.

Therefore one is undivided being. Hence one and being differ only in idea, and because our first concept is of being, one is related to being as a property to the essence from which it is derived, as, for instance, incorruptibility is related to a spiritual substance.

SECOND ARTICLE

WHETHER ONE AND MANY ARE OPPOSED TO EACH OTHER

State of the question. This article completes the idea of unity, inasmuch as it is compared with its opposite. The principal difficulty is enunciated in the fourth objection of this article, namely, that a vicious circle must be avoided in definitions, and there seems to be a vicious circle here; for if one is undivided being, it is opposed to the previously accepted notion of the

divided, or to multitude. Thus multitude would come before and not after one, which is contrary to what was stated in the previous article, and this would nullify the fourth way of proving God's existence.

Reply. One is opposed to many, but in various ways, inasmuch as one is considered the principle of number, or as it is convertible with being. For the one which is the principle of number, is opposed to multitude which is number, as the measure is to the thing measured; for number is multitude measured by one, as Aristotle says. But the one which is convertible with being, is opposed to multitude by way of privation, as the undivided is to the thing divided. Thus we speak of a united kingdom as being against a kingdom that is divided.

The first kind of opposition referred to here is of the relative order, as between father and son; the other is privative. Aristotle mentions two other kinds of opposition; namely, contradictory (as between a thing and its negation, between being and non-being, one and not one), and contrary (as between two opposite habits, for instance, between virtue and vice). Among these four kinds of opposition, the kind that is verified between transcendental unity and multitude is privative opposition.

Objection. But how is the principal difficulty to be answered? It is contended that if one is opposed to multitude, then it would follow that one comes after multitude, and is defined by it, as privation is by the want of form or perfection, as blindness is defined by privation of sight. But if unity is defined by privation of multitude, there is a vicious circle in definitions, for one is posited in the definition of multitude. Thus some define humility by its opposite, which is pride, as if it were a privation of pride; also pride is defined by humility, as if it were a privation of humility.

St. Thomas, in his reply to the fourth objection, concedes that "division is prior to unity, not absolutely in itself, but according to our way of apprehension. For we apprehend simple things by compound things; and hence we define a point to be what has no part, or the beginning of a line." Hence unity is defined by us as the privation of division, but not of multitude. Thus we conclude that one is prior to multitude, and is conceived as prior to multitude. In fact, as stated in this reply: what first comes to the mind is being; secondly, that this being is not that being, and thus we apprehend division; thirdly, comes the notion of one; fourthly, the notion of multitude. Hence we conclude that one is prior to multitude, although according to our way of apprehension it comes after division; for "we do

not understand divided things to convey the idea of multitude except by the fact that we attribute unity to every part." Hence there is no circle in definitions. Moreover, as Cajetan observes, division is negation, which is logical being. Hence division is absolutely prior to unity in the intelligible order, but not in the natural order.

In the reply to the first objection, it is pointed out that multitude is the privation of unity and has its foundation in unity, because privation neither takes away entirely the existence or being of a thing, nor unity which is converted with being. For privation is the want of some perfection in a subject. Thus privation of being and of unity has its foundation in being and in unity. But this does not happen in the privation of special forms. Thus the privation of whiteness is not founded on whiteness, nor is the privation of sight on sight, but on the subject apt for sight.

It remains true, however, that opposition between one and many, inasmuch as, although many is one relatively and has its foundation in one, yet it is not one absolutely. What is many absolutely is one relatively, namely, according to either specific, generic, or analogical similarity. Also what is one absolutely, as man, is many relatively, by reason of its parts and accidents.

Reply to second objection. The other difficulty is solved, namely, that multitude is constituted by one, and therefore it is not opposed to multitude. In the reply it is stated that unities constitute multitude in so far as they have being, but not in so far as they are opposed to multitude. Thus the parts of a house make up the house by the fact that they are beings, not by the fact that they are "not houses," namely "not the whole." Every distinct part has a unity that is distinct from the unity of the whole.

The particular conclusions to be drawn from these first two articles are that unity is a property of being, inasmuch as one is undivided being, and that multitude by way of privation is opposed to this transcendental unity, but presupposes it, and this for two reasons: (1) because multitude is a plurality of unities; (2) because multitude results from the division of a being that is one either by unity of genus or of species or of quantity or of subject.

THIRD ARTICLE

WHETHER GOD IS ONE

State of the question. The discussion is not about the absence of division in God, for we have already seen, when treating of God's simplicity, that He is absolutely indivisible since there is no kind of composition in Him, either physical, metaphysical, or logical. But the discussion concerns God's unicity. A being, however, is said to be unique, when there cannot be or at least are not other beings of the same species or genus. Therefore God is unique, if there cannot be many Gods. But, as we shall at once see, unicity has its foundation in unity, and God's unicity in the absolute indivisibility of the Deity.

It must be noted that all polytheists denied God's unity, and likewise many heretics who admitted two principles, one of good and the other of evil, such as the Gnostics, the Marcionites, the Valentinians of the second century. Along with these we must include the Manichaeans of the third century, and finally the Albigensians of the thirteenth century. In the sixteenth century, too, the Tritheists, not having a proper conception of the real distinction between the three divine Persons, spoke as if there were three Gods.

Finally, the pantheists implicitly deny God's unity, inasmuch as they admit a necessity of emanation of the divine nature in its external communication, just as the sun's rays of necessity proceed from it. St. Thomas gives three reasons for idolatry or polytheism: (1) an excessive love for certain men, who were the objects of veneration; (2) ignorance of the true God; (3) demoniacal inspiration.

Reply. There is of necessity but one God.

1. This conclusion is of faith, as clearly seen from very many texts of Holy Scripture; e.g., "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord." There is scarcely a page of the Old or New Testament in which there is not a reference to monotheism. Likewise the first words of the Nicene Creed are: "I believe in one God." The Fourth Lateran Council says: "We firmly believe that there is only one true God . . . the one principle of all things." This same truth is equivalently expressed in the Vatican Council.

2. Three proofs from reason are given of God's unicity. It is proved: (1) from God's simplicity; (2) from His infinity; (3) from the unity and order in the world. It is proved from God's simplicity as follows: It is impossible to communicate to many that by which any singular thing is this particular thing, for instance, that by which Socrates is this particular man as distinct from others. But because Socrates is not humanity, there can be many men.

Since God, however, is His Deity, for the same reason He is both God and this God. Therefore it is impossible that there should be many Gods.

This reasoning is clear, and is made clearer by contrasting it with its opposite, when it is said: “If Socrates were a man by what makes him to be this particular man, as there cannot be many Socrates, so there could not be many men.” Hence, because in the same way God is God and this God, there cannot be many Gods.

For the understanding of the major, it must be noted that this whereby any singular thing is this particular thing cannot be communicated to many, whether we are speaking of individuality resulting from matter which is the foundation of quantity, or whether we are speaking of subsistence or of personality. Indeed, matter which is the foundation of quantity cannot be communicated to inferior things, that is, it cannot be participated by another subject, since matter is the ultimate subject and pure potency, capable of receiving but not of being received. But if we consider subsistence or personality, then that by which this particular thing cannot be communicated is that by which the nature is made incommunicable to another suppositum or person. Therefore in these two acceptations of the term “singularity” we have the verification of the major.

The minor, however, has its foundation in the truth that God is His own Godhead, which means that there is no distinction between either the Godhead and this Godhead (because Godhead is not a form received in matter), or between this Godhead and this God (because God is absolutely simple, and He does not constitute a whole of which the Godhead would be only an essential part).

On the other hand, although there is not any distinction between Michaelness and this Michaelness, Michael is not his Michaelness, because Michael represents the whole, of which Michaelness is the essential part, and besides this there is in Michael contingent existence and accidents.

Moreover, in contradistinction to the Godhead, the angelic nature taken generically can be communicated to many, inasmuch as there can be many subordinated angelic species according to the perfections of their intellectual power. But this plurality does not apply to the Godhead, for this is not only separated from matter, but transcends every species and genus. From this first proof it is clear that God’s unicity is deduced from His unity, and from His simplicity or indivisibility.

The second proof is derived from God’s infinity.

There cannot be two or many infinitely perfect beings. But God is the infinitely perfect being as stated above. Consequently, there cannot be many Gods.

Proof of major. If there were two infinitely perfect beings, there would have to be a difference between them, and this difference would have to be a perfection and not an imperfection. Hence a certain "perfection would be wanting to one of them." This means that each of them would have to be the self-subsisting Being, and then there would be no way of distinguishing between them, either on our part or in themselves. In other words, there is only one unreceived subsisting Being, just as there would necessarily be but one whiteness, if this were not received in anything. On the other hand, there is a real distinction between God and creatures, inasmuch as these are not their existence, and this, being an imperfection, cannot be in the infinitely perfect Being.

From this proof given by St. Thomas many Thomists deduce that the subsistent relations in the divine Persons, according as they denote regard to another (esse ad), are not absolutely simple perfections, for since filiation is not in the Father, He would be without some absolutely simple perfection and thus would not be God. For an absolutely simple perfection not only implies no imperfection, but it is better for one to have than not to have this. Hence the divine relations, according as they denote regard to another (esse ad), do not add a new perfection to the infinite perfection of the divine nature. The same is to be said of God's free act, for instance, the creative free act.

The third proof is derived from the unity of the universe, and thus the fifth way of proving God's existence is perfected from on high.

Things that are diverse do not harmonize in the same order, unless they are ordered thereto by one, because one is essentially the cause of one. But there is ordination, either of subordination or of coordination, between all existing things in the universe. Therefore all these things are ordered by the one, which must be most perfect, so that all things may be ordered by it. And this one is God.

The major is evident from what we said about unity and multitude; for multitude does not convey the idea of unity that is found in it. There must be an intelligent Ordainer, for He must perceive the reasons for the existence of things, and the means in the end. Moreover, He must be the self-subsisting Intellection, otherwise His intelligence would be ordered to

intellection and truth by a higher Ordainer. But there must be only one self-subsisting Intellection, just as there is only one self-subsisting Being.

Reply to second objection. God is said to be one or undivided by a privation of division. But this privation is only according to our mode of apprehension, because with us the concept of the composite is prior to that of the simple. Hence we define a point to be "what has no part."

FOURTH ARTICLE

WHETHER GOD IS SUPREMELY ONE

State of the question. We are concerned here with unity that is the foundation for unicity. This follows as a corollary from what was said about God's simplicity. The difficulty that could be raised from the mystery of the most Holy Trinity is solved when we come to discuss this mystery. For the present, as regards the Trinity, only St. Bernard's words are quoted: "Among all things called one, the unity of the divine Trinity holds the first place"; that is, the unity is so sublime and intimate that it persists in the very Trinity of Persons. From this most exalted point of view God's unity is revealed. On the contrary, if this unity is not considered with reference to the Trinity, it constitutes the preamble to the faith, and is proved by reason alone, as we have seen. In fact, in this article it is proved by reason alone that God is supremely one.

The proof. What is supremely being and supremely undivided is supremely one; but God is supremely being (because He is the self-subsisting Being) and supremely undivided (because He is absolutely simple); therefore God is supremely one. This means that He is infinitely farther removed from composition than even the highest angel, who is composed of essence and existence. In fact, God alone is essential unity; for creatures have not unity as an entity except by participation.

In the treatise on the Trinity, however, it is shown that the real distinction between the Persons does not take away from God His supreme unity, for this distinction has its foundation in the opposition of relation. This means that there is a real distinction between the Persons and not between these and the divine nature. Thus in the equilateral triangle the three equal angles are really distinct from one another and not really distinct from the superficies of the triangle, which is one and the same in these three angles.

The closer is the unity effected by the real distinction, the nobler is this unity. This constitutes the very mystery of the Trinity.

Cajetan most correctly draws attention to this point so as to show that, although the divine nature is no way either really or formally distinct from paternity, yet this nature is communicable and is really communicated, whereas paternity is incommunicable. In like manner, although the first angle of a triangle is not really distinct from its superficies, and is not communicated to the other two angles, yet its superficies is really communicated. On this point Cajetan says: “As in the real order, so also in the formal order, or of formal aspects in themselves, and not as we speak of them, there is in God but one formal aspect, which is neither purely absolute nor purely relative, neither purely communicable nor purely incommunicable. But this aspect most eminently and formally contains whatever there is of absolute perfection and whatever the relativity in the Trinity demands. . . . But we are deceived when we proceed from the absolute and relative attributes in our approach to God, in that we imagine that the distinction between the absolute and the relative is, as it were, prior to the divine reality; and consequently we believe that this must be put under the other member. And yet there is totality of opposition, for the divine reality is prior to being and to all its differences; for it transcends being and one.”

This means that the divine reality, as it is in itself, contains formally and eminently all the most purely simple or absolute perfections, and also the divine relations, so that these real and subsistent relations are neither really nor formally (as realities) distinct from the nature. There is only a rationis ratiocinatae or virtual distinction between them and the divine nature. Thus we see the sublimity of God’s unity from revelation more clearly than from the most searching investigation of reason.

CHAPTER XII

QUESTION 12

THE KNOWABILITY OF GOD

AFTER speaking of “how God is not,” St. Thomas now treats the question, “How God is known by us,” as he had already announced.

The importance of this question. It is of the greatest importance. Just as the second question, concerning God’s existence, is of fundamental importance as regards those truths that belong to natural theology, so this twelfth question is of fundamental importance as regards those truths that are of the supernatural order. For this question concerns the possibility of the rational creature being elevated to the order of grace and glory, namely, to the supernatural end of the beatific vision. It is, strictly speaking, a discussion of the essentially supernatural nature of this vision, which far surpasses the supernatural nature of miracle. For a miracle is supernatural only as regards the manner of its production. Thus by the resurrection the natural life, both vegetative and sensitive, is supernaturally restored to one who is dead; whereas, contrary to this, as we shall at once see, the immediate vision of the divine essence is intrinsically and essentially supernatural, for it is essentially supernatural life. Several theologians of more recent times, wishing to prove conclusively from reason alone the possibility of the beatific vision, because of the natural desire for this, forgot to take into account this distinction between the essentially supernatural nature of eternal life and the supernatural nature of miracle, the existence and possibility of which latter can be known in a natural way. We shall see that reason alone cannot prove apodictically either the existence or the possibility of the beatific vision; for the knowability of what is essentially supernatural is itself supernatural, inasmuch as truth and being are convertible. We shall see, however, that the possibility of the beatific vision cannot be disproved, that it is defended against those who deny it,

that reason alone persuades us of this by means of a most profound argument of its fittingness, and that it is firmly held by faith. This is the common opinion of the theologians, and it is only by inadvertence that this can be denied.

Therefore in this question we already have the concept of the essentially supernatural life developed for us in its fundamental aspects, and completed in the treatises on happiness and on grace, inasmuch as grace is the seed of glory.

St. Thomas in his treatise on happiness says: “Neither man nor any (angelic) creature can attain final happiness by his natural powers,” because “the vision of the divine essence (is of that) which infinitely surpasses all created substance,” which means that it surpasses the natural powers and exigencies of such. It is likewise shown farther on that “without grace man cannot merit everlasting life” because “everlasting life is an end exceeding the proportion of human nature,” and even of the angelic nature.

The fundamental principles of all these truths are contained in this question, which is divided into three parts as follows: (1) God’s knowability by direct vision is discussed in the first eleven articles; (2) God’s knowability by the abstractive method of reasoning from natural effects is discussed in the twelfth article; (3) God’s knowability by faith is the subject of the thirteenth article.

The first part of this question, which is the principal part, has four divisions: (1) the possibility of the beatific vision, or of our being elevated to the supernatural order of grace and glory (a. 1); (2) the intuitiveness of this vision; whether God is seen through some similitude or idea (a. 2); (3) the faculty and the light of glory by which the created intellect can see God (a. 3, 4, 5); (4) the remaining articles are concerned with the various modifying circumstances of this vision, inasmuch as there is difference of degree in this among the blessed, since it is not a comprehensive penetration of the divine essence, and inasmuch as these circumstances modify the state of blessedness.

FIRST ARTICLE

WHETHER ANY CREATED INTELLECT CAN SEE THE ESSENCE OF GOD

State of the question. It is a discussion not only of the human intellect, but of every created intellect, even that of the highest angel, and even of higher angels that could be created. The word can in the title is taken in the unrestricted sense, as referring either to the natural power of the created intellect or to the elevation of this power by God. The question is whether the vision of God is possible (or non-repugnant) for the created intellect. But the existence of this vision is of faith, and it is purely a gift. Lastly, to see God's essence means to know God's essence, not partially but completely, although it is stated in the seventh article that this knowledge is not comprehensive. This is what the Scholastics say is not the abstractive but the quiddative knowledge of God.

The intellect has no difficulty in understanding this terminology. The abstractive knowledge of God is incomplete and imperfect; for by it we acquire a knowledge of God by predicating, indeed, attributes that are essential but only analogically common to Him and to creatures. Thus God is known as the first Cause, the first Being, the self-subsisting Being, the infinite Being. . . . On the contrary, the quiddative knowledge of God is complete and perfect, because by it we know God according to all His essential predicates, down to and including the ultimate difference, that is, to His Deity or intimate life. But the Deity as such contains formally, enimently, and explicitly all absolute perfections, which are intimately reconciled in His eminent Deity; in fact they are identified therein (without any real distinction between them), although without destroying one another. The Deity as such, however, is named by us wayfarers, but it is not known by its proper concept, because it is not naturally capable of being participated in by created natures from which by the abstractive method we get our ideas; these natures participate, indeed, in being, unity, truth, goodness, intelligence, and love, but not in the Deity, which can be participated in only by grace, which is strictly a participation of the divine nature, or of God's intimate life.

Hence there is a great difference between knowing God abstractively, or, as it were, externally, in some created image, and knowing Him quiddatively, in His intimate life. Thus there is a great difference between knowing some man, for instance, the supreme pontiff, only according to his external characteristics and knowing him in his intimate life. This terminology, however, has its immediate foundation in Holy Scripture. Thus St. Paul says: "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into

the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him. But to us God hath revealed them, by His Spirit. For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God [that is, the intimate life of God, or the Deity as such]. For what man knoweth the things of a man [intimately] but the spirit of a man that is in him? So the things also that are of God no man knoweth, but the Spirit of God."

St. Thomas has spoken in several other places of the distinction between the abstractive and intuitive or quiddative knowledge of God. This question has been discussed at length by us in another work, and therefore we shall mention here only the principal points.

Let us see: (1) what is defined to be of faith about the beatific vision; (2) the errors of those who deny either the possibility of the beatific vision, or its supernatural character; (3) what Sacred Scripture and tradition have to say about it; (4) how St. Thomas defends the possibility of this vision in this article and in other places; (5) the terminology of later theologians on this point; (6) the various opinions; (7) the common opinion among the Thomists.

WHAT IS DEFINED TO BE OF FAITH ABOUT THE BEATIFIC VISION

We have the following definitions and declarations of the Church: "Those who, having been baptized, die without any actual sin on their souls, go immediately to heaven, the state of grace being required for entrance therein; heaven or beatitude is not a substantial transformation into God, but man is raised to supernatural happiness, and this cannot be found out by reason alone." It is also declared that this supernatural happiness cannot be had in this life, but in the future, and that it consists in seeing God immediately and intuitively face to face, and in the enjoyment of this vision.

A special quotation must be given from the Constitution Benedictus Deus of Benedict XII, which states: "By apostolic authority we define that, according to God's common ordination, the souls of all the saints . . . immediately after death and the aforesaid purgation of those who are in need of this even before their souls are again united to their bodies and the general judgment . . . see the divine essence by direct intuition and face to face, in such wise that nothing created intervenes as an object of vision, but the divine essence presents itself to their immediate gaze, unveiled, clearly

and openly, and that in this vision they enjoy the divine essence. . . . Also in this vision and enjoyment of the divine essence, they do not make acts of either faith or hope in the same . . . and this vision and fruition will continue . . . forever."

In this constitution emphasis must be placed on the words "nothing created intervening as an object of vision." This does not mean, however, the condemnation of the opinion of those who maintain that there is a created impressed or expressed species in the beatific vision; for these do not say that such species intervenes as the object of vision, but only as that by which or in which the divine essence is seen, just as the angel sees his essence in some expressed intelligible species. In Like manner the Council of Florence says: "The souls of the saints in heaven know by clear intuition the one and triune God as He is in Himself, yet one more perfectly than another according to the diversity of their merits."

CONDEMNED ERRORS

As for the condemned errors on this subject, some recede from the true doctrine by denying the possibility of the beatific vision; others go to excess by saying that no absolutely gratuitous gift is required to make this vision possible.

Those who denied the possibility of the intuitive vision of God appealed to the arguments quoted by St. Thomas at the beginning of this article, namely, that there is no existing proportion between the created intellect and God, for there is an infinite distance between them. In fact, the Deity in a certain way transcends being, but the object of the intellect is being. Moreover, God can be seen only in a finite manner, and then His essence is not immediately seen. St. Gregory speaks of this error. Amalric, who lived during the pontificate of Innocent III, erred likewise on this point. But particularly the fourteenth century Palamites denied the possibility of the beatific vision, maintaining that the divine nature, as it is in itself, cannot be even supernaturally seen by the created intellect. Therefore the Palamites admitted that a certain uncreated light emanates from God, which can be seen by the bodily eye, such, they say, as the apostles saw on Mount Thabor, and it is this light which constitutes the enjoyment and happiness of the saints in heaven. The Greeks in four pseudo-synods accepted and confirmed this doctrine.

Among modern philosophers, Rosmini seems to have denied the possibility of the absolutely immediate vision of God even with the help of the light of glory. The following propositions of Rosmini were condemned: “God is the object of the beatific vision inasmuch as He is the author of ad extra works.” “Since God cannot, even by the light of glory, entirely communicate Himself to finite beings, He could reveal and communicate His essence to the possessors only in that way which befits finite intelligences, namely, by manifesting Himself to them, inasmuch as He enters into relation with them as their creator, foreseer, redeemer, and sanctifier.” These propositions seem to deny the immediate vision of God’s essence, even with the help of the light of glory.

In contradistinction to these, the fourth century heretics, Eunomius, Aëtius and the Anomoeans, attributed to the merely natural powers of the intellect not only the intuitive but also the comprehensive vision of God. They were most strenuously attacked by Chrysostom, Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa, Ambrose, Epiphanius, and others.

St. Thomas in the first objection of this article quotes a text from St. Chrysostom which suggests a difficulty, for he says: “Not only the prophets have not seen God, but neither have angels or archangels.” A similar text is quoted from the works of Dionysius. St. Thomas replies: “Both of these authorities speak of the vision of comprehension,” not of the merely intuitive vision. And he proves this by quoting what Chrysostom says farther on in this text about Dionysius; “He says this of the most certain vision of the Father, which is such a perfect consideration and comprehension as the Father has of the Son.” Indeed the words of Chrysostom here are directed against the Anomoeans, who said that they see God as God sees Himself.

In the fourteenth century, the Beguines and Beghards likewise erred on this point, and were condemned in the ecumenical Council of Vienne. They asserted “that any intellectual nature whatever is naturally blessed in itself, and that the soul does not need the light of glory, elevating it to see God and to enjoy seeing Him in this blissful state.” This means that the beatific vision is not only possible, but natural.

Later on Baius denied the gratuity of our elevation to the order of grace and glory, admitting a natural and efficacious desire in us for the beatific vision, as a gift due to our nature or as not being one to which we have no claim, and which is not gratuitous. He said: “The elevation and exaltation of

human nature to a participation in the divine nature was due to it because of its original state of integrity; hence it must be declared natural and not supernatural." He likewise asserted that "the opinion of those is absurd, who say that in the beginning man was raised above his natural state by a certain supernatural and gratuitous gift, so that he might worship God by the supernatural virtues of faith, hope, and charity."

He also said: "That distinction between the two kinds of love, namely, the natural by which God is loved as the author of nature, and the gratuitous by which God is loved as the beatifier, is vain and false, its purpose being to ridicule Scripture and the very many testimonies of ancient writers." All these condemnations are of the greatest importance, for they are a condemnation of the natural and efficacious desire for the beatific vision. This desire is called efficacious, not that the beatific vision would exceed the exigencies, but only the powers, of our nature; for the beatific vision, like the elevation and exaltation of human nature to a participation in the divine nature, would be due to this nature and not gratuitous. This means the denial of the gratuity of grace itself.

It must be noticed that subsequently the ontologists expressed a preference for this error, as is evident from their condemned propositions, such as the following ones: "The immediate and at least habitual knowledge of God, is so essential to the human intellect that without it nothing can be known; it is indeed the very light of the intellect." "That being, which is in all things and without which nothing is perceived by the intellect, is the divine being." If the beatific vision were such as just stated, then there would be no essential distinction between the formal object of this vision and that of natural knowledge; but the formal object of each would be the same, known confusedly at first and afterward distinctly, just as we say that the formal object of natural reason is specifically the same in the rustic and the great metaphysician, though known in a different way by each, since it is known vaguely by the former and clearly by the latter. This would do away with the essential distinction between the two orders of nature and grace.

Semirationalists, such as Frohschammer, said about the same. Their doctrine was more explicitly condemned in the Vatican Council, which most clearly affirmed "that there is a twofold order of knowledge, distinct both in principle and in object."

Finally Pius X, in his Encyclical Pascendi, says against several modern apologists who stressed excessively our natural aspirations and came near teaching the error of Baius: “We cannot refrain from once more and very strongly deploring the fact that there are Catholics who, while repudiating immanence as a doctrine, nevertheless employ it as a system of apologetics; they do so, we may say, with such a lack of discretion that they seem to admit in human nature not only a capacity and fittingness for the supernatural order, both of which Catholic apologists, with due reservations, have always demonstrated, but they assert that it truly and vigorously demands the same. As we may more truly say, however, this need of the Catholic religion is attacked by the modernists, who seek to be looked upon as more moderate in their views. For those whom we may call integralists want it to be taken for a demonstrated fact that there is this latent supernatural germ in the unbeliever, which was transmitted to mankind from the consciousness of Christ.”

The second part of this encyclical rejects the opinion of those who wish to find in our nature (which for them is in a process of becoming) the germ of the Christian life, which thus would not be strictly supernatural. The first part rejects the natural desire that postulates the beatific vision, or proves effective of the same. This would be to revive the error of Baius, who said: “The exaltation of human nature to a participation in the divine nature, was due to it because of its original state of integrity; hence it must be declared natural and not supernatural.”

What we have said suffices concerning mutually conflicting errors, that is, those that are such either by defect or by excess. But from this we already have the beatific vision correctly explained, especially if these mutually conflicting errors are taken exactly into consideration. Similarly, in the question on grace, the doctrine that is of faith is already to a great extent explained by a careful consideration of the Pelagian and Semipelagian errors, and of Predestinationism, Protestantism, and Jansenism.

THE TESTIMONY OF SACRED SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION CONCERNING THE BEATIFIC VISION

The aforesaid definitions of the Church are more explicit propositions of the truth that is already contained in the deposit of revelation, namely, in

Sacred Scripture and Tradition.

The principal texts of Sacred Scripture, as Tradition has interpreted them, must here be quoted.

In St. Matthew's Gospel we read: "Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God." This text is explained by the following one: "See that you despise not one of these little ones; for I say to you, that their angels in heaven always see the face of My Father who is in heaven." These words refer of course to the angels; but from this text and several other texts of the Gospel it is clear that our heavenly happiness, as regards the object seen, does not differ from that of the angels.

Moreover, St. John says: "In that day you shall know that I am in My Father, and you in Me and I in you." "That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, in Me and I in Thee; that they also may be one in us. . . . Father, I will that where I am, they also whom Thou hast given Me may be with Me; that they may see My glory which Thou hast given Me, because Thou hast loved Me before the creation of the world." The words "I will that where I am" are explained elsewhere by the Evangelist in these words: "We testify what we have seen. . . . And no man hath ascended into heaven, but He that descended from heaven, the Son of Man who is in heaven.

Similarly, in his first epistle St. John says: "Beloved, we are now the sons of God, and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like to Him, because we shall see Him as He is." However, if God's essence is not known by an intuitive vision, but by means of a created image, then this cannot be called "seeing Him as He is"; for a created image is something altogether imperfect with reference to God considered just as He is in Himself. This will be more fully explained in the following text.

Lastly St. Paul says: "We see now through a glass in a dark manner, but then face to face. Now I know in part; but then I shall know even as I am known."

This means that we know God at present through a mirror, namely, the mirror of created things, even if it is a question of the knowledge acquired by faith which is a gift of God; for the mysteries of faith are expressed according to concepts, for instance, of nature and person, and these are obtained from created things. Likewise it is said that "we see in a dark manner" because of the obscurity in the mysteries of faith, which is not an immediate and clear knowledge of these just as they are in themselves, but

a knowledge that rests solely on God's testimony confirmed by divine signs. "But then face to face," which means that God will be directly seen. And this is confirmed by the last words of the text, "as I am known." But God's knowledge of us is absolutely perfect, for the Scripture says: "All things are naked and open to His eyes."

There is, however, some difficulty about the expression "face to face," for the Scripture says: "And the Lord spoke to Moses face to face as a man is wont to speak to his friend." It also says: "And there arose no more a prophet in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face." In fact, we also read that after Jacob had seen the angels and heard God's message, he said: "I have seen God face to face, and my soul has been saved." This text does not refer, however, to the immediate vision of God's essence, because, as stated in this text, Jacob fought with the angel who appeared in a sensible form, and he received only God's blessing and had his name changed.

The reply to this difficulty is that the expression "face to face" in these passages from the Old Testament is materially the same as the text quoted from St. Paul's epistle, but the words of this text are to be taken in a more sublime sense, as is evident from the context: "Then I shall know even as I am known."

St. Thomas explains these texts of the Old Testament farther on in this question. He says: "So when Jacob says, 'I have seen God face to face,' this does not mean the divine essence, but some figure representing God . . . , or that Jacob spoke thus to designate some exalted intellectual contemplation, above the ordinary state."

It is no wonder, however, that this expression "face to face" is not used exactly in the same sense in the Old Testament and in the text just quoted from St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians; for the expression is analogical and metaphorical. Therefore God's appearance in some sensible form first suggests itself to us in this utterance; but it is afterward understood in a nobler sense of God's immediate manifestation without any intervening sensible image. Finally it must be said that not all the Fathers declared that this text of St. Paul refers strictly to the beatific vision. Nevertheless this is commonly admitted, because the text concerns our knowledge as it will be in heaven, which transcends faith and all the charismata. In the Old Testament there is veiled reference to the beatific

vision, as in the following text: “I shall be satisfied when Thy glory shall appear.”

As early as the second century we find the Fathers speaking of the beatific vision. Among them is St. Irenaeus, who says: “(God) grants this to those who love Him, namely, to see Him, which the prophets also prophesied. . . . For man does not see God by his own powers. But when He pleases He is seen by men, by whom He wills, and when He wills, and as He wills.” Likewise, too, St. Cyprian says: “What will be the glory and how great the joy, to be admitted to see God, to be honored with the companionship of Christ the Lord Thy God, and experience the joy of salvation and light eternal!” Petavius quotes the principal texts from the Fathers, and explains several passages in the works of St. Chrysostom and St. Basil, who seem at first sight to deny the immediate vision of God, whereas from the context it is clear that these Fathers are speaking against the Anomoeans, who said that the merely natural power of the intellect is sufficient not only for the intuitive but also for the comprehensive vision of God, as St. Thomas remarks. Long before the scholastic period, even the Stoics knew that comprehension means complete perception; for Zeno distinguished between simple sensation and comprehensive perception, comparing the former to the unclenched hand, and the latter to the clenched hand, which grasps what it holds. Thus St. John Chrysostom defines the comprehensive vision as the adequate knowledge which the Father has of the Person of His Son.

THE BEATIFIC VISION AND THE VIEWS OF NON-CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHERS

As for the ancient philosophers, it must be noted that Plato spoke of the future life especially in his Phaedo, and in a mythical manner about the contemplation of the supreme Good. But in another of his works he says that the Idea of the Good is the source of all truth and intelligence, so that it appears to transcend intelligible essence and intellection.

For Plotinus the supreme hypostasis, namely, the One-Good, transcends intelligence (the second hypostasis, which consists of a certain duality of subject and object), and therefore the supreme Good cannot be seen, but is known by a certain obscure and mystic contact.

Among modern philosophers, Spinoza had a pantheistic conception of the vision of God. He held that there is but one substance, which is endowed with two attributes, namely, thought and extension; and just as our bodies are finite modes of infinite extension, so our intellect is a finite mode of divine thought. Among men, however, those are immortal who attain to the idea of God, which is an eternal and not a transitory mode of God. Thus there is a certain impersonal immortality, and beatitude consists in a certain knowledge of God from which proceeds the intellectual love of God. He says:" The intellectual love of the mind for God is the very love of God by which He loves Himself, or the intellectual love of the mind for God is a part of the infinite love by which God loves Himself."

All this results from the pantheistic definition of substance, in which abstract being is confused with the divine being, from which Spinoza seeks to deduce all things geometrically, according to the principles of absolute determinism. Thus the denial of God's liberty results in the denial of the possibility of supernatural revelation and of miracles. In fact, this means the absolute denial of everything supernatural even in God, because the divine nature is identified with our nature. Human nature cannot be elevated to the supernatural order, since there is now no real and essential distinction between it and the divine nature.

But it is quite clear that Spinoza was wrong, as stated above, in confusing abstract being with the divine being, by conceiving infinite extension as one of God's attributes. He never did succeed in deducing from God the finite modes of extension and thought, for he considered the successive series of these as eternal.

Against this mental attitude toward God, it has already been established that He is the self-subsisting, absolutely simple and immutable Being, and thus He is really and essentially distinct from the changeable and composite world. There can be no finite modes in God, which could be considered as His accidents, because the self-subsisting Being is not capable of further determination. He is pure Act without any admixture of potency.

HOW DOES ST. THOMAS DEFEND THE POSSIBILITY OF THE BEATIFIC VISION IN THIS ARTICLE AND IN PARALLEL PASSAGES?

This article consists of three parts: (1) the reason for doubting this vision; (2) the opinion of those heretics who deny this truth; (3) refutation of

opinion because it is opposed to the faith and because the denial of the possibility of the beatific vision is against reason.

In the first part it is proved that God is in Himself supremely knowable; because everything is knowable according as it is actual. But God is pure Act. Thus Aristotle said that the pure Act is both supreme intelligence and the supreme intelligible. But this in some measure is directed against Plotinus, who held that the first hypostasis, the One-Good, transcends intelligence (second hypostasis) and essence. Nevertheless Plotinus admitted a superintellection in the first hypostasis.

Furthermore St. Thomas remarks: “But what is supremely knowable in itself may not be knowable to a particular intellect on account of the excess of the intelligible object above the intellect; as, for example, the sun which is supremely visible cannot be seen by the bat on account of the excess of light.” Aristotle had alluded to this. Hence there is reason for doubting this vision, since the created intellect, not as an intellect, but as it is created and weak or deficient, is like the owl in this respect.

The second part of this article reports the opinion of those who “held that no created intellect can see the essence of God.” Thus several Neoplatonists, followers of Plotinus, said that finite intellects, even in a state of supreme ecstasy, cannot see God, or the first hypostasis, but are only in mystic and obscure contact with Him. Similarly, in the pontificate of Innocent III, as we remarked, the Amalricians denied the possibility of the immediate vision of God’s essence.

The third part of this article proves the falsity of denying the possibility of the beatific vision, both because that denial is “opposed to the faith” and because it is “against reason.”

It is said to be “opposed to the faith,” at least as an erroneous doctrine. In fact, St. Thomas says: “This point of view cannot be upheld, since it is heretical.” Several definitions of the Church have made this increasingly clear, especially the definition of Benedict XI.

St. Thomas shows that the opinion is opposed to faith, since it is of faith that our ultimate happiness is to be found in God. But, as Aristotle declares, man’s ultimate happiness consists in his highest operation, which is intellection. And any being whatever is perfect in so far as it attains to its principle, as even the Neoplatonists said.

There is still a difficulty concerning the natural premise which is here posited, for it must be proved that ultimate happiness does not consist in the

abstract knowledge of God, but in the intuitive and absolutely direct knowledge of Him. It may be said, as John of St. Thomas observes, that a thing is perfect by the fact that it is united to its principle according to its capacity.

In reply to this we say that this immediateness is sufficiently established by the Scripture passages quoted above and from the definitions of the Church, and especially, since the time of St. Thomas, from the definition of Benedict XI.

Finally it is shown that the denial of the possibility of the beatific vision is against reason. This means that reason cannot demonstrate the impossibility of this vision, or the possibility of this vision cannot be proved false; moreover, it is reasonably defended against those who deny it.

A natural desire cannot be to no purpose. But every man naturally desires to know the cause when he sees the effect. Therefore it is against reason to say that no created intellect can see God.

Much has been written by the commentators of St. Thomas about this argument. We must first see how St. Thomas enunciates this argument in other parts of his works. Thus in one passage he says: “The object of the intellect is what a thing is, that is, the essence of a thing, according to De anima, Bk. III. Wherefore the intellect attains perfection in so far as it knows the essence of a thing. . . . Consequently, when man knows an effect, and knows that it has a cause, there naturally remains in man the desire to know about that cause, what it is. . . . Consequently, for perfect happiness the intellect needs to reach the very essence of the first Cause.” Elsewhere he says: “This natural and imperfect knowledge the angels have of God does not set their natural desire to rest, but rather urges it on to see the divine substance.”

From these and other places the argument is thus better construed as follows: A natural desire cannot be void or tend to something that is impossible. But there is in man a natural desire to know not only whether there is a cause, but also what it is in itself. Therefore to know the essence of the first cause, as it is in itself, does not seem impossible to man, that is, there does not seem to be any ineptitude in man for this possibility of being elevated; and therefore the denial of this possibility is “against reason.”

A doubt arises concerning the meaning and force of this argument. Several have objected that it proves too much or not enough.

It proves, of course, too much, if it is a question of a natural and efficacious desire, or of an exigency for the beatific vision; for, in such a case, this vision would be due to our nature and not gratuitous, as Baius and later on Jansenius said, who appealed to St. Thomas' argument in defense of their opinion. Such an interpretation of this argument would evidently prove too much; for it would prove also the beatific vision itself and would lead to a confusion between the two orders of nature and grace.

It does not prove enough, however, if it is a question of a conditional and inefficacious natural desire, or of a velleity; for this velleity can be frustrated and be ineffective. In fact, perhaps it tends toward an impossibility, just as if anyone, thinking that the intuitive vision of God must be also comprehensive, were to desire conditionally and inefficaciously not only the intuitive but also the comprehensive vision of God, which latter is incommunicable. But to desire conditionally is to desire on condition that the thing desired be possible, as if, for instance, one were to desire to have wings on condition that such be possible.

Moreover, there is another difficulty, inasmuch as a perfect, abstractive knowledge of the essence of the first Cause is all that is required for the explanation of things in nature, because God is the cause of things not by reason of His essence, acting from a necessity of His nature, but by a most free intervention of His intellect and will. Therefore, to explain things in nature, it suffices for us to know that the first Cause is endowed with intellect and will. Contrary to this, for a perfect explanation of sanctifying grace, which is participation in the divine nature, we would have to see God's essence.

The Thomists, especially those after the time of Baius, generally reply to this difficulty by observing that St. Thomas is certainly not speaking of an unconditional and efficacious natural desire or one of exigence. Therefore he has in mind a conditional and inefficacious desire, by reason of which we defend not the existence but the probability of the beatific vision, and are intimately persuaded of the same, although it is not conclusively proved. We have evidence of this from the following observations.

1) St. Thomas certainly is not speaking of a natural efficacious desire but of an inefficacious one. For, in his opinion, there is no natural efficacious and necessitating desire except with reference to good that is proportionate to and due to our nature. He says: "Everlasting life is a good exceeding the proportion of created nature; since it exceeds its knowledge and desire,

according to I Cor. 2: 9: Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him." Likewise, on the necessity of grace for the angels, he says: "To see God in His essence is beyond the nature of every created intellect. Consequently no rational creature can have the motion of the will directed toward such beatitude unless it is moved thereto by a supernatural agent. This is what we call the help of grace." Similarly when defining predestination, he says: "The end toward which created things are directed by God is twofold. One is that which exceeds all proportion and faculty of created nature; and this end is life eternal, which consists in seeing God, and this is above the nature of every creature, as shown above (q. 12, a. 4). The other end, however, is proportionate to created nature, to which end created being can attain according to the power of its nature." Elsewhere, too, he says: "Man's ultimate end is twofold; one kind, the happiness to which philosophers refer, is proportionate to human nature; the other is a good that exceeds the proportion of human nature."

It is therefore certain that St. Thomas has not in mind in this article an unconditional and efficacious, or exigitive natural desire; for he most certainly holds that grace and glory are gratuitous gifts, which are in no way due either to our nature or to the angelic nature.

2) But if the natural desire here in question is not unconditional and efficacious, it must be conditional and inefficacious. This means that to see God's essence would be supreme happiness, if God were freely to raise me so as to make this immediate vision possible.

One may raise the objection that the words "conditional" and "Inefficacious," in use among the Thomists, especially after the time of Baius, do not occur in the works of St. Thomas. We reply that it is certain from the passages quoted from the works of St. Thomas that this natural desire is not efficacious, and is therefore inefficacious. But the inefficacious desire supposes a condition which, as a matter of fact, may not be realized.

A general explanation is given of this in the passage in which St. Thomas distinguishes between God's will to save all mankind, which is conditional and efficacious, and His efficacious will to save the elect. In this passage St. Thomas shows that "a thing, taken in its primary sense, may be good," and desired (such as the salvation of all men), which, however, taking all things into consideration, is not absolutely or efficaciously but only conditionally willed. St. Thomas then goes on to say: "Nor do we will simply, what we

will antecedently, but rather we will it in a qualified manner; for the will is directed to things as they are in themselves, and in themselves they exist under particular qualifications. Hence we will a thing simply inasmuch as we will it when all particular circumstances are considered; and this is what is meant by willing consequently. Thus it may be said that a just judge wills simply the hanging of a murderer but in a qualified manner he would will him to live, namely, inasmuch as he is a man. Such a qualified will may be called a willingness rather than an absolute will."

Similarly, as regards ourselves, to see God's essence, on first consideration, is a good and one that is desired; but, taking all things into consideration, this vision does not appear to be naturally possible; it is made possible, however, only by a gratuitous elevation of our nature. Hence this desired good is not willed absolutely and efficaciously, but conditionally. Thus wings for flying would be good for us, if this were granted to us; and the same is to be said of even some better gift. To continue to live is a desirable good, but on condition that this privilege be granted by God as a preternatural gift.

Hence in this article St. Thomas, speaking of the natural desire of seeing God's essence, has in mind a desire that is not efficacious, but inefficacious; and it is inefficacious because it is conditional, since it presupposes our free elevation to this order. Otherwise this elevation to grace would be due to our nature, which is a heresy that destroys the very notion of grace, and there is not the slightest doubt that St. Thomas most certainly held this doctrine, even before the Church condemned the heresy of Baius.

On the accepted terminology
concerning the division of
the appetite or of love

The division as commonly accepted among theologians may be clearly presented by the following schema:

Love of charity
supernatural
of hope
necessary
innate efficacious
natural free conditional and
elicited inefficacious

Love is called natural when it proceeds from a natural principle, and not from grace. On the contrary, it is called supernatural when it proceeds from a supernatural principle, namely, from grace, or from charity, or hope, or even from actual grace that disposes one for habitual grace. Even "the pious impulse to believe," required for unformed faith, is supernatural. The following proposition of Baius is condemned: "That distinction between the two kinds of love, namely, the natural by which God is loved as the author of nature, and the gratuitous by which God is loved as the beatifier, is vain and lying, and is devised in ridicule of Sacred Scripture and the very many testimonies of the ancients." This distinction is frequently formulated by St. Thomas, as when he says: "The angel does naturally love God, so far as God is the author of his natural being. But here we are speaking of turning to God, so far as God bestows beatitude by the vision of His essence."

Natural love is of two kinds, innate and elicited. The innate desire is, so to speak, a very tendency or natural inclination for good, before the good is apprehended. Thus the plant instinctively and of necessity seeks the light of the sun. Similarly we speak of the sensitive appetite (concupiscible and irascible) and of the rational appetite, which are faculties of our soul. But all creatures, each in its way, thus naturally love God, the author and preserver of nature. Thus in the physical order it is natural for the part to love the whole more than itself, and so the hand is naturally exposed to ward off a blow on the body, and especially on the head; otherwise this would mean the perversion of a natural inclination.

The elicited love is that by which the knower, after apprehending the good, starts out in pursuit of it. And just as cognition, which directs this movement, is an act elicited by the cognitive faculty, so this is an act elicited by the appetitive faculty.

The elicited act is of two kinds. It is either necessary, or free and elective. The act is necessary when its object is universally good, so that all men necessarily (at least as regards the specification of the act) love happiness as such, or necessarily will to be happy, even when they do not as yet know in what true happiness consists in the concrete. The free or elective love is concerned with an object that is not universally good, or that is proposed as an object of indifferent judgment.

Lastly, love is said to be efficacious, or else it is conditional and inefficacious. The efficacious presupposes a judgment on the goodness and natural attainableness of the object desired. The conditional and

inefficacious love presupposes a judgment on the goodness and natural unattainableness of the object desired. Thus man would will not to die, and this would be good for him if such a preternatural gift were granted to him, as was granted to man in the state of innocence. This last mentioned appetite is a velleity. This good is most desirable, but it is naturally unattainable. I would wish it if God freely gave me the means for attaining it. What a happiness this would be! Lastly, this velleity is either explicit or implicit, according as the object desired and the presupposed condition are either clearly or confusedly known.

THE VARIOUS OPINIONS OF THE THEOLOGIANS

In the eighteenth century, the Augustinians Noris and Berti were of the opinion that there is a natural and innate desire in us for the intuitive vision of God. In a way this desire is efficacious, though not as Baius meant. For the intuitive vision of God constitutes our natural end in the appetitive order, but it is our supernatural end as regards its attainment and the means for attaining it.

Criticism. This opinion scarcely differs from Baianism, since it does not uphold the absolute distinction prevailing between the natural and the supernatural orders. By way of retaining some semblance of a distinction, it denies the principle of finality. For God as the Author of nature would have given us an innate appetite (a sort of ponderousness of nature) for the end, toward which as the Author of nature He could not direct us. Thus there would be no relation between the efficient and final causes. This would mean the violation of the corollary to the principle of finality, that every agent acts for a proportionate end.

The view of Scotus is that we have a desire for the intuitive vision of God, which is both innate and natural, though inefficacious. The reason is that this most sublime happiness is the fitting and final end of all human beings, and therefore the innate appetite has its foundation therein. But it is not efficaciously desired, since not all have a knowledge of this happiness.

Criticism. The only conclusion we can draw from the reason given by Scotus is that we have a natural and innate appetite for happiness as such, but not for the beatific vision; for this vision is not so in agreement with our nature as to be proportionate to it.

Moreover, the general view taken by the Thomists is that the desire of seeing God's essence cannot be innate, and if it were innate then it would have to be efficacious. For the innate appetite, as distinct from the elicited, implies in the object desired a natural relation and positive fittingness, which have their foundation in the very nature of the one desiring, even before there is any knowledge of this desired good. Now there is not in our nature any natural relation and positive fittingness for an object that is essentially supernatural, but only an obediential potency or possibility of being elevated to this order. Therefore our nature is not endowed with an innate and natural appetite, which would be a sort of ponderousness of nature for the immediate vision of God. In fact, if there were this appetite, it would be, for this very reason, efficacious; for, inasmuch as the desire is the result of a conditional judgment, it is inefficacious. Thus I would wish this naturally attainable good if God were freely to elevate me to this order. The innate appetite, however, is not the result of knowledge, but springs from nature itself and corresponds to the forces or at least the exigencies of nature; hence it is not concerned with that to which nature is not entitled, but with that to which it is entitled.

Furthermore, it must be said that if Scotus' opinion were true, then God as the Author of nature would have given it an innate appetite, a ponderousness of nature, for an end to which He could not bring it as the Author of nature, as already stated against the Augustinians Berti and Noris. Thus there would be no relation between the efficient and final causes, as demanded by the principle of finality, which states that every agent acts for a proportionate end.

Lastly, this innate appetite which Scotus speaks of, would be both essentially natural as being a property of nature, and essentially supernatural inasmuch as its object of specification would be formally supernatural. Nor can it be said to be specified by an entitatively supernatural object, but by one that is naturally and, as it were, materially known; for this appetite, being innate, independently of any knowledge whatever would tend toward God as He is in Himself. Thus there would be a natural tendency in our nature toward something essentially supernatural, which is a contradiction in terms and which would end in the denial of the distinction between the two orders, as it would also mean the univocity of being, which, according to the doctrine of Scotus, is included in this opinion.

It must be observed that the Thomists consider this final criticism a valid argument in refutation of the theory of an active obediential potentiality admitted by Suarez in his search of a via media between the view of Scotus and that of St. Thomas. This active obediential potentiality, as the Thomists generally admit, would be both essentially natural, since it is a property of the nature, and essentially supernatural, since it is specified by an essentially supernatural object. Suarez admitted only a natural desire that is elicited and inefficacious, however, as regards the beatific vision, and in this he differed from Scotus.

In opposition to the view of Suarez, according to the view held by St. Thomas and the Thomists, the obediential potentiality is passive, and, as its name implies, refers directly to an agent of a higher order whom it obeys and from whom it receives this supernatural elevation and relation or positive fitness for this essentially supernatural object. Hence for the Thomists the obediential potentiality is nothing else, as John of St. Thomas shows, but a potentiality that denotes a possibility of being elevated to the order of grace and glory.

Cajetan's opinion. It differs radically from that held by Scotus. He says: "In convincing proof of what we have said, understand that the rational creature can be considered in two ways, either absolutely or as ordained to happiness. If the rational creature is considered absolutely, then the natural desire is for that which is within the scope of the natural faculty; and thus I concede that there is no natural desire of seeing God absolutely as He is in Himself. But if the rational creature is considered in the second sense, then it naturally desires to see God, because, as such, it has knowledge of certain effects, namely, those of grace and glory, God being the cause of these, considered as He is absolutely in Himself and not as universal agent. But when the effects are known, then it is natural for any intellect whatever to desire to know the cause of these." And Cajetan adds that St. Thomas is here speaking as a theologian; hence it is a question of the natural desire of the creature ordained by God to eternal life.

Criticism. Francis Silvester (Ferrariensis) and several other Thomists have attacked this opinion of Cajetan in their commentaries. After quoting Cajetan's opinion, Ferrariensis says: "But this does not seem to be the view of St. Thomas. . . . For the reason given by St. Thomas (Ia, q. 12, a. 1, and Contra Gentes, Bk. III, chap. 50) is not restricted to the knowledge of the effects of grace and glory, but is also concerned with knowledge of

whatsoever effects and with knowledge of every cause. . . . (Moreover) it would then follow that only those who know the supernatural effects of grace and glory would have such a desire; but this conclusion is false, for, as St. Thomas says (Contra Gentes, Bk. III, chaps. 51, 57), every intellectual being has this desire." Therefore it is not a question of a natural desire for eternal life. So writes Ferrariensis, and very many Thomists are of the same opinion, such as Bannez, John of St. Thomas, the Salmanticenses, Gonet, Billuart, Gotti, and others.

It must furthermore be remarked that the desire which Cajetan speaks of, cannot be called natural, absolutely as such, but is natural only in a relative sense, or is connatural; and once the effects of grace are known, it is truly a supernatural and efficacious desire that proceeds either from infused hope or from charity. On the contrary, St. Thomas is referring to an absolutely natural desire that originates from a knowledge of natural effects, as is evident especially from a passage in which he discusses this desire arising in the angels from their natural knowledge of God as mirrored in their essence.

In fact, we even find that this natural desire, which originates from a knowledge of natural effects, is truly and wonderfully described by Plato. For he teaches that, in accordance with the ascendant dialectic of love, we must first love beautiful bodies, sounds, colors, and then, in a loftier flight, proceed to love the beauty of the soul. But since the intrinsic worth of the soul consists in glorious actions which have their foundation in the best of precepts and maxims, we must love sublime teachings which are the rule of human actions. But the excellence of these teachings is derived from the extraordinary perfection of the supreme science, whose object is the self-subsisting Beauty and Goodness. Then he goes on to say: "This beauty, O Socrates, in the first place is eternal, neither coming into being nor perishing, never increasing or decreasing. . . . It is the absolute and eternal beauty, in which all other beauties participate, without inducing in it by their birth or destruction the least diminution or increase. But what a felicitous sight shall we not deem it to be, if one were to gaze upon the genuine, perfect, pure and simple beauty . . . beholding that divine unvarying beauty . . . ? Do you not think that (a man who attains to this contemplation of God) acquires no longer the semblance of virtues but real virtues . . . , since by this he will be the friend of God and by all means will be immortal?"

Hence Plato rises from the consideration of natural effects to the knowledge of the existence of the supremely Good and Beautiful. Expressing this as a velleity, he says: “What an immense happiness this would be for man if he could directly see this supreme Good!” Of course traditional religious beliefs contributed to this view of Plato, as did also his exaggerated realism; but even excluding these, it is possible to attain this end by the way of ascendant dialectic.

Lastly, we must say that even Cajetan seems in some measure to concede what Ferrariensis asserts, for, after repeating the reply quoted above from his commentary, he says: “Yet in a special sense . . . it can be said that the human intellect, knowing of God’s existence and of His general attributes, naturally desires to know what He is, inasmuch as He is included in the category of causes, and not absolutely as He is, except as a certain consequence of this previous knowledge. And this is true, because we are naturally inclined, on seeing the effect, to desire to know the cause whatever this may be. Hence take note, thou beginner, that to know God’s essence is the same as to see it. This point is made clear, of course, in the proof of the last article of this question.”

THE MORE COMMON OPINION AMONG THE THOMISTS

This question was very much disputed in the schools during the time of Baius and Jansenius; then the Thomists, so as to avoid all equivocation, by more explicit definitions restricted the application of the terms used. But previous to this, Ferrariensis and Bannez had helped to solve the problem by introducing the finest of distinctions.

Ferrariensis said: “We naturally desire to see God in so far as He is the first Cause, but not as He is the object of supernatural happiness. For it can be known by the natural power of the intellect that God is the cause of other things, but it cannot be known in this way that He is the object of supernatural happiness.” Thus the object of the aforesaid desire is clearly determined, but a certain difficulty remained about this desire subjectively considered.

However, Bannez offers the following explanation: “Man can have a natural appetite, that is, elicited by one’s natural powers, which is a certain conditional and inefficacious desire of seeing God. . . . For, if . . . St. Thomas were referring to the ponderousness of nature (or to an innate

desire), then man would be inclined thereto even without having seen the effect. . . . I have said conditional, because by his natural powers man cannot be certain that such a good is possible. Thus man can desire and wish never to die, if this be possible. And although such a condition is not explicitly conceived by the mind, yet it is implicitly contained in the object, which is represented as good, and not as possible."

Later on, many Thomists admit that man's natural desire to see God's essence as He is the Author of nature, is not innate but elicited, conditional and inefficacious. Furthermore, the Thomists generally remark that this desire is also free, inasmuch as it is not a necessary act as regards the specification of the object.

And so this desire is explained both objectively and subjectively. Objectively, a desire of seeing God's essence as He is the Author of nature, but not as He is the triune God and the Author of grace; for this cannot be known in a natural way. Subjectively considered, this desire is said to be elicited, conditional and inefficacious.

It follows from this desire, as so conceived, that there is a natural knowledge of God's natural effects and of His naturally knowable divine attributes. This natural knowledge, indeed, of God's attributes is imperfect, since the intimate reconciliations of several of these attributes is mysterious, for instance, the reconciliation of supreme immutability with supreme liberty, likewise of infinite and omnipotent goodness, with the permission of evil, or even of infinite mercy with infinite justice. Hence St. Thomas says: "Therefore this knowledge (so imperfect) does not set the natural desire to rest, but rather urges it on to see the divine substance," which means that the divine essence as constituting the foundation for the naturally knowable attributes, or God's essence as He is the Author of nature, may clearly be known by the intellect. However, the essence is the same both in God as the Author of nature and in God as the Author of grace. Thus, therefore, the object of this natural desire is not formally supernatural, but only materially so, for it is by the natural light of reason that this object is known to be desirable or, as the Salmanticenses say, "the thing desired is materially supernatural, but not the reason for desiring it. . . ; for it is desired under the aspect of a certain maximum good."

Thus there is an immense abyss between this natural desire and infused hope or charity. This distinction, which Baius eliminated, was long before expressed by St. Thomas when he wrote: "Charity loves God above all

things in a higher way than nature does. For nature loves God above all things inasmuch as He is the beginning and the end of natural good; whereas charity loves Him, as He is the object of beatitude, and inasmuch as man has a spiritual fellowship with God."

Doubt. Can the possibility of this beatific vision be strictly demonstrated by the natural light of reason? In these latter days some have contended that from Cajetan's time many of the great commentators of St. Thomas, including Bannez, John of St. Thomas, and the Salmanticenses, did not correctly interpret St. Thomas' doctrine about the natural desire to see God's essence, because they did not properly distinguish between the order of possibility and the order of existence or, as we say, between the metaphysical order of intention and the physical order of execution. But having posited this distinction, we should have to say that from this natural desire, inasmuch as it arises from a knowledge of the natural effects of the first Cause, the possibility of the beatific vision can be strictly demonstrated by reason alone, and hence that there is an obediential capacity in our nature of being elevated to the order of grace. Yet this elevation and even the beatific vision must still be regarded as essentially supernatural, inasmuch as, in the order of existence, or in the physical order of execution, they are dependent on God's free and gratuitous good pleasure. And thus, as already stated, it is only in this latter order that this desire is conditional and inefficacious, although in the metaphysical order it is efficacious in demonstrating apodictically the possibility of the beatific vision.

But is it true that from Cajetan's time many commentators of St. Thomas did not correctly interpret his teaching about the natural desire, and that they erred in not admitting the metaphysical demonstrability by reason alone of the possibility of the beatific vision?

We have discussed this question at sufficient length in a recent book, but it seems fitting at this point to explain briefly the fundamental reason for the traditional stand taken by the theologians. This reason may be regarded as the pith or germinal idea of an earlier work, though many of our readers are not sufficiently aware of this fact.

The present problem resolves itself into this more general question, namely, whether the intrinsic possibility of essentially supernatural mysteries can be strictly demonstrated by reason alone.

1) The question is about their intrinsic possibility or their non-repugnance objectively considered. Thus we may ask whether the Trinity of

divine Persons is really possible, extramentally, or really and in itself non-repugnant, and not merely so for us. What is for us non-repugnant, is something whose non-repugnance is urged and defended against those denying it, although it is not positively and apodictically demonstrated.

2) We are concerned here with essentially supernatural mysteries, those that are intrinsically supernatural and entitatively so as regards their substance or essence. Such are the Trinity, the Incarnation, grace and glory. We are not concerned with those that are supernatural only in the mode of their production, such as the resurrection of the dead in whom natural life is supernaturally restored.

3) The reference here is to a metaphysical or apodictic demonstration, and not merely to a very probable argument. The reference is also to a demonstration that is obtained solely by reasoning, or from the natural light alone of reason, which means that it is not dependent on revealed premises either explicitly or even implicitly presupposed. I say, even "implicitly" presupposed.

Moreover, it must be observed that very probable arguments, those proposed by the great doctors of the Church concerning divine truths, may be most profound or most sublime, without being apodictic. And the intellect, either human or angelic, can always continue to see more clearly the force of these arguments, which, however, may not be convincing. These great arguments of congruence compared with those that give us evidence and absolute certainty, are like polygons inscribed in a circle. The number of sides may be increased indefinitely, yet they will never be equal to and be identified with the circumference of the circle.

Such are the most profound arguments of congruence which, taken from the traditional teaching of the doctors of the Church, are advanced in defense of the possibility of the Trinity, the Incarnation, and other mysteries. In heaven we shall see how much truth there is in these arguments of congruence, which even the highest of the angels by his natural powers could always penetrate more deeply, and yet never acquire conviction of evidence in this state.

I. To the question as thus stated we reply according to the traditional teaching of the theologians as follows:

What is supernatural not only as to the mode of its production but also as to its essence, or entitatively, is likewise supernatural as to its knowableness, because truth and being are convertible. This major is a

fundamental principle throughout theology, and its denial means the denial of truth and of the supernatural. But the intrinsic possibility of the aforesaid mysteries is the intrinsic possibility of the essentially supernatural. Therefore this possibility is supernatural as to its knowableness, and hence it cannot be apodictically demonstrated by the natural powers alone of any created intellect, either human or angelic, or even any creatable intellect.

The major is evident, for it concerns the essentially supernatural, that which is "far removed from our knowledge" not only in its contingent aspect, like future contingent things of the natural order which depend on God's most free good pleasure (for instance, the hour when this material world will come to an end), or even future miracles (such as the resurrection of the dead), but also in its aspect of intrinsic supernaturalness. There is no doubt that truth and being are convertible. As St. Thomas says: "The true that is in things is convertible with being as to substance (anything is knowable inasmuch as it has being); while the true that is in the intellect is convertible with being, as the manifestation with the manifested." There must be, or course, a proportion between the manifestation and the manifested. Hence what is essentially supernatural can be known formally as such only in a supernatural way (clearly by the beatific vision, obscurely by infused faith, and as virtually revealed by sacred theology).

In other words, what is essentially supernatural cannot be known in a natural way, because there is no necessary and evident connection between it and things of the natural order. If it were so related, then it would become a philosophical truth, as is the case with natural truths about God as the Author of nature. The supernatural mysteries about God properly belong to the order of naturally unknowable truths, for there is no necessary and evident connection between them and things of the natural order. We must include among these not only the Trinity and the Incarnation, but also the mystery of God's eternal life, which is essentially supernatural, since it is a formal participation of His intimate life.

It is indeed true that supernatural mysteries can be known materially by a natural and certain knowledge derived from the signs of divine revelation. In this way the mysteries are known by an acquired faith, which is the way the devil knows them. But apart from revelation and its signs, the mysteries are materially known only as probable, for there is no necessary and evident connection between them and natural things that are naturally knowable.

Neither can it be strictly demonstrated that anything essentially supernatural (such as the beatific vision) is really possible, abstracting from its supernatural formality. In a word, such an object is not necessarily and evidently connected with things of the natural order.

The minor is equally certain, for intrinsic possibility is evidently of the same order as the thing itself that is said to be possible. It is its non-repugnance to existence, not only considered as such by us, but as it is really so in itself.

Therefore the conclusion is that this intrinsic possibility or real non-repugnance, cannot be naturally known, and that it cannot be apodictically proved solely by the natural light of the human intellect or even of the angelic intellect. But, after this truth has been revealed, we are persuaded of this intrinsic possibility, or real non-repugnance, by congruent and even most profound arguments, which can always penetrate more deeply into the mystery; yet the arguments are not such as to become convincing.

Thus Billuart expresses the common opinion among theologians when he says: “That a positive and evident proof can be given that no contradiction is implied in this mystery (of the Trinity), this I deny; that a negative and probable argument can be given, this I concede. This suffices, indeed, so that this mystery cannot be declared impossible, yet not so as to be known as evidently possible.” In like manner St. Thomas had said: “We can make use of philosophy in sacred doctrine . . . by defending the faith against those who attack it, either by showing that their statements are false or that they are not convincing.” For theology shows that the objections proposed against the possibility of the Trinity, the Incarnation, life eternal, and other mysteries, are not convincing. Thus this possibility is neither disproved nor positively and apodictically proved, but we are reasonably persuaded of the same. This possibility is defended against those who deny it, and it is firmly held by faith.

II. This fundamental reason is without difficulty elucidated by examples, if we may be permitted further comment on this disputed point.

1) If the intrinsic possibility of the Trinity were demonstrated by reason alone, then its existence would be apodictically demonstrated, for the Trinity is not a contingent but a necessary truth, and in necessary things from their real possibility the existence of the same is legitimately inferred. This would mean the revival of the error of the semirationalists and of Rosmini, who said: “Provided the mystery of the Trinity has been revealed,

its existence can be demonstrated by merely speculative arguments, though they are negative and indirect, so that by such arguments this truth is classed among the philosophical subjects and, like the rest of them, becomes a scientific proposition. If it were denied, the theosophical doctrine of pure reason would remain not only incomplete, but also abounding in every respect with absurdities, which would mean its utter extinction."

2) If the real and intrinsic possibility of the Incarnation were demonstrated apodictically by reason alone, then it would be only because of its contingency that the Incarnation would transcend our natural knowledge, as being a future contingent of the natural order that is dependent on God's most free good pleasure, such as is the hour when this material world will come to an end, or even when it came into existence. The Incarnation would no longer be an essentially supernatural mystery; at most it would be a miracle supernatural as to its mode of production, as the resurrection from the dead is, the possibility of which can indeed be strictly demonstrated, inasmuch as God is evidently the Author and Lord of nature, and hence of natural life, which He can miraculously restore. But the Incarnation is concerned not only with the miraculous restitution of natural life, but also with the essentially supernatural life of the Word and the hypostatic union of the same with the human nature.

3) Likewise, if the real possibility of the mystery of eternal life or of the light of glory and of the beatific vision were apodictically demonstrated solely by the light of reason, then the beatific vision and the light of glory required for this would no longer be substantially supernatural, for that which is substantially or essentially supernatural is by this very fact supernaturally knowable inasmuch as truth and being are convertible. These principles are absolutely necessary and absolutely fundamental, and they are not even examined by several of the more modern theologians, who seek to depart from the traditional stand.

If the real possibility of the beatific vision were apodictically proved by the sole light of reason, then this vision and the light of glory would transcend our natural knowledge solely by reason of their contingency, inasmuch as they depend on God's most free good pleasure, like contingent futures of the natural order (such as the last day of the material world); and at most they would be reduced to what is supernatural as to its mode of

production, like the resurrection from the dead or the glorification of the body.

Even if, leaving the light of glory out of consideration, the real and intrinsic possibility of the beatific vision were apodictically demonstrated by reason alone, then it would follow necessarily from this that we could deduce the real and intrinsic possibility of the supernatural gifts required for this vision, namely, of those gifts now called by us habitual grace and the light of glory. But the intrinsic possibility of habitual grace cannot be proved by reason alone; for then grace would no longer be essentially supernatural, but only as to the mode of its production, as when the natural life is supernaturally restored to the corpse by the resurrection. That a participation in God's intimate life is possible or that it is communicable by way of participation, cannot be proved by reason alone. The possibility of grace is beyond the scope of demonstration.

Therefore the arguments deduced from reason alone concerning the intrinsic possibility of the beatific vision are indeed very probable, and as such most profound. They can always be more deeply penetrated by the intellect, whether human or angelic, yet they are not convincing, and compared with those arguments that give us evidence and certainty of conviction, they are like the polygon inscribed in a circle, since the number of its sides can always be increased. In fact, if these arguments of congruence were proposed as apodictic, then they would lose their force, since they do not come within the scope of demonstrability, but transcend it. What we are here discussing is indemonstrable because of the excess and not because of the deficiency of its light.

Hence the great commentators of St. Thomas, those who came after Cajetan (such as Bannez, John of St. Thomas, the Salmanticenses), did not have a false conception of St. Thomas' argument, which is founded on the natural desire to see God's essence. It is still true to say that the possibility of the mystery of eternal life is neither disproved nor apodictically proved, but we are reasonably persuaded of the same. It is defended against those who deny it, and it is firmly held by faith.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THIS REPLY

1) In God, that is said to be essentially supernatural which cannot be known through creatures, because there is no evident and necessary

connection between creatures and this object. In God this is “that which is known to Himself and revealed to others.” God is not here considered under the aspect of being, but in what intimately and most properly belongs to the notion of the Deity. And St. Thomas shows that the Trinity pertains to this order because “the creative power of God is common to the whole Trinity.”

2) In those things extrinsic to God, the essentially supernatural is defined as that which is a formal participation of the Deity or of God’s intimate life (such as grace, the infused virtues, the gifts, the light of glory), and there is no evident and necessary connection between creatures and this object. Hence this object cannot be formally known by the natural power of the intellect, but only materially and this in various ways, as is evident from the following synopsis.

The essentially supernatural is known formally as supernatural perfectly as to its quiddity comprehensively by God alone

not comprehensively by the blessed

imperfectly by infused faith and the gifts

by sacred theology under the guidance of virtual revelation

materially in a less formal aspect from the signs of revelation, and it is thus known by the devil with the certainty of acquired faith

not from revelation negatively, and thus is proved the existence of naturally unknowable truths in God

positively, and thus we are persuaded of the possibility of the beatific vision from the natural desire to see God, the Author of nature

What has been said suffices for the solution of this problem.

SECOND ARTICLE

WHETHER THE ESSENCE OF GOD IS SEEN BY THE CREATED INTELLECT THROUGH AN IMAGE

State of the question. That the beatific vision is enjoyed by the blessed is now known to be a revealed fact, and we have defended the possibility of this truth. In this question an inquiry must be made into those things that of necessity concur or do not concur in this vision, on the part both of the object seen and of the seer. In other words, on the part of the object seen, is it necessary or at least possible to have a species or similitude of God’s

essence, and then on the part of the seer, must there be an infused light that fortifies the created intellect?

As regards the similitude on the part of the object seen, St. Thomas, in stating the question at issue, recalls the following text from St. Augustine: “When we know God, some likeness of God is made in us.” And he also says that the intellect, like the sensitive faculty, in the act of knowing is informed with the likeness of the thing to be known. Thus Aristotle says that in sensible things the object of sense perception is potentially intelligible, then, through the light brought to bear upon it by the active intellect, it becomes actually intelligible in the impressed intelligible species, and finally it is actually understood in the expressed species, or in the word, which is the medium in which the nature of the thing understood is understood, such as the nature of a stone or of a plant.

Therefore the question is whether in the beatific vision there is an infused intelligible species in the intellect, and also an expressed species or a mental word.

This was not a question of minor importance for St. Thomas. We read in his life that, when his confrater Aegidius Romanus, after dying, appeared to him by God’s permission, St. Thomas asked him the following question: “Do you see God directly?” He received this answer: “As we have heard, so do we see in the city of the Lord of hosts.” St. Thomas looked upon this answer as confirming what he considered to be the true interpretation of scriptural texts on this subject, and there is reference to this in the counterargument of this article.

It reads as follows: “On the contrary, Augustine says (De Trin., Bk. XV, chap. 9) that when the Apostle says, ‘We see now through a glass, in a dark manner,’ by the terms ‘glass’ and ‘in a dark manner’ certain similitudes are signified by him, which are accommodated to the vision of God. But to see the essence of God,” as St. Thomas adds, “is not an enigmatic or speculative vision, but is, on the contrary, of an opposite kind. Therefore the divine essence is not seen through a similitude.”

St. Thomas’ conclusion is: God’s essence cannot be seen by any created similitude representing the divine essence itself as it really is.

All the disciples of St. Thomas unhesitatingly accept this conclusion, saying that there can be no question either of an impressed or expressed species in the clear vision of God. Or else they say that, according to the imperfect way we conceive it and speak of it, the divine essence takes the

place of both the impressed and the expressed species. This terminology is interpreted in a benign sense by the Thomists, but it is faulty; for the impressed and expressed species take, so to speak, the place of the object, as representing it. And therefore to say that the divine essence takes the place of the species, is to say that it acts as substitute for the same. However, this terminology is permissible according to our imperfect mode of conceiving it, just as we say that God enters into logical relations with creatures.

But St. Thomas' conclusion is not admitted by all theologians. Several, such as Aureolus, Suarez, Vasquez and Valentia, are of the opinion that there is nothing derogatory in admitting the presence of an impressed species in the beatific vision, although such is not actually the case. In fact, Suarez affirms the impossibility of the beatific vision without the utterance of the mental word or the expressed species. A comparison of these opinions with that held by St. Thomas most clearly shows what an exalted notion the Angelic Doctor had of this mystery.

Although St. Thomas' opinion is not de fide, it appears to be more in harmony with the definition given by Benedict XII, who declared: "The blessed . . . see the divine essence by direct intuition and face to face, in such wise that nothing created intervenes as an object of vision, but the divine essence presents itself to their immediate gaze, unveiled, clearly, and openly."

This definition does not exclude a created species, because a created species does not function as an object of vision, but is the medium by which or in which the thing seen is reflected. Nevertheless, the concluding words of this definition emphasize the immediateness of this vision.

The question is freely disputed, and it can be solved only in a speculative way. First of all, it must be said that intuitive vision in general does not exclude either an impressed or an expressed species. Thus the sense perception of color is obtained through the impressed species (although St. Thomas differs from Suarez in that he does not admit such through the expressed species). But St. Thomas maintains that the intuitive vision which the angel has of his own essence is obtained through the expressed species or the mental word. This is clearly enough affirmed by him in the following passage: "(The angel) knows itself by itself. Yet the life of angels does not reach the highest degree of perfection because, though the intelligible species is altogether within them, it is not their very substance, because in

them to understand and to be are not the same thing." This means to say that the angel's essence is indeed of itself intelligible, not merely potentially (like the essence of a stone), but actually, and so it is understood without an impressed species. However, it is not actually understood, because the angel's essence is not its act of understanding, and hence not itself understood. On the contrary, God's essence is His existence, and Himself understood, and is of Himself actually understood. Hence, to know Himself, as will be stated farther on, God is not in need, like the angel, of the accidental mental word. But from revelation it is known for certain that God the Father, not as denoting indigence, but by reason of His infinite fecundity, generates the Word that is not accidental, but substantial.

This substantial Word is not only "God understood" but "true God" of true God, "because the natural being of God is not distinct from His act of understanding (and its being understood). Hence it is said (John 1: 1): The Word was God. . . . (Thus) this shows that the divine Word is not merely an intelligible species, as our word is, but that it is, indeed, a real and subsistent being. On the contrary, man's word (concept of himself) cannot be called a man simply, but only with a qualification; namely, a man understood. Hence this statement is false: The word is a man; whereas this is true: The Word was God," as St. Thomas very well explains in this passage.

Thus the state of the question clearly is this: by divine revelation we know indeed that the beatific vision terminates in the substantial Word, who is "the brightness of His glory and the figure of His substance." But the question is whether there is or can be an accidental word in this vision.

It must be observed that the accidental word is not excluded from the intuitive vision, inasmuch as it is intuitive; for the angel's knowledge of himself is not abstractive but intuitive, and yet it is acquired by means of the accidental word, which is immediately received from the presence of the thing known. Neither is the impressed species excluded from intuitive vision, inasmuch as it is intuitive; for I intuitively see the flower, through the impressed species; but intuitive knowledge postulates that the species is immediately received from the presence of the thing known.

On the contrary, in the case of abstractive knowledge the species is not immediately received from the thing known, but from something resulting from it. Thus we have abstractive knowledge of God as reflected in creatures, and also of the essences of sensible things from the likeness of

sensible qualities. Thus we have descriptive knowledge of the essence of the lion, the rose, or the lily, but we do not directly see the specific difference of the lion through the species that would be immediately received in the intellect from the very essence of the lion. The state of the question being thus precisely determined, let us see what St. Thomas says in the argumentative part of the article.

It consists of three parts: (1) it determines what is required both for sensible and for intellectual vision; (2) it establishes that a similitude is required on the part of the visual faculty for the vision of God, namely, a reinforcing light; (3) it is proved that God's essence cannot be seen by any created similitude on the part of the object seen.

1) Two things are required for sensible and for intellectual vision, namely, power of sight and union of the thing seen with the sight. Thus the similitude of the stone is in the eye, whereby the vision is made actual. But, as will be stated farther on, the angel sees himself through his essence, without an impressed species.

2) To see God there must be some similitude of God on the part of the visual faculty. Now indeed, the intellective power is a certain intelligible light that is derived from God, the first intellect; but in addition to this, an infused light is required that reinforces the intellect, and this is called the light of glory, as will be more clearly explained in the fifth article. Mention of this is made here to explain St. John's statement quoted in the first difficulty: "We know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like to Him, because we shall see Him as He is." As it is said in the reply to this first objection, "that authority speaks of the similitude which is caused by participation of the light of glory." The light of glory is analogically called a light inasmuch as it serves to show the reinforced light given to the intellect.

3) On the part of the object seen, God's essence cannot be seen by any created similitude. Three proofs are given for this principal conclusion: (1) in that God is of a higher order of immateriality; (2) in that God both entitatively and intellectually is His own existence; (3) in that the Deity is uncircumscribed.

First reason. It is reduced to this: The difference between the created and the uncreated is greater than that between the divers orders of created things. But the reality of a higher order, for example, the angelic nature, is not seen as it is in itself by a similitude of a lower order, for example, by a

sensible species, nor even by an intelligible species abstracted from sensible things. Therefore much less can God's essence be seen by any created species whatever.

It must be observed that in the minor there is no mention of an inferior species, but of a species of an inferior order; for the lower angel is able to see the higher angel by an inferior species of the same order. Yet in this case his knowledge of the higher is incomplete.

The second reason is that God's essence is His own very existence. But no created form can be its own existence. Therefore no created form can be the similitude representing God's essence, as it is in itself. As will at once be stated in the solution of the objections, the major is to be understood as meaning that God alone is His existence both entitatively and intellectually. In other words, God alone is pure act in every respect; hence He alone is His intellection. On the contrary, the representative created species, however perfect it may be, cannot be its own subsistent intellection, because it is intelligible by participation.

The third reason is that the Deity is uncircumscribed, containing supereminently in itself whatever can be signified or understood by the created intellect, namely, all absolutely simple perfections. But every created form (or idea) is determined according to some aspect of wisdom or of power or of being itself. Therefore God cannot be seen as He really is by any created species.

This third reason shows pre-eminently that the Deity in a certain way transcends being, unity, truth . . . , in that it contains formally and eminently all absolutely simple perfections, which are naturally participable. But the Deity as such, or God's intimate life, is not naturally participable, nor is it naturally knowable; for it is participated in only by grace, which is properly defined as the participation of the divine nature according to the following text: "He hath given us most great and precious promises, that by these you may be made partakers of the divine nature."

In the reply to the third objection it is said that "the divine essence is existence itself . . . and is united to the created intellect (not only as the object actually intelligible, but as) actually understood, making (our) intellect in act by and of itself." This is practically what the Thomists mean when they state that the divine essence takes the place of the impressed and expressed species. But, as we have observed, this statement is to be accepted in accordance with our imperfect mode of understanding and

speech; for the species substitutes for the object, and the Deity, strictly speaking, does not function as its substitute. It is, however, truer to say that the vicarious similitude of the object is neither necessary nor even possible when the object is present not only as actually intelligible, but as actually understood. Thus God is clearly seen, inasmuch as He Himself alone is His intellection and Himself as understood.

SOLUTION OF OBJECTIONS

Aureolus objected to the aforesaid reasons, and said that all are at fault since they do not distinguish between the species as an entity and the species as a representation. But, although the species as an entity is but a finite accident, why as a representation could it not intentionally manifest God's essence as it really is? In fact, the species of the stone, although it is an accident, represents the substance of the stone; likewise the species of the angel represents the substance of the angel.

In reply to this we say with Cajetan that it is a question of the species formally as such, namely, according to its intentional or representative existence, but not materially, according to its entitative existence. It is for this reason that St. Thomas calls it a similitude. Therefore it is correctly affirmed in the first reason that a thing of the higher order (for example, the angelic nature) cannot be seen as it really is by a species or similitude of a lower order (for example, by an idea abstracted from sensible things). Hence the infused created species, which is not of the same degree of immateriality or of actuality in intelligible being as the Deity itself, cannot be represented as it really is by such species.

The affirmation in the second reason is likewise correct, when it is stated that the divine essence is its existence, not only in the entitative order but also in the intelligible order, for it is only God who is His intellection and Himself as understood. But no created similitude, however perfect it may be, is its own intellection; but every similitude is intelligible by limited participation. Only God is His own subsistent intellection, an eternally existing, so to speak, intellectual flash. Therefore no infused created similitude can be God either entitatively or intelligibly. By the beatific vision, however, the intellect of the blessed in a certain way, namely, intentionally, becomes God, as Cajetan says, and it cannot become so by any created species.

This means to say that there is no distinction between the real and the ideal order in the Deity. Only in God are these two orders identical, since He alone is pure act both entitatively and intellectually. But the purpose of Hegel's idealism was to identify these two orders, inasmuch as he said that "everything intelligible is real," which is panlogism. In truth, this identification is to be found only in God, not in possible things that are known only as possible in God without actually existing as realities, and not in existing creatures, which truly are actually existing realities, though they are not their own intellection, nor themselves understood. Thus the essence of a stone or of wood is only potentially intelligible in itself, and the essence of the angel is indeed actually intelligible in itself, yet it is not of itself actually understood; it alone is its substantial intellection and itself understood.

Wherefore St. Thomas rejects St. Anselm's argument, saying; "God is His own existence. Now because we do not know the essence of God, the proposition is not self-evident to us, but needs to be demonstrated by things that are more known to us though less known in their nature, namely, by effects." On the contrary, the blessed, in knowing God's essence, see that God necessarily and actively exists. We see a priori only this, namely, that, if God exists, He is self-existent; but the blessed see that God necessarily exists, and that the denial of His actual existence would be the denial of the Deity itself. Hence the proposition "God is," is self-evident to them since the transition from ideal being to real being is unwarranted.

Therefore the aforesaid Thomistic refutation of St. Anselm's argument is worthless if we admit the presence of a created species in the beatific vision. For St. Thomas holds that if one were to admit the presence of this created species, God would, indeed, be known as in fact actually existing, just as the archangel Michael clearly seen would be known as actually existing, but by this species it would not be known that God necessarily and actually exists. St. Thomas holds that, for this proposition to be self-evident to us, our intellect must have immediate knowledge of the Deity without the intervention of a created species. In other words, all that the created species would represent to us would be either that God is self-existent if He exists, or that God in fact exists, but not that God is actually self-existent.

As Cajetan remarks, the expressed species is excluded for the same reason. For just as the impressed species acts as the means by which, namely, as the principle determining the intellect to elicit the act of

understanding some particular object, so the expressed species or the mental word is that in which we understand the nature of the thing understood. Because of the reasons just given, no created species can thus represent the self-subsisting Intellection as it really is; for every created species is intelligible by participation, and the difference between it and the self-subsistent intellection is far greater than that between the sun and its ray; and just as he who would see only the sun's ray would not see the sun itself, so he who would see only that which is expressed in the highest infused species, would not in the strict sense see God.

Corollary. Wherefore it is commonly held that the extraordinary intellectual visions of the most Holy Trinity still pertain to the order of faith; for they do not give intrinsic evidence of the mystery of the Trinity, and it is not sufficiently clear that God would cease to be such if He were not the triune God. On the contrary, this would be made manifest if one were to receive the beatific vision by way of a transient act, which St. Augustine and St. Thomas believed that St. Paul received when rapt in ecstasy.

All that is expressed by these above-mentioned intellectual visions of the most Holy Trinity is the idea of the fittingness of this mystery, inasmuch as, for instance, good is essentially diffusive of itself; and the higher the nature, the more intimate and more complete is this self-diffusiveness, so that the Father communicates to the Son and to the Holy Spirit the whole of His nature without any division or multiplication of the same.

Suarez proposes another objection. It is his opinion that, just as there can be a similitude on the part of the seer, namely, the light of glory, reinforcing the intellect, so also there can be a similitude on the part of the object seen, consisting in the expressed word.

We reply with John of St. Thomas that the light reinforcing the intellect of the seer is a similitude by way of a tendency, and that which tends is not actually that toward which it tends; whereas, contrary to this, the objective species must actually have the form of the thing represented; in fact, it must be in its representative existence, the object itself. Therefore, to represent the object as this really is, it must be of the same order of immateriality and of the same actuality in the intelligible order. For this reason, as already stated, the species abstracted from sensible things cannot manifest the angel as he really is, nor can the created species represent the Deity as it really is. Thus the negative conclusion is established, namely, that there can be

neither an impressed nor an expressed species in the beatific vision, because the created species, however perfect it may be, cannot represent God or the self-subsisting Intellection as He really is.

First doubt. Does the divine essence take the place of the impressed and expressed species in the divine essence?

The Thomists reply in the affirmative, although this is but an imperfect way of expressing it, and is not strictly applicable. For, if we take care to note that the species substitutes for the object, then the Deity cannot properly be said to take the place of this substitute. But the theologians speak in this way according to the imperfect manner of our intellectual perception, just as we speak of God's relation to creatures, which is not a real but a logical relation.

This commonly held opinion among the Thomists is equivalently expressed in many passages of St. Thomas' works. Thus, in this question he says: "When any created intellect sees the essence of God, the essence of God itself becomes the intelligible form of the intellect." Similarly he says: "The divine essence must be united to the created intellect as an intelligible species," so, then, instead of the impressed species. In this article, however, he says: "The divine essence is united to the created intellect, as the object actually understood, making the intellect in act by and of itself." This means instead of the expressed species. The reasons for this assertion are those given in the body of the article to show that God cannot be seen as He really is by a created species.

Moreover, it must be noted that several doctors, who see no repugnance in admitting a created species for the beatific vision, yet maintain that de facto it is not present, because it is superfluous. And it is thus proved to be superfluous for both the impressed and the expressed species.

1) The impressed species is required either when the object is absent, or when it is not directly present to the intellect or is not sufficiently intelligible because of its immateriality. But the object of the beatific vision, namely, God, essentially exists, is already intimately present to any created intellect whatever, as preserving it in being, and is the maximum in intelligibility, because it is the maximum in immateriality. Therefore at least the impressed species is superfluous. It suffices that the created intellect be elevated and strengthened by the light of glory to see God's essence, which is already intimately present to it as preserving it in being. Just as the bat cannot see the sun, so in our present state we cannot see God because of His

dazzling brilliance. We have a confirmation of this in the angel, who intuitively sees his own essence without an impressed species, for the reason that his essence exists, is in him, and is of itself actually intelligible.

2) The expressed species is required so that the object may be actually understood and be present in the intellect in its representative form. But the divine essence is most pure act in the intelligible order, i.e., it is not only actually intelligible, but actually understood, and, as St. Thomas says, “is united to the created intellect, as the object actually understood making the intellect in act by and of itself.” It is also intimately present in it. Therefore the expressed species is at least superfluous. Thus there will be an immediate and complete transforming union; and so it is apparent that the inchoate union of which the mystics speak, accompanied by the ardent desire for the beatific vision, is the normal way that leads to eternal life.

But Suarez objects that there must be a created species, because there must be a terminus assigned to the vision produced by it.

In reply to this the Thomists say that the concept of an immanent act does not include that it should produce its effect, although this may often be the case. But the beatific vision is an immanent act. Therefore it is not of the essence of the beatific vision that it should produce its effect. This reply has its foundation in the distinction between immanent and transitive actions. The transitive action, indeed, which properly belongs to the category of action, of which passion is the counterpart, is for the perfection of the patient.. and thus it necessarily produces the terminus as its effect. Contrary to this, the immanent action is for the perfection of the agent in which it remains, and it formally belongs to the category of quality, not of action.

Therefore, when we contemplate the nature of anything already expressed in the word, this is purely intellection and is no longer a case of the utterance or production of the word. Similarly, in the Trinity the three Persons understand by one and the same essential intellection; only the Father utters, or generates the Word. Hence the created accidental word is at least superfluous in the beatific vision. The beatific vision terminates in the uncreated substantial Word, and thus the blessed are said to see all things in the Word.

Not only is the created accidental word superfluous, but, as we have stated, it is also repugnant. For, if there can be no impressed species of such perfection and immateriality as to represent God as He really is, then a fortiori there can be no created expressed species, since this must be more

perfect than the impressed species, for in the expressed species the object must be present not only as actually intelligible, but as actually understood.

Second doubt. How can the divine essence, without denoting imperfection, take the place of the impressed and expressed species?

The difficulty is that this seems to imply imperfection, and for two reasons. (1) For the created intellect must be informed by the impressed species so as to enable it to elicit the determinate act of seeing such object. But the divine essence cannot be the informing form, since thus the divine essence would form a compound with the other, as being a part; and the part is less perfect than the whole. (2) Because if the divine essence were to contribute to this act of seeing as the impressed species, then it would be subordinated to the created intellective faculty, from which this very act derives its being and vitality. Moreover, if the divine essence were to take the place of the impressed species, it would be of the nature of a first act, which is less perfect than the second act.

In reply to this first difficulty we say with Cajetan and John of St. Thomas that the species, taken not in its material sense as an inhering accident, but formally as, a species or as a similitude of the object, does not inform the intellect by inhering in it, does not inform the intellective faculty by constituting with it some third entity in the physical order; but this species informs the faculty objectively, so that the faculty becomes intentionally the object itself in first actuality. For as Aristotle says: “The soul is in a sense all things,” which means that the knower is in a sense the thing known, or what is other than itself. Hence Averroes was right in furthermore remarking that “a greater unity is effected between the knower and the known than between matter and form”; for matter is not form, but receives this as its own, and constitutes with it a third entity, namely, a composite, which is more perfect than its essential parts. On the other hand, the knower is intentionally the thing known, or is the form of the thing known, for it does not receive this form as its own but as the form of the other, as will be stated farther on. Therefore the divine essence can function as the impressed species. To do so it does not have to inform the created intellect entitatively, constituting with it a third entity or a composite. All that is needed is for it to draw the created intellect into a participation of its intelligible being, and thus its function is not to inform but to terminate, somewhat as in the substantial order the incarnate Word terminates the human nature of Christ, which it does not inform. For just as in the

incarnation the Word does not constitute with the human nature a third entity or a more perfect compound; that is, just as the Word is not a part of any composite and hence something less perfect, so the clear vision of God's essence does not constitute a third entity or compound with the created intellect, but only terminates it and by so doing gives it the greatest of perfection without being itself perfected. Just as the human nature in Christ is drawn into a close union with the divine being, so in the beatific vision the created intellect is attracted to the divine object.

We detect another remote analogy to this union inasmuch as number is terminated by the last unit, or inasmuch as two lines mutually terminate in the apex of the triangle. Cajetan remarks: "We must preserve intact the principle that God is by nature prior to the intellect when it sees God, and yet it is not that the intellect knows God intentionally and afterward sees Him." What he means is this: The intellect must of necessity be God intentionally but not indeed entitatively, just as the knower is the thing known in first actuality, before it is known in second actuality. Such is the common opinion among the Thomists. This is the complete transforming union.

Francis Silvester (Ferrariensis), as Billuart observes, does not admit that the intellect is God intentionally in the order of intelligible being; his contention is that the union of the object with the intellect results in a third entity distinct from each. But this opinion of Francis Silvester seems to be not so profound a view, and to be less in agreement with the teaching of Aristotle and St. Thomas. Moreover, it does not appear to be a sufficient answer to the objection.

Cajetan seems to give a more profound explanation of the intimate union of the created intellect with God clearly seen in the intelligible order, without any pantheistic confusion resulting therefrom, since he appeals to the infinite distinction between the two in the entitative order. In fact, this infinite distinction persists between the two natures that are most intimately united in the one Person of Christ.

Nevertheless, as we stated in the commentary on the first article, as reason cannot prove conclusively the possibility of the Incarnation, so it cannot prove the possibility of the beatific vision. This means that it cannot be conclusively proved by reason that no imperfection is implied for the divine essence to perfect the created intellect by actually terminating it. We are indeed most profoundly persuaded of this, but it cannot be conclusively

proved. For the supernatural mysteries are neither proved nor disproved, but they are defended; and there are solid grounds persuading us of their fitness, and either their existence or their possibility is firmly held by faith, which is essentially supernatural. What is essentially supernatural is supernaturally knowable, because truth and being are convertible. This point was not so clearly presented in the first article of this question.

As to this second difficulty, however, it must be said that the impressed species concurs with the faculty in the eliciting of the act, but it is not subordinated to the faculty, because it is not related to the faculty as an inferior instrument to the principal cause, but the purpose of this species is to give greater perfection to the faculty and determine it to elicit its act; hence it is truer to say that the species subordinates the faculty to itself. Thus the divine essence can take the place of the impressed species.

Finally, in this process the divine essence is not of the nature of a first actuality, which is less perfect than the second actuality, for it concurs as the principle by means of which the vision is effected, to the exclusion of all imperfections, as Cajetan observes. It constitutes, indeed, the created intellect in first actuality, but it is not itself of the nature of a first actuality. In other words, the pure act supplies the formality of the impressed species, but not its potentiality, because it supplies to the exclusion of all imperfections. Hence it is not subordinated either to the created intellect or to the created intellection.

Contrary to this, the divine essence can in no way take the place of the light of glory, because this latter functions on the part of the intellective faculty, informing it and constituting with it a third entity, or a composite that is more perfect than its parts. Unjustifiable, therefore, was the assertion of some, such as Master Francis of Good Hope and John of Ripa, who said that the blessed see God by His uncreated vision that is communicated to them. This cannot be, because the beatific vision is a vital act, and every vital act comes essentially from an intrinsic principle of the living being.

Thus we have sufficiently explained why there can be no created species in the beatific vision, and why the divine essence takes the place of both the impressed and the expressed species.

THIRD ARTICLE

WHETHER THE ESSENCE OF GOD CAN BE SEEN WITH BODILY EYES

State of the question. The purpose of this article is to explain certain metaphorical expressions of Holy Scripture, such as: “In my flesh I shall see . . . God.” It was formerly said by some Catholics

that God can be seen not by the bodily eye, but by the spiritualized eye in its glorified state. So said Master Francis of Good Hope. Valentia considered this a probable opinion.

St. Thomas replies to this as follows: “It is impossible for God to be seen by the sense of sight or by any other faculty of the sensitive power.” This opinion thus formulated by St. Thomas is the common one.

Although this conclusion is not explicitly defined to be of faith, yet it is a most certain truth; for its contradictory implies an error that is repugnant to the faith since it means that God is corporeal. There is foundation for this in several passages of Holy Scripture. Thus we read that “God inhabiteth light inaccessible, whom no man hath seen nor can see.” Thus God is declared to be “invisible.” Also we have: “No man hath seen God at any time.”

The argument from reason is as follows: The act of any sensitive faculty, since it is the act of a corporeal organ, cannot go beyond corporeal things; but God is incorporeal; therefore He cannot be seen by the sense or the imagination, but only by the intellect. Hence when Holy Scripture says that God is seen, this means that He is seen by the eye of the mind, but not of the body.

Reply to second objection. If it is stated that we see the life of another living person, this is because life is accidentally sensible, and the object of sense perception is apprehended by the intellect immediately on its being presented. Hence St. Thomas says at the end of this reply: “But that the divine presence is known by the intellect immediately on the sight of corporeal things and through them, happens from two causes, namely, from the perspicacity of the intellect, and from the refulgence of the divine glory infused into the body after its renovation.”

Reply to third objection. “The essence of God is not seen in a vision of the imagination; but the imagination receives some form representing God according to some mode of similitude.”

In fact, it is impossible for the sensitive faculty to be elevated to see God, for it is impossible for any faculty to be referred to what is beyond the scope or extent of its adequate object. But God, since He is a pure spirit, is not included within the scope and extent of the adequate object of the

sensitive faculty, for this object is something corporeal and sensible, such as color, sound, smell.

To deny this is to confound the sensitive faculty with the intellective. If the created intellect can be elevated to see God, this is because God, although He transcends its proportionate object (which for our intellect is the essence of material things), does not transcend its adequate object, which is being according to all that is implied by the term. The Deity is eminently and formally being, and being in all its purity exists only in the Deity, and cannot be seen without the Deity itself being seen.

From this it is clear that there is a vast difference between intellect and sense. And thus it is evident that the more material a faculty is the more restricted is its range, because it is limited by matter. It is only the intellect, at least as such if not as human, which by reason of its absolute immateriality can be directed to intelligible being of any kind. We are at least persuaded of this, and it cannot be disproved.

Objection. Natural water in baptism, spiritually elevated as it is, produces grace. Therefore the sense of sight can in like manner be raised to see God.

Reply. There is no comparison. For water is merely the efficient instrument, which acts through the power transmitted to it by the principal agent, who is God. On the contrary, sight is the vital and principal cause of seeing, and the faculty elicits the act of seeing by its own power. Hence its act cannot go beyond the scope of its adequate object.

Nor can the bodily eye see God by a spiritual vision that is imparted to it, because seeing, since it is a vital act, must of necessity come from an intrinsic principle. But spiritual sight is intellection, and this cannot proceed from the eye as from an intrinsic principle. Hence this intellectual sight would be a sort of extrinsic addition, and the eye itself would not see by it; for the corporeal eye can no more understand than can a stone or a piece of wood.

Final objection. There is a greater difference between the angel and God than between the corporeal eye and the angel. But the angel can see God supernaturally. Therefore the corporeal eye can see the pure spirit supernaturally.

Reply. I distinguish the major. That there is a greater difference entitatively between the angel and God than between the corporeal eye and the angel, this I concede; that the difference is greater objectively, this I deny; or, in the order of being, I concede the major; in the cognitive order, I

deny the major; for, since God is true and intelligible being, He is included in the adequate object of both the angelic and the human intellects. But the angel, being immaterial, cannot be included in the object of sense perception.

FOURTH ARTICLE

WHETHER ANY CREATED INTELLECT BY ITS NATURAL POWERS CAN SEE THE DIVINE ESSENCE

State of the question. In the title “by its natural powers” denotes the sufficient cause. But nature is the radical and essential principle of operation. Therefore the question concerns the possibility of the created intellect’s seeing God by its real and natural power, without being supernaturally elevated for this end. It is supposed from the first article that the created intellect can be raised to see the divine essence.

The principal difficulty is declared in the beginning of the article in the third objection, which is as follows: corporeal sense cannot be raised up to understand incorporeal substance, because such understanding is above its nature. Therefore, if to see the essence of God is above the nature of every created intellect, it follows that no created intellect can be elevated for this vision.

The answer is: It is impossible for any created intellect to see the essence of God, unless the intellect is supernaturally elevated for the vision.

1) This conclusion is de fide, and is defined as such in the Council of Vienne, in which the following proposition of the Beghards was condemned: “The soul does not need the light of glory elevating it to see God and enjoy Him in this blessed state.” This was, indeed, already implicitly defined against the Pelagians and Semipelagians, against whom the Church on several occasions asserted than man cannot by his natural powers merit eternal life, which is supernatural.

The same was declared against Baius. Likewise the Vatican Council declared: “If anyone shall say that man cannot be raised by divine power to a higher than natural knowledge and perfection, but can and should, by a continuous progress, attain at length of himself to the possession of all that is true and good; let him be anathema.” The Council also says: “There is a twofold order of knowledge, distinct both in principle and in object . . . ; in object because, besides those things to which natural reason can attain,

there are proposed to our belief mysteries hidden in God, which, unless divinely revealed, cannot be known. . . . For the divine mysteries by their own nature so far transcend the created intelligence that, even when delivered by revelation and received by faith, they remain covered with a veil of faith itself, and shrouded in a certain degree of darkness, so long as we are pilgrims in this mortal life, not yet with God."

From this definition it is clear that the supernatural mysteries transcend the created intellect, not only because of God's free decree, but by their very nature; that is, they are essentially supernatural, and not only de facto supernatural. But the contrary would be the case if God could give the light of glory to the created intellect as a natural property.

The following condemned proposition of Rosmini must also be noted: "God is the object of the beatific vision inasmuch as He is the author of ad extra works." The ontologists likewise were condemned, because they did not sufficiently maintain the distinction between the two orders, for they said: "The immediate and at least habitual knowledge of God is so essential to the human intellect, that without it nothing can be known."

This truth of the faith is equivalently expressed, although not so clearly, in several texts of Holy Scripture. Thus we read: "No one knoweth the Son but the Father; neither doth anyone know the Father but the Son, and he to whom it shall please the Son to reveal Him." But if the created intellect by its natural powers could see God's essence, it could also see His paternity and filiation, which are not really distinct from it. St. Paul also says: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him." In like manner he says: "The grace of God, life everlasting." But eternal life is the vision itself of God in accordance with the following text: "This is eternal life: that they may know Thee, the only true God." The Greek and Latin Fathers, commenting on the aforesaid texts of Holy Scripture, on several occasions affirmed the impossibility of any creature's seeing God by its natural powers.

2) Proof from reason. A careful reading of the argumentative part of this article of St. Thomas enables us to distinguish with Cajetan five consequences. But his argument can be expressed more simply by the following syllogism: Since the norm for knowledge is that it be according as the thing known is in the knower, according to the mode of immateriality of the nature of the knower, then the object whose mode of immateriality

exceeds the mode of immateriality of the nature of the created intellect cannot be naturally known as it really is by this intellect; but God is such an object; therefore God cannot be naturally known as He really is by the created intellect, but only as it is elevated by grace.

The major has its foundation in the principle that knowledge is according as the thing known is present immaterially in the knower, according to the nature of the knower. But the more immaterial a cognitive faculty is the more universal is its knowledge. This is evident by inductive reasoning in the cases of sensation and intellection. Whereas plants, because of their materiality, do not know, color is known by the sense of sight inasmuch as the similitude of color is in some way immaterially present in the sense of sight; for, as Aristotle says, the sense is cognitive because it is capable of receiving species separated from matter. But the intellect is all the more cognitive, because it is more separated from matter. Thus it knows not only sensible qualities, but the nature of sensible things. Hence the object, whose mode of immateriality exceeds the immaterial mode of the nature of the knower, cannot be known as this really is by it. ‘Thus it is natural for our intellect, united as it is with the body, to see intelligible things only in the mirror of sensible things.

The minor is proved, because God is not only absolutely immaterial, but is His own existence, that is, He is pure act both in the existential and in the intellectual orders, is the self-subsisting Being. This will be more clearly explained in a subsequent article. On the other hand, our intellect, although immaterial, is directly united to the body, because it is the lowest type of intellect, whose proportionate object is the least in the intelligible order, namely, the intelligible being of sensible things, and for this knowledge it has need of the senses. Thus, as will be more clearly stated farther on, it is because of its debility that our intellect needs the aid of the senses.

But it is the merely immaterial essence of the angel, which is not his existence, that constitutes the proportionate object of the angelic intellect. Therefore the mode of immateriality of the created and creatable intellect is a mode of essence that is not its own existence or its own intellection. Only God is in the highest degree of immateriality, and He thus absolutely transcends the mode of immateriality of any created intellect whatever. Hence God cannot be naturally known by the intellect as He really is.

The doctrine of this article may be expressed as follows: the object of the intellect is being, and the intellect is predicated analogically of the created

intellect and of the uncreated intellect, just as being is so predicated of created being and of the uncreated being. Thus we may write:

Intellect divine; its proper object: divine essence being
angelic; its proper object: angelic essence
human; its proper object: essence of material things

This means that the proper object of our intellect is the essence of material things. Thus it knows spiritual things in the mirror of sensible things. However, its correspondingly adequate object, not as it is strictly a human intellect, but as it is an intellect, is being in the widest sense of the term. This point will become increasingly evident from the explanation of the reply to the third objection.

Objection. Absolute immateriality does not admit of different degrees; but every intellect, even the human intellect, is as such absolutely immaterial; therefore there is no foundation for the above assertion.

Reply. That the exclusion of matter does not admit of different degrees, this I concede; that there are not different degrees of immateriality with reference to pure act, this I deny. Thus all the degrees of certitude exclude the fear of error, and yet there is certainly a distinction between these degrees as regards the firmness of assent, according as they are immediately referred back to first principles, that is, according as they are either without or with the intermediary of the senses and the testimony of men. Thus there is a distinction between metaphysical, physical, and moral certitudes.

Reply to first objection. The angel has a natural knowledge of God as mirrored in his essence; but he has not immediate knowledge of God as He really is.

Reply to second objection. Thus the angel, although he is a pure spirit, is most defective compared with God, because he is not his own existence.

THE ADEQUATE OBJECT OF OUR INTELLECT

The reply to the third objection solves the principal difficulty already presented in the beginning of the article, for it states: “The sense of sight, as being altogether material (being intrinsically dependent on the organism), cannot be raised up to immateriality. But our intellect, or the angelic

intellect, inasmuch as it is elevated above matter (since it is not intrinsically dependent on a corporeal organism), can be raised up above its own nature to a higher level by grace." This means that it can be elevated to know any intelligible being whatever, even the highest. At least this cannot be disproved. In fact, there is proof of the possibility of this elevation, and this proof confirms what was said in the first article concerning the natural and inefficacious desire of seeing the essence of God.

St. Thomas says in this same reply: "The proof is, that the created intellect, although it naturally knows the concrete in any nature, still is able to separate that existence by its intellect, since it knows that the thing itself is one thing, and its existence is another. . . . (This proves) that it can by grace be raised up to know separate subsisting substance (as this really is)."

In other words, our intellect not only knows the nature of sensible things, and spiritual things in the mirror of sensible things, but it knows being itself as such. Therefore we can distinguish between its proper object, which is the essence of material things, and its adequate and extensive object, which is being in the widest sense of the term.

But God clearly seen comes under being in the widest sense of the term, because being in the most pure state of pure act is found only in the Deity, and cannot be seen in this most pure state, without the Deity itself being seen, in which it is found formally and eminently.

But it must be observed that sometimes the formulation of this adequate object of the human intellect is inexact; this object applies to it, not strictly as it is a human intellect, but as it is an intellect. This adequate object is not only being as such, which is the object of metaphysics; for metaphysics is still a human science, which knows its object in the mirror of sensible things. If the adequate object of our intellect were nothing else, then the possibility of metaphysics would be all that could be proved from this against positivism and Kantianism.

Indeed, the adequate object of our intellect is being in the widest sense of the term (a commonly accepted expression); so that nothing transcends it, which means that it includes the triune God as He really is, or as He is clearly seen. We cannot, of course, prove conclusively by reason alone that this is the adequate object of our intellect; but it cannot be disproved. In fact, we are persuaded that it is not repugnant for our intellect to be informed by any intelligible being, however perfect it may be, inasmuch as our intellect is absolutely immaterial, or is intrinsically independent of the

organ of sight. As St. Thomas says: “The soul is naturally capable of grace since, from its having been made to the likeness of God, it is fit to receive God by grace.” But the soul is made to God’s image, inasmuch as it is made like to Him not only in existence and life, but also in intelligence. This means that it is absolutely immaterial or intrinsically independent of the body. On the other hand, although the soul of the irrational animal has that measure of immateriality required for sensitive knowledge, yet it is intrinsically dependent on the body and perishes with it; for it is then reduced to the potentiality of the matter in which it was first potentially. But the rational soul was not in the potentiality of matter, for it is created by God, and is intrinsically independent of the body in becoming, in being, and in operation. And the proof of this is that its intellect can be informed by any intelligible being whatever, even the most perfect.

This means that the passive capacity of our intellect is greater than its active power; neither of itself is it limited to some order of intelligible beings; whereas, on the contrary, its active power extends only to what is knowable from sensible things. Indeed, every creature can receive from God more than it can effect; hence it is not surprising that there should be in our nature a passive capacity, and that there is nothing of repugnance for this nature to be raised to the knowledge of the most perfect intelligible being that transcends the mirror of creatures. This capacity for being elevated is called an obediential capacity.

Hence it is only in a spiritual way, as transcending everything material, that the intelligible object, however perfect it may be, informs the intellective faculty. Consequently this does not appear to be beyond the elevatable or obediential capacity of our nature.

Thus we are persuaded of the existence of this obediential or elevatable capacity for the beatific vision. However, as the Thomists generally admit, this argument is not conclusive, but only very probable and indeed most profound in this order. Neither can the possibility of the light of glory be proved solely by the powers of reasoning, because it is the possibility of what is essentially supernatural, and hence of what is supernaturally knowable, inasmuch as being and truth are convertible.

Therefore St. Thomas presents this argument only as a “sign,” and he often distinguishes between the demonstrative argument and the sign. The possibility of essentially supernatural mysteries is neither proved nor disproved, but is defended, urged upon us, and held firmly by faith.

Doubt. Is it possible for God by His absolute power to create an intellect that by its own natural powers can see God as He really is? Further, can a supernatural substance be created, such that the light of glory would be connatural to it, as a property of its nature?

The theologians, especially the Thomists, generally answer in the negative to each. As Genet says, these two negative conclusions are now commonly held "against Durandus, Molina, Ripalda, Arriaga . . . whose opinion Vasquez calls absurd, Nazarius looks upon as temerarious, and Bannez as extraordinary ignorance."

Scotus and the Nominalists prior to Molina had defended a similar opinion, denying the absolute necessity of the light of glory so as to see God.

Cajetan says that the condemnation of the Beghards in the Council of Vienne makes this view of Scotus no longer tenable. He writes: "Note well that this opinion of Scotus and his followers can no longer be maintained; for the encyclical of Pope Clement V, Ad nostrum, de haereticis, condemns as positively erroneous the assertion of those who say that the soul does not need the light of glory elevating it to see God. In this you perceive that the Church, accepting the teaching of St. Thomas, definitely decided not only as to the need of the light of glory, but as to the cause of this, since the soul needs to be elevated for such vision, as stated in the encyclical." Gonet likewise contradicts Scotus on this point.

According to the teaching of Scotus and the Nominalists, the distinction between the natural order and the supernatural order of sanctifying grace is not one of necessity, as resulting from the very transcendence of God's essence over every created intellect; but the distinction is one of contingency, the result of God's free decree appointing angels and men in this state of wayfarers, such that they have not the immediate vision of His essence. This distinction of Scotus, however, is in harmony with his doctrine as formulated in two of his theses; for he says that being is predicated univocally of God and creatures, wherefore there is no essential and necessary distinction between the natural and supernatural orders. He states also that, since God's will is higher than His intellect, the distinction between the two orders is the result of God's free decree. This conclusion is also in accordance with the principles of Nominalism, for the Nominalists maintain that the common name "humanity" designates a collection of men and not a necessary and immutable nature.

But it is difficult to see how this merely contingent distinction can be reconciled with the teaching of the Vatican Council, which says: “The Catholic Church with one consent has also ever held and does hold that there is a twofold order of knowledge, distinct both in principle and in object: in principle, because our knowledge in the one is by natural reason, and in the other by divine faith; in object because, besides those things to which natural reason can attain, there are proposed to our belief mysteries hidden in God, which, unless divinely revealed, cannot be known. . . . For the divine mysteries by their own nature [there is no mention of any free divine decree] so far transcend the created intelligence that, even when delivered by revelation and received by faith, they remain covered with the veil of faith itself . . . so long as we are pilgrims in this mortal life, not yet with God.” Hence this superiority has its foundation not in the divine liberty, but in the very transcendence of the divine nature. Thus, A. Vacant and Scheeben have not interpreted the above text from the Vatican Council in favor of Scotus’ opinion.

OBJECTIONS OF SCOTUS

First objection. From the fact that the thing known is in the knower according to the mode of the knower, it follows solely that the knower cannot know naturally an object of a higher order except in an inferior manner. But it does not follow that the knower is absolutely incapable of knowing this object in a natural way. Therefore a natural, confused, and finite knowledge of the Deity or of God’s intimate life is perhaps possible.

Reply. I distinguish the antecedent: that the knower can naturally know an object of a higher order only in an inferior manner, that is, as it is related to the formal object of the lower order, namely, in some inferior image, this I concede; that it can naturally and immediately know this object according to the formal concept of the higher order, at least confusedly, this I deny. And I deny the consequent. We naturally know God in the mirror of creatures, according to the analogically common notions of being, goodness . . . , but not immediately according to the proper and intimate notion of the Deity. Otherwise our knowledge would be simultaneously according to two opposite modes of immateriality, namely, according to the human and the divine modes. This superior mode can be participated in only by the infusion of supernatural light, which is a certain participation of the divine

nature. Indeed, to know God confusedly is to know God under the common notion of being, and not under the most proper and most eminent notion of the Deity. It was not in a formal but in a material sense that Scotus understood the proposition of St. Thomas, that "the thing known is in the knower according to the mode of the knower," that is, according to the mode of immateriality of the nature of this knower. This principle, however, has its foundation in the principle that the intelligent being differs from the non-intelligent being, since by reason of its immateriality it can become something other than itself.

Second objection. There is no need of proportion between the intellect and its proper object. St. Thomas maintains, to be sure, that for our intellect this object is of a lower order, as being the essence of things material. But if there is no need of proportion, then the proper object also of our intellect can be of a higher order.

Reply. There is no comparison, for our intellect by its natural power can elevate an inferior material object to its own mode of intelligibility; but it cannot in a natural way, or according to its mode of operation, be elevated to the higher mode of operation of the divine intellect.

Third objection. Then it follows that the angel of a lower order could not by its own power know the angel of a higher order, which is false.

Reply. Two angels are of the same order of immateriality; wherefore the lower by its own power knows the higher, but not so clearly as the higher knows itself.

FIFTH ARTICLE

WHETHER THE CREATED INTELLECT NEEDS ANY CREATED LIGHT IN ORDER TO SEE THE ESSENCE OF GOD

State of the question. So far we know that the created intellect can be raised to see God's essence (a. 1) and that it cannot by its natural powers attain to this (a. 4). It is now a question of the necessity of the supernatural light of glory, which was already affirmed somewhat incidentally in the second article. The nature of this light must be determined. How does this necessity manifest itself and what is its proper effect?

What is of faith concerning this? The necessity of the light of glory is affirmed in the Council of Vienne, as is evident from the condemnation of the following proposition: "The soul does not need the light of glory

elevating it to see God and enjoy Him in this blessed state." Hence the Council affirms the light of glory in the blessed not only as being an actual fact, but also as necessary so that the soul may be raised to see God, and for this very reason it declares that this light is supernatural; otherwise the soul would not be raised to a higher order by this light. Yet even so, the Council does not determine the degree of this necessity. It is at least a necessity in accordance with God's ordinary power, although it may still be a disputed point whether this light is absolutely necessary, so that even by God's absolute and extraordinary power the created intellect could not see God unless it were elevated by means of this light. The Council, likewise, did not define that the light of glory is a quality, an infused habit; but we must say of it what was afterward declared by the Council of Trent concerning habitual grace, namely, that it is something created, infused and inherent in the soul. St. Thomas says more, inasmuch as he declares more explicitly that the light of glory is an infused quality and an infused habit.

Billuart puts the following question to his readers: "You will ask whether it is of faith that sanctifying grace is, in the strictly philosophical sense, an infused quality and an infused habit? Not in the strict sense, we reply; yet that it is so must be held as certain doctrine." The same must be said of consummated and inamissible sanctifying grace, which is in the essence of the soul, and which is the source of the light of glory for the intellect of the blessed, just as it is of the infused light of faith for the intellect of wayfarers. Thus theology, in the common acceptation of the term, explains still more precisely what is defined by the Church.

It must be observed that the Council of Vienne, in thus determining the necessity of the light of glory for the soul to be raised to this higher order, presents more clearly the doctrine already formulated against the Pelagians and Semipelagians in the Second Council of Orange concerning the necessity of grace, which is the seed of glory.

THE VARIOUS OPINIONS OF THEOLOGIANS BEFORE AND AFTER THE COUNCIL OF VIENNE

Notice must be taken of two opinions proposed before the time of the Council, and conflicting with its decisions.

1) Opinion of Scotus. He understood the light of glory to be the beatific vision in its second actuality, inasmuch as it is communicated to us by God.

This opinion is contrary to the teaching of the Council, which declares "that the soul needs the light of glory elevating it to see God." Therefore the light of glory, since it is necessary for the beatific vision, differs from this latter. Hence Cajetan says that, since the time of the Council, this opinion of Scotus is no longer tenable, which is also what Gonet says. John of St. Thomas says of Scotus' opinion: "Its affirmation cannot but be a very dangerous assertion."

2) The opinion of Durandus. He, too, before the time of the Council, understood the light of glory to be the divine essence itself, inasmuch as it immediately manifests itself to the intellect and changes it in the order of intellection. This opinion, says John of St. Thomas, is not in accord with the spirit of the Council; for those condemned as heretics did not deny the necessity of the divine essence manifesting itself as the object of vision, but they denied the necessity of a light elevating the intellect so that it can be united with the object.

3) Vasquez, who lived after the time of the Council, thinks the light of glory, as a habit perfecting the intellect, to be superfluous. Similarly, Molina and Suarez are of the opinion that, by God's absolute power, all that is required is an actual help, but no infused habit elevating the soul. There is nothing surprising about this in the teaching of Suarez, for he admitted an actual obediential power, by which our nature would be positively and actively directed to the performance of supernatural acts, although it would need the divine assistance to pass into act. This active obediential power is somewhat like the innate natural appetite for the beatific vision admitted by Scotus, Suarez, and Molina, who conceive God elevating and our intellect more as two co-ordinated causes (like two men pulling a boat) than as two causes subordinated one to the other.

4) The Thomists reject this actual obediential power, for they say it would be both essentially natural, as being a property of the nature, and essentially supernatural, as specified by a supernatural object. Therefore they say along with St. Thomas that the obedien- tial power is passive, and that its immediate reference is not to the eliciting of a supernatural act, nor to the object of this act, but to the agent of a higher order, that is, to God the author of grace, whom it obeys, and from whom it receives the grace which has as its purpose the attainment of glory. However, the obediential power, which in itself is formally passive, also inheres in the active faculty, namely,

in the will; but then it is only materially active because the will is its subject of inhesion.

This Thomist opinion agrees exactly with what St. Thomas teaches in his various works in which he discusses the obediential power, especially that which is required as a prerequisite for the beatific vision. There is also a vast difference between this latter and the obediential power required in bodies in which miracles are to be performed, or in the water that is instrumental in the production of grace. But for St. Thomas every obediential power, since it refers to God as agent and elevator, is a passive power. The two following quotations suffice: “In the human soul, as in every creature, there is a double passive power: one in comparison with a natural agent; the other in comparison with the first agent, which can reduce any creature to a higher act than a natural agent can reduce it, and this is usually called the obediential power of a creature.” Also: “In every creature there is a certain obediential power, inasmuch as every creature obeys God so as to receive in itself whatever God may have willed.” But God’s will and omnipotence are limited only by what is repugnant to existence; hence all that is required for the obediential power in a being, is that it be not repugnant for such being to be raised to a higher order. Thus there is an obediential power in our nature even for the hypostatic union, to which our nature is not positively ordained. Similarly there is an obediential power both in the disembodied spirits and in the angels of heaven for a greater degree of the light of glory, because the highest degree of this glory is inconceivable. The light of glory could always be intensively increased, and yet it would never attain to the comprehensive vision of God, for this can apply to God alone. Therefore St. Thomas says that there is no limit to the obediential power, for it corresponds to divine omnipotence, which is always able to produce still greater effects.

HOW ST. THOMAS PROVES THE NECESSITY OF THE LIGHT OF GLORY

In the body of the article he shows that the light of glory is necessary: (1) as a disposition preparing the intellect for union with the divine essence; (2) as a power strengthening the intellect to elicit this act of vision.

Proof of first requisite: Everything which is raised up to what exceeds its nature, needs to be supernaturally disposed for this; but the created intellect that sees God is so raised, and the divine essence takes the place of its

intelligible species; therefore the intellect needs to be disposed so as to see the divine essence.

Proof of second requisite: A power must be proportionate to the act that is to be elicited by it, so that it can elicit this act; but the natural power of the created intellect is intrinsically incapable, or is not in proportion so as to elicit the supernatural act of seeing God; therefore the intellect needs the reinforcement of a supernatural light.

The following objection is raised against the first argument; if the major were true, then a disposition would be necessary for the reception of this infused disposition, and so on indefinitely.

In reply to this we say with Cajetan and John of St. Thomas, that the reception of a form or perfection necessitates some disposition, of course, in the subject; but the disposition itself necessitates no previous disposition. In other words, there is no such thing as a disposition for a disposition; otherwise there would never be a disposition in any order. Hence the major of St. Thomas must be understood in the sense that there must be a first actuality or proximate potentiality in everything which is raised up to that which exceeds its nature and by which it is disposed for this. Such is manifestly the case in material things, and it is verified in every order. Thus the necessary prerequisite for wood to begin to burn is that it acquire a certain degree of heat. Similarly, for the reception of a substantial form (e.g., the sensitive soul, as also the intellective soul), there must be a disposition for this as a necessary prerequisite.

In like manner, in the attainment of knowledge, the student needs to be disposed so as to be able to listen to and profit by the special lectures on metaphysics. It must be noted that the lack of this requisite disposition for a form results in a monstrosity both in the natural order and in the intellectual order. So it would be if, through lack of this previous disposition, one were to understand Thomism in the Calvinist sense.

Not only is the disposition required for the action of an agent, but also for the proper reception of some exalted perfection, such as the proper appreciation of one of Beethoven’s symphonies, or the understanding of a difficult passage. So also the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost are required so as to dispose one to receive His inspirations. Hence it is not surprising that a special infused disposition is required for receiving the divine essence as an intelligible form or impressed species.

For our intellectual faculty, which of itself is incapable either of making use of this essence as intelligible form so as to see God, or of receiving it without being elevated, must be proportioned to it. And this functioning of the light of glory by way of a disposition is closely connected with the second and principal function with which the second argument is concerned.

The probative force of the second argument is evident if we consider that the operative power, which of itself and intrinsically is incapable of any act, needs to be intrinsically elevated, strengthened, and perfected by the reception of some habit that is either acquired or infused. It is this general principle that is invoked in showing the necessity of habits, and it is quite clear that there is no reference here to an acquired habit, because the object is of the supernatural order. Therefore an infused virtue is meant, which is commonly called the light of glory, since here we have a case of analogy of proportionality; for this light is to the created intellect as regards the beatific vision just as material light is to the eye as regards its object of vision.

Hence, as is more clearly seen in the answer to the first objection, the light of glory in the blessed is a permanent quality or a supernatural infused habit inhering in the intellect, elevating and perfecting it so as to see God. But this habit is always in second actuality, because the vision itself is permanent, and resides in the intellect as charity does in the will, and this light does away with the infused habit of faith. The principal function of this light is to elevate the faculty to elicit the act of vision, and its secondary function is to dispose the faculty to receive the divine essence as the intelligible form. Yet it is not of faith that the light of glory is a habit.

SOLUTION OF OBJECTIONS

The first series of objections denies the necessity of the light of glory.

First objection. What is of itself lucid needs no other light in order to be seen; but God is of Himself lucid, because He is light itself; therefore no other light is needed in order to see Him.

Reply. What is of itself lucid needs no other light on its own part in order to be seen, this I concede; on the part of the visual faculty, this I deny. I contradistinguish the minor in the same way.

Second objection. A created light is not required even on the part of the visual faculty, for God takes the place of the impressed species; but the

impressed species functions on the part of the visual faculty; therefore, in like manner, God can take the place of the light of glory.

Reply. I concede the major, but distinguish the minor. That the species functions as a perfection actuating the faculty by way of terminating it, this I concede; as informing form, this I deny. For it takes the place of the object. On the other hand, the light that strengthens the faculty belongs properly to the operative faculty, as informing form, and God cannot take the place of the informing form, which is essentially something participated and thus imperfect.

Third objection. But the divine concurrence suffices on the part of the subject so as to render the intellect capable of seeing God; therefore the intellect does not need to be strengthened by any created light so as to see God.

Reply. If the beatific vision transcended the faculty merely intensively in the natural order, then I concede the consequence. But this vision is essentially supernatural. Hence this faculty, which of itself is intrinsically incapable for such act, must be supernaturally elevated so as to be made intrinsically capable in first actuality for this vision.

SECOND SERIES OF OBJECTIONS, TO SHOW THAT THE LIGHT OF GLORY IS SOMETHING REPUGNANT

First objection. If God is seen by means of a light, then He is seen through a medium; but the beatific vision is absolutely direct; therefore the light of glory is incompatible with this vision

Reply. I distinguish the major. If God is seen by means of a light, then He is seen through an objective medium quo or in quo, this I deny; that He is seen through a subjective medium sub quo, or one that strengthens the faculty, this I concede. The minor I concede, and I distinguish the conclusion in the same way.

Second objection. Even this subjective medium that strengthens the faculty is something repugnant. For what is finite cannot dispose one to see the infinite. But the light of glory is finite, since it is created. Therefore it cannot dispose one to see God, who is infinite.

Reply. I distinguish the major. What is finite in the entitative and natural order, this I concede; what is finite in the entitative and supernatural order cannot dispose one to see the infinite, this I subdistinguish: it cannot

dispose one for an infinite or comprehensive knowledge of God, this I concede; that it cannot dispose one for a finite knowledge of God, this I deny.

Third objection. The light of glory is incompatible even with a finite knowledge of God, for the power that perfects a vital faculty must itself be vital; but the light of glory is not vital, because it does not proceed from an intrinsic principle; therefore this light is repugnant to the faculty.

Reply. I distinguish the major. The power that perfects a vital faculty must itself be vital, as being that by which the act is a vitally elicited act, this I concede; as being that which is vitally produced by the created intellect, this I deny. Although the light of glory is not vital as being what is produced by the intellective faculty, yet it is vital as being that by which the elicited act of vision is vital.

First doubt. How does the light of glory concur with the intellect in the beatific vision?

Reply. Each concurs actively, as two total and subordinated causes, but each under a different aspect. For the created intellect and the light of glory are not two partial and coordinated causes, such that the vitality of the beatific vision would be a natural vitality, as Suarez would have it in accordance with his conception of an active obediential power which, as we stated, almost dispenses with the necessity of an elevation or of an elevating grace.

The created intellect and the light of glory are indeed two total and subordinated causes, such that the intellect is the total and radical principle, and the infused habit of the light of glory is the total and proximate principle by which the act of vision is elicited. Hence the vitality of the beatific vision is essentially supernatural, because it proceeds not from a purely natural faculty, but from an elevated faculty. Thus eternal life is truly a new life, the two aspects of life and vision being equally applicable in this sense; for it is essentially supernatural as being specified by an essentially supernatural object. Thus the beatific vision differs entirely from the miraculous restoration of sight to a blind person, because this sight is essentially natural and is only supernaturally restored. In other words, it is only supernatural as regards the mode of its production.

It must be observed also that the created intellect is not the instrumental cause of intellectual vision, as baptismal water is of grace; but the beatific vision is its vital and connatural act, although it does not elicit this act

independently of the infused habit. This habit, however, functions by way of a second nature of the higher order. So also the will of the blessed is not the instrumental cause of the act of charity elicited by it, but is its connatural act.

Second doubt. Can there be the creation of an intellect to which the light of glory would be connatural?

St. Thomas denies this in his reply to the third objection: “The light of glory cannot be natural to a creature unless the creature has a divine nature; which is impossible. But by this light the rational creature is made deiform, as is said in this article.”

Scotus held the opposite view. But from Scotus’ opinion it follows that consummated grace, as a matter of fact, would be grace not essentially, but only contingently. This is contrary to the principle that powers, habits, and acts are specified by their formal object. But the formal and proper object of the divine intellect evidently transcends the proper and natural object of any creatable intellect whatever; otherwise this intellect would be of the same nature as God, would be God created.

Third doubt. Why is a created and supernatural substance a contradiction in terms?

It is because the intellect of this substance would be of the same nature as the divine intellect, for it would be specified by the same formal object, and hence would be the divine nature created, which is a contradiction in terms, just as pantheism is.

Moreover, this substance would be supernatural; but it is intrinsically repugnant for a supernatural substance to be created. Indeed, nothing created can be essentially supernatural without its being essentially related to the Deity as such, to God’s intimate life, and thus specified by it; for it is only God’s essence that transcends every created nature. But no created substance can be essentially related to the Deity and specified by it, since substance is being in itself and for itself. This means that the reason for its specification is to be found in itself, and it cannot be defined because of its being referred to something else. On the contrary, an accident, such as a power or a habit, can be essentially related to something else. Thus grace, which is the seed of glory, is specified by God’s essence, of which it is a participation, and by means of it we are ordained to see God in His essence.

SIXTH ARTICLE

WHETHER, OF THOSE WHO SEE THE ESSENCE OF GOD, ONE SEES MORE PERFECTLY THAN ANOTHER

The answer is in the affirmative, and it is of faith against Jovinian, as also against Luther, who said that all men are equally blessed, in that they are justified not by their own justice, but by the justice of Christ which is imputed to them.

The Council of Florence defines it to be of faith in the following words: “The souls of the saints . . . clearly intuit the one and triune God, one seeing Him more perfectly than another, according to the diversity of their merits.” Likewise the Council of Trent condemns those who say that “men justified by good works do not merit an increase of glory.”

This doctrine of the faith is equivalently expressed in the following passages of Holy Scripture: “Star differeth from star in glory”; and this is said of the blessed. Similarly we have: “In My Father’s house there are many mansions”; and these words must be understood as referring to the kingdom of heaven, because in this same chapter our Lord says: “I go to prepare a place for you . . . that where I am, you also may be.”

The Fathers, especially St. Augustine, frequently alluded to the doctrine of the various degrees of happiness in heaven that correspond to the varying degrees of merit among the blessed. But Holy Scripture also discloses the reason for this inequality, which has its foundation in the merits acquired in this life. Such texts are: “Your reward is very great in heaven”; “Who will render to every man according to his works.” But there is inequality of merit among wayfarers.

Theology, which explains more clearly the reason for this inequality, teaches that the more the intellect participates in the light of glory, the more perfectly it sees God. But the greater the charity, the greater is the participation in the light of glory; for desire actuated by charity in a certain degree makes the one desiring apt to receive the object desired.

First doubt. Does the inequality of vision result solely from the inequality of participation in the light of glory, or is it also because of the inequality of the natural power of the intellect?

Reply. The general answer to this, against the Scotists, Molina, and even partly against Cajetan, is that it is solely because of the inequality of participation in the light of glory. As St. Thomas says: “it [the inequality]

will arise on the part of the diverse faculty of the intellect, not indeed the natural faculty, but the glorified faculty." Why is this? It is because, as stated in the body of the article, "the faculty of seeing God does not belong to the created intellect naturally, but is given to it by the light of glory." Therefore the faculty of seeing God more perfectly does not belong to the created intellect according as it is by nature more perfect. Hence the penetrative vision of the divine essence is not greater in the angelic intellect than in the human intellect, if each receives an equal degree of the light of glory. The incongruity resulting from its denial confirms this view. For otherwise, granted equality of merit, one would see God more perfectly than the other, namely, the one whose intellect is endowed with greater penetration of vision; but this would be contrary to the notion of reward. There is another incongruity in that any degree of glory would not be according to the corresponding degree of grace, but would be according to one's natural powers, and thus man by his natural powers would claim something as his own in the spiritual order, which is contrary to what St. Paul says: "For who distinguisheth thee?"

The opinion of the Scotists and Molina arises from the fact that they consider the intellect and the light of glory not so much as two total and subordinated causes, but rather as two partial and coordinated causes.

Second doubt. Do some of the blessed enjoy an equal degree of glory?

Reply. This we affirm, especially for baptized children who die before coming to the use of reason.

SEVENTH ARTICLE

WHETHER THOSE WHO SEE THE ESSENCE OF GOD COMPREHEND HIM

It is of faith that the blessed do not comprehend God, inasmuch as the Lateran Council declares that "God is incomprehensible." It is commonly admitted among theologians that this incomprehensibility is to be understood as referring not only to the natural but also to the supernatural faculties; for there is a difference between invisibility and incomprehensibility. The blessed are called comprehensors, inasmuch as their immediate vision of God is construed as comprehension in the broad sense of the term.

The theological proof given by St. Thomas is clear. To comprehend God is to know Him both intensively and extensively so far as He is knowable, that is, infinitely; but no created intellect, either by its own power or by means of the light of glory, can know God infinitely; therefore no created intellect can comprehend God.

The major has its foundation in the principle that the source of knowledge and of knowableness is immateriality. But God alone is absolutely immaterial as being most pure act both in the entitative and in the intellectual orders. Hence no created intellect can see God with the same clarity, distinction, and penetration, as God sees Himself, that is, intensively; nor even extensively, for the more profound one's knowledge of God is, the more profound one's knowledge is of what comes within the scope of omnipotence or divine causality.

Objection. It is stated that the blessed see the indivisible God as a whole. Therefore it does not seem possible for their vision to remain imperfect.

Reply. In reply to the second objection it is pointed out that the blessed see the whole of God but not as He is infinitely knowable. Thus he who knows any demonstrable proposition by a probable reason, knows every part of the proposition, namely, the subject, the predicate, and the verb "is"; yet he does not know it as perfectly as it is capable of being known. So also in sense perception, when several persons see a mountain more or less perfectly, clearly, and distinctly, it is seen in all its details according as one has a keener vision than the other.

Similarly, it is pointed out in the reply to the third objection that the blessed see God as a whole, but not wholly, in the sense that the mode of the one knowing does not adequately correspond to the mode of the object known. This means that the blessed see God only in a finite way.

First doubt. Do the blessed see all the formal and necessary constituents of God, namely, the essence, the attributes, and the Persons.

Reply. That they do is commonly affirmed against the nominalists. In fact, the common teaching against Scotus is that it is repugnant for the divine essence to be seen by the blessed apart from the attributes and the Persons, because there is no real distinction between the divine essence, the attributes, and the Persons, not even an actual formal distinction on the part of the object, as posited by Scotus; for there is no intermediary distinction. Either the distinction between objects is real and exists before the mind's consideration, or it is logical, and does not exist before the mind's

consideration. Thus the divine reality, as it is in itself, actually and explicitly contains not only the divine essence, but also the attributes and the Persons. But if it is a question of the divine essence as conceived by us wayfarers, then the attributes and the Persons are contained actually and implicitly in it.

Second doubt. Do the blessed in seeing God see His free decrees?

Reply. They see them inasmuch as these are existing realities in God, but they do not see them inasmuch as these terminate defectibly in creatures, unless God wills to manifest this to them. Thus they do not know the day of judgment or the number of the elect. The reason is that future free things are contained in God's essence only by reason of His free decree, which is made known either by some effect or by God's special revelation. Having sufficiently discussed the primary object of the beatific vision, we now pass on to consider its secondary object.

EIGHTH ARTICLE

WHETHER THOSE WHO SEE THE ESSENCE OF GOD SEE ALL IN GOD

In the title the word "all" signifies everything outside God and everything that can exist.

Reply. It is denied that the blessed see all that God does or can do, for then they would have a comprehensive knowledge of God, which means that they would know all that God does or can do; for the more perfectly a cause is seen, the more of its effects can be seen, and all possible effects if it is seen comprehensively.

Doubt. What, therefore, do the blessed see in God?

It is generally admitted that the blessed see of past, present, and future things whatever pertains particularly and principally to them. The proof is that the beatific vision must perfectly satisfy every lawful desire of the blessed. But the blessed lawfully desire to know what specially pertains to them. Therefore the blessed see all that specially pertains to them.

It is not easy to determine in detail what specially pertains to them. However, the theologians generally agree in saying that the blessed can be considered from three points of view: (1) inasmuch as they are elevated to the supernatural order; (2) inasmuch as they are a part of the universe in the natural order; (3) inasmuch as each is an individual person, either public, as

the Pope, the king, or the founder of a religious order, or in a private capacity, as the father of a family.

But the blessed as raised to the supernatural order see the mysteries believed in this life, such as those of the incarnation, redemption, predestination, and grace. It is not necessary, however, that these be seen in all their circumstances of time and place, as is evident concerning the day of judgment, which not even the angels know. Nor is it necessary for them to see the fulfillment of these mysteries in all individual cases. The blessed as part of the universe see the genera and species, as St. Thomas teaches in this article.

The blessed, inasmuch as each is an individual person, see all or at least the principal things that pertain to their state. Thus St. Peter and more likely the Pope, too, see all that pertains to the universal Church; so also does the king see all that pertains to his kingdom, and the father to his family. They likewise see all the prayers of the faithful who implore their intercession. Hence the knowledge of the Blessed Virgin Mary far surpasses that of any of the saints, especially as regards the prayers and thoughts of human beings; yet not, so it seems, all the thoughts of human beings. This privilege belongs to Christ, as judge of the human race, and thus He must know the acts of all those to be judged.

Similarly, the blessed see God's free decrees in their fulfillment, those that specially pertain to them according to God's good pleasure.

NINTH ARTICLE

WHETHER WHAT IS SEEN IN GOD, BY THOSE WHO SEE THE DIVINE ESSENCE, IS SEEN THROUGH ANY SIMILITUDE

Reply. The answer is that the blessed see without the intermediary of a created species what they see in the divine essence or in the Word. In this case the divine essence is for them the medium previously known, in which creatures are known as in their efficient and exemplary cause. This vision of creatures in the Word is the beatific vision itself, which is one of simple intuition.

This vision of creatures in the Word, which is called morning knowledge inasmuch as it is the vision of creatures as in their dawning, is a certain participation of the knowledge which God has of creatures in Himself. They are known not merely in a confused manner, but distinctly as possible

participations of the divine perfections. Thus he who would have an intuitive knowledge of the intellective soul, would know the sensitive and vegetative souls. Hence the knowledge of things in the Word is without any created species.

But the blessed can also know creatures outside the Word, and this by created species. This knowledge outside the Word is called evening knowledge, as though it were twilight knowledge, because it is of an inferior kind; for, as St. Augustine says: “The knowledge of created things contemplated by themselves is, so to speak, more colorless than when they are seen in the wisdom of God, as in the art by which they were made.”

From this it is evident that the vision of things in the Word is more or less perfect according to the degree of the beatific vision and hence of merits. On the contrary, in the vision of things outside the Word there is not this same correspondence to the degree of the beatific vision and merits. Thus it may happen that the knowledge of a Pope or a king, who enjoys a lower degree of the beatific vision, may be greater as regards those things that specially pertain to him, which the blessed of a higher order do not have, since they are unknown to the latter.

John of St. Thomas remarks that theologians who, out of love for God, take up the study of theology, see the object of theology more eminently in the Word, whereas those who take up the study of theology more from a natural desire of acquiring knowledge, see the theological conclusions outside the Word.

Objection. If the blessed see various created things in the Word, why can they not see God’s free decrees even as to their fulfillment?

Reply. The reason is that God, just as He freely brings creatures into being, so He freely makes use of His essence as the intelligible species in representing these rather than the former. Hence the blessed see the free acts of the future that specially pertain to them, only if God expressly wills to make these known to them, and this manifestation is a certain revelation; but it is one that is effected in the Word, although it may also take place outside the Word.

The question may be asked whether the name “Word” imports relation to creatures. It certainly does, though not indeed essentially so, but only if there is a divine decree.

TENTH ARTICLE

WHETHER THOSE WHO SEE THE ESSENCE OF GOD SEE ALL THEY SEE IN IT AT THE SAME TIME

The article is concerned with the knowledge of things in the Word. In the title “at the same time” means that things are not seen successively.

Simultaneity of vision is affirmed, because this vision of things formally in the Word, is a unique intuition that is effected by means of but one and absolutely invariable species both as a representation and as an entity. Hence all things at one and the same time are included in this vision.

Therefore the beatific vision is measured by participated eternity, and not by time, not even by the discrete time of the angels in which their successive thoughts are measured. But participated eternity has indeed a beginning, but after its inception it is simultaneously whole, and it is not a fleeting but a permanent now. However, just as the beatific vision begins, so it could by God’s absolute power come to an end; but as long as it endures, it is measured by participated eternity, by a single indivisible instant. This was so if St. Paul received it as a transient vision during his life here on earth. Hence what the blessed see in the Word, they see at one and the same time and not successively. On the contrary, what they see outside the Word by their own different species, are not seen at one and the same time, but successively, and this for the opposite reason.

Corollary. Probably the blessed know outside the Word the prayers directed to them, because if they saw formally in the Word at one and the same time all the petitions of all those praying to them, they would already know the day of the last judgment.

ELEVENTH ARTICLE

WHETHER ANYONE IN THIS LIFE CAN SEE THE ESSENCE OF GOD

The answer is that no one in this life can see the essence of God. The Council of Vienne condemned the following proposition of the Beghards: “It is possible for man to acquire in this life the same degree of final happiness as he will have in heaven.” In like manner, the Scripture says: “Man shall not see Me and live.” “No man hath seen God at any time.”

“While we are in the body we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith and not by sight.”

St. Thomas assigns as the reason for this that the soul, united as it is with the body and the senses, knows God in a natural way only as it is related to sensible things; that is, with reference to its proper object.

The same also applies to the soul in its supernatural belief, because it is by means of concepts naturally abstracted from sensible things that revelation is made possible, for example, concepts of nature, person. The proper object of the lowest in the scale of intellectual beings is the lowest in the degree of intelligibility.

However, as pointed out in the reply to the second objection, God could, by way of an exception, have given the beatific vision as something transitory to St. Paul, who was rapt in ecstasy so that he might be the teacher of the Gentiles. This is the opinion of St. Augustine, and of St. Thomas when he discusses the subject of rapture.

TWELFTH ARTICLE

WHETHER GOD CAN BE KNOWN IN THIS LIFE BY NATURAL REASON

The answer is that we cannot see God by our natural power of reason, because our natural knowledge begins from sense, and sensible effects do not adequately express the power of the First Cause. However, we can by these effects know that God exists, and that He has perfections the lack of which would make it impossible for Him to be the First Cause.

Thus there are three ways of knowing God, namely, by causality, negation, and eminence.

THIRTEENTH ARTICLE

WHETHER BY GRACE A HIGHER KNOWLEDGE OF GOD CAN BE OBTAINED THAN BY NATURAL REASON

The answer is in the affirmative, and the superiority of this knowledge of God is considered from two points of view: (1) subjectively, inasmuch as our intellect is strengthened by the infusion of gratuitous light (light of faith, or also of prophecy); (2) objectively, inasmuch as it implies the presentation of an object that is not naturally knowable; and this is effected

either by the infusion of images or ideas, or by the divine arrangement of the acquired ideas to express a supernatural truth.

In the reply to the first objection it is remarked that “by the revelation of grace in this life we cannot know of God what He is,” still we know Him more fully than by the power of natural reason, and thus we believe that there are three Persons in God. Hence, although the faithful do not know the Deity as it really is, yet they have an obscure knowledge of the same by means of God’s revelation.

And so this terminates the question about the beatific vision both in itself as regards its proper object and its secondary object (created things seen in the Word), and also in its relation to other kinds of knowledge, which is knowledge outside the Word, these being faith, prophecy, and the natural knowledge of God, What St. Thomas made clear and particularly stressed is that the beatific vision is essentially supernatural. He is of the opinion that it absolutely demands the elevation of the intellect by the light of glory, such that this essentially supernatural light cannot be a natural property of any created or creatable intellect.

In like manner, St. Thomas shows convincingly that this vision is absolutely immediate, inasmuch as God’s essence is united to our intellect as impressed and expressed species. For no created species, which is intelligible by participation, can represent God Himself as He really is, who is the self-existing Being and self-subsisting Intellection, in fact, His Deity, which in a certain sense transcends being and intellection, inasmuch as it contains these formally and eminently, which must at once be shown.

CHAPTER XIII

QUESTION 13

THE NAMES OF GOD

PROLOGUE

"AFTER the consideration of those things which belong to the divine knowledge we now proceed to the consideration of the divine names. For everything is named by us according to our knowledge of it." For words are signs of ideas, and ideas express the nature of things, as explained by Aristotle. Thus every science has its terminology, although we must not say with the nominalists, especially with Condillac: "The sciences are well-constructed languages." Science makes use of good terminology in expressing its ideas; but, since it consists especially in the well-ordered arrangement of ideas as expressive of the very nature of things, it transcends this terminology. In fact, science is a simple quality, a habit that is specified by its formal object, subordinating the ideas with reference to this formal object.

The importance of this question. This question is of great importance, as it treats of the analogy existing between God and creatures, and in this life God is known and named only analogically by us. We shall give here but a brief explanation of this analogy, not only because it has been already discussed in our refutation of agnosticism in the question concerning the demonstrability of God's existence, in which we treated of analogy by way of investigation in the ascendant order, but also because we have written extensively on this subject in two other works.

By all means the conclusions and reasons given by St. Thomas must be here presented, so that it may be clearly and distinctly seen how his theory avoids the two extremes, namely, of agnosticism and of a certain anthropomorphism. Agnosticism gets no farther than a certain symbolism in which there is no criterion so as to distinguish between what is predicated

literally of God and what is predicated metaphorically of Him; e.g., in determining why it can properly be said of God that He is just, but not that He is angry. Thus in the end we should have to say that God is absolutely unknowable and ineffable in a depreciatory sense.

On the other hand, there is a type of anthropomorphism which considers God, not indeed as a great man as the ancient anthropomorphists did, but which considers Him in too human a way, predicating the divine names univocally or quasi-univocally, as if they had absolutely the same meaning when predicated of God and of creatures, as when wisdom is predicated of God and of a wise man.

We shall see that St. Thomas maintains that divine names are not predicated either equivocally (this would be the symbolism of the agnostics) or univocally (this would be the tendency of anthropomorphism), but analogically; yet they are not predicated merely analogically in the metaphorical sense, as when God is said to be angry, but they are predicated analogically in the literal sense, as when it is said that God is just, and when absolutely simple perfections implying no imperfection in their formal signification are attributed to Him. Hence, as we shall state farther on, these analogical names that are predicated of God and creatures, do not in their concept signify what is absolutely the same, but what is proportionately so. Thus wisdom is the knowledge of things by their highest causes; but God's wisdom is the cause of things, whereas our wisdom is caused by things.

Having shown the importance of this question by the foregoing principles, we must point out that it is divided into three parts. The first part, which treats of the divine names in a general way and which includes the first seven articles, contains the following queries: whether God can be named by us, whether any names applied to God are predicated of Him substantially (or only causally); literally (or only metaphorically); whether any names applied to God are synonymous (so that it can be said that God punishes by His mercy, as He is said to punish by His justice); whether names are applied to God and creatures univocally, or equivocally, or else analogically; but if analogically, whether they are applied first to God or to creatures; finally, in the seventh article, whether some names are applied to God temporally, as Creator and Lord, and others eternally. The second part of the question, which includes four articles, is concerned with the meaning of this name "God" in the first three articles, and in the fourth with the meaning of this name, "Who is," whether it is the supremely appropriate

name of God. The third part is a sort of recapitulation and application of the preceding doctrine to the conclusion established in the last query, namely, whether affirmative propositions can be formed about God.

FIRST ARTICLE

WHETHER A NAME CAN BE GIVEN TO GOD

State of the question. Three difficulties present themselves: (1) because it is commonly held that God is ineffable; (2) because every name is either concrete (wise), or abstract (wisdom). But a concrete name does not belong to God, since He is simple; nor does an abstract name belong to God, because He is subsisting Being; (3) there are special difficulties for the names taken to signify substance with quality, because God is without quality; for demonstrative pronouns,, because God is not pointed out; for verbs that have a temporal signification, since God transcends time.

Yet the answer is that God can be named by us from creatures, yet not so that the name signifying Him expresses the divine essence in itself or quidditatively.

1) It is proved from Sacred Scripture, in which God is referred to under various names, such as Lord, Omnipotent, Who is. On the other hand, it is likewise said in Sacred Scripture that God is ineffable. The Fourth Lateran Council also declares this in the following words: “We firmly believe . . . that there is only one true, eternal, immense, immutable, incomprehensible, omnipotent, and ineffable God, the Father and Son and Holy Ghost.” So also Dionysius calls God anonymous or ineffable; yet he says that God has several names.

2) Proof from reason. We can give a name to anything inasmuch as we can understand it. But in this life we know God from creatures, as being their principle, and also by way of excellence and remotion; in this life, however, we cannot see the essence of God. Therefore God can be named from creatures, yet not so that the name expresses the divine essence in itself.

The major has its foundation in the following principle formulated by Aristotle, which clarifies this entire question: “Words are signs of ideas (of concepts and judgments), and ideas are the similitudes of things.” Thus words relate to the meaning of things signified through the medium of the

intellectual concept. This formula, transcending nominalism and subjective conceptualism, is realistic. For the nominalists maintain that ideas do not express the nature of things; for instance, the idea of humanity would not express the human nature, but rather an actually existing collection of men. Thus the purpose of ideas would be, not for acquiring a knowledge of the nature of things, but rather for action; this is pragmatism. Thus, according to the nominalists, the principle of contradiction is a grammatical law for avoiding contradiction in discourse, and is at most a law of discursive thought, but is not a fundamental law of extramental being. Thus they end in doctrinal nihilism.

The minor is evident from what was said in previous articles. God is known from creatures as their principle. But we cannot have a proper concept of the Deity, such as would define it, for we have not a quidditative knowledge of the Deity. On the contrary, our concept of man, which defines man, is a proper concept. As St. Thomas says: “Such names (those signifying the divine substance) do not signify what God is, as though defining His substance.”

This is what St. Thomas thinks that St. John Damascene means, whom he quotes in this objection. Hence, as will be more clearly seen farther on, by the name “Deity” we understand that eminence which contains formally and eminently all absolutely simple perfections and the divine relations; but with reference to the Deity we are in this life like men who would know the seven colors of the rainbow without ever having seen whiteness. They would understand that the name “whiteness” implies the eminent fount of all colors; but the difference between whiteness and the Deity is, that whiteness contains colors only virtually, whereas the Deity contains all absolutely simple perfections formally and eminently. As Cajetan remarks: “The Deity is conceived through the medium of another concept (of being, of wisdom), yet it is not a representative but an abstractive concept of the Deity; and this is a sufficient reason for distinguishing between the Deity thus known and what is directly known by us.”

Hence the names attributed to God do not accurately express Him as He is, inasmuch as we have but an inadequate knowledge of Him from creatures, whether by way of causality (as when we say that He is the first Mover, the first efficient Cause, the first Ordainer), or by way of excellence (by means of such common concepts as supreme Being, supreme Truth, supreme Goodness), or by way of remotion (by means of such negative

concepts as immaterial, immobile), or by a combination of common and relative concepts, as when we say that He is the First Being.

The solution of the objections confirms this conclusion.

Reply to first objection. God is ineffable inasmuch as "His essence is above all that we understand about God and signify in word." For we do not know it quidditatively. We cannot say what formally constitutes the Deity in itself, just as a person who never saw whiteness cannot say what whiteness is. On the other hand, we know what man is, namely, a rational animal; although his specific difference is known by us abstractively and not intuitively, as the angels know it.

Reply to second objection. With reference to creatures, abstract names, such as wisdom, signify a simple form, whereas concrete names, such as wise, signify a composite subsisting being in which such form is found. And as God is both simple and subsisting, we attribute abstract names to Him to signify His simplicity, and concrete names to signify His subsistence. In addition to this we say that God is His Godhead; for God not only exists, but is His existence, His goodness, and similarly for His other attributes.

Reply to third objection. "Verbs and participles signifying time are applied to God because His eternity includes all time." Thus it is said of God that He is, was, will be, no distinction being made between present, past, and future. But the way we speak of God shows that we have an imperfect conception of Him, and this is because in this life we know Him only from creatures.

Corollary. The perfect name of God, that is, the adequate name, cannot be a name uttered by the voice, or formed in the imagination, or the word of a created mind but is the uncreated Word, in whom the Father adequately declares His essence.

SECOND ARTICLE

WHETHER ANY NAME CAN BE APPLIED TO GOD SUBSTANTIALLY

State of the question. God can be named; but how?

The title says "any name." Yet the inquiry is not about every name, for there are relative names that do not properly express the substance of God, but His relation to creatures, as Creator, or even Father as regards the only

begotten Son. Hence the question is whether any name is applied to God substantially to signify His substance (although not quidditatively), or whether all God's names refer to creatures. Is this name "essential Being," for instance, applied to God substantially?

The difficulty is that we know God only from creatures. But, on the other hand, it is sufficiently clear that there is a certain distinction between absolute names, such as "essential Being," and relative names, such as "supreme Cause." Moreover, St. Augustine, who is quoted in the counterargument, says: "The being of God is the being strong, or the being wise, or whatever else we may say of that simplicity whereby His substance is signified."

Conclusion. Negative names and names referring to creatures do not signify the substance of God; but, of course, absolute and affirmative names do, although they do not fully represent Him.

Examples of negative names are "incorporeal," "immense"; of relative names, "Lord," "efficient," "end"; of absolute and affirmative names, "being," "living," "wise." The first part of the conclusion is evident, for negative names signify the elimination of some imperfection, and relative names signify God's relation to creatures, or rather the relation of creatures to Him. Hence the second part must be proved, which concerns absolute and affirmative names.

That his argument may be convincing, (1) St. Thomas presents two opinions, (2) he proves his point by refuting these opinions, (3) he proves the same directly.

1) Two opinions are presented. The first was proposed by Maimonides (Rabbi Moses). He was born in Cordova in 1135, and his purpose was to give the true conception of anthropomorphism by distinguishing in Sacred Scripture between what is predicated metaphorically of God and what is predicated properly of Him. He believes that, to preserve God's simplicity, we must say that affirmative names, too, have been brought into use to express the elimination of something from God, rather than to express anything that exists positively in Him, Hence to say "God is living" would mean "God is not non-living."

Others said that absolute and affirmative names also are not predicated substantially, but causally. Hence to say "God is good" would mean that "God is the cause of goodness in things."

2) The conclusion is proved indirectly by refuting both opinions at the same time. (1) If these opinions were true, it could be said that God is a body, because this could have but one of two meanings, either that God is the cause of bodies, or else that He is not primary matter without any actuality. (2) Hence not only metaphorical names, but all names applied to God, would be predicated of Him in a secondary sense, and primarily of creatures. Thus, being and goodness would apply primarily to creatures, and this not only as regards the name that is imposed (by the way of investigation), but also as regards what is signified by the name. Then God could not be called the essential Being, the first Being; and creatures could not be called being by participation. Christ said: “No one is good, but God only.”

3) Names express what is conceived by the mind of those uttering them. But the above opinions are contrary to what is meant by those speaking of God. For when they say that God is good, they do not mean to say that God is the cause of goodness, but that God is good in Himself. It is especially to this that Christ referred.

Moreover, it must be noted that St. Thomas says against Maimonides; “It would also follow from this that we could not say of God that He was wise or good before creatures were. . . . Moreover, a negation is always understood on the basis of an affirmation, for every negative proposition is proved by an affirmative. Hence, if the human intellect could not positively know anything about God, it could not deny anything about Him.”

4) The conclusion is proved directly. Absolute and affirmative names are predicated of God substantially, but imperfectly. For names express God so far as our intellect knows Him from creatures. But creatures are made like to God, the likeness being imperfect, which is neither specific nor generic, but which is analogous. Therefore absolute and affirmative names are predicated of God substantially but imperfectly.

The major is proved from the preceding article. The minor is evident from what was said in the third article of the fourth question, in which it was proved that creatures are like God inasmuch as every agent reproduces itself either specifically or generically or at least analogically.

Likewise, in the second article of the fourth question it was said: “Whatever perfection exists in an effect must be found in the effective cause: either in the same formality, if it is a univocal agent, or in a more eminent degree, if it is an equivocal agent (non-univocal). . . . Since

therefore God is the first effective cause of things, the perfections of all things must pre-exist in God in a more eminent way," to the exclusion of imperfections.

But as St. Thomas points out in this article and in the following one, as also in another of his works, we must carefully distinguish between absolutely simple and mixed perfections, in that the former imply no imperfection in their formal concepts. Such are being, truth, goodness, wisdom, and love, although the created mode of these perfections is imperfect. On the contrary, mixed perfections, such as rationability and discursive knowledge, denote imperfection in their formal concepts.

Hence, as St. Thomas says in this article, when we say God is good, the meaning is not that God is the cause of goodness, or that God is not evil; but the meaning is that whatever good we attribute to creatures pre-exists in God, and in a higher way. And also, "because He is good in Himself, He causes goodness in things." The solution of the objections confirms this.

What Dionysius meant when he said that such expressions as not-good, or super-good, not-wise . . . must be attributed to God, is explained elsewhere by St. Thomas. His opinion is that these names are affirmed of God according to the thing signified, or according to what is meant by the name; but they may be denied because of the mode of their signification. For, according to the mode of their signification, abstract names, such as wisdom, signify a form apart from its subject, and concrete names, such as wise, signify a composite, consisting of a subject that has such a form. But God is pure self-subsisting form. To say that God is super-good is to say that the Deity or God's intimate life, contains all absolutely simple perfections in an eminent way, which was proved in the preceding article. In the next article it is proved that God contains these perfections not only eminently, but also formally and eminently, that is, more than virtually. But this is already suggested in the present article, in which it is said that absolute and affirmative names are predicated of God "not only causally but substantially, although imperfectly."

And so the danger of agnosticism is already avoided, which maintains that God is absolutely unknowable, inasmuch as He transcends the genera and the species.

THIRD ARTICLE

State of the question. It is not “commonly” but “metaphorically” that is here contrasted with “literally.” Thus we speak frequently of the literal meaning of words, meaning what is not metaphorical. In the interpretation of Sacred Scripture the distinction between the literal and the metaphorical senses must be very carefully noted. Thus it is often said that God is just, and sometimes He is said to be angry. He is said to be angry metaphorically, since anger is, strictly speaking, a passion, which has no place in the pure Spirit. But the question is whether the word “just” is to be applied to God in its literal sense, or is not to be so applied, because He is super-just. This difficulty arises from what Dionysius is quoted as saying in the second objection, who maintained that these names, “good,” “wise,” “just,” are more truly withheld from God than predicated of Him.

The conclusion of St. Thomas is that, as regards the signified perfection, several names are predicated properly of God and more properly and primarily than they are of creatures. But as regards their mode of signification, they do not properly apply to God.

First the terms are explained; for instance, as regards the perfection signified by the name, “wisdom” signifies knowledge by the highest of causes. But as regards the mode of its signification, wisdom is an accident, that is, a quality of the mind either acquired or infused, or a habit of the created mind. Thus wisdom is in a certain genus and in a certain species of quality; hence under this aspect it cannot be properly attributed to God, who is not in any genus.

The terms being thus explained, the reason for the conclusion, which is stated more clearly in the reply to the first objection, is that the perfection signified by these names implies no imperfection, as in the case of wisdom; whereas the mode of their signification is imperfect and applies to creatures. On the contrary, other names which, in their formal signification, imply imperfection, such as “angry,” are predicated of God only metaphorically.

The reply to the first objection finds fuller expression in another of St. Thomas’ works. According to what he states there, it may be said that God is not wise, but super-wise, if the imperfect mode is considered, inasmuch as wisdom is found in man as an acquired or infused habit.

It must be noted that the expression “properly as regards what is formally signified and not properly as regards the mode of signification” is

somewhat the equivalent of “formally” and “eminently,” that is, formally as regards the perfection signified, eminently and virtually as regards the mode of signification. However, this term “formally” must be understood as referring to predication not in the univocal sense but in the analogical, as will be stated in the fifth article.

FOURTH ARTICLE

WHETHER NAMES APPLIED TO GOD ARE SYNONYMOUS

State of the question. Synonymous names are those that have absolutely the same meaning, so that to say that God is wise, good, merciful, just, would be the same in meaning. If this were so, then, as it is said that God punishes by His justice, it could likewise be said that He punishes by His mercy, for justice and mercy would have the same meaning. This would result in agnosticism, and any distinction between justice and mercy would be no longer tenable. Yet evidently they are distinct from the way Sacred Scripture uses these terms.

But the difficulty here is to show why such names are not synonymous. This question is the same as the problem about the distinction between God’s attributes. As previously remarked by us, the nominalists admitted only a logical distinction between them, such as between Peter the subject and Peter the predicate in a proposition, as when we say: Peter is Peter; or they admitted a nominal distinction, such as that between Tullius and Cicero. Scotus Eriugena said about the same. Similarly, these two propositions of Master Eckhart were condemned: “Any distinction in God is both impossible and inconceivable. Any kind of distinction does not apply to God.”

On the contrary, Gilbert de la Porrée said: “The divinity is not God, but the form by which He is,” because abstract names do not signify the subsisting subject. There is a certain anthropomorphism in this, since the imperfect mode of creatures is thus transferred to God.

Duns Scotus posited his actual-formal distinction between the divine attributes, considered as objects. There appears to be no possibility of a medium between the distinction that is not the result and that which is the result of the mind’s consideration. But if this distinction of Scotus is more

than a virtual distinction, as previously stated, then it is incompatible with God's absolute simplicity.

Very many theologians admit a minor virtual distinction between God's essence and His attributes, inasmuch as His essence, which is conceived by us actually and implicitly, but not explicitly, signifies the attributes that are derived from it.

The exclusion of synonymous names is still the difficulty that confronts us; for, as stated in the objections, all divine names mean the same thing, namely, God's substance, which is most simple. If it is said that they signify the same thing, but differ in idea, there seems to be no purpose in different ideas that do not correspond to different things. Moreover, God is supremely one, not only in reality, but also in idea, which means that there is one proper and most eminent concept which expresses Him, this being the concept of the Deity.

Nevertheless the conclusion is that names attributed to God, although they signify the same reality, are not synonymous.

1) This conclusion is proved indirectly in the counterargument, for if these names are synonymous then their multiplication would be redundant or absolutely superfluous; because it would be affirming the same thing when we say that God is just and that God is merciful. In fact, if these names were synonymous, it could be said that God punishes by His mercy, and forgives by His justice. This would be agnosticism.

2) Direct proof. Names that signify the same thing but have different meanings are not synonymous. But such are the divine names: supreme being, wisdom, goodness, justice, mercy. . . . Therefore divine names are not synonymous.

The major has its foundation in the principle that names signify the thing only through the medium of the intellectual conception. The minor, however, is proved in the body of the article as follows: "But our intellect, since it knows God from creatures, forms conceptions proportional to the perfections flowing from God to creatures, which perfections pre-exist in God unitedly and simply, whereas in creatures they are received, divided, and multiplied."

This means that being, wisdom, goodness, belong indeed properly to God, as was stated in the third article, but they are identified in the eminence of the Deity; and they are so identified in the Deity as not to be destructive of one another, but are there in a most pure state. Thus the

divine being is the self-subsisting Being, who is identical with His self-subsisting intellection; also the divine existence is identical with the self-subsisting will of God. But there is only a virtual distinction between God's subsistent intellection and His subsistent will. Thus what inferior beings have separately, superior beings have unitedly.

So, analogically, the rational soul is eminently and formally both sensitive and vegetative. This means that there are not three subordinated souls in man, but only one, which is at one and the same time the principle of the intellective, sensitive, and vegetative lives. These three names are not synonymous, although they denote the same soul, because they denote it under different aspects. Nor need we have recourse to the actual-formal distinction on the part of the object, because this distinction is either previous to or the result of the mind's consideration. In the latter case the distinction is virtual; in the former case, the distinction is already real, which is repugnant to God's absolute simplicity.

Reply to second objection. "The many aspects of these names are not empty and vain, for there corresponds to all of them one simple reality represented by them in a manifold and imperfect manner." This means that the eminence of the Deity, which is most simple, is virtually multiple, since it is variously imitable. Similarly, in the natural order the same cause is virtually multiple, inasmuch as it produces different effects in different subjects. Thus fire expands iron, melts wax, burns flesh. . . . It is also evident a priori, as was shown above, that multitude does not explain the reason for unity, and that it must proceed from the supremely One, who must hence be virtually multiple. In like manner, great artists, such as Leonardo da Vinci, in their portraits of persons seek to depict what is, so to speak, the predominant trait, which, though simple in itself, is virtually multiple. So also the fundamental principle of any doctrine is simple in itself and virtually multiple, such as the Aristotelian distinction between actuality and potentiality. In the reply to the difficulty proposed in the third objection, it is stated that God is supremely one, not only in reality but also in idea. In other words, there is not only one reality in God, but also only one most proper and most eminent concept of Him, namely, the concept of the Deity, which, according to revelation, is expressed in His only Word.

St. Thomas also says in his reply: "The perfect unity of God requires that what are manifold and divided in others should exist in Him simply and unitedly." This must be given careful consideration, since it is the

foundation for the distinction between the most imperfect unity (for instance, of primary matter) and the supreme unity. This inferior kind of unity is potential, and is found in primary matter, which is quasi-negatively the same in all bodies; for this inferior kind of unity is found even in inferior elementary bodies and in the primitive cell from which the embryo originates, before the multiplicity or diversity of the parts of the organism appear in it. Contrary to this, the higher kind of unity is not potential but actual, and is then virtually multiple; such is the unity of the rational soul on which the divers parts of our exceedingly complex organism depend. But transcending all is the divine unity, which is the maximum in actuality, and of such virtual multiplicity that it contains an infinite multitude of possible things. At the end of this reply to the third objection the reason is given why "our intellect apprehends God in a manifold manner," because it apprehends Him "as things represent Him, which is in a manifold manner."

First Corollary. There is only one truth for the divine intellect concerning God, the one and only Word being the adequate expression of this truth. This truth not only expresses equality but also identity between the divine intellect and the divine reality.

Second Corollary. As for the created intellect, especially the human, there are many truths about God, and there are many names applied to Him that are not synonymous, which means that they do not have the same meaning. The reason for this is that truth exists formally in the mind and not in the thing; for it denotes conformity between the judgment formed by the mind and the thing judged conformable to it. Hence for us there are certain revealed truths about God, others that are deduced from revealed truths, and also others that are naturally knowable.

Third Corollary. To say that these two truths, "God is intelligent" and "God is free," have the same meaning and that therefore, if the first is revealed, by this very fact the second is revealed, is to say that divine names are synonymous. Then it could be said that God punishes by His mercy, and forgives by His justice.

Fourth Corollary. The lower the degree of intellectuality of the created intellect, the more it apprehends God by a multiplicity of concepts.

FIFTH ARTICLE

WHETHER WHAT IS SAID OF GOD AND OF CREATURES IS UNIVOCALLY PREDICATED OF THEM

State of the question. We know that many names applied to God, who is most simple, are predicated of Him substantially and in the literal sense, yet not so as to be synonymous. The question is whether they are predicated univocally or analogically. Now it is certain from what has been said that they are not predicated equivocally, because they are attributed to God in the literal sense. St. Thomas adopts Aristotle's terminology, and this must be explained, as St. Thomas himself explains at the end of the argumentative part of this article.

A univocal term is one that is predicated of things simply in the same sense. Thus "man" is predicated univocally of various men, as "animal" is predicated of the horse, the wolf, and the lion. For by these names is meant either the species that is simply the same in individuals of the species, or else the genus which is likewise simply the same. Thus the name "animal" signifies a living body endowed with sensitive life, and this genus is diversified by differentiae that are extrinsic to it. Thus the univocal concept admits of complete logical separation from the different subjects to which it is attributed.

An equivocal term is one that is predicated of things in an entirely different sense. Thus "lion" is predicated equivocally of the quadruped and of one of the signs of the zodiac. Similarly "dog" is predicated of the animal and of a certain constellation.

An analogous term is one that is predicated of different things neither in simply the same sense nor in an entirely different sense, but according to a certain proportion or proportionality. An example of analogy of proportion or of attribution is the following: health is predicated primarily of the animal; and then proportionately, as referring to the healthy animal, the urine is said to be healthy (as a sign of health), the air, the food (as being the causes of health), medicine. . . . There is a proportion among these analogates, and extrinsic denomination suffices for this, as health is intrinsically in the healthy animal, and only extrinsically in the air, the urine. . . . Hence this analogy is also called analogy of attribution, because extrinsic attribution suffices for such analogy.

An example of analogy of proportionality is the following: what the head is to the organic body, such is the general to his army, and the king to his kingdom. But this analogy of proportionality can be either metaphorical or

proper. The king is metaphorically said to be the head of his kingdom. On the contrary, being is predicated in the proper sense of substance and of accident; for substance has existence in itself, and accident in another. Similarly, cognition is predicated properly and proportionately of sensation and intellection, because sensation is to the sensible what intellection is to the intelligible. Similarly love is predicated properly of sensitive love and of rational love. Nor does this demand a determinate proportion among these analogates; in fact, there is an immense or immeasurable difference among them, since intellection pertains to the higher order, so that the internal senses would always be susceptible to further perfection in their order, and yet they would never attain to the dignity of the lowest grade of intellection.

This division of analogy may be expressed by the following schema:

Analogy of proportion or of attribution purely extrinsic (as medicine and air with reference to the animal's health).

not purely extrinsic (thus quality and quantity are spoken of as being dependent on substance; yet intrinsically they are beings).

of proportionality metaphorical (thus the lion is said to be the king of animals; God is said be angry).

proper distance determined: created substance = proportionate accident

its existence its existence

distance undetermined in created beings (intellection and sensation are analogically and properly cognitions).

between God and the creature God = Creature

His existence its existence

With these principles posited about the terminology, the chief difficulty about our knowledge of God is in the statement made immediately before the argumentative part of this article, namely, "God is more distant from creatures than any creatures are from each other." If, therefore, no corporeal being seems to be a sufficiently expressive image for our knowledge of the created pure spirit, far more so no creature whatever can be this for our knowledge of God.

Yet the reply is that names are predicated of God and creatures, neither univocally, nor equivocally, but analogically or proportionately. There are three parts to this reply.

First part. Not univocally: because the names are not predicated as having absolutely the same meaning. The reason for this is that "the effect which is not an adequate result of the power of the efficient cause, receives the similitude of the agent not in its full degree, but in a measure that falls short." Thus wisdom in man is an accident that is distinct from his essence, his existence, his intellectual faculty, whereas in God wisdom is the same as the divine essence.

This terminology of St. Thomas must be carefully noted, for he says: "Hence it is evident that this term 'wise' is not applied in the same way to God and to man." St. Thomas says the same in several other passages. Cajetan most faithfully preserves St. Thomas' teaching, with which Scotus disagrees.

2) These names are not predicated equivocally. This has been already refuted in the second and third articles of this question, in which it is shown that several names are predicated of God substantially and in the literal sense. In this article equivocation is disproved by reason of its inappropriateness, since "nothing could be known about God" which is contrary to Sacred Scripture testifying that "The invisible things of Him are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made." Moreover, it is quite clear that the words "being," "wise," do not signify in God and creatures totally different ideas or perfections, as when "dog" is predicated of animal and the constellation. For "being" signifies, both in God and in creatures, that which is, although God is self-existent and creatures are not. Similarly "wisdom" signifies, both in God and in man, knowledge by the highest of causes, although not applied in the same way to each.

3) These names are predicated analogically. The reason for this, which has already been given and which is repeated in the body of this article and in the reply to the first objection, is that every agent reproduces itself, inasmuch as it determines according to its own determination, and therefore it produces something that is either specifically or generically or at least analogically like itself. Thus there is proportion or order, and proportionality between God and creatures. But St. Thomas speaks more of the analogy of proportion in this article. In other passages, however, he speaks explicitly of the analogy of proportionality.

1) There is proportion, or preferably order of the creature toward God as to its principle and cause, so that the being of creatures depends on the divine Being. This is stated in the article.

2) There is proportionality, since there is a likeness between the being of creatures and the divine Being, between created wisdom and uncreated wisdom.

God = creature God = the wise person

His being its being to all things that must be known to all things that must be known

This similitude is according to a formality that is neither absolutely the same nor totally different, but proportionally the same. The creature, like God, is intrinsically being, namely, that which exists, but it is not its existence. Man, like God, is intelligent, but he is not his intellection; created wisdom is knowledge of things by the highest of causes, but it is not the cause of things. In all these examples there is similarity of two proportions, namely, as being is predicated of the creature in relation to its existence, so being is predicated of God in relation to His existence; but God alone is His existence. And as the Lateran Council says: “Between God and the creature so great a similarity cannot be detected, as not to detect a greater dissimilarity between them.”

Therefore the analogous notion cannot be perfectly prescribed from its analogates, because it expresses what is proportionally alike in each (for example, being is that which exists); and that which is proportionally alike cannot be conceived without the very members of the proportionality being included confusedly in the concept. Contrary to this, the univocal notion, such as humanity, animality, can be perfectly prescinded or abstracted from its various subjects. The univocal notion can be represented by the symbol o; the analogical notion, however, by the symbol 8.

The analogy of attribution can express the relation of one thing to another (as of the air to the health of the animal), or of several things to one object (as of the salubrious air and the healthful remedy to the health of the animal). And since extrinsic denomination suffices for this analogy of attribution in the secondary analogates (for the air is not intrinsically healthy), this analogy does not as yet clearly make known in what the analogates are intrinsically alike, when they are truly so alike. Hence, although this analogy is perhaps prior in the way of investigation, yet if we

wish to know in what the analogates, which have something intrinsically in common, are intrinsically alike among themselves, we must have recourse to the more profound analogy of proportionality. Thus from the relation of sense perception to the sensible object, we know analogically the relation of the intellect to the intelligible object, although it is of a higher order; also from the relation of the sensitive appetite to sensible good, we know analogically the higher relation of the will to rational or spiritual good. Likewise from the relation of created being to its existence, we know analogically of the conformity between the uncreated Being and His existence, who is, however, the self-subsisting Being. Similarly from the relation of human wisdom to things known by it we know analogically what divine wisdom is, although this latter is the cause of things, whereas our wisdom is caused by things.

It is of this proportionality that St. Thomas frequently speaks, as in the following passage: “Sometimes the attention is directed to conformity between two terms not proportionate to each other, but which are proportional, as between 6 and 4, for 6 is to 3, as 4 is to 2. . . . Thus seeing is predicated (analogically) of both corporeal and intellectual vision because, as sense perception is in the eye, so intellectual perception is in the mind.” This is the similarity that prevails between the created being and the uncreated Being, and they are both intrinsically beings (that which exists, that whose act is existence), but it is a different mode of existence in each. God alone is His existence, whereas the creature has existence, and has it dependent upon another. St. Thomas speaks of this analogical likeness (and indeed intrinsic) in the reply to the first objection of this article: “The universal agent (God), while it is not univocal, nevertheless is not altogether equivocal, otherwise it could not produce its own likeness, but rather it is to be called an analogical agent.” In the reply to the second objection, he says: “The creature’s likeness to God is imperfect, for it does not represent one and the same generic thing.”

SOLUTION OF OBJECTIONS

1) Objection of the agnostics. There is no proportion between the finite and the infinite. But the aforesaid analogy would suppose this proportion.

Reply. That there is no quantitative or proper proportion, this I concede; that there is no proportion in the sense of proportionality, this I deny. Thus a

likeness that is dependent on the divine causality is sufficiently established.

Instance. The difference between God and the creature is greater than that between the creature and nothingness. Hence the Scripture says: “My substance is as nothing before Thee.” But there is no analogy between the created being and nothingness. Therefore there is no analogy between God and the creature.

Reply. I distinguish the major. That the difference is greater as regards the mode of being, this I concede; greater according to the idea of being, this I deny.

Instance. The divine perfections, such as intellection and volition, cannot be identified without being destructive of one another. But, according to the aforesaid doctrine, they are identified in God. Therefore they are destructive of one another.

Reply. I distinguish the major. That they cannot be immediately identified so that intellection is the same as volition, or vice versa, this I concede; that they cannot be identified in the formal and more eminent notion of the Deity without being destructive of one another, this I deny. Superior beings unite in themselves the various perfections of inferior beings. So eminent is the formal notion of the Deity that it is equivalent to intelligence, will, and other perfections, which are contained therein formally and eminently. The Deity truly furnishes the foundation for these different concepts.

And the aforesaid perfections cannot indeed be thus identified according to their created mode, but according to the uncreated mode. In fact, essence and existence, as well as operative power and operation, demand according to their proper exigencies that they be identified, since they are contained in the Deity without any potentiality. But intellection and volition are identified not under the aspect of being, but under the aspect of Deity. Therefore the intimate reconciliation of God’s attributes remains a mystery for us, since we have not the proper concept of the Deity.

Objections of Scotus and the Scotists. Although they admit analogy of being, yet they seek to retain univocity of being between God and creatures. For Scotus, the formal notion of being is not only proportionately but also absolutely one in God and creatures.

First objection. The concept of being prescinds completely from God and creatures, since anyone can be certain, for instance, that charity is an entity

and yet can doubt whether charity is either God or something created. Therefore the concept is absolutely one.

Reply. Concerning this doubt, it suffices to say that the analogous concept does not clearly express the analogates, though it actually implies them, and not merely virtually, as the genus includes the various species. For being, indeed, is that which exists either of itself or by reason of another, and the various modes of being are still being, whereas rationality is not animality.

Instance. If God and creatures were actually implied in the concept of being, then God would be predicated of anything whatever about which being is predicated. But the consequent is absurd. Therefore the antecedent is also.

Reply. I distinguish the antecedent: If the concept of being actually and conjointly implies God and creatures, then I concede the antecedent; if the concept implies them separately, then I deny the antecedent. For being is that which exists, either of itself or by reason of another; or it is predicated separately but not conjointly of God and creatures.

SIXTH ARTICLE

WHETHER NAMES PREDICATED OF GOD ARE PREDICATED PRIMARILY OF CREATURES

State of the question. It seems that they are predicated primarily of creatures, for our first knowledge is of creatures. “We name God from creatures.”

St. Thomas replies to this with the following distinctions:

1) All names that are applied metaphorically to God are applied primarily to creatures, for they mean only similitudes to creatures. Thus God is metaphorically said to be angry, and anger is primarily predicated of the movement of the sensitive irascible appetite.

2) Names that are not applied to God metaphorically but properly, are applied to Hint primarily as regards what the names signify, and primarily to creatures as regards the imposition of the names. The reason for the first part of this conclusion is that they are applied to God not as the cause only, but also substantially. The reason for the second part is that, in the way of investigation, our first knowledge is of creatures.

And so this explains why Christ said: “None is good but one, that is God,” and why St. Paul wrote: “I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom all paternity in heaven and earth is named.” This article, in thus explaining these revealed words, is of great importance in the refutation of agnosticism, just as the third article is, in which it is stated that these names are applied to God in the literal sense, and not metaphorically or symbolically.

SEVENTH ARTICLE

WHETHER NAMES WHICH IMPLY RELATION TO CREATURES ARE APPLIED TO GOD TEMPORALLY

The question is whether such names as Creator, Lord, Savior, can be applied to God eternally. It seems to be so, because the creative action is the same as God’s essence, so that it is eternal, although its effect takes place only in time. Moreover, if these names were applied to God temporally, it could be said that God became the Savior, and this would denote a certain change in God. At least it would posit a new relation in God toward creatures, and not only a logical but a real relation, because God is really the Creator and the Savior.

The reply is: The names which import relation to creatures are applied to God temporally, and not from eternity.

The reason for this is clearly given at the end of the argumentative part of this article. It is that these names are predicated not indeed because of any change in God, but because of some change in the creature; so that these names denote a real relation of dependence of the creature upon God, and only a logical relation of God toward the creature.

This is possible because “the two extremes are not of the same order.” Thus there is a real relation of the visual faculty to the thing visible; but there is not a real relation of the visible object considered according to its physical entity to the visual faculty, for this physical order is distinct from the cognitive order. Likewise there is a real relation of knowledge to the thing knowable; but the thing knowable considered in itself is not in real relation to knowledge, because the thing in itself is of another order, namely, of the physical. Hence the thing is said to be known only by extrinsic denomination, according to a logical relation. But God completely

transcends the order of created beings, and all created beings are ordered to Him, and not conversely.

Thus these names (Creator, Savior, Lord) are applied to God temporally, not because of a change in God, but because of a change in creatures.

Reply to first objection. " 'Creator' and 'Savior' are applied temporally in their relation to creatures, but not as they signify the divine essence," since the creative action is the same as the divine essence.

This completes the first part of this question, which is a discussion of the divine names in general. The solution of the following doubt is appended to this part by way of recapitulation.

THE DOCTRINE OF ST. THOMAS COMPARED WITH THE TEACHINGS OF SCOTUS AND SUAREZ

THE EMINENCE OF THE DEITY

What is meant by the statement that the divine perfections are contained "formally and eminently" in God?

It is generally admitted that absolutely simple perfections are contained "formally and eminently" in God. What this means, according to the teaching of St. Thomas, must now be the subject of inquiry.

All theologians are aware of the necessity of defending this doctrine so as to avoid the nominalism of modern agnostics, who to some extent revive the opinion of Maimonides (Rabbi Moses), who said that the divine attributes are contained virtually and eminently in God, as mixed perfections are, rather than formally and eminently.

But theologians are not all agreed as to the meaning of this last expression, and so its exact signification is now sought. First of all we must recall very briefly what is commonly admitted on this subject, as recorded by St. Thomas in the various articles of this thirteenth question, and in the same order as presented by him.

I. What does the adverb "formally" signify in the above expression?

1) These absolutely simple perfections are said to be formally in God inasmuch as they are in Him substantially and in the literal sense. Substantially, indeed, and not merely causally, as if "God is good" meant, as Maimonides contends, merely that "God is the cause of good things." In the

literal sense, too, and not merely metaphorically. Thus, in the literal sense, God is said to be just, and metaphorically He is said to be angry.

The reason for this twofold assertion is that absolutely simple perfections, such as goodness, wisdom, love, imply no imperfection in their formal signification, since they differ from the finite mode of these perfections in creatures. And it is clear that the First Cause must possess eminently all created perfections that imply no imperfection. There is not the least doubt about this part of the question.

2) The names that express the above-mentioned perfections are not synonymous. This is said in refutation of the nominalists who asserted that there is only a logical and verbal distinction between the divine attributes, such as between Tullius and Cicero. If this were so, then, just as it is purely optional for one to write Cicero instead of Tullius, so it would be purely optional for one to write divine justice instead of mercy, and thus it could be said that God punishes by His mercy, and forgives by His justice. This second assertion is likewise most certain, and is commonly admitted by Thomists, Scotists, and Suarezians.

3) The aforesaid perfections are predicated of God neither un-ivocally nor equivocally, but analogically. Hence in the expression "formally and eminently" the meaning is: formally and eminently, not univocally. For St. Thomas says: "Every effect which is not an adequate result of the power of the efficient cause, receives the similitude of the agent not in its full degree (which means, according to the context, not univocally), but in a measure that falls short, so that what is divided and multiplied in the effects resides in the agent simply, and in the same manner. . . . All perfections existing in creatures divided and multiplied, pre-exist in God unitedly and simply."

These texts are of great importance. St. Thomas defines analogy for us in these texts, though not in the way Suarez does. For those who accept the principles of Suarez, analogues are such as have a common name, but the meaning signified by the name is relatively speaking different and absolutely speaking the same. But the Thomists maintain that St. Thomas defined analogues as having a common name, but the meaning signified by the name is absolutely speaking different in the analogates, and relatively speaking the same in them, that is, they are alike according to some proportion, or proportionally the same.

This Thomistic formula expresses adequately the teaching of St. Thomas in the text just quoted, in which he speaks ex professo on this subject, and

says: “Every effect which is not an adequate result of the power of the efficient cause, receives the similitude of the agent not in its full degree (that is, not univocally, as is evident from the preceding paragraph in the context), but in a measure that falls short.” A little farther on in this same article, he says: “This term ‘wise’ is not applied in the same way to God and to man.” The term is predicated, indeed, in proportionally the same sense, inasmuch as wisdom in general is knowledge by the highest of causes; but God’s wisdom is the cause of things, whereas created wisdom is caused or measured by things.

The way St. Thomas expresses himself here is completely in agreement with what is commonly admitted in logic, which establishes a distinction betwen analogues and univocals. Thus it is said that the generic and univocal name “animality” expresses absolutely the same notion or “a living body endowed with sensitive life,” in both the higher and the lower forms of animal life, as in the lion and the worm. But the meaning signified by the name “knowledge” is absolutely speaking different and only proportionally the same in sensation and intellection, since sensation is related to the sensible as intellection is to the intelligible. Likewise the meaning signified by the name “love” is only proportionally the same in sensitive love and in spiritual love. Therefore, while the univocal perfection can be perfectly abstracted from the inferior grades of being, as in predicating “animal” of the lion and the worm, by not considering the differentiae that are extrinsic to the genus, the analogous perfection cannot be perfectly abstracted from its analogates, because the similarity of the proportions is not conceived without conceiving confusedly or actually and implicitly the members of the proportionality. Hence it is difficult to define knowledge in general, so that it can be applied in the strict sense to sensation, to created intellection, and to the divine intellection. In like manner it is difficult to define being, such that it applies equally to God to created substance, and to accident.

But from this, that the analogous concept is only proportionally the same, it follows, as St. Thomas notes, that there can be an infinite difference between two analogates. Now there is, indeed, a vast difference between sensitive knowledge and intellective knowledge; yet the term “knowledge” is applied to both analogically and properly, and not merely metaphorically.

Moreover, the terminology of St. Thomas, according to which the idea of an analogical perfection is not absolutely but only proportionally the same

in God and in creatures, is completely in agreement with that of the Fourth Lateran Council, which says: “Between the Creator and the creature not so great a similarity can be detected, as not to detect a greater dissimilarity.” Therefore, when we say that perfections implying no imperfection are in God formally, the word “formally” must be understood not univocally but analogically; in the literal sense, however, and not metaphorically; just as in the created order knowledge is predicated of sensation and intellection analogically, but properly Having explained what is meant by “formally,” we must now declare what is implied by “eminently.”

II. What is meant by the adverb “eminently” in the above-mentioned expression?

1) From what has been said, it follows that the most eminent mode in which the divine attributes are contained in God is in itself mysterious, and is expressed only negatively and relatively, as when God’s wisdom is spoken of as not finite, as supreme, highest.

Hence St. Thomas says: “This term ‘wise’ applied to man in some degree circumscribes and comprehends the thing signified (as distinct from the essence of man, his existence, power . . .); whereas this is not the case when it is applied to God; but it leaves the thing signified as incomprehended, and as exceeding the signification of the name.” In this we already have the explanation of the adverb “eminently” in the expression “formally and eminently.” But this requires further explanation.

2) From what has been said it follows likewise, against Scotus, that there is no actual-formal distinction between the aforesaid divine perfections arising from the nature of these. For this distinction, according to Scotus, is more than virtual, inasmuch as it is prior to the mind’s consideration. But a distinction that is prior to the mind’s consideration is already real, however slight it may be. A real distinction, however, between the divine attributes is incompatible with God’s absolute simplicity. Therefore the Council of Florence says: “In God all things are one and the same where there is no relation of opposition.”

Therefore a virtual and indeed minor distinction is the only kind that can be admitted between the divine attributes. It is a distinction by way of implicit and explicit connotations, inasmuch as one attribute actually implies the others.

Yet it must be maintained, against the nominalists, that the divine names are not synonymous, that there is not only a distinction of names, for

instance, between mercy and justice, as between Tullius and Cicero.

3) Then the difficult question is posited of the identification of the divine perfections in God, in such a manner that they are not destructive of one another, but remain in God formally, or substantially and properly, and are not synonymous. The question here concerns the difficulty of combining the two adverbs “formally” and “eminently.” At first sight it seems that, as regards their signification, the latter is destructive of the former. It is indeed not difficult to see how the seven colors of the rainbow are contained in white light; but it contains them only virtually and not formally, for white light is formally neither blue nor red, whereas the Deity is formally good, intelligent, merciful. . . . It is particularly this difficulty that Scotus proposed, and he defended his actual-formal distinction between the divine attributes arising from the nature of these, because he deemed their formal identification an impossibility. As Scotus sees it, for the divine attributes to exist formally in God, they must be in Him as distinct formalities and more than virtually.

Is this identity an impossibility? Cajetan replies that there are two ways of understanding this: “(1) If we suppose that the proper formal concepts of wisdom and justice constitute one formal concept, such that this one concept is not another concept, but is only the proper concept of wisdom and justice. And this sort of identity is absolutely impossible, involving two contradictories. . . . (2) If we suppose that the concepts of wisdom and justice are eminently included and formally identified in one formal concept of a higher order. And this identity is not only possible, but is actually so with all perfections in God. For it must not be thought that the formal concept that belongs properly to wisdom is found in God; but, as stated in the article, the concept of wisdom in God is not the proper concept of wisdom, but is the proper concept of a higher order, namely, of the Deity, and it is a concept that is formally and eminently common to justice, goodness, power, and other attributes. For, just as in rational creatures the reality which is wisdom and the reality which is justice are elevated so as to constitute one reality of the higher order, which is the Deity, thereby constituting one reality in God, so the formal concepts of wisdom and justice are elevated so as to constitute one formal concept of a higher order, the proper concept, namely, of the Deity. They constitute numerically one formal concept, containing eminently what is implied in each concept: not only virtually, as the concept of light includes the concept of heat, but

formally, as the concept of light includes the concept of calorific energy. Whence St. Thomas, with that most keen penetration of his divine-like intellect, inferred from this that wisdom is not predicated of God and creatures in the same sense." This means, as Cajetan says farther on: "There is not absolute unity of concept," but a proportionate unity, as Cajetan had said in another treatise.

This, then, is the meaning given by the Thomists to the expression "formally and eminently." By "formally" is meant that the perfections are in God substantially and not causally, literally and not metaphorically; nevertheless they are predicated analogically. The term "eninently" excludes an actual-formal distinction between God's attributes, and expresses their identification or rather identity in the most eminent formal concept of the Deity, whose proper mode is in itself unknown to us, and is known only negatively and relatively in this life.

This is practically what St. Thomas says, as in the following passages: "These perfections pre-exist in God unitedly and simply, whereas in creatures they are received, divided, and multiplied. . . . So also to the various and multiplied conceptions of our intellect there corresponds one altogether simple principle, according to these conceptions, imperfectly understood." Also: "The many aspects of these names are not empty and vain, for there corresponds to all of them one simple reality represented by them in a manifold and imperfect manner." Hence the divine attributes are so identified in the most eminently formal concept of the Deity as not to be destructive of one another. They are contained formally in the Deity, yet not as distinct formalities. In fact, the divine perfections are so identified without being destructive of one another in the eminence of the Deity, that they exist there in their most pure state without any admixture of imperfection. Thus God alone is essential Being, essential Goodness, and similarly for the other attributes.

4) It is easier to explain this identification for those perfections which are of the same order, and between which there is only an extrinsic virtual distinction, namely, one that has its foundation only in creatures. Thus intelligence, intellection, the divine truth always understood, are most evidently identified, inasmuch as God is the self-subsisting Being, who is identical with the maximum Truth that is of itself and always actually understood.

It is more difficult to explain the identification of those perfections that do not belong to the same order, such as intellection and love, mercy and justice. Nevertheless, from what has been said it is clear that they are identified in the eminence of the Deity, which is eminently and formally intellection and love, mercy and justice.

5) This same explanation holds good for saying that there is no actual-formal but only a virtual distinction between the divine nature and the subsistent relations which constitute the divine Persons, as, for instance, between the divine nature that is communicable ad intra and incommunicable paternity.

Hence Cajetan says: “In itself, not according to our manner of speaking, in God there is but one formal concept, which is not purely absolute or purely relative or purely communicable or purely incommunicable. But it is a concept which in a most eminent and formal way contains whatever there is of absolute perfection, and whatever is demanded by the Trinity in a relative sense. . . . For the divine reality is prior to being and all its differences. It is above being and above the one. . . .” For the same reason, therefore, the divine reality transcends the absolute and the relative, which are contained in it formally and eminently.

This doctrine of the eminence of the Deity elucidates especially three questions which are of the greatest importance in dogmatic theology.

1) What stands out clearly from this doctrine is that reason alone can demonstrate the existence in God of a truth and life that are of the supernatural order, inasmuch as the Deity or God’s intimate life transcends the proper object and powers of any created or creatable being. As St. Thomas says: “It is most evident that some divine intelligibles absolutely transcend the native power of human reason.”

2) It is likewise evident from this doctrine of the eminence of the Deity that sanctifying grace must be called a participation of the divine nature, since it is a physical, formal, and analogical participation of the Deity as this is in itself; and so this participation radically ordains us to see the Deity as it really is. Thus the question of whether grace is a participation of the divine infinity is clearly seen to be of less importance. Certainly there is no subjective participation of the divine infinity, for by this it would be limited. But grace ordains us to see the Deity, of which it is a true participation. Now, stones are like God according to being, plants according to life,

human and angelic intellects according to intellection, but by grace alone we are like God according to the Deity.

3) Finally, in this doctrine of the eminence of the Deity we have a sublime explanation of why we cannot perceive in this life how God's universal will to save is intimately reconciled with the mystery of predestination. This would be to perceive how infinite mercy, justice, and supreme liberty are intimately reconciled in the eminence of the Deity, and why God mercifully elected this particular person rather than a certain other.

This theological contemplation of the eminence of the Deity, provided it is united with an ever-increasing charity, normally disposes one for infused contemplation, which, under the special inspiration of the Holy Ghost, proceeds from vivid faith illumined by the gifts of understanding and wisdom, and which, in a mystic darkness and in a more exalted way, attains to the Deity or to "that" light inaccessible whom, as St. Paul says, "no man hath seen nor can see," except in Heaven.

EIGHTH ARTICLE

WHETHER THE NAME "GOD" IS A NAME OF THE NATURE

State of the question. Certain divine names in particular are now considered. The question is whether "God" (Θεός) is a name of the nature or of operation.

Reply. God is a name of operation as regards the imposition of this name, by the way of investigation; but it is a name of the nature as regards what is meant by this name.

The reason is that we have not immediate knowledge of the essences of things, and especially of God's essence; but we know them only by their operations. Thus the name "stone" designates the nature of the stone, but many hold that this name is derived from its act, since it hurts the foot. But the divine operation from which this name "God" is imposed, seems to be that by which God knows and ordains all things, at least according to the etymology given by Dionysius. Hence the name "Deity" expresses properly the divine nature.

At the end of the reply to the second objection there is again a reference to the three ways by which God is known, namely, by causality, by

eminence, and by negation.

NINTH ARTICLE

WHETHER THE NAME ‘‘GOD’ IS COMMUNICABLE

Reply. This name “God” is incommunicable in reality (in the literal sense), but communicable in opinion and metaphorically.

The reason for the first part is that the divine nature or the Deity is in itself incommunicable to creatures. There can be only one God. Nevertheless from revelation we know that God the Father communicates the Deity to the Son and the Holy Ghost. Hence nothing outside God can properly be called God.

The reason for the second part is that men, adopting the erroneous opinion of polytheists, spoke of several gods. Moreover this name is predicated metaphorically of the just because of the grace or participation of the divine nature which they have. Thus the Scripture says: “I have said, you are gods.”

Hence while being, life, and intellection are naturally participable in stones, plants, and rational creatures, the Deity is not naturally but only supernaturally participable by grace, which is a formal participation of the Deity, or of the radical principle of the operations by which God sees and loves Himself.

TENTH ARTICLE

WHETHER THIS NAME “GOD” IS PREDICATED UNIVOCALLY OF THE TRUE GOD, OF IDOLS, AND OF THE JUST

Reply. This name is predicated of God alone, in fact uniquely so. Of idols it is predicated analogically in accordance with the false opinion of the polytheists; of the just it is predicated analogically by a certain participated likeness.

ELEVENTH ARTICLE

WHETHER THIS NAME “HE WHO IS” IS THE MOST PROPER NAME OF GOD

Reply. It is in the affirmative, and for three reasons: (1) because God alone is His existence, so that His existence is His essence; (2) because this name, “He who is,” determines no mode of being, and therefore it denominates the infinite ocean of substance, and thus it comprehends all other names confusedly. “Therefore the less determinate the names are, and the more universal and absolute they are, the more properly they are applied to God”; (3) because this name, “He who is,” signifies present existence, and so it expresses God’s eternity, which transcends past and future.

Reply to first objection. Nevertheless, “as regards the object intended by the name, this name ‘God’ is more proper, as it is imposed to signify the divine nature,” namely, the Deity which eminently and formally contains being, life, and intellection. St. Thomas distinguishes between the Tetragrammaton and the name “He who is”; but nowadays all identify these two names.

Reply to second objection. Supreme Good is God’s principle name, as regards causality, inasmuch as He is the end of all things, and the end is the first of causes. But “What is” is His principal name absoiutely.

TWELFTH ARTICLE

WHETHER AFFIRMATIVE PROPOSITIONS CAN BE FORMED ABOUT GOD

State of the question. This article may be looked upon as a recapitulation of the preceding articles, its purpose being the laying down of rules for the forming of affirmative judgments. That difficulties arise is owing to the fact that Dionysius says, in what is called his negative theology: “Negations about God are true, but affirmations are vague.” For God is ineffable, and we have no proper concept of the Deity, which for us pilgrims is like “a great darkness” or “an obscure night.” Moreover, God is a simple form, in no way composite, whereas there is composition in affirmative judgments.

Reply. Nevertheless, true affirmative propositions can be formed about God. The first proof of this is the fact that there are several propositions about God that are of faith.

Another proof of this may be expressed by the following syllogism: In every true affirmative proposition the predicate and the subject signify in some way the same thing in reality, and different things in idea. Thus in the proposition “Peter is white” (“Peter” and “white” are the same in subject).

But God, considered in Himself, is altogether one and simple; yet our intellect knows Him according to different conceptions. Therefore two affirmative propositions can be formed about God.

Reply to first objection. “Dionysius says that the affirmations about God are vague inasmuch as no name can be applied to God according to its mode of signification.” Thus abstract names signify the form only, and concrete names signify the composite subject in which there is such a form, whereas God is pure subsisting form.

Reply to third objection. “Any intellect which understands that the thing is otherwise than it is, is false. But this does not hold in the present case; because our intellect, when forming a proposition about God, does not affirm that He is composite.” But there is imperfection in its manner of understanding.

And so this terminates the question about divine names, in which St. Thomas most correctly determines the just and transcendent mean between the two opposite errors, namely, of agnosticism and a certain anthropomorphism. Agnosticism is avoided, as it is affirmed that absolutely simple perfections are substantially and properly in God, and are primarily in Him rather than in creatures. Anthropomorphism is avoided, as it is affirmed that these perfections are not predicated univocally of God and creatures, but analogically, according to a likeness of proportions. Just as there is an existence that belongs properly to the creature, so there is an existence that belongs properly to God, and He is His own existence. Just as there is a wisdom that belongs properly to man, so there is a wisdom that belongs properly to God, and He alone is His own intellection, as will be more clearly explained farther on. This method of analogy is applied to all questions about the one and triune God, which is most accurately determined in this thirteenth question. Analogy is necessary both for the natural knowledge of God and for the supernatural knowledge of revealed mysteries. Thus with the former there is evidence resulting from demonstration, with the latter there is obscurity of faith. For God, in the manifestation of the mysteries of His intimate life, made use of such analogical notions as those of nature, person, paternity, filiation, and these are in us as naturally acquired. Hence, as regards God the author of nature, the legitimate analogies can be known by reason alone; but it is not so if it is a question of God the author of grace, in His intimate Life.

CHAPTER XIV

QUESTION 14

GOD'S KNOWLEDGE

"HAVING considered what belongs to the divine substance," says St. Thomas, "we have now to treat of God's operation." Those commentators who maintain that self-subsisting Being is what formally constitutes the divine nature, according to our imperfect mode of conceiving it, say that the divine intellection, according to St. Thomas, belongs to His operations. But those who hold that subsistent intellection is what formally constitutes the divine nature, declare that St. Thomas does not say that he has so far treated of the divine nature, but of those things that belong to God's substance; nor does he say now that he is considering only the divine operations, but those things that belong to God's operations. But nature belongs to them as their principle. Nevertheless this passage of St. Thomas favors rather the first opinion, and it seems that St. Thomas did not wait for this fourteenth question in order to treat of what formally constitutes the divine nature.

First are considered merely immanent actions, such as intellection and volition, and then virtually transitive operations, in which God's power is discussed.

In the fourteenth question, which concerns God's knowledge, four principal points are considered: (1) Is there intellection in God, and what is its nature? (2) the primary object of God's knowledge (a. 2, 3, 4); (3) the secondary object (a. 5-13); (4) the way the divine knowledge operates; whether it is enunciative, variable, speculative, practical (a. 14,16).

FIRST ARTICLE

WHETHER THERE IS KNOWLEDGE IN GOD

State of the question. In the title, “knowledge” is taken in its broad sense as referring to certain and evident intellectual cognition. The article is not concerned with knowledge strictly so called, as distinct from wisdom; and so it is cognition acquired by proximate causes, and not by the highest of causes. In fact, in the reply to the second objection, it is stated that the divine intellection is eminently, without distinction of habits, intelligence, science, wisdom, prudence, and art.

The difficulties enunciated at the beginning of the article apply, however, to knowledge in the strict sense, inasmuch as it is a habit distinct from act, being concerned with conclusions and with universal abstract cognition. All these pertain to the created and imperfect mode of our knowledge.

Reply. God occupies the highest place in knowledge, because He is in the highest degree of immateriality.

1) This conclusion is a revealed truth, for there are many texts in Holy Scripture in which it is clearly stated that God is intelligent. It is a dogma of faith; in fact, the Vatican Council states that “God is infinite in intelligence.”

It is also demonstrated by the following syllogism: The immateriality of a thing is the reason why it is cognitive, and the mode of knowledge is according to the mode of immateriality. Therefore God occupies the highest place in knowledge, for He is in the highest degree of immateriality.

The minor has already been proved. God is not a body, not composed of matter and form, but is pure subsisting form; in fact, He is the self-subsisting Being, and besides is infinite. He transcends all limitations of essence, and a fortiori of matter.

The first part of the major is as follows: The difference between the intelligent being and the non-intelligent being is that the intelligent being is naturally adapted to have also the form of some other, which is therefore because of the amplitude of its nature; but the contraction of the form comes from the matter, which limits the amplitude of the form; therefore the immateriality of a thing is the reason why it is cognitive.

This argument gives the proof for the second part of the major. The mode of knowledge is according to the mode of immateriality; thus the intellect is more cognitive than sense. Therefore, since God is in the highest degree of immateriality, He occupies the highest place in knowledge.

The whole of this doctrine has its foundation in the principle that the intelligent being differs from the non-intelligent being, inasmuch as the

former can in a sense become something other than itself. Thus Aristotle says: “The soul is in a sense all things.”

Whereas the plant, which at first was cold, under the influence of the sun’s rays undergoes a change, becoming warm, the intelligent being, on seeing the sun, does not undergo a change, becoming warm, but in a sense becomes something else. This demands for such a being the possibility of its having in itself not only its own form but also the form of the other thing, namely, the representative species of the thing to be known.

But if the contraction or limitation of the form comes from the matter which receives the form, and which individualizes it, the immateriality of a thing is the reason why it is cognitive. Hence plants, because of their materiality, are not cognitive, whereas God is in the highest degree cognitive, because He is in the highest degree immaterial.

Both the materialists and the subjectivist idealists fail to perceive this profound reason why anything is cognitive. Materialism denies this immateriality of the principle of cognition, maintaining that it is only an epiphenomenon of not much importance, which transcends the physico-chemical phenomena.

On the other hand, subjectivist idealism does not admit that the knower truly knows something other than himself, but that he knows only his subjective modifications.

In these two extreme systems, which are fundamentally in opposition to each other, there is no conception of what is meant by this intentional change necessary for our knowledge, and transcending the physical or organic change already existing in the non-cognitive plant.

Whereas in physical or material reception there is appropriation of the form, which thus becomes the proper form of the subject, as when a plant is first cold and then becomes warm; on the other hand, in immaterial or intentional reception there is no appro-

priation of the form received, this remaining the form of the other thing. Hence Averroes was right in saying: “The knower and the known are more one than matter and form”; for matter does not become the form which it receives, whereas the knower, in a sense, namely, intentionally or representatively, becomes the object known, or becomes something other than itself.

St. Thomas says: “Change is of two kinds, one natural, the other spiritual. Natural change takes place by the form of the changer being received,

according to its natural existence, into the thing changed, as heat is received into the thing heated. Whereas spiritual change takes place by the form of the changer being received, according to a spiritual mode of existence, into the thing changed. . . . Now, for the operation of the senses, a spiritual change is required, whereby an intention of the sensible form is effected in the sensile organ." Previous to this, he had written: "But feeling is evidently accompanied with some change in the body. . . , and thus every operation of the sensitive soul is an operation of the composite. . . . Understanding alone is performed without a corporeal organ." Now indeed, the sensitive faculty is in some way elevated above material conditions, although it depends intrinsically on the organism. The intelligent being, of course, first becomes intentionally other than itself in first actuality by the impressed species of the thing known, and then in second actuality it becomes other than itself while actually knowing the extramental reality. It does not go out of itself in a literal sense, as a man goes out of his house, for knowing is an immanent act; but it becomes intentionally other than itself, inasmuch as the intentional species and the cognition are essentially related to the object of cognition.

From all that has been said, it is clearly enough established that knowledge has its foundation in the immateriality of the knower, and that the "mode of knowledge is according to the mode of immateriality." Since, therefore, God is in the highest degree of immateriality (inasmuch as He is not only a pure spirit but pure Act, the self-subsisting Being), it follows that He is in the highest degree knowing.

Cognition and intellection in their formal signification imply no imperfection, and thus they can be predicated of God analogically and properly, and not merely metaphorically.

Reply to first objection. Knowledge is said to be a habit that is not so perfect as act with regard to the created mode of its being, but not with regard to what is meant by the name. Moreover, there is not even a virtual distinction in God between wisdom and knowledge.

Reply to second objection. Likewise in man, knowledge, as regards its created mode, implies the imperfect process of formally discursive reasoning, and the transition from the unknown to the known. But there can be a most perfect knowledge, with only virtually discursive reasoning, and thus it differs neither from intelligence nor from wisdom.

Reply to third objection. Universal knowledge does not exist in God as abstracted from singular things; but by this knowledge God also knows at once singular things, a point that will be made clear in a subsequent article.

SOLUTION OF OBJECTIONS

First objection. The following objection is raised against the fundamental proof in the argumentative part of this article: There are many immaterial things that are not cognitive, such as the will and its habits. Therefore the reason given by St. Thomas is of no value.

Reply. I distinguish the antecedent. That there are many immaterial supposita that are not cognitive, this I deny; that there are many operative principles, such as the will and its habits, I subdistinguish; that they are not cognitive as elective acts, this I concede; that they are not of the cognitive order, acting in concert with the intellect, this I deny.

Second objection. The air and the mirror receive the intentional species without undergoing any change, and yet they are not cognitive. Therefore the reason given is of no value.

Reply. That these species are received in the air and the mirror, as in their subject of inhesion, in which these species materially inhere, this I concede; that the air and the mirror receive them formally as intentional or representative species, this I deny. As a matter of fact, what the air and the mirror receive is rather the power by which the impressed species is produced in the senses, or in the visual faculty, and in this alone, as in its proper habitat, it is formed.

Third objection. All angels are equally immaterial, and yet they are not equally cognitive. Therefore the mode of cognition is not according to the mode of immateriality.

Reply. That all angels are equally immaterial in the negative sense, which means that they are without matter, this I concede; that they are so in actual fact, this I deny, for they do not equally participate in the intellectual life.

Fourth objection. It is not repugnant for God to create an immaterial substance that is not cognitive. Therefore cognition is not dependent on immateriality.

Reply. That there is no repugnance in the creation of an immaterial substance that is not proximately cognitive, this I concede; that is not radically cognitive, this either I deny, or I say, please prove it. An

immaterial substance that in some extraordinary case would be deprived of its intellective faculty, would still be radically cognitive. Thus it remains true that the degree of cognition of a being corresponds to the degree of its immateriality, or of its elevation above material conditions. Hence God, who is in the highest degree immaterial, is in the highest degree cognitive.

SECOND ARTICLE

WHETHER GOD UNDERSTANDS HIMSELF

State of the question. The next three articles are concerned with the primary object of the divine intellection. This second article begins by presenting the difficulty that arises from the imperfect way in which we know our own soul; for it is a reflexive knowledge which presupposes a direct knowledge. Thus there is a multiplicity of acts which cannot be attributed to God. Moreover, it is by means of a certain assimilation of the knower with the thing known that we have intellection, and this is accompanied by a certain duality of subject and object, which cannot be in God, who is most simple. Therefore Plotinus said that the supreme hypostasis, which is the One-Good, transcends the second hypostasis, which is Intelligence, in which there is duality of subject and object. This objection was revived by many modern pantheists, who denied the possibility of a personal or intelligent and free God, for intellection presupposes duality of subject and object, and this cannot be attributed to the most simple Absolute.

Reply. God understands Himself through Himself.

1) It is of faith that God understands Himself, and there are very many texts in Sacred Scripture confirming this, such as the following: “The things also that are of God no man knoweth, but the Spirit of God.”

2) It is proved from reason that God knows Himself; and also from reason is proved the manner in which He knows Himself, which is immediately through Himself, without any duality or real distinction between the divine intellect and His essence understood by Him. This is demonstrated as follows:

The intelligible is not understood unless it is in the intellect understanding (at least by some representation), and there is no distinction between these two, except that each is in potentiality, namely, except that

the intellect understanding does not of itself actually understand, and that the intelligible is not of itself the intellect in act.

But God, who is actually understanding and whose essence is intelligible, is without any potentiality. Therefore God understands Himself through Himself, so that "His intellect and (the primary object) understood are altogether the same," that is, without the duality which Plotinus speaks of as being necessary for intellection.

The major is proved because intellection is an immanent act, its object being actually understood only in the intellect. Thus in the case of our intellect, when we understand the nature of a stone, this nature, which is in the stone itself, is only potentially intelligible, and is actually understood only in the intellect. And there is no distinction between our intellect and this intelligible object, except that each is in potentiality; for, prior to our act of understanding, it was possible for the intellect to understand, and for the stone to be understood. But when the object is actually understood, the intellect and the object understood are more one than matter and form, because, as it was stated, matter does not become form; whereas the intellect in the act of understanding in a certain sense becomes the object understood.

The minor is evident, because God is neither a body nor a composite of matter and form, and because He is intellect in act and pure Act without any potentiality.

Hence His intellect is of itself and eternally always in act, and His essence is not potentially intelligible (as the essence of a stone), nor is it only actually intelligible (as the angel's essence), but it is, of itself and eternally, actually understood. Hence there is no distinction between it and His intellection. This means that so long as all potentiality or imperfection is eliminated from the cognitive intellect and the intelligible object, they are identical. Aristotle had already said this.

On the contrary, in the case of the angel understanding himself, there is not absolute identity between his essence that is understood and his intellective faculty; for the angel's essence is only actually intelligible and is not actually understood, and his intellectual faculty is not his intellection. The completion of this doctrine is in the fourth article of this question, in which the identity between God's intellect and His essence is considered not only objectively but subjectively, as the subject of intellection.

Reply to second objection. Intellection is not, properly speaking, movement, for it is an act of the agent, whereas movement, properly speaking, is in the thing moveable by the agent. “Likewise, that the intellect is perfected by the intelligible object, or is assimilated to it, belongs to an intellect which is sometimes in potentiality. . . . But the divine intellect, which is in no way in potentiality, is not perfected by the intelligible object, nor is it assimilated thereto, but it is its own perfection and its own intelligible object.” This is the best answer to the objection of the Neoplatonists and of others who said that any intellection whatever implies a duality of subject and object, and hence this cannot be formally or properly in God, who is most simple.

Reply to third objection. “God is pure act in the order of existence, as also in the order of intelligible objects; therefore He understands Himself through Himself, which means without any impressed or expressed accidental superadded species. On the other hand, the angel is in need of an accidental mental word to understand himself, because his essence is not actually understood, but only actually intelligible.”

THIRD ARTICLE

WHETHER GOD COMPREHENDS HIMSELF

State of the question. Does God know Himself as much as He is knowable, or, in other words, is it an adequate and most complete knowledge which He has of Himself, knowing whatever is in Himself and in His productive power, which means knowing all possible things?

Reply. The conclusion in the affirmative is revealed (1) by the following statement from Holy Scripture, and in similar passages: “The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.” (2) It is proved from reason as follows: A thing is, strictly speaking, comprehended when it is known to the extent that it is knowable, or when it is known adequately and completely. But the cognitive power of God is as great as His actuality is knowable; for His intellect is in no way in potentiality, being pure Act in the intellective order, just as He is pure Act in the entitative order. And both are identical, as was stated in the preceding article.

Hence, whereas man remains a sort of mystery unto himself, inasmuch as “the heart (of man) is unsearchable” (this being the reason why St. Paul

says: “Neither do I judge my own self, but He that judgeth me is the Lord”), God knows Himself most perfectly, being no mystery unto Himself; and He likewise knows His power, which means that He knows all possible things, the multitude of which is infinite.

It must be noted that this conclusion is most evident for us, although there are several other truths about the divine intellect that remain for us most obscure, such as God’s infallible knowledge and permission of sin, the sinner being charged with the offense. But in this treatise on the one God there is frequently to be found a wondrous “light-transcending darkness,” in which what is for us most clear is accompanied by an obscurity, which is not because of any absurdity or incoherence of thought in the revealed truth, but because the light is far too bright for our intellectual vision. It is most evident that God most perfectly knows or comprehends Himself, and it is the commonly accepted opinon among Christians that to deny this would be truly foolishness.

FOURTH ARTICLE

WHETHER THE ACT OF GOD’S INTELLECT IS HIS SUBSTANCE

State of the question. We have seen that God’s intellect is absolutely identical with His essence as the object known. Now the question is whether the act of God’s intellect is identical with His substance as the subject of this intellection.

The difficulties proposed at the beginning of this article are of less importance.

Reply. The conclusion is in the affirmative. It is proved in two ways, indirectly and directly.

1) Indirectly. The act of understanding is the perfection and act of the one understanding. But if God’s act of undertanding were other than His substance, then His substance would be related to His act of understanding as potentiality is to act, which is impossible, since God is pure Act. Therefore God’s act of understanding is identical with His substance. This indirect argument is apodictic.

2) Directly and ostensively. To understand follows on the intelligible species and perfects it, just as existence follows on the form. But God’s essence is His existence and His intelligible species. Therefore God’s act of

understanding is His essence or substance and His existence. In other words, as stated in the reply to the second objection, God is His subsistent act of understanding, like an intellectual and eternally existing flash of itself.

The major of this proof has its foundation in the proportionality prevailing between the existential and intellectual orders. But God in virtue of His essence is not capable of further perfection, and thus He must be pure Act, unreceived and unreceptive both in the existential and intelligential orders. This means that, just as God's essence does not differ from His existence, so His intelligible essence does not differ from His act of understanding.

At the end of the argumentative part of this article, St. Thomas, by combining this conclusion with that of the second article, sums up and says: "Thus it follows from all the foregoing that in God the intellect understanding (subject) and the object understood and the intelligible species and His act of understanding are entirely one and the same. Hence, when God is said to be understanding, no kind of multiplicity is attached to His substance." Thus it was an unwarrantable assertion on the part of Plotinus, for him to say that every intellection supposed a duality of subject and object which cannot be predicated of the first hypostasis, who is most simple. Hence the famous contrary statement of Aristotle, that "God is absolute self-thought," or God is self-subsisting intellection.

Reply to third objection. "The act of divine understanding which subsists in itself and belongs to its very self and is not another's is absolute self-thought." The reference is to the primary object of the divine intellect; but the secondary object is not excluded.

First doubt. Is there a virtual distinction between God's essence, His intelligence, and His intellection?

Many Thomists with good reason reply that there is no intrinsically virtual distinction between these three, because, if this distinction were admitted, then God's essence and His intelligence would be conceived as in potentiality to His intellection, the divine reality constituting the foundation for this distinction. But this cannot be conceived of God, who is most pure Act; for nothing in Him can be conceived as potential or as capable of further determination or perfection. Therefore in God there is no intrinsically virtual distinction between these three.

If, therefore, there is a virtual distinction between these three, it is merely extrinsic, which means that the foundation for this distinction is not in the divine reality but in creatures, inasmuch as subsistent intellection is equivalent, in an eminent way, to the radical and proximate principles of intellection and to intellection itself.

Hence there is an intrinsically virtual distinction in God only between those perfections which, as found in created things, are distinct according to their objective concepts, and which belong to different orders, such as intellect and will. But intellect and actual intellection belong to the same order, and are concerned with the same formal object.

However, there is a virtual distinction in God between His knowledge or wisdom and His providence. In fact, it can be said that the formal object of the divine intelligence is the divine essence, as absolutely knowable in itself. The formal object of the divine knowledge is the divine essence as the cause of this; of prudence or providence it is the divine essence as the reason of things to be done; of divine art it is the divine essence as the reason of things to be made.

Second doubt. What is the formal and primary object of the divine knowledge?

Reply. The primary object is God or the Godhead, as containing actually and implicitly God’s essence, His attributes and relations. The reason is that the formal and primary object of divine knowledge is that which primarily and of itself is attained by it. Now this object is neither created being, nor being as such, abstracting from created being and uncreated being, but is God Himself. But God as He really is, not as conceived by us, contains actually and implicitly what we call the divine essence, the attributes deduced from it, and the relations. There is only a minor virtual distinction between these, as already stated. “In God all things are one and the same, where there is not a relation of opposition,” says the Council of Florence.

Durandus rashly maintained that the formal and primary object of the divine knowledge is being as such, as abstracted from created being and uncreated being, because, so he said, it is more universal than uncreated being. Rosmini said about the same. This opinion must be absolutely rejected, for nothing is or can be conceived prior to God. it is only according to our manner of speaking that abstract being is more universal than God, since we conceive being as having universality of content according to ontological reality.

God knows being as such, not abstractively and imperfectly (for in this way He would know only actually and implicitly the various modes of being), but He knows it, so to speak, in the concrete, inasmuch as it exists in the divine being, namely, in the primary object of His knowledge, and inasmuch as it is in creatures, as in the secondary object of His knowledge. We must now treat of this secondary object of divine knowledge.

FIFTH ARTICLE

WHETHER GOD KNOWS THINGS OTHER THAN HIMSELF

State of the question. The secondary object of the divine knowledge is discussed in this and the following eight articles. This object is considered first in general from the fifth to the eighth articles inclusive. The inquiry is about the existence, nature, and medium of this divine knowledge of creatures. Is it a proper knowledge of things as they are distinct from one another? Is it discursive? Is it the cause of things, and how is it the cause of things?

These articles, in which the question is discussed in a general way, are of great importance for the understanding of the following articles which treat in a special manner of such things as God's knowledge of contingent futures and of evil. The last articles of this question, as also what is said in explanation of God's will, especially whether God's will is the cause of things, are closely connected with the eighth article, namely, whether God's knowledge is the cause of things.

In this fifth article there are two points of inquiry: whether God knows things other than Himself, and how, or through what medium He knows them.

That God has such knowledge is a dogma of our faith, or rather a dogma of Providence which is expressed in almost every page of Holy Scripture. But through what medium God knows things other than Himself, is a disputed question among theologians.

At the beginning of this article St. Thomas proposes three difficulties: (1) How can God know things that are outside Himself? Augustine says that "God does not behold anything out of Himself." (2) If God were to know other things than Himself, He would be perfected by something other than Himself, as the intellect is by its object. (3) The intellectual act is so much

the nobler, as the object understood is nobler. Therefore only the divine essence can be the object of the divine intellect.

It must be noted that Aristotle gave these difficulties at least some consideration, and was unable to solve them. In discussing the intellection of the first intellect, he says: “Clearly, then, it thinks that which is most divine and estimable, and does not change; for the change would be for the worse. . . . Clearly, then, there must be something else which is more excellent than Mind, namely, the object of thought; for both thought and the act of thinking will belong even to the thinker of the worst thoughts; wherefore this must be avoided. For it is indeed better not to see some things, than to see them. This is not so if thinking is the supreme good. Therefore Mind thinks itself, if it is that which is best. And its thinking is a thinking of thinking.”

Several historians, such as Zeller and Ravaisson, said that in this text Aristotle denies knowledge of the world to God, inasmuch as it is more becoming for one not to see some things, as being of an inferior order. Contrary to this, St. Thomas observes that Aristotle appeals to this general axiom merely to show that the nobility of intellection depends on the nobility of its object, and therefore that the proper object of the divine intellect must be God Himself and not things of this world. As St. Thomas says: “Since, therefore, some act of understanding is to be avoided on account of the unworthiness of the intelligible species, it follows that the nobility of this act, which is to understand, depends on the nobility of the intelligible species. Therefore the thing understood is more excellent than the act of understanding it. . . . (Hence) it is that the (supreme Intellect) must understand Himself. . . . Evidently there is no perfecting of God’s intellect by any other thing besides Himself that is understood by Him. Nevertheless it does not follow from this that all things other than Himself are unknown to Him; for by understanding Himself He understands all other things (inasmuch as God is the cause of things).”

This text from Aristotle’s Metaphysics is indeed obscure. But it must be noted against Zeller and Ravaisson that the Stagirite has spoken more clearly in another chapter, in which he praised Anaxagoras for having said that there must be a supreme intelligence who has ordained all things in the world. Aristotle said in this chapter that Anaxagoras thus showed himself to be the wise one among the foolish. He said likewise in another passage:

“But the world refuses to be governed badly. The rule of many is not good; let one be the ruler.”

He also argued against Empedocles, that “God would be most ignorant if He did not know discord.” Finally, Averroes, accepting the teaching of Aristotle, admitted a general providence, by which God has a general knowledge of things in the world which He directs, if not as to each detail, at least in a general way.

It must be admitted, however, that Aristotle was always in doubt on this point, because he never succeeded in acquiring a clear concept of creation, especially of eternal creation. Therefore he was at a loss to explain how God can have any knowledge of this world without a certain passivity or dependence on things, which cannot be attributed to Him who is pure Act. But St. Thomas gives us an excellent solution of this difficulty.

Two truths are affirmed in this article: (1) God necessarily knows things other than Himself; (2) God knows things other than Himself, not immediately in themselves, but in Himself.

The first proposition is of faith, and is included in the dogmas of creation and providence. The words of St. Paul are quoted in proof of this: “All things are naked and open to His eyes.”

It is also proved by reason from what was said in the preceding articles: Anything is not perfectly known unless its power is perfectly known and unless it is known to what its power extends. But God knows Himself perfectly (otherwise His existence would not be perfect, since His existence is His act of understanding), and the divine power, which is the first efficient cause of all things, extends to things other than Himself. Therefore God necessarily knows things other than Himself.

In affirming that the divine knowledge of things is according to the knowledge of the divine power, St. Thomas already implicitly assigns the medium of this knowledge.

This proof is confirmed from the fact that the divine power contains things other than Himself, after the manner of an intelligible species. For a thing is in another according to the mode of the other in which it is. But in God, as first efficient cause, His existence is His act of understanding. Therefore whatever effects pre-exist in God as in the First Cause, are in Him His act of understanding and His intelligible species.

As Cajetan observes, this proposition, “God’s existence is His act of understanding,” is to be taken rather in its formal sense than as expressing

merely identity. There is identity (by reason of the reality or subject of the proposition) between God's act of understanding and His act of willing, because there is no distinction between them. But something more is affirmed when it is said that "God's existence is His act of understanding," for in God, as the First Cause, His existence is, strictly speaking, His act of understanding, inasmuch as His act of understanding is the foundation for His active power of intellectual cause as such. This is the case with the artificer, and it applies analogically to God, as will be stated more clearly in the eighth article.

In the second part of this article it is shown that God knows things other than Himself, not immediately in themselves, but in Himself. It concerns the medium of this knowledge, and is proved as follows: For a thing to be seen in itself, means that it is seen by its proper and adequate species (as through the medium by which it is seen); whereas a thing is seen in another when it is seen through the image of that which contains it, which is what is seen first, as the image of the mirror is what is first seen, and then what is reflected in it. But God knows things other than Himself inasmuch as His essence contains the similitude of other things, and He does not know them through the proper species of each thing. Therefore God knows things other than Himself, not in themselves, but in Himself.

This means that God knows things other than Himself in Himself first known as what is known. On the contrary, we know external things not in ourselves, but in themselves; for our senses know sensible qualities through the proper species impressed upon them by these qualities, and our intellect knows the nature of external things through their proper intelligible species, which are abstracted from the things. Hence it is commonly said that, whereas our knowledge is measured by things, God's knowledge is the measure of things. But although God knows things other than Himself, His knowledge of things is intuitive, because it extends both to the existence of the thing and the mode of its own existence.

SOLUTION OF OBJECTIONS

The solution of the objections of this article confirms this opinion.

Reply to first objection. When St. Augustine says that "God sees nothing outside Himself," this must be understood as meaning that God does not see what is outside Himself except in Himself.

Reply to second objection. “Hence it does not follow that there is any perfection in the divine intellect other than the divine essence.” Thus is solved the difficulty which baffled Aristotle, because for him creation was an unknown concept. If God is the Creator, then He is able to know the things of this world in Himself, in His causality, without His being in any way dependent on the things themselves.

Reply to third objection. “Hence it does not follow that the divine intellectual act is specified by anything else than the divine essence itself, because the intellectual act is not specified by what is understood in another, but by the principal object understood in which other things are understood.”

This opinion held by St. Thomas concerning the medium in which God knows things other than Himself is not admitted by all theologians, and especially by the Molinists; for if God cannot know things other than Himself except in Himself as the cause, this means the end of the scientia media by which, as Molina will have it, God knows conditionally free acts of the future (futurables) independently of His decree, or of His causality.

Therefore many Molinists, particularly Vasquez, hold that God knows things other than Himself immediately in themselves, or at least both ways, namely, either immediately in Himself as the cause (thus He knows created things), or immediately in themselves (thus He would know futurables independently of the divine decree).

But the Thomists refute this opinion, arguing from the principles laid down in this article. For to have immediate knowledge of external things is to know them by their proper species. But there is only one species in God, which is His essence, and the divine essence is not immediately representative of created things as the medium by which He sees them, but is that which is seen by God, and that in which God’s effects are known. But whatever is external to God, must be in a relation of dependent causality to Him, who is the cause of all beings and their real modes of being. Nor can it be said that God has immediate knowledge of things other than Himself without a species, for then His knowledge would not be determined more to one particular thing than to a certain other. The final result of this would be that the divine intellect is determined and perfected by something extrinsic. Thus God would not be pure Act, and the first determining Being, but would be determined by another, and this would

make Him dependent on another. This is the grave defect in the theory of the scientia media, as will be stated in a subsequent article.

Nor can the divine essence be considered as the immediately representative medium by which He knows created things; for immediate representation is effected by the proper and adequate species. But the divine essence infinitely transcends every created being. Nor can it be said evidently that God, by reason of His essence, knows, as it were on equal terms, both Himself and creatures. There must be not co-ordination but subordination of either a possible or an actual effect in relation to its cause. Thus God knows all things other than Himself in His essence as the cause.

Objection. Some say that God knows created truths in as many ways as they are knowable. But truths are also knowable immediately in themselves, and they are thus known by angels and by us. Therefore God knows them immediately in themselves.

Reply. That God knows created truths in as many ways as they are knowable on the part of the thing known, this I concede; on the part of the knower, I subdistinguish: in every way that does not imply imperfection, this I concede; otherwise I deny it.

Objection. Still some insist that to know a thing in itself is a more perfect way than to know it in another. Therefore this way must be attributed to God.

Reply. I distinguish the antecedent: if the thing to be known is not so clearly expressed in another as it is in itself, then I concede the antecedent; if it is more clearly expressed in another than it is in itself, then I deny the antecedent. Things are contained, however, more perfectly in God, as in the most eminent intellectual cause, than in themselves. Just as the production of a work of art pre-exists in more perfect form in the mind of a great painter or sculptor than on the canvas or in the marble, and as he cannot produce in matter whatever is vividly conceived by him, then far more so are things contained in God in a more eminent way than in themselves. By knowing them in Himself, God knows them as in their dawning, by what St. Augustine calls morning vision, which is measured by the unique instant of motionless eternity. On the contrary, whereas we know things in themselves, we know them as in their twilight, by what is called evening knowledge, in the obscurity of sensible and material things. Therefore it is the common opinion among theologians in discussing the knowledge of the

blessed, that it is a more perfect way for one to know created things in the Word than outside the Word.

Final difficulty. God is not the adequate cause of our vital acts, especially of our free ones. Therefore God cannot know them in His causality.

Reply. Although God is not the proximate cause of our acts, yet whatever entity and perfection they have come from God and are contained eminently in Him.

SIXTH ARTICLE

WHETHER GOD KNOWS THINGS OTHER THAN HIMSELF BY PROPER KNOWLEDGE

State of the question. This article is concerned with proper knowledge, not on the part of the knower as acquired by various acts, but on the part of the thing known. In other words, does God by a single act know things in the world as they are distinct from one another and according to their proper natures, or has He merely a general knowledge of them? The difficulty is that other things are in God as in their common and universal cause, and, moreover, the proper ratio of the divine essence cannot be the proper ratio of many and diverse things.

Reply. The conclusion is in the affirmative and is of faith.

1) It is revealed in several passages of Holy Scripture, as when it speaks of God's knowledge of things as "reaching unto the division of the soul and the spirit, of the joints also and the marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature invisible in His sight; but all things are naked and open to His eyes." The concluding words of this passage are quoted by the Vatican Council, and it adds "even those which are yet to be by the free action of creatures."

It must be noted that this article is especially directed against those who, like Averroes and Algazel, maintained that God has a general knowledge of things in the world, as regards the general laws of nature, but that He does not know them in particular.

2) Indirect proof. To know creatures in a general way would be to have an imperfect or confused knowledge of them. Therefore both God's understanding and His being would be imperfect, which is an impossibility. For it is evident that such knowledge is imperfect on the part of the thing known, because it would not be perfectly known.

3) Direct proof. It specifies the mode of this proper knowledge. St. Thomas does this gradually, first by giving the examples brought forward by others in explanation of this mode, as, for instance, if the center knew itself, it would know all lines that proceed from the center; or if light knew itself, it would know all colors. But these examples are not sufficiently convincing, says St. Thomas, because multitude and diversity are not caused by that one principle as regards that which is the reason for the distinction but only as regards that in which they communicate. Hence, if the center knew itself, it would know only that to which the lines converge. It must be shown that whatever perfection exists in any creature, even what belongs properly to it as such, pre-exists either eminently and formally or eminently and virtually in the cause of the total being of things.

St. Thomas gives a more convincing example as evidence of this, namely, the perfect act, which is posterior in the order of generation, and which contains all imperfect acts, which are prior to it in the order of generation. Thus animal and living are included in man, and the sensitive and vegetative souls are included in the intellective soul, because whatever perfection there is in the imperfect act, is found eminently in the perfect act. Thus he who knows a man knows an animal by proper knowledge.

This gradual preparation leads up to the following direct proof: The divine essence contains in itself whatever there is of reality in all creatures even to what ultimately differentiates them, of which His essence is the total cause, inasmuch as there is nothing in the creature that is not caused by God, not even matter, which is the principle of individuation in sensible things. But God has comprehensive knowledge of His essence, which is the self-subsisting Being. Therefore God by knowing Himself, knows all things by proper knowledge. In other words: “God knows all the ways in which His own perfection can be shared by others.”

In addition to this it is said: “Neither could He know the very nature of being perfectly, unless He knew all modes of being.” Averroes, denying this, failed to perceive that the self-subsisting Being contains all modes of being. He judged of being, the modes of which are also being, as of any genus, the differentiae of which are extrinsic to it. Thus rationality is an extrinsic differentia of animality. Hence, whoever perfectly knows an animal does not by reason of this know a rational being by proper knowledge. But whoever knows a rational being knows an animal.

Corollary. Only God, who has comprehensive knowledge of self-subsisting Being, has perfect knowledge of the very nature of being, either as an act or as an entity. Thus He alone knows all possible modes of being, or the infinite number of possibles. We know by abstraction those things that are actually and explicitly in being, but not all those that are actually and implicitly in being, that is, we do not know all modes of being. We know these successively by experience and by discursive knowledge.

The solution of the difficulties confirms this conclusion.

Reply to first objection. Although God knows things in this world, not immediately in themselves, but in Himself as they are in Himself, nevertheless He knows them in their own nature as they are in themselves. Thus by one cognitive act, which is self-subsisting intellection, He knows them distinctly, and "all the more perfectly, the more perfectly each one is in Him."

Reply to second objection. "The created essence is compared to the essence of God, as the imperfect act to the perfect act. Therefore the created essence cannot sufficiently lead us to the knowledge of the divine essence, but rather the converse."

Reply to third objection. "The divine essence (by reason of its eminence) can be taken as the proper ratio of each thing according to the diverse ways in which diverse creatures participate in and imitate it." Thus, dependent on God, stones participate in being, plants in life, animals in cognition, men and angels in intellective life, and the just in divine life strictly as such. It is only this last participation that is called a "participation of the divine nature," all others being imitations of the divine essence according to being, life, and intellection.

This eminence of the divine essence is for us mysterious or invisible, but in it is verified the principle, that "superior beings unite in themselves the various perfections of inferior beings." Thus one visual act of sense perception includes within its range all visible things of a vast region, which are seen in one glance. Likewise one thing perfectly known includes within itself all intelligible objects pertaining to it. Transcending all beings, God has comprehensive knowledge of the self-subsisting Being, that is, of Himself, and He has perfect knowledge of all possible and actual modes of being.

SEVENTH ARTICLE

WHETHER THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD IS DISCURSIVE

The reply is in the negative, and it follows as a corollary from the preceding. Discursion is of two kinds; either it is according to succession only, inasmuch as in point of time the things understood follow one another, as the night the day; or else it is according to causality, as when through principles we arrive at the knowledge of conclusions.

But neither kind of discursion belongs to God, because He sees all things together, seeing them all in one thing, which is Himself. Moreover, since God does not proceed from the known to the unknown, He knows effects not from their cause, but immediately in their cause, as we do when the terminus of discursive reasoning is reached.

EIGHTH ARTICLE

WHETHER GODS KNOWLEDGE IS THE CAUSE OF THINGS

State of the question. The question asked in this article really includes two questions: (1) Whether God's knowledge is at least the directive cause in the production of things, these being truly produced by God, so that God, the Creator and Ordainer, operates most wisely, and not in a blind or ignorant way; (2) whether God's knowledge is the effective cause of things, so that it in no way is caused by or is dependent on things (not even on our future free acts). But, if the first question is solved in the affirmative, then so is the second, on the supposition that there can be nothing real or future (either absolute or conditional) that is not dependent on God.

The answer to this first question, however, is in the affirmative and is of faith; for it is expressed in very many texts of Holy Scripture, such as in the following: "Thou hast made all things in wisdom"; "who made the heavens in understanding." Moreover, this is already evident to reason from the proof of God's existence because of the order prevailing in the world; for the supreme Ordainer of things acts not in a blind way but most wisely, since He operates by His intellect in all things effected by Him.

But as for the second question, namely, whether God's knowledge is the effective cause of things, so that it is in no way caused by things, St. Thomas in the first objection and in the counter-argument, notes a certain

difference of opinion on this point between Origen and St. Augustine. For Origen, who is quoted in the first objection, when commenting on the words, “Whom He called, them He also justified,” says: “A thing will happen not because God knows it as future; but because it is future, it is on that account known by God before it exists.” Taken literally, these words seem to mean that God’s knowledge is in some way dependent on future things.

Contrary to this, St. Augustine says: “Not because they are, does God know all creatures spiritual and temporal, but because He knows them therefore they are.” This means that things are dependent on God’s knowledge, and not God’s knowledge on things.

St. Thomas quotes St. Augustine, following him as his authority. In his reply to the first objection, he charitably interprets Origen’s words in a good sense. If these words were taken literally, it would follow that God knew things to be created because they were to come into being, and not that they were to come into being because God knew and freely willed them. But, as a matter of fact, in this passage Origen is referring especially to sin, which God is not the cause of, and Origen means that the divine foreknowledge does not do away with human liberty. Moreover, as St. Thomas says, “if things are in the future, it follows that God knows them; but not that the futurity of things is the cause of God’s knowing them.”

For a better understanding of the importance of this question, we should note that the difficulty arising from the conflicting statements of Origen and St. Augustine, persisted among theologians as regards the divine foreknowledge. This is especially the case with Molina who, in his theory of the scientia media, maintains that God foresees conditionally free actions of the future or futurables before there is any determining divine decree concerning them. Thus the divine knowledge of futurables in its relation to these would not be determining, but rather determined by them and dependent on them. For Molina says: “It was not in God’s power to know by this scientia (media) anything else than He actually knew. . . . (But) if the created free will were to do the opposite, as it truly can, He would have known even this by the same knowledge, but not that He actually knows it.” Thus Molina speaks rather the language of Origen than that of St. Augustine.

Therefore, as for the question asked in this article, Molina holds that God’s knowledge is indeed the directive cause of things which are produced

by Him; but he maintains that God's knowledge is not the effective cause of the determination of our free will, the act of which, in his opinion, is first foreseen by God as a conditionally free action of the future; e.g., if Peter were situated in certain circumstances he would choose this particular thing, and then, with the positing of the conditions, it is foreseen as a future act; i.e., Peter, actually situated in certain circumstances, will choose this particular thing. But St. Thomas settles both questions by one answer.

His answer is: The knowledge of God, in so far as His will is joined to it, is the cause of things, and is not caused by them.

1) There is foundation for this doctrine in Holy Scripture, as shown from the following texts: "The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth, hath established the heavens by prudence"; "and God said: Be light made. And light was made"; "by the word of the Lord the heavens were established"; "Who is a more artful worker than she (Wisdom) of those things that are?" "All things were made by Him (the Word)"; "upholding all things by the word of His power." But these complex terms, "The Lord by wisdom hath founded, hath established, is an artful worker," convey the idea that God's knowledge is the cause of things.

2) Among the Church Fathers, who stated this truth more clearly, prominent is St. Augustine, a quotation from one of his works being given in the counterargument of this article. He also says in another of his writings: "This world could not be known to us unless it existed, but it could not have existed unless it had been known to God." St. Gregory the Great asserts: "For even whatsoever things are, in His eternity are not therefore seen because they are, but therefore they are because they are seen."

3) The conclusion is proved by the following theological argument: The knowledge of God is to all creatures what the knowledge of the artificer is to the things made by his art. But the knowledge of the artificer is the cause of the things made by his art so far as his will is joined to it. Therefore the knowledge of God is the cause of all things, in so far as His will is joined to it.

The major enunciates an analogy drawn from the Holy Scripture in which God's wisdom is called the "artificer" of all things. Moreover, this is also evident to reason from the proof of God's existence as supreme Ordainer by reason of the order prevailing in the world. Hence, as stated in the body of the article, "It is manifest that God causes things by His intellect, since His

being is His act of understanding," a truth previously established. This is also clearly seen from the fact that to act by the intellect is a more perfect and more universal mode of action than to act by nature.

Now in man, for instance, the intellective life is above the vegetative which operates from a necessity of its nature. Finally, to act by the intellect is to determine the form and end of its action, whereas, on the other hand, to act by nature is to be determined by the Author of nature. This answers the objections of the pantheists. Therefore it can truly be said that knowledge is predicated analogically of God and the artificer.

The minor of this proof states, however, that the knowledge of the artificer is the cause of the things made by his art, in so far as his will is joined to it. For it is evident that the artificer acts by his intellect, and therefore by his practical knowledge or by his art, which is the perfection or form of his intellect. But besides this it is of necessity that there be conjunction of will and intellect; for just as the natural form, for instance, of a plant, is for action by reason of its natural appetite or inclination, so also the intelligible form, by reason of its rational appetite or will, is for the same end. "For since the intelligible form," says St. Thomas, "has a relation to opposite things, inasmuch as the same knowledge relates to opposites (thus ethics is concerned with the performance of good and the avoidance of evil), it would not produce a determinate effect unless it were determined to one thing by the appetite." For the intelligible form or the idea has a relation to opposite things, namely, to being and to non-being. Thus the artificer can produce or not produce the work of art that is conceived by him, and God can produce or not produce the world, and of possible things these particular ones in preference to others. But God's knowledge joined to His will constitutes the divine determining decree, and is not only the directive but also the effective cause of things, just as command presupposes freedom of choice.

St. Thomas states this more clearly in various passages of his works. Thus he says: "Knowledge never produces its effect except through the intervention of the will, the concept of which implies a certain influx into things willed." "Hence it does not necessarily follow that things come into being whenever there is knowledge, but only when the production of these is determined by the will." "The (divine) idea is determined as regards those things that are, or were, or will be produced, by a decree of the divine will; but it is not so determined as regards those things that neither are, nor were,

nor will be." "God does not, therefore, act by a necessity of His nature, but determined effects proceed from His own infinite perfection according to the determination of His will and intellect." "The form, as it is in the intellect only, is not determined to exist or not to exist in the effect, except by the will."

This determination just mentioned is nothing else but the determining divine decree, for which, just as for a human decree, there is required: (1) a judgment of the intellect directing the free choice of the will; (2) the choice itself by the will. Then there is the command of the intellect directing one to make use of the means willed. The gradual development of this doctrine is to be found in St. Thomas' treatise on human acts. It is there shown that there are two orders, one of intention and the other of execution. In the order of intention, the intellect apprehends the end and proposes it to the will; the will intends the end, and in virtue of this intention the intellect inquires into the means more suitable for the attainment of the end, and the intellect judges of them or distinguishes between them (this being a practical judgment); then the will freely chooses these means, and this terminates the order of intention, by a descendent process from the end intended down to the first and least of the means chosen. After this begins the order of execution through a command of the intellect, which means that the intellect commands the use of the means willed, beginning with the lowest and ascending to the higher until the end is attained, which is first in intention and last in execution. In virtue of this command the will applies the faculties to the performance of their acts, and this application is called the active use, which is followed by the passive use of these faculties, and after this comes the attainment of the end.

This is analogically verified in God. The divine intellect apprehends the divine goodness manifested to it as its end, and the divine will intends this end. In virtue of this intention the intellect, so to speak, inquires into the means, proposing these to the divine will, which wills them, and this terminates the order of intention. In this process the divine knowledge is directive but not effective. But, posited the efficacious choice of the means, in virtue of this the intellect commands the employment of the means, and thus the divine knowledge is not only the directive but is also the effective cause of things in second actuality. In this setting, the divine knowledge, presupposing as it does election, was usually called "knowledge of approbation" or even "of vision," because by producing the effect it sees,

and by seeing it produces the effect, which means that it extends to things either as actually present or as belonging entirely to the future, not precisely as it is knowledge of vision, but as the will is joined to it.

Hence the knowledge of simple intelligence, which is concerned with possible things before God's free choice of them, is only the directive cause of things, whereas the knowledge of approbation, which follows the efficacious choice, is the effective cause of things. This commanded act is efficacious, inasmuch as it presupposes a determining choice, and this latter is often called the purpose or efficacious decree of the divine will.

Thus we understand why St. Thomas said: "Determined effects proceed from His own infinite perfection according to the determination of His will and intellect." By "the determination of the will" is meant here the election which follows the directive judgment and which precedes the command moving one to make use of the means.

Conclusion. Therefore God's knowledge is the effective cause of things, as being a command that presupposes the efficacious act of election on the part of the divine will. And it is concerned with all things without exception, for there can be no reality that is not causatively dependent on God's knowledge and will, not even the free determination of our choices.

SOLUTION OF OBJECTIONS

Reply to first objection. It solves the difficulty presented by the text quoted from Origen, who spoke inappropriately and in too human a way about God's knowledge. Truly, his purpose is to prove that God's knowledge is not harmful to human liberty, and he is especially concerned with sin, which God is not the cause of, because He only permits it. Moreover, it is still true to say in an illative sense, but not in a causal sense, that if anything will come into existence, this is known by God before it exists.

Reply to second objection. Although God's knowledge is eternal, it does not follow that creatures are eternal, because it was not in God's knowledge that things should be eternal, but only that they should come into being in a time that is determined by God's will.

Reply to third objection. The knowable is prior to created knowledge, but not to the uncreated knowledge. Whereas our knowledge is measured or caused by things, God's knowledge is the measure and cause of things.

Objection. Created liberty cannot exist with that knowledge which, in virtue of an absolute and antecedent decree, is the cause of future action. But such is God's knowledge, in accordance with the preceding thesis. Therefore God's knowledge is not the cause of future actions.

Reply. According to what St. Thomas says in a subsequent question, I distinguish the antecedent as follows: If the decree of the divine will concerns only the substance of the future action, I concede it; if it concerns also the free mode of this action, then I deny it. Replying to one of his objections in this subsequent question, St. Thomas says: "From the very fact that nothing resists the divine will, it follows that not only those things happen that God wills to happen, but that they happen necessarily or contingently according to His will."

Another objection. Then God could not know sin, because He is not the cause of sin. Therefore the difficulty remains.

Reply. In the tenth article of this question St. Thomas solves this difficulty by pointing out that God knows possible evil things by their opposite good things; also actual and future sins, inasmuch as He wills to permit them for a greater good.

Doubt. How does St. Thomas distinguish between the knowledge of simple intelligence and that of vision?

Reply. St. Thomas explains this in different works of his. In his opinion, the knowledge of simple intelligence and the knowledge of vision are not two kinds of knowledge, but are one and the same in God; their difference arises only from the diversity of their objects. In other words, the knowledge of simple intelligence has not the will joined to it, and is concerned with possible things, thus being a necessary knowledge. The knowledge of vision has the will joined to it, and is concerned with really existing things, either present, past, or future. The knowledge of vision is said to have the will joined to it inasmuch as it is accompanied by either a positive or permissive decree of the divine will. As will be stated farther on, the knowledge of conditionally free actions of the future or of futurables refers back to the knowledge of vision inasmuch as it presupposes a conditional decree of the divine will, without which these conditionally free actions of the future would be undetermined. Such as these are: What would Peter do if situated in certain circumstances? Or what would Paul have done, if he had been in Peter's place, in the circumstances of our Lord's Passion? Confronted by the two possibilities of faithfulness or

unfaithfulness, which would he have chosen? If we say that God is able to know this infallibly before His decree, then such knowledge is not the cause of things but is caused by conditionally free actions of the future or is dependent on them; nevertheless, inasmuch as they are contingent, they are still undetermined. From this we already see how very important the present article is as regards the foreknowledge of future things.

In this article we have a legitimate application of the analogical method, to the exclusion of all anthropomorphism, because what is said of the artificer's knowledge, inasmuch as it is the cause of things made by his art, does not in its formal concept imply any imperfection. Thus knowledge is predicated analogically of God in the literal sense and not merely metaphorically, those imperfections being removed, of course, which are found in the created mode of the artificer's knowledge.

NINTH ARTICLE

WHETHER GOD HAS KNOWLEDGE OF THINGS THAT ARE NOT

State of the question. By "things that are not" is meant things that do not actually exist but that exist only potentially so, either in God or in a creature.

The answer is affirmative. (1) It is of faith, for the Scripture says: "Before I formed thee in the bowels of thy mother, I knew thee." There are very many parallel texts in Holy Scripture concerning God's knowledge of things that are not, but which are either possible or which did exist or which will exist.

2) Proof from reason. Things that are not absolutely, namely, that are not actually, are in the power either of God or of creatures. But God knows those things that are either in His power or in the power of a creature, otherwise He would not have comprehensive knowledge of Himself. Therefore God knows things that are not absolutely.

There are two more conclusions:

1) By the knowledge of vision, God knows past or future things, because God's glance is measured by eternity, which is without succession and which comprehends all time, just as the apex of a pyramid corresponds to all the points of its base.

2) By the knowledge of simple intelligence God knows merely possible things, those which never were nor are nor will be. God knows these in His essence as it is infinitely imitable.

St. Thomas in this article is not speaking of conditionally free actions of the future, for he treats of this elsewhere when discussing prophecy of denunciation. He is now speaking of merely possible things, which must not be confused with futurable; for the futurable means this: of two possible things (for instance, of remaining faithful or of being unfaithful), which would one choose if situated in certain circumstances? Thus the futurable adds a new determination to the possible.

The purely possible is merely what is capable of existence, what is not repugnant to existence. Inasmuch as it is something really possible, it is called a real possible, which is a different entity from what is purely a figment of the mind or mental being, which is not capable of real but only of logical existence, like the universality of any predicate. It also differs from real and actual being, or actually existing being.

TENTH ARTICLE

WHETHER GOD KNOWS EVIL THINGS

State of the question. The most serious difficulty is that God knows things other than Himself inasmuch as they are in Himself as in their cause. But God is not the cause of evil. Therefore it seems that God does not know evil things.

Nevertheless the contrary is affirmed frequently in Holy Scripture, as in the following text: “Thou hast set our iniquities before Thy eyes.” It is of faith that God knows physical and moral evils and, if God did not know sins and the grievousness of these, He could not justly punish them.

The body of the article contains two conclusions: (1) God knows evil things; (2) God knows evil things by their opposite good things.

Proof of first conclusion. There are some good things that can be corrupted by the presence of evil; but all good things and what can be accidental to them are perfectly known by God; therefore evil things are known by God.

The major is evident both as regards natural good, such as health, the loss of which may be due to various causes, and as regards moral good, such as

virtue, which can likewise be corrupted so as to beget vice. The minor is evident, it having been established that God has comprehensive knowledge of those things that are in Himself as in their cause.

Proof of second conclusion. A thing is knowable in the degree in which it is. But the essence of evil consists in the privation of good. Therefore God knows evil things by their opposite good things, just as darkness is known by light. Thus God knows injustice by justice, and from the fact that He has knowledge of all justice, He knows the gravity of injustice. But because we have not intuitive knowledge of all justice, our valuation of it is obtained from injustice and from the grief caused by grievous injustice. These two conclusions are concerned more with the nature of evils than with their existence.

Doubt. With regard to the existence of evils and with regard to the elucidation of the second objection, the following question is asked: How does God foresee evils, especially sins?

The answer is: God knows them in His permissive decree. St. Thomas speaks of this permissive decree in the preceding article, saying: "The knowledge of God joined to His will is the cause of things. Hence it is not necessary that whatever God knows, is, or was, or will be; but only is this necessary as regards what He wills to be, or permits to be." St. Thomas' answer is the same in the following replies to objections proposed by him: "God does not will evil to be done, but wills to permit evil to be done; and this is a good." "One who provides universally, allows some little defect to remain, lest the good of the whole should be hindered." "Reprobation includes the will to permit a person to fall into sin, and to impose the punishment of damnation on account of that sin." "Permission is of many kinds. There is permission: (1) of licit concession; (2) of dispensation . . . ; (3) of tolerance, as when a lesser evil is permitted for a greater good. Such was the permission given by Moses, when he allowed a bill of divorce . . . ; (4) of favorable concession, as when something is permitted, though its opposite is better; as when the apostles permitted second marriages (I Cor., chap. 7) . . . ; (5) of forbearance, as when God permits evils to happen, that through them He may effect some good."

Before the permissive decree God knows sins as possible, but not as future. Moreover, God wills to concur in the act of sin, so that whatever actuality there is in it depends on the First Cause. Nor does it follow from this that God is the cause of sin, namely, of the deordination in sin. Since

God is indefectible, He cannot be either the direct or the indirect cause (as it were through negligence) of this deordination, which is a defect. Thus evil is explained on three grounds: (1) on the part of the formal cause (as being the privation of a good that is due); (2) on the part of the material and defective cause (the defectible creature); (3) on the part of God permitting it, who in no way is the cause of sin, His permission being the indispensable condition for sin, which He ordains for a greater good as the end in view.

Clarity and obscurity are combined in this solution. What is most clear is this, that, just as God cannot produce what is not included in the notion of being, so He can in no way be either the direct or the indirect cause of the deordination in sin, which is excluded from the adequate object of divine omnipotence. Nothing is more exclusive in itself than the object of any faculty. Thus the intellect knows good only under the aspect of the true; for although there is no real distinction between the true and the good, yet the intellect does not attain to the good under the concept of good, this being the province of the will, but it attains to this under the proper concept of the true. Thus God wills, and causes sin only as it is an entity, but not as it is a sinful act. This is an absolute certainty. Yet there is obscurity as to the intimate mode in which God, by permitting sin, concurs in its entity and in no way concurs in its malice. This intimate mode is hidden from us; and no wonder, for the mode is strictly divine, and is only analogically known by us in an inferior mirror.

ELEVENTH ARTICLE

WHETHER GOD KNOWS SINGULAR THINGS

The answer is in the affirmative and is of faith, being a part of the dogmatic truth known as Providence which, according to Holy Scripture, extends even to the least of singular things, as is evident from the following passage: “Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And not one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.” St. Thomas quotes a text from the Old Testament: “All the ways of a man are open to His eyes.”

In the body of the article it is shown: (1) that God knows singular things; (2) how He knows them.

The truth of the first statement is established by the following argument: All perfections found in creatures, which in their formal signification imply no imperfection, pre-exist formally and eminently in God; but knowledge of singulars is of this nature; therefore such perfections pre-exist in God formally and eminently.

The major was proved in a previous article. The minor is evident. For, although sense perception of singular things implies imperfection, such is not the case with intellectual knowledge of singular things, if this intellectual knowledge does not have to be in conjunction with sensitive knowledge.

St. Thomas appeals to the authority of Aristotle, who, in refuting Empedocles, says: “God would be most ignorant if He did not know discord.” Yet it is not quite clear that Aristotle has in mind not only discord in general, but also particular cases of it.

In the second statement the question is asked: How does God know singular things? The answer is, that it will not do to say that God knows singular things in that He knows all their universal causes; for the singular thing, in its singularity, is dependent on individual matter, and thus the singular would not be realized as such. Nor will it do to say that God applies universal causes to particular effects, for this application presupposes but does not constitute the singular as known. It must be said that God, as shown above, knows things other than Himself by His essence as their cause. But the divine causality extends to singular things inasmuch as it produces not only the form of things, but also the matter by which things are individualized. Therefore God knows singular things by His essence as their cause.

The minor is evident, for matter, although it is pure potentiality, still is being, and is distinct from both actuality and nothingness. Therefore it is not independently of God, the first Being, that this matter is caused and preserved here and now in such individual. “Matter, in so far as it has being in this or that way, retains a certain likeness to the divine Being.”

Hence, whereas we know spiritual things in the mirror of sensible things, God knows material things in the most exalted mirror of His essence, which is the cause of all things even as regards their singularity. For us the spiritual is something immaterial: for the pure spirit and especially for God, the material is something non-spiritual, not having the amplitude of spirituality, something limited or confined here and now by matter, the

ultimate subject, which is almost nothing. Thus in a spiritual way God knows from on high, for instance, a symphony which we perceive by the sense of hearing.

TWELFTH ARTICLE

WHETHER GOD CAN KNOW INFINITE THINGS

State of the question. It seems that the infinite, such as an unending series of days, is something unknown and unknowable, because a thing is knowable inasmuch as it is in act, or determined. Also the essence of the infinite is that it is untraversable, for it has no end. Such, for instance, is the successive and endless series of intellectual and volitional acts. For that alone is traversable which has a beginning and an end.

The answer is, however, in the affirmative, and it is of faith, a point that will be more clearly established in the next article, which affirms that God knows future contingent things, even the intellectual and volitional acts of immortal souls, for there will be an unending series of such acts. It is first proved that God knows infinite things both by the knowledge of simple intelligence and by that of vision. Then the reason is given for the possibility of this knowledge.

1) As regards the knowledge of simple intelligence. Those things that are possible to God and to creatures are infinite. But God knows not only actual things, but all those that are possible to Him and to creatures. Therefore He knows infinite things, namely, an actually infinite and innumerable multitude of possible things. For, as St. Thomas says, “number adds to multitude the idea of measure; for number is multitude measured by one.”

2) As regards the knowledge of vision. The thoughts and affections of immortal souls will be multiplied to infinity. But God knows all these actually and simultaneously, and not successively, as we know them. Therefore also by His knowledge of vision He knows infinite things. The multitude of these thoughts is successively infinite, and absolutely innumerable.

3) The reason is given for the possibility of this knowledge of infinite things. Knowledge is measured by the mode of the form, which is the principle of knowledge. But the divine essence, where. by God knows,

extends as cause to infinite things, even as these are distinct from one another.

The major is evident by an inductive process. Sense perception is co-extensive with the sensible species, and includes all sensible things represented by this latter. Our intellect, however, is coextensive with the abstracted intelligible species, and includes an infinity of particulars as these communicate in the specific nature so understood, but not as they are distinct from one another.

But the minor is proved from the sixth and the eleventh articles of this question, in which it is stated that whatever perfection exists in creatures, even their individuating notes, pre-exist in God as in their most eminent cause, which most perfectly knows its power and causality.

The solution of the objections confirms this conclusion.

Reply to first objection. To know the infinite successively, part after part, is an impossibility even for God, because there would never be an end of this addition. But God knows the infinite or infinite things, not successively, that is, not part after part; for He knows all things simultaneously, inasmuch as they are contained in His power and eternal causality, which, as being simultaneously whole, includes all time. Thus it is not repugnant for infinite things to be contained in a most perfect and pre-existing Infinite, namely, in the power, intellect and eternity of God; for they exist unitedly in God, and are not as parts outside parts, as measured properly by time, but they are measured by the unique instant of motionless eternity.

Reply to second objection. “The infinite cannot be traversed by the infinite,” because transition imports a certain succession of parts (and is not the terminus of the infinite multitude of parts). But the infinite can be adequately comprehended by the Infinite, in the higher reason of the divine essence, whose power is infinite.

Reply to third objection. Thus God’s knowledge is not the quantitative measure of things, but is their measure inasmuch as things imitate God’s knowledge, as the things made by art agree with the art.

THIRTEENTH ARTICLE

WHETHER GOD’S KNOWLEDGE IS OF FUTURE THINGS

State of the question. The divine omniscience must indeed extend to all things, but it seems to eliminate contingency from things, because God's knowledge, which is the cause of things, is not a contingent cause but a necessary one, from which, therefore, a necessary effect proceeds. Moreover, everything known by God must necessarily be, whereas no contingent thing must necessarily be.

Hence, that the Stoics might defend God's foreknowledge of future things, they denied free will; so also did the Hussites. On the contrary, since Cicero could not reconcile God's foreknowledge of future things with our freedom, in order to defend the latter he denied the former. The same also applies to Marcion, and in later times the Socinians maintained that God has only a conjectural knowledge of future free acts.

It is of faith, however, that God has infallible knowledge of all absolute futures, both contingent and free, without detriment to their freedom.

This is evident from several texts in Holy Scripture, such as the following: "He who hath made the hearts of every one of them, who understandeth all their works"; "Thou hast understood my thoughts afar off . . . and Thou hast foreseen all my ways"; "For I know that transgressing thou wilt transgress, and I have called thee a transgressor from the womb." It is likewise said of Jesus: "For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that did not believe, and who he was that would betray Him." These texts refer to future and, in fact, free contingent acts. Nor is the reference here solely to conjectural knowledge, for such knowledge is not expressed by the words "understands," "I know," "knew from the beginning." Moreover, a conjecture is fallible and is something repugnant to the most perfect Being, to the first Truth, and to supreme Intelligence. Finally, there is no reason why God should know one rather than another of many future things, as will be clearly seen from the proofs that follow.

Several councils have affirmed that the decrees of divine providence are infallible, and that they are accompanied by the most certain foreknowledge of future things. As the Council of Valencia says: "We unhesitatingly maintain that God absolutely foreknew that the good will be so by His grace, and that by this same grace they will receive the reward of eternal life; He foreknew that the wicked will be so through their own malice." The Vatican Council says: "All things are naked and open to His eyes, even those which are yet to be by the free action of creatures."

Theological proof. This truth of the faith is proved from other truths which are likewise revealed, and which can be known by the natural powers of reason. Thus St. Thomas proves in the body of the article: (1) that God certainly knows future contingent things; and he declares (2) how God knows them, by assigning the proper reason for this knowledge both on the part of the thing known and on the part of the knower.

1) Arguing from common principles it is proved that God certainly knows future contingent things; for God knows all things, not only those that actually are, but even those that are possible to Him or to creatures. But of these some are for us future contingent things. Therefore God knows them, which means that He certainly knows them. This is the reason that is deduced from common principles.

2) How does God know them? The proper reason is assigned for this both on the part of the thing known and on the part of the knower.

The contingent cannot be infallibly known unless it is known as actual and present. It is not enough for it to be known in its proximate cause, for this is not determined to one thing. But God knows all contingents as they actually are and are present to Him. Therefore God knows them infallibly, and yet they do not cease to be contingent; just as when I most certainly see Socrates sitting, the contingency of this sitting is not thereby destroyed.

The minor is proved, and at the same time this knowledge is explained on the part of the knower.

Eternity, being simultaneously whole, comprises all time, so that futures are present in it; but the divine knowledge is measured by eternity; therefore the divine knowledge extends to future things, as actually present in this higher type of duration.

In other words, in the very now of eternity “God’s glance is carried over all things as they are in their presentiality.” In the reply to the third objection it is said: “Things reduced to act in time, are known by us successively in time, but by God they are known in eternity, which is above time . . . ; just as he who goes along the road, does not see those who come after him; whereas he who sees the whole road from a height, sees at once all traveling by the way.”

Thus the unique and permanent instant of eternity corresponds to all the passing instants of time, just as the peak of a pyramid corresponds to all the points of its base. This was explained in a previous question, in which it was declared that eternity is “simultaneously whole,” but that time is not. In

this same question it was said: “The flow of the now as alternating in aspect, is time. But eternity remains the same to both subject and aspect.” Eternity is the proper measure of the permanent Being, of His intellection and of His love, just as time is the proper measure of movement, suggesting succession and alteration, which cannot apply to God.

There are four points to be considered concerning this article of St. Thomas: (1) the interpretation proposed by the Molinists; (2) how future things are present in eternity, according to the teaching of the Thomists; (3) the objections proposed against the Thomist solution; (4) what is to be thought of the theory devised by Molina and known as the scientia media.

I. MOLINIST INTERPRETATION

It is generally admitted among the Molinists that St. Thomas, in those passages where he speaks professedly of the divine knowledge, does not mention the divine decree spoken of subsequently by the Thomists, but he has recourse to the presence of future things in eternity, which comprises all time. Hence, according to St. Thomas, the medium of the divine knowledge of future things is not, as the Thomists would have it, the divine decree predetermining these future things. They say that the holy Doctor’s opinion is, that the foreknowledge of future free acts does not presuppose an absolute decree of the divine will concerning this future determination of our free will. Therefore his teaching can be reconciled with the theory of the scientia media, by which God, before His decree, certainly knows from all eternity conditionally free actions of the future (for instance, what Peter’s choice would be if he were situated in certain circumstances), and then God decreed to place this man in these circumstances, in which He foresaw what his choice would be.

Examination of this interpretation. The Thomists generally reply that this interpretation lacks foundation and contradicts many texts of St. Thomas; in fact, it is contrary to the very principles laid down in the preceding articles of this question.

For in the fifth article St. Thomas said: “Since therefore the divine power extends to other things by the very fact that it is the first effective cause of all things, God must necessarily (by the perfect knowledge He has of His power) know things other than Himself. . . . He sees other things not in themselves, but in Himself,” as in their cause.

Moreover, in the eighth article he wrote: “The knowledge of God is the cause of things . . . in so far as His will is joined to it.” This is the decree of the divine will concerning which is the following clearer statement. “Determined effects proceed from His own infinite perfection according to the determination of His will and intellect.” In fact, the determination of the will is mentioned in this text before that of the intellect, for, as stated in the eighth article of this question: “Since the intelligible form has a relation to opposite things, inasmuch as the same knowledge relates to opposites, it would not produce a determinate effect unless it were determined to one thing by the appetite, as the philosopher says (Metaph., Bk. IX, chap. 5).” St. Thomas says similarly in another passage: “God’s idea as regards the things that are, or will be, or were to be produced, is determined by the purpose of the divine will.”

There is no retractation, however, of the universal principles laid down by St. Thomas in this question; but he is giving the particular application of this doctrine to future things that are contingent, by showing how these, although they are contingent, can certainly be known as present. It is not here a question of reconciling the determination of God’s most efficacious will with the contingency of the thing willed by Him. This will be discussed in its proper place when St. Thomas inquires whether God’s will imposes necessity on the things willed, in which we shall see that he says: “Since, then, the divine will is perfectly efficacious, it follows not only that things are done which God wills to be done, but also that they are done in the way that He wills,” namely, either contingently or necessarily.

This point belongs properly to God’s will, and there was no need of discussing it here along with God’s knowledge. It is precisely this alone that St. Thomas proves in the present question, namely, that the knowledge of the future contingent thing, inasmuch as it is certain knowledge, does not take away contingency from the thing, if the contingent thing is known as present, just as when I certainly see Socrates who happens to be sitting.

There remains, however, this question: how is it that this future contingent thing, such as the creation of the world in the passive sense, or the conversion of St. Paul, is present in eternity rather than its opposite, namely, that the world was not created, or that St. Paul was not converted? Most certainly, if this future contingent thing were eternally present to God independently of the determination of the divine will, it would be something necessary and not contingent. Therefore from the principles

already mentioned in this question (concerning God's knowledge, which is the cause of things, inasmuch as the will is joined to it), it is evident that the presence in eternity of this contingent future rather than its opposite presupposes the determination of the divine will, which will be more clearly explained in a subsequent question.

Therefore in the second argument of this article, St. Thomas does not speak so explicitly of the medium of this foreknowledge as of the condition required for it to be intuitive. This condition is that the divine knowledge refers to the future thing, not as it is future, but as it is already present to this knowledge. Abstracted knowledge can refer to those things that are not present, but intuitive knowledge, and this alone is most perfect knowledge, refers to things that are present.

Hence in this article St. Thomas most certainly presupposes that there is and will be nothing outside God, no matter what its grade of being may be, that is not related by way of causality to God, or is not dependent on Him. In fact, in the beginning of the argumentative part of this article he says: "Since God knows all things, not only things actual but also things possible to Him and the creature, and since some of these are future contingent to us, it follows that God knows future contingent things." This is the proof that is derived from common principles.

There are many other passages from St. Thomas' works that confirm this interpretation, such as the following: "God knows our mind's thoughts and our secret wills in their virtual causes, since He is the universal principle of being. . . . God so knows other things in knowing His essence, as effects are known through their cause being known. Therefore by knowing His essence God knows all things to which His causality extends. Now this extends to the works of the intellect and of the will. . . . So by knowing His act of intelligence and will, He knows every thought and will."

He also says: "But since the act of free will is traced to God as a cause, it necessarily follows that everything happening from the exercise of free will must be subject to divine providence." "Just as the will can decide otherwise, far more so can God do this."

But if St. Thomas says in this article, "a contingent thing as it is in its cause . . . is not subject to any certain knowledge," he is speaking of the created cause considered as such, which as regards its effect is contingent and future. He has not in mind the divine cause, for which nothing is future, all things being present to it.

THE THOMIST VIEW

According to the Thomists and many other theologians, including Fonseca, Tiphanius, and others, future things are eternally present in God not only objectively and intentionally, but physically and really. They give two proofs for this, one indirect and the other direct.

Indirect proof. If futures were not so present, then they would be for God absolute futures, for simple representation does not exclude the notion of futurity. Thus what is foretold in prophecy precedes its realization. If God had only objective knowledge of future things, He would thus begin again to see things as actually existing. Thus God would be perfected in His knowledge, and only then would it become intuitive.

Direct proof. Eternity is duration which, as such, is infinite, indivisible and simultaneously whole. But this duration contains eminently, in the same permanent now, all successive durations, past, present, and future, and it so contains them as not to cause a variation in it when something new occurs in the inferior kinds of duration. Thus St. Thomas says: “Newness of effect does not demonstrate newness of action in God, since His action is His essence.”

Objection. Some say that this merely proves that eternity is without intrinsic but not extrinsic succession, just as the tree on the bank of a river undergoes no change, though the constant flow of the stream results in only a part of this water being present to the tree, and not all the water is simultaneously present to the tree. Therefore future things are not physically and really present in eternity.

Reply. I deny the antecedent. A better illustration of eternity would be to compare it with a tree planted equidistant from the source and mouth of the river, and of such vast size as to extend to all parts of the river. Similarly, it might be more fittingly compared with the apex of a pyramid, which at one and the same time without succession is coexistent with all points of its base. Hence there is no increase in God’s knowledge when things appear in course of time.

But they again object that it is unintelligible for something to exist in eternity which does not have individual existence. But futures do not now have individual existence. Therefore they do not exist in eternity.

Reply. I distinguish the major: it is unintelligible for something to exist in eternity which does not have individual existence according to its proper

duration, this I deny; that it does not have individual existence in duration of a higher order, this I concede. I explain with John of St. Thomas as follows: Eternity does not measure created things immediately in themselves and by supposing them already in themselves passively produced; but it measures them properly, as they are contained in the divine action, by which created things are attained and viewed as the terminus of this action. For not only God's intellection and volition are eternal, but also His creative and motive action is eternal, although it has its effect in time. This action is formally immanent and virtually transitive. Thus the creative action in the creation of this particular soul, from eternity regards this individual soul, and yet it is produced only in time.

Futures indeed do not actually have individual existence, either in time or from eternity as passively produced effects, but they exist from eternity as terms implying actual eternal action. And under this aspect, the created thing, although it is not as yet passively produced, is however not only possible, or not only future, but it is really present in eternity, for the divine essence contains it not only as having the power or will to produce it but as actually producing it. Thus the created thing is the object of direct knowledge, although it does not yet exist in its own duration.

Doubt. Is this presentiality the medium of the divine knowledge of future contingent things?

Reply. Presentiality is not the medium of this knowledge, but a mode affecting the object known and a condition for this knowledge to be intuitive. The medium of this divine knowledge, however, is the determination of the divine will as actually causing from eternity. For St. Thomas, to see future things as present in eternity is to see them in the divine will as actually causing them. This is most evident from what St. Thomas has already said in this question, namely, that God does not see created things immediately in themselves, but in Himself as their cause. Farther on he declares that God is the cause of things by His will.

III. THOMIST SOLUTION OF THE OBJECTIONS AGAINST THE CONCLUSION OF THIS ARTICLE

First objection. It is at the beginning of this article, and is as follows: From a necessary cause proceeds a necessary effect; but the knowledge of

God is the necessary cause of things known by Him; therefore things known by Him are necessary.

Reply. I distinguish the major: that a necessary effect proceeds from a proximate necessary cause, this I concede; that from the supreme cause such an effect proceeds, this I subdistinguish: with a proximate necessary cause, this I concede; with a proximate contingent cause, this I deny. Thus, owing to the necessary influence of the sun's rays, the germination of the plant is contingent by reason of the proximate contingent cause.

It must be noted that God's knowledge cannot be called a necessary cause, except in an improper sense: (1) in that it is a necessary prerequisite; (2) in that it is infallibly efficacious; but as such it is a free cause, and as St. Thomas says, "God wills some things to be done necessarily, some contingently." Hence, as will be explained farther on, the divine causality transcends the necessity and contingency that proceed from it.

Second objection. Every conditional proposition of which the antecedent is necessary, must have a necessary consequent; but in this conditional proposition, "If God knew that this thing will be, it will be," the antecedent is necessary, in that it is eternal and immutable; therefore the consequent is also necessary.

Reply. I distinguish the major: if the antecedent is absolutely necessary in fact, then I concede it; if it is necessary as something contingently seen, which cannot at the same time not be seen, then I deny it. Thus, if I see Socrates sitting, he must be sitting, but it is contingent, nevertheless, that he sits.

Third objection. Everything known by God must necessarily be; but no future contingent thing must necessarily be; therefore no future contingent thing is known by God.

Reply. That everything known by God must necessarily be, by reason of a conditional necessity or one of consequence, this I concede; by reason of an absolute necessity or one of consequent in itself, this I deny. Thus, if I see Socrates sitting, he must of necessity be sitting; but it is contingent, as stated above, that he is sitting.

In other words, this proposition, "Everything known by God must necessarily be," if it concerns the thing is divided, and is false; for the meaning is: Everything which God knows is necessary. But the same proposition is true, if understood of the saying and in the composite sense, for then the meaning is: That which is known by God is necessary.

Similarly, we say that what is foreseen by God must of necessity happen; but it happens contingently. For the mode of the necessity affects not the thing and the mode of the thing in itself, but the statement declaring that some foreseen contingent event will infallibly come to pass, such as the conversion of St. Paul.

Expressed more briefly, as stated in the body of the article and in the replies to the second and third objections, the necessity does not affect the thing as it is in itself, but as it is subject to the divine knowledge, as in the case of Socrates who is seen to be sitting.

By this reply contradiction is avoided, but we have still to give the reason why the infallible efficacy of the determination on the part of the divine will does not destroy the freedom of the human will. The divine will does not destroy this freedom, because it actualizes the same and extends even to the free mode of our choice. For God wills some things to be done necessarily, some contingently; and this infallibly happens as God wills.

Another objection. Effects cannot be known with certainty in their universal and remote cause, because the power of the universal cause can be modified and even prevented by a particular cause, just as the sun’s rays can be because of a defective disposition in the plant, which prevents the ripening of the fruit. But the divine cause is the universal and remote cause. Therefore effects cannot be known with certainty in it.

Reply. I distinguish the major; in the universal cause, which is not the supreme cause, this I concede; in the supreme universal cause, on which every other cause depends, this I deny. For nothing prevents the First Cause from producing its effect, unless this is permitted by it. But God does not permit such deficiency in those things which He efficaciously wills, namely, in future contingent things efficaciously willed by Him; and it is of these that we are speaking.

Final objection. If the decree of the divine will is of itself infallibly efficacious, then our acts are necessary, and therefore not free.

Reply. I distinguish the antecedent: if the decree extends only to the substance of the act, this I concede; if it extends also to the free mode of this act, this I deny. For God moves creatures in the way that is befitting to their natures. What is more absurd than to say that God wills efficaciously that this particular sinner be converted freely, as Bossuet says, and then to conclude that he cannot be converted freely?

IV. THE “SCIENTIA MEDIA”

What must be said of the theory proposed by Molina, and known as the scientia media?

Molina says: “We must distinguish between three kinds of knowledge in God, unless we want to expose ourselves to the danger of laboring under a hallucination in reconciling the freedom of our will and the contingency of things with the divine knowledge. One kind is merely natural, and hence it could on no account be other than it is in God, (for it is concerned with necessary and possible things). . . . The second kind is merely free, by which God, after a free act of His will, regardless of any hypothetical condition, knew absolutely . . . what things would come into existence. The third kind, finally, is the scientia media, by which God, from a most profound and inscrutable comprehension of every free will in His essence, has intuited what each, according to its innate liberty, would do if placed in this or that condition, or even in infinite conditions of things, although it could, if it wished, do exactly the opposite.”

Hence Molina maintains that God’s merely natural knowledge is concerned with necessary and possible things; His free knowledge with absolute contingent futures; and the scientia media with conditional futures, which are called futurables, inasmuch as they mediate between the merely possible and the absolute future.

Immediately after the preceding extract, Molina adds: “Perhaps someone will ask whether this kind of scientia media is to be called free or natural. In reply to this it must first of all be said that on no account must this knowledge be called free, both because it precedes every free act of the divine will, and because it was not in God’s power to know by this knowledge anything else than He actually knew. . . . (But) if the created free will were to do the opposite of what it did, as it truly can do, God would have known this very act by the same knowledge, but not that He actually knows it.” Here we have a point of greatest difficulty.

The text of Molina is of great importance. Therefrom it seems to follow that there is a dependence or passivity in God as regards futurables, for instance, this one: If Peter the apostle were placed in the circumstances of the Passion, he would deny the Lord, so that in this order of things God could not have preserved Him from sin. For Molina says: “It was not in God’s power to know by this knowledge anything else than He actually knew. . . . (But) if the created free will were to do the opposite of what it

did, as it truly can do, God would have known this very act by the same knowledge, but not that He actually knows it."

This consequence appears to be absolutely necessary: for if God is not the first determining Cause as regards free conditionate futures, He is determined by them, and there is no other alternative. If all things are not dependent on God, then God Himself is dependent on another. Here is the main difficulty of the question.

The Thomists maintain, indeed, that God infallibly knows free conditionate futures, referred to in prophecies of commination, such as the destruction of Ninive, if the Ninivites are not converted. But they add: God infallibly knows these contingent futurables in a decree that is objectively conditional and subjectively absolute. Such are, for instance, the destruction of Ninive or the conversion of the Tyrians and Sidonians, if Christ had preached to them.

This decree is required, so the Thomists say against the Molinists, because, even posited the condition, these conditionally free acts of the future (futuribilia), as being contingent and free acts, are undetermined. To make the gratuitous assertion that they are determined in themselves, is to end in determinism of circumstances and to posit passivity and dependence in God as regards these acts. For God either is the first determining Cause or is determined by another, or dependent on another at least in the foreknowledge of conditionally free acts of the future.

Therefore the theory of the scientia media essentially consists in this, namely, that God, before the actual decree that is objectively conditional, infallibly knows free conditioned futures, namely, what the created free will would do if placed in certain circumstances. Afterward God decreed to put the will de facto in these or other particular circumstances; and thus dependent on the scientia media He knows absolute contingent futures. Thus God foresees before any decree of His that Peter, if placed in certain circumstances, would make good use of the sufficient grace to be offered him, and then God wills to place Peter in such circumstances.

Molina wants to explain the scientia media by the divine super-comprehension of the created free will. Suarez preserves intact the scientia media in his congruism, but he explains it by the divine knowledge of the formal or objective truth of futurables, as if contingent futurables were in themselves determined before whatsoever divine decree; as if, before any decree, of two contradictory propositions in a contingent matter of the

future, such as, Peter placed in these particular circumstances would or would not deny the Lord, one were determinately true and the other false.

CRITICISM OF THE THEORY OF THE SCIENTIA MEDIA

This theory is not in agreement with the doctrinal principles of St. Paul, St. Augustine, and St. Thomas.

1) St. Paul says: “For who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?” Christ, too, had said: “Without Me you can do nothing.” According to St. Paul’s words just quoted, the singling out of one from another must finally be sought not in the human will, but in God who singles out one from another by His grace. But the scientia media supposes that one by his own will singles himself out from another, for instance, Peter from Judas. Therefore the scientia media does not seek for this singling out in God.

Proof of the minor. Let us suppose that Peter and Judas situated in equal circumstances receive equal prevenient grace; then God sees Peter consenting to accept that grace, and hence singling himself out from Judas who does not consent, not on account of the grace, for an equal grace is indifferently offered to each. Therefore it is because the will decides to accept the grace. Thus do all Thomists argue against Molina, and they thus affirm as revealed the principle that can be called “the principle of predilection,” namely, that no one would be better than another unless he were loved more and helped more by God. This principle is frequently enunciated by St. Paul, as in the following text: “For the Lord saith to Moses: I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy. And I will show mercy to whom I will show mercy. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.”

But this principle cannot be reconciled with the scientia media. For what two persons equally have is not a reason for singling out one from another. But in the same circumstance the grace is supposed equal in Peter consenting and in Judas not consenting. Therefore this grace does not single out one from another, but in the final analysis Peter singles himself out by that which of himself he adds to it, namely, by his consent to and use of the grace. Moreover, St. Paul says: “For it is God who worketh in you both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will.”

2) St. Augustine often quotes the aforesaid text of St. Paul against the Semipelagians: “For who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received?” He says: “It is grace that singles out the good from the bad, not a grace that is common to both good and bad.” “And so this grace that is secretly given by the divine liberality to human hearts, is spurned by no one hard of heart, because it is primarily given to overcome this hardness of heart.” “Of two infants equally bound by original sin, why the one is taken and the other left; and of two wicked men already mature in years, why one should be so called that he follows Him that calleth, while the other is not called at all, or is not called in such a manner; these are unsearchable judgments of God.”

Contrary to this, according to the theory of the scientia media, it would have to be said that of two wicked men situated in equal circumstances, and receiving an equal prevenient grace, God sees one consenting to that grace and then singling himself out from the other.

The considerable opposition between the doctrine of St. Augustine and that of Molina is therefore evident in their definition of predestination. St. Augustine thus defines it: “The predestination of the saints is nothing else than the foreknowledge and preparation of the gifts whereby they who are delivered are most certainly delivered.” “By predestination God foreknew those things which He was going to do.”

On the contrary, Molina says: “To the foreknowledge which includes predestination on the part of the intellect, there is the condition attached of the use of free will without which there would have been no foreknowledge in God.” He also says; “Of two called and helped by an equal grace, one is converted and the other not.” Hence no wonder that Molina acknowledges his departure from the teaching of St. Augustine, as is evident from many passages in the work just quoted.

3) The principles of St. Thomas equally exclude the scientia media.

a) St. Thomas admits only the knowledge of simple intelligence, which is concerned with possible things, and the knowledge of vision which, granted a decree, intuits future things. The knowledge of conditioned futures belongs by a reductive process to this latter.

b) In reconciling the freedom of the will with the divine decrees, St. Thomas never has recourse to the scientia media, which explores the field of human liberty concerning the consent or dissent of the will before there is a divine decree, but with St. Augustine he asserts: “Since the divine will

is perfectly efficacious, it follows not only that things are done which God wills to be done, but also that they are done in the way that He wills. Now God wills some things to be done necessarily, some contingently (and freely)."

c) For St. Thomas, before there is an actual decree on God's part, there is nothing that will be, as is evident from the following passage: "That which now is was about to be before it actually was; because it was in its cause that it would be. Hence, if the cause were removed, that thing's coming to be was not future. But the first cause is alone eternal. Hence it does not follow that it was always true that what now is would be, except in so far as its future being was in the sempiternal cause; and God alone is such a cause." Also this text: "Contingent futures are not knowable in themselves, because their truth is not determined." It is not determined before God's decree, and if it were determined before, God would be determined by these contingent futures in His foreknowledge.

d) According to the teaching of St. Thomas, "God sees things other than Himself, not in themselves but in Himself" as in their cause. But in the theory of the scientia media God is not the cause of the determination of conditionally free acts of the future. Therefore, according to the principles of St. Thomas, God cannot know this determination. Moreover, the Angelic Doctor admits the principles which we now give.

4) Finally, the scientia media conflicts with many principles commonly accepted by the theologians.

a) Before the divine decree, there is no object for the scientia media, because the conditionally free act of the future is not determined either in itself or in another, as was stated.

b) The medium of the scientia media does not precede the divine decree, because there is no cause in which this conditioned future is determined; for it is not determined in the divine cause or in human liberty or in the circumstances; and if it is said that God knows infallibly this conditioned future by exploring the circumstances, then this theory would end in determinism of circumstances. Thus the scientia media, which is devised to save created liberty, would destroy it.

c) God's knowledge cannot be determined by anything which is extrinsic to Him, and which would not be caused by Him. But such is the scientia media, which depends on the determination of the free conditioned future; for this determination does not come from God but from the human liberty,

granted that it is placed in such particular circumstances; so that “it was not in God’s power to know any other thing . . . , but if the created free will were to do the opposite, He would have known this other thing,” as Molina says in the passage just quoted. Thus God would be dependent on another, would be passive in His knowledge, and would be no longer pure Act. The dilemma is unsolvable: Either God is the first determining Being, or else He is determined by another; there is no other alternative. In other words, the scientia media involves an imperfection, which cannot exist in God. Hence there is a certain tinge of anthropomorphism in this theory.

All the aforesaid arguments bring us to this conclusion: there is no determination without a determining cause, and the supreme determining cause is God, otherwise He would be determined by another. But this is nothing else than the principle of causality.

d) With the positing of the scientia media, God is no longer the first and universal Mover, the First Cause, for any movement of the created free will to determine itself is not from God. Thus the demonstration of God’s existence by the first way (from motion) loses very much in forcefulness.

e) Thus this theory takes away from God His supreme dominion over created free wills. In such circumstances, God could not convert the will, if it wills the opposite. For Molina says: “It was not in God’s power to know any other thing, but He would have known this other thing if the created will were to do the opposite of what it did.” But this is contrary to what Holy Scripture says, as in the following texts. “As the divisions of waters, so the heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord; whithersoever He will He shall turn it.” “As the potter’s clay is in his hand, to fashion and order it . . . , so man is in the hand of Him that made Him.” “For it is God who worketh in you both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will.” The theory of the scientia media limits the divine omnipotence. For if God, by means of the scientia media, foresees that our will under certain conditions will refuse to be moved to perform some good act, then He is already incapable of moving our will so that in these conditions it freely consent to be moved to perform this good act.

f) God would no more be the author of good than of bad acts, at least as regards their intrinsic and free determination, because

neither good nor bad acts would come from Him, at least as regards the performance of these acts. He would be the cause of the good determination only by proposing the desirable object. And this even men can do.

g) The scientia media puts less emphasis on the need for prayer. For the Molinist, who would wish to have his theory remain unimpaired in prayer, could not ask God for the efficacious grace that makes him will, that takes away from him the stony heart, that compels the rebellious will to turn to God, as the Church prays. He cannot pray with the profundity of meaning as in the prayer of the Mass: “Make me adhere to Thy commandments and never permit me to be separated from Thee.” But according to the Molinist’s theory, he asks God merely to place him in those circumstances in which He foresaw that he would consent to the grace offered.

h) This theory seems to savor somewhat of Semipelagianism, which holds that the beginning of salvation is from ourselves, and not from God’s grace. Molinism admits a prevenient interior grace, indeed, but maintains that it moves the will only objectively and not infallibly; in fact, according to Molina, “of two that are called and equally aided by grace, it can happen that one of them is converted, and the other not.” Thus the true beginning of salvation appears to be only in the one who is converted, which appears to be a free determination that is from God only in so far as He objectively urges this one to the free determination, just as He urges the other who is not converted.

Finally, the scientia media has been frequently condemned because of the novelty of this theory. In fact, Molina acknowledges that he is the discoverer of this theory. Nevertheless the Semipelagians made use of this knowledge according as it served their purpose, saying that God foresees the good use of free will and for this reason gives the grace. He also foresees the good works that would have been performed by the baptized infants if they had not died.

The Molinists object, indeed, that Christ said: “Woe to thee, Corozain! Woe to thee, Bethsaida! For if in Tyre and Sidon had been wrought the miracles that have been wrought in you, they had long ago done penance in sackcloth and ashes.” But, as they say, this reproof would have been unjust if understood in the Thomist sense; for, according to the opinion of the Thomists, the Jews could have justly replied to this by saying: Lord, if Thou hadst efficaciously decreed our penance on the supposition of Christ’s preaching, just as Thou didst decree the penance of the Tyrians on the same condition of Christ’s preaching and miracles, we would have repented, just as they did.

To this the Thomists reply: (1) This was the very way St. Paul argued in the objection which he put to himself; for, after having said: “So, then, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy, (who) hath mercy on whom He will, and whom He will, He hardeneth,” he at once follows this up with the counterobjection: “Thou wilt say therefore to me: Why does He then find fault? For who resisteth His will?” The apostle does not solve the objection, however, by having recourse to God’s foreseeing our consent, whether this is for what is good or for what is bad; but he says: “O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it: Why hast thou made me thus? Or hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump, to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?” The apostle does not settle the dispute by saying that all have sufficient grace, the efficacy of which depends on their consent foreseen by God. He replies that God is not bound to give the efficacious grace, for it is something freely given, as the name grace indicates.

A direct answer is given to this objection by saying that it was the Jews’ fault that they were hardened, whereas the Tyrians were not; because they made it more difficult for themselves to receive the efficacious grace, which was offered in the sufficient grace. The Tyrians would not have resisted Christ’s preaching and miracles, and thus they would not have been deprived of the efficacious grace. The Jews showed themselves more unworthy than the Tyrians, because of their greater blindness of intellect and ingratitude.

Instance. Man of his own free will can at least not resist sufficient grace, just as he can resist it. Therefore the difficulty remains.

Reply. I deny the antecedent, for there is a great difference between resisting and not resisting. To resist sufficient grace is an evil, and is solely of our own doing; not to resist it is a good which is not solely of our own doing, but which comes also from the source of all good, God’s efficacious will, who eternally willed this act of non-resistance to be performed right at this moment in time. As St. Thomas says: “Whatever God simply wills takes place; although what He wills antecedently, may not take place.”

Final objection. God infallibly knows future sins, and yet He is not the cause of them. Therefore it is false to say that God’s infallible knowledge has its foundation in the divine causality or in the decrees of the divine will.

Reply. I distinguish the antecedent. God infallibly knows future sins in His permissive decree as to what there is of deordination or privation in sin; and He knows them in His positive decree, as to the physical entity of sin, with which He concurs. And I deny the consequent. Without a permissive decree, God would know these sins as possible, but not as future.

This reply has its foundation in this most certain principle, namely, that just as no good, however insignificant it may be, happens to belong de facto to this man rather than to a certain other, unless God eternally and efficaciously willed that it should thus happen, so no sin happens to be in this man rather than in a certain other, unless God permitted it. The sinner, to be sure, in the very moment of sinning, can avoid committing the sin, and God eternally willed that it be really possible for the sinner to avoid committing the sin, and this is known as God's antecedent will. But God did not efficaciously will that this sinner right at this moment should de facto avoid committing sin; and if God had efficaciously willed it, this sinner de facto not only really could avoid sin, but would avoid it. As St. Thomas says: "Whatever God simply wills, takes place; although what He wills antecedently, may not take place." This is the ultimate reason for the distinction between sufficient grace and grace that is of itself efficacious. There is, indeed, a mystery in this, but we now disclose the element of clarity in this light-transcending obscurity. It cannot strictly be said, however, that Molina directly denies these commonly admitted principles just given; but by introducing the scientia media, which posits a passivity in God, he impairs their validity.

ON THE VARIOUS WAYS OF EXPLAINING THE SCIENTIA MEDIA

The Molinists say that the divine decree is not necessary for God's infallible knowledge of conditioned futures, for He certainly knows them (1) either in His ideas before the decree, or (2) by His supercomprehensive knowledge of the causes, or (3) in the formal or objective truth of contingent conditioned futures.

In reply to this we say: (1) God cannot, before a divine decree, infallibly know conditioned futures in His ideas, because, according to the divine ideas, the thing may either exist or not exist; there may be either consent or no consent, and they do not include the determination of our free will.

2) Nor is the supercomprehensive knowledge of causes a sufficient explanation of God's infallible knowledge of conditioned futures, because free causes are indifferent, and the examination of the circumstances does not suffice, unless we admit determinism of circumstances.

3) Nor does it suffice with Suarez to have recourse to the formal or objective truth of contingent conditioned futures, saying that before the divine decree, of two contradictory propositions concerning the future, one will be true and the other false, and that this is known by God from all eternity.

In reply to this we say with Aristotle, that of two contradictory propositions concerning the future in contingent matter, one will be true and the other false, but that neither is determinately true (before the divine decree); otherwise the result of this would be the logical fatalism of the Stoics.

RECAPITULATION

From the foregoing it is clearly enough established that Molinism is not a scientifically elaborated system, one that proceeds from certain and universal principles. But it starts out by presenting some particular objection for solution. Then it proposes the solution of the same, and ends willingly or unwillingly in the denial of the principle of causality (the transition of the created free will from potentiality to actuality would in this case be without cause) and of higher principles which concern God. Such principles are the following: God is pure Act without any potentiality, passivity, or even dependence in His knowledge; God is the first Cause and most universal Mover of both corporeal and spiritual beings to their acts of understanding and their voluntary choices.

Therefore the theory of the scientia media seems to imply not only a mystery, but a contradiction. Although it is devised for the preservation of free will, it seems to end in the destruction of the same through determinism of circumstances.

On the contrary, Thomism is a scientifically elaborated doctrine, which starts from certain and universal principles, and reaches its conclusions by a legitimate process. Therefore, if in these conclusions there is obscurity, this is owing to God's incomprehensibility and His intimate action on our free will, but it is not owing to contradiction.

Molinism says that it places the mystery in God's knowledge, namely, in the scientia media. Thomism finds that it consists in the efficacy of the divine will, which is able infallibly to move our will to choose freely, inasmuch as the divine will extends even to the free mode of our choice, actualizing but not destroying our free will.

HOW CONDITIONALLY FREE ACTS OF THE FUTURE ARE KNOWN BY GOD, ACCORDING TO THE PRINCIPLES OF THE THOMIST DOCTRINE

The prophecies of commination are concerned with free conditioned futures which, as stated, occupy a middle ground between the purely possible and the absolute future. Such are, when the destruction of Ninive is announced, if the Ninivites are not converted, and when Christ our Lord said that the Tyrians and Sidonians would have been converted, if the Gospel had been preached to them, and they had seen the miracles performed.

According to the principles of Thomism, how does God know infallibly from all eternity these free conditioned futures? The Thomists commonly reply that these are known in God's decree, which is objectively conditional and subjectively absolute; and without this decree, the aforesaid conditionally free acts of the future would remain, as stated, undetermined and therefore unknowable even to God Himself.

1) St. Thomas proves this inasmuch as he acknowledges in God an antecedent will to save all mankind, and he says that this will is sincere and is one of good pleasure. But, according to St. Thomas, this antecedent will is subjectively absolute and objectively conditional. For the holy Doctor says: "The antecedent will can be called a conditioned will, and yet the imperfection is not on the part of the divine will, but of the thing willed, which is not accepted with all the required circumstances for its right ordering to salvation." This means that God would save all mankind, if this did not conflict with the manifestation of His attributes, one of these being His justice.

2) Proof from reason. Without this divine decree contingent and secondary causes are undetermined as to whether or not they produce the effect. Hence without this decree conditioned futures would still belong to the order of possible things. But there is clearly a difference between the conditionally free act of the future and the purely possible. Thus it is evident that there are two possibilities for Peter as regards the situation in

which he finds himself during our Lord's Passion: he can either deny our Lord or not deny Him. But the conditioned future has this determination attached to it, namely, which of these two possible things Peter would choose if he were placed in these circumstances. Therefore without the aforesaid conditioned decree the free conditioned future would not be knowable, even to God Himself. "Contingent futures are not knowable in themselves, because their truth is not determined."

WHAT MUST BE SAID OF THE OTHER OPINIONS CONCERNING THE FOREKNOWLEDGE OF CONDITIONED FUTURES

1) Certain Scotists, as also some later theologians, said that God knows free futures in a concomitant and non-determining decree. But if this decree is only concomitant, then it will not be the cause of future things, for the cause, at least in the order of nature, precedes its effect. Hence this concomitant decree cannot be the medium for knowing the future. Thus all the disadvantages of the scientia media reappear.

2) Others teach that God knows future things in a decree, either absolute or conditional, multiplying the number of graces until the creature consents. This opinion resembles the congruism of Suarez, inasmuch as the multiplication of graces is equivalent to a congruent grace, but not to one that is of itself efficacious.

Nor can such a decree be the foundation for certainty of foreknowledge. There is no certainty in this multiplication of graces as to which of them will conquer the will, and when it will do so. God's foreknowledge is insufficiently explained by saying that He makes a shrewd guess; absolute certainty is required. Therefore these opinions, whether those defending them wish it or not, end finally in the theory of the scientia media. There is no other alternative between the scientia media and the doctrine of the divine predetermining decree. Either God infallibly knows contingent futures, even conditioned futures, in His determining decree, which extends even to the free mode of our choices, or else He does not know them in this decree, that is, before this decree, which is precisely the theory of the scientia media.

It must be noted finally that what has been said against the Molinists applies also to the Jansenists as regards the state of innocence; for these admit the scientia media and extrinsically efficacious grace in this state. If,

after original sin, they admit the presence of intrinsically efficacious grace, they do so not because of the dependence of the created will on God, but because of its weakness, by reason of the consequences of original sin.

FOURTEENTH ARTICLE

WHETHER GOD KNOWS ENUNCIABLE THINGS

The answer is in the affirmative, because God knows whatever is in our power to perform. Yet He knows these enunciable things, not after the manner of enunciable things, by way of composition and division, but by simple intelligence. For all things are represented in the divine essence unitedly and undividedly, not like our intelligible species which represent one thing in such a way as not to represent another. So, in like manner, God knows material things immaterially.

FIFTEENTH ARTICLE

WHETHER GOD'S KNOWLEDGE IS INVARIABLE

The answer is in the affirmative, because God's knowledge is self-subsistent intelligence, which is altogether invariable, just as the self-subsistent Being is.

Therefore God's knowledge is measured by eternity, and it absolutely transcends time, embracing all time. It is in this sense that we must understand the following text: With God "there is no change nor shadow of alteration."

Reply to first objection. "Created things are in God in an invariable manner, while they exist variably in themselves."

Reply to third objection. There is, indeed, variation in enunciable things known by God (e.g., Christ will be born, Christ was born). But God does not know enunciable things as we do, after the manner of enunciable things, by way of composition and division, but by simple intelligence, as was stated.

SIXTEENTH ARTICLE

In answer to this it is stated that knowledge is said to be speculative in three ways: (1) on the part of the thing known, which is not operable by the knower; (2) as regards the manner of knowing, if the operable thing be considered also by defining it, resolving it into its universal principles, for instance, stating what a harp is; (3) as regards the end, if there be a consideration also of the operable thing only as it concerns knowledge, not action.

But God has only speculative knowledge of Himself, because He is not operable. He has speculative knowledge of other things as regards the mode, since He knows not only how things are made, but what they are; He has practical knowledge of those things that can be made but never will be, and this as regards both the object and the mode, but not as regards the end on the part of the knower; He has simply and actually practical knowledge of those things that come to be in some period of time. But it must be noted that God's knowledge is eminently speculative and practical, being in itself undivided, and the only distinction in it is on the part of the things known.

Scotus held that God's knowledge of Himself is simply practical, because it is naturally prior to divine love by which He loves Himself. In reply to this it must be said that it does not suffice for practical knowledge that love of the object known follow it; the form of the work or the object of operation must be determined by it, so that it can be called the rule of operation.

Thus we terminate this question of God's knowledge, in which it has been our special purpose to show that God, by reason of His absolute immateriality, is in the highest degree cognitive; in fact, that He is the self-subsistent Intellection; that He knows things other than Himself, in Himself and not immediately in themselves; that He knows possible things, indeed, inasmuch as they have their foundation in the divine essence, as it is imitable ad extra, and He knows existing things in the decree of His will, without which His knowledge would not be the cause of things; that He knows contingent futures not only in His decree, but inasmuch as they are already eternally present to Him, this being the intrinsic terminus of the eternal creative or motive action, the effects of which are passively produced in time. In this way the perfection of God's knowledge, which is intuitive and absolutely invariable, is preserved intact. Its measure is eternity, which includes all time within its ambit.

CHAPTER XV

QUESTION 15

OF IDEAS

THIS question determines what must be retained of the exemplarism of Plato, as St. Augustine understood it, in that the exemplary ideas of things are not outside God as Aristotle interpreted it, but are in Him.

St. Thomas shows in this question that Augustinian exemplarism cannot be admitted on God's part without rejecting the principles of Aristotelianism.

FIRST ARTICLE

WHETHER THERE ARE IDEAS

The answer is "As then the world was not made by chance, but by God acting by His intellect, there must exist in the divine mind a form to the likeness of which the world was made. And in this the notion of an idea consists."

Reply to first objection. "God does not understand things according to an idea existing outside Himself." In fact, the idea, for instance, of man or dog cannot exist outside God and individuals of these species, for their nature implies a common matter (bones and flesh), and these cannot exist apart from individualized matter (these bones, this flesh). But matter in common can be abstracted, or it can be conceived apart from individualized matter, but it cannot exist apart from such matter.

Reply to second objection. The divine essence, as being representative of creatable and created things, is of the nature of an idea or exemplar. Similarly, in accordance with the reply to the third objection, it must be said

that the divine idea is identical with God’s essence, as known, and as it is capable of participation and imitation in various ways ad extra.

SECOND ARTICLE

WHETHER THERE ARE MANY IDEAS IN GOD

There are many ideas in God, inasmuch as there can be no idea of the whole world unless there are proper ideas of those things which constitute the world. But this plurality of ideas is not repugnant to God’s simplicity, because the divine ideas are identical with God’s essence as known and capable of imitation in various ways ad extra.

“Now it is not repugnant to the simplicity of the divine mind that it understand many things; though it would be repugnant to its simplicity were His understanding to be formed by a plurality of images,” or determined by these in understanding them, as St. Thomas says in this article.

It must be remarked that God, by understanding His essence, inasmuch as it is the principle of variously possible creatural imitation, and as it is the terminus of this relation of imitability, which declares a real relation of the creature to it, is in no real relation to creatures.

St. Thomas likewise says in another of his works: “And therefore the divine essence, which implies a knowledge of the various degrees in which things are related to it, is the idea of each particular thing. Hence, since there is a diversity in the degrees of relationship of things to it, there must be a plurality of ideas owing to the various degrees in which creatures are related to it.” He also says: “God understands the relation of things to His essence, and so these relations are in God as understood by Him.”

THIRD ARTICLE

WHETHER THERE ARE IDEAS OF ALL THINGS THAT GOD KNOWS

The difficulty is whether God has ideas of evil, primary matter, and not only of created natures, but also of singulars and accidents. These questions were already raised by Plato in the elaboration of his exemplarism, a system which was perfected by St. Augustine.

The answer is that the idea, as an exemplar, refers to everything made by God in any period of time, and the idea as the principle of knowledge refers to all possible things. Hence, as stated in the reply to the first objection, “there is no idea of evil in God, neither in so far as an idea is an exemplar (because God is not the cause of evil) nor as a type (because evil is known by God not through its own type, but through the type of good).”

The reply to the third objection posits another corollary: “Since we hold matter to be created by God, though not apart from form, matter has its idea in God; but not apart from the idea of the composite; for matter in itself can neither exist nor be known.

Reply to fourth objection. Accidents that are properties of some created nature do not have a special idea that is distinct from the idea of this nature. But accidents which supervene to the subject have their special idea. And providence extends to individuals, as will be shown later.

Hence, as the Thomists say, God has actually practical ideas of those things which He does or will do, because they are determined for realization by a decree of His will. But God has virtually practical ideas of possible things, because they are not meant for realization by a decree of His will St. Thomas stated this clearly in the following passage: “The (divine) idea is determined by a decree of the divine will as regards those things that either are or will be or were produced; but it is not so determined as regards those things that neither are nor were nor will be produced; and so the ideas of things of this kind (possible things) are to some extent undetermined.”

The causality of the divine idea is an exemplary causality, or one of extrinsic form, just as the idea of a house is in the mind of the architect. Therefore the divine ideas are the exemplars of things, but they are produced only “according to the determination of the divine will and intellect.”

In this we see what St. Thomas retains of Platonism. Exemplary ideas are not outside God but in God, and the divine ideas are the supreme causes of things, but in so far as the determination of the divine liberty is joined to them, which is not what Plato said. But as regards our intellectual knowledge, the divine ideas are not immediately known by our intellect, as the ontologists said, nor can they be immediately seen without our seeing God’s essence; but they are known mediately in the mirror of sensible things, as being the supreme norms and eternal types of things.

On this point St. Thomas says: “One thing is said to be known in another in two ways. First, as in an object itself known; as one may see in a mirror the images of things reflected in it. Thus the soul, in the present state of life, cannot see all things in the eternal types; but it is in this way that the blessed know all things in the eternal types, for they see God and all things in Him.

“Secondly, one thing is said to be known in another as in a principle of knowledge: thus we might say that we see in the sun what we see by the sun. And thus we must say that the human soul knows all things in the eternal types, since by participation of these types we know all things. For the intellectual light itself which is in us is nothing else than a participated likeness of the uncreated light, in which are contained the eternal types.”

Thus the divine ideas are the eternal exemplary forms of beings and created intellection. This means that the created being and created intellection have the same ultimate foundation. In other words, if there is harmony between being and intellect, between the laws of the mind and the laws of being, it is because created intellect and created being proceed from the same supreme cause.

This constitutes the ultimate metaphysical foundation for the ontological validity of our knowledge which by way of investigation begins with facts of experience and first principles of reason and being, and ascends to God. As St. Thomas says: “By way of investigation we come through knowledge of temporal things to that of things eternal. . . . By way of judgment, from eternal things already known, we judge of temporal things, and according to laws of things eternal we dispose of temporal things.”

Thus the holy Doctor retains what must be retained of Plato’s exemplarism as St. Augustine conceived it; yet he does not depart from the moderate realism of Aristotle, and he avoids all the excesses of idealism.

CHAPTER XVI

QUESTION 16

OF TRUTH

SUMMARY OF DOCTRINE

ST. THOMAS first treats of truth in general and then of divine truth. Concerning truth in general he considers it in its threefold relationship: (1) to the intellect by which it is known or manifested; (2) to being on which it is founded; (3) to good which follows as a property of being. These questions are treated at length in metaphysics, so that we shall not devote much time to them.

In the first article it is shown that truth resides formally and primarily in the intellect and secondarily in things as they relate to the intellect. But things are measured. by the divine intellect and by the divine ideas, and they measure our intellect, which is said to be true in so far as it is in conformity with them. Thus “a stone is called true which possesses the nature proper to a stone, according to the preconception in the divine intellect.”

In the second article it is shown that the conformity or identity between our intellect and the thing can indeed already be present in the intellectual act of simple apprehension by way of a representation that expresses conformity with the thing. But a conformity as known and compared with the thing, is found only in the act of judgment, or in the intellect composing and dividing, because it is there that the conformity or non-conformity of the predicate with the subject is first clearly seen, inasmuch as it is true to say that a thing is what it is, and is not what it is not; and that it is false to say that a thing is what it is not, and is not what it is.

The third article determines the relation of truth to being. Truth as found in things is convertible with being, entitatively or according to substance, by adding relation to the intellect, such as true gold. But truth as found in

the intellect is not convertible with being entitatively, but manifestatively, as the manifestator is with the thing manifested, or regulatively, as the regulator is with the thing regulated. Thus the intellect is true when judging of a thing or regulating what must be regulated.

The fourth article concerns the relation of truth to goodness. It is stated that, although the true and the good are the same entitatively, yet in their formal aspects the true is prior to the good, because the true has its foundation in the being of the thing, according to its very essence; but the good has its foundation in the thing according as it is perfect and desirable. Similarly, the true refers to knowledge, which is prior to the appetite, to which good refers; for nothing is willed that is not foreknown.

The second part of the question is about divine truth, namely, how it exists in God; and from divine truth it is shown that truth is one, eternal, and immutable.

The fifth article shows that God is not only true, but is Truth itself, because His being is not only conformed to His intellect, but is the very subsistent act of His intellect. Moreover, God is the supreme truth, because His act of understanding is the cause of every other being and intellect. Thus God is the first truth in the ontological, logical, and moral orders, in that it is impossible for God to lie.

The sixth article explains that truth which is absolutely one, is found only in the divine intellect, which is the measure of all things; but in creatures there are as many ontological truths as there are entities, and as many formal truths as there are things known to be true.

The seventh article shows that the positively eternal truth is found only in the divine intellect, which alone is eternal; but negatively some things are said to be of eternal truth, because they abstract from circumstances of place and time. Such are the principles of contradiction, causality . . . , and all necessary propositions. But the formal or cognitive truth of these statements is eternal only in the divine intellect, in that God alone knows from eternity these necessary truths.

Therefore we must not overlook what St. Thomas says in another of his works: “From the fact that truths known by the intellect are eternal with regard to what is thus known, one cannot conclude that the soul is eternal, but that the truths known have their foundation in something eternal. They have their foundation in that first Truth which, as the universal cause, contains within itself all truth.”

This is the proof of God's existence founded on the eternal verities, and it is referred back to the fourth proof of St. Thomas, in that it ascends from different degrees of truth until it reaches the maximum truth. For it is evident that an absolutely necessary principle, such as the principle of contradiction, by which all actual and possible beings and all our intelligences are necessarily regulated, must have its foundation in some necessary and supreme Being and in some supreme and eternal Intellect. For this absolutely necessary principle, such as the principle of contradiction, cannot have its foundation in some contingent existence, or in a multiplicity of such contingent existences, for all these come under the law of this principle; but this necessary and negatively eternal truth postulates as its ultimate foundation one that is necessarily and positively eternal.

Finally, the eighth article shows that the truth of the divine intellect is immutable, whereas our intellect changes from truth to falsity; and this happens in two ways: (1) when one gets a wrong opinion about something which in itself has not changed; or (2) when the thing is changed, but not the opinion.

CHAPTER XVII

QUESTION 17

OF FALSITY

As opposed to truth, St. Thomas treats of falsity in its relation to things, to sense, to intellect, and to truth itself.

The first article shows that natural things, in so far as they are compared with the divine intellect, are not false, because in so far they exist, inasmuch as they are from God, and are from His idea to which they conform. Yet it is possible for moral actions even to withdraw themselves from God's rule, and therefore sins are called lies. But in relation to the created intellect things can be called false, either because they are signified by what is false, or because of their resemblance to the truth, as brass is false gold.

In the second article it is decided that falsity, formally as such, is not formally in the senses as in one knowing falsity, because the senses do not compare one thing with another. Nevertheless there is an occasion of falsity or of false judgment from the senses apprehending the thing as being like what it truly is. As remarked in this article concerning proper sensibles (such as color, sound), the senses have no false knowledge, except accidentally, because of a defect in the organ; but of the common sensibles (such as extension, distance) and of the accidental sensibles (such as substance, life) the senses, even rightly disposed, can have a false knowledge, because of the abnormal way in which the object is proposed to the faculty; for the senses are not directly and immediately referred to these. Thus a stick half submerged in the water appears to be broken.

The third article concludes that the intellect cannot be false in the simple apprehension of a thing, but in composition and division, or in judgment, inasmuch as it attributes to a thing what does not belong to it. Thus there can accidentally be falsity in the first act of the intellect, which is apprehension, in so far as composition of the intellect is mixed up in it, for

instance, if in a definition parts are united which are mutually exclusive, such as “a reasonable four-footed animal.”

Finally, in the fourth article, St. Thomas teaches that truth and falsity, which are found in the intellect, are opposed as contraries and not merely as privations, because each consists in some act, or acceptance on the part of the intellect, which is truth, indeed, according to an adequate apprehension or conformity, and falsity according to an inadequate apprehension.

Thus the questions about truth and falsity are concluded as they concern God, which is the way they must be concluded in theology.

CHAPTER XVIII

QUESTION 18

THE LIFE OF GOD

SINCE to understand belongs to living beings, after consideration of the divine intellect comes the question of the divine life.

The first article concludes that the difference between living and lifeless things is, that living things move themselves to their actions. We already see that such is the case with plants, which nourish or renew, and reproduce themselves; whereas, on the other hand, lifeless things are merely moved by another, such as stones, which do not move themselves, but are moved and drawn by another.

The second article shows that life is not an accidental but a substantial predicate in living things, although it manifests itself to us by vital operations, and these are accidents. Thus the substance of a plant, an animal, a man, is life in first actuality, although it is only in their operations that they have life in second actuality.

The third article concludes that life in the highest degree and essentially so is in God, because He is subsistent Intellection, so that He is not determined or moved by another; for in so far as a thing is lower in the scale of beings, or is less endowed with life, just so is it in need of being moved or determined by another, so that it move itself. Thus there is no created living being that is so completely endowed with life as to be absolutely the principle of its own action, and not need to be moved by another. Even the higher creatures, those of the intellectual order, need to be moved efficiently by God, the supreme agent, and to be drawn to Him as their ultimate end.

God alone is essentially Life, just as He is Wisdom itself, and subsistent Intellection. Hence Christ affirmed His divinity when He said: “I am the

way, the truth, and the life." Creatures of the higher order have life, but they are not life itself.

In this article St, Thomas has depicted for us the beautiful gradation in being, from the plant life to essential life, showing that the nobler the life, the more it is immanent and immobile. Plants live by nutrition, increase, and reproduction; but the form by which they act and the end for which they act are determined for them by nature. Animals move themselves, moreover, to their objects apprehended through the senses. Man, however, prescribes for himself the end for which he acts, and yet he must be moved by a higher efficient Cause and be drawn to Him as his ultimate end. Only God, who is subsistent Intellection, is essential life that is absolutely immanent and immobile. But this immobility of supreme life is fundamentally the very opposite of the immobility of inertia or death. This latter means the absence of operation or privation of movement, whereas the operation of God's intellect and will is most perfect, and is always in act. His life is always in second actuality, and is not a transitive action, but an immanent and most perfect action.

The fourth article shows that all things that proceed from God have their life in Him, according to the ideal being they have in His act of understanding, in His divine idea. Thus all things live in God, as Holy Scripture says in the following text: "Without Him was made nothing that was made. In Him was life."

CHAPTER XIX

QUESTION 19

THE WILL OF GOD

AFTER considering the things that belong to the divine knowledge, we must consider what belongs to the divine will. We shall proceed in the following order: (1) About God's will itself (q. 19). (2) About what strictly belongs to His will, namely, divine love, which is the act of His divine will (q. 20), and justice and mercy, which may be regarded as virtues residing in the divine will, by way of analogy with the moral virtues that reside in our will (q. 21). (3) About what belongs to the intellect in relation to His will, namely, Providence as regards all things (q. 22), and predestination in respect of man as regards his salvation (q. 23).

Already from this division as set forth in the prologue, it is evident that Providence is named by way of analogy with our prudence, which presupposes a rightly ordered appetite, or a rightly ordered will.

Thus the discussion is about the divine moral acts, by way of analogy with the virtues of the rational soul, namely, of the will and intellect; for it is evident that the virtues of the sensitive soul, such as temperance, cannot be analogically and properly in God, who is a pure spirit. In other words, the inferior virtues cannot be in God, nor even the theological virtues, which in us refer to God as our superior. Nevertheless, God's love for Himself and for us, which is discussed in the twentieth question, corresponds analogically to our love of God and of our neighbor.

The nineteenth question, which concerns God's will, is divided into twelve articles, and these again are subdivided into three principal parts. The first part includes the questions as to the existence (a. 1) and nature of the divine will (a. 2). The second part is concerned with the ways in which God's will operates as regards His acts and objects, in that creatures are freely willed by Him (a. 3), in that His will is the cause of things (a. 4), in

that His volition is uncaused (a. 5), that it is most efficacious and immutable, and does not impose necessity on things willed (a. 6-8), and finally that His will is impeccable, or that He cannot will sin (a. 9). The third part, which includes the last two articles, concerns the manifestation of God's will: whether the will of expression is to be distinguished in God, and whether there are five expressions of will assigned to the divine will.

In this arrangement, what constitutes the very kernel of this question is more clearly seen, for the division is not immediately made by means of twelve members in opposition to one another, but by means of two, which must afterward be subdivided. And, in fact, the first two parts are reduced to one, namely, God's will in itself, which must be considered before its manifestation is discussed.

But the subdivisions show that St. Thomas considered everything that pertains to this question, both as to God Himself and ourselves, according to the various modes of God's liberty, and as to His efficacious causality and impeccability, which directly pertain more to His will than to His intellect.

The fourth article of this question, whether God's will is the cause of things, must be carefully considered in its connection with the question of God's knowledge, in which it is stated that God's knowledge is the cause of things in so far as His will is joined to it. The eighth article of this question: whether the will of God imposes necessity on things willed, which throws light on the foreknowledge of contingent futures, must also be most diligently examined.

FIRST ARTICLE

WHETHER THERE IS WILL IN GOD

State of the question. The word "will" has two meanings, for it means either the act of willing, as when one says: it is my will that you do this; or else it refers to the faculty of willing. But in this article it matters not in which sense the word is used, for the other meaning is implied, especially in God, who is pure Act.

The difficulty is: (1) that the object of the will is the end; but we cannot assign any end to God; (2) that the will is an appetitive faculty which is for something not possessed; but this denotes imperfection, which is not in

God; (3) that the will moves, and is moved in that it is moved by the intellect; but God is the first cause of movement, and He Himself is unmoved. It may be further remarked that Aristotle, who discussed God's intellect at sufficient length, did not at least explicitly refer to God's will and liberty; perhaps he thought they could not be reconciled with the supremely determined although unlimited pure Act; for God is not capable of further determination by His divine free act, as though something might be wanting to Him. Hence the difficulty.

The answer is in the affirmative. There must be will in God, since there is intellect in Him.

1) This answer is not a theological conclusion, but is of faith, although the existence of God's will can be proved from His intellect. That this conclusion is of faith is evident from very many texts of Holy Scripture, such as the following: "Whatsoever the Lord pleased, He hath done." "For who resisteth His will?" The Fathers understood these and similar texts not in a metaphysical sense, as when it is said that God is angry, but in a proper although analogical sense. The reason for this interpretation is that, whereas anger includes imperfection, what is formally signified by will implies no imperfection.

Finally, it is the common teaching of the councils. The following quotation from the Vatican Council suffices for our purpose: "The Holy . . . Church believes that there is one God . . . infinite in intelligence, in will, and in all perfection."

It must be noted that in this truth of the faith, namely, that will belongs properly to God, more is affirmed than in the following assertion from Plato: "Why did God produce the world? Because He was good and not avaricious, but free from envy." Similarly, toward the end of his treatise entitled The Banquet, he speaks not only of the supreme Good, but of His love for those things that proceed from Him.

But Plato's idea of God's goodness is not so much a goodness of benevolence, as a metaphysical goodness that is essentially diffusive of itself and fecund. Similarly Plotinus' supreme hypostasis is the One-Good, diffusive of itself, but actually diffusive of itself by a necessity of its nature, by way of emanation, and not by a free act of will creating all things other than itself from nothing.

So, therefore, in these conceptions of the Greek mind, the world appears as a necessary irradiation from God, just as the rays of the sun proceed from

the sun; and so the world is a manifestation of His goodness and physical perfection. This paves the way for pantheism.

On the contrary, God's will, and indeed His free will, the principle of a most free creation, are revealed to us far more clearly in the Old and New Testaments. Consequently God is conceived not only as the supreme Good, expressed in the neuter form, τὸ ἀγαθόν (the good), but as He who is supremely good, full of benevolence, ὁ ἀγαθός (He who is good); He is conceived, indeed, as the supreme Person. This is already evident from the first chapter of Genesis, for we read: "Be light made. And light was made." So this thought is constantly recurring: "He hath done all things, whatsoever He would." This becomes increasingly evident in the New Testament, especially when Jesus says: "For God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son." Similarly, "He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is charity. By this hath the charity of God appeared toward us, because He hath first loved us and sent His Son to be a propitiation for our sins. My dearest, if God hath so loved us, we also ought to love one another." And again: "But God commendeth His charity toward us, because when as yet we were sinners, Christ died for us."

This mode of speech differs very much from that employed by Plato, Aristotle, or Plotinus. For these Greeks, the world appears to proceed from God according to a certain necessity of His nature, as the rays emanate from the sun. In this way God's metaphysical goodness, which is diffusive of itself, is made manifest rather than His benevolence, which is analogically conceived as the benevolence of a living person who has companionship with us.

There is a considerable difference on this point between the Christian teaching and that of modern philosophers. If some of them exaggerated the divine liberty and said, as Descartes did, that the truth of the principle of contradiction and the primary distinction between good and evil depend on God's free will, nevertheless very many did not sufficiently recognize God's free will. Spinoza and the pantheists of his school absolutely denied it, for pantheism is absolute determinism. Others, such as Leibnitz and Malebranche, exceedingly restricted God's free will, saying that God would be neither wise nor good if He had not created, and if He had not created the best of possible worlds. This paves the way for pantheism, for if such be the case, then the world is already, as it were, a necessary irradiation from

God, not indeed by a metaphysical or physical necessity, but by a moral necessity.

On the contrary, God's will is affirmed most emphatically in revelation, and His absolute liberty is particularly described whenever it refers to God's good pleasure, as in the following texts: "Remember us, O Lord, in the favor of Thy people." And again: "I confess to Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them to little ones. Yea, Father; for so hath it seemed good in Thy sight."

There is evidently nothing like this to be found in the writings of Aristotle. Similarly, in the writings of Greek philosophers there is nowhere any reference to the purpose of the divine will, so often spoken of by St. Paul, as in the following text: "He hath predestinated us . . . according to the purpose of His will." And in another of his epistles we read: "that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand" (ἵνα ἡ κατ᾽ ἐκλογὴν πρόθεσις τοῦ Θεοῦ μένη). The purpose of the divine will is the same as the decree of the divine will. It still pertains to the order of intention, which precedes the order of execution, just as our purpose must afterward be put into execution.

Thus in the very first article on God's will, by the light of divine revelation His will is affirmed in the strict and full sense of the term, so that there is nothing like this to be found in the writings of Aristotle, or even in those of Plato and Plotinus; and far more so does this apply to the writings of Spinoza and the modern pantheists.

2) In the body of the article, St. Thomas proves a priori that there is will in God, and moreover that His will is His existence and His act of willing. Under this aspect these truths seem to be theological conclusions, but they are already revealed; for among the revealed truths, some are dependent on others, as the immortality of the soul depends on its spirituality.

But the existence of will in God is proved a priori, in that the will properly has its root in the intellect, and is reduced to the following syllogism: Will follows upon intellect; but there is intellect in God; therefore there is will in God.

The major is proved in virtue of the similarity of proportion that prevails between the natural form and the intelligible form, since we know spiritual things in the mirror of sensible things. For just as a natural thing, for instance, a plant, is in actuality by its specific form, so the intellect is

actually intelligent by its intelligible form, which represents the object. But everything tends toward its natural form when it has not this form, and is at rest therein when it has it; thus matter tends toward its form, or, when the form is acquired, it rests therein and retains it. Similarly every natural thing tends to possess and retain its integral parts, as the plant, for instance, seeks to have and retain its normal size. For all these things the natural appetite suffices, which is the thing itself tending by its very nature toward its natural perfection. It is often called a natural inclination, as in the case of the stone, that tends toward the center of the earth.

Hence proportionately so, as stated in this article, “intellectual natures have a like aptitude to good as apprehended through its intelligible form; so as to rest therein when possessed, and when not possessed to seek to possess it, both of which pertain to the will. Hence in every intellectual being there is will, just as in every sensible being there is animal appetite,” which is called sensitive. And thus there must be will in God, since there is intellect in Him.

Cajetan and John of St. Thomas draw attention to the difficulty that is, nevertheless, inherent in this proof. There is, indeed, a similarity of proportion between the natural thing, for instance, the plant, and the intellect; but from this it does not seem that, besides intellect, some appetite should be admitted as a distinct power and a distinct act. A natural appetite in the intellect appears to be sufficient, just as in the stone there is a natural appetite or inclination for the center of the earth, Thus Spinoza refuses to admit that intellect and will in us are two distinct faculties.

In fact, there is another difficulty, in that there appear to be four terms in the proof given by St. Thomas, because in the major he speaks of the intelligible form that is in the intellect, and in the conclusion, of the good apprehended outside the intellect. This second difficulty is of less importance, for the good referred to is that which is apprehended by means of the intelligible form.

In reply to the first difficulty, however, we say with Cajetan and John of St. Thomas that the natural appetite of the intellect does not suffice for this inclination, but that another faculty is also required, which is called the will or the rational appetite. This is evident for three reasons: (1) because the natural appetite, even in the intellect, follows its natural form, and not the apprehended form, or that of the thing known; (2) because the natural appetite is consequently determined to one thing, as the inclination of the

stone is for the center of gravity, of a plant for a determined height, and of the intellect for knowledge in general. On the contrary, the appetite that follows the form of the thing known is not determined to one thing, but extends to various things, and is an act elicited by the will (or even by the sensitive appetite), just as cognition resulting therefrom is an act elicited by the cognitive faculty, either intellective or sensitive; (3) finally, the natural appetite of the intellect is concerned only with truth to be known, which is the good of the cognitive faculty; whereas, on the contrary, the rational appetite is concerned with the good of the subject in toto, or of man in toto, just as actually the animal or sensitive appetite is concerned with the good of the brute in toto. Hence man is not said to be simply good, unless he be a man of good will, which means that he wills the true good of the entire man.

There is this remarkable difference, which many intellectuals are not sufficiently aware of, since with them there is a sort of atrophy of the will along with a certain hypertrophy of the intellect, and they often do not advert to the fact that Christian contemplation must have its foundation not only in the love of knowledge, but also in the love of God Himself, as St. Thomas says.

And therefore, just as in the brute animal the appetite that is called animal or sensitive is a special faculty distinct from the cognitive faculty of the sensible order; so also the rational appetite in man, the act of which follows intellectual cognition, is a special faculty that is called will and that is concerned not only with knowing, which is the good of the cognitive faculty, but also with the apprehended good of the entire man. Thus it is established that the will follows upon intellect. But, since there is intellect in God, there is also will in Him.

Confirmation. In fact, as St. Thomas frequently says, the distinction between these two faculties is evident from the fact that “knowledge comes about in so far as the object known is without the knower; consequently the intellect extends itself to what is outside it.”

In other words, truth is formally in the intellect, being conformity of judgment with the thing judged; whereas good is outside the mind, being in the things themselves. They are two operations that take place in an inverted order, as experience proves; for by knowledge we mentally absorb things, whereas by volition and love we are attracted by the object loved. And, as experience proves, we will not only the knowledge of the true, but

also the possession of the good. Thus we love not only the knowledge of God but God Himself. As the Scripture says: “Where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also.” There is a great difference, for instance, between loving to know humility, so as to speak about it, and loving humility itself.

The proof given by St. Thomas has not four terms: when he says “the intellect is actually intelligible by its intelligible form,” he subinfers “which is apprehended as good.” Thus it is legitimately concluded that “the intellectual nature as regards the apprehended good” tends toward it or rests therein by means of the will. Thus the above-mentioned proportionality is preserved with natural things. Thus the ascent is made by the mind from the lowest degree of natural inclination, such as that of the stone for its center of gravity, until the supreme will is reached, in which there is no longer to be found inclination or desire, but rest in the good that is eternally possessed. In this mental ascent the natural inclination of sensible things is first considered, because spiritual things are known only in the mirror of sensible things, and this leads us to know the supreme act of the will that delights in the divine good.

In the second part of the body of this article it is shown that God’s will is His existence and His act of willing, because there is no difference as to the mode in which will and intellect are in God. But it was shown that God’s intellect is His existence and His act of understanding, without any admixture of potentiality. Therefore, so is His will.

Corollary. God’s will is self-subsisting volition without any intrinsic virtual distinction; otherwise there would be a foundation in the divine reality for conceiving the will of God as in potentiality with regard to its act. Hence there is only an extrinsic virtual distinction between them, one that has its foundation not in the divine reality but in creatures, since the self-subsisting volition is the equivalent of our faculty of willing and our willing. On the contrary, there is an intrinsic virtual distinction between God’s intellect and His will, for which there is a foundation in the divine reality, because they belong to different orders. Similarly there is a virtual distinction between subsistent intellection and subsistent volition; yet it does not follow from this that there is a foundation in God for conceiving anything as in potentiality with respect to another thing.

In other words, this same corollary may be expressed as follows: God’s will is not of the nature of a potentiality as regards His volition, which means that this notion of potentiality is not found in the divine will formally

and eminently, but only virtually and eminently, as mixed perfections are, such as rationability or discursive knowledge. For this pertains to the created mode of the will, and this created mode implies imperfection, which is not included in what is formally signified by the name “will.” This formal signification is found in God not only virtually and eminently, but also formally and eminently, or properly. The solution of the objections confirms this.

Reply to first objection. The difficulty was that the object of will is the end. But God is not directed to any end. Therefore there is not will in Him. The reply is: “Although nothing apart from God is His end, yet He Himself is the end with respect to all things,” and thus, as will be stated farther on, God wills things apart from Himself for the manifestation of His goodness.

Hence, for the solution of this difficulty, it must be said: there is no assignment of an end to the act of God’s will, let this pass without comment; of things willed by God, this I deny. It is said that this non-assignment should pass without comment, because the divine goodness, which is willed by God, is not truly and formally the end of the divine volition, because the end is distinct from what is directed to the end, as being its extrinsic cause; yet it may be said that the divine goodness to be loved and made manifest is the reason for the divine volition, just as it is said that the divine immutability is the reason for eternity, and divine immateriality for subsistent intellection. In this sense the divine goodness can be said to be virtually, although not formally, the final cause of the divine will. This is a better way of distinguishing between what is formally signified by the name “will” and the created mode of our will.

Reply to second objection. Our will not only seeks the good that it does not possess, but loves the good which it possesses, and finds its delight therein. In this respect will is said to be in God. God’s will is primarily directed to the divine good, which it actually possesses. This brings out still more clearly the distinction between the formal signification of the word “will” and its created mode.

Reply to third objection. The relationship between the will and its object is one of moveable to mover, if it is a question of the created will, which is distinct from its objects; but it is not so with the divine will, which is identical with its object. Thus there is will in God, and this in the strict sense of the term, or formally and eminently, to the exclusion of all

imperfections that pertain to its created mode. In its formal signification, will excludes imperfection.

Instance. Even in its formal signification will includes imperfection, since it denotes dependence on the divine intellect, from which it is virtually distinct. Therefore the difficulty remains.

In reply to this we say, first of all, that if such were true, then even indirectly the intellect would include imperfection, since it depends on truth and on the divine Being. We may reply directly to this objection by distinguishing the antecedent: if the will proceeded from the intellect as from its cause, then I concede the antecedent; if it proceeded as from a previously known principle, then I deny the antecedent. Thus in the Trinity there is no imperfection in the Son, because He proceeds from the Father, not as cause, but from Him only as the principle, just as the line proceeds from the point as principle. Whatever imperfection there may be in this is due to our imperfect mode of conception, since we distinguish between the divine intellection and the divine volition, by a distinction known as rationis ratiocinatae, for which there is a foundation in the divine reality. But this distinction, as such, exists only in our mind, and so it is called a logical distinction (rationis). In actual fact, the divine intellection and the divine volition are identified (although not destructive of each other) in the eminence of the Deity in which they are formally and eminently. Thus in God, conceived as being, the divine attributes that must be deduced from Him are contained only actually and implicitly; whereas in God conceived as the Deity, namely, as He is in Himself, they are contained actually and implicitly, without the necessity of any deduction.

Finally, we must not overlook the importance of this assertion, namely, that will is properly or formally in God. We see the importance of this if we consider the superiority of our will as regards our sensitive appetite. For our will, inasmuch as it is specified by universal good and not by sensible good, is of almost infinite profundity on the part of the object willed, in the sense that God alone clearly seen can invincibly draw it; other goods do not of necessity draw it, and the will loves these freely. But if it is actually true to say that our will is of almost infinite profundity on the part of the thing willed, what must be said of God’s will, which is specified not by universal good, but by the divine good, which is not really distinct from it but is absolutely identical with it? For it is infinite complacency in this good,

divine rest therein; so that what is found by participation in the prayer of quiet is essentially in the divine will, to the exclusion of all imperfections.

From this it is already clear that the formal object of the divine will is the divine goodness, which of itself is not only lovable, but is actually and eternally loved; just as the divine truth is of itself not only actually understandable, but is actually and eternally understood.

SECOND ARTICLE

WHETHER GOD WILLS THINGS APART FROM HIMSELF

State of the question. Right now we consider the secondary object of the will. St. Thomas begins by stating most correctly the difficulties of this problem. Perhaps these are the difficulties that caused Aristotle not to affirm that God wills the world, and especially that He wills it freely. In fact, these difficulties were revived by Spinoza in establishing his thesis that God does not act for an end, and that the world proceeds from the divine substance by a necessity of nature.

The principal difficulties are in the second, third, and fourth objections. In the second it is said that the willed moves the wilier, as the appetible the appetite, which means that it entices, draws the appetite to itself. But God cannot be moved or enticed by another. Therefore He does not will any other thing than Himself. In the third objection it is stated that His own goodness suffices God and completely satisfies His will. Therefore God does not properly will anything apart from Himself. If this is affirmed, it is only by way of metaphor, as when God is said to be angry. The fourth objection presents the difficulty that, if God wills Himself and things apart from Himself, then there are two acts of the will in God, because the acts of the will are multiplied in proportion to the number of their objects, and this is contrary to God’s simplicity. These difficulties are presented to purify the concept of will from all imperfections in its relation to creatures. Thus the foundation is laid for the solution of the objections that concern the free act of God’s will, and of God’s love for creatures.

The answer given by St. Thomas consists of two parts: (1) God wills not only Himself, but also other things apart from Himself (and this indeed by taking will in the literal sense, not metaphorically); (2) God wills Himself as the end, and other things as ordained to that end.

1) Both are very often affirmed in Holy Scripture, and they are of faith. St. Thomas quotes the following text: “This is the will of God, your sanctification.” For the second part, the following text is usually quoted: “The Lord hath made all things for Himself”; and also: “He hath done all things, whatsoever He would.” The Vatican Council expresses this second part in equivalent words, by defining as follows: “If anyone shall deny that the world was made for the glory of God, let him be anathema.” Just previous to this, the canon defines that creation is a free act.

2) The first conclusion is proved from reason as follows: There is a similarity of proportion between the natural inclination and the rational inclination, which is the will; but natural things, in so far as they are perfect, are naturally inclined to communicate their good to others; therefore much more so does it pertain to the divine will, in so far as it is most perfect, to communicate by likeness its own good to others. Thus God wills Himself and things apart from Himself.

The major is not so clearly stated in this article as in the preceding. It necessarily prepares the ground for us, because we know spiritual things only in the mirror of sensible things, and we judge of the spiritual inclination because of a certain resemblance it bears toward the natural inclination of sensible things. This is the normal mode of procedure in the ascent of the mind to higher things.

The minor is proved by reason of the effects produced, or from experience, as Aristotle remarked. “We see that every agent, in so far as it is perfect and in act, produces its like.” From this it is evident that there is a natural inclination in every perfect thing to impart its good to others. Thus the fully grown plant produces its like, and so does every grown-up animal.

From this general observation, the mind proceeds by the inductive process to enunciate this general principle: “It pertains to the nature of the will to communicate to others, as far as possible, the good possessed.”

The Neoplatonists, especially Plotinus and Dionysius, often enunciated this principle: “Good is essentially diffusive of itself.” The way they showed the truth of this was by an inductive and gradual process of reasoning in the ascendant order, observing that the sun gives out life and heat, the fully grown plant produces its like, just as the fully grown or developed animal does; also the natural tendency of a man who is master of his art or who excels in knowledge or wisdom is to communicate this knowledge to others. Similarly the source of all gifts is perfect love, which

explains the loving generosity of parents toward their children. Hence from all this it is evident that good is diffusive of itself; in fact, the nobler the nature, the more intimately and completely it is diffusive of itself. This doctrine of mental ascent is in substance retained by St. Thomas in the present article, and in another of his works, to illustrate God's interior fecundity in the generation of the eternal divine Word, and so as to enunciate elsewhere the fittingness of the Incarnation. But if this principle is true, then its application to God's will is manifest inasmuch as His will is most perfect.

As St. Thomas remarks, good is described as self-diffusive primarily and immediately in the genus of final cause as regards the agent, and then mediately in the genus of efficient cause, inasmuch as the inclination of the perfect agent is to communicate actively to others the good possessed by it.

From this, however, Plotinus concludes not only that the supreme Good is diffusive of itself, but that it actually diffuses itself, according to a necessity of its nature, just as the sun emits its rays. Thus the world would seem to be a necessary irradiation of the divine goodness or of the divine perfection. Something like this is said by Leibnitz, who, according to his theory of absolute optimism, affirms, not the physical, but the moral, necessity of creation, and of the creation of the best among possible worlds. Otherwise, he says, God would not be infinitely wise and good.

St. Thomas affirms in this article that "it appertains to the divine will to communicate by likeness its own good to others, as much as is possible." By these words he affirms the fittingness, but in no way the moral necessity, of this communication.

There are three difficulties regarding this first part of the argumentative part of this article.

First difficulty. If good is essentially diffusive of itself, then it seems that God, being the supreme Good, is essentially diffusive of Himself ad extra; hence creation is not a free act. But, it is of faith that creation is a free act, as will be stated in the next article.

Reply. When it is said that good is essentially diffusive of itself, we must distinguish between the capacity of communicating and the act of communicating. Certainly the capacity of communicating good to others is a necessary perfection in God. Moreover, the act of communicating good to others or of perfecting involves no imperfection, and can be applied to God. But this suffices. Good entices the agent, inclines it to act; but the agent can

act either according to a necessity of its nature, or freely. In the following article it is shown that God wills things apart from Himself most freely, because “the goodness of God is perfect, and can exist without other things inasmuch as no perfection can accrue to Him from them.”

Second difficulty. Is the act of communicating good to others a special perfection?

The answer is, that it is not, because God is neither better nor greater in having created the universe. This conclusion, fundamentally the opposite of what Leibnitz taught, will be better explained in the following article. Leibnitz said that, if God had not created or if He had not created the best of possible worlds, then He would be neither infinitely wise nor infinitely good. On the contrary, according to St. Thomas’ teaching which was admirably expressed by Bossuet against Leibnitz, God is not better in having created the universe, and He would have been none the less good if He had not created it. This point will be more clearly explained in the next article. The statement just made serves its present purpose, which is to indicate that the present article is concerned with the fittingness of creation, so much so that it would be equally fitting if God had not willed to create, as will be stated in the following article.

On this point the Thomists generally do not adopt the language of Cajetan, who, in his commentary on this article, writes: “It is a perfection for the divine will, that it tend in the manner that pertains to it, to communicate its good to others; but . . . this perfection is voluntary . . . and absolutely free. But there is no unfittingness in conceding that God’s willing of things apart from Himself is a voluntary and absolutely free perfection . . . for this means that its opposite is no imperfection.”

The Thomists, however, commonly repudiate such language as this, for they say that God cannot be conceived as acquiring some new and free perfection superadded, as it were, to the infinite and necessary perfection of pure Act, and virtually distinct from it. In such a case there would be a foundation in the divine reality for conceiving the divine will as in potentiality with regard to this new and free perfection that is superadded; in this there is a certain danger of pantheism, since in this way the validity of the following principle is impaired: “The divine being is being that can have nothing added to it.” Hence there can be no accident in God.

Therefore the Thomists say what Cajetan, after more mature reflection, wrote: “To communicate oneself to others implies perfection not in the one

communicating, but in the recipients of this communication. . . . And it is of the nature of good to communicate itself to others, not for the betterment of the one communicating, but for the sake of others to be made good by it."

Godoy correctly observes that the way Cajetan first expressed himself must be understood as referring to a free perfection, which God may not possess, not inasmuch as it is a perfection, but in the sense that the object willed is contingent. But to express this exactly, the Thomists say that the free act in God does not add a new perfection in Him, but presupposes the infinite perfection of pure Act, and is defectible only because of the object willed.

The terminology commonly accepted in the schools expresses in somewhat different language what Cajetan meant. It is formulated, of course, as a modal proposition that refers to the saying rather than as a modal proposition that refers to the thing. It does not say that the act of creating is a free and befitting perfection in God, for then the word "befitting" would terminate in an apparently superadded perfection. But it says that it is befitting that God created the universe, although it would have been just as befitting if He had not created. Similarly it is befitting that God raised us to the supernatural order, and that He sent His Son into the world to save us, although it would have been just as befitting if He had not raised us to the supernatural order, or if He had not willed the Incarnation. These are, indeed, absolutely free acts.

In the example just given, it is evident that a modal proposition referring to the thing is not equivalent to a modal proposition referring to the saying, as St. Thomas observed. For it is false to say that everything known by God is necessary. But it is true to say that everything known by God must needs be (by a necessity of consequence but not of consequent). Similarly it is true to say that it is necessary (by a necessity of consequence) for the predestined to wish the good of salvation and be saved. But it is false to say that the predestined necessarily wills the good of salvation and is saved. Hence the argument of St. Thomas holds good, namely: "It appertains to God's will that He communicate His good to others as much as possible."

Third difficulty. It arises from the concluding words ("as much as possible") of the sentence just quoted. This seems to suggest that if God creates the world, He ought to create the best of possible worlds, as Leibnitz asserts.

Reply. St. Thomas holds, as we shall find him stating in the next article, that the volition by which God most freely wills things apart from Himself, cannot be known by us a priori but only after the act, or by revelation. But now, after the creative act, it is shown to be fitting for God to create, although it would have been equally fitting if He had not created, as will be stated in the next article. Hence these words, "as much as possible," indicate only this aforesaid fittingness. Moreover, as will be stated farther on, the supreme limit in the possible or creatable is impossible of conception, because "the (infinite) God can make something else better than each thing made by Him." Thus He can create better angels and of a higher order, because, between any created being and the infinite perfection of God, the distance is infinite.

Second conclusion. It states that God wills Himself as the end and other things as ordained to that end. This follows as a corollary from the first conclusion, because God cannot, except by not observing the order of subordination, will Himself and things apart from Himself. He cannot will equally, as it were, two things that are co-ordinated; for all co-ordination presupposes subordination. Order is the arrangement of things according to priority and posteriority with reference to some principle. Hence it is verified first in subordination and then in co-ordination. Thus two soldiers are not so much co-ordinated as subordinated to the same general of an army.

A difficulty arises concerning this second conclusion. If God wills all things for Himself, this seems to impair the ordinary conception we have of His goodness or liberality, and of the generosity of His love for us. In fact, God's love for us is not a love of concupiscence but of benevolence. But by the love of benevolence we love others not for our sake but for their sake. Therefore, that God's love for us should be truly a love of benevolence, He must love us for our sake and not for His sake. Kant, Hermes, Gunther, and more recently Laberthonnière, proposed this objection.

Reply. Against Hermes and Gunther it was defined by the Vatican Council in one of its canons: "If anyone shall deny that the world was made for the glory of God, let Him be anathema." This same point is explained by the Council in the chapter to which this canon is attached, for it says: "This one, only, true God, of His own goodness and almighty power, not for the increase of His own happiness, nor to acquire but to manifest His perfection by the blessings which He bestows on creatures, with absolute freedom of

counsel, created out of nothing, from the beginning of time, both the spiritual and the corporal creature, namely, the angelic and the mundane; and afterward the human creature, as partaking, in a sense, of both, consisting of spirit and of body."

The Vatican Council explained the following text from Scripture: "The Lord hath made all things for Himself," as meaning "for the manifestation of His goodness." If a man's actions are performed to show how good he is, not directing them to God, then this is vainglory; but if either man's acts or God's acts are performed to manifest the divine or supreme goodness, there is no vainglory but true glory in this; for this manifestation results in God's being clearly known and praised, which is true glory and due recognition of His supreme excellence.

It does not follow, therefore, that God loves us, not with love of benevolence, but of concupiscence. For the love of benevolence is that love by which the lover wills good to the one loved, and not only to himself. But God wills good to us, and not only to Himself. In fact, God wills to give Himself to us, and gave us His Son; but we are subjected to God as the supreme good. Therefore God loves us with the love of benevolence, but He subjects us to Himself. In other words, God loves us as that for which He wills good, but not as the end of creation.

Unless this were so, there would be an inversion of the established order, which would be a perversion, as when a miser prefers money to his own dignity as a rational being, and through love of money loses his soul. In fact, if God were to love the creature as the end of creation, He would no longer love the supreme good above all things. Thus God would repudiate Himself, which would be a mortal sin in God, the height of absurdity.

Hence this would result in a false definition of the love of benevolence, and it could not be attributed to God if it were said to be the love by which another is loved for his own sake and not for the sake of the lover. The love of benevolence must be defined as the love by which we wish good to another, so that the other is the one to whom we wish the good, and not necessarily the ultimate end of our love. But when we love God with the love of benevolence and of charity, we wish God His good, namely, His glory, and we love Him, moreover, as the ultimate end. Thus the Scripture says: "Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to Thy name give glory."

Thus teachers truly delight in expounding sublime truths to their students, even to only one student, and more indeed from love of God and of truth

than from love of the student to whom the truth is communicated.

Moreover, from the stand taken by Kant, Hermes, and Gunther, it would follow rather that the creature, instead of being happy, would be unhappy. For if the rational creature were the end of creation, the ultimate end of man would not be the supreme Good, who is to be loved above all things, but it would be the limited good that is contained in the dignity of the human nature. Thus the natural aspirations of man for the infinite good would be frustrated even in the natural order.

Finally, it is false to say that it amounts to "egoism" in God, if He made all things for Himself. Egoism is that inordinate love of self by which a man prefers himself to a higher good, such as family, country, and the like. But God cannot prefer Himself to a higher good, because He is identical with the supreme Good. God, in loving Himself above all things, prefers, as one must, the supreme Good to all things.

Hence this doctrine, no matter what Kant, Hermes, Gunther, and Laberthonnière may have said, by no means impairs God's liberality and His love of benevolence or of charity for us; but it most clearly illustrates that the divine goodness is capable of being loved in the highest degree, which is the only object that can be loved by God as the end. Created goodness or the creature is the one to whom God by the love of benevolence wills good as a manifestation of His goodness.

In fact, because the love of creatures, as will be stated in the next article, is most free, it being not at all necessary for God's happiness, for this very reason it is absolutely gratuitous and therefore most liberal, being the very opposite of egoism, since it manifests God's generosity or His magnanimity. Billuart, in his commentary on this article remarks: "The more generous and the more perfect is the friendship, so much the more is another loved and showered with benefits, who is most destitute of anything that is lovable, God's Love being solely a gratuitous act of His will. Thus it is solely by reason of His goodness that God loves creatures, and communicates His good gifts to them, not for His sake, but that it may well be for them a means of seeing Him as their supreme Good and ultimate end." Many texts in Scripture are to this effect, such as: "Give glory to the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy endureth forever." "He hath filled the hungry with good things." In the parable of the talents, in rewarding the good deeds performed, the Lord says: "Well done, good and faithful

servant. . . . Enter thou into the joy of thy lord.” Here we have the perfect love of friendship, since God gives us His own happiness.

The conclusion of this article is confirmed by the solution of the objections.

First objection. It is of minor importance. It states that the divine will is the divine existence. But God is not other than Himself. Therefore He does not will things other than Himself.

Reply. That the divine will is God’s existence objectively and not conceptually, this I concede; objectively and conceptually, this I deny. It is of the nature of volition that it relate to something.

Second objection. The thing willed moves the will, entices the will. If, therefore, God wills anything apart from Himself, His will is moved, enticed by another, which is impossible.

Reply. I distinguish the antecedent: that the thing willed moves the will for its own sake, this I concede; for the sake of something else, this I deny. Thus in the case of a person who takes a bitter medicine for the sake of health, it is health alone that moves the will. But God wills things apart from Himself only for the manifestation of His goodness, which is the reason for His loving creatures, and the reason for all God’s works ad extra. Nor can it be said, strictly speaking, that the divine goodness moves, entices, the divine will, but it is the reason for His loving creatures.

Third objection. What is willed suffices the willer, and he seeks nothing beyond it; but His own infinite goodness suffices God, therefore God does not will anything apart from Himself.

Reply. I distinguish the major: that he seeks nothing beyond it, unless such is a reason for its being made manifest, this I concede; that he wills absolutely nothing beyond it, this I deny. Thus God wills nothing besides Himself, except by reason of His goodness, but He wills things apart from Himself for the manifestation of His goodness.

Fourth objection. Acts of the will are multiplied in proportion to the number of their objects. If, therefore, God wills Himself and things apart from Himself, it will follow that the act of His will is manifold.

Reply. “As the divine intellect is one, as seeing the many only in the one, in the same way the divine will is one and simple, as willing the many only through the one, that is, through its own greatness.

First doubt. Is the divine goodness alone the formal object, the motive and what terminates the divine will, so that creatures are only its material

object?

It follows from the reply to the second objection of this article that the answer is in the affirmative. For the formal object of a faculty, its motive and what terminates it, is that which and by reason of which it is directly moved to act, and which directly and by reason of which it attains its object. But God wills all things for the manifestation of His goodness. Consequently the moving and hence the termination of the faculty find their complete explanation in the divine goodness, because the principle that attracts and the terminus of volition coincide; but it is called principle with reference to the intention, and terminus with reference to enjoyment of the good intended and possessed. Moreover, the will is specified by its formal object. But the divine will can be specified only by the divine goodness, for otherwise it would be dependent on some other goodness.

Second doubt. Is the divine goodness alone the adequate object of the divine will?

The Thomists reply in the affirmative, because the divine goodness in the order of good is coextensive with the divine will as faculty, for each is infinite. Hence the distinction that is made as regards the created intellect between the proper and the adequate objects, does not apply to God. The adequate object of the created intellect is being in all that pertains to being, whereas the adequate object of the divine intellect is the Deity, which, in a certain sense, transcends being and good, as it contains these formally and eminently.

Objection. Nevertheless God is moved on account of our merits to reward us, and on account of our miseries to come to our assistance, for the misery of others is the reason why one is merciful. Thus God willed the Incarnation for our redemption. Therefore the creature in some way moves the divine will as the motivated object.

Reply. The antecedent is denied: for God is moved toward these things solely by reason of His goodness considered under various aspects. For God is not moved toward these things as we are moved, on account of some particular good quality reflected in these objects. But the divine goodness, being the reason for doing good, specifies the divine liberality; being the reason for giving everyone his due, it specifies divine justice, which rewards or punishes according to one’s deserts. Similarly divine goodness, being the reason for coming to the assistance of those in misery, moves and specifies divine mercy, because the divine virtues cannot be specified by

created good. If, therefore, St. Thomas says that “the misery of others is the reason why one is merciful,” he is then speaking of created mercy; and, moreover, he says this as regards the material cause, for the perfecting of it, and not as regards the final cause, or the end for the sake of which the act is performed. Thus God is said to have willed the incarnation of His Son for our sake, inasmuch as the redemption of the human race was the subject for the sake of which or the end for which the Incarnation was of benefit. Thus it remains true to say that the ultimate end of the Incarnation is the manifestation of divine goodness.

Instance. Yet God wills one creature for another, and all things for the sake of the elect. Therefore, at least the higher creatures are the motivated object of the divine will.

Reply. I distinguish the antecedent in this sense, that “God wills this to be as means to that; but He does not will this on account of that.” In other words, the conjunction propter (“on account of’) affects the object, for God wills one creature to be on account of another; but the conjunction does not affect the divine volition, which is one only and uncreated, and is not dependent on creatures. Thus God wills all things for the sake of the elect; but the elect are not the cause of this divine volition (“volition” in the subjective sense). On the contrary, our will has at least two acts, namely, intention and choice, and on account of the end intended we will the means by a subsequent act of choice, which is the effect of the first act of intention. Therefore it remains true to say that God wills no created good by reason of itself, but by reason of the divine goodness to which all created things are ordained.

Corollary. When it is said that all God’s operations ad extra have been for His external glory, this must not be construed as meaning that they have been for the created and distinguished knowledge of Him with praise, because this created knowledge and praise are ordained to God; but it must be construed as meaning that all His works are for the manifestation of His uncreated goodness. This most admirably confirms the answer of St. Thomas, that God wills both Himself and other things, but Himself as the end, and other things as ordained to that end.

From what has been said it is also evident that the ultimate end of all God’s works ad extra, even the incarnation of the Word, is the manifestation of divine goodness, although there may be a subordinated end, since the Incarnation is for our salvation, as being beneficial to us.

Another corollary. Hence, just as only the divine good can completely satisfy the will of the blessed, far more so is this the case with the divine will. We say a fortiori, because the divine will is specified by the divine good, whereas the created will is specified by universal good. If we were to say that the created will is specified by the divine good, it would already have the same specified object as infused charity, and then it could not be elevated to the higher order of grace.

THIRD ARTICLE

WHETHER WHATEVER GOD WILLS, HE WILLS NECESSARILY

State of the question. The question in this article is whether God freely wills things apart from Himself, or whether He wills them from a certain necessity either of nature or of knowledge, namely, because of a physical or moral necessity. According to the pantheists, such as Spinoza, God necessarily produces things apart from Himself, this necessity being metaphysical, or at least physical; and so nothing would be possible besides that which exists. Thus Spinoza could not have been born in any other city than the one in which he was born, as Leibnitz replied to him. Yet Leibnitz himself said that God wills things apart from Himself by a moral necessity, because it would be unbecoming, contrary to wisdom and goodness, for God not to will things apart from Himself, and not to will better things. This same doctrine is found in the writings of Malebranche, and later on in those of Gunther and Rosmini. If such were the case, then it would have been morally necessary for Leibnitz to be born only in that city and at that time in which he was born. Thus in the opinion of Leibnitz, all things that happen would be necessary, at least morally so.

St. Thomas in the state of the question makes known the difficulty of this problem. He begins by positing six objections.

Two of these present special difficulty. There is first the difficulty as regards the exercise of the free act, which appears to be something contingent in God, because there is a possibility of its absence. This difficulty is touched upon in the fourth objection by the following remark: “The divine will would be contingent upon one or the other of two things, and so imperfect”; in fact, there would be a free volition that could as well not be. The fifth objection inquires into the cause of this contingent

determination in God. This difficulty is thoroughly examined by the Thomists.

The other difficulty is concerned with the specification and the motive of the free act in willing the object, since nothing is willed unless it is foreknown as suitable and better. Thus it is better to create; it would be unbefitting not to create, and not to create better creatures. Hence it seems that God ought to will things apart from Himself, if not from necessity of His nature, at least because either His knowledge or wisdom or goodness dictates this.

In other words, if there is not a metaphysical and physical necessity, at least there is a moral necessity for this, otherwise there will be imperfection in God. Leibnitz, Gunther, and Rosmini make this objection the subject of special discussion. St. Thomas knew of this objection, and he touched upon it to some extent.

Aristotle never affirmed God's liberty, because he found himself unable to reconcile it with His immutability. It seems that he admitted not only that the world was from eternity, but that it was a necessary production. This was the view of the Neoplatonists, as expressed in their doctrine of emanation.

In the Middle Ages it was Abelard who denied God's liberty, saying that "God can do only what He does." Aureolus taught that liberty was attributed to God only metaphorically, for otherwise His free act would be contingent. In later times, Wyclif, Bucer, and Calvin seem to have denied true liberty in God. This question has been discussed at length by us elsewhere.

The answer is that God wills things apart from Himself, not necessarily, but most freely.

1) It is of faith and is often declared in Holy Scripture, as in the following texts: "And God said: Be light made. And light was made." "The God of revenge hath acted freely." "And the Lord said to Moses . . . I will have mercy on whom I will; and I will be merciful to whom it shall please Me." "Therefore He hath mercy on whom He will, and whom He will He hardeneth." "Who worketh all things according to the counsel of His will." There are many other passages that refer to God's will of good pleasure and to the gratuity of His love for the elect. The divine election is, in the strict sense, a free act. In the parable of the laborers in the vineyard, the Lord

says: “I will also give to this last even as to thee. Or, is it not lawful for me to do what I will?”

In fact, even in the Old Testament we find God’s liberty frequently affirmed, as in the following texts: “As the potter’s clay is in his hands . . . so man is in the hand of Him that made him, and He will render to him according to His judgment.” “For if it shall please the Lord, He will fill him with the spirit of understanding.”

The Vatican Council, in attacking the moral necessity of creation as taught by Gunther and Leibnitz, defined as follows: “If anyone shall say that God created not by His will, free from all necessity, but by a necessity equal to the necessity whereby He loves Himself; let him be anathema.” In the corresponding chapter it states that God “with absolute freedom of counsel” created.

Likewise the following proposition of Anthony Rosmini was condemned: “The love by which God loves Himself even in creatures, and which is the motive that determines Him to create, constitutes a moral necessity which in the most perfect being always brings forth the effect; for it is only in the many imperfect beings that necessity of this kind leaves liberty intact on either side.” If such were the case, then liberty would be a mixed perfection, just as discursive knowledge is. On the contrary, liberty is an absolutely simple perfection, and so it must of necessity be in God. Nevertheless, as we shall see, this free act, such as that of creating, is not an absolutely simple perfection in God, as least in the strict sense, because it is not better for God to have this act than not to have it.

2) It is proved by reason that God necessarily wills His own goodness, and things apart from Himself freely.

The first part presents no difficulty: “For the divine will has a necessary relation to the divine goodness, since that is its proper object.” Moreover, there is not and cannot be any idea of evil resulting from the divine goodness, but in it we see clearly all that pertains to good. And then God is of necessity actually willing and not merely potentially so. Therefore God necessarily wills His goodness, and the necessity is one of specification and of exercise.

St. Thomas proves the second part of this proposition from the fact that God is in no way dependent on creatures for the possession of His infinite goodness. This point is made clear by the following argument.

In willing the end we do not necessarily will those things that are conducive to the end, unless they are necessary for the attainment of the end. But God wills things apart from Himself as ordained to His goodness (for its manifestation), which, since it is perfect, can dispense with creatures, and no perfection accrues to Him from them. Therefore God does not necessarily will things apart from Himself. But supposing that He wills these, He is unable not to will them, because His will cannot change.

There is another way of expressing the minor, by saying that after creation there are more beings, but not more being, or more perfection or goodness, because prior to this there necessarily and from eternity pre-existed infinite goodness that is necessarily and actually loved and possessed by God.

This proof is apodictic and most clear. This is the element of clarity in this light-transcending obscurity. The obscurity will be in what formally constitutes God's free act.

THE SOLUTION OF THE OBJECTIONS CONFIRMS THIS PROOF

Reply to first objection. Everything that is eternal is necessary either absolutely or hypothetically. Hence from the fact that God wills from eternity whatever He wills, it does not follow that it is absolutely necessary for Him to will things apart from Himself. This is only hypothetically necessary, on the supposition that He wills these.

Reply to second objection. The divine goodness, which God necessarily wills, can exist without other things. Hence God most freely wills things apart from Himself, and with absolute generosity.

Reply to third objection. It is not natural to God to will things apart from Himself; yet it is not unnatural but voluntary and free, in fact most free.

Reply to fourth objection. Every contingent being is imperfect. But the divine will is contingent to one or the other of two things. Therefore it would be imperfect. This difficult objection is solved by conceding the major and denying the minor. That the divine will would be in itself indifferent to one or the other of two things, this I deny; in that it is not necessarily related to something willed, this I concede. The conclusion is distinguished in the same way, so that the imperfection is only in the contingent thing willed, but not in the divine will. This is well explained by St. Thomas in his reply. He says: "Sometimes a necessary cause has a non-

necessary relation to an effect, owing to a deficiency in the effect and not in the cause. Even so, the sun's power has a non-necessary relation to some contingent effects on this earth, owing to a defect not in the solar power, but in the effect that proceeds not necessarily from the cause." Thus certain fruits never become ripe.

Reply to fifth objection. Nothing determinate results from that which is indifferent to one or the other of two things, unless it is determined by an extrinsic cause; but God cannot be determined by an extrinsic cause; therefore God is not indifferent to one or the other of two things. This objection is answered by distinguishing the major. What is indifferent potentially or passively, this I concede; that the indifference is actual and active, this I deny. I concede the minor, and distinguish the conclusion as follows: That God is not indifferent potentially or passively so, this I concede; that the indifference is actual and active, this I deny. St. Thomas says the equivalent of this in his reply: "A naturally contingent cause, such as human liberty, must be determined to act by some external power (thus it is attracted by the object and moved by God to choose this object freely); but the divine will, which by its nature is necessary, determines itself to will things to which it has no necessary relation."

For the explanation of this distinction, it must be observed that there is a dominating potential or passive indifference in our free will before it chooses anything. But once it is determined by reason of its choice, although it remains free, it retains a dominating indifference, not indeed one that is potential or passive, but one that is actual and active, inasmuch as man, in freely choosing some particular good, not universal good, is not invincibly attracted by it, but actually wills it at the same time retaining the real power of not willing, in fact, of actually not willing it. In God, however, who is pure Act, there is no potential and passive indifference, but only a dominating actual and active indifference of His self-subsisting act of willing, or of His self-subsisting love, which is in no necessary relation to creatures.

These last two objections of St. Thomas, as we shall at once see, are of great help in explaining the nature of God's free act and its indifference.

Reply to sixth objection. Whatever God knows, He knows necessarily, because His knowledge is His essence. Therefore it likewise follows that whatever God wills, He wills necessarily. This objection may be answered by distinguishing the antecedent: I concede this statement of His knowledge

of simple intelligence; I deny it of His knowledge of vision, and I deny the consequent and consequence, because in this case the will is now joined to God's knowledge of vision. Moreover, God's knowledge of things is as these are eternally present to His knowledge, whereas the will is related to things as they are in themselves (inasmuch as good, unlike truth, is not in the mind but in the things). Things in themselves, however, are contingent.

There are especially two objections among others that are proposed. As already stated, good is essentially diffusive of itself. But God is the supreme good. Therefore God is essentially (or necessarily) diffusive of Himself.

We reply to this by distinguishing the major: good is essentially diffusive of itself, that it may communicate itself, and first in the genus of final cause, this I concede; that de facto it necessarily communicate itself, this I subdistinguish: if it is a question of communicable natural good, such as the light given by the sun, this I concede; if it is a question of communicable good by a free act of the will, this I deny. Hence God essentially diffuses or communica-tes Himself; but it is only by a free act of His will that He actually communicates a participation of His goodness, because for the complete possession of this goodness He is in no need of creatures.

Finally, the following objection must be noted. God is absolutely immutable, or, in other words, He cannot be otherwise than He is. But God would be mutable if He could will or not will to create, or, in other words, He would be otherwise than He is if He were not the Creator. Therefore the difficulty remains.

From what has already been said, we answer this by distinguishing the major and denying the minor. For God is absolutely immutable, although it was in His power not to choose that which He freely chose from eternity. For this free choice is not even in the least degree a superadded accident in God, and it posits no new perfection in Him. Hence the change and variation is solely on the part of the things willed, as stated in the reply to the fourth objection. This gives rise to some doubts, however, which must be examined.

First doubt. What formally constitutes God's free act?

The difficulty is that God either could or could not have been without His free act, for instance, the creative act. If He could, then how is He immutable? He is at least from eternity, otherwise than He could have been. If He could not, then how is He free?

This is what is obscure in this light-transcending darkness, whereas what is most clear in it is that God most freely created, as He in no way is in need of creatures for the most complete possession of His infinite goodness. For the solution of this difficulty two contradictory and improbable opinions are proposed.

The first of these opinions states that God's free act is constituted by some intrinsic and defectible reality in Him, which is superadded, so to speak, to His pure Act.

Reply. If this reality were identical with God, then He would be intrinsically defectible. If, on the other hand, this reality were really distinct from God's substance, then it would be an accident in God, and then He would be neither absolutely simple, nor pure Act, since He would be in potentiality for this new determination, which, indeed, He would have from all eternity, but which it was possible for Him not to have. Thus the self-subsisting Being would no longer be the "being to whom nothing can be added." He would not be both the unreceived and unreceptive Being. This opinion would prepare the way for pantheism, which posits certain accidents in God, such as are the finite modes admitted by Spinoza, the series of which would be infinite both regressively and successively.

The second opinion, which is proposed by Aureolus, states that God's free act consists in some extrinsic denomination that is appropriated from creatures. Thus Aureolus says that the free act is not formally and properly in God, but only metaphorically, as anger is, which is a passion of the sensitive appetite.

Reply. God is from all eternity free, before anything was created by Him. In fact, the free creative act exists eternally in God as a formally immanent and virtually transitive vital act, although its effect ad extra is passively produced only in time. Therefore God's free act cannot be constituted by something purely extrinsic to Him and created, but it must be something intrinsic to Him.

Likewise we must reject the opinion which differs but little from that of Aureolus. This opinion states that a logical relation to creatures is what constitutes God's free act. For logical being cannot be the cause of real being. But God's free act is the cause of the

real being of all creatures. Moreover, God's free act exists before there can be any logical relation in Him, which has existence only in the created intellect. Therefore God's free act must be something real and intrinsic to

Him. But there is still the difficulty as to how this act is defectible in God, or may as well not be.

The more common opinion among the Thomists mediates between the above-mentioned contradictory opinions and is superior to them. It is, as it were, a higher synthesis, combining what is best in each of the other opinions, for it states that the entity of God's free act is indeed intrinsic to Him, but only its defectibility is extrinsic to Him.

To be more explicit, this means that God's free act is nothing else but the necessary act by which He loves His goodness, in so far as this connotes a non-necessary relation to creatures, and so it is only extrinsically defectible by reason of the defectibility in the

thing willed. There is foundation for this opinion in many texts from the writings of St. Thomas. Thus in the preceding article he says: "The divine will is one and simple, as willing the many only through the one, that is, through its own goodness."

In this article he says: "That God does not necessarily will some of the things that He wills, does not result from defect in the divine will, but from a defect belonging to the nature of the thing willed." More explicitly he writes: "God's will by one and the

same act wills Himself and other things. Now His relation to Himself is necessary and natural; whereas His relation to other things is by way of a kind of fittingness, not indeed necessary and natural, or violent and unnatural, but free."

Thus, from the teaching as set forth in this present article, this opinion is proved by the following syllogism: Divine liberty does not, like human liberty, consist in the indifference of a potency with regard to several acts, but it consists in the indifference of one most simple act with regard to different objects. But this act, simple in itself, is virtually multiple, and is necessary and free under different aspects; for it is necessary in so far as it terminates the divine goodness, and free in so far as it connotes a non-necessary relation to creatures. Therefore this act, permanently unmoved in itself, is in God something vital and intrinsic by reason of its entity, and is only extrinsically defectible because of the defectibility in the thing willed, namely, the creature; for the aforesaid termination would be lacking in the case of a creature that does not or will not exist. This likewise explains why the free act is called volition in so far as it terminates in the being of the

creature, and is called nolition in so far as it terminates in the non-being of the creature.

Thus the absolute actuality as well as the simplicity and eminence of the divine act gives us the solution of the question. St. Thomas illustrates this by a comparison in another of his works: “For every power tends by one operation or act to its object and the formal aspect of that object: even as by one sight we see light and the color made visible by light.

In fact, by one and the same act of seeing, we see light together with many colors and objects seen by means of color; yet some of these colors are absent, though the act of seeing remains the same. Far more so does God by one and the same act see His goodness and the manifestation of this in different things, though His relation to these is not a necessary one. Thus it is said of Him:

God, powerful sustainer of all things,
Thou who dost remain permanently unmoved,
Determining the course of time
By successions of day and night.

Thus the entity of the divine free act is intrinsic to God, whereas its defectibility is extrinsic to Him.

Objection. The relation of the necessary act to creatures is only a logical relation. Therefore it seems that God’s free act consists only in this logical relation.

Reply. I concede the antecedent, and deny the consequent. There is, indeed, a logical relation as a result of this act; but God’s free act is something real, vital, intrinsic to Him, which is God’s love that connotes a non-necessary relation to creatures, this being the foundation for the logical relation, and this free act is virtually distinct from the necessary love of His goodness.

Another objection. The very termination of the immanent and eternal free act must be intrinsic to God, and hence intrinsically defectible. So the difficulty remains.

Reply. I concede the antecedent, and deny the consequence. That this termination of God’s immanent and eternal act is intrinsic to Him as regards the entity of this immanent act, this I concede; as regards its defectibility, this I deny. It is only extrinsically defectible, by reason of the defectibility in the thing willed. Hence, as stated above, the entity of the free act is, indeed, intrinsic to God, and only its defectibility is extrinsic.

Hence in answer to the principal objection posited at the beginning of this article, the following must be said: that God's free act could as well not be, this I distinguish: that it could not be as regards creatures, this I concede; in itself, as it is the unique act of God's love, this I deny. To put it in other words, God, who is permanently unmoved, had it in His power not to create, and to bring other creatures into being, for the divine liberty is the dominating indifference not of a potency but of a pure act of subsistent love. Thus the peak of a pyramid, which in itself is fixed, is the terminus of new line converging toward it. So also he who, remaining in some place, and having within his view a certain territory, sees all the objects that change their locality in this territory, though he remains in the same place. This is indeed a feeble comparison, but it shows that even in sense perception the higher beings unite within themselves those things that are found dividedly in lower beings. It is the application of general principles. Thus the absolute simplicity and immutability of the pure Act is safeguarded. Hence this whole question consists in a proper understanding of dominating indifference, an indifference that is not potential and passive, but actual and active, and which formally and eminently, or properly, and not merely metaphorically, applies to God.

Second doubt. Can God, without undergoing any change, begin to will what He did not will, and not will what He willed?

The answer is in the negative, for once the relation is established toward things willed, it cannot be changed, unless we presuppose a change either in the knowledge or in the disposition of the willer. But neither of these changes can take place in God.

Suarez advances the objection that from the mere idea of liberty, without anyone undergoing any change either in disposition or in knowledge, he could begin to will what before he did not will.

Reply. There cannot be another free choice without another practical judgment that immediately regulates the choice. But there is no change of judgment in God, for His judgment of all things is from all eternity immutable. There is something similar to this in the angel, because of the perfection of his intellect, as "the angel's free will is flexible to either opposite before the choice but not after." Thus all the blessed in heaven are unchangeable in their love of God.

Third doubt. Can there be a suspension of any act on the part of God's free will concerning a created object?

The Thomists generally deny this against Gonet. They hold that God cannot remain, as it were, in suspense and undecided as to whether He will create or not create. Concerning this there must be either a volition or a nolition, because this suspension of any free act would seem in a way to detract from the divine perfection. For God is of necessity free, and His liberty is not a potential but an actual dominating indifference. Therefore it seems that God ought to have one or the other of these acts: to will to create, or to refuse to create. The refusal to will differs from non-willing.

Fourth doubt. Is God's free creative act an absolutely simple perfection?

Reply. It is not an absolutely simple perfection, at least in the strict sense; for this is defined as a perfection which implies no imperfection, and which it is better for one to have than not to have. But it is not better for God to have the creative act than not to have it. Therefore this free creative act is not an absolutely simple perfection.

Yet it remains true to say that liberty in God is an absolutely simple perfection, in the strict sense, for it is better for God to have it than not to have it; in fact, God is of necessity free, although it is not necessary for Him to have this particular act rather than a certain other.

FOURTH ARTICLE

WHETHER THE WILL OF GOD IS THE CAUSE OF THINGS

State of the question. So far we know that God freely wills things apart from Himself, or acts freely ad extra. We now inquire whether He acts by His will. On first consideration, this seems to be a useless question after what has been said in the preceding question; for if God freely wills creatures, then He causes them by His will. Yet it is really another question that is now asked, and one that requires special examination. For man does, indeed, freely generate, yet he does not do so by his will, but because he is of a certain nature. Hence, if he generates, he can generate only one like himself in species. Therefore it is now a question not only whether God freely willed to create, but whether God is the cause of things by His will, or by His nature.

This is clearly made known to us from the difficulties presented at the beginning of this article. They state that it seems God is not the cause of things by His will, but by His nature: (1) because, as Dionysius says, "the

divine good by its very essence pours the rays of its goodness upon everything that exists"; (2) because God is the first agent, therefore He acts by His essence, just as He is essentially being; (3) because God is essentially good, and Augustine says: "Because God is good, we exist"; (4) because God is the cause of things by His knowledge, He is therefore not so by His will.

Yet the answer is that God's will is the cause of things, or that God acts by His will, and not by a necessity of His nature.

In this article we get a much clearer conception of what was meant when it was said in a previous question that "God's knowledge is the cause of things, in so far as His will is joined to it." We are now concerned with this conjoined will, and the determination of this divine will. There is special reference to this latter in the second proof of the argumentative part of this article, which is afterward frequently called the decree of the divine will. At the same time, this article completes the refutation of pantheism, for the pantheists, like the Averroists of the Middle Ages, hold that God is the cause of things by a necessity of His nature. The beginning of this refutation of pantheism is in God's transcendence as the extrinsic cause of the world, and this point is made clear in the proof of God's existence, and from the fact that God is most simple, there being no accidents in Him, and absolutely immutable, whereas the world is composite and continually subject to change.

The truth of this answer is established in various texts of Holy Scripture. We quote the following: "And how could anything endure, if Thou wouldst not?" "And God said: Be light made. And light was made," which means that God is the cause of things by a command of His intellect and will. And again: "Who worketh all things according to the counsel of His will."

Three proofs are given in the body of the article: (1) from the very order of active causes; (2) from the disposition of a natural agent; (3) from the relation of effects to their causes. These proofs given in the article are clear, especially after the explanation of the proof for God's existence as supreme Ordainer from the order prevailing in the universe.

First proof. The first agent must act by intellect and will. But God is the first agent. Therefore He must act by intellect and will. The major is proved as follows: since both intellect and nature act for an end, the natural agent must have the end and the means predetermined for it by some higher

intellect; thus the end and definite movement are predetermined for the arrow by the archer.

The ultimate reason for this is that the things which lack intelligence do not know the nature of an end as such, even though, as animals, they have a sensitive knowledge of the thing which constitutes their end, as in the case of the swallow collecting the wisps of straw for building its nest. They have no knowledge of the end as such, or of the raison d'être of the means, because they lack the faculty whose object is intelligible being and the raison d'être of things. Hence, as stated in the fifth proof for God's existence: "Those things that are without (intellectual) knowledge do not move toward an end, unless they are directed by some being that is endowed with knowledge and intelligence; as the arrow is shot to its mark by the archer." Hence the supreme agent must act not by nature, but by intellect and will.

Second proof. A natural agent always produces the same effect, unless it be prevented. This is because the nature of the act is according to the nature of the agent. But God in His being and nature is infinite or unlimited. Therefore, if God were to act, not by His intellect and will, but by His nature, then He would produce an infinite effect in being, which is impossible.

It must be observed that the major of this syllogism is an inductive principle, already invoked by Aristotle, namely, that the same natural cause in the same circumstances always produces the same effect; for in this article it is stated that "the nature of the act of the natural agent is according to the nature of the agent; and hence, as long as it has that nature, its act will be in accordance with that nature." If, therefore, it is certain that heat once or on several occasions expanded iron, then there is no need of having recourse to the method of induction by exhausting the number of particular cases; but we can affirm that if heat is truly the natural cause of the expansion of metals, it will always be so in the same circumstances, so long as heat remains the same in nature. And so, no matter what historians in our times may say, Aristotle and St. Thomas well knew on what the inductive principle of the laws of nature rests, namely, that the natural agent is determined to one thing.

At the end of this second proof St. Thomas speaks explicitly of the determination of the divine will, which is afterward frequently called the decree of the divine will. He says: "(God) does not, therefore, act by a

necessity of His nature, but determined effects proceed from His own infinite perfection according to the determination of His will and intellect." Why did he put the will before the intellect? The reason is found in what was previously stated by him: "Since the intelligible form has a relation to opposite things (for the thing to be or not to be), inasmuch as the same knowledge relates to opposites, it would not produce a determinate effect unless it were determined to one thing by the appetite." Thus both in ourselves and in God, the will in choosing brings it about that the last practical judgment is the final one (so that there is an end of deliberation), and after the will has made its choice (which terminates the order of intention, and which is frequently called the purpose of the will), then the intellect is urged to command the act (which begins the order of execution).

Finally, it must be remarked concerning this second proof that the determination of the divine will is required not only in electing that things come into being or not, but also for the non-necessary determination of these things, such as that the movement of the heavenly bodies should be, as at present, from east to west, instead of contrariwise. This point is made much clearer in a subsequent question, in which it is stated that "(God) produced things into being in order that His goodness might be communicated to creatures, and be represented by them; and because His goodness could not be adequately represented by one creature alone." Thus God's intellect and liberty are the explanation for the many and different creatures that proceed from the supreme Agent, who in Himself is most simple. Contrary to this, the Neoplatonists, in denying the absolute freedom of the creative act, advanced the theory of emanation, namely, the One-Good, as if indeed, in accordance with this theory, the first hypostasis, namely, the One-Good, generated by a necessity of his nature a second hypostasis inferior to himself, then a third and so on in succession. But then it is not explained why the second hypostasis is inferior to the first; for if the first acts from a necessity of his nature, as man generates, he ought to produce an effect like to himself in nature and therefore infinite, which is impossible, as stated in this second proof.

Third proof. Effects proceed from the agent that causes them, in so far as they pre-exist in the agent. But God's being is His own intellect. Therefore effects pre-exist in God after the mode of intellect, and therefore they proceed from Him after the same mode. Consequently these effects proceed from Him after the mode of will.

Reply to first objection. When Dionysius says that God communicates a participation of His goodness just as the sun illumines all things, he does not mean to exclude election from God absolutely, but he means that, just as the sun illumines all things, so God communicates a certain participation of His goodness to all things.

Reply to third objection. God's goodness is the reason for His willing all things, and in this sense Augustine said: "Because God is good, we exist."

From this it is evident that God not only created most freely, but by His will, and so He differs from man, who does indeed freely generate; but he does so, however, by his nature, inasmuch as he is of a certain nature, and hence he can generate only a being like himself in species. In fact, as Cajetan remarks, in commenting on this article: "A vigorous male generates a male, and the irascible one that is irascible, as Aristotle says in his Ethics, Bk. VII, chap. 6."

FIFTH ARTICLE

WHETHER ANY CAUSE CAN BE ASSIGNED TO THE DIVINE WILL

State of the question. It seems that some cause is to be assigned to God's will. The reasons for this are the following: (1) otherwise He would act irrationally; (2) otherwise there would be but one answer to any question whatever, namely, God willed it so, and thus it would be useless to seek the causes of things, which would mean the abolition of science, since it is knowledge by causes; (3) finally, we would have to say that all things depend simply on the will of God, there being no reason prior to this. Thus we could not even discover reasons of fittingness for any of the divine operations, such as creation, incarnation. Thus, in the fourteenth century, Ockham said, too, that the distinction between moral good and moral evil, or the first principle of the practical reason, namely, that good must be done and evil must be avoided, depends simply on the will of God, that is, on the divine positive law, so that this would be to do away with the natural law. Descartes says, too, that the truth of the principle of contradiction depends on God's free will. Contrary to this, St. Thomas wrote: "To say that justice depends simply on the will, is to say that the divine will does not proceed according to the regulations of wisdom; and this is blasphemous." Leibnitz said likewise against Ockham and Descartes: "It is dishonoring God to hold

that He established the distinction between good and evil by a purely arbitrary decree. . . . Why, then, would it not be the Manichaean principle of evil as the orthodox principle of good?" This would result in the mind finally accepting the theories of absolute contingency and libertism, which are the very opposite of absolute determinism, such as that taught by Spinoza. Thus the statement of the question is evidently concerned with grave enough problems.

The answer is: There is no efficient cause of the divine will, or God does not will this on account of that (which is first intended), but He wisely wills this to be as means to that.

The first part is proved on the authority of St. Augustine in the counterargument, and then the following proof is given: The will follows from the intellect; but the divine intellect by one intuitive act knows both principles and conclusions; therefore the divine will by one act wills its own goodness in itself and as it is the reason for loving creatures. Hence in God intention or the willing of the end is not, as in us, the cause of another act, namely, the choosing of the means. And so it is said that He does not will this on account of that; for God, the end is not the motive of His willing on the part of His act of willing, but only on the part of the thing willed.

The second part is proved as follows: The wise person wills the means to be for the end, the lower for the higher; but God wills most wisely whatever He wills; therefore God wills the means to be for the end, and the lower for the higher. This is stated in the body of the article and in the reply to the first objection. These two parts of the answer are summed up briefly in the following accepted formula: God does not will this on account of that, but He wills this to be as means to that. Hence, when we speak of the motive of either the creation or the incarnation, this does not mean the motive on the part of the willer, but on the part of the thing willed. Thus there is an end to difficulties.

Reply to second objection. It is not, therefore, useless to seek for causes secondary to the divine will. In fact, there are absolutely necessary laws in things, such as metaphysical principles, or the laws of being, for instance, the principle of contradiction, the truth of which does not depend on the divine liberty, notwithstanding what Descartes said. Similarly, mathematical laws, which abstract from both efficient and final causes, are absolutely necessary, for it is impossible that the three angles of a triangle be not equal to two right angles. Moreover, there are hypothetically necessary natural

laws in things. Thus, if there is fire, then its action is to burn and not to cool, although God may miraculously prevent its action. In fact, there are certain laws of nature that are absolutely contingent and especially dependent on the divine liberty, such as that the motion of the heavenly bodies is from east to west, rather than in the reverse order. Finally, there are certain laws in things dependent solely on the will of God. As St. Thomas says: “In the things of nature, since primary matter is altogether uniform, a reason can be assigned why one part of it was fashioned by God from the beginning under the form of fire, another under the form of earth, that there might be a diversity of species in things of nature. Yet why this particular part of matter is under this particular form, and that under another, depends upon the simple will of God; as from the simple will of the artificer it depends that this stone is in this part of the wall, and that in another; although the plan requires that some stones should be in this place, and some in that place.”

First corollary. Two errors must be avoided: (1) absolute contingency, which denies the absolute necessity of metaphysical and mathematical principles, and the hypothetical necessity of the laws of nature; (2) absolute determinism, which denies all contingency, as in Spinozism, or in a certain kind of mechanical materialism, in which, for instance, the law of conservation of energy is declared to be absolutely necessary, so that the influence exerted by our liberty on our organism and God’s miraculous intervention are excluded; for, as they say, there would thus be an increase in the quantity of energy in the universe, which remains the same. It does, indeed, remain the same in this sense, that when one form of energy is produced, such as heat, this is equivalent to an antecedent form, namely, of local motion necessary for the generation of heat. But the law of conservation of energy, without a begging of the principle, cannot be enunciated as a law that is by all means or absolutely necessary, in this sense, that the whole universe would be a closed system that would be removed from all external influence, even the invisible influence of God the Creator, who conserves and keeps it in motion. For how could experimental knowledge exclude this invisible influence, which is beyond the scope of experience? On the contrary, the transformation of energy demands not only a secondary cause, such as local motion for the generation of heat, but it also demands the First Cause; for only the First Cause is its own action and

being, and without it the other causes produce no effect. Hence both absolute contingency and absolute determinism must be avoided.

Second corollary. It is hinted at in the reply to the third objection: the first effects willed by God depend on His divine will, namely, that creatures exist rather than that they do not exist depends solely on the most free will of God. Thus, for example, we may say that God willed man to have hands to serve his intellect by their work; or we may say that God willed the incarnation of His Son for our redemption, as the end for which or the subject to whom the Incarnation is of benefit.

Third objection. Hence it would be false to say with the absolute nominalists, that we must not seek for reasons of fittingness for the creation or the Incarnation. But we must say that creation is so expedient for the manifestation of divine goodness that it would be inexpedient if God had not created, so that creation is a most free act. The same observations apply equally to the decree of the Incarnation. We must not seek for reasons of fittingness in those things that depend only on the simple will of God or solely and merely on His will of good pleasure, for example, “why this part of matter is under the form of fire, another under the form of earth.”

SIXTH ARTICLE

WHETHER THE WILL OF GOD IS ALWAYS FULFILLED

State of the question. It seems that the will of God is not always fulfilled. (1) For the Apostle says that God “will have all men to be saved,” and it does not happen so. We have also the following texts: “How often would I have gathered thy children together . . . and thou wouldest not.” “I called, and you refused.” “You always resist the Holy Ghost.” (2) It seems that, just as God knows all truth, He wills all good, and yet many good things do not become realities. (3) The effects of the First Cause may be hindered by a defect of a secondary cause. On the other hand, there are many texts in Holy Scripture that state the opposite, such as: “Whatsoever the Lord pleased, He hath done.”

The answer is: It is of faith that there is a certain will in God which is always fulfilled. This will of God is called the simple or consequent will, or the will that is absolute and efficacious.

1) Revelation proves this clearly, for we read: “The Lord of hosts hath decreed, and who can disannul it?” “My counsel shall stand, and all My will shall be done.” “There is none that can resist Thy will.” “He will do all that pleaseth Him.” “For who resisteth His will?” “I give them (My sheep) life everlasting, and they shall not perish forever, and no man shall pluck them out of My hand. That which My Father hath given Me is greater than all; and no one can snatch them out of the hand of My Father.”

The Church has particularly defined that God’s will concerning the bringing of the elect to glory is always fulfilled. In fact, concerning the two divine wills, one of which is not always fulfilled, but the other infallibly so, the Council of Quierzy declares as follows: “Almighty God wills without exception all men to be saved, though not all are saved. That some are saved, however, is the gift of Him who saves; if some perish, it is the fault of them that perish.” This formula is taken from the writings of St. Prosper.

The Fathers, in explaining the above-quoted texts from Holy Scripture, often affirmed the infallibility of God’s consequent will, as St. Augustine did in the following words: “Nor is there any other reason why God is truly called omnipotent except that He can do whatever He wills to do; nor is the effect of God’s omnipotent will prevented by the will of any creature.”

The argumentative part of the article gives the following theological proof for the conclusion: It is not possible for anything to fall outside the order of the most universal cause, under which all particular causes are included; but God’s will (which is the will in the absolute sense) is the most universal cause, under which all particular causes are included; therefore it is not possible for anything to fall outside the order of this cause, and it is contradictory for this cause not to produce its effect.

The major is illustrated by a comparison between efficient and formal causes; for the agent acts in so far as it is in act, by means of its form. But in forms, although a thing may fall short of a particular form, such as humanity or life, it cannot fall short of the most universal form, which is being; for it is not possible for anything not to be being. Similarly, in efficient causes, something can fall outside the order of a particular cause, for instance, the sun; but it cannot fall outside the order of the most universal cause, under which all other causes are included.

The minor is evident from the fact that God’s will is the cause of all things, as already shown. It presupposes a certain distinction which is explicitly made in the reply to the first objection, namely, the distinction

between the antecedent or conditional and the consequent or absolute wills in God. It is only this latter which is called will in the absolute sense, and which is always fulfilled, a point that will be at once more clearly seen in the explanation that follows.

Immediately at the end of the argumentative part of the article the following corollary is deduced: “That which seems to depart from the divine will in one order, returns to it in another order; as does the sinner, who by sin falls away from the divine will as much as lies in him, yet falls back into the order of that will when by its justice he is punished.” The reason for this is that God’s will is the most universal of causes, and He permits evil only for the sake of a greater good which is efficaciously intended by Him, and which will infallibly be realized. This is also what is said in the reply to the third objection of this article. Similarly, in the reply to the second objection it is remarked that God does not will all possible good.

THE ANTECEDENT WILL OF GOD

Nevertheless there is still a difficulty about the universal will to save. The first objection in this article refers to this will, and it is formulated by the Apostle as follows: “God will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” But this does not happen.

St. Thomas’ reply to this first objection must now be examined, and this universal will to save will be more fully discussed in our appendix to this article. We shall there see that the consequent will and even the antecedent will refer to the will of good pleasure, which properly belongs to God.

Now there are several things of great importance to be remarked concerning this reply to the first objection. It must first of all be read.

1) It mentions St. Augustine’s explanation of St. Paul’s words, “God wishes all men to be saved.” St. Augustine interprets these words as applying to God’s efficacious will which is always fulfilled, and therefore he says: “God wills all men to be saved that are saved; or God wills some men of every class and condition to be saved, males and females, Jews and Gentiles, great and small.”

It must be observed that as regards adults who actually are not saved, St. Augustine said, as mentioned in the Council of Trent: “God commands not impossibilities, but, by commanding, both admonishes you to do what you

are able, and to pray for what you are not able (to do).” These words declare that there is a certain will attributed to God, by which He wills that His divine precepts be right at the moment really possible of fulfillment for all adults, and according as these know that they are bound by such obligations. Thus according to God’s will it is really possible for these to be saved, which is denied by Luther, Calvin, and Jansenius.

2) St. Thomas in his reply to this first objection refers to the opinion of St. John Damascene, who held that the words of St. Paul, “God will have all men to be saved,” apply to God’s antecedent will, but not to His consequent or efficacious will. This means that

God of His goodness wills all men to be saved by His antecedent will which does not take into consideration, of course, the foreseeing of sin. But God, having foreseen the final impenitence of many, wills by His consequent will to inflict upon them the punishment due to their sins.

But this solution of St. John Damascene considers the problem only under its moral aspects, so as to reconcile God’s infinite goodness with His damnation of many. More briefly, according to St. John Damascene, God, of Himself and prior to any consideration, wills the salvation of all; but many sin and remain in sin, and therefore, as a consequence of this, God damns them, and so de facto they are not saved. This is the commonly accepted answer among Christians.

But there is still the difficulty about how the will of the omnipotent God is not fulfilled concerning those who are not saved. Is it not in God’s power to preserve them from falling into the sin of final impenitence? But if He has the power, does He permit this

sin for a greater good, and what greater good is this? Moreover, are those who are actually saved, loved more and helped more by Him? Thus does St. Thomas posit the problem as it was formerly posited

by St. Augustine, not only in its moral aspect as it was considered by St. John Damascene, but in its higher metaphysical and theological aspects, considering it under the light of this higher principle in the present article, namely, that the will of the omnipotent is always fulfilled. Thus the question is approached from a higher plane.

3) St. Thomas solves the question by three syllogisms which have their foundations in the following principles.

A. Everything, in so far as it is good, is willed by God. But a thing taken in its primary sense, and absolutely considered, may be good, and yet when

some additional circumstances are taken into account, it may be changed into the contrary. Thus that a man should live is good; but if a man is a murderer, that he live is an evil. Thus a just judge antecedently wills all men to live, but consequently (on second consideration) he wills the man to be hanged. Therefore, in like manner God antecedently wills all men to be saved, but consequently wills some to be damned, as His justice exacts.

In the first syllogism St. Thomas retains the doctrine of St. John Damascene on the antecedent will, and thus he gives a better explanation of St. Paul's text than St. Augustine gave in the passages just quoted. But there is still the difficulty that is not sufficiently considered by St. John Damascene, though properly so by St. Augustine, i.e., whether the omnipotent God is incapable of saving all men or of preserving them from falling into sin? St. Thomas solves this difficulty by means of two arguments which he deduces from the first.

B. What we will antecedently we do not will simply but in a qualified manner, because the will is directed to things as they are in themselves (for good is not in the mind, as truth is, but in things), and in themselves they exist under particular qualifications, that is, they are willed as they are at the moment of willing.

Thus the just judge wills only in a qualified manner that the murderer should live, namely, inasmuch as he is a man. Hence it is not surprising that this antecedent will is not fulfilled, God's omnipotence, however, remaining intact, as will be more clearly seen now in the final argument to be presented.

We will a thing simply inasmuch as we will it when all particular circumstances are considered, and this is what is meant by willing consequently. Thus a just judge wills simply the hanging of a murderer, but in a qualified manner he would will him to live, inasmuch as he is a man. Therefore "whatever God simply wills takes place, although what He wills antecedently does not take place." Thus the conclusion of this article is preserved intact, namely, that God's will, which is the will in the absolute sense, is always fulfilled. The principle of St. Augustine concerning the will of the omnipotent God and the opinion of St. John Damascene are likewise safeguarded by the previous arguments. The opinion of St. John Damascene is now presented in a clearer light, and this not only as regards its moral aspect, but also as regards its metaphysical and theological aspects.

First corollary. It follows from this that the antecedent will is not only that will which precedes the foreseeing of sin, but it is also the divine will that is never fulfilled, as in the case of those fruits that never get ripe, of those sufficient graces that make it possible to keep Cod's commandments, but which remain ineffective because of the resistance of the created free will.

Second corollary. Similarly not only is the consequent will the divine will of punishing after having foreseen one's demerits, or of rewarding after having foreseen one's merits, but it also refers to every act of the divine will which is directed toward good considered as it actually is with its accompanying circumstances, for instance, the fruits that actually get ripe, and the effective compliance with God's commands.

Third corollary. Thus the principle of the distinction between sufficient grace and that grace which is of itself efficacious is ascribed to a higher source, as will be more clearly explained in a subsequent article.

We shall also see farther on, after explaining the eleventh and twelfth articles of this question, that the antecedent will is also the will of good pleasure, which is truly found in God, and which is not merely the will of expression, not merely an external sign of the divine will.

The whole of this most celebrated reply to the first objection can be summed up in the following syllogism: Everything, in so far as it is good, is willed by God, and good exists only as it actually is; but the antecedent will is directed toward good considered in the absolute sense and not as it actually will be, whereas the consequent will is directed toward good as it actually will be; therefore "whatever God simply or consequently wills takes place, although what He wills only antecedently may not take place." Thus we come to the final conclusion as established by St. Thomas, by writing in the major of this argument what is expressed in each of the majors of the three preceding arguments.

If these arguments, however, are given careful consideration, then this reply of St. Thomas to the first objection is seen in all its beauty of structure. All its concepts are expressed with absolute precision and simplicity of language, and are in perfect harmony, so that God's omnipotence, as affirmed by St. Augustine, is reconciled with His universal will to save, as affirmed by St. John Damascene. There remains indeed for our consideration the mystery about how infinite mercy, justice, and

supreme liberty are intimately reconciled in the eminence of the Deity or of God's intimate life.

All this doctrine may be summed up in this most certain principle formulated in the Council of Thuzey (860), which put an end to the discussions on predestination arising from the works of Gottschalk: "Whatsoever the Lord pleased He hath done in heaven and on earth (Ps. 134: 6). For nothing is done in heaven and on earth except what He Himself is pleased to do, or justly permits to be done." It follows from this: (1) that no good thing positively and actually happens to be found in this man rather than in a certain other, unless God from all eternity efficaciously willed that it should so come to pass; (2) that no evil thing positively and actually happens to be found in this man rather than in a certain other, unless God from all eternity permitted it. The sinner, indeed, in the very act of sinning, can avoid committing the sin, and from all eternity God willed that it be really possible for the sinner to avoid committing the sin (which is God's antecedent will); but God did not efficaciously will that this sinner right at this moment positively should avoid committing the sin, and if God had efficaciously willed this, then this sinner not only positively could avoid committing the sin, but truly would have avoided committing it. These are most certain and commonly accepted principles which have their foundation in revelation, and from them is derived the distinction between sufficient grace, which gives the power to do what is right, and grace that is of itself efficacious, which causes us freely to do what is right.

TEACHING OF ST. THOMAS ON THE UNIVERSAL WILL TO SAVE

This question is bound up with another, namely, whether Christ died for all men, and this evidently concerns the mystery of predestination. In fact, every error about God's will to save brings us back to an error about the mystery of predestination, and vice versa.

Thus the Semipelagians held that the beginning of salvation and final perseverance come from us, and not from God. Hence they said that God wills equally the salvation of all men, and went so far as to deny the gratuity of predestination on the part of the elect. On the other hand, the predestinarians and subsequently the first Protestants and the Jansenists so vitiated the notions of the gratuitous predestination of the elect and of human liberty, as to deny God's universal will to save and the existence of

grace that is truly sufficient for those not predestined. They likewise said that Christ did not die for all men.

We must therefore investigate: (1) what is defined of faith and what is theologically certain on these points; (2) what is the disputed point among theologians, especially between Thomists and Molinists, as regards God's universal will to save; (3) what is the validity of the Thomist view as compared with the teachings of St. Augustine, St. Prosper, and St. John Damascene. (4) Then there will be a solution of the objections.

I. WHAT IS OF FAITH

1) It is of faith that God sincerely wills the salvation not only of the predestined, but of all the faithful. This is evidently so for two reasons. (1) The fifth proposition of Jansenius, asserting that "it is a Semipelagian heresy to say that Christ died for all men without exception," was condemned as heretical, if this means that Christ died only for the salvation of the predestined. (2) Moreover, the Apostles' Creed is binding upon all the faithful, and it says of Christ: "Who for us men, and for our salvation came down from heaven."

2) It is certain and proximate to the faith that God sincerely wills the salvation of even all adult infidels, in so far as He makes it really possible for them here and now to observe His precepts whenever these are binding upon them. To say otherwise would mean that God commands what is impossible.

3) It is the common opinion of theologians that God sincerely wills even the salvation of all infants who die before they can be baptized. But it is more difficult to explain how it is really possible for these to be saved. The faith of the Church on these points has its foundation in revelation as variously expressed in Scripture and tradition. Thus we read: "We hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of the faithful." Even concerning infidels, St, Paul says: "I desire first of all that prayers be made for all men. . . . This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." This text refers to all human beings. St. Augustine, too, understood these texts in this manner.

IN WHAT SENSE CHRIST DIED FOR ALL

The Church has declared that Christ died for all, not only for the predestined or only for the believers, although not all receive the benefit of salvation.

How do the majority of Thomists explain this truth? They understand it in the sense that "Christ so died for all men that He truly and sincerely willed to offer His death to the Father for the eternal salvation of the whole human race, antecedently indeed and sufficiently salutary for the reprobates, consequently and efficaciously so for the predestined."

St. Paul says: "If one died for all, then all were dead; and Christ died for all." Similarly he says: "Therefore as by the offense of one, unto all men to condemnation; so also by the justice of one, unto all men to justification of life." According to this parallelism it must be said that each and all died because of Adam's sin; therefore Christ died for all. Thus St. Augustine declares in one of his works: "Just as infants died through Adam's sin, so also Christ died for them," even for those not baptized.

But the contrary teaching of Jansenius frustrates one of the principal articles of faith. Hope, which is founded primarily on Christ's death offered for us, becomes languid, and charity, which finds its source of energy in the remembrance of Christ's love as the Savior of mankind, becomes cold.

II. THE DIFFERENT OPINIONS OF MODERN THEOLOGIANS CONCERNING GOD'S ANTECEDENT WILL FOR THE SALVATION OF ALL MEN

This question is discussed at length by the Thomist, Gonzalez de Albeda, who wrote after Molina and Bannez. His special purpose is to show that sufficient grace, which depends on the antecedent will of God, is, in its order, truly sufficient. There is much that is helpful in his writings, although not all that he wrote is to be approved, and was not approved by the other Thomists. It must first of all be noted that there are two general and mutually conflicting opinions. These are the Thomist and Molinist opinions.

For the Thomists, who follow the teaching of St. Thomas, the antecedent will of God is always of itself inefficacious, because it is concerned with what is considered absolutely as such to be good, but not with what is considered here and now to be good. But it is only good in this latter sense that comes into being.

On this point all Thomists agree, but they differ in this, that formerly some held the antecedent will to be more probably the will of expression, which is not found properly and formally in God, but only metaphorically,

because it is more an external expression of God's will. Such was the opinion of Cajetan, Bannez, Zumel, as also of several of the old theologians.

Other Thomists who wrote after the time of Bannez (such as Lemos, Alvarez, Gonzalez, John of St. Thomas, the Salmanticenses, Gonet, Billuart) hold that the antecedent will is the will of good pleasure, which is properly and formally in God.

The Molinists, however, have a different conception of the antecedent will. They are of the opinion that this will is not of itself alone always inefficacious; for they define it as that will which precedes the foreseeing of our consent that is known by means of the scientia media. And they define the consequent will as the will which follows this foreseen consent, and is thus the will by which God punishes or rewards. Molinists are agreed on this point, although there are certain minor differences among them, as will be stated farther on.

These opinions must be examined, and they may be expressed by the following schema:

Antecedent will of itself alone Is always inefficacious
and is more probably the will of expression: the view of Cajetan and Bannez.

It is the will of good pleasure: the view of St. Thomas and of the Thomists generally.

is not always inefficacious the absolute gratuity of predestination to salvation is preserved intact: the opinion of St. Robert Bellarmine and of Suarez.

so that predestination to salvation is after our foreseen merits, at least the conditionally free and meritorious acts of the future: the opinion of Molina, Valentia, and Vasquez.

1) Cajetan and Bannez think it more probable that the antecedent will as regards the salvation of all men is only the will of expression, but not the will of good pleasure. They understand this distinction as explained by St. Thomas, namely, that the will of good pleasure is the very act of the divine will, and thus it is formally in God; whereas the will of expression is only metaphorically and causally attributed to God, for it is, strictly speaking, something external which, as we understand it, is a sign that God wills something. Thus a divine command externally given to men, even the most wicked, is called the divine will, inasmuch as it is a sign that God wills us

to do what is commanded. Thus God wills (by His will of expression), so they say, that all men, even criminals, be saved. Moreover, God does not command what is impossible, and so He wills at least that the fulfillment of His precepts be here and now really possible for all adults who have knowledge of these commands.

Cajetan and Bannez also say that the will of expression, which is a command, sometimes is identical with the will of good pleasure, and sometimes not. Thus when God commanded Abraham to kill his son, this did not coincide with His will of good pleasure, since indeed He afterward commanded the contrary.

2) The opinion of other Thomists, such as Lemos, Alvarez, Gonzales, includes a criticism of the preceding. They reply that the antecedent will is not only the will of expression, but is also the will of good pleasure, as expressly stated by St. Thomas, for he says: “Will in the strict sense of the term is found in God, and so will is, strictly speaking, predicated of God, which is the will of good pleasure, and this is subdivided into consequent and antecedent wills.” This is also quite clear from the examples given by St. Thomas in his reply to the first objection of the present article, in which he points out that a judge truly and in the strict sense wills that a man, inasmuch as he is a man, should live, although he condemns the murderer to death. Moreover, this opinion is proved both from Holy Scripture, and by a theological argument.

A. Scriptural proof. The words of Holy Scripture are to be taken in their literal sense, provided nothing derogatory to God or contrary to faith or morals results therefrom. But Holy Scripture in various texts asserts that God wills the salvation of all men coming into the world since Adam’s fall, and if this is understood, indeed, as referring to His conditioned but proper and formal will of good pleasure, and not to His will metaphorically so called, nor merely to His will of expression, then there is nothing either derogatory to God or contrary to faith that follows therefrom. Hence the words of Holy Scripture asserting that God wills the salvation of all men are to be taken in their literal sense. By all means the following texts must be so interpreted: “Who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth . . . (for) Christ gave Himself a ransom for all.” “The Lord . . . not willing that any should perish, but that all should return to penance.” “Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered together thy children, . . . and thou wouldest not.” St. John Chrysostom understood these

texts as referring to God's will which He truly possesses, for he says: "In a wonderful way God yearns for and vehemently desires our salvation." The Greek Fathers all speak in like manner, as Jansenius concedes. Even St. Augustine seems to admit this will of good pleasure, for he writes: "It is most sincerely to be believed and professed that God wills men to be saved, since indeed the Apostle, who was of this opinion, earnestly commanded what is faithfully observed in all the Churches, that supplications be made to God for all men."

B. The generally accepted opinion among Thomists is proved by the following argument: The will of good pleasure derives its name from the interior inclination and ordination of God, and not solely from what is a sign of this will. But God interiorly wills the salvation of all men and provides them with sufficient means for this although, considering the circumstances, and because of the higher ends involved by reason of the manifestation of His justice and His other attributes, the defectibility of the human will presupposed, He willed to permit that a considerable number fail to attain this end. Therefore His universal salvific or antecedent will is His will of good pleasure.

The minor of this argument is proved as follows: as the choice of efficacious means for salvation presupposes the efficacious interior intention to save, so also the choice of sufficient means for salvation presupposes the inefficacious interior intention to save. So say the majority of the Thomists.

This argument is confirmed by a consideration of God's salvific will. For indeed an object that is in itself good and that is not only possible, but that is a conditioned future, terminates the internal decree of the divine will which is subjectively absolute but objectively conditioned. But the salvation of all men who are still wayfarers is something that is in itself good and that is a conditioned future or a futurable, and not something that is merely possible. Therefore the salvation of all men who are still wayfarers is a conditioned future that terminates the internal decree of the divine will which is subjectively absolute but objectively conditioned.

The major is explained by pointing out that, if this good object were merely possible, it would not terminate the internal decree of the divine will; if it were a contingent absolute future, it would terminate God's efficacious decree; but as a conditioned future it terminates the internal conditioned decree of the divine will, namely, a decree similar to that presupposed in the prophecy of commination.

Therefore the conclusion we come to is, that the antecedent will is not only the will of expression, but is also the will of good pleasure, although it is objectively conditioned, as will be more clearly seen from the solution of the objections.

3) The opinion of Molina and the Molinists. Molina and Valentia think that St. John Damascene and St. Thomas held different opinions on this subject, and they seek to depart from the teaching of St. Thomas and return to that of St. John Damascene. But among the Molinists, Vasquez maintains that St. Thomas interpreted aright the viewpoint of St. John Damascene, though he himself departs from the teaching of St. Thomas.

What is Molina's teaching about the antecedent will? This is clearly made known to us from his writings. He is of the opinion that the antecedent will as regards the salvation of all men is a conditioned will in this sense: "provided we, too, will." Hence sometimes God's antecedent will is fulfilled, that is, when man wills to make God's help efficacious in its second actuality; and sometimes this antecedent will of God is only a velleity, that is, when man does not will to make God's help efficacious in its second actuality. Hence for Molina the antecedent will is the will that is prior to the foreseeing of our consent.

Nevertheless, that Molina may escape the taint of Semipelagianism, which declares that God wills equally the salvation of all men, so that predestination is made to consist in the foreknowledge of the merits, he

holds that God, by reason of His most free will of good pleasure, decreed to place this man, for instance, Peter, in those circumstances in which He had foreseen his good consent; whereas Judas is placed in other circumstances in which his infidelity to grace was foreseen. Thus Molina vitiates the above definition of the antecedent will. But, according to this definition, Molina must define the consequent will in the opposite sense, as being the will which follows the foreseeing of our consent, like the will of rewarding and punishing, of which St. John Damascene speaks.

It must be noted that Molina's conception of the antecedent will is such that the predestination of the elect to salvation is considered the result of foreseen merits, at least of conditioned merits, which is the teaching of Valentia and Vasquez. In fact, Valentia maintains that all good acts which are dependent on free will are willed by God's antecedent will and not by His consequent will. On the contrary, St. Robert Bellarmine and Suarez, although they retain from Molinism the theory of the scientia media and its corresponding conception of the antecedent will, nevertheless maintain with the Thomists, Augustinians, and Scotists, the absolute gratuity of predestination to salvation. Hence their conception of the antecedent and consequent wills is more in agreement with the opinion of St. Thomas. Thus, according to these theologians, sufficient graces are the result of God's antecedent will; and congruous graces, are the result of God's freely predestinating consequent will and are infallibly efficacious, not indeed of themselves, but because of the foreseeing of our consent by means of the scientia media.

CRITICISM OF MOLINA'S OPINION

1) This opinion rests on the theory of the scientia media. But the scientia media, which is concerned with the conditionally free acts of the future before God's conditioned decree, is a knowledge without an object, because before God's decree the conditionally free act of the future is undetermined, since it is a contingent and free act. But if it is said that God, because of His super-comprehensive knowledge of our will and of the circumstances, foresees our consent if we should be placed in such and such circumstances, then this theory, which was devised to safeguard our liberty, leads to determinism of circumstances, and moreover, since God would not be determining, then He would be passively determined in His foreknowledge.

There is no solution of the dilemma: God is either determining or determined, there is no other alternative. The same is also to be said of the modified theory of the scientia media proposed by Suarez.

2) The Molinist definition of the antecedent will results in a definition of the consequent will as the will which follows the foreseeing of our consent. But this definition applies to a certain kind of consequent will, namely, to that of rewarding or punishing, but not to every kind of consequent will. For indeed the consequent will of calling one efficaciously to faith and grace does not presuppose but precedes our consent, since it is the cause of this. Similarly the predestination of the elect to glory or salvation denotes the consequent will, and yet it does not presuppose the foreseeing of merits, as will be stated farther on, because the merits of the elect are the effects of their predestination. St. Robert Bellarmine and Suarez admit this. Even in Molinism, the will to place Peter in circumstances in which his good consent is foreseen, rather than to place him in certain other circumstances, is the consequent will, and yet it does not presuppose, like the will of rewarding or punishing, the foreseeing of Peter's consent as a future act, but only as a conditionally future act.

Hence we come back to St. Thomas' opinion, that the antecedent will is directed toward good, considered absolutely as such, and not as it is under particular qualifications. Thus of itself alone it is not efficacious, because only what is good under particular qualifications comes into being. On the other hand, the consequent will is directed to good considered as such here and now, that is, when all the particular circumstances are considered. This is what is known as will simply as such, and it is always efficacious, because good is in things themselves, and these exist only under particular qualifications.

These definitions, which consider the will and good in their metaphysical aspects, can be applied universally. The first definition applies to every antecedent will, and the second to every consequent will, which means that it applies not only to the will of rewarding or punishing, but also to the efficacious will of calling one to the faith and predestinating one to salvation before foreseen merits.

III. THE VALIDITY OF THE THOMIST OPINION AND HOW IT COMPARES WITH THE TEACHINGS OF ST. AUGUSTINE, ST. PROSPER, AND THE VIEWPOINT OF ST. JOHN DAMASCENE

The Thomist opinion is in harmony with the teaching of St: Augustine, whose interpreter was St. Prosper, and that of St. John Damascene. It reconciles these teachings from the exalted notion it has of the “simple will” of the omnipotent God, which is always fulfilled, as shown in this sixth article. A careful examination of the principal texts of St. Augustine, St. Prosper, and St. John Damascene establish this point with sufficient clarity.

It must be noted first of all that St. John Chrysostom distinguishes two wills in God. One is the will to save all men, even sinners; the other is the will to punish consequent to the foreseeing of the sin. Yet he maintains that the elect are more loved and helped by God, in accordance with the scriptural text: “What hast thou that thou hast not received?” In his commentary on this epistle he says: “Therefore thou hast what thou hast received, neither this only nor that, but whatever thou hast; for these are not thy merits, but God’s gifts.”

But as St. Augustine frequently remarked, the Fathers who wrote before the time of the Pelagian heresy spoke only incidentally of predestination. It is a mystery that is intimately connected with God’s universal will to save.

1) St. Augustine, as we already said, frequently understood St. Paul’s text, “Who will have all men to be saved,” as referring to God’s efficacious will; so he at once interpreted it as meaning: “God wills all men to be saved that are saved, and He wills some men of every class and condition to be saved, males and females, Jews and Gentiles, great and small.” What St. Thomas says of God’s consequent will, which is always fulfilled, is absolutely in agreement with these texts of St. Augustine.

2) St. Augustine spoke in another of his works in equivalent terms of God’s antecedent will, which is not always fulfilled. Thus he wrote: “God commands not impossibilities, but, by commanding, both admonishes thee to do what thou art able and to pray for what thou art not able (to do).” From this text, which is quoted by the Council of Trent, it is evident that, according to St. Augustine, God wills to make the fulfillment of His precepts really possible for adults, here and now, in so far as these are not only known by adults, but also as they are of obligation for them; otherwise God would be commanding impossibilities, and then sin would be unavoidable, in which case He would be punishing them unjustly, especially with eternal punishments. The Thomist doctrine of the antecedent will, by which God gives sufficient graces which make it really

possible for us here and now to fulfill God's precepts, is absolutely in agreement with this and similar texts of St. Augustine.

3) Afterward, in various places, St. Augustine spoke more explicitly of the universal will to save, as referring to God's antecedent will, although he does not use these words. It is more a question of what is implied than of words used. Thus he writes: "God wills all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth; yet not in such a way that He deprives them of free will, for the good or bad use of which they will be most justly judged." As is evident from the context, St. Augustine means this proffered statement of his to be taken as a probable way of explaining the words of the Apostle: "God will have all men to be saved."

In like manner St. Augustine says: "God, in His mercy, sent His only begotten Son, wishing to free men from this death that consists in eternal punishments, provided they are not their own enemies, and do not resist the mercy of their Creator."

Moreover, St. Augustine clearly affirms that Christ died for all, which presupposes in God the will to save all. For the holy Doctor says: "One, says the Apostle (II Cor. 5: 15), died for all, therefore all died: showing by this that He could have died only for those who died. For by this he proved that all died, because one died for all. . . . See, as a consequence of this, that he wanted us to understand that all died, if he died for all."

Finally, in one of his uncompleted works, St. Augustine likewise says: "One died for all, therefore all died. This conclusion of the Apostle remains unchallenged, and by reason of this, because He also died for infants, assuredly, too, infants died." The holy Doctor says this against the Pelagians, who refuse to admit the existence of original sin; but from this it is evident that, in St. Augustine's opinion, Christ died for all without exception, even for infants who die without being baptized, and who de facto are not saved. This shows clearly that there is a will in God to save all, which of itself, since it is not found in connection with His efficacious will, is not actually fulfilled. Therefore these texts of St. Augustine are fully in agreement with the Thomist opinion concerning the antecedent will.

On this point, what was the teaching of St. Prosper, who was a disciple of St. Augustine? St. Prosper was prompted to write by reason of the error of Cassian, who in his Collations showed a preference for Semipelagianism. Cassian, indeed, and many of the monks of Marseilles had rejected the absolute gratuity of predestination taught by St. Augustine. St. Prosper and

St. Hilary wrote to St. Augustine about this (429), so that he wanted to refute them. These monks of Marseilles said that “God’s grace accompanies but does not precede human merits,” and that “God wills indifferently all. . . to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” Thus the predestination of the elect was reduced to the simple foreknowledge of their merits, as in Semipelagianism, and hence the elect were not the objects of God’s predilection, nor were they more helped by Him.

St. Augustin replied to these epistles of St. Prosper and St. Hilary by writing two treatises against the Semipelagians, in which, to make it clear that predestination is gratuitous, he stresses certain texts from St. Paul’s epistles.

After the death of St. Augustine, St. Prosper, who was a layman out a most faithful disciple of St. Augustine, defended his master’s doctrine about the beginning of faith and the intrinsic efficacy of divine grace by which we perform good acts; hence he denied that God wills “indifferently” that all men be saved.

Nevertheless, St. Prosper wrote: “It must be most sincerely believed and professed that God wills all men to be saved.” But he adds that this will is efficacious only for the predestined, whose number is determined. Thus he is clearer than St. Augustine in teaching that damnation is after foreseen demerits; yet he retains the absolute gratuity of predestination, which is thus before foreseen merits.

Shortly after St. Prosper’s death, between the years 434 and 460, some unknown person wrote a work in which he set forth the teaching of St. Augustine, yet not in all its rigor. The author of this work seeks to reconcile God’s universal salvific will, which he admits, with the fact that many are lost. Therefore he distinguishes between a general grace, which is offered to all, and a special grace which, by God’s special mercy, is granted to many and which is the efficacious cause of their salvation.

In the fifth century, however, the priest Lucidus seems to have denied God’s universal salvific will. Faustus of Riez replied in the Semipelagian sense. Finally the African, St. Fulgentius, strictly defended St. Augustine’s doctrine on the gratuity of predestination, though it does not seem that he stresses enough God’s universal will to save. Yet St. Fulgentius refused to deny this proposition of St. Augustine: “God commands not impossibilities, but, by commanding, both admonishes thee to do what thou art able, and earnestly to ask for what thou art not able (to do).”

Finally, in the eighth century, St. John Damascene distinguished between God's antecedent and benevolent will, by which He wills the salvation of all men, and His consequent will, by which He wills to punish sinners either for a time or for eternity.

Nevertheless he says: "Without God's help we can neither will nor do what is good, but we are free either to persevere in doing good or refrain from so doing." From this text it is clear that those who persevere in doing good (the elect) are more helped by God than the others whom He permits to fall into sin. For God is the cause of the meritorious act, but not of sin. St. John Damascene clearly states this, although he makes no profound statement about the necessity and efficacy of actual grace in the life of the predestined.

As I said above, St. John Damascene considered this question in its moral aspect as it refers to God's goodness and man's culpability, rather than in its theological and metaphysical aspects as it refers to God's omnipotent will, which is always fulfilled when it is a case of His absolute will and not of His qualified or conditioned will.

On the contrary, it was particularly this second aspect of God's will that was considered by St. Augustine. And St. Thomas reconciles both aspects, by explaining the antecedent will, which St. John Damascene speaks of, as referring to good considered absolutely as such, and not as it is here and now; whereas the consequent will, he observes, is directed to good considered as it is here and now. But since good, which is in the things themselves, comes into being here and now only, it follows that the antecedent will of itself alone, when not joined to the consequent will, remains inefficacious. Hence the division of God's will into these two wills is the ultimate foundation for the distinction between sufficient grace, and grace that is of itself efficacious. The former is the result of God's antecedent will, which makes it really possible for us here and now to do what He commands; the latter is the result of His consequent will, which moves us so that we actually do what He commands. But from the fact that man resists sufficient grace, by reason of his defectibility, he deserves to be deprived of efficacious grace.

Thus the teaching of St. Thomas preserves intact both St. Augustine's opinion and St. John Damascene's, thus safeguarding the omnipotence of God, whose absolute will is always fulfilled, and the goodness of God, who does not command impossibilities and who makes it really possible for all

to do what He commands. Whatever the adversaries may say, Thomism acknowledges that this question of the salvific will is a mystery, not only as it affects our liberty, but also on God's part. And in this we clearly see both the exalted nature and insufficiency of sacred theology, which disposes one for the knowledge of infused contemplation, in which there is peace of mind and rest; for this contemplation is the effect of grace, which is a formal participation of the Deity, in which justice, mercy and supreme liberty are identified.

IV. SOLUTION OF OBJECTIONS

First objection. One fails to see why the antecedent will is conditioned, unless it is said that God wills all men to be saved, if they themselves will to be saved. But this is precisely Molina's opinion. Therefore, unless Molina's opinion is accepted, one fails to see why the antecedent will be conditioned.

Reply. This opinion, as we have said, presupposes the theory of the scientia media, for which there is no foundation and by which God, in His foreknowledge of conditionally free acts of the future, would be in a passive state. This theory was not fully approved even by Molina himself, who, to avoid Semipelagianism and preserve intact the dogma of predestination, admitted that God of His own most free will of good pleasure places the elect in circumstances in which He foresaw their good consent. And it is the gratuity of predestination that is more affirmed both by St. Robert Bellarmine and by Suarez.

Hence it is for Molina himself to answer this question, namely, why God did not will to place all men in those circumstances in which He foresaw their good consent.

But he must answer this question as St. Thomas did, by quoting St. Paul's text: "What if God, willing to show His wrath (i.e., the splendor of His justice), and to make His power known, endured (i.e., permitted) with much patience vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction, that He might show the riches of His glory upon the vessels of mercy, which He hath prepared unto glory (where is the injustice?)"

Hence it follows that the antecedent will is conditioned in this sense, that God would will the salvation of all men if He did not will to permit in many the sin of final impenitence to serve the higher ends of either manifesting

the splendor of His justice, or His inalienable rights to be loved above all things. Thus He willed to manifest His goodness, sparing by His mercy and punishing by His justice.

This condition is retained even by Molina, otherwise he would be absolutely denying the mystery of predestination. It is, indeed, an inscrutable mystery, and its reconciliation with the universal salvific will is nothing but the intimate reconciliation of infinite mercy, justice, and supreme liberty in the Deity, which is hidden from us, and which can be seen only in the beatific vision. But a strictly syllogistic objection, and one that is incapable of solution, cannot be raised against the possibility of God's permitting the sin of final impenitence.

But I insist: Nevertheless, what was said by several of the post-Nicene Fathers, namely, those who wrote before the rise of Pelagianism, and after the rise of this heresy what St. John Damascene said, practically meant that God wills the salvation of all men if they themselves will to be saved. Therefore the condition on which God's antecedent will depends, finds its explanation in none of the higher motives, but merely in man's will.

The Thomists reply to this by distinguishing the antecedent: God wills the salvation of all men, if they themselves will to be saved, waiting for them so to will, this I deny; if such volition is the result of God's operation in them, this I concede, according to what St. Paul says: "For it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will." I distinguish the consequent in like manner. It was not the intention of the post-Nicene Fathers or St. John Damascene to deny this text of St. Paul or the following: "For who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received?"

To say otherwise would not be to uphold the definition of the Council of Orange, which says against the Semipelagians: "If anyone maintains that God waits for us to will that we be cleansed from sin, but does not confess that even this act of willing to be cleansed from sin is the result of the inspiration and operation of the Holy Spirit in us, such a person resists the Holy Spirit . . . and the Apostle preaching for our spiritual benefit that: It is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will." St. Augustine wrote in like manner. To say otherwise, as we already remarked, would be to deny the mystery itself of predestination. Wherefore, as we pointed out, even Molina somewhat restricted his definition of the antecedent will. On the other hand, all Catholics admit that

God wills all men to be saved, if they themselves will to be saved, that is, presupposing their co-operation prompted by grace. St. Augustine himself says: “He who created you without your help, will not save you without your help.” Nor did anyone ever think of saying that God wills to save those who refuse and do not wish to be saved.

Second objection. What is conditioned is imperfect. But the antecedent will is conditioned, because, as stated above, it presupposes a greater good, namely, the manifestation of God’s attributes. Therefore it implies an imperfection, and hence cannot be properly and formally in God, but only metaphorically and virtually, as being the will of expression and not of good pleasure. This objection expresses the very opposite of the preceding.

Reply. I distinguish the major. The conditioned is imperfect, on the part of that which is conditioned, this I concede; otherwise I deny it. I contradistinguish the minor: that the antecedent will is conditioned on the part of the thing willed, which is not accepted with all its accompanying circumstances because of a higher good, this I concede; that it is conditioned, as if God were incapable of saving all men, this I deny. So say St. Thomas and the majority of the Thomists when discussing God’s subjectively absolute and objectively conditioned decrees. This means that God wills all. men to be saved, if this does not conflict with the manifestation of His divine attributes, the ordering of all things by His providence, and the contingency and defectibility of human beings.

But I insist: The efficacious will as such is a perfection; hence the inefficacious will as such is an imperfection. Therefore this cannot be properly and formally in God.

Reply. I distinguish the consequent: that the inefficacious will, which is the result of the nullification of its power by an extrinsic impediment, is an imperfection, this I concede. Such is the will of the merchant who desires to save his merchandise at the moment of shipwreck. That the inefficacious will, which is the result of the willer’s positively ordaining things to higher ends, is an imperfection, this I deny.

It is the antecedent will, as conceived by Molinists, that posits imperfection in God; for they say God wills all men to be saved, provided they themselves will to be saved. In this case the antecedent will would be conditioned, the condition depending on the consent or dissent of human beings, and not solely because of a higher good intended by Providence, this being the manifestation of God’s attributes.

This solution is confirmed by the fact that Holy Scripture records many instances of conditioned futures. Thus God promised Abraham to spare Sodom, if ten just men were found in it. Similarly it was revealed that the Tyrians and Sidonians would have been converted if Christ had come to them. But these conditioned futures are infallibly knowable by God only in His subjectively absolute and objectively conditioned decrees, and this we say against those who favor the theory of the scientia media. Hence a subjectively absolute and objectively conditioned decree must likewise be admitted with regard to the conditioned salvation of all men.

Third objection. But the subjectively absolute and the objectively conditioned decree implies a contradiction, for by it God wills and does not will the same object. Thus God wills the conversion of the Tyrians, and, on the other hand, He does not will it, because He does not will that the gospel be preached to them. Therefore the same holds good of His decree.

Reply. It is false to say that by this decree God wills and does not will the same formal object, but only the same material object, and this in different ways; that is, God wills inefficaciously the salvation of all men, absolutely considered, and He does not will efficaciously the salvation of all, having taken into consideration all the circumstances and the higher ends in view, Similarly He wills inefficaciously the conversion of the Tyrians, provided the gospel should be preached to them, and He does not will it efficaciously because, on account of higher ends in view, He does not will the gospel to be preached to them. There is no contradiction in this.

Thus the merchant during a shipwreck truly, though inefficaciously, wills to save his merchandise, and he efficaciously wills to cast it into the sea. It would be a contradiction if God willed antecedently the salvation of those already damned, to whom He no longer gives graces sufficient for salvation.

Fourth objection. If this decree of the antecedent will does not involve a contradiction, it is at least useless and illusory, it being as if a wealthy person were to say to a poor person: I will give you a hundred pennies if you fly.

Reply. This decree is not useless, because, although it fails to attain its ultimate effect, yet it serves many other useful purposes. (1) It establishes the foundation for the foreknowledge of conditionally free acts of the future. (2) By this decree God provides for all wayfarers sufficient means whereby they may be saved, whereas, on the other hand, for the salvation of

those who are already damned, His attitude at most can be merely one of passive complacency. (3) It serves as the foundation for God's promise to save us on certain conditions; for He could not sincerely and conditionally promise anything, unless He willed by such decree.

Moreover, this decree of the antecedent will is not illusory, because the condition is possible, not impossible, such as the example given above by the objector: "I will give you wealth, if you succeed in flying." For God does not command impossibilities. But in this there is the mystery of God's permission of the sin of final impenitence for higher ends, and it is not in our power to judge of these.

Finally, we can turn back the objection on our opponent by saying: What we consider contradictory is the conditioned decree as conceived by the Molinists, namely, "I will concur in your action if you have first freely determined yourself to act." This, in our opinion, implies a contradiction, because the divine concurrence is no less necessary for man's self-determination than light is for seeing, or existence for acting. Hence to say: "I will concur in your action, if you have first freely determined yourself to act," is tantamount to saying: "I will give you light, if you see this object," or "I will give you existence, if you do this." No wonder Molinism leads to such conclusions, for, if Thomism is true, then Molinism is absurd, or vice versa. For the principles of these two systems are contradictory, that is, before God's determining decree, either He can or cannot know conditionally free acts of the future with infallible certainty.

But I insist: Nevertheless this antecedent will is de facto merely inoperative and sterile, for by its own power nothing is accomplished, but only when it is joined to the consequent will, for it is only this will that is directed toward good considered with its accompanying circumstances.

Reply. It is, indeed, true that the antecedent will by its own power never accomplishes anything, because it is directed toward good absolutely considered, and good comes into being only with its accompanying circumstances.

But it does not follow that the antecedent will is merely idle and sterile, for by it God gives sufficient graces, which make the fulfillment of His precepts here and now really possible for adults, although it is not here and now effective.

Moreover, all Thomists are agreed that every grace which is called proximately sufficient as regards some perfect act, for example, that of

contrition, is infallibly and of itself efficacious, in virtue of some absolute decree, as regards an imperfect act, for example, that of attrition. But because man, by reason of his own defectibility, resists the sufficient grace, in which the efficacious help was offered to him, God justly denies the efficacious grace that was previously offered to him. This denial on God's part is of the nature of a penalty, and thus it presupposes at least a first offense. Hence there is a distinction between it and the divine permission of this offense, which, as is evident, precedes the offense. In fact, God often moves us wayfarers to pray as in the prayer of the Mass before Communion: "Permit me not, O Lord, to be separated from Thee."

Hence God's antecedent will concerning the salvation of all wayfarers is not inoperative and sterile. This is more clearly seen by comparing it with God's will concerning the salvation of the damned. For God ceases to operate as regards their salvation, because they are incapable of being saved, as they have reached the end of their course and are confirmed in evil. Hence, as we said, God's attitude toward the salvation of the damned can be only one of merely passive complacency. But it is not so as regards the salvation of the wayfarer, no matter how great a sinner such a person may be, because as long as a person is in this world there is possibility of conversion and salvation.

But you insist: St. Thomas says: "The antecedent will may be called a willingness rather than an absolute will."

Reply. What is denied by this statement is that the antecedent will is an absolute will, but not that it is a will; for it is called "a velleity" compared with the consequent will, which is the simple or absolute will.

Final objection. The antecedent will in God does not denote what He sincerely and positively wills. For indeed, he who has the power to do what he is said to will, and does not do so, does not positively and sincerely will it; such would be the case with a merchant who could save his merchandise and would not do so. But it is in God's efficacious power to save all men, and He does not do so. Therefore He does not positively and sincerely will all to be saved.

Reply. I distinguish the major: he who has the efficacious power to do what he is said to will, and does not do so, does not positively and sincerely will it by the consequent will, this I concede; by the antecedent will, this I deny. For it may happen that something, absolutely considered, is good, and not merely a possible but a conditioned future, namely, unless this conflict

with higher ends. Such a good terminates God's conditioned decree of His positive and sincere will, which is distinct, for example, from His quasi-negative will of permitting sin. Hence the object of God's universal salvific will is in itself good, but as it stands in the way of a greater good, it is not good, and consequently is not willed. Hence, just as the merchant sincerely wills to save his merchandise, which, however, he throws overboard because there is danger of shipwreck, so also God sincerely wills to save all men, though He does not save all, considering the higher ends in view.

But you insist: I deny the parity in the above illustration, for God, unlike the merchant, can efficaciously save all human beings.

Reply. It is not a case of absolute parity, but of analogy. It is indeed in God's efficacious power to save all, if we consider His omnipotence; but it is not so, if we consider the present ordering of His providence, by which He wills to manifest His infinite justice, as also His infinite mercy, governing and moving defectible creatures in accordance with their natures. Thus He does not efficaciously will all the fruits of the earth to become ripe. Hence, if all these and other conditions are considered, whether they are occult or manifest, it is not good, if in each case the particular circumstances are considered, that all should be saved. For it pertains to the universal Provider to permit various evils to happen so that the higher ends in view may not be frustrated.

Finally, you insist, arguing that if such were the case, then there would be no more hope for anyone, and the value of prayer would be very much impaired. Such is the case with the congruism of the Sorbonne, especially as Tournely presents it, by which salutary acts easy to perform, such as prayer, do not require a grace that is of itself and infallibly efficacious, this being required only for acts that are difficult to perform.

Reply. Even a salutary act easy of performance is the positing of an act that is actually as such a good. Therefore it presupposes the divine consequent will that is of itself efficacious, and grace that is of itself infallibly efficacious. Otherwise the previously enunciated principles are no longer exclusively and metaphysically certain.

But it does not follow that hope is either destroyed or diminished, because the formal motive of this theological virtue is not to be attributed to our endeavor, but to God's help; for the formal motive of this virtue postulates the uncreated, and so God Himself. But in Molinism and congruism the formal motive of theological hope would be partly created,

because our endeavor would enter into it; for a part of man's hope would be by reason of his endeavor, and to some extent he would be singling himself out, contrary to what St. Paul says: "For who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received?" For the result would be that of two persons equally loved and helped by God, one would be better than another, at least because of the salutary act easy to perform. But this is impossible, as we shall see farther on, for St. Thomas says: "Since God's love is the cause of goodness in things, no one thing would be better than another if God did not will greater good for one than for another."

Nor are the value and necessity of prayer impaired by this doctrine. In fact, they become more convincing, for, according to the teaching of St. Augustine and of St. Thomas, we have to pray even for the grace that is of itself efficacious for the performance of salutary acts, whether these are difficult or even easy to perform. On the other hand, if either Molinism or the congruism of the Sorbonne were true, then human beings would not, in their temptations, have to pray to obtain the grace that is of itself efficacious for the performance of salutary acts, at least those easy to perform; all they would have to do would be to strive to give the salutary consent which God expects of them.

This brings us back, therefore, to our original conclusion, namely, if we wish to consider this mystery, not only in its moral aspect, as it concerns the exhortation of men in the order of execution or fulfillment of God's commands, but also as it concerns God's attributes, His omnipotent will, and the order of intention proposed by His providence, that is, in its metaphysical and strictly theological aspects, then the doctrine of St. Thomas remains intact. It is in agreement with the teachings of St. Paul and St. Augustine, and it resolves itself into this dogma, which is thus expressed by St. Augustine: "God commands not impossibilities, but, by commanding, both admonishes thee to do what thou art able and to pray for what thou art not able (to do)." If one did not resist the sufficient grace to pray, then the efficacious grace to pray, and subsequently other graces, would be given. Hence St. Prosper's formula of God's salvific will, quoted by the Council of Quierzy (853), which is in agreement with St. Augustine's teaching, is the best way of expressing this dogma. It reads as follows: "The omnipotent God wills absolutely all men to be saved, although not all are saved. That some are saved is the gift of Him who saves. That some perish is the fault of those who perish." These are two

most certain aspects of this mystery. We have considered this second aspect, namely, “the fault of those who perish”; the other aspect: “the gift of Him who saves,” will be discussed in the treatise on predestination.

But the intimate reconciliation of these two aspects is for us mysterious, for it is the intimate reconciliation of infinite mercy, justice, and supreme liberty in the eminence of the Deity or of God’s intimate life; and it is only by the beatific vision that this can be clearly known, and as it actually is.

Doubt. Does God provide sufficient means for all to be saved?

The answer is that He does. He not only prepares for all, without distinction, those general helps that are sufficient for salvation, but He also offers, in fact, He bestows upon each and every adult, means that are sufficient for salvation.

First part. That God prepares for all, without distinction, those general helps that are sufficient, is admitted by all Catholics against Jansenius. This conclusion is deduced from God’s universal will to save and the fact that Christ died for all. For God cannot will the end without willing the means that are sufficient for attaining the end. Otherwise God would command what is impossible.

The universal salvific will not only refers, as Arnauld contends, to the human nature considered in the abstract, or as it exists in the mind; but it also refers to the human nature objectively as such, which means all human beings without exception, inasmuch as they are all individuals of the same nature which God has destined for salvation, even after Adam’s sin. Nor can it be said that sufficient grace is merely sufficient in the abstract, as Arnauld contends, but it makes the fulfillment of God’s precepts really possible here and now in the concrete, although it is not the cause of the actual fulfillment of the precepts. Thus a man who is sleeping, although he does not actually see, yet he has at the very time the power to see, for he is not blind; and to say that sufficient grace does not give the power to perform a good act is to say that one who is asleep, is blind.

Second part. The answer to this, namely, “that God offers, even bestows upon each and every human being, sufficient helps for salvation,” is not admitted by all Thomists. It is denied especially by Gonet, not indeed for the just, but for all hardened and blinded sinners. But several of the best Thomists teach this, such as the Salmanticenses, Billuart, Bancel, and Goudin, who quote Ferrariensis as being on their side.

It does not, indeed, follow from this that an equal degree of sufficient grace is given to all. This second part of the reply, however, is to be understood in the sense that God gives to each and everyone (at least to those who have the use of reason), where and when the fulfillment of a precept is of urgent necessity, helps that are proximately or at least remotely sufficient for salvation, according to each one's condition. Hence if they do not keep some of God's commandments, this is not because God denies them the sufficient help, but because men either reject the proffered sufficient grace, or else resist the sufficient grace already given.

According to this conclusion, he who does not resist the remotely sufficient grace, will receive the proximately sufficient grace. Thus the proximately sufficient help to begin to pray is remotely sufficient with regard to the more perfect salutary act. There is the mystery, inasmuch as to resist sufficient grace is an evil that comes solely from ourselves, whereas not to resist it is a good that comes from the source of all good.

Holy Scripture furnishes us with the foundation for this conclusion in the many texts by which it affirms God's mercy toward all wayfarers. Thus we read: "I called, and you refused. I stretched out My hand, and there was none that regarded." "Thou hast mercy upon all, because Thou canst do all things." " Jerusalem . . . how often would I have gathered together thy children as the hen doth gather her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldest not?" "What is there that I ought to do more to My vineyard, that I have not done to it?" "I stand at the gate and knock. If any man shall hear My voice and open to Me the door, I will come in to him." "The Lord is compassionate and merciful, long suffering and plenteous in mercy."

The theological reason is that otherwise God would command what is impossible. Thus sin would be unavoidable, and to punish it would be an act more of cruelty than of justice. For God would command what is impossible if He denied man the sufficient and necessary help to keep His commandments. Hence the Council of Trent quotes against the Protestants the following words of St. Augustine: "God commands not impossibilities, but by commanding, both admonishes thee to do what thou art able and to pray for what thou art not able (to do)."

These principles must be applied to infidels and hardened sinners, when the occasion arises that the fulfillment of a precept is of urgent necessity. If these do not resist the remotely sufficient grace, they will receive the proximately sufficient grace and subsequent graces, in virtue of the

commonly accepted principle that “to the man who does what he can (with the help of actual grace), God does not refuse the (habitual) grace.” Expressed more briefly: salvation is possible for any wayfarer; for this, however, sufficient grace is required. As Pius IX declared: “It is known to us and to you that those who labor under invincible ignorance concerning our most holy religion and who, diligently observing the natural law and its precepts that are engraved in the hearts of all by God, and being ready to obey Him, lead an honest and upright life, can, through the operative power of divine light and grace, attain eternal life.”

According to several theologians it is sufficient for such persons to believe that God (the author of salvation) exists and is the rewarder of the good, and that they love Him above all things. Several Thomists, the Salmanticenses included, hold that, although strictly speaking an explicit belief in the mystery of the Incarnation is necessary, since it is the necessary means by which salvation is obtained, yet it may be that it is not necessary for the one to whom the mystery was not preached, or to whom it was not sufficiently proposed.

A special difficulty presents itself about infants who die without being baptized. On this point it must be said that, the condition of these infants being taken into consideration, God has sufficiently provided for them by instituting the sacrament of baptism, inasmuch as it was instituted for all and can be conferred on all, although various natural and free causes sometimes intervene to prevent its actual administration. Not infrequently, indeed, infants fail to receive the grace of baptism through the fault of their parents who neglect to pray and make use of the means for salvation. The principle in the solution of this difficulty is that God, on His part, provides for the salvation of all according to each one’s capacity; but infants are not capable of being saved by any salutary acts but only by baptism, the actual administration of which, since it depends on both natural and free causes, can be prevented by these causes. Nor does it pertain to God’s general providence that He interrupt the course of secondary causes.

Finally, infants who die without being baptized are not punished for actual sins, but only for original sin. Therefore they do not suffer interiorly the pain of sense, nor do they suffer as adults do, at being deprived of the beatific vision. They enjoy a certain natural happiness which, even in the natural order, is not absolute but relative happiness; for their will, which is directly turned away from their ultimate supernatural end, is indirectly

turned away from their ultimate natural end; for every sin that is directly against the supernatural law is indirectly against the natural law, which demands obedience to God in whatever He commands. Hence the limbo of the children clearly shows that the supernatural life is gratuitous, and also that in the present economy of salvation the absence of the state of grace makes perfect natural happiness simply impossible. Man's present condition is not the state of pure nature, but he is ordained to the life of grace, and if he does not attain to it, it cannot be said that he is absolutely happy even in the natural order. This does not denote a lack of harmony in the disposition of Providence, but, on the contrary, it is consistent with the principles, posited that the whole human race is ordained to the supernatural life. Thus the doctrine of God's universal salvific will remains intact, which is not His consequent will or that which of itself is efficacious, but it is His antecedent will by which He gives sufficient graces to all according to each one's capacity. What always remains a mystery in this doctrine is the intimate reconciliation of the salvific will with the gratuitous predestination of the elect, that is, the mystery of the intimate reconciliation of infinite mercy, justice and, supreme liberty in the Deity.

SEVENTH ARTICLE

WHETHER THE WILL OF GOD IS CHANGEABLE

State of the question. What is asked in this article is whether God can begin to will what He did not will, and not will what He willed, so that from not willing He becomes willing, and vice versa. As a general rule, indeed, God's will is said to be unchangeable, but the Lord Himself says: "It repenteth Me that I have made man." Moreover, God does not always do the same thing, for at one time He ordered the law to be observed, and afterward forbade it. Finally, God is free; therefore He does not have to will continually and irrevocably what He first willed. In fact, just as it was possible for God not to will what He willed, without undergoing any intrinsic change, why could He not, without undergoing any intrinsic change, begin to will what He did not will?

Yet the answer is that God's will is entirely unchangeable, just as His substance and His knowledge are.

1) Holy Scripture shows that the conclusion is of faith, for we read: “God is not as the son of man, that He should be changed.” “I am the Lord and I change not.” Likewise, the Vatican Council declares that God “is one absolutely simple and immutable spiritual substance.” It is the constant teaching of tradition that the determinations of God’s will are unchangeable, that His decrees, which are measured by eternity, in which there is no before and after, are unchangeable, as the following text asserts: “There are many thoughts in the heart of man; but the will of the Lord shall stand firm.”

Theological proof. There would be a change in God’s will if He began to will what before He had not willed; but this is impossible; therefore a change in God’s will is impossible.

Proof of minor. A change in God’s will would presuppose either a change in His substance (and thus something would begin to be good for Him, which before was not), or else in His knowledge (as He would know for the first time that a thing is good for Him, which He did not know before). But it has already been shown that God’s substance and His knowledge are unchangeable, inasmuch as He is pure Act, and not in potentiality for further actuality both in the entitative and intellectual orders, and therefore not in the volitional order.

Corollary. God, by His same permanently unchangeable will, wills a change in some things; for it is one thing to change the will, and another thing to will a change in things. Thus change occurs only in time, but not in eternity, which admits of no variation; for it is “the simultaneously whole and perfect possession of interminable life.”

Reply to first objection. The Lord spoke metaphorically when He said: “It repenteth Me that I have made man,” thereby making known that it was His will to punish men; for from all eternity God foresaw their sins, and He decreed that they must be punished for them.

Reply to second objection. The same must be said of prophecies of commination concerning conditioned futures that are not realized, because the condition is not fulfilled. Thus we read in the Old Testament: “Yet forty days, and Ninive shall be destroyed”; but because the Ninivites repented, the Lord changed His sentence of condemnation, but not His counsel or the eternal decree of His will.

Reply to fourth objection. “Although God’s willing a thing is not by absolute necessity, yet it is necessary by supposition, on account of the

unchangeableness of the divine will." According to the teaching of St. Thomas, there is something similar to this by way of participation in the angels, because of the vigor of their intellect, for he says: "The angel's free will is flexible to either opposite before the choice, but not after." With us wayfarers, the free will is flexible to either opposite even after the choice, because we can always reconsider the thing, about which we already made the choice, under new aspects. Thus, because of the imperfection of our knowledge, which is acquired gradually, we can make a different choice. Contrary to this, God's will is entirely unchangeable.

EIGHTH ARTICLE

WHETHER THE WILL OF GOD IMPOSES NECESSITY ON THINGS WILLED

State of the question. The question asked in this most famous article is how to reconcile the efficacy of the determination of the divine will with the freedom of our actions. This problem belongs properly to this question of God's will, rather than to the question of God's knowledge, which states merely "that contingent things are infallibly known by God, inasmuch as they are subject to the divine sight in their presentiality (as God's knowledge is measured by eternity, which comprises all time); yet they are future contingent things in relation to their own causes." This left unsolved the question why this contingent future, for example, the conversion of St. Paul, is eternally present to the divine sight rather than Paul's resistance. It is certain and of faith that Paul's conversion would not have taken place in time, or have been eternally present to the divine sight, if God had not willed it; for if this conversion had been in this way present independently of God's free will, then it would have been of itself necessary, and not something contingent. Therefore it is now a question whether God's efficacious will, which is always fulfilled, imposes necessity on all things, even on our choices. This same question is discussed by St. Thomas when he treats of God's providence. Hence this article is concerned strictly with the question of the transcendent efficacy of the determinations or decrees of the divine will with reference to our free acts. In other words, is this predetermination necessitating or non-necessitating?

The article begins by presenting three difficulties, and these constitute the state of the question. They are: (1) It seems that the will of God imposes

necessity on all things, because St. Augustine says (Enchir., chap. 103): “It must necessarily be, if God wills (anything).” (2) “God’s will cannot be hindered. Therefore the will of God imposes necessity on the things willed.” This objection is afterward revived by the Molinists against the Thomists. (3) Lastly, “this true conditional statement is necessary: If God wills a thing, it comes to pass.” Now it is quite clear that the first and third difficulties are easily solved by means of the distinction between absolute necessity (or of consequent) and conditional necessity (or of consequence), as when I see Socrates sitting, he must be sitting, the necessity being one of consequence; but that he sits is contingent. The second objection presents the principal difficulty, namely, that God’s will cannot be hindered; and this is solved in the body of the article.

The answer is that God’s will does not impose necessity on all things, but that some things happen contingently, because God wills that they should happen contingently. To say otherwise would be to do away with free will, merits, laws, counsels, rewards, guilt, and punishment, all of which must be acknowledged as pertaining to the faith, as stated in the counterargument.

This conclusion was subsequently expressed in equivalent terms by the Council of Trent in the following canon: “If anyone says that man’s free will moved and aroused by God, by consenting to God’s call and action, in no way co-operates toward disposing and preparing itself to obtain the grace of justification; that it cannot refuse its consent if it wishes, but that, as something inanimate, it does nothing whatever and is merely passive; let him be anathema.”

The following Jansenist proposition was condemned: “For meriting and demeriting in the state of fallen nature, freedom from internal compulsion is not required; it is sufficient to be free from external restraint.” It was not defined, however, whether the divine decree concerning our future salutary acts is intrinsically efficacious, or extrinsically so, namely, because of our foreseen consent (by means of the scientia media), as the Molinists and congruists contend.

But all Thomists, as also Scotists and Augustinians, hold that the decrees of the divine will concerning our future salutary acts are intrinsically or of themselves infallibly efficacious, that is, because God wills, and not because man wills. They assert that such is the teaching of St. Thomas in this article and wherever he discusses this subject. In fact, they hold that this doctrine is connected with the principles of the faith, and is proximately

definable. Let us see what Holy Scripture, the councils, St. Augustine, and St. Thomas himself have to say on this subject.

According to Holy Scripture, even God's efficacious will does not impose necessity on all things. We find it frequently mentioned in the Old Testament that God's will is efficacious, and that we are free to choose. Thus we read: "As the divisions of waters, so the heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord; whithersoever He will, He shall turn it"; and yet the king freely wills what he decides upon doing. Similarly, Queen Esther prays as follows: "O Lord, King of gods and of all power, . . . turn his heart to the hatred of our enemy"; and farther on we read: "And God changed the king's spirit into mildness" (toward the Jews). Again we have: "As the potter's clay is in his hand . . . , so man is in the hand of Him that made him." "The Lord of hosts hath decreed, and who can disannul it? And His hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it away?" Yet our freedom remains intact, as is clearly stated in the following text: "And I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you, . . . and I will cause you to walk in My commandments and to keep My judgments and do them." Likewise in the New Testament we have: "It is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will." "No one can snatch them (My sheep) out of the hand of My Father." Especially to the point is the following text: "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy; and I will show mercy to whom I will show mercy. So then it is not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy."

The Second Council of Orange likewise declares against the Semipelagians "God does many good things in man, which man does not accomplish; but there is no good work done by man which God does not assist him to do." The same council declares: "No man can claim as his own anything except lying and sin. If a man hath anything of truth and righteousness, it is from that foundation which it behoves us to thirst after in this desert that being, so to speak, refreshed with some of its drops we may not faint by the way." This means that every salutary work is performed by means of at least actual grace, and that every ethically good act is performed by God's natural concurrence, which is due to the human nature, but not to this individual here and now rather than to another whom God permits to fall into sin.

Teaching of the Fathers. Those who wrote before the rise of Pelagianism and against Manichaeism and its denial of free will, sometimes did not

speak quite so correctly on this point, as St. Augustine often remarks. Yet they always said with St. Paul: “For who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?” Hence St. Cyprian says: “We must not boast of anything, since there is nothing that is ours.” St. Basil likewise says: “Nothing is left to you, O man, of which you may boast; for in all things we live by the grace and gift of God,” But if the free determination of the salutary choice were in man’s power and not from God, then he would have something that would single him out from another equally loved and helped by God, and what is better in the created order would not come from God.

It is particularly St. Augustine who, against the Pelagians and Semipelagians, explains the infallible efficacy of the divine will and grace, not because of our foreseen consent, but by reason of God’s omnipotence. Commenting on the words of St. Paul, “It is God who worketh in you both to will and to accomplish,” he says: “Certainly we will, when we will; but He causes us to will what is good. . . . Certainly it is we who act when we act; but He causes us to act by enabling the will to act efficaciously. . . . When He says: I will cause you to act, what else does He say but: I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and will give you a heart of flesh?” Similarly he says: “God has power over the heart, moving it from within . . . ; and the wills of men are more in His power than in their own; who else causes it that chastisement is wholesome and that the heart being contrite there should be amendment of life?” Similarly he says: “Secretly this grace is bestowed by the divine liberality upon human hearts, and it is spurned by no one that is hard of heart; for this very purpose it is bestowed, that the hardness of heart may first be taken away.” It is sufficiently clear that the text of St. Paul just quoted concerns grace that is of itself efficacious, because God wills it to be, and not because we will it to be so by reason of our consent.

In this article St. Thomas first of all mentions the opinion of some who maintain that the divine will imposes necessity on all things, because what God produces by necessary causes is necessary, but what He produces by contingent causes is contingent. Thus the distinction between contingent and necessary things would be the result only of secondary causes. This seems to be the opinion of the Averroists, that contingency would be the result only of secondary causes.

It is rejected by St. Thomas for two reasons. (1) The effect of a universal cause, such as the sun, is contingent on account of the secondary cause, from the fact that the effect of the first cause is hindered because of a defect in the secondary cause, as the sun's power is hindered by a defect in the plant, so that the fruit does not become ripe. But no defect of a secondary cause can hinder God's will from producing its effect; for God can remove this defect, otherwise He would not be omnipotent. (2) If the distinction between the necessary and the contingent is to be referred only to secondary causes, this must be independent of the divine intention and will; which is inadmissible. For everything external to God must of necessity be in a relation of causality or dependence with respect to God's will. Thus, as our immediate declaration will have to be, not even the free determination of our salutary choices can be made independently of God's will, who "worketh in you both to will and to accomplish."

Then St. Thomas shows what is the ultimate reason for the distinction between the contingent and the necessary, and he proves his conclusion, namely, "God does not impose necessity on all things," by appealing to the absolute efficacy of the divine will.

He builds up his argument as follows: When a cause is efficacious to act, the effect follows upon the cause, not only as to the thing done, but also as to its manner of being done or of being. Thus the one generated is generated even in accidental points. Since then the divine will is perfectly efficacious, it follows not only that things are done which God wills to be done, but also that they are done in the way that He wills. But God wills some things to be done necessarily, some contingently, to the right ordering of things, for the building up of the universe.

Therefore to some effects God has attached necessary causes, which cannot fail, from which effects necessarily proceed (just as day and night follow in regular succession); but to other effects He has attached defectible and contingent causes from which arise contingent effects (such as the ripening of fruits and the acts of our free will). Hence it is not because the proximate causes are contingent that the effects willed by God happen contingently, but because God has prepared contingent causes for them, it being His will that they should happen contingently.

This whole argument has its foundation in the following principle: "When a cause is efficacious to act, the effect follows from the cause, not

only as to the thing done, but also as to its manner of being done or of being."

There is first of all inductive evidence of this principle; for, because of the debility in the generative power, it happens that a child is born unlike its father in accidental points, which pertain to its mode of being. On the contrary, if the father is very vigorous, the child is born like him even in accidental points, for example, in the general expression of the face, as we observe in different families whose facial expression conforms persistently through several generations to a certain type. Similarly many soldiers die in war; but there is a heroic way of dying, and not many die heroically.

In like manner great generals not only lead their soldiers on to victory, but they lead them in that characteristic and genial way by which the latter obey willingly. This special manner is quasi-characteristic of this general. Likewise great writers, great poets, have their special manner of expressing themselves, also great musicians, but far more so God, whose will is perfectly efficacious.

The aforesaid principle is not only inductively evident, but its truth is clearly seen from the very analysis of the concepts of its constituent parts. For when a cause is efficacious to act, its influence extends not only to the thing done, but also to the manner in which it is done; because the whole effect depends on and is determined by its cause.

Lastly, this principle is not only found out by reason, but is also equivalently expressed in revelation, which speaks of the absolute efficacy of the divine will, as in the above quoted texts that follow the state of the question in this article. Thus we have: "As the divisions of waters, so the heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord; whithersoever He will He shall turn it," and yet the king freely wills what God moves him to do. Similarly, "As the potter's clay is in his hand . . . , so man is in the hand of Him that made him." "It is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will."

Are the Thomists justified in concluding from this article their doctrine of the intrinsic and infallible efficacy of God's decrees and of grace with respect to our free salutary acts?

The answer is in the affirmative. For St. Thomas already said as much, when he declared: "God's knowledge is the cause of things . . . in so far as His will is joined to it." And again: "The will of God is the cause of things. . . . Determined effects proceed from His own infinite perfection according

to the determination of His will and intellect." This determination of God's will is often called His purpose. We now take up the question of the absolute efficacy or decree of the divine will.

But if it is admitted that God's decrees and His grace are only extrinsically efficacious, that is, because of our foreseen consent through the scientia media, then God's will is no longer perfectly efficacious, nor does it extend even to the contingent and free mode of our salutary choices. In fact, the free determination of these choices is then, as regards the performance of these acts, solely from us, not being referred to God as dependent on His will, which is impossible, since this is contrary to the universal causality of the supreme Cause. For nothing can exist that is external to God unless it is in a relation of causality toward Him or of dependence on Him; to say otherwise means the nullification of the proofs for God's existence, these having their foundation in this necessary dependence. Finally, in this way the mind would revert to the opinion refuted by St. Thomas in the beginning of the body of this article, namely, that the distinction between the contingent and the necessary would arise from secondary causes, and would not be included in God's intention.

Moreover, St. Thomas spoke the same way in his other works and in other parts of his Theological Summa, as in the following passage: "We must remember that, properly speaking, necessary and contingent are consequent upon being as such. Hence the mode both of necessity and of contingency falls under the foresight of God, who provides universally for all being; not under the foresight of causes that provide only for some particular order of things."

And again he says: "The divine will must be understood as existing outside the order of beings, as a certain cause that penetrates the whole of being and its differences; but the possible and the necessary are differences of being, and therefore necessity and contingency in things originate from the divine will." On the contrary, the evil of sin is not included in the adequate object of divine omnipotence; and even if, though this is an impossibility, God were to will to be the cause of the evil of sin, He could not be so, just as the eye cannot see sounds. Similarly, in another passage he says: "God moves all things in accordance with their conditions, so that from necessary causes, through the divine motion, effects follow of necessity; but from contingent causes, effects follow contingently. Since, therefore, the will is an active principle, not determinate to one thing, but

having an indifferent relation to many things, God so moves it that He does not determine it of necessity to one thing, but its movement remains contingent and not necessary, except in those things to which it is moved naturally." He says the same in the following reply: "If God moves the will to anything, it is incompossible with this supposition that the will be not moved thereto. But it is not impossible simply. Consequently it does not follow that the will is moved by God necessarily," but it freely chooses and acts under the influence of the divine motion. Similarly, in one of his replies, he says: "God moves the will immutably on account of the efficacy of the moving power which cannot fail; but on account of the nature of the will that is moved, which is indifferently disposed to various things, the will is not necessitated but remains free."

In these various passages St. Thomas says: "God moves all things in accordance with their conditions," that is, God adapts His movement to creatures according as He moves either natural agents or our free wills. Thus secondary causes do not actively modify God's motion, but only objectively and materially, inasmuch as God operates in our will according to its natural inclination which He gave it and preserves in it. He is more intimate to it than it is to itself.

Hence, according to St. Thomas, God moves our will not only by proposing to it the object that attracts it, but also by applying it to make the choice. "It belongs to God to move the will, but especially by an interior inclination of the will."

First confirmation. God is with greater reason the cause of our free consent than angel and man are. But the angel guardian and man concur in our free consent by moral suasions. Therefore these moral suasions do not suffice on God's part.

Moreover, if an angel, or a human being very much loved by us, causes us to will what he wills, by proposing to us the object which attracts us, far more so can God do this by an interior movement of our will, moving it according to its natural inclination which He preserves intact in us, as the cause that is intimately present to all its effects.

Second confirmation. To say otherwise would be to deny that God is the truly efficient cause of our free consent. It is not enough to have recourse to moral suasion. For moral suasion does not belong to the order of efficient causalty, but of final and objective causality. Moreover, even Pelagius

admitted that God moves us by moral suasion to good; yet St. Augustine rejects these movements as insufficient.

Nor does it suffice to have recourse to simultaneous concurrence as advocated by Molina, which is offered indifferently, as to whether we consent or dissent; for such indifference of this simultaneous concurrence does not determine the will to consent rather than to dissent. The simultaneous concurrence and the human will are like two coordinated causes, like two horses pulling a boat; and one of these causes does not influence the other to act, but both of them influence only the effect. Hence what is better in the created order, namely, the free determination of our salutary choice, would not be from God, and, contrary to what St. Paul says, man would be singling himself out, because of two men equally helped by God and situated in the same circumstances, one would become better than another, which is contrary to what St. Thomas says.

Third confirmation. If God does not determine, then He is determined, that is, He assumes a passive role in this foreseeing by means of the scientia media, which is antecedent to the decree of the divine will. For, according to this theory, God, by concurring indifferently and by moral suasion, must wait for and ascertain our consent, or inquire by examining our will as to what it would choose if placed in such and such circumstances. The result of this would be passivity or dependence in God's knowledge; but there can be no passivity in Him who is pure Act. He is in the highest degree in actuality, and is nowise in potentiality.

Molina says: "It was not in God's power to know by this (middle) knowledge anything else than He actually knew. Then again it must not be called natural even in this sense, as if it were so innate in God that He could not know the contrary of what He knows by it. For if the created free will were to do the opposite of what it did, as it truly can do, God would have known this very act by the same knowledge, by which He really knows it, but not that He actually knows it." Therefore passivity or dependence is thus posited in God's knowledge with regard to our free conditional future choices, which actually will be, if God decreed to place our will in these circumstances. The independence of God's knowledge is thus destroyed, and the conception of the divine knowledge becomes tinged with anthropomorphism.

Lastly, it is not possible in this way for God to know infallibly our conditionally free acts of the future, and then our future choices, because

the determination of these choices cannot be seen by the supercomprehension of the human will, which in itself is undetermined, otherwise the will would not be free; nor is it possible for God to have this knowledge by foreseeing the circumstances, otherwise we would have to admit determinism of circumstances, and this would mean the end of freedom. This we have more fully explained in another work.

Therefore the doctrine of St. Thomas is vindicated, which was subsequently expressed so brilliantly by Bossuet in the following passages: “To reconcile the decree and the omnipotent action of God with our free will, we have no need to give it a concurrence which is ready for all things indifferently, and which becomes what we please; still less do we have to make it wait for what our will is inclined to do, for it to formulate afterward with no risk its decrees about our resolutions. For without this poor circumspection which gives us a confused notion of the First Cause, it suffices for us to bear in mind that the divine will, whose infinite power reaches everything, not only the essence, but also the modes of being, is of itself accountable for the complete effect, in which it puts everything which we conceive in it, ordaining that it will be accompanied by all the properties that are befitting it. . . .

“God wills from eternity, all the acts that will be performed by the free will of human beings, all the good and reality there is in them. What is more absurd than to say, that it is not because God wills, that a thing exists? Must we not say, on the contrary, that a thing exists, because God wills it? And just as it happens that we are free in virtue of the decree that wills us to be free, so it happens that we act freely in this or that act, in virtue of the decree which includes all this in detail?”

SOLUTION OF THE OBJECTIONS IN THIS ARTICLE

Reply to first objection. When St. Augustine says, “Man must inevitably be saved, if God has willed it,” the reference is to conditional necessity or to that of consequence, but not to absolute necessity or to that of consequent. Thus, when it is said, “I see Peter running,” Peter must at that very moment inevitably be running, by a necessity of consequence but his running is a contingent and free act, for he has the power not to run. Similarly, in the reply to the third objection it is said: “Things effected by

the divine will have that kind of necessity that God wills them to have, either absolute or conditional."

Reply to second objection. It answers the principal difficulty revived by Molinists, namely, that every cause that cannot be hindered, produces its effect necessarily. But the will of God cannot be hindered, according to the following statement: "Who resisteth His will?" It is not a question here of the antecedent will of God, on which sufficient grace depends, which a man often resists; but it refers to the consequent will of God, from which efficacious grace proceeds, which a man does not resist, but to which he consents. St. Thomas replied to this objection: "From the very fact that nothing resists the divine will, it follows that not only those things happen that God wills to happen, but that they happen necessarily or contingently according to His will." Hence St. Thomas does not have recourse to the foreseeing of our consent by God, as Molina did afterward in his theory of the scientia media; but again he affirms the absolute efficacy of the divine will, this absolute efficacy extending even to the free mode of our choices. Therefore we reply to the objection by distinguishing the major: every cause that cannot be hindered, produces its effect necessarily, if it is incapable of producing the contingent and free mode in its effect, this I concede; otherwise, I deny it. Hence the absolute efficacy of the divine will not only does not interfere with the freedom of our choice, but causes this, as declared by St. Thomas in the following passage: "Just as by moving natural causes He does not prevent their acts being natural, so by moving voluntary causes He does not deprive their actions of being voluntary; but rather is He the cause of this very thing in them; for He operates in each thing according to its own nature." The free mode of our choices is a mode of being, and it is thus included in the adequate object of divine omnipotence, since it is only the evil of sin that is excluded from it

Doubt. To what is contingency ultimately to be ascribed? To the freedom of the divine will, or to its absolute efficacy?

The Thomists answer with Cajetan: "It is of importance to know that, after the divinelike Thomas had written these things, there arose a new opinion about the ultimate foundation of contingency, advanced by Scotus. For he believes that the condition of the divine will truly constitutes the ultimate foundation of contingency, and on this point he is in agreement with us; but we say that the absolute efficacy of the divine will is that condition; but he says that it is its contingency. Concerning this theory of

his, by contingency in the divine will he means its liberty: so that he imagines that because God wills and causes freely, for this reason there is contingency in the universe." To this Cajetan replies: "If the contingency arises from the manner of God's willing, then it is not chosen, but is the consequence of the manner of choosing. Therefore, according to this proposed theory, the effect is not produced by God as the agent. And thus there is contingency in the universe over and above what is intended by God, inasmuch as it is the consequence of His manner of willing, but not of His willing."

Moreover, God also wills freely that some things happen necessarily in the world, such as that the sun gives out light and heat. Therefore contingency is not the result of the free mode of the divine will, but is due to the fact that God efficaciously wills some things to happen contingently in the universe and some necessarily. And God can produce these divers modes of being, because He is the author of being.

SOLUTION OF THE OBJECTIONS OF OPPONENTS

The opponents, that is, the Molinists and the congruists, who admit the scientia media and deny the intrinsic efficacy of God's decrees and grace, object to this doctrine, basing their objections (1) on scriptural grounds, (2) on the impairment of free will, (3) on the insufficiency of the help, (4) on the contention that by such teaching God would become the cause of sin. These objections are examined at length by such Thomists as the Salmanticenses, John of St. Thomas, Gonet, and Billuart. We give only the principal objections. The replies taken together are like an ancient and exquisitely harmonious canticle. They are, so to speak, the leitmotif of ancient theology. They can be explained frequently, just as a symphony of Beethoven is heard many times. Our purpose is to show the intimate harmony that prevails in the whole Thomist system.

Objections from Holy Scripture. These are taken from texts that speak of man's resistance with reference to God's grace. Thus we read: "What is there," said the Lord, "that I ought to do more to My vineyard, that I have not done to it? Was it that I looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it hath brought forth wild grapes?" "I called, and you refused. I stretched out My hand, and there was none that regarded." "You always resist the Holy Ghost."

Reply. These texts do not concern the consequent will of God by which He grants the efficacious grace; but they refer to His antecedent will by which He gives the sufficient grace, by reason of which the fulfillment of His precepts is made really possible, though not as yet effective. In fact, these texts refer to His will of expression, which is made known to us by His commands, which men do not always obey.

Therefore the first text just quoted does not say: “What is there that I could do more to My vineyard,” but “What is there that I ought to do more to My vineyard, that I have not done to it?” This means that God gave the Jews many sufficient graces, which had made it possible for them to be converted; but He did not give them the efficacious graces, which God had indeed been able to give them, but was not bound to give them, because the order observed in His providence did not demand this. If God were bound to give His efficacious grace always and to all persons, sin would never happen, which, however, He can permit for a greater good. Hence in the aforesaid text the Jews are reproved, because of their own accord they refused to obey God’s commands and make use of the sufficient grace, and thus they deserved to be deprived of the efficacious grace.

The other texts are explained in like manner, namely; “I called, and you refused”; “You always resist the Holy Ghost.” Man often de facto resists sufficient grace by not obeying God’s precepts; but he does not de facto resist efficacious grace, although he can resist it in sensu diviso, that is, inasmuch as he has the power to do the opposite; just as Peter cannot at the same time sit and stand, but when he stands, he has really the power to sit down. Likewise a man asleep has really the power to see, and, although he does not actually see, yet he has really the power to see, for he is not blind.

Hence these texts of Holy Scripture nowise render less convincing others which refer to God’s consequent and efficacious grace. Thus we read: “As the divisions of waters, so the heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord. Whithersoever He will He shall turn it.” “As the potter’s clay is in his hand . . . so man is in the hand of Him that made him.”

But I insist. Nevertheless we read: “Woe to thee, Corozain! Woe to thee, Bethsaida! For if in Tyre and Sidon had been wrought the miracles that have been wrought in you, they had long ago done penance in sackcloth and ashes.”

The Thomists in general reply to this by appealing to the same principles. They say this text means that the inhabitants of Corozain and Bethsaida

showed themselves more unworthy than those of Tyre, because of their greater blindness of intellect, hardness of heart, and ingratitude. For man of his own accord resists God's grace, but there is a greater degree of resistance in some, for they resist even the greatest sufficient graces, as was the case with the preaching of Christ which was confirmed by miracles. The Jews of Corozain and Bethsaida placed a greater obstacle to the efficacious grace offered in the sufficient grace, just as the fruit is contained in the flower. Thus they were deprived of the efficacious grace.

Still I insist. According to the teaching of the Thomists, the Jews needed an efficacious grace so that they might not resist the sufficient grace and thus place an obstacle to the reception of the efficacious grace. Therefore, if Thomism is true, it was possible for these Jews to reply that they resisted the sufficient grace because they simply did not have the efficacious grace required for not resisting the sufficient grace.

Reply. The cause of this resistance is not the lack of efficacious grace, but man's own defectibility. Resistance to sufficient grace is indeed an evil, or a deficiency, which comes from a defectible cause. An evil will, which is the first deficient principle, suffices for this. Hence it is false to say that our will resists the sufficient grace because it lacks the efficacious grace. But it must be said that our will lacks the efficacious grace because it resists the sufficient grace. The deficiency of a secondary cause is due to the fact that this cause is defectible. St. Thomas makes this clear by the following statement: "The first cause of the defect of grace is on our part; but the first cause of the bestowal of grace is on God's part, according to Osee 12: 9: "Destruction is thy own, O Israel; thy help is only in Me."

To state the case more briefly: resistance to sufficient grace is an evil, and is therefore due solely to a defectible and defective cause. On the other hand, the non-resistance to sufficient grace is a good, and is therefore not to be attributed solely to the secondary cause, but also and primarily to the First Cause, the source of all good.

Hence the Jews of Corozain and Bethsaida, after Christ's preaching confirmed by miracles, had no reasonable excuse for their resistance, and they were deservedly deprived of the efficacious grace, which the Tyrians, by God's mercy, would have received in similar circumstances, because they would not have resisted with such hardness of heart and ingratitude.

It is because Thomism teaches that this divine bestowal of grace, which is of itself efficacious, is the cause of the salutary act, that this final

objection seeks to infer that therefore the non-bestowal of the efficacious grace is the cause of the sin of omission and of the resistance.

But this does not follow; for, when two causes concur, one of which is indefectible and the other defectible, the deficiency comes from the defectible cause and not from the divine indefectible cause. Similarly, everything being in proportion, in that the clear explanation given by the teacher, arousing the attention of the pupil, is the cause of the pupil's knowledge, it does not follow that the cause of the pupil's error is because the teacher failed to give a clear explanation. This error can come from the defectibility in the pupil, from insufficient attention on his part.

More briefly: deficiency comes not from the indefectible cause but from the defectible cause. Thus we read: "Destruction is thy own, O Israel; thy help is only in Me." Similarly the Council of Quierzy says: "That some are saved, is the gift of Him who saves; if some perish, it is the fault of them that perish." This text is taken from the writings of St. Prosper, being his reply to the second Vincentian objection.

Therefore it remains true to say that the Jews of Corozain and Bethsaida were deservedly rebuked, compared with those of Tyre, because they placed a greater obstacle to the efficacious grace that was offered in the sufficient grace. The Tyrians would not have placed so great an obstacle to grace, and God in His mercy would have given them the efficacious grace of conversion.

This answer is clearly established from what our Lord says: "Without Me you can do nothing" for salvation; also from what St. Paul says: "For who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?" These words imply that every good thing comes from God, that is, to be able to keep His commandments, not to resist them, and actually to keep them. All these good things come from God, and if anyone not only can keep, but actually does keep, God's commandments, this is a new good that certainly comes from God, the source of all good. But if a man could by his own power make God's grace efficacious, then this would single him out from another equally loved and helped by God, and thus the words of St. Paul would be untrue: "For who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou, that thou hast not received?"

The principal objection from this point of view is already solved by St. Thomas in this article, for he says: “From the very fact that nothing resists the divine will (consequent or efficacious), it follows that not only those things happen that God wills to happen, but that they happen either contingently (i.e., also freely) or necessarily according to His will.” In other words: the determination effected by God’s consequent will, which is perfectly efficacious, does not interfere with the freedom of our will, because it extends even to the free mode of our choice, producing this in us and with us. For this mode is a modification of being and action, and hence is included in the adequate object of the power of Him who is the Author of the being of all things and actions. Thus God by His primary contact does not interfere with, does not destroy, the freedom of our will, but actuates it.

The opponents bring forward another objection. They declare that the Council of Trent says: “If anyone says that man’s free will, moved and aroused by God . . . cannot refuse its consent if it wishes . . . let him be anathema.” But this refers to grace that is in some manner efficacious, with which man de facto co-operates, and to which he assents. Therefore, under the influence of this grace, man cannot refuse his consent, if he would, and hence this grace is efficacious, not of itself, but because our consent was foreseen by God. So say Lessius, Molina, Vasquez.

Reply. I distinguish the major: that the free will of man, moved and aroused by God, can refuse its consent, this I concede; that it can refuse its consent in sensu composito, that is, unite actual resistance with efficacious grace, this I deny; for this grace would no longer be efficacious. Similarly, Socrates cannot stand and sit at the same time, but, while he sits, he can stand, that is, he has the power to stand at the same time that he actually sits. Thus a man asleep, although he does not actually see, yet he can see, for the fact that he is asleep does not mean that he is blind. That the minor, indeed, refers to efficacious grace, this I concede. The conclusion is distinguished in the same manner as the major: that a man under the influence of efficacious grace can refuse his consent if he so wills, in sensu diviso, this I concede; in sensu composito, this I deny. That is, under the influence of efficacious grace, a man can refuse his consent, if he so wills; but, under the influence of this grace a man never de facto so wills. Thus St. Thomas says: “If God moves the will to anything it is incompossible with

this supposition that the will be not moved thereto. But it is not impossible simply," because the will really has the power to do the opposite.

In fact, many Fathers of the Council of Trent, who were either Augustinians or Thomists, understood the aforesaid canon as referring to grace that is of itself intrinsically efficacious, which they admitted; and against the Protestants they held that grace of itself efficacious does not take away the freedom of the will. But if such is the interpretation of this text of the Council of Trent, then it is more against the Molinists who, along with the Protestants, admit that grace of itself efficacious takes away the freedom of the will.

The earlier Protestants said, just as the Jansenists did in later times, that grace of itself efficacious takes away the freedom of the will. But after original sin, for the performance of a salutary good act, grace of itself efficacious is required. Therefore, after original sin, free will is an empty title.

The Molinists reply to this by conceding the major and denying the minor. The ancient theologians, especially the Thomists, replied by denying the major and conceding the minor.

Hence from this text of the Council of Trent, in the formulation of which many Thomists and Augustinians collaborated, nothing can be concluded against Thomism.

Moreover, from the complete text of this quoted canon it is clear that the doctrine condemned differs entirely from that of St. Thomas; for it says: "If anyone says that man's free will moved and aroused by God, by assenting to God's call and action, in no way co-operates toward disposing and preparing itself to obtain the grace of justification; that it cannot refuse its consent if it wishes, but that, as something inanimate, it does nothing whatever and is merely passive; let him be anathema."

Yet I insist. But even Calvin admitted this distinction between the sensus divisus and the sensus compositus; yet he was condemned. Therefore this distinction does not suffice.

Reply. Calvin admitted this distinction, but not in the Thomist sense. The Thomists say that under the influence of grace that is of itself efficacious we can refuse our consent in sensu diviso, because our will really has the power to do the opposite. On the contrary, according to Calvin, under the influence of this efficacious grace, man has not the power to do the opposite; but when no longer influenced by efficacious grace, then the

power to do the opposite reasserts itself, that is, as a consequence of original sin free will is extinguished, is an empty title. He admitted only a certain contingency for the will, as in the case of the fruits of the earth, all of which do not ripen because of some impediment. Thus he reduced human liberty to spontaneity or to freedom from external restraint. The same was said by Jansenius, whose third proposition reads: “For meriting and demeriting in the state of fallen nature, freedom from internal compulsion is not required; it is sufficient to be free from external constraint.”

Second objection. A supposed condition that precedes and infallibly causes our choice, necessitates the will and takes away its freedom; but such is the Thomist opinion about predetermining decrees; therefore these decrees necessitate our choice.

Reply. I distinguish the major. That a supposed condition preceding and infallibly causing our choice necessitates the will as regards the substance of the choice, this I concede; that it also does so as regards the free mode of this choice, this I deny. I contradistinguish the minor, and deny the consequent and consequence.

But I insist. For our choice to be a free act, what it depends on and what it is infallibly connected with must be within our power; but the divine predetermining decree, on which our act depends and with which it is infallibly connected, is not within our power; therefore our choice is not a free act.

Reply. I distinguish the major: if the principle pertains to the order of secondary causes, as our ultimate practical judgment that regulates our choice, then I concede it must be in our power; if this principle pertains to the order of first cause, I subdistinguish: that this principle must be in our power in the originative sense, as it pertains to the order of first cause, this I deny; in the terminative sense, or as regards the execution of the act, this I concede; and so it is, because, while our will freely elicits the act of choice, it retains the power to choose the opposite.

Hence a distinction must be made before we can admit the Molinist definition of free will, namely, “that it is a faculty which, granted all the prerequisites for the will to act, can either act or not act.” We must distinguish as follows: granted all the prerequisites for the will to act when the time comes for the performing of the act, the will is free to act or not to act even in sensu composito; but if we presuppose only all the natural

prerequisites, such as are the divine efficacious motion and the ultimate practical judgment, the will is indeed still free not to act in sensu diviso, inasmuch as it retains the power to do the opposite, but not so in sensu composito; for the non-positing of the act cannot coexist with efficacious grace. Thus, when Socrates is standing, he can sit down; but he cannot at the same time stand and sit down. The above-mentioned Molinist definition of free will implies a begging of the question, for it presupposes before it is proved, that the divine decrees and grace are not of themselves efficacious.

Moreover, this definition is contrary to the principle that "faculties, habits, and acts are specified by their formal object"; and to define these it suffices for us to declare their essential relation to this object. Thus free will is defined as the dominating indifference of the will (either divine, angelic, or human) with respect to an object that is not good in every respect, which can be judged as good under one aspect and as not good under another. Thus St. Thomas says: "If the will is offered an object which is good universally and from every point of view, the will tends to it of necessity, if it wills anything at all; since it cannot will the opposite. (Thus it cannot but will God who is clearly seen.) If, on the other hand, the will is offered an object that is not good from every point of view, it will not tend to this of necessity." This is the true definition of free will as obtained from its specified object, and without any begging of the question.

Moreover, this indifference of judgment remaining intact with respect to an object that is not in every respect good, God, by interiorly moving our will as regards the performance of the act, cannot necessitate it, because He cannot change the nature of this act that is thus specified by this object thus proposed to it; but the divine action really causes the free mode of our choice by actuating this dominating indifference, which before this was potential. In the very act of choosing there is an actual dominating indifference of the will with respect to particular good that is actually chosen and does not infallibly attract the will. On the other hand, the will of the blessed is infallibly attracted by God clearly seen, so that there is no longer indifference of judgment in this respect.

WHETHER SUFFICIENT GRACE IS AN INSUFFICIENT HELP

SOLUTION OF OBJECTIONS

First objection. That help is insufficient which, for us to act, requires another which is not in our power. But in addition to the help that is called sufficient, according to the Thomist opinion there is required another help that is of itself efficacious, which is not in our power. Therefore the first help is truly insufficient for the actual observance of God's commandments. Thus we must go back to the theory of the scientia media. This objection can be answered either indirectly or directly.

1) Indirectly. This objection is in substance the same as that which St. Paul put to himself. Just previous to this, St. Paul, speaking of the divine election, had said: "It is not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. . . . Therefore He hath mercy on whom He will; and whom He will, He hardeneth." He at once remarks: "Thou wilt say therefore to me: Why doth He then find fault? For who resisteth His will?" But to this objection St. Paul replies: "O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it: Why hast thou made me thus? . . . What if God, willing to show His wrath (avenging justice) and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction, that He might show the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He hath prepared unto glory (is there in this any injustice in God?)" But St. Paul, in thus replying to the objection, does not have recourse to God's foreseeing our consent; for then man would single himself out, which is contrary to what he says in the following words: "For who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received?"

Therefore St. Paul's reply comes to this: on the one hand, God does not command impossibilities; on the other hand, no one would be better than another, unless loved and helped more by God; "for what hast thou that thou hast not received?" These two principles taken separately are most certain; but how are they intimately reconciled? This cannot be known by us in this life. This would be to see how infinite mercy, justice, and absolute liberty are intimately reconciled in the Deity, or in the intimate life of God. But it is only in heaven that the Deity can be seen as it really is. Therefore St. Paul says farther on: "O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are His judgments and how unsearchable His ways!" It is in this way that the element of the mysterious must be safeguarded in this reply, so that the mystery be kept on its high plane, and that a human theory for which there is no foundation in the

divine reality be not substituted for it. This would savor of anthropomorphism.

2) A direct reply in scholastic form must be given to this objection, so as to avoid an evident contradiction. That the help which requires another help is not absolutely sufficient and in every respect, let this pass without comment; that it is not sufficient in its own order, this I deny; for it confers a real power, in fact, the proximate power to act so that nothing is wanting on the part of the faculty or first actuality. Thus the visual faculty is sufficient for seeing, and the man who is asleep really has this faculty, although he does not actually see. Therefore, to say that sufficient grace as conceived by the Thomists is not truly sufficient and does not really give one the proximate power to act, is to say that a man when asleep is blind. Aristotle had already said this against the Megarics, namely, that a thing can be really in potency without functioning. Thus the art of building in the builder who is asleep and is not actually building, remains in him as an acquired art.

Moreover, to the first part of the distinction I said only transeat ("let it pass without comment"), and not "I concede." Why this? It is because the efficacious grace is offered in the sufficient grace, as the fruit is offered in the flower; but because man, through his own defectibility, resists the sufficient grace, he is deservedly deprived of the efficacious grace, by which he not only could have kept God's commandments, but actually would have done so. Thus the sin of resistance falls upon the sufficient grace, as the hail falls upon the trees in blossom which gave promise of the fruit, and so the fruit did not materialize.

Lastly, all Thomists admit that every actual efficacious grace for the performance of the imperfect salutary act, such as the act of attrition, is sufficient for the perfect act, such as the act of contrition. Yet, when the sin of resistance intervenes, the efficacious grace of contrition is not given, which was truly offered in the preceding grace, as the fruit is contained in the blossom, as the act is contained in the potency.

To resist grace is an evil, which is to be attributed solely to our deficiencies; not to resist is a good which comes from God, the source of all good. And there is again in this a mystery, but not a contradiction.

But I insist. If affirmation is the cause of affirmation, then negation is the cause of negation. Thus the sun illuminating is the cause of day, and its absence is the cause of night. But the bestowal of grace that is of itself

efficacious is the cause of the salutary act. Therefore the non-bestowal of grace that is of itself efficacious is the cause of the omission of this act, or of our resistance to grace.

Reply. I distinguish the major: if it is a case of one cause, which is, indeed, posited and then taken away, such as the rising of the sun, then I concede the major; if it is a case of two causes, one of which is supreme and indefectible, and which would not be bound to prevent the defect of the other, whereas the other is detectible, then I deny it; for then the defect is to be attributed solely to the detectible cause, and not to the indefectible cause. Thus the Scripture says: “Destruction is thy own, O Israel; thy help is only in Me.” Such is the teaching of St, Thomas.

It must be observed that according to certain Thomists, such as Gonzalez, Bancel, Massoulié, and, among later Thomists, Guillermin, the actual sufficient grace is virtually efficacious, in this sense, that it not only would give the power, but even would give one the impulse to act, although not infallibly, because it would not remove all the obstacles. Therefore, even according to these authors (who, like other Thomists, reject the scientia media), even the salutary act easy to perform is not posited and persisted in de facto here and now, unless God from all eternity willed this by His consequent and infallibly efficacious will, and unless God grants at the moment the grace that is of itself efficacious to overcome the obstacles to the performance of this salutary act here and now to be posited or persisted in.

All Thomists maintain that to resist grace is an evil that comes solely from a defectible cause, but not from God; whereas, on the contrary, here and now not to resist sufficient grace is a good here and now posited, which presupposes, therefore, a decree that is of itself and infallibly efficacious of God’s consequent will, as explained by St. Thomas in the following statement: “Whatever God simply wills takes place; although what He wills antecedently may not take place.” But the distinction between God’s antecedent and consequent wills is the ultimate foundation for the distinction between sufficient and efficacious graces.

WHETHER THE INTRINSIC EFFICACY OF THE DIVINE DECREES AND GRACE BEARS ANY RESEMBLANCE TO CALVINISM

Objection. It was defined in the Council of Trent that God in no way is the cause of sin: “If anyone says that it is not in man’s power to make his ways evil, but that the works that are evil God worketh as well as those that are good, not permissibly only, but properly and of Himself, in such wise that the treason of Judas is no less His own proper work than the vocation of Paul; let him be anathema.” But, according to the Thomists, God is the cause of the act of sin by physical premotion, which presupposes a divine predetermining decree that concurs in the physical entity of sin. Therefore it seems that God is the cause of sin itself, as He is according to the tenets of Calvinism.

Reply. God is truly the author of the physical entity of sin; yet He is neither directly nor indirectly the cause of the deordination that there is in sin, as St. Thomas shows. For God to be the direct cause of sin, this means that He influences His or another’s will to commit sin. But God draws all things to Himself, as to their end, and He cannot turn His will away from Himself. Therefore God is not the cause of sin.

He cannot be the indirect cause of sin, because to be the indirect cause of sin means not to prevent it. But God’s wisdom and prudence do not require that He should prevent sins, which He permits. He can permit them, however, for a greater good, for the greater manifestation of His mercy and justice. Thus there would be no patience of the martyrs without the persecution of tyrants, as St. Thomas points out. Hence St. Augustine gives the solution of the problem of evil, when he says: “Since God is absolutely good, He by no means would permit evil in His works, unless He were good enough and powerful enough to bring good out of evil.”

Moreover, the evident conclusion we must come to from this is that even if, by an impossibility, God willed to be the cause of sin, He could not be, for the evil of sin is excluded from the adequate object of divine and indefectible omnipotence, just as sound is excluded from the object of sight.

Yet it is insisted that he who premoves efficaciously and determinately to the act of sin, is the cause of sin itself. But, according to Thomism, God premoves efficaciously and determinately to the act of sin. Therefore God is the cause of sin itself.

Reply. I distinguish the major: he who premoves, not prescinding from the malice of sin, this I concede; otherwise, I deny the major. I contradistinguish the minor. Similarly the motive power causes whatever

motion there is in lameness, though prescinding from the defect of lameness.

Again it is insisted that God cannot prescind from the malice of sin, for He moves the will to the act precisely as coming from the will; but in the act of sin, as it comes from the will, malice is not excluded; therefore God moves the will to the malice of sin.

Reply. I distinguish the major. God moves one to the act of sin, as it proceeds effectively from the will, this I concede; as it proceeds defectively, this I deny.

Still it is insisted that if two things are inseparably connected, the cause of the one is the cause of the other; but the act of sin and its malice are inseparably connected; therefore God is the cause of the malice in sin.

Reply. I distinguish the major: if the connected effect is included in the adequate object of this cause, let it pass without comment; otherwise, I deny the major. But malice is not included in the adequate object of divine omnipotence; for there is nothing that is more precisive than the causality of a faculty that is specified by its object, even though something else is intimately connected with it. Thus it is only the color of the apple that is seen by the visual faculty, and not the smell; and just as smell is not included in the object of sight, so the evil of sin is not included in the adequate object of indefectible omnipotence.

Finally, it is insisted that the cause of anything is the cause of that which is essentially combined with it; but certain physical acts are essentially and morally evil, such as the hatred of God; therefore God in moving one to these acts, cannot prescind from their malice.

Reply. I distinguish the major: that the cause of anything in the physical order is the cause of that which is essentially combined with it in the same order, this I concede; when what is essentially combined with it is in the moral order, then I deny the major.

Hence God causes whatever there is of a positive nature in sin, as it is an effectible entity, but not as it is a detectible entity, because the evil of sin is not included in the adequate object of indefectible omnipotence. Even if, by an impossibility, God willed to cause it, He could not do so. This constitutes what is most clear in this chiaroscuro.

On the contrary, the objective motion to the act of sin, by reason of the object proposed to the will, does not prescind from its malice. Thus he who advises or commands the sinful act, is guilty of sin. But God does not move

the will to the object of sin, but only to the performance of the act, and He does not determine it to the material element in sin, before it has in some manner determined itself to what formally constitutes sin, through the will deliberately refusing to consider at the very moment the fulfillment of the obligation imposed upon it. This deliberate refusal on the part of the will to consider the obligation imposed upon it is the beginning of sin, which coexists with sufficient grace, or the proximate power for the required consideration. And prior to this deliberate refusal of consideration, all that is required on God's part is the permission of sin, which is not the cause of sin, but its indispensable condition.

Moreover, we must carefully distinguish between the divine permission that is prior to the first offense, and which therefore is not a punishment, and the refusal of divine efficacious grace, which is already a punishment, and which therefore presupposes at least a first offense. To confuse these two, between which the Thomists take care to distinguish, as being that which is prior to the first offense, and that which follows it, would result, indeed, in Calvinism.

Moreover, there is a vast difference between Calvinism and Thomism, inasmuch as Calvinism maintains the extinction of free will after original sin, it being an empty title. Thus there is an end of all merit, of all merit in obedience. The mystery of predestination is contaminated at its source by reason of the denial of God's universal will to save, which means the overthrow of the whole Christian religion. There is, besides, a more complete solution of this question in the following article.

Finally, it must be noted that this assertion maintained by the Thomists namely, "the divine decrees and grace are of themselves efficacious with reference to salutary acts," is connected with the principles of faith and proximately definable. In this almost all the schools, with the exception of the Molinist, agree with the Thomists.

This assertion must not, therefore, be confused with the two following statements: "grace of itself efficacious must be explained by physical predetermination"; "predetermination must be applied to natural acts and to the material element in sin." These last two assertions may be looked upon as philosophical and logical deductions from the previous affirmation about grace that is of itself efficacious.

But the opponents strive to confuse these two questions, so that from the first assertion concerning the intrinsic efficacy of grace they may conclude

that God becomes the cause of sin. Let them but remain faithful to the teaching of St. Thomas as set forth in this eighth article, and to his higher principles.

NINTH ARTICLE

WHETHER GOD WILLS EVILS

State of the question. The difficulty consists in this: on the one hand, God, who is infinitely good, cannot will evil; on the other hand, He wills everything that appertains to the perfection and beauty of the universe. But the evil, for example, of persecution, without which there would not be the patience of the martyrs, pertains to the perfection of the universe. Moreover, if God in no way willed evils, these would not happen, because nothing happens unless God wills it. That is, as stated in the third objection of this article, “God does not will that evil should not exist.” Therefore it seems that God wills evils.

It must be noted that evil is of three kinds. For there is (1) the evil of nature, which is the privation of good, even in irrational things; then there is (2) in voluntary things the evil of sin, which is the privation of moral rectitude; and there is (3) the evil of punishment, which is the privation of some good on account of sin.

There are two parts to the reply. The first part refers to the evil of sin, and the second to the evils of nature and of penalty.

1) God does not at all will or cause the evil of sin, even accidentally, but only permits it. He cannot in any sense be called the author of sin.

This conclusion is of faith according to Holy Scripture, which says: “Thou art not a God that willest iniquity. . . . Thou hatest all the workers of iniquity. Thou wilt destroy all that speak a lie.”

It was defined in the Council of Trent against Luther and Calvin: “If anyone says that it is not in man’s power to make his ways evil, but that the works that are evil God worketh as well as those that are good, not permissibly only, but properly and of Himself, in such wise that the treason of Judas is no less His own proper work than the vocation of Paul; let him be anathema.”

The reason for this first part of the answer is explained at length by St. Thomas elsewhere, by showing that God can be neither the direct cause of

sin (by inclining the will to sin), nor the indirect cause (by not giving the required help, or giving it insufficiently), and that He can permit sin on account of a greater good. Thus the evil of sin is a defect coming from a defective cause, not from God.

But in this article St. Thomas gives the general reason, which is: Since the aspect of good is the aspect of desirability, and since evil is opposed to good, it is impossible that any evil, as such, should be sought directly and essentially, though it can be sought indirectly and accidentally, inasmuch as it accompanies a good that is more desirable than the good of which it is a privation. Thus a lion kills a stag for the purpose of obtaining food.

But God wills no good more than He wills His own goodness. Hence God in no way, either essentially or accidentally, wills the evil of sin, which is the privation of the order toward divine good. But, as stated, He only permits it.

Therefore, as we said previously, God knows future sins in His permissive decree. It can now be said more explicitly that God knows future sins in a twofold decree, namely, permissive and effective; for there is a positive element in sin, that is, the act of effect, which can be produced only with the concurrence of the First Cause; and there is the privative element, and this comes, however, solely from a defectible and deficient cause.

The other part of the answer, that which refers to the evils of nature and of punishment, is worded as follows: God wills the evils of nature and of punishment, not indeed essentially but accidentally, by reason of the good that is connected with them.

What has been said makes this clear. (1) It is, indeed, impossible than an evil, as such, should be sought essentially and directly, for the aspect of good is the aspect of desirability. (2) God wills accidentally the evils of nature and of punishment, because He wills more the good to which this twofold evil is annexed, than the good of which the evil is the privation. Thus, by willing the preservation of the natural order, He wills accidentally or indirectly, as a quasi-consequence, the corruption of certain natural things. So, by willing of itself the life of the lion. He wills accidentally the death of the stag; so also in the moral order, by willing of itself justice, He wills punishment indirectly and accidentally.

Reply to first objection. This reply is against Hugo of St. Victor, who taught that God willed that evils should be done, because it is a good thing, inasmuch as evils are directed to some good end. St. Thomas replies: “This,

however, is not correct, since evil is not of itself ordered to good, but accidentally . . . ; as it was beside the intention of tyrants that the patience of the martyrs should shine forth from all their persecutions." That which of itself is ordered to good is not the evil itself which God permits, but God's holy permission. The reply to the second objection is to the same effect.

Reply to third objection. "God neither wills evil to be done, nor wills it not to be done, but wills to permit evil to be done; and this (willing to permit it) is a good."

Thus we must distinguish, as stated at the end of our commentary to the preceding article, between the permission of sin (especially the first sin), which is not a punishment, and the divine refusal of efficacious grace, which is already a punishment, and which presupposes, therefore, at least a first sin.

TENTH ARTICLE

WHETHER GOD HAS FREE WILL

It has already been made clear to us in the third article that God does not necessarily will things other than Himself; for His goodness is infinite, and He is in complete possession of it apart from other things. But this article shows that free will is to be attributed to God, because what it formally signifies implies no imperfection.

There are two conclusions. (1) There is free will in God, because there is election in Him, inasmuch as He does not necessarily will things apart from Himself. This is of faith. (2) God is absolutely free, although it is not possible for Him to sin, this belonging to the imperfection of creatures. As St. Thomas says: "Since the evil of sin consists in turning away from the divine goodness, by which God wills all things, it is manifestly impossible for Him to will the evil of sin; yet He can make choice of one of two opposites, inasmuch as He wills a thing to be, or not to be." This means that God enjoys absolute liberty, sin being for Him an impossibility, just as supreme wisdom excludes the possibility of error. This applies, though in a modified manner, to the most holy soul of Christ, which is both free and absolutely impeccable, for its liberty is the most pure image of the divine liberty, which is both absolute and impeccable.

ELEVENTH ARTICLE

WHETHER THE WILL OF EXPRESSION IS TO BE DISTINGUISHED IN GOD

State of the question. The purpose of St. Thomas in this article is to explain the commonly accepted distinction between God's will of good pleasure, and His will of expression. The former has already been discussed in this question.

That God's commands, which are not always observed, are called God's will, seems to be the foundation for this distinction. Thus we read: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Then the will of God is not the same in meaning as His consequent and efficacious will of good pleasure, which is always fulfilled, and this latter is not absolutely the same as His antecedent will of good pleasure, which is of itself never efficacious. In what sense, therefore, is God's command called His will?

To understand this distinction, St. Thomas makes the following observations in this article: "What is usually with us an expression of will, is sometimes metaphorically called will in God, just as when anyone lays down a precept, it is a sign that he wishes this precept obeyed. Hence a divine precept is sometimes called by metaphor the will of God, as in the words: Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven."

St. Thomas concludes: "Therefore in God there are distinguished will in its proper sense, and will as attributed to Him by metaphor. 'Will' in its proper sense is called the will of good pleasure (which is, as above stated, either consequent or antecedent); 'will' metaphorically taken is the will of expression, inasmuch as the sign itself of will is called will."

It must be observed that sometimes God's command does not coincide with His will of good pleasure, as is evidently the case when God commanded Abraham to kill his son Isaac, since indeed He afterward commanded the contrary. But this command was a sign that God wished the patriarch to will the slaying of his son and make the necessary preparations.

TWELFTH ARTICLE

WHETHER EWE EXPRESSIONS OF WILL ARE RIGHTLY ASSIGNED TO THE DIVINE WILL

State of the question. There are five expressions of will that are generally assigned in various passages of Holy Scripture to the divine will. These are:

precept, counsel, prohibition, permission, and operation.

The reason St. Thomas gives for this enumeration is that in these five ways we are accustomed to signify that we will something. For when we do anything it is a clear sign that we will it. When we command or advise something to another, it is a sign that we will it to be done (or not done, if it is something we forbid). Finally, when we permit someone over whom we have authority to do something, it is a sign that we do not will to prevent it. Hence St. Augustine says: “Nothing is done, unless the Almighty wills it to be done, either by permitting it, or by actually doing it.”

Doubt. How is the will of expression related to the will of good pleasure?

St. Thomas replies by showing that there is sometimes, but not always, agreement between these two wills. He says more explicitly in another of his works: “It is necessary for us to know that there are three ways in which the will of expression is related to the will of good pleasure. For there is a will of expression which never coincides with the will of good pleasure, such as when God permits the perpetration of evil, since He never wills this; but there is a will of expression that always coincides with the will of good pleasure, as in the case of operation; and sometimes, indeed, they coincide, and sometimes not, as in the case of command, prohibition, and counsel. Thus when God commanded Abraham to kill his son Isaac, this did not coincide with His will of good pleasure, for He afterward commanded the contrary. Thus when a command is not fulfilled as it ought to be, it does not coincide with God’s efficacious or consequent will of good pleasure, but with His antecedent will.

Objection. If the will of expression does not always coincide with the will of good pleasure, then it is incorrect to call it the will of expression; for a sign that is not in conformity with the thing signified is a false sign.

St. Thomas replies: “Although God does not will everything He commands or permits, yet He wills something concerning this; for He wills all to be under obligation to do what He commands, and that it be in our power to do what He permits, command and permission being an expression of this divine will.”

Finally it must be noted what is often said by spiritual authors, such as Bossuet: “Christian indifference being out of the question where the expressed will of God is concerned, we must restrict it, as St. Francis de Sales does, to certain events controlled by His will of good pleasure, whose sovereign commands determine the daily occurrences in the course of life.”

Dom Vital Lehodey says: “The good pleasure of God is the domain of abandonment; His expressed will, of obedience.” We have explained at length elsewhere in what sense it is true to say that the divine will of expression made known by various commands is the domain of obedience, whereas the will of good pleasure not as yet made known is the domain of holy indifference and abandonment into God’s hands. But we must now treat of God’s love for Himself and for us, or of the act of His will of good pleasure.

APPENDIX

ON GOD’S PERSONALITY IN OPPOSITION TO PANTHEISM

The pantheists and monists either completely or partly identify the world with its principle, and therefore they deny the distinction between God and the world, and His real personality. For they teach that a personal God does not exist, since the notion of person implies limitation. For these, person or the ego presupposes another certain independent being, as a non-ego in opposition to the ego. Thus the notion of person implies limitation.

This error is refuted from the principles already established. We must bear in mind that a person is an intelligent and free subject.

But the teaching authority of the Church enunciates in the Vatican Council what is the foundation for this refutation, by attributing to God what formally constitutes person, namely, subsistence, intelligence, free will, and also a real and essential distinction from the world; and the reason assigned for this is that, whereas the world is essentially composite and mobile, it requires God as the supreme, absolutely simple, and unchangeable cause.

The Vatican Council says: “The Holy Catholic . . . Church believes and confesses that there is one true and living God, Creator and Lord of heaven and earth, almighty, eternal, immense, incomprehensible, infinite in intelligence, in will and in all perfection, who, as being one, sole, absolutely simple and immutable spiritual substance, is to be declared as really and essentially distinct from the world (which is composite and changeable), of supreme beatitude in and of Himself, and ineffably exalted above all things besides Himself which exist or are conceivable.”

From what has been said in previous questions, it is evident that this doctrine has its foundation in Holy Scripture; moreover, the reason is given for the distinction between the absolutely simple and unchangeable God and the composite and changeable world, and the reason why the term “person” is predicated of God, since He is the intelligent, free, and subsistent Being who is independent of any other being.

Although revelation declares that there are three Persons in God, yet God, speaking of His nature and creative power, which are common to the Trinity, says to Moses: “I am who am. . . . Thus shalt thou say to the children of Israel: The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob hath sent me to you. This is My name forever.” And again we read: “I am the Lord and I change not.” “I am, I am the Lord; and there is no savior besides Me. I have declared and have saved.” God is always referred to in Holy Scripture as endowed with knowledge, volition, action, spiritually creating and exercising dominion over all things, and He often expresses that He is the personal Being, by using the pronoun “I’ in speaking of Himself. Moreover, in accordance with revelation, God must be invoked as Father, which is a personal name. Therefore, whatever belongs to the notion of person (subsistence, intelligence, liberty) is found formally and eminently in God, without any imperfection.

Objection. But the subsisting ego is named in opposition to the non-ego, which is likewise independent. If, therefore, God were a person, this would presuppose something else independent of Himself, and thus He would not be the principle of all things.

Reply. I distinguish the antecedent: the subsisting ego, inasmuch as this is a created and limited person, is named in opposition to the non-ego that is likewise independent and existing, this I concede; that this pertains to what is formally signified by the name “person,” inasmuch as it is distinct from its created mode, this I deny. And I deny the consequent and consequence.

For indeed, as stated, what is formally signified by “person” implies only subsistent, intelligent, and free being, which can be called ego. Thus in God, ego is what is formally signified by person, and with reference to God, non-ego signifies possible things, and after creation those things which, inferior to God, either are, will be, or were created by Him.

Thus the name “person” is not predicated univocally of God and created rational beings, but analogically, and this not only metaphorically but

properly, so that what is formally signified by “person” is in God formally and eminently as absolutely independent subsistence, intellection, and free will.

Another objection. Every person must be endowed with self-consciousness. But all self-consciousness necessarily implies limitation, inasmuch as consciousness distinguishes the ego from the non-ego. Therefore God is not a person.

Reply. I distinguish the major: that a person must have the created mode of consciousness, this I deny; that a person can be without such mode, this I concede. I distinguish the minor: that the created mode of consciousness denotes limitation, this I concede; that what is formally signified by consciousness denotes limitation, this I deny.

Evidently a created person as such is self-conscious, inasmuch as it is this that makes such a person distinct from God and other created persons. But nothing prevents God from being most perfectly conscious of Himself, inasmuch as He is the self-subsisting Being, and by this He is distinct from possible beings and, after creation, from created beings.

THE SANCTITY OF GOD

From what has been said about God’s will, it is evident that God enjoys the highest degree of sanctity, because He is infinitely perfect both in intellect and in will, and, as we shall see in the following question, God infinitely and immutably loves His most perfect goodness for its own sake and as the measure of any moral good. Hence God’s will, which is impeccable, is most holy; in fact, it is essential sanctity.

Holy Scripture repeatedly asserts this, as in the following texts: “The Lord is just in all His ways, and holy in all His works.” “Who is like to Thee, glorious in holiness?” “Holy, Holy, Holy,” the seraphim proclaim Him to be. God is often called ‘The Holy One of Israel.” This sanctity is the exemplar of our sanctity: “Be you therefore perfect as also your heavenly Father is perfect.”

This sanctity of God, inasmuch as it is communicative, is called benignity. This is declared many times in Holy Scripture: “When Thou openest Thy hand, they shall all be filled with good.” “O how good and sweet is Thy spirit, O Lord, in all things.” “Every best gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights.” Moreover, God

in calling Himself Father, expresses His readiness to be beneficent. In fact, “God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son.” As St. Thomas says: “It pertains to the divine will to communicate by likeness its own good to others as much as is possible.” Moreover, this benignity of God is especially evident in His love and mercy toward creatures, which we must now discuss.

Finally, from what has been said it is clear that there is infinite beauty in God, in fact, essential beauty not only of the ontological but also of the intellectual and moral orders.

For as St. Thomas says: “Beautiful things are those which please when seen; hence beauty consists in due proportion,” which means that this requires unity in diversity or harmony, and splendor of this unity as well as of truth and goodness.

But God most perfectly and essentially possesses the infinite plenitude of being, intelligence, and goodness, of all perfections in the highest unity of His Deity, so that it is said of His wisdom: “For she is more beautiful than the sun, and above all the order of the stars: being compared with the light, she is found before it.” “She is the brightness of eternal light.”

Hence God by reason of His beauty is to Himself the fount of infinite delight and beatitude, and the vision of God produces in intellectual creatures ineffable complacency and supreme joy. Thus God is the first beauty, and the exemplar of all ontological, intellectual, and moral beauty.

CHAPTER XX

QUESTION 20

GOD'S LOVE

THIS question treats of God's love as being the principal act of His will: (1) its existence (a. 1); (2) its object (a. 2); (3) the mode of this love (a. 4, 5): Whether God loves all things equally, or whether He loves the better things more.

FIRST ARTICLE

WHETHER LOVE EXISTS IN GOD

State of the question. The point of inquiry in this article is whether love is formally and not merely virtually in God. It seems that love is not formally in God, for love is a passion, and there are no passions in God. Moreover, love is of the same order as anger and sorrow, and these are not in God. Lastly, love is a uniting force, the connecting link between lovers. Hence this does not seem to exist in God, who is most simple.

Yet the answer is: We must assert that in God there is love in the strict sense, not merely metaphorically.

1) This conclusion is of faith and is expressed many times in Holy Scripture. Thus we read: "God is charity."

2) It is also proved by reason as follows: Love is the first act of the will; but will is formally in God; therefore love is formally in Him.

The major is evident from the fact that the will is specified by lovable good, and its love of good is prior to its avoidance of evil, and its love of good simply as such is prior to its sadness or its joy by reason of the absence or presence of good. To love means nothing else but to will good. Love is nothing else but the inclination to good, or, if one is already in

possession of good, as God is, then it is complacency in the same. But this perfection includes no imperfection. Therefore love not only exists in God, but exists in Him formally and eminently. It is not a question here of love as a passion, or as an act of the sensitive appetite, but as it is an act of the intellectual appetite.

Corollary. Joy is likewise formally in God, because it is satisfaction in the good possessed. The reason is that there is no imperfection in the formal concept of joy, as there is none in the concept of love. On the contrary, anger and sadness imply imperfection, and can exist in God only virtually or metaphorically. Sadness is affliction of mind because of present evil, and this sadness at having been offended gives rise to anger, which is the appetite for revenge. Hence when Holy Scripture says that God repents or is angry, this repentance and anger must be understood in a metaphorical sense. Thus anger signifies justice that inflicts the deserved punishment.

First doubt. Of what kind is the love by which God loves Himself?

The answer. From what has been said it is clear that God infinitely and necessarily loves Himself. But this most eminent love is not, in the strict sense either the love of concupiscence or of friendship, but is something higher. For the love of concupiscence is that by which we will something as being good especially for ourselves; and the love of friendship is that by which we love another, wishing good for the other as we wish it for ourselves. But God is absolutely identified with His love for Himself. Hence this love transcends both the love of concupiscence and the love of friendship.

Objection. There is between the divine persons, for example, between the Father and the Son, a mutual and amicable love that is accompanied by a supreme communication of good things. Therefore the love of friendship exists formally in the divine persons.

Reply. I deny the antecedent; for this mutual love between the divine persons is not formally such on the part of the act itself of love, but only on the part of the Persons loving, who by one sole act love Themselves. Hence it is not simply friendship, but something more than this, that is, it is not unifying love, but unity of love and identity of good things.

Second doubt. Can zeal be properly attributed to God? It can, because zeal is intense love that vigorously repels all that is contrary to it; and there can be no imperfection in it, such as that of envy or suspicion. Thus God is said to be zealous.

Third doubt. Is hatred properly attributed to God?

Reply. The evil of enmity by which we will evil as such to another is only metaphorically in God; for God does not will evil as such to the sinner, but as it is a just punishment. Now, to be sure, the just judge condemning the murderer to death, does not do this because of hatred for him, but from love of justice. Far more so, does God do this, of whom it is said: “Neither hath He pleasure in the destruction of the living,” but loves justice. Thus the devil is strictly so, the enemy of God; but God is not, strictly so, the enemy of the devil.

But as for the hatred of abomination by which the just person detests sin as an evil, it is disputed whether this is attributed properly or only metaphorically to God. Suarez, Vasquez, and several modern theologians affirm that it applies properly to God, because Holy Scripture says that God hates iniquity, and that sin is displeasing to Him. Hence they say that He formally detests it as simply evil, although He permits it, and afterward punishes it.

On the contrary, St. Thomas says: “Hence (because God cannot will evil) it appears that hatred of a thing cannot be ascribed (properly) to God. Just as love is related to good, so is hatred to evil; for we will good to those we love, but evil to those we hate. Therefore if God’s will cannot be inclined to evil, as was said above, it is impossible for Him to hate anything.” Hence several Thomists, such as John of St. Thomas and Gonet, hold that hatred of iniquity is only metaphorically or virtually in God, as a consequence of His love of justice. They say that no act of the divine will refers strictly to what is evil, either as to be pursued or as to be avoided, and that it is directly in conflict with it. No act of God can be formally avoidance of evil; for avoidance of evil belongs properly only to the created will, since it is imperfect, and it may find itself opposed by evil, and be prevented from attaining its good. But God’s will is most perfect; no evil can oppose it and prevent it from attaining its good. Therefore hatred of iniquity is not formally but virtually in God, inasmuch as it is virtually contained in His love of justice, and inasmuch as sin is directly opposed to His created virtue, that is, to charity or justice. Similarly, reasoning is virtually contained in the divine intellect. This seems at least to be the more probable opinion.

Fourth doubt. Do hope and desire properly belong to God?

The answer is in the negative. The reason is that hope refers to future good, which is something arduous or difficult of attainment, and this cannot be said of God. But desire refers to absent good, which is neither formally nor eminently possessed by the one who desires it. But God possesses all things eminently.

SECOND ARTICLE

WHETHER GOD LOVES ALL THINGS

State of the question. It seems that God does not properly, but only metaphorically, love things apart from Himself, for Dionysius says: “Love places the lover outside himself,” and this, so it seems, would be an imperfection for God. Moreover, God’s love is eternal and He alone is eternal; hence it seems that God loves only Himself and not things apart from Himself.

Aristotle seems to admit this, even Plato, as also the Neoplatonists, and among modern philosophers Spinoza, who maintains that the world proceeds of necessity from God, but is not loved by Him.

But the answer is: God loves all existing things, and indeed in the strict sense of the term.

1) This conclusion is of faith, for the Scripture says: “Thou lovest all things that are, and hatest none of those things which Thou hast made.” And in the New Testament we read: “God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son.” Nor is there any reason, as will immediately be stated, for restricting these words to a metaphorical sense.

2) The proof from reason is as follows: To love anything is to will good to that thing; but God wills good to all things that are, were, or will be, that is, He wills at least their existence, which depends on His divine will; therefore God properly loves all existing things.

Moreover, “the love of God infuses and creates goodness (in things),” whereas, on the contrary, our will is not the cause of the goodness of things, but is moved by it as by its object, and thus it calls forth our love, whereby we will the preservation and increase of goodness in another.

Therefore God’s love with reference to creatures is in no way passive, but active; in fact, it creates, conserves, and vivifies this love in them. It does not presuppose lovableness in the object, but posits this in it. Thus grace

that makes one pleasing to God is the effect of His love elevating us to a participation of His intimate life. Thus the treatise on grace is connected with the treatise on God.

There is no imperfection in what is formally denoted by this concept. However, God's love of creatures is not said to be an absolutely simple perfection in the strict sense, because this love is a free act, as stated above, and therefore it is not better for God to have this love than not to have it.

Reply to first objection. The expression, "love places the lover outside himself," is improperly used to signify that the lover wills good to the beloved; and in this latter, there is no imperfection.

Reply to second objection. As God knows future things eternally, He loved them eternally. In fact, the creative action is eternal, although its effect takes place in time. It is a formally immanent action, and is only virtually transitive inasmuch as it produces an external effect. Thus the effect is new, but not the action.

Reply to third objection. God loves rational creatures with the love of friendship, inasmuch as He wills them good, especially the good of eternal life. God, strictly speaking, does not love irrational creatures with the love of friendship (because they are incapable of returning this love and sharing in His life), but with the love of quasi-concupiscence, inasmuch as He orders them to rational creatures, and thus indirectly to Himself.

Reply to fourth objection. God loves sinners in so far as they belong to a certain kind of nature, and He preserves them in existence; but He does not love them in so far as they are sinners, or as they are deficient in good.

First doubt. Does God love possible things? He does not indeed in the sense that He wills to give them existence, and this constitutes the distinction between possible and future things. But God loves His essence as it is infinitely capable of being participated in ad extra; and as the number of possible things is infinite, so He loves His omnipotence.

Second doubt. Does God love futuribilia, conditioned futures that will not come into existence?

Reply. He loves these conditionally. We discussed this point when treating of God's antecedent will, which is conditional.

THIRD ARTICLE

WHETHER GOD LOVES ALL THINGS EQUALLY

State of the question. The difficulty presents itself because we read in Holy Scripture that “He hath equally care of all.” Moreover, God’s love, inasmuch as it is the unique uncreated act, does not admit of degree. Lastly, God is not said to know some things more than others. Therefore He does not love some things more than others.

On the other hand, St. Augustine says: “God loves all things which He has made, and among them rational creatures more, and of these especially those who are members of His only begotten Son; and, much more than all, His only-begotten Son Himself.”

The answer is that God loves all things equally on the part of the very act of the will, because by one and the same act He loves all things. But He does not love all things equally on the part of the good willed, but He loves the better things more.

The first part requires no special proof, for there are not several acts in God differing in intensity. Hence the saying, “God has equally care of all,” because He administers all things with a like wisdom and goodness.

The second part of the proof presents no difficulty. On the part of the good willed, we are said to love that one more than another, for whom we will a greater good, although we do not will with greater intensity. But God wills a greater good for some creatures than for others; for some He wills only existence, for others life, for others intelligence, for others the life of grace, for others the life of glory, and for Christ the hypostatic union. Therefore God does not love all things equally on the part of the good willed.

Corollary. This is expressed at the end of the argumentative part of this article as follows: “Since God’s love is the cause of goodness in things (a. 2), no one thing would be better than another, if God did not will greater good for one than for another.” This can be called the “principle of predilection,” and it is most universal. It holds good for whatever being is better than another: for the plant with reference to the stone, for the animal with reference to the plant, for man with reference to the animal, for the just person with reference to the wicked one, for the elect with reference to others.

The doctrine of gratuitous predestination is virtually contained in this principle. There is a better explanation of this doctrine in the following article, in which we see that it is both a naturally knowable and a revealed truth.

FOURTH ARTICLE

WHETHER GOD ALWAYS LOVES THE BETTER THINGS MORE

State of the question. The difficulty arises from the following considerations. (1) Although Christ is better than the whole human race, yet "God delivered Him up for us all." Therefore it seems that He loves the human race more than He loves Christ. (2) An angel is better than a man, and yet God showed that He loved men more by sending them His Son. (3) Peter was better than John, since he loved Christ more, as our Lord's question shows: "Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me more than these?" Yet Jesus loved John more, who was called the disciple whom Jesus loved. (4) The innocent man is better than the repentant, and yet it is said: "There shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just who need not penance." (5) The just man who is foreknown (not predestined) is better than the predestined sinner, and yet God loves the predestined sinner more.

Nevertheless the answer is: "The reason why some things are better than others, is that God wills for them a greater good. Hence it follows that He loves the better things more.

1) This truth is expressed clearly in revelation, as stated in various texts of Holy Scripture. Thus we read: "How could anything endure (in good), if Thou wouldst not? And our Lord said: "Without Me you can do nothing," in the order of salvation. "For He saith to Moses: I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy; and I will show mercy to whom I will show mercy. So then it is not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." Thus of the two thieves who died on Calvary, one of them by God's special mercy was saved. This is the principle of predilection, namely, that no one would be better than another unless loved more by God. This principle virtually contains, as we said, the whole doctrine of predestination, according to which some attain to eternal life and are called the elect, because they were loved and helped more by God.

2) For this answer the proof from reason is more than a theological conclusion since it is a truth revealed in Holy Scripture. It is as follows: God's will is the cause of goodness in things; but God's love for anything is greater in so far as He wills a greater good for it; therefore the reason why some things are better than others, is that God wills a greater good for them.

This conclusion follows as a corollary from the principle of causality, and may be fully expressed as follows: Every contingent being requires a cause, and in the final analysis the first cause, which is God. Thus God is the cause of the entity and goodness of things. Hence no being would be better than another unless God willed a greater good for this being than for another, as it was already stated in the preceding article.

It must be observed that this principle, as thus expressed, concerns God's consequent will, on which depends any good whatever that here and now happens, whereas what really can happen depends on His antecedent will, such as that His commandments can really be observed, even when they are not actually observed.

Moreover, this principle is most universal and admits of no exception, that is, it applies to all created beings, and especially to men and angels, in this sense that no one would be better than another (by an act easy or difficult to perform, natural or supernatural, first or final), unless he were loved more by God.

This principle is declared by St. Augustine when he says of the good and bad angels: "If both the good and bad (angels) were created equally good, then, whereas the latter fell by their evil will, the former were more abundantly assisted, and reached that state of complete happiness which made them absolutely certain of never losing it." This means that, as men are predestined, so the good angels were previously loved, chosen, and predestined.

The solution of the objections confirms this conclusion.

Reply to first objection. "God loves Christ more than He loves the entire created universe because He willed for Him the greater good in giving Him a name that is above all names, in so far as He was true God. Nor did anything of His excellence diminish when God delivered Him up to death for the salvation of the human race; rather did He become thereby a glorious conqueror," since he became the conqueror of sin, the devil, and death. Farther on we find St. Thomas saying: "Had sin not existed, the incarnation would not have been"; but he adds: "There is no reason, however, why human nature should not have been raised to something greater after sin. For God allows evils to happen in order to bring a greater good therefrom. Hence it is written (Rom. 5: 20): "Where sin abounded, grace did more abound." Hence, too, in the blessing of the paschal candle, we say: "O happy fault that merited such and so great a Redeemer." This

means that, had sin not existed, the incarnation would not have been; but, on the other hand, God permitted Adam's sin and original sin only for a greater good, and after the Fall this greater good is known to be the redemptive incarnation, which is the source of all our graces. Hence the doctrine of this article is confirmed, namely, that no one thing would be better than another unless it were loved more by God, and Christ was and is loved by God more than the entire created universe.

Reply to second objection. "God loves the human nature assumed by the Word of God in the person of Christ more than He loves all the angels; for that nature is better, especially on the ground of union with the Godhead. . . . God therefore did not assume human nature because He loved man, absolutely speaking, more; but because the needs of man were greater; just as the master of a house may give to a sick servant some more costly delicacy, which he does not give to his own son in sound health."

But the fallen angels were incapable of redemption because, as stated farther on, "the angel's free will is flexible to either opposite before the choice but not after," so that their choice is a participation in the immutability of the divine choice.

Reply to third objection. As to whether Christ loved Peter more than John, St. Thomas remarks at the end of his reply, that "it may seem presumptuous to pass judgment" on which of the two, either Peter or John, Christ loved more with the love of charity. It is also presumptuous to say which of the two God loved more, absolutely speaking, and ordained to a greater degree of eternal glory. For, as the Scripture says: "The Lord is the weigher of spirits," and there is no other. Moreover, there is no certain statement about this in revelation.

Reply to fourth objection: "Whether innocent or penitent, those are the better and the better loved who have more grace. Other things being equal, innocence is the nobler thing and the more beloved. God is said to rejoice more over the penitent than over the innocent, because often penitents rise from sin more cautious, humble, and fervent." From this something of great importance follows concerning predestination. It is that, if one of two sinners rises from sin, this is solely because of God's special mercy, who converts one rather than another. But if anyone keeps baptismal innocence until death, this is a sign of God's greater grace, who thus preserved such a person in the performance of good works.

Reply to fifth objection. The non-predestined just person is better than the predestined sinner, although according to some other time he is worse.

Corollary. The validity and importance of the principle of predilection.

Hence the principle enunciated in the preceding article remains intact, namely, that, other things being equal, no one thing would be better than another unless it were loved more by God, or unless God willed it a greater good. Hence God loves the better things more. The whole doctrine of gratuitous predestination, which is explained farther on, is virtually contained in this most exalted and most universal principle.

Moreover, this most exalted principle precludes from either priority or posteriority, which are expressed in the formulas: “before the foreseeing of merits” and “after the foreseeing of merits,” and in some measure it transcends the distinction between the orders of intention and execution. But, as we have already clearly seen, it contains virtually, as it were from on high, what is called predestination before the “foreseeing of merits.” In a manner more sublime it abstracts from the less important principles on which perhaps too much stress is laid at times, whereas it does not present clearly enough this principle of predilection.

This exalted principle presupposes with reference to our salutary acts, whether easy or difficult to perform, that God’s consequent will is of itself efficacious, and that consequently grace is of itself efficacious, and not because our consent was foreseen by God.

Therefore Molina indirectly denies this principle of predilection when he says that grace is not of itself efficacious, by asserting that “of two that are called and equally aided by grace, it can happen that one of them is converted and the other not. In fact, it is possible for one who has received a less grace to rise again, when another who has received a greater grace does not rise again, and remains obdurate.”

This principle is likewise indirectly denied for salutary acts easy to perform, by the congruism of the Sorbonne. Thus Tournely held that grace of itself efficacious is required only for salutary acts difficult to perform, but not for easy ones, as if greater and less differentiated the species. Then if this principle admitted of exceptions, it would no longer be metaphysically certain.

It is likewise indirectly denied by the Augustinians, such as Berthi and Noris, who in the time of Jansenism wrote and admitted that grace of itself efficacious is required only as a consequence of original sin, because of the

moral weakness of human nature, but not because of man’s dependence on God. Hence they indirectly denied the principle of predilection for the state of innocence and for the angels, as if Molinism truly applied to the angels. But a metaphysical principle that admits of exceptions is no longer metaphysical, and is, moreover, of no value. On the contrary, the sublimity and absolute universality of this exalted principle so beautifully illustrates all questions concerning grace and predestination, either for men in any state of life, or for the angels.

CHAPTER XXI

QUESTION 21

THE JUSTICE AND MERCY OF GOD

AFTER considering the divine love, we must treat of God’s justice and mercy. For they are virtues that reside in the will, the principal act of which is love. Then providence will be discussed, which is a virtue of the practical intellect, inasmuch as it analogically corresponds to our prudence and especially to that part which provides for future things.

There are no other virtues in God, because the rest imply imperfection. For it is evident that faith, which is obscure, cannot be in God; nor can there be hope, which concerns future good that is difficult of attainment. But charity corresponds to the uncreated act of love, which was discussed in the previous question. Nor can there be any moral virtues in God by which He is referred to another either as His superior or equal, such as religion and piety; nor are there in Him those virtues that regulate the passions, such as temperance and fortitude, which in us reside in the sensitive appetite as directed by reason, although fortitude bears a certain resemblance to omnipotence, which is discussed in a subsequent question.

But this twenty-first question decides: (1) whether there is justice in God and of what kind; (2) whether justice is identical with truth of which Holy Scripture speaks, associating it with mercy: (3) whether mercy is in God, and how it can be analogically and properly attributed to Him without denoting imperfection; (4) whether mercy and justice are to be found in every work of God.

FIRST ARTICLE

WHETHER THERE IS JUSTICE IN GOD

State of the question. The principal difficulty is that the act of justice is to pay what is due, or what is peculiarly one's own. Therefore justice is not attributed properly to God, not even analogically, but only metaphorically.

Yet the answer is: Justice belongs properly to God, and there are very many texts in Holy Scripture that show this to be of faith. Thus we read: "The Lord is just and hath loved justice."

In these texts God's justice is clearly seen as His constant will of giving to all what is due to them, in accordance with their nature and condition, and in view of their merits as ordained and promised by God.

It must be noted that Luther implicitly denied God's justice, asserting that the just person, even though he was a murderer and unchaste, can never be punished by the supreme Judge. Likewise, in our times, those impious persons who deny punishments in the future life, also contradict God's justice.

There is only the difficulty as to what kind of justice is properly attributed to God. Now justice, as explained in the treatise on this virtue, is divided into general and particular, which is again subdivided into commutative and distributive.

General justice, however, is of two kinds. There is legal justice, that refers to the common good in accordance with law, and equity or epikeia, which regards the spirit of the law more than its letter, which, if it were applied in certain cases, would be more severe, according to the saying: "extreme law, extreme injustice." But since this twofold general justice is, as St. Thomas says, by way of a master-craft in the king who commands, and administratively in his subjects, it is evident that this exists formally in God, who is the King of kings and the Lord of lords. Thus God takes care of all things, providing for the common good of all things in the universe, as befitting the manifestation of divine goodness.

Therefore this leaves only the difficulty concerning distributive and commutative justice to be considered. St. Thomas examines this difficulty in the body of this article.

Reply. Commutative justice does not belong properly and formally to God, because the obligation of commutative justice arises from this, that another gave us something belonging to himself over which we had no dominion. But man and angel can give God nothing that is not already His and under His dominion. Even our free action is under God's dominion, just as all created beings are. Hence St. Paul says: "Who hath first given to Him,

and recompense shall be made him?" Therefore commutative justice does not exist properly and formally in God.

Objection. One who is under obligation by reason of a pact or promise to reward another, if a certain work is performed, is bound by commutative justice. But God put Himself under such an obligation, for He says of Himself: "Call the laborers and pay them their hire." In fact, St. Thomas says: "This form of the divine judgment is in accordance with the conditions of commutative justice, in so far as rewards are apportioned to merits, and punishments to sins."

Reply. I distinguish the major: That one who is thus under obligation by reason of a pact or promise to reward another, is bound by commutative justice, if what is given is not already belonging to the other by right, this I concede; otherwise, I deny the major. I contradistinguish the minor in like manner. Hence, on God's part, the obligation is one of fidelity, but not of commutative justice. But if it is said that the kingdom of heaven is obtained by good works, then this is said metaphorically.

As for the difficulty arising from the text quoted by St. Thomas, it must be said that God in rewarding adheres to the mode of commutative justice, because He gives so much for so much; but this divine act is not properly and formally an act of commutative justice, for the reason already given. Similarly vindictive justice, in so far as it exists in God, pertains to commutative justice only as regards the mode of retribution; but as regards the debt incurred, it seems to belong more to legal or distributive justice.

Distributive justice, however, is found formally in God. It is that justice whereby a ruler or a steward gives to each what his rank deserves. But this is perfection that excludes all imperfection, and it most fittingly applies to God as the supreme lord and ruler of the universe. Therefore distributive justice is found formally in God. Experience clearly shows that God distributes to all creatures what is necessary so that they can attain their end, although all do not actually do so.

Objection. Distributive justice implies the payment of what is due. But God is debtor to nobody. Therefore distributive justice does not properly and formally belong to God.

In accordance with the reply to the third objection of this article, we may say: I distinguish the major: I concede that distributive justice implies the payment of what is due, sometimes as dependent on the proper ordering of the one who distributes, as in the distribution of one's own as reward; I

deny that the payment of what is due is always independent of this ordering. I contradistinguish the minor: that God is debtor to nobody, independently of His ordering, this I concede; as dependent on it, this I deny. Hence it is said that God is a debtor to Himself to give to all creatures what is necessary so that they can attain their end. Wherefore it is stated in the reply to the third objection: “It is due to God that there should be fulfilled in creatures what His will and wisdom require, and what manifests His goodness. In this respect God’s justice regards what befits Him inasmuch as He renders to Himself what is due to Himself.” Similarly, St. Thomas says: “Since our action has the character of merit only on the supposition of the divine ordination, it does not follow that God is made our debtor simply, but His own, inasmuch as it is right that His will should be carried out.”

But I insist. In distributive justice he who disposes of anything abdicates his right over the thing disposed of and transfers it to another. But God cannot abdicate His right over created things. Therefore distributive justice does not belong formally to God.

Reply. I distinguish the major: that sometimes he who disposes of something abdicates his right over the thing disposed of, this I concede; that he does so always, this I deny. Thus the sovereign preserves intact distributive justice by bestowing goods in common use by way of emphyteusis, though retaining direct dominion over them. Thus God, though retaining His supreme dominion over all created things, grants us dominion inferior and subordinate to His.

SECOND ARTICLE

WHETHER THE JUSTICE OF GOD IS TRUTH

State of the question. The purpose of this article is to explain these words: “Mercy and truth have met each other; justice and peace have kissed,” in which, according to the context and tradition, truth stands for justice.

The difficulty is, however, that truth resides in the intellect, whereas justice is in the will. If there is a virtue that is called truth or rather veracity, it is a virtue that is annexed to justice, but is not, however, justice itself.

But the answer is: God’s justice is fittingly called truth. The reason is that, since the divine intellect is the rule and measure of things, the truth of

these things consists in their conformity with the divine intellect. Similarly, our works are called just according as they are in conformity with the divine law. But God's justice establishes things in the order conformable to the rule of His wisdom, which is the law of His justice. Therefore God's justice is fittingly called truth.

Reply to first objection. Justice, as to the law that governs, resides in the intellect; but God's knowledge is the cause of things in so far as His will is joined to it, and command is an act in which the intellect and will concur.

Reply to second objection. The truth of justice is thus distinct from God's veracity, but they are interrelated.

COROLLARIES

THE PRINCIPAL ACTS OF DIVINE JUSTICE

There are three acts: (1) to give everyone his due in accordance with his nature and condition; (2) to inflict the punishment that is due to sins; (3) to assign the reward that is due to one's merits. This second aspect of justice is called vindictive, and the third remunerative.

1) Divine justice is the just distribution of natural goods and supernatural helps, without which it is impossible for any creature to attain its end. St. Thomas says on this point: "As then the proper order displayed in ruling a family or any kind of multitude evinces justice of this kind in the ruler, so the order of the universe, which is seen both in things of nature and in things of the will, shows forth the justice of God."

This is affirmed by Christ our Lord in His Sermon on the Mount: "Do not be solicitous for your life, what you shall eat; nor for your body, what you shall put on. Is not the life more than the meat, and the body more than the raiment? Behold the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not you of much more value than they? . . . For your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things. Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you." If there is a just distribution of material goods, far more so must there be a just distribution of spiritual goods: "Is not the life more than the meat?"

Nevertheless, without injustice on God's part, there is great inequality of both natural and supernatural conditions. The inequality of natural

conditions in the human race already existed in the state of original justice, for, as St. Thomas says: “Man is naturally a social being, and so in the state of innocence he would have led a social life. Now a social life cannot exist among a number of people unless under the presidency of one to look after the common good; for many, as such, seek many things, whereas one attends only to one. . . . The natural order of things requires this; and thus did God make man.” Similarly, there are hierarchies among the angels, for some dominate others. In fact, inequality among creatures, which is necessary so as to make them specifically different, is required for the fitting manifestation of divine goodness, and this cannot be sufficiently made manifest by one creature or by several that are absolutely equal. Thus no one collects a thousand copies of Virgil of the same edition and binding for his library. St. Thomas shows farther on that the universe would not be perfect if only one grade of goodness were found in things. Similarly, the plant would not be perfect if all its parts consisted of flowers, nor would the human body be perfect if all its parts were equal in dignity to the eye. Thus God has established inequality among creatures, and also inequality of conditions in the human race.

But after original sin, as also by reason of the concupiscence of the flesh, the eyes, and the pride of life, this inequality of natural conditions has been very much increased and accentuated, so that some are extremely wealthy and others are in dire need and distress. Hence Christ said: “But woe to you that are rich, for you have your consolation; woe to you that are filled, for you shall hunger; woe to you that now laugh, for you shall mourn and weep.” These words are a condemnation of the inordinate love of riches. The Gospel also records what our Lord said about the wicked rich man and the good beggar Lazarus.

Wherefore, among the signs of His Messianic office, Jesus declares that “the poor have the gospel preached to them”; and in the beginning of His Sermon on the Mount, in proclaiming the evangelical beatitudes, He shows that inequality of natural conditions is not infrequently compensated by inequality of graces inasmuch as “God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.” Thus He says: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. . . . Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

In this we see clearly that the highest degree of distributive justice is joined indeed to mercy, and this justice is also expressed in the Magnificat in these words: “He hath put down the mighty from their seat and hath exalted the humble. He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He hath sent empty away.”

This distributive justice as regards the distribution of graces is clearly seen in this, that, as St. Augustine says, “God commands not impossibilities, but, by commanding both admonishes thee to do what thou art able, and to ask for what thou art not able (to do).” Thus the common saying: To one who does what he can (with the help of actual grace) God does not refuse to give (habitual) grace. Thus God gives sufficient grace to all adults, by which the fulfillment of an actually pressing obligation is made really possible. The efficacious grace is offered to us in the sufficient grace, just as the fruit is contained in the flower; but if man resists this sufficient grace, he deserves to be deprived of the efficacious grace by which de facto he could have effectively observed God’s commandments.

Hence God’s distributive justice is preserved intact even as regards infidels, as Pius IX declared in the following statement: “It is known to us and to you that those who labor under invincible ignorance concerning our most holy religion and who, diligently observing the natural law and its precepts that are engraved in the hearts of all by God, and being ready to obey Him, lead an honest and upright life, can, through the operative power of divine light and grace, attain eternal life, since God, who clearly intuits, scrutinizes, and knows the minds, impulses, thoughts, and habits of all, because of His supreme goodness and clemency, by no means will allow anyone to be punished eternally who was not guilty of any willful offense.” Similarly, St. Thomas had said: “If anyone, brought up as a savage, were guided by the light of natural reason in seeking good and avoiding evil, it must be held as most certain that God would make known to such a person either by an interior revelation what must be believed, or else He would direct someone to preach the faith to such a person, just as He sent Peter to Cornelius.”

All these things pertain to distributive justice whereby God distributes to all creatures what is necessary so that they can attain their end. Thus God sees to it that the adult is not without the necessary help to escape damnation and, if such a person is lost, it is his own fault.

Not all indeed received five talents, for some received only one; but if they did not resist this divine grace, they would receive many others. Not infrequently, as we said, it is by inequality of graces that there is compensation on God's part for this inequality of natural conditions, especially so in the case of poverty. Hence in these cases not only does distributive justice remain unimpaired, but it is often wonderfully made manifest.

2) Another act of distributive justice is to inflict the punishment that is due to sin. Thus the Gospel records the following words as being addressed to the wicked rich man after his death: "Son, remember that thou didst receive good things in thy lifetime, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted; and thou art tormented." As St. Thomas clearly explains: "Whatever rises up against an order to which it belongs, is put down by that order or by the principle thereof. . . . (But) whoever sins, . . . acts against reason, and against human divine law. Wherefore he incurs a threefold punishment; one, inflicted by himself, namely, remorse of conscience; another, inflicted by man; and a third, inflicted by God, as the just judge who, without any passion, inflicts the punishment through love of His justice and infinite goodness that must be loved above all things. Thus vindictive justice belongs properly or formally to God.

In this there is most just retribution, which is according to the proportion between the punishment and the sin. Thus venial sin is punished by temporal punishment, and mortal sin that is not forgiven in this life, but that has become irreparable through the sin of final impenitence, is justly punished by eternal punishment, for as St. Thomas says: "Sin incurs a debt of punishment through disturbing an order. But the effect remains so long as the cause remains. Therefore so long as the disturbance of the order remains, the debt of punishment must remain also. . . . Consequently, if a sin destroys the principle of the order whereby man's will is subject to God, there will be a deordination such as to be considered in itself irreparable, although it is possible to repair this by the power of God. Now the principle of this order is the last end to which man adheres by charity. Therefore whatever sins turn man away from God, so as to destroy charity, considered in itself, they incur a debt of eternal punishment."

If therefore these sins are not forgiven before death, final impenitence, supervening upon this irreparable perversion of the order, is made permanent, and it is then de facto punished by eternal punishment.

Proportionate contrition and satisfaction are required in strictest justice for a deliberate sin, and when these are wanting punishment is inflicted so that the order may be preserved.

It is a manifestation of mercy, however, that sinners who have many times fallen into mortal sin, frequently and repeatedly turn again to God; but they must fear lest, falling again into mortal sin, it may never be forgiven, because they did not know the time of God's visitation. This concerns the question of the inscrutable mystery of predestination. Nevertheless we must always hope in God's mercy.

3) Finally, there is another act of divine justice, which consists in the admirable assignment of rewards, and these in just proportion.

Thus we read: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the meek, blessed are they that mourn, blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice, blessed are the merciful, blessed are the clean of heart, blessed are the peacemakers, blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." But there must be purity of intention and a certain proportion between merit and reward. Therefore our Lord says: "Take heed that you do not your justice before men, to be seen by them; otherwise you shall not have a reward of your Father who is in heaven." In these words our Lord admonishes us to strive for the simplicity of a pure intention. Hence He says of the hypocrites who give alms so as to be honored by men, that "they have received their reward," namely, human praise. On the contrary, "that thy alms may be in secret; and thy Father who seeth in secret, will repay thee."

God's mercy and justice both intervene here in accordance with the following text from St. Paul: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. As to the rest, there is laid up for me a crown of justice, which the Lord, the just judge, will render to me in that day; and not only to me, but to them also that love His coming." And the degree of the light of glory will correspond to the degree of charity in each of the blessed.

THIRD ARTICLE

WHETHER MERCY CAN BE ATTRIBUTED TO GOD

State of the question. The difficulty is that mercy seems to be a kind of sorrow. But there is no sorrow in God. Moreover, it seems that mercy is a relaxation of justice. But God cannot remit what appertains to His justice; for He cannot deny Himself. Hence it seems that mercy is only metaphorically in God, just as anger is.

Yet the answer is: Mercy belongs properly or formally to God.

1) It is of faith, as attested by many texts in Holy Scripture and by the common interpretation of the Church, although there is no special and solemn definition on this point that is already most certain.

The following are some of the texts from Holy Scripture: “The Lord is compassionate and merciful, longsuffering and plenteous in mercy.” “The mercies of the Lord I will sing forever.” “Show forth Thy wonderful mercies; Thou who savest them that trust in Thee.” “From the morning watch even until night, let Israel hope in the Lord. Because with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him plentiful redemption.” In the psalms and the prophetical books often the same three ideas are found inseparable, namely, man in his misery invoking God’s mercy that the glory of God may be made manifest. Thus we read: “Help us, O God, our Savior; and for the glory of Thy name, O Lord, deliver us and forgive us our sins for Thy name’s sake.” “We have sinned . . . and trespassed in all things . . . ; but deal with us according to Thy meekness and according to the multitude of Thy mercies. And deliver us according to Thy wonderful works, and give glory to Thy name, O Lord.” Thus the prophets see that God’s mercy in its effect is the highest manifestation of His goodness and omnipotence. In fact, they say: “The earth, O Lord, is full of Thy mercy.” The ideal of this revelation is reached in the following text of the New Testament: “For God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting.” Thus mercy was the motive of the incarnation. St. Paul often speaks of the riches of God’s mercy and grace, as in the following text: “God, who is rich in mercy, for His exceeding charity wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together in Christ” God’s mercy toward the children of Israel is described at length in the Old Testament, and the mercy of Christ, the good Shepherd, is taught in all the parables, as in the parable of the prodigal son, and throughout the Gospel.

But it must be shown by a theological argument that what is formally meant by mercy implies no imperfection, and, as St. Thomas says, “is

especially to be attributed to God." This is clearly shown in the argumentative part of the article.

The holy doctor distinguishes in human mercy toward those who are in misery between being affected with sorrow at the misery of another and dispelling the misery of this other. But this sorrow, by reason of the subject of this sorrow, constitutes the material part of mercy; whereas, on the other hand, by reason of the object of this sorrow, the inclination of the will to alleviate the misery of another constitutes the formal element in sorrow.

But, although sorrow over the misery of another does not belong to God, to dispel the misery of another implies no imperfection, and belongs especially to God. For defects are not removed except by the perfection of some kind of goodness. But the primary source of goodness is God, who is essential goodness. Therefore mercy, according to its formal signification, belongs properly and not merely metaphorically to God.

Mercy in this sense is a most beautiful example of the analogy of proper proportionality. There is a relation of proportion between God's merciful attitude toward sinners imploring His pardon and that of man toward those who are in misery, all imperfections being removed, such as sorrow or a feeling of compassion.

In like manner, St. Thomas says in discussing the virtue of mercy: "A virtue may take precedence of other virtues in two ways: first, in itself; secondly, in comparison with its subject. In itself, mercy takes precedence of other virtues, for it belongs to mercy to be bountiful to others, and, what is more, to succor others in their wants, which pertains chiefly to one who stands above. Hence mercy is accounted as being proper to God, and therein His omnipotence and goodness are declared to be chiefly manifested.

On the other hand, with regard to its subject, mercy is not the greatest virtue, unless that subject is greater than all others, surpassed by none and excelling all, since for him that has anyone above him it is better to be united to that which is above than to supply the defect of that which is beneath." Hence in us the most sublime of all virtues is charity, which unites us with God, but "of all the virtues which relate to our neighbor, mercy is the greatest."

St. Thomas most correctly distinguishes between the virtue of mercy and the emotion of commiseration, which is a praiseworthy inclination of the sensitive appetite, and is not a virtue. So also there is a distinction between

the virtue of chastity and a sense of shame; but chastity implies imperfection, whereas the virtue of mercy does not. In fact, as St. Thomas remarks, if the weak and timid are especially inclined to feeling compassion for others, on account of the possibility of suffering, in like manner the virtue of mercy pertains especially to the perfect, who so excel in goodness and fortitude that they can dispel the misery of others. Thus mercy belongs especially to God. “God takes pity on us through love alone, inasmuch as He loves us as belonging to Him.” Consequently, there is neither anthropomorphism nor sentimentality in this, but purely revealed truth that has been theologically explained. The motive of divine mercy is not properly the misery of the creature (this being the matter about which it is concerned), but it is God’s goodness to be made manifest in the alleviation of a person’s misery.

First doubt. What is the difference between God’s mercy, goodness, justice, and liberality?

Reply. As stated in the body of the article, “to bestow perfections appertains not only to God’s goodness, but also to His justice, liberality, and mercy; yet under different aspects. The communicating of perfections, absolutely considered, appertains to goodness. But, in so far as perfections are given to things in proportion, the bestowal of them belongs to justice. In so far as God does not bestow them for His own use, but only on account of His goodness, it belongs to liberality. In so far as perfection given to things by God expels defects, it belongs to mercy.” What is here said explains the doctrine of the following article.

Second doubt. How is it that mercy which forgives sin that has been committed, is not a relaxation of vindictive justice that must inflict the punishment for sin?

The reply to the second objection answers this as follows: “God acts mercifully, not indeed by going against His justice, but by doing something more than justice. Thus a man who pays another person two hundred pieces of money, though owing him only one hundred, does nothing against justice, but acts liberally or mercifully. The case is the same with one who pardons an offense committed against him, for in remitting it he may be said to bestow a gift. Hence the Apostle calls remission a forgiving. “Forgiving one another even as God hath forgiven you in Christ.” Hence it is clear that mercy does not destroy justice, but in a sense is the fullness thereof. And thus it is said: “Mercy exalteth itself above judgment.”

I insist. But the human judge is in justice bound to inflict the penalty for the crime, and he cannot show mercy by remitting it. Therefore neither can God do so, if justice belongs formally and properly to Him.

Reply. I distinguish the antecedent: The subordinate judge cannot, of course, without violating justice, let the offense go unpunished; but the supreme legislator can do so, and this right is a privilege that belongs either to the king of a country, or to the president of a republic, that he can pardon criminals imploring his mercy. Thus the goodness of either the king or the president is strikingly made manifest, and the common good is preserved intact as well as the king's honor. St. Thomas explains this very well: "Even this justice (which exacts reparation for sin) depends on the divine will, requiring satisfaction for sin from the human race. But if He had willed to free man from sin without any satisfaction, He would not have acted against justice. For a judge, while preserving justice, cannot pardon the offense without imposing a penalty, for he must punish the offense committed against another, for instance, against another man, or against the state, or any prince in higher authority. But God has no one higher than Himself, for He is the sovereign and common good of the whole universe. Consequently, if He forgives sin, which has the formality of fault in that it is committed against Himself, He wrongs no one; just as anyone else, overlooking a personal trespass, without demanding satisfaction, acts mercifully and not unjustly. And so David exclaimed when he sought mercy: "To Thee only have I sinned" (Ps. 50: 6), as if to say: "Thou canst pardon me without injustice." This means that the exercise of God's justice and mercy depends on His free will. Therefore St. Augustine says: "Why He draws this (sinner) and not another, seek not to judge, if thou dost not wish to err." On this point St. Thomas says: "The reason for the predestination of some, and the reprobation of others, must be sought for in the goodness of God." This remains for us a mystery, namely, how infinite justice, mercy, and supreme liberty are intimately reconciled in the eminence of the Deity. Now in this article it is shown that God's mercy in sparing sinners is not a relaxation of His vindictive justice, but transcends it, for, as the Apostle says, "mercy exalteth itself above judgment." But how some divine perfection can in a certain way excel another, will be discussed in the following article and in the corollaries on divine mercy.

FOURTH ARTICLE

WHETHER IN EVERY WORK OF GOD THERE ARE MERCY AND JUSTICE

State of the question. The purpose of this article is to explain the scriptural text: “All the ways of the Lord are mercy and truth.”

This difficulty arises chiefly for the following reasons: (1) Some works of God are attributed to mercy, as the justification of the ungodly; and others are attributed to justice, as the damnation of the wicked. (2) Many just persons are afflicted in this world, and this does not appear to be just. (3) The works of justice and mercy presuppose creation, which does not manifest these divine perfections.

Yet the answer is: “All the ways of the Lord are mercy and truth.” It must be observed that this assertion is verified, if mercy is taken in the broad sense as meaning the removal of any kind of defect, but not if it refers to mercy only in the strict sense of the term, as stated in the body of this article and in the reply to the fourth objection.

The reason is that the work of divine justice always presupposes the work of mercy, and has its foundation in this latter. For nothing is due to creatures (for instance, either help or reward or punishment) except on account of something pre-existing in them. In the final analysis, it must be because of something that depends solely on the goodness of the divine will that has gratuitously created and ordained us to a supernatural end. Thus we see that mercy (at least in the broad sense) is the primary source of all God’s works.

First corollary. It is stated in the body of the article that “the power of this primary source of all God’s works remains in all that follows therefrom, and operates indeed with greater force, just as the influence of the first cause is more intense than that of second causes.” Thus all God’s works have their foundation in His love for creatures, and it is manifested first by mercy, either in the broad or in the strict sense of the term, rather than by justice, which may be considered the branch in this tree of God’s love; whereas mercy is, as it were, the principal part of the tree, its trunk, so to speak, which comes directly from the root. Nor is it to be wondered at that a certain order prevails between the infinite perfections of God; for, as the divine will is logically preceded by the divine intellect, so also mercy and justice presuppose God’s goodness and love. But mercy is the first manifestation of love, whereas justice is, so to speak, its second manifestation. In mercy it is God’s goodness as self-diffusive that is

manifested, whereas it is especially in vindictive justice that the inalienable right of supreme goodness to be loved above all things is made manifest. Thus mercy is the primary source of God's works. St. Thomas says: "It is more proper to God to have mercy and to spare, than to punish."

Second corollary. In the argumentative part of this article occurs the following statement: "For this reason God out of the abundance of His goodness bestows upon creatures what is due to them more bountifully than is proportionate to their deserts: since less would suffice for preserving the order of justice than what the divine goodness confers; because between creatures and God's goodness there can be no proportion." Thus the psalmist says: "The earth is full of the mercy of the Lord." God gives generally to all creatures more than is strictly necessary for the attainment of their end; for He gives in the majority of cases what is befitting for their well-being, in the material, moral, and spiritual orders. Thus in all God's works mercy is the result of His superabundant good; but justice results from His operation, since He gives what is proportionately due to each.

Reply to first objection. In the damnation of the reprobate it is justice, indeed, that is more in evidence; nevertheless mercy is made manifest in it, as somewhat alleviating the punishment, because the reprobates are punished short of what is deserved.

Reply to third objection. Prior to the works of mercy and justice taken in their strict sense, the ideas of these perfections are in some manner preserved in creation, inasmuch as beings are, as it were, mercifully changed from non-existence to existence, and justice is seen in the production of these beings in a manner that accords with the divine goodness and wisdom, particularly in sparing and having mercy. Therefore the psalmist says: "Help us, O God, our Savior, and for the glory of Thy name, O Lord, deliver us; and forgive us our sins for Thy name's sake." Thus in this prayer, the sinner in his profound misery invokes God's most sublime attribute of mercy, not only that his misery may be alleviated, but also that God may be glorified, and that His goodness and omnipotence may be made manifest. Likewise, the Scripture says: "We have sinned and committed iniquity . . . but deal with us according to the multitude of Thy mercies, O Lord." Anyone who prays in this manner with humility, piety, and perseverance, is always heard. The abyss of misery invokes the abyss of mercy, and God's goodness and omnipotence are made manifest.

2) In so far as God in His mercy bestows upon creatures more than is strictly necessary, punishes short of what is deserved, and rewards beyond what is deserved, in these three acts His mercy in a certain manner transcends His justice.

A. God in the majority of cases bestows upon creatures more than is strictly necessary. Thus He could have created us merely in the natural order; yet de facto He raised us to the supernatural order. After Adam's sin, God could have left us in the state of fallen nature, or He could have afforded us some relief by simply forgiving the sin on certain conditions, this being announced to us through some prophet. As a matter of fact, "God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son." "Mercy and truth have met each other." "Mercy exalteth itself above judgment." Christ manifested His love for us even by dying on the Cross. Moreover, of His superabundant mercy He gave us baptismal grace or the grace of regeneration, and actual graces to persevere, and also the Holy Eucharist and other sacraments. In all this it is quite clear that God in His mercy bestows upon creatures more than is strictly required by rigorous justice.

B. In like manner, as stated in this article, God punishes short of what is deserved. For He often reinstates sinners who throughout their lives have repeatedly fallen into sin. He raises up souls to make reparation for them, and as St. Thomas observes: "It is a remarkable sign of God's mercy when He punishes sinners in this life, in accordance with the saying of St. Augustine: Burn, cut here, provided Thou spare in eternity." Even the damned, as stated in this article, are punished short of what they deserve.

C. God also rewards beyond what justice demands, and of His fullness we have received graces beyond our merits. Certainly the first grace of justification, which is the principle of merit, is not the object of merit; and this also applies to the grace of final perseverance, which means to die in the state of grace. The same is to be said of sacramental graces. Especially so is the nourishing grace which we receive in Holy Communion which is not the object of merit, for it is given without being merited by us; and, according to God's dispensation, every Communion, by increasing charity in us, if there is no venial sin of negligence on our part, ought to dispose us for a more substantially fervent Communion the following day.

God's mercy is especially made manifest toward the laborers in the Lord's vineyard who came to work at the last hour, shortly before their death, and toward those in whom are found verified these words of

Scripture: “Whosoever shall give to drink to one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, amen I say to you, he shall not lose his reward.”

But the splendor of mercy will be made manifest in behalf of those to whom the Lord will say: “Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry, and you gave Me to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me to drink. . . . As long as you did it to one of these, My least brethren, you did it to Me.”

This infinite mercy of God is the foundation of our hope, and is a most remarkable example for us of mercy and compassion toward our neighbor, being in agreement with the Gospel, which says: “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.” “This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.”

Finally, how are infinite mercy and justice intimately reconciled? There is inexorable justice as regards the damned, who, besides, do not ask for forgiveness. It is only by directly seeing the eminent Deity in which all the divine perfections are so united as not to be in the least destructive of one another, that we shall know how justice and mercy are reconciled. Hence Pius IX says: “When, freed from the trammels of this corporeal life, we see God as He is, we shall certainly understand how close and beautiful is the interrelation between divine mercy and justice.” Then, as stated farther on, we shall clearly understand the teaching of the Church when it says that “the gifts of heavenly grace are by no means wanting to those who sincerely will and ask to be directed anew by this light.” Thus, although the elect are by God’s mercy more loved and helped than others, yet for all it is true to say that God does not command impossibilities, but by commanding both admonishes us to do what we are able, and to ask for what we are not able to do. Thus in the obscurity of faith, especially in infused contemplation, the reconciliation of infinite mercy, justice, and supreme liberty in the eminence of the Deity is in a certain manner attained. Yet as long as we are in this life we always make use of limited analogical concepts, and these represent God’s spiritual attributes after the manner of a mosaic, the little colored stones of which cannot express its charm of appeal. Our concepts of mercy, justice, and liberty are too much disconnected, and not enough united that we may know what properly constitutes the Deity.

CHAPTER XXII

QUESTION 22

THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD

HAVING considered all that relates to the will, we must proceed to those things which have relation to both intellect and will. Of this kind, however, is providence, and predestination is its more exalted part. There is resemblance, by way of analogy, between providence and our virtue of prudence, to which providence belongs with reference to the future as fully explained elsewhere by St. Thomas when he says: “Providence (as the name signifies) implies a certain relation of one who is distant from things that occur in time and that must be directed to their ends.” For providence is an orderly direction in the mind, the direction to their ends of those things that are to be done.

The doctrine of St. Thomas on providence has been explained at length by us in other works. Therefore we now make some brief observations only about the principal points. St. Thomas’ division of this question is in four articles. (1) Whether providence can suitably be attributed to God, in which the questions as to the existence and nature of providence are solved. (2) Whether everything is subject to the providence of God, or what the scope of providence is. (3) Whether God has immediate providence over everything, the answer to which will be in the affirmative, and thus there is a difference between providence and divine government. (4) Whether providence imposes any necessity on things foreseen. The solution of this doubt will be the corollary to the doctrine as already set forth on this point.

State of the question. The difficulty arises from the following facts: (1) “Providence” denotes a certain part of our prudence in which there is always imperfection, that is, doubt and uncertainty; (2) providence is concerned with existing things that are not eternal. Therefore it does not appear to be anything eternal. There are other difficulties arising especially

from the existence of physical and moral evil in the world. These difficulties are pointed out by St. Thomas at the beginning of the second article, for he says: We see many evils existing. Either, then, God cannot prevent these, and thus is not omnipotent, or else He does not have care for everything." This objection belongs properly to the question of the scope of providence, and is explained more fully in another work.

It is affirmed in this article that providence is to be attributed to God, and very many passages from Holy Scripture and the declarations of the Church show that this doctrine is of faith.

In the Old Testament, Judith prays as follows: "All Thy ways are prepared, and in Thy providence Thou hast placed Thy judgments. . . . The prayer of the humble and the meek have always pleased Thee. O God of the heavens, Creator of the waters, and Lord of the whole creation, hear me a poor wretch making supplication to Thee, and presuming of Thy mercy." The Book of Wisdom says: "God made the little and the great, and He hath equally care of all." "Wisdom reacheth from end to end mightily, and ordereth all things sweetly." "Thou has ordered all things in number, measure, and weight." "There is no other God but Thou, who hast care of all." Of those crossing the sea in ships, it says: "Thy providence, O Father, governeth it; for Thou hast made a way even in the sea, and a most sure path even among the waves, showing that Thou art able to save out of all things."

The prayer of petition presupposes faith in divine providence, which extends to the least of our free acts. Hence Mardochai prays in the following manner: "O Lord, Lord almighty King, for all things are in Thy power, and there is none that can resist Thy will, if Thou determine to save Israel." It is in this way, too, that Queen Esther prays and is heard. Never did even the nobler minded among the Greek philosophers reach such a degree of certainty about divine providence, which extends even to the least details. Again, in Ecclesiasticus we read: "As the potter's clay is in his hand, . . . so man is in the hand of Him who made him; and He will render to him according to His judgment." And Isaias says: "The Lord of hosts hath decreed, and who can disannul it? And His hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it away?"

The psalms declare the wonders of God's providence toward the Israelites, freeing them from captivity. Thus we read: "When Israel went out of Egypt." "Direct me in Thy truth, and teach me; for Thou art God my

Savior." "The Lord ruleth me: and I shall want nothing. He hath set me in a place of pasture. . . . He hath led me on the paths of justice, for His name's sake. For though I should walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I will fear no evils, for Thou art with me." "But I have put my trust in Thee, O Lord. I said: Thou art my God. My lots are in Thy hands. Deliver me out of the hands of my enemies, and from them that persecute me. Make Thy face to shine upon Thy servant: save me in Thy mercy."

There is a certain aspect of God's providence that is most manifest from the order prevailing in the world. Thus the psalmist says: "The heavens show forth the glory of God: and the firmament declareth the works of His hands." But on the other hand, as shown in the Book of Job, there are certain and indeed most sublime ways of Providence that are unsearchable, such as the dispositions of Providence toward Joseph, the son of Jacob, when God permits him to be sold by his brothers. Then the purpose of these ways is made clear, when Joseph says to his brothers: "Not by your counsel was I sent hither, but by the will of God: who hath made me . . . governor in all the land of Egypt." The inaccessible height of Providence is also apparent in the following text: "Thy justice is as the mountains of God: Thy judgments are a great deep." But this greater obscurity is owing to the fact that He is far too luminous for our intellect; for God's providence in itself is light inaccessible, and under the guidance of this light all things co-operate unto good. Hence the Scripture says: "Thou art great, O Lord, forever, and Thy kingdom is unto all ages. For Thou scourgest and Thou savest: Thou leadest down to hell, and bringest up again, and there is none that can escape Thy hand. . . . He hath chastised us for our iniquities: and He will save us for His own mercy." The whole history of the Israelites is ordained by God's providence to prepare them for the coming of the promised Savior. The history of Susanna is for this same end.

God's providence together with His goodness and omnipotence is frequently mentioned in the New Testament. Thus our Lord says: "Behold the birds of the air: for they neither sow nor do they reap nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not you of much more value than they?" It is an a fortiori argument, the implication being that if God's care extends to the smallest things, far more so is He concerned with the life of the soul. Hence our Lord concludes: "For your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things. Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you." And

again: “The very hairs of your head are all numbered.” The parables of the laborers in the vineyard and of the talents contain this same doctrine. “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father from heaven give the good Spirit to them that ask Him!” St. Peter says: “Be you humbled, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in the time of visitation; casting all your care upon Him, for He hath care of you.”

All these texts declare that providence is evident by reason of the order prevailing in the world and the life of the just. On the other hand, there remains the profound mystery expressed by St. Paul in the following words: “How incomprehensible are His judgments and how unsearchable His ways!” This mystery applies especially to the tribulations the just endure, and the iniquity perpetrated by evil persons, both of which are permitted by God for a greater good and which in this life often remain hidden.

Some of the Fathers wrote especially about providence. Thus St. John Chrysostom wrote a number of treatises concerning the providential purpose and advantage of suffering in the lives of the just.

St. Augustine wrote a book explaining the action of divine providence in its dealings with human beings. There are two cities in the world, which at present are intermixed, but which at the end will be separated. There is the city of evil in which love of self finally leads to hatred of God, and there is the city of God, in which the love of God finally leads to contempt of self.

From the definitions and declarations of the Church it is evident that God certainly foreknew from eternity, and immutably preordained, all future things, yet it does not therefore follow that this makes it absolutely necessary, for all things that come into being. God governs by His providence both visible and invisible things, truly acting upon the world and man. He does not will evil things just as He wills good things, only permitting sin. He does not have to obey the devil, neither does He communicate His omnipotence to us, nor is He subject to us, and He ordains all things for the manifestation of His goodness. Hence the course of man’s life is not under the controlling influence of the stars, nor is man ruled by fate.

Among these definitions, the following declaration of the Vatican Council deserves special mention: “God protects and governs by His providence all things which He has made, reaching from end to end

mightily, and ordering all things sweetly. For all things are naked and open to His eyes, even those which are yet to be by the free action of creatures."

In the body of the article St. Thomas proves the existence of providence, which is a revealed doctrine. This he does by means of a theological argument, and at the same time he defines providence. He presupposes its quasi-nominal definition, according to which providence is a part of prudence, which orders different things to the attainment of their end. Thus the common saying is that it belongs to the governor of the state to provide for its grain supplies, and to the father of the family for necessities of life. This common notion of providence can be attributed to God only analogically; but now the question is whether it is to be attributed to Him analogically and in the strict sense, or only analogically and metaphorically.

The answer is that providence is predicated analogically and properly of God, and it is proved as follows.

In every effect produced by an intellectual agent, the type or idea of this effect pre-exists in such agent. But God is the cause of all created good by His intellect and hence of the order of things to their end, particularly their ultimate end. Therefore the type of the order of things to their end, which is called providence, in accordance with its nominal definition, pre-exists in God. Thus providence is suitably attributed to God analogically and properly, as it implies no imperfection.

The major of this argument is self-evident and, moreover, is equivalently revealed. But the minor is revealed, and is also proved by philosophy. Thus this argument, by reason of its twofold aspect, belongs to either theology or philosophy. Therefore providence is suitably attributed analogically and properly to God, just as intelligence, will, and the free act of creating are. To deny God's providence would be to deny that He is intelligent, or that He is God.

This proof is quasi a priori, since it presupposes that God is the cause by His intellect; quasi a priori, I say, because providence is not immediately deduced from God's nature, but presupposes that God most freely willed to create.

A philosophical a posteriori proof can also be given of providence, reasoning from the order prevailing in the world. This proof corresponds exactly to the fifth way by which St. Thomas proves God's existence, especially as the supreme Designer. This proof is reduced to the following syllogism: things which lack intelligence do not tend toward their end

unless they are directed to it by some intelligent being, as the arrow is shot to its mark by the archer; but we see that things which lack intelligence act for an end, and this is evident from their acting always, or nearly always, in the same way, so as to obtain the best result; therefore some intelligent being exists by whom all natural things are directed to their end, and this being we call God.

It must be remarked that St. Thomas in this fifth proof, just as in our argument, insists that the order of things toward their end pertains to the good of the universe, of which God is the author. As we stated above, Aristotle splendidly formulated and explained the minor of this fifth proof, namely, that natural agents operate for an end, but he did not grasp the concept of creation, especially of a most free creation from nothing for the manifestation of the orderly direction of divine goodness. Hence he did not acquire the right idea of divine providence.

In the Middle Ages the Averroists, who deny a free action, reduced providence to some general preordination that extends only to the general laws of the world, but not to particulars.

CONFIRMATION OF THIS CONCLUSION BY THE SOLUTION OF THE DIFFICULTIES PRESENTED IN THIS ARTICLE

Reply to first objection. Although to take counsel about doubtful matters does not belong to God, nevertheless to give a command as to the ordering of things toward an end does belong properly to God, because it implies no imperfection.

Reply to second objection. Providence is, properly speaking, the reason of order (or the ordering) of things to their end, whereas divine government is the execution of this order. Thus providence is eternal, whereas divine government is predicated of God in time, since it implies a relation to already existing things.

Reply to third objection. Providence, as the word denotes, as being an ordering of things, is in the divine intellect, but it presupposes the willing of the end. “Nobody gives a precept about things done for an end, unless he wills that end, as St. Thomas remarks in this reply. Thus human prudence presupposes the moral virtues, which direct the appetite aright concerning the end. In this reply it is already evident that for St. Thomas, God, like every wise person, first wills the end before He wills the means for the end.

This does not mean, indeed, that there are two acts of the will in God, for as stated above, “He wills this to be as means to that, but He does not will this on account of that.”

The solution of the objection arising from the existence of evil in the world is given in the following article of this question.

First doubt. In what act of the intellect does providence, strictly speaking, or at least principally, consist? What acts of the will does it presuppose?

The replies to the first and second objections of this article make it clear that providence consists, at least principally, in the act of the intellect that is called commanding or giving orders, as prudence goes in us. It presupposes two acts of the will, namely, the intention of the end and the choice of means for the end.

There are virtually several acts that concur in divine providence, just as there are really several acts that concur in human providence. (1) God’s will, directed by His wisdom, intends as the end in view the manifestation of His goodness ad extra; (2) the divine intellect judges concerning the most fitting means for the attainment of the end. On this point, the Salmanticenses correctly state that among all possible dispositions of things, this one is known as possible by God’s knowledge of simple intelligence, namely, the disposition in which there is subordination of nature, grace, and glory along with permission of original sin to the hypostatic union (for this constitutes some possible world); (3) this will accepts or chooses the means for the manifestation of divine goodness; (4) in virtue of this efficacious intention and choice, the intellect eternally commands that these means be made use of in time. Providence consists formally in this efficacious command, for, as St. Thomas says in this article, “it orders and gives a command as to the ordering of things toward an end,” and “nobody gives a precept about things done for an end, unless he wills that end.” This statement demands the attention of those who say that Scotus was the first among theologians who, on the subject of predestination, said that he who wills in an orderly manner, wills the end before willing the means to the end.

Objection. Once there is a choice of something by the divine will, then there is no difficulty in its execution, for nobody resists God’s will. Therefore command is superfluous, and hence providence finds its ultimate explanation not in command but in choice.

Reply. I deny the consequent: for we do not posit command in God because of some difficulty to be overcome, but because the means as eligible and the means as possible of execution are objects different in concept. The means actually chosen never would be made use of, unless the command were present to direct the execution of the means. Hence there are two virtually distinct acts in God. In fact, whereas deliberation in the descendent order starts from the intention of the ultimate end to choice of the least of means, command, in the reverse order, by directing the execution of the means, rises from the choice of the least of means to the attainment of the ultimate end; for the end is first in intention and last in execution.

Divine government, however, is the execution in time of the ordering of things under the direction of the aforesaid command which is eternal. Thus St. Thomas said that the reason of order in things is eternal, whereas the execution of this order is temporal.

Second doubt. Whether God's practical knowledge, which is the cause of things, is distinct from His providence.

Reply. St. Thomas shows that God's providence is distinct from His practical knowledge, because knowledge concerns the end and the means, but providence concerns the means in so far as they are ordered to the end. Providence is also distinct from the eternal law, just as the conclusion is distinct from its principle; for it is by the eternal law that God's providence orders and governs all things. Similarly prudence in us presupposes practical or moral knowledge and the law.

Third doubt. What does providence presuppose on the part of God's will?

Reply. As we already said, it presupposes the willing of the end and the choice of the means. It follows from this that providence presupposes God's love for creatures and two virtues of uncreated love, namely, mercy and justice. Wherefore St. Thomas said in his reply to the third objection of this article that, just as "prudence presupposes the moral virtues, by means of which the appetitive faculty is directed toward good," so it is distinct from art.

Hence the provident God is not only the supreme artificer, or the architect of the universe, but He is also the most holy ordainer of all things and minds to their ultimate end, which is the most holy and most liberal manifestation of His goodness. Thus providence is more than divine art, since it presupposes mercy and justice, just as a man cannot be prudent

unless he is just and benevolent toward other men. But providence, since it presupposes justice and mercy, directs the execution of the works of mercy and justice, just as prudence, since it presupposes the moral virtues, directs the acts of these virtues.

Fourth doubt. Does providence presuppose the antecedent and consequent wills of God?

Reply. It presupposes both wills; for the antecedent will, as stated above, concerns what is good in itself, on first consideration independently of actual circumstances. But since good is not in the mind but in things, and things exist only as they actually are, this antecedent will rests on the condition that it is because of some greater good that the defect in the thing is permitted. On the contrary, the consequent will is concerned with good when all its particular circumstances are considered, and therefore only this will is efficacious. Thus by the antecedent will the merchant in a storm at sea would will to save all his merchandise, but to save his life he de facto and simply wills to cast it into the sea.

Likewise, God wills antecedently that all the fruits of the earth become ripe, unless some greater good prevents this. In Like manner, He wills that all animals find what is necessary for their sustenance, and far more so He wills all men to be saved. But God does not will consequently and efficaciously that all the fruits of the earth become ripe, that all animals actually have what is necessary for their sustenance, that all human beings de facto be saved; but, for a greater good not always known to us, He permits that what is defectible may at times be defective.

Thus we have the answer to the doubt, as to whether providence presupposes both antecedent and consequent wills in God. For it presupposes the efficacious intention of the end of all things in the universe, which is the manifestation of divine goodness by way of liberality, mercy, and justice, and moreover the choice of the most fitting means to this end, namely, the disposition of things in accordance with the orders of nature, grace with permission of original sin, and the hypostatic union. But all this implies God’s antecedent will to save all men, inasmuch as “God commands not impossibilities but, by commanding both admonishes you to do what you are able, and to ask for what you are not able (to do),” as St. Augustine says. It also implies God’s consequent will of effectively leading some, although not all, to their ultimate end. And so we find St. Thomas saying farther on that predestination is a part of providence.

Similarly, as regards the infallibility of divine providence, it follows from what has been said that providence is absolutely infallible even as to the attainment of the end, inasmuch as it presupposes God's consequent or efficacious will; and it is infallible only as regards the ordering of the means to the end and not as regards the attainment of the end, inasmuch as it presupposes only His antecedent will. The Thomists are generally agreed that this constitutes the difference between providence and predestination, which is the teaching of St. Thomas. For it is evident that the efficacy of providence, in the act of command, depends, in the attaining of the end, on the efficacy of the willing or intending of the end.

Fifth doubt. How does natural providence differ from supernatural providence?

Reply. There is only one providence in God; nevertheless it can be considered under different aspects on the part of its objects. (1) There is providence in its most universal or complete aspect, which consists in the ordering of all beings to the end for which the universe was created, which is the manifestation of God's goodness. (2) Providence may be considered in its relation to particular ends, and thus it is called either natural or supernatural, the supernatural being either ordinary or extraordinary. Thus providence is called natural in so far as it is concerned with natural things, which are ordered by providence in its most universal aspect to supernatural things and to Christ.

But such particular ends are not always efficaciously willed, and thus, although all human beings are by God's providence destined for eternal life, yet not all are saved. On the contrary, the most universal end in the creation of the universe is efficaciously intended by God.

From this it does not follow that we must admit a certain antecedent and inefficacious providence. There is but one providence, which presupposes, for many things, a consequent will, and for other things, an antecedent will. This applies proportionately so to human prudence. Thus there is but one prudence in the merchant who, when a storm is threatening, efficaciously commands the casting of his merchandise into the sea for the saving of his life, although at the same time he may will antecedently or conditionally to save his merchandise; in fact, this merchant prudently does all in his power to save it, but afterward he casts it into the sea. Hence it is not surprising that divine providence likewise for many things presupposes a consequent

or efficacious will, and for other things an antecedent or conditional and inefficacious will.

Sixth doubt. How does providence differ from fate?

Reply. As St. Thomas says in explanation of this: “The order given by divine providence to things is called fate by Boethius (De consol., Bk. IV, prosa. 6). Hence as the idea is to the species of the thing, so is providence to fate,” in which fate is taken in a good sense, and not as implying fatalism or absolute determinism, which is a denial of both divine liberty and human liberty.

St. Thomas also remarks that several ancient philosophers were of the opinion that fate is a disposition of the stars under which each one is begotten or born, inasmuch as this disposition of the stars has an influence also on our human actions in things that take place by luck or by chance. To this St. Thomas replies: “It is manifest that a heavenly body acts after the manner of a natural principle,” which is determined to one thing. Hence it does not cause those things that are altogether accidental, such as those things that happen by luck or by chance. Previous to this he had said that “human actions (as being spiritual and free acts) are not subject to the action of heavenly bodies, unless accidentally and indirectly,” as proved above, that is, according to the influence they have upon the organism. But the indifference of judgment remaining intact, or the free judgment of reason, this influence of the stars on our choice, just as the attraction for us of sensible things, is not necessitating. Otherwise fate would have to be taken in the sense of absolute physical determinism.

But, as St. Thomas says, fate can be taken in a good sense, and then it signifies “the very disposition or order of second causes,” to the production of some effects foreseen and ordered by God. Thus we speak nowadays of the physical determinism of the laws of nature, in accordance with a series of connected causes, and besides these laws there is the possibility of miracles, and of various things happening by accident, such as those that happen by luck or chance. “Consequently it does not follow that whatever is subject to the divine will or power, is subject to fate.” Thus we are free in our choices.

So then, in establishing the existence of divine providence, its analogical notion is sufficiently determined by saying that it is “the type of the order of things toward their end, or the type existing in the divine mind of things

ordered toward an end. It is already apparent in what the infallibility of providence consists, and this will be more clearly shown in the next article.

SECOND ARTICLE

WHETHER EVERYTHING IS SUBJECT TO THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD

State of the question. This article is concerned with the scope of providence, whether it extends to all things, even to the least detail and to the moral law. Whether it extends immediately to all things is the point of inquiry in the following article.

St. Thomas also discusses this subject of providence in other works, directing his arguments especially against the Averroists, who were of the opinion that providence does not extend to particulars, but only to general laws.

This article begins by setting forth the state of the question and the many problems it presents. It seems that everything is not subject to divine providence: (1) because many things happen either by hazard or chance; but what happens by chance is not foreseen; (2) because there are many evils in the world, and it seems to follow from this that the omnipotent God does not have care for everything. One meets with this objection throughout the Book of Job and in the ninth chapter of Ecclesiastes. This difficulty made many say that God wills things only in a general way, and that His providence does not extend to details. So said the Deists and to some extent Malebranche. (3) Moreover, many things happen of necessity, and therefore they do not need to be directed by providence. (4) On the other hand, many things happen freely, and, as the Scripture says: “God made man from the beginning, and left him in the hand of his own counsel.” Thus Cicero, for the safeguarding of human liberty, denied the infallibility of God’s foreknowledge and providence. Among modern philosophers, the Socinians and J. Lequier were of this opinion. (5) Finally, the Deists said that material individual things in their smallest details do not come within the scope of providence. All other objections can be reduced to these. Some ancient philosophers admitted three subordinated providences, the highest of which was divine, and did not extend to things in their least detail.

Yet the answer is in the affirmative and is of faith, namely, that all things, even those of least value, are subject to divine providence, so that nothing

happens by chance on God's part.

1) That this conclusion is of faith is evident from many texts of Holy Scripture and several definitions of the Church quoted in the preceding article. It suffices for present purposes to recall the following words of the Vatican Council: "God protects and governs by His providence all things which He has made, reaching from end to end mightily, and ordering all things sweetly" (Wis., 8: 1). "For all things are naked and open to His eyes (Heb. 4: 13), even those which are yet to be by the action of creatures." In like manner, Pope Adrian I says: "God, in His eternal unchangeableness prepared works of mercy and justice. . . . He therefore prepared merits in the justification of human beings . . . and rewards; for the wicked, however. He did not prepare that their wills and deeds be wicked, but He prepared for them just and eternal punishments."

This doctrine concerning the scope of divine providence, which includes even all particular things, is expressed in many texts of Holy Scripture that have already been quoted in the preceding article. Thus Christ teaches that the birds of the air, the lilies of the field, the grass of the field, and the hairs of our head are all subject to divine providence, so that not one of them will fall without our Father's leave. Similarly, concerning our free acts, the Scripture says: "As the potter's clay is in his hand . . . so man is in the hand

of Him that made him." And again: "For it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will." It is foolish for the Christian to say that even some most insignificant act escapes God's providence, and that it happens independently of His will or permission.

Likewise, what we think happens merely by chance is subject to divine providence, for Holy Scripture says: "Lots are cast into the lap, but they are disposed of by the Lord." Also when Joseph, Jacob's son, was sold by his brothers, then cast into prison, and finally was raised to a high position, these things seem to have happened very much by chance; yet they are said to have been according to God's plan. If the merchants who bought Joseph had passed by one hour earlier or later, then this would have changed the entire course of events. But this happened according to the infallible design of Providence, for as Joseph said to his brothers: "Not by your counsel was I sent hither, but by the will of God," and so it is of several other events recorded in Scripture.

The Church Fathers always understood these texts of Holy Scripture as applying to God's universal providence that extends even to the least detail.

Thus true Christians, especially the saints, see providence and the finger of God even in the many insignificant things that happen.

The answer is proved by a theological proof, although it is apart from this revealed. The reasoning of this proof is theological if at least one premise is considered as revealed, and it is philosophical if both premises are considered as evident from the natural light of reason.

Since every agent acts for an end, the ordering of effects toward that end extends as far as the causality of the first agent extends. But the causality of God, who is the first agent, extends to all things, down to particulars and the least details. Therefore it necessarily follows that, inasmuch as all things participate in existence, in so far they are subject to the divine ordination or to providence.

The major is, in the philosophical order, the corollary of the principle of finality, or of the relation of agent to end, for "every agent acts for an end"; every action tends toward an end that is either known or is not known but attained, as the arrow is shot to its mark. This corollary of the principle of formality is indirectly confirmed in this article by the following statement: "Whence it happens that in the effects of an agent something takes place which has no reference toward the end, because the effect comes from a cause other than and outside the intention of the agent." But no created agent can act without being moved to act by God.

The minor. God's causality extends to all things, even particulars and the least details; and since God produces and conserves matter for the multiplication of individuals of every species, it follows that God by His providence just as by His knowledge knows things not only in general but also in particular. As St. Thomas said in this last article just quoted: "God's knowledge extends as far as His causality extends. Hence, as the active power of God extends not only to forms, which are the source of universality, but also to matter (q. 44, a. 2), the knowledge of God must extend to particular things, which are individualized by matter." With far more reason it includes within its scope particular spiritual things.

This proof is most universal, and it indudes God's providence concerning our choices, which positively wills those that are good, and permits those that are evil, as will be more clearly explained. Nevertheless there is no reference in this proof to what we find Molina afterward calling the scientia media by which God would foresee certain conditionally free acts of the future, whose positively free determination would be independent of Him.

But there can be nothing external to God that is not in a relation of causality to God or dependence on Him, except the evil of sin, which is the privation of a good that one ought to have, and which is only permitted by God.

Almost the same proof is given of the universality of providence that extends to particulars even in their least details, for the divine government. Thus, on the part of the agent, for the same reason God is the ruler and cause of things. But God is the cause of the total entity of all beings. Therefore there can be nothing which is not subject to His government. This universality of providence can also be proved from the nature of the end of government. The end of the divine government is the manifestation of divine goodness. But all things have as their end the manifestation of divine goodness. Therefore nothing escapes from the divine government, not even sin, which includes the incurring of punishment. But punishment is a manifestation of God's justice.

THE SOLUTION OF THE DIFFICULTIES CONFIRMS THIS PROOF PROVIDENCE AND CHANCE

The first difficulty was: Things that happen by chance do not seem to be subject to providence.

The reply to this first difficulty was: Things are said to happen by chance with reference to secondary causes. Thus the finding of a treasure in digging a grave is said to happen by chance to the one who digs, that is, it is beyond what was intended and foreseen. But this was not beyond what God foresaw and provided for. So also the meeting of two servants, although to them it appears a chance circumstance, was foreseen nevertheless by their master who purposely sent them to meet at the one place, in such a way that the one did not know about the other. Thus God sent the Ismaelite merchants on a certain day and hour to that place where they bought Joseph, sold to them by his brothers. The reason given here is the same as in the argumentative part of the article, and it is thus enunciated: "Since, then, all particular causes are included under the universal cause, it could not be that any effect should take place outside the range of that universal cause." This statement applies with equal truth to the free determination, which is the effect of our free will; for it is impossible that this determination should escape the order of the most universal cause, or that it should not be produced by God inasmuch as it is an entity and a good.

Moreover, as St. Thomas remarks farther on: “The very fact that an element of chance is found in those things (that are generated and corrupted) proves that they are subject to government of some kind. For unless corruptible things were governed by a higher being, they would tend to nothing definite (not to anything), especially those which possess no kind of knowledge. So nothing would happen unintentionally, which constitutes the idea of chance.” Expressed more briefly: if there were no natural laws and tendencies, then nothing would happen by chance outside the scope of these natural tendencies.

PROVIDENCE AND EVIL

The second difficulty was that the existence of both physical and moral evil seems to show that God does not have a care for all things in particular.

St. Thomas replies to this objection as Plato, Chrysippus the Stoic, and St. Augustine did, by considering the good of the universe.

The solution of the problem of evil is given in this reply by quoting these words of St. Augustine: “God would in no wise permit evil to exist in His works, unless He were so almighty and so good as to produce good even from evil.” Thus, unless the lion killed animals, it could not live; and there would be no heroic constancy in the martyrs unless they were persecuted.

St. Thomas says in various parts of his works that good and evil are subject to divine providence as foreknown and ordained; but it is the good that is intended, and not the evil. In fact, moral evil cannot even indirectly and accidentally be willed by God. It is only permitted, and by God’s permission it is made to serve a greater good. It is in this sense that St. Thomas says evil is foreknown and ordained by God, yet not intended. “Whatever pertains to the right order of providence comes under providence not only as ordered to the other, but as that to which the other is ordered; but that which departs from the right order, comes under providence, inasmuch as it is ordered to the other but not as the other is ordered to it.” Thus evil is permitted for a greater good, and so it is declared that all things are “for the sake of the elect.”

In like manner, St. Thomas says: “It is lawful to make use of an evil for the sake of good, as God does, but it is not lawful to lead anyone to do evil.”

Thus evil and errors are permitted by providence only that goodness and truth may be more clearly made manifest; just as in a painting the purpose of the darker colors is to bring out the lighter colors in bolder relief, and just as the malice of several actors in a tragedy is for the purpose of showing more clearly the heroism of the famous actors.

There is no contradiction in the chiaroscuro effect of this mystery, but in it these certain principles are preserved intact: moral evil cannot even indirectly be willed by God; God commands not impossibilities, but by commanding admonishes you to do what you are able, and to ask for what you are not able (to do), as said by St. Augustine, whom the Council of Trent quotes. But, on the other hand, no one would be better than another, unless he were loved more by God But the intimate reconciliation of these principles can be seen only in the immediate vision of the Deity, in whose eminence infinite justice, mercy, and supreme liberty are reconciled.

OTHER SPECIAL DIFFICULTIES

The third objection was: Many things happen in the world from necessity, and these do not need the direction of providence. It is the objection of Democritus.

Reply. That these do not need the direction of man, this I concede; that they do not need the direction of the Author of nature, this I deny. Thus God made the eye for seeing, the ear for hearing, the feet for walking, wings for flying. This ordering, to be sure, inasmuch as it is natural, is necessary and is determined to one effect; but it is so determined by the Author of nature, for all ordering to an end is from the supreme Ordainer, inasmuch as every agent acts for an end, tends to some end, and the order or subordination of agents corresponds to the order of ends.

The fourth objection was: “God left man in the hand of his own counsel.” Therefore man, inasmuch as he is free, is not subject to divine providence, as Cicero thought.

Reply. I distinguish the antecedent: God left man to himself, inasmuch as He gave him the operating force that is not determined to only the one effect, this I concede; inasmuch as the very act of free will is not traced to God as to a cause, this I deny. And I deny the consequent.

St. Thomas furthermore remarks: “God extends His providence over the just in a certain more excellent way than over the wicked, inasmuch as He

prevents anything happening which would impede their final salvation. “For to them that love God, all things work together unto good” (Rom. 8: 28). In this sense it is said that “all things are for the sake of the elect.”

Fifth Objection. It has its foundation in this query of St. Paul: “Doth God take care for oxen?” This was the objection raised by Maimonides (Rabbi Moses).

Reply. God does not show His care in the same way for oxen as for men; but His providence extends even to oxen. As St. Thomas remarks farther on: “Irrational creatures are only acted upon (by God) and do not act. So, when the Apostle says that it is not for the oxen that God has care, he does not wholly withdraw them from the divine government, but only as regards the way in which rational creatures are governed.”

Thus the answer of the article is established, namely, that God’s providence is most universal, reaching down to the least of individual corruptible things, which is contrary to what Maimonides thought. Thus divine providence disposes all things most wisely, firmly, and suavely, subordinating the lower to the higher. Hence divine providence wills in some manner for their own sake those things that are honorable in themselves or deserving of honor, and likewise those things that are permanent either as individual beings (such as the angels), or specifically so (such as sensible singular things, which serve as means for something higher).

THIRD ARTICLE

WHETHER GOD HAS IMMEDIATE PROVIDENCE OVER EVERYTHING

State of the question. It seems that God has not immediate providence over all things. For: (1) it belongs to the dignity of a king to have ministers by whom he provides for his subjects. Therefore this likewise belongs to the dignity of God; (2) because it appertains to every cause to direct its effect to good; (3) because St. Augustine says: “It is better to be ignorant of some things than to know them, for example, vile things.” Aristotle says the same, in fact he seems to declare this of God Himself.

Yet the answer is in the affirmative, and it is of faith.

1) According to revelation, from previously quoted texts, it is evident that divine providence, like divine knowledge, is not ignorant of anything, but

orders all things down to the least detail, and even immediately. St. Thomas quotes in this article a text from the Old Testament. Many other texts can be quoted, especially those which make it clear that God knows the prayers addressed to Him by the faithful, and hearkens to them. Our Lord also says: "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings? And not one of them is forgotten before God. Yea, the very hairs of your head are all numbered." This means that they are numbered directly by God Himself.

The definition of the Vatican Council must be understood in the same sense: "God protects and governs by His providence all things which He has made, reaching from end to end mightily and ordering all things sweetly. (Wis. 8: 1). For all things are naked and open to His eyes (Heb. 4: 13), even those which are yet to be by the free action of creatures." This means that divine providence of itself without any intermediary, reaches to all things and orders them from end to end, even what we do of our own free will, inasmuch as He wills efficaciously our actually accomplished good deeds, and wills to reward them. He also permits evil deeds, either ordaining a just punishment for them or else mercifully pardoning them.

2) The theological proof in the argumentative part of the article results in two conclusions, the first of which belongs to providence and the second to divine government, or to the execution of the providential order.

The first conclusion is: As regards the type of the order of things foreordained toward an end, God has immediate providence over everything.

The reason is that He has in His intellect the type of everything, even the smallest, and He has assigned to all causes certain effects, from inanimate things, such as the gravitation required for the cohesion of the universe, even to the lives of the saints. Thus according to God's plan the grain of wheat is for the production of wheat, just as grace, which is the seed of glory, is for this very glory. Likewise God has ordained from all eternity that our prayers of petition are for the purpose of obtaining those things that are either necessary or useful for our salvation and sanctification. This constitutes the dogmatic foundation for the efficacy of prayer, which is very well explained by St. Thomas in the following passage: "For we pray, not that we may change the divine disposition, but that we may impetrate that which God has disposed to be fulfilled by our prayers; in other words, that by asking, men may deserve to receive what Almighty God from eternity has disposed to give, as St. Gregory says" (Dial., Bk. I, chap. 8).

But if God’s knowledge did not immediately extend to all things, then it would remain only general and confused, and therefore imperfect, just as is the knowledge of a king, who is incapable of supervising all the particular things of his kingdom. Hence for a king the complete centering of all things in himself would be a practical error, but it would not be so for God.

Second conclusion. As regards the execution of the order, God governs things inferior by superior things, or through these as intermediary.

It is not because of any defect in His power that He does so, but, on the contrary, because of His abundant goodness, so that He may impart the dignity of causality even to creatures.

So also Christ in His mystical body imparts to the Blessed Virgin Mary the dignity of causality, so that, for example, she may be the coredemptress. He also imparts to the saints that in Him and with Him and for Him they may save souls, by carrying their cross, preaching, and being merciful to others.

Thus the error of Plato or of several of the Platonists is excluded, who admitted three subordinated providences. According to a number of Platonists, the providence of the supreme God is concerned with spiritual things and the whole world in a general way; the providence of the inferior gods is concerned with individual things that can be generated, and the “demons” in a certain manner direct human affairs, as the demon of Socrates does.

The error of the Averroists is likewise excluded, who admitted only a general providence that extends merely to the species and necessary individual things, to the sun and moon, for instance, but not to individual corruptible things.

THIS ANSWER CONFIRMED BY THE SOLUTION OF THE OBJECTIONS

Reply to first objection. “It pertains to a king’s dignity to have ministers who execute his providence. But the fact that he has not the plan of those things which are done by them arises from a deficiency in himself. For every operative science (both prudence and providence) is the more perfect, the more it considers the particular things with which its action is concerned.”

Reply to second objection. “God’s immediate provision over everything does not exclude the action of secondary causes, which are the executors of

His order." Thus God provides immediately for all things, and as regards the execution of the plan of providence, He governs the lower creation through the higher, as St. Thomas says farther on: "Therefore God so governs things that He makes some of them to be causes of others in government as a master who not only imparts knowledge to his pupils, but gives also the faculty of teaching others."

Reply to third objection. "It is better for us not to know low and vile things, because by them we are impeded in our knowledge of what is better and higher . . . , and because the thought of evil sometimes perverts the will toward evil. This does not hold with God, who sees everything simultaneously at one glance, and whose will cannot turn in the direction of evil."

First doubt. Does it follow from this conception of divine government through intermediaries that God does not operate immediately in all things?

It does not, for God immediately produces those effects that belong properly to Him, by the immediate contact both of His being and His power. Thus God alone creates things and immediately preserves them in being, even inferior things. So also God alone enters into the soul and moves interiorly our intellect and will. But through the mediation of creatures He produces the effects that belong properly to these creatures. Thus He objectively illumines men by means of angels and human teachers, although it is only He who can move interiorly the intellect and will to the performance of their acts. Hence, stated more briefly: Only God can produce and preserve in everything, being absolutely as such or being inasmuch as it is being; but any creature can produce and preserve in another creature of a lower order, a modification of being, for instance, that it be hot or luminous, or this particular kind of being.

Second doubt. Is divine providence always infallible, not only as to the ordering of the means to the end, but also as to the attainment of the end?

Reply. From what has been said, providence is not always infallible. For the efficacy of providence, which consists in the act of command concerning the means for the attainment of the end, depends on the efficacy of the willing or intending of the end. Hence providence is absolutely infallible even as regards the attainment of the end, in so far as it presupposes God's consequent or efficacious will, which is concerned with good here and now to be produced, for as previously stated: "Whatever God

simply wills takes place; although what He wills (only) antecedently may not take place."

On the contrary, God's providence is infallible only as regards the ordering of the means to the end, and not as regards the attainment of the end; in so far as it presupposes only His antecedent will. This means that God's providence is infallible in so far as it prepares the means necessary for the salvation of all adults, making the fulfillment of His commands really possible for them, even when they do not actually comply with these commands.

So then in the most general ordering of all things to the end for which God created the universe, this being His glory and the manifestation of His goodness, providence is absolutely infallible even as regards the attainment of the end, which is efficaciously or consequently willed by God.

But as regards certain particular ends, providence is infallible concerning the ordering of the means, but not concerning the attainment of these particular ends, because such ends are not efficaciously willed by God. Thus, although all men are ordered by God's providence to eternal salvation, yet not all are saved, because God does not efficaciously will the salvation of all. Yet all the particular ways of providence, whether they result in the attainment of the end or not, concur in the attainment of the most universal end, for they are subordinated to it. Thus he who by the act of final impenitence departs from the way of salvation, concurs in God's glory through the manifestation of His justice.

By means of these principles the various texts of St. Thomas about the infallibility of providence are thereby reconciled. Thus he says: "The order of divine providence is unchangeable and certain so far as all things foreseen happen as they have been foreseen, whether from necessity or from contingency." And again: "Divine providence does not fail to produce its effect, nor in the way foreseen." These statements make it certain that God's providence presupposes His consequent or efficacious will.

St. Thomas says in another of his works: "In all ordering of things to their end there are two points to be considered; namely, the order (to the end) and the result or consequence of this order; for not all things that are ordered to their end attain their end. Therefore providence (inasmuch as it depends on God's antecedent will) regards only the order to the end. Hence by God's providence all men are ordered to eternal happiness; but predestination regards also the result or consequence of this order, so that it

therefore refers only to those who attain to the glory of heaven." Predestination presupposes God's consequent will as regards the salvation of the elect, and it orders and commands the means that are efficacious for salvation.

From what has just been said it is evident that no good ever actually takes place in the world unless God efficaciously willed from all eternity that it should take place, and unless He efficaciously arranged that it should take place, whether this good is natural or supernatural, whether this good is an act easy or difficult of performance. For as stated above, "whatever God simply wills takes place, although what He wills (only) antecedently may not take place." But the absolute or consequent divine will is concerned with good that will take place when all particular circumstances are considered, and it is only in this way that anything takes place. Likewise no one actually commits a sin, unless God permitted it from all eternity.

Third doubt. Is the infallibility of divine providence only an infallibility of foreknowledge, as some in more recent times have contended, or is it also an infallibility of causality?

Reply. As regards sin, considered purely as such, of which God cannot be the cause either directly or indirectly, providence is only an infallibility of foreknowledge, on the supposition, however, of God's permissive decree, to which is added His positive decree concerning the physical entity of sin. But with reference to all that is real and good, the infallibility of providence is also an infallibility of causality; for God is the cause of all being and goodness of whatever kind. As St. Thomas says: "Since all particular causes are included under the universal cause, it could not be that any effect should take place outside the range of that universal cause."

FOURTH ARTICLE

WHETHER PROVIDENCE IMPOSES ANY NECESSITY ON THINGS FORESEEN

State of the question. It seems to be so: (1) because the effect follows of necessity from eternal providence, for divine providence cannot be frustrated. (2) God is both provident and almighty. Therefore He imposes the stability of necessity to things provided. Nevertheless the answer is that divine providence imposes necessity upon some things, not upon all.

1) This conclusion is of faith, it being declared in very many texts of Holy Scripture, which affirms that our free choices, our prayers and merits, are subject to divine providence. Therefore the Vatican Council declares: “God protects and governs by His providence all things which He has made . . . even those which are yet to be by the free action of creatures.”

The following theological argument is also given in proof of this conclusion.

It pertains to providence to produce every grade of being for the perfection of the universe. But, that every grade of being be produced, there must be both necessary and contingent effects, in fact, free effects. Therefore divine providence has prepared for some effects necessary causes or those that are determined to one particular thing; but for certain other effects providence has prepared contingent causes, so that they may happen contingently, and for some effects free causes or the power of choosing, with indifference of judgment and choice. This argument is but a summary of the complete proof on this point given in a previous article.

The major is evident because the perfection of the universe demands a subordination of beings. For the universe would not be perfect if there were only one grade of goodness in things, a point that is more clearly explained farther on.

The minor is likewise evident inasmuch as the species of things are necessary; and individuals which preserve the continuity of the species (for instance, of plants and animals) are contingent. There must also be necessary effects, that is, those that proceed from a proximate cause that is determined to one particular thing, and contingent effects, in fact, free effects, which proceed from a proximate cause that is not determined to one particular thing. There is a special fitness in this so that in created things there may be a certain reflection of the divine liberty. Therefore the conclusion is established, and it is also revealed, as already stated.

THIS CONCLUSION CONFIRMED BY THE SOLUTION OF THE DIFFICULTIES

Reply to first objection. “The effect of divine providence is not only that things should happen somehow, but that they should happen either by necessity or by contingency.” Hence, as St. Thomas says: “God foresaw that it (for example, the conversion of St. Paul) would happen contingently. It follows then infallibly that it will be, contingently and not of necessity.”

Reply to second objection. “Thus all things foreseen happen as they have been foreseen by God, whether from necessity or from contingency.” For, as stated above, “since the divine will is perfectly efficacious, it follows not only that things are done which God wills to be done, but also that they are done in the way that He wills.” Thus the divine will extends even to the free mode of our choices; by actualizing our liberty, He does not interfere with it. As Bossuet remarks, nothing is more absurd than to say that our choice cannot be free because God efficaciously wills it to be free.

Reply to third objection. “The unchangeableness of providence does not fail to produce its effect, and that in the way foreseen.” St. Thomas also says in another work: “It belongs to God’s providence sometimes to allow defectible causes to fail and sometimes to preserve them from failing.”

We should note what Cajetan says on this point. He writes: “I suspect that just as to be foreseen posits neither contingency nor necessity in the event that is foreseen . . . , so God, by reason of His excellence, that is far beyond our power of conception, thus provides for things and events, that to be foreseen by Him is the consequence of something more exalted than anything either avoidable or unavoidable.”

But Francis Silvester (Ferrariensis) censures Cajetan, not referring to him by name, however, and he shows that the way St. Thomas speaks is better, who says: “God foresaw that it (a particular effect) would happen contingently. It follows then infallibly that it (a particular effect) will be, contingently and not of necessity.” It follows infallibly as foreseen, and contingently as proceeding from a proximate cause that is not determined to one particular thing. Thus both the certitude of providence and the true contingency of things are preserved intact. Such is the general teaching of the Thomists.

But Cajetan expressed himself more clearly on this point in another of his commentaries. He had also very well said concerning contingent futures: “The divine ideas . . . represent the existences of things and their contingent characteristics, it being presupposed that the divine will is freely determined as regards the other term of the contradiction.” But the divine will is perfectly efficacious, as stated above, and it extends to the free mode of our choices.

First corollary. The unchangeableness of divine providence does not thereby render our prayers useless, but is the very reason why we should pray, because God from all eternity willed and disposed things for our

prayers. As St. Thomas says: “For we pray, not that we may change the divine disposition, but that we may impetrate that which God has disposed to be fulfilled by our prayers.”

Second corollary. The great mystery connected with God’s providence is not so much its reconciliation with human liberty as its permission of sin, especially the sin of final impenitence, which pertains to the mystery of predestination and reprobation.

In fact, the reconciliation of the infallible efficacy of the decrees of providence with the liberty of our choices, although this is in itself profoundly obscure, yet it clearly enough follows from God’s nature and the omnipotence of His will. If God is God, He certainly can move created liberties interiorly, firmly, and suavely, and especially so to the performance of salutary and holy acts. Moreover, it is sufficiently clear that the divine actualization of our liberty cannot destroy or interfere with this liberty.

But God’s permission of sin is a great mystery, especially the sin of final impenitence. It is the mystery of the intimate reconciliation of infinite mercy, justice, and supreme liberty in the eminence of the Deity. Of two sinners (for instance, the two thieves dying on Mt. Calvary) one is efficaciously called, the other is not. As St. Thomas says, quoting St. Augustine, “To whomsoever help is given by God, it is mercifully given; and from whom it is withheld, it is justly withheld, in punishment of a previous sin.” There is in this a most profound mystery, which we must now discuss in the following question.

CHAPTER XXIII

QUESTION 23

PREDESTINATION

THERE are three parts to this question: (1) The nature of predestination; (2) its cause; (3) the certainty of it.

The first part, which concerns the nature of predestination, consists of three articles. What its name implies and its reality (a. 1); its real definition and whether it posits anything in the predestined (a. 2); what its opposite is, which is reprobation (a. 3).

The second part concerns the cause of predestination. On God's part, whether the predestined are chosen by Him (a. 4); on our part, whether the foreknowledge of merits is the cause of predestination (a. 5).

The third part concerns the certainty of predestination: Whether it is a certainty (a. 6); whether the number of the predestined is certain (a. 7); whether predestination can be furthered by the prayers of the saints (a. 8).

We have discussed this question at length in a special work, to which we refer the reader. In the beginning of this work we treated of the significance and reality of predestination according to Holy Scripture, and of the teaching of the Church on this subject. The principal difficulties of this problem and the method of procedure, as also the classification of the theological systems, were then considered. In this same work the teaching of St. Thomas was compared with that of St. Augustine and with the theories of several modern theologians, especially of Molina and the congruists.

This question is connected with the preceding question. The gratuity of predestination is a disputed point among theologians, in so far as they admit or do not admit the intrinsic efficacy of the divine will as regards the merits of the predestined. For St. Thomas, the Thomists, the Scotists, and the Augustinians, these decrees are of themselves efficacious, so that the merits

of the predestined are the effects of predestination and therefore cannot be the cause of predestination, as will be stated in the fifth article. For the Molinists and the congruists, the divine decrees as regards the merits of the predestined are not of themselves efficacious; but their efficacy depends on our consent foreseen by means of the scientia media, and therefore Molina says: “To the foreknowledge, which is included in predestination on the part of the intellect, there is attached the condition of the use of free will without which there would have been no preordaining by God.” Something similar is to be found in the congruism of St. Robert Bellarmine and of Suarez, in so far as they retain the theory of the scientia media; nevertheless they agree with St. Augustine and St. Thomas in defending the absolute gratuity of predestination to glory.

As we shall see, what clarifies this entire question is the principle of predilection as formulated by St. Thomas in a previous article, in which he says: “Since God’s love is the cause (efficacious of itself) of goodness in things, no one thing would be better than another, if God did not will a greater good for one than for the other.” And again: “The reason why some things are better than others, is that God wills for them a greater good.” This means that no one would be better than another unless loved and helped more by God. This principle presupposes that God’s will or His love is the cause that is of itself efficacious of the goodness of our salutary choices and of our merits in accordance with the following text: “For who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received?” It follows from this, as will at once be seen, that as merits are the effects of God’s predilection and predestination, they cannot be its cause, as will be stated in the fifth article of this question. This teaching on the divine causality constitutes what there is of clarity, and the permission of the sin of final impenitence constitutes what there is of obscurity in this chiaroscuro.

In other words, St. Thomas preserves the principle of predilection absolutely intact in this question, whereas Molina says: “Of two that are called and equally aided by grace, it can happen that one of them is converted and the other not. It is possible for one who has received a less grace to rise again, when another who has received a greater grace does not rise again, and remains obdurate.” Nevertheless, so as not to deny the mystery of predestination and at least defend the extrinsic validity of the principle of predilection, Molina says that it depends entirely on God’s good pleasure that Peter was placed in those circumstances in which God,

by the scientia media, had foreseen his good consent, and that Judas was placed in different circumstances in which God, by this same knowledge, had foreseen his sin. Thus the solution of this entire question on predestination is to be sought in the preceding questions on God's knowledge and will. The Thomists reject the scientia media completely, for it posits a passivity in God with reference to our conditionally meritorious free acts of the future. They always appeal to this most exalted principle, namely, that no good is actually done by this particular man rather than by another unless God efficaciously willed it, and no one actually commits sin without God's permission.

If these principles are borne in mind, it will be easier to understand what must now be said on this subject.

Let us see what is the general condition of this question from the standpoint of Holy Scripture, what are the principal conflicting errors and the classification of the Catholic theological systems. The explanation of the articles of St. Thomas will thus be much simplified. Many appeal to him as their authority, yet their appeal does not always rest on solid grounds.

TESTIMONY OF HOLY SCRIPTURE

There is already indeed in the Old Testament frequent reference to the gratuitous election by which God chose the people of Israel from among all nations. Thus Seth was elected by God, and not Cain; then Noe was chosen, and Sem in preference to his two brothers; Abraham and Isaac, too, in preference to Ismael, and then Jacob was preferred to Esau. Similarly, in the New Testament we read that God freely calls the Gentiles to salvation, whereas He permits the crime committed by Israel.

Thus it is often said in the Old Testament that God's free election does not conflict with justice. There is no evidence that this divine election presupposes the divine foreknowledge of man's merits. Hence St. Paul says of Jacob and Esau: "When the children were not yet born, nor had done any good or evil (that the purpose of God might stand), not of works but of Him that calleth, it was said to her (Rebecca): the elder shall serve the younger; as it is written: Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated," that is, but I loved Esau less. Thus the mystery of salvation was announced "as a type" in the Old Testament.

Does the Gospel declare the mystery of predestination? It certainly does, inasmuch as it speaks of the elect and the divine election. The Gospel announces indeed to all the mystery of redemption and the possibility of salvation, as in the following text: “Going therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” St. Paul likewise says: “God will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one Mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a redemption for all.”

Most certainly God does not command what is impossible, but makes the fulfillment of His precepts really possible at the very moment that they are of obligation, and in so far as they are known by men.

Nevertheless there are men and angels who, through their own fault, have strayed from the path of salvation or have perished, even men who knew Christ the Savior and followed Him, such as “the son of perdition.”

Others, who in the Gospel are called the elect, are saved. If they are adults, they not only can keep God’s commandments, but they actually do, and they persevere until the end. Of these Christ says: “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them and they follow Me. And I give them life everlasting; and they shall not perish forever, and no man shall pluck them out of My hand. That which My Father hath given Me is greater than all; and no one can snatch them out of the hand of My Father. I and the Father are one.” Similarly He says farther on: “Those whom Thou gavest Me have I kept; and none of them is lost but the son of perdition, that the Scripture may be fulfilled.” There is reference in these texts not only to God’s foreknowledge, but especially to His most efficacious omnipotence.

It is likewise declared that “many are called, but few are chosen.” Also in the prophecy concerning the fall of Jerusalem and the end of the world, we read: “Unless those days had been shortened, no flesh should be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days shall be shortened.”

Therefore the Gospel treats of the mystery of the divine election, which is the same as the mystery of predestination. In fact, as St. Robert Bellarmine shows, there are three certain propositions which we conclude from the Gospel.

1) God has chosen several among all classes of men. In the parable of the laborers in the vineyard and in the other of those that were invited to the

marriage feast, we read: “Many are called, but few are chosen.” And again, there is the following text: “God shall send His angels with a trumpet and a great voice, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest parts of the heavens to the utmost bounds of them.”

2) God efficaciously chose those to be saved that they may infallibly attain to eternal life. Thus we read: “There shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch as to deceive, if possible, even the elect,” that is, if this were possible. And again: “This is the will of the Father who sent Me: that of all that He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again in the last day.” “My sheep . . . shall not perish forever, and no man shall pluck them out of My hand.” This text seems to point to the intrinsic efficacy of the divine election and grace, and that this efficacy does not depend on our foreseen consent. For this text does not speak of God’s knowledge, but of His omnipotent will that preserves the elect and leads them to salvation.

3) God’s choice of the elect was gratuitous, for we can in no way conclude from the Gospel that God chose them on account of their foreseen merits. Thus in the text: “Fear not, little flock, for it hath pleased your Father to give you a kingdom,” the verb “hath pleased” expresses God’s good pleasure and mercy. The text does not say: “Fear not, because your merits were foreseen.” Likewise, we read: “I have called you friends. . . . You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and have appointed you that you should go and should bring forth fruit, and your fruit should remain.”

These words are uttered, indeed, directly to the apostles, but they concern indirectly all those who must labor in the Lord’s vineyard and all God’s friends. St. Thomas says: “Many attribute to themselves the cause of divine friendship, in that they attribute the principle of good works to themselves and not to God. And the Lord excluding this, says: ‘You have not chosen Me’ (namely, that I should be your friend); ‘but I have chosen you’ (that I should make you My friends), and He is not speaking here only of the grace of the apostolate.” St. Thomas explains the whole of this passage as referring to the gratuity of predestination, and he concludes: “It is the good already present in the thing that influences our choice, but the divine election is the cause of greater good in one thing than in another. . . . This shows clearly God’s mercy to some, whom He prepares for grace without their having previously merited it.”

The gratuity of the divine election is likewise intimated in the following words of our Lord: “I confess to Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things (the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven) from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones. Yea, Father, for so hath it seemed good in Thy sight.” This means, as we read in one of the epistles: “God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble,” and even makes them humble; for humility is God’s gift. Hence St. Thomas explains this text from St. Matthew by referring it to predestination, saying: “Why God is merciful to this one rather than to a certain other, is to be attributed solely to His will . . . His will of good pleasure.” Therefore, Jesus says: “Yea, Father, for so hath it seemed good in Thy sight.”

The deep humility of the saints has its foundation in this, that when great saints see a criminal condemned to death, they say to themselves: “If this man had received all the graces which I received, perhaps he would not have been so unfaithful; and if God had permitted me to commit the sins which He permitted him to commit, this man would be in my place and I would be in his.” Thus Christian humility has its foundation in the mystery of creation from nothing and in the mystery of grace or divine election.

Hence already in the synoptic Gospels and in the Gospel of St. John the mystery of the divine election is declared, as well as its efficacy and gratuity. It must be noted that, just as in the principle of predilection enunciated by St. Thomas, so the gratuity of election follows from its efficacy, which extends even to the merits of the elect, for our Lord says: “Without Me you can do nothing.”

What is stated more clearly about this mystery in the epistles of St. Paul? It is called predestination, a name that properly applies to it. The efficacy and gratuity of this predestination are more clearly presented.

Now, in truth, St. Paul frequently declares the principle of predilection, which virtually contains the doctrine of predestination. He says: “For who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?” This is a quasi-commentary on our Lord’s words: “Without Me you can do nothing” as regards salvation. That is, no one thing would be better than another if God did not will greater good for one than for another. St. Paul also says: “It is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will.” The efficacy and gratuity of predestination,

which is asserted in the following texts, already follows from this principle of predestination.

Such texts are: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with spiritual blessings in heavenly places, in Christ: as he chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and unspotted in His sight in charity. Who hath predestinated us unto the adoption of children through Jesus Christ unto Himself: according to the purpose of His will: unto the praise of the glory of His grace, in which He hath graced us in His beloved Son.” St. Thomas, like his predecessor, St. Augustine, commenting on this passage in his commentary on this epistle, says: “He chose us, not because we were saints, for we were not; but He chose us that we might become saints by leading a virtuous life and one free from vices. . . . But when the Apostle says that God predestinated us unto adoption, these words may be referred to the imperfect likeness of adoptive sonship realized here on earth by sanctifying grace; yet it is better to say they refer to the perfect likeness to God that will be realized in our heavenly home, and it is of this adoption that St. Paul says: ‘We ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption of the sons’ (Rom. 8: 23). But there are two causes assigned . . . for the divine predestination. One is the simple will of God, denoted by the words, ‘according to the purpose of His will.’ . . . The other cause is final, which is, that we may praise and know God’s goodness, and this is denoted by the words, ‘unto the praise of the glory of His grace.’ “ This interpretation of St. Thomas is confirmed by the fact that adoptive sonship in this life is willed by God on account of the perfect adoption realized in heaven. This interpretation also brings out clearly both the gratuity and the efficacy of predestination.

And again St. Paul says: “We know that to them that love God, all things work together unto good, to such as, according to His purpose, are called to be saints. For whom He foreknew (προέγνω) he also predestinated (προώρισεν) to be made conformable to the image of His Son; that He might be the firstborn amongst many brethren. And whom He predestinated, them He also called. And whom He called, them He also justified. And whom He justified, them He also glorified.”

With St. Augustine, St. Thomas, and St. Robert Bellarmine, we must remark that in this last text the words, “whom He foreknew He also predestinated,” the meaning is: “Those whom God has foreknown, looking favorably upon them, He has also predestined. These words do not refer to

the divine foreknowledge of our meritorious acts, for such interpretation would imply that there is some good not produced by God Himself. Nowhere in St. Paul's epistles would we find any foundation for this interpretation; and it would contradict the texts just quoted and the ones we are about to quote. The meaning is: Those whom He has foreknown, looking favorably upon them (and among these are children who will die immediately after being baptized, before they performed any meritorious act). This is the frequent acceptation in Holy Scripture of the verb (προγιγνόσκω) "I foreknow." Thus we read: "God hath not cast away His people, which He foreknew." The Gospel speaks of the Lord as saying to the wicked: "I never knew you: depart from Me, you that work iniquity." And St. Paul says: "But now, after that you have known God, or rather are known by God." "If any man love God, the same is known by Him." "Then I shall know even as I am known." "The Lord knoweth who are His." "The Lord knoweth the way of the just, and the way of the wicked shall perish." This exegesis of St. Thomas and St. Robert Bellarmine is upheld at the present day by Lagrange, Allo, Zahn, Julicher, and others.

In the previously quoted passage, the gratuity of predestination is clearly seen since it depends on God's gratuitous purpose, which is there referred to. St. Paul also says in another epistle: "In whom we also are called by lot, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things according to the counsel of His will, that we may be unto the praise of His glory."

Likewise, in this previously quoted passage, the efficacy of predestination is made clear in its effects, which are vocation, justification, glorification.

Finally, St. Paul sets forth God's supreme independence or liberty in the distribution of His graces. For God had chosen Israel, which is now rejected because of its unbelief; and God announces salvation to the Gentiles, but the future conversion of the Jews is also foretold. The principle of predilection is proclaimed, which is applied to nations and individuals in the following words: "What then shall we say? Is there injustice with God? God forbid. For He saith to Moses: I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will show mercy to whom I will show mercy. So then it is not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy."

Father Lagrange, O.P. shows that these words are indeed primarily said of the Gentile nations, but the principles enunciated therein are also applied,

according to St. Paul, in a secondary sense to individuals; in fact, strictly speaking, only persons are predestined. The meaning of these words is that God freely chooses, without offending against justice. Therefore there is no injustice on His part. For God does not command what is impossible and deprives nobody of his due, when He freely grants a greater grace to some as we shall find St. Thomas stating farther on.

St. Paul concludes: “Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are His judgments and how unsearchable His ways! For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been His counselor? Or who hath first given to Him, and recompense shall be made him? For of Him and by Him and in Him are all things. To Him be glory forever, amen.”

We shall explain several of these texts again in our commentary on the articles of St. Thomas. At present, however, we must show, with St. Robert Bellarmine, that the three propositions which we have formulated from the Gospel, which concern the divine election, are more clearly deduced from what St. Paul says in his epistles concerning predestination which follows the divine election. They are:

1) God has chosen and predestined some among all classes of men.

2) God efficaciously chose and predestined those to be saved that they may infallibly attain to eternal life. “Those whom He predestinated, them He has also called . . . and justified . . . and glorified.”

3) God has freely chosen and predestined the elect. “Those whom He foreknew (looking favorably upon them) He also predestinated.” “Who shall accuse against the elect of God?” “There is a remnant saved according to the election of grace.” “In Him, in whom we also are called by lot, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things according to the counsel of His will, that we may be unto the praise of His glory.”

The gratuity of election is also inferred when St. Paul says that “God is able to make him stand,” which means, as the Council of Trent explains, “that he stand perseveringly (and that He is able) to restore him who falleth.” This implies that it is by a special act of God’s mercy that he who falls is restored or converted, and it is just as much God’s predilection that is made manifest, if one is always preserved from sin and never loses baptismal innocence.

From all these texts of Holy Scripture, St. Augustine deduced the following definition quoted by all theologians: “Predestination is the foreknowledge and preparation of the benefits by which most certainly are liberated whoever are liberated.” and St. Augustine says more explicitly: “By predestination God knew what He Himself will do.” It is not the foreknowledge of our merits that is assigned as the cause of predestination in this definition, but the merits of the elect are clearly seen to be the effects of this predestination, which is therefore gratuitous. Thus St. Augustine frequently says that God, in rewarding our meritorious acts, crowns His own gifts.

THE TEACHING OF THE CHURCH AGAINST MUTUALLY CONFLICTING HERESIES

The teaching of the Church on this subject was formulated in the condemnations of Pelagianism and Semipelagianism. It is subsequently declared against the absolutely contradictory errors of predestinarianism as also against those of Protestantism and Jansenism. The teaching of the Church is thus like the mountain peak of truth that towers above and between these conflicting errors.

THE DECLARATION OF THE CHURCH AGAINST PELAGIANISM AND SEMIPELAGIANISM

The Pelagians said: “Without grace we can keep the commandments . . . and grace is not necessary except for making it easier to keep them.” This proposition was condemned in the fifth canon of the Council of Carthage (418). The Semipelagians said that man does not need grace for the beginning of faith and good will, spoken of as the “beginning of salvation,” and that he can persevere until death without a special grace. This statement was condemned by the Second Council of Orange. The Semipelagians held that God wills equally the salvation of all, although certain special graces are granted to some, such as the apostles. Consequently the Semipelagians identified predestination with God’s foreknowledge of the beginning of salvation and of merits by which man perseveres until the end in doing good without any special help. Negative reprobation was identical with the foreknowledge of demerits. Thus predestination and negative reprobation

followed human election, whether good or bad. Hence this eliminated the element of mystery in predestination spoken of by St. Paul. Hence God was no longer the author but merely the spectator of that which singles out the elect from the rest of mankind. Hence in Pelagianism and Semipelagianism the elect are not loved and helped more by God.

Concerning children who die before the age of reason, the Semipelagians said that God predestines or reprobates them, foreseeing the good or bad acts they would have performed if they had lived longer. Thus already the Semipelagians admitted, previous to any divine decree, a foreknowledge of the conditionally free acts of the future or of the futurables, which in later times was called by Molina the scientia media. The opponents of Pelagianism replied that such interpretation would mean that children are marked for reprobation on account of sins they did not commit, which is unjust.

Toward the end of his life St. Augustine wrote especially two treatises against Semipelagianism, in which he shows from the testimony of Holy Scripture particularly three things: (1) that, without a special and gratuitous grace, man cannot have the beginning of salvation, and that he cannot persevere until the end without a special and gratuitous grace; (2) that God does not will equally the salvation of all, but that He wills more the salvation of children who die immediately after being baptized. He likewise wills more the salvation of believers than of those who de facto do not receive the faith, and He wills more the salvation of those who persevere until the end; (3) that the elect, as their name indicates, are loved more and helped more, and that their merits are not the cause but the effect of the divine election. Even in one of his earlier works, St. Augustine had already said, speaking of the angels who were of the elect, that they were “helped more” than the others.

The Council of Orange (529), in condemning Semipelagianism, took many of its formulas from the writings of St. Augustine and of his disciple St. Prosper. All historians agree that it disapproved of the Semipelagian denials of the gratuitousness of grace and of its necessity for the beginning of salvation and for final perseverance.

Hence, on account of the declarations of the Council of Orange, all Catholic theologians admit three propositions, although they do not all interpret them in the same sense. They are: (1) predestination to grace is not because of God’s foreseeing our naturally good works nor is the beginning

of salutary acts due to natural causes; (2) predestination to glory is not because of God's foreseeing we would continue in the performance of supernaturally meritorious acts apart from the special gift of final perseverance; (3) complete predestination, in so far as it comprises the whole series of graces from the first up to glorification, is gratuitous or independent of foreseen merits.

Nevertheless not all Catholic theologians interpret these three propositions in the same sense. There is particularly a difference between the Molinists who deny the intrinsic efficacy of grace, and others who admit it. The latter find this efficacy obviously stated in the declarations of the Council of Orange.

Thus, in the first proposition, for the actual grace that is required for the beginning of salvation, the Molinists understand this grace to be extrinsically efficacious, because our consent was foreseen by God. Hence they differ on this point from the Thomists, the Augustinians, and the Scotists. This does not safeguard so well the gratuity of grace as asserted by the Council of Orange.

Similarly, contrary to the above-mentioned theologians, the Molinists understood the second proposition as meaning that the actual grace of final perseverance is extrinsically efficacious, inasmuch as God foresaw our consent by means of the scientia media. St. Augustine said of the grace of final perseverance: "It is a grace that is spurned by no one whose heart is hardened, and it is therefore given that the hardness of heart may first be eliminated." Contrary to this, Molina says: "It may happen that two persons receive in an equal degree the interior grace of vocation; one of them of his own free will is converted and the other remains an infidel. It may even happen that one who receives a far greater prevenient grace when called, of his own free will is not converted, and another, who receives a far less grace, is converted."

It is not so easy to reconcile this statement with what the Council of Trent says: "of this great and special gift of perseverance . . . which cannot be derived from any other than from Him who is able to establish him who standeth that he stand perseveringly, and to restore him who falleth." Likewise, from what the Council of Trent teaches, it is commonly admitted that we cannot merit de condigno the grace of final perseverance, for the continuance of the state of grace up to the moment of death is the principle of merit, and therefore cannot be merited." Hence, if the Molinists wish to

admit predestination to glory after foreseen merits, then they must say that predestination to glory is independent of our foreseen supernatural merits which, without the special gift of final perseverance, would continue until the end. This is expressed in the third proposition, which we are now going to explain.

The third proposition is: “Complete predestination, in so far as it comprises the whole series of graces from the first up to glorification, is gratuitous or independent of foreseen merits.” The Molinists differ from St. Thomas in the interpretation of this proposition.

Molina admits it, but he adds: “To the foreknowledge, which is included in predestination on the part of the intellect, there is attached the condition of the use of free will without which there would have been no preordaining by God.”

Contrary to this, Augustinians and Thomists understand complete predestination as it is explained by St. Thomas: “It is impossible that the whole of the effect of predestination in general should have any cause as coming from us; because whatever is in man disposing him toward salvation, is all included under the effect of predestination; even the preparation for grace.” Thus even the free determination disposing one toward salvation is entirely included in the effect of predestination. “There is no distinction,” says St. Thomas, “between what flows from free will and what is of predestination; as there is no distinction between what flows from a secondary cause and from a first cause.” They are two total causes that are not coordinated, but subordinated. But the effect of predestination cannot be its cause.

The import of these three propositions seems to be that they express the very teaching of St. Augustine and are obvious inferences from the canons of the Council of Orange.

This is especially made clear from the following canons of this same council. Canon 9 reads: “As often as we do good it is God who works in us and with us enabling us to act.” Thus efficacious grace not only makes it possible for us to do what is good, but by it we actually do what is good. It effectively works in us, as St. Paul says: “It is God who worketh in you both to will and to accomplish.” Also canon 12 says: “God so loves us, as we shall be by the gift of His grace, not as we are by our own merit.” It follows from this that “God so much the more loves us, as we shall be better by the gift of His grace.” This means that no one would be better than

another if he were not loved more by God. In the quotation of this last canon, there is reference to the “Indiculus” on the grace of God, which expresses the same doctrine.

Hence ancient theologians, namely, Augustinians and Thomists, noted that this Second Council of Orange expresses in equivalent terms this principle of predilection, which is already enunciated by St. Paul in the following words: “For who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received?” It was this great truth which the Pelagians and Semipelagians denied in maintaining that God wills equally the salvation of all. Thus those who are saved would not be more loved and helped by God, who would be rather the onlooker than the author of what singles out the just from the impious.

We must now consider the declarations of the Church against the errors of those who deny God’s universal will to save.

Predestinarianism (ninth century) denied God’s universal will to save, and taught predestination to evil. Several said that these errors are to be found in the writings of Gottschalk. This was the occasion of much controversy. On this point must be quoted especially the declarations of the councils of Quierzy (853), Valence (855), Toul (859), and Thuzey (860). It was in this last council that the bishops of France came to an agreement on this difficult matter.

There are particularly two declarations which we get from these provincial councils. They are: (1) God wills in a certain way to save all men; (2) there is no predestination to evil, but God decreed from all eternity to inflict the penalty of damnation for the sin of final impenitence, a sin which He foresaw and in no way caused, but permitted.

The meaning and scope of these declarations are clearly seen especially from the third canon of the Council of Quierzy, which says: “Almighty God wills, without exception, all men to be saved, though not all are saved. That some are saved, however, is the gift of Him who saves; if some perish it is the fault of them that perish.” This canon is taken from the writings of St. Prosper, who was a disciple of St. Augustine. This canon makes it clear to us that God does not will equally the salvation of all, as the Pelagians thought; for that some are saved, is the gratuitous gift of Him who saves. Moreover, predestination to evil is excluded. Therefore the two extreme aspects of this mystery are declared in plain language, but we fail to

perceive the mode of their intimate reconciliation. The fourth canon of the Council of Quierzy affirms that Christ died for all men.

The Council of Valence insists more strongly on the gratuity of predestination to eternal life. This council declared "that God absolutely foreknew that the good will be so by His grace, and that the wicked will be so through their own fault. Nor do the wicked therefore perish, because they could not be good, but because they refused to be good. . . . In the election of those to be saved, God's mercy precedes their merits; but in the damnation of those who will perish, their demerits precede God's judgment. The malice of the wicked was foreknown but not predestined by God, since He is not the cause of this."

Finally the Council of Thuzey (860) very plainly formulates the higher principles that elucidate this question. The first declaration is: "Whatsoever the Lord pleased He hath done in heaven and on earth. For nothing is done in heaven or on earth except what He Himself is pleased to do or justly permits to be done." The bishops who accepted the teaching of St. Augustine demanded nothing more, and so they all agreed. This meant that no good deed is actually performed by this man rather than by a certain other, unless God Himself graciously wills and effects it; and no bad deed is actually performed by this man rather than by a certain other unless God justly permits it. Countless consequences are included in this absolutely general principle. The Thomists see in it the principle of predilection, that no one would be better than another, unless such person were loved more by God.

In the synodal letter approved by the Council of Thuzey all the other declarations proceed from this first one. The fifth declaration reads: "Hence it is because of God's grace that the world is saved; and it is because man has free will that the world will be judged." Thus the two extreme aspects of this mystery are declared: God's universal will to save and the gratuity of predestination.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, this teaching of the Church was confirmed by the decisions of the Council of Trent against the errors of Protestantism and by the condemnation of Jansenism. The Council of Trent says: "But, though He died for all yet not all receive the benefit of His death, but those only to whom the merit of His passion is communicated." And again: "If anyone says that it is not in man's power to make his ways evil, but that the works that are evil God worketh as well as those that are

good, not permissively only, but also proprie and per se, so that the treason of Judas is no less His own proper work than the vocation of Paul, let him be anathema." Also the following: "If anyone says that the grace of justification is attained only by those who are predestined to life, but that all others who are called, are called indeed, but do not receive grace, as being by the divine power predestined unto evil, let him be anathema."

It is likewise affirmed against the Jansenists that Christ did not die only for the predestined, or only for the faithful, but for all men; that there is a grace which is truly sufficient, and which makes it possible for adults to observe God's precepts according as these can be known by them.

The Church, quoting the words of St. Augustine, affirms against the reformers: "God commands not impossibilities, but, by commanding, both admonishes thee to do what thou art able, and to pray for what thou art not able (to do)."

The Church, however, though asserting that God by a sufficient grace makes the fulfillment of His precepts possible for all, nevertheless affirms the efficacy of grace that actually is productive of good works. Thus the Council of Trent declares that "God, unless men are themselves wanting to His grace, as He has begun the good work, so will He perfect it, working in them the will and the performance."

From all these declarations of the Church against conflicting heresies, we get, by way of summary, the following four propositions.

A. AGAINST PELAGIANISM AND SEMIPELAGIANISM

1) The cause of predestination to grace is not the foreknowledge of naturally good works performed, nor is it on account of any preliminary acts of the natural order that are supposed to prepare for salvation.

2) Predestination to glory is not on account of foreseen supernatural merits that would continue to be effective apart from the special gift of perseverance.

More briefly: "That some are saved, is the gift of Him who saves."

B. AGAINST PREDESTINARIANISM, CALVINISM, AND JANSENISM

1) God (in a certain way) wills to save all men.

2) There is no predestination to evil, but God has decreed from all eternity to inflict eternal punishment for the sin of final impenitence which He foresaw, He being by no means the cause of it, but merely permitting it.

More briefly: “That some perish, is the fault of those who perish.”

Hence the two truths that must by all means be held as of faith on this subject are these two propositions declared by the Council of Quierzy: “That some are saved, is the gift of Him who saves. That some perish, however, is the fault of those who perish.” Pelagianism denied the first statement, predestinarianism the second. Between these two precipices of error the revealed truth towers like a mountain whose peak cannot be seen. It will be seen only in heaven, for it is the intimate reconciliation of infinite mercy, justice, and supreme liberty in the eminent Deity. Long ago Holy Scripture expressed the two extreme aspects of the mystery, which must be reconciled in these words of the prophet: “Destruction is thy own, O Israel; thy help is only in Me.”

These two truths are most certain and the assent of the Christian mind has always been given to them; but their intimate reconciliation can be clearly seen only in the beatific vision.

THE CLASSIFICATION OF THE THEOLOGICAL SYSTEMS

The revealed doctrine of predestination and of the will to save mankind is, as we have remarked, like a mountain peak towering above and between the two precipices of Pelagianism on the one hand, and predestinarianism on the other.

This representation makes it easy to see how the theological systems are at variance with one another. There are two contrary systems, each situated about half way up on opposite sides of the mountain. On one side above Semipelagianism is Molinism, and a little farther up the congruism of Suarez. On the other side we have the more rigid interpretations of Augustinianism and Thomism, which modify, so it seems, God’s universal will to save, saying that negative reprobation, which is previous to foreseen demerits, consists not only in the permission of sins that are not forgiven, but in the positive exclusion from heavenly glory as from a favor to which one is not entitled.

Midway between the two sides, however, we find the eclecticism of the congruists of the Sorbonne, who with the Molinists admitted the extrinsic

efficacy of grace for salutary acts easy of accomplishment, and who with the Thomists and the Augustinians admitted the intrinsic efficacy of grace for difficult salutary acts. This view, which seems to be practically applicable, has in its speculative aspect all the difficulties of Molinism or of the scientia media for acts easy of performance, and almost all the difficulties of Thomism for difficult salutary acts. Hence it does not set the mind at rest.

Higher up is the mountain peak, which is, indeed, inaccessible for pilgrims here on earth, this being the Deity just as it is, in whose eminence infinite mercy, justice, and supreme liberty are intimately reconciled. But before we reach this peak, it is possible for us in this life to formulate most certain principles, in which we clearly see the equilibrium or harmony of the revealed doctrine, and which enable us to determine in this life the exact location of this inaccessible peak. These principles are: (1) God does not command impossibilities, but makes it possible for all to be saved. (2) One person would not be better than another, unless such person were loved more by God. “What hast thou that thou hast not received?” But these two principles stem from one more sublime, namely, “God’s love is the source of all good,” that is, of grace by which we can keep God’s commandments, and of grace by which we actually do keep them.

But these two higher principles are the ones that were so famously formulated by St. Augustine and St. Thomas, both of whom admitted their universal validity.

Thus we can now come to the methodical classification of the Catholic systems:

Universal will to save. Gratuitous predestination. God does not command “What hast thou that thou hast impossibilities.
not received?” (I Cor. 4: 7.)

Congruism more rigid Thomists
ugustinians

Pelagianism Predestinarianism

Negation of gratuitous predestination Negation of universal will to save

The systems have been classified in three ways. The first classification, which is the one more commonly proposed, considers not so much the principles as the conclusions of the theologians. The second, proposed by Father Billot, S.J., is from the Molinist point of view and considers rather

the principles. The third, proposed by Father del Prado, O.P., is from the Thomist point of view and likewise considers not so much the conclusions as the principles.

1) According to the commonly proposed classification there are two principal tendencies. Some say the predestination of adults to glory is the result of foreseen merits; these are sponsors of the purely Molinist view, such as Vasquez and Lessius. Others say that the predestination of adults to glory is previous to foreseen merits, and that negative reprobation or non-election is previous to foreseen demerits. Such is the view of the Thomists, the Augustinians, the Scotists, and, even among congruists, it is the view of St. Robert Bellarmine and Suarez.

Nevertheless these is considerable difference of opinion between the theologians of this second category, of those, namely, who admit the absolute gratuity of predestination to glory. Almost all of the old school, namely, the Thomists, the Augustinians, and the Scotists, hold that this gratuitous predestination has its foundation in the divine predetermining decrees. St. Robert Bellarmine and Suarez, however, deny these decrees and retain the Molinist theory of the scientia media so as to explain the distribution of “congruent” grace and God’s certain knowledge of the consent given by the elect to this grace.

2) The second classification, which is the one proposed by Father Biilot, has its foundation not so much in the conclusions as in the principles. For some, he says, the foundation of foreknowledge, which implies predestination, is in the divine predetermining decrees; for others, however, it is in the scientia media. Among these latter, there are some who, like Vasquez and Lessius, admit the predestination of certain adults to glory after foreseen future merits, and the non-election of certain ones after foreseen future demerits. But there are others who, like Suarez, hold that the predestination of adults to glory is even before conditionally future foreseen merits, and that negative reprobation or non-election is even before conditionally future foreseen demerits. Finally, others will have it that predestination of adults to glory is after foreseen merits as conditionally future, but not as future. Father Billot admitted this last opinion, which he thinks is the one Molina taught. Thus, for Father Billot, what is absolutely gratuitous is the divine choice of circumstances in which God places a certain person, after having foreseen by the scientia media that in these circumstances the consent would be freely given. But as for negative

reprobation or non-election, Father Billot's view does not differ much from that of Vasquez, which latter is very difficult to maintain.

Lastly, there is a third classification proposed by Father N. del Prado, O.P. He also takes into consideration not so much the conclusions as the principles of the theologians, according as they admit as the foundation for their doctrine predetermining decrees, or the scientia media. But he insists that only the theologians admitting the divine predetermining decrees are faithful followers of St. Thomas, who wrote: "Whatsoever is in man disposing him toward salvation is all included under the effect of predestination, even the preparation for grace." This includes, therefore, even the free determination of the salutary act in so far as it is in this one rather than the other, for example, in the good thief on Mt. Calvary rather than in the other. The absolute gratuity of predestination to glory is thus clearly seen; for, since the merits of the elect are the effects of predestination, they cannot be its cause. This is truly what was meant by St. Thomas, who previously in the article just quoted had written: "Now there is no distinction between what flows from free will, and what is of predestination; as there is no distinction between what flows from a secondary cause and from a first cause." For they are two total subordinated causes, so that the entire effect is from God as the first cause, and the effect is entirely from our will as the secondary cause moved by God. They are not two partial coordinated causes, as when men are pulling a boat.

It must also be remarked that only the theologians who admit the intrinsic efficacy of the divine decrees and of grace recognize the absolute and universal validity of the principle of predilection formulated by St. Thomas in these words: "Since God's love is the cause of goodness in things, no one thing would be better than another, if God did not will greater good for one than for another." Similarly St. Thomas says: "He who makes a greater effort does so because of a greater grace; but to do so he needs to be moved by a higher cause." This principle of predilection presupposes that the divine decrees concerning our future salutary acts are intrinsically and infallibly efficacious. If, on the other hand, this intrinsic efficacy of grace is denied, the case might arise in which, of two persons who are loved and helped to the same extent by God and who are placed in the same circumstances, one would correspond with the grace received and the other would not. Thus without having been loved and helped more by God, one would prove to be better than the other by doing something either easy or

difficult to perform, whether this is the first or final act. This is indeed what, in opposition to St. Thomas, Molina maintains. He reduced the principle of predilection to the divine choice of favorable circumstances in which God places those whom He foresaw will consent to make good use of the grace in such circumstances.

Conclusion. Hence a comparison of the different systems about predestination brings us back to the question of the value of the principle of predilection, namely, that one thing would not be better than another, unless it were loved more by God. Is this principle of absolute and universal validity, as the early theologians thought, especially the Thomists, or has it merely a relative value and one that is restricted to favorable circumstances, as the Molinists and the congruists think, who admit the scientia media?

As we shall see when we come to explain the doctrine of St. Thomas in the articles of this twenty-third question, this principle of predilection, in the philosophical order, is the corollary of the principle of causality applied to God's love which is the cause of all good. Hence St. Thomas says: "Since God's love is the cause of goodness in things, one thing would not be better than another, if God did not will greater good for one than for another."

In the supernatural order, however, this principle of predilection has been revealed by St. Paul in these words: "For who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received?" He finds this principle expressed in the Old Testament writing: "For He saith to Moses: I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will show mercy to whom I will show mercy."

This principle of predilection, as we stated above, was admitted by St. Augustine even for the angels. He says, concerning the good and the bad angels: "If both were created equally good, then, while some fell by their evil will, the others were more abundantly assisted, and reached that high degree of blessedness from which they became certain that they would never fall." It is evident, of course, that the following text applies even to the angels: "For who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received?" St. Augustine also says, speaking of predestination: "Why He draweth one and not another, seek not to judge, if thou dost not wish to err." We must now explain the articles of St. Thomas.

As we said, this twenty-third question consists of three parts. The first part contains the first three articles: (1) What is meant by the name

predestination and whether persons are predestined. (2) The real definition completes this inquiry: Does it place anything in the predestined? (3) What is meant by its opposite, reprobation? The second part concerns the cause of predestination (a. 4, 5); the third part treats of the certainty of predestination (a. 6, 7, 8).

FIRST ARTICLE

WHETHER MEN ARE PREDESTINED BY GOD

State of the question. The difficulty is (1) that St. John Damascene says: “God foreknows all that is in us, but does not predetermine it all.” (2) Other creatures are directed to their end by Providence and are not said to be predestined. Then why would men be predestined?

The answer is: It is fitting that God should predestine men; and predestination, as regards its objects, is a part of providence.

1) The conclusion is proved on the authority of St. Paul, who says: “Whom He predestinated, them He also called.”

The word “predestined” (προώρισεν, from the verb ,προοορίζω) signifies to predefine, to decree. The word praedestinavit, which St. Thomas quotes from the Latin Vulgate, is a good translation of the Greek verb, though it denotes something that is sent on in advance. There is another foundation for this idea in the Old Testament, for we read: “He hath made me as a chosen arrow. In His quiver He hath hidden me.” Likewise in the New Testament: “As many as were ordained to life everlasting, believed.”

Moreover, the Fathers and Councils make use of this word “predestination.” Thus the Council of Quierzy (853) says: “God, who is good and just, chose from the same mass of perdition (descendants of Adam), according to His foreknowledge, those whom He has predestined by grace for life, and He has predestined eternal life for them. But the rest, whom by His just judgment He left in the mass of perdition, He foreknew will perish, though He did not predestine that they should perish. But because He is just He predestined eternal punishment for them.”

This dogma of predestination is affirmed also by the Council of Trent, which says: “No one, moreover, so long as he is in this mortal life, ought so far to presume as regards the secret mystery of divine predestination as to determine for certain that he is assuredly in the number of the predestinate.”

It likewise says, speaking of the gratuity of the gift of final perseverance: “Which gift indeed cannot be derived from any other but Him who is able to establish him who standeth, that he stand perseveringly, and to restore him who falleth.”

The proof from reason is as follows: “Just as there is a type in the divine mind of the ordering (disposition and direction) of all things to their end, which is called providence, so there must be a type of the ordering of those who are to be transmitted to their end, which is supernatural happiness. But the type of the transmission of the rational creature is called predestination, for to destine is to send. Therefore it is fitting that God should predestine men, and predestination is, as regards its objects, a certain part of providence.

This argument means the end of all difficulties. In the reply to the first objection it is remarked that where Damascene says that God “does not predetermine what is in us,” he means that “He does not predetermine by an imposition of necessity.” This is evident from the context in which Damascene says: “God does not will malice, nor does He compel virtue.” Hence predestination is not excluded by Him.

Reply to second objection. Irrational creatures cannot properly be said to be predestined, because they are not capable of attaining to eternal life.

Reply to third objection. Predestination applies to angels, just as it does to men. Thus St. Augustine says: “Who made the good will in the angels, if not He who created them with their good will, that is, with their chaste love, by which they adhered to Him, at the same time establishing them in their nature and endowing them with grace?” A little farther on St. Augustine says that the good angels “were more abundantly assisted and attained to their eternal happiness, whereas the others fell by reason of their evil will.”

From this article we get the definition of predestination, which is: “the type of the ordering of some persons toward eternal salvation, existing in the divine mind.” This means that it is the ordering, preconceived in the divine mind, of some to salvation. On this point St, Thomas is completely in agreement with St. Augustine, who defined predestination as “the foreknowledge and the preparation of those gifts whereby they who are delivered are most certainly delivered.”

In this definition St. Augustine by “foreknowledge” does not have in mind merely speculative knowledge, or the scientia media by which God before any decree foresaw what we of ourselves will do; but he is referring

to that practical and effective knowledge by which God foresees what He Himself will do. It is therefore dependent on His executive decree. Wherefore it is said that predestination is “the foreknowledge and preparation of the gifts, whereby they who are delivered, are most certainly delivered.” St. Augustine had also said: “By predestination God knew what He will do.”

St. Thomas likewise says: “Although knowledge as such does not concern things to be done, nevertheless practical knowledge does, and it is to this knowledge that predestination refers,” This means that predestination refers to God’s knowledge, “which has the will joined to it, and is the cause of things.”

Thus St. Thomas explains St. Paul’s words: “Whom He foreknew, He also predestinated,” as meaning that He foreknew by the practical knowledge that regulates the choice, and the choice of the will precedes predestination as will be stated farther on; for predestination, as St. Thomas declares, is an act of the intellect, which means that it is an efficacious command concerning the means, concerning the execution of the means already chosen.

To predestine, indeed, means the ordering of the means that are efficacious for the salvation of the elect. But ordering is an act of the intellect, and the ordering of the efficacious means for the attainment of anything is a command that directs the execution of a preconceived and chosen thing. Also providence, of which predestination is an objective part, is an act of prudence, or a command that presupposes choice.

First doubt. In what sense is predestination an objective part of providence?

Reply. It is not to be understood as constituting a subjective part of providence. This means that it is not subordinated to providence as the species is subordinated to its genus. Some said that there are four kinds of providence: (1) providence that concerns the order of nature; (2) general providence that concerns the salvation of all human beings; (3) special providence that concerns the salvation of the predestined, or predestination; (4) providence that concerns the order of the hypostatic union. The distinction between them would be virtual.

St. Thomas says at the end of the argumentative part of this article: “Predestination, as regards its objects, is a part of providence.” This means that predestination constitutes some part of the material object of

providence. Thus it is that one and the same divine providence concerns the three orders of nature, grace, and the hypostatic union, there being no virtual distinction between these kinds of providence, and it is only because of the different objects that this divine providence receives different names. In this respect it resembles the divine knowledge, which in itself is only of one kind, yet because of its different material objects it is called the knowledge of simple intelligence, of vision, and of approbation.

The reason why divine providence is one and undivided is because its object is one, namely, the universe, which consists of three subordinated orders, and there is one end to which all these orders are ordained, which is God's glory. The Salmanticenses clearly show, in discussing the motive of the incarnation, that God by one and the same decree willed to manifest His goodness by means of the universe in which the subordination between the three orders is as follows: first comes the order of nature, which is subordinated to that of grace with permission of original sin, both of which are subordinated to the hypostatic union.

Second doubt. Does predestination add anything to providence in general?

Reply. It adds the efficacy of the means and the infallible attainment of the end. In other words, as Alvarez explains, by divine providence the end directly intended by God's consequent will is always attained, namely, the good of the universe; but for the attainment of this end certain evils are permitted, and thus certain things are indirectly intended; these are willed by God's antecedent will, such as that all the fruits do not become ripe, that all human beings are not saved. Contrary to this, since predestination depends solely on God's consequent will, it always obtains its effect, in this sense that the predestined are always saved. Nevertheless, that the predestined in the course of their lives here on earth are permitted to fall into sin is more probably the effect of predestination, so as to make the elect more humble, as will be stated farther on.

SECOND ARTICLE

WHETHER PREDESTINATION PLACES ANYTHING IN THE PREDESTINED

This article completes the definition of predestination, a point that is particularly evident from the fourth objection, which states that if

predestination places anything in the predestined, such as grace, then it is something temporal, and is not eternal and uncreated.

The reply of St. Thomas is: Predestination is not anything in the predestined, but only in the person who predestines. But the execution of predestination is in a passive way in the predestined.

The first part is proved from the fact that predestination, as it was stated, is a part of providence. Now providence is not anything in the things provided for, but is a type of the ordering of those things that exist in the divine mind.

The second part is proved from the fact that, just as the execution of providence, which is the divine government, is actively in God, as an action that is formally immanent and virtually transitive, but is passively in the things governed; so the execution of predestination is passively in the predestined.

First doubt. But what is this execution of predestination, or what are its effects?

St. Thomas replies at the end of the argumentative part of this article that these effects are the calling and magnification, for St. Paul says: “And whom He predestinated, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified.”

Several Thomists, comparing what St. Thomas says in this article with other passages in his various works, define the effect of predestination by saying that it is whatever God does by reason of His efficacious intention of saving some in preference to others. Hence four conditions are required for anything to be the effect of predestination: (1) that the thing is caused by God; (2) that it is the result of God’s efficacious intention to save; (3) that it leads one certainly to eternal life, for, since it is the result of God’s efficacious intention, it cannot be frustrated; (4) that it is the result of Christ’s merits, inasmuch as we are concerned here with the predestination of men in the state of fallen nature.

These four conditions are verified primarily in the proper effects of predestination, which result from it by an elective process. Such are the efficacious call, justification not interrupted by sin and continuing up to the moment of death, and finally glorification. But besides these proper effects there are others that are not a matter of choice, but are imperative only by reason of predestination. Such are the good disposition of the predestined and their natural endowments, which depend by way of choice on the

general direction of providence in the natural order. Thus in our human life we distinguish between acts elicited by charity and those commanded by this virtue, which are, of course, elicited by a virtue that is subordinated to charity.

Having posited these conditions, Thomists are generally enough agreed, from a consideration of the various texts of St. Thomas, in arranging the effects of predestination according to the following schema:

Effects of predestination Elective Glorification.

Good use of grace in the life of the elect (a. 5). This is against Molina's theory.

Uninterrupted justification ending in final perseverance. Also interrupted justification inasmuch as the remembrance of this results in a life of penance by the predestined, and inasmuch as lost merits are restored.

Especially the efficacious call in the predestined; also the inefficacious call, inasmuch as its remembrance by the predestined leads them to give thanks to God.

Imperative Poverty, diseases, misfortunes, death in such circumstances as assure one of being saved.

Naturally moral good acts, or the good use of natural qualities, such as moral rectitude, meekness.

Good disposition of the predestined, natural endowments, such as being born of good parents.

It is also more probable that the permission of sin in the predestined, inasmuch as it is the means of greater sanctification for them, is the effect of predestination. This last statement must be understood in the right sense. Indeed it is not sin but the permission of sin that is the effect of predestination, inasmuch as this permission is meant to be the occasion of leading the elect to greater humility and more fervent charity, as is seen in the life of St. Mary Magdalen, or in St. Peter's life after his repentance for having denied the Lord. This doctrine has its foundation in these words of St. Paul: "To them that love God (until death), all things work together unto good"; and St. Augustine adds: "all things, even sins," inasmuch as they serve as the occasion to make one more humble.

Second doubt. How are the natural gifts of the elect the effect of predestination, and how are they conducive to their salvation?

It is easy to see that natural gifts are conducive to salvation, since the natural inclination to fortitude is the foundation for stability in the life of the

Christian. But it is more difficult to say how these natural gifts of the elect are the effect of predestination, because the order of nature is presupposed by the order of grace, to which predestination belongs. Hence there is not absolute agreement among Thomists in the explanation of this point, for they arrange in different orders the ordaining of the divine decrees concerning nature, grace, and the hypostatic union.

Some say: (1) God, intending to manifest His goodness, willed the order of nature; (2) He ordained intellectual creatures to a supernatural end; (3) having foreseen Adam's sin and original sin, He decreed the reparation of the human race through Christ the Redeemer; (4) in Christ, God chose some in a more special manner and effectively, leaving the rest alone. According to this order, it is difficult to conceive how the very being of the predestined, native endowments, and other natural qualities, are the effect of predestination, and are thus conducive to salvation. For, according to this view, all these natural qualities, which will be realized in course of time, are supposed as already present in the previous signs. These Thomists seem to multiply excessively the number of virtually distinct divine decrees, nor do they answer the question why God permitted Adam's sin and original sin. This order was followed by John of St. Thomas and Billuart in discussing the motive of the incarnation.

Other Thomists, however, such as the Salmanticenses, Godoi, and Gonet, differ, and with good reason, from John of St. Thomas and Billuart. In discussing the motive of the incarnation, they say that God permits sin only for a greater good. We cannot, of course, say a priori for what greater good He permitted Adam's sin; but after the incarnation this good is clearly seen, as St. Thomas remarks, who says: "God allows evils to happen in order to bring a greater good therefrom. Hence it is written (Rom. 5: 20): 'Where sin abounded, grace did more abound.' Hence, too, in the blessing of the paschal candle we say: 'O happy fault, that merited such and so great a redeemer.' " Thus God permitted Adam's sin on account of the redemptive incarnation that was first willed in the genus of final cause, but not in the genus of material cause that is to be perfected, just as He wills the matter as capable of being actuated by its form, and the form as actuating the matter. Thus God permitted Adam's sin and the abounding of the offense in order that grace might abound yet more. Nor is there any need for a multiplicity of decrees, but by one and the same decree God willed that the natural order should be subordinated to the supernatural order (with permission of

Adam’s sin), and that the supernatural order should be subordinated to the hypostatic union. In this way it is more readily shown how the natural gifts of the elect serve to promote the salvation of the predestined. Thus the natural intelligence with which St. Augustine and St. Thomas were endowed, helped them in their theological studies. Likewise, in the elect the inclination to prudence is subordinated to infused prudence, just as the natural inclination to fortitude is subordinated to the Christian virtue of fortitude in the martyrs.

Not only do the natural gifts and temperament of the elect promote their salvation, but also their misfortunes and sicknesses do, inasmuch as “to them who love God all things work together unto good,” since there could be no heroic patience without suffering.

THIRD ARTICLE

WHETHER GOD REPROBATES ANY MAN

Since opposites have their foundation in the same principle, reprobation must be defined by its opposite, which is predestination.

Reply. It is of faith that there is such a thing as reprobation, which does not mean, however, predestination to evil. The Council of Quierzy says against Gottschalk: “God, who is good and just, chose from the same mass of perdition, according to His foreknowledge, those whom He has predestined for life, and He has predestined eternal life for them. But the rest, whom by His just judgment He left in the mass of perdition, He foreknew will perish, though He did not predestine that they should perish. But because He is just, He predestined eternal punishment for them.”

Holy Scripture speaks of the reprobates, of the son of perdition. St. Paul says: “I chastise my body . . . lest . . . I myself should become a castaway.” Christ Himself reveals to us the sentence of judgment: “Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire.”

Theological proof. The following answer is given to those who inquire about the definition and fitness of reprobation: It is the part of providence which permits the failure of some through their own fault to attain glory; and because it was their own fault, the penalty of damnation is inflicted on them. Thus reprobation is the opposite of predestination. It is a question of sin which de facto is not forgiven, especially the sin of final impenitence.

That it is fitting for God to reprobate some is proved as follows: It belongs to God's providence, as universal provider, to permit for the general good of the universe the failure among defectible things that are subjected to this providence. But intellectual creatures, who are destined for glory, are of their nature defectible. Therefore it belongs to God's providence to permit that some through their own fault fail to attain their end, and to inflict the penalty of damnation for their sin. The motive, however, of this divine permission will be discussed farther on along with the motive of predestination.

First doubt. Does reprobation imply only foreknowledge?

Reply. It does not, but as St. Thomas says: "It includes the will to permit a person to fall into sin, and to impose the punishment of damnation on account of that sin." This negative reprobation is the will to permit sin which de facto will not be forgiven; and, as we shall see, this negative reprobation is previous to foreseen demerits that are not to be forgiven, which are not infallibly foreseen as future without this divine permission.

Positive reprobation, however, is the will to inflict the penalty of damnation for sin, and this is the result of foreseen demerits; for every just punishment presupposes a sin, on account of which the punishment is inflicted.

Second doubt. What must be said of the opinion of certain Thomists who maintain that negative reprobation, which is prior to the foreseeing of demerits, consists in the positive exclusion from glory, as a gift to which they are not entitled? Such was the opinion of Alvarez, the Salmanticenses, John of St. Thomas, Gonet, and Contenson.

Reply. It is more difficult to reconcile this opinion with God's universal will to save, and there seems to be no foundation for this theory in the present article of St. Thomas, or in any other passage of his works. All that St. Thomas says in this article and elsewhere is: "Reprobation includes the will to permit a person to fall into sin," especially into the sin of final impenitence and other sins that dispose one for it. He does not speak of the positive exclusion from glory as from a gift to which one is not entitled.

St. Thomas says, indeed, in the reply to the first objection of this article: "To some God does not wish this good which is eternal life," which means that He wills eternal life to them only antecedently and not consequently or efficaciously. But to exclude them from glory as from a gift to which they are not entitled would be not only not to will, but to be unwilling; it would

be an act of positive exclusion from glory. This seems, however, too harsh a view, and by this very fact, these men, before their demerits were foreseen, would be excluded not only from their ultimate supernatural end, but also from their ultimate natural end.

Similarly, in the reply to the second objection it is stated that "reprobation is the cause of abandonment by God," that is, after sin and on account of sin.

In the reply to the third objection it is explained that the reprobate can be saved, although de facto he will not be saved. This point is better explained, however, if we bear in mind that before foreseen demerits such a person is not excluded from glory as from a gift to which one is not entitled.

Therefore this opinion of certain Thomists seems scarcely reconcilable with God's universal will to save. For God, to the utmost extent, sincerely wills by His antecedent will that all be saved, so that it is their own fault if they are damned. But He would not will all to be saved if, before having foreseen any sin on the part of the reprobate, He had decreed positively to exclude such a person from eternal salvation as from a gift to which one is not entitled.

Confirmation of proof. God wills whatever there is of good in anything. But that a person, who is ordained to an ultimate end that is both natural and supernatural, before the foreseeing of sin, be excluded from this end as from a gift to which one is not entitled, is not in itself anything good. Therefore God, before the foreseeing of sin, does not exclude a person from the ultimate natural and supernatural end as from a gift to which one is not entitled.

Hence negative reprobation is simply God's will to permit one through one's own fault to fail to reach the ultimate end. Therefore Thomist theologians generally distinguish between the permission of sin and the denial of efficacious grace; for this latter is an evil that implies a penalty and it therefore presupposes sin; whereas, on the contrary, the permission of sin precedes the sin, and is not a penalty, but something that is not good; for privation is more than a simple denial. There is a great difference, indeed, between not giving something that is gratuitous and refusing to give it.

Objection. Since God proceeds according to order, He first intends the end before the means. But in the case of reprobation, exclusion from glory is the end, and the permission of sin is the means. Therefore God first intends exclusion from glory, and then the permission of sin.

Reply. I concede the major, and deny the minor; for the exclusion from glory as from a gift to which one is not entitled is the end in the case of reprobation; for in the order of execution, the end is that which is attained. But God in the order of execution excludes no one from glory as from a gift to which one is not entitled, but only as a punishment for sin.

Moreover, we must not look for absolute parallelism between reprobation and predestination, because divine providence is not related to good and evil in the same way. It directly intends good things, because these are in themselves appetible; but it does not indirectly intend, but only permits, evil things, because these are not in themselves appetible; and having permitted them, it orders them to some good, and it permits them only because of some good.

Hence, because God first intends the general good of the universe, which demands the manifestations of His justice, He at once and directly wills simply to permit sin, and then He ordains the punishment of the sin which has been permitted and foreseen, which is a good thing; for it is just that sin should be punished, and in this we see the splendor of God's justice.

Third doubt. What is meant by God's permission of sin?

Reply. God's permission of sin means that the will, which by its nature is defectible, is not maintained by Him at that particular time in the performance of good; for if this will were maintained by Him in the performance of good at that particular time, sin would be prevented and would not be permitted.

But that the will is not maintained in the performance of good requires careful consideration. There is a mystery in this, and we must avoid contradiction. Three principles must be noted.

1) That the will, which by its nature is defectible, is not maintained by God in the performance of good is not yet an evil, because it is not the privation of a good to which one is entitled.

God is not bound always to maintain in the performance of good the will which by its nature is defectible; whereas, on the contrary, He is bound always to maintain it in existence along with the immortal soul.

Similarly, on the part of the creature, the will, which by its nature is defectible, is not bound always to be maintained in the performance of good, but only in being. If it were entitled to the former, then it would be impeccable.

Hence it is not an evil that the will, which by its nature is defectible, is not maintained by God in the performance of good. Nevertheless we do not say that it is a good. Thus the lack of greater perfection in a less fervent act of charity is not a good; neither is it an evil, because it is not the privation of a good that is due to one. Thus there is a great difference between the lack of greater perfection, and the smallest venial sin, which already is purely a moral evil.

2) Also the first sin that is committed is a moral evil, or the privation of that rectitude required of anyone. But sin follows inevitably the divine permission of sin which, as was stated, implies that one is not maintained by God in the performance of good. Thus the divine permission of sin is good because of the end in view; whereas that one is not maintained by God in the performance of good is neither a good nor an evil. But sin which infallibly follows therefrom, as a necessary consequence not of causality but of inference, is simply a moral evil or a sin.

The denial of God's efficacious grace is not indeed a moral evil, but it is a just punishment which presupposes the guilt of sin. To be without grace is a privation of good, and is not a moral evil but a punishment. Thus this denial of grace differs from the non-maintenance by God of anyone in the performance of good, which precedes even the first sin, and which is neither a moral evil nor a punishment.

Calvin confuses the first principle with the third, namely, God's permission of sin with His denial of grace, whereas St. Thomas plainly distinguishes between them. Similarly, in the reply to the second objection of this article he says: "Guilt proceeds from the free will of the person who is reprobated and deserted by grace. In this way the word of the prophet is true, "Destruction is thy own, O Israel." Thus there is a difference between God's permission of sin, which precedes it and which is only its indispensable condition (not being at all its cause, either direct or indirect), and being abandoned by Him, which is the result of sin.

FOURTH ARTICLE

WHETHER THE PREDESTINED ARE ELECTED BY GOD

State of the question. In this title the word "elected" as Cajetan observes, is taken strictly in the sense as expressing an act of the will by which, when

the choice is offered to one, a person prefers or pre-elects one thing to another.

The principal difficulty is that to which reference is made in the third objection, which is: Election implies some discrimination. But God wills all men to be saved (I Tim. 2: 4). Therefore predestination, which preordains men toward eternal salvation, is without election.

The reply is in the affirmative, however, and is as follows: all the predestinate are objects of election and love, so that love precedes election in the order of reason, and election precedes predestination.

1) It is proved on the authority of Holy Scripture, for St. Paul says: “He chose us in Him (Christ) before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and unspotted in His sight in charity. Who hath predestinated us unto the adoption of children through Jesus Christ unto Himself: according to the purpose of His will.” As St. Thomas explains: “He chose us, not because we were saints, for we were not; but He chose us that we might become saints and be without blemish.” This is what St. Augustine had already said.

St. Paul clearly indicates election in the following passage: “For when the children were not yet born, nor had done any good or evil (that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand), not of works, but of Him that calleth, it was said to her: The elder shall serve the younger.” And again: “Even so then at this present time also, there is a remnant saved according to the election of grace. And if by grace, it is not now by works: otherwise grace is no more grace.”

This election that precedes predestination is expressed by St. Paul in the following words: “Whom He foreknew, He also predestinated,” that is, whom He has foreknown looking favorably upon them or with predilection. There are several similar passages in Holy Scripture concerning the elect.

Theological proof. The conclusion is proved by means of two syllogisms. (Some have said recently that Scotus was the first who said: “God first wills the end before willing the means for the end.” It is at once evident that this doctrine is to be found in the works of St. Thomas, and it belongs to the very notions of both providence and prudence.)

Nothing is directed toward an end unless the will for that end already exists. But predestination is a part of providence which, like prudence, is the ordering of some things toward an end. Therefore the predestination of

some to eternal salvation, presupposes that God wills their salvation; and to this latter belong both election and love.

In the second syllogism it is shown that in God, though not in ourselves, love precedes election. It is proved as follows: God's will, by which He wishes good to someone, is the cause of that good possessed by some in preference to others. But God by His love wills for some the good of eternal salvation, and by His election wills this good for them in preference to others. Therefore God's love precedes election in the order of reason, just as election precedes predestination.

The case is the reverse with our will which, in loving anyone, does not cause good in the person loved, but is incited to love because of the good pre-existing in the person. Hence we choose someone whom we love, and thus in us election precedes love.

This means, as stated above: "God's love infuses and creates goodness in things." Therefore God loves before He elects. Also: "God's will is the cause of goodness in things; and the reason why some things are better than others is that God wills a greater good for them. Hence it follows that He loves the better things more." And again: "Those are the better and the better loved who have more grace." This is the principle of predilection that has already been explained.

This principle is denied by Molina, who says: "Given an equal grace or even a less grace, it can happen that one of two persons called is converted, and the other not." Hence it is not surprising that Molina wrote: "Election did not precede predestination. . . . Others affirmed the opposite. . . . And this seems to be the opinion of St. Thomas (Ia, q. 23, a. 4). . . . But I never found it acceptable."

In Molina's opinion, predestination to glory is because of at least conditionally future foreseen merits. Thus, as he himself acknowledges, he departs essentially from the teaching of St. Thomas.

Nevertheless, even Molina has to admit that God freely chose to place Peter in those particular circumstances in which He foresaw that he would give his good consent, and He chose to place Judas in other circumstances.

Hence, not even does Molina believe that God wills equally the salvation of all men. If he affirmed this, then he would be denying the very mystery of predestination, for the Council of Quierzy says: "That some are saved, is the gift of Him who saves; that some perish, is the fault of those who perish."

St. Thomas points out in his reply to the third objection of this article that God's universal will to save is His antecedent will, which means that it is His conditioned, but not His consequent, will. This means that God wills all men to be saved, unless higher ends prevent this.

FIFTH ARTICLE

WHETHER THE FOREKNOWLEDGE OF MERITS IS THE CAUSE OF PREDESTINATION

State of the question. On this subject we must recall the principal systems according to the names given them by modern theologians. They have, indeed, already been stated in the prologue to this question.

Predestination to glory — Not because of foreseen merits — Independently of the scientia media: St. Augustine

Dependent on the scientia media for the distribution of congruent grace: congruism of St. Bellarmine and of Suarez

Because of foreseen merits — At least conditionally future: Molina, Billot

Absolutely future: Vasquez

St. Thomas in his state of the question of this article shows that he is aware of the arguments of his adversaries. He says: (1) it seems that foreknowledge of merits is the cause of predestination, for the Apostle says: "Whom He foreknew He also predestinated"; (2) because otherwise there would be no reason for predestination or it would be unreasonable; (3) because it is unjust to give unequal things to equals.

Yet St. Thomas replies in the counterargument by saying that foreknowledge of merits is not the cause or reason of predestination. It is his principal conclusion, Suarez and St. Bellarmine agreeing with him on this point.

St. Thomas means that foreknowledge of merits is not the cause of predestination to glory, which was already defined by him as "the type of the direction of a rational creature to the end of eternal life." Moreover, predestination only to grace, which is common both to the elect and the reprobates, is not predestination in the strict sense of the word.

St. Thomas in a few words proves this conclusion on the authority of Holy Scripture in the present article, and more at length in his other works.

St. Paul says: “Not by the works of justice, which we have done, but according to His mercy, He saved us.” Similarly we read: “I will have mercy on whom I will; and I will be merciful to whom it shall please Me.” “He saved me, because He was well pleased with me.” “I confess to Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones. Yea, Father, for so hath it seemed good in Thy sight.” That some receive greater helps than others, as stated in these texts, is to be attributed to God’s predilection and good pleasure. There are also other texts from St. Paul, which we already quoted in proof of election. These are: “He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy.” “So then it is not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.” “Who hath first given to Him, and recompense shall be made him? For of Him and by Him and in Him are all things.” “For who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received?” This is tantamount to saying that our merits are the effect of God’s predilection, and therefore they cannot be its cause. “O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are His judgments and how unsearchable His ways!”

Moreover, that St. Augustine understood these texts in this sense, is recognized by St. Bellarmine and Suarez, even by Molina, for he departs from the opinion of St. Augustine when he says: “And this opinion of St. Augustine alarmingly disturbed the minds of many of the faithful, as also of the learned, and it was even the occasion that their salvation was placed in jeopardy. . . . But the divinelike Thomas, and subsequently many of the Scholastics, followed St. Augustine’s opinion.” Farther on, when Molina is again explaining his opinion, which is the theory of the scientia media, he says: “If these principles had always been given and explained, perhaps neither the Pelagian heresy would have sprung up . . . , nor would so many of the faithful have been disturbed in their mind, and joined the ranks of the Pelagians, because of Augustine’s opinion.” As if God finally revealed to Molina alone what to Augustine, the holy Fathers, and the most learned of theologians for countless centuries He has not at all made known.

In the prologue to this question we have already seen that this argument derives its greatest force from the texts of Holy Scripture and the writings of St. Augustine.

The principle of predilection as already formulated by St. Thomas elucidates this whole question: “Since God’s love is the cause of goodness in things, no one thing would be better than another, if God did not will greater good for one than for another.” The equivalent of this principle is declared by St. Paul when he says: “For who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received?”

In the argumentative part of the article, St. Thomas first reminds us of the condemned heresies, which he arranges and passes judgment on in accordance with the principle of predilection as above enunciated. He begins by remarking:

1) “Nobody has been so insane as to say that merit is the cause of divine predestination as regards the act of the predestinator”; for this is the uncreated act by which God does not will this on account of that, but wills this to be as means to that. This implies that by one uncreated act He wills all things, and His willing the end is not the cause of His willing the means, but He wills the ordering of the means to the end.

But the question is: “Whether, as regards the effect, predestination has any cause; or, what comes to the same thing, whether God preordained that He would give the effect of predestination to anyone on account of merits.”

On this point there were three errors:

Predestination is because of foreseen merits In a former life This was the opinion of Origen, who thought that souls were created in the beginning. But this contradicts St. Paul, who says: “For when the children were not yet born nor had done any good or evil . . . not of works but of Him that calleth, it was said to her: ‘The elder shall serve the younger.’ “

In this life Before justification, that is, because of the beginning of salvation made by one. So said the Pelagians and Semipelagians. But this contradicts St. Paul, who says: “Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves as of ourselves.”

After justification, that is, God predestined some to grace, because He foreknew that they will make good use of it. St. Thomas replies: “There is no distinction between what flows from free will and what is of predestination; as there is no distinction between what flows from a secondary cause and from a first cause.

It must be observed that the refutation of this third error holds good against Molina, even against all who admit the scientia media, which

supposes that there is a distinction between what flows from free will and what is of predestination (that is, from either indeterminate grace or even a congruent grace).

The first and second causes, indeed, are two causes that are not coordinated but subordinated, such that the second cause acts only inasmuch as it is moved by the first cause. This doctrine of St. Thomas holds good, too, against all who admit a simultaneous concurrence, or even an indifferent physical premotion, as Pignataro, S.J., and others admit. For even these latter theologians maintain that there is a distinction between what flows from the first cause, namely, the being of the act, and what flows from the free second cause, namely, the determination of the free will foreseen by the scientia media. Willingly or unwillingly, they have to admit a certain passivity or dependence on God's knowledge, in Him who is pure Act; for of two men equally tempted and helped, according to their opinion, one could be converted and the other not. Thus man would single himself out, and this differentiation would come from the man and not from God, who in His foreknowledge would be a passive onlooker.

In the second part of the body of this article St. Thomas posits two conclusions, and two more in the reply to the third objection.

First conclusion: "There is no reason why one effect of predestination should not be the reason or cause of another; a subsequent effect being the reason of a previous effect, as its final cause; and the previous effect being the reason of the subsequent as its meritorious cause, which is reduced to the disposition of the matter. For the end is first in intention and last in execution. Thus causes mutually interact from different points of view, as God made the matter for the form, and the form as actuating the matter. Thus glory is the final cause of merits, and merits dispose one for the attainment of glory.

Thus "God preordained to give glory on account of merit" (for in the order of execution, contrary to what the Protestants say, God does not give glory gratis, but according to merit); and "He preordained to give grace (efficacious, as a result of His consequent will) to merit glory."

Thus God predestines to glory before He predestines to grace, for the wise man first intends the end before the means to the end, because, as stated in the preceding article, "nothing is directed toward an end unless the will for that end already exists." Scotus, St. Robert Bellarmine, and Suarez agree with St. Thomas and the Thomists on this point.

In this first conclusion St. Thomas does not mean that God preordained to give extrinsically efficacious grace to anyone to merit glory. This is excluded by what he has already said about God's consequent will, and concerning predestination in this article, he says: "There is no distinction between what flows from free will, and what is of predestination." The proof of the following conclusion likewise excludes this intention of giving extrinsically efficacious grace for the meriting of glory.

Second conclusion. "It is impossible that the whole of the effect of predestination in general should have any cause as coming from us.

This proposition is admitted by Molina, though in a restricted sense, inasmuch as it implies that the whole of the effect of predestination includes the first grace, which cannot be merited by us. But St. Thomas attaches a much deeper meaning to this proposition, as is evident from the reason he gives.

The reason is: "Whatever is in man disposing him toward salvation is all included under the effect of predestination, even the preparation for grace. For neither does this happen otherwise than by divine help, according to the prophet Jeremias (Lam. 5: 21): Convert us, O Lord, to Thee, and we shall be converted."

This means that even the free determination of our salutary act disposing us to justification and afterward the meritorious acts of the elect, are all included under the effect of predestination. Therefore no cause or reason can be given for predestination, and hence it is not because of foreseen merits. This is against what Molina says, even against congruism, which states that the congruous grace is not of itself efficacious. Thus in this system of congruism the free determination of the merits of the elect is not properly the effect of predestination.

The reason given by St. Thomas is therefore the corollary to the principle of predilection, which states that, "since God's love is the cause of goodness in things, no one thing would be better than another if God did not will greater good for one than for another." "What hast thou that thou hast not received?" Hence, more briefly: The merits of the elect are the effect of predestination, and hence they cannot be its cause.

Therefore St. Thomas adds at the end of the argumentative part of this article: "Yet predestination has in this way, in regard to its effect, the goodness of God for its reason; toward which the whole effect of predestination is directed as to an end; and from which it proceeds, as from

its first moving principle." This manifests God's goodness, and is explained in the reply to the third objection.

In the reply to the third objection there are two conclusions.

The third conclusion is: "God willed to manifest His goodness in men; in respect to those whom He predestines, by means of His mercy, in sparing them; and in respect to others whom He reprobates, by means of His justice, in punishing them. This is the reason why God elects some and rejects others." Hence this mystery is both most charming and terrible.

St. Paul proves this by saying: "God, willing to show His wrath (that is, His vindictive justice) . . . , endured (that is, permitted) with much patience vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction, that He might show the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He hath prepared unto glory."

This finds its explanation in the fact that God made all things in order to manifest His goodness, and indeed in many ways, because created things cannot attain to the simplicity of God. Thus God allows some evils lest many good things may not happen. But God's goodness, inasmuch as it is self-diffusive, is the foundation for His mercy; and inasmuch as He has an indisputable right to be loved above all things, this constitutes the foundation for His justice. Thus this mystery is a fitting manifestation not only of God's mercy, but also of the splendor of His justice, and both express His goodness.

The fourth conclusion is: "But why He chooses some for glory and reprobates others, has no reason except the divine will."

Two proofs are given for this statement: (1) There is the authority of St. Augustine, who says: "Why He draws one, and another He draws not, seek not to judge, if thou dost not wish to err." (2) From the analogy prevailing between natural things and those made by art: thus, too, it depends on the simple will of God that this particular part of matter is under the form of earth, and that other part under the nobler form of fire. Similarly, from the simple will of the artificer it depends that this stone is in the lower part of the wall, and that other stone (which is absolutely the same in size and material) is in the upper part of the wall.

The analogy holds good, for the different goodness that is found in men is not theirs in their own right; because, since God's love is the cause of goodness in things, no one thing would be better than another if God did not will greater good for one than for another." "What hast thou that thou hast not received?"

The objection was: It is unjust that unequal things be given to equals.

The reply to this objection is: “In things which are given gratuitously a person can give more or less, just as he pleases (provided he deprives nobody of his due), without any infringement of justice. This is what the master of the house said: ‘Take what is thine and go thy way. . . . Is it not lawful for me to do what I will?’ “ But in the elect, efficacious grace is the effect of predestination, not theirs by right, but gratuitously given to them. Yet sufficient grace is given to all adults, which makes it possible for them to keep God’s commandments. But the one who resists sufficient grace deserves to be deprived of efficacious grace.

The doctrine of this article was distorted by Calvin, but in itself it is a most beautiful and perfect expression of the traditional teaching on predestination.

This conclusion is confirmed by the teaching of Trent on the gratuitousness of the gift of final perseverance, which is freely given to the good thief on Calvary rather than to the other, and to Peter in preference to Judas. The Council of Trent says: “As regards the gift of perseverance, of which it is written: ‘He that shall persevere unto the end, he shall be saved,’ it cannot be derived from any other but Him who is able to make him stand that he stand perseveringly, and to restore him who falls.”

Hence the common teaching is that the just person cannot merit the gift of final perseverance; for this gift is no more than the continuance of the state of grace up to the moment of death, and the state of grace is the principle of merit, and this latter cannot be merited. If, therefore, some will have it that predestination is because of foreseen merits, they must at least add that these merits do not continue up to the moment of death without the gratuitous gift of final perseverance, which is granted only to the elect.

Thus St. Thomas in teaching the absolute gratuity of predestination retains the doctrine of Holy Scripture, especially of St. Paul, who says: “What hast thou that thou hast not received?” This also is the conclusion reached by St. Robert Bellarmine and Suarez, who taught the absolute gratuity of predestination to glory, although they retained the theory of the scientia media in order to explain the distribution of congruous grace and to explain that the effect of this grace may be infallibly known by God.

Therefore all this teaching of St. Thomas on predestination is virtually contained in the principle of predilection: “Since God’s love is the cause of

goodness in things, no one would be better than another, unless such person were loved more and helped more by God."

This principle applies even to the angels. Hence St. Augustine says of them: "If both were created equally good, then, while some fell by their evil will, the others were more abundantly assisted, and reached that high degree of blessedness from which they became certain they would never fall."

Finally, there is the statement of the Council of Quierzy, which is taken from the writings of St. Prosper. It reads as follows: "Almighty God wills, without exception, all men to be saved, though not all are saved. That some are saved, however, is the gift of Him who saves; if some perish, it is the fault of them that perish."

This doctrine eliminates systems founded on motives that are too human, and there is left the revealed mystery of predestination as the object of contemplation.

THE MOTIVE FOR NEGATIVE REPROBATION

First doubt. What is the motive for negative reprobation taken absolutely, not as yet considering it as it is the reprobation of this particular person rather than of a certain other?

In the explanation of the third article we said that negative reprobation, according to St. Thomas' opinion, consists in "the will to permit a person to fall into sin," whereas positive reprobation is "the will to impose the punishment of damnation on account of that sin."

Now the doctrine concerning the motive for negative reprobation must be carefully formulated, so that the disadvantages mentioned above (a. 3) may be avoided. These disadvantages follow from the opinion of those who maintain that this reprobation is the positive exclusion from glory as from a gift to which one is not entitled, and it is difficult to reconcile this view with God's universal will to save.

First of all, it is evident that the motive for negative reprobation or for the permission of the sin of final impenitence and of sins that lead to this impenitence cannot be the foreseeing itself of this sin; for God could not foresee the sin of final impenitence, for instance, the impenitence of Judas, as something not only possible but future, if He did not permit it. Likewise, the sins that precede this final sin could not de facto dispose one for that sin if God did not permit it; for God can come to the aid of hardened sinners,

and He frequently does. The question is why God permitted sins not to be forgiven in others, either original sin or personal sins.

There is a great difference, indeed, between the permission of a sin, such as Peter's sin, so that one may become more humble, at the same time intending that one's salvation be assured, and, on the other hand, the permission of a sin that will not be forgiven, such as the sin of Judas, not intending that one's salvation be assured.

From what has been said, however, it is evident that God permits some to fall into sin before having foreseen their demerits. By the very fact that some in preference to others are predestined to glory before the foreseeing of their merits, it necessarily follows that those are permitted to fall into sin who are not included in the number of the elect.

More briefly: since negative reprobation is the will to permit some to fall into sin and fail to attain the glory of heaven, and since the permission of sin in the reprobates precedes this sin, this sin cannot be its motive.

We must always return to those higher principles, by which in the ninth century the controversy on predestination between the Augustinian bishops of Gaul and others was terminated. The Council of Thurzey (860) formulated these principles in the following words: "Whatsoever the Lord pleased He hath done in heaven and on earth (Ps. 134). For nothing is done in heaven or on earth except what He Himself is pleased to do (such as the conversion of Peter and of the good thief), or justly permits to be done (such as the sin of Judas and of the bad thief)."

Therefore, what is the motive for the permission of the sin of final impenitence, and of sins which de facto are not forgiven and which lead to the sin of final impenitence?

The general answer to this question is that God wills a thing only in so far as it is good. Hence it is only on account of some good to be obtained that He wills to permit some, through their own fault, to fail to attain the glory of heaven. Therefore St. Augustine says: "God by no means would permit any evil in His works unless He were powerful enough and good enough to bring good out of evil." More briefly: God permits evil only for a greater good.

But for what greater good does God permit the final impenitence of many men and angels? St. Thomas answers this in his reply to the third objection of this article: "God willed to manifest His goodness in men; in respect to those whom He predestines, by means of His mercy, in sparing them; and in

respect of others, whom He reprobates, by means of His justice, in punishing them. This is the reason why God elects some and rejects others." We find this already declared somewhat differently by St. Paul, who says: "God, willing to show His wrath (that is, His vindictive justice) and to make His power known, endured (that is, permitted) with much patience vessels of wrath fitted for destruction, that He might show the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He hath prepared unto glory."

Therefore the reason for negative reprobation, taken absolutely, is the manifestation of God's goodness by means of His justice. God's goodness, inasmuch as it is self-diffusive, constitutes the foundation for His mercy, and inasmuch as He has an indisputable right to be loved above all things, this constitutes the foundation for His justice.

This holds good as regards the end.

But it must furthermore be said that, as regards the creature or as regards the material cause, the natural defectibility of the creature or its disposition to fail, is the indispensable condition for negative reprobation. For if the creature, either human or angelic, were not by its nature defectible, God, who is the source of all goodness, could not permit it to fail. But, if anything is by nature defectible, the consequence is that it may sometimes fail.

Yet this defectibility is not, strictly speaking, the motive for reprobation, for God does not permit the defect on account of the defectibility of the nature, as being the motive for reprobation, but He permits the defect on account of some good to be derived therefrom. Therefore the natural defectibility is rather the indispensable condition, or the aptitude and disposition on the part of the matter.

In this whole question there is no proposition more obscure than that God permits the final impenitence of some (for instance, of the bad thief rather than of the other) as a punishment for previous sins which de facto will not be forgiven and for a greater good, which includes the manifestation of infinite justice. Indeed this proposition is most obscure. But that our firm assent to this proposition should be made easier for us, we may consider the fact that its contradictory cannot be upheld, or that the aforesaid proposition cannot be proved false. In this proposition we see clearly the application of the most exalted principle of predilection, which is a corollary to the principles of causality and finality, which state that all good comes from the supreme good and is ordered to it. The principle of predilection was

revealed to Moses: “I will have mercy on whom I will; and I will be merciful to whom it shall please Me.” St. Paul says: “For who distinguisheth thee? What hast thou that thou hast not received?” No one would be better than another without being loved more beforehand, by God. And among the nobler good things on account of which God can permit sin, are to be included either the splendor of His justice or the manifestation of His infinite goodness, which has an indisputable right to be loved above all things.

Thus God wills to permit sin for a greater good. For this reason He wills to permit that what is defectible may sometimes fail. This permission is the indispensable condition for sin, but it is neither its direct nor its indirect cause, because the universal Provider, who directly sees the higher ends, is not bound to prevent these sins, not even the sin of final impenitence.

The defectible creature, which by its nature is apt to fall into sin, cannot justly complain of not having received these more abundant graces, by which it would have been preserved from falling into sin. As St. Paul says: “O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it: Why hast thou made me thus? Or hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump, to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor? What if God, wishing to show His wrath (that is, the splendor of His justice and His mercy) . . . ?” This symbolism was already employed in the Old Testament. Thus we read: “As the potter’s clay is in his hand . . . so man is in the hand of Him that made him; and He will render to him according to His judgment.”

Jeremias also said: “Behold as clay is in the hand of the potter, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel.” And again Isaias said: “I, the Lord, that do all these things. . . . Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above. . . . Woe to him that gainsayeth his maker. . . . Shall the day say to him that fashioneth it: What art thou making, and thy work is without hands? Woe to him that saith to his father: Why begettest thou? And to the woman: Why dost thou bring forth?”

On the one hand, that is, in respect of those not chosen, the splendor of God’s justice is particularly made manifest, yet not without manifestation of His mercy. On the other hand, that is, in respect of those chosen, God’s mercy is particularly made manifest, yet not without manifestation of His justice. As St. Thomas says: “Certain works are attributed to justice, and certain others to mercy, because in some justice appears more forcibly, and

in others mercy. Even in the damnation of the reprobate mercy is seen, which, though it does not totally remit, yet somewhat alleviates in punishing short of what is deserved. In the justification of the ungodly justice is seen, when God remits sin on account of love though He Himself has mercifully infused that love. So we read of Magdalen: ‘Many sins are forgiven her because she hath loved much ‘ “ (Luke 7: 47).

Moreover, as stated by St. Thomas in this same article just quoted: “Justice and mercy appear in the punishment of the just in this world, since by afflictions lesser faults are cleansed in them, and they are the more raised up from earthly affections to God. As to this Gregory says: (Moral., XXVI): “The evils that press on us in this world force us to go to God.”

Corollary. Hence there is great inequality either of natural or of supernatural conditions. But sometimes the inequality of graces compensates for the inequality of natural conditions. As our Lord says: “Blessed are the poor in spirit. . . . Blessed are the meek. . . . Blessed are they that mourn. . . . Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice.” This means that many are the tribulations of the just and that those of the just who are loved more by God, such as Christ and the Blessed Virgin Mary, must suffer for the others as victims offered up in complete sacrifice. It was so with all the martyrs and great servants of God, who always suffered much. Thus there is effected a most wonderful compensation, which to some extent is pointed out by Christ in the parable of the wicked rich man and the good beggar, in which we read that Abraham said to the wicked rich man who was condemned to hell: “Son, remember that thou didst receive good things in thy lifetime, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.”

We find this compensation most beautifully described in a passage of the Old Testament which expressed the dogma of predestination in these words: “The souls of the just are in the hand of God, and the torment of death shall not touch them. In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die and their departure was taken for misery. And their going away from us, for utter destruction; but they are in peace. And though in the sight of men they suffered torments, their hope is full of immortality. Afflicted in few things, in many they shall be well rewarded; because God hath tried them, and found them worthy of Himself. As gold in the furnace He hath proved them, and as a victim of a holocaust He hath received them (especially so the martyrs). . . . The just shall shine, and shall run to and fro like sparks among

the reeds. They shall judge nations and rule over people, and their Lord shall reign forever . . . for grace and peace is to His elect." Thus the dogma of predestination is already clearly expressed in the Old Testament.

This great mystery of divine predestination is of itself more an object of contemplation than of theological discussion. For it is the nature of theological investigation to enable one to acquire a certain more sublime understanding of the mysteries of faith. As the Vatican Council declares: "Reason, indeed, enlightened by faith, when it seeks earnestly, piously, and calmly, attains by a gift from God some, and that a very fruitful, understanding of mysteries . . . ; but reason never becomes capable of apprehending mysteries as it does those truths which constitute its proper object. For the divine mysteries by their own nature so far transcend the created intelligence . . . that they remain shrouded in a certain degree of darkness, so long as we are in this mortal life exiled from the Lord; for we walk by faith, and not by sight."

This statement is particularly true concerning predestination, which is the sublimer part of providence.

Second doubt. What is the motive for negative reprobation taken in the selective sense, namely, as it is the reprobation of this particular person rather than that other?

The answer of St. Thomas is that negative reprobation, taken in the selective sense, has no reason except the divine will. He says: "Yet why He chooses some for glory, and reprobates others, has no reason except the divine will." He gives two proofs for this: (1) The authority of St. Augustine, who says: "Why He draws one, and another He draws not, seek not to judge, if thou dost not wish to err." (2) From the analogy prevailing between natural things and those made by art. He remarks: "Why this particular part of matter is under this particular form, and that under another, depends on the simple will of God; as from the simple will of the artificer it depends that this stone is in this part of the wall, and that (equal in size) in another; although the plan requires that some stones should be in this place, and some in that place."

In this argument founded on the analogy prevailing between natural things and those made by art, there is an unexpressed but implied major, namely: in those who are alike as regards defectibility, no reason can be assigned why one rather than another is permitted to fall into some defect that is not willed by the one foreseeing it. Then the minor is subsumed. But

all creatures that are destined for a supernatural end are alike as regards defectibility, and it is only by God's help that they do not fall into some defect; for the very fact of not falling into some defect is a good that comes from the source of all good. Therefore it depends solely on God's will that these particular persons rather than certain others are permitted to fall into some defect. This truth is expressed by the Council of Trent which, in discussing the gift of perseverance, says: "which cannot be derived from any other but Him who is able to make the one stand who stands (Rom. 14: 5), so that such a one stand perseveringly, and to restore the one who falls. . . . Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall (I Cor. 10: 12) and work out his salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2: 12)."

The foundation of Christian humility consists in this, namely, the twofold mystery of creation from nothing and the gratuitousness of grace. This humility does not degenerate into pusillanimity and despair, because God does not command impossibilities, and He gives His grace to those who humbly pray for it.

The following principal objections are raised against this doctrine of the motive for reprobation, considered either in a general way or in particular cases. We must show that on this point there is no severity on God's part.

First objection. Without anyone being reprobated, God's justice would be made manifest in the elect, both by rewarding them, and by punishing them for a time on account of sins they committed.

Reply. Such a procedure would be but an imperfect manifestation of God's infinite justice. For the rewarding of the just is more an illustration of God's mercy than of His justice, and, moreover, it is not at all a manifestation of His vindictive justice. This latter is to some extent made manifest in temporal punishments, but these do not make us realize what it ought to be by reason of the infinite malice of sin, which does all it can to rob God of His dignity of being the final end of creatures. Likewise, God's mercy would be very feebly manifested if He were to reward the elect with the beatific vision only for a time.

Moreover it has been revealed that some are reprobated on account of their sins, which God permitted; and the only possible reason for this permission is the greater good that is intended.

But I insist. The will to manifest vindictive justice before having foreseen the sin, is to will the punishment before the sin. But this is an injustice

which leads to the predestinarianism of Gottschalk and Calvin. Therefore this view must be rejected.

Reply. I deny the major, which confuses God's infinite justice with His finite chastisement. For God does not will the permission of sin because of His love and intention to impose finite chastisement, for that would be repugnant to justice. But because He wills the permission of sin for the manifestation of His infinite justice, or the inalienable right of sovereign goodness to be loved above all things, He first wills the permission of sin, and then wills to inflict the punishment for the sin in manifestation of His justice. The punishment is but a means of manifesting infinite justice, and it is a means that is not an intermediate end with reference to the permission of sin. Punishment cannot be, indeed, an intermediate end, for to punish is a good only on the previous supposition of sin. Hence God most certainly does not will the permission of sin because of His love to punish, for this would be cruelty; but He wills it from love of His infinite justice, or from love of His goodness which has a right to be loved above all things. But it is easy to depart from the orthodox teaching on this point, and a slight error in the beginning will be great in the end.

Thus God could cause the great persecutors of the Church to be converted at the last moment of their lives, but He can permit, too, their final impenitence from love of His infinite justice that must forever be made manifest; but He cannot permit this impenitence from love of punishment.

Again I insist. To will the permission of sin for the manifestation of justice, is to will the permission of sin so that it be punished. But this is a hard saying and savors of inclemency. Therefore to will the permission of sin for the manifestation of justice savors of inclemency.

Reply. I deny the major, for it would mean to will the punishment before the sin, which would not be the manifestation of justice, but its contrary. Punishment is not the immediate end, but only the means for the manifestation of justice; for punishment is good only when it presupposes sin, whereas, on the contrary, the manifestation of God's infinite goodness and justice is good even before the foreseeing of the sin; the knowledge of the possibility of sin is sufficient.

It is essentially good that God's inalienable right to be loved above all things as the sovereign good be made manifest; and eternal punishment proclaims this truth, as Dante says in his Inferno:

Through me you pass into the city of woe:
Through me you pass into eternal pain:
Through me among the people lost for aye.
Justice the founder of my fabric moved:
To rear me was the task of power divine,
Supremest wisdom, and primeval love.

Second objection. But then we would have to admit the rigorous opinion of certain Thomists, namely, the positive exclusion of reprobates from glory as from a gift to which they are not entitled, before the foreseeing of their sins. For at the same moment in which God chose those who are predestined for glory, He excluded all the others from it. Therefore the more rigorous opinion that was previously rejected follows from this reasoning.

Reply. I distinguish the antecedent. That at the same moment in which God chose those who are predestined to glory, He positively excluded all the rest from it, this I deny; that He permitted them to be excluded, this I concede. Similarly I distinguish the consequent: that the permission of the reprobates to be excluded from glory precedes their foreseen demerits, which will not be forgiven, this I concede; that they are positively excluded from glory, this I deny.

God, in predestining some, does not intend to do the opposite of this, saying: “I will the rejection of the others from glory,” but He says: “I will to permit that the others, through their own fault, fail to attain the glory of heaven.” This act means, indeed, the exclusion of some from being efficaciously chosen for the glory of heaven, but it does not mean their positive exclusion from this glory. Nevertheless the reprobates are always destined for glory, so that this glory would be attained by them unless they themselves prevented it.

Hence God does not repel them from the glory of heaven, but He permits that they fail to attain the glory of heaven, and this through their own fault. As Billuart rightly observes, it is one thing to be excluded positively from glory before sin, and it is another matter to be excluded from being efficaciously chosen for the glory of heaven. The first proposition we deny, but we concede that those not among the elect are excluded, before the foreseeing of their sin, from being efficaciously chosen for the glory of heaven; nor is this efficacious election to glory due to them in virtue of God’s antecedent will to save all men, otherwise all would be saved, and

God’s universal will to save would not only be His antecedent will, but also His consequent will, and it would be infallibly fulfilled.

In truth, those not among the elect, before their sin was foreseen, are excluded from being efficaciously chosen for the glory of heaven, as from a gift to which they are not entitled; and this is accomplished by leaving them to their weakness. This is also in some measure accepted by Molina when he says that God of His own gratuitous love decreed to place the elect in circumstances in which He had foreseen their salvation as a conditioned future, and He decreed to place others in circumstances in which He had foreseen their final impenitence.

Again I insist. But from this permissive exclusion the same effect infallibly follows as in the case of positive exclusion from glory. Therefore it is useless to deny this positive exclusion.

Reply. I distinguish the antecedent. That the same effect follows on the part of the reprobates, this I concede; on God’s part, this I deny. For it seems to follow from positive exclusion that God is the cause that some would not be saved, since He would refuse to save them. On the other hand, the only effect that follows from permissive exclusion is that those not among the elect, through their own fault, fail to persevere; and God merely permits this.

There is a considerable difference between these two exclusions. Just as God is not the cause of sin, which contradicts what Calvin asserted; so also He is not the cause of perdition, or of exclusion from the glory of heaven. But He is the cause of our salvation. Hence the Council of Quierzy says: “That some are saved, is the gift of Him who saves; but that some perish, is the fault of those who perish.”

Still I insist. Yet the Council of Trent declared: “God forsakes not those who have been once justified by His grace, unless He is first forsaken by them.” But the will to permit that some through their own fault fail to attain the glory of heaven is to forsake them before they separate themselves from Him. Therefore God cannot permit the failure of some to attain the glory of heaven.

Reply. Several theologians interpret these words of the Council of Trent as meaning:

1) That God takes sanctifying grace away from any of the just only on account of a previous mortal sin. And this is most certain.

2) Granted that this being forsaken by God is to be understood as meaning the withdrawal of actual grace, still I distinguish the major: that God is not, strictly speaking, the first to forsake the just by taking away from them His common helps and ordinary protection which He extends toward them, this I concede; for this withdrawal of common helps is a punishment, which presupposes sin. But God permits sin before it is committed; and so it is only in an improper sense that He forsakes one. It is true, indeed, as Billuart says, that God by leaving a man to his defectibility, does not keep him from falling into sin by means of a special and efficacious help. But this special and efficacious help, although it is in some way due to human nature in general, yet it is not due to this individual rather than to a certain other.

It is most evident that God's permission of sin must precede the commission of the sin that is permitted, not indeed as the cause but as the indispensable condition. For if God did not permit this sin, it certainly would not happen to be committed, and nothing happens unless it is either willed or permitted by God. Hence this permission of sin by God does not mean, strictly speaking, that He forsakes anyone, concerning which the Council of Trent says: "God forsakes not those who have been once justified by His grace, unless He is first forsaken by them." If it were said that God forsakes anyone by the very fact that He permits him to fall into sin, then this would be the same as saying that God cannot permit the first sin before it happens to be committed.

The Council of Trent maintains, indeed, that every sin presupposes the divine permission, for it declares that God's part is permissive with reference to sin, for example, to the betrayal of Judas. We also pray in the Mass: "Permit me not to be separated from Thee."

Final objection. Even the Thomists admit that no one is deprived of efficacious help except through his own fault. Therefore it is false to say that God in an improper sense forsakes a person by the withdrawal of His efficacious help.

Reply. I distinguish the antecedent: that the refusal of efficacious grace is a punishment, which presupposes at least a first sin, this I concede; but the simple permission of sin by God is not, strictly speaking, the refusal of efficacious grace, and this permission evidently precedes the sin.

God in conferring the sufficient grace wills antecedently to confer the efficacious grace, unless a man deliberately and wickedly resists the

sufficient grace. God could, indeed, by giving more abundant help, prevent this resistance and this wicked act of the will; but as universal Provider He is not bound to prevent this, and with higher ends in view He wills by His consequent will to leave a man to his defectibility. Thus it is true that a man is deprived through His own fault of efficacious grace which God, in the bestowal of sufficient grace, willed by His antecedent will to give him.

Third doubt. Is original sin a sufficient motive for positive reprobation?

We answer this question as several Thomists do. We distinguish and say that it is a sufficient motive in those who have not been freed from original sin, especially in infants who die without being baptized. These children, inasmuch as they have no other sin, are thus deprived of the beatific vision, without having to suffer, however, the punishment of the senses. But I deny that it is a sufficient reason in those who have been freed from original sin. In these, the effects of original sin (such as concupiscence and a weakening of the will in the performance of good) are conditions that contribute to their greater defectibility, and this latter shows itself in actual sins, and ultimately in the sin of final impenitence, for which they are positively reprobated.

But if it is a question of negative reprobation, since original sin is the same in all, both in the predestined and the reprobates, this sin cannot be in the reprobates the reason why God permits the sins that will not be forgiven. Therefore St. Thomas does not speak of original sin in this article, but says: “Why He chooses some for glory, and reprobates others, has no reason except the divine will.” So say the Salmanticenses, Alvarez, and John of St. Thomas.

The effects of reprobation. By the effect of reprobation is meant whatever God does with the efficacious intention of manifesting His justice by means of those whom He reprobates.

Hence the proper effects of reprobation are: (1) the permission of a sin that will not be forgiven; (2) the refusal of grace; (3) blinding of the intellect; (4) hardening of the heart; and finally (5) condemnation to eternal punishment.

Sin itself is not the effect of reprobation, for God is in no way the cause of sin, not even indirectly, when He permits it.

The signs of reprobation, however, are too great an attachment to the transitory things of this world, the sin of lust persisted in even to old age, a

rebellious attitude toward the teachings of the Church, aversion for the reception of the sacraments, and great pride.

According to the Salmanticenses, reprobation is the effect resulting from the predestination of the elect, because it shows more clearly God's greater mercy toward the elect. Hence St. Paul says: "God . . . endured with much patience vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction, that He might show the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He hath prepared unto glory." Thus all things are for the sake of the elect, who realize the splendor of God's justice in the very restoration of this order of justice and in the triumph of God's goodness over evil. Angels do not grieve either for sins or for penalties inflicted upon men, although sin is displeasing to them as it is to God. They will the fulfillment of the ordering of divine justice in this matter.

Thus too, as the same theologians of Salamanca say, we see more clearly with what liberality God chose the predestined for glory without any obligation on His part, and thus the riches of His mercy toward them are made more manifest, Likewise we see more clearly from reprobation the defectibility of the created free will and at the same time the powers conferred on us by grace. Thus all things are directed "unto the praise of the glory of His grace." St. Augustine frequently said about the same, though more concisely, when he declared that the wicked are in this world either that they be converted or that they afflict the good.

Molina admits that the manifestation of justice is one of the ends for which God permits sin.

PREDESTINATION AS A MYSTERY OF MERCY

The whole of this doctrine on gratuitous predestination may be summed up finally by what we may call an a posteriori observation. It is one that has already been made by us, and it is this: if, of two sinners who are equally obdurate, one is converted rather than a certain other, this is the effect of God's special mercy toward such person. A fortiori, it is the effect of God's special mercy, if any just person perseveres in doing good for many years, and especially if anyone is preserved in the state of grace from the time when he was baptized as a child until death. Thus the mystery of gratuitous pre- destination is a posteriori made manifest, so to speak, to those who are Christian in sentiment, just as God's universal will to save is also

manifested to such as these in many ways. The intimate reconciliation of these truths is hidden in the obscurity of faith, but the light of life, which is the object of contemplation, is found in this obscurity.

The author of the Imitation of Christ in his treatise on the spiritual life said about predestination: “I am He who made all the saints, I gave them grace, I brought them glory. I know what every one hath deserved; I led them with the blessings of My sweetness. I foreknew My beloved ones before the beginning of the world. I chose them out of the world; they chose not Me first. I called them by grace, I drew them by mercy, I led them safely through sundry temptations. I poured into them glorious consolations, I gave them perseverance, I crowned their patience.

“I acknowledge both the first and the last; I embrace all with love inestimable. I am to be praised in all My saints; I am to be blessed above all things, and to be honored in all whom I have thus gloriously exalted and predestined without any merit of their own.” Farther on, this same author says: “They glory not in their own merits, inasmuch as they ascribe no goodness to themselves but attribute all to Me who of Mine infinite love have given them all things.”

Hence this same author says: “When a certain person who was in anxiety of mind, often wavering between fear and hope, said within himself, ‘O, if I knew that I would yet persevere,’ he presently heard within him an answer from God, which said: ‘If thou didst know it, what wouldst thou do? Do now what thou wouldst do then, and thou shalt be secure.’ And being immediately comforted and strengthened, he committed himself wholly to the will of God, and his anxious wavering ceased.”

SIXTH ARTICLE

WHETHER PREDESTINATION IS CERTAIN

State of the question. It seems that predestination is not certain: (1) because the crown, which is the effect of predestination, can both be acquired and be lost; (2) because it is possible that one predestined, such as Peter, may sin and then be killed; (3) because God, who most freely predestined this particular man, has it in His power not to predestine him.

Yet the answer is that the effect of predestination is certainly attained. It will at once be seen from the argument that St. Thomas has in mind not

only certainty of foreknowledge but also of causality. This latter is denied, however, by Molina.

The certainty of predestination is clearly established from texts in Holy Scripture. Thus we read: “No one can snatch them (My sheep) out of the hand of My Father.” This text points to the certainty not only of foreknowledge but also of causality on the part of divine omnipotence, which preserves and leads the elect to salvation. Our Lord says: “There shall arise false Christs . . . insomuch as to deceive, if possible, even the elect.” If possible means: unless they had been specially preserved from falling into sin by God.

The certainty of God’s foreknowledge and causality is likewise pointed out in St. Augustine’s definition of predestination, who says that it is “the foreknowledge and preparation of those gifts whereby whoever are liberated are most certainly liberated.”

Theological proof. Predestination is a part of providence, which includes God’s absolute and consequent will concerning the elect. But this absolute and consequent will of God is always or infallibly fulfilled. Thus predestination differs from simple providence, which is not fulfilled in the case of those who are included only in God’s consequent will. God wills antecedently the salvation of all, but He permits the perdition of many, and wills consequently or absolutely the salvation of the elect.

Yet this consequent will does not interfere with created liberty, because God efficaciously wills also that the elect freely merit eternal life. The divine causality extends even to the free mode of our choices; it actualizes our liberty, and in doing so most certainly does not destroy it, a point which has already been explained.

St. Thomas excludes Molina’s opinion, when he writes: “It cannot be said that certainty of foreknowledge is the only thing superadded to providence by predestination. This is tantamount to saying that God ordains the one predestined to salvation as He does anyone else, but that in the case of the one predestined He knows that he will not fail to be saved. In such a case, to be sure . . . , predestination would not be because of the choice of the one predestining, which is contrary to the authority of Holy Scripture and the sayings of the saints. Hence in addition to the certainty of foreknowledge, there is infallible certainty (of causality) in this order of predestination.”

Nevertheless this certainty is not injurious to created liberty because, since God’s will is most efficacious, it follows not only that the elections of

the predestined take place, but that they take place freely, as God wills.

THE SIGNS OF PREDESTINATION

The following signs of predestination, which give one conjectural or at most moral certainty about it, have been taken by the theologians from various passages in the writings of St. Augustine, St. Gregory, St. Anselm, St. Bernard, and St. Thomas. These are: (1) A good life until the end; (2) the testimony of a conscience that is free from serious sins, and especially if one is prepared rather to die than offend God grievously; (3) patience in adversities endured for the love of God; (4) readiness to hear the word of God; (5) compassion for the poor; (6) love of one's enemies; (7) humility; (8) a special devotion to the Blessed Virgin, of whom the Church chants: "He that shall find me shall find life, and shall have salvation from the Lord."

Hence the author of The Imitation says: "If thou didst know it (that thou art predestined), what wouldst thou do? Do now what thou wouldst do then, and thou shalt be secure."

These signs are such as to give one particularly a feeling of security under the special inspiration of the Holy Spirit, concerning whom St. Paul says: "The Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit that we are sons of God," through the filial affection we have toward Him, which He inspires in us, as St. Thomas points out in his commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans. Nevertheless, as the Council of Trent says: "Except by special revelation, it cannot be known whom God has chosen unto Himself." And again: "If anyone saith that he will for certain, with absolute and infallible certainty, have that great gift of perseverance unto the end, unless he shall have learned this by special revelation; let him be anathema."

Thus the fact itself of being saved at the end of one's life still remains an uncertainty; yet "hope tends to its end with certainty, as though sharing in the certainty of faith which is in the cognitive faculty." Thus the certitude of hope is not certainty of salvation, but a tendency to salvation, which is more and more deepened in one as one approaches the end of life.

SEVENTH ARTICLE

WHETHER THE NUMBER OF THE PREDESTINED IS CERTAIN

The answer is that the number of the predestined is certain, and this not only formally but also materially; for God knows how many will be saved, and who will be saved. Thus our Lord says: “I know whom I have chosen”; and St. Paul remarks: “The Lord knoweth who are His.”

The Church says that God alone knows the number of the elect who are destined for the happiness of heaven. When this number is completed, the end of the world will come and the generations of men will cease.

Is there a great number of the elect? Absolutely speaking and not comparing them with the number of the reprobates, we can state that the number is very great, for the Apocalypse says: “I heard the number of them that were signed, a hundred forty-four thousand. . . . After this I saw a great multitude which no man could number.”

But if we compare the number of the elect with the number of reprobates, then St. Augustine and St. Thomas think that there are not so many elect as reprobates, for our Lord says: “How narrow is the gate and strait is the way that leadeth to life! And few there are that find it.” And again: “Many are called, but few are chosen.” We are concerned here with “the good that exceeds the common state of nature.” But if we include among the saved both angels and men, then St. Thomas is of the opinion that the number of the elect is probably greater than the number of reprobates. Several theologians think it more probable that, among Christians who are Catholics, the number of the predestined is greater than the number of reprobates. It seems possible for us to reach this conclusion from the intention of Christ in instituting His Church and from the efficacy of His Passion and the sacraments.

EIGHTH ARTICLE

WHETHER PREDESTINATION CAN BE FURTHERED BY THE PRAYERS OF THE SAINTS

The answer is that no one is predestined by the prayers of the saints. Predestination, as St. Thomas declares, depends solely on God’s good pleasure. But the prayers of the saints can obtain certain effects of predestination; just as the good works of the elect are the meritorious cause of their glory in heaven. Thus “whatever helps that person toward salvation, falls under the order of predestination, whether it is one’s own prayers, or those of others.” Thus the saints by praying for others, are God’s assistants.

CHAPTER XXIV

QUESTION 24

THE BOOK OF LIFE

FIRST ARTICLE

IN Holy Scripture “the book of life” is a metaphorical expression for “the knowledge of God by which He firmly remembers that He has predestined some to eternal life.”

SECOND AND THIRD ARTICLES

Primarily those are said to be written in the book of life who are predestined to glory; but, in a secondary sense, the expression applies to those who are justified, and then fall from grace, dying in that state.

This completes the question of predestination, which is clarified by these two principles: (1) God does not command impossibilities; hence it is really possible for all adults to keep God’s commandments, as these are known by them. (2) But, on the other hand, “since God’s love is the cause of goodness in things, no one would be better than another, without being loved more by God.” St. Paul says: “Who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received?” But in heaven the blessed see how God’s infinite justice, mercy, and the supreme liberty of His good pleasure are intimately reconciled in the eminence of the Deity. As our Lord says: “Yea, Father, for so hath it seemed good in Thy sight.”

Dante, in his Paradiso, speaks of predestination. There, in poetic language, he declares that the mystery of predestination is beyond the ken even of the saints in heaven.

CHAPTER XXV

QUESTION 25

THE POWER OF GOD

FIRST ARTICLE

WHETHER THERE IS POWER IN GOD

WHAT has already been said permits us to dismiss this question with a few brief comments.

Passive power cannot be attributed to God, who is pure act; active power, however, can rightly be attributed to Him. For it is manifest that everything, according as it is in act and is perfect, is the active principle of something.

It must be observed that the idea of active power is retained in God, inasmuch as it is the principle of an effect ad extra; not, however, as it is a principle of action, for God's action is His essence, which is His esse and His agere.

Reply to second objection. Hence "God's action is not distinct from His power," and God's action ad extra is formally immanent and virtually transitive, inasmuch as it produces the effect ad extra.

Reply to fourth objection. Active power in God is the divine command itself, inasmuch as this latter is the principle of His works ad extra.

SECOND ARTICLE

WHETHER THE POWER OF GOD IS INFINITE

It is of faith that God's power is infinite. The Second Council of Constantinople says: "If anyone says or thinks, either that God's power is

finite, or that He has done all the things that He was able to have in mind, let him be anathema."

Proof. The more perfectly an agent has the form by which it acts, the greater is its power to act, for instance, in giving heat. But God's essence, by which He acts, is infinite, or His power is infinitely perfect.

Reply to second objection. "Even if it were to produce no effect, the power of God would not be ineffectual; because a thing is ineffectual which is ordained to an end to which it does not attain. But the power of God is not ordered toward its effect as toward an end; rather it is the end of the effect produced by it."

St. Thomas in this reply observes that "the power of a univocal agent is wholly manifested in its effect. The generative power of man is not able to do more than beget man. But the power of a non-univocal agent does not wholly manifest itself in the production of its effect," just as the power of the sun is not wholly manifested, for instance, in the ripening of the fruits of the earth. But God evidently is not a univocal agent. "Hence His effect is always less than His power." Nevertheless His infinite power is manifested in the mode of producing things, inasmuch as He produces something out of nothing, or from no presupposed subject.

Analogically we say that men of great genius are superior to the works they produce; but it is, nevertheless, in the way they produce these works that their superiority is seen. On the contrary, men of ordinary ability are, so to speak, univocal agents, and the whole of their power is manifested in the effect produced. They could not do more.

THIRD ARTICLE

WHETHER GOD IS OMNIPOTENT

It is of faith that God is omnipotent as His power is infinite. God is said to be omnipotent, inasmuch as He can do whatever is absolutely possible, that is, whatever is not repugnant to existence, whatever is capable of existing, or whatever can be conceived as real being.

Proof. "The divine existence, upon which the nature of power in God is founded, is infinite, and is not limited to any genus of being; but it possesses within itself the perfection of all being. Therefore whatever has or

can have the nature of being, is numbered among the absolute possible beings, in respect of which God is called omnipotent."

Reply to third objection. "God's omnipotence is particularly shown in sparing and having mercy . . . , and in that He freely forgives sinners, thus leading them on to the participation of an infinite good."

Reply to fourth objection. "The wisdom of the world is deemed foolish because what is impossible to nature, it judges to be impossible to God."

FOURTH ARTICLE

WHETHER GOD CAN MAKE THE PAST NOT TO HAVE BEEN

The answer is that God cannot make the past not to have been, because what implies contradiction does not come within the scope of God's omnipotence. But that the past should not have been implies a contradiction. Thus God cannot remove from the sinner the fact of his having sinned, and of having lost charity. God removes sin, indeed, by justification, but He cannot remove from the sinner the fact of his having sinned.

FIFTH ARTICLE

WHETHER GOD CAN DO WHAT HE DOES NOT

The Council of Sens condemned the following proposition of Abelard: "It is possible for God to do only those things which He has done, and not to do only those things which he has not done; and to do things only in the manner and at the time in which He does them, and not otherwise."

St. Thomas recalls two erroneous opinions: (1) That God acts from natural necessity in such a way as the sun illumines. So said the Neoplatonists and subsequently Spinoza. (2) That God acts indeed by His will, but by His will determined by reason of the necessity of His knowledge. Thus, among modern philosophers, Leibnitz says that God by reason of a moral necessity was bound to create the best among possible worlds, otherwise He would not have been either infinitely wise or infinitely good. Rosmini said practically the same.

These errors deny the dogma of divine liberty, which is expressed by the Vatican Council in these words: “God, of His own goodness and almighty power, not for the increase of His own happiness, nor to acquire but to manifest His perfection by the blessings which He bestows upon creatures, with absolute freedom of counsel, created out of nothing from the beginning of time, both the spiritual and corporeal creature, to wit, the angelic and the mundane; and afterwards the human creature . . . , consisting of both spirit and body.”

St. Thomas explained the divine freedom in a previous article, and he now recalls the principal argument as set forth by him in that article, saying: “The whole idea of order which a wise man puts into things made by him is taken from their end. . . . But the divine goodness (that must be manifested) is an end exceeding beyond all proportions things created. Therefore the divine wisdom is not so restricted to any particular order that no other course of events could happen.”

Thus the apparent movement of the sun could be in the reverse direction; likewise there could be other species of plants and of animals, God could create angels of a higher order, and many other things similar to these.

Reply to first objection. Whatever is not in itself a contradiction in terms is absolutely possible, or is possible by God’s absolute power, such as the annihilation even of all spiritual creatures. But this annihilation of souls and angels is not possible by God’s power as ordained by His wisdom, whether this power be ordinary or extraordinary, because there can be no motive for this annihilation.

SIXTH ARTICLE

WHETHER GOD CAN DO BETTER THINGS THAN WHAT HE DOES

The answer is given in the words of St. Paul: “God is able to do all things more abundantly than we desire or understand.” St. Thomas enunciates and proves three propositions:

1) God cannot make a thing essentially better than it is itself; because the specific difference, by which it is constituted in its essence, does not admit of increase or decrease. Thus He cannot make the number four greater than it is, or man essentially better, because man is essentially and immutably a rational animal.

2) God can make accidentally better the things He made. Thus He can make a thing brighter, a man wiser or more virtuous; also God, by His absolute power, could increase the light of glory in the most holy soul of Christ.

3) Absolutely speaking, God can make something else better than each thing made by Him. Thus He can always create more perfect angels, who would be loftier in intellect and who would have a better knowledge of created and possible things. Hence there is no limit to what is possible for God, because His infinite omnipotence is inexhaustible.

Reply to first objection. Nevertheless God cannot make a thing better, if the word "better" is taken as an adverb, and not as a substantive. Thus God cannot make a thing from greater wisdom and goodness; but He can always make something better, in this sense, that He can always make a better thing. Thus the animal is better than the plant, but it has not a better arrangement of its parts than the plant has, for even in the plant there is the best arrangement of its parts to its end.

Reply to third objection. "The universe (the present creation being supposed) cannot be better, on account of the most beautiful order given to things by God. . . . For if any one thing were bettered, the proportion of order would be destroyed; as if one string were stretched more than it ought to be, the melody of the harp would be destroyed."

This orderly arrangement is true not only as regards the subordination of essences, but also as regards singulars and their characteristics; it even applies to good on account of which evils are permitted, as in the permission of persecution to try the patience of the martyrs. But, as St. Thomas says at the end of his reply to the third objection: "Yet God could make other things, or add something to the present creation, and thus there would be another and a better universe," which means it would be better, but not disposed better, taking the word "better" as an adverb.

The above reply is the answer that must be given to the objections of Leibnitz, who wanted to prove that the present world is the best possible world. There is, indeed, a highest created nature, this being the highest angel, but there can be no limit to what is possible for God, because "He can always make something else better than each thing made by Him."

Reply to fourth objection. "The humanity of Christ from the fact that it is attributed to the Godhead, and created happiness from the fact that it is the fruition of God, and the Blessed Virgin from the fact that she is the mother

of God, all these have a certain dignity from the infinite good, which is God. And on this account there cannot be anything better than these; just as there cannot be anything better than God." Nevertheless, by His absolute power, God could increase the light of glory in the most holy soul of Christ, and likewise in the Blessed Virgin Mary and the other saints.

What we have said suffices for God's omnipotence, and it confirms the teaching of St. Thomas, who declared in a previous article: "Since the divine will is perfectly efficacious, it follows not only that things are done, which God wills to be done, but also that they are done in the way that He wills. Now God wills some things to be done necessarily, some contingently, to the right ordering of things, for the building up of the universe."

CHAPTER XXVI

QUESTION 26

OF THE DIVINE BEATITUDE

AFTER considering all that pertains to God's operation, namely, to His knowledge, His will, and His power in its relation to external effects, we must treat of the divine beatitude, for beatitude is the perfect good of an intellectual creature. By so doing, we complete what pertains to the unity of the divine essence. There are four articles to this question.

1) Whether beatitude belongs to God; (2) whether God is called blessed in regard to His intellect; (3) whether God is essentially the beatitude of each of the blessed; (4) whether all other beatitude is included in the beatitude of God.

FIRST ARTICLE

WHETHER BEATITUDE BELONGS TO GOD

The answer is in the affirmative and it is of faith. St. Paul says of God: "Who is the Blessed and only Mighty, the King of kings and Lord of lords." The Vatican Council says that God is "of supreme beatitude in and from Himself."

Theological proof. "Beatitude is the perfect good of an intellectual nature." The irrational animal finds its pleasure indeed in the possession of its good, but it has not beatitude, "because it does not know that it has a sufficiency of the good which it possesses." Only an intellectual nature knows what is meant by good and evil, and so it alone is formally capable of beatitude, and it alone can "control its own actions" for the attainment of this beatitude. In other words, it is only an intellectual agent that knows the end as such, not merely the thing which is the end. In this it differs from the

irrational animal, and thus it alone is capable of possessing the end as such. Thus this article gives us a complete idea of beatitude, making it clear to us that beatitude as thus defined belongs in a most excellent way to God, inasmuch as God is the most perfect Being, possessing intelligence in the highest degree. For God possesses the supreme Good with fullness of intelligence.

Reply to second objection. As God has being, though not begotten; so He has beatitude, although it is not acquired by merit.

SECOND ARTICLE

WHETHER GOD IS CALLED BLESSED IN RESPECT OF HIS INTELLECT

St. Thomas follows St. Augustine and Aristotle on this point. The former said: “Vision is the whole of the reward.”

The answer of St. Thomas is: “Beatitude must be assigned to God in respect of His intellect, as also to the blessed.”

The reason is that “beatitude is the perfect good of an intellectual nature. . . . Now that which is most perfect in an intellectual nature is the intellectual operation, by which in some sense it grasps everything.” Thus God adequately comprehends Himself and understands all things in Himself as the cause.

Reply to second objection. “Since beatitude is a good, it is the object of the will; now the object is understood as prior to the act of a power. Hence, in our manner of understanding, divine beatitude precedes the act of the will at rest in it. This cannot be other than the act of the intellect,” by which God perfectly possesses His infinite goodness. Delight or fruition in the divine will follows from this perfect knowledge. This fruition is therefore the complement of beatitude, and is not its essence, which consists in the perfection of perfect good.

Scotus attacked this conclusion. He considers that formal beatitude consists principally in love, giving three reasons for this view: (1) that beatitude is a good, which is the object of love; (2) that we must know God in order to love Him, but not love Him in order to know Him; (3) that what we love more is beatitude, and the will loves its act of love more than the act of the intellect.

Cajetan replies to this by making three observations: (1) Objective beatitude is indeed a good, which is the object of love; but the will in loving is not an apprehensive faculty, and the possession of God is accomplished by seeing, from which follows fruition in the will. (2) In this life, of course, we must know God to love Him, and not vice versa, because in this life it is better to love God than to know Him, for love tends toward God as He is in Himself, whereas our knowledge of God in this life draws Him to us, according to the limitation of our concepts. But in heaven the vision of God is immediate, and so it is superior to love, which necessarily follows from it as a property from its essence. (3) The will, by an elicited appetitive act, prefers what is better not for itself, but for the individual who wills. Therefore, if the act of the intellect is a greater perfection of the individual than volition, then the correct attitude in the will is for it to prefer intellection to volition.

THIRD ARTICLE

WHETHER GOD IS THE BEATITUDE OF EACH OF THE BLESSED

The answer is that God is objectively the beatitude of all the blessed, but He is not formally their beatitude, for this consists in the beatific vision, which admits of different degrees.

FOURTH ARTICLE

WHETHER ALL OTHER BEATITUDE IS INCLUDED IN THE BEATITUDE OF GOD

The answer is: “Whatever is desirable in whatever beatitude, whether true or false, pre-exists wholly and in a more eminent degree in the divine beatitude. As to contemplative happiness, God possesses a continual and most certain contemplation of Himself and of all things else; and as to that which is active, He has the governance of the whole universe.”

Thus we finish the treatise on The One God, or the divine essence, in which three things have been considered: (1) Whether God exists (q. 2); (2) How God exists, or rather how He does not exist (q. 3-13); (3) His operations, namely, His knowledge, will, and power (q. 14-25). Thus the question on the divine beatitude (q. 26) completes what pertains to the unity

of the divine essence, and prepares for the treatise on the Trinity of the divine Persons and on God the Creator.

Praise be to God, who, as the Vatican Council says, “is of supreme beatitude in and from Himself, and ineffably exalted above all things besides Himself which exist or are conceivable.” For He is the self-subsisting Being, self-subsisting Intellection, essential love. Thus “He is absolutely simple and unchangeable, and thus He is really and essentially distinct from the world,” which is essentially composite and changeable.

Thus in the whole of this treatise on The One God, we find verified the words spoken by God to Moses, which may be considered as the definition of God: “I am who am,” which is tantamount to saying that, compared to Him, creatures are non-existent. Of themselves, indeed, creatures are non-existent, but for God they are something, because they are loved by Him. In fact, “God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son.”

THE THREE AGES OF THE INTERIOR LIFE

PRELUDE OF ETERNAL LIFE

REVEREND REGINALD GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE O.P.

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REVEREND REGINALD GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE O.P.

THE THREE AGES OF THE INTERIOR LIFE: PRELUDE OF ETERNAL LIFE

Preface

This work represents the summary of a course in ascetical and mystical theology which we have been giving for twenty years at the Angelicum in Rome. In this book we take up in a simpler and higher manner the study of the same subjects that we treated in two other works: Christian Perfection and Contemplation and L' amour de Dieu et la croix de Jesus. Complying with a request, we offer in this volume our preceding research in the form of a synthesis, in which the different parts mutually balance and illuminate each other. In accordance with advice from various groups, we have eliminated from this exposition discussions to which it is no longer necessary to return. The book thus conceived is accessible to all interior souls.

We have not given this study the form of a manual because we are not seeking to accumulate knowledge, as is too often done in academic overloading, but to form the mind, to give it the firmness of principles and the suppleness required for the variety of their applications, in order that it may thus be capable of judging the problems which may arise. The humanities were formerly conceived in this fashion, whereas often today minds are transformed into manuals, into repertories, or even into collections of opinions and of formulas, whose reasons and profound consequences they do not seek to know.

Moreover, questions of spirituality, because they are most vital and at times most hidden, do not easily fall into the framework of a manual; or to put the matter more clearly, great risk is run of being superficial in materially classifying things and in substituting an artificial mechanism for the profound dynamism of the life of grace, of the infused virtues, and of the gifts. This explains why the great spiritual writers have not set forth their thought under this schematic form, which risks giving us a skeleton where we seek for life.

In these questions we have followed particularly three doctors of the Church who have treated these matters, each from his own point of view:

St. Thomas, St. John of the Cross, and St. Francis de Sales. In the light of the theological principles of St. Thomas, we have tried to grasp what is most traditional in the mystical doctrine of The Dark Night by St. John of the Cross and in the Treatise on the Love of God by St. Francis de Sales.

We have thus found a confirmation of what we believe to be the truth about the infused contemplation of the mysteries of faith, which seems to us more and more to be in the normal way of sanctity and to be morally necessary to the full perfection of Christian life. In certain advanced souls, this infused contemplation does not yet appear as a habitual state, but from time to time as a transitory act, which in the interval remains more or less latent, although it throws its light on their entire life. However, if these souls are generous, docile to the Holy Ghost, faithful to prayer and to continual interior recollection, their faith becomes increasingly contemplative, penetrating, and full of savor, and it directs their action while making it ever more fruitful. In this sense, we maintain and we explain what seems to us the traditional teaching, which is more and more accepted today: namely, that the normal prelude of the vision of heaven, the infused contemplation of the mysteries of faith, is, by docility to the Holy Ghost, prayer, and the cross, accessible to all fervent interior souls.

We believe also that, according to the doctrine of the greatest spiritual writers, notably of St. John of the Cross, there is a degree of perfection that is not obtained without the passive purifications, properly so called, which are a mystical state. This seems to us clearly indicated by all the teaching of St. John of the Cross on these passive purifications, and in particular by these two texts of capital importance from The Dark Night: “The night of sense is common, and the lot of many: these are the beginners”; “In the blessed night of the purgation of sense, the soul began to set out on the way of the spirit, the way of beginners and proficients, which is also called the illuminative way, or the way of infused contemplation, wherein God Himself teaches and refreshes the soul without meditation or any active efforts that itself may deliberately make.”

We have never said, moreover, as some have asserted we did, that “the state of infused contemplation, properly so called, is the only normal way to reach the perfection of charity.” This infused contemplation, in fact, generally begins only with the passive purification of the senses, or, according to St. John of the Cross, at the beginning of the full illuminative way such as he describes it. Many souls are, therefore, in the normal way of

sanctity before receiving infused contemplation, properly so called; but this contemplation, we say, is in the normal way of sanctity, at the summit of this way.

Without fully agreeing with us, a contemporary theologian, who is a professor of ascetical and mystical theology in the Gregorian University, wrote about our book, Christian Perfection and Contemplation, and that of Father Joret, O.P., La contemplation mystique d'apres saint Thomas d'Aquin: "No one could seriously dispute the fact that this doctrine is remarkably constructed and superbly arrived at; that it sets forth with beautiful lucidity the spiritual riches of Dominican theology in the definitive form given to it in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by the great interpreters of St. Thomas, namely, Cajetan, Banez, and John of St. Thomas; that the synthesis thus presented groups in a strong and harmonious unity a considerable mass of teaching and experience of Catholic spiritual tradition; and that it allows the full value of many of the most beautiful pages of our great contemplatives to be brought out."

The author of these lines adds that everything in this synthesis is not of equal value and does not have the same authority. It is certain that after the truths of faith and the commonly received theological conclusions, which represent what is surest in the sum of theological science, what we put forward on the authority of St. Thomas and of his best commentators does not command our adherence to the same extent as the principles which are its foundation. Yet it is difficult to subtract from this synthesis a single important element without compromising its solidity and harmony.

Has not a notable harmony already been realized when we consider that the most attentive critics recognize the admirable construction and superb growth of a doctrine?

The Carmelite Congress held at Madrid in 1923, the conclusions of which were published in the review, El Monte Carmela (Burgos), May, 1923, recognized the truth of these two important points on the subject of infused contemplation (Theme V): "The state of contemplation is characterized by the growing predominance of the gifts of the Holy Ghost and by the superhuman mode with which all good actions are performed. As the virtues find their ultimate perfection in the gifts, and as the gifts find their perfect actualization in contemplation, it follows that contemplation is the ordinary 'way' of sanctity and of habitually heroic virtue."

In his Precis de theologie ascetique et mystique (1928), Father Tanquerey, the Sulpician, joins also in this teaching, to the extent that he writes:

“When infused contemplation is considered independently of the extraordinary mystical phenomena that sometimes accompany it, it is not something miraculous or abnormal, but the result of two causes: the growth of our supernatural organism, especially of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and of an operating grace which is itself in no way miraculous.... This doctrine seems clearly to be the traditional doctrine such as it is found in the works of mystical authors, from Clement of Alexandria to St. Francis de Sales.... Almost all these authors treat contemplation as the normal crowning of Christian life.

“With the same meaning we can quote what St. Ignatius of Loyola says in a well-known letter to St. Francis Borgia. (Rome, 1548): “Without these gifts (divine impressions and illuminations), all our thoughts, words, and works are imperfect, cold, and troubled. We ought to desire these gifts that by them our works may become just, ardent, and clear for the greater service of God.” In 1924, Father Peeters, S.J., in chapter 8 of his interesting study, Vers l’union divine par les exercices de saint Ignace (Museum Lessianum, Bruges), wrote: “What does the author of the Exercises think of the universal vocation to the mystical state? It is impossible to admit that he considers it a quasi-abnormal exception.... His optimistic confidence in the divine liberality is known. “Few men,” said the saint, “suspect what God would make them if they placed no obstacle to His work” Such, in truth, is human weakness that only a singularly generous elite accepts the formidable exigencies of grace. Heroism never was and never will be banal, and sanctity cannot be conceived without heroism....

“In the entire book of the Exercises, with an insistence revealing his deep conviction, he offers to his generous disciples the unlimited hope of the divine communications, the possibility of attaining God, of tasting the sweetness of the divinity, of entering into immediate communication with God, of aspiring to the divine familiarity. He said: “The more the soul attaches itself to God and shows itself generous toward Him, the more apt it becomes to receive graces and spiritual gifts in abundance.”...

“This is putting it still too mildly. The graces of prayer seem to him not only desirable, but hypothetically necessary to eminent sanctity, especially in apostolic men.

This is what we wished to show in the present work. Agreement on these great questions is increasingly acknowledged, and is also more real than it seems. Some, who are professional theologians as we ourselves are, consider the life of grace, the seed of glory, in itself in order to judge what ought to be the full, normal development of the infused virtues and of the gifts, the proximate disposition for receiving the beatific vision without passing through purgatory; in other words, their full development in a completely purified soul that has profited richly by the trials of life on earth and no longer has to expiate its faults after death. Whence we conclude that infused contemplation is, in principle or in theory, in the normal way of sanctity, although there are exceptions arising from the individual temperament or from absorbing occupations or from less favorable surroundings, and so on.

Other authors, considering especially the facts, or the individual souls in which the life of grace exists, declare there are truly generous interior souls that do not reach this summit, which is, nevertheless, in itself the full, normal development of habitual grace, of the infused virtues, and of the gifts.

Spiritual theology, like every science, ought to consider the interior life as such, and not in a given individual in the midst of rather unfavorable given circumstances. Because there are stunted oaks, it does not follow that the oak is not a tall tree. Spiritual theology, while noting the exceptions that may arise from the absence of a given condition, ought especially to establish the higher laws of the full development of the life of grace as such, and the proximate disposition to receive the beatific vision immediately in a fully purified soul.

Purgatory, being a punishment, presupposes a fault that we could have avoided and that we could have expiated before death by accepting the trials of the present life with an ever better will. We are seeking here to determine the normal way of sanctity or of a perfection such that one could enter heaven immediately after death. From this point of view, we must consider the life of grace inasmuch as it is the seed of eternal life, and consequently it is the correct idea of eternal life, the end of our course, which must illuminate the entire road to be traveled. Movement is not specified by its point of departure or by the obstacles it encounters, but by the end toward which it tends. Thus the life of grace must be defined by eternal life of which it is the seed; and then the proximate and perfect

disposition to receive the beatific vision immediately is in the normal way of sanctity.

In the following pages we insist far more on the principles generally accepted in theology, by showing their value and their radiation, than on the variety of opinions on one particular point or another proposed by often quite secondary authors. There are some recent works, already indicated, which mention all these opinions in detail. We propose another aim, and that is why we quote mostly from the greatest masters. Constant recourse to the foundations of their doctrine seems to us what is most necessary for the formation of the mind, which is more important than erudition. The secondary ought not make us forget the primary, and the complexity of certain questions ought not to make us lose sight of the certitude of the great directive principles that illuminate all spirituality. We ought particularly not to be content with repeating these principles like I so many platitudes, but to scrutinize them, to probe their depths, and to revert to them continually that we may better understand I them.

Doubtless such a course of action lays one open to repetition; but those who seek true theological science over and above contingent opinions which may be in vogue for several years, know that it is above all wisdom. They know that it is not so much preoccupied with deducing new conclusions, but with connecting all the more or less numerous conclusions with the same higher principles, like the different sides of a pyramid with the same apex. Then the fact that in relation to every problem we recall the loftiest principle of the synthesis is not a repetition but a way of drawing near to circular contemplation, which, St. Thomas says, ever reverts to the same eminent truth the better to grasp all its potentialities, and which, like the flight of a bird, describes several times the same circle around the same point. This center, like the apex of a pyramid, is in its way a symbol of the single instant of immobile eternity, which corresponds to all the successive instants of time that passes. From this point of view, our readers will pardon us for repeating several times the same dominant themes which constitute the charm, the unity, and the grandeur of spiritual theology.

Translator’s Preface

This translation of Father Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange’s synthesis of the spiritual life, Les Trois Ages de la Vie Interieure, has been made possible by the interest and encouragement of Mother Mary Samuel, O.P., Mother General of the Sinsinawa Dominican Sisters.

Gratitude is due especially to the Very Reverend Peter O’Brien, O.P., S.T.Lr., Ph.D., Provincial of the Province of St. Albert the Great, River Forest, Illinois, for reading the manuscript, to other Fathers of the Dominican House of Studies in River Forest for criticisms and helpful suggestions, and to Sister Mary Aquinas Devlin, O.P., Chairman of the Department of English, Rosary College, for reading the entire manuscript.

Grateful acknowledgement is also made to the Benedictines of Stanbrook Abbey for permission to use quotations from their editions of The Way of Perfection and The Interior Castle; to Thomas Baker for quotations from the Works of St. John of the Cross; to Benziger Brothers for the many quotations from their English edition of the Summa Theologica; to Burns, Oates, Washbourne for quotations from The Dialogue.

This translation is offered to Mary, Queen of the Most Holy rosary and Mediatrix of All Graces, and to St. Mary Magdalen, protectress of the Order of Preachers and patroness of the interior life, as a prayer that it may lead many souls to the contemplation of the mysteries of salvation in which they shared so profoundly.

Sister M. Timothea Doyle, O.P.

Foreword

Sister Mary Timothea Doyle has done us a real service in giving us this translation of Father R. Garrigou-Lagrange's classical work Les Trois Ages de la Vie Interieure. Doctrinally sound, this work has been accepted for its clear presentation of the way of perfection or, as St. Francis de Sales calls it, the life of devotion. The author is profound in his studies without losing that clarity of thought which is so necessary and helpful in works on the spiritual life. Analyzing the teaching of the great masters through the centuries, he has succeeded in giving us a synthesis of their thought which cannot but be helpful to those who are seeking closer and closer union with God.

The basic thought of this book is given in the words of our Blessed Savior: "Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect." We are called in our vocation as sons of God to dare to imitate divine perfection-to be participators of the divine nature. Our supernatural birthright, lost to us in Eden, was restored in the blood of the Savior on Calvary. Indeed human nature is weak, but in the grace of God it can soar to the heights of perfection and hold before it as its ideal the very perfection of God. To be in very truth in the light of Christian doctrine a son of God is the worthiest ambition of our souls.

The way is love. To be encompassed in the love of God for us and to seek always supernaturally to return to God love is the spiritual life of the Christian soul. Now love impels the soul to union with God, and God in His love gives the soul the capacity for supernatural union with Him. All the teachings on the spiritual life are synthesized in this one thought—love. Just how God leads the soul in divine love and how the soul may exercise itself in the discipline of love is the subject matter of the great works on the spiritual life.

Sublime indeed is the thought that Christian charity brings to our minds. We reach up to God, and God reaches down to us, and in divine love we are made sharers of the Divinity. All things we love in God, and because we

love them in God we seek to realize in our use of them and relations with them the harmony of the divine will. Of its very nature charity is not quiescent but operative. The soul in the pursuit of the way of perfection labors tirelessly according to its state in life to bring all men to God. Were it to content itself with its own perfection, it would lose the very thing it seeks. How can we love God and not love with God? How can we find God without searching in love for the things which God loves? Certainly one of the fruits of the spiritual life is peace, but this peace postulates our conforming our wills with the divine will. All the noble aspirations of the heart of man, aspirations which so often seem unrealizable in our condition of human weakness, are answered in our seeking to be ever more and more perfect in the spiritual life.

Men are talking much these days about realism, and they tell us that in life idealism must yield to compromise. Yet in every circumstance in life we can be sons of God in supernatural union with Him. This fact is the very basis of true Christian realism. We must not and dare not be defeatists. What human nature can never do can be done in the supernatural power of divine grace. It is therefore opportune in these times to give us this translation of this classical work of the spiritual life because it strengthens us in our effort to work out more perfectly our vocation of sons of God. We can build a better world. Human weakness is not an impassable barrier. The Savior died on the cross for us and rose to glorious life. With the graces of Redemption we are strong enough to labor for the realization of God’s plan and on our way to heaven to love with an operative love all those whom we meet on our pilgrimage of life.

We hope that pious souls will read this book, ponder over its pages, and gain new strength from it. It is a challenge to Christians to arise and labor unceasingly for the kingdom of Christ—wherein there is peace and true progress.

Samuel Cardinal Stritch Archbishop of Chicago

Introduction

We propose in this book to synthesize two other works, Christian Perfection and Contemplation, and L'amour de Dieu et la croix de Jesus. In those two works we studied, in the light of the principles of St. Thomas, the main problems of the spiritual life and in particular one which has been stated more explicitly in recent years, namely: Is the infused contemplation of the mysteries of faith and the union with God which results therefrom an intrinsically extraordinary grace, or is it, on the contrary, in the normal way of sanctity?

We purpose here to consider these questions again in a simpler and loftier manner, with the perspective needed the better to see the subordination of all the elements of the interior life in relation to union with God. With this end in view, we shall consider first of all the foundations of the interior life, then the elimination of obstacles, the progress of the soul purified and illuminated by the light of the Holy Ghost, the docility which it ought to have toward Him, and finally the union with God which the soul attains by this docility, by the spirit of prayer, and by the cross borne with patience, gratitude, and love.

By way of introduction, we shall briefly recall what constitutes the one thing necessary for every Christian, and we shall also recall how urgently this question is being raised at the present time.

I. THE ONE THING NECESSARY

As everyone can easily understand, the interior life is an elevated form of intimate conversation which everyone has with himself as soon as he is alone, even in the tumult of a great city. From the moment he ceases to converse with his fellow men, man converses interiorly with himself about what preoccupies him most. This conversation varies greatly according to

the different ages of life; that of an old man is not that of a youth. It also varies greatly according as a man is good or bad.

As soon as a man seriously seeks truth and goodness, this intimate conversation with himself tends to become conversation with God. Little by little, instead of seeking himself in everything, instead of tending more or less consciously to make himself a center, man tends to seek God in everything, and to substitute for egoism love of God and of souls in Him. This constitutes the interior life. No sincere man will have any difficulty in recognizing it. The one thing necessary which Jesus spoke of to Martha and Mary consists in hearing the word of God and living by it.

The interior life thus conceived is something far more profound and more necessary in us than intellectual life or the cultivation of the sciences, than artistic or literary life, than social or political life. Unfortunately, some great scholars, mathematicians, physicists, and astronomers have no interior life, so to speak, but devote themselves to the study of their science as if God did not exist. In their moments of solitude they have no intimate conversation with Him. Their life appears to be in certain respects the search for the true and the good in a more or less definite and restricted domain, but it is so tainted with self-love and intellectual pride that we may legitimately question whether it will bear fruit for eternity. Many artists, literary men, and statesmen never rise above this level of purely human activity which is, in short, quite exterior. Do the depths of their souls live by God? It would seem not.

This shows that the interior life, or the life of the soul with God, well deserves to be called the one thing necessary, since by it we tend to our last end and assure our salvation. This last must not be too widely separated from progressive sanctification, for it is the very way of salvation.

There are those who seem to think that it is sufficient to be saved and that it is not necessary to be a saint. It is clearly not necessary to be a saint who performs miracles and whose sanctity is officially recognized by the Church. To be saved, we must take the way of salvation, which is identical with that of sanctity. There will be only saints in heaven, whether they enter there immediately after death or after purification in purgatory. No one enters heaven unless he has that sanctity which consists in perfect purity of soul. Every sin though it should be venial, must be effaced, and the punishment due to sin must be borne or remitted, in order that a soul may enjoy forever the vision of God, see Him as He sees Himself, and love Him

as He loves Himself. Should a soul enter heaven before the total remission of its sins, it could not remain there and it would cast itself into purgatory to be purified.

The interior life of a just man who tends toward God and who already lives by Him is indeed the one thing necessary. To be a saint, neither intellectual culture nor great exterior activity is a requisite; it suffices that we live profoundly by God. This truth is evident in the saints of the early Church; several of those saints were poor people, even slaves. It is evident also in St. Francis, St. Benedict Joseph Labre, in the Cure of Ars, and many others. They all had a deep understanding of these words of our Savior: “For what doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?” If people sacrifice so many things to save the life of the body, which must ultimately die, what should we not sacrifice to save the life of our soul, which is to last forever? Ought not man to love his soul more than his body? “Or what exchange shall a man give for his soul?” our Lord adds. “One thing is necessary,” He tells us. To save our soul, one thing alone is necessary: to hear the word of God and to live by it. Therein lies the best part, which will not be taken away from a faithful soul even though it should lose everything else.

II. THE QUESTION OF THE ONE THING NECESSARY AT THE PRESENT TIME

What we have just said is true at all times; but the question of the interior life is being more sharply raised today than in several periods less troubled than ours. The explanation of this interest lies in the fact that many men have separated themselves from God and tried to organize intellectual and social life without Him. The great problems that have always preoccupied humanity have taken on a new and sometimes tragic aspect. To wish to get along without God, first Cause and last End, leads to an abyss; not only to nothingness, but also to physical and moral wretchedness that is worse than nothingness. Likewise, great problems grow exasperatingly serious, and man must finally perceive that all these problems ultimately lead to the fundamental religious problem; in other words, he will finally have to declare himself entirely for God or against Him. This is in its essence the problem of the interior life. Christ Himself says: “He that is not with Me is against Me.”

The great modern scientific and social tendencies, in the midst of the conflicts that arise among them and in spite of the opposition of those who represent them, converge in this way, whether one wills it or not, toward the fundamental question of the intimate relations of man with God. This point is reached' after many deviations. When man will no longer fulfill his great religious duties toward God who created him and who is his last End, he makes a religion for himself since he absolutely cannot get along without religion. To replace the superior ideal which he has abandoned, man may, for example, place his religion in science or in the cult of social justice or in some human ideal, which finally he considers in a religious manner and even in a mystical manner. Thus he turns away from supreme reality, and there arises a vast number of problems that will be solved only if he returns to the fundamental problem of the intimate relations of the soul with God.

It has often been remarked that today science pretends to be a religion. Likewise socialism and communism claim to be a code of ethics and present themselves under the guise of a feverish cult of justice, thereby trying to captivate hearts and minds. As a matter of fact, the modern scholar seems to have a scrupulous devotion to the scientific method. He cultivates it to such a degree that he often seems to prefer the method of research to the truth. If he bestowed equally serious care on his interior life, he would quickly reach sanctity. Often, however, this religion of science is directed toward the apotheosis of man rather than toward the love of God. As much must be said of social activity, particularly under the form it assumes in socialism and communism. It is inspired by a mysticism which purposes a transfiguration of man, while at times it denies in the most absolute manner the rights of God.

This is simply a reiteration of the statement that the religious problem of the relations of man with God is at the basis of every great problem. We must declare ourselves for or against Him; indifference is no longer possible, as our times show in a striking manner. The present world-wide economic crisis demonstrates what men can do when they seek to get along without God.

Without God, the seriousness of life gets out of focus. If religion is no longer a grave matter but something to smile at, then the serious element in life must be sought elsewhere. Some place it, or pretend to place it, in science or in social activity; they devote the selves religiously to the search for scientific truth or to the establishment of justice between classes or

peoples. After a while they are forced to perceive that they have ended in fearful disorder and that the relations between individuals and nations become more and more difficult, if not impossible. As St. Augustine and St. Thomas have said, it is evident that the same material goods, as opposed to those of the spirit, cannot at one and the same time belong integrally to several persons. The same house, the same land, cannot simultaneously belong wholly to several men, nor the same territory to several nations. As a result, interests conflict when man feverishly makes these lesser goods his last end.

St. Augustine, on the other hand, insists on the fact that the same spiritual goods can belong simultaneously and integrally to all and to each individual in particular. Without doing harm to another, we can fully possess the same truth, the same virtue, the same God. This is why our Lord says to us: “Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God and His justice; and all these things shall be added unto you.” Failure to hearken to this lesson, is to work at one’s destruction and to verify once more the words of the Psalmist: “Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it. Unless the Lord keep the city, he watcheth in vain that keepeth it.”

If the serious element in life is out of focus, if it no longer is concerned with our duties toward God, but with the scientific and social activities of man; if man continually seeks himself instead of God, his last End, then events are not slow in showing him that he has taken an impossible way, which leads not only to nothingness, but to unbearable disorder and misery. We must again and again revert to Christ’s words: “He that is not with Me, is against Me: and he that gathereth not with Me, scattereth.” The facts confirm this declaration.

We conclude logically that religion can give an efficacious and truly realistic answer to the great modern problems only if it is a religion that is profoundly lived, not simply a superficial and cheap religion made up of some vocal prayers and some ceremonies in which religious art has more place than true piety. As a matter of fact, no religion that is profoundly lived is without an interior life, without that intimate and frequent conversation which we have not only with ourselves but with God.

The last encyclicals of Pope Pius XI make this clear. To respond to what is good in the general aspirations of nations, aspirations to justice and charity among individuals, classes, and peoples, the Holy Father wrote the encyclicals on Christ the King, on His sanctifying influence in all His

mystical body, on the family, on the sanctity of Christian marriage, on social questions, on the necessity of reparation, and on the missions. In all these encyclicals he deals with the reign of Christ over all humanity. The logical conclusion to be drawn is that religion, the interior life, must be profound, must be a true life of union with God if it is to keep the pre-eminence it should have over scientific and social activities. This is a manifest necessity.

III. THE AIM OF THIS WORK

How shall we deal with the interior life? We shall not take up in a technical manner many questions about sanctifying grace and the infused virtues that have been treated at length by theologians. We assume them here, and we shall revert to them only in the measure necessary for the understanding of what the spiritual life should be.

Our aim is to invite souls to become more interior and to tend to union with God. To do so, two very different dangers must be avoided.

Rather frequently the spirit animating scientific research even in these matters tarries over details to such an extent that the mind is turned away from the contemplation of divine things. The majority of interior souls do not need many of the critical studies indispensable to the theologian. To understand them, they would need a philosophical initiation which they do not possess and which, in a sense, would hamper them who in an instant and in a different manner go higher, as in the case of St. Francis of Assisi. He was astonished to see that in the course of philosophy given to his religious, time was taken to prove the existence of God. Today, occasionally exaggerated specialization in studies produces in many minds a lack of the general view needed to judge wisely of things, even of those in which they are especially interested and whose relation with every thing else they no longer see. The cult of detail ought not to make us lose sight of the whole. Instead of becoming spiritual, we would then become materialistic, and under pretext of exact and detailed learning, we would turn away from the true interior life and from lofty Christian wisdom.

On the other hand, many books on religious subjects that are written in a popular style, and many pious books lack a solid doctrinal foundation. Popularization, because the kind of simplification imposed upon it is material rather than formal, often avoids the examination of certain

fundamental and difficult problems from which, nevertheless, light would come, and at times the light of life.

To avoid these two opposite dangers, we shall follow the way pointed out by St. Thomas, who was not a popularizer and who is still the great classic authority on theology. He rose from the learned complexity of his first works and of the Quaestiones disputatae to the superior simplicity of the most beautiful articles of the Summa theologica. He ascended to this height so well that at the end of his life, absorbed in lofty contemplation, he could not dictate the end of his Summa because he could no longer descend to the complexity of the questions and articles that he still wished to compose.

The cult of detail and that of superficial simplification, each in its way alienates the soul from Christian contemplation, which rises above these opposing deviations like a summit toward which all prayerful souls tend.

IV. THE OBJECT OF ASCETICAL AND MYSTICAL THEOLOGY

One sees from the matter which ascetical and mystical theology should treat that it is a branch or a part of theology, an application of theology to the direction of souls. It must, therefore, proceed under the light of revelation, which alone gives a knowledge of the nature of the life of grace and of the supernatural union of the soul with God.

This part of theology is, above all, a development of the treatise on the love of God and of that on the gifts of the Holy Ghost, to show how they are applied or to lead souls to divine union. Similarly, casuistry is, in a less elevated domain, an application of moral theology to the practical discernment of what is obligatory under pain of mortal or venial sin. Moral theology ought to treat, not only of sins to be avoided, but of virtues to be practiced, and of docility in following the inspirations of the Holy Ghost. From this point of view, its applications are called ascetical and mystical theology.

Ascetical theology treats especially of the mortification of vices or defects and of the practice of the virtues. Mystical theology treats principally of docility to the Holy Ghost, of the infused contemplation of the mysteries of faith, of the union with God which proceeds from it, and also of extraordinary graces, such as visions and revelations, which sometimes accompany infused contemplation.

We shall examine the question whether ascetical theology is essentially ordained to mystical theology by asking whether the infused contemplation of the mysteries of faith and the union with God that results from it is an essentially extraordinary grace, such as visions an revelations, or whether in the perfect it is not rather the eminent but normal exercise of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which are in all the just. The answer to this question, which has been discussed several times in recent years, will form the conclusion of this work.

V. THE METHOD OF ASCETICAL AND MYSTICAL THEOLOGY

We shall limit ourselves here to what is essential in regard to the method to be followed. We must avoid two contrary deviations that are easily grasped: one would result from the almost exclusive use of the descriptive or inductive method, the other from a contrary excess.

The almost exclusive use of the descriptive or inductive method would lead us to forget that ascetical and mystical theology is a branch of theology, and we would end by considering it a part of experimental psychology. We would thus assemble only the material of mystical theology. By losing the directing light, all would be impoverished and diminished. Mystical theology must be set forth by the great principles of theology on the life of grace, on the infused virtues, and on the seven gifts; in so doing, light is shed on all of it, and one is face to face with a science and not a collection of more or less well described phenomena.

If the descriptive method were used almost exclusively, we would be struck especially by the more or less sensible signs of the mystical state and not by the basic law of the progress of grace, whose essential supernaturalness is of too elevated an order to fall under the grasp of observation. More attention might then be given to certain extraordinary and, so to speak, exterior graces, such as visions, revelations, stigmata, than to the normal and elevated development of sanctifying grace, of the infused virtues, and of the gifts of the Holy Ghost. By so doing, we might be led to confound with what is essentially extraordinary that which is only extrinsically so, that is, what is eminent but normal; to confound intimate union with God in its elevated forms with the extraordinary and relatively inferior graces which sometimes accompany it.

Lastly, the exclusive use of the descriptive method might give too much importance to this easily established fact, that intimate union with God and the infused contemplation of the mysteries of faith are relatively rare. This idea might lead us to think that all interior and generous souls are not called to it, even in a general and remote manner. This would be to forget the words of our Lord so frequently quoted by the mystics in this connection: "Many are called, but few are chosen."

On the other hand, care must be taken to avoid another deviation that would spring from the almost exclusive use of the deductive theological method. Some souls that are rather inclined to over-simplify things would be led to deduce the solution of the most difficult problems of spirituality by starting from the accepted doctrine in theology about the infused virtues and the gifts, as it is set forth by St. Thomas, without sufficiently considering the admirable descriptions given by St. Teresa, St. John of the Cross, St. Francis de Sales, and other saints, of the various degrees of the spiritual life, especially of the mystical union. It is to these facts that the principles must be applied, or rather it is these facts, first of all well understood in themselves, that must be illuminated by the light of principles, especially to discern what is truly extraordinary in them and what is eminent but normal.

The excessive use of the deductive method in this case would lead to a confusion radically opposed to the one indicated above. Since, according to tradition and St. Thomas, the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost are in every soul in the state of grace, we might thus be inclined to believe that the mystical state or infused contemplation is very frequent, and we might confound with them what is only their prelude, as simplified effective prayer. We would thus be led not to take sufficiently into account the concomitant phenomena of certain degrees of the mystical union, such as suspension of the faculties and ecstasy, and we would fall into the opposite extreme from that of the partisans of the solely descriptive method.

Practically, as a result of these two excesses two extremes also are to be avoided in spiritual direction: advising souls to leave the ascetical way too soon or too late. We will discuss this matter at length in the course of this work.

Obviously the two methods, the inductive and the deductive, or the analytic and the synthetic, must be combined.

The concepts and the facts of the spiritual life must be analyzed. First of all, must be analyzed the concepts of the interior life and of Christian perfection, of sanctity, which the Gospel gives us, in order that we may see clearly the end proposed by the Savior Himself to all interior souls, and see this end in all its elevation without in any way diminishing it. Then must be analyzed the facts: the imperfections of beginners, the active and passive purifications, the various degrees of union, and so on, to distinguish what is essential in them and what is accessory.

After this work of analysis, we must make a synthesis and point out what is necessary or very useful and desirable to reach the full perfection of Christian life, and what, on the other hand, is properly extraordinary and in no way required for the highest sanctity.

Several of these questions are very difficult, either because of the elevation of the subject treated, or because of the contingencies that are met with in the application and that depend on the temperament of the persons to be directed or on the good pleasure of God, who, for example, sometimes grants the grace of contemplation to beginners and withdraws it temporarily from advanced souls. Because of these multiple difficulties, the study of ascetical and mystical theology requires a profound knowledge of theology, especially of the treatises on grace, on the infused virtues, on the gifts of the Holy Ghost in their relations with the great mysteries of the Trinity, the Incarnation, the redemption, and the Blessed Eucharist. It requires also familiarity with the great spiritual writers, especially those who have been designated by the Church as guides in these matters.

VI. THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN ASCETICAL AND MYSTICAL THEOLOGY AND THEIR RELATIONS TO EACH OTHER

We must recall here the division between ascetical and mystical theology that was generally accepted until the eighteenth century, and then the modification that Scaramelli and those who followed him introduced at that time. The reader will, therefore, more readily understand why, with several contemporary theologians, we return to the division that seems to us truly traditional and conformable to the principles of the great masters.

Until the eighteenth century, authors generally set forth under the title Theologia mystica all the questions that ascetical and mystical theology treats of today. This is evident from the title of the works written by Blessed

Bartholomew of the Martyrs, O.P., Philip of the Blessed Trinity, O.C.D., Anthony of the Holy Ghost, O.C.D., Thomas Vallgornera, O.P., Schram, O.S.B.., and others. Under the title Theologia mystica all these authors treated of the purgative way of beginners, of the illuminative way of proficients, and of the unitive way of the perfect. In one or the other of these last two parts, they spoke of infused contemplation and the extraordinary graces which sometimes accompany it, that is to say, visions, revelations, and like favors. Moreover, in their introduction these authors customarily treated of experimental mystical theology, that is, of infused contemplation itself, for their treatises were directed to it and to the intimate union with God which results from it.

An example of this division which was generally admitted in former times may be found in Vallgornera's Mystica theologia divi Thomae (1662). He closely follows the Carmelite, Philip of the Blessed Trinity, by linking the division Philip gave with that of earlier authors and with certain characteristic texts from the works of St. John of the Cross on the period when the passive purifications of the senses and of the spirit generally appear. He divides his treatise for contemplatives into three parts (the purgative way, the illuminative way, the unitive way).

1. The purgative way, proper to beginners, in which he treats of the active purification of the external and internal senses, of the passions, of the intellect and the will, by mortification, meditation, and prayer, and finally of the passive purification of the senses, which is like a second conversion and in which infused contemplation begins. It is the transition to the illuminative way.

This last point is of prime importance in this division, and it conforms closely to two of the most important texts from the works of St. John of the Cross: "The night of sense is common, and the lot of many: these are the beginners." "The soul began to set out on the way of the spirit, the way of proficients, which is also called the illuminative way, or the way of infused contemplation, wherein God Himself teaches and refreshes the soul." Infused contemplation begins, according to St. John of the Cross, with the passive purification of the senses, which thus marks the transition from the way of beginners to that of proficients. Vallgornera clearly preserves this doctrine in this division as well as in the one that follows.

2. The illuminative way, proper to proficients, in which, after a preliminary chapter on the divisions of contemplation, are discussed the gifts of the Holy Ghost, infused contemplation, which proceeds especially from the gifts of understanding and wisdom and which is declared desirable for all interior souls, as morally necessary for the full perfection of Christian life. After several articles relating to extraordinary graces (visions, revelations, interior words), this second part of the work closes with a chapter of nine articles dealing with the passive purification of the spirit, which marks the passage to the unitive way. This also is what St. John of the Cross taught.

3. The unitive way, proper to the perfect, in which is discussed the intimate union of the contemplative soul with God and its degrees up to the transforming union. Vallgornera considers this division traditional, truly conformable to the doctrine of the fathers, to the principles of St. Thomas, and to the teaching of the greatest mystics who have written on the three ages of the spiritual life, noting how the transition from one to the other is generally made.

In the eighteenth century, Scaramelli (1687–1752), who was followed by many authors of that period, proposed an entirely different division. First of all, he does not treat of ascetical and mystical theology in the same work but in two separate works, comprising four treatises:(1) Christian perfection and the means that lead to it; (2) Obstacles (or the purgative way); (3) The proximate dispositions to Christian perfection, consisting in the moral virtues in the perfect degree (or the way of proficients); (4) The essential perfection of the Christian, consisting in the theological virtues and especially in charity (the love of conformity in the perfect). This ascetical directory does not, so to speak, discuss the gifts of the Holy Ghost. The high degree of the moral and theological virtues therein described is, nevertheless, not reached without the gifts, according to the common teaching of the doctors.

The Direttorio mistico is composed of five treatises: (1) The introduction, in which are discussed the gifts of the Holy Ghost and graces gratis datae; (2) Acquired and infused contemplation, for which the gifts suffice, as Scaramelli recognizes (chap. 14); (3) The degrees of indistinct infused contemplation, from passive recollection to the transforming union. In chapter 32, Scaramelli admits that several authors teach that infused

contemplation may be humbly desired by all interior souls, but he ends by concluding that practically it is better not to desire it before receiving a special call: “altiora te ne quaesieris”; (4) The degrees of distinct infused contemplation (visions and extraordinary interior words); (5) The passive purifications of the senses and the spirit.

It is surprising to find only at the end of this mystical directory the treatise on the passive purification of the senses which, in the opinion of St. John of the Cross and the authors quoted above, marks the entrance into the illuminative way.

By a fear of quietism, at times excessive, which cast discredit on mystical theology, many authors in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries followed Scaramelli, who was most highly esteemed by them. According to their point of view, ascetical theology treats of the exercises which lead to perfection according to the ordinary way, whereas mystical theology treats of the extraordinary way, to which the infused contemplation of the mysteries of faith would belong. At the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the present period this tendency appears again clearly marked in the study of mental prayer by Father de Maumigny, S.]., in the writings of Bishop Farges, and in the work of the Sulpician, Father Pourrat. According to these authors, ascetical theology is not only distinct from mystical theology, but is separated from it; it is not ordained to it, for mystical theology treats only of extraordinary graces which are not necessary for the full perfection of Christian life. Taking this point of view, some writers even maintained that, since St. Teresa of the Child Jesus did not receive extraordinary graces, she sanctified herself by the ascetical way and not by the mystical way. Strange supposition.

In the last thirty years, Father Arintero, O.P., Monsignor Saudreau, the Eudist, Father Lamballe, Father de la Taille, S.J., Father Gardeil, O.P., Father Joret, O.P., Father Gerest, several Carmelites in France and in Belgium, Benedictines such as Dom Huijben, Dom Louismet, and several others, examined attentively the bases of the position taken by Scaramelli and his successors.

As we have shown at length elsewhere, we have been led, as these authors were, to formulate the three following questions on the subject of the division given by Scaramelli and his successors:

1. Is this absolute distinction or separation between ascetical and mystical theology entirely traditional, or is it not rather an innovation made in the eighteenth century? Does it conform to the principles of St. Thomas and to the doctrine of St. John of the Cross? St. Thomas teaches that the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, while specifically distinct from the infused virtues, are, nevertheless, in all the just, for they are connected with charity. He says, moreover, that they are necessary for salvation, for a just man may find himself in difficult circumstances where even the infused virtues would not suffice and where he needs a special inspiration of the Holy Ghost to which the gifts render us docile. St. Thomas likewise considers that the gifts intervene rather frequently in ordinary circumstances to give to the acts of the virtues in generous interior souls a perfection, an impulse, and a promptness which would not exist without the superior intervention of the Holy Ghost.

On the other hand, St. John of the Cross, as we have said, wrote these most significant words: “The passive purification of the senses is common. It takes place in the greater number of beginners.” According to St. John, infused contemplation begins with it. And again he says: “The soul began to set out on the way of the spirit, the way of proficients, which is also called the illuminative way, or the way of infused contemplation, wherein God Himself teaches and refreshes the soul.” In this text the holy doctor did not wish to affirm something accidental, but something normal. St. Francis de Sales expresses the same thought. The division proposed by Scaramelli could not be reconciled with this doctrine because he speaks of the passive purifications of the senses and the spirit only at the end of the unitive way, as not only eminent but essentially extraordinary.

2. It may be asked whether such a distinction or separation between ascetical and mystical theology does not diminish the unity of the spiritual life. A good division, in order to be necessarily basic and not superficial an accidental, should rest on the very definition of the whole to be divided, on the nature of, this whole, which in this case is the life of grace, called by tradition the “grace of the virtues and the gifts”; for the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, being connected with charity, are part of the spiritual organism and are necessary for perfection.

3. Does not the sharply marked division between ascetical and mystical theology, proposed by Scaramelli and several others, also diminish the

elevation of evangelical perfection, when it treats of it in ascetical theology, taking away from it the gifts of the Holy Ghost, the infused contemplation of the mysteries of faith, and the union which results therefrom? Does not this new conception weaken the motives for practicing mortification and for exercising the virtues, and does it not do so by losing sight of the divine intimacy for which this work should prepare us? Does it not lessen the illuminative and unitive ways when it speaks of them simply from the ascetical point of view? Can these two ways normally exist without the exercise of the gifts of the Holy Ghost proportioned to that of charity and of the other infused virtues? Finally, does not this new conception diminish also the importance and the gravity of mystical theology, which, separated thus from ascetical theology, seems to become a luxury in the spirituality of some privileged souls, and one that is not without danger?

Are there six ways (three ascetical and ordinary, and three mystical and extraordinary, not only in fact but in essence) and not just three ways, three ages of the spiritual life, as the ancients used to say?

As soon as ascetical treatises on the illuminative and unitive ways are separated from mystical theology, they contain scarcely more than abstract considerations first on the moral and then on the theological virtues. On the other hand, if they treat practically and concretely of the progress and the perfection of these virtues, as Scaramelli does in his Direttorio ascetico, this perfection, according to the teaching of St. John of the Cross, is manifestly unattainable without the passive purifications, at least without that of the senses, and without the cooperation of the gifts of the Holy Ghost. The question then arises whether the passive purification of the senses in which, according to St. John of the Cross, infused contemplation and the mystical life, properly so called, begins is something essentially extraordinary or, on the contrary, a normal grace, the principle of a second conversion, which marks the entrance into the illuminative way. Without this passive purification, can a soul reach the perfection which Scaramelli speaks of in his Direttorio ascetico ? Let us not forget what St. Teresa says: “For instance, they read that we must not be troubled when men speak ill of us, that we are to be then more pleased than when they speak well of us; that we must despise our own good name, be detached from our kindred... with many other things of the same kind. The disposition to practice this must be, in my opinion, the gift of God; for it seems to me a supernatural good.” By this statement the saint means that they are due to a special inspiration

of the Holy Ghost, like the prayers which she calls “supernatural” or infused.

For these different reasons the contemporary authors whom we quoted above reject the absolute distinction and separation between ascetical and mystical theology that was introduced in the eighteenth century.

It is important to note here that the division of a science or of one of the branches of theology is not a matter of slight importance. This may be seen by the division of moral theology, which is notably different as it is made according to the distinction of the precepts of the decalogue, or according to the distinction of the theological and moral virtues. If moral theology is divided according to the precepts of the decalogue, several of which are negative, more insistence is placed on sins to be avoided than on virtues to be practiced more and more perfectly; and often the grandeur of the supreme precept of the love of God and of one’s neighbor, which dominates the decalogue and which ought to be as the soul of our life, no longer stands forth clearly enough. On the contrary, if moral theology is divided according to the distinction of the virtues, then all the elevation of the theological virtues will be evident, especially that of charity over all the moral virtues, which it should inspire and animate. If this division is made, the quickening impulse of the theological virtues is felt, especially when they are accompanied by the special inspirations of the Holy Ghost. Moral theology thus conceived develops normally into mystical theology, which is, as we see in the work of St. Francis de Sales, a simple development of the treatise on the love of God.

What, then, is ascetical theology for the contemporary theologians who return to the traditional division? According to the principles of St. Thomas Aquinas, the doctrine of St. John of the Cross and also of St. Francis de Sales, ascetical theology treats of the purgative way of beginners who, understanding that they should not remain retarded and tepid souls, exercise themselves generously in the practice of the virtues, but still according to the human mode of the virtues, ex industria propria, with the help of ordinary actual grace. Mystical theology, on the contrary, begins with the illuminative way, in which proficients, under the illumination of the Holy Ghost, already act in a rather frequent and manifest manner according to the superhuman mode of the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Under the special inspiration of the interior Master, they no longer act ex industria propria,

but the superhuman mode of the gifts, latent until now or only occasionally patent, becomes quite manifest and frequent.

According to these authors, the mystical life is not essentially extraordinary, like visions and revelations, but something eminent in the normal way of sanctity. They consider this true even for souls called to sanctify themselves in the active life, such as a St. Vincent de Paul. They do not at all doubt that the saints of the active life have had normally rather frequent infused contemplation of the mysteries of the redeeming Incarnation, of the Mass, of the mystical body of Christ, of the value of eternal life, although these saints differ from pure contemplatives in this respect, that their infused contemplation is more immediately ordained to action, to all the works of mercy.

It follows that mystical theology is useful not alone for the direction of some souls led by extraordinary ways, but also for the direction of all interior souls who do not wish to remain retarded, who tend generously toward perfection, and who endeavor to maintain union with God in the midst of the labors and contradictions of everyday life. From this point of view, a spiritual director's ignorance of mystical theology may become a serious obstacle for the souls he directs, as St. John of the Cross remarks in the prologue of The Ascent of Mount Carmel. If the sadness of the neurasthenic should not be taken for the passive purification of the senses, neither should melancholy be diagnosed when the passive purification does appear.

From what we have just said, it is evident that ascetical theology is ordained to mystical theology.

In short, for all Catholic authors, mystical theology which does not presuppose serious asceticism is false. Such was that of the quietists, who, like Molinos, suppressed ascetical theology by thrusting themselves into the mystical way before receiving that grace, confounding acquired passivity, which is obtained by the cessation of acts, of activity, and which turns to somnolence, with infused passivity, which springs from the special inspiration of the Holy Ghost to which the gifts render us docile. By this radical confusion, the quietism of Molinos suppressed asceticism and developed into a caricature of true mysticism.

Lastly, it is of prime importance to remark that the normal way of sanctity may be judged from two very different points of view. We may judge it by taking our nature as a starting point, and then the position that

we defend as traditional will seem exaggerated. We may also judge it by taking as a starting point the supernatural mysteries of the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity, the redeeming Incarnation, and the Blessed Eucharist. This manner of judging per altissimam causam is the only one that represents the judgment of wisdom; the other manner judges by the lowest cause, and we know how "spiritual folly," which St. Thomas speaks of, is contrary to wisdom.

If the Blessed Trinity truly dwells in us, if the Word actually was made flesh, died for us, is really present in the Holy Eucharist, offers Himself sacramentally for us every day in the Mass, gives Himself to us as food, if all this is true, then only the saints are fully in order, for they live by this divine presence through frequent, quasiexperimental knowledge and through an ever-growing love in the midst of the obscurities and difficulties of life. And the life of close union with God, far from appearing in its essential quality as something intrinsically extraordinary, appears alone as fully normal. Before reaching such a union, we are like people still half-asleep, who do not truly live sufficiently by the immense treasure given to us and by the continually new graces granted to those who wish to follow our Lord generously.

By sanctity we understand close union with God, that is, a great perfection of the love of God and neighbor, a perfection which nevertheless always remains in the normal way, for the precept of love has no limits. To be more exact, we shall say that the sanctity in question here is the normal, immediate prelude of the life of heaven, a prelude which is realized, either on earth before death, or in purgatory, and which assumes that the soul is fully purified, is capable of receiving the beatific vision immediately. This is the meaning of the words "prelude of eternal life" used in the title of this work.

When we say, in short, that infused contemplation of the mysteries of faith is necessary for sanctity, we mean morally necessary; that is, in the majority of cases a soul could not reach sanctity without it. We shall add that without it a soul will not in reality possess the full perfection of Christian life, which implies the eminent exercise of the theological virtues and of the gifts of the Holy Ghost which accompany them. The purpose of this book is to establish this thesis.

VII. DIVISION OF THIS WORK

Following what we have said, we shall divide this book into five parts:

I. The sources of the interior life and its end.

The life of grace, the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity, the influence of Christ the Mediator and of Mary Mediatrix on us. Christian perfection, to which the interior life is ordained, and the obligation of each individual to tend to it according to his condition.

II. The purification of the soul in beginners.

The removal of obstacles, the struggle against sin and its results, and against the predominant fault; the active purification of the senses, of the memory, the will, and the understanding. The use of the sacraments for the purification of the soul. The prayer of beginners. The second conversion or passive purification of the senses in order to enter the illuminative way of proficients.

III. The progress of the soul under the light of the Holy Ghost.

The spiritual age of proficients. The progress of the theological and moral virtues. The gifts of the Holy Ghost in proficients. The progressive illumination of the soul by the Sacrifice of the Mass and Holy Communion. The contemplative prayer of proficients. Questions relating to infused contemplation: its nature, its degrees; the call to contemplation; the direction of souls in this connection.

IV. The union of perfect souls with God.

The entrance into this way by the passive purification of the soul. The spiritual age of the perfect. The heroic degree of the theological and moral virtues. Perfect apostolic life and infused contemplation. The life of reparation. The transforming union. The perfection of love in its relation to infused contemplation, to the spiritual espousals and spiritual marriage.

V. Extraordinary graces.

The graces gratis datae. How they differ from the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to St. Thomas. Application of this doctrine to extraordinary graces, according to the teaching of St. John of the Cross. Divine revelations: interior words, the stigmata, and ecstasy.

Conclusion. Reply to the question: Is the infused contemplation of the mysteries of faith and the union with God which results from it an essentially extraordinary grace, or is it in the normal way of sanctity? Is it the normal prelude to eternal life, to the beatific vision to which all souls are called?

We could discuss here the terminology used by the mystics as compared with that used by theologians. The question is of great importance. Its meaning and its import will, however, be better grasped later on, that is, at the beginning of the part of this work that deals with the illuminative way.

We could also at the end of this introduction set forth in general terms what the fathers and the great doctors of the Church teach us in the domain of spirituality. It will, however, be more profitable to do so at the end of the first part of this work when we treat of the traditional doctrine of the three ways and of the manner in which it should be understood.

Moreover, we have elsewhere set forth this teaching and that of different schools of spirituality. On this point Monsignor Saudreau’s work, La vie d’union a Dieu et les moyens d’y arriver d’apres les grands mattres de la spiritualite, may be consulted with profit. It will be well also to read Father Pourrat’s study, La spiritualite chretienne. This work is conceived from a point of view opposed to the book mentioned above, for it considers every essentially mystical grace as extraordinary. We recommend particularly the excellent work of Father Cayre, A.A., Precis de patrologie, in which he sets forth with great care and in a very objective manner the spiritual doctrine of the fathers and of the great doctors of the Church, including St. John of the Cross and St. Francis de Sales.

PART 1

The Sources of the Interior Life and Its End

Prologue

Since the interior life is an increasingly conscious form of the life of grace in every generous soul, we shall first of all discuss the life of grace to see its value clearly. We shall then see the nature of the spiritual organism of the infused virtues and of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which spring from sanctifying grace in every just soul. We shall thus be led to speak of the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity in the souls of the just, and also of the continual influence exercised on them by our Lord Jesus Christ, universal Mediator, and by Mary, Mediatrix of all graces.

Such are the very elevated sources of the interior life; in their loftiness they resemble the high mountain sources of great rivers. Because our interior life descends to us from on high, it can reascend even to God and lead us to a very close union with Him. After speaking, in this first part, of the sources of interior life, we shall treat of its end, that is, of Christian perfection to which it is directed, and of everyone’s obligation to tend toward it, according to his condition. In all things the end should be considered first; for it is first in the order of intention, although it may be last in the order of execution. The end is desired first of all, even though it is last to be obtained. For this reason our Lord began His preaching by speaking of the beatitudes, and for this reason also moral theology begins with the treatise on the last end to which all our acts must be directed.

Chapter 1

The Life of Grace, Eternal life begun

The interior life of a Christian presupposes the state of grace, which is opposed to the state of mortal sin. In the present plan of Providence every soul is either in the state of grace or in the state of mortal sin; in other words, it is either turned toward God, its supernatural last end, or turned away from Him. No man is in a purely natural state, for all are called to the supernatural end, which consists in the immediate vision of God and the love which results from that vision. From the moment of creation, man was destined for this supreme end. It is to this end that we are led by Christ who, after the Fall, offered Himself as a victim for the salvation of all men.

To have a true interior life it is doubtless not sufficient to be in the state of grace, like a child after baptism or every penitent after the absolution of his sins. The interior life requires further a struggle against everything that inclines us to fall back into sin, a serious propensity of the soul toward God. If we had a profound knowledge of the state of grace, we would see that it is not only the principle of a true and very holy interior life, but that it is the germ of eternal life. We think that insistence on this point from the outset is important, recalling the words of St. Thomas: “The good of grace in one is greater than the good of nature in the whole universe”; for grace is the germ of eternal life, incomparably superior to the natural life of our soul or to that of the angels.

This fact best shows us the value of sanctifying grace, which we received in baptism and which absolution restores to us if we have had the misfortune to lose it.

The value of a seed can be known only if we have some idea of what should grow from it; for example, in the order of nature, to know the value of the seed contained in an acorn, we must have seen a fully developed oak. In the human order, to know the value of the rational soul which still

slumbers in a little child, we must know the normal possibilities of the human soul in a man who has reached his full development. Likewise, we cannot know the value of sanctifying grace, which is in the soul of every baptized infant and in all the just, unless we have considered, at least imperfectly, what the full development of this grace will be in the life of eternity. Moreover, it should be seen in the very light of the Savior's words, for they are "spirit and life" and are more savory than any commentary. The language of the Gospel, the style used by our Lord, lead us more directly to contemplation than the technical language of the surest and loftiest theology. Nothing is more salutary than to breathe the pure air of these heights from which flow down the living waters of the stream of Christian doctrine.

ETERNAL LIFE PROMISED BY THE SAVIOR TO MEN OF GOOD WILL

The expression "eternal life" rarely occurs in the Old Testament, where the recompense of the just after death is often presented in a symbolical manner under the figure, for example, of the Promised Land. The rare occurrence of the expression is more easily understood when we remember that after death the just of the Old Testament had to wait for the accomplishment of the passion of the Savior and the sacrifice of the cross to see the gates of heaven opened. Everything in the Old Testament was directed primarily to the coming of the promised Savior.

In the preaching of Jesus, everything is directed immediately toward eternal life. If we are attentive to His words, we shall see how the life of eternity differs from the future life spoken of by the best philosophers, such as Plato. The future life they spoke of belonged, in their opinion, to the natural order; they though it "a fine risk to run," without having absolute certltude about it. On the other hand, the Savior speaks with the most absolute assurance not only of a future life, but of eternal life superior to the past, the present, and the future; an entirely supernatural life, measured like the intimate life of God, of which it is the participation, by the single instant of immobile eternity.

Christ tells us that the way leading to eternal life is narrow, and that to obtain that life we must turn away from sin and keep the commandments of God. On several occasions He says in the Fourth Gospel: "He who heareth My word and believeth Him that sent Me, hath life everlasting," that is, he

who believes in Me, the Son of God, with a living faith united to charity, to the practice of the precepts, that man has eternal life begun. Christ also affirms this in the eight beatitudes as soon as He begins to preach: “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.... Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice: for they shall have their fill.... Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God.” What is eternal life, then, if not this repletion, this vision of God in His kingdom? In particular to those who suffer persecution for justice’ sake is it said: “Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven.” Before His passion Jesus says even more clearly, as St. John records: “Father, the hour is come. Glorify Thy Son that Thy Son may glorify Thee. As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He may give eternal life to all whom Thou hast given Him. Now this is eternal life: that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.”

St. John the Evangelist himself explains these words of the Savior when he writes: “Dearly beloved, we are now the sons of God; and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that when He shall appear we shall be like to Him: because we shall see Him as He is.” We shall see Him as He is, and not only by the reflection of His perfections in creatures, in sensible nature, or in the souls of the saints, in their words and their acts; we shall see Him immediately as He is in Himself.

St. Paul adds: “We see (God) now through a glass in a dark manner; but then face to face. Now I know in part; but then I shall know even as I am known.” Observe that St. Paul does not say that I shall know Him as I know myself, as I know the interior of my conscience. I certainly know the interior of my soul better than other men do; but it has secrets from me, for I cannot measure all the gravity of my directly or indirectly voluntary faults. God alone knows me thoroughly; the secrets of my heart are perfectly open only to His gaze.

St. Paul actually says that then I shall know Him even as I am known by Him. In the same way that God knows the essence of my soul and my inner life without any intermediary, so I shall see Him without the intermediary of any creature, and even, theology adds, without the intermediary of any created idea. No created idea can, in fact, represent such as He is in Himself the eternally subsistent, pure intellectual radiance that is God and His infinite truth. Every created idea is finite; it is a concept of one or another perfection of God, of His being, of His truth or His goodness, of His

wisdom or His love, of His mercy or His justice. These divers concepts of the divine perfections are, however, incapable of making us know such as it is in itself the supremely simple divine essence, the Deity or the intimate life of God. These multiple concepts are to the intimate life of God, to the divine simplicity, somewhat as the seven colors of the rainbow are to the white light from which they proceed. On earth we are like men who have seen only the seven colors and who would like to see the pure light which is their eminent source. As long as we have not seen the Deity, such as It is in Itself, we shall not succeed in seeing the intimate harmony of the divine perfections, in particular that of infinite mercy and infinite justice. Our created ideas of the divine attributes are like little squares of mosaic which slightly harden the spiritual physiognomy of God. When we think of His justice, it may appear too rigid to us; when we think of the gratuitous predilections of His mercy, they may seem arbitrary to us. On reflection, we say to ourselves that in God justice and mercy are one and the same thIng and that there is no real distinction between them. We affirm with certitude that this is true, but we do not yet see the intimate harmony of these divine perfections. To see it, we should have to see immediately the divine essence, such as it is in itself, without the intermediary of any created idea.

This vision will constitute eternal life. No one can express the joy and love that will be born in us of this vision. It will be so strong, so absolute a love of God that thenceforth nothing will be able to destroy it or even to diminish it. It will be a love by which we shall above all rejoice that God is God, infinitely holy, just, and merciful. We shall adore all the decrees of His providence in view of the manifestation of His goodness. We shall have entered into His beatitude, according to Christ's own words: "Well done, good and faithful servant, because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." We shall see God as He sees Himself, immediately, without however exhausting the depth of His being, His love, and His power, and we shall love Him as He loves Himself. We shall also see our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Such is eternal beatitude in its essence, not to speak of the accidental joy that we shall experience in seeing and loving the Blessed Virgin and all the saints, more particularly the souls whom we knew during our time on earth.

The immediate vision of God, of which we have just spoken, surpasses the natural capacity of every created intellect, whether angelic or human. Naturally a created intellect may indeed know God by the reflection of His perfections in the created order, angelic or human, but it cannot see Him immediately in Himself as He sees Himself. If a created intellect could by its natural powers alone see God immediately, it would have the same formal object as the divine Intellect; it would then be of the same nature as God. This would be the pantheistic confusion of a created nature and the divine nature.

A created intellect can be raised to the immediate vision of the divine essence only by a gratuitous help, by a grace of God. In the angel and in us this grace somewhat resembles a graft made on a wild shrub to enable it to bear good fruit. The angel and the human soul become capable of a supernatural knowledge of God and a supernatural love only if they have received this divine graft, habitual or sanctifying grace, which is a participation in the divine nature and in the inner life of God. Only this grace, received in the essence of our soul as a free gift, can render the soul radically capable of essentially divine operations, can make it capable of seeing God immediately as He sees Himself and of loving Him as He loves Himself. In other words, the deification of the intellect and that of the will presuppose the deification of the soul itself (in its essence), whence these faculties spring.

When this grace is consummated and inamissible, it is called glory. From it proceed, in the intellects of the blessed in heaven, the supernatural light which gives them the strength to see God, and in their wills the infused charity which makes them love Him without being able thereafter to turn away from Him.

Through baptism we have already received the seed of eternal life, for through it we received sanctifying grace which is the radical principle of that life; and with sanctifying grace we received infused charity, which ought to last forever.

This is what our Savior told the Samaritan woman, as St. John recounts: “If thou didst know the gift of God, and who He is that saith to thee: Give Me to drink; thou perhaps wouldst have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water.... Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again; but he that shall drink of the water that I will give him shall not thirst forever. But the water that I will give him shall become in him a fountain of

water, springing up into life everlasting." If one should ask whether these words of our Lord belong to the ascetical or the mystical order, the question would seem unintelligent; for, if our Lord is speaking here of the life of heaven, all the more do His words apply to the close union which prepares the soul for that life.

St. Thomas says: "He who will drink of the living water of grace given by the Savior will no longer desire another, but he will desire this water more abundantly.... Moreover, whereas material water descends, the spiritual water of grace rises. It is a living water ever united to its (eminent) source and one that springs up to eternal life, which it makes us merit." This living water comes from God, and that is why it can reascend even to Him.

Likewise, in the temple at Jerusalem on the last day of the feast of tabernacles, Christ stood and cried in a loud voice: "If any man thirst, let him come to Me, and drink. He that believeth in Me, as the Scripture saith: Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." He who drinks spiritually, believing in the Savior, draws from the source of living water, and can draw from it not only for himself but also for other souls to be saved.

On several occasions, as we have already remarked, Jesus repeats: "He that believeth in Me, hath everlasting life." Not only will he have it later on, but in a sense he already possesses it, for the life of grace is eternal life begun.

It is, in fact, the same life in its essence, just as the seed which is in an acorn has the same life as the full-grown oak, and as the spiritual soul of the little child is the same one that will eventually develop in the mature man.

Fundamentally, the same divine life exists as a germ or a seed in the Christian on earth and as a fully developed life in the saints in heaven. It is these who truly live eternal life. This explains why Christ said also: "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up in the last day." "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say: Behold here or behold there. For lo, the kingdom of God is within you." It is hidden there like the mustard seed, like the leaven which causes the dough to rise, like the treasure buried in the field.

How do we know that we have already received this life which should last forever? St. John explains the matter to us at length: "We know that we have passed from death to life because we love the brethren. He that loveth not, abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer. And you

know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in himself." "These things I write to you, that you may know that you have eternal life, you who believe in the name of the Son of God." Jesus had said: "Amen, amen I say to you: If any man keep My word, he shall not see death forever." In fact, the liturgy expresses this idea in the preface of the Mass for the Dead: "For to those who believe in Thee, Lord, life is only changed, not taken away"; on the contrary, it reaches its full development in heaven. All tradition declares that the life of grace on earth is in reality the seed of glory. St. Thomas delights also in saying: "For grace is nothing else than a beginning of glory in us." Bossuet often expresses himself in the same terms.

This explains why St. Thomas likes to say: "The good of grace in one is greater than the good of nature in the whole universe." The slightest degree of sanctifying grace contained in the soul of an infant after baptism is more precious than the natural good of the entire universe, all angelic natures taken together included therein; for the least degree of sanctifying grace belongs to an enormously superior order, to the order of the inner life of God, which is superior to all miracles and to all the outward signs of divine revelation.

The same supernatural life, the same sanctifying grace, is in the just on earth and in the saints in heaven. This is likewise true of infused charity, with these two differences: on earth we know God not in the clarity of vision, but in the obscurity of infused faith; and besides, though we hope to possess Him in such a way as never to lose Him, we can lose Him here on earth through our own fault.

In spite of these two differences pertaining to faith and hope, the life is the same because it is the same sanctifying grace and the same charity, both of which should last forever. This is exactly what Jesus said to the Samaritan woman: "If thou didst know the gift of God... thou perhaps wouldst have asked of Him.... He that shall drink of the water that I will give him, shall not thirst forever: but the water that I will give him shall become in him a fountain of water, springing up into life everlasting." By the light of this principle we must judge what our interior life should be and what should be its full, normal development that it may be the worthy prelude of the life of eternity. Since sanctifying grace, the infused virtues, and the gifts are intrinsically ordained to eternal life, are they not also ordained to the mystical union? Is not this union the normal prelude of the life of eternity in souls that are in truth completely generous?

From what we have just said, we may at least infer the nonextraordinary character of the infused contemplation of the mysteries of faith and of the union with God which results therefrom. This presumption will be more and more confirmed in what follows and will become a certitude.

Sanctifying grace and charity, which unite us to God in His intimate life, are, in fact, very superior to graces gratis datae and extraordinary, such as prophecy and the gift of tongues, which are only signs of the divine intervention and which by themselves do not unite us closely to God. St. Paul affirms this clearly, and St. Thomas explains it quite well.

Infused contemplation, an act of infused faith illumined by the gifts of understanding and wisdom, proceeds, as we shall see, from sanctifying grace, called “the grace of the virtues and the gifts,” received by all in baptism, and not from graces gratis datae and extraordinary. Theologians commonly concede this. We may, therefore, even now seriously presume that infused contemplation and the union with God resulting from it are not intrinsically extraordinary, like prophecy or the gift of tongues. Since they are not essentially extraordinary, are they not in the normal way of sanctity?

A second and even more striking reason springs immediately from what we have just said: namely, sanctifying grace, being by its very nature ordained to eternal life, is also essentially ordained, in a normal manner, to the proximate perfect disposition to receive the light of glory immediately. This proximate disposition is perfect charity with the keen desire for the beatific.vision, an ardent desire which is ordinarily found only in the union with God resulting from the infused contemplation of the mysteries of salvation.

This contemplation is, therefore, not intrinsically extraordinary like prophecy, but something eminent which already appears indeed to be in the normal way of sanctity, although relatively rare like lofty perfection.

We must likewise add that the ardent desire for the beatific vision is found according to its full perfection only in the transforming union, or the higher mystical union, which consequently does not seem to be outside the normal way of sanctity. To grasp the meaning and import of this reason, we may remark that, if there is one good which the Christian ought to desire keenly, it is God seen face to face and loved above all, without any further possibility of sin. Evidently there should be proportion between the intensity of the desire and the value of the good desired; in this case, its

value is infinite. We should all be “pilgrims of the Absolute” “while... we are absent from the Lord.”

Finally, as sanctifying grace is essentially ordained to eternal life, it is also ordained to a proximate disposition for us to receive the light of glory immediately after death without passing through purgatory. Purgatory is a punishment which presupposes a sin that could have been avoided, and an insufficient satisfaction that could have been completed if we had accepted with better dispositions the sufferings of the present life. It is certain, in fact, that no one will be detained in purgatory except for sins he could have avoided or for negligence in making reparation for them. Normally purgatory should be spent in this life while meriting, while growing in love, instead of after death without merit.

The proximate disposition to receive the light of glory immediately after death presupposes a true purification analogous to that in souls that are about to leave purgatory and that have an ardent desire for the beatific vision. This ardent desire exists ordinarily in this life only in the union with God which results from the infused contemplation of the mysteries of salvation. Hence contemplation stands out clearly even now, not as an extraordinary grace, but as an eminent grace in the normal way of sanctity.

The keen desire for God, the sovereign Good, which is the normal proximate disposition to the beatific vision, is admirably expressed by St. Paul: “Though our outward man is corrupted, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.... For in this also we groan, desiring to be clothed upon with our habitation that is from heaven.... Now He that maketh us for this very thing, is God, who hath given us the pledge of the Spirit.”

Obviously, that we may treat of questions of ascetical and mystical theology in a fitting manner, we must not lose sight of these heights as they are made known to us by Holy Scripture explained by the theology of the great masters. If there is a field in which men must be considered not only as they are, but as they ought to be, that field is evidently spirituality. One should be able there to breathe freely the air of the heights above human conventions. Blessed are those tried souls who, like St. Paul of the Cross, breathe freely only in the domain of God and who aspire to Him with all their strength.

Chapter 2

The Interior Life and Intimate Conversation with God

"Our conversation is in heaven." (Phil. 3:20.)

The interior life, as we said, presupposes the state of grace, which is the seed of eternal life. Nevertheless the state of grace, which exists in every infant after baptism and in every penitent after the absolution of his sins, does not suffice to constitute what is customarily called the interior life of a Christian. In addition there are required a struggle against what would make us fall back into sin and a serious tendency of the soul toward God.

From this point of view, to give a clear idea of what the interior life should be, we shall do well to compare it with the intimate conversation that each of us has with himself. If one is faithful, this intimate conversation tends, under the influence of grace, to become elevated, to be transformed, and to become a conversation with God. This remark is elementary; but the most vital and profound truths are elementary truths about which we have thought for a long time, by which we have lived, and which finally become the object of almost continual contemplation.

We shall consider successively these two forms of intimate conversation: the one human, the other more and more divine or supernatural.

CONVERSATION WITH ONESELF

As soon as a man ceases to be outwardly occupied, to talk with his fellow men, as soon as he is alone, even in the noisy streets of a great city, he begins to carry on a conversation with himself. If he is young, he often thinks of his future; if he is old, he thinks of the past and his happy or

unhappy experience of life makes him usually judge persons and events very differently.....

If a man is fundamentally egotistical, his intimate conversation with himself is inspired by sensuality or pride. He converses with himself about the object of his cupidity, of his envy; finding therein sadness and death, he tries to flee from himself, to live outside of himself, to divert himself in order to forget the emptiness and the nothingness of his life. In this intimate conversation of the egoist with himself there is a certain very inferior self-knowledge and a no less inferior self-love.

He is acquainted especially with the sensitive part of his soul, that part which is common to man and to the animal. Thus he has sensible joys, sensible sorrows, according as the weather is pleasant or unpleasant, as he wins money or loses it. He has desires and aversions of the same sensible order; and when he is opposed, he has moments of impatience and anger prompted by inordinate self-love. But the egoist knows little about the spiritual part of his soul, that which is common to the angel and to man. Even if he believes in the spirituality of the soul and of the higher faculties, intellect and will, he does not live in this spiritual order. He does not, so to speak, know experimentally this higher part of himself and he does not love it sufficiently. If he knew it, he would find in it the image of God and he would begin to love himself, not in an egotistical manner for himself, but for God. His thoughts almost always fall back on what is inferior in him, and though he often shows intelligence and cleverness which may even become craftiness and cunning; his intellect, instead of rising, always inclines toward what is inferior to it. It is made to contemplate God, the supreme truth, and it often dallies in error, sometimes obstinately defending the error by every means. It has been said that, if life is not on a level with thought, thought ends by descending to the level of life. All declines, and one’s highest convictions gradually grow weaker.

The intimate conversation of the egoist with himself proceeds thus to death and is therefore not an interior life. His self-love leads him to wish to make himself the center of everything, to draw everything to himself, both persons and things. Since this is impossible, he frequently ends in disillusionment and disgust; he becomes unbearable to himself and to others, and ends by hating himself because he wished to love himself excessively. At times he ends by hating life because he desired too greatly what is inferior in it.

If a man who is not in the state of grace begins to seek goodness, his intimate conversation with himself is already quite different. He converses with himself, for example, about what is necessary to live becomingly and to support his family. This at times preoccupies him greatly; he feels his weakness and the need of placing his confidence no longer in himself alone, but in God.

While still in the state of mortal sin, this man may have Christian faith and hope, which subsist in us even after the loss of charity as long as we have not sinned mortally by incredulity, despair, or presumption. When this is so, this man's intimate conversation with himself is occasionally illumined by the supernatural light of faith; now and then he thinks of eternal life and desires it, although this desire remains weak. He is sometimes led by a special inspiration to enter a church to pray.

Finally, if this man has at least attrition for his sins and receives absolution for them, he recovers the state of grace and charity, the love of God and neighbor. Thenceforth when he is alone, his intimate conversation with himself changes. He begins to love himself in a holy manner, not for himself but for God, and to love his own for God; he begins to understand that he must pardon his enemies and love them, and to wish eternal life for them as he does for himself. Often, however, the intimate conversation of a man in the state of grace continues to be tainted with egoism, self-love, sensuality, and pride. These sins are no longer mortal in him, they are venial; but if they are repeated, they incline him to fall into a serious sin, that is, to fall back into spiritual death. Should this happen, this man tends again to flee from himself because what he finds in himself is no longer life but death. Instead of making a salutary reflection on this subject, he may hurl himself back farther into death by casting himself into pleasure, into the satisfactions of sensuality or of pride.

In a man's hours of solitude, this intimate conversation begins again in spite of everything, as if to prove to him that it cannot stop. He would like to interrupt it, yet he cannot do so. The center of the soul has an irrestrainable need which demands satisfaction. In reality, God alone can answer this need, and the only solution is straightway to take the road leading to Him. The soul must converse with someone other than itself. Why? Because it is not its own last end; because its end is the living God, and it cannot rest entirely except in Him. As St. Augustine puts it: "Our heart is restless, until it repose in Thee."

The interior life is precisely an elevation and a transformation of the intimate conversation that everyone has with himself as soon as it tends to become a conversation with God.

St. Paul says: “For what man knoweth the things of a man but the spirit of a man that is in him? So the things also that are of God no man knoweth, but the Spirit of God.” The Spirit of God progressively manifests to souls of good will what God desires of them and what He wishes to give them. May we receive with docility all that God wishes to give us! Our Lord says to those who seek Him: “Thou wouldst not seek Me if thou hadst not already found Me.”

This progressive manifestation of God to the soul that seeks Him is not unaccompanied by a struggle; the soul must free itself from the bonds which are the results of sin, and gradually there disappears what St. Paul calls “the old man” and there takes shape “the new man.”

He writes to the Romans: “I find then a law, that when I have a will to do good, evil is present with me. For I am delighted with the law of God, according to the inward man; but I see another law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind.”

What St. Paul calls “the inward man” is what is primary and most elevated in us: reason illumined by faith and the will, which should dominate the sensibility, common to man and animals.

St. Paul also says: “For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man is corrupted, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.” His spiritual youth is continually renewed, like that of the eagle, by the graces which he receives daily. This is so true that the priest who ascends the altar can always say, though he be ninety years old: “I will go in to the altar of God: to God who giveth joy to my youth.”

St. Paul insists on this thought in his epistle to the Colossians: “Lie not one to another: stripping yourselves of the old man with his deeds, and putting on the new, him who is renewed unto knowledge, according to the image of Him that created him, where there is neither Gentile nor Jew... nor barbarian nor Scythian, bond nor free. But Christ is all and in all.” The inward man is renewed unceasingly in the image of God, who does not grow old. The life of God is above the past, the present, and the future; it is measured by the single instant of immobile eternity. Likewise the risen Christ dies no more and possesses eternal youth. Now He vivifies us by

ever new graces that He may render us like Himself. St. Paul wrote in a similar strain to the Ephesians: “For this cause I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ... that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened by His Spirit with might unto the inward man, that Christ may dwell by faith in your hearts; that, being rooted and founded in charity, you may be able to comprehend with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth; to know also the charity of Christ, which surpasseth all knowledge, that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God.”

St. Paul clearly depicts in these lines the interior life in its depth, that life which tends constantly toward the contemplation of the mystery of God and lives by it in an increasingly closer union with Him. He wrote this letter not for some privileged souls alone, but to all the Christians of Ephesus as well as those of Corinth.

Furthermore, St. Paul adds: “Be renewed in the spirit of your mind: and put on the new man, who according to God is created in justice and holiness of truth.... And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath delivered Himself for us, an oblation and a sacrifice to God for an odor of sweetness.”

In the light of these inspired words, which recall all that Jesus promised us in the beatitudes and all that He gave us in dying for us, we can define the interior life as follows: It is a supernatural life which, by a true spirit of abnegation and prayer, makes us tend to union with God and leads us to it.

It implies one phase in which purification dominates, another of progressive illumination in view of union with God, as all tradition teaches, thus making a distinction between the purgative way of beginners, the illuminative way of proficients, and the unitive way of the perfect.

The interior life thus becomes more and more a conversation with God, in which man gradually frees himself from egoism, self-love, sensuality, and pride, and in which, by frequent prayer, he asks the Lord for the ever new graces that he needs.

As a result, man begins to know experimentally no longer only the inferior part of his being, but also the highest part. Above all, he begins to know God in a vital manner; he begins to have experience of the things of God. Little by little the thought of his own ego, toward which he made everything converge, gives place to the habitual thought of God; and egotistical love of self and of what is less good in him also gives place progressively to the love of God and of souls in God. His interior

conversation changes so much that St. Paul can say: “Our conversation is in heaven.” St. Thomas often insisted on this point.

Therefore the interior life is in a soul that is in the state of grace, especially a life of humility, abnegation, faith, hope, and charity, with the peace given by the progressive subordination of our feelings and wishes to the love of God, who will be the object of our beatitude.

Hence, to have an interior life, an exceedingly active exterior apostolate does not suffice, nor does great theological knowledge. Nor is the latter necessary. A generous beginner, who already has a genuine spirit of abnegation and prayer, already possesses a true interior life which ought to continue developing.

In this interior conversation with God, which tends to become continual, the soul speaks by prayer, oratio, which is speech in its most excellent form. Such speech would exist if God had created only a single soul or one angel; for this creature, endowed with intellect and love, would speak with its Creator. Prayer takes the form now of petition, now of adoration and thanksgiving; it is always an elevation of the soul toward God. And God answers by recalling to our minds what has been said to us in the Gospel and what is useful for the sanctification of the present moment. Did not Christ say: “But the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you”?

Man thus becomes more and more the child of God; he recognizes more profoundly that God is his Father, and he even becomes more and more a little child in his relations with God. He understands what Christ meant when He told Nicodemus that a man must return to the bosom of God that he may be spiritually reborn, and each day more intimately so, by that spiritual birth which is a remote similitude of the eternal birth of the Word. The saints truly follow this way, and then between their souls and God is established that conversation which does not, so to speak, cease. Thus it was said that St. Dominic knew how to speak only of God or with God; this is what made it possible for him to be always charitable toward men and at the same time prudent, strong, and just.

This conversation with God is established through the influence of Christ, our Mediator, as the liturgy often says, particularly in the hymn Jesu dulcis memoria, which is a splendid expression of the Christian’s interior life:

Jesu, spes poenitentibus,
Quam pius es petentibus!
Quam bonus te quaerentibus!
Sed quid invenientibus!
Nec lingua valet dicere,
Nec littera exprimere,
Expertus potest credere
Quid sit Jesum diligere.

Let us strive to be of the number of those who seek Him, and to whom it is said: “Thou wouldst not seek Me, if thou hadst not already found Me.”

Chapter 3

The Spiritual Organism

The interior life, which presupposes the state of grace, consists, as we have seen, in a generous tendency of the soul toward God, in which little by little each one's intimate conversation with himself is elevated, is transformed, and becomes an intimate conversation of the soul with God. It is, we said, eternal life begun in the obscurity of faith before reaching its full development in the clarity of that vision which cannot be lost.

Better to comprehend what this seed of eternal life, semen gloriae, is in us, we must ponder the fact that from sanctifying grace spring forth in our faculties the infused virtues, both theological and moral, and also the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost; virtues and gifts which are like the subordinated functions of one and the same organism, a spiritual organism, which ought to develop until our entrance into heaven.

ARTICLE I—THE NATURAL LIFE AND THE SUPERNATURAL LIFE OF THE SOUL

We must distinguish clearly in our soul what belongs to its very nature and what is an entirely gratuitous gift of God. The same distinction must be made for the angels who also have a nature which, though entirely spiritual, is very inferior to the gift of grace.

If we carefully consider the human soul in its nature, we see two quite different regions in it: one belongs to the sensible order, the other to the suprasensible or intellectual order. The sensitive part of the soul is that which is common to men and animals; it includes the external senses and the internal senses, comprising the imagination, the sensible memory, and also sensibility, or the sensitive appetite, whence spring the yarious passions or emotions, which we call sensible love and hatred, desire and aversion, sensible joy and sadness, hope and despair, audacity and fear, and anger. All

this sensitive life exists in the animal, whether its passions are mild like those of the dove or lamb, or whether they are strong like those of the wolf and the lion.

Above this sensitive part common to men and animals, our nature likewise possesses an intellectual part, which is common to men and angels, although it is far more vigorous and beautiful in the angel. By this intellectual part our soul towers above our body; this is why we say that the soul is spiritual, that it does not intrinsically depend on the body and will thus be able to survive the body after death.

From the essence of the soul in this elevated region spring our two higher faculties, the intellect and the will. The intellect knows not only sensible qualities, colors, and sounds, but also being, the intelligible reality, of necessary and universal truths, such as the following: “Nothing happens without a cause, and, in the last analysis, without a supreme cause. We must do good and avoid evil. Do what you ought to, come what may.” An animal will never attain to the knowledge of these principles; even if its imagination were continually growing in perfection, it would never attain to the intellectual order of necessary and universal truths. Its imagination does not pass beyond the order of sensible qualities, known here or there in their contingent singularity.

Since the intellect knows the good in a universal manner, and not only the delectable or useful good but the upright and reasonable good (for example: Die rather than become a traitor), it follows that the will can love this good, will it, and accomplish it. Thereby the intellect immensely dominates the sensitive part or the emotions common to men and animals. By his intellect and his will, man resembles the angel; although his intellect, in contrast to the angelic intellect, depends in this present life on the senses, which propose to it the first objects that it knows.

The two higher faculties, the intellect and the will, can develop greatly as we see in men of genius and superior men of action. These faculties could, however, develop forever without ever knowing and loving the intimate life of God, which is of another order, entirely supernatural, and supernatural alike for angels and men. Man and the angel can indeed know God naturally from without, by the reflection of His perfections in creatures; but no created and creatable intellect can by its natural powers attain, even confusedly and obscurely, the essential and formal object of the divine intellect. To hold that it could be done would be to maintain that this created

intellect is of the same nature as God, since it would be specified by the same formal object. As St. Paul says: “For what man knoweth the things of a man, but the spirit of a man that is in him? So the things also that are of God no man knoweth, but the Spirit of God.” This order is essentially supernatural.

Sanctifying grace, the seed of glory, introduces us into this higher order of truth and life. It is an essentially supernatural life, a participation in the intimate life of God, in the divine nature, since it even now prepares us to see God some day as He sees Himself and to love Him as He loves Himself. St. Paul has declared to us: “That eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him. But to us God hath revealed them by His Spirit. For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.”

Sanctifying grace, which makes us begin to live in this higher, supra-angelic order of the intimate life of God, is like a divine graft received in the very essence of the soul to elevate its vitality and to make it bear no longer merely natural fruits but supernatural ones, meritorious acts that merit eternal life for us.

This divine graft of sanctifying grace is, therefore, in us an essentially supernatural life, immensely superior to a sensible miracle and above the natural life of our spiritual and immortal soul.

Even now this life of grace develops in us under the form of the infused virtues and of the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost. As in the natural order, our intellectual and sensitive faculties spring from the very essence of our soul, so in the supernatural order, from sanctifying grace, received in the essence of the soul, spring, in our superior and inferior faculties, the infused virtues and the gifts which constitute, with the root from which they proceed, our spiritual or supernatural organism. It was given to us in baptism, and is restored to us by absolution if we have the misfortune to lose it.

The spiritual organism may be expressed in the following table of the virtues and the gifts.

In connection with this table it would be well to consult St. Thomas' treatise on each of the virtues, where he speaks of the corresponding gift. The gift of fear corresponds both to temperance and to hope, but this latter virtue is also aided by the gift of knowledge, which shows us the emptiness of created things and thereby makes us desire God and depend on Him.

ARTICLE II—THE THEOLOGICAL VIRTUES

The theological virtues are infused virtues which have for their object God Himself, our supernatural last end. This is why they are called theological. By contrast, the moral virtues have for their object the supernatural means proportioned to our last end. Thus prudence directs our acts to this end; religion makes us render to God the worship that is due Him; justice makes us give to everyone what we owe him; fortitude and temperance regulate the sensible part of our soul to prevent it from going astray and to make it cooperate, according to its manner, in our progress toward God.

Among the theological virtues, infused faith, which makes us believe all that God has revealed because He is Truth itself, is like a higher spiritual sense which allows us to hear a divine harmony that is inaccessible to every other means of knowing. Infused faith is like a higher sense of hearing for the audition of a spiritual symphony which has God for its composer. This explains why there is an immense difference between the purely historical study of the Gospel and of the miracles which confirm it and the supernatural act of faith by which we believe in the Gospel as in the word

of God. A very learned man who seeks the truth sincerely can make a historical and critical study of the Gospel and of the miracles which confirm it without as yet coming to the point where he believes. He will believe supernaturally only after receiving the grace of faith, which will introduce him into a higher world, superior even to the natural life of the angels. “Faith... is the gift of God,” says St. Paul. It is the basis of justification, for it makes us know the supernatural end toward which we must tend. The Church has defined against the Semi-Pelagians that even the beginning of faith is a gift of grace. All the great theologians have shown that infused faith is essentially supernatural, of a supernatural character very superior to that of the sensible miracle and also to that of prophecy which announces a contingent future in the natural order, such as the end of a war. Faith makes us, in fact, adhere supernaturally and infallibly to what God reveals to us about His intimate life, according as the Church, which is charged with preserving revelation, proposes it to us.

Infused faith belongs thus to an order immensely superior to the historical and critical study of the Gospel. As Lacordaire rightly says: “A scholar may study Catholic doctrine, not reject it bitterly, and may even say repeatedly: ‘You are blessed to have faith; I should like to have it, but I cannot believe.’ And he tells the truth: he wishes and he cannot (as yet), for study and good faith do not always conquer the truth, so that it may be clear that rational certitude is not the first certitude on which Catholic doctrine rests. This scholar therefore knows Catholic doctrine; he admits its facts; he feels its power; he agrees that there existed a man named Jesus Christ, who lived and died in a prodigious manner. He is touched by the blood of the martyrs, by the constitution of the Church; he will willingly say that it is the greatest phenomenon that has passed over the world. He will almost say that it is true. And yet he does not conclude; he feels himself oppressed by truth, as one is in a dream where one sees without seeing. The day comes, however, when this scholar drops on his knees; feeling the wretchedness of man, he lifts his hands to heaven and exclaims: ‘Out of the depths I have cried to Thee, O Lord!’ At this moment something takes place in him, scales drop from his eyes, a mystery is accomplished, and he is changed. He is a man, meek and humble of heart; he can die, he has conquered the truth.”

If acquired faith, born of the historical examination of the Gospel and of the miracles which confirm it, were sufficient to attain the formal motive of

Christian faith, infused faith would be useless, as would likewise infused hope and infused charity. Natural good will, spoken of by the Pelagians, would suffice. In the opinion of the Pelagians, grace and the infused virtues were not absolutely necessary for salvation, but only for the easier accomplishment of the acts of Christian life.

Infused faith is like a faculty of supernatural audition, like a higher musical sense, which permits us to hear the spiritual harmonies of the kingdom of heaven, to hear, in a way, the voice of God through the prophets and His Son before we are admitted to see Him face to face. Between the unbeliever, who studies the Gospel, and the believer, there is a difference similar to that which exists between two persons who are listening to a Beethoven symphony, one of whom has a musical ear and the other has not. Both hear all the notes of the symphony, but one alone grasps its meaning and its soul. Similarly, only the believer adheres supernaturally to the Gospel as to the supernatural word of God; and he adheres to it even though untutored, while the learned man with all his means of criticism cannot, without infused faith, adhere to it in this manner. “He that believeth in the Son of God, hath the testimony of God in himself.”

This is what prompted Lacordaire to say: “What takes place in us when we believe is a phenomenon of intimate and superhuman light. I do not say that exterior things do not act on us as rational motives of certitude; but the very act of this supreme certitude, which I speak of, affects us directly like a luminous phenomenon (infused light of faith); I would even add, like a transluminous phenomenon.... We are affected by a transluminous light.... Otherwise how could there be proportion between our adherence, which would be natural and rational, and an object that surpasses nature and reason?... Similarly sympathetic intuition between two men accomplishes in a single moment what logic could not have, brought about in many years. Just so, a sudden illumination sometimes enlightens the genius.

“A convert will tell you: ‘I read, reasoned, wished, and I did not arrive. Then one day, I don’t know how, on the street corner or at my fireside, I don’t know, but I was no longer the same; I believed.... What took place in me at the moment of final conviction is of a totally different nature from what preceded. Remember the two disciples who were going to Emmaus.’ “

Fifty years ago, a man who did not yet know radio would have been surprised to hear it said that the day would come when a symphony that was being played in Vienna could be heard in Rome. By infused faith we hear a

spiritual symphony which originates in heaven. The perfect chords of this symphony are called the mysteries of the Trinity, the Incarnation, the redemption, the Mass, and eternal life. By this superior sense of hearing man is guided toward eternity; he ought ever to advance toward the summit from which this harmony comes.

To tend effectively toward this supernatural end and to reach it, man has received two helps, hope and charity, which are like two wings. Without them he could make progress only in the direction indicated by reason; with them he flies in the direction pointed out by faith.

Just as our intellect cannot know our supernatural end without the infused light of faith, so our will cannot tend toward it unless its powers are augmented, increased more than tenfold, raised to a higher order. For this the will needs a supernatural love and a new impulse.

By hope we desire to possess God, and in order to attain Him we rely, not on our natural powers but on the help that He promised us. We rely on God Himself who always comes to the assistance of those who invoke Him.

Charity is a superior and more disinterested love of God. It makes us love God, not only in order to possess Him some day, but for Himself and more than ourselves, because of His infinite goodness, which is more lovable in itself than all the benefits we receive from it. This virtue makes us love God above all else as a friend who has first loved us. It ordains to Him the acts of all the other virtues, which it vivifies and renders meritorious. Charity is our great supernatural force, the power of love which through centuries of persecution has surmounted all obstacles, even in weak children, such as St. Agnes and St. Lucy.

A man illumined by faith thus advances toward God by the two wings of hope and love. As soon as he sins mortally, however, he loses sanctifying grace and charity, since he turns away from God, whom he ceases to love more than himself. But divine mercy preserves infused faith and infused hope in him as long as he does not sin mortally against these virtues. He still preserves the light which indicates the road to be followed and he can still entrust himself to infinite mercy in order to ask of it the grace of conversion.

Of these three theological virtues, charity is the highest, and together with sanctifying grace, it ought to endure forever. “Charity,” says St. Paul, “never falleth away.... Now there remain faith, hope, and charity, these three: but the greatest of these is charity.” It will last forever, eternally,

when faith will have disappeared to give place to vision, and when hope will be succeeded by the inamissible possession of God clearly known.

Such are the superior functions of the spiritual organism: the three theological virtues which grow together, and with them the infused moral virtues that accompany them.

ARTICLE III—THE MORAL VIRTUES

To understand what the action of the spiritual organism should be, we must clearly distinguish on the level below the theological virtues, the acquired moral virtues which were described by the moralists of pagan antiquity and which can exist without the state of grace, and the infused moral virtues which were unknown to pagan moralists and which are described in the Gospel. The acquired moral virtues, as their name indicates, are acquired by the repetition of acts under the direction of more or less cultivated natural reason. The infused moral virtues are called infused because God alone can produce them in us. They are not the result of the repetition of our acts; we received them in baptism as parts of our spiritual organism, and absolution restores them to us if we have had the misfortune to lose them. The acquired moral virtues, known by the pagans, have an object accessible to natural reason; the infused moral virtues have an essentially supernatural object commensurate with our supernatural end, an object which would be inaccessible without the infused light of faith in eternal life, in the gravity of sin, in the redemptive value of our Savior’s passion, in the value of grace and of the sacraments.

In relation to the interior life, we shall discuss first of all the acquired moral virtues, then the infused moral virtues, and finally the relationship of the first to the second. This subject matter is important, especially since some souls consecrated to God do not in their youth give sufficient importance to the moral virtues. Over and above a rather calm and pure sensibility, they seem to have the three theological virtues, but they almost lack the moral virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, and so on. Something like an intermediary stage seems to be lacking in their souls. Yet they have the infused moral virtues, but not the corresponding acquired moral virtues in a sufficient degree. Others, on the contrary, who are older and have seen the importance of the moral virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, and so

on, in social life, do not sufficiently value the theological virtues, which are, however, incomparably higher since they unite us to God.

THE ACQUIRED MORAL VIRTUES

We shall ascend progressively from the lower degrees of natural morality to those of supernatural morality. We must, first of all, observe with St. Thomas that in a man in the state of mortal sin there are often false virtues, such as the temperance of the miser. He practices it, not for love of honest and reasonable good, not for the sake of living according to right reason, but for love of that useful good, money. Similarly, if he pays his debts, it is rather to avoid the costs of a lawsuit than for love of justice.

Above these false virtues, true acquired moral virtues may exist even in a man in the state of mortal sin. Some practice sobriety in order to live reasonably; for the same motive they pay their debts and teach some good principles to their children. But as long as a man remains in the state of mortal sin these true virtues remain in the state of a somewhat unstable disposition (in statu dispositionis facile mobilis); they are not yet in the state of solid virtue (difficile mobilis). Why is this? The answer is that, as long as a man is in the state of mortal sin, his will is habitually turned away from God. Instead of loving Him above all else, the sinner loves himself more than God, with the consequent result that he shows great weakness in accomplishing moral good, even of the natural order.

Moreover, the true acquired virtues which are in a man in the state of mortal sin lack solidity because they are not connected, because they are not sufficiently supported by the closely related moral virtues that are often lacking. We may take as an example a soldier who is naturally inclined to acts of bravery and has often shown himself courageous, but who is also inclined to become intoxicated. It may happen that, by reason of intemperance, on certain days he fails in the acquired virtue of fortitude and neglects his essential duties as a soldier. This man, who is inclined by temperament to be courageous, has not the virtue of fortitude as a virtue. Intemperance makes him fail in prudence, even in the domain of the virtue of fortitude. Prudence, which ought to direct all the moral virtues, supposes in fact that our will and our sensible appetites are habitually rectified as regards the end of these virtues. A man who drives several horses hitched to a chariot must see to it that each animal is already broken and docile. Now

prudence is like the driver of all the moral virtues, auriga virtutunl, and it ought to have them all in hand, so to speak. One does not go without the other: they are connected in prudence, which directs them.

Therefore, that true acquired virtues may not be simply in a state of unstable disposition, and that they may be in a state of solid virtue (in statu virtutis), they must be connected. That this may be so, a man must no longer be in the state of mortal sin, but his will must be set straight in regard to his last end. He must love God more than himself, at least with a real and efficacious love of esteem, if not with a love that is felt. This love is impossible without the state of grace and without charity. But after justification or conversion, these true acquired virtues may come to be stable virtues; they may become connected, relying on each other. Finally, under the influx of infused charity, they become the principle of acts meritorious of eternal life. For this reason, some theologians, such as Duns Scotus, have even thought it not necessary that we should have infused moral virtues.

THE INFUSED MORAL VIRTUES

Are the acquired moral virtues we have just spoken of sufficient, under the influence of charity, to constitute the spiritual organism of the virtues in a Christian? Must we receive infused moral virtues?

In conformity with tradition and with a decision of Pope Clement V at the Council of Vienne, the Catechism of the Council of Trent (Part II, On baptism and its effects), answers: “The grace (sanctifying), which baptism confers, is accompanied by the glorious cortege of all the virtues, which, by a special gift of God, penetrate the soul simultaneously with it.” This gift is an admirable effect of the Savior’s passion which is applied to us by the sacrament of regeneration.

Moreover, in this bestowal of the infused moral virtues, there is a lofty fitness that has been well set forth by St. Thomas. The means, he observes, must be proportioned to the end. By the infused theological virtues we are raised and directed toward the supernatural last end. Hence it is highly fitting that we should be raised and directed by the infused moral virtues in regard to supernatural means capable of leading us to our supernatural end.

God provides for our needs not less in the order of grace than in that of nature. Therefore, since in the order of nature He has given us the capacity

to succeed in practicing the acquired moral virtues, it is highly fitting that in the order of grace He should give us infused moral virtues.

The acquired moral virtues do not suffice in a Christian to make him will, as he ought, the supernatural means ordained to eternal life. St. Thomas says, in fact, that there is an essential difference between the acquired temperance described by pagan moralists, and the Christian temperance spoken of in the Gospel. The difference is analogous to that of an octave between two musical notes of the same name, separated by a complete scale. We often distinguish between philosophical temperance and Christian temperance, or again between the philosophical poverty of Crates' and the evangelical poverty of the disciples of Christ.

As St. Thomas remarks, acquired temperance has a rule and formal object different from those of infused temperance. Acquired temperance keeps a just medium in the matter of food in order that we may live reasonably, that we may not injure our health or the exercise of our reason. Infused temperance, on the contrary, keeps a superior happy mean in the use of food in order that we may live in a Christian manner, as children of God, en route to the wholly supernatural life of eternity. Infused temperance thus implies a more severe mortification than is implied by acquired temperance; it requires, as St. Paul says, that man chastise his body and bring it into subjection, that he may become not only a virtuous citizen of society on earth, but one of the "fellow citizens with the saints, and the domestics of God."

The same difference exists between the acquired virtue of religion, which ought to render to God, the Author of nature, the worship due Him, and the infused virtue of religion, which offers to God, the Author of grace, the essentially supernatural sacrifice of the Mass, which perpetuates in substance that of the cross. Between these two virtues of the same name, there is even more than the difference of an octave; there is a difference of orders, so that the acquired virtue of religion or that of temperance could grow forever by the repetition of acts without ever attaining the dignity of the slightest degree of the infused virtue of the same name. The tonality is entirely different; the spirit animating the word is no longer the same. In the case of the acquired virtue, the spirit is simply that of right reason; in the infused virtue, the spirit is that of faith which comes from God through grace.

These two formal objects and two motives of action differ greatly. Acquired prudence is ignorant of the supernatural motives of action; infused prudence knows them. Proceeding not from reason alone, but from reason illumined by infused faith, it knows the infinite elevation of our supernatural last end, God seen face to face. It knows, consequently, the gravity of mortal sin, the value of sanctifying grace and of the actual graces we must ask for every day in order to persevere, and the value of the sacraments that are to be received. Acquired prudence is ignorant of all of this, because this matter belongs to an essentially supernatural order.

What a difference there is between the philosophical modesty described by Aristotle and Christian humility! The latter presupposes the knowledge of two dogmas: that of creation ex nihilo, and that of the necessity of actual grace for taking the slightest step forward in the way of salvation. What a distance there is also between the virginity of the vestal virgin, whose duty it was to keep up the sacred fire, and that of the Christian virgin who consecrates her body and heart to God that she may follow our Lord Jesus Christ more perfectly!

These infused moral virtues are Christian prudence, justice, fortitude, temperance, and those which accompany them, such as meekness and humility. They are connected with charity in this sense, that charity, which sets us aright in regard to our supernatural last end, cannot exist without them, without this multiple rectification in regard to the supernatural means of salvation. Moreover, he who loses charity by a mortal sin, loses the infused moral virtues; because, by turning away from the supernatural end, he loses infused rectification in regard to the means proportioned to this end. But it does not follow that he loses faith and hope, or that he loses the acquired virtues; the latter, however, cease to be stable and connected in him. In fact, a man who is in the state of mortal sin loves himself more than he does God and tends through egoism to fail in his duties even in the natural order.

RELATIONS BETWEEN THE INFUSED MORAL VIRTUES AND THE ACQUIRED MORAL VIRTUES

The relations between these virtues and their subordination are explained by what we have just said. First of all, the facility of virtuous acts is not assured in the same way by the infused moral virtues as by the acquired

moral virtues. The infused virtues give an intrinsic facility, without always excluding the extrinsic obstacles; whereas these extrinsic obstacles are excluded by the repetition of acts that engender the acquired virtues.

This is easily understood when by sacramental absolution the infused moral virtues, united to sanctifying grace and to charity, are restored to a penitent who, though he has imperfect contrition for his sins, has not the acquired moral virtues. This happens, for example, in the case of a man who is accustomed to becoming intoxicated and who makes his Easter confession with sufficient attrition. By absolution he receives, together with charity, the infused moral virtues, including temperance; but he has not yet the acquired virtue of temperance. The infused virtue that he receives gives him a certain intrinsic facility for the exercise of the obligatory acts of sobriety; but this infused virtue does not exclude the extrinsic obstacles which would be eliminated by the repetition of the acts that engender acquired temperance. This penitent ought also to watch seriously over himself in order to avoid the occasions that would cause him to fall back into his habitual sin. For this reason it is evident that the acquired virtue of temperance greatly facilitates the exercise of the infused virtue of the same name.

How are the virtues exercised? They are exercised simultaneously in such a way that the acquired virtue is subordinated to the infused virtue as a favorable disposition. Thus, in another domain, the agility of a pianist’s or a harpist’s fingers, which is acquired by a repetition of acts, favors the exercise of the musical art that is in the artist’s intellect and not in his fingers. If he completely loses the nimbleness of his fingers as a result of paralysis, he can no longer exercise his art because of an extrinsic obstacle. His art, however, remains in his practical intellect, as we see in the case of a musical genius who is stricken with paralysis. Normally there ought to be two subordinated functions that should be exercised together. The same holds true for the acquired virtue and for the infused virtue of the same name. In like manner the imagination is at the service of the intellect, and the memory at that of knowledge.

These moral virtues consist in a happy mean between two extremes, shown by excess on the one hand and deficiency on the other. Thus the virtue of fortitude inclines us to keep a happy mean between fear, which flees danger without a reasonable motive, and temerity, which would lead us into the danger of getting our head broken without sufficient reason.

However, this happy mean may be misunderstood. Epicureans and the tepid intend to keep a happy mean not for love of virtue, but for convenience' sake in order to flee from the discomforts of the contrary vices. They confuse the happy mean with mediocrity, which is found not precisely between two contrary evils, but halfway between good and evil. Mediocrity or tepidity flees the higher good as an extreme to be avoided. It hides its laziness under this principle: "The best is sometimes the enemy of the good"; and it ends by saying: "The best is often, if not always, the enemy of the good." It thus ends by confusing the good with the mediocre.

The right happy medium of true virtue is not only a mean between two contrary vices; it is also a summit. It rises like a culminating point between these contrary deviations; thus fortitude is superior to fear and temerity; true prudence to imprudence and cunning; magnanimity to pusillanimity and vain and ambitious presumption; liberality to avarice or stinginess and prodigality; true religion to impiety and superstition.

Moreover, this happy medium, which is at the same time a summit, tends to rise without deviating to the right or the left in proportion as virtue grows. In this sense the mean of the infused virtue is superior to that of the corresponding acquired virtue, for it depends on a higher rule and has in view a more elevated object.

We note, lastly, that spiritual authors insist particularly, as the Gospel does, on certain moral virtues which have a more special relation with God and an affinity with the theological virtues. They are religion or solid piety, penance, which render to God the worship and the reparation which are due to Him; meekness, united to patience, perfect chastity, virginity, and humility, a fundamental virtue which excludes pride, the principle of every sin. By abasing us before God, humility raises us above pusillanimity and pride and prepares us for the contemplation of divine things, for union with God. "God giveth grace to the humble," and He makes them humble in order to load them with His gifts. Christ delighted in saying: "Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart." He alone, who was so well established in truth, could speak of His humility without losing it.

Such are the infused and acquired moral virtues which, with the theological virtues to which they are subordinated, constitute our spiritual organism. This ensemble of functions possesses great harmony, although venial sin may more or less frequently introduce discordant notes in it. All the parts of this spiritual organism grow together, says St. Thomas, like the

five fingers of one hand. This proportionate growth demonstrates that a soul cannot have lofty charity without profound humility, just as the highest branch of a tree rises toward heaven in proportion as its roots plunge more deeply into the soil. We must take care in the interior life that nothing troubles the harmony of this spiritual organism, as happens unfortunately in those who, while perhaps remaining in the state of grace, seem more preoccupied with human learning or exterior relations than with growth in faith, confidence, and the love of God.

To form a right idea of the spiritual organism, it is not sufficient to know these virtues. We must consider the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, and not ignore the diverse forms under which divine help is offered.

ARTICLE IV—THE SEVEN GIFTS OF THE HOLY GHOST

We shall recall what divine revelation, the traditional teaching of the Church, and the explanation of this teaching given by theologians, especially St. Thomas, teach us about the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost.

THE TEACHING OF SCRIPTURE

The revealed doctrine on the gifts of the Holy Ghost is contained principally in the classic text of Isaias (II: 2) which the fathers have often commented upon, saying that it is applied first of all to the Messias, and then by participation to all the just, to whom Christ promised to send the Holy Ghost. In this text, Isaias says in reference to the Messias: “And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him: the spirit of wisdom, and of understanding, the spirit of counsel, and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge, and of godliness, and He shall be filled with the spirit of the fear of the Lord.”

In the Book of Wisdom we read also: “Wherefore I wished, and understanding was given me; and I called upon God, and the spirit of wisdom came upon me. And I preferred her before kingdoms and thrones.... Silver in respect to her shall be counted as clay. I loved her above health and beauty.... Now all good things came to me together with her.... I knew not that she was the mother of them all. Which I have learned without guile, and communicate without envy.... For she is an infinite treasure to men, which they that use, become the friends of God.... She reneweth all things,

and through nations conveyeth herself into holy souls, she maketh the friends of God and prophets. For God loveth none but him that dwelleth with wisdom." This passage in itself shows that wisdom is the highest of the gifts of the Holy Ghost enumerated by Isaias.

This Old Testament revelation takes on its full meaning in the light of our Savior's words: "If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you forever. The spirit of truth... shall be in you.... The Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you." To fortify the faithful against the promoters of heresy, St. John adds: "But you have the unction from the Holy One.... Let the unction, which you have received from Him, abide in you. And you have no need that any man teach you; but as His unction teacheth you of all things and is truth, and is no lie." Moreover, Scripture contains texts commonly quoted as relating to each gift in particular.

TRADITION

In the course of time, the fathers of the Church often commented on these words of Scripture, and, beginning with the third century, tradition explicitly affirms that the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost are in all the just. Pope St. Damasus, in 382, speaks of the sevenfold Spirit which rested on the Messias, and he enumerates the gifts.

St. Augustine, especially, explains this doctrine in his commentary on the Sermon on the Mount. He shows the correspondence between the evangelical beatitudes and the seven gifts. Fear represents the first degree of the spiritual life; wisdom is its crown. Between these two extremes, St. Augustine distinguishes a double period of purifying preparation for wisdom: a remote preparation, by the active practice of the moral virtues corresponding to the gifts of piety, fortitude, knowledge, and counsel; then an immediate preparation, in which the soul is purified as a result of a more enlightened faith by the gift of understanding, of a firmer hope sustained by the gift of fortitude, and of a more ardent charity. The first preparation is called the active life; the second, the contemplative life, because moral activity is here entirely subordinated to a faith rendered luminous by

contemplation, which, in pacified and docile souls, will one day culminate in perfect wisdom.

To know the teaching of the Church on this subject we shall recall what the Council of Trent says: “The efficient cause [of our justification] is the merciful God who washes and sanctifies gratuitously (I Cor. 6: II), signing and anointing with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the pledge of our inheritance (Eph. I: 13 f.).”

The Catechism of the Council of Trent fixes this point exactly by enumerating the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost according to Isaias (11: 2 f.), and by adding: “These gifts of the Holy Ghost are for us, as it were, a divine source whence we draw the living knowledge of the precepts of Christian life. Moreover, by them we can know whether the Holy Ghost dwells in us.” St. Paul says, in fact: “For the Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit, that we are the sons of God.” He gives us this testimony by the filial love which He inspires in us, and by which He makes Himself, so to speak, felt by us.

One of the most beautiful testimonies that tradition offers us on the seven gifts is found in the liturgy for Pentecost. We read in the sequence for the Mass of that day:

Veni sancte Spiritus,
Et entitle coelitus
Lucis tuae radium.

“Come, O Holy Ghost, and send from heaven a ray of Thy light. Come, Father of the poor. Come, Giver of graces. Come, Light of hearts, excellent Counselor, sweet Guest of our soul, sweet Refresh ment, Rest in labor, Coolness in heat, Comfort in tears.”

O lux beatissima,
Reple cordis intima
Tuorum fidelium.

“O blessed Light, inundate the very depths of the hearts of Thy faithful.... Warm what is cold, straighten what is crooked.”

Da tuis fidelibus,
In te confidentibus,
Sacrum septenarium.

“Give to Thy faithful who trust in Thee, the sacred sevenfold gift. Give them the merit of virtue. Give them a happy end. Give them eternal joy.”

In the Veni Creator Spiritus, we read likewise:

> Tu septiformis munere....
> Accende lumen sensibus,
> lnfunde amorem cordibus.

“The sevenfold gift is Thine.... Kindle our senses with fire from above and pour Thy love into our hearts.”

Finally, the testimony of tradition is admirably expressed by the encyclical of Leo XIII on the Holy Ghost, in which the Pope declares that to complete our supernatural life we need the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost. He says:

“The just man, that is to say, he who lives the life of divine grace and acts by the fitting virtues as by means of faculties, has need of those seven gifts, which are properly attributed to the Holy Ghost. By means of them the soul is furnished and strengthened so as to be able to obey more easily and promptly His voice and impulse. Wherefore these gifts are of such efficacy that they lead the just man to the highest degree of sanctity; and of such excellence that they continue to exist even in heaven, though in a more perfect way. By means of these gifts the soul is excited and encouraged to seek after and attain the evangelical beatitudes which, like the flowers that come forth in the springtime, are the signs and harbingers of eternal beatitude....

These sublime truths, which so clearly show forth the infinite goodness of the Holy Ghost towards us, certainly demand that we should direct towards Him the highest homage of our love and devotion. Christians may do this most effectually if they will daily strive to know Him, to love Him, and to implore Him more earnestly.... What should be chiefly dwelt upon and clearly explained is the multitude and greatness of the benefits which have been bestowed, and are constantly bestowed, upon us by this divine Giver.... We owe to the Holy Ghost love, because He is God.... He is also to be loved because He is the substantial, eternal, primal Love, and nothing is more lovable than love.... In the second place it will obtain for us a still more abundant supply of heavenly gifts; for whilst a narrow heart contracts the hand of the giver, a grateful and mindful heart causes it to expand.... Lastly, we ought confidently and continually to beg of Him to illuminate us daily more and more with His light and inflame us with His charity: for, thus inspired with faith and love, we may press onward earnestly towards our eternal reward, since “He is the pledge of our inheritance.”

Such are the principal testimonies of tradition regarding the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost. We shall recall briefly the exact statements brought to bear on this point by theology, especially in the doctrine of St. Thomas. His teaching has been approved in substance by Leo XIII, who often quoted the Angelic Doctor in the encyclical, the principal parts of which we have just cited.

THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY GHOST ACCORDING TO ST. THOMAS

The holy doctor shows us three things in particular: that the gifts are habitual permanent dispositions (habitus) specifically distinct from the virtues; that the gifts are necessary to salvation; and that they are connected with charity and grow with it. St. Thomas says:

"To differentiate the gifts from the virtues, we must be guided by the way Scripture expresses itself, for we find there that the term employed is spirit rather than gift. For thus it is written (Isa. 11:2 f.): "The spirit... of wisdom and of understanding... shall rest upon Him," and so on: from which words we are clearly given to understand that these seven are there set down as being in us by divine inspiration. Now inspiration denotes motion from without. For it must be noted that in man there is a twofold principle of movement, one within him, namely, the reason; the other extrinsic to him, namely, God, as stated above (Ia IIae, q. 9, a. 4. 6), and also by the Philosopher in the chapter on Good Fortune (Ethic. Eudem.,vii).

Now it is evident that whatever is moved must be proportionate to its mover: and the perfection of the thing moved as such consists in a disposition whereby the thing moved is made proportionate to its mover. Hence the more exalted the mover, the more perfect must be the disposition whereby the movable object is made proportionate to its mover: thus we see that a disciple needs a more perfect disposition in order to receive a higher teaching from his master. Now it is manifest that human virtues perfect man according as it is natural for him to be moved by his reason in his interior and exterior actions. Consequently man needs yet higher perfections, whereby to be disposed to be moved by God. These perfections are called gifts, not only because they are infused by God, but also because by them man is disposed to become amenable to the divine inspiration, according to Isa. I: 5: "The Lord... hath opened my ear, and I do not resist; I have not gone back." Even the Philosopher says in the chapter on Good Fortune

(Ethic. Eudem., loco cit.) that for those who are moved by divine instinct, there is no need to take counsel according to human reason, but only to follow their inner promptings, since they are moved by a principle higher than human reason. This, then, is what some say, that the gifts perfect man for acts which are higher than acts of virtue."

Thus we see that the gifts of the Holy Ghost are not acts, or actual motions, or passing helps of grace, but rather qualities or permanent infused dispositions (habitus), which render a man promptly docile to divine inspirations. Leo XIII, in the encyclical Divinum illud munus, which we quoted at length a few pages back, placed his approval on this manner of conceiving of the gifts. They dispose man to obey the Holy Ghost promptly, as sails prepare a ship to follow the impulse of a favorable wind. By this passive docility, the gifts help us to produce those excellent works known as the beatitudes. From this point of view, the saints are like great sailing vessels which, under full sail, properly catch the impelling force of the wind. The art of navigation teaches a mariner how and when he may most opportunely spread his sails to profit by a favorable breeze.

This figure is used by our Lord Himself when He says: "The Spirit breatheth where He will; and thou hearest His voice, but thou knowest not whence He cometh and whither He goeth. So is everyone that is born of the Spirit" and is docile to His inspiration. St. Thomas says we do not really know where precisely the wind that blows was formed, or how far it will make itself felt. In the same way, we, do not know where precisely a divine inspiration begins, or to what degree of perfection it would lead us if we were wholly faithful to it. Let us not be like sailing vessels which, because of neglect in noting a favorable wind, have their sails furled when they should be spread.

According to these principles, the great majority of theologians hold with St. Thomas that the gifts are really and specifically distinct from the infused virtues, just as the principles which direct them are distinct: that is, the Holy Ghost and reason illumined by faith. We have here two regulating motions, two different rules that constitute different formal motives. It is a fundamental principle that habits are specified by their object and their formal motive, as sight by color and light, and hearing by sound. The human mode of acting results from the human rule; the superhuman mode results from the superhuman or divine rule, from the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, "modus a mensura causatur." Thus even infused prudence proceeds

by discursive deliberation, in which it differs from the gift of counsel, which disposes us to receive a special inspiration of a superdiscursive order. Even infused prudence hesitates, for example, about what answer to give to an indiscreet question so as to avoid a lie and keep a secret; while a special inspiration of the Holy Ghost will enable us to find a proper reply, as Christ told His disciples.

Likewise, while faith adheres simply to revealed truths, the gift of understanding makes us scrutinize their depths, and that of wisdom makes us taste them. The gifts are thus specifically distinct from the virtues.

St. Thomas adds in his Summa a statement that he had not made in his Commentary on the Sentences, namely, that the gifts of the Holy Ghost are necessary to salvation. The Book of Wisdom (7: 28) tells us in fact that: "God loveth none but him that dwelleth with wisdom"; and we read in Ecclesiasticus (I: 28): "He that is without fear (of God), cannot be justified." Wisdom is the highest of the gifts, and fear the lowest.

Moreover, St. Thomas notes that even the infused virtues, both theological and moral, which are adapted to the human mode of our faculties, leave us in a state of inferiority in regard to our supernatural end which should be known in a more lively, more penetrating, more delightful manner, and toward which we ought to advance with greater ardor.

Even when faith is elevated, it remains essentially, imperfect for three reasons: (1) because of the obscurity of its object, which it does not attain immediately, but "through a glass in a dark manner" (I Cor. 13: I2); (2) it attains its object only by multiple dogmatic formulas, whereas God is supremely simple; (3) it attains its object in an abstract manner, by affirmative and negative propositions (componendo et dividendo), whereas, on the contrary, the living God is the light of life, whom we ought to be able to know, not in an abstract manner but in a quasi-experimental manner. Hope shares the imperfection of faith, and so does charity as long as its object is proposed by faith.

With even greater reason, prudence, though infused, is imperfect from the fact that it must have recourse to reasoning, to the search for reasons for acting in order to direct the moral virtues. It frequently hesitates, for example, about a suitable answer to give to an indiscreet question so as to keep a secret and avoid a lie. In certain cases, only a good inspiration would be necessary to do so. The same thing is true when it is a case of

efficaciously resisting certain temptations, either subtle, or violent and prolonged.

“Human reason,” says St. Thomas, “even when perfected by the theological virtues, does not know all things, or all possible things. Consequently it is unable to avoid folly (stultitia) and other like things.... God, however, to whose knowledge and power all things are subject, by His motion safeguards us from all folly, ignorance, dullness of mind, hardness of heart, and the rest. Consequently the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which make us docile to His promptings, are said to be given as remedies for these defects.”

In this sense they are necessary to salvation, as sails are on a vessel that it may be responsive to a favorable wind, although it may advance also by means of oars. These two ways of advancing are quite distinct, although they may be united or simultaneous.

“By the theological and moral virtues,” says St. Thomas, “man is not so perfected in respect of his last end as not to stand in continual need of being moved by the yet higher promptings of the Holy Ghost.” This need is permanent in man; for this reason the gifts are in us a permanent, infused disposition.

We make use of the gifts somewhat as we do of the virtue of obedience in order to receive a superior direction with docility and to act according to this direction; but we do not have this superior inspiration whenever we wish. In this sense by means of the gifts we are passive in regard to the Holy Ghost that we may act under His influence. This will explain more clearly why, like obedience, the gifts are a permanent disposition in the just man.

This great fitness, and even this necessity of the gifts, is better seen if we consider the perfection which each of them gives either to the intellect, or to the will and to the sensible part of the soul, as St. Thomas points out.

The following synopsis explains the statement just made:

We see that those gifts which direct the others are superior; among them the gift of wisdom is the highest because it gives us a quasi experimental knowledge of God, and thereby, a judgment about divine things which is superior even to the penetration of the gift of understanding (which belongs rather to first apprehension than to judgment).

The gift of knowledge corresponds to hope in this sense, that it makes us see the emptiness of created things and of human help, and consequently the necessity of placing our confidence in God in order to attain to the possession of Him. The gift of fear also perfects hope by preserving us from presumption; but it corresponds also to temperance to aid us against temptations. To these seven gifts correspond the beatitudes which are their acts, as St. Thomas so well shows.

Finally, from the necessity of the gifts for salvation it follows that they are connected with charity, according to St. Paul’s words to the Romans (5: 5): “The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us.” The Holy Ghost does not come to us without His seven gifts, which thus accompany charity and which, consequently, are lost with it by mortal sin.

They thus belong to the spiritual organism of sanctifying grace, which is therefore called “the grace of the virtues and the gifts.” Since all the infused virtues grow together like the five fingers of the hand, the same must be said of the seven gifts. Hence we cannot conceive of a Christian having that high degree of charity which is proper to perfection, without at the same time having the gifts of the Holy Ghost in a proportionate degree, although perhaps in him the gifts of understanding and of wisdom may be exercised under a less contemplative and more practical form than in others. This was the case with St. Vincent de Paul and many other saints who were called to devote themselves to their neighbor in the works of the active life.

We shall treat later of docility to the Holy Ghost and of the conditions it demands, but we see even now the value of this spiritual organism, which is eternal life begun in us. This life is more precious than sight, than physical life, than the use of reason, in this sense, that the loss of the use of reason does not deprive the just man of this treasure, which death itself cannot snatch from us. This grace of the virtues and gifts is also more precious than the gift of miracles or of tongues or of prophecy; for these charismata are, so to speak, only exterior, supernatural signs, which can point out the way that leads to God, but cannot unite us to Him as sanctifying grace and charity can.

To see more clearly how the diverse functions of this spiritual organism should be exercised, we must speak of the actual grace necessary to the exercise of the virtues and the gifts.

APPENDIX—THE SUPERHUMAN MODE OF THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY GHOST

Since we have treated this question of the superhuman mode of the gifts of the Holy Ghost in other works, we shall briefly recall the exact meaning of what we have previously written on this point and add some new and exact statements.

IN WHAT SENSE CAN THE GIFTS HAVE TWO MODES, THAT ON EARTH AND THAT OF HEAVEN?

We have several times recalled this incontestable truth, namely, that one habitus can have acts whose formal object is distinct from that of the habitus, and we have admitted that in the specifying object of the habitus two different modes of acting may be found, as, for example, in the case of the infused virtues and the gifts, their mode of acting here on earth and their mode in heaven. But we have emphasized the fact that one and the same habitus cannot be the principle of acts that have distinct modes, such as that of earth and that of heaven, unless the first mode is ordained to the second and thus falls under one and the same formal object.

A recent work offering an entirely contrary opinion states that the gifts of the Holy Ghost would, according to St. Thomas, have even here on earth two specifically distinct modes, the one ordinary, the other essentially extraordinary; the latter would be required for the infused contemplation of

the mysteries of faith. Consequently contemplation would not be in the normal way of sanctity.

We replied to this opinion. The essence of our reply, which should not be overlooked, was as follows: “If there were here on earth two specifically distinct modes for the gifts of the Holy Ghost, one of which would be ordinary, and the other not only eminent, but intrinsically and extrinsically extraordinary, the act characterized by the human mode would not be ordained to the act characterized by a superhuman and essentially extraordinary mode. (It would not be ordained to it any more than to the acts which suppose graces gratis datae, such as prophecy.) On the contrary, the act of the gifts exercised on earth is essentially ordained to that of heaven. They are, as St. Thomas insisted in the Quaestiones disputatae, ‘in eadem serie motus,’ in the same series of operations, and the last must be placed, otherwise all that precede fail to attain their end.

“This text from the Quaestiones disputatae, in no way contradicts what we have said. It does not state that the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost have on earth two specifically distinct acts, one ordinary, the other essentially extraordinary. It states quite the contrary; for it demands that for one and the same habitus the less perfect act should be ordained to the second, just as the foundation of a building is to the superstructure, as Christian life on earth is to that of heaven.” We even underlined (ibid., p. 76) in the text of St. Thomas invoked against our opinion, the word ordinetur, which the writer had neglected to consider.

R. Dalbiez, writing in the Etudes Carmelitaines, April, 1933 (pp. 250 ff.), made the same observation that we did. He placed in parallel columns the integral text of St. Thomas and the quotation that Father Chrysogonous had taken from it, although the latter failed to cite these significant words: “Si autem non accipiatur unum in ordine ad aliud, tunc non erunt eaedem virtutes, nec secundum actum nec secundum habitum.” Father Dalbiez adds (ibid.): “The passage which I have underlined and which Father Chrysogonous did not quote is quite unfavorable to his thesis.... The idea of finding in this so-called definitive text the slightest support for the thesis of the two modes, human and superhuman, of the terrestrial acts of the gifts of the Holy Ghost must be abandoned.”

P. Perinelle, in the Revue des sciences philosophiques et theologiques, November, 1932 (p. 692), makes a like observation on the central argument of the thesis. He adds that Father Chrysogonous was mistaken in saying that

according to St. Thomas there are three infused intellectual virtues (understanding, knowledge, and wisdom) parallel to the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and that it is only since the Fall that the gifts are necessary.

What most interests us here is that the author did not at all succeed in proving the principal point that he wished to establish: namely, that the gifts have here below two specifically distinct modes of operating, one ordinary, the other essentially extraordinary, which would characterize infused contemplation.

WHETHER THE SUPERHUMAN MODE OF THE GIFTS CAN BE LATENT

We have often affirmed that ordinarily the superhuman mode of the gifts is at first quite hidden, that is, in the ascetical life, and that this mode becomes more manifest in the mystical life, at least for an experienced director. We may express this teaching more exactly by stating that in the ascetical life the influence of the gifts is either latent and quite frequent (it makes one think of the breeze which only facilitates the work of the rowers), or manifest but rare (in certain striking circumstances), whereas, on the contrary, in the mystical life the influence of the gifts is both frequent and manifest. It is not, however, always striking, as in the case of the great contemplatives, but occasionally diffuse, very real nevertheless, as is the case in saints who have an active vocation, such as St. Vincent de Paul.

Some may object: “The operation belonging to the superhuman mode could not remain hidden; the soul necessarily perceives it from the very fact that this operation deviates from the natural mode of the subject.” This assertion springs from the preceding one which, we have seen, has not been proved. It would be true if the gifts had here on earth two specifically distinct modes, and if the superhuman mode were extraordinary to the point of requiring infused ideas or a manifestly supernatural arrangement of our acquired ideas. But this is not so. Even in the case of prophecy, which is an extraordinary grace, there may be, says St. Thomas, a prophetic instinct hidden even from him who receives it; by it he can, like Caiphas, prophesy without knowing it. “The prophet’s mind is instructed by God in two ways: in one way by an express revelation, in another way by a most mysterious instinct ‘to which the human mind is subjected without knowing it,’ as Augustine says (Gen. ad lit., II, 17).”

Since this is true for prophecy, which is an essentially extra ordinary grace, with even greater reason is it true of the special inspiration of the Holy Ghost, to which the gifts, present in all the just, should render them docile. All spiritual writers admit that this special inspiration, which resembles the breeze that comes up at the right moment, is ordinarily latent and almost imperceptible at first, and that, if it is not resisted, it generally becomes stronger and more urgent. Innumerable passages from Scripture, from the fathers, from St. Thomas, and St. John of the Cross could be quoted on this point. They make this statement in particular when commenting on Christ's words: "The Spirit breatheth where He will, and thou hearest His voice; but thou knowest not whence He cometh and whither He goeth: so is everyone that is born of the Spirit." The inspiration, at first latent and obscure, becomes more manifest, luminous, and compelling if one is faithful.

St. John of the Cross expresses the same idea in The Ascent of Mount Carmel: "It is indispensable to possess this knowledge proper to contemplation before leaving discursive meditation. But it is to be remembered that this general knowledge... is at times so subtle and delicate, particularly when most pure, simple, perfect, spiritual, and interior, that the soul, though in the practice thereof, is not observant or conscious of it."

The special inspiration which we should receive with docility through the gifts of the Holy Ghost is undoubtedly often quite hidden. According to spiritual writers, we must establish ourselves in silence that we may be attentive to this inspiration, hear it, and then distinguish between it and one that might lead us astray. This is the whole question of the discernment of spirits. This admonition is frequently expressed in The Imitation of Christ: "Consider these things, O my soul, and close up the doors of thy sensual desires; that thou mayest hear what the Lord thy God speaketh within thee." Moreover, there are certainly many degrees of docility to the Holy Ghost, from our first response to the attraction of our vocation up to the last moment when we give up our souls to God.

ARE THERE DEGREES IN DETACHMENT FROM CREATURES?

Is detachment from creatures the same for the greatest saints and for souls that have reached a lesser perfection? To formulate the question is to solve it; we have never had the slightest doubt on this point.

One must be possessed of a certain juvenile daring to write: “Detachment from creatures ought to be the same for all perfect souls: that is, total, absolute, universal. It is impossible to find a mean between having and not having defects. Now perfection by its nature excludes all defects, whether directly or indirectly voluntary. The interior fervor exercised in detaching oneself from everything will vary in the subject according to the degree of the grace received, which is the seed of more or less striking victories; but objectively speaking, the renunciation of everything, no matter how small, which is opposed to the divine will, must be total and witnout any exception.”

The logical formalism which halts at the formula: “It is impossible to find a mean between having and not having defects,” ought not to make us forget the concrete order of things, or the great difference that exists among perfect souls, from the least elevated up to the holy soul of Christ. In concrete reality, renunciation, even objectively considered, progresses together with the fervor of will of the subject in which it exists. In fact, an already perfect soul can undeniably still progress, and in that soul detachment from creatures increases with union with God. These are two aspects of the progress of the life of grace, which continues in the unitive way. Thus many indirectly voluntary defects, the result of a practically unheeded negligence, are progressively eliminated in proportion as the depth of the soul is purified and more intimately and continually united to God.

Moreover, it is certain that a just man, even though perfect, cannot continually avoid all venial sins, although he can avoid each venal sin in particular. As he grows in charity, he avoids them more and more, so that in the transforming union, as St. Teresa explains, the soul is practically freed from the trouble of the passions; as long as it is under the actual grace of the transforming union, it does not commit deliberate venial sins. Outside of these moments, it may still commit some venial fault, which is quickly atoned for. Though some perfect souls are confirmed in good, this is not true of all of them.

Finally, we must not forget that detachment from creatures was far greater in the Blessed Virgin than in the greatest saints, since she never committed the slightest venial sin. It was even greater still in the holy soul of Christ, who not only never actually sinned, but who was, even here on earth, absolutely impeccable. Therefore it is truly an exaggeration of

simplicity to say: “It is impossible to find a mean between having and not having defects.” What is true, is that there is no mean between being or not being absolutely impeccable, between continually avoiding or not avoiding every venial sin, between wishing or not wishing to strive henceforth to avoid them more and more. According to St. Thomas, “man (poenitens) needs to have the purpose of taking steps to commit fewer venial sins.” According as his will is more or less intense or fervent, he will actually avoid them more or less. Detachment from creatures will increase with the progress of charity or of attachment to God. Father Chardon strongly insisted on this point in his beautiful book, La croix de Jesus.

From all evidence, there are many degrees in what St. Thomas expresses in this manner: “Perfection can be had in this life... by the removal from man’s affections not only of whatever is contrary to charity, but also of whatever hinders the mind’s affections from tending wholly to God.” In this detachment there are many degrees even in regard to the exclusion of venial sins: “Those who are perfect in this life are said to offend in many things with regard to venial sins, which result from a weakness of the present life.” This statement is not exaggerated in its simplicity; it is rather the simple expression of Christian good sense.

ARE THE PASSIVE PURIFICATIONS NECESSARY TO ELIMINATE MORAL DEFECTS?

Our opponent writes in one of his replies: “We think that the defects pointed out by St. John of the Cross in The Dark Night under the name of capital sins, are all voluntary and that consequently the soul can, with the help of ordinary grace, free itself from them. Does Father Garrigou-Lagrange believe that the soul cannot purify itself of spiritual gluttony, spiritual laziness, spiritual pride, and other defects of this type... by the exercise of asceticism? We repeat here what we wrote elsewhere: that, if it could not free itself from them, these defects would no longer be voluntary and consequently would not hinder perfection.”

We answer that St. Thomas avoids this excessively simple and superficial manner of considering things, when he teaches the necessity of the gifts of the Holy Ghost and of the corresponding inspirations for salvation and perfection. We have seen in the course of this study that he by no means admits that the gifts would have here on earth two specifically distinct

modes, one ordinary, the other essentially extraordinary, such as that of graces gratis datae.

The soul can free itself of certain moral defects only by docility to the special inspirations of the Holy Ghost. It would be entirely false to say that if the soul cannot deliver itself from them without these special inspirations, "these defects are no longer voluntary and therefore do not hinder perfection." The gifts of the Holy Ghost are given to all the just precisely to enable them to receive with docility these special inspirations, whose superhuman mode, that is at first latent, grows progressively more manifest if the soul is docile. St. Thomas says in fitting terms: "Whether we consider human reason as perfected in its natural perfection, or as perfected by the theological virtues, it does not know all things, or all possible things. Consequently it is unable to avoid folly and other like things mentioned in the objection. God, however, to whose knowledge and power all things are subject, by His motion safeguards us from all folly, ignorance, dullness of mind, and hardness of heart, and the rest. Consequently the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which make us amenable to His promptings, are said to be given as remedies for these defects."

We hold, therefore, that the special inspirations of the Holy Ghost are necessary that the soul may be purified of a certain rudeness or harshness, of dullness, of spiritual folly, and other similar defects, which are not only opposed to a certain psychological purity, but to moral purity. Without progressive docility to these special inspirations of the Holy Ghost, the depth of the soul will not be purified of its more or less unconscious egoism which mingles, under the form of indirectly voluntary negligence, in many of our acts and in many more or less culpable omissions.

To say that the passive purifications are not necessary to perfect moral purity would be to deny the necessity of the passive purification of the will, which frees the acts of hope and charity from all human alloy. In this connection we may profitably recall what St. Teresa wrote in her Life: "For instance, they read that we must not be troubled when men speak ill of us, that we are to be then more pleased than when they speak well of us; that we must despise our own good name, be detached from our kindred,... with many other things of the same kind. The disposition to practice this must be, in my opinion, the gift of God; for it seems to me a supernatural good." The meaning which the saint gives to this last expression is well known. Moreover, she remarks more than once that the progress of the virtues

normally accompanies that of prayer, and that profound humility is ordinarily the fruit of the infused contemplation of the infinite grandeur of God and of our own wretchedness. This growth in virtue is not something accidental; it is the normal development of the interior life.

St. John of the Cross clearly holds that the passive purifications are necessary for the profound purity of the will. It will suffice to recall what he says of the defects that necessitate the passive purification of the senses and that of the spirit. In The Dark Night of the Soul (Bk. I, chaps. 2–9, and Bk. II, chaps. I f.) he speaks, especially in the last two chapters named, of the "stains of the old man" which still remain in the spirit, like rust which will disappear only under the action of an intense fire. Among the defects of proficients which require "the strong lye of the night of the spirit," he mentions rudeness, impatience, secret pride, unconscious egoism which causes some souls to use spiritual goods in anything but a detached manner, with the result that they fall into illusions. Evidently they lack not only psychological but moral purity. Finally, in the opinion of St. John of the Cross, these passive purifications (which belong to the mystical order) and infused contemplation of the mysteries of faith are indubitably in the normal way of sanctity since he wrote the two following propositions, which are of primary importance in his work: "The passive purification of the senses is common, it takes place in the greater number of beginners"; being passive, it belongs not to the ascetical but to the mystical order. "The soul began to set out on the way of the spirit, the way of proficients, which is also called the illuminative way, or the way of infused contemplation, wherein God Himself teaches and refreshes the soul" St. John of the Cross most certainly wished to note here not something accidental, but something that is produced normally in the way of sanctity when a soul that is truly docile to the Holy Ghost does not recoil in the face of trial.

We maintain, therefore, what we have always taught on this point. Moreover, the Carmelite theologians have taught the same doctrine. Philip of the Blessed Trinity and Anthony of the Holy Ghost state very clearly: "All ought to aspire to supernatural contemplation. All, and especially souls consecrated to God, ought to aspire and to tend to the actual union of enjoyment with God." (These theologians assign the same meaning to the words "supernatural" and "infused" when they apply them to contemplation.)

Finally, as we have more than once remarked, Joseph of the Holy Ghost wrote: “If infused contemplation is taken in the sense of rapture, ecstasy, or similar favors, we cannot apply ourselves to it, or ask it of God, or desire it; but as for infused contemplation in itself, as an act of contemplation (abstraction being made of ecstasy which may accidentally accompany it), we can aspire to it, desire it ardently, and humbly ask it of God, although we cannot certainly endeavor to have it by our own industry or our own activity.” Joseph of the Holy Ghost even says: “God usually raises to infused contemplation the soul that exercises itself fervently in acquired contemplation. This is the common teaching.”

We have never taught anything else. This is truly the teaching of St. John of the Cross, and it conforms fully to that left us by St. Thomas on the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, which are connected with charity and which, as infused habits, grow with charity. The full perfection of Christian life is inconceivable without them and without the special inspirations to which they render us docile.

ARTICLE V—ACTUAL GRACE AND ITS DIVERS FORMS

We shall recall here:(1) the necessity of actual grace; (2) its divers forms; and(3) the general nature of fidelity to grace.

THE NECESSITY OF ACTUAL GRACE

Even in the natural order, no created agent acts or operates without the cooperation of God, first Mover of bodies and spirits. In this sense, St. Paul says in his discourse on the Areopagus: “Although He (God) be not far from every one of us; for in Him we live and move and are.” With even greater reason in the supernatural order, that we may produce acts of the infused virtues and of the gifts, we need a divine motion, which is called actual grace. It is a truth of faith defined against the Pelagians and the Semi-Pelagians, that, without this grace, we can neither dispose ourselves positively to conversion, nor persevere for a notable time in good, nor above all persevere until death. Without actual grace, we cannot produce the slightest salutary act, or, with even greater reason, reach perfection. This is what Christ meant when He said to His disciples: “Without Me you can do nothing.” St. Paul adds with regard to the order of salvation: “Not that we

are sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves," and that "It is God who worketh in you both to will and to accomplish," by actualizing our liberty without violating it. It is He who gives us to dispose ourselves to habitual grace and to act meritoriously. When He crowns our merits, it is still His gifts that He crowns, says St. Augustine. The Church has often recalled this idea in her councils.

This explains why we must always pray. The necessity of prayer is founded on the necessity of actual grace. Except for the first grace, which is gratuitously given to us without our praying for it, since it is the very principle of prayer, it is a thoroughly established truth that prayer is the normal, efficacious, and universal means by which God wishes that we should obtain all the actual graces we need. This is why our Lord inculcates so often the necessity of prayer to obtain grace. He says: "Ask, and it shall be given you: seek, and you shall find: knock, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone that asketh, receiveth: and he that seeketh, findeth: and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened." He recalls this necessity of prayer to obtain actual grace, especially when temptation is to be resisted: "Watch ye, and pray that ye enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." In prayer we ought to recognize that God is the Author of all good; and therefore all confidence not founded on prayer is presumptuous.

Therefore the Council of Trent declares in St. Augustine's own words: "God never commands the impossible, but in commanding He tells us to do what we can, to ask for that which we are not able to do, and He helps us in order that we may be able." By His actual grace He even helps us to pray. There are, consequently, actual graces which we can obtain only by prayer.

We could not insist too strongly on this point, for many beginners, unwittingly impregnated with practical naturalism, as the Pelagians and the Semi-Pelagians were, imagine that everything can be attained with will and energy, even without actual grace. Experience soon shows them the profound truth of Christ's words: "Without Me you can do nothing," and also that of St. Paul's statement: "It is God who worketh in you both to will and to accomplish." Therefore we must ask Him for the actual grace ever more faithfully to keep the commandments, especially the supreme precept of the love of God and of our neighbor.

Actual grace, the necessity of which we have just recalled, presents itself under many forms which it is highly useful to know in the spiritual life. It will be well at this point to review the principles as clearly as possible, without failing to recognize the mystery they express. It is one of the most remarkable partly clear and partly obscure mysteries of Christian doctrine.

Actual grace is often given to us as a light or interior illumination. For example, while reading the Epistle or Gospel of the day at Mass, an interior light is given to us that we may better grasp its meaning. We are struck by these words of Christ to the Samaritan woman: “If thou didst know the gift of God,” or by those of St. Paul: “The Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself for me,” and we consider that He continues to offer Himself for us in the Mass and that, if we wish, He will give Himself to us, especially in Holy Communion. This light constitutes a grace of interior illumination. It is followed by a grace of inspiration and attraction, for, in thinking of the generous and disinterested love of the Savior, we feel ourselves strongly led to return Him love for love. This is an actual grace which acts on the will and leads to love and to action. At times it even brings one to will to give oneself fully to God, to suffer, and if need be, to die for Him. Then it is not only a grace of attraction, but a grace of strength, which, though often received without our being at all aware of it, makes it possible for us in aridity to endure and to wait

How does actual grace, which moves the will, influence it? It does this in two ways: either by proposing to it an object which attracts it, or by a motion or interior impulse which God alone can give. God can evidently incline our will toward good by proposing an object to it, for example, by the promise of eternal beatitude, or of progress in love. Thus a mother inclines the will of her child to good, either by proposing to him a sensible object which attracts him, or by persuading him to conduct himself in a becoming manner. Our guardian angels can do this also by suggesting good thoughts to us. What God alone can do, is to move our will to good by an interior motion or impulse, for He is closer to us than we are to ourselves. He preserves in existence our soul and our faculties, of which He is the Author; and, without doing violence to them, He can move them from within according to their natural inclination by giving us a new energy. An example will help to make this understood: In order to teach her child to walk, a mother takes hold of him under his arms and helps him not only with her voice by showing him an object to attain, but by her gesture; by

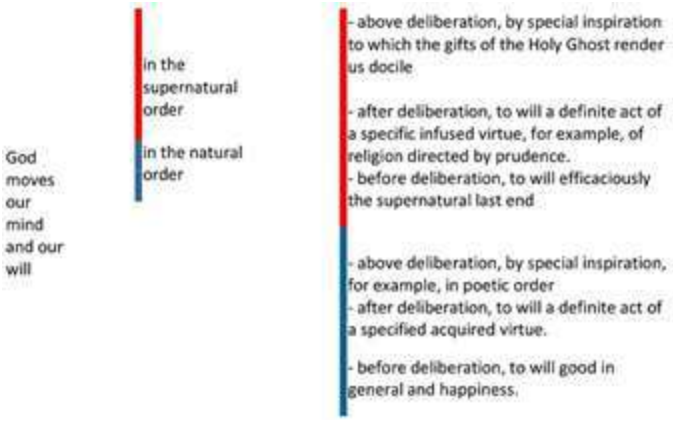
lifting him up. What the mother does thus in the corporeal order, God can do in the spiritual order. He can lift up, not only our body but our will itself, to lead it to good. He is the very Author of our will; He has given it its fundamental inclination to good, and in consequence He alone can move it from within according to this inclination. He acts thus in us, in the very inmost depths of our will, to make us will and act. The more urgently we ask Him to do this, the more strongly does He act to increase in us the love that we should have for Him.

Moreover, actual grace is called prevenient grace when it arouses a good thought or good feeling in us, when we have done nothing to excite it in ourselves. If we do not resist this grace, God adds to it a helping or concomitant grace, which will assist our will to produce the salutary act demanded and to realize our good designs. Thus, as St. Paul says: “God works in us both to will and to accomplish.”

Finally, we must note that God sometimes moves us to act by deliberation according to the human mode, and at other times by special inspiration to act in a superior manner without deliberation on our part. The following is an example of the first case: I see that the habitual hour to recite the Rosary has come, and of my own accord I am led by deliberation to recite it. I do so under the influence of a common actual grace, called cooperating, for it cooperates in my action according to the human mode of deliberation.

The second mode may be illustrated by the following example: It may happen that in an unexpected way while doing absorbing work, I receive a special inspiration to say a short prayer, and I immediately do it. This special inspiration is called an operating grace, for it operates in us without deliberation on our part, not however without vital, free, and meritorious consent. In the first manner, God generally moves us to act according to the human mode of the virtues; in the second manner, He moves us to act according to the superhuman mode of the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Our ship then advances no longer solely by dint of rowing, but by the superior impulse of a favorable wind.

All that we have said about the different modes of divine motion may be summed up in the following table, which should be read upward.



Under operating grace, we are more passive than active, and our activity consists especially in consenting freely to the operation of God, in allowing ourselves to be led by the Holy Ghost, in promptly and generously following His inspirations. But even under cooperating grace all our salutary action is from God as from the First Cause, and it is all from us as from the second cause.

FIDELITY TO GRACE

Fidelity to grace is of the utmost importance, and especially so is increasing fidelity to the actual grace of the present moment, that we may correspond to the duty of that moment, which manifests the will of God in our regard. St. Augustine says: “God who created you without yourself, will not sanctify you without yourself.” Our consent is needed and likewise our obedience to the precepts. God’s help is given us, he says again, not that our will should do nothing, but that it may act in a salutary and meritorious manner. Actual grace is constantly offered to us for the accomplishment of the duty of the present moment, just as air comes constantly into our lungs to permit us to breathe. As we must inhale in order to draw into our lungs the air which renews our blood, so we must will to receive with docility the grace which renews our spiritual energies in the journey toward God. A person who does not inhale will die of asphyxiation; he who does not receive grace with docility will eventually die of spiritual asphyxiation. This is why St. Paul says: “And we helping do exhort you that you receive not the grace of God in vain.” We must correspond with it and cooperate generously with it. Were this elementary truth put into practice daily, it would lead to sanctity.

Without a doubt, God takes the first step toward us by His prevenient grace, then He helps us to consent to it. He accompanies us in all our ways and difficulties, even to the moment of death. On our part, we should not forget that, instead of resisting His prevenient graces, we should be faithful to them. How can we do this? First of all, we can do so by joyfully welcoming the first illuminations of grace, then by following its inspirations with docility in spite of obstacles, and finally by putting these inspirations into practice no matter what the cost. Then we shall cooperate in the work of God, and our action will be the fruit of His grace and of our free will. It will be entirely from God as First Cause, and entirely from us as second cause.

The first grace of light, which efficaciously produces a good thought in us, is sufficient in relation to a voluntary good consent, in this sense, that it gives us, not this act, but the power to produce it. However, if we resist this good thought, we deprive ourselves of the actual grace which would have efficaciously led us to a good consent. Resistance falls on sufficient grace like hail on a tree in bloom which promised much fruit; the flowers are destroyed and the fruit will not form. Efficacious grace is offered us in sufficient grace, as the fruit is in the flower; moreover, the flower must not be destroyed if the fruit is to be given to us. If we do not resist sufficient grace, actual efficacious grace is given us, and by it we advance surely in the way of salvation. Sufficient grace thus leaves us without excuse before God, and efficacious grace does not allow us to glory in ourselves; with it we advance humbly and generously.

We should not resist the divine prevenient graces of Him who has given us sanctifying grace, the infused virtues, the gifts, and who daily draws us to Himself. We should not be content with living a mediocre life and with producing only imperfect fruits, since our Savior came that we “may have life, and may have it more abundantly,” and that from within us “shall flow rivers of living water,” that we may eternally enjoy His beatitude. God is magnanimous; let us, too, be so.

This fidelity is required, first of all, that we may preserve the life of grace by avoiding mortal sin. The life of grace is incomparably more precious than that of the body, than the power to perform miracles; it is of such worth that our Savior delivered Himself up to death in order to restore it to us. If were given to us to contemplate unveiled the amazing splendor of sanctifying grace, we should be ravished. Moreover, fidelity is required to

merit and obtain the increase of the life of grace, which ought to grow until our entrance into heaven, since we are travelers on the road to eternity and since we advance toward our goal by growing in the love of God. Thence comes the necessity of sanctifying each and every one of our acts, even the most ordinary, by accomplishing them with purity of intention, for a supernatural motive, and in union with our Lord. If we were thus faithful from morning until evening, each of our days would contain hundreds of meritorious acts, hundreds of acts of love of God and of neighbor, made on every pleasant or painful occasion, and when evening came, our union with God would be more intimate and much stronger. It has often been said that to sanctify ourselves there is no more practical and more efficacious means that is more within the reach of all, than thus to supernaturalize each of our acts by offering them in union with our Lord, to God for His glory and the good of souls.

Chapter 4

The Blessed Trinity Present in Us, Uncreated Source of our Interior Life

Since we have treated of the life of grace, of the spiritual organism of the infused virtues and the gifts, we may fittingly consider the uncreated Source of our interior life, that is, the Blessed Trinity present in all just souls on earth, in purgatory, and in heaven. We shall see, first of all, what divine revelation, contained in Scripture, tells us about this consoling mystery. We shall then briefly consider the testimony of tradition, and finally we shall see the exact ideas offered by theology, particularly by St. Thomas Aquinas, and the spiritual consequences of this doctrine.

THE TESTIMONY OF SCRIPTURE

Scripture teaches us that God is present in every creature by a general presence, often called the presence of immensity. We read in particular in Ps. 138:7: “Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from Thy face? If I ascend into heaven, Thou art there; if I descend into hell, Thou art present.” This is what made St. Paul say, when preaching to the Athenians: “God, who made the world,... being Lord of heaven and earth,... though He be not far from everyone of us: for in Him we live and move and are.” God, in fact, sees all, preserves all things in existence, and inclines every creature to the action which is suitable for him. He is like the radiant source from which the life of creation springs, and also the central force that draws everything to itself: “O God, sustaining force of creation, remaining in Thyself, unmoved.”

Holy Scripture does not, however, speak only of this general presence of God in all things; it also speaks of a special presence of God in the just. We read, in fact, even in the Old Testament: “Wisdom will not enter into a

malicious soul, nor dwell in a body subject to sins." Would only created grace or the created gift of wisdom dwell in the just soul? Christ's words bring us a new light and show us that it is the divine persons Themselves who come and dwell in us: "If anyone love Me," He says, "he will keep My word. And My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and will make Our abode with him." These words should be noted: "We will come." Who will come? Would it be only created effects: sanctifying grace, the infused virtues, the gifts? No indeed; Those who come are Those who love: the divine persons, the Father and the Son, from whom the Holy Ghost is never separated, that Spirit of Love promised, moreover, by our Lord and visibly sent on Pentecost. "We will come to him," to the just soul who loves God, and "We will come" not only in a transitory, passing manner, but "We will make our abode with him," that is to say, We will dwell in him as long as he remains just, or in the state of grace, as long as he preserves charity. Such were our Lord's own words.

These words are confirmed by those that promise the Holy Ghost: "I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete, that He may abide "with you forever, the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it seeth Him not, nor knoweth Him. But you shall know Him; because He shall abide with you and shall be in you.... He will teach you all things and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you." These words were not only addressed to the apostles; they were verified in them on Pentecost, which is renewed for us by confirmation. This testimony of our Savior is clear, and it states exactly and in an admirable manner what we read in the Book of Wisdom (I: 4). It is indeed the three divine persons who come and dwell in the souls of the just. Thus the apostles understood it. St. John writes: "God is charity: and he that abideth in charity, abideth in God, and God in him." He possesses God in his heart; but still more God possesses him and holds him, preserving not only his natural existence, but the life of grace and charity in him. St. Paul speaks in like manner: "The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost who is given to us." We have received not only created charity, but the Holy Ghost Himself who has been given to us. St. Paul speaks of Him especially, because charity likens us more to the Holy Ghost, who is personal love, than to the Father and to the Son. They are also in us, according to the testimony of Christ, but we will be made perfectly like Them only when we receive the light of glory, which will imprint in us the

resemblance to the Word, who is the splendor of the Father. On several different occasions St. Paul refers to this consoling doctrine: “Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” “Or know you not that your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost, who is in you, whom you have from God; and you are not your own? For you are bought with a great price. Glorify and bear God in your body.” Scripture thus teaches explicitly that the three divine persons dwell in every just soul, in every soul in the state of grace.

THE TESTIMONY OF TRADITION

Tradition, moreover, shows by the voice of the first martyrs, by that of the fathers, by the official teaching of the Church, that the words of Scripture must be understood in this way.

At the beginning of the second century, St. Ignatius of Antioch declares in his letters that true Christians bear God in themselves; he calls them “theophoroi” or God-bearers. This doctrine was widespread in the primitive Church: the martyrs proclaimed it before their judges. St. Lucy of Syracuse answered Paschasius:

> “Words cannot fail those who have the Holy Spirit dwelling in them.”
> “Is the Holy Ghost in you?”
> “Yes, all those who lead a chaste and pious life are the temples of the Holy Ghost.”

Among the Greek fathers, St. Athanasius says that the three divine persons are in us. St. Basil declares that the Holy Ghost, by His presence, makes us more and more spiritual and like to the image of the only Son. St. Cyril of Alexandria also speaks of this intimate union between the just soul and the Holy Ghost. Among the Latin fathers, St. Ambrose teaches that we receive Him in baptism and even more in confirmation. St. Augustine shows that, according to the testimony of the early fathers, not only grace was given us, but God Himself, the Holy Ghost and His seven gifts.

This revealed doctrine is finally brought home to us by the official teaching of the Church. In the Credo of St. Epiphanius, which adults were obliged to recite before receiving baptism, we read: “The Holy Spirit who... spoke in the apostles and dwells in the saints.” The Council of Trent declares also: “The efficient cause [of our justification] is the merciful God, who washes and sanctifies gratuitously, signing and anointing with the holy Spirit of promise, who is the pledge of our inheritance” (Eph. I: 13).

The official teaching of the Church on this point has been stated even more precisely in our times by Leo XIII in his encyclical on the Holy Ghost, Divinun illud munus (May 9, 1897), in which the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity in the souls of the just is thus described:

> It is well to recall the explanation given by the Doctors of the Church of the words of Holy Scripture. They say that God is present and exists in all things "by His power in so far as all things are subject to His power; by His presence, inasmuch as all things are naked and open to His eyes; by His essence, inasmuch as He is present to all as the cause of their being" (St. Thomas, la, q. 8, a. 3). But God is in man, not only as in inanimate things, but because He is more fully known and loved by him, since even by nature we spontaneously love, desire, and seek after the good. Moreover, God by grace resides in the just soul as in a temple, in a most intimate and peculiar manner. From this proceeds that union of affection by which the soul adheres most closely to God, more so than the friend is united to his most loving and beloved friend, and enjoys God in all fullness and sweetness.
>
> Now this wonderful union, which is properly called "indwelling," differing only in degree or state from that with which God beatifies the saints in heaven, although it is most certainly produced by the presence of the whole Blessed Trinity-"We will come to him and make Our abode with him" (John 14: 2 3)-nevertheless is attributed in a peculiar manner to the Holy Ghost. For, whilst traces of divine power and wisdom appear even in the wicked man, charity, which, as it were, is the special mark of the Holy Ghost, is shared in only by the just.... Wherefore the Apostle, when calling us the temple of God, does not expressly mention the Father, or the Son, but the Holy Ghost: "Know you not that your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost, who is in you, whom you have from God?" (I Cor. 6: 19')
>
> The fullness of divine gifts is in many ways a consequence of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in the souls of the just.... Among these gifts are those secret warnings and invitations which from time to time are excited in our minds and hearts by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Without these there is no beginning of a good life, no progress, no arriving at eternal salvation.

Such is, in substance, the testimony of tradition expressed by the teaching authority of the Church under its different forms. We shall now see what theology adds in order to give us, in addition, a certain understanding of this revealed mystery. We shall follow the teaching of St. Thomas on this subject.

THE THEOLOGICAL EXPLANATION OF THIS MYSTERY

Different explanations of this mystery have been proposed. Among these different points of view, that of St. Thomas, preserved by Leo XIII in his encyclical on the Holy Ghost, seems the truest.

> For God is in all things by His essence, power, and presence, according to His one common mode, as the cause existing in the effects which participate In His goodness. Above and

> beyond this common mode, however, there is one special mode belonging to the rational nature wherein God is said to be present as the object known is in the knower, and the beloved in the lover. And since the rational creature by its own operation of (supernatural) knowledge and love attains to God Himself, according to this special mode, God is said not only to exist in the rational creature, but also to dwell therein as in His own temple. So no other effect can be put down as the reason why the divine Person is in the rational creature in a new mode, except sanctifying grace.... Again, we are said to possess only what we can freely use or enjoy: but to have the power of enjoying the divine Person can only be according to sanctifying grace.

Without sanctifying grace and charity, God does not, in fact, dwell in us. It is not sufficient to know Him by a natural philosophical knowledge, or even by the supernatural knowledge of imperfect faith united to hope, as the believer in the state of mortal sin knows Him. (God is, so to speak, distant from a believer who is turned away from Him.) We must be able to know Him by living faith and the gifts of the Holy Ghost connected with charity. This last knowledge, being quasi-experimental, attains God not as a distant and simply represented reality, but as a present, possessed reality which we can enjoy even now. This is evidently what St. Thomas means in the text quoted. It is a question, he says, of a knowledge which attains God Himself, and permits us to possess Him and to enjoy Him. That the divine persons may dwell in us, we must be able to know Them in a quasi-experimental and loving manner, based on infused charity, which gives us a connaturality or sympathy with the intimate life of God. That the Blessed Trinity may dwell in us, this quasi-experimental knowledge need not, however, be actual; it suffices that we be able to have it by the grace of the virtues and gifts. Thus the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity endures in the just man even during sleep and as long as he remains in the state of grace. From time to time, however, God may make Himself felt by us as the soul of our soul, the life of our life. This is what St. Paul declares in his epistle to the Romans (8: 15 f.): “You have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry: Abba (Father). For the Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit, that we are the sons of God.” In his commentary on this epistle, St. Thomas says: “The Holy Spirit gives this testimony to our spirit by the effect of filial love which He produces in us.” For this reason the disciples of Emmaus exclaimed after Jesus disappeared: “Was not our heart burning within us, whilst He spoke in the way and opened to us the Scriptures?”

In giving the explanation we have just quoted, St. Thomas simply shows us the profound meaning of the words of Christ that we cited previously: “If anyone love Me, he will keep My word. And My Father will love him, and

We will come to him, and will make Our abode with him." "The Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you." According to this teaching, the Blessed Trinity dwells, in a sense, more perfectly in the just soul than the body of the Savior does in a consecrated host. Christ is, indeed, really and substantially present under the Eucharistic species, but these species of bread do not know and do not love. The Blessed Trinity dwells in the just soul as in a living temple which knows and loves in varying degrees. It dwells in the souls of the blessed who contemplate It unveiled, especially in the most holy soul of the Savior, to which the Word is personally united. And even here on earth, in the penumbra of faith, the Blessed Trinity, without our seeing It, dwells in us in order to vivify us more and more, up to the moment of our entrance into glory where It will appear to us.

This intimate presence of the Blessed Trinity in us does not dispense us, certainly, from approaching the Eucharistic table or from praying in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, for the Blessed Trinity dwells far more intimately in the holy soul of the Savior, personally united to the Word, than in us. If we draw profit from approaching a saint who is entirely possessed by God, like a holy Cure of Ars, how much more will we profit from approaching our Savior? We can say to Him: "Come, even with Thy cross, and take more complete possession of us. Grant that the prayer, 'Thou in us and we in Thee' may be more fully realized." Let us also think of the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity in the soul of the Blessed Virgin both here on earth and in heaven.

SPIRITUAL CONSEQUENCES OF THIS DOCTRINE

A consequence of primary importance springs from these considerations. If the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity in us cannot be conceived unless the just man can have a "quasi-experimental knowledge" of God present in him, what follows? That this knowledge, far from being something essentially extraordinary, like visions, revelations, or the stigmata, is in the normal way of sanctityThis quasi-experimental knowledge of God present in us springs from faith illumined by the gifts of wisdom and understanding, which are connected with charity; whence it follows that this knowledge ought normally to grow with the progress of charity, either under a clearly

contemplative form, or under a form more directly oriented toward action. Farther on, we shall also declare that infused contemplation, in which this quasi-experience develops, begins, according to St. John of the Cross, with the illuminative way and develops in the unitive way. This quasi-experimental knowledge of God, of His goodness, will grow with the knowledge of our nothingness and wretchedness, according to the divine words spoken to St. Catherine of Siena: “I am who am; thou art she who is not.”

It also follows that, when our charity increases notably, the divine persons are sent anew, says St. Thomas, for They become more intimately present in us according to a new mode or degree of intimacy. This is true, for example, at the time of the second conversion, which marks the entrance into the illuminative way.

Finally, They are in us not only as an object of supernatural knowledge and love, but as principles of supernatural operations. Christ Himself said: “My Father worketh until now; and I work,” especially in the intimacy of the heart, in the center of the soul.

We should, moreover, remember in a practical way that ordinarily God communicates Himself to His creature only in the measure of the creature’s dispositions. When these become more pure, the divine persons also become more intimately present and active. Then God belongs to us and we to Him, and we desire above all to make progress in His love. “This doctrine of the invisible missions of the divine persons in us is one of the most powerful motives for spiritual advancement,” says Father Chardon, “because it keeps the soul ever on the alert in regard to its progress, awake to produce incessantly ever stronger and more fervent acts of all the virtues, that, growing in grace, this new growth may bring God anew to it... for a union... which is characterized by greater intimacy, purity, and vigor.”

OUR DUTIES TOWARD THE DIVINE GUEST

In Proverbs we read: “My son, give Me thy heart.” And in the Apocalypse we are told: “Behold, I stand at the gate, and knock. If any man shall hear My voice and open to Me the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.” The soul of a just man is like a heaven that is still obscure, since the Blessed Trinity is in him, and some day he will see It there unveiled.

Our duties toward the interior Guest may be summed up in the following suggestions: that we think often of Him and tell ourselves that God lives in us; that we consecrate our day, our hour, to the divine persons by saying, “In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost”; that we remember that the interior Guest is for us the source of light, consolation, and strength; that we pray to Him as Christ suggests: “Pray to thy Father in secret (in thy soul): and thy Father who seeth in secret, will repay thee”; that we adore the interior Guest saying: “My soul doth magnify the Lord”; that we believe in Him; that we trust absolutely in Him, and love Him with an increasingly pure, generous, and strong love; that we love Him by imitating Him, especially by goodness, according to the words of our Savior: “Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect”; “That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee; that they also may be one in Us.”

As we shall see more clearly in the following pages, all this leads us to think that far from being essentially extraordinary, the mystical life alone, which is characterized by the reality of the quasi-experimental knowledge of God present in us, is completely normal. Only the saints, all of whom live this sort of life, are fully in order. Before experiencing this intimate union with God present in us, we are somewhat like souls still half-asleep, souls not yet spiritually awakened. Our knowledge of the consoling mystery of the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity is still too superficial and bookish, and yet overflowing life is offered to us.

Before entering into the intimacy of union with God, our adoration and love of Him are not what they ought to be, and frequently we consider the “one thing necessary” as if it were not the most important thing for us. Likewise we have not yet become profoundly cognizant of the gift that has been given us in the Eucharist, and we have only a superficial knowledge of the nature of the mystical body of Christ.

The Holy Ghost is the soul of the mystical body, of which Christ is the head. As in our body the soul is entirely in the whole body and entirely in each part, and exercises its superior functions in the head, so the Holy Ghost is entirely in all the mystical body, entirely in each just soul, and exercises His highest functions in the holy soul of the Savior, and through it on us. The vital principle which thus constitutes the unity of the mystical body is singularly more unitive than the soul which unifies our body, than the spirit of a family or of a nation. The spirit of a family is a certain

manner of seeing, judging, feeling, loving, willing, and acting. The spirit of the mystical body is infinitely more unifying; it is the Holy Ghost the Sanctifier, source of all graces, source of living water springing up into eternal life. The stream of grace, which comes from the Holy Ghost, unceasingly reascends toward God under the form of adoration, prayer, merit, and sacrifice; it is the elevation toward God, the prelude of the life of heaven. Such are the supernatural realities of which we should become increasingly more conscious. Only in the mystical life does the soul truly awaken completely, and have that lively, profound, radiating consciousness of the gift of God that is necessary if the soul is to correspond fully with the love of God for us.

Chapter 5

The Influence of Christ the Redeemer on His Mystical Body

The Blessed Trinity which dwells in every just soul is, as we have seen, the uncreated source of our interior life. But our sanctification depends also on the constant influence of Christ the Redeemer, who incessantly communicates to us, through the sacraments and outside of them, the graces He merited for us during His earthly life, and especially during His passion. Therefore it is fitting that we speak here of this sanctifying influence in general, and that we consider how it is exercised in particular by the greatest of all sacraments, the Eucharist.

HOW THE SAVIOR COMMUNICATES TO US THE GRACES WHICH HE FORMERLY MERITED FOR US

As the living instrument ever united to the divinity, source of all grace, Christ communicates to us the graces which he formerly merited for us. St. John says: “Of His fullness we all have received.”

Christ Himself tells this to us in a most expressive, symbolical manner: “I am the true vine; you the branches.... As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abide in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me.... He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.... If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you shall ask whatever you will, and it shall be done unto you.” Elsewhere Jesus likewise says: “Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you.” By this He means that, if we ask especially for a living, more intimate, and profound knowledge of Him (which is given by the Holy Ghost) and for a purer and stronger love of Him, we shall be heard. Who would dare to say that Christ

is not speaking here of the prayer by which His members ask for the infused contemplation of the mysteries of salvation? “In this,” He adds, “is My Father glorified; that you bring forth very much fruit, and become My disciples.”

This beautiful figure of the vine and the branches is most expressive. St. Paul reverts to it under the form of the olive tree in which we are ingrafted. He also gives another that is no less striking. Christ, he says, is like the head which communicates to the members the vital influx, which has its principle in the soul. The Church is the mystical body of Christ; Christians are the members of this body. He often repeats this statement: “Now you are the body of Christ, and members of member.” “But doing the truth in charity, we may in all things grow up in Him who is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body, being compacted and fitly joined together by what every joint supplieth... maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in charity.” “And let the peace of Christ rejoice in your hearts, wherein also you are called in one body.”

According to this doctrine, the Savior communicates to us the vital influx of grace (of which the source is God Himself considered in His divine nature), as the head communicates to the members the vital influx, the principle of which is in the soul. Clearly to understand this teaching, we must distinguish between the divinity and the humanity of Christ. Jesus, as the Word, dwells, as do the Father and the Holy Ghost, in the center, in the depths of our soul. He is closer to it than it is to itself; He preserves its natural and its supernatural life. By operating grace, He moves it to the deepest, most secret acts which it could not produce by itself. The humanity of our Savior, says St. Thomas, is the instrument ever united to the divinity through which all graces are communicated to us. Just as in the sacraments, the water of baptism, for example, and the sacramental formula are the physical, instrumental cause of sacramental grace, in the sense that God, by making use of this water and this formula, communicates to them a transitory divine power to produce this grace, so also the humanity of the Savior and especially the acts of His holy soul are the physical, instrumental cause of all the graces we receive, either through the sacraments or outside of them.

The sacred humanity of the Savior does not dwell in our soul. His body could not be in our soul; it is only in heaven (as in its natural place) and sacramentally in the Eucharist. But, although the humanity of Christ does

not dwell in us, the just soul is continually under its influence, since by its intermediary every grace is communicated to us, just as in our body the head communicates the vital influx to the members. Since at every waking moment we have some duty to accomplish, Christ's humanity communicates to us from minute to minute the actual grace of the present moment, as the air we breathe continually enters our lungs. God, the Author of grace, makes use of Christ's humanity to communicate grace to us, as a great artist uses an instrument to transmit his musical thought to us, or as a great thinker uses his own style, his more or less rich language, to express himself. Thus the seven sacraments are like the strings of a lyre from which God alone can, by His divine touch, draw music. The Savior's humanity is a conscious, free, and superior instrument, ever united to the divinity in order to communicate to us all the graces that we receive and that Christ merited for us on the cross. Thus every illumination of the intellect, every grace of attraction, of consolation, or of strength, whether felt or not, actually come to us from the sacred humanity. For each of our salutary acts, it is a continual influence far more profound than that exercised over a child by the best of mothers when she teaches him to pray.

Outside the sacraments, this activity of the Savior transmits the lights of faith to unbelievers who do not resist it; to sinners, the grace of attrition, which invites them to approach the sacrament of penance. Especially through the Eucharist His influence is exercised, for the Eucharist is the most perfect of the sacraments, containing not only grace but the Author of grace; and it is a sacrifice of infinite value. This point must be insisted on here in speaking of the bases or the sources of the interior life.

THE SANCTIFYING INFLUENCE OF THE SAVIOR THROUGH THE EUCHARIST

The very terms that Christ used in the Gospel to describe this influence may be fittingly used here.

To draw greater spiritual profit from this influence and to thank the Lord for it, we may recall how, through love for our souls, Christ first promised the Eucharist; how He gave it to us at the Last Supper by instituting the priesthood; how He renews it every day in the Sacrifice of the Mass; how He wishes to remain among us by assuring the continuity of His real presence; and finally, how He gives Himself to us in daily Communion, continuing to do so until we last receive Him as holy viaticum. All these

acts of divine generosity spring from one and the same love and are all ordained to our progressive sanctification. They deserve a special thanksgiving. Such is the true meaning of the devotion to the Eucharistic heart of Jesus. His heart is called “Eucharistic” because it gave us the Eucharist and still continues to do so. As people say that the air is healthful when it maintains or restores health, the heart of our Savior is called “Eucharistic” because it has given us the greatest of the sacraments, in which it is itself really and substantially present as the radiant source of ever new graces.

The words of the promise of the Eucharist, recorded by St. John (6:26–59), show us best of all what this vivifying influence of the Savior on us should be, and how we ought to receive it. First of all, Christ promised a heavenly bread. After the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves, He said: “Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto life everlasting, which the Son of man will give you.... My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life to the world.” Then a number of those who had eaten their fill after the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves exclaimed: “Lord, give us always this bread.” Jesus answered them: “I am the bread of life.... You also have seen Me, and you believe not.” The Jews murmured, says St. John, because He had said: “I am the living bread which came down from heaven.” Jesus replied: “Murmur not among yourselves.... Amen, amen I say unto you: he that believeth in Me, hath everlasting life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the desert, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven; that if any man eat of it, he may not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give, is My flesh, for the life of the world.... He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up in the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed: and My blood is drink indeed.... The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.” Many did not believe and withdrew. “Then Jesus said to the twelve: Will you also go away? And Simon Peter answered Him: Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.” This promise of the Eucharist makes us glimpse all that this sacrament ought to produce in us, whether beginners, proficients, or the perfect.

The institution of the Eucharist shows us the import of this promise. It is thus related in St. Matthew, and almost in the same terms in St. Mark, St. Luke, and the First Epistle to the Corinthians: “And whilst they were at supper, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke: and gave to His disciples, and said: Take ye, and eat. This is My body. And taking the chalice, He gave thanks, and gave to them, saying: Drink ye all of this. For this is My blood of the new testament, which shall be shed for many unto remission of sins.” The words of the promise are illumined. Peter was rewarded for having said with faith: “Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.” At the Last Supper, Christ’s word was more efficacious than ever; it was a transubstantiating word by which He changed the substance of bread into that of His own body that He might remain sacramentally among us. At the same moment He instituted the priesthood to perpetuate sacramentally, by means of the Eucharist, the sacrifice of the cross until the end of time. Christ says, in fact, as St. Luke relates, and as St. Paul states: “This do for the commemoration of Me.” The apostles then received the power to consecrate, to offer the Eucharistic sacrifice, which perpetuates in substance the sacrifice of the cross in order to apply its fruits, its merits, and its satisfactions to us until the end of the world. In the Mass, the principal priest is Christ, who continues to offer Himself sacramentally. As St. Paul says, He is “always living to make intercession for us.” He does this especially in the Holy Sacrifice. By reason of the principal priest and of the victim offered, of the precious blood sacramentally shed, this sacrifice has an infinite value. At the same time, Christ offers to His Father our adoration, our supplication, our reparation, our thanksgiving, all the salutary acts of His mystical body.

Christ’s love did not give us the Eucharist only once, but gives it to us daily. He might have willed that Mass should be celebrated only once or twice a year in some great sanctuary to which people would come from afar. On the contrary, not only one Mass, but numbers of them are celebrated continually, at every minute of the day, over the surface of the earth. Thus He grants to His Church the graces it needs at the various moments of its history. In the catacombs, later during the great barbarian invasions, in the iron centuries of the Middle Ages, the Mass was the source of ever new graces; it is still so today that it may give us the strength to resist the great dangers threatening us.

Moreover, Christ daily returns really and substantially among us, not only for an hour during the celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice, but to remain continually with us in the tabernacle, to be there “the companion of our exile, patiently waiting for us, eager to hear and grant our prayers” and unceasingly to offer there to His Father adoration of infinite value.

Finally, Communion is the consummation of the gift of self. Goodness is essentially diffusive, it attracts, it gives itself to vivify us and to enrich us spiritually. This is especially true of the radiating goodness of God and of His Christ. In Communion, the Savior draws us and gives Himself, not only to humanity in general, but to each one of us if we wish it, and in an ever more intimate manner if we are faithful. He gives Himself, not that we should assimilate Him, for this would reduce Him to our level; but that we may be made more like to Him. “The bread, which we break,” says St. Paul. “is it not the partaking of the body of the Lord?” It is Life itself that we receive.

Communion ought to incorporate us more and more into Christ, by increasing our humility, faith, confidence, and especially our charity, in order to make our hearts like to that of the Savior who died out of love for us. In this sense, each of our Communions should be substantially more fervent than the preceding one, that is, as far as fervor of the will is concerned; for each Communion ought not only to preserve but to increase the love of God in us, and thus dispose us to receive our Lord on the following day with not only an equal but a greater fervor of will, although it may be otherwise as regards sensible fervor, which is accidental. There should be, as it were, an accelerated progress toward God, which recalls the acceleration of bodies as they gravitate toward the center which attracts them. As a stone falls more rapidly as it approaches the earth which attracts it, souls should advance more rapidly toward God as they draw near Him and are more attracted by Him. We find this idea expressed in many forms in the liturgy, and especially in the Adoro Te of St. Thomas Aquinas:

Adoro te devote, latens Deitas

I adore Thee devoutly, O hidden Deity, who art truly hidden beneath these figures; my heart submits entirely to Thee, and faints in contemplating Thee.

Fac me tibi semper magis credere,
In te spem habere, te diligere.

Make me believe Thee ever more and more, hope in Thee, and love Thee.

O memoriale mortis Domini,
Panis vivus, vitam praestans homini:
Praesta meae menti de te vivere,
Et te illi semper dulce sapere.

O memorial of the death of the Lord! Living bread giving life to man, grant that my soul may live by Thee and ever taste Thee with delight!

Pie pellicane, Jesu Domine,
Me immundum munda tuo sanguine.

Merciful Pelican, Jesus Lord, unclean I am, cleanse me in Thy blood, of which a single drop suffices to cleanse the entire world of all its sin.

Jesu, quem velatum nunc aspicio,
Ora fiat illud, quod tam sitio:
Ut te revelata cernens facie,
Visu sim beatus tuae gloriae. Amen.

Jesus, whom I now behold beneath these veils, grant, I pray Thee, what so ardently I desire, that contemplating Thee face to face, the vision of Thy glory may make me blessed. Amen.

Should a soul thus live daily by the Savior in Mass and Communion, it would certainly arrive at great intimacy with Him, at the intimacy which is that of the mystical life. The gifts of the Holy Ghost would grow proportionately in it, and it would attain to an increasingly more penetrating and delightful contemplation of the great mystery of our altars, of the infinite value of the Mass, which is like an eminent spring of ever new graces to which all succeeding generations must come and drink, that they may have the strength to arrive at the end of their journey towards eternity. Thus the prophet Elias, overcome by fatigue, renewed his strength by eating the loaf that came down from heaven, and was able to walk even to Horeb, a figure of the summit of perfection.

Christ says to us in Communion, as He said to St. Augustine: “I am the bread of the strong.... Thou wilt not convert Me into thee, as the food of thy flesh; but thou shalt be converted into Me.” He who truly receives Christ in Holy Communion is more and more incorporated in Him, living by His thought and by His love. He can say with St. Paul: “To me to live is Christ and to die is gain,” for death is the entrance into unending life.

The doctrine of progressive incorporation in Christ will manifest its marvelous fecundity to the soul that wishes to live by it.

First of all, in order to die to sin and its consequences, we will recall what St. Paul says: “We are buried together with Him (Christ) by baptism into death... that the body of sin may be destroyed.” “And they that are Christ’s have crucified their flesh, with the vices and concupiscences”; this is the death to sin through baptism and penance. Then, in the light of faith and under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, the Christian should put on “the new (man), him who is renewed unto knowledge, according to the image of Him that created him.... Put ye on therefore, as the elect of God,” adds St. Paul, “holy, and beloved, the bowels of mercy, benignity, humility, modesty, patience.... But above all these things have charity, which is the bond of perfection.” This is the illuminative way of those who imitate Christ, who adopt His sentiments, the spirit of His mysteries, His passion, His crucifixion, His resurrection. This is the way of the contemplation of the Savior’s mysteries which all the saints have lived, even those of the active life, while recalling these words of the Apostle: “Furthermore, I count all things to be but loss for the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but as dung, that I may gain Christ.”

This road leads to continual union with the Savior, according to the sublime words of the Epistle to the Colossians (3: 1–3): “If you be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth. For you are dead (to the world); and your life is hid with Christ in God.” Then the peace of the Savior reigns in the soul that delights in saying to Him: “Lord, give Thyself to me, and give me to Thyself.” In the saints, this union is like an almost uninterrupted communion. A glance, a movement of the soul toward Christ, tell Him our desires, present to Him our weakness, our good will, our disposition to be faithful to Him, and the thirst we have for Him. Such is the way of the loving contemplation of the great mysteries of Christ; it has its aridities and its joys. Those who experience it, see in it the normal prelude of the vision of heaven.

Some delude themselves, pretending to reach union with God without having continual recourse to our Lord. They will scarcely attain any but an abstract knowledge of God. They will not reach that delightful, living,

quasi-experimental knowledge, as well as an elevated and practical knowledge, called wisdom, which makes the soul see God and His providence in the most insignificant things. The quietists fell into this error, holding that the sacred humanity of our Savior is a means useful only at the beginning of the spiritual life. St. Teresa reacted especially against this point, reminding us that we should not of our own accord leave aside in prayer the consideration of Christ's humanity; it is the road which gently leads souls to His divinity. We ought often to think of the immense spiritual riches of the holy soul of Christ, of His intellect, of His will, of His sensibility. By so doing we will come to a better understanding of the meaning of His words: "I am the way, the truth, and the life." He is the way according to His humanity; as God, He is the very essence of truth and life.

Chapter 6

The Influence of Mary Mediatrix

When the bases of the interior life are considered, we cannot discuss the action of Christ, the universal Mediator, on His mystical body without also speaking of the influence of Mary Mediatrix. As we remarked, many persons delude themselves, maintaining that they reach union with God without having continual recourse to our Lord, who is the way, the truth, and the life. Another error would consist in wishing to go to our Lord without going first to Mary, whom the Church calls in a special feast the Mediatrix of all graces. Protestants have fallen into this last error. Without going as far as this deviation, there are Catholics who do not see clearly enough the necessity of having recourse to Mary that they may attain to intimacy with the Savior. Blessed Grignion de Montfort speaks even of "doctors who know the Mother of God only in a speculative, dry, sterile, and indifferent manner; who fear that devotion to the Blessed Virgin is abused, and that injury is done to our Lord by honoring too greatly His holy Mother. If they speak of devotion to Mary, it is less to recommend it than to destroy the abuses that have grown up around it." They seem to believe that Mary is a hindrance to reaching divine union. According to Blessed Grignion, we lack humility if we neglect the mediators whom God has given us because of our frailty. Intimacy with our Lord in prayer will be greatly facilitated by a true and profound devotion to Mary.

To get a clear idea of this devotion, we shall consider what must be understood by universal mediation, and also how Mary is the mediatrix of all graces, as is affirmed by tradition and by the Office and Mass of Mary Mediatrix which are celebrated on May 31. Much has been written on the subject in recent years. We shall here consider this doctrine in its relation to the interior life.

St. Thomas says: “Properly speaking, the office of a mediator is to join together those between whom he mediates: for extremes are united by an intermediary. Now to unite men to God perfectly belongs to Christ, through whom men are reconciled to God, according to II Cor. 5: 19: ‘God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself.’ And, consequently, Christ alone is the perfect Mediator of God and men, inasmuch as, by His death, He reconciled the human race to God. Hence the Apostle, after saying, ‘Mediator of God and man, the man Christ Jesus,’ added: ‘Who gave Himself a redemption for all.’ However, nothing hinders certain others from being called mediators, in some respect, between God and man, forasmuch as they cooperate in uniting men to God, dispositive or ministerially.” In this sense, adds St. Thomas, the prophets and priests of the Old Testament may be called mediators, and also the priests of the New Testament, as ministers of the true Mediator.

St. Thomas explains further how Christ as man is the Mediator: “Because, as man, He is distant both from God by nature, and from man by dignity of both grace and glory. Again, it belongs to Him, as man, to unite men to God, by communicating to men both precepts and gifts, and by offering satisfaction and prayers to God for men.” Christ satisfied and merited as man by a satisfaction and a merit which drew an infinite value from His divine personality. This mediation is twofold, both descending and ascending. It consists in giving to men the light and grace of God, and in offering to God, on behalf of men, the worship and reparation due to Him.

As has been said, there is nothing to prevent there being mediators below Christ, subordinated to Him as secondary mediators, such as were the prophets and priests of the Old Law for the chosen people. It may thus be asked whether Mary is the universal mediatrix for all men and for the distribution of all graces in general and in particular. St. Albert the Great speaks of the mediation of Mary as superior to that of the prophets when he says: “Mary was chosen by the Lord, not as a minister but to be associated in a very special and quite intimate manner in the work of the redemption of the human race: ‘Faciamus ei adjutorium simile sibi.’ “

Is not Mary in her quality as Mother of God completely designated to be the universal mediatrix? Is she not truly the intermediary between God and men? She is, indeed, much below God and Christ because she is a creature, but much above all men by the grace of her divine maternity, “which makes

her attain the very frontiers of the divinity," and by the plenitude of grace received at the moment of her immaculate conception; a plentitude which did not cease to grow until her death. Not only was Mary thus designated by her divine maternity for this function of mediatrix, but she received it in truth and exercised it. This is shown by tradition, which has given her the title of universal mediatrix in the proper sense of the word, although in a manner subordinated to Christ. This title is consecrated by the special feast which is celebrated in the universal Church. To have a clear understanding of the meaning and import of this title, we shall consider how it is becoming to Mary for two principal reasons: because she cooperated by satisfaction and merit in the sacrifice of the cross; and because she does not cease to intercede for us, to obtain for us, and to distribute to us all the graces that we receive. Such is the double mediation, ascending and descending, which we ought to ponder in order daily to draw greater profit from it.

MARY MEDIATRIX BY HER COOPERATION IN THE SACRIFICE OF THE CROSS

During the entire course of her earthly life, the Blessed Virgin cooperated in the sacrifice of her Son. First of all, the free consent that she gave on Annunciation day was necessary for the accomplishment of the mystery of the Incarnation, as if, says St. Thomas, God had waited for the consent of humanity through the voice of Mary. By this free fiat, she cooperated in the sacrifice of the cross, since she gave us its Priest and Victim. She cooperated in it also by offering her Son in the Temple, as a most pure host, at the moment when the aged Simeon saw by prophetic light that this Child was the "salvation... prepared before the face of all peoples: a light to the revelation of the Gentiles and the glory of Thy people Israel" More enlightened than Simeon, Mary offered her Son, and began to suffer deeply with Him when she heard the holy old man tell her that He would be a sign which would be contradicted and that a sword would pierce her soul.

Mary cooperated in the sacrifice of Christ, especially at the foot of the cross, uniting herself to Him, more closely than can be expressed, by satisfaction or reparation, and by merit. Some saints, in particular the stigmatics, have been exceptionally united to the sufferings and merits of our Savior: for example, St. Francis of Assisi and St. Catherine of Siena, and yet their share in His suffering cannot be compared with Mary's. How did Mary offer her Son? As He offered Himself. By a miracle, Jesus could

easily have prevented the blows of His executioners from causing His death; He offered Himself voluntarily. “No man,” He says, “taketh it (My life) away from Me: but I lay it down of Myself. And I have power to lay it down: and I have power to take it up again.” Jesus renounced His right to life; He offered Himself wholly for our salvation. Of Mary, St. John says: “There stood by the cross of Jesus, His mother,” surely very closely united to Him in His suffering and oblation. As Pope Benedict XV says: “She renounced her rights as a mother over her Son for the salvation of all men.” She accepted the martyrdom of Christ and offered it for us. In the measure of her love, she felt all the torments that He suffered in body and soul. More than anyone else, Mary endured the very suffering of the Savior; she suffered for sin in the degree of her love for God, whom sin offends; for her Son, whom sin crucified; for souls, which sin ravishes and kills. The Blessed Virgin’s charity incomparably surpassed that of the greatest saints. She thus cooperated in the sacrifice of the cross by way of satisfaction or reparation, by offering to God for us, with great sorrow and most ardent love, the life of her most dear Son, whom she rightly adored and who was dearer to her than her very life.

In that instant, the Savior satisfied for us in strict justice by His human acts which drew from His divine personality an infinite value capable of making reparation for the offense of all mortal sins that ever had been or would be committed. His love pleased God more than all sins displease Him. Herein lies the essence of the mystery of the redemption. In union with her Son on Calvary, Mary satisfied for us by a satisfaction based, not on strict justice, but on the rights of the infinite friendship or charity which united her to God.

At the moment when her Son was about to die on the cross, apparently defeated and abandoned, she did not cease for a moment to believe that He was the Word made flesh, the Savior of the world, who would rise in three days as He had predicted. This was the greatest act of faith and hope ever made; after Christ’s act of love, it was also the greatest act of love. It made Mary the queen of martyrs,

for she was a martyr, not only for Christ but with Christ; so much so, that a single cross sufficed for her Son and for her. She was, in a sense, nailed to it by her love for Him. She was thus the coredemptrix, as Pope Benedict XV says, in this sense, that with Christ, through Him, and in Him, she bought back the human race.

For the same reason, all that Christ merited for us on the cross in strict justice, Mary merited for us by congruous merit, based on the charity that united her to God. Christ alone, as head of the human race, could strictly merit to transmit divine life to us. But Pius X sanctioned the teaching of theologians when he wrote: “Mary, united to Christ in the work of salvation, merited de congruo for us what Christ merited for us de condigno.”

This common teaching of theologians, thus sanctioned by the sovereign pontiffs, has for its principal traditional basis the fact that Mary is called in all Greek and Latin tradition the new Eve, Mother of all men in regard to the life of the soul, as Eve was in regard to the life of the body. It stands to reason that the spiritual mother of all men ought to give them spiritual life, not as the principal physical cause (for God alone can be the principal physical cause of divine grace), but as the moral cause by merit de congruo, merit de condigno being reserved to Christ.

The Office and Mass proper to Mary Mediatrix assemble the principal testimonies of tradition on this point with their scriptural foundations, in particular the clearcut statements of St. Ephrem, the glory of the Syriac Church, of St. Germanus of Constantinople, of St. Bernard, and of St. Bernardine of Siena. Even as early as the second and third centuries, St. Justin, St. Irenaeus, and Tertullian insisted on the parallel between Eve and Mary, and showed that if the first concurred in our fall, the second collaborated in our redemption.

This teaching of tradition itself rests in part on the words of Christ, related in the Gospel of the Mass for the feast of Mary Mediatrix. The Savior was about to die and, seeing “His mother and the disciple standing whom He loved, He saith to His mother: Woman, behold thy son. After that, He saith to the disciple: Behold thy mother. And from that hour the disciple took her to his own.” The literal meaning of these words, “Behold thy son,” points to St. John, but for God, events and persons signify others; here St. John represents spiritually all men purchased by the sacrifice of the cross. God and His Christ speak not only by the words They use, but by the events and persons whose masters They are, and by whom They signify what They wish according to the plan of Providence. The dying Christ, addressing Mary and John, saw in John the personification of all men, for whom He was shedding His blood. As this word, so to speak, created in Mary a most profound maternal affection, which did not cease to envelop

the soul of the beloved disciple, this supernatural affection extended to all of us and made Mary truly the spiritual mother of all men. In the eighth century we find Abbot Rupert expressing this same idea, and after him St. Bernardine of Siena, Bossuet, Blessed Grignion de Montfort, and many others. It is the logical result of what tradition tells us about the new Eve, the spiritual mother of all men.

Finally, if we studied theologically all that is required for merit de congruo, based not on justice, but on charity or supernatural friendship which unites us to God, we could not find it better realized than in Mary. Since, in fact, a good Christian mother by her virtue thus merits graces for her children, with how much greater reason can Mary, who is incomparably more closely united to God by the plenitude of her charity, merit de congruo for all men.

Such is the ascending mediation of Mary in so far as she offered the sacrifice of the cross with Christ for us, making reparation and meriting for us. We shall now consider the descending mediation, by which she distributes the gifts of God to us.

MARY OBTAINS AND DISTRIBUTES ALL GRACES

That Mary obtains for us and distributes to us all graces is a certain doctrine, according to what we have just said about the mother of all men. As mother, she is interested in their salvation, prays for them, and obtains for them the graces they receive. In the Ave Maris Stella we read:

> Salve vincla reis,
> Profer lumen caecis,
> Mala nostra pelle,
> Bona cuncta posce.
>
> Break the sinner’s fetters,
> To the blind give day,
> Ward all evils from us,
> For all blessings pray.

In an encyclical on the Rosary, Leo XIII says: “According to the will of God, nothing is granted to us except through Mary; and, as no one can go to the Father except through the Son, so generally no one can draw near to Christ except through Mary.”

The Church, in fact, turns to Mary to obtain graces of all kinds, both temporal and spiritual; among these last, from the grace of conversion up to that of final perseverance, to say nothing of those needed by virgins to preserve virginity, by apostles to exercise their apostolate, by martyrs to remain firm in the faith. In the Litany of Loreto, which has been universally recited in the Church for many centuries, Mary is for this reason called: “Health of the sick, refuge of sinners, comforter of the afflicted, help of Christians, queen of apostles, of martyrs, of confessors, of virgins.” Thus all kinds of graces are distributed by her, even, in a sense, those of the sacraments; for she merited them for us in union with Christ on Calvary. In addition, she disposes us, by her prayer, to approach the sacraments and to receive them well. At times she even sends us a priest, without whom this sacramental help would not be given to us.

Finally, not only every kind of grace is distributed to us by Mary, but every grace in particular. Is this not what the faith of the Church says in the words of the Hail Mary: “Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen”? This “now” is said every moment in the Church by thousands of Christians who thus ask for the grace of the present moment. This grace is the most individual of graces; it varies with each of us, and for each one of us at every moment. If we are distracted while saying this word, Mary, who is not distracted, knows our spiritual needs of every instant, and prays for us, and obtains for us all the graces that we receive. This teaching, contained in the faith of the Church and expressed by the common prayers (lex orandi lex credendi), is based on Scripture and tradition. Even during her earthly life, Mary truly appears in Scripture as the distributor of graces. Through Mary, Jesus sanctified the Precursor when she went to visit her cousin Elizabeth and sang the Magnificat. Through His mother, Jesus confirmed the faith of the disciples at Cana, by granting the miracle that she asked. Through her, He strengthened the faith of John on Calvary, saying to him: “Behold thy mother.” Lastly, by her the Holy Ghost came down upon the apostles, for she was praying with them in the cenacle on Pentecost day when the Holy Ghost descended in the form of tongues of fire.

With even greater reason after the assumption and her entrance into glory, Mary is the distributor of all graces. As a beatified mother knows in heaven the spiritual needs of her children whom she left on earth, Mary knows the spiritual needs of all men. Since she is an excellent mother, she

prays for them and, since she is all powerful over the heart of her Son, she obtains for them all the graces that they receive, all which those receive who do not persist in evil. She is, it has been said, like an aqueduct of graces and, in the mystical body, like the virginal neck uniting the head to its members.

When we treat of what the prayer of proficients ought to be, we shall speak of true devotion to Mary as it was understood by Blessed Grignion de Montfort. Even now we can see how expedient it is frequently to use the prayer of mediators, that is, to begin our prayer by a trusting, filial conversation with Mary, that she may lead us to the intimacy of her Son, and that the holy soul of the Savior may then lift us to union with God, since Christ is the way, the truth, and the life.

Chapter 7

The Growth of the Life of Grace by Merit, Prayer and the Sacraments

We cannot treat of the bases of the interior life, of its source, without speaking of the growth of sanctifying grace and of charity. No one can be saved without this supernatural virtue, the highest of all, which ought to inspire and animate the others. Moreover, it ought not to remain stationary, but should grow in us even until death. This point of doctrine can and should throw great light on the spiritual life since it is the basis of every exhortation to make progress with great humility and generosity by ardently desiring the full perfection of charity, intimate union with God, by striving to obtain it, and humbly asking for it., The virtues of humility and magnanimity ought always to be united. We shall see, first of all, why charity ought ever to increase in us until death; then, how it should grow in three ways: by merit, prayer, and the sacraments.

WHY THE LIFE OF GRACE AND CHARITY SHOULD GROW IN US UNTIL DEATH

We must first point out that no matter how low in degree, true charity, received in baptism or restored by absolution, already loves God, the Author of salvation, more than self and above all things, and one’s neighbor as oneself for the love of God. The slightest degree of infused charity immensely surpasses the natural love that we can have for God, the Author of nature, and for man. Charity, no matter of how low a degree, excludes no one, for this exclusion would be a grave sin which would destroy it. Nevertheless this charity of beginners is not victorious over all egoism; far from it. Beside it we find in our souls an inordinate love of self which, without being gravely culpable, is an obstacle that takes from charity the freedom of its action or its radiation. Gray stands between black and white.

Between the state of mortal sin and that of perfect and radiant charity, stands charity of a very low degree, the exercise of which is often hindered by a troop of habitual venial sins, of immoderate self-love, of vanity, of laziness, of injustice, and the like.

Undoubtedly, this charity of low degree ought to grow. St. Paul says to the Ephesians (4: 15): “But doing the truth in charity, we may in all things grow up in Him.” To the Philippians (I: 9) he declares: “I pray that your charity may more and more abound”; and in the First Epistle to the Thessalonians (3: 12 f.): “May the Lord multiply you, and make you abound in charity towards one another, and towards all men: as we do also towards you, to confirm your hearts without blame, in holiness, before God.” In the Apocalypse (22: 11) we read: “He that is just, let him be justified still: and he that is holy, let him be sanctified still.” In the Old Testament, the Book of Proverbs (4: 18) tells us: “The path of the just as a shining light, goeth forward and increaseth even to perfect day.”

Why should charity thus grow in us? It should grow because the Christian on earth is a traveler, viator, who is advancing spiritually toward God. His spiritual advancement is made by more and more perfect acts of love, “steps of love,” as St. Gregory says. We must conclude from this that charity on earth can and should always increase, otherwise the Christian would cease in a sense to be a viator; he would stop before reaching the end of his journey. The way is intended for travelers, not for those who stop en route and sleep. Moreover, we are told in St. Luke (6: 25): “Woe to you that are filled: for you shall hunger,” but on the other hand, we read in St. Matthew (5: 6): “Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice, for they shall have their fill.” Christ also declared: “If any man thirst, let him come to Me and drink.... Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.”

Since every traveler toward eternity should while on earth grow in charity, not only beginners and proficients, but the perfect ought always to draw nearer to God. And what is more, these last ought to advance toward Him so much the more rapidly as they are nearer to Him and as He draws them more strongly. St. Thomas affirms this when he comments on the words of St. Paul to the Hebrews (10: 25): “Comforting one another, and so much the more as you see the day approaching.” St. Thomas writes in his commentary on this verse of the epistle: “Some one might ask why we should thus progress in faith and love. The answer is that the natural (or connatural) movement becomes so much the more rapid as it approaches its

term, while it is the inverse for violent movement." (As a matter of fact, we say today that the fall of bodies is uniformly accelerated, while the inverse movement of a stone tossed into the air is uniformly retarded.) "Now," continues St. Thomas, "grace perfects and inclines to good according to the manner of nature. It follows that those who are in the state of grace ought so much the more to grow in charity as they draw near their last end (and are more attracted by it). This is why St. Paul says here: 'Not forsaking our assembly...; but comforting one another, and so much the more as you see the day approaching,' that is, the end of the journey. 'The night is past, and the day is at hand' (Rom. 13: 12). 'But the path of the just, as a shining light, goeth forward and increaseth even to perfect day'" (Prov. 4: 18).

This remark thus briefly made by St. Thomas, as it were in passing, has not been as much emphasized by theologians as it deserves. It is, however, striking that St. Thomas should have noted it in so simple, so rapid, and so beautiful a manner before the discovery of the law of universal gravitation and at a time when people knew only very imperfectly (without having measured it) the acceleration of the fall of bodies. St. Thomas means that in the saints the spiritual life is more and more intensified; the movement of their souls rises to the zenith and no longer descends. For them, there is no twilight; only the body weakens with age.

Such is the law of universal attraction in the spiritual order. As bodies are attracted in direct ratio to their mass and in inverse ratio to the square of their distance, that is, they are so much the more attracted as they draw near each other; in like manner souls are drawn by God so much the more as they approach Him. Alluding to the end of His course, Christ said with this meaning: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth (on the cross), will draw all things to Myself." "No man can come to Me, except the Father, who hath sent Me, draw him." The higher one rises, the more the efficient cause, which leads to action, and the final cause, which attracts to it, tend to become identified. God moves us and draws us to Himself. He is the beginning and the end of all, sovereign Good, who attracts love so much the more strongly as one draws nearer to Him. Thus, in the lives of the saints the progress of love during their last years is much more rapid than in their earlier life. They advance, not with an equal but with a quickened step, in spite of the heaviness of old age and a certain enfeebling of the sensible faculties, such as the sensible memory. Yet they hear and live the words of

the psalm: “Thy youth shall be renewed like the eagle’s.” Grace and, in particular, charity continually grow in them.

This increasingly rapid progress existed especially in the life of the Blessed Virgin for it found no obstacle in her, and it was so much the more intense as the initial speed, or the first grace, was greater. There was in her a marvelous acceleration of the love of God, an acceleration of which that of the fall of bodies is but a remote image.

We see thus why charity ought not only to grow in us until death, but to increase more and more like a falling body, the speed of which increases until it reaches its last end.

How, then, does charity grow in us? To be sure, in its lowest degree charity already loves God above all else with a love of esteem, and its neighbor in general, without excluding anyone. In this sense it cannot have a greater extension; but it can grow in intensity, takedeeper root in our will, more strongly determine its inclination to turn to God and to flee sin by more generous acts. As a matter of fact, charity does not grow by addition, like a heap of wheat. This addition would multiply charity without making it more intense. The increase would be in the order of quantity rather than of qualiity, which is quite a different thing. In reality, charity increases in us in so far as it becomes stronger, takes deeper root in our will, or, speaking without a metaphor, in so far as it inheres more strongly in our will and determines it more profoundly toward supernatural good by withdrawing it from evil. As in the scholar learning be comes more profound, more penetrating, more certain, without always reaching out to new conclusions, so charity grows in us by making us love God more perfectly and more purely for Himself, and our neighbor for God. If people had a better understanding of this doctrine, as St. Thomas expounds it, they would see more clearly the necessity of the passive purifications of the spirit, which St. John of the Cross speaks of. The purpose of these purifications is to free the highest virtues of all alloy, and to bring into powerful relief their formal objects: divine truth and divine goodness. Charity increases, therefore, like a quality, like heat, by becoming more intense, and that in several ways: by merit, prayer, and the sacraments.

THE INCREASE OF CHARITY BY OUR MERITS

A meritorious act is one which proceeds from charity, or from an inspired virtue vivified by charity, and which gives a right to a supernatural reward: first of all, to an increase of grace and of charity itself.

Meritorious acts do not themselves directly produce the increase of charity; for charity is not an acquired virtue produced and augmented by the repetition of acts, but it is an infused virtue. It was given to us by baptism, and as God alone can produce it in us, since it is a participation in His intimate life, He alone also can increase it. The growth of charity and the infused virtues, which are united to it, is like a continuous production. Thus St. Paul says: “I have planted (by preaching and baptism), Apollo watered, but God gave the increase. Therefore, neither he that planteth is anything, nor he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase (is all).... For we are God’s coadjutors: you are God’s husbandry; you are God’s building.” “He... will... increase the growth of the fruits of your justice.”

Although our acts of charity cannot produce the increase of this virtue, they concur in it in two ways: morally, by meriting it; and physically, by preparing us to receive it. Merit is a right to a recompense; it does not produce this reward, it obtains it. By his supernatural good works the just man merits the increase of charity, as the Council of Trent defined. While awaiting the reward of heaven, the Lord gives a just man even here on earth the recompense of growing in divine love, that is, of having a stronger and purer love. Quietism, which showed a want of esteem for the divine reward under the pretext of absolute disinterestedness, forgot that the more disinterested the soul is, the more it desires this recompense: that is, more purely and more strongly to love its God. This love is accompanied by an increase of hope, of the other infused virtues, and of the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

The acts of charity and of the virtues inspired by it do not merit, from the moral point of view, solely the increase of charity, but they dispose the soul physically to receive it, in the sense that, as it were, they open our faculties that they may receive more. They deepen them, so to speak, that the divine life may better penetrate them and elevate them while purifying them.

This is true especially of intense or very fervent acts of charity. A very generous act of love of God sometimes decides a whole life and merits a great increase of charity by disposing us to receive it immediately. It is as if a person were raised to a higher level, and in this ascent he has a new view of the things of God and a new pulse. He who had two talents thus

immediately obtains one or two more, perhaps an even greater number, and, as St. Thomas says, the Holy Ghost is then sent anew to us, for He becomes present in us in a new, more intimate, and more radiating manner.

This, however, brings up a difficult problem that has often been discussed by theologians and that is of great practical importance. Since it is clear that an intense or fervent act of charity disposes us to receive immediately an increase of this infused virtue and of all the others connected with it, it is not at all certain that a weak act of charity, an act lacking intensity and generosity (remissus), immediately obtains an increase of the life of grace. Does he who has five talents and acts weakly as if he had only two, obtain at once by this feeble and imperfect meritorious act an increase of charity? Several modern theologians, who follow Suarez, think so. Such is not the thought of St. Thomas and of the early theologians in general. The holy doctor says: “Every (even imperfect) act of charity merits an increase of charity; however, this increase does not always come at once, but only when we strive generously for it.” The reason is that the increase of sanctifying grace and of charity is conferred by God only according to the disposition of the subject who is to receive it, just as, at the moment of conversion or justification, sanctifying grace is given in a more or less elevated degree according to the fervor of the contrition of him who is converted. Evidently he who has five talents and acts as if he had only two, does not, in fact, as yet dispose himself to receive a sixth, for the act, although good, is notably inferior to the degree of virtue from which it proceeds. In this is a quite manifest analogy between supernatural acts and natural acts: a very intelligent man who is only slightly studious makes little progress in learning, whereas another who is less gifted but very hard working achieves good results. Likewise in the natural order, a friendship is strengthened only by more generous acts; very imperfect acts serve only to maintain it, not to make it grow. Therefore it seems we must conclude with St. Thomas that imperfect acts (remissi) of charity, although meritorious, do not at once obtain the increase of grace which they merit.

This doctrine should lead us often to make generous acts of charity. We might note, in passing, that particularly on the day of the monthly retreat or the first Friday of the month, we would do well to multiply generous acts of love of God, not in a mechanical fashion, like counting them, but on every opportune occasion, in order to preserve the spirit of fervor and to avoid growing tepid. We should recall also that the Holy Ghost generally moves

souls according to the degree of their infused virtues and of the seven gifts, or of their habitual docility. It would be incomprehensible that He would without reason move the soul to imperfect acts, for in that case the soul would have received in vain a high degree of infused virtue and of the gifts. Therefore, if the just man does not place an obstacle to the divine action, he will normally receive increasingly elevated graces of light and love that he may generously ascend toward God.

As good theologians teach, God is more glorified by a single act of charity of ten talents than by ten acts of charity of one talent each. Likewise a single very perfect just soul pleases God more than many others who remain in mediocrity or tepidity. Quality is superior to quantity. This is why the plenitude of grace in Mary surpassed from the first day of her existence that of all the saints, as a single diamond is worth more than a quantity of other precious stones.

Charity, therefore, ought by our merits to grow until death. With this infused virtue, our aptitude to receive a new increase grows, our spiritual heart dilates more and more, and our divine capacity is enlarged according to the words of the psalm: “I have run the way of Thy commandments, when Thou didst enlarge my heart.” St. Paul also says: “Our heart is enlarged.... Be you also enlarged.”

We too often forget that we are en route to eternity, and we try to settle down in the present life as if it were going to last forever. We resemble those travelers who install themselves in one of the great international trains where people sleep and eat as if they were in a hotel. They sometimes forget that they are on a journey. Then they look out of the window, see the vanishing countryside, notice that the train stops and that some people are getting off, and say to themselves that they also will soon reach their destination. The present life is like one of these great trains where people forget that they are on a journey. Then some persons alight from the train, that is to say, they die, and we are reminded that we must alight also. But, although we see many persons die, we do not succeed in realizing that some day our turn will come. Let us live, on the contrary, with our eyes fixed on the end of the journey; then we shall not lose the time that is given us, and it will become more and more filled with merits for eternity.

The growth of charity, of the infused virtues, and of the gifts which accompany it, is obtained not only by merit, but by prayer. We ask daily, in fact, to grow in the love of God when we say: “Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come (more and more in us), Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven (may we observe Thy precepts more perfectly).” The Council of Trent reminds us that this growth of the virtues is asked by the Church when it prays thus: “Increase, O Lord, our faith, hope, and charity” (Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost).

We should recall here the difference between the prayer of petition and merit. The sinner who has lost sanctifying grace cannot merit in this state, for sanctifying grace is the radical principle of all supernatural merit. Yet, by an actual transitory grace, the sinner can pray; he can ask for the grace of conversion; and, if he asks for it with humility, confidence, and perseverance, he will obtain it. Whereas merit, which is a right to a reward, is related to divine justice, prayer is addressed to the mercy of God, which often restores fallen souls and hears their prayers without any merit on their part. From the depths of the abyss into which it has fallen and where it can no longer merit, the most wretched soul may utter that cry to the divine mercy, which is prayer. The abyss of wretchedness calls to that of mercy, abyssus abyssum invocat, and if the sinner puts his whole heart into this appeal, he will be heard. His soul will be lifted up, and God will be glorified, as was the case with Magdalen. The impetrating power of prayer does not presuppose the state of grace, whereas merit does.

After conversion or justification, we can obtain the increase of the life of grace both by merit and by prayer. When prayer is humble, trusting, and persevering, it obtains for us a more lively faith, a firmer hope, a more ardent charity, all of which we ask for in the first three petitions of the Our Father. The mental prayer of a just man, who delights in meditating slowly on the Our Father, in nourishing his soul profoundly with each of its petitions, in remaining at times for half an hour in the loving contemplation of one of them, is at once meritorious and impetrating. It gives a right to an increase of charity, from which it proceeds, and by the impetrating power of prayer it often obtains more than it merits. Besides, when mental prayer is truly fervent, it obtains this increase immediately. Thereby we see how fruitful mental prayer can be; how it draws God strongly toward us that He may give Himself intimately to us and that we may give ourselves to Him. We should often recite the beautiful prayer of Blessed Nicholas of Flue:

“Lord Jesus, take me from myself, and give me to Thyself.” In it is a fervent meritorious act which immediately obtains the increase of charity that it merits, and a supplication which obtains even more than it merits. Then one’s heart dilates more and more in order to receive divine grace more abundantly; the soul empties itself of every creature and becomes more eager for God, in whom it finds in an eminent degree all that is worthy of being loved. It would be impossible to live too deeply by these things in recollection; sometimes it is given to a soul to live profoundly by them in the absolute silence of the night when everything is quiet and the soul is completely alone with its God, with its Savior, Jesus Christ. It then experiences His immense goodness and, by its mental prayer, which is at once meritorious and supplicating, it offers itself entirely to Him and receives Him in a prolonged spiritual communion that has a savor of eternal life. This is eternal life begun, as St. Thomas says. Often, therefore, the impetrating force of prayer is united to merit in order to obtain an increase of charity, a purer and stronger love of God.

Moreover, the just man may by prayer obtain certain graces which he could not merit, in particular the gift of final perseverance. This gift cannot be merited, for it is nothing other than the continuation until death of the state of grace, which is the principle of merit. Obviously it would be impossible to merit the very principle of merit. However, final perseverance or the grace of a happy death can be obtained by humble, trusting, daily prayer. For this reason the Church invites us to say daily with fervor in the second part of the Hail Mary: “Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.” Here prayer goes farther than merit, addressing itself, not to divine justice but to infinite mercy.

We can also ask God for the grace to know Him in an ever more living and intimate manner, by that knowledge which is called infused contemplation, and which results in a closer and more fruitful union with God. In this sense the Book of Wisdom (7: 7–9) says: “I called upon God, and the spirit of wisdom came upon me: and I preferred her before kingdoms and thrones, and esteemed riches nothing in comparison of her. Neither did I compare unto her any precious stone: for all gold in comparison of her, is as a little sand, and silver in respect to her shall be counted as clay.” We find also in Ps. 54: 23: “Cast thy care upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee: He shall not suffer the just to labor forever.” Not only will He come and sustain us, but He will come and nourish us with

Himself and daily give Himself more profoundly to us. And again in Ps. 26:4 we read: “One thing I have asked of the Lord, this will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life,” that I may daily see a little more clearly that He is infinitely good to those who seek Him and to those who find Him.

By addressing infinite mercy, prayer manifestly exceeds merit. The sinner who is still incapable of meriting, may by prayer obtain the grace of conversion. By prayer, the just man often obtains graces which could not be merited, such as final perseverance and the efficacious graces which lead to it.

THE INCREASE OF THE LIFE OF GRACE THROUGH THE SACRAMENTS

Lastly, we must recall here that charity and the other infused virtues, as well as the seven gifts, grow in us through the sacraments. The just man grows thus in the love of God through absolution and especially by Communion. The merit and prayer of the just soul obtain the gifts of God ex opere operantis, by reason of the faith, piety, and charity of him who merits, but the sacraments produce grace ex opere operato in those who do not place an obstacle to it; in other words, by themselves they produce grace from the fact that they were instituted by God to apply the merits of the Savior to us. They produce grace independently of the prayers and the merits, either of the minister who confers them or of those who receive them. This explains why a bad priest, and even an unbeliever, may validly administer baptism, provided he has the intention of doing what the Church does in conferring it.

But, although the sacraments of themselves produce grace in those who do not place an obstacle to it, they produce it more or less abundantly according to the fervor of him who receives it. The Council of Trent says that each one receives justice “according to his own measure, which the Holy Ghost distributes to everyone as He wills and according to each one’s disposition.” In the natural order, as St. Thomas observes, although an open fire of itself gives heat, a person benefits more from its influence in proportion as he draws closer to it. Likewise, in the supernatural order a person benefits so much the more from the sacraments as he approaches them with a more lively faith and a greater fervor of will. From this point of view, St. Thomas and many of the early theologians hold that, according as

the sinner receives absolution with greater or less repentance, he recovers or does not recover the degree of grace which he had lost. “Now the intensity of the penitent movement,” says St. Thomas, “may be proportionate sometimes to a greater grace than that from which man fell by sinning, sometimes to an equal grace, sometimes to a lesser. Wherefore the penitent sometimes arises to greater grace than that which he had before, sometimes to an equal, sometimes to a lesser grace.” It may be that a Christian who had five talents and who loses them by mortal sin has afterward a contrition equal to only two talents; he then recovers grace in a degree notably inferior to that which he had previously. On the contrary, he may by reason of profound repentance recover grace in a more elevated degree, as was doubtless the case with St. Peter when he wept bitterly immediately after denying Christ. This teaching is of great importance in the spiritual life for those who fall in the middle of their ascent; they can rise immediately and fervently and continue their ascent from where they left off. But it is also possible that they may rise only tardily and listlessly; they then remain midway instead of continuing the ascent.

It follows also from these principles that one fervent Communion is worth more than many tepid Communions taken together. The more a person approaches with lively faith, firm hope; ardent love, and fervor of will, our Lord present in the Eucharist, radiant source of graces, the more he benefits from our Lord’s influence by graces of light, love, and strength. The Communion of St. Francis, St. Dominic, or St. Catherine of Siena was on certain days extremely fervent and proportionately fruitful; their dilated souls approached our Savior to receive abundantly and even superabundantly from Him that they might later in their apostolate give Him to other souls.

It may happen, on the contrary, that the fruit of Communion is least when a soul approaches the holy table with dispositions sufficient only not to hinder the effect of the sacrament. This should make us reflec seriously, if we show no true spiritual advancement after years of frequent or daily Communion. Possibly by reason of a growing attachment to a certain venial sin, the effect of our daily Communion may be ever weaker, as the movement of a stone thrown vertically into the air is uniformly retarded until the stone falls down. God grant that this may never be our condition!

On the contrary, we should have sufficient generosity to permit the realization in us of that superior law which is verified in the lives of the

saints. In other words, because each of our Communions ought not only to preserve but to increase charity in us, each Communion should be substantially more fervent and more fruitful than, the preceding one; for each one, by increasing the love of God in us, ought to dispose us to receive our Lord on the following day with not only an equal but a superior fervor of will. Often, however, negligence and tepidity hinder the application of this law, of which that of the progressive attraction of bodies is only a symbol. Bodies are attracted to each other in increased ratio as they draw near to each other. Souls ought to make proportionately more rapid progress toward God as they draw near to Him and are more drawn by Him. Thus we see the meaning of our Savior’s words: “If any man thirst, let him come to Me and drink.... Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water,” the streams of living water which flow into the infinite ocean that is God, known and loved as He knows and loves Himself, for all eternity.

Chapter 8

The True Nature of Christian Perfection

So far we have spoken of the sources of the interior life, that is, of sanctifying grace, the infused virtues, the seven gifts, the Blessed Trinity which dwells in us, and the influence which Christ the Redeemer and Mary Mediatrix exert on our souls that we may grow in the love of God. We must now consider the end of the interior life, not, however, its final end, of which we spoke when we said that the interior life is, in a sense, eternal life begun; but the end which may be attained on earth, the Christian perfection that may be realized here below.

We shall see, first of all, the erroneous or incomplete ideas of perfection that have been proposed, then the true nature of Christian perfection. We shall also consider the Christian perfection that is obtainable on earth, comparing it with that of heaven. Then we shall see whether it is a duty or only a counsel for all to tend to it. Next, we shall speak of the different ages of the spiritual life, and then we shall treat of each one separately. Lastly, we shall inquire whether the full perfection of Christian life on earth belongs only to the ascetical order, or whether it truly belongs to the mystical order.

ERRONEOUS OR INCOMPLETE IDEAS OF PERFECTION

To get an exact idea of the Christian perfection which the Gospel makes known to us and to see its loftiness, we shall not fail to profit by first recalling two other ideas of human perfection that have arisen according as men placed more or less stress on one form or another of their activity.

We may distinguish three principal ideas of human perfection which always tend to reappear. In antiquity the barbarians made it consist principally in fortitude. The majority of the Greek philosophers thought that

it lay principally in wisdom. The Gospel tells us that it is especially in charity, or in the love of God and of our neighbor in God. These three words, fortitude, wisdom, and charity, express the dominant note in these three different conceptions of life. We shall briefly recall the first two by noting the forms they assume among us today; we shall thus better see the loftiness of the third, so much the more so as the first two contain an element of truth which, under the influence of charity, may take on great value.

The heroes of barbarian races made the perfection of man consist above all in fortitude, courage, bravery, as their legends, particularly those of the Niebelungen, remind us. The national pride of races would tend at times to bring them back to this ideal. In it is exalted the virtue of fortitude which has as its object difficult things that demand great energy and in which man's life is exposed, as in combats. An element of truth is contained in this idea, so much the more so as, in less tragic but painful and rather frequent circumstances, patience, constancy, and longanimity are needed. As St. Thomas, following Aristotle, remarks, it is even more difficult thus to hold out, to endure for a long time, to remain firm in the midst of difficulties and blows, than it is to attack in a moment of enthusiasm. To make human perfection consist above all in fortitude, is the idea of a warrior, a soldier, an explorer, or an aviator. Often not a little pride and at times injustice is mingled in it. This idea, moreover, certainly does not suffice to put man in his true place in regard to God and his neighbor.

Some ardent souls transpose this notion into the supernatural order by purifying it, and they conceive of the Christian chiefly as a soldier of Christ, for St. Paul says: "Take unto you the armor of God that you may be able to resist in the evil day and to stand in all things perfect. Stand, therefore,... having on the breastplate of justice... taking the shield of faith, wherewith you may be able to extinguish all the fiery darts of the most wicked one." From this point of view, all the grandeur of martyrdom may be easily conceived.

But does its true grandeur come especially from the fact that it is an act of fortitude? Does it not rather derive, as St. Thomas says, from the fact that martyrdom is the incontestable and striking sign of great charity? The three centuries of persecution of the early Church were certainly centuries of courage, of heroic fortitude, but even more, centuries of love of God. Surely

this is what distinguishes the Christian martyrs from the heroes of paganism.

From a point of view somewhat similar to that we have just discussed, some persons seem to place perfection especially in austerity, fasts, vigils, and other difficult things. This evaluation may be understood in a favorable sense in a religious order particularly vowed to prayer and immolation, or to reparation, which is a manifest sign of an ardent love of God, of real zeal. Care must be taken, however, not to place a value on austerity as such, as if it were, not a means of advancement and reparation, but an end. Were this true, the most perfect religious life would be the most austere, the most difficult, and not that life which would have the best end and the means most adapted to that end. Is what is arduous especially the proper object of virtue? This object is rather the good. Not every difficult act is morally good; at times it is a rash feat of strength. And if the good is often difficult, it is not always so. Some acts of love of God and of our neighbor are accomplished without difficulty, with a great supernatural impulse, and are manifestly very meritorious since they proceed from great charity.

Can fortitude be the highest virtue? For the soldier as such it may be the most necessary virtue; bravery may be the perfection of the soldier. But is it the perfection of man as man, and of a Christian as a Christian? Theology answers that fortitude and patience are virtues necessary and indispensable to perfection. Above them, however, there is justice in regard to others; there is prudence, which directs all the moral virtues; and there are especially the theological virtues (faith, hope, and charity), which have God as their immediate object. This explains why martyrdom, which is an act of the virtue of fortitude, draws its grandeur chiefly from the fact that it is the sign of a great love of God.

We cannot, therefore, admit that the perfection of man and of the Christian consists chiefly in fortitude or in patience, necessary as these virtues are. Fortitude is evidently not the perfection of our intellect in regard to supreme truth, or that of our will in regard to sovereign good; it is merely virtue that represses fear in the midst of difficulties and dangers in order that we may follow right reason.

If perfect on does not consist primarily in fortitude, does it consist chiefly in wisdom? The majority of the Greek philosophers thought so. According to them, man is distinguished from lower beings by his intellect, and therefore the perfection of man as such is chiefly the perfection of his

intellect, that is, the wisdom or eminent knowledge of all things by their supreme cause and last end. Perfection would thus lie in the knowledge or contemplation of the sovereign good, and in the love which springs from this knowledge. Plato, among others, even thought that it suffices to know the sovereign good in order to love it efficaciously above all, and that virtue is a science. As Aristotle remarks, this opinion did not take sufficient account of man's free will, which can deviate in spite of the knowledge of the duty to be accomplished. Nevertheless Aristotle himself placed the perfection of man in wisdom accompanied by the virtues which are subordinate to it: that is, prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance. Wisdom, like prudence which it dominates, is, of a certainty, indispensable to perfection and to the conduct of life; but we cannot say that speculative knowledge of God, the sovereign Good, is necessarily followed by the love of God. A philosopher with a powerful intellect, though he has a correct idea of God, First Cause of the universe and Last End, may not be a good man, a man of good will. At times he may be even a very bad man. That which is true is the good of the intellect, but it is not the good of the entire man, not the whole good of man.

Learning can exist without the love of God and of one's neighbor. When it does, as St. Paul says, it produces the inflation of pride by making us live for ourselves and not for God. The perfection of a professor or of a doctor, as such, is not the perfection of man as man, or of a Christian as a Christian. A good professor who teaches the humanities or the elements of philosophy with distinction is not always a good man. We should not confound the perfection of the speculative intellect with that of the entire man. The latter requires the profound rectification of the will in regard to our last end. The will is the faculty that must be directed toward the good of the entire subject, of the entire man, and not toward the good merely of the intellect. Aristotle made this observation, but it was easier to think it than to live it.

Lastly, is not the love of God here on earth superior to the knowledge of God? Knowledge draws God, in a sense, toward us by imposing on Him in a certain manner the limits of our circumscribed ideas, whereas the love of God draws us toward Him and makes us love in Him what we cannot know precisely, for we are sure that His inner life, which is hidden from us, is infinitely lovable.

The conception of the Greek philosophers, which makes perfection consist in wisdom, is found again today mingled with many errors in those

who put intellectual culture above everything else, and also in the theosophists, for whom perfection lies in “a consciousness of our identity with God,” in the intuition of what is divine in us.

Far from putting the creature in his humble place beneath the Creator, theosophy presupposes pantheism, which is the negation of the order of grace and of all Christian dogmas, although it often preserves the terms of Christianity while giving them an entirely different meaning. (If a man becomes involved in theosophy, he may find himself enmeshed body and soul.) A most perfidious imitation and corruption of our asceticism and mysticism, theosophy is a product of the imagination in which God and the world are confounded, and in which we find, as we do in a novelty store, all sorts of antiques which attract our curiosity and turn our souls away from divine truth and eternal life. This heresy reminds us of the bewitching foolishness which darkens the intellect, as the Book of Wisdom says: “For the bewitching of vanity obscureth good things”

While keeping themselves free from similar aberrations, some Christians, who have a quietist tendency, are inclined to think that a person can rapidly reach perfection by the assiduous reading of the great mystics, without concerning himself enough about practicing the virtues which these books recommend, and without remembering sufficiently that true contemplation should be completely penetrated by supernatural charity and forgetfulness of self.

Farther on we shall see that contemplation, which is an act of the intellect, is not what chiefly constitutes perfection. As will be made evident, perfection lies in union with God through charity. The loving contemplation of God is, so to speak, a means conjoined to this end; it disposes us immediately to union with God. The end toward which we must tend is not contemplation, but God Himself to be loved above all.

From all that we have just said, it follows that perfection indubitably requires fortitude, patience, abnegation, and also wisdom; indeed, all the theological and moral virtues accompanied by the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost are necessary. Does it follow that perfection consists in the ensemble of the virtues? In a sense it does, but on condition that this ensemble be ordered like an organism and that among the virtues there be one which dominates all the others, inspires, commands, animates, vivifies them, and makes all their efforts converge toward the supreme end. Is it not, then, in

this supreme virtue in which all the other virtues ought to meet, that perfection chiefly consists? What is this supreme virtue?

THE ESSENCE OF PERFECTION ACCORDING TO ST. PAUL'S INTERPRETATION OF THE GOSPEL

We shall see what answer Christian revelation gives to the question just stated. In the Gospel, on several different occasions and under the most varied forms, Christ incessantly reminds us that the Supreme precept dominating all others and all the counsels is the precept of love, which had already been formulated in the Old Testament: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with all thy strength and with all thy mind: and thy neighbor as thyself." This precept is superior to the ideal of the dominating fortitude of heroes and also to the Greek philosophers' ideal of speculative wisdom. In Christ's command is a fortitude of another order and a wisdom both much more realistic and far loftier. St. Paul explains this doctrine of our Savior when he writes to the Colossians (3:12–15): "Put ye on therefore, as the elect of God, holy, and beloved, the bowels of mercy, benignity, humility, modesty, patience: bearing with one another, and forgiving one another... even as the Lord hath forgiven you... but above all these things have charity, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of Christ rejoice in your hearts, wherein also you are called in one body: and be ye thankful"

Charity is the bond of perfection because it is the highest of the virtues which unites our soul to God. It ought to last forever, and it vivifies all the other virtues by rendering their acts meritorious, ordaining them to the last end, that is, to its object: God loved above all else. Thus St. Paul is so convinced of this superiority of charity over all the other virtues, over the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, and over the graces gratis datae, such as prophecy, that he writes:

"If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And if I should have prophecy and should know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."

Without charity, the most excellent extraordinary gifts (charismata) are of no avail for eternal life. Why is this? Because if I do not have charity, I do not fulfill the first commandment of God; I do not conform my will to His; I am turned away from Him, and my heart is set in the opposite direction from the heart of God. Therefore, “if I have not charity, I am nothing” personally in the order of salvation; I merit nothing, even though by preaching and miracles I should lead others to save their souls. With this meaning, St. Augustine says: “Love and do what you wish,” and what you will do, will merit eternal life for you, if you truly love your God more than yourself. Still more, we must have true charity, for there is nothing worse than the false, which has nothing in common with genuine charity except the name.

True charity, as opposed to false charity, implies all the virtues that are subordinate to it and that, from this point of view, appear as so many modalities or aspects of the love of God and of one’s neighbor. This is why St. Paul says: “Charity is patient, is kind: charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely, is not puffed up, is not ambitious, seeketh not her own; is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.”

As a matter of fact, if after losing charity, we recover it by absolution, we receive with it all the infused moral virtues that are subordinate to it: Christian prudence, justice, fortitude, temperance, and the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost. To this we must add with St. Paul: “Charity never falleth away: whether prophecies shall be made void or tongues shall cease or knowledge shall be destroyed.... We see now through a glass in a dark manner; but then face to face.... And now there remain faith, hope, and charity, these three: but the greatest of these is charity.” Faith will disappear to give place to vision, hope to possession, but charity will last eternally.

By charity we become the temples of the Holy Ghost: “The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us.” Lastly, the more we love God, the more we know Him by that entirely supernatural, quasi-experimental knowledge that is divine wisdom. This is what made St. Paul say to the Ephesians (3: 17–19): “Being rooted and founded in charity, you may be able to comprehend with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth: to know also the charity of

Christ, which surpasseth all knowledge; that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God."

St. Paul is speaking here not only to privileged souls, but to all the faithful. After meditating at length on these words in the presence of God, can we say that the infused contemplation of the mysteries of faith is not in the normal way of sanctity? Care must be taken before formulating a negative proposition of this sort, for we must remember that reality, especially the reality of the interior life such as it is willed by God, is richer than even the best of all our theories. Philosophical and theological systems are often true in what they affirm and false in what they deny. Why is this? Because reality, as God made it, is far richer than all our limited and narrow conceptions.

"There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, Than are dreamt of in our philosophy."

To deny this would be to lose the meaning of the mystery, which is identified with contemplation. To deny it would be to impoverish singularly the words of St. Paul which we have just quoted: "Being rooted and founded in charity, you may be able to comprehend, with all the saints," that is, with all Christians who reach perfection, "what is the breadth and length and height and depth" of the mystery of Christ... especially of His love, and "that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God."

St. John gives us the same doctrine, particularly in his First Epistle (4: 16–21): "God is charity: and he that abideth in charity, abideth in God, and God in him.... And this commandment we have from God, that he who loveth God love also his brother." Likewise St. Peter writes in his First Epistle (4: 8): "But before all things have a constant mutual charity among yourselves: for charity covereth a multitude of sins." Christ said of Magdalen: "Many sins are forgiven her, because he hath loved much."...

According to this doctrine, perfection does not consist chiefly in humility, nor does it consist especially in poverty, nor in acts of worship or of the virtue of religion, but it lies primarily in the love of God and of one's neighbor, which renders the acts of all the other virtues meritorious. "Poverty itself," says St. Thomas, "is not perfection, but the means of perfection.... But since the means are sought not for their own sake, but for the sake of the end, a thing is better, not for being a greater instrument, but for being more adapted to the end. Thus a physician does not heal the more,

the more medicine he gives, but the more the medicine is adapted to the disease."

As much must be said of humility, which makes us bow before God that we may with docility receive His influence, which ought to lift us up to Him.

The virtue of religion, which renders to God the worship due Him, is also inferior to the theological virtues; it is meritorious only by reason of the charity that animates it. If we should forget this, we would perhaps become more attentive to worship, to the liturgy, than to God Himself, to the figures rather than to the reality, to the manner in which we ought to say an Our Father or a Credo rather than to the sublime meaning of these prayers: the service of God would take precedence over the love of God. Hence our conclusion is that, according to Christian revelation, charity is "the bond of perfection."

SOME EXACT THEOLOGICAL STATEMENTS ON THE NATURE OF PERFECTION

The scriptural teaching which we have just recalled assumes a more precise form in the doctrinal body of theology. Relying on the Scriptures, St. Thomas easily establishes the fact that Christian perfection consists especially in charity. "A thing is said to be perfect," he says, "in so far as it attains its proper end, which is the ultimate perfection thereof. Now it is charity that unites us to God, who is the last end of the human mind, since 'he that abideth in charity abideth in God, and God in him' (I John 4: 16). Therefore the perfection of the Christian life consists chiefly in charity."

Infused faith and hope could evidently not be that in which perfection chiefly consists, for they can exist in the state of mortal sin, in a man whose will is turned away from God, his last end. They remain in him like the root of a tree which has been cut down and can revive. Not every mortal sin, in fact, makes a man lose faith and hope, but only a mortal sin that is directly contrary to these virtues. When the sinner who continues to believe and who still hopes, recovers charity, it revivifies faith and hope, and renders their acts not only salutary but meritorious, by ordaining them to God efficaciously loved above all else. St. Thomas adds farther on: "Primarily and essentially, the perfection of the Christian life consists in charity, principally as to the love of God, secondarily as to the love of our neighbor, both of which are the matter of the chief commandments of the divine

law.... Secondarily and instrumentally, however, perfection consists in the observance of the counsels." The great sign of the love of God is precisely love of one's neighbor. Christ Himself says so, and we cannot insist too strongly on this point: "A new commandment I give unto you: That you love one another, as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love one for another." This love of our neighbor is the great sign of the progress of the love of God in our hearts, so much so that St. John adds: "He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now." "We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren.... Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer."

Farther on we shall speak of the counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience; but even now it is clear that they are subordinate to charity, to the love of God and of one's neighbor in God.

We should like to insist here on two points that show the difference between Christian perfection on earth and perfection in heaven.

THE SUPERIORITY OF CHARITY TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD IN THIS LIFE

Some intellectuals raise an objection to the traditional doctrine, based on Scripture, according to which perfection consists primarily in charity. They ask whether the intellect is not the first faculty of man, the one which directs the others and which primarily distinguishes us from the animal. Since this is true, they say, should we not then conclude that the perfection of man lies chiefly in the intellectual knowledge that he can have of all things, considered in their principle and in their end, and therefore in the knowledge of God, the supreme rule of human life? From this point of view, a Bossuet may seem to surpass a number of canonized servants of God who did not particularly excel in intelligence, as for example, a holy lay brother or a St. Benedict Joseph Labre.

We have already virtually cleared up this objection by pointing out in one of our previous chapters that speculative and abstract knowledge of God can exist without being accompanied by profound righteousness of the will. It may exist in a very intelligent but heartless man, who could not be called "a man of good will" in the meaning given to this term by the Gospel. For the same reason, infused faith can remain in a soul that has lost charity and has turned away from God. Moreover, we said with St. Thomas, that on

earth the love of God is better than the knowledge of God. It is important to insist on this point. St. Thomas clearly recognizes that the intellect is superior to the will which it directs. The intellect has, in fact a more simple, more absolute, more universal object, being in all its universality, and consequently all beings; the will has a more restricted object, the good, which is a modality of being, and which is in everything the perfection that renders it desirable. Besides, we must not confound apparent good with true good, which the intellect recognizes and judges, and proposes to the will. As the good presupposes the true and being, the will presupposes the intellect and is directed by it. Therefore by the intellect, which is the first of his faculties, man differs primarily from the animal.

St. Thomas admits also that in heaven our beatitude will consist essentially in the beatific vision, in the intellectual and immediate vision of the divine essence, for it is above all by this immediate vision that we shall take possession of God for eternity. We shall plunge the gaze of our intellect into the depths of His inner life seen directly. God will thus give Himself immediately to us, and we shall give ourselves to Him. We shall possess Him and He will possess us, because we shall know Him as He knows Himself and as He knows us. Beatific love will be in us a consequence of this immediate vision of the divine essence; it will even be a necessary consequence, for the beatific love of God will no longer be free, but superfree, above liberty. Our will will be invincibly ravished by the attraction of God seen face to face. We shall see His infinite goodness and beauty so clearly that we shall be unable not to love Him; we shall even be unable to find any pretext of momentarily interrupting this act of superfree love, which will no longer be measured by time, but by participated eternity, by the single instant of the immobile duration of God, the instant that never passes. In heaven the love of God and the joy of possessing Him will necessarily follow the beatific vision, which will thus be the essence of our beatitude. All this is true. It is difficult to affirm more strongly than St. Thomas does the superiority of the intellect over the will in principle and in the perfect life of heaven.

Since this is true, how can the holy doctor maintain that Christian perfection on earth consists primarily in charity, which is a virtue of the will, and not in wisdom or contemplation, which belong to the intellect? To this question he gives a profound answer, which should be meditated on for the spiritual life. He says in substance: Although a faculty may by its nature

be superior to another, it may happen that an act of the second is superior to an act of the first. For example, sight is superior to hearing, it is less painful to be deaf than blind; nevertheless, although sight is superior to hearing, the audition of a Beethoven symphony is more sought after than the sight of an ordinary object. Likewise, although the intellect by its very nature (simpliciter) superior to the will which it directs, here on earth the love of God is more perfect than the knowledge of God. Therefore perfection lies chiefly in the love of God. A saint who has little learning in theological matters but who has a very great love of God, is certainly more perfect than a theologian who has a lesser charity. This observation, which is elementary for every Christian, appears upon serious reflection as a lofty and precious truth. It could be illustrated by many quotations from Scripture and from the works of the great spiritual writers, especially from The Imitation of Christ.

Whence comes this superiority of the love of God over the knowledge of Him that we have on earth? St. Thomas answers as follows: “The action of the intellect consists in this, that the idea of the thing understood is in the one who understands; whereas the act of the will consists in this, that the will is inclined to the thing as existing in itself. And therefore the Philosopher says (Metaph., VI) that good and evil, which are objects of the will, are in things, but truth and error, which are objects of the intellect, are in the mind.” It follows that on earth our knowledge of God is inferior to the love of God, since, as St. Thomas further says, when we know God, we draw Him in a way to ourselves, and in order to represent Him to ourselves, we impose on Him the bounds of our limited ideas; whereas when we love Him, it is we who are drawn to Him, lifted up to Him, such as He is in Himself. An act of love of God made by the Cure of Ars as he taught catechism, was worth more than a learned theological meditation inspired by a lesser love. Our knowledge of God draws Him to us, whereas our love of God draws us to Him. Therefore, as long as we have not the beatific vision, that is, while we are on earth or in purgatory, the love of God is more perfect than the knowledge of God. It presupposes this knowledge, but it surpasses it.

Further, says St. Thomas, even here on earth our love of charity attains God immediately; it adheres immediately to Him, and from Him it goes on to creatures. “For knowledge begins from Charity ought, therefore, incontestably to have the first place in our soul, above that of the love of knowledge and of any kind of human progress. Moreover, charity will

increase tenfold all our moral and intellectual powers by placing them in the service of God and of our neighbor. The love of esteem (appretiative summus) which we ought to have for God will thus become more intense, as it should.,,

THE LOVE OF CHARITY CANNOT BE ABSOLUTELY CONTINUAL ON EARTH AS IT WILL BE IN HEAVEN

In comparing Christian perfection on earth with that of heaven, St. Thomas observes that God alone can love Himself infinitely as much as He is lovable, as He alone can have a comprehensive vision of His essence. However, without loving God as much as He is lovable, the saints in heaven love Him with all their strength with an ever actual, uninterrupted love. This absolute continuity in love is not possible on earth; sleep, in particular, does not permit it.

The perfection possible on earth excludes everything that is contrary to the love of God, that is, mortal sin, and also all that hinders our love from being completely directed toward God. Thus those of the just who are called beginners and proficients tend toward this union with God, which is the possession of the perfect.

According to these principles formulated by St. Thomas, the perfection of charity in the perfect excludes not only mortal sin and fully deliberate venial sin, but also voluntary imperfections, such as a lesser generosity in the service of God and the habit of acting in an imperfect manner (remissa) and of receiving the sacraments with little fervor of will. He who has a charity equal to five talents and acts as if he had only two talents still performs meritorious but weak acts. These acts of charity, called remissi, do not immediately obtain the increase of charity that they deserve, and are not proper to the perfect, who ought indeed ever to ‘advance more rapidly toward God, for the nearer souls approach Him, the more they are drawn by Him.

St. Thomas points out also that in the perfect, charity toward one’s neighbor, the great sign of our love of God, extends not only to all in general, but as soon as the occasion presents itself to each of those with whom the perfect have relations, not only to friends but to strangers and even to adversaries. Moreover, this fraternal charity is intense in them, reaching even to the sacrifice of exterior goods and of life itself for the

salvation of souls, since Christ said: “This is My commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you.” We see this charity in the apostles after Pentecost, when they were “rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus.” This is also what made St. Paul say: “But I most gladly will spend and be spent myself for your souls.”

Perfect charity demands serious effort, a veritable struggle, a spirit of abnegation or renunciation, in order that our affection, ceasing to descend toward the things of earth or to fall back egoistically on ourselves, may always rise more purely and strongly toward God. For this ascent toward God we need prayer, habitual recollection, a great docility to the Holy Ghost, and the generous acceptance of the cross which purifies. As soon as the soul’s life ceases to descend, it ascends toward God. It cannot remain stationary on earth; and its law, like that of the flame which symbolizes it, is not the law of descent, but of ascent. Therefore, without having the absolute continuity of the love of heaven, the charity of the perfect on earth is characterized by an admirable and almost ceaseless activity.

The author of The Imitation admirably expresses this thought when he says: “Because I am as yet weak in love and imperfect in virtue, therefore do I stand in need of being strengthened and comforted by Thee. Wherefore do Thou visit me often, and instruct me in Thy holy discipline.... A great thing is love, a great good in every way, which alone lighteneth all that is burdensome and beareth equally all that is unequal. It carrieth a burden without being burdened, and maketh all else that is bitter sweet and savory. The noble love of Jesus impelleth us to do great things, and exciteth us always to desire that which is the more perfect. Love will tend upwards and not be detained by things beneath. Love will be at liberty, and free from all worldly affection that its interior vision be not hindered; that it suffer itself not to be entangled with any temporal interest, or cast down by misfortune. Nothing is sweeter than love, nothing stronger, nothing higher, nothing wider, nothing more pleasant... for love is born of God, and cannot rest but in God, above all created things. The lover flieth, runneth, and rejoiceth; he is free, and cannot be restrained. He giveth all for all, and hath all in all; because he resteth in one sovereign Good above all, from whom all good floweth and proceedeth.... Love often knoweth no measure, but groweth fervent above all measure.... Love watcheth, and sleeping slumbereth not. When weary it is not tired;... but like a vivid flame and a burning torch, it mounteth upward and securely passeth through all”

This is truly the life of the saints. We are called to it, for we are all called to the life of heaven where there will be only saints. In order to attain it, we must sanctify all the acts of our day, remembering that above the succession of daily deeds, whether pleasurable a or painful, foreseen or unforeseen, there is the parallel series of actual graces which are granted to us from moment to moment that we may draw the best spiritual profit from these daily deeds. If we think about this, we shall no longer see these acts only from the point of view of the senses, or from that of our reason which is more or less led astray by self-love, but from the supernatural point of view of faith. Then these daily deeds, whether pleasurable or painful, will become the practical application of the doctrine of the Gospel, and gradually an almost continual conversation will be established between Christ and us. This will be the true interior life, as it were, eternal life begun.

Chapter 9

The Grandeur of Christian Perfection and the Beatitudes

Christian perfection, according to the testimony of the Gospels and Epistles, consists chiefly in charity which unites us to God. This virtue corresponds to the supreme precept of the love of God. We read also: “He that abideth in charity abideth in God, and God in him.” “But above all these things have charity, which is the bond of perfection.”

Some theologians have questioned whether for perfection, properly so called, not that of beginners or of proficients, but that which characterizes the unitive way, a great charity is necessary, or whether this perfection can be obtained without a lofty degree of this virtue. Some authors doubt it. They even declare that a high degree of charity is not necessary to perfection, properly so called, because, according to the testimony of St. Thomas, “the very least grace is sufficient to resist any degree of concupiscence.”

The majority of theologians answer, on the contrary, that perfection, properly so called, is obtained only after long exercise of the acquired and infused virtues, an exercise by which their intensity increases. Before reaching the age of perfection, the perfect man must have been a beginner, then a proficient. In the perfect man, not only can charity conquer many temptations, but it has in fact triumphed over many, and has thereby notably increased. Therefore Christian perfection, properly so called, that of the unitive way, cannot be conceived without a lofty charity.

If we were to read the contrary in the works of St. John of the Cross, for example, we would think we were dreaming and that there was a typographical error. It seems altogether certain that, as for adult age greater physical strength is needed than for childhood (although accidentally certain particularly vigorous adolescents may be stronger than certain

adults), likewise for the state of the perfect a loftier charity is also needed than for that of beginners (although accidentally certain saints have a greater charity at the beginning than certain perfect souls already advanced in age).

The common teaching of theologians on this point seems clearly founded on the very preaching of the Savior, especially that of the beatitudes found in the fifth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel. This page of the Gospel admirably expresses all the elevation of Christian perfection to which Christ calls all of us. The Sermon on the Mount is the abridgment of Christian doctrine, the solemn promulgation of the New Law, given to perfect the Mosaic Law and to correct erroneous interpretations of it; and the eight beatitudes given at its beginning, are the abridgment of this sermon. They thus wonderfully condense all that constitutes the ideal of the Christian life and show all its loftiness.

Christ's first preaching promised happiness and showed the means to obtain it. Why does He speak first of all of happiness? Because all men naturally wish to be happy. They pursue this end unceasingly, whatever they may wish; but they often seek happiness where it is not, where they will find only wretchedness. Let us listen to our Lord, who tells us where true and lasting happiness is, where the end of our life is, and who gives us the means to obtain it.

The end is indicated in each of the eight beatitudes. Under different names, it is eternal happiness, whose prelude the just may enjoy even here on earth; it is the kingdom of heaven, the promised land, perfect consolation, the full satisfaction of all our holy and legitimate desires, supreme mercy, the sight of God our Father. The means are quite the contrary of those suggested by the maxims of worldly wisdom, which proposes an entirely different end.

St. Augustine and St. Thomas admirably explain the order of these eight beatitudes. An ascending order, it is the inverse of that of the Our Father, which descends from the consideration of the glory of God to that of our personal needs and of our daily bread.

The first three beatitudes tell the happiness that is found in the flight from sin and deliverance from it, in poverty accepted for love of God, in meekness, and in the tears of contrition. The two following beatitudes are those of a Christian's active life: they correspond to the thirst for justice and to mercy exercised toward one's neighbor. Then come those of the

contemplation of the mysteries of God: the purity of heart which prepares the soul to see God, and the peace which springs from true wisdom. Finally, the last and most perfect of the beatitudes unites all the preceding ones in the very midst of persecution endured for justice' sake. These are the final trials, the condition of sanctity.

We shall follow this ascending order to get a precise idea of Christian perfection, taking care not to lessen it. We shall see that Christian perfection goes beyond the limits of asceticism, or of the exercise of the virtues according to our own activity, and that it implies the eminent exercise of the gifts of the Holy Ghost. The superhuman mode of the gifts, when it becomes frequent and manifest, characterizes the mystical life, or the life of docility to the Holy Ghost.

Following St. Augustine, St. Thomas teaches that the beatitudes are acts proceeding from the Holy Ghost or from the virtues perfected by the gifts.

THE BEATITUDES OF THE DELIVERANCE FROM SIN

The beatitudes of the deliverance from sin correspond to the purgative way, which is proper to beginners and which is prolonged in the way the proficients and the perfect ought to follow. Whereas the world declares that happiness is in the abundance of exterior goods, of riches, and in honors, Christ states without any other preamble, with the calm assurance of absolute truth: "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Each beatitude has many degrees. Happy they who are poor without murmuring, without impatience, without jealousy, even if bread should be lacking, and who work while placing their trust in God. Blessed are they who, though more fortunate, have not the spirit of riches, pomp, and pride, but are detached from the goods of earth. More fortunate still are they who will leave all to follow Christ, who will make themselves voluntarily poor, and who will truly live according to the spirit of this vocation. They will receive the hundredfold on earth and eternal life. These poor are they who, under the inspiration of the gift of fear, follow the road which, though narrow at first, becomes the royal road to heaven, on which the soul dilates more and more, whereas the broad road of the world leads to hell and perdition. Elsewhere Christ declares: "Woe to you that are filled: for you shall hunger." On the other hand, blessed is that poverty which, as the life

of St. Francis of Assisi shows, opens the kingdom of God that is infinitely superior to all wealth, to the miserable riches in which the world seeks happiness.

Blessed are the poor, or humble of heart, who do not cling to the goods of the body, or to those of the spirit, or to reputation, or to honor, and who seek only the kingdom of God.

The desire of riches divides men, engenders quarrels, lawsuits, violence, and war among nations; but Christ says: “Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land.” Blessed are they who do not become irritated against their brethren, who do not seek to take vengeance on their enemies, to dominate others. “If one strike thee on thy right cheek, turn to him also the other.” Blessed are the meek who do not judge rashly, who do not see in their neighbor a rival to be supplanted but a brother to be helped, a child of the same heavenly Father. The gift of piety inspires this meekness in us with a filial affection toward God our common Father. The meek are not stubbornly attached to their own judgment; they express themselves quite simply in a straightforward manner, and do not feel the need to call heaven to witness in trivial matters.

To be thus supernaturally meek, even with those who are acrimonious, demands a great union with Him who said: “Learn of Me, for I am meek and humble of heart”; with Him who did not crush the broken reed or extinguish the smoking flax. According to Bossuet, the broken reed is sometimes our angry neighbor, who is broken by his own anger. We must not crush him by taking vengeance on him. Christ has been compared to the lamb which lets itself be led to the slaughter without uttering a complaint.

The meekness we are discussing is not that which does not offend anyone because it is afraid of everything; rather, it is a virtue which presupposes a great love of God and of one’s neighbor, the flower of charity, as St. Francis de Sales says. This meekness doubles the value of the service rendered. Moreover, it succeeds in stating the whole truth, in making counsel and even reproaches acceptable; for he who receives them feels that they are inspired by a great love. Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land, the true, promised land. Even now they possess spiritually the hearts that trust in them.

Whereas the world says that happiness lies in pleasures, Christ declares: “Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted.” To the evil rich man it was said: “Thou didst receive good things in thy lifetime, and

likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented." Blessed are they who, like the beggar Lazarus, suffer patiently without consolation from men, for their tears are seen by God. More blessed still are those who weep for their sins, and through an inspiration of the gift of knowledge know experimentally that sin is the greatest of evils, and by their tears obtain its pardon. Lastly, more blessed, says St. Catherine of Siena,, are those who weep for love at the sight of the infinite mercy, of the goodness of the Savior, of the tenderness of the Good Shepherd, who sacrifices Himself for His sheep. These receive even here on earth consolation infinitely superior to that which the world can give.

Such are the beatitudes which are found in the flight and deliverance from sin.

THE BEATITUDES OF THE ACTIVE LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN

There are other holy joys which the just man finds when, freed from evil, he seeks the good with his whole heart. The man of action, who allows himself to be carried away by pride, declares that happy is that man who lives and acts as he pleases, who is not subject to anyone, and who imposes his will on others. Christ says: "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice: for they shall have their fill." Justice, in the broad sense of the word, consists in rendering to God what is due Him, and then for the love of God giving also to the creature what is due him. In recompense, the Lord gives Himself to us. This is the perfect order, in perfect obedience that is inspired by love which enlarges the heart. Blessed are they who desire this justice, even to the extent of hungering and thirsting for it. In a certain sense, they will be filled even in this life by becoming more just and more holy. This is a blessed thirst, for Christ says: "If any man thirst, let him come to Me and drink. He that believeth in Me, as the Scripture saith: Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." That we may keep this thirst when sensible enthusiasm falls away, and preserve this hunger and thirst for justice in the midst of contradictions, hindrances, and disillusions, we must receive with docility the inspirations of the gift of fortitude. This gift prevents us from weakening, from letting ourselves be disheartened, and it lifts up our courage in the midst of difficulties. St. Thomas says: "The Lord wishes to see us hunger and thirst for this justice to such an extent that we can never be satiated in this life, as the miser never has enough gold." These

hungering souls “will be satiated only in the eternal vision, and on this earth in spiritual goods.... When men are in the state of sin, they do not experience this spiritual hunger: when they are free from all sin, then they experience it.”

In a Christian’s action this hunger and thirst for justice should not be accompanied by a bitter zeal toward the guilty. Therefore Christ adds: “Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.” In our life, as also in that of God, justice and mercy should be united. We cannot be perfect without going to the help of the afflicted, of the sick, as the good Samaritan did. The Lord will give the hundredfold to those who give a glass of water for love of Him, to those inviting to their table the poor, the crippled, the blind, who are mentioned in the parable of the guests. The Christian should be happier to give than to receive. He ought to pardon offenses, that is, to give to those who have offended him more than is due them; he ought to forget insults and, before offering his gift at the altar, go and be reconciled with his brother. The gift of counsel inclines us to mercy, makes us attentive to the sufferings of others, makes us find the true remedy, the word that consoles and uplifts.

If our activity were frequently inspired by these two virtues of justice and mercy and by the gifts corresponding to them, our souls would find even here on earth a holy joy and would be truly disposed to enter into the intimacy of God.

THE BEATITUDES OF CONTEMPLATION AND UNION WITH GOD

Some philosophers have thought that happiness lies in the knowledge of truth, especially of supreme truth. This was the teaching of Plato and Aristotle. They were but little preoccupied with purity of heart, and their lives, on more than one point, were in contradiction with their doctrine. Christ tells us: “Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God.” He does not say that those are blessed who have received a powerful intellect, who have the leisure and means to cultivate it; but rather, blessed are the clean of heart, even though they may be naturally less endowed than many others. If they are clean of heart, they shall see God. A truly clean heart is like the limpid waters of a lake in which the azure of the sky is reflected, or like a spiritual mirror in which the image of God is reproduced.

That the heart may be pure, a generous mortification is prescribed: “If thy right eye scandalize thee, pluck it out.... If thy fight hand scandalize thee, cut it off.” We must particularly watch over purity of intention: for example, not giving alms through ostentation, not praying to draw upon ourselves the esteem of men, but seeking only the approbation of “the Father who seeth in secret.” Then will be realized the words of the Master: “If thy eye be single, thy whole body shall be lightsome.”

Even here on earth, the Christian will, in a sense, see God in his neighbor, even in souls that at first seem opposed to God. The Christian will see God in holy Scripture, in the life of the Church, in the circumstances of his own life, and even in trials, in which he will find lessons on the ways of Providence as a practical application of the Gospel. Under the inspiration of the gift of understanding, this is the true contemplation which prepares us for that by which, properly speaking, we shall see God face to face, His goodness, and His infinite beauty. Then all our desires will be gratified, and we shall be inebriated with a torrent of spiritual delights.

This contemplation of God ought, even here on earth, to be fruitful. It gives peace, a radiating peace, as the seventh beatitude says: “Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.” According to St. Augustine and St. Thomas, this beatitude corresponds to the gift of wisdom, which makes us taste the mysteries of salvation and see, so to speak, all things in God. The inspirations of the Holy Ghost, to which this gift renders us docile, gradually manifest to us the wonderful order of the providential plan even in those things, and at times especially in those things, which at first disconcerted us, in the painful and unforeseen events permitted by God for a higher good. One could not thus perceive the designs of Providence, which directs our lives, without experiencing peace, which is the tranquillity of order.

That we may not be troubled by painful and unexpected events, that we may receive all from the hand of God as a means or an occasion of going to Him, we need great docility to the Holy Ghost, who wishes to give us progressively the contemplation of divine things, the requisite for union with God. Hence we received in baptism the gift of wisdom, which has grown in us by confirmation and frequent Communion. The inspirations of the gift of wisdom give us a radiating peace, not only for ourselves but for our neighbor. They make us peacemakers; they help us to calm troubled souls, to love our enemies, to find the words of reconciliation which put an

end to strifes. This peace, which the world cannot give, is the mark of the true children of God, who never lose the thought of their Father in heaven. St. Thomas even says of these beatitudes: “They are a kind of preparation for future happiness.”

Lastly, in the eighth beatitude, the most perfect of all, Christ shows that all He has said is greatly confirmed by affliction borne with love: “Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” The final trials especially, the requisites for sanctity, are indicated here.

Christ’s surprising statement had never been heard before. Not only does it promise future happiness, but it declares that a soul should consider itself happy even in the midst of afflictions and persecutions suffered for justice. This is an altogether supernatural beatitude, which is practically understood only by souls enlightened by God. There are, moreover, many spiritual degrees in this state, from that of the good Christian who begins to suffer for having acted well, obeyed, and given good example, up to the martyr who dies for the faith. This beatitude applies to those who, converted to a better life, encounter only opposition in their surroundings. It applies also to the apostle whose action is hindered by the very people he wishes to save, when they will not pardon him for having spoken the Gospel truth too clearly. Entire countries sometimes endure this persecution, such as the Vendee during the French Revolution, Armenia, Poland, Mexico, and Spain.

This beatitude is the most perfect because it is that of those who are most clearly marked in the image of Jesus crucified. To remain humble, meek, and merciful in the midst of persecution, even toward persecutors, and in this torment not only to preserve peace but to communicate it to others, is truly the full perfection of Christian life. It is realized especially in the last trials undergone by perfect souls which God purifies by making them work for the salvation of their neighbor. All the saints have not been martyrs, but they have, in varying degrees, suffered persecution for justice’ sake, and they have known something of that martyrdom of the heart which made Mary the Mother of Sorrows.

Christ insists on the reward promised to those who thus suffer for justice: “Blessed are ye when they shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you, untruly, for My sake. Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven.” These words of Christ kindled in the souls

of the apostles the desire for martyrdom, a desire which inspired the sublime utterances of St. Andrew and St. Ignatius of Antioch. These words live again in St. Francis of Assisi, St. Dominic, and St. Benedict Joseph Labre. Inspired by these words, these saints were “the salt of the earth,” “the light of the world,” and they built their houses not on sand but on rock, houses that have been able to weather all storms and have not been overthrown.

These beatitudes, which, as St. Thomas says, are the superior acts of the gifts or of the virtues perfected by the gifts, go beyond simple asceticism and belong to the mystical order. In other words, the full perfection of Christian life belongs normally to the mystical order; it is the prelude of the life of heaven, where the Christian will be “perfect as the heavenly Father is perfect,” seeing Him as He sees Himself and loving Him as He loves Himself.

St. Teresa writes: “They read that we must not be troubled when men speak ill of us, that we are to be then more pleased than when they speak well of us; that we must despise our own good name, be detached from our kindred... with many other things of the same kind. The disposition to practice this must be, in my opinion, the gift of God; for it seems to me a supernatural good.” In other words, this disposition goes beyond simple asceticism or the exercise of the virtues according to our own activity or industry; it is the fruit of a great docility to the inspirations of the Holy Ghost. Moreover, the saint says: “If a soul loves honors and temporal goods, it is in vain that it will have practiced prayer or rather meditation for many years; it will never advance very much. Perfect prayer, on the contrary, frees the soul from these defects.” This is equivalent to saying that without perfect prayer a soul will never reach the full perfection of Christian life.

The author of The Imitation also expresses the same idea when speaking of true peace: “If thou arrive at an entire contempt of thyself, know that then thou shalt enjoy an abundance of peace, as much as is possible in this thy earthly sojourn.” This is why, in the same book of The Imitation, the disciple asks for the superior grace of contemplation: “I stand much in need of a grace yet greater, if I must arrive so far that it may not be in the power of any man nor anything created to hinder me.... He was desirous to fly freely to Thee who said, ‘Who will give me wings like a dove, and I will fly and be at rest?’ (Ps. 44:7.)... Unless a man be disengaged from all things

created, he cannot freely attend to things divine. And this is the reason why there are found so few contemplative persons, because there are few that know how to secure themselves entirely from perishable creatures. For this a great grace is required, such as may elevate the soul, and lift it above itself. And unless a man be elevated in spirit, and free from attachment to all creatures, and wholly united to God, whatever he knows and whatever he has is of no great importance." This chapter of The Imitation belongs, properly speaking, to the mystical order; it shows that only therein is the true perfection of the love of God found.

St. Catherine of Siena speaks in the same way in her Dialogue. As we have seen, this is the very teaching given us by Christ in the beatitudes, especially as St. Augustine and St. Thomas understood them, that is, as the elevated acts of the gifts of the Holy Ghost or of the virtues perfected by the gifts. This is truly the full normal development of the spiritual organism or of "the grace of the virtues and the gifts." The beatitudes show it to us, not in an abstract and theoretical form, but in a concrete, practical, and vital manner.

Chapter 10

Perfection and Heroic Virtue

To COMPLETE what we have said about the grandeur or elevation of Christian perfection, we must see whether it essentially demands great charity and the practice of the virtues even to a heroic degree.

DOES PERFECTION NECESSARILY REQUIRE GREAT CHARITY?

Certain theologians, such as Suarez, have maintained that one can be perfect without great charity. This proposition would greatly astonish us if we were to find it in the works of St. Thomas or of St. John of the Cross, for it seems little in conformity with their principles. Yet it has been defended because, it has been said, the weakest charity can, according to St. Thomas, overcome all temptations, and because what is lacking in the intensity of charity can easily be supplied by the acquired virtues. Thus, according to this opinion, a person may be perfect without having great charity, and inversely he who has great charity may not be perfect, because he does not sufficiently govern his passions.

The common teaching is, on the contrary, that Christian perfection requires great charity. Why is this? The reason lies in the fact that perfection is obtained only after long exercise of the infused and the acquired virtues, an exercise by which these virtues increase more and more. And if at the beginning, “the weakest charity could overcome all temptations,” as time goes on it triumphs over them effectively and becomes more and more intense. It is inconceivable, therefore, that a Christian be perfect, that is, superior to beginners and proficients, without having great charity.

Nevertheless, perfection does not require a fixed intense degree of charity, as if mathematically determined and known to God alone. We do not find here the mathematical precision which is observed for the point of

fusion of such or such bodies. We must judge spiritual perfection by analogy with maturity, which normally requires more physical strength than adolescence, without, however, exacting a mathematically determined degree of strength.

Moreover, this doctrine is based on the fact that charity increases, properly speaking, intensively rather than extensively. Intact, even the slightest charity ought to extend to God and to all men, at least vaguely, without excluding anyone. Finally, we have seen that, according to St. Thomas, the three degrees of charity proper to beginners, proficients, and the perfect, are degrees of the intensity of this infused virtue, which more and more excludes deliberate venial sins and detaches us from earthly things in order to unite us more strongly to God. Thence it follows that Christian perfection essentially requires (per se loquendo et non solum per accidens) great charity.

But it may happen accidentally that a certain perfect Christian has a lesser degree of charity than a great saint has at the outset. St. Mary Magdalen could, immediately after her conversion, already have a higher charity than many perfect souls called to a lesser sanctity. Likewise in the corporeal order, it may happen accidentally that a certain especially vigorous youth is stronger than many grown men. But if it is a question of maturity in general and of perfection as such, prescinding from a given individual, it must be said that normally they require powers superior to the preceding age. It should also be observed that, with the same degree of habitual charity, one man avoids venial sin more than another, whether it is because the first has more actual generosity, or because he has fewer difficulties in his temperament, less work, fewer contradictions from men. St. Teresa remarks that, when she left her monastery to make a foundation, it happened that in the midst of unforeseen circumstances she committed more venial faults but also acquired more merits because of the difficulties to be overcome. The same is true when a man climbs a mountain: he stumbles from time to time, which he scarcely ever does on a level road, but he has the merit of a difficult ascent.

All these reasons show that, although accidentally a certain perfect soul may have a lesser charity than a certain beginner called to very high sanctity, perfection essentially requires great charity. It is obtained only after the conquering of many temptations and the acquiring of many merits. We read in the Book of Tobias (12: 13) :

“Because thou wast acceptable to God, it was necessary that temptation should prove thee.” The Scriptures also say: “The furnace trieth the potter’s vessels; and the trial of affliction just men.” And our Lord says at the end of the Sermon on the Mount: “Everyone therefore that heareth these My words, and doth them, shall be likened to a wise man that built his house upon a rock. And the rain fell and the floods came and the winds blew; and they beat upon that house. And it fell not, for it was founded on a rock.” These words show that, although a weak charity can resist temptations, it is actually victorious over them only by increasing and becoming stronger and stronger. Therefore true Christian perfection of itself requires great charity. This truth is evident from the principles commonly accepted.

The teaching of St. John of the Cross confirms this doctrine. In The Ascent of Mount Carmel he writes as follows:

> Some consider any kind of retirement from the world and any correction of excesses to be sufficient; others are content with a certain degree of virtue, persevere in prayer and practice mortification, but they do not rise to this detachment, and poverty, or self-denial, or spiritual pureness.... They render themselves spiritually enemies of the cross of Christ, for true spirituality seeks for bitterness rather than sweetness in God, inclines to suffering more than to consolation, and to be in want of everything for God rather than to possess; to dryness and afflictions rather than to sweet communications, knowing well that this is to follow Christ and deny self, while the other course is perhaps nothing but to seek oneself in God, which is the very opposite of love.... Would that I could persuade spiritual persons that the way of God consisteth not in the multiplicity of meditations, ways of devotion or sweetness, though these may be necessary for beginners, but in one necessary thing only, in knowing how to deny themselves in earnest; inwardly and outwardly, giving themselves up to suffer for Christ’s sake, and annihilating themselves utterly. He who shall exercise himself herein, will then find all this and much more. And if he be deficient at all in this exercise, which is the sum and root of all virtue, all he may do will be but beating the air; utterly profitless, notwithstanding great meditations and communications.... And when he [the spiritual man] shall have been brought to nothing, when his humility is perfect, then will take place the union of the soul and God, which is the highest and noblest estate attainable in this life.

Now this state, which is perfection, manifestly requires great charity together with the perfect humility spoken of in this passage. St. John of the Cross also says: “The state of perfection... consists in the perfect love of God and contempt of self.”

This doctrine, requiring great charity for perfection, is entirely conformable to what St. Thomas says of the seven degrees of humility. Following St. Anselm, he enumerates them as follows:(1) to acknowledge ourselves contemptible; (2) to grieve on account of this; (3) to admit that we are so;. (4) to wish our neighbor to believe it; (5) patiently to endure its being said; (6) willingly to be treated as a person worthy of contempt; (7) to

love to be treated in this fashion. Such humility is truly perfection, or, as St. Thomas says, “the state of those who aim chiefly at union with and enjoyment of God: this belongs to the perfect who desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ,” and who do not recoil before hard things to be accomplished for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. Perfection thus conceived evidently requires great love of God.

Can a person attain to a lofty degree of habitual charity without great effort and generosity, by long years of daily Communion and of rather weak meritorious acts, so that, with this lofty charity, he would remain notably imperfect through lack of generosity in combating inordinate passions? Some theologians seem inclined to think so, notably Suarez in the passages we quoted at the beginning of this chapter. This opinion comes from the fact that, in the question De augmento caritatis, Suarez holds that imperfect (remissi) acts of charity at once obtain the increase of charity which they merit. He is led thereby even to admit that Holy Communion, though received with little devotion, still obtains a notable increase of charity, and that by absolution lost merits are restored in the same degree, even if the attrition of the penitent is barely sufficient.

On all these points, St. Thomas and the ancient theologians consider far more the disposition of fervor of will required in the subject that there may be a notable increase of grace. In their opinion, imperfect acts of charity do not immediately obtain the increase of charity that they merit, but only when there is a serious effort toward good. Likewise Holy Communion received with very little devotion obtains only a scant increase of charity, just as a person profits from the heat of a fireplace in proportion as he draws nearer to it instead of remaining at a distance. Lastly, according to St. Thomas, by absolution lost merits are restored in the same degree only if the penitent has a contrition commensurate with his sin and with the graces lost.

From what we have said, we conclude that without great effort a person cannot reach a high degree of charity by years of daily Communion and weakly meritorious acts. By such practices he can succeed in remaining in the state of grace or in rising rapidly after having sinned mortally, but certainly he cannot reach a lofty charity in this way.

DOES PERFECTION REQUIRE THE HEROIC PRACTICE OF THE VIRTUES?

If patriotism requires heroism when one's country is in danger, certainly Christian perfection requires the heroic practice of the virtues, at least in praeparatione animi, in this sense, that the Christian must be ready, with the help of God, to endure even martyrdom if it is a question of choosing between the denial of his faith and torture. This is necessary even for salvation, and with still greater reason is required for perfection. In other words, a Christian who is faithful to his daily obligations should expect that in most difficult circumstances the Lord will give him help proportionate to the greatness of the duty. We read in the Gospel: "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in that which is greater." "Fear ye not them that kill the body and are not able to kill the soul" "Be not solicitous how or what you shall answer, or what you shall say. For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what you must say." "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." We must also love our enemies and come to their help if they are in grave need.

Moreover, St. Thomas teaches that the gifts of the Holy Ghost are necessary to salvation in order to prepare us to receive the special inspiration of the Holy Ghost with promptness and docility, especially when the acquired virtues and even the infused virtues do not suffice: that is, in the most difficult circumstances.

Since, according to these principles, every Christian must endure martyrdom rather than deny his faith or call it into question, what bout the priest who has charge of souls? Even at the peril of his life he must bring the sacraments to those of the faithful entrusted to him when they are in grave necessity: for example, he must go and hear the confession of persons suffering from a contagious disease. With even greater reason, a bishop is obliged, in certain circumstances, to give his life for his flock.

Nevertheless, to have heroism of the virtues in praeparatione animi, in the sense that we have just explained, does not mean that the soul possesses the virtues in the heroic degree. To prove heroic virtue, as Benedict XIV explains, four conditions are necessary: (1) the matter, object of the virtue, must be difficult, above the common strength of man; (2) the acts must be accomplished promptly, easily; (3) they must be accomplished joyously, with the joy of offering a sacrifice to the Lord; (4) they must be performed rather frequently, when the occasion presents itself.

Does Christian perfection require the heroic degree of the virtues? In the following chapter we shall see that St. John of the Cross teaches that

Christian perfection requires the passive purifications of the senses and of the soul, which do away with the defects of beginners and those of proficients. Now, in these purifications or interior trials, the soul must often heroically resist temptations against chastity and patience, then against faith, hope, and charity. From this point of view, it seems evident, therefore, that Christian perfection requires a ‘certain heroism of the virtues which can and ought, as time goes on, to continue to grow. This seems to be the opinion of St. Thomas, when he describes the perfecting virtues and the perfect virtues; both are lofty and are not inferior to what Benedict XIV calls heroic virtues.

Lastly, it is certain that Christian charity, which is ordained to our configuration with the Savior crucified for us, ought for that very reason to tend to the heroic practice of the virtues. This may be deduced from what precedes: namely, since every Christian ought, in fact, to have the virtues in a heroic degree in praeparatione animi and to be ready, with the help of God, to endure even martyrdom rather than to deny his faith, this heroic act is not superior to that to which charity, or the love of God above all else, is ordained. By its very nature, this love prefers God to corporeal life and ought, therefore, to be disposed to the sacrifice of life, which is required in certain circumstances.

That Christian charity ought to tend to the heroic practice of the virtues appears also in the enumeration of the degrees of charity given by St. Bernard and explained by St. John of the Cross. “Amor Dei tacit operari indesinenter et sustinere infatigabiliter.” This appears especially in the interior and exterior trials which the servants of God bear both for their personal purification and, following the example of the Savior, for their work for the salvation of souls.

The objection may be raised that, if this doctrine were true, many more Christians would reach heroism, for that to which charity is essentially ordained ought to be found in the majority. Heroism is rare.

The answer to this objection must be that it is also rare for a person to spend his whole life in the state of grace, without ever sinning mortally, from the moment that he receives baptism; yet sanctifying grace, by its very nature, is ordained to eternal life and therefore to last forever, without ever being destroyed by mortal sin. But we have received this very precious treasure in a fragile vessel, and sensuality or pride may make us lose it. Though the human soul is essentially rational and immortal, and grace

ought to make it live an essentially divine life (which the state of grace normally demands), many souls live only a life of sensibility, only a few live a life of right reason. Likewise, charity, which is in every Christian, as it is the seed of eternal life, tends by its very nature to heroism and, if circumstances so require, to the sacrifice of the present life in order to remain faithful to God. What the love of country requires in certain circumstances, the love of God and of souls requires even more.

As far as great sanctity is concerned, it manifests itself especially by the connection or harmony of even the most dissimilar virtues. One man may be inclined by nature to fortitude, but not to meekness; for another, the inverse is true. Nature is, so to speak, determined ad unum; it needs to be completed by the different virtues under the direction of wisdom and prudence. Great sanctity is thus the eminent union of all the acquired and infused virtues, even of the most dissimilar ones, which God alone can so intimately unite. It is the union of great fortitude and perfect meekness, of ardent love of truth and justice and of great mercy toward souls that have gone astray. This union indicates a very close union with God, for what is divided in the kingdom of nature is united in the kingdom of God, especially in God Himself. Thus sanctity is a beautiful representation of the union of the most varied divine perfections, of infinite justice and infinite mercy in the eminence of the Deity or of the inner life of God. Christian martyrs manifest at one and the same time the greatest fortitude in their torments and the greatest meekness by praying for their executioners. They are truly marked with the image of Jesus crucified.

Chapter 11

Full Christian Perfection and the Passive Purifications

We have seen that Christian perfection consists especially in charity, which, more than any other virtue, unites us to God and to our neighbor in God. We must consider how perfection also requires the acts of the other virtues and of the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost.

ACTS OF THE OTHER VIRTUES REQUIRED FOR PERFECTION

Perfection also necessarily requires the acts of the other virtues which are of precept and which ought to be inspired, vivified, and rendered meritorious by charity. Thus acts of faith, hope, religion, prayer, assistance at Mass, Holy Communion, are of the essence of perfection. Assuredly, Christian perfection requires also essentially the acts of prudence, justice, fortitude, patience, temperance, meekness, and humility, at least the acts of these virtues which are of precept. We shall see that the supreme precept of love demands that we should always grow as in charity.

The effective practice of the three evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience belongs only accidentally to perfection, as a precious but not indispensable instrument. They are very useful means for the more certain and rapid attainment of perfection; but they are not indispensable means. A person may reach sanctity, as Blessed Anna Taigi did, in the married state and while retaining the right of ownership and the free use of the goods of this world. Yet a person must have the spirit of the counsels and not be attached to these earthly goods, but according to the expression of St. Paul, “use this world as if they used it not.” The three evangelical counsels invite us to renounce certain licit things, which, without being contrary to charity, more or less hinder its activity and its full

development. If, therefore, the effective practice of these counsels is not necessary to perfection, one must at least have their spirit of detachment in order to become more and more closely united to God.

From what we have said of the spiritual organism of the virtues and the gifts, we see that the full perfection of Christian life requires all the infused virtues connected with charity and also the acquired moral virtues which give the extrinsic facility of producing supernatural acts by removing the obstacles. It also requires the seven gifts, which, as we have seen, are connected with charity and which consequently grow with it. Hence they are normally in a degree commensurate with that of this virtue.

We should, moreover, remember that normally the charity of the perfect ought to be greater and more intense than that of beginners and proficients, although accidentally a very generous beginner, called to become a great saint, may have a loftier charity than one of the perfect. From the natural point of view, there are in the same way little prodigies. The various ages of the spiritual life must be judged by what constitutes them as a rule, and not by an exceptional case. Normally greater vigor is required for adult age than for childhood; the same is true in the spiritual order.

Thus we see that perfection is a plenitude which implies the exercise of all the virtues and also of the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, which are in all the just. No one can be perfect without having, through the gift of understanding, a certain penetration of the mysteries of faith, and without having the gift of wisdom in a degree proportionate to charity, although this gift is found in some saints under a more clearly contemplative form and in others under a form more directed to action, to the apostolate, and to the works of mercy, as it was in St. Vincent de Paul who always saw in the poor the suffering members of our Lord.

Of this plenitude of the virtues and gifts, charity is the bond, to use the expression of St. Paul, “the bond of perfection.” This ensemble is like a well-bound sheaf that is offered to God. Moreover, we can truly say with St. Thomas that perfection consists especially in charity, and principally in the love of God, although it necessarily demands also the other virtues and the seven gifts. Thus, although the human body is of the essence of man, his essence is constituted especially by the rational soul, which distinguishes man from the animal.

Evidently the state of grace and the charity of beginners do not suffice to constitute perfection, properly so called, but only perfection in the broad

sense, which excludes mortal sin. One must then grow in charity to reach the spiritual age of the perfect. To attain it we need abnegation, a great docility to the Holy Ghost through the exercise of the seven gifts, and the generous acceptance of the crosses or purifications which should destroy egoism and self-love and definitely assure the uncontested primacy of the love of God, of an ever more radiant charity.

THE PURIFICATIONS REQUIRED FOR THE FULL PERFECTION OF CHRISTIAN LIFE

At this point, we must emphasize the purifications required for the full perfection of Christian life and speak of them in a general manner, drawing our inspiration from what St. Paul tells us about them, and then from St. John of the Cross, a doctor of the Church who has most profoundly studied this question of the purifications of the soul. If the Church proposes his teaching to us as that of a master, it is especially that we may gather from this teaching what is of primary importance in it. We shall, moreover, find in it a great light by which to distinguish the three ages of the spiritual life: that of beginners, that of proficients, and that of the perfect.

We should not forget the loftiness of Christian perfection, considered in its normal plenitude or its integrity. St. Paul contemplated it when he wrote to the Philippians: “I count all things to be but loss for the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ, my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but as dung, that I may gain Christ... that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings; being made conformable to His death, if by any means I may attain to the resurrection which is from the dead. Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect; but I follow after, if I may by any means apprehend, wherein I am also apprehended by Christ Jesus.... I do not count myself to have apprehended. But one thing I do: forgetting the things that are behind and stretching forth myself to those that are before, I press towards the mark, to the prize of the supernal vocation of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, be thus minded.... Let us also continue in the same rule.... For many walk, of whom I have told you often,... that they are enemies of the cross of Christ,... who mind earthly things. But our conversation is in heaven.... So stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.”

St. Paul presents here a perfection that is not merely Platonic or Aristotelian, but Christian in the full sense of the word. This perfection St. Paul proposes not only to himself as the apostle of Christ, but to the Philippians to whom he writes, and to all of us, to all who will be nourished by his epistles until the end of the world. Such perfection evidently requires a great purification of the soul and an unusual degree of docility to the Holy Ghost.

It has been said that St. Thomas Aquinas wrote little about the purifications of the soul. Such a statement disregards what he wrote in his commentaries on the Epistles of St. Paul and the Gospel of St. John, when, carried away by the word of God, he rises toward the summits of the spiritual life which the great mystics love to describe. One should read in particular what he wrote on the third chapter of the Epistle to the Philippians, which we have just quoted, about the desire to know Christ intimately and to be admitted to share in His sufferings, at least in order not to lose our crosses, in order to become conformable to Him, and to save souls with Him. One should also read what St. Thomas wrote on these words of Christ that are recorded by St. John: “I am the true vine; and My Father is the husbandman.... Every branch that beareth fruit, He will purge it, that it may bring forth more fruit.” St. Thomas writes on this subject: “In order that the just who bear fruit, may bear still more, God frequently cuts away in them whatever is superfluous. He purifies them by sending them tribulations and permitting temptations in the midst of which they show themselves more generous and stronger. No one is so pure in this life that he no longer needs to be more and more purified.” These are the passive purifications of which St. John of the Cross spoke at great length.

We are concerned here with what is required to attain the summit of the normal development of charity. When we use the term “summit,” we must not forget the word “normal”; and inversely, when we use the word “normal,” we should not forget the word “summit.” Frequently the term “normal” is applied to the state at which Christians as a rule actually arrive, and not sufficient attention is given to inquiring to what state they ought truly to reach if they were entirely faithful. Because the generality of Christian souls do not here on earth actually reach the stage of living in an almost continual union with God, we should not declare that this union is beyond the summit of the normal development of charity. We should not confound what ought to be or should be with what actually is: otherwise we

would be led to declare that true virtue is not possible on earth, for, as a matter of fact, the majority of men pursue a useful or delectable good, such as money and earthly satisfactions, rather than virtuous good, the object of virtue.

In a society which is declining and returning to paganism, a number take as their rule of conduct, not duty, the obligatory good, which would demand too great effort in an environment where everything leads one to descend, but the lesser evil. They follow the current according to the law of the least effort. Not only do they tolerate this lesser evil, but they do it, and frequently they support it with their recommendations in order to keep their positions. They claim that they thus avoid a greater evil which others would do in their place if, ceasing to please, they should lose their situation or their command. And so saying, instead of helping others to reascend they assist them in descending, trying only to moderate the fall. How many statesmen and politicians have come to this pass! A somewhat similar condition exists in the spiritual life.

At this point we are seeking to learn what should be the full normal development of charity, and not the level which this virtue as a general rule actually reaches in good Christians. To achieve our end, we must remember that the fundamental law of the normal development of charity is quite different from that of our fallen nature. While our nature, in so far as it remains wounded even after baptism, inclines us to weaken and to descend, grace, which regenerates us progressively, ever leads us to ascend and should finally "spring forth into eternal life" according to the words of Christ.

There is in our lives a light and shade that is at times striking. St. Paul often speaks of it when he opposes the flesh to the spirit, the light of God to the shades of death which would like to recapture us: "Walk in the spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. For the flesh (which here stands for wounded nature) lusteth against the spirit: and the spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary one to another." "Spirit" in this case means the spirit of the new man enlightened and fortified by the Holy Ghost. Even in the baptized, concupiscence and many tendencies to sensuality, to vanity, and to pride remain. The love of God, which is in us, is still far from being victorious over all egoism, all self-love. A profound purification is then necessary; not only that which we must impose on ourselves, and which is called mortification, but that which God imposes when, according to

Christ's expression, He wishes to prune, to trim the branches of the vine, that they may bring forth more fruit.

St. John of the Cross has shown this admirably. At the beginning of the prologue of The Ascent of Mount Carmel he writes: "The dark night, through which the soul passes on its way to the divine light of the perfect union of the love of God, so far as it is possible in this life, requires for its explanation greater experience and light of knowledge than I possess. For so great are the trials, and so profound the darkness, spiritual as well as corporal, through which souls must pass if they will attain to perfection, that no human learning can explain them, nor experience describe them. He only who has passed through them can know them." The branch which God trims or prunes is not only a living but a conscious branch. To know the nature of this pruning, which is similar to that of a tree, one must have experienced it. Each one must carry his cross, and only after having borne it with love does he know clearly what the cross is.

Not without suffering indeed, is complete victory obtained over egoism, sensuality, laziness, impatience, jealousy, envy, injustice in judgment, self-love, foolish pretensions, and also self-seeking in piety, the immoderate desire of consolations, intellectual and spiritual pride, all that is opposed to the spirit of faith and to confidence in God, that a man may succeed in loving the Lord perfectly, with his whole heart, with his whole soul, with all his strength, and with all his mind, and his neighbor (enemies included) as himself. Great firmness, patience, and longanimity are also needed to persevere in charity, whatever may happen, when the words of the Apostle are verified: "And all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."

We should not, therefore, be surprised that, when St. John of the Cross describes the road which leads most surely and most rapidly to the full perfection of Christian life, he declares that a soul could not reach it without undergoing the passive purification of the senses, which, in his opinion, marks the entrance into the illuminative way, and the passive purification of the spirit, which is at the threshold of the unitive way (if one understands the unitive way not in a diminished form, but according to its full normal development in the servants of God whom the Church proposes as models).

To show that the active purification which we impose on our selves does not suffice, St. John writes: "For, after all the efforts of the soul, it cannot by any exertion of its own actively purify itself so as to be in the slightest

degree fit for the divine union of perfection in the love of God, if God Himself does not take it into His own hands, and purify it in the fire, dark to the soul, in the way I am going to explain." This statement shows clearly the necessity of the cross, which is affirmed by the Gospel and by all Christian spirituality. We use here, and do so throughout this work, deliberately simple but entirely traditional terms, in order to avoid all exaggeration.

The same master says: "Souls begin to enter the dark (passive) night when God is drawing them out of the state of beginners, which is that of those who meditate on the spiritual road, and is leading them into that of proficients, the state of contemplatives, that, having passed through it, they may arrive at the state of the perfect, which is that of the divine union with God."

First of all, the soul is weaned from sensible consolations, which are useful for a time but become an obstacle when sought for themselves. Whence the necessity of the passive purification of the senses, which places the soul in sensible aridity and leads it to a spiritual life that is much more freed from the senses, the imagination, and reasoning. At this point the soul receives, through the gifts of the Holy Ghost, an intuitive knowledge which, despite a painful obscurity, initiates the soul profoundly into the things of God. At times this knowledge makes us penetrate them more deeply in an instant than would meditation over a period of months and years. To resist temptations against chastity or patience -temptations which present themselves rather frequently in this night of the senses there are required at times heroic acts of chastity and patience, which are, however, extremely fruitful.

In the night of the senses there is a striking light and shade. The sensible appetites are cast into obscurity and dryness by the disappearance of sensible graces on which the soul dwelt with an egoistical complacency. But in the midst of this obscurity, the higher faculties begin to be illumined by the light of life, which goes beyond reasoned meditation and leads to a loving and prolonged gaze upon God during prayer.

After treating of this purification, St. John of the Cross says: "The soul began to set out on the way of the spirit, the way of beginners and proficients, which is also called the illuminative way, or the way of infused contemplation." This text is among the most important in all the writings of

St. John of the Cross. Farther on we shall consider it again, and see its meaning and import more clearly.

But even after this purification, that the soul may be freed from the defects of proficients, from the subtle pride which subsists in them, another purification, that of the spirit, is needed. This purification is found in far more advanced souls which ardently desire goodness, but which have too strong a desire that good be done by them or in their way. They must be purified from every human attachment to their judgment, to their excessively personal manner of seeing, willing, acting, from every human attachment to the good works to which they devote themselves. This purification, if well borne in the midst of temptations against the three theological virtues, will increase tenfold their faith, their confidence in God, and their love of God and neighbor.

This purifying trial presents itself under rather varied forms in the purely contemplative life and in that devoted to the apostolate. It differs also according as it is intended to lead the soul even here on earth to lofty perfection, or when it occurs only at the end of life to help souls to undergo, at least partially, their purgatory before death while meriting, while growing in love, instead of undergoing it after death without meriting. The dogma of purgatory thus confirms the necessity of these passive purifications of the senses and of the spirit.

In this trial there is a light and shade superior to that of the night of the senses. The soul seems stripped of the lights and the facility to pray and to act in which it took satisfaction because of a remnant of self-love and pride. But a superior light appears in this night of the spirit; in the midst of temptations against faith and hope, appear little by little in all their relief the formal motives of the three theological virtues. They are like three stars of first magnitude: the first revealing truth, the helpful mercy, and the sovereign goodness of God. The soul comes to love God very purely with its whole heart; it becomes an adorer in spirit and in truth.

We shall, farther on, discuss this matter at greater length. But what we have just said was necessary in order not to diminish the loftiness of the full normal development of Christian life. This summit, attainable here on earth, is, as we have seen, the one Christ Himself described at the beginning of His ministry in the evangelical beatitudes, expressed in the Sermon on the Mount. These beatitudes, especially the last one, go beyond the order of

simple asceticism; they truly belong to the mystical order, like the passive purifications of which we have just spoken.

FULL CHRISTIAN PERFECTION AND CONTEMPLATION

This affirmation of St. John of the Cross, that the full perfection of Christian life requires the passive purifications of the senses and the spirit, is fraught with consequences. From this assertion it follows that the infused contemplation of the mysteries of faith is in the normal way of sanctity, for, as St. John of the Cross shows, it begins with the passive purification of the senses, in the aridity of the sensible faculties. It is commonly said that the roots of knowledge are bitter and its fruits sweet. As much must be said of the roots and fruits of infused contemplation. It would be a gross error to confound this contemplation with consolations, which do not always accompany it.

No one any longer maintains that the infused contemplation of the mysteries of faith is a grace gratis data, like prophecy and the gift of tongues. In the judgment of all, contemplation is attached to the order of sanctifying grace or "the grace of the virtues and gifts," and proceeds from faith illumined by the gifts of understanding and wisdom, from penetrating and savory faith.

Finally, if one cannot merit de condigno the actual efficacious grace of infused contemplation, it does not follow, as a result, that contemplation is not in the normal way of sanctity. Neither can the just man merit the grace of final perseverance (the state of grace at the moment of death, for this state is the very principle of merit); yet the grace of final perseverance is necessary to obtain eternal life. Likewise we cannot merit the efficacious grace which preserves us from mortal sin and keeps us in the state of grace. But these gifts, which the just man cannot merit, may be obtained by humble, trusting, and persevering prayer, for we read in Scripture: "Wherefore I wished, and understanding was given me: and I called upon God, and the spirit of wisdom came upon me."

It is clear from what we have already said that the infused contemplation of the mysteries of faith is morally necessary to full Christian perfection. Since, according to the Vatican Council (Denzinger, 1786), the revelation of the totality of the natural truths of religion is morally necessary that all these truths "may be easily known by all with firm certitude and without

admixture of error," likewise very few Christians would reach perfection without infused contemplation, which proceeds from faith enlightened by the gifts. What is more, they would reach only a diminished perfection, and not the full Christian perfection which Christ spoke of in the Sermon on the Mount while preaching the beatitudes. As St. Augustine and St. Thomas say, the beatitudes are, in fact, the highest acts of the Christian virtues perfected by the gifts. The teaching of St. John of the Cross, which we stated above, thus fully conforms to what is said of the beatitudes in the Gospel, and to the way St. Augustine and St. Thomas understood them.

The author of The Imitation likewise says: "There are found so few contemplative persons because there are few that know how to separate themselves entirely from perishable creatures." Here too, as St. Teresa observes, "Many are called but few are chosen."

Moreover, we must not confuse the question, "Is contemplation in the normal way of sanctity?" with the following: "Can all just souls actually attain to contemplation, no matter what their environment, their training, and direction?" Likewise, one should not confuse the question, "Is habitual grace essentially the germ of eternal life?" with this one: "Are all the baptized, at least the majority of them, saved?" or again with the following question: "Are the majority of those who have persevered for some years saved?"

Even if interior souls have good will, they may possibly not have all the generosity necessary to reach full perfection. The expression "full perfection" designates not only the essence but the integrity of perfection. That one may attain it, good training and direction are very useful, although God supplies these for very generous souls.

It should not be forgotten that the call to intimacy with God, like the call to Christian life, may be either general and remote, or individual and proximate. This last, in its turn, may be either sufficient or efficacious, and efficacious in regard either to the inferior degrees or to the highest degrees of union with God.

Lastly, in the works of authors such as St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross, distinction must be clearly made, as is customary, between what is a general principle or at least a main conclusion, and what is only an answer to an accidental difficulty. Otherwise, one would confuse what ought to be with what actually is ideal perfection, and what is still far from it.

The loftiness of the end to be attained must not be lessened, but should be considered as it was set forth for us by Christ when He preached the beatitudes. As far as the means are concerned, prudence ought to propose them with the moderation that considers the diverse conditions in which souls find themselves, and according as they are among the beginners or the proficients. By so doing, the loftiness of the end to be attained is safeguarded, and also the realism of a truly practical direction. The greatness of the end to be pursued should certainly never be lost sight of.

Chapter 12

Perfection and the Precept of the Love of God

We have seen that Christian perfection consists principally in charity, and that Christ describes it for us in all its loftiness in the eight beatitudes. We must now ask whether Christian perfection thus conceived is only counseled for all Christians, or whether the supreme precept makes it their duty to strive for it. This is equivalent to asking the exact meaning and import of the double precept of the love of God and of neighbor.

IS THE FIRST PRECEPT WITHOUT LIMIT?

Some have thought that for even the perfect observance of the supreme precept of the love of God and of neighbor, a high degree of charity is not necessary. From this point of view the precept would not be directed toward perfection; rather perfection would go beyond the precept and would consist in the accomplishment of certain counsels of charity, which would be superior to the first precept itself. Were this so, the supreme precept would have a limit.

This may seem true if we consider the matter superficially. In stating this problem, St. Thomas carefully notes this likelihood, remarking by way of difficulty or objection: “If, therefore, the perfection of the Christian life consists in observing the commandments, it follows that perfection is necessary for salvation, and that all are bound thereto; and this is evidently false.” St. Thomas answers this objection in a manner that is both simple and profound, by declaring that all are obliged in a general way to tend to perfection, each according to his condition, without being obliged to be already perfect. It is surprising to find that modern theologians, and not the least among them, failing to comprehend the doctrine of the greatest

masters on this fundamental point of spirituality, have turned this objection into their very thesis.

St. Thomas shows plainly that the supreme precept obliges all in a general way to tend toward the perfection of charity, at least according to the common way, although the vows of religious oblige only those who have made them to tend to this perfection according to the special way of their vocation.

The holy doctor offers the following explanation: “It is written (Deut. 6: 5): ‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart,’ and (Lev. 19: 18): ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbor (Vulg., friend) as thyself’; and these are the commandments of which our Lord said (Matt. 22: 40): ‘On these two commandments dependeth the whole law and the prophets.’ Now, the perfection of charity, according to which the Christian life is said to be perfect, consists precisely in loving God with our whole heart, and our neighbor as ourselves. Therefore it seems that perfection consists in the observance of the precepts (and not precisely in the fulfillment of the counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience).

“Perfection is said to consist in a thing in two ways: in one way, primarily and essentially, in another, secondarily and accidentally. Primarily and essentially the perfection of the Christian life consists in charity; primarily in the love of God, and secondarily in the love of our neighbor. This charity is the object of the two chief precepts of the divine law. Now, the love of God and of our neighbor is not commanded according to a measure, so that what is in excess of the measure be a matter of counsel. This is evident from the very form of the commandment, pointing, as it does, to perfection, for instance in the words, ‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart (where is the limit?): since the whole is the same as the perfect, according to the Philosopher (Phys. III, text. 64), and in the words, ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,’ since everyone loves himself most (maxime). The reason for this is that the ‘end of the commandment is charity’ according to the Apostle (cf. I Tim. 1:5). Now, the end does not present itself to the will in a fragmentary manner, but in its totality. In this it differs from the means. Either a person wills the end, or he does not will it; he does not will it by halves, as the Philosopher observes (Polit., 1:6). Thus a physician does not measure the amount of his healing, but how much medicine or diet he shall employ for the purpose of healing. Consequently it is evident that perfection consists essentially in the

observance of the commandments; wherefore Augustine says (De perf. justit., VIII): ‘Why, then, should not this perfection be prescribed to man, although no man has it in this life?.’

“Secondarily and instrumentally, however, perfection consists in the observance of the counsels; in other words, they are only precious instruments to attain it. In fact, all the counsels, like the commandments, are ordained to charity, with one difference, however; the commandments, other than the two great precepts of love, are intended to remove whatever is contrary to charity, whatever might destroy it; while the end of the counsels is to remove whatever hinders or prevents the perfect exercise of charity without, however, being opposed to it, as for example, marriage, the necessity of being occupied with secular affairs, and things of this sort. This is what Augustine teaches (Enchir., chap. 21): ‘Precepts... and counsels... are well observed when one fulfills them in order to love God and one’s neighbor for God in this world and in the next.’”

St. Thomas adds that this is why the abbot Moses says (Conferences of the Fathers, Bk. I, chap. 7): “Fasts, vigils, meditation on Holy Scripture, penury, and the loss of all one’s wealth are not perfection but means to perfection, since not in them does perfection consist, but by them one attains it” more rapidly and more surely. A man can be voluntarily poor for other than a religious motive, through philosophical scorn of wealth, for example; likewise one, can be poor for love of God, as St. Francis was, but this is not indispensable to perfection. Thus a soul may reach sanctity in the married state without the effective practice of the counsels, but on condition that it have the spirit of the counsels, which is the spirit of detachment from worldly goods for love of God.

All this shows that perfection lies principally in the more and more generous fulfillment of the supreme precept, which has ‘no limit. No one can find a limit in the statement in Deuteronomy: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with thy whole strength,” and not by halves. In other words, all Christians to whom this precept is addressed, must, unless they already have the perfection of charity, at least tend toward it, each according to his condition, whether it be in the married state or in the sacerdotal life or in the religious state. For all, it is not only better to tend toward this perfection of charity, it is a duty identical with that of continually advancing toward heaven where the love

of God will reign fully, a love which nothing will any longer be able to destroy or render tepid.

THE LOVE OF GOD DOES NOT CONSIST IN A GOLDEN MEAN

As this heading declares, the doctrine, that the supreme precept has no limit, is greatly confirmed if we consider that the end in question here is not an intermediary end, such as health, but the last end, God Himself, who is infinite good. If a sick person desires health without limitations, with greater reason we should desire the love of God, without limiting our desire to a certain degree. We do not know the degree to which God wishes to lead us and will lead us if we are faithful and generous. St. Thomas says: “Never can we love God as much as He ought to be loved, or believe and hope in Him as much as we should.” In contrast to the moral virtues, the theological virtues do not consist essentially in a happy mean: their object, their formal motive, their essential measure is God Himself, His infinite truth and goodness.

We are far from the aurea mediocritas of which Horace spoke. As an Epicurean, he even seriously reduced the golden mean of the moral virtues. The truly golden mean of these virtues is not only that of selfish calculation, which, without love of virtue, avoids the disadvantages of vices that are opposed to each other; the truly golden mean is already a summit, that of right reason and of virtuous good loved for itself, over and above the useful and the delectable. But this summit has not an infinite elevation; it is the reasonable rule determining the measure of our acts in the use of exterior goods and in our relations with our fellow men. For example, in the presence of certain dangers we must be courageous and even not fear death if our country is in danger; but to expose ourselves to death without a just motive would not be courage but temerity. Moreover, there are some sacrifices that our country cannot rightly require of us. Our country is not God, and consequently cannot demand that we love it above all else, sacrificing to it our Christian faith, the practice of the true religion, and our eternal salvation. Such a course of action would be an excessive love of country.

But, over and above the moral virtues, the theological virtues, which have God immediately as their object and motive, cannot essentially consist in a golden mean. We cannot love God too much, believe too greatly in

Him, hope too much in Him; we can never love Him as much as He should be loved. Thus we see more clearly that the supreme precept has no limit. It asks us all ever to strive here on earth for a purer and stronger love of God.

If hope is the mean between despair and presumption, this is not because the presumptuous man hopes too greatly in God, but because he displaces the motive of hope by hoping for what God could not promise, such as pardon without true repentance. Likewise, credulity does not consist in believing too greatly in God, but in believing what is only human invention or imagination as if it were revealed by Him.

We cannot believe too strongly in God, or hope too greatly in Him, or love Him too much. To forget, as the Epicureans do, that the rational, golden mean is already a summit, and to wish to make the theological virtues consist essentially in a golden mean as the moral virtues do, is characteristic of mediocrity or tepidity, erected into a system under pretext of moderation. Mediocrity is a mean between good and evil and, indeed, nearer evil than good. The reasonable, golden mean is already a summit, that is, moral good; the object of the theological virtues is infinite truth and goodness. This truth has at times been brought into relief by the comparison between the mediocre man and the true Christian.

THE DUTY OF ADVANCING ON THE WAY TO ETERNITY

Finally, another reason why the precept of love has no limit is found in the fact that we are travelers on the way to eternity, and that we advance by growing in the love of God and of our neighbor. Consequently our charity ought always to grow even to the end of our journey. Not only is this a counsel, that is, something better, but an obligation. Moreover, a soul here on earth not desirous of growing in charity would offend God. The road to eternity is not made to be used as a place for rest or sleep, but rather to be traveled. For the traveler who has not yet reached the obligatory end or term of his pilgrimage, progress is commanded and not only counseled, just as a child must grow, according to the law of nature, under pain of becoming a dwarf, a deformed being. Now, when it is a question of advancing toward God, it is not by the movement of our bodies that we advance, but rather spiritually, by the steps of love, as St. Gregory the Great says, by growth in charity which ought to become a purer and stronger love. This is what we

ought especially to ask in prayer; this is the import of the first petitions of the Our Father.

Does it follow that a person who does not yet fulfill the precept perfectly, transgresses it? Not at all; for, as St. Thomas says, “To avoid this transgression, it is enough to fulfill the law of charity to a certain extent as beginners do.

“The perfection of divine love falls entirely (universaliter) within the object of the precept; even the perfection of heaven is not excluded from it, since it is the end toward which one must tend, as Augustine says (De perfectione justitiae, chap. 8; De Spiritu et littera, chap. 36). But a person avoids the transgression of the precept by putting into practice a little love of God.

“Now, the lowest degree of the love of God consists in loving nothing more than God or contrary to God or equal with God, and he who has not this degree of perfection in no wise fulfills the commandment. There is another degree of charity which cannot be realized in this life and which consists in loving God with all our strength, in such a way that our love always tends actually toward Him. This perfection is possible only in heaven, and therefore the fact that a person does not yet possess it, entails no transgression of the commandment. And, in like manner, the fact that a person has not attained the intermediate degrees of perfection, entails no transgression, provided only that he reaches the lowest degree.”

But evidently he who remains in this lowest degree does not fulfill the supreme commandment in all its perfection: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with all thy strength and with all thy mind.”

It would be an error to think that only imperfect charity is of precept, and that only the degrees of this virtue superior to the lowest degree are of counsel. They fall under the precept, if not as something to be realized immediately, at least as that toward which we must tend. Thus, by virtue of the law of his development, a child must grow in order to become a man, otherwise he would not remain a child, but would become a deformed dwarf. The same is true in the spiritual life. The law of growth has serious demands. If the divine seed, placed in us by baptism, does not develop, it runs the risk of dying, of being choked out by weeds, as we read in the parable of the sower. In the spiritual life these abnormal souls are certainly not the true mystics, but the retarded and the lukewarm.

Perfection is an end toward which all must tend, each according to his condition. This capital point of spiritual doctrine, forgotten by some modern theologians, was highlighted in 1923 by Pius XI in his encyclical Studiorum ducem, in which he presents St. Thomas to us as the undisputed master not only of dogmatic and moral theology, but also of ascetical and mystical theology. Pius XI draws particular attention to the doctrine of the Angelic Doctor, namely, that the perfection of charity falls under the supreme precept as the end toward which every Christian must tend according to his condition in life.

That same year Pius XI, in another encyclical, recalled the fact that St. Francis de Sales taught the same doctrine.

Three consequences, which we shall develop farther on, result from this doctrine: (1) In the way of salvation, he who does not advance, goes back. Why is this so? Because it is a law that one must always advance, under penalty of becoming a retarded soul, just as a child who does not develop as he should, becomes abnormal.(2) The progress of charity should indeed be more rapid in proportion as we approach nearer to God, who draws us more strongly. Thus the movement of a falling stone is so much the more rapid as the stone approaches the earth which attracts it.(3) Lastly, since such is the loftiness of the first precept, assuredly actual graces are progressively offered to us proportionate to the end to be attained, for God does not command the impossible. He loves us more than we think. In return, we must give Him our love.

When we have succeeded in loving Him with all our heart, even with an affective love, we must love Him with all our soul, with an effective love, with all our strength, when the hour of trial strikes for us, and finally, with all our mind, progressively freed from the fluctuations of the sensible faculties, that, henceforth spiritualized, we may become truly “adorers in spirit and in truth.”

All this doctrine shows that sanctification must not be too greatly separated from salvation, as is done by those who say: “I shall never become a saint; it is enough for me to be saved.” This statement contains an error of perspective. Progressive sanctification is, in reality, the way of salvation. In heaven there will be only saints, and, in this sense of the word, each of us must strive for sanctity.

Chapter 13

Perfection and the Evangelical Counsels

We have seen that in virtue of the supreme precept all the faithful must tend to the perfection of charity, each according to his condition or state in life. In addition, we have seen that no one can reach Christian perfection without having the spirit of the evangelical counsels, which is the spirit of detachment spoken of by St. Paul when he says that we should use the goods of this world as though not using them: in other words, without fixing our affections on them, without settling ourselves on this earth as if we were going to live here forever. We must not forget that we are all travelers on the road to eternity, and that we must all grow in charity until we reach the end of our journey. This is a general obligation springing from the first precept. Moreover, by reason of a particular vocation, certain souls have a special obligation to tend toward perfection according to a particular kind of life. This is the case with the priest, that he may be the worthy minister of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is also the case with religious who are not priests, because of their vows or promises not only to live according to the spirit of the counsels, but effectively to practice the counsels of poverty, absolute chastity, and obedience. We shall now discuss the effective practice of these three counsels in relation to Christian perfection and to the healing of our moral wounds.

THE THREE EVANGELICAL COUNSELS AND THE WOUNDS OF THE SOUL

Christ said to the rich young man mentioned in St. Matthew's Gospel: "If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven. And come, follow Me." The Evangelist adds: "When the young man had heard this word, he went away sad, for he had great possessions."

The effective practice of the three evangelical counsels is not obligatory nor is it indispensable to reach the perfection toward which we must all tend, but it is a most suitable means more surely and rapidly to reach the end and not run the danger of stopping halfway. We have said that a soul cannot reach perfection without having the spirit of the counsels, or the spirit of detachment. Now, it is difficult truly to have this spirit without the effective practice of this detachment, which seemed too hard to the rich young man. Sanctity can be attained in the married state, as we see from the lives of St. Clotilde, St. Louis, and Blessed Anna Maria Taigi, but it is more difficult and more rare to reach it by this common road. It is not easy to have the spirit of detachment in regard to worldly goods, permitted pleasures, and our own will, if, in reality, we do not effectively detach ourselves from them. The Christian who lives in the world is often exposed to excessive absorption and preoccupation about a situation to be acquired or maintained for himself and his family. He is also in danger of forgetting to some extent that he must advance toward another life, another fatherland, and that to reach it, something is needed quite different from the understanding of worldly affairs: in other words, the help of God, which should be sought through prayer, and the fruit of grace, which is merit. In family life he is also inclined to dwell on affections in which he finds a legitimate satisfaction for his need of loving. He is also led to forget that he must above all things love God with his whole heart, with his whole soul, with all his strength, and with his whole mind. Frequently charity is not in him a living flame which rises toward God while vivifying all other affections; instead, it is like a burning coal which slowly dies out under the ashes. This explains the ease with which a number of these Christians sin, scarcely reflecting that their sin is an infidelity to the divine friendship, which should be the most profound sentiment in their hearts.

Lastly, the Christian living in the world is often exposed to doing his own will, side by side, so to speak, with the will of God. After giving a few moments to prayer on Sundays and weekdays, he may organize his life from the simple, natural point of view in accordance with his reason which is more or less deformed by self-love and the prejudices or conventions of his environment. Then faith seems at times reduced to a number of sacred truths that have been memorized, but have not become truths of life. The understanding is then too much preoccupied with earthly interests, sometimes with diversions; should difficulties demanding great moral

energy arise, the spirit of faith is often found wanting. The great truths about the future life, about the helps that come to us from Christ, remain practically inefficacious, like distant truths that have never been assimilated and are lost in the depths of the heavens. Practical faith is lacking then, a faith that would cause the light of the mysteries of salvation to descend into the midst of the difficulties of daily life.

Such are evidently the dangers which the Christian encounters when he does not seek to practice effectively the evangelical counsels in the measure possible to him. If he fails in this matter, he will go astray and fall progressively into three moral maladies radically opposed to the three counsels. St. John speaks of these evils when he says: “For all that is in the world (or according to its spirit) is the concupiscence of the flesh and the concupiscence of the eyes and the pride of life, which is not of the Father, but is of the world.” They are three purulent wounds which ravage souls and bring death to them by turning them away from God.

These three moral wounds appeared in the world after the sin of the first man and our repeated personal sins. To understand their gravity, we should recall the fact that they replace in many souls the triple harmony that existed in the state of original justice. It is this triple harmony that Christ wishes precisely to re-establish by the three evangelical counsels. Originally, on the first day of creation there was perfect harmony between God and the soul, between the soul and the body, between the body of man and exterior goods. Harmony existed between God and the soul, since it is created to know God, to love Him, to serve Him, and by this means to obtain eternal life.

The first man, who was created in “the state of sanctity and original justice,” was a contemplative who conversed familiarly with God, as we read in the first chapters of Genesis. His soul found its principal nourishment in divine things, “a little less than the angels.”. In the light of God, he considered all things, and he obeyed the Lord.

From this superior harmony came that which existed between the soul and the body, which was made to serve the soul. Since the soul was perfectly subordinated to God, it had dominion over its body. The passions or movements of the sensible appetites followed with docility the direction of right reason enlightened by faith and the impelling force of the will vivified by charity.

Finally, there was harmony between the body and exterior goods. The earth produced its fruits spontaneously without the necessity of being worked painfully; the animals were docile, or at least did no harm to man, who had received dominion over them.

Sin disturbed this triple harmony by destroying the highest of the three; it introduced the triple disorder, called by St. John “the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life.”

Man revolted against the law of God; and the human soul, thenceforth inclined to pride, has often repeated: “I will not serve.” The soul has ceased to nourish itself with divine truth, and instead conceives its own narrow, false, ever-changing, little ideas. It wished to make for itself its own truths and principles, and to direct itself alone, limiting as far as possible the authority of God, instead of receiving from Him the salutary direction which alone leads to true life. Refusing to submit to the dominion of God, the soul has lost control over its body and its passions, which were made to obey the reason and will. What is more, the soul has often made itself the slave of the body, of its lower instincts: this is the concupiscence of the flesh. Many people so far forget their divine destiny as to be occupied from morning to night with their bodies, which become their idols. Their passions reign as masters; the soul becomes their slave, for passions that are antithetic, love, jealousy, anger, hatred, follow each other in the soul in spite of it. Instead of directing these passions, the soul is carried away by them as by wild horses which no longer know the bit.

Finally, the body, instead of making use of exterior goods, be comes their slave; it overtaxes itself at times to obtain an abundance of these exterior goods. It surrounds itself with useless luxury, to the detriment of the poor who are hungry. It must have all that glitters and makes a man seem important: this is the concupiscence of the eyes. After accumulating a fortune, many men are wholly absorbed in the care of maintaining and increasing it. Slaves to their business, they never find time to pray, to read a page of the Gospel, to feed their souls. They settle down here on earth as if they were going to stay here always, with hardly any concern for their salvation.

This triple slavery, which replaces the original triple harmony, is order overthrown. Christ came to restore the order that had been destroyed; with this end in view, He gave us the three evangelical counsels.

THE THREE EVANGELICAL COUNSELS AND THE RESTORATION OF ORIGINAL HARMONY

Divine Providence sent our Lord to restore the primitive order. This restoration appeared first in the very person of Jesus, and should continue in the Church, which ought to shine with the splendor of the mark of sanctity. In His humanity Jesus was the model of all the virtues, the eminent exemplar of all sanctity. His humanity was consecrated to God in the first instant of His conception by substantial union with the Word, and thus received an innate, substantial, uncreated sanctity. It is impossible to think of a more intimate, more indissoluble union with God than the personal, hypostatic union of the human nature and the divine nature in the person of the Word made flesh. As a result, the humanity of the Savior is consecrated to God in all its faculties and acts, to such an extent that His intellect is infallible and can see things only in the divine light, to such a degree that His will is absolutely impeccable, and that His most pure sensibility cannot know any disorder. All the acts of the holy soul of Christ are of God, come from God, go to God; nowhere is the sovereign domain of the Most High exercised with so absolute a plenitude.

Because the humanity of Christ is thus radically consecrated to God, it is separated from the spirit of the world and is given to the world to save it and deliver it from its spirit of blindness, concupiscence, and pride. Christ's very elevation separates Him from the spirit of the world, from all that is evil or less good. By this innate elevation, Christ is detached from worldly goods, honors, and mundane affairs; the model of poverty, He had not "whereon to rest His head." By the elevation of His spirit, Christ is also detached from the pleasures of the world, free from the demands of a family, that He may found a universal family, the Church. In this He is the model of religious chastity, which is the condition of His universal, spiritual paternity. Finally, by His supernatural elevation, Christ is detached from all self-will. At the age of twelve He declares that He must be about His Father's business, and He is "obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross."

Because the Savior comes from above, His very elevation separates Him from all that is inferior. It separates Him thus, not that He may be isolated but that He may act on the world from a great height, and that His action may be more universal and more profound. It is like that of the sun when it reaches its zenith. Because Jesus was free from all the bonds which attach

man to his individual goods, to his family, to his petty personal ideas, He could act, not only on the men of one country or one period, but on the entire human race to which He brings eternal life. The Gospel has not grown old; it is of the present time, belonging to the very actuality of God. It is a sign that Jesus was not of the world, but was given to the world to save it.

We see thus in our Lord the restoration of the original harmony, a restoration so splendid indeed that it considerably surpasses the perfection of the first man. There "where sin abounded, grace did more abound." This restoration of the primitive order should continue in the Church, which should shine with the splendor of the mark of sanctity. Christ willed that His Church should be one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. Its sanctity must be striking and manifest, not only at great intervals in certain heroic souls like the martyrs and the great canonized saints, but in a permanent manner in religious institutions and families, where a great number of souls go for training in sanctity, and make profession to imitate Christ, His spirit of detachment from the things of the world and of union with God. Nevertheless, no matter how generous these souls are, there is a great difference between them and our Lord. He came from above, and was separated from the spirit of the world by His very elevation; they come from below, from the region of sin and falsehood. They must gradually detach themselves from it in order to consecrate themselves ever more intimately to God.

To souls which have received this special vocation, Christ proposes not only that they live according to the spirit of the three evangelical counsels, but that they practice them effectively, and He promises them the hundredfold in return. He invites them to a triple separation in view of a triple consecration which will more and more assure in them the growth of the highest virtues: of faith, hope, and charity; in other words, of union with God.

In the use of worldly goods, He counsels restraint that they may not be led into excess. He invites them to practice poverty, to separate themselves from the free use and even from the possession of exterior goods, and to consecrate these goods to God that they may no longer be an obstacle, but a means in the journey towards eternity. He invites them to absolute chastity, that is, to renounce completely the pleasures of the senses, and to consecrate their bodies and hearts to God that these may no longer be an

obstacle, but a means vivified by grace. He invites them, finally, to holy obedience, to free themselves from all self-will, so easily capricious and rebellious, in order that their wills may no longer be an obstacle but a means more and more supernaturalized by charity, with a view to union with God which will daily grow closer and stronger.

The practice of these three virtues and of the corresponding vows is not exempt from difficulties, but it suppresses many others. The bird bears its wings, but still more the wings support the bird. In like manner, the religious virtues and the three vows impose special obligations, it is true; but, above all, they bear souls toward the perfection of charity over a more rapid and a more sure road.

The three virtues of poverty, chastity, and obedience are called religious or holy virtues because they are subordinated to the virtue of religion, which renders to God the worship that is due Him. By reason of its object, the worship due to the Lord, the virtue of religion is the first of the moral virtues; it takes its place immediately after the three theological virtues and infused prudence which directs it. It offers to God the acts of the three religious virtues of poverty, chastity, and obedience. To make certain of not turning back, the religious binds himself by the three corresponding vows, a triple engagement or promise to practice these three virtues, first for a time, then until death, following the example of Christ, who was obedient “unto death, even to the death of the cross.” As the Savior offered Himself, the religious offers himself also in union with Him, giving his entire life as an oblation or sacrifice. Since the religious ought to offer everything,—exterior goods, body, heart, will, personal judgment—this sacrifice, if well made and not revoked as time goes on, truly deserves the title of holocaust. It ought to be lived daily in an ever more intimate manner; then it obtains the hundredfold promised by the Savior, who declared: “Amen, I say to you, there is no man who hath left house or brethren or sisters or father or mother or children or lands for My sake and for the gospel, who shall not receive a hundred times as much, now in this time, houses and brethren and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come, life everlasting.”

We shall see farther on that faith is the soul of holy obedience and that the practice of this virtue makes the spirit of faith grow. We shall likewise see that hope or trust in God is the soul of holy poverty, which obliges us to rely on the help of God, and that charity is the soul of holy chastity, which,

when practiced in all its delicacy, makes the love of God and of souls in God flourish in us.

Chapter 14

The Special Obligation of the Priest and the Religious to Tend to Perfection

Since we have spoken of the general obligation by which every Christian, according to his condition, must tend to perfection in virtue of the supreme precept of the love of God, it seems fitting to treat briefly the special obligation which exists on this point for the religious and for every priest, whether he has made the vows of religion or not. We must show here especially how the virtue of religion ought ever to be increasingly under the influence of the virtue of charity, of a stronger and purer love of God.

THE NATURE OF THIS SPECIAL OBLIGATION FOR RELIGIOUS

This obligation is based on religious profession; the grace of religious profession is not transitory but permanent if the religious is faithful. As St. Thomas says: “Properly speaking, one is said to be in the state of perfection, not through making an act of perfect love, but because he binds himself permanently and with a certain solemnity to what leads to perfection.” “Both these conditions are competent to religious and bishops. For religious bind themselves by vow to refrain from worldly affairs, which they might lawfully use, in order more freely to give themselves to God.... In like manner, bishops bind themselves to things pertaining to perfection, when they take up the pastoral duty, to which it belongs that a shepherd ‘lay down his life for his sheep.’ “

Strictly speaking, the religious thus makes “profession to tend toward perfection.” “Not as though I had already attained,” says St. Paul, “or were already perfect; but I follow after, if I may by any means apprehend, wherein I am also apprehended by Christ Jesus.” As a result, the religious does not commit a sin of hypocrisy because he is not perfect, but he would

commit it if he did not tend more sincerely to perfection. In his case, this special obligation is identified with that of observing his three vows and his rule. But this obligation must always be considered in its relation to the general obligation based on the great precept of the love of God and one's neighbor. When this is done, the religious life keeps all its loftiness and appears not only under its canonical or juridical aspect, but with its great spiritual meaning.

From this point of view, we see the true import of this principle, which must not be understood in a material and mechanical fashion by multiplying the vows without reason: "It is better and more meritorious to do one and the same deed with a vow than without." It does not follow from this statement that vows should always be multiplied in order to have greater merit; but the religious ought to observe his three vows better and better by more profoundly penetrating the three following reasons given by St. Thomas in the section where he explains this principle:

1) The vow is an act of the virtue of religion or of latria which is superior to the virtues of obedience, chastity, and poverty; the acts of these virtues it offers as worship to God.

2) By a perpetual vow, especially if it is solemn, man offers to God not only an isolated act, but the faculty itself. It is better to give the tree with its fruits than to offer the fruits alone.

3) By the vow, the will fixes itself firmly and irrevocably in the good. It is more meritorious to act thus, just as, on the other hand, it is more grave to sin by a will that is obstinate in evil.

When a person lives according to this spirit, he grasps more and more concretely and vividly what theology teaches: namely, that by the three vows, which belong to the very essence of the religious state, the religious, as St. Thomas shows, separates himself from what would hinder his affections from being wholly directed toward God. If he does not take back his offering, he offers himself totally to the Lord as a holocaust. His state is thus a state of separation from the world, especially from the spirit of the world, and a state of consecration to God.

Three things especially may hinder his affection from being completely directed toward God: the concupiscence of the eyes or the desire of exterior things, the concupiscence of the flesh, and the pride of life, the love of independence. These he renounces by his three vows; then he offers to God exterior goods through poverty, his body and his heart through religious

chastity, his will through obedience. He has nothing more that he can offer and, if in reality he does not take back what he has given, but practices ever more perfectly, with a greater love of God and of his neighbor, the three virtues corresponding to the three vows, he truly offers to God a perfect sacrifice meriting the name of holocaust. His life is thus, with the Divine Office, the daily accompaniment of the Sacrifice of the Mass. His life is an act of worship, and even an act of latria offered to God, by the virtue of religion. This is true especially if the religious, far from taking back his gift once he has bestowed it, often renews his promises with greater merit than when he made them for the first time. In fact, merit grows in him with charity and the other virtues, and thereby his consecration to God becomes increasingly intimate and complete.

What is the end of this triple renunciation and triple oblation or consecration? St. Thomas answers that it is union with God, which ought daily to become more intimate, and, as it were, the prelude of eternal life. The religious ought to reach it by the imitation of Christ, who is “the way, the truth, and the life.” Christ, as man, was completely separated from the spirit of the world, and as united to God as is possible. By the grace of personal union with the Word, His nature was wholly consecrated, His intellect rendered infallible, His will impeccable; in Him all thoughts, every act of the will, and all the emotions of His sensibility were from God and were directed to God. The sovereign dominion of God has never been as completely exercised as in the sacred humanity of the Savior.

Now, the religious makes profession to follow Him; but, whereas Christ came from above, the religious comes from below, from the region of sin, and he must separate himself progressively from all that is inferior in order to consecrate himself more and more intimately to God. Then will be realized in him the exhortation of St. Paul: “Seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth. For you are dead; and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ shall appear, who is your life, then you also shall appear with Him in glory.” In his commentary on this epistle, St. Thomas says: “Do not taste the things of the world, for you are dead to the world; your life is hidden with Christ. He is hidden as far as we are concerned because He is in the glory of God His Father, and likewise the life which comes to us from Him is hidden, according to these words of Scripture: ‘O how great is the multitude of Thy sweetness, O Lord, which

Thou hast hidden for them that fear Thee, which Thou hast wrought for them that hope in Thee' (Ps. 30:20). 'To him that overcometh, I will give the hidden manna, and will give him... a new name written, which no man knoweth but he that receiveth it'" (Apoc. 2: 17).

This spiritual manna, remotely symbolized by the manna of the desert, is the food of the soul; it is infused contemplation, which proceeds from living faith illumined by the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Thus, says St. Thomas, the active life (or the exercise of the moral virtues) disposes to the contemplative life of union with God, and especially, "virginity is directed to the good of the soul in respect of the contemplative life." As a result, every religious life tends to the more and more perfect fulfillment of the precept of divine love and to very close union with God.

Therefore it is advisable always to consider the special obligation of the religious to tend to perfection in its relation to the general obligation which is based on the supreme precept of love. The latter rises far above the three evangelical counsels, since they are only means or instruments to reach more rapidly and surely the perfection of charity or close union with God, which radiates on one's neighbor in a way that is increasingly fruitful.

Thus, under the inspiration of the three theological virtues, the three religious virtues find full exercise. A very close bond is established between them; so truly, it has been said, that the hope of eternal beatitude is as the soul of holy poverty, which abandons earthly goods for those of eternity. Charity is the soul of religious chastity, which renounces an inferior love for a much higher one. Faith is the soul of obedience, which fulfills the orders of superiors as if they were revealed by God Himself. Thus the religious life leads truly to contemplation and to close union with God.

THE SPECIAL OBLIGATION OF THE PRIEST TO TEND TO PERFECTION

Since a religious (even a simple lay brother or a sister) has a special obligation to tend to perfection, with even greater reason the same obligation holds for a priest, even though he is not a religious. True, the priest who lives in the midst of the world is not, properly speaking, in the "state of perfection"; if he became a religious, he would have an additional merit, that of the vows of poverty and obedience. Nevertheless he ought to tend to perfection, properly so called, by reason of his ordination and of his holy functions, which demand a greater interior sanctity than that required

by the religious state in a lay brother or a sister. This special obligation is not distinct from that of accomplishing holily and worthily the various duties of the priestly life. In virtue of the supreme precept, they must even be fulfilled more and more perfectly with the progress of charity, which ought to grow until death.

The basis of this obligation is ordination to the priesthood and the lofty character of the acts for which it is conferred. This ordination requires, not only the state of grace and special aptitudes, but an initial perfection (bonitas vitae) superior to that required for entering religion. The priest, in fact, ought to enlighten others, and it would be fitting that he himself should be in the illuminative way, as it would be fitting that the bishop should be in the unitive way of the perfect.

In addition, the effects of ordination are the sacerdotal character, an indelible participation in the priesthood of Christ, and sacramental grace, which makes possible the fulfillment of the priestly functions in a holy manner, as should be the case in a worthy minister of Christ. This sacramental grace is like a modality which is added to sanctifying grace, and which gives the right to receive actual helps for the holy, and indeed for the increasingly holy, accomplishment of the acts of the priestly life. This grace is like a feature of the spiritual countenance of the priest, who ought to become a minister ever more conscious of the greatness and the holy exigencies of his priesthood.

Priestly ordination is certainly superior to religious profession, and the special obligation of tending to perfection which it establishes is surely not less. This is why during the ceremony of ordination the bishop tells the candidate for the priesthood that he must henceforth “study to live in a holy and religious manner, and to please God in all things.” If even everyone of the faithful, each according to his condition, must by reason of the supreme precept of the love of God, tend to the perfection of charity, with even greater reason is this true of the priest. We read in St. Matthew: “For he that hath, to him shall be given, and he shall abound.”

Speaking on this subject to the minister of God, the author of The Imitation of Christ says: “Thou art made a priest and art consecrated to celebrate. See now that faithfully and devoutly, in due time, thou offer up sacrifice to God, and that thou show thyself blameless. Thou hast not lightened thy burden, but art now bound by a stricter bond of discipline and obliged to greater perfection of sanctity. A priest ought to be adorned with

all virtues and set the example of a good life to others. His conversation should not be with the popular and common ways of man, but with the angels in heaven, or with perfect men upon earth."

In relation to Christ present in the Eucharist and to His mystical body, the priestly functions show better than even ordination does, this special obligation to tend to perfection. When the priest celebrates the holy Sacrifice of the Mass, he is like the figure of Him in whose name he speaks, the figure of Christ who offered Himself for us. The priest should be a minister conscious of the greatness of his functions, and he ought to strive for an ever closer union in heart and soul with the principal Priest who is at the same time the sacred Victim, sacerdos et hostia. To mount the altar steps without the firm will to grow in charity would be hypocrisy, or at least an indirectly culpable negligence. Daily the minister of Christ ought to say with greater sanctity: "Hoc est enim corpus meum.... Hic est calix sanguinis mei." His Communion should be substantially more fervent each day by reason of a greater promptness of the will in the service of God, since the sacrament of the Eucharist ought not only to preserve but to increase charity in us.

Consequently St. Thomas says: "By holy orders a man is appointed to the most august ministry of serving Christ Himself in the sacrament of the altar. For this requires a greater inward holiness than that which is requisite for the religious state." This is why, as we read in the same article, other things being equal, the priest who places an act contrary to holiness sins more grievously than a religious who is not a priest.

The sanctity becoming to the minister of God at the altar is thus described in The Imitation of Christ: "The priest, clad in sacred vestments, is Christ's vicegerent that he may suppliantly and humbly pray to God for himself and all the people. He has before and behind him the sign of the cross of our Lord, that he may ever remember the passion of Christ.... Behind him he is marked with the cross, that he may learn to suffer meekly for God's sake all the evil that men may do him. He wears the cross before him that he may bewail his own sins; and on his back, that through compassion he may lament the sins of others, and know that he is placed as mediator between God and the sinner.... When a priest celebrates, he honors God, he edifies the Church, he helps the living, he obtains rest for the departed, and makes himself partaker of all good things."

Likewise he should say the Divine Office with dignity, attention, and true piety. This great prayer of the Church is like the accompaniment of the Sacrifice of the Mass; it precedes it as a prelude, and it follows it. The Office is the canticle of the spouse of Christ from dawn until dark, and it is a great honor to take part in it. During its recitation the great intentions of the Church (for example, the pacification of the world through the extension of the kingdom of Christ) should be kept in mind.

Lastly, the priest has a special obligation to tend to perfection that he may accomplish his functions well in relation to the mystical body of Christ. For the sanctification of souls, he shares in the office which belongs first of all to the bishop, whose cooperator he should be. Thus the Council of Trent says: “Nothing leads the faithful more surely to true piety than the good example of the priest. The eyes of men rest on him as on a mirror of perfection to be imitated. So he ought to order his life, his manners, his exterior, his gestures, and his words in such a way that he may always preserve the gravity, moderation, and piety that he should have.” The priest who lives in the midst of the world is not obliged to make the vow of poverty, but he ought to be free from attachment to worldly things, willingly bestowing them upon the poor. He ought also to obey his bishop and to be the servant of the faithful in spite of difficulties and sometimes even of calumnies.

The need of this perfection appears especially for the work of preaching, of hearing confessions, and in the direction of souls. That preaching may be living and fruitful, the priest must speak from the abundance of his heart. St. Thomas even says that preaching should “proceed from the fullness of contemplation,” from the living, penetrating, delightful faith in the mystery of Christ, in the infinite value of the Mass, in the value of sanctifying grace and of eternal life. The priest should preach like a savior of souls, and he should work incessantly for the salvation not only of a few, but of many souls. He should not have received the priesthood in vain.

Likewise for the ministry of confession and direction, the priest must have a burning and luminous soul, a “hunger and thirst for the justice of God”; otherwise his ministry may become a danger to him; instead of saving souls, he himself may fall. If life does not ascend, it descends; and that it may not descend, it must rise like a flame. Especially in the spiritual life, he who does not advance, falls back. Finally, souls of whom the Lord is asking much, at times have recourse to the priest, and they should be able to

find in him real help that they may walk truly in the way of sanctity. They should never have to go away without having, so to speak, received something.

We have been particularly impressed with what has been said on this subject by a friend of the Cure of Ars, the venerable Father Chevrier, a priest of Lyons, who accomplished immense good in that city. He used to tell the priests whom he trained that they should always keep the crib, Calvary, and the tabernacle before their eyes. The crib, he would say, should remind them of poverty; a priest should be poor in his dwelling, his clothing, and his food. He should be humble of spirit and of heart in his relations with God and man. The greater his poverty in this regard, the more he glorifies God and is useful to his neighbor. The priest is a man who is despoiled.

Calvary should remind him of the necessity of immolation; he ought to die, to his body, to his own mind, his will, his reputation, his family, and the world. He ought to immolate himself by silence, prayer, work, penance, suffering, and death. The more a priest dies to himself, the more life he possesses and gives to others. The true priest is a crucified man.

The tabernacle should remind him of the charity he ought to have. He ought to give his body, mind, time, goods, health, and life. He should give others life by his faith, doctrine, words, prayer, powers, and example. The priest should be like good bread; he is a man who is consumed.

This was the teaching of Father Chevrier, who opened a catechism class in Lyons for the most abandoned children. To gain admission it sufficed “to possess nothing, to know nothing, to be worth nothing.” His supernatural life was such that he made true Christians and often great Christians of many of these children. With a minimum of material resources, he thus reaped a truly exceptional supernatural harvest.

Such is the ideal of the priesthood which every priest ought to keep before his eyes, at the same time recalling what St. Paul says: “But I most gladly will spend and be spent myself for your souls; although loving you more, I be loved less.” He would do well also to recall the words of Christ: “I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you do also.”

“It is necessary that he who will be raised up to teach and instruct the people in virtue, should be holy in all things, and in no way reprehensible. He who convinces another of sin, should himself be free from sin. First of all, he who seeks to admonish others to live well ought to correct himself; so that in all things he himself may furnish an example of living and incite all to good work by teaching and work. For him a knowledge of Scripture also is necessary; for if the life of a bishop is so holy, to him alone, thus living, it is profitable. Besides, if he shall be learned in doctrine and speech, he can also instruct others and teach his people, and repulse adversaries who, unless they can be refuted and convicted, may easily pervert the hearts of the simple.

“His speech should be pure, simple, open, full of gravity and honesty, sweetness and grace, treating of the mystery of the law, of the doctrine of faith, of the virtue of continency, of the discipline of justice; admonishing by various exhortations each and every one according to the profession and quality of established customs... whose special office it is to read Scripture, to peruse the canons, to imitate the examples of the saints, to practice vigils, fastings, and prayers; to have peace with his brethren, not to tear to pieces any of those committed to his care; to damn no one unless he be proved guilty, to excommunicate no one unless he has been tried. He ought to be outstanding alike in humility and authority, so that he may not cause the vices of his subjects to grow through excessive humility. Nor should he exercise the power of severity without moderation, but should be so much the more cautious toward those committed to his care, as he fears to be more severely examined by Christ.

“He will also have charity which is supereminent among all gifts, without which all virtue is nothing. Charity is, indeed, the guardian of chastity. Humility, moreover, is the place where it is kept. He will likewise have, among all these things, eminent chastity: thus, as his mind is given to Christ, he should be spotless and free from carnal impurity. Among these things, it behoves him to take care of the poor with careful distribution, to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, receive pilgrims, redeem captives, protect widows and orphans, show prudent care in all things, provide with careful discretion. Hospitality should likewise be outstanding in him, that he may receive all with benignity and charity. If, indeed, all the faithful would like to hear those words of the Gospel: ‘I was a stranger, and you took me in,’

how much more, should the bishop, who ought to be the receiver of all diverse peoples?”

This page shows clearly what should be understood by the commonly accepted expression, that bishops are in the state of perfection (in statu perfectionis exercendae) to be exercised. Hence it is fitting, as has so often been said, that they should be in the unitive way.

The religious state is one in which man tends to perfection, status perfectionis acquirendae. To form a proper idea of it, one should read and meditate on the admirable pages in the Rule of St. Benedict on religious perfection and union with God, which ought daily to become more intimate in a life consecrated to the Lord. It would be profitable to study also what is said from the same comprehensive point of view about religious perfection by Blessed Humbert of the Romans, in his Expositio Regulae B. Augustini et super Constitutiones Fratrum Praedicatorum. This work is a golden book for the formation of religious and for their preparation for the different offices to which obedience may assign them.

Chapter 15

The Three Ages of the Spiritual life According to the Fathers and the Great Spiritual Writers

We have discussed what constitutes Christian perfection and the obligation to tend to it, either by the common way or by the special way of the effective practice of the three evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience. We must now consider the distinction between the three ages of the spiritual life, commonly called the age of beginners, that of proficients, and that of the perfect, or in other terms, the purgative, illuminative, and unitive ways.

We shall see, first of all, how the problem of the three ages of the spiritual life is stated, and then the answer found in the testimony of the fathers and in that of the doctors who followed them.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

One of the greatest problems of spirituality is in what sense we must understand the traditional division of the "three ways, the purgative, illuminative, and unitive," according to the terminology used by Dionysius, or the states of "beginners, proficients, and the perfect," according to an earlier terminology preserved by St. Thomas.

As we have already indicated in chapter one (sections 5, 6, and 7), two notably different interpretations of this traditional division have been given, according as the infused contemplation of the mysteries of faith and the union with God which results from it are considered as belonging to the normal way of sanctity, or as not only extrinsically but intrinsically extraordinary favors.

This divergence of interpretation appears if one compares the division of ascetical-mystical theology generally followed until the second half of the

eighteenth century with that given by several authors who have written since that period. We noted that this divergence is evident if a comparison is made, for example, between the treatise of Vallgornera, O.P. Mystica theologia divi Thomae (1662), and the two works of Scaramelli, S.J., Direttorio ascetico (1751) and Direttorio mistico. Vallgornera, closely following the Carmelite, Philip of the Blessed Trinity, connects the latter's division with that of earlier authors and with certain characteristic texts from the works of St. John of the Cross on the period when the passive purifications of the senses and of the spirit generally appear.

The following division made by Vallgornera shows what these authors considered the characteristics of the three ages of the spiritual life:

1) The purgative way or stage, proper to beginners, in which it is a question of the active purification of the external and internal senses, of the passions, of the intellect, and of the will, by mortification, meditation, prayer; and finally, it is a question of the passive purification of the senses, in which infused contemplation begins and by means of which the soul is raised to the illuminative way, as St. John of the Cross says.

2) The illuminative way or state, proper to proficients, in which, after a preliminary chapter on the divisions of contemplation, are discussed the gifts of the Holy Ghost and infused contemplation, which proceeds principally from the gifts of understanding and wisdom, and which is declared desirable for all interior souls, as being morally necessary for the full perfection of Christian life. This second part of the work, after several articles relating to extraordinary graces (visions, revelations, interior words), ends with a chapter of nine articles relative to the passive purification of the spirit, which marks the passage to the unitive way. This again is what St. John of the Cross taught.

3) The unitive life or stage, proper to the perfect, in which it is a question of the intimate union of the contemplative soul with God and of its degrees up to the transforming union.

Like Philip of the Blessed Trinity and many others, Vallgornera considers this division traditional, truly conformable to the doctrine of the fathers, to the principles of St. Thomas, and to the teaching of St. John of the Cross and the greatest mystics who have written on the three ages of the spiritual life. It harmonizes fully with these two capital texts from the writings of the

Carmelite doctor: “The passive purification of the senses is common. It takes place in the greater number of beginners.” “The soul began to set out on the way of the spirit, the way of proficients, which is also called the illuminative way or the way of infused contemplation, wherein God Himself teaches and refreshes the soul without meditation or any active efforts.” From this point of view, the infused contemplation of the mysteries of faith is manifestly in the normal way of sanctity. This is not at all surprising, since it proceeds from faith enlightened by the gifts of understanding and of wisdom, which are found in all the just.

However, the division given by Scaramelli and those who followed him is quite different. In his Direttorio ascetico, Scaramelli intends to describe the ordinary way which leads to Christian perfection. In this work he does not discuss, so to speak, the gifts of the Holy Ghost or the contemplation which proceeds from them. In his Direttorio mistico, he treats of infused contemplation as an extraordinary grace, and only at the very end does he speak of the passive purification of the senses (tr. V); whereas, for St. John of the Cross, as we have said, this purification is like a second conversion which marks the entrance into the illuminative way.

The divergence between this new manner of looking at the matter and the preceding one springs manifestly from the fact that the early authors, as opposed to the more recent, maintained that all truly interior souls may humbly ask for and keenly desire the grace of the infused contemplation of the mysteries of faith, of the Incarnation, of the passion of Christ, of the Sacrifice of the Mass, of the Blessed Trinity present in us, and of eternal life, mysteries which are so many manifestations of the infinite goodness of God. They considered this supernatural and confused contemplation morally necessary for close union with God, in which the full perfection of Christian life consists. It is from this point of view that they determined the characteristics of each of the three ages of the spiritual life.

With the above statement in mind, the question may obviously be put in the following terms: Is the idea generally accepted until the second half of the eighteenth century true? Has it a basis in Scripture, in tradition, and in the very principles of theology? We shall examine these different points.

THE TESTIMONY OF SCRIPTURE

We shall cite only some of the more important texts, after the already numerous ones which we adduced above. We have seen in the light of the Gospel, according to the eight beatitudes, how lofty Christian perfection is. We have also seen that it cannot be obtained without the mortification of all that is inordinate in us, without the cross borne with patience, without prayer to the Father hidden in the secret of our hearts, without docility to the inspirations of the Holy Ghost, which should characterize “the true adorers... in spirit and in truth.” Is this not, under a special influence of the Holy Ghost, the loving contemplation of the mysteries of salvation?

St. Paul tells us also what is normally proper to the spiritual age of the perfect when he writes: “Howbeit we speak wisdom among the perfect:... the wisdom of God in a mystery, a wisdom which is hidden, which God ordained before the world, unto our glory.... Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him. But to us God hath revealed them by His Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.” Is this not what the perfect contemplate?

St. Paul writes likewise to the Ephesians: “I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom all paternity in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened by His Spirit with might unto the inward man; that Christ may dwell by faith in your hearts; that, being rooted and founded in charity, you may be able to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth: to know also the charity of Christ, which surpasseth all knowledge, that you may be filled unto all the fulness of God.” Is not this what characterizes the age of the perfect: the infused contemplation of the mystery of Christ and the union with God which results from it? We shall see that the Greek and Latin fathers thus understood these inspired words, which they never tired of repeating.

First of all, let us note, as several writers have observed, that in the spiritual life of the apostles themselves, who were trained directly by Christ, there are three distinct phases which correspond to the three ages of the spiritual life.

The first phase of their interior life, that of beginners, extends from their conversion up to the Passion, when they passed through a profound crisis, during which Peter went so far as to deny his Master. Immediately afterwards he repented. This was his second conversion, which took place

in that true passive purification, the dark night of the Passion. Something similar occurred in the life of the other apostles when, by the grace of the Savior, they again got control of themselves after having abandoned Him.

The second phase of their interior life, that of proficients, extends from the Passion to Pentecost. They were still fearful; their faith still needed to be enlightened, their hope to be strengthened, their charity to be endowed with the necessary zeal. This phase was completed by the great privation of the sensible presence of Christ after His ascension into heaven. They had to continue their way in naked faith, with the prospect of the persecutions which had been announced to them.

The third phase began with Pentecost, which was for them like a third conversion, a true passive purification of the spirit and a spiritual transformation which introduced them into the perfect life. This purification greatly enlightened their souls, and greatly strengthened their wills to preach everywhere Christ crucified. This third phase of their interior life was marked by an increasingly closer union with God and deeper self-oblation, even to martyrdom.

Farther on, we shall return to the subject of these three phases of the interior life of the apostles, each phase of which began by a conversion or a transformation of the soul. If a person reflects deeply on this subject before God in prayer, he will find in it a true light on the three ages of the spiritual life. These indications given by Scripture are, moreover, confirmed by what the fathers tell us.

THE TESTIMONY OF TRADITION

In recent years special study has been made of the doctrine ot the Greek and Latin fathers on these three periods in the interior life of every Christian striving for sanctity. We shall recall here what seems most certain in their teaching. We shall consider, first of all, the testimony of the Greek fathers. Among the apostolic fathers, St. Ignatius of Antioch often speaks in his letters of the spiritual and mystical presence of Christ in the Church and in the faithful. He exhorts the faithful by telling them that they are Christophores (Christ-bearers) or Theophores (God-bearers). He says to them: “Let us perform all our actions with the thought that God dwells in us. We shall thus be His temples, and He Himself will be our God, dwelling in us (cf. Eph. 15: 3).” St. Ignatius of Antioch strongly aspires to live more

and more intimately with Christ and to die in order to be definitively united with Him. His letters are filled with that lofty knowledge of Christ, at once living and penetrating, which is nothing else but contemplation and which overflows in a most abundant apostolic activity, the fruit of a great charity. But to reach this very close union with God and the Savior, we must have contempt for self, for all that is inordinate in us, for everything that lessens the divine life in us. In this period of persecution, St. Ignatius desires to be ground by the teeth of beasts in order to become the wheat of Christ, as Christ was ground to become our Eucharistic bread.

In the second century, St. Irenaeus insists on the fact that man ought to allow himself to be formed by God like clay in the potter's hands. Instead of resisting, of shrinking away from the imprint of the divine hand, he should be increasingly docile to the Holy Ghost in prayer and action, and then he will come to judge spiritually of all things and to live only on the love of God.

At the end of the second century, Clement of Alexandria (in his Stromata) describes the spiritual ascent, every phase of which brings the soul closer to the state of the perfect man that St. Paul speaks of to the Ephesians. Clement conceives of these successive states through which interior souls pass as spiritual mansions. These states he characterizes as follows: first of all, the fear of God dominates, then faith and hope, and finally, charity and wisdom. Now, the fear of God is the least elevated of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and wisdom is the highest of all, according to the descending enumeration given by Isaias (II: 2 f.). The gift of wisdom bestows peace, which springs also from charity, the highest of the virtues.

According to Clement of Alexandria, the perfect are tranquilized souls in which charity dominates. According to the expression of St. Paul, they have attained to the state of the "perfect man, unto the measure of the age of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4: 13).28 They have received the mysterious and hidden wisdom which St. Paul preached "among the perfect" (I Cor. 2: 6). Clement calls this wisdom the gnosis. It is a religious contemplation springing from the inspiration of the Holy Ghost in the docile soul and transforming our interior life, making us friends of God.

Origen, like his master Clement of Alexandria, says that the perfect man lives especially by charity, and that ordinarily he receives from the Holy Ghost infused wisdom, intimate knowledge of the divinity of Christ and of the mystery of the Blessed Trinity. Origen, in his commentary on St. John 1:

6, even writes: “No one can grasp the meaning of the Gospel (of St. John, which is consecrated to the divinity of Christ) unless he has rested on the breast of Jesus, and unless he has received from Him, Mary, who becomes his mother also.” According to Origen, the Word reveals Himself to the perfect and trains their souls, as He trained those of the apostles. In the most beautiful pages of his Commentary on St. Matthew 12: 15–20, Origen admirably describes this training of the Twelve by the Savior.

Origen distinguishes three stages: that of beginners, in whom inordinate passions lose their strength; that of proficients, in whom these passions begin to die out under the abundance of the grace of the Holy Ghost; finally, that of the perfect. He recommends docility to the Holy Ghost, through whom we can go to Christ, and through Him rise even to the Father in the contemplation which solitude favors.

Didymus the Blind and the Cappadocian fathers teach the same doctrine. Didymus, whose teaching is marked by the depth of his piety, invites every Christian to close union with Christ, whom he calls the Spouse of holy souls, an expression taken from the parable of the wise and foolish virgins.

St. Basil, who organized monastic life in Cappadocia and Pontus, set forth the principles of this life and their application in his Greater Rules and his Lesser Rules. His spirituality is firm, solid, and serious, and prepares souls for contemplation and union with God. In the preface of his book on the monastic rules, he says: “When the eye of the soul becomes pure and shadowless, it contemplates divine things, thanks to a light from on high, which fills it abundantly without satiating it.... After undergoing painful combats and succeeding in freeing the spirit, in spite of its close union with matter, from the melange of sensible passions, it becomes capable of conversing with God.... He who has reached this state ought no longer to permit the vapors of vile passions to trouble and to cover the gaze of his soul with a thick veil, and thus to make him lose spiritual and divine contemplation.” St. Basil expresses the same idea in his explanation of Psalms 32. and 44, and in his first homily on faith. Progressive purification is the condition of union with God in contemplation.

St. Gregory of Nazianzus likewise says that God is substantial light, which a person can grasp only by himself becoming light, and by purifying his soul in order to rise from fear to wisdom, that is, from the lowest of the gifts of the Holy Ghost to the highest. It will be observed that all these authors use three terms: purification, illumination, union.

St. Gregory of Nyssa, in his De vita Moysis, in which the life of Moses serves only as the outward framework for the development of the spiritual life, shows that we must detach ourselves from creatures and live by Christ in order to be “admitted to the contemplation of the divine nature” and to union with God. This, says the saint, constitutes a victory over the enemy, a victory obtained only by the cross and by the progressive purification of one’s intellect from all that is sensible and material. In his treatise De virginitate, the same father shows that perfection makes the soul the spouse of Christ, a theme which he also develops in his homilies on the Canticle of Canticles.

St. Ephrem, who considered Christian life a spiritual combat, regards contemplation obtained by docility to the Holy Ghost as the privilege of the perfect life. In his treatise De virtute, chapter 10, he says: “When we have conquered our passions, destroyed every inordinate natural affection in ourselves, and emptied our minds of every preoccupation useless to salvation, then the Holy Ghost, finding our souls at rest, and communicating a new power to our intellects, will put light into our hearts, as we light a lamp that has already been provided with wick and oil.... Therefore, above all things, let us prepare our souls for the reception of the divine light, and so render ourselves worthy of the gifts of God.” The way of union with God is through purification and the light which the Holy Ghost gives.

In the fifth century, Diadochus taught this doctrine in his Chapters on Spiritual Perfection,942) and Dionysius the Mystic (the PseudoAreopagite) repeatedly speaks in well-known texts of purification, illumination, and the unitive or perfect way. The unitive way belongs to the mystical order; it is the normal prelude of eternal life. According to Dionysius, purification prepares a lofty knowledge of God, illumination communicates it, and sanctification makes it expand completely in the soul.

Among the Greek fathers of the seventh century, St. Maximus develops this doctrine and distinguishes three degrees of prayer corresponding to the three degrees of charity: “Simple prayer is like bread; it comforts beginners. When a little contemplation is added to prayer, it is like oil with which one refreshes oneself; pure contemplation is like a wine of exquisite flavor which lifts those who drink it out of themselves.” “Contemplation proceeds from an illumination of the Holy Ghost.” “He who is purified is enlightened and merits to penetrate into the innermost sanctuary and there enjoy the

embraces of the Word." St. Maximus also noted clearly the severe trials which contemplatives must under go, the crucible through which they must pass that they may be fully purified and firmly established in the love of God.

In the eighth century, St. John Damascene says also that infused contemplation is generally granted to the perfect: "He who has reached the highest degree of love, going out of himself, so to speak, discovers Him who cannot be seen. Taking his flight above this cloud of the senses which arrests the gaze of the spirit and establishing himself in peace, he fixes his gaze on the Sun of justice and enjoys this spectacle which he can never tire of." "To have attained to the contemplation of the Creator by the generous practice of virtues is a treasure that will not be snatched away."

Therefore, according to the Greek fathers, supernatural contemplation, proceeding from the gift of wisdom, is in the normal way of sanctity. It begins with the age of proficients and ordinarily accompanies the charity of the perfect.

The Latin fathers, in particular St. Augustine and St. Gregory the Great, present the same teaching. In De quantitate animae (chap. 33, nos. 70–76), St. Augustine distinguishes several degrees. He insists on the struggle against sin, the difficult work of purification, followed by the entrance into light for those who are purified and finally by divine union (mansio in luce). Later, in his commentary on the Sermon on the Mount, he describes the ascending progress of the soul toward God, according to the gradation of the gifts of the Holy Ghost. The fear of God is the first degree of the spiritual life; wisdom its summit. Between these two extremes, he distinguishes a double period of purifying preparation for wisdom: a remote preparation, called the active life, which is the active practice of the moral virtues that correspond to the gifts of piety, fortitude, knowledge, and counsel; then a proximate preparation, called the contemplative life, which is the eminent exercise of the theological virtues and of the gifts of understanding and wisdom in souls established in peace and docile to grace. Faith, enlightened by these gifts, is then the principle of contemplation, and ardent charity unites the soul closely to God. Thus the labors of the active life prepare for contemplation, in which the purified soul enjoys the divine light, the pledge of eternal life. This contemplation which proceeds from the gift of wisdom is, in truth, infused contemplation.

In the fifth century, Cassian in his Conferences, or lessons in spirituality, especially in the ninth and tenth, shows that the end of the spiritual life on earth is divine contemplation, which Cassian regards as the perfect exercise of the love of God. The soul prepares for it by prayer in order to obtain the pardon of sins committed, by the practice of the virtues and a lively desire for a greater charity for itself and its neighbor. Then prayer ends by becoming “a prayer all of fire,” which “is formed by the contemplation of God alone and by the ardor of a burning charity.” “Thus the soul begins to taste in an earthen vessel the first fruits of the glory which it hopes for in heaven.”

It is well known that Cassian’s Conferences were over a long period the current book of spiritual reading. St. Thomas read them often, and preserved Cassian’s doctrine in speaking of the gift of wisdom, whose progress accompanies that of charity.

In the sixth century, St. Gregory the Great also admits the division of the three degrees of the spiritual life: the struggle against sin, then the active life or the practice of the virtues, and the contemplative life, which is that of the perfect, and which he declares necessary for apostles or preachers of the word of God and for those who wish to attain perfection. In this teaching, St. Gregory shows himself the disciple of St. Augustine. In his opinion all the works of the Christian life have their full perfection only if souls are illumined by the superior lights of contemplation. It is the end of asceticism, the fruit of a special inspiration of the Holy Ghost, the exercise of the gift of wisdom. Clearly meant is an infused contemplation, for which one prepares especially by humility, purity of heart, and habitual recollection.

St. Gregory also noted the painful passive purifications later described by Hugh of St. Victor, Tauler, and especially St. John of the Cross. St. Gregory insists on the fact that these purifications “dry up all sensual affection in us” and thus prepare us for contemplation and union with God, wherein we find great strength in trial and ardent charity.

St. Bernard preserves all this teaching, and speaks in his Sermon of the humble and burning desire for contemplation. If these desires are ardent, they are, in his opinion, heard and granted; but men of desire are only too rare. St. Bernard often describes the union with God which results from infused contemplation and the alternate succession of the presence and absence of the Word, the Spouse of the soul.

The same doctrine is also found in Hugh of St. Victor, who insists on the passive purifications of the soul, in Richard of St. Victor, in St. Bonaventure, who was fond of the terminology, which Dionysius used habitually, of the purgative, illuminative, and unitive ways.

St. Thomas, as we shall see, preserves the distinction between beginners, proficients, and the perfect. This distinction is clarified by what he says in his Commentary on St. Matthew (chap. 5) about the beatitudes of the flight from sin, of those of the active life, and of those of the contemplative life. In this commentary he describes the ascent of the soul as St. Augustine and St. Gregory did.

THE THREE AGES OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE AND THOSE OF THE CORPOREAL LIFE

St. Thomas compares the three ages of the spiritual life with those of the corporeal life: childhood, adolescence, and maturity. We should note this analogy, and in particular the transition from one period to another.

It is generally admitted that first childhood ceases on the awakening of reason about the seventh year. This period is followed by a sort of second childhood which lasts until the period of adolescence, about the fourteenth year. Adolescence extends from the fourteenth to the twentieth year; then comes maturity, which is divided into the period which precedes full maturity, and that which, from about the thirty-fifth year onward, follows before the decline of old age.

Psychologists point out that mentality changes with the transformations of the organism. The child follows chiefly the imagination and the impulses of the sensible appetites. He does not yet discern, nor does he organize rationally; even when his reason begins to awaken, it remains extremely dependent on his senses. On leaving childhood, about the fourteenth year, at the period of puberty, there is not only an organic, but a psychological, intellectual, and moral transformation. The adolescent is no longer content to follow his imagination; he begins to reflect on the affairs of human life, on the necessity of preparing himself for a certain profession or life-work. This period of transition, called the awkward age, is not without difficulty: then, about the fourteenth year, the adolescent’s moral personality begins to take shape with a sense of honor and of good reputation, or he may become perverted and begin to go wrong, unless he becomes a retarded, unstable, abnormal person.

Here the analogy throws light on the spiritual life. We shall see that the beginner who does not become a proficient, as he should, turns out badly or remains a retarded, tepid soul, and, as it were, a spiritual dwarf. As the fathers, particularly St. Bernard, so often say: “He who does not advance, falls back.” To refuse to become better, is to fall back, whereas to tend persistently toward perfection, is, in a sense, already to possess it.

To continue the analogy, if the crisis of puberty, which is at once both physical and moral, is a difficult period through which to pass, the same is true of another crisis, which may be called that of first liberty, which introduces the adolescent into maturity at about the twentieth year. The young man, who is then fully formed physically, must begin to take his place in the life of society. Some pass through this period badly, abuse the liberty given them, and, like the prodigal son, confound liberty with license. On the other hand, the adult who develops normally and takes the good road concerns himself with matters of individual, family, and social life in a manner superior to that of the adolescent. The adult is engrossed in more general questions. Unless he has received a higher vocation from God, he himself founds a home that he may in his turn become an educator.

Something similar exists in the spiritual life. When the proficient who is, so to speak, in the period of spiritual adolescence, reaches the more advanced age of the perfect, his mentality rises as it becomes spiritual, and it grows more and more supernatural. He sees with increasing clearness not only the things that pertain to individual, family, and social life, but those that have to do with the reign of God or the life of the Church in their relation to eternal life.

We should like particularly to emphasize here the differences which separate the three ages of the spiritual life and to explain how the transition is made from one to the other. As St. Thomas observes: “The divers degrees of charity are distinguished according o the different pursuits (studia) to which man is brought by the increase of charity. For at first it is incumbent on man to occupy himself chiefly with avoiding sin and resisting his concupiscences, which move him in opposition to charity. This concerns beginners, in whom charity has to be fed or fostered lest it be destroyed. In the second place, man’s chief pursuit is to aim at progress in good, and this is the pursuit of the proficient, whose principal aim is to strengthen their charity by adding to it: man’s third pursuit is to aim chiefly at union with

God and enjoyment of Him: this belongs to the perfect who ‘desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ’ (Phil. 1:23).”

These are the three stages of progress toward sanctity; but what is important to add, and has been admirably observed by St. John of the Cross, is the transition from one spiritual age to another, a transition analogous to that in the order of corporeal life. As there is the crisis of puberty between childhood and adolescence, there is a similar crisis between the purgative life of beginners and the illuminative life of proficients. This crisis has been described by several great spiritual writers, notably by Tauler, especially by St. John of the Cross, under the title of the “passive purification of the senses,” by Father Lallemant, S.J., under the name of “second conversion.” As a matter of fact, this crisis recalls the second conversion of Peter during the dark night of the Passion.

At this point, the generous beginner, who runs the risk of standing still in many unconscious defects, in particular of dwelling on sensible consolations in his spiritual exercises, is deprived of these consolations that he may be introduced into a spiritual way that is much more detached from the senses, a way in which he finds in aridity a beginning of contemplation which the Holy Ghost grants him in order to make him advance. This is St. John’s teaching: “The first night, or sensual purgation, wherein the soul is purified or detached, will be of the senses, subjecting them to the spirit.... The night of sense is common, and the lot of many: these are the beginners.” They begin to understand clearly that one must be truly poor in spirit, truly humble, in order to grow in charity. One must renounce all the more or less gross or subtle follies of vanity, pride, and spiritual sensuality. The holy doctor adds: “When the house of sensuality was at rest, that is, when the passions were mortified, concupiscence quenched, the desires subdued and lulled to sleep in the blessed night of the purgation of sense, the soul began to set out on the way of the spirit, the way of proficients, which is also called the illuminative way, or the way of infused contemplation, wherein God Himself teaches and refreshes the soul without meditation or any active efforts that itself may deliberately make (at least quite generally in prayer).... Such... is this night and purgation of the senses.”

The words we have italicized in this text are very significant and reproduce exactly the original Spanish. Following the example of St. Augustine, Cajetan, St. Bernard, St. Bonaventure, St. Thomas, Tauler, and

others, St. John of the Cross, it should be noted, speaks of the illuminative way in the full, strong meaning of the term, and not of an illuminative way that is, so to speak, diminished, such as exists in those who have only partially profited by the passive purification of the senses, as the saint points out.

Finally, farther on when speaking of proficients, St. John of the Cross treats of the imperfections proper to the advanced or proficients. He declares that there is still in them natural rudeness, a distraction and dissipation of mind, presumption, and subtle and secret pride. These defects show the necessity of the passive purification of the spirit in order to enter the perfect unitive way, that of those who, as St. Thomas says: “aim chiefly at union with God and enjoyment of Him... and who ‘desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ.’ “

This trial of the passive purification of the spirit is a crisis analogous to that which occurs in the natural order when the adolescent becomes an adult and makes use of his liberty, sometimes to his cost. At this point in the spiritual order, there is, as it were, a third conversion, or better a transformation of soul which recalls what Pentecost was for the apostles, when, after being deprived of the presence of Christ, who had ascended into heaven, they were enlightened and fortified by the Holy Ghost, who thus prepared them for the severe persecutions they would have to undergo and who made them perfect ministers of the Savior.

St. John of the Cross is assuredly describing spiritual progress as it appears especially among contemplatives, and more particularly in those who are the most generous in striving to reach union with God as directly as possible. He thus shows the superior laws of the life of grace in all their loftiness. But these laws apply also in an attenuated manner in many others who do not reach such a lofty perfection, but who, nevertheless, advance generously without turning back. Attentive reading of the history of the interior life of the servants of God, reveals, in their interior sufferings and their progress, this profound purification of the senses and spirit, so that all their faculties may at length be fully subjected to God present in them in the depths of their souls.

St. John of the Cross, better than anyone else, noted these two crises of the transition from one age to another, and he rightly called them the passive purifications of the senses and the spirit. Manifestly they correspond well to the nature of the human soul (to its two parts, the

sensible and the spiritual). They correspond also to the nature of the divine seed, to sanctifying grace, the germ of eternal life, which ought more and more to vivify our lower and higher faculties and to inspire all our acts until the depths of our souls are purified of all egoism, of all more or less conscious self-love, and in truth belong entirely to God.

Keeping this fact in mind, we can understand that Vallgornera should have followed this lofty idea of the three ages of the spiritual life in dividing his work Theologia mystica divi Thomae. In doing so he concurred, as we said in the beginning of this chapter, with the Carmelites, Philip of the Blessed Trinity, Anthony of the Holy Ghost, and many others. Thus is preserved the tradition of the fathers, of Clement of Alexandria, Cajetan, St. Augustine, Dionysius, St. Bernard, St. Anselm, Hugh, Richard of St. Victor, St. Albert the Great, St. Bonaventure, and St. Thomas, whose doctrine on the gifts of the Holy Ghost thus appears in its full development.

To sum up what we have just said, we shall give a table that coincides approximately with one agreed on by several of the authors we have just named.

In beginners may be noted, with the first degree of charity, the initial virtues or the first degree of meekness, patience, chastity, and humility. Interior and exterior mortification makes them more and more avoid deliberate venial sins, or induces them to rise immediately from mortal sin should they fall into it. Their prayer is vocal, their meditation is discursive and tends to be transformed into simplified affective prayer. In them the gifts of the Holy Ghost begin to appear, but they are still rather latent. From time to time they have special inspirations from the Holy Ghost, but as yet little aptitude to profit by them. Docility to the Holy Ghost remains feeble; the soul is, above all, conscious of its activity and must frequently recognize its indigence.

The soul experiences its poverty in the crisis of sensible aridity of the passive purification of the senses, a painful purification more or less well borne, which marks the transition to the illuminative way, which has not been diminished and is truly worthy of its name.

In proficients, with the second degree of charity, appear the solid virtues which are no longer merely initial virtues; in particular, meekness and patience, a more genuine humility, which leads to benevolence toward one’s neighbor, and the spirit of the three counsels of poverty, chastity, and filial obedience to God recognized as present in the superiors placed over us.

With these solid virtues, the gifts of the Holy Ghost begin to manifest themselves, especially the three less elevated gifts of fear, knowledge, and piety. The soul, more docile now, profits more from interior inspirations and illuminations. If the proficient is truly generous, then infused prayer ordinarily begins by isolated acts of infused contemplation in the course of the acquired prayer of recollection. Then, if the soul is faithful, little by little come the prayers of supernatural recollection and of quiet (arid or consoled), in which may be seen a manifest influence of the gift of piety, which makes us cry: “Abba, Father,” as St. Paul says. Here, truly, the soul’s intimate conversation with itself becomes a conversation with God. Then, if the soul is generous, it sees in itself faults of subtle pride, of lack of benevolence toward its neighbor, sometimes of hardness, of lack of zeal for the salvation of so many souls that are being lost. These defects which did not at first appear to the soul, require a new passive purification, that of the spirit.

In spite of certain, as it were involuntary, imperfections, the perfect have, with the third degree of charity, eminent and even heroic virtues: great meekness, almost unalterable patience, profound humility which does not fear scorn and loves even humiliations, a great spirit of faith which leads the soul to see all things as coming from the hand of God, great confidence in God, magnanimity which causes the soul to tend to great things in spite of obstacles and rebuffs, and perfect abandonment to the will of God. The gifts of understanding and wisdom then manifest themselves more strikingly and frequently. The soul is, as it were, dominated by the Holy Ghost, who inspires it also to a more perfect practice of the virtues.

Ordinarily at this time, there is the infused prayer of union under the more and more marked influence of the gift of wisdom. The center of the soul is finally purified; and the higher and lower faculties are fully subject to God intimately present in the inner sanctuary. In the penumbra of faith, this is eternal life begun, or the normal prelude of beatitude which ought never to end.

Ch15 of "The Three Ages of the Interior Life" - Fr R. Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P.

Beginners (purgative way) Ascetical life	Proficients (illuminative way) Threshold of the mystical life	The Perfect (unitive way) Mystical life	Degrees of Charity
Initial virtues, first degree of charity, temperance, chastity, patience, first degrees of humility.	*Solid virtues*, second degree of charity, obedience, more profound humility; spirit of the counsels.	*Eminent and heroic virtues*, third degree of charity, perfect humility, great spirit of faith, abandonment, almost unalterable patience.	Virtues
Gifts of the Holy Ghost rather latent, inspirations at rare intervals, slight aptitude as yet to profit by them. The soul is especially conscious of its activity.	*The gifts of the Holy Ghost begin to manifest themselves*, especially the three inferior gifts of fear, knowledge, and piety. The soul, more docile now, profits more from inspirations and interior illuminations.	*The higher gifts manifest themselves more notably and frequently*. The soul is, as it were, dominated by the Holy Ghost. Great passivity in His regard, which does not exclude the activity of the virtues.	Gifts
Active purification of the senses and of the spirit, or exterior and interior mortification.	*Passive purification of the senses*, under the influence especially of the gifts of fear and knowledge. Concomitant trials. Entrance into the illuminative way.	*Purification of the spirit* under the influence especially of the gift of understanding. Concomitant trials in which are manifested the gifts of fortitude and of counsel. Entrance into the perfect unitive way.	Purifications
Acquired prayer: vocal prayer, discursive prayer, affective prayer, which becomes more and more simple, called the *prayer* of active recollection.	*Initial infused prayer*, isolated acts of infused contemplation in the course of the acquired prayer of recollection; then, prayers of supernatural recollection and of arid or consoled quiet. The gift of piety.	*Infused prayers* of simple union, of complete union (sometimes ecstatic), of transforming union, under the more and more marked influence of the gift of wisdom. Concomitant favors.	Prayers
First and second mansions	Third and fourth mansions	Fifth, sixth, and seventh mansions	Mansions of St Teresa

This spiritual progress may be expressed by the preceding summary, which should be read from the bottom up in order better to see that the passive purifications of the senses and the spirit are found at the entrance to the illuminative and unitive ways.

Chapter 16

Spiritual Reading of Scripture, of the Works and Lives of the Saints

After discussing the sources of the interior life and the end to be attained, which is Christian perfection, we should consider the exterior helps found in the reading of spiritual works and in spiritual direction.

Among the great means of sanctification offered to all, should be included spiritual reading, especially that of Holy Scripture, of the works of the masters of the interior life, and of the lives of the saints. In this chapter we shall discuss this subject, and point out the dispositions necessary to draw profit from such reading.

HOLY SCRIPTURE AND THE LIFE OF THE SOUL

Error, heresy, and immorality often come from the influence of evil books, but "the reading of Sacred Letters," as St. Ambrose says, "is the life of the soul; Christ Himself declares it when He says: 'The words that I have spoken to you, are spirit and life'" (John 6:64).

It was this reading that prepared St. Augustine to return to God when he heard the words: "Take and read." A passage from St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans gave him the decisive light which tore him away from sin and led him to conversion.

St. Jerome relates in a letter to Eustochium how, at the time when he was beginning to lead the monastic life near Antioch, he was led by a very great grace to the assiduous reading of the Scriptures. The elegance of profane writers still pleased him greatly; by preference he read the works of Cicero, Virgil, and Plautus. Then he received the following grace: during sleep he beheld himself, as it were, transported before the tribunal of God, who asked him severely who he was. "I am a Christian," Jerome replied. "You

lie," said the sovereign Judge. "You are a Ciceronian; for where your treasure is, there is your heart also." And the order was given to scourge him. "Upon awakening," writes St. Jerome, "I felt, indeed, that this had been more than a dream, that it was a reality, since I bore on my shoulders the marks of the stripes I had received. Since that time I have read the Sacred Scriptures with greater ardor than I formerly read profane books." This experience explains St. Jerome's statement to Eustochium in another letter: "Let sleep surprise you only reading; fall asleep only on Sacred Scripture."

From what book Can we better draw life than from Scripture, which has God for its Author? Especially the Gospels, the words of our Savior, the facts of His hidden, His apostolic, and His suffering life should be the living teaching to which the soul must ever turn. Christ knows how to make the loftiest and most divine things accessible to all by the simplicity with which He speaks. His word does not remain abstract and theoretical; it leads directly to true humility, to love of God and neighbor. Each word tells us that He seeks only the glory of Him who sent Him and the good of souls. The Sermon on the Mount in St. Matthew (chaps. 5–7) and the discourse after the Last Supper in St. John (chaps. 14–18) should be read frequently.

If with humility, hope, and love, we read the divine words of Scripture, which are spirit and life, they contain for us a special grace that daily inclines us more to imitate the virtues of Christ, His meekness, patience, and heroic love on the cross. Besides the Holy Eucharist, the true food of the saints is to be found in the Scriptures: the word of God, transmitted by His only Son, the Word made flesh. Hidden under the letter is the living thought of God, which, if we are docile, the gifts of understanding and wisdom will make us penetrate and taste more and more.

After the Gospel, nothing is more nourishing than the divinely inspired commentary on it, the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles. They are the teachings of Christ lived by His first disciples, who were given the task of training us. These teachings are explained and adapted to the needs of the faithful. In the Acts is found the heroic life of the new-born Church, its diffusion in the midst of the greatest difficulties, constituting a lesson in confidence, valor, fidelity, and abandonment. Where, other than in the Epistles, can we find more profound and living pages about the person and work of Christ (Col. I), the splendor of the life of the Church and the

immensity of Christ's love for it (Eph. 1–3), about justification by faith in Christ (Rom. 1–11), about the eternal priesthood of Christ? (Heb.,1–9)

If the ethical part of the Epistles is considered, where can we read more pressing exhortations to charity, to the duties of our state, to perseverance, to heroic patience, to sanctity, and surer rules of conduct for all,—superiors, equals, inferiors—also for the weak, for the guilty, and for false teachers? Where can we find a more vivid exposition of the duties of all Christians in regard to the Church? (I Pet. 4 f.)

Every Christian should know certain parts of the Old Testament, in particular the Psalms, which are still the prayer of the Church in the Divine Office, that prayer of reparative adoration for the contrite and humbled sinner, of ardent supplication and thanksgiving. Interior souls ought to read also the most beautiful pages of the Prophets, which the liturgy of Advent and Lent places before us, and in the Sapiential Books, the exhortations of uncreated Wisdom to the practice of the principal duties toward God and neighbor.

New lights and new strength will be found in the Scriptures, especially in the Gospels, when they are often reread with respect and love. God has put inexhaustible virtue in His word. When a person who has read a great deal and is tired of almost all books, approaches the close of life, he turns again to the Gospel as to the true prelude of the light which enlightens souls in eternal life.

THE SPIRITUAL WORKS OF THE SAINTS

Next to the Scriptures, the reading of the spiritual works of the saints greatly enlightens and warms the soul, because these works, though not composed under infallible inspiration, were written with the lights and the unction of the Holy Ghost. We should not ignore the chief spiritual works of St. Augustine, St. Jerome, Cassian, St. Leo, St. Benedict, St. Gregory the Great, St. Basil, St. John Chrysostom Dionysius, St. Maximus Confessor, St. Anselm, and St. Bernard Very useful also is an acquaintance with what most concerns the interior life in the writings of Richard of St. Victor Hugh of St. Cher St. Albert the Great, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Bonaventure. Profit may always be drawn from the Dialogue of St. Catherine of Siena, the works of Tauler, and those of Blessed Henry Suso, Blessed Angela of

Folign, Blessed John Ruysbroeck, Thomas a Kempis, the probable author of The Imitation.

Among modern spiritual writers, one should read Louis Blosius, O.S.B., the Franciscan, Francisco de Osuna (whose book served as a guide to St. Teresa), St. Ignatius Loyola, St. Teresa, St. John of the Cross, St. Francis de Sales, St. John Eudes.

Finally, one should also read the spiritual writings of Bossuet, those of the Dominicans, Louis of Granada, Chardon, Piny, and Massoulie, those of the Jesuits, L. Dupont, Lallemant, Surin, De Caussade, and Grou, the works of the writers of the French school of the seventeenth century, Berulle, Condren, Bourgoing, St. Vincent de Paul, Olier, Venerable Boudon, those of Blessed Grignion de Montfort, and St. Alphonsus Liguori.

We do not speak of more recent writers, whose principal works are known to all.

THE LIVES OF THE SAINTS

To the reading of books of spiritual doctrine should be joined that of the lives of the saints, which contain alluring examples that are always admirable and often imitable. Their deeds were often performed in most difficult circumstances by men and women with a nature like ours, who at the beginning had their weaknesses and defects, but in whom grace and charity gradually dominated nature by healing it, elevating it, and vivifying it. In them especially, we see the true meaning and import of the principle, that grace does not destroy nature (in so far as it is good), but perfects it. In them, especially at the end of the purgative and illuminative ways, we see what is in the unitive life the true harmony of nature and grace, the normal prelude of eternal beatitude.

In these lives we must seek especially what is imitable, and in what is extraordinary we must see a divine sign given to draw us from our lethargy and make us understand what is most profound and most lofty in an ordinary Christian life when the soul is truly docile to the Holy Ghost. The sufferings of the stigmatics thus recall to us what our Savior’s passion should be for us and how we ought daily to say with more meaning at the end of the Stations of the Cross: “Sancta Mater, istud agas, Crucifixi fige plagas cordi meo valide.” The extraordinary grace which enabled many saints, as St. Catherine of Siena, to drink deeply from the wound of the

heart of Jesus should recall to us what a fervent Communion should be for us, and how each of our Communions should be substantially more fervent than the preceding one in our ascent toward God.

The examples of the saints, their humility, patience, confidence, overflowing charity, are more efficacious in making us practice virtue than abstract doctrine is. “Universals do not move.”

We ought to read especially the lives of the saints written by saints, such as that of St. Francis of Assisi written by St. Bonaventure, that of St. Catherine of Siena by Blessed Raymond of Capua, her director, and the life of St. Teresa by herself.

DISPOSITIONS FOR PROFITABLE SPIRITUAL READING

A prayer well said before we begin to read will obtain for us the actual grace to read Sacred Scripture or spiritual books with a spirit of faith, avoiding all useless curiosity, intellectual vanity, the tendency to criticize what we read rather than to profit by it. The spirit of faith will make us seek God Himself in spiritual works.

We must also, with a sincere and keen desire for perfection, apply to ourselves what we read, instead of being content with a theoretical knowledge of it. Then, even while reading what has to do with “the little virtues,” as St. Francis de Sales calls them, we shall reap great profit, for all the virtues are connected with the highest of all, charity. It is also well for advanced souls to reread occasionally What is suitable for beginners; on second reading they will see this teaching under a superior light and will be astonished at all that is virtually contained in it, as, for example, in the first lines of the little catechism on the reason why we were created and placed in the world: “To know God, to love Him, to serve Him, and thus to obtain eternal life.”

It is also well for beginners to catch a glimpse of the extreme loftiness of Christian perfection, without, however, covering the ground too quickly and trying to go faster than grace. Perfection should at least be partly seen, because the end to be attained, which is last in the order of execution, is first in the order of intention or of desire. One must from the beginning wish to attain sanctity, since we are all called to that sanctity which would permit us to enter heaven immediately after death. No one, in fact, will go to purgatory except for sins which he might have avoided.

If beginners and the advanced have a keen desire to sanctify themselves, they will find what is suitable for them in Holy Scripture and in the spiritual writings of the saints. While reading, they will hear the teaching of the interior Master. That this may be so, they must read slowly and not devour books; they must be penetrated with what they read. Then spiritual reading will be transformed little by little into prayer, into intimate conversation with the interior Guest.

It is also well after a few years to reread the very good books which have already done us much good. Life is short: we should be content to read and read again whatever bears the mark of God, and not to lose our time on things that are lifeless and of no value. St. Thomas Aquinas never wearied of rereading the conferences of Cassian. How many souls have gained greatly by often rereading The Imitation ! To be profoundly penetrated by one such book is far better than to read all spiritual writers superficially.

Moreover, as St. Bernard says, we should read with piety, seeking not only to know divine things, but to taste them. St. Matthew (24: 15) says: “He that readeth, let him understand.” Let us ask God for the light to understand clearly. The disciples of Emmaus did not understand the meaning of the prophecies until Christ opened their minds. This is why St. Bernard says to us: “Let prayer interrupt reading,” then truly this reading will be a spiritual food and will prepare the soul for prayer.

Finally, we must begin without delay to put into practice what we read. At the end of the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 7:24, 26), our Lord declared: “Everyone therefore that heareth these My words, and doth them, shall be likened to a wise man that built his house upon a rock.... And everyone that heareth these My words, and doth them not, shall be like the foolish man that built his house upon the sand.” “For not the hearers of the law,” says St. Paul, “are just before God; but the doers of the law shall be justified.” Then reading bears fruit. In the parable of the sower we are told: “And other some fell upon good ground; and being sprung up, yielded fruit a hundredfold.... But that on the good ground, are they who in a good and perfect heart, hearing the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit in patience.” According to this parable, some spiritual reading may produce thirtyfold, other sixtyfold, and still other a hundredfold. Such was, for example, the reading which Augustine did when he heard the words: “Take and read.” He opened the epistles of St. Paul, which were lying on the table, and read these words (Rom. I 3: 13 f.): “Let us walk honestly, as in the day: not in

rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and impurities, not in contention and envy. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ!' From that moment his heart was changed; he retired for some time into solitude and asked for baptism. This was truly the hundredfold, which since then has nourished thousands of souls.

Chapter 17

Spiritual Direction

Spiritual direction should be numbered among the exterior means of sanctification. We shall discuss its necessity in general and also in the different stages of the spiritual life, and then we shall recall the desired qualities of a director and the duties of the soul that is being directed.

THE NECESSITY OF DIRECTION

Though it is not an absolutely necessary means for the sanctification of, souls, direction is the normal means of spiritual progress. In constituting the Church, Christ willed that the faithful should be sanctified by submission to the pope and the bishops with respect to external jurisdiction, and in matters of conscience to confessors, who point out the means needed in order not to fall back into sin and to make progress in virtue.

Pope Leo XIII, following Cassian and St. Francis de Sales, recalls on this subject the fact that St. Paul himself received a guide from the Lord. When Paul was converted, Jesus did not at once reveal His designs to him, but sent him to Ananias at Damascus to learn what he should do.

St. Basil says: “Employ all diligence and use the greatest circumspection in finding a man who may serve you as a very sure guide in the work of leading a holy life which you wish to undertake. Choose one who knows how to show souls of good will the straight road toward God.” He says elsewhere: “To believe that one does not need counsel is great pride.”

St. Jerome writes to Rusticus: “Do not be your own master and do not set out upon a way that is entirely new for you without a guide; otherwise you will soon go astray.” St. Augustine also says: “As a blind man cannot follow the good road without a leader, no one can walk without a guide.”

No one is a good judge in his own cause by reason of secret pride which may make him deviate from the right path.

In his conferences, Cassian says that anyone who relies on his own judgment will never reach perfection and will not be able to avoid the snares of the devil. He concludes that the best means to triumph over the most dangerous temptations is to make them known to a wise counselor who has the grace of state to enlighten us. In reality, to manifest them to one who has a right to hear them often suffices to make them disappear.

St. Bernard says that novices in the religious life should be lead by a father director who instructs, directs, consoles, and encourages them. In one of his letters he goes so far as to say: “He who constitutes himself his own director, becomes the disciple of a fool” And he adds: “As far as I am concerned, I declare that it is easier and safer for me to command many others than myself alone.” Our self-love leads us less astray, in truth, in conducting others than in dealing with ourselves, and if we knew well how to apply to ourselves what we tell others, we would make far greater progress.

In the fourteenth century, St. Vincent Ferrer expressed the same thought in his De vita spirituali (Part II, chap. I). “Our Lord,” he says, “without whom we can do nothing, will never grant His grace to one who, having at his disposition a man capable of instructing and directing him, neglects this powerful means of sanctification, believing that he is sufficient to himself and that he can by his own powers seek and find the things useful to salvation.... A person having a director whom he obeys completely and unreservedly will reach his goal much more easily and rapidly than he could alone, even with the aid of a very keen intellect and learned books on spiritual matters.... In general, all who have reached perfection, have followed this road of obedience, unless, by a privilege and singular grace, God Himself instructed some souls that had no one to direct them.”

St. Teresa, St. John of the Cross, and St. Francis de Sales teach the same doctrine. St. Francis de Sales says that we cannot judge our own cause impartially by reason of a complacency that is “so secret and imperceptible as not to be discovered even by those who are tainted therewith.” Likewise a person who has been in a closed room for a long time does not notice that the air has become vitiated, whereas one who comes in from outside notices it immediately.

We understand quite well that we need a guide if we intend to climb a mountain. He is not less necessary for climbing to the summit of spiritual perfection, the more so as in this ascent we must avoid the snares laid by Satan, who wishes to prevent us from ascending.

St. Alphonsus, in his excellent book, Praxis confessarii (nos. 121–71), indicates the principal object of direction: mortification, the manner of receiving the sacraments, prayer, the practice of virtues, the sanctification of ordinary actions.

The testimony of all these authorities shows clearly the general need of direction. We shall obtain a clearer idea of this necessity by considering the three stages of the interior life, or the spiritual needs of beginners, of proficients, and of the perfect.

THE DIRECTION OF BEGINNERS

Beginners need wise, firm, and paternal direction for their formation. In religious orders, this direction is the special duty of masters and mistresses of novices.

Later its necessity is felt less, except at difficult periods when some change takes place, or again when an important decision must be made.

Beginners must evidently be forewarned against relapses and also against two contradictory defects. Some, who receive sensible consolations in prayer, confound them with graces of a higher order and presumptuously wish to cover the ground rapidly, and without delay to reach the life of union without passing through the indispensable degrees. They must be reminded of the necessity of humility and be told that progress toward perfection is the work of a lifetime. No one can fly before he has wings, and no one begins the construction of a church with the spires, but with the foundation. If the end to be obtained is first in the order of intention or of desire, it is, in reality, last in achievement, and the most modest means indispensable for reaching it must not be neglected.

Other beginners take a secret pride in austerity, as the Jansenists did, and practice such excessive exterior mortifications that they compromise their health. Then, in their efforts to take care of themselves, they fall into laxity and go from one extreme to the other. They need to learn the measure of Christian discretion and must understand that it is not sufficient to have, over and above a keen sensibility, the three theological virtues, but that it is

necessary also to have between these two domains the moral virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance, so that sensibility may gradually become disciplined and these superficial and passing impulses may not be confounded with the lofty aspirations of living faith, hope, and charity.

Direction is particularly necessary in this period of prolonged aridity, in which meditation becomes difficult, and quite severe temptations against chastity and patience also arise, accompanied at times by contradictions from without. According to St. John of the Cross, this trial marks the passage from the purgative way of beginners to the illuminative way of proficients, but on condition that the three signs, which a good director can discern, are found in it. These three signs, which we shall speak of farther on, are the following:(1) When we find no comfort in the things of God, and also none in created things.(2) When the memory dwells ordinarily on God with a keen desire for perfection and the fear of not serving God.(3) When meditation is not possible and one feels inclined to a simple gaze on God. At the time of this crisis, which should be in the nature of a second conversion, it is well to pay close attention to a good director in order to traverse this difficult period generously and not to become a retarded soul. Farther on we shall discuss this subject at greater length.

THE DIRECTION OF PROFICIENTS AND THE PERFECT

The necessity of a guide for certain periods of the spiritual life of the advanced confirms what we have just said about its necessity for beginners. We may with profit state this confirmation here.

Direction may customarily be given more rapidly to proficients because the proficient has a greater knowledge of the spiritual life and can briefly explain the point on which he needs counsel. The director then becomes the witness of the soul’s life and progress; he should be the instrument of the Holy Ghost in order to make sure that the soul is docile to His inspirations. To do this, the director should seek to know well the action of the interior Master in given souls that he may discern in each, as far as is possible, the good and the bad, the dominant defect to be combated and the special attraction of grace to be followed.

Recourse should be had to the director especially during the annual retreat in order to discuss with him in all frankness what constitutes the

basis of the life of the soul, and to make sure of not falling into the defects of the advanced—hidden pride and presumption—which may become the source of great illusions.

The proficient also experiences periods in which he particularly needs a good guide; especially is this the case when he has to pass through the trials which mark the entrance into the unitive way, and which St. John calls the passive purification of the spirit. This purification appears under various forms that are more or less accentuated. Generally it is a prolonged privation of sensible and also spiritual consolations. During this period strong temptations often arise against faith, hope, and fraternal charity, and even against the love of God. Evidently if a person is to pass through this difficult period, the help of a good director is highly desirable in order not to fall back at this time but rather to make progress. And he who can direct others during such a trial, would not be able to direct himself, for here there is no longer "any road traced out in advance," as St. John of the Cross says; one must follow the inspiration of the Holy Ghost and not confuse it with something that might resemble it. At this time, souls given to prayer have a more special need of an enlightened and experienced director. St. Teresa felt the need of opening her soul completely to learned men, versed in the things of the interior life, to make certain of her docility to the Holy Ghost. The perfect themselves feel the need of this help to discover the harmony between passivity under the divine action and the activity which the Lord asks of them in order faithfully to practice the maxim: "fidelity and abandonment." They feel the need of direction that they may with profound humility keep alive in their hearts the love of the cross.

We have here only touched on the direction of proficients in order to indicate that, if it is necessary for them, with far greater reason is it necessary for beginners.

THE QUALITIES OF THE DIRECTOR AND THE DUTIES OF THE ONE BEING DIRECTED

St. Francis de Sales says on the subject of a director: "He must be a man of charity, learning, and prudence; if anyone of these three qualities be wanting in him, there is danger." St. Teresa expresses the same opinion.

His charity ought to be disinterested and to incline him, not to draw hearts to himself but to lead them to God. On this point, Tauler is exacting and says that certain directors who draw souls to themselves are like

hunting dogs that eat the hare instead of bringing it back to their master. Whereupon the hunter whips them soundly. The director's charitable kindness should not be weakness; it should be firm and fearless in speaking the truth in order to lead souls effectively to goodness. Neither should he lose his time in useless conversations or letters, but go straight to the point for the good of the soul.

In addition, he should have a knowledge of the spiritual life, be penetrated with the teachings of the great masters of the interior life, and be a good psychologist.

That the director may be the instrument of the Holy Ghost, he ought prudently to discern in souls the dominant defect to be avoided and the supernatural attraction to be followed. For this purpose, he must pray for light, especially in difficult cases, and, if he is humble, he will receive the graces of state. He will see that he must stimulate some and moderate the ardor of others, teaching the latter not to confound sentimentality with love, which proves itself by works.

When he directs generous souls, his prudence must avoid two dangers: that of wishing to lead all pious souls indiscriminately and rapidly to give themselves to contemplative prayer, and that of imagining that it is useless to concern oneself with this question. Here a person must advance neither too slowly nor too rapidly, but must examine whether there exist in the soul the three signs which we have pointed out, following the teaching of St. John of the Cross and several other great masters, in order to pass from discursive meditation to contemplation. Before these appear, it is well and sufficient to remind souls that they must be docile to the inspirations of the interior Master, as they are manifestly conformable to their vocation.

The duties of the directed soul spring obviously from what we have just said; the person who is being directed ought to respect his director as the representative of God, and to avoid two extremes opposed to respect for a director: sharp criticisms and excessive familiarity. This respect should be accompanied by a simple yet entirely spiritual filial affection, which excludes petty jealousy and the desire to be specially loved.

The person who is being directed should also have filial confidence in his director and great openness of heart towards him. As St. Francis de Sales so well explains it: "Open your heart to him with all sincerity and fidelity, manifesting clearly and explicitly the state of your conscience without fiction or dissimulation."

Lastly, he must be very docile in following the counsel given; otherwise he would be following his own will rather than that of God. It is not forbidden to explain that there is serious difficulty in putting such or such advice into practice; but after such explanation, he must subordinate his judgment to that of the director. Strictly speaking, the director may be mistaken; but the person under his direction will not be mistaken in obeying him, unless he advises something contrary to faith and morals. In that event a change of director is imperative.

Not without grave reason, however, should anyone change his director or confessor. The change should certainly not be made because of inconstancy, pride, false shame, or curiosity. But this may be done if a person perceives that his director's views are too natural and that his affection is excessively sensible, and that he has not the requisite learning, prudence, and discretion.

Except in these cases, a person should keep as far as possible a certain continuity in direction that there may truly be continuity in it and perseverance on the right road. We should not give up a good guide because he reproves us for our good. It may be well to recall what St. Louis used to say to his son: "Go to confession frequently; choose virtuous and learned confessors who know how to instruct you in what you ought to do or avoid, and give your confessors leave to reprove and admonish you freely." Such a statement gives evidence of good, holy, and strong affection without any admixture of sentimentality, which is an affectation of sentiment.

Under these conditions, the director will be able to be the instrument of the Holy Ghost to control His action in us, and to make us ever more docile to divine inspirations. Thus we will truly advance along the narrow way, which becomes broader and broader as we draw near to the infinite goodness of God to which it leads.

PART 2

The Purification of the Soul in Beginners

We have spoken of the principles of the interior life, that is, of its sources and its end, which is Christian perfection; we must now treat in particular of each of the three ages of the spiritual life, and first of all of the purification of the soul in beginners.

We shall see, in this regard, what characterizes this age of the interior life, and shall speak at some length of the active purification of the sensitive part and of the intellectual part of the soul, of the use of the sacraments, of the prayer of beginners, and lastly of the more or less well-borne passive purification of the senses which marks the transition to the age of proficients, or the entrance into the illuminative way. In this connection, we shall have to speak of the abuse of graces. Beginners who have become retarded and tepid souls, are the ones that do not reach the higher spiritual age. This part of spirituality is very significant from a practical point of view, for many souls remain greatly retarded because they have not put it into practice, whereas those that really profit by it make great progress.

At this stage it is not important to read many books, to have many ideas, but it is important to become penetrated with the fundamental principles set forth in some substantial book and to put them generously into practice without turning back. Our Lord Himself stated this expressly at the end of the Sermon on the Mount: “Everyone therefore that heareth these My words, and doth them, shall be likened to a wise man that built his house upon a rock.... And everyone that heareth these My words, and doth them not, shall be like a foolish man that built his house upon the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew; and they beat upon that house. And it fell, and great was the fall thereof.”

When anyone reads the lives of beatified and canonized servants of God, in particular of several of those who in recent times have been proposed to

us as models, he is impressed with the fact that many did not have great culture and had not read many books, but that they were profoundly penetrated with the Gospel, and had thus received its spirit, and that they practiced it with admirable generosity, at times in a very simple form of life which recalls that of St. Joseph. They thus attained a lofty wisdom, which at times showed forth in the profound realism of their reflections, and in an ardent charity that was most fruitful for the salvation of souls.

Chapter 18

The Spiritual Age of Beginners

We have seen that St. Thomas, when speaking of the three ages of the spiritual life, remarks that “at first it is incumbent on man to occupy himself chiefly with avoiding sin and resisting his concupiscences, which move him in opposition to charity.”

The Christian in the state of grace, who begins to give himself to the service of God and to tend toward the perfection of charity according to the demands of the supreme precept, has a mentality or state of soul which can be described by observing particularly knowledge of self and of God, love of self and of God.

SELF-KNOWLEDGE AND KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

Beginners have an initial knowledge of themselves; little by little they discern the defects they have, the remains of sins that have already been forgiven, and new failings that are more or less deliberate and voluntary. If these beginners are generous, they seek, not to excuse themselves, but to correct themselves, and the Lord shows them their wretchedness and poverty, making them understand, however, that they must consider it only in the light of divine mercy, which exhorts them to advance. They must daily examine their consciences and learn to overcome themselves that they may not follow the unconsidered impulse of their passions.

However, they know themselves as yet only in a superficial way. They have not discovered what a treasure baptism placed in their souls, and they are ignorant of all the self-love and the often unconscious egoism still continuing in them and revealing itself from time to time under a sharp vexation or reproach. Often they have a clearer perception of this self-love in others than in themselves; they ought to remember Christ’s words: “Why

seest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye; and seest not the beam that is in thy own eye?” The beginner bears in himself a diamond embedded in a mass of gross material, and he does not yet know the value of the diamond or all the defects of the other material. God loves him far more than he believes, but with a strong love that has its exigencies and that demands abnegation if the soul is to reach true liberty of spirit.

The beginner rises gradually to a certain knowledge of God which is still very dependent on sensible things. He knows God in the mirror of the natural world or in that of the parables: for example, in those of the prodigal son, of the lost sheep, of the good shepherd. This is the straight movement of elevation toward God, taking its point of departure from a simple, sensible fact. It is not yet the spiral movement rising toward God by the consideration of the various mysteries of salvation, nor is it the circular movement of contemplation that ever returns to the radiating divine goodness, as the eagle likes to look at the sun while describing the same circle several times in the air.

The beginner is not yet familiar with the mysteries of salvation, with those of the redeeming Incarnation, of the life of the Church. He cannot yet feel habitually inclined to see therein the radiation of the divine goodness. However, he sometimes has this view while considering our Savior’s passion, but he does not yet penetrate the depths of the mystery of the redemption. His view of the things of God is still superficial; he has not reached maturity of spirit.

THE LOVE OF GOD IN ITS EARLY STAGES

In this state there is a proportionate love of God. Truly generous beginners love the Lord with a holy fear of sin which makes them flee mortal sin, and even deliberate venial sins, by the mortification of the senses and of the inordinate passions, or of the threefold concupiscence of the flesh, the eyes, and pride. This sign indicates that they have the beginning of a deep, voluntary love.

Nevertheless, a number practically neglect necessary mortification, and resemble a man who would like to begin climbing a mountain, not from the base of the mountain but halfway up the side. When they do this, they ascend in their imagination only, not in reality; they travel rapidly, and their first enthusiasm will die out as quickly as burning straw. They will believe

that they have a knowledge of spiritual things and will abandon them after having barely examined them superficially. This is, alas, frequently the case.

If, on the contrary, the beginner is generous and seriously wishes to advance, though not wishing to go more quickly than grace or to practice beyond the bounds of obedience an excessive mortification inspired by secret pride, it is not unusual for him to receive as recompense sensible consolations in prayer or in the study of divine things. The Lord thus conquers his sensibility, since he still lives chiefly by it. Sensible grace, so called because it reacts on the sensibility, turns it from dangerous things and draws it toward our Lord and His holy Mother. At these times, the generous beginner already loves God with his whole heart, but not yet with his whole soul, with all his strength, or with all his mind. Spiritual writers often speak of this "milk of consolation" which is then given. St. Paul himself says: "And I, brethren, could not speak to you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, as unto little ones in Christ. I gave you milk to drink, not meat; for you are not able as yet."

Then what generally happens? Almost all beginners, on receiving these sensible consolations, take too much complacency in them, as if they were an end, not a means. They then fall into a certain spiritual gluttony accompanied by rash haste and curiosity in the study of divine things, by unconscious pride that makes them wish to talk about these things as if they were already masters of the subject. Then, says St. John of the Cross, the seven capital sins reappear, no longer under their gross form but as they apply to spiritual things. They are so many obstacles to true and solid piety.

What follows from this? According to the logic of the spiritual life, it follows that a second conversion is necessary, that described by St. John of the Cross under the name of the passive purification of the senses "common to the greater number of beginners" in order to introduce them into "the illuminative way of proficients, where God nourishes the soul by infused contemplation."

This purification is manifested by a prolonged sensible aridity in which the beginner is stripped of the sensible consolations wherein he delighted too greatly. If in this aridity there is a keen desire for God, for His reign in us, and the fear of offending Him, it is a sign that a divine purification is taking place. And this is clearer still if to this keen desire for God is added difficulty in prayer, in making multiple and reasoned considerations, and

the inclination to look simply at God. This inclination is the third sign, which indicates that the second conversion is taking place and that the soul is raised toward a higher form of life, which is that of the illuminative way of proficients.

If the soul bears this purification well, its sensibility submits more and more to the spirit. Often it must then generously repulse temptations against chastity and patience, virtues that have their seat in the sensitive appetites and that are strengthened by this struggle.

In this crisis the Lord tills the soul, so to speak; He greatly deepens the furrow He traced at the moment of justification or the first conversion. He extirpates the evil roots or remains of sin. He shows the vanity of the things of the world, of the quest for honors and dignities. Gradually a new life begins, as in the natural order when the child becomes an adolescent.

This crisis is, however, more or less well borne; many persons are not generous enough and may become retarded souls. Others follow divine inspiration with docility and become proficients.

Such are the chief distinctive marks of the spiritual age of beginners: a knowledge of self still superficial; an initial knowledge of God as yet very dependent on sensible things; a love of God manifesting itself by the struggle to flee sin. If this struggle is generous, it is as a rule rewarded by sensible consolations, on which one too often dwells. Then the Lord takes them away and by this spoliation introduces one into a spiritual life that is more detached from the senses. It is easy to see the logical and vital sequence of the phases through which the soul must pass. It is not a mechanical juxtaposition of successive states, but the organic development of the interior life which thus becomes more and more an intimate conversation of the soul, no longer only with itself but with God.

THE GENEROSITY REQUIRED IN BEGINNERS

Of great importance to note here is the generosity necessary in the beginner from the very first moment if he is to reach intimate union with God and the penetrating and sweet contemplation of divine things.

On this subject we read in The Dialogue of St. Catherine of Siena: “You were all invited, generally and in particular, by My Truth, when He cried in the Temple, saying: ‘Whosoever thirsteth, let him come to Me and drink, for I am the fountain of the water of life.’... So that you are invited to the

fountain of living water of grace, and it is right for you, with perseverance, to keep by Him who is made for you a bridge, not being turned back by any contrary wind that may arise, either of prosperity or adversity, and to persevere till you find Me, who am the giver of the water of life, by means of this sweet and loving Word, My only-begotten Son."

St. Thomas speaks likewise when he comments on the words: "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice: for they shall have their fill" "The Lord," he says, "wishes us to thirst after that justice which consists in rendering to every man and to God first of all what is His due. He wishes us never to be satiated on earth... but rather that our desire should grow always.... Blessed are they that have this insatiable desire; they will receive eternal life and here below an abundance of spiritual goods in the accomplishment of the precepts, according to the words of the Master: 'My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, that I may perfect His work.' "

The Angelic Doctor says again in his commentary on St. John, 7: 37 "All that thirst are invited when our Lord says: 'If any man thirst, let him come to Me and drink.' Isaias had said: 'All you that thirst, come to the (living) waters.' He calls those who thirst, for it is they who desire to serve God. God does not accept a forced service, but He 'loveth a cheerful giver.' He calls not only some, but all who thirst; and He invites them to drink this spiritual beverage which is divine wisdom, capable of satiating our desires. And once we have found this divine wisdom, we shall wish to give it to others. This is why He says to us: 'He that believeth in Me, as the Scripture saith: Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.'"

To reach this overflowing spring, one must thirst for virtue and walk generously along the narrow way of abnegation, in the spiritual way which is narrow for the senses, but which, for the spirit, becomes immense like God Himself to whom it leads. The road to perdition, on the other hand, while broad at first for the senses, in turn becomes narrower and narrower for the spirit and leads to hell.

St. Teresa, recalling these same words of the Master: "If any man thirst, let him come to Me, and drink," likewise writes: "Remember, our Lord invited 'any man': He is truth itself; His word cannot be doubted. If all had not been included, He would not have addressed everybody, nor would He have said: 'Let all men come, for they will lose nothing by it, and I will give to drink to those I think fit for it.' But as He said unconditionally: 'If any man thirst, let him come to Me,' I feel sure that, unless they stop

halfway, none will fail to drink of this living water. May our Lord, who has promised to grant it us, give us grace to seek it as we ought, for His own sake." In the same chapter the saint says: "When God gives you this water, sisters, this comparison will please you, and you will understand, as those do who drink of it, how genuine love of God that is powerful and freed from earthly dross rises above mortal things and is sovereign over all the elements of this world.... Our souls are so dear to Him that He prevents their running into danger while He is bestowing this grace on them. He at once calls them to His side, and in a single instant shows them more truths and gives them a clearer knowledge of the nothingness of all things than we could gain for ourselves in many years." In chapter 21, the saint adds: "Let us return to speak of those who wish to travel by this path to the very end, and to the fount itself, where they will drink of the water of life. Although there are books written on the subject, yet I do not think it will be waste of time to speak of it here. How must one begin? I maintain that this is the chief point; in fact, that everything depends on people having a great and a most resolute determination never to halt until they reach their journey's end, happen what may, whatever the consequences are, cost what it will, let who will blame them, whether they reach the goal or die on the road, or lose heart to bear the trials they encounter, or the earth itself goes to pieces beneath their feet."

St. John of the Cross expresses himself in like manner in the prologue of The Ascent of Mount Carmel and in The Living Flame of Love.

The generosity of which all these great saints speak in the quotations given is none other than the virtue of magnanimity; but it is no longer only that described by Aristotle; it is infused Christian magnanimity described by St. Thomas in IIa IIae, q. 129 of the Summa.

The magnanimous man, says the saint, seeks great things worthy of honor, but he considers that honors themselves are practically nothing. He does not let himself be exalted by prosperity or cast down by difficulties. Is there anything greater on earth than genuine Christian perfection? The magnanimous man dreads neither obstacles nor critics nor scorn, if they must be borne for a great cause. He does not allow himself to be at all intimidated by freethinkers, and pays no attention to their utterances. He pays far more attention to truth than to the opinions of men which are often false. If this generosity is not always understood by those who wish an

easier life, it has, nevertheless, a true value in itself. And if it is united to humility, it pleases God and cannot fail of a reward.

St. Francis de Sales, in his Fifth Conference, speaks admirably of generosity in its relations with humility, which ought always to accompany it. He says:

> Humility believes it can do nothing, considering the knowledge of our poverty and weakness...; and, on the contrary, generosity makes us say with St. Paul: “I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me.” Humility makes us distrust ourselves, and generosity makes us trust in God.... There are people who amuse themselves with a false and silly humility, which hinders them from seeing in themselves the good that God has given them. They are very wrong in this; for the goods that God has placed in us should be recognized... that we may glorify the divine goodness which bestowed them on us.... Humility which does not produce generosity is indubitably false.... Generosity relies on trust in God and courageously undertakes to do all that is commanded... no matter how difficult it may be.... What can hinder me from succeeding, it says, since the Scriptures declare that “He, who hath begun a good work in you, will perfect it unto the day of Christ Jesus”?

Such ought to be the generosity of beginners. All the saints hold the same doctrine. Christ Himself declared: “No man putting his hand to the plow and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God.” One must belong to those of whom He said: “Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice: for they shall have their fill”; here on earth they will taste, as it were, the prelude of eternal life and by working for the salvation of others will inspire in them a holy desire for this life.

Chapter 19

Practical Naturalism and Mortification According to the Gospel

We have given a general idea of the spiritual age of beginners; now we shall speak of the principal work imposed on them that they may avoid falling back into sin. With this end in view, we must get a just idea of the disorder that sin, under its multiple forms, really is and also of its roots and consequences which may continue to exist in us for a long time.

First of all, we must note here two extreme and erroneous tendencies: on the one hand, the frequent, practical naturalism into which the quietists fell; on the other hand, the proud Jansenist austerity that does not spring from the love of God. Truth rises like a summit between these two extremes, which represent the opposing deviations of error.

PRACTICAL NATURALISM: OF ACTION AND OF INACTION

Practical naturalism, which is the negation of the spirit of faith in the conduct of life, tends to revive under more or less accentuated forms, as it did some years ago in Americanism and Modernism. In several works that appeared during that period, mortification and the vows of religion were disparaged; they were considered not a deliverance which favors the upward flight of the interior life, but a hindrance to the apostolate. We were asked: Why speak so much of mortification, if Christianity is a doctrine of life; of renunciation, if Christianity ought to assimilate all human activity instead of destroying it; of obedience, if Christianity is a doctrine of liberty? These passive virtues, they said, have such importance only for negative spirits that are incapable of undertaking anything and that possess only the force of inertia.

Why, they added, depreciate our natural activity? Is our nature not good, does it not come from God, is it not inclined to love Him above all else? Our passions themselves, the movements of our sensible appetites (desire or aversion, joy or sadness) are neither good nor bad; they become so according to the intention of our will. They are forces to be utilized; they must not be mortified but regulated and modulated. They said that such is the teaching of St. Thomas, very different from that of so many spiritual writers, quite different, too, from Book III, chap. 54, of The Imitation on "The Different Motions of Nature and Grace." In thus opposing the author of The Imitation, they forget the words of our Savior: "Unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, itself remaineth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world, keepeth it unto life eternal"

They asked, moreover, why one should so greatly combat private judgment, self-will. To do so is to place oneself in a state of servitude which destroys all initiative and makes a person lose contact with the world, which one ought not to scorn, but to ameliorate. Holding this opinion, would one not lose sight of what all true spiritual men have meant by "self-will," or a will not conformed to the will of God?

In this objection formulated by Americanism and taken up again by Modernism, the true is cleverly mingled with the false. Even the authority of St. Thomas is invoked, and the following principle of the great doctor is often repeated: "Grace does not destroy nature, but perfects it." The movements of nature are not as inordinate, they say, as the author of The Imitation maintains; we must have the full development of nature under grace.

And as they lack the true spirit of faith, they designedly pervert the principle of St. Thomas which they invoke. He speaks of nature as such, in the philosophical sense of the word, of nature with its essential and also its good elements; of the work of God, and not of wounded, fallen nature, as it actually is in consequence of original sin and of our personal sins, more or less deformed by an often unconscious egoism, our covetousness, our pride. Likewise, St. Thomas speaks of the passions or emotions as such, and not as inordinate, when he says that they are forces to be utilized; but to utilize them one must mortify whatever is inordinate in them. Their inordinateness must not simply be veiled or moderated, but put to death.

All these equivocations were not long in manifesting their consequences. The tree is judged by its fruit. With too strong a desire to please the world, these Modernists, apostles of a new type, let themselves be converted by the world, instead of converting it.

They disregarded the consequences of original sin; to hear them, one would judge that man was born good, as the Pelagians, and later Jean Jacques Rousseau, declared. They forgot the gravity of mortal sin as an offense against God; and they considered it merely an evil which harms man. Therefore they failed particularly to recognize the gravity of the intellectual sins: incredulity, presumption, pride. The most serious offense seemed to them to be abstention from social works; consequently the purely contemplative life was considered quite useless, or the lot of the incapable. God Himself willed to reply to this objection by the canonization of St. Theresa of the Child Jesus and by the extraordinary radiation of that contemplative soul.

They also failed to recognize the infinite elevation of our supernatural end: God, the Author of grace. Instead of speaking of eternal life, of the beatific vision, they talked about a vague moral ideal tinted with religion, in which the radical opposition between heaven and hell disappeared. Finally, they forgot that the great means taken by Christ to save the world was the cross.

By all its consequences, the new doctrine gave proof of its principle: practical naturalism, not the spirit of God but the spirit of nature, the negation of the supernatural, if not in theory, at least in the conduct of life. During the period of Modernism this negation was occasionally formulated by declaring that mortification does not belong to the essence of Christianity. But we reply: Is mortification anything else than penance, and is not penance necessary for the Christian? How could St. Paul have written: “Always bearing about in our body the mortification of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodies”?

Under another form, practical naturalism appeared among the quietists, especially at the time of Molinos, in the seventeenth century. This naturalism was not that of action, as it is in Americanism, but that of inaction. Molinos held that “to wish to act offends God, who wishes to be the only one to act in us.” By no longer acting, he said, the soul annihilates itself and returns to its principle; then God alone lives and reigns in it.

Practical naturalism is thus reached by a way contrary to that of Americanism, which exalts natural activity.

Molinos deduced from his principle that the soul should no longer produce acts of knowledge or of love of God, nor should it think any more of heaven or of hell, nor any longer reflect on its acts or on its defects; the examination of conscience was thus suppressed. Molinos added that the soul should no longer desire its own perfection or its salvation, nor should it ask God for anything positive, but it ought to abandon itself to Him so that He may work His divine will in it, without its cooperation. Finally, he said: "The soul no longer needs to offer positive resistance to temptations, of which it no longer has to take account; the voluntary cross of mortification is a heavy and useless burden which one must get rid of."

He recommended that in prayer one should remain in obscure faith, in a repose in which one forgets every distinct thought relating to the humanity of Christ, or even to the divine perfections or to the Blessed Trinity, and that one should remain in this repose without producing any act. "That," he said, "is acquired contemplation, in which one must remain all one's life if God does not raise the soul to infused contemplation."

In reality the contemplation thus acquired by the cessation of every act was only a pious somnolence, far more somnolent than pious. Certain quietists did not deign to leave it even to kneel at the elevation during Mass. They remained seated in their would-be union with God, which they confounded with an august form of nothingness. Their state reminds one more of the nirvana of the Buddhists than of the transforming and radiant union of the saints.

This shows that the acquired contemplation, which Molinos advised for all, was not an infused passivity, but one acquired at will by the cessation of every operation. He thus attributed to this would-be acquired contemplation what is true only of infused contemplation, and with one stroke of the pen he suppressed all asceticism and the practice of the virtues, considered by tradition as the true disposition for infused contemplation and intimate union with God. Moreover, he claimed that "the distinction between the three ways, purgative, illuminative, and unitive, is the greatest absurdity that has been expressed in mysticism, since," he says, "there is only one way for all, the interior way."

This suppression of mortification led to the worst disorders. Molinos finally reached the point of declaring that the temptations of the devil are

always useful, even when they lead to immodest acts; that it is not necessary then to make acts of the contrary virtues, but that one must resign oneself, for such weakness reveals our nothingness. But Molinos, instead of thus reaching contempt of self by the recognition of our culpability, claimed to reach impeccability and mystical death; strange impeccability, reconcilable with all disorders.

This lamentable doctrine is, of course, a caricature of traditional mysticism, which is thus radically perverted in all its principles. And under the pretext of avoiding natural activity, which naturalism of action exalts, one falls here into the practical naturalism of sloth and inaction. Under another form, this doctrine amounted to the suppression of asceticism, of the exercise of the virtues, and of mortification.

The errors of the quietists show that there are two types of naturalism: the practical naturalism of those who have lost the interior life, and the quite different naturalism of those who have never found it.

At the opposite extreme from practical naturalism, there is occasionally the proud austerity of a false supernaturalism, such as we find in Jansenism and, earlier, in different forms of fanaticism, such as that of the Montanists in the second century and of the flagellants in the twelfth century. All these sects lost sight of the spirit of Christian mortification, which is not a spirit of pride, but of love of God.

In the seventeenth century the Jansenists fell into a pessimism which is an alteration of the Christian doctrine of penance. Like the first Protestants, they exaggerated the results of original sin to the point of saying that man no longer has free will, the liberty of indifference, but only spontaneity, and that all the acts of infidels are sins. They taught that “all his life long, a man must do penance for original sin.” As a result, they retained souls during a whole lifetime in the purgative way, and kept them away from Holy Communion, saying that we are not worthy of such a union with our Lord. According to their doctrine, only those should be admitted to Holy Communion who have a pure, unalloyed love of God. They forgot that this very pure love of God is precisely the effect of Communion, when it is accompanied by a generous struggle against all that is inordinate in us. Jansenism never attained to deliverance and peace.

Here as elsewhere, two opposing errors must be avoided: practical naturalism and proud austerity. The truth is to be found between these two extremes and above them as a summit. We can see it if we consider, on the

one hand, the elevation of our last end and of charity, and, on the other hand, the gravity of mortal sin and of its consequences.

MORTIFICATION ACCORDING TO THE GOSPEL

To see the true spirit of Christian mortification, we must consider what our Lord says about it in the Gospel and how the saints understood it and lived it.

The Savior did not come upon earth to carry out a human work of philanthropy, but a divine work of charity. He accomplished it by speaking more to men of their duties than of their rights, by telling them the necessity of dying completely to sin in order to receive an abundant new life, and He willed to show His love for them even to the point of dying on the cross to redeem them. The two aspects of death to sin and of higher life are always spoken of together, with a dominant note which is that of the love of God. Nothing like this appears in the errors mentioned above.

What does our Lord tell us about mortification? In St. Luke's Gospel we read: "He said to all: If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; for he that shall lose his life for My sake, shall save it. For what is a man advantaged if he gain the whole world and lose himself and cast away himself?"

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus points out the necessity of mortification, that is, of the death to sin and its consequences, by insisting on the elevation of our supernatural end: "Unless your justice abound more than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." "Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect." Why? Because Christ brings us grace, which is a participation in the inner life of God, superior to the natural life of the angels, that He may lead us to union with God, since we are called to see God as He sees Himself and to love Him as He loves Himself. This is the meaning of the words: "Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect." But this precept requires the mortification of all that is inordinate in us, of the inordinate movements of concupiscence, anger, hatred, pride, hypocrisy, and so on. These movements represent what is inordinate in the different passions. Our Lord is explicit on this point in the same Sermon on the Mount. Nowhere can we find a better statement of the interior and exterior

mortification that the Christian must practice and also of the spirit of this mortification. To show this, it will suffice to recall some of the Savior's words.

The true Christian ought as far as possible to exclude from his heart all resentment, all animosity: "If therefore thou offer thy gift at the altar, and there thou remember that thy brother hath anything against thee; leave there thy offering before the altar, and go first to be reconciled to thy brother; and then coming thou shalt offer thy gift." "Go first to be reconciled to thy brother"; we must see in him not only an adversary, but a brother, a son of God. Blessed are the meek. One day a young Israelite, who knew the Our Father, received the inspiration to pardon his greatest enemy; he did so, and immediately received the grace to believe in the entire Gospel and the Church.

Christ preaches also the mortification of concupiscence, of the evil gaze, of evil desire, by which one would already commit adultery in his heart: "If thy right eye scandalize thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee...; if thy right hand scandalize thee, cut it off...; for it is expedient for thee that one of thy members should perish, rather than that thy whole body go into hell." Our Lord could not express Himself in a more energetic manner. This explains why, for the conquering of certain temptations, the saints advise recourse to fasts, vigils, and other bodily austerities, which, when practiced with discretion, obedience, and generosity, keep the body in subjection and assure liberty of spirit.

The Sermon on the Mount also speaks of the mortification of every inordinate desire of vengeance: "You have heard that it hath been said: An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. But I say to you not to resist evil." Do not reply to an insult with acrimony in order to avenge yourself. Unquestionably you must resist even to death him who would lead you to evil; but bear offenses patiently, without hatred or irritation. "If one strike thee on thy right cheek, turn to him also the other. And if a man will contend with thee in judgment and take away thy coat, let go thy cloak also unto him": that is to say, be ready to bear injustice with longanimity. This is the patience that breaks the anger of an adversary and sometimes converts him, as can be seen in the three centuries of persecution which the early Church had to endure. The Christian ought to be less preoccupied with jealously defending his temporal rights than with winning over to God the soul of his irritated brother. Here we see the height of Christian justice,

which ought always to be united to charity. The perfect are here admonished that it is not fitting for them to enter into litigation, unless for the sake of higher interests of which they have charge.

In the same chapter, the Savior asks us to mortify egoism, self-love, which inclines us to flee from him who wishes to ask us for a service, to mortify rash judgment, spiritual pride, and hypocrisy, which incline men to perform good works or to pray before men "to be seen by them."

Finally, Christ points out to us what the spirit of mortification ought to be: death to sin and its consequences out of love for God. Our Lord's manner of stating His doctrine is most amiable, as opposed to the proud austerity of the Jansenists. In St. Matthew's Gospel, He tells us: "When you fast, be not as the hypocrites, sad. For they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Amen I say to you, they have received their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head, and wash thy face; that thou appear not to men to fast, but to thy Father who is in secret: and thy Father who seeth in secret, will repay thee." As the fathers have understood this text, Christ would have us perfume our heads with the oil of charity, mercy, and spiritual joy: wash our faces, that is, purify our souls of all spirit of ostentation. When we accomplish these acts of piety, it is not forbidden us to be seen, but to wish to be seen, for we would thus lose purity of intention, which ought to be directed immediately to the Father present in the secret of our souls.

Such is the spirit of Christian mortification or austerity, which the Jansenists did not understand; it is the spirit of love of God and love of neighbor. It is the spirit of love that radiates on souls to save them; therefore it is the spirit of gentleness, for how can we be meek, even with those who are ill-tempered, without learning to conquer ourselves, to possess our souls? It is a spirit which leads us to offer to God all painful occurrences, so that even these things may help us to advance toward Him and to save souls, and that all, even the obstacles that we encounter, may cooperate unto good, as Jesus made His cross the great means of salvation.

With this idea in mind, we see that, by this spirit of love of God, Christian mortification rises like a summit above the effeminacy of practical naturalism and above harsh and proud austerity. This is the mortification we find in the saints who are stamped with the image of Jesus crucified, whether saints of the early Church, like the first martyrs, or those of the Middle Ages, like St. Bernard, St. Dominic, St. Francis of Assisi, or those

of more recent times, like. St. Benedict Joseph Labre, the Cure of Ars, or those more recently canonized, such as St. John Bosco and St. Joseph Cotolengo. Mirabilis Deus in sanctis suis.

Chapter 20

Mortification According to St. Paul and the Reasons for Its Necessity

The doctrine of the Gospel on the necessity of mortification is explained at considerable length by St. Paul in his epistles. Frequent quotation is made of his words: “I chastise my body and bring it into subjection: lest perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway.” Likewise he says to the Galatians: “They that are Christ’s have crucified their flesh, with the vices and concupiscences. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”

Not only does St. Paul affirm the necessity of mortification, but he gives reasons for it which may be reduced to four; they are precisely those which are disregarded by practical naturalism. The mortification of all that is inordinate in us is necessary:(1) because of the consequences of original sin; (2) because of the results of our personal sins; (3) because of the infinite elevation of our supernatural end; (4) because we must imitate our crucified Lord.

Considering these different motives, we shall see what interior and exterior mortification is for St. Paul. It is attached to many of the virtues, since each one excludes the contrary vices, and particularly to the virtue of penance, which ought to be inspired by love of God, and which has for its end the destruction in us of the consequences of sin as an offense against God.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF ORIGINAL SIN

First of all, St. Paul draws a parallel between Christ the Author of our salvation and Adam the author of our ruin, and notes the consequences of original sin. To the Romans he says: “By one man sin entered into this

world, and by sin death." And again: "By the disobedience of one man, many were made sinners.... Where sin abounded, grace did more abound... through Jesus Christ our Lord."

With infirmities and maladies, death is one of the results of original sin, but there is also concupiscence, of which St. Paul speaks when he says: "Walk in the spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the spirit."

According to the Apostle, this is the condition of the "old man," that is, of man such as he is born of Adam, with a fallen and wounded nature. We read in the Epistle to the Ephesians: "You have heard Him, and have been taught in Him... to put off, according to former conversation, the old man, who is corrupted according to the desire of error. And be renewed in the spirit of your mind: and put on the new man, who according to God is created in justice and holiness of truth." St. Paul writes in the same vein to the Colossians: "Lie not one to another: stripping yourselves of the old man with his deeds, and putting on the new, him who is renewed unto knowledge, according to the image of Him that created him."

Again, he writes to the Romans: "For I am delighted with the law of God, according to the inward man: but I see another law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind and captivating me in the law of sin that is in my members. Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

The old man, such as he is born of Adam, has a certain lack of balance in his wounded nature. This will be evident if we recall the nature of original justice. In it there was perfect harmony between God and the soul, made to know Him, to love Him, and to serve Him; and also between the soul and the body. In fact, as long as the soul was subject to God, the passions or sensible emotions were obedient to right reason enlightened by faith, and to the will vivified by charity. The body itself shared this harmony by privilege, in the sense that it was not subject to sickness or death.

Original sin destroyed this harmony. The first man, by his sin, as the Council of Trent says, "lost for himself and for us sanctity and original justice," and transmitted to us a fallen nature, deprived of grace and wounded. Without falling into the exaggerations of the Jansenists, we must admit, with St. Thomas, that we are born with our will turned away from God, inclined to evil, weak in regard to the good, with our reason prone to error, our sensitive appetites strongly disposed to inordinate pleasure and to

anger, source of every type of injustice. Whence come pride, forgetfulness of God, egoism under all its forms, often a gross almost unconscious egoism, which wishes at any cost to find happiness on earth without aspiring any higher. In this sense, we can truly say with the author of The Imitation: “Nature proposes self as her end, but grace does all things purely out of love for God.” St. Thomas speaks in the same way: “Inordinate love of self is the cause of every sin.”

The fathers, in particular Venerable Bede, state in their explanation of the parable of the Good Samaritan that fallen man is not only stripped of grace and of the privileges of the state of original justice, but is even wounded in his nature. “By the sin of the first parent, man was despoiled of grace and wounded in nature.” This is explained especially by the fact that we are born with our will turned away from God, directly averted from our supernatural last end, and indirectly from our natural last end; for every sin against the supernatural law is indirectly contrary to the natural law which obliges us to obey whatever God may command.

This disorder and weakness of the will in fallen man are shown by the fact that we cannot, without healing grace, love God, the Author of our nature, efficaciously and more than ourselves. There is also the disorder of concupiscence, which is visible enough for St. Thomas to see in it “a quite probable sign of original sin,” a sign which adds its confirmation to what revelation says about the sin of the first man. In place of the original triple harmony (between God and the soul, between the soul and the body, between the body and exterior things), appears the triple disorder which St. John speaks of when he writes: “For all that is in the world is the concupiscence of the flesh and the concupiscence of the eyes and the pride of life, which is not of the Father, but is of the world.”

Undoubtedly baptism cleanses us from original sin by applying Christ’s merits to us, by giving us sanctifying grace and the infused virtues. Thus, by the virtue of faith our reason is supernaturally enlightened, and by the virtues of hope and charity our will is turned to God. We also receive the infused virtues which rectify the sensible appetites. However, there remains in the baptized who continue in the state of grace an original weakness, wounds in the process of healing, which sometimes cause us to suffer, and which are left to us, says St. Thomas, as an occasion for struggle and merit.

This is what St. Paul says to the Romans: “Our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin may be destroyed, to the end that we may serve

sin no longer.... Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, so as to obey the lusts thereof." Not only must this "old man" be moderated, regulated; he must be mortified or made to die. Otherwise we shall never succeed in obtaining the mastery over our passions and we shall remain more or less their slaves. This will mean opposition, perpetual struggle between nature and grace. If unmortified souls do not perceive this struggle, it is because grace is scarcely alive in them; egoistic nature has free play, with some virtues of temperament, natural happy inclinations that are judged to be true virtues.

Mortification is, therefore, imposed upon us because of the consequences of original sin, which remain even in the baptized as an occasion of struggle, and of struggle indispensable in order not to fall into actual and personal sin. We do not repent of original sin, which is a "sin of nature," which was voluntary only in the first man; but we must labor to rid ourselves of the withering effects of original sin, in particular concupiscence, which inclines us to sin. By so doing, the wounds of which we spoke above are healed more and more with the increase of the grace which heals and which, at the same time, raises us up to a new life (gratia sanans et elevans). Far from destroying nature by the practice of mortification, grace restores it, heals it, and renders it increasingly pliable or docile in the hands of God.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF OUR PERSONAL SINS

A second motive that renders mortification necessary is found in the consequences of our personal sins. St. Paul insists on this point in the Epistle to the Galatians, by noting especially the effects of sins against charity: "By charity of the spirit serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. But if you bite and devour one another, take heed you be not consumed one of another. I say then, walk in the spirit (that is, the spirit of the new man enlightened and fortified by the Holy Spirit), and you shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.... Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are fornication, uncleanness, immodesty, luxury, idolatry, witchcrafts, enmities, contentions, emulations, wraths, quarrels, dissensions.... But the fruit of the Spirit is charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, longanimity, mildness,

faith, modesty, continency, chastity.... They that are Christ's have crucified their flesh, with the vices and concupiscences."

Mortification is clearly imposed on us by reason of the effects of our personal sins. Renewed actual sin engenders a habitual bad disposition which, when grave, is called a vice or at least a defect. These defects are habitual modes of seeing, judging, willing, and acting, which combine to form an imperfect mentality, a spirit which is not that of God. And sometimes they translate themselves to our exterior, so much so that someone has rightly said that at thirty or forty years of age every man is responsible for his own countenance, according as it expresses pride, self-sufficiency, presumption, contempt, or disillusionment. These defects become traits of character, and little by little God's image is effaced in us.

When sins are confessed with contrition or sufficient attrition, absolution obliterates sin, but it leaves certain dispositions, called the remnants of sin, reliquiae peccati, which are, as it were, imprinted in us, like a furrow in our faculties, in our character and temperament. Thus the seat of covetousness remains after baptism. It is certain, for example, that although a man who has fallen into the vice of drunkenness and who accuses himself of it with sufficient attrition receives together with pardon sanctifying grace and the infused virtue of temperance, he preserves an inclination to this vice, and, unless he flees from the occasions, he will fall again. This trying inclination must not only be moderated, it must be mortified, made to die in order to unfetter both nature and grace.

The same is true of our unreasonable antipathies. They must be not merely veiled, not only moderated, but mortified, because they are seeds of death. That from this point of view an idea may be formed of the necessity of mortification, we must bear in mind the numerous vices that are born of each of the seven capital sins. For example, from envy are born hatred, slander, calumny, joy at the misfortune of another, and sadness at his success. From anger, which is opposed to meekess, come disputes, fits of passion, insults, abusive words, and at times blasphemy. From vainglory spring disobedience, boasting, hypocrisy, contention through rivalry, discord, love of novelties, and stubbornness. St. Thomas lays emphasis on each of these vices which spring from the capital sins and which are sometimes more grave than they. The field of mortification is consequently very wide.

Finally in a spirit of penance, we must mortify ourselves to expiate past sin that has already been forgiven and to help us avoid sin in the future. The virtue of penance leads us, in fact, not only to hatred of sin as an offense against God, but still more to reparation. For this last, to stop sinning is not sufficient; a satisfaction must be offered to divine justice, for every sin merits a punishment, as every act inspired by charity merits a reward. Consequently, when sacramental absolution, which remits sin, is given to us, a penance or satisfaction is imposed upon us that we may thus obtain the remission of the temporal punishment, which ordinarily remains to be undergone. This satisfaction is a part of the sacrament of penance which applies the Savior's merits to us; and as such, it contributes to our restoration to grace and to its increase in us.

Thus is paid, at least in part, the debt contracted by the sinner in regard to divine justice. To this end, man must also bear patiently the sufferings of this life, and if this patient endurance does not suffice to purify him completely, he must pass through purgatory, for nothing defiled can enter heaven. The dogma of purgatory thus strongly confirms the necessity of mortification, because it shows us that we must pay our debt, either in this life while meriting, or after death without meriting.

A repentance full of love effaces both the sin and the punishment, as did those blessed tears on which Christ bestowed His benediction, saying: "Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much."

It is important to accuse ourselves especially of sins that are becoming habitual and most hinder our union with God. This is more important than to aim at a complete enumeration of venial sins

Since penance is necessary to every Christian, how can the necessity of mortification be denied? Such a denial would be an utter disregard of the gravity of sin and its consequences. He who is opposed to mortification comes little by little to drink of iniquity as if it were water; he reaches the point where he calls what is often truly venial sin, an imperfection, and what is a mortal sin, a human weakness. Let us remember that Christian temperance differs specifically from acquired temperance, and that it exacts a mortification unknown to the pagan philosophers.

Neither ought we to forget that we have to contend against the spirit of the world and against the devil, according to St. Paul's words to the Ephesians: "Put you on the armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the deceits of the devil. For our wrestling is not against flesh and

blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places.... Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth and having on the breastplate of justice, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace."

To resist the enemy's temptation, which leads first of all to light faults and then to graver ones, Christ Himself told us that we must have recourse to prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. And then the temptation will become the occasion of meritorious acts of faith, confidence in God, and love of God. We shall find ourselves in the happy necessity of being unable to rest content with imperfect acts of virtue (actus remissi); we shall have to resort to more intense and more meritorious acts.

THE INFINITE ELEVATION OF OUR SUPERNATURAL END DEMANDS A SPECIAL MORTIFICATION OR ABNEGATION

We saw in the preceding chapter that in the Sermon on the Mount our Lord demands the mortification of the slightest inordinate interior movements of anger, sensuality, and pride, because we ought, He says, to be "perfect as also your heavenly Father is perfect," since we have received a participation in His intimate life, and since we are called to see Him immediately as He sees Himself, and to love Him as He loves Himself.

From the fact that we are called to a supernatural end of infinite elevation, since it is God Himself in His intimate life, it is not sufficient for us to live according to right reason, subordinating our passions to it. We must always act not only as rational beings, but as children of God, in whom reason is subordinate to faith, and every action is inspired by charity. This obliges us to detachment in regard to all that belongs only to the earth, or is purely natural, in regard to all that cannot be a means of drawing nearer to God and of leading souls to Him. In this sense we must combat the different forms of natural eagerness, which would absorb our activity to the detriment of the life of grace.

In virtue of this principle, St. Paul says to us: "Therefore, if you be risen with Christ (by baptism), seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth. For you are dead; and your life is hid with

Christ in God.... Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth,... evil concupiscence, and covetousness,... anger, indignation."

Likewise he writes to the Ephesians: "For by Him we have access both in one Spirit to the Father. Now therefore you are no more strangers and foreigners; but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and the domestics of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone: in whom all the building, being framed together, groweth up into a holy temple in the Lord. In whom you also are built together into a habitation of God in the Spirit."

Therefore, even if a person does not bind himself to the effective practice of the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience, he must have the spirit of the counsels, that is, the spirit of detachment: "The time is short (for the journey toward eternity). It remaineth, that they also who have wives be as if they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as if they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as if they used it not. For the fashion of this world passeth away." A man must not try to settle down in this world if he truly wishes to make progress toward God, if he wishes to make profitable use of time to advance toward eternity. The infinite loftiness of our supernatural end demands a special abnegation in regard to whatever is simply human, even though legitimate, for we might become absorbed in it to the detriment of the life of grace.

This is particularly true for apostles: "No man, being a soldier to God, entangleth himself with secular businesses; that he may please Him to whom he hath engaged himself." Likewise, the soldier of Christ ought to avoid becoming entangled in the things of the world; he should use them as though not using them; otherwise he would become as "a tinkling cymbal," and would lose the spirit of Christ. He would be like salt that has lost its savor "and is good for nothing anymore but to be cast out, and to be trodden on by men."

Nothing is more certain. From all that is purely of this earth the Christian ought to have a detachment, a special abnegation which is demanded by the infinite loftiness of the eternal goal toward which he ought to advance every day with greater rapidity; for the nearer we approach to God, the more we are drawn by Him.

A fourth reason obliging us to mortification or abnegation is the necessity of imitating Jesus crucified. He Himself tells us: “If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily.” St. Paul adds: “For whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.... And if sons, heirs also; heirs indeed of God, and joint-heirs with Christ: yet so, if we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified with Him. For I reckon that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us.”

Evidently this spirit of detachment is so much the more imposed on us as we are called to a higher, more abundant, and more radiating interior life, in which we ought to follow more closely the example of Christ, who came, not as a philosopher or a sociologist, but as the Savior, and who out of love willed to die on the cross in order to redeem us. He came to accomplish, not a human work of philanthropy but a divine work of charity, even to complete sacrifice, which is the great proof of love. Without a doubt this is what St. Paul means.

The Apostle of the Gentiles completely lived what he taught. Consequently, while describing his life of hardship and suffering, he could write: “But we have this treasure (the light of life of the gospel) in earthen vessels, that the excellency (of the gospel) may be of the power of God and not of us. In all things we suffer tribulation, but are not distressed; we are straitened, but are not destitute; we suffer persecution, but are not forsaken (by God); we are cast down, but we perish not: always bearing about in our body the mortification of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodies.... So then death worketh in us, but life in you.”

In his commentary on II Cor. 4: 7, St. Thomas says: “If the apostles were rich, powerful, noble according to the flesh, everything great that they accomplished would be attributed to them and not to God. But because they were poor and despised, what was sublime in their ministry is attributed to God. This explains why our Lord willed that they should be exposed to tribulations and to contempt.... And because they trusted in God and hoped in Jesus Christ, they were not crushed.... They bore affliction and the dangers of death patiently that they might thus attain to the life of glory as the Savior did: ‘Always bearing about in our body the mortification of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodies.’ “

St. Paul says further: “For I think that God hath set forth us apostles, the last.... We are reviled; and we bless. We are persecuted; and we suffer it. We

are blasphemed; and we entreat. Weare made as the refuse of this world, the offscouring of all, even until now." St. Paul here describes the life of the apostles from Pentecost until their martyrdom. Thus we read in the Acts of the Apostles that, after they had been scourged, "they indeed went from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus." They truly carried their cross and were thus stamped in the image of Christ that they might continue the work of the redemption by the same means as the Savior Himself had employed.

This spirit of detachment through imitation of Jesus crucified was singularly striking during the first three centuries of persecution which followed the founding of the Church. The letters of St. Ignatius of Antioch and the acts of the martyrs make this clear.

This same spirit of detachment and of configuration to Christ is found in all the saints, both ancient and modern: in St. Benedict, St. Bernard, St. Dominic, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Teresa, St. John of the Cross, and, nearer our day, St. Benedict Joseph Labre, the Cure of Ars, and, among the most recently canonized, St. John Bosco, and St. Joseph Cotolengo.

The spirit of detachment, of abnegation, is the condition of a close union with God, whence supernatural life overflows in a manner ever new, and at times stupendous, for the eternal welfare of souls. This is evidenced by the lives of all the saints without exception, and we ought to nourish our souls daily with the examples of these great servants of God. The world is not so much in need of philosophers and sociologists, as of saints who are the living image of the Savior among us.

According to St. Paul, the following reasons show the necessity of mortification or abnegation:(1) the consequences of original sin which incline us to evil; (2) the results of our personal sins; (3) the infinite loftiness of our supernatural end; (4) the necessity of imitating Jesus crucified. These are precisely the four motives disregarded by practical naturalism which reappeared some years ago in Americanism and Modernism.

These four motives of mortification can be reduced to two: hatred of sin and love of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ. Such is the spirit of holy realism, and basically of Christian optimism, which ought to inspire exterior and interior mortification. These remain to be treated more in detail. The true answer to practical naturalism is the love of Jesus crucified,

which leads us to resemble Him and to save souls with Him by the same means as He used.

Mortification or abnegation thus understood, far from destroying nature, liberates it, restores it, heals it. It opens up to us the profound meaning of the maxim: To serve God, is to reign: that is, to reign over our passions, over the spirit of the world, its false principles and its example, over the devil and his perversity; to reign with God by sharing increasingly in His intimate life, in virtue of this great law, namely, that if life does not descend, it ascends.

Man cannot live without love, and if he renounces every inferior love which leads to death, he opens his soul ever wider to the love of God and of souls in God. The Savior Himself declares: “If any man thirst, let him come to Me, and drink.... Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water” for the eternal good of souls.

Chapter 21

Sins to be Avoided Their Roots and Their Consequences

We have treated in general of the necessity of mortification and abnegation because of the consequences both of original sin and of our personal sins, and also because of the infinite elevation of our supernatural end and the necessity of imitating Jesus crucified. We shall consider somewhat in detail the principal sins to be avoided, their roots, and their consequences. St. Thomas does so in treating of the seven capital sins. With the aid of his work, we can make a serious and profound examination of conscience, especially if we ask for the light of the Holy Spirit, in order to see from above the stains on our souls, a little as the Lord Himself sees them. The gifts of knowledge and counsel can here greatly fill out what Christian prudence tells us; with it an increasingly enlightened, upright, and certain conscience will be developed in us.

We shall consider, first of all, the roots of the capital sins; then we will speak of their consequences.

THE ROOTS OF THE CAPITAL SINS

As shown by St. Gregory the Great and, following him in a more profound manner, also by St. Thomas, the capital sins of pride, sloth, envy, anger, avarice, gluttony, and luxury are not the gravest sins of all; they are less grave than heresy, apostasy, despair, and hatred of God. But the capital sins are those toward which we are first of all inclined, and which lead to a separation from God and to still graver sins. Man does not reach complete perversity all of a sudden; he is led to it progressively, by a gradual descent to evil.

In the first place we must examine the root of the seven capital sins. As St. Thomas says, they all spring from inordinate self-love or egoism, which hinders us from loving God above all else and inclines us to turn away from Him. St. Augustine says: “Two loves built two cities: the love of self even to contempt of God built the city of Babylon, that is, that of the world and of immorality; the love of God even to contempt of self built the city of God.”

Evidently we sin, that is, we turn away from God or become estranged from Him, only because we desire and will to have a created good in a manner not conformable to the divine law. This comes about only by reason of an inordinate love of ourselves, which is thus the source of every sin. This inordinate self-love or egoism must not only be moderated, but mortified so that an ordered love of self may prevail in us. This love is the secondary act of charity, by which the just man loves himself for God in order to glorify God in time and eternity. Whereas the sinner in the state of mortal sin loves himself above all else and in practice prefers himself to God, the just man loves God more than himself and must, in addition, love himself in God and for God. He must love his body that it may serve the soul instead of being an obstacle to its higher life; he must love his soul that it may live eternally with divine life. He must love his intellect and will that they may live increasingly by the light and love of God. Such is manifestly the broad meaning of the mortification of self-love, of self-will, which is opposed to that of God. Life must be prevented from descending, so that it may rise toward Him who is the source of every good and of all beatitude. Nothing is clearer.

Inordinate self-love leads us to death, according to the Savior’s words: “He that loveth his life (in an egotistical manner) shall lose it; and he that hateth (or sacrifices) his life in this world, keepeth it unto life eternal” In the saints this love of God reaches even to contempt of self, that is, even to real and effective contempt of all that is inordinate in us.

From inordinate self-love, the root of every sin, spring the three concupiscences which St. John speaks of, when he says: “For all that is in the world is the concupiscence of the flesh and the concupiscence of the eyes and the pride of life, which is not of the Father, but is of the world.” These are, in fact, the three great manifestations of the spirit of the world in regard to the goods of the body, to exterior goods, and to the goods of the

spirit. One is thus led to confound apparent good and real good in these three orders.

St. Thomas observes that the sins of the flesh are more shameful than those of the spirit, for they lower man to the level of the brute; but those of the spirit, such as pride, the only ones that exist in the devil, are more grave for they are more directly opposed to God and turn us more away from Him.

The concupiscence of the flesh is the inordinate desire of what is, or seems to be, useful to the preservation of the individual and of the species; from this inordinate or sensual love arise gluttony and lust. Voluptuousness can thus become an idol and blind us more and more.

The concupiscence of the eyes is the inordinate desire of all that can please the sight: of luxury, wealth, money which makes it possible for us to procure worldly goods. From it is born avarice. The avaricious man ends by making his hidden treasure his god, adoring it, and sacrificing everything to it: his time, his strength, his family, and sometimes his eternity.

The pride of life is the inordinate love of our own excellence, of all that can emphasize it, no matter how hard or difficult that may be. He who yields more and more to pride ends by becoming his own god, as Lucifer did. From this vice all sin and perdition may spring; whence the importance of humility, a fundamental virtue, just as pride is the source of every sin.

According to St. Gregory and St. Thomas, pride or arrogance is more than a capital sin; it is the root from which proceed especially four capital sins: vanity or vainglory, spiritual sloth or wicked sadness which embitters, envy, and anger. Vanity is the inordinate love of praise and honors. Spiritual sloth saddens the soul at the thought of the labor involved in sanctification, and at the thought of the spiritual good of good works because of the effort and abnegation they require. Envy inclines us to grow sad over another’s good, in so far as it appears to oppose our own excellence. Anger, when it is not just indignation but a sin, is an inordinate movement of the soul which inclines us to repulse violently what displeases us; from it arise quarrels, insults, and abusive words. These capital vices, especially spiritual sloth, envy, and anger, engender a wicked sadness that weighs down the soul; they are quite the opposite of spiritual peace and joy, which are the fruits of charity.

All these seeds of death must not only be moderated, but mortified. The original seed is self-love, from which proceed the three concupiscences; and

from them, the seven capital sins. This is what made St. Paul say: “If you live according to the flesh, you shall die: but if by the Spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live.”

We see this mortification in the lives of the saints, where grace finally dominates all the inclinations of fallen nature in order to restore our nature, to heal it, and to communicate a higher life to it. This is clear for the Christian mind, and the generous practice of such mortification prepares the soul for the more profound purifications that God Himself sends in order to destroy completely the seeds of death that still subsist in our sensible appetites and higher faculties. It is not enough, however, to consider the roots of the seven capital sins; we must examine their consequences.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE SEVEN CAPITAL SINS

By the consequences of sin are generally understood the remnants of sin (reliquiae peccati), the evil inclinations left, so to speak, in our temperament even after sin has been forgiven, as concupiscence, which is a remnant of original sin, remains after baptism, like a wound in the course of healing. The consequences of the capital sins may also mean the other sins that spring from them. The capital sins are so called because they are like the head or the principle of many others. We are, first of all, inclined toward them, and by them in turn toward sins that are often more serious.

Thus vainglory or vanity engenders disobedience, boasting, hypocrisy, contention through rivalry, discord, love of novelties, and stubbornness. It is a vice that may lead to most lamentable falls and apostasy.

Spiritual sloth, disgust for spiritual things and for the work of sanctification, because of the effort it demands, is a vice directly opposed to the love of God and to the holy joy that results from it. Sloth engenders malice, rancor or bitterness toward our neighbor, pusillanimity in the face of duty to be accomplished, discouragement, spiritual torpor, forgetfulness of the precepts, seeking after forbidden things. Slipping downward on the slope of pride, vainglory, and spiritual sloth, many have lost their vocation.

In the same way, envy or willful displeasure at the sight of another’s good, as if it were an evil for us, engenders hatred, slander, calumny, joy at he misfortune of another, and sadness at his success.

Gluttony and sensuality also produce other vices and may lead to blindness of spirit, to hardness of heart, to attachment to the present life

even to the loss of hope of eternal life, and to love of self even to hatred of God, and to final impenitence.

The capital sins are often mortal; they are venial only when the matter is light or the consent not complete. They may exist under a very gross form, as happens in many souls in the state of mortal sin; but they may also exist, as St. John of the Cross points out, in souls in the state of grace, as so many departures from the course of the spiritual life. It is thus that spiritual pride, spiritual gluttony, spiritual sensuality, and spiritual sloth are spoken of. Spiritual pride induces us, for example, to flee from those who reproach us, even when they have the authority to do so and are acting justly; it may even induce us to hold a certain rancor against them. As for spiritual gluttony, it may make us desire sensible consolations in piety, to the point of seeking ourselves in it more than we seek God. With spiritual pride, it is the origin of false mysticism.

Happily, contrary to what is true of the virtues, these vices or defects are not connected. One may have some without the others; several indeed are contradictory: for example, one cannot be avaricious and prodigal at one and the same time.

But we have to practice numerous virtues, forty or more, if we count all the virtues annexed to the principal ones. With the exception of justice, each stands like a summit between two contrary vices: the one by excess, such as temerity; the other by defect, such as cowardice.

Moreover, certain defects resemble certain virtues: for instance, pride is in some ways similar to magnanimity. It is important to have discretion or Christian prudence to discern clearly the virtue from the defect which in certain respects resembles it. Otherwise, false notes may be struck on the keyboard of the virtues: for example, pusillanimity may be confounded with humility, severity with justice, weakness with mercy.

THE EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

The enumeration of all these ignoble fruits of inordinate selflove should induce us to make a serious examination of conscience. Moreover, their number shows us that the field of mortification is very wide if we wish to live the true life in a thoroughgoing way. The quietists declared the examination of conscience useless, because, they said, the human heart is

inscrutable. They even asserted that such examination was harmful, as all reflection on self would hinder us from thinking of God in naked faith.

Such statements are aberrations easily refuted. Precisely because it is difficult to know the true nature of our interior feelings, we must examine them closely. And this examination, far from turning us away from the thought of God, should keep bringing us back to it. Moreover, we must ask for divine light to see our soul a little as God Himself sees it, to see our day or the week that has just ended somewhat as it is written in the book of life, somewhat as we shall see it at the last judgment. Thus to see ourselves, we ought every evening to search out with humility and contrition the faults that we have committed in thought, word, deed, and omission.

On the other hand, in this examination we should avoid the excess opposed to that of the quietists, that is to say, the minute search for the slightest faults under their purely material aspect, a search which sometimes leads to scruples or to forgetfulness of important things. The examination of conscience aims less at a complete enumeration of venial faults than at seeing and sincerely acknowledging the principle which in our case is generally at their root. To cure a skin eruption, an effort is made to purify the blood rather than to treat each blemish separately. In short, in the examination of conscience the soul ought not to spend too much time in consideration of self and cease to turn its gaze toward God. On the contrary, looking fixedly at God, it should ask itself how the Lord Himself will judge its day, or the week just spent. In what has it been entirely His? In what entirely its own? In what has it sought God sincerely? In what has it sought itself? Then, calmly the soul judges itself as it were from on high, in the light of God, somewhat as it will be judged on the last day. From this consideration we can understand the nobility of the Christian conscience and the holy demands it makes; it is far superior to the conscience of a simple philosopher.

But, as St. Catherine of Siena says in speaking of these holy exactions of conscience, we should not separate the consideration of our faults from that of God’s infinite mercy. We should see, on the contrary, our frailty and wretchedness under the radiation of the helpful, infinite Goodness. The examination made in this way, instead of discouraging us, will increase our confidence in God.

The sight of our faults shows us also by contrast the value of virtue. It has been said with great truth that the value of justice is brought home to us

especially by the grief which injustice causes us. The sight of the injustice we have committed and our regret for having committed it, should make us "hunger and thirst after justice." The ugliness of sensuality should reveal to us by contrast all the value of purity; the disorder of anger and envy should make us feel the great value of true meekness and true charity; the sight of the disastrous effects of spiritual sloth should reanimate in us the desire for generosity and spiritual joy. The aberration of pride should make us experience to some extent all the wisdom and grandeur of true humility.

For all these reasons, one of the best ways to make an examination of conscience is to do so in the light of the Savior's words: "Learn of Me, for I am meek and humble of heart."

Let us ask the Lord to inspire us with the holy hatred of sin, which separates us from the infinite goodness of God, from whom we have received the greatest benefits and who promises us still more precious gifts if we are faithful. In some respects, the holy hatred of sin is nothing more than the reverse of the love of God. To love truth strongly without detesting error, is impossible; it is likewise impossible to have a strong love for the good and the sovereign Good, which is God, without hating what turns us away from God. In the hearts of the humblest and meekest saints, there is a holy hatred of evil, a hatred that is as strong as their love of God. In the immaculate heart of Mary there is, by reason of her ardent charity, a burning hatred of evil, and this hatred renders her terrible to the devil. According to Blessed Grignion de Montfort, the devil suffers more from being conquered by the humility and love of Mary than from being directly crushed by the divine Omnipotence. We should ask the immaculate heart of Mary and the sacred heart of our Savior, burning furnace of charity, for this holy hatred of evil, this holy hatred of pride, spiritual sloth, envy, unjust anger, malevolence, and sensuality, in order that true charity, the love of God and of souls in God, may truly grow ever stronger in us.

The means of avoiding pride is to think often of the humiliations of the Savior and to ask God for the virtue of humility. To repress envy, we should pray for our neighbor and wish him the same good as we desire for ourselves.

This type of mortification is absolutely indispensable. To advance seriously toward perfection and sanctity, we should think of the mortifications of the saints, or, even without going as far as the examples of the saints, think of those given us by servants of God such as Father

Lacordaire who, fearing that he might fall into pride by reason of his successes, had recourse to great mortifications. On certain days while preaching at Notre Dame (Paris), he used to feel that a strong current of grace was passing through his soul to convert his hearers, and that, if he yielded to the sin of pride, this current of grace might be completely stopped and his preaching become absolutely fruitless. We should meditate on the fact that we also have our souls to save, that we must do good to those around us, good which will endure eternally. Let us also remember that we must work as much as possible for the salvation of other souls, and that for this purpose we ought to employ the means that Christ has pointed out to us: progressive death to sin through progress in the virtues and especially in the love of God.

SINS OF IGNORANCE, FRAILTY, AND MALICE

We have been told that people in certain milieux are inclined to think that only the sin of malice is mortal, and that so-called sins of ignorance and frailty are never mortal. On this point we should recall the teaching of theology, such as it is profoundly formulated by St. Thomas Aquinas in the Summa.

The sin of ignorance is that which springs from voluntary and culpable ignorance, called vincible ignorance. The sin of frailty is that which arises from a strong passion which diminishes liberty and impels the will to give its consent. As for the sin of malice, it is committed with full liberty, quasi de industria, intentionally and often with premeditation, even without passion or ignorance. We shall recall what St. Thomas teaches about each of them.

SINS OF IGNORANCE

In relation to the will, ignorance may be either antecedent or consequent or concomitant. Antecedent ignorance is that which is in no way voluntary; it is said to be morally invincible. For example, thinking that he is firing at an animal in the forest, a hunter may kill a man who had given no sign of his presence and whom the hunter would never suspect of being there. In this case there is no voluntary fault, but only a material sin.

Consequent ignorance is that which is voluntary, at least indirectly so, because of negligence in learning what one can and ought to know. It is called vincible ignorance because one could free oneself from it with morally possible application. It is the cause of a formal sin, at least indirectly willed. For example, a medical student yields gravely to sloth; nevertheless, as it were by chance, he receives his medical degree. But he is ignorant of many elementary facts of his profession which he ought to know, and it happens that he hastens the death of some of his patients instead of curing them. In this case there is no directly voluntary sin, but there is certainly an indirectly voluntary fault, which may be grave and which may even go as far as homicide through imprudence or grave negligence.

Concomitant ignorance is that which is not voluntary, but which accompanies sin in such a way that, even if it did not exist, one would still sin. This is the case of a very vindictive man who, wishing to kill his enemy, one day, as a matter of fact, unwittingly does kill him, thinking that he is killing an animal in a thicket. This case is manifestly different from the two preceding cases.

We may conclude, consequently, that involuntary or invincible ignorance is not a sin, but that voluntary or vincible ignorance of what we could and should know is a more or less serious sin according to the gravity of the obligations in which we fail. Voluntary or vincible ignorance cannot completely excuse sin, for there was negligence; it only diminishes culpability. Absolutely involuntary or invincible ignorance completely exculpates from sin; it does away with culpability. As for concomitant ignorance, it does not excuse from sin, for, even if it did not exist, one would still sin.

Invincible ignorance is called “good faith.” That ignorance be truly invincible or involuntary, it is necessary that the person cannot morally free himself from it by a serious effort to know his duties. It is impossible to be invincibly ignorant of the first precepts of the natural law: Do good and avoid evil; do not do to others what you would not wish them to do to you; you shall not kill; you shall not steal; one God alone you shall adore. At least by the order of the world, the starry sky, and the whole creation, man can easily obtain a knowledge of the probability of the existence of God, supreme Ordainer and Legislator. When he has this probability, he must seek to become more enlightened and must ask for light; otherwise he is not

in genuine good faith or in absolutely involuntary and invincible ignorance. As much must be said of a Protestant for whom it becomes seriously probable that Catholicism is the true religion. He must clarify his idea by study and ask God for light. Unless he does this, as St. Alphonsus says, he already sins against faith by not wishing to take the means necessary to obtain it.

Pious people are often not sufficiently attentive to sins of ignorance, which they sometimes commit without considering, as they can and ought, their religious duties or the duties of their state, or again the rights and qualities of persons, superiors, equals, or inferiors with whom they are in relation. We are responsible not only for the inordinate acts that we place, but also for the omission of all the good that we ought to do, and that we would accomplish in fact if we had true zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. One of the causes of the present evils of society is found in the forgetfulness of these words of the Gospel: “The poor have the gospel preached to them,” in the indifference of those who possess a superabundance toward those who lack even the necessaries of life.

SINS OF FRAILTY

A sin of frailty is one which springs from a strong passion, which impels the will to give its consent. With this meaning, the Psalmist says: “Have mercy on me, a Lord, for I am weak.” The spiritual soul is weak when its will yields to the violence of the movements of the sensible appetites. It thus loses rectitude of practical judgment and of voluntary election or choice, by reason of fear, anger, or concupiscence. Thus, during the Passion, Peter yielded through fear and denied our Lord three times. When, by reason of a lively emotion or of a passion, we are inclined toward an object, the intellect is induced to judge that it is suitable for us, and the will to give its consent contrary to the divine law.

But we must distinguish here the so-called antecedent passion, which precedes the consent of the will, and that called consequent, which follows it. Antecedent passion diminishes culpability, for it diminishes the liberty of judgment and of voluntary choice; it is particularly apparent in very impressionable people. On the contrary, consequent or voluntary passion does not lessen the gravity of sin, but augments it; or rather it is a sign that the sin is more voluntary, since the will itself arouses this inordinate

movement of passion, as happens in a man who wishes to become angry the better to manifest his ill will. Just as a good consequent passion, such as Christ's holy anger when He was driving the merchants from the Temple, increases the merit, so an evil consequent passion augments the demerit.

The sin of frailty, of which we are speaking here, is that in which the will yields to the impulse of an antecedent passion; and thereby the gravity of the sin is lessened. This does not mean, however, that it is never a mortal sin. It is truly mortal when the matter is grievous, and the sinner yields to passion with advertence and full consent. This is the case of homicide committed under the impulse of anger.

A person can resist, especially at the beginning, the inordinate movement of passion. If he does not resist it at the beginning as he ought, if he does not pray as he ought to obtain the help of God, passion is no longer simply antecedent, it becomes voluntary.

The sin of frailty, even when serious and mortal, is more pardonable than another, but here "pardonable" is by no means a synonym for "venial" in the current meaning of this word.

Even pious people ought to be attentive to this point for they may have unrepressed movements of jealousy which may lead them to grave faults: for example, to serious rash judgments and to words and exterior acts which are the cause of profound breaches, contrary both to justice and to charity.

It would be a gross error to think that only the sin of malice can be mortal because it alone implies the sufficient advertence, the full consent, together with the serious matter, necessary for the sin which gives death to the soul and renders it worthy of eternal death. Such an error would result from a badly formed conscience, and would contribute to increase this deformity. Let us remember that we can easily resist the beginning of the inordinate movement of passion, and that it is a duty for us to do so and also to pray for help, according to the words of St. Augustine, quoted by the Council of Trent: "God never commands the impossible, but, in commanding, He warns us to do what we are able and to ask Him for help to do that which we cannot."

THE SIN OF MALICE

In contradistinction to the sin of ignorance and that of frailty, the sin of malice is that by which one chooses evil knowingly. In Latin it is called a

sin de industria, that is, a sin committed with deliberate calculation, design, and express intention, free from ignorance and even from antecedent passion. The sin of malice is often premeditated. This is not equivalent to saying that evil is willed for the sake of evil; since the adequate object of the will is the good, it can will evil only under the aspect of an apparent good.

Now he who sins through malice, acting with full knowledge of the case and through evil will, knowingly wills a spiritual evil (for example, the loss of charity or divine friendship) in order to possess a temporal good. It is clear that this sin thus defined differs in the degree of gravity from the sin of ignorance and that of frailty. But we must not conclude from this that every sin of malice is a sin against the Holy Ghost. This last sin is one of the gravest of the sins of malice. It is produced when a man rejects through contempt the very thing that would save him or deliver him from evil: for example, when he combats recognized religious truth, or when by reason of jealousy, he deliberately grows sad over the graces and spiritual progress of his neighbor.

The sin of malice often proceeds from a vice engendered by multiple faults; but it can exist even in the absence of this vice. It is thus that the first sin of the devil was a sin of malice, not of habitual malice but of actual malice, of evil will, of an intoxication of pride.

It is clear that the sin of malice is graver than the sins of ignorance and frailty, although these last are sometimes mortal. This explains why human laws inflict greater punishment for premeditated murder than for that committed through passion.

The greatest gravity of the sins of malice comes from the fact that they are more voluntary than the others, from the fact that they generally proceed from a vice engendered by repeated sins, and from the fact that by them man knowingly prefers a temporal good to the divine friendship, without the partial excuse of a certain ignorance or of a strong passion.

In these questions one may err in two ways that are contradictory to each other. Some lean to the opinion that only the sin of malice can be mortal; they do not see with sufficient clearness the gravity of certain sins of voluntary ignorance and of certain sins of frailty, in which, nevertheless, there is serious matter, sufficient advertence, and full consent.

Others, on the contrary, do not see clearly enough the gravity of certain sins of malice committed in cold blood, with an affected moderation and a

pretense of good will or of tolerance. Those who thus combat the true religion and take away from children the bread of divine truth may be sinning more gravely than he who blasphemes and kills someone under the impulse of anger.

Sin is so much the more grave as it is more voluntary, as it is committed with greater light and proceeds from a more inordinate love of self, which sometimes even goes so far as contempt of God. On the other hand, a virtuous act is more or less meritorious according as it is more voluntary, more free, and as it is inspired by a greater love of God and neighbor, a love that may even reach holy contempt of self, as St. Augustine says.

Thus he who prays with too great attachment to sensible consolation merits less than he who perseveres in prayer in a continual and profound aridity without any consolation. But on emerging from this trial, his merit does not grow less if his prayer proceeds from an equal degree of charity which now has a happy reaction on his sensibility. It is still true that one interior act of pure love is of greater value in the eyes of God than many exterior works inspired by a lesser charity.

In all these questions, whether good or evil is involved, particular attention must be paid to what proceeds from our higher faculties, the intellect and will: that is, to the act of the will following full knowledge of the case. And, from this point of view, if an evil act committed with full deliberation and consent, like a formal pact with the devil, has formidable consequences, a good act, such as the oblation of self to God, made with full deliberation and consent and frequently renewed, can have even greater consequences in the order of good; for the Holy Ghost is of a certainty infinitely more powerful than the spirit of evil, and He can do more for our sanctification than the latter can for our ruin. It is well to think of this in the face of the gravity of certain present-day events. The love of Christ, dying on the cross for us, pleased God more than all sins taken together displeased Him; so the Savior is more powerful to save us than the enemy of good is to destroy us. With this meaning, Christ said: “Fear ye not them that kill the body and are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him that can destroy both soul and body in hell.” Unless we open the door of our hearts to him, the enemy of good cannot penetrate into the sanctuary of our will, whereas God is closer to us than we are to ourselves and can lead us strongly and sweetly to the most profound and elevated meritorious free acts, to acts that are the prelude of eternal life.

Chapter 22

The Predominant Fault

After treating of the principal sins to be avoided and of their roots and consequences to be mortified, it is fitting that we discuss in a special way the predominant fault that exists in each of us. That we may proceed with order, we must first see in what this fault consists, then how to recognize or discern it, and lastly how to combat it.

DEFINITION OF THE PREDOMINANT FAULT

The predominant fault is the defect in us that tends to prevail over the others, and thereby over our manner of feeling, judging, sympathizing, willing, and acting. It is a defect that has in each of us an intimate relation to our individual temperament. There are temperaments inclined to effeminacy, indolence, sloth, gluttony, and sensuality. Others are inclined especially to anger and pride. We do not all climb the same slope toward the summit of perfection: those who are effeminate by temperament must by prayer, grace, and virtue become strong; and those who are naturally strong, to the point of easily becoming severe, must, by working at themselves and by grace, become gentle.

Before this progressive transformation of our temperament, the predominant defect in the soul often makes itself felt. It is our domestic enemy, dwelling in our interior; for, if it develops, it may succeed in completely ruining the work of grace or the interior life. At times it is like a crack in a wall that seems to be solid but is not so; like a crevice, imperceptible at times but deep, in the beautiful facade of a building, which a vigorous jolt may shake to the foundations. For example, an antipathy, an instinctive aversion to someone, may, if it is not watched over and corrected by right reason, the spirit of faith, and charity, produce disasters in the soul

and lead it to grave injustice. By yielding to such an antipathy, it does itself far more harm than it does its neighbor, for it is much more harmful to commit injustice than to be the object of it.

The predominant fault is so much the more dangerous as it often compromises our principal good point, which is a happy inclination of our nature that ought to develop and to be increased by grace. For example, a man is naturally inclined to gentleness; but if by reason of his predominant fault, which may be effeminacy, his gentleness degenerates into weakness, into excessive indulgence, he may even reach the complete loss of energy. Another, on the contrary, is naturally inclined to fortitude, but if he gives free rein to his irascible temperament, fortitude in him degenerates into unreasonable violence, the cause of every type of disorder.

In every man there is a mixture of good and bad inclinations; there is a predominant fault and also a natural quality. If we are in the state of grace, we have a special attraction of grace, which generally perfects first of all what is best in our nature, and then radiates over that which is less good. Some are thus more inclined toward contemplation, others toward action. Particular care must be taken that the predominant fault does not snuff out our principal natural quality or our special attraction of grace. Otherwise our soul would resemble a field of wheat invaded by tares or cockle, of which the Gospel speaks. And we have an adversary, the devil, who seeks to foster the growth of our predominant fault that he may place us in conflict with those who work with us in the Lord’s field. Christ Himself tells us: “The kingdom of heaven is likened to a man that sowed good seed in his field. But while men were asleep, his enemy came and oversowed cockle among the wheat and went his way.”

Christ explains that the enemy is the devil, who seeks to destroy the work of God by creating disunion among those who, in a holy manner, ought to collaborate in the same work for eternity. He is skillful in exaggerating in our eyes the defects of our neighbor, in transforming a grain of sand into a mountain, in setting up, as it were, a magnifying glass in our imagination, that we may become irritated at our brethren instead of working with them. Considering all this, we can see what evil may spring up in each of us from our principal fault if we are not most attentive to it. At times it is like a devouring worm in a beautiful fruit.

Evidently it is of primary importance that we recognize our predominant fault and have no illusions about it. This is so much the more necessary as our adversary, the enemy of our soul, knows it quite well and makes use of it to stir up trouble in and about us. In the citadel of our interior life, which is defended by the different virtues, the predominant fault is the weak spot, undefended by the theological and moral virtues. The enemy of souls seeks exactly this easily vulnerable point in each one, and he finds it without difficulty. Therefore, we must recognize it also.

But how can we discern it? For beginners who are sincere, this is quite easy. But later the predominant fault is less apparent, for it tries to hide itself and to put on the appearances of a virtue: pride clothes itself in the outward appearances of magnanimity, and pusillanimity seeks to cover itself with those of humility. Yet we must succeed in discerning the predominant fault, for if we do not know it, we cannot fight it; and if we do not fight it, we have no true interior life.

That we may discern it, we must first of all ask God for light: “Lord, make me know the obstacles I more or less consciously place in the way of the working of Thy grace in me. Then give me the strength to rid myself of them, and, if I am negligent in doing so, do Thou deign to free me from them, though I should suffer greatly.”

After thus asking sincerely for light, we must make a serious examination. How? By asking ourselves: “Toward what do my most ordinary preoccupations tend, in the morning when I awake, or when I am alone? Where do my thoughts and desires go spontaneously?” We should keep in mind that the predominant fault, which easily commands all our passions, takes on the appearance of a virtue and, if it is not opposed, it may lead to impenitence. Judas fell into impenitence through avarice, which he did not will to dominate; it led him to impenitence like a violent wind that hurls a ship on the rocks.

A second step in discerning the predominant fault, is to ask ourselves: “What is generally the cause or source of my sadness and joy? What is the general motive of my actions, the ordinary origin of my sins, especially when it is not a question of an accidental sin, but rather a succession of sins or a state of resistance to grace, notably when this resistance persists for several days and leads me to omit my exercises of piety?” Then we must seek sincerely to know the motive of the soul’s refusal to return to the good.

In addition, we must ask ourselves: “What does my director think of this? In his opinion, what is my predominant fault? He is a better judge than I am.” No one, in fact, is a good judge in his own case; here self-love deceives us. Often our director has discovered this fault before we have; perhaps he has tried more than once to talk to us about it. Have we not sought to excuse ourselves? Excuses come promptly, for the predominant fault easily excites all our passions: it commands them as a master, and they obey instantly. Thus, wounded self-love immediately excites irony, anger, impatience. Moreover, when the predominant fault has taken root in us, it experiences a particular repugnance to being unmasked and fought, because it wishes to reign in us. This condition sometimes reaches such a point that, when our neighbor accuses us of this fault, we reply that we have many bad habits, but truly not the one mentioned.”

The predominant fault may also be recognized by the temptations that our enemy arouses most frequently in us, for he attacks us especially through this weak point in our soul.

Lastly, in moments of true fervor the inspirations of the Holy Ghost ask us for the sacrifice of this particular fault.

If we have sincere recourse to these different means of discernment, it will not be too difficult for us to recognize this interior enemy which we bear within ourselves and which enslaves us: “Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin,” says our Lord.

It is like an interior prison that we bear about with us wherever we go. We must earnestly aspire to deliverance.

It would be a great grace for us if we were to meet a saint who would say: “This is your predominant fault and this your principal attraction of grace which you must follow generously to reach union with God.” In this way Christ applied the name, “sons of thunder” (Boanerges) to the young apostles James and John who wished to call down fire from heaven on a city that had refused to receive them. We read in St. Luke: “He rebuked them, saying: You know not of what spirit you are. The Son of man came not to destroy souls, but to save.” In the school of the Savior, the Boanerges became such gentle souls that toward the end of his life St. John the Evangelist could say only one thing: “My little children,... love one another.” When asked why he always repeated the same exhortation, he used to reply: “This is His commandment.... And he that keepeth His commandments, abideth in Him and He in him.” John had lost nothing of

his ardor, of his thirst for justice, but it had become spiritualized and was accompanied by a great gentleness.

HOW TO COMBAT THE PREDOMINANT FAULT

Because the predominant fault is our principal interior enemy, we must combat it. When it is conquered, temptations are no longer very dangerous, but are rather occasions of progress.

The predominant fault is not conquered, however, as long as there is no true progress in piety or the interior life, as long as the soul has not attained to a true and stable fervor of will; in other words, to that promptness of the will in the service of God which is, according to St. Thomas, the essence of true devotion. In this spiritual warfare, we must have recourse to three principal means: prayer, examination of conscience, and a sanction.

Our prayer must be sincere: “Lord, show me the principal obstacle to my sanctification, the one that hinders me from profiting by graces and also by the exterior difficulties that would work to the good of my soul if I had greater recourse to Thee when they arise.” The saints went so far as to say, as St. Louis Bertrand did: “Lord, here burn, here cut, and dry up in me all that hinders me from going to Thee, that Thou mayest spare me in eternity.” Blessed Nicholas of Flue used to pray: “Lord, take from me everything that hinders me from going to Thee. Give me all that will lead me to Thee. Take me from myself and give me to Thyself.”

This prayer does not dispense us from self-examination; on the contrary, it leads to it. And, as St. Ignatius says, it is especially suitable for beginners to write down each week the number of times they have yielded to their predominant fault which seeks to reign in them like a despot. It is easier to laugh fruitlessly at this method than to apply it fruitfully. If we keep track of the money we spend and receive, it is still more useful to know what we lose and what we gain from the spiritual point of view for eternity.

It is also highly proper to impose a sanction, or penance, on ourselves each time we fall into this defect. This penance may take the form of a prayer, a moment of silence, an exterior or an interior mortification. It makes reparation for the fault and satisfaction for the penalty due it. At the same time we acquire more circumspection for the future. Thus many persons have cured themselves of the habit of cursing by imposing on

themselves the obligation of giving an alms in reparation each time they fail.

Before conquering our predominant fault, our virtues are often, to speak more properly, natural good inclinations rather than true and solid virtues that have taken root in us. Prior to victory over this fault, the fountain of graces is not yet adequately opened on our soul, for we still seek ourselves too much and do not live sufficiently for God.

In addition, we must overcome pusillanimity, which leads us to think that our predominant fault cannot be eradicated. With grace we can overcome it, because, as the Council of Trent says, quoting St. Augustine: “God never commands the impossible; but in giving us His precepts, He commands us to do what we can, and to ask for the grace to accomplish what we cannot do.”

It has been said that the spiritual combat is in this case more necessary than victory, for, if we dispense ourselves from this struggle, we abandon the interior life, we no longer tend toward perfection. We must not make peace with our faults.

Moreover, credence must not be given to our adversary when he seeks to persuade us that this struggle is suitable only for the saints that they may reach the highest regions of spirituality. The truth is that without this persevering and efficacious struggle we cannot sincerely aspire to Christian perfection, toward which the supreme precept makes it a duty for all of us to tend. This precept is, in fact, without limit: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with all thy strength and with all thy mind: and thy neighbor as thyself.”

Without this struggle, there is no interior joy or peace, for the tranquility of order or peace comes from the spirit of sacrifice. It alone establishes us interiorly in order by putting to death all that is inordinate in US.

Lastly, charity, the love of God and of souls in God, finally prevails completely over the predominant fault; it then truly occupies the first place in our soul and reigns there effectively. Mortification, which makes our principal fault disappear, delivers us and assures the predominance in our soul of our true natural qualities and of our special attraction of grace. Thus little by little, we grow to be ourselves, in the broad sense of the word, that is, to be supernaturally ourselves minus our defects. We do not have to copy in a more or less servile manner another’s qualities, or enter a uniform mold that is the same for all. There is a great variety in human personalities, just

as no two leaves or flowers are perfectly similar. But a person's temperament must not be crushed; it must be transformed while keeping whatever is good in it. In our temperament, our character must be the imprint of the acquired and infused virtues, especially of the theological virtues. Then, instead of instinctively referring everything to self, as is the case when the predominant fault reigns, we will turn everything back to God, think almost continually of Him, and live for Him alone; at the same time we will lead to Him those with whom we come into contact.

NOTE

That we may know ourselves better, we should vary the examination of conscience, making it at times according to the order of the commandments of God and the precepts of the Church; at other times, following the order of the moral and theological virtues; or considering the sins opposed to these different virtues, indicated in the two following outlines:

Inordinate love of self	Pride	in regard to self	Vain glory, from which come: disobedience, boastmg, hypocrisy, contention through rivalry, discord, singularity, stubbornness. Acedia (sloth), hatred of spiritual things, whence are born: malice, rancor, pusillanimity, discouragement, spiritual torpor, forgetfulness of the precepts, seeking after forbidden things.
		in regard to one's neighbour	Envy, from which spring: hatred, detraction, regard calumny, joy at the misfortune of another, to sadness at his success. Anger, whence come: disputes, fits of passion, , insults, contumely, blasphemy.
	Concupiscence	of the eye's	Avarice, whence proceed: perfidy, fraud, deceit, perjury, itch to acquire and excessive anxiety to keep, harshness, hardness of heart.
		of the flesh	Gluttony, which engenders: improper jokes, buffoonery, impurity, foolish conversation, stupidity. Lust, whence proceed: spiritual blindness, poor judgment, impetuosity (of decision), inconstancy, love of self even to hatred of God, attachment to the present life which destroys hope of eternal life.

				Contrary Vices
Virtues	Theological	Charity	toward God and the gift of wisdom	disgust for spiritual things
			towards one's neighbour and mercy	envy, discord, scandal
		Hope	confidence, abandonment, and the gift of fear, opposed to presumption	presumption despair
		Faith	and the spirit of faith, and the gifts of understanding and knowledge	infidelity, blasphemy, blindness, culpable ignorance
	Cardinal	Prudence	docility to good counsels and the gift of counsel	imprudence and negligence, carnal prudence, cunning
		Justice	and the connected virtues of religion (gift of piety), penance, filial piety, obedience, gratitude, veracity, fidelity, liberality	injustice, impiety, superstition, hypocrisy, lying
		Fortitude	and the gift of fortitude, with magnanimity, patience and perseverance	rash boldness, cowardliness, and pusillanimity
		Temperance	sobriety and chastity, with meekness and humility	intemperance, lust, anger, pride and curiosity

Chapter 23

Passions to be Regulated

There can be no interior life without a struggle against self in order to regulate and discipline the passions, to cause the light of right reason and even that of infused faith and of Christian prudence to descend into these movements of the sensible appetites. There is far more than we think in the expression, to discipline one's sensible appetite; it should receive discipline like a docile pupil who is being trained. Consequently it is fitting that we speak of the passions. To proceed in an orderly fashion, we must consider them from the psychological, the moral, and the essentially ascetical point of view. We shall follow the teaching of St. Thomas.

THE PASSIONS FROM THE PSYCHOLOGICAL POINT OF VIEW

St. Thomas, who follows Aristotle and St. John Damascene, defines passion thus: "A movement of the sensitive appetite when we imagine good or evil.... A passion is properly to be found where there is corporeal transmutation."

When we say that it is a movement of the sensible appetite, common to man and animal, a distinction is made between passion and a movement of the spiritual will, called the rational appetite. Neither must the movement of the sensible appetite be confused with corporeal movements: for example, with the beating of the heart that follows it. These movements of the sensitive appetite which are the passions manifestly exist in the animal: for example, when it desires its food, and in it passion is now under a mild form, as in the dove or the lamb, now under a violent form, as in the wolf, the tiger, or the lion.

Following Aristotle, St. Thomas distinguishes and classifies the different passions in a remarkable manner. He distinguishes first of all the

concupiscible appetite, which inclines one to seek for sensible and delectable good and to flee injurious evil, and the irascible appetite, which inclines one to resist obstacles and, in spite of them, to obtain a difficult good. There are animals and men dominated by the irascible appetite, others dominated by the concupiscible.

In the concupiscible appetite, in regard to sensible good which attracts, three passions are distinguished: the love of this sensible good, whether it is present or absent; the desire of this good, if it is absent; the joy, if it is present. These movements of the sensible appetite are seen in the animal to which food is brought or from which it is removed.

On the contrary, in reference to evil to be avoided, we distinguish in the concupiscible, hatred, aversion, and sadness. Thus the lamb instinctively flees from the wolf.

In the irascible appetite, in reference to the good difficult to obtain (bonum arduum), there are the two passions of hope and of despair or dejection, according as this good appears obtainable or unobtainable. And in this same appetite, with regard to injurious evil to be repulsed, there is audacity and fear, according as this evil is easy or difficult to repulse, and also anger, if it is a question of a present evil to be surmounted or an insult to be avenged.

In the spiritual will there are analogous movements of love, desire, joy, hope, and so on, but these are of an immaterial order, whereas the passion is always accompanied by a movement of the organism, because of the fact that the sensible appetite is united to an organ.

Among all the passions, the first of all, presupposed by all the others, is sensible love: for example, in the animal, love of the food that it needs. From this love are born desire, joy, hope, audacity, or hatred of what is contrary, aversion, sadness, despair, fear, anger.

From what we have said, it is evident that passion, as it has been defined, is not always lively, vehement, and dominant. However, many modern authors apply the term “passion” to a particularly intense movement of the sensible appetite and reserve “emotion” to others that are less strong.

PASSION FROM THE MORAL POINT OF VIEW

From the moral point of view, the passions have been widely discussed. The partisans of the morality of pleasure have said that all passions are

good, as the legitimate expansion of our nature. This justification of the passions is found among both ancient and modern writers.

The Stoics, on the contrary, condemned the passions, saying that they are a movement which, opposed to right reason, troubles the soul. According to them, the wise man must suppress the passions and reach impassibility.

Aristotle, followed by St. Thomas, states more profoundly that the passions or emotions, considered as such, are morally neither good nor bad, but become morally good if they are aroused or regulated by right reason and the will which utilizes them as powers, or they become morally bad if they are not conformable to right reason. Their morality depends on the intention of the will, which is always either good or bad, according as it bears or does not bear on a worthy end. Thus, anger may be holy or, on the contrary, unreasonable. Christ willed to show holy indignation when driving the vendors from the Temple and overturning their tables. Likewise, in Gethsemane Christ, who was about to expiate all our sins, willed to be sorrowful even unto death to make us understand the sorrow we should have for our own sins.

Therefore, if the passions or emotions are regulated, moderated by right reason, they are morally good; they are forces to be used in the service of virtue: for example, courage, which is a virtue, makes use of hope and audacity while moderating them. Likewise modesty, which is a laudable emotion, helps the virtue of chastity, and that other emotion, known as sensible pity toward the unfortunate, renders easy for us the exercise of the virtue of mercy. The act of virtue, St. Thomas says, is even more meritorious when it makes good use of the passions in view of a virtuous end.

It is clear, in fact, that God has given us our sensible appetites, as He has given us our exterior senses and imagination, as He has given us our two arms, that we may use them in view of a moral good. Thus utilized, the passions when well regulated are powers. And whereas the so-called antecedent passion, which precedes judgment, clouds the reason, as happens in the fanatic or the sectarian, the so-called consequent passion, which follows the judgment of right reason illumined by faith, increases merit and shows the power of good will for a great cause. With this meaning, Pascal could say: “Nothing great is accomplished without passion,” without this flame of sensibility, which is like the radiation of zeal

or the ardor of love of God and of neighbor. This zeal consumed the hearts of the saints and showed itself in their courage and endurance.

But the inordinate or undisciplined passions become vices because of their inordinateness: sensible love becomes gluttony or luxury; aversion becomes jealousy, envy; audacity becomes temerity; fear becomes cowardliness or pusillanimity.

When these inordinate passions precede the judgment of reason, they trouble it and can diminish responsibility, merit, and demerit; when they follow judgment and are willed, they increase the malice of the act. Then instead of being powers in the service of goodness, they are in the service of perversity. Whereas in the souls of the saints, of missioners, and of martyrs, a perfectly ordered passion is a power that manifests and serves the love of God and neighbor; in the soul of a criminal, it manifests and serves unbridled self-love.

THE PASSIONS FROM THE ASCETICAL POINT OF VIEW

According to the principles we have just recalled, we shall consider the passions from the ascetical point of view in their relation to the interior life. From these principles it follows that the passions, being in themselves neither good nor bad, ought not to be extirpated like vices, but should be moderated, regulated; properly speaking, they should be disciplined by right reason illumined by faith. If they are immoderate, they become the roots of vices; if they are disciplined, they are placed at the service of the virtues. A man must not be inert and, as it were, made of straw, nor should he be violent and irascible.

Little by little the light of reason and the superior light of infused faith must descend into our sensible appetites that they may not be like those of an animal without reason, but those of a rational being, of a child of God, who shares in the intimate life of the Most High.

We should direct our thoughts to Christ’s sensible appetites, which were pure and strong because of the virtues of virginity, patience, and constancy even to the death of the cross. Let us also think of the sensibility of Mary, Virgin most pure and Mother of Sorrows, coredemptress of the human race. We shall thus see how our sensible appetites ought to be ever more and more subjected to our intellect illumined by faith, to our will vivified by charity, and how the light and living flame of the spirit ought to radiate over

our emotions to sanctify them and place them at the service of God and of our neighbor. St. Paul exhorts us, saying: “Rejoice with them that rejoice; weep with them that weep.” This is characteristic of the saints; they manifest admirable delicacy of feeling for the afflicted; at times they alone can find words which uplift and fortify.

From this point of view, the passions must be moderated, not materially but proportionately to what reason requires in relation to a more or less lofty given end to be reached in given circumstances. Thus, without sinning, a person may experience great sadness, great fear, or lively indignation in certain grave circumstances. We read in Exodus II that Moses, seeing the Israelites adoring the golden calf, crushed this idol to dust and punished with great severity those who were most guilty. In the First Book of Kings, the priest Heli is reprimanded for not having become indignant at the evil conduct of his sons. On the road to perfection, those who are naturally meek must become strong, and those who are naturally inclined to be strong-willed must become gentle. Both are climbing toward the summit by different slopes.

To drive a horse well, now the bit must be used, and now the whip; the same applies to the governing of the passions. At times they must be checked, and at other times awakened, jolted, in order to react against sloth, inertia, timidity, or fear. At times a great effort is required to break an impetuous horse; the same is true of disciplining certain temperaments capable of great things. How beautiful it is to see these temperaments transformed by the profound impress of a Christian character after ten or fifteen years of self-discipline!

With a view to the interior life, one must be particularly attentive, above all at the beginning, to a special point: that is, to be on guard against precipitation and also against the dominant passion, that it may not become a predominant fault. As we have already spoken of the predominant fault, we here insist on precipitation to be avoided or, as the expression goes, on impulsiveness, which inclines one to act without sufficient reflection.

With rash haste many beginners, otherwise very good, at times wish to make too rapid progress, more rapid than their degree of grace warrants. They desire to travel rapidly because of a certain unconscious presumption; then, when trial comes, they sometimes let themselves be cast down at least for a moment. This condition is similar to what happens also in young students at the beginning of their curiosity in their work; when it is satisfied

or when application becomes too painful, negligence and sloth follow. As a matter of fact, the happy medium of virtue, which is at the same time a summit above two opposing vices, like strength above temerity and cowardliness, is not attained immediately.

Properly speaking, what is precipitation? St. Thomas defines it as a manner of acting by impulsion of the will or of the passion, without prudence, precaution, or sufficient consideration. It is a sin directly opposed to prudence and the gift of counsel. It leads to temerity in judgment and is comparable to the haste of one who descends a staircase too rapidly and falls, instead of walking composedly.

From the moral point of view, one should descend in a thoughtful manner from reason, which determines the end to be attained, to the operations to be accomplished without neglecting the steps that intervene, that is, the memory of things past, intelligent attention to present circumstances, shrewdness in foreseeing obstacles that may arise, docility in following authorized advice. One must take time to deliberate before acting; “one should deliberate slowly and without haste,” as Aristotle used to say. Afterward one must sometimes act with great promptness.

If, on the contrary, a person is inclined to action by the impulse of the will or of the passion, while neglecting the intervening steps we have just mentioned, the memory of the past, attention to the present, foresight of the future, and docility, such a person stumbles and falls. This is inevitable.

What are the causes of precipitation? As spiritual writers say, this defect comes from the fact that we substitute our own natural activity for the divine action. We act with feverish ardor, without sufficient reflection, without prayer for the light of the Holy Ghost, without the advice of our spiritual director. At times this natural haste is the cause of extremely imprudent acts that are very harmful in their results.

Natural haste often arises from the fact that we consider only the proximate end to be attained today, without seeing its relation to the supreme end toward which we must direct our steps. Seeing only this immediate human end, we direct our efforts toward it by natural activity, without sufficient recourse to the help of God.

We can see in the training that Christ gave His apostles how often He warned them against this precipitation or natural haste, which causes a man to act without sufficient reflection and without a sufficiently great spirit of faith. Some pages back, we recalled that James and John on returning from

their first apostolate, during which a town refused to receive their preaching, asked our Lord to send fire from heaven on this village. With divine irony, Christ then called them Boanerges, or “sons of thunder,” to remind them that they should be sons of God and, like Him, should also be patient in awaiting the return of sinners. James and John understood; so well indeed, that John at the end of his life could only say: “Love one another, this is the commandment of the Lord.” In Christ’s school, the Boanerges become gentle; yet they do not lose their ardor or their zeal, but this zeal becomes patient, gentle, and less fiery, and bears lasting fruits, the fruits of eternity.

We would do well also to remember how St. Peter, who was called to a high degree of sanctity, was cured of his rash haste and presumption. When our Lord announced His passion, Peter said to Him: “Although all shall be scandalized in Thee, I will never be scandalized. Jesus said to him: Amen I say to thee, that in this night before the cock crow, thou wilt deny Me thrice.” Humbled by his sin, Peter was cured of his presumption. He no longer counted on himself, but on divine grace by asking to be faithful to it; and grace led him to the very heights of sanctity by the way of martyrdom.

The precipitation we are speaking of sometimes leads young, generous, and ardent souls to wish to reach the summit of perfection more rapidly than grace, without any delay en route, without taking into consideration the intermediary degrees and the mortification necessary for disciplining the passions, as if they had already reached divine union. They sometimes read works on mysticism with avidity and curiosity, and gather from them beautiful flowers before fruit has time to form. They thus expose themselves to many illusions and, when disillusionment comes, they expose themselves to the danger of falling into spiritual sloth and pusillanimity. We should walk at a good pace, indeed with an ever firmer and more rapid step in proportion as we draw near to God who attracts us the more, but we must avoid what St. Augustine calls “great strides off the right road.”

The effects of this haste and of the self-satisfaction that accompany it, are the loss of interior recollection, perturbation, and fruitless agitation, which has only the outward appearances of productive action, as glass beads counterfeit diamonds.

The remedies for precipitation are easily indicated. Since this defect comes from the fact that we substitute our natural, hasty action for that of God, the chief remedy is to be found in a complete dependence in regard to

God and in the conformity of our will to His. For this, we must reflect seriously before acting; pray humbly for the light of the Holy Ghost, and also heed the advice of our spiritual director, who has the grace of state to guide us. Then gradually precipitation will be replaced by habitual docility to the action of God in us. We shall be a little less satisfied with ourselves, and we shall find greater peace and, from time to time, true joy in God.

To discipline the passions, we must be alert to combat vivacity of temperament united to presumption, which springs from too great esteem of self; we must also contend against effeminacy, and against sloth, which would be even more harmful to the interior life. By this slow persevering work, on which we should daily examine ourselves, the ardent, the Boanerges, must become meek without losing true spiritual ardor, which is zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. And the meek also, who are perhaps inclined by nature to effeminacy, heedlessness, and negligence, must become strong. Both will thus ascend by different slopes toward the summit of perfection. And they will see that it is a great thing to know how to discipline themselves gradually, to conduct themselves well, or to put it better, to know how to remain habitually faithful to grace, without which, in the order of salvation, we can do nothing.

Then the passions, no longer inordinate but disciplined, will become powers truly useful for the good of our soul and that of others. Audacity will be at the service of a fortitude that will dominate thoughtless fear when, for example, there is a question of coming promptly to the help of our neighbor in distress. Likewise meekness, which presupposes a great mastery over self, will repress anger so that it may never be anything but the holy indignation of zeal, of a zeal which, without losing any of its ardor, remains patient and meek and is the sign of sanctity.

Chapter 24

The Active Purification of the Senses or of the Sensible Appetites

"If thy right hand scandalize thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee." Matt. 5: 29

Now that we have discussed the sins to be avoided, their consequences to be mortified, and the passions to be disciplined, we must treat of the active purification of the senses and of the sensible appetites, then of that of the intellect and the will. We shall then speak of the purification of the soul through the sacraments and prayer, and finally of the passive purification of the senses, which, according to St. John of the Cross, is at the threshold of the illuminative way.

THE PRINCIPLES TO BE APPLIED

When we treated of mortification in general according to the Gospel and St. Paul, we saw that it is imposed on us for four principal motives: (1) because of the consequences of original sin, especially of concupiscence; (2) because of the effects of our personal sins; (3) because of the infinite elevation of our supernatural end (God seen as He sees Himself), which demands a subjection not only of the senses to reason, but of reason to the spirit of faith and to charity; (4) finally, because of the necessity of carrying the cross in order to follow Christ who died for us.

We must now apply these principles and see, first of all, what the mortification or active purification of the senses and of the sensible appetites should be.

St. Thomas treats this subject at length when he discusses the passions in general and in particular, also the seven capital sins and their results, and finally when he speaks of the virtues that have their seat in the sensible

appetites, such as temperance, chastity, fortitude, patience, meekness, and so on.

Among the great masters of the spiritual life, St. John of the Cross deals with this same subject in The Ascent of Mount Carmel and at the beginning of The Dark Night where he discusses the faults of beginners, or the seven capital sins transposed into the spiritual order: spiritual pride, spiritual gluttony, spiritual sloth, and so on.

Here we should recall the necessity of observing the precepts, especially the supreme precepts of love of God and of our neighbor, consequently of avoiding every mortal sin, and also of guarding ourselves better against our more or less deliberate venial sins. Although a man cannot, without a very special help which the Blessed Virgin received, continually avoid all venial sins taken together, he can avoid each one of them in particular. He should also strive more and more to suppress imperfection, which is a lesser good, an act of a lesser degree of generosity in the service of God. The lesser good is not an evil; but, in the order of good, one should not stop at the lowest rung of the ladder, at the least degree of light and warmth. The happy medium of the acquired virtue of temperance, described by Aristotle, is doubtless already a good, but we should aspire higher, that is, to the happy mean of infused temperance, which, moreover, rises in proportion to the growth of this virtue, united to that of penance, especially when the gifts of the Holy Spirit, like that of fear, incline us to greater generosity in order the better to overcome ourselves and advance more rapidly. Besides, there are still many degrees in this greater generosity, according, for example, as one ascends toward the summit of perfection by the winding road, which is easier, or by the straight road traced by St. John of the Cross, which reaches its goal more rapidly and leads higher.

To avoid sin and imperfection, we must remember here that the capital sins dispose to others, which are often more serious, as vainglory does to disobedience, anger to blasphemy, avarice to hardness, gluttony to impurity, luxury to the hatred of God. We could never beg God too fervently for light to see the gravity of sin and to have a greater contrition for our faults. With fraternal charity, it is one of the greatest signs of spiritual progress.

We must also remember that venial sin, especially if it is repeated, disposes to mortal sin; for he who easily commits venial sin loses purity of intention, and if the occasion presents itself, he may sin mortally. Venial sin is thus on a dangerous slope, like a wall which hinders us from reaching

union with God. On the road of perfection, he who does not advance, falls back.

Likewise imperfection, or an act not wholly generous, disposes us to venial sin. Acts that do not measure up to our degree of charity and of the other virtues (actus remissi), although they may still be meritorious, indirectly dispose us to redescend, for they do not exclude as much as they ought the inordinate inclinations which may cause us to fall. We shall discuss especially the mortification of sensuality and of anger.

THE MORTIFICATION OF SENSUALITY

We shall begin our consideration of this topic by recalling Christ's exhortation: "If thy right eye scandalize thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee. For it is expedient for thee that one of thy members should perish, rather than that thy whole body be cast into hell." Christian morality explains this text when, on the subject of the sixth commandment, it teaches that outside of marriage, carnal delectation directly willed with full deliberation is a mortal sin. In this case there is no light matter. Why? Because such direct consent disposes one proximately to a sin that is still more grave; it is like inserting a finger into a gear where the whole arm will be caught. Here one is faced with avoiding a capital sin which leads to inconsiderateness, inconstancy, blindness of spirit, love of self even to hatred of God, and to despair.

Therefore St. Paul strongly recalls the necessity of this mortification, of which he gives an example when he writes: "I chastise my body and bring it into subjection: lest perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway." The consideration here is the mortification of the senses and of the body in order to assure the liberty of the spirit, and in order that the body may not weigh down the soul, but allow it to follow a higher life.

St. Thomas teaches that lust is avoided rather by flight from the occasions than by direct resistance, which makes one think too much of the thing to be fought against. On the contrary, acedia, or spiritual sloth, is overcome rather by resistance, for, in order to resist it, we think of spiritual goods, and the more we think of them, the more they attract us.

We should also seek to avoid as far as possible even indirectly voluntary movements of sensuality, especially when there is proximate danger of

consent. It is thus expedient for a number of people to avoid certain reading (works on medicine, for example) which might become dangerous for them because of their frailty, especially if they read through curiosity and not through a duty of state.

From this point of view, we must also watch over certain affections which may become too sensible and even sensual. The author of The Imitation tells us that we must avoid excessive familiarity with persons in order to enjoy our Lord's, and that certain affections which are too lively and too sensible cause us to lose peace of heart. St. Teresa says also in The Way of Perfection that certain particular friendships are plagues which little by little make the soul lose fervor, then regularity, and which sometimes give rise to the most profound divisions in communities and compromise salvation.

At this point the mortification of the heart is no less necessary than that of the body and the senses.

Finally, care must be taken not to seek sensible consolations for their own sake in prayer through a sort of spiritual gluttony. He who loves God not for Himself, but for the sensible consolations he receives or expects, is not in order. He loves himself first and God in the second place, as a person loves a product inferior to himself. This is an inverted order and, consequently, a more or less conscious perversion. By putting self first, one misuses what is most holy and exposes oneself to all temptations.

Spiritual enjoyments, sought for themselves, will awaken the passions dormant in our heart of flesh, and, instead of taking the road that the saints have followed, we slip insensibly down the slope along which the false mystics, especially the quietists, let themselves be drawn. Corruptio optimi pessima, the worst corruption is that which attacks what is best in us, that is, the love of God, in order to disfigure and pervert it. There is nothing higher on earth than true mysticism, which is the eminent exercise of the loftiest virtue, charity, and of the gifts of the Holy Ghost which accompany it; on the other hand, there is nothing worse than false mysticism, than the false love of God and of our neighbor, which is true only in name and which resembles true mysticism as an imitation diamond does a real one. St. John tells us: "Dearly beloved, believe not every spirit; but try the spirits if they be of God."

To avoid illusion, we need humility and purity of heart here. We may even say that all Christ's teaching on the mortification of sensuality is

summed up in these words: “Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God.”

But the Gospel insists strongly on another mortification, that of the irascible appetite, the other form of the inordinateness of the sensibility, which is divided, as we have seen, into the concupiscible appetite and the irascible appetite.

THE MORTIFICATION OF THE IRASCIBLE APPETITE

We read in the Sermon on the Mount: “You have heard that it was said to them of old: Thou shalt not kill.... But I say to you, that whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment.... If therefore thou offer thy gift at the altar, and there thou remember that thy brother hath anything against thee; leave there thy offering before the altar, and go first to be reconciled to thy brother; and then coming thou shalt offer thy gift. Be at agreement with thy adversary betimes, whilst thou art in the way with him.”

A little farther on, Christ says: “But I say to you not to resist evil: but if one strike thee on thy right cheek, turn to him also the other. And if a man will contend with thee in judgment and take away thy coat, let go thy cloak also unto him.” Acting thus, the Christian does not sharply defend his rights; he thinks more of his duties than of his rights, and often wins over to God the soul of his irritated brother, whom he calms by his patience and meekness. The saints acted in this way and often won to God the violent who opposed them.

In the same sermon Christ tells us: “Love your enemies: do good to them that hate you: and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you.... For if you love them that love you, what reward shall you have?... Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect.”

And, to be sure, if we truly acted in this way toward our adversaries (even exteriorly, where there are no superior interests to safeguard), we would most certainly reach sanctity, that supernatural perfection which is a participation, not alone of angelic life but of the inner life of God, a perfection which is of the same order as that of our Father in heaven.

To reach it we need the mortification of the irascible appetite which makes us acquire the virtue of meekness, not the effeminacy of temperament or the supineness of those who let everything go because they have no energy or because they are afraid to react, but the virtue of

meekness, which is a great power to conquer ourselves, to possess our souls, to keep them calm, in the hand of God, and thus to do true good to those very persons who are irritated at us, to those who are like the broken reed that must not be completely crushed by answering them in the same irritated tone.

This mortification of the irascible appetite is so much the more necessary as the results of anger are more serious; for it leads to other sins, occasionally even to cursing and blasphemy.

On the other hand, meekness is the flower of charity and protects its fruits, for it makes counsels and even reproaches acceptable. A reproach given with great kindness is often well received, whereas when given with sharpness it produces no results. Thus Christ tells us: “Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart.”

At this point it is expedient to say something about the type of anger which is the “bitter zeal” mentioned by spiritual writers, especially St. John of the Cross, when dealing with the defects of beginners.

Some, he says, become impatient as soon as they are deprived of consolations: “For when spiritual things minister to them no more sweetness and delight, they naturally become peevish, and in that bitterness of spirit prove a burden to themselves in all they do: trifles make them angry, and they are at times intolerable to all about them.... Their natural temper is soured and rendered morose. They are,” says the saint, “like a babe weaned from the breast.” They also occasionally fall into spiritual sloth.

Or perhaps “they are angry with other people for their faults, with a sort of unquiet zeal, and watch them; they are occasionally moved to blame them, and even do so in anger, constituting themselves guardians of virtue. All this is contrary to spiritual meekness.” And there is pride involved. They see the mote in their neighbor’s eye and do not see the beam in their own.

“Others, again, seeing their own imperfections, become angry with themselves with an impatience that is not humble. These impatient people show that they expect to be saints in one day.” St. John of the Cross says: “Many of these make many and grand resolutions, but, being self-confident and not humble, the more they resolve, the more they fall, and the more angry they become; not having the patience to wait for God’s time; this is also opposed to spiritual meekness. There is no perfect remedy for this but

in the dark night," or the passive purification of the senses, of which we shall speak farther on.

Finally, the saint remarks: "There are, however, some people who are so patient, and who advance so slowly in their spiritual progress, that God wishes they were not so patient."

The active purification of the sensible appetites or the mortification that we impose on ourselves must cause this double disorder of sensuality and irritability to disappear; but it cannot completely suppress it. To finish its work, there is needed a more profound purification, that which comes directly from God Himself, when he places the sensibility in a special and prolonged aridity in which He communicates to us a superior light—that of the gift of knowledge, knowledge of the vanity of all earthly things—which is not a sensible grace but an entirely spiritual grace. It is the passive purification of the senses of which we shall speak farther on. This purification is one of the forms of the salutary cross we must carry in order to reach the true life of the spirit, which dominates the senses and unites us to God.

Chapter 25

The Active Purification of the Imagination and the Memory

"In all thy works remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin." Ecclus. 7:40

What we have said of the active purification of the senses and of the sensible appetites has already demonstrated that exterior mortification is not the most important; yet he who neglects it will also neglect all interior mortification and end by losing completely the spirit of abnegation.

This loss would occur especially if a person deliberately wished no longer to trouble himself about mortification. He would thus fall, as frequently happens, into practical naturalism substituted for the spirit of faith, and finally he would no longer keep practically anything of Christ's precept: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross."

If anyone deliberately wishes to take as food all that is pleasing and always to be at his ease, without any spirit of Christian temperance, he no longer tends toward perfection and forgets the loftiness of the supreme precept: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with all thy strength and with all thy mind." A religious who acts in this manner loses sight of the special obligation of the religious life.

But the exterior mortification of the body and senses would be without great result if it were not accompanied by the interior mortification of the imagination and the memory, of which we are going to speak, and by the active purification of the intellect and will, which we shall treat of next.

THE ACTIVE PURIFICATION OF THE IMAGINATION

The imagination is a faculty that is undeniably very useful to us, since the soul united to the body cannot think without images; an image always accompanies the idea. This fact explains why Christ spoke to the multitudes in parables, that He might lift them gently from the sensible image to the spiritual idea of the kingdom of God; in like manner, to make the Samaritan woman understand the value of divine grace, He did not tell her about it in abstract terms, but used the figure of the “fountain of water, springing up into life everlasting.”

But, to be useful, the imagination must be directed by right reason illumined by faith; otherwise it may become, as someone has said “the mad woman in the house.” It diverts us from the consideration of divine things and inclines us toward vain, inconsistent, and fantastic, or even forbidden things. At the very least, it leads us to daydreaming that gives rise to sentimentality, which is opposed to true piety.

It is not always in our power, especially in periods of fatigue, to dispel at once vain or dangerous images; but, with the help of grace, we can will not to grant them the attention of the mind, and we can gradually diminish their number and their attraction. Even perfect souls continue to suffer certain involuntary ramblings of the imagination aroused occasionally by the devil, as St. Teresa points out in the fifth mansion and even in the sixth. But, as the interior soul advances, it gradually frees itself from these wanderings of the fancy and ends by contemplating God and His infinite goodness, scarcely paying any attention to the images which accompany this act of penetrating and sweet faith. Thus we write with a pen without noticing its form, and frequently we converse with a person without paying any attention to the shape or color of his garments, unless there is something strange or unusual about them.

Consequently the imagination ceases little by little to trouble the exercise of the intellect, and finally is placed positively at its service that it may occasionally express in beautiful images those things that pertain to the interior life, somewhat as Christ expressed them in parables or in His conversations with Nicodemus or the Samaritan woman. These images ought, therefore, to be unimpassioned and discreet in order to draw attention not to themselves, but to the superior idea which they express. Then, as a well-born person wears a garment that is simple and in good taste without according it any more attention than is necessary, so the

thought makes use of the figure without dwelling on it. The image is there only for the thought, and the thought only for the expression of truth.

But such a harmony of our faculties is not realized without true discipline of the imagination in order that it may cease to be the mad woman in the house and may truly be placed at the service of the intellect illumined by faith. In this way alone can we gradually re-establish the order that existed in the state of original justice, in which the superior part of the soul retained the direction of the imagination and the different emotions of the sensibility as long as it obeyed God whom it contemplated and loved above all.

According to these principles, we must brush aside at once dangerous images and memories, put away also useless reading and vain reveries that would make us lose precious time and might expose us to all sorts of illusions in which the enemy would make sport of us in order to ruin us.

To effect this discipline, we must apply ourselves to the duty of the moment (age quod agis) with a healthy realism, directing the accomplishment of this duty to God, who should be loved above all. Thus will our intellect and will gradually dominate our imagination and sensibility; and our obedient imagination will find in the beauties of the liturgy food for our interior life.

St. John of the Cross points out that true devotion is concerned with the spiritual and invisible object, represented by sensible images, without pausing at these, and that the nearer a soul draws to divine union, the less it depends on images.

However, it is important at this point to speak more particularly of the mortification of the memory, which exposes us to live in the unreal and which only too often recalls to us what ought to be forgotten.

THE ACTIVE PURIFICATION OF THE MEMORY

St. John of the Cross discusses this subject at length. Here we are concerned at the same time with the sensible memory, which exists in animals, and the intellectual memory that is common to men and angels. The intellectual memory is not a faculty really distinct from the intellect; it is the intellect in so far as it retains ideas.

Why does our memory need to be purified? Because, since original sin and as a result of our repeated personal sins, it is full of useless and sometimes dangerous memories. In particular, we often recall the wrongs

our neighbor has done us, the harsh words for which we have not yet completely pardoned him, although he himself may have keenly regretted them. We remember less the favors we have received from our neighbor than what we have had to suffer from him, and a harsh word often makes us forget all the kindnesses that have come to us from him in the course of several years. But the chief defect of our memory is what Scripture calls the proneness to forget God. Our memory, which is made to recall to us what is most important, often forgets the one thing necessary, which is above time and does not pass.

What St. John of the Cross says about the necessity of the purification of the memory may seem exaggerated at first reading; but our impression changes if we read first of all what the Scriptures say on the subject.

Scripture often speaks of man's proneness to forget God. Isaias writes: "Truth hath been forgotten: and he that departed from evil, lay open to be a prey. And the Lord saw, and it appeared evil in His eyes, because there is no judgment."

Jeremias, speaking in the name of God, says: "Will a virgin forget her ornament?... But My people hath forgotten Me days without number." Recalling the mercies of God in regard to the people of Israel saved by Him in their passage through the Red Sea, the Psalmist writes: "They forgot His works.... They forgot God, who saved them, who had done great things." Several times Scripture adds that especially in tribulation we should recall the mercies of God and implore His aid.

If we forget God and do not appreciate His immense benefits, those of the redemptive Incarnation, the institution of the Holy Eucharist, daily Mass, we are guilty of ingratitude and lose the time of the present life which ought to tend toward eternal life.

Proneness to forget God causes our memory to be as if immersed in time, whose relation to eternity, to the benefits and promises of God, it no longer sees. This defect inclines our memory to see all things horizontally on the line of time that flees, of which the present alone is real, between the past that is gone and the future that is not yet. Forgetfulness of God prevents us from seeing that the present moment is also on a vertical line which attaches it to the single instant of immobile eternity, and that there is a divine manner of living the present moment in order that by merit it may enter into eternity. Whereas forgetfulness of God leaves us in this banal and horizontal view of things on the line of time which passes, the contemplation of God is

like a vertical view of things which pass and of their bond with God who does not pass. To be immersed in time, is to forget the value of time, that is to say, its relation to eternity.

By what virtue must this great defect of forgetfulness of God be cured? St. John of the Cross answers that the memory which forgets God must be healed by the hope of eternal beatitude, as the intellect must be purified by the progress of faith, and the will by the progress of charity.

This doctrine is based on numerous sayings of Holy Scripture relative to the remembrance of the benefits of God and His promises. The Psalmist often says: “In the day of my trouble I sought God.... I remembered the works of the Lord.” “I will be mindful of Thy justice alone.” “The proud did iniquitously altogether: but I declined not from Thy law. I remembered, O Lord, Thy judgments of old: and I was comforted.” We read in Ecclesiasticus also: “In all thy works remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin.”

Holy Scripture often says also that we must ceaselessly remember the divine promises, which are the foundation of our hope. The patriarchs and prophets of the Old Testament lived by the promise of the Messias who was to come; and we should live daily more profoundly by the promise of eternal beatitude. It is one of the great recurrent themes in Holy Scripture.

On this point, as on so many others, The Imitation of Christ preserves admirably for us the spirit of St. Augustine, often using his very words. This teaching helps us to understand clearly what St. John of the Cross wrote later. The author of The Imitation often treats of the purification of the memory in the passages where he speaks of the forgetfulness of all creatures in order to find the Creator, of meditation on death, of anxiety to be avoided about one’s affairs, of vain and worldly learning, of the remembrance of the benefits of God, of liberty of heart, which is acquired by prayer rather than by reading.

We shall quote only the most characteristic passages which show how the purification of the memory prepares the soul for contemplation and union with God.

Of the contempt of everything created in order to find the Creator. For as long as any thing holds me back, I cannot freely fly to Thee.... And what can be more free than he who desires nothing upon earth? A man ought, therefore, to soar above everything created, and perfectly to forsake himself, and in ecstasy of mind to stand and see that Thou, the Creator of

all, hast nothing like to Thee among creatures. And unless a man be disengaged from all things created (for their sake or for himself), he cannot freely attend to things divine. And this is the reason why there are found so few contemplative persons, because there are few that know how to sequester themselves entirely from perishable creatures....

Of the thoughts of death. Oh, the dullness and the hardness of the human heart, that dwelleth only upon things present, instead rather of providing for those which are to come! Thou shouldst so order thyself in every deed and thought as if thou wert immediately to die.... Now is the time very precious, now is the acceptable time, now is the day of salvation.... And man's life passeth away suddenly like a shadow.... Whilst thou hast time, amass for thyself immortal riches. Think of nothing but thy salvation; care only for the things of God. Make to thyself friends now, by venerating the saints of God and imitating their actions, that when thou shalt fail in this life they may receive thee into everlasting dwellings. Keep thyself as a pilgrim and a stranger upon earth, that hath no concern with the business of the world. Keep thy heart free and lifted up to God, for thou hast not here a lasting city.

We should not settle ourselves on earth; people do not settle themselves on the road, or go to sleep there, but rather use it as a means of advancing toward a given end.

That a man must not be too anxious about his affairs. Son, commit thy cause to Me always; I will dispose of it well in its due season. Await My appointment, and thence thou shalt experience success therefrom....

Against vain and worldly learning. Son, let not the beautiful and subtle sayings of men affect thee; for the kingdom of God consisteth not in speech, but in virtue, Attend to My words, which inflame hearts and enlighten minds, which excite to compunction and afford manifold consolations.... When thou shalt have read and shalt know many things, thou must always revert to the one beginning. I am He who teacheth men knowledge, arid who giveth a more clear understanding to little ones than can be taught by man. He to whom I speak will quickly be wise and will profit greatly in spirit. Woe to them that inquire after many curious things of men, and are little curious of the way to serve Me. The time will come when Christ, the Master of masters, the Lord of Angels, shall appear to hear the lessons of all men, that is, to examine the conscience of everyone. And then will He search Jerusalem with lamps, and the hidden things of darkness shall be

brought to light, and the argument of tongues shall be silent. I am He that in an instant elevateth the humble mind to comprehend more reasons of the eternal truth than if anyone had studied ten years in the schools. I teach without noise of words, without confusion of opinions, without ambition of honor, without strife of arguments. I am He who teacheth to despise earthly things, to loathe things present, to seek the things eternal, to relish the things eternal, to fly honors, to endure scandals, to repose all hope in Me, to desire nothing out of Me, and above all things ardently to love Me.... I within am the Teacher of truth, the Searcher of the heart, the Understander of thoughts, the Mover of actions, distributing to everyone as I judge fitting....

Of the remembrance of the manifold benefits of God. Give me to understand Thy will, and to commemorate with great reverence and diligent consideration all Thy benefits, as well in general as in particular, that so henceforward I may be able worthily to return thanks for them.... All things that we have in soul and body... are Thy benefits.... He who hath received greater things, cannot glory of his own merit, nor extol himself above others, nor exult over the lesser.... For Thou, O God, hast chosen the poor and the humble, and those that are despised by this world, for Thy familiar friends and domestics....

Of liberty of heart. Lord, this is the work of a perfect man, never to let the mind slacken from attending to heavenly things, and amidst many cares to pass on as it were without care; not after the manner of an indolent person, but by a certain prerogative of a free mind, not cleaving with an inordinate affection to anything created.

Here we have truly the purification of the memory, which prepares for the infused contemplation of the great mysteries of faith. On this contemplation of the purified and liberated soul, The Imitation says:

> For this a great grace is required, such as may elevate the soul, and lift it up above itself. And unless a man be elevated in spirit and freed from attachment to all creatures and wholly united to God, whatever he knows and whatever he has is of no great importance.

Is this not equivalent to saying that the infused contemplation of the mysteries of faith and the union with God resulting from it are in the normal way of sanctity? The Imitation adds:

> Whatsoever is not God is nothing, and ought to be accounted as nothing. There is a great difference between the wisdom of an illuminated and devout man, and the knowledge of a learned and studious cleric. Far more noble is that learning which flows from above from the

> divine influence than that which is laboriously acquired by the industry of man. Many are found to desire contemplation, but they are not careful to practice those things which are required for its attainment.... From a pure heart proceedeth the fruit of a good life.

This teaching on the purification of the memory was particularly developed by St. John of the Cross, especially in relation to the remembrance of exceptional and so to speak exterior graces on which we must not dwell too much. The memory of them, accompanied by vain complacency, would turn us away from union with God. Hope lifts us up more to the love of God than experience of extraordinary graces. “What we have to do, then,” says the holy doctor, “in order to live in the simple and perfect hope of God, whenever these forms, knowledge, and distinct images occur, is not to fix our minds upon them but to turn immediately to God, emptying the memory of all such matters, in loving affection, without regarding or considering them more than suffices to enable us to understand and perform our obligations, if they have any reference thereto.”

Here we have truly the active purification of the memory which is too preoccupied with useless or dangerous memories. We should put this teaching into practice that our memory may no longer be, so to speak, immersed in ephemeral things, that it may no longer see them only on the horizontal line of fleeting time, but on the vertical line which attaches them to the single instant of immobile eternity.

Thus, little by little the soul rises often to the thought of God, recalling the great benefits of the redemptive Incarnation and the Holy Eucharist. Often, on the contrary, we enter a church to ask for some urgent grace, and we forget to thank God for the measureless blessing of the Eucharist. Its institution demands a special thanksgiving; this sacrament reminds us of the promises of eternal life.

Chapter 26

The Active Purification of the Intellect

"If thy eye be single, thy whole body shall be lightsome." Matt. 6: 22

The superior faculties of man, which he has in common with the angels, are the intellect and will. They, too, need to be purified and disciplined, for they suffer from a disorder which is the consequence of original sin and of our personal sins.

The first gaze of the intellect of the baptized infant is simple; the same is true of a soul that begins to respond generously to a higher vocation. But it may happen that in time this gaze loses its simplicity through the complexity of the things it examines with a heart that is more or less pure. Then a serious purification is needed in order to recover the first simplicity of the intellect by a profound view which dominates the details and inevitable griefs, in order to embrace life as a whole. Happy the old people who after long experience and many trials reach this superior simplicity of true wisdom, which they had glimpsed from a distance in their childhood! With this meaning it can be said that a beautiful life is a thought of youth realized in maturity.

We shall discuss here: (1) the necessity of the active purification of the intellect because of the defects found in it; (2) the active principle of this purification and what must be put into practice on this point.

THE NECESSITY OF THIS PURIFICATION: THE DEFECTS OF OUR INTELLECT

Since the commission of original sin, man's intellect is wounded. This wound is called that of ignorance; because of it, the intellect, instead of inclining spontaneously toward the true, and especially toward supreme Truth, has difficulty in attaining it and tends to become absorbed in the consideration of earthly things without rising to their cause. It is inclined

with curiosity toward ephemeral things and, on the other hand, it is negligent and slothful in the search for our true last end and the means leading to it. Consequently the intellect easily falls into error, lets itself be darkened by the prejudices which come from inordinate passions. It may finally reach the state that is called spiritual blindness.

Doubtless, original sin did not render our intellect incapable of knowing the truth, as the first Protestants and the Jansenists held. By patient effort, it can even acquire, without the help of revelation, the knowledge of a certain number of fundamental truths of the natural order, such as the existence of God, Author of the natural moral law. But, as the Council of the Vatican declares, in the terms St. Thomas used, few men are capable of this labor, and they reach this result only after a considerable length of time, without succeeding in freeing themselves from all error.

It is also true that this wound of ignorance, the consequence of original sin, is in the process of healing from the time of baptism, which regenerates us by giving us sanctifying grace. This wound may, however, reopen by reason of our personal sins, especially by reason of curiosity and intellectual pride, of which we must speak here.

Curiosity is a defect of our mind, says St. Thomas, which inclines us with eagerness and precipitation toward the consideration and study of less useful subjects, making us neglect the things of God and of our salvation. This curiosity, says the holy doctor, is born of spiritual sloth in respect to divine things, and makes us lose precious time. Whereas people who have little learning but are nourished with the Gospel possess great rectitude of judgment, there are others who, far from nourishing themselves profoundly with the great Christian truths, spend a great part of their time carefully storing up useless, or at least only slightly useful, knowledge which does not at all form the judgment. They are afflicted with almost a mania for collecting. Theirs is an accumulation of knowledge mechanically arranged and unorganized, somewhat as if it were in a dictionary. This type of work, instead of training the mind, smothers it, as too much wood smothers a fire. Under this jumble of accumulated knowledge, they can no longer see the light of the first principles, which alone could bring order out of all this material and lift up their souls even to God, the Beginning and End of all things.

This heavy and stupid intellectual curiosity, as St. John of the Cross says, is in this sense the inverse of contemplation, which judges all things by the

supreme cause. Such curiosity could lead to spiritual folly of which St. Paul often speaks, to the folly which judges all, even the highest things, by what is lowest and at times most contemptible, by the satisfactions of our concupiscence or of our pride.

Spiritual pride is a more serious disorder than curiosity. It gives us such confidence in our reason and judgment that we are not very willing to consult others, especially our superiors, or to enlighten ourselves by the attentive and benevolent examination of reasons or facts which may be urged against us. This state of mind leads to manifest imprudent acts that will have to be painfully expiated. It leads also to asperity in discussions, to stubbornness in judgment, to disparagement which excludes in a cutting tone all that does not fit in with our manner of seeing things. This pride may lead a person to refuse to others the liberty he claims for his own opinions, and also to submit only very imperfectly to the directions of the supreme Shepherd, and even to attenuate and minimize dogmas under the pretext of explaining them better than has been done hitherto.

These defects, especially pride, may finally lead us to spiritual blindness, which is the direct opposite of the contemplation of divine things. It is necessary to insist on this point, as St. Thomas did, after he treated of the gift of understanding.

Holy Scripture often speaks of this spiritual blindness. Christ was saddened and angered by the spiritual blindness of the Pharisees, and finally said to them: “Woe to you blind guides.... You tithe mint and anise and cummin, and have left the weightier things of the law: judgment and mercy and faith.... Blind guides, who strain out a gnat, and swallow a camel.”

In St. John’s Gospel we read that this blindness is a punishment of God, who withdraws light from such as do not wish to receive it.

There are sinners who, by reason of repeated sins, no longer recognize the signified will of God manifested in a striking manner; they no longer understand that the evils which befall them are punishments of God, and they do not turn to Him. By natural laws alone, they explain these misfortunes as things that afflict a number of people at the moment. They see in them only the result of certain economic factors, such as the development of machinery and overproduction which results from it. They no longer take into account that these disorders have above all a moral cause and come from the fact that many men place their last end where it is

not; not in God who would unite us, but in material goods which divide us, because they cannot belong simultaneously and integrally to a number.

Spiritual blindness leads the sinner to prefer in everything goods that are temporal rather than eternal goods. It prevents him from hearing the voice of God, which the Church recalls in the liturgy for Advent and for Lent: “Be converted to Me with all your heart.... Turn to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and merciful, patient and rich in mercy, and ready to repent of the evil”

Spiritual blindness is a punishment of God which takes away the divine light because of repeated sins. But there is also a sin by which we voluntarily turn away from the consideration of divine truth by preferring to it the knowledge of that which satisfies our concupiscence of our pride.

We may say of this sin what St. Thomas says of spiritual folly (stultitia), that it is opposed to the precepts of the contemplation of truth. It hinders us from seeing the proximity of death and the judgment. It takes all penetration away from us and leaves us in a state of spiritual dullness, which is like the loss of all higher intelligence. Then we no longer see the grandeur of the supreme precept of the love of God and of our neighbor, or the value of our Savior’s blood shed for us, or the infinite value of the Mass, which substantially perpetuates on the altar the sacrifice of the cross.

Such a condition is a chastisement, and no heed is paid to it. As St. Augustine says: “If, when a thief stole money, he lost an eye, everybody would say that it was a punishment of God; you have lost the eye of your mind and you think that God has not punished you.”

It is surprising at times to find among Christians men who have great literary, artistic, or scientific culture, but who have merely a rudimentary and superficial knowledge of the truths of religion, a knowledge mingled with many prejudices and errors. It is a surprising disproportion, which makes them, as it were, spiritual dwarfs.

Some others, better instructed in matters of faith, the history of the Church, and its laws, have a tendency that is, so to speak, anticontemplative, permitting them to see the life of the Church only from without, as if they were looking at the exterior of the windows of a cathedral, instead of seeing them from within under the soft light which should illumine them.

This dullness of mind especially hinders the hearing of the great preaching of God, who speaks in His own way through great contemporary

events. At the present time, there are in the world two radically contradictory universal tendencies, over and above the nationalism of different groups more or less opposed to one another. On the one hand, we find the universalism of the reign of Christ who wishes to draw the souls of men of all nations to God, supreme Truth and Life; on the other hand, we see false universalism, which is called communism, which draws souls in an inverse sense toward materialism, sensualism, and pride, in such a manner that the parable of the prodigal son is verified not only for individuals, but for whole nations, such as Russia.

The great problem of today is found in the conflict between the universalism of the reign of Christ and of the Church, which liberates souls, and communism, which leads them to materialist abjection and to the oppression of the weak under the pride of demagogues and leaders.

In this conflict we must turn to prayer and penance, no less than to study and apostolic work. This is what the Blessed Virgin declared at Lourdes: “Pray and do penance.”

Such are the defects of the mind which exist in us in various degrees: curiosity, rash haste to learn what is useless, indifference, negligence in regard to the one thing necessary (i.e., God and our salvation); spiritual pride, blindness, and spiritual folly, which ends by judging everything by what is lowest and most petty, whereas wisdom judges everything by the supreme cause and the last end.

How to remedy this disorder, from which we all suffer in a greater or lesser degree?

THE PRINCIPLE OF THE ACTIVE PURIFICATION OF THE INTELLECT

This purification must be made by the progress of the virtue of faith, as the purification of the memory, immersed in time, is made by the growth of the hope of eternal beatitude.

St. Thomas tells us: “To detach itself from transient things and to tend toward God, the rational creature must first of all have faith in God: faith is the first principle of the purification of the heart in order to free us from error, and faith quickened by charity perfects this purification.” The intellect, which directs the will, must itself be thus purified; otherwise the root of the will would be corrupted or deflected, mingled with error.

This purification is accomplished by judging more and more according to the spirit of faith. As Cajetan remarks, faith leads us first of all to adhere to revealed truths because of the authority of God who reveals them; then it leads us to consider and to judge all things according to these truths. This is true even of him who, in the state of mortal sin, has kept faith by which he is preserved from graver sins, such as theft and murder; and by reason of faith he judges that he must go to Mass and not refuse to listen to the word of God. These various judgments may be made without the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which are not in a man in mortal sin; but without the gifts these judgments do not have all the perfection they should. In the just man they receive this perfection from the gifts; then they are produced in a different manner, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Thus the gift of wisdom leads us to judge according to a certain connaturality or sympathy with divine things. This is the opinion of Cajetan, and many theologians adopt almost the same terms.

Not only must we adhere firmly to the truths of faith, but according to them we must judge what we are to think, say, do, or avoid in life. Then we judge according to the spirit of faith, and not according to the spirit of nature or practical naturalism.

St. John of the Cross tells us that obscure faith enlightens us. It is obscure because it makes us adhere to mysteries we do not see; but these mysteries, which are those of the inner life of God, greatly illumine our intellect, since they do not cease to express to us the goodness of God, who created us, raised us to the life of grace, sent His only Son to redeem us, His Son who gives Himself to us in the Eucharist in order to lead us to eternal life.

Faith is obscure, but it illumines our intellect in our journey toward eternity. It is very superior to the senses and to reason; it is the proximate means of union with God, whom it makes us know infallibly and supernaturally in obscurity.

Faith is very superior to all the sensible and intellectual evidences that can be had on earth. What is evident for our senses, is sensible, not spiritual; therefore it is not God Himself. What is evident for our reason, is what is proportioned to it; at times this is a truth about God, His existence, for example, but it is not the inner life of God, which surpasses our reason and even the natural powers of the angelic intellect.

To see the intimate life of God, a person would have to die and receive the beatific vision. Now, faith makes us attain here on earth this inner life of

God in the penumbra, in obscurity. Consequently a man who would prefer visions to infused faith would deceive himself, even if these visions were of divine origin, for he would prefer what is superficial and exterior, what is accessible to our faculties, to what surpasses them. He would prefer the figures to the divine reality. He would lose the meaning of the mystery; he would forsake true contemplation by withdrawing from this divine obscurity.

Obscure faith enlightens us somewhat like the night, which, though surrounding us with shadows, allows us to see the stars, and by them the depths of the firmament. There is here a mingling of light and shade which is extremely beautiful. That we may see the stars, the sun must hide, night must begin. Amazingly, in the obscurity of night we see to a far greater distance than in the day; we see even the distant stars, which reveal to us the immense expanse of the heavens.

In the same way, the senses and reason allow us to see only what belongs to the natural order, only what is within their reach, whereas faith, although obscure, opens up to us the supernatural world and its infinite depths, the kingdom of God, His inner life, which we shall see unveiled and clearly in eternity.

St. John of the Cross reiterates this teaching, which is like a commentary on the definition of faith given by St. Paul, a definition which St. Thomas sums up by saying: “Faith is a habit of the mind whereby eternal life is begun in us, making the intellect assent to what is non-apparent,” since it makes us adhere to the mystery of the inner life of God which we shall see in eternity.

It follows that, to live by faith, we should consider everything under its light: God, first of all, then ourselves, others, friends or strangers, and all agreeable or painful events. We should see them not only from the sensible, but also from the rational point of view, from the supernatural point of view of faith, which would be equivalent to considering all things, so to speak, with the eye of God, or somewhat as God sees them. Whence the manifest necessity of purifying our mind of curiosity, by no longer preferring the study of the secondary, of the subordinate, and sometimes of what is useless to the attentive meditation of the one thing necessary, to the reading of the Gospel and of all that can truly nourish the soul. This necessity of the supernatural point of view shows the importance of spiritual reading together with study and distinct from it.

Consequently it is of prime importance not to devour books in order to appear well informed and to be able to talk about them, but to read what is suitable to the life of the soul, in a spirit of humility in order to be penetrated with it, to put it into practice, and to do real good to others. We may recall with profit what St. Paul says (Rom. 12: 3): “For I say, by the grace that is given me, to all that are among you, not to be more wise than it behooveth to be wise, but to be wise unto sobriety.”

Therefore we must avoid rash haste in judgment, for this haste is the source of many errors. We must even more avoid tenacity in our own judgment, and correct this defect by docility to the directions of the Church, to those of our spiritual director, and also to the Holy Spirit, who wishes to be our interior Master that He may make us live increasingly the life of faith and give us in it a foretaste of the life of heaven.

If we followed this rule, the consideration of details would no longer make us lose sight of the whole, as so often happens, just as trees seen too near hinder one from seeing the forest. Those who say that the problem of evil cannot be solved and find in it an occasion of sin, are absorbed in the woeful verification of certain painful details and lose the general view of the providential plan in which everything is ordained to the good of those who love the Lord.

The excessively meticulous study of details makes us depreciate the first global view of things; when the latter is pure, however, it is already elevated and salutary. Thus when a Christian child sees the starry sky, he finds in it a splendid sign of the infinite grandeur of God. Later on, if he becomes absorbed in the scientific study of the different constellations, he may forget the view of the whole, to which the intellect must finally return the better to comprehend its loftiness and profundity. It has been said that if a little learning withdraws a person from religion, great learning brings him back to it.

Likewise the great supernatural facts which are produced by God to enlighten the simple and to save them, such as the fact of Lourdes, are rather easily grasped by the clean of heart. They quickly see the supernatural origin, meaning, and import of these facts. If this simple, and at the same time superior, point of view is forgotten because of absorption in the study of details considered from the material point of view, only an undecipherable enigma may be found in it, and at times only something impossible to see through. Then, while learned men discourse endlessly

without being able to reach a conclusion, God does His work in the clean of heart. Finally, more profound learning, accompanied by humility, leads back to the original view of the whole in order to confirm it, and to recognize the action of God and the profound good done to souls. Thus, after a life consecrated to the study of philosophy and theology, the soul delights in returning to the simplicity of faith of the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to the words of the psalms, to the parables of the Gospel. It is the purification of the intellect which prepares for contemplation.

Chapter 27

The Active Purification of the Will

"For Thou art God my strength." Ps.42:2

We have seen that the intellect must be purified not only from error, ignorance, willfulness, and spiritual blindness, but also from curiosity, which gives too much importance to what is secondary and not enough to what is primary, when the work of the intellect should be directed to God, our last end, and to the good of souls. We must now speak of the purification and training of the will.

The will or rational appetite, which is very superior to the sensitive appetite, is a faculty which tends toward the good known through the intellect; it has for its object the universal good, which permits it to rise to the love of God, the sovereign Good. Whereas each of the other faculties is inclined to its own good the sight to what is visible, the intellect to the intelligible true-the will is inclined to the good of the entire man This explains why it applies the other faculties to the exercise of their acts, for example, the intellect to the search for the true. This is also why, if the will is fundamentally upright, a man is good; he is not only a good mathematician or a good physician, he is a man of good or, as the Gospel says, "a man of good will" On the contrary, if the will has not the desired rectitude, if it is not inclined toward the true good of the entire man, he may be a good logician, a good painter, or a good musician, but he is not a man of good; he is an egoist, whose virtues, more apparent than real, are inspired by pride, ambition, or the fear of difficulties and vexations.

Thus free will gives not only to its own (or elicited) acts, but also to the acts of the other faculties which it commands (commanded acts), their liberty and their merit or demerit. Therefore, to regulate the will is to regulate the entire man. But in the will there are defects, deviations, which are the result of original sin and of our personal sins.

The strength of the will to move itself and to incline the other faculties to act comes from its docility to God, from its conformity to the divine will, because then, by grace, the divine strength passes into it. This is the great principle dominating this whole question.

All the meaning and the bearing of this principle are seen when we recall that, in the state of original justice, as long as the will was subject to God through love and obedience, it had the strength to command the passions completely and to reject every disorder of the sensible faculties; the passions were then totally subjected to the will vivified by charity.

Since original sin, we are born without sanctifying grace and charity, with our wills turned away from God, the supernatural last end, and weak for the accomplishment of our duties even in the natural order.

Without falling into the exaggeration of the first Protestants and the Jansenists, we must say that we are born with a will inclined to egoism, to inordinate self-love. This is called the wound of malice; it often manifests itself by a gross egoism, against which one should guard, an egoism that mingles in all man’s acts. It follows that the will, which has become weak by reason of its lack of docility to God, no longer has absolute power over the sensible faculties, but only a sort of moral power or persuasion to lead them to subject themselves. Doubtless after baptism, which regenerated us by giving us sanctifying grace and charity, this wound, like the others, is in the process of healing; but it also reopens by reason of our personal sins.

The principal defect of the will is the lack of rectitude, called self-love or inordinate love of self, which forgets the love due to God and that which we should have for our neighbor. Self-love or egoism is manifestly the source of all sins. From it are born “the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life.” The sensible appetites, which are no longer firmly led, incline man to thoughtlessness, feverish eagerness, fruitless agitation, selfish search for all that pleases, flight from all that is painful, nonchalance, discouragement, in which he sees that his will has lost its strength, and to all sorts of bad examples.

It is clear that self-will, which is defined as that which is not conformed to the will of God, is the source of every sin. Self-will is extremely dangerous because it can corrupt everything; even what is best in one may become evil when self-will enters in, for it takes itself as its end, instead of subordinating itself to God. If the Lord perceives this will in a fast or a

sacrifice, He rejects them because He sees therein a divine work accomplished through pride in order to gain approbation. Now, self-will is born of self-love or egoism; it is strong self-love that has become imperious.

On the subject of self-love or egoism, we may fall into two opposing errors: utilitarianism and quietism. Theoretical or practical utilitarianism does not see an evil in egoism, but a power that should be moderated. This doctrine, which reduces virtue to a business transaction, suppresses all morality; it reduces praiseworthy good to the useful and the delectable. This good, the object of virtue and duty, ought to be loved for itself and more than ourselves, independently of the advantages or the pleasure that may result therefrom: “Do what you ought, come what may.” Practical utilitarianism leads to pride, which inclines a person to make himself the center of all who live about him; it is the manifest or hidden pride of the desire to dominate.

On the other hand, quietism condemned all interested love, even that of our eternal reward, as if there were a disorder in Christian hope, from the fact that it is less perfect than charity. Under the pretext of absolute disinterestedness, many quietists fell into spiritual sloth, which is indifferent to sanctification and salvation.

The thought of salvation and eternal beatitude is evidently very useful that we may strive to put to death inordinate love of self, which is the principal defect of our will. It is of this love that St. Augustine wrote: “Two loves have built two cities: the love of self even to the despising of God, the city of the earth; the love of God even to the despising of self, the city of God. One glorifies itself in self, and the other in the Lord. One seeks its glory from men, the other places its dearest glory in God, the witness of its conscience. The one in the pride of its glory walks with head high; the other says to its God: ‘Thou art my glory, and it is Thou who dost lift up my head.’ The former in its victories lets itself be conquered by its passion to dominate; the latter shows us its citizens united in charity, mutual servants, tutelary governors, obedient subjects. The former loves its own strength in its princes; the latter says to God: ‘Lord, Thou art my only strength, I shall love Thee.’ “ One would never weary of quoting St. Augustine.

A great purification and Christian training of the will are necessary to obliterate all inordinate self-love; this result is produced in us by the

progress of charity, which “unites man to God so that he lives not for himself, but for God.”

Egoism is like a cancer of the will, which ravages it more and more, whereas sanctifying grace should be in it like a strong root which buries itself ever deeper in the soil in order to draw therefrom nourishing secretions and transform them into fruitful sap. We should think of the value of habitual grace, called the “grace of the virtues and the gifts,” because of various proximate principles of meritorious acts springing from it. We would do well to consider that our will should possess a high degree of the virtues of justice, penance, religion, hope, and charity in order that its powers may be vastly increased.

The author of The Imitation thus describes inordinate self-love when he has Christ say: “My son, thou must give all for all, and be nothing of thy own. Know that the love of thyself is more hurtful to thee than anything of the world.... If thy love be pure, simple, and well ordered, thou shalt not be in captivity to anything. Covet not that which thou mayest not have. Seek not to have that which may embarrass thee and deprive thee of thy inward liberty. It is wonderful that thou wilt not, from the very bottom of thy heart, commit thyself wholly to Me, with all things that thou canst desire or have. Why dost thou pine away with vain grief? Why art thou so worn with superfluous cares? Be resigned to My good pleasure, and thou shalt suffer no loss. If thou seekest this or that, or wouldst be here or there for thy own interests’ sake, and the more to indulge thy own will, thou wilt never be at rest or free from solicitude; for in everything there will be found some defect, and in every place therewill be someone that will cross thee.”

The same book of The Imitation describes well the various movements of wounded nature, which remains weakened even after baptism:

> Nature is crafty and draweth away many, ensnareth them and deceiveth them, and always proposeth self as her end... Nature is neither willing to be mortified, restrained, overcome, nor subject, neither of its own accord to be brought under obedience.... Nature laboreth for its own interest and considereth what gain it may derive from another.... It willingly receiveth honor and respect,... is afraid of shame and contempt; seeketh to have things that are curious and beautiful;... hath regard to temporal things, rejoiceth at earthly gains, is troubled at losses, and is irritated at every slight injurious word.... Nature is covetous, and liketh rather to take than to give, and loveth to have things exclusive and private.... Nature glorieth in noble place and descent, smileth on them that are in power, flattereth the rich.... It easily complaineth of want and of trouble; it coveteth to know secrets and to hear news; desireth to appear abroad, longeth to be taken notice of, and to do those things which may procure praise and admiration....

> Grace teacheth, therefore, to restrain the senses, to avoid vain complacency and ostentation, humbly to hide those things which are worthy of praise and admiration; and from everything, and in every knowledge, to seek the fruit of utility, and the praise and honor of God.... This grace is a supernatural light and a certain special gift of God, the proper mark of the elect, and a pledge of eternal salvation, which elevateth a man from earthly things to love such as are heavenly, and from carnal maketh him spiritual. Wherefore, as nature is the more kept down and subdued, with so much the greater abundance is grace infused; and every day by new visitations the interior man is reformed according to the image of God.

St. Catherine of Siena, speaking of the effects of self-love, says: “The soul cannot live without love, but always desires to love something.... So, if the sensual affection desires to love sensual things, the eye of the intellect sets before itself for its sole object transitory things, with self-love, displeasure of virtue, and love of vice, whence it draws pride and impatience, and the memory is filled with nothing but what the affection presents to it. This love so dazzles the eye of the intellect that it can discern and see nothing but such glittering objects.”

We read in the same Dialogue: “Thus is injustice committed through miserable self-love, which has poisoned the whole world, and the mystical body of holy Church, and through which the garden of My spouse has run to seed and given birth to putrid flowers.” It is self-love that renders man unjust toward God, to whom he no longer renders the glory that is due Him, and toward souls to which he no longer gives the true goods without which they cannot live. Finally, self-love, which overthrows in our will the order willed by God, leads to trouble, discouragement, discord, and all dissensions; it brings about the total loss of peace, the tranquillity of order, which is truly found only in those who love God more than themselves and above all.

All the passages in Tauler’s works where he speaks of the necessity of purifying the depths of our will should be consulted.

THE PURIFICATION OF THE WILL BY PROGRESS IN THE LOVE OF GOD

How can we restore to our more or less weakened and vitiated will its power for good, the real power that makes it conquer spiritual sloth and also pride, which is a weakness hidden under the mask of energy? To bring about this restoration, we must remember the harmony existing in the state of original justice in which, as long as man’s will was docile and conformable to that of God, it had the grace and strength to dominate the passions, to prevent every fault, whence spring disorder and

discouragement. To renew our spiritual energies we must, therefore, render our will increasingly docile to the will of God, who will then give us ever new graces to advance along the way of perfection.

The training of the will must be made by progress in the virtues which it ought to possess: the virtue of justice, which renders to everyone his due; of religion, which renders to God the worship we owe Him; of penance, which repairs the injury of sin; of obedience to superiors; of veracity or of loyalty; above all, of charity, of love of God and neighbor.

From this higher point of view, the strength of will of a Napoleon seems insignificant compared to that of the sublime beggar, St. Benedict Joseph Labre, or that of the humble Cure of Ars. In the first centuries, the strength of will of Christian virgins, like Agnes and Cecilia, was incomparably superior to that of their executioners.

In the practice of all the virtues, docility to the divine will presupposes abnegation of self-will, that is, of the will not conformed to that of God. The spirit of sacrifice alone, by putting to death our inordinate self-love, can assure the first place to the love of God and give us peace. Profound peace of soul is impossible without the spirit of sacrifice. Therefore our Lord says: “If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself”; and also, “Unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, itself remaineth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life (selfishly) shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world (who leads a sacrificed life) keepeth it unto life eternal” In the spirit of abnegation we must be ready to abandon everything in order to do the will of God as it shall be manifested to us. We must say with the Psalmist: “My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready.” Like St. Paul at the moment of his conversion, we must daily pray thus: “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?”

Is this purification of the will in order to remove egoism and self will, something difficult? By reason of reiterated faults, it is very difficult in certain persons, and without divine grace it is even impossible in everyone. In fact, only the love of God, which is the fruit of grace, can triumph over self-love and put it to death; but if the love of God grows in us, what was at first difficult becomes easy. With this meaning Christ said: “My yoke is sweet and My burden light.”

Mortification of self-will is facilitated in the religious life by the practice of obedience, which rectifies and considerably strengthens the will by

making it daily more and more conformable to the divine will, manifested by the rule and the orders of superiors.

To succeed in purifying and strengthening the will, a person must act according to the profound convictions of Christian faith, and not according to his own spirit, which is more or less variable, according to circumstances and the fluctuations of opinion. When anyone has reflected before God and prayed to obtain His grace, he must act with decision in the way duty directs or in that which seems most conformable to the divine will. We have only one life, and it is short; it must not be wasted in trifles. Moreover, we must with persevering courage firmly and persistently will what appears to us to be our duty. In this way we avoid both the fluctuations of successive inclinations, some opposed to others, and unreasonable violence. True strength of will is calm; in calmness it is persevering so that it does not become discouraged by momentary lack of success or by any wounds received. No one is conquered until he has given up the struggle. And he who works for the Lord puts his confidence in God and not in himself.

Lastly, the strong will is the one that rests, not on the careening of obstinate pride, but on God, on His grace, which we ought to ask for daily with humility and confidence. If with humility, confidence, and perseverance we implore the graces necessary for our sanctification and salvation, they will infallibly be granted us in virtue of Christ's promise: "Ask, and it shall be given you: seek, and you shall find: knock, and it shall be opened to you." 926) Genuine strength of will, the effect of divine grace, is drawn from humble, trusting, and persevering prayer. Therein is found the true supernatural training of the will. Prayer is our strength in our weakness. Knowledge of its power made St. Paul say: "I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me." This should be the sentiment of one who sees himself obliged to undergo martyrdom rather than deny his Christian faith. God never commands the impossible and gives to those who truly ask it the grace to be faithful in the midst of the greatest trials. Then the will becomes strong, with that divine strength of which the Psalmist speaks when he says: Dominus fortitudo mea. By divine grace the human will then shares in the power of God and frees itself from self-love, from the attraction of everything that turns it away from God and hinders it from being wholly His. Thus abnegation and the spirit of sacrifice are the inevitable way of divine union, in which the love of God is finally victorious over self-love or egoism. He who has this holy hatred of his ego, which is made up of self-

love and pride, saves his soul for eternity and obtains even here on earth a peace and union with God which are a foretaste of eternal life.

THE SPIRIT OF DETACHMENT

In The Ascent of Mount Carmel, St. John of the Cross sets forth a profound doctrine on the perfect abnegation of self-will. He indicates the most direct route to reach lofty perfection and shows how the austerity of the narrow way leads to the sweetness of divine union. If we recall the elevation of the end he has in view, we will not consider the abnegation he demands exaggerated. A man who wishes to climb a mountain does not stop at the first difficulties; knowing that he needs energy, he urges himself forward. The same is true of him who truly wishes to make progress toward the summit of perfection.

We shall sum up the teaching of St. John of the Cross on detachment in respect to exterior goods and in regard to the goods of the spirit and of the heart, in a word, to all that is not God and His will.

We should detach ourselves from exterior goods, riches and honors. “If riches abound, set not your heart upon them.” St. Paul says: “The time is short... and they that rejoice, as if they rejoiced not;... and they that use this world, as if they used it not.” Even those who do not effectively practice the counsel of evangelical poverty ought to have its spirit if they wish to tend to perfection.

We must detach ourselves from the goods of the body, from beauty, from health itself; it would be an aberration to cling to them more than to union with God. And we cling to health far more than we think; if it were irremediably taken from us, it would be a true sacrifice for us, and one that may be asked of us. All these things will pass away like a flower that withers.

We must avoid all complacency in the virtues we may have. To entertain any complacency would be vanity and perhaps amount to scorn of our neighbor. The Christian ought to esteem the virtues, not inasmuch as they are in him like a personal possession, but inasmuch as they lead the soul to God.

When we receive consolations in prayer, we must not dwell on them with satisfaction; to do so would be to make of this means of drawing near to God an obstacle that would hinder us from reaching Him. It would be the

equivalent of pausing in a selfish fashion over something created and making an end of the means. By so doing, we would set out on the road of spiritual pride and illusion. All that glitters is not gold; and we must be careful not to confound an imitation diamond with a real one. We should remind ourselves of our Savior's words: "Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God and His justice; and all these things (all that is useful to your soul and even to your body) shall be added unto you."

Therefore we understand that adversity is good for us in order to deliver us from illusion and make us find the true road again.

Finally, if a person were to receive extraordinary graces, such as the gift of prophecy, he should avoid all attachment to this divine favor and live in holy detachment in its regard, at the same time recalling the words of St. Paul: "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal." Christ also says to His apostles: "But yet rejoice not in this, that spirits are subject unto you (that you drive out demons); but rejoice in this, that your names are written in heaven."

On the subject of eloquence, St. John of the Cross says: "For though it is true that a good style and action, profound learning, and correct expression have a greater effect when they accompany true spirituality; still when that is wanting, though the senses be charmed and the understanding delighted, but little or no substantial warmth reaches to the will. In general, the will remains dull and weak as before in good works, though marvelous things have been marvelously told it.... Though men may be wonderful preachers, yet their sermons are soon forgotten if they kindle no fire in the will."

This teaching of St. John of the Cross demonstrates how necessary it is that the preacher greatly purify his intention that his words may truly bear life-giving fruit, which will last for eternity. To effect this purification, his soul must live according to the spirit of immolation or of sacrifice, which assures the first place in the soul to the love of God and of souls in God.

The fruit of the purification of the will, which we have just mentioned, is peace, the tranquillity of order in which the soul is established with respect to God and its neighbor. This peace is not always joy, but it tends to become more profound and more lofty and to radiate even on the most troubled souls, giving them the light of life. This is what Christ says: "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." They will make Him known and loved.

As a practical conclusion, each one ought, in his examination of conscience, to ask himself whether his spirit of self-abnegation is increasing or diminishing. If there is no longer the minimum of exterior mortification, it is a sign that interior mortification has disappeared, that he no longer tends toward perfection, and that he is like salt which has lost its savor.

Here it should be remembered that on the journey toward God, he who does not advance falls back. And what would a religious or sacerdotal life be in which there is evidence of slower and slower progress, like the movement of a stone that has been cast into the air and that will soon fall back? A uniformly retarded progress is followed by a recoil. Especially in the religious and sacerdotal life, this progress should, on the contrary, be so to speak uniformly accelerated, like the movement of a stone that tends toward the center of the earth which attracts it. Souls ought, in fact, to advance more rapidly toward God, the nearer they approach Him and are more drawn by Him.

We should pray as follows: “My God, make me know the obstacles which I more or less consciously place to the working of grace in my soul. Show these obstacles to me at the moment when I am about to place them. Give me the strength to remove them, and, if I am negligent in doing so, do Thou deign to remove them, though I should suffer greatly. I wish only Thee, Lord, who alone art necessary. Grant that my life here on earth may be like eternal life begun.”

He who would say this prayer frequently would make great progress, which would be written in the book of life. Undoubtedly he would receive many crosses, but he would be borne by them more than he would bear them, as a bird is borne by its wings more than it bears them. This is what The Imitation says: “If thou carry the cross willingly, it will carry thee, and bring thee to thy desired end, namely, to that place where there will be an end of suffering, though here there will be no end.” This is the true road by which one enters the inner courts of the kingdom of God.

Chapter 28

The Healing of Pride

To complete what we have said about the active purification of the intellect and will, we must speak particularly of the healing of two fatal spiritual maladies: pride and spiritual sloth.

First of all, we shall see the general nature of pride in contradistinction to the virtues of humility and of magnanimity; then the various forms of pride and the way to heal them.

THE TRUE NATURE OF PRIDE

To know the true nature of pride, we should first note that it is a spiritual sin, in itself less shameful and less debasing, but more grievous, says St. Thomas, than the sins of the flesh, because it turns us more away from God. The sins of the flesh could not be in the demon who was irremediably lost through pride. Scripture on several occasions says that “pride is the beginning of all sin,” because it does away with the humble submission and obedience of the creature to God. The first sin of the first man was a sin of pride, the desire of the knowledge of good and evil, that he might be his own guide and not have to obey. In the opinion of St. Thomas, pride is more than a capital sin; it is the source of the capital sins, and particularly of vainglory, which is one of its first effects.

Some are deceived, at least practically, about the true nature of pride, and as a result, without wishing to do so, may commend false humility, which is a form of hidden pride more dangerous than that which displays itself and makes itself ridiculous.

In determining exactly the true nature of pride, the difficulty comes from the fact that it is opposed not only to humility, but also to magnanimity, which is sometimes confounded with it. We should be at pains not to

confound practically the magnanimity of others with pride, and not to mistake our pusillanimity or timidity for true humility. Sometimes the inspiration of the gift of counsel is needed to discern these things in a really practical manner, to see how the truly humble soul must be magnanimous, and how false humility is distinguished from the true. The Jansenists saw a lack of humility in the desire for frequent Communion.

St. Thomas, who was exceedingly humble and magnanimous, established very well the exact definition of these two virtues, which should be united, and that of the defects opposed to them. He defined pride as the inordinate love of our own excellence. The proud man wishes, in fact, to appear superior to what he really is: there is falsity in his life. When this inordinate love of our own excellence is concerned with sensible goods, for example, pride in our physical strength, it belongs to that part of the sensibility called the irascible appetite. It is in the will when it is concerned with goods of the spiritual order, such as intellectual pride and spiritual pride. This defect of the will presupposes that our intellect considers our own merits and the insufficiencies of our neighbors more than it ought, and that it exaggerates in order to raise us above them.

Love of our own excellence is said to be inordinate as it is contrary to right reason and divine law. It is directly opposed to the humble submission of the defectible and deficient creature before the majesty of God. It differs exceedingly from the legitimate desire of great things conformable to our vocation: for example, a magnanimous soldier can and ought to desire victory for his country without pride entering into his wish. Whereas the proud man immoderately desires his own excellence, the magnanimous man devotes himself to a great cause, superior to himself, and accepts in advance all humiliations in order to accomplish what is in his estimation a great duty.

Pride is therefore, as St. Augustine says, a perverse love of greatness; it leads us to imitate God in a wrong way, by not bearing with the equality of our fellow men and by wishing to impose our domination on them, instead of living with them in humble submission to the divine law.

Pride is thus more directly opposed to humility than to magnanimity; the inverse holds true for pusillanimity, which is more directly opposed to nobility of soul. In addition, whereas humility and magnanimity are connected virtues which complete and balance each other like the two

arches of an ogive, pride and pusillanimity are contradictory vices, like temerity and cowardice.

What we have said shows that pride is a bandage over the eyes of the spirit, which hinders us from seeing the truth, especially that relative to the majesty of God and the excellence of those who surpass us. It prevents us from wishing to be instructed by them, or it prompts us not to accept direction without argument. Pride thus perverts our life as one would bend a spring; it hinders us from asking light from God, who consequently hides His truth from the proud. Pride turns us away, therefore, from the affective knowledge of divine truth, from contemplation, to which humility, on the contrary, disposes us. Therefore Christ says: “I confess to Thee, a Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them to little ones.” Spiritual pride is most powerful in turning us away, from the contemplation of divine things. With this meaning, St. Paul writes: “Knowledge puffeth up; but charity edifieth.”

THE DIFFERENT FORMS OF PRIDE

St. Gregory enumerates several degrees of pride: namely, to believe that we have through our own efforts what we have received from God; to believe that we have merited what we have gratuitously received; to attribute to ourselves a good we lack, for example, great learning, when we do not possess it; to wish to be preferred to others and to depreciate them.

Doubtless it is rare that a man lets himself be led so far astray by pride as to reject the existence of God, to declare that he will have “neither God nor master,” even to refuse explicitly to submit himself to God as Lucifer did, or to go so far as to reject the authority of the Church as formal heretics do. We clearly recognize in theory that God is our first principle, that He alone is great, and that obedience is due Him; but in practice it happens that we esteem ourselves inordinately, as if we were the author of the qualities we possess. We may take complacency in them, forgetting our dependence on Him who is the Author of all good, whether natural or supernatural. It is not rare to find a sort of Pelagianism in men who are in no way Pelagians in theory.

A man exaggerates his personal qualities by closing his eyes to his own defects; and he even ends by glorying in what is a deviation of the spirit, as

if it were a quality. He may believe, for example, that he is broadminded because he pays scant attention to the little duties of daily life; he forgets that to be faithful in great things, he must begin by being so in little things, for the day is composed of hours, the hour of minutes, and the minute of seconds. Thus he is led to prefer himself unjustly to others, to disparage them, to believe himself better than some who are, nevertheless, really his superiors.

These sins of pride, which are often venial, may become mortal if they incite us to gravely reprehensible acts.

St. Bernard enumerates also several progressive manifestations of pride: curiosity, levity of mind, foolish and misplaced joy, boasting, singularity, arrogance, presumption, the refusal to recognize one's errors, the dissimulation of one's sins in confession, rebellion, unbridled liberty, the habit of sin even to the contempt of God.

The different forms of pride may also be considered in relation to the different goods, according as a person takes pride in his birth, wealth, physical qualities, knowledge, his piety or his sham piety.

Intellectual pride leads certain studious men to reject the traditional interpretation of dogmas, to attenuate them, or to deform them in order to harmonize them with what they call the exigencies of the mind. In others, this pride is manifested by a singular attachment to their own judgment, to such a degree that they do not even wish to listen to reasons sometimes stronger in favor of the adverse opinion. Some finally, who are theoretically in the truth, are so satisfied to be right, so filled with their learning which has cost them so much, that their souls are, as it were, saturated with it and no longer humbly open to receive the superior light that would come from God in prayer.

St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "You are now full; you are now become rich." On seeing their sufficiency, one would have said that they had reached the full Messianic royalty to which the faithful will be associated in eternal beatitude.

If a man is full of himself, how will he receive the superior gifts which the Lord could and would grant him in order that he might do great good to souls and save them? We can see, consequently, why intellectual pride, even in those who are theoretically right, is a formidable obstacle to the grace of contemplation and to union with God. It is truly a bandage over the eyes of the spirit.

Spiritual pride is not a lesser obstacle. Speaking of beginners, St. John of the Cross remarks:

> When beginners become aware of their own fervor and diligence in their spiritual works and devotional exercises, this prosperity of theirs gives rise to secret pride—though holy things tend of their own nature to humility—because of their imperfections; and the issue is that they conceive a certain satisfaction in the contemplation of their works and of themselves. From the same source, too, proceeds that empty eagerness which they display in speaking of the spiritual life before others, and sometimes as teachers rather than learners. They condemn others in their heart when they see that they are not devout in their way. Sometimes also they say it in words, showing themselves herein to be like the Pharisee, who in the act of prayer boasted of his own works and despised the publican (Luke 18: I I f.).... They see the mote in the eye of their brother, but not the beam which is in their own.
>
> Sometimes also when their spiritual masters, such as confessors and superiors, do not approve of their spirit and conduct... they decide that they are not understood, and that their superiors are not spiritual men because they do not approve and sanction their proceedings.... They are occasionally desirous that others should perceive their spirituality and devotion, and for that end they give outward tokens by movements, sighs, and various ceremonies.... Many of them seek to be the favorites of their confessors, and the result is endless envy and disquietude. Ashamed to confess their sins plainly lest their confessors should think less of them, they go about palliating them that they may not seem so bad: which is excusing rather than accusing themselves. Sometimes they go to a stranger to confess their sins, that their usual confessor may think they are not sinners, but good people.... Some beginners, too, make light of their faults, and at other times indulge in immoderate grief when they commit them. They thought themselves already saints, and so they become angry and impatient with themselves, which is another great imperfection.

THE DEFECTS BORN OF PRIDE

The principal defects springing from pride are presumption, ambition, and vainglory.

Presumption is the desire and inordinate hope of doing what is above one’s power. The presumptuous man believes himself capable of studying and solving the most difficult questions; he settles the most abstruse problems with rash haste. He fancies that he has sufficient light to guide himself without consulting a director. Instead of building his interior life on humility, renunciation, fidelity to the duty of the present moment even in little things, he speaks particularly of magnanimity, of apostolic zeal, or indeed aspires to the immediate attainment of the high degrees of prayer without passing through the various stages, forgetting that he is still only a beginner, whose will is still weak and full of egoism. He is still full of self; a great void must be created in him in order that his soul may some day be filled with God and able to give Him to others.

From presumption springs ambition, under one form or another. Because a man presumes too greatly on his powers and judges himself superior to others, he wishes to dominate them, to impose on them his ideas in matters of doctrine, or to govern them. St. Thomas says that a man manifests ambition when he seeks offices carrying with them honor which he does not merit; when he seeks honors for himself and not for the glory of God or the profit of others. How many schemes, secret solicitations, and intrigues ambition inspires in all walks of life!

Pride leads also to vainglory, that is, the wish to be esteemed for oneself, without referring this honor to God, the source of all good, and often a wish to be esteemed for vain things. This is the case of the pedant who loves to display his knowledge, binding himself and wishing to bind others to trifles.

Many defects spring from vainglory: boasting, which easily makes a person ridiculous; hypocrisy, which under the appearances of virtue, hides vices; stubbornness, contention or asperity in defending one's opinion, which engenders discord; and also disobedience, sharp criticisms of superiors.

Thus we see that pride which is not repressed sometimes produces disastrous effects. How many discords, hatreds, and wars are born of pride! It has been justly said that pride is the great enemy of perfection because it is the source of numerous sins and deprives us of many graces and merits. Scripture says: "God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble." And Christ says of the Pharisees, who pray and give alms in order to be seen by men: "They have received their reward"; they cannot expect that of our heavenly Father, since they have acted for themselves and not for Him. Lastly, a life dominated by pride is grievously sterile and presages perdition unless a remedy is promptly applied.

THE REMEDY FOR PRIDE

The great remedy for pride is to recognize practically the majesty of God. As St. Michael the archangel said: "Who is like to God?" He alone is great; He is the source of all natural and supernatural good. "Without Me," says our Lord, "you can do nothing" in the order of salvation. St. Paul adds: "For who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received

it?" "Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God."

St. Thomas states also: "Since God's love is the cause of goodness in things,... no one thing would be better than another if God did not will greater good for one than another." And then why should we glory in the natural or supernatural good that is in us, as if we had not received it, as if it were our very own and not ordained to glorify God, the source of all good? "For it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will."

The remedy for pride is to tell ourselves that of ourselves we are not, that we have been created out of nothing by the gratuitous love of God, who continues freely to preserve us in existence; otherwise we would return to nothingness. And if grace is in us, it is because Jesus Christ redeemed us by His blood.

The remedy for pride is also to tell ourselves that there is in us something inferior to nothingness itself: the disorder of sin and its effects. As sinners, we deserve scorn and all humiliations; the saints have thought so, and they certainly judged better than we.

How can we glory in our merits, as if they came solely from us? Without habitual grace and actual grace, we would be absolutely incapable of the least meritorious act. As St. Augustine says: "God crowns His gifts, when He crowns our merits."

This conviction, however, must not remain theoretical, but should be practical and inspire our acts. The Imitation says:

> Truly, a lowly rustic that serveth God is better than a proud philosopher who pondereth the courses of the stars, and neglecteth himself. He that knoweth himself, becometh vile to himself and taketh no delight in the praises of men.... Learned men are very willing to seem wise, and to be called so.... If thou wouldst acquire knowledge and learn anything to the purpose, love to be unknown, and to be esteemed as nothing.... If thou shouldst see another openly do wrong or commit some grievous sins, thou needest not think thyself better; for thou knowest not how long thou mayest be able to persevere in well-doing. We are all frail; but see thou think none more frail than thyself....
>
> Be not ashamed to wait on others for the love of Jesus Christ, and to be looked upon as poor in this world.... Trust not in thine own knowledge,... but rather in the grace of God, who helpeth the humble and humbleth them that presume upon themselves.... Esteem not thyself better than others, lest perhaps thou be accounted worse in the sight of God.... What pleaseth men, oftentimes displeaseth Him.... Continual peace dwelleth with the humble; but in the heart of the proud is frequent envy and indignation....
>
> The humble man God protecteth and delivereth; the humble He loveth and consoleth; to the humble He inclineth Himself; on the humble He bestoweth bounteous grace, and after he has

> been brought low, raiseth him up unto glory. To the humble He revealeth His secrets, and sweetly inviteth and draweth him unto Himself.

But to reach this humility of mind and heart, a profound purification is needed. That which we impose on ourselves is not sufficient; there must be a passive purification by the light of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which causes the bandage of pride to fall away, opens our eyes, shows us the depth of frailty and wretchedness that exists in us, the utility of adversity and humiliation, and finally makes us say to the Lord: “It is good for me that Thou hast humbled me, that I may learn Thy justifications.” “It is good for us sometimes to suffer contradictions, and to allow people to think ill of us.... These are often helps to humility, and rid us of vainglory.” It is in adversity that we can learn what we really are and what great need we have of God’s help: “What doth he know, that hath not been tried?”

After this purification, pride and its effects will gradually be felt less. A person, instead of letting himself fall into jealousy toward those who have more natural or supernatural qualities, tells himself then that, as St. Paul remarks, the hand ought not be jealous of the eye, but, on the contrary, it should be happy because it benefits from what the eye sees. The same is true in the mystical body of Christ; far from becoming jealous, souls ought to enjoy in a holy manner the qualities they find in their neighbor. Though they do not possess them themselves, they benefit by them. They should rejoice over everything that cooperates in the glory of God and the good of souls. When this is the case, the bandage of pride falls away and the soul’s gaze recovers its simplicity and penetration, which make it enter little by little into the inner life of God.

Chapter 29

The Healing of Spiritual Sloth, or Acedia

Among the capital sins, there is one, spiritual sloth, called also acedia, which is directly opposed to the love of God and to the joy that results from generosity in His service. We must discuss it in order to complete what we have said about the active purification of the will and to note exactly the grave confusions made by the quietists on this point.

We shall see, first of all, the general nature of spiritual sloth, then the gravity of this evil and the way to cure it.

THE NATURE OF SPIRITUAL SLOTH, OR ACEDIA

Sloth in general, pigritia, is a voluntary and culpable repugnance to work, to effort, and consequently a tendency to idleness, or at least to negligence, to pusillanimity, which is opposed to generosity or magnanimity.

Sloth is not the languor or torpor in action which comes from poor health; it is an evil disposition of the will and of the sensible appetites, by which one fears and refuses effort, wishes to avoid all trouble, and seeks a dolce farniente. It has often been remarked that the slothful man is a parasite, who lives at the expense of others, as tranquil as a woodchuck when he is undisturbed in his idleness, and ill-humored when an effort is made to oblige him to work. This vice begins with unconcern and negligence in work, and manifests itself by a progressive dislike for all serious, physical and mental labor.

When idleness affects the accomplishment of the religious duties necessary to sanctification, it is called acedia. It is an evil sadness: opposed to spiritual joy, which is the fruit of generosity in the love of God. Acedia is a disgust for spiritual things, a disgust which leads one to perform them

negligently, to shorten them, or to omit them under vain pretexts. It is the cause of tepidity.

This sadness, which is radically opposed to that of contrition, depresses the soul and weighs it down because it does not react as it should. Then it reaches a voluntary disgust for spiritual things, because they demand too much effort and self-discipline. Whereas devotion, which is the promptness of the will in the service of God, lifts the soul up, spiritual sloth weighs down and crushes the soul and ends by causing it to find the yoke of the Lord unbearable and to flee the divine light, which reminds it of its duties. St. Augustine says: “Light which is so pleasant to pure eyes, becomes hateful to infirm eyes which can no longer bear it.”

This depressing sadness, the result of negligence, and this disgust, which is at least indirectly voluntary, are quite different from the sensible or spiritual aridity which, in divine trials, is accompanied by true contrition for our sins, by fear of offending God, by a keen desire for perfection, by a need of solitude, of recollection, and of the prayer of simple gaze.

St. John of the Cross, referring to the condition of the spiritual man in the passive purification of the senses, says:

> We find no comfort in the things of God, and none also in created things... but the memory dwells ordinarily upon God with a painful anxiety and carefulness; the soul thinks it is not serving God, but going backwards, because it is no longer conscious of any sweetness in the things of God. In that case it is clear that this weariness of spirit and aridity are not the results of weakness and lukewarmness; for the peculiarity of lukewarmness is the want of earnestness in, and of interior solicitude for, the things of God. There is, therefore, a great difference between dryness and lukewarmness, for the latter consists in great remissness and weakness of will and spirit, in the want of all solicitude about serving God. The true purgative aridity is accompanied in general by a painful anxiety, because the soul thinks that it is not serving God.... For when mere bodily indisposition is the cause, all that it does is to produce disgust and the ruin of bodily health, without the desire of serving God which belongs to the purgative aridity. In this aridity, though the sensual part of man be greatly depressed, weak and sluggish in good works, by reason of the little satisfaction they furnish, the spirit is, nevertheless, ready and strong.

In other words, this divine trial is the privation of accidental devotion alone and not of substantial devotion, which consists in the will to give oneself generously and promptly to the service of God. Spiritual sloth or acedia, on the contrary, is, by reason of culpable negligence, the privation of substantial devotion itself and at least indirectly voluntary disgust for spiritual things because of the abnegation and effort they demand.

Whereas in the divine trial of which we are speaking, a person suffers because he has distractions and strives to diminish their number, in the state

of spiritual sloth a man welcomes them, lets himself glide easily into useless thoughts, and does not react against them. When such is the case, distractions that are at least indirectly voluntary soon invade prayer almost completely; the examination of conscience, which has become annoying, is suppressed; sins are no longer accounted for; and the soul descends farther and farther along the slope of tepidity. It falls into spiritual anaemia in which little by little, with the defects springing from it, the three concupiscences awaken.

The confusion of spiritual sloth with the divine trial of aridity was one of the chief errors of the quietists. For this reason the two following propositions of Molinos were condemned: “Disgust for spiritual things is good; by it the soul is purified, freed from selflove.” “When the interior soul feels repugnance for discursive meditation on God, for the virtues, when it remains cold, and does not experience any fervor, it is a good sign.” These propositions were condemned as offensive and dangerous in practice. The fact of the matter is certainly that disgust for spiritual things is not at all good, that it is an evil and a sin as soon as it is voluntary, whether directly or indirectly so, by reason of negligence. St. Paul writes to the Romans: “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercy of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing unto God.... Loving one another with the charity of brotherhood, with honor preventing one another, in carefulness not slothful, in spirit fervent, serving the Lord. Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, instant in prayer.” How far these words are from the quietism of Molinos!

The latter confounded spiritual sloth with the aridity and dryness of divine trials, not observing that the soul which bears these trials well, far from being slothful, has a keen desire for God and for perfection, and therefore preserves a true, substantial devotion of the will in the absence of sensible devotion of which it is deprived. Molinos confounded sensible and absolutely involuntary disgust for divine things with the disgust which is at least indirectly voluntary and culpable because of sloth and negligence.

St. John of the Cross, on the contrary, in The Dark Night gives an excellent description of spiritual sloth. Writing about the imperfections of beginners, he says:

> As to spiritual sloth, beginners are wont to find their most spiritual occupations irksome, and avoid them as repugnant to their taste; for, being so given to sweetness in spiritual things, they loathe such occupations when they find no sweetness. If they miss once this sweetness in prayer which is their joy,—it is expedient that God should deprive them of it in order to try

> them—they will not resume it; at other times they omit it, or return to it with a bad grace. Thus, under the influence of sloth they neglect the way of perfection—which is the denial of their will and pleasure for God—for the gratification of their own will, which they serve rather than the will of God. Many of these will have it that God should will what they will, and are afflicted when they must will what He wills, reluctantly submitting their own will to the will of God. As a result, they often imagine that what is not according to their will is also not according to the will of God; and, on the other hand, when they are pleased, they believe that God is pleased. They measure Him by themselves, and not themselves by Him.... They also find it wearisome to obey when they are commanded to do what they like not; and because they walk in the way of consolation and spiritual sweetness, they are too weak for the rough trials of perfection. They are like persons delicately nurtured who avoid with heavy hearts all that is hard and rugged, and are offended at the cross wherein the joys of the spirit consist. The more spiritual the work they have to do, the more irksome do they feel it to be. And because they insist on having their own way and will in spiritual things, they enter on the "strait way that leadeth unto life" (Matt. 16:25), of which Christ speaks, with repugnance and heaviness of heart.

Some who abandon prayer say, in order to cloak spiritual sloth: "The sweetness of prayer must be sacrificed to the austerity of study" or of work. If a truly generous person made this statement, it would mean: "One must know how to sacrifice the sweetness of prayer, especially of sensible devotion, to the austerity of the study or the work necessary for the salvation of souls." But if this statement is made by someone who is losing all true devotion, it does not make sense; for such a one in no way sacrifices the delights of prayer, which he does not experience, and he is only seeking to hide his spiritual sloth under the veil of a relatively exterior work in which he seeks himself. This man flees interior work because of spiritual sloth. True contemplation and union with God should, it is clear, not be sacrificed to study, which is subordinate to them; to do so would be to sacrifice the end for the means. Moreover, study not inspired by the love of God and of souls would, from the spiritual point of view, remain truly fruitless. In short, when a man says, "The sweetness of prayer must be sacrificed to the austerity of work," he wishes to forget that prayer is often dry. This is why it is more difficult to lead souls to a true life of profound and persevering prayer than to induce them to read and talk about books which appear on the subject. Finally, spiritual sloth not infrequently grows out of an excessive, unsanctified natural activity in which a person takes complacence instead of seeking God and the good of souls in it.

THE GRAVITY OF SPIRITUAL SLOTH AND ITS RESULTS

Spiritual sloth is gravely sinful when it reaches the point of giving up the religious duties necessary for our salvation and sanctification: for example, when it goes so far as to omit the hearing of Mass on Sunday. When it leads us to omit religious acts of lesser importance without a reason, the sin is only venial; but if we do not struggle against this negligence, it soon becomes more serious, placing us in a genuine state of tepidity or spiritual relaxation. This state is a sort of moral anaemia, in which evil tendencies awaken little by little, seek to prevail, and manifest themselves by numerous deliberate venial sins, which dispose us to still graver faults, just as bodily anaemia prepares the way for the invasion of the germ of a disease, the beginning of a serious illness.

Spiritual sloth or acedia is even, as St. Gregory and St. Thomas show, a capital sin, the root of many others. Why is this? Because man seeks material consolations in order to flee from the sadness and disgust which spiritual things inspire in him on account of the renunciation and self-discipline which they demand. As Aristotle says, “No one can long remain in sadness without any joy,” and then he who deprives himself of all spiritual joy through his own negligence and sloth, does not delay in seeking inferior pleasures.

Consequently, disastrous results follow disgust for spiritual things and for the work of sanctification, a sin which is directly opposed to the love of God and to the holy joy resulting therefrom. When life does not rise toward God, it descends or falls into evil sadness which oppresses the soul. From this evil sadness, says St. Gregory (loc. cit.), are born malice—and no longer only weakness—rancor toward one’s neighbor, pusillanimity in the face of duty to be accomplished, discouragement, spiritual torpor even to the forgetting of the precepts, and finally, dissipation of spirit and the seeking after forbidden things. This seeking after unlawful things manifests itself by the externalization of life, by curiosity, loquacity, uneasiness, instability, and fruitless agitation. Thus a person arrives at spiritual blindness and the progressive weakening of the will.

Descending this slope, many have lost sight of the grandeur of the Christian vocation, have forgotten the promises they made to God, and have taken the descending road, which at first seems broad, but which grows narrower and narrower, whereas the narrow road, which leads upward, becomes ever wider, immense as God Himself to whom it leads.

In The Ascent of Mount Carmel, St. John of the Cross says on this subject: “Dissipation of the mind engenders in its turn spiritual sloth and lukewarmness, which grow into weariness and sadness in divine things, so that in the end we come to hate them.”

THE CURE FOR SPIRITUAL SLOTH

Cassian declared that experience proves that a person triumphs over the temptation to spiritual sloth, not by fleeing from it, but by resisting it. On this subject St. Thomas observes: “Sin is ever to be shunned, but the assaults of sin should be overcome, sometimes by flight, sometimes by resistance; by flight, when a continued thought increases the incentive to sin, as in lust;... by resistance, when perseverance in the thought diminishes the incentive to sin, which incentive arises from some trivial consideration. This is the case with sloth, because the more we think about spiritual goods, the more pleasing they become to us, and forthwith sloth dies away.”

We must, therefore, conquer spiritual sloth by real love of God, by true devotion of the will, which ought to subsist in spite of sensible aridity. We must revert again and again to the prolonged consideration of the eternal goods which are promised us.

And to recover the spirit of faith, enthusiasm, and generosity in the love of God, we must every day courageously impose some sacrifices on ourselves in those matters in which we are weakest. It is the first step that costs; but after a week of effort the task becomes easy: for example, to rise at the appointed hour and to be obliging to everybody. All spiritual authors say that one of the remedies for tepidity is frankness with ourselves and with our confessor, a serious examination of conscience every day in order to rise again, the assiduous practice of our religious duties coupled with our duties of state, fidelity to prayer and to the morning offering, which we ought to make to God of all our actions during the day. And since we have little to present to God, let us offer Him frequently the precious blood of Jesus and the interior act of oblation ever living in His heart. Blessed are they who renew this offering when they hear the hour strike, and who offer the fleeting hour that it may bear fruits for eternity, that the moment which is passing may remain in the eternal instant which does not pass.

Above all, some daily sacrifices will restore vigor and tone to our spiritual life. Thus we will gradually recover substantial fervor, promptness

of the will in the service of God, even if sensible devotion is lacking, a privation we should accept in order to make reparation for past offenses.

To conquer spiritual sloth and to avoid spiritual instability, we should determine the religious employment of our time: for example, divide the day by the recitation of the parts of the Divine Office, or of the Rosary. Some interior souls divide the week according to the mysteries of faith, the rule of our life: Sunday is consecrated to God by special devotion and thanksgiving to the Blessed Trinity. Monday is consecrated to the mystery of the Incarnation by recalling the Ecce venio of Christ and the Ecce ancilla Domini of Mary. Tuesday is devoted to the thought of our Savior's hidden life. Wednesday is devoted to His apostolic life. Thursday recalls the institution of the Eucharist and of the priesthood. Friday is consecrated to living the dolorous Passion, to asking for love of the cross. Saturday is given over to the thought of the privileges of Mary, her sorrows, and her role as Mediatrix and Co-redemptrix.

Thus instead of losing time which flees, we recover it and gain it for eternity. And gradually we recover spiritual joy, that of which St. Paul speaks when he writes to the Philippians: "Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I say, rejoice. Let your modesty be known to all men. The Lord is nigh. Be nothing solicitous; but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your petitions be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."

Chapter 30

Sacramental Confession

> "Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them." John 20:22 f.

We have seen that the purification of the soul is an effect of the mortification of the senses, of self-will, and of personal judgment; we shall see also that it is an effect of prayer. Moreover, God, in His love for us, has placed within our reach other easy and powerful means to purify us, the sacraments, which operate by themselves, ex opere operato, and produce in the soul which has prepared itself by acts of faith and love a much more abundant grace than it would obtain by making the same acts without the sacraments.

However, if the sacraments by themselves, by the divine virtue they contain, have an essential efficacy, the measure of grace produced by them varies according to the dispositions of those who receive them; the more perfect they are, the more abundant is the grace, and the differences between a number of persons receiving the same sacrament are much greater than one ordinarily imagines. The sacrament of penance is one of the most precious means of sanctification; it must be well received, and routine, which would considerably diminish its effect, should be avoided. It is, therefore, important for us to see how we should prepare for sacramental confession, how we should make a good confession, and what are its fruits.

PREPARATION FOR CONFESSION

To prepare worthily for confession, we should examine our consciences and arouse ourselves to contrition.

The examination of conscience requires more care in proportion as the penitent falls into more sins and has little knowledge of his interior state.

However, those who each evening examine their principal failings, have no trouble at all in knowing themselves well, and they are thereby stirred to make serious efforts at amendment.

In the case of spiritual persons who confess frequently and who are careful to avoid deliberate venial sins, the examination of conscience, as St. Alphonsus remarks, does not require much time. It is advisable for such a person to ask himself: What remains of this week to be written in God, in the book of life? In what have I acted for God, in what for myself, by yielding to my temperament, my egoism, my pride? When he thus considers the state of his soul from above and asks for light, he often obtains the grace of a penetrating gaze on his own life.

We must distinguish here grave sins, more or less deliberate venial sins, and the faults of frailty.

If a man who tends towards perfection has the misfortune to commit mortal sins in a moment of weakness, he must accuse himself of them sincerely and clearly at the beginning of his confession, without, seeking to cause them to pass unperceived in the multitude of venial sins. He must indicate their number, kind, and cause, and especially have a profound contrition for them accompanied by a firm purpose of avoiding in the future not only the sins themselves, but their occasions and causes. Even after receiving pardon, he must also keep alive in his heart the sincere desire to atone, by an austere life and a generous love, for the evil committed. He should also remember how the Apostle, St. Peter, wept over his denial, humbled himself profoundly, thanked infinite Mercy, and continued on his way even to martyrdom.

An isolated mortal sin, when immediately confessed and atoned for, leaves scarcely any traces in the soul, which may at once resume its ascent from the very spot where it fell, without having to retrace all the road that had already been traveled. Thus he who stumbles midway in an ascent, may, when he picks himself up, promptly continue his climb from the spot which he had reached.

Venial sins committed with full deliberation are a serious obstacle to perfection, especially when they are frequent and the soul is attached to them. They are real maladies, which weaken the Christian soul. “Do not allow sin to grow old in thee,” Christ said to St. Gertrude. Fully deliberate venial sin, when not rejected, is like a poison that is not vomited forth and that, although it does not cause death immediately, acts slowly on the

organism. For instance, close attention must be paid to avoid keeping voluntarily any petty rancor, or attachment to one's own judgment, to self-will, to habits of rash judgment, of slander, of dangerous natural affections that would be a fetter, depriving us of liberty of spirit and all spontaneous movement toward God. When we deliberately refuse the Lord these manifestly demanded sacrifices, we cannot expect from Him the graces that lead to perfection. Consequently we must plainly accuse ourselves of fully deliberate venial sins against charity, humility, the virtue of religion, and so forth, especially those which are most humiliating. Their cause must be sought with a firm resolution to avoid them. Otherwise, of course, there is no longer any real and effective tendency to perfection. This is a point of primary importance.

There are other semi-deliberate venial sins, which are committed with less reflection and into which there enters a certain amount of surprise and impulse, but to which the will adheres with a certain complacency. We must guard against them, especially if they recur frequently; they show that the soul fights too feebly and is not determined to free itself from all obstacles.

Sins of frailty are those committed inadvertently because of human weakness; the will has only a small share in them; it yields momentarily, but promptly disavows its weakness. Sins of this kind cannot be completely and continually avoided, but their number should be diminished. They are not a serious obstacle to perfection because they are quickly atoned for; yet it is well to submit them to the influence of the sacrament of penance because thereby purity of soul will become more complete.

THE CONFESSION ITSELF

Confession should be made with a great spirit of faith, remembering that the confessor holds the place of our Lord. He is a judge, since this sacrament is administered in the form of a judgment: Ego te absolvo...; but he is also a spiritual father and a physician, who benevolently points out remedies if the penitent clearly reveals his suffering. Consequently it is not enough to make a vague accusation that would tell the confessor nothing, as for example: I have had distractions in my prayers. It is advisable to say: I have been especially distracted during such and such an exercise of piety through negligence, because I began it badly, without recollection, or because I did not sufficiently combat distractions springing from a petty

rancor or from too sensible an affection or from study. It is also fitting to recall resolutions taken and to tell whether we have failed more or less in keeping them. Thus routine and negligence will be avoided.

We need especially to excite contrition and a firm purpose of amendment, its indispensable consequence. To do this, we should think of the genuine motives of contrition, both as regards God and as regards ourselves. We must ask for the grace to see more clearly that sin, no matter how slight it may be, is an offense against God, resistance to His will, resistance which certainly displeases Him; that it is also ingratitude toward the most loving of Fathers, ingratitude so much the greater as we have received more, and by it we refuse to give God an "accidental joy" which we ought to give Him. Our sins have increased the bitterness of the chalice that was offered to Christ in Gethsemane; He could address to us these words of the Psalmist: "For if My enemy had reviled Me, I would verily have borne with it.... But thou a man of one mind, My guide and My familiar, who didst take sweetmeats together with Me." There we have indeed the motive for contrition with respect to God.

As regards ourselves, there is another motive: venial sin, though it does not of itself diminish charity, takes away its fervor, its liberty of action, and its radiation. Venial sin renders the divine friendship less intimate and less active. To lose the intimacy of a saint would be a great loss; but to lose the intimacy of our Savior is a far greater loss. Moreover, venial sin, especially if deliberate, causes evil inclinations to spring up again in us and thereby disposes us to mortal sin; and in certain matters the attraction to pleasure may easily cause us rapidly to cross the line which separates venial sin from mortal. We have here another motive for sincere contrition.

Confession thus practiced will, especially by virtue of absolution and the counsels of the priest, be a powerful means of purification and progress. Blessed Angela of Foligno, along with many others, exemplifies this purification and progress by means of confession. At the beginning of the book of her visions and instructions, the saint herself relates that when she first took cognizance of her sins she was greatly afraid, trembled at the thought of damnation, wept much, blushed for the first time, put off confessing them; nevertheless she went in this state to the holy table. She says:

> With my sins I received the body of Jesus Christ. That is why my conscience did not cease to chide me day or night. I prayed to St. Francis to make me find the confessor I needed,

someone who would be able to understand and to whom I could talk.... In the morning I found a friar who was preaching in the church of St. Felician. After the sermon I resolved to make my confession to him. I confessed my sins in full, I received absolution. I did not feel love, only bitterness, shame, and sorrow.

I persevered in the penance imposed on me; devoid of consolation, overwhelmed with sorrow, I tried to satisfy justice.

Then I looked for the first time at divine mercy; I made the acquaintance of that mercy which had withdrawn me from hell, which had given me the grace that I have related. I received its first illumination: my grief and tears redoubled. I gave myself up to severe penance....

Thus enlightened, I perceived only defects in myself; I saw with entire certitude that I had deserved hell.... I received no consolation other than that of being able to weep. An illumination made me see the measure of my sins. Thereupon I understood that, in offending the Creator, I had offended all creatures.... Through the Blessed Virgin and all the saints I invoked the mercy of God and, knowing that I was dead, on my knees I begged for life.... Suddenly I believed that I felt the pity of all creatures and of all the saints. And then I received a gift: a great fire of love and the power to pray as I had never prayed.... I received a profound knowledge of the manner in which Christ died for my sins. I felt my own sins very cruelly, and I perceived that I was the author of the crucifixion. But as yet I had no idea of the immensity of the benefit of the cross....

Then the Lord in His pity appeared to me several times, in sleep or in vigil, crucified: “Look,” He said to me, “Look at My wounds.” He counted the blows of the scourging and said to me: “It is for thee, for thee, for thee.”... I begged the Blessed Virgin and St. John to obtain the sufferings of Jesus Christ for me, at least those which were given to them. They obtained this favor for me, and one day St. John so loaded me with them that I count that day among the most terrible of my life.... God wrote the Pater Noster in my heart with such an accentuation of His goodness and of my unworthiness that I lack words to speak of it.

By this very profound contrition, Blessed Angela entered on the way of sanctity. These great graces should draw our attention to the value of the aids which God offers us daily, to matters of import in the ordinary Christian life.

THE FRUITS OF CONFESSION

The fruits of confession are those of the virtues of humility and penance and especially those of sacramental absolution.

What truer and more indispensable act of humility is there than the sincere confession of sins committed? It is the remedy of the vice of pride, the root of all sin. Therefore heresy, which is the fruit of pride, suppressed confession, as we see in Protestantism. In a humble confession there is a beginning of atonement for sins of pride.

The act of penance, which is contrition, regrets sin, disavows it because it displeases God and separates us from Him. By contrition the soul is converted, turns back to the Lord from whom it had turned away by mortal sin, or from whom it had strayed by venial sin. It draws near to Him and with confidence and love throws itself, so to speak, into the arms of mercy.

Above all, the blood of the Savior is sacramentally poured out on our souls by sacramental absolution. The Protestant never experiences, after committing sins that may torment him, the consolation of hearing the minister of God say to him in the name of the Lord, speaking in merciful judgment: Ego te absolvo. He has not the consolation of thus being able to apply to himself Christ's words to the apostles: "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them." On the contrary, by these words the blood of Christ is sacramentally poured out on our souls by absolution; it is like a salutary balm which, adding its power to that of the virtues of humility and penance, remits sins, greatly assists complete healing, and helps the soul to recover its lost strength.

"By confession," says St. Francis de Sales, "you not only receive absolution from venial sins you confess, but likewise strength to avoid them, light to discern them well, and grace to repair all the damage you may have sustained by them."

We must not forget, however, that the effects of absolution are always in proportion to the excellence of the dispositions with which the sacrament is received. As St. Thomas says, If a man who has five talents and loses them by mortal sin, has only sufficient contrition, he does not recover the merits lost in the degree that he had before his fall; he may recover three talents. If he has a more profound sorrow for his sins, he may again receive the five talents that he lost; or even, with a superior fervor of contrition, he will receive more, six, for instance. Such seems to have been the contrition of St. Peter after his denial of Christ; from that time on he was very generously faithful to grace, which led him even to martyrdom.

Among twenty people who go to confession, each receives a different measure of grace, for God discerns in each one's acts difference; which no one on earth suspects. There are many different degrees of humility, contrition, and love of God, which are more or less pure and more or less strong. They are as so many degrees of intensity of a flame.

The same principles apply to sacramental satisfaction, the effect of which depends on the sacrament, at the same time being proportioned to the fervor

with which it is accomplished. Sacramental satisfaction has thus more value than a satisfaction that is not sacramental, though the first may be more or less fruitful according to our generosity. It thus obtains for us in varying degrees the remission of the punishment due to forgiven sins. This satisfaction or penance should, therefore, not be put off to a later date, but performed at once, while we thank God for the grace of absolution. The blood of Jesus flowed over our soul to purify it; we should pray that He may grant us to remain in the state of grace and to die in this state. Only the saints have a profound understanding of the value of the blood of the Savior; this penetrating illumination on the depths of the mystery of the redemption is an immense grace.

Finally, it is fitting to accuse ourselves, at least in general, of the sins of our past life, especially of the most serious sins, in order to have a greater contrition for them so that the application of the merits of Jesus Christ to these sins, that have already been forgiven, may diminish the temporal punishment, which almost always remains after absolution. Let us also say with the Psalmist: “From my secret ones cleanse me, O Lord.” Cleanse me, O Lord, from my secret sins that are indirectly voluntary by reason of my negligence to know and to will what I ought to know and will.

Confession made thus with a spirit of faith is manifestly a great means of sanctification. Our Lord said to St. Veronica Juliani: “Thou shalt make progress in perfection in proportion to the fruits which thou shalt draw from this sacrament.”

In a little work on confession, St. Francis de Sales remarks: “Listen attentively... in order to hear in spirit the words of absolution that the Savior Himself pronounces in heaven over your soul... at the same time that His priest absolves you in His name here on earth.”

In the same work, he adds: “There is no character so untractable which, first of all by the grace of God, then by industry and diligence, cannot be subdued and conquered. For that reason, follow the orders and guidance of the prudent and zealous director.”

To conclude with St. Francis de Sales, let us note that the sadness of true contrition, that is, displeasure with evil and detestation of it, is never a vexing, fretful sadness which depresses, but, on the contrary, it is a holy sadness that makes the soul prompt and diligent, that uplifts the heart by prayer and hope, that leads it to outbursts of fervor: “It is a sadness which in the height of its bitterness always produces the sweetness of an

incomparable consolation, according to the precept of the great St. Augustine: ‘The penitent should ever grieve and rejoice at his grief.’ “

If this sadness of contrition at the memory of past sins has this sweetness, it is because it springs from charity. The more a man grieves for his sins, the more certain it is that he loves God. This sadness, which is not vexation and melancholy, is good; it is compunction or lively sorrow for having sinned, sorrow in which are found the fruits of the Holy Ghost: namely, charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, longanimity, mildness, faith, modesty, continency, and chastity.

Chapter 31

Assistance at Mass, the Source of Sanctification

The sanctification of our soul is found in a daily more intimate union with God, a union of faith, confidence, and love. Since this is true, one of the greatest means of sanctification is the highest act of the virtue of religion and of Christian worship, participation in the Sacrifice of the Mass. For every interior soul, the Mass ought each morning to be the eminent source from which spring the graces we need in the course of the day, the source of light and of warmth, similar, in the spiritual order, to the sunrise in the order of nature. After the night and sleep, which are an image of death, the sun reappearing each morning restores, so to speak, life to all that awakens on the surface of the earth. If we had a profound understanding of the value of daily Mass, we would see that it is like a spiritual sunrise that renews, preserves, and increases in our souls the life of grace, which is eternal life begun. Too often, however, the habit of assisting at Mass degenerates into routine for want of a spirit of faith, and then we no longer receive from the Holy Sacrifice all the fruits that we should. Yet the Mass ought to be the greatest act of each of our days, and in the life of a Christian, more notably of a religious, all other daily acts, especially all the other prayers and little sacrifices that we ought to offer to God in the course of the day, should be only the accompaniment of that act.

We shall consider here: (1) what constitutes the value of the Sacrifice of the Mass; (2) the relation of its effects to our interior dispositions; (3) the way we should unite ourselves to the Eucharistic sacrifice.

THE OBLATION EVER LIVING IN THE HEART OF CHRIST

The excellence of the Sacrifice of the Mass, says the Council of Trent, comes from the fact that it is the same sacrifice in substance as that of the

cross, because it is the same Priest who continues to offer Himself by His ministers; it is the same Victim, really present on the altar, who is really offered; only the manner of offering differs: whereas on the cross there was a bloody immolation, there is in the Mass, in virtue of the double consecration, a sacramental immolation through the separation, not physical but sacramental, of the body and blood of Christ. Thus the blood of Jesus, without being physically shed, is sacramentally shed.

This sacramental immolation is a sign of the interior oblation of Christ, to which we should unite ourselves; it is also the memorial of the bloody immolation of Calvary. Although it is only sacramental, this immolation of the Word of God made flesh is more expressive than the bloody immolation of the paschal lamb and of all the victims of the Old Testament. As a matter of fact, a sign draws its value as a sign from the grandeur of the thing signified: the flag, which reminds us of our country, even though it may be made of common material, has greater value in our eyes than the particular flag of a company or the insignia of an officer. Likewise the bloody immolation of the victims of the Old Testament, a remote figure of the sacrifice of the cross, expressed only the interior sentiments of the priests and faithful of the Old Law; whereas the sacramental immolation of the Savior on our altars expresses especially the interior oblation ever living in the heart of Christ "always living to make intercession for us."

This oblation, which is the soul of the Sacrifice of the Mass, has an infinite value, which it draws from the divine person of the Word made flesh, principal Priest and Victim, whose immolation continues under a sacramental form. St. John Chrysostom writes:

"When you see the ordained priest at the altar raising the sacred host toward heaven, do not believe that this man is the true (principal) priest, but, raising your thoughts above what strikes the senses, consider the hand of Jesus Christ invisibly extended." The priest whom we see with our eyes of flesh cannot penetrate all the depths of this mystery, but above him there is the intellect and will of Christ, the principal Priest. If the minister is not always what he should be, the principal Priest is infinitely holy; if the minister, even though very good, may be slightly distracted or occupied with the exterior ceremonies of the sacrifice, without penetrating their inmost meaning, there is above him One who is not distracted and who offers to God with full knowledge reparatory adoration of infinite value, supplication and thanksgiving of limitless power.

This interior oblation ever living in the heart of Christ is therefore, so to speak, the soul of the Sacrifice of the Mass. It is the continuation of that oblation by which Jesus offered Himself as a victim on His entrance into this world and throughout the course of His earthly existence, especially on the cross. When Christ was on earth, this oblation was meritorious; now it continues without the modality of merit. It continues under the form of reparatory adoration and of supplication in order to apply to us the past merits of the cross. Even after the last Mass has been said at the end of the world, and when there will no longer be any sacrifice, properly so called, but only its consummation, the interior oblation of Christ to His Father will endure, no longer under the form of reparation and intercession, but under that of adoration and thanksgiving. We are made to foresee this by the Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus, which gives us some idea of the worship of the blessed in eternity.

How great our admiration would be, were it given to us to see without intermediary the love which inspires this interior oblation continuing unceasingly in the heart of Christ, "always living to make intercession for us"!

Blessed Angela of Foligno tells us: "I have not a vague thought, but the absolute certitude that if a soul saw and contemplated any of the intimate splendors of the sacrament of the altar, it would take fire, for it would see divine love. It seems to me that those who offer the sacrifice, or who take part in it, ought to meditate profoundly on the deep truth of the thrice holy mystery, in the contemplation of which we should remain motionless and absorbed."

THE EFFECTS OF THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS AND OUR INTERIOR DISPOSITIONS

The interior oblation of Christ Jesus, which is the soul of the Eucharistic sacrifice, has the same end and the same effects as the sacrifice of the cross; but among these effects a distinction must be made between those that relate to God and those that concern us.

The effects of the Mass which relate immediately to God, such as reparatory adoration and thanksgiving, are always infallibly and wholly produced with their infinite value, even without our concurrence, even if the Mass, provided that it be valid, should be celebrated by an unworthy priest. From each Mass there rise thus toward God adoration and thanksgiving of

limitless value, by reason of the dignity of the principal Priest who offers it and of the value of the Victim offered. This oblation pleases God more than all sins taken together displease Him; this is what constitutes the very essence of the mystery of the redemption in its aspect as satisfaction.

The effects of the Mass which relate to us are poured forth on us only in the measure of our interior dispositions. It is thus that the Mass, as a propitiatory sacrifice, obtains ex opere operato for sinners who do not resist it the actual grace which leads them to repent and inspires them to confess their sins. The words Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis, produce in sinners who oppose no obstacle sentiments of contrition, as the sacrifice of the cross produced them in the soul of the good thief. Here we are especially concerned with sinners who assist at Mass or with those for whom it is said.

The sacrifice of the Mass, as a sacrifice of satisfaction, also infallibly remits to repentant sinners at least a part of the temporal punishment due to sin. This remission is in proportion to the more or less perfect dispositions with which they assist at Mass. For this reason, says the Council of Trent, the Eucharistic sacrifice can also be offered for the deliverance of the souls in purgatory.

Finally, as a sacrifice of impetration or supplication, the Mass obtains for us ex opere operato all the graces we need for our sanctification. It is the great enduring prayer for us of the ever-living Christ, accompanied by the prayer of the Church, His spouse. The effect of this double prayer is proportionate to our fervor, and he who unites himself with it to the best of his ability is sure to obtain the most abundant graces for himself and those dear to him.

According to St. Thomas and many theologians, the effects of the Mass which relate to us are limited only by the measure of our fervor. The reason for this is that the influence of a universal cause is limited only by the capacity of the subjects that receive it. Thus the sun equally illumines and warms a thousand persons as well as it does one at one place. Now the Sacrifice of the Mass, being substantially the same as that of the cross, is, in its aspect as reparation and prayer, a universal cause of graces of light, attraction, and strength. Its influence on men is, therefore, limited only by the dispositions or the fervor of those who receive it. Thus a single Mass can be as profitable for a great number of persons as if it were offered for one alone among them; just as the sacrifice of the cross was not less

profitable to the good thief than if it had been offered for him alone. If the sun warms a thousand persons at one place as well as a single one, the influence of the Mass, the source of spiritual warmth, is certainly not less in its order. The greater the faith, confidence, piety, and love, with which one assists at it, the greater are the fruits he draws from it.

All that we have said shows us why the saints, in the light of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, have always so greatly appreciated the Sacrifice of the Mass. Some, although infirm and ill, dragged themselves to Mass because it is worth more than all treasures. On her way to Chinon, St. Joan of Arc importuned her companions in arms and, by dint of persistent entreaty, wrung from them a promise to assist daily at Mass. St. Germaine Cousin was so strongly attracted toward the church when she heard the bell announcing the Holy Sacrifice that she would leave her sheep in the care of the angels and run to assist at Mass: and her flock was always well guarded. The holy Cure of Ars spoke of the value of the Mass with such conviction that practically all of his parishioners assisted at it. Many other saints shed tears of love or fell into ecstasy during the Eucharistic sacrifice; some saw our Lord Himself, the principal Priest, in the place of the celebrant. Others, at the elevation of the chalice, saw the precious blood overflow, as if it were going to pour out over the arms of the priest into the sanctuary, and angels come with golden chalices to catch it, as if to carry it wherever there are men to be saved. St. Philip Neri, who received graces of this kind, used to celebrate Mass with only his server present, because of the raptures that often seized him at the altar.

HOW TO UNITE OURSELVES TO THE EUCHARISTIC SACRIFICE

What St. Thomas says about attention in vocal prayer may be applied to assistance at Mass: “There are three kinds of attention that can be brought to vocal prayer: one which attends to the words, lest we say them wrong; another which attends to the sense of the words; and a third which attends to the end of prayer, namely, God, and to the thing we are praying for. This last kind of attention is most necessary, and even uneducated persons are capable of it. Moreover, this attention, whereby the mind is fixed on God, is sometimes so strong that the mind forgets everything else.”

We may use different ways to assist well at Mass, with faith, confidence, true piety, and love. We can be attentive to the liturgical prayers, which are

generally beautiful and full of unction, elevation, and simplicity. We can also recall the passion and death of the Savior, of which the Mass is the memorial, and think of ourselves as standing at the foot of the cross with Mary, John, and the holy women. Again, we can apply ourselves to rendering to God, in union with Christ, the four duties that are the ends of the sacrifice: adoration, reparation, petition, and thanksgiving. Provided we pray, even while piously saying the Rosary, we assist fruitfully at Mass. We may, like St. Jane de Chantal and many saints, with great profit continue our mental prayer during the Mass, especially if we are inclined to a pure and intense love, somewhat like St. John resting on the breast of Jesus at the Last Supper.

But whatever way we follow the Mass, one important point must be insisted upon. We must, above all, unite ourselves profoundly with the oblation of Christ, the principal Priest; with Him we must offer Him to His Father, remembering that this oblation pleases God more than all sins displease Him. We should offer ourselves also more profoundly each day; offer particularly the trials and contradictions that we already have to bear and those that may present themselves in the course of the day. Thus at the offertory the priest says: “In spiritu humilitatis et in animo contrito suscipiamur a te, Domine.”

The author of The Imitation rightly insists on this point. He has Christ say: “As I willingly offered Myself to God the Father for thy sins, with My hands stretched out upon the cross, even so oughtest thou willingly to offer thyself to Me daily in the Mass, as intimately as thou canst with thy whole energies and affections, for a pure and holy oblation.... Whatsoever thou givest except thyself, I regard not; for I seek not the gift but thyself.... But if thou wilt stand upon self, and not offer thyself freely to My will, thy offering is not complete, nor will there be an entire union between us.”

In the following chapter, the faithful soul replies: “Lord, in the simplicity of my heart, I offer myself to Thee this day, as Thy servant for evermore.... Receive me with this sacred oblation of Thy precious body.... I offer also to Thee all my good works, though very few and imperfect, that Thou mayest amend and sanctify them.... I offer to Thee also all the pious desires of devout persons; the necessities of my parents, friends, brothers, sisters, and all those that are dear to me.... I offer up also to Thee prayers and this sacrifice of propitiation for them in particular who have in any way injured me or have inflicted upon me any hurt or injury; and for all those likewise

whom I have at any time grieved, troubled, oppressed, or scandalized, by words or deeds, knowingly or unknowingly; that it may please Thee to forgive us all our sins and mutual offenses... ‘. Grant us so to live that we may be worthy to enjoy Thy grace and that we may attain unto life everlasting.”

The Mass thus understood is a fruitful source of sanctification, of ever new graces; by it Christ’s prayer may be better realized for us daily: “The glory which Thou hast given Me, I have given to them; that they may be one, as We also are one: I in them, and Thou in Me; that they may be made perfect in one: and the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast also loved Me.”

Our visit to the Blessed Sacrament should remind us of the morning’s Mass, and we should call to mind that though there is no sacrifice, properly so called, for it ceases with the Mass, Christ really present in the tabernacle continues to adore, to pray, and to give thanks. At every hour of the day we ought to unite ourselves to our Savior’s oblation. As the prayer to the Eucharistic heart says: “He is patient in waiting for us, eager to hear and grant our prayers. He is the fountain of ever new graces, the refuge of the hidden life, the master of the secrets of divine union.” In the presence of the tabernacle, we ought “to be silent in order to listen to Him, and leave ourselves in order to lose ourselves in Him.”

Chapter 32

Holy Communion

The soul tending to Christian perfection ought to live more and more by the Eucharist, not only by assistance at Mass but by frequent and even daily Communion. This is our reason for speaking of this living bread and of the conditions of a good and then of a fervent Communion.

THE EUCHARIST, THE LIVING BREAD COME DOWN FROM HEAVEN

For the salvation of all of us in general, our Lord could not have given Himself more than He did on the cross; and He cannot give Himself to each one of us in particular more than He has done in the Eucharist. Because He knew our deepest spiritual needs, He said to us in His promise of the Eucharist: “I am the bread of life. He that cometh to Me shall not hunger: and he that believeth in Me shall never thirst.... I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is My flesh, for the life of the world.... For My flesh is meat indeed.... He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood abideth in Me, and I in him.”

The Eucharist is thus the greatest of the sacraments, for it contains not only grace, but the Author of grace. It is the sacrament of love, because it is the fruit of love that gives itself and because it has for its principal effect to increase in us the love of God and of souls in God.

The reception of the Eucharist is called Communion, or the intimate union of the heart of God with the heart of man. This union nourishes the soul and supernaturally vivifies it more and more and, so to speak, deifies it, by increasing in it sanctifying grace, which is a participation in the inner life of God: “For My flesh is meat indeed.”

All created life needs to be fed: plants draw their nourishment from the secretions of the earth; animals feed on plants or other living creatures; man nourishes his body with material and appropriate food; he nourishes his mind with truth, especially divine truth; he should nourish his will with the divine will to be accomplished daily in order to reach eternal life. In other words, man ought to find his nourishment especially in faith, hope, and love. The acts of these virtues obtain for him, through merit, an increase in supernatural life.

But the Savior offers him still another and more divine food; He offers Himself as the food of souls. To St. Augustine, Christ said: “I am the food of the strong; grow and thou shalt feed on Me. But thou shalt not convert Me into thyself as the nourishment of thy body, but thou shalt be changed into Me.”

In Communion, the Savior has nothing to gain: it is the soul that receives, that is vivified, supernaturalized; the virtues of Jesus Christ pass into it; it is, as it were, incorporated in Him and becomes a more living member of His mystical body.

How is this incorporation and transformation effected? Especially because Christ, present in the Eucharist, leads the soul to a purer and stronger love of God.

The effects of this food are well explained by St. Thomas, who says: “This sacrament works in man the effect which Christ’s passion wrought in the world.” Then he adds: “This sacrament does for the spiritual life all that material food does for the bodily life, namely, by sustaining, giving increase, restoring, and giving delight.”

First of all, it sustains. He who in the natural order does not take food or who takes insufficient food, declines; in the spiritual order the same is true of the man who refuses the Eucharistic bread which the Lord offers us as the best food for our soul. Why deprive ourselves, without reason, of this “supersubstantial bread,” which is the daily bread of our souls?

As material bread restores the organism by repairing its losses, the results of labor and fatigue, so the Eucharist repairs the gradual loss of strength which results from our negligences. As the Council of Trent says, it frees us from venial sins, restores to us the fervor which we lost because of these sins, and preserves us from mortal sin.

Moreover, ordinary nourishment increases the life of the body in a growing child. Now, from the spiritual point of view, we ought always to

grow in the love of God and of our neighbor until death; thus we advance in our journey toward eternity. That we may grow in this way, the Eucharistic bread always brings us new graces. Thus supernatural growth does not stop in the saints as long as they continue on their way toward God: their faith becomes daily more enlightened and more lively, their hope more firm, their charity more pure and ardent. Little by little they advance from resignation in suffering to the esteem and love of the cross. Through Communion all the infused virtues grow with charity; and through ever more fervent Communions, they may reach a heroic degree. The gifts of the Holy Ghost, being permanent, infused dispositions connected with charity, also grow with it.

Lastly, as material bread is pleasant to the taste, the Eucharistic bread is sweet to the faithful soul, which draws from it a comfort and sometimes a spiritual well-being that is more or less felt.

The author of The Imitation says: “Confiding, O Lord, in Thy goodness and in Thy great mercy, I come as a sick man to my Savior, hungry and thirsty to the fountain of life, needy to the King of heaven, a servant to my Lord, a creature to my Creator, and one in desolation to my loving Comforter.” “Give Thyself to me, and it is enough; for without Thee no comfort is of any avail. Without Thee I cannot exist; and without Thy visitation I am unable to live.”

St. Thomas admirably expresses the mystery of Communion:

> “O res mirabilis, manducat Dominum
> Pauper, servus, et humilis!”

Communion is the sublime union of supreme wealth and poverty. And yet, how sad it is that habit, degenerating into routine, often prevents us from being attentive to the supernatural splendor of this infinite gift!

CONDITIONS OF A GOOD COMMUNION

The conditions of a good communion are indicated in the decree (December 20, 1905) by which Pope Pius X exhorted all the faithful to frequent Communion. This decree recalls first of all this principle: “The sacraments of the New Law, while acting ex opere operato, nevertheless produce a greater effect by reason of the more perfect dispositions of those who receive them.... Care must be taken, therefore, that an attentive

preparation precede Holy Communion and that a suitable thanksgiving follow it, taking into consideration the faculties and condition of each person."

According to the same decree, the first and indispensable condition for drawing profit from Communion is an upright and pious intention. On this point His Holiness declared: "Frequent and daily Communion, greatly desired by Jesus Christ and by the Catholic Church, should be so accessible to all the faithful of every rank and condition, that anyone who is in the state of grace and approaches the holy table with an upright and pious intention, may not be separated from it by any prohibition. Upright intention consists in this: that he who approaches the holy table is not influenced by custom, by vanity, or by any human reason, but desires to satisfy the good pleasure of God, to be more closely united to Him by charity, and by means of this divine medicine to remedy his infirmities and defects."

Evidently the upright and pious intention mentioned here must be supernatural, that is, inspired by a motive of faith; it is the desire to acquire the strength to serve God better and to keep from sin. If, with this principal intention, a person had a secondary intention of vanity, such as the desire to be praised, this secondary and nondeterminant motive would not prevent the Communion from being good and would not render it bad, but it would diminish its fruit. This fruit is so much the greater as the upright and pious intention is purer and stronger. These principles are positive. One very fervent Communion is, therefore, more fruitful in itself alone than many, tepid Communions.

THE CONDITIONS OF A FERVENT COMMUNION

In her Dialogue, St. Catherine states the conditions of a fervent Communion by using a striking figure:

> If thou hast a light, and the whole world should come to thee in order to take light from it, the light itself does not diminish, and yet each person has it all. It is true that everyone participates more or less in this light, according to the substance into which each one receives the fire. Suppose that there are many who bring their candles, one weighing an ounce, others two or six ounces, or a pound, or even more, and light them in the flame; in each candle, whether large or small, is the whole light, that is to say, the heat, the color, and the flame; nevertheless thou wouldst judge that he whose candle weighs an ounce has less of the light than he whose candle weighs a pound. Now the same thing happens to those who receive this

sacrament. Each one carries his own candle, that is, the holy desire with which he receives this sacrament, which of itself is without light, and lights it by receiving this sacrament.

How is this desire shown? The holy desire, which is the condition of a fervent Communion, should manifest itself first in removing all attachment to venial sin, slander, jealousy, vanity, sensuality, and so on. This attachment is less reprehensible in poorly enlightened Christians than in those who have already received much and are ungrateful. If this negligence and ingratitude were to become accentuated, they would render Communion less and less fruitful.

That Communion may be fervent, attachment to imperfections must be combated; that is, attachment to an imperfect manner of acting, such as characterizes the actions of one who, possessing five talents, acts as if he had only three (modo remisso), and only struggles feebly against his defects. Attachment to imperfections may also be found in the seeking after permissible but useless natural satisfactions, such as taking some refreshment which one can get along without. The sacrifice of these satisfactions would be agreeable to God; and the soul, by thus evidencing greater generosity, would receive many more graces in Communion. It ought to remember that it has as a model Christ Himself, who sacrificed Himself even to the death of the cross, and that it ought to work for its salvation and that of its neighbor by means similar to those which the Savior employed. The removal of venial sin and imperfection is a negative disposition.

The positive dispositions for a fervent Communion are humility (Domine, non sum dignus), a profound respect for the Eucharist, a living faith, an ardent desire to receive our Lord, the bread of life.

All these positive conditions may be summed up as hunger for the Eucharist.

All food is good when we are hungry. A rich man, accidentally deprived of food and famished, is happy to find black bread; he thinks it is the best meal of his life and he feels refreshed. If we hungered for the Eucharist, our Communion would be most fruitful. We should recall what this hunger was in St. Catherine of Siena; so great was it that one day when she had been harshly refused Communion, a particle of the large host became detached at the moment when the priest broke it in two, and was miraculously brought to the saint in response to the ardor of her desire.

How can we have this hunger for the Eucharist? The answer lies in our being firmly convinced that the Eucharist is the indispensable food of our soul and in generously making some sacrifices every day.

For those who are feeble, substantial food is sought which will restore their health; efforts are also made to raise the morale of the discouraged. The food par excellence, which renews spiritual strength, is the Eucharist. Our sensible appetites, inclined to sensuality and to sloth, need to be vivified by contact with the virginal body of Christ, who endured most frightful sufferings for love of us. We, who are always inclined to pride, to lack of consideration, to forgetfulness of the greatest truths, to spiritual folly, need to be illumined by contact with the sovereignly luminous intellect of the Savior, who is “the way, the truth, and the life.” Our will also has its deficiencies; it lacks energy, it is cold because it lacks love. This is the cause of all its weaknesses. Who can restore to it the ardor, the flame necessary to its life so that it may ascend instead of descending? The answer is contact with the Eucharistic heart of Jesus, ardent furnace of charity, immutably fixed in the good, and source of merits of infinite value. Of its plentitude we must all receive, and grace for grace. We have great need of this union with the Savior, which is the principal effect of Communion.

If we were profoundly convinced that the Eucharist is the necessary food of our souls, we would have the spiritual hunger which is found in the saints.

To recover it, if we have lost it, we must “take exercise,” as they say to people who are stricken with a languorous illness. Spiritual exercise in this case consists in daily offering sacrifices to God; in particular we should give up seeking ourselves in what we do; gradually, as egoism disappears, charity will take the first, uncontested place in our souls. We will cease to be preoccupied with the little nothings that concern us in order to think more of the glory of God and the salvation of souls. Then the hunger for the Eucharist will return. To make a good Communion, we should also ask Mary to make us share in the love with which she herself received the Eucharist from the hands of St. John.

The fruits of a fervent Communion are proportionate to the generosity of our dispositions. We read in Holy Scripture: “He that hath, to him shall be given, and he shall abound.” In the Office of the Blessed Sacrament, St. Thomas relates that the prophet Elias, who was being persecuted, stopped

worn out in the desert and lay down under a juniper tree to await death. He fell asleep; then an angel of the Lord wakened him, showed him a loaf of bread under the ashes, and a jug of water. He ate and drank, and with the strength that this food gave him, he walked for forty days, even to Mount Horeb, where the Lord was waiting for him. This is a figure of the effects of fervent Communion.

We should remember that each of our Communions ought to be substantially more fervent than the preceding one, since each ought not only to preserve charity in us, but to increase it, and consequently dispose us to receive our Lord on the following day with an even greater love than on the preceding day. As a stone falls so much the more rapidly as it approaches the earth which attracts it, so, says St. Thomas, souls ought to advance so much the more rapidly toward God as they approach nearer to Him and are more drawn by Him. This law of acceleration, which is at one and the same time a law of nature and a law of the order of grace, ought to be verified especially by daily Communion. It would be verified if some attachment to venial sin or to imperfection placed no obstacle to it. We see it realized in the lives of the saints, who make much more rapid progress during the last years of their lives than during the earlier years. This is notably true of the end of St. Thomas' life. Such acceleration in progress toward God was realized above all in Mary, the model of Eucharistic devotion; each of her Communions was certainly more fervent than the preceding one.

God grant that there may be in us at least a remote resemblance to this spiritual progress, and that, if sensible fervor is lacking, substantial fervor, which is the promptness of the will in the service of God, may not fail.

The author of The Imitation says: "For who, humbly approaching the fountain of sweetness, does not carry thence some little sweetness? Or who, standing by a great fire, does not derive therefrom some little heat? And Thou art a fountain ever full and overflowing; Thou art a fire always burning and never failing."

This source of graces is so lofty and so fruitful that the properties of refreshing water and the opposite qualities of burning fire may be compared to it. What is divided in material things is united in the spiritual life, and especially in the Eucharist, which contains not only abundant grace, but the very Author of grace.

In our Communions let us think of St. John, who rested his head on the heart of Christ, and of St. Catherine of Siena, who more than once drank

long draughts from the wound of His heart, which is ever open in order to show us His love. These extraordinary graces are given by God from time to time to draw our attention to what is most intrinsic and fruitful in daily Christian life, to what would exist in ours if we only knew how to answer God's call with generosity.

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE: COMMUNIONS WITHOUT THANKSGIVING

"If thou didst know the gift of God!" John 4: 10

A number of interior souls have told us of the sorrow they feel when they see, in certain places, almost the entire body of the faithful leave the church immediately after the end of the Mass during which they have received Holy Communion. Moreover, this custom is becoming general, even in many Catholic boarding schools and colleges where formerly the students who had received Communion remained in the chapel for about ten minutes after Mass, thus acquiring the habit of making a thanksgiving, a habit which the best among them kept all their lives.

Formerly to show the necessity of thanksgiving, people were told how St. Philip Neri had two altar boys, carrying lighted candles, accompany a lady who left the church immediately after the end of the Mass during which she had received Holy Communion. How many times this well deserved lesson was told, and how often it bore fruit! But nowadays people have acquired the habit of treating almost everybody, superiors as well as equals and inferiors, and even our Lord Himself, with easy familiarity. If this abuse continues, there will be, as someone has said, many Communions and few real communicants. If zealous souls do not set to work to stop this habit of unconcern, it will go on increasing, gradually destroying all spirit of mortification and of true and solid piety. And yet Christ Himself is ever the same, and our duty of gratitude toward Him has not changed.

Is not thanksgiving for a favor received a duty, and ought it not be proportionate to the value of the favor? When we give something valuable to a friend, we are rightfully grieved if that person does not take the trouble to send us a word of thanks. Yet this fault is frequent today. And if this easy carelessness, which borders on ingratitude, wounds us, what must be said of ingratitude toward our Lord, whose gifts are incomparably more precious than ours?

When, after the miraculous cure of the ten lepers, only one of them returned to thank our Lord, He asked: “And where are the other nine?” They had been miraculously healed, but did not return to express their thanks.

In Communion we receive a gift far superior to the miraculous cure of a physical disease; we receive the Author of salvation and an increase of the life of grace, which is the seed of glory, or eternal life begun. We receive an increase of charity, the highest of the virtues, which vivifies, animates all the others, and is the very principle of merit.

Christ often gave thanks to His Father for all His benefits, in particular for that of the redemptive Incarnation; with all His soul He thanked His Father for having revealed its mystery to little ones. On the cross He thanked Him while uttering His Consummatum est. In the Sacrifice of the Mass, of which He is the principal Priest, He does not cease to thank Him. Thanksgiving is one of the four ends of the sacrifice, always united to adoration, petition, and reparation. Even after the end of the world, when the last Mass has been said and when there will no longer be any sacrifice, properly so called, but only its consummation, when supplication and reparation have ceased, the worship of adoration and thanksgiving will endure forever, expressed in the Sanctus, which will be the song of the elect for all eternity.

With these thoughts in mind, we can easily understand why for some time many interior souls have been having Masses offered in thanksgiving, particularly on the second Friday of the month, in order to make up for the ingratitude of men and of many Christians, who scarcely know any more how to give thanks, even after receiving the greatest benefits.

If there is one favor, however, which demands a special act of thanksgiving, it is the institution of the Eucharist, through which Christ willed to remain substantially among us that He might continue in a sacramental manner the oblation of His sacrifice, and that He might give Himself to us as food to nourish our souls in a better and more substantial way than the best of food can nourish our body. Here it is not a question of feeding our minds on the thought of a St. Augustine or of a St. Thomas, but of feeding ourselves on Jesus Christ, on His humanity, on the plenitude of grace in His holy soul, personally united to the Word and to the Divinity. By the Eucharist, He gives Himself to us that he may assimilate us to Himself. Blessed Nicholas of Flue used to say: “Lord Jesus, take me from myself and

give me to Thyself." Let us add: "Lord Jesus, give Thyself to me, that I may belong entirely to Thee." The Blessed Eucharist is the greatest gift we can receive; surely it deserves a special thanksgiving. This is the purpose of the devotion to the Eucharistic heart.

If an author who offers you a good book is rightly offended when he receives no expression of thanks from you, much more painful is the ingratitude of one who fails to return thanks after Communion, by which Christ gives Himself to us.

Have the faithful who leave the church almost immediately after receiving Holy Communion forgotten that the Real Presence subsists in them as sacramental species for about a quarter of an hour after Communion, and can they not keep their divine Guest company for this short time? Christ calls us, He gives Himself to us with infinite love, and yet we have nothing to say to Him and are not willing to listen to Him for a few moments.

Bossuet used to recall that the saints, in particular St. Teresa, have often told us that sacramental thanksgiving is the most precious moment in our spiritual life. The essence of the Sacrifice of the Mass is indeed in the double consecration, but it is by Communion that we ourselves share in this sacrifice of infinite value. As a result of our Communion, contact is established between the holy soul of Jesus, personally united to the Word, and our soul, an intimate union of His human intellect, illumined by the light of glory, with our intellect, which is often darkened, clouded, forgetful of our great duties, in some measure obtuse in regard to divine things. A no less profound union of the human will of Christ, immutably fixed in the good, is also established with our wavering, inconstant will; and finally, a union of His most pure sensibility with ours, which at times is so troubled. In Christ's sensibility are the two virtues of fortitude and virginity, which strengthen and render virginal the souls that draw near to Him.

But Christ speaks only to those who listen to Him, only to those who are not voluntarily distracted. We should not only reproach ourselves for our directly voluntary distractions, but also for those which are indirectly so, as a result of our negligence in not considering what we ought to consider, in not willing what we ought to will, in not doing what we ought to do. This negligence is the source of a multitude of sins of omission, which pass almost unseen in our examination of conscience, because they are not something positive, but rather the absence of what should be. Many persons

who find no sin in themselves, because they have committed no grievous sins, are full of sins of omission, sins of indirectly voluntary and consequently culpable negligence.

Let us not neglect the duty of thanksgiving, as is so often done today. What fruits can be derived from Communions received with so little respect?

Unfortunately in some countries many priests themselves make, so to speak, no thanksgiving after their Mass. Others confound their thanksgiving with the obligatory and more or less recollected recitation of a part of the Office, with the result that they no longer have enough personal piety to vivify from within the official piety, as it were, of the minister of God. The results are sad indeed. How can the priest who no longer sufficiently nourishes the life of his own soul with the divine life, give it to others? How can he relieve the profound spiritual needs of souls that are famished, and who, after having recourse to him, sometimes go away sadder than ever, asking themselves anxiously where they can find what they require? Souls that hunger and thirst for God, souls that have received much and that, in the midst of great difficulties, should give abundantly to those about them in order to assist souls that are dying spiritually, are sometimes told: “Do not take so much trouble. You do more than is necessary.” We may well wonder what is to become of zeal, of the ardor of Charity, and how Christ’s words are to be verified: “I am come to cast fire on the earth: and what will I, but that it be kindled?” “I am come that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly.”

A truly pious person who used to reproach himself for not thinking sufficiently during the day of Holy Communion which he had received that morning, once received this reply to his expressed concern: “We do not think of the meal that we had some hours ago.” That was the reply of practical naturalism, which lost sight of the immense distance separating the Eucharistic bread from ordinary bread. The state of mind evinced by such a statement is manifestly the direct opposite of the contemplation of the mystery of the Eucharist: it springs from the habitual negligence with which one receives God’s most precious gifts. In the long run, a person no longer sees their value, which he knows only in a theoretical manner, and the counsels that he gives in no way lead souls to intimate union with God; they do not go beyond the level of casuistry, which is concerned only with knowing what is obligatory in order to avoid sin.

This state of soul can lead far; one can thus forget that every Christian, each according to his condition, must tend to the perfection of charity in virtue of the supreme precept: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with all thy strength and with all thy mind.”

Were they to follow this path, the priest and religious would also forget that they have not only a general, but a special obligation to tend to perfection in order that they may daily perform their sacred functions with greater holiness and be more closely united to our Lord.

In certain periods of the history of monastic orders, some religious, after celebrating their private Mass, did not go to the conventual Mass even on feast days, unless it was canonically indisputable that they were obliged to do so. If they had made their thanksgiving in a proper manner, would they have reached the point of judging in this fashion? Casuistry tended to prevail over spirituality, which was considered a secondary matter. That day on which we consider intimate union with God as something secondary, we no longer tend to perfection; we lose sight of the meaning and the import of the supreme precept: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind.” Our judgment is then no longer the judgment of wisdom; it no longer proceeds in any way from the gift of wisdom; we have begun to descend the slope of spiritual folly. This is the goal progressively reached through negligence in making a proper thanksgiving.

Remissness in regard to thanksgiving becomes negligence in adoration, which would end by being only exterior, negligence also in supplication and in reparation. We would thus more and more lose sight of the four ends of the sacrifice in order to give ourselves often to secondary matters which, moreover, lose their true moral and spiritual value as soon as they are no longer vivified by union with God.

Every benefit calls for an expression of gratitude; a measureless benefit demands a proportionate acknowledgment. Since we are not capable of offering God gratitude proportionate to His gift, we should ask Mary Mediatrix to come to our help and to obtain for us a share in the thanksgiving she offered to God after the sacrifice of the cross, after the Consummatum est, a share in the thanksgiving she made after St. John’s Mass, which truly continued in substance on the altar the sacrifice of Calvary. Negligence so frequent in thanksgiving after Communion springs

from our insufficient knowledge of the gift of God: “If thou didst know the gift of God!” Let us ask our Lord humbly but ardently for the grace of a great spirit of faith, which will permit us daily to realize the value of the Eucharist a little better. Let us ask for the grace of the supernatural contemplation of this mystery of faith, that is, the experimental knowledge which proceeds from the gifts of understanding and wisdom, and which is the cause of a fervent thanksgiving in the measure in which we are more conscious of the greatness of the gift received.

Chapter 33

The Prayer of Petition

We have spoken of the purification of the soul by the sacraments, by sacramental confession, assistance at Mass, and frequent Communion. We shall now discuss the purification of the soul in beginners through prayer. First of all, we shall speak of the efficacy of the prayer of petition in general, then of liturgical prayer, which is the psalmody, and of the spirit which ought to animate it, finally of the mental prayer of beginners. We shall begin with the most general principles.

THE NECESSITY OF A STRONG BELIEF IN THE EFFICACY OF PRAYER

The question of the efficacy of prayer interests all souls without distinction: those who are beginning, those who have made progress, and even those in the state of mortal sin, for though the sinner who has lost sanctifying grace cannot merit, he can always pray.

Merit, being a right to a reward, is related to divine justice; prayer, on the other hand, is addressed to divine mercy, which often hears and grants it and lifts up the soul without any merit on its part; thus it raises up souls that have fallen into the state of spiritual death. The most wretched man, from the depths of the abyss into which he has fallen, can utter this cry to mercy, which is prayer. The beggar who possesses nothing but his poverty can pray in the very name of his wretchedness, and, if he puts his whole heart into his petition, mercy inclines toward him; the abyss of wretchedness calls to that of mercy. The soul is raised up, and God is glorified. We should recall the conversion of Magdalen; let us also remember the prayer of Daniel for Israel: “Thou hast executed true judgments in all the things that Thou hast brought upon us... for we have sinned and committed iniquity.... Deliver us not up forever, we beseech Thee, for Thy name’s sake.” The psalms are

filled with these petitions: “But I am needy and poor; O God, help me. Thou art my helper and my deliverer: O Lord, make no delay.” “Help us, O God, our Savior; and for the glory of Thy name, O Lord, deliver us: and forgive us our sins for Thy name’s sake.” “Thou art my helper and my protector: and in Thy word I have greatly hoped.... Uphold me according to Thy word, and I shall live: and let me not be confounded in my expectation.”

Do we believe in the power of prayer? When temptation threatens to make us fall, when light does not shine in us, when the cross is hard to carry, do we have recourse to prayer, as Christ advised us to? Do we not doubt its efficacy, if not in principle at least in practice? Yet we know Christ’s promise: “Ask, and it shall be given you.” We know the common teaching of theologians: that true prayer, by which we ask for ourselves with humility, confidence, and perseverance the graces necessary for our salvation, is infallibly efficacious. We know this doctrine, and yet it seems to us at times that we have truly prayed without being heard.

We believe in, or rather we see, the power of a machine, of an army, of money, and of knowledge; but we do not believe strongly enough in the efficacy of prayer. The power of that intellectual force which is knowledge, we see by its results; there is nothing very mysterious about it, for we know whence this power comes and approximately whither it goes. It is acquired by human means and produces effects that remain within human limits. If, on the contrary, prayer is in question, we believe too weakly in it, because we do not know clearly whence it comes and we forget whither it is going.

Let us recall the source of the efficacy of prayer and the end to which it is ordained, what it ought to obtain; in other words, its first principle and its end.

THE SOURCE OF THE EFFICACY OF PRAYER

The sources of rivers are high up; the waters of the heavens and the fountain of the snows feed their streams. A river is first a torrent which descends from the mountains before irrigating the valley and casting itself into the sea. This is a figure of the loftiness of the source of the efficacy of prayer.

At times we seem to believe that prayer is a force which should have its first principle in ourselves, one by which we would try to bend the will of

God by persuasion. Immediately our thought encounters the following difficulty, often formulated by unbelievers, in particular by the deists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: namely, no one can move, no one can bend the will of God. God is indeed Goodness which asks only to give itself, Mercy ever ready to come to the help of him who suffers. But God is also perfectly immutable Being. The divine will is from all eternity as immovable as it is merciful. No one can boast of having enlightened God, of having made Him change His will: “I am the Lord, and I change not.” By the decrees of Providence, the order of things and of events is strongly and gently established from all eternity. Must we conclude from this, with fatalism, that prayer can do nothing, that it is too late, that whether we pray or not, what is to happen will happen?

The words of Holy Scripture remain, and the interior life must ever penetrate them more deeply: “Ask, and it shall be given you: seek, and you shall find: knock, and it shall be opened to you.”

Prayer is not, in fact, a force having its first principle in us; it is not an effort of the human soul, trying to do violence to God in order to make Him change His providential dispositions. Such a manner of speaking, which is used occasionally, is a metaphorical, human way of expressing oneself. In reality, the will of God is absolutely immutable, but this superior immutability is precisely the source of the infallible efficacy of prayer.

Fundamentally it is very simple in spite of the mystery of grace involved in it. We have here a combination of the clear and the obscure that is most captivating and beautiful. First of all, we shall consider what is clear: true prayer is infallibly efficacious because God, who cannot contradict Himself, has decreed that it should be. This is what the contemplation of the saints examines profoundly.

A God who would not have willed and foreseen from all eternity the prayers that we address to Him, is a conception as puerile as that of a God who would change His plans, bowing before our will.

Not only all that happens has been foreseen and willed (or at least permitted) in advance by a providential decree, but the way things happen, the causes which produce events; all is fixed from all eternity by Providence. For material harvests, God prepared the seed, the rain that must help it to germinate, the sun that will ripen the fruits of the earth. Likewise for spiritual harvests, He has prepared spiritual seeds, the divine graces necessary for sanctification and salvation. In all orders, from the lowest to

the highest, in view of certain effects God prepares the causes that must produce them.

Prayer is precisely a cause ordained to produce this effect: the obtaining of the gifts of God. All creatures exist only by the gifts of God, but the intellectual creature alone can realize this. Existence, health, physical strength, the light of the intellect, moral energy, success in our enterprises, all is the gift of God; but especially is this true of grace which leads to salutary good, causes it to be accomplished, and gives strength to persevere. Grace and, even more, the Holy Ghost who has been sent to us and who is the source of living water, is the gift par excellence which Christ spoke of to the Samaritan woman: “If thou didst know the gift of God, and who He is that saith to thee: Give Me to drink; thou perhaps wouldst have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water.... Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again; but he that shall drink of the water that I will give him shall not thirst forever. But the water that I will give him shall become in him a fountain of water, springing up into life everlasting.”

The intellectual creature alone is able to realize that it can live naturally and supernaturally only by the gift of God. Must we, then, be astonished that divine Providence has willed that man should ask for alms, since he can understand that he lives only on alms?

Here, as elsewhere, God wills first of all the final effect; then He ordains the means or the causes which must produce it. After having decided to give, He decides that we shall pray in order to receive, as a father, who has resolved in advance to bestow a pleasure on his children, purposes to make them ask for it. The gift of God is a result; prayer is the cause ordained to obtain it. St. Gregory the Great says: “Men ought by prayer to dispose themselves to receive what Almighty God from eternity has decided to give them.” Thus Christ, wishing to convert the Samaritan woman, led her to pray by saying to her: “If thou didst know the gift of God!” In the same way, He granted Magdalen a strong and gentle actual grace which inclined her to repentance and to prayer. He acted in the same manner toward Zacheus and the good thief. It is, therefore, as necessary to pray in order to obtain the help of God, which we need to do good and to persevere in it, as it is necessary to sow seed in order to have wheat. To those who say that what was to happen would happen, whether they prayed or not, the answer must be made that such a statement is as foolish as to maintain that whether we sowed seed or not, once the summer came, we would have wheat.

Providence affects not only the results, but the means to be employed, and in addition it differs from fatalism in that it safeguards human liberty by a grace as gentle as it is efficacious, fortiter et suaviter. Without a doubt, an actual grace is necessary in order to pray; but this grace is offered to all, and only those who refuse it are deprived of it.

Therefore prayer is necessary to obtain the help of God, as seed is necessary for the harvest. Even more, though the best seed, for lack of favorable exterior conditions, can produce nothing, though thousands of seeds are lost, true, humble, trusting prayer, by which we ask for ourselves what is necessary for salvation, is never lost. It is heard in this sense, that it obtains for us the grace to continue praying.

The efficacy of prayer well made is infallibly assured by Christ: “Ask, and it shall be given you: seek and you shall find: knock, and it shall be opened to you.... And which of you, if he ask his father bread, will he give him a stone? Or a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?... If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father from heaven give the good Spirit to them that ask Him?” To the apostles He also says: “Amen, amen I say to you: if you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it to you. Hitherto you have not asked anything in My name.” Prayerful souls ought more than all others to live by this doctrine, which is elementary for every Christian; by living it, one discovers its depths.

Let us, therefore, have confidence in the efficacy of prayer. It is not only a human force which has its first principle in us; the source of its efficacy is in God and in the infinite merits of Christ. It descends from an eternal decree of love, it reascends to divine mercy. A fountain of water rises only if the water descends from an equal height. Likewise when we pray, it is not a question of persuading God, of inclining Him to change His providential dispositions; rather we have only to lift our will to the height of His in order to will with Him in time what He has decided from all eternity to grant us. Far from tending to bring the Most High down toward us, “prayer is a lifting up of the soul toward God,” as the fathers say. When we pray and are heard, it seems to us that the will of God inclines toward us; on the contrary, it is ours which rises; we begin to will in time what God willed for us from all eternity.

Hence, far from being opposed to the divine governance, prayer cooperates in it. We are two who will instead of one. And when, for

example, we have prayed much in order to obtain a conversion and have been heard, we can say that it is certainly God who converted this soul, but who deigned to associate us with Him and from all eternity had decided to make us pray that this great grace might be obtained.

Thus we cooperate in our salvation by asking for ourselves the graces necessary to attain it; among these graces, some, such as that of final perseverance, cannot be merited, but are obtained by humble, trusting, and persevering prayer. Likewise, efficacious grace, which preserves us from mortal sin and keeps us in the state of grace, is not merited; otherwise we would merit the very principle of merit (the continued state of grace); but it can be obtained by prayer. Moreover, the actual and efficacious grace of loving contemplation, although, properly speaking, not merited de condigno, is obtained by prayer: “Wherefore I wished, and understanding was given me: and I called upon God, and the spirit of wisdom came upon me.”

Even when we are trying to obtain the grace of conversion for another, who perhaps resists it, the greater the number of persons who pray and the more each one perseveres in prayer, the more hope there is of obtaining this grace of conversion. Prayer thus greatly cooperates in the divine governance.

THE PARTICULAR PETITIONS WE SHOULD MAKE

We have just seen the nature of the first principle of the efficacy of prayer. We shall now consider the end to which it is ordained by God, what it can obtain for us.

The end to which Providence has ordained prayer as a means, is the obtaining of the gifts of God necessary to sanctification and salvation; for prayer is a cause which has its place in the life of souls, as heat and electricity have their place in the physical order. Now the end of the life of the soul is eternal life, and the goods which direct us to it are of two kinds: spiritual goods, which lead us to it directly; and temporal goods, which can be indirectly useful to salvation in the measure in which they are subordinated to the first.

Spiritual goods are habitual and actual grace, the virtues, the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, and merits, the fruits of the virtues and of the gifts. According to what we have just said, humble, trusting, persevering prayer is

all-powerful to obtain for the sinner the grace of conversion and for the just man actual grace that he may persevere in the performance of his duties. Prayer, made under the same conditions, is all-powerful to obtain for us also a more lively faith, a firmer hope, a more ardent charity, a greater fidelity to our vocation. The first petition we should make, as the Our Father points out, is that the name of God may be sanctified, glorified by a radiating faith; that His kingdom may come is the object of hope; that His will may be done, fulfilled with love, by an ever purer and stronger charity.

Moreover, prayer can obtain our daily bread for us in the measure in which it is necessary or useful for salvation, the supersubstantial bread of the Eucharist and the suitable dispositions to receive it well. Besides, prayer obtains for us the pardon of our sins and disposes us to pardon our neighbor; it preserves us from temptation or gives us the strength to triumph over it.

To accomplish all this, prayer must have the indicated conditions: it must be sincere, humble (it is a poor man who is asking), trusting in the infinite goodness, which it must not doubt, persevering, in order to be the expression of a profound desire of our hearts. Such was the prayer of the woman of Canaan, whom the Gospel mentions and to whom Christ said: “O woman, great is thy faith. Be it done to thee as thou wilt.”

Even if the Lord leaves us contending with great difficulties from which we have prayed Him to deliver us, we must not believe that we are not heard. The simple fact that we continue to pray shows that God is helping us, for without a new actual grace we would not continue to pray. He leaves us to battle with these difficulties in order to inure us to warfare. He wishes to show us that the struggle is profitable for us and that, as He said to St. Paul in similar circumstances, the grace granted us suffices to continue a struggle in which the very strength of the Lord, which is the source of ours, is more clearly shown: “My grace is sufficient for thee: for power is made perfect in infirmity.” We see this especially in the passive purifications of the senses and the spirit, which are at times a spiritual tempest, in which we must continually ask for efficacious grace, which alone can prevent us from weakening.

In regard to temporal goods, prayer can obtain for us all those which should, in one way or another, assist us in our journey toward eternity: our daily bread, health, strength, the success of our enterprises. Prayer can obtain everything, on condition that over and above all else we ask God for

greater love of Him: “Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you.” If we do not obtain these temporal goods, it is because they are not useful to our salvation; if our prayer is well made, we obtain a more precious grace in place of them.

“The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him.” And the prayer of petition, if it is truly a lifting up of the soul to God, prepares the soul for a more intimate prayer of adoration, reparation, and thanksgiving, and for the prayer of union.

Chapter 34

Liturgical Prayer

One of the greatest means of union with God for the religious soul is the psalmody, which in religious orders is the daily accompaniment of the Mass. The Mass is the great prayer of Christ; it will continue until the end of the world, as long as He does not cease to offer Himself by the ministry of His priests; as long as from His sacerdotal and Eucharistic heart there rises always the theandric act of love and oblation, which has infinite value as adoration, reparation, petition, and thanksgiving. The psalmody of the Divine Office is the great prayer of the Church, the spouse of Christ; a day and night prayer, which ought never to cease on the surface of the earth, as the Mass does not.

For those who have the great honor to take part in the chant, the psalmody should be an admirable school of contemplation, of self oblation, of holiness. That it may produce these abundant fruits, the psalmody should keep what is its very essence; it ought to have not only a body which is well organized according to harmonious rules, but also a soul. If it ceases to be the great contemplative prayer, it gradually loses its soul and, instead of being a soaring, a rising toward God, and a repose, it becomes a burden, a source of fatigue, and no longer produces great fruits. Therefore we shall discuss briefly first of all deformed and materialized chant, then true psalmody, which is a deliverance, like the chant of the Church, above all the noises of earth.

DEFORMED PSALMODY

Deformed psalmody is a body without a soul. Generally, it is marked by unseemly haste, as if undue haste, which, according to St. Francis de Sales, is the death of devotion, could replace true and profound life. The words of

the Office are badly pronounced without rhythm or measure. The antiphons, which are often beautiful, are poorly said and become unintelligible, the hymns even more so. The lessons which are not punctuated as they should be, are read as one would read the most indifferent or even the most boring passages, when, as a matter of fact, they are concerned with the splendors of divine wisdom or what is most beautiful in the lives of the saints. People wish to save time, four or five minutes which they will devote to worthless trifles, and they lose the best of the time given by God. Father de Condren used to say: “If a master spoke to his servant as a number of people speak to God while saying the Divine Office, the servant would think that his master was insane to be jabbering in such fashion.”

As a result of haste, the psalmody of which we are speaking is mechanical and not organic; just as in a body without a soul, the members are no longer vitally united, but only placed together. The Office becomes a series of words following one another. The great meaning of a psalm is no longer comprehended; to one who is trying to grasp this meaning and to follow it, this mechanical chant brings fatigue and is an obstacle to true prayer.

Is this manner of chanting a lifting of the soul toward God? Perhaps, but it is a uniformly retarded elevation, like the movement of a stone that has been thrown into the air and tends to fall back; whereas true prayer ought, like a flame, to tend spontaneously toward heaven.

What remedies can be applied to this evil? The remedy is to be found in recalling the rules for the chant. But this remedy is not effective if it alone is applied. The evil is deeper, and we must go to its roots. In reality, there is only one truly effective remedy that makes possible the utilization of the others: namely, the restoration of the spirit of prayer. Similarly, in order to restore functions to a body without a soul, life would have to be restored to it.

Deformed psalmody shows us that, for a soul which has no personal life of prayer, the recitation of the Office becomes altogether material, a wholly exterior worship. Not possessing the habit of recollection, this soul is assailed by thoughts foreign to the Office; its work, studies, or business affairs keep returning to its memory, and at times even thoroughly vain thoughts come. The most interior persons sometimes experience this distress. But in the case of those we are speaking of, it is a habitual state of negligence, and in them distraction does not remain in the imagination; it

invades the higher faculties. How can anyone in this state taste the divine words of the psalms, the prophets, the Epistles, the most beautiful pages of the fathers and of the lives of the saints which are daily offered to us in the Divine Office? All these spiritual beauties remain unperceived like colorless and insipid objects. The great poetry of the Psalmist and the most profound cries of his heart become spiritless and monotonous. One day in choir, St. Bernard saw above each religious his guardian angel who was writing down the chant. The manner of writing differed greatly, however: some wrote in letters of gold, others in silver, while still others wrote with ink or with colorless water; one angel held his pen poised and wrote nothing. Routine mummifies the most profoundly living passages and reduces them to mechanically recited formulas. This manner of chanting is nothing but practical nominalism, a sort of materialism in action. The higher faculties do not live in a prayer made thus; they remain somnolent or scattered. A person may still hear the symphony of the Office, more beautiful than the most famous symphonies of Beethoven, but for lack of an interior feeling, he can no longer appreciate it. Often the Divine Office is studied from the historical point of view, or from the canonical point of view of strict obligations, and these distinctions are held to; but it is especially from the spiritual point of view that it must be considered and lived.

CONTEMPLATIVE CHANT

What should the contemplative chant be? This chant is distinguished precisely by the spirit of prayer, or at least by the aspiration which inclines us to it, which desires it, seeks it, and at length obtains it. We are thus shown how much the contemplation of the mysteries of faith is in the normal way of sanctity: this contemplation alone can give us in liturgical prayer the light, peace, and joy of the truth tasted and loved, gaudium de veritate.

The spirit of prayer, more intimately drawn from mental prayer, is lost as soon as one hurries to finish daily prayer, as if it were not the very respiration of the soul, spiritual contact with God, our Life, It was in the spirit of prayer that the psalms were conceived without it, we cannot understand them or live by them. “As the hart panteth after the fountains of water, so my soul panteth after Thee, O God.”

If the psalmody has this spirit, then in place of mechanical haste, which is a superficial life, we find profound life for which we do not need continually to recall liturgical rules, for these rules are merely the expression of its inner inclinations. Then, without excessive slowness the words are well pronounced, undue haste is avoided, and the pauses, serving as a vital rest between aspiration and respiration, are observed. The antiphons are tasted, and the soul is truly nourished with the substance of the liturgical text. Whoever has the duty of reading the lessons, which are often most beautiful, should look them over ahead of time in order not to spoil their meaning. He who reads the lessons well avoids a too evident expression of his personal piety, but the great objective meaning of Scripture explained by the fathers remains intelligible, and here and there he grasps its splendors in the midst of its divine obscurities. No effort is made to save four or five minutes, and he ceases to lose the precious time given by God. He is even led at the end of the chant to prolong prayer by some moments of mental prayer, like the religious in bygone days who, at night after Matins and Lauds, spent some time in profound recollection. Many times in the history of their lives mention is made of these secret prayers, of this heart to heart conversation with God in which they often received the greatest lights, which made them glimpse what they had sought till then during hours and hours of labor. When this spirit of prayer prevails, real life begins, and one understands that mental prayer gives the spirit of the chant; whereas the psalmody furnishes to mental prayer the best possible food, the very word of God, distributed and explained in a suitable manner, according to the cycle of the liturgical year, according to the true time, which coincides with the single instant of immobile eternity.

Such prayer is no longer mechanical, but organic; the soul has returned to vivify the body; prayer is no longer a succession of words; we are able to seize the vital spirit running through them. Without effort, even in the most painful hours of life, we can taste the admirable poetry of the psalms and find in them light, rest, strength, renewal of all energies. Then truly this prayer is a lifting up of the soul toward God, a lifting up that is not uniformly retarded, but rather accelerated. The soul burns therein and is consumed in a holy manner like the candles on the altar.

St. Thomas Aquinas deeply loved this beautiful chant thus understood. It is told of him that he could not keep back his tears when, during Compline of Lent, he chanted the antiphon: “In the midst of life we are in death:

whom do we seek as our helper, but Thou, O Lord, who because of our sins art rightly incensed? Holy God, strong God, holy and merciful Savior, deliver us not up to a bitter death; abandon us not in the time of our old age, when our strength will abandon us." This beautiful antiphon begs for the grace of final perseverance, the grace of graces, that of the predestined. How it should speak to the heart of the contemplative theologian, who has made a deep study of the tracts on Providence, predestination, and grace!

The chant, which prepares so admirably for Mass and which follows it, is one of the greatest means by which the theologian, as well as others, may rise far above reasoning to contemplation, to the simple gaze on God and to divine union. The theologian who has spent a long time over his books in a positive and speculative study of revelation, in the refutation of numerous errors and the examination of many opinions relating to the great mysteries of the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Eucharist, the life of heaven, needs, after such study, to rise above all this bookish knowledge; he needs profound recollection, truly divine light, which is superior to reasoning and gives him the spirit of the letter which he has studied. Otherwise he grows spiritually anaemic and, because of insufficient contact with the light of life, he cannot give it adequately to others. His work remains too mechanical, not sufficiently organized and living, or it may be that the governing idea of his synthesis has not been drawn from a high enough source; it lacks amplitude, life, radiation, and little by little it loses its interest. The theologian needs often to find the living and splendid expression of the mysteries that he studies in the very words of God, such as the liturgy makes us taste and love: "Taste, and see that the Lord is sweet."

The word of God, which is thus daily recalled to us in prayer, is to its theological commentary what a simple circumference is to the polygon inscribed in it. We must forget the polygon momentarily in order to enjoy a little and in a holy manner the beauty of the circle, which the movement of contemplation follows, as Dionysius used to say. This is found during the chant, if mechanical haste is not substituted for the profound life which ought to spring from the fountain. The body of the chant must be truly vivified by the spirit of prayer.

There is great happiness in hearing the Divine Office thus chanted in many monasteries of Benedictines, Carthusians, Carmelites, Dominicans, and Franciscans. This prayer attracts good vocations, whereas the other, because it is materialized, drives them away. When we hear the great

contemplative prayer in certain cloisters, we feel the current of the true life of the Church; it is its chant, both simple and splendid, which precedes and follows the sublime words of the Spouse: the Eucharistic consecration. We are made to forget all the sorrows of this world, all the more or less false complications and all the tiresome tasks imposed by human conventions. God grant that the chant may ever remain thus keenly alive day and night in our monasteries! It has been noticed that when it ceases at night in those convents where it should go on, the Lord raises up nocturnal adoration to replace it, for living prayer ought not to cease, and prayer during the night, by reason of the profound silence into which everything is plunged and for many other reasons, has special graces of contemplation: Oportet semper orare.

The chant thus understood is the holy repose which souls need after all the fatigues, agitations, and complications of the world. It is rest in God, rest that is full of life, rest which from afar resembles that of God, who possesses His interminable life tota simul, in the single instant which never passes, and which at the same time measures supreme action and supreme rest, quies in bono amato.

We may define the mutual relations of mental prayer and the Divine Office by saying that from mental prayer the Office receives the habit of recollection and the spirit of prayer. On the other hand, mental prayer finds in liturgical prayer an abundant source of contemplation and an objective rule against individual illusions. The Divine Office cures sentimentality by continually recalling the great truths in the very language of Scripture; it reminds presumptuous souls of the greatness and severity of divine justice, and it also reminds fearful souls of infinite mercy and the value of the passion of Christ. It makes sentimental souls live on the heights of true faith and charity, far above sensibility.

It will suffice here to recall one example among many: the tract from the Mass for Quadragesima Sunday taken from psalm 90: “He that dwelleth in the aid of the most High, shall abide under the protection of the God of Jacob. He shall say to the Lord: Thou art my protector and my refuge: my God, in Him will I trust. For He hath delivered me from the snare of the hunters and from the sharp word. He will overshadow thee with His shoulders: and under His wings thou shalt trust. His truth shall compass thee with a shield: thou shalt not be afraid of the terror of the night, of the arrow that flieth in the day... or of the noonday devil. A thousand shall fall

at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand: but it shall not come nigh thee.... For He hath given His angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways. In their hands they shall bear thee up lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.... He shall cry to Me, and I will hear him: I am with him in tribulation, I will deliver him and I will glorify him. I will fill him with length of days; and I will show him My salvation."

The liturgy recalls all the ages of the spiritual life by the joyful mysteries of the childhood of the Savior, by His passion, and by the glorious mysteries; it thus gives true spiritual joy which enlarges the heart: "I have run the way of Thy commandments, when Thou didst enlarge my heart." It prepares the soul for the more intimate and silent prayer of meditation.

Chapter 35

The Mental Prayer of Beginners

Its Progressive Simplification

"Pray to thy Father in secret: and thy Father who seeth in secret will repay thee." Matt. 6:6

In our discussion of the efficacy of prayer in general and of the Divine Office, we saw that prayer is a lifting up of the soul to God, by which we will in time what God wills from all eternity that we should ask of Him: namely, the various means of salvation, particularly progress in charity: "Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you." The prayer of petition should be accompanied by adoration, reparation, and thanksgiving. These are the sentiments we should have when we say the Divine Office. But we feel the need of a more intimate prayer, in which our soul, more profoundly recollected, comes into contact with the Blessed Trinity dwelling in us, a contact which is necessary that we may receive from the interior Master that light of life which alone can make us penetrate deeply and taste the mysteries of salvation: those of the redeeming Incarnation, of the Sacrifice of the Mass, of eternal life toward which we are traveling. This light of life is also necessary to reform our character by spiritualizing and supernaturalizing it, by rendering it more conformable to Him who invites us to seek peace of soul in humility and meekness. This more intimate prayer is mental prayer.

We shall see, first of all, what the mental prayer of beginners should be. In the following chapter we will explain how to attain to a life of prayer and persevere in it.

In the Gospel, Christ tells us: “And when ye pray, ye shall not be as the hypocrites, that love to stand and pray in the synagogues and corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men.... But thou, when thou shalt pray, enter into thy chamber and, having shut the door, pray to thy Father in secret: and thy Father who seeth in secret will repay thee.”

In a statement that is both simple and profound, St. Teresa says: “Mental prayer is nothing else, in my opinion, but being on terms of friendship with God, frequently conversing in secret with Him who, as we know, loves us.” Genuinely simple and pure Christian souls have always been acquainted with this completely spontaneous and intimate prayer. A peasant who was questioned by the Cure of Ars on his manner of prayer, defined it admirably by saying: “I look at our Lord who is in the tabernacle, and He looks at me.” This is indeed the commerce of friendship, by which the soul converses alone with God by whom it believes itself loved. This interior prayer, which was so often that of the first Christians in the catacombs, has always existed in profoundly humble and religious souls eager for God. The royal Psalmist was, most certainly, profoundly acquainted with this prayer when he wrote: “As the hart panteth after the fountains of water, so my soul panteth after Thee, O God. My soul hath thirsted after the strong living God. When shall I come and appear before the face of God?”

What is simpler than prayer? Its spontaneity is, however, taken away at times by the use of excessively complicated methods, which draw too much attention to themselves and not enough to God, whom the soul should seek. A method is good as a way of finding the truth, on condition that it can be forgotten and that it lead truly to the end toward which one tends. To prefer the method to the truth, or a certain intellectual mechanism to reality that should be known, would be a manifest aberration, similar to that of the meticulous man or of the pedant. Moreover, an over-complicated method provokes a reaction, and even an excessive reaction in some who, worn out by this complexity, often end up in a vague reverie that has scarcely any true piety about it except the name.

The truth, here as elsewhere, is to be found in the middle and above these two extreme, opposite deviations. A method, or to speak more simply with Bossuet, a manner of making prayer, is useful, especially at the beginning, to preserve us from mental rambling. But that it may not by its complexity become an obstacle rather than a help, it must be simple, and, far from breaking the spontaneity and continuity of prayer, it should be content with

describing the ascending movement of the soul toward God. It should be limited to indicating the essential acts of which this movement is composed. We should remember especially that prayer depends principally on the grace of God, and that a person prepares for it far less by processes that would remain mechanical, so to speak, than by humility; “God... giveth grace to the humble.”

THE ESSENTIAL ACTS OF PRAYER

What are the essential acts of prayer? First of all, prayer is not only an act of the intellect, like a simple study or reading. There are speculative souls who are curious about the things of God, but they are not for that reason contemplative souls, souls of prayer. If in their considerations they taste a pleasure which far exceeds that of the senses, this pleasure comes perhaps more from their knowledge than from their charity; they are moved more by the love of knowledge, it may be, than by the love of God. St. Thomas, who distinguishes between these two loves, says that in prayer it is the second which should lead the intellect to the knowledge of God, with the purpose of loving Him more. In this statement is a holy realism, that which is observed in the knowledge of the servants of God.

The pleasure which is born, not of the love of God but of the love of knowledge, often increases pride and makes souls love themselves more; they seek themselves without being aware of it. Study and speculation, even when they do not err, do not necessarily presuppose the state of grace and charity, and do not always cooperate in increasing it.

Prayer, on the contrary, should proceed from the love of God and should end in Him. Through love of God, one seeks to contemplate Him, and the contemplation of His goodness and His beauty increases love. We read in The Dialogue of St. Catherine of Siena: “Knowledge must precede love, and only when she has attained love, can she strive to follow and to clothe herself with the truth.” In the same work, we read: “With this (supernatural) light the souls in the unitive state love Me, because love follows the intellect, and the more it knows the more it can love. Thus the one feeds the other.”

Moreover, as St. Thomas says, here on earth the love of God is more perfect than the knowledge of God; charity is more perfect than faith. Why is this? Because knowledge, as it were, draws God down to us and imposes

on Him the bounds of our limited ideas, whereas love draws us toward God, lifts us up toward Him, unites us to Him. Besides, as long as we are deprived of the beatific vision, it is chiefly by charity that union with God is made; this is why perfection consists especially in charity, which ought to have the uncontested first place in our soul. This is equivalent to saying that in prayer the soul should rise toward God on the two wings of the intellect and the will, aided by the influence of grace. Prayer is, therefore, a wholly supernatural movement of knowledge and love.

Hence we can readily enumerate the essential acts of prayer. To be this lifting up of the whole soul toward God, prayer must be prepared for by an act of humility and proceed from the three theological virtues, which unite us to God, animate the virtue of religion, and obtain for us the lights and inspirations of the Holy Ghost. The generous soul flies, so to speak, like a bird by the effort of its wings, but the breath of the Holy Ghost sustains this effort and rather often bears the soul farther aloft than it could go by its own virtues. Not in vain are the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost found in all the just without exception.

We shall consider these various acts of prayer. In the perfect, they are often simultaneous and continuous; but to describe them, we must enumerate them one after the other, as they present themselves in beginners.

Normally we should begin our prayer with an act of humility, for it is fitting that, when about to converse with God, we should recall what we are. Let us think of our Lord's words to St. Catherine of Siena: "I am who am, thou art she who is not." Of ourselves we are nothing, and even less than nothing, because our sins are a disorder inferior to nothingness itself. This act of humility is normally accompanied by an act of repentance and an act of adoration, like that which prompts the genuflection made on entering a church. These acts remove pride, the chief obstacle to grace, and this true humility, far from depressing us, reminds us that in a fragile vessel we bear a precious treasure, sanctifying grace and the Blessed Trinity dwelling in us. Thus begun, prayer does not proceed from vain sentimentality, but from the life of grace, which is immensely superior to our sensibility.

After this act of humility, we should make a profound and prolonged act of faith in some fundamental truth or other: God, His perfections, His goodness, or Christ, the mysteries of His life, His passion, His glory, or again our great duties, our vocation, our last end, sin, the duties of our state

to be accomplished with ever greater holiness. These subjects should recur. On feast days the liturgy itself gives us the subject. If the feast commemorates a mystery in the life of Christ, such as that of His passion, we should consider it first of all under its sensible aspect, then under its spiritual aspect, dwell on what makes its infinite value, rest in this gaze of fruitful faith. For this consideration and adherence of faith, some words of the Gospel or of the liturgy often suffice. For more advanced souls, they are like grains of incense on the fire of charity. It is not necessary to reason much; the simple act of theological faith is superior to reasoning, and becomes more and more a simple gaze, which, when accompanied by admiration and love, merits the name of contemplation. This infused faith, superior to all philosophy and to the discursive work of theology, makes us adhere infallibly and supernaturally in obscurity to the mysteries which the elect contemplate openly in heaven. As St. Paul says, it is “the substance of things to be hoped for.” Its obscurity does not hinder it from being infallibly sure. It is the first light of our interior life. “Credo in unum Deum....” And at a given moment, this Credo seems almost to become a video, as if we saw from afar the fountain of living water to which our soul aspires.

This gaze of faith on the truth and goodness of God gives spontaneous rise to an act of hope. The soul desires beatitude, eternal life, the peace promised by the heavenly Father to those who follow Jesus Christ. But we know for a certainty that by our own natural powers we shall never reach this supernatural end. Then we have recourse to the infinitely helpful goodness of God and beg Him for His grace. Petition, inspired by hope, relies on the divine help. Having said Credo, the soul spontaneously says: desidero, sitio, spero, I desire, I thirst, I hope. Having glimpsed from afar the fountain of living water, the soul desires to reach it that it may there drink long draughts, “as the hart panteth after the fountains of water.”

But the act of hope, in its turn, disposes us to an act of charity. As, indeed, St. Thomas says: “From the fact that man hopes to obtain a benefit from God, he is led to think that God, his benefactor, is good in Himself (and better than His gifts). This is why hope disposes us to love God for Himself.”

Thus, the act of charity rises spontaneously in us, at first under an affective form. If, in these affections, our sensibility offers its help to the will vivified by charity, it may be useful on condition that it remain subordinate. But this help is not necessary; it disappears in aridities. Here

we need a calm but profound affection, which is surer and more fruitful than superficial emotions. It consists in saying: “My God, I no longer wish to lie when I tell Thee that I love Thee. Grant me to love Thee and to please Thee in all things.”“Diligo te, Domine, ex toto corde.”

This affective charity should finally become effective: “I wish to conform my will to the divine will. May Thy will be accomplished in me by fidelity to the commandments and to the spirit of the counsels. I wish to break all that renders me the slave of sin, of pride, of egoism, and of sensuality. I wish, O Lord, to share more and more in the divine life that Thou dost offer me. Thou hast come that we may have life in abundance. Increase my love for Thee. Thou dost ask only to give; I wish to receive as Thou dost wish that I should receive, in trial as well as in consolation; whether Thou comest to associate me with the joyful mysteries of Thy childhood or the sorrowful mysteries of Thy passion, for they all lead to the glorious life of eternity. Today I resolve to be faithful on a certain point that I have often neglected. Volo.” As St. Teresa suggests, the Pater noster may be slowly meditated in this manner.

Here, in this culminating point of prayer, the fruit of the theological virtues, the knowledge of faith, the love of hope, and that of charity tend, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, to fuse in a gaze of faithful and generous love, which is the beginning of contemplation: Christian contemplation which bears on God and the humanity of Christ, as the contemplation of the artist on nature, and that of a mother on the countenance of her child.

This prayer begins to penetrate and to taste the mysteries of salvation: the nature of the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity in our souls, the mystical body of Christ, and the communion of the saints.

Gradually it introduces us into the intimacy of Christ, the intimacy of love. Nothing can better correct our defects of character, give us a lively desire to resemble Him who said to us: “Learn of Me, because I am meek, and humble of heart: and you shall find rest to your souls.” Prayer thus made renders our hearts more and more like the Sacred Heart of Jesus, for one imitates, even without being aware of it, those whom one loves truly and deeply. There are difficult characters who will succeed in reforming themselves only by the loving contemplation of Christ in prayer.

These ideas should give us a better understanding of St. Teresa’s definition of prayer, which we quoted at the beginning of the chapter and

repeat here: “Mental prayer is nothing else, in my opinion, but being on terms of friendship with God, frequently conversing in secret with Him who, as we know, loves us.”

THE PRAYER OF SIMPLICITY

In proportion as the soul grows, the acts of humility, faith, hope, and charity, which we have enumerated, tend, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, to fuse in a gaze of ardent love. Hence a simple method, useful at the beginning, should gradually give place to docility to the Holy Ghost, who breathes where He will. Prayer thus tends to become a prolonged spiritual communion, as the peasant of Ars, whom we quoted above, defined it: “I look at our Lord, and He looks at me.” The prayerful soul says much in a few words, which he often says over and over without ever repeating himself. This prolonged spiritual communion is like the breathing of the soul or its repose in God; by faith and hope it breathes in the truth and goodness of God, and it breathes out love. What the soul receives from God under the form of ever new graces, it gives back to Him under the form of adoration and love.

Consequently, to ask for the grace of Christian contemplation is to ask that the bandage of pride, which still covers the eyes of the spirit, may fall away completely in order that we may be able truly to penetrate and taste the great mysteries of salvation: that of the sacrifice of the cross perpetuated by the Mass, that of the sacrament of the Eucharist, the food of our soul.

Surely without any danger of quietism, Bossuet invites us to this simplified affective prayer in his substantial little work, Maniere courte et facile pour faire l’oraison en foi, et de simple presence de Dieu. We shall quote the principal part.

> A person must become accustomed to nourish his soul with a simple and loving gaze on God and on Jesus Christ our Lord; and to this end, it must be gently separated from reasoning, discourse, and the multitude of affections, in order to hold it in simplicity, respect, and attention, and thus to bring it nearer and nearer to God, its unique, sovereign Good, its first principle and last end.

The perfection of this life consists in union with our sovereign Good; and the greater the simplicity, the more perfect also is the union. This is why grace interiorly solicits those who wish to be perfect to become simple that they may finally be rendered capable of the enjoyment of the one thing

necessary, of eternal unity.... Unum mihi est necessarium, Deus meus et omnia!...

> Meditation is very good in its time and very useful at the beginning of the spiritual life; but we should not stop there, since the soul, by its fidelity in mortifying and recollecting itself, ordinarily receives a purer and more intimate prayer, which may be called the prayer of simplicity. This prayer consists in a simple view, a gaze on God, on Jesus Christ, or on one of His mysteries. Therefore, leaving reasoning behind, the soul makes use of a sweet contemplation which holds it peaceful, attentive, and susceptible to the divine operations and impressions which the Holy Ghost communicates to it. It does little and receives much... and, as it draws nearer to the source of all light, grace, and virtue, it is also proportionately expanded....
>
> We should observe that this true simplicity makes us live in a continual death and a perfect detachment, because it makes us go to God with perfect uprightness, without pausing over any creature. However, this grace of simplicity is not obtained by speculation, but by a great purity of heart and true mortification and self-contempt; whoever flees suffering, humiliation, and death to self will never enter it. This is also the reason why there are so few who advance in it, because hardly anyone wishes to give up self; and unless he does so, he experiences great losses and deprives himself of incomprehensible goods.... Fidelity which makes one die to self prepares... for this excellent type of prayer....
>
> The enlightened soul dearly esteems the guidance of God, who allows it to be exercised by creatures and overwhelmed by temptations and abandonment.... After the purgation of the soul by the purgatory of sufferings, through which one must necessarily pass, will come illumination, rest, and joy through intimate union with God.

The purgatory of sufferings, which Bossuet speaks of here as necessary before illumination, is the passive purification of the senses which we shall discuss farther on: it is, in fact, at the threshold of the illuminative way, like a second conversion.

Chapter 36

How to Attain to the Life of Prayer and Persevere in It

We have defined prayer and explained how that of beginners tend to become increasingly simple in order that it may become the prayer of simplicity described by Bossuet. We shall now explain how a person can attain to the life of prayer thus conceived and persevere in it.

HOW TO ATTAIN TO THIS LIFE

We must remember, first of all, that prayer depends especially on the grace of God; hence we prepare for it far less by processes, which might remain mechanical, than by humility, for “God... giveth grace to the humble,” and He makes us humble in order to load us with His gifts. To remind us of the necessity of humility and simplicity, or purity of intention, Christ said to his apostles: “Unless you be converted and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven,” especially into the intimacy of the kingdom, or into the life of prayer. God Himself is pleased to instruct immediately those who are truly humble of heart; such was the peasant of Ars who remained for a long time in silence near the tabernacle, in intimate and wordless conversation with our Lord. If we love to be nothing, to accept contempt, and not only accept it, but end by loving it, we shall make great progress in prayer; we shall be loaded with gifts far beyond all our desires.

Preparation for the life of prayer depends not only on humility, but also on mortification, which is the spirit and practice of detachment from sensible things and from self. Clearly, if our minds are preoccupied with worldly interests and affairs, and our souls agitated by too human an affection, by jealousy, by the memory of wrongs done us by our neighbor,

or by rash judgments, we shall not be able to converse with our Lord. If in the course of the day we criticize our superiors or fail in docility toward them, when evening comes we shall hardly be likely to find the presence of God in prayer. Therefore all inordinate inclinations must be mortified so that charity may take the uncontested first place in our soul and rise spontaneously toward God in distress as well as in consolation.

To attain to the life of prayer, we must, in the course of the day, often lift our hearts to God, converse with Christ about everything, as with the guide who leads us in our ascent; and then when we stop for a moment to chat more intimately with our Guide, we shall have something to say to Him; above all, we shall know how to listen to His inspirations because we shall be on holy and intimate terms with Him. To reach this intimacy, young religious are often taught to "sanctify the hour" when it strikes, that is, to offer it to the Lord in order to be more united to Him during the following period of time. It is also advised, especially on certain feast days or on the first Friday of the month, to multiply from morning until evening acts of love of God and our neighbor, not in a mechanical manner, such as counting them, but as the occasion presents itself: for example, on meeting a person, whether that person be naturally congenial to us or not. If we are faithful to this practice, we shall find when evening comes that we are closely united to God.

Finally, we must create silence in our soul; we must quiet our more or less inordinate passions in order to hear the interior Master, who speaks in a low voice as a friend to his friend. If we are habitually preoccupied with ourselves, seek ourselves in our work, in study and exterior activity, how shall we delight in the sublime harmonies of the mysteries of the Blessed Trinity present in us, of the redemptive Incarnation, and of the Eucharist? The disorder and clamor of our sensibility must truly cease for the life of prayer. Therefore the Lord at times so profoundly cultivates the sensible appetites, especially in the passive night of the senses, that they may eventually become silent and submit with docility to the mind or to the superior part of the soul.

All this work of life may be called the remote preparation for prayer. It is far more important than the immediate preparation, that is, than the choice of a subject; for this latter preparation has as its object only to excite the fire of charity, which ought never to be extinguished in us and which should be

continually fed with a generosity sustained by fidelity to the duty of the present moment.

To further this remote preparation, we must advise what has been called prayer while working; in other words, choosing about a quarter of an hour in the middle of the morning or afternoon, in the very midst of our work, whether intellectual or external, with the intention, not of interrupting it, but of accomplishing it in a holier manner under the eye of God. This practice is most profitable. By it we reach the point of no longer seeking self in our work, of renouncing what is too natural and somewhat egotistical in our activity, so that we may sanctify it and preserve union with God by placing all our energies at His service, by freeing ourselves from complacency in personal satisfaction.

Thus generous and simple souls, in the wide sense of the term, will reach an uninterrupted conformity with the divine will and will practically always preserve the presence of God, which will render the immediate preparation for prayer less necessary. They will be already disposed, inclined to turn to God, as the stone turns toward the center of the earth as soon as a void is created beside it. They will thus reach a true life of prayer, which will be for them a kind of spiritual respiration.

HOW TO PERSEVERE IN THE LIFE OF PRAYER

With perseverance much can be gained; without it, everything can be lost. Perseverance is not easy: a struggle must be carried on against self, against spiritual sloth, against the devil, who inclines us to discouragement. Many souls, on being deprived of the first consolations which they received, turn back; among them are souls that had made considerable advance. We may cite the case of St. Catherine of Genoa, who from the age of thirteen was drawn by God to prayer and made great progress in it; after five years of suffering, she abandoned the interior life, and for the next five years led a completely exterior life. However, one day when, on the advice of her sister, she was going to confession, she experienced with anguish the profound void in her soul; the desire of God revived in her.

In an instant she was taken back by God in the strongest, most imperious manner and, after fourteen years of great penance, she received assurance that she had fully satisfied divine justice. “If I should turn back,” she said then, “I should wish my eyes to be torn out, and even that would not seem

sufficient.” Such vigorous words of the saints express concretely what all theologians say abstractly: that it is better to lose one’s sight than to lose grace, or even to retrogress on the way to eternity. For anyone who knows the value of life, the value of time in relation to eternity, this statement is incontestable. It is, therefore, most important to persevere and to press forward.

Some souls, after struggling for a long time, become discouraged when they are perhaps only a few steps from the fountain of living water. Then, without prayer, they no longer have the strength to carry the cross generously; they let themselves slip into an easy, superficial life, in which others might perhaps be saved, but in which they run the risk of being lost. Why is this? Because their vigorous faculties, which were made to seek God, will incline them, in their search for the absolute which they desire, to look for it where it is not. For certain strong souls, mediocrity is not possible; if they do not give themselves entirely to God on the road of sanctity, they will belong wholly to themselves. They will wish to spend their life enjoying their ego; they run the risk of turning away from God and of placing their last end in the satisfaction of their pride or of their concupiscences. In this respect, certain souls somewhat resemble the angels. The angel, says St. Thomas, is either very holy or very wicked; there is no middle course. The angel makes a choice either of ardent charity or of irremissible mortal sin; venial sin is impossible for a pure spirit, since immediately seeing the end, its will is completely engaged. Either it becomes holy, forever established in supernatural good, or it turns away from God forever.

Some souls absolutely need prayer, intimate and profound prayer; another form of prayer will not suffice for them. There are very intelligent people whose character is difficult, intellectuals who will dry up in their work, in study, in seeking themselves therein with pride, unless they lead a life of true prayer, which for them should be a life of mental prayer. It alone can give them a childlike soul in regard to God, to the Savior, and to the Blessed Virgin. It alone can teach them the profound meaning of Christ’s words: “Unless... you become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” It is, therefore, important, especially for certain souls, to persevere in prayer; unless they do so, they are almost certain to abandon the interior life and perhaps come to ruin.

To persevere in prayer two things are necessary: to have confidence in Christ, who calls all pious souls to the living waters of prayer, and humbly to allow ourselves to be led by the road He Himself has chosen for us. First of all, we must have confidence in Him. We fail in this regard when, after the first slightly prolonged periods of aridity, we decide that prayer is not for us, nor we for it. On this score, we might as well say, as the Jansenists did, that frequent Communion is not for us, but only for a few great saints. Our Lord calls all souls to this intercourse of friendship with Him. He compares Himself to the good shepherd, who leads his sheep to the eternal pastures, that they may feed on the word of God. In these pastures is the fountain of living water of which Christ spoke to the Samaritan woman, who was, nevertheless, a sinner: “If thou didst know the gift of God, and who He is that saith to thee: Give Me to drink; thou perhaps wouldst have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water.” Likewise at Jerusalem on a festal day, “Jesus stood and cried, saying: If any man thirst, let him come to Me, and drink. He that believeth in Me, as the Scripture saith: Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. Now this He said of the Spirit which they should receive who believed in Him.”

The fountain of water (fons vivus) is the Holy Ghost, who has been sent to us, who is given to us with infused charity which unites us to Him. Moreover, He has been given to us as interior Master and Comforter to make us penetrate and taste the inner meaning of the Gospel: “The Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you.” This was realized for the apostles on Pentecost, and for us, proportionately, on the day of our confirmation. Therefore St. John writes to the simple faithful in his First Epistle: “You have the unction from the Holy One.... Let the unction, which you have received from Him, abide in you.... His unction teacheth you of all things” useful to salvation.

St. Paul says also: “The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us.” The Holy Ghost is thus in all the just, in every soul in the state of grace. He, who is subsistent Love itself, dwells in us, not to remain idle but to operate in us, to be our interior Master by His seven gifts, which are permanent, infused dispositions given to assure our docility to Him. These dispositions grow in us with charity. Therefore, if we do not better hear the holy inspirations of the interior Master, it is because we are listening too intently to ourselves and are not sufficiently

desirous of the profound reign of God in us. To persevere in prayer, we must, therefore, have confidence in Christ and in the Holy Ghost whom He has sent to us.

Finally, we must allow ourselves to be led by the path which our Lord has chosen for us. There is, to be sure, the common and indispensable way, that of humility and conformity to the divine will; hence we must all pray as the publican did. But on this common road, one part is shaded, the other has nothing to protect it from the burning rays of the sun; one section is flat, followed by long, steep hills that lead to high plateaus where we may enjoy a marvelous view. The good Shepherd leads His sheep as He judges best. Some He guides by the parables, others by the way of reasoning; to others He gives, in the obscurity of faith, simple and penetrating intuition, great views of the whole, which are the distinctive characteristic of wisdom. He leaves certain souls for a rather long time in difficulties in order to inure them to the struggle. For several years St. Teresa herself had to make use of a book in order to meditate, and the time seemed very long to her. Our Lord raises the Marys rather than the Marthas to contemplation, but the former find therein intimate sufferings unknown to the latter; and if the latter are faithful, they will reach the living waters and will slake their thirst according to their desire.

We must, therefore, allow ourselves to be led by the road which the Lord has chosen for us. If aridity is prolonged, we should know that it does not spring from lukewarmness, provided that we have no taste for the things of the world but rather concern for our spiritual progress. Aridity, on the contrary, is very useful, like fire that must dry out the wood before setting it ablaze. Aridity is needed precisely to dry up our too lively, too impetuous, exuberant, and tumultuous sensibility, so that finally the sensible appetites may be quieted and become submissive to the spirit; so that, above these passing emotions, there may grow in us the strong and pure love of charity, which has its seat in the elevated part of the soul.

Then if we are faithful, as St. Thomas teaches, we shall gradually begin to contemplate God in the mirror of sensible things, or in that of the parables. Our soul will rise from one of these parables to the thought of infinite mercy, by a straight movement, like that of a lark soaring directly from earth toward heaven.

At other times we shall contemplate God in the mirror of the mysteries of salvation, aiding ourselves, for example, by recalling the mysteries of the

Rosary. By a spiral (oblique) movement analogous to the flight of the swallow, we shall rise from the joyful to the sorrowful mysteries, and to those which announce the life of heaven.

Finally, on certain days we shall contemplate God in Himself, holding fast in the obscurity of faith to the thought of His infinite goodness which communicates to us all the blessings we receive. By a circular movement similar to that of the eagle high in the air, we shall repeatedly come back to this thought of the divine goodness. And, whereas the egoist always thinks of himself and refers everything to himself, we shall begin to think always of God dwelling in us, and to refer everything to Him. Then, even when the most unforeseen and painful events occur, we shall think of the glory of God and of the manifestation of His goodness, and we shall glimpse from afar the supreme Good toward which everything, trials as well as joys, should converge. This is truly the life of prayer, which allows us to see all things in God; it is the normal prelude of eternal life.

Chapter 37

Retarded Souls

At the beginning of the third part of this work, we shall speak of the second conversion through which one passes, with greater or lesser generosity, from the purgative way of beginners to the illuminative way of the advanced. Some souls, because of their negligence or spiritual sloth, do not pass from the age of beginners to that of proficients. These are retarded souls; in the spiritual life they are like abnormal children, who do not happily pass through the crisis of adolescence and who, though they do not remain children, never reach the full development of maturity. Thus these retarded souls belong neither among beginners nor among proficients. Unfortunately they are numerous.

Of these retarded souls, some who formerly served God with fidelity are now in a state bordering on indifference. Though in the past they knew true spiritual fervor, we may say without fear of rash judgment that they seriously misused divine graces. Had it not been for this misuse, as a matter of fact the Lord would have continued what He had begun in them, for He does not refuse His help to those who do what is in their power to obtain it.

How did these souls reach this state of tepidity? As a rule, two principal causes are indicated: the neglect of little things in the service of God and the refusal to make the sacrifices He asks.

THE NEGLECT OF LITTLE THINGS

The neglect of little things seems slight in itself, but it may become grave in its results. Our daily merit is ordinarily constituted by little acts of virtue from morning to night. As drops of water gradually wear away a stone, as drops of rain render the dried-up earth fertile, so our good acts by their repetition engender a good habit, an acquired virtue; they preserve it and

increase it; and, if they proceed from a supernatural or infused virtue, they obtain the increase of this virtue.

In the service of God, things which seem small in themselves are great in their relation to our last end, to God who should be loved, above all else. They are also great by reason of the supernatural spirit of faith, confidence, and love which should make us accomplish them. If we acted thus, we would live from morning to night in the presence of God, which is infinitely precious; and we would live by Him, by His spirit, instead of living by the natural spirit in accordance with the inclination of egoism. Little by little there would grow up in us zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. Unless we strive in this way, we may end by following the downward path of practical naturalism, allowing ourselves to be dominated by the more or less unconscious gross selfishness which inspires many of our acts.

The neglect of little things in the service of God leads rapidly to neglect of great things: for example, in the case of a priest or religious, it leads to the recitation of the Office without true piety, to scarcely any preparation for Mass, to saying Mass hastily or assisting at it without the requisite attention, to replacing thanksgiving by the obligatory recitation of a part of the Office, so that all personal piety disappears and gradually gives place to piety that is, in a way, official and exterior. If a priest were to follow this downward path, he would little by little become a mere functionary of God. He would end by treating holy things with carelessness, whereas, on the other hand, he would perhaps acquit himself with the utmost seriousness in those duties which assure his reputation as a professor, writer, lecturer, or man of affairs. Gradually emphasis would be shifted from what is of greatest moment in life to what is secondary. The holy Sacrifice of the Mass, which perpetuates in substance on our altars the sacrifice of the cross and applies its fruits to us, is evidently the most serious and greatest thing in life for the priest and the true Christian. A Mass well celebrated or well heard with a spirit of faith is far superior to our personal activity; it orientates this activity toward its true supernatural end and renders it fruitful. On the contrary, we swerve from this end when we reach the stage of seeking self in our activity, to the point of forgetting the salvation of souls and all that it demands on our part. Neglect of little things in the service of God may lead us to this forgetfulness, which renders everything unfruitful.

We read, on the contrary, in St. Luke: “He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in that which is greater.” Whoever is daily faithful to the smallest duties of Christian life, or to those of the religious life, will receive the grace to be faithful even to martyrdom, if he should have to bear witness to God in his blood. Then will be fully accomplished in him the words of the Gospel: “Well done, good and faithful servant; because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.” But whoever habitually neglects little things in the service of God, will end by neglecting great ones. How, then, will he accomplish the difficult acts that may be required of him?

THE REFUSAL OF SACRIFICES ASKED

A second cause of tepidity in retarded souls is the refusal to make the sacrifices which the Lord asks. Some persons feel themselves called to a more serious, a more perfect life, to true prayer, to the practice of humility, without which there are no true virtues; but these souls refuse, if not directly at least indirectly, by seeking diversion. They do not wish to hear the words that recur daily in the invitatory of Matins: “Today, if you shall hear His voice, harden not your hearts.” Some, who are preoccupied with doing something, for example, a book, a work that would let the world know they exist, say to themselves from time to time: “First of all, it is essential to become an interior soul; if the soul is empty, it can give nothing. To do something exterior is unprofitable unless the soul is united to God.” To become an interior soul, only some sacrifices of self-love would be necessary; God would have to be truly sought instead of self. Without these sacrifices, how can anyone enter on a true interior life? If these sacrifices are refused, the soul remains retarded; it may stay so permanently.

Then it loses zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of its neighbor, the fervor of charity. It falls into tepidity, which, with habitual negligence, is affection for venial sin or the disposition of the will to commit certain venial sins deliberately when the occasion presents itself. There is finally, as it were, the firm resolution to remain in this state. In addition to the lack of the spirit of sacrifice, other causes may produce this tepidity of retarded souls: namely, levity of spirit, the thoughtlessness with which one tells, for example, officious lies (i.e., lies of expediency) whenever the occasion offers; spiritual sloth, which leads finally to the abandonment of the

spiritual war against our defects, against our predominant fault, which quite frequently tries to pass for a virtue, and gives rise in us to other more or less inordinate passions. A person thus arrives at carelessness and indifference in regard to perfection and no longer truly tends toward it. The fact that he has perhaps promised to tend toward it by the way of the counsels is forgotten, as is also the loftiness of the supreme precept: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with all thy strength and with all thy mind.”

THE TENDENCY TO DERISION

Among the causes of tepidity in retarded souls, the tendency to derision should be particularly noted. St. Thomas speaks of the derider when he discusses the vices opposed to justice: insult, detraction, murmuring against the reputation of our neighbor. He points out that to deride or to ridicule someone, is to show that we do not esteem him; and derision, says the saint, may become a mortal sin if it affects persons or things that deserve high esteem. It is a grievous sin to ridicule the things of God, or our parents, or superiors, or good persons who lead a virtuous life. Derision may even become very grievous by reason of its consequences, for it may turn weak souls forever away from the practice of good. Job replied to his friends: “He that is mocked by his friends as I, shall call upon God; and He will hear him. For the simplicity of the just man is laughed to scorn.” But it is also said of deriders: “He that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh at them.” The terrible irony of heaven will chastise that of earth.

The derider is himself a retarded soul, holding others back and becoming, often without being aware of it, the instrument of the spirit of evil. His cast of soul, which is the direct opposite of evangelical simplicity, is the one most opposed to supernatural contemplation. The derider, who wishes “to play the rogue,” ridicules the just man who tends truly to perfection; he emphasizes the latter’s defects and depreciates his good qualities. Why is this? Because he feels that he himself has little virtue, and he is unwilling to admit his inferiority. Then, out of spite, he lessens the real and fundamental value of his neighbor and the necessity of virtue itself. He may greatly harm weak souls which he intimidates, and, while working his own ruin, he may labor at their perdition.

The saints tell us that retarded and tepid souls may reach such a state of blindness of spirit and hardness of heart that it is very difficult to reform them. This statement is borne out by St. Bernard, who says: “You will more easily see a great number of seculars renounce vice and embrace virtue than a single religious pass from tepidity to fervor.” The higher a retarded or tepid soul has been raised, the more deplorable is its fall and also the more difficult is its conversion; in fact, it reaches the point where it judges its state to be satisfactory, and no longer has a desire to ascend higher. When the time of the Lord’s visit is disregarded, He sometimes returns only after long petitions. Retarded souls are in danger; they should be entrusted to the Blessed Virgin Mary, who alone can bring them back to the Savior and obtain for them the graces that will rekindle in them the desire for perfection.

On this subject Father Lallemant, S.J., wrote a striking chapter reminiscent of certain pages from the writings of St. Catherine of Siena and of Tauler. Lallemant’s beautiful book, The Spiritual Doctrine, contains the following statement:

> In a community there may be four classes of religious: some perfect; others wicked, haughty, full of vanity, sensual, enemies of regularity; others tepid, cowardly, indifferent; and finally, the virtuous who tend to perfection, although they may perhaps never reach it.
>
> Religious belonging to these four classes may be found in the holiest religious orders, as well as in those communities which have fallen into relaxed condition; with this difference, however, that in an order which has fallen from its first fervor, the larger number belong to the tepid group, and the remainder is composed of a few wicked souls, of a small number who work at their perfection, and of a very limited number of perfect souls. But in an order in which regular observance is still in its vigor, the bulk of the community is composed of those who tend to perfection, and the remainder comprises a few perfect souls, a small number of tepid religious, and very few wicked souls.
>
> We may make a very important observation here: that is, that a religious order leans toward decadence when the number of the tepid begins to equal that of the fervent. By the fervent, I mean those who strive from day to day to make fresh progress in prayer, recollection, mortification, purity of conscience, and humility. Those who do not make this effort should be considered tepid, although they may keep from mortal sin; they corrupt many others, do extreme harm to the whole body, and are themselves in danger, either of not persevering in their vocation, or of falling into interior pride or great darkness.
>
> The duty of supeirors in religious houses is to act in such a way, as well by their good example as their exhortations, their individual conferences, and their prayers, that their inferiors may remain in the ranks of the fervent who tend to perfection; otherwise, the superiors themselves will bear the punishment, and a terrible punishment it will be.

All this is only too true and shows how easy it is to become a retarded soul, to stray from the road of perfection, by ceasing to live according to the spirit of faith. Then, evidently, it becomes difficult to admit that the contemplation of the mysteries of faith is in the normal way of sanctity; or one may conclude that this doctrine seems true in theory, but is little in accord with the facts. To tell the truth, we should say that, as a matter of fact, many souls remain retarded; they are not in order; they do not really tend toward perfection and certainly do not nourish themselves sufficiently with the mysteries of faith, with the mystery of the Mass, at which, however, they frequently assist, but in a manner that is not sufficiently interior to assure the progress that should be made.

Father Lallemant adds:

> There are four things prejudicial to the spiritual life, and on them are based the evil maxims that slip into holy communities: (1) the esteem of purely human talents and qualities; (2) the care to make friends for solely human reasons; (3) a politic conduct directed only by human prudence, a spirit that is sly and opposed to evangelical simplicity; (4) superfluous recreations which the soul seeks or conversations and reading which give a wholly natural satisfaction to the mind.

These four enemies of the spiritual life give rise, as Father Lallemant points out in this same chapter, to ambition, the desire for eminent positions or the wish to make a reputation for oneself in the sciences, and the seeking after one’s ease; all of which are manifestly opposed to spiritual progress.

In this discussion of retarded souls, a most important consideration should be noted: namely, that we must be on the alert to preserve in our souls the subordination of the natural activity of the mind to the essentially supernatural virtues, especially to the three theological virtues. These three infused virtues and their acts are certainly very superior to the natural activity of the mind necessary for the study of the sciences, of philosophy, and of theology. To deny this truth would be a heresy; but it is not sufficient to admit it in theory. Otherwise we would end by really preferring the study of philosophy and theology to the superior life of faith, to prayer, to the love of God and of souls, to the celebration of the holy Sacrifice of the Mass, which would be hurriedly celebrated without any spirit of faith, in order to give more time to a piece of work, to an intellectual overloading that would remain quite empty and fruitless, because it would be destitute of the spirit that ought to animate it. Thus we would fall into an evil intellectualism, in which there would be something like the hypertrophy of the reasoning

powers to the detriment of the life of faith, of true piety, and of the indispensable training of the will. Then charity, the highest of the theological virtues, would no longer truly hold the first place in the soul, which might remain forever retarded and in part fruitless.

To remedy this retardation, we should often recall that God in His mercy continually offers us the grace to make us daily fulfill a little better the supreme precept, that is, the duty to tend toward the perfection of charity: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with all thy strength and with all thy mind: and thy neighbor as thyself." Let us remember that in the evening of life we shall be judged on the sincerity of our love of God.

THE INCLINATION TO EGOISM THAT REMAINS IN US

Tauler in his sermons often speaks of two inclinations in us, the one good, the other evil. His disciples gathered up his preaching on this subject in the third chapter of The Institutions. At this point in our study, we must emphasize the essential elements of this teaching, by noting the indications of the inclination that seeks self, and by showing how to bring about the predominance of the other fundamental inclination by means of which we are in the image of God.

Since all our works draw their value from the intention and love which produce them, and since all should spring from the love of God, we ought often to recall the fact that all sins and eternal damnation come from an evil inclination which seeks self and is opposed to God.

Christ Himself declares: "Unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, itself remaineth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." This is equivalent to saying that without the death of the evil inclination in us our soul will never become rich in merits, in fruits of life for eternity. If, on the contrary, the evil inclination dies, then the seed of eternal life will grow in us. The knowledge of this evil inclination is, therefore, more useful to man than knowledge of the entire universe.

By what traits can this evil inclination be recognized? Simply by the fact that it continually seeks self rather than God in everything. If at times it gives evidence of love for God and neighbor, such a manifestation is only a deception and an illusion. This inclination fancies that it possesses justice and goodness; it often glories in its works, but chiefly in such as have some

appearance of virtue and holiness. It takes delight in them, attributes them to itself, and, although it does not love true virtues, it seeks the praise that is due them.

This evil inclination considers its sins as trifles. Such an attitude is a proof that it is destitute of true light and does not know what sin is; for, if it had a true and clear understanding of what it is to turn away from God, the sovereign Good, it would doubtless not willingly consent to do so.

This same inclination makes an effort always to appear good, although it is not. For this reason, some people would not dare to grieve anyone by a reproof because they could not endure a cross reply. This inclination at times even imagines that it loves God fervently, and consequently it reprehends its neighbor for his sins with extreme asperity. “But,” says Tauler, “if it could see its own sins, it would completely forget those of others, no matter how great they might be.”

Every time this inclination is reproved, it strives to justify and defend itself, and cannot bear to be corrected. It tells itself that others have their defects, but that it has always acted with a good intention or through ignorance or weakness. This inclination reaches the point of persuading itself that it seeks God in everything, whereas in reality it seeks itself always and lives only on appearances and externals. It prefers appearance to reality. Therefore it seeks itself even in prayer and the taste for spiritual things, in interior consolations turning the gifts of heaven, whether interior or exterior, and even God Himself, to its own satisfaction. If it happens to lose an object of its delight, it immediately seeks another, in order to rest in it and to refer all to self.

HOW TO BRING ABOUT THE PREDOMINANCE OF THE OTHER INCLINATION, WHICH IS IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

To bring about the predominance of the good inclination, man must be a severe guardian and observer of self, of his exterior and interior senses. He must not allow his senses to become dissipated, to run after creatures. “He must,” says Tauler, “build a cell within his heart, withdraw to it and live in it as far as possible unknown to the whole world, that he may be less turned away from divine contemplation. He must not lose sight of the life and passion of our Savior.” The consideration of Christ’s life and passion will

give birth in him to the desire to resemble Christ by humility of heart, patience, meekness, true love of God and neighbor.

When a man finds that he is not conformed to the divine model, he will ask the Holy Ghost to give him the grace better to see the ugliness of sin and its deadly results. He will abase himself with sincerity and humility, but with confidence in infinite mercy, begging it to raise him up again.

The more a man promptly mortifies his evil inclination, the more living and beautiful the image of God that is in him becomes: the natural image, that is, the soul itself in so far as by nature it is spiritual and immortal, and the supernatural image, in other words, sanctifying grace from which spring the infused virtues and the gifts. Then gradually man begins to think frequently of God instead of thinking always of himself, and instead of seeking self by referring everything to self, he begins to seek God in everything that happens, to love Him truly, effectively, practically, and to refer all to Him.

Tauler concludes: “As long as you seek yourself, as you act for yourself, as you ask for the reward of and the wages for your actions, and cannot endure being known by others for what you really are, you dwell in illusion and error worthy of pity. When you despise another because of his defects, and when you wish to be preferred to those who do not live according to your maxims, you do not know yourself, you are still ignorant of the evil inclination that subsists in you.” It is this inclination that hinders the image of God from being what it ought to be, so that the soul may truly bear the fruits of eternal life; therefore the necessity of knowing oneself profoundly in order to know God and to love Him truly.

These reflections on retarded souls lead us to speak of the necessity of the second conversion or passive purification of the senses, which marks, according to St, John of the Cross, the entrance into the illuminative way of the advanced. We will discuss this subject in the second volume of this work.

PART 3

The Illuminative Way of Proficients

Chapter 1

The Object of the Third Part and the language of Spiritual Writers Compared with That of Theologians

In Part One of this work, we discussed the principles or the sources of the interior life, the organism of the virtues and the gifts, the nature of Christian perfection, its elevation, and the general obligation of every Christian and the special obligation of priests and religious to tend to perfection.

In Part Two we treated of the purification of the soul in beginners, of sins to be avoided, of the predominant fault, of the active purification of the senses and the spirit, especially of the active purification of the memory, the understanding, the will, and finally the mental prayer of beginners.

We shall now, logically, proceed to the consideration of the illuminative way of proficients, which is the continuation of the purgative way under another name. It is given a new name, just as one and the same road is called, progressively, different names according to the cities through which it passes: the railway from Turin to Rome is called, first of all, the Turin-Genoa Railroad, then the Genoa-Pisa, and lastly the Pisa-Rome Railroad.

Great variety may be found on the same road; one part crosses the plain, another climbs more or less steep slopes; part of the road can be covered in daylight, part at night, and that in fair or stormy weather. The same is true from the spiritual point of view. Further more, on a railroad connecting two cities, speed must not be excessive, or stops eliminated, or the wait at stations too much prolonged. Likewise on God’s highway, progress would be compromised by a desire to travel too fast, whereas too great a delay in one place would put one behind schedule; in this sense, “Not to advance is to retrogress.” The illuminative way is, therefore, the continuation of the purgative way, but in the former, progress should be more marked.

To discuss the illuminative way in a methodical manner, we shall treat of it in the following order:

(1) the entrance to this way; several writers have called it a second conversion and, more precisely, speaking, the passive purification of the senses;

(2) the principal characteristics of the spiritual age of proficients;

(3) the progress of the Christian moral virtues, especially of humility, a fundamental virtue, and of meekness in its relations with charity;

(4) the progress of the theological virtues, of the spirit of faith and confidence in God, of conformity to the signified divine will, of fraternal charity, the great sign of progress in the love of God;

(5) the gifts of the Holy Ghost in proficients, their docility to the Holy Ghost, their more continual recollection in the course of the day;

(6) the progressive illumination of the soul by the Sacrifice of the Mass and Communion; why each Communion should be substantially more fervent than the preceding one; devotion to the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus and to Mary Mediatrix, in this period of the interior life;

(7) the contemplative prayer of proficients and its degrees; the error of the quietists on this subject; the passage from acquired prayer to infused prayer. Is infused prayer in the normal way of sanctity, or is it, on the contrary, an extraordinary grace, like visions, revelations, the stigmata? Is infused prayer ordinarily granted to generous, interior souls, who persevere in prayer and docility to the Holy Ghost, and who daily bear the cross with patience and love?

(8) the defects of proficients; the pride which mingles in their acts; the discernment of spirits; retarded proficients; the necessity of a passive purification of the spirit which, according to St. John of the Cross, marks the entrance into the unitive way.

Why do we propose to follow this order? Because it is fitting to consider the growth of the virtues and of the gifts before the progress of their acts, in order to show more clearly to what already elevated acts this growth of the virtues and of the gifts, which is a trustworthy sign of progress, is ordained. We are, in fact, already certain through faith and theology that the acquired virtues and the infused virtues, as well as the seven gifts, should always grow in us here on earth, particularly in the illuminative way or that of

proficients. In this stage there should even be an acceleration in this progress, for the soul ought to advance more rapidly toward God as it approaches Him more closely and is more drawn by Him, just as the stone falls more rapidly as it draws near the earth which attracts it. The traveler toward eternity should advance more rapidly as he approaches the end which captivates him more. We have already shown these principles to be certain; there should, consequently, be a very notable increase in the virtues and the gifts in the illuminative way of proficients. Profound consideration of this fact will make us understand better what the elevation of the acts of these virtues and gifts should normally be in this period of the spiritual life.

Moreover, that we may proceed with order, it is fitting that we follow an ascending course, considering first of all the increase of the Christian moral virtues, next that of the theological virtues, then that of the gifts which perfect the virtues, and finally the graces of light, love, and strength which are given us daily by Mass and Communion. If we follow this plan, we shall see more clearly that the prayer of proficients is normally a contemplative prayer. If, on the contrary, we discuss this prayer at the very beginning, we might describe it as it actually is in those who appear to be proficients without perhaps really being so, and not such as it should normally be in this already advanced age of the spiritual life. These are the reasons for the order we shall follow.

Before beginning our study, however, we shall here examine an important preliminary question, that of the essential character of the language of the great spiritual writers who have discussed these matters, language having terms that are somewhat different from those used by theologians. A comparison of these two terminologies or ways of speaking is necessary here.

THE LANGUAGE OF SPIRITUAL WRITERS COMPARED WITH THAT OF THEOLOGIANS

It has often been remarked that great spiritual writers, especially when they discuss mysticism properly so called, use terms that differ notably from those used by theologians. For a clear grasp of the meaning and import of each set of terms, a comparison of the two is necessary.

The language of the great Catholic mystics has its basis in Scripture, in the Psalms, the Canticle of Canticles, the Gospel of St. John, and the

Epistles of St. Paul. It takes shape increasingly with St. Augustine in his commentaries on the Psalms and on St. John; with Dionysius; St. Gregory the Great in his commentary on Job; St. Bernard; Hugh and Richard of St. Victor; St. Bonaventure; the author of The Imitation; Tauler; Blessed Henry Suso; St. Teresa; St. John of the Cross; and St. Francis de Sales.

Their terminology, the expression of their mystical experience, gradually passed into doctrinal, spiritual theology, which should compare it with the scholastic terminology of theologians in order to avoid certain errors or confusions into which Master Eckart occasionally fell.

THE QUESTION RAISED BY THE LANGUAGE OF THE MYSTICS

At first glance, the vocabulary of great spiritual writers seems to a number of exclusively scholastic theologians too metaphorical and also exaggerated, either in what relates to the abnegation necessary for perfection or in regard to the separation from the sensible and from reasoning or discourse in contemplation. For this reason, certain great mystics, such as Tauler and Ruysbroeck, seemed suspect; and, for the same reason, after the death of St. John of the Cross, some theologians felt they should correct his works and cover them over, as it were, with scholastic whitewash in order the better to explain their meaning and remove all exaggeration. Thus talent sometimes wishes to correct genius, as if the eaglet wished to teach the eagle to fly. It was then necessary to defend the mystics against their enemies and their injudicious friends. With this purpose Louis Blosius wrote a defense of Tauler, and Father Nicholas of Jesus Mary composed his book, Elucidatio phrasium mysticorum operum Joannis a Cruce.

An example of the difference between the language of spiritual writers and that of theologians may be illustrated by the meaning they give to the word “nature.” The speculative meaning of this word is abstract and has nothing unfavorable about it; its ascetical meaning is concrete and recalls original sin. We read in The Imitation in regard to the different movements of nature and grace: “Nature is crafty and draweth away many,... and always proposes self as her end. But grace walketh in simplicity, turneth aside from all appearance of evil, offereth no deceits, and doth all things purely for God, in whom also it resteth as its last end.... Nature willingly receiveth honor and respect. But grace faithfully attributeth honor and glory to God.”

These words at first seem contrary to the principles often formulated by St. Thomas: “Grace does not destroy nature, but perfects it”; “Nature inclines us to love God, its Author, more than ourselves; otherwise the natural inclination would be perverse, and it would not be perfected, but destroyed, by charity.”

Considering the matter with greater attention, we see that no contradiction exists between the author of The Imitation and St. Thomas, but they employ the word nature with two different meanings. St. Thomas takes it in the philosophical and abstract sense, which corresponds to the definition of man (a rational animal), to his nature, the radical principle of his operations, such as it comes from God, abstraction being made of every grace superior to it and also of original sin and its results. Human nature thus conceived corresponds to a divine idea. When spiritual writers, like the author of The Imitation, contrast nature and grace, they take the word nature in its ascetical and concrete meaning. They speak of nature such as it is concretely since the sin of the first man; in other words, turned away from God by original sin, or still wounded although regenerated by baptism. They wish to recall the fact that, even in baptized persons, the wounds, the results of original sin, are not completely healed, but are in the process of healing. These wounds are four in number: weakness, ignorance, malice, and concupiscence. They affect the different faculties, and often manifest themselves in a gross egoism, at times only slightly conscious, which personal sins can greatly augment. St. Thomas also insists on this point when he speaks of inordinate self-love, from which spring pride, the concupiscence of the flesh, that of the eyes; and then when he speaks of the seven capital sins, from which come other sins that are still more serious.

Careful thought on the matter shows that here there is not a contradiction in doctrine between speculative theologians and spiritual writers, but a difference of terminology which the context explains. One is more abstract, the other more concrete, for it aims at the application of principles for the conduct of life in conditions in which man actually finds himself since original sin.

For a clearer understanding of this difference, we shall speak of the theological bases of the terminology of spiritual writers, of the principal terms of their language, and we shall compare the expressive value of their language with the value of that of theologians.

Each science or discipline has its special terms, the meaning of which cannot be clearly understood by those who do not know the subject. If mathematics, physics, and physiology have their particular set of terms, why should mysticism not have its terminology? Terms express ideas, as ideas express the nature of things, and the idea which at first was confused subsequently becomes distinct. Scientific concepts are thus more distinct than the notions of common sense, and sometimes new names are needed to express them; otherwise it would be necessary to have recourse to circumlocutions or excessively lengthy paraphrases.

Theology furnishes the basis of the terminology of spiritual writers when it teaches that, to speak of God and our supernatural life, we have two classes of terms, one set of which has a literal meaning, and the other a metaphorical meaning. Thus we say, using the literal meaning: “God is good and wise; He is goodness itself, wisdom itself.” These are, in fact, perfections which imply no imperfection, and they are found analogically in God and in creatures according to their literal meaning. On the contrary, it is only metaphorically that we speak of the wrath of God; wrath is, in fact, a passion, a movement of the sensible appetite, which cannot, properly speaking, be found in God, who is pure spirit; but the expression “wrath of God” is a metaphor to denominate His justice.

On this subject we must make the following observations: among the analogical terms which denominate God literally, negative terms, like “immaterial” and “immobile,” express Him more exactly than positive terms, inasmuch as we know rather what God is not than what He is. We know very well that in Him there is neither matter, movement, progress, nor limit; whereas we cannot know positively the essential mode according to which the divine perfections are in God and are identified in the eminence of the Deity, in which they exist formally and eminently. We know this essential mode of he divine perfections in a negative and relative manner, saying: it is an uncreated, incomprehensible, supreme mode. But in itself it remains hidden, like the Deity, which is manifest only to the blessed who see it immediately.

Consequently, when the mystics speak of God, they use many negative terms, such as “incomprehensible,” “ineffable,” “incommunicable.” They say that negative contemplation, which expresses itself in this manner, is superior to affirmative contemplation. In fact, negative contemplation

attains in its way what is most lofty: the eminence of the Deity, or the inner life of God, which cannot be shared by nature, but only by sanctifying grace, which is a participation in the divine nature.

Moreover, among the positive names that are properly applied to God, the least definite and the more absolute and common denominate Him better than the others, says St. Thomas. Thus the name, “He who is,” is more properly applied to God than the others, for by its indetermination it better expresses the infinite ocean of the spiritual substance of God. On the contrary, more definite names, such as “intelligent,” “free,” fall short of this infinite mode. Therefore the mystics say that superior contemplation, which proceeds from faith illumined by the gifts, is confused, indistinct, ineffable; they place it above distinct contemplation which would come from a special revelation.

Metaphorical terms are necessary, says St. Thomas, where there are no suitable terms, especially to express the particular relations of God with interior souls. Thus the mystics speak metaphorically of spiritual espousals and of spiritual marriage in order to designate as it were a transforming union of the soul with God. Likewise by metaphor they speak of the depth of the soul to designate the depth of the intellect and the will, where these faculties spring from the very substance of the soul. These metaphors are explained by the fact that we know spiritual things only in the mirror of sensible things, and that it is often difficult to find fitting terms to express them.

THE PRINCIPAL TERMS OF THE LANGUAGE OF SPIRITUAL WRITERS

The ordinary terms of Scripture and those of theology would suffice for mysticism; but to avoid excessively long circumlocutions, spiritual writers have had recourse to special terms, or they have given a more particular meaning to expressions already in use. Thus several terms have become essentially mystical, to such an extent that if one took them in their scholastic meaning, they would no longer be true. All spiritual writers speak, for example, of the nothingness of the creature and say: the creature is nothing. A theologian, to render this proposition acceptable to his point of view, would add this precision: the creature by itself is nothing. Master Eckart’s error consisted in affirming in the scholastic meaning of the word what is true only in a mystical sense. Consequently several of his

propositions were condemned, among them the following: “All creatures are pure nothingness; I do not say that they are little, or something, but that they are pure nothingness.” If this were true, God would have created nothing outside of Himself, or rather the being of creatures would not be distinct from that of God.

Likewise the mystics have often called infused contemplation simply “contemplation,” when, as a matter of fact, they mean infused contemplation. Thus a special terminology has gradually grown up. Its special character comes from the fact that the secrets of the inner life of God and of the union of the soul with Him are ineffable, or from the fact that the terms of human language have no proportion with the sublimity of divine things. To remedy this lack of proportion, spiritual writers have found three categories of terms which are essentially mystical. They may be classed as hyperbolical, antithetical or contrary, and symbolical terms.

Hyperbolical terms seek to express the infinite elevation of God, as for example, “the superessence or the supergoodness of God,” or again the inferiority of the creature in relation to God, as “the nothingness of the creature.”

Antithetical terms express something lofty by a sort of contrary effect which they produce on us. Thus the terms “dark night” and “great darkness” express “the inaccessible light in which God dwells,” a light that dazzles us and affects us like a superior and transluminous obscurity, which is the direct opposite of the inferior obscurity which comes from matter, error, or evil. Likewise, by irony, the word of God is called foolishness, since it produces this effect on senseless people. With this meaning St. Paul writes: “For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world, by wisdom, knew not God, it pleased God, by the foolishness of our preaching, to save them that believe.... For the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.”

Symbolical terms are metaphors such as: the Spouse of souls (to designate God), the spiritual marriage, the depth of the soul, the spiritual senses, the sleep of the faculties, the wound of love, liquefaction and spiritual fusion.

It should be pointed out that certain mystics, such as Dionysius, have a preference for hyperbolical terms (for example, superessence, supergoodness); others, like St. John of the Cross, for antithetical terms (the

dark night); others, as St. Teresa, for symbolical terms (spiritual espousals and marriage).

In these terms we have the principle that enables us to reconcile the degrees of prayer described by St. Teresa and those described by St. John of the Cross; the difference is to be found more in the terms than in the spiritual states indicated. Thus under the title of the dark night of the senses, St. John of the Cross speaks of the prayer of arid quiet, which precedes consoled quiet of which St. Teresa speaks in the fourth mansion. With regard to the dark night of the spirit St. John discusses graces of which St. Teresa treats in the sixth mansion in connection with the spiritual espousals, which, like the night of the spirit, proximately prepare the soul for the perfect transforming union, also called the spiritual marriage.

The terminology preferred by St. John of the Cross contributes to giving him a more austere tone than that of St. Teresa; but when he speaks of the summit of the interior life in The Living Flame of Love, he does so in terms that show a plenitude of most striking spiritual joy.

The meaning of mystical terms is well comprehended, with respect to what is at one and the same time disproportionate and suitable, only by those who have experience in these matters, and they observe a fitting sobriety in this regard. Others have, at times, ridiculously abused these terms, even to speaking of superseraphic superelevation, of “confricatio deifica,” of the abyss of cordial exinanition, and so on, and using other terms which remind one of vain sentimentality and sometimes of mystical sensualism

MYSTICAL HYPERBOLE

In a study of the hyperbolical terms used by the great mystics, it should be pointed out that they did not use these terms with the meaning given them by agnostics. For example, when the mystics say, as Dionysius does, that God in His Deity or His inner life is above being, unity, the true, the good, intelligence, and love, they do not mean that God is unknowable, but that His Deity or His intimate life contains in an eminent manner the divine perfections according to an ineffable, superior mode, which permits these perfections to be mutually identified without destroying each other.

The mystics mean that the Deity, which can be participated in only supernaturally by sanctifying grace, is superior to the absolute perfections

that it contains formally and eminently. These perfections, such as being, life, intelligence, can be shared in naturally and are, in fact, participated in by stones, plants, and the human soul. The Deity thus appears as the inaccessible light superior to every name.

Likewise when the mystics speak hyperbolically of the nothingness of the creature, they mean only that the creature of itself is nothing, and that, although it actually exists through the creative act, it is, in comparison with God, lower and poorer than words can express. All these excessively lengthy circumlocutions are summed up in the more expressive term: the nothingness of the creature.

This legitimate hyperbole is already found in Scripture, as St. Thomas points out in reference to the expression of Isaias: “Therefore is the wrath of God kindled against His people, and He hath stretched out His hand upon them and struck them: and the mountains were troubled.” In Scripture, says St. Thomas, hyperbole exceeds not the truth, but the judgment of men, in this sense that God is greater than one can believe, and the punishments that He announces to the wicked transcend what one can imagine. In profane writings, hyperbole is a rhetorical figure which augments excessively the measure of things in order to produce a more vivid impression on the mind of the reader: for example, to indicate a very tall man, the word giant is used. Thus human poetry uses hyperbole because of the smallness of human things which it wishes to magnify, whereas the divine poetry of the prophets, of the Psalmist, and that of the great mystics makes use of metaphor and hyperbole because of the infinite elevation of divine things, which it could not otherwise express. Hence there is neither error nor formal exaggeration in scriptural hyperbole, nor in that of the great mystics. The exaggeration is only material, for example, when one speaks of the nothingness of the creature, for thereby the author wishes to convey something that is very true, namely, that in comparison with God, the creature is more poor and deficient than can be expressed; and by contrast God is far more perfect than words can tell.

Hyperbole of the same type is found in these words of Christ: “If thy right eye scandalize thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee.... If thy right hand scandalize thee, cut it off.” It is not a question here of mutilation; Christ uses a vivid expression to point out the gravity of the danger He is speaking of and the urgent necessity of defending oneself against it. Likewise St. Paul, in speaking of the advantages of Judaism, says: “I count

all things to be but loss for the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ, my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them but as dung, that I may gain Christ."

Blessed Angela of Foligno is fond of mystical hyperbole and antithesis when she speaks of the great darkness and of the inner life of God, which is above the perfections of intelligence and love, which are identified in it without disappearing. She writes: "I see nothing and I see all; certitude is obtained in the darkness;" that is, I see nothing determinate, but I see all the divine perfections united, fused in an ineffable manner in the eminence of the Deity. What she says in this mystical outburst, Cajetan says in abstract form in the loftiest parts of his commentary on St. Thomas' Treatise on the Trinity.

St. John of the Cross likes to use mystical hyperbole also in explaining his doctrine, for example, in The Ascent of Mount Carmel: "All things in heaven and earth are nothing in comparison with God. 'I beheld the earth,' saith He, 'and lo, it was void and a thing of nothing, and the heavens, and there was no light in them' (Jer. 4: 23)' The earth, 'void and nothing,' signifies that the earth and all it contains are nothing, and the heavens without light, that all the lights of heaven, in comparison with God, are perfect darkness. Thus all created things, with the affections bestowed upon them, are nothing, because they are a hindrance, and the privation of our transformation in God."

To judge by the engraving which serves as a frontispiece to The Ascent of Mount Carmel, the author seems to demand excessive abnegation. On the narrow path of perfection, he wrote: "Nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing"; but if he demands so much, it is because he wishes to lead souls to great heights by the most direct route. Above, he wrote: "Since I wish nothing through self-love, all is given to me, without my going in search of it." He explains this statement in the following manner in The Ascent: "He has greater joy and comfort in creatures if he detaches himself from them; and he can have no joy in them if he considers them as his own. He acquires also in this detachment from creatures a clear comprehension of them, so as to understand perfectly the truths that relate to them, both naturally and supernaturally. For this reason his joy in them is widely different from his who is attached to them, and far nobler. The former rejoices in their truth, the latter in their deceptiveness; the former in their best, and the latter in their worst, conditions; the former in their substantial worth, and the latter

in their seeming and accidental nature, through his senses only. For sense cannot grasp or comprehend more than the accidents, but the mind, purified from the clouds and species of the accidents, penetrates to the interior truth of things, for that is its proper object.... The negation and purgation of this joy leaves the judgment clear as the sky when the mists are scattered. The former, therefore, has joy in all things, but his joy is not dependent upon them, neither does it arise from their being his own; and the latter, in so far as he regards them as his own, loses in general all joy whatever." This is indeed what St. Paul says: "Having nothing, and possessing all things." St. Francis of Assisi enjoyed the landscapes of Umbria incomparably more than the proprietors of those lands, who were busy making them materially fructify to the greatest possible extent.

The mystics themselves, it is evident, explain the hyperbole and antithesis to which they have recourse in order to draw us from our somnolence and to try to make us glimpse the elevation of divine things and the value of the one thing necessary.

A comparison of their language with that of theologians will be profitable that we may see how they clarify each other.

COMPARISON OF THE LANGUAGE OF SPIRITUAL WRITERS AND THAT OF THEOLOGIANS

Each of these two terminologies has its merits. For the theologian's study, his more abstract and precise language, which is limited to essential terms, is preferable. But to lead souls effectively to generous abnegation and union with God, the terminology of the mystics is more appropriate because it is more vivid, more alluring, and also more brief, and, in a concrete manner, more comprehensive. These qualities spring from the fact that it expresses not only abstract concepts, but concepts that have been lived, and an ardent love of God; consequently it avoids many circumlocutions and speculative distinctions which would arrest the impulse of the love of God. It leads the soul to seek God Himself beyond the formulas of faith and through them. It reminds us that, if the truth of our judgments is in our mind, the good toward which the will tends is outside our mind, in God Himself. It leads also to the thought that what is unknowable and ineffable in God is sovereignly good and can be ardently loved without being really known. It is inspired by the thought which St. Thomas formulates as follows: "(In this

life) the love of God is better than the knowledge of God," for by knowledge we in a way draw God to ourselves by imposing on Him, so to speak, the limit of our ideas, whereas love draws us and lifts us toward God.

The distinction between these two terminologies appears, for example, in a comparison of our Savior's words with a theological commentary on them. In verse twenty-five, chapter twelve of St. John's Gospel, Christ says briefly, vividly, and concretely: 'He that loveth his life shall lose It; and he that hateth his life in this world, keepeth it unto life eternal" That is: he who loves his life in an inordinate manner, for example, by refusing to undergo martyrdom rather than to deny his faith, will lose his soul; whereas he who in this world has a holy hatred of his life, for example, by undergoing martyrdom for the Gospel's sake, will save his soul for eternal life.

But if we attempt a theological explanation of these highly vivid words of Christ, we will construe them in the following abstract manner: he who loves his life with a love contrary to charity will lose it. He will not lose it, however, because he loves his life with a natural love, which is distinct from charity without being contrary to it; and with even greater reason, if he loves it with a love which is included in charity itself. It is St. Thomas who thus distinguishes these three very different ways of loving one's life: the first, contrary to charity; the second, distinct from charity; the third, included in charity, when we wish the life of grace and that of heaven in order to glorify God. These distinctions are indispensable to the theologian; they are those of the speculative intellect which analyzes, whereas Christ's words lead immediately to love and to the generosity of love.

Likewise, the mystics speak briefly of the nothingness of the creature in order to express what theologians would state in the five following propositions: (1) the creature of itself is nothing, for it was created ex nihilo; (2) compared to God, the already existing creature is nothing, for there is no more perfection after creation, no more being than before, although there are now more beings; (3) by its essential defectibility the creature tends to nothingness and sin; (4) sin is less than nothingness itself, for it is not only the negation, but the privation of a good; it is a disorder and an offense against God; (5) the creature is nothing in our affection if we love it without subordinating it to God, for thus it turns us away from Him.

These five propositions, which are necessary for the abstract study of truth, are summed up in the vivid expression of spiritual writers: the nothingness of the creature. This hyperbolical expression is not false; it

would be so only if the word “nothingness” were taken in its literal meaning. Then it would signify that God created nothing outside of Himself and, consequently, one could not speak at all of creatures. All that we have said is clear, and does not greatly need explanation.

We may exemplify the distinction between the two terminologies by comparing the theological treatise on charity with its multiple questions; articles, objections, answers, and distinctions, with what The Imitation says about the marvelous effects of divine love: “Nothing is sweeter than love, nothing stronger, nothing higher, nothing wider, nothing more pleasant, nothing fuller or better in heaven or in earth: for love is born of God, and cannot rest but in God, above all created things. The lover flieth, runneth, and rejoiceth; he is free and cannot be restrained.... Love watcheth, and sleeping slumbereth not. When weary it is not tired; when straightened is not constrained; when frightened is not disturbed; but like a vivid flame and a burning torch, it mounteth upwards and securely passeth through all.... He that loveth must willingly embrace all that is hard and bitter for the sake of his Beloved, and never suffer himself to be turned-away from Him by any contrary occurrences whatsoever.”

WHICH OF THESE TWO TERMINOLOGIES IS THE LOFTIER?

Which of these two terminologies is the loftier depends on the principle formulated by Aristotle and often recalled by St. Thomas: “The terms of language are the signs of our ideas, and our ideas are the similitude of realities.” The more elevated terminology is, therefore, the one that expresses a loftier thought. Now infused contemplation, in spite of its obscurity and lack of precision, is loftier than theological speculation. Therefore the language of the mystics, which expresses this contemplation, is more elevated than that of theologians. Moreover, that great mystics may acquaint us with their intimate experiences, it is fitting that they should be great poets, like St. John of the Cross or Ruysbroeck; it is not necessary for the theologian to be a poet.

However, if the language of the mystics is in itself more lofty, because it expresses a higher knowledge, it translates this knowledge less exactly than the language of theologians expresses their thought. But we see that this point of view is secondary, if we remember what St. Thomas, following Aristotle, says in the Contra Gentes: “Although we know very little about

the loftiest things, the little that we do know about them is more loved and desired than the most exact knowledge that can be had of inferior things." Thus a probable or congruous argument on the mystery of the Trinity is, by reason of the dignity of its object, worth more than all the geometric demonstrations of Euclid.

What we have just said is confirmed by the fact that Christ's manner of speaking in Scripture is most lofty; now, the language of spiritual writers more closely resembles it than does scholastic terminology. For example, without feeling that they need to explain them, spiritual writers repeat Christ's words: "If thou didst know the gift of God,... thou perhaps wouldst have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water... springing up into life everlasting." "If any man thirst, let him come to Me, and drink.... Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Theologians, on the other hand, would offer the following explanation of these words: sanctifying grace, metaphorically expressed by the living water, is an infused habit, received in the essence of the soul, from which spring in our faculties the infused virtues and the gifts of the Holy Ghost, all ordered to eternal life. This theological commentary is in relation to the words of our Savior what the polygon inscribed within a circumference is in relation to it. The commentary shows the multiple wealth of the divine utterance, but in its simplicity this saying is superior to the commentary.

Consequently these two terminologies clarify each other, like the doctrine of St. Thomas and that of St. John of the Cross, like acquired wisdom, according to the perfect use of reason enlightened by faith, and infused wisdom or the gift of wisdom.

The terminology of the Gospel, such as it is kept by spiritual writers, preserves the spirit of faith and love of God, that is, the very spirit of the theological doctrine relative to the majesty of God and the inferiority of the creature. From this point of view, an antimystical scholastic theologian would be a bad theologian.

On the other hand, scholastic terminology is necessary, if not for the individual interior life of the faithful, at least for the doctrinal exposition of revealed truth in opposition to the inexact statements that disfigure it. Without the suitability and precision of theological terms, it is easy to fall into these errors; for example, one exaggerates the congruous reasons for the mysteries of faith and proposes them as if they were demonstrative, or indeed one exaggerates the natural desire to see God to such an extent as to

make of it, with Baius, an efficacious natural desire, with the result that grace would not be a gratuitous gift, but a favor due to our nature. For this reason the great mystics, like St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross, highly esteemed great theologians, whereas false mystics, like Molinos, gave them no importance whatever.

Therefore the priest who directs souls should know these two terminologies and be able to explain the one by the other. No one can know the true meaning of the language of spiritual writers if he is unable to explain it theologically; and, on the other hand, no one can know the sublimity of theology if he is ignorant of its relations to mysticism.

Chapter 2

The Entrance into the Illuminative Way

Scripture often recalls, even to those who are in the state of grace, the necessity of a more profound conversion toward God. Our Lord Himself spoke to His apostles, who had been following Him from the beginning of His ministry, about the necessity of becoming converted. St. Mark relates, in fact, that when Christ made His last journey into Galilee with His apostles, on reaching Capharnaum He asked them: “What did you treat of in the way? But they held their peace,” says the Evangelist, “for in the way they had disputed among themselves which of them should be the greatest.” And in St. Matthew, where the same occurrence is recounted, we read: “And Jesus, calling unto Him a little child, set him in the midst of them, and said: Amen I say to you, unless you be converted and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” Christ was speaking here to the apostles, who had already taken part in His ministry, who would receive Communion at the Last Supper, three of whom had accompanied Him to Thabor; they were in the state of grace, and yet He spoke to them of the necessity of being converted in order to enter profoundly into the kingdom or the divine intimacy. To this end He particularly recommended to them the humility of the child of God, who is conscious of his indigence, his weakness, his dependence on the heavenly Father.

Christ even spoke especially to Peter about his second conversion, just before the Passion, when once again, as St. Luke tells us: “There was also a strife amongst them [the apostles], which of them should seem to be the greater. And He said to them:... But he that is the greater among you, let him become as the younger; and he that is the leader, as he that serveth.” And to Peter He added: “Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith

fail not: and thou, being once converted, confirm thy brethren." On this occasion, Christ is speaking of Peter's second conversion; the first had taken place when he left his work as a fisherman to follow Jesus.

The liturgy often refers to the second conversion, particularly when it recalls these words of St. Paul: "You have heard Him, and have been taught in Him, as the truth is in Jesus: to put off, according to former conversation, the old man, who is corrupted according to the desire of error, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind: and put on the new man, who according to God is created in justice and holiness of truth." This spiritual renewal presupposes a first conversion. The Apostle of the Gentiles speaks of it again in the Epistle to the Colossians: "Lie not one to another: stripping yourselves of the old man with his deeds, and putting on the new, him who is renewed unto knowledge, according to the image of Him that created him.... But above all these things have charity, which is the bond of perfection."

When the liturgy recalls these words during Advent and at the beginning of Lent, it addresses not only souls in the state of mortal sin that are in need of conversion from evil to good, but also many Christians already in the state of grace who are still very imperfect and have to be converted from a relatively mediocre to a fervent Christian life. On Ash Wednesday it recalls to them Joel's words: "Now, therefore, saith the Lord: Be converted to Me with all your heart, in fasting and in weeping and in mourning. And rend your hearts, and not your garments, and turn to the Lord your God; for He is gracious and merciful, patient and rich in mercy, and ready to repent of the evil." These words are so much the better understood in proportion as the soul that hears them is more advanced and, although in the state of grace for many years, feels the need of a more profound conversion, the necessity of turning the depths of its will more completely toward God. The laborer who has plowed a furrow goes over it a second time to force the plow deeper and turn over the earth which must nourish the wheat.

From this point of view, which is admitted by all, the best spiritual writers have spoken of the necessity of a second conversion to enter truly on the illuminative way of proficients.

Among modern authors, Father Louis Lallemant, S.J. (d. 1680), insists on this point in his beautiful book, La Doctrine Spirituelle. Before him St. Benedict, St. Catherine of Siena, Blessed Henry Suso, and Tauler spoke of it at considerable length; but it is principally St. John of the Cross who has

treated of this second conversion, which he calls the passive purification of the senses, and which in his opinion marks the entrance into the illuminative way.

We shall set forth the doctrine of these authors, recalling first of all what Father Lallemant says on this subject, since his teaching is easier to understand because it is nearer to our own times. We shall then better grasp what St. Catherine of Siena and Tauler teach, and finally what St. John of the Cross affirms with originality and profundity.

We shall now see what the author of La Doctrine Spirituelle says:

of the fact of this second conversion in the lives of the saints,

of its necessity and fruits.

THE FACT OF THIS SECOND CONVERSION IN THE LIVES OF THE SERVANTS OF GOD

Father Lallemant states on this subject: “Two conversions ordinarily occur in the majority of the saints and in religious who become perfect: one, by which they devote themselves to the service of God; the other, by which they give themselves entirely to perfection. We see this fact in the lives of the apostles when Christ called them and when he sent the Holy Ghost upon them; in St. Teresa, and in her confessor, Father Alvarez, and in several others. The second conversion does not occur in all religious, because of their negligence. The time of this conversion in our lives is commonly the third year of novitiate. Let us, therefore, take fresh courage now and not spare ourselves in the service of God, because it will never be harder for us than it is at present. As time goes on, this way will gradually be rendered less rough, and the difficulties will be smoothed away, because the more pure our hearts become, the more abundantly we shall receive graces.” At this juncture a decisive step must be taken.

What Father Lallemant says here may be completed by examining the lives of many servants of God. There is a painful period, difficult to traverse, which is often set forth, in the lives of the saints and in the processes of beatification, under the title of “Interior Sufferings”; this period marks the entrance into a higher spiritual life. We believe also that notable light would be thrown on the lives of the saints and also on the causes of beatification, if it were more explicitly noted that this period corresponds to what St. John of the Cross calls the passive night of the senses, and that another period, similar to it in certain respects, occurs later.

According to this doctor of the Church, the latter corresponds to the passive night of the spirit.

This observation is of a nature to throw light on the most obscure moments in the lives of the servants of God. If, in reality, between the two particularly difficult periods we have just spoken of, the heroic degree of the virtues can already be established, and if it is even more clearly proved after the second of these two periods, it is a sign that the servant of God has indeed successfully passed through both of these periods. It is likewise a sign that he must have had a great spirit of faith, of trust in God in order to surmount the difficulties found therein. Thus these two obscure periods, or to use the expression of St. John of the Cross, these two nights, one of which marks the entrance into the illuminative way of proficients, the other into the unitive way of the perfect, far from being an objection against the sanctity of a soul, serve rather to bring it out more clearly. Great merit is, in fact, necessary to traverse them well, so as not to fall back at this time and to come forth truly fortified by these two trials. The lives of the saints are greatly illumined in the light of these principles.

THE NECESSITY OF THE SECOND CONVERSION

Not only is this second conversion a fact which is verified in the lives of the servants of God; its necessity is manifest because of the inordinate self-love that still remains in beginners after months and years of labor. Of the necessity of the second conversion, Father Lallemant says: “The reason why some reach perfection only very late or not at all is because they follow only nature and human sense in practically everything. They pay little or no heed to the Holy Ghost, whose appropriate work is to enlighten, to direct, to warm.

“The majority of religious, even of good and virtuous ones, follow in their private conduct and in their direction of others only reason and good sense, in which a number among them excel. This rule is good, but it does not suffice for Christian perfection.

“Such people ordinarily direct their lives by the common feeling of those with whom they live, and as the latter are imperfect, although their lives are not disorderly, they will never reach the sublime ways of the spirit, because the number of the perfect is very small. They live like the ordinary run of people, and their manner of governing others is imperfect.

“The Holy Ghost waits some time for them to enter into their interior and, seeing there the operations of grace and those of nature, to be disposed to follow His direction; but if they misuse the time and favor which He offers them, He finally abandons them to themselves and leaves them in their interior darkness and ignorance, which they preferred and in which they live thereafter amid great dangers for their salvation.”

The same author, who writes for religious, says: “The salvation of a religious is inseparably linked to his perfection, so that if he abandons care for his spiritual advancement, he gradually approaches ruin and loss. If he does not come to this pass, it is because God, wishing to save him, mercifully comes to his assistance before his fall. All the masters of the spiritual life agree on this maxim: He who does not advance, falls back. But it sometimes happens, because retrogression takes place imperceptibly, that a few who have already made some progress allow a considerable period to elapse before they realize that they are falling back.”

The necessity of a second conversion arises from all that remains in us of often unconscious egoism which mingles in the greater number of our acts. In a number of people this necessity comes from their unwillingness to be considered naive and their failure to recognize sufficiently the naivete of a superior simplicity which should grow in them. As a result, they become less simple and true with God, their superiors, and themselves. They lose sight practically of the grandeur of the theological virtues, of the importance of humility; then they no longer understand Christ’s words: “Unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” Under the pretext of prudence, they begin to consider the little aspects of great things and to see less and less the great aspect of the daily duties of Christian life and the value of fidelity in little things. They forget that the day is composed of hours and the hour of minutes. They neglect a number of their obligations and gradually, in place of the radical simplicity of a gaze that was already lofty, a simplicity which should become that of contemplation, they find themselves in the quasi-learned complexity of a waning knowledge.

On this subject Father Lallemant says: “In religion (itself) there is a little world, the component parts of which are the esteem of human talents, of important employments, offices, and positions, the love and search for glory and applause, for rest and a calm life. These are the things the demon uses as a puppet show to amuse and deceive us. He sets it all in motion before

our eyes in such a way that we dwell on it and let ourselves be seduced, preferring vain appearances to true and solid goods."

Human talents are indeed often preferred to the great supernatural virtues. The same author adds: "Only prayer can protect us from this delusion. Prayer it is that teaches us to judge of things in a holy manner, to look at them in the light of truth, which dissipates their false splendor and their spurious charms."

Elsewhere he says: "We commit more than a hundred acts of pride in a day without, so to speak, being aware of it." The ruin of souls results from the multiplication of venial sins, which causes the diminution of divine lights or inspirations. Nor is it sufficient to direct our attention toward God as an afterthought, if our act remains entirely natural and our heart is not truly offered to God. A superficial oblation of self does not suffice; there must be a genuine new conversion, a turning of the heart toward God.

The fruits of this second conversion are pointed out by the same author in the course of advice to preachers: "People kill themselves dying to produce fine sermons, and yet they reap scarcely any fruit. What is the reason? It is because preaching is just as much a supernatural function as the salvation of souls to which it is directed, and the instrument must be proportioned to the end.... The majority of preachers have sufficient learning, but they have not enough devotion or sanctity.

"The true means of acquiring the science of the saints... is to have recourse not so much to books as to interior humility, purity of heart, recollection, and prayer.... When a soul has attained to entire purity of heart, God Himself instructs it, at times by the unction of spiritual consolations and tastes, at other times by gentle and affectionate lights, which teach it better how to speak to the hearts of its auditors than study and other human means can.... But we cannot get rid of our own sufficiency, nor abandon ourselves to God.

"An interior man will make more impression on hearts by a single word that is animated by the spirit of God than another by an entire discourse costing him much work and in which he exhausted all the power of his reasoning." Such are the fruits of the second conversion. The author of The Imitation often speaks of them, especially when he describes the fervor with which we should amend our lives. He says: "A diligent and zealous person will make greater progress, though he have more passions, than another who is well regulated, but less fervent in the pursuit of virtues.... Study,

likewise, especially to guard against and to get the better of such things as oftenest displease thee in others.... As thine eye observeth others, so again thou art also observed by others.... But if thou give thyself to fervor, thou shalt find great peace; and thou shalt feel thy labor light, through the grace of God, and for the love of virtue."

Thus, intimate conversation with God, which is the basis of the interior life, will gradually take the place of conversation with ourselves.

Chapter 3

The Second Conversion According to Several Spiritual Writers

We discussed in the preceding chapter the second conversion according to the teaching of Father Louis Lallemant, S.J., one of the best spiritual writers of the seventeenth century. In the fourteenth century, we find the same teaching under another form in the writings of St. Catherine of Siena (d. 1380), Tauler (d. 1361), and Blessed Henry Suso (d. 1366), all of whom belong to the family of St. Dominic.

THE SECOND CONVERSION IN The Dialogue OF ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA

St. Catherine of Siena discusses the second conversion in chapters 60 and 63 of her Dialogue, in reference to imperfect love of God and neighbor, and cites as an example the second conversion of Peter during the Passion. We read in chapter 60: “Some there are who have become faithful servants, serving Me with fidelity without servile fear of punishment, but rather with love. This very love, however, if they serve Me with a view to their own profit, or the delight and pleasure which they find in Me, is imperfect. Dost thou know what proves the imperfection of this love? The withdrawal of the consolations which they found in Me, and the insufficiency and short duration of their love for their neighbor, which grows weak by degrees, and ofttimes disappears. Toward Me their love grows weak when, on occasion, in order to exercise them in virtue and raise them above their imperfection, I withdraw from their minds My consolation and allow them to fall into battles and perplexities. This I do so that, coming to perfect self-knowledge, they may know that of themselves they are nothing and have no grace, and, accordingly in time of battle fly to Me as their benefactor, seeking Me alone, with true humility, for which purpose I treat them thus, withdrawing

from them consolation indeed, but not grace. At such a time these weak ones of whom I speak relax their energy, impatiently turning backward, and so sometimes abandon, under color of virtue, many of their exercises, saying to themselves: This labor does not profit me. All this they do, because they feel themselves deprived of mental consolation. Such a soul acts imperfectly, for she has not yet unwound the bandage of spiritual self-love, for had she unwound it, she would see that, in truth, everything proceeds from Me, that no leaf of a tree falls to the ground without My providence, and that what I give and promise to My creatures, I give and promise to them for their sanctification, which is the good and the end for which I created them."

In imperfect or mercenary love of God and neighbor, the soul, therefore, almost unconsciously seeks itself. It must "tear out the root of spiritual self-love." As The Dialogue states: "It was with this imperfect love that St. Peter loved the sweet and good Jesus, My only-begotten Son, enjoying most pleasantly His sweet conversation, but, when the time of trouble came, he failed, and so disgraceful was his fall, that not only could he not bear any pain him self, but his terror of the very approach of pain caused him to fall, and deny the Lord, with the words, 'I have never known Him.' "

In chapter 63 of The Dialogue, the saint says, in speaking of the passage from mercenary to filial love: "Every perfection and every virtue proceeds from charity, and charity is nourished by humility, which results from the knowledge and holy hatred of self, that is, sensuality.... To arrive thereat... a man must exercise himself in the extirpation of his perverse self-will, both spiritual and temporal, hiding himself in his own house, as did Peter, who, after the sin of denying My Son, began to weep. Yet his lamentations were imperfect, and remained so until after the forty days, that is, until after the Ascension. But when My Truth returned, to Me in His humanity, Peter and the others concealed themselves in the house awaiting the coming of the Holy Spirit, which My Truth had promised them. They remained barred in from fear, because the soul always fears until she arrives at true love. But when they had persevered in fasting and in humble and continual prayer, until they had received the abundance of the Holy Spirit, they lost their fear, and followed and preached Christ crucified."

St. Catherine of Siena shows in this passage that the imperfect soul which loves the Lord with a love that is still mercenary, ought to follow Peter's example after his denial of Christ. Not infrequently at this time Providence

permits us also to fall into some visible fault to humiliate us and oblige us to enter into ourselves, as Peter did, when immediately after his fall, seeing that Jesus looked at him, he “wept bitterly.”

In connection with Peter’s second conversion, we should recall that St. Thomas teaches that even after a serious sin, if a man has a truly fervent contrition proportionate to the degree of grace lost, he recovers this degree of grace; he may even receive a higher degree if he has a still more fervent contrition. He is, therefore, not obliged to recommence his ascent from the very beginning, but continues it, taking it up again at the point he had reached when he fell. A mountain climber who stumbles halfway up, rises immediately, and continues the ascent. The same is true in the spiritual order. Everything leads us to think that by the fervor of his repentance Peter not only recovered the degree of grace that he had lost, but was raised to a higher degree of the supernatural life. The Lord permitted this fall only to cure him of his presumption so that he might become more humble and thereafter place his confidence, not in himself, but in God. Thus, the humiliated Peter on his knees weeping over his sin is greater than the Peter on Thabor, who did not as yet sufficiently know his frailty.

The second conversion may also take place, though we have no grave sin to expiate, for example, at a time when we are suffering from an injustice, or a calumny, which, under divine grace, awakens in us not sentiments of vengeance, but hunger and thirst for the justice of God. In such a case, the generous forgiving of a grave injury sometimes draws down on the soul of the one who pardons, a great grace, which makes him enter a higher region of the spiritual life. The soul then receives a new insight into divine things and an impulse which it did not know before. David received such a grace when he pardoned Semei who had outraged and cursed him, while throwing stones at him.

A more profound insight into the life of the soul may originate also on the occasion of the death of a dear one, or of a disaster, or of a great rebuff, when anything occurs which is of a nature to reveal the vanity of earthly things and by contrast the importance of the one thing necessary, union with God, the prelude of the life of heaven.

In her Dialogue St. Catherine also speaks often of the necessity of leaving the imperfect state in which a person serves God more or less through interest and for his own satisfaction, and in which he wishes to go to God the Father without passing through Jesus crucified. To leave this

imperfect state, the soul which still seeks itself must be converted that it may cease to seek itself and may truly go in search of God by the way of abnegation, which is that of profound peace.

THE SECOND CONVERSION ACCORDING TO BLESSED HENRY SUSO AND TAULER

The works of Blessed Henry Suso contain a number of instructions relative to the second conversion. He himself experienced this conversion after a few years of religious life, during which he had slipped into some negligences. Particular attention ought to be given to what he says about the necessity of a more interior and deep Christian life in religious who give themselves most exclusively to study, and in others who are chiefly attentive to exterior observances and austerities. In the divine light he saw "these two classes of persons circling about the Savior's cross, without being able to reach Him," because both groups sought themselves, either in study or in exterior observances, and because they judged each other without charity. He understood then that he should remain in complete self-abnegation, ready to accept all that God might will, and to accept it with love, at the same time practicing great fraternal charity.

Tauler, who, as Bossuet says, is "one of the most solid and most correct of the mystics," speaks of the second conversion especially in two of his sermons, that for the second Sunday of Lent, and the one for the Monday before Palm Sunday.

In the sermon for the second Sunday of Lent, Tauler points out those who need the second conversion; they are those who still more or less resemble the scribes and Pharisees. We may summarize his teaching as follows:

> The scribes, he says, were wise men who made much of their learning, whereas the Pharisees, who were strongly attached to their practices and observances, highly esteemed their own piety. We recognize in these two classes the two most harmful evil inclinations that can be found among pious people.... Nothing good comes from either of these dispositions. Nevertheless, rare are they who are not somewhat retained in one or the other of these evil inclinations or even in both of them at the same time; but some are much more held than others.
>
> By the scribes we must understand intellectual men who value everything according to the standard of their reason or sensibility. They pass on to their reason what their senses have furnished them, and thus they come to understand great things. They glory in this knowledge and speak eloquently, but the depths of their souls, whence the truth should come, remain empty and desolate.

> The Pharisees, on the other hand, are pious people who have a good opinion of themselves, think they amount to something, hold firmly to their observances and their practices, believe there is nothing beyond these, and aspire to esteem and consideration because of these practices. They condemn those who do not see things as they do (even if their lives are in no way seriously reprehensible).
>
> (Tauler certainly does not believe that these last are in the illuminative way.)
>
> Let everyone, he adds, guard against these Pharisaical ways in the depths of his soul, and be watchful that no false sanctity hide there.

In this connection we should recall what the Gospel tells us about the prayer of the Pharisee and the publican, a parable which shows the necessity of a more profound conversion.

What occurs at the beginning of the second conversion? God begins to pursue the soul, and it likewise seeks God, not, however, without a struggle against the inclinations of the exterior man and without anxiety. This state is manifested by a keen desire for God and for perfection, and also by what St. Paul calls the struggle of the spirit against the flesh or the inferior part of man. From this struggle originates anxiety or even a certain anguish; the soul asks itself if it will reach the end so keenly desired.

Tauler gives a good description of this state, which St. John of the Cross later on calls the passive purification of the senses, in which there is a beginning of infused contemplation. In the sermon for the second Sunday of Lent, the old Dominican master declares: “From this pursuit of God (and of the soul who seek each other) keen anguish results. When a man is plunged into this anxiety and becomes aware of this pursuit of God in his soul, it is then without doubt that Jesus comes and enters into him. But when one does not feel this pursuit or experience this anguish, Jesus does not come.

“Of all those who do not let themselves be caught by this pursuit and this anguish, none ever turns out well; they remain what they are, they do not enter into themselves, and consequently they know nothing of what is taking place in them.”

These last words show that in Tauler’s opinion this passive purification is indeed in the normal way of sanctity and not an essentially extraordinary grace like revelations, visions, and the stigmata. It is a purification that must be undergone on earth while meriting, or in purgatory without meriting, in order to reach perfect purity of soul, without which one cannot enter heaven. If a man must labor to obtain a doctor’s degree in theology or law, he must also toil to reach true perfection.

Though some people stricken with neurasthenia erroneously believe they are in this state, it often happens that interior souls who are truly in this anxiety and who seek light from a confessor, obtain only this answer: “Do not trouble yourself; those are only scruples. Remain in peace; the passive purifications that certain books speak of are very rare and extraordinary.” After this answer, the soul is no more illuminated than before and has the impression of not having been understood.

What Tauler speaks of in the above passage is truly in the normal way of sanctity or of the full perfection of Christian life. God appears here as the Hunter in pursuit of souls for their greatest good.

What should the soul do that is thus pursued by the Savior? Tauler answers: “In truth, it should do what the woman of Canaan did: go to Jesus and cry in a loud voice, that is, with an ardent desire: ‘Lord, Son of David, have pity on me!’

“Ah! my children, this divine pursuit, this hunt provokes (in some souls) an appealing cry of immense force; the supplication of the spirit carries thousands of leagues and more (that is, even to the Most High); it is a sigh which comes from a measureless depth. This desire of the soul reaches far beyond nature; it is the Holy Ghost Himself who must utter this sigh in us, as St. Paul says: ‘The Spirit Himself asketh for us with unspeakable groanings.’”

These words of Tauler show that in his opinion and, as we shall see, later on in that of St. John of the Cross, the soul in this struggle enters on the mystical life through a special inspiration of the Holy Ghost and a beginning of contemplation, in spite of the aridity in which it remains. The Holy Ghost, who dwells in all the just, begins to render His influence manifest.

Tauler points out here that, after this cry of the soul, God treats it at times as Jesus did the woman of Canaan; He acts as if He did not hear or were not willing to grant its prayer. This is the time to insist, as the woman of Canaan did so admirably, under the divine inspiration which pursued her in the midst of obvious rebuffs.

“Ah! my children,” says Tauler, “how greatly then should the desire in the depths of the soul become more keen and more urgent.... Even if God refused to give bread, even if He disowned one as His child..., one should answer Him as did the Canaanite: ‘Yea Lord; for the whelps also eat of the crumbs that fall from the table of their masters.’

“Ah! my children,” adds Tauler, “if one could succeed in thus penetrating the depths of the truth (of our consciences) not by learned commentaries, words, or indeed with the senses, but into the true depth! Then neither God nor any creature could tread on you, crush you, bury you so deeply that you would not plunge yourselves truly much deeper still. Though you should be subjected to affronts, scorn, and rebuffs, you would remain firm in perseverance, you would plunge still deeper, animated by a complete confidence, and you would ever increase your zeal. Ah! yes, my children, everything depends on this; a man who reached this point, would be really successful. These roads, and these alone, lead, in truth, without any intermediary station to God. But to some it seems impossible to reach this degree of limitless annihilation and to remain thus in this depth with perseverance, with entire and veritable assurance, as this poor Canaanite woman did. Consequently Christ answered her: ‘O woman! great is thy faith. Be it done to thee as thou wilt.’ In truth, this is the answer that will be made to all those who will be found in such dispositions and on this road.”

Tauler relates at this point what happened to a young girl who, believing herself far from God, nevertheless abandoned herself entirely to His holy will, no matter what it might bring, and gave herself up wholly for eternity; then, he says, “she was carried very far above every intermediary and completely drawn into the divine abyss.”

To show the fruits of the second conversion, the old master adds: “Take the last place, as the Gospel teaches, and you shall be lifted up. But those who exalt themselves will be humbled. Desire only what God has willed from all eternity; accept the place which in His most amiable will He has decided should be yours.

“My children, it is by a person’s complete renunciation of self and of all that he possesses that he goes to God. One drop of this renunciation, one rill of it, would better prepare a man and lead him nearer to God than if he had stripped himself of all his garments and given them away, than if he had eaten thorns and stones, supposing that nature could bear it. A short moment lived in these dispositions would be more useful for us than forty years following practices of our own choice....

“For long years you go your own little way and you do not advance,... a deplorable condition. Let us, therefore, pray our Lord that we may plunge ourselves so profoundly in God that we may be found in Him. Amen.”

Such is Tauler's description of the second conversion in which the soul is far more profoundly "turned toward God," like the soil, for example, which, on second plowing, is more deeply turned up that it may become really fruitful.

Tauler treats the same subject in the sermon for the Monday before Palm Sunday while explaining the text: "If any man thirst, let him come to Me, and drink.... Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." In this sermon he describes the soul's thirst for God which arises under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, at the same time as a sort of disgust for everything created, for everything in it that is inordinate, untrue, and vain. This lively desire for God and this distaste for creatures are accompanied by a struggle against the inordinate inclinations of the sensibility and impatience. This is in reality the state that St. John of the Cross later calls the passive purification of the senses. Tauler describes it with an abundance of metaphors that today seem excessive. He notes that after this trial there is a period of repose and enjoyment. Then he describes the second series of trials by which the unitive way of the perfect begins; these trials are those which St. John of the Cross calls the passive night of the spirit.

This teaching, which is approximately the same under varied forms in the works of St. Catherine of Siena, Blessed Henry Suso, and Venerable Tauler, shows that to enter the illuminative way of proficients a person needs what Father Lallemant and several others have rightly called a second conversion. Then the soul begins to understand Christ's words to the apostles, who were arguing to find out who was the first among them: "Amen I say to you, unless you be converted and become as little children [by simplicity and consciousness of your weakness], you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." The apostles were already in the state of grace, but they needed a second conversion to enter the intimacy of the kingdom, to penetrate deeply into it, that "the depths of the soul," which Tauler speaks of so frequently, might no longer contain any egoism or self-love, but belong wholly to God so that God might truly reign in it. Until His reign is established in the generous soul, the Lord pursues it; and, under the divine inspiration, it will also seek Him by an increasingly pure and strong desire, at the same time that it ceases to seek itself. Then its eyes will be opened and it will see that a number of those whom it judged severely are better than it. This work is the divine work par excellence, that of the profound purification of the soul; first of the sensitive part; then of the spiritual part

to the end that it may be established in the intimacy of the divine union, the normal prelude of the life of heaven.

Chapter 4

The Passive Purification of the Senses and the Entrance into the Illuminative Way

The entrance into the illuminative way, which is the second conversion described by St. Catherine of Siena, Blessed Henry Suso, Tauler, and Father Lallemant, is called by St. John of the Cross the passive purification of the senses or the night of the senses. At this point in our study we must see what St. John of the Cross says about: (1) the necessity of this purification; (2) the way it is produced; (3) the conduct to be observed at this difficult time; (4) the trials which ordinarily accompany the purifying divine action. These points will be the subject of this chapter and the following one.

THE NECESSITY OF THIS PURIFICATION

In The Dark Night of the Soul, St. John of the Cross says: “The night of sense is common, and the lot of many: these are the beginners”; and he adds farther on, after discussing this trial: “The soul began to set out on the way of the spirit, the way of proficients, which is also called the illuminative way, or the way of infused contemplation, wherein God Himself teaches and refreshes the soul without meditation or any active efforts that itself may deliberately make.” Nevertheless the soul must always struggle to remove the obstacles to this grace and to be faithful to it. These two texts are extremely important, for they mark the age of the spiritual life in which the purifying trial we are considering is ordinarily produced.

The necessity of this purification, as the saint shows in the same book, arises from the defects of beginners, which may be reduced to three: spiritual pride, spiritual sensuality, and spiritual sloth. St. John of the Cross teaches that remains of the seven capital sins, like so many deviations of the spiritual life, are found even here. And yet the mystical doctor considers

only the disorder that results from them in our relations with God; he does not speak of all that taints our dealings with our neighbor and the apostolate which may be under our care.

Spiritual sensuality, with which we are especially concerned here under the name of spiritual gluttony, consists in being immoderately attached to the sensible consolations that God sometimes grants in prayer. The soul seeks these consolations for themselves, forgetting that they are not an end, but a means; it prefers the savor of spiritual things to their purity, and thus seeks itself in the things of God rather than God Himself, as it should. In others, this selfseeking is in the exterior apostolate, in some form or other of activity.

Spiritual sloth comes as a rule then from the fact that, when spiritual gluttony or some other form of selfishness is not satisfied to the desired extent, one falls into impatience and a certain disgust for the work of sanctification as soon as it is a question of advancing by the "narrow way." The early writers spoke much of this spiritual sloth and of this disgust, which they called acedia. They even declared that acedia, when accentuated, leads to malice, rancor, pusillanimity, discouragement, sluggishness, and dissipation of spirit in regard to forbidden things.

Spiritual pride manifests itself quite frequently when spiritual gluttony or some other self-seeking is satisfied, when things go as one wishes; then a man boasts of his perfection, judges others severely, sets himself up as a master, while he is still only a poor disciple. This spiritual pride, says St. John of the Cross, leads beginners to flee masters who do not approve of their spirit; "they even end by bearing them rancor." They seek a guide favorable to their inclinations, desire to be on intimate terms with him, confess their sins to him in such a way as not to lower themselves in his esteem. As St. John of the Cross says: "They go about palliating their sins, that they may not seem so bad: which is excusing rather than accusing themselves. Sometimes they go to a stranger to confess their sin, that their usual confessor may think that they are not sinners, but good people. And so they always take pleasure in telling him of their goodness."

This spiritual pride leads, as is evident, to a certain pharisaical hypocrisy, which shows that the beginners, whom St. John of the Cross is speaking of, are still very imperfect; they are, therefore, beginners in the sense in which this word is generally understood by spiritual authors. And yet it is of them that St. John of the Cross says here that they need to undergo the passive

purification of the senses, which therefore marks clearly the entrance into the illuminative way of proficients, according to the traditional meaning of these terms.

To the defects of spiritual gluttony, spiritual sloth, and spiritual pride, are added many others: curiosity, which decreases love of the truth; sufficiency, which leads us to exaggerate our personal worth, to become irritated when it is not recognized; jealousy and envy, which lead to disparagement, intrigues, and unhappy conflicts, which more or less seriously injure the general good. Likewise in the apostolate, the defect rather frequent at this time is natural eagerness in self-seeking, in making oneself a center, in drawing souls to oneself or to the group to which one belongs instead of leading them to our Lord. Finally, let trial, a rebuff, a disgrace come, and one is, in consequence, inclined to discouragement, discontent, sulkiness, pusillanimity, which seeks more or less to assume the external appearances of humility. All these defects show the necessity of a profound purification.

Several of these defects may, without doubt, be corrected by exterior mortification and especially by interior mortification which we should impose on ourselves; but such mortification does not suffice to extirpate their roots, which penetrate to the very center of our faculties. “The soul, however,” says St. John of the Cross, “cannot be perfectly purified from these imperfections, any more than from the others, until God shall have led it into the passive purgation of the dark night, which I shall speak of immediately. But it is expedient that the soul, so far as it can, should labor, on its own part, to purify and perfect itself, that it may merit from God to be taken under His divine care, and be healed from those imperfections which of itself it cannot remedy. For, after all the efforts of the soul, it cannot by any exertions of its own actively purify itself so as to be in the slightest degree fit for the divine union of perfection in the love of God, if God Himself does not take it into His own hands and purify it in the fire, dark to the soul.”

In other words, the cross sent by God to purify us must complete the work of mortification which we impose on ourselves. Consequently, as St. Luke relates: “He [Jesus] said to all: If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself [this is the law of mortification or abnegation], and take up his cross daily, and follow Me”; per crucem ad lucem. This road leads to the light of life, to intimate union with God, the normal prelude of the life of heaven.

HOW THE PASSIVE PURIFICATION OF THE SENSES IS PRODUCED

This state is manifested by three signs which St. John of the Cross describes as follows:

> The first is this: when we find no comfort in the things of God, and none also in created things. For when God brings the soul into the dark night in order to wean it from sweetness and to purge the desire of sense, He does not allow it to find sweetness or comfort anywhere. It is then probable, in such a case, that this dryness is not the result of sins or of imperfections recently committed; for if it were, we should feel some inclination or desire for other things than those of God.... But still, inasmuch as this absence of pleasure in the things of heaven and of earth may proceed from bodily indisposition or a melancholy temperament, which frequently causes dissatisfaction with all things, the second test and condition become necessary.
>
> The second test and condition of this purgation are that the memory dwells ordinarily upon God with a painful anxiety and carefulness, the soul thinks it is not serving God, but going backwards, because it is no longer conscious of any sweetness in the things of God.... The true purgative aridity is accompanied in general by a painful anxiety, because the soul thinks that it is not serving God. Though this be occasionally increased by melancholy or other infirmity—so it sometimes happens yet it is not for that reason without its purgative effects on the desires, because the soul is deprived of all sweetness, and its sole anxieties are referred to God. For when mere bodily indisposition is the cause, all that it does is to produce disgust and the ruin of bodily health, without the desire of serving God which belongs to the purgative aridity. In this aridity, though the sensual part of man be greatly depressed, weak and sluggish in good works, by reason of the little satisfaction they furnish, the spirit is, nevertheless, ready and strong.
>
> The cause of this dryness is that God is transferring to the spirit the goods and energies of the senses, which, having no natural fitness for them, become dry, parched up, and empty; for the sensual nature of man is helpless in those things which belong to the spirit simply. Thus the spirit having been tasted, the flesh becomes weak and remiss; but the spirit, having received its proper nourishment, becomes strong, more vigilant and careful than before, lest there should be any negligence in serving God. At first it is not conscious of any spiritual sweetness and delight, but rather of aridities and distaste, because of the novelty of the change. The palate accustomed to sensible sweetness looks for it still. And the spiritual palate is not prepared and purified for so delicious a taste until it shall have been for some time disposed for it in this arid and dark night....
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> But when these aridities arise in the purgative way of the sensual appetite the spirit though at first without any sweetness, for the reasons I have given, is conscious of strength and energy to act because of the substantial nature of its interior food, which is the commencement of contemplation, dim and dry to the senses. This contemplation is in general secret, and unknown to him who is admitted into it, and with the aridity and emptiness which it produces in the senses, it makes the soul long for solitude and quiet, without the power of reflecting on anything distinctly, or even desiring to do so.
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> Now, if they who are in this state knew how to be quiet,... they would have, in this tranquillity, a most delicious sense of this interior food. This food is so delicate that, in general, it eludes our perceptions if we make any special effort to feel it; it is like the air which vanishes when we shut our hands to grasp it. For this is God’s way of bringing the soul into

this state; the road by which He leads it is so different from the first, that if it will do anything in its own strength, it will hinder rather than aid His work. Therefore, at this time, all that the soul can do of itself ends, as I have said, in disturbing the peace and the work of God in the spirit amid the dryness of sense.

The third sign we have for ascertaining whether this dryness be the purgation of sense, is inability to meditate and make reflections, and to excite the imagination, as before, notwithstanding all the efforts we may make; for God begins now to communicate Himself, no longer through the channel of sense, as formerly, in consecutive reflections, by which we arranged and divided our knowledge, but in pure spirit, which admits not of successive reflections, and in the act of pure contemplation (to which the special inspiration of the Holy Ghost gives rise in us).

In regard to this third sign, St. John of the Cross points out that this inability to meditate in a reasoned or discursive manner "does not arise out of any bodily ailment. When it arises from this, the indisposition, which is always changeable, having ceased, the powers of the soul recover their former energies and find their previous satisfactions at once. It is otherwise in the purgation of the appetite, for as soon as we enter upon this, the inability to make our meditations continually grows. It is true that this purgation at first is not continuous in some persons."

Though this state is manifested by two negative characteristics (sensible aridity and great difficulty in meditating according to a reasoned manner), evidently the most important element in it is the positive side, that is, initial infused contemplation and the keen desire for God to which it gives rise in us. It must even be admitted that then sensible aridity and the difficulty in meditating come precisely from the fact that grace takes a new, purely spiritual form, superior to the senses and to the discourse of reason, which makes use of the imagination. Here the Lord seems to take from the soul, for He deprives it of sensible consolation, but in reality He bestows a precious gift, nascent contemplation and a love that is more spiritual, pure, and strong. Only, we must keep in mind the saying: "The roots of knowledge are bitter and the fruits sweet"; the same must be said in a higher order of the roots and fruits of contemplation.

THE CAUSE OF THIS STATE

The theological explanation of this state is to be found in four causes. We already know its formal and material causes from the fact that St. John of the Cross tells us that it is a passive purification of the sensibility. Several

authors insist on its final cause or end, which is easily discovered, and do not give sufficient attention to its efficient cause.

The passage just quoted from St. John of the Cross indicates the efficient cause. It is, in fact, a special and purifying action of God, from which comes, says the saint, a beginning of infused contemplation. In this contemplation we have the explanation of the keen desire for God experienced by the soul, since man ardently desires only that of which he experimentally knows the charm. This keen desire for God and for perfection is itself the explanation of the fear of falling back (filial fear). Finally, sensible aridity is explained by the fact that the special grace then given is purely spiritual and not sensible; it is a higher form of life. St. John's text explains this state rationally.

On penetrating more deeply into the theological explanation of this state, we observe that in it there is a special inspiration of the Holy Ghost, whose influence then becomes more manifest. Theology teaches that every just soul possesses the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, which enable it to receive His inspirations with docility and promptness. Here, therefore, the influence of the gifts is quite manifest, especially those gifts of knowledge, filial fear, and fortitude.

The gift of knowledge, in fact, explains the first sign pointed out by St. John of the Cross: "No comfort in the things of God and none also in created things." The gift of knowledge, according to St. Augustine and St. Thomas, makes us know experimentally the emptiness of created things, all that is defectible and deficient in them and in ourselves. Knowledge indeed differs from wisdom inasmuch as it knows things not by their supreme cause, but by their proximate, defectible, and deficient cause. For this reason, according to St. Augustine, the gift of knowledge corresponds to the beatitude of tears. The tears of contrition come actually from the knowledge of the gravity of sin and the nothingness of creatures. The gift of knowledge reminds us of what Ecclesiastes says: "Vanity of vanities,... and all things are vanity," except to love God and to serve Him. This thought is repeatedly expressed in The Imitation and in the works of great mystics like Ruysbroeck. Before St. John of the Cross, Ruysbroeck pointed out the relations of the gift of knowledge to the passive purification of the senses, in which the soul knows by experience the emptiness of created things and is led thereby to a keen desire for God.

In the passive purification of the senses which we are speaking of, there is also a manifest influence of the gifts of fear and fortitude, as the second sign given by St. John of the Cross indicates: “The true purgative aridity is accompanied in general by a painful anxiety because the soul thinks that it is not serving God.... For when mere bodily indisposition is the cause, all that it does is to produce disgust and the ruin of bodily health, without the desire of serving God which belongs to the purgative aridity. In this aridity, though the sensual part of man is greatly depressed, weak and sluggish in good works, by reason of the little satisfaction they furnish, the spirit is, nevertheless, ready and strong.”

The second sign manifests, therefore, an effect of the gift of fear, of filial fear, not the fear of punishment but that of sin. Filial fear evidently grows with the progress of charity, whereas servile fear, or that of punishment, diminishes. By the special inspiration of this gift the soul resists the strong temptations against chastity and patience which often accompany the passive purification of the senses. The Christian, who then experiences his indigence, repeats the words of the Psalmist: “Pierce Thou my flesh with Thy fear: for I am afraid of Thy judgments.” According to St. Augustine, the gift of fear corresponds to the beatitude of the poor, of those who do not pose as masters, but who begin to love seriously the humility of the hidden life that they may become more like our Lord. In this poverty they find true riches: “Theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

In the keen desire to serve God which St. John of the Cross speaks of here, a desire that subsists in spite of aridity, temptations, difficulties, there is, at the same time, a manifest effect of the gift of fortitude, corresponding to the fourth beatitude: “Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice: for they shall have their fill.” The ardent desire to serve God at no matter what cost is truly this hunger, which the Lord arouses in us. He gives rise to it and He satisfies it; as was said to Daniel: “I am come to show it to thee, because thou art a man of desires.” The gift of fortitude comes here, in the midst of difficulties and contradictions, to the assistance of the virtues of patience and longanimity; without it spiritual enthusiasm would die away like sensible enthusiasm. This is the time when man must give heed to what The Imitation says about the holy way of the cross: “Follow Jesus, and thou shalt go into life everlasting. He is gone before thee, carrying His cross.... If thou carry the cross willingly, it will carry thee and bring thee to thy desired end.... And sometimes he gaineth such strength through affection to

tribulation and adversity, by his love of conformity to the cross of Christ, as not to be willing to be without suffering and affliction.... This is not man's power but the grace of Christ, which doth and can effect such great things in frail flesh, and that what it naturally abhors and flies, even this, through fervor of spirit, it now embraces and loves [i.e., to bear the cross]."

Finally, the third sign which St. John of the Cross speaks of, "the growing difficulty in meditating discursively," shows the influence of the gift of understanding, the source of initial infused contemplation, above reasoning. In the same chapter of The Dark Night, the saint speaks in exact terms of this "beginning of obscure and arid contemplation" by which God nourishes the soul while purifying it and giving it strength to go beyond the figures, to penetrate the meaning of the formulas of faith that it may reach the superior simplicity which characterizes contemplation.

St. Thomas also speaks clearly on this subject: "The other cleanness of heart is a kind of complement to the sight of God; such is the cleanness of the mind that is purged of phantasms and errors, so as to receive the truths which are proposed to it about God, no longer by way of corporeal phantasms, nor infected with heretical misrepresentations; and this cleanness is the result of the gift of understanding." Thereby this gift preserves us from possible deviations and makes us go beyond the letter of the Gospel to attain its spirit; it begins to make us penetrate, beyond the formulas of faith, the depths of the mysteries that they express. The formula is no longer a term but a point of departure. This purifying influence of the gift of understanding will be exercised especially in the passive purification of the spirit, but even at this stage it is manifest. Under the special inspiration of the Holy Ghost, the soul now makes an act of penetrating faith, which is called an infused act, for it cannot be produced without this special inspiration.

Thus there begins to be realized what St. Thomas also points out: "But on the part of the soul, before it arrives at this uniformity (of contemplation, symbolized by the uniformity of circular movement, without beginning or end), its twofold lack of uniformity needs to be removed. First, that which arises from the variety of external things... and from the discoursing of reason. This is done by directing all the soul's operations to the simple contemplation of the intelligible truth," a process which begins to be realized in the passive purification of the senses. Here, for example, a theologian will see the entire tract on predestination and that on grace

reduced to this simple principle: “Since God’s love is the cause of goodness in things, no one thing would be better than another if God did not will greater good for one than for another.”

St. Augustine, in treating of the degrees of the life of the soul, pointed out that the life of true virtue begins by a purification, which he called “purificationis negotium..., opus tam difficile mundationis animae.” Such is, we believe, according to the great masters, the explanation of this state or period of transition, which is manifested by the subtraction of sensible graces, but which is in reality the beginning of infused contemplation, the threshold of the mystical life, in which grace is given under a new form, more freed from the senses, that it may spiritualize us, make us attain the vivifying spirit under the letter of the Gospel, and cause us truly to live by it.

NOTE

To distinguish neurasthenia from the passive purifications, we should note that the most frequent symptoms in neurasthenics are the following: almost continual fatigue, even when they have not worked, accompanied by a feeling of prostration, of discouragement; habitual headaches (the sensation of wearing a helmet, a leaden cap; dull pains at the nape of the neck or in the spinal column); insomnia, to such an extent that the neurasthenic wakes up more tired than when he went to bed; difficulty in exercising the intellectual faculties and in maintaining attention; impressionability (intense emotions for very slight causes), which leads the sufferer to believe that he has illnesses that he does not really have; excessive self-analysis even to minute details, continual preoccupation not to become ill.

Neurasthenics are, however, not imaginary invalids; the powerlessness they experience is real, and it would be very imprudent to urge them to disregard their fatigue and work to the limit of their strength. What they lack is not will, but power.

The causes of neurasthenia may be organic like infections, endocrine or liver troubles, pre-paralysis; but often the causes are also psychical: intellectual overloading, moral worries, painful emotions, which constitute too heavy a load for the nervous system. Even in these last cases, where the cause of the disease is mental, the illness itself affects the organism. For this

reason neurasthenics must absolutely be made to rest; and they must be progressively led to perform easy tasks proportionate to their strength, and be encouraged.

We should also note that psychoneuroses may be associated with a developed intellectual life and a lofty moral life. Consequently we see, as St. John of the Cross pointed out in speaking of the three signs of the passive night of the senses, that this night may exist simultaneously with melancholia, or neurasthenia as it is called today. But we see also that the passive night is distinguished from this state of nervous fatigue by the second sign (the soul ordinarily keeps the memory of God with solicitude and painful anxiety for fear it may be falling back), and by the third sign (the quasi-impossibility to meditate, but the ability to keep a simple and loving gaze on God, the beginning of infused contemplation). The ardent desire for God and for perfection, which is manifested by these signs, distinguishes notably this passive purification from neurasthenia which may sometimes co-exist with it.

Chapter 5

Conduct to be Observed in the Night of the Senses

In The Dark Night, St. John of the Cross treats of the conduct to be observed in the night of the senses. He gives there, first of all, rules for direction, then he speaks of the trials which ordinarily accompany this state. We shall set forth here the essential part of his teaching on this point. This teaching may, moreover, be useful not only for those who are in this period of obscurity and prolonged aridity, but also for those who observe that in their interior life day and night alternate somewhat as they do in nature. The author of The Imitation frequently points out this alternation. As in nature it is good that night succeed day, so also is it suitable in the life of the soul. Furthermore, one must know how to conduct oneself in these two phases that differ so greatly; especially is this knowledge necessary when the obscure phase is prolonged, as it is in the period we are considering.

FOUR RULES OF DIRECTION RELATIVE TO THIS STATE

The mystical doctor points out first of all in regard to those who are in this period of transition: “If they meet with no one who understands the matter, these persons fall away and abandon the right road; or they become weak, or at least put hindrances in the way of their further advancement, because of the great efforts they make to proceed in their former way of meditation, fatiguing their natural powers beyond measure.” At this time, it is advisable for them to seek counsel from an enlightened director because of the difficulties which arise in the interior life by reason of the subtraction of sensible graces, the growing difficulty in meditating, and also by reason of the concomitant temptations against chastity and patience which the devil then awakens rather frequently in order to turn the soul away from prayer.

In the second place, says St. John of the Cross: “It behooves those who find themselves in this condition to take courage and persevere in patience. Let them not afflict themselves but put their confidence in God, who never forsakes those who seek Him with a pure and upright heart. Neither will He withhold from them all that is necessary for them on this road until He brings them to the clear and pure light of love, which He will show them in that other dark night of the spirit, if they shall merit an entrance into it.” Consequently, in this aridity and powerlessness one must not become discouraged or abandon prayer as if it were useless. On the contrary, it becomes much more fruitful if the soul perseveres in humility, abnegation, and trust in God. Prolonged sensible aridity and growing inability to meditate are the sign of a new, higher life. Instead of grieving over this condition, a learned and experienced director rejoices; it is the generous entrance into “the narrow way” which ascends as it broadens, and which will become increasingly wide, immense as God Himself to whom it leads. At this stage the soul is under the happy necessity of not being content with weak acts of faith, hope, and love. Imperfect acts (actus remissi) of these virtues no longer suffice here; more lofty and more meritorious acts are necessary. According to St. Thomas, it is characteristic of these acts to obtain immediately the increase of grace and charity which they merit.

The spiritual man who has reached this stage is like a man who in climbing a mountain comes to a difficult spot where, to make progress, he must have a keener desire for the goal to be attained. We are here at the aurora of the illuminative life; it richly deserves that we show generosity in our passage through the dark night which precedes it. Here it is a question of being purified from the remains of the seven capital sins that stain the spiritual life; if one is not purified from them on earth while meriting, one must be cleansed in purgatory without meriting.

The passive purification which we are speaking of is in the normal way of sanctity, which may be defined as union with God and sufficient purity to enter heaven immediately. This degree of purity is certainly in the normal way of heaven, whether a person obtains it on earth, or only at the end of his purgatory. Purgatory, which is a penalty, presupposes sins that could have been avoided. Therefore the soul should trust in God while this painful work of purification is being accomplished.

In the third place, as St. John of the Cross points out here, when persons can no longer meditate discursively: “All they have to do is to keep their

soul free,... contenting themselves simply with directing their attention lovingly and calmly toward God." To wish to return at any cost to discursive meditation, would be to wish to run counter to the current of grace instead of following it, and to give ourselves great trouble without profit. It would be like running toward the spring of living water when we have already reached its brim; continuing to run, we withdraw from it. It would be like continuing to spell when we already know how to read several words at a glance. It would be to fall back instead of allowing ourselves to be drawn, to be lifted up by God. However, if the difficulty in meditating does not increase and makes itself felt only from time to time, it is well to return to simplified, affective meditation whenever possible: for example, to the very slow meditation of the Our Father.

St. John gives a fourth rule of direction for those who, having reached this state of prolonged aridity, wish, not to return to reasoned meditation, but to feel some consolation. St. John of the Cross says on this subject: "All they have to do is to keep their soul free,... and all this without anxiety or effort, or immoderate desire to feel and taste His presence. For all such efforts disquiet the soul, and distract it from the peaceful quiet and sweet tranquillity of contemplation to which they are now admitted.... If they were now to exert their interior faculties, they would simply hinder and ruin the good which, in that repose, God is working in the soul; for if a man while sitting for his portrait cannot be still, but moves about, the painter will never depict his face, and even the work already done will be spoiled.... The more it strives to find help in affections and knowledge, the more will it feel the deficiency which cannot now be supplied in that way." In other words, natural activity exercising itself counter to the gifts of the Holy Ghost, through self-seeking opposes an obstacle to their most delicate inspirations. In prayer, we should not seek to feel the gift of God, but should receive it with docility and disinterestedness in the obscurity of faith. Spiritual joy will be added later on to the act of contemplation and love of God; but it is not joy that should be sought, it is God Himself, who is greatly superior to His gifts.

If the soul that has reached this period of transition is faithful to what has been said, then will be realized what St. John of the Cross affirms: "By not hindering the operation of infused contemplation, to which God is now admitting it, the soul is refreshed in peaceful abundance, and set on fire

with the spirit of love, which this contemplation, dim and secret, induces and establishes within it."

As the mystical doctor says: "The soul should content itself simply with directing its attention lovingly and calmly toward God," with the general knowledge of His infinite goodness, as when after months of absence, a loving son again meets his good mother who has been expecting him. He does not analyze his sentiments and his mother's as a psychologist would; he is content with an affectionate, tranquil, and profound gaze which in its simplicity is far more penetrating than all psychological analyses.

This beginning of infused contemplation united to love is already the eminent exercise of the theological virtues and of the gifts of the Holy Ghost which accompany them. In it there is an infused act of penetrating faith; therein the soul discovers increasingly the spirit of the Gospel, the spirit which vivifies the letter. Thus are verified Christ's words: "The Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you." St. John also wrote to the faithful to whom he directed his first epistle: "And as for you, let the unction, which you have received from Him, abide in you. And you have no need that any man teach you;... His unction teacheth you of all things." In the silence of prayer, the soul receives here the profound meaning of what it has often read and meditated on in the Gospel: for example, the intrinsic meaning of the evangelical beatitudes: blessed are the poor, the meek, those who weep for their sins, those who hunger and thirst for justice, the merciful, the pure of heart, the peacemakers, those who suffer persecution for justice, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

In this way, as a rule, begins infused prayer, the spiritual elevation of the soul toward God, above the senses, the imagination, and reasoning; it is adoration "in spirit and in truth," which goes beyond the formulas of faith to penetrate the mysteries which they express and to live by them. The formulas are no longer a term, but a point of departure.

Nevertheless we should remember here what St. John of the Cross says in The Ascent of Mount Carmel: "The beginning contemplative is not yet so far removed from discursive meditation that he cannot return occasionally to its practice," when he is no longer under the special influence of the Holy Ghost, which facilitates recollection. St. Teresa, in her Life (chap. 14), also speaks of the necessity at the beginning of the prayer of quiet of having

recourse to a simplified meditation, symbolized by the hydraulic machine called a noria. This passage from St. Teresa's life corresponds to what St. John of the Cross has just said about the work of the understanding, which prepares the soul to receive a more profound recollection from God. Thus it is fitting at the beginning of prayer to meditate slowly on the petitions of the Our Father, or to converse in a childlike manner with Mary Mediatrix that she may lead us to close union with her Son. It is well for us to recall how He Himself gave His life for us and how He does not cease to offer Himself for us in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. If we follow this way faithfully, we shall receive, at least from time to time, an interior light that will give us the profound meaning of the Passion, and also of the infinite riches contained in the Holy Eucharist. Thus our interior life will grow more simple while becoming more lofty, which is essential if it is to radiate and to bear fruit.

We may sum up the conduct to be observed in the passive purification of the senses, called also the night of the senses, as follows: docility to the director, trust in God, a simple and loving gaze on Him, abstention from seeking to feel consolation. To complete this chapter, we must also speak of the trials which frequently accompany this period of transition.

TRIALS WHICH ORDINARILY ACCOMPANY THE NIGHT OF THE SENSES

To this painful purification in which, under the influence of the gift of knowledge, we experience the emptiness of created things, are customarily added temptations against chastity and patience. These temptations are permitted by God to provoke a strong reaction of these virtues, which have their seat in the sensible appetites. This reaction should strengthen these virtues, root them more deeply, and thereby purify more profoundly the sensibility in which they are located, and subject it increasingly to right reason illumined by faith. For a like reason, there will be in the night of the spirit temptations of the same kind against the virtues which are in the highest part of the soul, especially against the theological virtues.

These concomitant trials have an attenuated form in many souls; in others they are more accentuated and then they announce that God wishes to lead these souls to the full perfection of Christian life if they are faithful.

The struggle against the temptations of which we are speaking necessitates energetic acts of the virtues of chastity and patience; as a result

these virtues then take deeper root in the sensibility that has been tilled and upturned. They become in it like very fertile seeds of a higher life. The acquired moral virtues cause the direction of right reason to descend, in fact, into the sensibility, and the infused moral virtues cause the divine life of grace to penetrate into it. Thus conceived, this struggle against temptation has a great and beautiful character. Without it we would often be content with a lesser effort, with weak, less intense, virtuous acts, actus remissi, as theologians call them, that is, acts inferior to the degree of virtue that we possess. Having three talents, we act as if we had only two. These weak virtuous acts, as St. Thomas points out, do not immediately obtain the increase of charity which they merit, whereas intense or perfect acts obtain it immediately.

Temptation places us in the necessity of producing these very meritorious acts, occasionally heroic, which root the acquired virtues and obtain immediately for us a proportionate increase of the infused virtues. For this reason, the angel Raphael said to Tobias: “Because thou wast acceptable to God, it was necessary that temptation should prove thee.” St. Paul also says: “God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able; but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it.” Isaias speaks in like manner: “It is He that giveth strength to the weary, and increaseth force and might to them that are not.... But they that hope in the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall take wings as eagles.”

Temptation reveals to us our misery and our need of the grace of God: “What doth he know, that hath not been tried?” Temptation obliges us to pray, to beg God to come to our aid, to place our confidence in Him and not in ourselves. Because of this trust in God which the man who is tried should have, St. Paul writes: “For when I am weak, then am I powerful” The apostle St. James also says: “My brethren, count it all joy when you shall fall into divers temptations; knowing that the trying of your faith worketh patience. And patience hath a perfect work; that you may be perfect.”

To these temptations against chastity and patience is also added at times in this period of the interior life the loss of certain temporal goods, of fortune, honors, friendships on which we dwelt too much. God comes at this time to ask us to give Him the lively affection which we have not thought of giving to Him. Sometimes He also permits illnesses, that we may learn to suffer, and also that we may be reminded that of ourselves we can

do nothing and that we need the divine favors for the life of the body and that of the soul.

THE EFFECTS OF THE PASSIVE PURIFICATION OF THE SENSES

If we bear these trials well, they produce precious effects in us. It is said that “patience produces roses.” Among the effects of the passive purification of the senses, must be numbered a profound and experimental knowledge of God and self.

St. John of the Cross points out: “These aridities and the emptiness of the faculties as to their former abounding, and the difficulty which good works present, bring the soul to a knowledge of its own vileness and misery.”

This knowledge is the effect of nascent infused contemplation, which shows that infused contemplation is in the normal way of sanctity. St. John of the Cross says: “The soul possesses and retains more truly that excellent and necessary virtue of self-knowledge, counting itself for nothing, and having no satisfaction in itself, because it sees that of itself it does and can do nothing. This diminished satisfaction with self, and the affliction it feels because it thinks that it is not serving God, God esteems more highly than all its former delights and all its good works.”

With this knowledge of its indigence, its poverty, the soul comprehends better the majesty of God, His infinite goodness toward us, the value also of Christ’s merits, of His precious blood, the infinite value of the Mass, and the value of Communion. “God enlightens the soul, making it see not only its own misery and meanness,... but also His grandeur and majesty.”

St. Teresa speaks in like manner: “For instance, they read that we must not be troubled when men speak ill of us, that we are to be then more pleased than when they speak well of us,... with many other things of the same kind. The disposition to practice this must be, in my opinion, the gift of God, for it seems to me a supernatural good.” “People may desire honors or possessions in monasteries as well as outside them (yet the sin is greater as the temptation is less), but such souls, although they may have spent years in prayer, or rather in speculations (for perfect prayer eventually destroys these vices), will never make great progress nor enjoy the real fruit of prayer.”

St. Catherine of Siena, too, taught the same doctrine: that the knowledge of God and that of our indigence are like the highest and the lowest points

of a circle which could grow forever. This infused knowledge of our misery is the source of true humility of heart, of the humility which leads one to desire to be nothing that God may be all, amare nesciri et pro nihilo reputari. Infused knowledge of the infinite goodness of God gives birth in us to a much more lively charity, a more generous and disinterested love of God and of souls in Him, a greater confidence in prayer.

As St. John of the Cross says: “The love of God is practiced, because the soul is no longer attracted by sweetness and consolation, but by God only.... In the midst of these aridities and hardships, God communicates to the soul, when it least expects it, spiritual sweetness, most pure love, and spiritual knowledge of the most exalted kind, of greater worth and profit than any of which it had previous experience, though at first the soul may not think so, for the spiritual influence now communicated is most delicate and imperceptible by sense.”

The soul travels here in a spiritual light and shade; it rises above the inferior obscurity which comes from matter, error, and sin; it enters the higher obscurity which comes from a light that is too great for our weak eyes. It is the obscurity of the divine life, the light of which is inaccessible to the senses and to natural reason. But between these two obscurities, the lower and the higher, there is a ray of illumination from the Holy Ghost; it is the illuminative life which truly begins. Then are realized the Savior’s words: “He that followeth Me walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life,” and he already has it.

Under this light, affective charity becomes effective and generous. Through the spirit of sacrifice it more and more takes first place in the soul; it establishes peace in us and gives it to others. Such are the principal effects of the passive purification of the senses, which subjects our sensibility to the spirit and spiritualizes that sensibility. Thus this purification appears in the normal way of sanctity. Later the passive purification of the spirit will have as its purpose to supernaturalize our spirit, to subject it fully to God in view of perfect divine union, which is the normal prelude to that of eternity. These are the superior laws of the life of grace, or of its full development, in its relation to the two parts of the soul. The senses should, in the end, be fully subjected to the spirit, and the spirit to God.

Finally, it should be pointed out that the passive purification of the senses, even for those who enter it, is more or less manifest and also more

or less well borne. St. John of the Cross points out this fact when he speaks of those who show less generosity: “The night of aridities is not continuous with them, they are sometimes in it, and sometimes not; they are at one time unable to meditate, and at another able as before.... These persons are never wholly weaned from the breasts of meditations and reflections, but only, as I have said, at intervals and at certain seasons.” In The Living Flame, the mystical doctor, explaining why this is so, says: “Because these souls flee purifying suffering, God does not continue to purify them; they wish to be perfect without allowing themselves to be led by the way of trial which forms the perfect.”

Such is the more or less generous transition to a form of higher life. We see the logical and vital succession of phases through which the soul should pass to reach the perfect purity that would permit it to enter heaven immediately. It is not a mechanical juxtaposition of successive states: it is the organic development of life. In his discussion of this point St. John of the Cross caused spiritual theology to advance notably, by showing the necessity and the intimate nature of these purifications, which are an anticipated purgatory in which one merits and advances, whereas in that after death, one no longer merits. May the Lord grant us the grace thus to suffer our purgatory before death rather than after our last sigh. In the evening of life we shall be judged on the purity of our love of God and of souls in God.

Chapter 6

The Spiritual Age of Proficients

Principal Characteristics

Since we have discussed the difficult period called the night of the senses, which, according to St. John of the Cross, marks the entrance into the illuminative way of proficients, we should now point out the principal traits of the spiritual character of proficients, the characteristics of this age of the interior life.

The mentality of proficients should be described by insisting on their knowledge and love of God, and by noting the differences between this spiritual age and the preceding one, just as one remarks those of adolescence and childhood. The adolescent is not only a grown-up child, but he has also a new mentality; he sees things in a less imaginative, more rational manner; he has different preoccupations, just as the child is not an adolescent in miniature. From the spiritual point of view there is something similar in respect to the different ages of the interior life.

THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD IN PROFICIENTS

In the preceding period, the beginner scarcely knew God except in the mirror of sensible things, whether in those of nature, or in those mentioned in the parables of the Gospel, or in the exterior acts of worship; and he knew himself only in a very superficial manner.

The proficient obtained a deeper self-knowledge while passing through the period of prolonged aridity which marks the second conversion. With this knowledge of his poverty, of his spiritual indigence, there grows within him by contrast a quasi-experimental knowledge of God, not only in the mirror of the sensible things of nature, of the parables, of exterior worship,

but in the spiritual mirror of the mysteries of salvation with which he familiarizes himself. These mysteries, which are those of the incarnation of the Word, of the redemption, of eternal life, the rosary daily places before our eyes by recalling to us the Savior's childhood, His sorrowful passion, His resurrection and ascension. If the proficient is faithful, he goes beyond the sensible aspect of these mysteries, he attains all that is spiritual in them, the infinite value of the merits of Christ; then the rosary is no longer the mechanical recitation of the Hail Mary, but a living thing, a school of contemplation. The joyful mysteries bring us the good news of the annunciation and the nativity of our Savior, which constitute true, enduring, and deep joys far above the pleasures of the world and the satisfactions of pride. Likewise, in the midst of our sufferings, which are often without reason, at times overwhelming, almost always badly borne, the sorrowful mysteries repeat to us that our sins should be the object of our grief. They make us desire to know them better, to experience a sincere sorrow for them, and thus we begin to comprehend the profound meaning and the infinite value of Christ's passion and its effects in our lives. Finally, in the midst of the instability and uncertainties of this life, the glorious mysteries recall to us the immutability and the perfect happiness of eternal life, which is the goal of our journey.

The proficient who would thus live a little better each day by the spirit of the rosary, would reach the contemplation of the mystery of Christ, a certain penetrating understanding of the life of the mystical body, or of the Church militant, suffering, and triumphant. Under the continual direction of Jesus and of Mary Mediatrix, he would enter increasingly into the mystery of the communion of saints. If he should listen daily to this secret teaching in the depth of his heart, this prayer would kindle in him the desire of heaven, of the glory of God, and the salvation of souls; it would give him a love of the cross and strength to carry it, and from time to time a foretaste of heaven, a certain savor of eternal life. As a traveler toward eternity (viator), he would occasionally enjoy it in hope and would rest on the heart of Him who is the way, the truth, and the life.

The proficient who has such knowledge of God no longer knows Him only in the sensible mirror of the starry sky or of the parables, but in the spiritual mirror of the great mysteries of the Incarnation, the redemption, and eternal life which is promised to us. He thus grows increasingly familiar with these mysteries of faith, he penetrates them a little, tastes

them, sees their application to his daily life. According to the terminology of Dionysius, which is preserved by St. Thomas, the soul rises thus by a spiral movement from the mysteries of Christ's childhood to those of His passion, resurrection, ascension, and glory, and in them it contemplates the radiation of the sovereign goodness of God, who thus communicates Himself admirably to us. Goodness is essentially diffusive, and that of God diffuses itself on us by the redeeming Incarnation and by the revelation of eternal life already begun, in a sense, in the life of grace.

In this more or less frequent contemplation, the proficients or advanced receive, in the measure of their fidelity and generosity, the light of the gift of understanding, which renders their faith more penetrating and which makes them glimpse the lofty and simple beauty of these mysteries, a beauty accessible to all those who are truly humble and pure of heart.

Consequently this period of the interior life merits the name of illuminative way. In the preceding period, the Lord conquered our sensibility by certain graces, to which the name sensible is given because of the sensible consolation they bring. Then the soul, which had become too attached to these sensible consolations, had to be weaned from them that it might receive a more spiritual and substantial food.

Now God conquers our intellect; He enlightens it as He alone can; He renders this superior faculty increasingly docile to His inspirations that it may grasp divine truth. He subjects our intellect to Himself in this way while vivifying it. He gives it lights that are often scarcely perceived, but that make us understand ever better the spirit of the Gospel. He lifts us up above the excessive preoccupations and the complications of a learning that is too human. He makes us aspire to the superior simplicity of the loving gaze which rests in the truth that makes man free. He makes us understand the meaning of these words: "If you continue in My word, you shall be My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." This word will deliver you from the prejudices of the world, from its vain complications, its lies, the shortsightedness of unconscious pride, and from that of covetousness. Divine truth will give itself profoundly to you and will also dispel the false luster of all that can seduce you. It will free you from what Scripture calls "the bewitching of vanity," from the vertigo of passion which blinds you to the true imperishable goods.

In all this there is a knowledge of God and of self notably different from that drawn from books simply by reading. We begin to know in a truly

living manner the Gospel, the Eucharist, Jesus Christ, who does not cease to intercede for us and who gives us always new graces to incorporate us in Him, in His mystical body for eternity. The life of the Church appears in its grandeur; we think of the spiritual summits of the Church in our day, which must number very holy souls as it did in the past and as it will in the future. Such is the work of the Holy Ghost in men's hearts.

Books alone cannot give this experimental knowledge. A treatise on the Eucharist will show at some length, by the analysis of scriptural texts, that this sacrament was instituted by Christ; it will defend speculatively the Real Presence and transubstantiation against ancient and modern errors; it will compare the different explanations which theologians give of the Sacrifice of the Mass, and will enumerate the fruits of Communion. These books, which are indispensable for the training of the priest, end in precise formulas. These formulas, however, should not be an end for us; for the interior soul they should be a point of departure. To live with a holy realism by the mystery itself, the soul should go beyond them.

By faith in the Eucharist, the interior soul already holds the truths that it needs to know; it is useless for such a soul to embarrass itself with discussions on the history of this dogma, on transubstantiation or the Eucharistic accidents; it needs to live by the truths of faith and of the liturgy, as Book IV of The Imitation points out. To live in this way, the soul must receive the inspirations of the Holy Ghost with docility. Not in vain are the seven gifts given to all the just; they are given to perfect the virtues. Thus the gift of understanding should make all the just who are faithful to its inspirations penetrate the meaning and import of the formulas of faith; simple souls who are clean of heart really see this import much better than theologians who are too satisfied with their acquired knowledge. Mirabilis Deus in sanctis suis.

The contemplation of divine things may be greatly hindered by self-sufficiency which leads a man to think he already knows the interior life, when, as a matter of fact, he still has much to learn. The study of books will never replace prayer; for this reason the great doctors of the Church have declared that they learned more in prayer at the foot of the crucifix or near the tabernacle than in the most learned works. Books give the letter and explain it; intimate prayer obtains the spirit which vivifies, the interior light which sometimes illuminates in an instant principles often repeated, but whose universal radiation had not been grasped. Many things in Christian

life are illuminated, for example, in the light of St. Paul's words: "What hast thou that thou hast not received?" This principle is the basis of humility, gratitude, and true love of God, that we may respond to God's love for us. In the same way we then increasingly understand the profound meaning of these words: God is the Author of being, of life, the Author of salvation, of grace, of final perseverance.

Such is, though very imperfectly expressed, the knowledge of God which proficients need and which is found in the illuminative way. This period, in which the soul begins to contemplate God in the spiritual mirror of the mysteries of salvation, already surpasses the ascetical life; it is a beginning of the mystical life. A denial of this fact would be a failure to recognize the grace of God. It would likewise be a failure to recognize it if one should deny the mystical character of The Imitation in which all interior souls may find their nourishment. This mystical character is a sign that the infused contemplation of the mysteries, which is discussed in this book, is in the normal way of sanctity.

THE LOVE OF GOD AND OF SOULS IN PROFICIENTS

What is the normal effect of the interior lights received on the mysteries of the life and death of our Savior, on that of eternal life which is promised us? These lights lead the soul to love God, no longer as in the preceding period, only by fleeing mortal sin and deliberate venial sin, but by imitating the virtues of Christ, His humility, meekness, patience, by observing not only the precepts necessary for all, but the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, obedience, or at least the spirit of these counsels, and by avoiding imperfections.

Then with a greater abundance of interior light, the faithful soul will receive, at least occasionally, keen desires for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. Then that hunger and thirst after the justice of God which Christ speaks of in the beatitudes will grow. The soul will see the truth of His words: "If any man thirst, let him come to Me, and drink.... Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." The soul will then receive, at least for a time, a greater facility for prayer. Not infrequently there is at this stage the infused prayer of quiet in which the will is captivated for a very short time by the attraction of God. Persons dedicated to the apostolate have also

in this period a greater facility to act in the service of God, to teach, direct, and organize works.

In such a life the soul loves God, no longer only “with its whole heart” in the midst of sensible consolations, but “with all its soul,” with all its activities, not yet however “with all its strength,” as will happen in the night of the spirit, nor as yet “with all its mind,” for the soul is not yet established in this superior region. That it may be established there, the passive purification of the higher part of the soul will be needed, a purification that brings about the disappearance of all the spiritual or intellectual pride which still mingles in the facility for prayer and action, which we have just mentioned. The soul has still a long road to travel, like Elias who had to walk forty days and forty nights even to Mt. Horeb; but the soul grows, its virtues develop and become solid virtues, the expression of a love of God and souls, which is not only affective, but effective or efficacious.

We shall now discuss these Christian virtues, their relation especially to the love of God, as do the apostle St. John, St. Paul, and all spiritual writers after them. For this reason we shall insist on the moral virtues that have a closer relation to the theological virtues: those of humility, meekness, and patience; those that correspond to the counsels of poverty, chastity, obedience; also those pointed out by Christ when He speaks of the necessity of uniting the prudence of the serpent to the simplicity of the dove, or to perfect sincerity. We shall thus be led to speak of what the progress of the theological virtues and of the gifts of the Holy Ghost should be in the illuminative way under the direction of the interior Master. Thus we follow an ascending way toward union with God.

Chapter 7

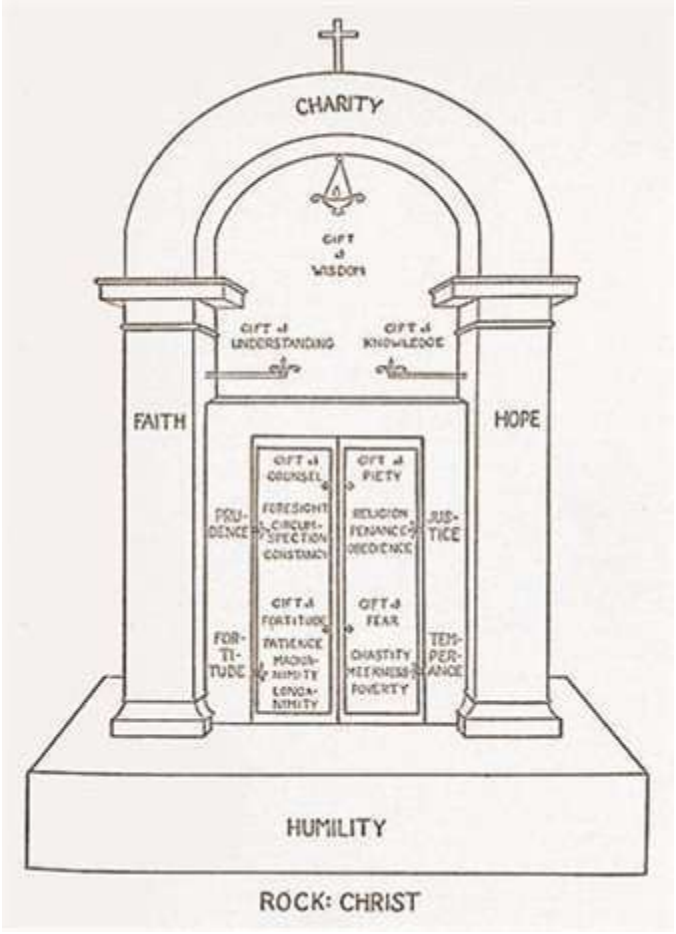
The Spiritual Edifice in Proficients

To describe what the progress of the Christian virtues should be in the illuminative way, we must recall the profound meaning of the traditional symbolism in the figure of the spiritual edifice. In this figure we find many of the teachings of Christ and St. Paul, such as St. Augustine and St. Thomas understood them in their works where they speak of the subordination of the virtues and of their connection with the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost.

Christ is the first to tell us, at the end of the Sermon on the Mount, that we must build our spiritual edifice not on sand, but on a rock, and St. Paul adds that the rock is Christ Himself on whom everything must rest.

To build this temple we must, therefore, dig the foundation until we find the rock. According to St. Augustine, the excavation symbolizes humility, which is, says St. Thomas, a fundamental virtue, inasmuch as it removes pride, the source of every sin. If the soul is empty of self, it will be filled with God; if it does not seek itself, it will seek God in everything. To build this temple we must, therefore, not scratch the soil, but dig very deep; and if we allow the Lord to work, He Himself will dig by making us profit by the humiliations He sends us.

As the illustration shows, from humility, the base of this excavation resting on Christ the foundation rock, rises the first column of the edifice, the pillar of faith, as St. Paul calls it. Faith is called a fundamental virtue, not only like humility in that it removes an obstacle, but in that all the other infused virtues rest positively on it. Opposite the pillar of faith is that of hope, which makes us desire God, eternal life, relying on the divine help for its attainment.



These two pillars support the cupola of charity, the highest of the virtues. The part of the cupola which rises toward heaven symbolizes charity toward God, whereas that which slopes toward the earth is a figure of fraternal charity, which makes us love our neighbor for God because he is a child of God or called to become one. The cupola is surmounted by the cross to remind us that our love ascends toward God only through Christ and the merits of His passion.

St. Augustine, speaking of the beatitudes in his commentary on the Sermon on the Mount, and St. Thomas tell us that to each of the three theological virtues corresponds a gift of the Holy Ghost; these three gifts are symbolized by three lamps. From the pillar of faith is suspended the lamp of the gift of understanding, which renders faith penetrating. By faith we adhere to the word of God; by the special inspiration of the gift of understanding we penetrate it, as for example, when assailed by temptation, we comprehend that God is truly our last end, the one thing necessary, and that we must remain faithful to Him.

From the pillar of hope is suspended the lamp of the gift of knowledge, which, according to St. Augustine and St. Thomas, makes us know things, not by their supreme cause as wisdom does, but by their proximate, defectible, and often deficient cause. For this reason, according to these doctors, the gift of knowledge shows us the emptiness of earthly things and the vanity of human helps in attaining a divine end. In this sense, the gift, which perfects faith, also perfects hope and leads us to aspire more strongly toward eternal life and to rely on the help of God, the formal motive of hope, to attain it.

From the cupola symbolizing charity is suspended another lamp, the gift of wisdom, which illuminates the whole interior of the spiritual edifice and makes us see all things as coming from God, supreme Cause and last End, from His love or at least by His permission for a greater good which we shall some day see and which from time to time becomes visible here on earth. In this spiritual temple, says St. Paul, dwells the Holy Ghost and with Him the Father and the Son. They are there as in a mansion, where They may be and are from time to time quasi-experientally known and loved.

However, to enter this spiritual edifice there must be a door. According to tradition, in particular the teaching of St. Gregory the Great, often quoted by St. Thomas, the four hinges of this twoleafed door symbolize the four cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance. Their name "cardinal" comes from the Latin cardines, meaning hinges. This meaning is preserved in the current expression, "That man is unhinged," when irritation makes a man fail in these four virtues. Without them man is outside the spiritual temple in the uncultivated region ravaged by the evil weeds of egoism and inordinate inclinations. The two upper hinges on the temple door symbolize prudence and justice, which are in the higher part of the soul, and the two lower hinges are figures of fortitude and temperance, which have their seat in the sensible appetites, common alike to man and animal.

To each of these four hinges is fastened a triple piece of ironwork, symbolizing the principal virtues annexed to each of the cardinal virtues. Thus, to prudence is attached foresight (a reflection of divine Providence), circumspection attentive to the circumstances in the midst of which we must act, and steadfastness or constancy, that we may not because of difficulties abandon good decisions and resolutions made after mature

reflection in the presence of God. Inconstancy, says St. Thomas, is a form of imprudence.

To the virtue of justice are also attached several virtues. Those which relate to God as forms of justice toward Him are: religion, which renders to Him the worship due Him; penance, which offers Him reparation for the offenses committed against Him; obedience, which makes man obey the divine commandments or the orders of the spiritual or temporal representatives of God.

The virtue of fortitude makes us keep to the right road in the presence of great dangers instead of yielding to fear; it manifests Itself in the soldier who dies for his country and in the martyr who dies for the faith. To fortitude several virtues are also attached: notably, patience that we may endure daily vexations without weakening; magnanimity which tends to great things to be accomplished without becoming discouraged in the face of difficulties; longanimity which makes us bear over a long period of time incessant contradictions that sometimes are renewed daily for many years.

Lastly, to the virtue of temperance, which moderates the inordinate impulses of our sensible appetites, are attached chastity, virginity, meekness which moderates and represses irritation or anger, and evangelical poverty which makes us use the things of the world as though not using them, without becoming attached to them.

According to St. Augustine and St. Thomas, to each of these cardinal virtues corresponds a gift of the Holy Ghost, symbolized by so many precious stones which ornament the door; portae nitent margaritis, as we read in the hymn for the feast of the dedication of a church.

To prudence corresponds manifestly the gift of counsel, which enlightens us when even infused prudence would remain uncertain, for example, as to how to answer an indiscreet question without telling a lie. To justice, which in regard to God is called the virtue of religion, corresponds the gift of piety, which comes to our help in prolonged aridities by inspiring in us a filial affection for God. To the virtue of fortitude corresponds the gift of fortitude, so manifest in the martyrs. To the virtue of temperance, and especially of chastity, corresponds the gift of filial fear, which enables us to surmount the temptations of the flesh, according to the words of the Psalmist: “Pierce Thou my flesh with Thy fear.”

Thus the picture of the spiritual edifice condenses the teaching of the Gospel, the writings of St. Paul and of the great doctors on the

subordination of the virtues and their connection with the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

This structure may appear somewhat complicated when insistence is placed on the virtues attached to the cardinal virtues; but the superior simplicity of the things of God stands out if the following profound statement is considered carefully: When in a soul or a community the foundation of the edifice and its summit are what they ought to be, in other words, when there is profound humility and true fraternal charity, the great sign of the progress of the love of God, then everything goes well. Why is this? Because God then supplies by His gifts for what may be lacking in acquired prudence or natural energy; and He constantly reminds souls of their duties, giving them His grace to accomplish them. “God... giveth grace to the humble,” and He never fails those who understand the precept of love: “Love one another as I have loved you; by this shall all men know that you are My disciples.”

Chapter 8

Prudence and the Interior Life

> "Be ye therefore wise as serpents and simple as doves."
> Matt. 10: 16

We shall discuss the moral virtues in the service of charity and in their relation to the interior life, showing how they ought to grow in the illuminative way and what their true place is in the spiritual edifice.

Whereas the theological virtues are concerned with the last end and lead us to believe in God, to hope in Him, to love Him above all, the moral virtues have to do with the means to be employed in order to obtain the last end. Among them we distinguish four, called the cardinal virtues, because they are, as we have seen, like the four hinges (cardines) of the door which gives access to the temple of the interior life. The two principal walls of this temple symbolize faith and hope, the dome is the symbol of charity, and the foundation is humility. The four cardinal virtues, to which are attached the other moral virtues, are, as moralists, even those of pagan antiquity, commonly teach: prudence, which directs the others; justice, which renders to each man his due; fortitude or courage, which keeps us from letting ourselves be cast down in an unreasonable manner in the face of danger; temperance, which causes the light of reason to descend into our sensibility especially under the forms of sobriety and of chastity. Other moral virtues, as we have said, such as patience and meekness, are manifestly attached to the cardinal virtues and are called connected virtues.

To understand clearly the teaching of St. Thomas on the most important of these virtues, we should recall that he admits a difference not only of degree, but of nature, in other words, a specific difference between the acquired moral virtues which were described by the pagan philosophers, and the infused moral virtues, which are received in baptism and grow in us with charity. It is of these virtues that the Gospel speaks.

The difference separating these two orders of moral virtues is most profound; it is that which distinguishes the natural, or rational, order from that of grace. Here we have at the same time a different formal object, motive, and end.

The acquired moral virtues, which were well described by Aristotle, establish the rectitude of right reason in the will and sensibility. Under the direction of acquired prudence, justice gradually reigns in the will; rational fortitude and reasonable moderation prevail in the sensible appetites. The infused moral virtues, received in baptism, belong to a much higher order; they have not only a rational but a supernatural formal motive. Under the direction of infused faith, prudence and the Christian moral virtues cause the light of grace, or the divine rule of the children of God, to descend into the will and the sensible appetites.

Between the acquired prudence described by Aristotle and the infused prudence received in baptism, there is a measureless distance, far greater than that of an octave, which in music separates two notes of the same name at the two extremities of a complete scale. Thus a distinction is commonly made between the philosophical temperance of a Socrates and Christian temperance, or the philosophical poverty of a Crates and evangelical poverty, or again the rational measure to be observed in the passions and Christian mortification. For example, by itself acquired temperance directed by reason alone does not take into consideration the mysteries of faith, our elevation to the supernatural life, original sin, the infinite gravity of mortal sin as an offense against God, the value of charity or the divine friendship. Neither does it consider the elevation of our supernatural end: “To be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect,” with a perfection of the same order as His, although unequal to His.

Infused temperance, on the contrary, which is directed by divine faith and Christian prudence, takes positively into account all these revealed mysteries; it is ordained to make us, not only truly reasonable beings, but to give us the supernaturalized sensible appetites of a child of God.

Thus we see that these two virtues which bear the same name of temperance are of very different metal: one is silver, the other gold. In spite of the measureless distance separating them, the infused virtue and the acquired virtue of the same name are exercised together in the Christian in the state of grace, somewhat like the art of the pianist, which is in his

intellect, and the agility of his fingers which gives to his art an extrinsic facility.

Thus the acquired virtue should, in the Christian, be at the service of the infused virtue of the same name, just as the imagination and the memory of a learned man concur in the work of his intellect. Thereby the moral virtues are also at the service of charity, the highest of the infused virtues. We shall discuss the chief among these virtues, and first of all prudence.

Christ spoke of prudence on several different occasions in the Gospel, particularly when He said to the apostles: “I send you as sheep in the midst of wolves: Be ye therefore wise as serpents and simple as doves.” Later on He also says: “Who, thinkest thou, is a faithful and wise servant?... Blessed is that servant.... Amen I say to you, he shall place him over all his goods.”

Prudence, which is requisite for every man that he may conduct himself well, is especially fitting for those who must counsel and direct others. We must have a correct idea of this virtue if we are not to confound it with defects which sometimes resemble it, and if we are to distinguish clearly between acquired prudence, good as it is in its own order, and infused prudence. For this reason we shall first discuss defects to be avoided, then acquired prudence, and finally infused prudence and the gift of counsel, which often comes to the aid of the virtue in difficult cases.

DEFECTS TO BE AVOIDED

The value of the virtue is better seen by considering the disadvantages of the contrary defects, which are often quite manifest. Therefore Scripture, the more strongly to recommend prudence to us, shows us the dangers and the results of lack of consideration.

It contrasts for us the prudent and the foolish virgins. St. Peter and St. Paul praise the prudence of the aged, especially of those who are charged with watching over the first Christian communities, adding: “Be not wise in your own conceits,” and declaring that God “will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the prudence of the prudent,” who rely chiefly on their suavity. And Christ says: “I confess to Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things [the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven] from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones.”

Consequently there are two mutually contradictory defects to be avoided: on the one hand, imprudence, lack of consideration, negligence in

considering what one should, rash haste in judgment; and on the other hand, false prudence, or “the wisdom of the flesh,” often called slyness or even cunning, which pursues only a lower, quite earthly end. It seeks, not the honest good, the object of virtue, but the useful good such as money, and it displays much craft or trickery to procure this good for itself. Cunning is the cleverness of rogues; it will not help them to enter the kingdom of heaven. This false prudence is foolishness and a delusion, as St. Paul often says.

Imprudence, or lack of consideration, greatly retards spiritual progress, and often it retards it by trying to hasten it. This is the case with those who skim the road, who wish to reach divine union immediately without passing humbly through the indispensable lower degrees, as if a bird were to try to fly before having wings, or an architect to construct the spires of a church before laying its foundations. For example, these imprudent souls read mystical books too soon and too rapidly, with avidity and in a superficial way, without applying themselves to the serious practice of virtue. They examine superficially the most beautiful aspects of the spiritual life and will perhaps never nourish their souls with them. It is as if they gathered from a fruit tree the flowers which should give the fruit, unaware that by so doing they hinder the fruit from forming. Later, when they should read the great spiritual writers with profit, they will perhaps say that it is useless to do so since they have already read them and know them; when as a matter of fact they have only a lamentably superficial knowledge of them. Theirs is the imprudence of the foolish virgins, the lack of discretion in the spiritual life.

To avoid the mutually contradictory defects of imprudence and false prudence, it is important to consider what infused or Christian prudence should be and likewise what should characterize acquired prudence, which is at the service of infused prudence, as the imagination and memory are at the service of the intellect. To follow an ascending course, we shall first discuss acquired prudence, then infused prudence, and finally the gift of counsel.

ACQUIRED PRUDENCE AND SELF-CONTROL

Acquired prudence, which has for its object honest good, is a true virtue distinct from false prudence, or the wisdom of the flesh, which St. Paul speaks of. Acquired prudence is defined as recta ratio agibilium, right

reason which directs our acts. It is called auriga virtutum, the driver of the moral virtues; in reality, it directs the acts of justice, fortitude, temperance, and the annexed virtues. It determines the measure to be observed or the rational happy mean, which is also a summit, in the midst of and above every deviation that may be unreasonable through defect or excess. Thus prudence determines the happy mean of fortitude above cowardliness and temerity, which would lead us to expose our life without a reasonable motive. Aristotle spoke of mesotes (the happy mean) and aerates (the summit).

The virtue of acquired prudence, which was well described by Aristotle, proceeds under the light of natural reason and moral knowledge, making this rational light descend into our sensibility, our will, and all our activity. But to determine the reasonable happy mean in the different moral virtues, prudence presupposes these virtues, as the coachman needs well-broken horses. There is a mutual relationship between the directing virtue and the others; they grow together. Let us not forget that no one can have true acquired prudence, distinct from cunning and artifice, if he has not in a proportionate degree justice, fortitude, temperance, loyalty, and true modesty. Why is this? Because, as the ancients used to say: “Such as a man is, such does the end seem to him.” The ambitious man judges as good what flatters his pride, whereas the sincerely modest man loves to do good while remaining hidden. He who is dominated by ambition may have great cunning and subtlety; he cannot have true acquired prudence, nor, with even greater reason, infused prudence. Therefore St. Thomas says: “The truth of the practical intellect depends on conformity with a right appetite.” Moreover, prudence ought not only to judge well, but to command efficaciously the virtuous acts of justice, fortitude, and temperance, and it cannot command them in this way unless the will is upright and efficacious, rectified by these very virtues. Thus there is truly a mutual relationship between prudence and the moral virtues which it directs; true acquired prudence cannot exist without the acquired virtues of justice, fortitude, and temperance. This rectitude of moral conduct is in itself something very beautiful.

Consequently, in a man in the state of mortal sin, who sins seriously against justice, fortitude, temperance, or any other virtue, the virtue of acquired prudence can be only in the state of a slightly stable disposition (facile mobilis), for the will of this man is turned away from his last end.

That the acquired virtue of prudence exist in the state of a stable virtue (difficile mobilis) and be in truth firmly connected with the other moral virtues, we must have charity; we must efficaciously love God, our last end, more than ourselves.

Acquired prudence counsels us about many things which natural reason can know by its own power. It will preserve us from impulsiveness, dominate our temperament, tell us not to follow the fancies of our imagination, the whims of our sensible appetites. It will remind us that we must submit to the judgment of those who are more enlightened and experienced, that we must obey those who have authority to command. It will guide us in our dealings with different people by taking their temperament and character into consideration. But however perfect acquired prudence may be, since it belongs to the natural or rational order, it cannot by itself judge as it should the supernatural conduct to be observed in Christian life. For that judgment, we need infused prudence, which is that recommended by the Gospel.

INFUSED PRUDENCE

Infused prudence was given to us by baptism; it grows with charity, through merit, the sacraments, Communion. By itself it gives us an intrinsic facility to judge well and practically of the matters of Christian life, and its exercise is extrinsically facilitated by acquired prudence which is exercised at the same time. Infused prudence brings to the actions of our daily life the light of grace and of infused faith, as acquired prudence brings to them the light of right reason. In certain very sensible Christians, acquired prudence is especially prominent; in others, who are more supernatural, infused prudence is particularly manifest. Consequently, infused prudence is a great virtue, superior to all the moral virtues which it directs; it should evidently be found especially in those whose duty is to advise and direct others.

We are not concerned here, therefore, with that negative prudence which, to avoid difficulties and vexations, almost always advises against acting, against undertaking great things. This prudence, which has as its principle: “Undertake nothing,” is that of cowardly souls. After saying: “The best is sometimes the enemy of the good,” it ends by declaring: “The best is often the enemy of the good.” Such negative prudence confounds the mediocre with the happy mean of the moral virtue, which is also a summit above

contrary vices. Mediocrity itself is an unstable mean between good and evil; it is that with which tepidity contents itself, seeking always for pardon by speaking of moderation and stating its first principle: “Nothing must be exaggerated.” Then follows forgetfulness of the fact that in the way of God, not to advance is to retrogress; not to ascend is to descend; for the law of the traveler is to advance, and not to fall asleep on the road. True Christian prudence is not a negative but a positive virtue, which leads a man to act as he should when he should, and which never loses sight of the elevation of our supernatural last end, nor of zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. It definitively rejects certain human maxims.

If acquired prudence presupposes the acquired moral virtues, Christian prudence presupposes the infused moral virtues which accompany charity. And if, in the first training, more insistence is placed on these virtues, especially on humility, chastity, and patience, than on prudence itself, it is because the humble, chaste, and patient man is inclined by these very virtues to judge well and practically (per modum inclinationis) of what relates to moral and spiritual life. But when the Christian, who is already more or less trained, must begin to direct himself, he should in many things, especially if he must counsel others, be particularly attentive to what true supernatural prudence demands, and avoid all lack of consideration and rash haste in judgment. Then he will become increasingly aware of the superiority of true Christian prudence, a virtue which ranks immediately below the theological virtues, that it may cause their radiation and vivifying influence to descend on the moral virtues which it directs.

Therefore Christian prudence should grow with charity, and its supernatural views should increasingly prevail over the too human views of what St. Thomas, following the example of St. Augustine, calls the “lower reason.” The lower reason judges everything from the temporal point of view; the higher reason, from the point of view of eternity.

This lofty Christian prudence is exceedingly rare. Father Lallemant, S.]., even says: “The majority of religious, even of the good and virtuous, follow in their own conduct and in their direction of others only reason and common sense, in which some of them excel. This rule is good, but it does not suffice to attain Christian perfection. Such persons are ordinarily guided in their conduct by the common opinion of those with whom they live, and as the latter are imperfect, although their lives may not be dissolute, because the number of the perfect is very small, they never reach the

sublime ways of the spirit. They live like the common run of people, and their manner of directing others is imperfect." At certain times, for instance during persecutions, the inadequacy of such a way of acting becomes evident.

True prudence never loses sight of the elevation of the end toward which we should journey; it judges all our acts in relation to eternal life, and not only in relation to the customs or conventions of our environment. It repeatedly calls to mind "the one thing necessary." Aided by the special inspirations of the gift of counsel, it becomes holy discretion which weighs all things according to God's measure.

HOLY DISCRETION AND THE GIFT OF COUNSEL

St. Catherine of Siena offers an admirable treatise on discretion or spiritual discernment in her Dialogue. She tells us that Christian discretion, which indicates the measure between the contrary defects and is the source of a wise discernment, is based on the knowledge of God and of self. She states: "Discretion is the only child of self-knowledge and, wedding with charity, has indeed many other descendants, as a tree with many branches; but that which gives life to the tree, to its branches, and its fruit, is the ground of humility, in which it is planted, which humility is the foster-mother and nurse of charity, by whose means this tree remains in the perpetual calm of discretion." This is a symbolical manner of expressing the connection of these virtues.

Holy discretion presupposes, therefore, a great spirit of faith. It lessens nothing; whereas practical naturalism sees only a limited aspect of great things, holy discretion sees the great aspect even of the little things in Christian life, of our daily duties in their relation to God. It directs justice, which renders to God and to one's neighbor what is due them. As we read in The Dialogue (it is the Lord who speaks):

> Discretion... renders to each one his due. Chiefly to Me in rendering praise and glory to My name, and in referring to Me the graces and the gifts which she sees and knows she has received from Me; and rendering to herself that which she sees herself to have merited, knowing that she does not even exist of herself.... And she seems to herself to be ungrateful for so many benefits, and negligent, in that she has not made the most of her time, and the graces she has received, and so seems to herself worthy of suffering; wherefore she becomes odious and displeasing to herself through her guilt. And this founds the virtue of discretion on knowledge of self, that is, on true humility, for, were this humility not in the soul, the soul would be indiscreet; indiscretion being founded on pride, as discretion is on humility.

> An indiscreet soul robs Me of the honor due to Me, and attributes it to herself through vainglory, and that which is really her own she imputes to Me, grieving and murmuring concerning My mysteries, with which I work in her soul and those of My other creatures; wherefore everything in Me and in her neighbor is cause of scandal to her. Contrariwise those who possess the virtue of discretion. For when they have rendered what is due to Me and to themselves, they proceed to render to their neighbor their principal debt of love and of humble and continuous prayer, which all should pay to each other and further, the debt of doctrine, and example of a holy and honorable life, counseling and helping others according to their needs for salvation.
>
> Holy discretion is thus the light which rules the virtues; it measures the acts of exterior penance and those of devotion to our neighbor, at the same time reminding us that our love of God should be without measure and should always grow here on earth.

Far from being a negative virtue, holy discretion is, in the service of charity, the virtue which holds the reins of the moral life, directing justice, fortitude, and temperance, that we may persevere in good, that we may make God known and loved. Christian prudence thus preserves with charity the connection of all the virtues.

When this great Christian prudence is enlightened by the special inspirations of the gift of counsel, which corresponds to it, it is, as our Lord insists it should be, in accordance with “the simplicity of the dove,” with perfect uprightness—not at all naivete—which keeps silence about what must not be said, but never speaks against the truth. A man must be master of his tongue and know how to cultivate his character.

The gift of counsel comes to the assistance of prudence especially in difficult and unforeseen circumstances, sometimes to unite in one and the same word or gesture seemingly contradictory virtues, as firmness and meekness, or again veracity and fidelity in keeping a secret.

According to St. Augustine and St. Thomas, the gift of counsel corresponds to the beatitude of the merciful for two reasons: first of all, mercy is necessary for us to know how to give fitting salutary counsel to those who need it, counsel which truly carries, which does not rebuff souls but lifts them up again with strength and sweetness. In the second place, when prudence hesitates in difficult circumstances between the rigor of justice to be observed and mercy, which should not be forgotten, the gift of counsel generally inclines us toward mercy which will encourage the sinner and perhaps make him re-enter the order of justice. He will at times enter it with a sincere and profound contrition, thus repairing the order that he violated, far better than by bearing the punishment with less love. Consequently the loftiness of infused prudence is manifest; but we shall see

it even more clearly in our discussion of Christian simplicity, which should always be united to prudence.

Even now we grasp the importance of Christ's words: "Who, thinkest thou, is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath appointed over his family, to give them meat in season? Blessed is that servant, whom when his lord shall come he shall find so doing. Amen I say to you, he shall place him over all his goods." These words are applied to every faithful and prudent Christian, especially to those who must advise others, to heads of families, to pastors, to bishops, to great popes. They will receive a high reward, to which allusion is made in Ecclesiasticus, where we read the praise of the wisdom and prudence of the patriarchs, and in the prophecy of Daniel where it is said: "But they that are learned [in the wisdom of God and faithful to His law] shall shine as the brightness of the firmament: and they that instruct many to justice, as stars for all eternity." Let us remember that false prudence is tin, true acquired prudence is silver, infused prudence is gold, and the inspirations of the gift of counsel are diamonds, of the same order as the divine light. "He that followeth Me walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

Chapter 9

The Different Forms of Justice and the Education of the Will

> "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice."
> Matt. 5:6

Among the four cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance, there is one, namely justice, which pious people do not consider sufficiently. They are attentive to the different forms of temperance, to prudence to be observed in the general conduct of life; they try to practice charity toward their neighbor, but they sometimes neglect certain duties of justice and consideration for the rights of others. Those, for example, who persecuted St. John of the Cross called themselves men of prayer and austerity, yet they were most unjust toward the reformer of Carmel.

If man practiced the different forms of justice more perfectly, he would make great progress in training his will. Justice, in fact, is in that faculty to make it leave egoism or self-love, as prudence is in the intellect to oppose lack of consideration, and as fortitude and temperance are in the sensible appetites to strengthen them against fear and inordinate concupiscences. For this reason these four virtues are called cardinal virtues. They are like hinges on which the doors turn that give access to the moral life. Some souls, while given to anger, are so cowardly that they seem to have lost all will; indeed this faculty seems to have disappeared, leaving only self-love or egoism. The reason is that the will is considerably weakened when it is deprived of the acquired and infused virtues which should be in it. On the other hand, a will enriched by these virtues is increased more than tenfold.

We should remember that the four forms of justice, which we are going to discuss, should be in the will and, above them, the virtues of religion, hope, and charity. Thus the training or Christian education of the will and

character should be made. Character should be the authentic imprint of reason illumined by faith and of moral energy, a mark stamped on the physical temperament, whether nervous, irascible, lymphatic, or sanguine, hyperthyroid or hypothyroid, in order that this temperament may cease to dominate, and that the Christian may truly appear as a rational being and still more as a child of God.

Consequently, for this Christian education of the will, we shall discuss the different forms of justice, to which correspond several precepts of the Decalogue. After our duties toward God, they determine those we should practice toward our parents and toward all persons with whom we have relations: “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s goods. Thou shalt not bear false witness,” and so on. We may transgress these precepts in many different ways when we forget in practice that we should not do to others what we do not wish them to do to us.

People often think of justice only in the inferior form known as commutative justice, which governs exchanges and forbids theft, fraud, calumny, and so forth. They do not sufficiently consider distributive justice, which presides over the distribution by authority of the advantages and duties of social life among the different members of society. In view of the common good, it distributes to each as it should goods, work, duties, obligations, rewards, and penalties; this distribution should be made in proportion to merit, real needs, and the importance of the different members of society. Even more do people forget a higher form of justice, which aims immediately at the common good of society and brings about the establishment and observance of just laws and ordinances; this form of justice is called legal justice. Above it there is equity, which considers not only the letter but the spirit of laws, and that not only of civil laws, but of all those that govern Christian conduct.

The interior life should watch over the exercise of these virtues. Here also the acquired virtue of justice is at the service of the infused virtue of the same name, somewhat as the imagination is at the service of reason.

COMMUTATIVE AND DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE IN RELATION TO THE INTERIOR LIFE

The duties of justice appear in a living and concrete fashion when we think of faults against it which should be avoided, for the sorrow that injustice causes us reveals to us the value of justice. The faults and acts

contrary to commutative justice are not only homicide, theft, fraud, usury, false accusations and false witness in a lawsuit; they are also insults given in anger, affronts, unjust blame or reproaches against inferiors, equals, and superiors. Also included are defamation, slander, or speaking ill of another without a proportionate motive; also secret insinuation by whispering, mockery which lessens the esteem due to our neighbor, forgetfulness of the truth that our neighbor has a right to his reputation and that he needs it to do good, to such an extent, says St. Thomas, that the perfect should, not for their own sakes, but for the good to be done to others, resist their detractors.

When commutative justice has been violated in one or another of these ways, restitution or reparation becomes a duty. Thus we must repair the wrong that we have done our neighbor by slander or insinuations or mockery which show we do not regard him as he deserves. Besides it is cowardly to ridicule someone who cannot defend himself, or the absent who cannot reply.

The defect opposed to distributive justice is undue respect of persons. We may indeed prefer one person to another and gratuitously give more to one than to another. But the sin of undue respect of persons consists in unjustly preferring one person to another, taking from the latter something that is due him. This sin is more grave in the spiritual order than in the temporal order: for example, if we are more attentive to the exterior condition of persons, to their wealth, than to their merits, and if we refuse them the respect which is due them or the spiritual helps which they need.

Interior souls should be particularly watchful on this point and on guard not to slight the friends of God, the saints whom the Lord has chosen for Himself from the humblest stations in life. Injustice is at times the portion of very patient servants of God because everyone knows that they will not complain and will put up with everything. This was often the lot of St. Benedict Joseph Labre because people failed to see the heart of a great saint under the rags of a beggar. On the contrary, clear-sighted souls should sense or divine sanctity in their neighbor, even though it be under the most humble exterior. Moreover, it is a great reward and a great joy to discover sanctity. It must have been a great consolation to verify the sanctity of Benedict Joseph Labre by seeing how he bore insults and blows, when, for example, he kissed the stone which had been thrown at him and had drawn his blood.

Above commutative justice and distributive justice is legal or social justice, which should have a lofty form in the Christian and in interior souls. This virtue is concerned, not directly with the rights of individuals, but with the common good of society, and not only of civil society but of that spiritual society, the Church, and the different groups in it. Legal justice leads a man to observe perfectly the laws or constitutions of the society to which he belongs. This virtue inclines the Christian to learn about the laws to be observed and the instructions of the Supreme Pastor, about his encyclicals on present-day questions. The reading and study of these encyclicals are often neglected to the detriment of all. Social justice should give us an understanding of the common good; it combats individualism, which is one form of egoism.

Social justice disposes us to devote ourselves in generous self-forgetfulness to the general good, and, if necessary, to sacrifice our time, comfort, or personal satisfaction to it. Were we to act otherwise, we would live on the common good like parasites, instead of contributing to promote and maintain it. We receive much from society and to it we are indebted. If we fail in our obligation, we are like mistletoe, which lives on the oak tree at the tree’s expense, sometimes causing its death. Society in general, indeed every social group, has its parasites. To react against this vice (into which a man might fall by trying to live like a hermit and being indifferent to the common good), we must perform the duties of legal justice and devote ourselves to the general good, mindful of its superiority. From this point of view, love of our rule, of the holy laws established in the Church, is a great virtue which protects the soul against many disorders.

Lastly, above legal or social justice there is equity. This form of justice is attentive not only to the letter of the law, but especially to its spirit, to the intention of the legislator. As it considers chiefly the spirit of laws, it does not interpret them with excessive rigor, in a mechanical and material manner, but with a superior understanding, especially in certain special circumstances in which, according to the intention of the legislator, it would not be advisable to apply the letter of the law, for then the adage would be verified: “Summum jus est summa injuria.” The strict law in all its rigor would then be an injustice and an injury, because the particularly difficult and distressing exceptional circumstances in which the person involved might be placed would not be taken into account.

Equity, which preserves us from Pharisaism and from the juridical formalism of many jurists, is thus the highest form of justice; it is more conformable to wisdom and to great common sense than to the written law. It has in view, over and above the text of the laws, the real exigencies of the general good and inclines one to treat men with the respect due to human dignity. This is a capital point; its importance is grasped only as one grows older. Equity is a great virtue, whence the expression: It is just and equitable to do this, for example, to practice benevolence toward a dying enemy, toward wounded prisoners of war who need help. Equity has thus some resemblance to charity, which is superior to it.

If we were attentive to these four kinds of justice that should be practiced, we would obviate many conflicts between persons, between classes, between the different groups that ought to labor at one work under the direction of God. These virtues, which are subordinated to charity, would also considerably increase the strength of our will; by withdrawing it from egoism and rectifying it, they would increase its energies more than tenfold. This point should be considered in connection with the Christian education of character, which should succeed in dominating our physical temperament and which should stamp it in the image of reason illumined by faith. As a matter of fact, the acquired virtues cause the rectitude of right reason to descend into the very depths of the will, and the infused virtues bring to it the rectitude of faith and the very life of grace, a participation in the inner life of God.

JUSTICE AND CHARITY

With a better knowledge of the loftiness of justice under its different forms, we see more clearly the relations to charity which should vivify it from above.

These two virtues have in common the fact that they regulate good relations with others. But they differ from each other: justice prescribes that we give to each man his due and allow him to use it according to his right. Charity is the virtue by which we love God above all else, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God. Therefore it goes far beyond respect for the right of others, in order to make us treat other human beings like brothers in Christ, whom we love like other selves in the love of God.

In brief, as St. Thomas well shows, justice considers our neighbor another person, in that he is a distinct person; charity considers him as another self. Justice respects the rights of another, charity gives over and above these rights for the love of God and of the child of God. To pardon means to give over and beyond.

We can thus see why, as St. Thomas says, “Peace (which is the tranquillity of order in the union of wills) is the work of justice indirectly, in so far as justice removes the obstacles to peace (such as wrongs, injuries); but it is the work of charity directly, since charity, according to its very nature, causes peace. For love is a unitive force...; and peace is the union of the appetites’ inclinations.”

THE VIRTUES CONNECTED WITH JUSTICE IN CHRISTIAN LIFE

Justice, thus vivified by charity, is accompanied by several other virtues that resemble it. Among them, there is one superior to justice, the virtue of religion, which renders to God the worship due Him, interior and exterior worship, devotion (or promptness of the will in the service of God), prayer, sacrifice of adoration, of reparation, of supplication, of thanksgiving. This virtue is opposed to irreligion, or impiety, and also to superstition. It reminds us at the same time of the worship of dulia due to the saints and that of hyperdulia due to the Mother of God. Thus religion is inferior to the theological virtues. To religion penance should be united to make reparation for offenses against God.

To justice are also attached filial piety toward parents and one’s country, the respect due to merit, to age, to the dignity of persons, obedience to superiors, gratitude for favors received, vigilance in punishing justly when necessary at the same time using clemency, lastly veracity in speech and in one’s manner of living and acting. Veracity, which is a virtue, differs from frankness, a simple inclination of temperament, which sometimes borders on insolence and which forgets that not every truth is to be told.

Justice reminds us that besides strict justice there are the rights and duties of friendship (jus amicabile), in regard to those who are more closely united to us. In respect to people in general, there are also the duties of amiability, which is opposed to adulation and to litigation or useless dispute. Lastly, there are the duties of liberality, which avoids both avarice and prodigality.

All these different forms of justice are of great importance in the conduct of life. At times pious people do not think sufficiently about them; they put on the airs of a hermit more egoistically than virtuously. Under the pretext of charity and the prompting of bitter zeal, they may even fail in charity and justice through rash judgment, slander, insinuation against their neighbor.

If, on the contrary, a man practiced generously the virtues we have just spoken of, his will would be greatly rectified and fortified, better disposed to live by the still higher virtues of hope and charity, which should unite him to God and preserve this union with God in the midst of the varied circumstances of life, even of the most painful and unforeseen. To show oneself a Christian, even in the smallest acts of life, is the true happiness of him who follows Christ.

St. Thomas described the eminent degree of the infused cardinal virtues when he wrote: “Prudence by contemplating the things of God, counts as nothing all things of the world, and directs all the thoughts of the soul toward God alone. Temperance, as far as nature allows, neglects the needs of the body; fortitude prevents the soul from being afraid of neglecting the body and rising to heavenly things; and justice consists in the soul giving a whole-hearted consent to follow the way thus proposed.” These are the perfecting virtues; higher still, according to St. Thomas, are the virtues of the fully purified soul, “the perfect virtues.... Such are the virtues attributed to the blessed, or, in this life, to some who are at the summit of perfection.”

Thereby we see the grandeur of the virtue of justice, which is the second cardinal virtue. It is superior to fortitude, to temperance, and even to virginity. Justice is often no more than an empty word for some souls; then injustice which must at times be borne reminds them of the real value of justice. This great reality appears especially in the evangelical beatitude: “Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice: for they shall have their fill.” The justice mentioned here is the highest degree of justice, containing eminently all that we have just said.

Chapter 10

Patience and Meekness

> "In your patience you shall possess your souls."
> Luke 21:19

In the difficult periods through which we have to pass, we should remember what our Lord has told us about the virtue of fortitude, which is necessary that we may not be frightened by any menace, or arrested in the way of salvation by any obstacle. We shall treat here especially of the virtue of patience, which is the most frequent form under which fortitude of soul is exercised in the vexations of life. In the Christian it should be united to meekness, and in such a way that those who are naturally meek may learn to become strong, and those who are naturally inclined to the virtue of fortitude may become meek with the meaning given to the term by the evangelical beatitude: "Blessed are the meek." Thus both will ascend toward the same summit, although by different paths. To make this teaching clear, we shall discuss first of all the virtue of patience, then that of meekness, both of which are in the service of charity.

PATIENCE AND LONGANIMITY, TWIN COLUMNS OF THE INTERIOR LIFE

> "Charity is patient."
> I Cor. 13:4

Patience, says St. Thomas, is a virtue attached to the virtue of fortitude, which hinders a man from departing from right reason illumined by faith by yielding to difficulties and to sadness. It makes him bear the evils of life with equanimity of soul, says St. Augustine, without allowing himself to be troubled by vexations. The impatient man, no matter how violent he may be, is a weak man; when he raises his voice and murmurs, he really succumbs from the moral point of view. The patient man, on the contrary,

puts up with an inevitable evil in order to remain on the right road, to continue his ascent toward God. Those who bear adversity that they may attain what their pride desires, have not the virtue of patience but only its counterfeit, hardness of heart.

By patience the soul truly possesses itself above the fluctuations of the sensible part depressed by sadness. The martyrs are in the highest degree masters of themselves and free. In patience is met again something of the principal act of the virtue of fortitude: the enduring of painful things without weakening. It is more difficult and meritorious, says St. Thomas, to endure for a long time what keenly vexes nature than to attack an adversary in a moment of enthusiasm. It is more difficult for a soldier to hold out for a long time under a shower of bullets in a cold damp trench than with all the ardor of his temperament to take part in an attack. If the virtue of fortitude bears the blows that may cause death, as we see in the soldier who dies for his country and still more in the martyr who dies for the faith, the virtue of patience endures unflinchingly the contradictions of life. Thus we see that this virtue of patience is the guardian of other virtues; it protects them against the disorders that impatience would cause; it is like a buttress of the spiritual edifice.

Some years ago Americanism spoke rather disdainfully of the so-called passive virtues of patience, humility, and obedience. A good writer replied that they are the twin columns of the moral and spiritual life.

To have patience as a solid virtue, man must be in the state of grace and have charity, which prefers God to everything else, no matter what the cost. For this reason St. Paul says: “Charity is patient.”

If the contradictions of life last for a long time without interruption, as happens in the case of a person forced to live with someone who continually tantalizes him, then there is need of longanimity, a special virtue resembling patience. It is called longanimity because of the length of the trial, the duration of the suffering, the insults, all that must be borne for months and years.

As St. Francis de Sales points out, patience makes us preserve equanimity of mind in the midst of the variableness of the divers mishaps of this mortal life. “Let us frequently call to mind,” he says, “that as our Lord has saved us by patient sufferings, so we also ought to work out our salvation by sufferings and afflictions, enduring injuries and contradictions, with all possible meekness.... Some are unwilling to suffer any tribulations

but those that are honorable: for example, to be wounded in battle.... Now these people do not love the tribulation, but the honor wherewith it is accompanied; whereas he that is truly patient suffers indifferently tribulation, whether accompanied by ignominy or honor. To be despised, reprehended, or accused by wicked men, is pleasant to a man of good heart; but to suffer blame and ill treatment from the virtuous, or from our friends and relations, is the test of true patience.... The evils we suffer from good men are much more insupportable than those we suffer from others."

To practice this virtue in a manner that is not stoic but Christian, we should often recall the patience of Christ on the cross, which surpasses human thought. For love of us He endured the most severe physical and moral sufferings, which came to Him from the fury of the priests of the Synagogue, from abandonment by His people, from the ingratitude of His own, from the divine malediction due to sin, which He willed to bear in our place as a voluntary victim. May the patience of our Savior preserve our souls according to the words of St. Paul: "And the Lord direct your hearts, in the charity of God and the patience of Christ." As a German proverb says, patience yields roses and ends by obtaining all: "Geduld bringt rosen."

When we have to practice this virtue in prolonged trials, we should remember the teaching of the saints, that sufferings well borne are like materials which compose the edifice of our salvation. Sufferings are the portion of the children of God in this life and a sign of predestination: "Through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God," we are told in the Acts of the Apostles. It is essential to know how to suffer calmly without excessive self-pity. Those who share most in the sufferings of Christ will be most glorified with Him. Sometimes an act of great patience before death is sufficient; this is the case of many dying persons who are reconciled to God a few days or hours before their last breath.

SUPERNATURAL MEEKNESS AND ITS FRUITS

"Charity is kind."
I Cor 13:14

Meekness, or gentleness, should accompany patience from which it differs in that it has as its special effect, not the endurance of the vexations of life but the curbing of the inordinate movements of anger, The virtue of meekness differs from meekness of temperament inasmuch as, in widely

diverse circumstances, it imposes the rectitude of reason illumined by faith on the sensibility more or less disturbed by anger. This virtue is superior to meekness of temperament, as the virtue of chastity is to the laudable natural inclination called modesty; similarly, the virtue of mercy is superior to sensible pity. Meekness of temperament is exercised with facility toward those who please us and is rather frequently accompanied by ill-temper toward others. The virtue of meekness does away with this bitterness toward all persons and in the most varied circumstances. Moreover, into a just severity that is necessary at times, the virtue injects a note of calmness, as clemency mitigates merited punishment. Meekness, like temperance to which it is united, is the friend of the moderation or the measure which causes the light of reason and that of grace to descend into the more or less troubled sensible appetites. This is so in true martyrs.

Meekness thus conceived should reign not only in our words and conduct, but also in our hearts; otherwise it is only an artifice. As St. Francis de Sales points out, when it is inspired by a supernatural motive and practiced even toward those who are acrimonious, meekness is the flower of charity. “Charity is kind,” says St. Paul. The flower is the most beautiful visible part of a plant, that which most draws our gaze, and in spite of its fragility, it has a very important role: it protects the fruit which is forming in it.

Similarly meekness is that which is most visible and most agreeable in the practice of charity; it is what constitutes its charm. It appears in the gaze, the smile, the bearing, the speech; it doubles the value of a service rendered. And besides, it protects the fruits of charity and zeal; it makes counsels and even reproaches acceptable. In vain will we have zeal for our neighbor, if we are not meek; we appear not to love him and we lose the benefit of our good intentions, for we seem to speak through passion rather than reason and wisdom, and consequently we accomplish nothing.

Meekness is particularly meritorious when practiced toward those who make us suffer; then it can only be supernatural, without any admixture of vain sensibility. It comes from God and sometimes has a profound effect on our neighbor who is irritated against us for no good reason. Let us remember that the prayer of St. Stephen called down grace on the soul of Paul, who was holding the garments of those who stoned the first martyr. Meekness disarms the violent.

St. Francis de Sales, who loves analogies taken from nature, remarks: “Nothing so soon appeases the enraged elephant as the sight of a little lamb, and nothing so easily breaks the force of a cannon shot as wool.” Thus at times Christian meekness, which inclines a man to present his right cheek when someone strikes him on the left, disarms the person who is irritated. He indeed is the bruised reed; if he is answered in the same tone, he will be completely broken; if he is answered with meekness, he will gradually revive.

St. Francis de Sales also declares: “It is better to make penitents through meekness than hypocrites through severity.” In his letters he reverts again and again to advice such as this: “Take care to practice well the humble meekness that you owe to everybody, for it is the virtue of virtues which our Lord greatly recommended to us; and if you should happen to violate it, do not be troubled, but with all confidence, get back on your feet in order to walk anew in peace and meekness as before.” Everyone knows that the Bishop of Geneva never tired of saying that more flies are caught with honey than with vinegar. Zeal is necessary, but it should be patient and meek.

We ought, consequently, to avoid bitter zeal, which sermonizes indiscriminately and which has brought about the failure of many reforms in religious orders. Opposing this bitter zeal, which is not inspired by charity but by pride, St. John of the Cross used to say: “There where there is not sufficient love, put love in and you will reap love.” We should also note that meekness, which is spoken of in the beatitude of the meek, corresponds, as St. Augustine and St. Thomas state, to the gift of piety. This gift inspires in us, as a matter of fact, an entirely filial affection toward God; it makes us consider Him more and more as a very loving Father, and consequently it makes us see in men, not strangers, nondescript people or rivals, but brothers, that is, children of our common Father. The gift of piety makes us say more profoundly both for ourselves and for others: “Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come....” We desire that the kingdom of God may take more profound possession of us and of our brethren, and this desire brings to our souls a great supernatural meekness which radiates on our neighbor. Indeed meekness, united to this gift of the Holy Ghost, is like the flower of charity.

To practice this virtue well, we should consider it in our Lord. His meekness is manifestly supernatural, springing from zeal for the salvation

of souls; instead of diminishing zeal, meekness protects its fruits.

Isaias had announced the Savior, saying: “Neither shall His voice be heard abroad. The bruised reed He shall not break, and smoking flax He shall not quench.” In response to Peter’s query as to how often he should pardon his brother, Christ said: “I say not to thee, till seven times; but till seventy times seven times.” He willed to be called “the Lamb of God... who taketh away the sin of the world.” At His baptism the Holy Ghost descended upon Him in the form of a dove, another symbol of meekness. Finally, on the cross He pardoned His executioners while praying for them; it is the smile of meekness in the supreme act of fortitude: the smile of the Crucified is the highest expression of goodness on earth.

Often martyrs, like St. Stephen while he was being stoned, followed the example of Jesus and prayed for their executioners. This very great supernatural meekness is one of the signs by which true martyrs are distinguished from the false. False martyrs die for their own ideas or opinions and through pride rebel against suffering; they may be aided in this by the spirit of evil. The connection or harmony of outwardly contradictory virtues is not manifest in them; their fortitude, which is stubbornness, is not accompanied by meekness. True martyrs, on the contrary, practice meekness even toward their executioners and often pray for them, following the example of Jesus. To forget one’s own sufferings in order thus to think of the salvation of one’s persecutors, of the good of their souls, is a sign of the highest charity and of all the virtues that are harmonized in it.

Let us often, in practice, ask our Lord for the virtue of meekness united to humility of heart. Let us ask Him for it at the moment of Communion, in that intimate contact of our soul with His, of our intellect and heart with His intellect illumined by the light of glory and His heart overflowing with charity. Let us ask Him for it by spiritual communion that is frequently renewed and, whenever the occasion presents itself, let us practice these virtues effectively and generously.

Then we shall see the realization of the words of the Master:

“Take up My yoke upon you and learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart; and you shall find rest to your souls.” We shall find rest for our souls; to know to what extent, we must experience it at a time of trouble and vexation. We should then make a more profound act of humility and meekness, pardoning fully those who have offended or wounded us, and we shall see how true are Christ’s words. Our soul will thus take its right place

in relation to God and our neighbor; with the help of grace it will be more profoundly restored to order, and it will recover the tranquillity of order, if not joy, at least the interior peace of an upright conscience united to God. We shall thus find peace in love, not the peace which the world can give, but that which comes from God. The peace which the world gives is wholly exterior; it is peace with the spirit of the world, with the enemies of God, with our evil inclinations; consequently it is interior disagreement with good people and with ourselves; it is the death of the soul. If there is any apparent tranquillity in us, it is that of death which hides decomposition and corruption.

The peace which the Lord gives is above all interior, and we cannot have it without incessant war against our inordinate passions, our pride and concupiscences, against the spirit of the world and the devil. For this reason our Lord, who brings us interior peace, says also: “I came not to send peace, but the sword.” How, in fact, can we be humble and meek toward all without doing violence to ourselves? Then we have war on the frontiers of our soul, but peace reigns within. In spite of the demands of God’s love, we experience that His yoke is sweet and His burden light. The weight of His burden diminishes with the progress of patience, humility, and meekness, which are, as it were, forms of the love of God and of neighbor in the sense in which St. Paul says: “Charity is patient, is kind; charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely; is not puffed up;... is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil;... rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never falleth away.”

It is truly eternal life begun like a prelude of unending beatitude.

Chapter 11

The Value of Chastity and Its Spiritual Fruitfulness

We have discussed prudence, justice, fortitude, and patience, which are all united to meekness. We must now consider what temperance should be in us, especially under the form in which we most need to practice it, namely, that of chastity, which corresponds to that of the beatitude: “Blessed are the clean of heart.” We shall first consider this virtue in the most general manner, as it should be practiced in every condition or type of life, including Christian marriage. To proceed with order, we shall speak of the value of this virtue, of the motive which ought to inspire it. We shall then see its spiritual fruitfulness, especially when it is practiced under its highest form, virginity.

THE MOTIVE THAT SHOULD INSPIRE CHASTITY

Chastity, says St. Thomas, is not simply that laudable natural disposition called modesty, a happy inclination, fearful by nature, which, through its very fear of evil, protects the soul against the disorders of concupiscence. Modesty, no matter how laudable, is not a virtue; it is only a natural good disposition. Chastity is a virtue and, as the name virtue indicates, it is a power. The acquired virtue of chastity, as it appeared in the Vestals, causes the light of right reason to descend into the occasionally disturbed and troubled sensibility. Infused chastity, received at baptism, causes the light of grace to descend into the sensible part of the soul; it makes use of acquired chastity somewhat as the intellect makes use of the imagination. They are exercised together; acquired chastity is thus at the service of infused chastity. Virginity is a still higher virtue, for it offers to God for a whole lifetime the integrity of body and heart which it consecrates to Him. It resembles simple chastity, says St. Thomas, as munificence resembles

liberality, since it offers a splendid gift, absolute integrity. According to St. Cyprian and St. Ambrose, it gives the Church a particular splendor and contributes in giving it the luster of the mark of sanctity, to distinguish it from the sects which have renounced the evangelical counsels.

The value of chastity, whether that of virgins, widows, or married people, appears first of all by contrast with the disorders which spring from the concupiscence of the flesh, disorders which often bring in their wake divorce, family dishonor, the unhappiness of married couples and their children. We need only recall the divorce of Henry VIII of England, which drew practically the entire country into schism and then into heresy. To preserve us from similar errors, Christ says to all: “If thy right eye scandalize thee, pluck it out.... And if thy right hand scandalize thee, cut it off.... For it is expedient for thee that one of thy members should perish, rather than that thy whole body go into hell.”

Chastity is lost through the exterior senses, the thoughts, the desires of the heart. It does not admit of any kind of forbidden pleasure. It retrenches even pleasures that are useless though permitted, and it leads man to live detached from them.

The motive that should inspire chastity is the love of God. Chastity of heart and body is in reality the renunciation of every illicit affection out of love of God. It prevents the life of the heart from descending, so that it may rise toward God like a living flame ever more pure and ardent. Chastity of the body is like bark around chastity of the heart, which is the more precious.

To preserve this virtue we must keep always spiritually close to Jesus crucified, as St. Francis de Sales says. We cannot do this without a twofold mortification: that of the body and senses, especially as soon as danger arises, and that of the heart, by forbidding ourselves every inordinate affection. Such an affection would become not only useless, but harmful, and would start us down a perilous slope. It is only too easy for us to descend, and to slip much more rapidly than we foresee, and it is very difficult to reascend. People sometimes forge chains for themselves which later they lack the courage to break. They end by saying as worldings do: “Human love, if sincere, has undeniable rights.” To this we must answer: “There can be no rights contrary to the love due to God, the sovereign Good and Source of all truly generous love.”

On inordinate affections, The Imitation declares: “Whenever a man desireth anything inordinately, straightway he is disquieted within himself.... It is by resisting the passions therefore, and not by serving them, that true peace of heart is to be found. Peace, therefore, is... in the fervent and spiritual man.” In the same work we read that excessive familiarity with people causes the soul to lose intimacy with our Lord. The author declares: “How foolish and vain, if thou desire anything out of Jesus! Is not this a greater loss to thee than if thou shouldst lose the whole world?... Whoever findeth Jesus, findeth a good treasure, a good above every good.... For His sake and in Him, let enemies as well as friends be dear to thee; and for all these thou must pray to Him that all may know and love Him.” The same sentiments are also expressed in the hymn, J esu, dulcis memoria :

Jesu, spes poenitentibus
Quam pius es petentibus!
Quam bonus te quaerentibus!
Sed quid invenientibus!

To reach this close union with Christ, we must be humble and pure of heart; we must, as St. Francis de Sales says, always practice humility and chastity and, if possible, never or very rarely mention them.

THE SPIRITUAL FRUITFULNESS OF CHASTITY

Chastity practiced in its perfection makes man live in mortal flesh a spiritual life which is like the prelude of eternal life. Since it frees man from matter, it makes him in a manner like the angels. It even has for its effect to make his body increasingly like the soul, and the soul more and more like to God.

When the body lives only for the soul, it tends in fact to resemble it. The soul is a spiritual substance that can be seen immediately only by the spiritual gaze of God and the angels. It is simple because it has no extended parts; it is beautiful, especially when it keeps a continually upright intention, beautiful with the beauty of beautiful doctrines, of beautiful actions; it is calm, in the sense that it is above every corporeal movement; it is incorruptible or immortal because it is simple and immaterial, because it does not depend intrinsically on a perishable body.

By purity the body becomes spiritual, so to speak; from time to time it lets the soul shine through the gaze especially, like the look of a saint in

prayer. By this virtue the body becomes simple: in proportion as the attitude of a worldly woman is complex, in the same proportion that of a virgin is simple. As someone has said: “There are two very simple beings: the child, who does not yet know evil; and the saint, who has forgotten it by dint of conquering it.” By purity the body grows beautiful, for all that is pure is beautiful: for example, an unclouded sky, a diamond through which light passes without any hindrance. Thus the bodies of the saints represented in the frescoes of Fra Angelico have a supernatural beauty which is that of a soul given entirely to God. By purity the body becomes calm and, in a certain way, even incorruptible; whereas vice withers, ravages, and kills the body prematurely, virginity preserves it.

Neither the body of our Lord nor that of the Blessed Virgin underwent the corruption of the tomb. Not infrequently the bodies of the saints remain intact, and long after their death sometimes exhale an exquisite odor, a sign of their perfect chastity. Their body, which lived only for the soul, still keeps its imprint. The Eucharist leaves, as it were, seeds of immortality in the body, which is destined to rise again and to receive a reflection of the glory of the soul. Christ tells us: “He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, hath everlasting life; and I will raise him up in the last day.”

Since perfect chastity renders the body like to the soul, it is even truer to say that it renders the soul like to God. The three attributes of God appropriated respectively to each of the divine Persons are power, wisdom, love. By perfect purity the soul becomes increasingly strong, luminous, and loving. Here especially appears the fruitfulness of this virtue.

By chastity the soul becomes strong. We have only to recall the courage of the virgin martyrs: St. Cecilia, St. Agnes, St. Catherine of Alexandria, St. Lucy of Syracuse, and many others. Their executioners tired more quickly of torturing them than they did of suffering. St. Lucy declared to her judges that a chaste and pious soul is the temple of the Holy Ghost. Upon this answer, they determined to profane her body by dragging her to a place of debauchery, but she remained rooted to the ground like a pillar of granite; the Holy Ghost kept her for Himself in spite of the efforts of her persecutors. The Lord gave these virgins an invincible strength which made them surmount every fear in the midst of the most severe torments. Though not miraculous, what strength, what moral authority perfect purity gives to religious in hospitals, in prisons, where they often gain the respect of poor perverted creatures who recognize in this virtue a superior power, that of the

strong woman whom nothing weakens! For this reason particularly, the Virgin of virgins, the refuge of sinners and consoler of the afflicted, is terrible to the demons. She also bears the name of Mary Help of Christians or Our Lady of Perpetual Help. We may all hope in her power, which is full of goodness.

Likewise by purity the soul becomes luminous: “Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God.” The Eagle of the Evangelists was a virgin, and so was St. Paul. St. Thomas, the greatest of theologians, was delivered at the age of sixteen from every temptation of the flesh that he might devote his entire life to the contemplation of divine things which he was to teach to others. Perfect purity also gives occasionally to Christian virgins, like Catherine of Alexandria and Catherine of Siena, a supernatural perception enabling them to see in a way even in this life the beauty of God, the sublime harmony of the apparently most contradictory divine perfections, such as God’s infinite justice and the tenderness of His mercy. These Christian virgins do not confound the good pleasure of God with arbitrariness; they do not argue about the mysteries of infallible Providence and of predestination, but if they touch upon them, they use exact expressions full of the spirit of faith. This clear vision of pure love has also enabled contemplatives and Christian virgins devoid of theological learning to write unforgettable pages on the spiritual beauty of Christ’s countenance, on the secret that unites in Him the most heroic fortitude and the most tender compassion, superabundant sadness and the loftiest serenity, the supreme demands of justice and the inexhaustible treasures of mercy. Only great wisdom knows what can be said and what remains inexpressible on this subject, a mystery that calls for the silence of adoration.

Finally, perfect purity gives to the soul, together with supernatural light, a spiritual love of God and of our neighbor, which is truly the hundredfold and which compensates far in excess of all the sacrifices we have made or still have to make.

In a truly purified heart, the love of God becomes increasingly tender and strong. Far removed from all sentimentality, it rises above the sensibility; in the higher part of the spiritual will, it becomes that living flame of love spoken of by St. John of the Cross. It is the perfect realization of what the supreme precept demands: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with all thy strength and with all thy mind.” Under certain touches of the Holy Ghost, the spiritual heart

melts, as it were, into that of the Savior to draw from Him greater strength and ever new youth. In this love there is a savor of eternal life.

When the soul consecrated to God is wholly faithful, it merits the name of spouse of Christ. By the strength and tenderness of its love, it is associated with His sorrows, His immortal joys, His profound work in souls, His anticipated or definitive victories.

At the summit of this ascent, there is on earth between the consecrated soul and its God a spiritual marriage, an indissoluble union which transforms it into Him and enables it to say: “My beloved to me, and I to Him.” This spiritual marriage is a profound intimacy, reaching at times even to the revelation of most secret thoughts. There are a thousand things which the faithful spouse of Christ divines and foresees. Between Christ and the soul there is perfect communion of ideas, sentiment, will, sacrifice, and action for the salvation of souls; and the reception of the Holy Eucharist each day with greater fervor, a fervor of the will, if not of the sensibility, is the daily testimony of this love.

This very pure and strong love of God and of souls in God is the source of a lofty spiritual paternity or maternity. To convince ourselves of this we need only recall the words of St. John the Evangelist to his children. Our Lord said to His apostles: “Little children, yet a little while I am with you.” St. John says to his disciples: “My little children, these things I write to you,”that you may not sin.” “Your sins are forgiven you for His name’s sake.” “And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He shall appear we may... not be confounded by Him at His coming.” “Let no man deceive you.” “Let us not love in word nor in tongue, but in deed and in truth.” “You are of God, little children.... Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world.”

St. Paul speaks with the same fatherly tenderness and strength when he writes to the Galatians: “My little children, of whom I am in labor again, until Christ be formed in you.... I am ashamed for you.” To the Corinthians he writes: [Shall I remind you of] my daily instance, the solicitude for all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is scandalized, and I am not on fire?”

Such is spiritual fatherhood in all its generosity, tenderness, and strength. It compensates far and beyond for the temporal fatherhood which the Apostle renounces. He does not found a definite and limited home where a

life that will last sixty or eighty years is transmitted. He labors to form souls for our Lord, to communicate to them a life that will last forever.

Also worthy of admiration is the spiritual maternity of true religious, who, by increasing fidelity, deserve to be called spouses of Jesus Christ. They exercise this maternity toward abandoned children, the poor who have been forsaken by all, the sick who have no resources, suffering souls who are drifting away, and the agonizing. To such religious Christ will say: “I was thirsty, and you gave Me to drink;... I was hungry;... naked,... sick... in prison, and you came to Me.... Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these My least brethren, you did it to Me.”

Perfect purity renders the soul increasingly like to God, strong, luminous, loving, and makes man share in God’s spiritual paternity, in that of the Savior, who came to found not a restricted family, but the great family of the Church which should extend to all peoples and to all generations. All this shows the grandeur of the evangelical counsel of chastity and of its effective practice.

The spirit of this counsel has on occasion also completely transfigured temporal fatherhood or motherhood. One of the greatest examples is that of St. Monica who, having given birth to Augustine, brought him forth spiritually by her tears and prayers. Monica thus obtained the conversion of her son; she became doubly his mother, of body and soul. All who are indebted to St. Augustine for the doctrine he taught should thank the mother to whom Ambrose said: “The son of so many tears could not perish.”

To sum up, the moral virtue of chastity, when truly understood and practiced in a high degree, prepares the soul to receive the grace of contemplation, which proceeds from living faith illumined by the gifts. Then begins the realization of the promise: “Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God.” The truly pure soul begins, as it were, to see God in prayer, while uniting itself more intimately to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, to the Consecration, and to Communion. It also begins to see divine Providence in the circumstances of life, for “to them that love God [and who persevere in this love], all things work together unto good.” Finally, following this way, man begins to see God in the souls of those about him; gradually he sometimes discovers, under a thick and opaque envelope, a luminous soul that pleases God far more than he had first thought. Thus to see God in souls is a grace that must be merited. It requires a particular clear perception which is gradually obtained by detachment from self and a

more pure and strong love of God, which makes us discover in Him those who love Him and those who are called to love Him, those from whom we can receive and those to whom we can and should give for love of Him.

Chapter 12

The Humility of Proficients

> "The Son of man is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life a redemption for many."
> Matt. 20:28

Since we are discussing here especially the moral virtues that have a special connection with the theological virtues and the life of union with God, we must consider what humility should be in proficients.

The importance and nature of this Christian virtue show clearly the distance which separates the acquired virtues described by the pagan philosophers from the infused virtues spoken of in the Gospel. In speaking of prudence, we recalled the distance between them, which is based on a distinction of nature. We shall get a clearer idea of this distance in speaking of humility, and even more in considering this virtue in our model, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Humility is considered in all Christian tradition as the foundation of the spiritual life, since it removes pride, which is, says Holy Scripture, the beginning of every sin because it separates us from God. Thus humility has often been compared to the excavation which must be dug for the erection of a building, an excavation which should be so much the deeper in proportion as the building is to be higher. From this point of view, as we have seen, the two principal pillars of the temple to be built are faith and hope, and its dome is charity.

Humility ought certainly to repress pride under all its forms, including intellectual and spiritual pride, which we have already discussed. But the principal, essential act and the highest act of humility is not, to be exact, the actual repression of movements of pride. It is evident, in fact, that in our Lord and in Mary there never was a first movement of pride to repress, and nevertheless there was in them and there still is the eminent exercise of the

virtue of humility. What is, therefore, the essentially characteristic act of humility, first toward God, then toward our neighbor?

HUMILITY TOWARD GOD

The act proper to humility consists in bowing toward the earth, called humus in Latin, from which the name of this virtue is derived. To speak without metaphor, its essential act consists in abasing ourselves before God and adore what is of God in every creature. To abase ourselves before the Most High is to recognize, not only in a speculative but in a practical manner, our inferiority, littleness, and indigence, manifest in us even though we are innocent, and, once we have sinned, it consists in recognizing our wretchedness.

Thus humility is united to obedience and religion, but it differs from them. Obedience is concerned with the authority of God and His precepts; religion considers His excellence and the worship due Him. Humility, by inclining us toward the earth, recognizes our littleness, our poverty, and in its way glorifies the majesty of God. It sings His glory as when the archangel Michael said: “Who is like to God?” The interior soul experiences a holy joy in annihilating itself, as it were, before God to recognize practically that He alone is great and that, in comparison with His, all human greatness is empty of truth like a lie.

Humility thus conceived is based on truth, especially on the truth that there is an infinite distance between the Creator and the creature. The more this distance appears to us in a living and concrete manner, the more humble we are. However lofty the creature may be, this abyss is always infinite; and the higher we ascend, the more evident does this infinite abyss become for us. In this sense, the highest soul is the most humble, because the most enlightened: the Blessed Virgin Mary is more humble than all the saints, and our Lord is far more humble than His holy Mother.

We see the connection of humility with the theological virtues by determining its twofold dogmatic basis, which was unknown to the pagan philosophers. At its root are two dogmas. Primarily, it is based on the mystery of creation ex nihilo, which the philosophers of antiquity did not know, at least explicitly, but which reason can know by its natural powers. We have been created from nothing; this is the basis of humility according to the light of right reason.

Humility is also based on the mystery of grace and on the necessity of actual grace for the slightest salutary act. This mystery exceeds the natural powers of reason; it is known by faith, and it is expressed in these words of the Savior: “Without Me you can do nothing” in the order of salvation.

From this principle spring four consequences in respect to God the Creator, to His providence and to His goodness, which is at once the source of grace and of the remission of sin.

First of all, in relation to God the Creator, we should recognize not only speculatively, but practically and concretely, that of ourselves we are nothing: “My substance is as nothing before Thee.” “What hast thou that thou hast not received?” We were created out of nothing by a sovereignly free fiat of God, by His love of benevolence, which preserves us in existence, without which we would be immediately annihilated. Furthermore, after creation, though there are a number of beings, there is no increase in reality, no increase of perfection, wisdom, or love; for before creation the infinite plenitude of divine perfection already existed. Therefore in comparison with God we are not.

If all that comes from God were taken away from even our best free acts, strictly speaking nothing would remain, for in such an act one part does not come from us and the other from God. The act is entirely from God as from its first cause, and it is entirely from us as from its second cause. Thus the fruit of a tree is entirely from God as from its first cause and entirely from the tree as from Its second cause. We should recognize practically that without God, the Creator and Preserver of all things, we are nothing.

Secondly, in regard to Providence, without God the supreme Ordainer, without His providence which directs all things, our life completely lacks direction. We should, therefore, humbly receive from Him the general direction of the precepts that we may reach eternal life, and the particular direction that the Most High has chosen from all eternity for each one of us. This particular direction is manifested to us by our superiors, who are intermediaries between God and us, by counsels to which we should have recourse, by events, by the inspirations of the Holy Ghost. Consequently we should humbly accept the place, it may perhaps be very modest, which God has willed from all eternity for each one of us. Thus in the religious life, according to the divine will, some should be like the branches of the tree, others like flowers, others like roots hidden in the earth. Yet the root is most useful; it draws from the soil the secretions that constitute the sap necessary

for the nourishment of the tree. If all its roots were cut, the tree would die; but it would not die were all its branches and flowers cut. Humility, which leads a Christian, a religious, to accept a hidden place very willingly, is extremely fruitful not only for himself but for others. Christ in His sorrowful life humbly wished the last place, that in which Barabbas was preferred to Him, the opprobrium of the cross; by so doing He became the corner stone in the edifice of the kingdom of God: “The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner. By the Lord this has been done; and it is wonderful in our eyes.” St. Paul wrote to the Ephesians: “You are no more strangers..., but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and the domestics of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone.”

Such is the solid, marvelously fruitful humility, which even in the most hidden places sings the glory of God. We ought, therefore, to receive humbly the special direction He has chosen for us, even though it should lead us to profound immolation: “The Lord killeth and maketh alive; He bringeth down to hell and bringeth back again.... He humbleth and He exalteth.” This is one of the most beautiful recurrent themes in the Scriptures.

Thirdly, in this special direction chosen by God for us, we cannot take the slightest step forward, or perform the least salutary and meritorious act without the help of an actual grace. We need this grace particularly to persevere to the end and should, consequently, humbly ask for it.

Even if we had a high degree of sanctifying grace and charity, ten talents for example, we should still need an actual grace for the least salutary act. And especially for a happy death we need the great gift of final perseverance, which we must daily ask for in the Hail Mary with humility and confidence. Christian humility says joyfully with St. Paul: “Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God.” “No man can say the Lord Jesus, but by the Holy Ghost.” In short, humility should recognize practically and a little better every day the majesty of God the Creator, the Ordainer of all things, and the Author of grace.

Finally, while humility, which recognizes our indigence, should be found in all the just and should be in the innocent man, it is after we commit sin that we should recognize practically not only our indigence, but our wretchedness: the baseness of our selfish, narrow hearts, of our inconstant

wills, of our vacillating, whimsical, ungovernable characters; the wretched weaknesses of our minds, guilty of unpardonable forgetfulness and contradictions that they could and should avoid; the wretchedness of pride, of concupiscence, which leads to indifference to the glory of God and the salvation of souls. This wretchedness is beneath nothingness itself since it is a disorder, and it occasionally plunges our souls into a contemptible state of abjection.

The Divine Office often reminds us in the Miserere of these great truths: “Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy, and according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my iniquity. Wash me yet more from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.... To Thee only have I sinned, and have done evil before Thee.... Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be cleansed: Thou shalt wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow:.... Turn away Thy face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create a clean heart in me, O God; and renew a right spirit Within my bowels.... Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation.” “Who can understand sins? From my secret ones, cleanse me, O Lord.”

How greatly this abasement of genuine humility differs from pusillanimity, which is born of human respect or of spiritual sloth! Contrary to magnanimity, pusillanimity refuses the necessary labor. Humility, far from being opposed to grandeur of soul, is united to it. A Christian should tend toward great things worthy of great honor, but he should tend toward them humbly and, if necessary, by the way of great humiliations. He should learn to say often: “Not to us, O Lord, not to us; but to Thy name give glory.”

The pusillanimous man is one who refuses to do what he can and should do; he may sin mortally when he refuses to accomplish what is gravely obligatory. Humility, on the contrary, abases man before the Most High that he may take his true place. It abases him before God only to allow God to act more freely in him. Far from becoming discouraged, the humble soul entrusts itself to God and, if the Lord does great things through it, it does not glorify itself any more than the ax in the hands of the woodsman, than the harp in the hands of the harpist. With the Blessed Virgin Mary, the humble soul says: “Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word.”

Writing on the subject of humility toward our neighbor, St. Thomas says in a manner as simple as profound: “Wherefore every man, in respect of that which is his own, ought to subject himself to every neighbor, in respect of that which the latter has of God’s.”

In fact, every man, considering that of himself he is nothing, that what he has of himself is only his indigence, defectibility, and deficiencies, ought not only in a speculative way but also in a practical way to recognize that all he has of himself as coming from himself, is inferior to what every other man has from God in the order of nature and that of grace.

The holy doctor adds in substance: It is possible, without falsehood, to deem and avow ourselves the most despicable of men, as regards the hidden faults which we acknowledge in ourselves and the hidden gifts of God which others have. For this reason the Psalmist says: “From my secret ones [sins], cleanse me, O Lord.” St. Augustine says also: “Consider that certain people are in a hidden way better than you are, although you may appear morally superior to them.”

We should also say with St. Augustine: “There is no sin committed by another which I, by reason of my own frailty, may not commit; and if I have not committed it, it is because God in His mercy has not permitted it and has preserved me in goodness.” We should give God the glory for our not having fallen and say to Him in the words of Scripture: “Create a clean heart in me, O God: and renew a right spirit within my bowels.” “Convert me, and I shall be converted.” “Look Thou upon me, and have mercy on me; for I am alone and poor.”

St. Thomas says: “Since God’s love is the cause of goodness in things, no one thing would be better than another if God did not will greater good for one than for another.” “What hast thou that thou hast not received?” This truth leads the saints to say to themselves when they see a criminal about to undergo the last punishment: “If this man had received the same graces that I have been receiving for so many years, he would perhaps have been less unfaithful than I. And if God had permitted in my life the sins which He permitted in this man’s, I would be in his place and he in mine.” “What hast thou that thou hast not received?” This is the true basis of Christian humility. All pride should break against these divine words.

The humility of the saints thus becomes ever more profound, for they experience increasingly their own frailty in contrast with the majesty and the goodness of God. We should tend toward this humility of the saints, but

should not employ the formulas they use so long as we are not profoundly convinced that they are true. Should we do so, our humility would evidently be false; in comparison with the true virtue, it is like a paste diamond.

Humility toward our neighbor, thus defined by St. Thomas, differs greatly from human respect and pusillanimity. Human respect (timor mundanus) is the fear of the judgment and wrath of the wicked; this fear turns us away from God. Pusillanimity refuses the necessary toil; it flees the great things it should accomplish and inclines toward base things. Humility, on the other hand, makes us abase ourselves nobly before God and before what is of God in our neighbor. The humble man does not abase himself before the power of the wicked; thus he differs, says St. Thomas, from the ambitious man who abases himself far more than he should to obtain what he desires, and makes himself a lackey in order to attain power.

Humility does not flee great things; on the contrary it strengthens magnanimity by making man tend humbly toward lofty things. These two virtues, which support each other like the arches of a vault, are complementary. They are magnificently presented to us in our Lord when He says: “The Son of man is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister [this is humility], and to give His life a redemption for many [this is magnanimity with zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls].” Our Savior could not tend to greater things and tend more humbly toward them: He willed to give us eternal life by the way of the humiliations of His passion and cross. Thus, all proportion being kept, these two virtues, which in appearance are so contradictory, are united in the saints. The humble John the Baptist did not fear the anger of Herod when he reproved him for his immoral conduct; the apostles in their humility did not fear the opposition of men; they were magnanimous even to martyrdom. There is something similar in all the saints, and the more humble they are, the stronger they are, the less they fear human opinions, however formidable these may be. We have an example of this courage in the humble and intrepid Vincent de Paul facing Jansenist pride, which he recognized and denounced, in order to preserve for souls the grace of frequent Communion.

Practically, what must we do to reach the perfection of humility, without which we cannot have that of charity? Our attitude toward praise and reproach is of great importance. In regard to praise, we must not laud ourselves; by so doing we would soil ourselves, as the Italian proverb says: “Chi si loda, s’imbroda.” Men praise themselves when they think they are

not sufficiently praised by others. Furthermore, we must not seek praise; should we do this, we would render ourselves ridiculous and lose the merit of our good acts. Lastly, we should not take pleasure in praise when it comes; to do so would be to lose, if not the merit of our good actions, at least the flower of merit.

We must, however, mount still higher by acting as we should in regard to reproaches. We must patiently accept deserved reproaches, especially when they come from superiors who have the right and the duty to make them. If we pout, we lose the benefit of these just observations. It is also fitting that we accept patiently at times a reproach that is only slightly deserved or undeserved. Thus, while still a novice, St. Thomas was unjustly reproved for a socalled mistake in Latin while reading in the refectory. He corrected himself as he had been told to do; later at recreation his brethren were astonished and said to him: “You were right. Why did you correct yourself?” “It is better in the eyes of God,” answered the saint, “to make a mistake in grammar than to fail in obedience and humility.” Lastly, we would do well to ask for a love of contempt, keeping in mind the examples of the saints. When our Lord asked St. John of the Cross: “What do you wish for a reward?” the saint replied: “To be scorned and to suffer for love of Thee.” His prayer was granted a few days later in the most painful manner; he as treated like an unworthy religious in a scarcely credible fashion. Likewise St. Francis of Assisi said to Brother Leo: “If when we arrive this evening at the door of the convent, the brother porter does not wish to open the door for us, if he takes us for thieves and receives us with blows and leaves us outside all night in the rain and cold, then we must say: Santa letizia, that is, what joy, O Lord, to suffer for Thee and to become a little like Thee.” The saints reached even this height.

St. Anselm admirably described the degrees of humility: (1) to acknowledge ourselves contemptible; (2) to grieve on account of this; (3) to admit that we are so; (4) to wish our neighbor to believe it; (5) patiently to endure people’s saying it; (6) willingly to be treated as a person worthy of contempt; (7) to love to be treated in this fashion.”

These higher degrees are stated in all books of piety but, as St. Teresa says: “The disposition to practice this (the higher degrees of humility) must be, in my opinion, the gift of God; for it seems to me a supernatural good.” They presuppose a certain infused contemplation of the humility of the Savior crucified for us and the ardent desire to become like to Him.

It is certainly fitting to tend to this lofty perfection. Rare are they who attain it; but before reaching it, the interior soul has many occasions to recall these words of Jesus, which are so simple, profound, and truly imitable, all proportion being kept: “The Son of man is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a redemption for many.” This is the deepest humility united to the loftiest grandeur of soul.

In our way we should also follow the Savior and gradually be conformed to Him. For this reason we shall devote the following chapter to a consideration of the humility of Jesus as the eminent exemplar of ours.

Chapter 13

The Humility of the Word Made Flesh and What Ours Should Be

> "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who... emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant."
> Phil. 2: 5–7

In studying humility, we should consider how it was practiced by our Lord Himself, whose example we should follow, and see how this abasement is united in Him to the highest virtues.

THE HUMILITY AND MAGNANIMITY OF CHRIST

In the second chapter of his epistle to the Philippians, St. Paul, wishing to exhort us to humility, speaks of the infinite majesty of the Savior that we may better see to what an extent He humbled Himself. The union of these two extremes is amazing, and should be found to some extent in Christian perfection.

In this celebrated passage, St. Paul teaches clearly the eternal preexistence of the divine person of Christ. He tells us: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man. He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross."

"Being in the form of God..." The word "form" in St. Paul's text designates intimate, fundamental, essential being; in this case, the nature of God. In other words, although the only Son of the Father is truly God, "the brightness of His glory, and the figure of His substance," as we read in the Epistle to the Hebrews, He did not eagerly retain His equality with God.

Lucifer, on the contrary, though only a creature, wished to be equal to God and not to recognize in practice any master superior to himself. In the error of his pride, he exclaimed: “I will be like he Most High,” and in order to tempt us he tells us: “You shall be as gods.”

Jesus, who is truly God, emptied Himself. St. Paul here affirms the divinity of Christ as clearly as it is expressed in the prologue to St. John’s Gospel: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.... The only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.”

“He emptied Himself.” How? He did not lose His divine nature; He remained what He was, but He took or assumed our poor human nature. In coming down from heaven, He did not leave it, but He began to dwell on earth in the humblest condition. In this sense He emptied Himself. Whereas the divine nature is the infinite plenitude of all perfections, human nature is as if empty, although it aspires to plenitude; the human intellect is at the beginning like a blank page on which nothing is written. The only Son of God emptied Himself, taking our human nature, which is infinitely below the divine nature, and even below the purely spiritual nature of the angels, even of the lowest among them.

“He took the form of a servant,” for man, God’s creature, is the servant of the Most High. The only Son of the Father therefore took in His divine person the nature of a servant, the condition of a slave, so that one and the same person might be the Son of God and the Son of man, that the same person might be the only Son begotten from all eternity and the Infant in the crib at Bethlehem and the Man of sorrows nailed to the cross.

“Being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man.” He wished to be rendered like His brethren in all things, sin excepted; even more, He wished to be born among the poor. He was cold and hungry, like a man of humble condition. He was tired and worn out, as we are and more than we are.

St. Paul adds, penetrating far more deeply into this mystery: “He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death.” The God-man humbled Himself. We read in Ecclesiasticus: “The greater thou art, the more humble thyself in all things, and thou shalt find grace before God: for great is the power of God alone, and He is honored by the humble.” For this reason Christ Himself tells us: “Learn of Me because I am meek, and humble of heart.”

The sign of humility is obedience. Pride, on the contrary, inclines us to do our own will and to seek what exalts us, not to wish to be directed by others, but to direct them. Obedience is opposed to this pride. The only Son of the Father came down from heaven to save us, to cure our pride, becoming obedient unto death, and even to the death of the cross.

Obedience renders our acts and sufferings meritorious to such an extent that, useless as they may appear, they may become very fruitful. One of the marvels accomplished by our Savior is to have rendered fruitful what was most useless, that is, suffering. He glorified it by obedience and love. Obedience is great, heroic, when man does not refuse death and does not flee ignominy. Now the death of the Word made flesh was most ignominious. It was announced by the Book of Wisdom, in the words of the impious directed against the wise man par excellence: “Let us condemn him to the most shameful death.” Death on the cross was considered precisely by the Romans and Jews as an infamous and horrible torture reserved to slaves. We read in Deuteronomy: “He is accursed of God that hangeth on a tree.” And St. Paul says to the Galatians: “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law [which is powerless to justify us], being, made a curse for us; for it is written: ‘Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree.’” This abasement was necessary before Christ entered into His glory as Redeemer.

Likewise in the Epistle to the Hebrews, St. Paul speaks of “the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasure of the Egyptians.” Farther on, he says: “Jesus, the author and finisher of faith... endured the cross, despising the shame, and now sitteth on the right hand of the throne of God.”

We can thus see how the cross of the Savior was “a stumbling block” for the Jews. They had to believe that the wood of malediction became the instrument of salvation, that He who was fastened to it, instead of being accursed of God, was to become the source of every grace, the object of love and adoration.

All that St. Paul says is already contained in the mystery of the nativity of the Lord, who came down from heaven for our salvation, as the Credo states. The infant Jesus foresaw all these painful and glorious events. As we read in the Epistle to the Hebrews: “When He cometh into the world, He saith: ‘Sacrifice and oblation [of the Old Law] Thou wouldst not; but a body Thou hast fitted to Me.... Then said I: Behold, I come to do Thy will, O God.’ “ This heroic example of humble obedience should be always before our eyes.

The liturgy of Christmas continually recalls this example by contrasting the humility and the majesty of our Savior:

Memento, salutis auctor,
Quod nostri quondam corporis
Ex illibata Virgine
Nascendo formam sumpseris.

Author of grace, sweet Savior mine,
Remember that Thy flesh divine
From the unsullied Virgin came,
Made like unto our mortal frame.

And in the office for Christmas we read these words of Pope St. Leo: “The two natures, divine and human, without losing their properties, are united in a single person; humility is sustained by majesty, weakness by power, mortality by eternity. If the Savior were not truly God, He would not bring the remedy; and if He were not truly man, He would not be an example for us.”

In the nativity of Jesus everything speaks to us of His humility. We read in St. Luke: “She brought forth her first-born Son, and wrapped Him up in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.” There was no room for the Word of God made flesh; a fact we must not forget when there is no room for us. The first adorers were poor shepherds “watching, and keeping the night-watches over their flock” But a multitude of angels descended from heaven singing: “Glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace to men of good will”

The two extremes are united: “The Word was made flesh.” It is the joining of supreme riches and perfect poverty to give men redemption and peace. It is impossible to conceive a more intimate union of a more profound humility and a more lofty dignity. The two infinitely distant extremes are intimately united; God alone could do it. It is not only beautiful, it is sublime, an extreme elevation in the order of the spiritually beautiful. It is what makes the grandeur of Christ’s physiognomy. He always tends toward very great things, worthy of the greatest honor, but He tends to them most humbly with full submission to the will of His Father and acceptance in advance of all the humiliations of the Passion and cross, which He foresees from His infancy. He exemplifies the closest union of perfect humility and loftiest magnanimity.

In what regard must we imitate Christ in the union of humility and Christian dignity? How can we harmonize these two extremes in our lives: a humility which should always grow and the keen desire for perfection and union with God? On the one hand, the Lord tells us to abase ourselves, so much so that we cannot humble ourselves too greatly, and on the other hand, we read in Scripture: “Be ye also perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

How can we harmonize “this abasement which is demanded of us, with the ardent desire for our progress? Souls fear to fail in humility by aspiring to a union with God of which they feel unworthy. The Jansenists went so far as to say that out of humility one should only rarely receive Communion. This practical difficulty exists especially, it is true, for souls that have lost the superior simplicity which comes from grace; but it may exist for us when we have to distinguish between true and false humility in ourselves. We experience it particularly when we must defend our way of living against that of others. At the beginning of the discussion we may speak solely for love of truth, but if we are constrained, often we reply with the impatience and pride of wounded self-love.

The simplest souls find the solution of this problem in rereading what Scripture says about the union of these two extremes: “Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this little child, he is the greater in the kingdom of heaven.” “Be you humbled therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in the time of visitation: casting all your care upon Him for He hath care of you.” “Be humbled in the sight of the Lord, and He will exalt you.” “The Lord killeth and maketh alive, He bringeth down to hell and bringeth back again. The Lord maketh poor and maketh rich, He humbleth and He exalteth.”

The union of deep humility and supernatural magnanimity is particularly mysterious in the saints. In this respect they reproduce the life of the Savior, while remaining far from His perfection. This point must be emphasized, for in it is a great lesson for us. On the one hand, the saints declare that they are the least of men because of their infidelity to grace, and on the other hand they have a superhuman dignity. For example, St. Paul says of himself: “He rose again the third day... and was seen by Cephas, and after that by the eleven. Then he was seen by more than five hundred brethren at once... and last of all He was seen also by me as by one born out of due

time. For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God." He even speaks of the infirmities that humiliate him and oblige him to pray God to come to his relief.

On the other hand, when St. Paul had to defend his ministry against false apostles, he wrote with magnanimity: "They are Hebrews: so am I.... They are the ministers of Christ (I speak as one less wise): I am more; in many more labors, in prisons more frequently, in stripes above measure, in deaths often.... Thrice was I beaten with rods, once I was stoned." He enumerates his labors, his cares; he even speaks of the visions and revelations he received from God. But finally, reverting to a deeper humility he writes: "And lest the greatness of the revelations should exalt me, there was given me a sting of my flesh, an angel of Satan, to buffet me [that I might not become proud]. For which thing thrice I be sought the Lord that it might depart from me. And He said to me: 'My grace is sufficient for thee; for power is made perfect in infirmity.' Gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me."

In his commentary on this chapter of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, St. Thomas speaks admirably of the union of humility and magnanimity in St. Paul. He writes as follows: "As charity is the root of the virtues, pride is the beginning of every sin. It is the inordinate desire of our own excellence: we desire it then without subordinating it to God. Thus we turn away from Him, which is the beginning of every sin; for this reason God resists the proud. As there is in good people the good of which they may become proud, God sometimes permits some infirmity in His elect, some defect, and occasionally a mortal sin, which prevents them from becoming proud, which truly humiliates them, and makes them recognize that they cannot hold out or persevere by their own strength. The apostle St. Paul in particular might have grown proud of many things: he was a vessel of election to carry the faith to the Gentiles; he had been ravished to the third heaven and heard secret words, which it is not granted to man to utter; he had suffered greatly for Christ, several times he had been cast into prison, and scourged; he was a virgin (having obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful); he had labored more than all, as he says; and in particular he had a lofty knowledge of divine things which may be the source of pride. For this reason the Lord gave him a remedy for pride. That the excellence of the revelations made to him might not make him proud, he received a

sting in the flesh, a humiliating infirmity which crucified his body in order to heal his soul.... As he says, an angel of Satan came and buffeted him. How the sinner should tremble if the great Apostle, the instrument of election, is not sure of himself! Three times he ardently begged the Lord to deliver him from this sting; three times, that is, often and urgently. He then heard these words: 'My grace is sufficient for thee,' it will preserve thee from sin. Divine power is shown in weakness, which is an occasion for the exercise of the virtues of humility, patience, and abnegation. The man who knows his weakness is more attentive to resisting it and, because he struggles, he grows in strength. 'Gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities,' says St. Paul, since I am thus more humble, and I must fight that the power of Christ may dwell in me and bear all its fruits of grace."

Something similar occurred in the life of St. Peter, who was humiliated because he denied our Lord during the Passion. Peter thus lost all presumption and placed his confidence no longer in himself, but in God alone.

The principle of the harmonizing of humility and Christian magnanimity is expressed in these words of St. Paul: "We have this treasure [of divine truth] in earthen vessels, that the excellency may be of the power of God and not of us." One of the most beautiful formulas of the harmonizing of humility and magnanimity is the following, taken from the works of St. Thomas: "The servant of God should always consider himself a beginner and always tend toward a more perfect and holy life without ever stopping."

Thus in the great saints humility and magnanimity are harmonized; they tend toward great things in the midst of trials and humiliations. There is, however, always an immense difference between them and the Savior; Christ who was most humble is sinless, without the slightest fault to deplore, most humble in His absolute impeccability and His sovereign dignity.

In the Blessed Virgin Mary, due proportion being kept, there is something similar. She was preserved from every sin, and in her Magnificat she appears at one and the same time very humble and very great, terrible to the demon: "My soul doth magnify the Lord.... He hath regarded the humility of His handmaid; for behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. Because He that is mighty hath done great things to me.... He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble."

Something analogous appears also for our consolation in the life of the Church, the spouse of Christ. Throughout its history Christ's words are verified: "Everyone that exalteth himself, shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Christ made this statement when He spoke of the guests who took the first places, and again in the parable of the Pharisee and the publican. In persecutions the Church often seems conquered; yet it is always victorious. In its humility it tends toward the great things which are the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

Lastly, there should be something similar in every Christian, especially in every religious. He must be truly humble like a root hidden under the ground, and he should always tend toward these great things, a more living faith, a more firm hope, a more ardent charity, a union with God that is daily more intimate, pure, and strong. Thus extremes are harmonized, like the deep root of the tree which symbolizes humility and the loftiest branch which is the figure of charity. All the virtues are connected and grow together, just as the root buries itself ever deeper in the soil, while the tallest branch reaches up toward heaven.

Thus in the mystical body of the Savior should be realized what St. Leo said of Christ Himself: "Humility is sustained by majesty, weakness by strength, mortality by eternity." Gradually in the mystical body of Christ "that which is mortal, may be swallowed up by life." "For this corruptible must put on incorruption," that the mystery of the redemption may be accomplished, that the incarnate Word may apply to us the fruit of His merits and be actually and fully the Author of salvation.

What majesty there is in the title Salutis auctor! And how well united it is with these words: "Learn of Me, because I am meek, and humble of heart: and you shall find rest to your souls." May the Savior grant us the grace to become like to Him. We have no true humility except that which He gives us; therefore we must sincerely beg it of Him and accept the road which leads to it.

APPENDIX: THE GLORY OF THE CROSS

> "He humbled Himself... even to the death of the cross. For which cause God also hath exalted Him, and hath given Him a name which is above all names."
> Phil. 2:8 f.

(We reproduce here a manuscript that has come into our possession, and have added some explanatory notes. It is a meditation on the glory of Christ in relation to the depth of His humiliations and sufferings.)

“For God so loved the world, as to give His only begotten Son.” In the great mystery of the Incarnation, the mystery of ineffable love, there is a core which is impenetrable to human reason, a secret which God alone reveals: the reason for the immense sufferings of the redemptive Passion.

If, in the presence of the crucifix, each Christian can say: “Jesus crucified, pledge of the love of my Father,” not one is capable of telling the reason which motivated the decree of the Passion and death of the Son of God. This decree is the secret of divine love.

We adore the excesses of humiliation, the indescribable ignominies to which the incarnate Word subjected Himself in obedience to His Father and through love of men, His brethren, but we cannot explain these excesses, this ocean of sufferings, until the Lord Himself lifts the veil covering this “holy of holies.” Then the mystery still remains a mystery, but the soul, enlightened regarding its secret, contemplates in ecstasy the ineffable harmonies of the divine masterpiece: the glory of the redemptive cross.

The words of holy Scripture: “I will not give My glory to another,” sum up what is hidden in this secret of the passion and death of Christ Jesus, and contain at the same time the marvelous harmony of all the divine words.

From all eternity God willed the Incarnation of the Word, His Son, as Redeemer of the world and head of redeemed humanity. In our Lord Jesus Christ [habitual] grace has for its principal end the most eminent union that God can grant to a created nature, that is, the hypostatic union, by which the Son of Mary, while enjoying the beatific vision from the moment of His incarnation, could affirm:”The Father and I are one.” This grace was given to Jesus Christ for the end which determined His coming to earth: this end is no other than the satisfaction which, as head of His mystical body, He was to offer to the thrice holy God.

However, by reason of the infinite dignity of the person of the Word, a single drop of the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ would have sufficed to redeem a thousand worlds, did they exist. Therefore, not in the necessity of redeeming sinful humanity should we seek the motive for the excesses of the most holy passion and death of Christ. Let us seek it, rather, in the splendors of the glory of the Incarnation (or of the manifestation of the radiating goodness of the Savior), because it is there that we shall find it.

The essential glory of God, the incommunicable and essential glory of the adorable Trinity became in the mystery of the Incarnation the magnificent portion of the sacred humanity of Jesus, as the Eagle of the Evangelists says in the prologue to his Gospel: “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we saw His glory, the glory as It were of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth.”

The excesses of the sorrow and humiliation of the passion and death of our Lord were the compensation demanded by divine wisdom, which does all things with weight and measure, in exchange for the ineffable glory which the God-man would enjoy eternally. “I will not give My glory to another.” Yahwe had spoken through His prophet, and these words were not belied, not even in favor of the incarnate Word, since by His passion and death our Lord Jesus Christ not only snatched the entire world from the domination of Satan and death, but in addition He won for His most sacred humanity the right to be enthroned in the eternal tabernacles at the right hand of the Father. Our Lord alluded to the necessity of conquering this right on the evening of His resurrection when He said to the disciples of Emmaus: “O foolish, and slow of heart to believe in all things which the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into His glory?” In fact, the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ is admirable, indescribable, since it is the glory of the only Son of the Father, and as such this glory exceeds the capacity of comprehension of human and angelic intellects; only God Himself can fully appreciate it, since He alone knows Himself perfectly.

Although the glory of the only Son is ineffable, a Gospel text gives us a little light on the subject: “He that believeth in Me, as the Scripture saith, Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” Jesus spoke this to all in a loud voice on the feast of tabernacles. And the Evangelist St. John adds: “This He said of the Spirit which they should receive who believed in Him.” To give the Holy Ghost to souls is the glory of the risen Christ, a glory that is unique, ineffable. Sacred Scripture continues: “For as yet the Spirit was not given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.” The Holy Ghost will be given on Pentecost when, through the humiliations of His passion and death, the Lord Jesus will enter into His glory because “he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted.”

And who has ever humbled himself like the Pontiff of the New Law, Christ our Lord? Consequently, in justice no one ever was or ever will be as

exalted as He: “He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross. For which cause God also hath exalted Him and hath given Him a name which is above all names: that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth: and that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father.” O gloria crucis.

The pages just quoted throw special light on the Savior’s humiliations, the dark night of His passion, and also on the night through which the saints must pass. This manuscript enables us to understand better what St. John of the Cross wrote about the night of the soul, and the reparatory sufferings which great servants of God like St. Paul of the Cross have had to bear. It is a well-known fact that having been raised to the transforming union at the age of thirty-one, St. Paul of the Cross spent forty-five years in continual and most profound interior sufferings for the salvation of sinners. He was closely configured to Jesus crucified: the depths, the duration, the continuity of his sufferings were proportioned to the “eternal weight of glory,” to use the expression of St. Paul, which he was to receive in heaven.

Thus we see the elevation of the infused virtues and what the progress of humility should be in proficients and the perfect: “He that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”

Chapter 14

The Spirit of Poverty

> "Blessed are the poor in spirit."
> Matt. 5: 3

Since we have treated of humility and meekness, it is fitting that we consider the virtues corresponding to the evangelical counsels. As we have already spoken of virginity in connection with chastity, it remains for us to explain how poverty and obedience cooperate in Christian perfection.

To attain perfection, man must practice the three counsels effectively: in other words, in the use of legitimate goods it is expedient that he retrench before reaching the limit of what is permitted, that he may not be led into excess. The effective practice of the three counsels, as we have seen, is a road leading more easily, rapidly, and surely to perfection, which is reached in this way more often in the religious life than in the married state. However, Christian perfection does not consist essentially in the practice of the counsels; it is chiefly in charity. Moreover, to reach perfection, one must have at least the spirit of the counsels, which is the spirit of detachment, as St. Paul says: "The time is short. It remaineth that they also who have wives be as if they had none;... and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as if they used it not. For the fashion of this world passeth away."

We shall discuss, first of all, the spirit of poverty, recommended to all by our Lord when He said: "Blessed are the poor in spirit."

THE VALUE OF VOLUNTARY POVERTY

The meaning of this evangelical beatitude is as follows: blessed are they who have not the spirit of wealth, its pomp, pride, insatiable avidity; but who have the spirit of poverty and are humble. Christ says: "For theirs is

the kingdom of heaven”; not only will it be theirs later on, but in a sense it is theirs even now.

Voluntary poverty can be practiced either in the midst of the abundance of worldly goods, when the spirit is not attached to them, or in destitution when one bears it generously for love of God. The value of voluntary poverty may even appear to those who have not faith, because they see the disorders which arise from cupidity, the concupiscence of the eyes, the desire of riches, avarice, the excesses of capitalism, and the forgetfulness of the poor who are dying of hunger.

We must begin to detach ourselves from earthly goods in order to grasp clearly the following truth often uttered by St. Augustine and St. Thomas: “Contrary to spiritual goods, material goods divide men, because they cannot belong simultaneously and integrally to a number.” A number of persons cannot possess integrally and simultaneously the same house, the same field, the same territory; whence dissensions, quarrels, lawsuits, wars. On the contrary, spiritual goods, like truth, virtue, God Himself, can belong simultaneously and integrally to a number; many may possess simultaneously the same virtue, the same truth, the same God who gives Himself wholly to each of us in Communion.

Therefore, whereas the unbridled search for material goods profoundly divides men, the quest for spiritual goods unites them. It unites us so much the more closely, the more we seek these superior goods. And we even possess God so much the more, the more we give Him to others. When we give away money, we no longer possess it; when, on the contrary, we give God to souls, we do not lose Him; rather we possess Him more. And should we refuse to give Him to a person who asks for Him, we would lose Him.

Consequently to combat cupidity, the concupiscence of the eyes, the desire of riches, avarice, and the forgetfulness of the poor, our Lord counseled voluntary poverty, or detachment in regard to earthly goods which divide men. Christ leads us thus to desire keenly spiritual goods, which unite men.

The spirit of detachment is even necessary for the Christian that he may clearly understand the true meaning of the right of individual ownership instead of infringing on this right, which is often forgotten; interior souls should have a profound knowledge of it. As St. Thomas shows, the right of ownership is the right to acquire and to administer material goods; but in regard to their use, they must be given readily to those who are in need.

St. Paul says: “Charge the rich of this world not to be high-minded nor to trust in the uncertainty of riches, but in the living God, who giveth us abundantly all things to enjoy: to do good, to be rich in good works, to give easily, to communicate to others, to lay up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on the true life.”

Such is the spirit of detachment; it should remind all of us of what St. Thomas says elsewhere: namely, that if a poor man in a case of extreme necessity asks for a piece of bread and is refused, he may take it, and not be guilty of theft. He has a right to it in order not to die of hunger. A man’s life is clearly worth more than a piece of bread which we have not the right to retain jealously if one of our brothers is in absolute need of it.

It is a precept that a man should give alms from his superfluity that he may aid him who is in grave necessity. What has been said of a piece of bread should be said of clothing and necessary shelter. There must be a return to the spirit of evangelical poverty in order to combat today the abuses of capitalism which exasperate the laborer who is out of work and unable to feed his children. Scripture tells us: “Whilst the wicked man is proud, the poor is set on fire.” The rich man, far from being a monopolist, should administer the goods given by God in such a way that the poor profit in regard to what is necessary. Then man no longer lives under the reign of covetousness and jealousy, but under the dominion of God.

It is fitting today to recall these elementary truths even when speaking of the progress of the interior life, for the grave disturbances and perils of modern society require that we consider these truths from a higher point of view and that we put them into practice with a great spirit of faith and detachment. This is the true remedy for two extreme deviations which are mutually contradictory: the abuses of capitalism and the excesses of communism, two contrary disorders springing from a materialistic conception of human life and from forgetfulness of the Gospel. The value of voluntary poverty is brought out by these very disorders, which are disturbingly serious.

The value of detachment appears in a more positive way when we remember the true goods we should ardently desire. Christ tells all of us what they are, and interior souls should have a deeper understanding of His teaching: “Be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body, what you shall put on. Is not the life more than the meat, and the body

more than the raiment? Behold the birds of the air, for they neither sow, nor do they reap,... and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not you of much more value than they? Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you. Be not therefore solicitous for tomorrow; for the morrow will be solicitous for itself. Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof."

The spirit of detachment thus leads us to a stronger desire for the goods of heaven and to reliance on the help of God to reach the end of the journey. Voluntary poverty and confidence in God go hand in hand; the more detached man is from earthly goods, the more he desires those of heaven; and the less he relies on human helps, the more he places his confidence in God's help. Thus confidence in God is the soul of holy poverty. All Christians should have the spirit of this counsel.

Since we are considering the effective practice of voluntary poverty, let us recall the answer our Lord gave to the rich young man who wished to know the surest road to perfection. Christ answered him: "Go, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor; and thou shalt have treasure in heaven. And come, follow Me. Who being struck sad at that saying, went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions." He preferred to keep them rather than to follow our Lord and win souls, rather than to become a "fisher of men" like the apostles.

The effective practice of voluntary poverty is of counsel; it is not obligatory; but to be perfect one must have at least the spirit of the counsel, the spirit of detachment in the midst even of riches, if one keeps them.

St. Francis de Sales develops this teaching, saying that voluntary poverty is a great good, but one which is little known; that it is a principle of happiness; that it must be observed in the midst of wealth and also in real poverty, if we should happen to lose everything.

> Now if you love the poor, be often in their company, be glad to see them in your house, and to visit them in theirs. Converse willingly with them, be pleased to have them near you in the church, in the streets, and elsewhere.... Make yourself then a servant of the poor: go and serve them in their beds when they are sick... at your own expense.... This service is more glorious than a kingdom.... St. Louis frequently served at table the poor whom he supported, and caused three poor men to dine with him almost every day, and many times ate the remainder of their food with an incomparable love. When he visited the hospitals,... he commonly served... such as had the most loathsome diseases, kneeling on the ground, respecting in their persons the Savior of the world.... St. Elizabeth, daughter of the King of Hungary, often visited the poor.... But should you meet with losses which impoverish you... as in the case of tempests, fires, inundations,... lawsuits, then is the proper season to practice poverty... with meekness... and patience.

St. Francis de Sales adds that truly Christian poverty should be gay, and that he who has chosen it should not seek his comfort, but should suffer some discomforts for the love of God; otherwise, how would this virtue be for him a means of union with God? The examples of St. Francis of Assisi, St. Dominic, and St. Benedict Joseph Labre, show us to what close union with God this virtue can lead us when practiced for love of God.

THE FRUITFULNESS OF VOLUNTARY POVERTY

St. Thomas tells us that Christ willed to be poor for four reasons: (1) because voluntary poverty is fitting for the preacher, who should be freed from the care of earthly goods; (2) because He wished to show that He desires only the salvation of souls; (3) that He might lead us to desire especially eternal goods; (4) that divine power which saves souls might stand forth more clearly in the absence of human helps. This is also the reason why Christ chose poor fishermen of Galilee as His apostles. Thus is demonstrated the fruitfulness of voluntary poverty; it is the hundredfold promised by Christ.

In the first place, the spirit of poverty frees us from excessive preoccupation about exterior goods, which are then no longer an obstacle in our progress toward God, but a means of doing good. Thus delivered, the Christian may run the way of perfection; he no longer thinks of settling down on earth as if he were to remain there always, for he understands that he is there only temporarily. He is no longer embarrassed, as it were, by useless baggage in his journey toward eternity; aware of being a traveler, a viator, he aspires to reach his last end without delay. His pace is even quickened, becomes ever more rapid, because he is always more drawn by the last end in proportion as he approaches it.

In the second place, voluntary poverty is a sign of disinterestedness, particularly necessary for an apostle; for it should be evident he has no interest but that of winning souls for our Lord, as St. Dominic told the prelates who arrived in Languedoc with a whole suite to preach the Gospel to people seduced by the errors of the Albigenses. These prelates understood then that they should preach first by example, by true detachment; and they sent away their retinue.

In the third place, voluntary poverty is materially fruitful in a degree that sometimes borders on the miraculous. To see this fact, one need only visit

certain convents dedicated to the care of the poor, such as the homes of the Little Sisters of the Poor, or the piccola casa of St. Joseph Cottolengo in Turin, “a little house” which shelters ten thousand indigent sick, and which subsists only on the alms received from day to day. It is like a perpetual miracle worked by divine Providence in response to the trust of the holy founder and his sons, who understood the profound meaning of Christ’s words: “Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you.” These servants of the poor live by the supernatural contemplation of this truth and by its practice.

Fourthly, more admirable still is the spiritual fruitfulness of the spirit of poverty. It teaches us patience, humility, detachment in regard to higher goods, to all that is not God and the love of God, that is, in respect to the goods of the intellect, of the heart, and of certain goods of the soul.

The goods of the intellect are our knowledge, our talents if we have any. In study we must know how to avoid curiosity, vainglory, useless natural eagerness; how to place this study truly at the service of God, detaching ourselves from our own lights, from our excessively personal views. If we do this, the Lord will in this case also give us the hundredfold: a superior simplicity, that of true contemplation, which forgets itself in order to lose itself in its object. St. Albert the Great practiced this spirit of poverty in respect to the immense learning he had acquired. He was told that he would lose the use of his memory; this took place, and during the rather long period of life that was left to him, he remained as if completely absorbed in the contemplation of God. In place of the acquired learning that he had lost, he received a very superior treasure, a lofty degree of infused contemplation that he might live most profoundly by the mysteries of salvation.

The goods of the heart are our affections, and also the affection full of esteem and confidence that others show us. We must live in a certain detachment in regard even to these goods that we may not fall into sentimentalism. We must not cling to being loved, esteemed; we must also consecrate our legitimate affections to God, placing them under the influx of true charity, which will reveal to us what a treasure is a truly supernatural friendship that is wholly generous. It is a great gift of God, which He occasionally grants to those who have renounced all.

Finally, the spirit of poverty also teaches us to practice detachment from certain goods of the soul, that is, spiritual consolations. They must certainly not be sought for themselves; were this done, they would cease to be a

means of progress toward God and would become an obstacle. We must consent to be weaned from them when the Lord judges it to be for our good. Following the advice of St. Grignion de Montfort, many interior souls strip themselves of all that is communicable to others in their prayers and good works and entrust it to the Blessed Virgin that she may use it to the best advantage of souls on earth or in purgatory in greatest need of it. By this denudation the Christian prepares himself for a higher spiritual poverty, which is a great gift of God and recalls the destitution of Christ on the cross, abandoned by His people, by many of His own, and to all appearances abandoned by His Father. Interior souls find this higher spiritual poverty in the last purification which St. John of the Cross calls the dark night of the soul. Victim souls experience more profoundly than others this absolute stripping of themselves and this immolation which configures them to Christ that they may obtain the salvation of sinners.

Thus, in different degrees, the spirit of poverty and still more voluntary poverty effectively practiced for love of God, enrich the Christian while stripping him and obtain the hundredfold for him. Such is the lofty meaning of the evangelical beatitude: “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

THE MERIT OF THE VOWS

With St. Thomas we must add that it is more meritorious to perform a good act with a vow than without, and this for three reasons: (1) because the vow is an act of the virtue of religion, or of the worship of latria. This virtue is the most noble of the moral virtues; hence it renders more meritorious the acts of poverty, chastity, and obedience which it inspires, commands, and offers to God as a holocaust.

Moreover, charity itself inspires the vow; it is made out of love and is a true testimony of love that is at times highly meritorious. If anyone greatly loves another, he places himself at the other’s service out of affection. Thus the soul that wishes to love God greatly places itself forever at His service out of love, binding itself to Him by a vow. It has been objected that he who is already closely united to God through charity, the highest of the virtues, does not find an additional perfection in binding himself to God by a vow. If he is already a friend, he does not have to become a servant; so much so that our Lord said: “I will not now call you servants.... But I have called you

friends.” The answer to this objection is that he who loves God finds an additional perfection in placing himself through love at God’s service for his entire life.

St. Thomas adds two other reasons:(2) he who promises God a succession of good works and accomplishes them subjects himself more to God than if he accomplished them without having promised them. Thus he who gives the tree and its fruits offers more than if he offered only the fruits while retaining possession of the tree.(3) Lastly, by the vow the will is immutably fixed in the good, which is an additional perfection.

Consequently it is evident that the vows of religion, especially perpetual and solemn vows, add to the acts of poverty, chastity, and obedience, an additional merit, that of the virtue of religion, which is itself offered to God as worship by charity that inspires all the other virtues. The soul consecrated to the Lord thus belongs more intimately to Him.

Chapter 15

The Grandeur of Obedience

Obedience is the highest of the three evangelical counsels, just as the pride of life is in itself a graver disorder than the concupiscence of the flesh and that of the eyes. Pride, which was the sin of the rebellious angel and of the first man, is the source of all deviations because it turns us away from God to put our trust in ourselves. In this sense it is a more serious sin than other more shameful sins which incline us toward vile things, but which turn us less directly away from God. Cold, hard pride, which leads man to refuse to adhere to the word of God or to obey Him, is a more serious sin than inordinate attachment to the pleasures of the senses or to earthly goods. For this reason Christ said to the Pharisees who were led astray by their pride: “Amen I say to you, that the publicans and the harlots shall go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came to you in the way of justice, and you did not believe him. But the publicans and the harlots believed him: but you, seeing it, did not even afterwards repent, that you might believe him.”

We know these things theoretically, but in practice we forget them. We think more readily of the manifest disorders which arise from the concupiscence of the flesh or from that of the eyes, and we do not adequately recognize that the great sin is the sin of him who said: “Non serviam, I will not serve.” This is the principal sin of the world that calls itself “modern,” while claiming to separate itself from the Church. It still desires indeed to repress gross instincts, to struggle against avarice, to labor for the amelioration of the lot of the working class, but it intends to do all this by itself, without the help of God, of our Lord, and of the Church. Only too often it wishes to obey only its own reason, its own judgment, its own will, and this rationalism leads it to disobey reason rather than to obey God. Its own reason leads it, like the prodigal son, into dishonorable, debasing

servitude, occasionally into real tyranny, that of rebellious popular passions and that of criminal, unjust laws, put into effect in spite of the protests of conscience, in the interest of the party in power. Obedience to the commandments of God and of the Church would free society from these servitudes which oppress the best and lead society into disorder, confusion, and ruin. Such an evil can be cured only by a holy reaction in the direction of profound, humble, Christian obedience. Yet the grandeur of obedience, even in relatively good circles, is too often misunderstood.

The better to see the value of this virtue, we shall consider first of all from what servitude it delivers us and what are its spiritual fruits with regard to union with God.

THE TYPE OF SERVITUDE FROM WHICH OBEDIENCE DELIVERS US

Obedience delivers us from a twofold slavery: that of self-will and that of our own judgment.

Obedience to God, to His spiritual and temporal representatives, daily assures the conformity of our will with the divine will, It thus delivers us from self-will, that is, from a will which is not conformed to that of God, and which through pride goes astray, acting contrary to the current of grace and refusing to act in the true direction.

Self-will thus defined is the source of every sin. For this reason St. Bernard says: “Take away self-will, and there will no longer be any hell.” Self-will is particularly dangerous because it can corrupt everything. Even what is best in man becomes evil when self-will enters in, for it takes itself as its end instead of subordinating itself to God. If the Lord sees that it inspires a fast, a penance, a sacrifice, He rejects them as Pharisaical works accomplished through pride in order to make oneself esteemed. Without going that far, we must admit that we cling greatly to our own will. Occasionally we hold to our way of doing good more than to the good itself; we wish it to be done, but by ourselves and in our way. When this egoism becomes collective, it may be called esprit de corps, a corruption of family spirit; it is the source of a great many unpleasantnesses, partialities, defamations. Sometimes a certain group wishes to promote a good work, or it hinders one from being developed. It is like wishing to smother a child who seems to be one too many, when as a matter of fact it may become the

honor of the family. Evidently such a course of action can only displease the Lord.

In religion, the vow of obedience assures the mortification of this dangerous self-will which turns the soul away from salvation. That it may control self-will, the vow must be practiced with a spirit of faith, seeing in the orders of superiors, in spite of their imperfections or defects, orders given by God, from whom all power comes. Religious obedience should be prompt and universal: that is, it should extend alike to little and great things; it should obey all legitimate superiors, whether they be amiable or not, particularly prudent or less enlightened, holy or less perfect, because it is always God who speaks, as long as the order given is not contrary to a higher law and does not exceed the limits of the constitutions which the religious promised to observe. Such obedience is a deliverance, for it assures from day to day the conformity of man's will with God's will, and by that very fact it greatly fortifies the will while rectifying it.

Obedience delivers us also from the servitude of our own judgment, that is, from an excessively subjective judgment not sufficiently founded on truth, not conformed to the judgment of God. Our own personal judgment is in this sense the source of singularity in conduct and stubbornness which leads to nothing and impedes the good which others wish to do. It is a hasty judgment springing from our prejudices, our evil dispositions, our self-love, our pride. Occasionally the enemy of our soul is the one who suggests it to us or confirms it when we ourselves have already formed it. Following Aristotle, St. Thomas often says: "According as we are well or ill disposed in our will and sensible faculties, a given end seems good or evil to us." The proud man judges that what flatters his pride is excellent, whereas the humble man judges that humiliation is good for him.

Our own judgment often leads to rash judgment, contrary to justice and charity. In it there is servitude, slavery; we are the slaves of our egoistic prejudices, and they lead us away from salvation and union with God.

Obedience delivers us from this slavery by assuring the conformity of our practical judgment with that of the representative of God, who has the right to give us an order in His name. It may be that this representative of God is mistaken on some point or other; he is not infallible like the pope speaking ex cathedra, but as long as the order given is not manifestly contrary to a higher law and does not exceed the powers of the one who commands, we are obliged to obey, and our practical judgment is not deceived in obeying.

Sometimes the messenger of Providence may limp, but he is still God's messenger; he brings us a letter or an order of divine origin.

The effective practice of the counsel of obedience is found especially in the religious life; it is a much surer road for reaching perfection more rapidly by progressive conformity to the will of God even in the depths of our will and the details of daily life.

But we must at least have the spirit of the counsel actually to reach Christian perfection, that is, the spirit of detachment from self-will to which we cling. As a child should obey his father, his mother, and the teachers who train him, every Christian should obey all who are for him the spiritual or temporal representatives of God. There is the obedience of the wife to her husband, that of the soldier to his leaders, of the servant to his master, of every subordinate to his superiors, of every Christian to the Church and to the constituted authorities in the Church. If this obedience is practiced, not merely in a servile, mechanical, exterior manner, but in the spirit of faith, it greatly forms the will, renders it flexible, and fortifies it while subordinating it daily a little better to the will of God, of the living God who vivifies us. It is well to recall often that "there is no power but from God," that one cannot obey an equal, but only a superior, and that, in short, it is God who is obeyed.

Similarly we must obey events so far as they are signs of the divine will. Theology teaches that the divine will is manifested to us not only by the precepts and the counsels, but also by events willed or at least permitted by God. Nothing, in fact, happens unless God has willed it (if it is a good), or permitted it (if it is an evil). To be perfect our obedience should take into consideration these signs of the will of God. For example, legitimate success in an examination gives us a position that makes possible for us the accomplishment of a more extended good; let us not compromise this good by imprudent or cowardly acts. On the contrary, we are humiliated by a failure, or by an illness, which sometimes show us that the way we are engaged in is not what God wishes for us.

There are particularly significant events which, from the temporal point of view, change the situation of a family or the organization of society. We must know how to draw the greatest spiritual profit from them and not wish at any cost to revert to an order of things which was useful in the past and which probably is no longer willed by God in the period in which we are living. One does not go back up the course of life or that of history; the old

man does not return to adolescence; and our century cannot return to what existed in the thirteenth, though it should seek to profit by all the good handed down by past ages in order to prepare a future in which God truly reigns.

In all these forms of obedience to all that manifests the will of God, in obedience to the duty of the present moment from minute to minute, the Christian ought always to have before his eyes as his model the Savior, who was “obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross.” Thus the martyrs and all the saints obeyed, finding their joy in dying to self-will that they might feed on that of God according to the Savior’s words: “My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me.”

THE FRUITS OF OBEDIENCE

To comprehend the grandeur and the fruits of obedience, we should remember that it is more perfect to offer God one’s will and judgment than to offer Him exterior goods through voluntary poverty, or one’s body and heart through chastity. It is also more perfect to offer Him one’s will than to sacrifice to Him exteriorly a lamb or a dove, as was done in the sacrifices of the Old Testament. With this meaning, Scripture says: “Obedience is better than sacrifices: and to hearken rather than to offer the fat of rams.”

The fruits of obedience are chiefly the following: it gives a great rectitude of judgment, great strength of will, the highest liberty of spirit.

The greatest rectitude of judgment comes from the fact that obedience makes us participate in the very wisdom of God; it renders us more wise than the wisest, more prudent than the ancients: Super senes intellexi. In the most difficult and the most complicated situations, it brings us the solution that is practically true for us here and now. Practically, we do not make a mistake in obeying, even if the superior is mistaken. By humble obedience a simple lay brother, Blessed Martin de Porres of Peru, did more for his country than statesmen who do not think of praying to obtain light.

As a reward for fidelity, perfect obedience obtains from the Holy Ghost, even here on earth, the inspirations of the gift of counsel that direct us in the most hidden things of the spirit which a director or a superior could not state precisely and which our prudence could not succeed in settling properly. The gift of counsel is particularly necessary for those whose duty it is to command, that they may do so supernaturally; for this reason if a

man does not begin by obeying well, he will never know how to command. God gives His lights to the obedient.

Obedience also gives great strength of will. Naturalism declares at times that obedience weakens the will; on the contrary, it strengthens the will tenfold. When, in fact, there is no reason to doubt that an order comes from God through the intermediary of a legitimate superior, it is also certain that by divine grace the fulfillment of this order is possible. As St. Augustine says: “God, in fact, never commands the impossible; but He tells us to do what we are able and to ask Him for the grace to accomplish what we cannot do of ourselves.” Therefore St. Augustine used to pray: “Lord, give me the strength to accomplish what Thou dost command, and command what Thou dost wish.”

Because God never commands the impossible, when in certain circumstances martyrdom is of precept, in the sense that it must be undergone rather than deny the faith, God gives the strength to obey, to be faithful to Him in the midst of torture; and He gives this strength even to children, to young virgins, like St. Agnes, or to old men weakened by age. In such cases especially are realized the words of Scripture: “An obedient man shall speak of victory.”

Without going as far as marytrdom, obedience works prodigies. We need only cite the example of the first sixteen sons of St. Dominic. Strong in the Pope’s blessing, the holy founder sent them from Toulouse into various parts of Europe to found convents and to carry on the apostolate. Having no money to give them, the saint said to them: “You shall beg your food; I will pray for you three times a day. I promise you that, in spite of the distress of poverty, you will never lack what is necessary.” The sixteen religious, trusting in the words of their Father, obeyed; they left joyfully like the first apostles, and were not slow in multiplying in Italy, Spain, England, even in faraway Poland, and among the infidels of the Orient whom they went to evangelize. This example and many others confirm the grandeur of obedience. When an order is given, and there is no doubt but that it comes from God, the grace which makes its fulfillment possible is most certainly bestowed. If a person prays to be faithful to this grace and not to resist it, he accomplishes the command not without difficulty sometimes, but he accomplishes it.

Finally, obedience, far from being a servitude, bestows the highest liberty, that of the children of God, as voluntary poverty gives true spiritual

riches, as perfect charity obtains the intimacy of the love of God. A French author, Alfred de Vigny, wrote a beautiful book on the life of a soldier; it is entitled, Servitude et grandeur militaires; in perfect Christian obedience there are a servitude and a superior grandeur that are truly supernatural. Of this obedience St. Paul speaks when he reminds us that we should desire to be "delivered from the servitude of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God"; "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty," that is to say, deliverance, for divine truth delivers the soul from error. Injecting truth into life, obedience sets man free from the prejudices of the world, from its maxims, modes, and infatuations. It frees him from excessive preoccupation about the judgment of men, from concern about what people will say, instead of doing good and letting them talk. Obedience delivers him from his doubts, hesitations, and anxieties. It simplifies life while elevating it. With it liberty grows, for in man liberty comes from the intellect, and the more enlightened his intellect is, the more free he is. The more man understands that God is the sovereign Good, the freer he is not to respond to the attraction of earthly goods, and the stronger he is against the threats of the impious. Who was freer than the martyrs? Through love and obedience they freely gave their blood in witness of divine truth, and neither iron nor fire could force an abjuration from them. They obeyed in a spirit of faith and for love of God, like the Savior, who was obedient "unto death, even to the death of the cross."

The grandeur of obedience is expressed in this frequently quoted, holy expression: "To serve God is to reign," that is, to reign over one's passions, over the spirit of the world, over the enemy of souls and his suggestions; it is to reign in the very kingdom of God and, so to speak, to share in His independence toward all created things. It is to place oneself like a docile instrument in His hands for all that He wishes, following out St. Augustine's words which we have already quoted: "Lord, give me the strength to accomplish what Thou dost command, and command what Thou dost wish."

Of a certainty obedience thus understood prepares for the contemplation of divine things; it prepares us to see the will of God or His permission in all pleasurable or painful events, and it helps us. to understand "that to them that love God [and persevere in His love], all things work together unto good."

Chapter 16

Simplicity and Uprightness

> "If thy eye be single, thy whole body shall be lightsome."
> Matt. 6: 22

Christian prudence or holy discretion, of which we have spoken, should be accompanied by a virtue, simplicity, which is to all appearances quite different. Christ Himself expressed this when He said to His apostles: "Behold I send you as sheep in the midst of wolves. Be ye therefore wise as serpents and simple as doves."

Sending His apostles as sheep in the midst of wolves, Christ recommends to them prudence especially toward the wicked, that they may not be deceived by them, and simplicity in reference to self and to God. The more simple the soul is in regard to God, the more He Himself, by the gift of counsel, will inspire the prudence to be observed in difficult circumstances, in the midst of the greatest obstacles. Consequently Christ announces immediately afterward to His followers that the Holy Ghost will inspire them with what they must reply to persecutors.

Where this simplicity does not exist, prudence begins to become false and to turn into cunning. The crafty or the shrewd man makes sport, says Holy Scripture, of the simplicity of the just: "The simplicity of the just man is laughed to scorn," says Job. People try to make simplicity pass for naivete and lack of penetration; it may indeed be accompanied in some by artlessness, but it is essentially something superior.

To get a correct idea of the virtue of simplicity and of veracity and uprightness which it makes us preserve, we should note first of all the defects opposed to it. God permits evil only for a greater good, in particular to bring virtue into greater relief. We have a better understanding of its value through the aversion inspired in us by the contrary vices.

DEFECTS OPPOSED TO SIMPLICITY

According to St. Thomas, simplicity is attached to the virtue of veracity, which puts truth into speech, gestures, manner of being and of living. Simplicity, in fact, is opposed to duplicity, by which we interiorly wish something other than what exteriorly we pretend. A man wishes other people's money and pretends to render them service; in reality, he wishes to make use of them or of what belongs to them; or again, he wishes power and honors, and to obtain them pretends to serve his country; he pretends to be magnanimous, when in reality he is only ambitious. This defect of duplicity, which may become Machiavellianism or perfidy, inclines a man to be two-faced, according to the people he is addressing, like the Roman god Janus that was represented with two faces. A two-faced man pretends to be your friend, tells you that you are right, and he tells your adversaries that they are not wrong.

Duplicity inspires lies, simulation, which leads a man to make himself esteemed for something other than he is, hypocrisy, by which he affects a virtue, a piety which he does not have. It also inspires boasting, because one prefers appearance to reality; one seeks to appear rather than to be what one should. It also inspires raillery, which turns others into ridicule in order to lower them in their neighbor's esteem and to exalt oneself above them.

All these defects, which are frequent in the world, show by contrast the value of uprightness or veracity in life.

VERACITY AND THE INTERIOR LIFE

Veracity, a virtue attached to justice, leads a man to tell the truth always and to act in conformity with it. This does not mean that every truth should be told to everybody, sermonizing right and left and boasting of a frankness which borders on insolence or lack of respect. But if every truth is not to be told, if there are truths which it is expedient to suppress, we should avoid speaking against the truth and falling into an officious lie, which we are tempted to tell in order to escape from an embarrassing situation. If we have committed this sin, we must accuse ourselves frankly of it, instead of seeking by false principles to justify this manner of acting. Thus to act would gradually bring about the loss of all loyalty and would destroy all confidence in human testimony, which is indispensable to the life of society.

It is indeed difficult at times, when faced with an indiscreet question, to keep a secret which has been entrusted to one and at the same time not to speak contrary to the truth. But if the Christian is habitually docile to the inspirations from above, the Holy Ghost will inspire him in such difficult circumstances as these with the reply to make or the question to ask, as He did the first Christians when they were led before the tribunals. Christ foretold this when He said: “When they shall deliver you up, take no thought how or what to speak: for it shall be given you in that hour what to speak. For it is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you.” This prediction was often verified during the French Revolution when priests were hunted down and when, to prevent them from bringing the last sacraments to the dying, they were asked all sorts of insidious questions. The Holy Ghost often inspired their answers, which, though not opposed to the truth, permitted them to continue their ministry.

Every Christian in the state of grace has the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, which render him docile to receive His inspirations, given especially in difficult circumstances where even our infused prudence is insufficient. St. Thomas says even that for this reason the gifts of the Holy Ghost are necessary to salvation as the complement of the infused virtues. The casuists should have remembered this great truth instead of having recourse to theories that occasionally were hazardous, in order to permit certain mental restrictions which were so slightly manifest that they bordered singularly on falsehood. It is better to recognize that one has committed a venial sin of lying than to have recourse to theories which falsify the definition of a lie, in order not to admit it there where it is. It is of great importance to preserve the spirit of uprightness of which our Lord speaks when He says: “Let your speech be yea, yea: no, no: and that which is over and above these, is of evil” He spoke in this manner to those who, in order to make their testimony believed, swore without reason by heaven or by the temple at Jerusalem. Disrespectful oaths expose one to perjury; if a man is accustomed always to tell the truth, others will believe his speech.

In treating of veracity, St. Thomas makes a remark which particularly concerns the interior life. This virtue, he says, inclines a man to keep silent about his own qualities, or not to manifest the whole good that is in him; this is done without prejudice to the truth, since not to speak of it, is not to deny its existence. St. Thomas even quotes on the subject the following reflection of Aristotle: “Those who represent themselves as being greater

than they are, are a source of annoyance to others, since they seem to wish to surpass others: whereas those who make less account of themselves are a source of pleasure, since they seem to defer to others by their moderation." St. Paul also says: "For though I should have a mind to glory, I shall not be foolish; for I will say the truth. But I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth in me, or anything he heareth from me."

The virtue pf veracity thus practiced, not only in speech but in action, in our whole way of living, brings truth into our lives. And when our life is established in the truth, then God, who is supreme Truth, inclines toward us by His divine inspirations, which gradually become the principle of a higher contemplation. To let ourselves fall into the habit of lying is to turn away from the truth and to deprive ourselves of the higher inspirations of the gift of wisdom. Habitual living in the truth prepares us to receive these inspirations, which make us penetrate and taste divine truth that we shall someday contemplate unveiled.

SUPERIOR SIMPLICITY, THE IMAGE OF THAT OF GOD

Another aspect of veracity, the superior simplicity of the saints, prepares the soul even more for contemplation. Simplicity is opposed not only to duplicity, but to every useless complexity, to all that is pretentious or tainted with affectation, like sentimentality which affects a love that one does not have. What falsity to wish to talk in a glowing style as if one were already in the seventh mansion of the interior castle, when one has not yet entered the fourth! How far superior is the simplicity of the Gospel!

We say that a child's gaze is simple because the child goes straight to the point without any mental reservation. With this meaning Christ says to us: "If thy eye be single, thy whole body shall be lightsome"; that is, if our intention is upright and simple, our whole life will be one, true, and luminous, instead of being divided like that of those who try to serve two masters, God and money, at the same time. In the presence of the complexities, the pretenses, the more or less untruthful complications of the world, we feel instinctively that the moral virtue of simplicity or of perfect loyalty is a reflection of a divine perfection.

The simplicity of God is that of the pure Spirit who is Truth itself and Goodness itself. In Him are no thoughts that succeed one another; there is but one thought, ever the same, which subsists and embraces every truth.

The simplicity of His intellect is that of a most pure gaze which, without any admixture of error or ignorance, has unchangeably as its object every knowable truth. The simplicity of His will or of His love is that of a sovereignly pure intention ordering all things admirably and permitting evil only for a greater good.

The most beautiful characteristic of God's simplicity is that it unites in itself perfections which in appearance are most contradictory: absolute immutability and absolute liberty; infinite wisdom and the freest good pleasure, which at times seems arbitrary to us; or again infinite justice, which is inexorable toward unrepented sin, and infinite mercy. All these perfections are fused and identified without destroying each other in the eminent simplicity of God.

We find a reflection of this lofty simplicity in the smile of a child and in the simplicity of the gaze of the saints, which is far superior to all the more or less untruthful intricacies of worldly wisdom and prudence.

What a false notion of simplicity we sometimes form when we imagine that it consists in telling frankly all that passes through our minds or hearts, at the risk of contradicting ourselves from one day to the next, when circumstances will have changed and the persons whom we see will have ceased to please us! This quasi-simplicity is instability itself and contradiction, and consequently complexity and more or less conscious untruth; whereas the superior simplicity of the saints, the image of that of God, is the simplicity of an unchanging wisdom and of a pure and strong love, superior to our impressionability and successive opinions.

St. Francis de Sales often speaks of simplicity. He reduces it to the upright intention of the love of God, which should prevail over all our sentiments, and which does not tarry over the useless search for a quantity of exercises that would make us lose sight of the unity of the end to be attained. He says also that simplicity is the best of artifices because it goes straight toward its goal. He adds that it is not opposed to prudence, and that it does not interfere with what others do.

The perfect soul is thus a simplified soul, which reaches the point of judging everything, not according to the subjective impression of the moment, but in the divine light, and of willing things only for God. And whereas the complex soul, which judges according to its whims, is disturbed for a trifle, the simplified soul is in a constant state of peace because of its wisdom and its love. This superior simplicity, which is quite

different from naivete, or ingenuousness, harmonizes perfectly, therefore, with the most cautious Christian prudence that is attentive to the least details of our acts and to their proximate or remote repercussion.

The soul of a St. Joseph, a St. John, a St. Francis, a St. Dominic, or a Cure of Ars gives us an idea of the simplicity of God; still more so does the soul of Mary, Morning Star, Queen of virgins and of all saints, Queen of peace. Higher still the holy soul of Christ reflects most purely the simplicity of God.

In Christ we find harmonized in a simple way the holy rigor of justice toward the hypocritical Pharisees and immense mercy toward all souls of which He is the Good Shepherd. In Him are united in the simplest manner the deepest humility and the loftiest dignity. For thirty years He lived the hidden life of a poor workman; He tells us that He came to serve, not to be served. On Holy Thursday He washed the feet of His disciples; He accepted the utmost humiliations of the Passion; He said simply to His Father: “My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt.” Before Pilate He proclaims simply His universal royalty: “My kingdom is not of this world.... Thou sayest that I am a king. For this was I born, and for this came I into the world; that I should give testimony to the truth. Every one that is of the truth, heareth My voice.” He dies simply, saying: “Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit.... It is consummated.” In this simplicity is such grandeur that the centurion, seeing Him die, could not refrain from exclaiming: “Indeed this was the Son of God.”

The centurion had the gaze of a contemplative; he sensed in the dying Christ, who seemed to be definitively conquered, Him who was winning the greatest victory over sin, the devil, and death. This light of contemplation was given to him by the dying Christ, by the Savior, who inclines more particularly toward the simple who are clean of heart.

This superior simplicity, even in souls without learning, is a preparation for the profound understanding of divine things. The Old Testament had already declared: “Seek Him [the Lord] in simplicity of heart.’ “Better is the poor man that walketh in his simplicity, than a rich man that is perverse in his lips.” “Let us all die in our innocency,” said the Machabees, under the injustice which afflicted them. “Obey,” says St. Paul,...”in simplicity of heart.” And he exhorts the Corinthians to beware lest they “fall from the

simplicity that is in Christ." Simplicity must be observed toward God, superiors, and self. It is the truth of life.

This simplicity, says Bossuet, is what permits limpid souls "to enter the heights of God," the ways of Providence, the unsearchable mysteries at which complex souls take scandal, the mysteries of the infinite justice, the infinite mercy, and the sovereign liberty of the divine good pleasure. All these mysteries, despite their obscurity, are in their loftiness simple for the simple.

Why are these mysteries simple for some and obscure for others? The answer lies in the fact that in divine things the most simple, like the Our Father, are also the loftiest and the most profound. We forget this fact because the inverse is true in the things of the world, in which good and evil are intimately mingled. Hence they are often very complex, and then he who wishes to be simple in this domain lacks penetration; he remains naive, ingenuous, and superficial. In divine things, on the contrary, simplicity is united to depth and elevation, for divine things that are highest in God and deepest in our hearts are simplicity itself.

We have an example in the profound simplicity of the Blessed Virgin Mary and also in that of St. Joseph, who, after our Lord and Mary, was the most eminently simple and contemplative soul the world has ever seen. His simplicity was the effect of his unique predestination as foster father of the Savior together with the habits of life of a humble carpenter. Leo XIII, in his encyclical on the Patronage of St. Joseph, says: "There is no doubt that more than anyone he approached that supereminent dignity by which the Mother of God so highly surpasses all creatures."

St. Thomas Aquinas also had in a very eminent degree the virtue of simplicity, which is an aspect of veracity, of the truth of life.

In recent times God has given us a lofty example of the simplicity of the saints united to the contemplation of the mysteries of faith in the person of St. Teresa of the Child Jesus. She says: "Far from resembling those beautiful souls who, from their childhood, practiced all sorts of macerations, I made mine consist solely in breaking my will, in withholding an answer, in rendering little services without drawing attention to them, and many other things of this kind." "In my little way, there are only ordinary things; little souls must be able to do all that I do." "How easy it is to please Jesus, to ravish His heart," she used to say; "one has only to love Him, without looking at oneself, without too greatly examining one's

defects. Consequently, when I happen to fall into some fault, I pick myself up at once. A glance toward Jesus and the knowledge of one's own wretchedness make reparation for everything. He calls Himself the 'Flower of the fields' (Cant. 2: I) in order to show how greatly He cherishes simplicity."

Speaking of her way of training the novices, she remarked on the subject of disputes which may arise between two persons: "Nothing is easier than to cast the blame on the absent. I do just the contrary. My duty is to tell the truth to the souls entrusted to me, and I tell it."

Again she states: "It is an illusion to think that one can do good outside obedience." And we see to what a degree in her own life were realized these words of hers: "The Lord is often pleased to give wisdom to little ones." It is not therefore surprising that His Holiness Pius XI should have declared in his homily for the feast of her canonization: "It has therefore pleased the divine Goodness to endow and to enrich Sister Teresa with an entirely exceptional gift of wisdom.... The Spirit of truth showed her and taught her what He ordinarily hides from the wise and prudent and reveals to the humble." Pope Benedict XV had spoken in like terms: "This happy servant of God had herself so much knowledge that she was able to indicate to others the true way of salvation." Her life and doctrine show how greatly the superior simplicity of the saints opens their intellect and renders it docile to the inspirations of the Holy Ghost, that they may penetrate and taste the mysteries of salvation and attain to union with God.

The saints know well what this union demands that it may be preserved in the midst of circumstances often unforeseen and painful. Superior simplicity united to discretion reminds them, no matter what happens, that "to them that love God [and persevere in this love], all things work together unto good."

To some it seems useless in a treatise on ascetical and mystical theology to insist on virtues such as these, and they are in a hurry to deal with questions on infused contemplation that are disputed among theologians and psychologists. We think, on the contrary, that it is extremely necessary to insist, as all the saints have done and as is done in every cause of beatification, on these Christian virtues which have so profound an influence on thought and life. Then the traditional doctrine on infused contemplation appears as a resultant of all that has been said about the progress of the acquired virtues, the infused virtues, and the seven gifts of

the Holy Ghost in interior souls truly detached from themselves and almost continually united to God. Under the pretext that the doctrine relative to the Christian virtues and the seven gifts is known by all, some never examine it deeply. Contemplation is, nevertheless, in the sweet and profound intuition of the divine truths known by all Christians, for example, of those expressed in the Our Father. The virtue of simplicity, conceived as a reflection in us of the divine simplicity, reminds us of this fact.

Chapter 17

The Spirit of Faith and Its Progress

We have spoken of the progress of the Christian moral virtues in the illuminative way; now we shall discuss the progress of the theological virtues, first of all that of faith and its influence on our whole life. By so doing we shall be prepared to see what mental prayer should be in the illuminative way.

We shall see the nature of the spirit of faith, then how it should grow in us, finally what its excellence and power should be that we may continually live by it, according to the words of Scripture: “The just man liveth by faith.”

THE NATURE OF THE SPIRIT OF FAITH

In reality man always lives according to one spirit or another; whether it be according to the spirit of nature, when he does not go beyond practical naturalism, or according to the spirit of faith, when he tends seriously toward his last end, toward heaven and sanctity.

The spirit according to which we live is a special manner of considering all things, of seeing, judging, feeling, loving, sympathizing, willing, and acting. It is a particular mentality or disposition that colors almost all our judgments and acts, and communicates to our life its elevation or depression. Consequently the spirit of faith is a special manner of judging all things from the higher point of view of essentially supernatural faith, which is based on the authority of God revealing, on the veracity of God, Author of grace and glory, who by the road of faith wishes to lead us to eternal life.

We may better grasp the nature of the spirit of faith by considering the spirit opposed to it, which is a sort of spiritual blindness that enables man to

attain divine things only materially and from without. Thus Israel, the chosen people, did not have a sufficiently spiritual understanding of the privilege which it had received and in which, with the coming of the Savior, other peoples, called also to receive the divine revelation, were to share. The Jews thought that the bread reserved to the children of Israel should not be given to pagans. Christ reminds us of this way of thinking in the first words He addresses to the woman of Canaan; then He immediately inspires her with the admirable reply: "Yea, Lord; for the whelps also eat of the crumbs that fall from the table of their masters." Then Jesus answering, said to her: "O woman, great is thy faith: be it done to thee as thou wilt. And her daughter was cured from that hour."

The spirit of faith, which the Jews lacked and this humble woman possessed, is the spirit of divine and universal truth, the very object of faith, above any particularism of peoples or human societies. Thus St. Paul, who was at first strictly attached to the Synagogue and its prejudices, became the Apostle of the Gentiles. Similarly the glory of St. Augustine and St. Thomas does not consist in their being the masters of only a group of disciples, but in their being the common doctors of the Church.

The spirit of faith can have this universality only because of its eminent simplicity, which is a participation in the wisdom of God. The act of faith, as St. Thomas points out, is far above reasoning, a simple act by which we believe at the same time in God revealing and in God revealed. By this essentially supernatural act we adhere infallibly to God who reveals and to the mysteries revealed. Thus by this simple act, superior to all reasoning, we tend in obscurity toward the contemplation of divine things above all the certitudes of a natural order. The essentially supernatural certitude of infused faith, as we said before, greatly surpasses the rational certitude that man can have of the divine origin of the Gospel through the historical and critical study of the miracles which confirm it.

Faith, which is a gift of God, is like a spiritual sense enabling us to hear the harmony of revealed mysteries, or the harmony of the voice of God, before we are admitted to see Him face to face. Infused faith is like a superior musical sense enabling us to hear more or less indistinctly the meaning of a mysterious spiritual harmony of which God is the author. St. Paul states the matter clearly: "We have received not the spirit of this world, but the Spirit that is of God; that we may know the things that are given us from God. Which things also we speak, not in the learned words of human

wisdom; but in the doctrine of the Spirit, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the sensual man perceiveth not these things that are of the Spirit of God; for it is foolishness to him, and he cannot understand, because it is spiritually examined. But the spiritual man judgeth all things; and he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ."

For judging in this manner, faith is aided by the gift of understanding, which makes man penetrate the meaning of the mysteries, and by the gift of wisdom, which makes him taste them. But it is faith itself which makes us adhere infallibly to the word of God.

The theological virtue of infused faith, in spite of the obscurity of the mysteries, is very superior to the intuitive and very luminous knowledge which the angels possess naturally. Infused faith, in reality, belongs to the same order as eternal life, of which it is like the seed; as St. Paul says, it is "the substance of things to be hoped for," the basis of our justification. The angels themselves needed to receive this gratuitous gift of God in order to tend to the supernatural end to which they were called.

As St. Francis de Sales says in substance, when God gives us faith, He enters our soul and speaks to our spirit, not by way of discourse but by His inspiration. When faith comes, the soul strips Itself of all discourses and arguments and, subjecting them to faith, it enthrones faith on them, recognizing it as queen. When the light of faith has cast the splendor of its truths on our understanding, our will immediately feels the warmth of celestial love.

THE GROWTH OF INFUSED FAITH IN US

It is important for the sanctification of our souls to remember that faith should daily increase in us. It may be greater in a poorly educated but holy, just man than in a theologian. St. Thomas Aquinas states: "A man's faith may be described as being greater, in one way, on the part of his intellect, on account of its greater certitude and firmness, and, in another way, on the part of his will, on account of his greater promptitude, devotion, or confidence." The reason is that "faith results from the gift of grace, which is not equally in all." Thus our Lord says of certain of His disciples that they are still men "of little faith," "slow of heart to believe," whereas He said to the woman of Canaan: "O woman, great is thy faith."

“But my just man liveth by faith,” and increasingly so. There are holy individuals who have never made a conceptual analysis of the dogmas of the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Eucharist, and who have never deduced from these dogmas the theological conclusions known to all theologians; but in these souls the infused virtue of faith is far more elevated, more intense than in many theologians. Many recent beatifications and canonizations confirm this fact. When we read the life of St. Bernadette of Lourdes or of St. Gemma Galgani, we can well exclaim: God grant that I may one day have as great faith as these souls!

Theologians say justly that faith may grow either in extension or in depth or in intensity. Our faith is extended when we gradually learn all that has been defined by the Church on the mysteries of the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Eucharist, and the other points of Christian doctrine. Thus theologians know explicitly all that has been defined by the Church; but it does not follow that they have a faith as intense and profound as it is extended. On the contrary, among the faithful there are saints who are ignorant of several points of doctrine defined by the Church, for example, the redemptive Incarnation and the Eucharist, and who penetrate profoundly these mysteries of salvation as they are simply announced in the Gospel. St. Benedict Joseph Labre, for example, never had occasion to read a theological treatise on the Incarnation, but he lived profoundly by this mystery and that of the Eucharist.

The apostles asked for this faith that is greater in depth and intensity when they said to the Lord: “Increase our faith.” And Jesus answered: “All things whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive.” We shall obtain it especially if we ask perseveringly for ourselves what is necessary or manifestly useful to salvation, like the increase of the virtues.

THE EXCELLENCE AND THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT OF FAITH

The value of the spirit of faith is measured in trial by the difficulties which it surmounts. St. Paul says this eloquently in the Epistle to the Hebrews: “By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered Isaac: and he that had received the promises, offered up his only begotten son.... Accounting that God is able to raise up even from the dead.... By faith he [Moses] left Egypt, not fearing the fierceness of the king [Pharao]: for he endured as seeing Him that is invisible.... For the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon,

Barac, Samson, Jephthe, David, Samuel, and the prophets; who by faith conquered kingdoms, wrought justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions [like Daniel], quenched the violence of fire [like the three children in the furnace].... And others had trial of mockeries and stripes, moreover also of bands and prisons. They were stoned [like Zachary], they were cut asunder [like Isaias], they were tempted, they were put to death by the sword, they wandered about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being in want, distressed, afflicted; of whom the world was not worthy." (This same type of thing has been renewed in our own day in Russia and Mexico.) And St. Paul concludes: "And therefore,... let us run by patience to the fight proposed to us: looking on Jesus, the Author and Finisher of faith, who having joy set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and now sitteth on the right hand of the throne of God."

In his commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews, St. Thomas Aquinas, carried away by the word of God and raised to the contemplation of this mystery, tells us: "Consider Christ who bore such contradiction on the part of sinners..., and in no matter what tribulation, you will find the remedy in the cross of Jesus. You will find in it the example of all the virtues. As St. Gregory the Great says, if we recall the passion of our Savior, there is nothing so hard and so painful that we cannot bear it with patience and love."

The more the spirit of faith grows in us, the more we grasp the sense of the mystery of Christ, who came into this world for our salvation. That we may have this understanding, the Church, our Mother, places daily before our eyes at the end of Mass the prologue of the Gospel of St. John, which contains the synthesis of what revelation teaches about the mystery of Christ. Let us nourish our souls daily with this sublime page which we shall never sufficiently penetrate. It recalls to us the three births of the Word: His eternal birth, His temporal birth according to the flesh, and His spiritual birth in souls. It is the summary of what is loftiest in the four Gospels.

In this summary of Christian faith we have, first of all, the eternal birth of the Word: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." We have here a clear statement of the consubstantiality of the Word. "No man has seen God at any time: the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." Thus light is thrown on the loftiest words of the Messianic psalms: "The Lord hath said to Me: Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee," today in the unique

instant of immobile eternity. “For to which of the angels,” St. Paul asks, “hath He said at any time: Thou art My Son, today have I begotten Thee?” The Word, splendor of the Father, is infinitely above all creatures, whom He created and preserves.

We should also nourish our souls with what is said in the same prologue about the temporal birth of the Son of God: “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we saw His glory, the glory as it were of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth.” This temporal birth of Christ is the realization of all the Messianic prophecies and the source of all the graces that men will receive until the end of the world.

Lastly, we should live by what this same prologue tells us of the spiritual birth of the Word in our souls: “He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, He gave them power to be made the sons of God, to them that believe in His name, who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” He gave them to become children of God by adoption, as He is the Son of God by nature. Our sonship is a figure of His, for we read in the same chapter: “And of His fullness we all have received, and grace for grace.”

To show us how He wishes to live in us, the Son of God says to us: “If anyone love Me, he will keep My word. And My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and will make Our abode with him.” It is not only the created gift of grace that will come, it is the divine Persons: the Father, the Son, and also the Holy Ghost promised by the Savior to His disciples.

Instead of daily reciting the Credo and the Gloria in a mechanical manner, instead of almost mechanically saying the prologue of the Fourth Gospel, we should live more profoundly by this very substantial abridgment of divine revelation. The spirit of faith should thus, while growing, normally give us in ever greater measure the meaning of the mystery of Christ, the supernatural meaning that should gradually become penetrating and sweet contemplation, the source of peace and joy, according to St. Paul’s words: “Rejoice in the Lord always.... And the peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding; keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.”

A PRACTICAL MANNER OF LIVING BY THE SPIRIT OF FAITH

We should live by the spirit of faith by judging all things under its superior light, thus considering God first of all, then our own soul, next our

neighbor, and all the events of life.

Is it necessary to say that we should consider God in the light of faith? Unfortunately, it is only too necessary. Do we not often consider God Himself in the light of our prejudices, our very human sentiments, our petty passions, contrary to the testimony that He Himself gives us in Scripture? Does it not happen even in prayer that we listen to ourselves, that we ascribe to the Lord our own reflections which are more or less inspired by our self-love? In hours of presumption, are we not inclined to think that the divine mercy is for us, and divine justice for those who do not please us? In moments of discouragement, on the contrary, do we not in practice doubt the love of God for us, and His boundless mercy? We often disfigure the spiritual physiognomy of God, considering it from the point of view of our egoism, and not from that of salvation, under the true light of divine revelation.

From the point of view of faith, God appears not through the movements of our self-love, but in the mirror of the mysteries of the life and passion of the Savior and in that of the life of the Church, renewed daily by the Eucharist. Then the eye of faith, which St. Catherine of Siena often speaks of, is increasingly purified by the mortification of the senses, of inordinate passions, of personal judgment and self-will. Only then does this blindfold of pride gradually fall away, this veil which hinders us from glimpsing divine things or allows only their shadows and difficulties to appear. Often we consider the truths of faith in the same way as people who see the stained-glass windows of a cathedral only from without; it is under the interior light that we should learn to contemplate them.

We should consider ourselves in the light of faith. If we see ourselves only under a natural light, we discover in ourselves natural qualities that we often exaggerate. Then contact with reality, with trial, shows us our exaggeration; and we fall into depression or discouragement.

In the light of faith we would recognize the supernatural treasures that God placed in us by baptism and increased by Communion. We would daily realize a little better the value of sanctifying grace, of the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity in us; we would consider what the fruit of a fervent Communion should be; the grandeur of the Christian vocation, in the light of the precept of love, would become increasingly apparent to us.

We would also see more clearly the obstacles that hinder the development of grace in us: the levity that makes us forget we have in us

the seed of eternal life, and a foolish pride, completely contrary to the spirit of wisdom. From this higher point of view, we would not delay in discovering in ourselves two things that are exceedingly important for us to know: our predominant fault and our principal attraction of grace, the black and the white, what must be destroyed and what should grow.

But it is our neighbor especially whom we forget to consider in the light of faith. We see him in the light of reason, which is deformed by our prejudices, egoism, pride, jealousies, and other passions. Consequently we approve in our neighbor what pleases us from a human point of view, what is conformed to our natural tastes or to our whims, what is useful to us, what makes us important, what our neighbor owes us. As a result, we condemn in him what annoys us, often what renders him superior to us, what offends us. How many rash, harsh, pitiless judgments, how many more or less conscious calumnies spring from this gaze that is darkened by selflove and pride!

If we could see our neighbor in the light of faith, with a pure spiritual gaze, what profit for him and for us! Then we would see in our superiors the representatives of God; we would obey them wholeheartedly without criticism, as we would our Lord Himself. In people who are naturally not congenial to us, we would see souls redeemed by the blood of Christ, who are part of His mystical body and perhaps nearer to His Sacred Heart than we are. Our supernatural gaze would pierce the opaque envelope of flesh and blood which prevents us from seeing the souls that surround us. Often we live for long years in the company of beautiful souls without ever suspecting it. We must merit to see souls in order to love them deeply and sincerely. Had we this love, we could then tell them salutary truths and hear such truths from them.

Similarly, if we saw in the light of faith persons who naturally please us, we would occasionally discover in them supernatural virtues that would greatly elevate and purify our affection. With benevolence we would also see the obstacles to the perfect reign of our Lord in them, and we could with true charity give them friendly advice or receive it from them in order to advance seriously in the way of God.

Lastly, we should see all the events of our lives, whether agreeable or painful, in the light of faith in order to live truly by the spirit of faith. We are often content to see the felicitous or unfortunate occurrences, as well as the facts of daily life, under their sensible aspect, which is accessible to the

senses of the animal, or from the point of view of our more or less deformed reason. Rarely do we consider them from the supernatural point of view which would show us, as St. Paul says, that “to them that love God all things work together unto good,” even contradictions, the most painful and unforeseen vexations, even sin, says St. Augustine, if we humble ourselves for it.

In the injustices of men which we may have to undergo, we would also often discover the justice of God and, when wrongly accused of faults, we would see a well-merited punishment for hidden sins for which no one reproves us. We would also comprehend the meaning of the divine trials and of the purification which God has in view when He sends them to us.

We shall speak farther on of the passive purification of faith by certain of these trials, which free this theological virtue from all alloy and bring into powerful relief its formal motive: the first revealing Truth. Before reaching this stage, let us grow in faith, not judging everything from the sole point of view of reason. We must know how to renounce certain inferior lights or quasi-lights, that we may receive others that are far higher. The sun must set to enable us to see the stars in the depths of the heavens; likewise we must renounce the misuse of reason, which may be called practical rationalism, that we may discover the highly superior splendor of the great mysteries of faith and live profoundly by them.

Chapter 18

Confidence in God; Its Certitude

Since we have spoken of the spirit of faith, it is fitting that we consider what hope in God, or confidence in Him, should be in proficients, and that we state precisely what must be understood by the certitude of hope, which is based on that of faith and has a character sui generis which it is important to note.

Infused hope, no less than faith, is necessary to salvation and perfection. Moreover, to have a generous interior life, it is not sufficient to hope in God weakly and intermittently, as so many Christians do. His often obscure and occasionally disconcerting good pleasure must be loved, accepted with a spirit of filial submission, and the divine help awaited with a firm, humble, and persevering confidence.

DEFECTS TO BE AVOIDED

In connection with this virtue, we should avoid two contrary defects: presumption and discouragement. By noting them at the beginning of our discussion, we may see more clearly the true nature of hope, which rises like a summit between these opposing deviations.

There are two kinds of presumption: either man relies excessively on his own powers, like the Pelagians, not asking as much as he should for the help of God, not recalling sufficiently the necessity of grace for every salutary act; or, on the other hand, he expects from the divine mercy what God cannot grant: for example, pardon without true repentance, or eternal life without any effort to merit it. These two forms of presumption are mutually contradictory, since the first presumes on our strength, whereas the second expects from God what He has in no way promised.

Moreover, when trial and contradiction come, the presumptuous fall into the opposite defect, discouragement, as if the difficult good (bonum arduum), which is the object of hope, becomes inaccessible. Discouragement might lead to spiritual sloth, to acedia, which makes a man judge the work of sanctification too difficult and turns him away from every effort in this direction. He might thus even fall into despair. Many souls oscillate thus between presumption and discouragement, and never succeed in arriving, at least practically, at a true notion of Christian hope and in living by it as they should.

THE TRUE NATURE OF CHRISTIAN HOPE

Less is said about the virtue of hope than about faith and charity. Yet hope is of great importance. Most certainly Christian hope, as an infused and theological virtue, is essentially supernatural, and consequently immensely surpasses the natural desire to be happy and also a natural knowledge of the divine goodness.

By infused hope we tend toward eternal life, toward supernatural beatitude, which is nothing less than the possession of God: seeing God immediately as He sees Himself, loving Him as He loves Himself. We tend toward Him, relying on the divine help which He has promised us. The formal motive of hope is not our effort, it is God our Helper (Deus auxiliator et auxilians), according to His mercy, His promises, His omnipotence.

Thus we desire God for ourselves, but first for Himself; for He is the last End of the act of hope, which should, moreover, be vivified by charity: in other words, by hope, we desire God, our last End, not by subordinating Him to ourselves, like the food necessary to our subsistence, but by subordinating ourselves to Him. Thus it is evident, in contradistinction to the teaching of the quietists, that hope, although inferior to charity, contains nothing inordinate. It is a lofty virtue, though not the greatest of all.

Since, in fact, among the moral virtues, acquired magnanimity, and especially infused magnanimity, has a high place, so far as it makes us tend to great things (as we see in the founders of religious orders, in their works and struggles); with even greater reason, infused hope is a lofty virtue that makes us tend not only toward great things, but also toward God Himself to be possessed for eternity. This truth is emphasized by the fact that hope

does not make us desire only an inferior degree of supernatural beatitude, but eternal life itself without fixing the degree. Indeed it leads us to advance always more generously toward God by giving us a greater desire for Him.

THE CERTITUDE OF HOPE

In this tendency of hope toward eternal life, there is at one and the same time a mystery still unknown and a certitude, about the nature of which some are deceived. St. Thomas explains it clearly, as he also explains the different types of certitude: those of knowledge, faith, prudence, and the gift of wisdom.

He raises first the following objection: No man can be certain of his salvation without a special revelation, which is rare; it seems, therefore, that hope cannot be certain. Moreover, it is not true that all who hope will be saved; it happens that some among them become discouraged in time and finally are lost. It seems, therefore, that hope is not truly certain.

In this problem, there is the element of the unknown, a mystery; yet hope remains certain. This mystery with its light and shade is one of the most beautiful in Christian teaching. As St. Thomas shows clearly, the certitude of hope differs from that of faith since it is not a certitude of the intellect, but a certitude shared in the will and in its aspect as a tendency. “Certitude,” says the holy doctor, “is essentially in the cognitive faculty; but it is also by participation in all that is moved infallibly to its end by the cognitive power.... In this way we say that nature works with certainty, since it is moved by the divine intellect which moves everything with certainty to its end (the bee builds surely its hive and makes honey).... Thus too, hope tends with certitude to its end, as though sharing in the certitude of faith, which is in the cognitive faculty.” Likewise, in the order of human affairs, when we have taken the train for Rome, without being absolutely sure of arriving, we are certain of going in the right direction, and we hope to reach the end of our journey.

In other words, by certain hope we have not as yet the certitude of our future salvation, which is not revealed to us (for that we would need a special revelation), but we tend certainly toward salvation, under the infallible direction of faith and according to the promises of God, “who never commands the impossible, but who orders us to do what lies in our power and to ask for help for what we cannot do.” The certitude of

Christian hope is not, therefore, as yet the certitude of salvation, but it is the firmest kind of certitude that we are tending toward salvation. From this statement spring many practical conclusions on the qualities or properties of Christian hope, which should grow in us with hope.

THE QUALITIES OF CHRISTIAN HOPE

How should we hope in God to avoid the twofold presumption that we have spoken of and the discouragement that often follows it? The Council of Trent tells us: “All should have a very firm confidence in the help of God. For if men do not fail to correspond to divine grace, as God Himself has begun the work of salvation in us, He will finish it, working in us ‘both to will and to accomplish.’ However, ‘He that thinketh himself to stand, let him take heed lest he fall’ and ‘with fear and trembling work out his salvation,’ In labors, vigils, prayer, alms, fasts, purity,! according to these words of the Apostle: ‘For if you live according to the flesh, you shall die: but if by the Spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live.’ “

From this admirable doctrine it follows that Christian hope should have two qualities or properties: it should be laborious to avoid the presumption which expects the divine reward without working for it; and it should be firm, invincible, to avoid discouragement.

Hope should be laborious because it tends toward a possible, difficult good, but a difficult, arduous future good, which is the object of merit. We must work at our salvation, first of all, to preserve in ourselves a living hope and not a vain presumption. We must work in the spirit of humility and abnegation to preserve a keen desire for eternal life, for God, our beatitude, a desire whose ardor would be destroyed by the intensity of contrary desires, like those of earthly joys and of ambition. This keen desire for heaven, this ardent desire for God, is too rare even among good Christians. And yet, if there is one thing we should desire with a holy ardor, is it not the divine union? What will we desire ardently, therefore, if we do not have a keen desire for God?

Furthermore, we must work to merit eternal beatitude: to see God as He sees Himself and to love Him as He loves Himself. Without doubt, we need grace to attain this end; but it is given to us, says St. Augustine, not that we may do nothing, but that we may work with continually increasing generosity until the end: “He that shall persevere unto the end, he shall be

saved." "For he also that striveth for the mastery is not crowned, except he strive lawfully." We must work to remove the obstacles of concupiscence, of sloth, pride, dissension, ambition, and to observe the precepts with always greater perfection according to the spirit of our vocation.

Laborious hope together with the gift of fear, or the fear of sin, saves us from presumption. By this virtue and this gift of fear, is preserved the equilibrium of the spirit in divine things, as a little lower in the order of the virtues, not theological but moral, spiritual balance is safeguarded by humility and magnanimity, which are like the two sides of a scale, that we may escape falling either into pride or into pusillanimity.

Lastly, in the midst of difficulties that may present themselves until death, and even until our entrance into heaven, hope should be most firm and invincible. It should not be broken by temptations, trials, or the sight of our sins. It should never yield to temptations coming from the world, the flesh, or the devil: "If God be for us, who is against us?" God never commands the impossible; more than that, as St. Paul says: "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able; but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it."

Hope should not be broken either by the trials which the Lord sends to purify us and to make us work for the salvation of souls. In time of trial we should not forget that the formal motive of hope is God our Helper, Deus auxilians, according to His mercy, promises, and omnipotence. Because Job had the virtue of hope, he declared: "Although He should kill me, I will trust in Him." And in the Epistle to the Romans we read: "Who against hope believed in hope; that he [Abraham] might be made the father of many nations, according to that which was said to him: 'So shall thy seed be.' " Contrary to every human hope, in spite of his great age, he hoped, and even prepared himself for the immolation of his son Isaac, the son of promise, from whom his posterity was to be born.

The aim of the purification of hope is to free the virtue from all alloy of inordinate self-love, but not to lead us to the sacrifice of the desire of our salvation, as the quietists declared. Such a sacrifice would be equivalent to renouncing our love of God above all for all eternity, and, by sacrificing hope under the pretext of pure love, we would also sacrifice charity. We must, on the contrary, hope against all hope.

Finally, confidence should not be broken by the sight and the memory of our sins. Therefore St. Catherine of Siena used to say: "Never consider your

past sins except in the light of infinite mercy, so that the memory of them may not discourage you, but may lead you to place your confidence in the infinite value of the Savior's merits."

St. Teresa of the Child Jesus stated that her immense confidence in God did not come from the knowledge of her innocence, but from the thought of the infinite mercy and infinite merits of the Savior, and that, even if she were the greatest wretch on earth, her confidence in God would not for that reason be diminished. This is a magnificent way of stating that the formal motive of hope, a theological virtue, is not our effort or our innocence, but God our Helper, Deus auxilians, helpful Mercy.

ADMIRABLE EFFECTS OF LIVING HOPE CONFIRMED BY TRIALS

After various trials, hope, which has been greatly strengthened, surmounts all obstacles. According to St. Paul: "We... glory in the hope of the glory of the sons of God. And not only so; but we glory also in tribulation, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience trial; and trial hope; and hope confoundeth not, because the charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost who is given to us."

Commenting on St. Paul's words, St. Thomas says: "St. Paul shows us first of all the grandeur of hope by the grandeur of the thing hoped for (that is, eternal life), then the power, the vehemence of hope. In fact, he who strongly hopes for something, willingly bears for that reason difficulties and bitterness. And therefore the sign that we have a strong hope in Christ is that we glory not only in the thought of future glory, but in our tribulations and the trials which we have to bear. 'Through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God.' Moreover, the Apostle St. James says: 'My brethren, count it all joy, when you shall fall into divers temptations, knowing that the trying of your faith worketh patience.' And from the fact that a man bears tribulation patiently, he is rendered excellent, probatus. We read of the just in the Book of Wisdom: 'Though in the sight of men they suffered torments, their hope is full of immortality. Afflicted in few things, in many they shall be well rewarded: because God hath tried them, and found them worthy of Himself. As gold in the furnace He hath proved them, and as a victim of a holocaust He hath received them.' Thus trial causes hope to grow, and hope does not deceive us, for God does not abandon those who trust Him. 'No one hath hoped in the Lord, and hath been

confounded.’ It is evident that the Lord will not refuse Himself to those who love Him, to those to whom He has already given His Son.... He has prepared eternal beatitude for those who love Him above all else.”

From what has just been said we perceive that, contrary to the opinion held by the quietists, in great trials, instead of sacrificing our desire of salvation, we must “hope against all hope” while loving God for Himself. Thus charity increases greatly; it becomes pure love which, far from destroying confidence, vivifies it.

Certainly these trials serve to purify hope of all self-love, of the desire of our own perfection, so far as it is ours. A servant of God who had desired to become a saint later expressed her desire under a less personal and more objective form: “Lord, may Your kingdom come more and more profoundly in me.” She was happy not to have the reputation of being a saint, happy to be but little esteemed by those about her; she thus aspired truly to be always more closely united to our Lord, to be more loved by Him. Thus hope grew as it was being purified.

So Abraham, the father of believers, hoped, when he was tried and prepared to sacrifice his son Isaac. He did not cease to believe that this child was the son of promise, that his posterity would be greatly blessed, “accounting that God is able to raise up even from the dead.”

St. Philip Neri used to pray: “I thank Thee with my whole heart, Lord God, that things do not go as I should like them to, but as Thou dost wish. It is better that they should go according to Thy way, which is better than mine.”

St. Nicholas of Flue admirably expressed in a prayer the union of firmest hope and of pure love: “Lord, take from me all that hinders me from drawing near to Thee; give me all that will lead me to Thee. Take me from myself and give me entirely to Thyself.” We can also say, as an expression of hope and pure love: “Give Thyself, Lord, entirely to me, that I may love Thee purely and forever.”

As a practical conclusion, let us remember that in our lives there are two parallel series of daily facts: that of the outward events which succeed one another from morning to night, and that of the actual graces which are offered to us and even bestowed on us from moment to moment that we may draw from these occurrences, whether pleasurable or painful, the greatest spiritual profit. If we thought often of this fact, there would be realized increasingly in our lives St. Paul’s statement: “To them that love

God all things work together unto good," even annoyances, rebuffs, and contradictions, which are so many occasions of lifting our hearts toward God in a spirit of faith and confidence in Him.

St. Francis de Sales says in his Second Conference on Hope: "Although we do not feel confidence in God, we must not fail to make acts of hope. Distrust of ourselves and of our own strength should be accompanied by humility and faith, which obtain the grace of confidence in God. The more unfortunate we are, the more we should have confidence in Him who sees our state, and who can come to our assistance. No one trusts in God without reaping the fruits of his hope. The soul should remain tranquil and rely on Him who can give the increase to what as been sown and planted. We must not cease to labor, but in toiling we must trust in God for the success of our works."

Chapter 19

The love of Conformity to the Divine Will

Having spoken of the spirit of faith and of trust in God, we must consider what the progress of charity should be in the illuminative way, that the soul may pass from the mercenary or interested love of the imperfect to perfect charity. Consequently we shall discuss the signs of imperfect love, then those of the progress of charity, the relations of charity with our natural dispositions, and its progressive conformity to the divine will.

THE SIGNS OF IMPERFECT LOVE

St. Catherine of Siena indicates clearly in her Dialogue the signs of mercenary love; we quoted this passage earlier in this work. The saint says in substance that love remains imperfect in the just man when, in the service of God, he is still too much attached to his own interests, when he still seeks himself and has an excessive desire of his own satisfaction.

The same imperfection is then found in his love of his neighbor. In loving his neighbor, he seeks self, takes complacency, for example, in his own natural activity, in which there is rash haste, egoistical eagerness, occasionally followed by coldness when his love is not returned, and he believes that he sees in others ingratitude, a failure to appreciate the benefits he bestows on them.

In the same chapter the saint points out that the imperfection of this love of God and souls is clearly shown by the fact that, as soon as we are deprived of the consolations that we had in God, this love no longer suffices us and can no longer subsist; it languishes and often grows colder and colder as God withdraws His spiritual consolations and sends us struggles and contradictions in order to exercise us in virtue. Nevertheless He acts thus only to put our inordinate self-love to death and to cause the charity

that we received at baptism to grow. This charity should become a living flame of love and notably elevate all our legitimate affections.

THE NATURE OF CHARITY AND THE MARKS OF ITS PROGRESS

The signs of the progress of charity are deduced from its very nature. Scripture tells us in several places that the just man is the “friend of God.” St. Thomas, explaining ‘these words of Scripture, shows us that charity is essentially a love of friendship we should have for God because of His infinite goodness which radiates on us, vivifying us and drawing us to Himself.

Every true friendship, St. Thomas tells us, implies three qualities: it is first of all a love of benevolence by which a man wishes good to another, as to himself; in this it differs from the love of concupiscence or of covetousness, by which one desires a good for oneself, as one desires a fruit or the bread necessary to subsistence. We ought to wish our friends the good which is suitable for them, and we should wish that God may reign profoundly over minds and hearts.

Moreover, every true friendship presupposes a love of mutual benevolence; it is not sufficient that it exist on the part of one person only. The two friends should wish each other well. And the more elevated the good which they wish each other, the more noble is this friendship. It is based on virtue when friends wish each other not only what is pleasant or useful like the goods of earth and fortune, but what is virtuous—fidelity to duty, progress in the love of moral and spiritual good.

Lastly, to constitute a true friendship, this mutual love of benevolence does not suffice. We may, in fact, have benevolence for a person at a distance, whom we know only through hearsay, and that person may have the same benevolence for us; we are not, however, friends for that reason. Friendship requires in addition a community of life (convivere). It implies that people know each other, love each other, live together, spiritually at least, by the exchange of most secret thoughts and feelings. Friendship thus conceived tends to a very close union of thought, feeling, willing, prayer, sacrifice, and action.

These three characters of true friendship—the love of benevolence, mutual love, and community of life—are precisely found in the charity which unites us to God and to souls in Him.

The natural inclination which already subsists in the depths of our will, in spite of original sin, inclines us to love God, the Author of our nature, more than ourselves and above all, as in an organism the part loves the whole more than itself, as the hand exposes itself naturally to preserve the body and especially the head. But this natural inclination, attenuated by original sin, cannot, without the grace which heals (gratia sanans), lead us to an efficacious love of God above all things.

Far above this natural inclination, we received in baptism sanctifying grace and charity with faith and hope. And charity is precisely this love of mutual benevolence which makes us wish God, the Author of grace, the good that is suitable to Him, His supreme reign over souls, as He wishes our good for time and eternity. Such a desire is indeed a friendship based on community of life, for God has communicated to us a participation in His intimate life by giving us grace, the seed of eternal life. By grace, we are "born of God," as we read in the prologue of St. John's Gospel; we resemble God as children resemble their father. And this community of life implies a permanent union, which is at times only habitual, for example, during sleep; at others, when we make an act of love of God, it is actual. Then there is truly community of life, the meeting of the paternal love of God for His child, and of the love of the child for the Father who vivifies it and blesses it. This is especially true when, by a special inspiration, the Lord inclines us to an act of infused love, which we could not make with common, actual grace. There is a spiritual communion, the prelude of the spiritual communion of heaven, which will no longer be measured by time, but by the indivisible instant of changeless eternity.

Such is indeed the friendship with God which begins on earth. Because Abraham had this love, he was called the friend of God. For the same reason the Book of Wisdom tells us that the just man lives in the divine friendship, and Christ says: "I will not now call you servants... but I have called you friends." By his analysis of the distinctive marks of friendship, St. Thomas only explains these divine words; he does not deduce a new truth; he explains revealed truth and enables us to penetrate it deeply.

Charity, even in its least degree, makes us love God more than ourselves and more than His gifts with an efficacious love of esteem, because God is infinitely better than we and than every created gift. Efficacious love of esteem is not always felt, for example, in aridity; and at the beginning it has not yet the intensity or spontaneity that it has in the perfect, and especially

in the blessed. A good Christian mother feels her love for her child, whom she holds in her arms, more than her love for God, whom she does not see; yet, if she is truly Christian, she loves the Lord with an efficacious love of esteem more than her child. For this reason, theologians distinguish commonly between appreciative love (love of esteem) and intensive love, which is generally greater for loved ones whom we see than for those who are at a distance. But, with the progress of charity, the love of esteem for God becomes more intense and is known as zeal; in heaven its impetuosity will exceed that of all our strongest affections.

Such is the nature of the virtue of charity; it is the principle of a love of God that is like the flowing of our hearts toward Him who draws us and vivifies us. Thus we ultimately find a great gratification in Him, desiring that He may reign more and more profoundly in our souls and in the souls of others. For this love of God, knowledge is not necessary; to know our heavenly Father through faith suffices. We cannot cease to love Him without beginning our own destruction, and we can cease to love Him by any mortal sin.

The efficacious love of esteem of God above all else, which may subsist in great aridity of the sensible faculties, is very much opposed to sentimentality, which is the affectation of a love one does not have.

Since such is the nature of charity, what are the indications of its progress? There are, first of all, the signs of the state of grace: (1) not to be conscious of any mortal sin; (2) not to seek earthly things, pleasures, wealth, honors; (3) to take pleasure in the presence of God, to love to think of Him, adore Him, pray to Him, thank Him, ask His pardon, talk to Him, aspire to Him. To these signs must be added the following:(4) to wish to please God more than all those whom one loves; (5) to love one’s neighbor effectively, in spite of the defects which are in him, as they are in us, and to love him because he is the child of God and is beloved by Him. Then one loves God in one’s neighbor, and one’s neighbor in God. Christ says: “By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love one for another.”

These signs are summed up in St. Paul’s words: “Charity is patient, is kind; charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely, is not puffed up, is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.”

Happy is the heart that loves God in this manner, without any other pleasure than that which it has in pleasing God! If the soul is faithful, it will one day taste the delights of this love and take an unequaled happiness in Him who is limitless good, the infinite plenitude of good, into which the soul may plunge and lose itself as in a spiritual ocean without ever meeting with any obstacle. Thus the just man begins to love God with a love of esteem (appreciative love) above all things, and he tends to love Him above all intensively with the ardent zeal which perseveres in aridity in the midst of trials and persecutions.

THE LOVE OF GOD AND OUR NATURAL DISPOSITIONS

But, it will be objected, there are harsh, rude, bitter characters, little inclined to affection. How, therefore, does what we have just said apply to them? St. Francis de Sales replies to this objection as St. Thomas does, stating that one cannot admit, without falling into the naturalism of the Pelagians, that the distribution of divine love is made to men according to their natural qualities and dispositions. St. Francis de Sales adds:

> The supernatural love which God by His goodness pours into our hearts... is in the supreme point of the spirit..., which is independent of every natural character.... It is, nevertheless, true that naturally loving souls, once they are well purified of the love of creatures, do marvels in holy love, love finding a great ease in dilating itself in all the faculties of their hearts. Thence proceeds a very agreeable sweetness, which does not appear in those whose souls are harsh, melancholy, and untractable.
>
> Nevertheless, if two persons, one of whom is loving and gentle, the other naturally fretful and bitter, have an equal charity, they will doubtless love God equally, but not similarly. The heart that is naturally gentle will love more easily, amiably, sweetly, but not more solidly, or more perfectly. Thus the love which will arise among the thorns and repugnances of a harsh and cold nature, will be braver and more glorious, as the other will be more delightful and charming.
>
> It matters little, then, whether one is naturally disposed to love when it is a question of a supernatural love by which one acts only supernaturally. Only, Theotime, I would gladly say to all men: Oh, mortals! If your hearts are inclined to love, why do you not aspire to celestial and divine love? But, if you are harsh and bitter of heart, poor souls, since you are deprived of natural love, why do you not aspire to supernatural love, which will lovingly be given you by Him who calls you in so holy a manner to love Him?
>
> From this doctrine on the relation of the life of grace and of our natural dispositions spring consequences of great importance in mystical theology.

The love of conformity consists in wishing all that the divine will signifies to us as being its intention. This will is signified to us by the precepts and by the counsels conformable to our vocation, and by events, some of which are painful and unexpected. We are speaking of the signified divine will when we say in the Our Father: “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” Thus we see what progressive conformity to the divine will should be.

To love God in prosperity is good, provided that one does not love prosperity as much or more than God Himself. In any case, this is only an inferior degree of love, easy to all. When facility in the practice of duty ceases, to love the divine will in its commandments, counsels, inspirations, to live by it, constitutes a second degree which is more perfect and which recalls the words of Jesus: “My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me.”

But we must also imitate Christ in loving God in painful and unbearable things, in daily vexations and tribulations, which His providence permits in our lives for a higher good. And, indeed, we cannot truly love God unless we love these tribulations, not in themselves, but for the spiritual good which results from patience in bearing them. Consequently, to love sufferings and afflictions for the love of God is the highest degree of holy charity. Our adversities are then converted into good, for, as St. Paul says: “To them that love God [and who persevere in this love], all things work together unto good.”

St. Francis de Sales remarks on the subject of ardent love that, according to Plato, it is poor, ragged, naked, pale, emaciated, homeless, always indigent; it sleeps out of doors on the hard ground, for it makes a man leave everything for the one he loves; it causes him to lose sleep and to aspire to an ever closer union. Plato spoke thus of natural love; but, adds the holy Bishop of Geneva, all of this is still truer of divine love when it wounds a soul deeply. Therefore, St. Paul wrote: “Even unto this hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no fixed abode.... We are made as the refuse of this world.”

“Who reduced him to this state,” asks St. Francis de Sales, “except love? It was love which cast St. Francis of Assisi naked before his bishop and made him die naked on the ground. It was love that made him a beggar all his life. It was love that sent the great St. Francis Xavier, poor, indigent, tattered, here and there in the Indies;... it was love which reduced the great

cardinal, St. Charles, archbishop of Milan, to such poverty... that he was (in his episcopal palace) like a dog in the house of his master."

The love of conformity to the divine will is like a fire, the flames of which are the more beautiful and bright as they are fed with more delicate matter, for example, with drier, purer, and better wood. For this reason, says the same saint, every love that does not have its origin in the Savior's passion is frivolous and dangerous. The death of Jesus, the supreme expression of His love for us, is the strongest incentive to our love of Him. Nothing satisfies our hearts as does the love of Jesus Christ, by the way of perfect spoliation which unites the soul very closely to the divine will.

The love of conformity to the divine will signified by the precepts and counsels, and by events, enables us to abandon ourselves to the divine will of good pleasure, not yet manifested, on which our future depends. In this filial abandonment there is faith, hope, and love of God; it may be expressed as follows: "Lord, I trust in Thee!" From this comes the motto: "Fidelity and abandonment," which preserves the balance between activity and passivity, above slothful quiet and restless and fruitless agitation. Abandonment is the way to follow; daily and hourly fidelity, the steps to take on this way. By fidelity in the light of the commandments, we enter the obscure mystery of the divine good pleasure, which is that of predestination.

We certainly do not possess all the love we need; therefore, the saints tell us, it is folly to expend our love inordinately upon creatures. The cooling of divine love comes from venial sin or from affection to venial sin. On the contrary, a generous act of charity merits and obtains for us immediately the increase of this infused virtue, which vivifies all the others and renders their acts meritorious. The increase of charity prepares us to see God better eternally and to love Him more intimately forever.

We should, therefore, deem as nothing all that we give to obtain the priceless treasure of the love of God, of ardent love. He alone gives to the human heart the interior charity that it lacks. Without Him our hearts are cold; we experience only the passing warmth of an intermittent fever.

When we give our love to God, He always gives us His. Indeed He forestalls us for, without His grace, we could not rise above our self-love; only grace, for which we should ask incessantly, just as we always need air in order to breathe, gives us true generosity.

During the journey toward eternity, we must never say that we have sufficient love of God. We should make continual progress in love. The traveler (viator) who advances toward God progresses with steps of love, as St. Gregory the Great says, that is, by ever higher acts of love. God desires that we should thus love Him more each day. The song of the journey toward eternity is a hymn of love, that of the holy liturgy, which is the voice of the Church; it is the song of the spouse of Christ.

It is not unfitting to tremble at times in the presence of God, but love must predominate. We must fear God filially through love, and not love Him through fear; therefore filial fear, that of sin, grows with charity, whereas servile fear, that of punishment, diminishes.

Our love of God grows by our carrying the cross. St. Francis de Sales declared: “The most generous and courageous characters are formed in crosses and afflictions, and cowardly souls are pleased only in prosperity. Moreover, the pure love of God is practiced far more easily in adversities than in comforts, for tribulation has nothing amiable about it except the hand of God who sends it... whereas prosperity has of itself attractions which charm our senses.”

As the love of conformity to the divine will grows, it renders sweet the sufferings on which it feeds; the soul then walks with assurance according to the words of the Savior: “He that followeth Me walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”

The love of God grows each time we mortify self-love. To desire ardently divine love, we must, therefore, retrench all that cannot be quickened by it. Growing thus, the love of God renders the virtues eminently more pleasing to God than they are by their own nature; the meritorious degree of their acts depends upon the degree of love. Thereby the accomplishment of our duties of state can be greatly sanctified and not a minute will be lost for eternity.

If a person has had a high degree of charity and has never sinned mortally, but his love has grown cool through some attachment to venial sin, he still keeps the treasure of lofty charity although he has lost its radiation or fervor like a golden chalice that has become tarnished and covered with dust, or like a flame in a clouded glass shade. Therefore, it is important to remove as quickly as possible this dust, these spots, and restore to charity its fervor and radiation.

As a practical conclusion, let us consider how we can subordinate all our affections to the love of God. St. Francis de Sales tells us: “I can combat the desire of riches and mortal pleasures either by the scorn that they deserve or by the desire of immortal pleasures; and by this second means, sensual and earthly love will be destroyed by heavenly love.... Thus divine love supplants and subdues the affections and passions,” or places them at its service.

The love of conformity to the divine will leads to the love of complacency by which we rejoice over everything that contributes to the glory of God: we rejoice that He possesses infinite wisdom, limitless beatitude, that the whole universe is a manifestation of His goodness, and that the elect will glorify Him eternally. The love of complacency or of fruition is more particularly felt under a special inspiration of God: in this sense it is infused and passive; whereas the love of conformity of which we have spoken, may exist without this special inspiration, with common actual grace; from this point of view, it is called active.

For this reason certain authors have held that St. John of the Cross proposed in The Ascent of Mount Carmel the union of the love of conformity as the end of the ascetical life, and in The Dark Night and The Living Flame the union of the passive love of enjoyment as the end of the mystical life.

We, as well as many contemporary writers, think, on the contrary, that St. John of the Cross preserves the unity of the spiritual life by speaking, in all his works, of only one end of the normal development of the life of grace on earth, and of only one union and transformation of love, which, it is true, presents itself under two aspects. The first of these aspects is the entire conformity of our will to the will of God; but this active gift of self is normally accompanied by the communication of the divine life passively received, which is the second aspect. Therefore the normal term of the spiritual life is a state at once ascetical and mystical, in which the perfection of active love, manifested by the virtues, is joined to infused or passive love, which leads the soul to the summit of union. The way leading to this union should, consequently, be not only active but also passive; it implies both the active purification described in The Ascent and the passive purification spoken of in The Dark Night. They are two aspects of purification: in other words, what the soul should do, and what it should

receive and bear. Thus the unity of the spiritual life is maintained, and perfect union is the normal prelude of the life of heaven.

Chapter 20

Fraternal Charity, Radiation of the Love of God

> "And the glory which Thou hast given Me, I have given to them; that they may be one, as We also are one."
> John 17:22

The love of God, of which we have spoken, corresponds to the supreme precept; but there is a second precept which springs from the first: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," for the love of God. The love of neighbor is presented to us by our Lord as the necessary consequence, the radiation, the sign, of the love of God: "Love one another as I have loved you.... By this shall all men know that you are My disciples." St. John even says: "If any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar."

In the illuminative way of proficients, fraternal charity should therefore be one of the greatest signs of the progress of the love of God. Here we must insist on the formal motive for which charity should be practiced, so that it may not be confounded with, for example, simple amiability or natural comradeship, or with liberalism, which assumes the exterior appearances of charity but differs greatly from this infused virtue. Liberalism disregards the value of faith and of divine truth, whereas charity presupposes them as its basis. To see clearly the formal motive of fraternal charity, not only in a theoretical and abstract manner, but in a concrete and experimental manner, we shall examine why our love of God should extend to our neighbor, and how actually to make progress in fraternal charity. That we may look at the matter from a supernatural point of view, we shall consider the love of Jesus for us.

WHY OUR LOVE OF GOD SHOULD EXTEND TO OUR NEIGHBOR

Fraternal charity, which the Lord demands of us, differs immensely from the natural tendency which inclines us to do good in order to please others, which leads us also to love the kind, to hate those who do us evil, and to remain indifferent to others. Natural love makes us love our neighbor for his natural good qualities and for the benefits we receive from him; we find this love in good comradeship. The motive of charity is quite different and very much higher; the proof of it is in Christ's words: "Love your enemies: do good to them that hate you: and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you.... For if you love them that love you, what reward shall you have? Do not even the publicans this?... Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect."

We should love our enemies with the same supernatural, theological love as we have for God; for there are not two virtues of charity, the one toward God, the other toward our neighbor. There is only one virtue of charity, the first act of which has God, loved above all else, as its object; and its secondary acts have ourselves and our neighbor as their object. Hence this virtue is very superior to the great virtue of justice, and not only to commutative and distributive justice, but to legal or social justice and to equity.

But how is it possible for us to have a divine love for men, who, like ourselves, are so often imperfect? Theology replies with St. Thomas by a simple example: he who greatly loves his friend, loves the children of this friend with the same love; he loves them because he loves their father, and for his sake he wishes them well. For love of their father, he will, if necessary, come to their aid and pardon them if they have offended him.

Therefore, since all men are children of God by grace, or at least called to become so, we should love all men, even our enemies, with a supernatural love and desire the same eternal beatitude for them as for ourselves. We ought all to travel toward the same end, to make the same journey toward eternity, under the impulsion of the same grace, to live by the same love. Charity is thus a supernatural bond of perfection which unites us, as it should, to God and to our neighbor. It unites hearts at no matter what distance they may be; it leads us to love God in man and man in God.

The supernatural love of charity is rare among men because many seek their own interest primarily, and more readily comprehend the formula: "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth."

The precept of fraternal charity was greatly neglected before the time of Christ; consequently He had to insist on it. He did so from the very beginning of His preaching in the Sermon on the Mount, and He continually reverted to it, especially in His last words before He died. St. John, in his Epistles, and St. Paul repeatedly remind us of this precept. They show us that when charity enters the heart, it is followed by all the other virtues; it is meek, patient, and humble.

But to love our neighbor supernaturally so far as he is the child of God or is called to become so, we must look upon him with the eyes of faith and tell ourselves that this person whose temperament and character are opposed to ours is "born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but [as we are] of God," or called to be born of Him, to share in the same divine life, in the same beatitude as we. Especially in a Christian milieu, we can and ought to tell ourselves in regard to persons who are less congenial to us that their souls are, in spite of everything, temples of the Holy Ghost, that they are members of the mystical body of Christ, nearer perhaps to His heart than we are; that they are living stones whom God works that He may give them a place in the heavenly Jerusalem. How can we fail to love our neighbor, if we truly love God, our common Father? If we do not love our neighbor, our love of God is a lie. On the contrary, if we love him, it is a sign that we truly love God, the Author of the grace that vivifies us.

A young Jew whom we knew, the son of a Vienna banker, one day had the opportunity to take vengeance on his family's greatest enemy; as he was about to do so, he remembered the following words of Scripture, which he was in the habit of reading from time o time: "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us." Then, instead of taking vengeance, he fully pardoned his enemy and immediately received the grace of faith. He believed in the entire Gospel, and a short time afterward entered the Church and became a priest and religious. The precept of fraternal charity had illumined him.

Even about an adversary we must tell ourselves that we can and ought to love him with the same supernatural, theological love as we have for the divine Persons; for we ought to love in him the image of God, the divine life that he possesses or is called to receive, his supernatural being, the realization of the divine idea which presides over his destiny, the glory which he is called to give to God in time and eternity.

The following objection has occasionally been raised against this lofty doctrine: But is this truly loving man; is it not loving God only in man, as one admires a diamond in a jewel-case? Man naturally wishes to be loved for himself, but as man he cannot demand a divine love.

In reality, charity does not love God only in man, but man in God and man himself for God. It truly loves what man should be, an eternal part of the mystical body of Christ, and it does all in its power to make him attain heaven. It loves even what man already is through grace; and, if he has not grace, it loves his nature in him, not so far as it is fallen, unbalanced, unruly, hostile to grace, but so far as it is the image of God and capable of receiving the divine graft of grace that will increase its resemblance to God. In short, charity loves man himself, but for God, for the glory that he is called to give to God in time and eternity.

EFFICACY OF THE LOVE OF CHARITY

Whatever naturalism may say, in loving our neighbor in God and for God we do not love him less, we love him much more and far more perfectly. We do not love his defects; we put up with them; but we love in man all that is noble in him, all in him that is called to grow and to blossom in eternal life.

Far from being a Platonic and inefficacious love of our neighbor, charity, in growing, disposes us to judge him well and to condescend to his wishes in whatever is not contrary to the commandments of God. Condescension thus born of charity makes indifferent things good, and the painful things that we impose on ourselves for our neighbor, fruitful. There is great charity in thus preserving union with all by avoiding clashes which might arise, or by effecting a reconciliation as soon as possible. Charity that grows has thus a radiating goodness; it makes us continually love not only what is good for us, but what is good for our neighbor, even for our enemies, and what is good from the superior point of view of God, by desiring for others the goods which do not pass, and especially the sovereign Good and its inamissible possession. St. Thomas sums up all this briefly: “Now the aspect under which our neighbor is to be loved, is God, since what we ought to love in our neighbor is that he may be in God. Hence it is clear that it is specifically the same act whereby we love God, and whereby we love

our neighbor. Consequently the habit of charity extends not only to the love of God, but also to the love of our neighbor."

Thus sight perceives light first of all and by it the seven colors of the rainbow. It could not perceive colors if it did not see light. Likewise we could not supernaturally love the children of God if we did not first supernaturally love God Himself, our common Father.

Whereas justice inclines us to wish good to another inasmuch as he is another or distinct from us, charity makes us love him as "another self," an alter ego, with a love of truly supernatural friendship, as the saints in heaven love one another.

THE COMPASS AND ORDER OF CHARITY

Therefore our charity should be universal: it should know no limits. It cannot exclude anyone on earth, in purgatory, or in heaven. It stops only before hell. It is only the damned that we cannot love, for they are no longer capable of becoming children of God. They hate Him eternally; they do not ask for pardon or for the grace to repent; hence they can no longer excite pity, for there is no longer in them the faintest desire to rise again. However, says St. Thomas, they are still the object of the divine mercy, in the sense that they are punished less than they deserve, a fact that gladdens our charity, which extends even that far.

Beyond the certain fact of damnation (and we are not certain of the damnation of anyone, except that of the fallen angels and of the "son of perdition"), charity is due to all; it knows no limits, it is broad, in a sense, like the heart of God. We had examples of this breadth of charity in the first World War when, on the battle front, a French boy at the point of death finished the Hail Mary begun by a young German who had just died beside him. The Blessed Virgin reunited these two youths, in spite of the harsh opposition of the war, in order to introduce them both into the supernal fatherland.

To be universal, charity does not have to be equal for all, and its progress in the illuminative way shows increasingly better what is called the order of charity, which admirably respects and elevates the order dictated by nature. Thus we should love God efficaciously above all else, at least with a love of esteem, if not with a love that is felt. Next we should love our own soul, then that of our neighbor, and finally our body, which we should sacrifice

for the salvation of a soul, especially when we are obliged by our office to provide for it, as happens to those who have charge of souls. The order of charity appears more clearly as this virtue grows in us. We understand better and better that among our neighbors we should have a greater love of esteem for those who are better, nearer to God, although we love with a more sensible love those who are nearest to us through blood, marriage, vocation, or friendship. We also distinguish increasingly better the shades of the different friendships based on the bonds of family, country, or profession, or on bonds of an entirely spiritual order.

The scale of values which appears more and more in this order of charity shows that God wishes to reign in our hearts, without excluding the legitimate affections which can and ought to be subordinated to the love we have for Him; then these affections are vivified, ennobled, purified, rendered more generous. Consequently the progress of charity does away with that esprit de corps, that collective egoism, that nosism which sometimes recalls painfully the chauvinism of certain narrow patriots who belittle their fatherland in their desire to magnify it. A spiritual daughter of St. Francis de Sales, Mother Louise de Ballon, who reformed the Bernardines and founded seventeen convents, used to say on this subject: “I can belong only to one order by profession and state; but I belong to all orders by inclination and love.... I confess ingenuously that I have always been afflicted at seeing monasteries envy each other..., at hearing some say that the good of the children of St. Augustine should not be for those of St. Benedict, and others say that the good of St. Benedict should not be given to the disciples of St. Bernard. Is it not the blood of Jesus Christ and not that of St. Augustine, St. Benedict, or St. Bernard, which purchased for their religious all the good that they possess? O my Lord! Establish solidly a good understanding among Your servants.... The different orders are composed of different bodies, but they should have only one heart, only one soul, as it was written of the first Christians.”

Without this broad charity, we would fall into the defect, into the narrowness which St. Paul blamed in the Corinthians, some of whom said: “I indeed am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollo,” to which the saint replied: “What then is Apollo, and what is Paul? The ministers of Him whom you have believed; and to everyone as the Lord hath given. I have planted, Apollo watered, but God gave the increase. Therefore, neither he

that planteth is anything, nor he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase."

In the same epistle the great Apostle writes: "Is Christ divided? Was Paul then crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?" "Let no man therefore glory in men. For all things are yours, whether it be Paul or Apollo or Cephas or the world or life or death or things present or things to come; for all are yours; and you are Christ's; and Christ is God's."

Such indeed, above all individual or collective narrowness, is the admirable order of charity, as it should appear increasingly in the disinterested proficient, whose heart should enlarge in a sense, like the heart of God, by the very progress of charity, which is truly a participation in the divine life, in eternal love.

This growing charity ought to be not only affective but effective, not only benevolent but beneficent. The lives of the saints show that they understood the Master's words: "This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you." Christ loved us even to the death of the cross; the saints loved their brethren even to the martyrdom of the heart, and often even to giving the testimony of their blood.

Such is fraternal charity, the extension or radiation of the love we should have for God. Similarly, humility in respect to our neighbor is the extension of the virtue that leads us to humble ourselves before God and before what is of God in all His works.

HOW TO MAKE PROGRESS IN FRATERNAL CHARITY

Occasions of failing in fraternal charity present themselves only too often even in the best surroundings; first of all, because of the defects of all who, though tending to perfection, have not reached it. Each of us is like a truncated pyramid that has not yet its summit. Our neighbor often seems so to us, and we forget that we appear in like manner to him; we see the mote in our neighbor's eye, and do not see the beam in our own.

Moreover, if, by an impossibility, all our defects were suppressed before our entrance into heaven, occasions of clashes and offenses would still subsist because of the diversity of temperaments—bilious, nervous, lymphatic, or sanguine; by reason of the diversity of characters—some inclined to indulgence, others to severity; because of the diversity of minds—some inclined to view things as a whole, others in the minutest detail; by

reason again of the difference in education; because of nervous fatigue; and finally because of the demon, who takes pleasure in causing division that he may destroy our Lord's work of truth, unity, and peace.

The devil intervenes more directly in certain excellent centers in order to obstruct the great good that might be done there. He seeks much more directly to disturb such groups than he does less good or positively evil centers, where he already rules through the maxims there diffused and the examples found there. As we see in the Gospel and the lives of the saints, the enemy of souls sows cockle among the best, placing in imaginations, as it were, a magnifying glass which transforms a grain of sand into a mountain.

We should also keep in mind that Providence designedly leaves among the good many occasions for humility and for the exercise of fraternal charity. It is in weakness that the grace of God manifests its power and that our virtue is perfected; our weaknesses humiliate us, and those of others exercise us.

Only in heaven will every occasion of conflict completely disappear, because the blessed, illumined by the divine light, see in God all that they should think, will, and do. On earth the saints themselves may enter into conflict, and occasionally no one yields for some time, because each is persuaded in conscience that he must maintain his point of view; that he may indeed yield in regard to his rights, but not in respect to his obligations. The case of St. Charles Borromeo and of St. Philip Neri illustrates this point. They could not come to an agreement on the foundation of one order; and, as a matter of fact, in this case the Lord wished two religious families instead of one.

In the midst of so many difficulties, how should fraternal charity grow? It should grow especially in two ways: by benevolence and beneficence; that is, first by considering our neighbor in the light of faith that we may discover in him the life of grace, at least what is good in his nature; then by loving our neighbor effectively, and that in many ways: by putting up with his defects, rendering him service, returning good for evil, praying for union of minds and hearts.

First of all, we should view our neighbor in the light of faith that we may find in him the life of grace, or at least the image of God a ready graven in the very nature of his spiritual and immortal soul. Since charity, in its aspect as love of God, presupposes faith in God, in its aspect as love of neighbor it

assumes that we consider him in the light of faith and not only in that of our eyes of flesh, or in that of a reason more or less deformed by egoism. We need a pure gaze fitted to see the divine life of others under an envelope that at times is thick and opaque. We see the supernatural being of our neighbor if we merit to do so, if we are detached from self.

In this connection we would do well to face the fact that often what irritates us against our neighbor is not serious sins against God, but rather defects of temperament which sometimes subsist despite real virtue. We would perhaps easily put up with sinners who are quite removed from God but naturally amiable, whereas advanced souls are occasionally very "trying" to us. We must, therefore, resolve to look at souls in the light of faith that we may discover in them what is pleasing to God, what He loves in them, and what we should love in them.

This higher light produces benevolence, whereas rash judgment most seriously opposes this benevolent view. For this reason Christ insists so strongly on this point in the Sermon on the Mount: "Judge not, that you may not be judged. For with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged; and with what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why seest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, and seest not the beam that is in thy own eye?... Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thy own eye, and then shalt thou see to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."

It should be clearly noted that rash judgment is not a simple unfavorable impression; it is a judgment. It consists in affirming evil on a slight indication; in reality a person sees two objects, but because of pride affirms that he sees four. If this judgment is fully deliberate and consented to in a serious matter, that is, judging one's neighbor guilty of a mortal sin, the one who judges, himself commits a mortal sin. Consequently, says St. Thomas, if we cannot avoid certain suspicions, we should take care not to make a firm and definitive judgment on slight indications.

Rash judgment, properly so called, is a sin against justice, especially when it is outwardly expressed by words or acts. Our neighbor has, in fact, a right to his reputation; next to the right which he has to do his duty, he has the right to uphold his good name more than to defend the right to property. We should respect this right of others to their reputation if we wish our own to be respected.

Moreover, rash judgment is often false. How can we judge with certainty of the interior intentions of a person whose doubts, errors, difficulties, temptations, good desires, or repentance, we do not know? How can we claim to know better than he what he says to God in prayer? How can we judge justly when we do not have the details of the case? Even if a rash judgment is true, it is a sin against justice because, in judging thus, a man arrogates to himself a jurisdiction which is not his to exercise. God alone is capable of judging with certainty the secret intentions of hearts, or those that are not sufficiently manifested. Hence even the Church does not judge them: “de internis non judicat.”

Rash judgment is likewise a sin against charity. What is most serious in the eyes of God, is not that this hasty judgment is often false and always unjust, but that it proceeds from malevolence, though often expressed with the mask of benevolence, which is only a grimace of charity. Anyone judging rashly is not only a judge who arrogates to himself jurisdiction over the souls of his brothers which he does not possess, but a judge sold by his egoism and his pride, at times a pitiless judge, who knows only how to condemn, and who, though unaware of it, presumes to impose laws on the Holy Ghost, admitting no other way than his own. Instead of seeing in his neighbor a brother, a son of God, called to the same beatitude as he is, he sees in him only a stranger, perhaps a rival to supplant and humiliate. This defect withdraws many from the contemplation of divine things; it is a veil over the eyes of the spirit.

If we do not go so far, we may judge the interior life of a soul rashly in order to enjoy our own clear vision and to show it off. Let us remember that God alone sees this conscience openly. We should be on our guard and remember with what insistence Christ said: “Judge not.” At the moment when we are judging rashly, we do not foresee that shortly afterward we shall perhaps fall into a more grievous sin than the one for which we reproached our neighbor. We see the mote in our neighbor’s eye and do not see the beam in our own.

If the evil is evident, does God demand that we should not see it? No, but He forbids us to murmur with pride. At times, He commands us in the name of charity to practice fraternal correction with benevolence, humility, meekness, and discretion, as indicated in the Gospel of St. Matthew, and as St. Thomas explains it. We should see whether correction is possible and if

there is hope for amendment, or whether it is necessary to have recourse to the superior that he may warn the guilty person.

Finally, as St. Catherine of Siena says, when the evil is evident, perfection, instead of murmuring, has compassion on the guilty party; we take on ourselves, in part at least, his sin before God, following the example of our Lord who took all our sins upon Himself on the cross. Did He not say to us: “Love one another, as I have loved you”?

We must, therefore, repress rash judgment that we may become accustomed to see our neighbor in the light of faith and to discover in him the life of grace, or at least his nature so far as it is an image of God that grace should ennoble.

It is not sufficient to look upon our neighbor benevolently; we must love him effectively. We can do this by bearing with his defects, returning him good for evil, avoiding jealousy, and praying for union of hearts.

We bear with another’s defects more easily if we observe that often what arouses our impatience is not a serious sin in the eyes of God, but rather a defect of temperament: nervousness or, on the contrary, apathy, a certain narrowness of judgment, a frequent lack of tact, a certain way of putting himself forward, and other defects of this kind. Even if the defect is grave, we should not allow ourselves to go so far as to become irritated over evil that is permitted by God; and we should not allow our zeal to become bitterness. While complaining of others, let us not go so far as to persuade ourselves that we have realized the ideal. Without suspecting it, we would be uttering the prayer of the Pharisee.

To put up with the defects of another, we must remember that God permits evil only for a higher good. It has been said that God’s business consists in drawing good from evil, whereas we can do good only with good. The scandal of evil, producing a bitter and indiscreet zeal, is responsible for the fruitlessness of many reforms. The truth should be told with measure and goodness and not spoken with contempt. We should also avoid indiscretion that leads to speaking without sufficient reason about the faults of one’s neighbor, which is slander and may lead to calumny.

The Gospel tells us that not only must we bear with the defects of our neighbor, but also return good for evil by prayer, edification, and mutual assistance. It is related that one of the ways of winning the good graces of St. Teresa was to cause her pain. She really practiced the counsel of Christ: “If a man will contend with thee in judgment and take away thy coat, let go

thy cloak also unto him." Why should we do this? Because it is much less important to defend our temporal rights than to win the soul of our brother for eternity, than to lead him to the true life which has no end. In particular, prayer for our neighbor, when we have to suffer from him, is especially efficacious, as was that of Jesus for His executioners and that of St. Stephen, the first martyr, when he was being stoned.

We must also avoid jealousy, telling ourselves that we ought to enjoy in a holy manner the natural and supernatural qualities that the Lord has given to others and not to us. As St. Paul says: "If the foot should say: Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear should say: Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were the eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? But now God hath set the members, everyone of them, in the body as it hath pleased Him. And if they all were one member, where would be the body? But now there are many members indeed, yet one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand: I need not thy help; nor again the head to the feet: I have no need of you.... But God hath tempered the body together... that there might be no schism in the body; but the members might be mutually careful one for another. And if one member suffer anything, all the members suffer with it; or if one member glory, all the members rejoice with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and members of member." The hand benefits by what the eye sees; similarly we benefit by the merits of others. We should therefore rejoice in the good qualities of another instead of allowing ourselves to become jealous. We must exercise charity particularly toward inferiors who are weaker, and toward superiors who have greater burdens to bear. We must not emphasize their defects; were we in their place, we would perhaps do less well than they. But we must help them as much as possible in a discreet and, so to speak, unperceived manner.

Lastly, we must pray for union of minds and hearts. Praying for His disciples, Christ said: "The glory which Thou hast given Me, I have given to them; that they may be one, as We also are one." In the primitive Church, the Acts tell us: "The multitude of believers had but one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but all things were common unto them." As it spread over the world, the Church could not preserve such great intimacy among its members, but religious communities and Christian fraternities should remember the union

of hearts in the early Church. In communities where there is common observance of life and prayers, this interior union must exist, otherwise observances and common prayer would be a lie to God, to men, and to ourselves. Union of hearts contributes to giving the Church the luster of the mark of sanctity, which presupposes unity of faith, worship, hierarchy, hope, and charity.

The radiating charity that unites the different members of the Savior's mystical body, in spite of diversity of ages, countries, temperaments, and characters, is a sign that the Word became flesh, that He came among us to unite us and to give us life. He Himself declares it in His sacerdotal prayer: "The glory which Thou hast given Me, I have given to them; that they may be one, as We also are one..., and the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast also loved Me."

Chapter 21

Zeal for the Glory of God and the Salvation of Souls

> "I am come to cast fire on the earth: and what will, I, but that it be kindled?"
> Luke 12:49

To show what charity should normally be in the illuminative way of proficients, we shall discuss the zeal which every Christian, especially the priest and religious, should have for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. If this zeal is lacking, or does not exist in the degree that it should manifestly have, it is an additional and at times striking sign of what our love of God and souls should normally be, of what the living, profound, radiating knowledge of the things of God should also be in us. Those whose duty it is spiritually to feed others, themselves need a substantial daily food, that to be had every day in intimate participation in the Sacrifice of the Mass, in Communion, and in prayer.

We have seen that love of neighbor is the extension or the radiation of the love we should have for God: this love should extend to the children of God. It is one and the same supernatural theological love; it is essentially divine, like grace, a participation in the inner life of God. This love should become so ardent in a fervent Christian soul as to merit the name of zeal. Especially for a soul consecrated to God, it is a duty to have zeal for His glory and the salvation of one's neighbor. Basically it is one and the same zeal, the ardor of one and the same love, which should subsist, though not always sensible, in the midst of aridities and trials of all sorts, just as in the heart of a good soldier ardent love of country subsists in the most trying hours when he can only be patient and endure. Zeal is the ardor of love, but of a spiritual love of the will, which is at times proportionately more generous and meritorious as it is less felt.

We may with profit consider the motives of zeal, what its qualities should be, and the means to exercise it.

For every Christian the first motive of zeal is that God deserves to be loved above all things. This motive is not the object of a counsel, but of the supreme precept, which has no limits; it makes it our duty to grow continually in charity while on earth, to love the Lord with our whole heart, with our whole soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind. Even in the Old Testament the supreme precept was already formulated in the same terms. We know what zeal in corresponding to it was shown by the prophets, whose mission it was ceaselessly to remind the people of God of their great duties. The Psalmist says to the Lord: “The zeal of Thy house hath eaten me up: and the reproaches of them that reproach Thee are fallen upon me.” “My zeal hath made me pine away: because my enemies forgot Thy words.... I am very young and despised; but I forget not Thy justifications.” Elias, reaching Mount Horeb and being questioned by God about what he had done, replies: “With zeal have I been zealous for the Lord God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken Thy covenant: they have thrown down Thy altars, they have slain Thy prophets with the sword, and I alone am left, and they seek my life to take it away.” It was then that the Lord told Elias that He was going to pass before him, and, after a violent wind and an earthquake accompanied by lightning, there was “the whistling of a gentle air,” the symbol of the divine gentleness; then the Lord gave the prophet His orders, and revealed to him that Eliseus was called to succeed him.

Likewise we read in the first book of the Machabees that the priest Mathathias, exhorting his sons to begin the holy war, said: “Phinees our father, by being fervent in the zeal of God, received the covenant of an everlasting priesthood.... Elias, while he was full of zeal for the law, was taken up into heaven.... Daniel in his innocency was delivered out of the mouth of the lions.... You therefore, my sons, take courage, and behave manfully in the law; for by it you shall be glorious.”

This zeal led Jesus to cast the buyers and sellers out of the temple and to overthrow their tables, saying to them: “It is written: ‘My house shall be called the house of prayer; but you have made it a den of thieves.’ “ Especially after Pentecost, the apostles had this zeal; it led them all even to martyrdom. It still exists in the Church wherever the testimony of blood is given and in numerous lives consecrated to the service of God even to

immolation. The first motive of zeal is, therefore, that God deserves to be loved above all and without measure.

The second motive of zeal is that we should imitate our Lord Jesus Christ. The predominant virtue of the Savior is zeal, the ardor of charity, as He Himself says: “I am come to cast fire [of charity] on the earth: and what will I, but that it be kindled?” St. Paul writes: “Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith: ‘Sacrifice and oblation [of the Old Law] Thou wouldest not: but a body Thou hast fitted to Me.... Then said I: Behold I come... that I should do Thy will, O God.’ “ All during His life, our Lord offered Himself; at twelve years of age He announced that He came to be about His Father’s business. He offered Himself continually during His hidden life, showing us in what humility and abnegation truly divine works should be prepared. From the beginning of His public life, He saw the indifference of the Jews of Nazareth, who called Him the son of the carpenter, and He experienced the hatred of the Pharisees, which would increase even to the point of demanding His death on the cross. The Word of God came among His own to save them, and many of His own were not willing to receive Him; they did not wish to let themselves be saved. Opposition came from those who should least have opposed Him, from the priests of the Old Law, the prelude of the New. The suffering which this attitude caused the Savior was profound like His love of souls: it was the suffering of ardent and overflowing charity, which wishes to give itself and often meets only with indifference, inertia, lack of comprehension, ill will, and spiteful opposition.

This thirst for the glory of God and the salvation of souls was the great cause of the sorrow which the Savior experienced at the sight of the sins of men. It was also the cause of Mary’s suffering at the foot of the cross.

All His life long Christ felt this desire for the salvation of souls and continually carried this cross of desire; He aspired strongly to realize His redemptive mission by dying for us on the cross. For this reason He said at the last supper the night before He died: “With desire I have desired to eat this pasch with you, before I suffer”; and then instituting the Eucharist, He said: “This is My body, which is given for you.... This is the chalice, the new testament in My blood, which shall be shed for you.” Christ desired with a great desire the accomplishment of His mission by the perfect sacrifice of Himself, by the most complete gift of self.

The suffering that accompanied this ardent desire ceased with His death on the cross, but this desire, this thirst for our salvation, still endures; He is "always living to make intercession for us," especially in the Sacrifice of the Mass, which continues sacramentally that of Calvary. In the Eucharist our Lord continues to make His appeals heard and to give Himself to souls, even to repentant prisoners and criminals sentenced to death."

This hunger and thirst for the salvation of sinners which is still living in the holy soul of Christ led St. Catherine of Siena to write to one of her spiritual sons: "I should like to see you suffer so greatly from hunger for the salvation of souls that you could die of it like Christ Jesus, that at least because of it you would die to the world and to yourself." Such thoughts are to be found on every page of this great saint's letters.

A third motive for our zeal is precisely the value of the immortal souls redeemed by the blood of Christ. Each of them is worth more than the entire physical universe, and each is called to receive the benefits of the redemption and eternal life. We should remember the zeal of the apostles who "went from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus," and who could say to the faithful, as St. Paul did: "I most gladly will spend and be spent myself for your souls; although loving you more, I be loved less." Zeal prompted St. Paul to write: "We are buffeted, and have no fixed abode.... We are reviled, and we bless; we are persecuted, and we suffer it; we are blasphemed, and we entreat." Zeal led the apostles even to martyrdom, and for three centuries after them the same was true of many bishops, priests, and laymen of every rank and age. The martyrs, whose heroism gave rise to numerous conversions, had such eminent zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls that it became an undeniable proof of the sanctity of the Church. If when a man's country is in danger he loves it to the extent that he will sacrifice himself for it, with what greater reason should we love the Church which leads us to the eternal country, where all the just of all peoples should meet.

Lastly, a fourth motive of our zeal is the contrary zeal with which the enemies of the Church toil at works of disorder, corruption, and death. What should draw us out of our somnolence, is the impious, spiteful, satanic war waged against our Lord and our holy Mother the Church; a war surpassing all others, a war of the spirit, which is carried on in the innermost depths of hearts, even in the souls of little children, whom they desire to snatch from

our Lord that they may make them reprobates and atheists. This war is indescribably perverse like the sins of the spirit; it is loaded down with crushing responsibilities. The Church sees the formidable consequences of this struggle on those who are intent upon it; it continues to pray for them, that God may cure their blindness and halt them on the road of damnation, into which they are dragging so many others with them.

The principal motives of zeal are consequently: the glory of God, the imitation of our Lord, the salvation of souls, and the relief of the souls in purgatory.

THE QUALITIES OF ZEAL

Zeal, according to its definition, should be ardent since it is the ardor of love; but here is meant enduring spiritual ardor, and not a sudden impetus, sensible enthusiasm of temperament, natural activity eager to take outward form through personal satisfaction and the seeking after self which wearies others. That it may not lose any of its spiritual ardor and may preserve it for a long time, zeal should be free from all excessively human self-seeking; to be so, it must be enlightened, patient, meek, and disinterested.

Zeal should, first of all, be illumined by the light of faith, by that of obedience and Christian prudence, and also by the gifts of wisdom and counsel. The light of natural reason does not suffice, for it is a question of performing not only a human work, but a divine work, of laboring at the salvation and sanctification of souls with the means indicated by our Lord. Zeal animated only by the natural spirit, instead of converting souls to God, gradually allows itself to be converted by the world, to be seduced by high-sounding phrases devoid of meaning. It dreams, for example, of a future city and loses sight of the supernatural end of the true city of God which St. Augustine speaks of. This zeal, which is that of restless, blundering, ambitious people, is impulsive, unseasonable, and inopportune; it forgets the indispensable, supernatural means, prayer and penance, recalled by Mary Immaculate at Lourdes.

Especially in difficult circumstances, zeal should beg the Holy Ghost for the light of the gift of counsel, not that it should propose to do extraordinary things, but to accomplish as perfectly as possible the ordinary duties fixed by the wisdom of the Church and obedience: to say Mass well or to unite oneself intimately to it, to be faithful to prayer under its different forms, and

to one’s duties of state. Sometimes heroic obedience may be demanded; should it be lacking, the greatest qualities of mind and heart would not suffice to compensate for its absence. Some servants of God, who were manifestly called to sanctity, seem not to have reached it because they lacked this heroic virtue.

Zeal should be not only enlightened, but also patient and meek. While preserving its ardor, and indeed in order to preserve it, zeal should avoid becoming uselessly irritated against evil, pouring itself out in vain indignation and sermonizing indiscriminately. The Gospel shows us that in the service of the Lord the Boanerges, or sons of thunder, as James and John were, become meek. Zeal should know how to tolerate certain evils in order to avoid greater ones and not itself turn to bitterness. What is only less good should not be cast aside as evil; the smoking flax should not be extinguished nor the broken reed crushed. We should always remember that Providence permits evil in view of a superior good, which we often do not yet see, but which will shine forth on the last day under the light of eternity.

To be patient and meek, zeal should be disinterested, and that in two ways: by avoiding appropriating to self what belongs only to God and what pertains to others. Some people are zealous for the works of God, but, motivated by unconscious self-seeking, they consider these works too much as their own. As Tauler says, they resemble hunting dogs that are eager in running down the hare, but that eat it after catching it, instead of bringing it back to their master; thereupon he whips them soundly. Thus these people keep for themselves the souls which they should win for our Lord, and as a result God punishes them severely to teach them to efface themselves, that He may act in them and through them. When they are less sure of themselves, less persuaded of their importance, and somewhat broken or at least more supple, the Lord will use them as docile instruments. They will then completely forget themselves in the hands of the Savior, who alone knows what is necessary to regenerate souls.

Let us not appropriate what belongs to others. Often we wish to do good, but we desire too greatly that we should do it in our way. We should not wish to do everything, or hinder others from working and being more successful than we are. Let us not be jealous of their success. Above all, we ought not to take upon ourselves the direction of souls that have not been entrusted to us; we ought to be on our guard not to take them away from a salutary influence, for the Lord might require a severe accounting from us

in this matter. It is for Him we are working and not for ourselves. This is what He wished to make His apostles understand one day when they had been disputing among themselves about which was the greatest. He then asked them: “What did you treat of in the way?” But they did not dare to reply, and it was then that, “calling unto Him a little child, [He] set him in the midst of them, and said: Amen I say to you, unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” He wished to make them understand that their zeal should be humble and disinterested.

He wished to convince particularly the sons of Zebedee, James and John, of this when their mother came to Him and asked for them the first two places in the kingdom of heaven. Jesus said to them: “You know not what you ask. Can you drink the chalice that I shall drink? They say to Him: We can. He saith to them: My chalice indeed you shall drink; but to sit on My right or left hand, is not Mine to give to you, but to them for whom it is prepared by My Father.... And he that will be first among you, shall be your servant. Even as the Son of man is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a redemption for many.” Thus our Lord taught the sons of Zebedee to dominate their natural ardor by humility and meekness, in order to transform it into a pure and fruitful supernatural zeal. Similarly He cures us sometimes by rebuffs and trials administered to our self-love and pride. He corrects us thus until we no longer wish to do our work; then, after permitting the lower part of our nature to be broken by events, and when selfishness has been overcome, He makes use of us for His work, the salvation of souls. Then zeal, though it preserves its spiritual ardor, is calm, humble, and meek, like that of Mary and the saints, and nothing can any longer crush it: “If God be for us, who can be against us?”

This zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls should be exercised by the apostolate under various forms: the apostolate by the teaching of Christian doctrine and the spiritual and corporal works of mercy; the apostolate by prayer, which draws down divine grace to render fruitful the labor of those who toil in the Lord’s vineyard. When profound, this hidden apostolate is the soul of the exterior apostolate. Lastly, there should also be the apostolate by reparatory suffering; hidden, too, like that of prayer, it continues, as it were, in the mystical body of Christ the sufferings of Jesus during the Passion and on the cross for the regeneration of souls. When, in the mystical body of Christ, a member voluntarily suffers

through love, another infirm member is healed, as in our human body painful remedies relieve infected organs, which then gradually resume their functions. When the servants of God immolate their bodies and hearts, the Lord spares the body of an unfortunate person whose strength is spent, or cures a sick heart which had not the courage to break its chains. When in the mystical body a generous soul sacrifices its own will, in another the Lord revives a dead will and grants it the grace of conversion.

Such are the qualities of zeal, which is the ardor of charity, an enlightened, patient, meek, disinterested, and truly fruitful ardor that glorifies God, imitates our Lord, snatches souls from evil, and saves them.

It is clear that this zeal should exist, that too often it is lacking, and that it is in the normal way of sanctity. But to subsist, it should be kept up by profound prayer, by prayer that is continual and like an almost uninterrupted conversation of the soul with God in perfect docility. We shall now discuss this docility and this prayer of proficients; it is this prayer that gave its name to the illuminative way in which the soul is more and more penetrated by the light of God.

THE SOURCES OF SPIRITUAL PROGRESS AND DIVINE INTIMACY

What we have just said about the progress of the moral and theological virtues leads us to speak of the sources of spiritual progress and divine intimacy. We shall do so by treating of what docility to the Holy Ghost, the discerning of spirits, the Sacrifice of the Mass, Holy Communion, devotion to Mary, should be for proficients. We shall finish Part III by examining the questions relative to the passage from acquired prayer to initial infused prayer, to the nature of infused contemplation, and to its progress.

Chapter 22

Docility to the Holy Ghost

Having spoken of the progress of the theological virtues in the illuminative way, we shall now treat of docility to the Holy Ghost who, through His seven gifts, is the Inspirer of our entire life with a view to contemplation and action.

Earlier in this work we set forth the nature of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to the teaching of St. Thomas, who considers them permanent infused habits, which are in every just soul that it may receive the inspirations of the Holy Ghost with promptness and docility. According to the fathers of the Church, the gifts are in the just soul like the sails on a vessel; the boat may advance by rowing, which is a slow and painful way of making progress; this is the symbol of the work of the virtues. It may also advance because a favorable wind swells its sails, which dispose it to receive, as it should, the impulsion of the wind. This analogy was indicated in a way by Christ Himself when He said: “The Spirit breatheth where He will; and thou hearest His voice, but thou knowest not whence He cometh and whither He goeth. So is everyone that is born of the Spirit.”

The gifts of the Holy Ghost have also been compared to the different strings of a harp which, under the hand of a musician, give forth harmonious sounds. Lastly, the inspirations of the gifts have been likened to the seven flames of the seven-branch candelabrum used in the synagogue.

These gifts, enumerated by Isaias and called by him “the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and of godliness, and... the spirit of the fear of the Lord,” are granted to all the just, since the Holy Spirit is given to all according to these words of St. Paul: “The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us.” The gifts of the Holy Ghost are consequently connected with charity, and therefore they grow with it. They

are like the wings of a bird that grow simultaneously, or like the sails of a ship that increasingly unfurl. By repeated venial sins, however, the gifts of the Holy Ghost are, as it were, bound; these habitual venial sins are like folds in the soul, which incline it to judge in an inferior manner with a certain blindness of spirit, which is the direct opposite of infused contemplation. We shall discuss first the inspirations of the Holy Ghost, then the ascending gradation of the gifts, and finally the conditions required for docility to the Holy Ghost.

THE INSPIRATIONS OF THE HOLY GHOST

The special inspiration to which the gifts render us docile is, as we have explained, quite different from common actual grace which leads us to the exercise of the virtues. Under common actual grace, we deliberate in a discursive or reasoned manner, for example, to go to Mass, or to say the Rosary at the accustomed hour. In this case we move ourselves by a more or less explicit deliberation to this act of the virtue of religion. Under a special inspiration of the Holy Ghost, on the contrary, we are moved, for example, in the course of study, to pray in order to obtain light. Here there is no discursive deliberation, the act of the gift of piety is not deliberate; but under the special inspiration it remains free, and the spirit of piety disposes us precisely to receive this inspiration with docility and therefore freely and with merit. St. Thomas distinguishes clearly between common actual grace and special inspiration when he shows the difference between cooperating grace, under which we are moved to act in virtue of an anterior act, and operating grace, by which we are moved to act by consenting freely to receive the impulsion of the Holy Ghost. In the first case, we are more active than passive; in the second, we are more passive than active, for it is more the Holy Ghost who acts in us.

It happens, moreover, that under this special inspiration the gifts are exercised at the same time that the work of the virtues is done. Thus while the boat advances by rowing, there may be a slight breeze which facilitates the labor of the rower. Likewise the inspirations of the gifts may recall to our mind many principles from the Gospel at the time when our reason deliberates on a decision to be made. Inversely, our prudence sometimes recognizes its powerlessness to find the solution of a difficult case of conscience, and it then moves us to ask for the light of the Holy Ghost,

whose special inspiration makes us see and accomplish what is fitting. We should be increasingly docile to Him.

THE ASCENDING GRADATION OF THE GIFTS

These inspirations of the Holy Ghost are exceedingly varied, as is shown by the enumeration of the gifts in the eleventh chapter of Isaias, and their subordination starting with that of fear, the least elevated, up to that of wisdom, which directs all the others from above This gradation given by Isaias and explained by St. Augustine, St. Thomas, and later St. Francis de Sales, is like an ancient hymn replete with beautiful modulations, one of the leitmotifs of traditional theology. In this gradation we perceive a spiritual scale analogous to that of the seven principal notes of music.

The gift of fear is the first manifestation of the influence of the Holy Ghost in a soul that leaves off sin and is converted to God. It supplies for the imperfection of the virtues of temperance and of chastity; it helps us to struggle against the fascination of forbidden pleasures and against the impulses of the heart.

This holy fear of God is the inverse of worldly fear, often called human respect. It is superior also to servile fear which; although it has a salutary effect on the sinner, has not the dignity of a gift of the Holy Ghost. Servile fear is that which trembles at the punishments of God; it diminishes with charity, which makes us consider God rather as a loving Father than as a judge to be feared.

Filial fear, or the gift of fear, dreads sin especially, more than the punishments due it. It makes us tremble with a holy respect before the majesty of God. At times the soul experiences this holy fear of offending God; occasionally the experience is so vivid that no meditation, no reading, could produce a like sentiment. It is the Holy Ghost who touches the soul. This holy fear of sin is “the beginning of wisdom,” for it leads us to obey the divine law in everything, which is wisdom itself. Filial fear increases with charity, like the horror of sin; in heaven, though the saints no longer have the fear of offending God, they still have the reverential fear which makes the angels themselves tremble before the infinite majesty of God, “tremunt potestates,” in the words of the preface of the Mass. This fear was even in the soul of Christ and still remains there.

This fear of sin, which inspired the great mortifications of the saints, corresponds to the beatitude of the poor: blessed are they who through fear of the Lord detach their hearts from the pleasures of the world, from honors; in their poverty they are supernaturally rich, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.

Fear has a negative element, making us flee from sin; but the soul needs a more filial attitude toward God. The gift of piety inspires us precisely with a wholly filial affection for our Father in heaven, for Christ our Savior, for our Mother, the Blessed Virgin, for our holy protectors. This gift supplies for the imperfection of the virtue of religion, which renders to God the worship due Him, in the discursive manner of human reason illumined by faith. There is no spiritual impulse and no lasting fervor without the gift of piety, which hinders us from becoming attached to sensible consolations in prayer and makes us draw profit from dryness, aridities, which are intended to render us more disinterested and spiritual. St. Paul writes to the Romans: "You have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry: Abba (Father)... '. Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity. For we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit Himself asketh for us with unspeakable groanings." By this gift we find a supernatural sweetness even in our interior sufferings; it is particularly manifest in the prayer of quiet, in which the will is captivated by the attraction of God, although the intellect often has to struggle against distractions. By its sweetness this gift makes us resemble Christ, who was meek and humble of heart. Its fruit, according to St. Augustine, is the beatitude of the meek, who shall possess the land of heaven. St. Bernard and St. Francis de Sales excelled in the gift of piety.

But to have a solid piety that avoids illusion and dominates the imagination and sentimentalism, the Holy Ghost must give us the higher gift of knowledge.

The gift of knowledge renders us docile to inspirations superior to human knowledge and even to reasoned theology. We are here concerned with a supernatural feeling that makes us judge rightly of human things, either as symbols of divine things, or in their opposition to the latter. It shows us vividly the vanity of all passing things, of honors, titles, the praises of men; it makes us see especially the infinite gravity of mortal sin as an offense against God and a disease of the soul. It throws light particularly on what in the world does not come from God, but from defectible and deficient

second causes; in this it differs from the gift of wisdom. By showing the infinite gravity of mortal sin, it produces not only fear but horror of sin and a great sorrow for having offended God.

It gives the true knowledge of good and evil, and not that which the devil promised to Adam and Eve when he said to them: “In what day soever you shall eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened: and you shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil.” As a matter of fact, they had the bitter knowledge or experience of evil committed, of proud disobedience, and of its results. The Holy Ghost, on the other hand, promises the true knowledge of good and evil; if we follow Him, we shall be in a sense like God, who knows evil to detest it and good to realize it.

Only too often human knowledge produces presumption; the gift of knowledge, on the contrary, strengthens hope because it shows us that every human help is fragile as a reed; it makes us see the nothingness of earthly goods and leads us to desire heaven, putting all our confidence in God. As St. Augustine says, it corresponds to the beatitude of the tears of contrition. Blessed are they who know the emptiness of human things, especially the gravity of sin; blessed are they who weep for their sins, who have true compunction of heart, of which The Imitation often speaks. By this gift we find the happy mean between a discouraging pessimism and an optimism made up of levity and vanity. Precious knowledge of the saints possessed by all great apostles: St. Dominic, for example, often wept on seeing the state of certain souls to which he brought the word of God.

Above the gift of knowledge, according to the enumeration of Isaias, comes the gift of fortitude. Why does the prophet place fortitude above knowledge? Because to be able to discern good and evil is not sufficient; we need strength to avoid the one and practice the other perseveringly without ever becoming discouraged. We must undertake a war against the flesh, the spirit of the world, and the spirit of evil, which is at times exceedingly afflictive. We have powerful, subtle, perfidious enemies. Shall we let ourselves be intimidated by certain worldly smiles, by a thoughtless speech? If we yield on this point, we shall fall into the snares of him who wishes our damnation and who struggles so much the more desperately against us as our vocation is higher.

The gift of fortitude strengthens our courage in danger, and comes to the help of our patience in long trials. It is this gift that sustained the martyrs, that gave invincible constancy to children, to Christian virgins, like Agnes

and Cecilia, to St. Joan of Arc in her prison and on her pyre. It corresponds, says St. Augustine, to the beatitude of those who hunger and thirst after justice in spite of all contradictions, of those who preserve a holy enthusiasm that is not only sensible, but spiritual and supernatural, even in the midst of persecution. It gave the martyrs of the early Church a holy joy in their torments.

But in difficult circumstances, in which the lofty acts of the gift of fortitude are exercised, we must avoid the danger of temerity which distinguishes fanatics. To avoid this danger, we need a higher gift, that of counsel.

The gift of counsel supplies for the imperfection of the virtue of prudence, when prudence hesitates and does not know what decision to make in certain difficulties, in the presence of certain adversaries. Must we still preserve patience, show meekness, or, on the contrary, give evidence of firmness? And, in dealing with clever people, how can we harmonize “the simplicity of the dove and the prudence of the serpent”?

In these difficulties, we must have recourse to the Holy Ghost who dwells in us. He will certainly not turn us away from seeking counsel from our superiors, our confessor, or director; on the contrary, He will move us to do so, and then He will fortify us against rash impulsiveness and pusillanimity. He will make us understand also what a superior and a director would be incapable of telling us, especially the harmonizing of seemingly contradictory virtues: prudence and simplicity, fortitude and meekness, frankness and reserve. The Holy Ghost makes us understand that we should not say something that is more or less contrary to charity; if, in spite of His warning, we do so, not infrequently it produces disorder, irritation, great loss of time, to the detriment of the peace of souls. All of this might easily have been avoided. The enemy of souls, on the contrary, exerts himself to sow cockle, to cause confusion, to transform a grain of sand into a mountain; he makes use of petty, almost imperceptible trifles, but he achieves results with them as a person does who puts a tiny obstacle in the movement of a watch in order to stop it.

Sometimes it is these trifles that arrest progress on the way of perfection; the soul is held captive by inferior things as by a thread which it has not the courage to break: for example, by a certain habit contrary to recollection or humility, to the respect due to other souls, which are also the temples of the Holy Ghost. All these obstacles are removed by the inspirations of the gift

of counsel, which corresponds to the beatitude of the merciful. These last are, in fact, good counselors who forget themselves that they may encourage the afflicted and sinners.

As the gift of counsel is given to us to direct our conduct by supplying for the imperfection of prudence, which would often remain hesitant, we need a superior gift to supply for the imperfection of faith. This virtue attains the mysteries of the inner life of God only by the intermediary of abstract and multiple formulas which we should like to be able to sum up in a single one that would express more exactly what the living God is for us.

Here the gift of understanding comes to our assistance by a certain interior light that makes us penetrate the mysteries of salvation and anticipate all their grandeur. Without this light, it happens often that we hear sermons, read spiritual books, and yet remain in ignorance of the deep meaning of these mysteries of life. They remain like sacred formulas preserved in the memory, but their truth does not touch our soul; it is pale and lusterless, like a star lost in the depths of the heavens. And because we are not sufficiently nourished with these divine truths, we are more or less seduced by the maxims of the world.

On the contrary, a simple soul prostrate before God, will understand the mysteries of the Incarnation, the redemption, the Eucharist, not to explain them, to discuss them, but to live by them. It is the Holy Ghost who gives this penetrating and experimental knowledge of the truths of faith which enables the soul to glimpse the sublime beauty of Christ’s sermons. It is He also who gives souls the profound understanding of their vocation and preserves them in this regard from every failure in judgment.

The gift of understanding cannot exist in a high degree without great purity of heart, of intention; it corresponds, according to St. Augustine, to the beatitude: “Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God.’: Even here on earth they begin to glimpse Him in the words of Scripture, which at times are illumined for them as if underscored by a line of light. St. Catherine of Siena and St. John of the Cross excel in this understanding of the mysteries of salvation that they may make us comprehend the plenitude of life contained in them.

The gift of wisdom is finally, according to the enumeration of Isaias, the highest of all, as charity, to which it corresponds, is the loftiest of the virtues. Wisdom appears eminently in St. John, St. Paul, St. Augustine, St. Thomas. It leads them to judge all things by relation to God, the first Cause

and last End, and to judge them thus, not as acquired theology does, but by that connaturalness or sympathy with divine things which comes from charity. By His inspiration, the Holy Ghost makes use of this connaturalness to show us the beauty, the sanctity, and the radiating plenitude of the mysteries of salvation, which correspond so well to our deepest and highest aspirations. Opposed to wisdom is spiritual folly, stultitia, of which St. Paul often speaks.

From this higher point of view, it becomes evident that a number of learned men are mad in their vain learning, when, for example, in discussing the origins of Christianity, they wish to deny the supernatural at any cost; they fall into manifest absurdities. In a less inferior degree, believers who are instructed in their religion but whose judgment is faulty take scandal at the mystery of the cross which continues in the life of the Church. They do not have a sufficiently clear perception of the value of supernatural means, of prayer, the sacraments, trials borne with love; they are too much preoccupied with human culture and occasionally confound liberalism and charity, as others confound narrowness and firmness in faith. This is a lack of wisdom.

The gift of wisdom, the principle of a living contemplation that directs action, enables the soul to taste the goodness of God, to see it manifested in all events, even in the most painful, since God permits evil only for a higher good, which we shall see later and which it is sometimes given us to glimpse on earth. The gift of wisdom thus makes us judge everything in relation to God; it shows the subordination of causes and ends or, as they say today, the scale of values. It reminds us that all that glitters is not gold and that, on the contrary, marvels of grace are to be found under the humblest exteriors, as in the person of St. Benedict Joseph Labre or Blessed Anna Maria Taigi. This gift enables the saints to embrace the plan of Providence with a gaze entirely penetrated with love; darkness does not disconcert them for they discover in it the hidden God. As the bee knows how to find honey in flowers, the gift of wisdom draws lessons of divine goodness from everything.

Wisdom reminds us, as Cardinal Newman says, that: “A thousand difficulties do not make a doubt” so long as they do not impair the very basis of certitude. Thus many difficulties which subsist in the interpretation of several books of the Old Testament or of the Apocalypse do not make a doubt as to the divine origin of the religion of Israel or of Christianity.

The gift of wisdom thus gives the supernaturalized soul great peace, that is the tranquillity of the order of things considered from God's point of view. Thereby this gift, says St. Augustine, corresponds to the beatitude of the peacemakers, that is to say, of those who remain in peace when many are troubled and who are capable of bringing peace to the discouraged. This is one of the signs of the unitive life.

How is it possible that so many persons, after living forty or fifty years in the state of grace, receiving Holy Communion frequently, give almost no indication of the gifts of the Holy Ghost in their conduct and actions, take offense at a trifle, show great eagerness for praise, and live a very natural life? This condition springs from venial sins which they often commit without any concern for them; these sins and the inclinations arising from them lead these souls toward the earth and hold the gifts of the Holy Ghost as it were bound, like wings that cannot spread. These souls lack recollection; they are not attentive to the inspirations of the Holy Ghost, which pass unperceived. Consequently they remain in obscurity, not in the darkness from above, which is that of the inner life of God, but in the lower obscurity which comes from matter, from inordinate passions, sin, and error; this is the explanation of their spiritual inertia. To these souls are addressed the words of the Psalmist, which the Divine Office places before us daily at Matins: "Today if you shall hear His voice, harden not your hearts."

CONDITIONS REQUIRED FOR DOCILITY TO THE HOLY GHOST

To be docile to the Holy Ghost, we must first hear His voice. To do so, recollection, detachment from the world and from self are necessary, as are the custody of the heart, the mortification of self-will, and personal judgment. If silence does not reign in our soul, if the voice of excessively human affections troubles it, we cannot of a certainty hear the inspirations of the interior Master. For this reason the Lord subjects our sensible appetites to severe trials and in a way crucifies them that they may eventually become silent or fully submissive to our will animated by charity. If we are ordinarily preoccupied with ourselves, we shall certainly hear ourselves or perhaps a more perfidious, more dangerous voice which seeks to lead us astray. Consequently our Lord invites us to die to ourselves like the grain of wheat placed in the ground.

To hear the divine inspirations, we must, therefore, create silence in ourselves; but even then the voice of the Holy Ghost remains mysterious. As Christ says: “The Spirit breatheth where He will; and thou hearest His voice, but thou knowest not whence He cometh and whither He goeth. So is everyone that is born of the Spirit.” Mysterious words, which should make us prudent and reserved in our judgments about our neighbor, attentive to the attractions placed in us by the Lord, which are the mixed seed of a future known to divine Providence. They are attractions toward renunciation, toward interior prayer; they are more precious than we think. Some intellectuals from an early age have an attraction to silent mental prayer, which alone perhaps will preserve them from spiritual pride, from dryness of heart, and will make their souls childlike, such as they must be to enter the kingdom of God, and especially the intimacy of the kingdom. A vocation to a definite religious order may often be recognized by these early attractions.

The voice of the Holy Ghost begins, therefore, by an instinct, an obscure illumination, and if one perseveres in humility and conformity to the will of God, this instinct manifests its divine origin clearly to the conscience while remaining mysterious. The first gleams will become so many lights which, like the stars, will illumine the night of our pilgrimage toward eternity; the dark night will thus become luminous and like the aurora of the life of heaven, “and night shall be my light in my pleasures.”

To succeed in being docile to the Holy Ghost, we need, therefore, interior silence, habitual recollection, attention, and fidelity.

ACTS WHICH PREPARE THE SOUL FOR DOCILITY TO THE HOLY GHOST

We dispose ourselves to docility to the Holy Ghost by three principal acts: (1) By obeying faithfully the will of God which we already know through the precepts and the counsels proper to our vocation. Let us make good use of the knowledge that we have; God will give us additional knowledge.(2) By frequently renewing our resolution to follow the will of God in everything. This good resolution thus renewed draws down new graces on us. We should often repeat Christ’s words: “My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me.”. (3) By asking unceasingly for the light and strength of the Holy Ghost to accomplish the will of God. We may with profit consecrate ourselves to the Holy Ghost, when we feel the attraction to

do so, to place our soul more under His dominion and as it were, in His hand. We may make this consecration in the following terms: “O Holy Ghost, divine Spirit of light and love, I consecrate to Thee my mind, my heart, my will, and my whole being for time and eternity. May my mind be ever docile to Thy celestial inspirations and to the teaching of the holy Catholic Church of which Thou art the infallible Guide. May my heart be always inflamed with love of God and of my neighbor. May my will be ever conformed to the divine will, and may my whole life be a faithful imitation of the life and virtues of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, to whom, with the Father and Thee, O Holy Ghost, be honor and glory forever.”

St. Catherine of Siena used to pray: “O Holy Ghost, come into my heart; by Thy power, O God, draw me to Thyself and grant me charity with filial fear. Keep me, O ineffable Love, from every evil thought; warm and kindle me with Thy sweetest love, and every suffering will seem light to me. My Father, my sweet Lord, help me in all my actions. O Jesus love, O Jesus love!”

This consecration is also admirably expressed in the beautiful sequence:

Veni, Sancte Spiritus,
Et emitte coelitus
Lucis tuae radium.

When such a consecration is made with a great spirit of faith, its effect may be most profound. Since a fully deliberate pact with the devil brings in its wake so many disastrous effects in the order of evil, an act of consecration to the Holy Ghost can produce greater ones in the order of good, for God has more goodness and power than the devil has malice.

Consequently the Christian who has consecrated himself to Mary Mediatrix, for example, according to the formula of St. Grignion de Montfort, and then to the Sacred Heart, will find treasures in the often renewed consecration to the Holy Ghost. All Mary’s influence leads us to the intimacy of Christ, and the humanity of the Savior leads us to the Holy Ghost, who introduces us into the mystery of the adorable Trinity. We may fittingly make this consecration at Pentecost and renew it frequently.

Especially when difficulties arise, when most important actions are being changed, we must ask for the light of the Holy Ghost, sincerely wishing only to do His will. This done, if He does not give us new lights, we shall continue to do what will seem best to us. Therefore, at the opening

assemblies of the clergy and of religious chapters, the assistance of the Holy Ghost is invoked by votive Masses in His honor.

Lastly we should note exactly the different movements of our soul in order to discover what comes from God and what does not. Spiritual writers generally say that God's action in a soul submissive to grace is ordinarily characterized by peace and tranquillity; the devil's action is violent and accompanied by disturbance and anxiety.

THE HARMONIZING OF DOCILITY TO THE HOLY GHOST WITH OBEDIENCE AND PRUDENCE

The first Protestants wished to regulate everything by private inspiration, subjecting to it even the Church and its decisions. For the true believer, however, docility to the interior Master admits nothing contrary to the faith proposed by the Church and to its authority; on the contrary, it tends only to perfect faith and the other virtues.

Likewise the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, far from destroying the obedience due to superiors, aids and facilitates its practice. Inspiration should be understood with the implied condition that obedience enjoins nothing contrary to it.

In the words of Father Lallemant, S.J.: "The only thing to be feared is that superiors may sometimes follow human prudence excessively, and that for want of discernment they may condemn the lights and inspirations of the Holy Ghost, treating them as illusions and reveries, and prescribe for those to whom God communicates Himself by such favors as if they were invalids. In this case, a person should still obey, but God will one day correct the error of these rash spirits and teach them to their cost not to condemn His graces without understanding them and without being qualified to pass judgment on them."

Neither should it be said that docility to the Holy Ghost renders useless the deliberations of prudence or the counsel of experienced people. The interior Master tells us, on the contrary, to be attentive to what we can see for ourselves; He also invites us to consult enlightened persons, but adds that we should at the same time have recourse to Him. As St. Augustine says: "God orders us to do what we can, and to ask for the grace to accomplish what we cannot do by ourselves." The Holy Ghost sent even St. Paul to Ananias to learn from him what he was to do. This docility then

harmonizes perfectly with obedience, prudence, and humility; it even greatly perfects these virtues.

THE FRUITS OF DOCILITY TO THE HOLY GHOST

All our perfection most certainly depends on this fidelity. According to Father Lallemant: “Some have many beautiful practices and perform a number of exterior acts of virtue; they give themselves wholly to the material action of virtue. Such a way of living is good for beginners; but it belongs to a far greater perfection to follow one’s interior attraction and to regulate one’s conduct by its movement.” Were we to apply ourselves to purifying our heart, to eliminating what is opposed to grace, we would arrive twice as soon at perfection. We read in the same chapter:

> The end to which we should aspire, after we have for a long time exercised ourselves in purity of heart, is to be so possessed and governed by the Holy Ghost that He alone will direct all our powers and senses, regulate all our interior and exterior movements, and that we may surrender ourselves entirely by a spiritual renunciation of our will and our own satisfaction. Thus we will no longer live in ourselves, but in Jesus Christ, by a faithful correspondence with the operations of His divine Spirit and by a perfect subjection of all our rebellious movements to the power of grace.
>
> Few persons attain the graces that God destined for them, or, having once lost them, succeed later in repairing their loss. The majority lack the courage to conquer themselves and the fidelity to use the gift of God with discretion.
>
> When we enter on the path of virtue, we walk at first in darkness, but if we faithfully and constantly followed grace, we would infallibly reach great light both for ourselves and for others....
>
> Sometimes, after receiving a good inspiration from God, we immediately find ourselves attacked by repugnances, doubts, perplexities, and difficulties which spring from our corrupted nature and from our passions, which are opposed to the divine inspiration. If we received it with full submission of heart, it would fill us with the peace and consolation which the Holy Ghost brings with Him....
>
> It is of faith that the least inspiration of God is more precious and more excellent than the whole world, since it belongs to a supernatural order and cost the blood and the life of a God.
>
> What stupidity! We are insensible to the inspirations of God because they are spiritual and infinitely elevated above the senses. We do not pay much attention to them, we prefer natural talents, brilliant positions, the esteem of men, our little comforts and satisfactions. Prodigious illusion from which, nevertheless, a number are undeceived only at the hour of death!
>
> Then in practice we take away from the Holy Ghost the direction of our soul and, though its center is made for God alone, we fill it with creatures to His prejudice; and instead of dilating and enlarging it infinitely by the presence of God, we contract it exceedingly by

occupying it with some wretched little nothings. That is what hinders us from attaining perfection.

On the contrary, says the same author, docility to the Holy Ghost would show us that He is truly the Consoler of our souls in the uncertainty of our salvation, in the midst of the temptations and tribulations of this life, which is an exile.

We need this consolation because of the uncertainty of our salvation in the midst of the snares which surround us, of all that can make us deviate from the right road. Strictly speaking, we cannot merit final perseverance, for it is nothing else than the state of grace at the very moment of death, and grace, being the principle of merit, cannot be merited. Therefore we need the direction, protection, and consolation of the Holy Ghost, who "giveth testimony to our spirit that we are the sons of God." He gives us this testimony, by the filial affection for God which He Inspires In us. He is thus the pledge of our inheritance."

We also need the Holy Ghost to console us in the temptations of the devil and the afflictions of this life. The unction which He pours into our souls sweetens our sorrows, strengthens our wavering wills, and makes us at times find a true, supernatural savor in crosses.

Lastly, as Father Lallemant says so well: "The Holy Ghost consoles us in our exile on earth, far from God. This exile causes an inconceivable torment in holy souls, for these poor souls experience in themselves a sort of infinite void, which we have in ourselves and all creation cannot fill, which can be filled only by the enjoyment of God. While they are separated from Him, they languish and suffer a long martyrdom that would be unbearable to them without the consolations which the Holy Ghost gives them from time to time.... A single drop of the interior sweetness that the Holy Ghost pours into the soul, ravishes it out of itself and causes a holy inebriation." Such is indeed the profound meaning of the name given to the Holy Ghost: Paraclete or Comforter.

On the subject of the ascending gradation of the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, which we discussed in this chapter, we should note the following important statement made by St. John of the Cross. It throws great light on the unitive way, which we shall discuss farther on. Treating of the transforming union, the mystical doctor wrote in A Spiritual Canticle of the Soul: "The cellar is the highest degree of love to which the soul may attain in this life, and is therefore said to be the inner. It follows from this that

there are other cellars not so interior; that is, the degrees of love by which souls reach this, the last. These cellars are seven in number, and the soul has entered into them all when it has in perfection the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, so far as it is possible for it.... The last and inmost cellar is entered by few in this world, because therein is wrought the perfect union with God, the union of the spiritual marriage."

These lines of St. John of the Cross express as clearly as possible the doctrine which we set forth in the course of this entire work on the full development of the life of grace.

Chapter 23

The Discerning of Spirits

Docility to the Holy Ghost, which we spoke of in the preceding chapter, requires, as we said, interior silence, habitual recollection, and the spirit of detachment in order to hear His inspirations, which at first are similar to a secret instinct that increasingly manifests its divine origin if we are faithful to it. This docility also requires that the inspirations of the Holy Ghost be discerned from those which might lead us astray, from those of two other spirits or inspirations, which may at first appear good, but which lead to death. The discerning of spirits is, consequently, a subject we should consider.

By the discerning of spirits may be understood one of the gratiae gratis datae, mentioned by St. Paul, by which the saints occasionally discern at once whether, for example, a person is speaking or acting through the spirit of true charity or only simulating this virtue. But by the discerning of spirits may also be meant a wise discretion proceeding from infused prudence with the cooperation of acquired prudence and the higher help of the gift of counsel and of the graces of state granted to the spiritual director who is faithful to his duties. It is with this second meaning that we shall discuss the discerning of spirits.

This question was treated by St. Anthony the hermit, patriarch of monks; by St. Bernard in his thirty-third Sermon; by Cardinal Bona, by St. Ignatius, by Scaramelli, and many other writers who draw their inspiration from those who preceded them.

By spirit is meant the tendency to judge, will, or act in one way or another; thus we speak of the spirit of contradiction, dispute, and so on. But in spirituality especially, we distinguish three spirits: the spirit of God; the purely natural spirit, proceeding from our fallen nature, which also has its impulses, fortitude, lyricism, its momentary enthusiasms, which may create

illusion; lastly, the spirit of the devil to whose interest it is to hide himself and disguise himself as an angel of light. For this reason St. John says in his First Epistle: “Dearly beloved, believe not every spirit; but try the spirits if they be of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world.”

Generally one of three spirits is dominant in every soul: in the perverse, the devil; in the tepid, the natural spirit; in those who are beginning to give themselves seriously to the interior life, the Spirit of God habitually dominates, but there are many interferences of the natural spirit and of the spirit of evil. Consequently no one should ever be judged by one or two isolated acts, but by his whole life. Even in the perfect, God permits certain imperfections, at times more apparent than real, to keep them in humility and to give them frequent opportunity to practice the contrary virtues. There are persons advanced in the ways of God, who are, as the result of an illness (for example, a progressive infection of the blood), inclined to exceptional irritability. They are like people badly dressed, because their illness increases, as it were tenfold, the painful impression produced by contradictions, and sometimes the latter are incessant. There may be great merit in this struggle, and great patience in seeming impatience.

It is, therefore, most important to discern clearly what spirit moves us, what is God’s action in us and what is our own, according to the words of St. John in the prologue of his Gospel: “But as many as received Him, He gave them power to be made the sons of God, to them that believe in His name, who are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” To be “born of God,” is our great title of nobility, and we may say of it more than of any other: Noblesse oblige.

The great principle of the discerning of spirits was given to us by our Lord Himself in the Gospel when He said: “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. By their fruits you shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, and the evil tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can an evil tree bring forth good fruit.”

Those, in fact, who are animated by an evil intention cannot long hide it. It does not delay, says St. Thomas, in manifesting itself in different ways: first of all, in things that must be accomplished instantly without time to deliberate and to conceal its intent; then in tribulations, as we read in Ecclesiasticus: “There is a friend for his own occasion, and he will not

abide in the day of thy trouble." Likewise, men show their character when they cannot obtain what they wish or when they have already obtained it; thus when a man attains power, he shows what he is.

The tree is known by its fruit: that is, if our fundamental will is good, it yields good fruit. If we hear the word of God that we may put it into practice, people are not long in seeing it; if, on the contrary, we hear it and content ourselves with saying, "Lord, Lord," without doing the will of God, how can we expect good fruit? In the light of this principle, "The tree is judged by its fruit," we can judge what spirit moves us. We must see the results of its influence and compare them with what the Gospel tells us about the principal Christian virtues: humility and mortification or abnegation on the one hand, and, on the other, the three theological virtues of faith, hope, love of God and of souls in God.

THE SIGNS OF THE SPIRIT OF NATURE

In consequence of original sin, nature is the enemy of mortification and humiliations; it seeks self while increasingly disregarding in practice the value of the three theological virtues. In the life of piety as elsewhere, nature pursues pleasure, and it falls into spiritual gluttony, which is the seeking after self and, therefore, the contrary of the spirit of faith and of love of God.

At the first difficulties or aridities, the spirit of nature stands still, quits the interior life. Often, under the pretext of the apostolate; it takes satisfaction in its natural activity, in which the soul becomes increasingly exterior; it confounds charity with philanthropy. Let contradiction, let trial arise, nature complains of the cross, grows irritated, and becomes discouraged. Its first fervor was only a passing enthusiasm; it is indifferent to the glory of God, to His reign, and to the salvation of souls; it is the negation of the zeal or ardor of charity. The spirit of nature is summed up in one word: egoism.

After seeking and failing to find pleasure in the interior life, it declares that one must prudently avoid all exaggeration in austerity, prayer, all mysticism; and from this point of view, a person is already a mystic who daily reads a chapter of The Imitation with recollection. It declares that one must follow the common way, by which it means the common way of tepidity or mediocrity, an unstable mean between good and evil, but closer

to evil than to good. It seeks rather frequently to make this mediocrity pass for moderation, for the happy mean of virtue. In reality, the happy medium is also a summit above contrary vices, whereas mediocrity seeks to remain halfway between this summit and the depths, the inconveniences of which it would like to avoid without any true love of virtue.

The spirit of nature is depicted by St. Paul as follows: “The sensual man perceiveth not these things that are of the Spirit of God. For it is foolishness to him, and he cannot understand, because it is spiritually examined.” The egoist judges everything from his individual point of view and not from God’s. Gradually the spirit of faith, confidence, love of God and souls disappears in him; he relies on himself, weakness itself. At times, however, the gravity of his own ill enlightens him and reminds him of the Savior’s words: “Without Me you can do nothing.”

THE SIGNS OF THE SPIRIT OF THE DEVIL

The devil first lifts us up by inspiring us with pride, subsequently to cast us down into trouble, discouragement, and even despair. To recognize his influence, we must consider it in relation to mortification, humility, and the three theological virtues.

The devil does not necessarily, as nature does, disincline us to mortification; on the contrary, he urges certain souls toward an exaggerated, very visible, exterior mortification, especially in centers where it is held in honor. Such a course of action keeps pride alive and ruins health. But the devil does not incline a soul to the interior mortification of the imagination, heart, self-will, and personal judgment, although he sometimes simulates it in us by inspiring us with scruples about trifles and great liberality on dangerous or serious matters. He gives us a great opinion of ourselves, leads us to prefer ourselves to others, to boast of ourselves, unwittingly to pray like the Pharisee.

This spiritual pride is often accompanied by a false humility which makes us speak ill of ourselves on certain points in order to hinder others from speaking ill about us on another point, and in order to give the impression that we are humble. Or indeed it makes us confound humility with timidity, which is rather the fear of rebuffs and scorn.

Instead of nourishing faith by the consideration of the teaching of the Gospel, the spirit of evil draws the attention of certain souls to what is most

extraordinary and marvelous, of a nature to make us esteemed, or again to what is foreign to our vocation. He inspires a missionary with the thought of becoming a Carthusian, a Carthusian with that of going to evangelize the infidel. Or, on the contrary, he leads others to minimize the supernatural, to modernize faith by the reading, for example, of liberal, Protestant works.

His way of exciting hope is to give rise to presumption, to lead us to wish to be saints immediately without traversing the indispensable stages and the way of abnegation. He even inspires us with a certain impatience with ourselves and with vexation instead of contrition.

Far from causing our charity to grow, he cultivates self-love in us and, according to temperaments and circumstances, makes charity deviate either in the direction of a humanitarian sentimentalism of extreme indulgence, or toward liberalism under the guise of generosity, or, on the contrary, toward a bitter zeal, which chides others indiscriminately instead of correcting itself. He shows us the mote in our neighbor’s eye, when there is a beam in our own.

Instead of giving peace, this spirit engenders dissensions, hatreds. People no longer dare to talk to us; we would not put up with contradiction. An encumbering personalism can thus lead a man to see only himself and unconsciously to place himself on a pedestal.

Should we commit a very evident sin, which we cannot conceal, we fall into confusion, vexation, discouragement; and the devil, who veiled the danger from us before the sin, now exaggerates the difficulties of turning back to God and seeks to lead us to spiritual desolation. He fashions souls to his own image; he rose through pride and he fell in despair.

Great care must therefore be exercised if we have lively sensible devotion and come forth from prayer with increased self-love, preferring ourselves to others, failing in simplicity with our superiors and director. The lack of humility and obedience is a certain indication that it is not God who guides us.

THE SIGNS OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD

The signs of the spirit of God are contrary to those of the spirit of nature and of the devil. The spirit of God inclines us to exterior mortification, in which it differs from the spirit of nature, but to an exterior mortification regulated by discretion and obedience, which will not attract attention to us

or ruin our health. Moreover, it makes us understand that exterior mortification is of little value if not accompanied by that of the heart, of self-will, and of personal judgment; in this respect, the spirit of God differs from the spirit of the devil.

The spirit of God inspires true humility, which forbids us to prefer ourselves to others, does not fear scorn, is silent about divine favors received, does not deny them if they exist, but refers all their glory to God. It leads us to nourish our faith with what is most simple and profound in the Gospel, while remaining faithful to tradition and fleeing novelties. It shows us our Lord in superiors, and hereby develops our spirit of faith. It quickens hope and preserves us from presumption. It makes us ardently desire the living waters of prayer, reminding us that we must reach them by degrees and by the way of humility, renunciation, and the cross. It gives a holy indifference in regard to human success.

The spirit of God augments the fervor of charity, gives zeal for the glory of God, forgetfulness of self. It leads us to think first of God and to leave the care of our interests to Him. It stirs up the love of our neighbor in us, showing therein the great sign of the love of God. It hinders us from judging rashly, from taking scandal without motive; it inspires meek and patient zeal which edifies by prayer and example instead of irritating by untimely admonitions. The spirit of God gives patience in trial, love of the cross, and love of enemies. It gives peace with ourselves and with others, and even quite often interior joy. Then, if we should happen to fall, it speaks to us of mercy. According to St. Paul, “The fruit of the Spirit is charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, longanimity, mildness, faith, modesty, continency, chastity,” which are united to obedience and humility.

If it is a question of one act in particular, this is a sign that God is visiting our soul when no natural cause has brought the profound consolation with which it suddenly feels itself filled. God alone penetrates thus into the innermost depths of the soul. However, we must distinguish carefully from this first moment of happiness those which follow it, although the soul still feels the grace received, for in the second moment it often happens that of ourselves we form certain thoughts which are no longer inspired by God and into which error may slip.

Rarely does the Holy Ghost make revelations; they are an extraordinary grace that it would be presumptuous to desire, but frequently the interior Guest gives His inspirations to fervent souls make them taste certain words

of the Gospel. Then, under the divine inspiration, the faithful soul should go forward like the artist who follows his genius and who, without thinking of the rules of art, observes them in a superior and spontaneous manner. Then are harmonized humility and zeal, fortitude and meekness, the simplicity of the dove and the prudence of the serpent. Thus the Holy Spirit leads faithful souls to the harbor of eternity.

Chapter 24

The Sacrifice of the Mass and Proficients

When we discussed the purification of the souls of beginners, we spoke of assistance at Mass as a source of sanctification. We shall now treat of the Sacrifice of the Mass in the illuminative way of proficients.

The excellence of the Sacrifice of the Mass, as we said, comes from the fact that the Mass is in substance the same sacrifice as that of the cross, because it is the same principal Priest who continues really to offer Himself through His ministers, the same Victim really present on the altar who is really offered, only the manner of offering being different: on the cross there was a bloody immolation, whereas in the Mass there is a sacramental immolation through the separation, not physical but sacramental, of the body and blood of the Savior by virtue of the double consecration. This sacramental immolation is the memorial of the bloody immolation that is past and the sign of the interior oblation perpetually living in the heart of Christ, who, as St. Paul says, "is always living to make intercession for us." This interior oblation of Jesus, which was like the soul of the sacrifice of the cross, remains the soul of the Sacrifice of the Mass, which perpetuates in substance that of Calvary.

Deeper penetration daily into what constitutes the infinite value of the sacrifice of the altar is essential to progress in the interior life. Speaking to the Lutherans, who suppressed the Eucharistic sacrifice, St. John Fisher declared that: "The Mass is like the sun which daily illumines and warms all Christian life."

The Christian and Catholic doctrine of the Sacrifice of the Mass may be penetrated either in an abstract and speculative manner or in a concrete and experimental manner by uniting oneself personally to the Savior's oblation.

Proficients should live by the four ends of the sacrifice: adoration, reparation, petition, and thanksgiving. Blessed Peter Eymard insisted

greatly on this point. That a proficient may live more profoundly by the Mass, he should, in union with our Lord, offer up everything painful in each day and throughout his life, even until his entrance into heaven. It is fitting that he make in advance the sacrifice of his life to obtain the grace of a holy death. Spiritual progress is, in fact, essentially ordered to the last act of love here on earth. If well prepared for by our whole life and very well made, this act will open the gates of heaven to us immediately.

To enter the depths of the Mass, we must place ourselves in the school of the Mother of God. More than anyone else in the world, Mary was associated with the sacrifice of her Son, sharing in all His sufferings in the measure of her love for Him.

Some saints, in particular the stigmatics, for example, St. Francis of Assisi and St. Catherine of Siena, have been exceptionally united to the sufferings and merits of our Savior. But profound as this union was, in comparison with Mary's it was insignificant. By a most intimate experimental knowledge and by the greatness of her love, Mary at the foot of the cross entered the depths of the mystery of the redemption more than did St. John, St. Peter, or St. Paul. She entered it in the measure of the plenitude of grace which she had received; in the measure of her faith, of her love, of the gifts of understanding and wisdom which she had in a degree proportionate to her charity.

That we may enter a little into this mystery and draw from it practical lessons which will enable us to prepare ourselves for a good death, we should think of the sacrifice we ought to make of our lives in union with Mary at the foot of the cross.

The dying are often exhorted to make the sacrifice of their lives in order to give a satisfactory, meritorious, and impetrating value to their last sufferings. The sovereign pontiffs, in particular Pius X, have invited the faithful to offer in advance these sufferings of the last moment, which may perhaps be very great, that they may be well disposed to offer them more generously in their last hour.

But that we may even now make this sacrifice of our lives rightly, we should make it in union with the sacrifice of the Savior sacramentally perpetuated on the altar during Mass, in union with the sacrifice of Mary, Mediatrix and Coredemptrix. And to see clearly all that this oblation implies, it is expedient to recall here the four ends of the sacrifice:

adoration, reparation, petition, and thanksgiving. We shall consider them successively and draw from them the lessons that they hold for us.

ADORATION

Jesus on the cross made His death a sacrifice of adoration. It was the most perfect accomplishment of the precept of the Decalogue: “Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and shalt serve Him only.” Jesus used these divine words when He replied to Satan, who, after showing Him all the kingdoms of the world, said to Him: “All these will I give Thee, if falling down Thou wilt adore me.”

Adoration is due to God alone because of His sovereign excellence as Creator, because He alone is eternally subsistent Being, Wisdom, and Love. The adoration due Him should be both exterior and interior and should be inspired by love; it should be adoration in spirit and in truth.

Adoration of infinite value was offered to God by Christ in Gethsemane when He prostrated Himself, saying: “My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt.” Christ’s adoration of the Father recognized in a practical and profound manner the sovereign excellence of God, Master of life and death, of God who, through the love of the Savior, willed to make death, the penalty of sin, serve as reparation for sin and for our salvation. In this eternal decree of God, which contains the entire history of the world, there is a sovereign excellence, recognized by the adoration of Gethsemane.

The Savior’s adoration continued on the cross, and Mary associated herself with it in the measure of the plenitude of grace which she had received and which had not ceased to grow. At the moment of the crucifixion of her Son, she adored the rights of God, the Author of life, who for the eternal good of souls was about to make the death of her innocent Son serve as reparation for sin.

In union with our Lord and His holy Mother, let us adore God and say from our hearts, as Pius X invited us to do: “O Lord, my God, from this moment with a tranquil and submissive heart, I accept from Thy hand the type of death that it shall please Thee to send me, with all its anguish, sufferings, and sorrows.” Whoever recites this act of resignation after confession and Communion once in he course of his life, will gain a plenary indulgence that will be applied to him at the hour of death, according to the

purity of his conscience. We would do well, however, to repeat this act of oblation daily, and by so doing prepare ourselves to make our death, in union with the sacrifice of Christ continued in substance on the altar, a sacrifice of adoration. And while we are making this act, we should consider the sovereign dominion of God, the majesty and goodness of Him who "leadest down to hell, and bringest up again." "For it is Thou, O Lord, that hast power of life and death, and leadest down to the gates of death, and bringest back again." This adoration of God, Master of life and death, may be made in quite different ways, according as souls are more or less enlightened. Is there a better way than thus to unite oneself daily to the Savior's sacrifice of adoration?

Let us from now on be adorers in spirit and in truth. May our adoration be so sincere and so profound that it will be reflected on our life and dispose us for that which we should have in our hearts at the moment of our death.

REPARATION

A second end of the Sacrifice of the Mass is reparation of the offense offered to God by sin and satisfaction for the punishment due to sin. Since adoration should, properly speaking, be reparatory, we ought to make our death a propitiatory sacrifice.

Christ satisfied superabundantly for our sins because, says St. Thomas, in offering His life for us, He made an act of love which pleased God more than all the sins of the human race displeased Him. His charity was far greater than the malice of His executioners; His charity had an infinite value which it drew from the personality of the Word.

He satisfied for us, the members of His mystical body. But as the first cause does not render the secondary causes superfluous, the Savior's sacrifice does not render ours useless, but arouses it and gives it its value. Mary set us the example by uniting herself to the sufferings of her Son; she thus satisfied for us to the point of meriting the title of coredemptrix. She accepted the martyrdom of her Son, whom she not only cherished but legitimately adored, and whom she loved most tenderly from the moment she conceived Him virginally.

Even more heroic than the patriarch Abraham ready to immolate his son Isaac, Mary offered her Son for our salvation, and saw Him die in the most

atrocious physical and moral sufferings. An angel did not come and put a stop to the sacrifice and say to Mary, as to the patriarch, in the name of the Lord: “Now I know that thou fearest God, and hast not spared thy only-begotten son for My sake.” Mary saw the effective and full realization of Jesus’ sacrifice of reparation, of which that of Isaac was only a figure. She suffered then from sin in the measure of her love for God whom sin offends, for her Son whom sin crucified, for our souls which sin ravages and puts to death. The charity of the Blessed Virgin incomparably surpassed that of the patriarch, and in her more than in him, were realized the words which he heard: “Because thou hast done this thing, and hast not spared thy only-begotten son for My sake, I will bless thee, and I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven.”

Since the sacrifice of Jesus and Mary was a sacrifice of propitiation or reparation for sin, of satisfaction for the punishment due to sin, let us, in union with them, make the sacrifice of our lives a reparation for all our sins. Let us from now on ask that our last moments may have both a meritorious and an expiatory value, and let us also ask for the grace to make this sacrifice with great love, which will increase its twofold value. We should be happy to pay this debt to divine justice that order may be fully re-established in us. If, in this spirit, we unite ourselves intimately to the Masses that are being celebrated every day, if we unite ourselves to the oblation always living in the heart of Christ, an oblation which is the soul of these Masses, then we shall obtain the grace to unite ourselves to them in the same way at the hour of our death. If this union of love with Christ Jesus is daily more intimate, the satisfaction of purgatory will be notably shortened for us. We may even receive the grace to complete our purgatory on earth while meriting, while growing in love, instead of after death without meriting.

PETITION

The daily sacrifice, like that of the hour of death, should be not only a sacrifice of adoration and reparation, but also a sacrifice of petition in union with Jesus and Mary.

St. Paul writes to the Hebrews: “[Christ] offering up prayers and supplications... was heard for His reverence.... And being consummated, He became, to all that obey Him, the cause of eternal salvation.” Let us call to

mind Christ's sacerdotal prayer after the Last Supper and shortly before the sacrifice of the cross: in it Jesus prayed for His apostles and for us. And let us be mindful of the fact that He is "always living to make intercession for us," in particular in the Sacrifice of the Mass, of which He is the principal Priest.

Jesus, who prayed for His executioners, prays for the dying who recommend themselves to Him. With Him the Blessed Virgin Mary intercedes, remembering that we have often said to her: "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death."

The dying man should unite himself to the Masses being celebrated far and near; he should ask through them, through the great prayer of Christ which continues in them, for the grace of a good death or final perseverance, the grace of graces, that of the elect. He should ask this grace not only for himself, but for all those who are dying at the same time.

To dispose ourselves even now to make this act of petition in our last hour, we should often pray at Mass for those who will die in the course of the day. Following the recommendation of Pope Benedict XV, we should occasionally have a Mass offered to obtain through this infinitely valuable sacrifice of petition the grace of a good death, or the application of our Savior's merits. We should also have Masses offered for those of our relatives and friends about whose salvation we have reason to be concerned, in order to obtain for them the final grace, and also for those whom we may have scandalized and perhaps led astray from the way of God.

THANKSGIVING

Lastly, everyone should daily prepare himself to make his death, in union with our Lord and Mary, a sacrifice of thanksgiving for all the benefits received since baptism, keeping in mind the many absolutions and Communions that have reinstated or kept him in the way of salvation.

Christ made His death a sacrifice of thanksgiving when He said: "It is consummated"; Mary uttered this "Consummatum est" with Him. This form of prayer, which continues in the Mass, will not cease even when the last Mass has been said at the end of the world. When there will no longer be any sacrifice properly so called, there will be its consummation, and in it there will always be the adoration and thanksgiving of the elect who, united

to our Savior and to Mary, will sing the Sanctus with the angels and glorify God while thanking Him.

This thanksgiving is admirably expressed by the words of the ritual which the priest says at the bedside of the dying after giving them a last absolution and Holy Viaticum. “Go forth from this world, Christian soul, in the name of God the Father almighty, who created thee, in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, who suffered for thee, in the name of the glorious and holy Mother of God, the Blessed Virgin Mary, in the name of Blessed Joseph, her predestined spouse, in the name of the angels and archangels, in the name of the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, in the name of all the saints of God. May thy dwelling today be in peace and thy rest in the heavenly Jerusalem, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.”

To conclude, we should often repeat, in order to give it its full value, the act recommended by Pope Pius X, and we should ask Mary for the grace to make our death a sacrifice of adoration, reparation, petition, and thanksgiving. When we assist the dying, we should exhort them to make this sacrifice while uniting themselves to the Masses then being celebrated. We ourselves should even now make it in advance and often renew it each day as if it were to be our last. By so doing we prepare ourselves to make it very well at the last moment. Then we shall understand that if God leads the soul down to the gates of death, He brings it back again. Our death will be as if transfigured; we shall call on the Savior and His holy Mother that they may come and get us and grant us the last of graces which will definitively assure our salvation, by a last act of faith, trust, and love.

What we have just said of the sacrifice of our lives in union with the Sacrifice of the Mass, should be understood by an interior soul in a realistic and practical manner that will make him live the words of St. Paul: “I die daily.” It is a question here of accepting in advance with patience and love not only the sufferings of the last moments of life, but all the physical and moral sufferings which God has prepared from all eternity to purify us and make us work for the salvation of souls. These sufferings are of all sorts: want of consideration, contradictions, defamation. They are insignificant in comparison with those which Jesus bore for love of us; nevertheless, because of our weakness, they seem very heavy to us at times. Let us accept them at Mass, before Holy Communion, at the moment of the breaking of the host, which symbolizes the breaking of all the bruises that Jesus bore for us.

May this breaking make us think of what should be in us: fervent contrition. Then, more conscious of our sins and of the necessity of making reparation, for them, we shall more willingly accept in advance the physical and moral sufferings which Providence reserves for us. We shall accept them, asking for a serious beginning of the love of the cross or the love of Jesus crucified. Should we not return Him love for love?

We should reread what Christ says to His faithful servant according to The Imitation: “Son, let not the labors which thou hast undertaken for My sake crush thee, neither let tribulations, from whatever source, cast thee down; but in every occurrence let My promise strengthen and console thee. I am sufficient to recompense thee beyond all bounds and measure.... Mind what thou art about: labor faithfully in My vineyard: I will be thy reward; write, read, sing, lament, keep silence, pray, bear adversities manfully: eternal life is worth all these, and greater combats. Peace shall come one day, which is known to the Lord.... Oh! if thou couldst see the everlasting crowns of the saints in heaven, and in how great glory they now triumph, who appeared contemptible heretofore to this world, and as it were even unworthy of life, doubtless thou wouldst immediately cast thyself down to the very earth, and wouldst rather be ambitious to be in subjection to all, than to have precedence over so much as one. Neither wouldst thou covet the pleasant days of this life, but wouldst rather be glad to suffer tribulation for God’s sake, and esteem it the greatest gain to be reputed as nothing amongst men.”

In assisting at the Sacrifice of the Mass or in celebrating it, we should unite our personal oblation to our Savior’s, offering Him the contradictions and tribulations which await us in life, mindful that they may thus become most fruitful for us. Obstacles may in this way be transformed into means. The cross was the greatest obstacle that men raised against Jesus; He made it the greatest instrument of salvation. If each member in the mystical body performs his duty supernaturally, all the others benefit, just as, when each little cell in our body functions as it should, the entire organism profits. For this reason, however little we may be able to do, its worth is great if it is accomplished in the spirit of the love of God and of neighbor, in union with Jesus the eternal Priest. In the greatest calamities little children are asked to pray; their earnest, humble prayer, united to that of the Savior, cannot fail to be heard by God.

We may better comprehend what the Mass should be for proficients by reflecting that its different parts correspond to the love which purifies (Confiteor, Introit, Kyrie, Gloria), to the love which enlightens and offers itself (Collect, Epistle, Gospel, Credo, Offertory), and to the love which sacrifices itself and unites itself to God (Consecration, Communion, Thanksgiving). Such consideration reminds us of the purgative way of beginners, the illuminative way of proficients, and the unitive way of the perfect. These are the normal phases of the ascent of the soul toward God.

Chapter 25

The Communion of Proficients

Earlier in this work we discussed the Communion of those who begin to give themselves seriously to the interior life. We explained how Holy Communion sustains, restores, and increases spiritual life, and why it demands as a condition an upright and pious intention. A fervent Communion, we said, presupposes hunger for the Eucharist or the keen desire to receive it in order to be more closely united to our Lord and to grow in love of God and neighbor. Each of our Communions, we pointed out, should be substantially more fervent than the preceding one, with a fervor of will if not of feeling; each should, in fact, increase charity in us and consequently prepare us to receive our Lord better and more fruitfully the following day. This is the case in the lives of the saints, whose ascent toward God is increasingly rapid; the nearer they approach Him, the more they are drawn by Him, as the stone falls more rapidly as it approaches the earth which attracts it. This acceleration in the journey toward God should, therefore, be realized in the Communion of proficients far more than in that of beginners. For the child, his first Communion is certainly a great grace, but the following Communions should always be more fruitful.

That we may see what the Communion of proficients should be, we should remember that the principal effect of Holy Communion is the increase of charity. Proficients should grow in this virtue particularly, remembering that fraternal charity is one of the great signs of the progress of the love of God. This will be more readily understood by reflecting that Communion, through union with our Lord, assures the unity and growth of His mystical body.

St. Paul writes: “The chalice of benediction which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? And the bread which we break, is it not the partaking of the body of the Lord? For we, being many, are one bread, one body: all that partake of one bread.” At this common table of the faithful, every dissension should disappear.

As St. John Chrysostom and St. Augustine explain, the Communion of the faithful united at the Holy Table to nourish their souls with the body of our Lord and to be increasingly incorporated in Him, is the sign of the unity of the Church and the bond of charity. All the faithful who communicate show, in fact, that they have the same faith in the Eucharist, which supposes all the other mysteries of Christianity; they show that they have the same hope of heaven and the same love of God and of souls in God, the same worship. This it is which makes St. Augustine say: “O sacrament of true piety, sign of unity, bond of charity!... The Lord has given us His body and blood under the species of bread and wine, and as the bread is made out of many grains of wheat and the wine from many grapes, so the Church of Christ is made out of the multitude of the faithful united by charity.”

Moreover, Pope Pius X, when inviting the faithful to frequent and daily Communion, recalled this great principle: “The Holy Table is the symbol, the root, and the principle of Catholic unity.” In the light of this principle, we should, before receiving Communion, think of the obstacles that we ourselves may oppose to the supernatural union of charity with Christ Jesus and His members, and should ask Him for light to see these obstacles more clearly and generosity to remove them. If we are negligent in doing so ourselves, we should ask the Lord Himself to remove them, even though we suffer greatly thereby. The Christian who communicates with these profoundly sincere dispositions certainly receives a notable increase of charity, which unites him more closely to our Lord and to souls in Him.

In this sense the author of The Imitation invites us to say as a preparation for Holy Communion: “I offer to Thee all my good works, though very few and imperfect, that Thou mayest amend and sanctify them; that Thou mayest have a pleasurable regard to them, and make them acceptable to Thee and always make them tend to better.... I offer to Thee also all the pious desires of devout persons; the necessities of my parents, friends, brothers, sisters, and all those that are dear to me... and who have desired and besought me to offer up prayers and Masses for themselves and all theirs.... I offer up also to Thee prayers and this sacrifice of propitiation for

them in particular who have in any way injured me, grieved me, or abused me, or have inflicted upon me any hurt or injury. And for all those likewise whom I have at any time grieved, troubled, oppressed, or scandalized by words or deeds, knowingly or unknowingly; that it may please Thee to forgive us all our sins and mutual offenses. Take, O Lord, from our hearts all suspicion, indignation, anger, and contention, and whatever else may wound charity and lessen brotherly love."

Communion received with these dispositions effectively assures in a concrete and experiential manner the unity of the mystical body, union with our Savior and with all souls vivified by Him. It is thus a powerful help in the midst of so many causes of dissensions among individuals, classes, and peoples. It should contribute greatly to assure the reign of Christ through the peace of Christ, above all the inconsistent dreams of those who seek a principle of union, not in God but in the passions that divide men.

COMMUNION AND THE GROWTH OF THE MYSTlCAL BODY OF CHRIST

Holy Communion should contribute to assure not only the unity, but the growth of the mystical body of our Savior. St. Paul wrote to the Ephesians that we are all called by God to attain "unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the age of the fullness of Christ; that henceforth we be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine.... But doing the truth in charity, we may in all things grow up in Him who is the head, even Christ; from whom the whole body, being compacted and fitly joined together,... maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in charity." This influence of the Savior on His members is exercised particularly by Eucharistic Communion. Christians who are nourished by the bread of life reach the perfection which God destines for them.

St. Thomas even says: "Baptism is the beginning of the spiritual life, and the door of the sacraments; whereas the Eucharist is, as it were, the consummation of the spiritual life, and the end of all the sacraments,... for by the hallowings of all the sacraments preparation is made for receiving or consecrating the Eucharist.... Therefore, from the act of children being baptized, they are destined by the Church to the Eucharist," somewhat as, in the natural order, childhood is ordered to the full development of adult age. In this sense, at least the implicit desire of the effect of the Eucharist is necessary for salvation. Therefore it is impossible to reach the perfection of

Christian life without preparing oneself to receive each Communion with increased fervor of will and greater fruit.

In addition, not only each Christian, but each parish, each diocese, the entire Church in each generation, reaches maturity, the fruitfulness of "the perfect age," that it may propagate the faith which it has received and transmit it to the following generation like a sacred seed. Each epoch has its difficulties, and, with the return of the masses to unbelief, the difficulties of our day might before long resemble those which the early Church encountered during the centuries of persecution. The Christian should find his strength in the Eucharist today as in the days of the catacombs. He should hunger for the Eucharist, that is, have an ardent desire to be united to Christ by a profound union of the will, which, by the persevering practice of the virtues, will resist all temptations and enable him to cope with the difficult circumstances in which he lives.

With the author of The Imitation we should say: "Lord God, when shall I be wholly united to Thee and absorbed in Thee, and altogether unmindful of myself? Thou in me, and I in Thee; and thus grant us both equally to continue in one. Verily, Thou art my Beloved, the choicest among thousands, in whom my soul is well pleased to dwell all the days of this life. Verily, Thou art my Peacemaker:, in whom is sovereign peace and true rest; and out of whom is labor and sorrow and infinite misery. Thou art in truth a hidden God, and Thy counsel is not with the wicked, but Thy conversation is with the humble and the simple. Oh, how sweet, O Lord, is Thy spirit, who, to show Thy sweetness toward Thy children, vouchsafest to refresh them with that most delicious bread which cometh down from heaven!"

The Psalmist had already exclaimed: "O how great is the multitude of Thy sweetness, O Lord, which Thou hast hidden for them that fear Thee!" Since the institution of the Eucharist, how well these words are verified by a fervent Communion! We read in The Imitation: "For they truly know their Lord in the breaking of bread, whose heart burneth so mightily within them, from Jesus walking with them. Alas, far from me too often is such affection and devotion, such vehement love and ardor. Be Thou merciful to me, O good Jesus, sweet and gracious, and grant Thy poor mendicant to feel, sometimes at least, in Holy Communion some little of the cordial affection of Thy love, that my faith may be more strengthened, my hope in Thy goodness increased; and that my charity, once perfectly enkindled, and having tasted the manna of heaven, may never die away. Powerful, indeed,

is Thy mercy to grant me the grace I desire, and in Thy great clemency, when the time of Thy good pleasure arrives, to visit me with the spirit of fervor."

Hunger for the Eucharist is thus expressed by the same author: "With great devotion and ardent love, with all affection and fervor of heart, I desire to receive Thee, O Lord, as many saints and devout persons, who were most pleasing to Thee in holiness of life and in the most burning devotion, have desired Thee when they communicated.... I desire to reserve nothing for myself, but freely and most willingly to immolate to Thee myself and all that is mine.... I desire to receive Thee... with such faith, hope, and purity, as Thy most holy Mother, the glorious Virgin Mary, received and desired Thee, when the angel announced to her the mystery of the Incarnation... '. I here offer and present to Thee the joys of all devout hearts, their ardent affections, their ecstasies, supernatural illuminations, and heavenly visions, together with all the virtues and praises that are or shall be celebrated by all creatures in heaven and earth;... thus by all Thou mayest be worthily praised and glorified forever."

The Christian who receives Communion with these dispositions makes increasingly rapid progress toward God and certainly brings other souls with him. Thus is assured the growth of the mystical body of Christ. But we must go a step farther in generosity.

COMMUNION AND THE GIFT OF ONESELF

Our Lord commands us: "Love one another, as I have loved you." He loved us even to dying for us on the cross and giving Himself to us as food in the Eucharist. The Christian should, therefore, in Communion learn the gift of self in order to imitate our Lord. The Eucharistic heart of Jesus, which instituted the Eucharist for us and daily gives it to us, is the eminent exemplar of the perfect gift of self. It reminds us that it is more perfect to give than to receive, to love than to be loved.

Therefore, imitating the example of our Savior, we should, after receiving, give ourselves to others to bring them the light of life and peace. A soul that is increasingly incorporated in our Lord by Holy Communion should in its turn serve somewhat as the bread of the souls which surround it, following the example of our Lord who wished to be our bread. To the less enlightened, to the weak, even to those who wander far from the altar, it

should give itself without counting the cost, in spite of misunderstandings, coldnesses, and evil actions. By so doing it will certainly cause souls that have strayed to return to the Eucharistic heart of Jesus, that “forgotten, despised, outraged heart, slighted by men.” It is, nevertheless, the heart which loves us, which is “patient in waiting for us, eager to grant our prayers, desirous that we pray to it, the burning source of new graces, the silent heart wishing to speak to souls, the refuge of the hidden life, master of the secrets of divine union,” the heart of Him who seems to sleep, but who watches always and overflows incessantly with charity.

This heart is the eminent model of the perfect gift of oneself. For this reason a friend of the Cure of Ars, Father Chevrier, a holy priest of Lyons, of whom we spoke earlier in this work, used to say to his spiritual sons: “Following the example of our Lord, the priest should die to his body, spirit, will, reputation, family, the world; he should immolate himself by silence, prayer, work, penance, suffering, and death. The more a man is dead to himself, the more life he has and the more he gives it. The priest is a crucified man. He ought also through charity, in imitation of his Master, to give his body, spirit, time, goods, health, and life; he should give life by his faith, teaching, words, prayers, powers, and example. He must become good bread; the priest is a man who is consumed.”

What is said here of the priest, should be said in a certain sense of every perfect Christian, who ought continually to devote himself in a supernatural manner in order to bring those about him to the end of man’s journey, which he too often forgets. Zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls is the answer which all should give to our Savior’s precept: “Love one another, as I have loved you.” In fervent Communion we shall find that generosity which causes the gift of God that we have received to radiate on other souls, and which thus shows the value and the fruits of the Eucharist. We have only to receive the love of God and to give it back to Him in the person of our neighbor.

Chapter 26

Devotion to Mary in Proficients

In chapter six of the first part of this work, we spoke of the influence of Mary Mediatrix, explaining how she cooperated in the sacrifice of the cross through merit and satisfaction, how she does not cease to intercede for us, to obtain for us and distribute to us all the graces that we receive. We shall apply these principles here, as St. Grignion de Montfort does, to show what devotion to Mary should be in proficients. We shall see what constitutes true devotion to the Blessed Virgin, its degrees, and its fruits.

TRUE DEVOTION TO MARY

We are not speaking here of an entirely exterior, presumptuous, inconstant, hypocritical, and interested devotion, but of true devotion which St. Thomas defines as “promptness of the will in the service of God.” This promptness of the will, which should subsist despite aridity of the sensible part of the soul, inclines us to render to our Lord and His holy Mother the worship that is due them. As Jesus is our Mediator with His Father, in the same way we should go to our Savior through Mary. The mediation of the Son throws light on that of His holy Mother.

They are deluded who claim to reach union with God without having continual recourse to our Lord. They will hardly attain to an abstract knowledge of God, and not to that sweet knowledge called wisdom; a lofty knowledge at once practical, living, and experiential, which makes us discover the ways of Providence in the most insignificant things. The quietists were mistaken in holding that Christ’s sacred humanity was a means useful only at the beginning of the spiritual life; they did not sufficiently recognize the universal mediation of our Savior.

Another error consists in wishing to go to our Lord without passing through Mary. This was one of the errors of the Protestants. And even some Catholics do not see clearly enough how expedient it is to have recourse to the Blessed Virgin in order to enter the intimacy of Christ. As St. Grignion de Montfort says, they know Mary "only in a speculative, dry, fruitless, indifferent manner.... They fear that devotion toward her is abused and that injury is done to our Lord by paying excessive honor to His holy Mother.... If they speak of devotion to Mary, it is less to recommend it than to destroy the abuses of it." They seem to consider Mary "a hindrance in reaching divine union," whereas all her influence is exercised in order to lead us to it. It would be just as sensible to say that the holy Cure of Ars was a hindrance to his parishioners in their progress toward God.

To neglect the Mediators whom God has given us because of our weakness, shows a lack of humility. Intimacy with our Lord in prayer will be greatly facilitated by frequent recourse to Mary.

THE DEGREES OF THIS DEVOTION

Devotion to Mary, which should exist in every Christian, ought to grow with charity. The first degree consists in praying to the Blessed Virgin from time to time, honoring her as the Mother of God, saying, for example, the Angelus with true recollection every time it rings. The second degree consists in having more perfect sentiments of veneration, confidence, and love for Mary. They lead us to the daily recitation of at least one of the three parts of the Rosary while we meditate on the joyful, sorrowful, or glorious mysteries, which are for us the road of eternal life.

The third degree of the true devotion to Mary, that proper to proficients, consists in consecrating oneself entirely to our Lord through her. In a clear explanation of this consecration, St. Grignion de Montfort says: "This devotion consists in giving oneself entirely to the Blessed Virgin in order to belong entirely to Jesus Christ through her. We must give her: (1) our body with all its senses and members (that she may keep them in perfect purity); (2) our soul with all its powers; (3) our exterior goods, present and to come; (4) our interior and spiritual goods, our merits, virtues, and good works, past, present, and future."

To have a clear understanding of this oblation, we must distinguish in our good works between what is incommunicable to others and what is

communicable to other souls. What is incommunicable in our good works is merit, properly so called (de condigno), which constitutes a right in justice to an increase of charity and to eternal life. These personal merits are incommunicable; in this respect they differ from those of Jesus Christ who, being constituted the head of humanity and our pledge, could merit for us in strict justice.

Consequently, if we offer our merits, properly so called, to the Blessed Virgin, it is not that she may give them to other souls, but that she may preserve them, make them fructify, and, if we should have the misfortune to lose them through mortal sin, that she may obtain for us the grace of so fervent a contrition that it may enable us to recover not only the state of grace, but the degree of grace lost; so that if we have lost five talents, we may recover these five, and not merely two or three.

What is communicable to others in our good works is congruous merit; it is also their satisfactory or reparatory value and their value as impetration or prayer. By congruous merit, based not on justice, but on the charity or friendship which unites us to God (in jure amicabili), we can obtain graces for our neighbor. Thus a good Christian mother draws graces on her children by her virtuous life because God takes into consideration the intentions and good works of this generous mother. Likewise, we can also pray for our neighbor, for his conversion, his progress, for hardened sinners, the agonizing, the souls in purgatory.

Lastly, we can satisfy for others, we can voluntarily accept the punishment due to their sins, expiate them, as Mary did for us at the foot of the cross, and thus draw the divine mercy down upon them. We can also gain indulgences for the souls in purgatory, open to them the treasure of the merits of Christ and the saints, and hasten their deliverance.

If we offer all our vexations and sufferings to Mary in this way, she will send us crosses proportionate to our strength aided by grace to make us labor for the salvation of souls.

Who should be advised to make this consecration as we have explained it? It should not be advised for those who would make it through sentimentality or spiritual pride without comprehending its meaning; but it is fitting to counsel it for truly pious and fervent souls, at first for a time, from one feast of the Blessed Virgin to another, then for a year. Thus one will become penetrated by this spirit of abandonment and later can make this act with fruit for one’s whole life.

It has been objected that such an act strips us and does not pay our own debt, which will increase our purgatory. This is the objection made by the devil to St. Bridget when she was preparing to make a similar act. Our Lord made the saint understand that this is the objection of self-love, which forgets the goodness of Mary, who does not let herself be outdone in generosity. By thus stripping oneself, one receives the hundredfold. And indeed the love to which this generous act testifies obtains for us even now the remission of part of our purgatory.

Others object, asking how, after having once and for all given all our prayers to Mary, we can pray especially for our parents and friends. The answer to this question is that the Blessed Virgin knows our duties of charity toward our parents and friends, and, should we forget to pray for them as we ought, she would remind us to do so. Moreover, among our parents and friends there are some who have a particular need of prayers, of which we are often ignorant; but Mary knows their needs and will thus, without our being aware of it, make these souls benefit by our prayers. We can always ask her to favor others.

THE FRUITS OF THIS DEVOTION

St. Grignion de Montfort says that this road to God is easier, and nevertheless more meritorious, and consequently a more perfect, short, and sure road.

First of all, it is an easier way. “One can in truth,” he says, “reach divine union by other roads; but it will be by many more crosses and strange deaths, with many more difficulties, which he shall conquer with greater difficulty. He shall have to pass through dark nights, combats, and strange agonies, steep mountains, very sharp thorns, and frightful deserts. But by way of Mary, the passage is more sweet and tranquil. On this road, in truth, are great combats to be fought and great difficulties to be overcome; but this good Mother takes up her position so near her faithful servants to enlighten them in their darkness, to illumine them in their doubts, to sustain them in their struggles and difficulties that in reality this virginal road to find Jesus Christ is a road of roses and honey compared with other roads.” Evidence of this fact appears in the lives of saints who more particularly followed this way, such as St. Ephrem, St. John Damascene, St. Bernard, St. Bonaventure, St. Bernardine of Siena, St. Francis de Sales.

The vision of St. Francis of Assisi in this connection is well known. One day the saint saw his sons trying to reach our Lord by a ladder that was red and very steep; after climbing a few rungs, they would fall back. Our Lord then showed St. Francis another ladder, white and much less steep, at whose summit appeared the Blessed Virgin, and He said to Francis: “Advise your sons to go by the ladder of My Mother.”

By way of Mary the road is easier because the Blessed Virgin supports us by her gentleness; nevertheless it is a more meritorious road because Mary obtains for us a greater charity, which is the principle of merit. The difficulties to be overcome are certainly an occasion of merit, but the principle of merit is charity, the love of God, by which we triumph over these difficulties. We should remember that Mary merited more by her easiest acts, such as a simple prayer, than did the martyrs in their torments, for she put more love of God into these easy acts than the saints did in heroic acts. Since the road by way of Mary is easier and more meritorious, it is shorter, surer, and more perfect; more easily traveled, progress on it is more rapid. By submission to the Mother of God, a person makes greater progress in a short time than he would make in many years relying excessively on his own personal prudence. Under the direction of her whom the Incarnate Word obeyed, he walks with giant steps.

This road is also more perfect, since through Mary the Word of God came down perfectly to us without losing anything of His divinity; through her, very little souls can ascend even to the Most High without fearing anything. She purifies our good works and increases their value when she presents them to her Son.

Lastly, it is a surer road, on which we are better preserved from the illusions of the devil who seeks to deceive us, imperceptibly at first, that later he may lead us into great sin. On this road we are also preserved from the illusions of day-dreaming and sentimentality. In the subordination of the causes that transmit divine grace, Mary exercises, in fact, a salutary influence on our sensibility; she calms it, rules it, to enable the elevated part of our soul to receive the influence of our Lord more fruitfully. In addition, Mary herself is to our sensible faculties a most pure and holy object, which lifts our soul toward union with God. She gives us great interior liberty, and, on our urgent petition, she sometimes obtains our immediate deliverance from the deviations of our sensible appetites which hinder prayer and intimate union with our Lord. The purpose of the entire

influence of Mary Mediatrix is to lead us to the intimacy of Jesus, as He Himself leads us to the Father.

It is advisable to ask for Mary's particular assistance at the moment of Holy Communion that she may make us share in her profound piety and love, as if she were to lend us her most pure heart to receive our Lord worthily. We may with profit make our thanksgiving in the same way.

We shall conclude by giving the essential parts of the consecration of oneself to Jesus Christ through Mary's hands:

O Eternal and Incarnate Wisdom! O most amiable and adorable Jesus, true God and true Man, I thank Thee for having annihilated Thyself, taking the form of a slave, to draw me from the slavery of the devil.... I have recourse to the intercession of Thy most holy Mother, whom Thou hast given me as a Mediatrix. By this means I hope to obtain from Thee contrition and the pardon of my sins, the acquisition and preservation of wisdom.

Hail, Immaculate Mary, Queen of heaven and earth, to whom everything under God is subject. Hail, safe Refuge of sinners, whose mercy fails no one; hear and grant my desires for divine wisdom, and to that end receive the vows and offerings that my baseness presents to thee.

I, an unfaithful sinner, today renew and ratify in thy hands my baptismal vows. I forever renounce Satan, his works and pomps, and I give myself completely to Jesus Christ, Incarnate Wisdom, to carry my cross after Him all the days of my life. And that I may be more faithful to Him than I have been hitherto, I choose thee, O Mary, for my mother.

I give and consecrate to thee my body and soul, my interior and exterior goods, and the very value of my good works past, present, and future. Present me to thy Son and grant me the grace to obtain true wisdom from God, and for that purpose to place myself in the number of those whom thou dost love, teach, lead, feed, and protect. O faithful Virgin, render me in all things so perfect a disciple and imitator of Incarnate Wisdom, Jesus Christ, thy Son, that by thy intercession and example, I may attain to the plenitude of His age on earth and His glory in heaven. Amen.

Chapter 27

The Universal Accessibility of the Mysticism of The Imitation

At this point in our study, we shall examine in the light of The Imitation of Jesus Christ the question proposed at the beginning of this work: namely, whether the infused contemplation of the mysteries of faith and the union with God resulting from it are in the normal way of sanctity, and also what are the dispositions ordinarily required to obtain such a grace.

The Imitation is not a didactic treatise; it is the experimental story of a soul in love with perfection, a story written from day to day, following prayer that is now laborious, now full of light and heavenly inebriation. It is certainly not only an ascetical book but also a mystical book; it leads to the practice of the virtues, but in view of contemplation and union with God. It is manifestly addressed to all interior souls, and in reality all read it. This is equivalent to saying that the true mysticism of which it speaks is accessible to all, if they are willing to follow the way of humility, the cross, continual prayer, and docility to the Holy Ghost. This fact is one of the strongest reasons in favor of the affirmative answer to the question proposed.

As Father Dumas, S.M., writes in his beautiful study on The Imitation: “The Imitation has a beauty, a virtue which touches, moves, and captivates infirm, indifferent, even unbelieving hearts. Yet it is not addressed primarily to sinners or to beginners; it assumes that some progress in virtue has already been made. It eagerly seeks nothing less than to raise us to contemplation and the intimate consolations of the life of union.

“Contemplation, intimate union with God, is the end, the destiny, and consequently the imperious need of our soul, which can find rest and peace only in God. And it is because The Imitation gives a glimpse of this peace and rest, while directing the soul toward union with the supreme Good, that every soul, even though very imperfect, experiences on reading this book—

which in reality it only half understands—a comforting sweetness impossible to explain. Our purpose is to show the essentially mystical character of The Imitation, to see whether, according to it, the infused contemplation of the mysteries of faith and the union with God resulting from it are highly desirable for all, and then to point out what ascetical dispositions, according to The Imitation, are ordinarily required to receive such a grace.

THE MYSTICAL CHARACTER OF THE IMITATION

Is it true that The Imitation is an essentially mystical and not only an ascetical book?

By the mystical knowledge of God we understand that knowledge obtained, not by rational speculations or only by faith, but by a special inspiration of the Holy Ghost in prayer. It is a quasiexperimental knowledge of God, according to St. Thomas, which proceeds from faith vivified by love and enlightened by the gifts of understanding and of wisdom. St. John of the Cross teaches the same doctrine: “Infused contemplation is a certain inflowing of God into the soul whereby God secretly teaches the soul and instructs it in the perfection of love, without efforts on its own part beyond a loving attention to God, listening to His voice and admitting the light He sends, but without understanding how this is infused contemplation.” St. Francis de Sales speaks in similar terms.

The Imitation continually exhorts the interior soul to humility, abnegation, and docility, which will prepare it to receive the grace of contemplation and of union with God. We see this on every page, and more especially in Book I, chapter 3, and in Book II, chapters 31 and 43.

In Book I, chapter 3, we read:

> Happy is he whom truth teacheth by itself, not by figures and passing sounds, but as it is In Itself.... Wonderful folly! that, neglecting the things that are useful and necessary, we give our attention unbidden to such as are curious and mischievous.... He to whom the eternal Word speaketh is delivered from a multitude of opinions. From the One Word are all things, and all things speak this One; and this is the Beginning which also speaketh to us. Without Him no man understandeth, or rightly judgeth.
>
> I am oftentimes wearied with the many things I read and hear; in Thee is all I wish or long for. Let all teachers hold their peace, and all created things keep silence in Thy presence; do Thou alone speak to me. The more a man is recollected within himself and interiorly simple, so much the more and deeper things doth he understand without labor; for he receiveth the light of understanding from on high.... The humble knowledge of oneself is a surer way to God

> than deep researches after science. Knowledge is not to be blamed nor simple acquaintance with things, good in itself and ordained by God; but a good conscience and a virtuous life are always to be preferred.... He is truly prudent who esteemeth all earthly things as naught, that he may win Christ. And he is truly most learned, who doth the will of God, and forsaketh his own will.

This is the knowledge, the understanding, and the wisdom, which come from the Holy Ghost, and which, without His divine inspirations, cannot be preserved.

The author of The Imitation also says:

> Lord, I stand much in need of a grace yet greater, if I must arrive so far that it may not be in the power of any man or anything created to hinder me....”Who will give me wings like a dove, and I will fly and be at rest?”... And what can be more free than he who desires nothing upon earth? A man ought, therefore, to soar over above everything created, and perfectly to forsake himself, and in ecstasy of mind to stand and see that Thou, the Creator of all, hast nothing like to Thee among creatures.... And this is the reason why there are found so few contemplative persons, because there are few that know how to sequester themselves entirely from perishable creatures. For this a great grace is required, such as may elevate the soul, and lift it up above itself. And unless a man be elevated in spirit, and freed from attachment to all creatures, and wholly united to God, whatever he knows and whatever he has, is of no great importance.... There is a great difference between the wisdom of an illuminated and devout man, and the knowledge of a learned and studious cleric. Far more noble is that learning which flows from above from the divine influence [this is clearly infused contemplation], than that which is laboriously acquired by the industry of man. Many are found to desire contemplation, but they are not careful to practice those things which are required for its attainment. It is also a great impediment that we rest so much upon signs and sensible things and have but little of perfect mortification.

This chapter by itself is most significant and shows that the infused contemplation of the mysteries of salvation is highly desirable, that it is in the normal way of sanctity.

Farther on we find these words put on our Lord’s lips:

> I am He that in an instant elevateth the humble mind to comprehend more reasons of the eternal truth than if anyone had studied ten years in the schools. I teach without noise of words, without confusion of opinions, without ambition of honor, without strife of arguments. I am He who teacheth to despise earthly things, to loathe things present, to seek things eternal, to relish them... to desire nothing out of Me, and above all things ardently to love Me. For a certain person, by loving Me intimately, learned things divine and spoke wonders. He profited more by forsaking all things than by studying subtleties. But to some I speak things common, to others things more particular; to some I sweetly appear in signs and figures, to others in great light I reveal mysteries.... I within am the Teacher of truth, the Searcher of the heart, the Understander of thoughts, the Mover of actions, distributing to everyone as I judge fitting.

From these excerpts it is evident that the contemplation spoken of by the author of The Imitation proceeds from a special inspiration of the Holy Ghost, which renders faith penetrating and sweet by making us taste how

good the Lord is: “O taste, and see that the Lord is sweet.” Therefore the contemplation in question here is infused.

It is not a question, however, of extraordinary graces, such as visions, prophetic revelations, and the stigmata, but rather of an increasingly profound and sweet penetration of the mysteries of faith, which are superior to all particular contingent futures, like the end of a war which prophetic light reveals. We see consequently that the infused contemplation of the mysteries of faith, here declared so highly desirable, is undoubtedly an eminent but not an essentially extraordinary grace; it is in the normal way of sanctity. And if at times the term “extraordinary” is applied to it, this is in the sense that it is extrinsically so, because it is rare; but it is not intrinsically so. Far from being essentially extraordinary, it is infused contemplation that establishes us in perfect order. Those only are in this perfect order who penetrate in this way into the inner life of God, who ardently love the One Thing necessary and see all earthly things in their true place. Thus the order of charity is established in all the feelings that are fully subordinated to the love of God and vivified by it.

Therefore, according to The Imitation all interior souls are called to this infused contemplation and the union with God resulting from it, at least by a general and remote call, if not by an individual and proximate call, which may be either simply sufficient, or efficacious and victorious over all resistance.

In Book IV of The Imitation, which is devoted to the Eucharist, the faithful soul asks insistently for the ineffable union with Jesus Christ. We read: “Who will give me, O Lord, to find Thee alone, to open my whole heart to Thee, and enjoy Thee as my soul desireth... that Thou alone mayest speak to me, and I to Thee, as the beloved is wont to speak to his beloved, and a friend to be entertained with a friend. For this I pray, this I desire, that I may be wholly united to Thee, and that... I may more and more learn to relish things heavenly and eternal.... When shall I be wholly united to, and absorbed in Thee, and altogether unmindful of myself? Thou in me, and I in Thee; and thus grant us both equally to continue in one.”

We read likewise in chapter 17: “O my God, Eternal Love, my whole good and never-ending happiness, I desire to receive Thee with the most vehement desire and most worthy reverence that any of the saints have ever had or could experience.”

Again he says: “A lover of Jesus and the truth, a true interior person, who is free from inordinate affections, can freely turn himself to God, elevate himself above himself in spirit, and enjoy a delightful repose (ac fruitive quiescere).” This is the quiet of fruition, a foretaste of eternal life.

THE DISPOSITIONS REQUIRED OR THE ASCETICISM OF The Imitation

To receive the special grace of infused contemplation and of the union with God resulting from it, the author of The Imitation demands especially the following dispositions: humility, consideration of the immense benefits of God, abnegation, purity of heart, and simplicity of intention.

The humility he requires is that which leads the soul to “love to live unknown and to be counted as nothing.” It disposes us to consider the benefactions of God, all the graces that come to us from our Lord, through His passion, His death, the Eucharist. In the light of this consideration, the soul discovers its ingratitude and sincerely begs pardon for it.

In this way the soul is led to the abnegation of all self-will. Consequently in Book III, chapter 13, the Lord is made to say: “Learn to break thy own will and to yield thyself up to all subjections. Kindle wrath against thyself, suffer not the swelling of pride to live in thee; but show thyself so submissive and little that all may trample on thee, and tread thee under their feet as the dirt of the streets.... But Mine eye hath spared thee, because thy soul was precious in My sight; that thou mightest know My love, and mightest always live thankful for My favors.” Abnegation thus understood puts self-love to death; it is a disappropriation by which the soul ceases to belong to itself that it may belong to God, ceases to seek itself that it may tend continually toward Him. The same doctrine is expressed in Book III, chapter 21. We read also in chapter 37 of the same book: “Forsake thyself, resign thyself, and thou shalt enjoy a great inward peace.”

Purity of heart and simplicity of intention wholly directed toward God prepare the soul to receive the special grace of infused contemplation. This grace makes the soul understand the profound meaning of these words: “Whoever findeth Jesus findeth a good treasure, a good above every good.”

From this contemplation are born the trusting abandonment and union, expressed in the following petition: “Thou dost will, O my God, that I receive Thee and unite myself to Thee in love. Wherefore, I beseech Thy clemency, and I beg of Thee to give me a special grace, that I may be

wholly dissolved in Thee, and overflow with Thy love, and no more concern myself about seeking any other consolation." With this in mind, one may grasp the depths of the splendid chapter 5 of Book III on the marvelous effects of divine love which "carrieth the burden without being burdened, and maketh all else that is bitter sweet and savory. The noble love of Jesus impelleth us to do great things, and exciteth us always to desire that which is the more perfect.... Nothing is sweeter than love, nothing stronger, nothing higher, nothing wider, nothing more pleasant, nothing fuller or better in heaven or in earth: for love is born of God, and it cannot rest but in God."

In a mortified soul which no longer seeks itself, such is the fruit of the contemplation of the sovereign Good: that union with God which is truly the normal prelude of the union of eternity.

The passages we have quoted clearly demonstrate the truth of the statement made at the beginning of this chapter: namely, that The Imitation is not only an ascetical but also a mystical book; it leads to the practice of the virtues in view of the infused contemplation of the goodness of God and of union with Him. Manifestly addressed to all interior souls, The Imitation is, in fact, read by all of them. In other words, the true mysticism of which it speaks is accessible to all, if they are willing to follow the way of humility, abnegation, persevering prayer, and docility to the Holy Ghost.

This is one of the strongest reasons in favor of the doctrine we set forth in this work on the normal prelude of eternal life.

Chapter 28

Contemplative Prayer

THE PASSAGE FROM ACQUIRED PRAYER TO INITIAL INFUSED PRAYER

Our treatment of docility to the Holy Ghost, of the infinite value of the Mass, of the Communion of proficients, and of the mysticism of The Imitation, prepares us to consider what should be the contemplative prayer of those who advance in the illuminative way.

We treated in Volume I of the mental prayer of beginners, of its progressive simplification, and of perseverance in this interior prayer. In our discussion of the prayer of proficients we shall see, first of all, how St. Francis de Sales sums up the traditional teaching on this point, using the principles of St. Thomas to illuminate his doctrine. Next, we shall see what constitutes the beginning of contemplative prayer in the opinion of St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross, which will enable us to get some idea of how it should develop.

THE PASSAGE FROM MEDITATION TO CONTEMPLATION ACCORDING TO THE TRADITIONAL TEACHING EXPRESSED BY ST. FRANCIS DE SALES

The holy Bishop of Geneva sets forth his teaching on this subject in his Treatise on the Love of God. In the Introduction to a Devout Life, he had already described meditation, which is an act of the understanding by which it makes one or more considerations in order to excite our affections for God and divine things. The mind meditates on a subject with the aid of the imagination and of discourse or reasoning. Resolutions must be made after the affections, and the meditation should end with thanksgiving, with an offering of self, and a petition to God to grant us His grace that we may put into practice the resolutions He has inspired in us.

But if one perseveres in this way, meditation becomes simplified affective prayer in which the various acts tend to fuse into a single act. Thus the faithful soul is gradually raised to contemplation, which is “a loving, simple, and fixed attention of the mind on divine things.” At this moment the life of the soul is entirely simple and concentrated on the object that it loves; the soul looks with a simple gaze at a perfection of God, especially at His goodness, or the radiation of it in some divine work.

Consequently, says St. Francis de Sales, “prayer is called meditation until it has produced the honey of devotion; after that it changes into contemplation.... Thus, as bees draw nectar from the flowers, we meditate to gather the love of God, but, having gathered it, we contemplate God and are attentive to His goodness because of the sweetness that love makes us find in it.” In other words, meditation prepares for the act of love of God, whereas contemplation follows it.

From this fact springs a second difference: “Meditation considers in minute detail and, as it were, item by item the objects that are suitable to excite our love; but contemplation gazes with simplicity and concentration on the object that it loves.” We no longer linger over one detail or another; we attain to a general view which dwells on God with admiration and love, as the gaze of an artist rests on nature, or that of a child on his mother’s features.

A third difference springs from the two preceding: whereas meditation is not made without effort, “contemplation is made with pleasure, in that it presupposes that one has found God and His holy love.” Nevertheless contemplation has its hours of dark night in which the soul, now eager for God, keenly feels His absence by reason of the ardent desire it has to possess Him, a desire in which it unites itself in trial to His good pleasure.

St. Francis de Sales concludes: “Holy contemplation being the end and the purpose to which all spiritual exercises tend, they are all reduced to it, and those who practice them are called contemplatives.” However, on the subject of the loving recollection of the soul in contemplation, the holy doctor adds: “We do not make this recollection by choice, inasmuch as it is not in our power to have it whenever we wish; it does not depend on our care; but God produces it in us when it pleases Him by His most holy grace.”

The teaching of St. Francis de Sales, which we have just quoted, springs from the very notion of supernatural contemplation such as we find it in the works of St. Thomas.

St. Thomas shows in the Summa that contemplation is an act of the intellect superior to reasoning, a simple view of the truth; and, when it is a question not of philosophical contemplation, but of that contemplation which the saints speak of, it springs from love, not only from the love of the knowledge habitual to philosophers, but from the love of God, from charity. It proceeds consequently from living faith enlightened by the gifts of the Holy Ghost, especially by those of understanding and wisdom, which render faith penetrating and sweet. Supernatural contemplation thus conceived supposes the special inspiration of the Holy Ghost, which His gifts dispose us to receive with promptness and docility, as the wide-spread sails on a boat receive the impulsion of a favorable wind; then the boat advances more easily than by the labor of the rowers, a symbol of discursive meditation united to the practice of the virtues. From this point of view, contemplation, because of the special inspiration which it supposes, deserves to be called, not acquired but infused, although at the beginning it may quite frequently be prepared for by reading, affective meditation, and the prayer of petition. The soul thus actively prepares itself to receive the special inspiration of the Holy Ghost, which will at times be strong enough so that discursive meditation will no longer be necessary, as when a favorable wind is strong enough to make the boat advance, the work of the rowers may cease.

This special inspiration of the Holy Ghost given to make us taste the mysteries of faith, uses the connaturality or sympathy with divine things that is rooted in charity. This special inspiration gives rise in us to an act of infused love and of living, penetrating, and sweet faith, which shows us how revealed mysteries, although still obscure, wonderfully correspond to our deepest and loftiest aspirations. These acts of love and of penetrating and sweet faith are said to be infused, not only because they proceed from infused virtues, in this case from the theological virtues, but because they suppose a special inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and because we cannot move ourselves to them with the help of common actual grace. In this case God moves us, not by inclining us to deliberate, but to acts above all discursive deliberation. For example, on reading the Gospel of the day at Mass, some expression that we have read many times is illuminated and

captivates us, such as the words of Jesus to the Samaritan woman: “If thou didst know the gift of God!” In like manner a preacher vividly experiences this illumination we are speaking of when at first he feels deeply his powerlessness to preach the Passion in a fitting manner on Good Friday, and then receives the animating breath which vivifies his thought, his will and his feelings, that he may do good to souls.

At times contemplation rises toward God by a straight movement from a sensible fact, for example, from a parable such as that of the prodigal son, to the wonderful vision of the divine mercy. At other times contemplation rises by an oblique movement, for example, from the mysteries of salvation, from those of the childhood of our Savior and of His passion, to the living and profound thought of eternal life.

Lastly, there is occasionally contemplation, called circular, of the infinite goodness of God which radiates on all things, on all the mysteries of salvation. This prayer is a very simple, most loving gaze, which reminds one of the circular flight of the eagle high up in the air, hovering as it gazes at the sun and its radiation over the horizon.

These principles thus formulated by St. Thomas illumine the traditional teaching on contemplative prayer which we found expressed in the works of St. Francis de Sales. This same teaching appears also in a concrete and experiential form in the writings of St. Teresa.

THE ACQUIRED PRAYER OF RECOLLECTION AND PASSIVE RECOLLECTION ACCORDING TO ST. TERESA

The passage from acquired to infused prayer is illumined in the light of what St. Teresa wrote about the last of the acquired prayers which she calls “the acquired prayer of recollection,” and about initial infused prayer, which she calls “supernatural or passive recollection.”

The saint describes the last or the highest of the acquired prayers as follows:

It is called (active) “recollection,” because by its means the soul collects together all the faculties and enters within itself to be with God. The divine Master thus comes more speedily than He otherwise would to teach it and to grant the prayer of quiet. For, being retired within itself, the spirit can meditate on the Passion and can there picture in its thoughts the Son, and

can offer Him to the Father without tiring the mind by journeying to find Him on Mount Calvary, or in the garden, or at the column.

Those who are able thus to enclose themselves within the little heaven of their soul where dwells the Creator of both heaven and earth, and who can accustom themselves not to look at anything nor to remain in any place which would preoccupy their exterior senses, may feel sure that they are traveling by an excellent way, and that they will certainly attain to drink of the water from the fountain, for they will journey far in a short time. They resemble a man who goes by sea, and who, if the weather is favorable, gets in a few days to the end of a voyage which would have taken far longer by land. These souls may be said to have already put out to sea, and though they have not quite lost sight of land, still they do their best to get away from it by recollecting their faculties.

> If this recollection is genuine it is easily discerned, for it produces a certain effect that I cannot describe, but which will be recognized by those who know it from personal experience. The soul seems to rise from play—for it sees that earthly things are but toys—and therefore mounts to higher things. Like one who retires into a strong fortress to be out of danger, it withdraws the senses from outward things, so thoroughly despising them that involuntarily the eyes close so as to veil from the sight what is visible, in order that the eyes of the soul may see more clearly. Those who practice this prayer almost always keep their eyes shut during it. This is an excellent custom for many reasons.... The soul appears to gather strength and to dominate itself at the expense of the body.... By persevering in the habit [of recollecting itself] for several days, and by controlling ourselves, the benefits that result will become clear. We shall find that when we begin to pray the bees (symbol of the different faculties) will return to the hive and enter it to make the honey without any effort on our part, for our Lord is pleased to reward the soul and the will by this empire over the powers in return for the time spent in restraining them. Thus the mind only requires to make them a sign that it wishes to be recollected, and the senses will immediately obey us and retire within themselves.... When the will recalls them they return more quickly, until after they have re-entered a number of times, our Lord is pleased that they should settle entirely in perfect contemplation.

These last words refer to infused prayer, prepared for by active prayer or the acquired prayer of recollection, just described and also called simplified affective prayer. The very slow and loving meditation on some of the petitions of the Our Father is a good preparation for it. Thus acquired prayer prepares the soul for infused prayer.

St. Teresa describes initial infused prayer, that of supernatural or passive recollection, which precedes the prayer of quiet, as follows:

This is a kind of recollection which, I believe, is supernatural (like the prayer of quiet). There is no occasion to retire nor to shut the eyes, nor does it depend on anything exterior; involuntarily the eyes suddenly close and

solitude is found. Without any labor of one's own, the temple of which I spoke is reared for the soul in which to pray; the senses and exterior surroundings appear to lose their hold, while the spirit gradually regains its lost sovereignty....

But do not fancy you can gain it [this recollection] by thinking of God dwelling within you, or by imagining Him as present in your soul.... By the divine assistance everyone can practice it, but what I mean is quite a different thing. Sometimes, before they have begun to think of God,... the soul is keenly conscious of a delicious sense of recollection.... Here it is not in our power to retire into ourselves, unless God gives us the grace. In my opinion, His Majesty only bestows this favor on those who have renounced the world.... He thus specially calls them to devote themselves to spiritual things; if they allow Him power to act freely, He will bestow still greater graces on those whom He thus begins calling to a higher life.

The saint adds: "Unless His Majesty has begun to suspend our faculties, I cannot understand how we are to stop thinking, without doing ourselves more harm than good," for then we would remain in idleness or the somnolence of the quietists.

"The supernatural recollection" which St. Teresa describes in the preceding passages is clearly a mystical prayer, the beginning of infused contemplation, for which simplified affective meditation prepares the soul.

What we have just said about the beginning of infused contemplation according to the teaching of St. Francis de Sales and St. Teresa conforms perfectly to what St. John of the Cross teaches when, in The Dark Night, he treats of the night of the senses, or the passive purification of the sensible faculties, which in his opinion marks, as we have seen, the transition from the purgative to the illuminative way. In The Dark Night he says expressly: "The night of sense is common, and the lot of many: these are the beginners." And he adds: "The soul began to set out on the way of the spirit, the way of proficients, which is also called the illuminative way, or the way of infused contemplation, wherein God Himself teaches and refreshes the soul without meditation or any active efforts that itself may deliberately make." The work of the virtues should certainly continue at times even to heroic acts, but prayer becomes increasingly simplified, and the soul ought especially to be docile to the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

St. John of the Cross agrees perfectly with St. Thomas when he writes: "Contemplation is the science of love, which is an infused loving

knowledge of God." "This dark contemplation is called secret, because it is, as I have said before, the mystical theology which theologians call secret wisdom, and which according to St. Thomas is infused into the soul more especially by love. This happens in a secret hidden way.... The faculties of the soul cannot acquire it, it being the Holy Ghost who infuses it into the soul." It is the eminent exercise of the theological virtues and of the gifts which accompany them. If this infused and loving contemplation lasts for a certain time, it is called a state of prayer, a passive state or at least one that is more passive than active, for we cannot produce it, but only prepare ourselves for it. This teaching is identical with that of The Imitation and thus lends additional confirmation to the statement in The Imitation quoted in the preceding chapter: "There are found so few contemplative persons, because there are few that know how to sequester themselves entirely from perishable creatures." In other words, the infused contemplation of revealed mysteries, which proceeds from living faith illumined by the gifts of the Holy Ghost, is in the normal way of sanctity or of heaven, provided we persevere in prayer, carry our cross daily in a supernatural manner, and are docile to the Holy Ghost. Then living faith becomes during prayer penetrating and often sweet, in such a way that we can live profoundly by the revealed mysteries of the redemptive Incarnation, the Mass, the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity in our souls; we can live profoundly by them and taste them; this is the normal prelude of the life of heaven.

Chapter 29

The Errors of the Quietists on Contemplation and Pure love

We find in the condemnation of several errors a confirmation of the traditional doctrine on initial infused prayer which we have just set forth. We shall consider the errors of quietism, then those of semi-quietism.

THE QUIETISM OF MOLINOS

The propositions of Molinos, which were condemned in 1687, show that quietism deviates from the traditional doctrine to the point of becoming a caricature of Catholic mysticism, which it perverts in its most fundamental principles.

According to Molinos, man should annihilate his faculties, for the desire to act offends God, who wishes to be the only one to act in us. Activity is the enemy of grace, vows to accomplish certain acts are an obstacle to perfection. In refraining from acting, the soul annihilates itself and returns to its principle; then God reigns and lives in it. Such is the interior way, in which the soul no longer produces acts of knowledge, or of love of God, and no longer thinks of eternal life, or of the sufferings of hell. It ought not to desire to know whether it is pleasing to God, nor reflect on its acts, nor on its defects to be corrected; it should not desire its own perfection, its salvation, nor ask God for anything definite. It no longer needs to resist temptations, with which it should no longer concern itself.

In prayer, according to the quietists, man must remain in obscure faith, in a repose in which he forgets every distinct thought relative to the humanity of Christ, or even to the divine perfections, to the Blessed Trinity. He must remain in this repose without producing any act. As for the knowledge of obscure faith, it is not an act produced by the creature, but a knowledge

coming from God alone; it is, said Molinos, an acquired contemplation which is acquired by the cessation of our own operations.

It is evident, therefore, that this acquired contemplation, which Molinos advised for all, was a passivity acquired at will by the cessation of every operation. Consequently he attributed to the contemplation acquired in this manner what is true only of infused contemplation, and with one stroke of the pen he suppressed all asceticism and the practice of the virtues, considered by tradition to be the real preparation for infused contemplation and union with God. All spirituality was thus radically perverted.

According to these principles, Molinos maintained that contemplation continues during sleep, that distaste for spiritual things is good; he confounded voluntary spiritual sloth, or acedia, with involuntary aridity, which is found in the passive purifications of the senses and the spirit. He went so far as to say that the use of the sacraments and the practice of good works are indifferent matters, and that acquired contemplation leads to impeccability, in which one need no longer resist temptations, even when they lead to immodest acts.

One of the initial errors of Spanish quietism was to consider the prayer of quiet as acquired at will (by the suppression of acts), whereas in reality it is infused, as St. Teresa shows in the fourth mansion of The Interior Castle.

In his Precis de theologie ascetique et mystique (no. 1484), Father A. Tanquerey juxtaposes exactly the errors of Molinos and Catholic doctrine. We have added several clarifying statements to his outline:

Catholic Doctrine	Errors of Molinos
(I) There is one passive state in which God acts in us by His operating grace; but one reaches it normally only after having practiced the virtues and meditation for a long time.	There is only one way, the interior way or the way of passive contemplation which one can acquire through one's own efforts, with common grace, by the cessation of every operation. One should therefore enter it at once.
(2) The act of contemplation ordinarily lasts only a short time, although the state of soul which results from it may last for several days.	The act of contemplation may last for entire years and even for a lifetime, even during sleep, without being repeated.
(3) Contemplation united to the act of love of God contains eminently the acts of all the christian virtues, but does not dispense us from making explicit acts of these virtues outside the time of contemplation.	Contemplation being perpetual dispenses from all the explicit acts of the virtues, which are only for beginners: for example, acts of faith, hope, religion, mortification, confession, and so forth.
(4) The principal object of contemplation is God Himself, but Christ is the secondary object of it, and outside of the contemplative act one is not dispensed from thinking about Jesus Christ, the necessary Mediator, or from going to God through Him.	It is an imperfection to think of Jesus Christ and His mysteries; it is necessary and sufficient to lose oneself in the divine essence. He who makes use of images or ideas does not adore God in spirit and in truth.
(5) Holy abandonment is a perfect way, but it should not go so far as indifference in regard to eternal salvation on the contrary, one should desire it, hope for it, and ask for it.	In the state of contemplation, one must be indifferent to everything, even to one's own sanctification, to one's salvation, and lose hope that love may be disinterested.
(6) In interior trials the imagination and sensibility may be profoundly troubled, whereas the fine point of the soul enjoys deep peace; but the will is still obliged to resist temptations, at least indirectly by rising above them or creating a diversion in order not to consent to them.	One should not trouble oneself to resist temptations; the most obscene mental images, the acts which result from them are not reprehensible because they are the work of the devil. They are passive trials that the saints themselves experienced, and one must take care not to confess them. In this way one attains to self-contempt, to perfect purity, and to very close union with God.

The quietism of Molinos thus ended in manifestly immoral consequences. It was taken up again in an attenuated form without these consequences by Madame Guyon, who, having been widowed while still young, rushed ardently into an imaginative and emotional piety which she called the way of pure love, or the short road. She won over to her ideas, first of all, Father Lacombe, a Barnabite, then in a measure, Fenelon.

SEMI-QUIETISM

The attenuated quietism of Fenelon," which was condemned in 1699, had to do with errors relative to pure love. The principal error consisted in teaching that in the state of perfect contemplation the soul enters a sort of complete annihilation, that it is in the presence of God, entirely resigned to His holy will and indifferent to its salvation or damnation.

This doctrine thus failed to recognize the obligation of Christian hope; it forgot that the saints in their greatest trials "against hope believed in hope," according to the expression of St. Paul. It also forgot that to sacrifice the desire of our salvation would be to sacrifice charity itself, which leads us to wish to glorify God eternally by the knowledge and love which the blessed enjoy in heaven.

The divine precepts relative to hope and charity, far from being mutually contradictory, are mutually strengthening. By hope, we desire to possess God without subordinating Him to ourselves; by charity, which vivifies hope instead of destroying it, we love God for Himself, and in order to glorify Him eternally we desire our own salvation and that of other souls. Thus zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls is the ardor of one and the same love, whose first object is God and whose second is ourselves and our neighbor.

Among the errors of semi-quietism the following are also important: "There is a state of contemplation so sublime and perfect that it becomes habitual, to such an extent that each time the soul prays, its prayer is contemplative and not discursive. When this state is reached, the soul need never more return to meditation and methodical acts." "The mystical saints excluded the exercise of the virtues from the state of transformed souls."

Fenelon, who submitted humbly to the condemnation, was led into error especially by a falsified edition of the Entretiens spirituels de saint Francois de Sales, published at Lyons in 1628 by a certain Drobet. Bossuet, in the course of his controversy with Fenelon, made a deep study of the questions relative to prayer, and it is a known fact that in his opinion the "prayer in faith and of the simple presence of God," which in its second phase is initial infused contemplation, is in the normal way of sanctity.

All the errors contained in the Maximes des saints, which were condemned in 1699 in twenty-three propositions, may be reduced, according to Bossuet, to the four following propositions: (1) "There is in this life a habitual state of pure love in which the desire for eternal salvation no longer exists.(2) In the final trials of the interior life, a soul may be

persuaded by an invincible and deliberate conviction that it is reprobated by God, and in this belief it may make the absolute sacrificeof its eternal happiness.(3) In the state of pure love, the soul is indifferent in regard to its own perfection and the practices of virtue.(4) Contemplative souls lose, in certain states, the distinct, sensible, and reflective view of Jesus Christ."

We italicized in these propositions what is particularly erroneous. What is true is: (1) that in the perfect the desire of beatitude is often inspired by charity and that there are moments in which they do not think explicitly of their salvation.(2) If some saints have had in the lower part of the soul the impression of being reprobate, it was not a reflective persuasion of the higher part, and if they made the sacrifice of their salvation, it was in a conditional and not an absolute manner.(3) Even in the highest states of perfection, the saints recommend concern about progress and the fundamental virtues.(4) Even in the transforming union, many saints, like St. Teresa, have had visions of our Savior's humanity; what is true is that in certain transitory moments the perfect soul, absorbed in the contemplation of the Deity, does not think explicitly of it.

THE PROBLEM OF PURE LOVE

We treated the question of pure love at length in The Love of God and the Cross of Jesus. We shall give here a brief summary of our teaching.

The problems of pure love may be stated as follows: Will our love of God always be tainted by self-love? Is pure love possible, and, if so, what is its relation to love of oneself, which seems to be the basis of our natural tendencies?

The errors to be avoided are mutually contradictory; the truth rises like a summit in the midst of these deviations and above them. Under the pretext of pure love, the quietists went so far as to require the absolute sacrifice of the desire of salvation or of personal happiness, and they said that the saints make this sacrifice in the passive purifications of the spirit. On the other hand, it is possible to fall into a practical naturalism which disregards the spirit of sacrifice and believes that without it one can succeed in loving God perfectly and more than oneself. Evidently the truth is above these two opposing deviations.

The saints have often described ardent love of God, insisting on its disinterestedness and its holy follies. Thus St. Paul writes: "For I wished

myself to be an anathema from Christ, for my brethren." St. Thomas explains this passage as follows: "He wished to be deprived for a time of the divine fruition which pertains to love of oneself, in order that God might be honored in his neighbor, which pertains to the love of God." But the same St. Paul says that in the greatest trials, man must, like Abraham, "against hope believe in hope," and therefore never renounce salvation; to do so, moreover, would be to sacrifice charity itself or the desire to glorify God eternally. The sacrifice of our happiness cannot, therefore, be absolute, but only conditional and temporary; further, in the saints it is not a permanent state, but a transport of love lasting some moments.

The following difficulty remains to be solved. How is the ardent, disinterested love of the saints reconciled with our natural inclinations, in particular with love of oneself? St. Thomas answers this difficulty by pointing out that by nature we are inclined to love God, the Author and Preserver of our nature, more than ourselves, as in an organism the part naturally loves the whole more than itself, the hand sacrificing itself to save the body. Otherwise the natural inclination which comes from God, the Author of nature, would not be good, and grace, charity, not only would not perfect it, but would destroy it.

The natural inclination to love God, the Author of our nature, was attenuated by original sin and by our personal sins, the results of which must be mortified; but it subsists in the depths of our will, and charity elevates this tendency, making us love God, the Author of grace, more than ourselves. Consequently in loving rightly the superior part of ourselves, we love our Creator still more, and to cease to will our own perfection would be to turn away from God. This is what the quietists did not understand when they asked, in the midst of the great passive purifications, not hope against all hope, but the absolute sacrifice of beatitude. This would have constituted at the same time the sacrifice of charity or the desire to glorify God eternally.

They did not understand that by hope we desire God for ourselves, not subordinating Him to ourselves, as a fruit is inferior to us, but subordinating ourselves to Him: "By hope we desire God for ourselves, not because of ourselves," for the ultimate end of the act of hope is God Himself. Further, by charity we love God in a superior manner, formally for Himself, and we then desire to possess Him in order to glorify Him eternally.

Thus perfect charity, far from destroying hope, vivifies it and renders it increasingly meritorious. One thus avoids the two contrary errors of quietism and of naturalism opposed to the spirit of sacrifice; and, during the passive purifications, the love of God and neighbor is increasingly purified of all inordinate self-love or of all self-seeking. Finally, ardent love, under the form of zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, is victorious over all egoism, as we see in the lives of great saints.

IN WHAT THE PRACTICE OF PURE LOVE CONSISTS

The practice of pure love consists chiefly in abandonment to Providence and to the divine will of good pleasure. This act of abandonment supposes faith and hope, and in it there is a love of God that is daily more pure.

The quietists were, therefore, mistaken in excluding hope from the most perfect state; it should be only subordinated to charity, vivified by it, and finally it should become heroic hope “against hope” as we see in the lives of the saints.

The quietists also erred in excluding from the state of perfection attention to the practice of the virtues and positive resistance to temptations. They failed to consider as they should that abandonment to the divine will of good pleasure should be accompanied by conformity to the divine will signified by the precepts, the counsels (at least the spirit of the counsels), and events. It is constant fidelity to the divine will signified from moment to moment that enables man to abandon himself without presumption, with confidence and love, to God’s will of good pleasure, on which the future depends. The signified will is consequently the domain of obedience, and the will of good pleasure that of abandonment. Thus balance is kept above the slothful quiet of the quietists and the fruitless agitation of those who rely on themselves and have no profound prayer.

On this subject St. Francis de Sales, Bossuet, Father Piny, and Father de Caussade may be read with profit. We have treated this question at greater length elsewhere; here we shall give what is essential.

The act of pure love may be considered in three ways: (1) as an exceptional and very rare act; (2) as a continuous exercise; (3) as an ordinary act accessible to all Christians.

1. The exceptional and very rare act of pure love is a close and lofty union with God, found only in already purified souls which, under a special inspiration of the Holy Ghost and without any return on self, no longer actually and explicitly think of their own beatitude. It was in an act of this kind that St. Paul, in excessu mentis, desired to be deprived for a time of the joy of possessing God that, by this sacrifice, he might obtain the conversion of his brethren.

2. The continual exercise of the act of pure love was proposed by the quietists as the state of perfection. In reality, this act exists with continuity only in heaven.

3. The ordinary act of pure love accessible to all Christians is the act of charity by which one loves God with appreciative love, above all, because He is infinitely good and better than all His gifts, while tending to love Him with intensive love, more than all, which will be realized in heaven. This act corresponds to the supreme precept of love, a precept that makes it the duty of all to tend to perfect charity.

Chapter 30

The Degrees of Contemplative Prayer in Proficients

We have seen the nature of contemplative prayer and the difference between the last acquired prayer and initial infused prayer. We shall now consider the various degrees of infused prayer in proficients. These degrees are set forth in the works of St. Teresa and in those of St. Francis de Sales. We shall give the essential part of their teaching and then apply this doctrine to fervent Communion.

THE PROGRESS OF PRAYER AND THE VIRTUES

The degrees of contemplative prayer are chiefly those of the growing intensity of living faith, of charity, and of the gifts of the Holy Ghost which correspond to them. This growing intensity of union with God manifests itself in a way by the progressive extension of this state to the different faculties of the soul, which are gradually captivated by God, so that little by little the distractions which come from an agitated and intractable imagination cease. Besides, and this point is especially important, the virtues grow as a rule with the progress of prayer.

St. Teresa makes this truth clear by comparing the degrees of prayer to four ways of watering a garden. First, water may be drawn from a well by main force; this is the figure of discursive meditation, which contributes to the growth of the virtues. The second way of watering consists in drawing up the water with a waterwheel, called a noria; this is the symbol of the prayer of quiet, which is prepared by work that disposes the soul to it. At this time the flowers of the virtues are about to appear.

A third way of watering consists in irrigating the garden with running water from a river; the virtues draw far more vigor from this prayer than from the preceding one, and their flowers bloom.

Lastly, the fourth water, which is rain, symbolizes the prayer of union given by God without human labor. “The soul draws from this prayer much more abundant fruits, its humility increases. It is here that are born heroic promises and resolutions, burning desires, horror of the world (of its spirit), the clear view of vanity.”

Consequently Pius X, in his letter (March 7, 1914) on St. Teresa’s doctrine, says: “The degrees of prayer enumerated by her are so many superior ascents toward the summit of Christian perfection.”

St. John of the Cross speaks in similar terms. He shows in particular that in the night of the senses, or passive purification of the sensibility, there is in the midst of aridity an initial infused contemplation, accompanied by an ardent desire for God. It is an arid quiet, often spoken of by St. Jane de Chantal, which prepares the soul for the consoled quiet described by St. Teresa in the fourth mansion.

THE PRAYER OF QUIET

In sweet quiet, which corresponds to the second way of watering, that is, with the pump, “the will alone is captivated” by the living light that manifests the sweet presence of God in us and His goodness. At this moment the gift of piety, which is in the will itself, disposes it to an entirely filial affection toward God. This state has been compared to that of a little child who relishes the milk given it. Or better, it is like the springing up of the living water which Jesus spoke of to the Samaritan woman. “The other fountain... receives the water from the source itself, which signifies God... We experience the greatest peace, calm, and sweetness in the inmost depths of our being.... The whole physical part of our nature shares in this delight and sweetness.... They [the celestial waters] appear to dilate and enlarge us internally, and benefit us in an inexplicable manner, nor does even the soul itself understand what it receives.”

However, in this state, the intellect, the memory, and the imagination are not yet captivated by the divine action. Sometimes they are the auxiliaries of the will and are occupied in its service; at other times their cooperation serves only to trouble it. Then, says St. Teresa, the will should “take no more notice of the understanding (or imagination) than it would of an idiot.”

This sweet quiet, called also the prayer of divine tastes or of silence, is, moreover, often interrupted by the aridities and trials of the night of the senses, by temptations which oblige the soul to a salutary reaction. The effects of the prayer of quiet are greater virtue, especially greater love of God and ineffable peace, at least in the higher part of the soul.

The prayer of quiet described by St. Teresa in the fourth mansion has three distinct phases: (1) passive recollection, which is a sweet and loving absorption of the will in God by a special grace; (2) quiet, properly so called, in which the will is captivated by God, whether it remains silent or prays with a sort of spiritual transport; (3) the sleep of the powers, when, the will remaining captive, the understanding ceases to discourse and is itself seized by God, although the imagination and the memory continue to be disturbed.

The conduct to be observed in the prayer of quiet is that of humble abandonment in the hands of God. No effort should be made to place oneself in this state, which can come only from a special grace of the Holy Ghost, who at times inclines the soul to a loving silence, at others to affections which gush forth as from a spring. If the understanding and imagination wander, the soul must not be disturbed about it, or go in search of them; the will should remain and enjoy the favor it receives, like a wise bee in the depths of its retreat.

THE PRAYER OF SIMPLE UNION

If the soul is faithful not only in attentively accomplishing all its daily duties, but in listening with docility to the inspirations of the Holy Ghost, who becomes more exacting in proportion as He gives more, what happens as a rule? The soul is then raised to a higher degree, called “simple union.” The action of God at this time becomes strong enough to absorb completely the interior faculties of the soul; God is the object of all its activity, which no longer wanders abroad. Not only the will is captivated by God, but also the thoughts and the memory; in addition, the soul has, as it were, the certitude of the divine presence. The imagination is no longer restless, but calmed; at times it is as if asleep, in order to allow the higher faculties of the intellect and will to be united to God. The special grace given by the Holy Ghost is then like running water coming from a river.

It even happens that all the soul's activity occurs in its higher, part, to such an extent that there is suspension of the exercise of the exterior senses, that is, a beginning of ecstasy, or ecstasy properly so called. If the mathematician who is absorbed in his research no longer hears what is said to him, with even greater reason is this true of him who is thus strongly drawn by God.

The soul then receives the salutary water that refreshes and purifies it like rain falling from heaven. According to St. Teresa, God "will leave us no share in them [His wondrous works] except complete conformity of our wills to His." "How beautiful is the soul after having been immersed in God's grandeur and united closely to Him for but a short time! Indeed, I do not think it is ever as long as half an hour."

St. Teresa points out also that the prayer of union is quite often incomplete, without suspension of the imagination and the memory, which sometimes wage a veritable war on the intellect. It is of this incomplete mystical union that St. Teresa is speaking in The Interior Castle when she says: "Is it necessary, in order to attain to his kind of divine union, for the powers of the soul to be suspended? No; God has many ways of enriching the soul and bringing it to these mansions besides what might be called a 'short cut.' "

The effects of the prayer of union are most sanctifying; there is something like a transformation of the soul similar to the metamorphosis of the silkworm into a butterfly. The soul feels great contrition for its sins; it experiences an ardent zeal to make God known and loved and to serve Him, suffers greatly at the sight of the loss of sinners, glimpses what the sufferings of our Lord must have been. Then the heroic practice of the virtues really begins, especially perfect submission to the will of God and great love for one's neighbor. The martyrs have at times had this prayer in the midst of their torments.

These prayers of sweet quiet and of simple union correspond to those which, in the opinion of St. John of the Cross, are found between the passive purification of the senses and that of the spirit. St. Teresa, in the first chapter of the sixth mansion, speaks clearly of the purification of the spirit, as we shall see later on when we treat of arid union and of ecstatic union which precede the transforming union.

Contemplative prayer, which we have just discussed, enables us to glimpse the depths of the Sacrifice of the Mass and of Communion, in which the Word of God made flesh gives Himself to us to be the food of our souls and to incorporate us more intimately in Himself, while quickening us.

St. Thomas Aquinas must have had a high degree of contemplative prayer when he composed the Office and the Mass for the feast of Corpus Christi. We shall note here some of its principal parts.

In Vespers, the responsory recalls the parable of the guests. Several, preoccupied with their own affairs or pleasures, declined to come; then the Lord invited the poor and at the Holy Table gave Himself to them as food. This is the loftiest interpretation of the parable of the guests.

In the antiphon of the Magnificat at First Vespers, we read: “How sweet is Thy spirit, O Lord, who, to show Thy tenderness to Thy children, hast given them a most sweet bread from heaven; Thou dost fill the hungry with good things and sendest the rich, who have not this hunger, away empty.”

The Introit of the Mass recalls the words of the Psalmist: “He fed them with the fat of wheat”; this wheat is Himself, for the bread has been changed into the substance of His body, which suffered for us on the cross. When we receive it, there is a spiritual and vivifying contact, which should daily become more intimate, between our poor soul and the holy soul of the Word made flesh, for He Himself said: “He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood abideth in Me, and I in him.”

Contemplation rises with the sequence:

Lauda, Sion, Salvatorem,
lauda ducem et pastorem,
in hymnis et canticis.
Quantum potes, tantum aude,
quia major omni laude,
nec laudare sufficis

Sion, lift thy voice, and sing,
Praise thy Savior and thy King,
Praise with hymns thy Shepherd true;
Strive thy best to praise Him well;
Yet doth He all praise excel;
None can ever reach His due.

The end of the sequence shows us in Communion the prelude of the life of heaven:

Tu, qui cuncta scis et vales,
qui nos pascis bic mortales:
tuos ibi commensales,
Coheredes et sodales,
fac sanctorum civium.
Amen, Alleluia.

Thou, who feedest us below!
Source of all we have or know!
Grant that with Thy saints above,
Sitting at the feast of love,
We may see Thee face to face.
Amen. Alleluia.

In our pilgrimage toward eternity, we are nourished by the Eucharist, like the prophet Elias who, when obliged to walk even to Mount Horeb, was sustained by a loaf of bread brought to him by an angel.

The hymn for Matins of this feast of the Blessed Sacrament ends in the contemplation of infinite riches inclining toward extreme poverty:

Panis angelicus fit panis hominum;
Dat panis coelicus figuris terminum.
O res mirabilis! manducat Dominum
Pauper, servus et humilis!

The bread of angels becomes the bread of men.
The bread of heaven puts an end to figures.
O wonderful truth! Man, the poor, the slave, the humble,
Eats his Lord.

It is the saving Host which draws infinite Mercy down upon us:

O salutaris Hostia,
Quae coeli pandis ostium:
Bella premunt hostilia,
Da robur, fer auxilium.

O saving Victim,
Opening wide the gates of heaven:
Our foes press on,
Give us strength, bring us help.

We receive this help especially during severe trials or persecutions, when faced with the enemy’s attacks. At such times we more particularly need to live by penetrating and living faith and by the Contemplation of the Eucharistic mystery, and to convince ourselves in fervent Communion of the fact that God alone is great, that He alone is of Himself, that the strongest and most formidable creatures are as nothing in comparison with

Him and can do no harm without His permission. Not a hair of our heads will perish unless He has willed or permitted it, says the Gospel. We must convince ourselves in the living light of contemplation that when we say, “God permits evil only for a higher good,” we are uttering not simply a sacred formula, but a truth replete with life. We must firmly and deeply believe that the higher good which God is beginning to realize in us in the midst of our struggles is an eternal good that will not pass away. We need to believe that profound Christian life is eternal life begun. We must nourish ourselves with these divine truths and, better still, we must nourish ourselves with Christ Himself who is divine subsistent Truth. We need to be vivified by Him, defended by Him, and to receive from Him that living flame of charity which will make us always aspire higher, even to the end of our journey. Such are in every faithful interior soul the fruits of mental prayer and fervent Communion.

What the great spiritual writers tell us about contemplative prayer is within the reach of the interior soul if it is willing to follow the way of humility and abnegation, and if it daily grasps a little better the following verse of the Magnificat: “He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble.”

What the masters of the life of prayer tell us is not beyond attainment by the faithful soul which believes with lively faith that in baptism it received the seed of eternal life, and which feels the need of being daily more deeply penetrated by the infinite value of the Mass. Then the soul understands how important it is to receive from God all that, in His infinite mercy, He wishes to give souls that He may draw them to Himself and make them share eternally in His inner life, in His eternal beatitude, as the prologue of St. John’s Gospel, read daily at Mass, reminds us: “But as many as received Him, He gave them power to be made the sons of God.” Those who are “born of God,” and not only of the flesh and of the will of man, should live especially by the divine life which, once begun in us, ought not to end. This is why Christ Himself says to us: “If any man thirst, let him come to Me, and drink.... Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water,” “a fountain of water, springing up into life everlasting.”

Chapter 31

Questions Relative to Infused Contemplation

Since we have discussed docility to the Holy Ghost, the mysticism of The Imitation, which is accessible to all, contemplative prayer in its beginnings and its degrees in proficients, we are prepared to examine the principal problem confronting us today about infused contemplation and to see the points on which there is agreement among many theologians who follow at the same time the principles formulated by St. Thomas and the doctrine of St. John of the Cross.

THE PRINCIPAL PROBLEM

The principal question we are going to examine bears on the intimate nature of infused contemplation. There is agreement in saying that contemplation in general, such as may exist in a philosopher, for example, in Plato and Aristotle, is a simple, intellectual view of the truth, superior to reasoning, as St. Thomas explains.

An example of this contemplation is the knowledge that at the summit of changing beings there exists being itself, absolutely simple and immutable, principle and end of all things; it is wisdom itself, goodness, and love. All the proofs for the existence of God converge toward this culminating point, and reason by its powers alone, with the natural help of God, can rise to this philosophical contemplation.

But when it is a question of Christian contemplation based on divine revelation received through faith, what do the great spiritual writers understand by the word “contemplation,” especially when they distinguish it from “meditation”? Does Christian meditation also bear on the truths of faith and what flows from them? How does contemplation differ from it?

The great spiritual writers, who are authoritative in the matter agree in saying with St. John of the Cross: “Contemplation is the science of love, which is an infused loving knowledge of God,” a knowledge that is not always absorbing, that is sometimes accompanied by distractions, and that may exist with the aridity of the passive purifications, or nights of the senses and spirit.

We have shown elsewhere that St. Teresa, St. Francis de Sales, and St. Jane de Chantal agree perfectly on this point with St. John of the Cross when they indicate the differences between discursive and affective meditation which becomes increasingly simple and contemplation properly so called. They also agree in stating, in opposition to the quietists, that one must not leave meditation before receiving this infused and loving knowledge of God, for in so doing there would result “more harm than good,” as St. Teresa points out.

Since such is indeed the meaning of the word “contemplation” in the writings of the great spiritual authors, what must be understood by “acquired contemplation,” spoken of by a number of authors, specially since the seventeenth century? Is acquired contemplation, with the union with God which results from it, the summit of the normal development of the interior life, or is it in reality only a disposition to receive the grace of the infused contemplation of the mysteries of faith, which would consequently be in the normal way of sanctity and clearly distinguished from essentially extraordinary graces like revelations, visions, the stigmata, and so on? In substance this is the chief problem confronting us on this subject. To solve it, we must examine more closely the definitions that are generally admitted.

ACCEPTED DEFINITIONS

Contemplation in general, we have said, is a simple, intellectual view of the truth, above reasoning and accompanied by admiration.

Acquired contemplation is generally defined by those who admit its existence at the end of meditation as a simple and loving knowledge of God and of His works, which is the fruit of our personal activity aided by grace. It is commonly agreed that the theologian possesses the contemplation called “acquired” at the end of his research in the synthetic view which he reaches. This is also the case with the preacher who sees his whole sermon

in one central thought, and in the faithful who listen attentively to this sermon, admire its unity and, as a result, taste the great truth of faith which they see in its radiation.

In these cases there is a certain contemplation that proceeds from faith united to charity and from a more or less latent influence of the gifts of understanding, wisdom, and knowledge. But this admiring knowledge would not exist if, for lack of a higher inspiration, the human activity of the preacher had not carefully arranged the ideas in such a way as to bring out their harmony. A poorly prepared sermon would, in fact, produce the contrary result.

In the believer who himself meditates on a great truth of faith, does the knowledge, which has often since the seventeenth century been called "acquired contemplation," differ from simplified affective meditation? In agreement with the testimony of the great spiritual writers quoted at the beginning of this chapter, especially of St. John of the Cross, St. Teresa, and St. Francis de Sales, we do not think so. It seems certain that, if their teaching is accepted, what has often been described under the name of acquired contemplation is only a variety of affective prayer, in which the soul that has not yet received the grace of loving infused knowledge, may, nevertheless, dwell for brief moments with a simple, admiring gaze on the merciful goodness of God, the interventions of Providence, the infinite value of our Savior's merits. Subsequently the soul returns to considerations and affections.

What has been called "acquired contemplation" thus corresponds to the acquired prayer of recollection, described by St. Teresa in The Way of Perfection, a prayer that is entirely different from the "supernatural and passive recollection" of which she speaks in chapter three of the fourth mansion, where infused contemplation begins. St. John of the Cross speaks in like manner in The Ascent of Mount Carmel, where he deals with the passage from meditation to the state where "God now communicates Himself to the soul, thus passive, as the light of the sun to him whose eyes are open."

In contradistinction to acquired prayer, infused contemplation is generally defined as a simple and loving knowledge of God and His works, which is the fruit, not of human activity aided by grace, but of a special inspiration of the Holy Ghost. For example, in a poorly organized, lifeless sermon, which produces scarcely anything but weariness in most of the

listeners, the preacher may, however, quote a saying of our Lord which profoundly seizes a soul, captivates it, and absorbs it. In this case there is in that soul a manifest act of infused contemplation, because it is not in human power to produce this act at will like an ordinary act of faith. Here it is a question of a particular, penetrating, and often even sweet act of faith in which an experienced director quickly perceives an influence of the gifts of understanding and wisdom.

But, although such an act is not in our power, we can dispose ourselves by humility, prayer, and recollection, to receive the divine inspiration which produces it, and we can also follow this inspiration with docility. According to St. Thomas, a special operating grace leads us to act above discursive deliberation, whereas cooperating grace inclines us to act at the end of this deliberation.

Thus the act of infused love is free and meritorious because of the docility to the Holy Ghost which it contains, although it is not properly speaking deliberate, in the sense that it is not the fruit of a reasoned deliberation but of a superior inspiration.

This essentially infused contemplation and the infused love that accompanies it begin with what St. Teresa calls the prayer of passive recollection, and what St. John of the Cross calls the passive night of the senses; in other words, at the beginning of the mystical life, properly so called. Whence it follows that essentially mystical contemplation is that which, in the eyes of an experienced director and in the sense we have just indicated, is manifestly passive. If this infused contemplation lasts and becomes frequent, one has the mystical state.

We believe, therefore, that we may draw the same conclusion in regard to so-called acquired contemplation as we did in a previous work: If by acquired contemplation we mean a prayer distinct from simplified affective prayer, in which the intellect is totally absorbed by its object and in which we place ourselves by the suppression of all rational activity, we thereby not only create a degree of prayer unknown to St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross, but we likewise oppose their explicit teaching. In fact, St. Teresa repeatedly opposes the total suppression of discourse and the movement of thought as long as one has not received infused contemplation.

Therefore the majority of theologians who, like those of Carmel, while wishing to remain faithful to the teaching of St. John of the Cross and of St. Teresa, have spoken of acquired contemplation, understand by it what St.

Teresa calls “the acquired prayer of recollection” in which our intellectual activity is simplified, but not suppressed. These theologians call this prayer contemplation because the act of simple intellectual intuition is frequent in it, and discursive meditation, on the other hand, is reduced. Consequently the substance of the difficulty disappears, and the question becomes one of terminology.

Moreover, the Carmelite theologians who have admitted the existence of acquired contemplation have rightly refused to consider it the normal term of spiritual progress on earth. They hold that in generous souls truly docile to the Holy Ghost, it is a proximate disposition to receive infused contemplation normally.

Different opinions have arisen about the time when infused contemplation begins. Attentive reading of the third chapter of St. Teresa’s fourth mansion, however, seems to indicate clearly that contemplation begins with the prayer of “supernatural recollection,” which we cannot obtain for ourselves by our own activity, aided by grace. According to the terminology employed by St. John of ‘the Cross, contemplation begins with the passive night of the senses.

The terminology may thus be fixed by the meaning which the great spiritual writers have given to the unqualified term “contemplation”; when they juxtapose it to meditation, they are speaking of infused contemplation which begins in the aridity of the night of the senses. For this reason St. John of the Cross, as we said at the beginning of this chapter, defined contemplation as “an infused loving knowledge of God.”

INTIMATE NATURE OF INFUSED CONTEMPLATION

According to the masters whom we have just quoted, contemplation properly so called, or infused, is therefore a loving knowledge of God which comes from a special inspiration of the Holy Ghost to make us advance continually in the love of God. Not only does it proceed from the infused virtues, in particular from faith united to charity, but it is an infused act of knowledge accompanied by infused love, which we could not make by ourselves with the help of common actual grace. In certain souls it is love which dominates; in others, light.

This special inspiration of the Holy Ghost is, therefore, the principle of infused contemplation. We receive this inspiration with docility through the

gifts of the Holy Ghost, especially through those of understanding and wisdom, which are, as a result, in the just soul like sails which enable a vessel to receive as it should the impulsion of a favorable breeze.

St. John of the Cross himself links infused contemplation to the gifts of the Holy Ghost when he writes in The Dark Night: “This dark contemplation is called secret, because it is, as I have said before, the mystical theology which theologians call secret wisdom, and which, according to St. Thomas, is infused into the soul more especially by love. This happens in a secret, hidden way in which the natural operations of the understanding and the other faculties have no share. And, therefore, because the faculties of the soul cannot compass it, it being the Holy Ghost who infuses it into the soul, in a way it knoweth not, as the Bride saith in the Canticle, we call it secret.” Under this higher inspiration, living faith thus becomes increasingly penetrating and sweet.

Therefore, between infused contemplation and meditation, even when simplified, there is a difference not only of degree, but of nature. Meditation, in fact, is in our power; it proceeds from our personal activity aided by common actual grace and, if there is in it a latent influence of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, this influence is not what constitutes it. Analogically, when the work of the rowers is facilitated by a favorable breeze, it is not the breeze which is the principle of the toil.

Infused contemplation, on the contrary, is not in our power; it proceeds not from our activity aided by grace, but from the more or less manifest special inspiration of the Holy Ghost, which is indispensable here. Therefore, in this case, the difference is not one of degree, but of nature, for the special inspiration is not only a stronger actual grace; it is not only moving but regulating; it contains a superior rule. Similarly, there is a specific difference between even the infused virtues and the gifts of the Holy Ghost: the infused virtues are by themselves principles of acts which we can produce at will, whereas the gifts dispose us to receive with docility the impulsion of the Holy Ghost for acts whose superhuman mode, springing from a superior rule, specifically surpasses our activity aided by common grace. As St. Thomas shows, there is in this case a specific difference, just as there is more than a difference of degree between the work of the oars that makes a boat advance and the impulsion of a favorable wind that makes rowing unnecessary.

In the ascetical life, before the passive purification of the senses, in which infused contemplation begins, the gifts of the Holy Ghost still intervene only weakly, and often they are as if bound by some attachment to venial sin, like sails which have not yet been spread. Later, in the mystical life, the intellectual gifts of understanding and wisdom, which are both speculative and practical, appear in some under a clearly contemplative form and in others, as in St. Vincent de Paul, under a form more directed toward action.

Lastly, it should be noted that the act of infused contemplation proceeds from living faith as from its radical principle, and from the gift of wisdom or that of understanding as from its proximate principle actualized by the divine inspiration. It is an act of penetrating and sweet faith; the superior inspiration received through the gifts adds to this act of faith the precious modalities of penetration and sweetness, which increase with the touch of the Holy Ghost to the point of becoming a taste of eternal life. Here we find, therefore, in a subordinated manner the formal motive of infused faith (the authority of God revealing), that of charity (the divine goodness sovereignly lovable for its own sake), and that of the gifts mentioned (the illumination of the Holy Ghost, which is regulating and inspiring). Consequently this simple act of penetrating and sweet faith deserves to be called infused in order to distinguish it from the act of faith which we commonly make at will, without special inspiration, for example, in order to say the prayers that we recite daily.

What is meant by the direct acts of contemplation? They are acts which are in no way discursive, but which are made by a simple gaze, above reasoning. And indeed they are at times so peaceful that the soul does not, so to speak, perceive them; in that case they are the contrary of reflective or perceived acts. With this meaning, according to Cassian, St. Anthony said: “There is no perfect prayer if the solitary perceives that he is praying.” This is the learned ignorance of which the mystics often speak. The direct acts of true contemplation do not indicate a dangerous idleness, but, on the contrary, a most intimate knowledge of divine truth. And if, after such prayer, the soul is humble, peaceful, detached, and zealous for the practice of the virtues, this result is a sign that it has not lost its time in prayer. These direct acts of contemplation are free, although they are not the fruit of discursive deliberation.

We have pointed out that, to show the growing intensity of contemplation and union with God, St. Teresa insists on the progressive extension of the mystical state to the different faculties, which gradually are either suspended or captivated by God. First of all, the will alone is seized and held (in the prayer of quiet), then the intellect (in more or less complete simple union); next the imagination falls asleep, so to speak; lastly, in total or partial ecstasy, the exercise of the exterior senses is suspended because all the activity of the soul is drawn toward God. St. Teresa knows, however, that the suspension of the imagination and of the senses is only a concomitant and accidental phenomenon of infused contemplation, since, she says, ecstasy generally ceases in the most perfect mystical state, the transforming union. The mystical state, complete in regard to its extension, is not therefore necessarily the most intense or the most elevated. St. Teresa is well aware of this fact; but this extension, which is at first progressive, then restricted, is easy to determine and describe. It constitutes a sign which may be useful, on condition that it be joined to another more profound sign on which St. John of the Cross insists.

This more profound sign refers directly to the progress of contemplation in penetration and to the intimacy of divine union. It is found, first of all, in the passive purification of the senses, then in that of the spirit, both of which denote great progress in the intensity of the knowledge and love of God and of the other virtues. St. Teresa did not indeed neglect this second sign; she speaks of it in connection with the aridities that contemplatives undergo, especially of the great aridity that is found at the beginning of the sixth mansion, and that corresponds to the night of the spirit. She also speaks of it in connection with the different ways of watering a garden: water drawn from the well by hand is the figure of meditation; the water-wheel, called a noria, is the symbol of the prayer of quiet; irrigation by canals, which fertilizes the garden, represents the sleep of the powers; finally, rain symbolizes the prayer of union. Thus progressively the flowers of the virtues bloom and form the fruits: “This is the time of resolutions, of heroic determinations, of the living energy of good desires, of the beginning of hatred of the world, and of the most clear perception of its vanity.”

Infused contemplation begins therefore, as St. John of the Cross says, with the passive purification of the senses, which is a second conversion in arid quiet; it progresses then, accompanied by the consolations of the

illuminative way. Contemplation becomes much more penetrating in the night of the spirit, in the midst of great spiritual aridity and of strong temptations against the theological virtues. In this period these virtues and humility are purified of all alloy and become truly heroic. The soul is thus prepared for the transforming union which St. John of the Cross speaks of in The Living Flame of Love and St. Teresa in the seventh mansion. The transforming union is the culminating point of infused contemplation on earth and, in souls that reach the full perfection of Christian life, it is the normal prelude of eternal life.

WHAT INFUSED CONTEMPLATION DOES NOT NECESSARILY REQUIRE

Several important observations arise from the facts we have just presented.

1. The degrees of contemplation described by St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa, show that contemplation does not always imply joy, that it begins ordinarily in the aridity of the sensibility, as it may subsist in great aridity of the spirit. Moreover, it is not necessarily accompanied by an absolute impossibility to discourse or to reason. Undoubtedly contemplation is superior to discourse, but precisely for this reason contemplation may inspire it from above, for example, in a preacher whose sermon would spring from the plenitude of the infused contemplation of the mysteries of Christ, like St. Peter’s sermons on Pentecost and the pages which St. Augustine certainly wrote under a superior inspiration.

2. It follows also from what precedes that the mystical state gives at times the feeling of the presence of God (it is the quasi-experimental knowledge springing from the gift of wisdom); at others a great thirst for God, with intense suffering because of inability to enjoy Him and a lively feeling of moral and spiritual separation from Him (this is what happens especially in the night of the spirit, when the penetration of the gift of understanding makes itself felt more than the sweetness of the gift of wisdom).

In this last state there is, besides, an infused knowledge and an infused love, from which comes sharp suffering because God is not loved as He should be. This lively suffering and great thirst for God cannot, moreover,

exist without a profound influence of His grace in us. Consequently there is a painful presence of God.

3. In addition, from what we have just said it is clear that infused contemplation does not require infused ideas like those of the angels, but only an infused light: the special illumination of the gifts of understanding and wisdom, which is clearly distinguished from graces gratis datae like prophecy, the gift of the discerning of spirits, or that of tongues, graces bestowed especially for the benefit of one's neighbor.

4. Lastly, the description of the degrees of infused contemplation given by St. John of the Cross shows that it is not an immediate perception of God as He is in Himself; such a perception is proper only to the beatific vision. When there is a marked influence of the gift of wisdom, God is known without reasoning as present in us in His effects (medium in quo), especially in the filial affection for Himself which He inspires in us, and in the sweetness of love which He sometimes makes a soul that is closely united to Him experience. This is the teaching of St. Thomas in his commentary on verse sixteen of chapter eight of the Epistle to the Romans when he discusses the words, "The Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit, that we are the sons of God." It is impossible to admit here an immediate intuition of sanctifying grace itself.

5. Therefore the mystical life is characterized by the predominance (become both frequent and manifest for an experienced director) of the superhuman mode of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, especially of the gift of wisdom, which illumines the others. However, in the passive night of the senses the gift of knowledge predominates, showing the vanity of created things; in the night of the spirit the soul experiences chiefly the deep penetration of the gift of understanding, but without experiencing the sweetness of the gift of wisdom. This gift appears in its full development and its greatest influence in the transforming union. The mystical state in general must not be confounded with its consoling phases, or with its complete flowering; it often exists under the form of arid quiet, which St. Jane de Chantal experienced for so long a time.

The call to contemplation may be understood in different ways. When the question is raised whether all interior souls are called to infused contemplation, the call in question is general and remote, distinct from the individual and proximate call. The latter call, moreover, may be only sufficient and followed by resistance or negligence, or it may be efficacious, and that in two ways: to lead souls actually either to the lower degrees or to the higher degrees of contemplation. In this problem we are again confronted with the mystery of the efficacy of grace, which is understood in one way by Thomists and Augustinians, and in another by Molinists.

In response to the question whether all interior souls are called to contemplation in a general and remote manner, we believe that the reply must be in the affirmative according to the principles formulated by St. Thomas on the gifts of the Holy Ghost which are received by all the just, and by St. John of the Cross on the passive purifications necessary for full Christian perfection, toward which we should all tend.

Three principal reasons motivate this reply. They relate to the radical principle of the interior life, to its progress, and to its end.

1. The basic principle of the mystical life (characterized by infused contemplation) is the same as that of the common interior life: the grace of the virtues and the gifts. Now docility to the Holy Ghost, according to the superhuman mode of the gifts, should normally prevail with spiritual progress to remedy the always imperfect human mode of the virtues and of our personal activity aided by common grace. The mystical life, which is characterized by this docility and this superhuman mode of knowledge and of infused love, appears, therefore, normally first of all in the illuminative way, but especially in the unitive way. Consequently St. John of the Cross writes: “The soul began to set out on the way of the spirit, the way of proficients, which is also called the illuminative way, or the way of infused contemplation, wherein God Himself teaches and refreshes the soul without meditation or any active efforts that itself may deliberately make.” This text, as we have already pointed out, is one of the most important.

2. In the progress of the interior life, the purification of the soul, according to St. John of the Cross, who is the faithful echo of tradition, is not complete except by the passive purifications. These purifications belong to the mystical order, in the sense that infused contemplation begins with the passive purification of the senses, in which the illuminations of the gift

of knowledge predominate, and rises with the night of the spirit, in which the gift of understanding assumes the principal role. The Holy Ghost thus purifies humility and the theological virtues from all alloy; He brings into powerful relief their essentially supernatural and uncreated formal motive: the first revealing Truth, Mercy and helpful Omnipotence, divine Goodness, sovereignly lovable for its own sake. These passive purifications of a mystical order are thus in the normal way of sanctity and dispense from purgatory those who undergo them generously; they are a purgatory before death in which the soul merits and makes progress, whereas in the other purgatory the soul no longer merits.

3. The end of the interior life is the same as that of the mystical life: eternal life, or the beatific vision and the inamissible love resulting from it. But the mystical life disposes the soul more immediately to this last end and, in the perfect, is its prelude, as shown by the evangelical beatitudes, which are eminent acts of the virtues and the gifts. The mystical life, which is characterized by infused contemplation and infused love of the divine goodness, is thus seen to be in the normal way of sanctity.

The reasons we have adduced—the basic principle of the interior life, its progress by the necessary passive purifications, and the ultimate end to which it is ordained—all contribute to show, in short, that infused contemplation and the union with God resulting from it are, in the perfect, the normal prelude of the life of heaven.

The principles formulated by St. Thomas on the gifts of the Holy Ghost, received by all the just, and the doctrine of St. John of the Cross on the passive purifications thus lead us to admit the general and remote call of all interior souls to infused contemplation.

The reservations made here and there by St. Teresa, St. John of the Cross, Tauler, and other masters, refer to the individual and proximate call. It is certain that all just souls are not called in an individual and proximate manner to infused contemplation.

The proof of this statement lies in the fact that the three principal signs of the proximate call are not in all the just, or even in all interior souls. St. John of the Cross points out these signs in T he Dark Night: “(1) When we find no comfort in the things of God (known by way of the senses), and none also in created things.... (2) The second test and condition of this purgation are that the memory dwells ordinarily upon God with a painful

anxiety and carefulness; the soul thinks it is not serving God, but going backwards.... (3) The third sign... is inability to meditate and make reflections, and to excite the imagination, as before, notwithstanding all the efforts we may make; for God begins now to communicate Himself no longer through the channel of sense, as formerly... but in pure spirit,... in the act of pure contemplation."

Finally, the individual and proximate call may be sufficient but remain fruitless because of our negligence or, on the contrary, it is efficacious, and that in different ways: to lead us effectively either to the lower degrees of contemplation, or to the highest degrees. Consequently St. Teresa applies to this subject our Lord's words: "Many are called, but few chosen."

Our discussion of the call to contemplation shows that all interior souls may legitimately desire infused contemplation, on condition that they remain humble and leave to the good pleasure of God the time when this grace shall be granted to them. Thus the farmer may legitimately desire and ask for rain that will render fruitful the earth he has sown, but he should also trust in Providence. If every prayer should be at once humble, trusting, and persevering, the same qualities should characterize that prayer by which we ask for the penetrating and sweet faith of which we have just spoken, that is, a more lively and profound knowledge of revealed mysteries, of the majesty of God, of His radiating goodness, His providence, an experiential knowledge of the redemptive Incarnation, of the Passion, of the humiliations of the Word made flesh, of the influence that He still exercises through the Eucharist, of the infinite value of the Mass, of the worth of a fervent Communion, of the value of time which leads us to eternity. Holy Scripture often repeats this prayer: for example, in the Book of Wisdom we read, as the Office for the feast of St. Teresa recalls: "Wherefore I wished, and understanding was given me: and I called upon God, and the spirit of wisdom came upon me. And I preferred her before kingdoms and thrones, and esteemed riches nothing in comparison of her....

For all gold in comparison of her, is as a little sand, and silver in respect to her shall be counted as clay. I loved her above health and beauty, and chose to have her instead of light: for her light cannot be put out. Now all good things came to me together with her.... I knew not that she was the mother of them all.... For she is an infinite treasure to men, which they that use, become the friends of God." This passage clearly expresses the desire for the lights of the gift of wisdom. Therefore we understand why the

Carmelite theologians, Philip of the Blessed Trinity, Anthony of the Holy Ghost, and the Dominican Vallgornera, in the passages where they speak of the desire for infused contemplation, say: “All ought to aspire to supernatural contemplation.” Joseph of the Holy Ghost speaks in like terms: “We may all aspire to it, ardently desire it, and humbly ask it of God.”

THE DIRECTION OF SOULS IN RELATION TO CONTEMPLATION

Before any sign of an immediate call to contemplation, it is certainly advisable to point out to souls the grandeur of the spirit of faith, which inclines one to consider all things from God’s point of view: the mysteries of religion, Christian worship, persons, whether pleasing to us or not, pleasurable or painful events. Only with the grace of contemplation is this lofty and supernatural consideration of all things perfect and lasting. Thus contemplation may be spoken of discreetly, without being named.

All souls can certainly be led to desire a sweet and penetrating faith in the great mysteries of salvation, and it is fitting that they ask for it. In the same way, before the signs of predestination appear in a soul, it is made to desire eternal life. Hence it may with propriety desire everything that is in the normal way of eternal life.

We must, however, distinguish clearly here between intention and realization. In the intention, the end that is glimpsed and desired comes first, then the means. In the realization, the inverse is true; the soul must rise from the most modest means to higher ones. Here rash haste should be avoided, for it would lead to neglect of the intermediate steps; to do so would compromise everything. It would be like wishing to construct the roof of a building before laying the foundations, or to fly before having wings.

Souls should also be continually reminded of the ordinary conditions of true union with God: habitual recollection, complete renunciation, purity of heart, true humility, perseverance in prayer despite prolonged aridity, great fraternal charity. If to these conditions is joined love of the liturgy and of sacred doctrine, the soul truly prepares itself for the proximate call to the divine intimacy.

When the proximate call becomes manifest, souls should read the description given by St. John of the Cross of the three signs of this call, or some other spiritual work offering the same doctrine. Such reading will

keep them from being discouraged by the troubles and aridity of the night of the senses. Once the graces of contemplation have become frequent, the reading of the same works should be continued. This is especially true of those works that put the soul on guard against the desire for essentially extraordinary graces, that is, visions, revelations, and the stigmata.

As soon as these souls are less faithful, they should be told of the defects of proficients, of the love of the cross, of the necessity of a more profound purification of the spirit, which is the indispensable condition for close union with God and for the full perfection of Christian life.

Many contemporary theologians—Benedictines, Carmelites, Dominicans, Jesuits, and others—admit this doctrine in substance, as shown by an inquiry which appeared in La Vie spirituelle. We agree with Father Marechal, S.J., when he says: “Contemplative activity should, even in its higher degrees..., mark a relatively rare but normal development of the common life of grace.... [This doctrine] echoes the most authentic tradition and now meets with scarcely any opposition.”

We see why Alvarez de Paz, S.J., wrote: “We should blame ourselves if we never taste the ineffable sweetness of contemplation.” And it is well known that St. Francis de Sales concludes: “Holy contemplation is the end and the goal toward which all spiritual exercises tend.”

To avoid the imprudences, the rash haste of those who might use this teaching as an authorization to neglect the intermediate steps, one should often recall, as we have just said, the conditions ordinarily required to receive the grace of the contemplation of the mysteries of faith: purity and humility of heart, simplicity of spirit, habitual recollection, and complete renunciation.

This traditional doctrine is briefly summed up in the lines we have already quoted from The Imitation: “There are found so few contemplative persons, because there are few that know how to withdraw themselves entirely from perishable creatures.” Contemplation is “the hidden manna” given by God to generous souls as the normal prelude of the beatific vision.

Chapter 32

The New Elements in Infused Prayer

Some declare that the explanation often given of infused prayer, which attributes it to a special inspiration received with docility through the gifts of the Holy Ghost, is insufficient. According to them, this explanation does not sufficiently account for what is new in infused prayer and shows that it differs only in degree from acquired prayer, in which the gifts of the Holy Ghost have begun to intervene in a latent manner.

To explain this matter we shall examine two points: first, whether the character of newness always clearly appears in the transition from acquired to infused prayer; next, whether this transition is to be explained by the inspiration and special illumination of the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

WHETHER THE CHARACTER OF NEWNESS ALWAYS APPEARS CLEARLY

The character of newness is incontestably clear if a soul passes suddenly from more or less simplified discursive meditation (occasionally called, in its last phase, acquired contemplation) not to arid but to consoled quiet, which St. Teresa speaks of in the second chapter of the fourth mansion. In this infused prayer “the will is captivated” by the interior illumination that shows it the goodness of God present in it as a source of living water: “This joy is not, like earthly happiness, at once felt by the heart; after gradually filling it to the brim, the delight overflows throughout all the mansions and faculties.... They [the celestial waters] appear to dilate and enlarge us internally, and benefit us in an inexplicable manner, nor does even the soul itself understand what it receives.”

However, the saint says in the same chapter, it happens that in this state the understanding and imagination do not cease to be disturbed and to trouble the will. The character of newness of infused prayer would,

therefore, be still more sensible if the understanding itself were captivated and if the imagination and memory ceased to be disturbed, as happens in the prayer of union, which is compared to rain which falls from heaven, and no longer only to the water wheel (noria) which draws water from a well.

But more often it happens that the transition from the last acquired prayer to initial infused prayer is not so clearly distinguished. St. John of the Cross shows this in The Dark Night, where he describes the night of the senses, which is recognized by the three signs often cited: “The first is this: when we find no comfort in the things of God (proposed in a sensible way by the intermediary of the senses and the imagination, as in meditation).... The second test and condition of this purgation are that the memory dwells ordinarily upon God with a painful anxiety and carefulness; the soul thinks it is not serving God, but going backwards.... The third sign... is inability to meditate and make reflections, and to excite the imagination as before, notwithstanding all the efforts we may make; for God begins now to communicate Himself, no longer through the channel of sense, as formerly, in consecutive reflections, by which we arranged and divided our knowledge, but in pure spirit, which admits not of successive reflections, and in the act of pure contemplation.”

This prayer is initial infused contemplation, accompanied by persistent sensible aridity; consequently this state has often been called arid quiet. St. Jane de Chantal often spoke of this prayer, which differs appreciably from the consoled quiet, described by St. Teresa in the second chapter of the fourth mansion. In the description given by St. John of the Cross, the character of newness of initial infused contemplation is not very striking. The same is true of the description contained in Bossuet’s well known little work, Maniere facile et courte de faire l’oraison en foi.

The first phase of this prayer is acquired, the second is patently infused. Hence we can see why this prayer is spoken of as a mixed prayer, in which the influence of the special inspiration of the Holy Ghost, which is at first latent, begins to make itself felt.

The great spiritual writers have even pointed out several times that certain very generous interior souls often have infused contemplation without realizing it, since contemplation may exist in the great obscurities of the night of the senses and of that of the spirit.

The passage from acquired to infused prayer is not, therefore always stamped with a marked character of newness; and, even when this new

character is quite manifest, it is not the same in arid quiet and in consoled quiet.

THE EXPLANATION OF THIS TRANSITION

When the transition from acquired to infused prayer is slow, progressive, as St. John of the Cross describes it in the night of the senses, the special inspiration passively received through the gifts of the Holy Ghost sufficiently explains the new character that presents itself here.

But to understand it thus, we must see clearly the specific difference between the human mode in which even the infused virtues operate and the superhuman mode of operation of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, the acts of which have precisely as their immediate rule the illumination and special inspiration of the interior Master. This inspiration is an elevated form of actual operating grace, which moves us to act freely above all discursive deliberation. It is thus notably superior to common actual grace, called cooperating grace, which moves us according to discursive deliberation to place a given act of faith, hope, charity, prudence, justice, or of some other virtue. St. Thomas stressed this difference profoundly in two articles which we have often explained: “Do the gifts differ [specifically] from the infused virtues by their object and their formal motive?” “How does operating grace differ from cooperating grace?”

The difference is manifest: For example, I see that the customary hour to say my Office has come; I move myself then (aided by common actual grace, which in this case is cooperating) to perform the acts of faith and religion proper to the recitation of this prayer.

On the contrary, in the midst of a difficult, absorbing study, I suddenly receive, without expecting it, a special inspiration to pray, either for a better comprehension of what I am reading or for a friend who must need prayers at that moment. In the first case, Christian prudence inclines me to say the Divine Office and to perform the acts of faith and religion that this liturgical prayer demands; in the second, the special inspiration of the Holy Ghost, which is above prudential deliberation, inclines me to pray.

There is certainly a new element here, although the transition from one mode to the other may at times be slow and progressive, and at others more rapid and even instantaneous.

When the transition is rapid—for example, if a soul passes without intermediary from simplified discursive meditation to the consoled quiet which is described by St. Teresa—why would not the inspiration and special illumination received through the gifts of the Holy Ghost suffice to explain it?

At this point in our study, it is important that we consider the gifts not only in a general, schematic, and bookish manner, but also in particular, in a concrete and living manner, as St. Thomas and the great spiritual writers, such as St. Bonaventure, Ruysbroeck, Tauler, and Father Lallemant, have described them.

The gift of knowledge explains the experimental knowledge of the emptiness of created things in contrast to divine things; in particular, such a knowledge of the gravity of mortal sin as an offense against God, that one has a horror of sin. This knowledge and horror have been remarked in certain converts at the moment of their conversion. The simple, attentive reading of books of piety, joined to the examination of conscience, could never have given them this lively contrition, which manifests a special inspiration of the Holy Ghost. In this case there is certainly a new element.

Likewise the gift of piety, which is in the will, explains why this faculty is captivated in the prayer of quiet by the sweet presence of God, experientially known, as St. Thomas says in his commentary on the Epistle to the Romans: “You have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry: Abba (Father). For the Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit, that we are the sons of God.” St. Thomas remarks in the same passage that the Holy Ghost gives this testimony by the filial affection He inspires in us for Himself, to which we could not have moved ourselves by common actual grace. Thus the disciples of Emmaus said: “Was not our heart burning within us, whilst He spoke in the way, and opened to us the Scriptures?” By the gift of piety, too, is explained, according to St. Thomas, what we read in the Epistle to the Romans: “The Spirit Himself asketh for us with unspeakable groanings.”

Lastly, the gift of wisdom is, according to St. Thomas, the principle of a quasi-experiential knowledge of the presence of God in us, a knowledge based both on the special inspiration of the Holy Ghost and on the connaturalness with divine things which comes from charity. The special inspiration makes use of this connaturalness which it actualizes (infused act of love) to show us how greatly the mysteries of faith satisfy to the full our

loftiest aspirations and give rise to new ones. In this case there is an act of infused love and of infused knowledge, of sweet and penetrating faith. These acts are said to be infused, not only because they proceed from infused virtues (in this case from the theological virtues), but because they would not be produced without the special inspiration to which the gifts render us docile. We could not have moved ourselves to these acts by ourselves, with common actual grace, called cooperating grace; we needed a special operating grace.

REPLY TO A DIFFICULTY

It has been objected that this traditional explanation, although given by the greatest masters, shows only a difference of degree and not one of nature; therefore the really new character of infused prayer is not sufficiently explained.

To this objection we reply that there is clearly a specific difference, and not only a difference of degree, between the gifts of the Holy Ghost and the infused virtues. The rule of our acts differs according as they are performed either through or without the special inspiration of the Holy Ghost. This is clear, for example, in regard to the inspiration of the gift of counsel which supplies for the imperfection of prudence when it is absolutely hesitant before an indiscreet question and is faced with the problem of avoiding a lie and keeping another’s secret. Sometimes only the inspiration of the Holy Ghost will furnish the answer promptly. Such an inspiration will be given by the Holy Ghost to generous interior souls that are, on the whole, docile to Him.

This specific difference is manifest when a discursively deliberate act of prudence is followed by an act of the gift of counsel (above discursive deliberation), which proceeds from the special inspiration of the interior Master, in such a way that prudence, remaining hesitant, is no longer exercised at the same time. But sometimes the special inspiration is given only to facilitate prudential deliberation by reminding us, for example, of a certain expression from the Gospel; then the difference is less evident.

Similarly, a man who is steering a boat will find an appreciable difference between advancing by means of oars and advancing under the impulsion of a favorable wind; this difference is apparent when the wind becomes strong enough to dispense with rowing. In this case there is

certainly more than a difference of degree. The difference is less obvious if the breeze does not dispense the rower from all effort, but only facilitates his work.

Just so, says St. Teresa, prayer may be symbolized by several different ways of watering a garden: one may draw water by hard labor from a well, or bring it up by a pump, called a noria, or irrigate the garden with water from a river, or lastly rain may water the garden. If there is a brusque transition from the first way to the fourth, the change is manifest; but the transition may be made in a progressive manner. Moreover, infused prayer also, symbolized by the rain from heaven, may be explained by the special illumination and inspiration of the Holy Ghost, received through the gifts of understanding, wisdom, and piety, when these gifts, which grow with charity, exist in a higher degree.

We have shown at length elsewhere that to explain mystical contemplation, according to St. Thomas and St. John of the Cross, it is not necessary to have recourse to infused species or ideas similar to those of the angels, that it suffices to have the infused light, called the special illumination and inspiration of the Holy Ghost, which grows continually in every generous interior soul that unites love of the cross with docility to the interior Master. Faith thus becomes increasingly penetrating and sweet.

Neither is it necessary to have recourse to prophetic light, since that of the gifts suffices. St. Thomas makes this point clear when he speaks of infused contemplation in Adam in the state of innocence and then in us. He says: “In contemplation God is seen by this means which is the light of wisdom, which lifts the spirit to perceive divine things, although the divine essence is not seen immediately; and thus, since original sin, by grace God is seen by the contemplative, although less perfectly than in the state of innocence.” The light of wisdom spoken of here is the gift of wisdom which St. Thomas treats of ex professo, IIa IIae, q. 45. There is no reason to see in it a light specifically distinct from that which this gift disposes us to receive. Thus the new element found in infused prayer is sufficiently explained by the traditional doctrine of the special inspiration of the Holy Ghost, received through the gifts. This point is confirmed by St. Thomas’ emphatically clear teaching that the grace of the virtues and the gifts, which unites us to God, is very superior to graces gratis datae, which only make us know the signs of the divine intervention.

Close union with God intimately present in us is superior to these signs, which are evidently subordinate to it. The divine reality, the hidden God, is superior to all symbols; excessive attention to these signs would, says St. John of the Cross, turn us away from infused contemplation, which attains God Himself in the obscurity of faith.

THE SPECIAL ILLUMINATION OF THE HOLY GHOST

In January, 1937, Father Lithard, C.S.Sp., sent the following statement of his exact opinion on the special illumination of the Holy Ghost to the editor of La Vie spirituelle.

Reverend Father:

La Vie spirituelle for November 1 published a short article on the occasion of a note which appeared under my name in the Revue d' ascetique et de mystique. I should like to add some precise statements to that note, and I trust that you will accept them as readily as did Father Garrigou-Lagrange when I spoke to him about the question in which I referred to him. I shall be brief.

I readily agree with Father Garrigou-Lagrange about the distinction that should be made between the helps which strengthen our personal initiative and those which manifest the divine initiative. In the first, the mode is purely human and we have no experience of it; the others, on the contrary, bear the mark of the gifts through which we receive them; they are "instinctive," and we are easily aware of them. We have experience of passivity.

But I pointed out that the helps received through the gifts do not all seem to be of the same nature, a point which Father Garrigou-Lagrange does not seem disposed to concede. Why, he says, "would special illumination not suffice" in the second case as well as in the first? My answer is this: because the experience of the mystics seems clearly to demand another kind of illumination in infused contemplation. Whereas hitherto, under the plainly instinctive action of graces, either of prayer or of action, they have been conscious only of their own acts,—acts, moreover, which are within their capacity, abstraction being made of instinctive delight, with the sole helps conceded to their personal initiative—in infused contemplation they have, in addition, the consciousness of being in contact with God, to the extent that they speak with assurance of seeing, feeling, touching God. And,

on doing so, they no longer refer only to the passivity of this specific act which is beyond all human power. For this reason we declare that these acts are doubly infused and supernatural. And it is at this point that these fortunate privileged souls speak of a distinctly new, additional experience, introducing them as it were into another world: what they knew by faith, they taste in faith. Evidently it is the gifts which serve to receive these graces, since they are by their nature, as Father Garrigou-Lagrange willingly agrees, habitus receptivi, and not operativi, as the virtues are.

Must we not, moreover, admit, beyond indistinct infused contemplation, helps of another nature for distinct infused contemplation, which requires infused species that render it extraordinary? God is rich, and therefore varied in His gifts.

But I quite willingly admit with Father Garrigou-Lagrange that the transitions are divinely gentle, at first scarcely perceptible insinuations, whose nature is shrouded in distant mystery and reveals itself only progressively. Is this not true in all God's works? If it is hard to say where one color ends and another begins in the work of nature, must we be astonished at our ignorance in the work of grace?

THE SPECIAL ILLUMINATION OF THE GIFT OF WISDOM SUFFICIENT FOR INFUSED CONTEMPLATION

In the preceding pages we have already answered the questions asked in Father Lithard's letter. To complete the subject we shall add the following observations.

1. To explain the new element in infused contemplation, we must recall the specific difference between the gifts of the Holy Ghost and the Christian virtues; emphasizing the fact that the gifts dispose us to receive the special inspiration of the Holy Ghost which moves us, above discursive deliberation, to infused acts to which we could not have moved ourselves deliberately by the virtues alone with the help of actual cooperating grace. Thus, we said, there is a notable difference, and more than a difference of degree, in the progress of a boat by dint of rowing or under the impulse of a favorable wind, although at times the breeze favors the work of the rowers without rendering it useless. Similarly, the gifts are exercised in a latent manner in the ascetical life, and at times in a manifest but rare manner; when their influence becomes at once frequent and manifest to an

experienced director, then the mystical life begins. This life is quite easily discerned by the three signs which St. John of the Cross gives of the passive purification of the senses, in which, he says, infused contemplation begins.

We also pointed out that the new character of infused contemplation appears more clearly when one passes from discursive meditation (symbolized, for example, by the noria) to consoled quiet; whereas this new character stands out less clearly when one passes, as ordinarily happens, from discursive meditation to the arid quiet of the passive night of the senses.

2. We admit a great variety in the gifts, since each has its distinct specification. For example, among the intellectual gifts, that of counsel, which is of a purely practical order, supplies for the imperfections of even infused prudence; the gift of knowledge, which is often exercised in the aridity of the night of the senses, shows us either the nothingness of creatures and the gravity of sin, or the symbolism of sensible things in relation to divine things. The gift of understanding gives us a special penetration of the truths of faith as happens particularly in the night of the spirit in spite of the great spiritual aridity found therein. Lastly, the gift of wisdom gives us a quasi-experiential knowledge of the presence of God in us by the wholly filial affection, by the infused love, which God inspires in us for Himself.

3. We have also often pointed out that in certain mystical souls the intellectual gifts, even that of wisdom, do not intervene under the form of a brilliant light, as in the great contemplatives, but under the form of a diffused light which is, nevertheless, very precious, for it illumines all things from above, in particular one’s conduct and the good to be done to souls. This is the case, for example, in the entire apostolic life of St. Vincent de Paul.

4. What we do not admit is that one and the same habitus, like that of the gift of wisdom, is ordained to acts of a different nature in such a way that the ordinary mode of the first would not be ordained to the extraordinary mode of the second. The unity of the habitus would no longer be safeguarded. We explained our thought in this matter in La Vie spirituelle, and we need not repeat it here. Suffice it to state here that St. Thomas clearly admits that the same gift, for example, that of wisdom, has acts that

differ notably on earth and in heaven, but the earthly mode in the obscurity of faith is essentially ordained to the celestial mode, which will be found in the clarity of vision; thus, the unity of the habitus is safeguarded. It would not be so otherwise.

The gifts dispose us to receive a special inspiration, but in view of a determined operation having a formal object, which specifies one gift rather than another. By the gifts, St. Thomas says, we are more passive than active, but each is a habitus receptivus, ordained to a special action and not to actions of different natures. It is thus that contemplation, to which the gift of wisdom is ordained, merits by its very nature the name of "infused," since we cannot obtain it by our own efforts and it absolutely requires a special inspiration or illumination of the Holy Ghost, which we can only receive, as the earth receives the desired rain.

We are not speaking here of the more or less extraordinary phenomena that accidentally accompany infused contemplation, or of the occasionally simultaneous influence of certain graces gratis datae. But we are speaking of what is essentially required for infused contemplation, which has, moreover, many degrees, from the passive night of the senses up to the transforming union.

To avoid all confusion, all these questions should be distinguished from one another. This being the case, we say that, according to St. Thomas and St. John of the Cross, the full normal actualization of the gift of wisdom deserves the name of infused contemplation, properly so called, and that without this contemplation the full normal actualization of this gift does not yet exist. We do not believe that a Thomist can deny this proposition.

5. We have also established at length that, according to St. Thomas and St. John of the Cross, infused contemplation does not demand infused species or infused ideas, but only the infused light of the gifts of understanding and wisdom, or the special illumination which they dispose us to receive. Replying to Father Lithard, we showed that the texts from St. Thomas on the mystical knowledge of Adam in the state of innocence do not permit us to affirm anything additional. The light of wisdom, which he speaks of in De veritate, is clearly the infused light of the gift of wisdom, which he treats of ex professo in the Summa.

Moreover, in his letter Father Lithard, in order to characterize the distinctly new experience of mystics "which introduces them into another

world," says: "What they knew by faith, they taste in faith." This is, strictly speaking, the quasi-experiential knowledge which, according to St. Thomas, proceeds from the gift of wisdom and makes faith sweet. In these spiritual tastes, so different from sensible consolations, there are, besides, many degrees, from the initial infused contemplation of the passive night of the senses up to that of the transforming union.

If essentially mystical contemplation required a special light other than that to which the gift of wisdom normally disposes us, there might be a great non-mystical contemplative who would have a high degree of the gift of wisdom without this special particularity and, inversely, there might be a mystic who would not have the eminent exercise of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, but only a charismatic light suggestive rather of graces gratis datae.

6. In our writings on these subjects over a period of twenty years we have pointed out that, as a rule, the persons who adhere to the doctrine that we consider traditional are especially those who have experience of infused contemplation, and that many of those who do not adhere to this doctrine admit that they have not this experience. But they seek to imagine it according to their reading, and question the meaning of the terms used by the mystics: to see God, to feel Him, to touch Him. It is not indeed a question of the immediate vision of God as He is but, as St. Thomas says, of a quasi-experiential knowledge of God in the infused love which He inspires in us for Himself.

In that part of his letter where he says, as it were incidentally, "abstraction being made of instinctive delight," Father Lithard recognizes that this delight is not within our capability or in our power, but that it is infused. Is it then something negligible? And is it not precisely because of this delight that farther on in the same letter he can write: "The fortunate privileged souls speak of a distinctly new, additional experience, introducing them as it were into another world: what they knew by faith, they taste in faith"? This is what St. Thomas always calls the essential effect of the gift of wisdom, when he quotes the well-known text: "Taste, and see that the Lord is sweet."

7. Father Lithard thinks that the masters of the spiritual life have given us the general principles, but have left us the task of stating them precisely: a question of progress in this branch of theology, as in dogmatic and moral theology.

We believe that masters like St. Thomas, St. John of the Cross, and St. Francis de Sales, have given us more than general principles, and that we are still far from a full comprehension of what their works contain on these difficult questions. Before setting ourselves the task of completing their work, we must try to understand thoroughly what they have written. In particular the author of The Dark Night and The Living Flame has stated with great care and precision what concerns infused contemplation and its various degrees, and what it is in the passive purifications or outside of them. To state more precisely and to complete what St. John of the Cross says about these lofty questions, one would need great experience in these matters, coupled with a profound knowledge of theology. Progress here is something very elevated and is realized as a rule not by those who propose it to themselves in advance, but by those to whom it is given to accomplish it, as was the case with St. John of the Cross. It still remains for us to penetrate, to grasp more profoundly, what he has taught, avoiding every excessively material interpretation that would constitute a serious diminution of his thought.

We must always revert to the definition of infused contemplation given by St. John of the Cross in The Dark Night, a definition that is so conformable to the teaching of St. Thomas: “Contemplation is the science of love, which is an infused loving knowledge of God.” In this definition St. John does not speak of a direct and immediate intuition of the supernatural gifts of grace and of the infused virtues, an intuition which, moreover, would give us a certitude of being in the state of grace before even reaching the transforming union. For all these reasons we maintain here what we stated about the intimate nature of infused contemplation in articles 3–6, chapter 4 of Christian Perfection and Contemplation.

Chapter 33

The Agreement and Differences Between St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross

Even after a single reading of the works of St. Teresa and of St. John of the Cross it is easy to note differences between them, which have often been pointed out. We shall indicate here especially the origin of these differences.

THE CAUSE OF THESE DIFFERENCES

The differences found in the works of St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross are due to the diversity of their point of view. St. Teresa speaks a great deal from her personal experiences and describes the seven mansions of the interior castle by mentioning extraordinary graces which she herself had received (suspension of the senses, ecstasies, and visions), without taking particular care to distinguish these phenomena, which are in a way exterior and accidental, from what constitutes the basis of the mystical life, from the essential element in each of the seven mansions. St. Teresa is thus led to give more importance than other authors do to sensible phenomena, which sometimes accompany infused contemplation and mystical union. She also insists on the consideration of our Savior's humanity. In short, she is less attentive than others in distinguishing in the seven mansions what pertains to the normal way of sanctity, in particular the passive purifications which this sanctity presupposes.

St. John of the Cross no doubt also speaks from personal experience and from that of the souls he directed, but without mentioning it, for he seeks especially what is essential in the progress of the soul toward close union with God. He made a theological study of these matters, which St. Teresa did not, and his study has unquestionably great importance in distinguishing what is normal from what is accessory or accidental. In relation to the

interior life, he examined thoroughly what theology teaches about the three theological virtues and the gifts that accompany them. Consequently he endeavors to explain the states of prayer of contemplative souls by the causes which produce them, linking them to infused faith, vivified by charity and illumined by the gifts of wisdom and understanding, thereby discerning better what the progress of the love of God should ordinarily be in every truly generous contemplative soul. From this point of view, he is particularly attentive to what is in the normal way of sanctity, and he studies more profoundly than any of his predecessors the passive purifications of the senses and of the spirit, necessary for the perfect purity of the love of God. Hence he is led to insist less on the extraordinary graces which sometimes accompany infused contemplation and which, in his works, appear more like concomitant phenomena that are, so to speak, exterior and accidental. He also dwells less on the consideration of our Savior's humanity, that he may fix his attention on the primary object of infused contemplation, which proceeds from faith under, the special inspiration of the gifts of understanding and wisdom; this object is God Himself, present in us and attained in the obscurity of faith by a quasi-experiential knowledge, which He Himself excites in us.

We, as well as many others, have often pointed out these differences. They show that the author of The Dark Night does much to complete what we read in St. Teresa and they make the understanding of her works easier for the theologian who seeks to explain, by their proximate principle or their cause, the states described by the mystics.

WHETHER THESE DIFFERENCES HAVE A COMMON BASIS

In recent years a number of theologians (Father Arintero, O.P., Father Garate, S.J., Canon Saudrea, and several others) have shown that these differences have a common basis. We expressed the same opinion in Christian Perfection and Contemplation. As a matter of fact, although St. Teresa speaks from personal experience, she is sufficiently well acquainted with that of her daughters to be able to set forth in the description of the seven mansions what ordinarily happens to souls passing through them. And, making use of the indications that she gives in various passages, we can discern more clearly what is essential to the mystical life, even in each of the seven mansions, and what is only a concomitant phenomenon, such

as ecstasy or a beginning of ecstasy. As we have pointed out several times, St. Teresa says clearly that in the prayer of quiet first of all the will alone is seized, captivated by God, then the intellect and the imagination; finally, in ecstasy, the exercise of the exterior senses is suspended. But St. Teresa knows that the suspension of the imagination and the senses is only a concomitant and accessory phenomenon of infused contemplation. Speaking to her daughters she says: “In reality there are very few who never enter this mansion: some more and some less, but most of them may be said at least to gain admittance into these rooms. I think that certain graces I am about to describe are bestowed on only a few of the nuns, but if the rest only arrive at the portal, they receive a great boon from God, for ‘many are called, but few are chosen.’”

St. Teresa is well aware of the fact that ecstasy is not a certain sign of a greater intensity of knowledge and love of God, since she says that it generally ceases in the most perfect mystical state, the transforming union. Father Lallemant, S.J., rightly insisted on this point.

St. Teresa also notes that in the prayer of quiet, “where the will alone is captive,” the other faculties are at times the auxiliaries of the will and engage in its service; at other times their contribution serves only to trouble it. “When the will enjoys this quiet,” she says, “it should take no more notice of the understanding (or imagination) than it would of an idiot.” The saint also says that the consolation springing from the prayer of quiet is often interrupted by aridities, by temptations against patience and chastity, that is, by the trials which St. John of the Cross speaks of in the passive night of the senses. This explains why, even for St. Teresa, over and above consoled quiet, there is arid quiet, which St. Jane de Chantal described several times, and which is found in what the author of The Dark Night calls the passive purification of the senses.

St. Teresa also points out that the prayer of union, described in the fifth mansion, is often incomplete, without the suspension of the imagination and memory, which sometimes wage a veritable war on the understanding and the Will. Then, as in the prayer of quiet, the soul should pay no more attention to the imagination than to an idiot, St. Teresa is speaking of this incomplete mystical union when she says: “Is it necessary, in order to attain to this kind of divine union, for the powers of the soul to be suspended? No; God has many ways of enriching the soul and bringing it to these mansions besides what might be called a ‘short cut.’ “

Some have believed this “short cut” and the delights found in it to be infused or mystical contemplation, whereas it is only the suspension of the imagination and the memory, or a beginning of ecstasy, which sometimes accompanies mystical union and greatly aids it. Father Arintero, O.P., Father Garate, S.J., and Canon Saudreau have shown this to be so.

If St. Teresa were to say that a soul can reach the fifth mansion by a non-mystical way, or without infused contemplation, she would state the contrary of what she often affirms in The Way of Perfection and also in the fourth mansion of The Interior Castle. Since, as a matter of fact, in the fourth mansion the prayers of supernatural or passive recollection and quiet are already infused (and this is the essential characteristic of this period of the interior life), with even greater reason those of the fifth mansion are infused.

The prayer of passive union is, therefore, not extraordinary in its principle or in its very essence, although certain of its accidental, concomitant phenomena may be. St. John of the Cross certainly shows this more clearly, but even in The Interior Castle it is quite manifest.

Lastly, it should be noted that St. Teresa describes in the first chapter of the sixth mansion a very painful period of trial which manifestly corresponds to what St. John of the Cross calls the passive night of the spirit preceding perfect union. St. Teresa speaks of “the interior anguish of the soul at the sight of its own wretchedness.... For one of the severe trials of these souls... is their belief that God permits them to be deceived in punishment for their sins,... When... they discover any faults in themselves, these torturing thoughts return.... They become almost unbearable. Especially is this the case when such spiritual dryness ensues that the mind feels as if it never had thought of God, nor ever will be able to do so.”

These observations permit us to recognize a common principle under the differences found between St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross. Moreover, how could it be otherwise, since both of them describe the way of perfect union and the different stages in this ascent?

A RECENT OBJECTION

Quite recently, however, in the Traduction nouvelle des oeuvres de saint Jean de la Croix, by Mother Mary of the Blessed Sacrament of the Carmel of Mangalore (Vol. III, appendix 5), the translator, to whom we owe a fluent

and generally faithful version of the works of St. Teresa (known as the Edition of the Carmelites of Paris), insists almost solely on the differences between the two great saints of Carmel. This appendix recalls the general introduction of the same work, which seemed to reach the conclusion that there is disagreement between the two saints, especially in regard to the consideration of Christ's humanity. In the Etudes Carmelitaines (April, 1934), Father Eliseus of the Nativity insisted on rectifying immediately certain conclusions, which he declared to be contrary to the text of The Interior Castle and to the ensemble of the teaching of St. John of the Cross He writes as follows: "In vain Reverend Mother eagerly repeats that it is not a question of 'contradiction'; we are surprised to learn suddenly from her that St. John of the Cross was-Heavens! it must be said—so roughly treated by the Foundress.

In the fifth appendix, contained in the third volume of this translation, the translator insists on eleven differences relating to the way the two saints conceived of contemplation, its beginnings, infused character, the cooperation that the soul may bring to it, by disposing itself for it or failing to do so, relating also to the passive purifications, to the role of faith in contemplation, to extraordinary favors, to illusions, to the humanity of Christ, to death to the world. After these eleven differences, one would expect to see the points of agreement between these two great saints on the lofty subject of infused contemplation and the union with God resulting from it. However, we are told nothing about this subject. The translator seems even to believe that, to find this agreement, the profound knowledge which theology can give of the theological virtues and the gifts of the Holy Ghost is not of great use.

As a rule Thomistic theologians, those of Carmel as well as those of the Order of St. Dominic, especially Cajetan, O.P., Joseph of the Holy Ghost, CD., more recent writers, Father Gardeil, O.P., and also Father de la Taille, S.J., and many others hold that infused contemplation proceeds from infused faith enlightened by the gifts (a fide infusa donis illustrata), or that it is "an act of the virtue of faith actuated by the Holy Ghost, whose touch causes the gifts to vibrate."

On this subject the translator tells us: "As for these subtle deductions, we are far from making them ours. It is certain that St. John of the Cross gives faith an extremely preponderant place in his mystical teaching.—Does St.

Teresa make contemplation rest on the exercise of the virtue of faith? In no way."

If this were really the case, there would be a serious disagreement. But she is obliged to recognize a few lines farther on that "the virtue of faith evidently exists in her contemplation [that of St. Teresa] like a substratum." Then how can she maintain that St. Teresa "does not make contemplation rest in any way whatsoever on the exercise of the infused virtue of faith"?

And how faintly comprehend "the extremely preponderant place" which she admits that St. John of the Cross gives to faith in his mystical teachings, if one does not go more deeply into what the theology of St. Thomas and his best commentators can tell us on this subject, if one dispenses oneself from examining it, and says: "As for these subtle deductions, we are far from making them ours"? Would St. Teresa, who willingly sought light from theologians, have spoken thus?

In the same appendix, apropos of what we wrote in Perfection chretienne et contemplation on the subject of the passage from meditation, which has become impracticable, to initial infused contemplation (with the meaning given to it by St. John of the Cross), the translator reminds us that, "to advise St. Teresa's prayer of quiet for a soul which God does not gratify with it, would be entirely wasted effort." We did not at all forget when writing that passage that the prayer of quiet is infused and not acquired, even in its essential element, abstraction being made of a given concomitant and consoling phenomenon which facilitates it. We said repeatedly in the same work that no one can acquire it, although one can prepare oneself to receive the special inspiration of the Holy Ghost which is its proximate principle. With this meaning, St. Teresa herself speaks of the noria (waterwheel) which symbolizes this work, which prepares the soul to receive the divine illumination.

The translator also points out to us in the same appendix, apropos of the aforementioned passage, that we did not mention between "meditation, which has become impracticable" and "the prayer of quiet," the initial obscure contemplation which St. John of the Cross speaks of in the night of the senses (that contemplation later on occasionally called acquired or mixed contemplation, which prepares for infused), or that which St. Jane de Chantal speaks of. We are all the more surprised at this remark since, in the lines which precede the passage mentioned and in those which follow it, we

speak precisely of the initial infused contemplation of St. John of the Cross, and of that of “simple surrender to God” of St. Jane de Chantal.

We conclude by repeating that if between the two great mystics of Carmel there exist certain differences easy to see and often pointed out, which are clearly explained by the fact that St. John of the Cross is a theologian and St. Teresa is not, there is, nevertheless, in their works an undeniable common principle, a fundamental conception of infused contemplation, of the union with God which results from it, and of the passive purifications necessary to reach perfect union.

If it is fitting to point out their differences, it is even more important to indicate their fundamental agreement; and in order to see in what this harmony consists, one should not neglect the help which the profound study of theology can give in these difficult questions. It is highly important to distinguish in the mystical life, and even in each of the seven mansions, between what is essential and normal and what is an accessory and concomitant phenomenon.

PART 4

The Unitive Way of the Perfect

Section I

The Entrance into the Unitive Way through the Night of the Spirit

In accordance with our plan for the division of this work, we shall follow the teaching of St. John of the Cross, who is the faithful echo of the tradition of the great spiritual writers, and treat of the night of the spirit at the beginning of the unitive way, since, according to the Mystical Doctor, the night of the spirit marks the entrance into this way, understood in its full and intense meaning. We shall see the nature of the passive purification of the spirit, the conduct to be observed in it, its effects, and the principal characteristics of the spiritual age of the perfect or of souls already purified.

DIVISION OF PART IV

In this fourth part we shall discuss, first of all, the entrance into the unitive way. According to St. John of the Cross, the soul enters this way by the passive purification of the spirit, which he explains in the second book of The Dark Night. In our opinion the Mystical Doctor thus preserves and examines thoroughly the traditional doctrine, because he considers the illuminative way of proficients and the unitive way of the perfect not in their diminished forms, but in their normal plenitude. From this higher point of view, the illuminative way demands the passive purification of the senses, which, we have seen, marks the entrance to it and is like a second conversion, analogous to that of the apostles, especially of Peter, during the dark night of the Passion. For the same reason, the unitive way of the perfect demands a passive purification of the spirit, which is like a third conversion, or rather a transformation of the soul, similar to that experienced by the apostles when, after being painfully deprived of the presence of Christ on Ascension Day, they received the Holy Ghost on

Pentecost. This new purification strengthened them greatly and prepared them for their apostolate, which from then on, was to have its source in the plenitude of the contemplation of the mystery of Christ. This was truly the case, as St Peter's sermons on Pentecost and the following days show.

We shall, therefore, discuss, first of all, the necessity of the passive purification of the spirit because of the defects which subsist in proficients or the advanced. We shall see the nature of this purification and its theological explanation; we shall give the rules for direction appropriate at this stage, and point out the effects of this purification and its concomitant trials.

It will then be easier to characterize the spiritual age of the perfect, to see the nature of the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity in the purified soul, to describe the contemplative faith of the perfect, their confidence in God, their abandonment, charity, and zeal. We shall thus be led to speak of the transforming union, following chiefly St. John of the Cross, and of the radiation of this intimate union with God in the life of reparation and in the apostolate. We shall thus be able better to determine what constitutes the full perfection of Christian life, the normal prelude of the life of heaven and the immediate disposition to receive the beatific vision without passing through purgatory.

To show more clearly in what this normal plenitude of Christian life consists, we shall not discuss in this Section the essentially extraordinary graces that sometimes accompany and even precede the transforming union; we shall deal with them in the following section. Thus we can draw a clearer distinction between every essentially extraordinary grace and the normal summit of the life of grace on earth, that is, the full development of the virtues and the gifts of the Holy Ghost. To be sure, this summit is an eminent and relatively rare state, like lofty perfection; but it does not follow that it is an intrinsically extraordinary favor, like the gift of prophecy and other charisms, or graces gratis datae, which are, besides, inferior to sanctifying grace. St. Thomas proves that prophecy and other similar charisms are only as it were exterior signs, whereas sanctifying grace, from which proceed charity, the other infused virtues, and the gifts, unites us to God and tends while growing to unite us ever more closely to Him, until it merits the name of consummated grace, which is eternal life itself.

Chapter 34

The necessity of the Passive Purification of the Spirit, and the Prelude of the Unitive Way

Christ said: “I am the true vine; and My Father is the husbandman. Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit, He will take away: and everyone that beareth fruit, He will purge it, that it may bring forth more fruit.... He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit.... If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you shall ask whatever you will; and it shall be done unto you.” But to reach this state, the good branch must be pruned. In his commentary on St. John’s Gospel, St. Thomas says: “In the natural vine, the branch which has many shoots yields less fruit, because the sap loses its efficacy by excessive diffusion in these superfluous shoots; therefore the vine-dresser prunes them. Something similar occurs in a man who is well disposed and united to God, but whose affection and life are excessively exteriorized in various ways; the strength of his interior life is then diminished and less efficacious in regard to the good to be accomplished. For this reason the Lord, who in this respect is like the vine-dresser, prunes His good servants and frequently cuts away what is useless in them so that they may bear more fruit. He purifies them for a long time, sending them tribulations, permitting temptations that oblige them to a holy and meritorious resistance, which renders them stronger in regard to the good. The Lord inures to war and thus purifies those who are already pure, for no one is ever sufficiently so on earth, according to St. John’s statement: ‘If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us’ (I John 1:8). Thus the Lord purifies His servants so that they may bear more fruit, that they may grow in virtue and be proportionately richer in good works as they are more pure.

This text from St. Thomas’ commentary on St. John refers properly to the passive purifications, which the just man does not impose upon himself like

mortification, but which he receives from God. Thus was purified holy Job, who declared: “The life of man upon earth is a warfare.” It is a time of laborious and painful service, a time of trial, like the life of a soldier. Such it was for the apostles after Christ left them on Ascension Day, and they assembled in the upper room to pray and prepare themselves for the struggles which Christ had announced to them, and which were to be crowned by their martyrdom.

The fathers of the Church and spiritual writers have often spoken in this intimate sense of the cross we must bear daily, the cross of the sensibility and that of the spirit, that the lower and the higher parts of the soul may gradually be purified, that the sensitive part may be perfectly subjected to the spirit, and the spirit to God.

The fathers have often commented on these words of Scripture: “As when one sifteth with a sieve, the dust will remain: so will the perplexity of a man in his thoughts. The furnace trieth the potter’s vessels, and the trial of affliction just men.” “For gold and silver are tried in the fire, but acceptable men in the furnace of humiliation.” “From above He hath sent fire into my bones,” said Jeremias in his Lamentations. Christ likewise said to Peter before the Passion: “Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat.” Now this is realized especially in the passive purification of the spirit, which prepares the soul for the life of close union with God. St. Augustine, St. Gregory the Great, St. Maxim, Hugh of St. Victor, Ruysbroeck, Tauler, and more profoundly St. John of the Cross, have shown that this purification is necessary because of the defects that remain in the proficients or advanced.

THE DEFECTS OF THE ADVANCED

Consideration of this subject is advantageous to interior souls, especially for three reasons: that they may see more clearly the necessity and the value of the daily cross that each must carry; that they may also better discern the unreasonable troubles which they foolishly create for themselves from those which have a true purifying value; lastly, that they may get a more exact idea of purgatory, which will be necessary for them if they do not profit sufficiently by the crosses sent to them in this life.

There are still many defects in proficients who have made considerable progress, the inferior or sensible part of whose souls is already in large part

purified, and who have begun to live the life of the spirit through the initial infused contemplation of the mysteries of faith. The stains of the old man still remain in their spirit like rust that will disappear only under the action of a purifying fire.

St. John of the Cross points out that these advanced souls are still often subject to indirectly voluntary distractions in prayer, to dullness, to useless dissipation, to excessively human sympathy for certain persons, leading to a lack of esteem for others, which is more or less contrary to justice and charity. They have moments of natural rudeness, the result of the sin of impatience. Some fall into illusion by being too much attached to certain spiritual communications; they expose themselves to the devil, who takes pleasure in deceiving them by false prophecies. Others, under the same influence, fall into bitter zeal, which leads them to sermonize their neighbor and to deliver untimely remonstrances. Thereby, though unaware of it, these advanced souls are puffed up with spiritual pride and presumption and thus deviate from the simplicity, humility, and purity required for close union with God. St. John of the Cross says: “Some of them become so entangled in manifold falsehoods and delusions, and so persist in them that their return to the pure road of virtue and real spirituality is exceedingly doubtful” Evidently there are greater dangers than those at the beginning.

According to the holy doctor, this matter is inexhaustible; and so far he has considered only the defects relative to the purely interior life, to relations with God. What would it be if one were to consider the defects that advanced souls still have in their relations with superiors, equals, and inferiors; if one were to consider all that, in this period of the spiritual life, still injures charity and justice; all that, in those who have to teach, govern or direct souls, stains their apostolate, teaching, government, and direction?

Spiritual or intellectual pride, which still subsists, inspires excessive attachment to personal judgment, to one’s own way of seeing, feeling, sympathizing, willing. From it are born jealousy, secret ambition, or again great authoritarianism, unless one is by temperament inclined to the contrary defect, that is, to excessive indulgence and to weakness toward those who oppress others. Here too, may often be remarked a lack of promptness and generosity in obedience, or, on the contrary, a servility inspired by self-love. Frequent also are faults against charity through jealousy, envy, slander, discord, contention.

At this stage may reappear many deviations, which seriously trouble the life of the soul. The root of the higher faculties of intellect and will is still deeply tainted with pride, personal judgment, and self-will. The divine light and the will of God do not yet reign there uncontested; far from it. These stains, which are in the root of the higher faculties, have, in some cases, been there for a long time; they may become encrusted as they grow old and may profoundly alter the character by turning it away from true intimacy with God. Thence are born many defamations and at times most grievous divisions among those who should work together for the good of souls.

St. John of the Cross says that this state of things shows that, “if they be not removed by the strong soap and lye of the purgation of this night, the spirit cannot attain to the pureness of the divine Union.” “The intercourse of proficients with God is, however, still most mean, because the gold of the spirit is not purified and refined. They think, therefore, and speak of Him as children (they have little understanding of the ways of Providence, which humiliates them in order to exalt them), and their feelings are those of children, as described by the Apostle: ‘When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child,’ because they have not reached perfection, which is union with God in love. But in the state of union, having grown to manhood, they do great things in spirit—all their actions and all their faculties being now rather divine than human. This is a clear way of stating that the full perfection of Christian life belongs normally to the mystical order, since it presupposes the passive purifications of the senses and of the spirit, which are sharply characterized passive or mystical states easily distinguished from melancholy and other fruitless spells of dejection of the same kind, as we shall see farther on. It is a question here of fruitful spiritual suffering and of a spiritual winter that prepares the germination of a new spring. Winter is indispensable in nature; there is also one which may be very useful in the life of the soul.

This is why St. Augustine used to say the prayer, often repeated centuries later by St. Louis Bertrand: “Lord, burn, cut, do not spare on this earth, that Thou mayest spare in eternity.” It is important to be purified on earth with merit rather than after death without merit. Nothing soiled enters heaven; consequently, to enter there the soul must, sooner or later, undergo a profound purification. The beatific vision of the divine essence cannot, it is evident, be granted to a soul that is still impure.

Before St. John of the Cross, Tauler greatly insisted on the depths of our will, which need to be purified from the often unconscious egoism that has for long subsisted in it, leading us to disturbing and fruitless conversation with ourselves and not to tranquilizing and vivifying conversation with God.

Tauler often speaks of the unconscious egoism that still inclines us to seek ourselves in everything and at times to judge our neighbor with severity while treating ourselves with great indulgence. This same egoism which makes us seek ourselves in many things is especially evident when trial strikes us; we are then completely upset and seek help, consolation, and counsel from without, where God is not to be found. We have not built our house sufficiently on Christ the rock, with the result that it lacks solidity. We have built on self, on self-will, which is equivalent to building on sand; thus at times there is great weakness underlying harshness of judgment.

Tauler declares: “There is only one way to triumph over these obstacles: God would have to take complete possession of the interior of the soul and occupy it, which happens only to His true friends. He sent us His only Son in order that the holy life of the God-Man, His great and perfect virtue, examples, teachings, and multiple sufferings might lift us above ourselves, make us leave ourselves completely (draw us from this depth of egoism), and that we might let our own pallid light disappear in the true and essential light.”

“This light [of the Word made flesh] shines in the darkness, but the darkness did not comprehend it (John 1:5). None but the poor in spirit and those who are completely stripped of self, of self-love, and of their individual wills, receive this light. There are many who have been materially poor for forty years and who have never received the slightest [interior] ray of it. Through their senses and reason, they know thoroughly what is said of this light, but, in its essence, they have never tasted it; it is foreign to them and remains far from them.”

Again Tauler says: “It is thus that, whereas simple common folk followed our Lord, the Pharisees, the princes of the priests and the scribes, every class that had the appearance of sanctity, harshly opposed Him and ended by putting Him to death.” God is the grandeur of humble souls, and His very lofty ways remain hidden to our pride.

We see, consequently, to what extremities we may be led by this depth of egoism and pride which blinds us and hinders us from recognizing our sins. Therefore it is important that the light of life of living faith and of the gifts of the Holy Ghost should penetrate the depths of our intellect and, as it were, the root of our will.

That we may receive this light and these gifts, it is not sufficient to know the letter of the Gospel and adhere to it; we must assimilate its spirit profoundly. Otherwise, appearing as Christians and using the language of Christians, we would preserve in the depths of our being something which is not Christian and which resists the light of life. There would be in the depths of our intellect and will as it were a citadel which would serve as a refuge for self-love, which is unwilling to surrender and to allow the reign of God to be profoundly and eternally established in us. Thereby certain souls, that think themselves quite advanced but that do not recognize their defects, are in greater peril than the common run of men who admit that they are sinners and who preserve the fear of God.

Consequently we should meditate on Tauler's conclusion: "Therefore, well-beloved children, employ all your activity, both of soul and body, to obtain that this true light may shine in you in such a way that you may taste it. In this way you will be able to return to your origin, where the true light shines. Desire, ask, with nature and without nature, that this grace may be granted to you. Employ all your energy to this end, pray to the friends of God that they may help you in this work; attach yourself to those who are attached to God in order that they may lead you to God with them. May this grace be granted to all of us, and may the all loving God help us! Amen."

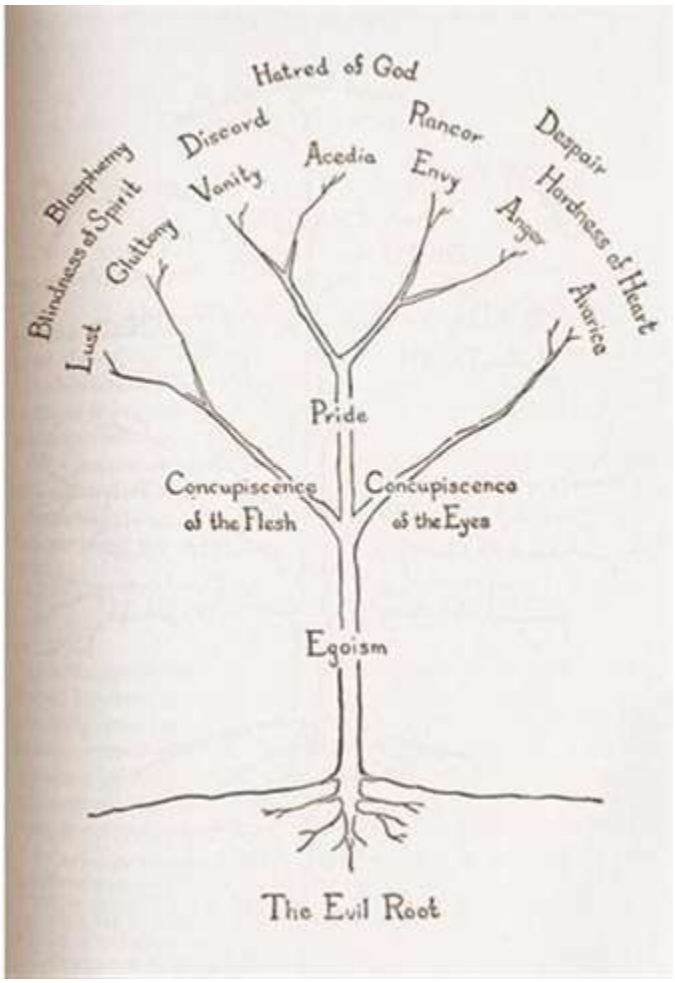
As a note in the translation which we have just quoted points out, Tauler draws a distinction here between the ordinary knowledge of faith, common to all the faithful, and mystical knowledge, the loving experience of God felt in the depths of the soul, which is reserved to the friends of God. Tauler invites all his hearers and readers to desire this intimate knowledge that transforms the center of the soul by illumining it, and that liberates it from this prison of egoism in which the soul had shut itself up. In this way alone can it be deified, divinized, by participating profoundly through grace in the inner life of God. All these defects, which still subsist in a measure in the depths of the intellect and will, even in the advanced, demand, therefore, a purification that God alone can effect. "God alone can deify, as fire alone can ignite," St. Thomas says in substance.

This passive purification will certainly not be without suffering, and, as St. John of the Cross teaches, it will even be a mystical death, the death to self, the disintegration of self-love, which until then has resisted grace, at times with great obstinacy. Here pride must receive the deathblow that it may give place to genuine humility, a virtue which has been compared to the deepest root of a tree, a root which buries itself so much the more deeply in the soil as the loftiest branch, the symbol of charity, rises higher toward the sky.

This center of the soul, the refuge of personal judgment and selflove that is often very subtle, must be illumined by the divine light and filled by God, rendered completely healthy, and vivified. On the feast of the Purification, at Mass and in the procession each person carries a lighted candle, the symbol of the light of life that each should bear in the innermost depths of his soul. This light of life was given to man on the first day of creation; extinguished by sin, it was rekindled by the grace of conversion and by the hope of the promised Redeemer. This light grew in the souls of the patriarchs and the prophets until the coming of Christ, “a light to the revelation of the Gentiles, and the glory of... Israel,” as the aged Simeon said in his beautiful canticle, Nunc dimittis, on the occasion of the presentation of Jesus in the Temple.

This same light of life, which grew in humanity until the advent of the Messias, should also grow in each of our souls from baptism until our entrance into heaven. It should gradually illumine and vivify the very center of our intellect and our heart that this depth may be not an obscure depth of egoism, personal judgment, and resistance to grace, but a depth of light and goodness where the Holy Ghost, the source of living water springing up into eternal life, may reign increasingly.

From what we have just said it is evident that the passive purification of the spirit, made necessary by the defects of proficients, is the decisive struggle between two spirits: the spirit of pride, which may grow even to blasphemy, to hatred of God, and despair, and that of humility and charity, which is eternal life begun in us. These two conflicting spirits may be symbolized by two trees, one of which illustrates the teaching of St. Gregory the Great and St. Thomas on the roots and results of the seven capital sins, while the other explains their doctrine on humility and charity, and the connection of these virtues with the other virtues and the seven gifts.


Hatred of God
Blasphemy
Blindness of Spirit
Discord
Vanity
Acedia
Rancor
Envy
Despair
Hardness of Heart
Anger
Gluttony
Lust
Avarice
Pride
Concupiscence of the Flesh
Concupiscence of the Eyes
Egoism
The Evil Root

We showed earlier in this work, following these two great doctors, that from egoism or inordinate self-love is born,—together with the concupiscence of the flesh and that of the eyes,—pride, from which proceed especially four capital sins: vanity, acedia, envy, and anger. We have also seen that from the capital sins spring other defects and sins that are often still more serious; among them should be noted particularly blindness of spirit, discord, rancor, hardness of heart, blasphemy, hatred of God, and despair. The tree of evil with its accursed flowers and poisonous fruits symbolizes these sins.

In contradistinction, the tree of the virtues and of the gifts has for its root humility, a root which penetrates more and more deeply into the earth in order to draw nourishing secretions from it. The lower branches of this tree are the cardinal virtues with the connected virtues and the corresponding gifts; its higher branches are faith, hope, and charity, the last being the loftiest and most fruitful. To faith is attached the gift of understanding, and

also that of knowledge, which greatly perfects hope by showing us the vanity of created things, the inefficacy of human helps for a divine end, and by leading us consequently to desire eternal life and to place our trust in God. To charity corresponds the gift of wisdom. From it principally proceeds contemplation; and from contemplation, actual union with God, which should become almost continuous, and also perfect abandonment.

That this tree of the virtues and of the gifts may reach its full development, there must be a definitive victory over the remains of intellectual and spiritual pride which subsist in proficients. Whence the necessity of the passive purification of the spirit in which, with an eminent help from the Holy Ghost, the soul makes heroic acts of the theological virtues to resist temptations contrary to these virtues.

Chapter 35

Description of the Passive Purification of the Spirit

In the preceding chapter we discussed the defects of proficients or the advanced, the remains of spiritual or intellectual pride found in them, and the absolute need of purification for the depth of the soul impregnated with self-love and subtle egoism. The Lord alone can effect this profound purification.

We purpose here to describe this purification so that it may not be confused either with sufferings springing only from melancholy or neurasthenia, or with the sensible aridity of beginners. Such a confusion would evidently be an unpardonable error.

THE DARKNESS IN WHICH THE SOUL HAS THE IMPRESSION OF BEING

As the passive purification of the sensible part of the soul is manifested by the loss of the sensible consolations to which it was excessively attached, the passive purification of the spirit seems at first to consist in the deprivation of the lights previously received of the mysteries of faith. Having become too familiar, as it were, with them, the facility with which the soul considered them in prayer caused it to forget their infinite elevation; it thought of them in a manner somewhat too human. It dwelt, for example, a little too much on Christ’s humanity, without living sufficiently by faith in His divinity; it attained as yet only the exterior aspects of the great mysteries of Providence, of the Incarnation, of the redemption, of the Mass, and of the life of the indefectible Church in the midst of continually recurring trials. The soul had still only a very superficial knowledge of these spiritual realities; its view of these mysteries was like that of a stained-glass window seen from without.

Then, what occurs? To lift the soul above this excessively inferior and superficial knowledge of divine things, the Lord detaches it from this way of thinking and praying and seems to strip it of its lights. In the words of St. John of the Cross: “God now denudes the faculties, the affections, and feelings, spiritual and sensual, interior and exterior, leaving the understanding in darkness, the will dry, the memory empty, the affections of the soul in the deepest affliction, bitterness, and distress; withholding from it the former sweetness it had in spiritual things.”

The sadness then experienced is very different from that which has its origin in neurasthenia, disillusions, or the contradictions of life. The chief difference is that the sadness of the passive purification of the spirit is accompanied by an ardent desire for God and perfection, by a persistent seeking after Him who alone can nourish the soul and vivify it. No longer only a sensible aridity, it is a dryness of the spiritual order, which springs, not from the deprivation of sensible consolations, but from the loss of the lights to which the soul was accustomed.

The soul should then walk “in the dark, in pure faith, which is the dark night of the natural faculties.” It can no longer easily apply itself to the consideration of our Savior’s humanity; on the contrary, it is deprived of such consideration, as were the apostles immediately after Christ’s ascension into heaven. During the months preceding the Ascension, their intimacy with Him had grown daily; it had become their life, and then one day He took final leave of them on this earth, thus depriving them of the sight of Him and of His encouraging words. They must have felt very much alone, as it were, isolated, especially while thinking of the difficulties of the mission our Savior had entrusted to them: the evangelization of an impious world, plunged in all the errors of paganism. On the evening of Ascension Day, the apostles must have experienced the impression of profound solitude, similar to that of the desert and of death. We can get a slight idea of this solitude, when, after living in a higher plane during a fervent retreat under the direction of a priest who is closely united to God, we return to ordinary everyday life, which seems suddenly to deprive us of this plenitude. The same thing is true, and indeed much more so, after the death of a father, of a founder of an order, for those whom he leaves and who must continue his work. Thus after Christ’s ascension, the apostles remained gazing toward heaven; their beloved Master had been taken from their gaze, and they felt alone in the face of all the sufferings to come.

They must then have recalled Christ's words: "I tell you the truth: it is expedient to you that I go. For if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you." "It is expedient to you that I go," that I deprive you of My sensible presence. In his commentary on St. John (loc. cit.), St. Thomas says: "The apostles were attached to the humanity of Christ, they did not rise sufficiently to the spiritual love of His divinity, and were not yet prepared to receive the Holy Ghost... who was to be given to them to console them and strengthen them in the midst of their tribulations."

This deprivation of the sensible presence of Christ's humanity which preceded the transformation of the apostles, effected on Pentecost, throws light on the state of darkness and desolation that we are discussing. It seems to the soul in this state that it enters a spiritual night, for it is deprived of the lights which hitherto illumined it; darkness descends as when the sun goes down.

THE REVELATION OF THE MAJESTY OF GOD IN THIS DARKNESS

But does the soul see nothing in this dark night? In the natural order when the sun has set and completely disappeared, at least some stars are visible, which convey an idea of the depth of the firmament. Hence at night we can see much farther than during the day; true, hills or mountains, fifty or a hundred miles away, are no longer visible, but we can see stars and constellations which are thousands of leagues from the earth. The nearest star requires four and a half years to send us its light. The sun seems larger than the stars, although those of the first six magnitudes are far greater than it.

In this natural fact we have a sensible symbol of a lofty truth. When the soul enters the spiritual darkness we are speaking of, it no longer sees what is near it, but it has an increasingly better anticipatory apprehension of the infinite majesty and purity of God, although it does not see it, an apprehension superior to all the ideas that we of ourselves can have of Him; and, by contrast, it perceives much more clearly its own indigence and wretchedness.

Thus after the Ascension, the apostles, deprived of the presence of Christ's humanity, began to glimpse all the majesty of the Son of God. On Pentecost, Peter preached to the Jews with unshakable faith: "But the

Author of life you killed, whom God hath raised from the dead." "This [Jesus] is the stone which was rejected by you the builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other."

Such is the lofty contemplation born in the darkness of which we are speaking. When the sun has set, we see the stars in the depths of the firmament. But before enjoying the contemplation of the starry sky, we must become used to walking fearlessly in the night and triumphing over powerful temptations against faith and hope, just as, during the night of the senses, it was necessary to overcome many temptations against chastity and patience that have their seat in the sensible part of the soul.

We may profit by recalling the case of the holy Cure of Ars. His principal suffering sprang from the fact that he felt himself far from the ideal of the priesthood, whose grandeur appeared increasingly to him in the obscurity of faith, at the same time that he had an ever clearer understanding of the needs of the innumerable souls coming to him. The more he saw all the good that remained to be done, the less he saw what had already been accomplished; consequently he could not be complacent about it. His great suffering, which approached that of Jesus, Priest and Victim, and of Mary at the foot of the cross, was that which comes from the sight of sin and from the loss of souls. This suffering presupposes a penetrating view which is nothing else than the contemplation of the infinite goodness of God, who is disregarded and outraged, and of the value of eternal life. This contemplation grows more and more in the dark night of faith which we are discussing.

St. Catherine of Siena pointed out in her Dialogue that the contemplation of our indigence and wretchedness and that of the infinite majesty and goodness of God are like the lowest and highest points of a circle that could grow forever. In reality, in this contemplation there is a contrast, a clear-cut opposition between two things which in an admirable manner mutually illumine each other.

In the life of Blessed Angela of Foligno we find a striking example of this fact, which she recounts as follows: "I see myself deprived of every good, of every virtue, filled with a multitude of vices;... in my soul I see only defects... false humility, pride, hypocrisy.... I would wish to cry out my iniquities to others.... God is hidden for me.... How can I hope in Him?... Though all the wise men of the world and all the saints of paradise were to overwhelm me with their consolations, they would bring me no relief, if

God does not change me in the depths of my soul. This interior torment is far worse than martyrdom." Then, recalling that God Himself was afflicted in Gethsemane, that during His passion He was scorned, buffeted, and tortured, she wished that her suffering might be increased still more, for it seemed to her a purifying suffering, which revealed to her the depths of the Passion. Some days later, on a road near Assisi, she heard these interior words: "O My daughter! I love thee more than any other person in this valley.... Thou hast prayed to My servant Francis, hoping to obtain with him and through him. Francis loved Me greatly, I did much in him; but if anyone loved Me more than Francis, I would do more for him.... I love with an immense love the soul that loves Me without falsehood.... Now, no one has any excuse, for all the world can love; God asks only love from the soul; for He Himself loves without falsehood, and is Himself the love of the soul." Causing her to glimpse His passion, Jesus crucified added: "Look closely: dost thou find anything in Me which is not love?"

Another striking example of the spiritual night which we are speaking of is found in St. Paul of the Cross, the founder of the Passionists. We read in his Letters:

> Little corporal or spiritual tribulations are the first steps of this lofty and holy ladder which great and generous souls climb. They ascend step by step until they reach the last rung. There, at the summit, they find the purest suffering, without the slightest admixture of consolation coming from heaven or earth (the suffering which comes from offense offered to God). And if these souls are faithful in not seeking consolations, they will pass from this pure suffering to the pure love of God, without anything else being mingled with it. But rare are the souls which reach such a degree....
>
> It seems to them that they are abandoned by God, that He no longer loves them, that He is irritated against them.... This is almost the pain of damnation, if I may express myself in this manner, a suffering, whose bitterness is comparable to no other. But if the soul is faithful, what treasures it amasses! The storms pass and go, the soul approaches true, very sweet, and very close union with Jesus crucified, who transforms it in Himself and reproduces His own features in it.

These excerpts show that St. John of the Cross is not the only one who spoke profoundly of the night of the spirit because he had experienced it. Before him, Hugh of St. Victor had compared the passive purification of the soul by grace and the love of God to the transformation which green wood undergoes when attacked by fire: "The dampness is consumed, the smoke diminishes, the victorious flame shows itself;... finally it communicates its own nature to the wood, which is set completely on fire. Likewise the love of God gradually grows in the soul, the passions of the heart at first resist,

which causes many sufferings and troubles; this thick smoke must be dissipated. Then the love of God becomes more ardent, its flame more lively... and finally it penetrates the entire soul. The divine truth is found and assimilated by contemplation; the soul, detached from self, no longer seeks anything but God. He is for it all in all; it rests in His love and finds therein joy and peace.

Speaking in like terms, Tauler says that the Holy Ghost creates a void in the depth of our souls where egoism and pride still dwell. He creates the void that He may heal us, and then He fills it to overflowing while continually increasing our capacity to receive.

St. Teresa speaks of the passive purification of the spirit in the first chapter of the sixth mansion of The Interior Castle.

We read also in the life of St. Vincent de Paul that for four years he endured a trial of this type, which was marked by a persistent temptation against faith. The temptation was so strong that he wrote the Credo on a sheet of paper, which he carried over his heart and pressed from time to time to assure himself that he did not consent to the temptation.

We should also keep in mind that St. John of the Cross, after Tauler, describes this state as it is in the saints in all its amplitude and intensity, such as he himself must have undergone it. But the purification is found in lesser degrees and under less purely contemplative forms, united, for example, to the great trials met with in the apostolate.

If the passive purification of the spirit seems extraordinary to us outside the normal way of sanctity, this is because we do not give enough thought to what a profound purification of the soul is necessary to receive immediately eternal life, the beatific vision of the divine essence, without having to pass through purgatory or after having done so. And when we read the exposition of this doctrine in the great masters, we read it perhaps through a certain curiosity about divine things, but without a sufficiently sincere desire for our own sanctification. If we had this desire, we would find in these pages what is suitable for us, we would see there the one thing necessary.

We must in one way or another pass through this crucible in order to have a concept of our Savior’s passion, of the humility of Jesus and His love for us, that will not be only a confused concept, or only a theoretically distinct concept, but an experimental concept, without which there is no love of the cross or true sanctity.

We must tell ourselves that the world is full of crosses that have unfortunately been lost like that of the bad thief. God grant that our sufferings may not be fruitless and that our crosses may resemble that of the good thief, which served as a reparation for his sins. May our crosses resemble even more closely the cross of Jesus and configure us to Him. Sanctifying grace, as it grows, makes us more and more like to God; inasmuch as it is Christian grace, it assimilates us to Christ crucified, and should make us grow more like Him until our entrance into heaven. It should mark us with the likeness of our Savior who died for love of us.

We must also take into account the inequality between souls and between their means. We must ask of souls only what they can give: of some, a continuous upward surge of heroism; of others, little steps, which bring them ever nearer the end to be attained. But, to be configured to Christ, every soul must sacrifice itself under some form or other.

Chapter 36

The Cause of the Passive Purification of the Spirit

Having described in the preceding chapter the passive purification of the spirit as it appears especially in the interior lives of the great servants of God, we shall now explain this spiritual state theologically by determining its cause. We have seen that it consists chiefly in a profound experiential knowledge of our indigence and wretchedness and, by contrast, of the infinite majesty of God, a knowledge which is accompanied by great spiritual aridity and a lively desire for perfection. What can be the cause of this obscure and painful contemplation?

St. John of the Cross answers, as theology must do, by invoking Holy Scripture, which speaks to us in a number of passages of a purifying light, a spiritual fire that rids the soul of its stains.

PURIFYING INFUSED LIGHT AND SPIRITUAL FIRE

The Book of Wisdom says of the just: “As gold in the furnace He hath proved them, and as a victim of a holocaust He hath received them.” Gold in the crucible is purified by material fire; a still more intense fire is needed to transform coal into a diamond; likewise, in tribulation the soul of the just man is purified by a spiritual fire. Scripture often insists on this thought, telling us that God is a fire which gradually consumes whatever hinders His reign in souls.

Jeremias writes in his Lamentations: “From above He hath sent fire into my bones.... He hath made me desolate, wasted with sorrow all the day long.” In the light of this spiritual fire, which in him, the prophet sees far more clearly the sins of Israel, the justice and goodness of God, and he prays earnestly to Him for the salvation of sinners.

The Psalmist says likewise: “Who can understand sins? From my secret ones cleanse me, O Lord.” “My substance is as nothing before Thee.” “O my God, enlighten my darkness.” “Create a clean heart in me, O God.” Thus, like a flash of lightning, the Holy Ghost illumines the soul He wishes to purify. He says at times to the soul: “Do you wish to be purified?” And if the reply is what it ought to be, a profound work begins in it; divine truth is given to the soul to deliver it from the depth of self-love that still so often deludes it. “If you continue in My word,” says Christ, “you shall be My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” If anyone lives seriously by the words of Christ, correcting himself, the first Truth will gradually penetrate into his soul and deliver it from that most pernicious of lies, the lie that a person tells himself while cherishing his illusions.

We can never too strongly desire this purifying light which Scripture speaks of. Unfortunately we often flee from it, because we are afraid we may be told the truth about ourselves, when we so greatly love to tell others the truth about themselves.

St. John of the Cross simply explains the nature of the purifying light spoken of in Scripture, when he writes: “The dark night is a certain inflowing of God into the soul which cleanses it of its ignorances and imperfections, habitual, natural, and spiritual. Contemplatives call it infused contemplation, or mystical theology, whereby God secretly teaches the soul and instructs it in the perfection of love, without efforts on its own part beyond a loving attention to God, listening to His voice and admitting the light He sends, but without understanding how this is infused contemplation.” In the life of the holy Cure of Ars we have a striking example of this state. Comprehending better every day the loftiness of the priestly ideal and judging himself to be farther than ever from it, he certainly did not think then that he was a contemplative, and yet it was God Himself who was enlightening him and instructing him in this way.

Among the comparisons used to explain more clearly the spiritual state we are speaking of is one by Hugh of St. Victor, which St. John of the Cross reproduces as follows: “This purgative and loving knowledge, or divine light,... is to the soul which it is purifying in order to unite it perfectly to itself, as fire is to fuel which it is transforming into itself. The first action of material fire on fuel is to dry it, to expel from it all water and all moisture. It blackens it at once and soils it, and drying it little by little, makes it light

and consumes all its foulness and blackness which are contrary to itself. Finally, having heated and set on fire its outward surface, it transforms the whole into itself, and makes it beautiful as itself.... It is in this way we have to reason about the divine fire of contemplative love which, before it unites with, and transforms the soul into itself, purges away all its contrary qualities. It expels its impurities, blackens it and obscures it, and thus its condition is apparently worse than it was before. For while the divine purgation is removing all the evil and vicious humors,... the soul—though not worse in itself, nor in the sight of God—seeing at last what it never saw before, looks upon itself not only as unworthy of His regard, but even as a loathsome object and that God does loathe it."

This salutary crisis is a purgatory before death, in which the soul is purified under the influence, not of a sensible fire, but of the spiritual fire of contemplation and love. "And thus," says St: John of the Cross, "the soul which passes through this state in the present life, and is perfectly purified, either enters not into purgatory, or is detained there but a moment, for one hour here is of greater moment than many there." The reason is that on earth man is purified while meriting and growing greatly at times in charity, whereas after death he is purified without meriting. And as purgatory is a penalty and every penalty presupposes a sin that could have been avoided, the normal way of sanctity is to undergo the passive purifications of which we are speaking before death and not after death. In reality, however, rare are they who go immediately from earth to heaven, without passing through purgatory. The true order of Christian life is fully realized only in the saints.

Is the purifying light, which we have just spoken of, only that of living faith, or also that of one of the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, present in all the Just? If we consider the characteristics of the gift of understanding, we see that it is chiefly this gift which intervenes in this state.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE GIFT OF UNDERSTANDING IN THIS PURIFICATION

St. John of the Cross offers the following explanation: "Because the soul is to attain to the possession of a certain sense and divine knowledge, most generous and full of sweetness, of all human and divine things which do not fall within the common-sense and natural perceptions of the soul, it views them with different eyes now; as the light and grace of the Holy Ghost differ from those of sense, the divine from the human.... For this night is

drawing the spirit away from its ordinary and common sense of things, that it may draw it toward the divine sense, which is a stranger and an alien to all human ways; so much so that the soul seems to be carried out of itself."

This teaching of St. John of the Cross receives additional light from what St. Thomas says about the gift of understanding and the new penetration and purification of which it is the principle. According to St. Thomas: "The stronger the light of the understanding, the further can it penetrate into the heart of things. Now the natural light of our understanding (even in the greatest geniuses) is of finite power; wherefore it can reach to a certain fixed point. Consequently man needs a supernatural light in order to penetrate further still (into God or into the depths of the life of the soul) so as to know what it cannot know by its natural light: and this supernatural light which is bestowed on man is called the gift of understanding." "Wherefore this addition is not called reason but understanding, since the additional light is in comparison with what know supernaturally, what the natural light is in regard to those things we know from the first."

This gift presupposes faith united to charity and perfects it. Living faith makes us firmly adhere to the divine mysteries because God has revealed them, but of itself alone it does not yet make us penetrate the profound meaning of the mysteries, of the majesty of God, the Incarnation, the redemption, the humiliations of Christ dying for love of us. The penetration that we are here speaking of is not that which comes from study, from theological labor; it proceeds from a special illumination of the Holy Ghost, which, not abstractly and theoretically, but vitally, concretely, and practically, goes farther, higher, and deeper than study. Through the gift of understanding we receive this penetrating illumination with docility. It prevents us, first of all, from confusing the true meaning of the word of God with the erroneous interpretations sometimes given of it. This gift shows us in an instant the inanity of the objections raised by an evil spirit, so wholly different from the spirit of God. Error then creates the impression of a false discordant note in a symphony; though unable to refute it theologically, we see that it is an error. Likewise the gift of understanding emphasizes the immense distance separating spiritual realities from sensible symbols, or the spirit from the flesh. Similarly it dispels the confusion between sensible consolations and spiritual tastes, which are far more elevated and more sure, as St. Teresa pointed out.

Not only does the gift of understanding remove error, but it positively makes man penetrate vitally the truths of religion which are accessible to reason, such as the existence of God, the sovereign freedom of the Creator, and His providence; but principally it makes him penetrate the meaning of the supernatural mysteries inaccessible to reason, what St. Paul calls “the deep things of God.” It cannot give us here on earth the evidence of these mysteries, but, in the obscurity of faith, it manifests to us their deep meaning, so difficult to express in human speech. It thus shows us the majesty of God, of His wisdom, justice, power, and paternity in relation the Word and to us. It gives us, for example, a more profound understanding of the mystery of the redemption by making us understand St. Paul’s words: “Christ Jesus... emptied Himself... He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross.”

The gift of understanding is thus both speculative and practical as St. Thomas says. It reminds us of the sovereign importance of the precept of love. In times of strong temptation, for example, to discouragement or even despair, it shows us as it were in a lightning flash the value of eternal life, the loftiness of our last end. Thus by the penetration it brings, this gift removes dullness of mind; it shows us our culpability far better than the most attentive examination of conscience; it reveals to us our indigence, our poverty, our wretchedness, and by contrast the eminence of God.

Therefore we see how, as St. Augustine and St. Thomas say, it corresponds to the beatitude: “Blessed are the clean of heart.” In fact, it purifies our intellect of speculative and practical errors, of attachment to sensible images; it makes us perceive, though indistinctly, that God is infinitely superior to all created goods, that the Deity or divine essence, which the blessed contemplate immediately, is superior to all the analogical ideas that we can form of it. We thus perceive that the Deity, which will appear unveiled only in heaven, is to our ideas of the divine perfections somewhat as white light is to the seven colors of the rainbow which come from it. A man who has never seen whiteness, but only the colors which come from it, cannot say positively what white is. Just so, we cannot say what the inner life of God is. “Nescimus de Deo quid est,” St. Thomas often says. The Deity as such, in which we share only by grace, is superior to all the naturally knowable and participable perfections which it contains formally and eminently; it is superior to being, to unity, to truth, to goodness, to understanding, to love. It is the Deity, which we cannot know

in its essence as long as we are on earth; that is why great mystics, like Angela of Foligno, have called it “the great darkness.” But this great darkness is nothing else than the transluminous obscurity, or, as St. Paul says, “the light inaccessible” in which God dwells.

Thus we see why the purifying light of the gift of understanding gives the impression of darkness; it makes us enter on a higher plane into the obscurity of the supernatural, the divine mystery, which is the direct opposite of the obscurity on the lower plane on which we are affected by the condition of material things, by inordinate passions, by sin and error.

We can also understand why St. Thomas tells us that the gift of understanding confirms the supernatural certitude of faith by making us penetrate mysteries and by dispelling error. Thus contemplation, which exists in the state of darkness we are speaking of, proceeds from living faith as from its radical principle, and from the gift of understanding as from its proximate principle. The gift of knowledge also often concurs in it by revealing to us more in detail our poverty, culpability, and wretchedness.

The spiritual aridity found in this state shows that the gift of wisdom does not exert a notable influence in it, for this gift makes us relish divine things and thus brings us great spiritual consolation and profound peace.

The penetration, which, in this state, comes from the gift of understanding, differs from this relish of the divine mysteries. The proof of it is that he who in this way penetrates or comprehends increasingly the majesty of God, feels that he is alienated from Him because of the contrast between God’s majesty and his own indigence. Later, at the end of the purification of the spirit, he will taste profoundly the presence of the Blessed Trinity in his soul, he will have a quasi-experimental knowledge of it, which was, as it were, sketched before the night of the spirit, and which, after this night, will appear in its plenitude in the transforming union.

St. John of the Cross describes the passive purification of the spirit as it is realized in great saints, but, all proportion being kept it should exist in every servant of God that his higher faculties may be truly purified to their depths, either on earth or after death in purgatory, since nothing unclean can enter heaven. Moreover, the proximate principle of this purification, the penetrating light of the gift of understanding, exists in all the just. For this reason Christ says to all: “Blessed are your eyes, because they see, and your ears, because they hear,” that you may grasp the spirit under the letter, the divine reality under figures, symbols, or parables. Blessed are they who

thus distinguish between the spirit of God and a human wisdom that would lead them astray.

It remains for us to explain more fully the reasons why the purifying light of the gift of understanding creates the impression of darkness during the passive purification of the spirit. We shall thus see more clearly how this higher obscurity differs from the lower. In many supernatural facts more or less disconcerting to human reason, such as the passion of Christ, there is an enigma in which some are inclined to see darkness from the lower level of their illusions and pride; others discover the darkness from the higher level, that of God’s inner life and of the mysteries of His grace. We need only recall the first controversies over the apparitions of Our Lady of Lourdes to Bernadette. The confusion of these two darknesses is that of two extremes infinitely distant one from the other, between which we have to walk. More than that, we must continually lift ourselves out of the darkness of the lower plane to penetrate more and more into the darkness of that higher plane, which is the inaccessible light in which God dwells. The night of the Spirit thus appears as the normal prelude of eternal life and as its painful germination in us.

Chapter 37

The Transluminous Obscurity

We have seen that the spiritual light of the gift of understanding, which is given to the soul in the passive purification of the spirit, enlightens it regarding the infinite majesty of God on the one hand, and, by contrast, regarding its own poverty and wretchedness.

Our problem now is why this infused purifying light manifests itself as darkness. Why does it give the impression of a great darkness and why does it at times cause great suffering?

There are three reasons for it, which are pointed out by St. John of the Cross and more readily understood with the help of the theology of St. Thomas Aquinas. A great light gives the impression of darkness because of its very strength and of the elevation of its object. Moreover, it makes us suffer because of our impurity and weakness, which we feel more keenly under certain temptations of the devil that occur in this period.

THE EFFECT OF TOO GREAT A LIGHT

First of all, St. John of the Cross, following Dionysius and the great theologians, says: “The divine wisdom is so high that it transcends the capacity of the soul, and therefore is, in that respect, darkness,” because we comprehend with increasing clarity that the divine Essence or the Deity surpasses all the ideas we can have of it, ideas of being, truth, goodness, intelligence, and love; it contains them all in an eminence inaccessible to us, which essentially is sovereignly luminous, but which seems dark to us because we cannot attain it. This “inaccessible light” in which God dwells is for us the great darkness. Thus the light of the sun seems dark to the eye of the owl, which can bear and attain only the dim light of twilight or dawn.

Aristotle pointed this out, and Dionysius the Mystic likewise says that contemplation is like “a ray of darkness.”

Consequently what seems clear to us in God, as His existence and the existence of His providence, is what we grasp of it in the mirror of sensible things, in the dim light within our reach. But the intimate harmonization of infinite justice, infinite mercy, and supreme liberty in the mystery of predestination seems very obscure to us, although this intimate harmonization may be intrinsically very luminous. Souls passing through the dark night of the spirit are consequently often tempted on the subject of the mystery of predestination; and in this trial they cannot dwell on the excessively human and seemingly clearer conceptions of this mystery. They would feel as if they were descending instead of ascending. They must rise above the temptation by turning, through a great act of faith, toward the superior obscurity of the intimate life of God, of the Deity, in which harmonize infinite justice, infinite mercy, and the supreme liberty of the Most High.

The Blessed Trinity also, which is Light itself, seems obscure to us because too luminous for the weak eyes of our spirit. For this reason St. Teresa says: “I have more devotion to the mysteries of faith in proportion as they are more obscure; because I know that this obscurity comes from a light too great for our weak understanding.” Christ’s passion, which was the darkest and most disconcerting period for the apostles, was that of Christ’s greatest victory over sin and the devil.

THE EFFECT OF LIGHT ON WEAK EYES

Furthermore, the divine light, given in the night of the spirit, causes suffering because of the impurity still existing in the soul. St. Augustine pointed this out, saying: “The light which so greatly pleases pure eyes is hateful to weak ones.” This is so much truer when this divine light must overcome a special resistance of the soul, which is unwilling to be enlightened in regard to certain of its defects, wishing at times to see virtues in them: for example, in regard to a somewhat bitter zeal and a secret complacency, as a result of which it is deceived by its self-love and by the enemy of the good. “The light shineth in darkness,” says St. John, “and the [inferior] darkness did not comprehend it.” This light seems painful when it must overcome resistance, especially a prolonged resistance.

It even happens often that the soul suffers greatly because it cannot understand why God tries it in this way, as if He were an implacable judge. As a result, it has difficulty in believing practically in His goodness; and when someone speaks of the goodness of God, it seems abstract and theoretical to the soul at a time when in its opinion it needs to experience this goodness by a little consolation.

THE FEAR OF CONSENTING OR OF HAVING CONSENTED TO TEMPTATIONS

This interior suffering increases still more through the fear of consenting to temptations arising at this time against faith, hope, and the love of God and of neighbor. Holy Job experienced this fear, and so did the apostles during the Passion and after the Ascension, when Christ had departed from them and left them alone.

In this painful state, the soul sees clearly that at times it resists these temptations, but at others it fears that it consented. This fear causes it anguish, for in this state the soul already greatly loves the Lord and would not for anything in the world offend His majesty or slight His goodness.

We have here the explanation of the fact that, whereas at the summit of the spirit there is an act of faith illumined by the gift of understanding, a direct and very simple, though unperceived, act of arid contemplation, at the same time the just man is inclined by his lower reason to conclude that he is abandoned by God. This was the case with St. Paul of the Cross when he exclaimed in the streets of Rome: “A via Pauli, libera nos Domine ”; also with St. Alphonsus Liguori, who believed that the Order which he had founded was going to perish; with Father Surin in his desolations, from which he emerged occasionally to preach, out of charity, an admirable sermon springing from the depths of his tormented faith, which was daily growing in this struggle. At this stage there is in tried souls, as in those of purgatory, a flux and reflux; carried toward God by the impulse of their love, they feel themselves repulsed by all the wretchedness and pusillanimity which they see in themselves.

As a rule, the director can bring no consolation to the soul thus afflicted, says St. John of the Cross. He speaks to it of the glorious end of this trial, of the soft light that will be met with again on leaving this tunnel, but the soul, immersed in suffering, cannot understand these words. It cannot receive consolation by this human and discursive way, but only through a special

inspiration of the Holy Ghost and through very simple direct acts which He excites in it. For this reason Father de Caussade says with his usual charm: “Souls walking in the light sing hymns of light; those walking in the darkness sing canticles of darkness. We must let both classes sing even to the end the part and the motet that God assigns to them. We must put nothing into what He is filling; we must let all the drops of this gall of divine bitterness flow, though it should inebriate. Jeremias and Ezechiel acted in this manner.... The spirit which renders desolate, alone can console. These different waters flow from the same source.”

Scripture states several times: “The Lord... bringeth down to hell and bringeth back again. The Lord maketh poor and maketh rich, He humbleth and He exalteth.” This statement is verified especially in the night of the spirit, which is the mystical death; it prepares the soul for the intimacy of union with God. The soul empty of all self-love can reach absolute sincerity; every mask drops away. The soul no longer possesses anything of its own, but is ready to possess God, like the apostles, of whom it was said: “As having nothing, and possessing all things.” The emptiness that it experiences renders it still more eager for God.

CONFIRMATIONS

The doctrine just set forth is confirmed in several ways. First of all, it is confirmed by the dogma of purgatory. Nothing unclean can enter heaven; therefore the purification of the spirit, which we are speaking of, must be undergone before or after death. However it is far better and more profitable to undergo it before death; for in the present life man merits while growing in charity, whereas in purgatory he no longer merits. It is far better to be purified by the spiritual fire of growing infused love than by another inferior fire. In this connection, it will be profitable to read what St. Catherine of Genoa says in her Treatise on Purgatory about the purification in the next world.

St. John of the Cross points out an additional confirmation: “For the light of God that illumines an angel enlightens him and sets him on fire with love, for he is a spirit already prepared for the infusion of that light; but man, being impure and weak, is ordinarily enlightened... in darkness, in distress, and pain—the sun’s rays are painful in their light to weak eyes.”

When we receive this divine illumination, we are not as a rule conscious that God is enlightening us; nevertheless, some words of the Gospel on mercy or justice are illumined for us. This is a sign that we have received a grace of light.

We find a third confirmation of what we have said in the analogy of night in nature, a symbol that enables us to understand a little the state of purification, called the night of the spirit. In nature, when the sun goes down and night falls, we no longer see the objects surrounding us, but we do see distant objects not visible during the day, such as the stars, which are thousands of leagues away. And the sun must hide that we may see them, that we may be able to glimpse the depths of the firmament. Analogously, during the night of the spirit we see much farther than during the luminous period preceding it; these inferior lights must be taken away from us in order that we may begin to see the heights of the spiritual firmament. This is why Christ said to His apostles: “It is expedient to you that I go. For if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.” As a matter of fact, when the apostles could no longer see Christ’s humanity, they began to glimpse the grandeur of His divinity. They were so well enlightened and fortified that on Pentecost the Apostle Peter preached to all who were in the temple at Jerusalem, saying: “But the Author of life you killed, whom God hath raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses.” “Neither is there salvation in any other. For there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby We must be saved.” Peter’s preaching sprang from the plenitude of the contemplation of the mystery of Christ. St. Thomas says it must be so in order that preaching may be living and profound, a condition that is fully realized only after the purification of the spirit.

What St. John of the Cross says, Tauler has pointed out several times in his sermons, for example, in the sermon for the Second Sunday of Lent. According to Tauler, the tried soul, which at first seems to pray in vain, like the woman of Canaan, is, however, as if pursued by God:

> This divine pursuit provokes in the soul an appealing cry of immense force;... it is a sigh coming from a measureless depth. This desire of the soul far exceeds nature; it is the Holy Ghost Himself who must utter this sigh in us, as St. Paul says: “The Spirit Himself asketh for us with unspeakable groanings.”... But God acts then as if He heard absolutely nothing,... as Christ seemed at first not to wish to hear the prayer of the woman of Canaan, saying to her: “I was not sent but to the sheep that are lost of the house of Israel.... It is not good to take the bread of the children and to cast it to the dogs.”... Humbling herself then she replied with great confidence: “Yea, Lord; for the whelps also eat of the crumbs that fall from the table of their

> master.”... That ‘s why Jesus answered her: “O woman, great is thy faith: be it done to thee as thou wilt.” In truth, this is the answer that will be made to all those who will be found in such dispositions (of profound humility and confidence) on this road. All that you wish will happen to you and in the way you wish it, for “in the measure in which you have gone forth from what is yours,” says the Lord, “in this measure you are to share in what is Mine.”... In proportion as a man renounces himself and goes out of himself, in the same proportion God enters into him in very truth.... Take the last place, as the Gospel says, and you will be lifted up. But those who exalt themselves will be put down. Desire only what God has willed from all eternity; accept the place which in His most amiable will He has decided should be yours. My children, it is by complete renunciation of self and of all that one possesses that one goes to God. One drop of this renunciation, one rill of it, would better prepare a man and lead him nearer to God than the most absolute exterior denudation.... A short moment lived in these dispositions would be more useful for us than forty years following practices of our own choice.

In this sermon Tauler speaks forcibly of the one thing necessary. The grace of denudation in question here fulfills profoundly the words of the Gospel: “Unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, itself remaineth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” Blessed is the death that is followed by such a spiritual resurrection.

Chapter 38

Conduct to Be Observed during the Purification of the Spirit

After describing the period of passive purification that should introduce the soul into the unitive way of the perfect, we explained this purification by the purifying light, which is chiefly that of the gift of understanding, in which we contemplate the majesty of God and our poverty, not to mention our wretchedness. We shall now give rules of direction for souls in this state of prolonged aridity, which is sometimes so painful.

GENEROUS ACCEPTANCE

There is, first of all, a general rule. These afflicted souls should be treated with kindness and helped that they may be led to full conformity to the divine will. The first rule of direction is that these souls should accept this trial generously for as long a time as, according to the good pleasure of God, it may last, and they should live in abandonment to the divine will. Moreover, as a general rule, the more generously they accept this purification, the quicker it will end, since the effect for which God wills it, will be more promptly accomplished. If it is more intense, it will generally be shorter (like the purification of purgatory) unless the soul is to suffer specially for sinners, over and above its personal purification.

Excellent books have been written on abandonment to Providence in this period of the spiritual life. Besides The Dark Night (Bk. II) of St. John of the Cross, there is the Treatise on The Love of God (Bk. IX) of St. Francis de Sales on the love of submission and of holy indifference in spiritual afflictions. In the seventeenth century, Father A. Piny, O.P., wrote Le plus parfait, or the way of abandonment to the will of God, and also L'Etat du pur amour. In the same period we find Les saintes voies de la croix by the

Venerable Henry Mary Boudon; in the eighteenth century, Abandonment to Divine Providence by Father de Caussade, S.J.; and recently (1919), Le saint abandon by Dom Vitalis Lehodey, O.C.R.

In this question of abandonment, two dangers must be avoided: quietism and the opposing error. Quietism or semi-quietism denies the necessity of our cooperation and goes so far as to demand in these trials the sacrifice of our hope or desire of salvation. On the contrary, we must in this case, as St. Paul says: “Against hope believe in hope.”

The contrary error would consist in exaggerating the necessity of our cooperation while diminishing that of prayer and disregarding the efficacy of our petitions and the conduct of Providence which directs all. It would amount to a sort of practical naturalism. Tried souls should, on the contrary, pray particularly, ask the help of God to persevere in faith, trust, and love. They must be told that, if they continue to pray in this severe trial, it is a sign that, in spite of appearances, their prayer is granted; for no one can continue to pray without a new actual grace. And God who, from all eternity, has foreseen and willed our prayers, excites them in us.

To this general rule of the generous acceptance of the trial in conformity with the divine will, must be added three special rules relating to the three theological virtues, by which especially one must live during the night of the spirit. Here more particularly is verified the expression: “The just man liveth by faith.” The night of the spirit is that of faith whose object is obscure mysteries which appear so much the more obscure in proportion as they are higher above the senses. St. Thomas often says: “Fides est de non visis,” the object of faith is things not seen. One does not believe on testimony what one sees.

FAITH IN THE MYSTERY OF THE CROSS

In the trial of which we are speaking, the soul must, therefore firmly believe in what God has told of the great efficacy of the purifying cross in the life of the Church and in its own personal spiritual life. That this faith may be practical, it must tell itself that the cross is necessary and good for it. St. Louis Bertrand, during this period of his life, used often to repeat the words of St. Augustine: “Lord, burn, cut, do not spare now, that in eternity Thou mayest spare.” The soul must believe that it is good for it to be thus painfully purified, that this purification is one of the distinctive signs of the

children of God, and that this profound and painful purification glorifies the Lord. It must be penetrated with St. Paul's words: "We have this treasure [of divine grace] in earthen vessels, that the excellency [of the Gospel] may be of the power of God, and not of us. In all things we suffer tribulation, but are not distressed; we are straitened, but are not destitute; we suffer persecution, but are not forsaken; we are cast down, but we perish not: always bearing about in our body the mortification of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodies." "Power is made perfect in infirmity. Gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me." "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into His glory?" "We are the sons of God. And if sons, heirs also; heirs indeed of God and joint heirs with Christ: yet so, if we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified with Him."

As sanctifying grace is a participation in the divine nature and makes us like to God, habitual grace, as Christian and as coming from Christ crucified, configures us to Him and prepares us to carry our cross in imitation of Him. In this sense it adds a special modality to sanctifying grace as it was on the first day of creation in the angels and in Adam in the state of innocence. St. Thomas points this out in treating of baptismal grace.

Thus we know the mystery of the redemption in a more living, profound, and quasi-experiential manner. We then comprehend how greatly deceived were the Jews who said to our Lord: "If Thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross." They should have said, on the contrary, as did the centurion on witnessing the death of our Savior: "Indeed this man was the Son of God." Christ never appeared greater than during His passion, when He said: "My kingdom is not of this world." "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." "It is consummated." Christ's victory over sin and the devil on Good Friday is far greater than the victory He won over death by His resurrection. The resurrection of His body is only a sign of the power He has to restore life to souls, to forgive them their sins.

The cross is thus a distinctive sign of the Christian who is configured to his Savior. Therefore, as a rule, among the signs of predestination are named: patience in adversity for the love of God, love of enemies in spite of their insults and calumnies, love of the poor, especially when personal affliction supernaturally inclines us to help them. "Because I am not unacquainted with evil things. I know how to commiserate the wretched."

The soul that is in the night of the spirit should, therefore, often contemplate the passion of Christ, following the example of the saints, and ask for light to have a more profound understanding of the holy humiliations of our Savior and of their infinite redemptive value.

FIRM HOPE AND CONSTANT PRAYER

During this painful purification, the soul should also, the quietists to the contrary notwithstanding, hope against all human hope, asking unceasingly for the help of God. Abraham acted thus when God tried him by asking for the immolation of his son. It may seem to it at first that God does not hear it, as was the case with the woman of Canaan; but He wishes in this way to try the confidence of the soul and at the same time, if it asks Him, He gives it the grace to continue to pray. This grace is itself a sign that He grants the prayer of the soul.

The soul must also recommend itself to the saints that they may intercede for it, especially those who were particularly tried in this manner, such as St. John of the Cross, St. Paul of the Cross, St. Benedict Joseph Labre, and the holy Cure of Ars.

It should pray in the manner used in the liturgy, the elevation of which then appears increasingly clear to those who bear this trial well. “O Lord, deliver my soul. The Lord is merciful and just, and our God showeth mercy.” “The Lord ruleth me: and I shall want nothing.... He hath led me on the paths of justice, for His own name’s sake. For though I should walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I will fear no evils, for Thou art with me. Thy rod and Thy staff, they have comforted me.” “Deliver me, O Lord, and set me beside Thee, and let any man’s hand fight against me.” Christ said: “He that followeth Me, walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”

That hope may be strengthened in the soul, it is also well in this state to meditate on the canticle in Compline for Lent, which used to make St. Thomas Aquinas weep: “In the midst of life, we are in death. Whom seek we as a protector, except Thou, O Lord, who art justly angered by our sins. Holy God, holy Strong One, holy and merciful Savior, deliver us not up to the bitterness of death. Abandon us not in our old age, nor when our strength will fall us, holy God; holy and strong, holy and merciful” Such is

the prayer the soul should make in the night of the spirit; it enables the soul to glimpse all the mystical grandeur of the liturgy.

When we pray in this manner, hope is purified and strengthened in the soul; far from sacrificing the desire for its salvation, as the quietists advised, the soul should desire God more and more purely and strongly. True, this desire should not subordinate God to the soul like a fruit necessary to its subsistence, but it should desire to possess God, its supreme Good, in order to glorify Him eternally.

THE LOVE OF CONFORMITY AND OF SUBMISSION TO GOD'S GOOD PLEASURE

Lastly, in this state of trial, the soul should, as St. Francis de Sales well shows, be penetrated with Christ's words: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me." In spiritual tribulations and afflictions, the soul should nourish itself with the will of God so that self-love may die definitively in it, that the soul may be truly stripped of self-love, and that the reign of the divine will may be established in the depths of its will. The soul will obtain this grace if it accepts, for love of God, to do and suffer all that He wishes, as obedience, circumstances, and the interior light of the Holy Ghost may indicate.

Consequently the soul should be penetrated with the evangelical beatitudes: blessed are the poor in spirit, the meek, those who shed the tears of contrition; those who hunger and thirst after justice and preserve this zeal in spite of all difficulties; blessed, too, are the merciful, the clean of heart, the peacemakers; blessed are they who suffer persecution for justice, when they are insulted and persecuted because of the Savior. Their reward is great in heaven, and even on earth they will receive the hundredfold of all that has been taken from them; they will receive it especially in close union with God and in working for the salvation of their neighbor.

Souls that pass through this denudation and are calumniated ought often to reread what St. Paul says to the Romans: "If God be for us, who is against us?... Christ Jesus... maketh intercession for us.. Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or persecution, or the sword?... But in all these things we overcome, because of Him that hath loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities nor powers nor things present nor things to come nor might nor height nor depth nor any other

creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God," nor be able to make God abandon the just, if they do not abandon Him first.

In this period of purification, one should ask our Lord for the love of the cross, for the desire to share in His holy humiliations in the measure willed by Providence. The soul should ask Him also to let it find in this desire the strength to bear whatever may come, the peace, and sometimes the joy, to restore its courage and that of souls that come to it. Then this trial, hard as it may be at times, will seem good to it; at least the soul will believe that it is salutary and sanctifying for it.

Then it will more readily grasp the great meaning of the words of The Imitation on the royal road of the cross: "In the cross is salvation; in the cross is life; in the cross is protection from enemies. In the cross is infusion of heavenly sweetness; in the cross is strength of mind; in the cross is joy of spirit; in the cross is height of virtue; in the cross is perfection of sanctity.... No man hath so heartfelt a sense of the Passion of Christ as he whose lot it hath been to suffer like things.... If thou carry the cross willingly, it will carry thee.... If thou carry it unwillingly, thou makest it a burden to thee, and loadest thyself the more.... For the sufferings of this life are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come."

The painful purification we are speaking of creates a great void in the soul by driving out self-love and pride, and gives it an increasingly eager desire for God. St. Francis de Sales explains this effect, saying:

> As man can be perfected only by the divine goodness, so the divine goodness can scarcely so well exercise its perfection outside itself as upon our humanity. The one has great need and capacity to receive good, the other great abundance and inclination to bestow it. Nothing is so suitable to indigence as a liberal abundance; nothing so agreeable to a liberal abundance as extreme indigence.... The more needy the indigent man is, the more eager he is to receive, as a vacuum is to be filled. Therefore the meeting of abundance and indigence is sweet and desirable; and if our Lord had not said that it is better to give than to receive, one could hardly say which has greater contentment, abundant good in diffusing and communicating itself or failing and indigent good in receiving.... Divine goodness has, therefore, more pleasure in giving its graces than we in receiving them.

The void created in the soul that is stripped of self-love and pride causes it to become, therefore, increasingly capable of receiving divine grace, the abundance of charity. In this sense the Apostle says: "God... giveth grace to the humble," and He makes them humble in order to fill them to overflowing.

All we have just said shows the profound truth of St. Thomas' words: "The love of God is unitive (congregativus), inasmuch as it draws man's

affections from the many to the one; so that the virtues, which flow from the love of God, are connected together. But self-love disunites (disgregat) man's affections among different things, so far as man loves himself, by desiring for himself temporal goods, which are various and of many kinds." The love of God causes the light of reason and that of grace to shine increasingly in us, whereas sin stains the soul, taking away from it the brilliance of the divine light. The purification of the spirit removes these stains, which are in our higher faculties, that they may be resplendent with the true light, which is the prelude of that of eternity.

Chapter 39

The Effects of the Passive Purification of the Spirit in Relation Especially to the Three Theological Virtues

Having described and explained the passive purification of the spirit and pointed out the rules of direction which should be followed, we shall now set forth its effects on the soul when borne with generosity.

These effects show the end for which God thus purifies His servants. He does so that the higher part of the soul may be supernaturalized and prepared for divine union, as the sensible part must be spiritualized or wholly subjected to the spirit. Among these effects some are negative, consisting in the suppression of defects; others are positive and are profound especially in the perfection they give to the virtues in the elevated part of the soul, principally humility and the theological virtues.

NEGATIVE EFFECTS

These effects are visible in the progressive disappearance of distractions, dullness of spirit, and the need of external dissipation or of finding consolation. Self-love or subtle egoism gradually disappears. The result is that the soul is less subject to illusions, for it lives increasingly by its higher part, into which the enemy cannot penetrate. God alone penetrates the innermost depths of the heart and spirit. Doubtless the devil still multiplies his temptations, but if the soul takes refuge in its center, where God dwells, the enemy cannot harm it and even cannot know but can only conjecture what is taking place in it; the intimate secrets of hearts escape him.

This purification removes many other defects in our relations with our neighbor or in respect to our duties of state: a certain natural rudeness, which leads to impatience; an a most unconscious secret ambition, the cause of many disorders and divisions among people; and also a lack of

interest in the occasionally great needs of our afflicted neighbor who turns to us for help. It is in this state that those who have the duty of caring devotedly for others, possess a deeper understanding of Christ's words: "The good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep. But the hireling, and he that is not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming and leaveth the sheep and flieth; and the wolf catcheth and scattereth the sheep." To profit by these words, we should ask the Lord to give us an increase of true zeal, the patient, gentle, disinterested zeal which draws life from God to give it in greater measure to our neighbor.

In connection with this subject, it should be noted that there are also at times collective purifications, like persecutions, from which the soul must know how to draw profit. On such occasions the heroic degree of the virtues becomes necessary; one is in the happy necessity of becoming a saint in order not to be lost. Those who seem fairly good in prosperity are often weak and cowardly in these great difficulties; others, on the contrary, reveal their true character on these occasions. These grave moments should lead us to make the following salutary reflection: true sanctity does not require a lesser purification in outwardly calm periods than in periods troubled by persecution. The saints who lived in the calmest periods of the life of the Church had their interior trials, without which their souls would not have attained to the perfect purity which God willed to see in them.

In no period, however calm it may be, can anyone become a saint without carrying his cross, without being configured to Christ crucified. In troubled times, however, man often faces the urgent necessity of sanctifying himself completely in order not to lose his soul; he must then be heroically faithful in order not to fall back. In other calmer periods, this urgent necessity does not make itself thus felt, but even then, carrying his cross he must follow our Lord. Nothing unclean can enter heaven; one must be purified either before death, like the martyrs, or after it, like the souls in purgatory.

Lastly, there are other collective trials which demand great uprightness of will: for example, when in the society in which we live some exceptional event occurs that obliges us, though at the cost of great sacrifices, to declare ourselves for God. Such events are visits from the Lord; in them are distinguished His true servants, who, instead of being merely good, must become excellent. With this meaning, the aged Simeon said of the coming of the Child Jesus into the world: "Behold this Child is set for the fall and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be

contradicted;... that out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed." In other words, Christ, who had come for the salvation of all, was to be an occasion of fall for many. Refusing to recognize the Savior in Him, they have fallen into infidelity. Thus the secret thoughts of the Pharisees were revealed, whereas they would have remained partly hidden had the Pharisees lived two centuries earlier. Something similar occurs when there is a great supernatural event, like the apparitions of the Blessed Virgin at Lourdes, an event about which the good and the bad are divided. There is, as Pascal says, sufficient light for those who wish to see and sufficient obscurity for those who do not wish to see. These great events, persecutions, or exceptional visits of the Lord, on the occasion of which the good and the tepid are profoundly divided, throw light on what we are saying here of the passive purification of the soul. In periods when the life of society is not marked by anything exceptionally bad or good, no less a purification is needed to reach sanctity than in periods of social upheaval.

In regard to the visits of the Lord, we must also remember that they often differ appreciably. There are visits of consolation, like the apparitions of Lourdes; but if people do not profit by them, the Lord comes to chastise; and if they do not profit by this divine correction, He may come to condemn.

All that we have said shows what profit we should reap from the trials which the Lord sends us, particularly in this prolonged period of spiritual aridity of which we are speaking. If we bear it generously, many defects, which arrest the growth of the divine life in us, will be uprooted forever. Conquered self-love will then give place to the true love of God, to zeal for His glory and the salvation of souls.

THE POSITIVE EFFECTS OF THIS PURIFICATION

The positive effects of the dark night of the soul consist chiefly in a great increase in the virtues of the elevated part of the soul, principally in humility, piety, and the theological virtues. These higher virtues come forth greatly purified from all human alloy, in the sense that their formal supernatural motive is brought into strong relief above every secondary or accessory motive which sometimes leads man to practice them in too human a manner. At this stage especially the formal motive of each of the three theological virtues stands out with increasing clearness: namely, the

first revealing truth, the motive of faith; helpful omnipotence, the motive of hope; the divine goodness infinitely more lovable in itself than every created gift, the motive of charity.

But there is first a similar purification of humility. Humility is commonly said to be the fundamental virtue which removes pride, the source of every sin. St. Augustine and St. Thomas for this reason compare it to the excavation that must be dug for the construction of a building, an excavation that needs to be so much deeper as the building is to be higher. Consequently, to deepen humility it does not suffice to scratch the soil a little, it is not sufficient that we ourselves dig, as we do in a thorough examination of conscience. To drive out pride, the Lord Himself must intervene through the special inspirations of the gifts of knowledge and understanding. He then shows the soul the hitherto unsuspected degree of its profound indigence and wretchedness and throws light on the hidden folds of conscience in which lie the seeds of death. Thus a ray of sunlight shining into a dark room shows all the dust, held in suspension in the air and previously imperceptible. Under the purifying divine light, as under a powerful projector, the soul sees in itself a multitude of defects it had never noticed; confounded by the sight, it cannot bear this light. It sees at times that by its repeated sins it has placed itself in a miserable state, a state of abjection. St. Paul, strongly tempted, felt his frailty keenly. Blessed Angela of Foligno seemed to herself an abyss of sin and wished to declare her state to everyone. St. Benedict Joseph Labre one day began his confession by saying: “Have pity on me, Father, I am a great sinner.” The confessor, finding nothing seriously reprehensible in his accusation, said to him: “I see that you do not know how to go to confession.” He then questioned the saint on the grossest sins, but obtained such humble answers so full of the spirit of faith, that he understood that his penitent, who confessed in this manner, was a saint.

Such is indeed the purification of humility, which is no longer only exterior, no longer the pouting or sad humility of one who holds aloof because people do not approve of him. It becomes true humility of heart, which loves to be nothing that God may be all; it bows profoundly before the infinite majesty of the Most High and before what is divine in every creature.

This true humility then reveals to us the profound meaning of Christ’s words: “Without Me you can do nothing.” It enables us to understand far

better what St. Paul says: “What hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?” The soul then recognizes experimentally that by its natural powers alone it is absolutely incapable of the least salutary and meritorious supernatural act. It sees the grandeur of the doctrine of the Church which teaches, against semi-Pelagianism, that the beginning of salvation, the beginning of salutary good will, can come only from grace, and that man needs a special gift to persevere to the end. The soul thus purified sees why, according to St. Augustine, St. Thomas, and their disciples, grace is efficacious of itself; far from being rendered efficacious by our good consent, it is grace that gives rise to our consent, it is truly “God who worketh in you, both to will an to accomplish,” as St. Paul says. In this period of painful purification, at grips with strong temptations to discouragement, the soul indeed needs to believe in this divine efficacy of grace, which lifts up the weak man, makes him fulfill the precepts, and transforms him.

Thus humility grows, according to the seven degrees enumerated by St. Anselm: “(1) to acknowledge ourselves contemptible; (2) to grieve on account of this; (3) to admit that we are so; (4) to wish our neighbor to believe it; (5) to endure with patience people saying it; (6) to be willing to be treated as a person worthy of contempt; (7) to love to be treated in this way,” and, like St. Francis of Assisi, to find a holy joy in this treatment. This is, in fact, heroic humility. Such virtue presupposes a special inspiration of the Holy Ghost and the passive purification of the spirit. Besides, it is clearly in the normal way of sanctity; full Christian perfection cannot exist without it. As a matter of fact, all the saints possessed great humility; it presupposes the contemplation of two great truths: we have been created out of nothing by God, who freely preserves us in existence; and without the help of His grace we could not perform any salutary and meritorious act.

The soul then attains a quasi-experiential knowledge of the gratuity and efficacy of grace, without which it would not advance, but would certainly fall back. Humility thus purified tells the glory of God more than do the stars in the heavens.

In this stage there is a similar purification of true piety, or the virtue of religion toward God. Substantial devotion, the promptness of the will in the service of the Lord, should, in fact, subsist here in spite of the absence of sensible devotion and spiritual consolation over a period of months and

sometimes of years. The inspirations of the gift of piety then come greatly to the aid of the virtue of religion, bestowing on the soul perseverance in prayer in spite of the greatest spiritual aridity. The fruit of this deep piety is meekness, which corresponds, says St. Augustine, to the beatitude of the meek.

THE PURIFICATION OF FAITH

Just as our Lord Himself teaches His friends to become meek and humble of heart, He also purifies their faith from all alloy.

Faith is an infused virtue by which we believe firmly all that God has revealed, because He has revealed it and as the Church proposes it. All the faithful doubtless believe in what God has revealed, but many live very little by the supernatural mysteries which are the principal object of faith. They think more often of the truths of religion that reason can attain—the existence of God, His Providence, the immortality of the soul—or they go no farther than the outward, sensible aspect of Christian worship. Often our faith is still too weak to make us truly live by the mysteries of the Blessed Trinity, the Incarnation, the redemption, the Eucharist, the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in our souls. These are holy formulas, often repeated with veneration, but they are pale and lifeless, and their object is, as it were, lost in the depths of the heavens. These supernatural mysteries have not sufficiently become for us the light of life, the orientation point of our judgments, the habitual norm of our thoughts.

Likewise, the motive for our belief in these mysteries is undoubtedly the fact that God has revealed them, but we dwell excessively on several secondary motives which aid us: first, these mysteries are the rather generally accepted belief of our family and our country; next, we see a certain harmony between supernatural dogmas and the natural truths accessible to reason; lastly, we have some slight experience of God’s action in our souls, and this helps us to believe.

But let us suppose that God were suddenly to take away from us all these secondary motives which facilitate the act of faith and on which we perhaps dwell too much. Let us suppose that in spiritual aridity prolonged for months and years, we no longer experience in ourselves the consoling action of God and no longer see the harmony between supernatural mysteries and natural truths; then the act of faith will become difficult for

us. This is true especially if the purifying divine light illumines in these mysteries what is loftiest and apparently least conformable to reason: for example, infinite justice on the one hand, and the gratuity of predestination on the other. Besides, in this trial the devil seeks to make our judgment deviate, to show us that there is severity in inexorable divine justice, as if the damned sought pardon without being able to obtain it, whereas in reality they never ask pardon. The enemy seeks also to make us interpret the judgments of the divine good pleasure as arbitrary, despotic, and capricious, adding that an infinitely good and omnipotent God could not permit all the evil that happens in the world; the evil spirit increases this evil in order to draw an additional objection from it. He sounds a false note to trouble the superior harmony of the mysteries of faith. At times he wishes to persuade the soul that there is nothing after death, and he puts forth every effort to give this negation the appearance of an icy evidence which imposes itself absolutely.

The question may then be put under the form of a temptation against faith: Does the supernatural world exist? The soul finds itself between two opposing influences: that of the purifying divine light which casts the intellect into the unsuspected depths of mysteries, as if one were thrown into the sea before knowing how to swim; and on the other hand, the influence of the devil, who tries to cause the effect of the divine light to deviate.

In order to believe, there is left only this sole motive: God has revealed it; every secondary motive has momentarily disappeared. The soul should then ask for the actual grace that enables it to make the act of faith; the grace that makes it overcome, rise above the temptation, instead of reasoning against it; the grace that makes it adhere to the divine revealing Truth: to the authority of God revealing, above the excessively superficial and narrow conceptions it had of the divine perfections. Then the soul gradually “finds shelter in the immutable,” in the first Truth, in the uncreated and revealing word, which makes it clearly understand that infinite justice is free from any cruelty, that it is identical in God with the most tender mercy. It also makes the soul see distinctly that, far from being capricious, the divine good pleasure is infinitely wise, and that the divine permission of the greatest evils is holy, for it has in view a higher good of which God alone is the judge and which the soul shall one day contemplate. This superior good is at times dimly seen on earth in the night of the spirit.

Faith is then purified from all alloy and no longer dwells on secondary motives which facilitated its act; they have momentarily disappeared. It no longer dwells on the sensible aspect of the mysteries of the Incarnation, the redemption, the Eucharist; it enters into the depths of divine revelation.

Thus the faith of the apostles was purified during the painful trial of the Passion, in which Jesus, whom three of them had contemplated on Tabor, appeared humiliated and crushed. They had to believe that in spite of this annihilation He was the Son of God made flesh, who would rise on the third day. The Blessed Virgin, St. John, and Magdalen remained firm in faith on Calvary. Likewise after the Ascension, the apostles, henceforth deprived of the sight of the risen Christ, had to live in the obscurity of faith; from Pentecost on, they preached this faith with the most absolute certitude, even to martyrdom.

The saints have known the same kind of trials. St. Vincent de Paul was tormented for four years by a temptation against faith. For ten years Blessed Henry Suso had a similar temptation.

At the end of such a trial, faith is considerably increased, tenfold and even more. The night of the spirit then becomes a starlit night in which one sees dimly the depths of the firmament; that this might be so, the sun had to hide. To glimpse the splendor of supernatural mysteries, reason must have made its sacrifice; it must have renounced seeing by its own light, and must have humbly received the divine light. Similarly, if he is deeply Christian, a deposed king, like Louis XVI, glimpses at the moment of his trial the beauty of the kingdom of God, which is infinitely superior to every earthly kingdom.

At the end of this purification, the soul is deeply convinced that the only reality that counts is supernatural life, and it then asks itself whether it will be able to persevere in this life. At this stage the effects of the purification of hope begin to make themselves felt. This is the third conversion, where we find again, as in the first, the acts of the three theological virtues, but in a far superior manner. The Lord plows the same furrow more deeply that the seed placed in the earth may produce not only ten or thirtyfold, but even sixty and a hundredfold, as we read in the Gospel.

At this time there begins in the soul a more intimate contemplation of God, which tends to become continuous and like an uninterrupted conversation with Him. Then one grasps increasingly better what is said in the Book of Wisdom about the value of wisdom itself: “I preferred her

before kingdoms and thrones, and esteemed riches nothing in comparison of her. Neither did I compare unto her any precious stone: for all gold in comparison of her is as a little sand, and silver in respect to her shall be counted as clay." This wisdom is the "pearl of great price" mentioned in the Gospel; a man sells all that he has to buy it.

THE PURIFICATION OF HOPE

After the effects of the purification of faith, the purification of hope begins to make itself felt. The soul, now convinced that the one thing necessary is sanctification and salvation, asks itself at times whether, in the midst of the great difficulties it is in, it will persevere to the end.

Hope is the theological virtue by which we tend toward God, as toward our beatitude, relying, in order to reach Him, on His mercy and His helpful omnipotence. The first object of hope is God to be possessed eternally; the formal motive of this theological virtue is God our Helper, Deus auxilians, as the formal motive of faith is God revealing: Veritas prima revelans.

Every good Christian has this infused virtue, united to charity; and it is indeed God whom he hopes for when he asks for the grace necessary for salvation. But often our hope lacks elevation, in the sense that we excessively desire certain temporal goods, which may seem useful to us for our salvation and yet are not. We may even too greatly desire certain human goods which would be harmful to us and would impede the higher goods that come from detachment and humility. From this point of view, our hope lacks life; it does not rise directly enough toward God.

Moreover, there is often some alloy in the motive inspiring our hope. Doubtless we count on the help of God, but we also rely, and occasionally too much so, on inferior motives that are much less sure. We may have too much confidence in ourselves, in our tact, energy, virtues, in various human helps within our reach, just as we may pass through moments of discouragement when we do not succeed and human helps fail us.

If God, wishing to purify our hope of all alloy, should suddenly take away from us the temporal goods which we hope for and also the secondary motives which sustain our trust,—the sympathy and help of our friends, the encouragement and esteem of superiors if at the same time He should show us our frailty in a hitherto unsuspected degree, if He were to permit calumnies, tenacious contradictions against us, and, with all of that, illness,

would we still hope “against all human hope” for this sole motive, that no matter what happens God remains infinitely helpful?

This is the time to say: “The Lord is compassionate and merciful, long suffering, and plenteous in mercy”; “God never commands the impossible”; He never permits us to be tempted above our strength, aided by grace. The divine help is always offered to us for salvation; God does not abandon us unless we first abandon Him; He is always willing to raise us up from our sins when we cry to Him.

Speaking through Isaias, the Lord says: “For the mountains shall be moved, and the hills shall tremble; but My mercy shall not depart from thee, and the covenant of My peace shall hot be moved: said the Lord that hath mercy on thee.”

The Psalmist writes: “For He hath hidden me in His tabernacle; in the day of evils, He hath protected me in the secret place of His tabernacle. He hath exalted me upon a rock.... Thy face, O Lord, will I still seek.... Be Thou my helper, forsake me not; do not Thou despise me, O God my Savior. For my father and my mother have left me; but the Lord hath taken me up.”

The saints hoped thus in the hours of their great trials. In his Lamentations, Jeremias lets the following cry of anguish escape: “My end and my hope is perished from the Lord,” but immediately after he cries out: “Remember my poverty, and transgression, the wormwood and the gall.... The mercies of the Lord that we are not consumed: because His commiserations have not failed... For the Lord will not cast off forever. For if He hath cast off, He will also have mercy, according to the multitude of His mercies. For He hath not willingly afflicted, nor cast off the children of men.”

In his prison St. John the Baptist hoped in this manner when he saw all that was opposed to the kingdom of God, whose coming he had announced. So too the apostles remained firm even to martyrdom. We find another example of heroic hope in St. John of the Cross, who continued to hope in his prison cell when all seemed leagued against the reform of Carmel. In the same way St. Alphonsus Liguori heroically placed his trust in God when the religious family that he had founded seemed on the point of perishing. At times the sacrifice of Isaac is again demanded of the true servants of God, that they may labor at the task entrusted to them, no longer as if it were theirs, but as the work of Almighty God, who can overcome all obstacles

and who will infallibly overcome them if He has decreed from all eternity that the work in question should be established.

Then, above every inferior motive of trust, will increasingly appear the formal motive of Christian hope: Deus auxilians, God our Helper, His helpful omnipotence, and the infinite merits of Christ; and the soul will be moved to utter the prayer of Esther: “O my Lord, who alone art our King, help me a desolate woman, and who have no other helper but Thee. My danger is in my hands.... Give not, O Lord, Thy scepter to them that are not.... Remember, O Lord, and show Thyself to us in the time of our tribulation, and give me boldness.... O God, who art mighty above, all hear the voice of them that have no other hope, and deliver us from the hand of the wicked, and deliver me from my fear.”

Hope is here transformed into perfect abandonment, whether in regard to a divine work to be accomplished on earth or to our eternal salvation. This trusting abandonment rests on the divine will not yet manifested; but that it may rest on it in this way, presupposes constant fidelity to the divine will already signified by the duty of the present moment. The more our will conforms through obedience to the signified divine will, the more it can abandon itself with confidence to the divine will of good pleasure not yet manifested, on which our future and eternity depend. The same holds true for the dying, and should be kept in mind when we are assisting them in their agony. We should beg God to grant them this trust, united to perfect abandonment, that, being conformed to His signified divine will, they may with more perfect trust accept death, that leap into the unknown, which is nothing else than abandonment to the divine good pleasure not yet manifested. In this way the soul rises above the obscurity from beneath, which comes from matter, error, and sin, that it may lose itself in the obscurity from on high, which is that of the intimate life of God and of His love for each of us.

At the end of this purification of hope, this virtue is freed from self-love which mingled in it, from the more or less inordinate desire of consolation, and it becomes much stronger in its purity. Hope is the desire for God, to possess Him Himself, above His gifts; and yet God does not show Himself, does not make His presence felt. At this time the soul begins to experience the effect of the passive purification of charity.

At this stage particularly, the passive purifications of the present life resemble those of purgatory, although they differ greatly from it, since in purgatory there is no longer any merit or increase of charity.

This theological virtue, the highest of the infused virtues, is that which makes us love God for Himself, because He is infinitely lovable in Himself, infinitely better than every creature and than all His gifts. It makes us love Him also because He first loved us, by communicating to us a participation in His intimate life. Charity is thus a holy friendship by which we give back to God the love He has for us, and by which also we love our neighbor inasmuch as he is loved by God, inasmuch as he is a child of God or called to become one.

Every good Christian undoubtedly has this virtue. By it we love God for Himself; but we also love Him for the consolations He gives us, because He makes Himself felt by us, because what we undertake for Him succeeds and gives us contentment. Likewise, we love our neighbor for the love of God, because he is loved by our common Father; but we also love him because he responds to our charity, our courtesies, our devotion, because he gives evidence of gratitude. And at times when, instead of gratitude, we see ingratitude, we do not love the soul of our seemingly ungrateful neighbor as we should, for, as a matter of fact, we should love even our enemies and pray for those who persecute us, that they may return to the road of salvation. Consequently there is some alloy in our charity. This base element is evident occasionally when our charity fails to overcome some bitterness or ill-temper, following on a want of consideration.

Therefore, when the Lord wishes to lead a soul, already possessed of great hope, to a more pure, more disinterested love of God for Himself, above all His gifts, He deprives it of all spiritual consolation, of His sensible presence, for months and years, though He becomes more intimately present in the soul and acts more profoundly in it. He seems to withdraw from it, as God the Father seemed to withdraw from the soul of Jesus on the cross when in His agony He cried out: “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” This exclamation, taken from a Messianic psalm, is immediately followed in the same psalm, as it was in the heart of Christ, by sentiments of perfect trust, abandonment, and love.

When in this spiritual night the soul seems to be abandoned by God, it makes a great act of love for this sole and most pure motive: God is infinitely good in Himself, infinitely better than every created gift, and it is

He who first loved us. Following the example of His crucified Son, I must return Him love for love.

St. Teresa of the Child Jesus was well acquainted with these very painful hours, and what we learn about them in her life helps us to a clearer understanding of the doctrine of St. John of the Cross on the purification of love, and of St. Thomas' teaching on the formal motive of charity. At this stage of the spiritual life, this motive appears in all its elevation, like a star of first magnitude in the night of the spirit, together with the motive of faith and that of hope.

We read, in fact, toward the end of the life of St. Teresa of the Child Jesus:

> My soul has known many kinds of trials. I have suffered greatly here on earth. In my childhood, I suffered with sadness; today, in peace and joy I taste all bitter fruits.... During the luminous days of the paschal season last year, Jesus made me understand that there are really impious souls without faith and hope (which I found it hard to believe). He then allowed my soul to be invaded by the thickest darkness, and the thought of heaven, which had been so sweet to me since my early childhood, to become for me a subject for struggle and torment. The duration of this trial was not limited to a few days, a few weeks; I have been suffering for months and I am still waiting for the hour of my deliverance. I wish I could express what I feel, but it is impossible. One must have passed through this dark tunnel to understand its obscurity....
>
> Lord, Thy child has understood Thy divine light which shines in the darkness. She begs Thee to pardon her unbelieving brethren, and is willing to eat the bread of suffering as long as Thou mayest wish. For love of Thee she takes her place at this table filled with bitterness where poor sinners take their food, and she does not wish to rise from it before receiving a sign from Thy hand. But may she not say in her own name and in the name of her guilty brethren: "O God, be merciful to us sinners"? Send us away justified. May all those who are not enlightened by the torch of faith at last see it shine.... When, weary of the surrounding darkness, I wish to rest my heart by the fortifying memory of a future and eternal life, my torment redoubles. It seems to me that the shadows, borrowing the voice of the impious mockingly say to me: "You dream of light, of a sweet-scented country, you dream of the eternal possession of the Creator of these marvels; you believe that you will one day emerge from the mists in which you languish. Forward! Forward! Rejoice in death, which will give you, not what you hope for, but a still darker night, the night of nothingness...."
>
> Knowing that it is cowardly to fight a duel, I turn my back on my adversary without ever looking him in the face; then I run to Jesus and tell Him that I am ready to shed every drop of my blood to acknowledge that there is a heaven. I tell Him that I am happy not to be able to contemplate here on earth with the eyes of my soul the beautiful heaven which awaits me, in order that He may deign to open it for eternity to poor unbelievers.
>
> Consequently, in spite of this trial which takes from me every feeling of enjoyment, I can still cry out: "Thou hast given me, O Lord, a delight in Thy doings." For what joy can be greater than that of suffering for Thy love? The more intense the suffering is and the less it

> appears to men, the more it causes Thee to smile, O my God.... May I prevent or make reparation for a single sin committed against faith....
>
> When I sing of the happiness of heaven, of the eternal possession of God, I do not experience any joy, for I sing simply what I will to believe. At times, I admit, a very tiny ray of light illumines my dark night, then the trial ceases for a moment; but afterward, the memory of this ray, instead of consoling me, makes my darkness thicker still.
>
> I have never felt so fully that the Lord is sweet and merciful. He did not send me this heavy cross until I was able to bear it; formerly, I believe that it would have cast me into discouragement. Now it produces only one effect: it takes from me every feeling of natural satisfaction in my longing for heaven.

Such is the simultaneous passive purification of faith, hope, and love of God and of souls in God, a purification which, in the case of St. Teresa of the Child Jesus, is united to reparatory suffering for sinners.

Then the most pure motive of this love of charity appears in all its elevation: namely, that God is sovereignly lovable in Himself, infinitely more so than all the gifts which He has given us and which we expect from Him. Here the acts of faith, hope, and charity fuse, so to speak, in an act of perfect abandonment to the divine will, while the soul repeats the words of Christ on the cross: “Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit.”

Then the soul understands what St. John of the Cross says: “For this is a certain fire of love in the spirit whereby the soul, amidst these dark trials, feels itself wounded to the quick by this strong love divine.... And inasmuch as this love is infused in a special way, the soul corresponds only passively with it, and thus a strong passion of love is begotten within it.... The soul is itself touched, wounded, and set on fire with love.... The soul, however, amidst these gloomy and loving pains, is conscious of a certain companionship and inward strength which attends upon it and invigorates it.”

St. Teresa speaks in like manner of this last purification which precedes the transforming union: “She sees herself still far away from God, yet with her increased knowledge of His attributes, her longing and her love for Him grow ever stronger as she learns more fully how this great God and Sovereign deserves to be loved.... She is like one suspended in mid-air, who can neither touch the earth nor mount to heaven; she is unable to reach the water while parched with thirst, and this is not a thirst that can be borne, but one which nothing will quench.”

At the end of this trial, charity toward God and one’s neighbor is purified of all alloy, as gold in the crucible is freed from its dross. And not only is

the love of charity thus purified, but notably increased. The soul now makes intense and heroic acts of charity, which obtain immediately the increase of grace which they merit, and with sanctifying grace increase greatly at the same time all the infused virtues and the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, which are connected with charity.

The love of God and of souls then becomes increasingly disinterested, ever more ardent and forgetful of self. We admire the purity of the conjugal love of the sailor's wife who does not cease to think of her absent husband, who may be dead, since for several months she has had no word that he is still alive. She loves him as if he were present, and brings up her children in the love of their father who has disappeared. How can we fail to admire the purity of love in these spouses of Jesus Christ who, like St. Teresa of Lisieux, remain for a long time, for months and months, deprived of His presence, in the greatest darkness and aridity, and who do not cease to love Him with a love as strong as it is pure, for the sole motive that He is infinitely good in Himself and incomparably more so than all His gifts! In this state the tenderness of love is transformed into the strength of union, according to the expression of the Canticle of Canticles: "Love is strong as death," and even stronger, for no trial can overthrow love. The soul then remembers that in our Lord, who fashions souls to His image, love on the cross was stronger than spiritual death, that it was the conqueror of sin and the devil, and by the resurrection the victor over death which is the result of sin. In the passive purifications, described by St. John of the Cross, the Christian and Catholic mystic relives these great truths of faith; thereby the soul is configured to Christ in His sorrowful life, before being configured to Him in His glorious life for eternity.

SUFFERINGS THAT SOMETIMES ACCOMPANY THE PASSIVE PURIFICATION OF THE SPIRIT

St. Teresa speaks of this purification, but does not distinguish as clearly as St. John of the Cross does, what essentially constitutes it from the sufferings which quite often accompany it, and which she herself experienced, as we see from her autobiography.

In The Interior Castle she writes:

> O my God, how many troubles both interior and exterior must one suffer before entering the seventh mansion! Sometimes, while pondering over this I fear that, were they known

beforehand, human infirmity could scarcely bear the thought nor resolve to encounter them, however great might appear the gain.... They really seem to have lost everything.

I shall not enumerate these trials in their proper order, but will describe them as they come to my memory, beginning with the least severe. This is an outcry raised against such a person by those amongst whom she lives.... They say she wants to pass for a saint, that she goes to extremes in piety to deceive the world.... Persons she thought were her friends desert her, making the most bitter remarks of all. They take it much to heart that her soul is ruined—she is manifestly deluded—it is all the devil's work—she will share the fate of so-and-so who was lost through him.... They make a thousand scoffing remarks of the same sort.

I know someone who feared she would be unable to find any priest who would hear her confession, to such a pass did things come.... The worst of it is, these troubles do not blow over but last all her life.... How few think well of her in comparison with the many who hate her!... Experience has shown the mind that men are as ready to speak well as ill of others, so it attaches no more importance to the one than to the other.... [Later] the soul is rather strengthened than depressed by its trials, experience having taught it the great advantages derived from them. It does not think men offend God by persecuting it, but that He permits them to do so for its greater gain....

Our Lord now usually sends severe bodily infirmity.... Yet, oh! the rest would seem trifling in comparison could I relate the interior torments met with here, but they are impossible to describe. Let us first speak of the trial of meeting with so timorous and inexperienced a confessor that nothing seems safe to him; he dreads and suspects everything but the commonplace, especially in a soul in which he detects any imperfection, for he thinks people on whom God bestows such favors must be angels, which is impossible while we live in our bodies. He at once ascribes everything to the devil or melancholy....

One of the severe trials of these souls, especially if they have lived wicked lives, is their belief that God permits them to be deceived in punishment for their sins. While actually receiving these graces they feel secure and cannot but suppose that these favors proceed from the Spirit of God; but this state lasts a very short time, while the remembrance of their misdeeds is ever before them, so that when, as is sure to happen, they discover any faults in themselves, these torturing thoughts return. The soul is quieted for a time when the confessor reassures it, although it returns later on to its former apprehensions; but when he augments its fears they become almost unbearable: Especially is this the case when such spiritual dryness ensues that the mind feels as if it never had thought of God nor ever will be able to do so. When men speak of Him, they seem to be talking of some person heard of long ago.

All this is nothing without the further pain of thinking we cannot make our confessors understand the case and are deceiving them... She believes all that the imagination, which now has the upper hand, puts before her mind, besides crediting the falsehoods suggested to her by the devil, whom doubtless our Lord gives leave to tempt her....

In short, there is no other remedy in such a tempest except to wait for the mercy of God who, unexpectedly, by some casual word or unforeseen circumstance, suddenly dispels all these sorrows.... It praises our Lord God like one who has come out victorious from a dangerous battle, for it was He who won the victory. The soul is fully conscious that the conquest was not its own as all weapons of self-defence appeared to be in the enemies' hands. Thus it realizes its weakness and how little man can help himself if God forsake him.

Tauler speaks in like strain, as we noted earlier. His teaching on this subject, which should be read, will be found in his sermons for the Monday before Palm Sunday (nos. 7, 8), for Easter Sunday, for the Monday before Ascension Thursday, and in the third sermon for the Ascension.

It would be easy to show by quotations from other masters that the teaching of St. John of the Cross is entirely conformable to the tradition of the great spiritual writers, to what they have said of the royal way of the cross, ad lucem per crucem, and of the progressive configuration of the soul to Christ crucified. We read in St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans: "Heirs indeed of God, and joint heirs with Christ: yet so, if we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified with Him."

Chapter 40

The Spiritual Age of the Perfect, Their Union with God

The painful passive purification just described is followed by a resurrection of the soul and a new life. The apostles experienced this change when, after being deprived of the presence of Christ's humanity on Ascension Day, they were on Pentecost transformed, enlightened, strengthened, and confirmed in grace by the Holy Ghost that they might preach the Gospel to the ends of the known world and seal their preaching with their blood.

We shall point out here the principal signs of the age of the perfect so far as it is distinguished from the age of beginners and that of proficients. We shall indicate particularly what characterizes the knowledge of God and of self in the perfect and also their love of charity.

QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL AND ALMOST CONTINUAL KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

After the passive purification of the spirit, which is like a third conversion and transformation, the perfect know God in a quasiexperimental manner that is not transitory, but almost continual. Not only during Mass, the Divine Office, or prayer, but in the midst of external occupations, they remain in the presence of God and preserve actual union with Him.

The matter will be easily understood by our considering the egoist's contrary state of soul. The egoist thinks always of himself and, without realizing it, refers everything to himself. He talks continually with himself about his inordinate desires, sorrows, or superficial joys; his intimate conversation with himself is endless, but it is vain, sterile, and unproductive for all. The perfect man, on the contrary, instead of thinking always of

himself, thinks continually of God, His glory, and the salvation of souls; he instinctively makes everything converge toward the object of his thoughts. His intimate conversation is no longer with himself, but with God, and the words of the Gospel frequently recur to his mind to enlighten from on high the smallest pleasurable or painful facts of daily life. His soul sings the glory of God, and from it radiate spiritual light and fervor, which are perpetually bestowed on him from above.

The reason for this state is that the perfect man, unlike the beginner, no longer contemplates God only in the mirror of sensible things or of the Gospel parables, about which it is impossible to think continually. Neither does he, like the proficient, contemplate God only in the mirror of the mysteries of the life of Christ, a prayer that cannot last all day long; but, in the penumbra of faith, he contemplates the divine goodness itself, a little as we see the diffused light that always surrounds us and illumines everything from above.

According to the terms used by Dionysius the Mystic and preserved by St. Thomas, this is the movement of circular contemplation, superior to the straight and the oblique movements. The straight movement, like the flight of the lark, rises from a sensible fact recalled in a parable to a divine perfection, from the sight of the prodigal son to infinite mercy. The oblique movement rises, for example, from the mysteries of the childhood of Christ to those of His passion, of His glory, and finally to the infinite love of God for us. The circular movement is similar to the flight of the eagle, which, after soaring aloft, delights in describing the same circle several times, then hovers seemingly motionless in the light of the sun, scrutinizing the depths of the horizon.

Here it is a question of a knowledge of the radiating goodness of God. The soul sees now in a quasi-experimental manner that everything God has done in the order of nature and that of grace is intended to manifest His goodness, and that if He permits evil, like a dissonance, it is for a higher good, which is glimpsed at times and which will appear on the last day.

This contemplation, by reason of its superior simplicity, may be continual and, far from hindering us from beholding the sequence of events, lets us see them from above, somewhat as God sees them as a man on a mountain sees what is happening on the plain below. It is like the prelude or the aurora of the vision of the fatherland, although the soul is still in the obscurity of faith.

This very simple supernatural view even on earth was continual in Mary, to a lesser degree in St. Joseph. It also enabled the apostles after Pentecost, to see in the divine light what they were to do for the preaching of the Gospel and the constitution of the first churches.

This all-embracing spiritual gaze is to be found in all the saints; it does not exclude significant details, but admirably perceives their profound meaning. At the same time it removes the imperfections springing from natural haste, unconscious self-seeking, and the lack of habitual recollection.

As a consequence the perfect know themselves, no longer only in themselves but in God, their beginning and end. In Him they see their indigence, the infinite distance separating them from the Creator; they feel themselves preserved in being by His sovereignly free love. They ceaselessly experience to what a degree they need His grace for the least salutary act; they do not become discouraged over their sins, but draw a truer humility from them. They make their examination of conscience by considering what is written of their existence in the book of life. They sincerely consider themselves useless servants, who of themselves can do nothing, but whom the Lord deigns to use for the accomplishment of great things, those that prepare the life of eternity. If they see their neighbor’s sins, they think there is no sin committed by another which they themselves would not be capable of committing had they the same heredity and were they placed in the same circumstances, faced with the same temptations. If they see the great virtues of other souls, they rejoice in them for the sake of the Lord and of souls, remembering that in the mystical body of Christ the growth of one member redounds to the profit of all the others.

This infused contemplation proceeds from a living faith illumined by the gift of wisdom, which, under the special inspiration of the Holy Ghost, shows that nothing good happens unless God wills it, nothing evil unless God permits it for a higher good. This eminent view may be almost continual by reason of its simplicity and universality, because the events of daily life fall under its scope, like lessons about the things of God and like the application of the Gospel to each one’s life. It is the continuation of the Gospel which is being written in souls until the end of time.

Then the Christian who has attained to this state has such knowledge of the divine perfections and of the virtues demanded of the soul, that he has passed beyond not only the confused concept but also the distinct concept

of the theologian, to the experimental concept, rich in all the experience of life, which becomes concrete, enlightening him from above for the good of souls. Thus he attains to the experiential concept of infinite goodness, as well as to that of perfect simplicity and true humility, which inclines him to love to be nothing in order that God may be all.

LOVING GOD WITH ONE'S WHOLE MIND

The perfect man attains in consequence to that profound intimacy with the Lord toward which charity or the divine friendship tends. Such intimacy is truly reciprocal benevolence together with this convivere, this life shared with another, which is a prolonged spiritual communion.

As the egoist, who is always thinking of himself, loves himself badly in every respect, the perfect man, who is almost always thinking of God, loves Him continually, no longer only by fleeing from sin, or by imitating the virtues of our Lord, but "by adhering to Him, by enjoying Him; and, as St. Paul says, he 'desires to be dissolved and to be with Christ.'" This adherence to God is a simple, direct act, which transforms a man's fundamental will and is at the basis of discursive and reflective acts. This adherence to God loved above all, not only as another self but more than self, contains the solution of the problem of the pure love of God harmonized with a legitimate love of self, for indeed the perfect man loves himself in God while loving God more than himself, and he desires heaven less for his personal happiness than that he may eternally glorify the divine goodness, the source of every created good. He tends more toward God Himself than toward the joy that will come to him from God. This is pure love of God and of souls in God; it is apostolic zeal more ardent than ever, but humble, patient, and meek.

Here the soul grasps the profound meaning of the gradation contained in the statement of the precept of love according to Deuteronomy (6: 5) and St. Luke (10: 1. 7): "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with all thy strength and with all thy mind." The beginner already loves God with his whole heart, occasionally receiving sensible consolations in prayer; next he loves God with his whole soul without consolation, placing all his activities at His service; later the advanced Christian loves God with all his strength, particularly in the trials of the night of the spirit; finally, on emerging from these trials, he loves the

Lord with all his mind. The perfect man no longer rises only at rare intervals to this higher region of the soul; he is established there; he is spiritualized and supernaturalized; he has become “an adorer in spirit and in truth.”

Consequently such souls almost always keep their peace even in the midst of the most painful and unforeseen circumstances, and they communicate it frequently to the most troubled. This is what causes St. Augustine to say that the beatitude of the peacemakers corresponds to the gift of wisdom, which, with charity, definitively predominates in the perfect. Their eminent model, after the holy soul of Christ, is the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Therefore it is evident that the spiritual age of the perfect is characterized by almost uninterrupted intimate conversation with God, loved purely above all, together with the ardent desire of making Him known and loved.

THE INDWELLING OF THE BLESSED TRINITY IN THE PURIFIED SOUL

Consideration of what characterizes the purified soul throws light on the nature of the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity in the perfect soul. In heaven the three divine Persons dwell in the beatified soul as in a temple where they are clearly known and loved. The Blessed Trinity is seen openly in the innermost depths of the beatified soul, which It preserves in existence and in consummated and inamissible grace. Each of the blessed is thus like a living tabernacle, like a consecrated host, endowed with supernatural knowledge and love.

The normal prelude to this life of heaven is realized on earth in the perfect soul that has reached the transforming union, which we shall describe farther on, following St. John of the Cross. Here we wish merely to point out that this close union is not essentially extraordinary, although very rare; but that it is the result of the mystery of the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity in every just soul

The life of grace, which is the seed of glory, is essentially the same as the life of heaven. And since in heaven the Blessed Trinity is present in the souls of the blessed, where It is seen without any veil, It must already dwell in the just soul here on earth in the obscurity of faith, and according as the soul is more purified, it has a proportionately better experimental knowledge of this divine presence. As the soul is present to itself and

knows itself experimentally as the principle of its acts, so it is given to it to know God as the principle of supernatural acts which it could not produce without His special inspiration.

And the purer the soul is, the more it distinguishes in itself what comes from itself with the general help of God and what can come only from the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Christ declares: “If anyone love Me, he will keep My word. And My Father will love him, and We will come to him and will make Our abode with him.” “But the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you.” St. John also says to his disciples: “His unction teacheth you of all things.” And St. Paul writes to the Romans: “For whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For you have not received the spirit of bondage again in fear; but you have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry: Abba (Father). For the Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit that we are the sons of God.” Commenting on these words, St. Thomas says that the Holy Ghost gives us this testimony by the filial affection He inspires in us for Him. He thus makes Himself felt at times as the soul of our soul and the life of our life.

It is especially through the gift of wisdom that we have the quasiexperimental knowledge of this divine presence. As St. Thomas explains, this gift makes us, in fact, judge of divine things by a certain connaturalness with these things, by a sort of supernatural sympathy based on charity, and by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost who makes use of this sympathy, which He Himself has aroused to make Himself felt by us. We thus taste the mysteries of salvation and the presence of God in us a little as the disciples of Emmaus did when they said: “Was not our heart burning within us, whilst He spoke in the way?” What the disciples experienced was a quasi-experimental knowledge, superior to reasoning, analogous to that which the soul has of itself as the principle of its acts. God, the Author of grace and salvation, is closer to us than we are to ourselves, and He inspires in us the most profound acts to which we could not of ourselves move ourselves. In this way He makes Himself felt by us as the principle of our interior life.

The term “quasi-experimental” is applied to this knowledge for two reasons: (1) because it does not attain God in an absolutely immediate manner, as happens in the beatific vision, but in the act of filial love which

He produces in us; (2) because we cannot discern with absolute certitude these supernatural acts of love from the natural impulses of the heart that resemble them. Hence without a special revelation or an equivalent favor we cannot have absolute certainty of being in the state of grace.

The indwelling of the Blessed Trinity is permanent as long as habitual union with God lasts, from the fact of the state of grace; it is thus that it lasts even during sleep. But this habitual union is manifestly ordered to the actual union we have just spoken of, and even to the closest, to the transforming union, the prelude of that of heaven.

Consequently it is evident that in the purified soul the supernatural image of God appears more and more. By its nature the soul is already the image of God, since it is a spiritual substance, capable of intellectual knowledge and love. By habitual grace, the principle of the theological virtues, the soul is capable of supernatural knowledge and love of God. The more habitual grace and charity grow, the more they separate us from what is inferior and unite us to God. Finally, in heaven, consummated grace will enable us to see God immediately as He sees Himself and to love Him as He loves Himself. Then the supernatural image of God in us will be completed; inamissible charity will render us like the Holy Ghost, personal Love; the beatific vision will liken us to the Word, who, being the splendor of the Father, will make us like to Him. We can thus judge what should be even here on earth that perfect union, which is the proximate disposition to receive the beatific vision immediately after death without having to pass through purgatory. It is the secret of the lives of the saints.

THE SIGNS OF THE INDWELLING OF THE BLESSED TRINITY IN THE PURIFIED SOUL

The signs of this indwelling are set forth at length by St. Thomas in the Contra Gentes, and more briefly in the Summa theologica where he asks whether a man can know if he is in the state of grace. Without having absolute certitude that he has grace, he has signs which enable him, for example, to approach the Holy Table without fear of making a sacrilegious Communion.

The principal signs of the state of grace, in ascending gradation, are the following.

The first sign is the testimony of a good conscience, in the sense that he is not conscious of any mortal sin. This is the fundamental sign,

presupposed by the following signs which confirm it.

A second sign is joy in hearing the word of God preached, not only for the sake of hearing it, but to put it into practice. This may be observed in several countries where there is preserved, together with a simple life, a great Christian faith which leads the faithful to listen willingly to their pastor when he explains the great truths of the Gospel.

A third sign, confirming the preceding ones, is the relish of divine wisdom, which leads a man to read the Gospel privately, to seek in it the spirit under the letter, to nourish his soul with it, even when it deals with the mystery of the cross and with the cross he must bear every day.

A fourth sign is the inclination leading the soul to converse intimately with God, and faithfully to resume this conversation when it has been interrupted. We cannot repeat too often that every man carries on an intimate conversation with himself, which, at times, is not good. True interior life begins, as we have often pointed out, when this intimate conversation is no longer only with self, but with God. St. Thomas says: “Friendship inclines a man to wish to converse with his friend. The conversation of man with God is made through the contemplation of God, according to these words of St. Paul: ‘Our conversation is in heaven’ (Phil. 3: 20). And as the Holy Ghost gives us the love of God, He also inclines us to contemplate Him. That is why the Apostle also says: ‘But we all beholding the glory of the Lord with open face, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord’” (II Cor. 3: 18).

This is one of St. Thomas’ texts which most clearly shows that in his opinion the infused contemplation of the mysteries of faith is not something extraordinary, but something eminent in the normal way of sanctity.

The holy doctor says in the preceding chapter that this intimate conversation with God is like the revelation of the most secret thoughts, in the sense that nothing in us is hidden from the Lord and that He Himself recalls to us the portion of the Gospel that should illumine the duty of every moment. There, says St. Thomas, we have an effect of friendship, “for it in a way unites two hearts in one, and what we reveal to a true friend seems not to have been said outside of ourselves.”

A fifth sign is to rejoice in God, fully consenting to His will even in adversity. Sometimes in the midst of dejection there is given us a pure and lofty joy which dissipates all sadness. This is a great sign of the Lord’s visit.

Moreover, Jesus, in promising the Holy Ghost, called Him the Paraclete, or Comforter. And normally we rejoice so much the more in the Lord as we more perfectly fulfill His precepts, for by so doing we form increasingly one sole heart with Him.

A sixth sign is found in the liberty of the children of God. On this subject, St. Thomas writes: “The children of God are led by the Holy Ghost, not like slaves, but like free creatures.... The Holy Ghost, in fact, makes us act by inclining our free will to will, for He gives us to love God and inclines us to act for love of Him and not through fear in a servile manner. That is why St. Paul tells us: ‘You have not received the spirit of bondage again in fear; but you have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry: Abba (Father). For the Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit, that we are the sons of God.’ The Apostle also says: ‘Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty’ (II Cor. 3: 17, deliverance from the slavery of sin, and ‘If by the Spirit you mortify the deeds [and affections] of the flesh, you shall live’ (Rom. 8: 13)’” This is truly the deliverance or the holy liberty of the children of God, who reign with Him over inordinate desires, the spirit of the world, and the spirit of evil.

Lastly, a seventh sign of the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity in the soul, according to St. Thomas, is that the person speaks of God out of the abundance of his heart. In this sense is realized what the holy doctor says elsewhere: “Preaching should spring from the plenitude of the contemplation of the mysteries of faith.” Thus, from Pentecost on, St. Peter and the apostles preached the mystery of the redemption; so too, St. Stephen, the first martyr, preached before being stoned; and likewise St. Dominic, who knew how to speak only with God or of God. Thus the Holy Ghost appears increasingly as a source of ever new graces, an unexhausted and inexhaustible source, “the source of living water springing up into life eternal,” the source of light and love.

He is, as the saints say, our consolation in the sorrows of exile. A great hope is left to us in the present world crisis, for the hand of the Lord is not shortened. The numerous saints recently canonized evidence the fact that God is always rich in mercy. These saints who are His great servants, furnish us with magnificent, and often imitable, examples of faith, hope, and love. Proof of this statement is found in the lives of St. Teresa of the Child Jesus, St. Gemma Galgani, St. John Bosco, St. Joseph Cottolengo, Blessed Anthony Mary Claret, St. Catherine Laboure, St. Louise de

Marillac, St. Conrad of Parzham, the humble Capuchin lay brother in whom are so admirably fulfilled our Savior's words: "I confess to Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones" (Matt. 11:25).

In this spirit interior souls should consecrate themselves to the Holy Ghost in order to place themselves more profoundly under His direction and impulsion, and not allow so many of His inspirations to pass unperceived.

Good Christians consecrate themselves to the Blessed Virgin that she may lead them to our Lord, and to the Sacred Heart that Jesus may lead them to His Father. Particularly during the Pentecostal season, they should consecrate themselves to the Holy Ghost in order better to discern and follow His inspirations. With this intention they should repeat the beautiful prayer:

O Lux beatissima,
Reple cordis intima
Tuorum fidelium.

Sine tuo numine,
Nihil est in homine,
Nihil est innoxium.

Da virtutis meritum,
Da salutis exitum,
Da perenne gaudium.
Amen.

Chapter 41

A Form of Perfect Life

the Way of Spiritual Childhood

The way of spiritual childhood taught by St. Teresa of Lisieux was highly praised on several occasions by Pope Benedict XV, and by Pope Pius XI who often expressed his confidence in the providential mission of the saint for the spiritual formation of souls in our day. The way of childhood which she recommends to us is explained by the innate qualities of the child, which should be found in an eminent degree in the child of God. There is in this idea a deep intuition in perfect harmony with what theology teaches on sanctifying grace, the infused virtues, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost. By recalling the innate qualities of the child, the principal virtues of the child of God, and what distinguishes spiritual childhood from natural childhood, we shall find great light on the doctrine of grace.

THE INNATE QUALITIES OF THE CHILD

What are ordinarily the innate qualities of a child? In spite of his little defects, we find in a child, as a rule, simplicity and conciousness of his weakness, especially if he has been baptized and is being raised in a Christian manner.

The simplicity, or the absence of duplicity, of a child is wholly spontaneous; in him there is no labored refinement, no affectation. He generally says what he thinks and expresses what he desires without subterfuge, without fear of what people will say. As a rule he does not pose; he shows himself as he is. Conscious of his weakness, for he can do nothing of himself, he depends in everything on his father and mother, from whom he should receive everything. This awareness of his weakness is the seed of

humility, which leads him to practice the three theological virtues, often in a profoundly simple manner.

At first the child spontaneously believes what his parents tell him; often they speak to him of God and teach him to pray. Innately the child has confidence in his parents, who teach him to hope in God even before he knows the formula of the act of hope, which he will soon read in his catechism and recite morning and evening. Finally with all his heart the child loves his parents, to whom he owe everything; and if his father and mother are truly Christian, they lift the lively affection of this young heart toward God, our Lord, and His holy Mother. In this simplicity, this consciousness of his weakness, and this simple practice of the three theological virtues, there is the seed of the loftiest spiritual life. For this reason, when Jesus wished to teach His apostles the importance of humility, setting a little child in the midst of them He said: “Amen I say to you, unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” In recent years we have seen realized the prediction of Pope Pius X: “There will be saints among the children,” called at an early age to frequent Communion.

Later on, during the awkward age, the child often loses his simplicity, the consciousness of his weakness, and wishes to act prematurely like a man; he gives evidence of pride and duplicity. And if he delights in speaking of certain virtues, it is less of the theological virtues than of human virtues, like fortitude and courage, which lend importance to his budding personality, and a certain prudence which he does not know how to distinguish from false prudence, and which, in his attempt to hide disorders in his life, may turn into deceit.

The harsh experience of life then reminds him of his weakness; at times he meets with injustice, which shows him the value of a higher justice. He suffers from lies that are believed, thus discovering the value of uprightness. Finally, if he reflects, if he has not ceased to pray a little every day, he understands Christ’s words: “Without Me you can do nothing,” and the profound meaning of the Our Father again becomes apparent to him. He repeats this prayer of his childhood, sometimes spending ten minutes saying the Our Father once from the depths of his heart. He has again found the road of salvation.

St. Teresa of the Child Jesus reminds us that the principal virtues of the child of God are those in which are reproduced in an eminent degree the innate qualities of the child, minus his defects. Consequently the way of spiritual childhood will teach us to be supernaturally ourselves minus our defects.

The child of God should, first of all, be simple and upright, without duplicity; he should exclude hypocrisy and falsehood from his life, and not seek to pass for what he is not, as our Lord declares in the Sermon on the Mount: “If thy eye be single, thy whole body shall be lightsome”: that is, if the gaze of your spirit is honest, if your intention is upright, your whole life will be illumined.

The child of God should preserve the consciousness of his weakness and indigence; he should constantly recall that God our Father freely created him from nothing, and that without God’s grace he can do absolutely nothing in the order of sanctification and salvation. If the child of God grows in this humility, he will have an ever deeper faith in the divine word, greater even than little children have in the words of their parents. He will have a faith devoid of human respect, he will be proud of his faith; and from time to time it will become in him penetrating and sweet, above all reasoning. He will truly live by the mysteries of salvation and will taste them; he will contemplate them with admiration, as a little child looks into the eyes of his beloved father.

If the child of God does not go astray, he will see his hope grow stronger from day to day and become transformed into trusting abandonment to Providence. In proportion to his fidelity to the duty of the moment, to the signified divine will, will be his abandonment to the divine good pleasure as yet unknown. The arms of the Lord are, says St. Teresa Of the Child Jesus, like a divine elevator that lifts man up to God.

Finally, the child of God grows steadily in the love of his Father. He loves Him for Himself and not simply for His benefits, as a little child loves his mother more than the caresses he receives from her. The child of God loves his Father in trial as in joy; when life is difficult, he remembers that he should love the Lord with all his strength and even with all his mind, and be always united to Him in the higher part of his soul as an adorer “in spirit and in truth.”

This last characteristic shows that the way of spiritual childhood often demands courage in trial, the virtue of Christian fortitude united to the gift

of fortitude. This is especially evident toward the end of the life of St. Teresa of the Child Jesus when she had to pass through the tunnel, which St. John of the Cross calls the night of the spirit. She passed through this profound darkness with admirable faith, praying for unbelievers, with perfect abandonment and most pure and ardent charity, which led her to the transforming union, the immediate prelude of eternal life.

The way of childhood thus understood wonderfully harmonizes several seemingly contradictory virtues: meekness and fortitude, and also simplicity and prudence, to which Jesus referred when He said to His apostles: “Behold I send you as sheep in the midst of wolves. Be ye therefore wise as serpents and simple as doves.”

We must be prudent with the world, which is often perverse; we must also be strong, at times even to martyrdom, as in Spain and Mexico in recent years. But to have this superior prudence and fortitude, we need the gifts of counsel and fortitude, and to have them we must be increasingly simple and childlike toward God, our Lord, and the Blessed Virgin. The less we should be children in our dealings with men, the more we should become children of God. From Him alone can come the fortitude and prudence we need in the struggles of today: we must hope in God and divine grace more than in the strength of popular movements; and should this force stray farther and farther into the way of atheistic communism, we should continue to resist even to martyrdom, placing our trust in God like a little child in the goodness of his father. Father H. Petitot, O.P., in his book, St. Teresa of Lisieux: a Spiritual Renascence, emphasizes this intimate union of virtues so contrary in appearance in St. Teresa of Lisieux.

Another point of capital importance is that when well understood the way of spiritual childhood wonderfully harmonizes also true humility with the desire for the loving contemplation of the mysteries of salvation. Thereby we see that this contemplation, which proceeds from living faith illumined by the gifts of understanding and wisdom, is in the normal way of sanctity. This penetrating and at times sweet contemplation of the mysteries of faith is not something extraordinary like visions, revelations, and the stigmata, extrinsic favors, so to speak, which we do not find in the life of St. Teresa of Lisieux; it is, on the contrary, the normal fruit of sanctifying grace, called the grace of the virtues and the gifts and the seed of glory. It is the normal prelude of eternal life. This point of doctrine stands out clearly in the writings of St. Teresa of the Child Jesus. She makes us desire and ask the

Lord for this loving contemplation of the mysteries of the Incarnation, the redemption, the Eucharist, the Mass, and the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity in our souls.

WHAT DISTINGUISHES SPIRITUAL CHILDHOOD FROM NATURAL CHILDHOOD

Lastly, in her teaching on the way of spiritual childhood, St. Teresa sets forth clearly what constitutes the distinction between spiritual and natural childhood. Differentiating between them, St. Paul tells us: “Do not become children in sense. But in malice be children; and in sense be perfect.” Consequently maturity of judgment first of all distinguishes spiritual from natural childhood. But there is also a character to which St. Francis de Sales draws attention. In the natural order, in proportion as the child grows, the more self-sufficient he should become, for some day he will no longer have his parents. In the order of grace, on the contrary, the more the child of God grows, the more he understands that he will never be self-sufficient and that he depends intimately on God. As he matures, he should live more by the special inspiration of the Holy Ghost, who, by His seven gifts, supplies for the imperfections of his virtues to such an extent that he is finally more passive under the divine action than given up to his personal activity. In the end he will enter into the bosom of the Father where he will find his beatitude.

A young person, on reaching maturity, leaves his parents to begin life for himself. The middle-aged man occasionally pays a visit to his mother, but he no longer depends on her as he formerly did; instead, it is he who supports her. On the contrary, as the child of God grows up, he becomes so increasingly dependent on his Father that he no longer desires to do anything without Him, without His inspirations or His counsels. Then his whole life is bathed in prayer; he has obtained the best part, which will not be taken away from him. He understands that he must pray always.

This doctrine, at once so simple and so lofty, is set forth in detail in the following page from St. Teresa of Lisieux:

> To remain little is to recognize one’s nothingness, to expect everything from God, as a little child expects everything from his father; it is to be disturbed about nothing, not to earn a fortune.
>
> Even among poor people, as long as the child is quite small, they give him what he needs; but as soon as he has grown up, his father no longer wishes to feed him and says to him:

> “Work now, you can be self-supporting.” Well, so as never to hear that, I have not wished to grow up. since I feel myself incapable of earning my living, the eternal life of heaven. I have, therefore, always remained little, having no other occupation than to gather the flowers of love and sacrifice and to offer them to God for His pleasure.
>
> To be little also means not to attribute to oneself the virtues that one practices, believing oneself capable of something; but it means recognizing that God places this treasure of virtue in the hand of His little child that he may make use of it when necessity arises; and it is always God’s treasure.

This is likewise the teaching of St. Augustine, when he affirms that, in crowning our merits, God crowns His own gifts. This is also what the Council of Trent says: “So great is God’s goodness toward us that He wills that His gifts should become merits in us.” We can offer Him only what we receive from Him; but what we receive under the form of grace, we offer to Him under the form of merit, adoration, prayer, reparation, and thanksgiving.

St. Teresa adds: “Finally, to be little is not to become discouraged by one’s sins, for children often fall, but they are too little to do themselves much harm.”

In all this spiritual teaching appears the great doctrine of grace: “Without Me you can do nothing”; “What hast thou that thou hast not received?” St. Teresa lived this lofty doctrine, on which the fathers of the Church and theologians have written so much. She lived it in a very simple and profound manner, allowing the Holy Ghost to lead her, above human reasoning, toward the harbor of salvation, to which she, in her turn, leads many sinners. Happy indeed the theologian who shall have converted as many souls as our saint! The Anglican preacher, Vernon Johnson, was not converted by theologians or by exegetes, but by St. Teresa of the Child Jesus.

St. Gregory the Great expressed his admiration for this way of childhood when he wrote in a homily, which the breviary recalls in the common for virgin martyrs: “When we see young maidens gain the kingdom of heaven by the sword, what do we say, we who are bearded and weak, we who allow ourselves to be dominated by wrath, inflated by pride, disturbed by ambition?”

Truly St. Teresa of Lisieux traced for us the simple road which leads to great heights. In her teaching, as it pleased Pope Pius XI to point out, the gift of wisdom appears in a lofty degree for the direction of souls thirsting

for the truth and wishing, above all human conceptions, to live by the word of God.

Section II

The Heroic Degree of the Virtues

To apprehend clearly what the unitive way should be in the full and strong sense of the term, we must treat of the heroic degree of the virtues in general, and more particularly of each of the theological virtues that chiefly constitute our life of union with God. With this intention, we shall also consider devotion to Jesus crucified and to Mary in the unitive way.

Chapter 42

The Heroic Degree of the Virtues in General

More perfectly to characterize the spiritual age of the perfect, we shall discuss at this point the heroic degree of the virtues which the Church requires for the beatification of the servants of God.

Heroic virtue commences even in the illuminative way, which begins by the passive purification of the senses, in which there are heroic acts of chastity and patience. With still greater reason it exists in the passive purification of the spirit, which introduces the soul into the unitive way. As we have seen, during this trial the soul must make heroic acts of the theological virtues in order to resist temptations against faith and hope. But this heroic degree manifests itself still more when the soul emerges from this trial into the unitive way of the perfect. We even pointed out earlier in this work that these two nights of the senses and the spirit are like two tunnels whose darkness is quite disconcerting. When we see a soul emerge from the first tunnel and with greater cause from the second with manifestly heroic virtues, it is a sign that the soul has successfully traversed these dark passages, that it did not go astray, or that, if in them it committed some sins, like the Apostle Peter during our Savior's passion, divine grace raised it up again and led it to still greater humility, a greater mistrust of self, and a firmer hope in God.

We shall discuss first the distinctive marks of heroic virtue, then the connection of the virtues in relation to their heroic degree. In the following chapters we shall treat of the heroic degree of the theological and moral virtues in the perfect.

THE DISTINCTIVE MARKS OF HEROIC VIRTUE

On this subject St. Thomas says in his Commentary on St Matthew, apropos of the evangelical beatitudes, which are the most perfect acts of the infused virtues and of the gifts: “Common virtue perfects man in a human manner, heroic virtue gives him a superhuman perfection. When a courageous man fears where he should fear, it is a virtue; if he did not fear in such circumstances, it would be temerity. But if he no longer fears anything, because he relies on the help of God, then it is a superhuman or divine virtue.”

It is these heroic virtues that are spoken of in the evangelical beatitudes: blessed are the poor in spirit, the meek, those who weep over their sins, those who hunger and thirst after justice, the merciful, the clean of heart, the peacemakers, those who suffer persecution for justice’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. “Blessed are ye when they shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you untruly, for My sake.”

The true Christian notion of heroic virtue is expressed in these words of our Savior and in the commentary on them given us by the fathers of the Church, in particular by St. Augustine. St. Thomas explains this traditional idea in the Summa, where he distinguishes between the social virtues, the perfecting virtues, and those of the purified soul; and also where he treats of the beatitudes. After treating of the acquired virtues of the good citizen (social virtues), St. Thomas describes the infused perfecting virtues as follows: “These virtues... are virtues of men who are on their way and tending toward the divine similitude; and these are called perfecting virtues. Thus prudence by contemplating the things of God, counts as nothing all things of the world, and directs all the thoughts of the soul to God alone; temperance, so far as nature allows, neglects the needs of the body; fortitude prevents the soul from being afraid of neglecting the body and rising to heavenly things; and justice consists in the soul giving a whole-hearted consent to follow the way thus proposed.”

In a higher degree, these same infused virtues are called virtues of the fully purified soul; they are those of great saints on earth and of the blessed in heaven. “Thus prudence sees naught else but the things of God (the rules of our conduct); temperance knows no earthly desires (after having often overcome them); fortitude has no knowledge of passion (as in the martyrs); and justice, by imitating the divine Mind, is united thereto by an everlasting covenant.”

Treating of the beatitudes, St. Thomas tells us that, as meritorious acts, they are the highest acts of the infused virtues and of the gifts, and that their reward is here on earth the prelude of eternal life (aliqua inchoatio beatitudinis). He distinguishes those of the flight from sin, which is attached to wealth, pleasure, earthly power; those of the active life (the thirst after justice and mercy), and those of the contemplative life (purity of heart, radiating peace); the highest contains all the preceding in the midst even of persecution.

This traditional teaching on the distinctive marks of heroic virtue is summed up by Benedict XIV when he says: “Four things are required for proven or manifest heroic virtue: (1) the matter or object should be difficult, above the common strength of man; (2) the acts should be accomplished promptly, easily; (3) they should be performed with holy joy; (4) they should be accomplished quite frequently, when the occasion to do so presents itself.”

The heroic degree of virtue is therefore superior to the common way of acting of even virtuous souls. Heroic virtue is present when one practices all one’s duties with ease and spontaneity, even in particularly difficult circumstances.

The different signs pointed out by Benedict XIV should be clearly understood in relation to the subject who practices heroic virtue. Thus, what is difficult for a ten-year-old child is what is above the ordinary strength of children of his age; likewise, what is difficult for an old man differs in a measure from what is hard for a man in his prime.

The second distinctive mark, promptness and facility, is understood especially in regard to the higher part of the soul; it does not exclude difficulty in the less elevated part, as the mystery of Gethsemane shows. That the holocaust may be perfect, there must be suffering involved and great difficulty to be overcome; but heroic charity promptly surmounts them.

Likewise holy joy, the third sign, is that of the sacrifice to be accomplished, and does not exclude sorrow and sadness; it is even at times accompanied by extreme dejection, which is religiously offered to God. The joy of suffering for our Lord even increases with suffering, and for that reason it is the sign of a very great grace.

The fourth mark, frequency in the accomplishment of such acts when the occasion demands it, greatly confirms the preceding ones and shows tested

heroic virtue.

The heroic degree of virtue is especially evident in martyrdom undergone with faith for love of God; but outside of martyrdom, this heroic degree is often manifest, and at times in a striking manner. This was the case especially in the life of Jesus before His passion, as shown by His humility, meekness, abnegation, magnanimity, and even more so by His immense charity toward all, the charity of the supreme Shepherd of souls who is preparing to give His life for them.

An example of heroic virtue outside of martyrdom is frequently found in the saints, in their pardon of injuries, in their admirable charity toward those who persecute them. For example, one day a spiteful man seeing St. Benedict Joseph Labre passing by, hurled a sharp stone at him; the stone struck the servant of God on the ankle, and the blood gushed forth. The saint immediately bent down, picked up the stone, kissed it, doubtless praying for the man who had thrown it, and then placed the stone at the edge of the road so that it would injure no one else. Still another example is Henry Mary Boudon, archdeacon of Evreux, counselor of his bishop and of many other bishops of France, and the author of excellent spiritual books. As the result of a calumnious letter to the bishop of his diocese, he was forbidden to celebrate Mass and to hear confessions. On receipt of this prohibition, he immediately threw himself at the feet of his crucifix and thanked God for this grace, of which he judged himself unworthy. His action is an example of perfect promptness in the acceptance of the cross.

Such examples could be endlessly multiplied. St. Louis Bertrand remained calm in the midst of great dangers. On one occasion when he perceived that he had drunk a poisoned beverage offered to him, he remained in peace and trusted to God. In the midst of sharp pain, he did not lament, but said to God: “Lord, now burn and cut that Thou mayest spare me in eternity.”

We should note that in heroic virtue the happy mean is far higher than in ordinary virtue. In proportion as the acquired virtue of fortitude grows, without deviating to the right or the left toward contrary vices, its happy mean rises. Higher up still is found the happy mean of the infused virtue of fortitude, which itself rises progressively. Finally, still more elevated is the superior measure of the gift of fortitude, dictated by the Holy Ghost. Now, heroic virtue is exercised conjointly with the corresponding gift and, as it is

thus placed at the service of charity, something of the impulse of this theological virtue is found in it.

Moreover, as the acts of the gifts depend on the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, the Christian hero remains very humble like a child of God who continually looks toward his Father. In this respect he differs notably from the hero who is conscious of his personal strength, like the Stoic, and who aims at great things or exalts his personality instead of allowing the Lord to reign profoundly in him.

The distinctive marks of heroic virtue are dominated by charity toward those who make one suffer and by prayer for them. This consideration leads us to discuss the connection of the virtues from this higher point of view.

THE CONNECTION OF THE VIRTUES AND THEIR HEROIC DEGREE

To discern more clearly between heroic virtue, which comes from a great help from God, and certain deceptive appearances, we must consider, besides the four distinctive marks already indicated, the connection of the virtues in prudence and charity. Prudence, the driver of the virtues, directs the moral virtues that it may kindle in our sensible appetites and will the light of right reason and faith. We saw earlier in our study that in this work of direction acquired prudence is at the service of infused Charity, on its part, directs the acts of all the other virtues to God loved supremely, making them meritorious. This is why all the virtues, being connected in prudence and charity, grow together, says St. Thomas, like the five fingers of the hand, like the different parts of one and the same organism. This point of doctrine is of primary importance in discerning heroic virtues, for there is extraordinary difficulty in practicing, especially at the same time, seemingly contradictory virtues, like fortitude and meekness, simplicity and prudence, perfect truthfulness and the discretion which knows how to keep a secret.

Difficulty in practicing simultaneously virtues that are so unlike springs from the fact that each one of us is determined by his temperament in one direction rather than in another. A person naturally inclined to meekness is but little inclined to fortitude; a naturally simple person sometimes carries simplicity to naivete and a lack of prudence; one who is very frank does not know how to answer an indiscreet question relative to something about which he should keep silent; one who is inclined to mercy will at times lack the firmness which justice or the defense of truth demands. Each one’s

temperament is determined in one direction; natura determinatur ad unum, the ancients used to say. All must climb toward the summit of perfection by opposite slopes; the meek must learn to become strong, and the strong to become meek. Thus the acquired and the infused virtues should complete man's excellent natural inclinations and combat the numerous defects which sully his moral character. Were we to count all the virtues annexed to the moral and theological virtues, we would discover that there are about forty of them to be practiced, and that each one occupies a middle position between two opposing defects to be avoided, as fortitude between cowardliness and temerity. It is essential to know how to play the keyboard of the virtues without sounding false notes, without confounding meekness with pusillanimity, and magnanimity with pride.

Hence the importance of the connection of the virtues and the difficulty there is in practicing them all at the same time, or practically so, in order that the equilibrium or harmony of moral life may be preserved fortiter et suavite.

It also follows that a virtue exists in the heroic degree only if the others exist in a proportionate degree, at least in praeparatione animi, that is, in such a way that they can be practiced should the occasion arise. Thus the deeper the root of a tree is, the loftier is the highest of its branches.

Therefore one must possess lofty charity, eminent love of God and neighbor, and also great prudence, aided by the gift of counsel, in order to have simultaneously a high degree of fortitude and meekness, perfect love of truth and justice joined to great mercy for those who have gone astray. God alone, who unites all perfections in Himself, can grant that His servants unite them also in their lives. This is why St. Paul asserts this connection when he says of the charity poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost: "Charity is patient, is kind: charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely, is not puffed up, is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

Likewise Benedict XIV declares: "The heroic degree, properly so called, demands the connection of all the moral virtues, and although pagans have excelled in one virtue or another, like love of country, it is not evident that they had the heroic degree properly so called, which cannot be conceived

without great love of God and neighbor and the other virtues which accompany charity."

This admirable harmony of the virtues appears especially in our Lord, particularly during the Passion. In Him, together with His heroic love of God and immense mercy for sinners, which led Him to pray for His executioners, we see the greatest love of truth and uncompromising justice. In Him are united the most profound humility and the loftiest magnanimity, heroic fortitude in selfforgetfulness and the greatest meekness. Our Savior's humanity thus appears as the spotless mirror in which the divine perfections are reflected.

The connection of the virtues likewise enables us to distinguish as Benedict XIV points out, between true and false martyrs. The latter endure their torments through pride and obstinacy in error whereas only true martyrs unite to heroic fortitude that meeknes which leads them, in imitation of our Lord, to pray for their executioners. In their martyrdom, St. Stephen and St. Peter Martyr exemplified this teaching, showing us, in consequence, that their constancy was true Christian fortitude, united to the gift of fortitude, in the service of faith and charity. In them especially we have living examples of the four characteristics of heroic virtue explained above: to accomplish very difficult acts, promptly, with holy joy, and not only once, but every time that circumstances demand such action. To act in this manner requires a special intervention on the part of God who sustains His servants and who, in extreme circumstances, gives extreme graces.

We must insist on the point that the heroic degree of virtue thus defined is relative to different ages of life. Heroic virtue in children is judged in relation to the common strength of virtuous children of the same age. If certain grown persons are morally very small, there are little children who by reason of their virtues are very mature. Scripture declares: "Out of the mouth of infants and of sucklings Thou hast perfected praise." Christ reminded the chief priests and the scribes of this passage when they grew indignant at the children who were crying in the temple: "Hosanna to the Son of David." And if the faith of little ones is at times an example for their elders, as much must be said of their confidence and love.

An example of such virtue is the heroism of little four-year-old Nellie of Ireland, whose well-known life written some years ago, aroused wonder and delight in Pope Pius X. Tortured by caries of the bone which ate away her jaw, she used to press her crucifix to her heart in order to endure her

sufferings; tears streaming down her cheeks, she accepted all her suffering, repeating unceasingly: “See how Holy God suffered for me!”

In 1909 little Guglielmina Tacchi Marconi, known in Pisa for her extraordinary love for the poor, died just as heroically. In the streets she used to watch for the poor in order to assist them; at table she could not eat if they lacked anything. She died at the age of eleven, after seven months of torture by endocarditis; throughout this period she was never guilty of a pout or a caprice. From the very first day, though she was never again to know an hour of peaceful sleep, she contented herself with repeating with great confidence: “All for the love of Jesus!” After her first Communion, made just before she died, she remained for a long time as if in ecstasy, and died exclaiming: “Come, Jesus, come.”

Another striking example is the martyrdom of the three little Japanese boys, canonized by Pope Pius IX in 1861. One of them, thirteen years of age, made the following reply to the governor who urged him to apostatize: “How foolish I would be to give up today certain and eternal goods for uncertain and passing goods!” Another, Louis Ibragi, twelve years of age, died on his cross singing the Laudate, pueri, Dominum. On reading the account of these heroic acts performed by children from ten to twelve years of age and even less, and recalling the sublime words that several of them uttered before dying, one recognizes in them a wisdom incomparably superior in its simplicity and humility to the often pretentious complexity of human knowledge. In it is evident an eminent degree of the gift of wisdom, proportionate to the charity of these little servants of God, who were great by the heroic testimony they gave Him even unto death.

Chapter 43

Heroic and Contemplative Faith

> "This is the victory which overcometh the world, our faith."
> I John 5:4

Since we have studied the heroic degree of the virtues in general, it will be profitable next to consider that of faith and the principal virtues in particular. We shall thus form an accurate idea of perfect Christian life according to the common teaching of the Church. There is no room for discussion in these matters, for they are the great common grounds of sanctity on which all theologians agree.

This description of the signs of the heroic degree of the principal virtues may be very useful in the beatification of the servants of God. A knowledge of these signs will also make clear why in these causes the Church does not seek to establish whether the servants of God in question had infused contemplation under a more or less determined form; it is sufficient to see that they had heroic faith, the signs of which we shall examine, since in them are often visible the fruits of contemplation, which makes such souls live in an almost continual conversation with God.

Heroic faith is not only the living faith, vivified by charity, which is found in all the just; it is eminent faith which has for its principal characters firmness of adherence to the most obscure mysteries, promptness in the rejection of error, penetration, which makes it contemplate all things in the light of divine revelation, while living profoundly by revealed mysteries. Thereby it is victorious over the spirit of the world, as is evident especially in times of persecution.

THE FIRMNESS OF ITS ADHERENCE

When we spoke of the passive purification of the spirit, we saw that faith must be very firm to overcome the strong temptations which then present themselves. We stated, on the one hand, that during this painful period the gift of understanding vividly enlightens the soul on the grandeur of the divine perfections, on infinite justice, as well as on the gratuitous character of the favors of mercy toward the elect. In consequence the soul asks itself how infinite justice can be intimately harmonized with infinite mercy. On the other hand, the devil tells it that infinite justice is excessively rigorous and that mercy is arbitrary. But the faithful soul, which is purified in this crucible, rises above these temptations, and divine grace convinces it that the darkness found in these mysteries comes from a light too great for the weak eyes of the spirit. Hence, in spite of the fluctuations of the lower part of the intellect, at its summit faith not only remains firm but daily grows stronger. In this darkness it rises toward the heights of God, just as at night we glimpse the heights of the firmament, which remain invisible during the day.

This firmness of faith then manifests itself more and more by love for the word of God contained in Holy Scripture, by the cult of tradition preserved in the writings of the fathers, by perfect adherence to even the most minute details of the doctrine proposed by the Church, by docility to the directions of the supreme shepherd, the vicar of Jesus Christ. This firmness of faith appears especially in the martyrs, and also, during great conflicts of opinion, in those who, far from vacillating, are capable of sacrificing their selflove in order to keep immutably to the right road.

In the practical order, this firmness of perfect faith is also evident when the servants of God, faced with the most painful and unforeseen events, are not astonished at the unsearchable ways of Providence, disconcerting to reason. Of this firm faith Abraham gave evidence when he prepared to sacrifice is son Isaac, in spite of the fact that God Himself had promised him that from this Son was to spring his posterity, the multitude of believers. In the Epistle to the Hebrews, St. Paul says: “By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered Isaac: and he that had received the promises, offered up his only begotten son.... Accounting that God is able to raise up even from the dead. Whereupon also he received him.” This was a remote figure of the sacrifice of Christ.

This heroic obedience emanated from heroic faith. In the practical affairs of daily life as well as in the mysteries which we must believe, the obscurity

of certain ways of God comes from a light too strong for our weak eyes. So in the life of Christ, His passion was at one and the same time the darkest hour, considered from a worldly point of view, and the most luminous from a spiritual point of view. This is what made St. Philip Neri say with admirable firmness of faith: “I thank Thee, Lord God, with all my heart that things are not going as I wish, but as Thou dost.” In Isaias the Lord says: “My thoughts are not your thoughts: nor your ways My ways.” These words are sometimes quoted to emphasize the disconcerting character of certain ways of God; but in this passage of Isaias, it is a question especially of the divine mercy which comes to us in these astounding ways. In the same chapter the Lord says: “All you that thirst, come to the waters.... Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unjust man his thoughts, and let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him, and to our God; for He is bountiful to forgive.... And as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and return no more thither, but soak the earth,... so shall My word be, which shall go forth from My mouth. It shall not return to Me void, but it shall do whatsoever I please.... For you shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace.” The firmness of the faith of the true servants of God makes them see, but a little indistinctly, that the most disconcerting trials are directed by Providence to their sanctification, their salvation, and that of many souls.

PROMPTNESS IN REJECTING ERROR

Heroic and contemplative faith is characterized not only by firmness in adherence, but by promptness in rejecting error. It not only immediately spurns the false maxims of the world that cloak themselves in deceiving formulas, but it quickly perceives errors that are small in appearance, but that may become the cause of a great deviation; a slight deviation at the summit of an angle becomes great when its sides are prolonged. Thus, for example, when Jansenism was leading some theologians astray, St. Vincent de Paul, through his great spirit of faith, immediately grasped the error of this doctrine, so opposed to the divine mercy, which kept the faithful away from Holy Communion. He denounced this error to Rome through love for the word of God, which it altered, and for souls, which it was leading astray.

Promptness in rejecting every source of deviation is shown in the practical order by the way a person makes his confession, that is, without routine, with a clear view of his sins, and perfect sincerity that avoids every attenuation, as if he were reading in the book of life, which will be open to his gaze after death.

Promptness of faith in rejecting error causes the servants of God great suffering when they see souls being lost. After disciplining himself for those to whom he was to preach, St. Dominic used often to say in his nocturnal prayers: “O my God, what will become of sinners? “

Thence is born great zeal for the propagation of the faith in the missions and in countries where faith was once alive but now is lamentably declining. This zeal is ardent but not bitter or harsh; it manifests itself chiefly by fervent and almost continual prayer, which should be the soul of the apostolate.

THE PENETRATION WHICH CAUSES EVERYTHING TO BE SEEN IN THE LIGHT OF REVELATION

Perfect faith makes the soul see everything in the light of Scripture and, as it were, with the eye of God. Possessed of this degree of faith, it sees with increasing clearness all that has been revealed about the majesty of God, the divine perfections, the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity, the redeeming Incarnation, the intimate life of the Church, and eternal life. Under the same supernatural light with increasing clarity the soul sees itself, its qualities, and its weaknesses, and also the value of graces received. Similarly, in peace it considers other souls, their frailty and their generosity; hence it judges agreeable or painful events in relation to the end of our journey toward eternity. Judgment rises above sensible things and above the purely rational aspect of these events in order to attain though indistinctly, God’s supernatural plan.

St. Catherine of Siena often insists on this point in her Dialogue. Speaking of the perfect, the Lord says there:

> She [the soul] would be illuminated to see that I, the primary and sweet Truth, grant condition, and time, and place, and consolations, and tribulations as they may be needed for your salvation, and to complete the perfection to which I have elected the soul. And she would see that I give everything through love, and that, therefore, with love and reverence she should receive everything.

> Those who belong to the third state... deem themselves worthy of the troubles and stumblingblocks caused them by the world, and of the privation of their own consolation, and indeed of whatever circumstance happens to them.... They have known and tasted in the light My eternal will, which wishes naught else but your good, and gives and permits these troubles in order that you should be sanctified in Me....
>
> With this light the souls in the unitive state love Me, because love follows the intellect, and the more it knows the more can it love. Thus the one feeds the other.

The perfect soul thus attains to a penetrating faith, which enters the depths of the mystery of Christ, of the Son of God made man and crucified for our salvation. We read on this subject in the same Dialogue: “Such as these follow the Immaculate Lamb, My onlybegotten Son, who was both blessed and sorrowful on the cross. He was sorrowful in that He bore the cross of the body, suffering pain and the cross of desire, in order to satisfy for the guilt of the human race, and He was blessed because the divine nature, though united with the human, could suffer no pain, but always kept His soul in a state of blessedness, being revealed without a veil to her.” Likewise, says St. Catherine of Siena, the intimate friends of the Lord Jesus suffer at the sight of sin, which offends God and ravages souls, but they are happy at the same time because no one can take away their charity, which constitutes their happiness and beatitude. Thus to the gaze of the servants of God there appear more clearly the infinite value of the Mass, the worth of the real presence of our Savior in the tabernacle, the grandeur of the intimate life of the Church, which lives by the thought, the love, the will of Christ. Everything takes on a true value in the liturgy, which is like the song of the Spouse accompanying the great prayer of Christ, perpetuated by the sacrifice of our altars.

This penetrating and contemplative faith leads man to rejoice in the triumphs of the Church, to see in men not rivals or indifferent persons, but brothers bought by the blood of Christ, members of His mystical body. St. Vincent de Paul, going to the assistance of abandoned children or of prisoners condemned to the galleys, had a high degree of contemplative faith which inspired his whole apostolate.

Perfect faith leads the just man always to base his decisions not on human but on supernatural motives. It gives life a superior radiant simplicity, which is like the reflection of the divine simplicity. Sometimes it shines forth on the countenances of the saints, which are as if illumined by a celestial light. One day St. Dominic, all unsuspecting, escaped an ambush prepared by his adversaries to bring about his death. When those who were

awaiting him in a lonely place in order to kill him, saw him approaching, they were so struck by the light illuminating his countenance that they did not dare to lay hands on him. St. Dominic was thus saved, as someone has said, by his contemplation, which radiated over his features; and with him was saved the Order he was to found.

THE VICTORY OF HEROIC FAITH OVER THE SPIRIT OF THE WORLD

St. John writes in his First Epistle: “Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world. And this is the victory which overcometh the world, our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?”

The victory of heroic faith appears even in the Old Testament, as St. Paul says: “By faith, Abraham, when he was tried, offered Isaac.... By faith also of things to come, Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau. By faith Jacob dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph... By faith he [Moses] left Egypt, not fearing the fierceness of th king: for he endured as seeing Him that is invisible.... By faith they [the Israelites] passed through the Red Sea.... The prophets... by faith conquered kingdoms, wrought justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions [like Daniel], quenched the violence of fire [like the three children in the furnace].... They were stoned, they were cut asunder, they were tempted, they were put to death by the sword... being in want, distressed, afflicted: of whom the world was not worthy.” This is what makes St. Paul say in the same epistle: “And therefore,... let us run by patience to the fight proposed to us: looking on Jesus,... who having joy set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and now sitteth on the right hand of the throne of God.... For you have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.”

The numerous martyrs who have died in Spain since July, 1936, gave our Lord this testimony of blood; they won the victory of heroic faith over the spirit of the world or the spirit of evil. Without going as far as the shedding of blood, this victory is won by the faith of all the saints: in the last century by that of the Cure of Ars, Don Bosco, St. Joseph Cottolengo, and nearer our day by that of St. Teresa of the Child Jesus, and of many very generous souls whose names we do not know, but whose oblation ascends toward God like the sweet odor of incense. “They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.” In this way souls are configured to Christ: first of all, to His

childhood, then to His hidden life, in a measure to His apostolic life, and finally to His sorrowful life, before sharing in His glorious life in heaven.

Chapter 44

Heroic Hope and Abandonment

"Against hope... in hope."
Rom. 4: 18

Heroic hope is the eminent degree of this virtue, which makes us tend toward God, the object of eternal beatitude, relying, in order to reach Him, on the help He promised us. The formal motive of infused and theological hope is God Himself ever helpful, Deus auxilians, or helpful Omnipotence.

As long as the Christian has not reached perfection, his hope lacks firmness; it is more or less unstable, in the sense that the soul sometimes allows itself to slip into presumption when all is going well, and to fall subsequently into a certain discouragement when some undertaking does not succeed. Above these fluctuations, heroic hope is characterized by invincible firmness and trusting abandonment, sustained by unwavering fidelity to duty. The heroic confidence of the saints is also shown by its effects: it restores the courage of others and arouses hunger and thirst after the justice of God.

THE INVINCIBLE FIRMNESS OF PERFECT HOPE

The Council of Trent tells us: "We should all have a most firm hope in the help of God; for if we do not resist His grace, as He has begun the work of salvation in us, He will finish it, working in us both to will and to accomplish, as St. Paul says (Phil. 2: 13)."

The invincible firmness of hope appears, we have seen, in the passive purification of the spirit when, to make us hope purely in Him, the Lord permits every human help to disappear. Then occur rebuffs, at times calumnies, which give rise to a certain mistrust in those who until then had been helpful. In addition, the tried soul has a clearer view of its own

wretchedness; it is likewise at times depressed by illness, and must overcome strong temptations to discouragement or even to despair, proceeding from the enemy of all good. The soul must then hope supernaturally and heroically against all human hope, as St. Paul says of Abraham, who, although nearly a hundred years old, did not despair of becoming the father of a great number of nations, according to the promise which had been given to him: “So shall thy seed be.”

If this trial is courageously endured, hope grows stronger and stronger during it and is increased tenfold. However, it does not give us absolute certitude that individually we shall be saved, since that would require a special revelation; but we hope increasingly for salvation with a certitude of tendency. Just as under the direction of Providence, the animal’s instinct tends infallibly toward its end, the swallow toward the country to which it should return, so under the direction of faith in the divine promises we tend infallibly toward eternal life.

This firmness in tending toward eternal life should be invincible because of the formal motive on which it rests: God who always aids us, according to His promises. In spite of rebuffs, contradictions, the sight of our wretchedness and our sins, we should always hope in God, who has promised His help to those who ask Him for it with humility, trust, and perseverance. “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you.... And which of you, if he ask his father bread, will he give him a stone? Or a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?... If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father from heaven give the good Spirit to them that ask Him!” And if we must ask conditionally for temporal goods, in the measure in which they are useful to our salvation, we should ask unconditionally, humbly to be sure, but with absolute trust, for the graces necessary to persevere. And as St. Luke relates in the text just quoted, we should thus ask not only for the graces necessary for our sanctification, but for the Holy Ghost Himself, the gift par excellence. He is sent anew when the soul passes from one degree of charity to another that is notably higher, as it must be, for the soul to pass through the trials which are ordered precisely to this progress. Hope thus purified becomes invincible, according to the words of St. Paul, which have sustained the martyrs: “If God be for us, who is against us?” The Lord has more than once said to His saints: “You shall lack help only when I lack power.” St.

Teresa of the Child Jesus used to say: “Even if I were the greatest sinner on earth, I should not have less trust in God, for my hope does not rest upon my innocence, but on God’s mercy and omnipotence.”

St. Paul grasped all the sublimity of this formal motive of hope when he wrote: “And lest the greatness of the revelations should exalt me, there was given me a sting of my flesh, an angel of Satan, to buffet me. For which thing thrice I besought the Lord that it might depart from me. And He said to me: My grace is sufficient for thee; for power is made perfect in infirmity. Gladly, therefore, will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me. For which cause I please myself in my infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ. For when I am weak, then am I powerful”: that is, I cease to trust in myself, that I may trust in God: “I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me.” It is expedient to say to oneself then, as a holy soul used to say: Of ourselves we are nothing, but through our Lord we are something, since He loves us and redeemed us by His blood.

The story is told that one day St. Philip Neri went through the cloisters of his monastery exclaiming in a loud voice: “I am in despair, I am in despair.” His spiritual sons, astonished, said to him: “Is it possible, you, Father, who so many times have restored our trust?” Leaping joyfully, St. Philip replied in his characteristic way: “Yes, left to myself, I am hopeless; but by the grace of our Lord, I still have confidence.” He had doubtless had a very strong temptation to discouragement, which he overcame in this fashion. He thus experienced the truth that one must be crushed in order to grow, to be configured to Him of whom Isaias says: “He was wounded for our iniquities.” St. Paul of the Cross had the same experience over a long period of years when he had to suffer in order to unify the Order of Passionists which he had founded, an order that was to bear especially the marks of our Savior’s passion.

TRUSTING ABANDONMENT AND UNWAVERING FIDELITY

Heroic hope manifests itself not only by its firmness, but by trusting abandonment to Providence and to the omnipotent goodness of God. Perfect abandonment differs from quietism because it is accompanied by hope and unwavering fidelity to duty, even in little things, from moment to moment, according to our Lord’s words: “He that is faithful in that which is least is

faithful also in that which is greater." He will receive the divine help to undergo martyrdom if necessary. Unwavering fidelity to the will of God signified in the duty of the present moment prepares the soul to abandon itself with entire confidence to the as yet unrevealed divine will of good pleasure, on which depend its future and eternity. The more faithful the soul is to the divine light received, the more it can abandon itself wholly to Providence, to divine mercy and omnipotence. Thus are harmonized in the soul the activity of fidelity and the passivity of abandonment, above restless, fruitless agitation and slothful quiet. At those times when all may seem lost, the soul repeats with the Psalmist: "The Lord ruleth me; and I shall want nothing.... For though I should walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I will fear no evils, for Thou art with me. Thy rod and Thy staff, they have comforted me."

In its greatest difficulties, the tried soul remembers the holy man Job, who, after losing all he possessed, exclaimed: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away. As it hath pleased the Lord, so is it done. Blessed be the name of the Lord." The tried soul should also repeat the words of the Book of Proverbs: "Have confidence in the Lord with all thy heart, and lean not upon thy own prudence. In all thy ways think on Him, and He will direct thy steps." The Psalmist likewise says: "In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped, let me never be confounded." When all seemed lost, St. Teresa used to say: "Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou canst do all, and Thou lovest me." To give oneself up to His love and in advance to accept all from this love rests the soul and makes it victorious over temptations to murmur. This temptation is sometimes formulated as follows: "O Lord, why dost Thou not come to my help?" We should remember that nothing escapes Providence, that the Lord watches over us, that there is a precious grace in the cross which He sends us, and that "His commiserations have not failed." St. John of the Cross used often to say: "O heavenly hope, which obtains as much as it hopes for!"

Heroic hope, moreover, rests more and more on the infinite merits of our Savior, on the value of the blood He shed for us. No matter what happens, even though the world should crumble, we should hope in the good Shepherd, who gave His life for His sheep, and in God the Father, who, after having given us His own Son, cannot refuse to come to the aid of those who have recourse to Him.

In The Dialogue of St. Catherine of Siena, the Lord says: “This true and holy hope is more or less perfect, according to the degree of love which the soul has for Me, and it is in the same measure that it tastes My Providence.” This spiritual taste is greatly superior to sensible consolations. In fact, not only does the perfect soul believe in Providence, but more and more discovers its manifestations where it least expected them. It tastes Providence by the gift of wisdom which shows it all things in God, even painful and unforeseen events, making it foresee the higher good for which He permits them.

In the same chapter of The Dialogue we read: “Those who serve Me disinterestedly, with the sole hope of pleasing Me, taste My Providence more than those who expect a recompense for their service in the joy which they find in Me.... Perfect and imperfect are the object of My attentions; I shall not fail any, provided they have not the presumption to hope in themselves.”

The more disinterested we are, the more we taste Providence see it in the course of our life, abandon ourselves to it and to the direction of our two great Mediators, who do not cease to watch over us. With trust in our Lord grows that in Mary, universal Mediatrix. She, who at the foot of the cross made the greatest act of hope when all seemed lost, merited to be called Mary Help of Christians, Our Lady of Perpetual Help. We know that frequent recourse to her is a special sign of predestination.

THE HEROIC CONFIDENCE OF THE SAINTS RESTORES HOPE IN THEIR COMPANIONS

That the heroic confidence of the saints revives the hope of their companions is particularly evident in the lives of the founders of religious orders. When they had neither money nor human support, when vocations were lacking or slow in coming, when they met with scarcely anything but mistrust and contradiction, they placed their confidence in God and lifted up the hope of their first sons, who remained faithful.

On more than one occasion miracles have rewarded their trust. When there was only a loaf of bread for the brethren of the convent of Bologna, St. Dominic gave the loaf to a poor man asking for alms. The saint put his trust in God, and angels came from heaven to bring the necessary bread to the religious.

Blessed Raymond of Capua relates that St. Catherine of Siena “was accustomed to say to us when some one of my brethren and I feared some peril: ‘Why do you concern yourselves? Let divine Providence act. When your fears are greatest, it is always watching over you and will not cease to provide for your salvation.’” Such is perfect, entirely trustful abandonment, united to sustained fidelity to daily duty.

The Lord Himself said to St. Catherine of Siena during very trying times: “My daughter, think of Me; if thou dost so, I shall unceasingly think of thee.” This trust in God enabled the saint to restore the courage of her companions during the exceptional mission entrusted to her of bringing the pope from Avignon to Rome, a mission which she accomplished in the midst of the greatest difficulties. The Sovereign Pontiff’s entourage did everything possible to discredit the saint; in spite of this almost incredible opposition, the daughter of the dyer of Siena, trusting implicitly in our Lord, succeeded perfectly in her task.

How many discouraged souls, like young Nicholas Tuldo who was condemned to death, she raised up!

When she offered herself for the reformation of the Church, the Lord gave her the following counsel for herself and her spiritual children: “You ought to offer to Me the vessel of many fatiguing actions, in whatever way I send them to you, choosing, after your own fashion, neither place, nor time, nor actions. Therefore the vessel should be full, that is, you should endure all those fatigues with affection of love and true patience, supporting the defects of your neighbor, with hatred and displeasure of sin.... So, endure manfully, even unto death, and this will be a sign to Me that you love Me; and you should not turn your faces away and look askance at the plough, through fear of any creature or of any tribulation; rather, in such tribulations should you rejoice.... After your sorrow I will give you most sustaining consolation, with much substance in the reformation of the holy Church.”

The Lord sustains the hope of His saints by words like those He addressed to Joan of Arc in her prison: “Do not fail to esteem your martyrdom; as a result of it, you will finally come to the kingdom of paradise.” The saints place their trust more and more in helpful omnipotence, saying to themselves: “God is stronger than all”; and their immolation itself is a triumph which configures them to our Savior. With Him they thus win the victory over sin and the devil. To persevere in the struggle, they ask the Lord to give them the sincere desire to share in His

sacred humiliations, and in this desire to find strength, peace, and occasionally joy that they may revive the courage of those about them.

In the same proportion as charity grows, the fear of suffering diminishes and that of sin increases without weakening trust. The more closely we are united to God by charity, the more we fear sin, which would separate us from Him, and the more we trust in Him who loves us and draws us to Himself.

Chapter 45

Heroic Charity

We shall explain the nature of heroic charity by recalling the definition of this virtue. Charity is the infused theological virtue which makes us love God for Himself and more than ourselves, because He is infinitely good in Himself, infinitely better than we are, and than all His gifts. It also makes us love our neighbor in God and for God, because God loves him and as God loves him. Charity is thus a friendship between the soul and God, a communion of our love with His and a communion of souls in the love of God. We must, therefore, consider heroic charity first toward God, and secondly toward our neighbor.

HEROIC CHARITY TOWARD GOD PERFECT CONFORMITY TO HIS WILL AND LOVE OF THE CROSS

Heroic charity toward God manifests itself in the first place by an ardent desire to please Him. In fact, to love someone not for oneself but for himself, is to wish him well, to wish what is suitable for him and pleasing to him. To love God heroically is, in the midst of even the greatest difficulties, to wish that His holy will be accomplished and His reign profoundly established in souls.

This holy desire to please God is a form of affective charity, which is proved by effective charity, or by conformity to the divine will, in the practice of all the virtues. The soul thus reaches unswerving fidelity in little things and in great things, or what is most difficult.

Heroic love of God is shown, we have seen, in the passive purification of the spirit, when it is a question of loving God for Himself, without any consolation, in great and protracted aridity, in spite of temptations to disgust, acedia, and murmuring, when the Lord seems to withdraw His gifts

and leave the soul in anxiety. God is for this reason none the less infinitely good in Himself and deserves to be loved purely for Himself. If then, in spite of such prolonged dryness, the soul loves to be alone with God, especially before the Blessed Sacrament, and if it still continues to pray, if in spite of everything its life remains a perpetual prayer, this is a sign of heroic love of God.

As St. Francis de Sales shows, heroic conformity to the divine will appears when the soul receives lovingly every agreeable or painful occurrence as coming either from the positive will of God, or from a divine permission directed toward a higher good. It then sees with ever greater clearness the truth of the words of Ecclesiasticus: “Good things and evil, life and death, poverty and riches, are from God.” The soul here becomes deeply convinced that God makes use even of the malice of men, for example, of persecutors, as an occasion of merit for those who wish to live only for Him. Thus Job accepted adversity, and in the same way David bore the insults of Semei.

In the greatest difficulties, the saints, while doing what is in their power, say: “It will be as God wishes.”

To this sign is added a confirmation: namely, one who thus renounces his own will and adheres heroically to the will of God finds a holy joy in this adherence. In conforming his will more and more to God’s will, he has all that he wishes. He experiences the truth of the Psalmist’s words: “O Lord, Thou hast crowned us, as with a shield of Thy good will.” This is what the martyrs have particularly experienced.

In his explanation of the Canticle of Canticles, St. Bernard describes the ascending degrees of heroic charity as follows: “Divine love leads to an unceasing search for God, to continual labor for Him; it bears indefatigably all trials in union with Christ; it gives a true thirst for God; it makes us run rapidly toward Him; it gives us a holy boldness and an undaunted audacity; it attaches us inseparably to God; it burns and consumes us with a very sweet ardor for Him; finally, in heaven, it likens us completely to Him.”

These degrees of perfect charity are explained in a short work attributed to St. Thomas, and also by St. John of the Cross in The Dark Night, where he shows that the second last degree is the transforming union, the prelude of that of heaven. “The Apostles,” he says, “experienced this sweetness of ardent love when the Holy Ghost descended visibly upon them.”

The greatest sign of heroic charity toward God, is love of the cross. The patience and conformity to the divine will of which we have spoken, lead to this love.

In The Dialogue of St. Catherine of Siena, the Lord says: “It now remains to be told thee how it can be seen that souls have arrived at perfect love. This is seen by the same sign that was given to the holy disciples after they had received the Holy Spirit, when they came forth from the house, and fearlessly announced the doctrine of My Word, My only-begotten Son, not fearing pain, but rather glorying therein. They did not mind going before the tyrants of the world to announce to them the truth, for the glory and praise of My name.”

In the same Dialogue we read: “Such as these,... as if enamored of My honor, and famished for the food of souls, run to the table of the most holy cross.” “They slacken not their pace on account of the persecutions, injuries, or pleasures of the world. They pass by all these things,... their affection clothed in the affection of charity, and eating the food of souls with true and perfect patience, which patience is a sign that the soul is in perfect love, loving without any consideration of self.” “Such as these do not feel any separation from Me.... I remain continually both by grace and feeling in their souls.”

In other words, the eminent exercise of charity is accompanied in a proportionate degree by the act of the gift of wisdom, which enables us, says St. Thomas, to know God present in us in a quasiexperimental manner. This is truly the mystical life, the summit of the normal development of grace and the prelude of the life of heaven. This summit cannot exist without love of the cross, and love of the cross does not exist without the contemplation of the mystery of the redemption, of the mystery of Christ dying for love of us.

Consequently, in The Dialogue, the Lord, speaking to St. Catherine of Siena for herself and for her spiritual children, says: “It is right for thee, and My other servants who have learned My truth in this way, to sustain, even unto death, many tribulations and injuries and insults in word and deed, for the glory and praise of My name; thus wilt thou endure and suffer pains”; that is, with patience, gratitude, and love.

Such are the great signs of heroic love of God: perfect conformity to His will in trials and love of the cross. There is also another sign, perfect charity toward one’s neighbor, which we shall now discuss.

HEROIC CHARITY TOWARD ONE'S NEIGHBOR: THE ARDENT DESIRE FOR HIS SALVATION AND RADIATING GOODNESS TOWARD ALL

Charity leads us to love our neighbor in God and for Him; that is, because God loves him and as God loves him. It makes us desire that our neighbor may belong entirely to God and glorify Him eternally. Heroic love of neighbor already exists when one promptly dominates strong temptations to envy, discord, isolation, so different from solitude; likewise when one quickly surmounts temptations to presumption, which incline one, in the wake of certain insults, to wish to get along without the help of others—of friends, director, superiors.

Perfect charity appears when, in the midst of great difficulties, one loves one's neighbor, mente, ore, et opere, that is, judging him with benevolence, speaking well of him, helping him in his necessity, perfectly pardoning offenses, and making oneself all to all. This charity is still more obvious if by preference one seeks out, as St. Vincent de Paul did, friendless and fallen souls, poor, strayed, and gravely guilty creatures, in order to lift them up, rehabilitate them, and set them back on the road to heaven.

A chief characteristic of heroic love of neighbor is an ardent desire for the salvation of souls, a thirst for souls, which recalls Christ's words on the cross: "I thirst." St. John used to say: "My little children, let us not love in word nor in tongue, but in deed and in truth."

Heroic love of neighbor led some saints to the point of wishing to sell themselves as slaves that they might deliver captives and thus rescue families from wretched poverty. This zeal inspired St. Paul to write: "I wished myself to be an anathema from Christ, for my brethren, who are my kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites."

This zeal inspired the apostolic activity of great missionaries, of St. Francis Xavier, St. Louis Bertrand, Las Casas, St. Peter Claver. Nearer our own day, it is the inspiration of apostles, like St. John Bosco, who are completely engrossed in bringing back to God the misguided masses in our Christian countries who no longer know the Gospel.

Another sign of heroic love of neighbor is radiating goodness toward all amid the greatest difficulties, according to the evangelical beatitude: "Blessed are the peacemakers," that is, those who not only preserve peace in most difficult moments, but who give it to others and hearten the most troubled. This eminent sign appears in Mary, the Consoler of the Afflicted,

and in all those who resemble her. Our Lord says: “Love one another as I have loved you.” “By this shall all men know that you are My disciples.”

Communicative goodness, love of neighbor carried even to daily and hidden sacrifice, is the indisputable mark of the presence of God in a soul. This goodness, which is as strong as it is gentle, sometimes leads one to correct others, but without bitterness, sharpness, or impatience. And that the correction may be effective, it points out the good, the salutary seed which should be developed in the one who deserves the reprimand. Then the person receiving the reproof feels that he is loved and understood; he takes courage. If the Blessed Virgin were to appear and tell us our defects, she would do so with such goodness that we would immediately accept her corrections and draw from them the strength to make progress.

Perfect charity toward one’s neighbor springs from close union with God, and it leads one’s neighbor to this same union, according to our Savior’s words: “I pray... for them also who through their word shall believe in Me; that they all may be one, as Thou, Father in Me, and I in Thee.” The more united the soul is to God, the more it draws others to Him, never to itself. In the soul united to God, shines forth the divine goodness, which radiates, attracts powerfully and sweetly, and ends by triumphing over all obstacles.

An incident from the life of St. Catherine of Siena will serve to illustrate this teaching. One day Peter Ventura, a Sienese involved in the affairs of the government, was brought to Catherine with his heart full of implacable hatred. “Peter,” Catherine said to him, “I take all your sins on myself, I shall do penance in your place. But grant me a favor; go to confession.” “I have just been to confession recently,” said the Sienese. “That is not true,” replied the saint, “it is seven years since you went to confession,” and, one by one, she enumerated all the sins of his life. Stupefied, Peter admitted his guilt, repented of his sins, and pardoned his enemies. By promising Peter Ventura that she would take his sins on herself and expiate them, the saint had truly offered herself as a victim, and the Lord required of His servant, or rather His spouse, expiation through suffering. She interpreted literally Christ’s words: “Love one another, as I have loved you.”

In the same heroic manner St. Catherine obtained the conversion of Andrea Mei, a Sienese invalid, who had grievously calumniated her. The saint with consummate devotion nursed this woman, who was being eaten by a cancer. The unfortunate creature had the sorry courage to impugn the virginal honor of her devoted nurse, and these evil remarks spread abroad.

Catherine, however, did not cease to tend her with the same zeal. Her patience and humility triumphed over Andrea Mei. One day the saint, as she approached the sick woman's bed, was surrounded by light, as if resplendent in glory; "Pardon!" cried the guilty woman. Catherine threw her arms around her neck, and their tears mingled. It was like the radiation of the divine goodness and the realization of our Savior's words: "The glory which Thou hast given Me, I have given to them; that they may be one, as We also are one."

Two souls united in God by charity are like two candles whose flames unite and fuse.

Charity, which thus triumphs over wickedness, makes the saints share in the victory of Christ over sin and the devil. It is one of the glories of His mystical body; through it shine forth the grandeur of the life of the Church, its fruitfulness in every kind of good and of works of mercy. It is the confirmation of the divine origin of the Church.

Chapter 46

The Heroic Degree of the Christian Moral Virtues

Since we cannot discuss here the heroic degree of each of the moral virtues in particular, we shall draw the inspiration for our selection especially from Christ's words: "Take up My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart." We shall consider first the heroic degree of humility and meekness. These virtues give the Christian tone we need to treat next of the heroic degree of fortitude, prudence, justice, and other virtues corresponding to the three evangelical counsels.

HEROIC HUMILITY AND MEEKNESS

Humility, which represses inordinate love of our own excellence, leads us to abase ourselves before the majesty of God and before what is of God in every creature. This virtue is heroic when it reaches the higher degrees described by St. Anselm and recalled by St. Thomas: "The third and fourth degrees regard the avowal of one's own deficiency: namely, that not merely one simply assert one's failing, but that one convince another of it. The other three degrees have to do with the appetite, which seeks, not outward excellence, but outward abasement, or bears it with equanimity, whether it consist of words or deeds.... We should especially be humble toward those who make us suffer, and this belongs to the fifth and sixth degrees; or the appetite may even go so far as lovingly to embrace external abasement," in order to be configured to our Lord, who, for love of our salvation, willed the final humiliations of the Passion.

Heroic humility led St. Peter to wish to be crucified head down; it led St. Francis of Assisi and St. Benedict Joseph Labre to rejoice in the worst treatment and to find therein a holy joy.

Perfect humility is manifested outwardly by a great habitual modesty. We read in Ecclesiasticus: “A man is known by his look, and a wise man... is known by his countenance. The attire of the body and the laughter of the teeth and the gait of the man, show what he is.” St. Paul says: “Let your modesty be known to all men.” It appears on a calm, humble countenance, little inclined to laughter, in a grave, simple, unaffected bearing, which shows that a man lives in the presence of God and does not interrupt his intimate conversation with Him. Thus the truly humble and modest man speaks of God by his conduct and even by his silence.

Heroic humility is accompanied by meekness in a proportionate degree. By this virtue man attains to complete self-mastery, to perfect domination of anger, when he does not return evil for evil, but triumphs over it by goodness. The higher degrees of meekness consist in not being disturbed under injury, in experiencing a holy joy at the thought of the higher good it procures for one, and lastly in having compassion on the person who inflicts an injury, in suffering from the evil which it may cause him. Thus Jesus wept over Jerusalem, following its ingratitude; He was more sad over the wretchedness of the ungrateful city than over the cruel death He was about to undergo. The heroic meekness of Jesus is manifested especially by His prayer for His executioners.

HEROIC FORTITUDE AND MAGNANIMITY

In the perfect soul humility and meekness are accompanied by virtues contrary in appearance, but in reality complementary: fortitude and magnanimity. They are like the two opposite sides of a pointed arch, supporting each other.

Fortitude is the moral virtue which strengthens the soul in the pursuit of the difficult good so that it does not allow itself to be shaken by the greatest obstacles. It should dominate the fear of danger, fatigue, criticism, all that would paralyze our efforts toward the good. It prevents man from capitulating in a cowardly manner when he should fight; it also moderates audacity and untimely exaltation which would drive him to temerity.

Fortitude has two principal acts: to undertake courageously and to endure difficult things. The Christian should endure them for the love of God; it is more difficult to endure for a long time than in a moment of enthusiasm, to undertake courageously something difficult.

Fortitude is accompanied by patience to endure the sorrows of life without being disturbed and without murmuring, by longanimity which endures trials for a long time, and by constancy in good, which is opposed to obduracy in evil. To the virtue of fortitude is also linked that of magnanimity, which leads to the lofty practice of all the virtues, avoiding pusillanimity and effeminacy, but without falling into presumption, vainglory, or ambition.

The gift of fortitude adds a superior perfection to the virtue of fortitude. It disposes us to receive the special inspirations of the Holy Ghost, which are given to sustain our courage in the presence of danger and to drive out worry over not being able to accomplish a great duty or to endure trials. This gift makes us preserve, in spite of everything, "hunger and thirst after the justice of God."

The heroic degree of the virtue of fortitude appears especially in martyrdom, undergone to give testimony to a truth of faith or to the grandeur of a Christian virtue. Outside of martyrdom, the virtue of fortitude, the gift of fortitude, patience, and magnanimity intervene each time that something heroic is to be accomplished or a great trial to be borne.

Christian fortitude differs from stoic fortitude inasmuch as it is accompanied by humility, meekness, and great simplicity. Simplicity is heroic when it has such love of the truth that it excludes absolutely all duplicity, every slightest lie, all simulation, every equivocation. It does not, however, lead a man to tell his every thought and feeling, and it knows very well how to keep a secret.

HEROIC PRUDENCE

People speak less of the heroic degree of prudence than of that of fortitude; nevertheless, in most difficult moments, this virtue also assumes a heroic character. Prudence it is that directs our actions toward the last end of life, by determining the golden mean of the moral virtues between deviations through excess and deficiency. It makes us avoid rash haste, inconsideration, indecision, and inconstancy in the pursuit of the good. It has, therefore, for its object practical truth or the truth to be placed in our actions. For this reason our Lord said to His disciples: "Be ye therefore wise as serpents and simple as doves." There is certainly a real difficulty in always perfectly harmonizing these two virtues. They are indispensable to

the Christian, with a characteristic unknown to the philosophers: the Christian, in fact, not only should be the perfect upright man who develops his personality in a human manner; he ought always to act as a child of God, in perfect dependence on Him. He should even increasingly recognize this dependence; the child, on the other hand, should, as it grows up, be self-sufficient and not depend on the help of its earthly father.

In its higher degree Christian prudence recognizes with clarity and penetration the true good which the child of God should effect, and it firmly directs the other virtues to make him accomplish this good in a holy manner.

This virtue is, therefore, absolutely necessary to those who tend to perfection, or to intimate union with God. They should aspire to have all the virtues in a lofty degree, which presupposes prudence in a proportionate degree, at least in what concerns personal sanctification. Evidently this virtue is especially necessary for those whose duty it is to advise and direct others.

When we have excessive confidence in our own prudence, for our purification God permits us to fail in tact and refinement, With the result that we suffer more or less visible rebuffs. He also permits at times a certain lack of memory, or failures in attention, which have more or less regrettable results and humiliate us.

After this purification, prudence may become heroic; it is then manifestly accompanied by the gift of counsel in an eminent degree. Through this gift we receive the inspirations which, particularly in difficult cases, give us a supernatural intuition of what it is advisable to do. We see this strikingly in the counsels which St. Catherine of Siena gave to the pope to bring him back from Avignon to Rome, and in her letters to princes in regard to political matters concerning religion.

Without reaching so high a degree, perfect prudence, united to the gift of counsel, makes us see what must be said and done in difficult moments: for example, when we are asked an indiscreet question and must reply at once without violating the truth or revealing a secret. If the soul is as a rule docile to the Holy Ghost, He will then give it a special inspiration enabling it to find the right answer. There are many such examples in times of persecution, in particular when priests, who exercise their ministry in secret, have to reply to extremely insidious and exacting questions. In such cases, heroic prudence is manifested.

The same is true when the Lord causes certain servants of His to undertake things that may seem imprudent to many. St. Alexius, on the evening of his marriage, received the inspiration to leave his wife and spend his life in solitude and prayer as a pilgrim to the greatest sanctuaries. He did so heroically, and at last returned to Rome, without making himself known in the home of his patrician father where his pious wife was living. He spent several years there as a poor man, sleeping under a staircase; only after his death did his wife learn his secret. This heroic life had not destroyed conjugal love in them, but had completely spiritualized and transformed it. In this exceptional situation, St. Alexius, living incognito in his father's house, often mistreated by the servants, had to practice heroic prudence, united to the gift of counsel. The same is true of St. Francis of Assisi in his love of poverty, and likewise of those who, by a divine inspiration, undertake most difficult works, such as the complete rehabilitation of poor, fallen, criminal girls, finally making them religious consecrated to God. These servants of God are thus at times led into most difficult situations, in which to act and not to act may seem to many equally imprudent. Then one must humbly beg the Lord for light, the inspirations of the gift of counsel, and must remain pliable and docile in the hands of God. Perfect prudence is, therefore, inseparable from continual prayer to obtain divine light. It also inclines man to listen to the good advice of those who can enlighten him. It represents perfect maturity of spirit.

In regard to the "extraordinary supernatural," true prudence is circumspect. It does not reject it a priori; it verifies the truth of the facts and pronounces on the matter only when obliged to do so, after often asking God for light. Superior prudence manifests itself also in the examination of certain exceptional vocations.

The heroic degree of this virtue appears, therefore, especially in acts which, in the eyes of human wisdom, are imprudent, but which, in reality, show by their results that they are those of a higher prudence. Thus our Savior sent His twelve apostles to work without any human means for the conversion of the world. So, too, St. Dominic sent his first sons without resources into different parts of Europe where they founded centers of apostolic life which still subsist. This was an act of lofty prudence, evidently enlightened by the gift of counsel.

The justice in question here is not justice in the broad sense of the term, which designates the totality of the virtues, as when it is said of St. Joseph that he was a just man. The justice we are speaking of is the special virtue inclining our will always to render every man his due. Thus commutative justice establishes, according to just right, order between individuals by regulating exchanges. Distributive justice establishes order in society by distributing congruously to individuals goods of general utility, advantages, and duties. Legal or social justice establishes just laws in view of the common good and sees to their observance. Lastly, equity (epicheia) observes the spirit of laws even more than the letter, especially in exceptional cases where the rigorous application of the letter, of legality, would be too rigid and inhuman.

To form an idea of perfect justice, either acquired or infused we must bear in mind that this virtue forbids not only theft and fraud, but also lying or any voluntary word opposed to the truth, hypocrisy, simulation, the violation of a secret, insult to the honor or reputation of our neighbor by calumny, slander, or action. It also forbids rash judgment, derision, and raillery which unduly disparage our neighbor.

Our justice often has some alloy, when it is practiced at least partially from interested motives: for example, when a person pays a portion of his debts in order to avoid the costs of a lawsuit, or when he avoids lying partly because of the annoying consequences that might result from the lie. Justice, therefore, needs to be purified from all inferior alloy just as the other virtues do.

Perfect justice is necessary for those who aspire to close union with God, because they should become irreproachable in their dealings with others and practice toward them all the duties of justice and charity.

We read in Ecclesiasticus: “Strive for justice for thy soul, and even unto death fight for justice, and God will overthrow thy enemies for thee. Be not hasty in thy tongue: and slack and remiss in thy works. Be not as a lion in thy house, terrifying them of thy household, and oppressing them that are under thee. Let not thy hand be stretched out to receive, and shut when thou shouldst give.”

The perfect man who attains to close union with God should exercise heroic justice in all its forms, equity included. He should perfectly observe all divine and human laws, ecclesiastical and civil. If he must make a distribution of goods or offices, he should do so in proportion to the merits

of each one, rising above excessively individual considerations of relationship or friendship. He should avoid all, even the slightest, injustice or injury to anyone.

Heroic justice is especially manifest when it is very difficult to harmonize it with certain deeply rooted affections: for example, when the father of a family, who is at the same time a magistrate, must decide against his grievously guilty son, or again when a superior must send a very dear spiritual son to a distant and perilous post.

THE HEROIC DEGREE OF THE RELIGIOUS VIRTUES

The virtue of religion appears in a heroic degree when a person practices his duties in spite of sharp opposition from his family or others. It appears also in the exact observance of the vow of the most perfect, or again in the foundation of a religious family in the midst of the great difficulties which generally accompany such a work.

Heroic poverty renounces everything, and is content with what is strictly necessary in order to resemble our Lord, who had not whereon to lay His head. He who desires nothing lacks nothing; thereby, like St. Francis of Assisi, he is spiritually rich and blessed.

Heroic chastity is manifest especially in perpetual virginity, when, in the flesh, one lives an entirely spiritual life and ends by forgetting every disorder of the senses by dint of victory.

Lastly, heroic obedience is shown by perfect abnegation of selfwill, when a person does nothing, so to speak, without consulting his superiors, when he obeys all superiors whoever they may be, even though they may be only moderately kind or even ill-willed. At times obedience to very difficult orders is required, as was the case with Abraham who was asked to sacrifice his son. At such a time great faith is needed to see God Himself in the superior, who is His intermediary and who speaks in His name. It is a moment of dark night which, if well traversed, leads to a great light, for the Lord richly rewards with His graces of light, strength, and love, those who thus obey. Evidently the heroic degree of the moral virtues places them more and more in the service of charity and prepares the soul for a very close union with God, which we shall discuss in the following chapter.

Chapter 47

The love of Jesus Crucified and of Mary in the Unitive Way

> “In the world you shall have distress; but have confidence, I have overcome the world.” John 16: 33

The quietists held that the sacred humanity of our Savior was a means useful only at the beginning of the spiritual life. St. Teresa, on the contrary, insists particularly that we should not of our own initiative leave off in prayer the consideration of our Savior’s humanity, for it is the way which leads souls to His divinity. In discussing the state of souls that are in the sixth mansion, the saint writes:

> You may fancy that one who has enjoyed such high favors need not meditate on the mysteries of the most sacred Humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ, but will be wholly absorbed in love.... Having been warned by experience in this respect, I have decided to speak again about it here.... Be most cautious on the subject; attend to what I venture to say about it and do not believe anyone who tells you the contrary.... How much less should we willfully endeavor to abstain from thinking of our only good and remedy, the most sacred Humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ?... Our Lord Himself tells us that He is “the Way”; He also says that He is “the Light”; that no man cometh to the Father but by Him; and that “He that seeth Me, seeth the Father also.”
>
> ... True, those whom our Lord admits into the seventh mansion rarely or never need thus to help their fervor, for the reason I will tell you of, if I recollect it when I come to write of this room where, in a wonderful manner, souls are constantly in the company of Christ our Lord both in His Humanity and His Divinity.... Life is long and full of crosses and we have need to look on Christ our pattern, to see how He bore His trials, and even to take example by His Apostles and saints if we would bear our own trials perfectly. Our good Jesus and His most blessed Mother are too good company to be left.... I assure you, daughters, that I consider this a most dangerous idea whereby the devil might end by robbing us of our devotion to the most Blessed Sacrament.

St. Catherine of Siena, who drank several times from the sacred wound in the heart of Jesus, teaches the same doctrine in her Dialogue. She speaks repeatedly of the value of our Savior’s blood.

All the saints have repeated St. Paul’s words: “For to me, to live is Christ: and to die is gain.... Having a desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ.” As the profession of arms, says St. Thomas, is the life of the soldier, as study is that of the scholar, so Christ was their life, the continual object of their love and the source of their energy. St. Paul likewise delighted in saying to the Corinthians: “For both the Jews require signs, and the Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews indeed a stumblingblock, and unto the Gentiles foolishness; but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.” “For I judged not myself to know anything among you, but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.” The great Apostle repeats this thought to the Ephesians with incomparable splendor: “That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and of revelation, in the knowledge of Him: the eyes of your heart enlightened, that you may know what the hope is of His calling, and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. And what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us, who believe according to the operation of the might of His power, which He wrought in Christ, raising Him up from the dead.” “That Christ may dwell by faith in your hearts that, being rooted and founded in charity, you may be able to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth: to know also the charity of Christ, which surpasseth all knowledge, that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God.”

All the saints have lived until the end of their lives by the contemplation of the Passion, particularly those who were more configured to Jesus crucified, like St. Francis of Assisi, St. Dominic, and more recently St. Paul of the Cross, and St. Benedict Joseph Labre.

In the unitive way are manifested increasingly the immense spiritual riches of our Savior’s holy soul, of His intellect, His will, His sensibility. More and more there appears His innate, substantial, uncreated sanctity, constituted by the very person of the Word who possesses intimately and forever His soul and body which suffered for us. One sees with increasing clearness the value of the plenitude of grace, light, and charity that sprang from the Word in the holy soul of Jesus. This plenitude was the source of the loftiest peace, of perfect beatitude even here on earth, and, at the same time, the source of the intensity of the sufferings of Christ, Priest and

Victim, since these sufferings at the sight of men's sins, which He had taken on Himself, had the same depth as His love for His offended Father and for our souls in need of redemption

In the unitive way the soul becomes increasingly conscious of the great victory won by Christ during His passion and on the cross: the victory over sin and the devil, manifested three days later by that over death.

The value of this victory over sin derived, as the soul comprehends more and more, from the act of theandric love, which drew from the divine person of the Word an intrinsically infinite worth to satisfy for our sins and to merit eternal life for us. This act of love of our Savior's holy soul "gave more to God than was required to compensate for the offense of the whole human race." It proceeded from the very person of the Son who is equal to the Father, and was worth more than all the merits of men and angels in their totality. Superabundant in value, it was equal and even superior to the recompense merited, that is, to the eternal life of all the elect redeemed by the sacrifice of the cross.

Truly Christ could say: "Have confidence, I have overcome the world." During periods of calamity and persecution, what a consolation to think that Christ crucified has already won the definitive victory, and that we have only to give ourselves to Him so that He may make us benefit by it!

There are still struggles on earth, but the victory is already won by Christ, the Head of the mystical body, of which we are the members. In the unitive way, devotion to our Savior's passion becomes increasingly devotion to the glorious Christ, by His cross the Conqueror of sin and the demon. The hymns of Holy Week sing of this victory:

> Vexilla Regis prodeum;
> Fulget crucis mysterium,
> Qua vita mortem pertulit,
> Et morte vitam protulit.
>
> Te, fons salutis, Trinitas,
> Collaudet omnis spiritus:
> Quibus crucis victoriam
> Largiris, adde praemium. Amen.

Then the soul understands better and better what St. Thomas says, speaking of the love of God for Christ and for us: "God loves more the better things, for it has been shown that God's loving one thing more than another is nothing else than His willing for that thing greater good. God's

will is the cause of goodness in things; and for this reason some things are better than others, because God wills for them greater good.... God loves Christ not only more than He loves the whole human race, but more than He loves the entire created universe. He willed for Him the greater good in giving Him ‘a Name that is above all names,’ in so far as He Was true God. Nor did anything of His excellence diminish when God delivered Him up to death for the salvation of the human race; rather did He become thereby a glorious conqueror [over sin, the devil, and death]. For, as Isaias (9:6) says: ‘The government was placed upon His shoulder.’ “

The text just quoted throws light on why God permitted the sin of the first man and its results. St. Thomas says: “God allows evils to happen in order to bring a greater good therefrom; hence it is written (Rom. 5: 20): ‘Where sin abounded, grace did more abound.’ Hence, too, in the blessing of the paschal candle, we say: ‘O happy fault, that merited such and so great a Redeemer!’” Christ’s death on the cross, which is at the same time His victory, is the most glorious manifestation of the mercy and power of God. “For God so loved the world, as to give His only begotten Son,” says St. John, This truth appears more and more to the contemplative soul and daily shows the soul more clearly the infinite value of the Sacrifice of the Mass, which perpetuates in substance that of the cross and applies its fruits to us.

DEVOTION TO MARY IN THE UNITIVE WAY

In the unitive way, there is a profound influence, secret touches of Mary, Mediatrix of all graces, given to lead us to ever greater intimacy with our Lord. The soul that follows this way thereby enters increasingly into the mystery of the communion of saints and shares in the loftiest sentiments of the Mother of God at the foot of the cross, after the death of our Lord, on Pentecost, and still later in her prayers for the diffusion of the Gospel by the apostles, by which she obtained for them the great graces of light, love, and fortitude which they needed to carry the name of Jesus to the extremities of the then known world. Mary thus exercised the loftiest apostolate through prayer and immolation, which rendered inexpressibly fruitful the apostolate by teaching and preaching. The summits of the life of the Church, the mystical body of Jesus, are today no less under the influence of Mary Mediatrix, whose action is more universal and more radiant since her assumption into heaven.

That it may penetrate the mystery of Christ, that of His passion, the contemplative soul should beg Mary to introduce it more profoundly into this mystery, as the Franciscan Jacopone da Todi (1228–1306) does in the Stabat Mater. This hymn is only one of a number of liturgical prayers asking for this grace.

This sequence demonstrates in a singularly striking manner how much the supernatural contemplation of the mystery of Christ is in the normal way of sanctity. In precise, ardent, and splendid images, it expresses the wound in our Savior's heart and shows us how intimate and penetrating is Mary's influence to lead us to it. And not only does the Blessed Virgin lead us to this divine intimacy, but, in a sense, she establishes it in us as the admirable repetition of the word Fac, the expression of ardent prayer, makes clear:

Eia Mater, fons amoris,
Me sentire vim doloris
Fac ut tecum lugeam.

Fac ut ardeat cor meum,
In amando Christum Deum,
Ut sibi complaceam.

Fac ut portem Christi mortem,
Passionis fac consortem
Et plagas recolere.

Fac me plagis vulnerari,
Fac me cruce inebriari,
Et cruore Filii.

This hymn is the prayer of the soul desirous of knowing spiritually, in its turn, the wound of love and of being associated with these sorrowful mysteries through reparatory adoration, as St. John and St. Mary Magdalen were in the company of Mary on Calvary, and as St. Peter also was when he shed abundant tears.

The soul would wish always to shed these tears of contrition and adoration for, in a work attributed to St. Augustine, we read "that the more one suffers from offense offered to God, the more one rejoices in experiencing this holy sorrow." The Stabat Mater expresses these sentiments in the following beautiful strophe:

Fac me tecum pie fiere,
Crucifixi condolere,
Donec ego vixero.

Juxta crucem tecum stare,
Et me tihi sociare
In planctu desidero.

We should not fail to profit by these fountains of life, but should slake our thirst at them. From the adorable wounds of our Savior gushes forth the life that we should drink abundantly. May the Lord, during the Sacrifice of the Mass and at Communion, lift us up to the fountain of His Sacred Heart! Such is the petition of a beautiful German prayer in a form accessible to all the faithful:

Ich danke Dir, Herr Jesu Christ,
Dass du fur mich, gestorben bist;
Lass dein Blut und deine Fein
An mir doch nicht verloren sein.

"I thank Thee, Lord Jesus Christ, for having died for me. Let not Thy blood and Thy anguish be lost on me."

In a more intimate and ardent manner St. Nicholas of Flue, called by the Swiss the Father of their country, expresses the same thought: "My Lord and my God, take from me everything that hinders me from going to Thee! My Lord and my God, give me everything that will lead me to Thee! My Lord and my God, take me from myself and give me completely to Thyself!"

Of a surety, this contemplation of our Savior's infinite merits is in the normal way of sanctity; without it there can be no true love of the cross, which is nothing else than an ardent love of Jesus crucified. It is the royal road to heaven, and in it there is already something like a beginning of eternal life, quaedam inchoatio vitae aeternae.

A greatly tried soul wrote as follows: "Our Savior's divine words have often sustained me: 'In the world you shall have distress; but have confidence, I have overcome the world.' His final triumph, that triumph which casts so consoling a light on the things of earth, is an immense joy to me. When, worn out, I lift my eyes to our good Master, sighing: 'Lord, I need joy,' I see His triumph, His victory at the end of time, and this ray from on high illumines the darkest nights and restores peace to my soul in spite of all disasters. It is as if from the shore one watched the torrents passing by. Things go so badly on earth. The foundations of the universe tremble, but He is immutable, immutably good."

Following our Lord in this way, man does not walk in darkness, but receives in ever greater abundance the light of life.

Section III

The Forms and Degrees of the Unitive Life

It is not possible to get a right idea of the unitive life without considering its different forms and degrees. We shall, consequently, treat here of the perfect apostolic life, the fruit of contemplation, and of the life of reparation. This will prepare us to understand better what the great spiritual writers have said of arid mystical union, ecstatic union, and the transforming union. We shall thus see how to settle the question whether a soul can have the full perfection of divine love without the mystical union, either in aridity or enjoyment.

To discuss these subjects, so far beyond us, we recall what has been said of young and old professors: “Young professors teach more than they know, that is, many things they do not know. Middle-aged professors teach all that they know. Old professors teach what is useful to their hearers.” It is imperative to follow the example of the last named when one approaches the subject we are going to treat of now. To deal with it in a satisfactory manner, one should have personal experience of this eminent union. We can only repeat briefly what seems to us most essential in the testimony of the saints. We are like a spectator who, still in the valley, gazes from below at the ascent of those who are climbing to the very summit of the mountain.

Chapter 48

Perfect Apostolic Life and Contemplation

> From the fullness of contemplation proceed teaching and preaching.”
> St. Thomas, IIa IIae, q. 188, a. 6.

It is inadvisable to treat of the intimate union of the purified soul with God without speaking of the fruits which result from this union in perfect apostolic life. This life differs from a purely contemplative life, that of the Carthusian, for example, and from the active life of orders devoted to hospital work, since it unites contemplation and apostolic action, which consists in the teaching of sacred doctrine, preaching, and the direction of souls.

This explains why, in the Church, orders dedicated to the apostolic life, like those of St. Dominic and St. Francis, the Carmelites, and others, unite monastic observances, such as abstinence, fasts, night rising, the profound study of philosophy and theology, integral liturgical prayer, that is, the Divine Office chanted in choir, and lastly the apostolate by oral or written teaching and preaching. If one of these elements happens to prevail to the detriment of the others, the harmony of this apostolic life is compromised. Emphasis is placed either on the letter of observances, or on a lifeless study, or on superficial preaching which cannot be fruitful. In this great diversity of functions, it is essential to preserve their balance, their unity, which constitutes the very spirit of this life; otherwise it becomes materialistic and superficial.

Blessed Henry Suso received a vision on this subject which showed him that, in an order devoted to the apostolic life, those who are almost exclusively attached to external observances are not more advanced than those who give themselves to study without the spirit of prayer, without generous love for God and souls, because neither group tends to become like Christ, neither lives by Him or can give Him to others. “Their eyes are

not yet opened," says Blessed Henry Suso; they do not know the meaning of the interior life, nor do they understand the value of the cross, without which the apostle cannot work for the salvation of souls.

THE EMINENT SOURCE OF THE APOSTOLATE

The apostolic life should resemble as closely as possible that of our Lord and of the Apostles St. Peter, St. Paul, and St. John the Evangelist. The fathers of the Church, shepherds of their dioceses, lived this life, as also did great theologians, apostles like St. Bernard, St. Dominic, great missionaries like St. Francis Xavier. All were priests of deep thought and prayer, true contemplatives, who, to save souls, gave them their living contemplation of God and of Christ.

A striking example of preaching that "proceeds from the fullness of contemplation," to use St. Thomas' expression, is found in the sermons of St. Peter on Pentecost, when, enlightened and fortified by the Holy Ghost, he said to the Jews: "Jesus of Nazareth.... This same being delivered up, by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, you by the hands of wicked men have crucified and slain. Whom God hath raised up." "But the Author of life you killed, whom God hath raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses.... This [Jesus] is the stone which was rejected by you the builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other."

The preaching that proceeds from the fullness of contemplation overflows in the epistles of St. Paul: for example, in the following excerpt from the letter to the Ephesians: "I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom all paternity in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened by His Spirit with might unto the inward man, that Christ may dwell by faith in your hearts; that, being rooted and founded in charity, you may be able to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth; to know also the charity of Christ, which surpasseth all knowledge, that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God."

The eyes that gaze openly upon divine things are those employed in the loving and penetrating contemplation of revealed mysteries, a contemplation superior to the exterior practices of penance and also to

simple study. It is the contemplation which, together with profound love of God and neighbor, should be the soul of the apostolate.

Like Jesus Christ and the Twelve, the apostle should be a contemplative who gives his contemplation to others to sanctify and save them. St. Thomas states the special end of the apostolic life in the phrase: “Contemplari et contemplata aliis tradere.”

How should the relations of contemplation and action in the apostolic life be understood? That the apostolic life may preserve its unity, contemplation and action cannot be on an equal footing in it. One should be subordinated to the other, otherwise they would harm each other, and finally a choice would have to be made between them.

How should this subordination be understood? Some unconsciously diminish the traditional teaching, saying that the apostolic life has apostolic action for its primary and principal end, but that it also tends toward a certain contemplation as a means requisite for action.

Did holy apostles and great missionaries like St. Francis Xavier consider the loving contemplation of the mysteries of faith a simple means subordinated to action? Did the holy Cure of Ars thus consider prayer, meditation, the celebration of Mass? Would not such an attitude diminish the importance of union with God, the source of every apostolate? By following this point of view which is seldom explicitly formulated, one would reach the point of saying that love of neighbor is superior to love of God; this would constitute a heresy that would overthrow the very order of charity.

St. Thomas and his disciples state in a more lofty, traditional, and fruitful manner that the contemplation of divine things and the union with God which it implies cannot be conceived as a means subordinated to action, for they are superior to it. It is indisputable that there is nothing more sublime on earth than union with God through contemplation and love, and, consequently, there is profound value in apostolic action only so far as it proceeds from this source, which, far from being a subordinated means, is an eminent cause.

Even more, it is apostolic action itself that is a means subordinated to the union with God to which the apostle wishes to lead souls, as he himself has been led thereto. Therefore we must say that the apostolic life tends principally to contemplation which fructifies in the apostolate. As St. Thomas well says: “Preaching of the divine word should proceed from the

fullness of contemplation." This is the explanation given by his best commentators, among whom may be named the Carmelites of Salamanca and the Dominican Passerini.

St. Thomas adds that Christ was not content with the purely contemplative life, but chose that which presupposes the abundance of contemplation and comes down from it to share it with men by preaching.

According to several Thomists, there is even between contemplation and action a relationship similar to that existing between the Incarnation and the redemption. The Incarnation, or the hypostatic union of the human nature of Christ with the uncreated person of the Word, is not ordered to our redemption as an inferior means to a higher end, but as an eminent cause to an inferior effect. St. Thomas says: "God loves Christ not only more than He loves the whole human race, but more than He loves the entire created universe.... Nor did anything of His excellence diminish when God delivered Him up to death for the salvation of the human race; rather did He become thereby a glorious conqueror." In this passage, St. Thomas shows that his doctrine emanates from the contemplation of the grandeur of the mystery of Christ.

From all eternity God willed the Incarnation, not as subordinated to the redemption, but as fructifying in the redemption. Likewise, in the apostolic life, He willed contemplation and union with God, not as subordinated to action, but as fructifying in the apostolate.

Why should the apostolate proceed from the contemplation of the mysteries of salvation? Is this a necessity? It is, that the preaching of the Gospel and the direction of souls may be luminous, living, simple, and penetrating, imbued with the unction which attracts hearts and the deep conviction which draws them on. St. Thomas says in substance: He who brings the word of God to others should instruct them, draw their hearts toward God, and move their wills to the fulfillment of the divine law.

This should be the case in order that preaching may convey not only the letter, but the spirit of the word of God, of supernatural mysteries, of the precepts, and of the counsels. It is not a question here of romantic lyricism, but of the breath of divine truth which comes from a great spirit of faith and from ardent love for God and souls.

To comprehend what the preaching of the Gospel should be, we must remember that the New Law is only secondarily a written law; it is primarily and principally a law infused into souls, "the grace itself of the

Holy Ghost." That we might be made to live by this grace, we had to be instructed by the exterior and the written word on the mysteries to be believed and the precepts to be observed.

The preaching of the Gospel should be spirit and life. And that the apostle may not become discouraged in the midst of all the obstacles he encounters, he must hunger and thirst after the justice of God; he must have the gift of fortitude to persevere to the end and to lead souls on with him. Hunger and thirst for the justice of God grow in liturgical and in mental prayer. But it is chiefly the celebration of the holy Sacrifice of the Mass which, through the union with God found in it, is the summit from which the living preaching of the divine word should descend like a stream.

Normally a priest, to be "another Christ," should reach the supernatural contemplation of the sacrifice of the cross perpetuated in substance on the altar. This contemplation should be the very soul of the apostolate. Evidently it is not a means subordinated to the apostolate, but an eminent cause, similar to the always abundant springs from which great rivers flow. In a word, to bring others to God, a man must himself be closely united to Him.

THE CONDITION OF THE APOSTOLATE AND ITS FRUITFULNESS

The fruits of the apostolate should be the conversion of infidels and sinners, the advancement of the good: broadly speaking, the salvation of souls. We should bear in mind that to save souls our Lord was not content simply to preach the truth to them; He died on the cross for love of them. Similarly, apostles cannot save souls by preaching without suffering for them.

St. Paul points this out when he writes: "In all things we suffer tribulation, but are not distressed; we are straitened, but are not destitute; we suffer persecution, but are not forsaken; we are cast down, but we perish not; always bearing about in our body the mortification of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodies." Christ announced this persecution when He promised the hundredfold to those who follow Him.

The Lord recalled this truth to St. Catherine of Siena, as we see in her Dialogue: "Now look at the ship of thy father Dominic, My beloved son. He ordered it most perfectly, wishing that his sons should apply themselves

only to My honor and the salvation of souls, with the light of science, which light he laid as his principal foundation.... At what table does he feed his sons with the light of science? At the table of the Cross, which is the table of holy desire, when souls are eaten for My honor."

Among the spiritual writers of the Society of Jesus, Father Lallemant speaks in like terms in La Doctrine spirituelle: "As our Lord redeemed the world only by His cross...; so too, evangelical laborers apply the grace of the redemption only by their crosses and the persecutions which they suffer. Therefore great returns should not be expected from their labors unless these are accompanied by obstacles, calumnies, insults, and sufferings.

"Some think they do wonders because they preach well prepared sermons, that are delivered with charm, that are in fashion, and welcomed everywhere. They are deceived; the means on which they rely are not those which God makes use of to do great things. Crosses are needed to procure the salvation of the world. Those whom God employs to save souls, He leads by the way of crosses, as we see in the lives of apostles such as St. Francis Xavier, St. Ignatius, St. Vincent Ferrer, St. Dominic.... Jesus has chosen our crosses for us, and offers them to us as the material of the crowns He is preparing for us, and as a test of our virtue and fidelity in His service."

St. Grignion de Montfort sets forth the same doctrine in his Lettre aux amis de la croix and in L' Amour de la divine sagesse (Part I, chap. 6).

The amazing fruitfulness of the apostolate of the saints is apparent especially in the missions. In Asia and the Indian Archipelago, St. Francis Xavier converted thousands of pagans; the same was true of St. Peter Claver. St. Louis Bertrand, the St. Francis Xavier of New Granada, in the midst of incessant perils, brought more than 150,000 souls to the Christian faith. In different regions, how many missionaries were cruelly martyred, their blood becoming the seed of Christians! The life of the Church, like that of her divine Founder, is a life which has passed through death and which thus always preserves its youth and an inexhaustible fecundity.

Consequently the fruitful apostolate should proceed from close union with God and the contemplation of divine things; "from the fullness of contemplation," St. Thomas even says, though his language is always so reserved.

Our study of this question has given us an additional confirmation of the doctrine which teaches that contemplation, proceeding from living faith

enlightened by the gifts, is in the normal way of sanctity, especially for the priest who must direct, enlighten, and lead souls to perfection.

Chapter 49

The life of Reparation

To complete what we have said about union with God in the perfect, we should deal at least briefly with the life of reparation, which, through prayer and suffering, is an apostolate, willed by God to render abundantly fruitful the doctrinal apostolate by preaching.

Our Lord saved the world even more by His heroic love on the cross than by His sermons. His words gave us light, pointed out to us the way to follow; His death on the cross obtained for us the grace to follow this way.

Mary, who merited the title of Coredemptrix and that of universal Mediatrix, is the model of reparatory souls through her sufferings at the foot of the cross. By them she merited congruously for us, or by a merit of propriety based on charity, all that the Word made flesh merited for us in strict justice. His Holiness Pius X approved this common teaching of theologians, and Pope Benedict XV ratified her title of Coredemptrix, saying that “Mary, in union with Christ, redeemed the human race.” Thus Mary became the spiritual mother of all men.

More recently, in the encyclical Miseremissimus Redemptor, His Holiness Pius XI reminded the faithful of the necessity of reparation, exhorting them to unite the oblation of all their vexations and sufferings to the oblation ever living in the heart of our Lord, the principal Priest of the Sacrifice of the Mass.

In the Mass, the immolation of Jesus is no longer bloody and painful as on the cross, but the painful immolation ought to continue in the mystical body of the Savior and will continue until the end of the world. While progressively incorporating into Himself the faithful whom He vivifies, Jesus, in fact, reproduces in them something of His life as a child, of His hidden, His public, and His sorrowful life, before making them share in His glorious life in heaven. By so doing He enables them to work, to cooperate

with Him, through Him, and in Him, for the salvation of souls by the same means as He used. In this sense St. Paul wrote: “Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, in my flesh, for His body, which is the Church.” Nothing is wanting in the sufferings of Christ in themselves. They have an infinite and superabundant value by reason of the personality of the Word of God made man; but something is lacking in their radiation in us.

THE LIFE OF REPARATION IN THE PRIEST

The priest in particular should be “another Christ.” Jesus is Priest and Victim. The priest cannot wish to participate in the priesthood of Christ without sharing in some way in His state as victim, in the measure willed for him by Providence. When the priest ascends the altar, he bears on the front and back of his chasuble a cross which recalls our Savior’s.

Great bishops who, in times of persecution, gave their lives for their flocks thus understood it. A similar idea of the priesthood distinguishes priest saints, like St. Bernard, St. Dominic, St. Charles Borromeo, St. Philip Neri, and nearer our own day the Cure of Ars, who, while offering the body and precious blood of our Lord, offered all his sufferings for the faithful who came to him.

Likewise too, the friend of the Cure of Ars, Venerable Father Chevrier of Lyons, used to say in substance to the priests whom he trained: “The priest should be another Christ. Thinking of the crib, he should be humble and poor; the more he is so, the more he glorifies God and is useful to his neighbor. The priest should be a man who is stripped. Recalling Calvary, he should think of immolating himself in order to give life. The priest should be a crucified man. Meditating on the tabernacle, he should remember that he ought to give himself incessantly to others; he should become like good bread for souls. The priest should be a man who is consumed.”

Father Charles de Foucauld, who offered his life in order to seal with his blood his apostolate among the Moslems, wrote in a notebook, which he always carried on his person: “Live as if you were to die a martyr today. The more everything is lacking to us on earth, the more we find the best thing that earth can give us: the cross.”

This attitude of soul is patent in the lives of many founders of religious orders, who, following the example of our Lord, had to complete their work

by perfect self-immolation. This is especially manifest, and most strikingly so, in the life of St. Paul of the Cross, who founded the Passionists in the eighteenth century. His life is one of the greatest examples of the life of reparation in a founder. By forty-five years of sufferings which were like a continual prayer in the Garden of Olives, he confirmed his work. St. Paul died in 1775 at the age of eighty-one; the last months of his life were like an anticipated heaven.

The profound pages in the book just mentioned, in our opinion throw light on the lives of several other saints, in particular on the last years of St. Alphonsus Liguori when he was so severely tried. A superficial reading of the interior sufferings described in his Life, written by Father Berthe, might lead one to believe that they were those of the passive purification of the senses united to those of the spirit. In reality, the soul of this great saint, then eighty years of age, was already purified, and these great trials at the end were chiefly reparatory for the sanctification of sinners. It is the great apostolate through suffering that makes the saints share in the sorrowful life of our Lord and that allows them to seal their work as He sealed His on the cross.

THE LIFE OF REPARATION IN ALL THOSE WHO HAVE A HEAVY CROSS TO CARRY

If the priest ought to be another Christ, the simple Christian should also “take up his cross daily” and offer his sufferings in union with the sacrifice of Jesus perpetuated on the altar. He ought to offer them for himself and for the souls for whose salvation he should work.

St. Benedict Joseph Labre was not a priest. He did not share, in the real sense of the word, in the priesthood of Christ, but he shared largely in His state as a victim. As much must be said of many spouses of Christ, who, following Mary’s example, share in His sufferings and find therein a profound spiritual motherhood, which is like a reflection of the spiritual maternity of the Blessed Virgin in relation to souls redeemed by the blood of her Son.

Mary did not receive the priestly character; she could not consecrate the Holy Eucharist, but as Father Olier says, “she received the plenitude of the spirit of the priesthood,” which is the spirit of Christ the Redeemer. She penetrated the mystery of our altars far more than did the Apostle St. John, when he celebrated Mass in her presence and gave her Holy Communion.

In the early Church, Mary, by her interior oblation united to that of the Mass, rendered the apostolate of the Twelve fruitful. By her interior suffering at the sight of the nascent heresies that denied the divinity of her Son, she was the spiritual mother of souls to a degree unimaginable without profound experience of this hidden apostolate. She thus continued the sacrifice of her Son.

A servant of God who lived by this truth for a long time said to us: “The mystical body of Christ can no more live without suffering than our eyes without the light of the sun. On earth, the nearer a soul is to God, that is, the more it loves, the more it is dedicated to suffering. For souls that have received everything from the Church, is it not a noble vocation to live and immolate themselves for their Mother?” The same valiant religious said also: “Patience is necessary, but I shall win her. Our Lord will win her.... I always say to Him: I want that soul at the cost of no matter what suffering.” “Until the end of the world, Christ will agonize in His members, and it is by these sufferings and this agony that the Church, His spouse, will bring forth saints.... Since the death of Jesus, the law has not changed: souls are saved only by suffering and dying for them.” “The eternally glorified heart of Jesus will suffer no more, it can no longer suffer; henceforth it is our turn.... What happiness that it is our turn and no longer His to suffer now!”

The Lord causes these reparatory souls to hear words such as these: “Have you not asked Me for a share in My passion? Choose: do you wish the joy of unclouded faith, ravishing you and flooding your soul with delights, or do you wish darkness, suffering, which will make you cooperate in the salvation of souls?” Our Lord invites such souls to choose quite freely; but, as if powerless to resist, they abandon joy and choose suffering with all its darkness, so that light, sanctity, and salvation may be given to others.

From time to time, God allows them to see the hardness of hearts, and at certain times hell seems unchained to tear from them an act of despair. They fight for hours; it is a struggle of spirit against spirit; at no matter what cost, they must follow the Master to the end. He lets them understand with increasing clearness that He expects from them love of scorn and complete destruction, like that of the grain of wheat cast into the earth, which must die that it may bring forth much fruit. This life of reparation is that of souls called to the intimate service of the Lord Jesus.

Such is the sign of perfect love, as it is described in The Dialogue of St. Catherine of Siena: “This is seen by the same sign that was given to the holy disciples after they had received the Holy Spirit,... not fearing pain, but rather glorying therein.... Through this charity, which is of the Holy Spirit, the soul participates in His will, fortifying her own.” In the same book, we read (it is the Lord who speaks):

> These, I say, as if enamored of My honor, and famished for the food of souls, run to the table of the most holy cross, willing to suffer pain and endure much for the service of the neighbor, and desiring to preserve and acquire the virtues, bearing in their body the stigmata of Christ crucified, causing the crucified love which is theirs to shine, being visible through self-contempt and delighted endurance of the shames and vexations on every side.... Such as these follow the Immaculate Lamb, My only-begotten Son, who was both blessed and sorrowful on the cross.... These souls, thrown into the furnace of My charity, no part of their will remaining outside, but the whole of them being inflamed in Me, are like a brand wholly consumed in the furnace, so that no one can take hold of it to extinguish it, because it has become fire. In the same way, no one can seize these souls or draw them outside of Me.”

This is perfect configuration to Jesus Christ; it is, in the life of reparation, the transforming union which has become fruitful and radiating. It is the participation in the state of Jesus as victim and, even in saints who have not received the priesthood properly so called, it is a very close union with the eternal Priest, in which are admirably realized St. Peter’s words: “Unto whom coming, as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen and made honorable by God, be you also as living stones built up, a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”

This configuration to Christ crucified by the life of reparation is like the immediate prelude of eternal life.

A GREAT EXAMPLE THE REPARATORY NIGHT OF THE SPIRIT IN ST. PAUL OF THE CROSS

The reading of the works of St. John of the Cross leads one to consider the night of the spirit chiefly as a personal passive purification, which prepares the soul for the perfect union with God, called the transfonning union. This purification, which in its passive aspect is a mystical state and implies infused contemplation, appears thus as necessary to remove the defects of proficients of whom the author speaks in The Dark Night..This is particularly true of a secret spiritual pride, whIch is sometimes the cause of manyillusions. The night of the spirit is a purgatory before death, but a

purgatory in which the soul merits and grows greatly in love. Finally, this darkness and the affliction experienced in this state give way to the superior light and joy of the transforming union, the immediate prelude of the life of heaven. The winter of the night of the spirit seems followed by a springtime and a perpetual summer, after which there would no longer be an autumn.

Such is the impression created by the reading of The Dark Night and The Living Flame of Love. It may be said that for advanced souls the night of the spirit is only a tunnel to be traversed before entering the transforming union, and that afterward the soul need not pass through it again.

The lives of some great servants of God especially dedicated to reparation, to immolation for the salvation of souls or to the apostolate by interior suffering, make one think, however, of a prolongation of the night of the spirit even after their entrance into the transforming union. In such cases, this trial would no longer be chiefly purificatory; it would be above all reparative.

Though St. John of the Cross does not insist particularly on this point, he alludes several times to the interior trials endured by the saints for the salvation of sinners. St. Teresa also mentions them when she writes of the great generosity of souls that have entered the seventh mansion.

What should be our attitude toward a night of the spirit that is more reparatory than purificatory and is even prolonged over lengthy period after the entrance into the transforming union, when the tried soul is already personally purified? We treated this question briefly in another work; here it is expedient to recall in regard to this point the incontrovertible principles and some significant facts.

First of all, the Christian mind cannot forget that the great interior sufferings which our Lord and His holy Mother experienced at the sight of sin and in the offering of themselves as victims for us were not for their purification but for our redemption, and that the more souls advance in the spiritual life, the more their interior sufferings resemble those of Jesus and Mary. The common opinion is that the servants of God are more particularly tried, whether it be that they need a more profound purification, or whether, following the example of our Lord, they must work by the same means as He used for a great spiritual cause, such as the foundation of a religious order or the salvation of many other souls. St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa almost continually experienced this, as the facts clearly show.

We shall point out here a particularly striking fact in this connection, and we shall then briefly compare the purifying night of the spirit with that which is chiefly reparatory and which contains an apostolate through suffering that is as fruitful as hidden.

Let us note first of all, though without insistence, a fairly characteristic fact, verified toward the close of the life of St. Alphonsus Liguori. A superficial reading of this period of his life, he was then eighty, might give the impression that he was experiencing the passive night of the senses, which is frequently accompanied by strong temptations against chastity and patience, virtues having their seat in the sensible part of the soul. The holy old man had at this time such violent temptations that his servant wondered if they would not cause him to lose his mind. But consideration of all the work already accomplished by grace in the soul of this great saint leads to the conclusion that this trial in his last years was not precisely for him the passive purification of the senses (although it had all the appearances of being so), but a series of afflictions that he endured chiefly for his neighbor and for the consolidation of his Order for which he had already suffered so much.

There is an even more striking example in the life of St. Paul of the Cross, the founder of the Passionists. We may form an exact idea of his interior life from his numerous letters, from the notes left by his confessor and director, Father John Mary, and from other documents of the period, quoted in the process of canonization and the preparatory work. Father Cajetan of the Holy Name of Mary, CP., assembled the most important of these documents in his book, Oraison et ascension mystique de saint Paul de la Croix. Father Cajetan kindly gave us some other documents which he plans to publish soon and which confirm the contents of those already published.

We shall cite here only the most significant facts in the long and austere life of the saint, which was wholly dedicated to the service of God. Born in 1694, St. Paul of the Cross, who lived to be eighty-one, became the founder of a religious order vowed to reparation.

Brought up in a thoroughly Christian manner and accustomed from his youth to complete abnegation and the practice of all the virtues, St. Paul very early in life had the affective prayer of simple gaze, and at about the age of nineteen a notable increase in piety. He called this period “his

conversion”; in it appear the signs of the passive purification of the senses, accompanied, as is not unusual, by an attack of scruples.

From this time on, Father Cajetan rightly distinguishes three periods in his mystical life. In the first, which lasted twelve years, the saint was raised progressively to the different degrees of prayer described by St. Teresa, even to the transforming union. In the second period, which lasted forty-five years, he had exceptionally profound experience of the life of reparation. In the third period, which comprised the last five years of his life, although his trials continued, consolations increased in proportion as he drew near the end of his journey.

In the first period, after the passive purification of the senses and the painful attack of scruples, the servant of God, who had received the grace of infused contemplation, remained for three or four hours at a time in prayer. He gave seven hours daily to mental prayer. According to the testimony of his confessor, Father John Mary, he had experience of ecstatic prayer at about the age of twenty-four, being often rapt out of his senses. He then received great lights on the mysteries of faith and was favored with visions which gave him to understand that he should found an order Consecrated to the Passion. At this period he also received a vision of the Blessed Trinity, one of heaven, and another of hell; his faith “seemed to him changed into evidence.”

It seems certain that St. Paul of the Cross personally underwent the passive purification of the spirit at the age of twenty-six, chiefly during a retreat of forty days in 1720. Father Cajetan relates these trials at length. At this time the saint heard words uttered against God, “diabolical words, which, he said, pierced his heart and soul”

This passive purification of the spirit was completed by a contemplation of our Savior’s passion, a contemplation which led the saint “through love to make the most holy sufferings of Jesus his own.” “The soul,” he says, “all immersed in pure love, without an image, in most pure and naked faith, suddenly finds itself, when it so pleases the Sovereign Good, plunged equally into the ocean of the Savior’s sufferings” and sees “that the Passion is wholly a work of love.”

From this time on, the saint’s prayer consisted in putting on the sufferings of Jesus and in allowing himself to be immersed in our Savior’s divinity. Before the age of thirty-one, St. Paul of the Cross received the grace of the transforming union. This fact can scarcely be doubted if, after carefully

considering the loftiness of the purifying graces which preceded it, one takes cognizance of the testimony gathered by Father Cajetan. This signal grace was even accompanied by the symbolism which sometimes manifests it sensibly: by the apparition of our Lord, of His Blessed Mother, and of several saints. St. Paul of the Cross also received a gold ring on which were represented the instruments of the Passion.

When we see to what close union with Jesus crucified the servant of God attained before the age of thirty-one, and consider that he was to live to the age of eighty-one and found an order vowed to reparation, we are less astonished at seeing him associated afterward for a period of forty-five years with the sorrowful life of our Lord Jesus Christ. In fact, after receiving the grace of the transforming union, he had, according to the testimony of his confessor, to pass through forty-five years of interior desolations, most painful abandonment, during which, “from time to time only, the Lord granted him a short respite.”

His life was truly a life of reparation in all its depth and elevation; it was the apostolate by spiritual suffering to an exceptional degree. This suffering consisted not only in the subtraction of sensible consolations, but, as it were, in the eclipse of the virtues of faith, hope, and charity. The saint believed himself abandoned by God, he believed that God was irritated with him. His temptations to despair and sadness were overwhelming; and yet in this interminable trial, St. Paul showed great patience, perfect resignation to the divine will, and extreme kindness to all who approached him, as Father Cajetan relates. In the Summary of the ordinary processes in view of his canonization, are the following declarations: “One day St. Paul said to his director: ‘If anyone should ask me at any time what I was thinking about, it seems to me that I could reply that I was thinking of God.’ “This was likewise the case even in his greatest spiritual desolations, at a time when it seemed to him that he no longer had faith, hope, or charity. He was accustomed to say: “It seems to me impossible not to think of God, since our spirit is wholly filled with God and we are entirely in Him.”

Actually, when St. Paul of the Cross went through the streets of Rome exclaiming: “A via Pauli, libera nos, Domine,” he was unable to breathe spiritually except in God. Day and night for fortyfive years his prayer was a painful, heroic, incessant prayer, which sought God ardently, and which sought Him to give Him to the souls for whom this great saint suffered. More fruitful than years of preaching inspired by a lesser love, these painful

years were a sublime realization of the Master's words: "We ought always to pray, and not to faint." The saint's life and trials throw light on the import of the following thought of St. John of the Cross: "A single act of pure love can do more good in the Church than many exterior works" inspired by a lesser charity.

Near the close of these fony-five years of suffering, St. Paul of the Cross experienced intervals of consolation. He felt himself drawn into our Savior's wounds, and Jesus crucified said to him: "You are in My heart." The Blessed Virgin appeared to him, and also the soul of a priest condemned to purgatory, for whom he was to suffer. Our Savior's passion was, so to speak, imprinted on his heart.

After forty-five years, his trial was mitigated, and spiritual consolations increased progressively during the last five years of his long life. He had an apparition of our Lady of Sorrows and other favors in the sacristy of the church of SS. John and Paul in Rome, ecstasies with and without levitation. The last months of his life, at the age of eighty-one, were like the immediate prelude of the beatitude of heaven.

The facts we have just recounted are certainly most exceptional. From time to time, however, we find, more particularly in contemplative orders vowed to prayer and immolation, somewhat similar facts in souls that have a reparatory vocation and have made a vow consecrating themselves to this apostolate through suffering. We have known three very generous Carmelites and a priest, all of whom seemed to be in an interminable night of the spirit (thirty and forty years); yet these souls were apparently already purified, but their oblation for the salvation of sinners seemed to have been accepted.

After the examination of these facts, in the light of principles we believe that we can reach the following conclusion: When the night of the spirit is chiefly purificatory, under the influence of the grace that is exercised mainly by the gift of understanding, the theological vinues and humility are purified of all human alloy. As we have shown elsewhere, the formal motive of these virtues is freed from every accessory motive, and their primary object brought into powerful relief above every secondary object. The soul thus purified can pass beyond the formulas of mysteries and enter into "the deep things of God," as St. Paul says. Then, in spite of all temptations against faith and hope, the soul firmly believes by a direct act in a most pure and sublime manner which surmounts temptation; it believes

for the sole and most pure motive supernaturally attained: the authority of God revealing. It also hopes for the sole reason that He is ever helpful, infinite Mercy. It loves Him in the most complete aridity, because He is infinitely better in Himself than all the gifts which He could grant us. The first revealing Truth, formal motive of infused faith, the divine, helpful Mercy, formal motive of hope, the infinite Goodness of God sovereignly lovable in itself, then appear more and more in their transcendent supernaturalness like three stars of first magnitude in the night of the spirit.

When this trial is chiefly reparatory, when it has principally for its end to make the already purified soul work for the salvation of its neighbor, then it preserves the same lofty characteristics just described, but takes on an additional character more reminiscent of the intimate sufferings of Jesus and Mary, who did not need to be purified. In this case the suffering makes one think of that of a lifesaver who, in a storm, struggles heroically to save from death those who are on the point of drowning. Spiritual life-savers, like St. Paul of the Cross, struggle not only for hours and months, but sometimes for years in order to snatch souls from eternal death; and, in a way, these reparative souls must resist the temptations of the souls they seek to save that they may come efficaciously to their assistance. Reparative souls are intimately associated with our Savior’s sorrowful life; in them St. Paul’s words are fully realized: “Heirs indeed of God, and joint heirs with Christ; yet so, if we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified with Him.”

Chapter 50

The Influence of the Holy Ghost in the Perfect Soul

> "If thou didst know the gift of God!"
> John 4: 10

For a clear understanding of the nature of the mystical union, we must treat of the influence of the Holy Ghost in the perfect soul by recalling the most indisputable and lofty principles commonly taught on this subject. To see their meaning and import, we shall consider first the Holy Ghost as the supreme gift, and secondly what follows this gift in the perfect soul.

THE HOLY GHOST, UNCREATED GIFT

The Holy Ghost is called the Gift par excellence. Christ alluded and more than alluded to this title when He said to the Samaritan woman: "If thou didst know the gift of God!" The created gift of sanctifying grace, united to charity, in itself immensely surpasses all natural gifts, those of the richest imagination, of the keenest intellect, of the most energetic will. Grace, the seed of eternal life, even immensely exceeds the natural life of the angels, the natural strength of their intellect and will; it also exceeds, and that greatly, as St. Paul says, graces that are gratis datae and, so to speak, extrinsic, like the gift of miracles, the gift of tongues, and prophecy.

The Holy Ghost is the uncreated Gift, infinitely superior to that of sanctifying grace and of charity, superior to every degree of charity and every degree of glory.

He is, first of all, the uncreated Gift, as the final and eternal term of the divine fecundity of the heavenly Father and of His Son. By the eternal generation of the Word, the infinitely good Father communicates to the Son all the divine nature, gives Him to be God of God, light of light. The Father and the Son breathe forth the personal Love that is the Holy Ghost. The

third divine Person thus proceeds from the mutual love of the Father and the Son; He is the uncreated Gift which the first two Persons give each other, the unique gift, by an eternal spiration that communicates all the divine nature to the Holy Ghost.

St. Thomas explains why the Holy Ghost is called the personal and uncreated Gift. He says that every gift proceeds from a gratuitous donation whose source is love, and the first thing we give to someone is the love by which we wish him well. Thus love is the first of all gifts, the principle of all the others. Consequently the Holy Ghost, who is personal subsistent Love, deserves to be called the personal and uncreated Gift.

This supreme Gift, which the first two divine Persons make each other from all eternity, has been given to us in time by our Lord Jesus Christ. He had already given us the Eucharist at the Last Supper, and His precious blood on the cross; He had given us grace by all the sacraments. Lastly, He willed to give us the supreme Gift, the uncreated Gift, to crown all His benefactions. He had promised to send us the Holy Ghost and, in fact, He sent Him to us on Pentecost.

The grandeur of this supreme gift appears more clearly in comparison with the others, even with the most sublime among them. Our Savior had already merited for us all the effects of our predestination: our vocation to Christian life, our justification or conversion, final perseverance, and the glory of the elect redeemed by His blood; but He willed to give us still more, to bestow on us the uncreated Gift, the Holy Ghost.

When the apostles received the Holy Ghost, they were enlightened, strengthened, confirmed in grace, and transformed; and, under the direction of the Holy Ghost, they persevered even to martyrdom.

This discussion shows why the names proper to the Holy Ghost are personal Love and the uncreated Gift. By appropriation, He is also called the Comforter. He is, indeed, the great spiritual friend who comforts us in the sorrows of life, in anxiety which sometimes grows into anguish. Thus He comforted the apostles, deprived of our Lord’s sensible presence, when the great difficulties of their apostolate were beginning. For each of us Pentecost was renewed when we received confirmation.

THE ACTIVITY OF THE UNCREATED GIFT IN OUR SOULS

We have truly received the supreme Gift. Through charity and the gift of wisdom, from which proceeds a quasi-experimental knowledge of the presence in our souls of the divine Persons, who always remain united, we can enjoy this Gift.

At this point in our study, we consider it advisable to insist on the principal effects attributed to the Holy Ghost by appropriation, although the Father and the Son also concur in their production, as They do in every effect of the divine power that is common to the three Persons.

The uncreated Gift first of all strengthens, preserves, and increases the created gift of sanctifying grace in our souls. Therefore, says St. Thomas, our Lord, speaking to the Samaritan woman, calls grace “a fountain of water, springing up into life everlasting.” In contrast to dead water preserved in cisterns or ditches, living water is not separated from its gushing source and, under the impulsion of its source, always flows toward the ocean.

Thus sanctifying grace is not separated from the source of living water, the Holy Ghost; it is He Himself who preserves it in us and gives it that strength of impulsion which drives it in a way toward the spiritual ocean that is eternal life. In this sense St. Paul says: “The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us.”

Hence the Holy Ghost sometimes gives the perfect soul a confident certitude of being in the state of grace, according to the words of St. Paul: “The Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit, that we are the sons of God.” He gives us this testimony, says St. Thomas, by the filial affection which He excites in us, and by which, in a way, He makes Himself felt by us as the life of our life.

However, this sort of transitory certitude is far from having the clarity of evidence, for we cannot perfectly discern the filial affection inspired by the Holy Ghost from a natural act of love of God, from an inefficacious love, accompanied at times by a certain lyricism, which may exist without grace, as happens in some poets.

The Holy Ghost “dwells in light inaccessible” which seems obscure to us because it is too strong for us, but His inspiration reassures us, according to the words of the Apocalypse: “To him that overcometh, I will give the hidden manna,... and a new name written, which no man knoweth, but he that receiveth it.”

For the same reason the Holy Ghost strengthens our faith and makes it penetrating and sweet. St. Paul says: “The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.... Now we have received... the Spirit that is of God, that we may know the things that are given us from God.”

In consequence also, the Holy Ghost strengthens the certitude of our hope, a certitude which is not yet that of salvation, but that of tending toward salvation; a certitude that increases in the measure in which we draw near to the end of the journey.

Lastly and above all, the Holy Ghost, personal Love, excites in perfect souls an infused love of God and of neighbor notably different from the other acts of charity. It is a love to which the soul could not move itself with the help of common actual grace; it requires a special inspiration, a superior operating grace. There is in it a visit of the Lord; it is then the Holy Ghost Himself who moves us to love Him. He causes this infused love, of which He is at one and the same time the beginning and the end, to well up from our hearts. We shall never be able to love God as much as He loves us by His uncreated and eternal dilection; but between Him and us there is a certain equality of love when it is the Holy Ghost Himself who gives rise in us to the infused love which He purifies and strengthens until our entrance into heaven.

It is of this infused love that the author of The Imitation speaks, when he says:

> O Lord God, my holy Lover, when Thou shalt come into my heart, all that is within me shall be filled with joy. Thou art my glory and the exultation of my heart. Thou art my hope and my refuge in the day of my tribulation. But because I am as yet weak in love and imperfect in virtue, therefore do I stand in need of being strengthened and comforted by Thee. Wherefore do Thou visit me often, and instruct me in Thy holy discipline... so that I may become... courageous to suffer, and steadfast to persevere. A great thing is love [excited by Thee], a great good above all goods. It alone lighteneth all that is burdensome, and beareth equally all that is unequal, for it carrieth a burden without being burdened, and maketh all else that is bitter sweet and savory. The noble love of Jesus impelleth us to do great things, and exciteth us always to desire that which is the more perfect.... Love often knoweth no measure, but groweth fervent above all measure.... Love watcheth, and sleeping slumbereth not. When weary, it is not tired; when straitened, it is not constrained; when frightened, it is not disturbed; but like a vivid flame and a burning torch, it mounteth upward and securely passeth through all.

This teaching, which is confirmed by the experience of the saints, rests on revelation itself. St. Paul tells us: “The Spirit also helpeth our infirmity, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit Himself asketh for us with unspeakable groanings.... He asketh for the

saints according to God"; "according to God," that is, according to the divine good pleasure, which He knows perfectly.

In The Dialogue of St. Catherine of Siena, the Lord Himself explains these words, saying: "In perfect souls the Holy Ghost weeps tears of fire," in particular at the sight of the sins that lead souls to perdition. These spiritual tears often obtain the remission of great sins.

For the same reason the Holy Ghost is called the Father of the poor, of those especially who love holy poverty. He nourishes them spiritually like a mother by His divine charity; from time to time He gives them a holy joy and, as it were, a foretaste of eternal life.

He inspires them with the love of the cross, that is, the love of Jesus crucified, of His sufferings, of His holy humiliations. He gives them the desire to share therein in the measure willed for them by Providence, and He makes them find peace, strength, and occasionally joy in this desire. The Holy Ghost configures His faithful servants to Christ crucified, and through them, through their sufferings, He saves souls.

He shows faithful souls the value of His divine inspirations which, when not resisted, lead to true sanctity. As a result, these souls have an increasingly deeper understanding of the effect which the consecration of the soul to the Holy Ghost may produce when well made.

Lastly, He sometimes gives most perfect souls as it were a certitude of their predestination and salvation by a special revelation or by the equivalent of such a revelation, by granting them, together with a savor of eternal life, the experimental knowledge of sanctifying grace as the seed of glory.

CONCLUSION

All theologians accept these principles which are manifestly based on revelation. They lift us gently toward what the great spiritual writers have said about the mystical union, arid or consoled, occasionally ecstatic, the full development of which is called the transforming union. Taking especially St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross as our guides, we shall discuss this mystical union, properly so called. What these two saints say about this union seems less exceptional after a study of the higher laws of the development of sanctifying grace, of charity, and of the gifts of the Holy Ghost. One sees in them an excellent fruit which forms mysteriously but

normally in the flower of charity under the ever more intimate influence of the interior Master, of the Comforter, who instructs by His unction, without noise of words, and who draws the soul always more strongly to Himself.

The mystical union is, in our opinion, the normal though eminent fruit of the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity in our souls. The three divine Persons dwell in the soul in the state of grace as in a temple where they can be and sometimes are the object of a quasi-experimental knowledge and of an infused love. They thus make Themselves felt as the life of our life. When this quasi-experimental knowledge of the divine Persons present in us and this infused love have reached their full, normal development, they constitute the mystical union, properly so called.

The indwelling of the Blessed Trinity in our souls is thus the center from which our spiritual life springs and to which it returns. It is the realization of St. John's words: "God is charity; and he that abideth in charity, abideth in God, and God in him."

The truth of this doctrine is still more evident when we consider not a given individual soul, but the human soul itself and especially divine grace itself. The grace of the virtues and the gifts is not only the seed of the mystical union; it is normally the seed of the beatific vision and of its immediate prelude: gratia est semen gloriae, a doctrine profoundly understood by Sister Elizabeth of the Trinity, a valiant Carmelite of Dijon. The mystery of the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity in the center of her soul was the great reality of her interior life.

Chapter 51

Arid Mystical Union and Ecstatic Union According to St. Teresa

When we spoke of the degrees of contemplative prayer in proficients, taking St. Teresa as our guide, we described arid quiet, next sweet quiet, in which the will alone is captivated by God, and lastly the prayer of simple union, in which not only the will is seized by God, but also the understanding and the memory, and in which the imagination is as if asleep, because all the activity of the soul takes place in its higher part. There is even at times a beginning of ecstasy or an initial suspension of the exercise of the exterior senses. Following what St. Teresa wrote in the sixth mansion, we shall now discuss arid and painful union, which corresponds to the night of the spirit, then ecstatic union or the spiritual betrothal, and lastly, in the following chapter, the transforming union or spiritual marriage.

ARID AND PAINFUL MYSTICAL UNION

St. Teresa speaks of this union at the beginning of the sixth mansion, but she describes especially its concomitant outward phenomena. St. John of the Cross, on the other hand, shows more the intimate nature of this state under the name of the night of the spirit, or the passive purification of the spirit, as we saw at the beginning of the fourth part of this work.

God makes the soul desire the immense good which He is preparing for it; and He causes it to pass through a terrible crucible, of which St. Teresa writes:

> An outcry is raised against such a person by those amongst whom she lives.... They say she wants to pass for a saint, that she goes to extremes in piety.... Persons she thought were her friends desert her making the most bitter remarks of all.... They make a thousand scoffing remarks.... The worst of it is, these troubles do not blow over but last all her life.... ‘

> Yet, oh! the rest would seem trifling in comparison could I relate the interior torments met with here, but they are impossible to describe. Let us first speak of the trial of meeting with so timorous and inexperienced a confessor that nothing seems safe to him.... The poor soul beset by the same fears, seeks its confessor as judge, and feels a torture and dismay at his condemnation that can only be realized by those who have experienced it themselves. For one of the severe trials of these souls, especially if they have lived wicked lives, is their belief that God permits them to be deceived in punishment for their sins. While actually receiving these graces they feel secure and cannot but suppose that these favors proceed from the Spirit of God; but this state lasts a very short time, while the remembrance of their misdeeds is ever before them, so that when, as is sure to happen, they discover any faults in themselves, these torturing thoughts return.
>
> The soul is quieted for a time when the confessor reassures it, although it returns later on to its former apprehensions, but when he augments its fears they become almost unbearable. Especially is this the case when such spiritual dryness ensues that the mind feels as if it never had thought of God nor ever will be able to do so. When men speak of Him, they seem to be talking of some person heard of long ago....
>
> Her understanding being too obscure to discern the truth, she believes all that the imagination, which now has the upper hand, puts before her mind, besides crediting the falsehoods suggested to her by the devil, whom doubtless our Lord gives leave to tempt her. The evil spirit even tries to make her think God has rejected her.... No comfort can be found in this tempest of trouble....
>
> There is no other remedy in such a tempest except to wait for the mercy of God who, unexpectedly, by some casual word or unforeseen circumstance, suddenly dispels all these sorrows. Then every cloud of trouble disappears and the mind is left full of light and far happier than before. It praises our Lord God like one who has come out victorious from a dangerous battle, for it was He who won the victory. The soul is fully conscious that the conquest was not its own.... Thus it realizes its weakness and how little man can help himself if God forsake him. This truth now needs no demonstration.

The soul then understands far better the Master's words: "Without Me you can do nothing" in the order of salvation, and it is led more and more to admit, with St. Augustine and St. Thomas, that grace is efficacious of itself, that it excites our effort instead of being rendered efficacious by it.

What conduct should be observed in this trial? St. Teresa tells us in the same chapter:

> Their comfort must come from above—nothing earthly can help them. This great God wishes us to acknowledge His sovereignty and our own misery.... The best remedy for these crosses... is to perform external works of charity and to trust in the mercy of God, which never fails those who hope in Him....
>
> The devils also bring about exterior trials which, being more unusual, need not be mentioned. They are far less painful, for whatever the demons may do, I believe they never succeed in paralyzing the faculties or disturbing the soul in the former manner. In fact, the reason is able to discern that the evil spirits can do no more harm than God permits; and while the mind has not lost its powers, all sufferings are comparatively insignificant.

Farther on, St. Teresa speaks of a still more painful purification of love, which occurs at the entrance to the seventh mansion, “as the purification of purgatory introduces the soul into heaven.” But the soul is conscious, while enduring this suffering, that it is an eminent favor.

After the interior sufferings described at the beginning of the sixth mansion, in which there is a painful presence of God, the soul receives such knowledge of the divine majesty that frequently partial or complete ecstasy follows.

ECSTATIC UNION; ITS MANIFESTATION AND NATURE

Ecstasy is the suspension of the exterior senses; it does not necessarily imply levitation, or the elevation of the body above the ground. This suspension of the exterior senses is manifested by more or less marked insensibility, the slowing of the respiration, the diminution of vital heat. According to St. Teresa: “One perceives that the natural heat of the body is perceptibly lessened; the coldness increases, though accompanied with exceeding joy and sweetness.” The body then becomes motionless, the gaze fixed on an invisible object; sometimes the eyelids close.

Instead of weakening the body, this state gives it new strength. A person who ordinarily would find difficulty in kneeling for a long time, does so without difficulty in the state of ecstasy. Occasionally the suspension of the senses is incomplete and allows the ecstatic to dictate the revelations received, as happened to St. Catherine of Siena.

Whence arises the loss of the use of the exterior senses in this state? It proceeds from the soul’s absorption in God, which is itself the result of a very special grace of light and love. The abundant light then given, for example, on the mysteries of the redemptive Incarnation, of the Eucharist as the expression of the immense goodness of God, produces lively admiration and great love of God. The will is touched and, as it were, wounded by the divine attraction, and moves toward God with great impetuosity, like a magnetized needle toward a pole. The admiration of the intellect grows through love, and love through admiration; as St. Francis de Sales says: “The sight of beauty makes us love it, and love makes us look at it.”

The soul, thus ravished with admiration and love for God, loses the use of its senses because all its activity passes over into its higher part. St. Thomas noted this principle clearly: “When the soul tends wholly to the act

of one power, man is abstracted from the act of another power"; when the soul is wholly moved to the act of one of its faculties, the exercise of the other faculties is suspended. If at times a scholar, like Archimedes, is so absorbed by speculation that he no longer hears speech addressed to him, with what far greater reason is this true of the contemplative soul at the time when a very strong grace makes it perceive the infinite majesty of God and absorbs it in this blessed contemplation! Then ecstasy, which follows this eminent infused contemplation, is not, properly speaking, extraordinary; it may be the normal result of the soul's absorption in God, according to the principle which we have just recalled. As we shall see, it is otherwise in rapture, which seizes the soul abruptly and violently in order to raise it to lofty contemplation; then it precedes this contemplation instead of following it.

In ecstatic love, is there still liberty and merit? There most certainly is; as St. Thomas shows, the liberty of the act of love, the condition of merit, disappears only when the soul sees God face to face in heaven. Then it is invincibly attracted by Him and loves Him with a love that is sovereignly spontaneous but no longer free; it is a love superior to liberty.

The duration of divine ecstasy varies greatly; complete ecstasy generally lasts only some minutes, sometimes for half an hour. However, there are cases of prolonged incomplete ecstasy, which St. Teresa says "lasts occasionally for an entire day." There are even complete ecstasies which have lasted as much as four days, or even longer.

Ecstasy ordinarily ends by a spontaneous awakening; only little by little does the soul recover the use of its senses, as if it were returning from another world. The awakening may be provoked by an oral or simply a mental command given by a religious superior. In this connection it should be observed that, in the judgment of the Church, religious obedience during ecstasy is one of the characteristic signs of its divine origin, and a sign which eliminates the hypothesis of hysteria. The ecstatic who does not obey a religious superior lacks the sign considered by the Church as a touchstone, which shows the conformity of the ecstatic's will with the divine will expressed by the superior. It should, in fact, be kept clearly in mind that if in hysteria there is suggestion by hypnosis, it is only through the influence of an imperious will and a strong imagination on a sickly sensibility, with surrender of the will and no merit. In this case there is lacking the moral character of religious obedience, in which, through virtue, a human will

subjects itself to the divine will, and even comes out of ecstasy to obey in this way.

False ecstasies are often easy to discern from true ones. The ecstasy of divine origin differs greatly from the so-called hysterical ecstasy, because in the divine there is no trace of the character of morbid excitation, of strained and passionate agitation, of entirely physical enjoyment followed by great depression. Divine ecstasy is a movement of the entire being, body and soul, toward the divine object that is contemplated. In a great calm, it is the absorption of the soul ravished out of its senses by a mysterious power, generally following a vision received in the imagination or the intellect. The end of the ecstasy is the return to the natural state in a calm manner, accompanied by simple regret over the disappearance of the vision and the celestial joy that it gave. This was observed in particular in the ecstasies of St. Bernadette Soubirous, likewise in those of St. Teresa and many other servants of God.

It should be noted also that the natural swoon may have as its cause an excessive over-excitement of the imagination or even the lively impressions of mental prayer on a frail and weak constitution. These swoons should be eliminated as much as possible; they should be resisted and the organism strengthened by more substantial food.

Lastly, it should be kept in mind that there can be diabolical ecstasies, which are a sort of obsession. If a person lives in sin and seems to have ecstasies during which he gives way to unseemly contortions, utters incoherent words which he immediately forgets, seeks frequented places that he may become a spectacle, and if besides, in this state, he receives communications leading to evil or to good for an evil end, these are so many signs, as Benedict XIV declares, of diabolical ecstasy.

WHAT DISTINGUISHES RAPTURE FROM ECSTASY

Simple ecstasy is a sort of swoon which is produced sweetly following a wound of love. St. Teresa says: “The soul is conscious of having received a delicious wound but cannot discover how, nor who gave it, yet recognizes it as a most precious grace and hopes the hurt will never heal. The soul makes amorous complaints to its Bridegroom, even uttering them aloud; nor can it control itself, knowing that though He is present He will not manifest

Himself so that it may enjoy Him." It is like a fleeting interview before more continual union, called the transforming union or spiritual marriage.

The swoon of ecstasy differs from the impetuosity and violence of rapture, in which the soul is suddenly seized by God as by a superior force that carries it away. St. Thomas noted this. He says: "Rapture adds something to ecstasy. For ecstasy means simply a going out of oneself by being placed outside one's proper order; while rapture denotes a certain violence in addition."

Often the spiritual espousals are concluded in rapture; the soul is as if inebriated and can concern itself only with God. Rapture is followed by the flight of the spirit, in which the soul believes itself transported into a new, wholly divine region.

THE EFFECTS OF ECSTATIC UNION

Such absorption in God produces great detachment from creatures, whose nothingness becomes more and more apparent; it also gives rise to immense sorrow for sins committed and for all that separates the soul from God. The soul also sees with increasing clearness the value of our Savior's passion and of Mary's sufferings at the foot of the cross, and from this contemplation draws admirable patience to bear the trials which the Lord will send it that it may work for its neighbor's salvation.

In short, the effects of ecstatic union are great holiness of life. For this reason St. Francis de Sales says: "When you see a person who has raptures in prayer... and, nevertheless, no ecstasy in his life, that is, does not lead a lofty life of union with God, by the abnegation of worldly desires and the mortification of natural wishes and inclinations, by interior sweetness, simplicity, humility, and especially by continual charity, believe me, Theotime, all these raptures are seriously doubtful and dangerous."

THE PURIFICATION OF LOVE

After ecstatic union, as a preparation for the transforming union, there is a very painful purification of love, of which St. Teresa speaks at the end of the sixth mansion. The saint says:

> The heart receives, it knows not how or whence, a blow as from a fiery dart... in the very depths and center of the soul.... This resembles the pains of purgatory.... The spiritual torments

> are so much more keen that the bodily ones remain unnoticed.... She feels a strange loneliness, finding no companionship in any earthly creature.... Meanwhile all society is a torture to her. She is like one suspended in mid-air, who can neither touch the earth nor mount to heaven; she is unable to reach the water while parched with thirst and this is not a thirst that can be borne, but one which nothing will quench.... Though this torment and grief could not, I think, be surpassed by any earthly cross..., yet they appeared to her as nothing in comparison with their recompense. The soul realizes that it has not merited anguish which is of such measureless value.

In the same chapter of the sixth mansion, the saint goes on to say: “This agony does not continue for long in its full violence—never, I believe, longer than three or four hours; were it prolonged, the weakness of our nature could not endure it except by a miracle.... This favor entails great suffering but leaves most precious graces within the soul, which loses all fear of any crosses it may henceforth meet with, for in comparison with the acute anguish it has gone through, all else seems nothing.... It is also much more detached from creatures, having learned that no one but its Creator can bring it consolation and strength.”

We shall now discuss the supreme development on earth of the life of grace in souls that have undergone the passive purification of the spirit, described by St. John of the Cross in Tbe Dark Night and by St. Teresa in Tbe Interior Castle.

On emerging from these interior trials, the soul receives such knowledge of the divine majesty that it is at times absorbed in God, as Archimedes was by his discoveries, to such an extent that he did not hear speech addressed to him. At other times, the soul exults and cannot refrain from singing the praises of God. In this connection St. Teresa says: “So excessive is its jubilee that the soul will not enjoy it alone, but speaks of it to all around so that they may help it to praise God, which is its one desire.” Thus St. Dominic spoke only to God or of God and spent his nights in prayer at the foot of the altar; St. Thomas Aquinas also prayed for hours at night before the Blessed Sacrament.

This holy joy of soul, the fruit of union with God, may be desired, says St. Teresa, whereas it is in no way fitting to desire visions and revelations, for they are extraordinary favors entirely distinct from the full development of the life of grace in our souls. St. Teresa declares: “Know that for having received many favors of this kind, you will not merit more glory, but will be the more stringently obliged to serve, since you have received more.... There are many saints who never knew what it was to receive one such

favor, while others who have received them are not saints at all.... Indeed, for one that is granted, the soul bears many a cross."

Finally, at the end of its earthly ascent toward God, the soul is introduced into the transforming union, described especially by St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross, who bring a precision of statement on this point to what the greatest spiritual writers who preceded them had said. Using their description, we shall see the graces which sometimes accompany the transforming union, next the essential nature of this union, its theological explanation, and its fruits.

Chapter 52

The Transforming Union, Prelude of the Union of Heaven

THE GRACES WHICH SOMETIMES ACCOMPANY THE TRANSFORMING UNION

The spiritual marriage is at times celebrated with expressive symbolism: the favored person receives a ring set with precious stones, which from then on he sees from time to time; he hears celestial canticles. This sensible symbolism is also at times accompanied by an apparition of our Lord and by an intellectual vision of the Blessed Trinity. St. Teresa mentions these two graces which she personally received. She also notes: “Those whom our Lord admits into the seventh mansion... are constantly in the company of Christ our Lord both in His humanity and His divinity.”

The intellectual vision of the Blessed Trinity which certain persons receive in this state shows them by an infused idea and an eminent light the real distinction between the three Persons and the unity of Their nature incomparably better than the best theologian could by developing the congruous arguments relative to this mystery. The soul thus favored has not yet the immediate vision of the divine essence; it does not possess the intrinsic evidence of the mystery; it does not yet see that if God were not triune, He would not be God. The soul still remains in the order of faith, but its faith becomes singularly penetrating, luminous, and sweet. It grasps far better than before that the Father is God, that the Son is God, that the Holy Ghost is God, and, nevertheless, that the Father is not the Son, and that neither the Father nor the Son is the Holy Ghost. It sees dimly, so to speak, that the Father in His infinite fecundity communicates the entire divine nature to the Son, and the Father and the Son communicate it to the Holy Ghost by the most perfect diffusion of the divine goodness and in the most intimate communion. The soul sees in the Blessed Trinity an eminent

exemplar of Eucharistic Communion and of the closest union of the soul with its Creator and Father, according to the words of Jesus: “That they may be one as We also are one.”

This intellectual vision of the Blessed Trinity, which is inferior to the beatific vision, is of varying and intermittent clarity. It does not seem necessarily linked to the transforming union according to the description given of it by St. John of the Cross. He does not say that this state requires essentially extraordinary graces, although it implies a very lofty contemplation of the divine perfections.

THE ESSENTIAL NATURE OF THE TRANSFORMING UNION

St. Teresa notes that in this stage ecstasies cease as a rule: “The infirmity [of ecstasy] formerly so troublesome to the mind and impossible to get over, disappears at once. Probably this is because our Lord has now strengthened, dilated, and developed the soul.” Thus union with God, which can now take place without troubling the exercise of the faculties, becomes almost continual. It seems indeed that the Blessed Virgin was always in this state, and it is also said that St. Hildegarde never knew the weakness of ecstasy.

According to St. John of the Cross, the essential basis of this wholly eminent state is in no way miraculous; it is, says the saint, “the perfect state of the spiritual life,” being here on earth the culminating point of the development of the life of grace and of the love of God, and the closest union with the Blessed Trinity, which dwells in every soul in the state of grace.

In the transforming union the higher faculties are drawn to the innermost center of the soul where the Blessed Trinity dwells. Under this grace the soul cannot doubt the presence in it of the divine Persons and is almost never deprived of Their company. “The soul learns that it is God who gives it ‘life,’ by certain secret intuitions,” says St. Teresa.

St. John of the Cross, in The Living Flame of Love, explains this union by several images:

> Thus fire or a stone tend by their natural force to the center of their sphere.... When a stone shall have reached the center of the earth and is incapable of further motion of its own, we say of it that it is then in its inmost or deepest center.

> The center of the soul is God. When the soul shall have reached Him according to its essence, and according to the power of its operations, it will then have attained to its ultimate and deepest center in God. This will be when the soul shall love Him, comprehend Him, and enjoy Him with all its strength. When, however, the soul has not attained to this state,... it is not in the deepest center, because there is still room for it to advance.... But if the soul shall have attained to the highest degree of love, the love of God will then wound it in its inmost depth or center, and the soul will be transformed and enlightened in the highest degree in its substance, faculties, and strength, until it shall become most like unto God. The soul in this state may be compared to crystal, lucid and pure; the greater the light thrown upon it, the more luminous it becomes by the concentration thereof, until at last it seems to be all light and indistinguishable from it; it being then so illumined, and to the utmost extent, that it seems to be one with the light itself.

A little farther on, St. John of the Cross uses another image: “It is the same fire that first disposes the wood for combustion and afterward consumes it.” It is still wood, but incandescent wood, which has taken on the properties of fire. Thus from the purified heart a flame rises almost ceaselessly toward God.

St. Teresa uses still another figure for this spiritual state, comparing it to rain: “Thus rain which falls from heaven into a river is so mingled with it that it can no longer be distinguished from it.” The figure of two candles whose flames unite to form a single flame, has also been used to describe this union, which is like a fusion of the soul’s life and God’s. As a result, we understand why St. John of the Cross describes the transforming union as the state of spiritual perfection, the full development of the grace of the virtues and the gifts: “The perfect spiritual life,” he says, “consists in the possession of God by the union of love.”

The transforming union is, therefore, most intimate; it brings with it great, inalterable peace, at least to the summit of the higher faculties. Yet the soul thus favored may still at times be “sorrowful unto death” if Jesus wishes to associate it with His life of reparation and lead it to Gethsemane for the salvation of sinners. In the Garden of Olives, He himself had more than the transforming union; with the hypostatic union, He had the beatific vision, and yet He willed to experience mortal sadness that His holocaust might be perfect.

THE THEOLOGICAL EXPLANATION OF THIS STATE

In A Spiritual Canticle, St. John of the Cross writes of the interior cellars thus: “These cellars are seven in number, and the soul has entered into them all when it has in perfection the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, so far as it is

possible for it.... Many souls reach and enter the first cellar, each according to the perfection of its love, but the last and inmost cellar is entered by few in this world, because therein is wrought the perfect union with God, the union of the spiritual marriage."

In other words, when the soul perfectly possesses the gift of wisdom, the highest of the seven gifts received in baptism with sanctifying grace, it has reached its inner sanctuary where the Blessed Trinity dwells, and union with God is no longer only habitual, but actual and in some measure transforming. In spite of the infinite distance separating the creature's being from that of the Creator, it is a union of quasi-experimental knowledge and very intimate love, in which the soul is deified by receiving perfect participation in the divine nature. In this sense, St. Paul could write: "He who is joined to the Lord, is one spirit."

In this case union is transforming because the soul, while keeping its created nature, receives a great increase of sanctifying grace and charity, and because it is the characteristic of ardent love to transform us morally into the person loved who is like another self, alter ego, for whom we wish, as we do for ourselves, all suitable goods. If this person is divine, holy souls wish Him to reign ever more profoundly in them, to be closer to them than they are to themselves, closer than the air they breathe is to their lungs, and the freshened blood to their hearts.

St. John of the Cross himself, therefore, gives the theological explanation of this state, which he sums up in a principle enunciated in the Ascent of Mount Carmel: "The more pure and clean the soul in the perfection of a living faith, the greater is the infusion of charity, and the greater the charity, the greater the illumination and the more abundant the graces."

St. Thomas says likewise that the seven gifts are connected with charity; consequently, just as the infused virtues, they grow with it, like the parts of one and the same organism, or "like the five fingers of the hand."

Evidently there are many degrees in the transforming union. St. John of the Cross points out this fact in A Spiritual Canticle, apropos of the spiritual betrothals, in which the soul enjoys perfect union in a transitory way, whereas in the spiritual marriage the soul possesses it in a quasi-continual manner.

According to St. Teresa, the fruitive union of the betrothal lasts scarcely more than half an hour, during which the soul has experimental knowledge of God really present in it and of His embrace.

In the spiritual marriage, which is ratified on earth and will be consummated in heaven, the actual union of love with God experimentally known in the center of the soul becomes more constant. According to several authors, this state is, as it were, the equivalent of a special revelation which gives the soul the certitude of being in the state of grace and, some writers add, a certitude of its predestination. This last point may be verified in many cases, but, as we shall see, it is not certain that it is verified as a rule.

St. John of the Cross says in A Spiritual Canticle: “We are not to suppose that all souls, thus far advanced, receive all that is here described, either in the same way or in the same degree of knowledge and of consciousness. Some souls receive more, others less; some in one way, some in another; and yet all may be in the state of spiritual betrothal.” Likewise, there are many degrees in the quasi-continual transforming union, under a more or less manifest form, up to the highest degree which the Blessed Virgin Mary enjoyed on earth. In these different degrees, it may be truthfully said that souls, according to their predestination, have attained here on earth their deepest center. This is the perfect realization of Christ’s prayer: “That they may be one, as We also are one: I in them, and Thou in Me;... that the world may know that Thou... hast loved them, as Thou hast also loved Me.”

THE EFFECTS OF THE TRANSFORMING UNION

The effects of this state of perfection are those of the theological virtues and of the gifts which have attained their full development. One of the fruits of this union is that which was granted to the apostles on Pentecost, confirmation in grace. St. John of the Cross says: “I believe that no soul ever attains to this state without being confirmed in grace.”

The Carmelites of Salamanca explain this confirmation in grace as a certain participation in the impeccability of the blessed through a great increase in charity whose progress turns us more and more away from sin. This notable increase of divine love is completed by a special protection of God, who removes the occasions of sin and strengthens the soul when necessary, so that it is henceforth always preserved from mortal sin and even almost always from deliberate venial sin.

Is the soul that has reached this state certain of no longer offending God and of obtaining the grace of final perseverance? St. Teresa simply says that

it is almost freed from the disturbance of the passions, that as long as it is under the actual grace of the transforming union it does not sin venially with full deliberation. She writes: “The accustomed movements of the faculties and imagination do not appear to take place in any way that can injure the soul or disturb its peace. Do I seem to imply that after God has brought the soul thus far it is certain to be saved and cannot fall into sin again? I do not mean this; whenever I say that the soul seems in security, I must be understood to imply for as long as His Majesty thus holds it in His care and it does not offend Him.”

This text shows that St. Teresa is less categorical than St. John of the Cross, who goes so far as to say in A Spiritual Canticle: “The soul has left on one side and forgotten all temptations, trials, sorrows, anxieties, and cares.” St. Teresa’s manner of speaking seems more conformable to that of theology, which teaches that the grace of final perseverance cannot be merited, and that to be assured of salvation one would have to have a special revelation about one’s own predestination. This last point was even defined by the Council of Trent. Now we cannot affirm as certain that the transforming union implies in all its degrees and in every case the equivalent of such a revelation. Moreover, after receiving a revelation, one may, under certain temptations, doubt its divine origin.

We should not forget the unusually significant example of the great St. Paul of the Cross, founder of the Passionists, who passed through the purifying night of the spirit about the age of twenty-six, and received the grace of the transforming union at twenty-nine. Destined to reach the age of eighty-one and to found an order vowed to reparation, he lived from the time he was thirty-one until he was seventy-five in an almost continual reparatory night of the spirit, during which several times he questioned whether he would be saved.

Perhaps with the reservation “under the actual grace of union,” the following statement of St. John of the Cross should be understood: “Finally, all the motions and acts of the soul, proceeding from the principle of its natural and imperfect life, are now changed in this union with God into divine motions. For the soul, as the true child of God, is moved by the Spirit of God, as it is written: ‘Whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God’ (Rom.8:14)”

We are not ignorant of the fact that in speaking of the transforming union Philip of the Blessed Trinity and Scaramelli consider that so sublime a state

requires that God reveal to the soul the indissoluble friendship that exists between them. According to these authors, if the person thus favored does not receive a special revelation of his predestination, there is, as it were, an equivalent of this special revelation.

We believe that it suffices to affirm that the Holy Ghost then greatly confirms the certitude of hope. This certitude is, as St. Thomas says, a certitude of tending toward salvation without being as yet the certitude of salvation itself. Now the Holy Ghost confirms this security of hope by the increasingly filial and strong affection which He excites in us. Then is fully verified St. Paul's statement: "The Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit that we are the sons of God."

In this state there are at times divine touches so profound that they are, the mystics say, "impressed on the substance of the soul." What is the meaning of this expression in the light of the principles of theology as St. Thomas understood them?

The divine touch is a most profound supernatural motion which acts on the very depth of the will and the intellect where these faculties take root in the substance of the soul, from which they emanate. God is closer to us than we are to ourselves, inasmuch as He immediately preserves the substance of our soul by a divine act which is the continuation of the creative act. Likewise He preserves sanctifying grace in the very essence of the soul, and at certain moments, by a special inspiration, He moves the very depths of our will and intellect from within in order to incline them toward Himself. Therein is a contact, not quantitative and spatial but supraspatial, spiritual, and absolutely immediate, of the divine essence with the substance of our soul, and from this contact proceed in the depths of our higher faculties direct acts to which God alone can move us and which we would never produce without this special inspiration. The soul can act only through its faculties, that is, it can know only by its intellect, love and will only by its will; but in this case, under the divine touch, it acts by the most intimate depth of its faculties, there where they take root in the essence of the soul.

In it there is a spiritual embrace of God, which at certain moments is extremely strong. There is also at times in the depths of the higher faculties a wound of love, a delicious spiritual wound, which is occasionally accompanied, as in the stigmatics, by a painful wound of the body, in particular in the region of the heart. It is God who wounds the soul while drawing it strongly to Himself and giving it a very ardent desire to see Him

immediately and never again to be separated from Him. This burning desire of the beatific vision is the normal disposition to receive it without delay. A similar desire also exists in its way in the souls in purgatory when they are approaching the end of their purification.

In the epilogue to The Interior Castle, St. Teresa invites her sisters humbly to desire this intimate union with God, but not to wish to force their entrance into this mansion: “Therefore I advise you to use no violence if you meet with any obstacle, for that would displease Him so much that He would never give you admission to them. He dearly loves humility: if you think yourselves unworthy to enter the third mansion, He will grant you all the sooner the favor of entering the fifth. Then, if you serve Him well there and often repair to it, He will draw you into the mansion where He dwells Himself.”

The saint’s words make clear that the state of spiritual perfection of which we are speaking is on earth the summit of the normal development of the life of grace, considered not precisely in a given person, but in itself. This summit should, in fact, imply this aspiration, that is, this very ardent desire for the beatific vision, which up to this stage did not exist in this degree. It is inconceivable that God should reveal Himself to souls not yet keenly desirous of possessing Him forever, of seeing Him immediately and forever. He prepares them for the immediate vision by a divine touch which has a savor of eternal life. St. John of the Cross speaks admirably of this favor, saying that divine touches are attained only by the practice of complete detachment from everything created, and that by one of these touches of love the soul is rewarded for all its labors.

About the wound of love, St. John of the Cross writes in A Spiritual Canticle, which he explains in The Living Flame :

> O Living Flame of Love,
> That woundest tenderly
> My soul in its inmost depth!
> As thou art no longer grievous,
> Perfect thy work, if it be thy will,
> Break the web of this sweet encounter.

In other words, complete the work of our union; break the thread of my earthly existence, which is the final obstacle to my meeting with the Well-Beloved. This veil allows me to see God imperfectly, but it is still an obstacle to immediate and definitive union.

The living flame is the Holy Ghost who excites in the soul acts of love which are more meritorious than all it has elicited before it reached this state, says the saint in the explanation of this first stanza. He adds: “O how wonderful the fire of God! though so vehement and so consuming, though it can destroy a thousand worlds with more ease than material fire can destroy a single straw, it consumes not the spirit wherein it burns.... Thus on the day of Pentecost the fire descended with great vehemence upon the Apostles, who... sweetly burned interiorly.”

In his explanation of verse five of the second stanza of The Living Flame, St. John of the Cross wrote this significant passage: “Why is it that so few ever attain to this state [of perfection and of union with God]? The reason is that in this marvelous work which God Himself begins, so many are weak, shrinking from trouble, and unwilling to endure the least discomfort or mortification, or to labor with constant patience. Hence it is that God, not finding them diligent in cultivating the graces He has given them when He began to try them, proceeds no further with their purification, neither does He lift them up out of the dust of the earth, because it required greater courage and resolution for this than they possessed.... They are few in number who deserve to be made perfect through sufferings so as to attain to so high a state as this.” The soul must pass through many tribulations to reach “the perfect spiritual life, which consists in the possession of God by the union of love.”

Truly spiritual delights come from the cross, from the spirit of sacrifice which puts to death all that is inordinate in us in order to assure the first place to the love of God and of souls in God.

When the heart thus burns with love for its God, the soul contemplates lamps of fire which illumine all things from above. These lamps are the divine perfections: wisdom, goodness, mercy, justice, providence, eternity, omnipotence. They are, so to speak, the colors of the divine rainbow, which are identical without destroying each other in the intimate life of God, in the Deity, as the seven colors of the earthly rainbow fuse in the white light from which they proceed. “God, therefore,” says St. John of the Cross, “according to this knowledge of Him in unity, is to the soul as many lamps, because it has the knowledge of each of them [these attributes], and because they minister to it the warmth of love, each in its own way, and yet all of one subject, all one lamp.”

These souls are characterized by great forgetfulness of self, a great desire to suffer in imitation of the example of our Lord. The soul participates in the very strength of Christ, in His immense love for men; it succeeds in practicing simultaneously virtues that apparently are most contradictory: justice and mercy, fortitude and meekness, the simplicity of the dove and the prudence of the serpent. It unites the most sublime contemplation to the most circumspect common sense in matters of which it must judge. Thus these souls are definitively marked with the image of Christ. The apostolic life (manifest or hidden) or the life of reparation overflows from the plenitude of their contemplation and union with God.

Such is manifestly the perfect disposition of the truly purified soul to pass immediately at the moment of death from earth to heaven without having to go through purgatory. The perfect order is to be purified before death with merit, in order not to have to be purified after death without merit. Only in the close union we have described does the soul have an ardent desire to see God. It is inconceivable that God should show Himself immediately and forever to a soul not ardently desirous of seeing Him.

This doctrine would be too lofty for us if in baptism we had not received the life of grace, which should develop in us also into eternal life, nor often received Holy Communion, which has as its principal purpose to increase the love of God in us. Let us remember that each of our Communions should be substantially more fervent and fruitful than the preceding one. We shall then see that, as St. John of the Cross says, interior souls would reach the close union which we have just discussed if they did not flee from the trials which God sends them for their purification.

In the transforming union we see the full development of grace, which is eternal life begun, quaedam inchoatio vitae aeternae.

A NOTE ON THE HIGHEST DEGREE OF THE MYSTICAL LIFE

1 THE NAMELESS DEPTH OF THE SOUL AND THE DEITY

Tauler describes as follows the highest degree of the mystical life in the servants of God:

> The peace of the highest degree is the essential peace of which it is written: “Seek after peace and pursue it.” They seek peace, and it follows them. This peace, “which surpasseth all understanding,” follows upon the essential conversion. When what is unnamable and unnamed

in the soul turns fully toward God, everything in man that has a name follows this unnamed depth of the soul and is likewise converted. To this conversion always answers that which is nameless, that which is Unnamed in God and also that which in God has a name; all this answers to conversion. In such a man, God proclaims His true peace, and man can then say: “I will hear what the Lord God will speak in me; for He will speak peace unto His people... and unto them that are converted unto the heart.” Dionysius says that these men are formed in God. St. Paul must have been thinking of these men when he said: “That being rooted and founded in charity, you may be able to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth, and length, and height, and depth... of God.’”

Do not imagine that I claim to have arrived at this degree. No master should, in truth, teach that which he himself has not experienced. Strictly speaking, it suffices that he love that of which he speaks, that he pursue it, and place no hindrance to it....

Nature, which is too weak to bear such a life, must necessarily be broken, with the result that this man no longer has a single day of good health.... As St. Paul says: “Power is made perfect in infirmity.”

However, this weakness does not come from exterior observances, but from the superabundant outpouring of the divinity, which inundates this man to such a point that his poor body of clay cannot bear it. For God has so drawn this man into Himself that man thus becomes “deicolored,” to such an extent that God Himself performs the works of this man.... It is in such souls that God finds His glory....

When they plunge into this bottomless sea, no longer do they have definite words or thoughts.... At this time man buries himself so deeply in his unfathomable nothingness that he retains absolutely nothing for himself... and gives back all that he has received from God, the Author of every good.... There the spirit [of man] is lost in the spirit of God.... And yet this man becomes so profoundly human a man... so good to all that no defect can be found in him.... It is not to be believed that such souls may ever be separated from God. May this be the portion of all of us! May God help us to attain it! Amen.

2 THE HOLY GHOST LIFTS UP THE SOUL AND PRAYS IN IT

In the Sermon for the Second Sunday of Lent, Tauler also speaks of the pursuit of God:

It provokes an appealing cry of immense power.... It is a sigh coming from an endless depth and far exceeding nature. The Holy Ghost Himself must utter this sigh in us, as St. Paul says: “The Spirit Himself asketh for us with unspeakable groanings.”... When the poor man thus pursued experiences this immense anxiety and cries to God with inexpressible sighs and with such a desire that his appeal penetrates even the loftiest heavens, if God then acts as if He heard absolutely nothing or wished to know nothing, how greatly at this moment in the depths of the soul man’s desire should reach out and become more urgent!... Then the soul, while abasing and humbling itself, should pray with confidence like the woman of Canaan: “Yea, Lord; for the whelps also eat of the crumbs that fall from the table of their masters.”... These roads, and these alone, lead in truth, and without an intermediary station, even to God.

In a manuscript dealing with this subject, we read:

In this immensely powerful cry of appeal there is an act of love of God which pierces the clouds, an act of love not obtained by impetuous outbursts. It is Jesus who passes by and gives rise in the soul to a movement which is extremely calm, tranquil like the peace of God, but which issues from the most profound depths of the heart, where love dwells, and goes forth and touches Jesus in the unfathomable depths of eternity. This act of love is absolutely distinct from the most fervent acts that we ourselves make. When Jesus forms it in the soul, the soul perceives it because a little of its life ascends toward God. It is not so much the Lord who, by a divine touch, reaches the depths of the soul, but rather it is the soul which, lifted up by Him, rushes rapidly toward Him, as by a flight of incomparable gentleness, by an act of love which God alone can produce in it.

These acts of love are always promptly followed by crosses, by great crosses. But everything goes well in this way.

This is progressive configuration to our Lord.

3 DETACHMENT FROM SELF AND ATTACHMENT TO GOD

A soul that seems to be approaching this state wrote the following lines which are reminiscent of the pages we have just quoted from Tauler:

In prayer I sometimes feel this tearing of myself away from myself which carries all my being into “An Other,” a tearing away which is brought about without any violence, but with power and gentleness, and with the sweet and complete consent of my will; this is my part. But what is the Lord’s part?... At the term of this movement (if I may thus express myself, for in this prayer this movement is continuous) I have felt as if two great arms entwined me; it was the Abyss which closed over and swallowed me up in its infinite depths. When a ship sinks, the waters of the sea open up to receive it, then silently close over it. This is something similar...

My whole being would break its bonds and cast itself into the Other. Although often I do nothing in prayer, there is always, more or less, this secret and imperceptible movement which would draw me whither I cannot go.... All graces, all supernatural impulsions emanate from this innermost depth wherein God acts, and literally bear me away into this infinite abyss. It is God within me who bears me away in Himself out of myself. Sometimes I feel that the grace is not completed, that it stops at the threshold of a grace of full union.... Were the grace to attain its normal term each time, the result would be the embrace of two spirits in a silence like that of eternity; but I remain on the threshold.

When a grace of this kind is given to me, my active intellect and will are warned by the substance of my very soul, as, for example, when it is extremely cold, I feel the cold before thinking that the weather is cold. This physical experience precedes the judgment of the mind; similarly, the experience felt in the substance of the soul (evidently, it is from the experimental and mystical point of view and not from the philosophical point of view that I speak of the substance of the soul) precedes the idea of the gift received. Inversely, if I deliberately propose to touch an object that I know is very cold, the thought of the cold precedes the physical experience of the cold that I am about to feel. Likewise, my will and intellect can in an instant awaken the inert experience in the depths of my soul which awaits but a stimulus to be

revived. When my soul is powerless and empty, I do indeed deliberately intensify my oblation, and this act provokes at long intervals as it were an awakening.

4 DIFFERENT MEANINGS OF THE TITLE “SPOUSE”

In view of certain observations that have been made to us, we believe it advisable in a discussion of the transforming union to signalize the following points.

Some very loving, greatly tried, and extremely generous souls live closely united to God in the world, and their director may early believe that they have entered the transforming union. This judgment may, however, be precipitate, for, before attaining to the spiritual marriage, the chosen soul must first become a spouse, as a simple religious is who has made profession after the trials and generous acts of the novitiate.

There may be a notable error of interpretation in this decision if the director or the directed soul attributes to the title of spouse, received occasionally in an interior locution, the same meaning as that of the far superior title of spouse in the transforming union. There is a great difference between the term spouse, used to denote a religious who has made profession, and the title spouse, as applied to St. Catherine of Siena and St. Teresa. Moreover, even in the second sense, the perfect soul, though confirmed in grace, may not believe that it has attained the goal, for until its last sigh it will remain on the royal road, seeing this goal in a very consoling light, while recalling the words of St. Paul: “Not as though I had already attained or were already perfect; but I follow after.”

Again, a soul much loved by God is drawn to Him, and gives itself. It is very generous, wholly loving, pure, and its crosses become heavy. After an interior locution, the Lord seems to choose it as a spouse. May this soul believe that it is in the transforming union? Is this not simply the normal state of a good religious after profession? For this chosen soul still has numerous defects and imperfections, which seem incompatible with the spiritual marriage. But the director may believe that this soul will attain to this state when its charity is wholly true and its life completely impregnated with God.

The life of St. Gemma Galgani, for example, shows clearly what the Lord required of her before permitting her to call herself His spouse. This valiant saint, who never refused anything to grace, complained at times of these demands.

Another case is that of a married woman, who is partly emancipated from what has become for her humiliating servitude and who is generous in her sacrifices. Our Lord holds her soul captive and urges her to belong to Him alone. As a result she is somewhat inclined to believe that she is in the transforming union. In our opinion she is accepted as a spouse in the sense that a religious is after final profession, and we believe that if the mystical marriage is granted to this person, it will be only later on, for this beautiful soul is still too much encumbered with herself. All worldly nets are not odious to her. Her charity does not at all measure up to that of a soul united to God by the spiritual marriage. More profound trials will perhaps not delay in making this evident.

The transforming union is, undoubtedly, given in different degrees, but the least degree requires perfect charity toward God and one's neighbor. Who can tell it without having attained to that state where there is no longer any insufficiency, where an unknown food is served to the well-beloved who, filled but still famished, utter ineffable groans?

5 THE DESIRE OF THE TRANSFORMING UNION

May a generous person, who truly seems to have passed through at least a part of the night of the spirit, desire and ask for the grace of the transforming union?

Certainly. This grace is here on earth the term of the more or less conscious aspirations of such a soul. If an explicit desire is in question, however, it is advisable to give it a more objective expression, that is, desiring the ever more profound reign of God in our souls and their more perfect configuration to our Lord. Besides, it is also advisable to keep in mind what St. Teresa points out in the epilogue to The Interior Castle: "It is true you cannot enter all the mansions by your own power, however great it may appear to you, unless the Lord of the castle Himself admits you. Therefore I advise you to use no violence if you meet with any obstacle, for that would displease Him so much that He would never give you admission to them. He dearly loves humility: if you think yourselves unworthy to enter the third mansion, He will grant you all the sooner the favor of entering the fifth. Then, if you serve Him well there and often repair to it, He will draw you into the mansion where He dwells Himself.... When once you have learned how to enjoy this castle, you will always find rest, however painful

your trials may be, in the hope of returning to your Lord, which no one can prevent."

Let us also remember what St. John of the Cross says in The Living Flame: "O souls that seek your own ease and comfort, if you knew how necessary for this high state is suffering, and how profitable suffering and mortification are for attaining to these great blessings." He likewise writes in A Spiritual Canticle: "O that men would understand how impossible it is to enter the thicket, the manifold riches of the wisdom of God, without entering into the thicket of manifold suffering making it the desire and consolation of the soul; and how that the soul which really longs for the divine wisdom, longs first of all for the sufferings of the cross, that it may enter in.... They who desire to enter in that way are few, while those who desire the joys that come by it are many."

In the following stanza, St. John of the Cross says: "One of the reasons which most influence the soul to enter into the 'thicket' of the wisdom of God, and to have a more intimate knowledge of the beauty of the divine wisdom, is, as I have said, that it may unite the understanding with God in the knowledge of the mysteries of the Incarnation, as of all His works the highest and most full of sweetness, and the most delicious knowledge.... But the soul cannot reach these hidden treasures unless it first passes through the thicket of interior and exterior suffering."

Certainly this end, the prelude of heaven, is highly desirable; but the soul must be willing to take the royal road which leads to it.

6 THE INTIMACY OF THE TRANSFORMING UNION

The intimacy of the transforming union, it should be noted, is due to an absolutely eminent operating grace. Of operating grace in general, in contradistinction to cooperating grace, St. Thomas says: "The operation of an affect is not attributed to the thing moved but to the mover. Hence in that effect in which our mind is moved and does not move, but in which God is the sole mover, the operation is attributed to God, and it is with reference to this that we speak of operating grace." The will, however, freely consents to be moved.

The human will indubitably continues to exist, since it will subsist even in beatific love; it is not physically absorbed in God, as the pantheists would say in this case. We must hold what St. John of the Cross so well

expresses in A Spiritual Canticle: “Though in heaven the will of the soul is not destroyed, it is so intimately united with the power of the will of God, who loves it, that it loves Him as strongly and as perfectly as it is loved by Him.... Thus the soul loves God with the will and strength of God Himself, being made one with that very strength of love wherewith itself is loved by God. This strength is of the Holy Ghost, in whom the soul is there transformed. He is given to the soul to strengthen its love; ministering to it, and supplying in it, because of its transformation in glory, that which is defective in it.”

7 THE EQUALITY OF LOVE

Consequently, as Father Gabriel of St. Magdalen well explains, one can understand that the soul reaches a certain equality of love with God. St. John says in The Living Flame :

> Thus, then, the soul, by reason of its transformation, being a shadow of God, effects through God in God what He effects within it Himself by Himself, because the will of both is one. And as God is giving Himself with a free and gracious will, so the soul also with a will, the more free and the more generous the more it is united with God in God, is, as it were, giving back to God—in that loving complacency with which it regards the divine essence and perfections—God Himself.... The soul gives to the Beloved, who is God Himself, what He had given to it.
>
> Herein it pays the whole debt, for the soul gives as much voluntarily with inestimable joy and delight, giving the Holy Spirit as its own of its own free will, so that God may be loved as He deserves to be. Herein consists the inestimable joy of the soul, for it sees that it offers to God what becomes Him in His infinite Being.

This is truly the prelude of the life of heaven.

8 CONCLUSION

Whence A Spiritual Canticle concludes: “O souls created for this [such grandeurs] and called thereto, what are you doing? What are your occupations? Your aim is meanness, and your enjoyments misery. Oh, wretched blindness of the children of Adam, blind to so great a light and deaf to so clear a voice!”

As Father Gabriel of St. Magdalen says: “This call, addressed by the saint to souls in general, shows us that he cannot regard as ‘extraordinary’ the sublime things he has just described for us.... That state, the flowering

of the seed of supernatural life, which is sanctifying grace in the soul, should be within the reach of all those who are endowed with this grace."

Appendix

The Perfection Of Love And The Mystical Union

OR THE MYSTICISM OF A SPIRITUAL CANTICLE BY ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS

We reproduce here an article which appeared in La Vie spirituelle (January, 1936). We thank its author for permitting us to use it and also for having so well expressed what in our opinion is the true teaching of St. John of the Cross on several points of great importance.

I. THE PERFECTION OF LOVE AND INFUSED CONTEMPLATION

It has recently been affirmed that according to the spiritual teaching of Carmel, and of St. Teresa in particular, the perfection of love is found in the ascetical way and that infused contemplation is not at all necessary to sanctity.

God willingly grants these mystical graces to generous souls, they say. Consequently the soul does well to desire them, to prepare itself for them, and to tend to them, even to direct its whole life toward the contemplative ideal; nevertheless, they add, the fact remains that sanctity can be attained without them.

Moreover, they distinguish two kinds of contemplation: acquired contemplation and infused contemplation. The first may also be called mixed or active-passive contemplation; it is a latent mystical contemplation. They concede that this contemplation is in the normal way of sanctity. The second, mystical contemplation properly so called, experimentally passive or infused, especially in its higher degrees (the betrothal and the spiritual marriage), is not, they maintain, in the normal way.

This opinion, it seems to us, is not in harmony with the teaching of St. John of the Cross.

To affirm on the one hand that mystical contemplation is not necessary to perfection, and to maintain on the other that it is good to tend to it seems to us difficult to reconcile with the teaching of the Mystical Doctor. We know with what insistence he requires that the soul absolutely divest itself of all that is accidental, accessory, extraordinary, and not essential or necessary to perfection. For St. John of the Cross the unique goal in this life is perfect union with God through the theological virtues; everything that is not necessary to this union—even graces in other regards precious—is, as soon as one dwells excessively on it, an obstacle. These things must be renounced, rejected, as far as possible; the soul must go beyond them and thus rest in emptiness, in the most absolute nudity of spirit. This is the very essence of the teaching of St. John of the Cross in The Ascent of Mount Carmel and in The Dark Night. How, therefore, can we harmonize this doctrine of the void, excluding all that is accidental, with the seeking after a mystical contemplation that would be precisely something accidental?

This mortification of every desire, with the exception of that of divine union, this divesting oneself of all that is not God, constitutes for the soul the dark night, which is at the center of the saint's doctrine. If he leads the soul by this night to mystical, obscure, and general contemplation, is it not that, in his opinion, this contemplation is part of the perfect union to which the denudation of the purifications tends, and that there is a necessary connection between perfect love, the fruit of denudation and of the purifications, and the mystical contemplation to which the soul has access through the dark night?

This is especially clear in A Spiritual Canticle, and we should like to show it. Our fundamental reason is summed up in the following argument.

The transforming union described in A Spiritual Canticle is certainly a very lofty mystical state; no one can deny it. Now this state is in the normal way of sanctity, since St. John calls it the union of love, the state of perfection, full union with God, full and perfect love. Therefore even the most elevated mystical state, at least in its essential character, is in the normal way of sanctity.

Besides it would be difficult to comprehend how the perfection of love described by the saint in A Spiritual Canticle, could be attained without the help of mystical graces and of infused contemplation. We shall see this by an analysis of A Spiritual Canticle.

To the above we add a further consideration. If the connection between the state of perfect love and the mystical state of the betrothal or of the spiritual marriage were only accidental, St. John of the Cross would at each step have caused an unbelievable confusion by continually uniting them, without ever warning us that one can exist without the other. He affirms explicitly, on the contrary, that consummate perfection is obtained only in the state of the espousals and of spiritual marriage and that before this state is reached love is always imperfect. This is what we shall try to establish by evidence.

We shall show, first of all, that the union described in A Spiritual Canticle is the highest mystical state. By analysis of the text we shall then establish that this union is in the normal line of the development of perfect charity, the necessary term of sanctity.

II. THE UNION DESCRIBED IN A Spiritual Canticle IS MYSTICAL

First of all, we can easily establish that the union described in A Spiritual Canticle is the highest mystical union.

1) St. John calls this union the spiritual espousals, in its lower degree, and, in its higher degree, the spiritual marriage. Now, these expressions are commonly attributed to the mystical union; marriage denotes the most sublime union; the espousals refer to the union which immediately precedes the spiritual marriage. The union to which St. John of the Cross leads the soul is, therefore, the highest mystical union.

2) St. John of the Cross calls this union the transforming union, the transformation of the soul in God, and these expressions, like that of the spiritual marriage, fittingly designate the highest mystical Union.

3) The Mystical Doctor attributes to the espousals the entrance into the “sweet science” that God teaches to the soul in this union; and “this science is mystical theology, which is the secret science of God, and which spiritual men call contemplation.” Evidently mystical contemplation is meant. It is God who “bestows on the soul this science and knowledge in the love by which He communicates Himself to the soul” In this luminous union God transforms the soul, “makes it completely His own and empties it of all that is alien to Himself,” which cannot be done without the mystical graces.

In the higher degree of union we find infused contemplation more clearly described: “When the soul has been raised to the high state of spiritual marriage, the Bridegroom reveals to it, as His faithful consort, His own marvelous secrets most readily and most frequently, for he who truly and sincerely loves hides nothing from the object of his affections. The chief matter of His communications are the sweet mysteries of His Incarnation, the ways and means of the redemption, which is one of the highest works of God, and so is to the soul one of the sweetest.” The Bridegroom does all this in this stanza which emphasizes with what tender love He discloses such mysteries interiorly to the soul.

The state which St. John of the Cross describes here is a state of love linked to a state of infused contemplation. The connection is owing to a necessity of love: “True and full love cannot hide anything.” This connection is not accidental, since this need is connatural to perfect charity. The observation is important.

4) The Mystical Doctor repeatedly affirms that it is God alone who acts and operates immediately in the soul in this state, that therein the soul passively receives contemplation. But passivity characterizes precisely mystical contemplation.

5) Lastly, Sr. John of the Cross speaks of divine touches, of the contact of the divinity as characteristic of this union, as ordinarily produced in this state. These are, certainly, very lofty mystical graces.

There is not, it seems, any doubt that the union described in A Spiritual Canticle is the most distinctly characterized and the loftiest mystical union.

This union is in the normal way. St. John of the Cross again and again describes the state to which the soul should tend: the spiritual marriage as full union with God, as consummated union, as the state of perfect love. He affirms that the full perfection of love is obtained only in the spiritual marriage.

But full union with God, consummated perfection, perfect love are certainly in the normal way: this is the whole end of our life. It will suffice, therefore, to establish solidly that, in the opinion of the Mystical Doctor, the spiritual espousals, the spiritual marriage are simply the state of perfect love in order to conclude that he places them in the normal way of sanctity. The texts will furnish us abundant proof of this.

III. THE PERFECTION OF LOVE IN THE SPIRITUAL ESPOUSALS

ST. 14. THE FLIGHT OF MYSTICAL CONTEMPLATION AND THE STATE OF UNION

In the thirteenth stanza St. John of the Cross describes the flight of the soul in this state of ardent love and great desires, which he set forth in the first stanzas.

In the fourteenth stanza he continues: “This spiritual flight signifies a certain high estate and union of love, whereunto, after many spiritual exercises, God is, wont to elevate the soul: it is called the spiritual betrothal of the Word, the Son of God.”

Here we have two very important affirmations: (1) the state of the spiritual espousals is nothing other than the state of union of love; (2) God is wont to elevate the soul to this state when it has greatly exercised itself in the spiritual life; which is equivalent to saying that this state is normal.

ST. 24. THE STATE OF THE SPIRITUAL ESPOUSALS, THE STATE OF PERFECT LOVE

St. John describes the state of the spiritual espousals as the state of perfect love and of perfect and heroic virtues. The soul says clearly that it is now united to the Beloved, since it has the solid virtues together with perfect charity. Therefore it calls this union of love a bed of flowers. Moreover, the soul says that the bed is of flowers because in this state the virtues in the soul are perfect and heroic, a condition impossible before there was a bed of flowers, the fruit of perfect union with God.

Perfect and heroic virtues cannot, therefore, exist before the union of the spiritual espousals; such virtues are the fruit of this union. Similarly, each of the virtues (the soul now possesses them in perfection) becomes like a den of lions. “The soul’s bed is encompassed by these dens of the virtues, because in this state its virtues are so perfectly ordered, and so joined together and bound up with one another in the consummate perfection of the soul, each supporting the other, that no part of it is weak or exposed. Not only is Satan unable to penetrate within it, but even worldly things, whether great or little, fail to disturb or annoy it, or even move it; for being now free from all molestation of natural affections, and a stranger to the worry of temporal anxieties, it enjoys in security and peace the participation of God.”

It is clear that for St. John the state of the spiritual espousals is the initial stage of the state of consummate perfection.

ST. 26. THE INNER CELLAR AND THE UNION OF MOST INTIMATE LOVE

St. John of the Cross describes here the state of the espousals and of the spiritual marriage as full union with God and as the supreme degree of love to which the soul can attain in this life. The soul sets forth in this stanza the very great grace that God gave it by making it enter the secret depths of His love which is the union or transformation of love in God. The cellar of which the soul speaks is the supreme degree of the most intimate love to which the soul can attain in this life; consequently the soul calls it the inner cellar, that is, the most secret. It uses this term because there are others less interior: such are the degrees of love through which the soul ascends to the highest. We may say that there are seven of these cellars. The soul will enter them all when it has in perfection the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost. In the inmost cellar is wrought the perfect union with God, the union of the spiritual marriage, of which the soul is now speaking.

Thus for St. John of the Cross the spiritual marriage is identified with full union with God. The effects of this union are then described: “Until the soul reaches the state of perfection, however spiritual it may be, there always remains a troop of desires, likings, and other imperfections, sometimes natural, sometimes spiritual, after which it runs, and which it tries to feed while following and satisfying them.... As to this flock, some men are more influenced by it than others; they run after and follow it, until they enter the inner cellar, where they lose it altogether, being then transformed in love. In this cellar the flock of imperfections is easily destroyed, as rust and mould on metal in the fire.”

It is evident that in the opinion of St. John of the Cross the highest degree of love and perfection is attained only in the state of the espousals and the spiritual marriage, in the “inner cellar.” Hence no one can say that the highest degree of love is outside the normal way of the saints.

ST. 27. THE STATE OF THE SPIRITUAL ESPOUSALS AND THE COMPLETE IMPULSION OF THE SOUL TOWARD GOD

In this stanza St. John describes the state of the spiritual espousals as the state of perfect love, in which even the first movements of the will and the sensible appetites are directed toward God. It would be futile to wish to obtain such perfection actively by one's own efforts in the purely ascetical life. And besides, St. John teaches explicitly that it is God Himself who causes this perfection in the soul by means of "mystical theology," that is, by infused contemplation. St. John states that the "science full of sweetness" which God has taught the soul is mystical theology, "which is the secret science of God, and which spiritual men call contemplation.... God is the Author of this union, and of the purity and perfection requisite for it; and as the transformation of the soul in Himself makes it His, He empties it of all that is alien to Himself. Thus it comes to pass that, not in will only, but in act as well, the whole soul is entirely given to God without any reserve whatever, as God has given Himself freely unto it.... The soul is, as it were, absorbed in God, and even its first movements have nothing in them—so far as it can comprehend them—which is at variance with the will of God.... The first movements (in the understanding, the memory, the will, and the desires) of the soul which has attained to the spiritual state of which I am speaking are ordinarily directed to God, because of the great help and courage it derives from Him, and its perfect conversion to goodness."

Evidently this degree of perfection is superior to human efforts; it can be attained only in the mystical way. On the other hand, it is the effect of a "union by exchange" which is in the normal development of charity.

ST. 28. THE SPIRITUAL ESPOUSALS AND THE ACTIVITY OF LOVE

St. John here describes the state of the spiritual espousals as the state of perfect love, in which all the higher and lower powers "are consecrated no longer to its own interests, but to those pertaining to the service of the Bridegroom." The saint says: "Even its communion with God Himself is nothing else but acts of love." The soul declares: "My soul is occupied, and all my substance in His service." In these words it reveals the gift it has made of itself to the Beloved in this union of love in which the soul is, with all its powers (intellect, will, and memory), dedicated and engaged in His service, devoting its intellect to the understanding of what is of most consequence to His cause that it may put it into practice; its will to the

preference of all that gives pleasure to God, to the direction of its affections in everything to God; its memory to the seeking of what may serve Him and give Him the greatest pleasure.

The soul continues: “And all my substance in His service.” By all its substance, the soul means here all that relates to its sensible part. The soul says here that it has consecrated its sensible as well as its rational and spiritual part to His service.

All this, it says, is consecrated to His cause: the soul orders the body according to God “in all its interior and exterior senses, all the acts of which are directed to God. The four passions of the soul are also under control in Him; for the soul’s joy, hope, fear, and grief are conversant with God only; all its appetites and all its anxieties also are directed unto Him only.”

“The whole substance of the soul is now so occupied with God, so intent upon Him, that its very first movements, even inadvertently, have God for their object and their end. The understanding, memory, and will tend directly to God.”

“Now I guard no flock.” By these words the soul means: “I do not now go after my likings and desires; for having them fixed upon God, I no longer feed or guard them. The soul not only does not guard them now, but has no other occupation than to wait upon God. ‘Nor have I any other employment.’ Before the soul succeeded in effecting this gift and surrender of itself, and of all that belongs to it, to the Beloved, it was entangled in many unprofitable occupations.... It may be said that its occupations of this kind were as many as its habits of imperfection.”

The soul still has a blemish, which it never rids itself of as long as it does not once and for all consecrate all its substance to the service of God so that, as we have said, all its words, thoughts, and works are directed to God.

“‘My sole occupation is love.’ The soul means: ‘All my occupation now is the practice of the love of God, all the powers of soul and body, memory, understanding, and will, interior and exterior senses, the desires of spirit and of sense, all work in and by love. All I do is done in love; all I suffer, I suffer in the sweetness of love.’”...

“When the soul has arrived at this state all the acts of its spiritual and sensual nature, whether active or passive, and of whatever kind they may be, always occasion an increase of love and delight in God; even the act of prayer and communion with God, which was formerly carried on by reflections and divers other methods, is now wholly an act of love.... The

soul, in the state of spiritual betrothal, is for the most part living in the union of love—that is, the will is habitually waiting lovingly on God."

It is impossible to conceive of such perfection of love, of such a gift of self extending even to the first movements of all the powers, in the purely ascetical way. According to St. John of the Cross, this perfection, obtained only in the spiritual espousals, is the effect of the mystical graces bestowed in this state. Thus once more the state of perfect love is identified in the teaching of St. John of the Cross with the state of the spiritual espousals.

ST. 29. THE SOUL LOST TO THE WORLD FOR ITS BELOVED

This stanza also refers to the state of the spiritual espousals: "Having attained to a living love of God [that is, practicing the virtues solely for love of God], it makes little account of all this; and that is not all. It boasts that... it is lost to the world and to itself for the Beloved.... Such is he that loves God; he seeks neither gain nor reward but only to lose all, even himself, according to God's will; this is what such a one counts gain."

This is still another description of perfect love; it is the way of pure faith and pure love, as the following words show: "When a soul has advanced so far on the spiritual road as to be lost to all the natural methods of communing with God; when it seeks Him no longer by meditation, images, impressions, nor by any other created ways, or representations of sense, but only by rising above them all, in the joyful communion with Him by faith and love, then it may be said to have found God of a truth, because it has truly lost itself as to all that is not God, and also as to its own self."

IV. THE PERFECTION OF LOVE IN THE SPIRITUAL MARRIAGE

ST. 12. THE SPIRITUAL MARRIAGE AND THE TRANSFORMING UNION

In this stanza St. John himself declares that he is discussing the spiritual marriage. First of all, he tells us that the perfection of this state is not obtained by our own efforts, but by the breathing of the Holy Ghost: that is, it belongs, not to the ascetical, but to the mystical way. The soul has again implored and obtained the breathing of the Holy Ghost which remains the indispensable means and instrument of the perfection of this state.

St. John then describes the spiritual marriage as the state of perfect love. It is a complete transformation into the Beloved: God and the soul give each other total possession of each other by the union of love consummated in the measure possible on earth. The soul as a result becomes divine and God by participation, as much as this life permits. By the consummation of the spiritual marriage between God and the soul, two natures are in one single spirit and love of God. The spouse is introduced, that is, she has got rid of all that is temporal, all that is natural, of all attachments, ways, and spiritual manners... in the transformation of this sublime embrace.... The soul is transformed in its God. The transformation is complete. What St. Paul says to the Galatians may be applied to it: “I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me.”

Thus the spiritual marriage is for St. John of the Cross the union of perfect love. But perfect love is in the normal way; all are called to perfect love, the final end of life on earth: “Now the end of the commandment is charity.” Besides, St. John of the Cross affirms it: “In all the works of the soul, God and the soul have only one ambition, one end: the consummation and plenitude of this state.” If, therefore, the state of spiritual marriage is the end of all the actions of the soul, as well as of the divine operation, it is necessarily identified with perfect love and cannot be in purely accidental relation to it. Consequently we conclude that it incontestably brings the spiritual marriage, an eminently mystical state, into the normal way of sanctity. The analysis of the following stanzas will but strengthen this conclusion.

ST. 20–21. THE SPIRITUAL MARRIAGE AND THE TOTAL DEATH OF THE PASSIONS

In this stanza St. John describes the spiritual marriage as the state of perfect love in which God “commands all vain distractions of the fancy and imagination from henceforth to cease, and controls the irascible and concupiscible faculties which were hitherto the sources of so much affliction. He brings, so far as it is possible in this life, the three powers of memory, understanding, and will to the perfection of their objects.... He adjures also all these actions which depart from the true mean, and bids them cease before the soft lyres and the siren strains, which so effectually charm the powers of the soul as to occupy them completely in their true and

proper functions, so that they avoid not only all extremes, but also the slightest tendency to them."

This is a new degree of love which manifestly surpasses our own efforts and the purely ascetical life. Moreover, St. John of the Cross says so explicitly: "The Beloved adjures the affections of these four passions, compels them to cease and to be at rest."

ST. 18. THE PERFECT CALM OF THE POWERS AND SENSES

The spiritual marriage is represented here as the state of perfection which excludes even the imperfection of the inordinate first movements of the powers and senses. "And touch not our thresholds, that is to say: Let not even your first movements touch the higher part, for the first movements of the soul are the entrance and thresholds of it. When the first movements have passed into the reason, they have crossed the threshold; but when they remain as first movements only, they are then said merely to touch the threshold, or to cry at the gate, which is the case when reason and sense contend over an unreasonable act."

Thus, in this state, this sensible part with all its powers, its energies, and its weaknesses has yielded to the spirit. This constitutes even now a blessed life, similar to that of the state of innocence, when all the resources and capacities of the sensible part of man enabled him to know and to love God.

ST. 35. THE SOLITUDE OF THE SOUL WITH THE BRIDEGROOM

In this stanza St. John shows clearly that the spiritual marriage is a mystical state and that perfect love is not obtained in the ascetical way, but that it is God who produces it in the soul in the mystical way. In this stanza the Bridegroom declares not only that He guides the soul, "but that He is its only guide, without any intermediate help."

"'Alone hath the Beloved guided her.' That is, the Beloved not only guides the soul in its solitude, but it is He alone who works in it directly and immediately. It is of the nature of the soul's union with God in the spiritual marriage that God works directly, and communicates Himself immediately, not by the ministry of angels or by the help of natural capacities. For the exterior and interior senses, all created things, and even the soul itself, contribute very little toward the reception of those great supernatural favors

which God bestows in this state; yea, rather, inasmuch as they do not fall within the cognizance of natural efforts, ability, and application, God effects them alone.

"The reason is that He finds the soul alone in its solitude, and therefore will not give it another companion, nor will He entrust His work to any other than Himself. There is a certain fitness in this; for the soul having abandoned all things, and passed through all the ordinary means, rising above them unto God, God Himself becomes the guide and the way to Himself. The soul in solitude, detached from all things, having now ascended above all things, nothing now can profit or help it to ascend higher except the Bridegroom Word Himself."

In this stanza St. John admirably distinguishes between the ascetical and the mystical ways. To the ascetical way belongs the preparation of the soul for the divine operation by denuding it of all that is created; to the mystical, consummate perfection, which God produces in the soul.

ST. 37–38. PERFECT PURITY AND EQUALITY OF LOVE

St. John of the Cross shows first in this stanza that the soul desires mystical contemplation, designated here by "the caverns of the rock," because mystical contemplation is the means to obtain perfect love and perfect purity. In the following stanza he describes perfection and the purity of the state of the spiritual marriage. "The reason why the soul longed to enter the caverns was that it might attain to the consummation of the love of God, the object of its continual desires; that is, that it might love God with the pureness and perfection wherewith He has loved it, so that it might thereby requite His love."

If the connection between perfect love and the mystical contemplation designated by the "caverns of the rock" were purely accidental, if perfect love and perfect purity could be obtained without mystical contemplation, this desire of the soul would be imperfect, according to the principles of St. John of the Cross.

He continues: "In the present stanza the bride says to the Bridegroom that He will there show her what she had always aimed at in all her actions, namely, that He would show her how to love Him perfectly, as He has loved her. And, secondly, that He will give her that essential glory for which He has predestined her from the day of His eternity.

‘There Thou wilt show me... That which my soul desired.’

“That which the soul aims at is equality in love with God, the object of its natural and supernatural desire. He who loves cannot be satisfied if he does not feel that he loves as much as he is loved.”

The desire for equality of love is, therefore, essential to love; it is in the nature and the grace of love. The saint continues: “When the soul sees that in the transformation in God, such as is possible in this life, notwithstanding the immensity of its love, it cannot equal the perfection of that love wherewith God loves it, it desires the clear transformation of glory wherein it shall equal the perfection of love wherewith it is itself beloved of God; it desires... the clear transformation of glory wherein it shall equal His love....

“The will of the soul will then be the will of God.... Though in heaven the will of the soul is not destroyed, it is so intimately united with the power of the will of God, who loves it, that it loves Him as strongly and as perfectly as it is loved of Him; both wills being united in one sole will and one sole love of God. Thus the soul loves God with the will and strength of God Himself, being made one with that very strength of love wherewith itself is loved of God. This strength is of the Holy Ghost, in whom the soul is there transformed. He is given to the soul to strengthen its love; ministering to it, and supplying in it, because of its transformation in glory, that which is defective in it. In the perfect transformation also of the state of spiritual marriage, such as is possible on earth, in which the soul is all clothed in grace, the soul loves in a certain way in the Holy Ghost, who is given to it in that transformation.”

Again St. John identifies the state of the spiritual marriage with the state of perfect love, of perfect conformity to the will of God; it is the normal end of all life on earth. He then explains the purity of this state, saying that it presupposes evidently that God has given to the soul in this state of transformation a great purity, like to that of original justice or that of baptismal innocence. The soul here adds, therefore, that this purity is going to be granted to it by the Spouse as the fruit of this transformation of love. It says also:

> “And there Thou wilt give me at once,
> O Thou, my life,
> That which Thou gavest me the other day.”

“By ‘other day’ is meant the day of the eternity of God, which is other than the day of time. In that day of eternity God predestined the soul unto

glory, and determined the degree of glory which He would give it and freely gave from the beginning before He created it."

The soul declares in these verses that it will find this gift again in this union of love. That is indeed what it meant in the last verse by the words "that which Thou gavest me the other day," since, as we have said, the soul, in its state of perfection, attains to the same purity and the same cleanness.

St. John therefore affirms here that in the spiritual marriage the soul reaches a purity similar to that of original justice or of baptismal innocence. This is an important statement. From this affirmation we may draw two conclusions which interest us: (1) the spiritual marriage is normal; (2) it is mystical.

It is normal, for the purity of original justice or of baptismal innocence, which the soul receives in the spiritual marriage, excludes every moral imperfection; and this exclusion is the normal end to which all souls can and must tend. This state is mystical, for in the present order a permanent state, similar to that of original or baptismal innocence, without moral imperfection, in the full activity of the spiritual faculties, cannot be attained in the purely ascetical way by our own efforts, but only in the mystical way by the special operation of the Holy Ghost. It requires the grace of infused contemplation and the activity of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, as is evident from all the texts from the works of St. John of the Cross. In this state the soul "experiences interiorly a sort of fruition, a sweetness which makes it overflow with praise." The purity to which it has attained is "bestowed on it by the Bridegroom as the fruit of this transformation of love." The touches of the passive graces are evident in this state. Is not this also a normal growth of perfect love?

ST. 39. THE FLAME OF SWEET TRANSFORMATION

The spiritual marriage is described in this stanza as the state of the most sublime perfection and transformation in God. St. John bases his teaching on the words of St. Paul: "And because you are sons, God hath sent the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying: Abba (Father)"; on the words of our Lord: "Father, I will that where I am, they also whom Thou hast given Me may be with Me; that they may see My glory which Thou hast given Me"; and on the words of St. Peter: "He hath given us most great and precious promises, that by these you may be made partakers of the divine

nature.” All these quotations admirably confirm our thesis that in the opinion of St. John of the Cross the spiritual marriage is the full and normal development, the flowering of the life of grace, the normal end of supernatural life on earth.

St. John of the Cross also teaches in this stanza that perfect love is obtained in the mystical way by the “breathing of the air,” that is, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, and that it is accompanied by mystical contemplation, which is not only the means, but also the effect of perfect love.

The spouse, we said, wishes two things in the preceding stanza: first, what her soul had as an end; then, what the Bridegroom had given her the other day. The soul sets forth in the present stanza the parts of its end: that is, not only perfect love, but also all that comes to the soul through it.

Therefore the soul enumerates five things which detail all that it admits having in view here: first the breathing of the air; then the love of which we have spoken, the principal object that it has in view;... fourthly, the pure and clear contemplation of the divine essence.

“The breathing of the air.” This is a property of the Holy Ghost which the soul asks for here in order to love God perfectly. It calls it the “breathing of the air” because it is a touch or a very delicate feeling of love, ordinarily produced in the soul in this state by the presence of the Holy Ghost.

Thus, according to St. John of the Cross, to love God perfectly the “breathing of the air,” or the touch of the Holy Ghost, is necessary; this is certainly a mystical grace ordinarily produced in the spiritual marriage.

The fourth request is “‘In the serene night.’ That is, contemplation, in which the soul desires to behold the grove. It is called night because contemplation is dim; and that is the reason why it is also called mystical theology, that is, the secret or hidden wisdom of God, where, without the sound of words, or the intervention of any bodily or spiritual sense, as it were in silence and in repose, in the darkness of sense and nature, God teaches the soul—and the soul knows not how—in a most secret and hidden way....

“Some spiritual writers call this ‘understanding without understanding,’ because it does not take place in what philosophers call the active understanding, which is conversant with the forms, fancies, and apprehensions of the physical faculties, but in the understanding as it is possible and passive, which without receiving such forms, receives

passively only the substantial knowledge of them free from all imagery. This occurs without effort or exertion on its part, and for this reason contemplation is called night.

“Still, however clear may be its knowledge, it is dark night in comparison with that of the blessed, for which the soul prays. Hence, while it prays for clear contemplation, that is, the fruition of the grove, and its beauty with the other objects here enumerated, it says, let it be in the night now serene; that is, in the clear beatific contemplation.”

This magnificent description of mystical contemplation proves conclusively to us that the spiritual marriage is a mystical state. But this mystical contemplation, according to the terms of St. John of the Cross, is “that which comes to the soul through perfect love.” It is, therefore, not purely accidental, but is the essential effect, the distinctive characteristic, of perfect love, as it was also, we have seen, the means, the disposition to obtain this love. But if mystical contemplation is the characteristic of perfect love and its necessary disposition, it is surely in the normal way, as perfect love itself is.

ST. 40. THE FINAL PREPARATIONS OF THE SOUL

In the last stanza, St. John of the Cross describes the perfection of the virtues in the spiritual marriage and the perfect harmony in this state between the lower and the higher parts of man.

In this stanza the soul wishes to make it known that it is ready to receive the favors to be enjoyed in this state, gifts which it has asked of the Bridegroom and which, if the soul is not ready, it can neither receive nor preserve. Therefore the soul puts before the Beloved four dispositions or preparations which made possible what precedes, in order to urge Him still more to grant it the favors mentioned: “The first is that the soul is detached from all things and a stranger to them. The second is that the devil is overcome and put to flight. The third is that the passions are subdued and the natural desires mortified. The fourth... that the sensual and lower nature of the soul is changed and purified, and so conformed to the spiritual, as not only not to hinder spiritual blessings, but is, on the contrary, prepared for them....”

“‘None saw it.’ That is, my soul is so detached, so denuded, so lonely, so estranged from all created things, in heaven and earth; it has become so

recollected in Thee, that nothing whatever can come within sight of that most intimate joy which I have in Thee. That is, there is nothing whatever that can cause me pleasure with its sweetness, or disgust with its vileness; for my soul is so far removed from all such things,... that nothing can behold me.

"This is not all, for: 'Neither did Aminadab appear.' Aminadab, in the Holy Writings, signified the devil; that is, the enemy of the soul, in a spiritual sense, who is ever fighting against it, and disturbing it with his innumerable artillery, that it may not enter into the fortress and secret place of interior recollection with the Bridegroom. There the soul is so protected, so strong, so triumphant in virtue which it then practices, so defended by God's right hand, that the devil not only dares not approach it, but runs away from it in great fear, and does not venture to appear. The practice of virtue, and the state of perfection to which the soul has come, is a victory over Satan, and causes him such terror that he cannot present himself before it. Thus Aminadab appeared not with any right to keep the soul away from the object of its desire.

"'The siege was intermitted.' By the siege is meant the passions and desires, which, when not overcome and mortified, surround the soul and fight it on all sides. Hence the term 'siege' is applied to them. This siege is 'intermitted,' that is, the passions are subject to reason, and the desires are mortified.... Under these circumstances the soul entreats the Beloved to communicate to it those graces for which it has prayed, for now the siege is no hindrance. Until the four passions of the soul are ordered in reason according to God, and until the desires are mortified and purified, the soul is incapable of seeing God."

The soul says that in this state the cavalry dismount at the sight of the spiritual waters, because the sensible part of the soul is now so well purified, and in a certain way spiritualized. "So the soul with its powers of sense and natural forces becomes so recollected as to participate and rejoice to some degree in the spiritual grandeurs which God communicates to it in the spirit within."

Here again St. John of the Cross shows us that the spiritual marriage is the state of consummate perfection, the normal end of the present life, which can, however, be attained only in the mystical way, "in the fortress or the hiding place of interior recollection in the company of the Beloved."

Rich in suggestion is the conclusion by which St. John ends his work: “Whereunto [the spiritual marriage] may He bring of His mercy all those who call upon the most sweet name of Jesus, the Bridegroom of faithful souls, to whom be all honor and glory, together with the Father and the Holy Ghost. Amen.” In these words the Mystical Doctor wishes for the grace to be introduced into the interior recollection which he has just described, that is, into the state of the spiritual marriage; and he wishes it for all those “who call upon the most sweet name of Jesus,” that is, for all the faithful. Now, one does not wish for all the faithful an extraordinary grace, outside the normal way, especially if the one who wishes it is St. John of the Cross.

We shall append two texts from The Ascent of Mount Carmel, in which the holy doctor explicitly teaches that obscure contemplation (which is without any doubt mystical contemplation) is part of perfect union with God, and consequently is in the normal way, and that absolute renunciation in regard to all other types of knowledge does not apply to this contemplation, since it belongs to the union of love, the normal end of our life on earth.

St. John makes the following statement: “The second kind [of knowledge], which is obscure and general, has but one form, that of contemplation, which is the work of faith. The soul is to be led into this by directing it thereto through all the rest, beginning with the first and detaching it from them.”

Farther on he says: “This divine knowledge concerning God never relates to particular things, because it is conversant with the highest, and therefore cannot be explained unless when it is extended to some truth less than God, which is capable of being described; but this general knowledge is ineffable. It is only a soul in union with God that is capable of this profound loving knowledge, for it is itself that union. This knowledge consists in a certain contact of the soul with the Divinity, and it is God Himself who is then felt and tasted.” Nothing could be more clear and explicit.

From a study of all the texts that we have quoted (and they could be multiplied), it seems we may conclude that, in the opinion of St. John of the Cross, the state of the espousals and of the spiritual marriage is identified with the state of perfect love. It is, therefore, in the normal way; it is the normal end of our life on earth.

To conclude and to clarify everything, we must, it seems, avoid two confusions:

1. What is essential to mystical contemplation must not be confused with what is accidental and accessory in it. The essence of mystical contemplation is the infused, obscure, general contemplation which St. John of the Cross speaks of in The Ascent of Mount Carmel and in A Spiritual Canticle. This contemplation is produced by the gifts of the Holy Ghost, by the gifts of wisdom and understanding. The other types of supernatural knowledge, particular and distinct like visions, revelations, locutions, and so on, as well as ecstasies and other exterior phenomena, are only something accidental in comparison with mystical contemplation, properly so called; they are, more properly speaking, gratiae gratis datae which the soul ought not at all to desire.

2. Sanctity should not be confused with the salvation of the soul. We do not affirm that mystical contemplation in this life is necessary for the salvation of the soul, but the question is whether it is not necessary for sanctity. By sanctity we mean a very great perfection of the love of God and of neighbor, a perfection which, nevertheless, always remains in the normal way, for the precept of love has no limits.

To state the matter with greater precision, the sanctity in question here is the normal immediate prelude of the life of heaven, a prelude which is realized either on earth or in purgatory, and which presupposes that the soul is fully purified, capable of receiving the beatific vision immediately. Finally, when we say that, according to St. John of the Cross, infused contemplation is necessary for sanctity, we mean a moral necessity, in other words, that in the majority of cases sanctity will not be attained without it. And we even add that without it the soul will not actually have the full perfection of the Christian life, which implies the eminent exercise of the theological virtues and of the gifts of the Holy Ghost which accompany them.

NOTE

To this very remarkable article which Father Alexander Rozwadowski, S.]., wrote in 1936, we shall add a simple remark: Father Gabriel of St. Magdalen, CD., has since that date drawn much nearer to this point of view.

In fact, in an article in the Angelicum, after describing the transforming union and quoting the moving call of St. John of the Cross to negligent souls, created, nevertheless, for such grandeurs, he wrote: “This call, addressed by the saint to souls in general, shows us that he cannot consider ‘extraordinary’ the sublime things that he has just described for us. Not everyone is invited to graces which are privileges. The object of the sacerdotal prayer of Christ, made for ‘all those who should believe in Him,’ cannot, in its turn, be a ‘reserved’ good; and that which constitutes the flowering of the seed of supernatural life in our souls, which sanctifying grace is, must be prepared for all those who are endowed with grace.” Likewise in regard to the desire for equality of love, he writes: “There is, therefore, in our charity for God an aspiration connatural to mystical love; such love is in no way ‘extraordinary’ for a soul endowed with the virtue of charity, but brings this virtue to its ultimate and integral perfection.”

Lastly, infused contemplation, without which mystical love does not exist, is not extraordinary either, as Father Gabriel recognizes: “For St. John of the Cross, the ‘illumination’ of faith is the work of the gifts of the Holy Ghost. He has, moreover, strongly affirmed ‘that faith leads the soul to union.’ He could not uphold such a thesis if it were necessary to add other ‘extraordinary’ principles to faith.”.. ‘. We may therefore conclude, Father Gabriel says at the end of his article, that neither does the light necessary for the transformation of love belong to the order of reserved privileges. It is a “connatural” light: the light of faith accompanied by that of the gifts. Faith and the gifts are elements of our supernatural “organism.”... Unfortunately the soul often recoils before the indispensable suffering which should prepare union. Let us not forget that “the door by which we enter into the riches of the knowledge of God is the cross.”

Father Arintero, O.P., taught this same doctrine from 1908 on in Evolucion mistica, and we have not ceased to teach it since the first edition (1923) of Christian Perfection and Contemplation, in which we declared: “What constitutes the foundation of this eminent state, called the transforming union, is in no way miraculous.” And again: “All just souls are called, at least in a general and remote manner, to this transforming union, which is the normal prelude to the life of heaven. If they are faithful to this call, and at the same time humble and generous, they will hear a more proximate and urgent invitation. St. Teresa repeats this in the Epilogue to The Interior Castle. ”

The same conclusion is more or less explicitly reached by several authors who have treated of very close union with Mary in the unitive way, according to the principles set forth by St. Grignion de Montfort. Father E. Neubert, S.M., has assembled some very significant data on this point. On this subject must also be mentioned L' Union mystique a Marie, written by Mary of St. Teresa (1623–77), a Flemish recluse who experienced it personally.

TOWARD A CLOSE UNION, ALMOST ALWAYS AN ACTUALITY THE VALUE OF THE HIDDEN LIFE

The life of union seems to us expressed with simplicity and depth in the following letter from a contemplative religious who is still young and who has, we believe, truly found his vocation, in spite of the powerlessness of which he speaks:

> Peace increases with joy, although everything sensible disappears more and more, and my poor soul is as if lost at times in the darkness, possessing nothing and unable to acquire anything by its own powers. Life becomes so simple. A single desire governs everything: to arrive at Love, to thank Him for His incomprehensible love, and to save souls. My desire for the infinity of God grows continually, and the clear view of my own nothingness is ever before my eyes. Though it humiliates me greatly, it does not discourage me. I try to live simply as at Nazareth, making each act, even the most banal, an act of perfect love. For is it not with our will that we love? What matter then if a man is truly a wretched nothing? Is not the sole, strong, and constant determination to give pleasure to Jesus and to my heavenly Mother by each act, love which grows more perfect with the intensity of the will? Every morning and repeatedly during my work or in the recitation of the Divine Office, I say to Jesus: Beloved Jesus, I wish each thought, each word, each little action to be an act of perfect love, and to each one of them I unite the infinite merits of Calvary, the immense merits of my Mother and of all the angels and the saints. This intention becomes more and more actual and is continually on my lips.
>
> All (my powerlessness to understand His limitless love, my actual desire of love, my prayer for my friends, for souls), all is more and more summed up in this single word: Jesus. I think always of Him, but I do not possess Him sufficiently.
>
> If I am mistaken in what I have just said, Father, correct me.
>
> Oh, I see indeed that I am very wretched. All the sins and all the selfishness of my past life are ever before my eyes. I know that I have been very ungrateful. But precisely for that reason, I do not wish to lose a minute that is not an act of love. I should like my love to be as pure as possible in order that my poor life may be useful to the Church, to souls. In your letter you told me that I am not losing my life. What joy!
>
> On the other hand, I see that I am so terribly poor. The world can offer me nothing; everything in it is vanity. This I see. The supernatural, the divine, which alone I seek, which

alone can help me toward union with Jesus, I do not possess; at least I do not feel that I possess it.

My faculties no longer seem to belong to me; my thoughts do not come at will. The thought of Jesus, yes; but no others. I am convinced that I shall never be able to advance unless help comes to me from on high. Will it come? When? I wish to be patient, tranquil. May His holy will be done, and may I oppose no obstacle to it!

You know that in recent years, I have had to admit to my superiors and to everybody, that I was good for nothing, that I could no longer preach or teach. My memory retains nothing, Thanks be to God, I am no longer concerned about men's opinion. I work for Jesus. Since my arrival here, I take my turn with the others for the sermons. Moreover, there are no great preachers here, and the people are simple. I also sometimes preach to our Carmelite sisters. Everybody claims to be satisfied, but these sermons are, more properly speaking, little talks in which everything is very simple and the language not elegant. I have nothing by heart; but I bring several great thoughts on a scrap of paper and try to talk about them. I know that grace alone can change hearts, and that is why I wish to be increasingly united to my divine Friend. A final reason why I wish that my poor life should be as holy as possible is the good of the Province....

The conviction that there is only one thing to do, to render myself increasingly like the great friends of Jesus, in order to do good to the Church and to save souls, grows continually. Besides, my holy Order exacts perfection from me; it is not sufficient to be "a good religious"; one should be closely united to God. But that is precisely what constitutes my constant torment. The thought of the unbounded love of Jesus for us is always present to my thought. What can I do in return to please Him and to save souls? It is my first thought in the morning, it returns repeatedly in the course of the day, and it is my last thought at night.

We have so far discussed the three ages of the interior life, considering them not under a diminished form, but as they are described by the great spiritual writers, in particular St. John of the Cross. In the course of our work we have thus spoken of the infused contemplation of the mysteries of faith and of its degrees, though we did not treat of the extraordinary graces which at times accompany it, but are quite distinct from it. We shall now discuss these graces.

To proceed in an orderly fashion, we shall see first what St. Paul tells us about these graces, which he calls charisms, and how St. Thomas Aquinas explains his teaching. Next, we shall treat of private revelations, visions, interior words, divine touches, stigmatization, and suggestion. We shall sum up the classic teaching on these subjects and thus find a new confirmation of the traditional doctrine set forth earlier in this work on the axis of the spiritual life. The examination of extraordinary facts brings out more clearly what distinguishes them from what is loftiest in the normal way of sanctity.

PART 5

Extraordinary Graces

Chapter 53

Charisms or Graces Gratis Datae

St. Paul speaks of these extraordinary graces in his First Epistle to the Corinthians where he says: “Now there are diversities of graces, but the same Spirit.... And the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man unto profit. To one indeed, by the Spirit, is given the word of wisdom; and to another, the word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit; to another, faith in the same Spirit; to another, the grace of healing in one Spirit; to another, the working of miracles; to another, prophecy; to another, the discerning of spirits; to another, diverse kinds of tongues; to another, interpretation of speeches. But all these things one and the same Spirit worketh, dividing to everyone according as He will.”

St. Paul places charity far above all these gifts or charisms: “If... I have not charity, I am nothing,” for my will is turned in the opposite direction from the divine will.

NATURE AND DIVISION OF THE CHARISMS

As St. Thomas shows, sanctifying grace and charity are much more excellent than these charisms; the former unite us immediately to God, our last end, whereas these exceptional gifts are directed chiefly to the benefit of our neighbor and only prepare him to be converted, without giving him divine life. As a rule, they are not essentially supernatural like sanctifying grace, but only preternatural like a miracle and prophecy. They are only signs which confirm the divine revelation proposed to all, or the sanctity of great servants of God.

There is an immense difference between the essentially supernatural character of sanctifying grace and the supernaturalness of these charisms. Grace is essentially supernatural as a participation in the intimate life of

God; it is consequently invisible and not naturally knowable. Whereas these naturally knowable signs are not supernatural by their essence, but only by the mode of their production: thus the resurrection of a dead body restores natural life (vegetative and sensitive) in a supernatural manner, but does not produce supernatural life, the participation in the divine life. What is supernatural in these signs is, therefore, exterior and very inferior to that of the grace received in baptism.

The nature of these charisms may be more clearly seen in the division that St. Thomas gives of them, following the text of St. Paul, which we quoted before.

Graces gratis datae to instruct one's neighbor concerning divine things.	1. Graces that give full knowledge of divine things	-**faith** or special certitude as to principles. -**word of wisdom,** on the principal conclusions known through the first cause. -**word of knowledge,** on the examples and effects which manifest the causes
	2. Graces that confirm divine revelation	-by works: **gift of healing, gift of miracles.** -by knowledge: **discerning of spirits, prophecy.**
	3. Graces that aid in preaching the word of God	-**gift of tongues;** -**gift of interpretation of speeches.**

It is easy to see that St. Paul and St. John the Evangelist excelled in the word of wisdom; St. Matthew and St. James in the word of knowledge; that certain saints, such as St. Vincent Ferrer, received the gift of miracles in a striking manner; others, such as St. John Bosco, that of prophecy; still others, like the holy Cure of Ars, the discerning of spirits.

APPLICATION OF THIS DOCTRINE BY ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS

To these charisms are generally linked the extraordinary favors which sometimes accompany infused contemplation, that is, private revelations, supernatural words, visions. St. John of the Cross treats these favors at length in The Ascent of Mount Carmel, distinguishing them with great care from infused contemplation, which belongs to the grace of the virtues and gifts, or sanctifying grace, as we saw earlier in this work.

The teaching of St. John of the Cross on this point rests theologically on the tract on prophecy expounded by St. Thomas Aquinas in the Summa theologica. In question 175 St. Thomas devotes six articles to rapture which sometimes accompanies prophetic revelation, as it may also accompany infused contemplation.

St. Thomas there explains in particular that prophetic revelation may be made in three ways: by a sensible vision, an imaginary vision, or an intellectual vision; and the prophet may be awake, asleep, or in ecstasy.

The vision is said to be sensible or corporeal when a sensible and exterior sign appears to the eyes or when an exterior voice is heard. The vision is called imaginary when God, in order to express His thought to us, coordinates certain images that pre-exist in our imagination, or imprints new ones on it. There is a supernatural intellectual vision when He acts immediately on the intellect by coordinating our acquired ideas or by imprinting new ideas, called infused. There is always infused prophetic light to judge supernaturally of what is proposed, and indeed this light alone suffices to interpret certain signs, as Joseph interpreted the dreams of Pharaoh.

If the prophet is awake, the vision is more perfect than if given to him during sleep, because he has the full use of his faculties. Occasionally the so-called imaginary vision and the intellectual vision are accompanied by ecstasy, or alienation of the senses. Ecstasy, especially when it is only partial (the alienation of one sense and not of all), may be a natural effect of the absorption of the higher faculties in the object manifested; the soul can no longer be attentive to exterior things. But when ecstasy, instead of following, so to speak, precedes the vision or infused contemplation and prepares the soul for it, then ecstasy is extraordinary and deserves the name of rapture; it then implies a certain violence which lifts the soul above inferior things in order to fix it in God.

Christ and the Blessed Virgin had all these charisms in an eminent degree, but without losing the use of their senses. It is said of St. Gertrude

that she never knew the weakness of ecstasy; of our Savior and His holy Mother it must be said that from the very beginning of their lives they were superior to ecstasy and rapture.

Following these principles accepted by theologians, St. John of the Cross draws a clear distinction between general and obscure infused contemplation and different modes of particular and distinct supernatural knowledge: (1) visions, sensible, imaginary, or intellectual;. (2) revelations;. (3) interior words. After enumerating these modes of knowledge, St. John of the Cross adds: “In regard to obscure and general knowledge, there is no division; it is contemplation received in faith. This contemplation is the end to which we should lead the soul; all other knowledge should be directed toward this, beginning with the first; and the soul should progress by detaching itself from all of them.”

Following the example of St. Thomas, we shall proceed from the general to the particular, and we shall first discuss revelations; then we shall see the special modes of their manifestation, that is, either by visions, or by words, a mode which is generally more expressive.

Moreover, we shall consider first among these favors those that are more exterior, that are manifestly directed toward the benefit of our neighbor and are more directly connected with charisms or graces gratis datae. Next, we shall consider those which are more directly ordained to the sanctification of the person who receives them. This is particularly the case with various interior locutions and also with divine touches received in the will, which St. John of the Cross discusses last.

Proceeding in this manner from the general to the particular, from the exterior to the interior, we shall avoid repetition and more dearly understand the divine action in souls. We shall see that extraordinary favors, like the stigmata, are exceptional signs given by God from time to time to draw us from our spiritual somnolence and to attract our attention more strongly to the great mysteries of faith by which we should live more profoundly every day, in particular to the mystery of the redemptive Incarnation.

Chapter 54

Divine Revelations and Visions

Divine revelations manifest supernaturally a hidden truth by means of a vision, a word, or only a prophetic instinct; they presuppose the gift of prophecy. They are called public if they have been made by the prophets, Christ, or the apostles, and are proposed to all by the Church, which preserves them in Scripture and tradition. They are called private when they are directed only to the particular benefit of certain persons. Private revelations, no matter what their importance, do not belong to the deposit of Catholic faith. However, some may draw attention to a certain form of worship of a nature to interest all the faithful, for example, the devotion to the Sacred Heart. After examining the reasons which motivate this worship, the Church may promote it and establish it without judging infallibly about the divine origin of the private revelation which gave rise to this movement of prayer. These private revelations will remain the object of pious belief, as will the supernatural origin of exceptional favors which occasionally accompany them, such as the stigmata of a particular servant of God.

WHAT SHOULD BE THOUGHT OF PRIVATE REVELATIONS

Those who receive divine revelations, recognized as such, should most certainly, after prudent and authoritative judgment, incline respectfully before this supernatural manifestation. St. Margaret Mary followed this rule in regard to devotion to the Sacred Heart; so also did St. Bernadette in respect to the revelations she received at Lourdes, after favorable examination by diocesan authority.

According to certain theologians, a person who receives a private divine revelation with the certitude of its divine origin, like St. Joan of Arc, should

believe in it with divine theological faith, for, in their opinion, the revelation contains the formal motive of infused faith, the authority of God revealing.

According to other theologians, and their opinion seems more exact, anyone who receives a certain private revelation should adhere to it immediately, not through divine faith but by prophetic light. This supernatural certitude may last or, on the contrary, give way to a moral certitude when the prophetic illumination disappears; but this illumination may return in order to restore the first certitude.

When the Church approves private revelations made to the saints, she simply declares that they contain nothing contrary to Scripture and to Catholic teaching and that they may be proposed as probable to the pious belief of the faithful. Private revelations may not be published without the approbation of ecclesiastical authority.

Even in revelations approved as probable by the Church, some error may slip in; for the saints themselves may attribute to the Holy Ghost what proceeds from themselves, or may falsely interpret the meaning of a divine revelation, or interpret it in too materialistic a manner, as, for example, the disciples interpreted Christ's remark about St. John to mean that the latter would not die.

The explanation of this possibility of error lies in the fact that there are many degrees in prophetic light, from the simple, supernatural instinct to perfect revelation. When there is only prophetic instinct, the meaning of things revealed and even the divine origin of the revelation may remain unknown. Thus it was that Caiphas prophesied, without being aware of it, when he said, "that it was expedient that one man should die for the people."

One of the signs of the divine origin of a revelation is the humility and simplicity with which the favored soul receives it and, without excessive attachment to it, communicates it briefly to its spiritual director, whom it obeys perfectly as the minister of Jesus Christ. The gift of prophecy may, it is true, be found in those who do not possess these qualities, but such an exception is rare.

Before regulating its conduct, at least indirectly, by a private revelation, a soul that is truly enlightened by God will always consult its director or some other learned and discreet person who will examine the matter from the point of view of faith, theology, and supernatural prudence. St. Teresa insists particularly on this point This is especially necessary since the soul

may easily go astray in the interpretation of revelations, either because it considers them too literally and according to habits tainted with egoism, or because they are sometimes conditional. A learned, prudent, and virtuous confessor, however, has graces of state which make him avoid error, especially when he prays humbly, fervently, and assiduously for these graces. He himself then receives the inspirations of the gift of counsel that he may see clearly and judge rightly.

What should be thought of the desire for revelations? St. John of the Cross, who often invites interior souls to desire humbly, but confidently and ardently, the infused contemplation of the mysteries of faith and the divine union resulting therefrom, strongly reproves the desire for revelations. On this point he is in complete accord with St. Vincent Ferrer, and shows that the soul desiring revelations is vain; that by this curiosity it gives the devil the opportunity to lead it astray; that this inclination takes away the purity of faith, produces a hindrance for the spirit, denotes a lack of humility, and exposes it to many errors. To ask for revelations shows also a lack of respect toward Christ, because the fullness of revelation has been given in the Gospel. God sometimes grants these extraordinary favors to weak souls, or again to strong souls that have an exceptional mission to accomplish in the midst of great difficulties; but to desire them is at least a venial sin, even when the soul has a good end in view. They are of value only because of the humility and love of God which they awaken in the soul. All this shows clearly the error of imprudent directors who, impelled by curiosity, are concerned with souls favored by visions and revelations. This curiosity is a deformation of the spirit which casts the soul into illusion and trouble, and turns it away from humility through vain complacency in extraordinary ways.

Finally, St. John of the Cross insists strongly on the fact that the desire for revelations turns the soul away from infused contemplation. He says: “The soul imagines that something great has taken place, that God Himself has spoken, when in reality there is very little, or nothing, or less than nothing. In truth, of what use is that which is void of humility, charity, mortification, holy simplicity, silence, etc.? This is why I affirm that these illusions offer a great obstacle to divine union, for if the soul makes much of them, this fact alone drives it very far from the abyss of faith.... The Holy Ghost enlightens the recollected intellect according to the measure of its recollection. The most perfect recollection is that which takes place in

faith.... Infused charity is in proportion to the purity of the soul in a perfect faith: the more intense such charity is, the more the Holy Ghost enlightens the soul and communicates His gifts to it." No words could more strongly condemn the desire for revelations and make the soul long for that perfect spirit of faith, which is found in infused contemplation and which leads to almost continual intimate union with God.

As we have pointed out several times, it is, therefore, a serious error, rather frequently committed, to confound the desire for revelations with a desire for infused contemplation. Not only is the former blameworthy, but it also turns the soul away from infused contemplation, which is highly desirable. St. John of the Cross thus gives us the loftiest commentary on St. Thomas' words: "Sanctifying grace is much nobler than gratia gratis data." In other words, sanctifying grace (with charity and the seven gifts connected with it) is far superior to the charisms, and even to prophecy, the highest of all. This statement puts clearly before us the whole scope of St. Paul's teaching on the eminence of charity.

However, at this point in our study we must distinguish two kinds of private revelations: (1) revelations properly so called reveal secrets about God or His works; (2) revelations improperly so called give a greater understanding of supernatural truths already known by faith.

I) Revelations manifesting secrets to us are much more subject to illusion. Without doubt God sometimes reveals to the living the time that remains to them on this earth, the trials that they will undergo, what will happen to a nation, to a certain person. But the devil can easily counterfeit these things and, to gain credence for his lies, he begins by nourishing the spirit with likely things or even with partial truths. St. John of the Cross says: "It is almost impossible to escape his wiles if the soul does not immediately get rid of them, because the spirit of evil knows well how to assume the appearance of truth and give this appearance credit." "In order to be perfect there is, therefore, no reason to desire these extraordinary supernatural things.... The soul must prudently guard itself against all these communications if it wishes, in purity and without illusions, to reach divine union by the night of faith." No words could make a clearer distinction between these extraordinary supernatural things and infused contemplation, and more effectively show that infused contemplation is normal in the perfect.

2) Revelations improperly so called, which give us a greater understanding of revealed truths, are associated with infused contemplation, especially if they concern God Himself and do not stop at particular things, but profoundly penetrate His wisdom, infinite goodness, or omnipotence. In The Ascent of Mount Carmel St. John of the Cross says on this subject: “This profound loving knowledge is, moreover, accessible only to a soul in union with God. Such knowledge is this union itself, for it has its origin precisely in a certain contact of the soul with the Divinity. Consequently it is God Himself who is felt and tasted, though He is not perceived manifestly in full light, as He is in glory; but the touch is so strong and so profound, by reason of the knowledge and attraction, that it penetrates the substance of the soul. It is impossible for the devil to interfere in this and to deceive by imitation, for nothing is comparable to it, or approaches it in enjoyment and delights. These touches savor of the divine essence and of eternal life, and the devil cannot counterfeit such lofty things.... In regard to the other perceptions, we said that the soul should abstract itself from them, but this duty ceases in the case of this lofty loving knowledge, since it is the manifestation of that union to which we are trying to conduct the soul. All that we have taught previously on the subject of despoliation and of complete detachment was directed toward this union; and the divine favors which result from it are the fruit of humility, of the desire to suffer for the love of God, with resignation and disinterestedness as to all reward.”

SUPERNATURAL VISIONS

Divine revelations sometimes take the form of visions and at other times of words. Supernatural visions are either sensible, imaginary, or intellectual.

Sensible or corporal visions of our Savior, the Blessed Virgin, or the saints, are sometimes granted to beginners to detach them from worldly things. If the vision is common to a great number of persons, it is a sign that the apparition is exterior, without any certainty thereby that it is of divine origin. If it is individual, the dispositions of the witness who declares that he has had it must be attentively examined and great prudence must be exercised.

The director will be able to recognize whether these apparitions are graces of God, by their conformity to the teaching of the Church and by the fruits which they leave in the soul. The soul itself should be very faithful in

reaping the fruits of sanctity which God proposes by granting it these favors. Those who are favored with apparitions of our Lord, the Blessed Virgin, and the saints should render to the persons represented the honors due them, even though the apparition should be the result of an illusion of the imagination or of the devil, for as St. Teresa says: “Although a painter may be a wicked man, honor should none the less be paid to a portrait of Christ done by him.” These apparitions must never be desired or asked of God.

Imaginary visions are produced in the imagination by God or by the angels when a person is either awake or asleep. According to the Gospel, St. Joseph was on several occasions supernaturally instructed in a dream. Although the divine origin of a dream may be difficult to discern, ordinarily when the soul seeks God sincerely, He makes Himself felt either by a feeling of profound peace, or by events that confirm the vision; thus in a dream a sinner may be warned of the urgent necessity of conversion.

Imaginary visions are subject to the illusions of the imagination and of the devil. We have three signs, however, by which to discern whether they are of divine origin: (1) when they cannot be produced or dismissed at will, but come suddenly and last but a short time; (2) when they leave the soul in great peace; (3) when they produce fruits of virtue, a great humility and perseverance in good.

A divine imaginary vision, granted while a person is awake, is almost always accompanied by at least partial ecstasy (for example, the momentary loss of sight) so that the soul may distinguish the interior apparition from external impressions; there is ecstasy also because a soul enraptured and united to God loses contact with external things. No perfect imaginary vision occurs without an intellectual vision, which makes the soul see and penetrate its meaning: for example, the former may concern the sacred humanity of Christ; the second, His divinity.

Imaginary visions should not be desired or asked of God any more than sensible visions; they are in no way necessary to holiness. The perfect spirit of faith and infused contemplation are of superior order and prepare the soul more immediately for divine union.

An intellectual vision is the certain manifestation of an object to the intellect without any actual dependence on sensible images. It is brought about either by acquired ideas supernaturally coordinated or modified, or by infused ideas, which are sometimes of angelic order. It requires, besides, an

infused light, that of the gift of wisdom or of prophecy. It may refer to God, spirits, or material things, like the purely spiritual knowledge of the angels. The intellectual vision is at times obscure and indistinct, that is, it manifests with certitude the presence of the object without any detail as to its intimate nature. Thus St. Teresa often felt our Lord Jesus Christ near her for several days. At other times the intellectual vision is clear and distinct; it is then more rapid and is a sort of intuition of divine truths or of created things in God. It cannot be translated into human language.

Intellectual visions, especially those caused by infused ideas, are free from the illusions of the imagination and of the devil; but at times what is only an over-excitement of the imagination or a suggestion of the devil may be taken for an intellectual vision. The divine origin of these favors may be recognized from the effects they produce: deep peace, holy joy, profound humility, unshakable attachment to virtue.

St. John of the Cross says: “By the very fact that this knowledge is communicated suddenly, independently of the will, it is useless for the soul to desire it...; it ought simply to allow God to act when and how He wills.... These favors are not given to a soul which is attached to any good; they are the effect of a special love which God bears toward the soul which strives for Him in detachment and disinterested love.”

The loftiest intellectual visions, since they are inferior to the beatific vision, cannot attain the divine essence sicuti est, but only “by a certain manner of representation” due to infused ideas, as St. Teresa says. In the opinion of a number of authors, the intellectual visions that often accompany the transforming union are the equivalent of a special revelation that gives the soul the certitude of being in the state of grace and of predestination. St. John of the Cross even says, as we have seen: “In my opinion, the soul can never be placed in possession of this state [the transforming union] without at the same time being confirmed in grace.”

Chapter 55

Supernatural Words and Divine Touches

Supernatural words are manifestations of God's thought which are heard either by the exterior senses or by the interior senses or immediately by the intellect.

THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF SUPERNATURAL WORDS

An auricular supernatural word is a vibration formed in the air by the ministry of angels. For example, St. Luke records that Zachary heard the angel Gabriel speak to him. The same angel Gabriel said to Mary: "Hail, full of grace." Like corporal visions, these locutions are subject to illusions; the same rules should be applied to them to discern those of divine origin.

Imaginary supernatural words are heard by the imagination, when the person is either awake or asleep. They sometimes seem to come from heaven; at other times from the depths of one's heart. They are perfectly distinct, although not heard with bodily ears. They are not easily forgotten; those especially which contain a prophecy remain graven on the memory. To recover the exact statement of the words heard, it is sometimes necessary that the person who has heard them should recollect himself and make mental prayer; in this way he can avert the slightest variation.

These supernatural words can be distinguished from those of our spirit by the fact that they are not heard at will, and that they are words and works at one and the same time. For example, when they reprove us for our faults, they suddenly change our interior dispositions and render us capable of undertaking everything for the service of God. It is then easy to discern them.

When imaginary words come from the devil, they not only do not produce good effects, but, on the contrary, produce evil effects. The soul is

disturbed, troubled, frightened, disgusted; and if it experiences any sensible pleasure, it is very different from divine peace. These diabolical words resemble supernatural words of divine origin as glass beads resemble diamonds. It is often easy to perceive the difference immediately.

Intellectual words are heard directly by the intellect without the intermediary of the senses or imagination, in the way the angels communicate their thoughts to one another at will. They suppose a divine light and the coordination of pre-existent acquired ideas, and at times of infused ideas. As St. Teresa says: “It is a wordless language, which is the tongue of the fatherland.”

Theologians teach, with St. John of the Cross, that intellectual words may be either successive, formal, or substantia1. We shall recapitulate their teaching here.

Successive intellectual words are produced only in the state of recollection; they come from our spirit which is enlightened by the Holy Ghost, and with such facility and new views that the understanding cannot imagine that they spring from its own depths. These successive words are subject to illusion, for the spirit, which at the beginning followed only the truth, may deviate and even go seriously astray, inasmuch as the devil often insinuates himself into these successive words, especially when people are attached to them. He acts thus with even greater reason toward those who are bound to him by a tacit or formal act, with heretics who persist in their errors, and especially with heresiarchs.

Successive words come from God when they simultaneously produce in the soul an increase of charity and humility. But it is sometimes difficult clearly to discern supernatural love from a certain natural love, and true humility from pusillanimity. Therefore it is not easy to recognize the divine origin of successive words. They should not be desired, for obscure faith is far superior to them.

Formal intellectual words are so called because the soul knows formally that they are uttered by another, without any contribution on its part... and it can hear them when not recollected, and even when far from thinking of what is said.” They are, therefore, quite different from those we have discussed, and are at times very precise; for example, Daniel says that an angel spoke to him. The Lord sometimes leads souls in this way to great things, at the same time allowing a certain repugnance to the fulfillment of

the divine order to subsist If, on the contrary, God inspires humiliating things, He gives greater facility to accomplish them.

These formal intellectual words are in themselves free from illusions, since the understanding cannot contribute anything to them, and the devil cannot act immediately on the intellect. Nevertheless his artifices may be taken for words of God, by confounding what immediately touches the intellect with what takes place in the imagination. “Consequently,” says St. John of the Cross, “what they say should not be immediately translated into action, nor should they be held in esteem no matter what their origin. It is indispensable to make them known to an experienced confessor or to a discreet and learned person.... If an experienced person is not to be found, the soul should keep whatever is substantial and sure in these words; disregard the rest; and speak of it to no one, lest a counselor be found who would do the soul more harm than good. The soul should not place itself at the mercy of anyone at all, for it is of prime importance whether one acts judiciously or is deceived in such matters.”

Substantial intellectual words are formal locutions which effect immediately what they announce. We read in The Ascent of Mount Carmel:

> For example, God says formally to a soul: Be good!, and instantly the soul becomes good. Or He says: Love Me!, and at once the soul possesses and experiences in itself true love of God. Or again He may say: Fear nothing!, and at that very instant, strength and peace come upon that soul... Thus, God said to Abraham: “Walk before Me, and be perfect,” and instantly perfection was given to him, and thenceforth he walked reverently before God.... A single one of these words instantly operates more good than the efforts of a lifetime. When the soul receives such locutions, it has only to abandon itself; it is useless to desire or not to desire them, for there is nothing to repulse, nothing to fear. The soul ought not even to seek to effect what is said, for God never utters substantial words in order that we should translate them into acts; He Himself brings about their effect. This is what distinguishes them from successive and formal locutions.... Illusion is not to be feared here, for neither the understanding nor the devil can interfere in this matter.... Substantial words are, therefore, a powerful means of union with God.... Happy the soul to which God addresses them.

God’s words are living flames in purified souls.

DIVINE TOUCHES

There is a fourth kind of favor which “frequently” accompanies lofty infused contemplation, that is, divine touches, which are imprinted in the will and which “react on the intellect.... They give, thus, a very lofty and sweet intellectual penetration of God.” These touches are thereby attached

to “particular and distinct contemplation.” They do not depend on the activity of the soul, or on its meditations, although these prepare the soul for them.

These divine touches are occasionally so deep and intense that they seem imprinted “in the very substance of the soul.” How should this be understood? God, in fact, preserves the very substance of the soul in existence by a virtual contact, which is creation continued. In it He also produces, preserves, and increases sanctifying grace, whence the infused virtues and the gifts spring. He also moves the faculties, either by proposing an object to them, or by applying them to the exercise of their acts, and that from within. The divine touch of which we are speaking is a supernatural motion of this type, but one of the most profound. It is exercised on the very depths of the will and of the intellect, where these faculties take root in the substance of the soul, whence they arise.

Blosius, when explaining what Tauler calls the depth of the soul, tells us that it is the origin or the root of the higher faculties, virium illarum est origo. In truth, our will is, in a way, infinite in its profundity, in the sense that God alone can fill it; hence created goods cannot exercise an invincible attraction on it. It is free to love or not to love; only God seen face to face infallibly attracts it and captivates it, even to the very wellspring of its energies. So-called substantial divine touches affect this depth of the will and of the intellect. The very substance of the soul can operate, feel, perceive, and love only through its faculties; it has received them for that purpose. In this it differs from the divine substance, which alone, because God alone is pure Act, operates immediately by itself without having need of faculties. But God, who is closer to the soul than it is to itself, inasmuch as He preserves it in existence, can from within touch and move the very foundation of the faculties by a contact, not spatial but spiritual (contactus virtutis, non quantitativus), which reveals itself as divine. Thus from within God moves the soul to the most profound acts, to which it could not move itself.

With this in mind, we understand why St. John of the Cross says on this subject:

> Nothing is more calculated to dissipate this delicate knowledge than the intervention of the natural spirit. Since it is a question of a sweet supernatural communication, it is useless to try to comprehend it actively, for that is impossible; the understanding has only to accept it. If, on the contrary, the soul seeks to provoke it or desires it, it may happen that what it conceives comes from itself, and thereby gives the devil the opportunity of presenting counterfeit

> knowledge.... Passive acceptance in humility is, therefore, incumbent on the soul. God grants these favors according to His good pleasure, and it is the humble and thoroughly detached soul that receives God's preference. By acting in this way, the progress of the soul suffers no interruption, and such knowledge serves efficaciously to advance it. These touches are touches of union serving to unite the soul passively to God.

This wholly intimate action of God on "the depths of the soul" is that in which everything terminates and, in a sense, that in which everything began, without our having been aware of it. This influence of the Holy Ghost on the depths of the soul, where He produced, preserves, and increases sanctifying grace, in fact precedes, without our knowing it, His influence on the faculties. The completely purified soul experiences this action in its very depths, when it has at length entered the sanctuary where God dwells and operates from the moment of justification. Therefore the great mystics have spoken so much of this depth of the soul and of this "substantial" action of God in which everything has its beginning, and at which everything terminates, when the soul reverts to its principle. It is like a spiritual kiss imprinted by Christ, the Spouse of souls, on the depths of the will, which replies to Him with the most ardent love: "My Beloved to me, and I to Him." This divine touch is quite frequent in the transforming union or the spiritual marriage.

Evidently this favor of the divine touch, like many substantial words, is directly ordained to the sanctification of the person who receives it. It is, however, distinct from infused contemplation or from the mystical state, which it sometimes accompanies. Infused and obscure contemplation continues, in fact, when these touches, which are transitory, have ceased. The fact is that they are very sanctifying and may be more or less explicitly desired with the intimate union which they produce, but this desire should be humble and supernatural.

We must guard against confounding the mystical state (prolonged infused contemplation and the union with God which results from it) with extraordinary facts notably distinct from union. Neither should we lessen the mystical state by confounding it with fervent and simplified affective meditation, which is acquired and not infused. The mystical, or passive and infused, state begins with the passive recollection and prayer of quiet, described by St. Teresa in the fourth mansion. Neither should a chasm be interposed between the initial mystical state and the transforming union, described in the seventh mansion. This last mansion alone is, in this life, the culminating point of the development of grace, the virtues, and the gifts,

and the immediate disposition to receive the beatific vision to which we are all called.

Chapter 56

Stigmatization and Suggestion

In recent years a study has again been made of the following problem: Can suggestion and autosuggestion produce the stigmata, that is, the marks of our Lord's passion, which a number of saints during ecstasy have received on their feet, hands, side, and forehead, with intense sufferings extraordinarily reminiscent of those of Christ crucified for us? These wounds appear without having been caused by any exterior wound, and periodically fresh blood flows from them. The first known stigmatic is St. Francis of Assisi. Since his day the cases have multiplied, but it seems certain that stigmatization occurs only in ecstatics and is preceded and accompanied by very acute physical and moral sufferings, which configure the soul to Jesus crucified. Can so exceptional a phenomenon be explained by suggestion in certain highly emotional subjects, as some unbelievers claim?

This question is examined at length by several physicians, psychologists, and theologians in the well documented number of the Etudes carmelitaines for October, 1936.

Dr. Lhermitte, associate professor in the Medical School in Paris, offers a negative reply to this problem in an interesting report. He says:

> Even admitting that by hypnotic suggestion ecchymoses, vesicles and bloody sweats may be produced, can we say that the problem of stigmatization would be solved?... We cannot admit it.... Even though cutaneous ecchymoses were reproduced by pure suggestion, we would still have to produce symmetrical ecchymoses terminating in lasting wounds, rebellious to infection and slow to heal.... Contrary to those who, under the cover of experimental science and of so-called positive facts, maintain that we can apprehend the processus of mystical stigmatization in one of its parts, we claim that, in spite of a few very deficient data given to us by experimentation and clinical research, we are as far from the explanation of the stigmata as in the days of Charcot, Bourneville, Bernheim, and Virchow.

We know specifically that Pierre Janet tried unsuccessfully for long years to produce stigmata by hypnotic suggestion.

The opinion opposed to that of Professor Lhermitte is defended in the same number of the Etudes by Dr. van Gehuchten of the University of Louvain and Dr. Wunderle of the University of Würzburg. Both of them think that, under the influence of suggestion, local vasomotor manifestations may be produced which go so far as the formation of blisters and hemorrhages. Dr. Wunderle cites a case of this kind, produced by suggestion in a Protestant woman in Dr. Lechler's sanatarium in Germany.

The second of these opinions has, we believe, in its favor only confused and weak data, as Professor Lhermitte says.

THE TRADITIONAL TEACHING

In favor of the traditional doctrine, we are happy to point out here what Father Louis Sempe, S.J., wrote recently in an excellent article on this subject after the Congress of Avon-Fontainebleau. We quote this article all the more willingly because it expresses very exactly what we ourselves would have wished to say had we taken part in the congress. We shall italicize what seems to us most important in it.

Father Sempe believed, though without reason, that we conceded conditionally (if the facts are exact) Dr. Wunderle's opinion. This impression was created by the manner in which Father Lavaud, O.P., of the University of Fribourg, in this same number of the Etudes, expressed at one and the same time his own thought and our opinion, forgetting to mention a traditional argument, which has always seemed to us very important and on which we shall insist at the end of this chapter.

Father Sempe justly remarks:

> It is not that we deny to hypnotic suggestion the power to produce the effects that they tell us about. We would not dare a priori to concede it or to refuse it; let experience decide the matter. But, in our humble opinion, this is not the crux of the question. It is, so it seems to us, the fact that true stigmata, those of the saints, the only ones which the Church takes into consideration, are not in their entity wounds like the others. Beyond the fact that they are always located in the same places in the body as they were in Christ and occasionally attain the same dimensions as they did in Him, their behavior differentiates them essentially, we believe, from ordinary wounds.
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> To recall only their best verified characteristics, they are as rebellious to all medication as they are inaccessible to corruption: no dressing heals them, and they never suppurate, although frequently open and exposed to the air for years. They occasionally heal suddenly and

> perfectly, to such a degree that the scar tissue is as elastic and strong as the surrounding skin, as pliable and resistant to pinching and twisting as the rest of the skin, though it is still possible to see the form and the dimensions of the wound underneath.... Finally, true stigmata bleed periodically, depending on the liturgical feasts of Christ and the Blessed Virgin. They may bleed on the days to which some of these feasts have been transferred, contrary to the expectation of the subject who was unaware of the transference.
>
> Are these not miraculous characteristics? But they point out nothing similar to us in connection with red spots, vesications, erosions, little
> drops of blood, obtained with so much trouble in certain neuropathic subjects by the aid of suggestion.

It has also been occasionally observed that when the stigmatic is lying on his back, the blood flows from the wounds in his feet as it flowed from Christ's wounds, and therefore in the direction contrary to gravity.

T he abundance of the hemorrhages is also unexplained. The stigmata are generally on the surface, far from the large blood vessels, and yet they bleed copiously.

These physical particularities of stigmatic wounds differentiate them notably, in fact, from other wounds, as Dr. Lhermitte pointed out. And the description which is generally given of the stigmata of the saints presents these physical particularities and likewise the moral circumstances of this exceptional fact, notably the lively compassion for the sufferings of our Savior.

Special attention should be paid to the fact that the stigmata, properly so called, are found only in persons who practice the most heroic virtues, and who have in particular great love of the cross.

Stigmatics enter into the depths of the mystery of the redemption, into the secret of the moral and physical sufferings of Christ, or of His immolation for the salvation of sinners. Here is something that has no relation to the patients of clinics for nervous diseases. It is precisely to recall His dolorous passion to our indifferent minds and hearts that our Savior chooses victims whom He thus visibly or invisibly configures occasionally to His crucifixion.

To neglect this loftier aspect in stigmatization, in order to be able to explain this fact naturally, is to consider in it only the material cause while closing one's eyes to the formal cause and to the final cause, consequently to the true efficient cause. It is as if one defined a statue solely by the wood or marble of which it is made, prescinding from its form, its true end, and the artist who had this end in view. To explain the superior by the inferior, naturalism should, like materialism, reduce the superior to its material

cause, that is to say, disfigure it to the point of making it unrecognizable. The natural ecchymoses of which we are speaking resemble true stigmata as glass beads resemble diamonds.

Moreover, just as to judge well of a human act, of its meaning, and its import, one must be attentive to its circumstances, each of which theologians study in particular and enumerate in the wellknown expression: Quis, quid, ubi, quibus auxiliis, cur, quomodo, quando, so to judge rightly of the meaning and import of an exceptional fact like stigmatization, one should most attentively note its physical and moral circumstances. Special attention should be paid to those related to the stigmatic's end (cur), manifested either before, by a prayer or a promise, or afterward, by the effects, by a great love of the cross; those relating to the object (quid), for example, the corporeal wounds produce keen physical suffering accompanied by a delicious spiritual wound, which, as St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross say, can come only from God; those relating to the person (quis), which consist in the fact that he is humble, obedient, animated by a great charity; those relative to the means (quibis auxiliis), by the exclusion of all clever trickery and occultism; lastly, those relative to the time and the place (ubi et quando).

If all these circumstances are favorable, one may have moral certitude of the supernatural origin of the stigmata. It is evident that it is not a question of a pathological fact, but that there is in the case the intervention of a free and intelligent cause which acts on the stigmatics to configure them to Jesus crucified.

Finally, God alone can produce what is most lofty in stigmatization: the spiritual wound of the heart, which St. Teresa speaks of in the sixth mansion. This wound, which has as its effect an ardent desire for God and a great love of the cross, attains the most intimate depth of the spiritual will; therefore it can come only from God. It is at one and the same time most painful and delightful, and, as St. Teresa says, the soul would wish never to recover from it.

ECSTASY AND STIGMATIZATION

A study has recently been made again as to whether great supernatural compassion for the sufferings of our Savior, intensified by ecstasy, may have as a natural result the corporeal stigmata.

St. Francis de Sales replies in the negative to this question in his Treatise on the Love of God, where he says: “Love has wonderful power to sharpen the imagination, so that it may penetrate even to the exterior.... But the love which was within [St. Francis of AssisiJ simply could not produce openings in the flesh on the exterior. That is why the burning seraphim, coming to its help, darted at the saint rays of such penetrating light that it actually pierced the flesh with the exterior wounds of the Crucified which love had imprinted interiorly on the soul”

The reply given by St. Francis de Sales is confirmed by the following traditional argument quoted by Benedict XIV, Many men and women saints of widely different temperaments have had a very intense supernatural compassion for the sufferings of our Savior, and have not had the stigmata, which appear for the first time in the thirteenth century in St. Francis of Assisi. No one has ever affirmed that the Blessed Virgin, St. Mary Magdalen, or St. John the Evangelist had these divine corporeal wounds, and yet who more greatly compassionated the sufferings of Jesus crucified? Likewise, since the thirteenth century, many men and women saints, of widely divergent temperaments, with or without ecstasy, have had this lively supernatural compassion without having the stigmata. Among them are even great mystics, like St. John of the Cross, who have had a lofty degree of infused contemplation, accompanied by ecstasy and even the spiritual wound of the heart.

Does this not prove that the stigmata are not the natural consequence of lively supernatural compassion, and that ardent love does not suffice to produce them? Such is the conclusion of Bartholomew of Pisa and, after him, of Theophilus Raynaud, of Benedict XIV as opposed to Francesco Petrarch and Pomponazzi. This traditional argument is undoubtedly quite general, but in our opinion it preserves all its value. In recent discussions, it was not sufficiently examined and nothing was adduced that could weaken it.

In the number of the Etudes carmelitaines already mentioned, Dom Aloysius Mager, O.S.B., dean of the Faculty of Theology of Salzburg, and Dr. Wunderle, of Würzburg, strongly incline to consider stigmatization as the ideoplastic contrecoup on the organism of the infused contemplation of Jesus crucified. In their opinion it would, thanks to the power of the imagination, be a natural result of a great supernatural compassion. As the apprehension of blushing makes one blush, the imagination united to a

lively supernatural emotion could produce corporeal stigmata. This is a return to the ideoplastic theory which St. Francis de Sales rejected. What is it worth?

Father Sempe, in the article we quoted, offers a just criticism of this explanation:

> In the first place, this theory, since it is basically autosuggestion, supposes that there is always at the origin of the stigmata the two necessary factors of autosuggestion, that is, an extremely vivid representation of Jesus crucified coupled with a profound compassion for His sufferings and an ardent desire to receive these wounds. Now, these necessary factors do not, however, always exist. Among the best characterized and most authentic cases of stigmatization, there are some in which the subject did not desire, imagine, or even suspect as possible the impression on his flesh of the wounds of the Crucified. Indeed, a number of stigmatics have even begged Christ to spare them these exterior marks, and their prayer was not granted.
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> In conformity with the exigencies of this theory, its proponents also assume that the stigmatic pain precedes the exterior wound. Such is not always the fact. There are cases in which the subject at first felt no local pain, and never even thought of the stigmata. The wounds were made on his body from the exterior by a blinding blow of luminous rays, and immediately the pains, extremely sharp pains, began....
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> But if it is the luminous rays which cause the wound, why bring in, by dint of hypotheses, the ideoplastic power of the imagination? Would not this psychological instrument be unnecessary since the rays exist? Does not the scientific method demand economy?

Theologians have often asked how it is that the majority of stigmatics received the divine wounds without suggestion or autosuggestion, without expecting them, and without wishing them?

Blessed Raymond of Capua relates in his Life of St. Catherine of Siena, that on August 18, 1370, the saint received the stigmata in an altogether unexpected manner following a prayer and a divine promise of the salvation of several persons; stigmatization was produced to confirm this promise. The absolutely unforeseen pain was as sharp as if her hand had been pierced with an iron nail driven by a hammer. At the petition of the saint, the stigmata remained invisible during her life. Later in the presence of several witnesses worthy of credence, the supernatural renewal of the fact took place with such effect that the saint swooned suddenly before their eyes, as if she had been mortally wounded. The fact and its supernatural origin are, moreover, attested by the saint, and her testimony is confirmed by the humility of her entire life, which led her to ask and obtain immediately the invisibility of this exceptional favor. In this case we see how all the physical and moral circumstances of the fact confirm its origin.

Thus we return to the explanation offered by St. Francis de Sales, which seems the wisest. It is our crucified Lord Himself who, by means of luminous rays, imprints the wounds on the bodies of stigmatics, whom He wishes to configure to His passion that He may remind us of it. Evidently the traditional argument of Bartholomew of Pisa, preserved by Benedict XIV, retains all its value. To sum it up again: Many men and women saints, of widely different temperaments, have been absorbed with ardent love in the infused contemplation of the sufferings of Christ and, nevertheless, they have not had the stigmata. Among them must be numbered the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. John the Evangelist, St. Mary Magdalen, and many others prior to St. Francis of Assisi, the first stigmatic, and many others subsequent to him. This is a sign that ardent love, united to infused contemplation, does not suffice to produce the stigmata. Christ Jesus grants them to whom He will, when He will, and as He will. Stigmatization is an essentially extraordinary grace that is not in the normal way of sanctity.

LEVITATION

By levitation is understood the phenomenon of the elevation of the human body above the ground without any apparent cause and in such a way that it remains in the air without any natural support. This phenomenon is also called ascensional ecstasy, ecstatic flight, or ecstatic walking when the body seems to run rapidly without touching the ground.

The Bollandists relate numerous cases of levitation. They cite particularly those attested in the lives of St. Joseph of Cupertino (September 18), St. Philip Neri (May 26), St. Peter of Alcantara (OctoBer 19), St. Francis Xavier (December 3), St. Stephen of Hungary (September 2), St. Paul of the Cross (April 28), and others. It is related that St. Joseph of Cupertino, seeing some workmen having trouble in trying to put up a very heavy mission cross, took his aerial flight, seized the cross, and without effort placed it in the hole destined for it.

In contradistinction to levitation, they cite cases of extraordinary weight of the bodies of certain saints: for example, when an attempt was made to violate and drag St. Lucy of Syracuse to a place of debauchery, her body remained fixed to the earth like the pillar of a church.

Suggestion or autosuggestion of hysterical persons has never been able to provoke levitation. After an examination extending over several years,

Professor Janet of Paris was able to establish that the body of the person was never raised, even a millimeter, even sufficiently to slip a cigarette paper between his feet and the ground.

Rationalists have tried to explain naturally the levitation proved in the case of several saints by the deep breathing of air into the lungs; but, in the face of the manifest insufficiency of this reason, they have had to have recourse to an unknown psychic power an explanation that is merely so many words.

Benedict XIV states the traditional and reasonable explanation. He requires first of all that the fact be well proved in order to avoid all trickery. Then he shows: (1) that because of the law of gravity, well-proved levitation cannot be naturally explained; (2) that it does not, however, exceed the powers of angels and the devil, who can lift bodies up; (3) that consequently the physical, moral, and religious circumstances of the fact must be carefully examined to see whether there is not diabolical intervention; and that, when the circumstances are favorable, one can and must see in it a divine or angelic intervention, which grants to the bodies of the saints an anticipation of the gift of agility which is proper to glorified bodies.

LUMINOUS EFFLUVIA

Ecstatics occasionally present luminous phenomena; the body is enveloped in light, and in particular the forehead. Benedict XIV examines this fact as he does that of levitation. He points out that one must make sure whether the phenomenon can be explained naturally: at what time of the day or of the night it is produced; whether the light is more brilliant than any other; whether the phenomenon is prolonged for a notable length of time and renewed several times. Particular attention must also be paid to the moral and religious circumstances: whether the phenomenon is produced during a sermon, a prayer, an ecstasy; whether effects of grace, lasting conversions, and so on, result from it; whether the person from whom this light comes is virtuous and holy. If all these attentively examined conditions exist, as it were an anticipation of the brightness of glorified bodies may be seen in this exceptional fact.

FRAGRANT EFFLUVIA

During the lifetime of the saints or after their death, their bodies occasionally give off perfumes. The faithful have always seen in this fact a sign of the good odor of the virtues they practiced. This fact has often been proved; in particular the stigmata of St. Francis of Assisi gave off a sweet odor. When St. Teresa died, the water with which her body was washed became perfumed. When, long after his death, the tomb of St. Dominic was opened, his perfectly, preserved body exhaled a celestial odor.

To make sure of the supernatural character of the fact, it should be ascertained whether the sweet odor endures, whether anything near the body can explain it naturally, whether effects of grace result from this exceptional phenomenon.

PROLONGED ABSTINENCE

Lastly, there are saints, especially among the stigmatics, who have lived for months and even years without taking any other food than the Blessed Eucharist. Notable examples of this fact are St. Catherine of Siena, St. Lidwina, Blessed Catherine Racconigi, Blessed Angela of Foligno, and St. Nicholas of Flue.

On this subject Benedict XIV says that the fact must be attentively examined over a considerable length of time by constant surveillance, and by recourse to numerous witnesses expert in detecting trickery. An examination must be made, to determine whether abstinence is total and extends to liquid food as well as to solid nourishment, whether it is lasting, and whether the person continues to devote himself to his occupations. Under such conditions the fact cannot be explained naturally.

The same thing must be said of very prolonged lack of sleep, such as has been proved, for example, in the lives of St. Peter of Alcantara, St. Dominic, and St. Catherine de Ricci.

In these divers exceptional phenomena, after extensive examination of the fact itself, of its physical, moral, and religious circumstances, one sees that the body, far from weighing down the soul, as happens only too often, becomes the instrument of the soul whose spiritual beauty, infused light, and ardent love it allows to shine through. These outward signs are given us from time to time to show us, even in a sensible manner, that perfect Christian life is the prelude of eternal life.

These exceptional phenomena, when superficially examined, are like a stained-glass window in a church seen from without; from the exterior, their meaning and import cannot be grasped. But, when examined more attentively in the twofold light of right reason and faith, they resemble a stained-glass window seen from within under its true light; then all their beauty can be appreciated. We see this particularly when we permeate our souls with the liturgy for the feasts of the stigmata of St. Francis of Assisi and of St. Catherine of Siena. The prayers of the Mass and the Office for these two feasts are of a rare splendor, like those for the Mass of the transverberation of St. Teresa.

To enkindle love for Jesus crucified in the hearts of the faithful, Paul V extended the feast of the stigmata of St. Francis of Assisi (September 17) to the universal Church. The prayer for the Mass is as follows: “Lord Jesus, who at a time when charity was growing cold in the world, to enkindle our hearts with the fire of Thy love, didst renew the sacred stigmata of Thy passion in the flesh of the Blessed Francis, grant us, in Thy goodness, that by his merits and prayers, we may continually bear the cross and bring forth worthy fruits of penance. Thou who livest,” and so on. In this prayer we see the great realism of the Church, which to the highest elevation of thought unites the effective practice of all the virtues.

Chapter 57

Differences Between Extraordinary Divine Facts and Morbid Phenomena

The extraordinary facts discussed in the preceding chapter, particularly stigmatization, levitation, and so on, which occasionally accompany ecstasy are so well proved that positivists cannot deny their existence. They try, however, to liken them to certain morbid phenomena proceeding from psychoneuroses, especially hysteria.

The saints are, as a matter of fact, subject, like other men, to illness; but we are concerned with discovering whether, in spite of their maladies, they are mentally sane and well balanced.

We shall point out here, as many psychologists and theologians have already done, the differences: (1) on the part of the subject; (2) on the part of the phenomena; (3) on the part of the effects. After these general remarks, we shall indicate by some examples how to proceed to the examination of certain particular facts.

DIFFERENCES ON THE PART OF THE SUBJECT

Patients afflicted with psychoneuroses are unbalanced from a mental point of view, whereas true mystics and ecstatics manifest perfect moral equilibrium.

Dr. E. Regis thus characterizes the mentality of hysterical subjects:

> Many hysterical subjects have a distinctive mental state, easily recognizable. From early youth, future hysterical subjects—for we are speaking here especially of hysterical members of the feminine sex—stand out by reason of particular characteristics. In the majority of cases, they are girls of intellectual brilliancy, precocious in the extreme, impressionable, coquettes, seeking to draw attention to themselves, clever in feigning and lying, subject, moreover, to nocturnal terrors, dreams, and nightmares. Hysteria once established, the mental and moral state of its tributaries is characterized principally, where the intellect is concerned, by an

> excessive mobility, which makes the patients incapable of perseverance and of any stable idea;... they are absolutely incapable of succeeding in any serious endeavor. In addition, they have a very manifest tendency to contradiction, controversy, paradoxical ideas... likewise to imitation, suggestion, and autosuggestion. Morally the state is the same: a bizarre, capricious, fantastic, immoderately mobile character;... duplicity, untruthfulness, cleverness in simulating, deceiving, inventing; brusque and untimely propensity to the most perverse acts, as well as to most meritorious actions of bravery and display; continual need to make a spectacle of themselves, and so on. Then come subconscious fixed ideas, hallucinations even outside of any delirium properly so called, attacks with delirium, finally mental deterioration and madness.

It is evident that mental disturbance is increasingly accentuated, the intellect directs the patient's conduct less and less, the memory splits, sometimes to the extent that the patient believes that he has two personalities; soon there is nothing left in the mind except a small number of fixed ideas; whence arises a certain mono-ideism bordering on madness. With the diminution of the intellect, goes the weakening of the will; the emotions get the upper hand, gradually the personality disappears, and caprice dominates.

In true mystics and ecstatics, on the contrary, it has been established that their intellect grows through their knowledge of God, the divine perfections, the dogmas of faith, and also through their profound knowledge of themselves. They declare that in a few moments of contemplation they learn more than by reading all books on the interior life. In these moments they receive a higher light which makes them glimpse, as it were, a superior synthesis of all they already knew, a living, luminous synthesis which, arousing the impulse of the will, makes them undertake and carry out great things with admirable, persevering courage in spite of almost unbelievable difficulties. The lives of St. Catherine of Siena and of St. Teresa illustrate this fact.

In addition, true mystics are humble, charitable, submissive to the divine will amid even the greatest trials. In them is patent the connection and the harmony of the most dissimilar virtues, and, dominating all, a love of God and of neighbor and a wisdom that give them peace and wonderful serenity. Properly speaking, they represent the inverse of the passionate agitation and inconstancy of hysterical subjects. This fact is evident in their labors for the successful prosecution of a difficult undertaking; likewise their perseverance in good, their constant love of the truth, united to reserve and humility, give proof of it.

No less difference exists. between true ecstasy and what has been called hysterical ecstasy. It suffices to have assisted once or twice at this latter manifestation in hospitals to see that there is no resemblance whatever between the two.

In attacks of hysteria, as Dr. E. Regis says, there is a delirium of illusion, clearly hallucinatory in character or marked by memories or lengthy monologues. Fundamentally it is one and the same delirium, but corresponding to different degrees of depth of the illusion. The first phase of the crisis resembles a light attack of epilepsy, but is distinguished from it by the sensation of a ball that rises in the throat; the person experiences a feeling of suffocation, which comes from the swelling of the throat. The second phase consists in inordinate gestures, contortions of the whole body, especially in arched circles. The third is that of passional attitudes of fright, jealousy, lubricity in relation to the obsessing image. The crisis ends by attacks of tears or of laughter, which relax the patient. On coming out of these crises, the subjects are exhausted. In short, there are different phases, epileptoid, clownish, plastic, and passional (called hysterical ecstasy), the crisis terminating in exhaustion of the body, dulling of the mind, collapse of the whole being.

In true ecstasy, on the contrary, there are no convulsions, violent agitation, passional attitudes of fright, jealousy, and so on; there is calm, the rapture of a soul profoundly united to God by one of those passive recollections which God alone can give and which considerably surpass the recollection that proceeds from our personal effort of concentration. There is absolutely no relation between so-called hysterical ecstasy and the ecstasy, for example, of Bernadette during the apparitions of Lourdes. In a real ecstasy there is no morbid excitation, no strange agitation, no entirely physical delectation, followed by depression. Ecstasy is the movement of the whole being, both body and soul, toward the divine object present in the imagination or intellect. Ecstasy ends in the calm return to the natural state, with simple regret over the disappearance of the celestial vision and the wholly spiritual joy that it gave. St. Teresa even points out in her Life that this state, which should weaken the body, on the contrary, gives it new strength.

These differences are more and more marked. In hysterical subjects when the crises increase, the unbalanced mental condition grows and with it dissimulation, lying, brutalization, lascivity, and finally capricious sensuality completely dominates the intellect and will. If mono-ideism is present, it springs from the disorganization and disintegration of the personality, and from mental confusion which leads to madness.

In true mystics and ecstatics, on the other hand, there is a growing development of the understanding of divine things, of those of the interior life, of the life of the Church, of all that touches on the salvation or the loss of souls. There is likewise a steady increase in the love of God and in devotion to their neighbor, as shown by the works they undertake and often bring to success, to such a degree that their foundations last for centuries.

St. Francis of Assisi, the stigmatic of Alvernia, founded in the thirteenth century a religious order that is still one of the most numerous in the Church. St. Thomas Aquinas, during his ecstasies, dictated whole chapters on the mystery of the Blessed Trinity and saw from a superior point of view the entire synthesis of theological science.

St. Catherine of Siena, who died at the age of thirty-two and who for a long time could neither read nor write, played a role of primary importance in the affairs of her day, particularly in the return of the popes to Rome.

In spite of opposition on the part of many, St. Teresa founded before her death sixteen convents for women and fourteen for men.

If in hysterical subjects there is mono-ideism (for lack of other ideas), for example, the fixed idea of suicide, in true mystics there is one great idea which subordinates all others to itself in perfect harmony; in other words, the thought of God, of His immense goodness toward us and the profound and radiating conviction that we must correspond to His love. It is not the disintegration of the elements of a man’s personality; rather it is their perfect subordination according to the very order of charity: God loved above all else, then souls to be saved. This is why, even from the human point of view, as a number of unbelieving psychologists have recognized, the saints are great organizers. Although an unbeliever, De Montmorand writes on this subject: “True mystics are people of experience and action, not of reasoning and theory. They have the sense of organization, the gift of commanding, and reveal themselves well endowed for business. The works that they found are capable of surviving and enduring; in the conception

and direction of their enterprises, they give proof of prudence, of daring, and of that just appreciation of possibilities which characterizes good sense. And, as a matter of fact, good sense seems to be their fundamental quality; good sense untroubled by an unhealthy exaltation and a disordered imagination, and coupled with the most unusual power of penetration." This we see exemplified in St. Paul, St. Augustine, St. Bernard, St. Dominic, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Bonaventure, St. Teresa, and so many others.

AN EXAMINATION OF SOME PARTICULAR FACTS

Occasionally in the lives of mystics and ecstatics we find evidence of a given fact that might suggest the hypothesis of hysteria. We shall give an example of blindness which we have studied particularly. It is known that functional blindness and even temporary paralysis are occasionally found in hysteria and may last even beyond the crisis and for a long time.

In Father Estrate's life of the Arabian Carmelite, Sister Mary of Jesus Crucified, we read that in her youth in the Orient the servant of God was stricken with blindness which lasted forty days, that she recovered her sight instantaneously after a prayer to the Blessed Virgin, and that at the moment of her cure she felt something fall from her eyes. In another life of the same Carmelite, the fact is reported in an identical manner. Is this blindness for forty days a sign of hysteria in this Carmelite who had frequent ecstasies accompanied by levitation?

To answer this question and every other one of the same kind, the moral and physical qualities of the subject should first be examined. In the case under discussion, the constitution of the servant of God was healthy and even strong; her corpulence and the incessant work she performed do not permit us to classify her among neuropaths or among psychopaths. No functional malady was observed in her. Moreover, she never had the signs of typical hysteria, or the precursory symptoms, or the crises with epileptoid, clownish, plastic, passional phases, or delirium followed by physical exhaustion. Instead of discovering inconstancy or untruthfulness in her, one sees perseverance in good, love of the truth, purity, reserve, and humility. Should the fact of this forty-day blindness, nevertheless, be attributed to hysteria? Is it a symptom of this malady?

On this subject we shall make a few observations which are applicable to several similar facts:

1. The nature of hysteria is not yet well known; some see a neurosis in it, others a psychosis, others the two at once, to such a degree that Professor Lassegue, of the Paris Academy of Medicine, said, as reported in L'Ami du clerge: "The definition of hysteria has never been given, and it is possible that it never will be.... It is a basket into which people throw the papers that they do not know how to classify." Since this malady has not yet been sufficiently defined, it has not as yet, properly speaking, differential symptoms, such, for example, as Koch's bacillus for tuberculosis. What seems to be fixed is the form of the hysterical crisis, with its precursory symptoms and the different phases of the crisis. Blindness is occasionally, but not always, found in it; therefore, among the signs of this malady that are customarily cited, it is not a cardinal symptom.

2. Moreover, blindness occurred only once in the life of the servant of God of whom we are speaking.

3. She has not one of the peculiar symptoms of hysteria, not any of the precursory symptoms, not any of the phases of the crisis. In the syndrome of these symptoms, blindness would have contributed to proving something; without them, it proves nothing.

4. On the other hand, the particular cadre of Sister Mary of Jesus Crucified harmonizes sufficiently with that of mystical ecstasy described by St. Teresa.

5. Persons least favorably inclined to the servant of God never said that she was hysterical. A doctor at Pau who had suspected this malady and sought to make sure of it, one day witnessed her extraordinary state and admitted that it was ecstasy.

All these observations show that the temporary blindness of which we are speaking did not originate in hysteria.

6. There is a confirmation of our opinion in the reasons which lead to the conclusion that it was an organic malady. It occurred, in fact, in the Orient where blind persons are notably more numerous than elsewhere because of the brilliant glare of the sun, the whiteness of the earth, the calcareous dust

carried by the wind, the coolness of the nights and the fact that people sleep on the flat roofs, and finally because of the lack of hygiene, because of flies and other insects.

7. There is a final reason, and one not to be disregarded, related by the two above-mentioned biographers of the servant of God, namely, that at the moment when her blindness was cured “she felt that something fell from her eyes.” This same remark is made by those who are cured of organic blindness caused by leucoma (albugo), well known in pathology, that is, the yellowish spot which forms between the layers of the cornea in several inflammations of the eyeball or of one of its parts.

These different reasons lead us to think that blindness in this case is organic and not functional, and consequently not hysterical.

Particular facts, more or less similar to this case, may be examined in the same way by considering, first of all, the qualities of the subject and the particular details of the fact itself, to see whether or not it is related to one or another symptom of hysteria or of some other psychoneurosis.

The director will be able and sometimes will be obliged to consult a competent physician. An attentive examination, well conducted from both the medical and the spiritual point of view, will often give moral certitude, especially if it is accompanied by prayer, great disinterestedness, and perfect purity of intention in the search for truth.

NOTE

In the “Congress on Religious Psychology” of Avon-Fontainebleau (September 21–22, 1938), the reports of which are assembled in the Etudes carmelitaines (October, 1938), the following question was raised: “In what measure are sanctity and lofty mystical life compatible with pathological disturbances?” Father Bruno, who organized the Congress, believed that the entire result could be summed up in the following proposition: “Theologians and doctors who were consulted believe possible the concomitance of normal mystical life and of certain psychopathological states not to be identified with insanity. However, it appears that definitive and incrustating anomalies are not compatible with regular mystical elevation.” In accord with Father de Guibert and Father de Tonquedec, we admit this proposition with some reservations. During the same Congress,

Doctor A. Delmas, who also admits the possibility of a lofty interior life in lucid moments for a cyclothymic like Father Surin, declared that nevertheless true hysteria does not seem to him compatible with an eminent moral life; such a state would constitute a veritable enigma.

The articles of Dr. Biot on these questions may be read with profit.

Chapter 58

Diabolical Phenomena

The persecutions of the devil comprise all that one may have to suffer from him: temptations, obsession, possession. On this subject we must recall, first of all, the theological principle which throws light on these problems: the action of the devil does not go beyond the sensible part of the soul and cannot be exercised immediately on the intellect or the will.

St. Thomas says in substance that, since every agent acts for an end which is proportionate to it, the order or subordination of agents corresponds to the order of the ends. God alone can incline our intellect to universal truth and our will to the universal good, and finally to Himself, the Sovereign Good. Therefore He alone can act immediately on our intellect and will, according to their natural inclination, which comes from Him and which He preserves. Solus Deus illabitur in anima.

With the permission of God, however, the devil can attack us by acting on our imagination, our sensibility, on external objects, and on our body to incline us to evil. He often limits himself to temptation by way of suggestion and more or less impetuous movements; but occasionally his action goes as far as obsession and in certain cases even to possession.

In these matters two excesses must be avoided: attribution to the devil of what proceeds from the triple concupiscence or from certain morbid states, or, on the contrary, unwillingness to admit his intervention in any case, in spite of what Scripture and tradition tell us about it.

We shall sum up here the traditional teaching on obsession and possession.

OBSESSION

Obsession is a series of temptations that are more violent and prolonged than ordinary temptations. Rarely does the devil act only on the exterior senses; more frequently, through the imagination; he provokes lively impressions of the sensible appetites in order to trouble the soul. He may act on the sight by loathsome apparitions or, on the contrary, seductive apparitions; on the hearing, by making a racket or by making the person hear blasphemous or obscene words; on the touch, by inflicting blows or by embraces of a nature to lead to evil. There are cases in which these apparitions are not corporeal, but imaginary or produced, like hallucination, by nervous overexcitement.

The direct action of the devil on the imagination, memory, and passions, may produce obsessing images, which persist in spite of energetic efforts and which lead to anger, to very lively antipathies, or to dangerous affections, or again to discouragement accompanied by anguish. Those whom the enemy of good persecutes in this way feel at times that their imagination is as if bound by thick shadows, and that over their heart rests a weight which oppresses them. This powerlessness is entirely different from that proceeding from the divine action which, in bestowing infused contemplation, renders discursive meditation more or less impracticable. The enemy of God, in his jealous desire to imitate the divine action, seeks to cause the effect of God’s action to deviate, in such a way that, in the passive purifications, the soul occasionally finds itself between the special action of God, which inclines it to a spiritual life more freed from the senses, and an inverse action, which in its way strikes it with powerlessness in order to cause the effect of the divine action to deviate and to throw the soul into utter confusion.

If the temptations of which we are speaking are sudden, violent, and persistent, and no illness explains them, a special influence of the devil may be seen in them.

Obsession may be so strong that it deserves the name of diabolical siege. Scaramelli says: “In the diabolical siege, the devil stays near the person whom he besieges as a captain does near a place which he surrounds closely with his troops. But he has no stable and permanent power over the body of the obsessed person (which occurs only in possession); and once the time of purification is ended, the devil himself raises the siege and goes off without exorcisms, without injunction.”

By what sign may one recognize that obsession is related to the passive purification of the senses? Obsession may be linked with the passive purification of the senses if the obsessed person works seriously at his perfection, in particular if he is humble, obedient, charitable, and if he has the three signs of the night of the senses indicated by St. John of the Cross. On the other hand, astute, very subtle persons may, for interested motives, seek to make themselves pass for victims of the devil, in such a way especially as to excuse excessively compromising exterior faults which they commit.

In dealing with obsessed persons, the director should be prudent and kind; he should not believe too readily in a true obsession; he should remind the penitent, first of all, how temptation must be resisted, pointing out that it is an occasion to acquire great merits by a salutary, firm, at times heroic reaction, and by the practice of humility. He should remind the penitent that the principal remedies are humble, trusting prayer, recourse to the Immaculate Virgin, to St. Michael, to the guardian angel, the trusting use of the sacraments and sacramentals, scorn of the devil, who may indeed bark, but who can bite only those who draw near him. The director should also remind his penitent that, if in the violence of temptation disorders are produced without any consent, there is no sin in them. In case of doubt, he will judge that there is no serious sin when the person concerned is habitually well disposed. If he sees that the obsession is part of the passive purification of the senses or of the spirit, he will give appropriate counsels, which we recalled earlier in the course of this study.

Lastly, if diabolical obsession is morally certain or very probable, the priest may employ privately the exorcisms prescribed by the Roman Ritual or shortened forms. To avoid agitating the penitent or overexciting him, it is best, as a rule, not to inform him beforehand that one is going to pronounce over him the words of private exorcism; it is sufficient to tell him that one is going to recite over him a prayer approved by the Church.

POSSESSION

What is possession? By possession the devil really dwells in the body of the victim, instead of only making his action felt from the outside, as in obsession. Moreover, by thus acting from within, he not only hinders the free use of a man’s faculties, but he himself speaks and acts by the organs of

the possessed person, without the latter being able to hinder him from doing so, and even as a rule without his perceiving it.

When we say that the devil dwells in the body of a person, we do not mean that he is there like the soul itself which informs the body, but like a motor which, through the body, acts on the soul. He acts directly on the members of the body, makes them execute all sorts of movements, and he acts indirectly on the faculties in the measure in which they depend on the body for their operations.

Two states are distinguished in possessed persons: a state of crisis, with contortions, outbursts of rage, blasphemous words; and a state of calm. During the crisis, the patient generally loses, it seems, the feeling of what is taking place in him, for afterward he has no memory of what the devil has, they say, done through him. Nevertheless, as an exception, there are possessed persons who remain aware of what is taking place in them during the crisis. This was, it seems, the case with Father Surin, who, while exorcising the Ursulines of Loudun, himself became possessed or at least obsessed. He said: “In this state, there are very few actions in which am I free.”

In the state of calm, the devil seems to have withdrawn, although there may still remain at times chronic infirmities which physicians do not succeed in curing.

As a rule possession is more properly a punishment than a purifying trial. However, there are exceptions, like the case of Father Surin, that of Blessed Eustochium of Padua, beatified by Clement XIII, on March 22, 1760, that of Marie des Vallees, spiritual daughter of St. John Eudes. Mention must also be made of the more recent case of Sister Mary of Jesus Crucified, an Arabian Carmelite who died in the odor of sanctity at Bethlehem in 1878, and the cause of whose beatification has been introduced. She was twice the victim of possession, or at least of a very strong obsession, first at the Carmel of Pau, later at that of Mangalore. There have been other similar cases, in which possession was a concomitant phenomenon of the passive purification of the senses or that of the spirit, in souls that offered themselves as victims for sinners.

What are the signs of real possession? Great care must be taken to distinguish it from certain cases of monomania and of mental alienation which resemble it. According to the Roman Ritual (De exorcizandis obsessis a daemonio), there are three principal signs: “To speak an unknown

language, making use of several words of this language or understanding him who speaks it; to disclose distant and hidden things; to manifest strength which surpasses the natural powers of the subject, considering his age and state. These and other similar signs, when united in great number, are the strongest indications of possession." They are particularly striking, for example, if a person who does not know either Latin or theology or knows only their rudiments, speaks in correct and even elegant Latin about the most difficult problems of theology, like that of the gratuity of predestination. It is true that people adduce cases of morbid exaltation which awaken in the memory forgotten languages or fragments that have been heard; but in this question the Ritual demands much more, as we have just seen. Accompanying possession at times is levitation, a preternatural phenomenon which manifests itself under circumstances of such a nature that they cannot be attributed to God or to the good angels, but must be attributed to the devil. According to tradition, this was the case with Simon Magus who, they say, was lifted into the air and fell down.

Another indication of possession is that on coming into contact with a sacred object or on the recitation of certain liturgical prayers, the person believed to be possessed becomes furious and blasphemes horribly. This sign is more significant when the experience is brought about without the knowledge of the person, in such a way that the reaction is not produced by him, by his ill will, or by a desire to simulate possession.

It has been pointed out, apropos of these signs, that in extreme hysteria there are analogous phenomena. Analogous, it is true, but not specifically similar; in hysteria the patient does not discourse in a language of which he is ignorant and in a learned manner on problems of which he has no knowledge at all, such as predestination or the efficacy of grace. Besides, the devil can produce either nervous diseases, or exterior phenomena analogous to those of neuroses; he may also make use of an existing illness and reduce the patient to a state of exasperation.

What are the remedies for possession? The Ritual indicates the following: (1) The possessed person must do penance and purify his conscience by a good confession.(2) He should receive Holy Communion as often as possible, according to the advice of a prudent and enlightened confessor. The more pure and mortified a soul is, the less hold the devil has on it; Holy Communion introduces into the soul the Author of grace who is the conqueror of Satan. However, Holy Communion should be given only

in moments of calm.(3) The possessed person should often implore the mercy of God by prayer and fasting.(4) With a great spirit of faith he should make use of sacramentals, in particular of the sign of the cross and holy water. He should have trusting recourse to the invocation of the holy name of Jesus, of His humility, His immense love.(5) Lastly, the exorcisms were instituted for the deliverance of possessed persons in virtue of the power of driving out devils which Jesus Christ left to the Church. But solemn exorcism may be performed only by priests chosen by the bishop of the place and with his special authorization.

The Ritual counsels exorcists to prepare themselves for this difficult function by prayer, fasting, and a humble and sincere confession, so that the devil may not reproach them with their own sins. In addition, solemn exorcism should, at least as a rule, be performed only in a church or chapel. The exorcist should be accompanied by grave and pious witnesses, sufficiently strong to overpower the possessed person if necessary. Lastly, the exorcist should proceed to the interrogations with authority, rejecting all that is useless. He summons the devil or the devils to declare the reason for the possession and to tell when it will end. To oblige the enemy of God to do this, the exorcist must redouble the adjurations which seem to irritate the devil most, that is, the invocations of the holy names of Jesus and Mary. If the evil spirit makes sarcastic and derisive answers, silence must be imposed upon him with authority and dignity. The witnesses should be few in number, they must not ask questions, but should pray silently. The exorcisms should be continued for several hours and even for several days, with intervals of respite, until the deliverance, which should be followed by prayers of thanksgiving.

Many authors point out that the exorcisms are not always efficacious against obsession. They do not deliver the soul completely from an obsession which is part of the passive purifications, for God permits it for a time known to Him, in view of the great advantages which the soul should derive from this trial.

A STRIKING EXAMPLE

We have studied particularly the diabolical vexations which Sister Mary of Jesus Crucified had to undergo in 1868 in the Carmel of Pau and in 187I in that of Mangalore, not only according to the account given by Father

Estrate in her Life and the shorter report by Father Buzy, but also according to the testimony gathered by her directors and superiors. We are convinced that in her case there was, on two different occasions, possession or at least a strong obsession which took away from the servant of God the responsibility for certain exterior acts (a short departure from the cloister, which was not yet canonically established) and for certain remarks contrary to humility and obedience, virtues which she practiced in a heroic degree, even in those obscure periods, as soon as she recovered the use of her faculties.

We think there was in this case not a punishment, but a trial and very great merit. As Father Estrate, who was one of the directors of this valiant Carmelite, points out, she bore these diabolical vexations with heroic patience, a very great spirit of faith, an admirable confidence in God, an ardent love of God and of souls. As long as she preserved freedom of movement and the use of speech, she spent hours at a time replying to all the suggestions of the devil. The devil had permission to attack her one hundred times in the Carmel of Pau, and he sought by every means to make her utter a complaint; “always conquered, he begged the Master to be allowed not to continue the struggle. Jesus obliged him to go on.” The servant of God did not cease to reply to his assaults by words such as these: “I offer my sufferings for the enemies of Jesus, that they may love Him as St. John did.” The devil was forced to say: “Do you know why the little Arab speaks thus? Why is she strong? Because she walks in the steps of the Master.” At length at the end of forty days she was freed.

This case furnished an example of one of the greatest trials which may accompany the passive purifications of the senses or the spirit. It brings out strikingly the truth of what St. John of the Cross says on this subject: “There is open warfare between two spirits.... This attack of the devil takes place also when God bestows His favors upon a soul by the instrumentality of a good angel. The devil sees this occasionally, because God in general permits it to become known to the enemy, that he may do what he can [that is, if God grants the soul extraordinary favors, He often permits the devil to fight as if with equal arms, by extraordinary vexations].... At that time the mental agonies are great and occasionally surpass all description; for when spirit has to do with spirit, the evil one causes an intolerable horror in the good one.” All authors of mystical theology express the same opinion, and there are similar facts in the lives of many canonized saints.

The example we have just recalled and others more or less similar are made clear in the light of what St. John of the Cross teaches in The Dark Night on the night of the senses and that of the spirit. He states that these nights are tunnels through which generous souls, called to a high degree of perfection, to true sanctity, must pass. If a soul emerges from the first tunnel with a heroic degree of the virtues and if, on leaving the second, the heroic quality of its virtues is even more manifest, it is a certain sign that it did not go astray in these very dark and difficult passages, but, on the contrary, gained very great merits therein. These trials are more particularly painful for souls that have a reparatory vocation and that must, in imitation of our Lord, suffer for the salvation of sinners.

In these exceedingly painful dark nights, the soul may occasionally commit a sin, even a serious sin, as happened to the Apostle St. Peter during the dark night of our Savior's passion. But if, like St. Peter, the tried soul rises immediately with deep repentance, it receives a notable increase of grace and charity and it continues its ascent from the very spot where it stumbled for a moment. "Wherefore the penitent sometimes arises to a greater grace," says St. Thomas.

It follows that these obscure periods in the lives of the servants of God, far from being an obstacle to their beatification, on the contrary bring out more clearly the heroic degree of their virtues. Those who have passed through them have triumphed over the most difficult trials which the saints meet with in this life. This is especially true of those who fight more directly against the devil, and who in this way show more clearly the depth of the reign of God in souls that are wholly submissive to Him. Thus are realized occasionally in an extraordinary manner the words of St. Paul: "But the foolish things of the world hath God chosen, that He may confound the wise; and the weak things of the world hath God chosen, that He may confound the strong. And the base things of the world, and the things that are contemptible, hath God chosen, and things that are not, that He might bring to nought things that are."

NOTE

The article entitled "Possession" in the Dictionnaire theologique catholique states: "In our Western civilizations, men would be inclined to say that the devil is interested instead in dissimulating his action. Does he

not hold men so much the better when they ignore or deny him?" But, as Father L. de Grandmaison points out: "In the regions where the Gospel penetrates intensively for the first time, it still encounters, as in ancient times, a sort of occult power, usurped but established, which, by its resistance and manifestations, perfectly recalls the convulsions of the evil spirits in the presence of Jesus. There is hardly a missionary in those countries who has not encountered it."

Why does God permit these diabolical manifestations? St. Bonaventure answers: "It is either for the manifestation of His glory (by constraining the devil, by the mouth of the possessed person, to confess, for example, the divinity of Christ), or for the punishment of sin, or for the correction of the sinner, or for our instruction."

In practice, possession should be admitted only on solid proofs or indications, and the spiritual director should secure the opinion of an experienced physician. St. Philip Neri, although he "thought that persons whom people believe to be possessed by the devil are, in the majority of cases, either sick, melancholy, or mad, nevertheless, judging a certain Catherine, a noble lady of Aversar, to be truly possessed, he freed her from this terrible evil."

On temptation in general and its causes, we advise the reading of the excellent articles by Father Masson, O.P., which were published in La Vie spirituelle, from 1923 to 1926: I. "Temptation in general, its nature, universality, necessity" (1923, p. 108). II. "Its sources: the flesh (ibid., pp. 193, 333); the world (p. 42I); the devil (1924, p. 270; (the tempter, his work, p. 384, his mode of suggestion, by ruse, by violence, his stubbornness; the limits of his power; resistance to temptation)." III. "The processus of temptation" (1926, p. 493). IV. "End of the temptation on the part of the devil, on the part of God: why does God permit temptations? Justice and mercy" (1926, p. 644).

EPILOGUE

The Axis of the Spiritual Life and its Unity

I

To conclude, we shall return to our starting point. The problem of the axis of the spiritual life is a catechetical question worth examining theologically, if it is true that the most elementary truths are those which become the most vital and profound when meditated on for a long time, and end by being the object of our contemplation.

Among these elementary truths, is the following: the axis of the spiritual life is found in faith, hope, and charity. Failure to recognize this truth would be an unpardonable error, which would prove that one had lost the meaning of Christian doctrine. But, with respect to this elementary and fundamental question, there are more subtle problems which we must consider at the end of this work.

Someone wrote recently that the division between “ascetical” and “mystical” theology is “a regrettable division, whose error consisted precisely in telescoping sanctifying grace and its peculiar organism of the divine virtues between moralism and mysticism. (The history of modern spirituality is witness to this.)” “St. Thomas did not conceive or build his moral theology on this division, but rather on the following plan: the moral virtues, the theological virtues (subsequently modifiable by the gifts in the interior of their object). Otherwise a considerable section of the Second Part (all the admirable analysis of the regime of the virtues) loses its import and seems impregnated with semi-naturalism, as if the supernaturalness of the gifts was the only integral supernaturalness, that of the virtues being only semi-supernatural”

What is true in these observations? The answer depends on the way the terms “ascetical” and “mystical” are understood. They should have a good meaning since they are commonly accepted in the Church; but they have not always been understood in the same way. It is, consequently, important to return to this point.

We are happy to see with what insistence the writer of these pages speaks of sanctifying grace and the infused virtues, but he surprised us by

reproaching certain Thomists, who in recent years have treated more particularly of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, with having “exaggerated the role of the gifts to the detriment of the theological virtues.”

It may be that someone gathered this impression by reading articles written for the purpose of treating especially of infused contemplation, properly so called, and of the passive states, articles in which it was indeed necessary to place the emphasis on the gifts of understanding and of wisdom and their superhuman mode. But we must remind our readers that for the last thirty years or so we have hardly ceased to defend the essentially supernatural character of infused faith (independently of the gifts), by reason of its essential object and its formal motive.

In the domains of dogmatic theology, moral theology, and spirituality, we have always said that all the infused virtues, both theological and moral, are intrinsically and essentially supernatural by reason of the formal object that specifies them. We have not ceased to defend the principle: Potentiae, habitus et actus specificantur ab objecto formali.

In our opinion it would be a gross error to think that the description given by St. Thomas of the moral virtues is impregnated with semi-naturalism. Semi-naturalism would consist in being more attentive to the (intrinsically natural) acquired moral virtues than to the infused moral virtues. It would consist in aiming rather at being a perfect upright man, master of self, than at being a child of God increasingly conscious of his dependence on his heavenly Father and more and more docile to divine inspirations. One might thus reach the state of attributing in part to oneself the respect due to God, which would be a serious error.

It is also fully evident (to ignore the fact would be unpardonable) that, as Father Lemonnyer so rightly insisted, the axis of the supernatural life passes through the theological virtues. We have not ceased to say so under different forms, and Father Lemonnyer himself graciously recognized, in what he wrote on theological prayer, how well founded is what we have been saying for a long time about common prayer, in which, in our opinion, faith, hope, and charity are exercised especially.

This statement contains an elementary truth that certainly deserves to be penetrated deeply. No theologian would think of denying it; but its importance in spirituality may be more or less great according to the idea one has of the distinction between ascetical theology and mystical theology.

THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN ASCETICAL AND MYSTICAL THEOLOGY AS IT HAS OFTEN BEEN PROPOSED SINCE THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

The distinction between ascetical and mystical theology is not a division of the virtues, like that between the theological and the moral virtues; it is a distinction between two forms of the spiritual life. Ascetical and mystical theology is the application of the teaching of dogmatic and moral theology to the direction of souls toward ever closer union with God. It presupposes what sacred doctrine teaches about the nature and the properties of the Christian virtues and of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and it studies the laws and the conditions of their progress from the point of view of Christian perfection. It causes the lights of dogmatic and moral theology to converge toward this end.

The distinction between ascetical and mystical theology is inspired by the current meaning and the etymology of these terms. The term “asceticism,” as its Greek origin indicates, means the exercise of the virtues. Among the first Christians those were called ascetics who devoted themselves to the practice of mortification, exercises of piety, and other Christian virtues. Consequently the term “ascetical” was applied to that part of spiritual theology which directs souls in the struggle against sin and in the progress of virtue.

Mystical theology, as its name indicates, treats of more hidden and mysterious things: of the intimate union of the soul with God; of the transitory phenomena that accompany certain degrees of union, as ecstasy; lastly, of essentially extraordinary graces, such as visions and private revelations.

Until the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, writers generally treated under the single title of mystical theology not only the mystical union, infused contemplation, its degrees, and essentially extraordinary graces, but also Christian perfection in general, and the first phases of the spiritual life, the normal progress of which thus seemed directed toward the mystical union as its culminating point. This is the conception found in the mystical theologies of the Carmelites, Philip of the Blessed Trinity, Anthony of the Holy Ghost, Joseph of the Holy Ghost, and of the Dominican Vallgornera, who so often literally reproduced the teaching of Philip of the Blessed Trinity.

Since the seventeenth and eighteen centuries, several authors have deemed it necessary to distinguish absolutely between ascetical theology

and mystical theology, which since then have often become subjects of special treatises, such as the Ascetical Directory and the Mystical Directory of Scaramelli. We wrote in 1920 in one of the first numbers of La Vie spirituelle: “Excessively eager to systematize things and to establish a doctrine to remedy abuses, and consequently led to classify things materially and objectively, without a sufficiently lofty and profound knowledge of them, they declared that ascetical theology should treat of the ‘ordinary’ Christian life according to the three ways, the purgative, the illuminative, and the unitive. As for mystical theology, it should treat only of extraordinary graces, among which they included not only visions and private revelations, but also supernatural, confused contemplation, the passive purifications, and the mystical union.”

Thereby the unity of the spiritual life was compromised; the perfection which ascetical theology speaks of, became an end and not a disposition to a more intimate and more elevated union. Mystical theology was no longer of any importance except to some rare privileged souls.

For about the last thirty years many theologians have rejected the division thus conceived between ascetical and mystical theology. They have returned to a more traditional doctrine, according to which the ascetical life is a form of the spiritual life in which appears chiefly the human mode of the Christian virtues, while the mystical life is a form of life in which predominates quite manifestly and frequently the superhuman mode of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which are in all the just. From this point of view, the unity of the spiritual life is better comprehended in spite of the differences between the three successive ages distinguished by tradition: that is, the age of beginners, that of proficients, and that of the perfect, or in other words, the purgative, illuminative, and unitive ways. Thus there is a return to a traditional division more commonly received among the ancients than that between ascetical theology and mystical theology, that is, the division between the active life and the contemplative life, which was dear to St. Augustine and to St. Gregory, and was well explained by St. Thomas.

In the opinion of these great masters, the active life, to which is attached the exercise of the moral virtues of, prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance, and the outward works of charity prepare for the contemplative life, so far as it regulates the passions that disturb contemplation and so far as it makes us grow in the love of God and of our neighbor. Then comes the contemplation of God, which is proper to the perfect; it is found either in

the purely contemplative life, or in the mixed life which fructifies in the apostolate. Contemplation then directs action from above and renders it much more supernatural and fruitful. The contemplative life is chiefly that of the theological virtues and of the gifts which accompany them, as the active life is especially that of the moral virtues.

This traditional division is more profound, more grounded on the very nature of man and also on the nature of grace, the virtues, and the gifts, than the division between ascetical life and mystical life, which may be seriously misunderstood and which it is quite difficult to define clearly.

DISADVANTAGES FROM A WRONG UNDERSTANDING OF THE DIVISION BETWEEN ASCETICAL AND MYSTICAL THEOLOGY

Some souls seem to have gone beyond the essentially ascetical life (or the active life in the meaning given to it by the ancients), which consists chiefly in methodical exercises of piety, united to the practice of mortification or of the Christian virtues that discipline the passions and regulate relations with one's neighbor. These souls live especially by the theological virtues and, in a more or less latent manner, by the gifts which accompany them. However, they do not yet give evidence of the properly so-called mystical life of passive prayer, described by St. Teresa from the fourth mansion on, and by St. John of the Cross beginning with the clearly characterized passive purification of the senses. The opinion is usually held that the souls we are speaking of here are in a still imperfect illuminative way, intermediary between the purgative or ascetical way of beginners and the essentially mystical or passive way, which, according to St. John of the Cross, is that of proficients, or the advanced, and that of the perfect.

The prayer of the souls we are discussing already rises above methodical exercises; it is a simple lifting up of the soul to God by a prolonged act of faith, followed by acts of hope and love of God. It is often called simplified affective prayer; we have described it under the title of the common prayer of the ancients, and Father Lemonnyer, under the title of theological prayer.

Souls such as these seem to be in a stage between the ascetical life, properly so called, and the mystical life in the essential meaning of the term, a period which for the most generous is one of transition and which for others is prolonged for their whole lifetime.

Father Gabriel of St. Magdalen, CD., makes similar observations when he treats of active (or acquired or mixed) contemplation according to Carmelite writers, in whose opinion it is ordinarily a preparation for infused contemplation. We must also remember that in the prologue to The Ascent of Mount Carmel St. John of the Cross says: “Its contents... are a solid and substantial doctrine suited to all, if they seek to advance to that detachment of spirit which is here described. My principal object, however, is not to address myself to all, but only to certain persons of our holy Order of Mount Carmel, of the primitive observance.” St. John of the Cross wrote chiefly for the most generous souls among contemplatives, for those who wish to take the road which ascends most directly toward very close union with God.

Manifestly, therefore, there is an intermediate stage between the methodical discursive meditation, described in works on ascetical theology, and infused contemplation properly so called, spoken of by mystical authors.

VARIOUS FORMS OF SIMPLIFIED PRAYER

Even the authors who hold that the infused contemplation of the mysteries of faith is in the normal way of sanctity and that without it there is not the full perfection of Christian life, recognize the difference between the active and the contemplative life. They also say that Marys reach infused contemplation more rapidly than Marthas. Moreover, the former find in contemplation great purifying trials, which at the same time make them work for the salvation of souls.

These authors likewise often distinguish between the acquired prayer of recollection, or simplified affective prayer, and, above it, a latent infused contemplation, similar to the diffuse light which pervades the air when the sun is not directly visible, and which illumines everything though it does not itself appear as a distinct ray. We have often spoken of it. In our opinion, it seems certain that St. Vincent de Paul often had, not only during prayer and the celebration of Mass but in his ministry, this latent infused contemplation, which is an act of living faith accompanied by a certain influence of the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Through it he continually saw suffering members of Christ in abandoned children and prisoners condemned to the galleys. Therein lay a frequent although diffuse influence

of the gift of wisdom under its practical form. St. Thomas points out that this gift, like faith and the gift of understanding, is speculative and practical, in the sense that it bears both on the mysteries to be believed and on the precepts and counsels, or on the conduct of life. In certain servants of God this gift appears more under its practical form, united to the gifts of counsel, fear, piety, and fortitude; in others it appears under its speculative or rather contemplative form, united to the gifts of understanding and knowledge.

Consequently we see why a theologian who is also a man of prayer may often have latent infused contemplation which heightens the activity of his mind and, so to speak, directs his work from on high: for example, that he may ward off useless discussions which would degenerate into personalities; that he may preserve the requisite benevolence toward all; that he may seek especially the profound and fruitful understanding of the mysteries of faith. When we read the works of St. Augustine, we are led to believe that this contemplation often directed his search, illumined from on high the reasons he developed, and made them all converge in a superior synthesis which he finally seized at a single glance. Father Cayre, A.A., has rightly insisted on this point in his beautiful book, La Contemplation augustinienne (1927).

To the theologian who, like St. Thomas, often recalls the same principles to illumine questions such as those of grace, free will, merit, and sin, from time to time one of these oft-quoted principles appears in all its elevation and radiance, throwing light on entire tracts, previously studied with patience. Take, for example, the principle of predilection: “No one thing would be better than another if God did not will greater good for one than for another.” This principle expresses in equivalent terms the thought of St. Paul: “What hast thou that thou hast not received?” and contains virtually the doctrine of predestination and that of grace.

In this case the theologian has a contemplation which is in a sense acquired, so far as it is the fruit of his work, and which, in a superior sense, is infused, so far as the special inspiration of the Holy Ghost elevates it in a more or less manifest manner, giving it a penetration and spiritual sweetness surpassing simple faith and theological speculation. Faith adheres to revealed mysteries, the gift of understanding makes us penetrate them, the gift of wisdom makes us taste them.

Clearly manifest infused contemplation, such as St. John of the Cross describes in The Dark Night, especially in Book II, during and after the

purification of the spirit, is superior to acquired or mixed contemplation which we have just spoken of. St. Thomas received this contemplation in an eminent degree toward the end of his life, when he could no longer dictate. When we speak of this contemplation, it does not follow that we do not esteem the less elevated forms of knowledge which dispose to it.

We have often insisted on the different aspects of this great problem. In concluding, we revert to this subject in order to show that the axis of the spiritual life is not displaced by ascetical theology or by the mystical theology of the best masters whose teaching the Church approves.

THE AXIS OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE AND ASCETICAL THEOLOGY RIGHTLY UNDERSTOOD

It suffices to read any good ascetical work, such as the Introduction to a Devout Life, by St. Francis de Sales, and the first books of his Treatise on the Love of God, where he does not yet deal with contemplation but only with meditation, to realize that the axis of the spiritual life, which rests especially on the theological virtues, far from being displaced in the ascetical life, is already greatly strengthened. The holy doctor says that interior and exterior mortification is a powerful means to draw down upon us the favors of heaven, if we practice it in charity and through charity. He also states very practically that the greatest mortifications are not the best, declaring that ordinary ones, which fall to our lot daily and unexpectedly, are more fruitful and assure the conformity of our will with God’s will, signified by the precepts and the counsels. In these pages the saint reminds us that mortification without prayer is a body without a soul, and that prayer without mortification is a soul without a body. In these works he treats not only theoretically but practically of the progress of the virtues illumined by faith and vivified by charity, especially of the progress of the theological virtues. St. Francis de Sales here applies in a practical manner the teaching of St. Thomas in the second part of the Summa, by causing to converge toward daily acts what the Angelic Doctor tells us of virtue in general, of the virtues in particular, their motive, their connection, and their progress. Abstraction separated these questions; ascetical theology reunites them in order to point out to us the road that leads to perfection. It aims at the end to be attained practically rather than at the nature of virtues to be well defined.

Ascetical theology rightly understood, far from being a moral system which fails to recognize the elevation of the theological virtues, is inspired by the breath of these virtues and directed toward a higher life to which it makes the soul aspire. To show how the moral virtues should be at the service of faith, hope, and love of God and of souls in God, to point out how the spiritual life should increasingly dominate every disorder of the sensible part of the soul, triumph over egoism, self-love, and pride under all its forms, certainly is not to change the axis of the spiritual life. It is at times necessary to recall these absolutely elementary truths which the erroneous linking of words would cause us to forget, so much the more so as we are too greatly inclined to dispense ourselves from ascetical effort and as we too readily renounce higher aspirations.

THE AXIS OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE AND TRUE MYSTICAL THEOLOGY

Likewise the axis of the spiritual life is certainly not changed, the role of the gifts of the Holy Ghost is not exaggerated to the detriment of the theological virtues, when, in company with the greatest spiritual writers, we point out what should be the progress of faith, hope, and charity in the illuminative way; when, with St. John of the Cross, we recall how these three virtues are purified during the passive night of the spirit, how their formal motive stands out with increasing relief, like three stars of the first magnitude in this superior obscurity. Similarly the role of the gifts is not exaggerated to the detriment of the theological virtues by showing their heroic degree in the unitive life of the perfect, described by the great mystics.

St. John of the Cross does not exaggerate the role of the gifts to the detriment of the theological virtues; on the contrary he practically never mentions the gifts themselves, but writes continually about faith, hope, and charity, using capital letters to designate these virtues. It would be as unjust to reproach him with having failed to recognize the importance of the gifts as to claim that he falls into a false supernaturalism which neglects the human subject, because he emphasizes the abnegation presupposed by the loftiest perfection. The faith he speaks of not only adheres to revealed mysteries, but is rendered penetrating and often sweet by the influx of the rarely named gifts of understanding and wisdom.

Is faith depreciated by showing what it is in all its sublimity, when it bears all its fruits? The regime of the virtues is not sacrificed to that of the gifts by pointing out what faith is when illumined by the gifts, as several great Thomists have done. Likewise the value of reasoning is not lessened by preparing oneself for the "simple intuition of the truth" which St. Thomas speaks of in connection with circular contemplation. Because discourse ceases in this contemplation, it certainly does not follow that discourse must be renounced outside of contemplation. In like manner the importance of the study of sacred doctrine is not disparaged by saying it should be made with love of divine truth that prepares the soul for union with God, which is obviously superior to study itself.

Let us not stop at the external chaff of words, but penetrate to the kernel of things with a healthy realism. The supernatural virtues are not depreciated when, to explain the highest forms of the life of faith, we speak of the superhuman mode of the gifts of understanding and wisdom, which make us penetrate and taste revealed mysteries. The same holds true in dealing with the radiant influence of the apostolic life of the greatest saints or of the life of reparation. What might happen, on the contrary, is that, under pretext of defending the superiority of the theological virtues over the gifts, one might diminish these very virtues by failing to recognize the value of the inspirations of the Holy Ghost which cause the spirit of faith, hope, and love of God to grow more and more. By so doing, one would incline toward a moralism that would exaggerate the value of human prudence to the detriment of union with God.

If a Thomist is to give a course in mystical theology, he must certainly speak ex professo of infused contemplation, at first latent, then manifest; of its signs, its nature, and its fruits. On this point he may not omit the testimony of St. Teresa or of St. John of the Cross; he should seek to explain it theologically by the principles formulated by St. Thomas. The result would not be a clumsy concordance, nor would the use of this method be reprehensible in writing a work of this kind. Because St. Thomas himself did not write a mystical theology, but gave its principles, he certainly did not forbid the writing of such a text. Similarly, because he did not write the Praxis confessarii of St. Alphonsus, he did not exclude the possibility of similar works. It would be narrowness of spirit to renounce, under the pretext of Thomism, the theological treatment of the essential questions of mystical theology, or in treating them to fear a depreciation of the

theological virtues which, on the contrary, appear therein in all their loftiness.

We fully agree with what Father Lemonnyer says, in the work we quoted above, about the value of theology: “Grace and the virtues are not realities whose nature, object, mechanism wait to become intelligible to us and to make the spiritual life intelligible to us until we have completed the inventory of ascetical and mystical experiences.... These experiences do not judge the theology of the Church; the theology of the Church judges them, illumines them, and praises them according to their merits.”

The theologian should, moreover, avoid any conceit, which would be more intolerable in him than in many others; it would take away all vitality from his interior life, depriving it of great graces, and would prevent him from understanding as he should prayerful souls, incapable of opening their hearts to him. He should remember that his theological wisdom, acquired secundum perfectum usum rationis, is inferior to the infused gift of wisdom, which judges according to the inspiration of the Holy Ghost and its connaturality with divine things. St. Thomas possessed these two wisdoms, in an eminent degree; the elevation of the second prevented him from taking satisfaction in the first, to such a degree that at the end of his life, when he could no longer dictate, he was as if lost in God through contemplation.

Dominic Banez, one of St. Teresa’s directors, used to say that theologians, after spending years in the study of theology, profit by association with spiritual persons. In fact, if the theologian’s personal interior life remains quite mediocre, if he has not persevered in ascetical effort, or led a profound life of prayer, he cannot sufficiently grasp the admirable spiritual riches contained in the treatises which he explains. Then he delays excessively over the rind and does not penetrate sufficiently into the substance. If he is teaching positive theology, he even runs the risk of becoming above all a historian; if he is teaching speculative theology, of being scarcely more than a logician or a metaphysician who speaks about the great supernatural mysteries from a relatively inferior point of view. The same is true of the exegete who interprets the Epistles of St. Paul according to his own mediocre psychology, which scarcely suggests “hunger and thirst for the justice of God.” Then everything is depreciated and no longer is a matter of interest.

The spirit of theological science becomes so much the less alive when one dallies too much over what is inferior in it, and when one no longer disposes oneself in this way for “the very fruitful understanding of the mysteries” spoken of by the Vatican Counci1. If, on the contrary, the theologian loves to read the great spiritual writers and if he sees the lives of prayerful souls truly dead to themselves in the midst of the passive purifications which they have had to undergo, and already possessing a very close union with God, then he has the impression of being in a higher atmosphere, very different from that in which one is too preoccupied with one’s scientific reputation and with discussions in which self-love and many but slightly interesting petty passions often mingle. From the higher point of view dominated by the gifts of understanding and wisdom, which render faith penetrating and sweet, the theological treatises appear more elevated and profound. We personally taught St. Thomas’ treatise on the theological virtues for the first time before we saw souls of prayer that had passed through the passive purification of the spirit. When, after acquaintance with several of these souls, we returned on different occasions to the explanation of St. Thomas’ articles relative to faith, hope, and charity, we saw much more in them than we did before. We passed from, the confused to the distinct concept of the theological virtues and, in varying degrees, to their experiential concept. Such an experience shows ever more clearly how the theological teaching of St. Thomas sprang from the plenitude of contemplation, to use the expression dear to the saint. Then, without clumsy concordance, the teachings of a St. John of the Cross help one to a better understanding of what the Angelic Doctor meant. Often our interior life, which remains too superficial and mediocre, does not enable us to discover this plenitude of meaning; we should, therefore, be grateful to those who help us to do so. This helps us understand why St. Thomas himself said that he had learned more at the foot of the crucifix and before the tabernacle than in books. He spent hours at night in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, and in this profound prayer he grew in the knowledge of the spirit of those things of which theological books give us the letter.

What we have said shows that the axis of the spiritual life is found in the theological virtues which are superior to the gifts, but which receive from them an added perfection. Faith is essentially supernatural and infallible by reason of its formal motive, but it is more perfect when, under the inspiration of the gifts of understanding and wisdom, it becomes penetrating

and sweet; when it gives us the fruitful understanding of the mysteries of the inner life of God, of the redemptive Incarnation, of the infinite value of the Sacrifice of the Mass, of the inestimable treasure of the presence of the Blessed Trinity in us, of the intimate union with God which finds its perfection in the transforming union, the prelude of eternal life. From this point of view, nothing is diminished, but one grasps increasingly better the value of infused faith and notably, below it, that of theology.

II

THE BEATIFIC VISION AND ITS NORMAL PRELUDE

At the beginning of this work, we stated that the life of grace is the beginning of eternal life, according to the traditional formula: “Grace is the seed of glory.” It is essentially the same life in its basis, in spite of two differences: here on earth we know God only in the obscurity of faith, not in the evidence of vision, and although we hope to possess Him inamissibly some day, we can while on earth lose Him by mortal sin. In spite of these two differences relating to faith and hope, it is the same essentially supernatural life: sanctifying grace, received in the very essence of the soul, and infused charity, received in the will, should last forever, and with them the infused moral virtues and the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost. The summit of the normal development of the life of grace is, therefore, the beatific vision received after death. By way of conclusion, we shall briefly discuss this vision of heaven and its normal prelude on earth in the truly purified soul.

THE ABSOLUTELY IMMEDIATE VISION OF THE DIVINE ESSENCE

We shall sum up here what St. Thomas teaches on this point in the Summa.

If God had created us in a purely natural state with a mortal body and an immortal soul, but without the supernatural life of grace, even then our last end, our beatitude, would have consisted in knowing God and loving Him above all else, for our intellect is made to know the truth, and especially the supreme Truth, and our will is made to love and will good, and especially the sovereign Good.

If we had been created without the supernatural life of grace, the final reward of the just would have been to know God and to love Him, but they would have known Him only from without, so to speak, by the reflection of

His perfections in creatures, as the greatest philosophers of antiquity knew Him. Without a doubt, we would have known Him in a more certain manner without admixture of errors, but by abstract knowledge, through the intermediary of things and of limited concepts in the mirror of creatures. We would have known God as the first cause of spirits and bodies, and we would have enumerated His infinite perfections known analogically by their reflection in the created order. Our ideas of the divine attributes would have remained, we have said, like squares of mosaic incapable of reproducing perfectly the spiritual physiognomy of God without hardening it. This abstract and mediate knowledge would have let many obscurities subsist, in particular in regard to the intimate harmonizing of the divine perfections. We would always have asked ourselves how infinite goodness and the divine permission of evil are able to harmonize, how infinite justice and infinite mercy can accord intimately. The human intellect would not have been able to forbear saying: If I could only see this God, who is the source of all truth and goodness, of the life of creatures, and of intellects and wills! This desire would have remained conditional and inefficacious if we had been created in a purely natural state.

But, in reality, the infinite mercy of God has raised us to supernatural life, whose full flowering is called not only the future life, but eternal life, because it is measured by the single instant of immobile eternity. Preaching the beatitudes at the very beginning of His ministry, our Lord tells us: “Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven.” To the Samaritan woman He says: “He that shall drink of the water that I will give him, shall not thirst forever; but the water that I will give him, shall become in him a fountain of water springing up into life everlasting.” In His sacerdotal prayer, Christ says: “Now this is eternal life: that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.” St. Paul explains this statement to us by saying: “We see now through a glass in a dark manner; but then face to face. Now I know in part; but then I shall know even as I am known.” And St. John adds: “We shall be like to Him, because we shall see Him as He is.”

The Church has defined that this revealed doctrine means an immediate vision of the divine essence without the intermediary of any creature previously known. In other words, by the gaze of our intellect supernaturally strengthened by the light of glory, we shall see God better than we see with our eyes of flesh the persons with whom we speak, for we

shall see Him clearly as an object closer to us than we are to ourselves. Here on earth we know especially what God is not: we know that He is not material, changing, limited; we shall then see Him as He is in His Deity, in His infinite essence, in His intimate life common to the three Persons. Grace is a participation of this essence and life since it will give us to see Him thus immediately as He sees Himself, to love Him as He loves Himself, to live eternally by Him.

St. Thomas explains this revealed doctrine by stating that between God and us there will not be even the intermediary of an idea, for no created idea can represent such as it is in itself, the pure, intellectual, eternally subsistent being that is God and His infinite truth, or His limitless love. We shall not be able to express our contemplation by any word, even by any interior word, just as a man is rendered incapable of speech when absorbed by the sight of a sublime and indescribable spectacle.

This immediate vision of the divine essence immensely surpasses all the created concepts of the divine perfections that we can have here on earth. We are called to see all the divine perfections intimately harmonized, identified in the eminence of the Deity, or the inner life of God; to see how the tenderest mercy and the most inflexible justice proceed from one and the same infinitely generous and infinitely holy love, from an eternal love of the supreme Good, which is, to be sure, intimately diffusive of self (the principle of mercy), but which also has a right to be loved above all (the principle of justice). We shall see how mercy and justice are united in all the works of God, how eternal love is identical with the sovereign good always loved, how divine wisdom is identical with the first truth always known, and how all these perfections harmonize and are but one in the very essence of Him who is.

We shall also see the infinite fecundity of the divine nature in the three divine Persons; the eternal generation of the Word, “splendor of the Father and figure of His substance.” We shall gaze upon the ineffable procession of the Holy Ghost, term of the common love of the Father and of the Son, the bond uniting Them eternally in the most absolute diffusion of Themselves. The supreme Being is essentially diffusive of Itself in the intimate life of God, and freely bestows Its riches by means of creation and by our gratuitous elevation to the life of grace. Thus will be verified St. Paul’s words: “Whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son; that He might be the first-born

amongst many brothers." From all eternity God has an only Son to whom He communicates all His divine nature; He gives Him to be "God of God, light of light." He has willed to have other sons, adopted sons, to whom He communicates a participation in His nature, sanctifying grace in the essence of their souls, and from this grace proceed in their higher faculties the light of glory and inamissible charity. Thus, St. Thomas says, "by the incarnation of the Son we receive adoptive sonship in the likeness of His natural sonship."

We shall also contemplate immediately the intimate and indissoluble union of the person of the Word and of the humanity of the Savior. We shall see thereby all the splendor of the divine maternity of Mary, of her mediation, the price of the salvation of souls, and the unlimited riches of these words so quickly uttered: "The eternal life of the elect."

No one can tell the joy that will be born in us of this absolutely immediate vision, which will be like a spiritual fusion of our soul, of our intellect, and of the divine essence, an uninterrupted transforming union, an intimate and perfect communion that nothing will ever be able to lessen. The love which will result from this vision will be so pure and strong a love of God that nothing will ever be able to diminish it. This love will be sovereignly spontaneous, but no longer free; it will be superior to liberty, ravished by the sovereign Good. By this love we shall rejoice especially that God is God, infinitely holy, just, and merciful; we shall adore all the decrees of His providence in view of the manifestation of His goodness, and we shall subordinate ourselves completely to Him. We shall enter into His beatitude, according to the words of our Savior in the parable of the talents: "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

We can form some idea of the activity of the saints in heaven by the radiation of their lives on earth, such as it appears, for example, in our day in the numerous graces obtained through the intercession of Mary in the sanctuary at Lourdes, or through the prayer of a St. Teresa of Lisieux.

THE NORMAL AND IMMEDIATE PRELUDE OF THE BEATIFIC VISION

If sanctifying grace is the seed of eternal life in us, what follows as a result? First of all, that sanctifying grace, called "the grace of the virtues and the gifts," is "much more excellent," as St. Thomas says, than the graces gratis datae, like the gift of miracles, that of tongues, or prophecy

which announces a contingent event. These graces are, so to speak, exterior; they give us signs of the divine life, but they are not themselves the divine life shared in us.

Now, it is from the grace of the virtues and the gifts received by all at baptism, and not from graces gratis datae and extraordinary graces that, as we have seen, the infused contemplation of the mysteries of faith proceeds. This contemplation is an act of living faith, illumined by the gifts of understanding and wisdom. It is not, therefore, an essentially extraordinary favor like prophecy or the gift of tongues, but is found in the normal way of sanctity.

The truth of this conclusion becomes even more apparent if we observe that sanctifying grace, being essentially ordained to eternal life, is likewise ordained to the normal and immediate prelude of the beatific vision. Is not this prelude precisely the eminent exercise of infused faith illumined by the gifts of wisdom and understanding, that is, the infused contemplation of the divine goodness and its radiation, together with perfect charity and the ardent desire for the beatific vision? On earth this ardent desire is found in its full perfection only in the transforming union. Therefore this union does not appear to be outside the normal way of sanctity, especially if one considers, not so much a given individual soul, but the human soul and, in it, sanctifying grace considered in itself, as the seed of glory.

The ardent desire for God is only too rare on earth, even in consecrated souls; and yet if there is a good to which the Christian should ardently aspire, evidently it is the eternal possession of God. To attain it, he should desire an ever deeper faith, a firmer confidence, a purer and stronger love of God, virtues which are found precisely in the transforming union. Thus this union appears, in profoundly humble and fully purified souls, as the immediate prelude of the beatific vision. There must, in fact, be some proportion between the intensity of the desire and the value of the good desired; in this case the value of the good being infinite, it could not be too greatly desired. Consequently it is not fitting that this infinite good should be granted to a soul that does not yet desire it ardently. The more purified the soul is, the more it aspires to the possession of God, and if at death the soul’s desire is not as ardent as it should be, this is a sign that it needs additional purification, that of purgatory.

The dogma of purgatory, then, throws a new light on the present question. Purgatory is a punishment which supposes a sin that could have

been avoided and an insufficient satisfaction that could have been complete if we had better accepted the trials of the present life. It is certain that no one will be detained in purgatory except for sins he could have avoided or for negligence in making reparation for them. Therefore normally we should, like the saints, undergo our purgatory in this life while meriting, while growing in love, instead of after death without meriting.

Therefore sanctifying grace, which is of itself ordained to eternal life, is also ordained to such perfection that the soul may receive the light of glory immediately after death without passing through purgatory. This disposition to enter heaven immediately after death supposes a complete purification, analogous at least to that of souls that are about to leave purgatory and have a very ardent desire for God. According to St. John of the Cross, this complete purification is normally found on earth only in those who have courageously endured the passive purifications of the senses and the spirit, which prepare the soul for intimate union with God. This reason confirms all that we have said and shows that the passive purifications are indeed in the normal way of sanctity, like the close union with God for which they prepare. Evident also is the degree of sanctity in question in the expression "the normal way of sanctity"; that sanctity is meant which permits the soul to enter heaven immediately after death.

Such is, we believe, the teaching of St. John of the Cross, which admirably preserves and explains the traditional doctrine on this point, in particular that of the great spiritual writers who preceded him. To grasp the meaning and import of this teaching, souls must doubtless be considered not only as they are, but as they should be. Now, it is the work proper to spirituality to remind souls incessantly of what they should be that they may go beyond what they are.

This lofty doctrine also conforms perfectly to what St. Thomas tells us not only about the nature of grace, the seed of glory, but also about the beatitudes and the imitation of Jesus Christ, the virtues of the purified soul, the higher degree of humility, patience, the spirit of faith, confidence in God, and charity.

St. Thomas, St. Albert the Great, St. Bonaventure, and after them St. John of the Cross and St. Francis de Sales found this teaching in the fathers who spoke of the relations of contemplation and perfect love, in St. Paul himself, and in the Gospel. St. Paul delights in saying: "That which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation [if it is well borne], worketh

for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory." He gives us the ardent desire for it by reminding us that we have received the "pledge of the Spirit," or the pledge and foretaste of eternal life. And our Lord Himself says to us: "If any man thirst, let him come to Me, and drink.... Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." "He that hath My commandments and keepeth them; he it is that loveth Me. And he that loveth Me, shall be loved of My Father; and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him." This secret manifestation of Christ to the faithful soul is truly the prelude of eternal life; it is found especially in the highest of the eight beatitudes: "Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers.... Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake." These beatitudes are, says St. Thomas, the highest acts of the virtues and the gifts; there is in them "a kind of imperfect inchoation of future happiness." Even here on earth, the fruits of these merits begin to appear, and they contain a savor of eternal life, or a foretaste of the joy of the elect.

ADDENDA

ON THE NATURE OF SPIRITUAL THEOLOGY

We call attention to a good work by Father Gabriel of St. Magdalen, C.D., which appeared in the Acta Academiae Romanae S. Thomae (1939):- "De indole psychologica theologiae spiritualis." This article, we believe, contains the most exact statement that has been made on this subject following two recent controversies: that between Father Stolz, O.S.B., and M. Penido on whether the psychological consideration of the facts of the interior life belongs to the domain of spiritual theology; and that between Jacques Maritain and Father T. Deman on the relation of spiritual theology with theology as such.

Father Gabriel answers these two questions as follows:

1. In reality spiritual theology as it exists today implies a psychological study of the facts of the interior life, but a study made in a manner notably different from that of St. Teresa, who is almost solely descriptive, and from that of St. John of the Cross, who interprets these facts theologically in order to show what the evolution of the life of grace in a completely faithful soul is and ought to be.

2. This psychological study may be scientific, and it becomes so when it establishes universal psychological laws, for example, on the relations of purifying aridity and union with God.

3. This study becomes theological when these laws find their superior basis in fixed theological principles. Such is the character of the psychological consideration of the spiritual life in the work of St. John of the Cross, in particular when he establishes the necessity of the passive purification of the senses and then that of the spirit to attain the intimate and perfect union with God, which is the culminating point of the evolution of

the life of grace in perfect souls. (Thus fixed theological conclusions are reached.)

4. The psychological study of the facts of the life of the soul, although necessary even to moral theology in the tracts on human acts, the passions, the virtues in general and in particular, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost, is particularly requisite for spiritual theology, which considers the development of the interior life and its different phases even to perfect union. Consequently spiritual theology preserves the same concepts of grace, faith, confidence, charity, contemplation, and so on, as does moral theology, such as St. Thomas considers it. Nevertheless in spiritual theology these concepts are in closer relation with the concrete development of the interior life: for example, the concept of infused contemplation with the successive phases of the night of the senses, the night of the spirit, and perfect union. As a result we are led, not to admit a specific distinction between theology as conceived by St. Thomas and spiritual theology, but to see in the latter a function of theology, which, without being a science subordinated to theology, depends essentially on its principles.

Father Gabriel thus admits, as we do, that spiritual theology is an application of theology which determines the nature of the intimate union of the soul with God and the means (the acts, trials, graces) which lead to this union. It thus establishes, according to fixed theological principles, juxtaposed with the experience of the saints, the superior laws of the life of grace.

This is the point of view we took in the introduction and in the course of this work. Spiritual theology is, we said—designedly using a very general term—an application of theology, an application which is still in the domain of the universal, and on which depend the art of direction and the prudence of the director, which is the particular, contingent, and final application to a given person rather than to another.

We also stated that spiritual theology is a branch of theology, or one of its integral parts (ratione materiae); but although it has a less extended domain than moral theology as conceived by St. Thomas, it is the highest of its applications or its branches, for its end is to lead souls to intimate union with God. By it theology returns to its point of departure, to its eminent source, to divine revelation contained in Scripture and tradition. Spiritual theology, as a matter of fact, studies what should be the infused

contemplation of revealed mysteries and the divine union resulting from this contemplation. In a word, it shows what the normal prelude of eternal life should be. Thereby the cycle of sacred science is completed.

From this point of view, spiritual theology presumes a thoroughly profound knowledge of dogmatic theology and of moral theology, which are the two parts of a single science that is eminently speculative and practical, like “the impression of the science of God in us.” Thereby the superior unity of theology is maintained, and we see ever better how it realizes what the Vatican Council says: “Reason also, illumined by faith, when it seeks zealously, piously, and soberly, attains through the gift of God some understanding of the mysteries, and that a most fruitful one, now from the analogy of those which it knows naturally, now from the interrelation of those mysteries with the ultimate end of man.”

SYNTHESIS OF THE TREATISE ON THE THREE AGES OF THE INTERIOR LIFE

(To be read from the bottom up)

Unitive life of the perfect	◇ full	◇ extraordinary, e.g., with the vision of the Blessed Trinity	
	◇ weak	◇ ordinary	• eminent contemplative form • apostolic form
	◇ initial	◇ not very continual union, often interrupted	
Illuminative life of proficients	◇ full infused contemplation	◇ extraordinary or accompanied by visions, revelations	
		◇ ordinary	•clearly contemplative form • active form, or form ordained to action, e.g., gift of wisdom under practical form
	◇ weak	◇ transitory acts of infused contemplation (d. The Dark Night, Bk. I, chap. 9)	
	◇ initial	◇ passive purification of the senses more or less well borne (initial infused contemplation)	
Purgative life of beginners	◇ full or generous	◇ fervent souls pious and devout souls	
	◇ weak	◇ tepid or retarded souls, not without relapses	
	◇ initial	◇ first conversion or justification	

THE END

REVEREND REGINALD GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE O.P.

Réginald Marie Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P. (February 21, 1877, Auch, France—February 15, 1964, Rome) was a Catholic theologian and is considered by some to be the greatest Catholic Thomist of the 20th century. He taught at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas, commonly known as the Angelicum, in Rome from 1909 to 1960.

By 1917 a special professorship in ascetical and mystical theology was created for him at the Angelicum, the first of its kind anywhere in the world. His great achievement was to synthesise the highly abstract writings of St Thomas Aquinas with the experiential writings of St John of the Cross, showing how they are in perfect harmony with each other.

Father Garrigou-Lagrange, the leading proponent of "strict observance Thomism," initially attracted attention when he wrote against the Modernist Nouvelle Théologie theological movement. He is also said to be the drafter or "ghostwriter" of Pope Pius XII's 1950 encyclical Humani Generis, subtitled "Concerning Some False Opinions Threatening to Undermine the Foundations of Catholic Doctrine."

He is best known for his spiritual theology. His magnum opus in the field is The Three Ages of the Interior Life, in which he propounded the thesis that infused contemplation and the resulting mystical life are in the normal way of holiness of Christian perfection. This influenced the section entitled "Chapter V: The Universal Call to Holiness in the Church" in the Second Vatican Council's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Lumen Gentium.

He taught many eminent Catholic theologians during his academic career, the most illustrious being the future Pope John Paul II, whose encyclical Fides et Ratio is the mature fruit of his training under the learned Dominican. Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange is also known to have introduced Thomism to fellow theologian and priest Yves Congar.

The Osservatore Romano, Dec. 9–10, 1950 lists Garrigou-Lagrange among the names of the prepatory commission for the definition of the Assumption of Mary.

THE THREE WAYS OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

REVEREND REGINALD GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE O.P.

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THE THREE WAYS OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

CHAPTER 1

THE LIFE OF GRACE AND THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FIRST CONVERSION

THE interior life is for all the one thing necessary. It ought to be constantly developing in our souls; more so than what we call our intellectual life, more so than our scientific, artistic or literary life. The interior life is lived in the depths of the soul; it is the life of the whole man, not merely of one or other of his faculties. And our intellectual life would gain immeasurably by appreciating this; it would receive an inestimable advantage if, instead of attempting to supplant the spiritual life, it recognized its necessity and importance, and welcomed its beneficial influence—the influence of the theological virtues and the gifts of the Holy Ghost. How deeply important our subject is may be seen in the very words we have used: Intellectuality and Spirituality. And it is important to us not only as individuals, but also in our social relations, for it is evident that we can exert no real or profound influence upon our fellow-men unless we live a truly interior life ourselves.

THE NECESSITY OF THE INTERIOR LIFE

The pressing need of devoting ourselves to the consideration of the one thing necessary is especially manifest in these days of general chaos and unrest, when so many men and nations, neglecting their true destiny, give themselves up entirely to acquiring earthly possessions, failing to realize how inferior these are to the everlasting riches of the spirit.

And yet St. Augustine’s saying is so clearly true, that ‘ material goods, unlike those of the spirit, cannot belong wholly and simultaneously to more than one person. ‘ The same house, the same land, cannot belong completely to several people at once, nor the same territory to several

nations. And herein lies the reason of that unhappy conflict of interests which arises from the feverish quest of these earthly possessions.

On the other hand, as St. Augustine often reminds us, the same spiritual treasure can belong in its entirety to all men, and at the same time to each, without any disturbance of peace between them. Indeed, the more there are to enjoy them in common the more completely do we possess them. The same truth, the same virtue, the same God, can belong to us all in like manner, and yet none of us embarrasses his fellow-possessors. Such are the inexhaustible riches of the spirit that they can be the property of all and yet satisfy the desires of each. Indeed, only then do we possess a truth completely when we teach it to others, when we make others share our contemplation; only then do we truly love a virtue when we wish others to love it also; only then do we wholly love God when we desire to make Him loved by all. Give money away, or spend it, and it is no longer yours. But give God to others, and you possess Him more fully for yourself. We may go even further and say that, if we desired only one soul to be deprived of Him, if we excluded only one soul—even the soul of one who persecutes and calumniates us—from our own love, then God Himself would be lost to us.

This truth, so simple and yet so sublime, gives rise to an illuminating principle: it is that whereas material goods, the more they are sought for their own sake, tend to cause disunion among men, spiritual goods unite men more closely in proportion as they are more greatly loved. This principle helps us to appreciate how necessary is the interior life; and, incidentally, it virtually contains the solution of the social question and of the economic crisis which afflicts the world to-day. The Gospel puts it very simply: ‘ Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you. ‘ If the world to-day is on its death-bed, it is because it has lost sight of a fundamental truth which for every Christian is elementary.

The profoundest truths of all, and the most vital, are in fact those elementary verities which, through long meditation and deep thought, have become the norm of our lives; those truths, in other words, which are the object of our habitual contemplation.

God is now showing men what a great mistake they make when they try to do without Him, when they regard earthly enjoyment as their highest good, and thus reverse the whole scale of values, or, as the ancient

philosophers put it, the subordination of ends. As though in the hope of compensating for the poor quality of earthly goods, men are striving to increase their quantity; they are trying to produce as much as possible in the order of material enjoyment. They are constructing machinery with the object of increasing production at a greater profit. This is the ultimate objective. But what is the consequence ? The surplus cannot be disposed of; it is wasted, and unemployment is the result. The worker starves in enforced idleness while others die of surfeit. The present state of the world is called a crisis. But in fact it is more than a crisis; it is a condition of affairs which, if men only had eyes to see, ought to be revealing, it ought to show men that they have sought their last end where it is not to be found, in earthly enjoyment—instead of God. They are seeking happiness in an abundance of material possessions which are incapable of giving it; possessions which sow discord among those that seek them, and a greater discord according as they are sought with greater avidity.

Do what you will with these material goods: share them out equally, make them the common property of all. It will be no remedy for the evil; for, so long as earthly possessions retain their nature and man retains the nature which is his, he will never find his happiness in them. The remedy is this, and this only: to consider the one thing necessary, and to ask God to give us saints who live only on this thought, saints who will give the world the spirit that it needs. God has always sent us saints in troubled times. We need them especially to-day.

THE PRINCIPLE OF THE INTERIOR LIFE

It is all the more important to recall the necessity and the true nature of the interior life, because the true conception of it, as given to us in the Gospel, in the Epistles of St. Paul and in the whole of Tradition, has been partially obscured by many false ideas. In particular it is evident that the notion of the interior life is radically corrupted in the Lutheran theory of justification or conversion. According to this theory the mortal sins of the convert are not positively blotted out by the infusion of the new life of grace and charity; they are simply covered over, veiled by faith in the Redeemer, and they cease to be imputed to the person who has committed them. There is no intrinsic justification, no interior renewal of the soul; a man is reputed just merely by the extrinsic imputation of the justice of

Christ. According to this view, in order to be just in the eyes of God it is not necessary to possess that infused charity by which we love God supernaturally and our fellowmen for God's sake. Actually, according to this conception, however firmly the just man may believe in Christ the Redeemer, he remains in his sin, in his corruption or spiritual death.

This grave misconception concerning our supernatural life, reducing it essentially to faith in Christ and excluding sanctifying grace, charity and meritorious works, was destined to lead gradually to Naturalism; it was to result finally in considering as ' just ' the man who, whatever his beliefs, valued and practiced those natural virtues which were known even to the pagan philosophers who lived before Christ.

In such an outlook, the question which is actually of the first importance does not even arise: Is man capable in his present state, without divine grace, of observing all the precepts of the natural law, including those that relate to God ? Is he able without grace to love God the sovereign Good, the author of our nature, and to love Him, not with a merely inoperative affection, but with a truly efficacious love, more than he loves himself and more than he loves anything else ? The early Protestants would have answered in the negative, as Catholic theologians have always done. Liberal Protestantism, the offspring of Luther's theology, does not even ask the question; because it does not admit the necessity of grace, the necessity of an infused supernatural life.

Nevertheless, the question still recurs under a more general form: Is man able, without some help from on high, to get beyond himself, and truly and efficaciously to love Truth and Goodness more than he loves himself ?

Clearly, these problems are essentially connected with that of the nature of our interior life; for our interior life is nothing else than a knowledge of the True and a love of the Good; or better, a knowledge and love of God.

In order fully to appreciate the lofty conception which the Scriptures, and especially the Gospels, give us of the interior life, it would be necessary to study a theological treatise on justification and sanctifying grace. Nevertheless, we may here emphasize a fundamental truth of the Christian spiritual life, or of Christian mysticism, which has always been taught by the Catholic Church.

In the first place it is clear that according to the Scriptures the justification or conversion of the sinner does not merely cover his sins as with a mantle; it blots them out by the infusion of a new life. ' Have mercy

on me, O God, according to thy great mercy, ‘ so the Psalmist implores; ‘ and according to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my iniquity. Wash me yet more from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.... Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop and I shall be cleansed; thou shalt wash me and I shall be made whiter than snow.... Blot out all my iniquities. Create a clean heart in me, O God; and renew a right spirit within my bowels. Cast me not away from thy face, and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and strengthen me with a perfect spirit. ‘

The Prophets use similar language. Thus God says, through the prophet Isaias: ‘ I am he that blot out thy iniquities for my own sake. ‘ And the same expression recurs throughout the Bible: God is not content merely to cover our sins; He blots them out, He takes them away. And therefore, when John the Baptist sees Jesus coming towards him, he says: ‘ Behold the Lamb of God. Behold him who taketh away the sin of the world ! ‘ We find the same idea in St. John’s first Epistle: ‘The blood of Jesus Christ... cleanseth us from all sin. ‘ St. Paul writes, similarly, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians : ‘ Not the effeminate nor the impure nor thieves nor covetous nor drunkards nor railers nor extortioners shall possess the kingdom of God. And such some of you were. But you are washed; but you are sanctified; but you are justified; in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Spirit of our God. ‘

If it were true that by conversion sins were only veiled, and not blotted out, it would follow that a man is at once both just and ungodly, both justified, and yet still in the state of sin. God would love the sinner as His friend, despite the corruption of his soul, which He is apparently incapable of healing. The Savior would not have taken away the sins of the world if He had not delivered the just man from the servitude of sin. Again, for the Christian these truths are elementary; the profound understanding of them, the continual and quasi-experimental living of them, is what we call the contemplation of the saints.

The blotting out and remission of sins thus described by the Scriptures can be effected only by the infusion of sanctifying grace and charity—which is the supernatural love of God and of men for God’s sake. Ezekiel, speaking in the name of God, tells us that this is so: ‘ I will pour upon you clean water, and you shall be cleansed from all your filthiness; and I will cleanse you from all your idols. And I will give you a new heart, and put a new spirit within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh

and will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit in the midst of you; and I will cause you to walk in my commandments. ‘

This pure water which regenerates is the water of grace, of which it is said in the Gospel of St. John: ‘ Of his fullness we have all received; and grace for grace. ‘ ‘ By (our Lord Jesus Christ) we have received grace, ‘ we read in the Epistle to the Romans ;... ‘the charity of God is poured forth in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost who is given to us ‘ ; and in the Epistle to the Ephesians: ‘ To every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the giving of Christ. ‘

If it were otherwise, God’s uncreated love for the man whom He converts would be merely an idle affection, and not an effective and operative love. But God’s uncreated love for us, as St. Thomas shows, is a love which, far from presupposing in us any lovableness, actually produces that lovableness within us. His creative love gives and preserves in us our nature and our existence; but his life-giving love gives and preserves in us the life of grace which makes us lovable in His eyes, and lovable not merely as His servants but as His sons. (I, Q. xx, art. 2).

Sanctifying grace, the principle of our interior life, makes us truly the children of God because it makes us partakers of His nature. We cannot be sons of God by nature, as the Word is; but we are truly sons of God by grace and by adoption. And whereas a man who adopts a child brings about no interior change in him, but simply declares him his heir, God, when He loves us as adoptive sons, transforms us inwardly, giving us a share in His own intimate divine life.

Hence we read in the Gospel of St. John: ‘ (The Word) came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them he gave the power to be made the sons of God, to them that believe in his name. Who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. ‘ And our Lord Himself said to Nicodemus ‘ Amen, amen, I say to thee, unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Wonder not that I said to thee: You must be born again. ‘

St. John himself, moreover, writes in his first Epistle ‘ Whosoever is born of God committeth not sin; for God’s seed abideth in him. And he cannot sin because he is born of God. ‘ In other words, the seed of God, which is grace—accompanied by charity, or the love of God—cannot exist together

with mortal sin which turns a man away from God; and, though it can exist together with venial sin, of which St. John had spoken earlier, yet grace is not the source of venial sins; on the contrary, it makes them gradually disappear.

Still clearer, if possible, is the language of St. Peter, who writes : ‘ By (Christ) he hath given us most great and precious promises, that by these you may be made partakers of the divine nature ‘; and St. James thus expresses the same idea: ‘ Every best gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no change nor shadow of alteration. For of his own will hath he begotten us by the word of truth, that we might be some beginning of his creature. ‘

Truly sanctifying grace is a real and formal participation of the divine nature, for it is the principle of operations which are specifically divine. When in heaven it has reached its full development, and can no longer be lost, it will be the source of operations which will have absolutely the same formal object as the eternal and uncreated operations of God’s own inner life; it will make us able to see Him immediately as He sees Himself, and to love Him as He loves Himself: ‘ Dearly beloved, ‘ says St. John, ‘ we are now the sons of God; and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that when it shall appear we shall be like to him, for we shall see him as he is. ‘

This is what shows us, better than anything else, in what the true nature of sanctifying grace, the true nature of our interior life, consists. We cannot emphasize it too much. It is one of the most consoling truths of our faith; it is one of those vital truths which serve best to encourage us in the midst of the trials of our life on earth.

THE BEGINNING OF ETERNAL LIFE

To understand what our interior life is in itself and in its various phases, we must consider it not merely in its seed, but in its full and complete development. Now, if we ask the Gospel what our interior life is, it tells us that the life of grace, given to us in Baptism and nourished by the Eucharist, is the seed or germ of eternal life.

According to St. Matthew’s account of the Sermon on the Mount, preached by Christ at the beginning of His ministry, our Lord says to His hearers (and it is the burden of the whole of His discourse): ‘ Be ye perfect

as your heavenly Father is perfect. ‘ He does not say: ‘ Be ye as perfect as the angels, ‘ but ‘ as your heavenly Father is perfect. ‘ It follows, therefore, that Christ brings to men a principle of life which is a participation of the very life of God. Immeasurably above the various kingdoms of nature: the mineral kingdom, the vegetable, the animal kingdom, and even above the kingdom of man and above the natural activity of the angels, is the life of the kingdom of God. And this life in its full development is called, not the future life—of which even the better among the pre-Christian philosophers spoke-but eternal life; a life measured, like that of God, not by future time, but by the one instant of motionless eternity.

The future life of which the philosophers speak is a natural life, similar almost to the life of the angels; whereas eternal life, of which the Gospel speaks, is essentially supernatural, as much for the angels as for us. It is not merely superhuman, it is super angelic, truly divine. It consists in seeing God immediately as He sees Himself, and in loving Him as He loves Himself. This is the reason why our Lord can say to you: ‘ Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect ‘; because you have received a participation in His inner life.

While the Old Testament speaks of eternal life only in figure, under the symbol of the Promised Land, the New Testament, and especially the Gospel of St. John, speaks of it continually; and from that time forth it has become almost impossible to conclude a sermon without mentioning eternal life, as that supreme beatitude to which we are called and destined.

But the Gospels, and especially the Gospel of St. John, tell us more about grace; we are told that grace is eternal life already begun.

In the fourth Gospel our Lord is recorded as saying no fewer than six times: ‘ He that believeth in me hath eternal life. ‘ And it is not only in the future that he will have it, if he perseveres; in a sense he possesses it already: ‘ He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up in the last day. ‘ What is the meaning of these words ? Our Lord explains them later: ‘ Amen, amen, I say to you: If any man keep my word he shall not see death for ever. The Jews therefore said: Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest: If any man keep my word he shall not taste death for ever.... Whom dost thou make thyself ? ‘ It was then that Jesus said: ‘ Before Abraham was, I am. ‘

What, then, does our Lord mean when He says: ‘ He that believeth in me hath eternal life ‘ ? He means: He that believes in Me with a living faith, that is, with a faith which is united with charity, with the love of God and the love of his neighbor, possesses eternal life already begun. In other words: He who believes in Me has within himself in germ a supernatural life which is fundamentally the same as eternal life. Our spiritual progress cannot tend in the direction of the life of eternity unless it presupposes the seed of it already existing in us, a seed of the same nature as the life towards which we are tending. In the natural order, the germ which is contained in the acorn could never grow into an oak tree unless it were of the same nature as the oak, if it did not contain the life of the oak in a latent state. The little child, likewise, could never become a man if it had not a rational soul, if reason were not already latent within it. In the same way, a Christian on earth could never become one of the blessed in heaven unless he had already received the divine life in Baptism.

And just as it is impossible to know the nature of the germ enclosed within the acorn unless we study it in its perfect state in the oak tree, so we cannot know the life of grace unless we consider it in its ultimate development, in that glory which is the consummation of grace. ‘ Grace, ‘ says the whole of Tradition, ‘ is the seed of glory. ‘

Fundamentally, it is always the same supernatural life, the same sanctifying grace and the same charity, but with two differences. Here on earth we know God supernaturally, but not in the clearness of vision; we know Him in the obscurity of faith. Moreover, while we hope one day to possess Him finally and definitively, here on earth it is always possible for us to lose Him by a mortal sin. But, in spite of these two differences, relating to faith and hope, it is the same life, the same sanctifying grace, and the same charity. And so our Lord said to the Samaritan woman: ‘ If thou didst know the gift of God and who he is that saith to thee: Give me to drink; thou perhaps wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.... He that shall drink of the water that I will give him shall not thirst for ever. But the water that I will give him shall become in him a fountain of water springing up into life everlasting. ‘ And in the Temple, on the last day of the feast of Tabernacles, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, not merely for the benefit of privileged souls, but for all: ‘ If any man thirst let him come to me and drink He that believeth in me... out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. ‘ ‘ Now this he said, ‘ adds St. John, ‘ of the

Spirit which they should receive who believed in him. ‘ And in fact the Holy Ghost is called fons vivus fons vitae: the living fountain, the fountain of life.

Again Jesus says: ‘ If any one love me he will keep my word (faith alone, then, is not enough), and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and will make our abode with him. ‘ Who will come ? Not only grace, God’s created gift, but the divine Persons will come: the Father and the Son, and also the promised Holy Spirit. Thus the Holy Trinity dwells in us, in the obscurity of faith, in very much the same way as It dwells in the souls of the saints in heaven who see It face to face. ‘ He that abideth in charity abideth in God, and God in him. ‘

It is much more wonderful than any miracle, this supernatural life. A miracle is an exercise of the divine omnipotence by which God signifies that one of His servants speaks in His name, or that he is of eminent sanctity. But even the raising of the dead to life, the miracle by which a corpse is reanimated with its natural life, is almost nothing in comparison with the resurrection of a soul, which has been lying spiritually dead in sin and has now been raised to the essentially supernatural life of grace.

Grace, then, is eternal life already begun within us, and this is why Christ says: ‘ The kingdom of God cometh not with observation. Neither shall they say: Behold here or behold there. For lo, the kingdom of God is within you. ‘ It is there, hidden within you, like the grain of mustard seed, like the leaven which will cause the whole of the meal to rise, like the treasure hidden in a field, like the source from which gushes a river of water that will never fail. ‘ We know, ‘ says St. John, ‘ that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren ‘; and ‘ these things I write to you that you may know that you have eternal life, you that believe in the name of the Son of God. ‘ And Christ, His beloved master, had said: ‘ This is eternal life: that they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. ‘

St. Thomas expresses this doctrine in the brief statement: ‘ Gratia nihil aliud est quam quaedam inchoatio gloriae in nobis ‘: Grace is nothing else but a certain beginning of glory within us. ‘ And Bossuet says the same thing: ‘ Eternal life in its beginnings consists in knowing God by faith (united with charity); in its consummation eternal life consists in seeing God face to face, unveiled. Jesus Christ gives us both the one and the other,

because He has merited it for us and because He is the source of it in all the members to which He gives life. ‘

And therefore the Liturgy tells us, in the Preface used for the Mass of the Dead. ‘ Tuis enim fidelibus, Domine, vita mutatur, non tollitur ‘: ‘ From them that believe in thee, O Lord, life is not taken away; it is changed and transformed. ‘

THE IMPORTANCE OF TRUE CONVERSION

We are thus able to appreciate something of the importance of true conversion, by which a man passes from the state of mortal sin to the state of grace. In the former state his energies were dissipated and he was indifferent in regard to God; now he loves God more than he loves himself, more than he loves anything else; at any rate he esteems God beyond all earthly things, even though his love of God may not be free from all selfish motives. The state of sin was a state of spiritual death; a state in which, more or less consciously, he made himself the center of all his activities and the end of all his desires; in which he was actually the slave of everything, the slave of his passions, of the spirit of the world, of the spirit of evil. The state of grace, on the other hand, is a state of life in which man begins seriously to tend beyond himself and to make God the center of his activities, loving God more than himself. The state of grace is entrance into the kingdom of God, where the docile soul begins to reign with God over its own passions, over the spirit of the world and the spirit of evil.

We may well understand, therefore, how St. Thomas could write: ‘ Bonum gratiae unius majus est quam bonum naturae totius universi’ The lowest degree of grace in a soul, for example in that of a small child after its baptism, is of greater value than the natural goodness of the whole universe. This grace alone is worth more than all created natures together, including even the angelic natures. For the angels, too, stood in need, not of redemption, but of the gratuitous gift of grace in order to tend to the supernatural beatitude to which God called them. St. Augustine says that when God created the nature of the angels He also gave them the gift of grace: ‘ Simul in eis condens naturam et largiens gratiam ‘; and he maintains that ‘ the justification of the ungodly is something greater than the creation of heaven and earth, greater even than the creation of the angels. ‘

St. Thomas adds. ‘ The justification of the sinner is proportionately more precious than the glorification of the just; because the gift of grace more greatly transcends the state of the sinner, who is deserving of punishment, than the gift of glory transcends the state of the just man, who, by reason of his justification, is worthy of the gift of glory. ‘ There is a much greater distance between the nature of man, or even between the nature of the highest of the angels, and grace, than there is between grace itself and glory. No created nature, however perfect, is the germ of grace, whereas grace is indeed the germ or the seed of eternal life, semen gloriae. Hence when a sinner is absolved in the confessional, an event occurs which is proportionately of greater importance than the entrance of a just soul into heaven.

This doctrine is expressed by Pascal in one of the finest pages of his Pensees, a page which summarizes the teaching of St. Augustine and St. Thomas on this point: ‘ The infinite distance which separates bodies from spirits is a symbol of the infinitely more infinite distance which separates spirits from charity, for charity is supernatural. The whole of the material creation together, the firmament, the stars, the earth and its kingdoms, is inferior to the least of the spirits; for he knows all this and he knows himself, whereas bodies know nothing. All bodies together, and all spirits together, and all that they can produce, are of less value than the smallest act of charity, because this is of an infinitely higher order. From all bodies together it would be impossible to extract a single thought, because a thought is of a higher order than they. From all bodies and all spirits together it would be impossible to extract one single act of true charity, because an act of charity is of the supernatural order. ‘

Luther erred fundamentally, therefore, when he tried to explain justification, not by the infusion of a grace and charity which remit sin, but merely by faith in Christ, without works and without love; making it consist simply in the extrinsic imputation of the merits of Christ, an imputation which covers sins without destroying them, and thus leaves the sinner in his filth and corruption. According to his view there was no regeneration of the will by the supernatural love of God and men. We have seen, on the contrary, what is the teaching of the Scriptures and of Tradition. Faith and the extrinsic imputation of the justice of Christ are not sufficient for the justification or conversion of the sinner. He must be willing, in addition, to observe the commandments, above all the two great commandments of the

love of God and the love of one’s neighbor: ‘ If any one love me he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our abode with him. ‘ ‘ He that abideth in charity abideth in God, and God in him. ‘

According to the true teaching of Christ we are in an order far transcending natural morality. Our unaided reason tells us that it is our duty to love God, the author of our nature, and to love Him effectively, that is, by observing His commandments. But even this natural duty we are unable to fulfill without the help of God’s grace, so weakened are our wills in consequence of original sin. Still less are we able by our natural powers alone to love God, the author of grace; for this love is of an essentially supernatural order, as supernatural for the angels as it is for us.

Such is the supernatural life which we received in Baptism; and this is what constitutes our interior life.

This beginning of eternal life, as we have called it, is a complete spiritual organism, which has to grow and develop until we enter heaven. The root principle of this undying organism is sanctifying grace, received in the very essence of the soul; and this grace would last for ever, were it not that sin, a radical disorder in the soul, sometimes destroys it. From sanctifying grace, which is the germ of glory, proceed the infused virtues. First, the theological virtues, the greatest of which, charity, is destined to last for ever- ‘ Charity never falleth away, ‘ says St. Paul, ... ‘ Now there remain faith, hope and charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity. ‘ Charity will remain for ever, after faith has disappeared to make room for vision; after hope has been displaced by the everlasting possession of God, seen face to face.

In addition to the theological virtues there are also the infused moral virtues, which perfect man in his use of the means of salvation, just as the former dispose him rightly in regard to his end. The infused moral virtues are like so many functions admirably adapted one to another, infinitely surpassing in perfection those of our physical organism; they are called- prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance... together with the other virtues which are associated with them.

Finally, in order to supply the deficiencies of these virtues which, in the twilight of faith and under the direction of prudence, still act in too human a fashion, we are given the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, who dwells in us. These are like the sails on a ship; they dispose us to receive obediently and

promptly the breathing that comes from on high, the special inspirations of God; inspirations which enable us to act, no longer in merely human fashion, but divinely, with that alacrity which we need in order to run in the way of God, undismayed by any obstacles.

All these infused virtues and gifts grow with sanctifying grace and charity, says St. Thomas ; they increase together just as the five fingers of the hand, or the organs of our body, develop simultaneously. Thus it is inconceivable that a soul should possess a high degree of charity without possessing at the same time a proportionate degree of the gift of wisdom; whether this exist under a definitely contemplative form, or in a practical guise, more directly adapted to action. The wisdom of a St. Vincent de Paul is unlike that of a St. Augustine; but the one and the other are equally infused.

In this way the whole of the spiritual organism develops simultaneously, though it may manifest its activity under various forms. And, from this point of view, since the infused contemplation of the mysteries of faith is an act of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, an act which disposes the soul to the beatific vision, must we not admit that such contemplation is in the normal way of sanctity ?.—We merely mention the question here, without insisting further upon it.

Let us now examine more closely the full development of our eternal life in heaven, in order that we may better appreciate the value of that sanctifying grace which is its beginning. In particular let us compare it with what would have been our beatitude and our reward if we had been created in a purely natural state.

If we had been created in a state of pure nature, with a spiritual and immortal soul, but without the life of grace, even then our intellect would have been made for the knowledge of the True and our will for the love of the Good. Our end would have been to know God, the Sovereign Good, the author of our nature, and to love Him above all things. But we should have known Him only in the reflection of His goodness in creatures, in the same way as the greatest among the pagan philosophers knew Him, though our knowledge would have been more certain than theirs, and free from any admixture of error. God would have been for us the First Cause and the Supreme Intelligence that orders all the things of creation.

We should have loved Him as the author of our nature, with that love which a subject has for his superior. It would not have been a love of

friendship, but rather a sentiment compounded of admiration, respect and gratitude, yet lacking that happy and simple familiarity which rejoices the hearts of the children of God. We should have been God's servants, but not His children.

This natural end is already a sublime destiny. It could never bring satiety, just as the eye never tires of contemplating the blue vault of heaven. Moreover, it is a spiritual end, and therefore, unlike material goods, can be possessed at once by all and by each, without possession on the part of one being prejudicial to possession on the part of another, and thus without causing jealousy or discord.

But this abstract and mediate knowledge of God would have left many obscurities in the human mind, especially as regards the mutual compatibility of the divine perfections. We should forever have remained at the stage of counting singly and enumerating these absolute perfections; we should forever have wondered how it was possible to reconcile the almighty goodness of God with His permission that evil should exist; an evil, too, which is sometimes so great as to disconcert the human mind. We should have asked ourselves, moreover, how His infinite mercy could be truly consistent with His infinite justice. Even though we enjoyed this natural beatitude, we should still be urged to say: ‘ If only I could see this God, who is the source of all truth and goodness; if I could see Him as He sees Himself ! ‘

What the most brilliant of human minds, what even the intelligence of the angels could never have discovered, divine Revelation has disclosed to us. Revelation tells us that our last end is essentially supernatural and that it consists in seeing God immediately, face to face, as He is: sicuti est ‘ (God) has predestinated (us) to be made conformable to the image of his Son; that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. ‘ ‘ Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love him.

We are destined to see God, not merely in the mirror of creatures, however perfect these may be, but to see Him immediately, without the intermediary of any creature, and even without the medium of any created idea; for no created idea, however perfect, could ever represent as He really is One who is Thought itself, infinite Truth, the eternally subsistent brightness of intelligence and the living flame of measureless Love.

We are destined to see all the divine perfections concentrated and intimately united in their common source: Deity. We are destined to see how the tenderest Mercy and the most inexorable Justice proceed from the one Love which is infinitely generous and infinitely holy; how this Love, even in its freest choice, is identically one with pure Wisdom, how there is nothing in the divine Love which is not wise, nothing in the divine Wisdom which is not synonymous with Love. We are destined to contemplate the eminent simplicity of God, His absolute purity and sanctity; to see the infinite fecundity of the divine nature in the procession of the Three Persons: to contemplate the eternal generation of the Word, the ‘ brightness of (the Father’s) glory and the figure of his substance, ‘ to see the ineffable breathing of the Holy Spirit, the issue of the common Love of the Father and the Son, which unites them in the most complete outpouring of themselves. The Good tends naturally to diffuse itself, and the greater the Good the more abundant and intimate is its self-giving.

None can tell the joy and the love which this vision will produce in us, a love of God so pure and so strong that nothing will ever be able to destroy or in the slightest degree to diminish it.

In no way, therefore, can we express more clearly the preciousness of sanctifying grace, or of the true interior life, than by saying that it is a beginning of eternal life. Here on earth we know God only by faith, and, while we hope one day to possess Him, we are able, unfortunately, to lose Him by sin. But, apart from these two differences, it is fundamentally the same life, the same sanctifying grace and the same charity, which is to last through all eternity.

This is the fundamental truth of Christian spirituality. Consequently our interior life must be a life of humility, for we must remember always that the principle of that life, sanctifying grace, is a gratuitous gift, and that we need an actual grace for the slightest salutary act, for the shortest step forward in the way of salvation. It must be also a life of mortification; as St. Paul says, we must be ‘ always bearing about in our body the mortification of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodies ‘; that is to say: we must daily more and more die to sin and to the relics that sin leaves in us, so that God may reign more completely in us, even to the depth of the soul. But, above all, our interior life must be a life of faith, hope, charity, and union with God by unceasing prayer; it is above all the life of the three theological virtues and of the gifts of the Holy Ghost which

accompany them: the gifts of wisdom, understanding, knowledge, piety, counsel, fortitude and fear of the Lord. In this way we shall enter into the mysteries of faith and relish them more and more. In other words, our whole interior life tends towards the supernatural contemplation of the mysteries of the inner life of God and of the Incarnation and Redemption; it tends, above all, towards a more intimate union with God, a preliminary to that union with Him, ever actual and perpetual, which will be the consummation of eternal life.

THE THREE PERIODS OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

If such is the life of grace, if such is the spiritual organism of the infused virtues and the gifts, it is not surprising to find that the development of the interior life has often been compared to the three periods or stages of physical life: childhood, youth, and manhood. St. Thomas himself has indicated this analogy: and it is an analogy which is worth pursuing, particular attention being paid to the transition from one period to the other.

It is generally admitted that childhood lasts until the age of puberty, about fourteen; though early childhood, or infancy, ceases at the dawn of reason, about the age of seven. Youth, or adolescence, lasts from the age of fourteen to twenty. Then follows manhood, in which we may distinguish the period which precedes full maturity, about the age of thirty-five, and that which follows it, before the decline of old age sets in.

A man’s mentality changes with the development of the organism: the activity of the child, it has been said, is not that of a man in miniature, or of a fatigued adult; the dominant element in childhood is different. The child has as yet no discernment, it is unable to organize in a rational manner; it follows the lead of the imagination and the impulses of sense. And even when its reason begins to awaken it still remains to a great extent dependent upon the senses. So, for example, a child asked me one day: ‘ What are you lecturing on this year ? ‘ ‘ On man, ‘ I replied.

‘On what man?’ was the next inquiry. The child’s intelligence was as yet unable to grasp the abstract and universal idea of man as such.

Most important to be noticed, for the purposes of our present subject, is the transition from childhood to adolescence and from youth to manhood.

The period of puberty, which is the end of childhood, about the age of fourteen, is characterized by a transformation which is not only organic but

also psychological, intellectual and moral. The youth is no longer content to follow his imagination, as the child was; he begins 10 reflect on the things of human life, on the need to prepare himself for some career or occupation in the future. He has no longer the child’s attitude towards family, social and religious matters; his moral personality begins to take shape, and he acquires the sense of honor and of good repute. Or else, on the contrary, if he passes unsuccessfully through this difficult period, he deteriorates and follows evil courses. The law of nature so ordains that the transition from childhood to youth must follow a normal development; otherwise the subject will assume a positive bias to evil, or else he will remain a half-wit, perhaps even a complete idiot, for the rest of his life. ‘ He who makes no progress loses ground. ‘

It is at this point that the analogy becomes illuminating for the spiritual life. We shall see that the beginner who fails to become a proficient, either turns to sin or else presents an example of arrested spiritual development. Here, too, it is true that ‘ he who makes no progress loses ground, ‘ as the Fathers of the Church have so often pointed out.

Let us pursue the analogy further. If the physical and moral crisis of puberty is a difficult transition, the same is to be said of another crisis, which we may call the crisis of the first freedom, and which occurs at the stage where the youth enters manhood, about the age of twenty. The young man, having now reached his complete physical development, has to begin to take his place in social life. It will soon be time for him to marry and to become an educator in his turn, unless he has received from God a higher vocation still. Many fail to surmount this crisis of the first freedom, and, like the prodigal son, depart from their father’s house and confuse liberty with license. Here again the law ordains that the transition must be made normally; otherwise the young man either takes the wrong road, or else his development is arrested and he becomes one of those of whom it is said: ‘ He will be a child for the whole of his life. ‘

The true adult is not merely a young man grown a little older. He has a new mentality; he is preoccupied with wider questions, questions to which the youth does not yet advert. He understands the younger generation, but the younger generation does not understand him; conversation between them on certain subjects, except of a very superficial kind, is impossible.

There is a somewhat similar relation, in the spiritual life, between the proficient and the perfect. He who is perfect understands the earlier stages

through which he has himself already passed; but he cannot expect to be understood by those who are still passing through them.

The important thing to be noticed is that, just as there is the crisis of puberty, more or less manifest and more or less successfully surpassed, between childhood and adolescence, so in the spiritual life there is an analogous crisis for the transition from the purgative life of beginners to the illuminative life of proficients. This crisis has been described by several great spiritual writers, in particular by Tauler and especially by St. John of the Cross, under the name of the passive purgation of the senses, and by Pere Lallemant, S. J., and several others under the name of the second conversion.

Moreover, just as the youth has to pass through a second crisis, that of the first freedom, in order to reach manhood, so in the transition from the illuminative way of the proficients to the true life of union, there is a second spiritual crisis, mentioned by Tauler, and described by St. John of the Cross under the name of the passive purgation of the spirit. This, likewise, may be called a third conversion, or better, a transformation of the soul.

None has better described these crises which mark the transition from one spiritual period to another than St. John of the Cross. It will be noticed that they correspond to the two parts of the human soul, the sensitive and the spiritual. they correspond also to the nature of the divine seed, sanctifying grace, that germ of eternal life which must ever more and more animate all our faculties and inspire all our actions, until the depth of the soul is purged of all egoism and surrendered entirely to God.

St. John of the Cross, it is true, describes spiritual progress as it appears especially in contemplatives, and in the most generous among contemplatives, who are striving to reach union with God by the most direct way possible. He therefore shows us what are the higher laws of the spiritual life at their maximum of sublimity. But these laws apply in a lesser degree also to many other souls who do not reach so high a state of perfection, but are nevertheless making devoted progress, and not looking back.

In the chapters which follow it will be our object to show that, according to the traditional teaching, beginners in the spiritual life must, after a certain period, undergo a second conversion, similar to the second conversion of the Apostles at the end of our Lord’s Passion, and that, still later, before entering upon the life of perfect union, there must be a third conversion or

transformation of the soul, similar to that which took place in the souls of the Apostles on the day of Pentecost.

This distinction between the three periods or stages of the spiritual life is clearly of great importance, as those who are charged with the direction of souls well know. An old and experienced director who has himself reached the age of the perfect may have read but little of the writings of the mystics, and yet he will be able to answer well and readily the most delicate questions on the most sublime subjects, and he will answer in the words of the Scriptures, perhaps by quoting a passage from the Gospel of the day, without even suspecting for a moment how truly profound his answers are. On the other hand a young and inexperienced priest, himself only at the age of a beginner, will have little more than a book-knowledge and a verbal acquaintance with the spiritual life.

The question with which we are concerned is thus in the highest sense a vital question; and it is important that we should consider it from the traditional point of view. If we do so consider it, we shall see how true is the saying of the ancients, that ‘ in the way of God he who makes no progress loses ground ‘; and it will appear also that our interior life must, already here on earth, become the normal prelude to the beatific vision. In this deep sense our interior life is, as we have said, eternal life already begun: ‘ inchoatio vitae aeternae. ‘ ‘Amen, amen I say to you, he that believeth in me hath eternal life, and I will raise him up in the last day. ‘

CHAPTER 2

THE SECOND CONVERSION: ENTRANCE INTO THE ILLUMINATIVE WAY

WE have seen that, comparable with the two crises which mark the transition from childhood to youth and from youth to manhood, there are also in the spiritual life two crises, one by which proficients pass into the illuminative way, and another by which the perfect reach the state of union.

The first of these crises has been called a second conversion, and it is of this that we have now to speak.

The liturgy, especially at periods such as Advent and Lent, speaks often of the need of conversion, even for those who are leading a Christian life. Spiritual writers also refer often to this second conversion, necessary for the Christian who, though he has thought seriously of his salvation and made an effort to walk in the way of God, has nevertheless begun once more to follow the bent of his nature and to fall into a state of tepidity—like an engrafted plant reverting to its wild state. Some of these writers, such as the Blessed Henry Suso or Tauler, have insisted especially upon the necessity of this second conversion, a necessity which they have learned from their own experience. St. John of the Cross has profoundly pointed out that the entrance into the illuminative way is marked by a passive purgation of the senses, which is a second conversion, and that the entrance into the unitive way is preceded by a passive purgation of the spirit, a further and a deeper conversion affecting the soul in its most intimate depths. Among the writers of the Society of Jesus we may quote Pere Lallemant, who writes: ‘ Saints and religious who reach perfection pass ordinarily through two conversions: one by which they devote themselves to the service of God, and another by which they surrender themselves entirely to perfection. We find this in the case of the Apostles, first when our Lord called them, and then when He sent the Holy Ghost upon them; we find it in the case of St. Teresa, of her

confessor, P. Alvarez, and of many others. This second conversion is not granted to all religious, and it is due to their negligence. ‘

This question is of the greatest interest for every spiritual soul. Among those who dealt with it before St. John of the Cross we must count St. Catherine of Siena, who touches upon the subject repeatedly in her Dialogue and in her Letters. Her treatment, which is very realistic and practical, throws a great light upon the teaching which is commonly received in the Church.

Following St. Catherine, we shall speak first of this second conversion as it took place in the Apostles, and then as it should take place in us; we shall say what defects render this conversion necessary, what great motives ought to inspire it, and finally what fruits it should produce in us.

THE SECOND CONVERSION OF THE APOSTLES

St. Catherine of Siena speaks explicitly of the second conversion of the Apostles in the 63rd chapter of her Dialogue.

Their first conversion had taken place when Jesus called them, with the words: ‘ I will make you fishers of men. ‘ They followed our Lord, listened with admiration to His teaching, saw His miracles and took part in His ministry. Three of them saw Him transfigured on Tabor. All were present at the institution of the Eucharist, were ordained priests and received Holy Communion. But when the hour of the Passion arrived, an hour which Jesus had so often foretold, the Apostles abandoned their Master Even Peter, though he loved his Master devotedly; went so far as to deny Him thrice. Our Lord had told Peter after the Supper, in words that recall the prologue of the Book of Job … ‘ Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not; and thou being once converted confirm thy brethren. ‘ To which Peter replied: ‘ Lord, I am ready to go with thee both into prison and to death. ‘ But Jesus warned him: ‘ I say to thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day till thou thrice deniest that thou knowest me. ‘

And, in fact, Peter fell; he denied his Master, swearing that he did not know Him.

When did his second conversion begin ? Immediately after his triple denial, as we are told in the Gospel of St. Luke ‘ Immediately, as he was yet speaking, the cock crew. And the Lord turning, looked on Peter. And Peter

remembered the word of the Lord, as he had said: Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter going out, wept bitterly. ‘ Under the glance of Jesus and the grace which accompanied it, Peter’s repentance must have been deep indeed and must have been the beginning of a new life for him

In connection with this second conversion of St. Peter it is well to recall the words of St. Thomas; ‘ Even after a grave sin, if the soul has a sorrow which is truly fervent and proportionate to the degree of grace which it has lost, it will recover this same degree of grace; grace may even revive in the soul in a higher degree, if the contrition is still more fervent. Thus the soul has not to begin again completely from the beginning, but it continues from the point which it had reached at the moment of the fall. ‘ In the same way, the climber who falls when he has reached half-way up the mountain-side, rises immediately and continues his ascent from the point at which he has fallen.

Everything leads us to suppose that Peter’s repentance was so fervent that he not only recovered the degree of grace which he possessed before, but was raised to a higher degree of supernatural life. Our Lord had allowed him to fall in this way in order to cure him of his presumption, so that he might be more humble and place his confidence in God and not in himself.

St. Catherine writes in her Dialogue : ‘ Peter... after the sin of denying My Son, began to weep. Yet his lamentations were imperfect, and remained so until after the forty days, that is until after the Ascension. (They remained imperfect in spite of the appearances of our Lord.) But when my Truth returned to me, in His humanity, Peter and the others concealed themselves in the house, awaiting the coming of the Holy Spirit which my Truth had promised them. They remained barred in through fear, because the soul always fears until it arrives at true love. ‘ It was only at Pentecost that they were truly transformed.

Yet even before the end of the Passion of Christ there was clearly a second conversion in Peter and the other Apostles, a conversion which was consolidated during the days that followed. After His resurrection our Lord appeared to them several times, enlightening them, as He did when He taught the disciples of Emmaus the understanding of the Scriptures; and in particular, after the miraculous draught of fishes, He made Peter compensate for his threefold denial by a threefold act of love. ‘ Simon, son of John, ‘ He says to him, ‘ lovest thou me more than these? He saith to

him: Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He saith to him: Feed my lambs. He saith to him again: Simon, son of John, lovest thou me. He saith to him: Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He saith to him: Feed my lambs. He said to him the third time: Simon, son of John, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time: Lovest thou me ? And he said to him: Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee. He said to him: Feed my sheep. ‘ And then He foretold in veiled terms the martyrdom that Peter would undergo: ‘ When thou wast younger thou didst gird thyself and didst walk where thou wouldst. But when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands and another shall gird thee and lead thee whither thou wouldst not. ‘

The threefold act of love made reparation for the threefold denial. It was a consolidation of the second conversion, a measure of confirmation in grace before the transformation of Pentecost.

For St. John, too, there had been something special just before the death of Christ. John, like the other Apostles, had abandoned his Master when Judas arrived with his band of armed men; but by an invisible and powerful grace Jesus drew the beloved disciple to the foot of the cross, and the second conversion of St. John took place when he heard the seven last words of the dying Savior.

What our second conversion ought to be. The defects which render it necessary.

In the 60th and 63rd chapters of her Dialogue, St. Catherine shows that what happened in the case of the Apostles, our models formed immediately by the Savior Himself, must happen, after a certain manner, in the case of each one of us. Indeed we may say that if even the Apostles stood in need of a second conversion, then still more do we. The Saint emphasizes especially the faults which make this second conversion necessary, in particular self-love. In varying degrees this egoism survives in all imperfect souls in spite of the state of grace, and it is the source of a multitude of venial sins, of habitual faults which become characteristic features of the soul, rendering necessary a veritable purging even in those who have, as it were, been present on Mount Tabor, or who have often partaken of the Eucharistic banquet, as the Apostles did at the Last Supper.

In her Dialogue St. Catherine of Siena speaks of this self-love, describing it as ‘ the mercenary love of the imperfect, ‘ of those who, without being conscious of it, serve God from self-interest, because they are attached to

temporal or spiritual consolations, and who shed tears of self-pity when they are deprived of them.

It is a strange but not uncommon mixture of sincere love of God with an inordinate love of self. The soul loves God more than itself, otherwise it would not be in the state of grace, it would not possess charity; but it still loves itself with an inordinate love. It has not yet reached the stage of loving itself in God and for His sake. Such a state of soul is neither white nor black; it is a light gray, in which there is more white than black. The soul is on the upward path, but it still has a tendency to slip downwards.

We read in this 60th chapter of the Dialogue (it is God who speaks). ‘ Among those who have become My trusted servants there are some who serve Me with faith, without servile fear, it is not the mere fear of punishment, but love which attaches them to My service (thus Peter before the Passion). But this love is still imperfect, because what they seek in My service (at any rate to a great extent) is their own profit, their own satisfaction, or the pleasure that they find in Me. The same imperfection is found in the love which they bear towards their neighbor. And do you know what shows the imperfection of their love ? It is that, as soon as they are deprived of the consolations which they find in Me, their love fails and can no longer survive. It becomes weak and gradually cools towards Me when, in order to exercise them in virtue and to detach them from their imperfection, I withdraw spiritual consolations from them and send them difficulties and afflictions. I act in this way in order to bring them to perfection, to teach them to know themselves, to realize that they are nothing and that of themselves they have no grace. Adversity should have the effect of making them seek refuge in Me, recognize Me as their benefactor, and become attached to Me by a true humility....

‘ If they do not recognize their imperfection and desire to become perfect, it is impossible that they should not turn back. ‘ This is what the Fathers have so often asserted: ‘ In the way of God he who makes no progress loses ground. ‘ Just as the child who does not grow does not merely remain a child but becomes an idiot, so the beginner who does not enter upon the way of proficients when he ought to, does not merely remain a beginner, but becomes a stunted soul. It would seem, unhappily, that the great majority of souls do not belong to any of these three categories, of beginners, proficients or perfect, but rather to that of stunted souls ! At what stage are we ourselves? This is often a very difficult question to answer, and

it would perhaps be vain curiosity to inquire at what point we have arrived in our upward path; but at least we must take care not to mistake the road, not to take a path that leads downwards.

It is important, therefore, to reach beyond the merely mercenary love, which often we unconsciously retain. We read in this same 60th chapter: ‘ It was with this imperfect love that Peter loved the good and gentle Jesus, my only-begotten Son, when he experienced the delights of sweet intimacy with Him (on Mount Tabor). But as soon as the time of tribulation came all his courage forsook him. Not only did he not have the strength to suffer for Him, but at the first threat of danger his loyalty was overcome by the most servile fear, and he denied Him three times, swearing that he did not know Him. ‘

St. Catherine of Siena, in the 63rd chapter of the same Dialogue, shows that the imperfect soul, which loves God with a love which is still mercenary, must do what Peter did after his denial. Not infrequently Providence allows us, too, at this stage to commit some very palpable fault, in order to humiliate us and cause us to take true measure of ourselves.

‘ Then, ‘ says the Lord, ‘ having recognized the grievousness of its sin and repented of it, the soul begins to weep, for fear of punishment; then it rises to the consideration of my mercy, in which it finds satisfaction and comfort. But it is, I say, still imperfect, and in order to draw it on to perfection... I withdraw from it, not in grace but in feeling. ... This I do in order to humiliate that soul, and cause it to seek Me in truth... without thought of self and with lively faith and with hatred of its own sensuality. ‘ And just as Peter compensated for his threefold denial by three acts of pure and devoted love, so the enlightened soul must do in like manner.

St. John of the Cross, following Tauler, gives us three signs which mark this second conversion: ‘ The soul finds no pleasure or consolation in the things of God, but it also fails to find it in any thing created.... The second sign... is that ordinarily the memory is centered upon God, with painful care and solicitude, thinking that it is not serving God, but backsliding, because it finds itself without sweetness in the things of God.... The third sign... is that the soul can no longer meditate or reflect in its sense of the imagination.... For God now begins to communicate Himself to it, no longer through sense, as He did aforetime, by means of reflections which joined and sundered its knowledge, but by an act of simple contemplation, to

which neither the exterior nor the interior senses of the lower part of the soul can attain. ‘

Progressives or proficients thus enter, according to St. John of the Cross, ‘ upon the road and way of the spirit, which... is called the way of illumination or of infused contemplation, wherewith God Himself feeds and refreshes the soul. ‘

While St. Catherine of Siena does not give so exact an analysis, she insists particularly upon one of the signs of this state: an experimental knowledge of our poverty and profound imperfection; a knowledge which is not precisely acquired, but granted by God, as it was granted to Peter when Jesus looked upon him immediately after his denial. At that moment Peter received a grace of enlightenment; he remembered, and going out he wept bitterly.

At the end of this same 63rd chapter of her Dialogue we find a passage of which St. John of the Cross later gives a full development- ‘ I withdraw from the soul, ‘ says the Lord, ‘ so that it may see and know its defects, so that, feeling itself deprived of consolation and afflicted by pain, it may recognize its own weakness, and learn how incapable it is of stability or perseverance, thus cutting down to the very root of spiritual self-love; for this should be the end and purpose of all its self-knowledge, to rise above itself, mounting the throne of conscience, and not permitting the sentiment of imperfect love to turn again in its death-struggle, but, with correction and reproof, digging up the root of self-love, with the knife of self-hatred and the love of virtue. ‘

In this same connection the Saint speaks of the many dangers that lie in wait for a soul that is moved only by a mercenary love, saying that souls which are imperfect desire to follow the Father alone, without passing by the way of Christ crucified, because they have no desire to suffer.

The motives which must inspire the second conversion, and the fruits that derive therefrom.

The first motive is expressed in the greatest commandment, which knows no limits: ‘ Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with all thy strength and with all thy mind. ‘ This commandment requires the love of God for His own sake, and not from self-interest or attachment to our own personal satisfaction; it demands, moreover, that we love God with all our strength in the hour of trial, so that we may finally arrive at the stage of loving Him with our whole mind, when

our love will be unaffected by the ebb and flow of sensibility and we shall be of those who ‘ adore in spirit and in truth. ‘ Furthermore, this commandment is absolute and without limits: the end for which all Christians are required to strive is the perfection of charity, each in his own condition and state of life, whether it be in the state of marriage or in the priestly or the religious life.

St. Catherine of Siena emphasizes this in the 11th and 47th chapters of her Dialogue, reminding us that we can only perfectly fulfill the commandment of love towards God and our neighbor if we have the spirit of the counsels, that is to say, the spirit of detachment from earthly goods, which, in the words of St. Paul, we must use as though we used them not.

The great motive of the second conversion is thus described in the 60th chapter: ‘ Such souls should leave their mercenary love and become sons, and serve Me irrespective of their own personal advantage. I am the rewarder of every labor, and I render to every man according to his condition and according to his works. Wherefore, if these souls do not abandon the exercise of holy prayer and their other good works, but continue with perseverance to increase their virtues, they will arrive at the state of filial love, because I respond to them with the same love with which they love Me; so that if they love Me as a servant loves his master, I pay them their wages according to their deserts, but I do not reveal myself to them, because secrets are revealed to a friend who has become one thing with his friend, and not to a servant....

‘ But if My servants, through displeasure at their imperfection and through love of virtue, dig up with hatred the root of spiritual self-love, and mount to the throne of conscience, reasoning with themselves so as to quell the motions of servile fear in their heart, and to correct mercenary love by the light of holy faith, they will be so pleasing to Me that they will attain to the love of the friend. And I will manifest Myself to them, as My Truth said in these words- “ He who loves me shall be one thing with me and I with him, and I will manifest myself to him and we will dwell together. “ These last words refer to the knowledge of Himself which God grants by a special inspiration. This is contemplation, which proceeds from faith enlightened by the gifts, from faith united with love; it is a knowledge which savors mysteries and penetrates into their depths.

A second motive which should inspire the second conversion is the price of the blood of the Savior, which St. Peter failed to realize before the

Passion, in spite of the words: ‘ This is my blood which is shed for you, ‘ which Christ pronounced at the Last Supper. It was only after the Resurrection that he began to comprehend this. We read in the Dialogue 1 on this subject … ‘ My creatures should see and know that I wish nothing but their good, through the Blood of My only-begotten Son, in which they are washed from their iniquities. By this Blood they are enabled to know My truth, how in order to give them life I created them in My image and likeness and re-created them to grace with the Blood of My. Son, making them sons of adoption. ‘ This is what St. Peter understood after his sin and after the Passion of Christ; it was only then that he appreciated the value of the Precious Blood which had been shed for our salvation, the Blood of Redemption.

Here we have a glimpse of the greatness of Peter in his humiliation; he is much greater here than he was on Tabor, for here he has some understanding of his own poverty and of the infinite goodness of the most High. When Jesus for the first time foretold that he must go to Jerusalem to be crucified, Peter took his Master aside and said to Him: ‘ Lord, be it far from thee, this shall not be unto thee ! ‘ In speaking thus he had, all unconsciously, spoken against the whole economy of Redemption, against the whole plan of Providence, against the very motive of the Incarnation. And that is why Jesus answered him. ‘ Get behind me, Satan; thou savors not the things that are of God but the things that are of men. ‘ But now, after his sin and after his conversion, Peter in his humiliation has an understanding of the Cross, and he sees something of the price of the Precious Blood.

And so we can understand why St. Catherine constantly speaks in her Dialogue and in her Letters of the Blood which gives efficacy to Baptism and to the other sacraments. At every Mass, when the priest raises the Precious Blood high above the altar, our faith in its redemptive power and virtue ought to become greater and more intense.

A third motive which ought to inspire the second conversion is the love of souls which need to be saved, a love which is inseparable from the love of God, because it is at once the sign and the effect of that love. This love of souls ought in every Christian worthy of the name to become a zeal that inspires all the virtues. In St. Catherine it led her to offer herself as a victim for the salvation of sinners. In the last chapter but one of the Dialogue we read’ Thou didst ask Me to do mercy to the world... Thou didst pray for the

mystical body of Holy Church, that I would remove darkness and persecution from it, at thine own desire punishing in thy person the iniquities of certain of its ministers.... I have also told thee that I wish to do mercy to the world, proving to thee that mercy is My special attribute, for through the mercy and the inestimable love which I had for man I sent into the world the Word, My only-begotten Son....

‘ I also promised thee, and now again I promise thee, that through the long endurance of My servants I will reform My Spouse. Wherefore I invite thee to endure, Myself lamenting with thee over the iniquities of some of My ministers.... And I have spoken to thee also of the virtue of them that live like angels.... And now I urge thee and My other servants to grief, for by your grief and humble and continual prayer I will do mercy to the world. ‘

The fruit of this second conversion, as in the case of Peter, is a beginning of contemplation by a progressive understanding of the great mystery of the Cross and the Redemption, a living appreciation of the infinite value of the Blood which Christ shed for us. This incipient contemplation is accompanied by a union with God less dependent upon the fluctuations of sensibility, a purer, a stronger, a more continuous union. Subsequently, if not joy, at all events peace, takes up its dwelling in the soul even in the midst of adversity. The soul becomes filled, no longer with a merely abstract, theoretical and vague persuasion, but with a concrete and living conviction, that in God’s government all things are ordained towards the manifestation of His goodness. At the end of the Dialogue God Himself declares this truth : ‘ Nothing has ever happened and nothing happens save by the plan of My divine Providence. In all things that I permit, in all things that I give you, in tribulations and in consolations, temporal or spiritual, I do nothing save for your good, so that you may be sanctified in Me and that My Truth be fulfilled in you. ‘ It is the same truth which St. Paul expresses in his epistle to the Romans: ‘ To them that love God all things work together unto good. ‘

This is the conviction that was born in the soul of Peter and the Apostles after their second conversion, and also in the souls of the disciples of Emmaus when the risen Christ gave them a fuller understanding of the mystery of the Cross: ‘ O foolish, ‘ He said to them, ‘ and slow of heart to believe in all things which the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and so to enter into his glory ? And beginning at

Moses and all the prophets he expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things that were concerning him. ‘ They knew Him in the breaking of bread.

What happened to these disciples on the way to Emmaus should happen to us too, if we are faithful, on the way to eternity. If for them and for the Apostles there had to be a second conversion, still more is such a conversion necessary for us. And under the influence of this new grace of God we too shall say: ‘ Was not our heart burning within us whilst he spoke in the way and opened to us the Scriptures? ‘ Theology, too, helps us to discover the profound meaning of the Gospel. But the more theology progresses, the more, in a sense, it has to conceal itself; it has to disappear very much as St. John the Baptist disappears after announcing the coming of our Lord. It helps us to discover the deep significance of divine revelation contained in Scripture and Tradition, and when it has rendered this service it should stand aside. In order to restore our cathedrals, to set well-hewn stones into their proper place it is necessary to erect a scaffolding; but when once the stones have been replaced the scaffolding is removed and the cathedral once more appears in all its beauty. In a similar way theology helps us to demonstrate the solidity of the foundations of the doctrinal edifice, the firmness of its construction, the proportion of its parts; but when it has shown us this, it effaces itself to make place for that supernatural contemplation which proceeds from a faith enlightened by the gifts of the Holy Spirit, from a faith that penetrates and savors the truths of God, a faith that is united with love.

And so it is with the question with which we are dealing, the truly vital question of our interior life in God.

CHAPTER 3

THE THIRD CONVERSION OR TRANSFORMATION OF THE SOUL: ENTRANCE INTO THE UNITIVE WAY

WE have spoken of the second conversion, which is necessary for the soul if it is to leave the way of beginners and enter upon the way of proficients, or the illuminative way. As we have seen, many authors hold that this second conversion took place for the Apostles at the end of the Passion of Christ, and for Peter in particular after his triple denial.

St. Thomas remarks in his commentary on St. Matthew that this repentance of St. Peter came about immediately, as soon as his Master had looked upon him, and that it was efficacious and definitive.

Nevertheless, Peter and the Apostles were slow to believe in the resurrection of Christ, in spite of the account which the holy women gave them of this miracle so often foretold by Jesus Himself. The story they told seemed to them to be madness.

Moreover, slow to believe the resurrection of the Savior, they were correspondingly anxious, says St. Augustine, to see the complete restoration of the kingdom of Israel such as they imagined would come to pass. This may be seen from the question which they put to our Lord on the very day of the Ascension: ‘ Lord wilt thou at this time again restore the kingdom of Israel? ‘ But there was still much suffering to be undergone before the restoration of the kingdom; and that restoration would be far superior to anything that they suspected.

And so spiritual writers have often spoken of a third conversion or transformation of the Apostles, which took place on the day of Pentecost. Let us see first what this transformation was in them, and then what it ought to be, proportionately, in us.

The Apostles were prepared for their third transformation by the fact that from the time of the Ascension they were deprived of the perceptible presence of Jesus Himself. When our Lord deprived His Apostles forever of the sight of His sacred Humanity, they must have suffered a distress to which we do not perhaps sufficiently advert. When we consider that our Lord had become their very life—as St. Paul says: ‘ Mihi vivere Christus est ‘-and that they had become daily more and more intimate with Him, they must have had a feeling of the greatest loneliness, like a feeling of desolation, even of death. And their desolation must have been the more intense since our Lord Himself had foretold all the sufferings that were in store. We experience something of the same dismay when, after having lived on a higher plane during the time of retreat, under the guidance of a priestly soul full of the spirit of God, we are plunged once again into our everyday life which seems to deprive us suddenly of this fullness. The Apostles stood there with their eyes raised up to heaven. This was no longer merely the crushing of their sensibility, as it was during the time of the Passion; it was a complete blank, which must have seemed to take from them all power of thinking. During the Passion our Lord was still there; now He had been taken away from them, and they seemed to be completely deprived of Him.

It was in the night of the spirit that they were prepared for the outpouring of the graces of Pentecost.

THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY GHOST UPON THE APOSTLES

“All These Were Persevering In One Mind In Prayer, With The Women And Mary The Mother Of Jesus.

The Acts of the Apostles give us an account of the event … ‘ When the days of Pentecost were accomplished they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind coming; and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them parted tongues, as it were of fire, and it sat upon every one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost; and they began to speak with divers tongues according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak. ‘

The sound from heaven, like that of a mighty wind, was an external sign of the mysterious and powerful action of the Holy Spirit; and at the same

time the tongues of fire which rested upon each of the Apostles symbolized what was to be accomplished in their souls.

It happens not infrequently that a great grace is preceded by some striking perceptible sign which arouses us from our inertia; it is like a divine awakening. Here the symbolism is as clear as it can be. As fire purifies, enlightens and gives warmth, so the Holy Ghost in this moment most deeply purified, enlightened and inflamed the souls of the Apostles. This was truly the profound purging of the spirit. And St. Peter explained that this was the fulfillment of what the prophet Joel had foretold: ‘ It shall come to pass in the last days (saith the Lord) I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy.... And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. ‘

the Holy Ghost already dwell in the souls of the Apostles, but by this visible mission He came into them to increase the treasures of His grace, of the virtues and the gifts, giving them light and strength in order that they might be capable of witnessing to Christ even to the ends of the earth, and at the peril of their lives. The tongues of fire are a sign that the Holy Spirit enkindled in their souls that living flame of Love of which St. John of the Cross speaks.

Then were the words of Christ fulfilled: ‘ The Holy Ghost whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and will bring to your mind whatsoever I shall have said to you. ‘ Then the Apostles began to speak ‘ in divers tongues the wonderful works of God, ‘ so that the foreigners who were witnesses of this marvel, ‘ Parthians and Medes, Elamites and inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judaea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia... Jews, Cretes and Arabians... were all amazed and wondered, saying... We have heard them speak in our own tongues. ‘It was a sign that they were now to begin to preach the Gospel to the different nations, as our Lord had commanded them- ‘ Go ye, and teach all nations. ‘

THE EFFECTS OF THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY GHOST

The Acts show us what were these effects: the Apostles were enlightened and fortified, and their sanctifying influence transformed the first Christians; there was a transport of intense fervor in the infant Church.

First of all, the Apostles received a much greater enlightenment from the Holy Spirit regarding the price of the Blood of the Savior, regarding the

mystery of Redemption, foretold in the Old Testament and fulfilled in the New. They received the fullness of the contemplation of this mystery which they were now to preach to humanity for the salvation of men. St. Thomas says that ‘ the preaching of the word of God must proceed from the fullness of contemplation. ‘ This was most fully verified at that time, as we may see from the first sermons of St. Peter related in the Acts and from that of St. Stephen before his martyrdom. These words of St. Peter and St. Stephen recall the saying of the Psalmist: ‘ Thy word is exceedingly refined and thy servant hath loved it. ‘

The Apostles and the disciples, men without education, were still asking on the day of the Ascension: ‘ Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom of Israel? ‘ Jesus had answered: ‘ It is not for you to know the times or moments which the Father hath put in his own power. But you shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you, and you shall be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem and in all Judaea and Samaria, and even to the uttermost parts of the earth. ‘

And now behold Peter. He who before the Passion had trembled at the word of a woman, who had been so slow to believe the resurrection of the Master, now stands before the Jews, saying to them with an authority that can come only from God: ‘ Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God by miracles and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you... this same being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, you by the hands of wicked men have crucified and slain. Him God hath raised up [as David foretold].... This Jesus God hath raised again, whereof all we are witnesses... he hath poured forth this which you see and hear.... Therefore let all the house of Israel know most certainly that God hath made both Lord and Christ this same Jesus whom you have crucified. ‘ Herein lies the whole mystery of the Redemption. Peter now sees that Jesus was a willing victim, and he contemplates the infinite value of His merits and of the Blood which He shed.

The Acts add that those who heard this discourse ‘ had compunction in their heart and said to Peter: What shall we do ? Peter answered. Do penance and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins. And you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. ‘ And so it came to pass, and on that day about three thousand persons were converted and received the sacrament of baptism.

Some days later, Peter said to the Jews in the temple, after the cure of a man who had been lame from birth: ‘ The author of life you killed, whom God hath raised from the dead; of which we are witnesses.... Our Lord Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified... this is the stone which was rejected by you the builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other. For there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved. ‘ In this enumeration of the graces of Pentecost we must notice chiefly, not the gift of tongues or other powers of this kind, but rather that special illumination which enabled the Apostles to enter into the depths of the mystery of the Incarnation, and more particularly of the Passion of Christ. This is the mystery of which Peter could not bear the prediction, when Jesus said that He was to be crucified: ‘ Lord, be it far from thee; this shall not be unto thee. ‘ And Jesus answered: ‘ Thou savors not the things that are of God, but the things that are of men. ‘ Now Peter has an understanding of the things of God, and he contemplates the whole economy of the mystery of the redemptive Incarnation. And it is not only he who is thus enlightened. All the Apostles bear witness in like manner, and the disciples also, and the deacon, St. Stephen, who, before being stoned to death, reminded the Jews of all that God had done for the chosen people in the time of the Patriarchs, in the time of Moses and, since then, until the coming of the Savior.

But the Apostles were not only enlightened on the day of Pentecost, they were also strengthened and confirmed. Jesus had promised them: ‘ You shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you. ‘ Fearful before Pentecost, they are now full of courage, even to the point of martyrdom. Peter and John, arrested and haled before the Sanhedrin, declare that ‘ there is no salvation in any other’ than in Jesus Christ. Arrested again, and beaten with rods, ‘ they went forth from the presence of the council rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus. And every day they ceased not, in the temple and from house to house, to teach and preach Christ Jesus. ‘ They all bore testimony to Christ in their blood. Who had given them the strength to do this ? The Holy Spirit, by enkindling the living fire of charity in their hearts.

Such was their third conversion; it was a complete transformation of their souls. Their first conversion had made them disciples of the Master, attracted by the sublime beauty of His teaching; the second, at the end of the Passion, had enabled them to divine the fecundity of the mystery of the

Cross, enlightened as it was by the Resurrection which followed it; the third conversion fills them with the profound conviction of this mystery, a mystery which they will constantly live until their martyrdom.

The transformation which the Apostles had undergone is shown also in their sanctifying influence, in the transport of intense fervor which they communicated to the first Christians. As the Acts show, the life of the infant Church was a life of marvelous sanctity; ‘ the multitude of the believers had but one heart and one soul’; they had all things in common, they sold their goods and brought the price of them to the Apostles that they might distribute to each according to his needs. They met together every day to pray, to hear the preaching of the Apostles, and to celebrate the Eucharist. They were often seen assembled together in prayer, and men wondered to see the charity that reigned among them. ‘ By this, ‘ our Lord had said, ‘ shall all men know that you are my disciples. ‘

Bossuet has given an admirable description of the fervor of the first Christians, in his third sermon for the feast of Pentecost … ‘ They are strong in the face of peril, but they are tender in the love of their brethren; the almighty Spirit who guides them well knows the secret of reconciling the most opposite tensions.... He gives them a heart of flesh... made tender by charity... and He makes them hard as iron or steel in the face of peril.... He strengthens and He softens, but in a manner all His own. For these are the same hearts of the disciples, which seem as diamonds in their invincible firmness, and which yet become human hearts and hearts of flesh by brotherly love. This is the effect of the heavenly fire that rests upon them this day. It has softened the hearts of the faithful, it has, so to speak, melted them into one....

‘ The Apostles of the Son of God had once disputed concerning the primacy; but now that the Holy Spirit has made them of one heart and one soul they are no longer jealous or quarrelsome. It seems to them that through Peter they all speak, that with him they all preside, and if his shadow heals the sick the whole Church has its part in this gift and praises our Lord for it. ‘ In the same way we ought to regard one another as members of the same mystical body, of which Christ is the head, and, far from allowing ourselves to give way to jealousy or envy, we ought to rejoice with a holy joy in the good qualities of our neighbor; for we profit by them as the hand derives advantage from what the eye sees, or the ear hears.

Such were the fruits of the transformation of the Apostles and the disciples by the Holy Spirit.

But was the Holy Spirit sent to produce these marvelous fruits only in the infant Church? Evidently not. He continues the same work throughout the course of ages. His action in the Church is apparent in the invincible strength that He gives her; a strength which may be seen in the three centuries of persecution which she underwent, and in the victory that she won over so many heresies.

Every Christian community, then, must conform to the example of the infant Church. What must we learn from her ?

To be of but one heart and one soul, and to banish all divisions amongst us. To work for the extension of the kingdom of God in the world, despite the difficulties with which we are confronted. To believe firmly and practically in the indefectibility of the Church, which is always holy, and never ceases to give birth to saints. Like the early Christians we must bear with patience and love the sufferings which God sends us. Let us with all our hearts believe in the Holy Spirit who never ceases to give life to the Church, and in the Communion of Saints.

If we saw the Church as she is in the most generous souls who live most truly the life of the Church, she would appear most beautiful in our sight, despite the human imperfections which are mingled with the activity of her children. We rightly lament certain blots, but let us not forget that if there is sometimes mud in the valley at the foot of the mountains, on the summits there is always snow of dazzling whiteness, air of great purity, and a wonderful view that ever leads the eye to God.

THE PURIFICATION OF THE SPIRIT NECESSARY FOR CHRISTIAN PERFECTION

Create A Clean Heart In Me, O Lord.

We have seen that the transformation of the Apostles on the day of Pentecost was like a third conversion for them. There must be something similar in the life of every Christian, if he is to pass from the way of proficients to that of the perfect. Here, says St. John of the Cross, there must be a radical purgation of the spirit, just as there had to be a purgation of the senses in order to pass from the way of beginners to that of proficients, commonly called the illuminative way. And just as the first conversion, by which we turn away from the world to begin to walk in the

way of God, presupposes acts of faith, hope, charity and contrition, so it is also with the other two conversions. But here the acts of the theological virtues are much more profound: God, who makes us perform these acts, drives the furrow in our souls in the same direction, but much more deeply.

Let us see now (I) why this conversion is necessary for proficients, (2) how God purifies the soul at this stage and (3) what are the fruits of this third conversion.

THE NECESSITY OF THE PURIFICATION OF THE SPIRIT

Many imperfections remain even in those who have advanced in the way of God. If their sensibility has been to a great extent purged of the faults of spiritual sensuality, inertia, jealousy, impatience, yet there still remain in the spirit certain ‘ stains of the old man ‘ which are like rust on the soul, a rust which will only disappear under the action of an intense fire, similar to that which came down upon the Apostles on the day of Pentecost. This comparison is made by St. John of the Cross.

This rust remains deep down in the spiritual faculties of the soul, in the intelligence and the will; and it consists in an attachment to self which prevents the soul from being completely united to God. Hence it is that we are often distracted in prayer, that we are subject to sluggishness, to a failure to understand the things of God, to the dissipation of the spirit, and to natural affections which are hardly, if at all, inspired by the motive of charity. Movements of roughness and impatience are not rare at this stage. Moreover, many souls, even among those that are advanced in the way of God, remain too much attached to their own point of view in the spiritual life; they imagine that they have received special inspirations from God, whereas they are in reality the victims of their own imagination or of the enemy of all good. They thus become puffed up with presumption, spiritual pride and vanity; they depart from the true path and lead other souls astray.

As St. John of the Cross says, this catalogue of faults is inexhaustible; and he confines his attention almost exclusively to those defects which relate to the purely interior life. How much longer would the catalogue be if we considered also the faults which offend against fraternal charity, against justice in our relations with our superiors, our equals or our inferiors, and those which relate to the duties of our state and to the influence which we may exert upon others.

Together with spiritual pride there remains often in the soul intellectual pride, jealousy, or some hidden ambition. The seven capital sins are thus transposed into the life of the spirit, to its great detriment.

All this, says St. John of the Cross, shows the need of the ‘ strong lye, ‘ that passive purgation of the spirit, that further conversion which marks the entrance into the perfect way. Even after passing through the night of the senses, St. John says, ‘ these proficients are still at a very low stage of progress, and follow their own nature closely in the intercourse and dealings which they have with God; because the gold of their spirit is not yet purified and refined; they still think of God as little children, and feel and experience God as little children, even as St. Paul says, because they have not reached perfection, which is the union of the soul with God. In the state of union, however, they will work great things in the spirit, even as grown men, and their works and faculties will then be divine rather than human. ‘ Before this third conversion has taken place we may still say of these souls, in the words of Isaias, that their justices are as a soiled rag; a further, and final, purification is necessary.

HOW DOES GOD PURIFY THE SOUL IN THIS THIRD CONVERSION ?

It seems that at first He strips the soul instead of enriching it. In order to cure the soul of all spiritual and intellectual pride, and to show it what dregs of poverty it still has within, He leaves the understanding in darkness, the will in aridity, sometimes even in bitterness and anguish. The soul then, says St. John of the Cross, after Tauler, must ‘ remain in the dark, in pure faith, which is dark night for the natural faculties. ‘ St. Thomas often points out that the object of faith is that which is not seen (fides est de non visis); it is dark. And the Angelic Doctor adds that it is impossible for anyone to believe and to see the same thing under the same aspect; because what is believed, as such, is not seen. The soul has now to enter into the depths of faith and to rise to its heights, like the Apostles when they were deprived of the sensible presence of Christ after His ascension. As He Himself had told them: ‘ It is expedient to you that I go. For if I go not the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go I will send him to you. ‘ St. Thomas gives an admirable explanation of these words in his commentary on St. John; he says that the Apostles, attached as they were to the humanity of Christ by a natural love, were not yet sufficiently filled with a spiritual love of His

divinity, and therefore were not yet capable of receiving the Holy Ghost spiritually, as they must if they were to withstand the tribulations which they would meet when Jesus had deprived them of His perceptible presence.

At first, then, God seems to strip the soul in this purification, as in the preceding; He seems to leave it in darkness and aridity. The motto of the soul must now be: ‘ Fidelity and abandonment. ‘ It is now that the words of Christ will be fulfilled … ‘ He that followeth me walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life. ‘ Especially illuminated now by the purging light of the gift of understanding, the soul begins, as St. Paul says, ‘ to search the deep things of God. ‘

Now humility and the theological virtues are purged of all human alloy. The soul experiences more and more, without seeing it, the infinite purity and greatness of God, who transcends all the ideas that we can form of Him; it experiences likewise all the supernatural riches of the holy soul of Christ, which here on earth contained the fullness of grace, ‘ all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. ‘ Like the Apostles on the day of Pentecost it has a glimpse of the depths of the mystery of the Incarnation and the Redemption; it perceives something of the infinite value of the merits of Christ who died for us on the Cross. The soul now has a sort of living knowledge, an experimental perception, of the supernatural world, a new outlook upon it. And by contrast the soul becomes more conscious of its own poverty. The chief suffering of a St. Paul of the Cross, of a Cure d’Ars, at this stage, was to feel themselves so distant from the ideal of the priesthood, which loomed now so great before them in the dark night of faith; while at the same time they understood better the great needs of those many souls that had recourse to them, imploring their prayers and their help.

This third conversion or purification is, evidently, the work of the Holy Spirit, who illuminates the soul by the gift of understanding. As with a lightning-flash during the night He illumines the soul that He wishes to purify. The soul had said to Him so often … ‘ Enlighten my eyes that I may never sleep in death’ ; ‘ O my God, enlighten my darkness ‘ ; ‘ Create a clean heart in me, O God, and renew a right spirit within my bowels. Cast me not away from thy face, and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation and strengthen me with a perfect spirit. I will teach the unjust thy ways... and my tongue shall extol thy justice. ‘

The purified soul addresses to Christ those words which He Himself once uttered, and begs that they may be fulfilled in itself. ‘ I am come to cast fire on the earth; and what will I, but that it be kindled ? ‘ This third purification comes about, as St. John of the Cross says, by ‘ an inflowing of God into the soul, which purges it from its ignorances and imperfections, habitual, natural and spiritual, and which is called by contemplatives infused contemplation or mystical theology. Herein God secretly teaches the soul and instructs it in perfection of love, without its doing anything or understanding of what manner is this infused contemplation. ‘

This great purification or transformation appears under different forms, according as it is in pure contemplatives like a St. Bruno, or in souls dedicated to the apostolate or to works of mercy, like a St. Vincent de Paul; but in substance it is the same. In every case there is the purification of humility and the three theological virtues from every human alloy, so that the formal motive of these virtues takes increasing ascendancy over all secondary motives. Humility grows according to the process described by St. Anselm, and repeated by St. Thomas: ‘ (I) To know that one is contemptible; (2) to feel affliction at this knowledge; (3) to confess that one is despicable; (4) to wish one’s neighbors to know this; (5) patiently to endure their saying so; (6) to submit to being treated as worthy of contempt; (7) to like being so treated. ‘ So we have the example of St. Dominic, who by preference went to those parts of Languedoc where he was ill-treated and ridiculed, experiencing a holy joy at feeling himself made like our Lord, who was humbled for our sake.

Then the formal motives of the three theological virtues appear in all their sublime grandeur- the supreme Truth that reveals, Mercy ever ready to help, sovereign Goodness, ever lovable for its own sake. These three motives shine forth like three stars of the first magnitude in the night of the spirit, to guide us surely to the end of our journey.

The fruits of this third conversion are the same as those of Pentecost, when the Apostles were enlightened and fortified, and being themselves transformed, transformed the first Christians by their preaching-as we learn from the Acts of the Apostles, where we are told of the first sermons of St. Peter and of St. Stephen’s discourse before his martyrdom.

The fruits of this third conversion are a true and deep humility, and a living faith that begins to relish and savor the mysteries of the supernatural order-as it were, a foretaste of eternal life. Moreover, it produces a firm and

confident hope in the divine mercy, which is ever at hand to help us. To attain to this perfection of hope, one must, as St. Paul says, have hoped against hope.

But the most perfect fruit of this third conversion is a very great love of God, a very pure and very strong love, a love that hesitates before no contradiction or persecution, like the love of the Apostles who rejoiced to suffer for the sake of our Lord. This love is born of an ardent desire for perfection, it is ‘ hunger and thirst after the justice of God, ‘ accompanied by the gift of fortitude, which enables it to triumph over every obstacle. It is the perfect fulfillment of the commandment- ‘ Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, with thy whole soul and with all thy strength and with all thy mind. ‘

Henceforth the depth of the soul belongs completely to God. The soul has now reached the stage of living almost continually the life of the spirit in its higher part; it is now an adorer in spirit and in truth. The darkness of the night of faith is thus a prelude to the life of eternity: quaedam inchoatio vitae aeternae It is the fulfillment of the words of Christ: ‘ If any man thirst let him come to me and drink.... Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. ‘ This is the living water that springs up into eternal life, the water which Jesus promised to the Samaritan woman: ‘ If thou didst know the gift of God... thou perhaps wouldst have asked of him and he would have given thee living water.... The water that I will give him shall become in him a fountain of water, springing up into life everlasting. ‘

PRAYER TO THE HOLY GHOST

Holy Spirit, come into my heart; draw it to Thee by Thy power, O my God, and grant me charity with filial fear. Preserve me, O ineffable Love, from every evil thought; warm me, inflame me with Thy dear love, and every pain will seem light to me. My Father, my sweet Lord, help me in all my actions. Jesus, love, Jesus, love (St. Catherine of Siena).

(Anyone who has consecrated himself to Mary according to the formula of the Blessed Grignion de Montfort, and then also to the Sacred Heart, will find great treasures in a repeated consecration to the Holy Spirit. The whole influence of Mary leads us to intimacy with Christ, and the humanity of Jesus leads us to the Holy Spirit, who introduces us into the mystery of the adorable Trinity.)

PRAYER OF CONSECRATION TO THE HOLY GHOST

O Holy Ghost, divine Spirit of light and love, I consecrate to Thee my intellect, my heart, my will and my whole being for time and for eternity.

May my intellect be ever docile to Thy heavenly inspirations and to the teaching of the Holy Catholic Church of which Thou art the infallible Guide. May my heart be ever inflamed with the love of God and my neighbor; may my will be ever in conformity with the divine will, and may my whole life be a faithful imitation of the life and virtues of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, to whom, with the Father and thee, Holy Spirit, be honor and glory for ever. Amen.

(Indulgence of 300 days once a day, applicable to the souls in Purgatory —Pius X. This consecration may be renewed by repeating only the first paragraph of the form.)

CHAPTER 4

THE PROBLEM OF THE THREE STAGES OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE IN ASCETICAL AND MYSTICAL THEOLOGY

THIS chapter, written especially for theologians, will prove less useful for the majority of readers, who will find the substance of it explained more simply and easily in the following chapter.

One of the great problems of the spiritual life is the question how we are to interpret the traditional distinction of the three ways, purgative, illuminative, and unitive, according to the terminology of Dionysius, or the way of beginners, of proficients, and of the perfect, according to an earlier terminology.

Of this traditional division two notably different interpretations have been given, according as the infused contemplation of the mysteries of faith and the union with God which results from it were considered as belonging to the normal way of sanctity, or as extraordinary favors, not only de facto but also de jure.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The difference between the two interpretations may be seen if we compare the division of ascetic-mystical theology used until the second half of the eighteenth century with that given by several authors who have written since that time. It is evident, for example, if we compare the treatise of Vallgornera, O. P., Mystica theologia divi Thomae (1662), with the two works of Scaramelli, S. J., Direttorio ascetico (1751) and Direttorio mistico.

Vallgornera follows- more or less closely the Carmelite, Philip of the Trinity. He likens the division given by him to that used by previous

authors, and confirms it by appeal to certain characteristic texts of St. John of the Cross on the moment at which the passive nights of the senses and of the spirit generally make their appearance. He divides his treatise for contemplative souls into three parts:

1. Of the purgative way, proper to beginners, in which he treats of the active purification of the external and internal senses, the passions, the intellect and the will by mortification, meditation and prayer, and finally of the passive purification of the senses, where infused contemplation begins and leads the soul on to the illuminative way, as St. John of the Cross explains at the beginning of the Dark Night.

2. Of the illuminative way, proper to proficients, where, after a preliminary chapter on the divisions of contemplation, the writer treats of the gifts of the Holy Ghost and of infused contemplation, which proceeds especially from the gifts of understanding and wisdom, and which is declared to be a legitimate object of desire for all spiritual souls, as being morally necessary for the complete perfection of the Christian life. This second part of the work, after several articles dealing with extraordinary graces (visions, revelations, interior speech) concludes with a chapter of nine articles on the passive purification of the spirit, which marks the transition to the unitive way. This, likewise, is the teaching of St. John of the Cross.

3. Of the unitive way, proper to the perfect, where the author deals with the intimate union of the contemplative soul with God and with its degrees, up to the transforming union.

Vallgornera considers this division to be the traditional one, and to be truly in harmony with the doctrine of the Fathers, with the principles of St. Thomas and the teaching of St. John of the Cross, and with that of the great mystics who have written on the three periods of the spiritual life, and on the manner in which the transition is generally made from one to another.

Quite different is the division given by Scaramelli and the authors who follow him.

In the first place Scaramelli treats of Ascetics and Mystics, not in the same work, but in two distinct works. The Direttorio ascetico, twice as long as the second work, comprises four treatises: (I) The means of perfection; (2) the obstacles (purgative way); (3) the proximate dispositions to Christian perfection, consisting of the moral virtues in the perfect degree (the way of proficients); (4) the essential perfection of the Christian,

consisting of the theological virtues and especially of charity (the love of conformity in the case of the perfect).

This treatise of Ascetics hardly mentions the gifts of the Holy Ghost. And yet according to the common teaching of spiritual writers the high degree of perfection in the moral and theological virtues which is here described is unattainable without these gifts.

The Direttorio mistico consists of five treatises: (I) An Introduction, on the gifts of the Holy Ghost and the gratiae gratis datae; (2) on acquired and infused contemplation, for which, as Scaramelli admits, the gifts are sufficient ; 1 (3) on the degrees of obscure infused contemplation, from passive recollection to the transforming union. (Here, in Chapter XXXII, Scaramelli admits that several authors teach 1 Ch xiv. that infused contemplation may be desired humbly by all spiritual souls; but he comes to the conclusion that in practice it is better not to desire it unless one has received a special call to it: ‘ Altiora te ne quaesieris’) ; (4) on the degrees of distinct infused contemplation (visions and extraordinary interior words); (5) of the passive purifications of the senses and of the spirit.

It is surprising not to find until the end of this treatise on Mystics a description of the passive purgation of the senses, a purgation which, for St. John of the Cross and the authors above quoted, marks the entrance into the illuminative way.

The difference between this new way of dividing ascetico-mystical theology and the old way obviously arises from the fact that the old authors, unlike the modern ones, maintained that all truly spiritual souls can humbly desire and ask of God the grace of the infused contemplation of the mysteries of the faith: the Incarnation and Passion of Christ, Holy Mass and Eternal Life, mysteries which are so many manifestations of the infinite goodness of God. They considered this supernatural and confused contemplation to be morally necessary for that union with God in which the full perfection of the Christian life consists.

Hence it may be wondered whether the new division, as propounded for example by Scaramelli, does not diminish both the unity and the sublimity of the perfect spiritual life. When Ascetics are separated from Mystics in this way, do we sufficiently preserve the unity of the whole which is divided ? A good division, if it is not to be superficial and accidental, if it is to be based upon a necessary foundation, must repose upon the definition of the whole which is to be divided, upon the nature of that whole. And the whole

in question is the life of grace, called by tradition ‘ the grace of the virtues and gifts ‘ ; for the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, since they are connected with charity, are part of the supernatural organism, and, as St. Thomas teaches, are necessary for salvation, a fortiori for perfection.

Similarly, the new conception surely diminishes the sublimity of evangelical perfection, since this is dealt with under the head of Ascetics, without mention of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and without mention of the infused contemplation of the mysteries of faith and the union with God which results from that contemplation. While the new method of treatment emphasizes the necessity of ascetics, does it not at the same time degrade it, weakening the motives for the practice of mortification and for the exercise of the virtues, because it loses sight of the divine intimacy to which the whole of this work should eventually lead ? Does it throw sufficient light upon the meaning of the trials, those prolonged periods of aridity, which generally mark the transition from one stage of the spiritual life to the other ? Does not the new conception diminish also the importance and value of mysticism, which, if it is separated thus from asceticism, seems to become a luxury in the spiritual life of a few favored ones, and a luxury which is not without its dangers? Finally, and above all, does not this conception debase the illuminative and unitive ways, by regarding them simply from the ascetical point of view ? Is it possible for these two ways normally to exist without the exercise of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, proportionate to the exercise of charity and the other infused virtues ? Are there six ways (three ascetical ways which are ordinary, and three mystical ways which are extraordinary), and not only three ways, three periods in the spiritual life, as the ancients maintained ? Does it not seem that, if ascetics is divorced from the illuminative and unitive ways, it becomes simply an abstract study of the moral and theological virtues ? Or, if the progress and perfection of these virtues is treated in concrete-as is done by Scaramelli—is it not manifest, according to the teaching of St. John of the Cross, that this perfection is unattainable without the passive purifications and the operation of the gifts of the Holy Ghost ? On this matter we shall do well to remember the words of St. Teresa: ‘ According to certain books we ought to be indifferent to the evil which is spoken of us, and even rejoice more thereat than if we were well spoken of; we ought to make little of honor, and be detached from our neighbor... and many other things of the same

sort. In my opinion these are pure gifts of God, these are supernatural graces. ‘

In order better to preserve the unity and sublimity of the interior life, such as the Gospels and the epistles reveal it to us, we propose the division which follows. It accords with that of the great majority of authors who wrote before the second half of the eighteenth century, and, by including an imperfect form of the illuminative and unitive ways, mentioned by St. John. of the Cross, it also safeguards that portion of truth which, in our opinion, the more recent conception contains.

PROPOSED DIVISION OF THE THREE STAGES OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

Above the condition of hardened sinners, above the state of those sensual souls who live in dissipation, conversion or justification sets us in the state of grace; grace which sin ought never to destroy in us, grace which, like a supernatural seed, ought continually to grow until it has reached its full development in the immediate vision of the divine essence and in a perfect love which will last for ever.

After conversion there ought to be a serious beginning of the purgative life, in which beginners love God by avoiding mortal sin and deliberate venial sin, through exterior and interior mortification and through prayer. But in actual fact this purgative life is found under two very different forms: in some, admittedly very few, this life is intense, generous; it is the narrow way of perfect self-denial described by the saints. In many others the purgative life appears in an attenuated form, varying from good souls who are a little weak down to those tepid and retarded souls who from time to time fall into mortal sin. The same remark will have to be made for the other two ways, each of which likewise is found in an attenuated and in an intense form.

The transition to the illuminative life follows upon certain sensible consolations which generally reward the courageous effort of mortification. As the soul lingers in the enjoyment of these consolations, God withdraws them, and then the soul finds itself in that more or less prolonged aridity of the senses which is known as the passive purgation of the senses. This purgation persists unceasingly in generous souls and leads them, by way of initial infused contemplation, to the full illuminative life. In other souls that are less generous, souls that shun the cross, the purgation is often

interrupted; and these souls will enjoy only an attenuated form of the illuminative life, and will receive the gift of infused contemplation only at long intervals. Thus the passive night of the senses is seen to be a second conversion, more or less perfect.

The illuminative life brings with it the obscure infused contemplation of the mysteries of faith, a contemplation which had already been initiated in the passive night of the senses. It appears under two normal forms. the one definitely contemplative, as in the many saints of the Carmel; the other active, as in a St. Vincent de Paul, a contemplation which, by the light of the gifts of wisdom and counsel, constantly sees in the poor and abandoned the suffering members of Christ. Sometimes this full illuminative life involves, not only the infused contemplation of mysteries, but also certain extraordinary graces (visions, revelations, interior speech), such as those described by St. Teresa in her own life.

The transition to the unitive life follows upon more abundant spiritual lights, or an easier and more fruitful apostolate, these being, as it were, the reward of the proficient's generosity. But in them the proficient is apt to take some complacency, through some remnant of spiritual pride which he still retains. Accordingly, if God wills to lead the proficient into the perfect unitive life, He causes him to pass through the night of the spirit, a painful purgation of the higher part of the soul. If this is endured supernaturally it continues almost without interruption until it leads the soul to the perfect unitive life. If, on the other hand, the proficient fails in generosity, the unitive life will be correspondingly attenuated. This painful purgation is the third conversion in the life of the servants of God.

The perfect unitive life brings with it the infused contemplation of the mysteries of faith and a passive union which is almost continuous. Like the preceding, this life appears under two forms: the one exclusively contemplative, as in a St. Bruno or a St. John of the Cross; the other apostolic, as in a St. Dominic, a St. Francis, a St. Thomas, or a St. Bonaventure. Sometimes the perfect unitive life involves, not only infused contemplation and almost continuous union with God, but also extraordinary graces, such as the vision of the Blessed Trinity received by St. Teresa and described by her in the VIIth Mansion. In this perfect unitive life, whether accompanied by extraordinary favors or not, there are evidently many degrees, ranging from the lowest to the highest among the saints, to the Apostles, to St. Joseph and our Lady.

This division of the three stages of the spiritual life is set out in the following table, which should be read beginning from below; the three purgations or conversions figure in the table as transitions from one stage to another.

The scheme may be compared with the doctrine of Tradition, and above all with the doctrine of St. Thomas, concerning the grace of the virtues and the gifts, and with that of St. John of the Cross on the passive purgations, on infused contemplation and on the perfect union, the normal prelude to the life of heaven.

We have seen also how it may be compared with the three ages of our bodily life … infancy, adolescence, and manhood, especially as regards the crises which mark the transition from one to another.

UNITIVE LIFE

plenary

extraordinary, e.g.. with vision of the Blessed Trinity.

Ordinary

purely contemplative form

apostolic form

attenuated: Intermittent union

Transition: Passive purgation of the spirit, more or less successfully endured

ILLUMINATIVE LIFE of proficients

Plenary

Extraordinary, with visions, revelations, etc.

Ordinary

purely contemplative form

active form

Attenuated: Transitory acts of infused contemplation.

Transition: Passive purgation of the senses, more or less successfully endured.

PURGATIVE LIFE of beginners

Generous: fervent souls

Attenuated: tepid or retarded souls.

TRANSITION: FIRST CONVERSION, OR JUSTIFICATION

The transition from one stage to another in the Spiritual Life.

The transitions from one stage to another in the spiritual life, analogous to similar transitions in our bodily life, are marked by a crisis in the soul; and none has described these crises so well as St. John of the Cross. He shows that they correspond to the nature of the human soul, and to the nature of the divine seed, which is sanctifying grace. In the Dark Night, after having spoken of the spiritual imperfections of beginners, he writes: ‘ The one night or purgation will be sensual, wherein the soul is purged according to sense, which is subdued to the spirit.... The night of sense is common, and comes to many; these are the beginners. ‘ Then he adds: ‘ When this house of sensuality was now at rest—that is, was mortified its passions being quenched and its desires put to rest and lulled to sleep by means of this blessed night of the purgation of sense, the soul went forth to set out upon the road and way of the spirit, which is that of progressives and proficients, and which by another name is called the way of illumination or of infused contemplation, wherewith God Himself feeds and refreshes the soul, without meditation, or the soul’s actual help. Such, as we have said, is the night and purgation of sense in the soul. ‘

The words that we have italicized in this passage are very significant, and they reproduce the original Spanish exactly.

St. John of the Cross then proceeds to treat of the imperfections which are proper to progressives or proficients: natural roughness, outward clinging of the spirit, presumption, a remnant of spiritual pride—and he thus shows the need of the passive purgation of the spirit, another painful crisis, a third conversion which is necessary before the soul can enter fully upon the life of union which belongs to the perfect, to those who, as St. Thomas says, wish above all things to cleave to God and to enjoy Him, and yearn ardently for eternal life, to be with Christ. ‘

This doctrine of the Dark Night is found also in the Spiritual Canticle, especially in the division of the poem and in the argument which precedes the first strophe.

It is sometimes objected that this sublime conception of St. John of the Cross far transcends the ordinary conception given by spiritual writers, who speak less mystically of the illuminative life of proficients and of the unitive life of the perfect. It would seem therefore that the beginners of whom St. John speaks in the Dark Night are not the beginners in the spiritual life, whom writers generally have in mind, but rather those who are already beginning the mystical states.

To this we may easily reply that the conception of St. John of the Cross corresponds admirably with the nature of the soul (sensitive and spiritual) and also with the nature of grace, and that therefore the beginners of whom he speaks are actually those who are usually so called. To prove this it is enough to note the faults which he finds in them: spiritual gluttony, a tendency to sensuality, to anger, to envy, to spiritual sloth, to that pride which causes them to ‘ seek another confessor to tell the wrongs that they have done, so that their own confessor shall think that they have done nothing wrong at all, but only good... desiring that he may think them to be good. ‘ The souls thus described are certainly beginners, not at all advanced in asceticism. But it must be remembered that when St. John of the Cross speaks of the three ways, purgative, illuminative and unitive, he takes them, not in their attenuated sense, but in their normal and plenary sense. And in this he follows the tradition of the Fathers, of Clement of Alexandria, Cassian, St. Augustine, Dionysius, and the great teachers of the Middle Ages: St. Anselm, Hugh of St. Victor, St. Albert the Great, St. Bonaventure and St. Thomas.

This is particularly apparent in the traditional distinction of the degrees of humility, which, by reason of the connection of the virtues among themselves, correspond to the degrees of charity. This traditional gradation in humility leads to a perfection

which is assuredly not inferior to that of which St. John of the Cross speaks. St. Catherine of Siena, the author of the Imitation, St. Francis of Sales and all the spiritual writers reproduce the same doctrine on the degrees of humility, corresponding to the degrees in the love of God. All books on ascetics likewise say that we must rejoice in tribulations and in being calumniated; but, as St. Teresa remarks, this presupposes great purgations, the purgations of which St. John of the Cross speaks, and can result only from faithful correspondence with the grace of the Holy Spirit.

The same is apparent in the classic distinction, preserved for us by St. Thomas, between political virtues (necessary for social life), purging virtues (purgatoriae), and the virtues of the purified soul. Describing the ‘ purging virtues, ‘ St. Thomas says: ‘ Prudence despises all the things of the world in favor of the contemplation of divine things; it directs all thoughts to God. Temperance gives up all that the body demands, so far as nature can allow. Fortitude prevents us from fearing death and the unknown element in higher things. Justice, finally, makes us enter fully into the way of God. ‘ The

virtues of the purified soul are more perfect still. All this, together with what the Angelic Doctor says elsewhere of the immediate union of charity with God dwelling in the soul, is certainly not less sublime than what St. John of the Cross was to write later on.

Finally, the division of the three stages of the spiritual life corresponds perfectly to the three movements of contemplation described by St. Thomas after Dionysius. (I) The soul contemplates the goodness of God in the mirror of material creatures, and rises to Him by recalling the parables which Jesus preached to beginners; (2) The soul contemplates the divine goodness in the mirror of intelligible truths, or the mysteries of salvation, and rises to Him by a spiral movement, from the Nativity of Christ to His Ascension; (3) The soul contemplates sovereign Goodness in itself, in the darkness of faith, circling round again and again, to return always to the same infinite truth, to understand it better and more fully to live by it.

It is certain that St. John of the Cross follows this traditional path which so many great teachers had trodden before him; but he describes the progress of the soul as it is found in contemplatives, and in the most perfect among them, in order to arrive, ‘ as directly as possible at God. He thus shows what are the higher laws of the life of grace and of the progress of charity. But these same laws apply in an attenuated form to many other souls as well, souls which do not reach so high a state of perfection, but which nevertheless make generous progress without turning back. In all things, similarly, we can distinguish two ‘ tempos. ‘ For example, the medical books describe diseases as they are in their acute stage, but they also point out that they may be found in a modified or attenuated form.

In the light of what has been said it will be easier for us now to describe the characteristics of the three ways, with special reference to the purgations or conversions which precede each of them—purgations which are necessary even though the soul may not have fallen again into mortal sin, but remained always in the state of grace.

From this point of view we shall now study what exactly constitutes the spiritual state of the beginner, the proficient, and the perfect; and it will become apparent that this is not merely a conventional scheme, but a truly vital process founded on the very nature of the spiritual life, that is, on the nature of the soul and on the nature of grace, that divine seed which is the germ of eternal life: semen gloriae.

CHAPTER 5

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE THREE STAGES OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

WE have seen the different conceptions which various writers have proposed of the three stages or periods of the spiritual life; and we have seen which of these is to be regarded as the traditional one. There is, we have said, an analogy between these three stages of the life of the soul and those of the life of the body- infancy, adolescence and manhood; and we have paid particular attention to the transition between one period and another, marked by a crisis analogous to that which, in the natural or physical order, occurs in life about the age of fourteen or fifteen and again at twenty or twenty-one. We have seen also how these different periods of the interior life have their counterpart in the life of the Apostles. We now intend, following the principles of St. Thomas and of St. John of the Cross, to describe briefly the characteristics of these three periods, that of beginners, proficients and perfect, in order to show that these are successive stages in a normal development, a development which corresponds both to the distinction between the two parts of the soul (sensitive and spiritual), and to the nature of ‘ the grace of the virtues and the gifts. ‘ This grace progressively permeates the soul with the supernatural life, elevates its faculties, both higher and lower, until the depth of the soul is purged of all egoism and self-love, and belongs truly, without any reservation, to God. We shall see that the whole development is logical, it is logical with the logic of life, the logic which is imposed necessarily by life’s end and purpose: Justum deduxit Dominus per vias rectas: ‘ The Lord guides the just by straight ways. ‘

BEGINNERS

The first conversion is the transition from the state of sin to the state of grace, whether by baptism or, in the case of those who have lost their baptismal innocence, by contrition and sacramental absolution. Theologians explain at length in the treatise on grace what precisely justification is in an adult, and how and why it requires, under the influence of grace, acts of faith, hope, charity and contrition, or detestation of sin committed. This purgation by the infusion of habitual grace and the remission of sins is in a sense the type or pattern of all the subsequent purgations of the soul, all of which involve acts of faith, hope, charity and contrition. Often this first conversion comes about after a more or less painful crisis in which the soul progressively detaches itself from the spirit of the world, like the prodigal son, to come back to God. It is God always who makes the first step towards us, as the Church has taught against the Semi-Pelagians; it is He who inspires the good movement in us, that initial goodwill which is the beginning of salvation. For this purpose, by His grace and by the trials to which He subjects the soul, He as it were ‘ tills ‘ the ground of the soul before sowing the divine seed within it; He drives a first furrow therein, a furrow upon which He will later return, to dig more deeply still and to eradicate the weeds which remain; much as the vine-tender does with the vine when it has already grown, to free it from all that may retard its development.

After this first conversion, if the soul does not fall again into mortal sin, or at all events if it rises from sin without delay and seeks to make progress, it is then in the purgative way of beginners.

The mentality or spiritual state of the beginner may be best described in function of that which is primary in the order of goodness, namely his knowledge of God and of himself, and his love of God. Admittedly there are some beginners who are specially favored, like many great saints who have had greater grace in their early beginnings than many who are proficients; just as in the natural order there are infant prodigies. But after all, they are children, and it is possible to say in general in what the mentality of beginners consists. They begin to know themselves, to see their poverty and their neediness, and they have every day to examine their conscience to correct their faults. At the same time they begin to know God, in the mirror of the things of sense, in the things of nature or in the parables, for example, in those of the Prodigal Son, the Lost Sheep or the Good Shepherd. Theirs is a direct movement up to God, not unlike that of the

swallow when it rises up to the heavens uttering a cry. In this state there is a love of God proportionate to the soul’s knowledge; beginners who are truly generous love God with a holy fear of sin, which causes them to avoid mortal sin and even deliberate venial sin, by dint of mortifying the senses and concupiscence in its various forms.

When they have been engaged for a certain time in this generous effort they are usually rewarded by some sensible consolations in prayer or in the study of divine things. In this way God wins over their sensibility, for it is by their sensibility that they chiefly live; He directs it away from dangerous things towards Himself. At this stage the generous beginner already loves God ‘ with all his heart, ‘ but not yet with all his soul, with all his strength, or with all his mind. Spiritual writers often mention the milk of consolation which is given at this period. St. Paul himself says : ‘ I could not speak to you as unto spiritual but as unto carnal, as unto little ones in Christ. I gave you milk to drink, not meat; for you were not able as yet. ‘

But what happens, usually, at this stage ? Practically all beginners, when they receive these sensible consolations, take too much complacency in them; they regard them as though they were an end in themselves, and not merely a means to higher things. They then become an obstacle to their progress; they are an occasion of spiritual greed, of curiosity in the things of God, of an unconscious pride which leads the recipient to talk about his favors and, under a pretext of doing good to others, to pose as master in the spiritual life. Then, as St. John of the Cross says, the seven capital sins make their appearance, no longer in their gross form, but in the order of spiritual things, as so many obstacles to a true and solid piety.

Accordingly, by a logical and vital transition, a second conversion becomes necessary, described by St. John of the Cross under the name of the passive purgation of the senses. Of this he says that it is ‘ common and comes to many; these are beginners, ‘ and that its purpose is to lead them into ‘ the road and way of the spirit, which is that of progressives and proficients... the way of infused contemplation, wherewith God Himself feeds and refreshes the soul. ‘ This purgation is characterized by a prolonged aridity of the senses, in which the beginner is deprived of all those sensible consolations in which he had taken too great complacency. If in the midst of this aridity there is an intense desire for God, a desire that He should reign in us, together with a fear of offending Him, then this is a second sign that it is a divine purgation. Still more so, if to this intense

desire for God there is added a difficulty in praying according to the discursive method, and an inclination towards the prayer of simple regard, with love. This is the third sign that the second conversion is in progress, and that the soul is being raised up to a higher form of life, that of the illuminative way.

If the soul endures this purgation satisfactorily its sensibility becomes more and more subject to the spirit; the soul is cured of its spiritual greed and of the pride that had led it to pose as a master; it learns better to recognize its own neediness. Not infrequently there arise other difficulties pertaining to this process of purgation, for example, in study, in our relations with persons to whom we are too greatly attached, and from whom God now swiftly and painfully detaches our affections. At this time, too, there arise often enough grave temptations against chastity and patience, temptations which God allows so that by reaction against theta these virtues, which reside in the sensible part of our nature, may become. more firmly and truly rooted in us. Illness, too, may be sent to try us during this period.

In this crisis God again tills the ground of the soul, digging deeper in the furrow which He has already driven at the moment of our first conversion: He is uprooting the evil weeds, or the relics of sin, ‘ reliquias peccati. ‘

This crisis is not without its dangers, like the crisis of the fourteenth or fifteenth year in the development of our natural life. Some prove faithless to their vocation Some souls do not pass through this crisis in such a way as to enter upon the illuminative way of proficients, and they remain in a state of tepidity; they are not in the proper sense beginners, rather they are retarded or tepid souls. In their case, the words of the Scriptures are fulfilled: ‘ They have not known the time of their visitation ‘; they have failed to recognize the time of their second conversion. These souls, especially if they are in the religious or the priestly state, are not tending to perfection as they should, and unconsciously they are stopping others from doing so, placing serious obstacles in the way of those who really desire to make progress. Communal prayer, instead of becoming contemplative, becomes mechanical; instead of prayer supporting the soul, the soul has to support and endure prayer. Such prayer may even, unhappily, become anti-contemplative!

In those, on the contrary, who pass through this crisis successfully it is, according to St. John of the Cross, the beginning of infused contemplation

of the mysteries of faith, accompanied by an intense desire for perfection. Then the beginner, under the illumination especially of the gift of understanding, becomes a proficient and enters upon the illuminative way; he recognizes his own poverty, sees the emptiness of honors and dignities and the things of this world; he detaches himself from these entanglements. This he must do, as P. Lallemant says, ‘ in order to take the step ‘ which will lead him into the illuminative way. He now begins what is like a new life; he is like the child that becomes a youth.

It is true that this passive purgation of the senses, even in the case of those who actually enter upon it, may be more or less manifest and more or less successfully endured. St. John of the Cross remarks this, speaking of those who are less generous at this stage: ‘ This night of aridities is not usually continuous in their senses. At times they have these aridities; at others they have them not. At times they cannot meditate; at times they can... for not all those who consciously walk in the way of the spirit are brought by God to contemplation.... And this is why He never weans the senses of such persons from the breasts of meditations and reflections, but only for short periods and at certain seasons. ‘ In other words, they have only an attenuated form of the illuminative life. St. John of the Cross explains this later by their lack of generosity: ‘ Here it behooves us to note why it is that there are so few that attain to this lofty state. It must be known that this is not because God is pleased that there should be few raised to this high spiritual state—on the contrary, it would please Him if all were so raised.... When He proves them in small things and finds them weak and sees that they at once flee from labor and desire not to submit to the least discomfort or mortification.... He goes no farther with their purification... they would fain go farther on the road, yet cannot suffer the smallest things nor submit themselves to them.... ‘

Such is the transition, more or less generously made, which leads to a higher form of life. So far it is easy to see the logical and vital sequence of the phases through which the soul must pass. This is no mechanical juxtaposition of successive states, but an organic development of life.

PROFICIENTS OR PROGRESSIVES

The mentality of proficients, like that of the preceding, must be described in function of their knowledge and love of God. With their self-knowledge

there is developed in them a quasi-experimental knowledge of God. They know Him, no longer merely in the mirror of the things of sense or of parables, but in the mirror of the mysteries of salvation, with which they become more and more familiar and which the Rosary, the school of contemplation, sets daily before their eyes. The greatness of God is contemplated now, no longer merely in the mirror of the starry heavens, in the sea or the mountains, no longer merely in the parables of the Good Shepherd or the Prodigal Son, but in the incomparably more perfect mirror of the mysteries of the Incarnation and the Redemption. To use the terminology of Dionysius, employed also by St. Thomas, the soul rises in a spiral movement, from the mystery of the Incarnation or the Infancy of Jesus, to those of His Passion, His Resurrection, His Ascension and His Glory; and in these mysteries it contemplates the radiance of the sovereign Goodness of God, thus admirably communicating itself to us. In this contemplation, which is more or less frequent, the proficients receive an abundance of light—in proportion to their fidelity and generosity—through the gift of understanding, which enables them to penetrate more and more deeply into these mysteries, and to appreciate their beauty, at once so simple and so sublime.

In the preceding period or stage God had won over their sensibility; now He thoroughly subjugates their intelligence to Himself, raising it above the excessive preoccupations and complications of merely human knowledge. He simplifies their knowledge by spiritualizing it.

Accordingly, and as a normal consequence, these proficients being thus enlightened concerning the mysteries of the life of Christ, love God, not only by avoiding mortal sin and deliberate venial sin, but by imitating the virtues of our Lord. His humility, gentleness, patience; and by observing not only those commandments that are laid upon all, but also the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience, or at any rate by keeping the spirit of these counsels, and by avoiding imperfections.

As happened in the preceding period, this generosity is rewarded, but no longer by merely sensible consolations, but by a greater abundance of light in contemplation and in the work of the apostolate; by intense desires for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, and by a greater facility in prayer. Not infrequently we find in the proficients the prayer of Quiet, in which the will is momentarily held captive by the love of God. This period is marked also by a great facility in doing works for God, such as teaching,

directing, organizing, and the rest. This is to love God, not only with the whole heart, but with the whole soul, with the whole of one’s activities; but not yet with the whole strength, nor with the whole mind, because God has not yet achieved complete dominion in that higher region of the soul which we call the spirit.

And what happens generally at this stage ? Something similar to what happened in the case of the beginners who had been rewarded with sensible consolations. The proficient begins to take complacency—by reason of an unconscious pride—in this great facility in prayer, working, teaching, or preaching. He tends to forget that these are God’s gifts, and he rejoices in them with a proprietary air which ill beseems one who adores in spirit and in truth. It is true that he is working for God, he is working for souls; but he has not yet sufficiently forgotten himself. An unconscious self-seeking and self-importance cause him to dissipate himself and to lose the sense of the presence of God. He thinks that his labors are being very fruitful; but it is not quite certain. He is becoming too sure of himself, he gives himself too much importance and is perhaps inclined to exaggerate his own talents, to forget his own imperfection and to be too greatly aware of the imperfections of others. Purity of intention, true recollection, perfect straightforwardness, are often lacking; there is something of a lie in his life. ‘ The depth of the soul, ‘ as Tauler puts it, ‘ does not belong entirely to God. ‘ God is offered an intention which really is only half given to Him. St. John of the Cross mentions these defects of proficients as they are found in pure contemplatives, who, he says, ‘ believe in vain visions... and presume that God and the saints are speaking with them, ‘ being deceived by the ruses of the evil one. Not less notable are the defects, mentioned, for example, by St. Alphonsus, which are found in apostolic men entrusted with the care of souls. These defects in proficients become manifest especially in the obstacles which they are called upon to meet, or in differences of opinion which, even at this advanced period of the spiritual life, may cause vocations to be lost. It then becomes evident that the presence of God is not sufficiently borne in mind, and that in the search for God it is the self which is really being sought. Hence the need of a third purgation; hence the need of that ‘ strong lye ‘ of the purgation of the spirit, in order to cleanse the very depth of the spiritual faculties.

Without this third conversion there is no entrance into the life of union, which is the adult age, the manhood of the spiritual life.

This new crisis is described by St. John of the Cross in all its depth and acuteness, as it occurs in the great contemplatives who, in point of fact, usually suffer not only for the sake of their own purification, but for the souls for whom they have offered themselves. The same trial occurs also in proficients of the apostolic type, generous souls who have reached a high perfection, but it is generally less obvious in them since it is mingled with the sufferings incident to their apostolic labors.

In what does this crisis essentially consist?—In the soul being deprived, not only of sensible consolations, but of its supernatural lights on the mysteries of salvation, of its ardent desires, of that facility in action, in preaching and in teaching, in which it had felt a secret pride and complacency, and by reason of which it had been inclined to set itself above others. This is a period of extreme aridity not only as regards the senses, but as regards the spirit, in prayer and the recitation of the office. Temptations frequently occur during this stage, not precisely against chastity or patience now, but against the virtues that reside in the higher part of the soul, against faith, hope and charity towards one's neighbor, and even against charity towards God, whom the soul is tempted to regard as cruel for trying souls in such a crucible of torment. Generally during this period great difficulties occur in connection with the apostolate. detraction, failures, checks. It will often happen that the apostle is made to suffer calumnies and ingratitude, even from those souls to whom he has done much good, so that he may thus be brought to love them more exclusively in God and for God's sake. Hence this crisis, or passive purgation of the spirit, is like a mystical death; it is the death of the old man, according to the words of St. Paul: ' Our old mall is crucified with Jesus Christ, that the body of sin may be destroyed. ' It is necessary to ' put off... the old man who is corrupted according to the desire of error, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, putting on the new man who according to God is created in justice and holiness of truth. '

All this is profoundly logical; it is the logical development of the supernatural life. ' Sometimes, ' says St. John of the Cross, ' in the stress of this purgation the soul feels itself wounded and hurt by strong love. It is a heat that is engendered in the spirit, when the soul, overcome with sufferings, is grievously wounded by the divine love. ' The love of God is as a fire that progressively dries up the wood, penetrates it, sets it alight and transforms it into itself. The trials of this period are permitted by God in order to lead proficients to a more lofty faith, to a firmer hope, and to a

purer love; for it is absolutely necessary that the depth of their soul should belong completely to God. This is the meaning of the words of Scripture: ‘ As gold in the furnace he hath proved them, and as a victim of a holocaust he hath received them. ‘ ‘The just cried and the Lord heard them; and delivered them out of all their troubles. The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a contrite heart.... Many are the afflictions of the just; but out of them all will the Lord deliver them. ‘

This crisis, like the preceding, is not without its dangers; it calls for great courage and vigilance, for a faith sometimes reaching to heroism, a hope against all hope, transforming itself into perfect abandonment. For the third time God tills the ground of the soul, but this time much more deeply, so deeply indeed that the soul seems overwhelmed by these afflictions of the spirit, afflictions similar to those often described by the prophets, in particular by Jeremias in the third chapter of the Lamentations.

He who passes through this crisis, loves God, not only with all his heart and all his soul, but according to the scale of the Scriptural phrase, with all his strength; and he now prepares to love Him ‘ with all his mind, ‘ to become an ‘ adorer in spirit and in truth, ‘ that higher part of the soul which should control the whole of our activity being now in some sort established in God.

THE PERFECT

What is the spiritual state of the perfect after this purgation, which has been like a third conversion for them? They know God with a knowledge which is quasi-experimental and almost continuous; not merely during times of prayer or the divine office, but in the midst of external occupations, they have a constant sense of the presence of God. Whereas at the beginning man had been selfish, thinking constantly of himself and, unconsciously, directing all things to himself, the perfect soul thinks constantly of God, of His glory, of the salvation of souls and, as though instinctively, causes all things to converge upon that end. The reason of this is that he no longer contemplates God merely in the mirror of the things of sense, no longer merely in parables or even in the mirror of the mysteries of the life of Christ, for this cannot continue throughout the whole day, but he contemplates the divine goodness in itself, very much in the way in which we constantly see light diffused about us and illuminating all things from on

high. In the terminology of Dionysius, employed also by St. Thomas, it is a movement of contemplation, no longer straight nor spiral, but circular, like the flight of the eagle which, after rising to a great height, circles round and round, and hovers to view the horizon.

This simple contemplation removes those imperfections that arise from natural eagerness, from unconscious self-seeking and from the lack of habitual recollection.

The perfect know themselves no longer merely in themselves, but in God, their source and their end, they examine themselves, pondering what is written of their existence in the book of life, and they never cease to see the infinite distance that separates them from their Creator. Hence their humility. This quasi-experimental contemplation of God proceeds from the gift of wisdom, and, by reason of its simplicity, it can be almost continuous; it can persist in the midst of intellectual work, conversation, external occupations, such continuity being impossible in the case of a knowledge of God which uses the mirror of parables or that of the mysteries of Christ.

Finally, whereas the egoist, thinking always of himself, wrongly loves himself in all things, the perfect, thinking nearly always of God, loves Him constantly, and loves Him, not merely by avoiding sin and by imitating the virtues of our Lord, but ‘ by adhering to Him, enjoying Him, desiring, as St. Paul said, to be dissolved and to be with Christ. ‘ It is the pure love of God and the love of souls in God; it is apostolic zeal, zealous beyond measure; but humble, patient and gentle. This is to love God, no longer merely ‘ with the whole heart, with the whole soul, with the whole strength, ‘ but continuing up the scale, ‘ with the whole mind. ‘ For he that is perfect is no longer merely rising gradually to this highest region in himself; he is established there; he is spiritualized and super-naturalized; he has now become truly ‘ an adorer in spirit and in truth. ‘ These souls preserve peace almost constantly amidst even the most distressful and unforeseen circumstances, and they communicate it to others who are troubled. This is why St. Augustine says that the beatitude of the peacemakers corresponds to the gift of wisdom, which, together with charity, holds dominion over these souls. The great model of such souls, after the holy soul of Christ, is the Blessed Virgin Mary.

All this, so it seems to us, shows the legitimacy of the traditional division of the three periods of the spiritual life, as understood by a St. Thomas, a St. Catherine of Siena, a Tauler, and a St. John of the Cross. The transition

from one stage to another is explained by the need of a purgation which in actual fact is more or less manifest. These are not schemes artificially constructed and placed mechanically side by side; it is the description of a vital development in which each stage has its own raison d'etre. If there is sometimes a misunderstanding of the division, it is because sufficient account is not taken of the defects even of generous beginners or of proficients; it is because the necessity of a second and even a third conversion is forgotten; it is because it is sometimes overlooked that each of the purgations necessary may be more or less satisfactorily undergone, and may thus introduce more or less perfectly into the illuminative or the unitive way.

Unless due attention is paid to the necessity of these purifications it is impossible to form a just idea of what the spiritual condition of proficients and perfect must be. It is of the necessity of a new conversion that St. Paul was speaking when he wrote to the Colossians: ' Lie not one to another; stripping yourselves of the old man with his deeds, and putting on the new, who is renewed unto knowledge according to the image of him who created him.... But above all these things have charity, which is the bond of perfection. '

CHAPTER 6

THE PEACE OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD: A PRELUDE TO THE LIFE OF HEAVEN

THOSE who follow the way of generosity, self-denial, and self-sacrifice which the saints have taught, will come at length to know and taste the joys of God’s complete dominion within us.

Truly spiritual delights have their source in the cross, in the spirit of sacrifice which causes disordered inclinations to die in us and gives the first place to the love of God and the love of souls in God, which installs in the throne of our souls that charity which is the source of peace, the tranquility of order. These deep joys cannot enter into the soul until the senses and the spirit have been purged and refined by tribulations and sufferings which detach us from things created. As we read in the Acts of the Apostles: ‘ Through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God. ‘

THE DIVINE AWAKENING

After the dark and painful night of the spirit there is, St. John of the Cross tells us, a divine awakening: ‘ The soul uses a similitude of the breathing of one that awakens from his sleep, ‘ and says, ‘ How gentle and loving is... thine awakening, O Word and Spouse, in the center and depth of my soul... wherein alone, secretly and in silence, Thou dwellest as its Lord. ‘ This divine awakening is an inspiration of the Word manifesting His dominion, His glory and His intimate sweetness.

This inspiration shows the face of God radiant with graces and the works which He accomplishes. ‘ This is the great delight of this awakening: to know the creatures through God and not God through the creatures; to know the effects through the cause and not the cause through the effects Then is the prayer of the Psalmist fulfilled: ‘ Arise, Lord, why sleepest thou

? ‘ ‘ Arise, Lord, ‘ that is to say, remarks St. John of the Cross, ‘ do thou awaken us, and enlighten us, my Lord, that we may know and love the blessings that Thou hast ever set before us. ‘

The same grace is described in the 39th Psalm: ‘ With expectation I have waited for the Lord, and he was attentive to me. And he heard my prayers and brought me out of the pit of misery and the mire of dregs; and he set my feet upon a rock and directed my steps, and he put a new canticle into my mouth. ‘

In this ‘ powerful and glorious awakening’ the soul receives, as it were, an aspiration of the Holy Spirit, who fills it to overflowing with His goodness and His glory, ‘ wherein He has inspired it with love for Himself, which transcends all description and all sense, in the deep things of God. ‘

These graces are a preparation for that other awakening of the supreme moment of death, when the soul issuing forth from the body will see itself immediately as a spiritual substance, as the angels see themselves. And the last awakening of all will be in the moment of entrance into glory, when the soul, separated from the body, sees God face to face, and sees itself in God. Happy the saints who go straight to heaven. While those about them are lamenting their departure, they have reached the end of their journey in the clearness of the vision that gives them joy. As the Gospel says, they have entered into the joy of their Lord.

THE LIVING FLAME

Already here on earth the divine awakening produces in the soul of the perfect a flame of love which is a participation of that living flame which is the Holy Spirit Himself. ‘ This flame the soul feels within it, not only as a fire that has consumed and transformed it in sweet love, but also as a fire which burns within it and sends out flame.... And this is the operation of the Holy Spirit in the soul that is transformed in love, that His interior actions cause it to send out flames.... And thus these acts of the soul are most precious, and even one of them is of greater merit and worth than all that the soul may have done in this life apart from this transformation, however much this may be;... it is the same difference as that between the log of wood that is enkindled and the flame which it sends forth.... In this state, therefore, the soul can perform no acts, but it is the Holy Spirit that moves it to perform them.... Hence it seems to the soul that whensoever this flame

breaks forth... it is granting it eternal life... it teaches the soul what is the savor of eternal life... it causes the soul to experience the life of God, even as David says: My heart and my flesh have rejoiced in the living God. ‘

This flame wounds the soul as it is given, but the wound is tender, salutary and, instead of causing death, it increases life; for the soul is holiest that is most wounded by love. Thus St. John of the Cross says that ‘ this wound is delectable, ‘ and he adds that this ‘ came to pass when the seraph wounded the soul of St. Francis (of Assisi) with love. ‘

When the heart is thus burning with love for its God, the soul is contemplating lamps of fire which enlighten all things from on high. These are the divine perfections: Wisdom, Goodness, Mercy, Justice, Providence, Omnipotence. They are, so to speak, the colors of the divine rainbow which, without destroying one another, are identified in the intimate life of God, in the Deity, as the seven colors of the rainbow are united in the one white light from which they proceed. ‘ All these are one lamp, which is the Word.... This lamp is all these lamps, since it gives light and burns in all these ways. ‘

The powers of the soul are then as though melted in the splendor of the divine lamps ; it is truly a prelude to eternal life.

‘ The soul is completely absorbed in these delicate flames, and wounded subtly in each of them, and in all of them more deeply and subtly wounded in love of life, so that it can see quite clearly that that love belongs to life eternal, which is the union of all blessings. So that the soul in that state knows well the truth of those words of the Spouse in the Songs, where He says that the lamps of love were lamps of fire and flame. ‘

The flame which the wise virgins must tend in their lamps is a participation of this flame.

The following lines from a recent commentary on the Canticle of Canticles are worth pondering: ‘ The divine love is a consuming fire. It penetrates the soul to its depth. It burns and consumes, but it does not destroy; it transforms into itself. Material fire which burns wood to its innermost fibers and iron to its last molecules, is an image of that fire, but how feeble an image ! At times, under the influence of a specially powerful grace, the soul that is on fire with divine love sends forth flames. They ascend straight to God. He is their principle as He is their end; and it is for His sake that the soul is consumed with love. The charity that elevates the soul to God is only a created, finite, analogical participation of uncreated

charity; but it is nevertheless a real, positive and formal participation of the substantial flame of Jehovah. ‘

We can understand, therefore, why St. John of the Cross often compares the soul that is penetrated by God with the union of air and fire in a flame, which is nothing else but air on fire. Doubtless there is always an infinite distance between the Creator and the creature, but God by His action enters so intimately into the purified soul that He deifies it, giving it an increase of sanctifying grace. And sanctifying grace is a real and formal participation of His inner life, His own nature, which is Deity.

Unitive love then becomes in the soul like a sea of fire that ‘ reaches to the farthest heights and depths, filling it wholly with love. ‘ This love, hardly perceptible at first, grows more and more until the soul experiences an ever-increasing hunger for God and a burning thirst, of which the Psalmist says: ‘ For thee my soul hath thirsted; for thee my flesh, O, how many ways ! ‘ This is truly the beatitude of those that hunger and thirst after justice; this is truly the prelude to the life of heaven, truly a beginning of eternal life, ‘ quaedam inchoatio vitae aeternae. ‘ as St. Thomas has said. This is the supreme, but normal, development of the life of grace on earth, the seed of glory, semen gloriae.

WHAT ARE WE TO CONCLUDE FROM THIS DOCTRINE, WHICH MAY APPEAR TOO SUBLIME FOR US POOR MORTALS ?

It would certainly be too sublime for us if we had not received in baptism that life of grace which, in us too, must develop into eternal life; if we had not often received Holy Communion, the precise effect of which is to increase that grace within us. Let us remind ourselves that each of our Communions ought to be substantially more fervent than the preceding, since each of them ought to increase the love of God in us, and thus dispose us to receive our Lord with a greater fervor of will on the following day.

As St. John of the Cross says, spiritual souls that desire this union would attain it if they did not flee from those trials which God sends them for their purification.

Exactly the same doctrine is found in the Dialogue of St. Catherine of Siena, where we are given the explanation of those words of Christ: ‘ If any man thirst let him come to me and drink.... Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. ‘

‘ You were all invited, generally and in particular, by My Truth when He cried in the Temple, saying: “ If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink.... “ So that you are invited to the fountain of living water of Grace, and it is right for you, with perseverance to keep by Him who is become for you a bridge, not being turned back by any contrary winds that may arise, either of prosperity or adversity, and to persevere until you find Me, Who give the water of Life, by means of this sweet Word of love, my only-begotten Son.... ‘

‘ But you must have thirst, because only those that thirst are invited. “ If any man thirst, “ He says, “ let him come to me and drink. “ He who has no thirst will not persevere, for either fatigue causes him to stop, or pleasure distracts him... he turns back at the smallest persecution, for he likes it not... The intellect must gaze into the ineffable love which I have shown thee by means of My only-begotten Son.... A man who is full of My love and the love of his neighbor finds himself the companion of many real virtues; and then the soul is disposed to thirst: it thirsts for virtue, and the honor of My name and the salvation of souls, every other thirst in him is spent and dead. The soul then walks securely... being stripped of self-love; it is raised above itself and above transitory things.... It contemplates the deep love that I have manifested to you in Christ crucified.... The heart, emptied of the things that pass away, becomes filled with heavenly love which gives access to the waters of grace. Having arrived there, the soul passes through the door of Christ crucified and tastes the water of life, slaking his thirst in Me, who am the Ocean of Peace. ‘

What practical conclusion are we to draw from all this ? We ought to say and repeat this prayer to our Blessed Lord.

‘ Lord, teach me to know the obstacles that, consciously or unconsciously, I am placing in the way of Thy grace in me. Give me the strength to put them aside, and if I am negligent therein, vouchsafe Thyself to remove them, howsoever I may suffer thereby. What wouldst Thou have me to do for Thee this day, my God ? Show me what it is in me that displeaseth Thee. Teach me rightly to value the Precious Blood which Thou didst shed for me, of the sacramental or spiritual communion by which we are enabled to drink that Blood from the wound of Thy most loving Heart.

‘ Make me, O Lord, to grow in love of Thee. Grant that our inner conversation may never cease; that I may never separate myself from Thee; that I may receive all that Thou dost deign to give me; and that I may not

stand in the way of the grace which through me should be poured out upon other souls to give them light and life. ‘

And thus, in the words of St. Thomas, man lives no longer for himself, but for God. He may say, with St. Paul: ‘ To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. ‘ Life for me is not study, not work, or natural activity of any kind, but Christ.

Such is the way that leads to this quasi-experimental and almost continuous knowledge of the Blessed Trinity dwelling within us. And this is what makes St. Catherine say at the end of her Dialogue :

‘ O eternal Trinity, O Godhead, O divine Nature that gavest to the Blood of Thy Son so great a price, Thou, O eternal Trinity, art a bottomless sea into which the more I plunge the more I find, and the more I find the more I seek Thee still. Of Thee it is never possible to say- Enough. The soul that is sated in Thy depths desires Thee yet unceasingly, for it hungers ever after Thee.... Thou art the fire that burns ever and is never quenched, the fire that consumes in itself all the self-love of souls, that melts all ice and gives all light. This light is an ocean into which the soul plunges ever more deeply and there finds peace. ‘

What better commentary could we find on those sublime words of St. Paul to the Philippians : ‘ the peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. ‘ l his is the fruit of the third conversion, in very truth a prelude to the life of heaven.

NOTE ON THE CALL TO THE INFUSED CONTEMPLATION OF THE MYSTERIES OF FAITH

WE have pointed out above—and we have developed the theme at length elsewhere —that the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost are connected with charity, and that they consequently develop together with it. It is therefore impossible to have a high degree of charity without having at the same time and in a proportionate degree the gifts of understanding and wisdom, gifts which, together with faith, are the principle of the infused contemplation of revealed mysteries. In some of the saints, as in St. Augustine, this contemplation bears immediately upon the mysteries themselves; in others, as in a St. Vincent de Paul, it bears upon the practical consequences of these mysteries; for example, upon the life of the members of the mystical body

of Christ. But in either case it is infused contemplation. The superhuman mode of the gifts, a mode of activity which is derived from the special inspiration of the Holy Ghost and which transcends the human mode of the virtues, is at first latent, as in the ascetic life; but then it becomes manifest and frequent in the mystical life. In fact, the Holy Ghost usually inspires souls proportionately to their habitual docility or to their supernatural dispositions (i.e. according to the degree in which they possess the virtues and the gifts). This is definitely the traditional teaching.

We have also shown elsewhere, that according to St. Thomas the gifts have not a human mode specifically distinct from their superhuman mode; for if this were so, the former might always be perfected without ever attaining to the latter, and would thus not be essentially subordinate to it.

Now, if the gifts have no human mode specifically distinct from their superhuman mode, it follows that—as we have often said—there is for all truly spiritual. souls a general remote call or vocation to the infused contemplation of the mysteries of faith—a contemplation which alone can give a profound and living understanding of the redemptive Incarnation, of the indwelling of God within us, of the sacrifice of Calvary substantially perpetuated on the altar during the Mass, and of the mystery of the Cross which should be reproduced in any true and profound Christian life. However, this ‘ general and remote call ‘ does not mean the same as an ‘ individual and proximate call, ‘ just as a ‘ sufficient call ‘ does not mean the same as an ‘ efficacious call. ‘

We have recently been conceded, on this matter, a point which we had not asked—and which, incidentally, we do not accept—namely, that ‘ the negative clement of perfection, that is to say, detachment from creatures, must be the same for all souls: complete, absolute, universal ‘; ‘ there can be no degrees in the absence of voluntary faults. The very smallest, like the very greatest, destroys perfection... a thread is enough to hold a man captive. ‘

We do not think that detachment from creatures is the same for all, whether for the greatest saints or for those souls that have reached a minimal perfection. And the principal reason is, that perfection excludes not only faults that are directly voluntary, but also those that are indirectly voluntary; those which proceed from negligence and a relative tepidity, from a secret and semi-conscious egoism that does not allow the depth of the soul to belong completely to God. Likewise there is a certain co-

relational between the intensive growth of charity and its extension, in consequence of which charity gradually excludes even those obstacles which we more or less unconsciously oppose to the work of grace in our souls.

If then, as we are granted, every soul is called by its progress in the love of God to exclude all voluntary faults, even the smallest, even those that are indirectly voluntary, it will succeed only by means of a high degree of charity. This charity will, evidently, be proportionate to the vocation of the individual soul; it will not be the same for Bernadette of Lourdes as it was for St. Paul; but it will have to be a high degree of charity. Without this the depth of the soul will not belong completely to God; without this there will still be some egoism, which will manifest itself often enough by faults that are at least indirectly voluntary.

If a soul is to be perfect, it must possess a degree of charity higher than that which it possessed when it was still in the ranks of beginners or of proficients; just as in the physical order the full age of manhood presupposes a physical strength superior to that of childhood or adolescence —though it may be that accidentally a youth is found to be more vigorous than a fully grown man.

What conclusion follows regarding the purgation of the depth of the soul, which is necessary to exclude all egoism and secret pride ? A recent study on this question contains the following:

‘ I admit that the passive purgations (which are of the mystical order) are necessary in order to arrive at the purity required for mystical union; and it is in this sense that St. John of the Cross speaks.... But I deny that the passive purgations are necessary for the purity required in the union of love by conformity of wills.—The reason of this difference is a profound one. For the mystical union, which involves infused contemplation and love, active purgation is not sufficient, precisely because the purity of the will is not sufficient. It is necessary that there should be added to it a sort of psychological purity of the substance and the powers of the soul, which consists in rendering them adapted to the mode of being of the divine infusion. ‘

The important question, then, is: Are the passive purgations, according to St. John of the Cross, not necessary for the profound purity of the will ? Are they not necessary in order to exclude that more or less conscious egoism, and those indirectly voluntary faults which are incompatible with the full

perfection of charity, incompatible also with the full perfection of the infused virtues and gifts, which develop together with charity like so many functions of the same spiritual organism ?

The answer to this extremely important question, for our part, is not for a moment in doubt.

It suffices to read in the Dark Night the description of those faults of beginners which render the purgation of the senses necessary. Here are, not faults opposed to the sort of psychological purity of which our author speaks, but faults which are contrary to the moral purity of the sensibility and of the will. They are, in fact, as St. John of the Cross tells us, the seven capital sins translated into the order of the spiritual life, such as spiritual greed, spiritual sloth, spiritual pride.

The same remark may be made of the faults of proficients which render necessary the passive purgation of the spirit; they are ‘ stains of the old man which still remain in the spirit, like a rust which will disappear only under the action of an intense fire. ‘ These proficients, says St. John of the Cross, are really subject to natural affections; they have moments of roughness, of impatience; there is still in them a secret spiritual pride, and an egoism which causes some of them to make use of spiritual goods in a manner not sufficiently detached, and so they are led into the path of illusions. In a word, the depth of the soul is lacking, not only in psychological purity, but in the moral purity that is required. Tauler has spoken in the same sense, solicitous especially to purify the depth of the soul of all self-love, of all more or less conscious egoism. Hence it is our opinion that the passive purgations are necessary for this profound moral purity. But these purgations are of the mystical order. They do not always appear under so definitely contemplative a form as that described by St. John of the Cross; but in the lives of the saints, even of the most active among them, like a Vincent de Paul, the chapters which treat of their interior sufferings prove that they all have a common basis, which none has described better than St. John of the Cross.

A final and very important concession has been made to us in connection with the famous passage of the Living Flame, ST. II, 23:

‘ It behooves us to note why it is that there are so few that attain to this lofty stale. It must be known that this is not because God is pleased that there should be few raised to this high spiritual state-on the contrary it would please Him if all were so raised—but rather because He finds few

vessels in whom He can perform so high and lofty a work. For, when He proves them in small things and finds them weak and sees that they at once flee from labor, and desire not to submit to the least discomfort or mollification... He finds that they are not strong enough to bear the favor which He was granting them when He began to purge them, and goes no farther with their purification.... ‘

With regard to this it has recently been conceded. ‘ We admit that St. John of the Cross is treating here of the spiritual marriage, and that he states that the will of God is that all souls should attain to this state. But we deny that this implies a universal call to the mystical life.... The confusion arises, in our opinion, from a failure to distinguish two elements included by St. John of the Cross in the two degrees of union called spiritual betrothal and marriage. One of these two elements is essential and permanent; the other accidental and transitory. The essential element is the union of wills between God and the soul, a union which results from the absence of voluntary faults and from the perfection of charity; the accidental element consists in the actual union of the powers, a mystical union in the proper sense of the word, a union which cannot be continuous. ‘

In this supposition, it is possible that the transforming union, or spiritual marriage, should exist in a person without that person ever having had a mystical union, the mystical union being merely an accidental element, like the interior words or the intellectual vision of the Blessed Trinity mentioned by St. Teresa. To us, on the contrary, it appears certain that, according to St. John of the Cross, the transforming union cannot exist without there having been at least from time to time a very lofty contemplation of the divine perfections, an infused contemplation proceeding from the gifts, which have now reached a degree proportionate to that of perfect charity. It is, he says, ‘ even as the fire that penetrates the log of wood... and having attacked and wounded it with its flame, prepares it to such a degree that it can enter it and transform it into itself. ‘

Moreover, to our mind it is absolutely certain-that the profound union of wills between God and the soul, which is recognized as being the essential element of the transforming union, presupposes the moral purgation of the depth of the soul, a purgation from that more or less conscious self-love or egoism which is the source at least of many indirectly voluntary faults; and this moral purification of the depth of the soul, according to St. John of the

Cross, requires the passive purgations which eliminate the faults of beginners and proficients.

We therefore maintain what we have said, in common with numerous theologians, Dominican and Carmelite, about the doctrine of St. Thomas and St. John of the Cross concerning the gifts of the Holy Ghost. To conclude, we recall especially these two important texts

‘ The night of sense is common and comes to many; these are the beginners. ‘ Being passive, this purification, or night, is of the mystical order. ‘ The way of progressives or proficients... is called the way of illumination or of infused contemplation, wherewith God Himself feeds and refreshes the soul. ‘ Hence infused contemplation is in the normal way of sanctity, even before the unitive way is reached; and therefore it is inconceivable that a soul should be in the state of spiritual marriage or the transforming union without ever having had that infused contemplation of the mysteries of faith which is the eminent exercise of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, developing in us side by side with charity.

We cannot admit that a mind of the caliber of St. John of the Cross can have meant only something accidental when he wrote the passage which we have just quoted, and which we quote once more in conclusion:

‘ The way of progressives or of proficients... is called the way of illumination or of infused contemplation, wherewith God Himself feeds and refreshes the soul.

THE TRINITY AND GOD THE CREATOR

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THE TRINITY AND GOD THE CREATOR

PREFACE

In his motu proprio, Doctoris Angelici, of June 29, 1914, Pope Pius X commanded that the universities and institutions of learning which were empowered to grant academic degrees and the doctorate in sacred theology should use the Summa theologica of St. Thomas as their text.

On March 7, 1916, the Sacred Congregation of Seminaries and Universities interpreted this decree as follows: “The Summa theologica of St. Thomas must be accepted as the text for the lectures inasmuch as they treat of the scholastic part of the questions. The method to be followed is this: the Summa theologica is to be consulted frequently and explained together with some other text which presents the logical order of the questions and the positive teaching” (Acta Apost. Sedis, VIII, 157).

To meet this demand, we have already published three treatises: De revelatione ab Ecclesia proposita, De Deo uno, De Eucharistia. The first part of this present work treats of the Trinity. After presenting the testimony of the Scriptures and the Fathers, we explain the questions in St. Thomas’ Summa theologica, article by article, comparing his doctrine with the teaching of earlier and later theologians.

We have laid great stress on St. Thomas’ concept of relation because from it flow all the other conclusions in this treatise, and these conclusions will appear to be in accord with the fundamental thesis of the Thomistic treatise on the one God which establishes that God is self-subsisting Being and that consequently there is but one nature in Him although the real relations in God are really distinct from one another.

In this way we shall show how St. Thomas perfected St. Augustine’s teaching on the Trinity. As St. Augustine solved many difficulties remaining in the doctrine of the Greek Fathers on the Trinity, so St. Thomas explained many of St. Augustine’s doubts about the processions, relations, and persons. This will become abundantly clear as we proceed to the different parts of the present treatise. We shall give particular attention to the indwelling of the Holy Trinity in the souls of the just.

With regard to the questions on creation, the distinction of things, their preservation, and on evil, we shall explain each article because they are all of great importance. In the treatises on the angels, corporeal creatures, and man, we shall study only the more important questions, laying special emphasis on the principles which throw light on the whole matter. It is well to descend from these principles to the conclusions and then rise from the conclusions to the principles, so that the unity of our science will become clear and that our study may dispose to a contemplation of divine things and to a true union with God.

We hope that in some degree at least we shall attain the goal envisaged by the Vatican Council: “Human reason illumined by faith, when it inquires diligently and piously and sincerely, will with God’s help attain to a most fruitful understanding of the mysteries both from the analogies of those things which it knows naturally and from the interconnection between the mysteries themselves and between the mysteries and man’s ultimate end.”

INTRODUCTION

1. THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS TREATISE

If we read the Fathers of the Church and the ancient theologians, I we shall see that for them the dogma of the Trinity, however obscure it may have been for them, was of the greatest importance. Thus Tertullian asked: “What is the substance of the New Testament, except that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, believed to be three, are one God?” The words of St. Hilary on this mystery, expressed in the sign of the cross, with which Christians sign themselves, have been quoted many times; “This is what the Church understood, what the synagogue did not believe, what philosophy could not grasp.” The dogma of the Trinity, therefore, is that fundamental truth by which believing Christians are distinguished from the Jews and pagans.

Both the Greek and the Latin Fathers wrote long treatises on the Trinity, at first as positive and apologetic theology and later as speculative theology. Among the Greek Fathers we find St. Athanasius, St. Basil, St. Gregory Nazianzen, St. Gregory of Nyssa, Didymus, Cyril of Alexandria, St. John Damascene; and among the Latin Fathers, St. Hilary, St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, St. Fulgentius, and Boetius.

Among the Scholastics, all the great theologians and their commentators wrote speculative treatises on the Trinity; among modern positive theologians, Petau and Thomassin wrote at length on this dogma. Finally, the more recent theologians have accorded this dogma the same importance, as Franzelin, Scheeben, Kuhn, Billot, Buonpensiere, de Regnon (who wrote four volumes, 1892-98), and J. Lebreton. Father Jugie’s recent work is based on the sources of revelation and the teachings of the dissident Oriental Churches. A. d’Ales wrote his De Deo Trino in 1934; P. Galtier wrote De SS. Trinitate in se et in nobis in 1933; L. Choppin, La Trinite chez les Peres, Apostoliques in 1925; F. Cavalerra, Les premieres formules

trinitaires de S. Augustin in 1925, and M. Schmaus, Die Psychologie Trinitatslehre des hl. Augustinus in 1927.

In view of this theological activity it is surprising that toward the end of the last century the question of the importance of this dogma should have arisen. With regard to this question three positions may be distinguished.

Certain Protestants, holding that this mystery is incomprehensible, declared that God revealed it as an enigma to humble human reason, which seeks to measure all things according to its own principles, and not in order to perfect our intellects by sublime and fruitful knowledge.

This position, which is in opposition to the whole tradition of the doctors, exaggerates and distorts a truth. It is indeed true that in the revelation of this mystery God shows us that His intimate life and His divinity transcend even our highest and most universal analogical concepts, the concepts of being and unity. For the Deity as such, naturally unknowable, is in a sense above the being and unity which are naturally knowable, as Cajetan said so well. The revelation of the mystery of the Trinity shows that the Deity is also above the absolute and the relative for, as we shall see, the Deity as it is in itself is not really distinct from the divine relations, from paternity, filiation, and spiration. Thus it is not something merely absolute nor merely relative, but something above these, the supreme enigma. But must we conclude that the manifestation of this enigma was intended solely to humble our reason and not also to perfect and illuminate it?

Many other Protestants during the nineteenth century, and some Catholics too, like Hirscher, declared that this dogma indeed illuminated our minds, but only in an extrinsic manner. They thought that for us the Trinity had no intrinsic importance, but that it served only to obviate contradictions in the other mysteries of the incarnation of the Son of God and the sending of the Holy Ghost, which in themselves are of great value to us.

The basis of this position, as its authors declared, is that the dogma of the Trinity taken intrinsically, prescinding from the other truths with which it is connected, cannot perfect our inner life, our faith, hope, and charity. They argue as if it mattered not to our interior life whether we believe that there are four divine persons, or that the divine persons are not really distinct from one another. Since, according to these men, God did not reveal this mystery because of its intrinsic validity, any theological attempt to penetrate it is futile, and therefore the treatise on the Trinity is merely an introduction

to the treatises on the redemptive Incarnation and the mission of the Holy Ghost, which perfect our faith, hope, and charity.

Such an introduction, they said, is necessary to prevent any contradiction between the essential truths intrinsically necessary for the Christian life: between 1. the unity of God, which is the fundamental truth of the Old Testament; 2. the divinity of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who, according to the Gospels, is not entirely identified with His Father; and 3. the divinity of the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete and Sanctifier, sent by the Father and the Son. These are the essential dogmas of Christianity, which cannot be reconciled without the distinction and the consubstantiality of the three divine persons, as is clear from the first centuries, when Sabellianism denied the real distinction between the three divine persons, and when Arius and others denied the consubstantiality of the Son and the Holy Spirit. According to this position the dogma of the Trinity was revealed to illuminate our minds but solely in an extrinsic manner to prevent contradictions in the other mysteries.

The Modernists, however, like Le Roy, extended this position in a pragmatic sense, declaring, “The dogmas of faith are to be accepted only in a practical sense, that is, only as preceptive norms of action and not as rules of faith.” Thus, for the Modernists the formula of the dogma of the Trinity was introduced into the professions of faith to prevent such heresies as oppose the Christian life.

This position is similar to Locke’s Nominalist philosophical position. Locke taught that the principle of contradiction is a solemn futility, in itself of slight importance but necessary nonetheless to obviate absurdity in our thought and speech.

If a principle is necessary to avoid error, is it without all intrinsic value? Certainly contradictions are not eliminated from our thinking without some positive illumination, and the principle of contradiction precludes all absurdity only because it is a fundamental law of real being and of thought. Thus, ontology is not a solemn futility but an important part of metaphysics which, in opposition to absolute evolutionism, defends the validity of the principles of contradiction and identity, which was denied by Heraclitus when he said,” ll things are becoming and nothing exists and in the becoming itself being and non-being are identified.”

So also in the spiritual order, charity dispels all discord because it is the supreme virtue uniting the soul with God and also uniting souls to one

another. Similarly, the mystery of the Trinity would not exclude every contradiction in the other mysteries of the incarnation of the Son and the sending of the Holy Spirit unless it were the expression of the intimate life of God in the most sublime aspect of that life.

The third position is the traditional view of those who hold that the dogma of the Trinity possesses intrinsic value of the greatest importance for us. This position was defended during the nineteenth century by Kleutgen (Theologie der Vorzeit) and Scheeben, whose fundamental reasoning may here be stated briefly and later developed during the course of this treatise. This dogma 1. perfects our natural knowledge of God the Creator, 2. it gives us supernatural knowledge of the intimate life of God, and 3. it throws light from above on other supernatural mysteries.

The first reason is found in St. Thomas: “The knowledge of the divine persons was necessary for right thinking about the creation of things. For when we say that God made all things by His Word we avoid the error of those who say that God made all things necessarily because of His nature. But when we discover in God the procession of love we see that God produced creatures not because of any need, nor because of any extrinsic cause, but because of the love of His goodness.” This is to say, as Scheeben points out, that the revelation of the mystery of the Trinity perfects and confirms our natural knowledge of God the Creator and of creation as an entirely free act of God ad extra. This will be all the more apparent when we remember that many philosophers denied the freedom of creation because of the Platonic and Neoplatonic principle that the good is essentially diffusive of itself. But God is the highest good. Therefore God is essentially and to the greatest degree diffusive of Himself even as the sun radiates its light and heat everywhere by its very nature.

Reply. That good is diffusive of itself according to its particular aptitude, I concede; that it is always so because of its actuality, I deny. On this principle St. Thomas showed that creation was fitting and proper, but in his following article he went on to say that, although creation is fitting it is entirely free because “the goodness of God is perfect and is able to be without other beings since nothing of perfection accrues to it from other beings.” Some obscurity remains, however; for if God had created nothing, how would the principle that good is diffusive of itself be verified in God? In the first place how could there be an end eliciting the action of creation, and secondly how would creation be effected? Here Leibnitz erred by

saying that creation is not physically but morally necessary, and that God would not be perfectly wise and good if He had not created, and moreover if He had not created the best of all possible worlds. Such was also the teaching of Malebranche. This obscurity is clarified by the revelation of the mystery of the Trinity, for, even if God had created nothing, there would still be in Him the infinite fecundity of the generation of the Son and the spiration of the Holy Ghost. Thus the principle that good is diffusive of itself is perfectly verified in God. Indeed the highest good is necessarily diffusive of itself within itself but not by causality; by a communication which is not only a participation in its nature but a communication of His entire indivisible nature, of His entire intimate life in the generation of His Son, who was not made, and in the spiration of the Holy Ghost.

Thus from a higher plane comes confirmation that creation is an entirely free act by which God communicates without Himself a participation of His being, His life, and His knowledge. Thus also it is more evident that God is not the intrinsic cause but the extrinsic cause of the universe, the end for which it was created, the being that created, conserves, and keeps it in motion.

If, therefore, God created actually, it was through love, to show in an entirely free act His goodness, and not in any way by a necessity of His nature, as St. Thomas taught in the passage cited above against the pantheists and against that absolute optimism which is found in the teaching of Leibnitz and Malebranche.

The second reason supporting the traditional view is that the revelation of the Trinity has intrinsic value for us and is of the greatest importance for the supernatural knowledge of God in His intimate life and immanent operations. No created intellect by its own natural powers is able to know the formal object of the uncreated intellect which is the Deity in its own proper aspect of Deity; the created intellect knows God only according to the common and analogical terms of being, unity, truth, goodness, and so on. For if any created intellect, human or angelic, could attain even confusedly and vaguely to the formal object of the uncreated intellect, it would then be of that same nature as are the intellects of the ignorant man and the greatest philosopher. Then we would have that pantheistic confusion of the uncreated and created natures which, like sanctifying grace, would be a participation in the formal nature of God. This is profoundly explained by St. Thomas: “It is not by his natural knowledge

that the angel knows what God is, because the very nature of the angel by which he attains to the knowledge of God is an effect not commensurate with the power of the cause that made it."

The angel, and especially man, by his natural knowledge cannot attain to God except by those perfections in which he can share in the natural order, such as being, unity, goodness. But God as He is in Himself cannot be shared in the natural order; such participation can be only in the supernatural order by sanctifying grace. Thus even an angel in his natural knowledge is related to God as He is in Himself as the eye that perceives all the colors of the rainbow but would not perceive white light from which the colors are derived as inadequate effects. St. Thomas taught: "Revelation most properly defines God inasmuch as He is the highest cause, teaching not only that which is knowable by creatures but also communicating how He is known to Himself alone and to others in revelation." This is primarily the Godhead Himself, or the intimate life of God, which is properly made known by the revelation of the Trinity.

In the Trinity we see the infinite and eternal fecundity of the divine nature, which is communicated by the Father to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost by the Father and the Son. The Protestant theologians mentioned above say that the mystery of the Trinity is an enigma without meaning for our interior life, but the traditional theologians say that in this mystery of the Trinity we come to some knowledge of the most perfect intellectual life, that is in the three persons, who in the same divine truth live by the same act of pure intelligence which is subsisting intelligence itself.

So also in this mystery there is some manifestation of the supreme life of charity in the love of the three divine persons, who in the same infinite goodness live by the same act of pure love, which is subsisting love itself.

Here we have the supreme model of our supernatural life, the love of the three divine persons, since our adoptive sonship is the image participating in the eternal filiation of the only-begotten Son. For so Christ prayed for us to the Father: "That they may be one, as We also are" (John 17:11); and St. Paul writing to the Romans said: "For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be made conformable to the image of His Son; that He might be the first-born among many brethren."

By its own powers the created intellect could not know this essentially supernatural mystery, and without some revelation, more or less obscure, there would be no explicit knowledge of the intimate life of God in itself.

Some implicit knowledge of the intimate life of God, however, is obtained when we believe that God is and that He is the rewarder, for we know Him not only as the author of nature but also as the author of grace and the remunerator in the order of salvation. The intimate life of God, therefore, is known from the effects of grace and salvation, but this life is known explicitly in itself in the mystery of the Trinity, although not with that clarity with which it will be seen in heaven.

This is clearly expressed by Alexander of Hales and still more clearly by St. Thomas, who says: “Only this can be known about God by natural reason, that He necessarily possesses being inasmuch as He is the principle of all beings. God’s creative power is common to the entire Trinity and pertains therefore to the unity of essence and not to the distinction of persons.”

Objection. This knowledge of the intimate life of God remains so obscure that it does not of itself throw any positive light on the human mind.

Reply. Clearly even a very imperfect knowledge of the intimate life of God is of the utmost importance for us in this life since it is an anticipation of eternal life. This knowledge will correspond to our natural inefficacious and conditional desire of seeing the essence of the first cause and the intimate conciliation of the divine attributes; it corresponds also to our supernatural and efficacious desire which proceeds from infused hope and especially from infused charity, which is the true friendship between God and the just man. Any friendship presupposes a union of the friends and strives for a more intimate union between them.

To say, therefore, that the revelation of the mystery of the Trinity is without real value for us is to look at the matter from a naturalistic viewpoint. We recall here the words of Aristotle: “Man should be attracted to divine and immortal things as much as he is able, and however little he may see of these things, that little is to be loved and desired more than all knowledge he has of inferior substances.”

Christ our Lord pointed out the importance of the mystery of the Trinity when He said: “But I have called you friends; because all things whatsoever I have heard of My Father, I have made known to you, “ and “Father, I will that where I am, they also whom Thou hast given Me may be with Me; that they may see My glory which Thou hast given Me, because Thou hast loved Me before the creation of the world.” These words refer primarily to the eternal generation of the Word.

Indeed the act and the fruit of charity is that rejoicing in God because God is infinitely perfect in Himself. This joy, however, is greatly increased by the knowledge of God's inner life and His infinite fecundity. This is what St. Paul meant, writing to the Colossians: "That their hearts may be comforted, being instructed in charity, and unto all riches of fullness of understanding, unto the knowledge of the mystery of God the Father and of Christ Jesus: in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

When theologians abandon the contemplation of divine things, they say that the revelation of the mystery of the Trinity is of no intrinsic value for us, that it is useful only to prevent contradictions in the enunciation of other mysteries. And because of this trend theology gradually became anti-contemplative. Men began to write books of theology devoid of contemplation and piety, just as if they were to write books of piety devoid of doctrine. The Fathers of the Church and the great doctors, on the contrary, looked on the mystery of the Trinity as having the greatest importance for us. The tract on the Trinity, of course, was not purely practical like the tracts on penance and matrimony, but it afforded the greatest help in attaining the higher stages of contemplation and union with God.

Amid his tribulations, St. Hilary, writing of the Trinity, said: "The persecution of men is a small thing because the persecutors cannot touch the divine persons nor diminish their joy." A friend rejoices in the joy of his friend, and the just man rejoices in the beatitude of God.

All the great doctors who wrote about the Trinity, from St. Athanasius to St. Thomas, were true contemplatives, deeply concerned not only with purely practical human affairs but also with divine things, with the divine life itself, the knowledge and love of which is the beginning of eternal life. By the revelation of the Trinity we are given the supernatural knowledge of God, as distinct from natural knowledge; and immediately the distinction of the two orders of knowledge becomes clearer. This was the great argument against Baius, who denied the essential distinction between nature and grace, as if grace were something owing to nature. This distinction between the two orders stood out so clearly in the revelation of the dogma of the Trinity that some rationalists taught that the tract on the one God contained all that could be said about God. Consequently the Protestant liberals, who are rationalists in a sense, no longer mention the Trinity, speaking

exclusively of the unity of God, and therefore came to be known as Unitarians.

Finally, the revelation of the mystery of the Trinity not only serves to obviate contradictions in the teaching of the other mysteries, but also throws a positive light from above on all the other supernatural mysteries, on the redemptive Incarnation, the sending of the Holy Ghost, and the life of grace. All this will be clear to us in heaven, but even now we can see that the visible and invisible missions of the divine persons presuppose the internal processions, because no one is sent by himself, but the Son is sent by the Father, and the Holy Spirit is sent by the Father and the Son. Again, our adoptive sonship is the image and participation in the sonship of the eternal Son, since the only-begotten Son is "the first-born among many brethren." Adoption is attributed to the Father as to its author, to the Son as to the model, and to the Holy Ghost as to Him who imprints the character. So also the friendship between the saints and the just is an image participating in the friendship of the divine persons, according to our Lord's words, "that they may be one, as We also are." The life of grace is, as it were, a reflected light, manifesting God's inner life and the divine processions.

Thus St. Thomas taught: "The knowledge of the divine persons was necessary for us,... especially that we might think correctly about the salvation of the human race, which is accomplished by the incarnate Son and the gift of the Holy Spirit." He says it was necessary for correct positive thinking, not only to avoid contradiction negatively. The reason is that a truth which excludes equivocation and absurdity in any teaching is a higher truth, such as those eminent principles of being and reasoning and ontology itself in the philosophical sphere. This will stand out most clearly after we have attained the light of glory; when we see the Trinity clearly, the other supernatural mysteries will be lucidly evident.

We see, therefore, that the revelation of the mystery of the Trinity has not only an extrinsic value, but an intrinsic worth in illuminating our minds, for it makes manifest to us the principal and supreme object of our faith, which according to the arrangement of the Apostles' Creed is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost and those things attributed to them in the order of salvation.

Lastly, we should point out that the just here on earth, until that time when they reach the height of perfection which is called the transforming

union, described by St. Theresa in the seventh mansion, enjoy the contemplation of the mystery of the Trinity amid the darkness of faith, which is really the highest exercise of the theological virtues and of the gift of understanding and wisdom.

Looking at the matter from this exalted viewpoint, those opinions which hold that the mystery of the Trinity is of no intrinsic value appear not as the dicta of wise men but rather as the fruit of spiritual stupidity and ignorance in the scriptural sense of the word. St. Paul said: “Although we speak wisdom among the perfect; yet not the wisdom of the world,... but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery,... that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him.”

2. THE TEACHING OF THE CHURCH ON THE TRINITY

The Catholic doctrine on the Trinity is expressed in the various creeds and definitions, such as the Apostles’ Creed, the Athanasian Creed, the Nicene Creed, and many others of later date, and in Denzinger. Finally, the Catholic belief in the Trinity was summed up by the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) in that famous chapter, Firmiter: “Firmly we believe and simply we confess that one alone is true God, the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit, three persons, but one essence, one substance, and one nature entirely simple. The Father is from no one, the Son from the Father alone, and the Holy Ghost equally from both... consubstantial, co-equal, co-omnipotent, and co-eternal... . We confess and believe with Peter Lombard that it is one supreme being, incomprehensible and ineffable; this supreme being is truly the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, three persons together and each one singly; and therefore in God there is only a Trinity, not a quaternity, because each of the three persons is that thing, that substance, that essence, that divine nature.”

Again, “No real distinction exists between the essence and the persons, but a real distinction exists between the persons among themselves.”

Again, the three persons are one principle of operation without, because the divine operation without proceeds from the divine omnipotence, which is common to the three divine persons.

This definition of the Fourth Lateran Council was amplified by the Council of Florence (1439) in the dogmatic decree of the union of the

Greeks: “We define that the Holy Spirit is eternally from the Father and the Son and that He has His essence and His subsisting being simultaneously from the Father and the Son, and that He proceeds eternally from both as from one principle and by one spiration.” Other definitions about each person in particular may be found here.

The mystery of the Trinity may be more briefly stated as the mystery of one God in three divine persons. But in opposition to the pseudo-synod of Pistoia it should be said that it is not one God divided into three persons but one God in three distinct persons, since there is no real distinction in the Godhead Himself, as the Eleventh Council of Toledo declared: “The Godhead is not reduced to single persons and is not increased into three persons.”

THE TRADITIONAL SYMBOL OF THE TRINITY

The equilateral triangle is commonly proposed as a symbol expressive of this mystery, and the symbol expresses more than is sometimes thought. It very tangibly expresses an outline of the mystery with respect to the distinction between the persons and those things that flow from it.

(a) The three angles are really distinct from each other although they are not really distinct from the area of the triangle, which is numerically the same for all three angles. Thus the three divine persons are really distinct from each other but not from the divine essence, which is numerically the same in all three persons. Further, the three angles are really distinguished from each other by opposite relations but not from the area to which they are in no way opposed; so also it is with the three divine persons.

(b) The three angles are equal and, as it were, consubstantial because they are constituted by the same surface which is no greater in the three than it is in one. Thus there is one surface in three distinct angles but not distinguished into three angles.

(c) Each angle renders the surface incommunicable in its own way, nevertheless when the first angle is formed it does not cause the surface of the other angles although it communicates its surface to the second angle, and through the second angle to the third. Thus the first angle, although not really distinct from its surface, communicates that surface without communicating itself. In the Trinity the Father communicates the divine nature but not Himself; likewise the Son with respect to the Holy Ghost.

(d) Lastly, even though the angles are equal, there is among them an order of origin without causality: the first angle once formed becomes the principle of the second, and both of these are the principle of the third. At the same time the second and third are not caused by the first because their surfaces are not caused, but it is the surface of the first which is communicated to them. This analogy will become clearer when the principal definitions of the Church on the Trinity are reduced to the following propositions, which are often written around an equilateral triangle as below.

The Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Ghost is God, and yet the Father is not the Son, because He does not generate Himself; nor is the Father the Holy Ghost, or the Son the Holy Ghost, because those who spirate are distinguished from that which is spirated as he who generates is distinguished from that which is generated. In the statement of this mystery we see the profound meaning of the word “is” and of the negation “is not.” As St. Thomas says: In every affirmative proposition about some reality the word “is” expresses the real identity of the subject and predicate. Here it expresses the real identity of the three divine persons with the divine essence, and the negation “is not” expresses the real distinction of the persons from each other. In this statement of the mystery the apparent contradiction is explained, that contradiction arising if God would be said to be one and three under the same aspects, e. g., nature.

In the Catholic Catechism, written by Cardinal Gasparri, this mystery is defined as:

(a) “God is one in the unity of nature in three really distinct persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, who constitute the Holy Trinity.” Thus the Father is the Godhead but He is not the Trinity.

(b) How are the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost distinguished from one another?

Answer. By the opposite relations of the persons, inasmuch as the Father generates the Son, and the Holy Ghost proceeds from both. (The Father does not generate Himself.)

(c) How are the three divine persons one God?

A. Because they are consubstantial, that is, they have one and the same divine nature and therefore the same attributes or perfections and operations ad extra. (The operations ad extra proceed from omnipotence, which is common to the three persons.)

(d) Is not power usually attributed to the Father, wisdom to the Son, and goodness to the Holy Ghost in the Scriptures?

A. Although all the attributes of divinity are common to the three divine persons, the Scriptures usually attribute power to the Father because He is the font of origin, wisdom to the Son because He is the word of the Father, and goodness and holiness to the Holy Ghost because He is the love of the other two.

We will spend no more time in the simple statement of this mystery; the explanation of the terms nature, person, and so on will be found in St. Thomas' articles.

3. Trinitarian Errors

We are here not concerned with atheists and pantheists, who deny God the Creator Himself, nor with the rationalists, who simply reject every supernatural mystery. The errors about the Trinity can be easily divided into those which attempt to safeguard the unity of the divine nature by denying either the real distinction between the persons (Monarchians and Sabellians) or the consubstantiality of the persons (Subordinationists, Arians, Macedonians). Opposed to these are the Tritheists who say there are three natures in God in order to safeguard the Trinity of persons.

We see how divine providence permits errors and heresies that the truth made stand out more clearly, just as it permits sin for a greater good. With regard to the Trinity, God permitted errors to appear which are opposed to one another as early as the first three centuries. During that time all the principal aspects of this supreme mystery were speculatively considered and this supreme dogma stood forth in the clearest light. In the East particularly the chief speculative heresies, those of the metaphysical order, preceded the Pelagian heresy, which is of the moral order and originated in the West.

The Trinitarian errors can be so classified as to support the axiom that erroneous systems often are true in what they affirm and false in what they deny because the reality with which they deal is higher and broader than the heresies themselves.

Denial

Trinity of persons

With respect to their real distinction—Monarchians & Modalists

With respect to their consubstantiality—Arians and Macedonians

Unity of nature—The Tritheism of Roscelline (11th cent.) and of Abbot Joachim (12th Cent.)

It would be difficult to imagine any other errors, unless we include the errors of modern rationalists, such as Kant.

These errors can also be presented in a way to show the opposition existing between them. Between Unitarianism (Monarchists, Modalists, and Arians) and Tritheism, the Catholic dogma of the Trinity appears as the highest point of truth, like the apex of a pyramid rising from errors opposed to one another. The errors thus opposed to one another appear false in what they deny, e. g., the denial of the Trinity or of the divine unity, and true in what they affirm, because the divine reality is infinitely broader than the limited concepts of the human mind. As we shall see, the medieval conflict between nominalism and realism had considerable influence on these theological questions.

ERRORS DENYING THE REAL DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE PERSONS

In the second century the Monarchians, believing in only one divine principle, declared that Christ was only man endowed with some divine power (Paul of Samosata) or that Christ was the Father who became incarnate and suffered (Patripassians). Chief among the Patripassians were Noetus, who was opposed in the East by Hippolytus, and Praxeas, whom Tertullian refuted in the West. Noetus and Praxeas argued that the Father and the Son were not really distinct but merely different names for the same person.

In the third century Sabellius proposed his Modalism, so called because in God he did not admit distinct persons but only accidental modes. Later the Modalists taught that in God there was but one person, who manifested Himself in three modes: as the lawgiver in the Old Testament (the Father), as the Redeemer in the New Testament (the Son), and finally as the sanctifier or Holy Spirit. The Sabellians and Modalists were opposed by Tertullian, St. Dionysius of Alexandria, St. Zephyrinus, and Callistus.

In the seventh century Modalism was revived by the Mohammedans. Mohammed admitted the existence of only God the Creator, Allah, who alone was to be adored, excluding the Trinity of persons. The Islamic formula of prayer, “There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is His prophet, “ was in Mohammed’s mind a negation of the Trinity and

contained within it the total apostasy from the Christian faith, denying at the same time the dogmas of the incarnation and redemption by Christ, who was no more than one of the prophets. Those who now write about the mysticism of Islam, should note this essential difference between Islam and Christianity.

In the Middle Ages, Modalism was again revived by the Waldensians and the Socinians, and later by the Unitarians, who constitute the liberal wing of Protestantism. It appears again in the theology of Kant, where God the Father is called the lawgiver, the Son the ruler, and the Holy Spirit the judge. Modern theosophists also are Unitarians, teaching that there is one eternal, infinite being, which manifests itself in three ways: as the first logos or the root of being, the second logos or the primitive duality, and the third logos or the universal intelligence. Others say in God there is intelligence, without real distinction from the object and the union of these two, and that these three may be called, in the Hegelian sense, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. All these errors are revivals of the Modalism of the third century.

ERRORS DENYING THE DIVINITY OF THE PERSONS

Most famous of these heresies was that of Arius, a priest of Alexandria, who was addicted to the Gnostic principle that God by reason of His excellence could not immediately produce inferior creatures but required some superior creature to mediate between Him and His creation. Following the leadership of the Ebionites and Gnostics, Arius denied the divinity of the Son, declaring that the Son was only the most perfect of creatures, made out of nothing in time, and thus subordinate to God. Hence the name Subordinationism. According to Arius, God the Father alone is eternal; the Father created the Son, not of His own substance but out of nothing, and then God made use of the Son as an instrument to create the universe and redeem men. According to Arius the Holy Ghost also is a creature, inferior not only to the Father but also to the Son. Hence Arius, at least in the beginning, held that the Son was entirely different from the Father in nature. This error was attacked by Alexander, the bishop of Alexandria, who called a synod attended by almost a hundred bishops, and excommunicated Arius. Best known among the opponents of Arius was St. Athanasius, who valiantly defended the Catholic teaching and the words of

St. John, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

To restore peace to the Church, a general council was called in 325 at Nicaea in Bithynia, which defined against Arius that the Son is consubstantial with the Father, homoousion two patri (“of the same substance with the Father”). The Council’s formula of faith was: “We believe in one God, the Father almighty maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten born of the Father, that is, out of the substance of the Father[not out of nothing], God of God, light of light, true God of true God, born, not made, of one substance with the Father, which in Greek is called homoousion, by whom all things were made. And in the Holy Ghost... .” After Arianism was thus condemned by the Church as a heresy, the Arians tried to dissimulate their error and said that the Son was similar in nature to the Father, homoiousion or homoion, but they refused to say that He was consubstantial or homoousion. Such was the teaching of Basil of Ancyra and Auxentius of Milan, who are called Semi-Arians. Arianism lasted into the sixth century, when it completely disappeared.

St. Athanasius’ defense of the dogma may be briefly summed up as follows: The Word is called God in St. John’s prologue, “And the Word was God”; His divinity is often affirmed in the epistles of St. Paul and by Christ Himself when He said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” Further, the Word deifies us, making us gods by participation, and for this it is necessary that the Word be God essentially, consubstantial with the Father, although distinct from Him as His Son. Similarly the Holy Ghost who vivifies us is essentially God, and therefore is mentioned with the Father and the Son in the formula of baptism.

Following the principles that misled Arius, Eunomius concluded that the Holy Ghost was not God but a creature made by the Son of God, inferior to Him and similar to the angels. At about the same time, the Macedonians like the Semi-Arians denied the divinity and consubstantiality of the Holy Ghost. Eunomius was refuted by St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Basil of Caesarea, and St. Ambrose. Macedonianism was condemned by St. Damasus in the fourth Council of Rome (380) and in the following year by the second ecumenical Council of Constantinople. The most important definition of the Council is: “If anyone shall say that the Holy Ghost is not truly and properly of the Father, like the Son, of the divine substance, and

true God, let him be anathema.” Thus in the fourth century, opposing these heresies, the Church explicitly taught a Trinity of distinct persons, upheld their divinity and consubstantiality, and so preserved the unity of essence together with the distinction of persons. In the earliest centuries, therefore, the Church explicitly condemned that Unitarianism which the liberal Protestants have recently revived.

TRITHEISM

Tritheism as such did not appear until the Middle Ages. In the sixth century, however, John Philoponus, a philosopher of Alexandria, prepared the way for Tritheism when he identified person with nature and taught that there were three natures in God and that there were still three persons in one God. In other words, the three divine persons participate in the divine nature as three men participate in human nature. He was condemned as a heretic in the Second Council of Constantinople (the fifth ecumenical council).

In the eleventh and twelfth centuries the controversy about universals affected questions about the Trinity in various ways. Roscellinus, the celebrated doctor of Nominalism, taught that the divine essence could not be common to three persons and that the three divine persons were three distinct realities or substances, in much the same way that three souls or three angels differ. Nevertheless, he said, the three divine persons form a certain unity inasmuch as they are endowed with one will and the same power.

Roscellinus arrived at this conclusion because of his Nominalism, according to which the universals have not even a fundamental existence in things, that is to say, the universals have no objective reference but are merely words adopted into our speech. Positivists and modern empiricists have returned to this view, refusing to admit any essential difference between intellectual and sensitive knowledge and reducing the idea to a composite image of the phantasm to which a common name has been joined. According to pure Nominalism, therefore, the universals do not exist in things even fundamentally; the only things that exist are the individuals. Thus humanity designates the aggregate of men and not human nature, which is specifically one. If, therefore, according to revelation, there are three divine persons, the Nominalists cannot conceive how they can have

the same divine nature, especially a divine nature which is numerically one, nor do they admit one specific nature for all men. St. Anselm attacked the Nominalism of Roscellinus, and in 1092 it was condemned by the Synod of Soissons.

In the eleventh century Gilbert Porretanus, who although he is often called a Nominalist is really a realist, inclined to Tritheism in another way by teaching that the divine relations are really distinct from the divine essence. Extreme realism believes that the universal exists formally apart from the thing, and consequently Gilbert placed real distinctions where they do not exist, for example, in man between the metaphysical grades of being, substantiality, corporeity, life, animality, rationality, unmindful of the fact that all these things are reduced to one comprehensive concept of man.

Similarly this extreme realism places a certain real distinction, or at least more than a virtual distinction, between the divine attributes, and also between the divine essence and the divine persons. It thus inclines to Tritheism because the “esse in” is multiplied in the divine persons and in the divine relations opposed to one another, while St. Thomas has shown that the “esse in” in the divine persons is not accidental but substantial and therefore is not multiplied.

Gilbert Porretanus was condemned by the Council of Reims in 1148. From his doctrine it would have followed that the divine relations would be accidents in God. St. Thomas’ reply is that in God, who is pure act, no accident is found, and the relations thus really distinguished from the divine substance like accidents cannot constitute persons. As we shall see below, the “esse in” of the relations in God is something substantial and therefore not really distinguished from the substance.

Thus Roscellinus and Gilbert Porretanus by different routes reached Tritheism by placing in God real distinctions which are not there. Finally, in the twelfth century Abbot Joachim of Calabria fell into Tritheism in an effort to correct Peter Lombard, whom he had misunderstood. He feared that the teaching of Peter Lombard would lead to a kind of quaternity inasmuch as the divine essence was neither the Father nor the Son nor the Holy Ghost. Trying to avoid this error he fell into another: he taught that between the three divine persons only a moral unity existed, arising from the consent of the will, a unity such as exists between a group of Christians. Consequently the divine nature would not be unique or one numerically, but it would be multiplied. This error of Abbot Joachim was condemned by the

Fourth Lateran Council: “We, however, with the approbation of the sacred council, believe and confess with Peter Lombard that the supreme entity is one, incomprehensible and ineffable indeed, which is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, the three persons together and singly each of the three persons. Therefore in God only a Trinity is found and not a quaternity, since each of the three persons is that entity, namely, the divine essence.” In this definition the word “is” in the statement, “The divine essence is the Father, “ indicates, as in every affirmative proposition, the real identity of the subject and the predicate. The divine essence is the Father without any real distinction; on the contrary the Father is not the Son and between the two persons is found a real distinction, a distinction which is antecedent to any consideration of the mind and based, as was more clearly expressed by the Council of Florence, on the opposition of relation. In the Council of Florence, called to reconcile the schismatic Greeks to the Church, was formulated the principle which illumines the whole doctrine of the Trinity: “In God all things are one and the same where no opposition of relation exists.” This opposition of relation exists between the divine persons themselves but not between the persons and the divine substance. The doctrine of the Church thus appears as the apex of a pyramid rising above the heresies opposed to each other which either deny the Trinity of the divine persons or the numerical unity of the divine nature. According to the judgment of the Church, these heresies are false in what they deny, whereas something of the truth remains in what they affirm. Whatever these false teachings affirm positively, such as the unity of nature and the Trinity of persons, is also affirmed by the Church.

It should be noted that in the nineteenth century, Gunther inclined to Tritheism when he defined personality as the consciousness of oneself. He thought that if God were conscious of Himself by His divine essence only one person would be in God. Accordingly he placed three distinct consciousnesses in God, distinguishing between the subject of the consciousness (the Father), the object of the consciousness (the Son), and the equality of both conscious of itself (the Holy Ghost). He arrived in this way at three intelligences. This error was condemned by Pius IX.

Among the errors about the Trinity we must mention the theory of the Modernists, who declare that the dogma of the Trinity, like other dogmas, is a human invention, achieved by laborious effort and subject to continuous change and evolution.

From this brief enumeration of the errors about the Trinity, we see not only the revealed truth as taught by the Church standing forth more clearly, preserving both the unity of the divine nature and the Trinity of the divine persons, but by reason of these errors the distinction between nature and person is greatly clarified. As has often been said, the great difficulty in determining this distinction arose from the difference between the Latin and Greek terms. In the Western Church, the Latin word persona (prosopon) at first meant a theatrical mask, worn by actors when impersonating famous individuals; later the term was used for those who held some dignified position (a personage), and finally it designated all men who are of their own right, that is, capable of rights, and thus persons were distinguished from things. More philosophically Boethius in the sixth century defined a person as "an individual substance with a rational nature." Today we define a person as a free and intelligent subject.

In the Eastern Church, however, in the first centuries the terms ousia and hypostasis were used indiscriminately to designate substance and essence. This was the cause of many controversies and at the same time it was realized that prosopon, with its etymological meaning of a theatrical mask, did not clearly express the real distinction between the divine persons. The Arians understood the term hypostasis to refer to the substance and declared that there were in God three subordinate substances. At length, at St. Athanasius' urging, the word ousia was accepted to mean nature and the word hypostasis to mean person. From this time the Greek hypostasis was equivalent to the Latin persona, hence the expression hypostatic union to designate the union of two natures in the one person of the incarnate Word; similarly three hypostases in one nature were said to be in God. Later, among the Greek Fathers, St. Basil further determined the meaning of these words. He taught that ousia designated what was common (to koinon) to individuals of the same species. Even then the meaning was not clear because the nature assumed by the Word, although it is individual, is not a person. Therefore Leontius of Byzantium, to avoid confusing the individual humanity of Christ with His divine person, defined hypostasis as a substance not only individual but also separately existing of itself and truly incommunicable.

St. Thomas perfected the definition of person when he said that a person is an individual substance with a rational nature, that is, incommunicable, existing of itself separately and operating separately of itself, of its own

right. Today commonly, as we have said, a person is defined as a free and intelligent subject, and this definition (analogically, yet properly) applies to the human person, the angelic person, and the divine persons, as will be seen more clearly below.

We find two tendencies among the Catholic doctors and theologians. The Greek Fathers and theologians, when explaining this mystery, generally began with the Trinity of persons as explicitly revealed in the New Testament, rather than with the unity of nature. The Latins, on the other hand, especially after the time of St. Augustine, generally started with the unity of nature, as stated in the tract on the one God, and went on to the Trinity of persons. Thus the two groups began from either extreme of the mystery and proceeded to the other and therefore they were met with opposing difficulties: the Greeks found difficulty in safeguarding the unity of nature, and the Latins had to be careful to safeguard those things which are proper to the persons.

Among the Latin Scholastics we find a notable difference caused by the controversy about universals, since some, like Scotus, placed between the divine essence and the persons a formal distinction, actual on the part of the thing, whereas the Nominalists made the distinction only verbal, such as exists between Tully and Cicero. The Thomists, however, and many other theologians called it a virtual distinction.

4. Scriptural Testimony On The Trinity

State of the question. It is better to speak of the testimony of the Scriptures than to say that the existence of the Trinity is proved from the Scriptures, for the Trinity is not proved, nor is it a theological conclusion, but it is believed. To say that it is proved from the Scriptures is to insinuate that faith is the conclusion of this syllogism: Whatever God has revealed is true and is to be believed. But in the Scriptures God had revealed the mystery of the Trinity. Therefore I believe this mystery. The real conclusion of this syllogism, however, is that the Trinity is believable and should be believed. This is a judgment of credibility, but not an act of faith which is simply an essentially supernatural act, above discursive reasoning, and never the result of a syllogism, because it is based immediately on the authority of God the revealer, inasmuch as I believe in God revealing and God revealed by one and the same act.

This statement, that the existence of the Trinity is proved by the Scriptures, can be accepted in the sense that this truth is proved to be of

faith by the Scriptures. It was in this sense that many Thomists used the formula.

It is not necessary that every dogma be proved as revealed by the Scriptures, since a dogma may be contained implicitly in the Scriptures and more clearly be found in tradition, which preceded the Scriptures in the preaching of Christ and the early preaching of the apostles, which were not completely recorded in writing.

With regard to the origin of the dogma of the Trinity, the rationalists, the Protestant liberals, and the Modernists say that Christ in no way taught that God was triune, but only that God was the Father of all. They say further that in the beginning the apostles indeed believed in God the Father and in Jesus Christ, the man, the divine legate, and in the spirit, power, and operation of God, but that they did not accept these terms as referring to three distinct persons. About A.D. 80 we find in the Gospel of St. Matthew the formula of baptism, in which the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are enumerated but not as distinct persons. Shortly thereafter certain Christians, influenced by the philosophy of Philo, concluded that Christ was the Logos, that intermediary being between God and men. Others, because of their addiction to certain Hellenic theories, concluded that Christ was the Son of God in a literal and proper sense, and therefore equal to the Father. After long controversy this theory was defined by the Council of Nicaea. For the rationalists, therefore, the dogma of the Trinity is nothing more than a Judae-Hellenistic theory, slowly elaborated during the first four centuries.

Against this rationalist interpretation, it can be shown from the testimony of the Scriptures that this mystery was adumbrated in the Old Testament and more fully revealed in the New Testament. In a course of dogmatic theology, however, it is better to follow a regressive method by first explaining the texts of the New Testament and then indicating how the mystery was adumbrated in the Old Testament, just as we would regressively follow the course of a stream in order to discover its source. In explaining the doctrine of the New Testament it is more desirable to follow the order in which the revelation was proposed by Christ and the apostles, considering first the texts about the three persons together and then those about each person in particular.

NEW TESTAMENT TESTIMONY ON THE THREE PERSONS

Presupposing a course in exegesis, our explanation of this doctrine of faith ought to point out the theological sources. As great rivers come down from the mountains, so sacred theology descends from the heights of doctrine as expressed in Sacred Scripture and in tradition, and then, in the end, theology should ascend to the heights and dispose us to a contemplation of divine things.

We shall first consider the New Testament testimony on the three divine persons together as found: 1. in the Synoptic Gospels, the first expression of Christian preaching; 2. in the epistles of the apostles, the first of which were written about A.D. 53; 3. in the Gospel of St. John, written about A.D. 80 against those who denied the divinity of Christ. First we shall cite the clear texts and then point out the difficulties arising from the more obscure passages.

The Synoptic Gospels. The first text, sufficiently clear to show the mystery of the Trinity, is found in Luke 1:30-35, where the incarnation of the Word is announced to Mary by the archangel Gabriel, “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.”

The Trinity of persons is clearly enunciated in this text, for the angel is sent by God the Father, who is often referred to as the Most High, and the Holy Ghost and the Son of the most high God are distinguished from the Father. That which was to be born of the Virgin Mary was not the Father or the Holy Ghost, but the Son of God. The consubstantiality of the persons is also implied in the text especially since the term “Son of God” is not used in the broad sense but in the proper sense, inasmuch as farther on (Luke 1:43) Mary is called the mother of the Lord. Finally, the Holy Ghost, to whom the work of the Incarnation is attributed is not less than the Father and the Son. This is the first manifestation of the Trinity in the New Testament before the Incarnation.

The second text of the Synoptic Gospels is Matt. 3:16 and Luke 9:34 (cf. II Pet. 1:17), before the beginning of Christ’s public ministry at the time of His baptism. In Matthew we read: “And Jesus being baptized, forthwith came out of the water: and lo, the heavens were opened to Him: and He saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon Him. And behold a voice from heaven, saying: This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well

pleased.” These words were spoken by God the Father in this solemn theophany.

More clearly than in the first text we see the distinction of the persons, since the Father speaks from heaven and the Son by this personal appellation is opposed to the person of the Father. The Holy Ghost is distinguished from both the Father and Son, for while the Father speaks from heaven the Holy Ghost in the form of a dove descends upon Christ, who is called the Son of God.

It is sufficiently clear that the Father is not the Son, for no one is ever called the father of himself, and that the Father and the Son are not the Holy Ghost. If the Father, antecedent to all consideration of our minds, is not the Son, then they are really distinct; and if the Father and the Son are not the Holy Ghost, they are really distinct from Him.

In this text, too, there is some manifestation of the divinity of the Son, since He is called ho huios, with the article, that is, son not in the wide but proper sense, and the Father added, “In whom I am well pleased, “ that is, beloved above all others. As Father Ceuppens remarks, “It should be noted that the three Synoptic Gospels use the same expression, ho agapetos (beloved), and this term is never used in the New Testament for an adoptive son and seems to have the meaning of ho monogenes (“only, or only-begotten”).

In this text the Holy Ghost is called the Spirit of God (Matt.) and is therefore not any divine spirit, such as an angel, but a well defined Spirit, to pneuma. And lest there be any further doubt, St. Luke added to pneuma to agion (3:22), that divine person who throughout the New Testament is called the Holy Ghost and who together with the Father and the Son constitutes the Holy Trinity.

The third text of the Synoptic Gospels is Matt. 28:19 and Mark 16:13, the formula of baptism, which Christ, before He ascended into heaven, transmitted to the apostles while He was commissioning them to preach the gospel. This is at the end of the whole Gospel, as the first manifestation was at the beginning prior to the Incarnation. In the text from St. Matthew we read: “Going therefore, teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.” The personal distinction is clearer in the Greek, where the conjunction kai and the article are repeated before the name of each person. This emphatic repetition of the article cannot be explained except by the real distinction between the

persons. Moreover the Father is not the Son, since these are personal nouns and not impersonal nouns, like truth, goodness, wisdom, which indicate divine attributes pertaining to the divine nature. Thus Father and Son designate distinct persons, and if this is true then the third term ought also to designate a distinct person.

Lastly, the text implies that the divinity of these three persons, like the baptismal grace bestowed in their name, cannot be conferred except in the name of God, and thus in this formula the same worship of latria is given to the three persons. In the formula, then, the Son and the Holy Ghost are equal to the Father; if they are not God, they would be infinitely below the Father.

The rationalists and liberals, acknowledging the force of this text, have tried to impugn its genuineness because Eusebius gives the words of Christ as, “baptizing them in My name.” The objection is futile, however, since all the codices give the received text, and almost all the Fathers before Eusebius, among them St. Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Tertullian, and Origen. Eusebius himself sometimes gives the received text and sometimes the short form.

The Epistles. In the Epistles we find three witnesses to the three persons. The first is II Cor. 13:13 (according to Harnack, A.D. 53): “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the charity of God and the communication of the Holy Ghost be with you all.” Here St. Paul attributes to three persons the granting of sanctifying grace; but God alone is the author of grace, of the remission of sin, and of salvation. We refer the reader to Job 14:4: “Who can make him clean that is conceived of unclean seed? Is it not Thou who only art?”; and to Ps. 83:12: “The Lord will give grace and glory”; and Jas. 4:6: “God... giveth grace to the humble.” The second testimony is Eph. 4:4 ff. (according to Harnack, A.D. 57-59), where the Apostle is speaking of the mystical body of Christ, “one body and one Spirit,... one Lord (namely, Christ), one faith, one baptism. One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all.” The equality of the persons is inferred from the fact that the three together confer grace, of which God alone is the author. This was St. Athanasius’ great argument: God alone deifies.

The third testimony is I Pet. 1:1 f.: “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ... according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, unto the sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. Grace

unto you and peace be multiplied." As in the other texts, the three persons are presented as the highest source of grace.

The Gospel of St. John (according to Harnack and Zahn, written between 80 and 110) clearly affirms the Trinity of persons and their equality. We quote only the two principal texts referring to the three persons.

The first is John 14:16 and 26, concerning the promise of the Holy Ghost made by Christ at the Last Supper: "And I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you forever,... but the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things." Here we see a clear distinction between the Father who sends the Spirit, and the Son who asks the Father to send the Spirit, and the Spirit who is sent by the Father in the name of the Son. Certainly the one who sends is distinct from him who is sent, antecedent to our thinking the sender is not the one who is sent, and thus the Father is not the Son, for the one who generates is not the one who is generated. If we rightly understand the meaning of the verb "is" and the negation "is not, " the real distinction between the persons will be clear, a distinction which is antecedent to our mind's consideration. Although those things which the Scripture speaks of here are intimately united, they are really distinct; the substance of bread is not its quantity, but they are intimately united. So, in this text and in the context the consubstantiality of the three persons emerges, for a little earlier (John 14:9-11) Christ said: "He that seeth Me seeth the Father also... . Do you not believe, that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me?" Again John 10:30: "I and the Father are one"; John 15:26: "the Spirit of truth, who proceedeth from the Father"; John 16:13: "But when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will teach you all truth."

The second text of St. John referring to the three persons together is the famous Johannine comma: "And there are three who give testimony in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost. And these three are one" (I John 5:7). A great controversy has arisen about the genuineness of this text. Those who attack the text argue from the fact that it is not found in any Greek codex of any authority, nor in many Latin codices and versions. From this they conclude that this "comma" was originally a marginal note which in the course of time was incorporated into the text. Consequently the text would enjoy only the force of tradition. The defenders of the text say that it was always in the Latin version, which is more ancient than the Greek codices, for it is found in many Latin codices and is cited by many of

the Fathers, by Tertullian, St. Cyprian, and St. Augustine. The omission of this verse in the Greek codices is explained by the fact that the seventh and eighth verses begin and end in the same way and thus the scribes could easily have omitted the seventh verse. In the Latin version the seventh verse is: “And there are three who give testimony in heaven, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. And these three are one.” The eighth verse is: “And there are three that give testimony on earth: the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three are one.”

On this matter the Holy Office has issued two declarations. In the first, dated January 13, 1927, we read: “The authenticity of this text of St. John cannot be safely denied or called into doubt.” Later, on June 2, 1927, the Holy Office declared: “This decree has been issued to repress the temerity of those private teachers who have attributed to themselves the right of completely rejecting this ‘comma’ of St. John or at least by their final judgment of calling it into doubt... . It is in no way intended to deter Catholic writers from investigating the matter more fully,... or from adopting an opinion opposed to the genuineness of the text, as long as they profess to be willing to submit to the judgment of the Church, to whom has been committed by Jesus Christ the duty not only of interpreting the Sacred Scriptures but also of guarding them faithfully.”

We proceed now to the testimonies in the New Testament about the individual persons of the Trinity.

SPECIAL TESTIMONIES ABOUT GOD THE FATHER

In the Sacred Scriptures God is called Father in a threefold sense: 1. in the broadest sense by reason of the creation, thus He is called the “father of rain” (Job 38:28); 2. in the broad sense by reason of the adoption of men as His sons, thus He is called our Father in the Lord’s Prayer; 3. in the strict and proper sense by reason of the generation of His only-begotten Son. Thus Christ Himself, of whom it was said,” his is My beloved Son” (Matt. 3:17), said, not “our Father, “ but “My Father”: “It is My Father that glorifieth Me” (John 8:54); “Come, ye blessed of My Father” (Matt. 25:34); “I must be about My Father’s business” (Luke 2:49); “No one can snatch them out of the hand of My Father” (John 10:29); “They have both seen and hated both Me and My Father” (John 15:24); “I ascend to my Father and to your Father” (John 20:17). God is not the Father of Jesus Christ in the same

way as He is the Father of His adopted sons, for in the prologue of St. John's Gospel we read: "The only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (John 1:18). Frequently St. Paul speaks of God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for instance," hat... you may glorify God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 15:6); and "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Cor. 1:3 and Eph. 1:3). Thus the Father is represented as a person and moreover as a divine person; no one has called this into doubt. The Father is called the Lord of heaven and earth and living God, as for instance, "Thou art Christ the Son of the living God." Throughout the seventeenth chapter of St. John's Gospel, Christ invokes the Father as God, and it is clear that the Father is a person distinct from the Son from the fact that he who generates is distinct from him who is begotten. This will appear more clearly when we speak of the Son.

SPECIAL TESTIMONIES ABOUT GOD THE SON

In Sacred Scripture the term son of God is used in a twofold sense: in the broad sense for adoptive sons, and in the proper sense for the only-begotten Son both before and after the Incarnation. References to the Son of God are to be found 1. in the Synoptic Gospels, 2. in the Epistles, 3. in the Gospel of St. John.

In the Synoptic Gospels Christ is described as the incarnate Son of God, not only distinct from the Father but also equal to Him. The principal text is: "All things are delivered to Me by My Father. And no one knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither doth anyone know the Father, but the Son, and he to whom it shall please the Son to reveal Him" (Matt. 11:27). From various codices and from the Fathers it appears that this text is authentic, and its authenticity is admitted by almost all critics, not only Catholics but also the Protestant liberals. In this text is expressed the distinction between the Father and the Son as well as the equality of knowability and knowledge which presuppose an equality of nature and the identity of the divine nature.

"No one knoweth the Son, but the Father, " and therefore the Son is above natural created knowledge and cannot be known naturally by anyone but God. From this it follows that He is God. To this text we may add all the texts in the Synoptic Gospels, in Christian apologetics, and in the tract on

the Incarnation, which demonstrate the divinity of Christ. These texts may be grouped together as follows:

1. Jesus, according to His own testimony, is greater than all creatures, greater than Jonas, Solomon, David, who called Him lord, greater than Moses and Elias, who appeared beside Him at the Transfiguration, greater than St. John the Baptist, greater than the angels "who ministered to Him" (Mark 1:13), and of whom He said, "The Son of man shall send His angels" as His servants (Matt. 13:41).

2. Jesus speaks as the supreme lawgiver, complementing and perfecting the divine law in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 10:21-48).

3. He vindicates for Himself the prerogative of forgiving sins, which according to the Jews was a divine attribute (Matt. 9:2).

4. He assumed the right of judging the living and the dead, and of raising the dead to life (Mark 14:62; 8:38; 13:26).

5. He promised to send the Holy Ghost, to whom He is therefore not inferior (Luke 24:49), and He accepted the adoration which the apostles had rejected (Matt. 8:2; 28:9, 17).

6. He is called the Son of the living God by St. Peter (Matt. 16:16).

7. In the parable of the vineyard He is called the Son of the lord of the vineyard (Mark 12:1-12; also in Matthew and Luke). In this parable we are told that the lord of the vineyard first sent his servants, who were put to death by the workers in the vineyard. "Therefore having yet one son, most dear to him; he also sent him unto them last of all,... and laying hold of him, they killed him." Of the Pharisees who heard this parable, we read: "And they sought to lay hands on Him, but they feared the people. For they knew that He spoke this parable to them." From all these texts of the Synoptic Gospels it is clear that Jesus' utterances about His eminent dignity imply more than a simple Messiahship and express a divine filiation entirely proper to Him, constituting Him above all creatures, equal to God and God Himself, although distinct from His Father.

In the epistles of the apostles and in their preaching, the divinity of Christ is still more explicitly expressed.

In the Acts of the Apostles (3:13, 15), St. Peter declared: "The God of our fathers hath glorified His Son Jesus, whom you indeed delivered up... . But the author of life you killed." The author of life is none other than God. Again in the Acts of the Apostles, St. Peter said: "Neither is there salvation in any other. For there is no other name under heaven given to men,

whereby we must be saved," that is, Jesus is the Savior of the world, the author of grace and salvation. Of no prophet and of no angel were similar words spoken. Again, "Him hath God exalted with His right hand, to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins" (Acts 5:31). But only God can be the Savior, forgiving sins. Similarly St. Peter calls Jesus "the Lord of all, appointed by God judge of the living and of the dead" (Acts 10:36, 42).

Since St. Peter uttered these words immediately after Pentecost, the argument of the rationalists that a process of idealization intervened, transforming the original preaching of Christ, has no validity. These words represent the confirmation by the Holy Ghost of those things that Christ, during His public ministry, said about His divine filiation. It should be remembered that the Acts of the Apostles in its entirety is attributed to St. Luke, who was St. Paul's co-worker, and this not only by all Catholic and conservative Protestant critics but also by many rationalists, among them Renan, Reuss, and Harnack, and that it was most probably written about A.D. 63-64.

In the epistles of St. Paul we find the following references to the divinity of the Son, as distinct from the Father. These texts are important since St. Paul, beginning in the year 53, speaks of the divinity of Christ as a dogma already received in the various churches before there was sufficient time for any process of idealization.

1. St. Paul speaks of the Son of God in the strictest sense: "God sending His own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom 8. 3)

"He that spared not even His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all" (Rom. 8:32); "God sent His Son... that He might redeem them who were under the law: that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. 4:4 f.). In the last text the adopted sons are clearly distinguished from God's own Son, and the only-begotten Son is represented as the Savior of the world.

2. St. Paul affirms the pre-existence of the Son of God before the Incarnation: "Giving thanks to God the Father... who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the remission of sins. Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature. For in Him were all things created in heaven, and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominations or principalities or powers: all things were created by Him and in Him. And He is before all, and by Him

all things consist" (Col. 1:12-17). These attributes belong to God alone, and at the same time the Son of God is distinguished from the Father. A little farther on we read: "Because in Him, it hath well pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell; and through Him to reconcile all things unto Himself" (w. 19 f.). Here the Son of God is clearly called the Creator and the Savior.

Again, St. Paul says: "For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead corporeally; and you are filled in Him, who is the head of all principality and power" (Col. 2:9 f.). Writing to the Philippians, while exhorting them to humility he casually says these sublime words: "For let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man" (Phil. 2:5 ff.). In this text, the expression "in the form of God" (qui in forma Dei esset) signifies the essence and nature of God, and this interpretation is confirmed by the following words, "No be equal with God." We could have no clearer statement of the pre-existing glory of the Son of God before the Incarnation.

Writing to the Romans, St. Paul said: "For I wished myself to be an anathema from Christ, for my brethren,... and of whom is Christ, according to the flesh, who is over all things, God blessed forever. Amen" (Rom. 9:3 ff.). Some controversy exists whether the punctuation mark before the phrase "who is over all things" is a comma or a period, but most critics, even those who are considered liberal, admit the comma, and thus this phrase refers to Christ.

Lastly, we read in the Epistle to the Hebrews: "In these days [God] hath spoken to us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the world. Who being the brightness of His glory, and the figure of His substance, and upholding all things by the word of His power, making purgation of sins, sitteth on the right hand of the majesty on high" (1:2 f.). In this text the Son of God, distinct from the Father, is declared to be the Creator, the Preserver, and the Savior, "upholding all things by the word of His power." In this Epistle also the Son of God is said to be superior to Moses and the angels, the mediator and the high priest for all eternity. Speaking in this manner, St. Paul intended to affirm, not something new, but that which had been held by the different churches

before this time. No time had intervened, therefore, to permit any progressive idealization of the primitive preaching.

In the Gospel according to St. John the divinity of Christ and the distinction of the Son from the Father is so clearly enunciated that the rationalists themselves have had to admit it, but they argue that this Gospel, written against those who denied the divinity of Christ, was composed only in the second century. Renan places it about A.D. 125, and Holtzmann between 100 and 123. The later rationalists however have had to acknowledge that it was written toward the end of the first century: B. Weiss placing its composition in the year go; Harnack between 80 and 110. The theory of the intervening process of idealization is excluded by the fact that as early as 54 and 58 St. Paul speaks of the eternal pre-existence of the Son of God.

With regard to the texts of the Fourth Gospel, we present first the words of our Lord Himself and then the words of St. John the Evangelist in the prologue of his Gospel, thus observing the order of revelation.

The words of our Lord referring to His divinity and His distinction from the Father are the following.

“The Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He... said God was His Father, making Himself equal to God. Then Jesus said to them... the Son cannot do anything of Himself, but what He seeth the Father doing: for what things soever He doth, these the Son also doth in like manner... . For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and giveth life; so the Son also giveth life to whom He will. For neither doth the Father judge any man, but hath given all judgment to the Son. That all men may honor the Son, as they honor the Father... . For as the Father has life in Himself, so He hath given to the Son also to have life in Himself” (5:18-26). This thought will be more clearly presented below In this text the same works ad extra of the Father are attributed to the Son, particularly miracles and the sanctification of souls, of which God alone is the author.

“Not that any man hath seen the Father; but He who is of God, He hath seen the Father” (6:46); “You are from beneath, I am from above. You are of this world, I am not of this world” (8:23); “For from God I proceeded, and came” (8:42), that is, I proceeded from eternity and came in time; “Amen, amen, I say to you, before Abraham was made, I am” (8:58), is a clear declaration of the pre-existence of the Son of God; “I and the Father are one” (10:30), whereupon the Jews took up “stones to stone Him.”

“As the Father knoweth Me, and I know the Father” (10:15), is an affirmation of the equality of knowledge and nature, already expressed in St. Matthew, “No one knoweth the Son, but the Father” (11:27); “I am the way and the truth and the life” (14:6), that is, I not only possess life and truth, but I am life and truth, and since truth and life are identical, He alone is truth itself who is being itself by His essence, that is, subsisting being. Such is the profound meaning of the verb “is” as distinguished from “have” in the sentence, “I am truth and life,” that only He who can say, “I am who am,” could utter these words.

“All things whatsoever the Father hath, are Mine. Therefore I said, that He shall receive of Mine, and show it to you” (16:15). These words clearly state that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son.

“And now glorify Thou Me, O Father, with Thyself, with the glory which I had, before the world was, with Thee,... because Thou hast loved Me before the creation of the world” (17:5, 24).

Lastly, the revelation of this doctrine is enunciated by way of synthesis in the prologue of St. John’s Gospel, especially in the first four verses: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him: and without Him was made nothing that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men” (John 1:1-4). These words contain the statement of two fundamental truths: 1. the distinction of the Word from the Father, 2. the consubstantiality of the Word with the Father. From these truths others follow in the prologue.

1. The distinction of the Word from the Father is enunciated in the words, “The Word was with God, “ for, as is commonly remarked, no one is said to be with himself. One difficulty, however, arises from the fact that it is not clearly stated that the Word is a person; it might be understood as similar to the word of our mind which is in our intellect and “with” the intellect. This difficulty, however, is removed by what is said later of the Word, especially by the words,” and the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, the glory as it were of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” (1:14); and “No man hath seen God at any time: the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him” (1:18).

From these verses it is clear that the Word mentioned in the first verse is the only-begotten Son who became incarnate and before this was in the

bosom of the Father, or “with Him,” in the words of the first verse. From this we may infer a real distinction between the Father and the only-begotten Son, for apart from any consideration of the mind the Father is not the Son, and he who begets does not beget himself. Father and Son, as has been said, are personal nouns and not impersonal nouns like truth, goodness, and intelligence, which designate the attributes of the divine nature. Therefore, apart from any consideration of the mind, it is true to say that the Father is not the Son.

On the other hand, as theologians point out, we cannot say that, apart from the consideration of the mind, the essence of God is not His intellect, for His essence is subsisting being itself and subsisting intelligence itself; no real distinction exists in God between His being and His essence, nor between His essence, faculties, and operation. Therefore this proposition is false: God is not His own being, as is also the following: God is not His own intelligence. From revelation, however, we infer that the following is true: God the Father is not the Son, for he who begets does not beget himself. If therefore, apart from any consideration of our mind, the Father is not the Son, He is really distinct from the Son.

2. The consubstantiality of the Word with the Father is expressed in the same first verse, in the words, “he Word was God.” According to the generally accepted interpretation, for instance, that of St. Thomas in his commentary on St. John’s Gospel, in this phrase the term “Word” (ho logos) is the subject and “God” is the predicate. This is evident from the context, which refers to the attributes of the Word, and from the Greek article ho, which precedes the term “Word” (ho logos).

Moreover, in this sentence the predicate “God” retains its proper meaning, as is evident from the parallel statements, “he Word was with God,” and “the Word was God,” and from the second verse, “he same was in the beginning with God.” Thus, the word “God” is used three times in its proper meaning, designating not God by participation, but God Himself. The sense of the text is, therefore, that the Word is no less God than He with whom He was from the beginning. There is, therefore, a perfect equality between the Word and the Father. Moreover, since the most simple and infinite divine nature cannot be multiplied, and since, as is clear from the Old Testament and from philosophy, there cannot be many gods, it follows that the Word and the Father are consubstantial. This consubstantiality was more explicitly stated later at the Council of Nicaea. The words “in the

beginning” at the opening of the prologue mean first of all before the creation of the world, as is clear from the context, and also from eternity, since God is eternal and immutable, since before the creation no change took place.

From these two truths others follow.

1. The Word together with the Father is the Creator. “All things were made by Him: and without Him was made nothing that was made” (v. 3), that is, nothing whatsoever was made without the Word. This follows from the fact that the Word is God.

2. The Word is the author of both the natural and the supernatural life. “In Him was life” (v. 4); thus He is the author of life equally with the Father, since He is God. Jesus expressed this later on in the words, “or as the Father has life in Himself, so He hath given to the Son also to have life in Himself” (5:26), and this life is essential and subsisting life and the cause of participating life, the life He spoke of when He said, “I am the life.” Further, the Word is the author of supernatural life, as is clear from the words,” and the life was the light of men, “which are explained in verse 9, “that was the true light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world.” Later on this is expressed still more clearly, especially in verse 18, “No man hath seen God at any time: the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him, “ and by our Lord’s words to Nicodemus,” or God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in Him, may not perish, but may have life everlasting” (3:16).

In his commentary on the fourth verse of the prologue, “and the life was the light of men,” St. Thomas says: “This life may be explained in two ways: first, as an infusion of natural knowledge; secondly, as the communication of grace. It should be especially understood in the second way, because of what follows, namely, ‘And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it... . (John) came for a witness, to give testimony of the light, that all men might believe through Him’” (w. 5, 7), believe, that is, to attain salvation.

3. The Word is the author of our redemption. In verse twelve we read: “But as many as received Him, He gave them power to be made the sons of God, to them that believe in His name,” that is, by the Word we are made adopted sons of God, as St. Paul said, “[God] who hath predestined us unto

the adoption of children through Jesus Christ unto Himself" (Eph. 1:5), and "that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. 4:5).

The five following truths, then, are announced in the Prologue of St. John's Gospel: the Son of God is 1. distinct from the Father, 2. equal and consubstantial with the Father, 3. the Creator, 4. the author of both the natural and the supernatural life, 5. the Redeemer and the author of salvation. In this way the divinity of the Word is proclaimed.

Objection. The rationalists and liberals say that this doctrine of the Word apparently stems from Philo, an Alexandrian Jew, born about 20 B. C., who tried to conciliate the monotheism of the Jews with the Neoplatonism in vogue at the time in Alexandria. Relying on the Old Testament, Philo admitted the existence of one personal God, the Provider, but in accord with the Greek philosophers of Alexandria he held that the most high God could not produce this finite world except through some intermediate being, which he called the logos. As a Jew, Philo tried to reconcile two contradictory teachings, namely, monotheism and free creation with the pantheistic doctrine of necessary emanation. Thus, when he considers the logos under the Neoplatonic aspect he speaks of him as an intermediate being, but when he considers the logos in the light of the New Testament and Jewish monotheism he speaks of him as a divine attribute.

Reply. The Catholic reply to this difficulty is the following. A great difference exists between the logos of Philo and the Logos of St. John. The Logos of St. John is neither a being beneath God nor a divine attribute, but He is properly the Son of God the Father, at the same time God, the Creator, and the Redeemer in the strict sense. Philo's logos, however, is in no way the Redeemer. St. John's teaching, therefore, is not derived from Philo, but from Christ's preaching, as explained by him, and as understood by the other apostles, as we see in the preaching of St. Peter and in the epistles of St. Paul. St. John could have found an adumbration of this mystery in the Old Testament, especially in the Book of Wisdom, "or she is a vapor of the power of God, and a certain pure emanation of the glory of the almighty God: and therefore no defiled thing cometh into her. For she is the brightness of eternal light, and the unspotted mirror of God's majesty" (7:25 f.).

As to the word "Logos" itself, St. John could have taken it from revelation, but it would not be derogatory to admit, as many do, that he derived it directly from Philo, for when the Evangelist was writing in

Ephesus, Apollo was preaching there, and Apollo was widely versed in Alexandrian philosophy. Quite probably also the earliest heretics misused the word “logos” to designate a being midway between God and the world. St. John may have used the term to correct the current false interpretation, when he said, “The Word[Logos] was God.”

We must add here that the Logos of St. John has no connection with the teaching of Plotinus, who in the third century spoke of three subordinate hypostases, of different rank, in his system of pantheistic emanationism. Plotinus posited: 1. the One-Good, corresponding to Plato’s idea of the good; 2. the primal intelligence, or the logos, proceeding, not by a free creation, but by a necessary emanation from the supreme good, to whom it was inferior. Here the logos, according to Plotinus, resembled Aristotle’s god, who is “noesis noeseos noesis”. In his primal intelligence Plotinus tried to discern the duality of the subject and the object known, besides a multitude of ideas for things that were to be produced. Plotinus’ third hypostasis was the soul of the universe, corresponding to the god of the Stoics, from which, by a pantheistic emanation, the seminal ideas of all things proceeded (logoi spermatikoi).

The difference between Plotinus’ hypostases and the Trinity of Christian revelation is evident. These three hypostases are distinctly unequal, and in this pantheistic emanation a multitude of beings proceeds from the supreme being not by free creation but by a necessary emanation, or by a necessity of nature. As in all kinds of pantheism, the supernatural order of the life of grace is denied; for here our human nature would be a participation of the divine nature and could not be elevated to a higher order, and human reason would be the seed of eternal life.

Lastly, the doctrine of the Word proclaimed in St. John’s Gospel has no resemblance to the Indian trinity, called Trimourti. In this system Brahma is god, the producer of all things; Siva is god the destroyer, the destructive force; and Vichnu was many times born in the flesh for the defense of the good.

The differences are obvious: 1. In the Trinity as revealed by Christ none of the divine persons can be called the destroyer. This idea is an expression of the pessimism and fatalism of the Indians. 2. In the Indian trinity, the three manifestations of God, the producer, the destroyer, and the conserver, are adopted with respect to the things of this world, and they seem rather to be three aspects of the same supreme power; indeed it is often said that

there is no distinction in God except in appearance. 3. The Indian system does not transcend pantheism and fails to preserve the idea of a free creation.

SPECIAL TESTIMONIES ABOUT THE HOLY GHOST

1. In the Synoptic Gospels the Holy Ghost is less frequently mentioned than the Son of God, because He was not incarnate, and sometimes in Sacred Scripture the expression “Spirit of God” does not clearly designate a special person. Nevertheless, as we pointed out in gathering the testimonies about the three divine persons together in the Synoptic Gospels, the Holy Ghost appears as a divine person, distinct from the others, in the formula of baptism (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:13). In this formula Father and Son are personal nouns, and therefore the third term should also designate a distinct divine person. This truth appears, although not so clearly, in the words of the archangel Gabriel at the time of the Annunciation, “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee” (Luke 1:35), and in the solemn theophany after Christ’s baptism when Jesus “saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon Him” (Matt. 3:16; Luke 9:34).

Father Ceuppens distinguishes the texts in which it is clear from the context that reference is made to the third person of the Blessed Trinity from those in which there is rather reference to some divine virtue and not explicitly to the Third Person.

St. John the Baptist, St. Elizabeth, and St. Zachary are said to be filled with the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:15, 41, 67).

Simeon is said to have “received an answer from the Holy Ghost... and came by the Spirit into the temple” (Luke 2:26 f.).

St. John the Baptist announced a higher baptism to be conferred “in the Holy Ghost” (Matt. 3:11), and “Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert” (Matt. 4:1).

Christ said: “Whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but he that shall speak against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him” (Matt. 12:32).”In view of the context,” says Father Ceuppens, “we do not think that the Holy Ghost here can be explained as referring to the Third Person of the Trinity.

Announcing to the apostles their imminent persecution, Jesus said: “It shall be given you in that hour what to speak. For it is not you that speak,

but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you" (Matt. 10:19 f.). He who speaks is a person and not a divine attribute, and this promise was fulfilled by the sending of the Holy Ghost, the Third Person of the Trinity, on Pentecost (Acts 2:1, 4).

Thus the Synoptic Gospels reveal the Holy Ghost as a distinct, divine person, to whom are attributed divine operations, in particular prophecy (the prophecy of Simeon), and the sanctification of souls (the sanctification of St. John Baptist). All this will become clearer in the Acts of the Apostles and in the epistles of St. Paul.

2. In the Acts of the Apostles the Holy Ghost speaks as the person who sanctifies men, who in the past inspired the prophets and now inspires the apostles, who directs and rules them and constitutes them bishops. Thus we read: "Now there were in the church which was at Antioch, prophets and doctors,... and the Holy Ghost said to them: Separate me Saul and Barnabas, for the work whereunto I have taken them... . So they being sent by the Holy Ghost, went to Seleucia: and from thence they sailed to Cyprus" (Acts 13:1-4); "The Holy Ghost hath placed you bishops, to rule the Church of God" (Acts 20:28); "Have you received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" (Acts 19:2.) St. Paul says: "And now, behold, being bound in the spirit, I go to Jerusalem, not knowing the things which shall befall me there: save that the Holy Ghost in every city witnesseth to me, saying that bands and afflictions wait for me at Jerusalem" (Acts 20:22 f.); and St. Peter said: "Men, brethren, the scripture must needs be fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas" (Acts 1:16). In all these instances the Holy Ghost appears as a person. Again, St. Peter said that to lie to the Holy Ghost is to lie to God: "Ananias, why hath Satan tempted thy heart, that thou shouldst lie to the Holy Ghost?... Thou hast not lied to men, but to God" (Acts 5:3 f.).

On this point the entire second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles about the coming of the Holy Ghost can be cited: "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they began to speak with divers tongues according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak" (v. 4). Here, as in the other texts, the Holy Ghost speaks as a divine person for only God sanctifies souls.

Father Ceuppens says that the personal character of the Holy Ghost cannot be inferred from some of the texts of the Acts of the Apostles in which He is mentioned, for example, 1:5, 8; 2:4, 41; 8:12; 9:7; but that the Holy Ghost appears explicitly as a person in the following: "And they were

all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they began to speak with divers tongues according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak" (2:4). This was the fulfillment of Christ's promise to send the person of the Holy Ghost. His personal character is clear when He is said to rule the apostles (5:3, 9); also in the text," or it hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us" (15:28); "The Holy Ghost said to them: Separate me Saul and Barnabas" (13:2), and when He prevented St. Paul from going to Bithynia (16:7), when He foretold St. Paul's sufferings (20:22 f.), and when He "placed you bishops to rule the church of God" (20:28).

3. In the epistles of St. Paul many passages show the Holy Ghost to be a distinct person and true God. He appears as a person when such properties and actions are predicated of Him as pertain only to a person and not to a divine attribute. The Holy Ghost is said to have an intellect," or the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (I Cor. 2:10). To Him are also attributed a will and operations, "but all these things one and the same Spirit worketh, dividing to everyone according as He will" (I Cor. 12:11); graces gratis datae, like prophecy and the word of wisdom, are conferred by Him.

The person mentioned here is also true God for He is said to have all knowledge of divine things," or the Spirit searcheth all things,[comprehends them], yea, the deep things of God" (I Cor. 2:10). Only God can know future free things and reveal them to the prophets. To the Holy Ghost are also attributed the works of regeneration and sanctification and these are proper to God, as in "You are washed, but you are sanctified, but you are justified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Spirit of our God" (I Cor. 6:11).

Lastly, according to St. Paul, the worship of latria is to be given to the Holy Ghost, dwelling in the just soul: "Or know you not, that your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost, who is in you?" (I Cor. 6:19); but temples are built for God. Therefore St. Paul added, "glorify and bear God in your body" (v. 20). Father Ceuppens remarks," some of these texts, taken alone, might be understood as referring to a poetical personification, as was said above about wisdom, but to comprehend the full meaning of these texts we must keep in mind the Trinitarian formulas in St. Paul's writings in which the Holy Ghost is placed on the same level with the Father and the Son."

4. In St. John's Gospel the Holy Ghost clearly appears as a divine person distinct from the other divine persons as was shown above in treating of the

three divine persons together: “And I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete... . But the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost [to pneuma], whom the Father will send in My name, he [ekeinos] will teach you all things” (John 14:16, 26). No one sends himself, and therefore the Holy Ghost, who is sent, is distinct from the Father, who sends Him, and from the Son, who asks the Father to send the Holy Ghost, because the Son was already sent in the Incarnation. Here too (15:26) the Holy Ghost is called the Spirit of truth, that is, the source of truth, and He is said to possess perfect knowledge so as to illuminate the apostles and perfect sanctity for the sanctification of souls: “But when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will teach you all truth” (John 16:13). In all these passages the Holy Ghost is revealed as a divine person.

We may conclude, therefore, that the books of the New Testament explicitly reveal the mystery of one God in three distinct and perfectly equal divine persons. This doctrine is completely at variance with the Stoics’ pantheistic concept of the logos, the world soul; from Neoplatonism, in which the logos is a secondary hypostasis subordinate to the One-Good; and from Philonism, in which the logos is either a creature or a divine attribute, depending on whether Philo was speaking as a Jew or as a Neoplatonist. We see, then, that the doctrine of Christ was not altered by the Greek philosophers, but that it is an explicit manifestation of higher truth, which in an obscure manner was already revealed in the Old Testament, as we shall show immediately.

Objections. It has been pointed out before that the Arians and after them the Socinians adduced certain texts of the New Testament to deny the divinity of the Son and the Holy Ghost, for example, “go to the Father: for the Father is greater than I” (John 14:28). To this we reply that going to the Father was not predicated of Christ according to His divine nature, for in His divine nature He is always in the Father.

I insist. In I Cor. 15:28 we read: “And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then the Son also Himself shall be subject unto Him that put all things under Him.”

Reply. Here St. Paul is speaking of the resurrection of Christ, which is attributed to Christ in His human nature.

I insist. In Matt. 24:36 we read: “But of that day and hour no one knoweth, no not the angels of heaven, but the Father alone.”

Reply. St. Thomas, St. John Chrysostom, and many other Fathers say that these words are to be understood of Christ as man, for as man Christ is said to be ignorant of the day of judgment; not absolutely, for St. Peter said, “Lord, Thou knowest all things” (John 21:17), but He was ignorant of the time with regard to revealing it to us.

I insist. In I Thess. 5:19 we read: “Extinguish not the spirit.”

Reply. The meaning of these words is: Do not place obstacles in the way of the manifestations of the spirit, such as prophecy and the gift of tongues; do not resist grace.

I insist. The spirit of an individual is not a person distinct from that individual; but the Holy Ghost is often called the Spirit of God; therefore He is not a distinct person.

Reply. I distinguish the major: if the word “spirit” is used to denote an individual’s essence or part of his essence or his manner of judging, this I concede; otherwise, this I deny.

Thus, for instance, the spirit of an angel designates his whole essence, and spirit of a man designates his manner of judging. Sometimes, however, spirit is used to denote a person distinct from him of whom it is said to be the spirit; for instance, the angels are called the spirits of God (Apoc. 3:1 ff.). No repugnance arises, therefore, when we say that “Spirit of God” means a distinct person, and from the context it is often clear that such is the case; for instance, when it is said that the “Father sends His spirit,” and when this Spirit is said to be another Paraclete, distinct also from the Son.

THE MYSTERY OF THE TRINITY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The mystery of the Trinity is obscurely expressed in the Old Testament. We give here certain passages that have a meaning more clearly understood after the revelation of the New Testament.

1. A certain plurality in the one God is indicated, sometimes in the words of God and again in the theophanies.

God’s words seem to express a council between several persons in Gen. 1:26,”let us make man to our image and likeness.” It might be said that this is the plural of majesty, but this interpretation seems to be excluded by God’s words to Adam after the Fall,” behold Adam is become as one of us” (Gen. 3:22). The expression “one of us” indicates more than the plural of majesty. We may also cite God’s words, provoked by the pride of the

builders of the tower of Babel, “come ye, therefore, let us go down, and there confound their tongue” (Gen. 11:7).

The mystery of the Trinity sheds some light on why the seraphim cried to one another: “Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God of hosts, all the earth is full of His glory” (Isa. 6:3). Another triple invocation of God is found in the Book of Numbers in the formulas of benediction (6:24 ff.).

Something similar is found in the theophanies. In the opinion of St. Augustine and St. Ambrose, Jahve appeared to Abraham in the guise of three men to adumbrate the Trinity: “And the Lord appeared to him in the vale of Mambre... and when he had lifted up his eyes, there appeared to him three men standing near him: and as soon as he saw them he ran to meet them from the door of his tent, and adored down to the ground” (Gen. 18:1 f.). The Roman Breviary in explanation says, “We saw three and adored one.” This was also the interpretation of St. Augustine and St. Ambrose, but others, among them St. Hilary, understood this passage in a different sense.

In these words of God and in the theophanies, therefore, a certain plurality is implied as existing in the one God, but it is not expressed so explicitly that the Jews could understand it.

2. The person of the Messias is more explicitly revealed in the Messianic prophecies, 1. as the Son of God, distinct from the Father, 2. as God, 3. when He is called wisdom.

In the psalms we read: “The Lord hath said to me: Thou art My son, this day have I begotten thee” (2:7). This psalm is Messianic in the literal sense, for the power that is promised to the new king is universal domination, extending over the universe, and the concept of any universal dominion is essentially Messianic. Therefore the king who is here proclaimed and who is to assume this dominion is the Messias.

To this Messianic king Jahve said, “Thou art My son, this day have I begotten thee.” This sentence may be taken in the literal sense as referring to the only-begotten Son, or in a metaphorical sense as referring to a son by adoption. From the text alone it would be difficult to prove that this statement is to be taken in its literal sense as referring to the divine generation and to the eternal Messias. This passage merely states that the Messias is formally constituted a king, but such election as king gave any Oriental king and especially the king of the Jewish theocracy the title of “son of God” in the metaphorical sense. From the text and from the context as well it is difficult to affirm the divinity of the Messias with any certainty,

but we can easily conclude that the Messias would be a universal king and in some very special way the son of God.

In the light of a new inspiration, the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews determined the meaning of this psalm verse (2:7) when he said: “For to which of the angels hath He said at any time, Thou art My son, today have I begotten thee?” that is, the Son of God is above the angels. Thus the Epistle to the Hebrews teaches us in what sense that most special filiation of the Messias is to be understood: not as some metaphorical or adoptive filiation, but as actual filiation. The argument here is theological, based on the New Testament.

In Psalm 109 (V. I, 3), which the Biblical Commission attributes to David, we read: “The Lord said to my Lord: Sit thou at My right hand;... with thee is the principality in the day of thy strength: in the brightness of the saints: from the womb before the day star I begot thee.” David is speaking of a colloquy between Jahve and some person whom David calls his Lord. Who is this person?

In order that David could call him his lord (Adonai), this person must be someone greatly superior to David; he must have dominion over the whole universe; and he must be a priest for all eternity according to the order of Melchisedech. The two last qualities are verified only in the Messias. With regard to the first quality, the superiority over David, we may ask whether this superiority is one of degree only, as when both are human beings and one is higher than the other, or a superiority of nature, as when the Messias is not only a man but God also, the only-begotten Son of God. The point is not clear either from the text or the context. Sometimes the expression, “it thou at my right hand,” is used to indicate the divinity of the Messias, but it is also an Oriental figure of speech implying that an individual has been raised to some special dignity, generally to the royal state. From the text and the context alone we can conclude merely that the promised Messias would be greatly superior to David; but what this superiority actually was is not clearly stated. In the second century before Christ the Septuagint version interpreted this superiority over David as one of nature, that is, they understood it as referring to the divinity of the Messias, and later Christ Himself in His disputations with the Pharisees argued His divinity from this text.

In St. Matthew’s Gospel we read: “The Lord said to my Lord... . If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? And no man was able to answer him

a word" (22:44 ff.). The full meaning of the text appears from Christ's interpretation in the New Testament. As St. Augustine pointed out, in the expression, "Today have I begotten thee" the word "today" signifies the permanent present moment of eternity, where there is no past or future. Thus this eternal generation of the Son is above time. St. Thomas, too, says that the generation is eternal; it is not a new begetting but one that is eternal. "The 'today' designates what is present; and that which is eternal is always."

In Isaias we read: "For a child is born to us, and a son is given to us, and the government is upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, God the Mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of Peace" (9:6). The expression "God the Mighty" (El Gibbor) is found in Isa. 10:21, Deut. 10:17, Jer. 32:18, Neh. 9:32 and always refers to Jahve. It is never used with reference to a creature, even the highest, and therefore Catholic exegetes accept this expression as designating the divine quality of the Child.

In these texts we see illustrated what was later said of Wisdom in the Sapiential Books. In Prov. 8:22-31, Wisdom itself says, "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His ways, before He made anything from the beginning. I was set up from eternity, and of old before the earth was made. The depths were not as yet, and I was already conceived,... before the hills I was brought forth,... I was with Him forming all things: and was delighted every day, playing before Him at all times."

This text is illuminated by Ps. 2:7, "Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee," and Ps. 109:3, "Before the day star I begot Thee, " and it proclaims what St. Paul will say to the Hebrews (1:3) concerning the Son, who is "the brightness of His glory, and the figure of His substance." In this text from Proverbs, we find a certain distinction between the persons in the words, "The Lord possessed Me," for no one properly possesses himself. The pronoun "me" also designates a person, and not a divine attribute, for later we read, "I was with Him forming all things and was delighted, " that is, affected by joy, and only a person would be affected by joy, not a divine attribute. In this text also we find some indication that the principle of distinction between the two persons is the fact that one is begotten by the other, begotten not made: "I was conceived, I was brought forth." We find even some indication of the order of procession, and nothing of inequality: "I was set up from eternity."

Thus this text, considered alongside the analogy of faith, or when it is compared with other earlier and later texts, contains much that does not appear at first sight. Gradually the contemplative mind is able to penetrate its full meaning with the aid of the gift of understanding. For all these texts can be studied in two ways: superficially with whatever aid comes from grammar and history, or more profoundly in the light of faith and the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Thus we search out the meaning of the word of God, understanding it in that supernatural light in which it was originally written under the guidance of the Holy Ghost. In this way it was that the Fathers read these texts. In our churches the stained-glass windows can be looked at in two ways: from the outside, where the figures cannot be discerned; and from within the church, where all the design of the window can be seen in the light intended by the artist.

Here, too, we should read the text of the Book of Ecclesiasticus (chap. 24): “I [Wisdom] came out of the mouth of the Most High, the first-born before all creatures. I made that in the heavens there should rise light that never faileth... . In me is all grace of the way and of the truth.” In this text, the procession is indicated in the words, “I came out of the mouth of the Most High”: on the day of the Annunciation the archangel Gabriel called God the Father the Most High and, Jesus the Son of the Most High. The text also declares that Wisdom is begotten not made: “the first-born of all creatures.” Finally we find some indication of the order of procession in the words: “there should rise light that never faileth... in which is all grace of the way and of the truth.”

It might be raised in objection that verse 14 refers to creation, “From the beginning,... was I created.” Father Lebreton replied that this verse is to be explained from the context, in which, a little earlier, it is said that Wisdom “came out of the mouth of the Most High, the firstborn before all creatures.” Therefore when we read, “From the beginning,... was I created, “ the word “create” is to be understood for the production of a thing, as when it is said that children are procreated.

Lastly, we read in the Book of Wisdom (7:25-30) that Wisdom is “a vapor of the power of God, and a certain pure emanation of the glory of the almighty God: and therefore no defiled thing cometh in to her. For she is the brightness of eternal light, and the unspotted mirror of God’s majesty, and the image of His goodness... . She can do all things,... and conveyeth herself into holy souls, she maketh the friends of God and prophets... . Being

compared with the light, she is found before it. For after this cometh night, but no evil can overcome wisdom."

In the light of the preceding texts, this passage insinuates very probably the existence of a person distinct from the Father, the same as that person referred to in the psalms: "Thou art My son, this day have I begotten Thee" (2:7), and "The Lord said to my Lord: Sit thou at My right hand" (109:1). Here Wisdom, as "the certain pure emanation of the glory of the almighty God, appears as God from true God and as light from light." Here Wisdom is called "the brightness of eternal light, and the unspotted mirror of God's majesty, and the image of His goodness," that is, His adequate image, not an imperfect representation like the angels and men, who are created to the image of God. Of this perfect and adequate image we read that it "can do all things," because it is God Himself, and that it sanctifies souls, which is an attribute proper to God. It is, therefore, the uncreated light, without spot or blemish.

Many of the Fathers have compared this text with the beginning of the Epistle to the Hebrews: "God, who, at sundry times and in divers manners, spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, last of all, in these days hath spoken to us by His Son,... who being the brightness of His glory [Wisdom was called 'the brightness of eternal light'] and the figure of His substance [Wisdom was called 'the unspotted mirror of God's majesty, and the image of His goodness'], and upholding all things by the word of His power [Wisdom was said to be able 'to do all things'], making purgation of sins, sitteth on the right hand of the majesty on high [Wisdom was said to 'make friends of God and prophets']."

Lebreton, speaking of this chapter 7 of the Book of Wisdom, says: "Wisdom has not all the features of a living personality,... yet in this book we find the most precise presentiment of the Christian dogma. Soon the authentic interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews will show in full light that theology of the Word which we have been able to perceive there only obscurely."

In this passage of the Book of Wisdom, the Holy Ghost delineated what was to appear more brilliantly in the prologue to the Fourth Gospel: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." In opposition to all this, Philo's logos was either a creature, when he spoke as a Neoplatonist, or a divine attribute, when he spoke as a Jew.

The Old Testament contains only obscure references to the Holy Ghost. Often, indeed, the Spirit of God is mentioned, and He is represented as the principle of life by which the face of the earth is renewed (Ps. 103:30), and as the distributor of heavenly gifts (Isa. 11:2), the classic text concerning the gifts of the Holy Ghost. But the personal distinction of the Holy Ghost from God the Father can be hardly inferred from these texts of the Old Testament. This is not surprising, since the Old Testament was to announce the coming of the Messias, or of the Son, whereas the New Testament was to bring the Son's announcement of the mission of the Holy Ghost.

We find, however, some indication of this distinction in the Book of Wisdom (9:1 f., 17): "God of my fathers, and Lord of mercy, who hast made all things with Thy word, and by Thy wisdom hast appointed man... . And who shall know Thy thought, except Thou give wisdom, and send Thy Holy Spirit from above?"

Some light is thrown on this passage by the words of Isaias: "And there shall come forth a rod from the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise up out of this root. And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him: the spirit of wisdom, and of understanding, the spirit of counsel, and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge, and of godliness. And he shall be filled with the spirit of the fear of the Lord" (Isa. 11:1 ff.). Joining these two texts from the Old Testament, we see what Christians understand by the words, "And who shall know Thy thought... except Thou send Thy Holy Spirit from above?" On the feast of Pentecost the Church repeats the words of the Psalmist, "Send forth Thy spirit, and they shall be created" (Ps. 103:30). It should not be surprising that the first lineaments of the mystery of the Trinity should be obscure. Some features of the mystery were announced in the beginning, but that which was to be more fully revealed later on could not then be known. In the natural order the whole river is virtually known in the initial spring of a great stream, but from that spring alone the whole course of the river cannot be known. So also the extraordinary talents of a great genius are virtually found in the mind of the child, but they are not explicit in the beginning.

Conclusion. All that was revealed in the Old Testament about the Messias, Wisdom, and the Holy Spirit is the primitive delineation of the mystery of the Holy Trinity. The Jews, however, apparently were not able to understand these things or to unite them into one body of doctrine, as is evident from the rabbinical and apocryphal writings. Thus it often occurs

that the father and the mother of a child who later becomes a great thinker are not able to appreciate the acumen of the child, although later when the child has grown to manhood they can discern his unusual gifts in the light of a maturer mind. It is said of St. Thomas that when he was five years old he often asked his teachers, “Who is God?” Most of his teachers were not able to foresee what would become of the child. St. Albert the Great, however, seems to have foreseen the child’s future.

Doubt. In the Old Testament what kind of faith was necessary for salvation with regard to God?

Reply. The answer is found in the Epistle to the Hebrews (11:6): “But without faith it is impossible to please God. For he that cometh to God, must believe that He is, and is a rewarder to them that seek Him.” As St. Thomas explained, it was always necessary to believe something above reason, that is, not only the existence of God as the author of nature but also the existence of God as the author of grace and salvation. Faith in the Trinity is implicitly contained in this supernatural belief. Explicit faith in the Trinity was not necessary for salvation in the Old Testament. “Before Christ the mystery of the incarnation of Christ was explicitly believed by the majority, while a minority believed it implicitly and vaguely; the same was true of the mystery of the Trinity.” It was in this sense that St. Thomas says in the same place, “Therefore from the beginning it was necessary for salvation to believe explicitly in the Trinity,” at least for the leaders, among whom were the prophets. In the same article in the reply to the first objection, St. Thomas says: “It was necessary at all times and for all to believe explicitly these two truths concerning God (that God is and that He is the rewarder). But these two truths were not sufficient at all times for all.”

5. The Blessed Trinity In Tradition

The testimony of tradition on the Holy Trinity is extensively treated in the history of dogma. Here we shall discuss only the more important questions relating to the difference between tradition in the ante-Nicene and post-Nicene periods. These questions have at all times been discussed in the Church, and St. Thomas himself wrote of them at length in his Commentary on the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel, where he speaks of Origen’s error about the Word, the Son of God, and in the Summa, where he says, “The Arians, for whom Origen was the source, taught that the Son was different from the Father by a diversity of substance,” and that the Word is said to be divine only metaphorically and not properly.

At the outset it should be noted, as is evident from the New Testament, that from the beginning the Church believed explicitly in the mystery of the Trinity, professing in concrete terms that God the Father sent His only-begotten Son into the world and then the Holy Ghost came to sanctify men. This is the substance of the Apostles' Creed itself. In defining this mystery the Church did not yet make use of such abstract terms as nature, person, and Trinity, but it was already clear that the words "Father" and "Son" were personal nouns. This should be kept in mind lest the earlier sublime simplicity of contemplation, which transcends the later technical terminology, be confused with a later attempt to debase this doctrine by a superficial and spurious simplicity. Some say that at first the faith of the Church was proposed in a popular manner and later more scientifically; it would be better to say that in the beginning the faith was expressed in a concrete manner, which in its sublimity surpassed the abstract technicality of a later age. In the transition from this concrete expression of the faith, particularly in the earliest Creeds, to the abstract expression as formulated against Arianism in the Council of Nicaea in 325, certain difficulties arose which were solved by the Nicene Council itself. Thus in this matter we distinguish two periods: the ante-Nicene and the post-Nicene periods. We see here how slowly man learns to abstract, how he slowly attains to the third stage of abstraction divorced from all matter, how at first his metaphysical notions are confused, and only later become clarified and distinct. Then the danger of the abuse of abstraction arises as in the decline of Scholasticism, when the mind receded too far from the concrete, from the documents of revelation, and from the vital contemplation of divine things.

ANTE-NICENE TESTIMONIES

In this period the documents which express the faith of the Church can easily be reconciled with the later definitions of the Council of Nicaea, which state the doctrine of the Trinity more explicitly. The writings of many ante-Nicene Fathers, however, with their mingling of faith and philosophical theory, are correct in their statement of the substance of the mystery, but the explanations they offer often contain inexact expressions, some of which seem to incline to Subordinationism, and others seem to favor Sabellianism or Modalism. We see here how the evolution of dogma

is the progressive unfolding of the same truth, from the indistinct and concrete concepts to the more defined and distinct concepts.

We should not be surprised to learn that the early Fathers used such inexact expressions since they were confronted with the problem of refuting heresies which were mutually opposed; to show the real distinction between the persons against the Modalists they sometimes made use of expressions tainted with Subordinationism, and when they were intent on safeguarding the unity of God they sometimes weakened the distinction between the persons. Theologians have at all times carefully distinguished between the documents of faith proposed by the Church, in which tradition is found without any admixture of philosophical theory, and the writings of the Fathers which were more or less exact in their use of abstract and philosophical terminology.

The faith of the early Church about the Trinity was expressed chiefly in three ways: 1. in the manner of baptizing, 2. in the various Creeds, 3. in the doxologies.

1. Baptism was conferred by a triple immersion and with the invocation of the three divine persons. The manner of baptizing is given in the Didache (VII, I ff.): “Baptize in this manner: after you have said all these things, baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost with living water. Pour water on the head three times in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.” The same instruction is found in Tertullian, writing against Praxeas. Praxeas was a Patripassian, admitting the existence of only one person, the Father, who had become incarnate. In his reply to Praxeas, Tertullian wrote: “We immerse not once but three times at each of the names and for each of the persons.” Further, the sign of the cross expresses three mysteries: the Trinity, the Incarnation, when the hand descends to the breast at the words “and of the Son,” and the Redemption by the form of the cross.

2. The faith of the Church in the Trinity is expressed in various creeds. St. Irenaeus tells us that in the second century the catechumens before they were baptized read or recited a certain rule of faith or profession of faith in the Trinity, which declared, “In one God, the almighty Father, who made heaven and earth and sea, and all that are in them; and in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, incarnate for our salvation; and in the Holy Ghost, who by the prophets preached the ordinances of God.” This belief was developed in later creeds which can be found in Denzinger.

3. The faith of the primitive Church in the Trinity is also enunciated in the doxologies, which were in use from the earliest times. Many of them are found in the epistles of St. Paul, who in the beginning or at the conclusion invokes and glorifies the three persons of the Trinity.

Later, we read in the Acts of the Martyrdom of St. Polycarp, the disciple of St. John, that at his execution St. Polycarp exclaimed: “Lord God almighty, Father of Thy blessed and beloved Son Jesus Christ, I bless Thee,... I glorify Thee through the heavenly and eternal high priest Jesus Christ, Thy beloved Son, through whom there is to Thee with Him and the Holy Ghost glory now and in future ages. Amen.”

As early as the second century the Church used the lesser doxology, “Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost,” still recited in the Divine Office at the end of each psalm, and the greater doxology, “Glory to God in the highest,” in which the Church’s faith in the Trinity is expressed in greater detail. In the greater doxology we have an example of that sublime contemplation which assuredly will dispose us to an intimate union with the Blessed Trinity no less than many scholastic treatises on the Trinity. Often when celebrating Mass the priest recites this doxology in a mechanical manner as something prescribed by the rubrics. It is, however, an instance of profound contemplation of the mystery of the Trinity of great antiquity, for Pope St. Telesphorus (128-39) commanded that the Gloria be recited on the feast of the Nativity of our Lord.

The greater doxology begins with the song of the angels, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will”; then the one God is adored, “We adore Thee, we glorify Thee”; the in we adore, “God the Father almighty,” our “Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son; O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,” and finally the Holy Ghost, “together with the Holy Ghost, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.”

Many contemplative minds have not found a more beautiful expression of this mystery, and yet it is often recited mechanically as something already well known and worthy of no further consideration or contemplation. The result is a kind of materialization of divine worship. The great antiquity of this greater doxology shows how vivid was the early Christian’s faith in the Trinity, even though he spoke rather inexactly when he treated of the mystery in abstract and philosophical language.

In spite of some inexact expressions, the teaching of the ante-Nicene Fathers can easily be reconciled with the later definitions of the Council of

Nicaea. At all times they held fast to the doctrine expressed in the earliest creeds concerning one God in three persons. Among the apostolic Fathers, St. Clement of Rome in his two letters to the Corinthians says that the Father is the Creator, the Son is more excellent than the angels and is God Himself, and that the Holy Ghost spoke through the prophets. We find like expressions in the epistles of St. Ignatius Martyr to the Ephesians and to the Magnesians. All the Fathers believed in one God in three persons, and those Fathers who opposed Modalism clearly asserted the real distinction between the persons. Thus St. Hippolytus, wrote: “It is necessary that we confess that the Father is God almighty, and Jesus Christ the Son of God, God made man, and the Holy Ghost, and these are really three.”

Tertullian (213-25) asserts the unity of substance no less clearly than the Trinity of persons. He says: “We should guard the sacredness of the economy (i. e., the sacred doctrine) which teaches that there is unity and trinity, three directing, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Three, however, not in status but in degree... of one substance and one power, for it is one God from whom these degrees, these forms and species, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, are derived.” It was difficult to find the proper abstract terms; the words “degree, form, species” are quite inadequate to express abstractly the distinction between the persons.

In asserting the distinction between the persons, the ante-Nicene Fathers generally avoided the language of the Subordinationists. Some, however, like Origen (202-54), leaned somewhat to Subordinationism, saying that the Son was in some manner inferior to the Father, and the Holy Ghost was inferior to the Son. Misled by his philosophy, Origen seems to have come under the influence of Philo, and in his attempt to confute the Modalists he made use of inaccurate expressions and merited the criticism of later writers.

Similarly St. Dionysius of Alexandria, Origen’s disciple, fought Modalism with such zeal that some thought he had fallen into Subordinationism, but in his Apologia addressed to the Supreme Pontiff he stated his position more clearly. On other occasions these Fathers taught that the Son was begotten and not made: Origen speaks of the Son as eternal and homoousios, consubstantial with the Father. They did not, however, at all times avoid the use of Neoplatonic expressions which implied a necessary emanation and some subordination, something between

eternal generation in equality of nature and free creation out of nothing. Therefore Pope St. Dionysius in 260, condemning the Modalists and Subordinationists, wrote: “Neither is the admirable and divine unity to be divided into three divinities, nor by the language of division is the dignity and supreme greatness of the Lord to be diminished.”

POST-NICENE TESTIMONIES

In 325 the Council of Nicaea defended the true tradition against Arius, who taught that the Father alone was truly God, that the Word was the most excellent of creatures, created in time out of nothing, and that the Holy Ghost was also a creature, inferior to the Son. After long discussion it was defined that the Word was consubstantial with the Father, homousion: “We believe in one God the Father almighty, maker of all things, visible and invisible. And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten Son of the Father, that is, of the substance of the Father, God of God, light of light, true God of true God, begotten, not made, of one substance with the Father, as the Greeks say, homousion, by whom all things were made. And in the Holy Ghost.”

After this condemnation the heretics tried to cover up their error by teaching that the Son was not properly homousion or consubstantial with the Father, that is, of the same essence, but that He was similar in nature, or homoiousion. Such was the teaching of the Semi-Arians; the Acacians said the Son was homoion, that is, similar with regard to form and accidents. These teachings were refuted by St. Alexander, the bishop of Alexandria, and by St. Athanasius.

NOTE ON THE EVOLUTION OF DOGMA OR THE PROGRESSIVE UNDERSTANDING OF DOGMA

The definition of the Council of Nicaea on the consubstantiality of the Word is clearly nothing more than an explanation or more explicit statement of the proposition contained in the prologue of St. John’s Gospel: “The Word was God.” The consubstantiality is not arrived at by an objectively illative process which deduces a new truth from another, as, for example, when we conclude that man is free from the fact that he is rational. To arrive at the knowledge of this consubstantiality an explicative process is

sufficient, or at the most a subjectively illative process, by which the mind proceeds to the deduction of a new truth. By the simple explicative process the second statement is shown to be equivalent to an earlier simpler proposition.

The explicative process is most easy: God is one, but the indivisible and infinite divine nature cannot be multiplied. This monotheism is manifestly based on faith, for we read, “Wear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord” (Deut. 6:4); “See ye that I alone am, and there is no other God beside Me” (Deut. 32:39); “And Jesus answered him:... the Lord thy God is one God” (Mark 12:29); “We know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no God but one” (I Cor. 8:4).

On the supposition of monotheism, we read further, “And the Word was God, “ or, the Word, the only-begotten Son of God, is God, like the Father. Therefore the Father and the Son are consubstantial, that is, they are not distinct with regard to essence and substance but only by reason of paternity and filiation, which is the opposition of relation. Again, Jesus said, “I am the truth and the life.” This process does not attain to a new truth deduced from that revealed truth, “And the Word was God, “ but it explains it on the supposition that monotheism is established. Therefore, in spite of what has been said by recent students, the divine consubstantiality is not a theological conclusion sanctioned by definition.

St. Athanasius, from another approach, proves the consubstantiality by a proper illative process from two revealed premises. St. Athanasius declared: Only God deifies, or makes divine by participation. But the Word of God deifies us. Therefore He is God, and consequently homousios with the Father, from whom He proceeds not by creation but by generation in the identity of nature.

Father Marin Sola teaches: “The consubstantiality defined by the Council of Nicaea was a revealed truth. But where and how was it revealed? It was revealed in other truths, which contained it implicitly and from which it was deduced by reasoning. These other truths are: 1. Jesus Christ is truly the Son of God; 2. in God there is simple unity and there can be no division of substance.”

At this point we depart from Sola and Batiffol, holding that consubstantiality is not really a theological conclusion but a truth of faith more explicitly stated.

Having posited the revealed proposition, “The Word was God, “ no objectively illative process is required to understand consubstantiality. This consubstantiality does not express a new truth, but the same truth in a more explicit manner, as when we proceed from the nominal definition of man to the real and explicit definition, namely, man is a rational animal. If certain theologians, like Bellarmine, say that consubstantiality is deduced, it is deduced by the explicative process, or perhaps, as we have said, by an illative process from two premises already revealed. Here we must also keep in mind the transition from concrete knowledge to abstract knowledge. Abstract knowledge is already contained implicitly, and not only virtually, in the concrete knowledge of the same thing, and the transition is made without any objectively illative process.

In this way St. Athanasius argued to prove the divinity of the Holy Ghost against the Arians and the Macedonians: inasmuch as the Holy Ghost sanctifies us, that is, deifies us by a participation in the deity. Furthermore, St. Athanasius said: “The Father begets necessarily and at the same time freely; and He does not create necessarily but freely.” In explanation he said that the Father necessarily and freely loves Himself but not as a matter of choice. It follows that in God generation is eternal since God was always the Father, and similarly spiration is eternal, otherwise neither the Son nor the Holy Ghost would be God, because they would not then be eternal. In refuting the Arians, St. Athanasius concluded: “Nothing created can be found in the Trinity, since it is entirely one God.” After the Nicene Council many other councils confirmed this teaching against the Macedonians, who had denied the divinity of the Holy Ghost, particularly the Fourth Council of Rome (380) and the Council of Constantinople, which expressly defined that the Holy Ghost was God. With this we conclude the testimony of tradition, for after the Nicene Council the Church clearly taught the mystery of one God in three distinct persons.

6. St. Augustine And St. Thomas On The Trinity

In his commentaries on the Gospel of St. Matthew and that of St. John and on the epistles of St. Paul, St. Thomas examined all the texts of the New Testament in which the Holy Trinity is mentioned explicitly or implicitly. In his consideration of this subject, he clearly understood how much St. Augustine was able to contribute toward the understanding of these texts. His debt to St. Augustine will become evident from a

comparison of the works of St. Augustine with the writings of the Greek Fathers.

1. The method of the Greek Fathers. In their refutation of Sabellius, who had denied the real distinction between the divine persons, and of Arius and Macedonius, who had denied the divinity either of the Son or of the Holy Ghost, the Greek Fathers began with the affirmation of the three persons, as found in Sacred Scripture, and then they tried to show that this Trinity of persons could be reconciled with the unity of nature by reason of the consubstantiality of the persons. This idea of consubstantiality was more and more explicitly stated and then defined in the Council of Nicaea.

Thus the Greek Fathers, especially St. Athanasius, showed that, according to revelation, the Father begets the Son by communicating to Him not only the participation of His nature but His whole nature, and from this it followed that the Son was consubstantial with the Father and true God from true God. This also explained how the incarnate Son of God was able to redeem us from the servitude of sin, because His merits had infinite value. In the same way the Greek Fathers showed that according to Sacred Scripture the Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, was God and therefore was able to sanctify our souls. Indeed these processions were looked upon as donations and communications rather than as operations of the divine intellect and will: the Father, in begetting the Son, gave Him His nature. Similarly, the Father and the Son gave or communicated the divine nature to the Holy Ghost, who proceeded from them. But in this concept, the manner in which the first and second processions took place remained inscrutable. In their explanations of this mystery, the Greek Fathers followed the order of the Apostles' Creed, in which the Father is called the Creator, the Son the Savior, and the Holy Ghost the Sanctifier. The explanations proposed by the Greek Fathers contained, it must be said, many obscurities.

2. The difficulties of the Greek Fathers. Why are there two processions and only two? How does the first differ from the second, and why is the first procession called generation? In other words, why is the Son of God only-begotten, and why does the Holy Ghost, although not begotten, receive the whole divine nature?

One other doubt arises: Why, in the Apostles' Creed, is the Father alone called the Creator, whereas in the prologue of St. John's Gospel and in the epistles of St. Paul all things are said to have been made by the Word? The

creative omnipotence is an attribute of the divine nature and therefore it is something common to the divine nature and pertains to the three divine persons. The Greek Fathers did not explain in what sense the Father alone is called the Creator in the Creed.

To solve this difficulty, St. Augustine and his successors adopted the theory of appropriation, which is found only implicitly in the Greek Fathers. The Latins explained that the Father is called the Creator, not because He alone created, but by appropriation, that is, by a similitude of propriety, for "the creative power contains the idea of principle and therefore has a resemblance with the heavenly Father, who is the principle in the divinity." In the same way wisdom has a resemblance with the Son inasmuch as He is the Word.

3. St. Augustine's solution of these difficulties. To arrive at a solution of these problems, St. Augustine labored long in the writing of his great work, De Trinitate, in fifteen books; the first seven books explain the biblical texts referring to the Trinity, and the other eight treat of the mystery speculatively, proposing analogies taken from the human soul, inasmuch as the word of the mind proceeds from it by intellection as well as love, which is the inclination or weight of the soul drawing it to the good as loved. St. Augustine laid great emphasis on the fact that according to the Fourth Gospel the Son proceeds from the Father as the Word; "And the Word was with God and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him... ."

The Son, who is called only-begotten (v. 18), proceeds therefore from the Father as the Word, not as the Word produced and delivered exteriorly, but as the Word of the divine mind, for it is said, "The Word was with God, and the Word was God." The Word, then, is God, not the supreme creature, and "all things were made by Him." In the Epistle to the Hebrews, we read, "Who being the brightness of His glory, and the figure of His substance[of God the Father], and upholding all things by the word of His power."

St. Augustine explains the intimate manner of the generation of the eternal and only-begotten Son, while the Greek Fathers said that the manner of His begetting was inscrutable. Explaining the prologue of St. John's Gospel, St. Augustine showed that the Father from eternity begets His Son by an intellectual act just as our mind conceives the mental word: in the soul we find the mind, knowledge, and love; in the soul, which is the image

of the Trinity, there are memory, intelligence (the act of intellection), and the will. This helps us to understand the fecundity of the divine nature.

But while our word is only an accident of our minds, remaining very imperfect and limited, and multiple to express the diverse nature of things, the divine Word is something substantial, most perfect, unique, perfectly expressing the divine nature and all that it contains. It is therefore truly "light of light, God of God, true God of true God." Thus, by the analogy of our intellectual word, by its similarity and dissimilarity, the intimate manner of the first procession is explained. The manner of the second procession, which appears as the procession of love, is also explained. From our souls, which according to the Scriptures are created in the likeness of God, proceeds not only the word but also love. The human mind not only conceives the true-good but also loves it. If therefore the only-begotten Son proceeds from the Father as the mental Word, the Holy Ghost is to be considered as proceeding from them as love.

Thus it is that there are in God two processions and only two, and the manner of each is explained. St. Augustine, however, did not understand why the first procession is called generation. St. Thomas explains: "The Word proceeds by intellectual action, which is a vital operation, conjoined to the principle, and after the manner of a likeness, because the intellectual concept is an image of the thing understood." The concept of our minds, however, does not deserve the name of generation, because in us the concept is only an accident of our minds, whereas in God the Word is substantial inasmuch as intellection in God is subsisting being. Thus the Father, in producing the Word, begets a Son like to Himself, and does not produce an accidental mental word.

St. Thomas further perfected the doctrine of St. Augustine by showing why the procession of love should not be called generation: "the will is in act, not because some likeness of the thing willed is in the will, but because the will has a certain inclination toward the thing willed." In St. Augustine's words, "My love is my weight."

In the doctrine proposed by St. Augustine we also find an explanation of why the Holy Ghost proceeds not from the Father alone, but also from the Son, because in our souls love proceeds not only from the soul itself but from the knowledge of the true-good, since nothing is loved unless it is also known.

From this it appears that in his thinking about the Trinity, St. Augustine did not begin with the three persons as did the Greek Fathers but rather with the unity of the divine nature, which was already demonstrated by reason, just as he began with the soul itself in his demonstration of its faculties and superior operations.

In these two approaches opposing difficulties arise: in the Greek approach it is difficult to safeguard the unity of nature, while in the Augustinian approach, starting with the unity of nature, it is difficult to safeguard the distinction between the persons and those things which are proper or appropriated to the persons. It is, after all, a transcendent and indemonstrable mystery. But by these two approaches, the first of which is the more concrete and the second is more abstract, the mystery is contemplated under two aspects. And finally, the abstract principles serve to advance a better understanding of what is known beforehand in a concrete manner.

St. Augustine and his followers easily explained what the Greek Fathers were not able to show: why the Father alone is not the Creator, but also the Son and the Holy Ghost, because the creative power is a property of the divine nature, common to the three persons. Gradually was unfolded the meaning of the traditional principle: the three persons are one principle in the operations ad extra. This principle was formulated in the condemnations by Pope Damasus in 380, and later councils defined it more accurately. Great progress was thus made in the elucidation of this dogma.

When, in the Apostles' Creed, only the Father is called the Creator, the predication is not proper and exclusive; it is rather by a kind of appropriation, inasmuch as the creative power contains the notion of principle ad extra just as the Father is the principle ad intra. In the same way, wisdom has a resemblance with the Word, and our sanctification has a resemblance to the Holy Ghost, since it proceeds from God's love for us, and thus the Holy Ghost is called the Spirit of love or personal love.

Therefore, while consubstantiality was the terminus toward which the Greek Fathers tended, beginning with the three persons, whose names are found in Scripture, St. Augustine, on the other hand, began with the unity of the divine nature to arrive at the three persons, just as he began with the unity of the soul to determine its superior operations and the various manifestations of its life.

In the Augustinian doctrine, gradually that principle which illumines the whole treatise on the Trinity and was formulated by the Council of Florence in 1441, came to light, “In God all things are one and the same unless there is opposition of relation, “ that is, where there is no relative opposition between the persons, all things are one and the same because the divine nature is numerically one with all its attributes.

4. The difficulties of the Augustinian teaching solved by St. Thomas. Two difficulties remained in the Augustinian doctrine. The first arose from the fact that the generation of the Word takes place after the manner of intellection; but the three divine persons have intellect; therefore the three divine persons ought to beget, and then there would be a fourth person, and so on to infinity. This difficulty is solved by the distinction between intellection and the expression of the notional idea inasmuch as the three persons all have intelligence but only the Father expresses the intellection. He alone expresses because the Word is adequate and the most perfect expression of the divine nature and no other Word need be enunciated. Just as in a classroom while the teacher is teaching, both he and the pupils understand, but the teacher alone enunciates. Similarly a difficult question may be proposed to a number of persons; then one discovers and expresses the correct solution, while all the others immediately understand it. This distinction between intellection and enunciation is offered by St. Thomas.

The second difficulty is similar: the second procession takes place after the manner of love; but the three persons love; therefore the three persons ought to spirate another person, and so on to infinity.

The solution of this difficulty depends on the distinction between essential love, which is common to the three persons, and notional love, which is active spiration and corresponds to the enunciation of the Word. It is called notional because it denotes the third person. Thus the three persons all love, but only the first two spirate. We have then three kinds of love in God: essential, notional, and personal. Personal love is the Holy Ghost Himself, who is the terminus of active spiration just as the Word is the terminus of generation and enunciation. According to a rather remote analogy: a saintly preacher loves God and inspires his audience with this love, and the hearers also love God but they do not inspire others with this love. These two distinctions are not explicitly found in St. Augustine, but after his time great progress was made in elucidating the traditional doctrine of the Trinity.

5. The preference of St. Augustine’s doctrine over that of the Greek Fathers.

THE AUGUSTINIAN TEACHING PREVAILED FOR THREE REASONS

1. Because by beginning with the unity of the divine nature, St. Augustine began methodically with what was better known to us. The divine nature was already demonstrated by reason, and from this he proceeded to the supernatural mystery of the Trinity. When the Greek Fathers were writing, the treatise on the one God had not yet been set up as the way to an understanding of the Trinity.

2. Because the Augustinian approach solved those difficulties remaining in the Greek concept, explaining the number and character of the processions after the manner of intellection and love. It also explained the Filioque, inasmuch as love presupposes intellection; and finally it explained the distinction between the natural order, of which God as one and the Creator is the efficient principle, and the supernatural order, whose supreme mystery is the divine processions within God.

3. Because whatever difficulties still remained were attributable not to deficiencies of method but to the sublimity of the mystery. Moreover, the Augustinian concept offered whatever was positive in the Greek concept, perfecting it, and thus itself was more perfect. The Greek Fathers began with the concrete; the Latin Fathers and theologians arrived at a more abstract consideration and at the knowledge of principles which cast light both on the whole treatise and on those things known concretely in the beginning.

6. The theory of Richard of St. Victor. This theory is dominated by the Victorine voluntarism, according to which the good is prior and more important than being, and the will and love are more important than the intellect. According to this concept, God would better be defined as the supreme Good rather than as subsisting Being. To which St. Thomas replied that that which first comes to the attention of our intellect is being, and that the notion of good presupposes the more universal and simpler concept of being; good is nothing more than the plenitude of being, desired because it is perfective. We should not be surprised to see these two tendencies among philosophers and theologians, the primacy of being and intellect, and the primacy of good and love, nor is it surprising that two theories should have

been proposed by Latin theologians about the Trinity. We will briefly consider here Richard's theory because it was adopted in some form by Alexander of Hales and St. Bonaventure, and is quoted by St. Thomas. Indeed, St. Thomas, developed his own doctrine by correcting the theory of Richard of St. Victor, which should therefore be explained first.

Richard, like the Greeks, first considered in God the person and then the nature. He demonstrated the existence of a personal God, possessing all perfections, especially the supreme perfection, which for Richard was the love of benevolence and friendship, or charity.

Charity, however, declared Richard, is not the love of oneself, but the love of friendship, the love of another person, according to the classical passage from St. Gregory the Great: "Charity cannot exist unless there are two persons, for no one can properly be said to have charity toward himself." Hence Richard concluded: "It is fitting that love should tend toward another in order that it be charity. Where there is not a plurality of persons, charity cannot be said to be present." In God, according to Richard, love (good diffusive of itself) begets a second beloved person, without whom the love of friendship cannot come into being. The most perfect love of friendship gives to the other not only something belonging to the lover but the whole nature of the lover. The love of the lover gives whatever it can.

Finally, Richard in order to prove that the most perfect charity, such as is found in God, is most pure without any love of concupiscence, concluded that it not only tolerates but most freely desires a third person, equally beloved by the other persons. When envy appears sometimes in human friendship, it is a sign that the love is not pure. Hence there are in God three persons, who love one another equally without any selfish love or self-interest, and the three loves are identified with subsisting love itself, which is the definition of God Himself.

Objection. But the love of the Holy Ghost is not freely given as is the love of the Father and the Son.

Reply. Richard's reply was that, by reason of His supreme benevolence, the Holy Ghost wishes rather to receive than to give in order that what is more glorious might be attributed to the other two persons.

Such is the brief outline of this theory by which Richard wished to demonstrate the mystery of the Trinity from the fact that God is the most perfect personal love.

Criticism. St. Thomas replied that the theory does not demonstrate that God is infinitely fecund ad intra, for the love of the most perfect person does not require the association of another person for his happiness. Further, what becomes of the Word of God in Richard's theory? It seems to disappear, since the first procession is by love and not by intellection. For Richard, as for the Greeks, the Word was something spoken to another person rather than a mental concept of a person. In Richard's mind the Father speaks, the Son is the utterance, and the Holy Ghost hears. Thus the intimate life of God is an intimate conversation, and the same is intellection in the three persons. Briefly, Richard does not understand by the Word or by His production a formal mode of divine generation, for he explains divine generation not by the analogy of intellection but of love.

Hence another objection arises: Richard omits the concept of intellection, but nothing can be loved unless it is known beforehand. As we see from his writings, Richard responded to this objection on the basis of his metaphysical and psychological principles.

1. Metaphysically speaking, according to Richard, the good is superior to being and diffusive of itself by love, as Plato and the Neoplatonists taught. According to the Neoplatonists, the first hypostasis is the one-good, which by its own diffusiveness and by love generates the second hypostasis, intelligence, whose object is being, something inferior to the supreme Good.

2. Psychologically speaking, Richard contended that the highest vital activity is not immobile intellection, which is quiescent in itself, but love, especially the love of friendship, which is diffusive of itself. For Richard knowledge was subordinate to love, as a previous condition for a higher perfection. This opinion is continued in Scotism, which is a form of voluntarism. For St. Thomas, on the other hand, the dignity of love is derived from the dignity of knowledge by which love is directed, and the heavenly beatitude is constituted formally by the vision of God. This vision of God is necessarily followed, as by its complement, by the love of God above all things.

Another objection against Richard's theory arises from the difficulty of safeguarding the unity of the divine nature. It is the same difficulty as beset the Greeks; like the Greeks, Richard began with the notion of divine person rather than with the notion of the divine nature. Therefore in his mind the divine nature was rather the act of love, rather a dynamic unity than a static

entity. For Richard the same love was identical in the three divine persons, although some special property of this love is found in each person. The matter is left in mystery. The main criticism of Richard's theory is that he seems to lose sight of the teaching of St. John's Gospel, that the Son of God proceeds as the Word, that is, after the manner of intellection.

Alexander of Hales made some improvements on Richard's theory. Alexander was more intent on the metaphysical aspect of the problem; he considered the principle that good is diffusive of itself, rather than the psychological aspect, that the love of charity requires several persons. Thus Alexander and St. Bonaventure, who followed him, looked on the divine processions as the fecundity of the infinite living being, relying on the axiom that good is diffusive of itself, and the higher the nature the more intimate and complete will be this diffusion. But the highest kind of diffusion is the communication of ideas and of love, as when God makes creatures in His own likeness and loves them, and also the communication of His entire divine nature. Whereas we, the adopted sons of God, have received only the participation of the divine nature, the only-begotten Son has received the entire divine nature without any division or multiplication; and this is the supreme diffusion and fecundity of the supreme Good.

As we shall see, this concept was retained by St. Thomas, but a part of Alexander's theory was discarded by him. Alexander had taught, "In God to beget after the manner of intellection is hardly the same as to understand." After lengthy examination, under the title, "Thether begetting is the same as intellection in God, " St. Thomas assigns supporting reasons: "God lives the noblest kind of life, which is intellection"; "Intellection is nothing else than generating a species within oneself." These arguments had already been presented by St. Augustine and St. Anselm, and St. Thomas perfected them.

Yet Alexander concluded: "Begetting in God is not the same as intellection." For this he gives two reasons: 1. "No one begets himself, and yet he understands himself; the Son of God understands but does not beget. Therefore in God begetting is not the same as intellection." St. Thomas replied that begetting is the same as intellectual enunciation. 2. Begetting implies the duality of the begetter and the begotten, but such is not the case in intellection, since anyone can understand himself without this duality. A study of this theory reminds us of Leibnitz's dictum: "In general, systems are correct in what they affirm and false in what they deny." Why? Because

reality is more solid than the systems; especially is this true of the supreme reality.

Richard's theory was also accepted by Peter Bles, by William of Auxerre, and partly by St. Bonaventure, but it was refuted by St. Thomas.

St. Bonaventure's theory is mixed because it proceeds from two sources, from Peter Lombard, who gave St. Augustine's doctrine on the Word, and from Richard of St. Victor through Alexander of Hales. Hence we find a difference between St. Bonaventure and St. Thomas. The principal difference seems to be this: for St. Thomas, God is pure act, in the sense of pure actuality; for St. Bonaventure, God is pure activity or the supreme activity. For St. Bonaventure, therefore, the supreme unity is active, rather dynamic than static, and goodness especially is essentially diffusive of itself. Therefore the supreme active unity is not only absolute but it also implies a certain relation to something else by reason of the notion of diffusion or fecundity of a living being.

According to this principle, St. Bonaventure, like Alexander, conceived the first procession as "the fecundity of the divine nature," and the second procession as "the fecundity of the will." St. Bonaventure looked on the Second Person rather as the Son of God than as the Word of God, and he considered the Word, or Logos, mentioned by St. John in his prologue, as a comparison to help us understand who the Son of God is. With Alexander, St. Bonaventure conceded that there must be begetting in God since every nature is communicable and every living being begets specifically like itself. Such fecundity is a noble quality or perfection which must be attributed to God. St. Bonaventure pointed out that there is a notable difference between divine and human generation. In divine generation alone, the communicated nature remains numerically the same with the first nature because it is infinite and cannot be divided. In human generation, man begets in order to preserve the species after the death of the begetter; thus man begets both because of his fecundity and his need.

God the Father almighty begets only because of His fecundity. St. Bonaventure's theory joins the classic theory of St. Augustine with Richard's theory as modified by Alexander of Hales. It is a dynamic concept in which the concept of the good is dominant; the theory is greatly influenced by Dionysius' principle: good is diffusive of itself. This principle, it should be noted, serves to illustrate the fitness of creation, but

not that of the Incarnation or of the Holy Eucharist. In all these mysteries God diffuses His goodness.

The question arises whether St. Thomas retained the principle that good is diffusive of itself. In making use of this principle St. Thomas distinguished between the end and the agent. “Good,” he said, “is said to be diffusive of itself in the sense that the end is said to move or elicit.”

Every agent acts on account of an end, and therefore the good is first of all diffusive of itself as an end, and then effectively it is diffusive through the mediation of the agent. “It pertains to the idea of the good,” says St. Thomas, “that it communicate itself to others; and it pertains to the idea of the supreme good that it communicate itself in the highest way to the creature.” This takes place ad extra in the Incarnation. Again, under the question: “Whether God wills other things besides Himself, “ St. Thomas taught: “The natural thing... has a natural inclination to diffuse its own good to others as much as is possible. Hence we see that every agent, so far as it is in act and perfect, makes something like itself... . Much more it belongs to the divine will to communicate its own good to others by means of a likeness as far as is possible.” In the following article, against the Neoplatonists, he says that the divine will most freely wills other things besides itself, “Since nothing accrues to the divine goodness from creatures.” St. Thomas also points out the fitness of the Holy Eucharist, which is the sacrament of love.

Thus we see that St. Thomas retains the principle of Dionysius so often quoted by Alexander of Hales and St. Bonaventure, although sometimes he proposes it differently in the questions on the Trinity, where the good is not properly speaking the final cause, nor the efficient cause, but the principle. In the Contra Gentes in the famous eleventh chapter, he offers this principle to explain the divine generation of the Word: “By how much a nature is higher, by that much what emanates from it is more intimate.” Thus, from fire is generated, from the plant another plant, and a vital operation is the more vital the more it is immanent, as, for example, sensation, and intellection is still higher since from it proceeds the word. “That which proceeds ad extra is properly diverse from that from which it proceeds; but that which proceeds ad intra by the process of intellection is not properly diverse, for the more perfectly it proceeds the more it will be one with that from which it proceeds. Thus the Word of God proceeding from the Father, proceeds from Him without any numerical diversity of nature.” Even if

there had been no creation, the principle, good is diffusive of itself, would be verified in God, and so the revelation of the mystery of the Trinity confirms the dogma of a free creation, in no way necessary.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the Thomists in explaining the teaching of St. Thomas frequently make use of that principle so often invoked by St. Bonaventure, that the good is essentially diffusive of itself; although on this point there is some difference between the two doctors. In his treatise on the Trinity, Scheeben also makes use of this principle.

THE DIVISION OF ST. THOMAS' TREATISE ON THE TRINITY

IN the prologue (question 27), St. Thomas lays down the order for the whole treatise and the fitness of his distribution of the matter is immediately apparent. He explains: "Since the divine persons are distinguished by the relations of origin (inasmuch as the Son is denominated by His origin from the Father, and the Holy Ghost by His origin from the Spirators), we shall follow the order indicated by the matter itself when we first consider origin or procession, secondly the relations of origin, and thirdly the divine persons."

The treatise, therefore, is divided as follows:

1. Concerning the divine processions (Question 27).
2. Concerning the divine relations (Question 28).
3. Concerning the divine persons (Questions 29 to 43).

Of persons absolutely:

In common: the idea of person, the plurality of persons, the similarities and dissimilarities of the persons, and their knowability by us.

Individually: the persons of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Of the persons comparatively: with regard to their essence, their properties and relations, their notional acts (generation and active spiration); the comparison of the persons with one another with regard to their similarity and equality and their respective missions.

St. Thomas, we see, proceeds according to the genetic method, from that which is better known to that which is less known. For in the Scriptures we read of processions, indicated by the name of the Son, proceeding from the Father, and of the Holy Ghost, proceeding from the spirators, but we do not find the word "person," only the personal nouns, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. In this way St. Thomas gradually shows that the relations are

founded in the processions (for example, filiation is based on passive generation), and that the persons are constituted by subsisting relations. Beginning with what is explicitly revealed, the processions, he finds something that is implicitly revealed and gradually progresses from the indistinct knowledge of subsisting relations and related persons to a defined and distinct idea. These are, as we shall see, explicative processes, or at least subjectively illative, and not objectively illative processes, except in those instances where a new truth is deduced. In general in these first questions the same truth, which is formally revealed, is extensively explained and unfolded.

In the division of this treatise it should be noted that the first two parts are discussed in Questions 27 and 28: the third part, treating of the divine persons, is treated in Questions 29 to 43.

THIS THIRD PART IS SUBDIVIDED INTO TWO PARTS:

1. The persons considered absolutely: a) in common; b) individually.

2. The persons considered comparatively: a) with regard to their essence; b) their properties; c) their notional acts (active generation and active spiration); d) their equality, similarity, and missions.

At first sight it will appear that in Questions 39, 40, 41, St. Thomas seems to begin the treatise anew, treating of the persons in common with regard to their essence, properties, and notional acts; he seems to be repeating what was already said in Questions 27, 28, and 29, about the processions, the relations of origin, and the persons in common.

He is not, however, repeating himself; for what he said earlier in an analytical exposition he explains later in a synthetical exposition, comparing one truth with another and penetrating more profoundly into the matter of the treatise. Many of St. Thomas' commentators, because of the similarity of the matter treated, explain in their commentary on Question 27 the doctrine offered by St. Thomas in Question 39. They follow this procedure for the sake of clarity and brevity, but the more profound and preferable presentation, we think, is that given by St. Thomas.

CHAPTER I

QUESTION 27 THE PROCESSION OF THE DIVINE PERSONS

This question contains five articles

1. whether there is a procession in God; 2. whether any procession in God can be called generation, and what is the intellectual manner of this generation; 3. whether besides generation another procession is found in God; 4. whether this other procession can be called generation (the answer will be in the negative); 5. whether there are more than two processions in God.

In general these five articles are simple explanations of the dogma by a conceptual analysis of the terms of the revealed propositions before any new truths are deduced, that is, before any theological conclusions are drawn. Some students have tried to see in these treatises an illative process where there is only an explicative process which is merely the progressive understanding of one and the same revealed truth.

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER THERE IS ANY PROCESSION IN GOD

State of the question. The question is proposed in the form of three difficulties. 1. It appears that there are no processions in God because a procession implies motion without; but in God there is no motion, since He is the prime immovable mover and pure act. 2. He who proceeds differs from Him from whom He proceeds, but in God there can be no such difference. 3. To proceed from another is to depend upon another, but this is repugnant to the idea of a first principle. If the Son depends upon the Father, He is not God. Such are the principal difficulties.

Reply. In God the processions are not by local motion, nor by transitive action, but by the intellectual emanation of an intelligible word from Him

who enunciates. At the end of the body of the article, St. Thomas says, “And thus Catholic faith holds that there is a procession in God.” From this last line it is evident that we are concerned here with an explanation of faith and not with a deduction of a theological conclusion.

Proof. It is clear from the Scriptures that it is of faith that there are processions in God. In his argument St. Thomas quotes the words of our Lord,” or from God I proceeded” (John 8:42). In the Contra Gentes St. Thomas quotes other texts: Jesus said, “The Spirit of truth, who proceedeth from the Father” (John 15:26). Besides this, in the Scriptures the Son of God is called “His own Son, “ that is, of God the Father (Rom. 8:32), and “the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father” (John 1:18). It is the Son who is truly “His own” who proceeds from the Father and not the son who is only adopted. Again we read, “The Father loveth the Son: and He hath given all things into His hands” (John 3:35), and the only-begotten Son of the Father is called “the Word, “ by whom “all things were made,... and without Him was made nothing that was made” (John 1:3; Heb. 1:1). From this it is clear that the Son proceeds from the Father from all eternity.

This truth is explicitly contained in the creeds. In the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed we read: “Begotten of the Father, God of God, light of light, true God of true God”; and of the Holy Ghost: “who proceeds from the Father.” In the Athanasian Creed: “The Son is from the Father alone, not made, not created, but begotten; the Holy Ghost is from the Father and the Son, not made, not created, not begotten, but proceeding.”

Procession (ekporeusis, probole) is the origin of one from another, as light proceeds from the sun and a son from his father.

St. Athanasius and St. Augustine explained that the imperfections inherent in human generation are not found in the divine processions. In the divine processions, for example, there is no diversity of nature (the nature remains numerically the same) but only a diversity of persons according to the opposition of relation.

In the body of the article, St. Thomas intended only to explain this truth of faith by a conceptual analysis of the word “procession, “ discarding at the same time any false interpretations. His process, therefore, is not illative but explicative. This is clear from the first words of the paragraph, in which he explains the idea of procession, as used by the Scriptures, and from the following article, in which St. Thomas explains the idea of generation.

The body of the article has three parts.

1. Against Arius, it is shown that in God there is no procession of effect from cause, otherwise it would follow, against the Scriptures, that neither the Son nor the Holy Ghost would be God. The Scriptures declare of the Son," his is the true God, " (I John 5:20), and the same is said of the Holy Ghost in I Cor. 6:19.

2. Against Sabellius, it is shown that in God procession is not understood as though there were different effects flowing from one and the same person of the Father: as though the Father were called the Son as incarnate and the Holy Ghost in the sanctification of souls. This would be contrary to the Scriptures which make it clear that the Son is not the Father, for example, "The Son cannot do anything of Himself" (John 5:19). Furthermore, no one begets himself.

3. St. Thomas explains the root of these two errors: these heretics erred because they understood procession as being ad extra. He then explains that in God procession is ad intra. As often occurs in the body of the article, the major is given after the minor. If the major were given before the minor, this explicative process would be somewhat as follows:

Since God is above all things, those things which are predicated of God are to be understood in their resemblance to intellectual and not corporeal substances. But in corporeal substances procession is in the manner of action ad extra, whereas in intellectual substances it is after the manner of action ad intra, as the concept of a thing or the mental word proceeds from the intellect. Therefore the procession predicated of God is procession ad intra, like that of the intelligible word in him who enunciates. "And in this manner Catholic faith understands procession in God" as opposed to Arius and Sabellius.

This process therefore only explains the true idea of procession in God as it is found in the Scriptures, excluding any false interpretations and giving the analogy of the word which is indicated in the prologue of St. John's Gospel and explained at great length by St. Augustine.

We should note that many commentators, such as Billuart, prove from Question 33, article 4 ad 4, that there are processions in God from the fact that it is of faith that there are several really distinct persons in God. Such was also the method of the Greek Fathers.

The article should be read.

1. The doctrine is confirmed by the divine fecundity which, since it IS a perfection without imperfection, cannot be denied to God. ("Shall not I that

make others to bring forth children, Myself bring forth, saith the Lord? Shall I, that give generation to others, be barren, saith the Lord thy God?" Isa. 66:9.)

2. The reply is also confirmed by the solution of the objections.

Reply to first objection. Procession would imply motion in God if it were after the manner of transitive action, but not if it is immanent action, which is in the predicament of quality and not of action.

Reply to second objection. Similarly there would be numerical diversity if the procession were ad extra, as when by human generation the son proceeds from the father with consequent multiplication of human nature. But such is not the case with procession ad intra. As St. Thomas explains: "That which proceeds ad intra by an intelligible process need not be diverse; indeed the more perfect the procession the more that which proceeds will be one with that from which it proceeds. It is clear that the more profoundly a thing is understood the more intimate the intellectual concept will be to him who understands and so much greater will also be the union of both. For the intellect inasmuch as it understands in act will be united with what it understands. Therefore, since the divine intellection is the acme of perfection, as we said above in Question 14, a. 2, it follows necessarily that the divine Word is perfectly united with Him from whom He proceeds, without any diversity, " that is, without any numerical diversity so that there is only a distinction of persons.

This teaching is developed in the second chapter of the fourth book of the Contra Gentes, in which St. Thomas illustrates this principle: The higher any particular nature is the more anything that emanates from it will be intimate with it. Thus St. Thomas preserves under another form Dionysius' principle, so frequently enunciated by Alexander of Hales and St. Bonaventure: "Good is essentially diffusive of itself, and the higher the nature is the more fully and intimately it will be so." Good, however, is primarily predicated of a final cause; but the Father is not properly the end or the efficient cause of the Son. Therefore St. Thomas' formula is more acceptable because it rises above both final and efficient causality, although the formula about the diffusion of good could be understood as referring to things above the order of causality. This principle, however, is arrived at inductively.

Thus fire is generated from fire, a plant by another plant, an animal from another animal in the manner of action ad extra and the numerical

multiplication of nature. But in the higher spheres, life is more and more immanent, for sensation remains in the subject, intellection in the one who understands, as does also the mental word. Human intellection, however, has its beginning from without, that is, from sensible things. In a still higher sphere, “The intellection of the angels does not proceed from something exterior, but knows itself through itself. But the life of the angels does not attain to the ultimate perfection for, whereas the angelic intellection is entirely intrinsic to the subject, the intellectual concept or intention is not identical with the subject’s substance because intellection and being are not the same.” In order to know himself, the angel requires an accidental mental word because the angel’s substance is intelligible of itself in act although it is not actually understood of itself in act. And further, the substance of the angel as it is understood in act and represented in the accidental word is not the angel’s substance according to its physical being but only according to the angel’s intentional or representative being. The mental word of Michael is not Michael himself because it is an accident and not his substance.

On the other hand, as we read in this chapter of the Contra Gentes, “Since in God being and intellection are the same,” He does not require an accidental word to know Himself. But if from the divine superabundance there is a Word, as we learn from revelation alone, then “the being of the Word, interiorly conceived, is the same as the divine intellection,” God’s being itself, not only according to His intellectual being but according to His physical being. Thus the divine Word is not only God as understood, but “true God,” as we-learn from the Creed: “true God of true God.” Contrariwise the accidental word by which Michael the archangel knows himself is indeed Michael according to his intellectual being but not the actual Michael according to his physical being, because it is an accident and not a substance

Intellectual generation, therefore, when it is most perfect produces not only an accidental mental word but also a substantial word, and it is therefore true generation, because it communicates the entire nature of the generator, as we shall see in article 2.

Our mental word can be called the offspring of our minds only metaphorically. Such is the solution of the second objection: in God He who proceeds is not different in nature from Him from whom He proceeds, but has a nature numerically the same.

Reply to third objection. The third objection was that to proceed from another was repugnant to God as the first principle. In reply we distinguish "proceed" as above, namely, to proceed as something extraneous and diverse, I concede; to proceed as something within and without numerical diversity of nature, I deny. Thus the Son of God is God of God, light of light; He is in some manner like the word in the mind of the artificer with relation to some external artifact.

First doubt. Is it not at least virtually revealed and theologically certain that in God procession is after the manner of an intelligible concept uttered by an enunciator, and that the procession is intellectual?

We are not asking whether the Son of God is rightly called the Word of God, for we know from the Prologue of St. John's Gospel, written under divine and infallible inspiration, that it is of faith that the Son of God is the Word, and that the Word is consubstantial with the Father, as was explicitly defined by the Nicene Council. But we are asking whether these words of the Prologue formally reveal, or at least virtually reveal, the formal manner of the first procession, that is, by intellectual enunciation.

Durandus did not admit this but contended that the Son proceeded from the Father's nature as pre-understood, antecedent to any consideration of intellect and will.

The reply is in the affirmative. It is at least virtually revealed and theologically certain that the Word, or the Son, proceeds from the Father by intellectual generation, from the intellect of the Father. Indeed many recent theologians hold that this proposition is proximately definable. D'Ales gives this proposition as proximately of faith: "The Son proceeds from the Father according to intellectual generation," and he gives the following proposition as common doctrine: "The Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son according to mutual love." And this seems to be true.

Proof. In the Scriptures, He who is called the Word is also called the Son. But this is not a question of a word enunciated exteriorly but of an immanent word, as is clear from the context. An immanent word, however, is conceived by the intellect, it is the concept expressed by the intellect, as the Fathers taught.

This doctrine is confirmed by the fact that in the Scriptures the Son of God is called not only the Word, but Wisdom, the image of the Father, and the splendor of His glory and the figure of His substance.

In the reply it was stated that this doctrine is theologically certain because it is at least virtually revealed, but it is more probable that it is implied in a formal revelation, for the required process is explicative rather than discursive when we have a clear understanding of the idea of a mental word. This will become clearer below.

Second doubt. In the body of the article, does St. Thomas intend to say that a word is produced in every intellection?

The reply is in the negative, for manifestly St. Thomas holds that the Son and the Holy Ghost understand and still do not produce a word. The three divine persons understand by the same numerically one essential intellect, but only the Father enunciates, just as in a classroom both the teacher and the pupils understand but only the teacher enunciates. Moreover, St. Thomas holds that in heaven the blessed, seeing God immediately, do not express an accidental word, which would be intelligible by participation and would not be able to represent God as He is in Himself since He is essentially subsisting intelligence itself. St. Thomas did not intend to exclude these instances when in the body of the article he states: "Whenever anyone understands, by the very fact that he understands he produces something within himself, which is the concept of the thing which is understood." But such is the case in every created intelligence of the natural order, as when a man or an angel understands himself and other things besides himself. We still have sufficient analogy here to conceive what the divine Word is as mentioned in the prologue of St. John's Gospel. It is still true to say, therefore, that whoever understands, by the fact that he is an intellectual nature, produces a word in some intellectual act. The analogy offered by St. Thomas is based on the fact that it is a property of an intellectual nature to produce a word. Further, it is a perfection that can be purged of imperfections and can be attributed to God as the highest intelligence.

Objection. In the created intellect a word is required to know an object which is not understood of itself in act. But God is subsisting intelligence itself and therefore He is not only intelligible of Himself in act, but actually understood in act. Therefore no word is required in God.

Reply. I distinguish the major: that an accidental word because of a natural indigence is so required, I concede; that a substantial word is required, I deny. I concede the minor and distinguish the conclusion: therefore in God an accidental word because of a natural indigence is not

required, I concede; that a substantial Word because of the divine fecundity is not required, I deny.

I insist. Now the analogy between an accidental word produced because of a natural indigence and the substantial word produced from divine fecundity or superabundance is destroyed.

Reply. . Although the comparison is not univocal, the analogy remains for in creatures the accidental word is not required only because of a natural indigence (inasmuch as the thinking subject is not of itself understood in actu secundo) but because it pertains to the fecundity and perfection of the created intellect to speak vitally and interiorly by expressing a concept. Thus the philosopher rejoices when after a long and difficult search he finally gives birth to the word that solves his difficulty; now he can die for he has found the truth.

I insist. But why do not the Son and the Holy Ghost produce a word by their intellection?

Reply. This is part of the mystery and cannot be explained entirely. But we can say and should say, as do the Thomists, one intellection will have one word when that word is adequate. But in God intellection is infinite, and also the same for the three divine persons. Therefore in God there is one, infinite, and adequate word and no other word need be produced. The three persons understand but only the Father enunciates because He enunciates adequately, or because the Word already enunciated is perfect and without any imperfection. Nothing more need be enunciated in God nor would anything more be needed in the case of men if the teacher would be able adequately to say all that pertained to the matter under discussion. At first sight this distinction between intellection and enunciation may seem too subtle, but it is not without some foundation. Many men, even after years of laborious study, cannot express interiorly and exteriorly the solution of some difficult problem; but when some great genius discovers the solution and gives birth to the word or notion interiorly and expresses it exteriorly others are able often to understand without difficulty. They may not be able to enunciate the solution but they are able to understand without much difficulty. Indeed, if some great mind were to discover the perfect and adequate solution of a question, he would express it in a definitive statement that would need no further emendation or amplification, whereas we are continually obliged to perfect our imperfect and inadequate statements of solutions.

Finally, it is often remarked that loquacious people use innumerable words without reason, whereas wise people, especially in their later years, use few words, words that are effective and almost adequate, like the confident and clear statements of the saints and great doctors, which others are generally able to understand although they would never have been able to discover them. In this way we can understand analogically and without too much subtlety that in the Trinity the three persons understand, but the Father alone enunciates because the Word is adequate. We, on the other hand, make use of many inadequate words.

Objection. In his reply to the second objection, St. Thomas says: “The divine Word is perfectly one with Him from whom He proceeds and without any diversity”; and in the Contra Gentes he says: “The being of the Word is the intellect of God itself.” But then the Word would not proceed as a distinct person. Therefore the analogy is not valid.

Reply. I deny the minor and the consequent. St. Thomas denies numerical diversity of nature between the Father and the Word, but the diversity of persons as revealed still remains. This diversity is only relative and inasmuch as it is real arises from the procession, for procession, inasmuch as it is real, requires extremes that are really distinct, at least with regard to their mode of being. Such is the reasoning of many Thomists, among them Billuart. Thus the word in our minds is diverse from our intellect both knowing and known, not indeed according to intelligible and intentional being but according to real and entitative being, for the word in us is an accident of our intellects.

I insist. If the Word is a distinct person as a person, if not as a nature, He still depends on the Father. But God cannot depend on another; this is an obvious imperfection. Therefore the Word is not a divine person or God.

Reply. I distinguish the major: He would depend on the Father if He proceeded as from a cause and freely, I concede; if He proceeds from the Father solely as from a principle because of the necessary and infinite fecundity of the divine nature, I deny. Thus, the Father in His intellection is not able not to produce the Word. We have here a communication of nature without efficient causality; this communication is the transmission of something pre-existent without losing it. In the equilateral triangle the first angle constructed does not cause but communicates its own surface area to the other two equal angles, and these two angles are not less perfect than the

first. Indeed, the geometrical figure can be inverted so that one of the two angles at the base is placed on top.

I insist. But the necessary and intimate dependence still remains.

Reply. I deny the consequent, because for true dependence it is required that only one of the two in question depend upon the other. But the Father cannot be more without the Son than the Son is without the Father, and yet the Father is not said to depend on the Son. Thus in the equilateral triangle all the angles are equal, and one angle cannot exist without the other.

On the other hand, a human son depends on his father, as from a cause; and the man who is a father is able to be without the son, because he is able not to be a father, since he freely begets. But God the Father is not able to be without being the Father and He is not able to be without the Son.

Wherefore, in order that anything depend on another it is not enough that it cannot be without the other. God the Father is not able to be without the Son and yet He does not depend on the Son, nor is omnipotence able to exist without the possibility of creatures and still it does not depend on this possibility. It follows therefore that, although the Son cannot be without the Father, He does not depend on the Father, since the Father is not the cause but only the principle of origin. It is repugnant to God to derive from another as from a cause, this I concede; that it is repugnant to derive as from a principle of origin, this I ask you to disprove. The possibility of the mystery, therefore, is not disproved or proved; it is merely presented as plausible.

I insist. But the Son receives from the Father, therefore He is passive and in some need.

Reply. I distinguish the consequent: if at any time the Son lacked or could lack anything He has, I concede; otherwise, I deny. Whereas a creature is able not to be, the Son of God is not able not to be, nor is He able to lack the divine perfections.

I insist. Each of the divine persons is the first principle; therefore each excludes the principle of origin.

Reply. I distinguish the antecedent: each of the divine persons is the first principle ad extra, I concede; ad intra, I deny. Thus the Father alone is not from a principle of origin. As St. Thomas says, “To oppose the things that are said against faith, either by showing that it is false or by showing that it is not necessary,” it is sufficient to show that the impossibility of the mystery is not definitively proved, for example, the dependence of the

Word of God with respect to the Father is not definitively proved. At least these objections are not cogent and therefore they do not destroy faith. The impossibility of the procession of the Word, who is “true God of true God,” cannot be proved.

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER ANY PROCESSION IN GOD CAN BE CALLED GENERATION

State of the question. As the first article was a conceptual analysis of the idea of procession, without any illative process, so this second article is a conceptual analysis of the idea of divine generation as found in the Scriptures. We have here a beautiful example of the transition from a confused concept to a distinct concept. This transition takes place by eliminating the false interpretations, from which arise the three difficulties, formulated in the beginning of this article: 1. generation is a change from non-being to being and therefore a divine person cannot be generated; 2. in God procession is after the manner of intellection, but in us such intellectual procession is not called generation; 3. the being of anything begotten is accepted and received and therefore is not divine.

Reply. This is of faith: the procession of the Word in God is called generation, and the Word that proceeds is called the Son.

We prove that it is of faith from Ps. 2:7: “The Lord hath said to Me: Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee.” Today, as St. Augustine says, is the ever-present now of eternity, which is above time, above past and future. This text of the Old Testament is illustrated by the New Testament, especially by the prologue of St. John’s Gospel. Further proof comes from Ps. 109:1-3: “The Lord said to my Lord:... from the womb before the day star I begot thee, “ although this text is less clear in the Hebrew than the preceding text; from Isa. 53:8, in the prophecy of Christ’s passion: “who shall declare His generation?”; from Acts 8:33 and John 1:18: “No man hath seen God at any time, the only-begotten Son..., He hath declared Him”; from John 1:14: “and we saw His glory, the glory as it were of the only-begotten of the Father”; from John 3:18: “But he that doth not believe, is already judged: because he believeth not in the name of the only-begotten Son of God”; and from John 3:16: “For God so loved the world, as to give His only-begotten Son.”

Similarly the creeds and councils defined that the Son of God was not created (against Arius), not made, but begotten from the nature or substance of the Father, and is therefore called the natural Son and not the adopted son of the Father.

In the body of the article St. Thomas makes a conceptual analysis of the notion of generation, purifying it of every imperfection so that it can be applied to God not only by a metaphorical analogy but also by an analogy of proper proportionality. Thus the idea of generation, found in revelation, passes from a confused state to one more distinct. We do not arrive at a new truth, but the same truth is explained in this manner.

Generation is the origin of one living being from a conjoined living principle in the likeness of nature, as when a man begets a man. But the procession of the Word is the origin of a living being from a conjoined living being, yet without transition from potency to act or to new being. Therefore the procession of the Word is properly generation and not only metaphorically so.

Explanation of the major. The generation of everything that can be generated in the natural order is a change from non-being to being, as when non-living fire is generated from fire. But that generation which is proper to living beings is the origin of a living being from a conjoined living being, that is, from the father and not from the grandfather, through the active communication of the nature of the generator in the likeness of at least the specific nature. The angels therefore cannot properly be called the sons of God because they did not receive the divine nature from God.

Explanation of the minor. The procession of the Word after the manner of intellection is the origin of a living being from a conjoined living being and in the likeness of nature because the concept in the intellect is the likeness of the thing understood. Indeed, in God, since God the Father understands and enunciates Himself, a nature numerically the same is communicated, because in God being and intellection are the same. Thus the Word is not only God as understood according to intentional being but true God according to physical and entitative being, as will be explained more fully in the solution of the second objection.

The theory of the Latins, then, based on the fact that the Son of God is called the Word in St. John’s Gospel, explains how the eternal generation of the only-begotten Son is without any imperfection and without transition from potency to act or from non-being to being. This is the correct

interpretation of our Lord's words: "For as the Father has life in Himself, so He hath given to the Son also to have life in Himself" (John 5:26), and "I and the Father are one" (10:30). We refer the reader to the article.

This article, therefore, does not deduce a theological conclusion, but explains this truth of faith, that the Son is generated by the Father because He proceeds from the Father intellectually as the Word. And in this generation we see the infinite fecundity of the divine nature, so often mentioned by Alexander of Hales and St. Bonaventure.

The reply is confirmed by the solution of the objections.

1. The first difficulty was: Generation implies the transition from potency to act. But such transition cannot be in God who is pure act. Therefore there is no generation in God.

Reply. I distinguish the major: generation implies the transition from potency to act in the created mode of generation, I concede; in the formal mode of generation, I deny, because formally it is required only that generation be the origin of a living being from a conjoined living being in the likeness of nature. I concede the minor. I distinguish the conclusion: therefore there is no generation in God according to the created mode, I concede; according to its formal mode, I deny. The analogy is one of proportionality, not only metaphorical, but it is an analogy that reason by itself could not have discovered. God has revealed it to us.

2. The second difficulty was: Procession in God is after the manner of intellection. But in us such intellectual procession is not generation; we speak only metaphorically of the parturition of a word in ourselves.

Reply. I concede the major and the minor, but I deny the parity. The disparity arises from the fact that in God alone and not in us to understand is substantial intellection itself. In God alone understanding and the mental concept are something substantial and not accidental, as in us. In us the word proceeds as an accident in which is represented the substance of that which is understood. In God, on the other hand, the Word proceeds as the subsistence of the same nature and therefore He is properly said to be begotten and the Son. The divine Word, therefore, is not only God as understood, or God in a representative or intentional manner, but true God from true God. This matter is explained at greater length in the Contra Gentes.

John of St. Thomas explains that our intellect forming within itself a concept of itself or a representation of itself assimilates this term to itself, at

least imperfectly. An imperfect intellect, human or angelic, assimilates its word imperfectly, only intentionally, and in a representative or intelligible manner. The perfect intellect, however assimilates its Word most perfectly, not only intentionally, but really in nature and in a nature that is numerically one, so that the divine Word is not accidental but substantial, at the same time living and understanding, because in God being and understanding and being understood are the same. Revelation affirms that this substantial Word is the person of the Son of God. This is true generation, which primarily deserves the name generation; other kinds of generation are generation by participation and secondarily, although they are prior in our knowledge. Therefore St. Paul said," or this cause I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom all paternity in heaven and earth is named" (Eph. 3:14 f.).

Our word is called a concept, not something generated. Conception is the initial formation of a living being; generation is its perfect production, including the evolution of the embryo. Our intellection goes as far as the intellectual conception of the word but not as far as the intellectual generation. Thus we speak of our faculty of conceiving, but not of generating intellectually. So also it is with the angels. In God alone, in His intimate life, known only by revelation, conception is at the same time intellectual generation, properly so called.

CONCEPTION AND GENERATION ACCORDING TO ST. THOMAS

In every (animal) conception, according to St. Thomas, "The matter of what is conceived is prepared by the generative power of the mother; the formative force, however, is in the seed of the father." Then follows the development of the embryo, terminating in the generation of the animal. Conception, therefore, is the beginning of animal generation.

The word "conception" was then transferred to signify intellectual conception because our intellect as a passive potency is fecundated by the object or by the impressed species derived from the object, and then our intelligence, fecundated and informed, conceives its mental word to express to itself some extramental thing or the mind itself. And indeed it is a great accomplishment to profoundly conceive something, like a book that we are about to write or the order observed in the Summa theologica. But this intellectual conception in us does not go as far as intellectual generation,

because our word is only an accident in our minds and not a living substance like the understanding mind itself. On the contrary, in God, whose intellect is subsisting intellection itself and subsisting being itself and subsisting life itself, the Word, mentioned in revelation, cannot be an accidental word but is the substantial Word, living and understanding. Therefore in God conception, which is the initial step in generation, attains to the perfect generation of the Word, who is true God from true God, not only God as conceived but really God of true God.

John of St. Thomas says, and in this he agrees with Ferrariensis, “The procession of the word, standing precisely in the line of intellection and by the force of its formality,... purified of every imperfection... becomes substantial and generative.” This follows not only materially because of the divine subject but also formally because of the procession of the word when it is purged of every imperfection. This helps explain the joy of a great thinker who has found the answer to some great problem and gives birth to a word; in its highest sense this parturition of the word would be generation, not corporeal but spiritual. The reason given by St. Thomas is that, “Since the divine intelligence is of the highest perfection, it is necessary that the divine Word be perfectly one with Him from whom it proceeds without any diversity of nature.” In the highest state of perfection the procession of the word is substantial and generative whereas in us it is accidental. The word in us, called rather a concept than something generated, is not a living and intelligent person but only an accident; in God the Word is substantial, living, and intelligent, and, as we shall see, a person relative to the Father. We cannot converse with our word or have communion with it- man remains alone with his ideas. But the Father has communion and lives in society with the Son.

First corollary. We see how the notions of generation and intellectual procession mutually illuminate each other. It is more certain that there is in God a procession after the manner of generation than that there is in God a procession which is properly intellectual. The first is manifestly of faith; the second is at least theologically certain. But without an intellectual procession it would be very difficult to conceive of generation in God and to show that this generation is actual and not simply metaphorical. For this reason St. Thomas speaks in his first article of intellectual procession and in his second article of generation, although the latter is more certain. This is one reason among others on account of which the Latin concept of the

Trinity, sometimes called the psychological theory of St. Augustine based on revelation, prevailed over other concepts.

Second corollary. Since this divine generation of the Word is eternal (above the continuous time of men and the discrete time of the angels), it follows that in the ever-present now of eternity the Father always begets and the Son is always born, or as St. Augustine says, the divine generation takes place without any newness of being.

Third corollary. A great joy rises from this eternal generation. Vestiges of this joy are found in the mother when a child is born to her, and in a great scholar when after long labor he perfects his work of making some truth manifest.

Fourth corollary. In God to be begotten, like the begetting, implies no imperfection, nor is it less perfect to be begotten than to beget, nor does it produce less joy, for it is impossible to beget without someone being begotten, and being begotten eternally and necessarily is not a transition from potency to act. But we do not say that paternity or the begetting is a simple perfection properly so called, for although it does not imply any imperfection it is not simply better to have paternity than not to have it. If this were so, some simple perfection properly so called would be denied to the Son, and the Son would not be God. The essence and dignity of the Father and the Son are the same; in the Father we have the relation of the giver, in the Son the relation of the receiver. Here is the mystery, but we see that the divine relations by reason of their concepts do not add any relative perfection that would be virtually distinct from the absolute perfection of the divine essence. Such is the thought of most Thomists, as we shall see below.

We are still confronted with the difficulty proposed in the third objection: “The being of anyone who is begotten is accepted and received, “ and therefore it is not divine, for the divine being is self-subsisting and not received.

In his reply to the third objection, St. Thomas says that the being of anyone who is begotten is accepted indeed but not received always in some subject. Thus the entire substance of created things is accepted by God but it is not received in some receptive subject. So also the being of the Word is accepted but not received; it is self-subsisting being itself.

In the perfection of the divine being itself there is contained both the intelligibly proceeding Word and the principle of the Word as well as the

other things which pertain to its perfection. From these words of St. Thomas it appears, in the opinion of many Thomists, that the relations in God do not by reason of their concepts add any new relative perfection that is virtually distinct from the absolute divine perfection.

On the other hand, in several places St. Thomas says that the being of any created being is not only accepted from God but also received in the created essence, or more correctly in the created suppositum. “It should be said,” says St. Thomas, “that at the same time that God gives being He produces that which receives the being; and thus fittingly He does not act in dependence on some pre-existing being.”

This text and many others are quoted against Suarez and his followers to show that for St. Thomas a real distinction exists between the created essence and the created being. For the created being is not only accepted from God, as Suarez admits, but it is also received and therefore limited by the essence in which it is received. The divine being, however, is not received, no more in the Son and the Holy Ghost than in the Father.

Another objection. By reason of the procession the Word proceeds as understood and not as understanding, for it proceeds as the term of the paternal intellection. Therefore because of the procession the Word does not proceed as like to the Father, and therefore this procession is not generation.

Reply. I distinguish the antecedent: the Word by reason of the procession proceeds as understood and not as understanding notionally or as enunciating, I concede; not as understanding essentially, I deny. Likeness of nature is not dependent on the notional qualities or notional acts like active generation and active spiration, but on essentials. Analogically in men, although the son does not proceed as generating but as generated, the son nevertheless proceeds like the father in nature. So it is proportionally in God.

Doubt. How does the enunciation of the Father differ from the essential intellection which is common to the three persons, as in the statement, “The three persons understand but the Father alone enunciates”?

Reply. The enunciation of the Father differs only by reason from the essential intellection and it is not actually different from the relation of paternity, which in turn is not really distinct from the divine essence. St. Thomas offers a profound explanation: “The origin of motion inasmuch as it begins with another... is called action. If we remove the motion, the action implies no more than the order of origin according to which the action

proceeds from some cause or principle to that which is from the principle. Since in God there is no motion, the personal action which produces a person is nothing else than the relation of a principle to the person who is from the principle. These relations are the actual divine relations or notions." No difference exists between them except in the manner of speaking inasmuch as we speak of divine things in the manner of sensible things.

Certain difficulties have been proposed by Durandus and Scotus concerning St. Thomas' first and second articles; but rather than adding anything to the matter they tend to obscure it. We shall not delay in considering them here but content ourselves with a few words about these difficulties at the end of this question. They are all solved by St. Thomas later when he comes to speak of the comparison of the persons with the essence, relations, and notional acts.

THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER THERE IS IN GOD ANOTHER PROCESSION BESIDES THE GENERATION OF THE WORD

State of the question. According to revelation expressed in the Scriptures and divine tradition there is a third divine person, who is often called the Holy Ghost, as in the formula of baptism, and sometimes the Paraclete from the words para and kaleo, parakletos that is, advocate, intercessor, and consoler. As we see, this is not a simple divine operation, like essential love, but a person to whom are attributed divine operations and divine perfection according to our Lord's words: "And I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete" (John 14:16), and "The Spirit of truth, who proceedeth from the Father, He shall give testimony of Me" (John 15:26).

In this article St. Thomas makes a conceptual analysis of this second procession. In stating the question he proposes three difficulties: 1. If a second procession is found in God, why not a third and so to infinity? 2. In every nature we find only one mode of communicating that nature, namely, generation. 3. The procession of love cannot be distinguished from the intellectual procession even in God because in God the will is not different from the intellect.

Reply. The reply is nevertheless that it is of faith that "besides the procession of the Word there is another procession in God," and we add that

this is the procession of love, although this does not appear to be of faith but the common opinion.

1. This first part is proved from the Scriptures: “I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete” (John 14:16); and “But when the Paraclete cometh, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceedeth from the Father, He shall give testimony of Me” (John 15:26).

2. The second procession is explained theologically.

In God procession takes place according to immanent and not transient action. But in an intellectual nature immanent action is twofold: intellection and volition, or love. Therefore, in God, an intellectual agent, it is proper that besides the intellectual procession there be another procession, which is the procession of love.

First doubt. Did St. Thomas intend to demonstrate the existence of the second procession strictly from the first? Even if the second procession were not revealed and if the existence of the Holy Ghost were not revealed, could the second procession be certainly known by a theological process.

Reply. This does not seem to have been St. Thomas’ intention, although he uses the words, “In evidence of this.” According to his custom, whenever he was treating of essentially supernatural mysteries, St. Thomas wished to show that the mystery is not opposed to reason. He then offers reasons of propriety, which while they are profound, especially to those who contemplate the mystery, are not demonstrative, for this progressive contemplation does not lead to the evidence of demonstration but to the higher evidence of the beatific vision. Such reasons of propriety belong to a sphere that is above demonstrability. If we were to offer these reasons as demonstrative, we would minimize rather than appreciate their force. His argumentation, therefore, does not strictly prove that there is a second procession or that there is the existence of a third person, unless this were revealed.

We may ask, on the supposition that the existence of the third person and of the second procession are revealed, can we strictly prove that this second procession is the procession of love, because it is at least theologically certain that the first procession is after the manner of intellection? The argument could be supported with some difficulty because it is less certain that love has an immanent term than that intellection or enunciation has as its term the expressed word.

The immanent term of love is exceedingly mysterious, for love tends toward the good which is in things outside the mind, whereas the intellect tends to the truth, which is formally in the mind in the likeness of the extramental thing.

In an article entitled A propos de la procession d'amour en Dieu, which agrees with Father Chevalier, Penido proposes this correction of St. Thomas' text in De veritate: "The operation of the will terminates with things in which there is good and evil, but the operation of the intellect terminates in the mind, in which there are truth and falsehood, as we read in VI Metaph., chap. 8; and therefore the will does not have anything proceeding from itself that is in it, except after the manner of operation; but the intellect has something in itself that proceeds from it not only after the manner of operation but also after the manner of a thing accomplished. Therefore 'the word' signifies a thing that proceeds but 'love' signifies an operation that proceeds." In many editions the word "except" is omitted and the passage appears unintelligible. In the Contra Gentes, St. Thomas says: "That which is loved is in the will of the lover (not in the likeness of its species), but as the term of motion in the proportionate moving principle." That which is loved exists in the will of the lover as something that inclines and in a way interiorly impels the lover toward the thing itself that is loved.

It should be said, therefore, that the argument proposed in this article is at least an argument of propriety, explaining the nature of the second procession as the procession of love. This argument is very profound and sublime; it shows that the psychological theory of the Trinity proposed by St. Augustine is in accord with revelation. When we speak of the Word, however, revelation itself indicates the analogy in the prologue of St. John, "In the beginning was the Word...." But with regard to the second procession we do not find in Scripture a similar indication; the Holy Ghost is not called love even by the Greek Fathers. He is indeed called sweetness and benignity, and the word "spirit" has an allusion to the will. At the present time it is the common opinion that the Holy Ghost proceeds as personal love.

Second doubt. What is the relation of the Holy Ghost to this second procession?

Reply. The Holy Ghost is the terminus of the procession of love as the Word is the terminus of the intellectual procession. Therefore St. Thomas, in the body of the article, says: "In the second procession that which is

loved is in the lover, as in the conception of the Word the thing enunciated or understood is in him who understands."

The terminus of love has no special name. Cajetan offers the following explanation. "What is loved is not in the lover except as the affection of the lover for that which is loved." We have a certain difference here between intellection and love, for a likeness of that which is loved is not produced in the lover like the likeness of the thing understood which is produced in him who understands. In the lover, however, there is a certain impulse and propensity of the will toward that which is loved, and this impulse is in the lover as the unnamed terminus of love. St. Augustine said, "My love is my weight." In this sense the second procession is to be understood as the procession of love.

Solution of the objections. The first objection is: Therefore we must admit a third procession and so to infinity.

Reply. In the divine processions it is not necessary to go on to infinity, for that procession in intellectual natures which is within is terminated by the procession of the will. Here the psychological theory is in accord with revelation and corroborates it. This theory assigns a reason why there are no more and no less than two processions, and thus offers a reason of propriety, not a demonstration, because we are dealing with an essentially supernatural mystery. That this is not a strict demonstration will appear in the second objection.

Second objection. In every nature we find only one mode of communicating that nature, namely, by generation. Therefore in the divine nature there should be but one mode of communicating the divine nature, that is, by intellection and not by the will.

Reply. We deny the parity between the nature of corruptible things and the divine nature. The disparity arises from the fact that whatever is in God is God, and this is not true of other natures. Therefore the divine nature is communicated by any procession that is not ad extra. Hence the divine nature is communicated even in the procession of love, because whatever is in God is God and not a part of God.

In his reply, based on faith, St. Thomas shows that the objection has no force, but he did not intend to prove the second procession from the first so that the second procession would be certain even if it had not been revealed.

I insist. The entire nature is adequately communicated by the first procession, and therefore it is no longer communicable. As there is only one

Word, so there should be but one procession.

Reply. I distinguish the antecedent: that the entire nature is totally communicated in the first procession, that is, in every way that it is communicable, I deny or I ask you to prove it: that it is communicated entire but not totally, that is, in every communicable manner, I concede. For according to revelation we know that not only the Son but the Holy Ghost also proceeds from the Father. According to St. Augustine's theory it appears that the divine nature is communicable and fecund in two ways: by the intellect and by love. Indeed, Richard of St. Victor emphasized this second way to such an extent that he seemed to neglect the first mode by intellection. Neither should be neglected.

I insist. Whatever is infinite is unique and excludes all else. But the first procession is infinite. Therefore it excludes a second procession.

Reply. I distinguish the major: whatever is infinite is unique in its own order and excludes others of the same order, I concede; that it excludes things of another order, I deny. Thus the mercy of God is infinite and excludes another infinite mercy, but it does not exclude infinite justice. The same is true of the processions.

Third objection. In God intellect and will are not distinct. Therefore neither is the procession of love distinct from the intellectual procession.

Reply. I distinguish the antecedent: that the intellect and the will in God are not really distinct, I concede; that they are not distinct by reason and virtually, I deny; and I distinguish the consequent in the same way. The two processions are not really distinct except with regard to the mutually opposed relations. Thus active spiration is not really distinct from the active generation by the Father, nor from the passive generation of the Son, but it is distinct from the passive spiration of the Holy Ghost.

Moreover, as St. Thomas notes in the same place, "While in God the will and intellect are not different, nevertheless because of the nature of the intellect and will the processions according to the action of each follow a certain order." For nothing is loved unless known beforehand, and therefore there is no procession of love unless there is a process of intellection. Here again we see the propriety of the psychological theory, and an indication that an image of the Trinity is to be found in the soul.

Third doubt. Whether the two divine processions differ in species and number?

Reply. There is a quasi-difference in species, that is, they differ not only in number, otherwise both processions would be generation or spiration. They do not, however, differ in the proper sense in species because in God genus and species do not exist in the strict sense. Speaking analogically with reference to creatures, we can say that the processions differ in a certain sense according to species, not by reason of a diversity of natures but by reason of the personal properties, which are diverse in the one nature. This is not true of creatures. It does not follow from this that the three persons differ in species, for their nature is one not only in species but also in number.

Fourth Article: Whether In God The Procession Of Love Is Generation

The reply is in the negative.

1. Because of faith. The Athanasian Creed tells us: “The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son, not made, not created, not begotten, but proceeding.”

2. Further explanation is found in the psychological theory, which on this point is sufficiently in accord with the teaching of faith. The Greek Fathers and St. Augustine declared that they were not able to discover a reason why the second procession was not generation like the first procession.

St. Thomas offers the following reason.

Generation, in its formal concept, takes place after the manner of assimilation of the begotten to the begetter, who produces something like himself in nature. But such assimilation is found in procession from the intellect, when the Father knows Himself and enunciates, but it is not found in the procession of the will. Therefore the procession of love cannot be called generation.

The major is evident. The minor is proved from the fact that the intellect assimilates a thing to itself when the truth is in the intellect by the likeness of the thing known. But the will by its nature is not an assimilative faculty or power; it is inclining and tends to a thing because the thing is good; it tends to the good as it is in things and not as it is represented in the mind. Thus the will does not produce by its own power a terminus like to itself or to the object; it produces an inclination and a tendency to the thing that is loved.

3. The procession which is not generation remains without a special name; it may be called spiration because it is the procession of the Spirit.

FIFTH ARTICLE: WHETHER THERE ARE MORE THAN TWO PROCESSIONS IN GOD

The reply is in the negative and it is of faith.

1. This is known from the Scriptures and from the definitions of the Church, according to which there are only three persons, one that does not proceed and two others that proceed, and hence there are but two processions.

2. This truth is also explained by the psychological theory, which more and more appears as a concept based on revelation; because in every intellectual nature there are only two immanent actions, intellect and will.

The divine nature as good is diffusive of itself and it is diffusive in a twofold manner: through the intellectual procession and through the procession of love, “Inasmuch as God understands and loves His essence, truth, and goodness.” Thus St. Thomas, even in this treatise, preserves the principle frequently quoted by St. Bonaventure: good is essentially diffusive of itself, and the higher the nature the more intimately and abundantly is it diffusive of itself. But within God this diffusion is not through final or efficient causality but above the order of causality. Yet there is a completely intimate and superabundant diffusion in the communication of the entire and infinite divine nature through generation and spiration.

DOUBTS ABOUT THIS WHOLE QUESTION

First doubt. What is the principium quod of each procession, considered actively, that is, what is the principle that generates and the principle that spirates?

Reply. It is the Father that generates, and the Father and the Son that spirate. “The divine nature does not beget, is not begotten, and does not proceed; but it is the Father who begets, the Son who is begotten, and the Holy Ghost who proceeds.” With regard to the second procession, it has been defined: “The Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son.” If the divine nature generated, the generation would be in the three persons and the three persons would generate, and so the Holy Ghost would generate a fourth person and so to infinity. Again, if the divine nature were begotten, the three persons would be begotten; if the divine nature proceeded, the three persons would proceed.

Second doubt. What is the principle through which (principium quo) each procession takes place actively considered?

Reply. According to revelation each procession terminates with one person who proceeds not from the divine nature taken in itself, but the Son proceeds from the divine nature as it is of the Father (because it is the Father who generates), and the Holy Ghost proceeds from the divine nature as it is of the Father and the Son, since these two spirate.

Therefore we say that the principium quo (the principle through which) of each procession actively considered is the intellect and the will in the divine nature as modified by the relations of paternity and active spiration. It is important to add "as modified" because essential intellection and essential love are common to the three persons and thus are not processions. Such is the common teaching of the Thomists. The psychological theory, although it wishes to pluck out the persons from the processions, to a certain extent must suppose the persons and relations in order fully to define the processions. This is part of the obscurity of this theory, and we should not be surprised at it because these notions of procession, relation, and person mutually illustrate each other just as in ontology the notions of being, unity, truth, goodness, and beauty throw light on one another.

From these passages from St. Thomas we see that the principium quo of the divine processions implies something absolute and something relative: it is absolute in recto as form, and relative in obliquo as mode. Thus we say that the proximate principium quo of the processions is the intellect and the love in the divine nature, but as modified by the relations of paternity and active spiration. The three persons know, but only the Father enunciates by generating or generates by enunciating; the three persons love, but only the Father and the Son spirate. This is sufficiently clear in spite of the obscurity of the mystery.

Third doubt. Is the power of generating in God a perfection?

Reply. The difficulty arises from the fact that this perfection would be lacking in the Son and the Holy Ghost, belonging only to the Father, and thus the three persons would not be equally perfect.

The reply is based on the fact that the power of generating directly

(in recto) signifies the divine nature, but indirectly (in obliquo) the divine relation, as will be more clearly explained below. This is to say that the power of generating pertains to the divine nature as it is in the Father. Wherefore the power of generating in God is a perfection with respect to that which it signifies directly, namely, the absolute, which is the divine nature; but it is not a perfection with respect to that which it signifies

indirectly (in obliquo), namely, the relation of paternity, which according to its relative being (esse ad) abstracts from perfection and imperfection, because it does not involve imperfection nor is it a new perfection superadded to the infinite perfection of the divine nature. Something similar is taught concerning the free act of creation, which is virtually distinct from the necessary act of love, since the act of creation does not involve an imperfection nor does it add a new perfection. Thus God was not improved by the fact that He freely willed to create the universe.

Fourth doubt. Whether the divine processions, actively considered, are true and proper actions or only emanations, like the faculties that emanate from the essence of the soul.

Reply. In their reply the Thomists oppose Suarez. They say that the processions are true actions, but actions that are merely immanent because they are the act of the intellect ad intra, namely, enunciation, and the act of the will, namely, active spiration. This immanent action can be purified of every imperfection, as is indeed the creative act, an immanent action which is virtually transient and transitive.

But we do not say that God the Father as begetting is truly and properly acting, but only truly and properly understanding and enunciating; so also the Father and the Son in active spiration are not properly acting, because in common usage the expression “acting” is taken to mean an efficient cause and not a principle alone. The Father is not the cause of the Son, and the Son is not an effect. Indeed although the Father is the principle of the Word, the Son is not said to be principled, because, as St. Thomas points out, to be principled or derive from a principle implies an imperfection that cannot be attributed to the Son.

The Word is not principled, but He is a principle from a principle. Therefore there is no other distinction between the Father and the Son except the distinction of origin; no distinction exists with regard to nature, dignity, omnipotence, and the like: “All things whatsoever the Father hath, are Mine” (John 16:15). For this reason it is better to speak of quasi-active generation and quasi-active spiration, and especially of quasi-passive generation and quasi-passive spiration, for passivity, properly speaking, corresponds to transitive action. Generation and spiration, however, are simply immanent actions above the order of causality; through them the divine nature is not caused but communicated.

Fifth doubt. How does the divine Word differ from our word?

Reply. It differs in many ways. 1. The Word of God is something substantial, living, and intelligent; it is, moreover, a person, but our word is only an accident of our minds. God alone is subsisting intellect. 2. The divine Word exists, not like ours because of a need, but from the infinite abundance and fecundity. 3. The divine Word is co-eternal with the Father, it is immutable, and is begotten perpetually, all of which is not verified in our word. 4. The divine Word is unique because it is adequate; our word is inadequate and therefore multiple, indeed it is more multiple in the inferior created intellects.

Nevertheless an analogy remains between the two words, because both are termini of the enunciating intellect or enunciation, and both are images or representations of the thing that is known; both are conceived by the mind, but only in God does this conception deserve the name of generation in its proper sense; both are simply spiritual, intrinsically independent of matter and the corruption of material things. But, according to the declaration of the Fourth Lateran Council, “The similarity between the Creator and the creature is never so great that the dissimilarity is not always greater.” These declarations might serve as a definition of analogy, for, as we have often shown with St. Thomas, things are analogous when they have the same name, but what is signified by the name is the same secundum quid and proportionately but simply different in these analogous things.

RECAPITULATION

In this question 27 we have seen that in God there are processions ad intra, why there are two and only two processions, and why the first procession alone is called generation.

In the first article, in the light of revelation, we saw that in God there is a procession after the manner of intelligible emanation of an intelligible Word from one who enunciates. It is a procession ad intra, not ad extra; it is not a procession like a being of the mind, but a real procession.

In the same article we saw that the Word has the same nature as the Father from whom He proceeds. The perfection and propriety of this procession ad intra became manifest in the light of the following principle: “that which proceeds ad intra by an intellectual process should not be diverse in nature from him from whom it proceeds; indeed the more

perfectly it proceeds the more it will be one with that from which it proceeds, like the intellectual concept with the intellect. Thus the Word understood and enunciated by the Father is one with Him in nature; nor is the Word an accidental word—it is substantial, just as the divine intellect is not an accident, since it is subsisting intellect itself.

As St. Thomas says in the Contra Gentes, “The higher any nature is, the more intimate with it will be that which proceeds from it.” Thus the Angelic Doctor safeguards the principle that good is essentially diffusive of itself, and the higher the nature the more intimately and fully will it be diffusive of itself. In God there is, then, a diffusion ad intra transcending the order of efficient and final causality.

In the second article we saw that the procession of the Word is rightly called generation because it is the origin of a living being from a conjoined living being in the likeness of its nature. The concept of the intellect is a likeness of the thing understood; so also the Word is the likeness of the Father knowing Himself, existing in the same nature, since in God intellect and being are the same. That knowledge which is had by means of an expressed likeness of the thing known is essentially assimilative.

In the third article, in addition to the procession of the Word, we learned of the procession of love, inasmuch as the love of the good follows the conception of the good.

In the fourth article it was explained why the procession of love is not generation; because it is through the will, which by its own power is not assimilative and does not assimilate a thing to itself, but inclines toward the thing that is willed, like a weight, in the words of St. Augustine, “My love, my weight.”

As a complement to this teaching on the processions, we shall explain below that the three persons understand (by essential intellection), but that the Father alone enunciates and enunciates adequately; as when three persons are confronted by a difficult problem, one discovers an adequate solution and all three equally understand what is enunciated by one of the three. In the same way we shall explain proportionally that, although the three persons love (with essential love), only the Father and the Son spirate the Holy Ghost, who is the terminus of this active spiration.

In this present question, St. Thomas did not intend as yet to solve these various doubts because their solution will be much more patent later on. The holy doctor proceeds without haste, passing gradually from the

confused concept to a more distinct concept of the same thing. His commentators, however, are obliged at times to examine these doubts earlier because they are sometimes proposed as objections against the articles under questions 27 and 28.

CHAPTER II

QUESTION 28 THE DIVINE RELATIONS

Prologue. “Next in order we consider the divine relations.” St. Thomas says “next in order” because according to faith these relations are the relations of origin or procession, inasmuch as the Son proceeds from the Father, and the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son. Therefore the processions are the foundation of really distinct relations which, as we shall see in the following question, formally constitute the persons. Hence we are now speaking implicitly of the persons although they are not yet explicitly mentioned.

This question on the divine relations is of the greatest importance because, as we shall see below, the persons are constituted by subsisting relations opposed to one another, which are in God not only virtually but also formally. Since these relations are in God, they cannot involve any imperfection so that, for example, filiation will not involve any dependence. This concept of relation is the philosophical idea developed by Aristotle and it is applied to the divine persons, who are called by relative terms in the Scriptures the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. In this fundamental question, therefore, we are still concerned rather with an explanation of the principles of faith than with the deduction of theological conclusions. We are to explain why the Father is so called relative to the Son, why the Son is so called relative to the Father, and the Holy Ghost relative to the Father and the Son. Consequently we consider here the real distinction of the divine persons as revealed and as founded on the opposition of relations. In these articles we shall study the basis of that principle which throws light on the entire treatise of the Trinity and by which the principal objections are answered: “In God all things are one and the same when there is no opposition of relation.”

Division of the question. In this question we ask four things:

I. Are there real relations in God?

II. What are these relations? Are they the divine essence itself. or something extrinsically attached to the essence?

III. Can there be in God several relations really distinct from one another?

IV. How many relations are there?

PHILOSOPHICAL NOTES ON THE IDEA OF RELATION AND ITS DIVISION

These notes are briefly recalled by St. Thomas in the body of the first article, and it is suggested that the reader consult the first part of the body of the article.

The category of relation is distinguished by Aristotle from the categories of substance, quantity, quality, transitive action, passion, etc. Thus a man is called relatively a father of another and a son of another. Aristotle calls relation to prosti, or the ad aliquid, or the “to something”; it is also called the reference (to something else), the order (to something else) or the habitude.

Many Nominalists declare that there are no real relations in creatures; that all the relations are relations of reason. On the other hand, moderate realism sees real relations in creatures, for apart from anyone’s thinking about it a man is really the father of the son he begets. So also two white things are really alike apart from any consideration of the mind. Paternity and likeness, however, are merely relations; therefore there are real relations in things. St. Thomas explains that the good of the universe, which is something real, consists mainly in relation, namely, in the order of things to themselves and to God, and if this order is removed, all things will be in confusion as when an army is without any coordination and subordination of the soldiers.

Relation is twofold: real and of reason. Real relation is the order in things themselves. Thus, for example, an effect is related to the cause on which it depends, a part to the whole, potency to act, and an act to its object. A relation of reason is the order cogitated by the mind, as the order of the predicate to the subject, and of species to genus. From various texts of Aristotle and St. Thomas we present the following synopsis of the division of relation.

Real relation,

transcendental or essential, such as essence to existence and matter to form, and the relation of faculties, habits, and acts to the specific object.

predicamental or accidental,

according to quantity, as equal, unequal, twofold, threefold

according to quality, as like and unlike

according to action, as paternity

according to passion, as filiation

Relation of reason between things not really distinct as predicate to the subject in a judgment as the relation of real identity of one thing with itself between things really distinct as the knowable to knowledge as God to the creature.

Real relations are divided into transcendental and predicamental. A transcendental relation is the order included in the essence of a thing as, for example, the soul's transcendental order to the body, that of matter to form, essence to being, accident to the subject, science to its object, etc. All these things have these relations by their very essence, and the transcendental relation perdures even when the term disappears. Thus a separated soul continues to be individuated by its relation to the body which is to rise again. It is called transcendental because it transcends the special predicament of relation and is found also in other categories, for example, in substance and quality; indeed there is scarcely anything that is not ordered to something else by its nature.

Predicamental relation, which is also called relation according to being (secundum esse), is defined by Aristotle as a real accident whose whole being is to be ordered to something else. This relation is not included in the essence of the thing, but it comes to the essence as an accident. It is pure order or reference to a term, as, for example, paternity, filiation, the equality of two quantities, likeness.

The real existence of these relations is certain, for, antecedent to any consideration of the mind and apart from anyone's thinking, two white things are really alike and this man is really the father of another. On the contrary, the relation of the predicate to the subject in a sentence is a relation of reason, which does not exist until after the consideration of the mind and as the result of the mind's activity.

The predicamental relation requires a real basis in the subject and a real terminus really distinct from this basis in the subject; this relation does not perdure after the terminus disappears, and in this it differs from the

transcendental relation. The basis of the predicamental relation is the reason for the reference or ordering. Thus, in the relation of paternity the man who begets a son is the subject, the son is the terminus, to whom the father has a reference, and generation is the basis of the relation, since the reason why the father is referred to the son is the fact that he begot him.

Whether The Predicamental Relation Is Really Distinct From Its Basis Or Foundation

For example, whether the likeness of two white things is really distinct from their whiteness, and paternity from generation.

Many Thomists, among them Capreolus, Cajetan, Ferrariensis, John of St. Thomas, and Goudin, admit at least a modal real distinction between the relation and its foundation or basis; Suarez denies the distinction and thus aligns himself with the Nominalists. The Thomists prove their stand in the following way. The predicamental relation is an accident whose whole being is to be referred to something else. But the entity of the foundation is not pure order to another but something absolute, as, for example, quantity, quality, and action. Therefore the entity of the foundation of the relation is really distinct from the predicamental relation. For this reason, Aristotle conceived of quantity, quality, action, and relation as distinct predicaments.

Confirmation. The predicamental relation disappears with its terminus whereas the entity of the foundation of the relation survives. When one of two similar things, for instance, is destroyed, the relation to the other also disappears. Moreover, even after the generation of the son, he remains the son of his father.

Whether Existence Belongs To A Predicamental Relation Formally According To Its Being In The Subject Or Its Being With Reference To Its Terminus

The relation’s being in the subject (esse in) is not the foundation of the relation but it is the relation itself in the general nature of an accident and not under the special aspect of a relation. The reply of the Thomists is that existence does not belong formally to a predicamental relation according to its being with reference to its terminus (esse ad) because according to this being with reference to another (esse ad) the relation abstracts from existence and could be a relation of reason. Existence, however, belongs to a predicamental relation according to its being in a subject, that is, its “inesse,” or its inherence in the subject. Since, however, as we shall see below, in God the esse in cannot be an accident, but must be the divine

substance, it follows, according to St. Thomas, that there is one being in the Trinity for the different divine relations. Suarez, on the contrary, thought that a relation had its own proper existence and therefore he taught that there were three relative existences in God. Similarly he taught that there were two beings in Christ because he denied the real distinction between the created essence and being. For St. Thomas there was but one being for the three divine persons and one being in Christ.

This distinction between the esse in of a relation and its esse ad is clearly explained by St. Thomas: “The relation itself, which is nothing else than the reference of one creature to another, has one kind of being inasmuch as it is an accident and another being inasmuch as it is a relation or order to another. Inasmuch as it is an accident it has its being in a subject, but not as it is a relation or an order, for as a relation it has being exclusively with reference to another, a something passing over to another and in some way assisting the thing to which it is related.” Thus the esse in, which is something the relation has in common with all accidents, gives title to reality to the relation’s esse ad.

From various examples, especially in the supernatural order, we shall see that this concept of relation is of great importance. In Christ the hypostatic union is the real relation of the dependence of the humanity of Christ on the person of the divine Word. “The hypostatic union is that relation which is found between the divine and human natures... . This union is not really in God but is only a relation of reason; but it really is in the human nature, which is a kind of creature. Therefore it is proper to say that it (the hypostatic union) is something created.”

Similarly, in the Blessed Virgin Mary the divine maternity is a real relation to the person of the incarnate Word, and because of its terminus this real relation belongs to the hypostatic order and transcends the order of grace. Hence it is commonly held that the Blessed Virgin Mary was predestined to the divine maternity before she was predestined to the fullness of glory and grace. It should be noted, however, that the person of the Word does not acquire a real relation to the Blessed Virgin but only a relation of reason because the relation of God to creatures is only a relation of reason. So also St. Joseph’s great dignity of foster-father of the incarnate Word is a relation. Finally, our adoptive sonship is a relation to God the author of grace; it is a participation in the likeness of the eternal filiation of the only-begotten Son.

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER THERE ARE REAL RELATIONS IN GOD

State of the question. It seems that there are no real relations in God and that there are only relations of reason like the relation of identity between a thing and itself, because the terms are not really distinct. Moreover, if a real relation were found in God, it would be the relation of a principle to the principled. But the relation of God to creatures as their principle is not a real relation but one of reason, whereas the relation of creatures to God is real. Neither does that relation which is founded on the intellectual procession of the Word seem to be real since it does not precede the operation of the intellect but follows it.

Reply. Nevertheless the reply is in the affirmative and is defined as of faith. This is evident from the condemnation of Sabellius. According to the Sabellian heresy, God is not really the Father and the Son, but only according to our way of thinking. Against this heresy the Church has declared that God is really the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost in such a way that the Father is not the Son but is really distinct from Him. The Father is so called only because of His paternity, which is a relation; the Son is so called because of filiation, which is also a relation, as is also spiration. Therefore in God we find the real relations of paternity, filiation, spiration, and, as we shall see below, of active and passive spiration.

The major of this argument from authority is the affirmation of the dogma against Sabellius. The minor is an analysis of the words, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. As found in the Scriptures these nouns are relative: the Father is so called with relation to the Son, and the Son with relation to the Father, and in this way these two persons are really distinguished by the opposition of relation.

This idea of relation was gradually developed by the Fathers; their teaching became more and more explicit on the point that the divine persons are distinguished among themselves by relations alone. St. Gregory Nazianzen said, “Father is not the name of the essence or of an action but it indicates the relation which the Father has to the Son, or that which the Son has to the Father.” Among the Greeks, St. Gregory of Nyssa and St. John Damascene, and among the Latins, St. Augustine, St. Fulgentius, Boetius, St. Isidore, and St. Anselm, employ similar language.

In his work on the Trinity, St. Augustine had already evolved a theory of relations, as Tixeront points out, explaining that the divine persons are relations which are not something absolute like the divine essence and

which are not accidents. St. Augustine wrote: “These things are not said according to the substance, because each one does not refer to Himself, but these things are said mutually and to each other; they are not said according to accidents, because that which is said to be the Father and what is said to be the Son is something eternal and incommunicable. These things are said not as of substances but as something relative, but the relative thing is nevertheless not an accident, because it is not changeable. Thus the Father is so called with regard to the Son, the Son with regard to the Father, and the Holy Ghost with regard to the Father and the Son.

This doctrine of the divine relations was clearly defined by the Eleventh Council of Toledo in 675: “By the relative names of the persons, the Father is referred to the Son, the Son to the Father, and the Holy Ghost is referred to the other two persons, and when the three persons are spoken of in a relative sense, we nevertheless believe in one nature and one substance... . For that which is the Father is not referred to Himself but to the Son; and that which is the Son is not referred to Himself but to the Father...; with reference to themselves each person is said to be God.” 18 In the Council of Florence particularly the famous dogmatic principle, “In God all things are one where there is no opposition of relation,” was proclaimed. At this council, John, the theologian for the Latins, declared: “According to both Greek and Latin doctors, it is relation alone that multiplies the persons in the divine production, and it is called the relation of origin, which has two characteristics: that from which another is and that which is from another.” At this same council, the learned Cardinal Bessarion, archbishop of Nicaea, declared: “No one is ignorant of the fact that the personal names of the Trinity are relative.”

St. Thomas treated this question in several of his works. From a study of these various works it is clear how his understanding of the matter became more sublime and more simple as he approached the pure intuition of truth. Later, however, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the thinking of many theologians, among them Durandus and others, became excessively complicated so as to impede the contemplation of divine things.

This and the following articles can be reduced to this simple truth: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are God; but the Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Father, and the Holy Ghost is neither the Father nor the Son. In this article St. Thomas proves from the processions that there are real relations in God. His argument may be reduced to the following.

When anything proceeds from a principle of the same nature it is necessary that both, namely, that which proceeds and that from which it proceeds, should concur in the same order and have real references to each other. But the processions in God take place in the identity of nature (preceding question). Therefore it is necessary that according to the divine processions we accept real relations, namely, of the Father to the Son, of the Son to the Father... . On the other hand, when anything proceeds from God ad extra, such as a creature, that which proceeds is not in the same order as God Himself, the two are not mutually ordered to each other, and the creature alone depends on God, but God does not depend on the creature nor is He ordered to the creature. Hence only the creature has a real relation to God; and God in no way has a real relation to the creature.

Reply to first objection. These real relations, however, do not inhere in God as an accident inheres in a subject. This will be explained in the following article, where it will be shown that in God the “being in” (esse in) of the relations is substantial and not accidental.

Reply to second objection. Boetius merges the relations in God with the relation of identity (a relation of reason alone) inasmuch as the divine relations do not diversify the divine substance; but Boetius continued to accept as true that the Father is not the Son and that they are opposed by the opposition of real relation.

Reply to third objection. God the Creator does not have a real relation to creatures because the Creator and creatures are not in the same order and are not ordered to each other. Creatures indeed are ordered to God upon whom they depend, but God is not ordered to creatures. It is in the nature of the creature to depend on God, but it is not in God’s nature to produce creatures, since He produced them most freely. On the other hand, the Father and the Son are of the same order and are ordered to each other, just as in men active and passive generation are in the same order and thus are the basis for real mutual relations.

Reply to fourth objection. The relation of filiation in God follows the operation of the divine intellect, but not as a logical entity such as the distinction between the subject and predicate; it follows as something real, namely, as the expressed word, which as the terminus of mental enunciation is something real in the mind.

First doubt. Is the esse ad of a relation always real? The reply is in the negative. The reason is that many relations are of reason only and each of

these relations has its esse ad; consequently the esse ad as such is not necessarily a real being or a being of the mind but may be either, depending on whether the foundation of the relation and its esse in are real or beings of the mind only.

Second doubt. Are the relations in God real not only according to their esse in but also according to their esse ad? The reply is in the affirmative. The reason is that when the esse in is real the esse ad is also real. Thus in man the relation of paternity to the son is a real accident, existing in the father antecedent to the consideration of our minds. If in God the esse ad were not real, the real distinction between the persons, which is founded on the opposition of real relation, would be destroyed. It is the reference to (respectus ad) alone that causes the relative opposition. The reason why the esse ad is real is because the relation really exists in some subject in accord with the real foundation of the relation independently of the consideration of our mind. The esse in is the title to reality of the esse ad. In the De potentia, St. Thomas gives the following explanation. “The relation itself, which is nothing more than the order of one creature to another, is one thing inasmuch as it is an accident and something else inasmuch as it is a relation or an order. Inasmuch as it is an accident it has its being in a subject, but not inasmuch as it is a relation or an order, for as a relation it is order to another, as if passing over to another and in some way assisting the related thing.”

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER A RELATION IN GOD IS THE SAME AS HIS ESSENCE

State of the question. After asking the question whether a thing is we ask the question what it is. The difficulty arises from the fact that the relative element, the “to another,” is not understood as something substantial, for then the essence of God would not be something substantial but relative.

The reply, however, is affirmative and of faith, namely, the relations in God are actually the same as His essence, although they are distinguished by reason from the essence. This truth was defined in the Council of Reims against Gilbert Porretanus: “When we speak of the three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, we say that they are one God and one substance. Conversely, we confess that the divine substance is three persons.” “We believe that there are no relations in God that are not God.”

In these propositions, as in every affirmative proposition, the verb “is” affirms the real identity of the subject and the predicate, as, for example, the Father is God and the paternity is the deity, because God is His own deity and the Father is His own paternity. The same teaching was defined by the Fourth Lateran Council, and the following proposition of Eckard was condemned, “In God there can be no distinction and none can be conceived.”

The most common opinion of theologians is that the divine relations are distinguished from the divine essence only by reason with a foundation in reality, that is, only virtually. To this the Thomists generally add that the distinction is a minor virtual distinction after the manner of that which is implicit and explicit inasmuch as our concept of the divine essence implicitly contains the relations. Before considering St. Thomas’ argument, we will briefly explain the meaning of these terms.

A virtual distinction, or a distinction of reason with a foundation in reality, may be minor or major. A major virtual distinction is after the manner of that which excludes and that which is excluded. Such a distinction exists between the genus and the differences extrinsic to it which the genus contains, not implicitly, but only virtually. Thus animality may be without rationality, and with regard to rationality it has a foundation in actuality as something potential and perfectible.

A minor virtual distinction, however, is after the manner of those things that are implicit and explicit. Thus subsisting being itself, according to our concept, implicitly contains the divine attributes, but it does not have a foundation in actuality for these attributes as something potential, or as something imperfect and perfectible by the divine attributes, because subsisting being, according to our concept, is pure act. For when we speak of subsisting being we do not yet speak explicitly of mercy and justice. It must be noted, however, that this minor virtual distinction is more than the verbal distinction between Tullius and Cicero. We cannot equivalently use the names, divine essence, divine mercy, or divine justice in the same way that we equivalently use the names Tullius and Cicero. We cannot say, for instance, that God punishes by His mercy and pardons by His justice.

Lastly, it may be recalled that Scotus held that the distinction between the divine essence, the attributes and the relations was formal actual from the nature of things, because the distinction, in his view, is not real since it is

not between one thing and another but between two formalities of the same thing.

To this the Thomists reply that this formal actual distinction based on the nature of the thing either antecedes the consideration of our minds and then, however small it is, it is real; or it does not antecede the consideration of our minds, and then it is a distinction of reason with a foundation in the thing or a virtual distinction. There is no middle point in the distinction between what antecedes and what does not antecede the consideration of our minds.

After these preliminaries we shall consider how St. Thomas proved the commonly accepted doctrine that the real relations in God are not really distinct from the divine essence but are distinguished from it only by reason.

St. Thomas explained this proposition by two arguments: by the indirect argument (sed contra) and the direct argument.

The indirect argument. Everything that is not the divine essence is a creature. But the relations really belong to God. If therefore they are not the divine essence, they are creatures; and the worship of latria cannot be offered to the divine relations.

The direct argument. Whatever in created things has an accidental being in another (esse in), when transferred to God has a substantial being in another (esse in), because no accidents are found in God. But in created things a relation is really distinguished from its subject solely because it has an accidental being in another (esse in) from which it derives the reality of its esse ad or reference to another. Therefore in God a relation is not really distinct from its subject inasmuch as its esse in, or being in another, is substantial from which is derived the reality of its reference to another, its esse ad. The major is evident from the fact that in God, who is pure act, there can be no accident perfecting something potential and perfectible. The minor is explained by the fact that in creatures a relation places nothing real in the subject except so far as it places in the subject that which is common to all accidents, namely, the esse in, which is an accidental being really distinct from substance. According to its own peculiar structure, a relation is not properly in a subject, as are quantity and quality, but it is a reference to something else.

If therefore, for example, the relation of paternity is transferred to God where the esse in will be substantial, the relation will not be really distinct

from the divine essence; it will be distinguished only by reason since it expresses a reference to something else, namely, of the Father to the Son. Therefore neither by the divine relations nor by the divine attributes is the divine essence something potential and perfectible because of a foundation in its nature. Hence the divine essence, as it is conceived by us, implicitly contains the divine relations, from which it is distinguished by a minor virtual distinction. By this latter term the Thomists have epitomized this present article.

It must be carefully noted that what is the peculiar feature of a relation, namely, the esse ad, does not properly inhere in the subject as does the peculiar feature of the accident of quality. If the esse ad properly inhered in the subject, there could be no relative opposition between the real relations without there being at the same time opposition in the very essence of God, which is impossible. This entire article is reduced to this simple thought: the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Ghost is God, and the paternity is the deity because God is His own deity and the Father is His own paternity. In all these statements the verb "is" expresses the real identity of the subject and the predicate.

The difference between St. Thomas and Suarez. The principle that "in God all things are one and the same except where there is opposition of relation" is not understood in the same way by St. Thomas and by Suarez since they do not understand relation in the same way. For St. Thomas being (esse) does not formally belong to accidental or predicamental relation (paternity, for instance) according to its esse ad, because the esse ad prescinds from existence; it is found also in a relation of reason (in the relation of God to creatures, for example). Being, however, belongs formally to an accidental relation according to its esse in, namely, as it is an accident inhering (at least aptitudinally) in a real subject. If the esse in is real, then the esse ad is real, but it takes its title to reality not from itself but from the esse in.

But in God the esse in cannot be an accident, since God is pure act and no accident is found in Him. Therefore in God the esse in of the divine relations is identified with the one existence of the divine substance; it is identified with subsisting being itself. From this it follows that in the Trinity the divine relations have the same esse in since they exist by the one existence of the divine essence itself. "Since a divine person is the same as the divine nature, in the divine persons the being of the person is not

different from the being of the divine nature. Therefore the three divine persons have but one being." Similarly in Christ there is one being for the two natures because Christ is one person, and this presupposes a real distinction between created essence and being.

Suarez, on the contrary, did not admit this real distinction and held that there were two existences in Christ and three relative existences in the Trinity. For Suarez the relations have their own proper existence even according to their esse ad. He found it difficult to solve the objection arising from the axiom that two things that are the same as a third are also the same as each other. But the divine persons are the same as a third, namely, the divine essence. Therefore they are the same as each other.

Suarez did not know how to solve this objection except by denying the major with respect to God. He was aware of St. Thomas' reply that those things which are the same as a third are the same as each other unless there is present the opposition of relation. But because he had a different concept of relation he held that this convenient answer did not solve the difficulty since nothing like this is found in creatures. Therefore he concluded that this axiom taken in its most universal extension, prescinding from created and uncreated being, is false for, while it is true in certain cases, that is, in creatures, it cannot be inferred for the entire extension of being.

This is the same as saying that this axiom does not apply to God. But this axiom is directly derived from the principle of contradiction or identity, which patently must be applicable to God analogically because it is the law of being as being, the most universal law therefore, apart from which there is nothing but absurdity, which would be unthinkable.

The principal difference between Suarez and St. Thomas is that for Suarez the esse ad of a relation is real by reason of itself, just as he held that the created essence is actual by reason of itself and is therefore not really distinct from its existence. Suarez did not conceive being other than that which is, not as that by which a thing is. He did not admit a real distinction between essence, either of a created substance or accident, and being. This is the foundation of the difference. Whether he wished it or not, Suarez multiplied the absolute in God, and therefore the objection based on the principle of identity remained unanswerable.

SOLUTION OF THE OBJECTIONS

1. What did St. Augustine mean when he contended that the ad aliquid of the relation was not intended to refer to the substance?

Reply. St. Augustine's meaning was that the ad aliquid is not predicated of God as something absolute but as something relative, but he did not say that the divine relations are really distinct from the substance. In several places he declared that in God the relations are not accidents. St. Thomas points out that in God there are only two predicaments, substance and relations, and the esse in of the relations is substantial. We are dealing here not with a transcendental relation but with a predicamental relation (paternity, filiation, etc.), whose esse in or "being in" in God, however, is substantial.

2. The term, "inor virtual distinction," is the happiest expression for the relations as they are in God, because the Deity as conceived by our minds actually and implicitly contains the relations.

3. In reply to the third objection, St. Thomas shows that it does not follow from the preceding that the divine essence is something relative.

First doubt. Whether the Deity, not as conceived by us but as it is in itself and is seen by the blessed, contains the relations explicitly or only implicitly.

Reply. The Deity contains the relations explicitly because the virtual distinction is a distinction of reason subsequent to the consideration of our minds, and this distinction is not found in the divine essence so as to be seen by God and the blessed. Similarly the divine nature as imperfectly conceived by us contains the divine attributes implicitly, since we gradually deduce the attributes from the divine essence; but as it is in itself, the Deity explicitly contains the attributes. The blessed in heaven have no need of deduction to know the divine attributes; they see them intuitively as they are formally and eminently in God, not only as virtually eminently, as is the case with the mixed perfections.

In rejecting Scotus' formal actual distinction between the Deity and the relations, Cajetan explains: "There is in God actually, or in the order of reality, only one being, which is not purely absolute or purely relational, neither mixed nor composite, or resulting from either of these, but most eminently and formally possessing that which is relational and that which is absolute. So in the formal order, or the order of formal reasons, in Himself, not in our mode of speaking, there is in God only one formal reason or essence. This is neither purely absolute nor purely relational, neither purely

communicable nor purely incommunicable, but most eminently and formally containing both that which is absolutely perfect and that which the relational Trinity demands. We are in error, however, whenever we proceed from the absolute and relational to God because we imagine that the distinction between the absolute and the relational is prior to the divine nature. The complete opposite is true, for the divine essence is prior to all being and all of its differences; it is above being, above one, etc."

And yet the Deity as an essence is really communicated to the Son and the Holy Ghost without any communication of paternity or filiation, just as in the triangle the first angle constructed communicates its whole surface to the other angles without communicating itself. The danger of agnosticism does not arise in this statement; such danger would be present, however, if we said that the divine relations and attributes were in God virtually and eminently, like mixed perfections, and not eminently formally. This doctrine may be reduced to this simple thought: the Father is God, and in this proposition the verb "is" expresses the real identity of the subject and predicate.

Second doubt. Can we safeguard the idea of God as the most pure, most simple, and infinite act if we admit the formal-actual distinction?

Reply. The Thomists reply in the negative. In this hypothesis the divine essence is conceived as having a foundation in itself that is in potency to the relations, that is actuable by the relations, as by something extraneous, like the genus of animality which is actuable by an extraneous specific difference. But it is repugnant to the most pure act that it be conceived as having a basis in itself for further realization; this would be repugnant to the simplicity and infinity of God. In this way the Thomists have adhered to Cajetan's explanation; other equivalent expressions may be found in Billuart's exposition of this article.

Third doubt. Is the concept of the divine essence more extensive than the concept of paternity or of any other relation taken separately?

The reply is in the affirmative, because the Deity as conceived by us implicitly contains the idea of filiation, but the idea of filiation is not even implicitly contained in the concept of paternity, except correlatively since it is opposed to paternity.

Fourth doubt. Does Deity belong to our explicit concept of the person of the Father?

The reply is in the affirmative, for while paternity is only implicitly contained in our concept of the Deity, Deity is explicitly contained in the paternity because Deity is more extensive than paternity, including also filiation. Similarly, in created beings, being is explicit in the concept of substance, while substance is not explicitly in the concept of being because being is more extensive than substance.

Scotus' objection. If Deity is conceived by us as containing paternity in act, it follows that in begetting the Son the Father communicates paternity to Him. Then the Son would be the Father. Or if paternity is not communicated to the Son, then the Deity is not communicated to Him. Further, Scotus argued that if being implicitly contains substance and accidents, then whenever anything is predicated both substance and accidents are predicated.

Reply. I distinguish the antecedent: if the Deity is conceived by us as explicitly containing paternity, I concede; as implicitly containing paternity, I sub-distinguish: both implicitly and copulatively, I concede; implicitly and disjunctively, I deny. For the Deity is disjunctively either in the Father, or in the Son, or in the Holy Ghost. A virtual distinction is enough to safeguard the truth of the propositions about the communicability of the nature without the communication of paternity, just as it suffices to say that God punishes by His justice but not by His mercy. In the same way the concept of being contains substance and accidents implicitly, not copulatively but disjunctively, and therefore it does not follow that substance is accident.

Many difficulties are solved in this manner, namely, how it is the Father who begets and not the essence with which the Father is really identified; how each divine person is really God and still not the other persons, which are really implicitly included in the Deity.

I insist. But if the Deity, as it is in itself and is clearly seen by the blessed, explicitly contains the paternity, it follows that the Father in begetting the Son communicates paternity to Him, and thus the Son is the Father or He is not God.

Reply. This would be true if in the eminent being of the Deity the absolute and the relative, the communicable and the incommunicable, would be identified to such an extent as to be destroyed, this I concede; otherwise, I deny. Indeed, the absolute communicable and the incommunicable relative are found in God in a formally pre-eminent manner, just as mercy and justice in God are identified without being

destroyed, since they are in God not only virtually (like the seven colors in white light) but also formally and eminently. Here is the mystery of the divine pre-eminence. We therefore rightly conceive the divine essence as being communicated to the Son together with all the absolute essential things which it contains and which are communicable, without any communication of the relative (paternity) because of the opposition to the terminus to which the essence is communicated. Thus in the triangle the first angle communicates its entire surface to the second and third angles but not itself.

In a word, the Father communicates the divine essence to the Son with regard to everything except where the opposition of relation intervenes, because a relative cannot be communicated to its correlative opposite. This statement is in accord with Cajetan's explanation: "In God (as He is in Himself) there is but one formal reason, neither purely absolute, nor purely relative, nor purely communicable, nor purely incommunicable, but eminently and formally containing both whatever is of absolute perfection and whatever the relational Trinity demands." Cajetan declared also: "It remains that (God) is both communicable and incommunicable."

Fifth doubt. What is the foundation of the relations of paternity and filiation?

Reply. In created beings the foundation is active and passive generation; this is also true proportionately of God. It should be noted that the esse in of the relation is not the foundation of the relation because the esse in is something common to all accidents, expressing at the same time the existence of the accident, for the being of the accident is the esse in at last aptitudinally.

The foundation of paternity as a relation is active generation, and the foundation of the relation of filiation is passive generation, that is, the actual procession. Similarly, spiration is the foundation of the relations between the Holy Ghost and the Father and the Son, who spirate in one active spiration.

Sixth doubt. Whether the divine relations (or persons) have their own proper relative existences, or whether they exist by the one absolute existence of the essence.

Reply. In opposition to Scotus and Suarez, the Thomists and many other theologians reply in the negative. This reply is based on many texts of St. Thomas; for example, "Since the divine person is the same as the divine

nature, the being of the person is not different from the being of the nature. Therefore the three divine persons have but one being; they would have a triple being if in them the being of the nature were other than the being of the persons."

In these texts St. Thomas is clearly speaking of the being of existence and not the being of the essence, particularly in the passage where he inquires whether there is one being in Christ although there are two natures, and answers in the affirmative.

In explaining this answer to Scotus and Suarez we may say that the existence of the relation is nothing more than its esse in. But, as we have said, the esse in of the relations in God is substantial, the same as the being of the divine nature. Therefore the divine relations do not have their own existences. Just as in God there is not a triple intelligence nor a triple will, so all the more there is no triple being, for in God all things are one and the same except where there is the opposition of relation.

This teaching is confirmed by the Athanasian Creed, which declares, "not three uncreated,... but one uncreated." If there were three uncreated existences besides the absolute existence common to the three persons, there would be three uncreated beings, not only adjectively but substantively, because the form and the subject would be multiplied. We would then have three entities having three uncreated existences. Scotus and Suarez, therefore, are in some danger of tritheism. Fundamentally this is why Suarez was unable to solve the objection arising from the principle of identity: those things which are equal to a third are equal to each other. By multiplying being in God, Suarez multiplied the absolute in God and placed in jeopardy the principle that in God all things are one and the same except where there is the opposition of relation.

Further confirmation is had from the fact that in God essence and being are the same. But the essence is common to the three persons. Therefore being is also common to all three. Being is communicated together with the nature because it is completely identified with the nature. The divine nature is subsisting being itself according to the Scriptures, "am who am." If the same intelligence and will are communicated, all the more the same existence is communicated.

Further, relative existences would be superfluous, for that which is already in existence does not need further existence; by the first existence a being is beyond nothingness and beyond its causes (if it has a cause). To say

that what is already beyond nothingness and its causes is once again placed beyond causes and nothingness is to imply a contradiction. It would also imply a contradiction to have two ultimate realities of the same order, for neither would be the ultimate. Existence, however, is the ultimate reality of a thing. When the Fathers said that to be God was different from being the Father, they understood this being God with respect to Himself and the being the Father with respect to some one else. It does not follow from this that there are several existences in God.

Objection. Existence is nothing more than being in act. But the relations are really in act as distinct from the essence. Therefore they have their own existences.

Reply. The Thomists deny the major, for existence is not the thing itself but the actuality of the thing by which it is placed beyond nothingness and its causes. In God, however, essence and being are the same, and since the essence is common to the three persons the divine existence is also common to them. The relations, therefore, are truly in act, but they are so by the absolute existence of the essence.

Objection. All production terminates with existence.

Reply. I distinguish the major: the production of a contingent being terminates in the production of a new existence, I concede; but communication terminates in an existence that is not new but in an existence that is communicated to the person who proceeds. So in some way the uncreated being of the Word is communicated to the assumed humanity since there is only one existence in Christ; so also the being of the separated soul is communicated to the body in the resurrection because there is only one substantial existence in man. Scotus and Suarez, however, deny the real distinction between created essence and being and therefore they multiply substantial being in man, assigning one to the body and one to the soul. They also declare that there are two beings in Christ and three relative existences in the Trinity.

I insist. Each thing that is distinct from others has its own existence. But the divine persons are distinct from one another. Therefore they have their own existences.

Reply. Each thing has its own existence, either proper or common, I concede; that the existence is always proper, I deny. Thus the humanity of Christ does not have its own proper existence, and in us the body does not have its proper existence distinct from the existence of the soul. Our bodies

exist by the existence of the soul, which is spiritual. It is not repugnant, therefore, that in God the relations, whose esse in is substantial, exist by the existence of the divine nature itself.

I insist. Therefore in God the Father refers to Himself and not to another and not to the Son.

Reply. I distinguish the antecedent: the Father refers to Himself with regard to His esse in, I concede; with regard to His esse ad, I deny.

Final objection. Besides the absolute subsistence in God there are three relative subsistences or personalities; therefore there should be besides the absolute existence three relative existences.

Reply. I deny the consequence. The difference arises from the fact that the absolute subsistence confers only the perseity of independence but not the perseity of incommunicability; the three relative subsistences are not superfluous since they are required for incommunicability. On the other hand, the absolute existence, communicated with the nature, places the persons beyond nothingness, so that relative existences are superfluous, as was said above.

Seventh doubt. Whether the divine relations by reason of their esse ad add some relative perfection to the absolute perfection of the divine essence virtually distinct from it.

State of the question. It is most certain that the divine relations (which are, as we shall see below, the divine persons) are most perfect since they are identified with the divine essence, which is infinite subsisting perfection itself. Thus the divine relations are necessarily loved by God and must be accorded the adoration of latria on our part. The question is whether the relations by reason of their esse ad add some relative perfection, virtually distinct from the absolute perfection of the divine essence, which they include.

The reply is in the negative. This reply is at least the more probable one and is held by such Thomists as Capreolus, Cajetan, Ferrariensis, the Salmanticences, Gonet, and Billuart. But some Thomists (John of St. Thomas, Contenson, and Bancel) hold the contrary opinion.

1. Proof from authority. In his work on the Trinity, St. Augustine says: “The Father is good, the Son is good, the Holy Ghost is good; but there are not three good, only one is good. If goodness and perfection are actually multiplied in the three divine persons, they could be said to be three good and three perfect persons not only adjectively but also substantively

because what these words signify both materially and formally would be multiplied inasmuch as there would be three relative perfections really distinct from one another.

St. Thomas declared: “Paternity is a dignity of the Father as is the essence of the Father, for it is an absolute dignity and pertains to the essence. Just as, therefore, the same essence which in the Father is paternity and in the Son is filiation, so the same dignity which in the Father is paternity is filiation in the Son.” So analogically in the triangle, the one surface which is the surface of the first angle is the surface of the second and third angles; no relative surfaces are found besides the absolute and common surface.

Billuart and others rightly point out that in these words St. Thomas not only openly asserts our conclusion but proves it, since the dignity or perfection of the Father is absolute and pertains to the essence.

2. Proof from theology. A thing is not good or perfect except inasmuch as it exists or implies an order to being. But the divine relations indeed exist according to their esse in, but according to their esse ad they are not anything but only in reference to something. Therefore by reason of their esse ad the relations do not add a relative perfection virtually distinct from the absolute, infinite perfection of the essence. In other words, the existence, and the perfection too, of the predicamental relation, with which we are now dealing, has reference to the subject and not to the terminus, and therefore the esse ad does not imply an order to existence, but prescinds from existence. For this reason it is possible to have certain relations which are not real and are of the mind only, namely, those whose esse in is not real.

Here it is that the divine relations differ from the divine attributes, which by their nature look to the essence and have an order, not to something else, but to themselves. Thus the attributes are called absolute or absolutely simple perfections, which it is better to have than not to have. So the divine will is an absolute perfection, virtually distinct from the perfection of God’s being and from subsisting intellect itself, although all these are identified without being destroyed in the eminence of the Deity, in whom they are found not only virtually and eminently but formally and eminently.

Corollary. The divine relations, taken formally according to their esse ad, are not absolutely simple perfections properly so called because, although they do not involve imperfection, it is not better to have them than not to

have them; their esse ad is a pure reference, prescinding from perfection and imperfection. So also in God the free act of creation (I am not speaking here of freedom but of the free act) is not an absolutely simple perfection, since God is not more perfect because He created the universe. God was not improved because from eternity He willed to create the world; to create the world is indeed something befitting, but not to have created is nevertheless not unbefitting.

On this point there is agreement, but Cajetan offered a formula that was not acceptable to other Thomists: “For God to will other beings is a voluntary and entirely free perfection whose opposite would not be an imperfection.” He expresses it better when he says: “To communicate oneself implies perfection not in him who communicates but in those to whom the communication is made.”

In the formula, rejected by other Thomists, as we have noted elsewhere, Cajetan seems to confuse a modal proposition referring to the saying with the modal proposition referring to the thing. It is correct to say that it is befitting that God created, in the sense that it is not unbefitting not to have created; but it is incorrect to say that the free volition to create is a new free perfection in God (virtually distinct from His essential perfection), even though the opposite is not an imperfection. Otherwise God would be more perfect because He willed to create the universe, as Leibnitz wrongly concluded. These observations should throw some light on this present question, namely, that the divine relations with regard to their esse ad do not add a new perfection.

CONFIRMATION FROM THE FOLLOWING INCONGRUITIES

1. Otherwise it would follow that the Father lacked one perfection, namely, filiation, and also passive spiration. None of the divine persons would therefore be perfect, none would have every perfection, and none would be God. For God must have all absolutely simple perfections, those perfections which it is better to have than not to have.

2. It would follow that all three persons would be more perfect, at least extensively, than any one person, and against this St. Augustine declared: “The Father is as great by Himself as are the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost together.”

3. The Father and the Son would be more perfect than the Holy Ghost because besides their proper perfection they would have the perfection of active spiration, whereas the Holy Ghost would have but one perfection, passive spiration.

Objection. The Father does not have filiation formally but eminently because of the divine essence. Hence filiation is properly an absolutely simple perfection.

Reply. In that case the Father would not have any absolutely simple perfection formally, and that would be improper.

I insist. The Father has filiation compensatively and terminatively, if not constitutively.

Reply. In that case the Father would not be infinitely perfect; and the Holy Ghost would be less perfect because He would have only one relative perfection and not two. Hence He would not even be compensatively perfect.

Another objection. A relative perfection implies a subject that is perfectible in order to something else, as we see in the case of potencies or faculties and habits. Hence it is wrong to say that a relation with regard to its esse ad prescinds from perfection. For the perfection of our intellect arises from its relation to being. Such was Contenson's argument.

Reply. Contenson, as Billuart pointed out, here confuses the transcendental relation of a faculty to its specific object with the predicamental relation, namely, paternity or filiation, which are pure references to a pure terminus and therefore do not consider the subject by reason of itself but by reason of the terminus.

Final difficulty. The created personality implies a perfection really and modally distinct from the perfection of the nature. Therefore for an equal or stronger reason the divine personalities, which are constituted by subsisting relations, imply a perfection distinct from the nature.

Reply. In agreement with many others I distinguish the antecedent. The created personality is a perfection with regard to the perseity of independence, I concede; with regard to the perseity of incommunicability, I deny, because it is not a perfection not to be able to communicate to another. The divine personalities confer incommunicability but not the perseity of independence, which is common to all three persons.

This should suffice in explanation of St. Thomas' second article, in which he teaches that the real relations in God are not distinguished really

from the essence, but are only virtually distinct. This truth can be succinctly stated as, “The Father is God.” In this statement, as in every affirmative proposition, the verb “is” expresses the actual identity of the subject and the predicate. In other words: the Deity as known by us contains the divine relations implicitly; the Deity as it is in itself contains them explicitly, or formally and eminently without the formal-actual distinction proposed by Scotus. This teaching implies no leaning to agnosticism; such danger would arise if we said that the real relations were in God not formally and eminently but only virtually and eminently like mixed perfections, as when we say that God is angry.

Indeed the divine relations are in God like the divine attributes, to a greater degree than colors are contained in white because the seven colors are contained in white only virtually and not formally. White is not blue; but the Deity is true, it is good, it is also the paternity, although the Deity is communicated by the Father to the Son without a communication of paternity.

THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER THE RELATIONS IN GOD ARE REALLY DISTINGUISHED FROM ONE ANOTHER

State of the question. This question seems to have been solved if we correctly understand the propositions, “The Father is not the Son,” “The Holy Ghost is not the Father nor the Son,” for in these negative propositions the verb “is not” denies the identity of the subject and the predicate, and therefore there is a real distinction, one that precedes the consideration of our mind. The question, however, requires further examination because it is not sufficiently clear how the persons are constituted by the relations and because, as we have said in the preceding article, the real relations in God are not really distinct from the essence.

From this arise certain difficulties, which are proposed at the beginning of this third article.

1. Those things equal to a third are equal to each other; but the divine relations are equal to a third, namely, the essence; therefore they are equal to each other. This is the classic objection of the rationalists against the mystery of the Trinity, which is sometimes examined by Thomists in the introduction to this treatise.

2. Paternity and filiation are, of course, distinguished mentally from the essence, as are goodness and omnipotence. Therefore, like goodness and omnipotence, paternity and filiation are not really distinguished from each other.

3. In God there is no real distinction except by reason of origin. But one relation does not appear to originate from another. Therefore the relations are not really distinct.

Reply. The reply is nevertheless in the affirmative, namely, in God a real distinction exists between the relations opposed to each other.

This teaching pertains to faith, since faith teaches that there is a real and true Trinity in which the Father is not the Son, and the Holy Ghost is not the Father or the Son. The Council of Florence declared: “In God all things are one except where there is opposition of relation.” At the same council, John, the Latins’ theologian, declared: “According to both Latin and Greek doctors it is relation alone that multiplies persons in the divine productions; this relation is called relation of origin, in which only two are concerned: the one from whom another is and the one who is from another.” Also at this Council, Cardinal Bessarion, the most learned theologian of the Greeks, averred, “No one is ignorant of the fact that the personal names of the Trinity are relative.”

In his argument St. Thomas quoted Boetius. Other Fathers who might be quoted are St. Anselm, St. Augustine, St. Gregory Nazianzen, St. Gregory of Nyssa, and St. John Damascene, who said: “The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are distinct and yet they are one.”

In the body of the article St. Thomas explains this doctrine of faith by an analysis of the concept of relative opposition as follows.

The nature of a real relation consists in the reference of one thing to another, according to which something is relatively opposed to another and the two are therefore really distinct.

But in God we have real relations opposed to one another, namely, paternity, filiation, and spiration. Below it will be explained that active spiration, which is opposed to passive spiration, is not opposed to paternity and filiation. Therefore in God there is real distinction according to these real relations opposed to one another.

The major explains something that is already admitted confusedly by the common sense of man and by natural reason, namely, that relative things, inasmuch as the Father and the Son are opposed to each other, are really

distinct, since no one begets himself. This analysis of the ideas of relation, opposition, and distinction is found in Aristotle's Postpredicamenta, where he distinguishes the various kinds of opposition.

Opposition properly so called is a definite and determined repugnance; opposition improperly so called is between disparate things, as between different species of things. Thus opposition properly so called requires a determined extreme, to which something is repugnant, as heat to cold, blindness to vision. Proper opposition, therefore, calls for two conditions: the distinction between the extremes and some determined repugnance between these extremes.

Opposition may be of four kinds: relative, contrary, privative, and contradictory. Following Goudin in his work on logic, we may present the division of opposition as follows.

Opposition

between being and non-being

by pure negation: contradictory opposition, e.g., man and no man, knowledge and nescience

by privation in a suitable subject: privative opposition, e.g. sight and blindness, knowledge and ignorance

between being and being

expelling each other from a subject: contrary opposition, e.g., virtue and vice, truth and error

based on mutual reference: relative opposition, e.g., between father and son

Thus, as is commonly taught, relative opposition is the weakest of all; in this kind of opposition one extreme does not destroy the other, rather one requires the other. Hence it can be attributed to God because it does not imply any privation of being but only distinction with a reference, as St. Thomas pointed out. Thus the Father and the Son are really distinct by relative opposition. Relative opposition may be defined as the repugnance between two things arising from the fact that they refer to each other.

On the other hand, contradictory opposition is the strongest of all because one extreme completely destroys the other; not even the subject survives as in privative opposition, nor the genus as in contrary opposition, in which, for example, virtue and vice oppose each other in the same genus of habit. Thus contradictory opposition is the cause of the others and is to a certain

extent mingled with them. In a sense we may say that the Father is not the Son, and virtue is not vice.

It is clear that in these four kinds of opposition, the word “opposition” is used not univocally but analogically, and the analogy is not only metaphorical but proper. The primal analogy contains the greatest opposition, that is, contradictory opposition. Hence it is not surprising that contradictory opposition participates in the other kinds of opposition.

Reply to the first and second difficulties. “Those things which are equal to a third are equal to each other,” I distinguish: if they are equal to the third actually and mentally and there is no mutual opposition, I concede; if they are equal to a third actually and not mentally and there exists relative opposition, I deny.

But the divine relations are equal to a third, the divine essence, this I distinguish: they are equal actually but not mentally, and some of the relations are mutually opposed, although they are not opposed to the third, this I concede. Otherwise, I deny.

To put it analogically, according to St. Thomas, transitive action, taken at least terminatively, and passion are really the same as movement, but they are really distinct from each other because of the opposition of relation, since action is the movement as coming from the agent and passion is the movement as received in the recipient.

So also in an equilateral triangle the three equal angles are actually the same as a third, namely, the surface of the triangle, but they are really distinguished from each other because of relative opposition.

First doubt. Are action and passion really and modally distinct from movement?

Reply. According to the common opinion of Thomists they are. Aristotle, however, did not consider precisely this question, and St. Thomas makes reference to his words, which, although they are somewhat vague, throw some light on the present problem, as does the reference to the triangle. Even though the illustration of the triangle may be deficient, the principle enunciated by St. Thomas is nevertheless true. We should remember that it is not necessary for the theologian to show that this objection is evidently false; it is enough if he shows that the objection is not necessary and has no cogency. Thus the revealed mystery remains intact.

Second doubt. Is the principle," hose things equal to a third are equal..." to be understood as a formal predication?

Reply. In order to understand this principle we must distinguish between formal predication and material predication. Thus it is only materially true to say that the divine mercy and the divine justice are the same, because they are not really distinct, and by reason of their subject or matter they are in a sense the same, just as when we say that the humanity of Peter is his individuality. We have here a material predication because the humanity and the individuality are not actually distinct, and by reason of the matter and the subject they are the same. But in these instances we are not uttering a formal predication in which the predicate belongs to the subject according to its formal nature. For example, it does not belong to the divine mercy to punish; the divine mercy pardons, condones, and it is the divine justice that punishes, although these two perfections are really the same, that is, materially the same but not formally.

The laws of the syllogism, however, are not verified except in formal predications, since the process of reasoning does not deal with things in themselves but through the mediation of our concepts. Therefore if we wish to conclude the identity of two things by our reasoning, we must consider these two things from the same formal aspect. Otherwise we do not obey the first law of the syllogism: the term must be threefold: middle, major, and minor. According to this law the middle term must be perfectly distributed, that is, taken in the same sense in the major and the minor. Hence, for example, the following argument is not valid because the major is only a material predication: in God mercy is the same as justice; but justice is the principle of punishment; therefore God inflicts punishment through His mercy. The argument is false because in God mercy and justice are not the same formally although they are the same materially. Again, in the Trinity it is conceded that the Father and the Son are actually the same as the divine essence, but they are not the same formally. Moreover the Father and the Son are relatively opposed to each other, but they are not opposed to the essence. It is clear, therefore, that the following syllogism is not valid: This God is the Father, but this God is the Son, therefore the Son is the Father. Nor is the following true: This divine essence is the paternity, but this divine essence is the filiation, therefore filiation is paternity. In these syllogisms we have merely material predications, and the form of the syllogism is not observed.

Objection. The force of this reply is invalidated when, against Scotus, we say that in God there is not only one being but one formal eminent reason, namely, the Deity, and thus in God every predication is not only material but formal.

Reply. It is true that in God there is but one formal reason as far as God Himself is concerned, but not with regard to us. In other words, the objection would be valid if the Deity identified with itself the attributes and relations without preserving their formal reasons; but the objection has no force if these formal reasons are still found to be in the eminence of the Deity. In God, of course, the relations are not only virtually and eminently, as the seven colors are in white, but formally and eminently; for whereas blue is not white, God is true, good, paternity, and filiation. Formal predication, therefore, must be carefully distinguished from material predication.

In God the formal reasons or aspects of the attributes and relations are identified without being destroyed; they are perfectly preserved in spite of their real identity with the essence. Indeed, they do not exist in the purest state except in this identification. Thus subsisting being itself must be not only intelligible in act but actually understood in act, and it is therefore identified with subsisting understanding. The proper reason or nature of a relation is to be opposed to its correlative and to be distinguished from it.

This is possible because of the eminence of the Deity. Analogically, the body of Christ is present to many consecrated hosts, but these hosts are not present to each other. At first sight this seems to contradict the principle that those things which are united to a third are united to each other, or those things that are present to a third are present to each other. Thus two bodies cannot be present in the same space without being present to each other.

But this is not true if there is a third member which, remaining the same, is in many distant places as if not being in that place. Thus the same body of Christ is present in the manner of substance in many distant hosts. So in the natural order the head and the foot are present to the same soul and yet they are not parts present to each other and close to each other.

Second objection. A real distinction is not founded on that which prescinds from reality. But the esse ad of a relation prescinds from reality. Therefore it does not provide a basis for the real distinction of relations or of the persons.

Reply. I distinguish the major: a real distinction is not founded on that which prescinds from reality and is not real, I concede; on that which is real, I deny. I contradistinguish the minor in the same sense and I deny the consequence and the consequent. The esse ad is said to prescind from reality inasmuch as it may be either in a real relation or a relation of reason; but this esse ad in a real relation is real, not formally because of itself but because of the real esse in, which is common to all accidents. Thus in created beings the esse ad of the relation of paternity is something real and not something of the mind; both the father and the son therefore are necessarily distinct, since no one begets himself. The real relations in God are really distinct more as relations than as real, because as relations they are opposed to each other and as real they have the same esse in since their esse in is not accidental but substantial. Hence in God there are four real relations, as we shall see below, but not four relative realities as if there were four actions, for example. We shall also see below that of these four real relations active spiration is not really distinguished from paternity and filiation because it is not opposed to them.

Third doubt. Why is not the <esse ad> of a real relation real because of itself, as Suarez taught?

Reply. Because, as St. Thomas says, a real relation formally as a relation is not something but to something, and therefore there can be relations that are not real, whose esse in is not real. On the other hand there is no such thing as quantity or quality mentally. Suarez, however, held that the esse ad of a relation is real because of itself, just as he held that the created essence is actual because of itself and is therefore not really distinct from its existence. Suarez thought of being (ens) only as that which is and not as that by which a thing is, whereas for St. Thomas the essence is that by which a thing is in a certain species. Hence Suarez concluded that the relations of reason (mental relations) are not true relations. From this he went so far as to infer that the divine relations have their own relative existence and perfection, virtually distinct from the infinite perfection of the essence. In this way Suarez to some extent inclined to Scotus' teaching on the formal distinction. It will be seen therefore that the Father is lacking some perfection, namely, filiation and passive spiration. Now it becomes very difficult to safeguard the unity and absolute simplicity of the divine

nature, just as when the Greeks in their treatise on the Trinity began with the three persons rather than with a study of the divine nature.

Thus Suarez was not able to reply to the principal objections against the mystery of the Trinity as the Thomists were. How was Suarez to solve the objection: “Those things equal to a third are equal to each other”? At a loss in answering this objection, Suarez declared that the principle of identity (or contradiction), if taken in complete abstraction and analogy of being, prescinding from created and uncreated being, from both finite and infinite, is false. According to Suarez this principle is true inductively only in created beings, and the truth of the principle arises only within the limits of created being. It is a law of finite being, not an analogical law of being itself in common. Henceforth the theologian could not argue about the divine perfections because his argument is based on the principle of identity or contradiction. This is pure agnosticism. According to our teaching, to say that the principle of identity or contradiction is not verified analogically in the mystery of the Trinity is to say that this mystery is absurd, not above reason but opposed to reason. This much we can say: that most eminent mode according to which this principle is verified in the Trinity cannot be positively known by us here on earth; it can be known only negatively and relatively.

Another difference arises between St. Thomas and Suarez from the fact that for St. Thomas the three persons have only one being since, as it is commonly expressed, the being of an accident is being in another. But in God the esse in of the relations is substantial and is therefore identified with the divine essence, which is therefore unique. For Suarez, on the contrary, who proceeded from other principles of being, the essence, the being, and the relations are three relative existences in God.

The doctrine of St. Thomas, as Del Prado shows, “Perfectly preserves the supreme simplicity of the divine being because in God there is but one being; the real relations, on the one hand, do not make a composition with the essence, and on the other hand they really distinguish the persons. From this it follows that in the three divine persons there is one divinity, equal glory, co-eternal majesty, and the same absolute perfection. No perfection is found in one person that does not exist in the other.” Del Prado continues: “Those who like Suarez deny the real composition of being and essence in creatures are forced to place three beings in God, and they must place in one person a perfection that is not in another, nor can they solve the

difficulty arising from the principle of identity." The difference between St. Thomas and Suarez has its roots in their basic philosophy and in their positions about the real distinction between essence and being in creatures. Suarez, as we have said, whether he wishes to or not, multiplies something absolute in God, namely, being, and therefore the objection based on the principle of identity remains unsolved.

FOURTH ARTICLE: WHETHER THERE ARE IN GOD ONLY FOUR REAL RELATIONS

State of the question. Besides paternity, filiation, active and passive spiration, why do we not admit the real relations of equality and similitude? Scotus admitted these other relations. It appears, however, that there are only three real relations just as there are only three divine persons, for the persons are constituted by subsisting relations.

Reply. St. Thomas replied that there are four real relations in God, and this is the common opinion of theologians in opposition to Scotus and the Scotists.

The proof in the body of the article is the following.

Real relations are founded either on quantity, which is not found in God, or on action and passion, and in God there are only two actions ad intra, intellection and love, from which the two processions derive. But each procession is the basis for two relations, one of which is that of the proceeding from the principle and the other the principle itself. Therefore there are in God only four real relations: paternity, filiation, and the two relations founded on the procession of love, called active spiration and the passive procession or spiration, which is rather quasi-passive.

St. Thomas says below: "Although there are four relations in God, one of these, active spiration, is not separate or distinct from the persons of the Father and the Son because it is not opposed to them."

There are therefore not four persons but only three. The reason is always the same: in God all things are one and the same except where there is opposition of relation. But there are only three relations opposed to each other, since active spiration is not opposed to paternity and filiation. Moreover, because of the identity of the principle, active spiration is numerically one and the same in the Father and the Son. We must always return to this principle as to the center of the circle from which all the radii proceed. The repetition of this principle in these articles is not a mere

routine repetition but it is frequent recourse to the source of that light which illuminates this entire treatise.

It should be noted that the relations of equality and similitude are not real relations; they are only mental relations. St. Thomas explains this below and the reason he gives is valid against Scotus, who held the opposite opinion. Equality is predicated after the manner of quantity, and similitude after the manner of quality. But in God there is no quantity of the mass but only of virtue, which like quality is reduced to the divine essence and with which it is numerically one and the same. One thing cannot have a real reference or relation to itself. Nor is there in God a real relation of equality because of the relations, since one relation is not referred by another relation, otherwise there would be an infinite process.

Objection. The divine persons are truly and really equal; therefore the equality between them is a real relation.

Reply. I deny the consequence and the consequent. For a real relation it is not required that the equality be taken formally; equality taken fundamentally suffices, such as the unity of an infinite magnitude, which by reason of the divine essence is numerically one. Thus God is really the lord of all creatures without any real relation to them; we have here only the creative action upon which creatures really depend. In God therefore there are only four relations, and these are relations of origin based on the two processions.

RECAPITULATION OF QUESTION TWENTY-EIGHT

In the first article it was shown that consequent on the two processions there are real relations in God; consequent on the eternal generation are the relations of paternity and filiation, and consequent on the other procession are the relations of active and passive spiration.

In the second article we saw that the relations in God are not really distinct from the essence since the esse in of the relations, though it is accidental in creatures, is substantial in God because no accident is found in God.

In the third article we saw that the relations in God are really distinguished from each other because they are mutually opposed. The principle was formulated that in God all things are one and the same unless there is opposition of relation. In the first place the objection, that those

things equal to a third are equal to each other, was solved. In the reply the major was distinguished by conceding the proposition when the two things are not more opposed to each other than to the third and denying it if there is such opposition. Thus several relations were found mutually opposed but not opposed to the essence.

In the fourth article the four relations were determined; one of them, active spiration, was not opposed to paternity or filiation. Thus there are three relations in mutual opposition.

As Del Prado points out: “The difference between Suarez and St. Thomas in their explanation of the mystery of the Trinity arises from a difference in their view of primary philosophy. The root is to be found in the fact that Suarez, in the Disputationes metaphysicae 1. does not admit, but rejects as absurd, the real composition of being and essence in creatures; 2. consequently in real created relations he does not distinguish between the esse ad, which is the essence or the nature of the relation, and the esse or being which is the actuality of the essence; 3. consequently the three real relations in God, according to Suarez, cannot be defended except as three beings, which he and his followers call relative beings but which are in fact absolute because in God being is the very nature or essence of God and belongs to the absolute predicaments; 4. and consequently these three beings imply three perfections which, like the three beings of the three relations, are in one person in such a way as not to be in another. We have, therefore, three beings and three perfections opposed to each other, and from this follow the difficulties already mentioned and many others.”

On the other hand, all these difficulties are removed if with St. Thomas we admit that the being of an accident (distinct from the essence) is its inesse, and that the esse in of the divine relations is not accidental but substantial and therefore one in the different relations and persons.

CHAPTER III

QUESTION 29 THE DIVINE PERSONS

IN the beginning we treat of the persons in common, then of the individual persons, and finally of the persons in comparison with the essence and each other. This is the content of the treatise.

Concerning the three persons in common there are four questions:

1. The meaning of the word “person.”
2. The plurality of persons.
3. Their differences and similarities.
4. How they can be known by us.

The first question has four divisions

1. the definition of person; 2. the comparison of person with essence and subsistence; here person is identified with the Greek hypostasis; 3. whether the word “person” is used with reference to God; 4. whether in God person signifies relation. The reply will be in the affirmative: person signifies a subsisting relation opposed and incommunicable to others. In the appendix we shall see what is to be said about the absolute subsistence common to the three persons.

In this question it will be made clear that the general idea of person is to be applied to God analogically, not metaphorically but properly, without any distinction or multiplication in the divine nature itself. A great deal of effort was required to make this point clear. In the third century the Latins, like Tertullian, spontaneously declared that there are three persons in God and one substance because the names Father and Son and Holy Ghost are personal. This statement, however, was the source of much difficulty for the Greeks, who used the words ousia and hypostasis promiscuously to designate essence, substance, and nature. On other occasions the term prosopon a translation of the Latin persona, designated the mask or theatrical costume which actors donned to impersonate famous personages,

and this term was not considered definite enough to express the real distinction between the divine persons. At the time of Origen and St. Dionysius of Alexandria, however, the term hypostasis designated a divine person and ousia the divine nature. St. Athanasius also used these terms in this manner.

FIRST ARTICLE: THE DEFINITION OF PERSON

State of the question. In this article inquiry is made for the definition of person, and the definition given by Boetius and commonly accepted is defended. St. Thomas, following the Aristotelian method, goes from the nominal definition to the real definition by a division of the genus of substance and by an inductive comparison of the thing to be defined with similar and dissimilar things. These are the principal rules to be followed in the search for a real definition as proposed in the Posterior Analytics.

In the beginning St. Thomas mentions three difficulties against the Boethian definition, “I person is an individual substance with a rational nature.”

1. No individual is defined; for example, Socrates is not defined because a definition expresses an essence that is common to many individuals. The reply will be: If this individual is not definable, individuality can be defined, and individuality pertains to a person.

2. It appears that the adjective “individual” is superfluous because the term “substance” stands for first substance which, for Aristotle, is the individual substance.

3. The third and fourth difficulties are of minor importance. The fifth difficulty is that a separated soul is an individual substance with a rational nature and is not a person.

THE REPLY OF ST. THOMAS AFFIRMS THAT BOETIUS’ DEFINITION IS ACCEPTABLE FOR THESE REASONS:

1. Because of Boetius’ authority and because the definition has been accepted generally by theologians.

2. The acceptability of the definition can be rationally explained. St. Thomas assumes that the nominal definition of “person,” although it is etymologically derived from impersonation or representation of another’s

features or gestures, nevertheless designates some individual rational being distinct from others, for example, Socrates, Plato, anyone who is able to say, “I am,” or “I act,” is called a person. So also all peoples in their grammar commonly distinguish between the first, second, and third person: I, you, he. The ancient jurists added that a person is distinguished from things inasmuch as the person is of his own right, and at one time they taught that in the legal sphere a slave was not a person because he was not of his own right. At the inception of this philosophical inquiry it is sufficient to have a general idea of person: an individual rational being, a singular rational being distinct from others; in French un particulier, in Italian, un tale. Briefly a person is a free and intelligent subject. The nominal definition, which tells what the term signifies, contains intimations of the real definition, which tells what the thing really is.

The real definition is not demonstrated; it is itself the foundation of the demonstration of the properties of the thing defined. The real definition is methodically sought out by a division of the genus and by inductive comparison. In going from the nominal to the real definition of a person, therefore, we must consider the supreme genus of the thing to be defined and this genus must be correctly divided. The article should be read carefully.

The genus of the thing to be defined is substance. On this point St. Thomas notes at the beginning of the body of the article that in the genus of substance the individual is a special instance. Substance itself is individuated by itself whereas accidents are individuated by the subject in which they are. Hence individual substances have some special name; they are called hypostases or first substances or supposita, that is, the first subject of attribution of those things belonging to these substances. For example, this tree is a suppositum as is this dog. Aristotle calls individuals first substances (as Peter, Socrates); second substances are the genera and species, as man, animal, living being. Therefore this distinction is a division into individual and universal substances. Aristotle said that second substances are predicated of first substances as of subjects not because they inhere like accidents but because they express the nature of this particular subject.

Aristotle said that individuals subsist per se and that genera and species do not subsist except in individuals. The suppositum is that which exists separately and acts per se. First substance therefore is the same as the

suppositum or the subject of attribution of nature, existence, and accidents, for example, this tree and this dog. Thus the person that we are to define is compared with things dissimilar to it, namely, with accidents, and with genus and species.

In the second part of the body of the article, St. Thomas compares person with things similar to it, that is, with other supposita. “The particular and the individual in rational substances is found to have a special and more perfect mode because it has dominion over its acts and acts per se independently. Therefore the individual substance with a rational nature bears a special name, person. A person is defined, then, as an individual substance with a rational nature.

“This real definition expresses that reality which is vaguely contained in the nominal definition, namely, a rational being, individual and distinct from others, such as Socrates, Plato, I, you, and he.”

CONFIRMATION. THE VALIDITY OF THIS DEFINITION IS CONFIRMED AS WE SOLVE THE OBJECTIONS

1. This individual or this person, Socrates, is indeed not defined, but the individuality and the person abstractly considered are defined.

2. In Boetius’ definition the adjective “individual” is not superfluous since it signifies that we are dealing with first substance, with the individual or suppositum; in other words, with the real subject which cannot be attributed to another subject.

3. The term “individual” is used to designate that mode of existence which belongs to particular substances, which alone are able to subsist separately per se. Hence “individual” means as much as incommunicable to another suppositum; the person of Peter cannot be predicated of another subject or attributed to another subject.

4. In this definition nature signifies essence.

5. A separated soul is not called a person because it is a part of a human species, whereas “person” signifies the complete whole existing separately, for example, Peter and not his soul, which is attributed to him. Having set up the definition of person, we must now examine the nature of personality.

THE NATURE OF PERSONALITY

Methodically we go from the nominal definition of personality to its real definition. Here again we observe the laws for establishing a definition laid down by Aristotle and St. Thomas. We begin with the nominal definition not only of person but of personality itself. According to the common sense of men, personality is that by which some subject is a person, just as existence is that by which some subject exists. This may appear to be somewhat ingenuous, yet we have an intimation here that personality, whatever certain writers may say, is not formally constituted by existence. Philosophically the transition to the real definition is made by comparative induction, by comparing this personality which we wish to define with similar and dissimilar things and by correctly dividing the genus of substance to which personality belongs.

Various opinions of Scholastics, who are divided into those who admit or do not admit the real distinction between what a thing is and its being, and between the created essence and being

Denying this distinction, Scotus said that personality is something negative, namely, the negation of the hypostatic union in an individual nature such as Socrates or Peter. Suarez, likewise rejecting this real distinction between created essence and being, said that personality is a substantial mode presupposing the existence of an individual nature and rendering it incommunicable.

Among those who with St. Thomas admit the real distinction we find three opinions.

Cajetan and many other Thomists say that personality is that by which an individual nature becomes immediately capable of existing separately per se. Others with Capreolus say somewhat less explicitly that personality is the individual nature under the aspect of its being. Lastly, Cardinal Billot reduces personality to the being that actuates an individual nature.

Many moderns abandon the ontological approach to this question and consider it from the psychological and moral viewpoint. They declare that personality is constituted either by the consciousness of oneself or by liberty. Consciousness and liberty, however, are only manifestations of the personality; the subject that is conscious of itself must first be constituted as a subject capable of saying. So also the free subject is indeed morally of its own right by liberty, but it also must first be ontologically constituted as I, you, or he.

The true idea of personality. We are looking for the real ontological definition of personality within the genus of substance, because a person is an intelligent and free substance or subject. We proceed progressively by dividing the genus of substance by affirmation and negation and by comparing the personality which we want to define with similar and dissimilar things.

1. Personality, or that by which anything is a person, is not something negative; it is positive just as the person of which it is the formal constituent. If the dependence of an accident is something positive, a fortiori the independence of the subject or the person is positive, that is, that by reason of which the person exists separately per se. Moreover, since the personalities of Socrates and Peter belong to the natural order, they cannot be defined by a denial of the hypostatic union, which is something essentially supernatural and unique. If this were true, it would follow that the personality could not be known naturally.

2. Personality, as something positive, must be something substantial and not accidental because the person is a substance. Hence personality in the proper sense cannot be constituted by consciousness or liberty. Thus personality is compared with dissimilar things and with accidents; we now compare it with similar and related things in the genus of substance.

3. Personality is something substantial but it is not the nature of substance itself, nor this particular nature, but it is this individual human nature, since nature even as individuated is attributed to the person as an essential part. St. Thomas says: “The suppositum signifies the whole which has nature as a formal part that perfects it.” We do not say, “Peter is his own nature,” because the whole is not the part; it is greater than the part and contains other things besides.

Nor is personality the nature itself under the aspect of being, since the individual nature, Peter for example, is not that which exists but that by which it is a man. That which exists is Peter himself, the person of Peter. We are now asking for that by which something is what it is. Personality therefore is not the individual nature under the aspect of being; otherwise, since there are two natures in Christ, Christ would have two persons and two personalities.

4. Nor is personality Peter’s existence because existence is attributed to Peter as a constituted person after the manner of a contingent predicate. Indeed existence is a contingent predicate of every person that has been

created or can be created, for no human or angelic person is its own being. Therefore, as St. Thomas says, “In every creature there is a difference between that which is and its being.” He also says: “Being follows nature not as something that possesses being but as that by which a thing is; but it follows the person as something that has being.” If, therefore, being follows the person constituted as a person, it does not formally constitute the person.

If being formally constituted the created person, the real distinction between the created person and being would be destroyed, and it would no longer be true to say that Peter is not his own being. In other words, that which is not its own being is really distinct from its being, distinct apart from the consideration of our minds. But the person of Peter, as well as his personality which formally constitutes his person, is not Peter’s being. Therefore Peter’s person and his personality are really distinguished from his being. We shall see this all most clearly in heaven when we see God, who alone is His own being and who alone can say, “I am who am.”

5. Personality, therefore, is something positive and substantial, determining an individual nature of substance so that it will be immediately capable of existing separately per se. More briefly, it is that by which a rational subject is what it is. Existence, however, is a contingent predicate of the subject and its ultimate actuality and therefore existence presupposes the personality, which cannot be, as Suarez would have it, a substantial mode following on existence. Personality is, as it were, the terminal point where two lines meet, the line of essence and the line of existence. Properly it is that by which an intelligent subject is what it is. This ontological personality is the foundation of the psychological and moral personality or of the consciousness of self and dominion of self.

This real definition explicitly enunciates what is vaguely contained in the accepted nominal definition: personality is that by which the intelligent subject is a person just as existence is that by which a subject exists. Therefore personality differs from the essence and from the existence which it brings together.

In order to show that the quid rei is confusedly contained in the quid nominis and that the real definition of personality should preserve what is vaguely contained in the nominal definition, Cajetan says: “The word ‘person’ and similarly the demonstrative personal pronouns like ‘I,’ ‘you,’ and ‘he,’ all formally signify the substance and not a negation or an

accident or something extraneous. If we all admit this, why, when scrutinizing the quid rei, that is, when going from the nominal to the real definition, do we depart from the common admission?" Why do we depart from the common sense of mankind, from natural reason, and forget the nominal definition of the person?

It is not surprising, then, that this opinion is accepted by a great many theologians, by Ferrariensis, John of St. Thomas, the Salmanticenses, Goudin, Gonet, Billuart, Zigliara, Del Prado, Sanseverino, Cardinal Mercier, Cardinal Lorenzelli, Cardinal Lepicier, Hugon, Gredt, Szabo, Maritain, and many others.

Certain texts of Capreolus are quoted to show that the person is the nature under the aspect of being. These texts, however, are not really opposed to Cajetan's stand because for Capreolus personality is properly that by which the individual rational nature becomes immediately capable of existence and it is clear that what exists is not the nature of Peter but his person, that is, Peter himself. In other words, personality is that by which the intelligent and free subject is constituted as a subject possessing its own nature, faculties, existence, operations, consciousness, and the actual free dominion over itself.

Finally this theory, accepted by many theologians, is based not only on the texts of St. Thomas cited above but on many others, such as, "The form designated by the word 'person' is not the essence or the nature but the personality." For St. Thomas, therefore, personality is a kind of form or formality or modality of the substantial order. "The name person is imposed by the form of personality which gives the reason for the subsistence of such a nature." Accordingly personality is that by which the rational subject has the right to being separately per se. Thus personality is a substantial mode, antecedent to being, not subsequent to being, because being is the ultimate actuality of a thing or of the subject.

Moreover, St. Thomas taught: "(In Christ) if the human nature had not been assumed by the divine person, the human nature would have had its own personality, and to that extent the divine person is said to have consumed the human nature, although this is not the proper expression, because the divine person by its union impeded the human nature from having its own personality." Thus, according to St. Thomas, personality is distinguished from the individual nature and also from existence because "being follows the person as something that possesses being," and therefore

being does not constitute the person. Lastly he says, “The three (divine) persons have but one being,” and therefore “the personality is not the same as the being since there are in God three personalities and one being”; and “being is not by reason of the suppositum,” for a created suppositum is its own being.

We conclude that a person is a free and intelligent subject and that it is predicated analogically of men and angels, and of the divine persons, and that personality is that by which this subject is what it is, namely, that which determines an individual nature to be immediately capable of existing separately per se.

COROLLARIES

1. Personality excludes a threefold communicability. 1. It formally excludes the communicability of nature to another suppositum because the nature already exists in a suppositum. 2. By presupposition and materially it excludes the communicability of the universal to the individual because the person is an individual itself and has an individuated nature. This incommunicability properly pertains to the individuation of nature which takes place in us and in corporeal beings by matter determined by quantity inasmuch as a specific form as received in this matter is no longer communicable. 3. Personality excludes the communicability of the part to the whole because the person is a complete substance. Thus a separated soul is not a person but a principal part of a person. Thus we do not say, “Peter is now in heaven,” but “the soul of Peter.” On the other hand we say, “After the Ascension, Jesus is in heaven; and after the Assumption, the Blessed Virgin is in heaven and not only her soul.” The humanity of Christ is not a person for, while it is individuated and singular, it is not a suppositum or a subject, but it pertains to the suppositum of the incarnate Word.

2. In this way we explain that there is but one person in Christ, that is, one intelligent and free subject, although He has two intellects and two wills. So also we see how in God there are three persons and one nature and one being. We say this because there are three free and intelligent subjects although they have the same nature, the same essential intellect, the same liberty, and the same essential love. Contradiction is avoided by the fact that the three divine persons are relative and that they are opposed to each other, as we shall see below.

3. Personality is quite different from that individuation whose principle is matter determined by quantity. Individuation properly excludes the communicability of the universal to the inferior and it takes place through something lower than the universal, that is, by the matter in which the form is received so that the received form is no longer subject to participation.

On the other hand, personality properly and formally excludes the communicability of nature to another subject or suppositum because the nature is terminated and possessed by one subject existing separately per se, for example, by Peter, and now Peter's human nature cannot be attributed to Paul. St. Thomas says: "Person signifies that which is most perfect in all nature, namely, something subsistent (existing separately per se) in rational nature," whereas our individuation derives from something lower than ourselves, namely, matter.

In Christ, although individuation as in us is derived from matter, the personality is uncreated and differs infinitely from matter. The term "individual" designates that which is inferior in man, that which is subordinate to the species, to society, and to the country; person designates that which is superior in man, that by reason of which man is ordered directly to God Himself above society. Thus society, to which the individual is subordinate, is itself ordered to the full perfection of the human person, as against statism, which denies the higher rights of the human person. We thus arrive not only at a concept which is definite and distinct but at a vital concept of the person immediately subject to God loved above all things. Such is the definition of person. For a simple understanding of the dogma it is sufficient to say that the person is a free and intelligent subject and is predicated analogically of man, the angels, and the three divine persons, for each of these is a free and intelligent subject.

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER PERSON IS THE SAME AS HYPOSTASIS, SUBSISTENCE, AND ESSENCE

State of the question. In this article we establish the equivalence of the Latin term persona with the Greek term hypostasis. St. Thomas, as is clear from his replies to the second and third difficulties, realized the difficulties arising on this point between the Greeks and Latins. The Greeks refused to accept the term "person" because for them it signified the mask which actors in the theater wore to represent famous personages; and since an

actor successively wore masks to impersonate different heroes, they sensed the danger of Sabellianism, according to which the divine persons are merely different aspects of God acting ad extra.

On the other hand, the Latins rejected the term “hypostasis” because it often designated substance and thus implied the danger of Arianism, which taught that there were in God three substances, some of which were subordinate substances.

These difficulties were eliminated by St. Basil’s clear distinction between the meaning of the terms ousia and hypostasis. Ousia, he said, signifies the substance which is numerically common to the three persons; hypostasis signifies that which is individual and real so that there is a real distinction between the persons. Then the Greek formula of three hypostases was accepted as equivalent to the Latin of three persons. Nevertheless the Greek formula could not be expressed in the Latin translation because the terms “subsistence” and “suppositum” were not yet in use.

These terms, the correlative abstract and concrete forms, did not exist in the fourth century; St. Hilary and St. Augustine did not know them. The term “subsistence” was invented by Rufinus about 400. Rufinus derived the term “subsistence” from subsistere just as “substance” came from substare. This was logical enough because the Latins had said that the divine persons subsist. The word “hypostasis” was finally accepted by the Latins, and the union of the two natures in Christ was even called the hypostatic union.

Boethius, writing at the beginning of the sixth century, did not appreciate Rufinus, happy discovery and taught that if the Church would permit it, absolutely speaking we could say that there were three substances in God. In this present article, St. Thomas strove to place a favorable interpretation on Boethius’ words, and out of this came the complexity of this article. Thus in explaining Boethius’ words, in his reply to the second difficulty, he says: “We say that in God there are three persons and subsistences as the Greeks say there are three hypostases. But since the term ‘substance’ which in its proper significance corresponds to ‘hypostasis’ is used equivocally by us, sometimes meaning essence and sometimes hypostasis, the Latins in order to avoid any error preferred to translate ‘hypostasis’ by the term ‘subsistence’, rather than the term ‘substance.’” This was happily done by Rufinus.

But Boethius, misunderstanding the matter, distinguished differently between subsistere and substare when he said that substare referred to

accidents and therefore only individuals were substances with respect to their accidents, whereas only genus and species, which do not have accidents, could be said to subsist. Here was Boethius, principal error: he inverted Rufinus, formulas and said that in God there were three substances and one subsistence (or substantial nature).

Rufinus, however, had said that in God there were three subsistences and one substance. Thus Boethius gave a false meaning to the word "subsistence" invented by Rufinus. Rusticus, a deacon of the Roman Church, restated the true meaning of the word. From that time "hypostasis" has been translated by "subsistence" and later by "suppositum" for the concrete form. Indeed the concrete correlative of subsistentia is not subsistere but suppositum just as the concrete correlative of "personality" is "person."

The complexity of this present article can be attributed to these fluctuating translations and especially to Boethius, unfortunate interference. The first two difficulties proposed at the beginning of the article are therefore not objections, because after explanations are made they conclude as does the article itself. The two arguments in the sed contra are objections taken from Boethius, who misunderstood the meaning of "hypostasis."

Reply. In spite of these objections the conclusion of the article is clear: in the genus of rational substances the term "person" signifies what these three terms, hypostasis, substance, things in nature (res naturae) signify in the whole genus of substances, namely, the suppositum or the first subject of attribution. We recall that substance is said to be twofold: second substance, or ousia, and first substance, which has four names: suppositum, subsistence, hypostasis, and thing in nature.

The first name, "uppositum," signifies the logical relation of the subject of attribution to the predicate; the three others signify the thing itself and not the logical relation. Thus "subsistence," taken concretely, signifies the first substance as existing separately per se; "thing in nature" signifies first substance as it is placed under some common nature; and hypostasis as it is placed under accidents. It should be noted that hypostasis in the concrete is the same as first substance, and subsistence is now understood in the abstract and corresponds to personality and not to person.

The following should be kept clearly in mind: The concrete correlative of subsistence is the suppositum as personality corresponds to person. Certain authors, attempting to identify subsistence with the existence of substance,

say that the concrete correlative of subsistence is to subsist (subsistere), just as to exist is the correlative to existence. This is erroneous because the suppositum, of which subsisting and existing are predicated as contingent predicates, ought to have in itself that by which it is a suppositum, and this is subsistence, or if it is a rational being, personality. Clearly the concrete correlative of personality is not "to subsist" but the person. Actually, the abstract correlative of "to subsist" is the existence of the substance, just as the existence of the accident corresponds to inhering itself.

Briefly this article may be reduced to this: In the genus of rational substances person designates the same as hypostasis or suppositum in the whole genus of substances, namely, that which exists separately per se.

St. Thomas' replies to the second, fourth, and fifth difficulties are favorable interpretations of certain texts of Boethius, who wrote rather inaccurately on this question.

THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER THE TERM PERSON CAN BE APPLIED TO GOD

The reply is in the affirmative as pertaining to faith as is clear from the Athanasian Creed: "For there is one person of the Father, another of the Son, another of the Holy Ghost."

The body of the article gives the theological argument, which may be presented as follows. Every perfection is to be attributed to God. But "person" signifies what is most perfect in all of nature, namely, a free and intelligent subject, or a subsisting being with a rational nature. Therefore it is proper to speak of God as a person, and this in the most excellent manner. God is subsisting being itself with an intellectual nature and, therefore, whatever pertains to the person belongs to Him formally and eminently. For this reason theistic philosophers speak of a personal God in opposition to the pantheists, who say that God is immanent in the universe in which He operates not freely but necessarily.

In his reply, St. Thomas states that God is the highest and most intelligent being per se. To the second difficulty he replies that the term "person" in its formal being most properly belongs to God since the dignity of the divine nature exceeds every dignity. His third reply shows he understood the difficulty that arose between the Greeks and the Latins. In his reply to the fourth objection, he says: "Individual being cannot belong to God so far as matter is the principle of individuation but only so far as individual being

denotes incommunicability." This was also noted by Richard of St. Victor. Thus the person of the Father is incommunicable to the Son; thus also it is explained that the humanity of Christ, which is individuated by matter, is not a person because it is communicated to the suppositum of the divine Word, in which it exists.

From this, however, a problem arises. If the person denotes incommunicability in the divine nature, how can the Father communicate His nature to the Son? This problem will be solved in the following articles.

FOURTH ARTICLE: WHETHER IN GOD THE TERM PERSON SIGNIFIES RELATION

State of the question. In this question this article is of major importance. In the foregoing article we saw that in God, who is the most simple being, there can be no plurality except that of real relations mutually opposed. According to revelation, however, there are several persons in God. We must show, therefore, that a divine person can be constituted by a real divine relation. All the difficulties mentioned at the beginning of the article are reduced to this: person signifies something absolute and not relative. This becomes evident from the following considerations. 1. Person is predicated with reference to itself and not to another; 2. in God person is not really distinguished from the essence; 3. person is defined as an individual substance with a rational nature; 4. in men and angels person signifies something absolute and, if it signifies relation in God, it would be used equivocally of God and of men and angels.

Reply. The divine person signifies relation as subsisting. Boethius says," very name referring to persons signifies a relation." Thus Father signifies the relation to the Son, Son signifies the relation to the Father, and Holy Ghost signifies the relation to the Spirators. "By the relative names of the persons the Father is referred to the Son, the Son to the Father, and the Holy Ghost to both, for while we speak of the three persons relatively we believe in only one nature or substance... . For that which is the Father is not with reference to Himself but to the Son,... but, on the other hand, when we say God, this is said without reference to another." "In the relation of the persons we discern number... . In this number alone do the persons indicate that they are referred to each other." "In God all things are one and the same except where there is opposition of relation."

In the body of the article St. Thomas presents three opinions and then offers the most acceptable opinion.

1. The opinion of the Master of the Sentences: even in God the term “person” in the singular may be taken to mean something absolute, but in the plural it is taken to mean something relative, contrary to the teaching of the heretics, especially the Arians, who said that the three persons are subordinate substances. St. Thomas replied that if the term “person” even in God in the singular signifies something absolute, we are not sufficiently removed from the error of the Arians. By affirming the plurality of persons we might be multiplying something absolute.

2. The term “person” in God signifies essence directly and relation indirectly, because, as it is said, the person is said to be one per se. This, however, is false etymology. This opinion is corrected by the following.

3. The term “person” in God signifies relation directly and essence indirectly. This opinion, St. Thomas remarks, approaches more closely to the truth.

Then St. Thomas offers proof for his own opinion: the divine person signifies relation as subsisting.

Person in general signifies an individual (or distinct) substance with an intellectual nature, or a hypostasis distinct from others. But in God there are no real distinctions except according to the relations of origin, which are subsisting. Therefore in God person signifies a distinct relation as subsisting.

This is to say, in general there are two things in the person: the distinction by incommunicability (I, you, he) and subsistence in the intellectual nature. But these two things are not found in God except in the real relations mutually opposed and thus really distinct, whose esse in is substantial and entirely the same as subsisting being itself.

More briefly we may say that person in any nature means a subsisting being distinct from others. But in God there is no distinction except according to the real relations, which are subsisting. Therefore in God person signifies relation not as relation but as subsisting. In this way we preserve the analogy of person in God, namely, a subsisting being distinct from others. In another place St. Thomas says: “The signified relation is included indirectly in the meaning of divine person, which is nothing else than a subsisting being in the divine essence distinct by relation,” or a subsistence distinct by relation in the divine nature.

Difficulty. The person renders a nature incommunicable to another suppositum. But the subsisting relation of paternity does not render the divine nature incommunicable. Therefore this subsisting relation of paternity does not constitute a person.

Reply. I distinguish the major: an absolute person renders a finite nature incommunicable, I concede; a relative person renders a divine nature incommunicable, this I subdistinguish: as of itself, I concede; in other respects, I deny. Thus the divine nature as terminated by paternity is incommunicable and in God there is only one Father and the Father alone enunciates. In an equilateral triangle the first angle constructed renders the surface incommunicable as of itself only, but this surface is communicated to the other opposite angles.

This reply will appear less clear than the objection because the objection arises from our inferior mode of knowledge, whereas the reply is taken from the height of the ineffable mystery and therefore requires profound meditation and mature thought. It is not necessary for theology to show that all the objections made against the mysteries are evidently false; it is sufficient to show that they are not necessary and cogent, in the words of St. Thomas.

At the end of the body of the article several corollaries are presented.

First corollary. As the Deity is God, so the divine paternity is God the Father. In God there is nothing except the Deity for there are no individuating notes from matter, no accidents, nor a being distinct from essence. Hence God and Deity are the same and the Father and the paternity are the same. On the other hand, Socrates is not his humanity, which is only an essential part; the whole is not the part, but it is greater than its part.

It is not perfectly true to say that Michael is his own Michaelity because, although the Michaelity is individuated of itself and not by matter, yet there are in Michael accidents and being besides his essence.

Second corollary. In God person signifies relation directly as subsisting and essence indirectly.

Third corollary. Inasmuch as the divine essence is subsisting per se, it is signified directly by the term person, and relation as relation, not as subsisting, is signified indirectly.

Reply to the first objection. The term “person” even in God refers to Himself inasmuch as it signifies relation, not as relation, but as subsisting;

for example, the Father as subsisting refers to Himself although as a relation He refers to the Son.

Reply to the third objection. In our understanding of an individual substance, that is, a distinct and incommunicable substance, we understand a relation in God, as was said in the body of the article.

Reply to the fourth objection. In God the analogy of person is preserved, for it is something subsisting and distinct from others (a free and intelligent subject) which is proportionally predicated of the divine persons, angelic and human persons. But the three divine persons understand by the same essential intellection and they love by the same essential love.

First doubt. Are the divine persons constituted only by the subsisting relations opposed to each other or also by everything that belongs to them?

Against Praepositivus and Gregory of Rimini, the Thomists reply that the divine persons are constituted as persons by the fact that they are distinguished from each other. But they are distinguished from each other by nothing except the opposite subsisting relations, otherwise they would differ by essence and in essence. It has been defined, however, that they are the same in essence. Hence the Council of the Lateran declared: “The Most Holy Trinity is individual according to the common essence and separate according to the personal properties.” The Council of Florence says: “The divine persons differ by their properties.”

Confirmation. What is common to the three persons cannot constitute a special person distinct from the others. But all things that are absolute in God are common to the three persons.

Second doubt. Are the divine persons constituted by the active and passive origins, as St. Bonaventure thought, or according to the opinion attributed to him?

The reply is in the negative, for by its essential concept person denotes a fixed and permanent being since it is the ultimate terminus of nature, rendering it incommunicable and subsisting. But origin is essentially conceived as becoming; active origin is conceived as the influx and emanation from a principle, and passive origin is conceived as the path or tendency to a terminus. Active origin presupposes the person from which it issues, and passive generation is conceived as something supposed prior to the constitution of the person of the Son, according to our manner of thought.

Third doubt. Is the person of the Father constituted by innascibility, as Vasquez thought?

The reply is in the negative, because innascibility taken formally is merely the negation of a principle and thus cannot constitute the person of the Father, which, since it is real, must be constituted by something real and positive. If, however, innascibility is taken fundamentally, the basis implied is either something absolute, and then it cannot constitute a particular person, or it is something relative, and then it can be nothing else than the relation of paternity. Vasquez had proposed this opinion to solve the following difficulty.

THE SPECIAL DIFFICULTY IN THE LATIN'S CONCEPT

In this present article we can examine a particular difficulty arising from the concept of the Latin theologians. The problem is as follows: The relation which follows upon active generation cannot constitute the person who begets. But the relation of paternity follows upon active generation, for it is founded on it. Therefore this relation of paternity cannot constitute the person of the begetting Father. The person must first exist before it begets, because operation follows being.

This objection is somewhat clearer than the reply because the difficulty arises from our imperfect manner of thinking, whereas the reply must come from the heights of this ineffable mystery.

In examining this difficulty, St. Thomas says: "The special property of the Father, His paternity, can be considered in two ways. First, as it is a relation and as such according to our understanding it presupposes the notional act of generation because the relation as such is founded on the act. Secondly, as it constitutes the person, and as such it is understood as prior to the notional act just as a person in act is understood as prior to the action."

This is to say that the relation, of paternity for example, as a relation actually referring to its terminus does indeed presuppose active generation and is founded on it, just as the relation of filiation is founded on passive generation. But the active generation itself presupposes the begetting person and its personal property, that is, paternity, as it constitutes the person of the Father. There is here no contradiction because this relation of paternity is not considered under the same aspect, but first as a relation actively looking

toward the terminus and founded on active generation, and secondly as the proximate principle (principium quo) of active generation or as constituting the begetting person.

As in the equilateral triangle the first angle constructed, while it is alone, is itself a geometric figure, that is, an angle, but it does not yet refer to the other two angles not yet constructed.

In explaining St. Thomas' teaching, Thomists have offered two replies to this objection. Some Thomists reply by distinguishing the major: the relation of paternity, considered as referring to something, follows generation; but considered as in something, it precedes generation. But the difficulty remains since the esse in is something common to the divine relations and the three persons and therefore it cannot constitute a particular person as distinct from the others and as incommunicable. The esse in does not confer incommunicability; only the esse ad does this.

Other Thomists (Cajetan, John of St. Thomas, and Billuart) reply as follows to this important difficulty. Even with regard to the esse ad the relation of paternity as that by which the divine essence is modified in actu signato precedes the active generation, although it follows it with regard to the esse ad in the actual exercise (in actu exercito), that is, in the actual exercise of that respect after the manner of the actual tendency and attainment of the terminus. Hence these Thomists say that the relation of paternity, as that by which the divine essence is modified in actu signato, constitutes the person of the Father; and the relation of paternity as that which in the exercise of the act (in actu exercito) is founded on active generation supposes the person of the Father as already constituted. Thus the doctrine of St. Thomas is maintained: the persons are constituted by the relations as subsisting and not as relations. And thus the notional act of active generation has its origin in the person of the Father as subsisting and in the relation itself as really incommunicable.

I insist. Relative things are the same in nature and in knowledge. But the Father, as has been said, is understood before generation. Therefore the Son also is understood before generation, which is absurd.

Reply. I distinguish the major: relative things are the same in nature and knowledge in actu exercito, I concede; in actu signato, I deny. I contradistinguish the minor: the Father is understood before generation in actu signato as a subsisting person, I concede; in actu exercito with regard to the Son, this I deny.

In other words, the ad as such denotes the respect to another either by the opposition of the terminus or by the attainment of the terminus. In the relation of opposition itself we may consider either the opposition between two persons or the exercised relation of one to another; for example, I refer to you, but I am distinct from you. So the Father refers to the Son, but the Father is not the Son.

I insist. The first thing in the esse ad is to refer in act to the terminus rather than being a relative incommunicable entity. Therefore the difficulty remains.

Reply. I deny the antecedent. Just as the first thing is for whiteness to be constituted in itself as that by which something is made white before the wall is whitened (ut quod), for the form precedes its formal effect not by the priority of time but of causality.

I insist. The opposition in a relation arises from the reference, since it is the opposition of one relative thing to the correlative. Therefore the reference in act is prior to the opposition to the terminus. And the difficulty remains.

Reply. I distinguish the antecedent: the exercised opposition in the relation arises from the exercised reference (in actu exercito), I concede; the entitative opposition arises from the reference in actu exercito, this I deny. The entitative opposition arises in the actu signato. Similarly, whiteness in actu signato is opposed to blackness in actu signato, and whiteness as actually existing in a wall actively opposes blackness existing in another wall. In a word, the form precedes its formal effect not in time but by nature.

The following analogies illustrate this point. Sanctifying grace is thought of first as it is in itself before we think of it as driving out sin and making the soul pleasing to God. The rational soul is thought of first in itself as a nature before we think of it as conferring a specific being and life on the body. Similarly a relation first affects the subject as that by which (ut quo) and later it refers exercite to the terminus, for first a thing must be constituted in itself before it tends toward something else. We cannot conceive of it as attaining its terminus before it is in itself.

In human generation, in that indivisible instant in which the rational soul is created and united to the body, the ultimate disposition of the body in preparation for the soul precedes the creation of the soul in the genus of material or dispositive causality; but it follows the creation of the soul (as a

property of the soul) in the genus of formal, efficient, and final causality. For it is the rational soul itself which in this instant of time gives to the body not the penultimate but the ultimate disposition to itself; and this disposition is then a property of the soul. When this property of the soul in its body is destroyed by death, the soul is separated from the body. Here there is no contradiction because the ultimate disposition precedes and follows the form but not in the same genus of causality. Thus the causes are causes of one another but in different classes and thus there is no vicious circle.

In the same way the phantasm precedes the idea in the line of material causes, but the phantasm completely assumed to express sensibly an idea does not exist prior to the idea. When a man succeeds in discovering a new idea, in the same moment he often discovers the appropriate phantasm for the sensible expression of that idea.

So also the motion of sensibility precedes and follows volition under a twofold aspect. Again, at the end of a period of deliberation the final practical judgment precedes the free choice, which it influenced, but at the same time it is the free choice which made the practical judgment final by accepting it.

In the contract of marriage the consent of the man is expressed in a word, but that word has no effect unless it is accepted by the woman. After the woman accepts, the marriage is definitively ratified, but not before. Here the consent of the man precedes as consent and, although it is pronounced relatively to the woman, it does not actively affect the consent of the woman unless later the woman consents and expresses that consent. These analogies are to some extent explicative of the matter.

We return to St. Thomas, teaching. The divine person is constituted by the relation as subsisting and not as a relation. Thus the generation of the Son terminates in the person of the Son but not as that which is the object of the relation. For, as the philosophers say, movement or generation does not terminate per se and directly in a relation. In God, therefore, generation terminates in the person of the Son as subsisting, or in the relation of filiation as it is subsisting being, but not as a relation. Such was St. Thomas, distinction which without too much complication was able to solve this difficulty as much as it could be solved by men.

Fourth doubt. Whether in God, prior to the consideration of relations and persons, there is some absolute subsistence besides the three relative

subsistencies.

Theologians are not agreed. The Thomists commonly reply in the affirmative; many other theologians reply in the negative. Durandus taught that an absolute subsistence was sufficient without relative subsistences; but this is rejected by most theologians.

The common opinion of Thomists is that God, considered in Himself, prior to the persons and relations, is subsisting, that He is therefore not only the Deity but also God, subsisting being itself, and for that reason He is understood as having intellect, will, and the power to create ad extra. But God is not said to be subsisting with regard to Himself by a relative subsistence. Therefore He subsists by an absolute subsistence.

Confirmation. Subsistence implies the highest perfection, namely, the most perfect manner of being. But God, prior to our consideration of the persons, possesses every perfection because He is pure act, existing because of Himself. Therefore He derives no perfection from the relations, because if paternity would be a new perfection that perfection would be lacking in the Son and thus the Son would not be God.

Confirmation. Antecedently to the consideration of the persons, God possesses being or the existence of that which is. But such existence presupposes subsistence or that by which something is what it is. In other words, prior to the consideration of the persons God is that which is, indeed He is subsisting being itself. This seems to be the opinion of St. Thomas: “The divine nature exists having in itself subsistence apart from any consideration of the distinction of the persons.” On other occasions St. Thomas said, “In God there are many subsisting beings if we consider the relations, but only one subsisting being if we consider the essence.” This opinion seems to follow upon the concept of the Latins, who begin, not with the three persons, but with the divine nature.

First objection. If we place an absolute subsistence in God we have a quaternity.

Reply. This I deny because this absolute subsistence confers the perseity of independence from any other sustaining being but not the perseity of incommunicability. Thus there are not four persons. It is certain that, considered in Himself, God is singular, since He is not a universal. In Him, God and the Deity are one. From revelation it is certain that in itself the divine nature is communicable by the Father to the Son and to the Holy Ghost.

Second objection. According to the councils and the Fathers subsistence is the same as hypostasis. But no theologian admits the existence of an absolute hypostasis.

Reply. The councils and the Fathers did not deal with this scholastic question and, when they spoke of the divine persons, they did indeed say that subsistence is the same as the hypostasis but they did not intend to exclude the absolute subsistence of which we are now speaking.

Third objection. In order that the divine nature subsist independently and at the same time be incommunicable the personalities or relative subsistences are sufficient. For if in God there were one personality, this would be able to confer both kinds of perseity, of independence and incommunicability. Why cannot this perseity be conferred by three persons?

Reply. If in God there were one personality, this would be an absolute perfection and thus it would confer both the perseity of independence and incommunicability. This one personality would really be that absolute subsistence of which we are speaking and in addition it would confer incommunicability. But such is not the case because it has been revealed that in God there are three persons. Besides it would be incongruous that this most perfect manner of existence in God would depend on the relations which do not add any new perfection.

I insist. In rational creatures personality confers both the perseity of independence and incommunicability. Therefore it should all the more do so in God.

Reply. In rational creatures personality is an absolute subsistence, not relative as in God. In God perfections are derived only from the essence; incommunicability comes only from the relations.

Final objection. That which derives its existence from another does not exist in itself. But the divine nature, prior to the relations or persons, seeks its existence in them. Therefore it does not exist in itself.

Reply. I distinguish the major: that which seeks its existence in another because of its own indigence, I concede; that which seeks its existence in another because of its infinite fecundity, I deny. I contradistinguish the minor: the divine nature does not seek existence in the relations or persons because of any indigence, so that it can exist by itself. It is already able to exist by itself because it is subsisting being itself, but because of its infinite fecundity it seeks to exist in the persons as the precise terms of its existence and not as sustainers of its own being.

I insist. The divine nature cannot exist without the relations; therefore it is complemented by them because of its own indigence in existence.

Reply. I distinguish the antecedent: the divine nature cannot exist without the relations because it is supremely fecund, I concede; because it is deficient, I deny. It is itself subsisting being. In the same way omnipotence cannot exist without the possibility of creatures, not because of its own indigence but because of its fecundity. So also the Father enunciates the Word not because of any need but because of His fecundity.

Final doubt. Why is not the absolute subsistence, modified by the relations, sufficient without relative subsistences, as Durandus taught?

Reply. 1. Because the councils and the Fathers have often stated that each divine person has its proper subsistence. St. Thomas declared: “As we say that in God there are three persons and three subsistences, so the Greeks say there are three hypostases.”

2. According to the Catholic faith there are three persons in God. But a person is formally constituted by subsistence, which confers incommunicability. Therefore in God there are three relative subsistences.

3. Otherwise no basis would exist for incommunicability nor would the principle of active generation and active spiration be established.

Confirmation. If there were only one subsistence, modified by the three relations, we could not truly say that there are three persons in God, just as we could not say that there are three gods because there is one nature modified by the three relations. We would have to confess one person alone just as we confess one God. In order to multiply a substantive noun such as person we must also multiply the form, which is the personality. We return then to St. Thomas, statement that the divine persons are constituted by relative subsistences, as they are subsisting and opposed to each other. Thus we have three relative subsistences.

The Father is then the principle quod of active generation; the Son with the Father is the principle quod of active spiration. God, antecedent to any consideration of the persons, is the principle quod of the essential actions, which are common to the three persons, such as essential intellection and essential love as distinct from notional love (active spiration) and personal love (the Holy Spirit).

Confirmation. The humanity of Christ is united to the Word in His personal subsistence, which supplies the place of the created subsistence; otherwise the three divine persons would be incarnate.

From the foregoing we may be able better to solve a difficulty that often comes to mind. Personality renders a nature incommunicable to another suppositum; but paternity does not render the divine nature incommunicable to the Son, on the contrary it communicates it to the Son; therefore paternity cannot constitute the person of the Father, and, therefore, there cannot be three persons in God.

Reply. I distinguish the major: personality renders a nature incommunicable as personified, I concede; personality renders a nature incommunicable in itself, I subdistinguish: in created beings, where personality is absolute, I concede; in God, where personality is relative, I deny. Thus the person of the Father renders the divine nature incommunicable as personified (there is but one Father in God), but it does not render the divine nature incommunicable in itself. Indeed the Father, inasmuch as He implies the relation to the Son, communicates to the Son the divine nature and thus manifests the infinite fecundity of the divine nature.

We have sufficiently examined the questions about the processions of the divine persons (question 27), the divine relations (question 28), and the divine persons considered absolutely and in common (question 29). We now turn to the plurality of the persons, and after this lengthy explanation of the fundamental ideas we may now proceed more rapidly. We shall now study the corollaries that can be inferred from the foregoing and the correct terminology to be used in speaking of these truths. But we will not neglect to gather the precious gems of knowledge which can be found in the following articles.

RECAPITULATION OF QUESTION TWENTY-NINE

Article 1. A person is a free and intelligent subject or an individual substance with a rational nature.

Article 2. Person is the same as the <hypostasis> of an intellectual nature.

Article 3. Since person signifies that which is most perfect in all nature, namely, a subsistence with a rational or intellectual nature, it is proper that this term be used with reference to God analogically and in the most excellent manner. Thus in Sacred Scripture the Father and the Son, as is clear, are personal nouns and so also is the Holy Ghost, who is mentioned with them.

Article 4. The divine persons, distinct from one another, are constituted by the three divine subsisting relations opposed to one another, namely, paternity, filiation, and passive spiration.

The reason for this is that “there is no distinction in God except by the relations of origin opposed to one another.” Since these relations are not accidents but subsisting, we find in them two requisites for a person: subsistence and incommunicability, or distinction. Thus the three divine persons are three intelligent and free subjects, although they understand by the same essential intellection, love themselves necessarily by the same essential love, and freely love creatures by the same free act of love.

Therefore the paternity in God is personality, although it is relative, as are also filiation and passive spiration. The divine paternity on its part renders the divine nature incommunicable, although the divine nature is still communicable to the other two persons, just as the top angle of the triangle on its part renders its surface incommunicable, although this surface can still be communicated to the other two angles. And as God is His own deity, so the Father is His own paternity, the Son is His own filiation, and the Holy Ghost is His own (quasi-) passive spiration.

CHAPTER IV

QUESTION 30 THE PLURALITY OF THE DIVINE PERSONS

Articles one and two inquire whether there are several persons in God, and articles three and four inquire in what this plurality consists.

Article 1. In God there are several persons because there are several real subsisting relations opposed to one another. In the reply to the fourth difficulty, St. Thomas notes that each divine person is not a part nor is the divine reality the whole, because the Father is as great as the entire Trinity, as will become clear below, when St. Thomas explains: “All the relations are one according to essence and being, and all the relations are not greater than one alone; nor are all the persons greater than one alone since the entire (infinite) perfection of the divine nature is in each of the persons.”

Article 2. In God there are not more than three persons. This truth is revealed in the form of baptism and stated in the creeds. The theological explanation is that the divine persons are constituted by mutually opposed subsisting relations. But these three relations are three in number. One of the four relations, active spiration, is opposed neither to paternity nor to filiation. This active spiration, therefore, belongs to the Father and to the Son. Passive spiration, however, cannot be attributed to the Father and to the Son for then the procession of love would precede the procession of intellection. The reader is referred to the reply to the first difficulty in the text. It should be noted that the fact that no opposition exists between active spiration and filiation is an implicit affirmation of the Filioque.

Article 3. Whether anything is added to God by the numeral terms.

State of the question. Is there any positive significance when we say that God is wise, or any negative significance when we say that God is incorporeal? This is Cajetan’s interpretation of the sense of this title.

Reply. The numeral terms do not add anything positive to God since they express not a quantitative but a transcendental plurality, which is not properly speaking a number. The transcendental multitude refers to the many of which it is predicated in the same way that transcendental unity refers to transcendental being. Transcendental unity merely predicates the indivisibility of being without adding any accident. We say not only that the scholastic school of thought is one among many theological schools but that it is also perfectly one and united. So also the Summa Theologica is not only one among many works written by St. Thomas but it is a work that is perfectly one because of the intimate connection between its parts. We refer the reader to the text.

Thus, as was explained elsewhere, transcendental unity differs from the unity which is the principle of number, which is a kind of quantity. St. Thomas in concluding the body of the article says: “When we say that the divine persons are many, this signifies these persons and the indivisibility of each of them since it is of the nature of a multitude that it consist of unities.” In his reply to the third difficulty, he says: “Multitude does not do away with unity; it removes division from each of those entities which constitute the multitude.”

This may be better understood when we see it verified in several instances. The numerical multitude of individuals does not do away with the unity of the species; the transcendental multitude of species does not do away with the unity of genus; the transcendental multitude of genus does not do away with the analogical unity of being, nor does the multitude of accidents in a suppositum destroy its unity. Similarly the transcendental plurality of persons in God does not destroy the unity of God. But if it were a numerical plurality in God, the divine nature would be multiplied in the three individuals, and there would be three gods.

The unity of God is a unity pure and simple, whereas the specific unity of many men is only a qualified unity, that is, a unity according to the specific likeness of these men, who together are a pure and simple multitude. Wherefore the plurality of the divine persons in the bosom of the simple unity of the divine nature is best compared analogically with the plurality of accidents, such as, for example, the plurality of faculties in one suppositum that is simply one rather than with the plurality of individuals in the same species.

Corollary. Thus there is in God a simple unity and a qualified plurality. The unity is the unity of the divine nature; the transcendental plurality is the plurality of the opposing relations. In a nature numerically one and the same this plurality arises from the opposition of relations of origin. Therefore it cannot be said that there are three gods, but we must say there is one God. Again, as we shall see in the following article, we cannot say that God is threefold, but we say He is triune in order to safeguard the simple unity which is at the same time substantial together with the plurality that arises from the opposing relations. Thus we say that God is one in three persons.

Article 4. Whether the term “person” is common to the three divine persons. It seems that it is not, since nothing is common to the three persons except the divine essence.

Reply. The term “person” is a common noun according to reason because that which is a person is common to the three persons, namely, the subsisting relation opposed to other relations. It is not, however, common to the three persons by a community of the actual thing as is the divine essence, which is one whereas there are three persons. If something were common to the persons actually, there would be but one person as there is one nature.

Even when applied to men, the term “person” is common by a community of reason, not indeed as are genus and species but as an undetermined individual, as some man, that is something subsisting of itself and distinct from others. Analogically this notion is common to the three divine persons since each divine person subsists in the divine nature distinct from the others. The term “person, “ therefore, is common to the three divine persons by a community of reason but not actually, as St. Thomas explains in the reply to the third difficulty. It is common but not as genus is a common term, because the three divine persons have one being and are subsisting being itself, which is above all genus.

CHAPTER V

QUESTION 31 OF THE UNITY AND PLURALITY OF THE TRINITY

We are here concerned with the manner of speaking about the Trinity in the following four articles. 1. The name Trinity itself. 2. Whether we can say, the Father is other than the Son. 3. Whether we can say that God is alone or solitary. 4. Whether we can say that one person is alone, as for instance, “Thou alone art most high.” In the treatise on the Trinity this question corresponds to the thirteenth question in the treatise on the One God, on the names of God.

FIRST ARTICLE

WHETHER THERE IS A TRINITY IN GOD

The difficulty arises from the fact that everything that is triune is threefold, whereas God is not threefold since He possesses the greatest unity. Nevertheless the reply is in the affirmative as an article of faith. In the Athanasian Creed we read, “The Unity is to be worshiped in Trinity and the Trinity in Unity.”

Theology offers the following explanation. In God there is a transcendental plurality of persons. The term “Trinity” according to revelation limits this plurality to the three persons. Therefore the term Trinity can rightly be used.

Reply to the first objection. Etymologically the term “Trinity” seems to signify the unity of three, but in a special way it signifies the transcendental number of persons of one essence. Thus we cannot say that the Father is the Trinity. The term “Trinity” signifies at the same time the number of persons and the unity of the essence.

Reply to the second objection. St. John declared, “And these three are one” (I John 5:7). Hence we have the name “Trinity.”

Reply to the third objection. Nevertheless in God there is no triplicity because triplicity denotes a proportion of inequality as do duplicity and quadruplicity. Thus we cannot say that God is threefold. That which is threefold has in a sense been tripled, as, for instance, a triple crown signifies the union of three crowns.

If God were said to be threefold, the three persons together would be more than one alone, and one person would not have infinite perfection. But we can say that the persons are threefold and the processions are twofold, because by adding person and procession we exclude sufficiently the multiplicity of nature.

Reply to the fourth objection. Unity in Trinity signifies that there is one nature in three persons, and Trinity in unity signifies three persons in one nature.

Reply to the fifth objection. We cannot say that the Trinity is threefold for this would mean that there were three supposita of the Trinity, whereas there are only three supposita of the Deity.

First corollary. From the foregoing the Thomists, especially Gonet, conclude that those things that belong to the persons by reason of the essence alone are predicated only singly. Those things, however, that belong to the persons by reason of the persons alone are predicated only in the plural. Those things that belong to the persons by reason of the essence and the relations are predicated both in the singular and in the plural.

The reason for this rule is that in God all things are one and the same except where there is the opposition of relation; only the relations are multiplied in God, the essence is not. This was defined by the Council of Toledo: “Number is discovered in the relation of the persons; but we find nothing that is numbered in the substance of the divinity. Thus number is indicated only in this, that they are mutually related; and they lack number in this, that they are in themselves.”

From this rule it follows that it is correct to say that there are three persons or three hypostases in God but not three individuals because the nature is multiplied in individuals. In its formal signification person denotes personality; in its material signification it denotes nature. On the other hand, the individual in its formal signification denotes nature; in its material signification it denotes personality.

Thus we do not say that there are three individuals or three gods, because in the three persons God is numerically one. According to the Fourth Lateran Council, we may say that there are three divine beings, three co-eternal and omnipotent beings if these terms are used adjectively because the multiplication of the suppositum is sufficient for the multiplication of the adjective term without a multiplication of the form. Thus "three divine beings" signifies three that possess the Deity.

It is wrong, however, to say three divine beings if this expression is taken substantively. It is in this sense that the Athanasian Creed declares, "And yet they are not three eternals, but one Eternal," for the plural substantive requires the multiplication of both the form and the suppositum. We can say, "In God there is one thing (res)" which is the essence, and several relative realities inasmuch as the divine relations are something real and not fictitious. We can then predicate reality of God both in the singular and plural number according to the aforesaid rule because reality belongs to the persons both by reason of the essence and the relations.

Second corollary. As Cajetan declared: "In God according to actuality or in the real order there is one being, neither purely absolute nor purely relational, not mixed or composed or resulting from these two, but eminently and formally possessing both that which is relational (with several relational beings) and that which is absolute." This is generally admitted even by the Scotists.

Third corollary. In opposition to the Scotist formal-actual distinction on the part of the thing, Cajetan also declared: "Even in the formal order or the order of formal reasons in themselves, not in our manner of speaking, there is in God one formal reason, neither purely absolute nor purely relational, neither purely communicable nor purely incommunicable, but eminently and formally containing both whatever is of absolute perfection and whatever the relational Trinity demands." In God there is no distinction antecedent to our consideration except between the divine relations that are opposed to each other. Still the divine nature is actually communicated to the Son without a communication of paternity. So also with regard to the Holy Ghost the divine nature is communicated without a communication of paternity, filiation, or active spiration, as in the triangle the entire surface of the first angle is communicated to the second and third angles without a communication of the first angle. Paternity cannot be communicated to the

Son, because it is opposed to filiation, as spiration is also opposed to procession.

Fourth corollary. The unity of God is more clearly manifested after the revelation of the Trinity than before, because it now appears as that simple unity which exists notwithstanding the real distinction of the persons and which contains in itself eminently and formally whatever is absolute and relational. These are the lights and shadows in our view of the Trinity.

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER THE SON IS OTHER THAN THE FATHER

The difficulty arises from Christ's words, "I and the Father are one." The reply nevertheless is that the Son is other than the Father but not another being. This is an article of faith according to the Fourth Lateran Council: "That being (the divine nature) does not beget, nor is it begotten, nor does it proceed, but it is the Father who begets, the Son who is begotten, and the Holy Ghost who proceeds, because the distinctions are in the persons and the unity is in the nature. Although the Father is another, the Son another, and the Holy Ghost another, each is not another being but that which is the Father is the Son and the Holy Ghost, entirely the same, " that is, they are one according to nature and are consubstantial.

This statement of the Council was taken from the writings of St. Gregory Nazianzen. St. Fulgentius, quoted by St. Thomas in his argument sed contra, used the same language. In this way the words of our Lord are safeguarded: "I and the Father are one." The Son and the Father are one; the Son is not another being, although He is other than the Father because He was begotten by the Father.

In the body of the article St. Thomas explains this point by comparing the masculine pronoun, which signifies a person, with the neuter pronoun, which signifies the nature. The reader is referred to the reply to the fourth difficulty, "The neuter gender is unformed, and so conveniently signifies the common essence, whereas the masculine gender signifies a determined person." In the body of the article St. Thomas determines the vocabulary to be used in order to avoid the dangers of Arianism and Sabellianism. To avoid any confusion with Arianism, in speaking of the divine persons we do not use the terms diversity and difference but distinction, because diversity implies a distinction in genus and difference implies a distinction in species. Thus we do not say, the nature is divided into three persons, the person of

the Father is separated from the person of the Son, a disparity exists between the persons, nor that the Son is alien to the Father, because the Son is perfectly similar and united to the Father but distinct from Him.

To avoid Sabellianism, we do not say that God is unique, but one in three persons, nor do we say that God is singular or that He is solitary.

THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER WE CAN SAY THAT GOD IS ALONE

Reply. 1. We cannot say that God is alone if the word alone is taken categorematically or absolutely, inasmuch as the meaning of the word is attributed absolutely to the subject, in this case solitude or aloneness. This would be tantamount to saying that God is solitary and without any consort and would deny the society of the divine persons.

2. But if the word alone is taken syncategorematically, denoting only the order of the predicate to the subject, it would be correct to say that God alone is eternal, God alone is His own being, or to God alone belong honor and praise.

FOURTH ARTICLE: WHETHER WE CAN SAY THAT GOD THE FATHER IS ALONE

Reply. We cannot say that the Father is alone categorematically because the Father is not solitary; but syncategorematically we can say, for instance, that in God the Father alone enunciates or begets.

When the Church proclaims, “Thou only, O Jesus Christ, art most high,” she does not wish to say that the Son alone is most high but that the Son alone is most high with the Holy Ghost in the glory of the Father. When Jesus said that no one knows the Son except the Father, He did not wish to say that the Son and Holy Ghost do not know the Son, because the persons are not excluded unless there is relative opposition, as when we say, the Father alone begets.

In this brief examination of the correct mode of speaking about the Trinity, we see how amazing it is that human language with all its limitations and inadequacies is able to develop such precision in enunciating a mystery that is in itself ineffable.

CHAPTER VI

QUESTION 32 THE KNOWABILITY OF THE DIVINE PERSONS

At this point St. Thomas discusses the knowability of the divine persons because he considers their knowability a property of the divine persons that has a reference to us, just as in the treatise on the one God he treats of the knowability of God in the twelfth question. This question contains four articles:

1. Whether the divine persons can be known by natural reason; 2. Whether certain notions are to be attributed to the divine persons; 3. The number of these notions; 4. Whether we can entertain different opinions about the divine persons.

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER THE UNITY OF DIVINE PERSONS CAN BE KNOWN BY NATURAL REASON

St. Thomas takes up this problem after the first five questions. Recent theologians generally treat of it in the beginning of the treatise to support the validity of their investigations into the divine processions. The order adopted by St. Thomas is excellent in itself, although from our standpoint it is useful to consider the indemonstrability of this mystery at least briefly in the beginning. We will here consider the problem at some length.

State of the question. The question is well put by St. Thomas in the three difficulties proposed at the beginning of the article. 1. Many Platonic and Neoplatonic philosophers admitted a certain kind of Trinity with three hypostases, namely, the One, the Logos, and the world soul. 2. Richard of St. Victor tried to demonstrate the Trinity from the infinity of the divine goodness, which communicates itself infinitely in the procession of the three divine persons and from the fact that there can be no joyous

possession of any good without some consort or association in that enjoyment. In a similar way, St. Augustine proceeded to show the Trinity of persons from the procession of the word and of love in our human minds. 3. If the mystery of the Trinity had no relation to our reason, its revelation would seem to be superfluous.

We might add that Abelard tried to demonstrate the Trinity. St. Anselm frequently attempted to construct demonstrations to prove the Trinity and sometimes indulged in what were at least wordy extravagances. In recent times Guenther also wished to demonstrate this mystery, as did Rosmini, who brought down on himself the Church's condemnation. More recently Schell, in opposition to the rationalists and Unitarians, who said this mystery was openly opposed to reason, tried to prove the Trinity from the nexus between aseity and immanent processions.

The reply, however, is in the negative: the Trinity of the divine persons cannot be known by natural reason, that is, it cannot be understood or demonstrated. This statement does not depress but rather pleases the theologian.

The proof is from 1. Scripture; 2. the authority of the Fathers; 3. the definitions and declarations of the Church; 4. theological reasoning.

1. The authority of the Scriptures. From our Lord's words, "No one knoweth the Son, but the Father: neither doth anyone know the Father, but the Son, and he to whom it shall please the Son to reveal Him" (Matt. 11:27), it is clear that the Trinity of the divine persons is above created natural knowledge, even that of the angels. This is confirmed by our Lord's words to St. Peter, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona, because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but My Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 16:17). The second text, it is true, refers directly to the mystery of the Incarnation, but if the incarnation of the Son of God is above natural reason, the mystery of the Trinity is all the more above human reason. Hence Pope Hormisdas in writing to the Emperor Justin said: "No visible or invisible nature is able to investigate the secret of the Trinity."

2. The authority of the Fathers. In his argument sed contra St. Thomas quotes St. Hilary and St. Ambrose. He also adduces the authority of St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Fulgentius, and St. Jerome. He quotes St. Gregory of Nyssa's words, "No words can express the ineffable depth of this mystery."

3. The authority of the Vatican Council: "The mysteries hidden in God are proposed for our belief and if they had not been divinely revealed they

could not be known... . These divine mysteries by their very nature exceed the created intellect and even when they are handed down by revelation and received by faith remain covered with the veil of faith and wrapped up in obscurity for us as long as we are journeying in this life toward the Lord, for we walk not through the species of things but by faith." The same Council declared: "If anyone shall say that the divine revelation does not contain true and proper mysteries, but that all the dogmas of faith can be understood and demonstrated from natural principles by the efforts of reason, let him be anathema."

The Church did not in these words define that the mystery of the Trinity is a mystery properly so called, but it is commonly believed in the Church that the Trinity is supreme among all mysteries, since it is the mystery of God's intimate life, and if this mystery is not essentially supernatural, the other mysteries, of the incarnation of the Son of God, our redemption, the sending of the Holy Ghost, would not be essentially supernatural mysteries. Then these mysteries would not be indemonstrable except for their contingency, since the physical world was not created from eternity but in time, and they would not be indemonstrable by reason of their essential supernatural nature. However, the Council declared: "The divine mysteries are above the created intellect by their very nature to such a degree that even when they are handed down by revelation and received by faith" they cannot be demonstrated. This truth was affirmed against the semirationalists Guenther and Frohschammer.

Several declarations were made by the Church against Guenther. The following propositions by Rosmini were condemned by the Church: "After the mystery of the Trinity had been revealed, its existence can be proved by purely speculative arguments, although these arguments are negative and indirect, and these arguments can reduce this truth to the realm of philosophy so that it becomes a scientific proposition like others in philosophy. If this proposition were denied, the theosophic doctrine of pure reason would not only be incomplete but it would be destroyed because of consequent absurdities." Rosmini's teaching that there are "three supreme forms of being, namely, subjectivity, objectivity, and holiness and, when these forms are transferred to absolute being, they cannot be conceived as anything else than living and subsisting persons," was also condemned.

Guenther taught something like this when he defined personality as the consciousness of oneself. "Consciousness," he said, "presupposes the

duality of the subject and the object and the knowledge of their identity. The subject is the Father, the object is the Son or the Word, and their substantial identity is the Holy Ghost." Further he declared, "If in God there were but one person, God would not be conscious of Himself." This last statement is obviously false since God is subsisting intellect itself. Moreover, according to Guenther's theory, there should be not only three who are conscious of themselves but also three consciousnesses in order that there be three personalities, and then in God there would be three intellects. This would be tritheism, and something essential in God would be multiplied.

Because of these different authoritative statements it is clear that the Holy Trinity cannot be known naturally, even after its existence is known by revelation. It is also clear that the real possibility of this mystery cannot be positively demonstrated even after revelation. If once the possibility could be proved, the actual existence would also be proved because in necessary things existence follows possibility, and the Trinity is not contingent as are the Incarnation and the Redemption.

4. The theological proof. In God only that can be known naturally which is necessarily and evidently connected with creatures.

We can know nothing about God naturally except through created effects, as was shown above, and the natural principles which are known from a consideration of created being. But from these created effects, at least those that are natural, we cannot arrive at the knowledge of the Trinity because these effects proceed from the creative power or God's omnipotence, which is common to the entire Trinity and, like the divine intelligence and the divine will, pertains to the unity of the essence and not to the distinction of the persons. Therefore it is impossible to come to the knowledge of the Trinity by natural reason.

The major of this argument is philosophically and theologically certain. The minor is of faith according to the Fourth Lateran Council, which said that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are "co-omnipotent and co-eternal, one principle of all things." By philosophy and theology it can be shown that omnipotence pertains to the divine nature as it is one and not as it is threefold in the persons, since each person does not have its own proper and distinct omnipotence. Thus created effects do not per se proceed from God as triune but only concomitantly inasmuch as the creative power is one

and the same in the three persons. The reader is referred to St. Thomas' article, in which he clarifies this truth more than did his predecessors.

Objection. If created effects were known more perfectly, as they are known, for instance, by the angels, perhaps the Trinity could be known from them.

Reply. An effect, no matter how perfectly it is known, will not lead to the knowledge of the cause except under that aspect by which it proceeds from the cause and according to the dependence of the effect on the cause. Thus a painting makes known the painter, but it does not tell whether the painter was large or small, fat or lean. Created effects, at least natural effects, do not depend on God as triune but only as He is one.

Confirmation. In the body of the article St. Thomas adds two theological arguments. "Anyone who tries to prove the Trinity of persons by natural reason derogates from faith in two ways. 1. He derogates from faith because it is concerned with things that do not appear and are hidden in God... . 2. Such an attempt arouses the derision of non-believers since they are led to believe that we depend on human reasonings and believe because of them." The holy doctor concludes: "We should not try to prove the things that are of faith...; it is enough to make a defense by showing that what faith proclaims is not impossible." He says "make a defense," that is, by solving objections and offering reasons of convenience.

Reply to the first objection. The philosophers did not know a Trinity of persons, but the attributes which were later attributed to the persons. The Neoplatonists spoke of three subordinate hypostases which were not equal and which were quite different from the three equal divine persons. They spoke of 1. the one, which is also the supreme good (the god of Plato); 2. the first intelligence (the god of Aristotle); 3. and the world soul (the god of the Stoics).

Reply to the second objection. Concerning the Trinity, reason can offer non-demonstrative reasons, arguments of convenience. Thus from the infinite goodness of God we are persuaded by an argument of convenience to accept God's fecundity within Himself, but this is no proof. In the same way from the fact that our intellect produces a word we cannot prove that there is a word in God; in us the word is a result of need, in God the word is from superabundance.

Reply to the third objection. Nevertheless the revelation of the Trinity is not without relation to the truths of the natural order, which it confirms. The

Trinity confirms the freedom of creation, for if God made all things by His Word, He did not create by a necessity of nature or of knowledge; since He is already fecund within Himself He does not need to create in order to be fecund. The revelation of the Trinity was especially necessary for a correct understanding of the salvation of the human race, which is accomplished by the incarnate Son and by the gift of the Holy Ghost. These two mysteries presuppose the mystery of the Trinity.

First doubt. Whether after the revelation of this mystery it can be clearly demonstrated by reason alone. The reply is in the negative: 1. from the authority of the councils, according to which mysteries in the strict sense cannot be demonstrated even after they are revealed; 2. from theological reason because divine revelation does not indicate that creatures depend and proceed per se from God as triune

Second doubt. Whether the possibility of the mystery of the Trinity at least can be apodictically proved by reason after it has been revealed. The reply is in the negative: 1. because, as has been said, only that can be known naturally in God which necessarily is connected with creatures. But the possibility of the Trinity is no more clearly connected with creatures than its existence, because the creative power is common to the three persons. 2. Moreover, in necessary things existence follows from a real intrinsic possibility as, for instance, if it is true that God can be wise then He is indeed most wise. But the Trinity is not something contingent but necessary. Therefore, if by reason alone we can prove conclusively that the Trinity is intrinsically possible, we would also prove its existence. Such is the reasoning of many Thomists, among them Gonet and Billuart.

Objection. Whatever can be shown to involve no contradiction is proved to be possible. But by reason alone it can be shown that the Trinity involves no contradiction. Therefore it can be proved to be possible, for intrinsic possibility is simple non-repugnance to being.

Reply. I distinguish the major: if it can be shown positively and evidently to involve no contradiction, I concede; if only negatively and probably, I deny. Thus St. Thomas says: “Theology makes use of philosophy to counter those things which are said against the faith by showing either that these things are false or that they are not necessary.” This means, Billuart notes, when we solve the objections from reason and the contradictions which oppose the possibility of this mystery, we show that these arguments are at least not necessary or cogent. It suffices that this mystery be not judged to

be impossible, but not that it is evidently possible. We have shown that the possibility of this mystery cannot be disproved, nor can it be strictly proved because we have here a mystery in the strict sense, which has no necessary and evident connection with creatures that are naturally knowable. The reason given by St. Thomas in the body of the article is entirely formal. In order to understand the possibility of this mystery we must be able to see that if God were not triune He would not be God just as we see that if God were not omnipotent He would not be God. This truth is not manifest even in the extraordinary intellectual visions which are granted by means of infused species such as the angels possess; this truth cannot be seen except when the essence of God itself is seen, and God's essence cannot be known as it is in itself by any created species.

I insist. No middle exists between the possible and the impossible. But the rationalists cannot prove that this mystery is impossible. Therefore the theologians can prove that it is possible.

Reply. I deny the consequence. Although no middle exists between the possible and impossible, a middle does exist between the demonstration of possibility and the demonstration of impossibility, for the possibility of the Trinity is plausible although it cannot be proved. So it is with all mysteries that transcend demonstration; they are not contrary to reason, they are above it. Their possibility cannot be positively proved or disproved; it is only plausible. Such is the possibility of the Incarnation, of eternal life, of the beatific vision, of the light of glory, and the possibility of grace, which is the seed of glory.

I insist. In the treatise on the Trinity it is at least shown that the Trinity implies no contradiction. Therefore it is possible.

Reply. I distinguish the antecedent: that we see clearly that the Trinity implies no contradiction, this I deny; that it appears plausible, this I concede. We say, for instance, that in God to be begotten is not less perfect than to beget, that to be spirated is not less perfect than to spirate, but this is not evident. We cannot prove conclusively that passive generation imputes no imperfection in the Son of God; we only indicate it with some probability while it is revealed elsewhere.

I insist. God as one is no less supernatural than as triune. But God as one can be naturally known. Therefore He can be known naturally also as triune.

Reply. I distinguish the major: God as one is no less supernatural in being as He is in Himself, I concede; as a knowable object with regard to creatures, I deny. I distinguish the minor: God is known in this way by creatures, I concede; otherwise, I deny.

Third doubt. Whether reason by itself alone can find analogies to make known the divine processions. For example, if the Son of God had not been called the Word of God in St. John's Gospel, would St. Augustine have been able to discover the analogy of our mental word with the Word of God?

We reply with St. Thomas.

1. St. Augustine would not have been able, before the revelation of the Trinity, to propose this analogy in such a way that it would have led him to certitude about the existence of the Trinity.

2. But after the Trinity was revealed he would have been able to propose the analogy as probable. Indeed, it is more than probable that the analogy was not discovered by St. Augustine, but that it is to some extent revealed in the prologue of St. John's Gospel.

Explanation. In his reply to the second difficulty, St. Thomas says concerning the arguments of fitness given by St. Augustine and Richard of St. Victor: "Once the Trinity has been established, these arguments show its congruity but not in such a way that they would be able to prove the Trinity of persons... . So, in astronomy, in order to explain the movement of the planets, a system of eccentrics and epicycles is adopted in order to explain the sensible appearances of heavenly movements, but these theories are not sufficient to prove anything, because these appearances could be proved by some other theory."

St. Thomas adds that this is clear in these individual instances.

1. With regard to the divine goodness being diffusive of itself. It is proposed as an argument of fitness that good is essentially diffusive of itself and the higher the good the more intimately and abundantly is it diffusive. Hence it is congruous that God the Father should beget the Son and with Him spirate the Holy Ghost in the unity of nature. But this is only an argument of congruity, for, as the Angelic Doctor says: "It is not necessary, if God is to communicate Himself in His infinite goodness, that some infinite being should proceed from God, but that some being should receive the divine goodness according to its own mode of being." Thus it was that God created from nothing finite beings because of His infinite goodness. By

this argument it cannot be demonstrated that God is infinitely fecund within Himself by that certain diffusion of goodness which exceeds the order of efficient and final causality and takes place by the communication of the divine nature itself to two uncreated persons.

2. Richard of St. Victor declared that there can be no joyous possession of any good without friendship or association, and from this argument of fitness he showed that there should be in God some association between distinct persons. This argument is not demonstrative because the alleged principle applies when perfect goodness is not found in one person and therefore this person requires the good of another person associated with itself in order to enjoy goodness fully. But God is essentially goodness itself and He possesses it fully and thus He differs entirely from a created person who needs the association of friends. If there is any association in God, it exists not because of a need but because of superabundance. Thus this argument is only an argument of congruity and not demonstrative.

3. Nor from the fact that our intellect enunciates a mental word does it follow necessarily that the Word is in God. Intellect is not found in God and in us univocally, and we have seen above that God, who is subsisting intelligence itself, does not need an accidental word for intellection. Hence, if the Word is in God, it is not accidental but substantial; moreover the Word is not because of need but because of superabundance, and this can be known only by revelation.

Hence, according to St. Thomas, reason of itself alone did not discover these congruities, but after revelation it could propose such arguments. This mystery is properly speaking essentially supernatural, transcending the spheres of demonstration and demonstrability. In this essentially supernatural order we cannot penetrate farther than to those things that are formally or virtually revealed; beyond that we are in the realm of probability.

Fourth doubt. Whether, after revelation, these arguments of congruity can explain with some probability the divine processions as they are in themselves, or are they only convenient and useful representations without any foundation in the divine reality.

Reply. Perhaps many would reply by taking the stand that many modern critics take with regard to physical science: that these theories do not intend to explain how things are in reality, that they are only convenient representations useful in classifying known phenomena which are subject to

change when other phenomena are discovered, as, for instance, in the case of radioactivity.

Following St. Thomas, we reply that these arguments of congruity with respect to the Trinity are not only convenient representations, but they explain reality with some probability, or rather they explain what is not in God. Such explanations are the more valid the more they are based on revelation. Indeed it appears that the formal mode of the first procession by intellectual diction, if not formally revealed by the fact that the Son of God is called the Word, is at least certain as a virtually revealed theological conclusion. But many of the other conclusions remain only probable.

Fifth doubt. Whether these arguments of congruity about the Trinity are simply superior or inferior to the demonstrations given in the treatise on the one God.

Reply. With regard to us, that is with regard to the mode and certitude of our knowledge, they are inferior; but in themselves they are superior with regard to the dignity of the object, because they are not beneath but above the sphere of demonstrability, and in the essentially supernatural order we cannot ascend higher than those things that are either formally or virtually revealed except in the sphere of probability.

Hence it is that semirationalists, like Guenther and Rosmini, who wish to transform these arguments of congruity into demonstrations really weaken rather than elevate them. This is clear from Rosmini's condemned proposition: "By these arguments the truth of the Trinity is brought within the scope of philosophy."

Against this view St. Thomas remarks: "It is useful for the human mind to exercise itself in arguments of this kind, however weak they may be, as long as there is no presumption of comprehending or understanding, because it is a great satisfaction to behold these sublime matters even if our consideration is slight and weak."

Thus our natural and inefficacious desire of seeing God in His essence is not a demonstration but it forcefully insinuates the possibility and congruity of eternal life, of the beatific vision, of the light of glory, and of inchoate and consummated grace. This possibility cannot be demonstrated because it is the possibility of something that is essentially supernatural, of a mystery in the strict sense, which transcends reason and demonstrability.

These arguments of congruity are related to evidence and certitude in the same way that a polygon is related to the circumference of a circle. The

sides of the polygon can be multiplied to infinity, but the polygon will never be identified with the circumference because it will never be as small as a point. In geometry we say that the polygon will be the circumference at the limit of multiplication, but multiplication is indefinite. Great theologians and the angels, by their natural cognition, can penetrate deeper and deeper into the arguments of congruity about the Trinity and never attain to evidence, because the evidence which-is beyond the limit of this progressive penetration is not the natural evidence of demonstration but the supernatural evidence of the beatific vision. These arguments are like the element of cogitation in faith, if we define the act of faith as, “No believe is to think with assent.” Such thinking in this life never reaches evidence; only in heaven, where faith ceases because it cannot exist alongside vision.

RECAPITULATION OF THE SOLUTION OF THE PRINCIPAL OBJECTIONS AGAINST THE TRINITY

According to the rationalists the dogma of the Trinity is a violation of the principles of contradiction and causality.

The first objection often proposed by the rationalists is the following. Those things which are the same as a third are identical. This is a form of the principle of contradiction or identity and is called the principle of comparative identity, on which the validity of the demonstrative syllogism is based. But the three persons are identified with the divine essence (since each one is God). Therefore the three persons cannot be really distinct from one another.

Reply. I distinguish the major: those things which are the same as a third in fact and in reason are identical, I concede; which are the same as a third in fact but not in reason, I deny. I contradistinguish the minor: but the three persons are the same as the divine essence in fact and in reason, I deny; the three persons are the same in fact but not in reason, I concede. I deny the consequent and the consequence.

I insist. Those things which are the same as a third in fact but not in reason are then identical in fact but not in reason. Thus the persons are distinct from each other only in reason but not in reality.

Reply. I distinguish the major: those things which are the same as a third in fact but not in reason are identical in fact but not in reason if they are no more opposed to each other than to the same third, I concede; otherwise, I

deny. They are indeed opposed to each other by relative opposition. Just as the three angles of the triangle, although they have the same triangular surface, with which they are identified, nevertheless are really distinguished from each other because between them there is opposition of relation.

I insist. But it seems to be repugnant that the same thing (the essence) should in reality be identical with relations that are distinct from each other and opposed to each other.

Reply. An evident contradiction would exist if the extremes which are opposed to each other were absolutes, because each of the extremes would in itself imply an absolute reality which would be lacking in its opposite. But the contradiction does not appear when the extremes, as in God, are relative. We have seen that the divine persons are constituted by subsisting relations that are opposed to one another; but these relations have one esse in and are opposed only with regard to their real esse ad.

This reply is based on the application of that principle, admitted by the Greeks and the Latins, which illuminates this entire tract, namely, in God all things are one and the same except where there is opposition of relation. Indeed those things that are the same as a third are identical if they are no more opposed to each other than to the third, I concede; otherwise, I deny. I contradistinguish the minor, as follows: but the three persons are the same as the essence and besides this they are opposed to each other by the opposition of relation, this I concede; otherwise, I deny. Therefore I deny the consequent and the consequence.

As in the natural order, “While transitive action is the same as motion and the reception of motion (passio), it does not follow that motion and its reception (actio and passio) are the same, “ because they are mutually opposed by the opposition of relation, for transitive action, at least terminatively taken, is motion as from the mover, whereas passio (the reception of motion) is motion as in the one moved. In the words of St. Thomas,” assio and actio imply opposite references.” Similarly, paternity and filiation, although they are in reality the same as the divine essence, “My their proper natures imply opposite references.”

A second objection frequently made is the following. The dogma of the Trinity is a violation of the principle of efficient causality, according to which nothing produces its own being. But in this dogma the person who produces, the Father, and the person produced, the Son, have the same divine essence. Otherwise the Son would not be God.

To put it more briefly: Nothing produces its own being. But the Father in begetting the Son would be producing His own being since it is the same as that of the Son. Therefore the Father cannot beget the Son. This objection is made by many rationalists, by the Unitarians and the Socinians.

Reply. I concede the major. I distinguish the minor: if the divine being were caused in the Son, I concede; if it is communicated to the Son, I deny. The conclusion is distinguished in the same way. Thus begetting in God is not a change from non-being to being, but implies the origin of one living being from a living principle conjoined to it. This principle is not a cause. Aristotle pointed out that a principle is more general than a cause. Thus the point is the principle of the line, but not its cause; the aurora is the principle of the day, but not its cause. So in God the principle does not signify priority, but origin, and the Father does not produce His own being; He communicates it only.

The term “communicate” transcends efficient and final causality. Thus in God to beget is not more perfect than to be begotten because in God begetting is not causing. That which is caused does not exist before in act, whereas that which is communicated exists before in act. For example, the first angle of the triangle communicates its surface, already existing in act, to the other two angles.

The third objection (by way of insistence) states that this dogma distorts the notion of person. For personality renders a nature incommunicable to another suppositum. But the nature which is in the person of the Father is communicated to the Son and to the Holy Ghost. Therefore this dogma distorts the very idea of personality.

Reply. I distinguish the major: absolute personality renders the nature incommunicable, I concede; relative personality renders the divine nature incommunicable, I subdistinguish: nature in itself, I deny; nature as personified, I concede. I contradistinguish the minor: the nature which is in the Father is communicated as nature in itself, I concede; as personified, namely, the divine nature in the mode of the Father, I deny. Thus there cannot be two Fathers or two Sons in the Trinity. Similarly in an equilateral triangle the first angle constructed renders the area of the triangle incommunicable inasmuch as it belongs to that first angle; nevertheless this same area remains communicable and is communicated to the other two angles.

I insist. But the person renders incommunicable a nature that is numerically the same even considered in itself. But this would not be true in God. Therefore.

Reply. A person absolutely renders a finite nature incommunicable which, since it is finite, is filled by the one personality. On the other hand, a relative personality, for example, the person of the Father, does not render an infinite nature incommunicable to other persons. The divine nature, being infinite and infinitely fecund, is not adequately filled by one relative personality; or, I say please prove the contrary. Personality in God differs from human personality inasmuch as it is not something absolute but something relative, and it is of the nature of relative things that they have a correlative. The Father cannot be without the Son, to whom He communicates His nature, not by causality but by the principle of origin.

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER THERE ARE NOTIONS IN GOD

In this article St. Thomas explains in opposition to Praepositivus of Cremona that it is necessary to express the relations in the abstract, and that the relations in the abstract are called personal properties or notions. Thus paternity is said to be a notion or the objective reason denoting the person of the Father, and filiation likewise is the notion or the proper reason denoting the person of the Son, and similarly procession is the notion denoting the third person.

The reason for having recourse to the abstract notions of paternity, filiation, etc., is that our intellect apprehends God not as He is in Himself as a most simple being, but in the mirror of sensible things, that is, according to our method of knowing sensible things. The simple forms of sensible things are signified by abstract terms, for example, animality, humanity, whereas the suppositum is signified by concrete terms, such as this animal, and this man.

As St. Thomas says, because of their simplicity we designate divine things by abstract terms, and by concrete terms because of their subsistence. Thus we speak of God and, the Deity, of wisdom and a wise man, of paternity and the Father. But we add that God is His own Deity and the Father is His own paternity. Otherwise we would not be able to reply to the heretics who ask how the three persons are one God and how they are three. For the person of the Father there is a special reason since the person of the

Father is actively referred to the two other persons by the two relations of paternity and active spiration. These two relations cannot be reduced to one, otherwise filiation and passive spiration would be identified and thus there would be only two persons. Thus we must admit two notions for the Father, namely, paternity and active spiration, and the latter is common to Him and to the Son.

THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER THERE ARE FIVE NOTIONS IN GOD

This article justifies the accepted mode of speaking of the Trinity. The reply is in the affirmative: five notions are commonly given, namely, innascibility, paternity, filiation, common (active) spiration, and procession.

Such is the general usage of theologians, but Scotus added a sixth, the infecundity of the Holy Ghost. This notion is not acceptable because it does not pertain to the dignity of the Third Person.

In the body of the article St. Thomas shows why there are no more and no less than five notions. A notion is that which is the proper reason for knowing a divine person. But the divine persons are multiplied according to their origin (both active and passive). Therefore according to origin (active and passive) we derive the notions denoting the persons. Thus we have paternity, filiation, common active spiration, passive spiration, to which we add innascibility, because the person of the Father is known not only by paternity but also by the fact that He is from no one and that He is the principle without a principle. This notion is in conformity with the dignity of the Father, but the infecundity of the Holy Ghost is not an expression befitting the dignity of the Third Person.

First corollary. Of these five notions only four are relations, since innascibility is not a relation but the negation of the relation of origin in the Father.

Second corollary. Only four of the notions are properties since common spiration belonging to two persons is not a property.

Third corollary. Of these five notions only three are personal notions, that is, notions constituting persons, since common spiration and innascibility are not personal. As we shall see below, innascibility does not properly constitute the First Person. We shall also see that there are two notional acts, that is, the processions in their active sense, namely, generation and active spiration.

Objection. Innascibility seems to be pure negation and is therefore not a distinct notion because negation adds nothing to the dignity of the person.

Reply. Innascibility signifies that the Father is the principle without principle, and this is a great dignity. On the other hand, infecundity does not pertain to the dignity of the Third Person.

FOURTH ARTICLE: WHETHER WE MAY HAVE CONTRARY OPINIONS ABOUT THE NOTIONS

This article was written because the Greeks held other opinions about common spiration when they denied the Filioque.

St. Thomas replies that it is lawful to have other opinions about the divine notions provided that no conclusions are reached contrary to the faith proposed by the Church. With regard to the Filioque, we shall learn the doctrine of the Church when we treat in particular of the Holy Ghost as He proceeds from the Father and the Son. This doctrine was defined as early as 381 in the First Council of Constantinople. This concludes the questions concerning the divine persons in common.

RECAPITULATION OF QUESTION 32

In the first question on the Trinity St. Thomas began with the unity of the divine nature and the revealed existence of the processions. He showed that the processions were immanent or ad intra and he explained them according to St. Augustine by analogy with the intellectual enunciation of the word and with love. Thus the processions were seen to be after the manner of intellection and of love. This is based on revelation since it is clear from the prologue of St. John’s Gospel that the Son of God proceeds as the intellectual word of the Father.

In the second question he showed how these real processions, namely, generation and spiration, are the bases of real relations according to which the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are denominated in Sacred Scripture. These real relations are not really distinguished from the essence, but they are really distinct from one another if relative opposition exists between them. For it is not repugnant that the relations be mutually opposed; they are indeed not opposed to each other in their esse in (for in this they are identified with the essence) but according to their esse ad,

which does not properly inhere in the essence. If, on the contrary, that which is proper to a relation inhered in the subject, as the property of quality, the opposition of relation could not exist between the relations unless at the same time there should be opposition in the divine essence itself. We saw also how St. Thomas solved the objection based on the principle that those things which are the same as a third are identical, whereas Suarez held that the principle of identity does not apply to the Trinity.

In question 29 St. Thomas showed that the divine persons are formally constituted by subsisting relations opposed to one another. Thus he safeguards the analogical notion of person as something subsisting and incommunicable. Hence the divine essence is communicable but the paternity is not.

Then St. Thomas treats of plurality in God, the proper manner of expressing this plurality, and the knowability of this mystery.

St. Thomas thus begins with the unity of the divine nature and the two processions as they are revealed and proceeds to the three divine persons mentioned in revelation. Thus without detracting from the sublimity of this mystery he explains it to some extent by showing that, even after the unity of the divine nature is established, the Trinity of persons is not repugnant. The possibility of the Trinity is not properly and positively demonstrated, but congruent reasons are given to show that the divine nature ought to be fecund, even infinitely, after the manner of intellectual generation and the spiration of love. In this way St. Thomas retained what earlier theologians, like Alexander of Hales and St. Bonaventure, had taught: that the good is diffusive of itself, and that it seems that the higher the good the more intimately it will be diffusive of itself. St. Thomas expressed this idea in his own words: “the higher any nature is, the more intimate with it will be that which proceeds from it.”

But, as has been said, with respect to creatures the good is diffusive of itself primarily in the order of final causality and consequently in the order of efficient causality, since everything that acts does so because of some end. The divine processions, however, are above the order of causality, both final and efficient. The Father is not the cause of the Son; He is only the principle. The same is true of the Father and the Son with regard to the Holy Ghost. Hence St. Thomas makes little use of the formula, “Good is diffusive of itself,” in this treatise on the Trinity; and in order to express the

fecundity of the divine nature he prefers the statement, “My how much higher a nature is so much more intimate will be that which proceeds from that nature,” and “By how much greater the understanding so much more intimate will be the intellectual concept with the intellect... . Hence, since the divine intellect is at the apex of perfection, we must say that the divine Word is perfectly one with Him from whom it proceeds without any diversity of nature.”

The divine Word is not something accidental; it is substantial because intellection in God is not an accident but something subsisting. The first procession, then, is not the conception of an accidental word but the true generation of the substantial Word. Thus to some degree the mystery is explained notwithstanding its supernatural sublimity. We now turn to the divine persons in particular.

CHAPTER VII

QUESTION 33 THE DIVINE PERSONS IN PARTICULAR—THE PERSON OF THE FATHER

In this question four things are explained in particular

1. in what I sense the Father is a principle, 2. when the Father is so called personally, 3. when He is so called essentially, 4. the nature of innascibility. These questions explain the Trinity in a more concrete manner and in them we find an admirable application of the principles which were abstractly enunciated in the preceding questions.

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER THE FATHER IS A PRINCIPLE

State of the question. The difficulty arises because the Father is not the cause of the Son and therefore it seems that He cannot be the principle of the Son. It would also follow that the Son proceeded from a principle and would therefore be created, or at least that there were priority and posteriority in God. That which is later depends on that which is earlier, and dependence implies imperfection, which cannot exist in a divine person.

Reply. Nevertheless the Father is a principle. This is of faith since the Father is defined by the Council of Florence as “the principle without principle.” In many earlier councils, especially in the Sixth Council of Toledo, the same doctrine was defined: “We confess the unbegotten and uncreated Father, the font and origin of the entire Trinity, with whom there is not only paternity but also the principle of paternity.” St. Augustine says: “The Father is the principle of the entire Deity.”

St. Thomas explains the meaning of the word “principle” in the body of the article and in the reply to the first objection. A principle is nothing other than that from which something proceeds. For example, a line proceeds from the initial point, a series of numbers proceeds from unity, the light of

day proceeds from the aurora. But the Father is He from whom the Son and the Holy Ghost proceed in God. Therefore the Father is a principle and this not in a metaphorical but the proper sense. This is a simple explanation of the meaning of “principle.”

Reply to the first objection. This will be made clearer by contrast with the meaning of cause, for as Aristotle himself remarks, “The meaning of principle is more general than cause.” Thus we say that the point is the principle of the line and not its cause. For the term “cause” (especially an extrinsic cause) seems to imply the diversity of substance and dependence of one on another, but this is not implied in the term “principle.” Hence, although the Greeks in speaking of God used the two terms ‘arche’ and ‘aitia’ the Latin doctors never use the word “cause,” restricting themselves to the term “principle.” The reader is referred to the reply to the first objection.

Reply to the second objection. The Latins do not even use the expression “principle” of the Son and the Holy Ghost because this implies a certain subordination. The Son is said to be the principle from a principle, light from light, and the Holy Ghost is similar in His own way. The beautiful text of St. Hilary is quoted here: “The Son is not less because the one being is given to Him.” The Father and the Son both possess subsisting being itself, yet the Father communicates this being to the Son. Analogically, two brothers possessing something in common communicate to each other certain gifts.

Reply to the third objection. Here the objection that principle is derived from priority is solved. But in God there is no priority and no posteriority. I distinguish the major: principle is derived from priority according to the use of the word, let it pass; according to its formal significance, I deny; for principle does not denote priority but origin. In God, however, there is the relation of origin without priority. Certainly there is no priority of time because the processions are eternal; nor is there priority of nature because the divine nature is numerically the same in the Father and the Son and the relation of paternity is not conceived without the opposing relation of filiation. Relative things are simultaneous in nature and in the intellect since one is in the definition of the other. The Father is not constituted by something absolute, as is the man who begets before he begets. In God, the Father does not become the Father, but of Himself and from all eternity He is the Father and He is formally so constituted by the subsisting relation of

paternity, whose correlative is filiation, by which the Son is constituted. So it is with the three angles of an equilateral triangle.

In question 42, speaking of the equality of the divine persons, St. Thomas says: “(In God) dignity is absolute and pertains to the essence. As the same essence which is paternity in the Father is also filiation in the Son, so the same dignity which is paternity in the Father is filiation in the Son. But in the Father this dignity is according to the relation of the giver; in the Son it is according to the relation of the receiver.” But to receive subsisting and infinite being in itself is not something less perfect than giving it. In the equilateral triangle the second angle constructed is not less perfect than the first, and for the second angle to receive the total area is not less perfect than for the first angle to communicate it. Hence the term principle notionally belongs to the Father. The term principle, however, is also used essentially with respect to creatures, and in this case it is common to the three persons.

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER THE NAME FATHER IS PROPERLY THE NAME OF A DIVINE PERSON

This is to say, whether the name “Father” is used not metaphorically but properly of the First Person and not of the others. The reply is in the affirmative for so the name is used in the Gospels, for example, in the formula for baptism, in the creeds, and by the councils.

This can be explained easily as follows. The proper name of any person signifies that by which that person is distinguished from others. But that by which the person of the Father is distinguished from the other persons is paternity.

Reply to the first objection. “Father” is indeed the name of a relation, but in God since relation is subsisting it can be the constitutive of a person.

Reply to the third objection. The divine Word is not metaphorically called the Son, because He is the mental concept, not accidental but substantial. Therefore the Father is so called not metaphorically but properly.

Reply to the fourth objection. The name “paternity” as it is used in its proper sense of God the Father has a prior significance than when it is used as designating an earthly father, at least with regard to the thing signified if not with regard to the manner of signification. For divine generation is the

most perfect of all because it generates not only that which is similar in species but a Son whose nature is numerically the same as the nature of the Father. The earthly father, moreover, in generation does not produce the spiritual soul of his son, but only a disposition for it, nor does he produce a son in adult age. God, on the other hand, communicates to His Son His infinite nature, numerically the same as His own, so that His Son is immediately and eternally as perfect as the Father.

More and more it appears that the first procession is truly and properly generation, a generation that is spiritual in the full meaning of that word. It is not only conception, as when we say we conceive a mental concept; conception is only the initial stage of generation.

In God, the Father not only spiritually conceives His Son; He truly and properly generates Him spiritually, that is, He communicates to Him His nature in its entirety and numerically one with His own nature, which nature cannot be multiplied or divided. The Father communicates His nature to the Son from all eternity so that the only-begotten Son is from all eternity most perfect, an adult, if I may say so, in His divine age and entirely equal to the Father. From the height of his mystery light falls on the words of St. Paul to the Ephesians (3:15): “I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom all paternity in heaven and earth is named.” For from the divine paternity is derived that spiritual paternity by which the Supreme Pontiff is the Father of the Christian people, by which the founder of a religious order is the father of his sons, by which the bishop is the father of his diocese, and by which the priest is the father of the souls committed to his care. From this divine paternity, too, is derived that earthly paternity, which is something noble and excellent in the good Christian father, who like a patriarch gives his sons and daughters not only corporal life but heavenly blessings as did Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER IN GOD THE NAME FATHER IS PRIMARILY USED WITH A PERSONAL SIGNIFICANCE

State of the question. In God the word “Father” has a twofold significance: first it is used essentially with reference to creatures, as when we say in the Lord’s Prayer,” ur Father”; secondly it is used personally with reference to the only-begotten Son.

Reply. St. Thomas says: “In God the name ‘Father’ is used primarily in its personal meaning, rather than essentially.”

The name “Father” in God refers primarily to the person because: 1. it is used personally from all eternity and necessarily with relation to the only-begotten Son, and essentially with relation to creatures only in time, presupposing the free divine decree, which could not have been; 2. the perfect example of paternity and filiation is found in God the Father and God the Son, whose nature is numerically one. On the other hand, God is called essentially the Father of intellectual creatures, not according to the communication of His entire nature but according to the participation of the divine nature, that is, in the likeness of grace and glory. Thus adoptive filiation is the image of eternal filiation by nature, and this adoptive filiation is obviously much more imperfect. In a still less perfect manner God is called the father of irrational creatures, in which instead of His image only a mere trace is found.

Reply to the first objection. Common absolute terms are predicated prior to personal terms. But common terms which relate to creatures, like creator, are predicated after the personal names because they are predicated not from eternity but in time. In other words, the Son proceeds from the Father before creatures.

Hence, when we say in the Lord’s Prayer, “Our Father,” “Father” is predicated essentially of the three persons; so also “Thy kingdom come” refers not to the First Person but to the three persons. But in St. Paul’s words to the Ephesians (3:15), “I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom all paternity in heaven and earth is named, “ and in Christ’s words, “My Father,” the name “Father” refers personally to the Father, and therefore Christ made the distinction, saying, “I ascend to My Father and to your Father” (John 20:17).

FOURTH ARTICLE: WHETHER TO BE UNBEGOTTEN IS PROPER TO THE FATHER

The reply is in the affirmative: innascibility is a property of the Father since the Father is the principle without principle. Thus He is known by the fact that He is not from another. Of the Father it is generally said that “He was not made, nor created, nor begotten, nor proceeding.” He is the principle without principle.

Reply to the first objection. Primary and simple things are denoted by negations, as when we say that a point is that which has no parts.

Reply to the second objection. In another way the Holy Ghost may be said to be unbegotten since He does not proceed by generation. But the Father is properly said to be unbegotten because He does not proceed from any other and is the principle without principle whereas the Son is the principle from a principle and the Holy Ghost is the principle from both persons.

Reply to the third objection. In this way the relation of the Son is denied in the Father.

First doubt. Whether the Unbegotten is constituted as a notion by something positive or something negative.

Reply. Following the principle laid down in the reply to the first objection: the Unbegotten directly implies the negation of passive generation. But this negation denotes a great dignity, for from the fact that the Father is not from any principle it follows that He is the origin of the other persons, and this is something positive.

All these things can be illustrated by the commentaries on Christ's sacerdotal prayer, in which the Father is addressed personally. In this prayer frequently and it seems with insistence the Son of God says that His Father has given all things to Him: "Father, the hour is come, glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son may glorify Thee. As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He may give eternal life to all whom Thou hast given Him... . And now glorify Thou Me, O Father, with Thyself, with the glory which I had, before the world was, with Thee" (John 17:1-5).

Second doubt. Why has not a special feast been instituted in honor of the Father?

The reply is found in the encyclical of Pope Leo XIII, Divinum illud munus (namely, the Holy Ghost): "A danger might arise in belief and worship that the divine persons would be confused with each other and that the one nature would be separated... . Wherefore Innocent XII, our predecessor, refused the request of those who had asked for some solemnities proper to the honor of the Father." The faithful might attribute to the principle of origin priority of dignity, which would be in opposition to the identity of nature.

CHAPTER VIII

QUESTION 34 THE PERSON OF THE SON

Three names are attributed to the Son: the Son, the Word, and the Image. We have considered the name “Son” in connection with the name “Father,” hence we must still consider the names “Word” and “Image.” These three are entirely the same without even a virtual distinction, but they are distinguished in the mode of designation and with reference to various extrinsic connotations. We say the Son with reference to the Father, Word with reference to the enunciating intellect, and Image with reference to the principle which is imitated.

About the Word there are three articles: 1. Whether “the Word” is used essentially or personally; 2. Whether “the Word” is a proper name of the Son; 3. Whether in the name “Word” any reference to creatures is implied. These questions we will consider carefully in the light of the prologue of St. John’s Gospel.

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER THE WORD IN GOD IS A PERSONAL NAME

State of the question. This article is introduced to distinguish “the Word” properly so called from “the word” improperly so called, namely, from the thing understood in the word and also from the intellection which is common to the three persons.

Reply. The affirmative reply is of faith as revealed in St. John’s prologue, “The Word was with God, and the Word was God... . And the Word was made flesh” (1:1, 14). In this text “the Word” designates the same person as “the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father” (1:18).

This doctrine was defined by St. Damasus I and the Fourth Council of Rome in these words: “If anyone shall not say that the Word of God, the Son of God, God even as God His Father, is able to do all things and know

all things and is equal to the Father, let him be anathema.” Similarly, the Second Council of Constantinople declared: “If anyone does not confess the two nativities of the Word of God... let him be anathema”; the Lateran Council: “If anyone does not confess that God the Word descended from heaven...”; and the Eleventh Council of Toledo, explaining the words,” and the Word was made flesh, “ corroborated this doctrine.

Doubt. Did these councils wish to define solemnly by these words that divine generation is properly by intellectual enunciation?

Reply. It does not seem that this has been properly defined, but it is revealed in the prologue of St. John’s Gospel that the Son of God proceeds from the Father as an intellectual word. Therefore all theologians admit that it is at least theologically certain that the first procession is after the manner of intellection. Indeed, it seems that this truth is of faith according to the Scriptures although it is not solemnly defined.

In the body of the article it is shown that the name “Word” in God if used in its proper meaning is a personal and not an essential name. The reason is that “the Word” signifies something proceeding from another as a concept of the mind. But that which signifies something proceeding from another in God is personal since the divine persons are distinguished by their origin.

So that we may understand this reply, St. Thomas, in the first part of the body of the article, shows that the term “word” is used properly in three ways with reference to ourselves (the word of the mind, the word of the imagination, and the vocal word), and besides this it is also used improperly:

word

proper

the interior concept of the mind. imagination of the sound to be emitted.

the sound which signifies the mental concept.

Improper

that which is signified by the word, not the sign, but its meaning.

In God, however, “Word” is used properly only in the first sense, as a concept of the mind; all other words in God are only metaphorical because they are something sensible or even corporeal and external. Hence St. Thomas says that the mental word in its proper meaning is not that which is understood but that in which the thing understood is known. If St. Thomas sometimes says, “It is the word which is understood,” he is using “word” improperly for the thing signified by the word. For Descartes, on the other

hand, the interior word is that which is understood, although he does not deny every relation of the word with the extramental thing.

Between these two concepts, that is, between realism and idealism, a great abyss exists, as we see when Descartes did not hesitate to write in the beginning of his Discourse on method: “For us a square circle is something unthinkable but perhaps it may not be something really impossible outside the mind. Perhaps God is able miraculously to make a square circle.”

For realism, however, this is absolutely and evidently impossible outside the mind, and according to realism I in my mental word and you in your mental word understand the same law of extramental being, namely, that a thing cannot be and not be at the same time. This law of extramental being is what is understood in my mental word and in your mental word.

If, however, the mental word itself is what is understood, then this law of extramental being is placed in jeopardy. Obviously there is a great abyss between realism and idealism. In this fundamental question of philosophy it is important that we preserve the proper meaning of our terms, otherwise we will always be talking incorrectly in our conclusions.

Some have tried to preserve their realism by conceding to the idealists that it is the mental word that is understood but they add later, as indeed the Scholastics generally hold, that the mental word has an essential relation with the extramental thing. But this qualification is not in harmony with the first statement. If the mental word itself is what is properly understood, how can we afterward pass over to the extramental thing, or to its essence? How shall we be able to compare the thing itself with the word that expresses it, when the thing itself cannot be known except in the word? How can we distinguish between the word that conforms to the extramental thing and the word that does not conform, as we are able to distinguish between a statue that represents a real man and a statue that represents an imaginary man? We cannot have recourse to the principle of causality because the validity of that very principle must be proved first.

Obviously an immense abyss stretches between Descartes, idealism and realism, and it would be exceedingly dangerous to concede to the idealists that the mental word is that which is properly understood. St. Thomas always says that the object of the intellect is being (extramental) and he does not say that the object of the intellect is the mental word of being. We are obliged always to speak so carefully about the word that it will be entirely clear, in opposition to Descartes, that a square circle is not only

unthinkable but really impossible outside the mind. Descartes was not able to safeguard the validity of sensitive and intellectual knowledge except by having recourse to the criterion of God's veracity as the author of our faculties. But this implies a vicious circle because we must first prove God's existence by effects and by the principle of causality.

Reply to the first objection. The Arians said that the Son of God was a metaphysical word which was external, but, as St. Thomas says, an external word presupposes an internal word. Moreover, in St. John's Gospel we read, "The Word was God, " and God was the Word, and so the Word cannot be something created or produced outside of God.

Reply to the second objection. In God intellection is predicated essentially and belongs to the three persons.

Reply to the third objection. In God enunciation is predicated personally; only the Father enunciates, and the three persons understand. The Son alone is enunciated as the Word; the other persons are enunciated as things expressed in the Word.

Reply to the fourth objection. Sometimes "word" is used improperly for the thing signified by the word.

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER THE WORD IS THE PROPER NAME OF THE SON

I reply in the affirmative, because word signifies a certain emanation from the intellect, and the Son alone proceeds after the manner of an emanation from the intellect.

Reply to the first objection. In God the Word is not accidental but substantial, because in God being and intellection are the same.

THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER THE NAME WORD IMPLIES A REFERENCE TO CREATURES

The difficulty arises from the fact that creatures are contingent and not eternal, whereas the Word is necessary and eternal. But, as is noted in the sed contra, St. Augustine says that the name "Word" signifies not only the relation to the Father but also to creatures.

Reply. The reply is in the affirmative, because in the one act by which God knows Himself He also knows creatures, for in God there is only one intellection. Thus the one and only Word is expressive not only of the

Father but of all creatures. Moreover, the Word with reference to creatures is not only expressive but also operative. In us, on the other hand, there are various words according to which by different acts of intellection we understand different things. An angel, however, understands all things interior to it by one word, as we shall see below.

Doubt. Whether the name “Word” refers to possible creatures in the same way as it refers to future creatures.

Reply. From the body of the article and from the reply to the second objection the reply is that the name “Word” of itself implies a reference to possible creatures, and only per accidens and concomitantly a reference to future creatures.

Proof. The first part is proved as follows. The divine essence is known by God per se comprehensively, that is, to the full extent of its knowability. But it would not be known comprehensively if the divine omnipotence and the possible effects virtually contained in it were not known. Therefore the Word, by which the divine essence is expressed, has a reference per se to possible creatures.

The second part is proved as follows. Per se the Word does not contain a reference to future creatures or even to futurables, because the knowledge from which the Word proceeds per se is natural and necessary, since the Word proceeds naturally and necessarily. But the knowledge of futures and futurables in God is not natural and necessary but presupposes God’s free decree. Hence, if the knowledge of the same nature as now.

But per accidens the Word contains a reference to future creatures, presupposing the eternal decree of free creation, since the Word in expressing the divine nature expresses it as operating freely ad extra.

Consequently we say that the blessed see creatures in the Word as in their exemplary and efficient cause; but they do not see all possible creatures because this would imply the possession of comprehensive vision. Besides this vision of creatures in the Word, the blessed have knowledge of creatures outside the Word by representations and proper species, and this second knowledge is inferior to the first, being clouded and hazy as in the dusk, whereas the first knowledge is clear as in the morning light. Hence many of St. Thomas’ commentators, such as John of St. Thomas, point out that the theologians in heaven who while on earth engaged in the study of theology, not only because of a natural desire of learning and teaching but also for the love of God and souls, see the object of theology in the Word,

whereas other theologians who studied theology only because of their desire for learning see the object of theology outside the Word, with a knowledge that is inferior and cloudy.

Many mystics, like Tauler, teach that an intellectual creature, elevated to grace, will not be perfect with the ultimate perfection unless it sees God immediately and sees itself in the Word. It is a higher kind of knowledge to see our soul in the Word than to see it in itself and through itself. The mystics often say that the soul must return to its principle, and that the soul will love itself most perfectly when, beholding itself in the Word, it loves itself in the Lord without any inordinate self-love. St. Thomas says: “So far as a thing is perfect it will attain to its principle.” This is the return to the bosom of the Father, in some sense similar to what is said of the only-begotten Son, who is “in the bosom of the Father.” Then the soul will not live for itself but for God.

CHAPTER IX

QUESTION 35 THE IMAGE

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER “IMAGE” IN GOD IS PREDICATED PERSONALLY

THIS article is intended to explain the words of Holy Scripture I about the Second Person of the Holy Trinity: “The unspotted mirror of God’s majesty, and the image of His goodness”; “that the light of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should not shine unto them”; “who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature”; “who being the brightness of His glory, and the figure of His substance,... sitteth on the right hand of the majesty on high.”

Reply. The name Image is a personal and not an essential name. The reason is that for something to be a true image it must proceed from another similar to itself in species or in the sign of the species. But that which implies procession or origin in God is personal. Therefore the name “Image” is a personal name.

To explain his reason St. Thomas shows that two conditions are required for an image: 1. that it be similar not only analogically, generically, or even specifically, but in the sign of the species, for example, according to the features of the face; 2. that this likeness have its origin from that being of which it is the image by virtue of some procession. Here we can see the validity of common sense. No one is said to be like his image, but we do say that the picture of this man is perfectly like him. Similarly, as St. Augustine says,” ne sheep is not said to be the image of another, because it was not expressed by it.” In this observation we see the hidden wealth in common sense and in natural reason, which contain the beginnings and rudiments of ontology just as the earth contains metals, like gold and silver, and precious stones, like diamonds.

A book could be written about the riches hidden in common sense, particularly with regard to the verb “is,” its different tenses and modes, its

various persons; all this is a reflection of metaphysics cast on the elements of grammar.

Images are of three kinds.

1. The artificial image, which is similar only in the sign of the species, for example, in features or figure, as a picture or statue. This IS an imperfect image.

2. The intentional image, which is the expressed intelligible species implying a likeness not only in the sign of a specific nature but also in the specific nature itself, not in the mode of natural being but in intelligible being. This image is more perfect than the first.

3. The natural image, which denotes likeness both in the specific nature and in the mode of natural being, as the son is sometimes the living image of his father. This is the perfect image. In God it is most perfect because it is likeness in a nature numerically the same. The first and third kinds of image are presented as the thing that is known; the second kind of image itself is not properly known but that in which another thing is known. In God the Word is at the same time the intentional and the natural image.

Reply to the first objection. That from which the image proceeds is properly called the exemplar and improperly the image. Thus it is said that man is made to the image of God, but God is properly the exemplar and man is the imperfect image of God.

Reply to the third objection. Imitation in God does not signify posterity but only assimilation. All words retain a certain amount of imperfection from their original human application, according to which they apply first to creatures.

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER THE NAME IMAGE IS PROPER TO THE SON

State of the question. The Greeks applied the name Image to the Holy Ghost as well, while the Latins use it only for the Son.

Reply. The name Image is proper to the Son.

1. Proof from Scripture. In Sacred Scripture the word “image” refers only to the Son, as for instance, “Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature”; and “Who being the brightness of His glory, and the figure of His substance.”

2. Proof from theological reason. Only the Son by reason of His procession formally possesses that which is similar to the Father because

He proceeds as the expressed Word. The Holy Ghost, on the other hand, proceeds as love, but love is not a likeness of that from which it proceeds but rather an inclination after the manner of a weight or an impulse.

Out of respect to the Greek Fathers it may be said that the Holy Ghost is like the Father and the Son in nature and thus the Holy Ghost may be said to be the image of the Father and the Son in a broad sense, but not formally by reason of His procession. For the same reason we said above that the second procession is not generation because of itself it does not produce something similar to that from which it proceeds.

Durandus objected that the Son is not similar to the Father by reason of essence, because here there is identity, nor by reason of relation because here there is opposition. We reply that the Son is like the Father by reason of essence and relation at once, that is, by reason of person, for like things agree in some things and differ in others. Thus the Father and the Son agree in nature and differ by relation.

Note on the third objection. Man is said to be in the likeness of God rather than the image of God, that is, man tends toward the likeness of God.

Recapitulation. “The Word” is the proper name of the Son, for the Word in God is both substantial and incommunicable, that is, He is a person, something subsisting and incommunicable. The Word implies a reference to creatures inasmuch as He proceeds from the comprehensive knowledge of the divine essence, which is the cause of creatures. Again, the Son of God is properly the Image, an image that is natural and intentional at the same time, as a son is the living image of his father. Only the Son has this derived likeness of an image by reason of His procession because He proceeds as the expressed Word of the Father.

Therefore we read in the Scriptures, “The image of the invisible God,” “the unspotted mirror of God’s majesty, “and” the brightness of His glory and the figure of His substance.”

CHAPTER X

QUESTION 36 THE PERSON OF THE HOLY GHOST

The Holy Ghost is known by three names: the Holy Ghost, Love, and the Gift. Hence there are three questions about the Holy Ghost.

About the Holy Ghost four things are asked: 1. Whether this name, Holy Spirit, or Holy Ghost, is personal; 2. Whether the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and from the Son, 3. Whether He proceeds from the Father by the Son; 4. Whether the Father and the Son are one principle of the Holy Ghost.

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER THIS NAME, HOLY SPIRIT OR HOLY GHOST, IS A PROPER NAME OF ONE OF THE DIVINE PERSONS

State of the question. Often in the Scriptures this name is common to the divine persons, for example, “But if I by the Spirit of God cast out devils.” Further, the Holy Spirit does not imply a reference to someone else as the Father and the Son refer to another. Moreover, the name “Holy Spirit” appears to be a divine attribute, as when we speak of the spirit of this man, meaning his mind or his manner of judging.

In the Scriptures, however, especially in the New Testament, “The Holy Spirit” is used personally in many places, for example, in the formula of baptism, and in the instances cited in the introduction. St. Thomas also refers to the Johannine comma, which is at least an expression of tradition even if its genuineness is not entirely clear.

In the body of the article St. Thomas concludes that although the name, Holy Ghost, is not in itself a proper name, it has been adapted by its use in the Scriptures to designate the third person. St. Thomas explains that those things that pertain to love often do not have a proper name, and some

common name is adopted. This happens because love is ineffable. The reason is that we give proper names to those things that we understand properly and distinctly, but we are not able to understand the things pertaining to love properly and distinctly in the abstract. Why? Because the elements of love are less known to us than the matters that pertain to the intellect, and this for the following three reasons.

1. The intellect knows those things that are in itself better than those things that belong to another faculty, as the will.

2. Good, which is the object of love, is not formally in the mind like truth, which is the conformity of judgment with the thing, but the good is in things since the good is the very perfection of that thing that is amiable and alluring. Therefore the immanent term of love goes without a proper name.

3. Love as inclining to the good which is in things, like every tendency or inclination, contains something potential, and things are not intelligible except so far as they are in act and determined. A thing is known as an act or as a form; but love is rather a tendency, an impulse, or the weight by which the lover is drawn to that which is loved. St. Thomas said above: “The procession that takes place in the nature of goodness is not understood as being in the nature of a similitude but rather in the nature of something impelling and moving toward another.” He goes on to say: “This procession remained without a special name, but it can be called spiration” because of its inclination to a terminus not properly named. Love tends to the good that is in things; first it inclines after the manner of desire before it possesses the thing. The possession takes place by intuitive cognition, that is, by sight and touch in the sensible order; as long as the possession continues, love quiesces by fruition in that which is loved. Therefore bliss or the possession of the thing is not in love but in the intuitive cognition of what is loved, and this is the assimilation of the thing. This tendency of love and this fruition are known experimentally and it is difficult to obtain a speculative knowledge of them which can be expressed by a special and distinct name. Hence we said above that the terminus of intellectual enunciation has a proper name, namely, the word, but the terminus of the act of love has no special name.

Because of this ineffability of love some say that love is something higher than knowledge and that knowledge is a kind of disposition for love. Such was the teaching of Plotinus, who speaks of a supreme <hypostasis> above the second <hypostasis>, which is intellect; the supreme

<hypostasis> of Plotinus is the One-Good, which is not intelligible but which can be contacted by love. Later Scotus taught that bliss is essentially in the love of God. But St. Thomas showed that the intellect is simply superior to the will, which it directs, because the object of the intellect, that is, being, is more absolute and universal than the good. Although in this life the love of God is better than the abstract knowledge of God, in heaven the possession of God takes place by intuitive vision, which is necessarily followed by love just as the property is derived from the essence.

The following should be noted about the ineffability of love, which many consider superior to the intellect. When voluntarists and dynamists (like Bergson) say that there is more in motion than in immobility, they confuse the immobility of inertia, which is inferior to motion, with the immobility of perfection, which is above motion and which is the stability as something more perfect opposed to the instability of mobile things. These philosophers never use the terms stability and instability. There is more in motion than in the terminus from which the motion began, but there is not more than in the end of the motion itself, more in esse than in fieri (more in being than in becoming), more in a man than in the embryo. If you deny the superiority of this second kind of immobility, the stability of perfection, you must say with Eduard Le Roy that God Himself is in perpetual evolution and is creative evolution itself. In the treatise on the One God, St. Thomas asks whether God has life. He replies that God possesses immanent life of the highest degree, subsisting intelligence itself whose measure is the one stable instant of eternity, namely, the stable now, not the fluid moment of time which is ever fleeting and ever unstable.

When, therefore, many say that the intellect is more imperfect than love because it is static and immobile, they do not take into consideration sufficiently the distinction between the imperfect immobility of inertia and the perfect stability which is the goal of the highest contemplation of immutable truth. Absolute dynamism ought logically to deny the immobility of God Himself and confuse God with mundane evolution. And anti-intellectualism, professed by many voluntarists, ought to take the stand that the intellect is not a simply simple perfection and that God does not know Himself as Plotinus taught about the supreme <hypostasis> which he had placed above the first intelligence. This is, of course, absolutely inadmissible. We can concede, however, that the human intellect as such sometimes materializes the life of the spirit inasmuch as it knows the spirit

in the mirror of sensible things. In this way the human intellect understands spiritual qualities according to the analogy of quantity and speaks of a high or broad spirit or of the height of understanding.

Because of this ineffability of love it follows, as St. Thomas says in this article, that the relations which arise from the procession of love are unnamed. Wherefore the name of the person proceeding in this manner is not a proper name but a name accommodated from the usage of the Scriptures, namely, the Holy Ghost (Holy Spirit) as we see it used in the formula of baptism.

The accommodative application of this name has two advantages: 1. since the third person proceeds from the two first persons, who are spirits, this third person is, as it were, their spirit; 2. since the term “spirit” in corporeal things denotes a certain impulse and it is a property of love to move or impel the will of the lover to that which is loved.

Reply to the first objection. Many texts of the Old Testament use the term “spirit of God” as a common name rather than a personal name. Such is not the case, however, in the New Testament, where this accommodation is obvious as in the formula for baptism and in the promise of the Holy Ghost.

Reply to the second objection. The name “Holy Spirit” was adopted to signify a person distinct from the others only by relation and as spirated by them.

Reply to the third objection. Why can we say, “our Father,” and “our Spirit,” but not “our Son”,? We cannot say “our Son” because no creature can be considered the principle with regard to any of the divine persons. On the other hand we depend on our heavenly Father, and spirit is a common name as when we say the spirit of Moses or of Elias. Even the Holy Spirit, dwelling within us and inspiring us to holy deeds, can be called our spirit in the sense that He is the life of our life. In this sense we say that we have received the Spirit of adoption of sons.

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER THE HOLY GHOST PROCEEDS FROM THE SON

State of the question. This article contains two questions: whether the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Son, which is the subject of dispute between the Greeks and Latins, and whether the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Son in such a way that if He did not proceed from the Son He would not be distinguished personally from the Son. Concerning this second question

Scotus opposed St. Thomas, who gave an affirmative reply. We shall consider first the prior question particularly in its speculative aspect since the positive aspect is treated in the history of dogma.

Various errors and the definitions of the Church. Many errors about the procession of the Holy Ghost have been condemned by the Church. In the beginning the Eunomians and the Macedonians denied that the Holy Ghost proceeded from the Father, and they were immediately condemned by the Council of Constantinople in 381. Later many others attacked the teaching that the Holy Ghost proceeded from the Son, namely, Theodoret , the Monothelites and Iconoclasts (eighth century), Photius (ninth century), and Michael Caerularius (eleventh century), whom the Greek schismatics follow until the present day. Photius, the impious usurper of the Constantinopolitan see, who aspired to the supremacy over the Church, found a pretext for attacking the teaching of the Latin Church on this point in some obscure texts of the Greek Fathers. Photius was condemned by Nicholas I and seceded from communion with the Latin Church. After his death union between the Churches was restored, but the schism again broke out because of the ambitions of Michael Caerularius. For many the difficulty arose from the fact that many Greek Fathers said that the Holy Ghost proceeded from the Father through the Son. This turn of words provided the occasion for the Photians to write against the doctrine of the Latin Church. In the present article St. Thomas presents the principal difficulties of the Greeks, adding that there is no basis for their stand either in Sacred Scripture or in the ancient councils, in which the question was not yet explicitly considered.

It should be said, moreover, that in the Latins, concept of the Trinity, which begins with the unity of nature rather than with the three persons, an easier approach is made to the Filioque, especially if the Latin doctrine is understood in the post-Augustinian view, according to which the processions are after the manner of intellection and love, for love follows knowledge and proceeds from it inasmuch as nothing is willed unless it is known. This point is not so clear in the Greek concept, which starts with the three persons instead of with the unity of nature.

To clarify the matter in opposition to Photius, the term Filioque was added to the Nicene Creed, first in Spain, then in France and Germany, and later was accepted and approved by authority of the Roman Pontiffs. Finally under Pius X it was declared: “It would be no less temerarious than

erroneous to entertain the opinion that the dogma of the procession of the Son from the Holy Ghost can hardly be proved from the words of the Gospels or from the faith of the ancient Fathers."

The Church has indeed defined that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son "as from one principle and by one single spiration." The Council of Florence declared: "We define that this truth of faith be accepted and believed by all Christians and that all shall profess that the Holy Ghost is eternally from the Father and the Son and that He has His essence and subsisting being at the same time from the Father and the Son, and that He proceeds eternally from both as from one principle and by one spiration." In the same council it was defined: "The Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son... . Whatever the Holy Ghost is or has He has received simultaneously from the Father and the Son. But the Father and the Son are not two principles of the Holy Ghost but one principle just as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are not three principles of creatures but one principle." These words, "We proceeds by one spiration," were added in the Council of Florence and in the Council of Lyons to solve the difficulty of some Greeks who rejected the formula ex Patre Filioque because they erroneously thought that it implied two principles of the Holy Ghost.

Whether there is a clear warrant in Scripture and tradition for this definition of the Church.

The testimony of Scripture. No doubt exists that it is clearly taught by the Scriptures that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father: "But when the Paraclete cometh..., who proceedeth from the Father, " "For it is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you."

It is also clear from many passages of the New Testament that the Holy Ghost proceeds also from the Son. We prove this in three ways: 1. because the Holy Ghost is said to be sent by the Son; 2. because the Holy Ghost is said to receive something from the Son; 3. because the Holy Ghost is called the Spirit of the Son.

In proving these three points we presuppose from the formula of baptism and from similar texts already cited for the three persons together that Holy Ghost and Spirit of the Father are names not of a divine attribute but of the third person. In these proofs we follow the chronological order in which this truth was revealed, beginning with the revelation of Christ Himself when He promised the Holy Ghost.

1. The Holy Ghost is said to have been sent by the Son as well as by the Father. “I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you forever. The Spirit of truth... shall abide with you.” Here mention is made of another person, that is, another Paraclete, distinct from Him who asks and from the Father, who will send Him. “But the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things.” If the Father sends the Holy Ghost in the name of the Son, the Son also sends Him. This thought is more clearly expressed in the following: “But when the Paraclete cometh, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceedeth from the Father, He shall give testimony of Me.” In the following chapter: “If I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.”

St. Thomas’ argument is built on these texts as follows: A mission or sending presupposes a certain influence of the sender on him who is sent. This influence of the sender is either in the nature of a command, as when a master sends a servant, or in the nature of counsel, as when a man sends his friend to another, or in the nature of origin, as when leaves are sent out by a tree. A divine person, however, is not sent by command or counsel because these imply inferiority since he who commands is greater and he who counsels is wiser. Hence sending in God denotes nothing except the procession of origin to a terminus where the person sent was not before. If the Holy Ghost, therefore, is said to be sent by the Father and the Son, He proceeds from the Father and the Son. “The Father... is not said to be sent for He does not have a terminus from which He is or from which He proceeds.” In God, then, a sending cannot take place without being a procession, and the Holy Ghost, who was sent by the Son, must proceed from the Son.

2. The Holy Ghost proceeds from the Son because He is said to receive something from the Son. “But when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will teach you all truth... . He shall glorify Me; because He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it to you. All things whatsoever the Father hath, are Mine. Therefore I said, that He shall receive of Mine, and show it to you.”

Here the Scriptures explicitly affirm that the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete, receives something from the Son. But in God one person cannot receive anything from another except to proceed from that person because, besides the relation of origin, all things are common to the three persons. “In God receiving is not understood in the same sense as in creatures... . For, since

the divine persons are simple, that which receives is not different from that which is received... . Moreover, the person who receives was not at some time lacking what is received, because the Son had from eternity what He received from the Father, and the Holy Ghost had from eternity what He received from the Father and the Son... . Therefore the Holy Ghost receives from the Son as the Son receives from the Father. Therefore in God to receive denotes the order of origin."

Objection. "To receive of Mine" must be understood as referring only to the communication of the knowledge of the future because "and shall show it to you" follows immediately.

Reply. The Holy Ghost appears as a divine person from the other texts quoted and is therefore called the Spirit of truth. But a divine person who is not incarnate cannot receive the knowledge of futures except by receiving the divine nature because in the divine nature this knowledge is uncreated and identified with the divine nature. The text confirms this argument in the words: "All things whatsoever the Father hath, are Mine; therefore I said that He shall receive of Mine." Here the reason is assigned why the Holy Ghost proceeds also from the Son, namely, because the Son has whatever the Father has, including active spiration.

3. In several passages of the Scripture the Holy Ghost is called the Spirit of the Son or the Spirit of Christ Jesus: "God hath sent the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying: Abba, Father." From the use of the word "sent" we see reference is made to the Holy Ghost, sent by the Father and the Son on Pentecost, who dwells in the hearts of the just, as St. Paul frequently says. Further confirmation is found in St. Paul's words to the Romans: "But you are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His."

In this last text the Holy Ghost dwelling in the souls of men is called the Spirit not only of the Father but also of Christ, as in the words of Christ, "But when the Paraclete cometh, whom I will send you from the Father." Again in the Acts of the Apostles, "They attempted to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not." From these texts the following argument is constructed: here the Holy Ghost is called the Spirit of the Son. But he could not be so called unless He proceeded from the Son just as He is called the Spirit of the Father because He proceeds from the Father. In other words, if the Greeks admit that the Spirit of the Father is the Spirit proceeding from the Father, why do they not admit that the Spirit of the Son

is the Spirit proceeding from the Son? This argument is found in the writings of St. Augustine: “Why therefore do we not believe that the Holy Ghost proceeds also from the Son since He is also the Spirit of the Son?”

The testimony of tradition. Is the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Son explicitly found in tradition as expressed by the Fathers?

Since the Greeks admit this doctrine is found in the Latin Fathers, it will be sufficient to refer to the Greek Fathers who wrote on the Trinity: St. Athanasius, St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Cyril of Alexandria.

St. Athanasius writing to Serapion said: “We find that the same property that the Son has to the Father, the Holy Ghost has to the Son.” In another place St. Athanasius calls the Son “the font of the Holy Ghost.” St. Gregory of Nyssa explains this truth by a comparison: “The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are like three lights of which the second is lit by the first and the third by the second.” St. Cyril of Alexandria is more explicit: “since therefore the Holy Ghost dwelling in us makes us comformable to the Father, He truly proceeds from the Father and the Son, and it is clear from the divine essence that He is essentially in it and proceeding from it, just as the breath comes from the human mouth, although this is a humble and unworthy illustration of such a sublime thing.”

Many of the Greek Fathers explain this truth in a slightly different manner, declaring that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father through the Son. This expression was explained by the Council of Florence with the approval of the Greeks.

The Church’s doctrine on this point is found in the synods and councils held prior to the Greek schism.

In the profession of faith presented by the bishops of Africa to King Hunneric in the fifth century, we read: “We believe that the unbegotten Father and the Son begotten of the Father and the Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, are of one substance.” The synod of Alexandria approved the letter in which St. Cyril wrote that the Holy Ghost “proceeded from the Father and the Son, “ and this letter was later applauded by the Councils of Ephesus, Chalcedon, and Constantinople (II).

In the ninth century the Roman Pontiffs approved the addition of the Filioque to the creed; later with the consent of the Greeks it was defined in the Fourth Lateran Council, and in the Council of Florence.

St. Thomas Doctrine On The Filioque

We consider first the theological reason he offers in the Summa and later how he solves the difficulties of the Greeks. In the body of the article we find three reasons: the first from incongruity and the other two from the congruity or conformity with things in the natural order. From the analogy with natural things we can to some degree know the mystery of the Trinity although we cannot demonstrate it.

1. The reason or argument from incongruity is an apodictical argument by reduction to the impossible. It begins with the negation of the position to be admitted: if the Holy Ghost does not proceed from the Son, He would not be distinguished from the Son, because the divine persons are distinguished only by the relation of origin, which is founded on the processions. We do not delay in considering this argument because it will be developed against the objections of Scotus after an examination of the Greek difficulties.

2. This argument is based on the nature of the processions. The Son proceeds after the manner of intellection as the Word, and the Holy Ghost proceeds after the manner of the will as personal love. But love proceeds from the word, for we do not love anything unless we have apprehended it by a concept of the mind. Nothing is willed unless first it is known. Therefore the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Son. This argument proposed by St. Thomas is sufficiently clear from the foregoing. It is at least a profound argument of congruity. Against it, however, two objections have been raised which are too much concerned with particulars and in this way do not take into consideration what St. Thomas wished to say.

Objection. In the beatific vision there is no word, and yet it is followed by love.

Reply. In the beatific vision there is no accidental created word, but the divine essence takes the place of the expressed species because the divine essence of itself is understood in act and cannot be represented in a created word as it is in itself. We are obliged to express ourselves in this manner because of the imperfect manner of our intellection although there is in our intellection an expressed species (when it exists) which is the vicar of the object and which takes the place of the object, as when the object is not understood of itself in act. Thus what St. Thomas wished to say in this argument stands: nothing is willed unless first known, and love follows vision and proceeds from it in some way. So proportionately the Holy Ghost

proceeds as love from the Word, and this procession is understood to take place as intellection from the words of the prologue of St. John's Gospel.

I insist. In created beings the word does not concur effectively in love; it concurs only objectively and as the final object inasmuch as the word proposes the object that elicits love.

Reply. Granting this for the sake of argument, it is still true that love in some way proceeds from the knowledge of the good or from the good as known; it also is still true that the appetitive faculty comes from the essence of the soul as endowed with the intellectual faculty, and the essence is therefore the root of the other faculties. Moreover, according to revelation, the divine Word is a subsisting person and thus can be the principle (principium quod) of notional love and active spiration, whereas our accidental word is not the principium quod but a necessary condition (sine qua non) of love since love tends only to the known good.

We granted for the sake of argument that the word in created beings does not concur effectively in love, because a dispute exists on this point between Thomistic theologians.

Conrad Kollin, Cajetan, and others hold that the intellect moves the will with respect to its specification as an efficient cause inasmuch as the object proposed by the intellect is the cause for eliciting a determined act of love. The particular specification of the act of love, as distinguished from the exercise of the act of love, must have an efficient cause, and the will alone is not a sufficient efficient cause for this specification, otherwise all acts of love would be of the same species. Moreover, as Conrad Kollin and Cajetan point out, in God the subsisting Word effectively produces personal love or the Holy Ghost. Therefore the same thing takes place analogically in the case of the non-subsisting word of our intellect. To support this interpretation they cite certain texts of St. Thomas: "The intellect is prior to the will as the mover is prior to what is moved and as the active is prior to the passive, for the good that is understood moves the will."

Other Thomists, among them Capreolus, Ferrariensis, Bannez, and Gonet hold that the intellect moves the will only as a final and formal extrinsic cause because the object proposed by the intellect to the will is not intrinsic to the will. But even if this second opinion is admitted, our argument still holds because the word in created beings produces love at least in a broad sense because it leads to the eliciting of a definite act of love inasmuch as it specifies the act, and no act can be elicited without being specified.

Further, the subsistence of the divine Word elevates all the conditions of the word to most perfect being and in this state of being the Word actively and properly influences love. Thus the Word of God spirates love.

St. Thomas' argument remains unscathed. He was disinclined, however, to descend to these particulars because as he said: "Our intellect cannot understand the essence of God as it is in itself in this life, but it determines and limits every mode in the things it understands about God and departs from the mode of God's being in Himself. Therefore the more certain nouns are unrestricted and common and absolute, the more properly they are predicated by us of God, as, for instance, the name "Who is," which expresses the vast and infinite ocean of substance itself.

Hence we should not descend to small particulars, to excessive precision and delimitation; these things remove us from the contemplation of God and we cannot understand a free act in God or how the Word spirates love. This is true of many speculative and practical questions. For instance, a certain particular intention virtually lasts for several days, but we cannot say for how many days it lasts since there is a great difference here between a superficial soul and one that is profoundly recollected. Again, it is certainly very laudable to unite our personal offerings often during the day by prayer to the oblation made continually in the heart of the glorious Christ and to the offering of all the Masses celebrated throughout the world. If we wish to descend mechanically to particulars, we might ask how it is possible to unite oneself to all these Masses in particular. This does not mean that it is impossible to unite ourselves to the oblation which perdures in the heart of Christ in glory, which is, as it were, the soul of all these Masses.

Very often excessive and pseudo-scientific exactitude in spiritual things removes us from the contemplation of God. Such concern with particulars detracts from the beauty of St. Thomas, argument that love proceeds from the knowledge of good, and therefore it appears right to say that in God personal love proceeds from the Word. In the light of this argument we understand those beautiful words of tradition: The Word spirates love. The same is true with regard to our understanding of the mystery of the cross or of the Redemption: too much concern with details impedes us in contemplation of the mystery.

The third argument of congruity may be stated as follows: When several things proceed from one, they are distinct only by number and matter unless they are distinguished because of the orders of origin or causality. But the

Son and the Holy Ghost proceed from one and the same Father and they are distinct by more than number and matter, that is, by the two processions of intellect and love, which are more than numerically distinct. Hence there must be between them some order; not the order of causality or of greater or less perfection, but of origin. And since the Son does not proceed from the Holy Ghost, the Holy Ghost must proceed from the Son.

The major of the argument is based on the fact that when several things that are distinct by more than number and matter proceed from one thing they proceed according to some order, and in created beings according to some kind of subordination. When several things proceed from one thing and are distinguished only by number and matter, they may proceed without any definite order as, for instance, when a workman makes many knives distinct from one another only numerically and materially, they have no order to each other. Such is not the case, however, with the species of number and the figures of geometry in the order of quantity; all numbers proceed from unity according to a definite order. So also in the order of quality: for example, the different degrees of heat and light, the various colors of the spectrum. The various species of minerals, plants, and animals are subordinated according to their greater or lesser perfection; such subordination is also found among the angels.

This gives us an analogy of the divine processions. But in God there can be no order of greater or lesser perfection and so there can be no subordination or coordination, which implies subordination. Nor can there be an order of causality since each divine person is uncreated, uncaused, and entirely equal to the others. In the divine persons there is an order of origin as we know exists between the Father and the Son, and between the Holy Ghost and the Father, and equally between the Holy Ghost and the Son, otherwise there would be no more order in the divine persons than between those things that are distinguished only numerically and materially.

If there were no such order the analogy with intellect and will would break down, for the will, as the rational appetite, does not come from the essence of the soul except through the mediation of the intellective faculty, otherwise the appetite would not be properly rational in its root nor would it be under the direction of reason. In other words it is impossible that the intellect and the will should be equal (ex aequo) as Suarez thought; there must be some order between them as there must be order between vision and love.

Suarez failed to see that all coordination supposes subordination and that the intellect and the will cannot be coordinated on an equal plane (ex aequo) nor can vision and love.

Order is a disposition by way of earlier and later with respect to some principle, and thus order is discovered in subordination before it is found in coordination. Two soldiers are not coordinated in an army unless they are first subordinated to the leader of the army. St. Thomas asks whether the inequality of things is from God, and he replies in the affirmative, saying that the subordination or hierarchy of things serves to manifest in many ways the divine goodness, which in itself is most simple and would not be fittingly manifested if all things were entirely equal. Then there would be no reason for multiplying created things.

Thus, as Leibnitz said, no one would place in his library several identical copies of the same edition of Virgil. The variety of species necessary for the subordination of created things is a better manifestation of the divine goodness, which is in itself most simple.

In God's intimate life there is no subordination or hierarchy, but there is an order of origin that transcends coordination and subordination.

In the body of the article St. Thomas notes that the Greeks concede that there is an element of truth in this argument; they concede that the Holy Ghost is from the Father through the Son. This formula will be examined in the next article. St. Thomas also notes that some Greeks are said to concede that the Holy Ghost flows from the Son but does not proceed from Him. To which St. Thomas replied: everything that flows from another proceeds from it, as the brook from the spring and the ray of light from the sun. The Greeks insisted that the Holy Ghost proceeded from the Father as the brook from the spring and through the Son as through the channel in which the brook flows.

The fourth argument is taken from the general principle that in God all things are one and the same except where there is opposition of relation. But between the Father and the Son there is no opposition of relation in active spiration. Therefore active spiration is common to both. This commonly accepted principle was expressly formulated in the Council of Florence, and as Denzinger notes, it was at this Council that the learned Cardinal Bessarion, archbishop of Nicaea, the theologian of the Greek party, proclaimed: "No one is ignorant of the fact that the personal names of

the Trinity are relative." It is on this accepted principle that the argument is based.

The fifth reason is drawn from the words," ll things whatsoever the Father hath, are Mine. Therefore I said, that He shall receive of Mine." If the Holy Ghost did not proceed from the Son, the Son would not have whatsoever the Father has (excepting paternity), and the divine will would be less fecund in the Son for active spiration than in the Father. Nor should it be said that the Holy Ghost has the same will as the Father and still does not spirate actively because the Holy Ghost, proceeding not by intellection but by the will, exhausts the will as its adequate terminus. In other words, the Holy Ghost exhausts the entire fecundity of the divine will within itself (ad intra), just as the divine Word proceeding by intellection ad intra, exhausts the entire fecundity of the divine intellect as its adequate terminus.

The sixth reason is found in the Contra Gentes. In God, since He is necessary, there is no difference between being and possibility, that is, being follows immediately on possibility. But it is not the impossibility but rather the possibility that appears that the Son should be the principle of the Holy Ghost, for that which is from a principle in the first procession can be the principle in the second procession. Therefore the Son is a principle of the second procession together with the Father.

Solution Of The Principal Objections Of The Greeks

First objection. This objection is stated as the first difficulty in St. Thomas, article, namely, Sacred Scripture states that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father but it never says He proceeds from the Son.

Reply. Sacred Scripture does not express this truth in so many words, I concede; it does not express this truth, I deny; for as we have seen, the Son says of the Holy Ghost, "We shall receive of Mine"; "All things whatsoever the Father hath, are Mine. Therefore I said, that He shall receive of Mine."

Second objection. The First Council of Constantinople, which was the second ecumenical council, does not make any mention of the Son.

Reply. St. Thomas replies that the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Son was not explicitly mentioned in this council because the opposite error had not yet arisen. But later, when the error arose, the Filioque was added to the creed, first in Spain and later in France and Germany in the fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries. Thereupon Benedict VIII approved the addition and finally it was accepted by the ecumenical councils of Lyons (II) and Florence by both the Greeks and Latins present at these councils.

In the reply to the third difficulty, St. Thomas notes that St. John Damascene, following the Nestorian error on this point, spoke inaccurately in his book, although some commentators say that he (lid not expressly deny the Filioque. Petavius points out that St. John Damascene understood that the Holy Ghost did not proceed from the Son as from the first font of origin because among the Greeks the preposition ex and the noun principium denote the first font of origin.

In D'Ales' words, "St. John Damascene did not deny simply that the Holy Ghost proceeded from the Son but that He proceeded from the Son as from the first principle. He had evolved a physical theory of the Trinity, according to which the procession was like a breath coming from the mouth, a figure certainly less apt than that of St. Augustine."

St. John Damascene approaches the Latin doctrine when he compares the Father to the sun, the Son to the ray, and the Holy Ghost to the brightness, which is from the ray. Indeed, in his book, De fide orthodoxa, he says that the Holy Ghost is the image of the Son as the Son is the image of the Father.

This is a sufficient defense of the Church's doctrine on the Filioque. In the third article we shall see that it is permissible to say that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father through the Son, according to the Greek Fathers, and St. Hilary among the Latin Fathers. The reason is that the Son has from the Father that by which the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Son.

Other objections. Whatever is in God is either common or proper. But the spiration of the Holy Ghost is not common to the entire Trinity. Therefore this spiration is proper to one person, namely, to the Father and does not belong to the Son.

Reply. I distinguish the major: whatever is in God is either common (to the three persons) or strictly proper, as risibility in man, I deny; is common or proper in a broad sense, I concede as, for instance, spirituality and freedom properly belong to the human soul and also to the angels.

I insist. But to spirate the Holy Ghost is strictly proper to the Father, for absolutely contrary properties cannot belong to the same person. But the property of the Son consists in receiving, of which spiration is a contrary property. Therefore the Son cannot actively spirate the Holy Ghost.

Reply. I distinguish the major: properties that are contrary with respect to the same other person cannot belong to the same person, I concede; with respect to distinct persons, I deny. I contradistinguish the minor in the same

way: the Son is both active and passive with respect to distinct persons and not to the same person. This is not an impossible contrariety.

I insist. The Son is no more in agreement with the Father than the Holy Ghost. But the Holy Ghost does not concur with the Father in the generation of the Son. Therefore the Son does not concur with the Father in the spiration of the Holy Ghost.

Reply. I distinguish the major: with regard to essentials, I concede; with regard to the notional act of spiration, I deny.

The second article contains references to the discussion between the Thomists and Scotus, which we shall examine immediately.

Doubt. If the Holy Ghost did not proceed from the Son, would He be distinguished from Him?

In the beginning of the body of this article St. Thomas answers negatively, and not only the Thomists but most other theologians agree with him. Scotus and his followers, however, reply in the affirmative, arguing that if the impossible were true and the Holy Ghost were not spirated by the Son, the Son would still be distinguished by filiation from the Holy Ghost because the Holy Ghost would not be the Son.

St. Thomas, position is based on that principle commonly accepted and explicitly formulated in the Council of Florence: “In God all things are one and the same except where there is opposition of relation”; in other words, the divine persons are really distinguished only by the relation of origin, which is founded on the processions, as was explained above. If therefore the Holy Ghost did not proceed from the Son, He would not be distinct from the Son. The reader is referred to the body of the article.

It should be noted that this principle is found prior to the Council of Florence in the writings of the Fathers, particularly in St. Augustine, St. Gregory of Nyssa, and St. Anselm. The Council of Florence proved against the Greeks that the Holy Ghost proceeded from the Son; its principal reason was that otherwise the Holy Ghost would not be distinguished from the Son. In the eighteenth session John the Theologian declared: “According to both the Latin and the Greek doctors, it is relation alone that multiplies the divine persons in the divine productions, and this relation is the relation of origin.” None of the Greeks, not even Mark of Ephesus, the most prominent adversary of the Latin theologians, opposed this principle. While this was not a definition of the Council, this argument ought to have great weight

because by it the Church was disposed to define the dogma of the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Son.

What is the basis for the axiom: In God all things are one and the same where there is no opposition of relation? Note that the axiom does not say merely a distinction of relation. The basis for the axiom is that, since God is most simple being, He admits no real distinction in Himself except that distinction which, according to revelation, is founded on the procession of origin, namely, the distinction between the principle and that which is of the principle.

Objection of the Scotists. The principle accepted and expressed in the Council of Florence is to be understood as referring not only to the relative opposition of relation but also the disparate opposition of relation. The first kind of opposition is that between two relations that have reference to each other, as between paternity and filiation, and between active and passive spiration. Disparate opposition of relation exists between two relations that have no reference to each other, as between filiation and passive spiration.

Reply. I deny the antecedent, since disparate relations are not impossible in the same person, as paternity and active spiration, and as filiation and active spiration. Therefore it is not sufficient that two relations, like filiation and passive spiration, are disparate in order to constitute two distinct persons.

The Scotists insist. Even though paternity and active spiration are not incompatible in the same person, nevertheless filiation and passive spiration are incompatible and require two persons, because that would imply that the same person was produced by two complete productions, which would be the case if the one person were at the same time the terminus of generation and spiration. This is the crux of the problem.

Reply. This insistence begs the question; it proves a thing by itself. There are not two complete, distinct productions except when they tend to two distinct termini or to two really distinct persons as on the way to the terminus, for the production of a person is a person in becoming (in fieri). As the two sides of the triangle are not two except because they tend toward constituting with the base the two inferior angles opposed to each other and therefore distinct, so two processions in God are not two except inasmuch as they tend to constitute two proceeding persons opposed to each other and therefore distinct. Thus the adversaries prove that there are two proceeding persons and not one because there are two proceeding persons and two

processions, which is begging the question. It is incumbent on the Scotists to find another reason to prove that even if the Holy Ghost did not proceed from the Son He would be distinct from Him.

In this hypothesis generation and passive spiration would be one and the same total procession, formally and eminently generative and spirative, just as generation and active spiration are only virtually distinct in the Father.

The other Scotist objections are of minor import.

They say that the person of the Son is sufficiently constituted and distinguished by filiation. We reply that it is constituted but not distinguished from the Holy Ghost without the opposition of relation.

They insist that by filiation the Son has incommunicable being, otherwise He would not be a person, and this distinguishes Him from the Holy Ghost.

Reply. In God being is unique and it is communicated to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; that which is incommunicable is only the subsisting relation which is opposed to another. Thus the Father has communicable being but He is a distinct person by the paternity, which is opposed to filiation; similarly, active spiration is opposed to passive spiration.

I insist. By filiation the Son is distinguished from any other who is not the Son. But the Holy Ghost is not the Son. Therefore the Son is distinguished from the Holy Ghost by filiation alone.

Reply. I distinguish the major: the Son is thus distinguished from any other person who is opposed to Him, I concede; otherwise, I deny. I contradistinguish the minor: if the person is opposed to the Son, I concede; otherwise, I deny.

We must conclude that the Scotists do not safeguard the doctrine of the Fathers and of the Council of Florence, according to which all things in God are one and the same except where there is opposition of relation or relative opposition based on a procession. If therefore the Holy Ghost does not proceed from the Son, He is not distinct from the Son. The fiction of disparate opposition is an abuse of the terms and in violation of common sense, or, as Billuart rightly says, a confusion of the notions of things. Things are disparate when they are not opposed, for example, white and cold. Thus St. Thomas, opinion stands.

The triangle lends confirmation to this view. If in the triangle the third angle constructed did not proceed from the first and second, it would not be distinguished from the second, and then there would not be two sides because they would be identified in their tendency to the same terminus.

Similarly, if the will did not presuppose the intellect and did not depend on it, it would not be distinguished from it; there would be not two but one faculty. Spinoza, in his absolute intellectualism inclines to this view; he reduces the will to a natural appetite or the natural inclination of the intellect itself to truth. At most there would be two entirely equal faculties (ex aequo), and this is impossible for there would be no order between them, as was explained in the third argument of St. Thomas' second article. For it to be a rational appetite, the will must proceed from the substance of the soul, presupposing the emanation from the intellect; thus the will proceeds from the intellect and is distinguished from it; and so also analogically if the Holy Ghost does not proceed from the Son, He is not distinct from the Son.

THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER THE HOLY GHOST PROCEEDS FROM THE FATHER THROUGH THE SON

State of the question. This article was written because the Greek Fathers and St. Hilary used this expression.

Reply. The reply is in the affirmative in the sense that the Son has from the Father that by which the Holy Ghost proceeds from Him. Analogically, a statue proceeds from the sculptor through the hammer or chisel, because the hammer is operated by the power of the sculptor. But the Son is not like an instrument of the Father or His assistant, but an intermediate person who, by reason of origin, has from the Father that by which the Son proceeds from Him.

Doubt. Does the Holy Ghost proceed immediately from the Father?

Reply. In his reply to the first difficulty, St. Thomas replies in the affirmative, namely, that the Holy Ghost proceeds directly from the power of the Father because the spirative power in the Father and the Son is the same, indeed it is one act of spiration. More than this: the Holy Ghost proceeds immediately from the Father directly from His suppositum (as Abel proceeds from Adam), although there is an intermediate person. Analogically, between Adam and Abel there is Eve, who herself proceeded from Adam and from whom Abel proceeded. This analogy is quite inept, of course, with regard to the divine processions.

In his reply to the fourth objection, St. Thomas explains why we cannot say conversely that the Son spirates the Holy Ghost through the Father. The

reason is that the Father does not receive from the Son that by which the Holy Ghost proceeds from Him. But the Father is not a more immediate principle by reason of His power since this power is the same in the Father and the Son.

In the triangle the third angle constructed proceeds immediately from the first and second, and the second angle is not less necessary for the construction of the third than the first.

Similarly, the will proceeds immediately from the soul, of which it is a faculty, although the activity of the intellective faculty is presupposed, without which the will would not be the rational appetite. The will, then, is a faculty, not of the intellect, but of the soul itself and immediately pertains to the soul, although the intellect comes from the soul prior to the will.

FOURTH ARTICLE: WHETHER THE FATHER AND THE SON ARE ONE PRINCIPLE OF THE HOLY GHOST

State of the question. It is asked whether this proposition is true in its strict sense. We note that the Greeks considered the Filioque a serious objection against the Latins, understanding that the Latins implied that there were two principles of the Holy Ghost.

Reply. The reply is in the affirmative; there is but one principle. This is proved by the authority of St. Augustine: “We must confess that the Father and the Son are not two principles but one principle of the Holy Ghost.” This doctrine is also supported by St. Basil and St. Ambrose, and was proclaimed in the Councils of Lyons and Florence.

The theological reason given in the body of the article is as follows: the Father and the Son are one in all things in which they are not distinguished by opposition of relation. But in their being the principle of the Holy Ghost they are not relatively opposed.

In explanation of this reasoning we point out that in order to multiply a substantive name, like God, or man, which denotes a form with an accompanying suppositum, both the form and the suppositum must be multiplied. Hence we cannot say “several gods.” On the other hand, for the multiplication of an adjective, like divine and white, which does not denote a form with the accompanying suppositum but only as something attached to the suppositum, it is not required that the form be multiplied; only the suppositum need be multiplied, and thus we say not “three gods, “ but

“three divine beings.” But the term, principle of the Holy Ghost, like spirator, is a substantive name. Therefore there is one principle and one spirator, but two spirating beings (the adjective form), as St. Thomas explains in his reply to the first difficulty. Thus, according to a rather remote analogy, when the Holy Ghost Himself “asketh for us with unspeakable groanings, “ there is but one prayer and two who ask: the inspirer and the other inspired. In inquiring how operating grace is distinguished from cooperating grace, St. Thomas explains that under operating grace the soul is moved and not moving, no matter how vitally, freely, or meritoriously it consents to the special inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Such are the acts of the gifts of the Holy Ghost and here the effect is attributed to the one who moves, namely, God who inspires us. Thus St. Paul says, “The Spirit Himself asketh for us.”

Doubt. What is the suppositum for the spirator or principle of the Holy Ghost?

Reply. This term “spirator” has for its suppositum two persons taken together, as when we say that the father and mother are the principle of the son. The adequate principle is the father and mother taken together, and in this sense we understand the proposition; man generates man. The father alone is the inadequate principle. Proportionally this is true in the present question.

CHAPTER XI

QUESTION 37 LOVE AS THE NAME OF THE HOLY GHOST

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER LOVE IS THE PROPER NAME OF THE HOLY GHOST

State of the question. It seems that love is not the proper name of the Holy Ghost since the three persons love, and love therefore is predicated essentially. Moreover, love is the name of an action, not of a subsisting person, and it is predicated of the Holy Ghost as His operation after He is constituted a person.

Reply. The reply is in the affirmative. Love, used personally and not essentially or notionally, is the proper name of the Holy Ghost.

1. Proof from authority. St. Gregory the Great declared: “The Holy Ghost Himself is love.” St. Augustine also frequently uses the name “love” to designate the Holy Ghost. This usage is plainly in accord with the Latin theory of the Trinity, according to which the Holy Ghost proceeds after the manner of love, and the term of such procession can be called love. But we do not have an explicit warrant in Sacred Scripture for the use of this appellation, while on the other hand the Son of God is explicitly called “the Word” in the Scriptures. St. Ambrose calls the Holy Ghost the charity of God, and this thought is also expressed in the liturgy:

Thou who art called the Paraclete,
Best Gift of God above,
The living Spring, the living Fire,
Sweet Unction, and true Love !

The Eleventh Council of Toledo makes reference to this name: “The Holy Ghost is shown to have proceeded from the Father and the Son because He is acknowledged to be the charity or the holiness of both.”

In the writings of the Greek Fathers the Third Person of God has one proper name, the Holy Ghost, but He has various appellations: kleseis, that is, energeia, or vital action, the gift of God and certain symbolic names: living spring, chrism, anointment, and spiritual unction. But the Greeks do not distinguish the proper name from the others as the Latins do.

2. Theological proof. In the body of the article St. Thomas argues that love is accepted in three senses: essentially, notionally, and personally. In all three senses it is substantial love. In the essential sense it denotes the condition of the lover with reference to the thing loved and belongs to the three persons like intellection. Notionally love signifies active spiration, by which the Holy Ghost is designated as proceeding from the spirating Father and Son, just as in the first procession the enunciation as distinct from intellection is something notional, as will be explained more fully below in question 41. Personally love denotes the condition of him who proceeds after the manner of love with regard to his principle, and in this sense it is a proper name of the Holy Ghost proceeding from the mutual love of the Father and the Son as a "certain impression of the thing loved in the affection of the lover," as St. Thomas says. This notional love of the Father and the Son is unique if understood substantively, because there is but one spiration and indeed only one spirator; it is also said to be mutual when understood adjectively because there are two spirating.

As we have said in the first article of question 36, the procession of love is not as well understood by us as the procession after the manner of intellection, and therefore we do not have the proper terms to designate what pertains to love. Thus while the term of enunciation in the intellect has a proper name, the mental word, the immanent terminus of love is unnamed. Three reasons are given for this: 1. the intellect knows better what is in itself than what is in the will; 2. good, the object of love, is not formally in the mind as truth, that is, as the conformity of the judgment with the thing, but it is in things outside the mind. A certain terminus of love exists in the affection of the lover, "I certain impression of the thing loved on the affection of the lover" and at the same time "an impulse to the thing loved." In St. Augustine's words, "My love (is) the pressure that is on me." Thus love can be predicated of God not only essentially and notionally but also personally because, although a special name for the immanent terminus of love is lacking, we use the common name of love; 3. a reason why love, the act of the will, is less known than the act of the intellect arises from the

fact that a thing is not intelligible except inasmuch as it is in act or determined; but the act of the will or love, tending to the good which is in things, retains something that is potential. We do not understand divine love, which is determined to the highest degree, except from the analogy with our love, whose tending to the good remains somewhat potential and not fully determined. From this difficulty in understanding the things that pertain to love comes this poverty of words, and so we must have recourse to common terms.

Because of this limited vocabulary we often hear preachers speak of the Holy Ghost as if He were the active, mutual love of the Father and the Son, whereas this love is active spiration and if the Holy Ghost were identified with it there would be only two persons in God. Certainly the Holy Ghost is not the active spiration which is in the Father and the Son; He is the terminus of that spiration, a terminus which is opposed to the first two divine persons by the opposition of the relation of procession or of passive spiration.

The Intimate Nature Of The Terminus Of The Procession Of Love

With regard to the immanent and unnamed terminus of love, we should note what St. Thomas says: “the thing loved is in the lover, not according to the likeness of the species as the thing known is in the intellect, but as that which inclines and to some extent intrinsically impels the lover toward the thing loved.”

By analogy with the word of the intellect this unnamed and immanent terminus can be called, as it were, the word of love, keeping in mind that it is a kind of inverted word, that is, it is produced not by the lover as the intellectual word is produced by him who understands but rather the thing loved attracting the lover to itself. Truth is formally in the mind (as the conformity of the judgment with the thing); but good is in things (as the perfection of a lovable thing) and draws the lover to itself. Cajetan says: “The thing loved does not become different in the lover except according to the affection of the lover for the thing loved... . Thus the lover is drawn, transformed, and objectively impelled to the thing loved, and so the lover is in that which is loved... . To be loved is not to be drawn, but to draw the lover... . Therefore to be in the will as loved is to be in the will as drawing it, “ or attracting the will to itself. This is what St. Thomas remarks so often: knowledge draws the object, for instance, God, to us, but love draws us to the good which is in things. Therefore in this life “the love of God is

better than the knowledge of God." While this terminus of the act of love is difficult to express, we find it expressed in various languages as a wound. In the Canticle of Canticles: "Thou hast wounded my heart, my sister, my spouse"; and some of the mystics, St. Theresa and St. John of the Cross, often speak of this holy wound of love by which God enters into our hearts and inclines and impels us to Himself. This holy wound of divine love completely heals the wounds of sin. It was this truth that prompted the beautiful prayer of St. Nicholas of Flue: "O my Lord and my God, take me from myself and make me entirely Thine."

St. Paul also speaks of this drawing by our Lord: "Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect: but I follow after, if I may by any means apprehend, wherein I am also apprehended by Christ Jesus." These last words signify not only that Christ knew St. Paul perfectly, but that He also accepted him on the day of his conversion as His apostle and beloved disciple and that Christ always drew St. Paul Himself. Thus the Christ who is loved is in St. Paul, who loves, as drawing St. Paul to Himself.

Although the immanent terminus of love has no name, it finds at least metaphorical expression in various languages, especially in the metaphor of a wound. This metaphor is explained by St. Thomas as follows: Love causes a languishing, a sadness, because of the absence of the lover; it wounds, and sometimes violently draws the lover outside himself and thus produces ecstasy and rapture. Hence we see that even in his intellectualism St. Thomas did not ignore the psychology of love even though there is such a penurious vocabulary about it; he intentionally makes use of general terms and supplies with such metaphors as that of the wound.

Solution Of The Difficulties

In article I, in the reply to the second objection, St. Thomas says that in God love can be a divine person inasmuch as it is subsisting and also incommunicable as the terminus of the second procession.

The third objection: Love is a nexus between lovers; but the nexus is the medium between those things which it joins and therefore it is not a terminus or something that proceeds.

Reply. The Holy Ghost is at the same time a nexus and a terminus, since He is the terminus of the mutual love of the Father and the Son. This mutual spirating love is notional love, and the Holy Ghost is personal love. The Holy Ghost is said to be the terminus of mutual love inasmuch as He

proceeds from two spirators, but the love of the two spirators is unique since there is only one spiration.

In the reply to the fourth objection we learn that the Holy Ghost loves with an essential love like the Father and the Son. We should note how St. Thomas safeguards the proper meaning of the terms. “The word,” he says, “onnotes the condition of the word with respect to the thing expressed by the word.” That which is really understood is the thing understood in the word; that is, what we first understand in direct intellection is not the mental word of the extramental thing but the nature of the extramental thing expressed by the mental word. We know the extramental thing in the word but not in the word first seen or known in itself. On the other hand we know a man in his reflection, and the reflection is that which is first seen or known, and God knows all creatures in Himself and He knows and sees Himself first, for what is first known by the divine intellect is the divine essence itself and not possible or actual creatures.

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER THE FATHER AND THE SON LOVE EACH OTHER BY THE HOLY GHOST

State of the question. In the sed contra St. Augustine is quoted as saying that the Father and the Son love each other by the Holy Ghost. But the difficulty arises because the Father and the Son cannot love each other by the Holy Ghost either by essential love or by notional love, just as we do not say that the Father understands the Son by the Son or begets by the Son. But the Father and the Son have no other love than essential and notional love.

Reply. Nevertheless the reply is in the affirmative: the Father and the Son love each other by the Holy Ghost with notional love as a tree is said to flower with flowers.

1. Proof from authority. The text of St. Augustine, quoted in the argument, had been explained in several ways by Scholastics prior to St. Thomas as is indicated in the beginning of the body of the article.

2. Theological proof. A distinction is made between essential and notional love. If love is understood essentially, the Father and the Son do not love each other by the Holy Ghost but by the divine essence because the Holy Ghost is not essential but personal love. By essential love the three divine persons love one another in one and the same act of the divine will,

and this act of essential love is identified with the divine essence. But if love is understood notionally, that is, as denoting the third person, then love is nothing else than the spiration of personal love just as enunciation is the production of the word and flowering is the production of flowers. So as we say that a tree flowers with flowers and the Father understands Himself and creatures by the Word, so the Father and the Son are said to love themselves and us by the Holy Ghost, that is, by proceeding love. As we have said, this notional love is mutual although there is but one active spiration and one spirator with two who spirate.

St. Thomas, explanation is more satisfactory than those proposed by earlier Scholastics who understood the ablative “spiritu Sancto” (by the Holy Ghost) either as a sign of mutual love and thus weakened the sense of the expression; or as a formal cause, as if the Holy Ghost were the mutual love of the Father and the Son and thus identified the Holy Ghost with active spiration and then there would be no third person; or as the formal effect, and this last approaches closest to the truth.

Therefore we must say that the Father and the Holy Ghost love each other by notional love inasmuch as the Holy Ghost is the terminus of this love. Confirmation is found in a rather remote analogy: parents are said to love each other by their son since the son is the terminus of their love in the sense that we say that a tree flowers with flowers. We refer the reader to the third paragraph of the body of the article.

Reply to the second objection. “Whenever the understanding of any action implies a determined effect, the principle of the action can be denominated by the action and the effect.”

Reply to the third objection. “The Father loves not only the Son but also Himself and us by the Holy Ghost as He enunciates Himself and every creature by the Word which He generates.” This is so “because the Holy Ghost proceeds as the love of the first goodness according to which the Father loves Himself and all creatures.” Hence the Holy Ghost proceeds not only from the mutual love of the Father and the Son but also from the love of the first goodness, which the Father loves in Himself and in the Son and which the Son loves in Himself and in the Father. In this way many difficulties proposed recently on this point are solved.

Doubt. From the love of which things does the Holy Ghost proceed?

Reply. The Holy Ghost proceeds per se from the love of all the things that are formally in God, and per accidens and concomitantly from the love

of creatures. This is because the Holy Ghost proceeds from the most perfect love. By this love whatever is in God is necessarily loved and by it God freely loves creatures. But the Holy Ghost does not proceed from the love of possible creatures since God is not said to love possible creatures because He does not will for them the good of existence. This suffices to explain why the Holy Ghost is properly called love, namely, personal Love.

Corollary. The expression sometimes heard, “incarnate love,” is not admissible as is “incarnate Word,” because it seems to imply the incarnation of the Holy Ghost.

We may recall here how beautifully the liturgy makes use of metaphors to express this doctrine, particularly in the hymn Veni Creator:

Thou who art called the Paraclete,
Best gift of God above,
The living spring, the living fire,
Sweet unction, and true love!
O guide our minds with Thy blest light,
With love our hearts inflame,
And with Thy strength, which ne’er decays,
Confirm our mortal frame.

Since, as St. Thomas says, those things which pertain to love are unnamed, the liturgy has recourse to various metaphors, some of them opposed to the others, as the spring of living water and fire, but whatever is said dividedly is finally united in spiritual love.

In the sequence, Veni, Sancte Spiritus, the liturgy amasses antithetic metaphors about the Holy Ghost:

Thou in labor rest most sweet,
Thou art shadow from the heat,
Comfort in adversity.
What is soiled, make Thou pure;
What is wounded, work its cure;
What is parched, fructify;
What is rigid, gently bend;
What is frozen, warmly tend;
Strengthen what goes erringly.

In the preparation for Mass among the seven prayers to the Holy Ghost we read: “Inflame, O Lord, our reins and our hearts with the fire of the Holy Ghost; that we may serve Thee with a chaste body and please Thee with a

pure mind.” As we have a consecration to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and to the Blessed Virgin Mary we should also consecrate ourselves to the Holy Ghost.

CHAPTER XII

QUESTION 38 THE GIFT AS THE NAME OF THE HOLY GHOST

PRELIMINARY REMARKS

THIS question is the basis for the question on the missions of the divine persons (question 43) and it is also fundamental to the questions on grace. For a clear understanding of the following articles we must first present a few notes on the differences between the Latin and Greek Fathers.

For the Latin Fathers the natural order, or the order of creation, depends efficiently and finally on the one God, the author of nature; the supernatural order, or the order of grace, depends efficiently and finally on the triune God, the author of grace. For the Greeks, the natural order is also produced by God ad extra through efficient causality and by the command whereby God in pronouncing the fiat produced all created things from nothing. The supernatural order, however, for the Greeks is rather the indwelling of the divine persons in the just than an effect of efficient causality ad extra. This indwelling is in a sense a prolongation of the divine processions ad extra, distinct from the creative action as living is distinct from commanding. Living is an action essentially immanent whereas the divine command is something that refers to things outside the divine nature. It was in this sense that the Greek Fathers interpreted St. Peter's words, "My whom He hath given us most great and precious promises: that by these you may be made partakers of the divine nature." In order that the intimate life of God may come to us it is necessary that the divine persons themselves, without whom this intimate life of God cannot exist, should come to us in their substantial reality. It is not enough that the Father should have the simple will of adopting; He must operate, as it were, by His nature or according to His intimate life by sending us the Son and the Holy Ghost. Thus in the mind of

the Greek Fathers the order of grace is rather the order of substantial indwelling than an effect of divine causality, and therefore the Greeks insist that we receive not only grace, which is a created effect, but the Holy Ghost, who is the gift par excellence. For Origen and the Alexandrian Fathers, the Holy Ghost is the substantial font of all graces. For Didymus the Holy Ghost is the seal impressed on the soul, and sanctifying grace is the impression of this seal in its passive aspect, and this seal must remain in the soul.

Similarly St. Basil and St. Gregory Nazianzen call our sanctification a deification, and this deification is described as the projection of God's inner life ad extra by the divine missions.

For the Greek Fathers, then, the Holy Ghost is the uncreated gift and at the same time the enexgeia metaphorically expressed by the figure of the spring of living water; and this uncreated gift is prior, on the part of God who gives it, to the created gift of grace. In this sense they also understood the words, "The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us."

St. Thomas does not appear to recede from this position of the Greek Fathers, although he does insist that habitual grace is a previous disposition on the part of the subject, man, for the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. This does not preclude the idea that the Holy Ghost on the part of the efficient cause, which is God, is given prior to grace. Causes are often causes of each other; thus the ultimate disposition for a perfection precedes the perfection in the order of material cause and follows it as a property in the order of formal cause. In the theory of the Greek Fathers, although the entire Trinity dwells in the just, the Holy Ghost is in the just by a special presence which is more than the presence by appropriation of which the Latin Fathers speak. In other words, the theory of the Greek Fathers, which considers the three persons prior to the divine nature, finds it easier to explain the special nature of the mission of the Holy Ghost, which as a mission is something more than simple appropriation.

In the Greek mind the Father, in order to sanctify men and angels, sends them the uncreated gift, namely, the Holy Ghost, who dwells personally in the just and by circumincession, as it were, draws the Son, who is also sent, and the Father, who is not sent but who comes. Thus the Holy Ghost dwells in us formally as a person and as the uncreated gift. There is not, however, a hypostatic union of the soul of the just man with the Holy Ghost because

the just man retains his own personality and the union with the Holy Ghost is not substantial but only accidental.

According to the theory of the Latin Fathers the Holy Ghost dwells in us by reason of the divine nature, because the Latins considered the divine nature before the three persons, and in the souls of the just they considered first the participation in the divine nature, which is created grace, before they considered the uncreated gift, for which grace disposes the soul. These are two aspects of the same mystery, and divine Providence has arranged that both be studied so that we might understand this mystery better although we shall never be able to express it adequately.

From this it is clear that the Greeks understood the absolute distinction between the order of nature and the order of grace; indeed they declare that without the uncreated gift we cannot be made partakers of the divine nature; that is, habitual grace cannot be infused except through the divine persons dwelling in the just, especially by the Holy Ghost, who is the uncreated gift, the living spring of all graces.

This at all events is the interpretation of the doctrine of the Greek Fathers proposed by many modern authors although the doctrine of the Greek Fathers in other texts seems to be closer to St. Augustine and the Latin Fathers.

We shall now consider how St. Thomas preserved the doctrine of the Greek Fathers and how he reconciled it to the Latin theory of the two processions after the manner of intellection and of love. This question has two articles: 1. whether “the Gift” can be taken as a personal name; 2. whether it is a proper name of the Holy Ghost. Such is St. Thomas’ procedure because the Son of God is also given to us, and he wished to show that the Holy Ghost is properly the gift.

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER “THE GIFT” IS A PERSONAL NAME

State of the question. It appears that “gift” is not a personal name because the divine essence is the gift which the Father gives the Son. Moreover, a gift is something inferior to the giver. Finally, gift implies a reference to creatures and is predicated of God in time, whereas personal names are predicated of God from eternity.

Reply. Nevertheless the reply is that it belongs to a divine person to be given and to be a gift.

1. Proof from authority. This entire doctrine has its source in the words of our Lord as explained by St. John and St. Paul. Jesus said to the Samaritan woman: “If thou didst know the gift of God, and who He is that saith to you, Give Me to drink; thou perhaps wouldst have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water... . But the water that I will give him, shall become in him a fountain of water, springing up into life everlasting.” The living water springing up into life everlasting is grace, the seed of glory, but the spring of the living water or the font of grace is something else than grace. These words are explained by our Lord Himself later on: “If any man thirst, let him come to Me, and drink. He that believeth in Me, as the Scripture saith, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. Now this [the Evangelist adds] He said of the Spirit which they should receive, who believed in Him; for as yet the Spirit was not given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.” It pertains, then, to the glory of Christ to give His supreme gift, the uncreated gift of the Holy Ghost. The same doctrine is found in St. Paul’s letter to the Romans: “The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us.”

In the light of these texts of the New Testament many passages of the Old Testament, cited by the Fathers, especially Didymus, appear much clearer. In Jeremias we read: “They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living water, and have digged to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.” How true these words are of those who put aside everything that disposes to the contemplation of God and lose themselves in mere human learning and are busy with trifles! They gnaw at the shell and never taste the meat, as Pope Leo XIII pointed out.

In the prophecy of Isaias we read: “For I will pour waters upon the thirsty ground, and streams upon the dry land: I will pour out My spirit upon thy seed, and My blessing upon thy stock.” “And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him.” “And the Lord will give thee rest continually, and will fill thy soul with brightness, and deliver thy bones, and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a fountain of water whose waters shall not fail.” And in the prophecy of Joel we read: “I will pour out My spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,... moreover upon My servants and handmaids in those days I will pour forth My spirit.”

These words of Joel were quoted by St. Peter on Pentecost to explain the extraordinary events of that day: “For these are not drunk, as you suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day: but this is that which was spoken

of by the prophet Joel: And it shall come to pass, in the last days (saith the Lord) I will pour out of My spirit upon all flesh... and they shall prophesy."

In the psalms we often read of the font of life," or with thee is the fountain of life: and in thy light we shall see light"; "His wind (spirit) shall blow, and the water shall run"; "the stream of the river maketh the city of God joyful."

In the mirror of sensible things by this metaphor of the spring of living water we find a wonderful expression of the Holy Ghost, the font of all graces. We may add those texts of the New Testament in which the Holy Ghost is promised or the mystery of Pentecost is commemorated, "We shall give you another Paraclete, " "Receive ye the Holy Ghost."

After these preliminary remarks it will be easy to understand the reply to this article: It is proper for a divine person to be given and to be a gift.

This is theologically explained in the body of the article. Obviously the syllogism is explicative and not objectively illative because we do not arrive at a new truth distinct from the truth contained in the passages quoted from revelation. The theological explanation is an analysis of the concept of gift. The word "gift" implies the aptitude to be given, an aptitude toward the giver and to him to whom the gift is made so that the receiver may really accept and enjoy the gift. But any divine person can be given by another inasmuch as it proceeds from that person, and a divine person may be possessed by a rational creature if the creature also is given the ability to enjoy the divine person. Therefore the name "gift" is a personal name, or it belongs to a divine person to be given and to be a gift.

The reader is referred to the article, where we see that this presence of the Holy Ghost in the just is real and not an intentional, representative, or affective presence like the presence of the humanity of Christ or of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who remain physically distant.

Reply to the first objection. "The Holy Ghost gives Himself inasmuch as He has disposition over Himself and is able to enjoy Himself, just as a free man is said to have disposition over himself... . But in the case when the gift is said to be from the giver (by origin) it is thus distinguished personally from the giver and then 'gift' is a personal name."

It should be noted that as the Holy Ghost gives Himself so Christ gives Himself in Holy Communion, especially when He gave Himself to His apostles with His own hands. To give oneself is much more excellent than to give something external to oneself; it is a sign of great love. Thus in God,

the Father gives Himself to the Son and to the Holy Ghost, communicating something of Himself, His own divine nature.

Reply to the third objection. "'Gift' when it is used as a personal name in God does not imply subjection but only origin with regard to the giver. In comparison to the receiver, however, it implies free disposition (if the gift is inferior to the giver) or fruition (if the gift is a divine person)." This is the basis of that mystical, fruition union in which the soul of the just man, already purified, experimentally knows the divine persons as really present in itself and enjoys them imperfectly in this life in anticipation of the perfect enjoyment in heaven. From this it follows that infused contemplation, which proceeds from a living faith illuminated by the gifts of knowledge and wisdom, and the mystical union that results, are not something extraordinary like the gifts of prophecy and tongues. They are rather something at once eminent and normal in perfect souls, a certain normal beginning of eternal life, like the acts of the gifts or virtues which are perfected by the gifts of the Holy Ghost, as St. Thomas said in speaking of the beatitudes.

Reply to the fourth objection. "A divine person is called gift from eternity although He is given in time" for He has this aptitude to being given from eternity. Nor does the name "gift" imply a real relation to creatures but only a relation of reason.

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER "GIFT" IS A PROPER NAME OF THE HOLY GHOST

State of the question. It seems that "gift" is not a proper name of the Holy Ghost because it is also used for the Son, "I son is given to us," and "God so loved the world, as to give His only-begotten Son." This name, moreover, does not appear to signify any property of the Holy Ghost since it is predicated with respect to creatures, which are able not to be and which are not from eternity.

Reply. Nevertheless the reply is that "gift" taken personally in God is the proper name of the Holy Ghost.

1. Proof from authority. This is proved by the authority of St. Augustine: "As to be born is to be the Son from the Father, so for the Holy Ghost to be the gift of God is to proceed from the Father and the Son."

2. The theological proof. A beautiful explanation is taken from the fact that the Holy Ghost is personal love, as was explained above. Here St.

Thomas reconciled the theories of the Greek and Latin Fathers; for the Latins the Holy Ghost is personal love, for the Greeks He is the uncreated gift of God.

The reasoning may be summed up as follows: Since a gift implies a gratuitous donation based on love, the first thing that we give another is the love by which we will good for him. Thus love is the first gift and the root of all other gifts. But the Holy Ghost proceeds as personal love. Therefore He proceeds as the first gift and consequently "gift" is a name proper to Him, that is, it belongs to Him rather than to the Son.

If however "gift", is understood essentially, it belongs to the three divine persons, who are able to communicate and give themselves to us gratuitously. If "gift" is taken notionally, according to its passive origin from the giver, it refers also to the Son, but less properly than to the Holy Ghost, who alone proceeds as personal love.

The reader is referred to the article.

Thus once again is confirmed the Latin theory of the Trinity, according to which the Son proceeds as the intellectual word and the Holy Ghost as love. This doctrine admirably agrees with revelation and is based on the fact that the Son is called the Word in the prologue of the Fourth Gospel, and on the fact that the Scriptures call the Holy Ghost the uncreated gift of God; for the primary gift is love, the root of all gratuitous donation. St. Thomas thus preserves what the Greek Fathers taught about the Holy Ghost, the uncreated gift, and His indwelling in the souls of the just. The Greek theory is more concrete; it speaks of God the Father as the Creator, of the Son as the Savior, and of the Holy Ghost as the Sanctifier. The Latin theory is more abstract; in a more abstract way it considers the divine nature common to the three persons and the participation in that divine nature, which is habitual grace without which the indwelling of the Holy Ghost does not take place. The Latins had to be more abstract in their approach because they began with the divine nature as that which is common to the three persons. Gradually it became clearer that every divine operation ad extra, such as creation and sanctification, is common to the three persons because it proceeds from the omnipotent divine will, which as an attribute of the divine nature belongs to all three persons. Thus the Father cannot be said to be the Creator in the sense that He alone creates, nor is the Holy Ghost properly the Sanctifier as if He alone sanctified, but these terms are

predicated of these persons by appropriation. It was necessary for the Latins in this way to complement the concept of the Greeks.

Those who write about love from the psychological or theological viewpoint ought to keep in mind that love, especially pure and gratuitous love, is the gift par excellence from which other gifts flow. The Latin theory offers an excellent explanation for the Greeks, frequent assertion that the Holy Ghost is the fountain of living water, the source of all graces, namely, because He is love and the first and most excellent gift. This is a legitimate commentary on our Lord's words to the Samaritan woman and on the following: "If any man thirst, let him come to Me, and drink... . Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. Now this He said of the Spirit which they should receive."

Corollary. As Christians we should try to attain a more intimate union with the Holy Ghost, who is the most excellent of all divine gifts and the root of all others. This present doctrine should be applied to all those who are seeking to live an interior life and not only to those who are led by God along extraordinary paths and who receive graces which are not given to all. If anyone should ask whether our Lord's words, "If thou didst know the gift of, God..." pertain to the ascetical life or the mystical life, it seems to me the question smacks of pedantry. Indeed it refers to the spiritual life, a spirituality it is true that is profound and leads to eternal life, for which the mystical life is only a normal and preliminary disposition in perfect souls.

In the Contra Gentes St. Thomas presents a beautiful chapter on the other proper and appropriated names of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is often called the nexus or bond of the Holy Trinity, the complacent joy of the Father and the Son, since the Holy Ghost is produced by the joyous love which the Father has for the Son. He is called the Paraclete and the consoler of the soul, the spiritual unction, which heals the wounds of our souls; the power of the Most High, because love is the greatest power; the finger of God, because the sending of the Son was the beginning of salvation, and the Holy Ghost is, as it were, the index and sign of sanctification.

CHAPTER XIII

QUESTION 39 THE DIVINE PERSONS IN COMPARISON WITH THE ESSENCE

We have completed the second part of the treatise, which deals with the divine persons in particular, and now we begin the third part, which treats of the divine persons: in comparison with the essence; 2. in comparison with the properties; 3. in comparison with the notional acts, namely, generation and active spiration; 4. and in comparison with each other.

At first sight it will appear to many readers that St. Thomas is again saying what he said in the first part of this treatise, when he treated of the persons absolutely in common and then went on to the two processions and the relations founded on the processions. St. Thomas, however, is not making a new beginning of the treatise. What in the first place he had considered analytically, first in common and then in particular, he now considers synthetically, that is, by comparing with each other all that has been determined theologically in the light of revelation. This treatise is a kind of circle, beginning with the processions, going on to the persons, and returning to the terminus a quo, that is, the divine processions. This "circular" contemplation may appear to be returning always to the same things but in reality it seeks always to penetrate more deeply into the matter just as the eagle high in sky seems to be making the same circle again and again, looking up into the sun and in the light of the sun above looking down on the vast expanse of the earth below. "This circular movement is the movement around the same central point. Dionysius ascribed to the angels a circular movement since they, uniformly and unceasingly, without beginning and without end, look upon God, just as circular movement has neither beginning nor end and uniformly moves about the same center."

We will understand the necessity of this synthetic part when we come to the theory of appropriation, which cannot be explained until we have

determined those things which are proper to each person, and when we consider the notional acts, active generation and active spiration, which presuppose the persons from whom these acts proceed.

DIVISION OF QUESTION 39

In question 39, on the divine persons in comparison with the divine essence, St. Thomas again considers (in the first two articles) the distinction of the persons, but not in the same manner as in question 28, which dealt with the relations. Then he proceeded analytically because he had not yet arrived at the concept of a person, explained later in question 29.

Now he considers the matter synthetically, beginning with the concept of a person, which has now been determined. After the first two articles, St. Thomas determines the exact manner of speech to be observed in order to avoid errors about the Trinity; he explains the essential names, whether concrete or abstract, the notional adjective, notional verbs, such as generate and spirate. Here he also explains the difficult theory of appropriation, to which the Latins, more than the Greeks, recur for a clearer presentation of the distinction between the persons. The Greek Fathers had no great need of this theory because they began with the consideration, not of the unity of nature, but of the Trinity of persons, which for them obviously were distinct from the beginning.

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER IN GOD THE ESSENCE IS THE SAME AS A PERSON

State of the question. In this title “the same” signifies real identity. It appears that the essence is not the same as the person because there are three persons and only one essence. Moreover, the persons are distinct and the essence is not distinct. Finally, the person is subject to the essence inasmuch as the person is the first subject of attribution and nothing is subject to itself.

Reply. The reply is in the affirmative: the persons are not really distinguished from the essence. This doctrine was defined by the Fourth Lateran Council: “In God there is only a Trinity, not a quaternity, because each of the three persons is that thing which is the substance, the essence, or the divine nature.” We have treated of this matter in question 28, where we referred to the definition of the Council of Reims against Gilbert

Porretanus. There we also expounded Scotus' theory, which tries to establish between the divine persons and the divine essence a distinction called formal-actual on the part of the thing.

In the sed contra St. Thomas quotes the authority of St. Augustine: "When we say the person of the Father we are saying nothing else than the substance of the Father." We should note that the words "nothing else" mean not really distinct. This point is of major importance with regard to St. Thomas, doctrine about the real distinction between a created essence and being. Although St. Thomas does not often say expressly that a real distinction exists between created essence and being, he often affirms that opinion. For example, in the Contra Gentes he says: "It is proper in every substance, except subsisting being itself, that the substance itself be one thing and the being another." In other words, antecedent to the consideration of our minds Peter is not his being; his being, which is in him as a contingent attribute, is something other than his essence. We are now asking whether a divine person is something other than the divine essence. St. Augustine answered in the negative.

In the body of the article St. Thomas coordinates and synthesizes the conceptual analysis given previously. He reasons as follows: Relations inhere accidentally in creatures, but in God they are the essence itself because their <esse in> is substantial. But a divine person, for example, the Father, signifies a subsisting relation. Therefore the divine persons are not really distinct from the divine essence although they are really distinct from each other because of the opposition of relation. Symbolically, in the triangle the three angles are really distinct from each other but they are not distinct from the common surface.

Reply to the first objection. This does not involve a contradiction because the relations are not distinguished from each other according to their <esse in> but only according to their <esse ad> because of their relative opposition.

Reply to the second objection. But the divine persons are distinguished from the essence just as the divine attributes are distinguished from one another, and this is sufficient so that something may be affirmed of the essence and denied of the persons; for example, the essence is communicable but paternity is not, just as mercy is the principle of forgiveness and justice is not.

Reply to the third objection. If it should be said that nothing is subject to itself, the reply is that the divine persons are analogically considered as the subject of the divine essence without any real distinction, whereas in sensible things there is a real distinction between the matter, by which the thing is individuated, and the form which is given to this subject; similarly in created things a real distinction exists between substance and the accidents.

Scotus raised certain objections against this article, but we have already considered them together with Cajetan's replies. We recall here that the formal-actual distinction on the part of the thing which was proposed by Scotus is an impossible middle between a real distinction and a distinction of reason. A distinction either precedes the consideration of our minds and then it is real, however weak it may be, or it does not precede the consideration of our minds and follows and then it is not real but of reason although it may often be founded in the thing and then it is called virtual. In the present instance the distinction in question is a virtual distinction of a minor order after the manner of that which is implicit and explicit, that is, the essence of God as understood by us implicitly contains the persons in act and the Deity as seen by the blessed and as it is in itself explicitly contains the persons in act.

No middle can be found between the distinction which precedes the consideration of our minds and the distinction which does not so precede. Scotus, theory of the formal-actual distinction on the part of the things sins against the rules of division. A division, as Aristotle pointed out, must divide the whole, and in order that it be adequate it must be into two members opposed to each other by affirmation and negation and not into three members. In the Porphyrian tree substance is divided per se, adequately and progressively into members contradictorily opposed to each other: corporeal and incorporeal substance; animate and inanimate corporeal substances; sensitive and non-sensitive living substances; sensitive rational and sensitive non-rational. Distinction must be divided in the same way: real distinction or that which precedes the consideration of our minds and the non-real, which does not precede the consideration of our minds; between these two we cannot conceive, nor can there be, a middle, because a thing either is or is not antecedent to the consideration of our minds.

Hence distinction, which is the absence of identity, must be divided immediately, not into three members (of reason, formal-actual on the part of the thing, and real), but into two members opposed to each other by contradiction:

1. Real distinction.

2. Distinction of reason, either founded on the thing, or virtual, or not founded on the thing.

The major virtual distinction after the manner of that which is excluded and excluding, for example, between genus and difference.

The minor virtual distinction after the manner of that which is implicit and explicit, for example, between the attributes of God.

A similar case arises in the division of divine science.

We recall here Cajetan's admirable reply to Scotus on this question: "The Deity as it is in itself is above being and above unity, it is above all simply simple perfections, which it contains formally and eminently in their formal natures." These words of Cajetan are the sublimest comment on this entire treatise.

"We fall into error," says Cajetan, "Then we proceed from the absolute and the relative to God, because the distinction between absolute and relative is conceived by us as prior to God and therefore we try to place God in one or the other of these two members of the distinction. Whereas the matter is entirely different. The divine nature is prior to being and all its differences, it transcends all being and is above unity... . Thus in God there is but one formal nature or reason, and this is neither purely absolute nor purely relative, not purely communicable or purely incommunicable, but it contains most eminently and formally both that which is of absolute perfection and whatever the relative Trinity requires."

This formal and most eminent nature is the Deity as it is in itself, and when the blessed behold God they see no distinction between the essence and paternity although the essence is communicable while the paternity is not. It appears therefore, as it were a posteriori, that the Deity is above being, although the Deity formally and eminently contains being; a sign of this is the fact that, whereas in the natural order being is particible, as are also good, truth, intellect, and will, the Deity as such cannot be participated in naturally by even the highest angel or creatable angel. Participation in the Deity can take place only through grace, which disposes us to see God immediately as He sees Himself, although not comprehensively.

The Deity inasmuch as it is above being, unity, intellect, and will is that great darkness of the mystics because it transcends the limits of intelligibility in this life.

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER WE MAY SAY THAT THE THREE PERSONS ARE OF ONE ESSENCE

State of the question. This is a question of terminology. The difficulty arises from the use of the genitive, “If one essence”; or it might be better to say, “One essence of three persons.”

Reply. The reply is in the affirmative. The formula is found in the councils, for example, “We confess and believe that the holy and ineffable Trinity, the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost, one God in nature to be of one substance, of one nature, and of one majesty and power.”

In the preface of the Mass of the Holy Trinity we say: “One God, one Lord: not in the singleness of one only person, but in the Trinity of one substance, “ that is, the three persons are of one essence. Thus the Church uses this genitive. As is said in the argument sed contra, this is a translation of the Greek homoousios, of one substance, that is to say, that the three persons are consubstantial, as was defined by the Council of Nicaea.

The theological argument, given in the body of the article, is the following. We cannot denominate divine things except in the manner of our own intellectual processes with the ever-present reference to creatures from which our concepts are derived. But in creatures the essence signifies the form of individuals and persons and is attributed to them. Thus we say the sanity of this man, or by means of the genitive we say, a man of perfect virtue.

Similarly in God, where the persons are multiplied and the essence is not, we say, the one essence of three persons, and the three persons are “of one essence, “ and the genitive is construed as signifying the form.

Reply to the fifth objection. We cannot say that the three persons are out of the same essence, because the preposition out of does not express the formal cause but the efficient and material cause, which do not exist in God with reference to the divine persons.

THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER THE ESSENTIAL NAMES CAN BE PREDICATED SINGLY OF THE THREE PERSONS

The question is whether the essential names are predicated of the three persons only singly or also in the plural, for example, whether we can say, in God there are three Gods, or at least three divine beings.

In reply we refer to the distinction between the substantive and adjective. Those things which signify the essence substantively are predicated of the three persons only singly and not in the plural; thus we do not say, three Gods. Those things, however, which signify the essence adjectively are predicated of the three persons in the plural: thus we say three wise beings.

It should be noted that what grammarians today call substantive and adjective were formerly called a substantive noun, as stone, wood; and an adjective noun, as white. It was called adjective because it denoted something that inhered in a subject like an accident.

The point is that a substance is in itself and not in another, and thus it has in itself its own unity or plurality. Therefore if a substantive noun is predicated in the plural it signifies a plurality of substances, for example, many men, in which the essence or substantial form is multiplied. Therefore we do not say, three Gods.

On the other hand an accident is not in itself but in another, and therefore the accident receives unity or plurality from its subject. In adjective nouns, therefore, the singularity or plurality follows on the subject or suppositum, and the multiplication of the suppositum suffices without the multiplication of the form, for example, if the same whiteness pertains to two supposita, we may say, two that are white.

Thus we do not say, three Gods, but three divine beings, three who exist, three who are eternal, three uncreated, if these terms are taken adjectively. In the Athanasian Creed we read: “The three persons are co-eternal together and co-equal.” If these words are taken substantively, we say One uncreated, as we read in the same Creed, “is also they are not three uncreated, nor three infinites: but one Uncreated, and one Infinite.”

Reply to the second objection. St. Thomas notes that in the Hebrew “Eloim” is used in the plural. But we do not say in the plural, Gods or substances, lest the plurality refer to the substance.

Reply to the third objection. That which pertains to a relation is predicated in the plural; that which refers to the substance is predicated in the singular. It is better to say three real relations than three relative realities, because the relations in God are not multiplied according to their

<esse in> but according to their <esse ad>. St. Augustine is quoted here as saying, “The very Trinity is the highest thing.”

FOURTH ARTICLE: WHETHER CONCRETE ESSENTIAL TERMS (GOD, NOT DEITY) CAN BE SUBSTITUTED FOR PERSON

The question is whether concrete essential names can be used as the subject of a proposition in place of the name of any person, for example, can we say God generates as we say the Father generates?

The difficulty arises from the fact that these concrete essential terms seem to signify the essence, since Deity and God are the same, and it is not the divine essence that generates, but the Father. Thus we could also say that God does not generate if “God” can be substituted for “the Son.”

The reply nevertheless is in the affirmative, with some explanation. God in the concrete signifies Deity in the suppositum and therefore God may express either the principle of operation common to the three persons, for example, God created heaven and earth, or one of the three persons. The particular signification must be determined by the exigencies of the predicate. Thus when we say God created heaven and earth, “God” stands for the three persons who have the same nature and omnipotence. On the other hand when we say, God generates, “God” stands for the Father alone because He alone generates. But we cannot say the Deity generates, as will be explained in article five.

FIFTH ARTICLE: WHETHER ESSENTIAL TERMS TAKEN IN THE ABSTRACT CAN BE SUBSTITUTED FOR PERSON

The reply is in the negative from the Fourth Lateran Council, which declared against the error of Abbot Joachim: “The divine essence does not generate, nor is it generated, but it is the Father who generates and the Son who is generated.” Abbot Joachim did not advert to the fact that the truth of a proposition depends not only on the thing signified but also on the manner of signification; the mode must also conform to the truth.

The reason for this reply is as follows: although the Deity is God without any real distinction, we cannot say that the Deity generates although we can say that God generates, because the formal signification is not the same. “Deity” signifies the divine essence in itself, but “God” signifies the divine

essence in the suppositum or in a person that possesses the divine essence. Only by reason of the suppositum of the Father is this proposition true: God generates, that is, inasmuch as “God” is substituted for “the Father.”

To say that the Deity generates and that the Deity is generated is to imply in the Deity a real distinction, which can exist only between the persons according to the opposition of relation, since no person can generate himself.

Reply to the fifth objection. But we can say that the divine essence is God generating or that which generates because here the predicate is used in place of the name of the person, and, as we shall see in the following article, we can say that the divine essence is the Father according to an identical predication.

SIXTH ARTICLE: WHETHER THE PERSONS CAN BE PREDICATED OF THE ESSENTIAL NAMES

The question is whether, for instance, we can say, the divine essence is the Father, God is the Father, as we say that the Father is God.

The reply is in the affirmative. This proposition is true: the Deity is the Father. The reason is that personal substantive names, like Father, can be predicated of the essence because of the real identity of the essence and the person. Thus we can say, the divine essence is the Father, and the divine essence is the Son; but we cannot say that the divine essence generates or is generating or spirating, because these are adjective names, which are attributed to persons but not to the three persons.

Cajetan notes that this proposition, “The divine essence is the Father, “ is true and necessary, not by formal predication but by identical predication, that is, solely because of the identity of the subject but not by reason of the thing signified. In the same way when we say the divine will is the divine intelligence, this is true identically but not formally. If it were formally true, we could substitute divine will for divine intelligence in every instance, just as we can substitute Tullius wherever we find Cicero. Then we could say that God knows by His will, that He pardons by His justice, and punishes by His mercy.

The proposition, “The divine essence is the Father, “ is true identically, while the proposition, “The essence generates, “ is false. It is also false to say that the divine will understands, for the adjective signifies the form in

the subject, and in this last statement there can only be a formal predication and not an identical predication because the divine will is a form and not the subject of a form. The divine subject does indeed understand but not by the will. The willing God understands, but it is not God's will itself that understands.

SEVENTH ARTICLE: WHETHER ESSENTIAL TERMS ARE TO BE PROPRIATED TO THE PERSONS

State of the question. This is the difficult question of appropriation. To solve it the theologian should preserve the "sense of the mystery," and he should not try to reduce the mystery in every instance to clear and univocal ideas. This theory of appropriation is found at least explicitly only among the Latins. The Greeks use the proper names of the persons, and besides this they speak only of appellations, kleseis, which are found in the Scriptures. As De Regnon points out, the Greeks have but one proper name for each of the divine persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Besides this they have especially for the Son many appellations: thus in the Scriptures the Son is called Logos, Wisdom, Truth, Image, Justice, Sanctification, Redemption, and Resurrection. According to the Greeks, these appellations are conducive to a better knowledge of a divine person, but they did not arrive at an explicit concept of appropriation. Indeed they had less need for this theory because they began their study with the three persons rather than with the unity of nature.

The Latin theologians, particularly the Scholastics, desired to perfect the doctrine of the Trinity by a precise classification of all terms and concepts. Thus they distinguished exactly, in the case of each divine person, the proper names from the other appellations found in Holy Scripture, and in making these distinctions they relied on St. Augustine's psychological theory, according to which the Son proceeds as the Word after the manner of intellection or rather enunciation, and the Holy Ghost proceeds after the manner of love.

Thus, as we have seen above, St. Thomas showed that the proper names of the Son are, the Son, Word, and Image, and the proper names of the Holy Ghost are Holy Ghost, Love, and Gift. The other appellations found in Scripture are not proper names, but they are appropriated to one person

rather than to another because of the affinity they have for one person rather than for another. Thus Wisdom is appropriated to the Son.

In presenting the question in this article, St. Thomas poses three difficulties against the theory of appropriation accepted by the Latin theologians.

1. A difficulty arises because this theory may lead to an error in faith since it is possible that essential terms, like wisdom, could be understood as belonging to one person alone, or to that person in a greater degree. This would be erroneous since the Father and the Holy Ghost are equally wise with the Son.

2. Another difficulty arises from the fact that abstract essential terms, like wisdom as distinct from a wise person, cannot be appropriated to any one person, for then the Son would be the wisdom of the Father or the form of the Father. But no person is the form of another person. Like the first difficulty, this one confuses an appropriation with a proper name.

3. That which is proper is prior to that which is appropriated. But the essential attributes are prior to the persons, at least according to our method of understanding, just as that which is common is prior to that which is proper. Therefore the essential attributes should not be appropriated to the persons.

This statement reveals the difficulties inherent in the theory, whether the appropriation is not adequately distinguished from the property or whether it is explicitly distinguished from it. The importance of this problem arises particularly from our manner of speaking of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in the soul by appropriation, although the Father and the Son also dwell in the souls of the just, according to our Lord's words, "If anyone love Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and will make Our abode with him." We shall see that a mission means more than an appropriation, although the appropriation is not merely something verbal.

Reply. St. Thomas replied: "For the manifestation of the faith it is fitting that essential attributes be appropriated to the persons." Such is the common answer of Latin theologians.

1. The reply is proved by the authority of St. Paul, who said, "Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." In this passage wisdom, which is an attribute common to the three persons, is appropriated to the Son. In the

following article we shall see other appropriations indicated by Holy Scripture.

2. The theological proof may be thus summed up. Although the Trinity of persons cannot be demonstrated, yet it can be fittingly explained by such truths as are clearer to us. But the essential attributes, known to us from creatures, are more clear to us than the properties of the three persons. Therefore it is fitting that the essential attributes be appropriated to the persons, especially when there is a similarity or affinity, as when wisdom is appropriated to the Son. The reader is referred to the article.

In reading the article the following difficulty comes to mind: if the essential attributes, known from creatures, can manifest the divine persons, then the divine persons can be known from creatures. St. Thomas replies to this difficulty in the body of the article. He recalls what was said earlier, that creatures are the effects of the creative omnipotence, which is common to the three persons, and from creatures therefore we cannot demonstrate the Trinity of persons. On the other hand Scripture tells us that there are traces of the Trinity in creatures, indeed even an image of the Trinity in the human soul. Hence the divine essential attributes, known from creatures with rational certitude, can in some way manifest the divine persons, although the Trinity cannot be demonstrated by them and can be known only through revelation.

This is to say, that the theory of appropriation is not something merely verbal, like the difference between Tullius and Cicero, nor is it merely a fiction in the theologians, minds, but it has according to the Scriptures a foundation in reality, at least a foundation of trace and image, although it is difficult to determine in what this foundation consists.

In general this appropriation is made because of likeness or affinity, but sometimes it is because of dissimilarity, as when power is appropriated to the Father, as St. Augustine said, because among men fathers are weak because of their age, and we should not insinuate anything like this about God.

Reply to the first objection. No error follows from this theory because a clear distinction is made between a property and an appropriation. At least in the tract on the Trinity appropriation does not signify that something becomes a property, because the essential attributes cannot become proper to any one person, nor is the Son wiser than the Father and the Holy Ghost. Appropriation signifies adaptation or accommodation, as the doctors of the

Church were accustomed to do when they attributed wisdom to the Son because He is the Word. We have therefore no error but rather more light on the truth.

Properties can easily be distinguished from appropriations. Properties are those things which are attributed to one person and cannot be attributed to another; appropriations are those things which of themselves are common to the three persons but for greater clarity are attributed to one person. Such was Cajetan's argument.

Abelard, however, ignored this distinction and fell into error. According to St. Bernard, he taught that power was proper to the Father, wisdom to the Son, and goodness to the Holy Ghost. Hence the following proposition was condemned: "The Father is full of power, the Son is a certain power, and the Holy Ghost has no power."

Reply to the second objection. If wisdom when appropriated to the Son would become proper to Him, the Son would become the form of the Father. But to be appropriated does not signify becoming a property. Hence when St. Paul said, "Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God, " he meant that the Son is the wisdom of the Father in the sense that the wisdom is from the wisdom of the Father as when we say Light of Light. Hence the Father is not wise by the wisdom which He generates but by the wisdom which is His essence.

Reply to the third objection. An essential attribute like wisdom is in itself prior to a person, but as appropriated it follows the property of a person. So color is consequent on the body but it is prior to a white body. Such is the solution of the difficulties although the idea of appropriation remains confused and we cannot arrive at a perfect distinction according to our manner of understanding. We must always retain the "sense of the mystery" and not attempt the clarification of every detail in this dogma.

EIGHTH ARTICLE: WHETHER THE HOLY DOCTORS PROPERLY ATTRIBUTED ESSENTIAL ATTRIBUTES TO THE PERSONS

State of the question. This question is concerned with the application of the theory of appropriation and the solution of certain special difficulties.

1. St. Hilary appropriates eternity to the Father; the reason is not apparent, for the three persons are co-eternal.

2. St. Augustine appropriates unity to the Father, equality to the Son, and concord or harmony to the Holy Ghost, whereas the three persons are co-equal.

3. St. Augustine also appropriates power to the Father; St. Paul appropriates it to the Son when he says, “Christ, the power of God.”

4. St. Augustine appropriates the following words to the three persons: “For of Him, and by Him, and in Him, are all things,” in this way: of the Father, by the Son, in the Holy Ghost. The reason for this attribution is not apparent.

5. Truth is appropriated to the Son but it seems to be proper to the Son.

Reply. To solve these difficulties and to show the fitness of these appropriations of the doctors, St. Thomas invokes this principle: God as known from creatures, just as creatures themselves, can be. considered in four ways: 1. as He is a being; 2. as He is one; 3. as He has the power of operation; 4. as He has a relationship to His effects.

This principle presents no difficulties, and St. Thomas shows that the appropriations made by Scripture and the Fathers were made according to these various considerations.

1. When God is regarded as the supreme being, eternity is appropriated to the Father, brightness to the Son, and use or fruition to the Holy Ghost. Thus St. Hilary. Why? Because the eternal is not from a principle, brightness or beauty belongs to the Son as the perfect image and splendor of the Father, and, use in the broad sense includes fruition and belongs to the Holy Ghost since the Father and the Son love each other and mutually enjoy the Holy Ghost. Such is the explanation of the appropriations made by St. Hilary.

2. When God is regarded as One, according to St. Augustine, unity is appropriated to the Father, equality to the Son, and concord to the Holy Ghost. Why? Because these three concepts imply unity in different ways. For unity absolutely speaking does not presuppose anything else and is therefore appropriated to the Father; equality implies unity with reference to another and thus is appropriated to the Son; and concord implies the unity of two according to the heart and is therefore appropriated to the Holy Ghost.

3. When God is regarded as having the power for operation, according to St. Augustine and others, power is appropriated to the Father, wisdom to the Son, and goodness to the Holy Ghost. Why? Because power has the nature

of a principle and thus has a likeness to the Father, who is the principle without principle. Wisdom has a similarity to the heavenly Son inasmuch as the Son is the Word or the concept of wisdom. Goodness, finally, is the basis and object of love and thus has a similarity with the Holy Ghost, who is personal love since He proceeds after the manner of love.

This appropriation, then, more commonly accepted by the Latin theologians than others, is based on the concept proposed by St. Augustine, according to which the Son proceeds after the manner of intellection or enunciation, and the Holy Ghost proceeds after the manner of love. A second reason of lesser importance is also given, based on dissimilarity, for as the earthly father as an old man is weak, the earthly son as young is not yet wise, and the earthly spirit is often evil and implies violence.

First corollary. The divine operations especially marked by power, as the creation of the world, are appropriated to the Father. Thus we read in the most ancient form of the Apostles, Creed, “I believe in God the Father almighty, “ and in the Nicene Creed, “I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker... of all things visible and invisible.”

Second corollary. The operations which are particularly marked by wisdom are appropriated to the Son. Thus the Nicene Creed says, “My whom all things were made, “ since they were made according to God’s wisdom, which orders the world. Besides this, the visible mission of the Son in the redemptive Incarnation is attributed to the Son properly and not by appropriation.

Third corollary. The operations which are especially marked by goodness are appropriated to the Holy Ghost, as the conferring of grace. Thus we read in the Constantinopolitan Creed, “And in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and vivifier... who was spoken of by the prophets.”

The Greek Fathers had little need for this theory of appropriation because in their exposition of the doctrine of the Trinity, as we have said, they began with the three persons, who are clearly distinguished in the New Testament, rather than with the unity of nature, which incidentally they had difficulty in safeguarding. On the other hand, the Latin Fathers, especially after the time of St. Augustine, since they began with the unity of nature had difficulty in showing the distinction between the persons. In order to explain this distinction between the persons they used the theory of appropriation, especially the appropriations of power, wisdom, and goodness, which have a valid foundation in the Apostles’ Creed even in its primitive form.

It is interesting to observe that the Greek Fathers, without any explicit theory of appropriation, explain how the creative omnipotence is attributed to the Father and sanctification is attributed to the Holy Ghost, although they were certain that in the operations ad extra the three persons act as one principle because they act by the divine intellect, will, and omnipotence, which are essential attributes and common to the three persons. In the introduction to this treatise, comparing the two theories, we said that among the advantages of the Latin theory was its ability to explain how the three divine persons are one principle of the operations ad extra, namely, creation, conservation, motion, providence, and divine governance. One of the difficulties of the Greek theory is that it does not clearly explain this point. This is not surprising for, when this latter theory starts out with the three persons rather than with the unity of nature, we expect that the difficulties would be the opposite of those in the Latin theory. The Greeks had difficulty in explaining the unity of nature, while the Latins had difficulty in explaining the real distinction of the persons. The mystery is simply infinite and impenetrable.

Finally St. Thomas presents a fourth appropriation based on St. Paul's words, "If Him, and by Him, and in Him, are all things." The "of" (ex) denotes the condition of an efficient cause, which belongs to the Father by reason of His omnipotence. The preposition "by" (per) designates the form by which the agent acts, as when the artist is said to work by his art, and this meaning is appropriated to the Son. The "in" denotes the condition of a container; God contains things inasmuch as He conserves them in His goodness and therefore this meaning is appropriated to the Holy Ghost as goodness is.

At the end of the article St. Thomas explains why truth and the "book of life" are appropriated to the Son, and also why the name "Who am." This last is appropriated to the Son because when God spoke to Moses he prefigured the liberation of the human race, which was accomplished by the Son.

We will return again to the theory of appropriation in question 43, when we treat of the indwelling of the Holy Trinity, which is appropriated to the Holy Ghost because this indwelling takes place by charity. By charity we are more closely assimilated to the Holy Ghost than we are assimilated by faith to the Son; we are not perfectly assimilated to the Son except by the light of glory, and then the Son will assimilate us to the Father.

CHAPTER XIV

QUESTION 40 THE PERSONS IN COMPARISON WITH THE RELATIONS

Many commentators (e. g., Billuart) present the doctrine of this question as a commentary of question 29, article 4, namely, whether a divine person is constituted by a relation, to which the reply is in the affirmative: a divine personality is a relation as subsisting and incommunicable. The same doctrine is now taken up again to be considered synthetically and not analytically, as earlier.

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER A RELATION IS THE SAME AS A PERSON

St. Thomas recalls that an incommunicable relation as subsisting is the same as a person, which is something subsisting and incommunicable. Moreover, in his reply to the first objection he shows that personal properties, like paternity and filiation, are not really distinct from the persons because as God and the Deity are the same (God is His own Deity), so the Father and paternity are the same. In God the abstract is not distinct from the concrete because there is no matter in God; on the contrary, humanity is only an essential part of the concrete man, who besides has individuating notes. God, however, is pure form without matter, and He is His own being and His own act. Properties that are not personal, such as active spiration, are not really distinct from the persons to whom they are attributed, because the simplicity of God excludes every real distinction except where there is opposition of relation.

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER THE PERSONS ARE DISTINGUISHED BY THE RELATIONS

St. Thomas replies affirmatively, as above in question 30, and also refutes the opinion of Alexander of Hales, attributed to St. Bonaventure, according to which the persons are constituted by the active and passive origins, for example, the Father is constituted by active generation and not by the relation of paternity.

To this St. Thomas replies that a person should be constituted by something intrinsic to the person itself that is stable and permanent in actual being. But the active and passive origins are rather extrinsic to the persons and they are conceived as in the state of becoming. Moreover, an active origin, like active generation, cannot formally constitute the person which it presupposes, since it is the Father who generates. Hence, according to our mode of conception it is better to say that the divine persons are constituted by the subsisting relations. Thus the Father signifies the First Person, and the generator is the property of this person.

Objection. That which presupposes a distinction cannot be the first principle of the distinction. But relation presupposes the distinction of the things that are related, since to be related means to have a reference to another. Therefore relation cannot be the first principle of distinction in God.

Reply. I concede the major. I distinguish the minor: a relation that is an accident presupposes the distinction of the supposita, I concede; a relation that is subsisting, I deny, because such a relation constitutes the persons and brings the distinction with it. So the reply to the third difficulty. Moreover, in proof of the minor it should be said that a relation has a reference to the correlative that is prior, this I deny; to the correlative that is simultaneous in nature, this I concede.

I insist. This was examined above. The relation which follows on active generation cannot constitute the person who generates. But the relation of paternity follows active generation since it is founded on active generation. Therefore the relation of paternity cannot constitute the person of the Father.

Reply. I distinguish the major: the relation as actually referring to the terminus, or that which in the exercise of the act refers to the Son (follows the person), this I concede; the relation which in the signified act modifies the divine essence (follows the person), this I deny. And I contradistinguish the minor.

Thus the first angle constructed in the triangle is a geometric figure even before it actually has a reference to the two other angles. So we can conceive whiteness in itself as that by which (ut quo) before we conceive it as modifying the wall (ut quod). Similarly habitual grace is conceived in itself before it is conceived as expelling sin; essence is conceived first in its formal act (in actu signato), as that which is capable of existence, before it is conceived as in the exercise of the act as having reference to a produced existence.

This distinction is not futile or without an analogy, but it must be said that relation, which is a predicamental in creatures, has a substantial <esse in> only in God and only in God can it constitute a person. Relation constitutes a person in God inasmuch as it is incommunicable and subsisting, and it constitutes a relative personality inasmuch as it is a relation.

In the third article of this question St. Thomas insists on the identity of the persons with the relations by which they are constituted, and he shows that the intellect cannot abstract the relations from the persons. This is contrary to the opinion attributed to St. Bonaventure. In explanation St. Thomas distinguishes between total abstraction, or logical abstraction, in which the entire universal (as genus or species) is abstracted from the particular, as, for example, animal from man, and formal abstraction, in which form is abstracted from matter, as, for example, when the form of the circle is abstracted from all sensible matter.

With respect to God we cannot use total or logical abstraction because God is not in any genus; hence we cannot abstract the relations from the persons. Nor can we by formal abstraction abstract the personal relations from the persons, for example, paternity from the Father, because there is no matter in God. The Father is His paternity and if we abstract the paternity nothing remains of the Father. On the other hand the form of the circle can be abstracted from all sensible matter, for example, from wood or stone.

THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER THE NOTIONAL ACTS ARE UNDERSTOOD PRIOR TO THE PROPERTIES

St. Thomas disagrees with the opinion of Alexander of Hales, attributed to St. Bonaventure, according to which the notional acts, for example,

generation, constitute the persons in such a way that active generation is antecedent to paternity according to our method of conception.

Reply. In St. Thomas' view the notional acts taken actively, such as to generate and to spirate, presuppose the persons from which they proceed as already constituted, and the persons are constituted by the subsisting relations, as was said above. Hence active generation, or enunciation, proceeds from the divine intellect as modified by the relation of paternity. And yet these notional acts are the bases of the relations inasmuch as the relations actually have a reference to their termini. In our method of conceiving these things the matter is rather obscure with regard to the active origins; this obscurity, however, does not arise with regard to the passive origins since a passive origin, such as passive generation, according to our method of conception precedes the filiation for which it is a basis.

Toward the end of the body of the article St. Thomas replies that a relation (for example, paternity) as a relation actually referring to the Son presupposes active generation; but active generation presupposes the person who generates and the personal property, paternity, as constituting the person. Here there is indeed a mystery but no contradiction. Similarly, in an equilateral triangle the first angle constructed, while it is alone, is a geometric figure but it does not yet refer to the other two angles not yet constructed.

The reader is referred to the article in the Summa.

In question 27 we have examined the difficulty presented by the Latin theory with regard to the proximate principle quo of the divine processions. We concluded that this principle is the divine intellect and will, not in themselves, but as they are modified by the relations of paternity and active spiration.

Nevertheless the relation of paternity as actually and actively terminated in the Son presupposes active generation. In this most difficult expression of the mystery we find something similar to the principle that causes are mutually causes of each other but in different genera. By reason of this principle, for example, the ultimate disposition for a form precedes the form in the order of material cause and afterward follows the form as a property in the order of formal cause. If we have difficulty in expressing this mutual relationship between the material and formal disposition of corporeal beings, it is not surprising that we should find it difficult to express the

mutual relationships between the divine relations, such as paternity, and the notional acts, such as active generation.

Generation presupposes the Father and is the foundation for paternity, but not under the same aspect. The matter is somewhat similar to the form which presupposes the disposition and also affords the basis for the disposition inasmuch as the disposition is also a property. An example is the ultimate disposition for the rational soul, whatever it may be, whether it is a movement of the heart or something similar. When this property is destroyed by death, the soul separates from the body, because this property is seen under two aspects at the same time: it is a property and a disposition for the production and conservation of the form in the matter. If this is a mystery in the order of sensible things, we do not wonder that it is difficult to express how these things are in God.

First corollary. As stated in the reply to the first difficulty, both these statements are true: because He generates He is the Father, and because He is the Father He generates. In the first statement the name “Father” is taken as designating the relation alone, or the simple reference to the terminus; in the second statement the name “Father” is taken as designating a subsisting person.

Second corollary. The relation of active spiration, since it does not constitute a person but is merely a reference to a terminus, is posterior in our minds to the notional act of spiration, which is attributed to the Father and the Son.

CHAPTER XV

QUESTION 41 THE PERSONS IN COMPARISON WITH THE NOTIONAL ACTS

In this question we consider expressly the notional acts, generation I and spiration, which are called notional because they denote persons. In this question six articles are proposed for our profound and diligent consideration.

1. whether notional acts can be attributed to the persons; 2. whether the notional acts are necessary or voluntary, and then whether God has power with regard to these acts.

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER NOTIONAL ACTS ARE TO BE ATTRIBUTED TO THE PERSONS

State of the question. The difficulty arises 1. because, since God is not an accident, every act pertains to the essence and cannot therefore be attributed to the persons; 2. because St. Augustine seems to confirm this difficulty when he says: “Everything that is predicated of God is predicated either according to His substance or according to a relation, “ hence there is no place for notional acts; 3. because it is a property of an act to imply passivity or passion, but nothing passive is found in God, for example, passive generation is something imperfect and not to be attributed to God.

Reply. Nevertheless the reply is in the affirmative, namely, notional acts are to be attributed to the persons; indeed it is necessary to do so in order to signify the order of origin in the different persons.

The first part of this reply is of faith according to the Scripture as we shall see immediately.

1. The testimony of Sacred Scripture is clear: “The Lord hath said to Me: Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee.” This text, as we have said

above, is given added force by the New Testament: “the Spirit of truth, who proceedeth from the Father.” Our Lord also said: “For from God I proceeded, and came.” The first part of this text is accepted in tradition as referring to the eternal procession. The councils quoted these words of Scripture in this sense. In the argument sed contra St. Thomas quotes the words of St. Fulgentius, “It is a property of the Father that He generated the Son.”

2. The theological reason is as follows: In the divine persons distinction is attendant on the origin. But origin cannot be conveniently designated except by some act. Therefore generation is properly attributed to the Father and spiration to the Father and the Son. This reasoning is clear, but the difficulties posed in the state of the question must still be solved.

Reply to the first difficulty. How is it that an act like generation, which is not a relation, does not pertain to the divine essence? The reply is that if this were an act ad extra, like creation, it would pertain to the essence, but generation and spiration are acts ad intra belonging to the procession of a person from a person and therefore are attributed to the persons.

Reply to the second difficulty. It is insisted that in God there is nothing besides essence and relation, and therefore the notional acts must be reduced to the relations. But to generate is more than a relation. The reply is rather profound. The notional acts are distinguished from the persons not really but only by reason, because if the idea of action is purified of all created modes, action within God (ad intra) is nothing more than a relation. In the created order transitive action, like active generation, is a movement or mutation as coming from the agent, and the passion is the movement as it is in the recipient. When we prescind from the motion, as no matter is in God, action implies nothing more than the order of origin, according to which it proceeds from a principle to the terminus. Since, then, there is no motion in God, active generation is nothing else than the condition or reference of the Father to the Son, and active spiration is nothing else than the condition or reference of the Father and the Son to the Holy Ghost. According to our method of knowing, which is based on the knowledge of creatures, we distinguish active generation from the Father and thus we have two terms, but there is no real distinction. It would be better to speak of quasi-active generation and quasi-passive generation, and also quasi-spiration. With regard to our concept of creation we must also purify the idea of transitive action since creation is without becoming because there is

no preexisting subject. In creation we have causality properly so called, but the Father is not the cause of the Son but only His principle. St. Thomas says: “Creation is not a change (mutatio) except to our way of thinking... for if we prescind from motion and the pre-existing subject we have only the various references (habitudines) in the Creator and in the creature.”

So in the Trinity, if we remove the idea of motion, active generation implies nothing more than the order of origin.

Reply to the third difficulty. The other insistence still remains: How can there be in God passive generation, which implies imperfection? The reply is as follows: action, inasmuch as it implies the origin of motion, of itself results in passivity (passio), since action is motion as coming from the agent and motion as it is in a recipient. But such action is not found in the divine persons. When we prescind from the motion, we do not find that passivity (passiones) except in the grammatical sense and according to our method of signification, as when we say that the Father generates and that the Son is generated. This means that the Son is generated not according to a transition from passive potency to act as in human generation but in the sense that the entire uncreated divine nature and subsisting and unreceived being itself are communicated to the Son by the Father. Hence the expression, “The divine nature is communicated,” is more proper than, “The Father produces the Son,” since active production savors of causality, and passive production savors of the transition from potency to act.

In God, then, to be generated is not less perfect than to generate, and to be communicated is not less perfect than to communicate. Analogically, in the equilateral triangle the angle that is constructed first is not more perfect than the other two, and the three angles have a superficies which is numerically the same. In the beginning this superficies is the superficies of the angle that is first constructed and it is not communicated to this first angle; then this same superficies is communicated to the second angle and, if the second angle is equal to the first, the third angle is equal to the first two, and the third angle receives the same superficies, which is not caused in it but is communicated to it. It is wonderful that between things so remote as the Trinity and the triangle there should be an analogy so intelligible and so clear. In all created things we can find a trace of the Blessed Trinity.

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER THE NOTIONAL ACTS ARE VOLUNTARY

State of the question. The sense of the question is whether the Father voluntarily generates the Son and whether the Father and the Son voluntarily spirate the Holy Ghost.

As is clear from the texts cited from the Fathers at the beginning of this treatise, the difficulty arises because on the one hand we cannot say that the Father freely generates the Son, for then the Son would be a creature, as the Arians taught; and on the other hand we cannot say that the Father involuntarily generates the Son as if forced to do so. From the words quoted in the argument sed contra we see that St. Augustine was aware of this difficulty: “The Father generates the Son neither by His will nor by necessity (by force).”

Reply. St. Thomas solves the difficulty by a distinction between the concomitant will and the antecedent will, which latter is subdivided into necessary and free. It should be noted that the antecedent will is in opposition to the concomitant will and to the consequent will but not in the same way. With respect to the consequent will, the antecedent will is inefficacious; with respect to the concomitant will it may be efficacious. St. Thomas’ division may be reduced to the following.

The will

Antecedent, as an effective principle

as nature: that is, as a natural and necessary principle. Thus man naturally wills happiness in general

as free: as a principle acting indifferently as to judgment. Thus God freely wills creatures.

Concomitant, not as an effective principle

In this way I will to be a man and I am pleased to be a man, but the fact that I am a human being does not depend on my will

Having made this division, we draw three conclusions.

1. The notional acts, to generate and to spirate, are voluntary by a concomitant will. Thus the Father voluntarily generates the Son, just as He wills Himself to be God; the Father does not generate the Son involuntarily nor do the Father and the Son spirate the Holy Ghost unwillingly.

As we read in the reply to the first objection, St. Hilary wrote: “The Father does not generate the Son induced by a natural necessity. He is not forced to generate the Son.” Such was also the declaration of the Council of Sardinia, and St. Augustine rightly says, “The Father generates the Son not by the necessity of force.”

2. The notional acts are not voluntary by an antecedent will as free, because what proceeds in this way from the free will is able not to be, and the notional acts are not able not to be. Otherwise it would be possible for the Son and the Holy Ghost not to be. St. Thomas might have been content with this explanation, but in the body of the article he recalls the roots of liberty explained earlier in the question, “Whether God freely wills things other than Himself.” He explains that, whereas the form by which a natural agent acts is one (the natural form), it follows that in the same circumstances such an agent always produces the same effect (by the principle of induction), since it is determined to one effect. On the other hand, the form by which the will as free acts is not one only but consists of many reasons in the intellect and many possible judgments, and therefore in the deliberation there is an indifferent mistress of judgments and also of choice. Therefore what is freely willed can be either one or another. But this cannot be in God or in the processions, otherwise it would be possible for the Son and the Holy Ghost not to be and then they would be creatures, as the Arians thought.

3. Active spiration is by an antecedent will as nature; generation, however, which, as enunciation, proceeds not from the will but from the intellect, proceeds prior to the will. God therefore understands the generation before He wills it. Spiration proceeds from the antecedent will because the Holy Ghost proceeds as love; consequently He proceeds by the will, namely, as the terminus of that volition by which the Father and the Son naturally and necessarily love each other. In this same way man naturally loves happiness in general, at least by a necessity of specification; in this way also the blessed love God by an act of the will which is entirely spontaneous but also necessary, an act of the will that is not inferior to liberty but above it, because the will of the blessed is invincibly drawn to God’s goodness when they see Him clearly. In this beatific love there is no liberty of specification or freedom of exercise and yet this love is most spontaneous; it is therefore an excellent example of the non-free and spontaneous active spiration. Thus the Holy Ghost proceeds not after the manner of nature, because He is not begotten, but from the will as nature.

Scotus, who in this question seems to follow St. Bonaventure and Richard of St. Victor, held that the procession of the Holy Ghost is an act that is free by an essential freedom. To this the Thomists reply that this essential liberty cannot be a liberty by necessity or a liberty of indifference

for then it would be possible for the Holy Ghost not to be and then He would be a creature. The term, “essential liberty,” then, can be understood only as liberty by compulsion, which is simply the spontaneity of natural and necessary volition. The difference is really only nominal, because the Thomists readily admit such spontaneity, as in the beatific love, which is not in any way free yet is most spontaneous. Scotus found himself obliged to say that active spiration, although free by an essential freedom, was necessary inasmuch as the Holy Ghost is necessarily spirated and necessarily exists, but he did not wish to call the spirating will natural.

THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER A PERSON PROCEEDS FROM SOMETHING OR FROM NOTHING BY THE NOTIONAL ACTS

This article explains the words of the Creed about the Son, who is begotten but not made from nothing, in opposition to the Arians, who taught that the Son was a creature. St. Thomas showed that the processions, generation and spiration, are emanations and not creations from nothing. This is the difference between being begotten and being made: he who is begotten is from the substance of the generator. For even in human generation the son is from the seed of the father, although here we have a multiplication of natures; in divine generation the Son is of the substance of the Father, but here the entire indivisible divine nature is communicated to the Son without multiplication of the nature. That, however, which is made, for instance by a mechanic, is not of the substance of the workman, but it is produced by a transformation of matter, or if it is made without any pre-existing subject it is said to be made from nothing. This explains why the Scriptures speak of the Son of God not only in the broad sense, as an adopted son, but as “His own Son, “ and as “the only-begotten Son.”

FOURTH ARTICLE: WHETHER IN GOD THERE IS POTENTIA WITH REGARD TO THE NOTIONAL ACTS

State of the question. It is asked whether there is a potentia of generating and spirating in God. Following St. Augustine, St. Thomas replies in the affirmative because potentia is nothing else than the principle of some act, and in this instance the potentia is active. As he says in the reply to the

second difficulty, passive potentia cannot exist in God, nor can there be any power which is necessarily opposed for then the potentia would be passive.

A difficulty is raised in the third objection. Potentia is predicated of God with respect to certain effects (in this way we speak of God's omnipotence); but power is not predicated of God with respect to the divine operations, divine intellection and will, because God is pure act. Therefore in God there is no intellective faculty but only intellect subsisting per se, nor is there a volitional faculty. Indeed, the divine persons are not effects of God, and therefore we cannot speak of the potentia of generating or spirating in God.

Reply. According to St. Thomas' reply the potentia of generating is not properly the principle of active generation but the principle of the begotten person, just as the creative power is not the principle of the creative action, which is not an accident in God, but the principle of the created effect.

As Billuart points out, these notional powers, that is, the powers of generating and spirating, are not virtually distinct from the acts because there is no foundation in God for conceiving Him as being in potency to anything since He is pure act.

Thus in God the intellect is not virtually distinct from intellection since God's intellect is intellection subsisting per se, noesis noeseos Similarly God's will is not virtually distinct from His love, by which He loves Himself necessarily, and loves other things freely. This unique act of love is the indifferent mistress of those goods which are able not to be.

FIFTH ARTICLE: WHETHER THE POWER TO GENERATE SIGNIFIES THE RELATION AND NOT THE ESSENCE

Reply. The power of generating signifies directly the divine nature and indirectly the relation of paternity. This is another way of saying what was said at the beginning of this treatise in the question on the processions, namely, the proximate principle quo of the processions is the divine nature itself as modified by the relations of paternity and spiration. In the present article this principle quo is called the notional power of generating or spirating.

St. Thomas offers proof for this for the power of generating, which is more easily understood than the second power: In the created order every agent produces what is like to itself according to the form by which it acts inasmuch as it determines its production according to its own proper

determination. Thus a cow generates a cow, a horse generates a horse, and everything that generates produces something like itself according to its species or nature. Hence in the one who generates, the nature is the principle quo of generation; thus Socrates generates as a man and generates a man. If Socrates generated as Socrates he would generate Socrates. Therefore the active principle of generation is directly the nature of the generator and indirectly it is the personality of the generator, for when Socrates generates, the principle quo of generation is human nature as it is in Socrates; so also in God the principle quo of generation is the divine nature as it is in the Father. Similarly the superficies of the triangle is communicated to the second and third angles as it is in the first angle. Particular attention should be given to what St. Thomas says at the end of the body of the article: "In created things the individual form constitutes the person of the generator, but it is not that by which the generator generates, otherwise Socrates would generate Socrates. Hence paternity cannot be taken as that by which the Father generates, but it must be understood as the form that constitutes the person of the generator, otherwise the Father would generate a Father."

According to St. Thomas, then, the personality of Socrates is the individual form, namely, that by which something is what it is, or the first subject of attribution. But this individual form of Socrates is not matter marked by quantity, or the individuating conditions, since it is called the individual form; nor is this form Socrates' existence, which is a contingent predicate in Socrates.

SIXTH ARTICLE: WHETHER A NOTIONAL ACT CAN TERMINATE IN SEVERAL PERSONS

In other words, it is asked whether several persons can be generated or spirated in God, as one man can beget several sons.

Reply. The reply is in the negative.

1. In God being and possibility are not different. Therefore if it were possible to have several sons of God, there would actually be several sons of God; and this conclusion would be heresy.

2. Such plurality of sons could arise only from matter, which does not exist in God. It would also presuppose several numerically distinct generations. This is impossible because generation and spiration are acts

naturally determined to one terminus and the terminus is, as it were, an adequate fruit (result). Thus the Son is the perfect Son, in whom the entire filiation and the entire divine nature is contained without multiplication. We should note what St. Thomas says in this sixth article (as everywhere else): “The forms of one species are not multiplied except according to matter, “ and therefore a form that is not received in matter cannot be anything but one.

Recently some Thomists have said that God could miraculously make several angels in the same species, that is, many Michaels multiplied without matter. According to St. Thomas this is impossible because we are dealing here with a metaphysical principle in which there is no place for a miracle. It is not merely a natural law but a metaphysical principle that an act that is not limited in itself is not limited or multiplied except by the potency or real capacity in which it is received. Therefore a form is not multiplied except by matter, or by an order to matter, and it is this order to matter that remains in the separated soul. In this metaphysical principle, if it is really metaphysical, that is, absolutely and not only hypothetically necessary, there is no exception by way of a miracle.

CHAPTER XVI

QUESTION 42 THE EQUALITY AND SIMILARITY OF THE DIVINE PERSONS

THIS chapter treats of the comparison of the divine persons with one another. Six articles are presented about their equality and on the order between them and on circumincession, inasmuch as one person is in the other.

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER THE DIVINE PERSONS ARE EQUAL

Reply. The reply is affirmative and of faith according to the Athanasian Creed, which professes that the divine persons are “coequal, “ and the same doctrine is defined by many councils. In the Scriptures it is said of the Son, “Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.” The explanation given in the body of the article is this: things are said to be unequal according to a difference in quantity. But in God quantity is the perfection of divine nature, which is numerically the same in the three persons. Therefore the three persons are not unequal but all three are coequal.

In the reply to the first difficulty, St. Thomas explains that quantity is twofold: quantity of amount (molis) and quantity of power (virtutis). The latter is predicated according to perfection of nature or form. To be one in nature is to be the same; to be one in quantity is to be equal; and to be one in quality is to be similar. Corollaries are presented in the following articles.

In the reply to the second difficulty, it is noted that the three persons are similar because we have here equality not of amount but of power, according to communication in one form.

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER THE PROCEEDING PERSON IS COETERNAL WITH HIS PRINCIPAL

State of the question. The difficulty arises because no eternal being has a principle and that which is generated begins to be. In the first difficulty St. Thomas quotes the objection of the Arians, who enumerated twelve kinds of generation in which there is no consubstantiality or coeternity.

Reply. Nevertheless the reply is that the three persons are coeternal. This is of faith according to the Scriptures: “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard”; “I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.” In the Athanasian Creed we profess, “The whole three persons are coeternal together and coequal.” The Fourth Lateran Council also declared that the three persons are “consubstantial and coequal and co-omnipotent and coeternal.”

The theological explanation throws a great deal of light on this somewhat obscure doctrine. The explanation is as follows: The proceeding persons are coeternal with their principles because they proceed from a principle whose active power is always perfect by instantaneous action in the one unique instant of eternity. The intellect and the will of God are, of course, always in act. Therefore the divine intellect is never without the Word nor is the divine will ever without personal love, or the Holy Ghost.

Reply to the first objection. A vestige of this coeternity is found in the sun inasmuch as the sun never lacks its brightness.

Reply to the second objection. Unparticipated eternity properly so called excludes the principle of duration but not the principle of origin. Thus the Son originates from the Father in the one instant of immobile eternity. This truth is expressed in the words, “Thou art My son, this day have I begotten Thee.” “Today, “ that is, in this one unique instant of eternity, which is the stable now (nunc stans) and which is not fluent.

Reply to the third objection. The following principle, “Everything that is generated begins to be,” is not verified in the Son of God because divine generation is not a transmutation, nor is it a change from non-being to being, but it takes place by the communication of uncreated being itself. Hence the Son is always generated and the Father always generates, since the “now” of eternity is not fluent but is immutably stationary.

Reply to the fourth objection. In time the perduring time is different from the indivisible fleeting point, which is the fluent instant, for time is the successive continuum which is divisible in infinity, whereas the instant is

indivisible like the point that terminates a line. In eternity, however, this indivisible "now" is always stable or stationary and therefore there is no difference between the perduring eternity and this indivisible point. Since the generation of the Son is in the "now" of eternity, we can say that the Son is always being born, or still better that the Son is always born because the "born" signifies the perfection of him who is begotten, whereas being born signifies that which is becoming and is not yet perfect.

A beautiful thesis could be written about this "now" of eternity in comparison with continuous time, which is the measure of the apparent movement of the sun, and with the discrete time of the angels, which is the measure of the angels' successive thoughts and affections. Such a thesis could be combined with the doctrine concerning the life of God inasmuch as eternity is defined as "the perfect, complete, and simultaneous possession of interminable life."

THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER THERE IS AN ORDER OF NATURE IN THE DIVINE PERSONS

State of the question. The precise state of the question appears in the second difficulty. This difficulty is as follows: In those things where there is an order of nature one thing is prior to another, if not in time at least in nature or intellection. But in the divine persons nothing is earlier or later, as we learn from the Athanasian Creed. Moreover, in God the nature is most simple and numerically the same in the three persons and hence there is no order in the divine nature.

Reply. Nevertheless the reply is that there is an order of nature in the divine persons, an order not according to earlier and later but according to origin.

1. This is proved from general principles in the argument sed contra as follows: Wherever there is plurality without order we have confusion. But in God there is no confusion; therefore there must be order.

2. It is also proved from particular principles. Order is always predicated with regard to some principle, for example, with regard to the principle of the line, the principle of number, the principle of demonstration, the principle of causal influence, or the chief end. But in God we predicate the principle of origin without any priority. Therefore in God there is the order of origin without priority or posteriority.

The minor was explained above: “Although the term ‘principle’ with regard to that from which its significance is derived seems to come from priority, it does not signify priority but origin. For that which a term signifies is not the same as that from which the term is derived, as was explained above.” Thus the Latin word for stone, lapis, seems to be derived from some action of the stone, namely, to injure the foot, laedit pedem.

Reply to the second objection. In created beings order is a disposition with regard to priority and posteriority in view of some principle, for example, the principle of the line or of motion, the principle of demonstration, or the principle of causality in any one of the four kinds of causes. But in God the concept of order is preserved analogically in view of the principle of origin without priority or posteriority, because posteriority either in duration or being would be an imperfection, which cannot be predicated of the Son or of the Holy Ghost. More briefly: whatever is posterior to another in nature must depend according to its own nature upon the nature of the other (as the nature of the ray depends on the nature of the sun). But we cannot speak of God in this way because there is but one nature in God. In this reply to the second difficulty St. Thomas shows that where there is no priority of time in created beings there is still a priority of nature, for example, the sun is prior to its brightness. But he adds: “If we consider not the entity of the cause but the relations themselves of the cause and that which is caused, of the principle and that which is principled, it is evident that the relatives are simultaneous in nature and intellect inasmuch as the one is contained in the definition of the other. But in God the relations are subsisting persons in one nature. Therefore one person is not prior to another either on the part of the nature or on the part of the relations. Nor is one person prior to another in intellection.

We have then an order of origin without any priority, even that of nature. This is, of course, quite mysterious. Cajetan notes that many theologians admit a “priority and posteriority of origin.” His reply was: “Let them have this opinion, but let them be quiet about it.” He probably meant that they could hold this opinion inasmuch as there is a kind of priority and posteriority according to our imperfect method of understanding but not in fact, and that as far as possible we ought to try to correct our imperfect method of knowledge. To safeguard the words of the Athanasian Creed, “In this Trinity there is nothing before or after,” we ought to say with St. Thomas, “nothing is before or after, either in time or nature or honor.” We

preserve the analogy by noting that “between God and creatures there is no similarity so great that there is not always a greater dissimilarity.

A trace of this truth is found in the equilateral triangle, in which the three angles are entirely similar and equal. We can say that the angles are without any priority in this sense, that in constructing the triangle we can begin with any angle, and we can invert the triangle so that the apex becomes the extremity of the base.

Reply to the third objection. “The order of nature is predicated not in the sense that the divine nature itself is ordered but that the order among the divine persons follows according to natural origin, “ for the Father generates according to His own nature, and the Father and the Son spirate the Holy Ghost by the will as it is the divine nature.

Reply to the fourth objection. It is called the order of nature rather than the order of the essence because nature to a certain extent implies the idea of principle.

FOURTH ARTICLE: WHETHER THE SON IS EQUAL TO THE FATHER IN GREATNESS

State of the question. We are dealing here with the equality of perfection for the purpose of explaining Christ’s words, “The Father is greater than 1.” The difficulty arises because paternity pertains to dignity and does not belong to the Son. This is a statement of the question on which we touched earlier, namely, whether paternity is a simply perfect perfection properly so called, although the Son does not possess it. It is the same question as in the first article with the special difficulty that arises from the fact that paternity appears to be a special dignity.

Reply. The reply is in the affirmative: the Son is equal to the Father in perfection. This doctrine is of faith from the Scriptures: “Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.”

The theological reason is as follows: It is of the nature of paternity and filiation that the Son by generation attains to the possession of that perfect nature which is in the Father as it is possessed by the Father. And the Son attains to that perfect nature unless the power of generation is defective. But in God the power of generation is not defective; it is exercised most perfectly from all eternity. Therefore the Son possesses the entire perfection of the Father from all eternity.

Reply to the first objection. Only as man did Christ say, “The Father is greater than 1.”

Reply to the second objection. The difficulty is that the Son lacks the dignity of paternity. St. Thomas replied: “Paternity is the dignity of the Father just as the essence is the dignity of the Father, since the dignity is absolute and pertains to the essence. Just as the same essence which is the paternity in the Father is filiation in the Son, so the same dignity which is paternity in the Father is filiation in the Son. But in the Father this dignity is according to the relation of the giver, and in the Son it is according to the relation of the recipient.” But the divine generation is without the imperfection of the transition from potency to act since divine generation is not a mutation but the communication of uncreated being itself. Similarly, in the equilateral triangle the superficies is the same in the first angle and in the second, but in the first it is according to the relation of the giver and in the second according to the relation of the recipient. That is, as we have said above, the relations as such, according to their <esse ad>, prescind from perfection and imperfection. Hence they are not simply simple perfections properly so called; for, although they do not involve any imperfection, it is not better to have them than not to have them. Otherwise the Son would lack some perfection and so would not be God.

St. Thomas points out that “a relation, inasmuch as it is a relation, does not have that which makes it something but only that by which it has a reference to something.” In this reply he says, “The thing in the something to which the reference is, is changed, “ since the same dignity which in the Father is paternity is filiation in the Son. Thus divine filiation is not less perfect than divine paternity, just as in the triangle either angle at the base is not less perfect than the angle at the apex.

Reply to the third objection. The three persons together do not constitute greater perfection than one person alone, because the entire, infinite perfection of the divine nature is in each person, just as the superficies of the equilateral triangle is in each of the angles.

St. Thomas also points out in this article that in God relation and person are not something universal because all the relations are one according to essence and being. Humanity, however, is something universal, that is, it is apt to be in many through the multiplication of the form received in different parts of matter.

FIFTH ARTICLE: WHETHER THE SON IS IN THE FATHER AND THE FATHER IS IN THE SON

This article deals with circumincession, which is the mutual coexistence of the divine persons in each other so that the Father is in the Son, the Son in the Father, and both in the Holy Ghost, and the Holy Ghost in both.

The difficulty arises because what goes out of another is not in the other. But the Son goes out of the Father from all eternity. Moreover, one of two opposites is not in the other opposite.

Reply. The affirmative reply is of faith according to the Scriptures, for Christ said: “Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me?” Such was the interpretation of the Fathers, especially St. Augustine.

The theological argument is in three parts: the Son is in the Father, and the Father is in the Son:

1. according to essence, which is numerically the same in the persons;

2. according to the relations, because they mutually involve each other, although they are opposites;

3. according to the procession, because it is immanent or ad intra and not ad extra.

Circumincession signifies consubstantiality, the immanence of the processions, and the reciprocity of opposite relations. An analogy can be seen in the equilateral triangle, where each angle is in the other two.

Objection. One of two opposites is not in the other opposite, because the opposites are really distinct. Therefore the Father is not in the Son.

Reply. I distinguish the antecedent: one of the opposites formally as an opposite is not in the other opposite, I concede; nevertheless by reason of the same essence the relations have the same <esse in> and according to the <esse ad> they mutually refer to each other and are inseparable, although really distinct. Thus, by circumincession the Father and the Holy Ghost are with the incarnate Son in the Holy Eucharist.

SIXTH ARTICLE: WHETHER THE SON IS EQUAL TO THE FATHER IN POWER

This article explains the following words of our Lord: “The Son cannot do anything of Himself, but what He seeth the Father doing, “ and,” or whatsoever He[the Father] doth, these the Son also doth in like manner.”

Reply. The affirmative reply is of faith. The reason is that the power of acting follows the perfection of the nature, which is numerically the same in

the Father and in the Son.

Reply to the first objection. But the Son has this power as He has His nature from the Father.

Reply to the third objection. St. Thomas recalls what was said in the reply to the second objection in the fourth article.

CHAPTER XVII

QUESTION 43 THE MISSION OF THE DIVINE PERSONS

THIS last question of the treatise takes up the comparison of the I divine persons with one another with regard to their missions ad extra. We have already touched on this matter in question 38, where we treated of the Gift as the name of the Holy Ghost, that uncreated gift, personal love, which is the first of all the gifts that proceed from love. This question about the missions of the divine persons is the principal foundation for that event which is essentially supernatural ad extra, namely, the redemptive Incarnation and the life of grace within us. Under that aspect this question is connected with the question on the love of God, where the principle of predilection is enunciated: No one would be better than another if he were not loved more by God, and with the question of the universal salvific will.

These articles are, therefore, of great importance and should be studied carefully. The doctrine contained in them was the frequent object of contemplation for the saints and it ought to be effectively presented in our sermons. It would become the subject matter of our preaching if our preaching were preceded by diligent contemplation of this matter.

This question is divided into two parts. The first part treats the matter in general and is divided into the first three articles: 1. whether any divine person is sent; 2. whether the mission is eternal or only temporal; 3. in what manner a divine person is sent invisibly; and the reply: according to grace gratum faciens. This is the principal article of the entire question.

The second part of this question consists of the special application of-these truths to the three divine persons: 4. the Father is not sent because there is no person to send Him, but He comes and dwells in us; 5. whether the Son as well as the Holy Ghost is sent invisibly, and the reply is affirmative; 6. to whom is the mission made? and the reply: to all the just in

whom the divine persons become present in a new way or in a higher way; 7. whether it belongs to the Holy Ghost to be sent visibly, as on Pentecost; 8. whether it can be said that the Son is sent by the Holy Ghost; and the reply is affirmative with the qualification that the sending is improperly so called.

The basis of this doctrine of the missions of the divine persons is found in many places in Holy Scripture. We cite here the texts of the New Testament.

From the Synoptics: “Whosoever shall receive Me, receiveth not Me, but Him that sent Me”; “And I send the promise of My Father upon you.” The Greek for “send” is apostello, hence apostolos, one sent, or a legate from God.

From St. John’s Gospel: “For God sent not His Son into the world, to judge the world, but that the world may be saved by Him”; “And the Father Himself who hath sent Me, hath given testimony of Me”; “because I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent Me.” Concerning the Holy Ghost: “But the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things”; “But if I go, I will send Him to you.”

In St. Paul: “But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent His Son.”

From the councils: “The Holy Ghost is said to be the Spirit not only of the Father but of the Father and the Son together. This Holy Ghost is believed to be sent by both as the Son is sent by the Father; but He is not less than the Father; and the Son as the Son, because of the flesh He assumed, testified that He was less than the Father and the Holy Ghost.”

In the creed of St. Epiphanius we read: “I believe in the Holy Ghost, who was proclaimed by the prophets, who descended on the Jordan (in Christ’s baptism), who spoke through the apostles (on Pentecost), and who dwells in the saints.”

The Council of Trent declared that the Holy Ghost is received with sanctifying grace; and earlier St. John Damascene said that the Holy Ghost gives seven gifts.

The most complete and extensive document of the Church on the divine missions and on the indwelling of the Holy Trinity in the just is Pope Leo XIII’s encyclical on the Holy Ghost, which Denzinger should have listed. In almost the same words used by St. Thomas it gives a beautiful presentation

of the doctrine of the missions, the indwelling, and the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost.

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER IT IS FITTING FOR A DIVINE PERSON TO BE SENT

State of the question. It seems that no divine person is sent because the one who is sent is less than the sender, and because whatever is sent is separated from the sender. Moreover, the divine persons are already present everywhere and hence they cannot be sent where they already are. The expression “mission” is, therefore, not proper but only metaphorical, as when we say, God is angry.

Reply. The reply is in the affirmative: it belongs to some persons to be sent, that is, analogically, not only metaphorically and analogically, as when we say, God is angry, but by a proper analogy.

This reply is of faith according to the Scriptures, which often use this expression.

The body of the article contains a conceptual analysis of the idea of mission, and the argument is therefore not an illative but an explicative syllogism: the idea of mission implies the twofold reference of the one sent: to the sender and to the terminus of the sending.

One is sent by the sender either by command, as the servant by his master, or by counsel, as a king by his councilor, or by origin, as the flower is sent out by the plant. One is sent to the terminus of the sending either in the sense that the one sent begins to be there, or at least begins to be there in a new way.

Hence a mission can be predicated of a divine person by a proper analogy inasmuch as this divine person proceeds from the sender and begins to be in another in a new way. Thus the Son is said to be sent by the Father into the world inasmuch as the Son began to be in the world in the flesh assumed by Him, and yet the Son was in the world before this as the Word not yet incarnate. “That was the true light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world. He was in the world, and the world was made by Him.” Obviously, this syllogism is not objectively illative because we do not arrive at a new truth but only explain a truth already revealed: “For God sent not His Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world may be saved by Him.”

The reply is confirmed by the solution of the objections.

Reply to the first objection. The one sent is less than the sender if he is sent by command or even by counsel, but not if he is sent according to a procession that is only of origin, which takes place on the plane of equality.

Reply to the second objection. In a divine mission the one sent is not separated from the sender because the one sent does not move locally to a place where he was not before but only begins a new manner of being in one where he had not been before.

Reply to the third objection. Thus a divine person does not leave a place, because God in Himself is not in any place, and the divine person was already present by the general presence of His immensity where now He begins to be in a new way. This will be explained at greater length in the third article.

From this article we obtain the definition of a divine mission: essentially it implies the procession of origin of one person from another with a new mode of existence in another. According to his custom, St. Thomas thus passes from the nominal, or commonly accepted, definition to the real definition, dividing the various kinds of missions, comparing them in order to discover how they agree and differ analogically so that no imperfection will be posited in God. Indeed this idea of mission in its formal analogical meaning posits no imperfection in God; on the other hand the concept of anger does imply imperfection. Hence we say that God is angry only metaphorically, but that the Son of God is sent by the Father in the proper sense, as is also the Holy Ghost by the Father and the Son.

First corollary. A mission is more than simple appropriation, for the Son of God is said to be sent in the Incarnation; and He is said to be incarnate not only by appropriation but properly and personally so that the Father and the Holy Ghost are not incarnate.

Similarly the mission of the Holy Ghost is more than simple appropriation, although the Holy Ghost is not united personally with the just, and although the three persons dwell in the just. Mission implies a procession of origin which is more than simple appropriation, and it pertains to the person that proceeds. Thus, as we shall explain below, it cannot be said that the Father is sent, although He dwells in the just with the other two persons.

Second corollary. According to tradition the words," or from God I proceeded and came; for I came not of Myself, but He sent Me, " express not only the visible mission which took place in the Incarnation but

likewise the eternal procession. Thus Jesus said, “I proceeded and came.” Although this interpretation, making a distinction between “proceeded” and “came, “ does not appear at once from the context, it does result from a comparison with other texts about the processions. Indeed, in this very place, Christ says, “I came not of Myself, but He sent Me, “ while the Father came of Himself and was not sent, because He does not proceed from another person.

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER A MISSION IS ETERNAL OR ONLY TEMPORAL

State of the question. The difficulty arises because, as we have said, a mission implies a procession, and the processions are eternal. Moreover, whenever anything belongs to another temporarily and not from eternity, that one is changed; but a divine person is not changed.

Reply. Nevertheless the reply is that mission and giving in God are predicated only temporarily.

1. This is proved from the Scriptures: “But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent His Son.”

2. The theological reason is merely an explanation of the idea of mission: for a mission, besides the reference to the eternal principle, has a reference to the temporal terminus by which the idea of mission is completed. Therefore it must be said to be temporal, even though its principle is eternal, because the effect which it connotes and by which it is denominated is temporal.

In the same way God is said to have created not from eternity but in time. Similarly, the Incarnation and the sending of the Holy Ghost on Pentecost are not from eternity but in time.

On the other hand, generation and spiration are said to be from eternity, because they do not imply a reference to a temporal terminus. Procession and exitus in God, however, are said to be both eternal and temporal, since the Son proceeds eternally as God and temporally as man.

In his conclusion St. Thomas joins mission and giving (datio), not because they are entirely the same but because they are in a certain way in agreement. They agree in this, that both imply a new mode of existence in creatures. They differ inasmuch as mission implies that the person who is sent proceeds from another, whereas the giving does not imply this procession. Thus the Father, who cannot be sent, gives Himself, and the

divine essence can be given to the Son and the Holy Ghost by communication.

Reply to the second objection. Why is the person who is sent not changed by the fact that the person becomes present in a new way in another? The reason is that this is solely because of the change in the creature, just as God is said to be the Lord of all things in time not because God is changed but because things arrive at existence. In the same way any object is said to be actually seen now and not before, not because there is a change in the object but because of the change in vision, which is now terminated to this object. Thus the Word is not changed by the visible mission of the Incarnation, that is, by the fact that the humanity of Christ terminates in the Word.

Reply to the third objection. Mission includes the eternal procession and adds a temporal effect. We have then a twofold procession, eternal and temporal; twofold, not with respect to a twofold principle but to two termini, of which one is eternal (and so the procession is eternal) and the other temporal (and so the procession is temporal, which is the mission itself).

Hence “mission” can be defined as “the procession of origin of one person from another with a new mode of existence in another.” Mission, therefore, is more than appropriation, and is distinguished both from creation and from eternal procession. It is distinct from creation because its eternal principle is the person that sends and not the entire Trinity, which is the one principle of operation ad extra. It is distinct from eternal procession because of its temporal terminus and also because it is somewhat similar to creation. Mission is, therefore, a kind of middle between eternal procession and creation.

Doubt. Does mission principally and directly imply the eternal origin of the person sent or the new effect produced in the creature? With John of St. Thomas and Gonet, it should be noted that there are two concepts of mission held by Scholastics: the one proposed by St. Bonaventure and Scotus, the other by St. Thomas, the Thomists, and others. This question, which seems to be rather subtle, is necessary to distinguish the divine mission from simple appropriation, inasmuch as mission is more than appropriation.

For St. Bonaventure and Scotus, mission is principally not the procession itself but the production of the temporal effect for which the person is said

to be sent. Their reason is that the person pre-existed by eternal procession before the free and temporal procession.

The Thomists, like Gonet, say that mission is not the production of the temporal effect, but that it implies directly the eternal origin of the persons, and indirectly the new effect produced in the creature.

1. This is proved by the authority of St. Augustine, “Now go forth from the Father and to come into the world is to be sent.” St. Thomas says: “Mission includes the eternal procession but it adds something, namely, the temporal effect.” Besides this, St. Thomas held in the eighth article that the Son is not as properly sent by the Holy Ghost as the Holy Ghost is sent by the Son, although the Holy Ghost together with the Father and the Son produces the temporal effect on account of which the Son is said to be sent.

2. Proof from reason. The mission of a divine person essentially implies the going forth of the person sent. But this going forth can be nothing else than the eternal origin, because the mission of the divine person cannot take place by either command or counsel. Therefore the mission essentially implies such origin, and therefore it is not only the temporal operation of God ad extra, but the eternal origin of the person sent with the connotation of the operation ad extra and the temporal effect.

First confirmation. Otherwise the Father would also be sent, since sanctifying grace is produced in the just, according to which the Father also dwells in the just.

Second confirmation. Our view is confirmed by a comparison of the divine mission with a free act of God, for example, creation, for this free act of creating in God is nothing else than the one unique act of the divine will by which God necessarily loves Himself, with the added connotation of the good that is not necessarily loved.

Third confirmation. The Thomistic view seems more in conformity with the Scriptural language: “From God I proceeded, and came”; and “I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world.”

The Greek Fathers regarded the missions as prolongations of the processions ad extra; thus they distinguished the missions from creation. They said that the sending of the persons of the Son and the Holy Ghost differs from creation as to live differs from to command. And they based the communication of divine life, by which we are elevated to the order of grace, not on creation but on the divine missions. In this way they distinguished between the natural order and the order of grace as they

distinguished between creation and the missions of the divine persons. Naturally they placed great emphasis on the invisible mission of the Holy Ghost, and this characteristic of the Greek theory should not surprise us, because the Greeks began with the three persons rather than with the unity of nature. St. Augustine, however, preserved the essential point in the doctrine of the Greeks when he said: “To go forth from the Father and to come into the world is to be sent.”

The mission is said to be temporal, however, inasmuch as it connotes a temporal effect by which it is denominated; just as creation is said to be temporal by reason of its effect, although the free creative action is eternal.

THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER THE INVISIBLE MISSION OF A DIVINE PERSON IS MERELY ACCORDING TO GRACE GRATUM FACIENS

State of the question. This is the principal article of this question, at least with regard to ourselves and our life of grace, for it treats of the principal foundation of this life. Here is presented matter for preaching and contemplation. We will, therefore, examine this truth at some length. Proceeding methodically, we see that there are six points that claim our attention. We shall note: 1. the difference between visible and invisible missions; 2. the crux of the difficulties proposed at the beginning of the article; 3. the testimony of Sacred Scripture and tradition; 4. the point where theologians are generally in agreement; 5. the body of the article; 6. three interpretations, namely, a) the more common interpretation of the Thomists, b) Vasquez’s interpretation, c) Suarez’ interpretation. We shall thus be proceeding in an orderly fashion from what is better known to what is less known, from the revealed foundation of the doctrine to its explanation.

1. The Difference Between The Visible And Invisible Missions

They differ according to the terminus or the temporal effect connoted by the mission. The visible mission connotes an effect that is at least in some way sensible, by which the person sent is sensibly manifested; thus the visible mission of the Son took place in the Incarnation and the visible mission of the Holy Ghost on Pentecost took place under the species of fire and the gift of tongues. An invisible mission is one which connotes an effect of the spiritual order and which is not sensible. Thus the Holy Ghost is said to be sent to the soul of the just man at the moment of invisible justification, which is accomplished by the infusion of habitual grace.

In explaining these articles we shall see that because of this there are two differences between the two kinds of missions. By the visible missions of the Incarnation and of Pentecost only one person is sent and manifested, while in the invisible mission two proceeding persons are sent and the Father gives Himself. The second difference is that the visible mission takes place through some visible effect designed to manifest the divine person who is sent; thus the Holy Ghost is sent in the appearance of fire on Pentecost and in the appearance of a dove at the baptism of Christ, according to the words of St. Matthew, “Wesus... saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon him.”

On the other hand, the invisible mission cannot take place except by some supernatural gift, as is shown in this third article. We must determine what this supernatural gift is; whether it is habitual grace (or grace gratum faciens), or actual grace, or by infused faith alone, or hope, or finally by the graces gratis datae, which sinners can receive for the benefit of their neighbors. In this way we will determine the state of the question.

2. The Difficulty Inherent In The Question

This appears from the objections placed at the beginning of the article. First we must explain that it is not only created grace but also a divine person that is given; secondly, we shall see that the grace is according to the Holy Ghost, because grace is given us through Him; and lastly, we ask why the Son and the Holy Ghost are not said to be sent according to the graces gratis datae.

3. The Teaching Of The Scriptures

When we seek the teaching of the Scriptures on the invisible mission of the Holy Ghost and the Son, we see that Scripture frequently speaks of the general presence of God the author of nature in all things, which God immediately conserves in being, inasmuch as being is the proper effect of God. Thus we read: “If I ascend into heaven, Thou art there; if I descend into hell, Thou art present.” St. Paul speaking on the Areopagus, said: “For in Him we live, and move, and are.”

This general presence of God in all created things, which God preserves in being, is explained by St. Thomas as the preserving action which is a continuation of the creative action that produces things in being immediately and not through any instrument. Thus God, as the efficient cause, is effectively present in all things inasmuch as He preserves in them what is most intimate, their being, which is the most formal thing of all

since it actuates everything in created beings. God also immediately preserves the matter that is produced from nothing as well as the souls produced from nothing.

Sacred Scripture speaks not only of this general presence, which is called the presence of immensity, but also of a special presence of God, which is in the souls of the just and not in all things. Thus we read in the Book of Wisdom: “For wisdom will not enter into a malicious soul, nor dwell in a body subject to sins. For the Holy Spirit of discipline will flee from the deceitful, and will withdraw Himself from thoughts that are without understanding.” From the context it seems that these words refer not only to created wisdom but also to the Holy Ghost, who is uncreated wisdom. Any doubt that may arise, however, is removed by Christ’s words: “If any one love Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and will make Our abode with him.”

In this text every word should be noted, especially the words, “We will come to him.” Who comes? Is it only some created effect, like created grace or created wisdom? No. Those who come are the same as love, the Father and the Son, from whom the Holy Ghost is never separated. Besides this, the Holy Ghost is promised by the Son. Lastly we read not only that They will come but also that They will make Their abode with him, that is, they will not come only transitorily but permanently to abide in the just man as long as he remains just. Thus we read, “God is charity, and he that abideth in charity, abideth in God, and God in him.”

Obviously mention is made here of a special presence entirely distinct from God’s general presence in all things. The condition of this special presence is charity, or the state of grace, by which a man is constituted as just. The just man, then, possesses God in his heart, or perhaps it would be better to say that God possesses the just man inasmuch as God preserves him not only in nature but also in grace and charity.

St. Paul, writing to the Romans, said: “The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us.” We receive, therefore, not only the gift of charity but also the Holy Ghost, the giver of charity. Again St. Paul says: “Know you not, that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” That is to say, the Holy Ghost dwells in you, in your souls, as He dwells in a temple where He ought to be known, loved, and adored.” Or know you not, that your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost, who is in you, whom you have from God, and

you are not your own? For you are bought with a great price. Glorify and bear God in your body." These words recall what Jesus said to the Samaritan woman: "Woman, believe Me, that the hour cometh, when you shall neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, adore the Father. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true adorers shall adore the Father in spirit and in truth... . God is a spirit; and they that adore Him, must adore Him in spirit and in truth." The Scriptures therefore clearly distinguish between God's general presence and His special presence, which is often attributed to the Holy Ghost.

Tradition. From documents of the primitive Church we see that this doctrine was admirably preserved from the beginning.

St. Ignatius of Antioch in his epistles often calls Christians "Godbearers" ("theophoroi"), according to St. Paul's expression, "Wear God in your body."

This doctrine was explicitly known by the faithful in the early Church and was proclaimed by the martyrs before their judges. St. Lucy said to Paschasius: "Words are not lacking to those who have the Holy Ghost within themselves." "Is not therefore the Holy Ghost in you?" "Indeed, all those who live piously and chastely are the temples of the Holy Ghost." The Greek Fathers often say that by the Holy Ghost Christians are made partakers of God and are deified. St. Basil said that our union with the Holy Ghost is founded on the fact that the Holy Ghost dwells in us and makes us spiritual and conformed to the image of the Son of God. St. Cyril of Alexandria teaches the same thing. St. Ambrose says that the Holy Ghost is given to us first in baptism and then in confirmation so that we might be able to possess His splendor and His image and His grace. St. Augustine testifies that the Fathers are in great accord in teaching that God gives Himself as a gift to the just.

This doctrine has often been affirmed by the Church: in the Creed of St. Epiphanius, "The Holy Ghost, who spoke through the apostles and dwells in the saints." The Council of Trent declared: "The efficient cause of justification is the mercy of God, who gratuitously cleanses and sanctifies, signing and anointing with the Spirit of promise, who is the pledge of our inheritance." Lastly, Leo XIII in his encyclical Divinum illud munus quotes these texts of Sacred Scripture, and in explaining the special presence of the Holy Trinity in the just he quotes the words of St. Thomas.

Pope Leo XIII writes in the encyclical: “God is in all things; He is in them by His power since all things are subject to His power; by His presence since all things are naked and open to His eyes; by His essence since He is present in all things as their cause of being. But in man God is present not only as He is in things, but more so because He is known and loved by man, since by our nature we spontaneously love and desire and acquire the good. Besides this, God resides in the souls of the just by grace as in a temple in a singular and intimate manner; and from this it follows by force of charity, by which God is most closely conjoined to the soul, that He is completely and most sweetly enjoyed more than a friend is loved by his dearest friend. This wonderful union, which is called inhabitation, differs only in status from that by which God embraces the blessed in heaven, although it is effected by the very real presence of the entire Trinity, according to the words, ‘We will come to him and make Our abode with him,’ nevertheless this union is predicated in a special way of the Holy Ghost. Even though traces of God’s power and wisdom appear in the unjust man, no one except the just man is a partaker of that charity which is the special note of the Holy Ghost. A wealth of heavenly gifts of various kinds follows the Holy Ghost when He inhabits the souls of the just.”

The encyclical explains that this special presence of the Holy Trinity is appropriated to the Holy Ghost inasmuch as the Holy Ghost is sent by the two other persons and since charity assimilates us to the Holy Ghost, who is personal love, more than faith assimilates us to the Word. Because of its obscurity, faith is essentially imperfect and thus differs from charity, which alone of the three theological virtues remains in heaven. Our perfect assimilation with the Word takes place only when we receive the light of glory and when we see the Word, by which we are assimilated to the Father inasmuch as the Son is the splendor of the Father.

Thus the special presence of the Holy Trinity is appropriated to the Holy Ghost, although His mission, as we have said, is more than this appropriation. It is also certain that the Son, not by reason of His humanity, but as the Word, is specially present in us and is invisibly sent to us; the Father Himself is present, but He is not sent since He gives Himself to the just.

The encyclical of Pope Leo, therefore, does not favor the opinion of Petavius, according to which the special union of the Holy Ghost with the just is more than appropriation. Petavius does not offer an adequate

explanation of our Lord's words: "If anyone love Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and will make Our abode with him." Obviously not only the Holy Ghost but also the Father and the Son dwell in the just by this special presence distinct from God's general presence. No great effort will be required to distinguish clearly between these kinds of presence according to their formal constituent.

4. The Common Teaching Of Theologians

Theologians commonly teach about this inhabitation: a) that this union is not hypostatic or personal and substantial, but that it is accidental and moral, although real; b) that the Holy Ghost is in the souls of the just not properly as a formal cause but as an efficient and exemplary cause, and as an object that is known and loved; c) that this habitation belongs to the three persons but is appropriated to the Holy Ghost.

a) This inhabitation is entirely distinct from a hypostatic union, since the just man retains his own personality, and the soul is not only a substance distinct from the Holy Ghost but it retains its own proper being. It is therefore a union that is not personal or substantial but accidental through knowledge and love; thus it is a moral union. Nevertheless it is a real union because the Holy Ghost is present not only as the effect of a divine operation but also by the divine substance; that is, without any change in Himself, the Holy Ghost is infused into the soul according to the degree by which He elevates the soul to grace and charity.

b) The Holy Ghost living thus in the soul sanctifies it not as a formal cause but as an efficient and exemplary cause; not as a formal cause, because infused charity is something created and is not uncreated charity. The Council of Trent declared: "The one and only cause of justification is the justice of God, not the justice by which God is just but that by which He makes us just," namely, created grace. If the Holy Ghost were the formal cause of our justification, the soul would have to be considered the material cause, in which the Holy Ghost inheres intrinsically; and by these two as parts there would be constituted a third being more perfect than the parts, which is impossible. This would open the way to pantheism. Hence the Holy Ghost is called only "the quasi-soul of our soul and the quasi-life of our interior life." But together with the Father and the Son the Holy Ghost is properly the efficient cause of grace and charity inasmuch as He infuses, conserves, and increases them. The Holy Ghost may also be called the

exemplary cause, since He imprints on the soul the divine likeness, and at the same time He is also the ultimate end. In the explanation of St. Thomas' articles we must explain how the Holy Ghost is in us as the known and loved object.

c) This indwelling in the soul, as Pope Leo remarks, is common to the three persons but it is appropriated to the Holy Ghost, because it takes place by charity, which assimilates us more to the Holy Ghost than faith assimilates us to the Son. By the light of glory we will be perfectly assimilated to the Son, who will perfectly assimilate us to the Father, of whom He is the image.

This is the common teaching in opposition to Petavius, Scheeben, and Jovene, who believe that the indwelling is common to the three persons, but, citing certain texts of the Greek Fathers, they hold that the union belongs properly to the Holy Ghost, who is united to us by reason of His person rather than by reason of the divine nature. This opinion is generally rejected because "in God all things are in common except where there is opposition of relation." And not only the indwelling but the union of God with the soul by grace can be attributed to the three persons as long as there is no opposition of relation. This union of the Holy Ghost with the soul of the just man is not personal because it is not hypostatic, and thus it cannot be more than appropriation. This was the teaching of Pope Leo, namely, the presence is "that of the entire Trinity, although it is predicated as peculiar to the Holy Ghost."

5. St. Thomas Teaching In The Body Of The Article

St. Thomas' argument is an explanation of the doctrine of faith and not a theological conclusion; or it may be said to be a deduction of an explicitly revealed proposition from two truths of faith.

A person is sent inasmuch as He exists in a new way in another and is possessed by that other. But a divine person, already present in the ordinary way in all things as the efficient cause (preserving their being) does not exist in man in a new way except inasmuch as He is known and loved by man, by an operation which attains to Him and which cannot take place without habitual grace and charity. Therefore a divine person is not sent invisibly except according to grace gratum faciens, which is connected with charity. The reader is referred to the article.

The whole force of this explanation of the doctrine of faith lies in the distinction between the general presence of immensity, by which God is

present as the efficient cause (preserving the being of creatures) by the continuation of the creative action, which is immediate, namely, without any instrument (thus there is an immediacy of power and the suppositum), and that special presence by which God is present in the just man, not only as an efficient cause but also as the object that is known and loved.

The difficulty arises because the humanity of Christ and the Blessed Virgin Mary are known by the just through faith and they are loved by charity and yet they are not said to be really present in the just; indeed they are physically distant, for according to their natural being they are in heaven. The humanity of Christ is not really present except in heaven and in the Holy Eucharist. In the Eucharist it is really present sacramentally.

God is not said to be especially present in the philosopher who in the state of mortal sin knows the existence of God and some of His attributes by demonstration. Neither does God dwell in the Christian who preserves faith and hope without charity.

To solve this difficulty, St. Thomas, in the body of the article, says that it is by the knowledge and the love of God that the just man attains to God Himself. These words require explanation, and St. Thomas seeks to throw light on them from the words of Sacred Scripture. This supplementary explanation is found in the last paragraph of the body of the article and in the replies to the objections.

In the second paragraph we read: “Similarly, we are said to possess only that which we can freely use and enjoy (we use creatures and enjoy God). The possession of the power to enjoy a divine person is vouchsafed only according to grace gratum faciens (and charity). But in the very gift of grace gratum faciens the Holy Ghost is possessed and through it He dwells in the soul. Hence it is the Holy Ghost Himself who is given and sent. It follows from this that we are dealing not with any kind of knowledge of God but with a quasi-experimental knowledge, by which we enjoy God really present within us and not removed from us. That is to say that natural philosophic knowledge, or the knowledge of faith, especially unformed faith, or prophetic knowledge, is not sufficient; the knowledge of a living faith, of a living faith endowed with gifts, is required, as we shall explain below.

That the three persons be present in a special way in the just man it is not necessary that this knowledge be actual; it is sufficient that it be habitual, because the indwelling perdures as long as the just man remains just, even

in sleep. But it is necessary that God be in the just man not only as the efficient cause preserving his being but also as an object that is experimentally knowable (if not actually known) and lovable (if not actually loved) and enjoyable. St. Thomas states these truths more explicitly in the replies to the objections. In the reply to the third objection he says: "Although the Son can be known by us by certain other effects (besides habitual grace), He does not dwell in us nor is He possessed by us by these other effects." St. Thomas is speaking here of that knowledge and love by which we enjoy the divine person.

In another place St. Thomas said: "Not every kind of knowledge is sufficient for this mission (of a divine person) but only that knowledge which is received from some gift appropriate to the person, that is, from the gift by which the conjunction with God is effected in us, and this must be according to the proper mode of that person. Thus, when the Holy Ghost is given, it must be according to love, and hence this knowledge is quasi-experimental." This is the basis of mystical contemplation, which is experienced as something eminent on the normal road to sanctity.

Experimental or quasi-experimental knowledge concerns an object that is not absent or distant but that is really present, not only effectively, as an efficient cause, but also as an object experimentally known.

Commenting on the words, "For the Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit, that we are the sons of God," St. Thomas says that He gives testimony through the effect of filial love which He produces in us, that is, as the soul experimentally knows itself through its acts, so proportionally the soul quasi-experimentally knows God present within itself inasmuch as God is the principle of filial love, which proceeds under God's special inspiration. This is expressed in the words of the disciples on the way to Emmaus, "Was not our heart burning within us, whilst He spoke in the way?" Although the just man does not have absolute certainty that he is in the state of grace, under God's special inspiration he knows quasi-experimentally that God is present within him.

As John of St. Thomas explains, this knowledge proceeds from a living faith illumined by the gift of wisdom, as St. Thomas says: "From the quest of reason about divine things a right judgment may be reached which leads to wisdom, which is an intellectual virtue. But reaching a right judgment about divine things through a state of being connatural with them belongs to that wisdom which is the gift of the Holy Ghost, as Dionysius said,

‘Hierotheos is perfect in divine things, not only learning them but also experiencing them (that is, by being connatural and sympathetic with them under the special inspiration of the Holy Ghost). This sympathy or connaturality with divine things takes place through charity, which unites us to God, according to the words, But he who is joined to the Lord, is one spirit.’” This gift is possessed by all the just.

In the reply to the third objection, St. Thomas says that the prophetic spirit is not enough, because it does not unite us to God and to His inner life; it only manifests something announced by God. With regard to the reply to the second objection, it should be noted that grace and charity are, as it were, the disposition for receiving the Holy Ghost Himself, and that the Holy Ghost is the efficient cause of grace. Thus in the same moment in the order of efficient causality the Holy Ghost first infuses charity, and in the order of material causality charity is first in disposing the soul to receiving the Holy Ghost. Thus charity is the disposition for the form, and later it becomes the property of that same form.

Doubt. Does this special presence of the Holy Trinity as an object necessarily presuppose the other presence of God as the efficient cause that preserves us in being; and even if it presupposes this other presence, is the special presence real of itself like an accident, which is real of itself although it presupposes a substance, or is it only representative, as when something physically distant is represented?

According to the common opinion of the Thomists, especially John of St. Thomas, this special presence of God as an object necessarily presupposes the other presence of God as the efficient cause that preserves us in being. But even of itself this special presence is real and not merely representative as of some distant thing. To explain this reply we present two mutually opposed interpretations, proposed by Vasquez and Suarez.

According to Vasquez, God’s special mode of existence in the just by grace does not of itself require the real presence of God, so that, if God were not really present by His general presence, He would not be really present by charity but He would be present affectively, as a distant friend, or as the humanity of Christ or the Blessed Virgin, who are physically distant. Vasquez lost sight of the fact that the Blessed Trinity is in the just as an object that is quasi-experimentally knowable, namely, as an object really present and not distant.

Suarez, on the other hand, held that the mission of the divine persons so gives the divine persons that they are really present in the just even if God were not present in them causally and physically present as preserving them in being. And this real, special presence of God in the just, according to Suarez, is based on that exigency of created charity of the just, even here on earth, which demands that God be really present as a friend and not only affectively present.

The reply of the Thomists given above appears to be between these two mutually opposed opinions. For, in opposition to Vasquez, the Thomists hold that this special presence of God is not only the affective presence of a loved and distant friend, but that it is the presence of God quasi-experimentally knowable as present, and as sometimes experimentally known in act.

To depart from this view is to minimize the words of Scripture and depart from their obvious sense. Our Lord said: "If anyone love Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and will make Our abode with him," that is, we will really come. This would not be true of a person who is distant and who becomes present only affectively and by representation as by a letter or by memory. Again the sense of St. Paul's words would not be preserved: "The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us," but who is not given to the unjust, in whom God is already present by His general presence. Again, St. Paul would not be speaking the truth: "Know you not, that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth ill you?" that is, really dwells in you. This is not said of the Blessed Virgin, although she is venerated by the faithful as their spiritual mother.

Finally, in opposition to Vasquez we should say that, if his opinion were true, this special presence, minimized in his sense, would be verified not only in the just but also in believing sinners, in whom God, already present by His general presence, is present as the known object of unformed infused faith and as the object of hope and of inefficacious love. According to Vasquez' opinion we would not be able to explain St. Thomas' texts: "The invisible mission takes place according to the gift of grace gratum faciens, and yet the divine person Himself is given," and "the just man enjoys the divine person Himself."

St. Thomas also says: "Besides grace, no other perfection added to the substance makes God to be present in another as the known and loved

object, and therefore grace alone brings about this singular mode of God's presence in creatures." Therefore, according to St. Thomas, by grace and charity the Trinity is not only objectively and affectively present as a distant friend, but the Trinity is also really objectively present as an object quasi-experimentally knowable and as sometimes actually known in some such manner as the soul is really and objectively present to itself, as an object quasi-experimentally knowable through its actions. Hence we cannot admit the opinion of Vasquez.

What are we to think of Suarez' opinion? According to him the charity of the Christian here on earth requires not only the affective but the real presence of God, who is therefore really in the soul even if He had not already been present as the efficient cause.

In reply many Thomists, especially John of St. Thomas, say that the love of friendship, even when it is supernatural, effects a formal effective union, which exists between distant friends, but it does not effect a real union, which cannot be had without experimental knowledge of the object really present. Thus St. Thomas says that love formally produces a union according to affection and desires a union in fact, or a real union. Moreover, the fact that by charity we love the humanity of Christ and the Blessed Virgin Mary does not make them really present in us but only affectively present.

Finally St. Thomas says: "Bliss, which is the attainment of the last end, formally consists in the beatific vision and not in love." He goes on to say, "The attainment of the last end does not consist in the act of the will itself. The will is directed to the end when it is absent, and then it desires the end, and also to the end when it is present, and then the will rejoices in the possession of the end. We attain the end, however, when it becomes present to us by the act of the intellect, and then the will rests in the fruition of the end." Hence John of St. Thomas and other Thomists conclude that the real presence of the three divine persons is a prerequisite for their special presence, and that the real presence takes place by efficient causality, according to which God preserves us in being (by contact with His power), whether this be the being of nature or the being of grace.

Nevertheless this special presence is in its own right real because we are speaking here of God as quasi-experimentally known. Analogically, an accident, in order that it be real, presupposes a substance, at least the accident inheres in a substance according to its aptitude, and yet the

accident in its own right is something real, that is, being is intrinsically found in it. Somewhat similar to this is the dependence of the special presence of God on His general presence, and both presences are real, although in a different manner. The general presence is formally the presence of the efficient cause preserving us in being, whereas the special presence is the presence of an object quasi-experimentally knowable and enjoyable and sometimes actually known and enjoyed.

We may add with the Salmanticenses that, if by an impossible hypothesis God were not already present in the soul of the just man as preserving his natural being, in the instant when grace and charity are infused God would begin to be really present as preserving grace and charity, which are His most proper effects, and at the same time God would be present as the object quasi-experimentally knowable and sometimes actually known and loved.

This may be illustrated by two analogies. 1. When God is clearly seen He is present in the saints in two ways: a) as preserving them in their natural and supernatural being; b) as the object clearly seen and experimentally known and continually loved above all things. 2. Our souls are really present to themselves, a) as the radical, physical principle of the soul's own actions; b) as an object that is not distant and that is experimentally knowable in its operations. This opinion of John of St. Thomas has recently been presented again as the true interpretation of St. Thomas' doctrine by Father Gardeil. Thus the triune God is the principle and the efficient cause of our supernatural life, especially with regard to those acts which are not produced without God's special inspiration; and thus sometimes God manifests Himself in the shadows of faith as an object that is quasi-experimentally known.

Doubt. Does Sacred Scripture speak of this quasi-experimental knowledge of God dwelling in the souls of the just? The reply is in the affirmative. Sacred Scripture frequently mentions it: "For the Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit, that we are the sons of God"; "His unction teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie"; "But you shall know Him; because He shall abide with you, and shall be in you"; "To him that overcometh, I will give the hidden manna,. . . which no man knoweth but he that receiveth it"; "He that loveth not, knoweth not God," that is, does not know God quasi-experimentally, although he may know Him by reason or faith.

Doubt. Why does St. Thomas call this knowledge quasi-experimental? For two reasons: 1. because this knowledge does not attain to God altogether immediately but only in the filial affection which God excites in us; 2. because we are not able with complete certitude to distinguish this supernatural filial affection from a similar natural and inefficacious affection which comes from sentiment. Therefore we have no absolute certainty that we are in the state of grace. But still amid the shadows of faith the just man here on earth under the special inspiration of the Holy Ghost can sometimes say with the disciples on the road to Emmaus: “Was not our heart burning within us, whilst He spoke in the way?” St. Thomas remarks: “He who truly receives grace knows it by experiencing a certain sweetness, which he who does not receive grace does not experience.” In this way St. Thomas explains the words of the Apocalypse, “To him that overcometh, I will give the hidden manna,. . . which no man knoweth but he that receiveth it.”

Finally the effects and signs of the indwelling of the Holy Trinity are described by St. Thomas in the Contra Gentes and also in the following articles of this question. The signs listed in the Contra Gentes are as follows: 1. the testimony of a good conscience; 2. the frequent hearing of the word of God; 3. an inner taste for divine wisdom; 4. conversation with God; 5. joy in God by fully assenting to Him even in adversity; 6. the liberty of the sons of God, by which the just are freed from inordinate passions; 7. conversation about divine things from the fullness of the heart. It would be a great mistake to confuse these signs with sentiment, which is nothing more than an affectation of the love of God, where there is actually no love of God or where it is only cold and indifferent.

FOURTH ARTICLE: WHETHER THE FATHER IS SENT

Reply. It is not congruous for the Father to be sent, since mission implies procession from another according to origin. But the Father is not from another. Therefore He is not sent.

Reply to the first objection. The Father gives Himself inasmuch as He liberally communicates Himself to be enjoyed by creatures, and He dwells in creatures by grace, according to our Lord’s words: “If anyone love Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and will make Our abode with him.”

FIFTH ARTICLE: WHETHER THE SON IS INVISIBLY SENT

Reply. The Son was sent visibly by the Incarnation, but He is also sent invisibly, for He said: “And We will come to him, and will make Our abode with him”; and besides this the Son has His origin from the Father. Thus He is sent invisibly according to the gift of grace gratum faciens.

Reply to the first objection. Certain gifts are appropriated to the Son, namely, those which pertain to the intellect and incline to love, as the gift of wisdom, which is a kind of taste for knowledge and is called a kind of experimental knowledge.

Reply to the second objection. We treat here only of the knowledge which inclines to love, since the Son of God is the Word spirating love.

Reply to the third objection. We distinguish two invisible missions, which are inseparable: “the one cannot be without the other, because neither takes place without grace gratum faciens, nor is one person separated from the other.”

SIXTH ARTICLE: WHETHER THE INVISIBLE MISSION IS TO ALL WHO PARTICIPATE IN GRACE

Reply. The reply is affirmative according to St. Augustine, for this mission takes place through sanctifying grace.

Reply to first objection. The Holy Trinity dwelt in the Fathers of the Old Testament by the fact that they were in the state of grace, and the Son and the Holy Ghost were invisibly sent to them. But the Holy Ghost was not sent visibly except at our Lord’s baptism and on Pentecost.

Reply to second objection. It is noted that “the invisible mission takes place even in the progress of virtue or in the increase of grace. . . especially when anyone progresses to some new act or new state of grace. For example, when a person offers himself in martyrdom out of the fervor of charity, or renounces his possessions, or undertakes some arduous work.”

An invisible mission also takes place after the passive purification of the senses, which is a kind of second conversion, in the transition from the state of the beginner to the age of spiritual proficiency or to the illuminative way. The Holy Ghost is sent invisibly a fortiori after the passive purification of the soul, when a profound transformation of the soul takes place at the moment when the soul enters into the perfect life of union, as occurred to the apostles on Pentecost.

Reply to third objection. The Holy Ghost is sent to the blessed in the exact instant when the beatific vision begins; then the three divine persons are present in the just soul as in a living temple, no longer shrouded by the shadows of faith, but appearing in a bright vision, which is called the splendor of the saints. Then the soul is perfectly assimilated not only to the Holy Ghost but also to the Word, by whom the soul is assimilated to the Father, inasmuch as the Word is the figure of His substance. The reader is referred to this third reply.

Reply to fourth objection. A mission of a divine person is not made to the sacraments, because the missions do not take place except with regard to a terminus, that is, to those who receive grace through the sacraments.

SEVENTH ARTICLE: WHETHER THE HOLY GHOST IS SENT VISIBLY

In this article St. Thomas explains the congruity of the visible mission of the Holy Ghost descending on our Lord at His baptism in the figure of a dove and on Pentecost in the figure of fire.

Reply. This visible mission is fitting, because it is connatural to man to be led by visible things to the invisible. These visible missions are to the Trinity of persons as creatures are to the one God, that is, God manifests Himself as triune in these visible events, namely, in the incarnation of the Son and in the heavenly fire of Pentecost.

The difference between the two visible missions is that the Son is sent as the principle of sanctification, and therefore as a person united to human nature to perform a work as the Redeemer, and the Holy Ghost is sent as the sign of sanctification through some symbol, as the dove and fire.

Reply to second objection. With St. Augustine, St. Thomas holds that the dove that descended on Jesus was not merely the object of an imaginary vision, but something real and extramental; so also with the fire on Pentecost. The reason is that “those who saw this dove and this fire saw them with their eyes,” that is, all the witnesses present saw them.

Reply to fifth objection. These creatures (the dove and the fire) were formed externally by the ministry of the angels.

Reply to sixth objection. St. Thomas explains the different visible missions which took place in the early Church to propagate the faith. Thus the Holy Ghost manifested Himself in the guise of fiery tongues to make known the office of teaching.

EIGHTH ARTICLE

In this last article St. Thomas shows that a divine person is properly sent by that person from whom He proceeds. Thus the Holy Ghost is sent by the Father and the Son, and the Son is sent by the Father. But in a less proper sense we may say that the Son is sent by the Holy Ghost inasmuch as the person sending is understood as the principle not of the person who is sent but of the effect for which the mission takes place. Thus we read in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, "And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man."

Thus we conclude the treatise of the Trinity with a consideration of the manifestation of this mystery ad extra. By way of conclusion we may briefly speak of the importance of this supreme mystery, having in mind particularly the relation of the mystery to the two orders of nature and grace and to the life of grace.

EPILOGUE: THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SUPREME MYSTERY OF THE TRINITY

1. The distinction between the two orders of nature and grace appears more clearly from the fact that the mystery of the Trinity is entirely indemonstrable. Indeed, as has been said, the possibility or repugnance of this mystery cannot be proved or disproved; it can only be set forth as plausible. If the possibility of this mystery could be proved, by this very fact the existence of the Trinity would be proved, because the existence of the Trinity is not contingent but necessary.

By the revelation of the Trinity the dogma of the freedom of creation is confirmed, and a clear solution is offered to the objection presented by the absolute optimism of Plato, Leibnitz, and Malebranche. This objection is clothed in the following syllogism: good is essentially diffusive of itself; but God is the highest good; therefore He is essentially diffusive of Himself by creation, which is, therefore, at least morally necessary so that the actual world must be the best possible world. Leibnitz said: "If God had not created, He would not be good or wise." To which Bossuet replied: "God is not any greater for having created the universe."

The Vatican Council defined the absolute freedom of creation in these words: "By His most free counsel God created all things. . . . not for the sake of increasing His happiness or acquiring it, but to manifest His

perfection by the good things which He bestows on creatures." Therefore creation is an expression of God's most voluntary liberality and generosity.

To the objection based on the principle, "good is diffusive of itself," we reply by making a distinction: good is diffusive either according to nature, as the sun diffuses its light, or according to the will and liberality. "Since the goodness of God is perfect and can exist without any other, and since nothing of perfection accrues to Him from others, it follows that it is not absolutely necessary for God to will other things besides Himself."

This reply is confirmed by the revelation of the mystery of the Blessed Trinity, for in this mystery is verified completely and necessarily the aforesaid principle, "good is essentially diffusive of itself." This principle is verified in the infinite fecundity of the divine nature. In the Contra Gentes St. Thomas states: "The higher a nature is the more that which emanates from that nature is intimate to the nature." Thus in generating the Son, God the Father communicates to Him not only His ideas as in the creation of things, not only grace and charity as in our justification, but His entire nature. If the necessary diffusion or the necessary fecundity is such in the Trinity, it follows that creation, which is diffusion ad extra, is free and in no way necessary, since the principle, "good is diffusive of itself," is verified in God before the creation. And the principle is verified on a plane which is above the order of causality whether efficient or final by the communication of the entire divine nature to the Son after the manner of intellection and likewise to the Holy Ghost after the manner of love.

2. This mystery shows that the intimate life of God is the perfect life of intellection and of love.

It is the perfect life of intellection, in which not only a multiple and accidental word is conceived but in which the unique and substantial Word is conceived, in whom in one instant all possible and future things are known. The reason is that in God intellection is not an accident but the same as substantial being, and the terminus of the intellection, the Word, is likewise substantial. In this perfect life of intellection the three divine persons live by the one intellection out of the same infinite truth in the perfect comprehension of their own intimate life.

The mystery of the Trinity also shows that God's intimate life is the perfect life of love, so that the three persons, by one and the same essential love, love the supreme good, with which they are identified. In this love there is a perfect union of the three persons without any inordination of

love, without any egoism; indeed the entire personality of the Father is the relation to the Son, the entire personality of the Son is the relation to the Father, and the entire personality of the Holy Ghost is the relation to the Father and to the Son.

This mystery may be summed up as follows: the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Ghost is God, but the Father is not the Son, because no one generates himself, and the Father and the Son are not the Holy Ghost. All this remains hidden to us, but in speaking of the mystery we avoid contradictions, although we are unable to demonstrate the possibility or non-repugnance of the mystery. This possibility is neither proved or disproved; it is only set forth as plausible, as is the fitness of the Trinity or the fecundity of the divine nature ad intra. Again and again we can return to the study of the reasons for the fitness of the Trinity since these reasons are most profound, although they are not demonstrative; they tend to the evidence not of demonstration but of the beatific vision, as the polygon inscribed in a circle tends to the circumference of the circle as its sides are multiplied in infinity.

3. In the revelation of the Blessed Trinity the intimate life of God appears as the supreme exemplar of the life of grace, especially since our adoptive filiation is an analogical likeness participating in the eternal natural filiation.

As God communicated to His Son His entire nature so He communicates to us a participation of His nature, or the principle of operation by which we are able to see God directly as He sees Himself and to love Him as He loves Himself. Speaking of the similarity of these two filiations, St. Thomas said: “The adoptive filiation is a certain likeness participating in the natural filiation; but it takes place in us as appropriated to the Father, who is the natural principle of filiation, and through the gift of the Holy Ghost, who is the love of the Father and the Son.” St. Thomas refers to this adoptive filiation in explaining the following texts: “For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be made conformable to the image of His Son; that He might be the first-born among many brethren”; “That which we have seen and have heard, we declare unto you, that you also may have fellowship with us, and our fellowship may be with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ”; “Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect.”

The procession of the Holy Ghost is also a supreme exemplar of our charity, for, as St. Thomas says, “The Son is not any Word but the Word that

spirates love." Therefore all our knowledge of God should spirate charity toward God and our neighbor. St. Thomas defines a devil as "one who does not love." This similarity between Gods love and ours was expressed by our Lord Himself: "Holy Father, keep them. . ., that they may be one, as We also are. . . . As Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee; that they also may be one in US." That is, as the Father and the Son are one in the unity of nature and as they love each other in the Holy Ghost, who is personal love, the terminus of notional love, so Christians should be one in God and among one another by grace, which is the participation of the divine nature.

In this way the image not only of the one God but of the triune God will be perfected in the soul, for as God the Father knows Himself in the Word and loves Himself and the Son in the Holy Ghost so the Christian soul should not only know itself but God Himself quasi-experimentally and continuously and to love Him always. In heaven this image of the Trinity will be definitively perfected, for there the blessed continually and directly know God as He knows Himself and they love Him as He loves Himself.

With regard to the special relations of the sons of God with each divine person, it should be noted: 1. that the three persons are one principle of operation ad extra, because they operate through the intellect, the will, and the omnipotence, which are common to all three; further, the adoption of men belongs to the entire Trinity, and therefore in the Our Father, "Father" is predicated essentially and not personally of the first person alone; 2. nevertheless the adoption is appropriated to the Father as the author, to the Son as the exemplar, and to the Holy Ghost as to the one who imprints the character on the soul. St. Thomas says: "The adoptive sonship is a certain likeness participating in the (divine) natural filiation, but it takes place in us as appropriated to the Father, who is the principle of natural filiation, and through the gift of the Holy Ghost, who is the love of the Father and of the Son"; "Although this adoption is common to the entire Trinity, it is appropriated to the Father as the author, to the Son as the exemplar, and to the Holy Ghost as the one who imprints on us the likeness of the exemplar." This adoption is imperfect by grace in this life and perfect in glory. God, dwelling in the saints, in the one immobile instant of eternity generates the Son in the saints and spirates in them the Holy Ghost, and He assimilates the saints to Himself by preserving in them consummated grace, the light of glory, and charity that can never be lost, so that the prayer of Christ will be verified in them: "That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in

Thee; that they also may be one in Us; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me.”

GOD THE CREATOR THE PLACE OF THIS TREATISE IN THEOLOGY

To understand this treatise we should first consider the place it holds in St. Thomas' now classical synthesis. The first part of the Theological Summa, which treats of God, the primary and formal object of theology, is divided into three parts: 1. the one God or the divine essence (questions 2-26); 2. the Trinity of persons (questions 27-43); 3. God the creator and governor of the universe (questions 44-119)

The reason for this division is that sacred theology, which is the science of God based on revelation, should in the light of revelation first treat of its formal object, namely, God in Himself, in His essence and in the Trinity of persons, before it treats of God's operation ad extra, which is the creation and governance of the universe, because operation follows being, and the mode of operation follows the mode of being.

Here we see the difference between the method of metaphysics and that of sacred theology. Metaphysics, which is the science in the natural order which treats not of God but of being as such and of being as known by man, that is, in the mirror of sensible things, ascends gradually from the sensible to the spiritual and divine. Therefore Aristotle, after his physics or natural philosophy of mobile being and his psychology of animated being, began his metaphysics concerning being as such, namely, the metaphysical critique of the value of reason and of being as knowable (IV Metaphysica); then he considered being in itself in his ontology; and finally he undertook the demonstration of the existence of the first mover and pure act (XII Metaphysica). Metaphysics, therefore, the science of being as being, primarily considers being as such as it is knowable naturally, that is, by ascending from sensible things to the supreme cause of being, to God, the author of nature.

Sacred theology, on the other hand, being a supernatural science not of being as being but of God as God from the viewpoint of the Deity or of the

intimate life of God as knowable by revelation, begins in the light of revelation with the consideration of God not only as the author of nature but also of grace. Theology therefore treats of God before creatures, it treats of God in His essence and in the Trinity of persons before it turns to God the creator and governor of the universe. St. Thomas explains this important difference between the metaphysical and theological methods: “The two sciences do not proceed in the same way. In the discipline of philosophy, which considers creatures in themselves and from them goes to the knowledge of God, the first consideration is of creatures and the last of God; in the doctrine of faith, however, which considers creatures only in their ordination to God, the first consideration is of God and then it turns to creatures. Thus theology is more perfect since it is more like the knowledge of God, who knowing Himself sees all other things in Himself. Hence, according to this method, after having treated of the things that concern God in Himself in the first book, it remains to treat of those things that come from God.”

St. Thomas follows this order not only in the Summa theologica but also in the Summa Contra Gentes, which is not really a philosophical Summa, since it begins with God, although it deals first with the truths that can be known naturally and treats of the Trinity only in the fourth book.

This distinction between the metaphysical and theological methods applies also to the theological treatise on man and the philosophical treatise on man as presented by Aristotle in his De anima. The philosophical treatise on man begins with the sensible manifestations of the life of the soul, of vegetative, sensitive, and intellective life, and only at the end is there mention of the spirituality and incorruptibility of the human soul. This is the method of discovery and ascent. On the other hand, the theological treatise on man descends from God to the spiritual soul created by God, and therefore the first question is about the spirituality and incorruptibility of the soul (Ia, q. 75, a. 1, 2, 4, 5); then follow questions on the union of the soul with the body (q. 76), the powers of the soul both common and special (q. 77), the intellective operations, which alone with the help of grace can attain to God, particularly the knowledge of the separated soul, about which the philosopher knows little (q. 84), and finally the questions on the first production of man as the image of God (q. go) and the state of justice and original sanctity (q. 93).

This difference between the philosophical and theological methods should be noted in the beginning, since St. Thomas as a speculative theologian makes extensive use of philosophy in treating of God. Many have thought that he was too much addicted to philosophy in theological matters, but St. Thomas carefully observed the distinction between the two disciplines. Theology makes use of philosophy as a superior uses an inferior for a higher end, and thus before theology makes use of a philosophical proposition it examines it in a higher light and approves it at least negatively as not contrary to revelation; then it uses the philosophical proposition as an instrument and confers on it a higher certainty so that the theological conclusion, derived from the major of faith and the minor of reason, although less certain than faith, is still more certain than a philosophical conclusion because it enjoys the approbation and confirmation of the superior light of virtual revelation, which is the formal object of theology.

DIVISION OF THE TREATISE ON GOD THE CREATOR

The treatise on God the creator is divided into three parts:

1. the production of creatures.

2. the distinction of things in general and in particular. This part has three treatises: a) the angels, b) corporeal creatures, c) man.

3. the conservation and governance of things in general and in particular.

The order of this division is logical. First we treat of the production of being created from nothing, clearly distinguishing between creation and every other production of things; secondly, we treat of the distinction between created things, and here we take up the problem of how a multitude can proceed from the supreme unity. Plato, Aristotle, and Plotinus were unable to solve this problem. The first two did not attain to an explicit notion of creation from nothing, and Plotinus substituted pantheistic emanationism for creation. In this second part we also consider the distinction between good and evil. Finally, we logically treat of the governance of all these creatures, both spiritual and corporeal, inasmuch as their actions are ordered by divine direction and motion to the end of the whole universe.

CHAPTER XVIII

QUESTION 44 THE FIRST CAUSE OF ALL BEING

This question is divided according to the four kinds of causes, since God is the efficient, exemplary, and final cause of all things, and since He is the efficient cause of matter itself, the causality of which is entirely imperfect and cannot be attributed to the supreme principle. We treat here especially of the efficient cause and in the following question of its mode. Final causality, or God as the ultimate end, is considered at length in the first part of the second part of the Summa, while exemplary causality was considered in the first part under the divine ideas.

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER IT IS NECESSARY THAT EVERY BEING BE CREATED BY GOD

In other words, as St. Thomas himself says in the prologue, whether God is the efficient cause of all being.

State of the question. The title is clear. Every being stands for everything that can properly be called being, namely, every substance and every suppositum of which we can say that it is what it is. In the following question we will ask whether prime matter is from God, because prime matter is not properly being or that which is; it is a part of material being, namely, that by which a thing is material.

At the moment the word “created” in the title signifies only what is effectively caused, because we are not yet considering the mode of this production, namely, from nothing; this will be considered in a following article. The question now is, whether God is the efficient cause of all being.

The state of the question will become clearer from the difficulties proposed at the beginning of the article: it appears that there are many

things absolutely necessary in the world, for example, the circle is a circle of itself and of itself possesses such properties. But what is absolutely necessary requires no efficient cause.

Reply. The reply is in the affirmative: God is the efficient cause of all being. This truth is of faith.

1. Sacred Scripture clearly affirms it: “In the beginning God created heaven and earth.” Here the word “heaven” includes all heavenly beings, and “earth” includes all inferior beings. “For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are in them”; “I am the Lord that make all things, that alone stretch out the heavens, that establish the earth”; “Who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all things that are in them”; “All things were made by Him”; “For of Him, and by Him, and in Him, are all things”; “God, who made the world, and all things therein.”

2. In the Nicene and Constantinopolitan Creeds we read: “I believe in one God,. . . maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.” “We believe that the one God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are one principle of all things, the creator of all things visible and invisible, spiritual and corporal.”

3. Theological proof. Before we begin this proof it should be remembered that this problem has received three solutions: dualism, pantheism, and the revealed doctrine of creation.

Dualism says that the world came from an eternal prime matter, which is necessary, as God is, and which is coordinated to God rather than subordinate to Him.

Pantheism holds that God is one and the same substance with the world so that the things in the world are quasi-accidents or finite modes of God, whether the world became God by ascending evolution, as modern pantheists say, or whether God became the world by descending evolution, which the Neoplatonists have in mind when they talk about emanation.

The revealed doctrine of creation holds that the world and whatever is in it is the effect of God.

We have already refuted pantheism above, by showing that God must be the first, immovable, most simple, efficient cause since He is His own action and also His own being, and therefore He is distinct in fact and in essence from the mutable and composite world. Moreover, an efficient cause is extrinsic and does not enter into the composition of its effects. Again, as has been said, God cannot have accidents, for He would be

perfected and actuated by them and this is impossible, since He is pure act, subsisting being itself, the ultimate unreceived actuality, to which no addition can be made; God is indeed the fullness of being. Dualism will be refuted in the second article.

The demonstration given in the body of the article is the fourth argument for demonstrating the existence of God, but in reverse, that is, the argument does not ascend but it descends. Hence this article is a commentary of the fourth argument for God's existence. The fourth argument can be reduced to the following.

Whatever is in anything by participation is caused by that being to whom this thing belongs essentially. But in things we find participated being, for being is predicated of them in a greater or lesser degree. Therefore there exists a being who is such essentially, the cause of all things, and this being we call God.

The major is the very principle of causality, namely, whatever is such not of itself is such by another that is such essentially. The minor is evident from the grades of perfection in the world, for every multitude presupposes a superior unity, because the multitude does not account for the unity of likeness that is in it; as St. Thomas says, "those things that are diverse among themselves do not agree in any one thing except by some cause that unites them." Thus every imperfect thing is composed from perfection and the restricted capacity for this perfection, and every composite requires a cause for this same reason, since those things that are diverse among themselves do not agree in any one thing except by some cause that unites them. In other words, the union that is found in the composition of two things and in the multitude of diverse and similar things depends on a superior unity. The union participates in the unity, and the unity, therefore, is the principle of the union, as St. Thomas frequently points out. We cannot conceive a union unless we first have the concept of the unity; the converse is not true. Unity is the most simple of ideas; but in the union we already have composition or multitude. Hence the principle: an uncaused union of diverse things is impossible.

In this article we use the same argument in reverse. That which is in anything by participation is efficiently caused in it by the being that has this thing essentially. But God and God alone is being essentially, since He is subsisting being itself, which cannot be other than one. Therefore God is the efficient cause of all being.

The major is evident since it is a form of the principle of causality. Cajetan notes that “this proposition is accepted both by the Platonists and by the Peripatetics, if the participated thing is found to exist essentially, “as without repugnance.” For sometimes there is a repugnance, for example, man as an essence, separate from individuals cannot exist, since man by his very definition must have common matter, bones and flesh. But bones and flesh cannot exist unless they are these bones and this flesh, because they imply quantity whose parts extend beyond other parts and are individuated. Man can be conceived essentially as an idea but he cannot exist as an essence; thus the idea of man is in God, and the divine essence contains man only virtually, inasmuch as it can produce a man. But the major is to be understood of a participated perfection which in its concept does not involve common matter or an imperfection, that is, some perfection like being, living, and intellection.

On the supposition that God is subsisting being itself, the minor is evident, as was proved elsewhere, as follows: the first mover must be His own action and His own being. For, since being is predicated with respect to the actual being and since it is that whose act is being, if God is subsisting being itself it follows that God is being essentially. Moreover, being itself, if it is received, is received in some essence, for example, in man, a plant, a stone; but if the being subsists as unreceived then it is being essentially and it is also unique, just as whiteness, if it were subsisting, would be the one and only whiteness. A perfection is never multiplied except by the capacity for perfection in that in which it is received. Thus St. Thomas resolves the question from an analysis of the things involved in the question, because a more proper cause of beings inasmuch as they are beings cannot be assigned than that which is being essentially. We are certainly dealing with the efficient cause, since that which is by participation is efficiently from that which is being essentially.

Reply to first objection. Relationship to a cause is a property of contingent being, which is defined as being which is able to be or not to be. Therefore it follows that contingent being does not exist of itself but by another.

Reply to second objection. The objection is that many things exist in the world that are absolutely necessary and do not require an efficient cause. The reply is that there are in the world certain absolutely necessary things which still have a cause for necessity, like demonstrated conclusions.

Reply to third objection. The objection is that those things that are mathematically true do not require an efficient cause. Reply. The science of mathematics abstracts from an efficient cause but it does not deny it. It abstracts from an efficient cause only because it considers the essence and not the existence of numbers and geometric figures, nor does it consider motion but only the formal cause of numbers and figures.

On this matter the reader is referred to St. Thomas' article in the De potentia. The article in the Theological Summa is shorter but more sublime in its simplicity. Its sublimity does not appear until we study the complex article in the De potentia; then we understand the superior unity and what it contains in its virtuality.

In this first article we consider the historical question, whether Plato and Aristotle, who are quoted by St. Thomas, affirmed that the multitude of beings in the world depend on God as on an efficient cause or that the dependence is only on a formal and final cause. St. Thomas replies to this question in the following article. We shall see that these great philosophers explicitly affirmed the formal and final dependence, but much less explicitly did they speak of a dependence on an efficient cause, because they had not yet attained to an explicit idea of creation from nothing and a fortiori they had not understood free creation or creation from eternity.

When St. Thomas quotes Plato and Aristotle he does not intend to imply that they formulated the conclusion of the article but that they laid down the principles, showing that the multitude does not account for the unity of likeness that is found in the multitude; that is, the multitude presupposes a superior unity, and perfection with an admixture of imperfection presupposes a pure unparticipated perfection, for, as St. Thomas says, "those things that are diverse among themselves do not agree in some one thing except through some cause that unites them." That is, many things do not agree in some perfection except through some cause that unites them, and the diverse things that constitute a composite, as a perfection and the capacity in which it is received, do not agree and become one except through some cause uniting them.

Pantheistic Objections

First objection. If whiteness were subsisting it would be one alone. Therefore if being is subsisting there is but one being.

Reply. In the antecedent it is supposed that whiteness cannot be participated in; on the contrary, being is shared.

I insist. There is a certain participation but it is after the manner of the emanation of an accident from a substance.

Reply. We reply in two ways: a posteriori and a priori.

A posteriori. From an experience illuminated by the light of reason we know that there are many substances in the world, for example, the substance of water is distinct from the substance of hydrogen and the substance of oxygen of which it is composed, for it has entirely different properties. Again, the animal is substantially different from the inanimate food that it assimilates. We note particularly in the world about us the individuality of the higher animals, especially the individuality of man, which is confirmed by the testimony of consciousness, according to which each one of us is substantially distinct from others, as the just man is distinct from the criminal, and Jesus from Barabbas. Moreover, in proving the existence of God, the first mover, first cause, and supreme being, it was not necessary to show first that there was a multiplicity of substances in this world. It was sufficient to show that the substance of the world changes, and then to point out that every movement required a mover and in the final analysis an immovable mover, who is his own action and consequently his own being. It was clear then that this first immovable mover was really distinct from the mobile substance of the world. It was sufficient to show that every multitude presupposed a superior unity, and that every imperfect being or composition of perfection and imperfection presupposed a perfect, pure, and simple being, which was really and essentially distinct from the changeable and composite world. “God, who is unique and singular, a completely simple and unchangeable spiritual substance, must be said to be really and essentially distinct from the world and ineffably exalted above all things which are by Him and which can be conceived.”

A priori. Supposing the existence of the first being as proved, it is evident that the world is not related to God as an accident to a substance. It was proved earlier that a substance is compared to an accident as potency to act, since the substance is in some way perfected by the accident. But subsisting being itself is in no way in potency to anything, it cannot be perfected, it is pure act, the ultimate actuality, a being to which no addition can be made, since it is already the fullness of being. Hence Spinoza was able to deduce from God infinite attributes but no finite modes. Hence if God alone exists, as Parmenides taught, there is no change anywhere, no multitude.

I insist. But Spinoza thought that the world needed neither an efficient nor a final cause, being like the circle which in itself does not require these extrinsic causes, for the circle is a circle of itself.

Reply. Spinoza here made use of the mathematical method, which abstracts from the existence of the circle and considers its essence and which abstracts from the existence of all things, from movement, for instance, and therefore from efficient and final causes, and which considers only the formal cause of numbers and geometrical figures, as St. Thomas explains in this article. But the mathematical method is a special method which is valid in the study of the essence of quantity, whether continuous or discrete, but it is not a universal method which is valid in the study of beings, particularly with regard to their existence. For if anything comes into existence which did not exist before, as this plant, this animal, this recently generated man, it requires not only a formal cause but also an efficient and a final cause. The mathematical method is not adequate in physics or in metaphysics. Spinoza's theory is an abuse of the mathematical method, which in its own order prescinds from efficient and final causes. Metaphysics, however, cannot prescind from these causes in this way, since it is the science of being as being through the highest causes, as Aristotle explained at length in the beginning of his metaphysics.

I insist. The essences of things are eternal and absolutely necessary and they do not depend on God, for example, man is a rational animal eternally and independently of God. Therefore not every being depends on God.

Reply. The essences of things are eternal negatively, that is, inasmuch as they prescind from the here and now, I concede; positively eternal, as always existing, I deny, or I ask you to prove it. Again I distinguish: the essences as absolutely necessary do not depend on God, if their necessity is not participated, I concede; if it is otherwise, I deny. These essences do not indeed depend on God effectively unless they are produced here and now, but they do depend formally on God, since they are the divine essence as imitable ad extra in a participated likeness. Just as every existence presupposes the first existence, so every essence presupposes the first essence, of which it is an analogical imitation, at least in the nature of being, and so also every truth presupposes the first truth. As St. Thomas says in this article, "certain necessary things have a cause for their necessity, as necessary conclusions."

In the Contra Gentes, St. Thomas says: “From the fact that the truths that we understand are eternal with regard to what is understood, we cannot conclude that the soul is eternal, but that the understood truths are based on something eternal. They are in fact based on the first truth itself as in a universal cause containing all truth.”

I insist. Spinoza also objected that one substance cannot produce another substance, since the second substance would have the same essential attributes and therefore it would not be distinct from the first substance.

Reply. I distinguish: the second substance would have the same attributes at least analogically, I concede; the same attributes numerically, I deny.

I insist. By substance we understand that which subsists per se. But that which subsists per se is the one subsisting being itself. Therefore there is only one substance.

Reply. I distinguish the major: a substance subsists independently of a subject in which it inheres, I concede, for example, man is a substance, whiteness is not; independently of the cause of its existence, I deny. I distinguish the minor: that which subsists per se independently of the cause of existence, I concede; merely independently of a subject of inherence, I deny. Hence we cannot define substance, as Spinoza did, as being of itself but as being in itself and not in another, although it can be from another.

I insist. Besides the infinite there can be nothing. But the substance of God is infinite. Therefore there is nothing besides God.

Reply. I distinguish the major: nothing that is infinite and of itself, I concede; nothing that is finite and of another, I deny.

I insist. Neither can there be anything finite besides God. A finite substance added to the infinite makes it something more. But this is absurd.

Reply. I distinguish the major: the infinite would become something more intensively, I deny; extensively, I concede. There would be not a major entity but more entities. After the creation there is not more of being but there are more beings, not more of wisdom but more wise persons. We have the same thing when a student understands St. Thomas: another understands, but there is not more wisdom.

I insist. That which contains another is not really distinct from it. But the infinite God contains the world, otherwise He would not be infinite. Therefore God is not really distinct from the world.

Reply. I distinguish the major: that which contains another formally or materially, I concede; that which contains another eminently and virtually, I

deny. I distinguish the minor: God contains the world formally or materially, I deny; eminently and virtually, I concede, inasmuch as God can produce the world, and all the perfections in the world pre-exist eminently in the subsisting being itself, who is the plenitude of being.

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER PRIME MATTER IS CREATED BY GOD

State of the question. This article is not without value after the preceding article, for prime matter is not some kind of being, nor is it that which exists, but that by which something is material; it is a part of material being.

The question of this second article coincides materially with the question of creation, because prime matter cannot be produced except from nothing. Neither has it anything to do formally with the mode of creation, which we will treat in the next question. We are now not considering the mode of production but that part of material things which is prime matter. The state of the question will appear more clearly from the difficulties posed at the beginning of the article. These difficulties are the arguments of dualism.

First difficulty. Averroes argued: nothing is produced from nothing, for everything that becomes is produced from some subject. But prime matter has no subject from which it is produced. Therefore it cannot be produced. As Aristotle said, prime matter is ingenerable and incorruptible, for all generation presupposes it and all corruption ends with it.

Second difficulty. There cannot be an active principle without a passive correlative. But God is the first active principle. Therefore matter must be coordinated to God, as the first passive principle.

Third difficulty. Every agent produces its effect in act. But prime matter is pure potency. Therefore prime matter cannot be produced by God. From this we see the difficulties inherent in the present question.

Reply. The reply is that prime matter is created by God. This doctrine is of faith, since it is of faith, as we shall see below, that the creation of the world was a production of the world out of nothing of itself or of any subject. In the argument sed contra St. Thomas quotes St. Augustine's classical text, "Thou hast made two things, O Lord, one close to Thee, namely, the angel, and the other close to nothing, namely, prime matter." We should point out, however, that St. Augustine did not speak as precisely about prime matter as the Peripatetics. He was speaking here perhaps of elementary matter, of the empty earth, which could exist without any form,

because it already had an elementary form. For the Peripatetics prime matter is not something, it has no quality and no quantity, it is pure potency or the real capacity for that perfection which is the specific form of material things. Hence for the Peripatetics prime matter was not burnable wood, or transformable land, or air, or water, but that which is determinable by the forms of things. Therefore it is not that which is but that by which a thing is material, and therefore, as St. Thomas says, it cannot exist without a form.

Scotus and Suarez did not clearly understand this prime matter; they thought that it was not pure potency and that it had an essential actuality and could exist without a form. This is a different kind of metaphysics from ours, for with them potency is most imperfect act, as if the potency which is presupposed in motion were the beginning of the motion.

The body of the article has two parts, one historical, the other theoretic, beginning with hoc igitur.

In the historical part St. Thomas distinguishes three classes of philosophers.

1. In the first group are those who list only the causes of accidental changes: Thales, Anaximenes, Anaximander, Heraclitus, Empedocles, and even Anaxagoras, although Anaxagoras said that a separate intelligence existed which ordered all things.

2. In the second group are those who assign causes of substantial changes or the causes of being inasmuch as it is a particular being, as this being individually (this animal), or such a being specifically (cow, bovinity). Plato gave as causes the separated ideas, and Aristotle said that substantial generations did not take place in the winter but in the spring under the influence of the stars and especially under the influence of the oblique circles, that is, the ecliptic.

3. In the third group are those who assign the cause of being not only as this being individually or specifically, but of being as being. Among these are the Christian philosophers, who benefited by the light of revelation and learned of creation from the words of Scripture, “In the beginning God created heaven and earth.”

Hence we have this division:

Philosophers who assign cause of being

of substantial being

as it is being, hence all parts of being

God, subsisting being itself, the cause pouring out the entire being and not only changing it.

As it is

Such being specifically: the idea of cow or oblique circle.

This being individually: this cow;

uncreated matter, coordinated to God

of accidental being: local motion or fire

Only the supreme cause pours out the whole being; others are only causes changing some subject. With regard to this classification it should be noted that St. Thomas did not always present it in the same way.

In the second book of the Sentences, St. Thomas classifies the philosophers as above.

In the De potentia he places Plato and Aristotle in the third group since they say at least implicitly that all being depends as being on God.

In the eighth book of the Physica, while refuting the dualism of Averroes, St. Thomas said that creation out of nothing "is not contrary to Aristotle's intention," that is, not contrary to his principles, and that it is rather virtually contained in his principles, although Aristotle had not attained to the explicit notion of creation from nothing. Aristotle did say that "nothing comes from nothing," but he was speaking of production in the proper sense out of a subject, whereas creation is not production in the proper sense, as we shall explain below.

In the first part of the Theological Summa St. Thomas places Plato and Aristotle in the second group because he was speaking here of what these great philosophers taught explicitly.

The theoretical part of the article can be reduced to the following.

The efficient cause of beings inasmuch as they are beings is their cause with respect to everything that pertains to their being. But God is the cause of all beings inasmuch as they are beings, and, if they are material beings, prime matter pertains to their being. Therefore God is the efficient cause of prime matter.

This argument is an application of the conclusion of the preceding article to that part of things which is prime matter. The major is evident from a comparison of the cause of being itself as being and the cause of being as this being individually or such being specifically. The minor is clear from the preceding article. This is a demonstration based on an analysis of the

ideas involved and not from general principles, that is, from a formal demonstrative middle.

Let us turn to the solution of the objections of dualism and the objections based on the Cartesian concept of matter or space.

The objections raised by dualism are placed at the beginning of the article.

First objection. Everything that is produced is produced from some subject. But prime matter has no subject. Therefore prime matter cannot be produced.

Reply. Everything that is properly produced, I concede; improperly, in the sense of being produced in any way whatsoever, I deny. I concede the minor and distinguish the conclusion.

Second objection. The active cannot be without the passive. But God is the first active principle. Therefore prime matter ought to be eternal as the passive principle.

Reply. I distinguish the major: there cannot be an active principle transforming a subject without a correlative passive principle, I concede; there cannot be an active principle which does not transform a subject but produces the whole being without a correlative passive principle, I deny; I contradistinguish the minor and deny the conclusion.

Third objection. Every agent produces an effect in act. But prime matter is pure potency. Therefore it cannot be produced.

Reply. I distinguish the major: every agent produces its effect in act and also whatever pertains to it, I concede; without also producing whatever pertains to the effect, I deny. I concede the minor and distinguish the conclusion: prime matter cannot be produced as something pertaining to the material thing, I deny; that it cannot be produced without a form, I concede. Hence prime matter is not properly created, it is concreated while the material suppositum, of which it is a part, is created. Hence St. Thomas says: “Matter has an idea in God but the idea is not other than the idea of the composite, since matter in itself neither has being nor is it knowable.”

Doubt. Whether transforming causes, those that produce substantial or accidental changes, are in some way causes of being as it is being?

Reply. They are not per se but per accidens, that is, by reason of another inasmuch as they produce this being or such a being. Cajetan points out that a cow generating a cow produces a certain being simpliciter, that is, some suppositum, by a transmutation of matter but it does not produce being as

such per se, because the act of the generator presupposes the matter which already existed in the other composite. Further, in generation being is not produced per se as being, because prior to this the being was in potency, but per accidens being IS produced as being inasmuch as this being is produced per se that is, this individual cow. So from black, white is produced per se, and per accidens something colored is produced, because the color already was in the black.

An objection against this article can be made on the basis of the Cartesian idea of matter as understood by Spinoza. According to Spinoza, matter is nothing else than the threefold extension of length, width, and depth, which is space, having no limits, and so all imaginary space is already filled and a vacuum is impossible. But space conceived in this way appears to be something existing of itself independently of God, or it is a divine attribute. Therefore matter is uncreated.

More briefly Spinoza's objection based on the Cartesian idea can be stated as follows: Infinite space is something uncreated. But matter is infinite space. Therefore matter is something uncreated, a divine attribute.

Reply. I distinguish the major: imaginary space as the possibility of placing a body, that this possibility is not something created, I concede; that real space or the real extension of some body is something uncreated, I deny. I contradistinguish the minor: matter is imaginary space, I deny; that it is really extended in bodies, I concede, and I deny the conclusion.

Further, space cannot be a divine attribute, because it belongs to the corporeal order and hence is less perfect than a spirit. But in God there is nothing imperfect, because God is subsisting being itself per se; He is subsisting perfection itself. Moreover, space is divisible and divided, and it has parts beyond parts, of which some are not as perfect as others. Finally, space is arranged in parts up and down, right and left, according to the three dimensions. But that which is arranged itself is not the first principle of order.

THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER GOD IS THE EXEMPLARY CAUSE OF THINGS, OR WHETHER THERE. ARE OTHER MODELS BESIDES HIM

We are concerned here not with artificial but natural things. St. Thomas himself formulated the title as given above; later certain editors abbreviated the title.

State of the question. The state of the question appears from the arguments advanced by Plato to prove the existence of the ideas which correspond to the uncaused matter which, according to Plato, is “a certain non-being that somehow exists,” in which these ideas are received.

First objection. That which is modeled possesses the likeness of the model. But creatures are far removed from the divine likeness. Therefore other subordinate models are required besides God, for example, models of cows, roses, lilies, etc.

Second objection. Everything that is by participation is finally reduced to that which exists per se. But this rose is a rose by participation, since there are many other roses. Therefore there ought to exist a rose essentially so, an essential lily, and an essential cow.

Third objection. The sciences are concerned not with individuals but with universals, for example, psychology deals not with this individual man but with man in general. But these sciences have objective and ontological validity. Therefore the universals ought to exist formally outside of the mind. Indeed, it seems that Dionysius spoke in this way because he seems to say that subsisting being itself is prior to subsisting life itself.

Reply. The reply is that the models of natural things are not outside of God.

In the argument sed contra this is proved by the authority of St. Augustine, who held that the models of things are the divine ideas existing in the divine mind. St. Augustine thought that this was the teaching of Plato himself. Such was also the opinion of Dionysius or Pseudo-Dionysius. On the other hand, Aristotle thought that according to Plato the models were outside God, that they were like separate subsisting forms. Aristotle refuted this teaching, because the separated man, not as a separated soul but as man separated from individuals, ought to have some matter, not individually, but common matter as common bones and flesh. But bones and flesh in themselves imply quantity whose parts are beyond parts and are individuated and therefore bones and flesh cannot exist without being these bones and this flesh.

In the body of the article St. Thomas supports the validity of Platonic exemplarism when it is understood, as St. Augustine understood it, as referring to the divine ideas existing in the divine mind. The argument of the article can be summed as follows. A model is necessary for the production of anything so that the effect will attain a determined form. But

it is evident that the things that are produced naturally attain determined forms, for example, the form of a rose, a lily, a lion, etc. Therefore they have an exemplary cause in the divine wisdom, which planned the order of the universe.

This argument coincides to some extent with the proof for the existence of God from the order of the universe, but here we are considering rather the model of all things rather than their ordination to an end, rather their form than their end, but the form of the thing generated is the end of the generation. The minor is evident; the major requires explanation. The major is illustrated in the example of the artificer. But it is not only empirically true; it is evident of itself and necessary and is proved by an explanation of the terms and by a reduction to absurdity, just as the principle of finality, "every agent acts for some end," is proved. St. Thomas proved the truth of the principle of finality by explaining the terms, for every agent tends to something agreeable to itself, but an end is nothing else than an agreeable good to which the agent tends. Further, he defends this principle by a reduction to absurdity, saying: "An agent does not move except with an end in mind. If the agent were not determined to some effect, it would not do this rather than that. In order that it will produce a determined effect it is necessary that the agent be determined to something definite that has the nature of an end." That is, if the eye were not ordered to vision it would not see rather than hear; if the foot were not ordered to walking it would not serve for walking rather than for flying, etc.

This passive ordering of the eye to vision, of the foot to walking, presupposes an active ordering. But ordering is the function of a wise person, because in order that anyone can order different things he must know the relationship of means to an end, and the intellect alone, not the senses or the imagination, can know the nature of things.

Therefore, in spite of what Kant says, a supreme intelligence which is subsisting intelligence itself is required, for every intelligence that is not subsisting intelligence itself is itself ordered to intellection, and this passive ordering presupposes an active ordering which cannot come from anything except subsisting intelligence itself, in which are the ideas of things as something seen by this intelligence in itself without any real plurality.

The major of our proof is therefore the same as the major of the proof for the existence of God from the order in the universe, and it is defended in the same way by a reduction to absurdity. For if in the production of a natural

thing a directing idea or model were not necessary, the natural thing would not attain a determined form and it would not rather become this than that. For example, if there were no directing idea in the development of the germ of a nut, the nut would indifferently produce an oak or a pear tree.

Objection. But it suffices that there be a directing idea immanent in the evolution itself. Such was Hegel's opinion in his pantheistic evolution.

Reply. The immanent directive idea is like the passive ordering of this nut to an oak, but every passive ordering presupposes an active ordering, and only the wise being knows the natures of the being of things, and the nature of means to an end. In ascending evolution without a supreme ordering and directing cause more is produced from a minor being than is in it, more perfect beings are produced from imperfect ones, and by this evolution not only more beings but more of being is produced. This is less acceptable than the dogma of creation according to which more does not come from the lesser; in creation, moreover, there are, of course, more beings but there is not more of being or more of wisdom. To be consistent, Hegel should deny the validity of the principle of contradiction and say the radical absurdity is the principle of all things. It is to this state that the mind comes when it rejects creation. Earlier St. Thomas showed that the plurality of ideas in God was only objective inasmuch as God understood the imitability of His essence ad extra, or rather the relation of the imitability of something, for example, a lion, to His essence inasmuch as a lion participates in life and knowledge.

The replies to the objections confirm the conclusion.

Reply to first objection. Humanity is not formally but only virtually in the divine nature, but the idea of man is formally and eminently in God as the terminus of intellection. So also the objective multitude of ideas is formally and eminently in God, whereas it is formally but not eminently in the angel, in whom there are many subordinate ideas. Hence the notion of idea is an analogical notion which is predicated only according to a similarity of proportion of the human idea, the angelic idea, and the divine idea, for, as Dionysius often says, "those things that are divided in inferiors are united as in one in superior beings."

Reply to second objection. Man subsisting per se implies matter and therefore he cannot be without at least common matter, and this common matter cannot exist without individual matter. Bones and flesh by the very fact that they exist are these bones and this flesh.

Reply to third objection. Universals do not exist formally outside the mind as real but only fundamentally in individuals, that is, according to their specific or generic likeness, which can be abstracted from the individuals. But the mode of abstraction and the mode of universality do not exist formally except in the mind.

Spinoza, on the contrary, held that the substantial universal being exists formally in reality and thus the universal being is pantheistically confused with the divine being. Malebranche inclined to the same conclusion because he thought that the first principles of reason were not only in the abstract intelligible being but also in God. Then our natural will would be specifically determined not by the universal good but directly by God Himself as in the case of infused charity. Here we have a pantheistic confusion of the orders of nature and grace, for our nature itself, like sanctifying grace, would be a participation of the divine nature.

Reply to fourth objection. When Dionysius said, “Being itself is prior to that which is life itself and to that which is wisdom itself,” he either meant that we first conceive God as first being before we conceive Him as the first living being, or he was speaking of participated being, which is in all creatures, even in the lowest, whereas life and intelligence are only in the higher beings.

FOURTH ARTICLE: WHETHER GOD IS THE FINAL CAUSE OF ALL THINGS

State of the question. This was affirmed by Aristotle, namely, that pure act is the end of all things and immovably moves to attract all things and moves as the supreme desirable end.

Many have denied that God is the final cause. For example, Spinoza simply denied final causes, saying that the end does not move the agent because the end does not yet exist or is not obtained while the agent is acting, as if there were no foundation for the distinction between the intentional order, in which the end is first, and the order of execution, in which the end is later. Kant averred that God did not create us on account of Himself but on account of us, for otherwise there would be transcendental egoism in God.

The objections placed at the beginning of the article indicate how difficult is this question of the motive of creation.

First objection. To act for an end seems to indicate the need of an end. But God in no way needs anything.

Second objection. In generation the agent and the end are numerically distinct. But God is the first agent. Therefore He cannot be the ultimate end.

Third objection. Not all things desire God because not all things can know Him.

Fourth objection. The end is the first of all causes. If therefore God is both agent and end, there is in Him priority and posteriority

Reply. The reply is nevertheless affirmative and of faith according to the Vatican Council: “This only and true God by His goodness and omnipotent power, not for the sake of acquiring or increasing His own happiness, but to manifest His perfection through the gifts which He bestows on creatures, by a most free counsel established creatures” (Denz., no. 1783). The meaning of this definition is that God created not because of some finite end, or because of His external glory, if we understand this to mean something created, as that clear knowledge of God with praise which the blessed have in heaven. This clear knowledge of God is itself ordered to God as the ultimate end. Thus we read in the Scriptures; “The Lord hath made all things for Himself.”

Hence God created all things for an uncreated end, but every end has the nature of good, and therefore God created on account of His uncreated goodness, not indeed to increase it, since it is already infinite, nor to acquire anything, since He is subsisting being itself, but to manifest His uncreated perfection through the good that He imparts to creatures. In almost the same words this thought of the Vatican Council is found in the body of this article.

This truth is proved from reason by the fact that God is the supreme agent, because according to the theory of the four causes the order of those who act should correspond to the order of the ends. By virtue of this correspondence we can prove conversely from the fact that God is the ultimate end of all things (which Aristotle clearly affirmed) that He is the first efficient cause (this the Philosopher stated less explicitly). Thus from the fact that Aristotle expressly said that God is the ultimate end of all things he should have had some understanding that God is the efficient cause of all things. This conclusion is called for according to the theory of the four causes and also according to the Aristotelian principle that there is no process in infinity in any genus of causes.

The argument of the article can be stated as follows. Every agent acts for an end, and the end of the agent is the same as the end of the patient inasmuch as the patient acquires what the agent imprints. But the supreme agent, who is in no way passive, can have no other end than to communicate His goodness, which other beings seek to participate in. Therefore the divine goodness, which is to be communicated, is the end of all things.

The major is the principle of finality, which can once more be demonstrated by a reduction to absurdity: “for otherwise the action of the agent would not result in one thing rather than another,” for example, from the structure of the eye vision would not result rather than hearing, from the acorn there would not be produced an oak rather than a pear tree. Some modern Scholastics say that these demonstrations by a reduction to absurdity both of the principle of efficient causality and the principle of finality contain a vicious circle. They say this because they are unable to distinguish between an indirect demonstration and a direct demonstration in which intrinsic evidence is revealed. These demonstrations by way of absurdity are recognized by all Scholastics as well as by Kant and Suarez, but these modern philosophers are under the influence of empiricism and Kant. In such demonstrations St. Thomas did not try to deduce the principles of efficient causality and finality from the principle of contradiction; he wished merely to show that these subordinate principles could not be denied without denying the supreme principle of reason, namely, the principle of contradiction which is founded immediately on the idea of being and on its opposition to nothing. If these demonstrations by absurdity are not valid, we ought to say that an uncaused contingent being is neither impossible nor absurd, and tendency without finality is also neither impossible nor absurd. This would be pure empirical nominalism, a negation of all of our metaphysics and of the proofs for God’s existence. Moreover, the principle of finality itself is immediately evident if the terms are clearly understood, for every agent as such tends to produce something determined agreeable to itself, and this thing is the end. Chance, however, cannot be the first cause of the ordering of beings, because chance is a cause only per accidens which presupposes a cause per se ordered to its effect.

In our major we add that the end of the agent is the same as the end of the patient but in a different way, inasmuch as the patient acquires that which

the agent imprints, for example, the generator tends to confer the specific likeness of its form, which the patient receives.

The minor is evident from what was said above. God is agent only and not patient, since He is, as first mover, both His own action and His own being; He is being itself and pure act. Therefore it is not fitting that God should act to acquire some end, or to increase His goodness, which of itself is infinite, but God acts to communicate this goodness, as the Vatican Council declared.

Corollary. The love of God gives; it does not properly receive, because it is not perfected. So with man, the higher he is elevated the more his love for his neighbor is active; so the Apostle was more active and higher in love, whereas those who marry not only give but also receive.

Since, then, the end of the agent and the patient is the same, all other beings strive to attain the perfection of the first agent, which is the participated likeness of this divine goodness. Thus, as St. Thomas says in the reply to the third objection, “all things desire God as their end, by desiring whatever is good by the intelligible appetite, or sensible appetite, or even the natural appetite, which is without knowledge, because nothing has the nature of good or desirable being except so far as it participates in God’s likeness. Aristotle is sufficiently explicit on this matter, although he is less explicit in affirming that God is the efficient cause of all things.

Indeed, St. Thomas says farther on: “Because every creature, inasmuch as it is, is naturally of God, it follows that every creature in its own way naturally loves God more than itself.” All things tend to a certain likeness with God: the stars in the universal and necessary attraction which holds the universe together, the earth moving about the sun, the plants that strive for their own preservation and propagation, as also the animals and the birds, the hen that gathers her young under her wings against the attack of the hawk and loves the good of the species more than herself, the eye that sees, the ears that hear, the bee that builds its hive and makes its honey, man who tends not only to the enjoyable and useful good but also to the moral good, which is found especially in the supreme good. In the canticle of the three young men we read: “All ye works of the Lord, bless the Lord. . ., the heavens bless the Lord.” The goodness of God, therefore, is the end of all things.

First doubt. Whether the divine goodness is really the final cause with reference to the creative action. The difficulty arises because this action is

never an effect, not even in the order of finality.

Reply. The goodness of God is not a final cause really distinct from the creative action, nor is it an end to be produced or acquired. But analogically the divine goodness has the aspect of an end with respect to the creative action. As St. Thomas says: “The first principle of all things is one in reality, but there is nothing to prohibit us from considering many things in it according to reason, of which some will in our intellect be prior to others.” The Thomists point out: “The divine goodness is not properly and strictly the final cause of the immanent divine operation, because between a cause properly so called and an effect there is necessarily a real distinction and a real dependence of the effect on the cause. Rightly we should say that the divine goodness is the reason for the divine operation or the reason why God wills and acts.” For this a distinction of reason is sufficient, nor is a real dependence of one on another needed. As St. Thomas said earlier: “The immutability of God is the reason for His eternity, and His immateriality is the reason for His intellection.” Hence because God perfectly loves His goodness He freely wills to communicate it by participation to others.

Second doubt. How is the creative action itself ordered to the creature and to the production of created goodness?

Reply. Not as a means to an end, for then God would be subordinated to the creature, but the creative action is ordered to the creature as the eminent cause to an inferior effect without any real relation to the creature, since the real relationship is only of the creature to God and not conversely. Thus the Incarnation is ordered to the Redemption, not as a means, but as an eminent cause. The creature is in no way the end of the act of uncreated love, but the creature is the end of the good which God wills to give it. It is in this way that we interpret the words, “The Lord hath made all things for Himself.”

Kant objected that this would mean there was in God a transcendental egoism.

Reply. When this egoism is defined, it appears that it is not a simply perfect perfection that can be predicated of God, even with the adjective “transcendental,” nor is egoism a perfection secundum quid. Egoism is an inordinate love of oneself by which one loves himself more than the good of the family, or the good of his country, or the supreme good. God, however, cannot love Himself more than the supreme good, with which He is identified. Therefore there is in God no egoism, not even transcendental.

Indeed, if God did not love Himself, that is, His own goodness, above all things, He would love some created good more, for example, our dignity. Then there would be mortal sin in God and this would be the supreme absurdity, since mortal sin consists in the aversion from the supreme good, to which some changeable and finite good is preferred. Finally, our own happiness would be decreased, because then the creature would have for its last end some finite good, for example, its own dignity and not the ultimate infinite end.

Corollary. On the contrary, instead of egoism there is the highest liberality in God, because God made all things without any need for them, since He was infinitely happy before the creation, and He made all things to manifest His goodness. This is the characteristic of the highest liberality. “God Himself alone is most liberal, because He acts not on account of His own needs but only to communicate His goodness.” “Give glory to the Lord, for He is good.” Thus we conclude that God is the efficient cause of all things, and the model and final cause of all things, so that all things, so far as their being is concerned, even prime matter, are caused by Him.

CHAPTER XIX

QUESTION 45 THE EMANATION OF THINGS

THIS question is divided into two parts of four questions each. The first part, including the first four questions, is a search for the real definition of creation. It begins with the nominal definition of creation and considers 1. the terminus a quo, namely, nothing; 2. the efficient cause, that is, whether God can create; 3. the formal cause of creation, or what is meant by creation as considered passively in creatures; 4. the terminus ad quem, or whether creation is proper to composites.

The second part of the question determines the conditions of creation on the part of the efficient cause. The fifth article asks whether God alone can create and studies the doctrine proposed in the second article; the sixth article asks whether creation is proper to the Father or common to the Trinity. The seventh and eighth articles treat of the conditions of creation on the part of the effect, that is, whether a vestige of the Trinity is found in creatures (art. 7), and whether there is a mixture of creation in the works of nature (art. 8).

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER TO CREATE IS TO MAKE SOMETHING FROM NOTHING

This article is a search for the real definition of creation with respect to the terminus a quo and it is an application of the conclusions arrived at in the first and second articles of the preceding question.

State of the question. It seems that to create is not to make something out of nothing, 1. because to create is sometimes used in another sense, for example, to create a bishop or elevate him to a higher position; 2. because the “from nothing” designates a material cause, and nothing cannot be a material cause.

Reply. The reply is in the affirmative.

1. Proof from Scripture. We read, “In the beginning God made heaven and earth.” The word bara (created) in the forms kal and niphal in Sacred Scripture is never used except for the operation that is proper to God, and therefore it is best suited to designate production from nothing, that is, from no presupposed subject, and this is an action proper to God. The fact that this word bara in this instance signifies creation in the proper sense is clear from other words in the text, namely, “in the beginning,” which indicate that the text refers to the first origin of all things, and “heaven and earth” signify the universe of things. No pre-existing matter is mentioned from which all things were made, whereas somewhat later we read that man was made “of the slime of the earth.”

In speaking of the creative power of God, the prophets exclude any kind of dualism, and the Psalmist says that all things were made simply by the word of God. The same teaching is found in the Sapiential Books. Lastly, the mother of the Machabees, prompted by the spirit of God, says to one of her sons, “I beseech thee, my son, look upon heaven and earth, and all that is in them: and consider that God made them out of nothing.” And only God is able to say, “I am who am,” that is, not from another.

In the New Testament we read, “All things were made by Him (the Word): and without Him was made nothing that was made.” Therefore, all things have their origin from God and are out of nothing, not out of pre-existing matter that was not produced, otherwise things would be something out of themselves, they would not be totally from God and to God, nor would they be totally subject to God’s dominion.

The first Christians professed, “Lord, thou art He that didst make heaven and earth, the sea, and all things that are in them.” St. Paul declares, “For of Him, and by Him, and in Him, are all things”; “One God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto Him”; “For in Him were all things created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominations or principalities or powers: all things were created by Him and in Him. And He is before all, and by Him all things consist.” Finally, God is “the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end,” of all things. Such was the consistent Judaic and Christian tradition. Nor is there any contradiction in the words, “For Thy almighty hand, which made the world of matter without form,” since from the context it is clear that God made the sensible world out of unformed matter which He himself had produced before.

The Fathers of the early Church say without hesitation that God is the one and only Creator of all things; and against the heretics they reject any unproduced or eternal matter, asserting that things were produced from nothing, and that this doctrine pertains to faith.

Journel arranges the texts of the Fathers under the following headings: “God created all things,” “out of nothing,” “He alone created,” “He created freely,” “according to, the divine ideas,” “out of His goodness,” “that He might make known His perfections,” “the Trinity creates,” “the world (matter) is not eternal,” and “God is not the author of evil.”

St. Augustine in particular says: “The angels can in no way create a nature; the one and only Creator of every creature, whether it be great or small, is God.” He explains that God created all things out of nothing, saying: “not of Himself, for then (created being) would be equal to the only-begotten Son,” “but out of nothing” He made that which He created.

The councils often define that the triune God created the world out of nothing, when He willed and not from eternity, but freely because of His goodness.

Errors. In the judgment of the Church creation was erroneously explained by the following.

The Origenists, who taught the pre-existence of the human souls prior to the generation of the bodies with which the souls were united; Eckhard, who admitted creation from eternity; the ontologists, Rosmini, the pantheists, and the emanatists.

The Gnostics also erred by saying that matter is eternal; the Manichaeans, who admitted a twofold principle of things, one good the other bad; and the Albigenses revived this error. Abelard held that God created things neither freely nor for His own glory, and this error was accepted by Wyclif, Hermes, Guenther, and Rosmini.

In recent times the theosophists taught an evolutionistic pantheism, and Bergson thought he could explain everything by a creative evolution. According to this theory nothing is (exists) properly speaking, all things are becoming, all things and all minds are in a perpetual flux or in a perennial evolution, and Bergson often speaks as though God Himself were becoming.

2. Proof from reason. The body of the article does not contain an illative process, that is, one that deduces a new truth from another, but an explicative process, in which there is a transition from the confused notion

of creation to an explicit notion with respect to the terminus a quo. Hence we do not arrive at a new truth, but the same idea and the same truth is explained. This explicative argument is an example of the evolution of dogma or the evolution of some revealed truth. The argument can be reduced to the following.

The production of the entire being of any thing is from no being just as the production of a man is not from a man. But by creation we understand the production of the entire being of some thing. Therefore by creation we understand the production of a thing out of nothing.

We have here not only a verbal advance but a conceptual advance, not however from one concept to another but from a confused concept to a clear concept, for the concepts in our minds are representative qualities or habits, which can be vitally augmented, as a plant grows.

The primitive concept of creation is expressed in Sacred Scripture, “In the beginning God created heaven and earth.” Hence God produced whatever is outside Him, the whole being of all things that are produced. Therefore this production was out of no presupposed subject but out of nothing, just as the generation of man is out of no man, that is, out of the seed, which is not yet man. For if a man were already generated then he would not now be generated, because that which is generated was not before. The same notion of creation is developed, the same truth, “God created all things,” is explained; now we add “from nothing.” This is not the deduction of a new truth but an explanation of the same truth, as in the search for a real definition which begins with the nominal definition, since the question, “What is it called, what is its name?” tells vaguely what the thing is without determining the genus and difference.

This inquiry into the real definition is not, therefore, a demonstration. As Aristotle explained, the definitions of things are not demonstrated; they are sought out by a descending division of the highest genus and by an ascending comparative induction of the specific difference. The direction of this search is from the confused concept expressed in the nominal definition to a distinct statement. Sometimes the definition of a thing is from the aspect of the end from which a definition can be deduced defining the form; thus if a saw is intended to cut, it should be made with teeth from some durable metal. If we are dealing with a definition based on the formal cause, which is at first confused and later becomes distinct, the transition is not a demonstration, nor is it an objectively illative syllogism, although there

may be a noticeable conceptual advance in the same concept, for example, from the vulgar concept of the human soul to the explicitly defined concept found in the Council of Vienne: the human soul is truly per se and essentially the form of the body. The same progress can be made in the concept of the personality of Christ, of the consubstantiality of the Word, and now in the idea of creation.

Hence in the first four articles of this question we have the search for the real definition of creation, beginning with the nominal definition. This search is confirmed by the solution of the objections.

Reply to first objection. Sometimes St. Augustine uses the word "creation" equivocally, for example, to create a bishop. But in its proper sense "creation" signifies the production of a thing from nothing.

Reply to second objection. A change receives its species and dignity not from the terminus a quo but from the terminus ad quem, for it has a reference to that toward which it tends. Thus creation, which produces the total being of a thing, is more perfect than generation, which produces the one begotten from a presupposed subject.

Reply to third objection. "Out of nothing" can be understood in two ways: 1. as "after nothing" and then it does not designate a material cause but only an order; 2. "more profoundly," as out of no presupposed subject, and then it designates a negated material cause, that is, something is created when it is produced not out of anything. In this second acceptation, St. Thomas points out, the expression "out of nothing" implies the condition of a material cause, which is denied.

If Bergson had studied the teaching of St. Thomas, he might perhaps have refrained from saying that the concept of creation out of nothing was a pseudo-idea, because we cannot have an idea of nothing. We cannot, of course, positively conceive nothing, but it can be conceived negatively with reference to being as the absolute negation of being. In order to conceive creation we need not first conceive nothing and later the appearance of the thing produced; it is more profound to conceive creation as the production of a thing out of no presupposed subject, and this concept is verified even though creation from nothing should be from eternity.

Before this man is generated he was not and therefore he is generated from no man; similarly the entire being of things is produced; the things were not and therefore they are produced from no thing or from nothing.

This is not a pseudo-idea but the true idea of nothing, a negative idea, it is true, obtained by the negation of being.

First doubt. Why do the Scholastics say that creation is the production of a thing “out of nothing of itself or of a subject”? They mean that what is properly created, before it was created was entirely nothing in itself and moreover did not have a subject out of which it became. On the other hand, what is created, before it was generated was nothing in itself, as the generated cow, but there was a subject from which it became.

Objection. But before creation, at least the possibility of the thing to be produced is presupposed, and this possibility is not only something logical or a being of the mind, which can be conceived but not realized, as a predicament, a universal, a syllogism, or the syllogistic laws, but it is a possible real being or a being really possible outside the mind.

Being is divided into
real being
actual
by itself
by another
in itself
in another
really possible
mental being, that can be conceived but not realized

Reply. The possibility prerequisite to creation is not only a being of the mind, or of second intention like the laws of the syllogism, which cannot be effected or really produced but only conceived, I concede.

But this possibility is not something existing outside of God; it expresses that which can be produced by God ad extra. Hence that which is outside the mind is only a real possibility, not a real entity or a real potency like prime matter. This point is important inasmuch as the principle of contradiction is not only a law of the mind but also a law of being, for example, a square circle is not only unthinkable but really impossible, whatever the subjectivists say about it. The essences of things do not depend on the liberty and omnipotence of God, whatever Descartes says when he asserts that the principle of contradiction is true because God wills it that way; in that case this principle would be a contingent truth. The supposition underlying creation is the divine ideas, and thus creation is from the material nothing but not from the ideal nothing. Hence when we

say that creation is out of nothing we do not mean out of the nothing of its own possibility, for this itself would be impossible, but out of no presupposed, preexisting subject.

Second doubt. What was Rosmini's error about creation? Rosmini erred in thinking that real being taken indeterminately (that which our intellect first apprehends and predicates of all things) is in itself something divine and that it has the same essence as God. He spoke as if a possible real being (not created) were already some kind of initial being common to God and creatures. Hence he said that this initial being is not created and that the essences of created things are not something positive but something negative, consisting in limits which God adds to the initial being. For Rosmini this limiting action of God is creation. (Cf. Denz., nos. 1903 f.) This initial being is for him the univocal minimum in the analogy between God and creatures, and it is positively determined by God and negatively by the created essence, which is a limitation or negation. The Deity is like a white light, and creatures are like the colors. For Rosmini the created essence is something negative, for us it is something potential.

Reply. Creation, as we have said, presupposes nothing else than the real possibility of creatures and this possibility is not a kind of initial being, it is merely the non-repugnance to being. Rosmini's teaching is an immoderate realism, which confuses being in common with the divine being.

Third doubt. In what did Victor Cousin's error on creation consist? Cousin said that "we create whenever we produce a free act, that is, we produce this act from our real potency. Similarly, God in creating the universe educed it from Himself because He was not able to produce it from nothing since nothing is not, cannot be, and is purely a name." Bergson said almost the same thing: "creation out of nothing is a pseudo-idea, like the idea of nothing, and in its place we must have creative evolution."

Reply. Cousin and Bergson after him confuse creation with the production from some presupposed real potency, either material or spiritual, as when we produce a free act inasmuch as the will actually willing an end reduces itself to the act of willing the means. In the body of the article St. Thomas replies that as the eduction of the generated cow is from no generated being (but out of matter), so the production of total being is from no being, that is, from no presupposed subject. And for this it is not necessary that nothing be something or could be something.

Moreover, if God educed the universe not from nothing but from Himself in the same way that our will, actually willing an end, reduces itself to the act of the free choice of the means and thus educes a free act from itself as it is a determinable potency, then God would be in potency to another act and He would not be pure act. Bergson's creative evolution is also objectionable because it posits a reality in potency until it is perfected by itself, and in this theory more is produced by less, the more perfect by the less perfect. There would also be motion without a mobile subject, without an extrinsic mover, and without an end understood beforehand, whereas every movement requires a mover and in the final analysis the prime mover who is his own action and consequently his own being, that is, pure act in no way in potency. Cousin, and Bergson to some extent, confused the material cause with the efficient cause. God, however, cannot be the material cause and therefore He did not make the world out cf Himself or of Himself but out of no presupposed subject. The Son of God, however, was begotten, not made from nothing.

Final conclusion. Such is the explanation of creation with regard to the terminus a quo; it is the production of a thing from nothing, that is, from no presupposed subject and from no real potency; it presupposes only a real possibility, which is entirely different from real potency, because a real possibility is merely the non-repugnance to being; real passive potency is the real capacity of receiving an act, for example, prime matter is real capacity for receiving the substantial forms of material things. Such real capacity, however, cannot exist without some form which is received and which limits and individuates the real capacity.

Objection. We read, "For of Him, and by Him, and in Him, are all things." Therefore God created the world not from nothing but from Himself.

Reply. The "of Him" signifies not from God as from a material cause but by God's power.

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER GOD CAN CREATE ANYTHING

State of the question. We now explain the idea of creation with respect to the efficient cause.

First objection. It appears that God cannot create anything because, as the ancient Greek philosophers said, nothing is made of nothing, and God

cannot do the impossible. The axiom, nothing is made of nothing, was formulated by Parmenides and from his time it was accepted by the Greek philosophers. This axiom can be understood as meaning that nothing is made without an efficient cause and then it is a formula of the principle of causality, namely, nothing is made except from some subject.

Second objection. Averroes objected that if creation is to make something out of nothing, to be created is to become something. But all becoming is a change presupposing a subject.

Third objection. Averroes insisted that what becomes is not yet made. In other words, whatever is made must first become, and all becoming presupposes a subject.

Fourth objection. An infinite distance cannot be crossed. But between nothing and being there is an infinite distance.

Reply. Nevertheless the reply is in the affirmative and of faith, as was said above. In the body of the article St. Thomas shows that it is not only possible but necessary that all things are created by God from nothing. He presents an explicative process of reasoning which resembles a reduction to absurdity:

If God acted only from some presupposed subject, it follows that that subject would not be caused by Him. But there can be nothing outside God that is not caused by Him. Therefore we must say that God produces things in being from nothing.

Creation on the part of God is explained by showing not only that God actually created heaven and earth but that heaven and earth could not exist except by creation from nothing.

Reply to first objection. How can this ancient axiom, nothing is made from nothing, be reconciled with creation. If we understand the axiom to mean that nothing is made from no cause, it remains true for creation, because there is a creative cause. If it is understood to mean that nothing is made from no subject, this is true of both substantial and accidental change but not of the production of the total being of any thing.

Reply to second objection. St. Thomas points out that creation is not a change, because every change presupposes a subject which is different now than it was before. This will be explained at greater length in the following article.

Reply to third objection. Where there is neither change or movement there is no priority of time of the becoming with respect to the actual

making. But, as St. Thomas says, in those things that are made without movement, that is, in an instant, the becoming and the making are simultaneous. For example, the mental word is forming and it is instantly formed, something is being created and it is instantly created, a dead man rises and he is instantly resuscitated. The ancients thought that illumination took place in an instant and therefore St. Thomas said, a thing is lighted and it is instantly illuminated. We now know that the movement of light is not instantaneous but that it is extremely swift in comparison with the velocity of the transmission of sound.

Reply to fourth objection. Is there an impassible distance between nothing and the finite thing that is produced? There would be an infinite distance if nothing were a positive terminus and if there were an infinite middle between the terminus a quo and the terminus ad quem. But nothing is a negative terminus and the distance is negatively infinite and can be overcome by an infinite active potency, as will be explained later

Doubt. What is creation taken actively? It is a divine action, formally immanent and virtually transient, as will be explained in the third article, when we consider creation taken passively.

Such is the explanation of creation on the part of the efficient cause. We are still explaining the same notion and the same revealed truth, “In the beginning God created heaven and earth.” We have not gone on to a new truth by any illative process but we are only explaining the word “created” by stages with respect to the terminus a quo, the agent, and the terminus ad quem.

THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER CREATION IS ANYTHING IN THE CREATURE

State of the question. We are inquiring what is the formal cause of creation taken passively in the creature and here we will show what creation is, taken actively.

First difficulty. Creation taken passively does not appear to be anything, because creation taken actively is not anything, for if it were it would be something temporal in God.

Second difficulty. If creation taken passively were anything, it would be created, that is, a creature, and to produce it we would have to posit another creation and so on to infinity

Third difficulty. If creation taken passively were something, it would be an accident of a created substance. But this is impossible, because the created substance is prior to the accident and it cannot be prior to passive creation, of which it is the terminus.

The argument sed contra is rather an argument in the opposite sense than a proof. St. Thomas says that if generation taken passively is something in the one generated, then creation taken passively is something in the creature. The difficulty remains, however, for generation is a change and, as we have said, creation is not a change.

Reply. Creation in the creature is nothing more than a certain relation to the Creator, namely, a real relation of dependence.

This is proved in the body of the article and in the reply to the third difficulty. St. Thomas says that "the creature is the subject of creation inasmuch as it is a relation and prior to the relation in being as the subject is prior to an accident." The proof in the body of the article can be reduced to the following. If we prescind from motion in action and passion, nothing remains but the relation of the effect to the agent. But creation, since it is out of no presupposed subject, is without motion or change. Therefore creation in the creature is nothing but a certain relation to the Creator

This syllogism may be said to be illative and not only explicative inasmuch as we are no longer treating of the definition of active creation and inasmuch as the major of the syllogism is from reason and not from revelation. The minor is clear from what we have said earlier. The conclusion, however, is not admitted by all theologians. The major is verified in the Incarnation and is explained in the reply to the second difficulty of the preceding article, where it is said: "Since action and passion agree in the one substance of motion (that is, in the one reality of the motion itself) and since they differ only with regard to different relationships, it is proper that, after we have subtracted the motion, nothing remains except different relationships in the Creator and the creature."

This is to say that "motion is the mobile act as mobile, for example, the motion of heating is the act of the wood, not inasmuch as it is wood but as it is heatable and not yet heated." The transitive action inasmuch as it is received terminatively in the patient is the motion proceeding from the agent, and the passion is the motion as it is in the patient. Action is the motion as from this one and passion is the motion as it is in this one with a relation of dependence on the agent. This is Aristotle's reasoning.

If, then, we subtract the motion from action and passion, nothing remains except the relation of dependence on the agent.

Objection. Durandus and Suarez, on the other hand, held that creation is an influence received in the creature, something as actual grace is a created influence received in the will so that the will can vitally elicit its act.

Reply. The difference is that when God gives actual grace the soul and the will pre-exist as the subject which God applies to action; such also is the action and passion by which the will is applied to elicit its act. Hence actual grace is received as an accident in the soul and it preceded the salutary act by a priority of causality. On the other hand, in creation no subject pre-exists, and therefore no influence is received in the creature to produce it. Such an influence ought to precede the created substance and still be received in it as an accident. This is impossible.

St. Thomas' solution, which is accepted by all Thomists and many other theologians, is confirmed by the solution of the objections.

Reply to first objection. St. Thomas explains that creation taken actively is an action formally immanent in God and virtually transient. It is called formally immanent inasmuch as it is identified with the divine substance, since it is not an accident and it certainly is not a temporal accident in God, who is subsisting being itself, the ultimate actuality, to which no addition can be made. Nothing is made from the divine entity; Parmenides understood this somewhat vaguely, when he said that being is not made of being, confusing universal being with divine being.

The creative action is said to be virtually transient inasmuch as it posits an effect ad extra, and thus this action has the perfection of a formally transient action without its imperfections. The imperfection of a transient action arises from the fact that it is an accident proceeding from the agent and received terminatively in the patient.

But it still remains a mystery how this action, which is eternal, has an effect only in time. St. Thomas explains this to some extent in the Contra Gentes, as follows: "God acts voluntarily in the production of things but not in such a way that He has a mediating action, as in our case the action of the motive power is the middle between the act of the will and the effect, as has been shown in the preceding—but (with God) it is fitting that His intellection and willing be His acting An effect, however, follows from the intellect and the will according to the determination of the intellect and the command of the will. Now, when the making of a thing is determined by

the intellect, the intellect prescribes all the conditions and also the time of the making; in art not only is it determined that a thing shall be thus but also that it shall be then, just as the doctor prescribes not only that this medicine be taken but also that it be taken then. If God's will is per se able to produce an effect, a new effect could follow from the former (and continuing? will of God without any new action (of the will). Nothing prohibits us from saying that God's action is from eternity and that the effect is not from eternity but at that time when God from eternity arranged and freely disposed it to be. Hence there is a newness of effect without a newness of action. Aristotle did not understand this because he did not consider the divine liberty.

According to revelation,. God said, "Be light made. And light was made." He said from eternity, "Be light made," and the light was made at the time determined from eternity so that there was a new effect but no new action. We should add that God is the most free cause of the creature, of its movement, and of its time, because time is the measure of the movement with regard to earlier and later, for example, time is the measure of the apparent movement of the sun according to the succession of days.

In the reply to the first objection, St. Thomas says that there is no real relation of God to the creature, whereas there is a real relation of the creature to God. Why? As was explained earlier, all creatures are ordered to God and depend on Him, but God is in no way ordered to creatures nor does He depend on them. Thus the senses are ordered to a sensible thing, but sensible things are not ordered to the senses; so also our science is ordered to knowable things, but the things are not ordered to science, and therefore the things do not acquire anything by the fact that they are seen or known, whereas the cognitive faculty is perfected by things when they are known.

Objection. But the father does not depend on the son, and yet there is a real relation of the father to the son.

Reply. This is so because active generation is a formally transient action which is ordered to the passive generation of the son. On the other hand, active creation is not a formally transient action ordered to created being. God is in no way ordered to creatures, but creatures are ordered to God.

Reply to second objection. Creation taken passively is a real relation in creatures, but this relation does not require a special passive creation to exist, because "the relations, since the very thing that they are is predicated

to another, are referred by some other relations," that is, there is not a relation of the relation itself.

Reply to third objection. "In creation, inasmuch as a change is signified (although there is no change in creation), the creature is the terminus; but inasmuch as it is a relation, the creature is the subject of creation and prior to the relation in being, as the subject is prior to the accident. But creation has a certain aspect of priority on the part of the object of which it is predicated, which is the principle of the creature." Hence this relation according to its <esse in> follows the substance, and according to its <esse ad> in some sense precedes it.

First doubt. This doubt concerns the last reply. Is creation, taken passively, a predicamental relation and an accident or is it a transcendental relation, that is, the created substance itself as related to God the Creator, just as a science is essentially and transcendentally referred to the knowable?

Scotus held that it is a transcendental relation, because it could not be conceived as an accident, for, while a created substance can be conceived without an accident, it cannot be conceived without the dependence on the Creator. Thomists, like Cajetan and John of St. Thomas, commonly hold that passive creation is a predicamental relation and an accident and inseparable from the creature, namely, a predicamented accident (like the intellective faculty in the rational soul), and not a predicable accident (like the color of the hair), that is, it is a property of an existing creature.

The Thomists hold this opinion for the following reasons. 1. St. Thomas in this article says that "creation is truly a relation, the creature is the subject of the relation and prior to the relation in being as the subject is prior to the accident." 2. Moreover, a contingent being is defined, not as a being caused by God, but as a being that can be or not be. St. Thomas says: "Although the relationship to the cause does not enter into the definition of the being that is caused (man, for instance), yet this relationship follows those things that are of the nature of the being. . . . Such a being cannot be unless it is caused, just as there cannot be a man unless he possesses the quality of risibility." Therefore passive creation is a property and not the essence of the existing creature. A science, however, is related by its essence to what is knowable by a real transcendental relation; so also is matter to the form, the form to the matter, and essence to being.

Second doubt. But what is the foundation for this predicamental relation? John of St. Thomas replies: “it is the creature’s existence as participated, just as the movement in a mobile being is the foundation of the mobile being to the mover. This existence, however, as produced by God, depends essentially on God the Creator.

FOURTH ARTICLE: WHETHER TO BE CREATED IS PROPER TO COMPOSITE AND SUBSISTING BEINGS

State of the question. It appears that what is properly created is prime matter, which is presupposed by generation, for the composite subsistences, like plants and animals, are generated now and are not created.

Moreover it appears that sanctifying grace is created in the baptized child, just as the spiritual soul is created in the body. Indeed, St. Thomas says, “When grace is destroyed it returns at once to nothing.” And what ceases by annihilation begins by creation. Therefore it appears that grace is created, although it is an accident.

Reply. The things that are properly created are subsisting beings, not accidents, or prime matter, or the forms of sensible things.

1. Proof from Sacred Scripture. “In the beginning God created heaven and earth,” that is, subsisting beings. We are still explaining the same text, the same truth, not a new truth.

2. Proof from reason. Being properly belongs to subsistences whether they are simple or composite. But becoming and creation belong to those things to which being belongs. Therefore becoming and creation properly belong to subsistences, whether they are simple or composite.

Explanation of the major. A subsisting being is that which is, or that which has being; forms and accidents are not that which is but that by which something is such, for example, that by which something is the earth or that by which something is hot.

Explanation of the minor. Becoming is ordered to the being of a thing, and what becomes is that which will be, for example, this cow, not the form of the cow. To be created is in a sense a becoming, or being produced, although properly it is not a becoming, which presupposes a subject.

Corollary. We should say that forms and accidents are concreated rather than created, just as they are rather coexistences than beings.

Reply to third objection. Prime matter cannot be produced except by creation, but it is not created without a form, for creation is the production of the whole being and not of matter alone. Hence matter is concreated.

Indeed, according to St. Thomas, prime matter cannot exist without a form because prime matter is not that which is but that by which something is material. That which exists is the composite of matter and form, and here we see the real distinction between essence and existence, for the essence of a sensible thing is composed of matter and form, while its being or existence is not a composite.

Scotus and Suarez, on the contrary, held that prime matter could exist without the form, because they conceived prime matter not as pure potency but as the most imperfect kind of act. This is a distortion of the idea of potency. Potency is not even the most imperfect kind of act; for example, before the movement there is a real potency to movement, and not until the movement begins is there even an imperfect act, which presupposes potency. Potency is merely the real capacity for producing or receiving inasmuch as the potency is active or passive. Moreover, what would this matter without the form be? It would not be something spiritual because it is matter nor would it be corporeal because the corporeity is a determination depending on the form.

First doubt. Is the human soul properly created? The human soul is created in the proper sense because it is a subsisting form, that is, intrinsically independent of the copy in its specific act of intellection and therefore also in its being and becoming.

Second doubt. Whether grace is created in the soul?

Reply. Grace is not created in the soul because it is an accident by which a person is pleasing to God; to be created is a property of a subsisting being. The infusion of grace presupposes a subject upon which grace, as an accident, depends in its becoming and later in its being. Hence St. Thomas says that grace and the infused virtues are educed from the obediential potency of the soul.

The difference between St. Thomas and Suarez on creation. The truth of creation is demonstrated by St. Thomas from the fact that no being existing outside of God is its own being, or from the fact that everything outside of God is really distinct from its being. “God is being subsisting in itself, and subsisting being can only be one. It follows, then, that all other beings besides God are not their own being but participate in being,” and are

caused according to their whole being by God. Here we see the connection between the doctrine of creation and the real distinction between created essence and being.

Those who deny this real distinction are forced to find another way to prove the truth of creation, namely, by induction, as Suarez did, by showing the contingency of things. But if this contingency is shown from experience from their generation and corruption, it will be quite difficult to show by induction that the angels were created and do not exist of themselves from eternity. How can this be proved conclusively if we deny in the angels the real distinction between essence and being and if therefore the angels' essence is their being?

When we deny the real distinction between created essence and being, and between a created person and being, we deny what St. Thomas laid down as the basis for the infinity of God and for the distinction between God and creatures. If we say, "The being in creatures is the essence and substance itself," how shall we reply to Spinoza when he says, "Existence pertains to the nature of the substance," since then there can be but one substance as there is only one subsisting being, as Parmenides taught?

FIFTH ARTICLE: WHETHER ONLY GOD CAN CREATE

State of the question. Why cannot the highest angel create a grain of sand? Avicenna said that God created the first separated substance, and this substance created the soul of the world. In the difficulties presented at the beginning of the article, St. Thomas says: 1. It seems that one angel can produce another just as man produces a man. But the angel cannot be produced except by creation. 2. A creature can make something from its contrary, for example, hot from cold. A fortiori therefore the creature can make something out of nothing because there is more resistance from the contrary than from nothing. 3. Since created being is finite, no infinite power is required for its production. Peter Lombard affirmed that a creature can create instrumentally.

Reply. Creation belongs to God alone to such an extent that no creature can create, whether by its own power or instrumentally.

Proof from authority. It is a dogma of faith that <de facto> God alone created the universe. We read in the Scriptures, "He that created all things is

God.” The same teaching is found in the Apostles’ Creed and in the Council of the Lateran under Innocent IV.

The Fathers wrote in the same sense. Here St. Augustine is quoted as saying, “Neither the good angels or the bad angels can be the creators of any thing.”

Proof from reason. First we prove the first part of the conclusion: no creature can create by its own power.

Being taken absolutely, not as this specific being, is an effect proper to God. But to create is to produce being absolutely, not as this specific being. Therefore to create is an act proper to God, that is, no creature can create by its own power.

Proof of the major. The more universal effects are to be reduced to the more universal and primary causes as belonging to them. But absolute being is the most universal effect. Therefore absolute being is the proper effect of the most universal cause, which is God.

St. Thomas confirms this teaching by the authority of Proclus, the author of the book De causis. He offers a benign explanation of Proclus’ text. Proclus, himself a Neoplatonist, seems to be talking about the second <<hypostasis>> which Plotinus posited beneath the One Good, namely, the intelligence in which duality of subject and object appears (the intelligence and the intelligible thing), as if the One were above being and intelligibility and intelligence.

What is the sense of the second major? Cajetan said the sense is that the more universal effects (in predication) are to be reduced to the more universal causes (according to perfection in being and causing), that is, these effects depend on such causes <per se>, necessarily and immediately. This principle is mentioned by Aristotle, at least in the order to the universal cause. For example, Polycletus is the proper cause of this statue, and the sculptor is the proper cause of the statue as such a statue. Aristotle also applies this principle to the most universal extrinsic causes and says that pure act attracts all things to itself. St. Thomas applies this principle explicitly to the first most universal efficient cause. Hence he was able to state against Averroes that the dogma of creation is not contrary to the mind of Aristotle, that is, not contrary to his principles, and that it is virtually contained in them. Therefore being as being, or a being inasmuch as it is a being, is the proper effect of God, as passive illumination is the proper effect of light and heat is the proper effect of fire. God produces being as

light produces illumination, as fire produces heat, except that God does this most freely.

Scotus admitted the conclusion of the article but he attacked the method of the proof. His objection is as follows: God's proper effect is from Him alone. But the being of a cow that is generated is not from God alone but also from the generating cow. Therefore the being of the cow that is generated, as being, is not the proper effect of God.

Reply. With Cajetan I distinguish the major: God's proper effect is from Him alone as from the proper cause, from which the effect depends primarily and <per se>, I concede; as from a unique cause, that is, the only cause, I deny. I contradistinguish the minor: the being of the cow generated is not from God alone as the unique cause, I concede; as from a proper cause, I deny.

Scotus' insistence is as follows: What is in imperfect effects can be from an imperfect cause. But the most universal effect (being) is in imperfect effects. Therefore this most universal effect can come from an imperfect cause.

Reply. (According to Cajetan.) I distinguish the major: from an imperfect cause <per accidens> which produces by reason of another, I concede; from a proper cause from which the effect depends primarily and <per se>, or necessarily or immediately, I deny. I concede the minor and distinguish the conclusion: this effect is from an imperfect cause as from a cause <per accidens>, I concede; as from the proper cause, I deny.

Manifestly this cow generating this cow is the proper cause of this particular cow, not as the proper cause of the bovinity, or of the cow as cow, nor is it the proper cause of this cow as being. If bovinity and entity depended necessarily and immediately on this cow, it would be its own cause and the reason for its own being. The owner of this cow would then be the possessor of the whole bovine race on earth. Hence St. Thomas says: "It is manifest that where there are two of the same species, one cannot per se be the cause of the form of the other inasmuch as it is such a specific form (for example, the bovine form), because then it would be the cause of its own form since both have the same nature. But one individual can be the cause of this form as it is in matter, that is, inasmuch as matter acquires this form. This is being a cause according to becoming and not the proper cause of the very being of the thing that is produced."

Scotus' final objection. If God is the proper cause of being as such, creation is mixed in every operation of nature. But St. Thomas says the opposite. Therefore God is not the proper cause of being as such.

Reply. (According to Cajetan.) I distinguish the major: if God is the proper cause of being by an action at all times totally new, I concede; otherwise, I deny. I concede the minor, and distinguish the conclusion: by an action at all times totally new, I deny; otherwise, I concede.

Explanation. When in the beginning God created heaven and earth the action was totally new; now when a cow is generated, the being as being depends primarily per se on God but not by an action that is totally new, for this generation of a cow presupposes the matter preserved by God and not produced anew.

The proper cause of the generating cow
as being is essential being
as cow is the divine idea of cow, or bovinity
as this cow is another generating cow

Thus the cow when it generates a cow actually and necessarily depends on universal causes, on the sun, without which there would be no animal life on earth, and on God the author of nature, the first being and the first living being. And there cannot be an infinite process through causes that are <per se> subordinate. On the other hand there is no repugnance in an infinite process through causes that are <per accidens> subordinate. For example, this cow generating here and now, in this generative act does not depend <per se> on its sire, who is perhaps dead, or on its grandsire. This cow generates here and now not as the offspring of another but inasmuch as it has a bovine nature.

But by revelation we hold that creation is not from eternity and that the world had a beginning. Hence St. Thomas' argument is valid; it is a most simple argument based on the relation between a proper effect and a proper cause. This proper effect is a quasi-property <ad extra> of this proper cause because it depends necessarily and immediately on the cause as the property of the circle depends on the essence of the circle. Examples of proper causes are: the singer sings, the killer kills, the doctor cures, light illuminates, fire heats, God produces and preserves the being of things and is the efficient cause of their being and He alone creates.

St. Thomas' first argument is confirmed by the solution of the objections against the first conclusion of the article.

First reply. Why cannot an angel make a being like himself and create another angel? Because the angel, who is a pure spirit, cannot be produced except by creation, and if an angel created another angel, he would be the proper cause of the whole being of the second angel, and he would also be his own cause, since both have the same nature of being. Thus if a cow were the cause <per se> of the whole bovine race, namely, the divine idea of cow, it would be its own cause.

Second reply. The second objection, which is a difficult sophism, may be presented in the following form. More power is required to make something from an opposite than from nothing. But a created cause makes something from an opposite. Therefore a created cause can make something from nothing.

Reply. I distinguish the major: if the thing is made from an opposite <per se>, I concede; if it is made <per accidens> from an opposite, I deny. I contradistinguish the minor: <per accidens>, I concede; <per se>, I deny. The reason is that a thing is made <per se> not from an opposite but from a passive potency; and the opposite offers resistance inasmuch as it impedes the actuation of the potency or binds the potency. But it is more difficult to make something from no potency at all than from a bound potency.

Third reply. The third objection is that the power of the maker is judged according to the measure of what is made. But created being is finite and it can be very small, as a grain of sand. Therefore for its production the infinite power of God is not necessary.

Durandus and the nominalists seem to think that this argument cannot be answered apodictically, and that the archangel Michael could create, if not the universe, at least a grain of sand.

St. Thomas replies apodictically: I distinguish the major: the power of the maker is judged according to the measure of what is made and by that alone, I deny; and also by the method of the making, I concede. I concede the minor and distinguish the conclusion: if we consider only what is made, I concede; if we consider the method of the making out of nothing, I deny.

At the end of this third reply, St. Thomas adds a confirmation of the first argument of the article: “If so much more power is required in an agent when the potency is far removed from the act, it is fitting that the power of the agent who acts with no presupposed potency, as does a creative agent, should be infinite.” For example, the more arid the earth is the more the farmer must cultivate, etc.; but if the earth is not only arid but non-existing,

the farmer will need an active infinite power to produce. When pupils are less intelligent and less industrious, more effort is required in the teachers, as is evident in the education of abnormal, deaf, dumb, or blind children. Great Christian charity is needed in these cases; but if the subject were nonexistent infinite active power would be needed.

These observations show vividly that the argument in the body of the article is apodictical, in spite of what Durandus says. To understand this it is sufficient to recall how the effect of creation, namely, the entire being of a thing, even of a grain of sand, differs from the effect of any other production, of generation for example.

To produce the smallest grain of sand from nothing requires the same infinite power as far as the method of operation is concerned as to produce the universe and all the angels. If the highest angel could create a grain of sand from nothing, he would be able to produce the most universal effect, namely, being as being, and he would therefore be able to produce all contingent beings inasmuch as they are beings, and thus he would be his own cause, which is repugnant.

Second part of the article: a creature cannot create even instrumentally.

St. Thomas recalls that Avicenna and Peter Lombard thought this to be possible. Avicenna explained that the first separated substance created by God creates another substance either instrumentally or by its own power (the text is not clear on this point). This second created substance is lower than the first. This substance itself creates a still lower substance somewhat in the manner of Plotinus' emanatism. Peter Lombard spoke rather of the possibility of creation through an instrument than of the fact. Durandus and a few others followed Peter Lombard.

St. Thomas' conclusion is admitted at least as probable by almost all later theologians, even by Scotus, although all do not adopt the same method of proof. In his commentary on the <Sentences>, St. Thomas held that Lombard's opinion was probable, but now he rejects it.

It should be noted that the fact of creation by an instrument with regard to the first production of things cannot be admitted without danger to the faith, for the Fourth Lateran Council declared: "God by His omnipotent power at the beginning of time established from nothing both the spiritual and the mundane creature."

The Fathers defended the dogma, "God alone is the creator of all things," against the Arians, who taught that God the Father directly created the Son

and that the Son ministerially created other things. St. Augustine refuted certain Platonists, who said that God created separate intelligences, which created the inferior beings. Estius held that it was not of faith that God now creates souls without an instrument.

Among theologians there is no dispute about the fact but only about the possibility of creation by an instrument, and almost all theologians, with St. Thomas, deny the possibility.

St. Thomas' argument can be reduced to the following. An instrumental cause does not participate in the action of the principal agent unless it operates dispositively toward that effect by something proper to itself. But no creature can operate dispositively toward the effect of the Creator because there is no subject to be disposed. Therefore no creature can create instrumentally.

St. Thomas proves the major in two ways: by a reduction to absurdity and by induction.

By a reduction to absurdity as follows: If the instrument did nothing that was proper to it, it would be futile to use the instrument, nor would there be any reason to have particular instruments for particular actions. I would then be able to write with a lute.

Inductively it is clear that instruments have a proper effect, for example, a saw cuts wood, and by cutting the saw disposes toward the effect of the workman, that is, to make a bench. And this proper effect of the instrument has a certain priority with regard to the effect of the principal agent toward which it disposes; it is at least a priority of dispositive causality.

The minor is proved as follows: Creation is from no presupposed subject. Hence there is no subject to be disposed. Moreover, the effect of God creating is the whole being of a thing, which presupposes no other effect.

We note that St. Thomas says, "the instrument must operate dispositively toward the effect of the principal agent." He does not say that the instrument must effect the disposition for the effect. Man has certain instruments which effect the disposition, for instance, a pen which leaves the ink on the paper. Other instruments, however, operate only dispositively, as the trumpet in the transmission of sound by preventing the dispersion of the sound but not by producing any special disposition in the ears of the listeners.

Nevertheless in the instrument the instrumental movement is always an accident and the instrumental action is formally transitive, proceeding from

the instrument as from a subordinate agent and existing terminatively in a pre-existing subject. In creation, however, there is no pre-existing subject to be disposed. Hence creation can proceed from God alone, whose action <ad extra> is not an accident but is formally immanent and only virtually transitive inasmuch as it produces an effect <ad extra> without any of the imperfections of a formally transitive action.

Let us consider Suarez' objections to this argument. Suarez says that St. Thomas' major is true of the instruments which created agents use, since created agents need apt instruments, for example, a man cannot write with a lute or make music with a pen. But God does not need an apt instrument; He can produce the baptismal grace not with water but with fire. It is sufficient that the instrument God uses have obediential potency. Therefore St. Thomas' major is not certainly verified in God the Creator.

To this objection the Thomists generally reply as follows: When God makes use of instruments, for example, to produce baptismal grace, it is not because He needs the instrument. But if <de facto> God uses a physical instrument, St. Thomas' major is verified, that is, the instrument, to be a true instrument, operates dispositively toward the effect of the principal agent. Otherwise the true notion of an instrument would not be verified and what is called an instrument would be only a means of transmission, as the air is a means for transmitting sound, and not an instrument, as the trumpet which transmits sound.

More briefly we can reply to Suarez' argument as follows: It is conceded that St. Thomas' major is true of the instruments which a created agent needs inasmuch as they are instruments; it is denied that the major is true only inasmuch as the created agent needs the instruments. The minor is conceded. With regard to the conclusion, it is conceded that no creature can create instrumentally if the major is true by reason of the need of the principal agent; it is denied if the major is true by reason of the instrument itself.

Suarez insists. The difficulty remains because St. Thomas' argument is not proved by the nature of the instrument itself. For the nature of the instrument it is not necessary that it effect the disposition in the subject; it is sufficient if it operate dispositively, as a trumpet, strengthening the voice, does not produce a previous disposition in the ears of the hearers, or as the water of baptism in the soul of the one to be baptized. But an instrument can operate dispositively without a preexisting subject.

Reply. I distinguish the major: it is sufficient for the nature of the instrument that it operate dispositively by an immanent action, I deny; by a transitive action, I concede. I contradistinguish the minor: the instrument can operate dispositively without a subject in an immanent action, let it pass; by a formally transitive action, I deny, because this action is an accident that proceeds from the instrumental agent and it ought to be terminatively in the patient. This is required for the nature of a physical instrument in which the instrumental motion is received as traveling accident, and therefore the instrument cannot operate except in a pre-existing subject.

I insist. But the immanent acts of Christ are physical instruments for producing grace and they produce grace by an action only virtually transitive.

Reply. These acts are indeed immanent but the instrumental motion in them is an accident which must be terminatively in the patient, for example, in the just man in whom the grace is produced.

It is clear that the supernatural instrumental motion educed from the obediential potency of that thing which is an instrument is a kind of <accidens viale>, a transient thing, like the light in the air that is illuminated in passing. But this motion, if it is an accident, is not only from the agent but must be terminatively in the patient or in the preexisting subject to be disposed. In other words, this instrumental motion precedes the effect of the principal agent, as becoming precedes the actual making, and therefore the instrumental motion requires a pre-existing subject. Therefore there can be a physical instrument of God to produce transubstantiation inasmuch as the body of Christ comes from bread, but there cannot be a physical instrument in creation.

In another article, the idea of creation is illustrated by comparison with natural transmutation and transubstantiation. An instrument can be present in the production of grace from the obediential potency of the soul since grace as an accident depends on the soul as its subject. Considering the method of operation out of nothing, creation is a greater work than justification, but considering the effect produced, justification is a greater work than the creation of heaven and earth.

Last insistence. Why cannot there be an instrument in the creation of the soul since matter pre-exists as a subject?

The Thomists reply that matter does exist, but they deny that it exists as the subject ex quo. In the daily creation of souls there is no real terminus <a quo> and therefore no subject, for the spiritual soul is not educed from the potency of matter. The terminus <a quo> is nothing, and the human soul is produced from no presupposed subject. On the other hand, in transubstantiation there is a certain real terminus <a quo> inasmuch as it is true to say that the body of Christ is produced from bread, that is, by the conversion of the entire substance of bread (namely, the matter and form of bread) into the body of Christ. It is evident, therefore, that there can be no instrument in creation. Therefore only God can create, and the creature cannot create even instrumentally.

SIXTH ARTICLE: WHETHER CREATION IS PROPER TO ANY PER SON WHATEVER

State of the question. It seems that creation is proper to one person. 1. The procession of the creature from God <ad extra> presupposes the procession of the divine persons ad intra, and that which is prior and more perfect is the cause of that which is later and less perfect. 2. In the creeds the creation of all visible and invisible things is attributed to the Father, and of the Son it is said only that all things were made through Him, and the Holy Ghost is called the vivifier. 3. In these different statements it does not seem correct to say that they are only appropriations and to say that creation is appropriated to the Father, because every divine effect is caused by the three attributes which are appropriated to the divine persons, namely, by the power which is appropriated to the Father, by the wisdom which is appropriated to the Son, and by the essential love which is appropriated to the Holy Ghost, who is personal love.

Reply. The reply is in the negative and of faith.

Proof from authority. St. Thomas cites the authority of Dionysius, who said: “All the causal things are common to the entire Trinity.” These words of Pseudo-Dionysius witness the tradition of the time when he wrote.

In Sacred Scripture the work of the creation is attributed equally to one or the other of the persons: “All things were made by Him (the Word)”; “The same God, who worketh all in all. . . . But all these things one and the same Spirit worketh”; “For in Him (the Word) were all things created in heaven and on earth.”

In the definitions of the Church the work of creation is equally attributed to the three persons; for example, in the Creed: “I believe in one God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth, and in one Lord Jesus Christ. . . . by whom all things were made.” And the Church chants, “Come, Holy Ghost, Creator.”

Finally there are many definitions and declarations of the Church, particularly the declaration of the Fourth Lateran Council against the Albigenses and the Waldensians: “We firmly believe that one alone is the true God. . . . the Father generating, the Son begotten, the Holy Ghost proceeding: consubstantial, coequal, co-omnipotent, and coeternal, one principle of all things, the creator of all visible and invisible things.” Earlier the First Council of the Lateran declared: “If anyone does not confess that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are a Trinity in unity. . . . the creator and protector of all things, let him be condemned.” The Eleventh Council of Toledo: “These three persons are inseparable in their action and in what they make,” even in the work of the Incarnation. In the decree of Pope Eugenius IV for the Jacobites we read: In the Trinity “all things are one where there is no opposition of relation”; “The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are not three principles of the creature but one principle.”

The opinion of Lulle that the three persons can be known certainly and clearly by natural reason because in created effects something is found that is produced by the Father alone, something produced by the Son alone, and something produced by the Holy Ghost alone, must be judged heretical. St. Thomas proved against many earlier theologians (Abelard, Richard of St. Victor) that the mystery of the Trinity cannot be demonstrated from creatures because the creative power is common to the entire Trinity and pertains to the unity of the essence and not to the Trinity of persons.

<Proof from reason.> Since every agent acts in a manner similar to itself, the principle of an action can be known from the effect. But to create is to produce the being of things as being. Therefore creation belongs to God according to His being, which is His essence and is common to the three persons.

Explanation of the major. Is this principle, “every agent acts in a manner similar to itself,” only an experimental law, as when, for instance, light illuminates, the cow generates a cow, etc., or is it a necessary principle, evident in itself from an analysis of the involved notions? We reply that it is a necessary and evident principle, since to act is to determine or actuate

something, and an agent cannot determine except according to its own determination or form. Hence we say that an agent acts inasmuch as it is in act. But the subject on which the agent acts is sometimes able to receive a form similar in species to the agent, for example, when the cow generates a cow; but sometimes the subject can receive only an imperfect and analogical likeness of the agent, and thus creatures agree only analogically with God, either in being, or living, or intellection. St. Thomas says:" Since every agent acts in a manner similar to itself, for it acts always according to its form, it is necessary that there be a likeness of the form of the agent in the effect," or at least an analogical likeness inasmuch as the effect may or may not attain to the perfect likeness of the agent. For example, when St. Thomas was teaching he did not communicate the fullness of his wisdom to all his disciples, but they received his wisdom according to their capacities.

This principle is not merely an experimental law but a principle of natural philosophy; at first we recognize it in the sensible order and later we apply it metaphysically to all agents, and finally to the supreme agent in a fitting analogy. By virtue of this law, then, the principle of an action is known in its effect. But to create is to produce the being of things as such. Creation therefore belongs to God according to His being, which is His essence and is common to the three persons. That is, God produces the being of things inasmuch as He is subsisting being <per se>; but He produces created being most freely and not by any necessity of nature.

Corollary. Creation is predicated of God not personally but essentially.

Doubt. In the Our Father we say, "Our Father,. . . Thy kingdom come." Are these words addressed to God personally or essentially? According to St. Thomas they are used essentially, because the three persons operate <ad extra> as one principle, for example, in the justification of man, who thereby becomes a son of God by participation in the divine nature, which is common to the three persons. Thus when we say, "Thy kingdom come," we are speaking not only of the kingdom of the Father, but also of the kingdom of the Son and the Holy Ghost. The same is true when we say, "Thy will be done."

Doubt. When Jesus addresses the Father, as, for example, "I confess to Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth," is He speaking essentially or personally? He is speaking primarily personally because it is the person of the Son speaking to the Father ad intra, as when the Father said, "Thou art

My son, this day have I begotten Thee." But the address "Father" may be used essentially by Christ when He speaks according to His human nature.

The body of the article contains a second conclusion which pertains to appropriation. It may be stated as follows: The processions of the divine persons so far as they include essential attributes appropriated to the persons are reasons for the production of creatures, or more briefly: each person is said by appropriation to have a special causality with regard to creatures.

The proof is as follows: God operates through intelligence and will. But the Son proceeds as the Word in an intellectual manner, and the Holy Ghost proceeds after the manner of love. Therefore we may say that God creates through His Son and through the Holy Ghost.

In the reply to the second objection, St. Thomas says: "Being the Creator is attributed to the Father as not having the creative power from another. Of the Son we say, 'by whom all things were made, ' inasmuch as He has power from another (or as the principle from a principle). But to the Holy Ghost, who has the same power from the first two persons, is attributed the position of governing and vivifying the creatures of the Father and the Son by dwelling in them." At the end of this reply St. Thomas recalls the theory of appropriation: to the Father is appropriated power, to the Son wisdom, and to the Holy Ghost goodness. In the reply to the third objection, he says, "Thus creation is reduced to power, ordering is reduced to wisdom, and justification to goodness."

Appropriation is generally defined as the attribution of some essential property to one person for that person's manifestation. Hence a property is not an appropriation. A property is attributed to one person and cannot be attributed to another; an appropriation, however, is common to the entire Trinity, but for the sake of the greater manifestation of that person it is attributed to one person because of some similarity. For instance, those things that pertain to the intellect are appropriated to the Son, because the Son proceeds by intellection.

Thus the Latin Fathers, proceeding in their speculations about the Trinity from the unity of nature to the Trinity of persons and attaining to this Trinity only with difficulty, tried to throw as much light as possible on the three persons. The Greek Fathers, on the other hand, proceeded from the three persons to the unity of nature and thus found no difficulty in distinguishing the persons and had little need for the theory of

appropriation, found among most of the Latin Fathers. But the Greek Fathers had difficulty in explaining the unity of nature, and these difficulties were solved later by St. Augustine and St. Thomas. At the beginning of the treatise on the Holy Trinity we explained why the concept of the Latin Fathers prevailed, because it solved the difficulties that remained in the Greek concept.

SEVENTH ARTICLE: WHETHER IT IS NECESSARY TO FIND A VESTIGE OF THE TRINITY IN CREATURES

A vestige or trace differs from an image inasmuch as it represents in some way the causality of the cause and not its form, as for example, smoke represents fire. Thus there is in creatures a vestige of the Trinity on the supposition that the Trinity has been revealed, since everything is a substance in a particular species and ordered to a good end.

EIGHTH ARTICLE: WHETHER CREATION IS MINGLED IN THE WORKS OF NATURE AND ART

We are dealing not with the creation of the human soul but with the generation of brute animals and plants. St. Thomas replied that the answer depends on the manner of conceiving the pre-existence of forms in matter.

If we say that forms pre-exist actually in matter, as the atomists and Anaxagoras (theory of the involution of forms), there is no substantial becoming or substantial change. This opinion reveals an ignorance of the nature of matter because those who hold it were not able to distinguish between potency and act.

If we say that forms in no way pre-exist in matter but are caused by some superior agent, then they are created. This seems to have been the opinion of Avicenna, and it is based on an ignorance of the nature of form, as though the form were that which is and not that by which a thing is.

But if forms really pre-exist in the potency of matter, they are not created but educed, and that which becomes is not the form but the composite. The form, as we know, is that by which something is such a being or in such a species.

Hence St. Thomas concludes: Creation is not mingled in the works of nature and art; it is found nowhere except in the production of the spiritual

soul, which, as spiritual, is not in the potency of matter and cannot be educed from matter. The soul is intrinsically independent of any organism in its specific act, and therefore it is also independent of the organism in its being and its becoming because operation follows being.

By way of an appendix some commentators explain:

1. that many worlds are possible, because the creation of one world does not exhaust the infinite power of God;

2. that actually there is but one world, one by unity of coordination and subordination;

3. that the world is perfect, not the best of all possible worlds, but perfect in the sense that whatever imperfections are in the world exist for the perfection of the universe, as the shadows in a painting serve to accentuate the colors. Moreover, things that are harmful in one way are useful in another, as, for example, certain poisons like arsenic, which in moderation serve as medicine.

CHAPTER XX

QUESTION 46 THE DURATION OF CREATED BEINGS

AFTER our consideration of the first cause of being and their production from nothing, we turn to the principle of the duration of things, which is treated in three articles: 1. whether creatures were always; 2. whether it is an article of faith, or a demonstrable conclusion that they began to be; 3. how God is said to have created heaven and earth in the beginning.

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER THE WORLD OF CREATURES WAS ALWAYS

State of the question. In the <Contra Gentes> and the Opus de aeternitate mundi, St. Thomas wrote at length on this question. To show the difficulties connected with this question, he presents the arguments of Aristotle and Averroes for the eternity of the world.

The principal objection is: Everything that is made is made from prime matter, which cannot exist without a form. Therefore the world was from eternity. This difficulty is proposed in different ways in the first and third objections: in the first, real potency and the real possibility presupposed by creation are identified; in the third objection it is stated that matter as the first subject of generation is ungenerated and ungenerable and is therefore eternal.

In the second objection it is stated that there are in the world incorruptible beings, at least the intellectual substances if not the heavenly bodies. But an incorruptible being has the power to be always, it will always be in the future. Then, why not always in the past? It appears to be its nature to be above time. The other difficulties pertain more to the imagination.

The fourth objection points out that the vacuum was always, and vacuum appears to be something real, as Spinoza said, space is something real, existing from all eternity.

Fifthly it is objected that motion was always because anything that begins to move is moved by another who began to move and this mover began to move when it was moved, and so on. Hence the absolutely immovable cause cannot of itself alone produce the initial movement but only permanence, or the sempiternal duration of movement. Thus Aristotle thought that every man was generated and presupposes a generator and so into the past. He was not able to understand that there could be a new effect without a new action in any mover. In Aristotle's mind the first mover moves from eternity always in the same way, drawing all things to Himself, just as the sun always illuminates and heats; any variety in movement was explained by subordinate movers, especially by the successive generations of plants and animals.

Sixthly: if the first eternal mover moves by a necessity of nature, he moves from eternity; if he moves through his will, why does he begin to move at this particular moment rather than earlier or later? Such a choice seems to have no reason, no motive, and therefore the movement is from eternity.

Seventhly: time cannot have a beginning because its entire reality is the instant, the present fluent instant which is the terminus of the past and the beginning of the future.

Eighthly: if God is prior to the world according to duration, then time was before the world because time is that duration in which earlier and later are distinguished.

Ninthly: if you posit a fully sufficient cause, the effect will follow accordingly; but God, the cause of the world, is eternal and therefore His creative action is eternal. So also His effect is eternal because there is no new effect without a new action.

Reply. Nevertheless the reply is in the negative and it is of faith. It is of faith that the universe was not created from eternity. The Fourth Council of the Lateran declared: "By His omnipotent power in the beginning of time and at the same time God made from nothing both the spiritual and corporeal creature, namely, the angelic and mundane creature, and then He made the human creature, as it were, a composite creature composed of spirit and body." The same expressions are used by the Vatican Council.

Many of Eckhard's propositions have been condemned in this matter, such as the following: "As soon as God was He created the world"; "It can be conceded that the world was from eternity"; "At one time and only once, when God was and when He generated His Son, coeternal and coequal in all things to God, He also created the world."

The foundation for this doctrine is found in Sacred Scripture: "In the beginning God created heaven and earth." These words are generally understood as referring to the beginning of time." "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His ways, before He made anything from the beginning. The depths were not as yet, and I was already conceived, neither had the fountains of waters as yet sprung out:. . . before the hills I was brought forth. He had not yet made the earth, nor the rivers, nor the poles of the earth." "And now glorify Thou Me, O Father, with Thyself, with the glory which I had, before the world was, with Thee. . . . Thou hast loved Me before the creation of the world." "As He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world."

With regard to the declaration of the Fourth Lateran Council, some discussion exists whether the words "at the same time" signify simultaneity of time, which is commonly accepted, or only a simultaneity of ordering, as some Fathers thought who held that the angels were created before matter. St. Thomas replies that it is more probable that the angels were created at the same time as bodies.

In the body of the article St. Thomas does not prove from reason that the world began to be or that it ought of necessity to begin; he merely proves this negative proposition: it is not necessary that the world be always and therefore it is not impossible that the world began, as we are taught by revelation. The argument is apodictical.

The possibility of mysteries that are essentially supernatural cannot be proved apodictically, it is true, but we are here concerned with the non-repugnance of a contingent fact which does not pertain to the order of grace.

The proof may be reduced to the following. Since the will of God is the cause of things, it is not necessary that anything be unless it be necessary that God wills them. But it is not necessary that God will anything except Himself. Therefore it is not necessary that the world be always, but only at that moment which God determined from eternity.

The major and the minor were proved in the question on the free will of God. There it was shown that God wills other things besides Himself freely since His goodness can be without other things and since nothing of perfection accrues to Him from other things. It was also shown that God is the cause of things by His will and that He differs from man, who generates freely indeed but not by his will but by his generative faculty inasmuch as he possesses a certain nature, and therefore man can generate only a man because his generative power is determined to one result.

Hence if God acts with the greatest freedom <ad extra> and through His will by saying, “Let the world be,” it follows that the world began at that moment which God had determined from eternity, or as revelation teaches, in the beginning of time.

Among the modern philosophers, Leibnitz admitted this teaching, but he sought for some morally necessary motive on account of which God willed the world to begin at this time rather than earlier. In this he was limiting the liberty of God.

For St. Thomas particularly the beginning of the world depends simply on the will of God. St. Thomas says: “Why this part of matter is under this form and that matter under another form depends on the simple will of God just as the fact that this stone is in this part of the wall and that stone in another part depends on the will of the workman, although it is of the nature of the art that some stones be here and others there.” Hence the Vatican Council declared: “By His omnipotent will in the beginning of time and at the same time God made from nothing both the spiritual and corporeal creature,” and “God created by a will free from all necessity,” that is, without any metaphysical, physical, or moral necessity.

In the second part of the article St. Thomas tries to show that Aristotle did not intend to give demonstrative reasons for the eternity of the world, because in another place Aristotle says expressly, “There are certain dialectic problems for which we have no reasons, as whether the world is eternal,” or rather sempiternal. In yet another place, however, it seems that Aristotle tried positively to prove the sempiternity of movement and of time and from this the infinite power of the first mover.

The conclusion of the article is confirmed by the solution of the difficulties, of which these are the more important.

Reply to first difficulty. Before the world was it was possible, but this real possibility is not real passive potency, like prime matter. It is only a

non-repugnance to being.

Reply to second difficulty. When incorruptible beings exist they are always, but they receive their existence from God's free will.

Reply to third difficulty. It is true that prime matter is ungenerated and cannot be generated, like an incorruptible being, and thus it begins not by generation but by creation and can be annihilated.

Reply to fourth difficulty. Before creation there was no vacuum because the vacuum is a place for a body; even a vacant place supposes certain corporeal beings between which there are unoccupied places. Hence before creation there was only a real possibility of corporeal beings as there was a real possibility of spirits; but this real possibility is not some being outside of God, it is merely a non-repugnance to being. This non-repugnance to being, however, is distinguished from simple conceivability, for the being of the mind is conceived but it cannot be produced outside the mind; it is conceivable but not realizable.

Reply to fifth difficulty. Is it true that every movement presupposes another movement, that every man presupposes a man who generates, and that the first immovable cause cannot of itself produce incipient movement so that a new effect follows without a new action in God?

St. Thomas replies that the first mover is always the same (that is, he has no new actions), but the first thing moved begins to move not by movement but by creation. Thus the first man was created, not generated. St. Thomas explains: "If the first mover were an agent acting only through his nature and not by intellect and will, the effect would follow necessarily; but because the first mover acts through his will, he can by his eternal will produce a non-eternal effect just as with his eternal intellect he can understand a non-eternal being." "From the eternal free action of God there does not follow an eternal effect, but whatever effect God wills."

This eternal divine action, formally immanent and virtually transient and transitive, is at once most free and of itself and immediately efficacious; therefore it produces its effect when it wills, that is, at the time determined from eternity. This is somewhat similar to the physician who in the morning prescribes a dose of medicine to be taken in the evening; if the doctor were able to administer the medicine without any intermediate action, the will he had in the morning would be like God's will. The will of God created the world without any intermediary through His omnipotence, which is not really distinct from God, and thus the eternal and free action of God

produces its effect in time so that there is a new effect in time without any new action in eternity. Eternity is to time as the stationary apex of a cone is to the circular base of the cone, which is described successively, and as the apex goes around and is above the base so eternity is above time.

Reply to sixth difficulty. “A particular agent presupposes time as it presupposes matter..., but the universal agent produces both the thing and the time…. And the world more clearly leads to the knowledge of the divine creating power if it is not always,” for in this way it is manifest that a world that has a beginning needs a cause.

Reply to seventh difficulty. When the world began, the beginning of movement and the first present moment were not the terminus of time past, for the time began with the movement itself of which it is the measure, then, for example, the first circular movement of the sun began.

Reply to eighth difficulty. Before this first instant there was nothing but imaginary time just as above the sky there is nothing but imaginary place, that is, something that can be imagined, the mere non-repugnance to the localization of corporeal beings. The conclusion, therefore, stands that it is not necessary that the world be always.

Doubt. Is it congruous that the world began, in the sense that it would be incongruous that the world was created from eternity?

Reply. It is congruous that it might appear more clearly that God alone is eternal and that God most freely created the world. Nevertheless, as we shall see in the following article, creation from eternity does not seem to be positively incongruous; God is most free to have created eternally, and in those things which God does freely the thing which God actually did is, of course, congruous but the opposite would not be incongruous.

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER IT IS AN ARTICLE OF FAITH THAT THE WORLD BEGAN

State of the question. As we see from the first difficulty, the title asks whether it is an article of faith or a preamble of faith that the world had a beginning. A preamble of faith is a demonstrable conclusion, as for instance that God is the efficient cause of all being and thus the Creator; such a preamble of faith can be demonstrated. An article of faith differs from a preamble of faith, for, as St. Thomas says, “Where something is found not seen by a special reason, there we have a special article (of faith).” “Thus

there are twelve articles of faith (or according to another listing, fourteen) and among these is the article on creation: ‘I believe in one God the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.’”

The question is, then, whether it is repugnant that God created the world from all eternity, in the sense that God would precede the existence of the world by a priority only of nature and causality and not by a priority of duration, just as if a foot were on the sand from all eternity it would precede the footprint not by duration but by causality.

This question should be proposed with a restriction: whether some creature, at least one that is permanent and immobile like an angel, could be created from eternity even though movement and time must have a beginning.

St. Albert, St. Bonaventure, and Petavius and many more recent writers hold that eternal creation is repugnant; St. Augustine, St. Thomas, Capreolus, Francis Sylvester (Ferrariensis), Cajetan, Suarez, and almost all Thomists and Scholastics hold that it is not repugnant.

The question is not of great importance, although it is important to show that the proofs for the existence of God, in particular St. Thomas’ five proofs, are still valid even though the world was from all eternity.

Of the difficulties proposed at the beginning of the article the sixth and seventh are the most important: “If the world was always, an infinite number of days would have preceded this day. But the infinite cannot be crossed. Therefore this day would never have arrived.” “If the world were eternal, man would be generated by another and so to infinity, and thus there would be an infinite succession of subordinate efficient causes, and therefore it would be impossible to demonstrate the existence of the first cause.” Moreover, according to the eighth difficulty, there would now be an infinite multitude of the souls of the deceased.

Reply. The reply is that it is an article of faith and not a demonstrable conclusion that the world began.

1. Proof from authority. That God is the Creator, in the sense that “In the beginning God created heaven and earth” is an article of faith in the proper sense. But articles of faith are distinguished from the preambles of faith by the fact that they cannot be demonstrated. With regard to creation natural reason can prove that all things outside of God are from God, and from this it follows that God produced these things from nothing. It can also be proved that God created most freely and not from a necessity of nature.

But, according to St. Thomas, we know only by faith that God did not create the world from eternity. The idea of creation contains three truths: 1. God created the universe from nothing, 2. most freely, 3. and not from eternity. The third truth is not demonstrable.

Objection. But this is not a supernatural mystery and therefore it can be known by reason alone.

Reply. This is not a mystery because the matter is essentially supernatural, I concede; but it is a mystery because of the contingency of the matter, like a future contingent of the natural order. This is, however, a past contingent.

2. Proof from reason. The conclusion which we wish to prove is that it is impossible to demonstrate that the world began.

The beginning of the world cannot be proved except on the part of the world or on the part of God. But in neither way can it be demonstrated. Therefore it is entirely indemonstrable.

Proof of the first part of the minor: the beginning of the world cannot be proved on the part of the world.

The principle of demonstration is the definition of the thing. But the definition of any created thing abstracts from here and now. Therefore the beginning of the world is indemonstrable on the part of the world.

Objection. The definition of the thing is the principle of the <a priori> demonstration from the properties of the thing. But besides this there is a demonstration <a posteriori>. Hence perhaps the beginning of the world can be demonstrated <a posteriori>.

Reply. If the world could not be from eternity, its beginning would be a property and could therefore be demonstrated from the definition of the world or of the things in the world. In other words, the beginning of the world, like the end of the world, is a contingent fact not included in the definition of the world, and it cannot be known except by experience, that is, <a posteriori> and not as the existence of the cause is demonstrated by the effect.

I insist. If the universals are always and everywhere, it is necessary that individuals be not always and everywhere. But the world is composed of particulars and individuals. Therefore the world could not be always.

Reply. The universals are always and everywhere negatively inasmuch as they abstract from here and now. Thus individuals cannot be always negatively because they do not abstract from here and now but are

positively here and now. But it does not follow that they cannot be always positively. If the movement of the heavens was from eternity it would always be true to say that the heavens are in motion.

I insist. The beginning of the world can at least be proved <a posteriori> by the law of the diminution of energy, according to which the energy of the world is qualitatively diminished, as, for instance, the heat produced by local motion cannot in turn produce an equal amount of local motion. Hence the world is tending to a state of immobility and frigidity.

Reply. God could renew the physical energy of the world as He daily renews the spiritual energy of the world by creating souls. Moreover, even if this demonstration were valid it would prove at most the beginning of motion and not the beginning of a permanent and immobile creature such as the substance of the angel.

Proof of the second part of the minor, namely, the beginning of the world cannot be proved on the part of God, the cause.

The most free will of God when it is not manifested in act cannot be investigated by our reason. But God most freely created the world and at a time when He most freely willed. Therefore the beginning of the world, depending in this way on God's free will, cannot be demonstrated and can be known only by faith.

The major is clear. The free will of God can be manifested by a fact, for example, when the end of the world comes. This fact will make known God's free will about the end of the world. But in the first part of the article it was said that the beginning of the world is not made manifest either in the definition of the world or by any fact. Hence by reason of the contingency and not of the supernatural character of the matter the free will cannot be investigated. Hence it is that we cannot know with any certainty contingent futures, which depend on God's free will.

The minor is certain from what we have said earlier: God operates most freely <ad extra>, not by a necessity of nature, or a necessity of wisdom, whatever Leibnitz says, because the infinite goodness of God exists without creatures, and God's perfection is not increased by creatures.

From what he says at the end of the article, we see that at the time of St. Thomas many believed there could be a demonstration of this matter, and some thought that the demonstrations of the existence of God depended on a non-eternal world. St. Thomas, however, understood that the position of the Averroists on the eternity of the world was against faith and not against

reason, at least if it is admitted that the being of things depends efficiently on God.

Reply to first difficulty. If creation were from eternity, God would have a priority only of nature and causality but not of time with reference to the world, just as in the case of the foot which is impressed on the sand always, as St. Augustine says.

Reply to second difficulty. It would still be true to say that God created the world from nothing, that is, from no presupposed subject, although creation would not be after nothing.

Reply to fourth difficulty. Those who admit the eternity of the world must perpetually look for new sciences and new civilizations, that is, the civilization which appears to be primitive is perhaps not the first of all, and if the world is from eternity we cannot determine the first race, or the first movement of the sun, or the first day.

Reply to fifth difficulty. If the world were always it would not be equal to God in eternity because in the life of the world there would be a succession and the existence of the world would not be entirely at the same moment.

Reply to sixth difficulty. There would not be a first day or a first movement of the sun. In the <Contra Gentes> St. Thomas says that this argument is not cogent: “if the world were always there would not be a first movement of the sun and thus not transition (from the first day to today because such transition always requires the two extremes).”

I insist. It would then follow that a new day would be added to infinity.

Reply. To the prior part of the infinite an addition can be made from the posterior part of infinity, and thus time would be longer under the finite aspect, that is, in the posterior part although it is infinite in the prior part.

I insist. But this multitude of days would be an infinite number, which is repugnant.

Reply. It would be an innumerable multitude but not a number, for number adds to the multitude a determined relation to unity inasmuch as numbers begin with the first one. Hence an infinite number is repugnant but not an innumerable multitude, as would be the multitude of acts of the intellect and will of a separated soul in the future without end.

I insist. If there were no first day, or second, or third, there would be no actual day.

Reply. I concede the antecedent: if there were no first day, there would be no second or third. I deny the consequence: because it is not necessary that

the multitude of days past be numerable or numerated. In Aristotle's hypothesis there would be an innumerable multitude. As St. Thomas says: "Number adds to multitude the idea of mensuration, for a number is a multitude measured by one." Hence it is conceded in Aristotle's hypothesis that there would not be a first day, or a second, etc., namely, because there could not be a progressive numeration of days but only a regressive numeration, going back to the most ancient times and never arriving at the most ancient day. Such was St. Thomas' reply to the sixth difficulty.

Eternity, whose now is always stable and not fluent, would be to infinite time in its prior part as the apex of the cone is to the circular base of the cone, which is continually described as without beginning or end; in the apex there is but one point whereas in the circle of the base there is a perpetual succession.

I insist. But if time were from eternity, the infinite and innumerable multitude of hours would be much greater than the infinite multitude of days. But one infinite multitude cannot be greater than another equally infinite.

Reply. I distinguish the minor: the infinite multitude cannot be greater considered as infinite, I concede; considered as finite, I deny. Thus to the infinite multitude in its anterior part there can be an addition from the posterior part and thus it is greater considered as finite.

Reply to seventh difficulty. There cannot be an infinite process of efficient causes that are subordinate <per se>, but there seems to be no repugnance in an infinite process of causes subordinate <per accidens> in which the causality of the posterior does not depend on the causality of the antecedent, for example, "it happens that this man who generates is generated by another, but he generates inasmuch as he is a man and not inasmuch as he is the son of another man."

Reply to eighth difficulty. It is objected the souls of the dead would constitute an infinite multitude in act.

Algazel replies that this would be infinite only <per accidens> and only with regard to the posterior part. St. Thomas refuted this objection earlier, remarking that "every multitude must be in some species of multitude," but it is disputed whether his refutation is apodictical since St. Thomas himself says that this argument is only probable because an innumerable multitude does not seem to be repugnant. On another occasion St. Thomas wrote, "It has not yet been demonstrated that God cannot make infinite things in act,"

and “To make something infinite or infinite things in act is not repugnant to the absolute divine omnipotence.” At the end of the reply to the eighth difficulty St. Thomas notes that, even though human generations cannot be from eternity, it does not follow that the physical world cannot be from eternity and that the series of brute generations had a beginning.

Last objection. If a thing is created, we must be able to say that at some time it is created. But that which does not have a principle of duration cannot be said to be created at some particular time.

Reply. In this case it would be true to say that the world is created always, just as if the foot were on the sand from eternity, it would be true to say that the footprint was always imprinted.

I insist. But then there would be no difference between creation and conservation, for creation is the first production of a thing and conservation is the continuation of that production. That is to say, creation must take place in some instant.

Reply. The concept of creation from eternity is difficult because we conceive a divine action analogously to created action, which has a beginning. Nevertheless I deny the inference and distinguish in this way: creation in time is the first production of a thing, I concede; creation from eternity, I deny. Actually creation and conservation are one single act which is called creation inasmuch as it confers being, and is called conservation inasmuch as it continues that being either in finite or infinite duration. This distinction remains even if creation were from eternity. Although this cannot be represented to the imagination, it does not seem to involve any repugnance, just as in the example of the foot on the sand from eternity. It is therefore at least probable that the world could be from eternity.

Doubt. Is this theory more probable with regard to permanent beings, like the angel, the rational soul, a stone, the sky, than with regard to successive things which consist in a certain flux, like movement and time?

Many Thomists, among them John of St. Thomas and Billuart, say that this theory is more probable with regard to permanent beings, and that it is probable that the world could not be from eternity with regard to successive beings, like movement and time, although Aristotle thought that movement and time were from eternity.

According to these Thomists the second part of the argument is not apodictical, and to many others it does not seem to be more probable. They say that if the movement of heavenly bodies were from eternity it would

perdure in an infinite duration without the flux of the earlier part that ceases and the later part that begins, and therefore this movement would at the same time be something permanent and something successive, which is impossible. Other Thomists, like Cajetan, Capreolus, Ferrariensis, and the Salmanticenses, concede the possibility of movement from eternity.

Reply. If the movement of the heavenly bodies were from eternity, there would be no first circular movement of the sun, as St. Thomas says earlier, and the movement would always have been something successive, that is, always in the flux of the earlier part that ceases and the later part that begins. The movement, therefore, would not be successive and permanent under the same aspect; it would be successive with regard to the parts that ceased and permanent with regard to the whole. It is sufficient to note that if movement had no beginning, there would be in movement no part that was the first of all, for example, there would be no first movement of the sun. Moreover, St. Thomas holds that it is not repugnant for the world to be from eternity in the same way as Aristotle, and Aristotle held that the world was from eternity even with regard to successive beings.

Finally if the angel were created from eternity, he would have no first cogitation. At least this cannot be demonstrated to be impossible. If it is probable that time should have a beginning, this is because it seems that creation, as distinct from conservation, ought to take place in some instant which is the beginning of time. But our explicit distinction between creation and conservation can be applied, mutatis mutandis, to creation from eternity.

This problem appears again in Kant’s writings. Kant presents the first antinomy, whose thesis is: the world began in time and is limited in space, and the antithesis is: the world is infinite in time and space.

In the thesis it is proved that the world began because, as Kant says, it is repugnant that an infinite series of days should be terminated now by the present day. We reply that if this series were infinite in its anterior and posterior part it would be repugnant, but if the series is infinite only in the anterior part, it would not be repugnant.

Kant demonstrates the antithesis as follows: If the world began, it was preceded by vacant time and there is no reason why the world should begin now rather than earlier or later. St. Thomas would have replied: the world began at that moment determined by God’s free will. From his antinomies Kant concluded that metaphysics was impossible and that time and space

are e priori forms of sensible knowledge and that causality is an <a priori> form of our intellects.

Hence St. Thomas would have said there is no antinomy because an antinomy is a contradiction whose two parts are proved apodictically, and thus metaphysics is impossible. But actually neither part is proved because this matter depends on God's free will, and God could, if He wished, create the world from eternity just as He created it in time.

The second antinomy concerns the substance composed of simple parts or parts divided in infinity; but a continuum cannot be constituted by indivisible points. The reply is that the continuum is divisible in infinity but not divided in infinity.

The third antinomy concerns free will in the sense that free choice is against the principle that the same cause in the same circumstances produces the same effect. Reply: the same cause determined to one effect, I concede; not determined to one effect, I deny.

The fourth antinomy concerns the existence of the first cause. Kant says that if God began to act He would be measured by time. Reply: an eternal action produces its effect in time whenever it wills.

THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER THE CREATION OF THINGS WAS IN THE BEGINNING OF TIME

This article seeks to determine the meaning of the words, "In the beginning God created heaven and earth." St. Thomas points out that these words are explained in three ways:

1. In the beginning of time, according to St. Basil and St. Ambrose in opposition to the older philosophers.

2. In the principle, that is, in the Son, who is the exemplary principle, according to St. Augustine and St. Jerome against the Manichaeans.

3. Before all things, that is, in the beginning of time all things, including the angels, were created at one time.

The first and third explanations are literal; the second is mystical or spiritual. St. Augustine tried to see a twofold literal sense in the words, "in the beginning," and also in the word "heaven," that is, a corporeal heaven and a spiritual heaven. This is not repugnant because these words are analogical, and God and the sacred writer, who was illuminated by divine inspiration, could have had in mind both the lower and the higher analogy,

as when Christ taught us to say, “give us this day our daily bread,” He understood ordinary bread, and the “supersubstantial bread” mentioned by St. Matthew.

CHAPTER XXI

QUESTION 47 THE DISTINCTION OF THINGS IN GENERAL

After considering the production of creatures in being we proceed to the distinction of things. Why? Because the first property of being is unity, to which is opposed multitude, which implies the distinction of things. Hence we treat first in question 47 of the distinction of things. Here we do not institute a search, as in the fourth proof for the existence of God, but we proceed synthetically from first principles, considering that vast problem, discussed at great length by the Greek philosophers, especially by Plato, of how the multitude can proceed from the one, most simple, supreme principle. The Greek philosophers were not able to solve the problem, and it appears again in evolutionism. In question 48 we treat of the distinction between good and evil. Why? Because good is another property of being. In this question we are given the definition of metaphysical evil. Finally, in question 50 we consider the distinction between spiritual and corporeal creatures. In these three questions, then, we have a treatise on the properties of created being. As a complement to these considerations, we have the treatise on the angels, where St. Thomas also treats of the creature as such, that is, whether the created substance is immediately operative or whether it requires a faculty or an operative potency.

In the Parisian Codex (in the National Library) question 47 has only three articles: 1. the multitude and the distinction of things; 2. their inequality; 3. the unity of the world. The Cassinese Codex, however, has a fourth article inserted between the second and third of the Parisian Codex, entitled, whether there is an order of agents among creatures. This article was written either by St. Thomas himself or by one of his disciples and it is based on what is said on this matter in the <Contra Gentes> (Bk. II, chap. 42). The Leonine edition gives this article in small type. At any rate, this

article is a complement to the present question, serving as a preamble to the last article, and it contains the true teaching of St. Thomas.

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER THE MULTITUDE AND DISTINCTION OF THINGS IS FROM GOD

State of the question. The meaning of the title is: whether the multitude and distinction of things is from God, not in any way whatsoever, but as intended by Him. This is the great problem of the origin of multitude. In the fourth proof for the existence of God it was easy enough to ascend from the multitude of things, which we know from experience, to the one supreme being, because the multitude does not itself give an adequate reason for the unity of similitude and composition which we find in it. Hence we must posit unity prior to every multitude. Such was Plato's dialectic ascent which attained to the idea of the supreme good; and in similar language Aristotle says that every truth and every being presupposes the greatest truth, which is the greatest being.

But if it is easy to ascend from the multitude of things to the supreme unity, it is very difficult to descend from the one supreme being to the multitude, that is, to explain how the one supreme being can be the cause of the multitude. For us who have from revelation the idea of free creation this is easy, but for those who do not possess this idea or reject it, as do the modern evolutionists, the problem is insoluble.

In ancient times Parmenides began with the idea of being and unity and concluded that multitude was unintelligible. Why? Because he could not understand how anything could be added to being to diversify it. In other words, being is being and it cannot be diversified except by something other than being. But that something other than being is non-being, which is nothing. Therefore being cannot be diversified; from eternity it is one, and always remains one and immutable. It is God. Hence Parmenides concluded that multitude is an illusion of the senses.

In the same way, Zeno's arguments (for example, that Achilles could never catch the tortoise) were intended to show the absurdity of the theory of plurality. Indeed, if the continuum were composed of indivisible points and not of divisible parts, Zeno's arguments would be irrefutable.

In the beginning of this article St. Thomas presents similar difficulties, but on the part of God. The first and second objections are: every agent acts

similar to himself, inasmuch as he determines according to his own proper determination. But God is the greatest unity. Therefore God’s effect is one only and not multiple. The third objection: so also the end of creatures is one, the manifestation of the divine goodness. In our day the evolutionists are trying to explain how the multitude of beings arises from some homogeneous primitive being.

In the <Contra Gentes> St. Thomas considers these difficulties at great length from chapter 39 to chapter 45 of the second book: that the distinction in things is not by chance, against Democritus (chap. 39); that prime matter is not the first cause of the distinction of things, against the dualism of Plato and many others (chap. 40); that the distinction of things does not arise from a diversity or contrariety of agents, against Avicenna (chap. 41); that the first cause of the distinction of things is not the order among secondary agents (chap. 42); that the distinction of things is not by an angel inducing diverse forms into matter (chap. 43); nor does this distinction proceed from the diversity of merits and demerits, against Origen (chap. 44), but this distinction is intended <per se> by God, the most free Creator, so that the likeness of the Creator may be found in creatures to the extent that creatures can be assimilated to God.

This problem of the origin of multitude, discussed by Plato in the dialogue entitled Parmenides, reappears in modern evolution in the following form: How did the distinction of things, mineral, vegetative, animal, and human, arise from the primitive, homogeneous being? How did vegetative life, sensation, and intellection arise? The evolutionists try to conceal the difficulty by saying that the distinction of things appeared only slowly and progressively. But metaphysically speaking it makes little difference whether these distinctions appeared slowly or suddenly, whether they appeared only after a thousand years, or six days, or suddenly. This question of time, as also with regard to creation, is of minor consequence. The important question, abstracting from time, is how a multitude can originate from the primitive unity. This question is similar to that other important question asked in the next article: If God is infinitely good and the cause of all things, what is the cause of evil?

Reply. St. Thomas shows that this problem of the origin of the multitude of things is insoluble without the idea of free creation. His reply is that the distinction of things and multitude are from the intention of the first agent, who is God.

Proof from authority. “In the beginning God created heaven and earth. . . . And He divided the light from the darkness. . . . And God made a firmament, and divided the waters that were under the firmament, from those that were above the firmament.” This is a popular expression of the truth, accommodated to the intelligence of the Israelites, who thought of the heavens as a solid firmament. But when it is revealed that the heavens (which you think of as a solid firmament) are created by God, it is not revealed that the heavens are a solid firmament, for in the revealed proposition the verb “is” refers to “created” (the heavens are created) and not to “solid.” Hence it may be that some error is mingled in the subject of the proposition without making the proposition erroneous in its formal meaning, that is, with regard to the verb “is” and those things to which “is” refers. On other occasions it is more clearly stated that God created visible and invisible beings and that God “ordered all things in measure and number and weight.”

In the body of the article St. Thomas presents and then refutes two theories: the ascending evolution of the materialists and the descending evolution of Avicenna.

The theory of the ancient materialists was that the distinction of things arises by chance according to the movement of matter. This opinion was held by Democritus and later by Epicurus. Modern materialists with their theory of evolution were unable to add anything to this ancient theory; they were unable to explain how the first nebulae, the incandescendent stars, the habitable earth could come from primitive homogeneous matter except by chance or by the activity of some unknown forces, and the appearance of vegetative, sensitive, and intellectual life remained for them an insoluble enigma. They would be forced to admit that more proceeds from less and that the perfect proceeds from the imperfect, and they find themselves at a loss how to explain the multitude and diversity of organisms except by chance. But to say that these things are by chance is no explanation, but rather an absence of explanation, for chance is a cause <per accidens> which presupposes a cause ordered <per se> to one effect, and if there is no cause <per se> there can be no cause <per accidens>. A man digging a grave could not accidentally find a treasure if he were not <per se> digging in the earth and if some one else had not buried the treasure.

St. Thomas points out that Anaxagoras approached a solution of this problem when he admitted an intelligent cause that orders the universe, but

at the same time Anaxagoras thought that a distinction pre-existed in eternal matter, that is in the homeomeriae.

Reply. In his reply to the materialists St. Thomas presents two arguments which apply equally to the ascending evolutionism of modern materialists.

1. If there is any distinction from matter, this distinction should be referred to some higher cause. Why? Because matter is created by God, as we have said above, for matter is not a being in itself. Matter is moved and perfected and therefore it is moved and perfected by another; matter does not move or perfect itself, it does not confer on itself vegetative, sensitive, or intellectual life; it is not its own action or its own being. Matter is always in potency to other determinations and it is not related to being, the ultimate actuality of all things, as A is to a. This argument also applies to Plato's dualism.

2. Matter is because of the form, and the form is not because of the matter. But the distinction of things takes place through the specific forms. Therefore the distinction is not on account of matter but conversely matter is on account of the distinction of things. Matter is the principle of individuation and is ordered to the multitude of species.

This second argument applies also to evolutionism, for there can be no evolution with a tendency to something definite and congruous without some finality. Otherwise the direction of such a tendency would be without any reason, and no tendency would ever attain to the constitution of any of our organs, the heart, the head, the eye, etc. John of St. Thomas restates these two arguments against materialism as follows:

1. Act is simply prior to potency, and therefore matter, which is the potency to a higher act, is not uncreated, nor is it therefore the first cause for the distinction of things, for example, the distinctions of vegetative, sensitive, and intellectual life, which matter cannot produce because it is inferior to them. Matter is merely the real capacity for receiving a perfection.

2. Potency is referred to act and is because of act, or matter is because of the form and on account of the diverse forms, and therefore it is not the cause of the specific distinction of the forms. Matter is because of the distinction of these forms.

The first conclusion therefore is that the specific distinction of things cannot be explained by a material cause.

2. The second theory refuted by St. Thomas might be called descending evolutionism. It calls to mind Plotinus' emanatism. This second theory was advanced by Avicenna, who tried to explain the specific distinction of things by efficient causes. Avicenna declared that God in understanding Himself produced the first intelligence (Plotinus' <logos>, the second <<hypostasis>>); then, when the first intelligence understood itself, it produced the soul of the world (Plotinus' third <<hypostasis>>, the god of the Stoics).

Modern pantheists, who support a descending evolution rather than an ascending evolution, try to explain the distinction of things in almost the same way. Spinoza tried to derive two infinite attributes from the divine substance: cogitation and infinite extension, besides the finite modes of cogitation and extension. But because he rejected free creation he was unable to derive the finite modes from an infinite substance, and therefore he simply stated without proof that these finite modes come into being successively from eternity in some necessary way.

In trying to explain the distinction of things Schelling began with the Absolute, but because he rejected the revealed truth of free creation he spoke of a fall of the Absolute by which the Absolute became the world in some kind of descent. Hegel, who supported an ascending evolution, ridiculed Schelling's dream of the fall of the Absolute, but Hegel's position is no less ridiculous, for according to Hegel God is becoming in the world but He does not yet exist and will never properly be, as Renan said.

Reply. To this second theory of the emanatists, St. Thomas replied that creation belongs to God alone and the total being of anything cannot be produced except by creation from nothing, and creation is not emanation, for in creation God is the sole efficient and final cause, but in no sense the material cause. Hence God does not become the world nor is the world made from God. Avicenna's second <hypostasis>, therefore, if it is created, cannot create a third, and the third cannot create something inferior to itself.

Furthermore, St. Thomas replies, according to Avicenna the totality and distinction of things would not derive from the intention of the first agent but from a concourse of many active causes. This concourse of causes, however, must come about by chance if it does not come from the intention of the first cause. But chance, since it is a cause <per accidens>, presupposes a cause ordered <per se> to its effect and therefore it cannot be the first cause of the specific distinction of things. Manifestly the distinction

between vegetative, sensitive, and intellectual life in the world does not come from chance. In other words, there would be no finality in the world, and natural agents would tend to something determined and fitting without any reason, the order in things would be derived from an absence of order, more would come from the less, and the more perfect would come from the imperfect. Nor can it be said that the distinction in things comes from the form of secondary causes, for these forms do not exist of themselves and they themselves are distinct from one another and thus their own distinction must be explained.

Nor can it be said that the cause of the distinction in things is God inasmuch as He operates by a necessity of His nature. This argument was answered in the reply to the first difficulty and was refuted above: “It is of the nature of a natural agent that it produces one effect, because a nature (determined to one thing) operates in one and the same way unless it is impeded (for example, the vital principle in a plant operates in the same way in the same circumstances). This is because a natural agent acts according to its specific being, and as long as it is such a being it acts only in this one way. Since the divine being is infinite. . ., it cannot be that it acts by a necessity of nature unless it were to cause something infinite in being, which is impossible. The divine being, therefore, does not act by a necessity of nature, but the effects determined by its infinite perfection proceed according to the determination of its will and intellect.”

The second conclusion, therefore, is that the distinction of things does not come from God as acting by a necessity of nature.

Until this point St. Thomas has not considered the opinion that the distinction of things comes from God as operating by a necessity of wisdom, an opinion espoused by the absolute optimism of Plato and by Leibnitz in modern times. Here is an attempt to explain the distinction of things, which is assumed to be necessary, by a final cause. In this instance the necessity of the distinction of things is not metaphysical or physical but moral. St. Thomas says: “Plato supposed that it was due to the goodness of God as understood and loved by God Himself that He should produce the most perfect of worlds. This could, of course, be true if we consider only those things that are and not those things that could be. This universe is the best of those that are, and the fact that it is the best is due to the goodness of God. But the goodness of God is not obligated to this universe in such a way that God could not make a better or worse universe.” “Whenever the

end is proportionate to the things that are made on account of that end, the wisdom of the maker is limited to some determined order. But the divine goodness is an end disproportionately exceeding created things. Therefore the divine wisdom is not determined to some order of things."

The third conclusion, therefore, is that the distinction of things does not come from God operating by a necessity of wisdom.

By eliminating the material cause, natural efficient causes, and the final cause that implies the necessity of the production of things, we come to the positive conclusion: the distinction of things arises from the free intention of God the Creator.

The proof may be somewhat easier if we join this last section of the article with the reply to the first difficulty, in which the divine liberty is affirmed.

A free agent can produce distinct effects according to whatever distinct forms he understands. But God, as a free agent, wished to manifest His goodness through diverse creatures. Therefore the distinction of things is explained by the intention of God the free Creator. and this distinction can have no other cause.

Explanation of the major. An agent that acts by its nature acts by the form by which it is, and this form is only one for each agent. Therefore such an agent acts only in one way. A free agent, however, acts according to a form received in the intellect.

Explanation of the minor. God is a voluntary and free agent. It does not conflict with God's unity and simplicity that He understands many things, for the multitude of things understood by God do not effect a real distinction in Him. Since God can understand many things, He can also make many things.

God, however, wished freely to manifest His goodness by diverse creatures. Why? St. Thomas explains in the last section: "Because by one creature the divine goodness cannot be adequately represented, God made many different things so that whatever is lacking in one to represent the divine goodness will be supplied by another."

The validity of this solution. This solution is of faith. From the philosophical viewpoint it is necessary, for the ascending evolution of the materialists and even of Hegel is repugnant both to the principle of causality (more cannot be produced by the less) and to the principle of finality (every agent acts according to the end to which it is ordered) and,

moreover, ascending evolution does not explain the distinction of things. Similarly, descending evolution fails to explain the distinction of things for, if God operates by a necessity of nature, He will necessarily produce only one effect.

Similarly the absolute optimism of Plato and Leibnitz does not take into account the disproportion between any created universe and the divine goodness, which is to be manifested. We must, therefore, have recourse to the liberty of God the Creator, or we must, with Parmenides, deny all multitude and all distinction in things. In the end the solution is that the most eminent unity of God virtually contains the infinite multitude of possible things, from which God freely chose the things He wished to create.

The higher unity differs from the lower unity in the fact that it virtually contains the multitude; the higher the unity the richer its content, for, as Dionysius said, “those things that are divided in inferior beings are united in the higher beings.” This is especially clear when we ascend from one order to another; the vital principle of the plant virtually contains all the acts of agents lower than itself. Similarly, the faculty of vision, which in itself is simple, extends itself to a spreading panorama; the central sense in the common sense unites the objects of the particular senses; the intellect knows the universal, which virtually contains the individual. Great musicians, like Mozart, hear the melody they are composing completely at one time and they often express the whole theme virtually in the prelude of the composition. Great philosophers reduce the whole of philosophy to a few sublime principles. When the saints arrive at the unitive way they unite in this unity various virtues. In a still higher plane, the unity and simplicity of God virtually contain the infinite multitude of possible beings, and from this multitude God chooses those that He wishes to create. By the divine liberty, then, we are able to solve the problem of how a multitude proceeds from the supreme and most simple principle. Plato and Aristotle were not able to offer a solution because they had not attained to the idea of free creation.

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER THE INEQUALITY OF THINGS IS FROM GOD

State of the question. Many men cannot understand how the inequality in things can come from God. The Manichaeans tried to explain this inequality

by two, opposite principles, and Origen, trying to rectify their error, explained that in the beginning God created only intellectual beings and that all these beings were equal. Some of these sinned and as a punishment they were united to bodies. In modern times some thinkers have declared that that great inequality among animals, whereby the strong devour the weak, cannot come from God. They ask why there should be such a great inequality in the intellectual and moral aptitudes of men. This is the language of egalitarianism. As we shall see in the body of the article, it is a materialistic theory that does not take into account the subordination of the forms of agents and ends.

These unfortunate inequalities, says Schopenhauer, cannot come from a good and omnipotent God, and he concludes that God is not omnipotent and that the principle of all things is some kind of will that is always trying to persevere in being. This attempt is always associated with sorrow and is like an insatiable thirst. Therefore in his pessimism he concluded, that this desire for life must be eradicated so that we may come to that negative bliss which is the ending of all sorrow.

Schopenhauer’s difficulties can be reduced to the difficulties proposed at the beginning of the present article: the best God should have made the best things, and therefore all equal, otherwise, according to the third objection, it would be an injustice for God to distribute His gifts unequally to creatures.

Reply. The reply is that the divine wisdom is the cause of the distinction of things for the sake of the perfection of the universe, and therefore the divine wisdom is also the cause of inequality.

1. Proof from authority. “Why doth one day excel another, and one light another, and one year another year, when all come of the Lord? By the knowledge of the Lord they were distinguished.” In the canticle, “All ye works of the Lord, bless the Lord,” we see the inequality of creatures, each of which in its own way praises the Lord. The description of the creation in the Book of Genesis shows the inequality of creatures, and the Fourth Council of the Lateran declared that “God at one time and in the beginning of time established both creatures, the spiritual and corporeal, and then the human creature, as it were a common being constituted by spirit and body.”

2. Proof from reason: a) by the refutation of Origen’s theory; b) positively.

a) In opposing the Manichaeans, Origen declared that God in the beginning had created spiritual beings, who were all equal. Those that

sinned were bound to bodies, and the greater the sin the closer the union with matter. Some of these beings did not sin, and these now constitute the different grades of angels according to their different merits. In this way Origen combined the doctrine of original sin with the Platonic myths about the pre-existence of souls.

St. Thomas replies: “The totality of corporeal beings would then not be because of the communication of God’s goodness to creatures but for the punishment of sin. But this is contrary to the words of Genesis, “And God saw all the things that He had made, and they were very good.” St. Augustine exclaims: “What could be more stupid than to say that by this sun, as there is but one in the world, God was concerned not with the splendor of beauty or the welfare of corporeal things, but that this sun came to be because one soul sinned?”

What could be more stupid than to say that the stars are in the sky, that the pure air exists, that the rose, the lily, the dove, the lamb were made because someone sinned? St. Augustine is speaking formally when he says, “what could be more stupid,” for it is stupidity, opposed to the wisdom which explains the beauty of even the sensible world as a manifestation of God’s goodness, while this theory explains all this by sin, not by the highest cause but by something that is less than nothing. Schopenhauer’s doctrine is even greater folly when he speaks of a fall of the Absolute or of God. He tries to explain the inequalities and sorrows of the world by a primitive, non-omnipotent, or rather impotent will. The first cause is subsisting being itself and therefore omnipotent, because operation follows being, and anything that is able to possess the nature of being is comprised in the object of divine power, which can effect anything that has no repugnance to being.

b) The positive proof is from the principle of finality, out of which is drawn the corollary of the principle of the subordination of ends, forms, and agents, against materialistic egalitarianism. Leibnitz adopted St. Thomas’ argument but exaggerated it, as we shall see. St. Thomas’ argument can be reduced to the following: The specific or formal distinction is more important than the material or numerical distinction, because matter is on account of the form and the individuals in any species of corruptible beings are for the conservation of the species. But the formal distinction always requires inequality, since the forms of things are subordinate like numbers, ascending from the elements to mixed beings, to plants, and to animals, and

in each instance one species is found more perfect than the others, for example, the diamond or radium among minerals, the rose among the flowers, and man among the animals. Therefore the inequality of beings is required for the perfection of the universe so that in different ways the wisdom of God might make known His goodness.

The major is evident, since matter is because of the form, according to the principle of finality that the imperfect is on account of the perfect. In the same way the many individuals of the same species of corruptible being are for the conservation of the species. Excluding the subsisting spiritual soul, individuals are ordered to the preservation of the species. Thus individuals pass away but the species remains; it is negatively eternal in the sense that it prescinds from the here and now, and thus it is somehow above time, representing the divine idea, the idea of rose, of lily, of lion, etc. Therefore, St. Thomas says, the hen gathers the chicks under her wing and defends them against the hawk because the hen naturally loves the good of its species more than its own good.

The major therefore is certain, namely, the formal or specific distinction is more important than the material or numerical distinction; any material individual of this or that species is of minor importance. This, however, is not true of a person, because the soul of the person is subsisting and immortal and thus is of greater value than the species of lion or horse.

The minor. But the formal distinction requires the inequality or subordination of forms. This is affirmed with a serene mind and not lugubriously as was the case with Origen. On this point St. Thomas differs entirely from the pessimism of Schopenhauer. But it should be noted that the holy doctor is speaking here of the primary distinction and inequality existing prior to sin; he is not now speaking of how after original and actual sin this inequality is often increased and causes that miserable state of servitude in which so many men spent their entire lives before the spread of Christianity.

The primary inequality of things pertains to their natures independently of sin, for, as Aristotle says, “the species of things are subordinate like numbers.” For numbers vary by the addition or subtraction of unity and the species of things differ by the addition or subtraction of a specific difference. for example, a substance is incorporeal or corporeal, and here there is inequality; similarly, the corporeal substance is living or inanimate;

if living, it is sensitive or not; if sensitive, it is rational or not. Everywhere we find the inequality and subordination of forms as with numbers.

Hence St. Thomas says, “In each of these we find one species more perfect than the others,” for example, man among the animals, and the animals that have both internal and external senses are superior to the animals that do not possess all the senses, as the oyster and the sponge, which appear to have only the sense of touch. So there is also a certain subordination among plants and flowers and among minerals; the diamond, or perhaps radium, seems to be the most precious of minerals.

These considerations are valid against materialism and mechanism, which take into consideration only quantity and not quality. If quality is something prior to quantity, the variation of heat from the tenth to the twentieth degree is perhaps greater than between the twentieth and thirtieth degrees. Materialism looks at everything as if it were in the same horizontal plane, as if, for instance, animals were machines and as if the human soul were not essentially superior to the soul of the brute. This is absolute egalitarianism, which reduces everything to the lowest plane.

Spiritualism, on the other hand, considers everything as in a vertical line, inasmuch as the species of things are subordinated in a hierarchy for the splendor of the universe, because those things that are united in God can be only divisively in creatures and because the formal distinction requires inequality. Many modern writers do not understand this subordination, confusing it with coordination, for example, when they compare the first cause and the second cause with two men rowing a boat.

The conclusion is confirmed by the solution of the objections.

Reply to first objection. The most perfect agent produces his perfect total effect, but he produces it with a subordination of parts, for example, with the subordination of organs and functions in the plant and animal organisms. The animal would be less perfect if all its parts were equal, if all, for instance, had the dignity or importance of the eye.

Thus the universe is more perfect with angels, men, animals, plants, minerals than if there were only angels and all the angels were equal. Here was Origen’s error. According to St. Thomas the angels could not be equal, for in the angels there is a particular subordination of forms since the angels are pure subsisting forms. Since individuation takes place through matter, there can be only one individual in each angelic species. Michael is the only

individual in his species. Hence among the angels we have a perfect hierarchy or subordination.

Reply to second objection. In the Blessed Trinity there is equality according to the processions <ad intra> by which the entire divine nature is communicated. The Word and the Holy Ghost are equal to the Father. On the other hand there must be inequality in the procession <ad extra> because the creature is an inadequate manifestation of the divine goodness and many subordinate creatures are required.

Reply to third objection. The primitive inequality is not unjust since it is because of the perfection of the universe. This Origen was not able to understand.

Thus some are born inclined to fortitude and must acquire meekness, others inclined to meekness must acquire fortitude. Each must ascend the mountain of perfection by traversing the various parts of the mountain. The justice of God is not commutative, regulating the changes among equals, but it is distributive according to the requirements of the common good. God is His own law. Cajetan remarks: “Therefore God is just in condescension in order to manifest His goodness.”

Leibnitz exaggerated this doctrine of inequality when he denied matter in his monadology and reduced all substance to spiritual monads which are subordinated as are the angels in St. Thomas’ doctrine. Leibnitz held that there could not be in the world two beings absolutely similar because God would have created these perfectly similar beings without reason, just as a man would have two perfectly similar copies of the same edition of Virgil in his library without reason.

Reply. Two perfectly similar individuals can exist, especially in succession, for the preservation of the species and they are distinguished from each other by matter marked by quantity, as in the case of two drops of water or two perfectly identical twins. We concede only that there cannot be two angels perfectly similar in species, and this would also be true of men if they were monads without matter.

St. Thomas does admit a certain individual inequality of souls in the same human species: the soul of Christ is higher even in the natural order than the soul of Judas, but this inequality is not unrelated to the body, although on the other hand a body is better disposed because of a higher individual soul, since causes are mutually causes to each other in different genera of causes.

If this article was not written by St. Thomas, it was composed by one of his disciples from what St. Thomas says on this matter elsewhere. This article completes the question and serves as a preamble to the fourth article: whether there is only one world.

In this article it is asked whether the subordination of agents is not only formal but also dynamic. It appears that it is not dynamic: 1. because the omnipotent God can act without an intermediate subordinate agent; 2. because this dynamic subordination would be a return to the separated ideas of Plato, for the subordinate agents would at the same time be exemplary ideas; 3. if one creature were the active cause of another, it would also be its final cause; and God alone is the end of all things.

Reply. Nevertheless the reply is in the affirmative, that is, in creatures the subordination of agents corresponds to the subordination of ends.

Proof from authority. “There is no power but from God; and those that are, are ordained from God.” As Dionysius said, in this way God rules the lower through the higher.

Proof from reason. The proof is twofold: indirect and direct.

a) The indirect proof is a refutation of the doctrine of occasionalism, already proposed in St. Thomas’ day, according to which it is not the fire that heats but God in the fire.

Reply. The active powers, as well as the qualities and forms, attributed to things would be futile if they effected nothing. St. Thomas says: “Indeed all created things would seem to be somehow futile if they were stripped of their proper operation, because all things are because of their operation,” or as Cajetan says, because of themselves as operating. “It is not due to some lack of power that God acts through the mediation of creatures, but because of the abundance of His goodness inasmuch. . . as He communicates the dignity of causality to creatures.” This causality is explained by the distinction between potency and act, which Malebranche and Leibnitz failed to recognize and therefore they fell back on occasionalism when they were unable to explain the transitive activity of creatures.

b) The conclusion is proved directly from the inequality required in creatures to manifest the divine goodness, as we stated in the preceding article. The proof may be reduced to the following: The more perfect is compared to the less perfect as act to potency, and it is the nature of what exists in act that it act on that which is in potency. But there is inequality in

creatures inasmuch as one is more perfect than another. Therefore it is necessary that one creature act on another, by the power of God, the first agent. We have in mind here agents that are <per se> subordinate, not univocal causes, subordinate <per accidens>, such as men who are successive by the succession of generation.

Explanation of the major. If in nature some inferior being is in potency to receive some perfection, it is of the nature of a superior being in act that it act on that which is in potency, for example, if the fruits of the earth need warmth to ripen, it is in order that the sun, which is hot in act, should provide heat for the earth. The minor is evident. Therefore there must be a subordination of agents.

Corollary. The order or subordination of agents corresponds to the subordination of ends, as St. Thomas frequently pointed out: “It is necessary, since every agent acts for an end, that every cause direct its effects to its end, and therefore, since there is an order of ends according to the order of agents or movers, it is necessary that man be directed to the ultimate end by the movement of the first mover.” Hence St. Thomas says also in this article, “matter is ordered to the form, the elements to mixed beings, plants to animals, and animals to man.” We see then that the order of the universe arises from the fact that one creature acts on another and that one creature is made to the likeness of another (for every agent acts in some way similar to itself) and that one creature is the end of another. Thus minerals are assimilated by plants, plants by animals, and animals by men. We see here an external finality of the inferior being to the superior which can be corroborated by the internal finality of the superior being, for example, the animal acts for an end and in assimilating the plant for its own sustenance it uses an appropriate means to the end of sustaining itself and thus it appears that according to external finality plants are because of animals.

First corollary. Man is a microcosm, a sort of compendium of the universe inasmuch as he reflects this subordination of agents and ends. The intellective part of the soul moves the sensitive faculties and members and uses them for its higher end, because the end of the agent and patient is the same but in different ways. So also the sensitive part uses the vegetative part, and the vegetative part uses the lower aliments which it assimilates through the nutritive function and by respiration.

In this microcosm we see the dynamic order of the whole universe, the threefold subordination of agents, ends, and forms inasmuch as the superior agent in acting in a manner similar to itself is also a kind of exemplar of the effect produced in the inferior being. St. Thomas says: “God is the prime exemplar of all things, but secondarily the creature is an exemplar of another creature.” For example, our reason is modified by prudence, and this is an exemplar of the rectitude of the sensitive appetite governed by temperance.

Second corollary. The pantheists look for a substantial unity in the universe and without reason deny the two extrinsic causes of the world, the efficient and final causes, while evidently the world has a dynamic unity which participates in efficient and final causality.

Third corollary. From all this it appears that the principle of finality (every agent acts for an end) is no less necessary and no less evident than the principle of efficient causality (every thing that is made has an efficient cause). Indeed there can be no efficient causality without finality, nor can there be a tendency which does not tend to an end. The end is the first and supreme of the four causes and thus, at least in itself, the principle of finality is prior to the principle of efficient causality and better known <per se>.

FOURTH (THIRD) ARTICLE: WHETHER THERE IS ONLY ONE WORLD

State of the question. We are inquiring here about the fact, not the possibility, of the numerical unity of the world. It seems that there are many worlds: 1. because God could create many worlds; 2. because many worlds would be better than one, since many goods are better than a few; 3. as man is multiplied, the world ought also be multiplied. Democritus thought that many worlds resulted from the concourse of the atoms. The question asked here is not the same as that about the plurality of worlds in the sense of the stars being inhabited. The opinion that the stars or plants are inhabited is not contrary to the conclusion of this article, since the stars and planets and everything that moves in them constitute one universe.

Reply. St. Thomas’ reply is that the world is unique.

1. This is proved from the language of the Scriptures: “The world was made by Him.”

2. It is proved also from the divine ordination to one and the same end. All the things that are from God have a relation to one another and to God Himself, that is, all things are coordinated and subordinated and thus constitute a complete whole, which is called the universe. The unity of the world, therefore, is a unity of order.

Reply to first objection. From the unity of order existing in things, Aristotle reached the conclusion that God the governor is one: “Beings are averse to being ill disposed, and a plurality of principles is not good. Therefore there is but one principle.” This text of Aristotle is adduced to prove that for him God is not only the ultimate end of the world, attracting all things to Himself, but also the governor, at least of the genera and species if not of individuals, as Averroes contended. From this argument it also follows that by His ordered power God cannot make many worlds without some relation to one another; they must at least be coordinated with regard to the same ultimate end, since it is the part of a wise being to put things in order.

Reply to second objection. No agent intends a material plurality as an end because a material multitude does not have a definite terminus and because it can always be increased; the material multitude must be ordered to something higher as matter is ordered to the form. From this it follows that there would be no reason for God to create two similar worlds only numerically distinct. We may ask why two worlds rather than three or four or more?

Reply to third objection. St. Thomas says: “It is not possible that there be another earth besides this one because every earth would be borne naturally to the same middle point,” that is, to the center of the world. This is the opinion of the ancients proposed by Aristotle, but it was not proved. Cajetan says that St. Thomas was speaking not of an absolute impossibility but of a physical impossibility under the present laws of the universe according to the Ptolemaic system.

Doubt. Whether God could create two unequal worlds? This does seem to be impossible because such worlds would be subordinated by reason of their inequality.

Brief review. The distinction of things in general.

We see, therefore, that the origin of multiplicity and of the distinction of things depends on the divine liberty and the divine ideas, that is, in the ultimate analysis on the divine unity, which virtually contains an infinity of

possible beings. In this multiplicity and distinction we see a unity of order or subordination of forms, agents and ends, a unity that is at once static and dynamic. Plato and Aristotle prepared the way for this solution by answering Parmenides' arguments against the existence of the multitude, but since they had not attained an explicit notion of free creation from nothing, their teaching remained confused about the origin of multitude and the distinction of things in general. We see here the superiority of Christian philosophy and especially of Christian theology.

CHAPTER XXII

QUESTION 103 THE GOVERNANCE OF THINGS IN GENERAL

After considering creation and the distinction of things in general, we consider the divine governance before taking up creatures in particular. As was said earlier in treating of divine providence, the governance of things is the execution of providence. It is part of divine providence to order things to their end, and the execution of this order is divine governance. Similarly, in human affairs we distinguish the executive power from the legislative power.

St. Thomas considers the divine governance according to the four kinds of causes: 1. whether there is divine governance and what it is formally; 2. what is its end; 3. why the divine governance must proceed from one supreme efficient cause alone; 4. what the divine governance effects and how (that is, its efficacy). In this way we consider whatever belongs <per se> to the divine governance. Human society, and the Church as well, ought to be studied according to these four causes if we wish to know everything that pertains to them of necessity.

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER THE WORLD IS GOVERNED BY ANYONE

State of the question. The materialists, pessimists, and all who reject divine providence deny any governance of the world. They hold, as we shall see in the third difficulty, that in their movements the principal parts of the world are determined to one end by some necessity and therefore do not need any governance.

Reply. Nevertheless the reply is that the world is governed, and this truth is of faith. All the texts of Scripture that affirm the existence of divine providence can be offered as proof. St. Thomas cites the text, “But Thy

providence, O Father, governeth it.” God is considered the Father who gives life, and who nourishes, elevates, and governs His children with knowledge and benevolence.

The divine governance is proved <a posteriori> as follows: Means are not ordered to an end except by a governing intellect which understands the nature of the means. But in the world there are many means excellently ordered to a good end. Therefore the world is governed by one intelligence. Moreover, in opposition to Kant, this intelligence must be its own being and intellection, wisdom and truth itself, for otherwise this intelligence itself would be ordered to intellection and to truth by some higher governor.

The existence of the divine governance can also be proved <a priori> to a certain extent from a consideration of the divine goodness inasmuch as it produces things in being, so it also pertains to it to lead things to their end, which is to rule. To govern, properly speaking, is to lead things conveniently to their proper end as the arrow is directed by the archer.

Reply to third objection. In natural things we find a certain necessity by which they are determined to one end; thus the eye is determined to seeing, the ear to hearing, the foot to walking, so that this end constitutes the reason for the existence of these means that are ordered to itself. But this ordering presupposes an ordering intellect in the Author of nature. Otherwise the intelligibility in things would come from non-intelligence, from a blind and material necessity; order would come from the privation of order, the more perfect from the less perfect in opposition to the principle of causality, and all things would be without a reason for their existence, that is, without any reason for being rather than not being.

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER THE END OF THE GOVERNANCE OF THE WORLD IS SOMETHING OUT SIDE THE WORLD

State of the question. It seems that the end of the world is its order and peace, that is, something intrinsic to the world for the good of the multitude is its peace.

Reply. Nevertheless the reply is that God Himself is the final end of the governance of the world.

Proof from Scripture. “The Lord hath made all things for Himself”; “To make thee higher than all nations which He hath created, to His own praise and name and glory.” This thought is frequently repeated in the psalms,

namely, that God made all things to manifest His goodness. This truth was defined by the Vatican Council: “If anyone shall deny that the world was established for the glory of God, let him be anathema”; and in another chapter, “God, by His goodness and omnipotent power, not to increase His happiness or to acquire it, but to manifest His perfection by the goods which He imparts to creatures, by His most free counsel made all things.”

Proof from reason. Since every agent acts for a proportionate end, the end corresponds to the principle. But the efficient principle of the world is a cause extrinsic to it. Therefore the final end of the world is also some good extrinsic to it. In other words, and this is a corollary of the principle of finality (every agent acts for a proportionate end): the order of subordination among agents must correspond to the order of ends. Therefore corresponding to the supreme and most universal agent we have a most universal ultimate end, namely, the manifestation of the supreme goodness through the good imparted to things.

Reply to second objection. “To this one thing every thing tends, namely, to partake of the good and to be assimilated to the supreme good as much as is possible.”

Reply to third objection. The order of the universe is its proximate end, but its ultimate end is God Himself, or the manifestation of the divine goodness. Similarly, the order of an army is ordered to something higher, to victory and the defense of the country. Inferior creatures cannot know and possess God, but intellectual creatures can, especially when they are elevated to the order of grace.

“God wills Himself as the end; He wills other things as the means to the end.” If God were to act on account of a created good as His ultimate end, the act would be inordinate and absurd, something like a mortal sin in God, and the creature thus inordinately desired would be most unfortunate because it would be ordered to itself and not to God the highest good. Here we see the inanity of the doctrine according to which God created us ultimately for ourselves and not to manifest His own goodness. Evidently, if every agent acts for a proportionate end, the subordination of agents must correspond to the subordination of ends.

THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER THE WORLD IS GOVERNED BY ONE

State of the question. The second objection states the difficulty of the Manichaeans: created things often are opposed to each other as if some proceeded from a good principle and some from an evil principle.

Reply. The reply is in the affirmative and of faith according to the words of St. Paul: “Yet to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto Him.”

Proof from reason. It is necessary that the governance of the world ordered to the supreme good should be the best. But the best governance is that which is through one being. Why? Because governance is the direction of those who are governed to a good, which supposes unity as against dissolution. The cause of unity, however, is one <per se>, since several beings cannot agree unless they are united in some way. Therefore the governance of the world, since it is the best, is by one governor.

This is a strict demonstration and it is found to be true even in human affairs. And this best kind of government by one supposes a wise and good governor, capable of leading his subjects to unity and to their end.

Such governance is necessary particularly when the end to be attained is arduous and involves a complexity of problems that are difficult of solution, and when the multitude is incapable of attaining its end, as often happens in great masses of people where it is difficult to establish order. If, however, those who are ruled are close to perfection, there is less need of a strong rule, for here the words are verified, “these. . . are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts.” Thus an imperfect rule suffices for perfect subjects, but a perfect rule is needed for the imperfect and for the multitude, which in itself remains imperfect. We read in the Scripture: “Where there is no governor, the people shall fall; but there is safety where there is much counsel.” Therefore a king should have about him the wisest counselors, reserving the final judgment to himself. Hence we see that the same principles by which the universe is ruled are applied, with some modifications, to human society.

Reply to second objection. In reply to the objection of the Manichaeans, St. Thomas says: “Contrary things, although they are in disagreement with regard to proximate ends, nevertheless agree inasmuch as they are coordinated in the one order of the universe and ordered to the final end.” That is, created things frequently are at variance with one another with regard to proximate ends, but this does not prove the existence of some evil principle, for, as St. Augustine says: “God, who is the highest good, would

in no way allow anything evil in His works unless He were so omnipotent and so good that He could make good things even from evil."

FOURTH ARTICLE: WHETHER THE EFFECT OF DIVINE GOVERNANCE IS ONE ONLY OR PLURAL

Reply. The principal effect of the divine governance, through the conservation and movement of things, is that creatures are assimilated to God through the participation in good and inasmuch as creatures move other creatures to good. The particular effects of the divine governance, however, are innumerable.

FIFTH ARTICLE: WHETHER ALL THINGS ARE SUBJECT TO THE DIVINE GOVERNANCE

State of the question. It appears that all things are not subject to God's governance, for, as we read in Ecclesiastes, many things are fortuitous. Moreover, we read, "Doth God take care for oxen?" and even of the rational creature Sacred Scripture says: "God made man from the beginning, and left him in the hand of his own counsel."

Reply. It is of faith that all things are subject to the divine governance. The Vatican Council declared: "All things that He established God guards and governs by His providence, 'reaching from end to end mightily, and ordering all things sweetly.'" "All things are naked and open to His eyes," even those things that are in the future by the free action of creatures.

Proof from reason. "Just as there can be nothing that is not created by God, so there can be nothing that is not subject to His governance." Again, "as there is nothing that is not ordered to the divine goodness as to its end, so it is impossible that any being should be outside the divine governance."

Therefore, both from the viewpoint of the supreme agent and from the viewpoint of the ultimate end it is clear that all things are subject to the divine governance. The opposite opinion is rightly called "stupid," since stupidity makes a judgment about things on the basis of the lowest kind of cause, that is, chance, and opposes wisdom, which judges all things on the basis of the highest cause and the ultimate end.

Reply to first objection. Many things, indeed, happen beyond the intention of nature and are said to happen by chance. But in these cases

chance would not exist beyond the intention of nature if the things of nature did not tend to an end under the divine governance. “By the very fact that something casual is found in these things it is demonstrated that these things are subject to the divine rule.” Moreover, nothing happens by chance or fate from God’s viewpoint; the casual takes place only in view of other causes.

Ecclesiastes does not teach the opposite. The sacred writer also holds that many things are hidden from us: “As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones are joined together in the womb of her that is with child; so thou knowest not the works of God, who is the maker of all.” Hence Ecclesiastes concludes: “Let us all hear together the conclusion of the discourse. Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is all man. And all things that are done, God will bring into judgment for every error, whether it be good or evil.”

Reply to second objection. When it is said that “God does not have care for oxen,” this means that He does not care for them in the same way that He cares for rational creatures, to whom He gives precepts, counsel, and rewards, and whom He punishes.

Reply to third objection. The rational creature as a secondary cause governs itself, but over and above this it is governed by God, the first cause.

SIXTH ARTICLE: WHETHER ALL THINGS ARE DIRECTLY GOVERNED BY GOD

State of the question. It seems that God governs all things directly because through Himself without mediate causes He can govern all things. In this God differs from an earthly ruler, who because of the imperfection of a creature cannot do all things or be present everywhere and therefore needs helpers.

Reply. Providence, which is the plan or order of divine governance, extends directly to all things, but with regard to the execution of divine providence God governs inferior beings through superior beings.

The reason is as follows: “The most desirable thing in all practical knowledge is that every particular which is effected should be known, as, for instance, in the science of medicine. Hence God knows even the smallest things. But on the other hand, that government is better which communicates to certain things the dignity of causality with regard to other things, just as that teacher is better who not only makes his students learned

but also develops teachers. It is therefore pertinent to God’s dignity as the supreme governor that He govern inferior beings through superior beings although His providence directly knows and orders even the lowest beings.

SEVENTH ARTICLE: WHETHER ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN BEYOND THE ORDER OF DIVINE GOVERNANCE

Reply. The reply is in the negative and of faith according to the Scriptures, where we read: “O Lord, Lord, almighty king, for all things are in Thy power, and there is none that can resist Thy will, if Thou determine to save Israel.”

The reason is that, since God is the first and most universal cause (without whom second causes cannot act), it is impossible that anything can happen beyond the order of the divine governance.

Evil cannot happen without the divine permission, and God permits evil for some greater good, as He permits persecution for the sake of the patience and glory of martyrs. Moreover, from God’s viewpoint nothing happens by chance, for from eternity God willed or permitted the accidental conjunctions of second causes. Similarly, two servants of the same master meet each other by chance, but it is not a matter of chance for the master who sent the servants to the same place.

EIGHTH ARTICLE: WHETHER ANYTHING CAN WORK AGAIN ST THE ORDER OF THE DIVINE GOVERNANCE

Reply. Nothing can resist the order of the divine governance as it proceeds from God, the most universal cause of the good of the whole universe, but a being may well resist this order as it proceeds from a particular cause. Thus those who sin oppose some determined good according to the law of God and therefore they are justly punished by God. Cajetan points out in connection with the reply to the first objection that “those who sin mortally look at two things: first, what they intend to do, and this is good in a sense; and secondly, something beyond their intention, and this is the deformity of the act, consisting in the privation of the proper order. Here sinners depart from a certain order of good and act against this order.” But even this deformity is permitted by God for the sake of a greater good, at least with regard to the end of the whole universe, and thus sinners

do not oppose the divine governance in general but only in a particular instance.

CHAPTER XXIII

QUESTION 104 THE CONSERVATION OF CREATURES

The first effect of the divine governance is the conservation of creatures; the second effect is the movement of creatures either directly by God or through the mediation of superior creatures.

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER CREATURES NEED TO BE CON SERVED IN BEING BY GOD

State of the question. It seems that creatures need not be conserved by God in being because: 1. many creatures are incorruptible; 2. a builder can erect a structure that will last for many ages, and a fortiori God can do the same with beings; 3. in no creature do we find a positive tendency to non-being; 4. divine conservation would be an action without a positive effect, because whatever is does not become.

Reply. The reply is that creatures need divine conservation and this truth is of faith. Of the Son of God we read in the Scriptures, “upholding all things by the word of His power”; in the language of the Bible “uphold” signifies the same as “conserve,” and the same interpretation is accepted by the Septuagints, Philo, and in Christian tradition. We read further, “For in Him we live and move and are,” “For of Him and by Him and in Him are all things,” “And He is before all, and by Him all things consist.” St. Thomas says, “Both according to faith and according to reason we must say that creatures are conserved in being by God.”

Proof from reason. 1. God indirectly conserves corruptible things by removing from them corruptive principles. 2. Directly and <per se> God conserves all creatures even those creatures that are incorruptible.

Every effect that depends on a certain cause not only according to its becoming but also directly according to its being needs to be conserved directly by that cause. But every creature depends directly for its being on God, who alone is being itself in essence. Therefore every creature needs to be conserved directly by God.

Proof of the major. Every effect depends on its cause in the way it is caused. Just as the becoming of a thing cannot perdure when the action of the agent which is the cause of the becoming ceases (for example, the passive erection of the house ceases when the builder does not work), so the being of a thing does not perdure when the action of the agent which is the cause of its being ceases.

Proof of the minor. God alone is being by essence because His essence is His being, whereas the creature is being by participation, and its essence is not its being.

Hence, if the conserving action of God were to cease, every creature would be annihilated, just as, says St. Augustine, “the atmosphere would be continually darkened” if the illuminative action of the sun were to cease.

To understand this reasoning we must note the opposition between the cause of the becoming and the direct cause of the being of a thing. When a father begets a son he is the direct cause of the passive generation of his son but not of the son’s being. Thus the son often remains alive after the death of the father. Indeed, if the father were the direct cause of the very nature and the very being of his son, he would be his own cause since nature and being are found in the father and the son in the same way, inasmuch as they belong to the same species.

On the other hand, since God is being by essence He is the direct cause of the very being of every creature, and the creature is being by participation, depending on essential being as long as it perdures, just as the diffused light in the air depends on the illumination of the sun and ceases with the cessation of this illumination.

We may understand this more readily if we recall that there are causes in the world upon which the permanence of their effects depends after the effects are produced. For example, atmospheric pressure and solar heat are required for the conservation of a living animal as well as for its production; the object of sensation not only objectively causes sensation but also conserves it, and when the object is removed the sensation ceases. In the intellectual order, too, the knowledge of principles is necessary not only for

acquiring the knowledge of the conclusions but also to conserve that knowledge, and similarly if the desire for the end ceases, the desire for the means to that end also ceases.

From this we may be able better to understand St. Thomas' words: "It is manifest that if two things are of the same species, one cannot be the cause of the form of the other inasmuch as the form is such a form because it would then be the cause of its own form; it can, however, be the cause of this form inasmuch as it is in matter, that is, inasmuch as this matter acquires this (individuated) form. This is a cause according to becoming, as when a man begets a man, or when fire kindles fire.

Evidently, a cow, however perfect it may be, cannot be the cause of bovinity or of the bovine race, for then it would be its own cause. The cause of the bovine race is the divine idea of cow, or the idea of this species.

Hence if a cause is of the same species as its effect, it is a direct cause only of the becoming. If, on the other hand, the cause is of a higher nature than its effect, it not only produces the effect but also conserves it. Thus God, who is being by essence, conserves every creature, which is being by participation.

Reply to first objection. The potency to non-being is not positively in incorruptible beings, but God can remove from such creatures His conserving influence.

Reply to second objection. God cannot communicate to a creature that it continue in being after the divine action ceases, just as He cannot communicate to a creature that He should not be its cause.

Reply to third objection. In corruptible creatures there is a tendency to non-being inasmuch as the matter of these beings desires another form; and these beings need to be conserved even indirectly by the removal of that which may corrupt them.

Reply to fourth objection. "God's conservation is not a new action, it is a continuation of the action which confers being. This action, however, is without movement or time," that is, it is a continuation of the creative action above time by which God creates without any instrument and without any intermediary matter and those things that cannot be produced except by creation, namely, the angels and spiritual souls. Therefore God directly conserves matter, the soul, and the angels, in being, and He is therefore intimately present in these creatures.

Several corollaries may be deduced from the principle that St. Thomas lays down in this article: “When an effect that is not born is to receive the imprint of the agent in the same manner as the imprint is in the agent...., then the cause of this effect is the cause not only of the becoming but also of the being.” Thus the influence of Christ is as necessary for the conservation of the Church as it was for its institution; the same is true of the influence of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In the same way the influence of the founders of religious orders perdures even in heaven so that their orders may continue in being. St. Thomas’ influence also perdures that the true spirit of his doctrine may be conserved.

We see, then, that there are, under God’s conservation, subordinate conserving causes but always in the sense that the most universal effect, namely, being, must be attributed to the most universal cause. The proper effect, according to the fourth mode of predication <per se>, necessarily and directly depends on the proper cause, just as in the second mode of predication the properties depend on the essence from which they are derived. As illumination depends on light, so the being of things depends on God, who is subsisting being itself.

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER GOD CONSERVES EVERY CREATURE DIRECTLY

Reply. God directly conserves the very being of things inasmuch as it is being, but other agents, subordinate to God, conserve being as such being, for example, the sun conserves the light in the atmosphere. Similarly the influence of other subordinate causes is necessary for the conservation of vegetative and sensitive life on the surface of the earth; and the succession of day and night and of the four seasons, without which there would be no generations or conservation of life, depends on the regular movement of the stars.

In the spiritual order God directly conserves spiritual souls in being, and under God the angels and the saints in their way illumine souls and assist them to know and love divine things and to conserve the principles of the spiritual life.

THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER GOD COULD REDUCE ANYTHING TO NOTHING

Reply. As God most freely created and conserves all things, according to the words of Scripture, “Whatsoever the Lord pleased He hath done,” so He could cease to supply being to creatures, which would reduce them to nothing. Annihilation would not be an action; it would be the cessation of conservation.

Reply to second objection. Without prejudice to His goodness, God could have refrained from creating. Erroneously Leibnitz asserted the contrary: God would not be infinitely good and wise if He had not created, and if He had not created the best of all possible worlds. To which Bossuet replied: “God is in no way greater for having created the universe.”

FOURTH ARTICLE: WHETHER ANYTHING IS EVER REDUCED TO NOTHING

Reply. The reply is in the negative, based on the words of Holy Scripture, “I have learned that all the works which God made, continue forever.”

By His ordinary power God annihilates neither material beings, whose corruption is not annihilation since their matter remains, nor immaterial beings, in which there is no potency for non-being since they are incorruptible.

Neither by His extraordinary power, that is, miraculously, does God ever annihilate anything, because such annihilation does not pertain to the manifestation of His glory and grace. Hence there is never a motive for annihilation on the part of the end.

Some theologians, like Scotus, thought that by the Eucharistic consecration the substance of bread is annihilated when the body of Christ becomes present; but to preserve the proper use of the terms, the Councils of Florence and of Trent taught that the substance of bread is not annihilated but is changed into the body of Christ.

Reply to second objection. St. Thomas noted: “Those things that do not have a contrary, although they may have a limited power, perdure in eternity.” Some thinkers have used this text to defend the principle of inertia, or the inertia of movement, namely, if some mobile thing, actually in motion, were to be deprived of every influence, it would persevere always in motion if it did not meet an obstacle. This cannot be proved <a posteriori> because we cannot isolate any mobile thing from every influence, especially every invisible influence, nor can we verify the statement that the movement would always perdure unless there were an

obstacle. This principle of inertia is a postulate suggested by experience, but it is not evident, and it cannot be demonstrated <a priori> or <a posteriori>, as the better physicists admit today.

Reply to third objection. The forms of corporeal things, which cease to exist by the corruption of the composite, are not annihilated; they remain in the potency of the matter.

It is evident, then, that the conservation of things is the continuation of free creation from nothing. If the world had been created from eternity, God would have only a priority of causality and not of duration with regard to the world, but the unique, immobile instant of eternity would always be infinitely above time and it would embrace all time including that which might be infinite in its prior part.

CHAPTER XXIV

QUESTION 105 THE CHANGE OF CREATURES BY GOD

Although this question is in itself of great importance, we will not consider it at length because we have already solved the principal difficulties arising from it.

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER GOD CAN DIRECTLY MOVE MATTER TO THE FORM

State of the question. It seems that the most universal cause can directly produce only the most universal effect, that is, the being of all things inasmuch as it is being, but not the most particular effect, for example, forming this particular body out of matter.

Reply. The reply is in the affirmative, for we read in the Scriptures: “The Lord God formed man of the slime of the earth.” The reason is that a being in passive potency can be reduced to act by that active potency which has this being in its power. But matter is under the power of God inasmuch as it is produced by God. Therefore matter can be reduced to act by the divine power.

Reply to first objection. An angel cannot do this because matter is not in its power. An angel cannot directly change water into wine by a direct action on the matter itself to educe the form of wine without preliminary alterations. The angel can only move bodies locally, but it can do this quickly and skillfully.

Reply to second objection. If God acted by a necessity of nature, He could produce but one effect, but God acts freely, not only with the freedom with which man freely begets only a man, but God acts directly by His will and intellect and He knows not only the universal natures of things but also this particular form which is to be imprinted on the slime of the earth.

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER GOD CAN DIRECTLY MOVE A BODY

The reply is in the affirmative, for the same reason as given in the preceding article. The contact of God moving with the body that is moved is not quantitative contact, but rather a contact of power or a dynamic contact. Thus God touches but He is not touched because the natural power of no creature can reach Him.

THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER GOD DIRECTLY MOVES THE CREATED INTELLECT

The reply is in the affirmative. God moves the created intellect: 1. because, as the first intelligence, He gives the creature the power of intellection; 2. because He is the supreme intelligible, in whom other intelligibles pre-exist intelligibly and from whom these intelligibles are derived for other intellects. Thus God causes the intelligible species in angels directly, and in our intellect by means of the abstraction from sensible things.

FOURTH ARTICLE: WHETHER GOD CAN MOVE THE CREATED WILL

State of the question. It appears that God cannot move the created will because whatever is moved extrinsically is forced; because to move voluntarily is to be moved from within and not by another; and because voluntary deeds would not be imputed to man for merit or demerit. These objections were revived by Molinism.

St. Thomas replies that it belongs to God to move the will objectively and efficaciously, and especially interiorly by inclining it. Proof from Scripture. “For it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish.” Other texts were cited above.

Proof from reason. 1. On the part of the object the will is not adequately or efficaciously moved except by God because God alone is the universal good in being, which adequates and exceeds the capacity of the will. Thus God alone, clearly seen, irresistibly attracts our will. 2. Further, God alone can move the will by inclining it interiorly, just as He alone is the cause of the power of willing. The order of agents must correspond to the order of ends, and therefore only the supreme agent can move beings to the final end, to the universal good.

Reply to first objection. In moving the will, God does not force it, because He gives the will an inclination that is proper to it, and in accord with this inclination He moves the will from within. Thus God also moves the will to some particular good according to its inclination to the universal good.

Reply to second objection. To be moved voluntarily is to be moved of oneself, that is, by an intrinsic principle. But that intrinsic principle is a second cause, which is moved by the first cause.

Reply to third objection. If the will were to be moved by God in such a way that it did not move itself as a second cause, the acts of the will would not be imputed for merit or demerit. But such is not the case." Since the divine will is most efficacious, it follows not only that those things take place which God wishes, but that these things take place in the manner that God wishes. But God wishes certain effects to take place contingently (some even voluntarily) and therefore He has prepared contingent (and voluntary) causes for these effects" and He moves these causes in accord with their condition.

FIFTH ARTICLE: WHETHER GOD OPERATES IN EVERY OPERATION

The reply is in the affirmative according to the words of Scripture, "Thou hast wrought all our works for us," "For in Him we live and move and are," "The same God, who worketh all in all." In this article St. Thomas rejects two errors which are opposed to each other. According to nominalism, no created power operates in things; God alone directly does all things, for example, fire does not heat, it is God operating in the fire. On the other hand, others say that the creature can act without divine movement and thus the creature is not subordinate to the first cause; God and the creature are two coordinate causes, like two men rowing a boat.

St. Thomas takes a position above these opposing views. The operation always follows being, and the mode of operation follows the mode of being. Therefore God alone, who is being <per se>, operates of Himself without any superior movement, whereas the creature, which is being by participation, does not operate except dependently on the divine movement. That is, "God not only gives forms to things but He conserves them in being, and He applies them to action, and is the end of all actions."

If the creature were to pass from potency to act, or to action, without the divine movement, more would proceed from less, the perfect from the imperfect in opposition to the principle of causality, and the proofs for the existence of God based on motion and on efficient causes would lose their force. “Thus God is the cause of every action inasmuch as He gives the power to act, inasmuch as He conserves that power, inasmuch as He applies the power to action, and inasmuch as every power acts by His power.” “God could not have made a natural thing so that it could operate without the divine operation.” Nothing has been more explicitly stated by the Thomists.

Molina, however, found himself at variance with this teaching of St. Thomas. He said: “Two things in this doctrine of St. Thomas cause me difficulty. The first is that I cannot see or understand that movement and that application in second causes by which God moves these causes to act.” For Molina the influx of God’s general power is simultaneous, it does not flow into the second cause and apply it to action but flows directly into the effect of the second cause, “not unlike two men rowing a boat.” Suarez maintained the same view. The Thomists reply that if this were true the second cause would be coordinate with the first cause and it would not be properly subordinated in causality, and the transition from potency to act would not be explained. On the other hand, we must say that the second cause is subordinated to the first cause in such a way that the whole effect is from God as from the first cause and from the creature as from the second cause, just as the fruit of the vine is entirely from the branch as the proximate cause and from the whole vine itself as from the radical cause.

God, therefore, actuates the vital functions of plants and animals, just as He actuates the vitality of our intellects and the liberty of our wills without any violence being inflicted. For God moves our will according to the inclination of the will, which He conserves, and so God is more intimately present in our liberty than this liberty is to itself. God, however, never causes the disorder in a sinful act; this inordination proceeds solely from a defective cause. Our liberty is a secondary liberty which depends on the first liberty, and the idea of liberty is predicated only analogically of uncreated and of created liberty.

SIXTH ARTICLE: WHETHER GOD CAN DO ANYTHING OUT SIDE THE ORDER FOUND IN THINGS

The reply is in the affirmative. St. Thomas' demonstration may be summed up as follows: That higher free cause upon which the application of hypothetically necessary laws depends and which is not bound by such laws is able to act without regard to these laws. But God is the omnipotent free cause upon whom the application of all hypothetically necessary laws depends (these laws constitute the order of action of all created nature), and the divine liberty is not bound by this order of action. Therefore God can act without regard to the order of action established in created nature, or in other words, God can work a miracle.

The following is an example of a hypothetically necessary law: when only natural causes are active in natural conditions, the resurrection of a body is impossible. But in the miracle of resurrection a supernatural free cause intervenes, namely, God. On the other hand, God cannot act without regard to metaphysical and mathematical principles (for example, make a square circle), because these principles are not hypothetically but absolutely necessary.

Just as a man can act without regard to his usual custom, so God is free to act without regard to the laws of nature, which are His customs in moving creatures.

We delay no longer in this argument, which we have defended and explained at length in another place.

SEVENTH ARTICLE: WHETHER EVERYTHING THAT GOD DOES OUTSIDE THE NATURAL ORDER OF THINGS IS A MIRACLE

The reply is in the affirmative, because a miracle is properly defined as a sensible fact produced in the world by God outside the order of action found in created nature.

EIGHTH ARTICLE: WHETHER ONE MIRACLE IS GREATER THAN ANOTHER

St. Thomas divides miracles according to the degree in which they exceed the powers of nature: 1. those that go beyond the powers of nature with regard to the substance of the fact, as the glorification of the body, which nature can in no way accomplish; 2. those that exceed the powers of nature with regard to the subject in which they take place, as the resurrection of the body, for while nature can cause life it cannot do so in a

corpse; 3. those that exceed the powers of nature with regard to the manner in which they take place, as the instantaneous conversion of water into wine, which nature can bring about only gradually through the fermentation of the grape.

In a later question St. Thomas explains that fate is a certain disposition of natural causes to produce a determined effect; but this disposition depends on divine providence and does not preclude either the intervention of the divine liberty or human intervention. Neither does fate exclude chance, which exists in second causes (for example, when a man digs a grave and by chance comes on a treasure); but chance does not exist with regard to God, who orders even those things that are said to be casual or fortuitous.

Having disposed of these questions related to the question on creation, we turn now to the distinction of things in general and in particular.

CHAPTER XXV

QUESTIONS 48, 49 THE DISTINCTION OF THINGS IN PARTICULAR

The Distinction Between Good And Evil

We consider first the distinction between good and evil and then the distinction between the spiritual and corporeal creature.

St. Thomas proceeds methodically by considering first created being as being in the question on creation, then being as one and multiple in the question on the distinction of things in general, and now being as good and the evil that may be in it.

Thus St. Thomas considers creatures with regard to the transcendental properties of being before he considers genera and species. He does not treat of being expressly as true because truth is formally in the intellect, as was already explained in the question on truth in God. In the present question St. Thomas treats rather of evil than of good, because the good in general was already discussed in the question on the divine goodness.

On the subject of evil there are two questions: on evil itself with relation to being and to good (question 48); on the cause of evil, having in mind especially the problem of God’s relationship to evil and whether God is in any way the cause of evil.

Question 48 is divided into two parts: 1. the nature of evil; 2. the kinds of evil. The first part, on the nature of evil, has four articles: 1. whether evil is some kind of nature; 2. whether evil is found in things; 3. whether the good is the subject of evil; 4. whether evil completely corrupts the good. The second part, concerning the kinds of evil, has two articles: 5. the division of evil into that of punishment and guilt; 6. which is more evil, punishment or guilt. St. Thomas explained these questions at great length in his <De malo.>

Errors. In these questions we find an exposition of the doctrine of St. Augustine and Dionysius as developed in their controversies against the Manichaeans, who posited two principles, one beneficent, the other malevolent, and against the Neoplatonists, especially Plotinus, who taught that matter was the ultimate terminus of emanation, a kind of non-being and the cause of both physical and moral evil.

The following is an outline of Manichaeism and Plotinus' doctrine on evil. Reviving the errors of the Marcionites, the Gnostics, and of Zoroaster, the Manichaeans posited two supreme principles, one beneficent, the other evil, in order to explain the evil found in the world, since evil cannot come from God, the good principle. They also taught that matter and the flesh are from the evil principle, as is also the inferior or sensitive soul in man, whereas the spiritual soul is derived from the good principle. Thus they said that the concupiscence of the flesh against the spirit, and the war of the spirit against the flesh is nothing more than the battle between two souls. They execrated generation and condemned marriage, but not an infecund sexual union. Hence their peculiar immorality. They also taught that Christ did not assume true flesh. Finally, according to their theory, the end of the world will be the separation of the good kingdom from the evil kingdom inasmuch as the good souls will be separated from matter for all eternity while the other souls will be bound to matter forever.

This theory reduces Christianity to a natural philosophy and confuses evil with matter. As descendants of Manichaeism we find the Priscillianists in Spain in the fifth century and the Bulgarians in Bulgaria in the eleventh century, who, when they migrated to the west, originated the sects of the Albigenses and the Cathari. Many of their errors are also found in the teachings of Huss, Wyclif, and Luther on original sin and the fall of man.

Plotinus posited only one principle, the One-Good, but he also taught that an intimate connection existed between matter and evil. In his view the world is explained as a necessary emanation from the One-Good principle; he held a descending evolution, in which through a series of divine generations a gradual descent is made from the perfect to the imperfect, and finally the primitive energy became so weak by these successive emanations that it was no longer able to bring forth real being and in the end there came forth a kind of non-being, that is, matter, which existed somehow, which was said to be the root of all evil and the principle of all corruption. Thus the supreme good by a necessity of its nature produced the

root of every evil. Such is the paradox of this emanatism. For Plotinus, matter is evil; it is the primary evil inasmuch as it is the privation of being and good. Thus it is the root of all evils, both physical and moral, for physical evils, such as disease and death, are a kind of corruption inasmuch as matter tries to escape the domination of the form. The spiritual soul, however, is good in itself but it becomes evil as the slave of the body by intemperance and ignobility. From this teaching arose many errors.

St. Augustine attacked Manichaeism and the Neoplatonic doctrine on evil in his <De civitate Dei.> He admitted that the body accidentally weighs down the soul, but he showed that matter is not evil, that the flesh in its rightful place is good, and that there will be a corporeal resurrection. Hence we cannot attribute our sins to our flesh and indirectly to God, who is the author of our bodies; nor do all sins come from sensuality, for example, the spiritual pride of the devils. Further, St. Augustine insisted that the condition of moral evil is our liberty, which is not its own rule and can, therefore, deviate from the rule. In his work, <De natura boni>, written against the Manichaeans in 405, he demonstrated that prime matter is not evil: “Nor is that matter to be called evil, which because of the complete privation of species can hardly be conceived. For it possesses the capacity for forms. Therefore, if a form is some kind of good, without doubt the capacity for a form is also some kind of good.” St. Thomas adopted and developed this doctrine.

Finally, in his <Enchiridion>, St. Augustine gave the definition of evil, which later became classical and offered a solution for the problem of evil which was accepted and explained by all theologians. St. Augustine said that evil is nothing more than the privation of good, and from this came the classic definition, evil is the privation of some good that is owing, for example, sickness is the privation of health, and moral evil is the privation of moral rectitude. St. Augustine points out that sickness is not a substance but the privation of health in the body, which itself is the substance and something good.

He affirms that all natures are good since the author of all natures is the highest good, but in these natures the good can be decreased, and this decrease is evil. Then he solves the problem of evil, as follows: “God, since He is the highest good, would in no way allow any evil in His works, unless He were so omnipotent and so good that He could turn evil into good.”

St. Thomas frequently quotes these words of St. Augustine as a solution of the problem of evil, for example, “God does not permit evil except for some greater good.” This truth had already been stated by Plato and is expressed in different ways in Holy Scripture. The divine permission of evil would not be good and holy unless it were ordered to some good and all things in the universe would not cooperate to good.

St. Thomas also perfected Dionysius’ doctrine on evil in his work, “<Expositio in Dionysium de divinis nominibus.>“ In several instances Dionysius corrects the teaching of Plotinus by showing that matter is not evil.

In the beginning he shows that “evil is neither existing being, nor from some existing being, nor in existing beings.” These last words mean, as St. Thomas says, that evil is not something positive in existing beings as a part or an accident; that in creatures evil is not something positive; that “in the devils and in souls evil is not as something existing but like the defect of the perfection of proper goods.”

In a later passage, in opposition to Plotinus, he shows that matter is not evil. He offers a threefold proof: 1. with regard to form; 2. with regard to God the creator of matter; 3. and with regard to the good of the whole universe.

1. Under the form, matter participates in being and beauty, and therefore it is not evil. Indeed, even without the form it is not evil or the principle of all evils because without the form matter is not a principle of action, because matter cannot destroy or corrupt anything, and because matter is the receptive capacity of the form, and therefore good, as St. Augustine said.

With regard to God. The matter which the Neoplatonists call non-being either is or it is not; if it is not, it is neither good nor bad; if it is, it is produced by a good God, and therefore it cannot be bad, as St. Augustine again pointed out.

3. With regard to the good of the universe. Matter is necessary, for example, it is necessary for the generation of plants and animals and for their nutrition, and thus inasmuch as it enters into the order of the universe it is good.

In his commentary on this book of Dionysius, St. Thomas notes that when many of the ancient philosophers, like Plato, say that matter is evil and the principle of evils this was because they were unable to distinguish

between privation and matter, and therefore, like Plato, they called matter non-being and consequently non-good.

But Aristotle showed that it is only <per accidens> that matter is non-being, that is, matter is non-being not by its nature but by reason of the privation that is in it. Indeed, matter is something positive, namely, the real capacity for receiving a form, or passive potency, and therefore it is not evil.

Finally Dionysius showed that matter is not the cause of malice in the soul, necessarily drawing the soul to evil, for many souls are not drawn to evil and have a tendency to good. He adds that the malice comes from the inordinateness of free will. These teachings of St. Augustine and Dionysius were stated metaphysically by St. Thomas, as we see in the beginning of the present question.

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER EVIL IS ANY KIND OF NATURE

State of the question. 1. Aristotle says that evil is a genus; therefore it is some kind of nature; 2. evil is a constitutive difference in moral matters, for example, we speak of an evil habit, or an evil act; 3. Aristotle says that good and evil are opposed as contraries, that is, as positives; 4. evil acts and it corrupts, therefore it is something; 5. evil pertains to the perfection of the universe because in its own way it enhances the good.

Moreover, as Renouvier says: “According to experience, physical pain is something else than imperfection or privation, and according to our consciences moral evil is something else than ignorance. There is therefore a positive evil.”

The pessimists hold that physical evil, such as pain, is not only something positive but something primitive, in the sense that pleasure is only secondary and negative, namely, the cessation of pain. Schopenhauer tried to prove this point by the following argument: Man always requires something, he always desires something. This perpetual desire is not without pain. Therefore the normal state of man is sad and painful. The pleasure that comes from the satisfaction of this desire is simply the cessation of pain. Pain, therefore, is something primitive and positive.

Before Schopenhauer’s time, Kant said that punishment preceded pleasure because pleasure is the consciousness of the vital striving and all striving presupposes an obstacle or punishment. Montaigne said: “Our well-being is nothing else than the absence of ill-being.” Similarly the

Epicureans declared that pleasure is the absence of pain or perturbation, ataraxia.

The reply of the article is, however, that evil is not anything but it is the privation of good.

Proof from authority. Dionysius said, “Evil is not existing.” St. Augustine says the same thing.

Proof from reason. This proof begins with the nominal definition of evil, which according to all thinkers is opposed to good and is known through this opposition to good. Going from the nominal definition to the real definition and from the confused concept to a distinct concept, we arrive at this explicative syllogism.

Good and being are convertible. But evil is opposed to good. Therefore evil is not something positive but the negation or rather the privation of good.

Proof of the major. Good is everything that is desirable. But every nature desires to preserve its being and its perfection. Therefore all being and every perfection is something good, and therefore, too, evil is not some being or some positive nature, but it is either the negation or the privation of good. St. Thomas says below more explicitly that evil is the privation of some owing good, that is, in an apt subject, when and where this good is owing.

Reply to first objection. In what sense does Aristotle say that evil is a kind of genus? St. Thomas replies that in his book on logic Aristotle offered examples which appeared probable in his time, and that he took this example from the Pythagoreans. Or, perhaps, Aristotle meant that the primary contrariety was habit, or the having of a thing, and privation, because this contrariety is found in all contraries. Elsewhere Aristotle, treating professedly of the four modes of opposition, distinguishes between privation and contrariety.

opposition between
being and being
opposition of relation, as between father and son
opposition of contrariety
pleasure and pain
virtue and vice
true and false judgments
being and non-being

opposition of contradiction, as between man and non-man
opposition of privation
sight and blindness
light and darkness
knowledge and ignorance
good and evil

From this division of various kinds of opposition it appears that evil is not the negation but the privation of good. No one will say that it is evil for a stone or a tree not to know, nor does anyone say that wood is ignorant. Similarly we do not say that it is an evil that man does not have the strength of a lion. These are negations, not privations. We see, then, that evil is the privation of some owing good and not only a negation of good.

This point is of great importance, for we say that the non-preservation of our will in good here and now is not something good, because it is not being, nor is it something evil, because it is not the privation of some owing good; it is merely the privation of a good that is not owing. God is not obliged to preserve all created wills in good or to prevent every sin. Thus the non-preservation of our wills in good differs from the subtraction of divine grace. This withdrawal of divine grace is the evil of punishment and presupposes the evil of guilt.

Corollary. A lesser good is not an evil, although it implies the negation of a greater good, which, however, is not the privation of an owing good. In the same way, a lesser evil is not a good. In this sense many theologians distinguish between an imperfection and the smallest venial sin, as for instance, between a diminution of generosity (some remissness in an act of charity) and negligence. In the concrete, however, it is extremely difficult to say where the lesser good ceases and where the lesser evil begins, just as it is difficult to say when is the lowest degree of sensitive life and when is the highest degree of vegetative life. Nevertheless the order of things must not be confused.

All ethics would be destroyed by a relativism which teaches that a lesser evil, not only physical (as the amputation of a member) but also moral evil (as a lie) would be lawful to avoid some greater evil. Such action would be against reason; such lesser moral evil can be tolerated but it cannot be positively chosen.

Reply to second objection. Good and evil are not constitutive differences, except in moral matters, for instance, a bad habit, an evil deed. But even in

moral matters evil does not constitute a species, except in the sense that the privation of a proper end is annexed to an improper end. Thus the end of the intemperate man is not to deprive himself of the good of reason, his aim is a pleasurable thing according to the senses outside the order of reason. Hence even in moral matters evil, as evil, is not a constitutive difference.

Consequently a sin of commission is a positive act, tending to a changeable good as out of harmony with the rules of morals; thus a good act and an evil act are contrary, as are virtue and vice. But in the contrary positive that we call vice we find the privation of an owing end. Scotus held that good and evil are contrary opposites, but according to St. Thomas this is not true except of good and evil in morality, that is, when we speak of an evil act or a bad habit.

Reply to fourth objection. Evil acts in corrupting the good, but it does not act efficiently, nor does it act for an end except by reason of a connected good; evil is said to corrupt the good by reason of some privation, because it is the privation of good.

Reply to fifth objection. Evil does not pertain to the order of the universe except by reason of some connected good. Thus the corruption of one being disposes to the generation of another. Nevertheless evil as opposed to good, commends the good, as, for example, some lamentable injustice shows forth more clearly the beauty of justice.

On Pain

What reply can be given to the objection that pain is something positive and not merely privation, as when we speak of a painful toothache?

The reply is given by St. Thomas: “Just as two things are required for pleasure, namely, the union with some good and the perception of this union, so two things are required for pain, namely, the union with some evil, which is evil because it deprives of some good, and the perception of this union....Thus pain, like pleasure, is a movement in the intellective or sensitive appetite. Hence pain, when it is in the sensitive appetite, is properly said to be the passion or suffering of the soul.”

Pain and pleasure are contraries, and as pleasure is connected to some good act easily exercised, such as the grace of youth, so pain is connected with some act more or less impeded, or some immoderate act which produces fatigue. Hence pain is not something privative, but it is connected with privation and arises from the perception of the union with some evil.

What is to be said about the pessimists, who say that pain is something primitive, and that pleasure is secondary and negative, that is, the cessation of pain?

We reply with Aristotle, whom Descartes and Leibnitz follow on this point, that there are certain pleasures that precede all pain, and therefore pleasure is not essentially the cessation of pain. For example, the pleasure of seeing a beautiful scene or hearing a beautiful symphony can precede any pain; so also the pleasures of taste can precede any pain of hunger or thirst. Nor is every desire accompanied by pain; for example, the desire for food at the opportune time is often experienced without the pain of hunger. And in reply to Kant, it may be said that not every effort is painful, indeed moderate exercise which is proportionate to our strength is pleasant, such as a brisk walk, a ride, or a hunt.

On those occasions when pleasure comes after pain, there is not only a cessation of the pain. This cessation of pain is the condition of the delight, but the cause of the pleasure, as St. Thomas says, is the union with some good and the perception of that union. The desire for the pleasure is greater than the flight from pain because the good is desired for itself, whereas the evil is fled only as the privation of good.

Hence pleasure is not negative but positive. Pain, too, is something positive, but it is joined with the perception of some privation, and therefore pain is in itself something posterior, just as privation presupposes the good that is denied, and just as darkness cannot be conceived unless the light is first known which is denied by the darkness. Pleasure follows a good act easily performed even before pain follows an impeded act.

All this is in agreement with common sense, or natural reason, and exemplifies the transition from natural reasoning to philosophical reasoning. Common sense would say it was ridiculous to assert that pleasure is the cessation of pain, as it would be ridiculous to say that light is the cessation or privation of darkness.

The principal conclusion of our article therefore stands: Although good and evil are opposed to each other by the opposition of privation, yet the following are contraries: pleasure and pain, true and false judgment, virtue and vice, as well as a virtuous and evil act, such as a sin of commission which, as many Thomists hold, is formally constituted by something positive, which supplies the basis for the privation, namely, the tendency to some changeable good which is out of harmony with the rules of morals.

Therefore that which makes a sin of commission evil is the privation of the rectitude that is owing to the act.

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER EVIL IS FOUND IN THINGS

State of the question. This article seeks to offer a more precise real definition of evil, inasmuch as privation differs from negation. It appears that evil is not in things, because then something would be in them and God would not always make that which is better.

Reply. The reply is that evil is found in things, indeed the perfection of the universe requires that there be certain things which can be deficient in goodness, and from this it follows that some things are deficient in goodness.

1. This is proved from the fact that there are prohibitions and penalties, which would not exist except because of evils.

2. An <a priori> proof can be found by reducing this problem to the preceding question about the multiplicity and inequality of beings. The argument may be reduced to the following. The perfection of the universe requires that there be inequality in things, namely, a degree of indefectible goodness and a degree of defectible goodness, that is, corruptible being, which can be defective and sometimes is defective. But the nature of evil is that some being is deficient of some good. Therefore in things we find evil, like corruption, and this is in agreement with the perfection of the universe, or serves to manifest the divine goodness in the various grades of goodness, since, as was said above, “the divine goodness cannot be adequately represented by one creature and therefore God made many subordinate beings.”

This article explains the meaning of the statement often made by St. Thomas: “it follows that what is defectible is sometimes deficient,” that is to say, it is not surprising that a being is sometimes deficient. The expression, “it follows,” is explained in this article in this way: “The perfection of the universe requires that there be some beings that can defect from goodness, and it follows from this that some beings sometimes are deficient.”

This expression does not mean that it is congruous that a being should sometimes be deficient, for such deficiency is actually not agreeable to that being, but it is congruous for the good of the universe; for instance, the

corruption of one being is the generation of another, and this corruption is agreeable for the generation of the other.

This article more than any other on evil offers an opportunity to explain St. Augustine's and St. Thomas' teaching on the greater good on account of which God permits evil.

Reply to first objection. Evil is not pure negation but the privation of an owing good in an apt subject. Thus we do not say that a piece of wood is ignorant, but that wood has no knowledge. For this reason the Scholastics reject Leibnitz's expression, metaphysical evil, which he used to designate the imperfection of any creature inasmuch as it did not possess every perfection.

Reply to second objection. This privation of an owing good is in things as in an apt subject, for example, blindness is in the eye, not indeed as something positive but as a privation. And when we say that there is blindness, the word "is" does not signify a real entity but the truth of the proposition, namely, that it is true that this man is blind, or deprived of vision.

Reply to third objection. St. Thomas explains that, although there is evil in things and God does not make what is better in every part of the universe, God makes that which is better in the whole, and in the parts with relation to the whole of the universe. He does not mean that the actual world is the best possible of all worlds, for above he said: "God is able to make a being better than any being He has made...., that is, He can always make something better if the better is understood substantively...., but He cannot make something better if the "better" is understood adverbially, that is, with greater wisdom and goodness." In another place he shows that the inequality in creatures manifests the divine goodness.

Now St. Thomas explains the congruity of the divine permission of evil in two ways.

1. On the part of the material cause or the subject. He says: "It is of the very nature of things that those things that can be deficient are sometimes deficient." It is fitting, therefore, that God does not interfere or that he permits this deficiency.

2. On the part of the end. This divine permission is fitting because it is for a greater good. As St. Augustine says: "God, since He is the highest good, would in no way allow anything evil in His works unless He were so omnipotent and so good that He could make good come from evil." For

example, the life of the lion would not be preserved unless the ass were killed, nor would there be the patience of martyrs unless there were the iniquity of the persecutor.

This is the solution of the problem of evil, which is at once clear and obscure; it is clear in principle, in the abstract and formally, but it is obscure in the particular, in the concrete and materially. The solution is clear inasmuch as it shows that the most holy and omnipotent God cannot permit evil except for some greater good, otherwise the divine permission would not be holy. But on the other hand this solution remains obscure in the particular and in the concrete because this greater good is generally not clearly understood until we see it in heaven. Nevertheless it sometimes happens that this greater good on account of which God permits evil is clearly seen.

1. In the mineral kingdom we see that the corruption of one being is the generation of another; indeed, of the four elements distinguished by the ancients, the highest, fire, originates from the corruption of the others, especially air. Fire devours and destroys all things, but fire itself has the higher properties, and many things are made through fire.

2. In the animal kingdom, the slaying of inferior animals furnishes food for the higher animals, such as the lion, the eagle; and man.

3. In the human race itself, pain is the stimulus or the goad that urges men on in the intellectual, moral, social, and religious order.

In the intellectual order pain and poverty and need make man inventive and skillful in the arts; a high state of civilization arises in part from the struggle against pain. This accounts for the rise not only of medicine and surgery but also of legislation. In the speculative order higher systems of thought arise from the painful conflict of other systems, and thus a thesis provokes the antithesis before the human mind attains the superior synthesis. In general, as soon as one force appears another opposing force appears, and from the conflict frequently comes equilibrium and harmony. In this struggle for life each individual works with his greatest energy, and sometimes the result is a higher synthesis.

In the moral order, the most painful injustice emphasizes the beauty of justice; the innocent man who suffers a great injustice either desires revenge, and thus becomes evil, or he feels within himself the thirst and hunger for justice and thus becomes holy, according to our Lord’s words: “Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice: for they shall have

their fill" (Matt. 5:6). If they had not seen these great injustices, many would never thirst and hunger in this way for justice.

Similarly, out of the knowledge of our own misery arises the desire for a good life. Good exists scarcely anywhere in the world except as the result of struggle. In the social order, the need and suffering of our neighbor arouses sympathy, charity, and benevolence. An unjust war prompts men to make greater sacrifices to defend their country. In the religious order, God permits sin in the lives of the saints, for example, St. Peter's triple denial, so that the saints may attain greater humility and that God Himself may manifest His mercy and justice.

The insufficiency of sensitive life prompts the desire and aspiration for the rational life, and the insufficiency of the rational life prompts men to aspire to a still higher life. Finally, although pain seems to be altogether futile, in the sacrifice of reparation pain is used as the supreme test of love for God and men, and thus pain becomes most fruitful. Indeed, this principle, "God does not permit evil except for some greater good," appears in splendor in the mystery of the cross and in the life of Christ the Redeemer; it appears participatively in the lives of the saints, who can say with St. Paul, "I fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, in my flesh, for His body, which is the Church."

St. Thomas also states clearly that God permitted original sin because of the greater good of the redemptive Incarnation. He says: "Nothing stood in the way that after sin human nature should be led to something higher. God permitted evil to happen that some thing better might come of it. Hence St. Paul said, 'And where sin abounded, grace did more abound.'" And in the blessing of the paschal candle, we sing, "O happy fault, that merited so great a Redeemer."

This providential law finds its highest expression in the fact that from something that was not only useless but also harmful, the torment of crucifixion, Christ established the font of all spiritual goods. God permitted this most grievous sin of deicide so that Christ by His heroic death might save us from sin. Hence we address the cross, "O Cross, our one reliance, hail!"

This is the Christian solution of the problem of evil, which cannot be comprehended except by faith that is illumined by the gifts of understanding and wisdom. In the chapter on "The Royal Way of the Holy Cross," the Imitation of Christ says: "In the cross is salvation, in the cross is

life,....in the cross joy of the spirit, in the cross the perfection of holiness....; if you willingly carry the cross, the cross will bear you up." "Though our outward man is corrupted, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For that which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory."

This is the true law of progress and ascent, which cannot be understood according to the dicta of determinism and pantheism, for there are many setbacks in the world, there are many crosses that are unfruitful to him who bears them with ill will, like the bad thief. But still they serve to manifest God's justice and the love of God as the supreme good that is to be loved above all things.

Thus we explain evil according to its three causes: 1. according to its formal cause it is the privation of an owing good; 2. according to the material cause it is in a defectible subject, which at times is defective; 3. according to its final cause, it is not impeded by God, but is permitted for some greater good. Finally, in question 49 we shall see that evil does not have an efficient cause <per se>, but merely either an efficient cause <per accidens>, when evil follows on the production of some form, or a defective cause. From this we shall see that the divine permission of evil is nothing but a condition <sine qua non> of evil and in no way the cause of evil.

The concept of the divine permission of evil. From the reply to the third objection we see that the fact that God does not impede evil is the same as the permission of evil; this is especially true in the case of moral evil of which God is not even the indirect or accidental cause. St. Thomas explains the nature of this divine permission in his commentary on St. Matthew: "There are five kinds of permission," and in his enumeration of these five kinds of permission, the object of the first four is not sin, and the object of the fifth is sin. He says: "It should be noted that there are several kinds of permission. The first is the concession of a licit thing, as when the prior grants you permission to visit your parents, which is no sin. The second kind is dispensation, when the superior allows you to eat what is not lawful for you, as eating meat, which is not a sin but would be against the rule unless you were dispensed. The third kind of permission is tolerance, as when the lesser of two evils is permitted to avoid the greater evil; such was Moses' permission to write a bill of divorce. He is said to have granted permission because he tolerated divorce lest a greater evil, namely, murder,

follow. This divorce would have been a sin if Moses had not tolerated it, and it is said that Moses did this because of the hardness of their hearts. The fourth permission is indulgence, that is, when something is permitted whose opposite is better, as when the apostles permitted second marriages, when continence of the marital survivor would have been better. The fifth kind of permission is sustaining, as when God permits evil that He may elicit good things," that is, God does not impede and does not wish to impede evil, but this He does on account of a greater good.

We must not confuse this last kind of permission with the others, with which it has not affinity, except with the third. This last kind of permission is called permission only analogically.

THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER EVIL IS IN THE GOOD AS IN A SUBJECT

State of the question. We see that evil is found in things, indeed in every part of the universe, from the mineral to the spiritual and moral order. We are asking now what is the immediate subject of evil. Is evil in the good as in a subject? It seems that it is not, as we see in the third and principal objection given in this article. One contrary thing is not the subject of the other contrary. The fourth difficulty is that it would follow that good would be evil, contrary to the warning of Isaias, "Woe to you that call evil good, and good evil." This is the language of the perverse man, who inverts the order of morality.

Reply. The reply is that good is the subject of evil.

Proof from authority. St. Augustine says, "Evil is nowhere except in the good."

Proof from reason. In the body of the article, St. Thomas begins with the minor. If we begin with the major, the argument is as follows:

The privation, just as the form of which it is the privation, is in some subject which is in some way being and good. But evil is the removal of good not only negatively but also privatively. Therefore evil is in the good as in a subject.

The major is clear. The subject of privation, like the form, is being in potency, either being in simple potency, as prime matter, or being in potency <secundum quid>, as a diaphanous body, which is the subject of light and darkness. But being in potency is some kind of good, since it is ordered to the good or to a form, which is a kind of perfection.

The minor is the definition of evil, namely, the privation of an owing good; it is not evil if it is only the negation of good. Imperfection is not good, but it does not follow that it is evil except when there is an absence of an owing perfection. This was Leibnitz's error; because a creature did not have the perfections of other creatures, he called it a metaphysical evil. St. Thomas, on the contrary, notes that man is not evil because he does not possess the swiftness of a goat or the strength of a lion. Common sense should be used not only by the farmer and the merchant; it is useful also for the philosopher, because this common sense is nothing else than natural reason, which is in a way the mother of philosophical reasoning. William James said: "The reasoning of the schools is that sister of common sense which attended the university for some years." He might have said: "Philosophical reasoning is the daughter of natural reason, or common sense, and during the Middle Ages it not only attended the great universities but it established them." In these universities, such as those of Paris and Bologna, St. Thomas shows how the transition is made progressively from natural reason to philosophical reasoning, beginning with the nominal definition and arriving at the real definition and at the properties to be deduced from it. The present article is an example of this process; it demonstrates the complete conformity of philosophical reasoning with natural reason.

Corollary. Hence the good whose privation is evil is not the same as the good in which it is as in a subject; for example, blindness is the deprivation of sight and it is in an animal. This is the solution of the problem that one contrary cannot be the subject of the other contrary. This is, of course, true, but one good, for example, animal life, can exist together with the privation of another good, for example, sight. A dog can be blind.

The final difficulty is rather subtle. The subject of evil is said to be evil just as the subject of whiteness is said to be white, But according to the reply above, the subject of evil is good. Therefore, in opposition to Isaias, something is said to be good and evil at the same time.

Reply. I distinguish the major: the subject of evil is evil by reason of itself, I deny; by reason of the deprivation of some owing good, 1 concede. I contradistinguish the minor: the subject of evil is said to be good by reason of itself, I concede; by reason of the deprivation of some owing good, I deny.

From this it follows that even physical pain as it is something, namely, the passion of the soul, has a certain goodness, but it displays a connection with some evil, and often it is important to recognize the existence of such an evil, for instance, a cancer, so that a remedy may be used in time. So also a sin of commission, inasmuch as it is being and a physical act is something good physically, and thus can be produced by God who, however, prescinds from the malice or privation of the owing righteousness. Such malice does not come under the adequate object of the divine omnipotence, just as sound does not come under the subject of vision. Hence if by an impossible hypothesis God wished to be the cause of sin as such and not only of the physical entity of sin, He would not be able to cause a sin, because sin is outside the adequate object of His omnipotence. All this is quite clear, but the exact manner in which God moves in the act of sin remains a great mystery.

Evil, therefore, is in the good as in the subject. There is no perversion of the truth here; it would be wrong to say that the subject of evil was evil by reason of itself, or that the privation of moral rectitude, for example, in pride, cunning, presumption, or luxury, is good. It is also wrong to say that what is good <secundum quid>, as something that is pleasing to the senses, for example, adultery, is a simple and unqualified good here and now. This is the monstrous perversion found in the practical judgment in which a criminal choice is made out of malice.

It is also wrong in the speculative order to say with Hegel that there is no good pure and simple and no evil pure and simple; that there is only qualified good, that is, something good according to the actual concepts of our time which tomorrow may be considered relatively evil. Thus patriotism is not a simple good, but only a good with reference to the ideals of our time; in time to come, perhaps, when some internationalism may prevail, patriotism would be regarded as obsolete. This is the language of absolute evolutionism condemned at the time of the Modernists. This proposition was condemned: “Truth is no more immutable than man himself; indeed truth is evolved with and through man.” If this were true, there would be no absolute goodness, only a qualified goodness, or a relative goodness according to the changing ideas of a particular age. The first proposition condemned in Pius IX’s Syllabus was: “God actually becomes in man and in the world,....and God and the world are one and the same thing, as are also spirit and matter, necessity and liberty, truth and

falsehood, good and evil, the just and the unjust." It was against such pantheistic evolution that Isaias warned when he said, "Woe to you that call evil good and good evil."

FOURTH ARTICLE: WHETHER EVIL CORRUPTS GOOD COMPLETELY

State of the question. If the subject of evil is good, as we have said, can this subject be completely corrupted by the evil that is in it, or be totally destroyed? It seems that it can be; this is the opinion of some pessimists. The reason, as given in the third difficulty, is that the evil, as long as it lasts, harms and destroys the good. But a finite good from which something is always being taken away will in some time be destroyed. Thus after a serious illness comes death, and venial sins dispose to mortal sin, which takes away grace.

This question is not of minor importance and it arises again when we speak of original sin and its consequences, under the question, "whether all the good of human nature is destroyed by sin." The Protestants and Jansenists said that by original sin man's liberty was destroyed. On the other hand, most of the theologians of the Society of Jesus say that in the state of fallen nature man's powers are no weaker with respect to moral good than in the state of pure nature; the Thomists and Augustinians teach that man's powers are weakened although his freedom is not extinguished.

Reply. In reply St. Thomas says that good is threefold: the first is opposed to evil and is totally removed by the evil; the second is the subject of evil and it is not even decreased by the evil; the third is the aptitude of the subject to good, and this aptitude is decreased but is never completely removed. Hence, St. Augustine said, "Evil cannot completely consume the good."

This proof is founded on the division of good as given above. In the preceding article it was stated that the good which is a privation is different from the good in which the evil is as in a subject; to this a third kind of good is added, namely, the aptitude of the subject to good, for example, the aptitude of human nature to virtue.

The first two parts of the conclusion present no difficulty.

1. The good that is opposed to the evil can be completely destroyed by the evil; this is evident from an explanation of the terms when the privation is complete for then the good is entirely removed. This is clear from

experience: light is completely destroyed by darkness, sight by blindness, corporeal life by death, and the life of grace by mortal sin. So also the good of original justice, freely conferred on all human nature in the first man, was completely taken away by the sin of our first parents.

2. The good that is the subject of the evil is not even diminished by the evil. In the physical order prime matter at least remains, and in the spiritual order the spiritual human soul at least remains. The reason is that the privation cannot take place except in an apt subject, and therefore the nature of this subject must remain, otherwise the same subject would no longer remain, that is, the subject that is apt for the particular privation. If the subject is destroyed, there is no longer any privation, for example, the subject of sickness is a living animal, and the subject of death is a corpse. We do not say that the corpse is blind; blindness is predicated of the living animal.

Hence St. Thomas speaks of the proper subject with respect to the proper privation, and he also speaks of the immutable nature of the subject. This is clear from the example: the substance of the air is not diminished by darkness; darkened air still remains air.

In another place, St. Thomas says: “The principles of human nature, by which the nature itself is constituted, and the properties, such as the powers of the soul, are not destroyed or diminished by sin.” Hence the freedom of the will is not extinguished by original sin, otherwise fallen man would no longer be truly man. Fallen man is truly man by his specific difference, which is indivisible, that is, it is not subject to increase or decrease. Either someone has or has not the capability of producing rational acts; even a demented person preserves his nature although he does not have the use of his reason, and as long as a man retains the use of reason he retains proportionately the use of deliberation and of his free will.

Therefore what can be taken from a subject while the subject remains is its integrity. For example, a man can lose his arm or his eyes but not his essence nor the essence of his faculties; the very nature of our will cannot become evil, not even in the damned, for the will preserves its ordination to the universal good by which it is specified. Either it is the will or it is not; in the very nature of the will there is no increase or decrease with regard to the specific object. The will, however, may receive both acquired and infused virtues, by which it is perfected, and it can also lose these virtues.

3. The aptitude of the subject to a good act is diminished but it is never completely removed. For example, in man the natural inclination to virtue, which is increased by virtuous acts and diminished by evil acts, is never entirely destroyed as long as the human nature remains, because this aptitude is founded on this nature.

The proof of this third part of the conclusion is somewhat complex in the body of the article. The argument can be reduced to the following.

The diminution of the subject's aptitude to good is not quantitative, but it is a qualitative loss by contrary dispositions. Such contrary dispositions, however, even when multiplied to infinity, do not destroy the nature of the subject as long as the subject remains, nor do they therefore destroy the root of this aptitude of the subject to good. Therefore this aptitude is never destroyed.

Explanation of the major. What is meant by a qualitative loss of this aptitude by contrary dispositions? Is it an intrinsic diminution or only extrinsic?

We must judge the diminution of this aptitude to virtue by its positive opposite, that is, by the qualitative intensification. We must not confuse the intensification and diminution of this capability with the intensification and diminution of a habit, for an acquired habit is increased intrinsically by the repetition of acts and intrinsically diminished by the cessation of the acts or by contrary acts, so that in the end the habit is completely destroyed, while the natural aptitude to virtue is never completely destroyed. The aptitude to virtue is something else than the virtue itself.

We say, then, that this natural aptitude to virtue is not increased or diminished intrinsically, that is, in itself, on the part of the subject or the root of this aptitude, which is the very nature of the soul or the faculty. This nature is not subject to increase or decrease. Hence this aptitude is increased or decreased, as it were, extrinsically, not on the part of its principle but with regard to the terminus.

In the reply to the second objection, St. Thomas says: "This aptitude is between the subject and act. Hence inasmuch as it touches on the act it is diminished by evil, but inasmuch as it is identified with the subject it remains." Thus the aptitude of wood to burning is diminished by humidity, and the aptitude of the soul to virtue is diminished by contrary dispositions or by venial and mortal sins, both actual and habitual. In this way this aptitude was diminished by original sin, which implies directly a habitual

aversion to the final supernatural end and indirectly a similar aversion to the final natural end, for every sin that is directly opposed to the supernatural law is indirectly against the natural law, which commands us to obey God in whatever He commands us. Hence this natural aptitude to virtue is diminished by original sin, not intrinsically, on the part of the principle, but extrinsically, with regard to the facility of eliciting a virtuous act, because of the obstacles placed between the faculty and the virtuous act for which it was intended.

St. Thomas explains this at greater length in his book, <De malo>, where he shows that this aptitude cannot be diminished by the subtraction of parts (intrinsically) but by the addition of contraries (extrinsically). We now ask whether these contraries are able to corrupt or destroy the subject; whether, for instance, humidity corrupts the wood and whether sin destroys the soul or the nature of man.

St. Thomas makes the following distinction. By continual diminution every finite being can be totally removed, this I distinguish: by the intrinsic subtraction of parts, I concede, unless it be a division to infinity, by the extrinsic addition of contraries, this I subdistinguish: of contraries that can corrupt the subject, I concede; of contraries that cannot corrupt the parts, I deny.

The minor requires explanation, namely, why contrary dispositions can never completely remove or destroy the aptitude mentioned above. St. Thomas says that these contrary dispositions can be increased either to infinity or not. If they are not increased to infinity, neither is this aptitude decreased to infinity. Thus, for example, wood becomes less combustible by humidity to a certain stage, and beyond this the wood is corrupted. As long as the nature of wood perdures, its combustibility or the aptitude to combustion remains, but when the nature of the wood is corrupted the aptitude is removed. “If the contrary can corrupt the subject, the aptitude can be completely removed.”

If, however, the contrary dispositions can be increased to infinity, the aforesaid aptitude is likewise decreased to infinity but it is never entirely removed as long as the nature of the subject remains. “If by the addition of a contrary, the subject is not corrupted, no matter how much the contrary is multiplied, the aptitude is always decreased as the added contrary increases, but it is never entirely removed.” The reason is that the nature is the root of this aptitude. Thus it is with man in the moral order; the man who sins

continually retains, together with the incorruptible nature of his soul and his faculties, a certain aptitude to virtue, but this aptitude is decreased to infinity by the multiplication of obstacles between his faculties and the virtuous act to which the faculty is ordered. Thus air can always be illuminated by the sun even though opaque bodies to infinity are placed between the air and the sun.

This is to say, against the Manichaeans, that no created being is evil and that no created nature can become absolutely evil, or completely lose its aptitude to good.

Corollary. In spite of inveterate depraved habits a man still can reform his moral character and arrive at the judgment that God's commandments are in conformity with the basis of his human nature.

Even in the devils a nature remains, which as nature is good, but it can no longer go on to a good act. "Even in the damned there is a natural inclination to virtue, otherwise the devils would not have remorse of conscience."

In the reply to the third objection it is noted that some have offered a faulty proof of this conclusion, saying that the matter is as in the case of the division of quantity where something smaller is always subtracted, for example, first half the whole quantity, then half of the half, so that there is always something remaining to be divided. St. Thomas replies that this is true with regard to quantity but that there is not parity here with sin because the second sin can be more serious than the first, indeed succeeding sins are generally more grave.

This doctrine can be expressed by the following synopsis taken from St. Thomas' De malo.

Diminution of good

qualitative

extrinsic by addition of a contrary

which cannot corrupt an incorruptible subject, as sin with regard to the soul;

which can corrupt the subject and its aptitude, as humidity which finally corrupts wood

intrinsic, which can completely destroy virtue

quantitative,

by the subtraction of parts; this can completely remove the good, for example, a sum of money

Napoleon once said, “I prefer a good synopsis to a long report.” But for a synopsis to be good it must be adequate and the divisions must be founded on the nature of things. These divisions must be necessary, not accidental, that is, they must be made according to the formal reason of the whole to be divided, and they must be made in such a way that the members are really opposite so that no member will be overlooked.

We conclude, then, that the natural aptitude to virtue always remains, as long as the soul remains, even though this aptitude is diminished extrinsically by actual sin, especially by actual sin repeated so often that it becomes habitual sin.

In this light St. Thomas explains the wounds which are the consequences of original sin, which is the deprivation of the gift of original justice. “The natural inclination of virtue is not diminished on the part of the root but on the part of the terminus inasmuch as an obstacle is placed in the way of attaining the terminus.” Thus in the state of fallen nature man’s powers for virtue are weaker than in the state of pure nature because now he is born with a habitual aversion to his final natural end, whereas in the state of pure nature he would have been born neither habitually averse nor converted to moral good; he would have been simply capable of aversion or conversion. Now he is born with a certain weakness for the natural moral good, but his natural aptitude to virtue remains. After baptism these wounds are on the way to being healed.

FIFTH ARTICLE: WHETHER EVIL IS COMPLETELY DIVIDED INTO THAT OF PENALTY AND GUILT

State of the question. The traditional division is into evil of guilt and penalty but we must now prove that this division is legitimate. We are confronted with the following difficulties. 1. The death of brute animals is something evil for them, yet it does not appear to be either guilt or penalty. 2. The diseases of animals are something evil, yet they are neither guilt nor penalty. 3. In us temptation is something evil, yet it is not guilt if it is immediately resisted, indeed it is an occasion for exercising virtue; neither is temptation a penalty, since it precedes sin. Indeed temptation preceded the first sin of the first man. Further, the trials of the just are something evil, yet they are not always penalties for sins.

In the argument <sed contra>, the objection is given in the opposite sense, namely, every evil is a penalty because every evil is harmful. Therefore guilt is not distinct from penalty.

Reply. In voluntary beings every evil is either a penalty or guilt, that is, it is guilt arising from an inordinate will or the penalty against a culpable will.

What is the meaning of this reply? It refers to “voluntary beings,” not all things, not brute animals, not even men, because the trials of the just are neither sin nor a penalty for the sins of the just, nor are they something inflicted on a culpable will.

This difficulty is explained above in the article in the treatise, The One God, “whether God wills evils.” Here a distinction is made between the evil of guilt (moral evil) and the evil of nature (physical evil), which can be a penalty if it is inflicted for sin or not a penalty if it exists where no sin is to be punished.

Evil
of sin (moral
mortal
venial
of nature (physical)
because of sin:
penalty of loss, penalty of senses
without sin:
as merely physical evil (blindness)
or the trials of the just

Here we approach the great problem proposed in the Book of Job: whether all human trials are inflicted because of sin.

What proof can be offered for St. Thomas’ conclusion given above? It should be noted that the division of evil is based on its definition, and by two syllogisms it is shown that St. Thomas’ division as given in the conclusion is legitimate.

In his argument St. Thomas, as in many other instances, begins with the minor, a method that is sometimes more natural in the search for truth. But if we follow the formal method and begin with the major, the syllogism would be as follows:

Good consists in perfection, in first act, that is, in the form and integrity of a thing, or in second act, that is, in proper operation. But evil is the privation of an owing good. Therefore evil consists either in some

subtraction from the form or the integrity (blindness) or in the subtraction of some proper operation.

This first syllogism does not yet give the distinction between guilt and penalty, which, as was stated in the reply to the second objection, do not present a division of simple evil, but a division of evil in voluntary things. Thus in brute animals there are evils, such as blindness, which are neither guilt nor penalty. This is also true of men, for instance, when our Lord was asked, “Who hath sinned, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind?” our Lord replied, “Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.” Hence blindness in itself is neither guilt nor penalty. How do we then reach the conclusion that evil is either guilt or penalty? We must remember that the conclusion is limited to voluntary beings. We have therefore the following syllogism.

Evil, like good, is the object of the will; it has a special reference to the will. But with reference to the will we correctly divide evil into that evil which is from the will, namely, a disorder of the will’s operation or guilt, and that evil which is against the will, namely, the privation of the form or the integrity of the (culpable) voluntary agent, that is, penalty, for instance death or mutilation. Therefore evil in voluntary things is correctly divided into the evil of guilt or sin and the evil of penalty.

Difficulty. In what sense does St. Thomas say that the evil of penalty can be through the subtraction not only of the integrity but also of the form of the agent, for in the latter case not even the subject of the evil would remain?

Reply. The penalty by the subtraction of the integrity is mutilation; the penalty by the subtraction of the form is death. It is true that in the latter case the subject (man) does not remain, but the soul does; and by this penalty man does not become evil, indeed in this way he makes reparation for his sin.

Another difficulty remains. The trials of the just are against their wills, as we see from the Book of Job, and Christ Himself said, “Let this chalice pass from Me.” On the other hand, a guilty man sometimes freely accepts the penalty that is justly imposed on him. Hence not every evil that is against the will is a penalty, for example, the tribulations of Job, the blindness of one born blind; nor is every penalty opposed by the one who is punished.

To solve this difficulty we should point out that, although the division of evil into the evil of guilt and the evil of penalty given in the body of the

article is legitimate, we do not yet have an explicit statement of the specific difference of penalty by which it is distinguished from the trials of the just. We have clearly stated the proximate genus of penalty (an evil opposed to the will of the one punished), but to ascertain the specific difference the penalty must be compared with guilt. According to common sense every penalty presupposes guilt.

This explanation will be found partly in the reply to the third objection, where it is stated that temptation is not guilt except in the tempter when it is resisted, and partly in the following article in the reply to the objections, and particularly in the <Summa theologica>, in the question on penalty as the effect of sin. The seventh article of this question asks, whether every penalty is inflicted because of some guilt, and the reply is, “If we are speaking of penalty <simpliciter>, in the sense that it has the nature of punishment, then it always has a reference to guilt, either personal, actual, or original..... But it sometimes happens that a man suffers some loss in a minor good in order that he may gain a greater good, for example, for the salvation of his soul or for the glory of God. Such loss is not an unqualified evil for the man, but an evil <secundum quid>, and therefore it is not an unqualified penalty (<simpliciter>), but it is rather medicinal.” Such were the tribulations of Job and the blindness of one born blind. Moreover, “sometimes one who has not sinned voluntarily undergoes punishment for another,” as Christ did for us.

What, therefore, is the definition of penalty as it differs from the trials of the just and also from voluntary mortification? The answer is given in <De malo>, where St. Thomas enumerates three things that belong to the nature of penalty: 1. it is an evil inflicted for committed sin (St. Thomas says this is the tradition of faith), and in this it differs from the trials of the just; 2. it is something repugnant to the will, either actual or habitual or radical, that is the natural inclination which tends to the proper good (in this way this explains that a culpable man sometimes freely accepts a just penalty, which however is still repugnant to the inclination of his nature); 3. it is from an extrinsic principle, which inflicts an afflictive suffering (thus it is distinguished from the mortification which a man inflicts on himself).

Hence penalty in itself is defined as an evil inflicted for some committed fault or guilt by an extrinsic principle against the natural inclination of the culpable agent.

It is enough, says St. Thomas, that the penalty be against the natural inclination of the will, “as when an individual is deprived of the habit of virtue when he does not wish to have the virtue; nevertheless the natural inclination of the will is to the good of the virtue.”

From this definition of penalty we learn its division, namely, the penalty of the senses, inflicted on the sensible part, and the penalty of loss, or the absence of the divine vision. The first is owing to the fault because of the inordinate turning to some changeable good, the second is owing to a grave sin because of the aversion or turning away from the ultimate end.

First corollary. The trials of the just do not always arise from their sins. From the foregoing definition we can see Baius’ error in his seventy-second proposition: “All the afflictions of the just are punishments for their sins; hence Job and the martyrs underwent whatever they suffered for their sins.”

This statement is against the tradition of faith and of the Scriptures. For example, “Now this trial the Lord therefore permitted to happen to him, that an example might be given to posterity of his patience, as also of holy Job”; “And because thou wast acceptable to God, it was necessary that temptation should prove thee”; of the man born blind our Lord said, “Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.”

Second corollary. Hence not every purification of the just is properly penalty; it may be a purification from some imperfection distinct from sin. “In the Blessed Virgin the Holy Ghost effected a twofold purgation. The first was preparatory to the conception of Christ, and this was not a purification from any impurity of guilt or sin but it served to recollect her mind and lift it above the multitude. For the angels, too, are said to be purified and no impurity is found in them. Thus there is a twofold purgation: the purgation from guilt by grace and the purgation from ignorance by the light of doctrine.

The principal differences between guilt and penalty are clearly given in St. Thomas’ <De malo>. The difference is threefold:

1. The guilt is the evil of the voluntary action itself; the penalty is the evil of the voluntary agent consequent on the evil of the action, for example, the privation of the form or the penalty of death, or the privation of integrity or the penalty of mutilation.

2. The guilt is according to the will, whereas the penalty is against the will.

3. The guilt is in the acting, the penalty is the suffering.

Moreover it should be noted that the evil that is a disorder in action can be not only in the will but also in the intellect, for example, a speculative error, and in this latter instance the evil is sometimes voluntary and sometimes not. So also with regard to the will we can have a material and involuntary sin, which is not guilt because of the defect of attention.

Doubt. Can all the divisions of evil be reduced to the foregoing, namely, the division between guilt and penalty?

Reply. All the divisions of guilt cannot be reduced to these two because this division refers only to evil in voluntary things. Evil has other divisions inasmuch as it is opposed to transcendental good, which under the aspect of being is divided into the ten categories of being, and thus we have an evil man, an evil fruit, an evil quantity, quality, action, passion, or relation.

Evil is again divided as it is opposed to good in general, which, under the aspect of good, is divided into the honest, delightful, and useful. Thus evil is divided into the dishonest or base (which conforms to guilt), the painful (which conforms to penalty), and finally the harmful, which conforms to both guilt and penalty, but more with guilt, as we shall see in the following question, because a just penalty in itself is something good, and evil only <secundum quid>.

St. Thomas gives another division into the evil of guilt, or moral evil, namely the privation of moral rectitude, and the evil of nature, namely, the privation of the good of nature, which can be a penalty if it is inflicted for guilt, or it may not be a penalty if not inflicted for guilt, as the blindness of one born blind, as mentioned in the Gospel.

evil as the privation of an owing good

of guilt, or moral

mortal: the privation of the order to God, the ultimate end

venial: the privation of the order in means to the end

of nature, or physical

for guilt: penalty

of loss

of the senses

without guilt:

as a mere physical evil, for example, the blindness of one born blind

In these instances evil is predicated analogically. So also sin is predicated analogically when we speak of mortal and venial sin. According to the

Thomistic definition of analogy as distinct from Suarez' definition, venial sin is farther removed from mortal sin for St. Thomas than for Suarez. According to Suarez, in an analogy things are the same <simpliciter> and diverse <secundum quid>; for St. Thomas analogical things are diverse <simpliciter> and the same <secundum quid>, or proportionately the same. For instance, animality, which is univocal, is the same <simpliciter> and diverse <secundum quid> in man and in the worm.

SIXTH ARTICLE: WHETHER PENALTY HAS MORE OF EVIL THAN GUILT HAS

State of the question. It appears that this is true because: 1. reward has more of good than merit, and similarly penalty has more of evil than guilt; 2. the agent is better than the action, and therefore the evil of the agent, namely, the penalty, is worse than the evil of the action; 3. the penalty of loss is the privation of the vision of God and therefore worse than the privation of moral rectitude. These are clever sophisms.

Reply. The reply is that guilt partakes more of the nature of evil than any penalty, whether it be the penalty of the senses or of loss or of damnation.

1. In the argument <sed contra> this is proved from the reference to the wise being who inflicts the penalty. In His wisdom God inflicts the penalty that the guilt may be averted, that is, He induces a lesser evil that a greater may be avoided, just as the surgeon amputates a member to save the rest of the body from corruption. This argument of St. Thomas applies also for the penalty of eternal damnation, as he explains in the body of the article. Indeed the punishment of hell is medicinal, if not for the damned at least for those still on earth, since it induces a salutary fear. So in society the penalty of capital punishment inspires a healthy fear in the criminal.

2. The proof in the body of the article is twofold: a) from the formal cause and the formal effect of both guilt and penalty; b) from the efficient cause of the penalty, namely, God, who as the author of the penalty cannot be the author of the evil of guilt.

a) The argument may be presented in this form. That by which a man becomes evil in his will is a greater evil than the privation of any one of the things he uses. But it is by guilt that man becomes evil in his will. Therefore guilt is a greater evil than penalty.

Proof of the major. Evil is the privation of an owing good, and the greater evil is the privation of a greater owing good. But good consists essentially

in act, and a man's ultimate act is his operation, and moreover it is the will that moves all his other faculties to operation. Thus a man is said to be good by reason of his good will, by which he makes good use of what he has; and he is evil because of an evil will. For it is the will that tends to good, and directs not only to the good of some particular faculty but to the good of the whole man. Hence the will tends to the good of the whole man and averts evil from him. A man who is good without qualification is a man of good will and not the man with a good intellect alone, for knowledge is ordered to the truth, which is the good of the intellective faculty, but the truth is not the good of the complete man. A philosopher or a scientist may, as we know, put his knowledge to evil uses.

It follows that by the deprivation of knowledge or art, by the loss of an arm, a man is rendered evil not completely but only in certain respects. He may be a bad scientist, a poor artist, or a poor musician; But by the privation of good will a man is rendered completely evil.

Elsewhere St. Thomas says: "The subject of the habit that is called virtue can be nothing else than the will or some faculty that is moved by the will. The reason is that the will moves all the other faculties which are in some sense rational to their acts. And therefore the fact that a man actually acts well arises from the fact that the man has a good will."

b) This argument is based on the fact that God, the efficient cause of penalty, cannot be the author of the evil of guilt. It may be stated in the following form. That is the greater evil which is opposed to the greater good and cannot be caused by God. But the evil of guilt is directly opposed to the uncreated good and cannot be caused by God, whereas the evil of penalty is opposed to the uncreated or created good of the creature and is caused by God.

The major is evident. The minor is proved as follows: The evil of guilt is opposed not only to the uncreated good of the creature, as in the case of the privation of the beatific vision, but directly to the uncreated good itself. In what way?" Sin is opposed to the fulfillment of the divine will and the divine love by which the divine good is loved in itself and not only as it is participated in by the creature." That is, as St. Thomas explains in the treatise on charity: "We must love God more than ourselves and we must love Him on account of Himself, formally and finally, as He is infinitely good in Himself and our final end, infinitely better than ourselves and better than all His gifts." Mortal sin, on the other hand, is a turning away from

God our last end, and this is denying to God the infinite dignity of the last end. Cajetan offers this formula: “the evil of guilt is directly opposed to the uncreated good, not as it is in us but as it is in itself.”

But a difficulty arises from the fact that mortal sin takes nothing from God since God is infinitely simple and can lose nothing.

“To this we reply briefly,” says Cajetan in the same place, “that the opposition of evil to the uncreated good can be understood in two ways, formally and objectively. Formally such opposition is impossible....since God is pure act who can lose nothing. Objectively, however, the evil of guilt opposes the divine good in itself. This is explained in the place referred to (and in the present article) by the object of charity. Whoever sins mortally wishes explicitly or interpretatively as much as he can that God should not be his ultimate end. This is opposing God objectively as He is in Himself, just as he who loves in charity wishes for God whatever belongs to Him.”

St. Thomas’ article may be reduced to the following.

privation
of the uncreated good
formally; this is impossible
objectively; by mortal sin
of the good of the creature
of the uncreated good: pain of loss
of a created good: pain of senses

Anyone who sins wishes explicitly or interpretatively as much as he can to deprive God of the infinite perfection of the last end, that is, that supreme good on account of which all things were made. Mortal sin practically denies to God the dignity of the highest good, and the sinner places his last end in himself and loves it above all things. Hence St. Thomas says: “A sin committed against God has a certain infinity because of the infinity of the divine majesty. The offense is judged to be graver by how much higher he is against whom the offense is committed. Hence, for condign satisfaction, the act of satisfaction must have infinite efficacy, as belonging both to God and man.” The conclusion of the present article is borne out therefore especially for mortal sin, namely, that mortal sin is more evil than any penalty.

Doubt. Does this conclusion apply also to venial sin? The reply is in the affirmative. The term sin is predicated analogically of venial sin, but the analogy is proper and not metaphorical, and therefore the conclusion

applies also to venial sin, that is, even venial sin, as something purely evil, is a greater evil than the evil of penalty, because a just penalty, even the penalty of damnation, is not purely evil since in its own way it restores the order of justice. The penalty is, then, merely something evil, as the privation of the good of the creature, and damnation itself is privation of the uncreated good to the creature, which is less than the denial of the uncreated good in itself. Below we shall see that God can in no way be the cause of even venial guilt because even venial sin is something essentially disordered.

Solution Of The Objections

Since the objections are difficult, we present them formally.

First objection. Reward is a greater good than merit. But guilt is related to penalty as merit is to reward. Therefore guilt is less an evil than penalty is.

Reply. I concede the major. I distinguish the minor: inasmuch as guilt terminates in penalty, I concede; inasmuch as guilt is intended on account of penalty as merit is on account of reward, I deny. I distinguish the conclusion: if guilt were intended on account of penalty as merit is intended on account of reward, I concede; if otherwise, I deny.

Second objection. That is the greater evil which opposes the greater good. But the penalty opposes the good of the agent, which is a greater good than the good of the action, to which guilt is opposed.

Reply. I distinguish the minor: if by the good of the action is meant the good of the action of the speculative intellect or of the members, I concede; but if the good of the action is the good of the action of the will, which tends to the good of the whole man, I deny, because by an evil will a man becomes purely evil.

The difficulty in this reply to the second objection arises from the fact that a second perfection, which is an accident, is said to be better than a first perfection, which is the substance. How can an accident be more perfect than the substance?

Cajetan replies that the accident is not more perfect than the substance but that the substance as operating is more perfect than a substance that is not yet operating. Only in God is it true that the substance operating <ad extra> is not more perfect than the substance as not operating <ad extra>. Hence we say that every created being is because of its operation, in the sense that it is because of itself as operating.

Third objection. The privation of the order to an end is less than the privation of the end itself. But guilt is the privation of the order to the end, and the penalty of damnation is the privation of the end itself. Therefore guilt is less an evil than the penalty is.

Reply. Let the major pass. I distinguish the minor: the penalty of damnation is the privation of the end itself inasmuch as man is removed from the end, I concede; inasmuch as the infinite dignity of the ultimate end is denied to God, I deny. I distinguish the conclusion: if guilt were only the privation of the good of man, I concede; if it opposes the uncreated good in itself, I deny. Here is subject matter for a sermon: it is guilt alone that makes man evil and is opposed to the divine goodness.

We should note that this doctrine, that guilt is a greater evil than any penalty, even death, was clearly understood in pagan antiquity, particularly in Plato's dialogue, entitled Gorgias.

The thesis which Plato is defending in this dialogue is that it is a greater evil to do injustice than to suffer it, and that it is a greater evil for the criminal to go unpunished than to be punished.

This dialogue is a conversation between Socrates and the three Sophists, Pollus, Callicles, and Gorgias, the rhetorician.

Plato asked Gorgias, "What is rhetoric? What is its object?"

"Orations, speeches, and discourses," replied Gorgias.

"Is it every discourse on any subject, even on the kitchen?" asked Plato.

"It is the discourse intended to persuade men so that the opinion of the rhetorician will prevail," answered Gorgias.

"Is it intended to persuade men of what is really true and just, or that which only appears true and just, or even something purely unjust?" asked Plato. "If this is the object of rhetoric, then the rhetorician acts against right reason, he is immoral, and rhetoric is not even an art but simply an empty exercise."

Gorgias was silent. Pollus tried to defend him, and said, "This is the force of rhetoric: that by his art the rhetorician can persuade men to do what he wishes."

Socrates replied: "What is it he wishes to do? Is it wishing and effecting what is good, what is right for us, and not what is only apparently right; what is really right for us, namely, what is actually good and true?"

"Does the rhetorician," asked Socrates, "do what he wishes when he brings it about that a good citizen is sent into exile? Indeed, he wishes and

does something that is not good, something unjust, and therefore something that is not good even for himself. Then this rhetorician is not happy, because that man is happy who wills and does the good."

At the end Socrates stated what the criminal and his defender should do. In order that he may will his own true good, the criminal should go to the judges and say, "I committed a crime," just as a sick man goes to the physician to be cured. And the criminal should willingly submit to the penalties imposed for his crime so that he will once again be reinstated in the order of justice and the good and thus find happiness.

Thus Socrates supports the teaching that it is a greater evil to do injustice than to suffer injustice, and for the criminal it is a greater evil to go unpunished than to be punished, especially if he submits willingly and accepts the punishment justly imposed on him.

The truth that the evil of penalty is something just and that it repairs the evil of guilt appears in its splendor in the supernatural order in the sacrament of penance when the criminal, whose crime is hidden, willingly accuses himself and makes satisfaction in union with Christ the Redeemer.

CHAPTER XXVI

QUESTION 49 THE CAUSE OF EVIL

Thus far we have determined the definition of evil, the privation of an owing good; the subject of evil; and the division of evil. We now turn to the cause or origin of evil.

In the second article of the preceding question we stated that God could impede evil, and that He nevertheless wills to allow it because of some greater good. We thus assigned the final cause of the divine permission of evil, but not the cause of evil itself. In treating of the cause of evil itself, St. Thomas asks three things: 1. whether good can be the cause of evil; 2. whether the highest good, which is God, is the cause of evil; 3. whether there is some supreme evil which is the cause of all evils. In this last article he refutes the Manichaeans.

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER GOOD CAN BE THE CAUSE OF EVIL

State of the question. In this title cause is understood in its most general sense, without any determination of the kind of cause.

It seems that good cannot be the cause of evil:

1. because “a good tree cannot bear evil fruit,” as our Lord said;

2. because one contrary cannot be the cause of another contrary, for every agent acts in a manner similar to itself, that is, it acts in accord with its own determination;

3. because evil is a deficient effect; which can proceed only from a deficient cause as such, that is, from a cause that is not good but evil, for the cause that is deficient is evil;

4. finally, Dionysius declared, “evil does not have a cause.”

But on the other hand, St. Augustine said: “There was absolutely nothing from which evil could arise except out of good.”

Reply. The reply has four parts:

1. it is necessary to point out that every evil has some kind of cause;

2. evil has neither a formal nor a final cause;

3. evil has a material cause, namely, the good in which it is;

4. evil has an efficient cause <per accidens>, which is some good. Thus good is the material cause and the accidental efficient cause of evil.

First conclusion. It is necessary to point out that evil has some kind of cause. In his proof St. Thomas enunciates first the minor; but we begin with the major as follows:

The fact that anything is deficient in its natural and due disposition can arise only from some cause that draws the thing outside its disposition; for example, an agent does not defect in its action except by reason of some impediment. But evil is the deficiency of some good that is due. Therefore evil has some kind of cause, and nothing can be a cause unless it is being and good in some way.

The major of this syllogism illustrates the entire article, as we shall see. Up to this point there is no difficulty, and the foregoing argument will appear even clearer at the end of the article when we distinguish between evil in action and evil in effect.

Second conclusion. Evil has neither a formal nor a final cause; this is evident because evil is the privation of form and the privation of the right ordination to an end.

The divine permission of evil takes place because of a greater good, but the evil itself is not useful nor is it of itself ordered to the greater good; if it were, it would be something good as matter ordered to the form. Evil, however, is only the occasion and the condition <sine qua non> of some greater good, as, for example, persecution is the occasion of the great constancy of the martyrs. A condition and an occasion differ from a cause inasmuch as they have no influence on the effect, neither efficiently nor finally nor formally nor materially.

Third conclusion. That evil has a material cause is evident because evil is privation in an apt subject, and thus it is in good as in a subject.

Fourth conclusion. This conclusion is more difficult. Evil cannot have an efficient cause <per se> but only an efficient cause <per accidens>, and this is something good.

The proof is rather complex. The following synopsis may be helpful.

Obviously evil does not have an efficient cause <per se>, for such a cause is in some way being and good, which <per se> produces some good, for example, fire produces fire and motor power produces movement. Hence evil can have an efficient cause only <per accidens>. But accidental causes are of many kinds; likewise evil is of many kinds, and therefore this subdivision is necessary.

Good is the efficient cause of evil

not <per se>; for a cause <per se> is some being and some good, which <per se> produces something like itself, that is, something good; for example, fire produces fire, motive power produces motion

<per accidens>

in action, from the defect of the agent

principal: e.g., weakness in walking.

instrumental: lameness

in the effect

from the power of the agent <per se> producing an opposite form; thus the sun dries up some fruits

by defect

of the agent and the action: e.g., poor speech;

of the matter: e.g., a monstrosity.

1. Evil in action, for example, weakness in walking or lameness is caused by the defect of the principal cause (a weakness of the motive power) or by a defect of the instrumental cause (curvature of the leg bones).

2. Evil in anything is of three kinds: a) from the power of a contrary agent, for example, the form of wood or of a house is destroyed by the power of fire; b) from the defect of an action followed by a proper deficient effect, for example, poor hearing is the effect of poor pronunciation; c) from the indisposition of the matter, for example, the birth of a monstrosity.

This enumeration is complete because evil in a thing cannot be produced except by the agent or the matter as considered with regard to the form and the end. Thus the four kinds of causes are included. And evil cannot come from the agent except by reason of the power of a contrary agent or from the defect of the proper agent.

Finally it is clear that in these three cases the efficient cause is only an accidental cause, but the difficulty arises from the fact that causes are said to be accidental in different ways.

It is accidental that a proper agent be defective, for example, that a man speaks poorly because of the presence of some impediment. The deficiency happens to a good thing which <per se> has the power to act.

So also it is accidental that matter be indisposed to properly receive the action of an agent. Lastly it is only by accident that the privation of a form takes place, for example, the destruction of wood or of a house by the force of a contrary agent, namely, fire. Per se this contrary agent tends to induce its proper form; fire produces something similar to itself, it produces fire, and it does not <per se> tend to the privation of an opposite form. This privation, however, follows necessarily. It is true that this is not the first but the second acceptation of the term “accidental cause,” as explained by Aristotle.

Aristotle divides accidental causes as follows.

The division of quasi- <per accidens> and not contingently will appear obscure to many. It is difficult at first to conceive of a contrary agent producing a physical evil <per accidens> and of necessity; the terms “<per accidens>“ and “necessarily” seem to be irreconcilable to those who do not clearly understand the difference between a cause that is absolutely <per accidens>, like chance, and an accidental cause that always produces the accidental effect. Such a cause is nevertheless a cause <per accidens> even though the accidental effect follows always and of necessity, because this cause is not <per se> ordered to this effect. Fire acts in a way similar to itself; <per se> it does not tend to the destruction of wood or of a house, but to the production of fire. The terms “<per accidens>“ and “<of necessity>,” at first sight irreconcilable, can be reconciled.

Doubt. With regard to a voluntary agent, is the accidental effect separated from the intention of the agent?” Sometimes the accidental effect is connected with the principal effect rarely and in few instances, and in this case when the agent intends the effect <per se> it is not necessary that the agent intend the accidental effect. But sometimes the accidental effect accompanies the principal effect at all times or in the majority of instances, and then the accidental effect cannot be said to be separate from the intention of the agent. If therefore the good intended by the will is joined to some evil in rare instances, the will can be excused from sin, as in the case of accidental homicide which occurs beyond the intention of the will. But if at all times or in most instances the evil is joined to the good which the will intends <per se>, it is not excused from sin, even though the will does not

intend this evil <per se>. Even though the sinner does not will the evil in itself, yet he wills to fall into this evil rather than go without the connected good."

3. Thus good is the material cause and <per accidens> the efficient cause of evil. For this reason we say, for instance, of a conflagration or of a fractured bone, it was an accident.

The conclusion of the body of the article will appear clearer in the light of this principle, "The fact that a thing is deficient in its natural and proper disposition can arise only from some cause that draws it away from that disposition."

The evil of an action arising from the defect of the agent and the evil in a thing arising from the defect of the agent or from the defect of the matter in the final analysis arise from some cause that draws the thing or the agent away from its disposition. This disturbing cause is a cause <per accidens> because <per se> it tends to its proper effect; for example, fruits are dried up owing to an excessive influence from the sun, and on the other hand fruits do not ripen from an insufficient influence from the sun. Physical evil, as Leibnitz says, happens because of the interconcurrence of the laws of nature. But each of these laws is good. The evil follows accidentally, and it is the condition of a greater good according to the disposition of Providence. And while we deplore these accidental evils, we unconsciously confess that the things that happen ordinarily are well ordered by divine Providence.

Solution Of The Objections In The Article

First objection. Good is like a good tree. But a good tree cannot bear evil fruit. Therefore good cannot be the cause of evil.

Reply. I distinguish the major: a good tree is a figure of the will that is morally good, I concede; of the natural will that is physically good, I deny. I distinguish the minor: the good tree, or the will that is morally good, cannot bear evil fruit, I concede; the natural will that is physically good cannot bear evil fruit, I subdistinguish: <per se>, I concede; <per accidens>, I deny. Hence good can be the cause of evil <per accidens>.

Second objection. One of two contraries cannot be the cause of the other. But evil is contrary to good. Therefore good cannot be the cause of evil.

Reply. One of two contraries cannot <per se> be the cause of the other, I concede; <per accidens>, I deny. Thus the goodness of fire can cause the evil of the wood's destruction or the burning of a house.

Third objection. An evil or deficient effect does not proceed except from a deficient cause. But a deficient cause is evil. Therefore evil comes only from evil.

Reply. I distinguish the major: in voluntary things, I concede; in physical things, I deny, because sometimes evil proceeds from the power of a contrary agent. Moreover, a deficient cause is not evil as cause but only as deficient.

In his reply to the third difficulty, St. Thomas points out that the defect of a voluntary action proceeds "from the fact that the will does not subject itself in act to its rule. This defect is not indeed a fault or guilt, but it is followed by guilt because the will operates with this defect or fault."

In his work, <De malo>, St. Thomas says: "The fact that the will does not in act attend to such a rule considered in itself is not evil and it is neither guilt nor penalty, because the soul is not bound nor can it attend to a rule of this kind always in act. But it takes on the first aspect of guilt when without actual consideration of the rule it proceeds to a particular election..... Man sins by the fact that he does not have a rule, or does not attend to one, and thus proceeds to making a choice. For this reason St. Augustine said that the will is the cause of sin inasmuch as it is deficient." And the will is deficient inasmuch as it recedes from a worthy good under the influence or attraction of some delectable unworthy good. Thus even in moral matters the major of the first argument of this article is verified: "The fact that anything departs from its natural and due disposition comes only from some cause that draws the thing away from its proper disposition." Hence evil always has some cause <per accidens> in the good.

The fifteenth objection in <De malo>. An accidental cause does not intend the effect that follows <per accidens>. But evil has only an accidental cause. Therefore no one who does evil sins.

Reply. An intelligent cause does not contemplate the accidental effect that rarely follows, I concede; the accidental effect that is always joined to the principal effect, I deny.

The seventeenth objection. Whatever follows accidentally happens in rare instances. But evil follows in many instances, as we read, "The number of fools is infinite." Therefore the cause of evil is <per se> and not <per accidens>.

Reply. A thing is said to follow <per accidens> not only if it follows in rare instances but because it follows, though not intended <per se>, even if

it follows in the majority of instances. St. Thomas says: “The accidental thing does not always take place in rare cases, sometimes it follows in all cases or most cases, for example, the adulterer intends a certain sensible good to which an evil is always joined and he always falls into that evil..... The evil of guilt happens so often in the human race (and in it alone) because there are so many more ways to deviate from the middle than holding the middle path, as we read, ‘the sensible goods are better known by many than the goods of the mind.’”

On a higher plane and with clearer distinction St. Thomas proposes this doctrine in a manner that seems to oppose the theory of optimism: “The good that is proportionate to the common state of nature occurs in most instances, and the defect from this good occurs in fewer instances. But the good that is above the common state of nature is found in fewer instances..... It is evident that many men have sufficient knowledge to govern their own lives....: but very few men attain to a profound knowledge of intelligible things.”

This limitation of optimism is owing to the human composite and to original sin.

1. The lowest kind of intelligence has for its object the lowest of intelligible things, namely, the intelligible thing in sensible things, and thus this intelligence must be united with sensible things. First, therefore, we know sensible things and we live according to the senses, and many men are attracted rather to the good of the senses than to the good according to right reason.

2. “Some signs of original sin probably appear in the human race. Since God takes cognizance of human acts in such a way that He fixes a reward for good acts and penalties for evil acts,....we can certify the guilt from the penalty. It is evident that the human race suffers various kinds of penalties, both corporal and spiritual..... Among the spiritual penalties the greatest is the weakness of reason, and because of this penalty man has difficulty in knowing the truth, he easily falls into error, he cannot entirely overcome his bestial appetites, and he is often overwhelmed by these lower impulses. Someone might say that these defects are not penal, but natural defects arising necessarily from matter..... But if we study the matter carefully, we can conclude with sufficient probability that divine providence, which has conjoined congruous perfectibles to the particular perfections, united the higher nature (the soul) to the lower (the body) so that the soul would be

dominant, and if any impediment should arise against this dominion from the defect of nature, God would have removed it by a special and supernatural act of beneficence."

Pascal said: "Without this mystery man would be more incomprehensible than this mystery is incomprehensible to man." The doctrine of original sin offers the solution to the puzzling problem of the coexistence in man of such great weakness and misery and such strong aspirations to the sublime. But, as St. Thomas says, "God permitted evil to happen that something better might come of it." Hence we read, "And where sin abounded, grace did more abound," and in blessing the paschal candle we chant, "O happy fault that merited so great a Redeemer!"

Indeed, according to revelation: "For if by one man's offense death reigned through one; much more they who receive abundance of grace, and of the gift, and of justice, shall reign in life through one, Jesus Christ." Thus the motive of the Incarnation was formally a motive of mercy, for the reason behind mercy is the alleviation of misery. God predestined Christ to the glory of the Redeemer and permitted Adam's sin that Christ might be the Redeemer of the human race.

But while we clearly see the sensible existence of evil in the world, the existence of the concupiscence of the flesh and of the eyes, and the pride of life, we do not clearly understand the spiritual heights and the infinite value of the mystery of the redemptive Incarnation, and we do not appreciate the price of all the graces that flow invisibly from this mystery to the souls of all generations. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency may be of the power of God, and not of us,....that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal flesh."

The solution of this problem, that God permits evil only for some greater good, is at once clear and obscure; it is clear in the abstract and in general but obscure in the concrete and in particular, because only in heaven shall we see this greater good because of which God permits evil. We are loved by God much more than we think, just as St. Anne, the mother of the Blessed Virgin Mary, did not understand the greatness of the blessing which her daughter had received. Grace is the seed of glory, and our trials and tribulations can obtain for us the eternal reward of glory.

But this solution of the problem of evil will not bring peace and quiet to anxious souls in this life without the influence of the gifts of the Holy Ghost and without the special inspiration of the gifts of understanding and

wisdom, from which we obtain a quasi-experimental knowledge of the good things promised to those who believe. Hence St. Thomas says that these gifts are necessary for salvation.

It is true, therefore, that good is the efficient cause of evil only <per accidens>. And if this occurs frequently, it is only so in the human race because of the union of the soul with the body and because of original sin. Such is not the case with the angels. St. Thomas says that the multitude of angels is very great, like the multitude of the stars, and that more angels remained constant than sinned. In the angels there is only the intellectual nature; there is no attraction to sensible things, and there is no original sin in them. St. Thomas wrote these words in explanation of the passage, "Thousands of thousands ministered to Him, and ten thousand times a hundred thousand stood before Him." Thus the number of all the elect, if the angels are included, is greater, according to St. Thomas, than the number of the damned.

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER THE HIGHEST GOOD, WHICH IS GOD, IS THE CAUSE OF EVIL

State of the question. It seems that God is the cause of evil because:

1. We read in the Scriptures, "I am the Lord and there is none else: I form the light, and create darkness, I make peace, and create evil" (that is, the evil of penalty);

2. If good is the cause of evil, as we have said, God, who is the cause of all good things, is also the cause of evil;

3. Aristotle says that the cause of the ship's safety and the cause of the shipwreck are the same, that is, the pilot according as he is vigilant or negligent. But God is the cause of the safety of all things. Therefore it seems that He is the cause of every loss and every evil, that is, because of insufficient care or lack of help. This last objection implies negligence in God, but divine negligence is a contradiction in terms and a denial of providence.

On the other hand, St. Augustine says: "God is not the author of evil (that is, of guilt), because He is not the cause of the tendency to non-being."

The conclusion of the article is in two parts: 1. God is not the cause of the evil that consists in defect of action, that is, the evil of guilt; 2. God is <per

accidens> the cause of the physical evil of natural things and of the evil of penalty.

First conclusion. God is in no way the cause of the evil of guilt.

a) Proof from Scripture. We read, “The works of God are perfect, and all His ways are judgments: God is faithful and without any iniquity, He is just and right”; “Is there injustice with God? God forbid”; “Let no man, when he is tempted, say that he is tempted by God. For God is not a tempter of evils, and He tempteth no man”; “He that committeth sin is of the devil”; “For thou hatest none of the things which Thou hast made”; “But to God the wicked and his wickedness are hateful alike”; “Destruction is thy own, O Israel: thy help is only in Me.”

Against the Calvinists the Council of Trent declared: “If anyone shall say that it is not in man’s power to go his evil ways, but that God does the evil works as He does the good works, not only permissively but properly and <per se>, so that the treason of Judas and the calling of Paul are equally God’s work, let him be anathema.” Against the Predestinationists the Council of Carisiac declared: “When some are saved it is because of the gift of salvation; when some are lost it is because of those who are lost”; “Destruction is thy own, O Israel.” And the Third Council of Valencia clearly affirmed against Scotus Eriugena that God is the author of penalties but not of guilt.

From these definitions it is clear that God is neither the direct nor the indirect cause of sin. He is not the direct cause of sin, by moral or physical movement to sin; nor indirectly, that is, by negligence, because of insufficient assistance, as the negligent pilot is the indirect cause of the shipwreck. This last point has been expressly defined by the Church against the Protestants and the Jansenists, who held that God is in some way the cause of sin because of insufficient assistance. In its definition, the Council of Trent quotes the words of St. Augustine: “God does not command the impossible, but when He commands He admonishes us to do what we can and to petition for that which we cannot do.” We learn the same from the condemnation of the first proposition of Jansenius:” Some of God’s precepts are impossible for just men who will and try (to fulfill them) with the powers that they now have: besides they lack the grace that would make these precepts possible of fulfillment.”

St. Thomas explains the divine permission of sin by enumerating the various ways in which the term “permission” is understood. His

enumeration may be reduced to the following synopsis.

permission

of good

of a simple good: the permission of a licit concession; for example, for a religious to visit his parents

of a lesser good

permission of indulgence; for example, second marriages

permission of dispensation; for example, for a Dominican to eat meat

of evil

of a lesser evil

permission of tolerance; for example, giving a bill of divorce to avoid homicide

of a simple moral evil:

the permission of support, in this way God permits even serious sins for some greater good

We see that permission is not used univocally in all these instances. In the last case the will of the one permitting intervenes to a much smaller degree than in the first, and the will to permit is the same as the will not to impede. Hence God is in no way the cause of sin.

b) Proof from reason. The evil which consists in the defect of the action is always caused by the defect of the agent. But God is the agent who is absolutely indefectible and never deficient. Therefore God can in no way be the cause of the evil of action or of guilt.

The major is clear from the preceding article, where it was shown that the evil of action does not have a cause <per se> but only <per accidens>, as coming from the defect of the agent, whether it be the principal agent, as weakness in walking, or the instrumental agent, as lameness on account of a curvature of the leg bone. In physical things, of course, this defect of the agent comes from some disturbing cause or from some impediment, that is, from some power of a contrary agent.

But in free agents the evil of a voluntary action comes only from the defect of the operator. “In voluntary things the defect of the action proceeds from a will deficient in act, inasmuch as the will does not subject itself in act to its rule. This defect is, however, not guilt, but guilt follows upon it because the will operates with this defect.” That is to say that the non-consideration of the rule is only a negation before the agent operates, but it becomes privation and is called in consideration when the agent begins to

operate without consideration of the rule. As St. Thomas says: “The will takes on the first aspect of guilt from the fact that the will proceeds to this kind of choice without actual consideration of the rule.” Further, this inconsideration becomes at least virtually voluntary and culpable when a man in a state of alertness should and could consider the rule of right reason in his operation. God does not command the impossible. Therefore every venial sin is avoidable, although without a very special help all venial sins cannot be avoided continuously.

The minor is clear. God is absolutely indefectible, that is, He cannot be the author of a defect either directly or indirectly. Not directly, because He cannot move either morally or physically to sin as sin, that is, to something inordinate under the aspect of privation; not indirectly, that is, through neglect or carelessness, because divine negligence implies a contradiction. This is quite clear in the abstract and in general, although in concrete and particular cases it is difficult to explain the divine movement in the direction of sin.

Therefore, if God were to command the impossible, sin would be unavoidable, and then it would not be sin, nor could man be justly punished especially for all eternity; that would be the greatest injustice. For this reason Jansenius eventually arrived at the denial not only of mercy but also of divine justice.

Moreover, if by an impossible hypothesis God were to wish to be the cause of sin, He could not be because sin is outside the adequate object of the divine omnipotence, which is indefectible and cannot produce what is the privation of being and goodness but can produce only what has the nature of being and goodness. Thus when God moves toward the physical entity of sin He necessarily prescinds from the malice involved. Nothing is more exactly defined than the adequate object of a potency or power; as sight cannot see sounds, so God cannot be either the direct or the indirect cause of sin.

In another place St. Thomas explains this conclusion more clearly in two ways by distinguishing between direct and indirect causality.

1. God cannot be the direct cause of sin. To be the direct cause of sin is to incline one’s own will or that of another to sin. But God cannot incline His will or that of another to sin. Therefore God cannot be the direct cause of sin.

The major is clear.

Proof of the minor. God inclines and converges all things to Himself as to their last end, for every agent acts for a proportionate end, and the order of actions corresponds to the order of ends. Hence God cannot be the direct cause of any sin, since every sin is a departure from the order to God as to an end.

This reason is in conformity with the reason given above in the article, whether God wills evils: “God cannot be author of the evil of guilt,....because the evil of guilt is directly opposed to the uncreated good; it is contrary to the fulfillment of the divine will.” “Evil is never desired except <per accidens>, that is, when the good to which the evil is joined is desired more than the good that is deprived by the evil. But God wills no good more than His own goodness..... Hence God in no way wills the evil of guilt, which denies the order to the divine good.”

To put it briefly: God, as the indefectible cause, cannot be the cause of the evil of guilt, because this evil denies the order to the divine good, which God wills above all things. Otherwise God would be a defective cause and He would depart from Himself, from truth and goodness, which is obviously impossible since God is essential goodness itself.

What, then, is the direct cause of sin? It is the sinner, inasmuch as he tends to an object out of harmony with the rules of morals; the sinner wills <per se> some changeable good and consequently he wills the inordination of his act.

2. God cannot be the indirect cause of sin. To be the indirect cause of sin is to refrain from preventing it when we can and should prevent it. But according to His wisdom and justice God is not bound to prevent the sins which He permits. Therefore, when God does not provide the help to avoid sin, He is not the indirect cause of the sin.

The major is certain; it is the definition of the indirect voluntarium; for example, the pilot is the indirect cause of the shipwreck when he neglects to guide the ship and is able and obliged to do so.

The minor is proved as follows: “The universal provider allows a certain defect to occur in some particular instance lest the good of the whole be impeded..... The corruption of one individual is the generation of another and so the species is preserved. Since God is the universal provider of all being, it pertains to His providence that He permit certain defects in particular things lest the perfect good of the universe be impeded. If all evils were to be impeded, the universe would lose many good things; it

would lose the life of the lion, the patience of the martyrs, if animals would not be killed or if tyrants would not persecute."

Before we consider the second conclusion concerning physical evil, we reply to the objections to the first conclusion.

Solution Of The Objections

In the solution of these objections we must keep in mind the manner in which God moves toward the physical act of sin. These points should be carefully noted.

1. We presuppose that there is in God an eternal positive and effective decree with regard to the entity of sin, and a permissive decree with regard to the defect of sin proceeding solely from the deficient cause. Hence from eternity there was a twofold decree with regard to the sin of Christ's enemies at some determined hour.

2. The divine motion is previous, since God is the cause of the act of sin and not only of the sin as being. The cause always precedes the effect, at least by nature and causality; the will needs to be moved so that it can act, because the will is not its own action just as it is not its own being.

3. This divine motion is predeterminative, but not in the same way as the divine motion by which we are moved to a good act; in the case of evil the divine motion is predeterminative as executing the divine will, but for an evil act there is a twofold decree instead of a single decree: the positive decree with regard to the entity of the sin and the permissive decree with regard to the lack of moral rectitude, or with regard to the malice.

4. This divine motion in its execution follows upon, at least by nature if not in time, the moral or objectively defective motion, which as such is not from God but from the devil, from an evil man, or from concupiscence. On the other hand, the moral motion which is a prerequisite to a good act is from God, at least as from the first cause, because it is good.

Once this defective moral motion is posited and after the intervention of some inconsideration on the part of man, the physical influx of God begins to flow into the will itself and effects the entity of the act of the will, but it prescinds from the malice; the freedom remains as in other acts because God moves not only toward the act but also that the act be free.

5. God does not determine the material part of the sin before the creature has in some way determined itself to the formal part of the sin. As the universal provider, God moves only that will to sin which is in itself evilly disposed and which thus disposed needs to be moved. Thus Christ said to

Judas: “That which thou dost, do quickly.” That which on the part of God precedes the determination of the will to the formal part of sin is only the permission to sin, which is a penalty, not for the first sin but for the other sins.

6. The inconsideration, which is the beginning of the sin, is voluntary and culpable, at least virtually, inasmuch as a rational agent can and should consider the rule of right reason in his action, and if he does not consider it, he is culpable; this is the beginning of the sin. Finally, since the will is naturally inclined to the good, it does not turn to the evil or the apparent good without first virtually turning itself away from the true good, at least by not considering the law when it could and should. This predetermination to the act of sin is not something primary in Thomism; it is secondary, something consequent and merely philosophical.

First objection. (The second objection in the article.) This objection, which attempts to show that God is the direct, although not the immediate, cause of sin, is stated as follows: The effect of a second cause is referred to the first cause. But the evil of guilt is sometimes the effect of a second cause. Therefore the evil of guilt is referred to the first cause.

Reply. I distinguish the major: with regard to the entity and perfection, I concede; with regard to the effect, I deny. I contradistinguish the minor: as a defect, I concede; as being, I deny; for example, whatever there is of motion in lameness is caused by the motive power, but whatever there is of deformity is not of the motive power but from the curvature of the bone. That is to say, the divine motion prescinds from malice.

I insist. But God moves the will to the act as it issues from the will itself. But the act of sin as it issues from the will does not prescind from malice. Therefore God in moving to this act does not prescind from malice.

Reply. I distinguish the major: as the act issues effectively from the will, I concede; defectively, I deny. I contradistinguish the minor: as it issues from the will defectively, I concede; effectively, I deny.

I insist. The cause of anything is also the cause of that which essentially belongs to it. But some physical acts are essentially evil in a moral sense, as hatred of God. Therefore in moving toward these acts God cannot prescind from their malice.

Reply. I distinguish the major: the cause of anything in the physical order is also the cause of that which essentially belongs to it in the same order, I concede; in the moral order and outside the adequate object of its causality,

I deny. I contradistinguish the minor: and the malice is in the physical order and is within the adequate object of the divine omnipotence, I deny; and the malice is in the moral order and outside the adequate object of the divine omnipotence, I concede.

Thomists commonly point out that nothing is more clearly delimited than the causality of a potency or power, which is so completely concerned with its object that it touches on nothing else, no matter how closely anything else may be conjoined to its object. Thus in the same apple three things, color, taste, and smell, are intimately connected, and yet sight takes in the color but not the taste and smell. Sight cannot see sounds. Indeed, a distinction of reason is sufficient to delimit a potency; thus the good and true are distinguished only by reason, for example, in the true goodness of virtue, and yet the true is known and the good is loved. The intellect touches the good under the aspect of truth but not under the aspect of the good. Similarly, in God the paternity is distinguished from the divine nature only by reason, and the divine nature alone is communicated to the Son, without the communication of the paternity. In sin, however, the act taken physically and the moral malice are much more distinct from each other; these things pertain to two different orders, and the malice is outside the adequate object of the divine omnipotence, for every agent acts in a manner at least analogically similar to itself, and between God and the malice of guilt there is not even an analogical similarity. Hence, even if God willed to be the cause of sin, He could not, just as a man who willed to see sound could not.

I insist. But the formal constituent of a sin of commission is a positive element, according to St. Thomas and many Thomists. But God causes whatever is positive in sin. Therefore God causes the formal constituent of a sin of commission.

Reply. I distinguish the major: it is a positive element under the aspect of defectible being, or as forming the basis of the inordination, I concede; under the aspect of effectible being, I deny. I contradistinguish the minor: God causes whatever is positive under the aspect of effectible being, I concede; under the aspect of defectible being, I deny. Thus, as defectible being the sin does not come within the adequate object of the divine omnipotence.

I insist. Whatever causes a form, <per accidens> produces the annexed privation. But the privation of moral rectitude is annexed to the act of sin.

Therefore God, causing the act of sin, <per accidens> produces the privation of rectitude.

Reply. I distinguish the major: if this privation follows from the very nature of this form, I concede; in this way God is the cause <per accidens> of the physical evil of penalty or of the death of an animal because He wills the life of the lion; but if the privation proceeds from a defective principle, I deny. In this latter instance the privation is not even <per accidens> from an indefectible principle.

Thus we say that the sinner himself is <per accidens> the cause of the malice of his act, inasmuch as he tends <per se> to some unworthy good; but God is not even <per accidens> the cause of this malice, because this malice is outside the adequate object of omnipotence.

Other objections attempt to prove that God is at least indirectly the cause of sin.

The same pilot is the cause of the safety of the ship and of the shipwreck. But God is the cause of the safety of all things. Therefore God is the cause of moral shipwreck, or sin.

Reply. I distinguish the major: inasmuch as the pilot is defective, or does not guide the ship when he can and should, I concede; otherwise, I deny. I contradistinguish the minor: and God is deficient in doing what is necessary for salvation, I deny; and God is still indefectible, I concede.

I insist. But he who does not prevent a sin when he can do so is still the indirect cause of the sin. But God does not prevent sin when He is able. Therefore God is the indirect cause of sin.

Reply. I distinguish the major: when he can and should, I concede; when he can and is not obliged to do so, I deny. I contradistinguish the minor: God is able not to prevent, or permit, that a defectible agent fails, or sins, because of a greater good which is occasioned by a sin. Thus God is not obliged to prevent sin.

I insist. St. Thomas says: “If affirmation is the cause of affirmation, negation is the cause of negation, as Aristotle says; for example, the rising of the sun is the cause of the day, and the non-rising of the sun is the cause of darkness. But the conferring of grace is the cause of a salutary act. Therefore the non-conferring of grace, included in the permission of even the first sin, is the cause of the omission of the salutary act.”

We see that St. Thomas was not ignorant of this objection with which Thomists have been always confronted in almost the same terms.

Reply. I distinguish the major: if we are dealing with one cause alone, as the sun rising or not rising, or the pilot watching or not watching, I concede; but if we are dealing with two causes of which one is indefectible and the other defectible, I deny. I contradistinguish the minor: and the omission of the salutary act proceeds from one and the same cause as that which confers grace, I deny; from another defectible and deficient cause, I concede.

I insist. He who denies grace apart from antecedent guilt is the indirect cause of sin. But God, by permitting the beginning of the first sin (for example, in a baptized person), denies grace apart from antecedent guilt. Therefore God is the indirect cause of the beginning of the first sin.

Reply. The reply is contained in St. Thomas' words concerning the principle, "mutual causes are causes in different genera," which is applied inversely in justification and the loss of grace by sin. I distinguish the major: apart from guilt antecedent by a priority of nature, I concede; by a priority of time, I deny. I contradistinguish the minor: apart from guilt antecedent by a priority of time, I concede; by a priority of nature, I deny.

Explanation. The denial of grace is indeed a penalty, which can be inflicted only for guilt. Thus the denial of grace implies more than the simple divine permission of sin, which simply antecedes sin as a condition <sine qua non>. It is true that the permission of the second sin is a penalty for the first sin, as St. Thomas says, but the permission of the first sin, for example, in the angels, or in the innocent Adam, or in a baptized person, does not have the nature of penalty.

God does not deny grace except for some antecedent guilt, but this guilt can be antecedent by a priority not of time but of nature only, in the genus of material cause, or of a defectible and deficient cause.

This is illustrated by the principle proposed by St. Thomas, mutual causes are causes in different genera, without there being a vicious circle. Thus in the same instant, on the part of the sun, illumination is prior to the removal of darkness, but on the part of the atmosphere to be illuminated the removal of darkness is first in the order of nature, although the two things are simultaneous. Since the infusion of grace and the remission of guilt are considered on the part of God as justifying, the infusion of grace is prior to remission of guilt in the order of nature. But if these things are considered on the part of man who is justified, the converse is true: liberation from guilt (we do not say remission of guilt) is prior in the order of nature to the attainment of justifying grace (we do not say infusion of grace because this

expression views the matter from the viewpoint of God and not from the viewpoint of man, who is justified).

Speaking absolutely, the infusion of grace is prior to the remission of guilt, because these things are predicated on the part of God.

On the other hand, the loss of grace and the commission of sin are predicated of man sinning, and absolutely speaking from the viewpoint of the material cause, or of man losing grace, it is true that the beginning of the first sin is prior to the denial of divine grace, that is at least initial guilt is absolutely prior to penalty. The only thing that precedes this beginning of the first sin is the divine permission, which is a condition <sine qua non> of the sin. The denial of grace implies more than the simple permission of sin, which is not a penalty especially in the case of the first sin.

I insist. The Council of Trent declared: “God does not desert by His grace those who are once justified unless He is first deserted by them.”

Reply. This statement was made by St. Augustine, who nevertheless solved the problem of evil. The statement means that God does not withdraw habitual grace except for some antecedent sin. In the case of actual grace, however, there is a desertion properly so called, which is the denial of actual grace by God. But this is not true of the simple divine permission for the beginning of the first sin, because God is not bound to preserve even the just man from sin by a special and efficacious help which is not due to man. But God does not refuse sufficient grace by which, if man does not resist it, he can attain to good; but if man resists sufficient grace, God can justly deny him efficacious grace.

I insist. As the best friend, God should always give man efficacious grace to avoid sin. But God is the best friend of every man. Therefore God should always give all men efficacious grace to avoid sin.

Reply. I ask you to prove the major, namely, that God as Adam’s best friend was bound to offer him at all times not only sufficient grace but also efficacious grace, that is, by preventing Adam’s resistance to sufficient grace.

I insist. But sufficient grace is required for the fulfillment of the commandments. And God because of the abundance of His goodness owes it to Himself to give us more help than is required to make the commandments possible of fulfillment. Therefore because of the abundance of His goodness God owes it to Himself to give us more than sufficient grace, namely, efficacious grace.

Reply. I distinguish the minor: frequently for the human race and also for the just man, I concede; always unto the end, this I ask you to prove.

I insist. God owes it to Himself at all times to unite mercy and justice in all His works.

Reply. I distinguish: by abundant sufficient graces, by sermons, good examples, let it pass; by graces that are always efficacious, this I ask you to prove. Even when God punishes, His mercy is united to justice, because even in hell the punishment is less than condign.

I insist. He who does not preserve a man in good is the indirect cause of the sin of a man who needs this preservation. But, by permitting the beginning of the first sin, God does not preserve a man in good. Therefore God is the indirect cause of sin.

Reply. I distinguish the major: he who does not preserve a man in good when he is able and obliged to do so, I concede; when he is able but not obliged to do so, I deny. I contradistinguish the minor. God is not obliged to preserve all defectible things in good, otherwise defectible things would never fail, and preservation from sin would not have been a most special privilege for the Blessed Virgin, but it would be something most common. God actually gives more than justice demands because of the superabundance of His goodness; He does this even for each person frequently, but not always to the end, that is, He does not conduct each person to his last end.

If it is said that man needs to be preserved in good so that he might remain in the good, the reply is: that man requires and has a right to be preserved in good and that God owes it to Himself to preserve man in good, this I deny; that man requires this preservation without having the right to it, I concede. In himself man is defectible and from this it follows that he sometimes fails; he fails sometimes physically and without guilt, like the agents inferior to him, and sometimes he fails morally and voluntarily with guilt, and God is not obliged to prevent this guilt. If God were so bound, no sin would ever be committed and defectible things would never fail. To no one, not even to the elect, is owing the efficacious election to glory, otherwise all men would be saved.

St. Thomas expresses this thought in these words: “It happens that God does not extend to some that help to avoid sin which, if it were extended, would prevent them from sinning. But God does all this according to the order of justice and wisdom, since He Himself is justice and wisdom.

Hence it cannot be imputed to God that someone sins, as if He were the cause of sin, just as the pilot is not the cause of the shipwreck because of the fact that he does not steer the ship unless when he withdraws his guidance he could and should be steering the ship." The pilot is blamed only for negligence, and divine negligence is a contradiction in terms. This objection is indeed difficult, but it is not cogent.

I insist. St. Thomas says: "Out of the abundance of His goodness God dispenses those things that are owing to some creature more generously than the importance of the thing demands."

Reply. This is often true, but God does not always lead every man to the last end, preserving him and elevating him above sin. We are here face to face with a profound mystery, indeed the mystery of iniquity is more obscure than the mystery of grace since it is obscure not only with regard to us but also in itself. But the apparent contradiction will be obviated if we keep clearly in mind the following two most certain principles:

1. "God does not command the impossible, but when He commands He admonishes you to do what you are able and to ask for what you cannot do." This principle was invoked against the Protestants by the Council of Trent.

2. In the article, "Whether God loves all things equally," St. Thomas formulated this principle: "Since the love of God is the cause of the goodness of things, one thing would not be better than another if God had not willed a greater good for one thing than for another." This is the principle of predilection as found in revelation: "For it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish, according to His good will," "For who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received?"

These two principles were promulgated by the Council of Carisiac in the words of St. Prosper: "The omnipotent God wills all men without exception to be saved, even though all are not saved. The fact that some are saved is owing to the gift of Him who saves them; the fact that some are lost is owing to themselves."

Taken separately, these two principles are most certain according to revelation; even in the natural order they are evident. But their intimate reconciliation remains obscure, and no created intelligence by its own powers can make this reconciliation, because it would be necessary to see how the infinite mercy, the infinite justice, and supreme liberty are intimately reconciled in God. No one can see God in this way except in the

light of glory. In the words of Bossuet: “In this state of captivity we must humble our intelligence before the divine mystery and admit these two graces, one that leaves our will inexcusable before God, the other that prevents us from glorying in ourselves.”

Hence St. Paul says: “He that glorieth, may glory in the Lord”; “For by grace you are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, for it is the gift of God; not of works, that no man may glory. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus in good works, which God hath prepared that we should walk in them.”

An article could be written comparing false evidence with the obscurity of true faith to illustrate why so often, especially in this question of evil, the objections at first sight seem clearer than the replies. This matter might at least be considered in a chapter on faith as illumined by the gifts of the Holy Ghost. The principal reason is that the objections are taken from the superficial appearances of reality, whereas the replies are taken from that highest reality which is with God and which is so profound for us because of our defectibility and therefore remains so obscure.

Indeed in this present problem there are two obscurities opposed to each other: the higher obscurity of the divine reality which is translucent and the lower obscurity of sin itself, which is itself the privation of light, truth, and goodness. Between these two opposing obscurities is the true clarity of these certain principles: “God does not command the impossible,” and “no one would be better than another if he were not loved more by God.” The reconciliation of these principles is a mystery, but the evidence of the principles themselves indicates that the objections are superficial and false. In the objections we always find some sophistic falsehood, and none of the objections is either cogent or necessary.

These objections are useful because they arouse in the just a desire to contemplate the mystery of the Deity on a plane above every distinct idea. Such contemplation when it proceeds from faith illumined by the supernatural gifts with a certain experimental knowledge of God remains obscure with a translucent obscurity of which St. John of the Cross spoke so eloquently.

Second conclusion. God wills and causes <per accidens> physical evil and the evil of penalty.

An agent that by its power <per se> produces some form as a consequence and quasi- <per accidens> causes the privation of the opposite

form. But God wills and causes <per se> and principally the good of the universe, which requires defectible things that are sometimes deficient, and God wills and causes the order of justice, which requires that penalty be inflicted on sinners. Therefore God wills and causes as a consequence and quasi- <per accidens> physical evil and the evil of penalty.

It should be noted that St. Thomas bases this proof not only on efficient causality but also on the divine intellect and will, because whatever God causes <per accidens> He also wills in the same manner; from eternity God willed and foresaw whatever He would do even <per accidens> in these or other circumstances. We, however, sometimes produce <per accidens> certain evils which we do not will or foresee. Such is not the case with God.

St. Thomas returns to the proof which he had already given above in the article, "Whether the will of God is concerned with evil," where he says: "God wills the evil of natural defect or the evil of penalty by willing some good to which such evil is joined." But God can in no way will the evil of guilt, which negates the order to the divine good willed by God above all things.

Doubt. Is the following proposition true: "While evils are not good, nevertheless it is good that there be evils, because those things that are evil in themselves are ordered to some good"? If this proposition is true, then the following is also true: "It is good that there are sins."

St. Thomas replies in the negative: "Some say that, although God does not will evils, nevertheless He wills that evils should be and should come into being..... But this is not a correct statement, because evil is not <per se> ordered to good but only <per accidens>. The fact that some good ensues from a sin is beyond the intention of the sinner, just as it is beyond the intention of tyrants that the patience of martyrs is glorified in persecution." Hence we should say that <per accidens> and as a consequence God wills physical evil and the evil of penalty, and that He wills to permit sin by not preventing them and occasionally deriving some good from them. Only in this sense do we say, "O blessed fault which merited so great a Redeemer.!"

This entire article can be reduced to the following synopsis. God in no way wills or causes the evil of guilt, neither on the part of the end, because sin negates the order to the divine good loved by God above all things; nor on the part of the efficient cause, because sin is from a deficient voluntary agent, at least by inconsideration, and this defect cannot be predicated of the indefectible God. God wills physical evil and penalty <per accidens>,

on the part of the end, because He wills the good of the universe and justice, and from this evils sometimes follow; on the part of the efficient cause, because these evils proceed from the power of the agent producing a form which entails the privation of the opposite form.

THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER THERE IS ONE SUPREME EVIL WHICH IS THE CAUSE OF ALL EVIL

State of the question. This article is in direct opposition to the Manichaeans, Albigenses, and other heretics who taught a system of dualism. The title inquires directly about the efficient cause of evil. It was in the thirteenth century that the Albigenses were spreading their doctrines in southern France. In the beginning of his article St. Thomas collected the arguments that might be proposed in support of dualism.

First objection. In things we almost everywhere find contrariety; for example, life and death, good and evil, true and false, noble and base. Therefore two contrary principles must be postulated. The reply will be that contraries agree in being.

Second objection. If one of the contraries is in the nature of things, so also is the opposite. But the supreme good exists. Therefore supreme evil also exists. Reply: evil opposes that good which it negates, not that good in which it is.

Third objection. Grades of perfection are judged according as they approach the best or that which is good by essence. So also it should be with grades of evil with regard to the supreme evil. The reply will be that bad and worse are judged according as they recede from good, not as they approach the supreme evil.

Fourth objection. Evil by participation must eventually lead to evil by essence. Reply: there is no evil by participation, but beings that are deprived of some due good.

Fifth objection. Everything that is <per accidens> is ultimately reduced to that which is <per se>, and since evil exists in many instances, it must have a cause <per se>, namely, the supreme evil. The reply will be that, although evil occurs in many instances in the human race, it is not intended <per se>.

Sixth objection. The evil of an effect is traced to the evil in the cause, namely, a deficient cause. But there cannot be an infinite process, and we

must eventually come to the first evil cause. The reply will be that evil is traced to some good cause from which the evil ensues <per accidens>.

Conclusion: there is not nor can there be a first principle of evil.

This proposition is of faith. (cf. Denz., nos. 234 ff.) St. Thomas' argument <sed contra> refers to the dogma of the creation, according to which God is the cause of all being.

The body of the article contains two parts: the first is strictly theological and proves the conclusion; the second is historical, explaining why the Manichaeans postulated two principles.

The conclusion is proved in three ways:

1. from the notion of good;
2. from the notion of evil;
3. from the notion of the first principle.

1. From the notion of good. Good and being are convertible. But the first evil principle would be evil in essence and in no way good. Therefore this first principle of evil would not be being and would not exist.

The proof of the major was given above. Every being as being in act is a certain perfection and a good desirable to itself, and thus every being strives to preserve its being. As matter is being in potency, so it is good in potency. Hence no being is said to be being inasmuch as it is evil but inasmuch as it lacks some being. And therefore evil exists only in the good as in a subject.

2. From the notion of good. If evil were integral being, or if it completely corrupted the good in which it is, it would destroy itself, as Aristotle pointed out, for evil cannot be except in a subject. But the supreme evil would be integral being.

3. From the notion of first principle. A first principle cannot be caused <per accidens> by another, nor can it be a mere accidental cause. But evil is caused <per accidens> by good, that is, by a defective agent or by a contrary agent, and evil can be a cause only <per accidens>, that is, by reason of an annexed good. Therefore the notion of evil is repugnant to the notion of a first principle. And therefore the dualistic position of Manichaeism involves contradictions on all sides.

In the second, historical part of the article St. Thomas explains how the Manichaeans arrived at this solution of this problem of evil. These heretics failed to consider the most universal cause of being as being, that is, the creative cause, and only considered particular efficient and final causes. They did not understand that what is harmful with regard to some particular

being, as a viper with regard to man, may be useful with regard to the universal good of the entire universe. Nor were they able to rise above mutually contrary causes to the most universal cause.

In his reply to the fifth difficulty St. Thomas says that the corruptible beings in which there is an evil of nature are a small part of the universe. He reasoned in this way because he thought that the heavenly bodies were incorruptible, but today spectral analysis has shown the opposite to be true. At any rate, after the resurrection of the dead there will be no more corruption. In this reply he affirms that only in men does evil seem to be in the majority of instances, because there are more who follow the senses than follow reason.

This concludes the questions on evil: what evil is, its kinds, and its cause.

Appendix: The Trials Of The Just And Their Motives

In the Gospel our Lord said: “I am the true vine; and My Father is the husbandman. Every branch in Me, that beareth not fruit, He will take away; and every one that beareth fruit, He will purge it, that it may bring forth more fruit.” Commenting on this, St. Thomas says: “In order that a vine may be more fruitful, the growers cut away the superfluous shoots. So it is in man. For when a man who is well disposed and united with God allows his affections to incline to other things, his power to do good is weakened and made less efficacious. Hence it is that God, in order that man may be more fruitful, often cuts away such obstacles and purges him, sending him trials and temptations, by which he becomes stronger. And therefore our Lord says, “He will purge it,” even though the man is pure, because no one in this life is so pure than he cannot be made purer. St. John says: “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” God tries a man “that he may bring forth more fruit,” that is, increase in virtue, that being purer he may be more fruitful, as the Scripture says: “He that is just, let him be justified still; and he that is holy, let him be sanctified still”; The word of the truth of the Gospel “bringeth forth fruit and groweth”; “they shall go from virtue to virtue.”

Thus the just man who is purified brings forth more fruit. St. Thomas explains: “He bears a threefold fruit in this life. The first is to abstain from sin..... The second is to give himself to works of holiness..... The third is to work for the sanctification of others. He brings forth a fourth fruit in eternal life.” The reason for this efficacy is that the just man remains in Christ, who

said, “without Me you can do nothing.” This is the first reason for the trials of the just.

The second reason for these trials is that the just man is united with Christ, and by the same means as Christ used he cooperates in the salvation of others. St. Paul said: “And if sons, heirs also; heirs indeed of God, and joint-heirs with Christ: yet so, if we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified with Him. For I reckon that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us.”

Commenting on the words, “yet so, if we suffer with Him,” St. Thomas says: “Christ, who is the principal heir, came into the inheritance of glory by His sufferings. ‘Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into His glory?’ We cannot come into the possession of our inheritance by an easier way, and so we also must attain our inheritance by suffering. In the Acts of the Apostles we read, ‘through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God.’ Hence he says, “yet so, if we suffer with Him, that is, suffering with Christ, we undergo the tribulations of this world that we may be glorified with Christ. ‘For if we be dead with Him,....we shall also reign with Him.’”

Therefore our Lord said: “If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me”; and, “he that taketh not up his cross, and followeth Me, is not worthy of Me.” In his commentary St. Thomas says: “This was said because he who loves father and mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. So also he who loves himself more than Me is not worthy of Me, because God alone can completely satisfy man’s affections..... Hence he who is not prepared to suffer death for the truth, and especially that cruelest death, the death of the cross, is not worthy of Me. Indeed a man should glory in the cross, as St. Paul said, ‘God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.’ He takes up the cross who mortifies his flesh, as we read again, ‘And they that are Christ’s, have crucified their flesh, with the vices and concupiscences.’ The cross is also borne in the heart when a man is contrite for his sins, as the Apostle says, ‘Who is scandalized, and I am not on fire?’”

This was verified in the apostles. St. Paul wrote: “With Christ I am nailed to the cross. And I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me”; and, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Commenting on these words, St. Thomas writes: “Behold, where the

philosopher of this world is ashamed, the Apostle found a treasure. What appeared to be foolishness to the philosopher, became wisdom and glory for the Apostle, as said St. Augustine. Everyone glories in that by which he becomes great, for example, riches. The Apostle gloried in nothing except in Christ, especially in the cross of Christ, because in the cross are found all things about which men glory. Some men glory in the friendship of the great, but in the cross is the sign of divine friendship. Some glory in knowledge, but the Apostle found the most sublime science in the cross: 'For I judged not myself to know anything among you, but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.' For in the cross is the perfection of the whole law and the complete art of living well. Some men glory in power, and St. Paul found the greatest power in the cross: 'For the word of the cross, to them indeed that perish, is foolishness; but to them that are saved, that is, to us, it is the power of God.' So the Apostle glories in the cross for the liberty he has received, for his acceptance into the heavenly kingdom, and for the victory over the devil and sin."

According to St. Thomas, therefore, the tribulations of the just are explained by two reasons: 1. that the just may be purified and bring forth more fruit; 2. that they may cooperate with Christ in the salvation of souls. Tribulation is the fire that tries the elect; in this fire evils are confounded because the temporal allurements are destroyed, but not the elect. The tribulations of the impious, however, are more grievous, because the impious do not have the love of God to support them.

Some philosophers have objected that this doctrine of the cross and of the trials of the just is not only above reason but contrary to reason.

To this we reply that this doctrine contains something that is entirely in agreement with good reason, namely, tribulation shows the absolute insufficiency of a life lived according to the senses and passions, as Spinoza explains in his Ethics. Man, he says, living according to the senses and his passions wants to be the center of all things, and he becomes the slave of all, he becomes a slave, and finds himself in contradiction with himself and with others. The tribulation which we find in the sensual life arouses the desire to live according to right reason, and there we find freedom. The sensual man becomes the slave of external circumstances, of his passions, and of other men. On a higher plane, the tribulations which we find in the rational, intellectual, and moral life, excite the desire of living according to the divine life.

The philosophy of pessimism, according to Spinoza, is the result of sensualism, whereas right reason rising above the senses disposes us to optimism, for the senses know nothing but particulars, but reason considers the good of the universe on account of which evils are permitted. But a higher optimism is found in the supernatural life, according to St. Paul, “To them that love God, all things work together unto good.” Better than the ancient Greek philosophers, Christianity knows that perfect happiness is not found in this valley of tears but in the life to come.

On the other hand, he who does not wish to live supernaturally descends from the spiritual life to a merely intellectual life. There he is met with difficulties and if wishes to overcome them he must ascend. If he does not ascend, he descends to bitter pride and a sensual life. He who does not conquer is conquered; he who does not ascend, falls.

St. John Chrysostom enumerates these eight reasons for the trials of the just, taken from St. Paul.

1. The remedy against pride: “Lest the greatness of the revelations should exalt me, there was given me a sting of my flesh.”

2. The remedy against vainglory: “Lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth in me, or anything he heareth from me”

3. That the virtue and power of God might shine forth in weak men: “Gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me.”

4. That the patience of the just might be manifested in persecution and that the purity of their intentions might be made known, as in the case of Job.

5. That the just man might fix his thoughts on the life to come and his eternal reward when he sees that he has almost no reward in this life. Amid persecution and incessant contradictions, St. Paul wrote: “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.”

6. That those who mourn may have consolation when they see the tribulations of the saints and their steadfastness. In his Epistle to the Hebrews, St. Paul exhorts the Hebrews to remember the heroic examples of faith in adversity in the Old Testament.

7. That we might understand that the saints, whom we are to imitate, had natures like ours: “Elias was a man passible like unto us.”

8. That we might distinguish the true evils and the true good from the false: “For whom the Lord loveth, He chastiseth; and He scourgeth every

son whom He receiveth”; “We are reviled, and we bless; we are persecuted, and we suffer it..... We are made as the refuse of this world, the offscouring of all even until now.”

CHAPTER XXVII

QUESTION 50 THE EXISTENCE AND THE SUBSTANCE OF THE ANGELS

By the word “angel” is understood a created substance, purely spiritual (in no way ordered to inform a body), and hence intellectual (but not rational). Thus the angel is subsistent and possesses a personality, for it is a substance that is complete, existing and operating <per se> and separately and of its own right (sui juris) and has dominion over its own actions.

FIRST ARTICLE: THE EXISTENCE OF THE ANGELS

The existence of the angels was denied in ancient times by the Epicureans and the Sadducees, and in our time it is denied by atheists, rationalists, and liberal Protestants, who assert that the angels, mentioned in Sacred Scripture, are either divine inspirations or men sent by God to instruct other men.

The testimony of Scripture. a) The Old Testament teaches the existence of the angels, both good and bad. From the Old Testament it is also clear that the angels are intelligent creatures, that their number is great, that there is an order among them, and that the good angels under God’s command assist and guard good men. On the other hand, the bad angels, with God’s permission, attack men.

b) This doctrine of the Old Testament is confirmed by the New Testament. St. Paul enumerates the orders of angels, “whether thrones or dominations or principalities or powers.” He also mentions the bad angels.

Even if Pseudo-Dionysius had not written his De caelesti hierarchia, St. Thomas would have been able to write his treatise on the angels, relying on the testimony of Scripture and tradition.

Concerning the angels the Church teaches: 1. that they exist, that they were created but not from eternity, and that they are spiritual; 2. that they are not propagated; 3. that the devil was good when he was created.

Besides this, the ordinary magisterium of the Church has everywhere taught the doctrine of the guardian angels, and theologians consider this truth to be of faith. Finally, according to Suarez, it is of faith that the angels are not equal in dignity, as is clear from many texts, especially from St. Paul.

The teaching of all of the Fathers is that the angels are created by God, and endowed with intellect and free will. The absolute spirituality of the angels, however, is not clearly affirmed by all the Fathers prior to the fourth century. Without the angels the ascending series of creatures appears to be incomplete. After the twelfth century the theologians commonly teach that the angels are absolutely incorporeal, although Scotus thought that there was an incorporeal matter in the angels.

SECOND ARTICLE: THE TEACHING OF ST. THOMAS COMPARED WITH THAT OF SCOTUS AND SUAREZ

1. St. Thomas affirms the absolute spirituality of the angels and therefore that there cannot be two angels of the same species, because the principle of individuation is matter marked by quantity. Scotus taught the opposite. As an eclectic, Suarez held with St. Thomas that the angels were absolutely spiritual, and with Scotus that there could be two angels of the same species.

2. For St. Thomas the proper object of the angel’s intellect is the essence of the angel itself, whereas the proper object of our intellect is the essence of sensible things. Therefore, whereas the human idea is abstracted from sensible particulars, the angelic idea is not abstracted but is naturally impressed on the angel and it is at the same time universal and concrete, that is, it represents at the same time the species, for example, of a lion, and the individuals, both the actual and the past of which the angel has memory.

Hence the angelic ideas are participations in the divine ideas, according to which God is the cause of things. Therefore the angels do not have discursive but simply intuitive knowledge. They know not by composition and division, but they see the properties of things in the essence of things by

one simple intuition. In the same way they see conclusions in the principles and means in the ends.

Therefore the angels cannot err with regard to the things that belong or do not belong naturally to things, but they can err about those things that are entirely contingent and free, such as, the secrets of the heart and future free acts.

Scotus, on the other hand, held that an angel, although it does not have senses, can receive ideas from sensible things. Scotus was unwilling to designate the proper and specific object of the angelic intellect, and he concluded therefore that the angel had discursive knowledge. With St. Thomas, Suarez admitted this innatism in the angels, and with Scotus he held that the angels could reason.

3. With regard to the will of the angels, St. Thomas admitted that in the angelic will there were certain necessary acts, such as the natural desire of happiness in general. Moreover, since nothing is willed unless first known as agreeable, the angel's free choice is always con formed to the ultimate practical judgment by which it is regulated, but the will executes this ultimate judgment, while it freely accepts it. Scotus, however, held that every act of the will is free and that a free choice could be not conformed to the ultimate practical judgment. Here we see evidence of Scotus' voluntarism.

Because of these viewpoints many differences arose between St. Thomas and Scotus about the angelic will.

According to St. Thomas, the angel loves by a natural love not only happiness in general but also God the author of its nature more than itself, and therefore probably the angel cannot sin directly and immediately against its natural law, which it sees intuitively inscribed on its own essence. When Satan sinned directly and immediately against the supernatural law, he sinned indirectly against the natural law

St. Thomas held that during the time of probation the angel could not sin venially but only mortally, because "the mind of the angel (which is simply intuitive) does not comprehend those things which are ordered to an end except as they are placed in the order to the end." The angel sees the means in the end as it sees conclusions in the principles. Thus the angel cannot turn itself away from the proper means to an end without turning away from its ultimate end and sinning mortally. Further, according to St. Thomas, because of the superiority of the angelic intellect the angel's free choice is

immutable; it is a participation in the immutability of the divine choice. From this it follows that the angel's mortal sin is unforgivable, or that the angel wills irrevocably what it freely chooses with full and intuitive advertance, that is, a choice made not after successive consideration, like ours, but after a simultaneous consideration of all the things that pertain to the choice without any influence of the passions. Hence if someone would say to the devil after he had made his choice, "You did not consider this point," the devil could answer, "This also I considered." This explains the obstinacy of the devils, since before their choice they considered everything and then cannot change their choice. The only way that the devil could recall his decision would be by humility and obedience, and this the devil did not wish to do and does not wish to do.

Because of his voluntarism, Scotus held that the choice of the angels is not always in conformity with the final practical judgment, and that the devil's first mortal sin, as such, is not irrevocable or unforgivable. The demons, he thought, committed many sins before they became obstinate, and after each sin they could have returned to God. Hence the diabolical obstinacy is only extrinsic, that is, it is owing to the fact that after many sins God declared that He would no longer grant them the grace of conversion.

In his eclecticism Suarez held with St. Thomas that the angelic will did not have concupiscible and irascible parts, but with Scotus he held that, since the angel could reason, it could sin directly against the natural law and could also sin venially. He also thought that after the first mortal sin the angel could return to God, because the angel's choice need not be in conformity with the final practical judgment.

Finally Suarez thought that the devil's obstinacy was a consequence of that miserable state to which he saw himself condemned. St. Thomas would have replied that it is precisely damnation itself and the immutability of this state that must be explained, either intrinsically because of the intuitive mode of the knowledge that directs the choice, or extrinsically because God no longer offers the grace of conversion.

These three doctors teach that the angels were elevated to the order of grace, and that most probably they were created in grace. But there are certain differences in their teachings. St. Thomas denies that the angels could have sinned in the first instant. He held that their probation lasted for one instant. He denied that the angels received essential grace and glory because of the merits of Christ, because the merits of Christ are the merits

of the Redeemer, and the angels were not redeemed. On these points Scotus, and Suarez to some extent, differ from the Angelic Doctor because of the principles mentioned above.

From this brief review it is apparent that St. Thomas is more definite in affirming the specific distinction between angels and men because of the proper and specific object of their intellects. He affirms that the angels are purely intellectual and intuitive spirits, not rational or discursive. He maintains intact the principle that nothing is willed unless first known as agreeable. All the differences with Scotus and Suarez flow from these two principles.

THIRD ARTICLE: THE CREATION AND SUBSTANCE OF THE ANGELS QUESTION 61, A. 2 AND 3; QUESTION 50

The angels were not created from eternity; they were probably created with corporeal creatures, because they are part of the universe, and no part is perfect separated from the whole. They were probably created in the empyrean heavens. They are a very great multitude, “Thousands of thousands ministered to Him (God), and ten thousand times a hundred thousand stood before Him.” Their number exceeds the number of the species of material substances and is comparable to the number of the stars. A greater number of the more perfect things was created for the perfection of the universe. This principle refers to the more important parts of the universe which God produced without the intervention of secondary causes, the stars, the constellations, and the angels. It does not follow from this principle that there is more gold than silver, or more silver than lead in the universe.

They were created that they might attain eternal happiness and glorify God, and that they might assist and guard men and rule over corporeal creatures. This second reason is not an end but result of their superiority, since it is fitting that inferior beings be ruled by superior beings.

FOURTH ARTICLE: THE ANGELS ARE PURE SPIRITS WITHOUT A BODY QUESTION 50, A. 1

The Scriptures never speak of the body of an angel, and frequently call the angels spirits. When spirit is predicated of intellectual creatures, it is

used in opposition to body.

The Fourth Lateran Council declared: “At the same time in the beginning God established from nothing both creatures, the spiritual and corporeal, that is, the angelic and the mundane, and finally the human creature as a common creature constituted from spirit and body.”

In this definition is clearly defined: 1. the existence of the angels; 2. their real distinction from corporeal creatures and from man, who is both spiritual and corporeal. This is equivalent to stating that the angels are incorporeal. This, however, is not properly defined but merely declared; what the Council was expressly defining was the unity of the first principle against the Manichaeans.

After the Fourth Lateran Council it was considered temerarious to attribute to the angels a body however subtle, and after the twelfth century theologians commonly taught that the angels were absolutely incorporeal.

St. Thomas shows that the perfection of the universe requires intellectual creatures, who are able to know God. “Since intellection is not an act of the body nor of any corporeal power, the union of a body is not part of the nature of the intellectual substance as such; it is an addition,....because it is imperfect, inasmuch as the object (of the corporeal being) is the lowest intelligible of sensible things. In any genus where something imperfect is found, it is fitting that the corresponding perfection in that genus pre-exist.” Otherwise creation would be truncated and, as it were, mutilated.

As Cajetan points out, a more perfect creature can always be produced, but it is reasonable to infer that the perfection of the universe requires a purely intellectual creature as one genus of being.

FIFTH ARTICLE: THE ANGELS ARE ABSOLUTELY IMMATERIAL QUESTION 50, A. 2

Avicebron held that matter was common to spirits and bodies because, as he said, there is something which they have in common. But the thing they have in common is nothing more than created essence as something capable of existence and limiting being. According to St. Thomas, it is impossible that a spiritual substance have any kind of matter. The operation of anything is after the manner of its substance, or operation follows being, or the mode of operation follows the mode of being. But intellection is an operation entirely immaterial, that is, intrinsically independent of matter, because it is specified of a universal object, by intelligible being, which abstracts from

all matter. Thus the intellect is able to know the first principles of being, which are absolutely necessary and universal, above all contingent and particular being, and hence it can know the reasons for the being of things. Therefore a spiritual and intellectual substance is entirely immaterial.

SIXTH ARTICLE: HOW THE ANGELS ASSUME BODIES

Sometimes angels assume bodies, as the angels who appeared to Tobias and Abraham. In these instances the angels are accidentally united to such bodies, which they move but do not inform vitally.

Thus the angel said to Tobias: “I seemed to eat and to drink with you: but I use an invisible meat and drink, which cannot be seen by men.”

SEVENTH ARTICLE: WHETHER THE ANGELS DIFFER IN SPECIES QUESTION 50, A. 4

The Church has defined nothing on this point, but from the various names used in Sacred Scripture it appears that there is a hierarchy of angels, for example, “Whether thrones or dominations or principalities or powers,” and in the Old Testament the angels are distinguished and subordinated into seraphim, cherubim, angels, and archangels. From this it is certain that the angels are not different only in number, which theologians commonly admit.

St. Thomas holds that all the angels differ in species; this is denied by Scotus. In agreement with St. Thomas, the Thomists generally admit that there cannot be two angels of the same species. The reason is that those things that are of the same species and differ in number are the same in form and different with regard to matter, since an act is not multiplied except by the potency in which it is received. Thus two perfectly similar drops of water are two by reason of the matter in which their specific forms are received. But the angels are not composed of matter and form. Therefore it is impossible that there be two angels of the same species. That is to say, according to many Thomists, that this is intrinsically impossible, or intrinsically repugnant, and not only extrinsically by reason of the end, as, for example, the annihilation of some blessed soul, which never happens but is still not intrinsically repugnant.

Confirmation. If whiteness were separated from matter, it would be unique. By a similar argument the unicity and infinity of God are

apodictically proved, namely, because God, who is pure act, is not received in matter, or unreceived subsistent being.

In the question, “Concerning spiritual creatures” (a. 8), St. Thomas says: “If the angel is a simple form apart from matter, it is impossible to imagine that there are many angels in the same species.” In another place he says: “We cannot understand that any separated form is anything but one of one species.” He also shows that the separated human soul is individuated by the transcendental relation to its body, which will rise again, while the substance of the angel has no relation to a body which it is to inform. Hence there cannot be two angels of the same species. It is not enough to have recourse to the thisness (haecceitas) of the angel, as Scotus did, for the question arises, whence does it come that in the same species one nature is this as distinct from that. This difference can come only from matter.

The principle of numerical multiplication within the same species must be intrinsic and substantial. But Scotus implies that this can happen without matter marked by quantity or without a relation to such matter. Therefore in the angels, in which there is no matter, there can be no numerical multiplication. Nor can this multiplication be explained by some supernatural addition, since this would be extrinsic to the substance of the angel, which is supposed to be already constituted.

If God were to annihilate the archangel Michael and then create him again, he would be the same Michael with the same essence, the same existence once more produced and received in the same essence. Moreover, even if it were possible to have two angels of the same species successively (by annihilation and a second creation), it would not follow that there were two angels of the same species at the same time. The principle remains that an act cannot be multiplied except by the potency in which it is received.

According to St. Thomas, all angels differ in species according to the different grades of intellectual nature, according to intellectual power, and sometimes, like the birds, the angels have a stronger or weaker visual power. In the same way the seven colors of the rainbow and the seven notes in the scale are distinguished.

EIGHTH ARTICLE: WHETHER AN ANGEL IS IN A PLACE QUESTION 52, A. 1

Since an angel is absolutely incorporeal and immaterial, it is not in a place according to its substance, that is, by quantitative contact, since it

does not have quantity. But the angel is said equivocally to be in a place inasmuch as it locally moves some body by dynamic contact, or the contact of its power, that is, by a virtually transient operation. In this way our will, which is spiritual, moves the members of our body, but it is not in a place by quantitative contact (as when my hand touches the page), but by dynamic contact. Besides this, the human soul, as informing its body, is definitively in the place of the body and nowhere else.

CHAPTER XXVIII

QUESTION 54, A. 1 THE ANGELS COGNITIVE FACULTY

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER THE ANGELS INTELLECTION IS ITS SUBSTANCE

The reply is in the negative.

Indirect proof. The action of a thing differs more from the substance than the being of the thing for the operation follows the being. But the being of no creature is its substance; this is true only of God. Therefore a fortiori the intellection of the angel is not its substance.

Direct proof. 1. From the fact that action is the ultimate actuality of an agent. Action is the ultimate actuality of an operative power just as being is the ultimate actuality of an essence. But only pure act, namely, God, is His own ultimate actuality. Therefore only God, pure act, is His own action just as He is His own being.

The major is clear because the operative faculty is ordered to action, for example, the intellect is ordered to intellection as its ultimate perfection.

The minor is evident from the opposition between the word “to be” and the word “to have.” Pure act not only has its own ultimate actuality, namely, its being and its action, but it is its own ultimate actuality.

2. From a consideration not only of action itself but also of intellection. If the intellection of the angel were its substance, it would be as subsistent as its substance. But subsisting intellection can be only one, it is unique (as, for instance, whiteness, if it subsisted). Therefore the substance of the angel would not be distinct from the substance of God or from the substance of the other angels.

Objection. That which is not pure act cannot indeed be every actuality but it can be some actuality with an admixture of potentiality. Therefore the reasoning is not valid.

Reply. I distinguish the antecedent: that which is not pure act can be some actuality that is not ultimate, I concede; thus Michael is his own Michaelity; that which is not pure act can be ultimate actuality, I deny.

Action is the ultimate actuality in the order of operation just as being in the order of being. If the angel were its own action, this ultimate actuality in the angel would be unreceived and moreover as ultimate it would be irreceptive, and thus it would be pure act.

I insist. If Michael's intellection were subsistent, it would be unique in his species but not simply unique, for there could be other subsisting intellects. Therefore the difficulty remains.

Reply. I deny the antecedent. Such intellection would not be delimited, either by the subject in which it is received because it is not received, or by the object to which it is ordered because a substance cannot be specified by something extrinsic to itself. Therefore subsisting intellect cannot be unless it has its formal object in itself, that is, unless it is subsisting being itself at all times and of itself intellection in act.

I insist. But this subsisting intellect of Michael could be specified by itself as in divine intellection.

Reply. This I deny, because intellection must be specified by intelligible being as by its formal and adequate object. And if Michael's intellect were specified by itself, it would not be able to know anything except itself and that which could be known through itself, and hence it would not be able to know other substances except confusedly.

This reply of John of St. Thomas is taken from the following article. Without anticipating the following article, Cajetan replies as follows: If the intellection of the angel were of such great perfection that it would be a substance, it would be one, because it would identify in itself three absolutely simple perfections, namely, a spiritual nature, intellection, and subsistence in itself. These perfections, however, cannot be identified in anyone but God, and because of this these perfections are identified with the other absolutely simple perfections, with subsistent will, with love, mercy, and justice.

Objection. For living beings to live is to be, as Aristotle said. But to understand is to live. Therefore the intellection of the angel is its substantial being.

Reply. I distinguish the major: to live in actu primo is substantial being, I concede; to live in actu secundo, I deny. I contradistinguish the minor: to

understand is to live in actu secundo, I concede; to understand is to live in actu primo, I deny.

I insist. In us the acting intellect is its action, and yet it is not God. Therefore the angel can be its own action.

Reply. Our acting intellect is always in act and then it is its own action improperly, not essentially but concomitantly. Thus the sun is always actually giving light, but the sun is not essentially this action. In the same way the heart is always beating but it is not its own movement.

I insist. If the extremes are one, the middle is not really different from the extremes. But when the angel understands itself, the subject and the object are one, and the intellection is the middle. Therefore the intellection does not differ from the angel.

Reply. Let the major pass without comment. I deny the minor: intellection is not really a middle; it follows the union of the subject with an object that is intelligible in act, for intellection follows the union of the faculty with an impressed species. When the angel understands itself it does not require an impressed species, it requires only an expressed species because it is itself intelligible in act, but not understood in act.

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER THE INTELLECTION OF THE ANGEL IS ITS BEING

The reply is in the negative, because its being is limited, whereas its intellection is infinite intentionally and extends to every intelligible being as its adequate object.

THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER THE ANGELS INTELLECTIVE FACULTY IS ITS ESSENCE

The reply is in the negative, because a faculty is understood with reference to the act, and because of the different acts there are different faculties which are essentially ordered to these acts. But the essence is ordered to being or existence, whereas the intellect is ordered to intellection, which in the angel is distinct from being since it presupposes being. In the same intellective faculty and within the same specific and adequate object there may be many acts of intellection, either simultaneous and subordinated or successive.

CHAPTER XXIX

QUESTION 55 THE MEANS OF ANGELIC COGNITION

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER THE ANGELS KNOW ALL THINGS BY THEIR ESSENCE AS GOD DOES

The reply is in the negative, because only the essence of God as infinite comprehends all things in itself. Only God, in knowing Himself, knows all possible and actual things because this is the same as knowing what He is able to do and what He has done and does. The angel cannot do all things, and therefore its intelligence must be perfected by some species or representative likenesses of things.

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER THE ANGELS UNDERSTAND THROUGH SPECIES TAKEN FROM THINGS

St. Thomas invokes the authority of St. Augustine, who taught that sensible creatures were first produced by God as intelligible beings in the mind of the angels and then in the nature of things. St. Augustine came to this conclusion because of his Platonic philosophy, in which even our ideas are derived from a supersensible divine illumination.

St. Thomas shows why this innatism should be admitted in the case of the angels but not in man. His reasoning: operation follows being, and the mode of operation follows the mode of being. But the angel’s mode of being is absolutely immaterial and independent of the body. Therefore the angel’s mode of operation and of understanding is also without any acceptance from a body; it is by an intelligible influx from God the author of nature. On the other hand, the intellective soul would be united to a body without any reason if the soul did not obtain its intellective perfection from the body. Thus the imagination is the highest point of the lowest order of

sensible knowledge, and our intellect is the lowest point of the highest order of intelligence. Hence the adage: the highest of the lower order touches on the lowest of the higher order, even though, absolutely speaking, there is a vast difference between the two. Here we see the subordination of beings and we conclude that man, a rational animal, is not a genus but a determined species, in the sense that there cannot be many species of rational animals. Rational animal implies the meeting point of the highest in the lowest order and the lowest in the highest order.

Objection. If from the instant of their creation the angels receive from God ideas of things, including those of individuals, the angels naturally know future contingents, which is against the opinion commonly held.

Reply. Actually these ideas represent only existences and they are suited to represent futures inasmuch as these futures are derived from the divine ideas and when they will be according to the divine will. Even God Himself does not know from eternity future contingents except as they are dependent on the decree of His will.

THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER THE HIGHER ANGELS KNOW BY MORE UNIVERSAL SPECIES THAN THE LOWER ANGELS

In other words: Does the perfection of the angel's knowledge depend on its universality? St. Thomas replies affirmatively.

He derives his first proof from the authority of Dionysius: "That which is divisively in inferior beings is united in superior beings."

Proof from reason <a priori>. The superior beings are those that are closer to and more like God. But God knows all things by one eternal intuitive act in His essence. Therefore among the superior intellects those are the higher which know by means of fewer and more universal species.

The <a posteriori> proof is confirmed in the saying: just a few words for the one who knows, that is, the man who knows does not need many words.

First objection. The universal is obtained by abstraction. But the angels do not abstract from things.

Reply. I distinguish the major: if the knowledge is obtained from individual things, I concede; if it is obtained from the divine ideas, I deny.

Second objection. Universal knowledge is confused. But the higher angels do not have the more confused knowledge.

Reply. I distinguish the major: universal knowledge on the part of the thing known, I concede; universal knowledge on the part of the means, I deny. That is, by these more universal and fewer ideas the higher angels know many things very distinctly and without confusion.

Scotus says that the perfection of the higher angels' knowledge consists in its clarity.

Reply. I distinguish: in an empiric and material clarity, I deny; in the clarity that comes from the higher and more universal principles, I concede.

Corollary. In the sciences the following principle of economy is to be observed: matters should be explained by few principles. That is, principles should not be multiplied without reason. Thus St. Thomas explains the principal questions about predestination with this principle: Since the love of God is the cause of the goodness of things, no one thing would be better than another if it were not loved more by God.

FOURTH ARTICLE: WHETHER THE ANGELS NATURALLY KNOW FUTURE CONTINGENT BEINGS AND THE SECRETS OF HEARTS (Q. 57, A. 3, 4)

The reply to the first question is in the negative. This is the common opinion and seems to be of faith because of the testimony of Sacred Scripture and of the Fathers. Special reference is made to the words, "Show the things that are to come hereafter, and we shall know that you are gods." Thus prophecy is the proper sign of divinity and a motive of credibility, "amply demonstrating the infinite knowledge of God," just as a miracle "demonstrates His omnipotence," in the words of the Vatican Council.

Proof from reason. Future contingent beings cannot be known certainly by the angels either in their causes or in themselves; not in the created causes because these are contingent and indifferent; not in the uncreated cause, that is, in God's free decree, which is naturally inaccessible to every created intellect; not in themselves, for in this way future contingents are known only by God inasmuch as God's knowledge alone is measured by eternity, which embraces all time. Hence the angels cannot naturally know future contingent beings; unless at the most they may have some conjectural knowledge.

The reply to the second question is also in the negative because of the testimony of the Scriptures. The reason is that such secrets of the heart are not parts of the universe. As free they are not necessarily connected with

our wills, and as immanent they are not connected with exterior beings. They have therefore no connection with the parts of the universe and thus are not properly parts of the universe. They belong to a higher order known only to God and if they are sacred secrets they belong properly to the kingdom of God. Such is the privileged character of the interior life, “hidden with Christ in God,” which the angels cannot know naturally. St. John of the Cross emphasizes this point in his teaching that the demons cannot know the secrets of our hearts.

CHAPTER XXX

QUESTION 60 THE LOVE OF THE ANGELS

FIRST ARTICLE: THE WILL AND THE LIBERTY OF THE ANGELS

The angels have a will, which is the appetite following on intellection, as the inclination to the good intellectually known. Like the intellect, the will of the angels is a faculty distinct from their substance, and the angelic will is free, that is, it can choose one thing in preference to another. The angel's liberty of choice follows the intellect inasmuch as the intellect is able to judge the universal nature of good and this judgment remains undetermined with regard to an object here and now which is not good in every part. The angels do not have a sensitive appetite.

SECOND ARTICLE: THE ANGELS NATURAL AND ELECTIVE LOVE

In the angels the natural love is always right, and this love is an inclination conferred on the angel by the author of nature. The angels also have an elective love which is consequent on the natural love and is concerned with an object here and now that is not good in every part.

Like man, the angel naturally loves itself inasmuch as it desires some good for itself with its natural appetite. When the angel desires some good for itself by election it loves itself by elective love.

The angel loves itself by a natural love that is necessary with regard to the specification of that love because the angel cannot consider anything in itself (or in God the author of its nature) that would move it to a hatred of itself (or to hatred of God the author of its nature). Indeed, according to Bannez, Sylvius, Gonet, and Billuart, the angel loves itself necessarily even with regard to the exercise of that love just as it knows itself necessarily with regard to the exercise of that knowledge. This love is a property that

flows from the angel's nature just as the movement of the heart flows from the nature of the animal.

Objection. But the bad angels desire non-being and therefore they do not necessarily love themselves.

Reply. They love non-being directly and by its very nature, this I deny; for this is impossible since the aspect of good is not present in non-being. They love non-being indirectly and by reason of something else, I concede; because they desire non-being in their torments and thus they desire non-being by reason of their self-love and not by reason of any hatred for themselves.

THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER BY ITS NATURAL LOVE THE ANGEL LOVES GOD MORE THAN ITSELF

We have treated of this question at great length in another place; here we will refer only to the essential points. This problem refers not only to the angel but also to man and analogically to every creature. St. Thomas shows that the fundamental natural inclination found in every creature is right and remains right, although it has been weakened in us by original sin and by our personal sins and must be perfected by infused charity. Thus we see in this article that grace does not destroy nature but perfects and elevates it. St. Thomas' reply in this article is therefore in the affirmative, and he offers the following proof.

Everything that naturally, according to its nature, belongs to another inclines more to that to which it belongs than to itself, as is true of any natural part, for example, the hand is inclined to the defense of the body even though the hand may suffer mutilation. But every creature naturally, according to its nature, belongs to God. Therefore every creature naturally inclines to the love of God, the author of its nature, more than to the love of itself.

If this were not so, the natural inclination would be perverse and would not be perfected by infused charity; indeed infused charity would destroy the natural inclination.

First doubt. Does this apply to the innate natural inclination or to the elicited natural inclination?

Reply. To both.

Second doubt. Is this natural love of God necessary or elective when it is elicited?

Reply. It is necessary at least with regard to its specification, because in God the author of nature nothing can be found to move the angel to the hatred of God.

Third doubt. Whether this natural love of God when it is elicited is necessary even with regard to its exercise?

Reply. Bannez, Gonet, and Billuart think that the affirmative is more probable, because the angel cannot desist from the consideration of itself or from the consideration of God, whom it knows in the mirror of its own essence. The love of itself and the love of God preserving its natural life are natural movements, just as in the animal the movement of the heart is, as it were, a natural property.

Fourth doubt. Does this natural love of God above all things exist in some way in all creatures?

Reply. It exists even in the stone, which tends to the center of the earth because of the cohesion of the universe and thus contributes to the good of the universe to manifest God's goodness. So the hen gathers her little ones under her wings to protect them from the hawk because it tends to the preservation of its species for the good of the universe, and it would sacrifice itself if it were necessary for the good of the species. The canticle, "All ye works of the Lord, bless the Lord," expresses the thought that every creature in its own way tends toward God, or to the good of the universe to manifest the goodness of God. There is here no pantheism; the creature is considered not as a part of God but as a part of the universe, which is ordered to the glorification of its author and to the manifestation of His goodness.

First objection. Natural love is based on natural union. But the angel is naturally united rather to itself than to God. Therefore the angel naturally loves itself more than God.

Reply. I distinguish the major: natural love is founded on a natural union and on a natural dependence on God, I concede; on a natural union without this dependence on God, I deny. I contradistinguish the minor: the angel is more naturally united to itself and depends on God more than on itself, I concede; that the angel does not depend more on God than on itself, I deny.

I insist: in spite of this dependence the angel loves itself more naturally. Whoever loves anything naturally loves it inasmuch as it is good for itself.

But in loving anything as good for itself the lover loves the object for its own self. Therefore whoever loves God naturally loves Him for the lover's sake and less than the lover himself.

Reply. I distinguish the major: whoever loves anything naturally loves it inasmuch as it is good for itself as the subject for which it is desired, I concede; loves it for itself as the permanent end, I deny. I contradistinguish the minor: whoever loves something as a good for the lover, loves it for the sake of the object if it is a good subordinate to the lover, I concede; but if it is a good that is superior to the lover, I deny.

The angel desires God for itself but on account of God, its natural ultimate end. The end for whose sake a thing is desired and the subject for which a thing is desired are not the same. On the other hand, I desire a piece of fruit for myself and on account of myself because the fruit is inferior and subordinate to myself. When the angel, and man too, rightly loves God even naturally, it subordinates itself to God and does not subordinate God to itself.

Second objection. Nature reflects on itself and first tends to its own preservation. But nature would not be reflecting on itself if it tended to something other than itself. Therefore by its natural love the angel loves itself more.

Reply. I distinguish the major: nature reflects on itself not only with regard to its own individuality but rather with regard to the universal in itself as a part of the universe ordered to the good of the universe and for the manifestation of God's goodness, I concede; otherwise, I deny.

I insist. If this is true, the brute animals tend to some ethical good. As a matter of fact, however, they tend only to some pleasurable good or some useful good.

Reply. The brute animals tend to some ethical good not explicitly or consciously but implicitly and unconsciously, just as the hen that gathers its chicks under its wings loves its species more than itself.

I insist. The error of this thesis is apparent from the consequent incongruity, namely, that charity would be useless. The characteristic of charity is that by it one loves God more than oneself. But charity is not a natural but an infused love. Therefore by its natural love the angel does not love God more than itself.

Reply. I distinguish the major: the characteristic of charity is loving God more than oneself as the author of grace, I concede; as the author of nature,

I deny.

I insist. At any rate this thesis cannot explain the sin of the angels, since this natural love of God will perdure as long as the nature perdures. But the love of God does not remain in the sinning angel, which hates God. Therefore loving God as the author of its nature more than itself is not natural to the angel.

Reply. I concede the major. I distinguish the minor: the angel's love of God as the judge does not perdure, I concede; the angel's love of God as the author of nature does not perdure, I deny. For as a judge God commands the angel to do something that is displeasing to the angel, whereas God as the author of the angel's nature is the cause that preserves the life of the bad angel in a kind of physical manner, something like the physical premotion that we speak of in the spiritual order.

I insist. But a devil cannot at the same time be turned to God as the author of its nature and turned. away from God as the author of grace because a sin against God the author of grace is at the same time indirectly against God the author of nature.

Reply. A devil is turned away from God the author of grace and from God the author of the law of nature freely and morally; nevertheless the devil at the same time remains necessarily and physically turned to God the author of his nature in its physical aspect. This lamentable opposition in the devil pertains to his damnation.

How does man naturally love God more than himself? By an innate love and by an implicit elicited love; in this way man loves God under the aspect of happiness in general.

CHAPTER XXXI

QUESTION 62, A. 4, 5, 6 THE MERITS OF THE ANGELS

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER THE GOOD ANGELS MERITED THEIR HAPPINESS

Reply. The ultimate end must be obtained by merit. But happiness for the intellectual creature is the ultimate end that is not effected but (attained), which consists in the supernatural vision of God. Therefore the angels merited happiness.

When did they merit their happiness? Certainly before they attained it since merit has the nature of a road leading to an end. As St. Thomas remarks: “He who is already at the terminus is not moved toward that terminus, just as no one merits what he already has,” and “Free will cannot be informed at the same time by imperfect grace, which is the principle of meriting, and perfect grace, which is the principle of fruition.”

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER THE ANGELS MERITED IN THE FIRST INSTANT

The question is whether the angels merited happiness in the first instant of creation, if they were created in the state of grace? What is angelic time? Is it continuous or discrete? Is it the measure of some movement? It is the measure of the succession of the thoughts and affections of the angels. One angelic instant may perdure as long as several hours and days of our time, just as the contemplation of the same object by the saints in an ecstasy lasts for several hours.

“In all the angels the first operation was good,” because this first operation was under the special inspiration of God. But in this operation there was as yet no full merit because the angels were moved by God and they did not yet move themselves. Immediately after this some of them

turned to God the author of grace with full merit, while others inflated by pride turned away from God the author of grace.

In this second instant why was one act in the angels sufficient for merit or demerit?

Reply. Because grace perfects nature according to the mode of the nature. It is a characteristic of the angelic nature that it acquires a natural perfection not discursively but immediately in one act. Therefore immediately after one fully meritorious act the angels attained supernatural happiness, which the devil would also have attained if he had not immediately placed the obstacle of sin.

THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER THE ANGELS ATTAINED GRACE AND GLORY ACCORDING TO THE QUANTITY OF THEIR NATURES

The affirmative reply seems the more reasonable because in the angel the movement of the will cannot be impeded or retarded by an inordinate passion, and when there is nothing to impede or retard it a nature. is moved according to its entire power. Hence it seems reasonable that the angels that have a better nature turned to God with more power and more effectively.

On this point we have a certain analogy with men. “This also occurs in men, because greater grace (habitual) and glory is given to men according to the intensity of their conversion to God.” This does not imply any taint of Pelagianism with regard to the angels, because the angelic nature is not a disposition proportioned to a purely gratuitous gift of grace. Moreover, just as the grace is entirely from the will of God so also is the nature of the angel. “Therefore it seems that grace is given rather according to the degree of nature than because of works.” In man, however, when he disposes himself under the influence of actual grace for habitual grace, this habitual grace is given not in proportion to his natural attempt but in proportion to the supernatural disposition which comes from prevenient grace.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE GUILT AND OBSTINACY OF THE DEVILS

FIRST ARTICLE: WHETHER THE EVIL OF GUILT CAN BE IN THE ANGELS (Q. 63, A. 1)

The affirmative reply is of faith, because many angels sinned; therefore they are able to sin.

That the angel can sin, St. Thomas proves as follows:

Only that will which is the rule of its own action is unable to depart from the proper rectitude. But only God's will is the rule of its own action because it has no superior end. Therefore any created will is able to sin.

Can the angels sin directly against the natural law, and could they have sinned if they had been created simply in the natural order? According to the more common opinion of the Thomists the negative reply is more probable.

1. Because at all times the angels see intuitively the natural law in their own essence, even with regard to singular instances, and therefore they cannot be in error, or be ignorant, or lack consideration about the natural law, consequently they cannot sin against the natural law.

2. Because the angel naturally and efficaciously loves God as the author of nature more than itself, and this love virtually contains the fulfillment of the entire natural law. This love remains in the devil to the extent that the devil loves God as the author of his physical life although he does not love God as the author of the moral law and as the judge.

Can the angel sin indirectly against the natural law?

Reply. He can by sinning directly against the supernatural law.

How can the angel sin against the supernatural law?

Reply. Because the angel knows the supernatural law not with intuitive evidence but in the obscurity of faith, and inasmuch as this law commanded something that could be displeasing to the proud angels.

Is every direct sin against the supernatural law indirectly against the natural law?

The reply is in the affirmative, because the natural law already commands that God is to be obeyed in whatever He commands.

Objection. Then the angels' elevation to the order of grace was the cause of their sin.

Reply. It was not the cause but the occasion, just as the redemptive Incarnation was an occasion of sin for the Jews.

Objection. But the angels could not have sinned even against the supernatural law.

Proof. Sin, or a defective choice, supposes an erroneous judgment. But there can be no error in the angels, at least not prior to sin, since they have no passions or any inordinate precipitation of the will.

Reply. I distinguish the major: the angels have no defective choice with regard to the object willed, I concede; with regard to the manner of tending toward the object good in itself, I deny.

What does this sin of the angels presuppose on the part of the intellect?.

Reply. A lack of consideration of the supernatural law to be observed here and now.

Is this lack of consideration a negation or a privation?

Reply. It is a privation since the angel begins to operate without consideration of the rule.

Was this lack of consideration voluntary?

Reply. It was at least indirectly voluntary inasmuch as the angel could have and should have considered the rule.

Was this lack of consideration more voluntary in the angel than in man?

Reply. Many Thomists say that this lack of consideration was interpretatively voluntary.

What is the meaning of interpretative in this connection?

Reply. It does not mean that the consent was such as would be given if there were sufficient attention; in this case it means something willed virtually or implicitly, by an implicit act rather than an explicit act. If it had been an explicit act, such as, "I do not wish to consider," this act of unwillingness would presuppose not only lack of consideration but also an error, which could not have been in the angels before sin.

How then did the angels sin?

Reply. They sinned by inordinately desiring their own excellence, or their natural happiness as derived from the power of their natures, and refusing the supernatural happiness that comes from the gratuitous gift of God, the supernatural happiness that they have in common with men, the happiness that is to be had by way of humility and obedience.

Were there two acts, one concerning natural happiness and the other concerning supernatural happiness?

Reply. There was but one act, preferring natural happiness to the other.

How could such stupidity enter the mind of the higher angels?

Reply. In the same way that some men prefer the study of mathematics or physics to the study of the Gospel.

SECOND ARTICLE: WHETHER THE ANGELS COULD SIN IN THE FIRST INSTANT

Reply. They could not because in the first instant the angel operated under a special divine inspiration. Since nothing is willed unless first known, the first cognition was not from the application of the created will but from the special inspiration of God, and under this influence the creature does not sin. The angels sinned in the second instant, in which they fully deliberated. The third instant was the instant of damnation, in which there was no longer any demerit or possibility of merit.

THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER THE ANGELS COULD HAVE SINNED VENIALLY

According to St. Thomas they could not have sinned venially. The reason is that the angelic intellect is not discursive; it sees conclusions in principles intuitively, and it beholds means as they are in the order to an end. Therefore in the angels there cannot be a deordination with regard to the means (venial sin) unless there is also a deordination with regard to the end.

Scotus and Suarez hold the contrary opinion, that the angels have discursive knowledge.

FOURTH ARTICLE: THE OBSTINACY OF THE DEVILS

It is of faith that the devils are in fact obstinate in evil. We read: “Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels.” The words of the Psalmist are referred to the bad angels:

“The pride of them that hate thee ascendeth continually,” that is, this pride always produces new effects.

St. Thomas, Scotus, and Suarez differ in their explanations of the obstinacy of the devils’ will.

Scotus explains this obstinacy by an extrinsic cause alone, namely, because God denies the devils grace.

St. Thomas assigns also an intrinsic cause, namely, the connatural mode according to which the angel judges irrevocably and adheres to an end in such a way that its decision is inflexible.

Suarez explains that because of the angel’s nature it is merely difficult to retract what the angel has once willed deliberately.

St. Thomas proves his opinion as follows: the appetitive faculty is in all things proportionate to the apprehending faculty, by which it is moved. But the angel apprehends immovably and intuitively those things that we apprehend discursively. This is particularly true when the angel judges something to be an end to be loved above all things. The angel sees intuitively and not successively all those things that pertain to the choice of a thing, and once the choice has been made the angel can say, “I have already considered everything.” Therefore the will of the angel is affixed immovably to the end. St. Thomas remarks in this article that it was customary to say that man’s free will was flexible with regard to opposites both before and after the choice, but that the angel’s free will was flexible to the opposites before the choice but not after it.

Objection. But the angel remains free after the choice and is therefore not inflexible.

Reply. Liberty does not require the possibility of changing a proposition, for example, the most free decrees of God are immutable.

Objection. It appears then that free will is predicated univocally of God and of the angels.

Reply. The predication is only analogical, for in God alone is this immutability from eternity, and in God it is never in evil.

Objections Based On The Idea Of The Indifference Of Freedom After The Choice

Freedom excludes inflexibility and immutability. But after the choice the angel remains free. Therefore the angel is not immutable.

Reply. I distinguish: freedom excludes absolute immutability, I concede; hypothetic immutability, I deny. Thus God’s free decrees are immutable. I

concede the minor and distinguish the conclusion.

I insist. When the object remains indifferent the choice is mutable. But after the sin of the angel the object of its choice remains indifferent.

Reply. I distinguish the major: when the object remains indifferent the choice is mutable on the part of the object, I concede; on the part of the subject, that is, on the part of the angel's connatural mode of acting intuitively, I deny. I concede the minor, and distinguish the conclusion.

Objections Based On The Idea Of A Retracted Judgment

According to St. Thomas the devil sinned because of lack of consideration of a higher rule. But the devil can now give that consideration especially since he has learned through his misery. Therefore the devil can change his judgment.

Reply. I distinguish the major: the devil sinned from lack of consideration that was voluntary, I concede; he sinned from a lack of consideration arising out of ignorance, I deny.

The devil was not ignorant that in thus proudly refusing supernatural happiness he would bring on himself damnation. He was certainly more certain than we theologians that turning away from his final supernatural end was for him an unforgivable mortal sin which implied indirectly an aversion from his final natural end.

I insist. But it seems incredible that any intelligence would refuse supernatural happiness, especially when such refusal brought with it future damnation.

Reply. Nevertheless this is a characteristic of unbounded pride: to cling to one's own individual good and pride one's self on it rather than accept supernatural happiness from the goodness of another and to possess that happiness in common with men. The devil closed the eyes of his mind to the light of grace and haughtily refused to follow that light. Doellinger wished to defend the Church, but he wished to defend it in his own way and not under the direction of the Supreme Pontiff.

I insist. But the devil foresaw his damnation only speculatively; now he knows damnation experimentally and therefore because of this new experience he can change his judgment.

Reply. If the devil now practically understands his crime of pride as a moral evil that must be rejected, I concede; if he only speculatively understands this pride as an evil, I deny.

In order that the devil could practically understand his crime of pride as an evil that should be rejected he should also incline to humility, to obedience, and to prayer for mercy. But the devil's pride "ascends continually," not intensively, but by always producing new effects. The damned do not ask for pardon. For them there could be but one way to retract their judgment, namely, the way of humility and obedience, and they do not will to follow this way.

We find a similar state of mind in some of the apostates, in Lamennais and Loisy. They strove for an object that was apparently the object of magnanimity; they strove for excellence but they strove for it in the spirit of pride. Magnanimity is the well-ordered love of excellence; pride is the inordinate love of one's own excellence without subjection to God.

Objection. According to St. Thomas some remorse of conscience remains in the damned because of synteresis, and therefore it seems that they are able to change their judgment.

Reply. Such remorse of conscience does remain because of synteresis, but it is without the least attrition or hope, indeed it is the remorse of desperation, without the least veleity of true repentance.

For the damned, sin is a bitter thing but not because of any repentance. Although they still have synteresis and remorse of conscience, they do not have infused faith, hope, prudence, or fear of sin; their minds are overwhelmed by pride, of which it is said that it "ascendeth continually." The damned do not repent of their evil deeds because of the guilt; they rue their deeds only because of the punishment. More than this, they wish all others to be damned, because they are filled with unbounded hatred for all good things, and they are grieved by every good, by every deed done according to God's will, and especially by the happiness of the blessed.

I insist. But the damned still have a desire for happiness, at least for natural happiness, which they do not possess, because they are turned away not only from their final supernatural end but also from their natural end. Therefore because of this desire for happiness they are able to change their judgment.

Reply. In order to change their judgment practically they would have to follow the way of humility and obedience, but because of their unremitting pride they do not will to follow this road. They are therefore confirmed in evil. In the damned the desire for the happiness they have lost is filled with envy; indeed this is part of damnation. The damned persevere in the hatred

of God, for although the devil naturally loves God as the author of his nature in its physical aspect, he hates God as the author of the law that commands obedience, he hates God as the judge, as the author of grace, because under these three aspects God commands something that displeases the devil.

Practically then the devil does not apprehend his crime of pride as a moral evil that must be rejected; only speculatively does he apprehend it as evil. At the same time pride rules him completely and in this pride the devil loves himself above all things with the bitterness of desperation and hatred of God.

How is man's obstinacy explained? Can we say with Cajetan that man is made immovable in good or evil by a meritorious or demeritorious act elicited in the first moment of non-being (<in primo non esse viae>), that is, in the first instant of the separation of the soul from the body? Some Thomists reject this idea, since it would not be man but a separated soul that would be meriting. Our Lord said, "The night cometh, when no man can work." In the final chapters of <Contra Gentes> St. Thomas explains that after the separation from the body the soul is no longer on the road to salvation (in via), since the body is for the perfection of the soul that the soul may reach its end, and the separated soul therefore is no longer on the road to its perfection, and that final merit or demerit is rendered definitive by the soul's separation from the body.

CHAPTER XXXIII

QUESTION 106 THE ILLUMINATION OF THE ANGELS

The higher angels illuminate the lower angels. According to St. Thomas, to illuminate is not only to make manifest a truth, which may be done by simple speech even when an inferior being speaks to a superior being, but to manifest a truth with authority, referring the truth to higher principles and to the first truth, that is, arranging truths so that another will understand them more clearly than he would be able to do by his own powers. This the higher angels are able to do because they possess more universal species which represent greater areas of the intelligible world in a more simple manner. Thus the higher angels have a higher understanding of truth and are able to explain their more perfect concepts.

The higher angels, however, cannot infuse a new light of nature or grace as God does. The higher angels, like a teacher, propose the object and illuminate an inferior angel by shedding their higher light on the object proposed. A human teacher, in proposing a demonstrative middle to his pupils, objectively supports the thinking of his pupils without infusing a new light. A higher angel can a fortiori do this because it is of a higher species with regard to a lower angel. The higher angel therefore not only strengthens the lower angel's intellect in the degree of knowledge but it also elevates the lower angel to a more perfect manner of intellection. The angel that is illuminated, as well as a man who is illuminated by an angel, is to some extent elevated to the mode of intellection of the superior being, and thus attains to something that is <per se> unknown to him, something beyond the light of his own intellect. Such is not the case with a pupil illuminated by a human teacher who makes manifest only what is <per accidens> unknown.

The higher angels illuminate the lower angels about all those things which pertain to the state of nature, the state of grace, and accidental glory, since good is essentially diffusive of itself.

The devils direct the manifestation of truth to their own iniquity, and therefore they do not illuminate but rather darken the truth.

CHAPTER XXXIV

QUESTIONS 108-112 THE HIERARCHIES OF ANGELS

Hierarchy is a multitude ordered and arranged under a leader, and it is said to be one inasmuch as the multitude is able to perceive the government of the leader in one and the same way. The mode of cognition and illumination in the angels, however, is threefold. Some angels draw the light of truth immediately from God, as ministers sitting beside the king; others draw the light of truth from the more universal created causes, as senators and governors of provinces; others draw this light from particular causes, as presiding officers of particular cities. In the first hierarchy there are three orders: seraphim, cherubim, and thrones; in the second, there are dominations, virtues, and powers; in the third, there are principalities, archangels, and angels. These orders are named according to their properties and duties. In the fallen angels, since these retain their natures, a subordination remains, not because of any friendship between them, but because of their common wickedness, and to be pre-eminent in evil is to be more miserable.

CHAPTER XXXV

QUESTION 113 THE GUARDIAN ANGELS

FIRST ARTICLE: THE GUARDIANSHIP OF THE ANGELS

That men are under the guardianship of the angels is of faith: “For He hath given His angels charge over thee: to keep thee in all thy ways.” Christ Himself commanded that children should not be scandalized because “their angels in heaven always see the face of My Father.”

The. testimony of tradition is confirmed by the institution of the feast of the Guardian Angels. The theological reason for the guardianship of the angels is that God usually governs the lower beings through the higher. Besides this, man is a pilgrim and there are many dangers along the way, both interior and exterior. Just as protection is given a man on a dangerous road, so God gives every man a guardian during this life. When a man arrives at the end of his journey he will not have a guardian angel but an angel who will rule with him. It is certain that each of the faithful has his own guardian angel. It is also commonly held that sinners and infidels have guardian angels so that these sinners may do less harm. It is also very probable that an angel is specially deputed to assist every priest celebrating Mass.

SECOND ARTICLE: THE DUTIES OF GUARDIAN ANGELS

The guardian angels illuminate the intellect not by infusing species but by adapting truths to our understanding, by representing truths by likenesses of sensible things, by suggesting good thoughts, and they excite the will to good by admonition and persuasion. They supply occasions for good and remove occasions for evil; they offer our prayers and sacrifices to God; they ward off exterior evils, they help us in worldly affairs, they do battle with evil spirits, they inflict remedial penalties, they help us particularly in the

hour of death, and lead our souls to heaven or purgatory. We in turn owe them reverence, loyalty, and confidence.

CHAPTER XXXVI

QUESTION 114 THE ASSAULTS OF THE DEVILS

Art. 1. Men are attacked by the devils, who try to impede the progress of men because of envy. By reason of their pride the devils assume the appearance of the divine majesty. But the order of these attacks on men is from God, who wills to make use of evils in order that good may come of them.

The devils attack men: 1. by instigating them to sin (with God's permission), 2. in order to punish men, and in this way they are sent by God as was the evil spirit that punished Achab the King of Israel. But those who are tempted are always assisted by God by His own power and through the good angels. All this is ordered to the glory of the elect.

Art. 2. To tempt others is a characteristic of the devil, and whenever the devil tempts others he does it to harm them by precipitating them into sin. Although the devil cannot move the will, he can to some extent affect man's lower powers by which the will is inclined, although it is not compelled.

Art. 3. All sins are not to be attributed to the temptation of the devil; some sins arise from the concupiscence of the flesh or of the eyes, or from our own pride.

Art. 4. The devils can seduce men, not by true miracles, but by cunning and deception.

With regard to spiritualism the Holy Office has decreed as follows: "It is not lawful to be present at any spiritualistic seances or conferences, with or without a so-called medium, with or without hypnotism, even under the guise of piety, for the purpose of interrogating souls or spirits, of hearing replies, or even of observing such things with the tacit or expressed protestation of having nothing to do with evil spirits."

All these assaults by the devil are permitted for the glory of the elect. Christ has already obtained a perfect victory over the devils, over sin and death, on Calvary and by His resurrection.

CHAPTER XXXVII

QUESTIONS 65-74 THE CORPOREAL CREATURE

As a beginning we present what is of faith concerning corporeal creatures according to Sacred Scriptures and the declarations of the Church.

The biblical narrative. What is the literary character of the first three chapters of Genesis, in which the creation of corporeal creatures and of man is described? This question was considered by the Biblical Commission, and on June 30, 1909, the Commission issued a decree on the historical character of the first chapters of Genesis.

From this decree we arrive at the following conclusion: In the first three chapters of Genesis the constitution of things and the complete order of creation is not described in a scientific manner; these chapters present a historical-popular narrative adapted to the understanding of the people of the time.

In accordance with the response of the Biblical Commission, this thesis is explained as follows.

1. The first three chapters of Genesis are historical since “they contain the narrative of things that actually happened, and this narrative corresponds to objective reality and historical truth.”

As the decree says: a) This is clear from the style and historical form of the Book of Genesis, for if the events related in Genesis about the sons of Adam, Noah and his sons, of Abraham, Isaac, Esau, of Jacob and his sons are historical, as all admit, why should that part of the book which deals with the first origin of things be considered a fable? b) It is clear from the peculiar connection between these three chapters themselves and between them and the following chapters. In this narrative the origin of the entire human race is connected with the origin of the Jewish people, which is explained in the following chapters. c) It is clear from the frequent

testimony of both the Old Testament and the New Testament and from the almost unanimous opinion of the Fathers, in which the events related in the first chapters of Genesis are cited as historical. Moreover, this historical sense was traditional among the Israelites and was always held by the Church.

2. However, this historical narrative is not scientific but popular, “for in writing the first chapter of Genesis it was not the intention of the inspired writer to teach the inner constitution of visible things or to present the complete order of creation in a scientific manner but to give to the people of his time a popular presentation, in the language of the time, adapted to the understanding of the time.” St. Thomas said: “Moses adapted himself to the uneducated people and spoke of what appeared to the senses.”

The inspired writer, therefore, had no intention of teaching the sciences of physics, astronomy, geology, or biology; he was simply teaching truths necessary for salvation. For example, the nature of the firmament, or the heavens, is not given in scientific terms; the author merely affirms that the firmament was created by God. In order to discover what is properly revealed in this narrative we must carefully determine what is formally embraced by the word “is” in the revealed proposition. What, for instance, is revealed in the following sentences? “And God said: Let there be a firmament made amidst the waters: and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made a firmament, and divided the waters that were under the firmament, from those that were above the firmament, and it was so. And God called the firmament, Heaven.” Is this a revelation that the firmament is something solid? No. Because the verb “is” does not refer to the solid. What is revealed is that the heavens (which the ancients thought was a solid firmament) were created by God. The verb “is” formally refers to what was created by God and not to the adjective “firm.” The proposition, “the heavens are a solid firmament,” is not a revealed proposition.

In the biblical narrative we need to determine what the author wished to teach and to avoid confusing the phrasing with the proposition itself. The proposition formally contains the subject, the verb “is,” and the predicate, for example, the heavens were created by God. The phrasing frequently contains modifications to describe the subject as it was conceived by the ancients, for example, the heavens, which the ancients understood to be something solid, were created by God. As the Biblical Commission says:

“Not every word and phrase found in the aforesaid chapters must always and necessarily be accepted in its proper sense.” Similarly, these chapters of Genesis do not deal with the nature of light, geological strata, or biological laws in a scientific manner. Nor did the author of Genesis intend to give the complete order of creation; he merely spoke of things that were better known to the people. He does not always follow a chronological order, for example, we cannot infer from Genesis that light preceded the formation of the sun, although we are told that light was made on the first day and the “lights in the firmament of heaven” were made on the fourth day.

First doubt. About what facts must the literal historical sense not be called into doubt?

Reply. “In particular about the facts that refer to the foundation of the Christian religion, such as, among others, the creation of all things by God in the beginning of time; the special creation of man; the formation of the first woman out of man; the unity of the human race; the original happiness of our first parents in the state of justice, integrity, and immortality; the precept given by God to test man’s obedience; the transgression of the divine commandment prompted by the devil under the guise of the serpent; the fall of our first parents from that primal state of innocence; and the promise of the future Redeemer.”

Second doubt. “Presupposing this literal and historical sense, can an allegorical and prophetic interpretation be given wisely and fruitfully to certain passages of these chapters?” The Biblical Commission answered in the affirmative. In this the Commission followed the precedent of many of the Fathers, especially St. Augustine, and of the Church itself.

St. Augustine and the Alexandrian school held that the whole universe had been created in one instant and that Moses had distinguished between six days merely to give his narrative a logical plan. Others have held that Moses presented in logical order six prophetic visions in which the creation of the world was revealed. This latter theory is admissible if these visions are held to contain a popular historical description of the works of God. According to St. Thomas, the Mosaic narrative logically distinguishes between a threefold operation, namely, that of creation, of distinction, and of ornamentation. This does not militate against the popular-historical character of the narrative.

Third doubt. Whether in this distinction of six days the word “Yom” (day) can be taken in its proper sense, as a natural day, or in an improper

sense, as a period of time?

Following the reply of the Biblical Commission, exegetes are permitted to dispute freely on this point.

The Concordists hold that the six days represent six periods of indefinite duration, as philology allows and as paleontology requires. Thus, according to the Concordists, the geological phases are in accord with the Mosaic narrative, at least in broad outline. But many scholars question whether this agreement can be supported today. No need exists to establish a positive harmony between the Mosaic narrative and the natural sciences since there is no proof that Moses wished to follow a chronological order.

In the words of St. Thomas: “In questions of this kind two things must be observed. First, the truth of Scripture must be maintained inviolate. Secondly, since Sacred Scripture may be explained in many ways, no one should hold so tenaciously to a particular interpretation that if it turned out that what he thought was the true sense of the Scriptures was certainly wrong he would nevertheless assert his own interpretation, so that the Scriptures would not be exposed to ridicule by infidels and the infidels themselves kept from believing in the Scriptures.”

We should note the important truths that are defended in questions 65 to 74: God created all things, visible and invisible; the divine goodness is the end of all corporeal things; the corporeal forms which bodies have in their original production were produced immediately by God; matter was never without a substantial form, otherwise being would be in act without act, which is a contradiction; time began with movement, of which it is the measure. The ancients thought that the heavenly bodies were incorruptible and that they were not composed of the same matter as sublunary bodies. Spectral analysis, however, has shown that the same chemical combinations exist in the stars as in terrestrial bodies. Modern scientists, however, admit the existence of the ether, which appears to be incorruptible.

Transformism And The Origin Of Life

State of the question. The question of the origin of life and of the different species of living things is one of the most important of those that pertain to the creation of corporeal things. The modern theory of transformism was scarcely mentioned among the ancient philosophers, although St. Thomas sometimes spoke of the hypothesis of the appearance of new species. This problem is in some way connected with the old

question of universals: whether the universals are fundamentally in individual beings according to their unchangeable nature.

Transformism may be either absolute or moderate.

Absolute transformism holds that matter is uncaused, that it exists of itself from eternity, and that from it by successive transformations have issued different living beings, that is, vegetative, sensitive, and intellectual life. (Huxley and Darwin.)

Moderate transformism holds that matter is not uncaused but is created by God, that it is not eternal, that the first living beings were created by God, and that God intervened in a special way to produce sensitive life, in the formation of the human body and in the creation of the spiritual soul. This moderate transformism refers to the production of various species of plants and animals which derive by successive transformations from the first living beings. Some of those who hold a moderate transformism think that all plants and animals come from different species created by God; others think that all plants came from one species and all animals came from one species of animal. Those who support the theory of transformism are not agreed on the definition of species; what one calls species another may call a variation.

Absolute transformism. This theory manifestly contradicts faith and reason inasmuch as it denies all intervention by God. It is directly opposed to the dogma of creation (“In the beginning God created heaven and earth”), since it teaches that matter has no cause and is eternal. This theory is opposed to all the proofs for the existence of God, and it implies that more is produced by less, the more perfect by the imperfect. This is at the same time against the principle of contradiction or identity, against the principle of the reason of being, the principle of efficient causality, and the principle of finality. It implies an ascending evolution, in which something more perfect appears without any reason, without any efficient cause, without an end, and without order. This theory destroys all intelligibility of things, as we have explained at length on another occasion. Such an evolution of species would be entirely fortuitous, without any preconceived idea or finality, and no reason is supplied for the wonderful subordination and coordination of things in nature.

In even the most ancient species, as we know from fossils, the organs are adapted to an end, coordinated with one another, and subordinated to the preservation of the individual and the species. All this cannot be attributed

to chance; it presupposes an intelligent cause. Chance is a cause <per accidens>, a cause that is accidentally connected with a cause <per se>, and therefore an accidental cause cannot be the first cause of the order in things, for then order would come from the privation of order, and intelligibility would come from unintelligibility. What would be more absurd than to say that the intellects of the great doctors and the charity of the saints derived from a blind and material fate? The greater cannot be produced by the lesser. Hence absolute transformism substitutes the most patent absurdity for the mystery of creation.

This refutation of absolute transformism is confirmed by experience, which shows that every living thing comes from another living being and that there is no spontaneous generation. Pasteur and Tyndall demonstrated that no living beings are generated where all ova and seed have been destroyed. Such bacteria as are said to be generated in the atmosphere do not come from inanimate matter but from ova existing in the atmosphere. Huxley himself admitted Pasteur's conclusions.

St. Thomas held that certain animal life was generated by putrefaction under the influence of the sun. His explanation was as follows: "A heavenly body, since it is a moving thing that is moved, has the nature of an instrument which acts with the power of the principal agent; and therefore it can cause life by virtue of its mover, which is a living substance." St. Thomas never admitted that the more perfect being can be produced by the less perfect.

Moderate transformism. This theory does not oppose the teaching of faith. The words of Genesis ("And God said: Let the earth bring forth the green herb, and such as may seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after its kind") show that there was some difference among the species that God created, but they do not assert that all species were immediately created by God. St. Thomas himself said: "If certain new species should appear, these have existed previously in certain active forces; in this way what is generated by animal putrefaction is produced by the power of the stars and the elements," that is, "by the power of the mover (of the stars), which is a living substance." Thus St. Thomas maintains inviolate the principle of causality, according to which the more perfect cannot be produced by a less perfect being as a fully sufficient cause.

Lastly, it is difficult to say where true variation begins and where species leaves off in the ontological sense. Generally interfecundation is held to be

the sign of membership in the same species. If it is pointed out that the horse and the ass generate the mule, it should be remembered that the mule is sterile, that is, it does not propagate a species. Here we have confirmation of the principle that operation follows being, and the mode of operation follows the mode of being; from this it follows that every animal generates offspring similar to itself in species. Ontological species therefore are immutable. But it is difficult to say when two animals belong to the same species properly so called or to two similar species. We do not have a clear enough understanding of the specific difference between living sensible beings; their specific forms are deeply immersed in matter and hardly intelligible to us. We know them only in a descriptive manner, empirically.

But when we come to man, we clearly understand his specific difference because it is not immersed in matter. Man's reason or rationality is a form of intellectuality, and intelligence is distinctly intelligible to itself because it is essentially ordered to the cognition of intelligible being itself and the reasons for the being of things.

It is clear, then, that the human soul cannot be educed from the potency of matter; on the other hand the specific form of plants and animals is educed from matter by way of generation.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

MAN

Prologue

In its consideration of the nature of man theology treats only of I man's soul, and of his body only with regard to the relationship of the body to the soul. Therefore St. Thomas considers the human soul in its essence, in its union with the body, and then he considers the faculties of the soul. In this treatise he considers acts of the intellective faculty, leaving the acts and habits of the appetitive faculty to moral theology. Finally St. Thomas considers the first production of man and the state of the first man.

Today many of the questions of the first part of this treatise are dealt with in rational psychology, and therefore we select only the more important questions that pertain to dogmatic theology and present them in two sections.

I. The human soul. 1. The spirituality and immortality of the human soul (q. 75). 2. The union of the soul with the body (q. 76). 3. The faculties of the soul (q. 77-83). 4. The manner in which the soul knows itself (q. 87). 5. The separated soul (q. 89).

II. The first production of man (q. 90-102). 1. The origin of man. 2. The elevation of man to the supernatural state. 3. The fall of man.

The theological character of this treatise. St. Thomas does not here follow the ascending order of the philosophical treatise <De anima>. The philosopher ascends progressively from sensible things to the spiritual and the divine, from vegetative life to sensitive life and then to the intellective life, whose acts reveal the spirituality and immortality of the soul. Theology, on the other hand, having God in His intimate life as its proper object, first considers man as God's creature. Therefore, after the treatise on God, on creation in general, on the angels, theology treats of the human soul. This begins with the soul's spirituality and immortality, proceeding

then to the soul’s union with the body, the soul’s faculties and acts, the separated soul, the production of the first man, and the state of the first man.

Besides this, in these questions St. Thomas follows the doctrinal method, which is a departure from the methods of the Averroistic philosophers and the Augustinian theologians, who preceded him.

Averroes held that the human intellect was the lowest of the intellects, but that it was an immaterial form, eternal, separate from individuals, and numerically one. In his view this human intelligence was at the same time the intellectus agens and the intellectus possibilis, and human reason was impersonal but it illumined individual souls. Hence Averroes denied the personal immortality of individual souls and their liberty. This doctrine was taught in the thirteenth century by the Latin Averroists, Siger of Brabant and Boethius of Dacia, against whom St. Thomas wrote his treatise, <De unitate intellectus> contra averroistas.

On the other hand, the Augustinian theologians who preceded St. Thomas, among them Alexander of Hales and St. Bonaventure, admitted a plurality of substantial forms in man and held that there was spiritual matter in the human soul. They insisted on this conclusion because the intellective soul is independent of the body and because they were unable to explain the natural unity of the human composite.

In opposition to these mutually opposing theories, St. Thomas sought to prove that the rational soul is purely spiritual, without any matter, that it is therefore incorruptible, but that it is nevertheless the one and only form of the human body, intrinsically independent of matter in its intellective and voluntary operations, and therefore after its separation from the body it is individuated in its being by its natural relation to one body rather than to another.

Scotus and Suarez, however, sought to retain certain propositions taught by the older, pre-Thomistic Scholasticism.

The Spirituality And Immortality Of The Soul: Question 75

The spirituality of the soul is often affirmed in Sacred Scripture. 1. God is said to have formed the body of Adam from the slime of the earth, and into this body He breathed the breath of life, that is, the soul, which is spiritual since man was made to the image of God, who is a spirit. 2. Those things predicated of the sheol presuppose the immortality of the soul, as does also the resurrection of certain human beings. 3. The spirituality and immortality of the soul are expressly stated in the prophetical and sapiential

books, and in the Books of the Machabees. 4. In the New Testament the human soul is said to be entirely distinct from the body, immortal, and capable of eternal life: “Fear ye not them that kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him that can destroy both soul and body in hell”; “For what man knoweth the things of a man, but the spirit of a man that is in him?”

The Fathers frequently affirm the spirituality and immortality of the soul; in general their teaching is that the soul is incorporeal, immortal, and created by God.

The Fourth Council of the Lateran declared that the human creature “is constituted of a spirit and a body.”

As Denzinger notes at the end of his systematic index, the Church has declared that the human soul is not generated by the parents, that the intellective soul is not evolved from the sensitive soul, that the soul is substance, not numerically one in all but one in each individual, that it is created by God from nothing, that it does not pre-exist, is not a part of the divine substance, and is immortal.

St. Thomas proves the spirituality of the soul from reason as follows: “It is clear that whatever is received in another is received after the manner of that in which it is received; thus whatever is known is known according to the form it has in the one who knows. The intellective soul, however, knows a thing in its absolute nature, for example, a stone, which is known absolutely as a stone. In the intellective soul the form of the stone is absolute according to its formal nature. Therefore the intellective soul is an absolute form, not something composed of matter and form. If the intellective soul were composed of matter and form, the forms of things would be received in it as individuals, and the soul would know only the individual, as is the case with the sensitive powers, which receive the forms of things in a corporeal organ.”

This demonstration becomes clearer the more our knowledge abstracts from matter. Following Aristotle, St. Thomas distinguishes three degrees of abstraction. In the first degree our intellect abstracts only from individual matter, knowing, for example, not this mineral, this plant, or this animal, but the nature of the mineral, plant, or animal and the reason underlying their functions. In the second degree our intellect abstracts from sensible matter, or from all sensible qualities and considers the nature of the triangle, circle, sphere, or of numbers, and deduces the necessary and universal laws

of their properties, which thus become intelligible and not merely imaginable. Now it becomes clear that the idea of the circle is not only a composite image or the average of individual circles, but expresses the nature of the circle which is verified either in the small, or large, or average circle, and this nature contains the reason for the properties of the circle, which thus become truly intelligible, whereas the image of the circle contains only the sensible phenomena without any intelligibility. Finally in the third degree of abstraction our intellect abstracts from all matter and attains to intelligible being, which is not accessible to the senses or to the imagination, either as a sensible property (color, sound, etc.) or as something sensible in common (as size, figure), but is accessible only to the intellect. Such reasons for the being of things as well as the properties of being, namely, one, true, and good, can also be attributed to pure spirits.

Only the intellect, not the senses or the imagination, can know the intelligible being of things and the first necessary and universal principles of being; the senses and the imagination know only the sensible qualities of things and the individual, not the absolutely necessary and universal principles of contradiction, identity, the nature of being, efficient causality, finality, etc., by which all things gradually become intelligible and by which we demonstrate the existence of the first cause and the first intelligence, which orders all things.

In this third degree of abstraction our intellect knows itself as essentially related to the immaterial, and therefore it must itself be immaterial. Its object is not color or sound or the different sensible phenomena, but the intelligible being of things, and therefore all its concepts presuppose the most universal concept of being. So also in all its judgments the verb is reduced to the verb “is,” which is, as it were, the soul of the judgment, and every ratiocination assigns the reason for the being of the conclusion.

Our intellect is therefore essentially related to intelligible being and to the absolutely necessary and universal principles of being because of the abstraction from all matter, and therefore our intellect itself is immaterial. Consequently the intellective soul also is entirely immaterial and intrinsically independent of the organism, since operation follows being and the mode of operation follows the mode of being.

This is the principal proof for the spirituality of the soul, which St. Thomas adopted from Aristotle.

The imagination cannot attain to the knowledge of a necessary and universal principle, for example, the principle of causality, nor to the first principle of ethics, that the moral good (transcending the sensible, delectable, or useful good) is to be done and evil is to be avoided. In this, man is essentially superior to even the higher animals.

This argument is corroborated by several subordinate arguments.

1. The spirituality of the soul is also proved by the fact that it is able to know the nature of all bodies. “When a thing is able to know other things, it is fitting that it have nothing of these things in its nature, because that which might be in it naturally would impede the knowledge of the other things, just as the tongue that is infected with a bitter taste finds all things bitter.”

Much has been written about the validity of this argument. If it is offered independently from the preceding argument, it is rather difficult, but it is comparatively simple as a confirmation of the preceding argument. These two arguments are taken from direct intellection.

2. The spirituality of the soul is also proved from reflex intellection. “The action of no body is reflected back on the agent; as was shown in Physica (Bk. VII, chap. I); no body is moved by itself except with respect to a part, so that one part of the body moves and another is moved. Our intellect, however, acting on itself reflects back on itself by complete reflection, it understands itself not only with regard to a part but with regard to its totality. Therefore it is not a body.” In other words, the intellective soul is entirely devoid of integrating parts and extension.

Moreover, as St. Thomas says: “Our intellect reflects on its own act, not only inasmuch as it knows its act but also inasmuch as it knows its relation to the thing (the extramental thing that is known), which is something that cannot be known unless the nature of the act itself is known together with the nature of the intellect itself.” Thus our intellect knows itself as ordered to the cognition of truth, just as the feet are ordered to walking and wings are ordered to flying. But the cognition of truth is not something corporeal like walking; it is spiritual, revealing the spirituality of the soul.

3. Through the intellect the soul conceives immaterial and spiritual things, among these the eternal, infinite, holy God, the first cause of all being; it conceives even revealed mysteries, which entirely transcend the capabilities of the sensitive faculties, such as the infinite value of the Redemption and of the love of the Son of God, dying on the cross.

4. The spirituality of the soul is confirmed by the object of the will, inasmuch as the will follows the intellect. Our will, specified by the universal good as known by the intellect, is ordered not only to the delectable or useful sensible good but also to the moral, or reasonable, or spiritual good, according to the various virtues of temperance, fortitude, justice, and equity. We know from experience that, while the same material goods, the same house, the same field, cannot be possessed entirely at the same time by many persons, the same spiritual goods, such as the same truth or the same virtue, can be possessed entirely and at the same time by many persons, as St. Augustine and St. Thomas frequently point out. Lastly, our souls by their natural desires are attracted more to spiritual objects than to corporeal things; indeed the soul naturally is drawn to God the author of nature, the principle of truth, of goodness, and of beauty, who is to be loved above all things and even more than ourselves.

5. Further confirmation is had from human freedom inasmuch as our will, specified by the universal good, remains free with regard “to every object that is not good in every respect.” This reveals the universal scope and immeasurable depth of our will, which cannot be filled except by the clear vision of God.

6. In man we find a moral conscience, which threatens him when he is about to do wrong and torments him with remorse if he commits the wrong. Only an immaterial and spiritual nature is capable of such a conscience. Moral laws are not imposed on blind matter.

From all this we conclude that, although the human soul is dependent on the senses for the presentation of its proper object, which is the intelligible being of sensible things, it is not dependent on an organism in its specific operation, or in its being (since operation follows being, and the mode of operation follows the mode of being), or in its production, that is, the soul is not educed from matter.

Therefore, as we shall see in the next chapter, the human soul and the body unite in the one being of man in such a way that the soul does not depend on the body in being but communicates its being to the body.

The incorruptibility of the soul follows from the spirituality of the soul, or its intrinsic independence of matter. Every simple and subsisting form (that is, immaterial and intrinsically independent of matter) is incorruptible <per se> and <per accidens>. But the human soul is not only simple, like the soul of the animal, it is also subsisting and intrinsically independent of

matter. Therefore it cannot be corrupted either <per se> (because of its simplicity) or <per accidens> when the composite is corrupted (because of its intrinsic independence of matter both in being and in its specific operation).

By God's absolute power, of course, the soul can be annihilated, since annihilation is not repugnant and since the soul needs to be preserved by God. But by His power as directed by His wisdom God does not annihilate a creature which is both <per se> and <per accidens> incorruptible according to the laws established by God Himself. God does not annihilate the soul even miraculously or by an extraordinary use of His power, because, from the viewpoint of the end, there is no motive for such action; such an action is not good in itself, nor can it be directed to a greater good. On the other hand God can permit sin for a greater good, namely, for the manifestation of mercy and justice. The soul, therefore, is immortal by its very nature.

We see from this, in opposition to Scotus, that the immortality of the human soul is not only known by faith but can also be demonstrated by natural reason.

St. Thomas adds the following argument: "In cognitive beings desire follows knowledge. The senses know being only under the aspect of the here and now, but the intellect understands being absolutely and as it is in all time. Hence every being that possesses an intellect naturally desires to be at all times. A natural desire cannot be futile. Therefore every intellectual substance is incorruptible."

The brute animal does not desire to be always but only here and now, for example, at the moment when it is threatened with death, because the animal does not know being absolutely in all time. Man himself does not naturally desire the immortality of his body, which is naturally mortal, but the soul of man, which knows being absolutely as in all time, naturally desires to be always, and this is a sign that the soul is naturally immortal. This desire of the soul is not a conditional and inefficacious desire, like the desire for the beatific vision, which is essentially supernatural and gratuitous; this desire is for the natural being of the soul to be preserved continually.

Finally, from the fact that the human soul is spiritual it follows that it is not in the potency of matter like the soul of the animal, nor can it be produced by generation. It can be produced only by God by creation from

nothing, that is, from no pre-existing subject. That which operates independently of matter also exists and becomes, or rather is produced, independently of matter. Hence we find among the twenty-four propositions approved by the Sacred Congregation of Studies : “Intellectuality necessarily follows immateriality, and the degree of intellectuality depends on the degree of remoteness from matter” (no. 18).

The human intelligence, therefore, is the lowest of all the intelligences, and correspondingly its proportionate object is the lowest intelligible being, namely, that of sensible things, in which as in a mirror the human intelligence knows higher things.

CHAPTER XXXIX

THE UNION OF THE SOUL WITH THE BODY

This an article of faith that the intellective soul is <per se> and essentially the form of the body. This truth was defined by the Council of Vienne (1311-12): “We define that if anyone shall presume to assert, defend, or hold that the rational or intellective soul is not <per se> and essentially the form of the human body, he shall be considered a heretic.” In these words the Council of Vienne condemned the error of Olivi, who taught that the rational soul informed the body not <per se> but that it did so through the vegetative and sensitive faculties.

This definition states three things. 1. The human soul is the form of the human body, or the soul is substantially united to the body as form to matter, not like a mover to a thing that is moved, but constituting one nature with the body. 2. This union is <per se> and not through another, not through the mediation of a sensitive or vegetative principle, but directly and immediately through the soul. 3. The union is essential, that is, by the essence of the soul and not through some faculty, or consciousness of operation, or some accidental influx, so that the essence of the soul is the radical principle of the vegetative and sensitive operations together with the body with which it is united.

Among the condemned propositions of Rosmini we find: “The union of the soul and the body properly consists in an immanent perception by which the subject, comprehending an idea, affirms the sensible part, after having comprehended its own essence in the idea.”

In a declaration against the false doctrine of A. Guenther, Pius IX said: “The rational soul is the true form of the body, <per se> and immediate.”

Cardinal Zigliara concludes: “The fathers of the Council of Vienne used the word ‘form’ in its strict scholastic sense,” which was the sense commonly accepted by those to whom the Council addressed itself. The

Council, however, as Zigliara points out, did not wish to condemn Scotus' thesis which admits the form of corporeity besides the rational soul. Hence the Council did not define that the rational soul was the only form of the human body, but rather that it is the substantial form and the principle of the vegetative and sensitive life of the human body.

Corollary. Hence, as Vacant points out, it cannot be admitted that there are several souls in man, as the Gnostics, Manichaeans, Apollinaris, and Guenther said. We must hold that the intellective soul is the only soul in man and the principle of the vegetative, sensitive, and intellectual life of man, even though it has not been defined that it is the only form. Indeed, Palmieri was able to make a defense for his atomism, according to which the rational soul is still the principle of even vegetative life.

St. Thomas, however, proves from reason that the rational soul is not only the form of the human body and the only soul in man but also that it is the only form because if any other substantial form existed beforehand it would follow that the soul was only accidentally united to the body.

St. Thomas wrote: "That by which anything is primarily operated is the form to which the operation is attributed..... But it is evident that that by which the body lives primarily is the soul....For it is the soul by which we are nourished, feel, move in place, and by which also we primarily think..... For it is the same man who perceives that he thinks and feels; and feeling cannot take place without the body..... If the intellect is not united to Socrates' body, except as the mover of the body, Socrates would not be absolutely one, and consequently he would not be a simple being."

Nevertheless the rational soul is not immersed in matter, for as St. Thomas says: "The more noble a form is the more it dominates the corporeal matter and the less it is immersed in it, and the more it excels the matter by its operation and power." "The soul communicates that being in which it subsists to the corporeal matter..... For this reason, when the body is destroyed, the soul retains its own being, which is not true of other forms."

The intellective principle is multiplied as the human bodies are multiplied; otherwise Socrates and Plato would be one intelligence. "If there were but one intellect in all men, the variety of phantasms found in this man and that could not cause the variety of intellectual operations of this or that man." When it is separated from its body the soul remains

individuated, because it preserves its natural relation to this particular body rather than to another.

Nor are there other souls in man, because then man would not be simply one, “for nothing is simply one except by one form.” “The intellective soul contains the sensitive soul of the animal and the nutritive soul of the plants, just as the pentagon contains the tetragon.”

Nor is the form of corporeity in man distinct from the intellective soul “because the substantial form confers being absolutely. If besides the intellective soul some other substantial form existed beforehand in matter by which the subject of the soul would be in act, it would follow that the soul would not confer being absolutely and that consequently it would not be the substantial form.” This was the opinion held by Thomists at all times in opposition to Scotus and his followers. “That which is <per se> one, namely, one nature, does not come into being out of two acts but out of potency and act. This was Cajetan’s conclusion from the words of Aristotle himself.

Finally, it is fitting that the intellective soul be united to a proper body for the purpose of sensation to become a human body, because “the intellective soul is the lowest grade of intellectual substances,” and therefore its proportionate object is the lowest intelligible being of sensible things, knowable through the senses. “Hence it is proper that the intellective soul have not only the power of intellection but also the power of sensation. The action of the senses, however, does not take place without a corporeal instrument. It is proper, therefore, that the intellective soul be united to a body which can be a proper organ for the senses.”

Thus man is a microcosm in which there is the being of the stone, life as we find it in plants and animals, and intellection as it is in the angels. And in man we see the highest degree of the lowest form of life, namely the highest degree of sensitive life as found in the imagination, and at the same time the lowest degree of the highest kind of life, namely, the lowest degree of intellection. The human species appears, therefore, as a unique species, that is, there cannot be several ontologically distinct species of rational animals. In this one species the highest degree of the lowest life unites with the lowest degree of the highest life, while an immeasurable distance remains between sensitive and intellective life.

Solution Of The Objections

The principal objection against the doctrine that the intellective soul is the only form of the body is the following. An intellective power cannot be the form of a body. But an intellective substance is more noble than its power. Therefore an intellective substance cannot be the form of a body.

St. Thomas replied: “The human soul is not a form immersed in corporeal matter, or completely comprehended by matter, because of the perfection of the soul, and therefore there is nothing to prohibit some power of the soul from being the act of the body, although the soul by its essence is the form of the body.”

In other words, the intellective soul is the form of the body inasmuch as it is eminently and formally vegetative and sensitive, or inasmuch as the intellective soul does for the human body what the sensitive soul does for the animal and what the vegetative soul does for plants. In this manner the intellective soul is virtually multiple.

This teaching is sometimes misunderstood to mean that the intellective soul is virtually sensitive and vegetative. On the contrary, according to the interpretation of Cajetan, Ferrariensis, and John of St. Thomas, the intellective soul is eminently and formally vegetative and sensitive. It is God alone who virtually possesses vegetative and sensitive life, as He possesses other mixed perfections which He can produce, and God cannot be the form of the human body.

The intellective soul contains vegetative and sensitive life eminently and formally, just as God in the sublimity of the Deity formally contains the absolutely perfect perfections, such as being, intellection, love. The soul therefore can be the form of the human body, but this would be impossible if the soul were only virtually and not formally vegetative and sensitive.

But, as in God the absolutely perfect perfections are only virtually distinct, so the sensitive, vegetative, and corporeal forms are only virtually distinct in the intellective soul. This is the clear teaching of St. Thomas. Some have caused confusion on this point by saying that the vegetative and sensitive parts are only virtually in the soul because St. Thomas said that the intellective, sensitive, and vegetative parts are only virtually distinct. The term “virtually” refers to “distinguish” and not to the verb “is,” as when we speak of the absolutely perfect perfections in God.

Moreover, it would be repugnant for the soul to be the immediate principle of such diverse operations as those of vegetative, sensitive, and intellectual life, but it is not repugnant that the soul produce these

operations through the mediation of various subordinate faculties. No created substance, not even the angel, is immediately operative; it cannot understand except through the intellective faculty, nor can it will except through the will. The created essence is ordered to being, but the operative faculties are ordered to operations and are specified by the formal object of these operations.

The twofold principle for the solution of the objections against this traditional doctrine is: the intellective soul is the form of the body, and yet it is in no way immersed in matter. This teaching is well stated as the sixteenth of the Thomistic propositions approved by the Sacred Congregation of Studies : “This same rational soul is united to the body in such a way that it is the only substantial form of the body, and through this form man is man, animal, living, a body, substance, and being. This form therefore confers on man every essential degree of perfection; besides this the soul confers on the body the act of being by which it itself is.” For the Thomists this proposition is certain according to the principles that refer to the distinction between potency and act, and between essence and being. Suarez, on the contrary, who conceived these principles otherwise, held that it was only probable that the rational soul is the only form of the body. Denying the real distinction between created essence and being, he said that the substantial being of man cannot be one, but that there is a twofold being just as there are two parts in the essence of man, namely, matter and form. As in the question of creation, so here also Suarez differs considerably from St. Thomas.

From St. Thomas’ principles concerning the distinction between potency and act it follows that the human soul and body unite in the one being of man in such a way that the soul does not depend on the body for being, but communicates its being to the body; and after the separation from the body, the soul can again communicate its being to the body, as happens in the resurrection of the dead. From the same principles it follows that there is one being in Christ, namely, the being of the Word, communicated to the human nature, which does not subsist except in the Word.

This doctrine of the spirituality and personal immortality of the soul shows how St. Thomas Christianized that Aristotelianism which the Averroists interpreted in a pantheistic sense. We see this likewise in the question of free creation from nothing. In these two questions the holy doctor shows how the principles supporting the preambles of faith are

demonstrated and explained by the Aristotelian teaching on potency and act.

CHAPTER XL

QUESTIONS 77-83 THE FACULTIES OF THE SOUL

The questions in the <Summa theologica> from seventy-seven to eighty-three, treating of the distinction and subordination of the faculties of the soul, are governed by the principle that “the faculties, acts, and habits are specified by the formal object to which they are essentially ordered, that is, by the formal object which they touch on immediately and by the formal motive under which they attain their object.” More briefly: the relative is specified by the absolute to which it is essentially ordered. In his work, De tribus principiis doctrinae S. Thomae, A. Reginaldus enunciates this principle as the third. The other two principles are: being is transcendental and analogical, and God is pure act. Indeed this third principle illumines all psychology and ethics, as well as all moral theology and the theological treatises on the angels and man.

From this principle it follows first that the faculties are really distinguished from the soul, because as the soul is ordered to its own being the faculties are ordered to operation, and operation presupposes being and is distinct from it. Moreover, no creature is immediately operative; to operate it requires an operative faculty. Hence the human soul, like the angel, cannot understand except through the intellective faculty, nor can it will except through the will. When we speak in this way it is not because of the usages of language but because the very nature of things requires it. As the essence of the soul is the real capacity for existence, so the intellect is the real capacity for knowing truth, and the will is the capacity for willing what is proposed as good. Hence by reason of this principle the faculties of the soul are really distinct from each other according to their formal objects.

Only in God are essence, existence, intellect, intellection, will, and love identified without any real distinction. Even in the angel there is a real

distinction between essence and being, between the essence and the faculties, between the faculties themselves, between the intellect and successive intellections, and between the will and successive volitions. Such is also the case with the human soul.

Instead of a real distinction Scotus introduced his formal-actual distinction derived from the nature of the thing as a middle between the real distinction and the distinction of reason. To this the Thomists reply that either this new distinction is antecedent to the consideration of our minds, and then it is real, or it is not antecedent to the consideration of the mind, and then it is a distinction of reason based on the nature of the thing, that is, a virtual distinction.

Suarez, an eclectic in these questions as in others, sought a middle way between St. Thomas and Scotus by saying that the distinction between the soul and its faculties is not certain but only probable. Here again it is evident that Suarez did not understand the distinction between potency and act as St. Thomas did.

From this same principle, that the faculties are specified by their formal object, we learn of the distinction and the immeasurable distance between the intellect and the sensitive faculties. These latter, no matter how perfect they may be, never attain to anything but sensible being, that is, sensible and imaginable phenomena; they do not penetrate to intelligible being, to the reasons for the being of things, or to the universal and necessary principles of contradiction, causality, finality. Nor do they attain to the first principle of ethics: Good is to be done and evil is to be avoided. This immeasurable distance between the intellect and the sensitive faculties is the foundation for the proof of the spirituality of the soul.

For the same reason the will, the rational appetite, is distinguished from the sensible appetite, both irascible and concupiscible. For the will, directed by the intellect, is specified by the universal good, which is known only by the intellect, whereas the sensitive appetite, which is immediately directed by the cognitive sensitive faculties, is specified not by the universal good but by the sensible, delectable, and useful good. Therefore the sensitive appetite, as such, cannot will the rational or moral good which is the object of virtue. However, under the direction of prudence, the virtues of temperance and fortitude, which are in the sensitive appetite disciplined and regulated by reason, are specified by the moral good as demanding preservation in circumstances of enjoyment or attack.

This profound distinction between the will and sensibility is not acknowledged by many modern psychologists, particularly after J. J. Rousseau.

From what we have said it follows that the sensitive faculties are in the human composite as in their immediate subject as well as in the particular animated organ, whereas the intellect and the will, which are intrinsically independent of the organism, are not in the human composite but in the soul alone as in their immediate subject.

The definition of liberty. From this doctrine on the intellect and the will is derived what St. Thomas teaches about liberty. We have explained and defended this teaching on another occasion. Here we wish to point out the difference between the Thomistic definition of liberty and the definition proposed by Molina. According to Molina "that agent is said to be free which, when all the requirements are present for acting, is able to act or not act." What is the meaning of the words, "when all the requirements for acting are present"? They include not only those things that are prerequisite in time but also by the simple priority of nature and causality, such as actual grace received in the same instant in which the salutary act is elicited and the ultimate practical judgment is placed. Moreover, Molina's definition means not only that under the influence of efficacious grace liberty retains the ability to resist although it actually never resists, but that grace is not efficacious in itself but only that our consent is foreseen by scientia media prior to the divine decree.

According to the Thomists, Molina's definition is not sound because it does not take into consideration the object by which the free act is specified and in this way neglects the principle that acts are specified by their formal objects.

But if we take this specifying object into consideration, we must say with St. Thomas: "If an object is proposed to the will that is not good from every viewpoint, the will is not necessarily drawn to it." In other words, the Thomists say: "Liberty is that dominating indifference of the will with regard to an object proposed by reason as not good in every way."

The essence of liberty consists in the dominating indifference of the will with regard to every object proposed by the reason as good here and now under one aspect and not good under some other aspect. We are concerned first with the indifference of the exercise of the will with regard to willing or not willing this object. This indifference is potential in the free faculty

and actual in the free act. For while the will actually wills this object and while it is determined to willing the object, it still wills it freely with a dominating indifference that is now not potential but actual. In God, however, who is most free there is no potential or passive indifference but only an active and actual indifference. Liberty therefore arises from the disproportion that exists between the will specified by the universal good and the will specified by some particular good, some good under one aspect and not good or insufficient under another aspect.

The Thomists add that even by His absolute power God cannot force the will to will a particular object proposed with indifference of the judgment. Why? Because it implies a contradiction for the will necessarily to will an object proposed by the intellect as indifferent, that is, good under one aspect and not under another, or an object that is absolutely out of proportion to the unlimited capability of our will specified by the universal good.

The relation of choice to the final practical judgment. From the foregoing is derived the twenty-first of the twenty-four propositions approved by the Sacred Congregation of Studies: “The will does not precede but follows the intellect, and the will necessarily desires that which is presented to it as good in every way and thus satisfying the (rational) appetite. But the will freely chooses among several goods that are proposed as desirable to the changeable judgment. The choice therefore allows the final practical judgment, and the will effects that which is final.” The choice follows freely upon the final practical judgment by which it is directed, and the will does that which is final by accepting the direction of the judgment. But the will is able to apply the intellect to another consideration which would lead to the opposite practical judgment. Here we see the influence that the intellect and the will have on each other; it is, as it were, the marriage of the intellect and will. Thus the consent of the will does whatever accepted practical judgment remains as final.

This intellectual direction is necessary because the will itself is blind, and nothing is willed unless first known as acceptable. This is an application of the principle that causes are causes with regard to each other but in different genera of causes. The intellect directs with respect to the specification of the act, and the will applies the intellect with respect to the exercise of its act, and it applies the intellect to a certain consideration as it is inclined to it.

Scotus and Suarez however held that it was not necessary that the choice be directed immediately by the final practical judgment. According to Suarez, the will is able to choose one of two equal or unequal goods even though the intellect does not propose it to us as better here and now. To this the Thomists reply that nothing is willed here and now unless it is first known as more acceptable to us here and now; each one judges according to his actual inclination, which however does not force us and can be removed.

The intellect and the will are not coordinated; the will is subordinated to the direction of the intellect in such a way however that the final practical judgment about an object that is not good under every aspect is free and not compelling. This is the indifference of the judgment which is followed by the dominating indifference of the will.

CHAPTER XLI

THE ACTS OF THE INTELLECTIVE PART OF THE SOUL; HOW THE SOUL KNOWS ITSELF

In questions eighty-four to eighty-eight of the first part of the <Summa theologica>, St. Thomas treats only of the acts and habits of the intellective part of the soul, because the acts and habits of the appetitive part are considered in moral theology and because the operations of the sensitive part do not directly pertain to theology. St. Thomas asks: 1. how the soul joined to the body understands corporeal things (q. 84); by what means it knows them (q. 85); what it understands in them (q. 86); 2. how the soul knows itself and the things that are in itself (q. 87); 3. how the soul knows the things that are above, that is, immaterial substances (q. 88).

It should be noted particularly that for St. Thomas the adequate object of our intellect, as intellect, is intelligible being in the entire extent of being. Hence we are able to know God naturally as the first cause, and supernaturally we can be elevated to the direct vision of the divine essence, which is not outside the full extent of being.

But the proper or proportionate object of the human intellect, as human, is the essence of sensible things, since the lowest intelligible being of sensible things, knowable by means of the senses, corresponds to the lowest intellect. Hence our intellect is united to the senses. Hence also we know God and spiritual substances naturally only by analogy, in the mirror of sensible things. In the state of union with the body our souls do not know spiritual things directly as does the angel, and therefore it conceives spiritual being as immaterial, and this is a sign that the soul first knows the nature of material things, such as the nature of stones, plants, and animals.

In particular it is asked whether the soul as united to the body knows itself through its essence. In <De veritate> St. Thomas examines the arguments pro and con at great length, and in the <Summa theologica> he

proceeds in a simpler way and says: “Whatever is knowable is knowable as it is in act..... For sight does not perceive the colored thing in potency but only in act. And so it is with the intellect..... Thus it is that we do not know prime matter except in its relation to the form. Hence in immaterial substances, just as each one is in act by its essence so each one is intelligible by its essence..... God, who is pure act and from whom all things proceed, not only knows Himself but all things through His essence. The essence of the angel is in the genus of intelligible being as it is act, but not pure act..... Hence the angel knows itself through its essence, but the angel does not know everything through its essence; it knows some things through their representations. The position of the human intellect in the scale of intelligible beings is that of a being in potency, similar to the position of prime matter in the scale of sensible being, and therefore the human intellect is called possibilis. Considered in its essence, therefore, the human intellect is a cognitive potency. Of itself it has the power of intellection but it does not have the power of being known except when it is in act. But because it is connatural for our intellect in its present state to be concerned with material and sensible things, it follows that our intellect knows itself inasmuch as it is in act by means of the species abstracted from sensible things by the light of the intellectus agens, which is the act of these intelligible beings, and through the mediation of these intelligible species the intellectus possibilis understands. Our intellect therefore knows itself not through its essence but by its act.

This happens in two ways. First, in the particular when Socrates or Plato perceives that he has an intellective soul from the fact that he perceives that he understands. Secondly, in the universal when we study the human mind through the act of the intellect. But it is true that the efficacy of this knowledge, by which we understand the nature of the soul, is based on the light which our intellect derives from divine truth, in which the natures of all things are contained.

St. Thomas therefore arrives at the same conclusion that he reached in the <De veritate>: “Hence our mind cannot understand itself in the sense that it understands itself directly or immediately.” If the soul knew itself immediately through its own essence, its spirituality would be fully evident to the soul, and there would be no materialists, just as there are no materialists among the angels. But when the soul is separated from the

body, in the exact instant of the separation when the soul is no longer existing in the body, the soul will know itself through itself.

CHAPTER XLII

THE SEPARATED SOUL

In question 89 St. Thomas asks how the separated soul knows. The subjects of purgatory, heaven, and hell are treated in the treatise on the Last Things. Here we consider: 1. the subsistence of the separated soul; 2. its knowledge; 3. its unchangeable will, either in good or bad.

FIRST ARTICLE: THE SUBSISTENCE OF THE SEPARATED SOUL

The subsistence of the soul separated from the body is demonstrated by this principle: Every simple form that is intrinsically independent of matter (in its operation, its being, and in its production) subsists independently of matter and perdures after separation from the body. But the human soul is a simple form and is intrinsically independent of matter. Therefore the human soul subsists after the dissolution of its body.

The Averroists object that since the human soul is individuated by matter, or by its body, when it is separated from the. body it is no longer individuated, and hence nothing subsists except one soul for all men. Others went on to say that if the soul of St. Peter is saved, my soul is also saved, because after separation from the body my soul is not distinct from the soul of St. Peter.

Replying to the Averroists St. Thomas said that, just as the human soul has an essential (or transcendental) relation to the body of a man and not to that of a lion, so this human soul has an essential (or transcendental) relation to this particular body. And this relation remains in the soul even though the terminus of the relation no longer exists, and thus the separated soul remains individuated. If this relation were predicamental or accidental, like paternity, it would disappear with its terminus. But such is not the case with a non-accidental relation, which is founded directly on the very

substance of the soul. In the same way the essential relation of the faculty of sight reaches out to a colored object even though all colored things should be destroyed. The individuation of the rational soul therefore depends on the body in its becoming but not in its being, and thus there can be no question of metempsychosis. The human soul cannot inform the body of a brute animal, nor can the soul of Socrates inform Plato's body; each soul preserves its relation to its body and in this way remains individuated.

If the human soul were united only accidentally to the body, this particular soul would have only an accidental relation to this particular body, and this relation would disappear when the terminus is destroyed, that is, when the body is dissolved. But this is not true since the human soul is united to the body by its very nature, and together with the body the soul constitutes a being that is one <per se>, that is, one nature. Thus St. Thomas is always faithful to the principle of economy, according to which a question should not be explained by many principles if it can be explained by fewer principles. In this treatise, as in others, all the conclusions are deduced from a few exalted principles, and this makes for a greater unification of our science.

From the foregoing it follows that it is more perfect for the rational soul to be united to the body than to be separated from it, for this lowest intellect has for its proportionate object the lowest intelligible being, placed in the shadows of sensible being, and in order to know this kind of being the soul needs the senses, and therefore the body, which exists on account of the soul. Thus, <per se> the body is useful for the soul, although at times it may be a hindrance. The state of separation from the body, therefore, is preternatural for the soul; and the soul naturally desires to reinform its body, all of which is in full accord with the dogma of the general resurrection. The separated soul, however, cannot at will reassume its body, because it is the form of the body not by an action that is dependent on its will, but it is the form of the body by its nature. Operation follows being, and the soul does not have power over its own being; the being of both soul and body are under the power of God alone, and God alone can revive the body and He alone as the author of life can restore life to a corpse.

SECOND ARTICLE: THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE SEPARATED SOUL

The guiding principle in this entire question is still that the human intellect is the lowest of the intellects although it is purely spiritual.

It is certain that the sensitive operations of the internal and external senses do not remain in the separated soul; indeed the sensitive faculties are only radically in the soul. As they are in the soul they are not in act since they are in act only in the human composite. Similarly the habits of the sensitive faculties (for example, the habitual recollections of the sensitive memory) remain in the separated soul only radically.

On the other hand, the separated soul retains its higher faculties, which are purely spiritual, namely, the intellect and the will, as well as the habits of these faculties, both those that are acquired, as the sciences and virtues, and those that are infused, such as faith, hope, charity, prudence, religion, justice, penance, etc. Similarly the separated soul retains the acts of these superior faculties and their habits. The exercise of these faculties is, however, impeded to some extent because after separation the soul is without the cooperation of the imagination and the sensitive memory, which is helpful in the knowledge that is obtained from the species abstracted from sensible things.

Theologians commonly hold that the separated soul receives from God certain infused species in the instant of separation to overcome this impediment. These species are similar, although of a lower kind, to the angels' species, and are used by the soul without the assistance of the imagination. This procedure has an analogy in the case of an aging theologian. Because of his failing sight he can no longer peruse theological periodicals or new books on theology but he now becomes a man of prayer and enjoys more abundant inspirations from the Holy Ghost to enable him to arrive at a more profound understanding of theology. The separated soul, therefore, understands according to the mode of other spiritual substances that are separated from matter.

That the state of the separated soul is preternatural is evident from the fact that these infused ideas, although inferior to those of the angels, are too sublime for the capacity of the human intellect, which is the weakest of all intellects. The state of the separated soul is somewhat like that of a student uninitiated in the science of metaphysics who finds the lectures far above his comprehension; the newcomer in metaphysics prefers conventional argument based on common sense.

A twofold difficulty attends cognition by the separated soul: when it seeks to make use of acquired ideas it lacks the helpful cooperation of the imagination, and when it seeks to use infused ideas it finds them too sublime for its capabilities. But for this twofold difficulty some compensation is derived from the fact that the separated soul sees itself intuitively. Hence it clearly sees its own spirituality, immortality, and liberty, and in the reflection of its own essence it knows God the author of nature with perfect certitude. Thus the greatest philosophical problems are solved in a higher light. St. Thomas says, “to some degree the separated soul is freer in its intellection.”

The separated souls also naturally know each other perfectly although less perfectly than the angels, “and the separated soul knows the angels through divinely imprinted likenesses which, however, fail to be perfect representations because the nature of the human soul is inferior to the angel.”

St. Thomas shows that separated souls know individual things through infused species; but they do not know all of them as do the angels, only “those to which they are in some way determined either by previous knowledge, by some affection, by some natural relation, or by divine ordination, because everything that is received is received according to the mode of the recipient.” Local distance does not impede the soul’s knowledge of individuals, because this knowledge is derived from infused ideas and does not depend on the senses or on local distance.

Do the separated souls know what is happening here on earth? St. Thomas replies: “According to their natural knowledge the souls of the dead do not know what is happening here on earth. The reason is that the separated soul knows individual things inasmuch as it is determined to them by some vestige of previous knowledge or affection or by divine ordination. But the souls of the dead, by divine ordination and by the mode of their being, are segregated from intercourse with the living and joined in intercourse with spiritual substances, which are separated from the body. Hence they are ignorant of the things that happen among us.”

It is probable, however, that the souls of the blessed know all that is happening here on earth. They are equal to the angels, and, as St. Augustine says, the angels are not ignorant of what is happening among us. “But because the souls of the saints are most perfectly in accord with divine

justice, they are not saddened nor do they interest themselves in the affairs of the living except when the disposition of divine justice requires it."

St. Thomas also points out that "the souls of the dead (in purgatory) can be solicitous about the living, even though they are ignorant about the condition of the living, just as we are solicitous about the dead, offering our suffrages for them, although we are ignorant about their (particular) state. The souls of the dead cannot know through themselves what the living are doing, but they may have this knowledge either through the souls of those who join them from here below, or through the angels, or through the revelation of the spirit of God."

The duration of the separated soul that is not yet in the bliss of heaven is twofold, namely, aeviternity and discrete time. Aeviternity is the measure of their immobile substance and their immobile knowledge of themselves and of God, as well as of their immobile love, which results from this knowledge. Thus aeviternity does not imply the change of succession; it is simultaneously whole, but it is still not eternity, because it has beginning, at least in fact, and because it is compatible with before and after, that is, it has discrete time annexed to it.

In the separated souls and in the angels discrete time is the measure of successive thoughts and affections; each thought perdures for one spiritual instant, and the following thought is measured by another spiritual instant. Thus discrete time is the measure of the succession of the thoughts and affections of these souls and of the angels just as continuous time is the measure of continuous motion, for example, of the apparent movement of the sun. It should be noted that one spiritual instant, which is the measure of one thought, can last for several hours or days of solar time, as, for example, even here on earth a person in ecstasy may be absorbed for several hours in one and the same contemplation. The duration of that contemplation is one spiritual instant for that person.

The souls of the blessed in heaven have another duration, namely, participated eternity, which is the one stationary now of eternity by which the beatific vision and beatific love are measured, since these two acts last for eternity without interruption. We have then four kinds of duration; these may be represented symbolically by a pyramid or perhaps better by a cone whose apex represents eternity. The base represents continuous or solar time; half way up a conic section parallel to the base represents aeviternity,

and on this section a polygon is drawn to represent the discrete time of the successive thoughts of those beings that are in aeviternity.

THIRD ARTICLE: THE IMMUTABLE WILL OF SEPARATED SOULS

According to the teaching of faith, a soul separated from the body enters into the particular judgment immediately after death, and then God “renders to every man according to his works.”

The Second Council of Lyons declared that “soon after death” the souls of men either enter heaven, or go down to hell, or are placed in purgatory. This presupposes a particular judgment. Benedict XII on two occasions makes use of this formula, “soon after death according to their different merits,” which likewise presupposes a particular judgment. This truth, taught by faith, is expressed in various ways in Holy Scripture: “For it is easy before God in the day of death to reward every one according to his ways..... And in the end of a man is the disclosing of his works.” “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment.” “I must work the works of Him that sent me, whilst it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.” Hence retribution follows immediately on death. Patristic tradition also supports this teaching that the soul is subjected to the particular judgment when it leaves the body.

Out of this particular judgment the elect receive the certainty of salvation and confirmation in grace even though they must first pass through purgatory; the rest receive the certainty of perdition.

How can we explain the immobility of the separated soul from the instant of separation from the body without the beatific vision for all souls, even those that are not among the elect?

Scotus and Suarez teach that this immobility is only extrinsic, inasmuch as God no longer offers the grace of conversion to the souls that leave the body in the state of sin, and inasmuch as He grants the souls in purgatory a special protection that wards off sin, both mortal and venial, so that these souls do not recede any farther from heavenly bliss.

St. Thomas and the Thomists assign an intrinsic reason, namely, by the fact that the soul is separated from the body it becomes subject to the normal conditions of intellectual life of a pure spiritual creature. St. Thomas says: “The apprehension of the angel differs from the apprehension of man in this, that the angel apprehends immovably through the intellect just as we

apprehend first principles, with which the intellect is concerned. Man (in this life), however, apprehends movably through reason, proceeding from one thing to another, since for him the way is open to proceed to both opposites. Hence the will of man (in this life) adheres to a thing movably, being in a position to abandon one thing and adhere to the contrary. The will of the angel, however, adheres fixedly and immovably. And therefore, if we consider the angel's will before it adheres to a thing, it is able to adhere freely to one thing or to the opposite in those matters which it does not will naturally, but after it has adhered to a thing it adheres to it immovably. Hence we say customarily,....the free will of the angel is flexible with regard to either opposite before the choice is made but not after."

This follows from the purely intuitive mode of cognition as contrasted with the abstractive and successive mode of cognition. The intellect that knows by abstraction sees the various aspects of the decision to be made at the end of the deliberation only successively and therefore it is able to change its free judgment and its voluntary choice. On the other hand, the intellect that knows in a purely intuitive manner sees all the aspects, both for and against, of the decision to be made not successively but at one time, and afterward it does not change its final practical judgment or its voluntary choice. If some one were to say to the intuitive intellect, "You did not consider this aspect," it would reply, "I considered even this aspect." Hence for the devil there is no way to return except the road of humility and obedience, which the devil did not accept and does not now accept.

This immutability of choice in created spirits is a participation in the immutability of the divine choice, which remains most free even though it is entirely immutable since from eternity God considered everything that was to be considered. And the separated soul is like the angels in their mode of knowledge.

Doubt. In the very instant of separation from the body is a final merit possible for those souls that remained in mortal sin in the final moment of their union with the body?

Cajetan takes the affirmative view. He said: "The soul becomes obstinate by the first act that it elicits in the state of separation; at this point the soul merits not as here on earth but as in its terminus." This instant is the first moment when it is no longer in via, the first instant of its separation from the body. Immediately before this, time is divisible in infinity.

Other Thomists reject this solution as contrary to Scripture and tradition and to the teaching of St. Thomas in the <Contra Gentes>: “As soon as the soul is separated from the body it receives the reward or punishment for what it has done while in the body.” There is therefore no possibility of final meriting in the separated soul by which it can repair the sin in which it perdured to the last moment of its union with the body.

The Salmanticenses declared: “This manner of speaking (proposed by Cajetan) is commonly rejected because of the testimony of Scripture, which expressly says that men can gain merit or demerit only before death and not in death. This is the sense of the words, ‘I must work....whilst it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work.’ Moreover, if in this first instant after the separation of the soul from the body a final meriting is possible, it would also be possible that the souls that were in the state of grace in the last moment of union with the body could lose their merits, which no one is willing to admit, as Suarez says.”

In rejecting Cajetan’s opinion, Ferrariensis points out that there is an element of truth in it, “While in the instant of separation the soul has an immutable apprehension and in that instant begins to be obstinate, nevertheless it does not in that instant merit or lose merit, as some say, because merit and demerit are not gained by the soul alone but by the composite, that is, by man. In that instant (of separation) man is not in being; this is the first instant of his non-being, the first instant in which the soul is separated and obstinate (or confirmed in good). Man does not continue so that he can merit.” Hence, Ferrariensis concludes, the obstinacy in man is caused inchoatively by the mutable apprehension of some end while here on earth, and the obstinacy is completed by the immutable apprehension existing in the soul while it is separated.

The element of truth in the inadmissible opinion of Cajetan is that in the first instant of separation from the body the merit or demerit of the last moment of union with the body becomes definitive because of the mode of consideration, not only extrinsically, as Scotus and Suarez thought, inasmuch as God no longer grants the grace of conversion.

St. Thomas’ solution therefore appears to be between and above the opposing opinions of Scotus and Cajetan. In the words of Ferrariensis, “In man obstinacy is caused inchoatively by the mutable apprehension of some end while here on earth, and the obstinacy is completed by the immutable apprehension existing in the soul while it is separated.”

Objection. The immutability of the free will of the separated soul is not sufficiently explained by the separation from the body because this separation is too extrinsic with regard to the free will; nor is it explained by the immobile apprehension of the intellect, unless we admit with Cajetan that in man, as in the angel, the final free choice is elicited in the first instant of the separation and depends on that immobile apprehension, which considers everything that is to be considered.

Reply. Obstinacy, as Ferrariensis says, is caused inchoatively by the mobile apprehension of an end here on earth and is completed by the subsequent immobile apprehension. If we give careful consideration to the reason offered by St. Thomas, this is sufficient to explain the immobility of the disposition of the will of the separated soul. St. Thomas says: "According to the kind of individual, such will be the end, that is, each one makes a practical judgment about an end according to his own inclination..... (Therefore) when the disposition remains by which something is desired as a final end, the desire of that end cannot be moved, because the final end is desired above all things. Hence a person cannot be withdrawn from the desire of an ultimate end by something more desirable. This is the major of the argument; the minor follows. The soul, however, is in a mutable state as long as it is united to the body. Thus the transitory disposition of a passion can be removed; even the disposition of a habit can be removed, and a vice can be eradicated. Since the body serves the soul in its proper operations, it was given to the soul that the soul, existing in the body, might be perfected in its movement to perfection. The conclusion is as follows: When therefore the soul is separated from the body it is not in the state of movement to the end, but now it quiesces in the attained end. The will then will be immobile with regard to the desire of the ultimate end, because that disposition by which this or that is desired as the ultimate end will remain immobile."

That is to say that while the internal disposition by which something is desired as the ultimate end remains, this desire is immutable. But when the soul is separated from the body this disposition in the soul remains immovable, because the soul no longer apprehends mutably as when it was in the body but immutably like a pure spirit. Hence the final merit or demerit here on earth, while the soul was united to the body, becomes definitive by reason of the soul's intuitive manner of consideration, and not only extrinsically, inasmuch as God no longer grants the grace of

conversion. The obstinate soul then cannot return to God except on the road of humility and obedience, and the soul does not will to take this road. The obstinate soul should not be regarded as desirous of returning to God if God were to grant the grace of conversion but rather as not willing the way of conversion by humility and obedience. Hence it is generally said of the damned that they do not repent of the evil they have committed because of the guilt but because of the penalty. The damned are grieved because the will of God is fulfilled and they desire that all souls be damned because they are saddened by every good, especially by the happiness of the blessed, because of their profound and perfect hatred.

The souls in purgatory after the particular judgment, which takes place in the instant the soul is separated from the body, possess the certitude of salvation and are confirmed in grace. Hence we refer to them as the holy souls. This confirmation in grace prior to the beatific vision is explained by St. Thomas and the Thomists not only by God's special protection which wards off sin, as Suarez taught, but by the fact that the separated soul accepts the normal conditions of the intellectual life of a purely spiritual being, which apprehends immutably by its intellect and adheres immutably to the final end even though this end is not yet clearly seen. After this, when in the light of glory the final end, which is God in His infinite goodness, is clearly seen, the love the soul has for God is no longer free but above freedom. It is at the same time spontaneous and necessary, like the love that God has for Himself, and then the soul is no longer able in any way to turn itself away from God or to interrupt the act of loving God or the act of beatific vision. "It is impossible that anyone beholding the divine essence would wish to not see it..... The vision of the divine essence fills the soul with all good things since it unites the soul with the font of all goodness."

Thus the immutability of the separated soul, in good or evil, is explained not only extrinsically but also intrinsically by the soul's manner of immutably considering the final end.

CHAPTER XLIII

THE ORIGIN OF MAN

These final three chapters treat of man’s origin, man’s elevation to the supernatural order, and man’s fall. The present chapter considers the question of man’s origin.

FIRST ARTICLE: THE CREATION OF OUR FIRST PARENTS

State of the question. The materialists and positivists try to explain the origin of man, with regard to body and soul, by the natural laws of evolution without any intervention from God the first cause. This theory proposed by Huxley and Darwin, called absolute transformism, is, as we have shown earlier in considering the production of the corporeal creature, in open contradiction to both faith and reason. According to it more is produced by less, and the more perfect comes from the less perfect in opposition to the principle of causality. Be, sides this, the order of the world and the finality of beings demands that there be a first intelligent cause and that this cause should intervene in the production of matter, of vegetative life, of sensitive life, and of intellective life. Mitigated transformism admits all this, but many of its supporters do not admit God’s special intervention in the formation of man’s body to make it fit for supersensitive life, as if natural evolution were sufficient to account for the formation of man’s body.

The Catholic teaching. The direct creation of the soul from nothing is a dogma of faith according to the universal teaching of the Church; and according to the common teaching of the Fathers and theologians the body of the first man was formed by a special action of God directly from the slime of the earth without any transformation of species. On June 30, 1909, the Biblical Commission declared that the literal sense of the first three

chapters of the Book of Genesis cannot be called into doubt With regard “to the peculiar creation of man and the formation of the first woman from the first man.”

Sacred Scripture tells US: “And God created man to His own image: to the image of God He created him: male and female He created them”; “And the Lord God formed man of the slime of the earth: and breathed into his face the breath of life”; “He took one of his ribs, and filled up flesh for it. And the Lord God built the rib which he took from Adam into a woman” (Gen. 2:21 f.). The Hebrew text conveys the same sense. The obvious meaning is that Adam’s body was formed directly from the slime of the earth, not through succeeding periods by the transformation of species, and that the body of Eve was formed from Adam’s rib. Moreover, the words “breathed into his face the breath of life” refer to direct action by God, without the interposition of the progressive evolution of plants and animals. Hence Leroy, Bonomelli, and Zahn, who defend the opposite opinion as probable, are not on firm ground.

The Fathers and theologians, with the exception of Origen, Cajetan, and a few others, are almost unanimous in their interpretation of the teaching of the Bible on the formation of the bodies of our first parents.

Confirmation of reason. Between man and the animals close to him, such as the ape, we find essential differences not only with respect to the soul but also with respect to the body. Beings that are essentially so diverse cannot come from the same parent. Physically, the apes are equipped with four hands (quadrumanual), whereas man has only two, and because of this men and apes do not walk in the same way. We also find a great difference in the facial angle of men and apes; similarly the brain is differently evolved in man and ape. Man enjoys the faculty of speech for the clear and distinct expression not only of sensations and emotions but also of ideas and judgments; the ape lacks this faculty. Above all things, man alone of all animals possesses reason, he knows necessary and universal principles, the ideas of being, truth, goodness, justice, moral beauty, religion, and holiness, which are manifestly above the senses. Animals know only the individual and they are incapable of intellectual, moral, and religious life.

For these reasons many transformists today admit that man did not come from the ape, but that both descended from some remote common parent. Such a common parent, however, left no trace in the geological strata.

It does not seem absolutely repugnant that God should infuse into an animal organism the power by which it might gradually be changed into the human organism. But that is a purely gratuitous hypothesis, destitute of any basis in fact, and contrary to the literal sense of the biblical narrative.

St. Thomas shows that the human body was produced directly by God and admirably equipped to serve the rational soul and its operations, that is, the human body is excellently equipped for sensitive life, which in turn serves the intellectual life. Although man lacks horns, claws, and the furry covering of the animal, he has in their stead reason and hands. So also man's posture is erect with face uplifted to consider all things; the animal is inclined to the earth as if its only concern were the quest for food.

St. Thomas also points out why man is said "to be made to the image of God." Man is the true image of God by reason of his intellectual nature. He was made by God Himself in the image of God's intellectual life and thus he is able to know and love God as God knows and loves Himself. This image is, of course, imperfect; only the Son of God is the perfect image of the eternal Father. Properly speaking, irrational creatures are not made to the image of God, for although they resemble God in their being or in living, they are not like God in intellection. More perfectly than man, the angels are images of God.

God's image can be seen in man in three ways: 1. inasmuch as man possesses the ability to know God; 2. inasmuch as man knows and loves God supernaturally by faith and charity; 3. inasmuch as man perfectly knows and loves God in the light of glory and in the charity of heaven.

When some of the Fathers say that the image of God is destroyed is man by sin, they are referring to the image that was produced in the re-creation of grace.

Lastly, man is an image of God even with regard to the Trinity of persons, inasmuch as man in understanding himself produces a word and by loving himself produces love, and this image is enhanced in man when by knowing God he produces a word and by loving this word produces love.

SECOND ARTICLE: THE UNITY OF THE HUMAN RACE

State of the question. In opposition to the Scriptures and tradition, the Preadamites, led by Isaac de la Peyrere , denied the unity of the human race and taught that some men existed before Adam, and that Adam was the

father of the Jews but not of the Gentiles. The Coadamites held that many human families existed contemporaneously with Adam.

The revealed doctrine. According to Holy Scripture the entire human race had its origin in the one protoparent, Adam. This truth is an article of faith.

We are speaking here of our earth and of the human race that is on this earth. If some indulge in the hypothesis that there are rational creatures on the stars or planets, or that other men existed on our earth before Adam and were extinct before his creation, many theologians hold that such gratuitous assumptions do not affect the teaching of faith.

According to Genesis no men existed when Adam was created: “And there was not a man to till the earth..... But for Adam there was not found a helper like himself.” Eve is called the mother of all the living; and Adam is called the father of the human race.

St. Paul says: “And hath made of one, all mankind, to dwell upon the whole face of the earth”; “Wherefore as by one man sin entered into this world, and by sin death; and so death passed upon all men, in whom all have sinned.” That is: all men are born with the stain of original sin because all derive the same nature infected with sin from the same head.

This is the common teaching of the Fathers, especially of Lactantius, St. Ephrem, St. Ambrose, and St. Augustine.

Confirmation by reason. We find various signs of specific identity in all men of whatever race or color. As Quatrefages points out, we find the same anatomical structure, the same physiological functions, the same laws of generation, unlimited fecundity in the marriages contracted between various races of men, the same faculty of speech, the same power of reasoning, and the same moral and religious sense. Differences in color, brain capacity, facial angles, or idiom, are not substantial but only accidental, as ethnographers admit.

From paleontology and geology we now know that man is much older than was thought formerly, but there is still a great difference of opinion about the precise epoch when man appeared on earth. On this point the Scriptures are silent, and the Church has made no declaration.

THIRD ARTICLE: THE PRODUCTION OF THE HUMAN SOUL

State of the question. With regard to the body the human race is propagated by generation. But what is the origin of the intellective soul of

the infant? Some say that the soul emanates from God; others like the Origenists and Priscillianists, teach the pre-existence of human souls, or that the human soul is a spirit <per se> and that God created all souls in the beginning. According to the traducianists, the human soul is produced from the substance of the parents; according to some from the corporeal semen, according to others directly from the souls of the parents. This latter theory is called generationism, taught by Tertullian. At one time St. Augustine inclined to this theory. In our day Frohschammer held that the soul is created by the parents by a special power given them by God; Rosmini held that the sensitive soul is created by the parents and that this soul by the illumination of being later becomes intellective.

The Catholic doctrine, called creationism, is that human souls are created by God when they are infused in the body. Peter Lombard said: “The Catholic Church teaches that souls are infused in the bodies and are created in the infusing.” St. Thomas, in presenting three opinions: generationism, pre-existentianism, and creationism, said: “The first two were condemned by the judgment of the Church and the third was approved.” Other Scholastics use similar language.

Sacred Scripture supplies the basis for this teaching: “And the dust return into its earth, from whence it was, and the spirit return to God, who gave it.”

The Fathers in general hold the doctrine of creationism. Their teaching is that the soul does not exist prior to the body, that it is not educed by generation, but that it is created by God.

The Church condemned as heretical the teaching that the soul is produced by the parents from the seed, as well as the doctrine that “the human soul of the son is propagated from the soul of his father.” Origen’s teaching of the pre-existence of the soul was condemned by the Fifth Ecumenical Council of Constantinople : “If anyone shall assert the fabulous pre-existence of souls, let him be anathema.” Finally Frohschammer’s opinion was condemned by Pope Pius IX on December 11, 1862, and Rosmini’s teaching was condemned by Pope Leo XIII.

Taking these declarations together we see that the human soul is not derived from the substance of God, is not generated by the parents, does not evolve from a sensitive soul to an intellective one, but is created by God from nothing, not prior to the formation of the body but when it is infused into the body. The Church has also declared that the human soul is a

substance, that it is not one in all individuals, but one in each individual, and that it is not naturally good or evil.

Proof from reason. I The soul is not a part of the divine substance. Some have advanced the theory that God is a certain corporeal light and that a part of that light is the soul bound to the body. This is impossible because God is pure act and purely spiritual, having no diversity in Himself, and therefore there is nothing in Him from which the soul could be produced as from a material cause. God cannot be a material cause to be perfected, nor an informing and participated formal cause; He is only an extrinsic cause, that is, an efficient and final cause.

2. The soul cannot come from the human seed. “It is impossible that the active power that is in matter can extend its activity to produce an immaterial effect. It is obvious that the intellective principle in man is a principle that transcends matter, for it has an operation in which the body does not communicate.” In other words, the human soul is intrinsically independent of the organism in its specific operation, and therefore in its being, and also in its own production.

3. The soul of the infant cannot come from the souls of the parents by emanation because the soul is a simple substance, without parts, from which nothing can be taken. Nor can the soul come from the parents by creation because the creative power belongs to God alone.

4. The soul of the infant therefore is directly created by God from nothing, that is, from no presupposed being, at the time it is infused. The parents are not even the instrumental cause of this special creation; they only dispose the matter of the embryo to receive the spiritual soul. The ultimate disposition is produced in the instant when the soul is created and infused, and this ultimate disposition is from God. But the parents are rightly said to generate a human being because from their own substance they produce the body of the infant disposed in such a way (the penultimate disposition) that by virtue of a law of nature the creation and infusion of the soul necessarily follow. The parents are said to generate a human being because in this way by generation they transmit human nature.

Nor can it be admitted that intellective souls were created at the beginning of the world and that the soul is accidentally united to the body as a punishment for some fault. As St. Thomas says: “From this it would follow that man constituted by such a union would be a being <per accidens>, or that the soul is the man, which is false. That the human soul is

not the same in nature as the angels is seen from the fact that they have different modes of intellection." The human soul has the lowest kind of intellection, corresponding to the lowest kind of intelligible being, namely, that which is in the shadow of sensible things.

CHAPTER XLIV

MAN’S ELEVATION TO THE SUPERNATURAL STATE

FIRST ARTICLE: WHAT IS MEANT BY THE SUPERNATURAL

This subject is treated at length in another place. Here we will consider only the essentials.

According to the nominal definition, supernatural denotes that which is above nature. The term “nature” commonly has two meanings: it means either the essence of a thing considered as the root of the specific activity (in this sense we speak of the nature of gold, of silver, of a man), or the complexus of all things in the universe as they are interdependent according to certain laws. Supernatural therefore commonly means that which is above nature taken collectively, that is, what is above the laws of nature. Hence a supernatural effect is one that cannot be produced according to the laws of nature, and a supernatural truth is one that cannot be known according to the natural laws of our intellect.

For the Catholic Church, as we see from her definitions, the supernatural is that which is above every created nature, as exceeding the powers and exigencies of every created nature, although it does not exceed the passive and perfectible capacity of our nature, nor is it incongruous to our nature.

Moreover, according to the Church, supernaturalness is at least twofold: 1. the supernaturalness of miracles, which exceed the efficient powers (or causality) and exigencies of any created nature, but do not exceed the cognitive powers of man’s nature; 2. the supernaturalness of mysteries strictly so called, and the supernaturalness of grace and glory, which exceed not only the efficient powers and exigencies of any created nature but the cognitive and appetitive powers of any created intellectual nature as well.

Hence the supernatural is that which exceeds the properties (the powers and exigencies) of nature and is able to perfect nature gratuitously. The relative supernatural is that which exceeds the properties of only some particular created nature, but not of all created nature, for example, that which is natural and specific for an angel is relatively supernatural for man. Such would be the cunning and tricks of the devils, which are imitations of miracles. The absolute supernatural is that which exceeds the properties of all created and creatable nature, namely, that which exceeds the powers and exigencies of every created nature.

How is the absolutely supernatural divided? According to the Church, as we said above, supernaturalness is at least twofold: a) the supernaturalness of the miracle, which exceeds the efficient powers and exigencies of every created nature but does not exceed the cognitive powers of human nature; b) the supernaturalness of mysteries strictly so called and of the life of grace and glory, which exceeds not only the powers and exigencies of every created nature but also the cognitive powers, and consequently exceeds also the appetitive powers and the natural merit of every created intellectual nature. We see this distinction in the miracle of resurrection, in which natural life is supernaturally restored to a corpse, but in which there is no restoration of life that is essentially and intrinsically supernatural.

To explain this distinction the Thomists point out that the absolutely supernatural is that which exceeds the powers and exigencies of every created nature. But this transcendency can be founded only on the intrinsic formal cause of the thing that is called supernatural, and then the thing is substantially (or entitatively or intrinsically) supernatural, or on causes extrinsic to the thing that is said to be supernatural, and then the thing is supernatural with regard to mode. This transcendency cannot be founded on the material cause since the material cause is the subject in which the supernatural forms are received, namely, the soul and its faculties.

With regard to the formal cause, a being is said to be supernatural as to essence or substance, whether it be the uncreated supernatural, namely, God, the Trinity, the person of the Word subsisting in the human nature of Christ, or a created supernatural being by reason of the specifying formal object, such as the light of glory, habitual grace, the infused virtues, the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and actual graces of this order.

With regard to the efficient cause, a being is said to be supernatural as to the mode of its production, namely, a miracle. But miracles are divided into

those that are supernatural as to the substance, for example, the glorification of the body, which can in no way be effected by nature, and those that are supernatural with regard to the subject in which they happen, for example, a resurrection that is not glorious, since nature can produce life but not in the dead, and those that are supernatural as to mode, for example, the sudden cure of a fever, since a fever can be cured by nature or by science but this cannot be done suddenly.

We should try to avoid the confusion arising from the terms “supernatural as to substance” and “miraculous as to substance,” since in the first term “substance” means formal and intrinsic, but in the second it means efficient and extrinsic. With regard to the preternatural privileges of the state of innocence, it should be noted that the preservation or immunity from death implies a miracle of the same order as a resurrection that is not glorious, for just as nature cannot restore life to a corpse so it cannot permanently preserve man’s body from death.

With regard to the final cause, a being is said to be supernatural as to the mode of its ordering, for example, the act of natural acquired temperance directed to a supernatural end, that is, to life eternal, under the influence of charity. This act of acquired temperance differs essentially from the act of infused temperance, which is supernatural as to substance and essence by reason of the specifying formal object.

This classic division may be presented as follows:

Supernatural knowledge can be either supernatural as to substance, as the act of infused faith, or supernatural as to mode, and this latter, like miracles, has three divisions:

1. the prophetic knowledge of some future, natural, contingent event, which is distant in time;

2. the knowledge of a natural object already existing but remote in space;

3. the instantaneous knowledge of some language, which can be learned naturally but not in a moment.

the absolutely supernatural

as to substance

uncreated

God under the aspect of the Deity, the Trinity, the person of the Word united to human nature

created

the light of glory, habitual and actual grace, infused virtues, the gifts of the Holy Ghost

as to mode

on the part of the end

a natural act supernaturally ordered to a supernatural end

on the part of the agent

a miracle as to substance (as the glorification of the body)

a miracle as to the subject (as non-glorious resurrection)

a miracle as to mode (the sudden cure of a fever)

What is the natural order? In general, order is the disposition of things with regard to before and after in relation to some principle. The natural order therefore is the disposition of the various created natures with regard to before and after in relation to God as the author and end of these natures. This natural order comprises, on the part of the efficient cause, creation, conservation, and the divine cooperation necessary for the natural acts of creatures. In the case of man the natural final end is the possession of God, not in the beatific vision, but as known discursively through reason and loved naturally above all things.

What is the supernatural order? It is the fitting disposition of those things that exceed the properties of created nature in relation to God as He is their author and end. We must distinguish between the essentially supernatural order, which is purely supernatural, from that which is only effectively supernatural, as for example, a miracle, and which is often referred to as preternatural.

For man the essentially supernatural order is constituted by the following:

1. the end, or the possession of God by intuitive vision;

2. the first agent, or God the author of grace and glory, and the second agent, or man elevated by grace;

3. the objective means, such as the external revelation proposed by the Church and the sacraments;

4. the subjective means, such as the infused virtues, the gifts, actual grace;

5. the law, or the system of precepts by which the supernatural end is to be reached.

God, therefore, can be considered in two ways:

1. as the author and end of the natural order;

2. as the author and end of the supernatural order.

First corollary. That which is only effectively supernatural (as a miracle) can be produced by God as the author and lord of nature, but not that which is supernatural as to substance or essence.

Second corollary. No opposition, but rather harmony exists between the order of nature and the order of grace because both have their origin in the same immutable font of truth, God the best and greatest being. “Thus,” says St. Thomas, “faith presupposes natural knowledge just as grace presupposes nature, and perfection presupposes the perfectible.”

SECOND ARTICLE: THE DIFFERENT STATES OF HUMAN NATURE IN RELATION TO GRACE

This question is generally considered at the beginning of the treatise on grace. We present here the principal truths relating to this matter.

Theologians commonly distinguish several states of nature.

1. By the state of pure nature is meant nature itself with its intrinsic principles and those that follow or are due nature, but without grace and the preternatural gifts. In this state man would have a natural end, the natural means to attain this end, helps of a natural order sufficient for all and efficacious for some. He would also have the natural law, but he would be subject to ignorance, concupiscence, infirmities, and death.

2. The state of integral nature, besides including the perfections of pure nature, consists in the perfect subjection of the body to the soul by reason of the immunity from infirmities and death and in the perfect subjection of the sensitive appetite to reason because of the immunity from concupiscence and ignorance. Nature is said to be integral when there is no division between its parts or any defection from its perfection. Integrity is a certain perfection of nature in the natural order which, though it does not elevate the nature to the supernatural order of grace, is still gratuitous and preternatural. In Adam, however, this state of integrity was joined with his elevation to the order of grace.

3. The state of holiness and original justice is that in which grace and the preternatural gifts of integrity are conferred together; it is the state in which Adam existed <de facto.>

4. The state of unredeemed fallen nature is that in which human nature was, by Adam’s sin, despoiled of sanctifying grace, and the infused virtues

together with the gift of integrity, the state that bears the four wounds of ignorance in the intellect, malice in the will, concupiscence in the concupiscible appetite, and weakness in the irascible appetite.

5. The state of redeemed nature is that in which we now find the just man redeemed by Christ, endowed with sanctifying grace, the infused virtues, and the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, but without the gift of integrity in the present life. Human nature will not be completely repaired until it is in glory, when it will again receive the gift of integrity in the resurrection from the dead.

THIRD ARTICLE: WHETHER OUR FIRST PARENTS WERE CONSTITUTED IN THE STATE OF HOLINESS AND JUSTICE, AND WHETHER THIS STATE WAS SUPERNATURAL

State of the question. The supporters of naturalism deny the existence of truly supernatural grace in Adam; among these are the Pelagians, and in modern times the Unitarians, the liberal Protestants, the positivists, and also the Modernists, who speak of a principle of religious immanence because of which even the Christian religion is not above the exigencies of our nature and which, according to some, is merely a development of a germ seated in our nature. Naturalism also denies original sin and therefore, especially in its pantheistic form, it exaggerates the powers of nature to such an extent that nothing is beyond the capacity or powers of human nature. This is a form of absolute optimism.

Pseudo-supernaturalism, on the other hand, has a pessimistic bent and exaggerates the consequences of original sin and also succeeds in confusing the orders of grace and nature. It holds that grace and the gifts conferred in the state of innocence are essentials of human nature (Luther), or were owing to nature (Baius and Jansenius), or that they were complements of human nature (Calvin).

With regard to the terminology used in this question it should be noted that, while the word “natural” means the same as “original,” it has been used in an improper sense to designate a truly supernatural gift connected with man’s origin. For example, some of the Fathers have called the original holiness given to Adam when he was created natural; similarly, the gift of integrity, which perfects nature in the natural order, has been called natural although it is gratuitous. This improper use of terms should be avoided because of the danger of confusion.

The Catholic doctrine is above these extreme and mutually opposed positions of naturalism and pseudo-supernaturalism. The Church teaches that our first parents were constituted in the state of holiness and justice and that this state was entirely gratuitous and supernatural. The Council of Trent declared, “If anyone does not confess that Adam the first man....lost that holiness and justice in which he was constituted, let him be anathema,” and “that he lost (this state) for himself alone and not for us, let him be anathema.”

These two propositions of Baius were condemned: “The sublimation and exaltation of human nature to fellowship with the divine nature was owing to the integrity of the first condition and therefore it should be considered natural and not supernatural”; “The integrity of the primary creation was not an undeserved exaltation of human nature but its natural condition.”

From these declarations it follows that the first man was created without sin, that he had free will, that he was endowed with the supernatural gifts of integrity and immortality; it follows too that God could have created man without supernatural grace, such a man as is born now. To preserve his primitive state man needed grace, and his merits were not purely human and natural.

This doctrine is revealed in Sacred Scripture. From the Old Testament it is clear:

1. that prior to sin a certain familiarity existed between God and man;

2. that man was made to the image of God, an expression that is clarified later;

3. that man was created righteous in a state of friendship with God, that is, loving God above all things, otherwise there would be no righteousness or rectitude. These texts must be understood according to the analogy of faith; their meaning becomes clearer in the light of the New Testament.

In the New Testament, however, when men are justified by sanctifying grace they are said to be regenerated, renewed, and restored to the state of the first man, who therefore was created and constituted in the same grace. Lastly, the grace we receive is truly supernatural, for by it “we are made partakers of the divine nature,” adopted sons of God, and enabled to see God as He is. Therefore Adam too was created in the same supernatural grace.

This truth is confirmed in tradition. De Journel has collected the important texts in which it is expressly stated that prior to the Fall our first

parents were endowed with gifts beyond the requirements of nature, such as original justice, immunity from concupiscence, freedom from the necessity of dying, and brilliant knowledge, and that they lived a most happy life.

This doctrine is proved by theological reason, as St. Thomas shows. According to the Scriptures, “God made man right,” that is, just, for in the Scriptures the righteous are called just. This righteousness or justice in which man was created consisted in this: that reason was subjected to God, by reason of the immunity from concupiscence the lower powers were subject to reason, and because of the immunity from pain and death the body was subject to the soul. St. Augustine explains that the first subjection was the cause of the second and the third, and that these were not natural otherwise they would have remained after sin. Hence the first subjection was not natural but gratuitous, because the effect cannot be greater than the cause.

Nor can it be said that this first subjection referred only to the higher part of the gift of integrity, since it is called holiness and justice, in which the just are now regenerated by a truly supernatural grace. This will be made clearer in the following article, when we treat of the gift of integrity and the twofold subjection which this integrity implies and of the threefold harmony of the state of original justice.

Besides this, it seems repugnant that the entire human race should be deprived of the perfection necessary to attain its natural end by the sin of one man. Hence this perfection was not owing to nature but was supernatural, as defined by the Church.

Corollary. As St. Thomas shows, Adam consequently had all the virtues in the state of innocence, that is, all the virtues by which reason is ordered to God and by which the lower powers are disposed according to the rule of reason. For sanctifying grace, in which the first man was created, is the root of all virtues, which flow from it as properties from the essence; and by these infused virtues our first parents were elevated to elicit supernatural acts and, with the help of actual grace, to merit their last end. The Holy Trinity dwelt in their souls and they received the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, which are derived from charity. As St. Augustine said of the angels, “For them God at the same time established their nature and granted grace.”

State of the question. Besides sanctifying grace our first parents received the gift of integrity, by which they were perfected beyond the requirements of the order of nature. This gift of integrity comprises four preternatural gifts, namely, with regard to the body immunity from death and pain and some dominion over animals and the forces of nature, and with regard to the soul immunity from concupiscence and ignorance. We shall consider these four gifts separately with regard both to their essence and to their gratuitousness, beginning with those that are more certain according to revelation, that is, with the immunity from death and pain and then ascending to the higher gifts, for if God made the body of the first man perfect, He certainly also perfected his soul. Gradually we shall see the threefold harmony found in the state of original justice, namely, the threefold subjection of the soul to God by grace, of the lower powers to the soul illumined by faith and to the will elevated by charity, and of the body to the soul. We shall also see, as St. Augustine and St. Thomas have shown, how the two other subordinations depend on the higher harmony between God and the soul, and how, when the first is destroyed by sin, the other two also are lost.

By a privilege our first parents were constituted immune from death. Although they were naturally mortal, they. were immune from the necessity of dying, that is, they would be preserved from death if they remained in grace and after the period of their probation they would have entered alive into heavenly bliss, as would also their posterity.

This doctrine is of faith according to various councils. The Council of Trent declared that the first man had incurred “the anger and indignation of God and consequently that death which God had threatened.”

Sacred Scripture explicitly affirms the existence of this gift. We read that the death of the body is the punishment for sin: “For in what day soever thou shalt eat of it, thou shalt die the death”; “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return to the earth, out of which thou wast taken: for dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt return.” We read further: “For God created man incorruptible, and to the image of His own likeness He made him. But by the envy of the devil, death came into the world.” Finally, the New Testament frequently affirms that death is the penalty for sin. Sacred Scripture emphasizes this privilege more than the other privileges since its loss is more keenly felt by all, and thus this privilege throws light on the other privileges.

Tradition also unanimously affirms that our first parents were immune from the necessity of dying. St. Augustine says of the first man: “He was therefore mortal because of the condition of his animal body, but he was immortal through the beneficence of the Creator.”

St. Thomas explains the congruity and gratuity of this gift as follows: As long as the soul remained perfectly subject to God “it was fitting that in the beginning a power should be given the soul by which the body could be preserved better than the nature of corporeal matter.” As a material composite the body was by nature mortal, like the bodies of the animals; death would follow naturally either from some extrinsic cause or by age or natural corruption. Hence corporeal immortality was gratuitous and not owing to the nature of the body. Hence St. Thomas says: “His (Adam’s) body was not indissoluble by some force of immortality existing in him, but there was in the soul a certain supernatural power, divinely given, by which the soul was able to preserve the body from all corruption as long as the soul remained subject to God.”

Perpetual preservation from bodily death was a miracle like the resurrection of the body, by which the natural life of the body is supernaturally restored; nature can of course produce life by generation but it cannot preserve the body, in itself corruptible, from death. This immunity from death, however, was not as perfect as in the glorified body, for Adam still required nourishment, which the glorified body does not need.

The gratuity of this gift is more explicitly affirmed in the condemnation of many of Baius’ propositions.

By a privilege our first parents were immune from pain and the miseries of this life. This teaching is generally regarded as theologically certain.

We find it expressed in Sacred Scripture, according to which our first parents enjoyed an abundance of good things in the terrestrial paradise, were active without becoming weary, ruled over animals and inferior beings, and were untouched by all those sorrows that are explained as the penalty of sin. Moreover, immortality presupposes the immunity from the pain and disease that dispose to death.

This teaching is affirmed by tradition.

The congruity of this doctrine is explained by St. Thomas as follows: Man’s body, since it is a material composite, is by its nature passible and mortal, like the bodies of brute animals, but as long as the soul remained

subject to God “divine providence protected his body so that nothing unforeseen should occur to harm it.”

According to St. Thomas it is sufficiently clear from the first chapter of Genesis that the first man had dominion over all animals, not only with regard to right and power but also with regard to the exercise and use of that power, so that he was able to command them and they would obey. As less perfect beings, all animals are naturally subject to man. But now, after sin, the exercise and use of this dominion has been greatly weakened, and man is able to rule over only a few animals, and these obey only with difficulty.

By a special privilege our first parents were immune from inordinate concupiscence. This is theologically certain. The Council of Trent declared that the Apostle often calls concupiscence sin, because “it comes from sin and inclines to sin,” but that concupiscence is not truly and properly a sin in those who are reborn.

Sacred Scripture tells us that our first parents did not blush before the Fall, but afterward they were aware of their nakedness because of their disobedience.

The Fathers of the Church, especially St. John Chrysostom, St. Augustine, and St. Cyril of Alexandria, explain these passages from Holy Scripture as follows: Before the Fall our first parents were immune from concupiscence and from the tumult of inordinate passions.

St. Thomas explains the congruity and gratuitousness in these words: “As long as reason remained subject to God, the lower powers were subject to it, as Augustine says. It is clear however that the subjection of the body to the soul and of the lower powers to reason was not natural, otherwise this subjection would have remained after man sinned.” The gratuitousness of this gift is made more manifest by the fact that “reason is influenced by the political dominion of the irascible and concupiscible parts, because the sensitive appetite has its own nature and is therefore able to resist the command of reason. The sensitive appetite is moved not only by the knowledge that is under the direction of universal reason but also by the imagination and the senses. Hence we have the experience that the irascible and concupiscible parts oppose reason because we feel and imagine something delectable, which reason forbids, or something unpleasant, which reason commands.”

Hence it is a privilege if man is preserved from the inordinate movements of sensibility.

By a special privilege our first parents were immune from ignorance. This too is theologically certain.

State of the question. Ignorance is the privation of that knowledge that one should have in view of his age and state in life. From the preceding article it is clear that Adam had infused faith and the necessary supernatural knowledge to attain his supernatural end. We now ask whether he had natural knowledge proportionate to his state for the perfect government of himself and for the easy instruction of his children. In other words, did he have, as one created in adult age and as the head of the human race, adequate natural knowledge, acquired not by experience and study but infused <per accidens>, although such knowledge is <per se> acquirable? That he had such knowledge is commonly admitted.

From its mode of speaking, Sacred Scripture indicates that Adam was created not as an infant but as an adult, and therefore with a formed intellect. We read, “And the Lord God....brought them (all the animals and birds) to Adam to see what he would call them: for whatsoever Adam called any living creature the same is its name. And Adam called all the beasts by their names.” At least, therefore, Adam had sufficient knowledge to distinguish the various animals and give them a fitting name. He did not, however, acquire this knowledge gradually by experience; it was therefore infused.

Similarly Adam knew the meanings of the parts of speech, the proper meaning of noun, verb, and adjective, and thus he had rather advanced knowledge not only of grammar but also of philosophy if he was able to make the distinction between the meaning of the verb “to be” and “to have,” and so he could understand that God alone is His own being and subsisting being itself, whereas a creature, no matter how perfect, had being but was not its own being. He would also have had a rather advanced knowledge if he understood the meaning, the necessity, and universality of the first principles of reason and being, namely, the principles of contradiction, efficient causality, and finality, by which the human mind naturally ascends to the knowledge of the supreme cause and the ultimate end.

Finally, as the head of the human race, and living in familiar friendship with God, as the biblical narrative tells us, he should have had a certain knowledge of moral and religious matters in order to impart the necessary instruction to his children. Sacred Scripture tells us, “He gave them

counsel,....and a heart to devise: and He filled them with the knowledge of understanding. He created in them the science of the spirit, He filled their heart with wisdom, and showed them both good and evil. He set his eye upon their hearts to show them the greatness of His works, that they might praise the name which He hath sanctified: and glory in His wondrous acts."

Tradition affirms the truth that Adam's knowledge was of the highest order.

St. Thomas explains the congruity and gratuitousness of this gift in this way: "Since the first things were established by God not only so that they might exist in themselves but that they might be the principles for other things, they were produced in such a perfect state that they might be the principles for other things. Therefore the first man was established in a perfect state with regard to his body....and with regard to his soul, so that he would be able immediately to instruct and rule..... The first man received such knowledge of supernatural things as was necessary to govern the human race in that perfect state." This knowledge was beyond what was owing to nature. But Adam did not see God or the angels in their essences, nor did he know future contingents or the secrets of hearts.

St. Thomas says further: "The righteousness of that first state was not compatible with any deception in the intellect," and "the seduction (or deception) of the woman, even though it preceded the sin in deed, nevertheless followed the sin of internal elation" which the woman conceived immediately after hearing the words of the serpent. Further, if the innocent Adam was created so perfect with regard to his body as to be preserved from death, it is all the more true that he was created perfect with regard to his intellect.

According to St. Thomas, Adam foreknew the incarnation of God, although he did not know he was to sin; he had a more excellent knowledge of God and the angels than we have; his knowledge was midway between our knowledge and that of the blessed. In his knowledge Adam needed the phantasm.

Conclusion. With regard to the gratuitousness of these four privileges of the state of innocence we can easily understand why the following propositions of Baius were condemned: "The integrity of the first creation was not an undeserved exaltation of human nature but its natural condition"; "God could not have created such a human being in the beginning as is now born." This second proposition was condemned in

Baius' sense, that is, a human being without grace and the gift of integrity. By this the Church affirms that God could have created a man without grace and the gift of integrity, that is, with some ignorance, concupiscence, certain weaknesses, and subject to death.

Corollary. A state of nature, without grace, without the gift of integrity, and without sin, is therefore possible. This follows from the condemnation of Baius' propositions. Theological reason supports this conclusion, as Billuart explained at great length. St. Thomas explains, "In the beginning, when God made man, He could also have made another man out of the slime of the earth, leaving him in the condition of his nature, so that he would be passible and mortal, knowing the war of concupiscence against reason; and in this man there would be no derogation of human nature, because these things follow from the principles of his nature." God was not obliged to give man anything more, because grace and the preternatural gifts are not owing to man.

The Augustinians Noris and Berti were akin to Baius when they said that the state of pure nature is possible by God's absolute power but not God's power as ordered by wisdom and goodness. If this were true, the grace given our first parents was due them from the Creator in propriety. This teaching has not been condemned by the Church, but it seems to approach too closely to Baius' doctrine.

We conclude with St. Thomas: "If anyone considers this matter carefully, he can at least probably conclude that if there is a divine providence that adapts suitable perfectibles to each of the perfections, God joined the higher nature of the soul to the lower nature of the body that the soul might rule the body, and, if some obstacle to this rule should arise from the defect of nature, it would be removed by God's special and supernatural beneficence."

FIFTH ARTICLE: THE CONDITION OF THE OFFSPRING IN THE STATE OF INNOCENCE

With regard to the body, children born in the state of innocence would enjoy perfect subjection of the body to the soul and they would be equipped for the acts suitable to childhood, because their parents would transmit human nature as they had received it.

With regard to the soul, if men persevered in the state of innocence, would they be born with original justice and sanctifying grace even though

neither the soul nor grace are carried over by generation?

St. Thomas replies by quoting these words of St. Anselm: “If man did not sin, those whom he generated would be just at the same time that they received a rational soul.”

St. Thomas explains: “I reply by saying that man naturally generates a being similar to himself in species. Hence in the case of whatever accidental things follow upon the nature of the species it is necessary that the children resemble their parents, unless some error take place in the operations of nature, which would not have happened in the state of innocence. In particular accidents however, it is not necessary that the children be like the parents. But original justice, in which the first man was established, was an accident belonging to the nature of the species, not indeed caused by the principles of the species but as a certain gift divinely conferred on the entire nature. This is clear when we recall that opposites belong to the same genus. But original sin, which is the opposite of that original justice, is said to be the sin of the nature, and hence is carried on by the parents to the offspring. Because of this the children were like the parents with regard to original justice.”

“In replying to the second objection, in which some say that the children were not born with gratuitous justice (grace), which is the principle of meriting, but only with original justice: since the root of original justice, in whose righteousness man was created, consists in the supernatural subjection of reason to God, which makes man pleasing by grace, it is necessary to say that if the children are born in original justice, they are also born in grace, as we said above about the first man, who was established in grace. But this did not make it a natural grace, because it was not transmitted by virtue of the seed but was conferred on man as soon as he received a rational soul, just as, when the body is disposed, God infuses the rational soul, which similarly is not passed on by the parents.”

In the state of innocence men were not confirmed in grace when they were born, because the children at the time of their birth had no more in the way of perfection than their parents. Children born in the state of innocence were not perfect in knowledge, but in time they easily acquired perfect knowledge.

SIXTH ARTICLE: WHETHER SANCTIFYING GRACE WAS A GIFT OF NATURE OR A PERSONAL GIFT IN ADAM

Some modern writers hold that in Adam sanctifying grace was not an endowment of nature but purely a personal gift. They admit that the gift, of original justice was an “accident of nature,” to be transmitted with nature itself by generation, but they say that sanctifying grace has no intrinsic connection with original justice and was only the efficient cause or a condition <sine qua non> of original justice. From this it would follow that sanctifying grace was not transmitted with the nature and original justice by generation but that God immediately granted this grace to the person when he was generated, because of the disposition of the integrity of human nature. Finally, it would be inferred from this that original sin is not the privation of sanctifying grace but only the privation of integrity of nature.

Indeed, according to these writers, this doctrine is found not only in the works of many Scholastics who before the time of St. Thomas held that Adam received sanctifying grace after his creation and in view of his personal disposition, but these writers say that this is the definitive teaching of St. Thomas himself as found in the Theological Summa.

We shall inquire first whether this thesis is true according to the obvious sense of the Church’s definitions, and secondly whether it is the teaching of St. Thomas.

1. The Church’s Teaching On The Gift Of Original Justice And On Original Sin

1. The Council of Trent declared: “If anyone shall assert that Adam’s sin injured himself alone and not his posterity, and that Adam forfeited for himself alone and not for us also the holiness and justice which he had lost; or that the sin of disobedience transmitted to the whole human race only death and the punishment of the body but not the sin which is the death of the soul, let him be anathema, because he contradicts the Apostle, who said, ‘Wherefore as by one man sin entered into this world, and by sin death; and so death passed upon all men, in whom all have sinned.’”

The words “holiness and justice which he had lost” clearly indicate not only integrity of nature but also sanctifying grace, and therefore we may construct the following argument against the aforesaid thesis.

Adam lost for himself and for us “holiness and justice,” that is, sanctifying grace and not merely the integrity of nature. But what he lost for himself and for us he had not received purely as a personal gift. Therefore Adam received sanctifying grace not only as a personal gift but also as a hereditary gift of nature.

If it should be objected that Adam lost the integrity of nature directly for us and indirectly lost sanctifying grace, this would no longer be the obvious meaning of the Council, for the obvious meaning is that which is understood apart from any implied distinction. Indeed what the Council primarily proposes as received for us and lost for us is holiness itself, which in the accepted language of the Church most certainly means more than the integrity of nature, and specifically, means sanctifying grace. Hence the doctrine that holds that grace in Adam was a gift of nature is at least more conformable to the declarations of the Council of Trent than the other.

2. A similar argument may be drawn from the definition of original sin given by the Council. The Council of Trent declared that original sin is the "death of the soul." But in the language of the Church the "death of the soul" is essentially the privation of the spiritual life of grace. Therefore original sin is the privation of original justice, since sanctifying grace is intrinsically related to this justice.

In the thesis which we are opposing, original sin cannot be called the death of the soul except dispositively, for in that thesis original sin is only the privation of the integrity of nature and the disposition for the privation of sanctifying grace. But this is not the obvious sense of the Council. According to the fathers of the Council, the holiness which Adam lost for himself and for us was grace, and original sin is transmitted in generation with human nature and without God's grace.

3. This doctrine is confirmed by the Church's teaching about the principal effect of baptism. By baptism original sin is remitted. But baptism directly and immediately confers grace but it does not restore the integrity of nature. Therefore if original sin consisted formally in the privation of the gift of integrity, it would not be forgiven in baptism, because concupiscence remains in those who are reborn in baptism.

If it should be said that the gift of integrity is restored with regard to the subjection of the mind to God through the healing effect of grace, we reply that even in the will of the baptized person the good is still difficult and the inclination to evil remains, and this was not true of man in the state of integral nature. Here again this thesis departs from the obvious sense of the Council of Trent.

4. In the schema of the Vatican Council we read: "Under anathema we proscribe the heretical doctrine of those who have dared to say that in Adam's posterity original sin is not truly and properly a sin unless by actual

consent they approve this sin by sinning, or who deny that the privation of sanctifying grace belongs to the nature of original sin, which grace our first parent lost for himself and his posterity by voluntary sin." Later on the Council explained as follows: "It is not said that this privation of grace is the essence itself of original sin,....but that it pertains to the nature or original sin, which is still true as long as it is not denied that this privation is necessarily connected with original sin." This explanation was added in view of the opinion of certain ancient Scholastics, which was not rejected as erroneous. But according to the obvious sense of the Council of Trent the Vatican Council declared, "Adam....by his voluntary sin lost grace not only as it was personal to himself but as it was to be derived from God's institution by all of his posterity. That which is said to pertain to the nature of original sin is not only the negative lack of sanctifying grace but the privation of grace, that is, the lack of holiness, which according to God's ordination was to be in all of Adam's posterity, since in the beginning it elevated the whole human race in its root and in its head to the supernatural order of grace; now however Adam's descendants are deprived of this grace."

This is saying equivalently that in the innocent Adam sanctifying grace was not only a personal gift but a gift to human nature to be transmitted with that nature, and this grace Adam lost for himself and for his posterity, as the Council of Trent has declared.

Otherwise Catholic theologians of almost every school who at least since the time of Baius taught this doctrine would have been in error about the very definition of original sin and original justice. This would be hard to admit, but this is precisely what is affirmed in the defense of the aforesaid thesis.

2. The Doctrine Of St. Thomas On This Matter

St. Thomas was certainly not ignorant of the second canon of the Council of Orange, in which original sin is called the death of the soul, that is, the privation of the spiritual life of grace. He must also have read similar expressions in the works of St. Augustine, when St. Augustine explained that prior to baptism there is in concupiscence the guilt of sin, although concupiscence is not in itself culpable, nor does it remain culpable in the baptized. Nor was St. Thomas unaware of the teaching of St. Anselm, who wrote: "(Adam) lost that grace which he had been able to preserve for those who were to descend from him," "he lost that grace which he had always

been able to preserve for his descendants." "Because therefore, having been placed in the high position of such a great grace, he of his own will abandoned the good things which he had received to be preserved for himself and them (his posterity), and thus his children lost what the father might have given them by preserving it and what he abandoned by not preserving it."

Some of the aforesaid writers think that St. Anselm is here speaking of grace in the broadest sense, inasmuch as creation itself is a certain grace. From the context, however, it is clear enough that St. Anselm is speaking of grace in the proper sense and of preternatural gifts.

St. Thomas' definitive doctrine on this question is found not in the Commentary on the <Sentences>, but in the works that he wrote toward the end of his life, especially in the Theological Summa. The opinion St. Thomas gives in the Commentary on the <Sentences> was regarded by himself as less probable, and later he receded from it more and more. No clear text to support it can be found in the Theological Summa; indeed in the work <De malo> many opposing passages can be found.

In the Commentary on the <Sentences> St. Thomas does present the opinion that in the innocent Adam sanctifying grace was only a personal gift and not a gift to human nature, but even then he considered the opposite opinion probable, and later in the Theological Summa he defends only this opposite opinion.

In the Commentary on the <Sentences> St. Thomas asks, Whether in the state of innocence children are born in grace? The holy doctor then presents two opinions: "Some say that the first man was created with only natural gifts and not with gratuitous gifts, and from this it seems that for such justice some preparation by personal acts would be required. Hence according to this view such grace would be a personal property belonging to the soul, and thus it would be in no way transmitted, except as an aptitude. Others, however, say that man was created in grace, and according to this view it seems that the gift of gratuitous justice was conferred on human nature itself, and hence grace would be infused at the same time that human nature was transmitted."

In the Commentary on the <Sentences> St. Thomas defends this second opinion as more probable: "This however is more probable: since man was created with integral natural gifts, which could not have been given without

a purpose, turning to God in the first instant of his creation, man obtained grace, and this opinion should be supported."

In the Theological Summa St. Thomas speaks more confidently: "Some say that the first man was not created in grace..... But as others say, he was established in grace, and this seems to be required by that righteousness of man's first state in which God made him, according to the words, 'God made man right.' This righteousness consisted in the fact that reason was subject to God, the lower powers were subject to reason, and the body was subject to the soul. The first subjection is the cause of the second and the third. As long as reason remained subject to God, the lower powers were subject to reason, as St. Augustine said. It is clear, however, that this subjection of the body to the soul and of the lower powers to reason was not natural..... Hence it is also clear that that first subjection of reason to God was not only according to nature but according to the supernatural gift of grace, for the effect cannot be more powerful than the cause."

As St. Thomas' teaching developed, the corollary of the opinion referred to earlier became more firmly established: "Others say that man was created in grace, and from this it seems that the gift of gratuitous justice was conferred on human nature itself, and hence grace would be infused at the same time as human nature was transmitted."

In the Theological Summa, considering the same question, whether men were born with justice, he says, "Original justice, however, in which the first man was established, was an accident of the nature of the species; not as if it were caused by the principles of the species but only as a gift divinely conferred on the whole nature." "In reply to the second difficulty, in which some say that children were not born with gratuitous justice, which is the principle of meriting, but with original justice: since the root of original justice, in whose righteousness man was created, consists in the supernatural subjection of the reason to God, which by grace makes man pleasing to God, it is necessary to say that, if children were born in original justice, they were also born with grace, just as we said above that the first man was established with grace."

Nor can it be said, according to St. Thomas' definitive teaching, that sanctifying grace was the extrinsic root of original justice.

In <De malo> St. Thomas says, "Original justice includes grace gratum faciens." In the same work, replying to the objection: "But the divine vision is not owing to one who has original justice, since he is able not to have

grace. Therefore the perpetual lack of the divine vision does not correspond to original sin," St. Thomas replied: "In reply to the thirteenth difficulty I say that this reasoning is in accord with those who say that grace gratum faciens is not included in the idea of original justice. This I believe to be false, because, since original justice consists primordially in the subjection of the human mind to God, which subjection cannot be permanent without grace, therefore original justice cannot be without grace."

Hence, according to St. Thomas grace gratum faciens is included in the idea of original justice. But what is included in the idea of a thing is not an extrinsic efficient cause, otherwise God would be included in the idea of the creature. Nor is this grace merely an extrinsic condition <sine qua non>, because the subjection of the mind to God "cannot be permanent without grace." Thus grace and charity, which flows from grace, are more than conditions <sine qua non> of this primordial subjection because they positively influence it. This habitual primordial subjection is the formal effect of infused charity.

Moreover, according to this text, original justice implies the subjection of the mind to God as the author of grace, because from the integrity of nature with proportionate natural helps alone there results the efficacious love of God as the author of nature. If therefore the subjection of the mind to God required for original justice "cannot be permanent without grace," it must be a subjection of the mind to God as the author of grace and not of nature alone.

This conclusion reached in <De malo> is the same as that found in the Theological Summa: "Since the root of original justice, in whose righteousness man was created, consists in the supernatural subjection of the reason to God, which by grace makes man pleasing to God, as we said above, it is necessary to say that if children were born in original justice, they were also born in grace, just as we said above that man was established in grace." Because, as he had said earlier, "man was created in grace, and according to this view it seems that the gift of gratuitous justice was conferred on human nature itself, and hence grace would be infused at the same time as human nature was transmitted."

Nor can it be said that sanctifying grace in the innocent Adam was only the intrinsic root of original justice, as infused faith is the root of sacred theology, which is acquired by human study. St. Thomas says: "Original justice belonged primordially to the essence of the soul, for it was a divine

gift conferred on human nature, which refers rather to the essence than to the potencies of the soul. The potencies seem to belong rather to the person inasmuch as they are the principles of personal acts. Hence the potencies are the proper subjects of actual sins, which are personal sins." If therefore "original justice belonged primordially to the essence of the soul," there was nothing primordially besides the entitative habit of sanctifying grace. For there were not in the essence of the soul two entitative habits, namely, the habit of the integrity of nature and the habit of sanctifying grace, just as there are not two distinct habits of healing habitual grace and elevating habitual grace.

Nor is the aforesaid opinion supported by the fact that St. Thomas frequently said that grace gratum faciens is the root of original justice. A root is not necessarily extrinsic, for example, the root of a tree is a part of the tree. Moreover, as the essence of the soul is the root of the faculties, so sanctifying grace is the root of the infused virtues, and a fortiori sanctifying grace, which is included in original justice, is the root of original justice, inasmuch as "original justice belonged primordially to the essence of the soul," and consisted in the threefold subjection of the mind to God, of the lower powers to reason, and of the body to the soul (by the privilege of immunity from pain and death).

This was Cajetan's understanding of the word "root." Cajetan also remarked: "According to him (St. Thomas), grace gratum faciens belongs to the idea of original justice."

Capreolus pointed out against Durandus: "Grace gratum faciens alone was not original justice, which included something more than grace; baptism restores this grace but not those other things that belong to this kind of justice. Hence baptism does not restore original justice completely but only a part of it."

Ferrariensis wrote: "From this we can see that original justice included grace as its root because, just as the subjection of the body and the lower powers was supernatural through original justice, which was a grace gratis data, so the subjection of reason to God had to be supernatural, through grace gratum faciens, whose function it is to subject the soul supernaturally."

We see, therefore, that there are no texts, at least no clear texts in the Theological Summa, to support the contention that the aforesaid opinion represents the definitive doctrine of St. Thomas. Indeed there are many

contrary texts. Perhaps for this reason one of the recent exponents of this theory cited no texts from the Theological Summa, but instead injected his theory of adoption, according to which sanctifying grace can only be personal and not a gift to human nature to be transmitted with that nature.

This theory, however, is without any foundation. When a rich man adopts a poor man he can give him a hereditary title of nobility. Why cannot God do the same for Adam and in him elevate the human race to the order of grace, as the Vatican Council declared, “God in the beginning elevated the whole human race in its head to the supernatural order of grace”? This is what St. Thomas said: “Others say that man was created in grace, and according to this view it seems that the gift of gratuitous justice was conferred on human nature itself, and when human nature is transmitted grace is transmitted at the same time.” At that time St. Thomas held this view to be the more probable and in his later works he defended it more and more.

Objection may be made that St. Thomas wrote: “The first sin of the first man not only deprived the sinner of his own personal good, namely, grace and the proper order of the soul, but also of the good that belonged to the common nature.” From this and similar passages it seems at first that in the innocent Adam sanctifying grace was only a personal gift. But if we study these texts carefully we see that sanctifying grace was a personal gift as conferred on a person, but not to one single person alone, but to that person as a part and the head of the community which is the human race. This is clear from what St. Thomas says in <De malo> when he asks, whether any sin is contracted by origin: “We must say absolutely that sin is transmitted from the first parents to his posterity by origin. In support of this we must consider that an individual man can be considered in two ways. In the first place a man is a certain single person; in the second place he is part of a group (collegium). Thus the entire multitude of men receiving human nature from the first parent should be considered as one group, or as the one body of one man, and in this multitude each man, even Adam himself, can be considered as one individual person or as a member of this multitude, which by natural origin is derived from one man. To the first man at the time of his creation God gave a certain supernatural gift, original justice, by which the reason was made subject to God, the lower powers were subjected to the reason, and the body was made subject to the soul. This gift, however, was not given to the first man as a single person alone but as

the principle of all human nature, which was to be derived from him through origin by his posterity. Having received this gift, the first man, when he sinned voluntarily, lost it under the same aspect as that under which he had received it, namely, for himself and for all his posterity."

From all this it is sufficiently clear that sanctifying grace was, according to St. Thomas and also according to reason, not merely a personal gift to the innocent Adam, but an endowment of nature, since "original justice includes grace gratum faciens."

CHAPTER XLV

THE FALL OF MAN

FIRST ARTICLE: THE SIN OF OUR FIRST PARENTS

State of the question. We suppose that a sin is a defection from the order to a right end, something contrary to the rule of reason, of nature, and the eternal law. sin, however, is not predicated univocally of mortal and venial sin; mortal sin turns away from the final end; venial sin maintains the order to the final end but turns to means that are not ordered to the end. Besides this, sin can be considered either in act or in habit. In the latter sense it is a disordered habit remaining in the soul until the sin is remitted. Thus after an actual mortal sin a man remains turned away from his final end. Hence habitual mortal sin is a state of sin consisting in the privation of sanctifying grace caused by a gravely culpable turning to creatures.

Adam's sin and its consequences for the human race are denied by the rationalists and liberal Protestants, according to whom the biblical narrative of Adam's Fall is merely allegorical and mythical. The rationalists object because of the disproportion between the eating of the forbidden fruit and the penalty inflicted, as described in the Book of Genesis.

The Catholic doctrine was defined by the Council of Trent: "If anyone does not confess that the first man Adam, when he transgressed the commandment of God in paradise, immediately lost the holiness and justice in which he had been constituted, and by the offense of such transgression incurred the anger and indignation of God, and therefore death, with which God had threatened him, and with death captivity under the power of him who from then on held the empire of death, that is, the devil, and that the whole Adam by the offense of this transgression was changed for the worse in body and soul, let him be anathema."

With regard to Adam's sin the Biblical Commission teaches that the literal historical sense of Genesis cannot be doubted, especially with regard

to the facts narrated in those chapters “which refer to the foundations of the Christian religion, such as, among others, the original happiness of our first parents in the state of justice, integrity, and immortality, the commandment given by God to man to test his obedience, the transgression of that divine commandment with the persuasion of the devil under the guise of a serpent, the eviction of our first parents from that primeval state of innocence, and the promise of the future Redeemer.”

Sacred Scripture affirms the existence of this grave commandment and its violation: “And He commanded him, saying:....but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat. For in what day soever thou shalt eat of it, thou shalt die the death..... And the woman....took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave to her husband who did eat.”

From these words it is clear that our first parents sinned gravely, because of the purpose of the commandment, namely, the testing of their obedience, because of the grave punishment, namely, the loss of grace and their privileges, because of the consequences of the sin for the human race, and because of the perfection of this first state in which it was most easy to avoid sin.

The gravity of this sin is asserted in other places in Scripture: “From the woman came the beginning of sin, and by her we all die”; “But by the envy of the devil, death came into the world”; “For as by the disobedience of one man, many were made sinners; so also by the obedience of one, many shall be made just.”

The Fathers, in explaining these texts, commonly assert that when our first parents committed this grave sin they lost their pristine justice, that death is the effect of Adam’s sin, that by his sin Adam lost the preternatural gifts but retained free will, and that Adam’s sin passed on to all men.

Theological proof. St. Thomas proves that the sin of our first parents was the sin of pride, because they inordinately desired to be like God in the knowledge of good and evil and wished to govern themselves by reason alone instead of obeying the divine commandments received by faith. Thus disobedience arises from pride. And although this sin was not more grave than all others according to species, “it took on the greatest gravity because of the perfection of the state of the persons who committed the sin.” Thus the Scriptures say frequently that “pride is the beginning of all sin.”

St. Thomas points out in the same place that at that time the sensitive appetite was completely subjected to the reason and the will. Therefore this

inordination could have its beginning only in the will, by an inordinate desire of one's own excellence. At the same time there was in Eve curiosity and disloyalty and in Adam an inordinate love for his wife. Hence, as St. Thomas says, the eating of the forbidden fruit was entirely secondary, and therefore the objection of the rationalists about the disproportion between the sin and the punishment is without basis.

It is commonly admitted that our first parents obtained salvation by penance, according to the words: "She (wisdom) preserved him, that was first formed by God the father of the world, when he was created alone. And she brought him out of his sin, and gave him power to govern all things." Indeed, the Greek Church celebrates the feast of Adam and Eve on the Sunday before Christmas.

SECOND ARTICLE: THE EXISTENCE OF ORIGINAL SIN AND ITS EFFECTS ON ADAM'S POSTERITY

State of the question. Those who attempt to explain all the evils of this life as the effects of an evil principle, like the Gnostics and Manichaeans, indirectly deny the existence of original sin. In early times Theodore of Mopsuestia, Rufinus, and the Pelagians directly denied original sin; in the Middle Ages, Abelard and the Albigenses took the same position; in modern times the Socinians, the Unitarians, and the liberal Protestants also denied original sin, teaching that Adam injured only himself and not the entire human race, except inasmuch as he gave a bad example. The rationalists and pantheists deny original sin a fortiori as something absurd. The Modernists say that the doctrine about original sin is merely a theory invented by St. Augustine.

Luther and the early Protestants, on the other hand, exaggerated the consequences of original sin when they said that "free will is merely a name, and when man does what he wishes he sins mortally."

The Catholic doctrine is stated by the Council of Trent: "If anyone shall say that by his transgression Adam injured only himself and not his progeny, and that the holiness and justice which he received from God and which he lost, was lost only for himself and not also for us; or that the guilt of that sin of disobedience transmitted merely death and the punishments of the body to the human race but not the sin, which is the death of the soul, let him be anathema, since he contradicts the Apostle, who said, 'By one man

sin entered into this world, and by sin death; and so death passed upon all men, in whom all have sinned.’”

Moreover it has been defined that original sin is transmitted not by imitation but by propagation or generation from the seed of Adam; that it is a true sin, bringing with it the privation of sanctifying grace and the gift of integrity, that it is proper to each individual, although it is not personal, that it is found in infants, in Christians as well as infidels, that it is voluntary, not by the habitual will of the infant, but by reason of its origin from the will of the first man, the head of the human race, that it differs from actual sin by reason of the consent, and by reason of the penalty, which in the case of original sin is only the lack of the vision of God, but in a manner different from that in the other damned souls, since non-baptized infants are indeed condemned (to the penalty of loss) but do not actually hate God, nor do they suffer the punishment of fire. Original sin is remitted in the baptism of regeneration, which must be received at least in desire.

This doctrine may be summed up as follows: All men naturally born of Adam, with the exception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, by their conception contract some sin, which is correctly called original sin or “the sin of nature,” and which brings with it the privation of sanctifying grace and the gift of integrity. Prior to the Council of Trent, this doctrine was formulated in the Council of Milevum and the Second Council of Orange.

Sacred Scripture. The testimony is found as early as the beginning of the Old Testament and more explicitly in the New Testament. From the Book of Genesis it is clear that the fall of our first parents injured all their posterity; all men lost the friendship of God, the gifts of immortality and immunity from pain and concupiscence. Besides, the promise of the Redemption included all of Adam’s posterity and therefore presupposed that all men had fallen in their first parents. The words, “Who can make him clean that is conceived of unclean seed?” have been understood in Jewish and Christian tradition as referring to the sin contracted in conception. The words, “For behold I was conceived in iniquities: and in sins did my mother conceive me,” without the aid of tradition do not prove the existence of original sin, because it may be said that they refer to concupiscence, which, according to the Council of Trent, may be called sin in an improper sense.

The entire Old Testament announces the promised Redeemer and thus supposes the fall of the human race. We read, “From the woman came the beginning of sin, and by her we all die,” since in some way the sin of our

first parents came down to us. Finally, according to the Fathers, circumcision remitted original sin.

This doctrine is more explicitly revealed in the New Testament. Of Christ it is said, “For He shall save His people from their sins,” and “Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him who taketh away the sin of the world.” Christ said: “Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” No one is able to be spiritually reborn unless he has been spiritually dead by a common habitual sin, because infants are not capable of actual sin. “We were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest,” that is, from birth, and therefore not by actual sin but by a sin contracted in conception. This is the sense in which many understand this text.

The doctrine of original sin is more explicitly expressed by St. Paul: “By one man sin entered into this world, and by sin death; and so death passed upon all men, in whom (or because) all have sinned”; “For as by the disobedience of one man, many were made sinners; so also by the obedience of one, many shall be made just.” As St. Augustine explained against the Pelagians, St. Paul is here affirming that all men have died because all have sinned through Adam or in him, just as all are vivified in Christ. This sin is truly a sin and not merely that concupiscence which remains in the baptized, because it is opposed to justice and grace and leads “unto condemnation.” St. Paul is not speaking of actual sin, because this sin is also “in them who have not sinned after the similitude of the transgression of Adam.” Hence it is a sin committed by Adam alone, the head of the human race, a sin which passed on to all his posterity not by imitation but by propagation as the Council of Trent declared. Here we see the parallel between Christ and Adam, who as the head of the human race was the “form of the future.”

Objection. We read, “The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father.”

Reply. This refers to the punishment due a father, which should not be inflicted on an innocent son, while original sin is transmitted. to us and is in each of us together with the privation of the preternatural gifts of nature.

Tradition. During the first four centuries, before the rise of Pelagianism, the belief in original sin was expressed by the Church’s universal practice of baptizing infants for the remission of sin and to drive out the devil; hence the exorcisms in baptism. De Journel quotes Hermas: “Before a man bore the name of the son of God, he was dead; but when he received the seal, he

cast off mortality and resumed life. The seal therefore is water; the dead descend into the water and ascend from it alive." St. Irenaeus, also in the second century, said, "We have indeed offended God in the first Adam by not obeying His precept, but in the second Adam we were reconciled, being made obedient unto death." Similar testimony comes from St. Justin, Theophilus of Antioch; in the third century from St. Cyprian, Origen, and Tertullian; and in the fourth century from St. Basil, Didymus, St. Ambrose, and St. John Chrysostom. Mary is called the new Eve, who cooperated in the mystery of the Redemption as the first Eve cooperated in the fall of the human race.

Lastly, St. Augustine defended the existence of original sin against Pelagianism, basing his arguments on Sacred Scripture and reason. The Pelagian denial of original sin was condemned by the Councils of Carthage and Ephesus and by St. Celestine.

Theological proof. Reason alone, from the miseries of this life, which affect even infants, cannot prove the existence of original sin, which remains a mystery in the proper sense, just as the elevation of the human race to the life of grace is a mystery, for God could have created man in the state of pure nature, in which he would not be immune from pain, death, ignorance, and concupiscence. These miseries, therefore, are only a probable sign of the existence of original sin, as St. Thomas said.

After revelation, however, especially as it is expressed in the Epistle to the Romans, St. Thomas was able to explain by an analogy how the first sin of our first parents is transmitted by origin to their posterity: "All men who are born of Adam can be regarded as one man inasmuch as they are one in nature, which they have received from their first parent, just as in society all the men of one community are considered one body, and the whole community is considered one man..... Thus many men are derived from Adam as the several members of one body. The action of one bodily member, such as the hand, is not voluntary by the will of the hand but by the will of the soul which moves the member..... Thus also the inordination which is in this man generated from Adam is not voluntary by his will but by the will of the first parent who moves by the movement of generation all the men who are derived from him by origin..... Therefore original sin is not the sin of this particular person except inasmuch as this person receives his nature from the first parent. Hence it is called the sin of nature."

In his reply to the first difficulty, St. Thomas says, “The sin is derived by origin from the father to the son.”

In the reply to the second difficulty, he says: “Human nature is transmitted by virtue of the seed and together with it the infection of nature.” Thus Adam’s first sin (not his other sins) is passed on to this posterity, that is, to all men, who all therefore need redemption. The force of this argument, as Cajetan explains, is in the analogical proportion between our will and our members on the one hand, and the will of Adam and other men, who are as it were his members, since they proceed by generation from him as from the head of human nature, which was once elevated and then despoiled of its supernatural gifts.

This is not a proof of the mystery by reason; that is impossible. But from this reasoning we have some insight into the mystery, according to the words of St. Paul to the Romans, “both from an analogy of those things that we know naturally, and from the connection between the mysteries and their relation to man’s final end,” as the Vatican Council said. Thus light is thrown on the mystery of original sin from its relationship to the mystery of the Redemption, for God did not permit such a great offense except for the greater good of the redemptive Incarnation, that is, in order that grace might superabound.

Some theologians, among them Salmeron, Toletus, Lugo, the school of Wurzburg, teach that Adam’s sin was morally committed by his posterity through the moral inclusion of our wills in the will of our first parent. This has not been proved nor does it appear admissible. Original sin is not an act but a sinful state that directly affects the nature and only indirectly the person. Adam accepted for himself and his posterity holiness and justice as a gift to human nature, or as an accident to nature, and he lost it for himself and for us, as the Council of Trent declared.

Nor can it be admitted that a compact existed between God and Adam whereby his sin should be transmitted to his posterity. We have no indication that such a pact was made, nor was Adam’s consent necessary that his sin be transmitted to his posterity.

Adam, therefore, was not only the physical head of the human race by whom the life of the body was transmitted, but he was also the head of elevated nature. Under this aspect Adam was the moral head of the human race for, if he had not sinned, he would have communicated human nature together with the gifts of nature when he communicated natural life, as St.

Thomas explains: “Children would have been born with grace..... But the grace would not have been transfused by virtue of the seed but it would have been conferred on a man as soon as he had a rational soul, just as the rational soul is infused by God as soon as the body is disposed to receive it.” Now, however, after Adam’s sin, original sin, which is opposed to that original justice, is called the sin of nature, and hence is transmitted by the parents to their children.

THIRD ARTICLE: THE NATURE OF ORIGINAL SIN

State of the question. The early Protestants said that original sin consists in a vehement concupiscence which extinguishes free will. Baius and the Jansenists taught a similar doctrine with some qualifications; according to them free will is so weakened that it is necessarily drawn to earthly pleasures unless it is strengthened by efficacious grace.

Shortly before the Council of Trent, Catharinus and Albert Pighius, in their opposition to the Protestants went to the extreme opposite. They said that original sin was formally the actual sin of Adam extrinsically imputed to his posterity, and that the privation of grace did not belong to the essence of original sin but was simply the penalty for original sin.

The Catholic doctrine was stated by the Council of Trent, which defined as follows: “In baptism all that has the true and proper nature of sin is taken away” and “there remains in those baptized concupiscence....left for the struggle..... The holy Synod declares that this concupiscence, which the Apostle sometimes called sin, the Catholic Church has never understood to be truly and properly a sin in those who are reborn, but that it is from sin and inclines to sin. If anyone should believe otherwise, let him be anathema.” Hence original sin does not consist in concupiscence, which is called sin in an improper sense.

On the other hand, according to the Council of Trent, original sin implies the privation of sanctifying grace (hence it is remitted by baptism), death is a consequence of original sin, and free will is not destroyed although it is weakened. The Council of Trent did not, however, determine in what the essence of original sin consisted, nor did it condemn the theory of Catharinus and Pighius. Their theory, however, can hardly be reconciled with the Catholic doctrine, for that which is extrinsically imputed cannot be

said to be properly in each individual as “transmitted by propagation,” nor is it remitted by baptism.

The Schema of the Vatican Council proscribes the heretical doctrine of those “who have dared to say that original sin is not truly and properly a sin in Adam’s posterity except in those individuals who have approved this sin by their actual consent; or those who deny that the privation of sanctifying grace, which our first parent by sinning voluntarily lost for himself and his posterity, belongs to the nature of original sin.” This council adopted the following canon: “If anyone shall say that original sin is formally concupiscence itself or some physical or substantial disease of human nature, and deny that the privation of sanctifying grace belongs to the nature of original sin, let him be anathema.”

Various opinions of the doctors. According to St. Augustine, original sin consists in the disordered habitual concupiscence found in the soul despoiled of grace because of Adam’s sin. According to him this concupiscence has two things: the guilt of sin, which is remitted by baptism, and the penalty of sin, which remains in those who are baptized. We see, therefore, a great difference between St. Augustine’s opinion and the Protestant error.

According to St. Anselm, original sin consists in the privation of original justice or of the rectitude of the will. “Because of his disobedience Adam was denuded of proper justice and because of this all are children of wrath.” “All men were, as it were, causally or materially in the seed of Adam.”

Attempting to reconcile St. Augustine’s opinion with that of St. Anselm, St. Thomas held that original sin is materially in concupiscence and that it is formally the privation of original justice.

St. Thomas asks the question: Whether original sin is concupiscence? His argument is as follows: “I reply by saying that everything takes its species from its form. It was said above (in the preceding article) that the species of original sin is taken from its cause. Hence it follows that what is formal in original sin is taken from the cause of original sin. (This is the major of the argument.) The causes of opposite things, however, are opposite. The cause of original sin therefore must be considered together with the cause of original justice.”

“The whole ordination of original justice, however, consists in the fact that the will of man is subject to God. This subjection is found primarily and principally in the will, whose function it is to move the other parts to

their end. Hence from the aversion of the will from God there followed the inordination in all the other powers of the soul. Hence the privation of that original justice by which the will is subject to God is the formal element in original sin, and every other inordination in the powers of the soul is the material element in original sin..... Thus original sin is materially in concupiscence, and formally original sin consists in the lack of original justice."

This argument may be stated briefly as follows: "The formal constituent of a thing is the root of the other things that pertain to it But the privation of original justice which implies the subjection of the will to God is the root of the inordination of the lower powers and of the penalties that pertain to original sin. Thus when grace was removed, the rebellion of the flesh followed. Therefore the formal constituent of original sin is the privation of original justice with its subjection of the mind to God, and therefore it is essentially the death of the soul, as the Second Council of Orange declared." This argument is based on causality.

When St. Thomas says that "original sin is materially in concupiscence," he most probably means to use the term materially in an improper sense, as many commentators have noted. Shortly before this he uses the expression "like some kind of material." In his <De malo> he says "quasi-material." Properly speaking, the material is presupposed for the formal; concupiscence, however, is not presupposed prior to the privation of original justice but follows it as an effect; as St. Thomas himself says, concupiscence "is a consequence of original sin," inasmuch as the rebellion of the flesh follows the termination of the will's subjection to God. Later on (q. 85, a. 3) St. Thomas enumerates concupiscence as one of the wounds or consequences of original sin.

From the fifteenth to the nineteenth century many theologians held that the essence of original sin consisted in the privation of sanctifying grace alone, and no more mention was made of concupiscence as the quasi-material element.

More recently Bittremieux and Kors held that the formal element of original sin is the privation of original justice or natural integrity, and that this privation necessarily implies as a consequence the privation of sanctifying grace since, as they say, original justice originates from sanctifying grace. In the preceding chapter we have examined this opinion

and we have seen that it is not in accord with St. Thomas' teaching in the Theological Summa.

Hence for many Thomists the formal element of original sin is the privation of sanctifying grace itself, which is the intrinsic root and the intrinsic formal cause of original justice. Such is the teaching of the Salmanticenses, Gonet, Billuart, Pegues, Hugon, Billot, and Michel.

This more common teaching is truly in accord with the passages from St. Thomas cited above, such as, "the supernatural subjection of reason to God takes place through grace gratum faciens."

Hence the formal element of original sin is the privation of sanctifying grace, by which we are turned away from God our supernatural end, and in us it is the effect of a voluntary and culpable act committed by Adam our head. Original sin, therefore, is not an act but a sinful state which directly infects our nature and indirectly infects the person. For in Adam grace was a gift to nature, and Adam lost this grace for himself and for us. Now there is transmitted to us a nature deprived of the gift of grace which by the positive ordination of God ought to be in us. All this is derived from the principle explained earlier that Adam was the head of an elevated nature and, if he had not sinned, "men would be born with grace."

Confirmation. 1. This traditional opinion is confirmed by the effect of baptism. As pointed out by Soto, original sin ought to consist in the privation of that which is restored by baptism, for this sin is entirely remitted by baptism. But that which baptism confers is sanctifying grace. Therefore original sin consists formally in the privation of grace.

2. Original sin, called by the councils the "death of the soul," belongs to the genus of habitual sin, not actual sin. But habitual mortal sin consists in the privation of sanctifying grace, and it is voluntary by the will of the particular person. Therefore original sin consists in the privation of the same grace, as voluntary by the will of the head of the human race.

Corollaries. It should be remembered that guilt precedes the penalty, and therefore the aforesaid privation of nature is prior to us by the voluntary will of the head of the human race, prior to the deprivation of the preserving help of grace. For God deserts no one except those who desert Him, nor does He take away original justice except for the reason that Adam wished to deprive himself and us of it.

In its formal aspect original sin is the habitual turning away from the ultimate supernatural end as voluntary by the will of the head of the human

race. In its formal aspect original sin cannot be more in one than in another because the privation of original justice is equal in all. Concupiscence, however, may be stronger in one than in another because of the constitution of the body.

Original sin is primarily in the essence of the soul, rather than in the powers of the soul, because it is transmitted by generation, and the terminus of generation is man, whose soul is the substantial form. Sanctifying grace, too, is in the essence of the soul as is also the privation of sanctifying grace.

Original sin first infects the will, among the powers of the soul, and then passes to the lower powers, which are infected in special ways, inasmuch as original sin is transmitted by generation.

FOURTH ARTICLE: THE CONSEQUENCES OF ORIGINAL SIN

1. By original sin man was despoiled of the gratuitous gifts. This doctrine is of faith. Man lost sanctifying grace and the annexed gifts. This privation of grace as the habitual aversion from God and as voluntary by the will of the head of the human race has the nature of guilt, but when it is inflicted by God it is a penalty.

Man lost also the four preternatural gifts that belong to integrity: immunity from death, from pain, from concupiscence, and from ignorance. He was reduced to the servitude of the devil and sin, from which he cannot be freed except by grace.

2. Man was wounded in his natural endowments, although he preserved his nature and the nature of his faculties. The Second Council of Orange and the Council of Trent say that “in body and soul man was changed for the worse”; and the Council of Trent adds that his “free will was weakened and deformed in its exercise.”

St. Thomas and theologians in general enumerate four wounds of the soul: “Inasmuch as reason was deprived of its order to truth we have the wound of ignorance; inasmuch as the will was deprived of the order to good we have the wound of malice; inasmuch as the irascible appetite was deprived of its order to the difficult we have the wound of weakness; inasmuch as concupiscence was deprived of the order to the delectable moderated by reason we have the wound of concupiscence.”

Doubt. Whether man is weaker to accomplish moral good of the natural order in the state of unredeemed fallen nature than he would have been in

the state of pure nature. In other words, does the wounding of nature consist only in the loss of the gratuitous gifts, or does it include the weakening of the natural powers?

There are three principal opinions.

1. Some theologians hold that the powers of fallen man have been intrinsically reduced by his positive habit of being inclined to changeable goods. Such is the opinion of Henry of Ghent, Gabriel Biel, and certain ancient writers. The Jansenists held an exaggerated form of this opinion.

2. Others hold that man's powers for moral good have in no way been diminished. This view is held by Suarez, Bellarmine, and by the theologians of the Society of Jesus, among them, Mazzella, Palmieri, and Pesch.

3. Others teach that the natural powers of fallen man have been weakened, not intrinsically,—but extrinsically, because of the placing of an obstacle. This is the opinion of Thomists in general: Alvarez, Lemos, John of St. Thomas, Contenson, the Salmanticenses, Goudin, Billuart, Gonet in his Clypeus, in which he amended what he had taught earlier in his Manual, St. Alphonsus, and Tanquerey.

This last opinion seems to be more in accord with the doctrine of St. Thomas; the first opinion sins by excess, and the second by defect. St. Thomas proposes the question, whether sin diminishes the good of nature. He replies by explaining the words of Venerable Bede, "Man was despoiled of the gratuitous gifts and wounded in his natural powers." "The good of nature," St. Thomas says, "is threefold. First, the principles of nature, by which are constituted the nature itself and the properties caused by these principles, such as the powers of the soul. Secondly, because man has from nature an inclination to virtue, as we said above, the inclination to virtue is itself a certain good of nature. Thirdly, the gift of original justice, which was given to the whole human race in the first man, can be called a good of nature."

"The first good of nature is not lost nor is it diminished by sin. The third good of nature is completely lost by the sin of our first parent. But the second good of nature, the natural inclination to virtue, is diminished by sin." Following this, St. Thomas treats of the four wounds "inflicted on all human nature by the sin of the first man."

What is the extrinsic impediment which diminishes the powers of the soul? Many Thomists reply as follows: The faculties of the soul and its properties, like the essence of the soul itself, do not admit of reduction or

increase, because they are entirely spiritual and therefore incorruptible and unalterable. They cannot therefore suffer intrinsic diminution. But in the state of fallen nature man is born habitually and directly averse to God his supernatural end, and indirectly averse to God his ultimate natural end, since every sin that is directly opposed to the supernatural law is indirectly opposed to the natural law, commanding us to obey God in everything. When Adam sinned, he turned all his posterity away from God the author of nature.

In the state of pure nature this aversion would not have existed because there had been no sin and man would have been born capable of positive conversion to God and of aversion to God. Hence in the state of pure nature man would have been more capable of turning to God than the man who is born with an aversion to God. This aversion is a wounding of the will, which, as St. Thomas says, “is deprived of the order to good.” Thus we see how man’s free will is “weakened in its powers and inclined (to evil),” in the words of the Council of Trent. From this follows the wound of ignorance, particularly in the practical intellect, because everyone arrives at a practical judgment according to his inclination. If this inclination is not right, the intellect is inclined to error. Similarly the wounds of weakness and concupiscence follow in the sensitive appetite, because the higher faculties are not strong enough to direct the sensitive appetite as they should. Hence fallen man is compared to man in the state of pure nature not only as a stripped man to a naked man but as a wounded man to a healthy man.

CONCLUSION

We are now better able to solve the objections against original sin. 1. Original sin is not repugnant to divine justice, because it is the privation of grace and the preternatural gifts, which were not owing to our nature. The just God could grant these gratuitous gifts to the human race on the condition that Adam, the head of elevated nature, should not sin and not forfeit these gratuitous gifts for himself and for us.

2. Original sin is not repugnant to God’s wisdom or goodness. As St. Thomas explains, “Nothing prohibits human nature from being brought to something higher after sin. God permits sin and evil that He may elicit something better. Hence it is said, ‘Where sin abounded, grace did more

abound.’” And in the blessing of the paschal candle the Church chants, “O happy fault, that merited so great a Redeemer.!”

God could not permit evil except for some greater good, but we cannot say <a priori> for what good God permitted original sin. After the Incarnation took place, however, it is sufficiently clear that God permitted the abundance of sin that grace might more abound. He permitted this universal evil in the human race so that He might give us something better and more efficacious for salvation through the redemptive Incarnation. Christ, the head of the Church, infinitely excels Adam. The Blessed virgin Mary is incomparably more perfect than Eve, and the Eucharistic sacrifice offered in every church immeasurably exceeds the divine worship offered in the terrestrial paradise.

Once the existence of original sin has been admitted, we can more easily explain the present condition of the human race. This doctrine solves the enigma of the coexistence in man of such great frailty and misery and such strong aspirations for the sublime. “Some signs appear,” says St. Thomas, “of original sin in the human race.” In Pascal’s words, “Without this mystery man is more incomprehensible than the mystery is to man.” From experience, therefore, man is able to know his profound need for the Redemption that would elevate him again to the life of grace, which is the seed of eternal life.

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